

Film Feature: Seven Things We Want From ‘Thor 2’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 5, 2011 - 8:33pm

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CHICAGO – Even though the summer movie season is barely halfway over, it seems clear that, when we reminisce about summer 2011 later this year, one of the biggest surprises of the season will have to be the simple fact that it was possible to make a “Thor” movie that actually works. Because, c’mon, it’s Thor. He’s the hammer guy. The winged helmet guy. The living god who hangs out with the Hulk and the Silver Surfer. This is a movie that very easily could’ve been laughed out of the multiplexes, but, thanks to some very shrewd decisions by director Kenneth Branagh and Marvel Studios, “Thor” became one of the most fun, watchable, and oddly compelling superhero movies of the past few years. It was light years better than the much-easier-to-adapt “Green Lantern”, got us nominally more excited for July’s “Captain America” movie, and was a much, much better teaser for Joss Whedon’s upcoming “Avengers” movie than the underwhelming “Iron Man 2”.

So, at the end of June, when Marvel confirmed that “Thor 2” was actively in development, with a planned release date of July 26, 2013, we were excited. However, thanks to our bitter experience with other Marvel sequel slumps like “Iron Man 2”, “Fantastic Four 2”, and “Spider-Man 3”, we have a long list of things we want and don’t want from another “Thor” movie. So, in the futile hope that we might be able to have some influence on the direction of the nascent “Thor” sequel, here are our picks for the seven things we definitely want from “Thor 2”.



Thor
Photo credit: Paramount

1. A Solid Replacement for Kenneth Branagh

While we’re happy that the charismatic Chris Hemsworth gets another turn at playing our favorite Asgardian ass-kicker, we’ll admit that we’re not pleased that Kenneth Branagh won’t be returning to the director’s chair. Branagh was, unquestionably, the MVP of “Thor”. His

Shakespearean sensibilities blended amazingly well with “Thor”. He deftly balanced a mass of confusing back stories, a mish-mash of tones, and an ambitious scope and, despite all those disparate elements, delivered a solid, well-polished adventure flick that was both accessible and fun. He’s going to be a hard act to follow. In terms of a replacement for Branagh, we’d love to find someone with Branagh’s ability to balance epic Shakespearean godliness with down-to-earth intrigue and romance. What about John Madden (“Shakespeare in Love”, “The Debt”), Mike Newell (“Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire”), Peter Weir (“Master and Commander”, “Truman Show”), or Duncan Jones (“Source Code”, “Moon”)? Personally, our dream choice would probably be Terry Jones, ex-Python and director of the obscure cult flick – and best Viking movie EVER – “Erik the Viking”, but that’ll never happen.



Thor

Photo credit: Marvel

2. Give Us One, Just One “I Say Thee Nay!”

OK, yes, Branagh did do a commendable job brining out the best qualities of Thor, while also editing or minimizing some of his more ridiculous characteristics. And we are very glad that the “Thor” team found a way to have the character sound regal and godly without resorting to his full-on, flowery script, uber-Asgardian dialect. HOWEVER... we were more than a little disappointed that the character’s most iconic catch phrase – “I SAY THEE NAY!” – didn’t make it into “Thor 1”. Yes, it’s a hard line to pull off. It sounds clunky and melodramatic and goofy as hell. But it is THE quintessential Thor line. If Bryan Singer found a way to have Wolverine say “Bub” and Michael Chiklis’ Thing got to yell “It’s Clobberin’ Time!” than we will never be 100% won over by Chris Hemsworth’s performance until he gets the opportunity to “say thee nay” at least once.



Thor

Photo credit: Marvel

3. Use The Enchantress and The Executioner as Bad Guys

Tom Hiddleston’s Loki was a fantastic villain in the first “Thor” movie, but, let’s be frank, if he’s also going to be one of the major bad guys in Joss Whedon’s “The Avengers” — a fact that was pretty much confirmed by the after-credits scene in “Thor” — by the time “Thor 2” gets around, we’re probably going to be pretty Loki-ed out. So, who else can fill the void? While Thor has a pretty decent rogues gallery, many of his classic villains are either a little too cosmic or a little too mundane to work in a movie. Asgardian baddies like fire demon Surtur or Hela the death goddess are too esoteric and impersonal, particularly after so much of “Thor 1” was spent on building Thor’s human relationships, while his 1970s human costumed foes like the Absorbing Man and the Wrecking Crew are way too cheeseball and minor, given the regal tone of “Thor”’s Asgard scenes. (It also doesn’t help that Nick Nolte played a weird version of the Absorbing Man in Ang Lee’s terrible “Hulk” movie.) So, what Thor villains have the ideal mix of the human and the divine? The Enchantress and the Executioner fit the bill perfectly. The Enchantress (or Amora) is one of the most powerful magicians in Asgard, and she’s constantly got her sights set on Thor. She’s a schemer on par with Loki (they’ve teamed up several times before), and she has a long history of antagonizing Jane Foster, i.e. Thor’s human love

interest (Natalie Portman). She frequently travels with Skurge, the Executioner, a fierce, oddly noble Asgardian warrior whom the Enchantress constantly manipulates, thanks to his undying love for the evil sorceress. Together, they make a very cool, very complex pair of antagonists that could explode off the screen with the right casting. The Enchantress has the cosmic magical might of Loki, but she’s also got very human reasons for wanting to claim Thor as her own, and the jilted romance angle would really give Natalie Portman a very active reason to interact with the bad guys, making her a more integral part of the story. And the Executioner could easily throw down with Thor in a series of man-on-god battle royales – giving us our quota of Norse barbarian violence – all while having much deeper and complex reasons for picking a fight rather than just being the token bad guy. They’re two fantastically human villains with a ton of personality, which would be a much better fit for the world that Branagh created in “Thor 1” than some faceless Kirby cosmic entity or a costume-wearing super-crook.



