

'Thor: The Dark World' is Little More Than Marketing For 'The Avengers 2'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 7, 2013 - 10:32am

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Few major films have felt less creatively inspired and more commercially conceived than Alan Taylor's dull "Thor: The Dark World," a wannabe blockbuster with all the personality and ingenuity of a straight-to-DVD sequel. It is a film that simply fades into the background of other films, both already produced and still-to-come. The gang from Kenneth Branagh's "Thor" has returned but only yet-another engaging performance from the always-great Tom Hiddleston displays the slightest sign that any of them want to be there. It's a contractual obligation for some and merely a bridge for others to get back to "The Avengers" franchise. Thor looks like he misses his friends. You will too.

After a brief prologue to introduce the villain – Dark Elf Malekith (Christopher Eccleston) – we join Thor (Chris Hemsworth) proving his MVP status on the battlefield yet again. Fighting with Sif (Jaimie Alexander), Fandral (Zachary Levi), Volstagg (Ray Stevenson), and Hogun (Tadanobu Asano), the man with the giant hammer proves yet again that he's the one who will rule the nine realms when his father Odin (Anthony Hopkins) steps down from the throne. He's certainly the more beloved brother after what Loki (Tom Hiddleston) tried to pull in "Thor" and "The Avengers." The charismatic shape-shifter is banished to a dungeon, where he will rot for years while his brother takes the crown that Loki things should rightly be his.



Thor: The Dark World

Photo credit: Marvel

Meanwhile, Jane Foster (Natalie Portman) is trying to get over the fact that she hasn't seen her hunky beau in two years when Darcy (Kat Dennings) alerts her of an anomaly in the fabric of space and time. The odd happenings around England, including portals through which matter seems to be able to travel, have already driven poor Erik (Stellan Skarsgard) off the deep end. When Jane gets sucked into one of these portals and stumbles across the Aether, the substance that Malekith will use to bring about the darkness as the nine realms are about to converge, she becomes essential to Thor's arc yet again and the two are reunited.

Christopher L. Yost and Christopher Markus & Stephen McFeely's script for "Thor: The Dark World" is both cluttered with too much story and paper thin at the same time. It's a piece of work weighed down with constant explanation of what's happening, what's going to happen, and what need to be done to stop it, but with absolutely no reason to care about any of it. The convoluted narrative, one that sometimes feels like it's being made up as it goes along, is overwritten in story but completely lacking in character or excitement. Few films about the end of the world have felt like they had lower stakes than this one.



Thor: The Dark World

Photo credit: Marvel

Part of the problem is that "Thor: The Dark World" lacks joy, especially when Hiddleston is off-camera. As with the last film, Hemsworth & Portman have little chemistry and so their romance is flat. Every character here hits the beats one expects them to hit – Dennings cracks wise, Skarsgard plays crazy, Hopkins gets Shakespearian, etc. The complete lack of surprises on a character level in a film with a story that no one cares about makes for a blockbuster that never engages the viewer. It's shockingly boring for a film that bears the Marvel brand. And that's really the greatest sin that a film like this can commit.

"Thor: The Dark World" was designed to bridge the story from "The Avengers" to "Guardians of the Galaxy" to "The Avengers 2" and "The Avengers 3." It is marketing product, as creatively rich as the "One-Shot" straight-to-DVD short films that have been accompanying Marvel movies of late. It feels like an obligation more than a movie; something to tide over fans as Marvel tries to take over all four quarters of the year. "Well, we have to make a "Thor" movie, so here it is." Just because they had to make it doesn't mean you have to see it.

"Thor: The Dark World" stars Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston, Anthony Hopkins, Christopher Eccleston, Jaimie Alexander, Zachary Levi, Ray Stevenson, Tadanobu Asano, Idris Elba, Rene Russo, Kat Dennings, and Stellan Skarsgard. It was directed by Alan Taylor. It will be released on November 8, 2013.



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