

The new creative team of Meredith and David Finch takes Diana out of the world of myth in Wonder Woman #36, returning the freshly-minted queen of the Amazons to her Justice League colleagues just in time to face an ecological crisis and a very grumpy Alec Holland, AKA Swamp Thing. The Finches wisely keep Diana firmly anchored in continuity on all sides. Her relationships with her superhero compatriots, especially Aquaman and Superman, are solid and believable. While her Amazon sisters debate the events that ended the admired run of Brian Azzarello and Cliff Chiang, especially the residence on Paradise Island of the Amazons' male relatives, and the presence among them of an infant male god. Meredith Finch dutifully acknowledges such details as Lex Luthor's presence on the League, Clark Kent's encounter with Doom, and Alec Holland's recent conflict with the King of Atlantis. The writer maintains a strong focus on the question of humanity, its meaning and balance between glory and degradation. The Amazons fear the latter, as they worry that their queen's actions have entangled them irretrievably in the corrupt world of men, while Diana sharply challenges Swamp Thing to hold onto his human virtues amidst the power of the Green. Wonder Woman herself asks how she will carry the burdens of godhood and friendship, royal power and heroic longing, love and duty. Perhaps Diana's musings are a bit too reminiscent of pop psychology and self-help guides, just as the environmental crisis on hand seems a little too topical and geared to present news cycles. But William Moulton Marston created the character as a strong woman dealing with issues of her day, and Nazis were as topical in 1941 as ecological decay is now. No one can say Finch's approach lies outside the traditional bounds of Wonder Woman canon. Unfortunately, the author's gifts with plot and dialogue don't rise to the standards of her personality exploration. The Justice League discovers almost nothing about the origins and meaning of the mysterious deluge that sets the story rolling. Finch loses sight of the plot, bringing it to an awkward pause so she can shift the focus back to Paradise Island for a cliff-hanger involving Diana's petrified mother. Much worse, the author displays a poor ear for dialogue, which often sounds like a weak parody of Sir Walter Scott. Take Wonder Woman's challenge to Swamp Thing defying him to explain "What vegetative injustice was worth so many lives?!" However, the art comes to the rescue of the writing. David Finch's strong, slightly extended lines and bent curves give the characters and backgrounds a sense of the normal slightly skewed, as one would expect of gods and legends. Richard Friend's deep shadows and Sonia Oback's dark, intense colors create a feeling of strength and majesty. This story may proclaim the glory and virtues of humanity, but no one can regard it and forget that it is ultimately about divinity and heroism. The post Wonder Woman #36 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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