Thor

Photo credit: Paramount

4. Keep the Avengers and S.H.I.E.L.D. References to a Minimum

This one is tricky. SPOILER WARNING – “Thor 1” ended with Thor and his Earth-bound girlfriend desperate to reconnect with one another, after Thor loses his ability to travel to Earth, which was a great teaser for another “Thor” movie. However, since Thor will be appearing in “The Avengers”, we’re going to assume that that whole problem will be rendered moot before “Thor 2” ever comes out. So, when “Thor 2” picks up, there will probably have to be some sort of reference to the events of “The Avengers”. And we’re fine with that... in moderation. One of the BIG flaws of “Iron Man 2” was that all of the extra Marvel Studios crossover scenes got to be a little much. There were way, way too many scenes with Nick Fury, Agent Coulson, and S.H.I.E.L.D. that really had next to nothing to do with the central plot of “IM2”. They were filler scenes and they took away from the main storyline. (The worst offender was the Tony Stark scene at the end of Ed Norton’s “Incredible Hulk” – it was a huge mistake to end the movie, not with Bruce Banner, but with a throwaway scene teasing a movie that comes out 4 years later.) Yes, the after credits scenes are fun and small cameos are fine, but we wish Marvel Studios would spent less time highlighting their continuity and more time making solid stand-alone movies. The Marvel references in “Thor 1” weren’t too bad – great Renner cameo, but we’re sick of Clark Gregg’s Agent Coulson – but we really hope that, post-“Avengers”, “Thor 2” won’t have to spend so much time winking at the fanboy audience.



Thor

Photo credit: Paramount

5. Keep Up The Romance

It pains us to say this, particularly since we're such big fans of hammer-swinging and ass-kicking, but the Chris Hemsworth/Natalie Portman romance was one of our favorite aspects of "Thor". (Just try to take away our man credentials. We will fight you tooth and nail.) We were skeptical about Portman taking the "girl" role in a superhero movie, but her chemistry with Hemsworth was fantastic. Their relationship was dynamic, subtle, cute, and entertaining as hell. It was way more engaging than the "will they/won't they" Tony Stark/Pepper Potts relationship, if only because it actually seems to be going somewhere. Every truly great superhero movie has some sort of love story at its core. Yes, heroes are interested in truth, justice, blah, blah, blah. As a motivating factor, justice and honor has NOTHING on love. We don't believe that Thor would cross the cosmos just to save Earth from some bad guys. But we DO believe that he'd tear the cosmos asunder if it was the only way to save the woman he loves. So, let's balance the gladiator guy-gasms with a good old-fashioned love story.



Thor

Photo credit: Paramount

6. Play up the “God on Earth” Angle

After the events of “Thor” and (we’re guessing) “The Avengers”, we’re going to assume that the general public of the Marvel movie world will eventually become aware of Thor’s presence on Earth, and that has a lot of potential for some very cool storytelling. Because Thor isn’t your normal superhero. He’s not a vigilante or a mutant. He’s a living embodiment of a GOD, a fairly well-known Norse god. The creative team behind “Thor 2” could get a lot of mileage out of humanity’s reaction to a card-carrying god walking on Earth with super-powers and a big honkin’ hammer. Would people accept Thor? Would they think he was a god or just a god-themed superhero? Would people try to worship him? Would there be a Thor cult? Would other religions denounce him? How would the public perceive Jane Foster as the girlfriend of the only god on Earth? There are a lot of fun aspects to the Thor character – his ego, his power, his “fish out of water” qualities – but we really hope that future “Thor” sequels don’t ignore that the guy is a GOD and that makes him one of the most unique superheroes out there.



Thor

Photo credit: Paramount

7. Don’t Let “Thor 2” Become “My Super Ex-Girlfriend 2”

While it’s been confirmed that director Kenneth Branagh isn’t returning for the sequel, it has been confirmed that screenwriter Don Payne – who worked on “Thor” – will be returning for “Thor 2”. While that continuity is semi-reassuring, Payne’s writing resume is all over the place and makes us pretty nervous. Yes, he helped write “Thor”, which we liked, and a bunch of episodes of “The Simpsons” (put those in the pro column too), but he also wrote “My Super Ex-Girlfriend” and “Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer”, two of the worst superhero movies of the past decade. We’d feel much, much better if Payne wasn’t working alone – his collaborators on the “Thor” screenplay, Ashley Edward Miller and Zack Stentz, also worked on “X-Men: First Class”, which was GREAT. And having a story concept written by J. Michael Straczynski and Mark Protosevich didn’t hurt either. This may be one of the few times in Hollywood history where we actually WANT more cooks in the kitchen. Fine, let Payne knock out a first draft, but, hopefully, the Marvel Studios team will have a team of expert “Thor” scribes on retainer, just in case Payne doesn’t deliver.

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