

MARVEL'S AVENGERS

THANOS, A CONSIDERATION

BY STEVEN MARK KOHN

Thanos, destroyer of worlds, self-proclaimed restorer of balance to the universe, brutal murderer of civilizations. I have only one question. Where are his parents? Why didn't they instill a better moral compass into their little darling? Parenting is serious business and carries with it great responsibility. Trillions are dead. I blame the parents.

Thanos, for those who have missed the Avengers franchise, is a huge, hulking brute, the most feared and ruthless being in the entire cosmos. He is merciless, practicing sweeping genocide to restore his own notion of "balance" to the universe. But how did he get this way? Where were his parents? The warning signs were there. Even when Thanos was in kindergarten, the following scene was becoming common:

*(Thanos' mother and father enter the principal's office.
Thanos, age 5, is sitting in a chair staring at the ground sheepishly.)*

PRINCIPAL:

Hello Mr. and Mrs. Thanos, I appreciate your coming down today.

THANOS' MOM:

What has he done now?

PRINCIPAL:

He...um... he murdered his entire class.

THANOS' MOM:

What? Why?

PRINCIPAL:

No one picked him for their dodgeball team.

THANOS' DAD:

Oh, good Lord, not again!

(addressing his son)

What did I tell you about this?

What the hell is wrong with you?

THANOS:

I don't know...

THANOS' MOM:

And you wonder why you don't have any friends?

Honestly! This behavior is unacceptable. You are grounded mister.

PRINCIPAL:

We may need to find another school for Thanos.

I still don't know what to tell the other parents.

Your son is making my job very difficult.

THANOS' DAD:

I am so sorry. We have tried, but we just...we can't reason with him.

And once his mind is made up, that's it.

I think he gets it from his mother's side of the family.

You should see him when he doesn't like his dinner.

We just back off until the house stops shaking.

We are at our wit's end. I am so sorry.

A few years later, the following scene occurred.

(It is Thanos' 8th birthday party. He is seated at a table, his huge form overflowing the chair, which can barely support him. He is wearing a tiny party hat with a ball of pink fuzz on top of it. There is a cake on the table in front of him with 8 candles on it. There are no party guests. Only his mother is present. She stands over him with her arms crossed.)

THANOS' MOM:

You see what happens?

When you kill everyone, guess what?

There's no one left to come to your birthday party.

I hope your happy.

So, the pattern was established at an early age, and with no effective parental supervision, Thanos' abhorrent behavior continued unabated. Later, when Thanos was a young adult:

(Thanos' parents are relaxing at home. She is watching "Housewives of the Crab Nebula" on TV. He is reading the newspaper, his glasses perched at the end of his nose.)

THANOS' MOM:

Have you seen Thanos?

THANOS' DAD: *(Not looking up)*

He went out.

Said something about killing half of the people in the universe.

THANOS' MOM:

What?

THANOS' DAD:

Yeah. Muttered something about restoring balance and order, something about finite resources, I don't know. I was reading.

THANOS' MOM:

Well...at least he's outside.

So. Half of life in the universe is wiped out, all because parents could not control their child. There is a lesson in all of this. Parenting is serious business. Don't enter into it if you do not have the intellectual, emotional and financial resources necessary to adequately take on the job. Children need boundaries. They look to us for guidance. This should be a teaching moment for all parents.