

## Thanos: the Unproven Titan

*Pim Razenberg on whether Thanos is the Avengers' greatest foe, or just purple cookie-dough...*

Thanos. The Dark Lord. The Man Titan... The Great Bore?

Introduced with a slight, grim smile in **The Avengers**, Marvel Comics' powerful supervillain Thanos soon became Marvel Studio fans' top 1 Google-search term. It didn't take long before I started hearing casual movie goers attending newer Marvel Studios' titles whispering about "who that purple guy from 'The Avengers' was". By the time **Guardians of the Galaxy** came out, and intergalactic terrorist Ronan the

Accuser started arguing with his omnipotent employer, a student occupying the seat in front of me impatiently tapped his friend on his shoulder trying to explain to him that they were now looking at *the* guy who appeared at the end of **The Avengers**. Though his friend had no idea what he was talking about, the young man then went on to explain how "Thanos was also fighting with Thor on the ice planet in the first **Thor** movie". This guy really did his homework to impress his friend.



Either way, Thanos has become a presence in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. If we have to believe Korath from **Guardians of the Galaxy**, Thanos is "the most powerful being in the

universe". This seems to be a fact Marvel Studios can't stress enough to set up the "epic scale" of their two-parter **Avengers: Infinity War**. But are they really succeeding?



"You will have your war, Asgardian," Thanos' direct servant The Other promised Loki in **The Avengers**, "if you fail, if the Tesseract is kept from us, there will be no realm, no barren moon, no crevice where he can't find you. You think you know pain? He will make you long for something as sweet as death." Well – that obviously never happened. Three years later and Loki is still wandering around freely – free to the point where he can impersonate Odin, "the most powerful being in the Nine Realms", take his throne in Asgard and get away with it (so far). Thanos must have a very busy schedule ruining lives elsewhere, off-screen – lives such as those of his "adoptive" daughters, Gamora and Nebula, or that of scorned warrior Drax the Destroyer, who each speak their mind about the horrors inflicted upon them by the Mad Titan in the **Guardians of the Galaxy**... Events about which we get to hear gruesome tales,

but that we've never actually been shown. So far what Thanos' on-screen power boils down to is sitting, grinning and bullying.

Now, that's alright – it makes sense in a way – Marvel Studios is trying to portray him as a fearsome legend, a lurking threat in the darkness whose powers are still left up to the viewers speculation and imagination... But it's been three years since we first saw him. **X-Men: Apocalypse** is already churning out their "omnipotent, ancient supervillain" Apocalypse next year and the Internet is captured by a continues buzz surrounding Warner Bros.' plans of setting up a possible confrontation with either Doomsday or Darkseid in the DC Extended Universe. Yet three appearances later, the most spectacular thing Thanos has done is lift his arm at the end of **Avengers: Age of Ultron** in a 23 seconds scene.



To show Thanos is more than a bucket of purple cookie-dough ice cream to keep the fans on their toes, it's time we see him in action. Since in 2016 neither *Captain America: Civil War* nor *Doctor Strange* really have a reason to reference the Thanos-storyline at this point, it is all the more important that *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* and *Thor: Ragnarok* will not leave his story untouched. It's time to see some ramifications in the Marvel Cinematic Universe to demonstrate the unproven "titan" his powers. If they *really* want to make us believe Thanos is *the* universal treat with a capital "T", even greater than those "ultimate supervillains" their rival studios are prepping, Thanos will have to do a lot worse than kill off some secondary characters or destroy a random planet in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* which no one cares about. If the Marvel Cinematic Universe is

really *one* entity, I want to see his actions leave a real impression on its major players. I want to see Thanos call back on his deal with Loki in *Thor: Ragnarok*, only to reveal his real intentions, take the Tesseract, rip out (the real) Odin's throat, destroy Asgard and kill most – if not all – of Thor's supporting cast in the process. Doing something similar on Xandar in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* to retrieve the Orb wouldn't have much impact on Marvel Studios' earth-based heroes, but a (successful) attack on Asgard would make a statement that cannot be ignored... Because really, one more cameo of that guy smiling at us and I'll start thinking Happy Hogan is a bigger threat. I just hope the Dark Lord's statement at the end of *Age of Ultron* will receive the follow-up it deserves...

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Pim Razenberg is both a film maker and a film buff. Having kept a record of every movie he watched since childhood, Pim followed up his love for film by writing his master thesis on the socio-political contextualization of superhero films and became a freelance entertainment writer.

