

With the Odinson finally returned to this series, this first arc of the all new Thor races towards its conclusion. While some fans will be understandably upset to see the Thor vs. Odinson battle used as a way to avoid the Thor/Malekith showdown the arc was building to, Jason Aaron's style remains spot on for this story. The best thing Aaron brings to this series is honesty. While both Thors tend to speak in heightened language, you not only understand what they mean but feel it as well. Aaron writes the Odinson as if recovering from a surprising divorce, and in some ways he is. Though he can't really justify Thor outright ignoring an assault on Midgard, Aaron does a fine job of presenting the Odinson's outrage as something well within the limits of his character. In fact, while we saw him at his lowest point in Thor #1, it didn't hit me just how affected the Odinson was by the loss of Mjolnir until now. The former Thunder God growls rather than roars, but it's the palpable whimper he's keeping in that sells the character this month. The new Thor, on the other hand, still doesn't get the most characterization, having to roll out heroic clichés against her predecessor. In fact, both Thors are at their weakest when battling one another. Much of their battle banter does little to tell us about the characters and reiterates what we already know. However, particularly before and after their scrap, the goddess of thunder does get some strong character work. Her reactions to the Odinson's declaration at the issue's end is heartfelt and impressively restrained and the smile on her face when last we see her speaks in volumes. She also gets one of my favorite lines. It's a simple statement of "Calm thyself down" but there's something about it that forcefully translates into "cool your tits". Indeed, it's amazing how much Aaron gets you to think about the process of Mjolnir's translations for the Lady Thor and the additional subtext that gifts the issue. I'm still bored with Odin's utter lack of redeeming traits and the Avengers don't really feel like themselves in their cameos but otherwise Aaron continues a winning streak. The Odinson's rapport with Screwbeard is varied and charming, even if he reminds me a little of a certain webcomic's fukken dwarves, and Malekith remains lovably smarmy under Aaron's pen. But while the dialogue and atmosphere are quite good, Aaron feels overly conscious of the reader. Throwing a kiss into the issue for no discernible reason, continuing to metatextually taunt readers with the mystery of the new Thor's identity, and using the two Thors' battle and the resulting fan-service to cover a lack of overall plot progression, you can feel the writer's hand at play a little too heavily. The twin mysteries of what parted Thor from his hammer and who claimed it are obviously still on readers' minds but it looks like we'll have to wait a little longer if we want more than breadcrumbs. Russell Dauterman does a fantastic job of realizing this clash of Thunderers. The force and pacing of their confrontation comes through loud and clear and, honestly, reminds me how exciting the prospect of live-action Thor movies is\*. Smart layouts, some clever tricks, and an attention to movement make this another impressive action scene for an artist whose style might not scream 'epic fight scenes' at first glance. That said, Thor's expressions of anger don't receive nearly as kind a representation. While some may disagree, Thor's fuming lips slipped into the uncanny valley for me more than once and, given the focus on his anger, it's a significant sticking point. I don't know that Dauterman would have done things differently if he could and respect that, but it just looks off to me. But one excess of style is hardly enough to spoil the book. The intensity and continuity of movement is superb and Dauterman does an excellent job of giving his settings the alien grandeur they deserve. Dauterman and Matthew Wilson work wonderfully together. This issue isn't really written to show off Wilson's talents but he turns in a strong effort all throughout and takes his opportunities when they arise. It really feels like he and Dauterman know when a page is something special, as their best work tends to align. The focal shift and debris as the two Thors reconcile is lovely and the pages outside

Roxxon Tower are both beautifully drawn and stunningly evocative in their coloring. \*Thor: The Dark World came close to capturing the awesome of Thor in combat, if little else. The post Thor #4 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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