



Swamp Thing, Volume 5: The Killing Field

Charles Soule (Writer) , Jesus Saiz (Illustrations) , Javier Pina , Andrei Bressan , Matthew Wilson

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The battle for the soul of The Green reaches its epic conclusion.

Alec Holland knew little of the politics involved in becoming the The Green's Avatar, but since his role has been challenged, he must take a crash course in the politics and power of The Green. The mantle of Avatar evolves over time, and when the Parliament decides an Avatar's time is at an end, a new one must be raised. If Alec fails the Seeder's challenge, the fate of mankind will be sealed and reclaimed by The Green under the control of The Seeder.

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From Reader Review Swamp Thing, Volume 5: The Killing Field for online ebook

Drown Hollum says

Charles Soule is a real badass. He's a perfect fit for Swamp Thing. The rotating cast of artists are amazing too, each one stepping up to the high bar Yanick Paquette set at the start of the current volume. Soule adds the perfect pinch of humor needed in a good horror book, while comfortable farming the DCU for plots and characters. The concepts are great, managing to maintain the themes of Snyder's run, all the while standing out as unique stories. The additions Soule has made to the cast and lore are perfect, intriguing additions that keep Dr. Holland fresh, and always engaging. Clever dialogue, mind-blowing landscapes, expansive new concepts, and brilliantly designed characters. Swamp Thing remains near the tippy top of my favorite New 52 titles.

Richard Guion says

This volume is where Swamp Thing starts to level off in terms of story quality for me. A character from the Alan Moore's ST run is brought back, Jason Woodrue, who threatens to take over control of the Green. The story allows Soule to explore the world of the Green and the Parliament of Trees. The only problem I have with that is the Green appears to have recreated all kinds of famous buildings in the Green, and I thought, huh? I expected the Green to be a pretty fabulous network of unworldly behavior. The art is a bit pedestrian.

Michael Church says

This was a great continuation of the last volume. Charles Soule is clearly setting a direction for the book and I'm excited to see what his plans are. It would have been easy for this to just be another villain of the day story, but it goes beyond that. Sure, the other part of the story is a little bit of a trope as well, but it's carried out pretty well.

It's also interesting to see more of the previous avatars introduced. The whole concept of the green is so strange and interesting. Seeing it from multiple perspectives is excellent, especially since Swamp Thing is still very much a human perspective. Even the difference between him and Woodrue is a stark contrast. It also is a good way to build dramatic tension. Do I root for humanity or do I root for the green? Especially when humanity also has an avatar with Animal Man and his daughter.

Speaking of which, loved that cameo. And I loved it even more that Buddy was still shown as a total badass. The fights also highlight how unique this title is. It's really not like anything else I'm reading and there were some crazy twists.

The art was also excellent for most of the volume. The first couple of issues were a little rocky, but Jesus Saiz has an awesome look. He manages to take the characters introduced earlier and make them look like they feel they were supposed to.

I'm really excited about what happened in this volume and can't wait to see how it continues to unfurl until

the end of the series.

Titas (I read in bed) says

My favourite volume of the New 52's Swamp Thing.

Seeder, an equally (or trying to be) powerful contender of Green has risen to challenge the Swamp Thing. As an Avatar of Green, he has accepted it and will do his best to defeat him. But Seeder has some unknown tricks in his sleeves and alleys of Swamp are not who they seem to be.

Charles Soule has taken Swamp Thing and made him bigger and bigger even more than we can imagine! The story build-up with Constantine in it and then the ultimate showdown with a most surprising and twisting end! And I would donate a hand of mine if I can ever draw like Jesus Saiz. The art is out of the world!

Sud666 says

Ever since Alan Moore's seminal run on Swamp Thing many writers have tried to capture the magic. Few have managed it. Some of the versions I've read were awful. Thus it was quite nice to read this New 52 volume and actually enjoy it.

Soule does a creditable job of taking Moore's concepts and expanding on them with a slightly modern take. This really was a story about who is the true representative of the green. We have Alec Holland (Swamp Thing) and then we have Jason Woodrue (Seeder).

The Parliament of Trees is shown as a group with mixed feelings. Some have a more aggressive approach-they support Seeder to become avatar. Seeder feels the best way to help the green is to kill man, who represents the red. Swamp Thing is not into the killing humans bit.

