

THOR: GOD OF THUNDER Outline

By Jason Aaron

THE GOD BUTCHER

Issues #1-6

#1: The Dead Thing in the Sea

Back in the Viking Age, sometime around the 8th century, young Thor is drinking with some Vikings after a battle against the Frost Giants, when a scream calls them outside. An old woman from the village has found something floating along the icy shore. A bloody hunk of something floating in the sea, being pecked at by the birds. It's the remains of a man, dressed in strange garb (what we recognize as Mayan or Native American). He appears to have been butchered. More pieces of him begin to wash up. But Thor looks into what remains of the dead face and realizes this was no man. This was a god. What could possibly have done such a thing to a god, the Vikings wonder aloud, as a chill wind blows through them. Thor breaks the silence with a laugh, calling all the men back to the mead hall. But as they wander off, he stays behind, to stare out into the foggy waves. The old woman is praying. "To what gods do you pray?" he asks her. "All of them," she replies.

In the present day, a young girl is praying. An alien girl from a planet in deep space. Her planet for a long time now has been suffering a terrible draught. She has heard the legend of Thor, echoing throughout the cosmos, and prays to him for help. Thor hears her prayer and streaks through space, arriving with a roll of thunder. Lightning flies from his hammer and the heavens pour forth rain. He slams his hammer against the ground, and water spews up from deep within the earth. Where once there were only jagged mountains and desert, Thor has made a beautiful waterfall and flowing river. The young girl and the rest of her alien village shower Thor with praise and thanks. Thor asks the little girl why she prayed to him, instead of simply asking her own gods for help. Her world has no gods, she tells him. None at all. Thor is perplexed by this. When he goes to leave, the villagers beg him to stay, to join their celebration. Once Thor spies a couple of fetching alien maidens among the crowd, he gives in and agrees to stay, asking the villagers if their world has such a thing as "beer." Later we see Thor sitting around the fire, surrounded by children, telling them stories about the wonders of Asgard.

The next morning, Thor talks with the village elder, asking why their world has no gods. Thor has traveled throughout the galaxies, he says, and never heard of a world without gods. The elder says his world once had gods, many hundreds of years ago, but that no one had heard from them in a very long time. The elder tells Thor where the city of those gods had once supposedly been, and Thor flies off to investigate. High up in the clouds above the world's highest mountain, he finds what was once a majestic city, but now is deserted. Thor searches the empty chambers and halls. He finds a treasure house, still full of treasure, untouched for many years. A weapons room, still filled with weapons. He finds a library and takes a scroll, reading about the proud and powerful gods who had once called this city home. He finds no signs of war or disaster. But neither does he find anything living or dead. No sign whatsoever of what became of these gods.

Thor is just about to leave when he notices one last building, marked MEAT STORAGE. Inside he finds a slaughterhouse. He finds the whole pantheon of missing gods, all strung up like sides of beef. All slowly rotting. These gods have been dead for a very long time, Thor can tell. And written on the wall in dried blood, in a language of the elder gods, one Thor's father made him learn as a child, are the words: ALL GODS MUST DIE.

As Thor investigates the carnage, he notices something glimmering in the rigid hand of one of the dead gods. It's the tip of a blade, broken off in the god's hand while he was being butchered. The blade is black but seems to shimmer. Thor peers closer, the sight rousing old memories. He knows who did this, he realizes, and suddenly he remembers a day long ago when he found a dead god floating in the sea. Thor hears a noise behind him and turns, alert. He sees nothing and turns back. The black blade is gone. And suddenly Thor is under attack. Two black-clad warriors whose armor seems to be made from the same material as the black blade. Neither of them speak, but they fight like demons. It's all Thor can do to hold them off.

