

## 52 Catch Up: Swamp Thing

Written by Kristine Chester, Fanboy Comics Senior Contributor  
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 22:50

---



**52 Catch Up** is a series devoted to looking at issues from DC's New 52 and seeing how they're faring now that they're underway, why they're worth reading (or not), and places we hope they will go in time.

### Concept:

□

Dr. Alec Holland was a botanist working on the bio-restorative formula when an accident occurred in his lab and he was killed. Now, he's come back from the dead years later, with

## 52 Catch Up: Swamp Thing

Written by Kristine Chester, Fanboy Comics Senior Contributor  
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 22:50

---

memories of being some kind of monster, a Swamp Thing, but before he can make sense of all of this, the plants start to speak to him again, telling him of his destiny as the Protector of the Green.

### SPOILERS BELOW

Previously on *Swamp Thing*: Covering *Issues #1-#6*

*Alec Holland is as far away from society as possible. He's taken a construction job in the middle of nowhere and is so determined not to go back to working on the bio-restorative formula that not even Superman can change his mind. But, the plants keep speaking to Alec, and soon he finds himself faced with the very thing he fears: the Swamp Thing. Alec quickly learns that this is not the same creature that possesses his memories and that there have been other Swamp Things in the past, Protectors of the Green, of plant life, which is also to be Alec's destiny.*

*The Green's emissary warns Alec about a being known as Sethe, a power of the Black/Rot, which controls death and decay. Sethe sends some agents against Alec, but he is pulled out of his apartment by Abigail Arcane, a woman he has piecemeal memories of from the Swamp Thing. Alec soon learns that Abigail is to the Rot as Alec is to the Green. She has a connection to it but is resisting its call. The same cannot be said of her half-brother William. Allergic to chlorophyll and trapped in a hospital, when the dead start to speak to him, William happily answers and murders his way out of the hospital in order to unite with Sethe.*

*Abigail and Alec hunt down William but walk into an ambush. Alec manages to escape but William traps Abigail in a cocoon of dead meat and bone, for she is the true avatar of the Black and is to be transformed for that purpose. At the same time, another of Sethe's agents finds*

## 52 Catch Up: Swamp Thing

Written by Kristine Chester, Fanboy Comics Senior Contributor  
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 22:50

---

*the heart of the Green, the Parliament of Trees, and sets fire to it, severing Alec from the source of his powers and preventing him from becoming the next Protector of the Green.*

### High Points

**Mythology:** Snyder with *Swamp Thing* and Lemire with *Animal Man* are creating a fantastic mythology behind life on Earth.

#### *Swamp Thing*

goes into further details regarding the three-way war between the Red, Green, and Black, and how the Red and the Green allied themselves to keep the Rot at bay. The processes between how knights/avatars for each side are chosen and what abilities they possess are just as fascinating.

**William Arcane:** While the Hunters Three from *Animal Man* and Sethe have been formidable agents of the Rot, William as the human knight for the Black has been the most interesting so far. William is a tragic character, unable to interact easily with others, and is taunted and threatened by the cruelty of children; it's no wonder he gives in so readily to the Rot, so he can be free of his prison.

But, William is more than just a tragic character, he's a villain in his own right. He murders his way past customers in a diner, just so he can have a sundae, all while doing his best Darth Vader impression, lugging around a scuba tank and mask so he doesn't choke on the air. And, when this little boy starts monologuing to Alec, it manages to both be humorous and creepy as hell at the same time.

### Low Points

**Paneling:** The paneling changes, going from simple black lines to curved plant stems or

## 52 Catch Up: Swamp Thing

Written by Kristine Chester, Fanboy Comics Senior Contributor  
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 22:50

---

squiggly decay lines depending on the topic and environment at the time. While the metaphor behind the shift is great, there are times where it's difficult to determine the order panels are supposed to be read in. Fortunately, this has been getting clearer in *Issues #5 and #6* and, hopefully, won't be an problem in future issues.

**Introduction:** *Swamp Thing* had a rough introductory issue for anyone not familiar with the history of the character, and even now, having never read an issue of *Swamp Thing*

before the Relaunch, the impact of Abigail and Alec's relationship is lost on me as is the full breadth of the fact that Swamp Thing and Alec Holland were once two separate characters who just happen to share memories. For fans of Alan Moore's run and older

*Swamp Thing*

, I'm sure it's great, but it's taken away a lot of the impact for new readers and had us playing catch up in more ways than one.

**Cliché:** Ah, yes, the star-crossed lovers. Never saw that one coming. My lack of enthusiasm for this idea probably stems from not knowing Abigail and Alec well enough. In six issues I'm not buying into the romance between them, so having them forced to fight each other means little to me.

### Looking Ahead

**The Green & the Red:** Both Green and Red have made serious mistakes and are on the ropes. The impending *Animal Man* and *Swamp Thing* crossover is still very exciting, especially with the knowledge added from *Swamp Thing*

that the Red and Green have been at odds in the past. The possibility of a three-way battle royale is particularly exciting.

**Alec vs. Abby:** Though a cliché idea, Snyder is a good enough writer and can salvage this and turn it into something awesome. What will happen when the two of them face off against one

## 52 Catch Up: Swamp Thing

Written by Kristine Chester, Fanboy Comics Senior Contributor  
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 22:50

---

another? Will Alec purposely hamper his allies' attempts to take down the avatar of the Rot, his love? Will William or another avatar of the Rot be chosen if Abigail refuses to fight?

**Humanity:** Both Abigail and Alec are set to undergo a physical transformation, becoming something more (or less) than human. It's been implied numerous times that the Swamp Thing Alec has memories of was a monster. Will he become one again or will he retain more control of his faculties? What about Abigail? What is William starting to transform into, and what does this mean in *Animal Man* regarding Maxine as the avatar of the Red?