What follows is a grand adventure as Swamp Thing travels the Parliament of Trees world and meets certain members. Some of the Parliament are former avatars of the green themselves. Alec Holland is merely the current incarnation. More than that I will not say-read this...it's good.

The artwork is solid-good throughout and I thought it did a good job of telling the story. Ahh but the story itself...I credit Soule with trying to capture the big picture ideas of Moore and give a modern twist. I think the Parliament of Trees having different opinions and the stories of the past avatars to be very well done.

After a long time I found a Swamp Thing comic (besides one excellent Brian Vaughn version) that does a creditable job of expanding on Moore's concept without destroying the idea. Well done!

Bradley says

Who is Seeder? Woodrue! Who is Woodrue? The new AVATAR! Wooo, evil wins!

Or does it? Poor Alec is put to pasture. Or wherever it is they put plants past their prime.

Huh? Does this make any sense to you, dear reader? ALEC? The God of Green? After all he did, after all

he's capable of? I mean, sheesh. What does the Parliament of Trees WANT? And to allow that nasty piece of work take over just because he has less restraint when it comes to using the Green? Again, Sheesh. What's going on here?

Ah well, the reversals have reversals, and after all that hard work to save the Parliament in the first place, Alec now.... Yeah.

Sorry. This whole story has huge continuity issues and can't quite tell whether Snyder's stuff needs to go or this one does. I'm actually to the point where the huge mess at the end of Vol 3 SHOULD be the one to go. That was just a retcon nightmare.

But this one? All of these threads can't agree on what they are or where they've been.

At least the artwork is good and as long as I turn off my head, the stories themselves are internally consistent. (Assuming we're just reading individual Volumes.)

Justin Labelle says

Soule is building up a new Swamp Thing Mythology and it works best when he sticks to the small time 'world' issues.

In essence, I feel Soule's stories work best when Swamp Thing comes off as a concerned gardener.

The Seeder background story felt a little bit forced with a throwback to the Moore days of old, but overall it seems the story is going in the right direction in building towards a satisfying story arc.

Good not great.

Aaron says

Soule defeated the sophomore slump! The number of titles I've read, particularly in the New 52, that begin with a bang and immediately eat shit in their second volume, is so staggering that it feels like it's an intentional editorial decision. This time around, though, things only seem to be heating up, so much so that I'd say this volume is actually *better* than the previous one. Soule really leans into this new take on Swamp Thing he's going with, and I have to say, I think it might be better than Snyder's.

It's Soule's decision to dig into and expand the core concepts of Swamp Thing that really works here. He's given the character a set of adversaries and goals that actually feel equal to him, while thoroughly deconstructing the concept of "The Green" that has been present in Swamp Thing ever since Alan Moore's iconic run. His expansion of The Green and The Parliament of Trees, turning them from a very generalized magical concept into a living, breathing collective representing all plant life around the world, allows for a supporting cast that makes this book feel significantly less lonely than it has in the past, and also moves past the Manichean concept of good vs. evil. It's a smarter world now, more complex, with new characters with ulterior motives, none of which seem overtly wicked. They are simply trying to do what they think is best, and it's unclear who exactly is right. The series has much wider parallels with the real world now, and feels much more grounded, despite essentially being about a bunch of swamp monsters fighting each other with

plant magic.

I'm really on board for this series, and I hope Soule continues to broaden this world as much as he has. If he does, this could be right up there with Batman and Wonder Woman as one of the best series of the New 52.

Paul Mirek says

There's some fun potential in turning the series into a shonen fighting manga and Jesus Saiz has some great character designs for the past avatars, but Soule's portrayal of the Swamp Thing as a tortured, brooding genius trying to come to terms with the monster inside (a la Bruce Banner) doesn't do much for me.

Sam Quixote says

Like a cheating partner, the Parliament of Trees has to choose who it wants to be Avatar of the Green: Swampy or the usurper Seeder. As the two train for their title match, we explore the mysterious world of the Green and the host of colourful new characters who inhabit it. It's kinda like a grown up Fern Gully!

Swamp Thing's a tough cookie to get right, eh? Charles Soule comes close but I'm still not completely in love with his run on the character. You can split this book right down the middle into two halves, one which I liked and one which I didn't. I really liked Soule's expansion of Swampy's world. The history of the Swamp Things goes back millennia so we see the very first prehistoric jellyfish-like Swamp Thing to a giant dinosaur Avatar and a caveman Swamp Thing who bears an uncanny resemblance to Alan Moore!