Cut to the future. Thousands of years into the future. Asgard is a ruined mess. The rainbow bridge is broken. The great halls are all but empty. A bearded, bear-like, one-armed King Thor sits alone on his throne, brooding. A great enemy is coming. The end to a drama that started long long ago. Thor's memories are hazy but he remembers something about finding a dead god in the sea. That was when it started. And later, there was a young girl from a world that had no gods. He seems to remember how the story started, but why can't he remember what happened after that? "Bring me my arm," the King calls and then realizes there's no one left to bring it. Asgard has no warriors left. None but one. Moments later Thor enters his trophy room. He draws his father's sword. And then he stands before a dusty pedestal, looking down at his old hammer, all chipped and cracked from an eon's worth of battles. Moments later, King Thor walks out onto the battlement. He's fitted with an arm of the Destroyer, holding the Odinsword in one hand and his hammer in the other. He walks out alone to meet the enemies of Asgard, and we see that the entire city is surrounded by a seemingly endless legion of the same black-clad warriors that present-day Thor was fighting. An army of the Black Berserkers.

#2: The Stalker In the Clouds

Flashback to the Viking Age again. The dead god is still floating along the icy shore when a black-cloaked figure emerges from the fog, walking across the surface of the water. He steps over the dead god, stepping up onto the ground. He sniffs the air. "I smell godflesh," he says, and walks off into the night.

A few days later, Thor is heading into battle alongside his Viking worshippers. They are set to meet a rival Germanic tribe, who are bringing along a few gods of their own. But the Germanic gods don't show. Eventually one of their horses comes riding in, without a rider. It's a winged steed, drenched in god blood. The Germanic tribe tries to retreat but are routed by the Vikings. Thor feels cheated and goes out looking for the missing gods. He finds another winged steed with a headless body on it, flying aimlessly through the clouds. Thor then has his first encounter with the God Butcher, as the killer stalks him

among the clouds, cutting him to shreds without ever facing him openly. Thor calls down a thunder storm to drive his attacker out of hiding. When the clouds clear, the God Butcher is gone.

Thor falls to earth, badly wounded. The Vikings find him and bandage his wounds. They urge him to call his father, the great Odin, for help, but Thor stubbornly refuses and goes out alone in search of the God Butcher. He finds more evidence of the killer's work. A whole tribe of Saxons kneeling and wailing in horror, as the sky rains blood and chunks of slaughtered gods. He finds a godling, drenched in blood, wandering the mountains, shrieking madness. Thor tracks the Butcher to his lair and they fight again, a fierce, bloody fight that Thor seems destined to lose.

In the present-day, Thor is still battling the Black Berserkers. It's a helacious fight. "I certainly wouldn't want to fight more than two of these," Thor tells himself.

In the far-flung future, Old King Thor is waging a fierce one-man battle against an entire army of Black Berserkers.

#3: The Hall of the Lost

In the past, Thor is about to fall to the God Butcher, but before the Butcher can strike the fatal blow, the Vikings suddenly arrive, coming to the rescue of their god. Their intervention gives Thor enough of an advantage to deal the Butcher a crippling blow. The God Butcher barely manages to escape with his life, flying off into the sky, disappearing. Thor is victorious. Or so it seems.

In the present-day, Thor goes to the great city that is home to the Parliament of the Gods and to a central library filled with knowledge relating to all gods from throughout history. Thor is looking for info on missing gods, and finds a whole room dedicated to them. A hall filled with piles of scrolls and stone tablets. There are apparently very many gods who have gone missing over the years.

Thor investigates more of the city homes of these missing gods, and finds more scenes of ancient slaughter, before eventually finding the lair of the God Butcher himself, on a world that was once home to a race of Chronal Witches. The Butcher has been working and living in this place for many years, ever since his defeat at the hands of Thor years ago. That defeat caused him to rethink his strategy, to plan for something greater. Something called the Godbomb. And when Thor catches up to him, he's in the midst of leaving to set his plan in motion. The Butcher uses knowledge stolen from the Chronal Witches to disappear into time, followed by his Black Berserkers. Thor manages to give chase, disappearing into the folds of time as well.

In the past, young Thor is still recovering from his battle with the God Butcher, when a time window suddenly opens up and Black Berserkers emerge. They capture Thor and disappear with him.

In the future, King Thor is losing his battle against the Black Berserkers, when suddenly there's a flash, and a new ally arrives. It's present-day Thor, ready to join the fight.

