



Australian actor Chris Hemsworth reprises the role of Thor for the third time in Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World." In this latest epic adventure, Hemsworth is back in his glory, looking every bit like the Mighty Avenger that audiences have come to idolize. Hemsworth says of his return, "I love playing the character. The trick is to find new ways to make the character have some sort of advance or growth from the last film. Each time we get to break him down and find his human qualities and his vulnerable side it's interesting because he has such a tough exterior and an unbreakable feel."

In Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World" Thor's character arc does indeed continue, exploring both the fractured relationship between Loki and Thor, and Thor's relationship with Jane. But Hemsworth reminds, "The bigger picture is that potentially Thor is stepping into the role of king, and he needs to prove that he deserves to be there and also understand and come to terms with the responsibilities that becoming king carries. He figures out that it doesn't necessarily come with all the privileges; there are a lot of sacrifices. It's that next step in his evolution to become king."

Hemsworth approaches his role by looking for the conflict and determining what Thor is trying to work through. "You've got to make sure the hero is a big catalyst to the resolution; that he's not just there to step in at the very end and save the day," explains Hemsworth. "You want a journey. I think what we managed to find was real conflict with Thor about where his place is. Is it with Jane on Earth, or is it here in Asgard? His senses are now awakening and he's having a greater understanding of the world and its problems."

Hemsworth has definite feelings about why Thor, even though he is a god from another world, is so relatable to audiences. "Thor's in love with a human, so that helps," says the actor. "Instantly there's a connection. It helps that we've brought the story into a more real, grounded look. But Thor is going through human problems. His conflicts and emotions are the same as ours. They're not so far off that we can't find any connection to it. He's battling with his responsibilities and coming to terms with who he is, his place in the world, his relationships and family."

In Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World" the polarizing relationship between brothers Thor and Loki takes a new turn. Hemsworth relates, "In the very first film Loki and Thor as brothers had a friendship where there was less hatred involved. We get to a place in this one where there's more of that this time around again. Thor gets to ask Loki what this is all about and how they got to this point in their relationship."

"Thor is able to confront Loki and say, 'It's about time that you recognize your role in this. You know, it wasn't all everyone else's fault.' In 'Marvel's The Avengers' it was us yelling at each other and butting heads, and that happens a bit in this, too, but for the most part it's a far more interesting dynamic," concludes Hemsworth.

Hemsworth has nothing but praise for fellow cast member Tom Hiddleston, who plays the scheming Loki. "Tom brings so much to the part; people love that character," says Hemsworth. "He brought such empathy to Loki that audiences were conflicted. He's the villain but we kind of love him. Any time you can do that, it makes it so much more interesting. Some of my favorite scenes are with Tom in every film we've done."

The relationship between Thor and Jane Foster also gets put to the test in Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World" when the two reunite. Hemsworth explains the tension between the two, saying, "Jane's been wondering where the hell he is and where the hell he's been, and why he hasn't contacted her since he left. She comes to understand that he's been saving the universe, so that's not a bad excuse. But the two of them have to figure out whether or not this is a realistic relationship."

This film marks the first time that Hemsworth has worked with director Alan Taylor. Describing Taylor's approach to the material, he states, "Alan's fantastic. He's got a great sense of story and a need to find the truth in this and not have it be hokey and ridiculous. Very much like the 'Game of Thrones' series, which was where Alan had just come from, there was grounding in reality no matter how mythical the world got. Asgard does look like a place you could visit. There's a sort of medieval feel, but there's also a science fiction quality to it."



Despite its serious overtones and fierce action, Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World" doesn't lack for comedic moments. Hemsworth reveals, "The humor doesn't lay so much in Thor's kind of naiveté as it did in the first one when that fish-out-of-water quality played so well. As much as we wanted to repeat that we couldn't because it would contradict the fact that he was now becoming more mature and aware. But Kat Dennings and Natalie Portman certainly have a ton of humor in this and some great dialogue. It's through their observations of how wacky our world of Asgard is. So, it's sort of what we had in the first one, but a bit of a role reversal."

Chris Hemsworth expects audiences will have a great experience when they see Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World" in theaters. "I'm excited for people to see the updated version of this world and these characters," says the actor. "I'm excited myself to see it all come together on the big screen. There are so many pieces in the puzzle and so many different sections and departments with everyone doing their bit that it's such a satisfying thing when it comes together and works. It is what you thought it was going to be and hoped it would be."

