

Thor: Hammer Time for Action, Adventure

✖ If Spider-Man's creed is "with great power comes great responsibility," the mantra of Thor could easily be "with great power comes great arrogance."

The latest superhero movie from Marvel Studios, *Thor* features an out-of-this-world arrogant, reckless and selfish warrior (Chris

Hemsworth), who is about to be named king of the mystical kingdom of Asgard by his father, Odin (Anthony Hopkins). But Thor's reckless

actions reignite an ancient war with the frost giants—a provocation that runs

counter of Odin's advice: "a wise king never seeks out war, but he must always be ready for it."

Odin justly calls Thor a "vain, greedy, cruel boy," but the son

fires back with, "You are an old man and a fool!" Bad move, as his father

removes Thor's power, and casts him and his mighty hammer Mjolnir to

Earth—forcing him to live among humans. Speaking of Thor's hammer, it can be

thrown like a boomerang, spun like nunchucks and can alter the weather—"a weapon

to destroy or a tool to build," according to King Odin.

From a celestial sword-and-sorcery fantasy ala *The Lord of the Rings*, the film then becomes a

fish-out-of-water action/comedy as Thor must adjust to the new world around him,

while earthlings are dumbfounded by his Viking ego and mannerisms. For example,

he storms into a diner and yells "I need SUSTENANCE," and "I need a HORSE" as he

stumbles into a hamster-and-hound-packed pet store.

The best parts of the movie are when Thor is banished to

Earth,
and he must find out what it takes to be a true hero when his
crafty
half-brother, Loki (Tom Hiddleston), threatens the whole
planet. After he
crash-lands in a New Mexico desert, Thor literally runs into
astrophysicist
Jane Foster (Natalie Portman), and he must learn to embrace a
humble attitude to
become heroic.
Despite earning more than \$440 million at the global box
office
this summer, I was leery to watch *Thor* largely because the
character
was heavily promoted in the box office as the “god of
thunder.” Getting over my
trepidation, I decided to catch the movie’s recent release on
DVD and Blu-ray.
After all, I recall as a youngster reading about
the Mighty Thor—a superhero who doesn’t have a costume to be
the hero
when he was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby for Marvel
Comics back in the
1960s.
Thor, Odin, Loki and other denizens of Asgard are “gods,”
according to Norse myth and in Marvel’s original comic books.
In the film, the
inhabitants of Asgard don’t see themselves as gods, although
they acknowledge
that they were taken to be such when they came to Earth about
a thousand years
ago. Although they possess god-like powers and reside in a
heavenly place, the
movie portrays them as aliens from a faraway world—a realm
where science and
magic are basically one and the same.
By getting around this cloudy spirituality, the film does
offer
a nod to Christianity, turning Thor into a Christ-figure when
Loki sends a
robotic Destroyer to eliminate his stepbrother and Earth’s

inhabitants.

Best known for film adaptations of several plays by William Shakespeare, director Kenneth Branagh deftly handles direct this large-scale

superhero drama as he wisely sets the stage for a Shakespeare-like fallen

hero who must find humility in order to rise to greatness.

Thor is a

worthwhile summer flick, offering plenty of hammer-wielding action, but it's not

exceptional as *Captain America*—which I'll save for another review.

Besides deleted scenes, featurettes and teasers for next summer's *The Avengers*, the next superhero movie from Marvel Studios,

the DVD and Blu-ray features the first "Marvel One Shot"—short films that are

meant to link *The Incredible Hulk*, *Iron Man* and *Thor*, members of the Avengers. The short stars .

(Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division)

man-on-the-ground Agent Coulson (Clark Gregg).

Content Watch: The film is rated PG-13 for sequences of intense

sci-fi action and violence, and brief, light foul language. It features some

family-friendly content, although I wouldn't recommend the film for children 10

and under because of the scary frost giants and relentless battles. Although

there's no sex or profanity, *Thor* is seen out-drinking another character.

Parents should discuss with youngsters the difference between the gods of Norse

mythology and the one true God.