

Thrud the Barbarian #2

Written, illustrated, and published by Carl Critchlow.

£2.00 (available from <http://www.thrudthebarbarian.com/>)

Carl Critchlow's second offering of *Thrud* continues in the same vein as the debut issue, with a pulp-fantasy pastiche that allows our favourite knuckle-headed barbarian to engage in mindless slaughter whilst remaining blissfully unaware of the unfolding storyline. As with #1, the art is crisp and minimalist without being too sparse or hard-edged. The cover art is a lovely hand-painted depiction of one of the scenes from the strip.

While it was all too easy to like *Thrud* because of its resurrection of a favourite of the gaming community, there always was going to be a danger that *Thrud* might not pan out too well over a full comic. This isn't to say the comic isn't good, because it's as good as #1. The problem is that it feels like too much of the same, a continuation of the same themes and the same joke. This is a danger inherent in all sophomore efforts, especially one as thematically simple as *Thrud*. While I will be the first to praise Carl for his continuing efforts to self-produce the comic in his own free time, I would like to see the theme of parody played up more than it is. There are plenty of sacred cows in gaming that deserve to be sacrificed and Thrud is the man to do it.

Saying this, there are those who enjoy *Thrud* without any clever allusions, and to this majority I can only say that you will love #2. It is as good, if not better, than similar offerings from the major comic names, and so deserves recognition if just for that. There is the danger of wearing the joke thin, but after just two issues I'm probably being premature with such a gloomy attitude. Roll on #3!

Robert Clark

StS Rating – 6

(thanks to Carl for providing a copy of *Thrud* #2 for review)