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SHAKEFIRE (SF):

Please describe Thor and his weapon.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CH):

Thor is the God of Thunder. He's incredibly strong and from a place called Asgard, which is within the Nine Realms of the universe. He has a weapon called Mjolnir, which is basically a big, magical hammer that has been forged from the heart of a dying star. It can summon the lightning and control the elements and also gives him the ability to fly.

SF:

What are the uses of the hammer in this film?

CH:

The usual, like summoning the lightning and manipulating the elements and storms and wind as well as breaking things and destroying things. It's certainly a weapon that he uses to destroy rather than build in this one.

SF:

What is it like to be back portraying Thor for the third time?

CH:

I love playing the character. The trick is to find new ways to make the character have some sort of advance or growth from the last film. That's the trick of the director, writer and the actor obviously coming together and asking what's the next step and where are we going to take him.

SF:

As an actor, what is it like to play a character with such a rich arc?

CH:

I love the fact that he is a god but that could be very bland and one-sided. But each time we get to break him down and find his human qualities and his vulnerable side it's interesting because he has such a tough exterior and an unbreakable feel.

SF:

What did you change about the process this time around?

CH:

It's different from "Marvel's The Avengers" because in that film you didn't have your individual arc or journey. The arc of that story was the group, whereas this is certainly each of us, and we each have our own specific story. And for Thor, it really is picking up from "Thor" in a lot of ways, with the same questions he still has about his brother, about why and how they ended up here and what happened to their relationship. But the bigger picture is that potentially Thor is stepping into the role of king, and he needs to prove that he deserves to be there and also understand and come to terms with the



responsibilities that becoming king carries.

SF:

Where do we find Thor in this film as opposed to the last?

CH:

In the first film Thor was a young spoiled teenager, about to take on the throne and be king. Then his father realizes that he's not quite mature enough to do that and his priorities are in the wrong place. He's full of ego and attitude. During that film, he is humbled and we leave that first story with Thor about to step into the responsibility of possibly becoming king of Asgard. In this film we pick up with him really coming to an understanding of what that entails and the darker side of that responsibility. He figures out that it doesn't necessarily come with all the privileges; there are a lot of sacrifices. It's that next step in his evolution to become king.

SF:

Thor is back on Asgard in this film. What is he doing there?

CH:

Thor and The Warriors Three and the other soldiers of Asgard have been basically putting out the fires across the Nine Realms since the Bifrost was destroyed, allowing the criminals of the universe to wreak havoc. So they've been doing some sort of peacekeeping and sorting out the various conflicts all over the place. It's pretty direct, but also in some ways more immediate to what we had in "Thor," with the Bifrost having been destroyed and the realms now being free of any sort of policing.

SF:

This film is called Marvel's "Thor: The Dark World." What is this "Dark World" that we'll be seeing?

CH:

The Dark World is a reference to the planet that the dark elves are from, but also I think Alan's [Taylor] take on it was that this is a darker transition into adulthood for Thor and him becoming king, and the darker side of growing up. With the maturity and the responsibilities and then the secrets, it becomes very political about what the people of Asgard and the universe need to know versus what they want to know. You start to see the shadier side of the royal family.

SF:

What's it been like having everybody back together again?

CH:

It's great. Tom [Hiddleston] and I obviously spent a lot of time together on "Marvel's The Avengers," so we jumped straight back into it. But certainly to see Natalie [Portman] and Anthony [Hopkins] and Kat Dennings and all the Warriors Three, and the whole cast was great. We had such a fun time on the first one and we picked up where we left off.

SF:

When you read this particular script, what did you connect with in terms of fleshing out the character?

CH:

I'm always looking for some sort of conflict and what it is that Thor's trying to work through as opposed to just being there and being central to the situation. You've got to make sure the hero is a big catalyst to the resolution; that he's not just there to step in at the very end and save the day. You want a journey, and often the villains are so much easier to write on one hand, but also there's an advantage just because they're allowed to be more unpredictable; they're allowed to be inconsistent, whereas I think we traditionally know the hero can be pretty obvious sometimes. So I think it was up to all of us to police that and make sure he was relevant in the story; he wasn't just kind of there. I think what we managed to find was real conflict with Thor about where his place is. Is it with Jane on Earth, or is it here in Asgard? His senses are now awakening and he's having a greater understanding of the world and its problems. That was something we wanted to thread in



from the beginning, which allowed him to be proactive through the story and constantly searching for something.