In particular the Green itself is portrayed as an enchanting fantasyland. There's The Wolf, the greatest Avatar before Alec Holland, is an 18th century nobleman who travels about on an enormous flower petal, and Lady Weeds, a vicious and cynical fighter who lives in a cave and teaches Swampy to use his powers to their full potential.

Kano and Jesus Saiz's gorgeous art flesh out Soule's ideas to create this rich, whimsical world where I really hope more future stories take place. The Swamp Thing designs – really all the character designs - are absolutely brilliant and the horror element is maintained with the way flesh and foliage merge together into something visually unusual and disturbing.

Then there's the second half which is just empty fighting. Swampy and Seeder throw branches, spit seeds, 'plode one another, regenerate, do it again. Is there anything more tedious than watching two people who can't be killed fight? For all the imaginative training Swampy undergoes with his floral Yoda, Lady Weeds, his final fight with Seeder is so boring – "I'm gonna punch you hard" "Yeah? I'm gonna punch you harder!", etc. (not actual dialogue but it captures the essence).

Much like Red Lanterns Volume 5, Soule rushes the hell out of the ending, wrapping everything up in six pages. It literally goes from doom and the end of the world to Swampy saving the day and defeating everyone – in six pages!! Also, Seeder has never been an interesting character to me and the backstory he recounts is so played out and generic. Maybe if you're a fan of the Alan Moore run you might enjoy it more as he's from those comics, but even so I thought he's only ever been an average baddie.

The Killing Field isn't a bad book, it's just disappointing that for all the thought and imagination put into its build-up, it's all in service to that most mundane of superhero stories: hero fighting villain. It's an unsatisfying payoff. But I love the world-building Soule imbues into the series and hope it's not discarded or forgotten after the forthcoming Convergence whirlwind. Like the last volume, Soule's Swamp Thing continues to be pretty decent but not by any means amazing.

Koen says

[aka Seeder (hide spoiler)]

James DeSantis says

Now this was a ton of fun. By far my favorite volume of the Swamp Thing series so far.

Swamp Thing is having a rough time. Seeder, his new arch nemesis has shown up and he's kind of a prick. So when the two go at it, almost killing each other, the Parliament decides for them to train and see who will be the true champion. The true Avatar. There can only be one! So thus begins the training, some interesting twist, and then the very end leaves this series into some interesting twist and turns that can really amp it up.

Good: The seeder storyline was solid and made for a good villain. Swamp Thing was pretty funny in this actually, and very likeable. The art is a lot easier to follow than the first few volumes and the fights are pretty epic. The ending is also great.

Bad: There's some HEAVY exposition in the middle that kind of bog down the series for a bit.

Overall I think Carles Soule writes a Swamp Thing I enjoy way more. Snyder's was darker, and more horror like, but I never cared about the character. The way Soule writes his Swamp Thing I think I'm sticking around!

'kris Pung says

I've been picking up this title monthly and it never disappoints to deliver a great story and the art is just out of this world awesome too. Seriously this is one of the best books on the stands and I can't believe more people aren't reading this title (jumps off soap box but rolls ankle awkwardly and falls to the ground).

Darth says

I thought the whole expose of The Green was really cool, and one that hadn't been explored before. I also really liked how even though some of the characters were past avatars of The Green, you still didn't quite trust them, and they weren't always the greatest of people.

However, it makes you wonder if Swampie is really a "superhero" after all, being basically a god...

The plant horse was cool.

Wing Kee says

Wow, world building mind explosion.

World: The art is absolutely fantastic, the depth, design, framing and detail is insane. This book is so gorgeous. The world building, what can I say, this was a tour de force. This was mind blowing insanely good. The stuff with the Green, the Seeder stuff, man I can't really express how amazing it was without spoiling it. Just read it for the world building.

Story: Insanely well written and paced. The story of Seeder and Alec was fantastic, made logic sense, and builds upon Moore and the past of the Swamp Thing, it's great. I don't want to say anymore. I don't know what else to say without spoiling it, but just bloody read this arc. I thought we would never see the highs of Snyder's run but wow this is just up there with it. Nerdgasm!

Characters: Fantastic, Alec gets a lot of development and Seeder is done so so so so well. The stuff in the Green with Lady Weed and Wolf, all absolutely amazing.

This book is absolutely amazing.

Onward to the next book!
