

= Thrud the Barbarian =

Thrud the Barbarian is a comics character created by Carl Critchlow in 1981 . Although Thrud himself is a parody of Conan the Barbarian , particularly as depicted in the Arnold Schwarzenegger films , inspiration for the character 's adventures and adversaries has been drawn from several fantasy sources .

During the 1980s , a Thrud comic strip was a regular and popular feature in the roleplay and wargame magazine White Dwarf with Thrud 's grotesque and comic antics forming a memorable part of the magazine 's golden age . In 2002 , continued interest in the character from role @-@ playing enthusiasts and a desire to be free to experiment with a new artistic style prompted Critchlow to self @-@ publish a series of award @-@ winning full @-@ length Thrud the Barbarian comics .

Since October 2002 , Critchlow has continued to develop his new artistic style in several different 2000 AD stories , contributing to the success of Lobster Random in particular . While Critchlow 's use of muted palettes has been criticised , his style has received praise for being highly recognisable and unique .

= = Appearances = =

= = = Initial publications = = =

The character of Thrud was created by the then 18 @-@ year @-@ old Critchlow in 1981 while he was at foundation art college . His graphic design tutor , Bryan Talbot , gave him the project of producing a comic strip . At the time , Critchlow was reading the Conan books by Robert E. Howard , and this inspired him to produce Thrud . The initial five @-@ page strip was published in comics fanzine Arken Sword . When Critchlow moved on to art college in Liverpool , Thrud made a further appearance in the comic Dead ' Ard , which Critchlow co @-@ authored with artist Euan Smith . Dead ' Ard also featured a strip titled The Black Currant , subsequently re @-@ published in the 26th and final issue of the Warrior comic anthology . The Black Currant would later appear as one of Thrud 's many enemies .

= = = White Dwarf = = =

On seeing an advertisement in White Dwarf magazine asking for cartoonists , Critchlow submitted some of his Thrud strips and was hired . Thrud the Barbarian became a monthly feature in White Dwarf between issue 45 in September 1983 and issue 105 in September 1988 . During this time , the black @-@ and @-@ white single @-@ page strip was voted " Most popular feature " for three consecutive years .

In 1987 , a collection of Thrud strips was published in a Thrud the Barbarian Graffik Novel by Games Workshop . In addition to strips that had been printed in White Dwarf , this anthology included a re @-@ drawn version of the original Arken Sword strip and an origin story for Thrud .

= = = Full @-@ length comic = = =

Once the Thrud strip had run its course in White Dwarf , Critchlow worked on other comics including the Judge Dredd / Batman crossover story The Ultimate Riddle , first published in 1995 . His work on this story was fully painted , and while considered impressive was also criticised as being forced , confused and muddy . Critchlow was developing a new style based on line @-@ drawings with computer colouring , but having been pigeon @-@ holed as a painter did not believe that he would be able to interest anyone in this very different style .

When attending gaming conventions , Critchlow found that he was often remembered for his work on Thrud and recognised that there was still an interest in the character . He therefore decided to

create and self @-@ publish a full @-@ length Thrud the Barbarian comic as a way to get his new style noticed . A total of five Thrud the Barbarian comics were published :

Carborundum Capers ? June 2002

Ice ' n ' a Slice ? January 2003

Lava Louts ? June 2004

Thrud Rex ! ? June 2005

Bungle in the Jungle ? January 2007

Critchlow found that , by organising distribution through comic shops and a devoted Thrud website , he was able to break even financially . His new style was also noticed and received positive comments .

The cover images for each of the first four comics were hand @-@ painted in contrast to the computer @-@ coloured line art used in the comic itself . For issue 5 , Critchlow also used his new style for the cover image .

= = Fictional character biography = =

An origin story for Thrud was printed in the Thrud the Barbarian Graffik Novel . The story tells of a group of mercenaries who , lost and searching for a pub , stumble across an abandoned baby in a deserted village . The mercenaries decide to raise the baby as one of their own , teaching him how to fight and drink beer .