SF:

What is the relationship between Odin and Thor this time around?

CH:

Once again, the challenge was not to repeat what we had in the first film, but at the same time, the conflict between Thor and Odin was something people seemed to love. So we found new ways of having them disagree. But it's a much more mature, respectful disagreement as opposed to the first one where Thor was a young teenager.

SF:

What is it like working with Anthony Hopkins now that you have that relationship from the first film?

CH:

He's the greatest. Obviously having worked together before, there's an immediate ease and familiarity, which is great to dive back into. Anthony is one of those rare actors that I could just be around and watch all day long. There's such a weight and depth to everything he does, no matter how subtle. I think we both have such a great time playing these characters and finding new ways to explore the conflict and love they have for one another.

SF:

How has the relationship between Thor and Loki changed throughout the movies?

CH:

In the very first film Loki and Thor as brothers had a friendship where there was less hatred involved. We get to a place in this one where there's more of that this time around again. Thor gets to ask Loki what this is all about and how they got to this point in their relationship. Thor is able to confront Loki and say, "It's about time that you recognize your role in this. You know, it wasn't all everyone else's fault." In "Marvel's The Avengers" it was us yelling at each other and butting heads, and that happens a bit in this, too, but for the most part it's a far more interesting dynamic.

SF:

What is it that Tom Hiddleston brings to the role this time around?

CH:

We make the assumption that Loki is walking the line a lot of the time about which side he is going to fall to, and is it going to be the Loki we've come to know or is it the one we previously knew? Tom brings so much to the part; people love that character. He brought such empathy to Loki that audiences were conflicted. He's the villain but we kind of love him. Any time you can do that, it makes it so much more interesting. Some of my favorite scenes are with Tom in every film we've done. It's great.

SF:

Why is it important for the film to contain some of the humorous beats that it does?

CH:

The humor in all the Marvel films is what ties them together. It also allows people to buy into the fantastical world that you're a part of. It doesn't take itself too seriously. In moments, it's serious enough, but any chance you get to laugh takes the pressure off of having to believe that there's a guy with a big hammer and a red cape flying around the place.

SF:

Give some examples as to where we see some humor in this film.

CH:

The humor doesn't lay so much in Thor's kind of naiveté as it did in the first one when that fish-out-of-water quality played so well. As much as we wanted to repeat that we couldn't because it would



contradict the fact that he was now becoming more mature and aware. But Kat Dennings and Natalie Portman certainly have a ton of humor in this and some great dialogue. It's through their observations of how wacky our world of Asgard is. So, it's sort of what we had in the first one, but a bit of a role reversal. It plays so well. The two of them are just so good at it and it brings that element into the story that it needs to buy into the fantastical world.

SF:

What are the evils that Thor and Asgard face in this film?

CH:

The bad guys are the dark elves. They're another race of beings that have come into conflict with the Asgardians thousands of years ago, and they since have been thought of as extinct; their planet's been destroyed and they no longer exist. But they've reawakened and their big concern isn't necessarily the Asgardians, it's the weapon that the Asgardians happen to have that they're after. Thor and his family are stepping-stones to the dark elves taking over the universe in the bigger picture, and they don't see Thor and the Asgardians as much of a threat.

SF:

What was your impression when you first saw the dark elves in costumes and makeup?

CH:

The prosthetics and costumes on the dark elves are incredible. The whole world that they've created for them, from the sets and the locations to shooting in Iceland, just made it feel so possible. There's an epic feel to their world, but a grounded quality as well.

SF:

Where do Thor and Jane Foster stand in this film in terms of their relationship?

CH:

Jane's been wondering where the hell he is and where the hell he's been, and why he hasn't contacted her since he left. Thor did have a brief trip to New York with the Avengers but didn't give her a call, so she's not too happy at first. She comes to understand that he's been saving the universe, so that's not a bad excuse. But the two of them have to figure out whether or not this is a realistic relationship. They do feel strongly for each other, so regardless of everything else, they're thinking with their hearts instead of their heads.

SF:

How do Thor and Jane not let their relationship cloud their judgment overall?

CH:

It does cloud their judgment a bit until the very end. Then Thor actually gets to be honest and go, "Okay, now that the dust is settled, is this a crazy idea or is it possible?" And for Thor it certainly becomes then about the darker side of him taking on the throne, which is all about what people need to hear versus what they want to hear.

