

Compared to last month's installment, Thor #3 is not as expertly structured, however the additional spontaneity and the increased feeling of being 'in the moment' do a lot to make this another special issue. After an issue packed to the brim with the Goddess of Thunder's personality, Aaron takes a step back and places some spotlight on our villains. While this slows the pace down considerably, it makes for some interesting old-school comics and does more to build the world this new Thor will inhabit. Aaron continues his trend of providing Malekith of Svartalfheim some of the issue's strongest writing. With Loki otherwise engaged, Malekith fills the part of the charming, malicious spellcaster admirably. As Loki, himself, has proven, this archetype can easily seem pandering, but Aaron shows the necessary restraint and keeps Malekith from feeling too smug for his good. Perhaps a part of that is the wise choice to move him away from the main battle and pit him against one of the few characters who can truly match his ego, Dario Agger. Agger, on paper, is an incredibly dull character to me. His plutocratic motivations are shallow at best, but, paired with Malekith, he becomes a rather enjoyable villain. There's something classic about this battle of villains that brings out the best in both of them. The dialogue is cute, without overstaying its welcome and the characters play off of each other nicely. Despite fine work with the pair of them, some of the most interesting elements of this issue are reserved for the Frost Giants. Opening on a beautiful map of Jotunheim, Thor #3 spends the most time focused on the Giants' inner thoughts of nearly any Thor comic I've read, though that's hardly exhaustive. While they remain slow-witted and brutish, Aaron manages to give Skrymir a certain warrior nobility and imbues his mourning for the Jotun way with not a small amount of pathos. This continues into the main portion of the story and, even though the Jotun are still played as no serious challenge for the Thunderer, it seems possible and, for the first time in my reading, promising to see more about them in future issues. Thor, herself, is only mediocre this issue. She spends too much time pondering 'What Would the Odinson Do' and generally comes up with a fairly simple understanding of the answer, but, especially towards the end of the issue, there are some solid moments for her. The opening pages in Jotunheim represent some of Russell Dauterman's strongest work in recent memory. Particularly as colored by Matthew Wilson, the fortress of Utgard is palpably sinister. Panels like Skrymir's introduction or Malekith looking up from within his cloak look fantastic and make ample use of the eerie blue light of the scene. While this sequence clearly represents a high point, the general quality of the duos work extends throughout the rest of the issue. As has occasionally been a problem for Dauterman, there are panels where there are too many spells, shards, or other forms of obstructive debris to fully appreciate the image, however they're spaced far enough apart that you're never confused for long. Dauterman also does a great job of bringing out the refinement in his villains and the ferocity in his heroine. Malekith's face immediately before opening the vault looks positively genial while you can feel the struggle and disdain in the Goddess of Thunder's straining lips. Wilson also does a great job of defining and then integrating the two different scenes of the main plot, using variations of the beautiful Jotun blue for Thor's conflicts while clearly aligning Malekith and Agger on the warmer side of the spectrum. As for the battle scenes, they waver but generally fall somewhere around good but unremarkable. Actually, there isn't that much fighting. Aaron and Dauterman include only a few physical exchanges but create a sense of immersion by alternating between detailed drawn out renderings of single attacks and energetic, single panel blows. I also have to praise Dauterman's depiction of Agger's minotaur form. It's not untraditional, but has its own look and emotes very well for what's effectively a bipedal cow. I especially appreciated the attention paid to its hair and the varied lengths Dauterman used. A Thought: In mythology, Skrymir is the

name given by an enormous giant when Thor and Loki meet him on one of their many road trips. The encounter is the first in a series of embarrassments for the Thunderer and leads him to the realm of Utgard-Loki. At the end of the tale, Utgard-Loki reveals that he was Skrymir in disguise. In Marvel's history, after the death of Laufey, a Jotun named Utgard-Loki became king. Considering the myth, Skrymir's role, and his rule over a citadel called Utgard, it seems likely that Skrymir is a renamed form of Utgard-Loki, however, given his drastically different appearance and his ambiguous fate in his last appearance, it's hard to say if this is actually the same character. The post Thor #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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