At the age of five , Thrud is sent to Crom the Destroyer Orthodox Pagan Infants School , where he towers above the teachers and his fellow students . When one of the children shoots him with a pea shooter , Thrud 's reaction is to kill and maim twenty @-@ seven pupils and three teachers , leading to his expulsion from the school . Choosing to return to the wilderness rather than his adoptive parents , Thrud lives alone until , one day , he stumbles across a hidden burial chamber . Finding a small helmet and a large axe , Thrud arms himself . Finding gold and gems , he decides to return to civilisation with his newfound wealth , quickly establishing himself a reputation as a violent warrior .

Many years later , Thrud the Barbarian becomes Thrud the King , but finds the mundane duties of kingship tiresome without opportunities to fight . To put a halt to Thrud 's constant mutterings of , " Kill ! Death ! Maim ! Mutilate ! Destroy ! " , the wise men of his kingdom collect stories of heroism from around the land and read them to him long into the night .

= = Characterisation = =

Endowed with the strength of a rhinoceros , the speed of a jungle cat and the intelligence of a garden snail , Thrud is a one @-@ dimensional character who engages in mindless slaughter and strikes Frank Frazetta @-@ style poses while remaining ignorant of plot points . Depicted as an 8 @-@ foot @-@ tall (2 @-@ 4 m) barbarian with a hugely exaggerated , muscular physique and a very small head , and dressed in large furry boots and a loincloth , Thrud is a caricature of Arnold Schwarzenegger 's Conan the Barbarian .

Thrud is also a heavy drinker , frequenting the The Hobbit 's Armpit tavern and regularly causing mayhem when he is unable to have his desired flavour of crisps . These and other annoyances often cause Thrud to invoke the author of the Conan the Barbarian books with the battle cry , " By the sacred jockstrap of Robert E. Howard you 'll pay for this , Hellspawn ! "

= = Supporting characters = =

= = = The Black Currant = = =

First appearing in Dead ' Ard and Warrior , The Black Currant returned in a series of White Dwarf Thrud strips titled Thrud the Destroyer . In this story , The Black Currant is the leader of a horde of warriors who attack a small village , looting the homes , burning the women , raping the livestock

and eating the babies . The Black Currant returned again in issue 3 of Critchlow 's self @-@ published Thrud the Barbarian comic as the leader of a group of bandits laying siege to a small town . The Black Currant is depicted in heavy black armour , wearing a helmet provided with a pair of exceedingly long , horizontally extending horns .

= = = Carl Critchlow = = =

Critchlow himself appears in a number of Thrud strips , occasionally as a narrator although more often as a drinking companion for Thrud . Critchlow depicts himself with lank hair and a large cap pulled down low over his eyes .

= = = Croneman the Cimpletan = = =

Croneman claims to be the mightiest barbarian of the northern tribes and honorary chief of the savage bezerkers of Nid . Known also as Amoron , the Wombat , he is a slayer , a reaver , a corsair , a usurper , and a conqueror . Depicted as resembling Schwarzenegger , he is also a bodybuilder with a very silly accent . On first meeting Croneman , Thrud slices him in half with a sword . When Croneman returns to join a group of mercenaries fighting The Black Currant in Thrud the Destroyer , he is depicted with a line of sutures running down the middle of his face and chest .

= = = Lymara , the She Wildebeeste = = =

Thrud first encounters Lymara when he sees her chasing away a wasp by waving a small cloth from her tower bedroom . Thinking her to be a damsel in distress , Thrud storms the tower , killing Lymara 's father , five brothers , two uncles , ten cousins and fiance in the process . Seeking revenge , Lymara attempts to poison Thrud with a bottle of Acme " Mammoth Poison " , but succeeds only in putting him to sleep as part of the The Three Tasks of Thrud series of strips . Subsequently , Lymara joins Thrud as one of the group of mercenaries brought in to fight The Black Currant in Thrud the Destroyer . In this latter series of strips , Lymara is depicted with oversized breasts barely covered by an off @-@ the @-@ shoulder leather bra .

= = = To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa = = =

To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa (a name phonetically similar to that of British comedian Tommy Cooper) is an evil necromancer who regularly crosses paths with Thrud and is depicted as a bald man wearing a large cloak . Thrud first encounters To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa in an early White Dwarf strip and is turned into a frog . Subsequently , in The Three Tasks of Thrud , To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa takes advantage of Thrud 's drugged state , following Lymara 's failed assassination attempt , to hypnotise him and force him to obtain three items necessary for a spell .