SF:

How do you think people will react to Jane being brought to Asgard?

CH:

I hope they like it. It's a bit of fun. It's something that we're nervous about as well, but anytime there's a big risk with something, there's a bigger payoff if you pull it off. It was done in a tasteful way, but at the same time there was a right amount of humor again for her character. It allows you to laugh with the ridiculousness of it as opposed to pointing your finger and rolling your eyes.

SF:

What kind of training did you have to do this time around?

CH:

On this one I came in and said, "Okay, I want to make Thor more dynamic." The guy can fly and split



the earth in half with his weapon, yet a lot of the time we have seen him in the past just fighting hand-to-hand combat like a Viking, which is an element of his style, but I think we needed to embrace that he has far more advanced skills than that. So the idea of getting him off the ground a lot more, using more wire work. There's a lot more wire work in this than previously. Developing different ways to use the hammer, but not always using the hammer. So it just became about making it a bit more dynamic.

SF:

What does Alan Taylor bring to the franchise and what is his process like?

CH:

Alan's fantastic. He's got a great sense of story and a need to find the truth in this story and not have it be hokey and ridiculous. Very much like the "Game of Thrones" series, which was where Alan had just come from, there was grounding in reality no matter how mythical the world got. There were a lot of exterior locations and a lot of the sets were built outside with less blue screen, which I think is great. Asgard does look like a place you could visit. There's a sort of medieval feel, but there's also a science fiction quality to it. Alan wanted more of the Viking feel than the science fiction.

SF:

What has it been like working on these sets, and being in London?

CH:

It's great. It does feel like a place that exists as opposed to a set. There's a worn quality to them, and they're not quite as clean as they could've been, so it looks like it's been lived in. A lot of the sets were built outdoors so we could use natural lighting as opposed to the indoor studio look.

SF:

What will we be seeing in terms of your wardrobe this time around?

CH:

The hammer has been taken and roughed up and beaten a bit and scratched, so it looks like it has been through thousands of years of war and battle and it's not straight off the rack. The sets, the costumes, the hair, the makeup—all of it was about making it look more realistic. Not having them so much like gods that they were unrelatable. There's a human quality to them all, which is wonderful.

SF:

Why do you think Thor is so relatable to audiences, considering it's such a cosmic story?

CH:

Thor's in love with a human, so that helps. Instantly there's a connection. It helps that we've brought the story into a more real, grounded look. But Thor is going through human problems. His conflicts and emotions are the same as ours. They're not so far off that we can't find any connection to it. He's battling with his responsibilities and coming to terms with who he is, his place in the world, his relationships and family. You could take all these stories and put them in a little independent film. It's a father with two sons battling for their father's affection. Or there's a Romeo and Juliet quality to it of two different families with children who want to be together and everyone thinks it's ridiculous. It's what they go through and their journeys that are similar to what we could go through.

SF:

How are you pushing the boundaries in this film to make it such an amazing product?

CH:

It's probably the scope of this film that feels bigger than any other Marvel film. We were in Iceland and London and various locations that were very rugged with very outdoor landscapes. So the feel of it wasn't just New York City or Santa Fe, New Mexico. The whole scope of it was far larger than anything we'd seen before.



SF:

What do you think separates these Marvel films from the typical Hollywood fare that we normally see?

CH:

It was a big risk to individually build these characters up and then bring them all together. Marvel pulled that off and each film was recognized as its own thing and loved and then they slammed them all together in "Marvel's The Avengers." It was a big risk but a huge payoff. The Super Heroes are from different times; they're from different worlds. There's a unique quality to them individually, and that's what makes them so special.

SF:

What is it that you love most about the fans of "Thor" and how they've reacted to these films?

CH:

They've been really supportive and I love them for that. It could've gone the other way. Staying true to the comic books and these characters was something we were mindful of from the beginning. These characters already existed and had a fan base that was a lot more knowledgeable than we were, so you don't want to let anyone down in that sense. But there's a lot of feedback they give us that helps shape where we take these characters to.

SF:

What are you most excited to see once this hits the big screen?

CH:

This film is very different to "Thor" even to "Marvel's The Avengers." I'm excited for people to see the updated version of this world and these characters. I'm excited myself to see it all come together on the big screen. There are so many pieces in the puzzle and so many different sections and departments with everyone doing their bit that it's such a satisfying thing when it comes together and works. It is what you thought it was going to be and hoped it would be.

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