

Swamp Thing Review

Whoo-boy. Swamp Thing.

Here at the Cinemonster, at the top of each month we are given the option to write about a new release or a movie that qualifies for the spotlight of that month. When I heard that this month's spotlight was going to be superheroes, I without pause jumped at the idea. One of my biggest passions in life are comic books and any opportunity to talk about them turns into an hour long lecture about the current atmosphere of the Green Lantern right now (he's doing pretty alright). So, with the decision about which type of movie I was going to write about was made for me, the timing worked out so that I ended up needing to pick a movie from the 80s. Now, there were a couple of big titles that came out in the 80s; the first Tim Burton Batman was in '89 and a couple of the Superman ones were in that decade as well. But, being the comic book nerd that I am, I wasn't prepared to settle on the banal. That's about the time Wikipedia mentioned that Swamp Thing came out in 1982. My eyes lit up. Oh, if only I knew what I was getting myself into.

The premise of Swamp Thing starts with a scientist named Alec Holland who is hidden away in the Louisiana swamps to develop a new super secret formula to accelerate the growth of plants. His experiments go horribly awry when sabotage leads to an explosion that bathes him in his own chemicals. In an act of desperation, he dives into the swamp to put to fire out, but the formula mixes with the water and he emerges from the depths as the hulking SWAMP THING!!!!!!!

Trust me; he is *totally* a super hero.

The comic was successful enough at its start, but really gained prominence when legendary writer Alan Moore, writer of acclaimed book *The Watchmen*, took over and pushed into the strange and bizarre. I mean, even farther than giant swamp monster comics were at the time. Which kinda says a lot. All I'm saying is, Swamp Thing had a psychedelic sexual trip experience with this one chick. Yeah, that's comics.

SO ANYWAY, at some point someone in Hollywood saw how popular these crazy crazy stories were and decided to have Wes Craven direct the piece.

What he ended up with was a pretty standard monster movie; the main character is a woman by the name of Cable, who is brought into the project on security detail and becomes the center of the movie's action. After the film's obligatory comic-book-movie origin sequence which follows the same basic path as the books, though with tweaks made here and there (a

love interest was formed from said tweaks) it follows Cable's attempted escape from the swamp as the bad guys chase her down while interference is run by the Swamp Thing. Action and adventure ensue. About 17 people get thrown into the water throughout the movie; at some point I was hoping that someone would realize that just because they are in the water does NOT mean that the person is in any incapacitated.

Frankly, as the swamp water settled, my biggest take away from the movie: "MAN, was that movie made in the 80s" and that, I think, sums up the movie well. It wasn't some profound allegory, nor was it groundbreaking in its technology; the major significance of the piece was that it was Craven's attempt to show that he could handle big budget action movies. Instead, it was a movie that was CLEARLY made in the 80s, starring a creature that, while I commend them for attempting to be moderately accurate to the comics, turned out to be basically a first generation Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle costume with the neck articulation of a Batman Suit, but with the fit of a garbage bag. The action scenes were pretty damn ridiculous and the acting was alright, though one has to factor in the script. Overall, the movie wasn't awful. It wasn't. But it wasn't outstanding; the biggest appeal to it was its camp value. For some of you, and I know a couple, campiness is highly valued, and I would recommend Swamp Thing to you; there are some *wicked* 'fros involved with the production. Otherwise, unless you *really* love Swamp Thing, this is just follows the archetypal monster/action movie a bit too closely to still be entertaining 30 years later.

I give this 1 and ½ buildings ruined by explosions caused by sabotage to plant growth formulas. I hope the ensuing monster will be a bit more engaging than precedent set. Oh, and I also sacrifice 4 out of 4 goats to Allan Moore; that dude is bat-shit crazy and I do NOT want him putting a curse on me.