In Thrud the Destroyer , To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa is revealed as being in service to The Black Currant and is providing him with an army of warriors drawn from throughout time , including daleks and Imperial stormtroopers . To @-@ Me Ku @-@ Pa also appears as the villain in issue 1 of the full @-@ length Thrud the Barbarian comic .

= = Merchandise = =

A range of Thrud merchandise has been produced since the character 's inception , including a Thrud t @-@ shirt and badge as well as a series of miniatures . Citadel Miniatures produced five different metal miniatures of Thrud , starting in 1984 with a " White Dwarf Personality " miniature . Three numbered limited edition miniatures followed consisting of " LE12 , Thrud the Barbarian " , in 1986 , " LE19 , Thrud and Female Admirer " in 1987 , and " LE104 , Thrud scratching head " . Thrud was also introduced as a Blood Bowl player and Jervis Johnson commissioned an appropriate miniature . Heresy Miniatures has also produced three Thrud miniatures , including a limited edition

" Strolling Thrud " that sold out within three weeks of release . On 29 March 2007 , another limited edition of 1000 resin miniatures was released .

= = Reception and awards = =

Thrud the Barbarian was one of the best loved pieces in White Dwarf over the five years that the strip ran , being voted " Most popular feature " for three consecutive years during the magazine 's golden age . Long @-@ term fans of Thrud were excited and nostalgic to see him return in his own full @-@ length comic , but were concerned that the idea would not stretch to 24 pages . In reviewing issue 1 , Jez Higgins , writing on TRS2 , and Robert Clark of Strike to Stun , considered the comic a success that was more than one joke spread thin and which was not limited by the single page brevity of the original strip . Steven Maxwell of Bulletproof Comics , however , found that what worked well within the constraints of a single page seemed stretched when spun out over 24 . Issue 2 received similarly mixed reviews , with Clark criticising the comic for being much the same , with the same themes and joke as issue 1 while Glenn Carter of Comics Bulletin found it to be well written light reading with quite a few elements of humour . Overall , the comic was deemed a success , with even the more negative reviewers awarding it 6 out of 10 and looking forward to more issues .

Although the writing received mixed reviews , the reception of the artwork was almost entirely positive . Higgins , recalling the heavy blacks and bold outlines of the original strip , found Critchlow 's new style to be much more open and expressive . Maxwell also praised Critchlow 's development as an artist , judging the comic to be beautifully drawn and coloured with a clear line style . Carter thought that the art was a little flat in places , but nevertheless praised it for being unique with a lot of character .

Critchlow was also commended for the risky decision to write , draw and publish the comic himself . The comic was compared favourably with professional quality comics , with its lack of adverts viewed as an advantage over those offerings . The high production values were also praised , with the glossy cover and high quality paper used for the inner pages .

In 2004 , Thrud the Barbarian won the Eagle Award for " Favourite British Small Press Title " . In 2006 Thrud was nominated for the " Favourite Colour Comicbook ? British " Eagle Award , but lost out to 2000 AD .

= = Legacy = =

In October 2002 , four months after Thrud issue 1 was published , Critchlow returned to 2000AD using his new computer @-@ drawn style . His first story was the Judge Dredd , Out of the Undercity story written by John Wagner . The new style was initially well received by 2000AD Review and seen as a marked improvement over his previous fully painted style with clearer figures and atmospheric colouring . As the Undercity story developed , however , Critchlow was criticised for using too narrow a palette , with too many greys and blues , although this might have been as a result of the story being set underground .

2000AD Review 's criticism of Critchlow 's subdued colouring continued with the 2003 Lobster Random story , No Gain , No Pain . By the conclusion , however , Critchlow 's style was recognised as being truly unique and even the previously criticised blues and greys were seen to work well when used with other coloured elements . The artwork in two further Lobster Random stories , Tooth & Claw in October 2004 and The Agony & the Ecstasy in April 2006 was again very well received . Tooth & Claw was praised for its character designs while Critchlow 's style in The Agony & the Ecstasy was said to be easily recognisable , having " volume , colour and verve " .