#4: The Three Thors

Thor and King Thor manage to make a stand against the Black Berserker army, and the God Butcher winds up calling them home. While King Thor fills his younger self in on the current state of Asgard, we get our first glimpse of the God Butcher's ultimate plan. He has come here, to the far reaches of time, to the final days of all creation, to build something. A massive structure that requires hundreds of gods working as slave labor. The Butcher has been sending his army of Black Berserkers out through time to kidnap gods and bring them here. One of those gods is young Thor, the one who inspired the Butcher to take this course of action in the first place. When he lost to Thor in the Viking Age, he realized he could never attain his true goal by killing each god with his own hands. That was when he first created the Black Berserkers. And later, after years of work, he devised the plan for the Godbomb, the ultimate weapon of death in his war against the gods.

Not only has the God Butcher gathered an army around himself, but he now also has a family. A wife and children. He's not just a mindless maniac. He's a loving father, who wants to give his children the one thing he's always dreamed of: a god-free universe.

Young Thor manages to escape the God Butcher's clutches and winds up crashing into Asgard. All three Thors are now together. And together, they prepare to launch their attack on the God Butcher, while he puts the finishing touches on his Godbomb.

#5: The Black Thing From the Sky

Unable to work together, the Thors fall and are taken prisoner. Gorr The God Butcher recounts his origin to them, the root of his hatred of all gods. Thor points out to him the ultimate irony: that Gorr has basically become the thing he hates the most. He has become a dark god.

After years of struggle, the work is finally finished. The Godbomb is ready to be activated. As the Butcher triggers it, the imprisoned Thors receive help from an unlikely source: the Butcher's own son.

#6: The Godbomb

Gorr's son frees the Thors, and together, the three Thors are able to defeat the God Butcher. Present-day Thor, with a hammer in each hand, is able to shut down the Godbomb, just as it's starting to explode and send ripples back through time.

Defeated, Gorr faces the son who betrayed him. But it turns out the son doesn't really exist. The whole army of Black Berserkers, the wife and the children, they were all grown from Gorr's weapon. So really, the son represented some small part of Gorr himself, who realized he had to be stopped.

Gorr drops his weapon, and without it, quickly rots and turns to dust. The gods all leave the weapon where it fell, and throw the entire planet into a black hole.

Young Thor returns to his time, to drink with the Vikings.

King Thor returns to Asgard, alongside his now freed subjects, including his grandchildren.

And Thor returns to the present day with some friends in tow. Among the gods who were freed from Gorr's slave camp were some who had been there so long, they couldn't remember where they'd come from. Or perhaps their worlds no longer existed. So we end with Thor returning to the planet without gods, returning to the little girl who had prayed to him, and bringing her a whole new pantheon of gods.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE GODS

Issues #7-9

Some of Thor's fellow gods become jealous of his deeds and challenge him to a tournament of the gods. A battle of plagues, of destruction, a Trial by Man-Gog, that sort of thing. Thor's temper gets the best of him and he accepts before realizing the stakes. By entering, he has just wagered Midgard. Thor's battles with the other gods only emphasize what he has been feeling lately: that gods have become too self-absorbed. That they're far more interested in fighting each other than in taking care of their flock. In the end, Thor's new god friends help him win the tournament. And Thor is inspired to form a group, a secret order of gods who commit themselves to helping people throughout the universe. Wherever a god is needed, a god will be there, they swear.

THE ORDER OF THE 8TH DAY

Issue #10

We see Thor's new order in action, filled with new friends and old, as Thor asks himself the question, "Am I a good god?"

THE RETURN OF DR. MIDAS

Thor is recruited by the daughter of Dr. Midas (from Morrison's MARVEL BOY) to stop her father, as he's on a tear, raping and pillaging one reality after another.

THE SHI'AR/ASGARD WAR

Star War vs. the Lord of the Rings.

THE COMING OF THE GOD OF GODS

This is something we build to over the course of several arcs. The one true God of Gods has been roused from his slumber. And when he looks around at the state of his creation, he doesn't like what he sees. So Thor has to stop the creator of the universe from destroying it.