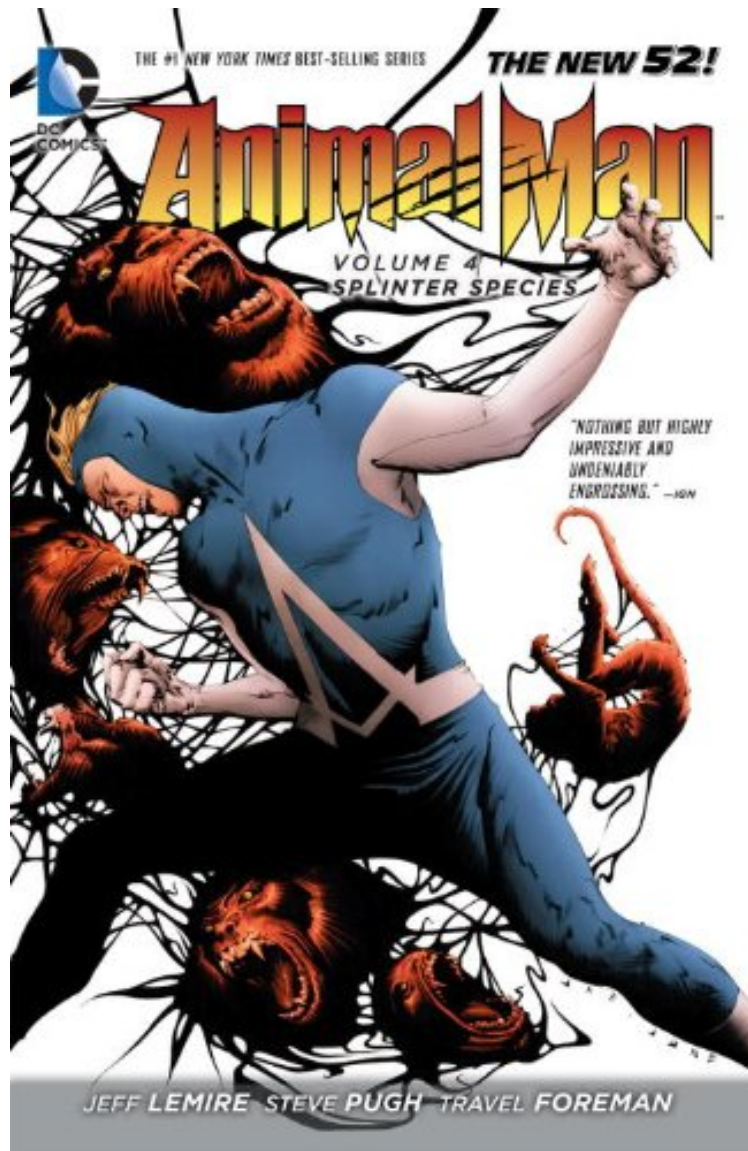


(Read free) Animal Man Vol. 4: Splinter Species (The New 52) (Animal Man (DC Comics))

## Animal Man Vol. 4: Splinter Species (The New 52) (Animal Man (DC Comics))

Jeff Lemire

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**Jeff Lemire : Animal Man Vol. 4: Splinter Species (The New 52) (Animal Man (DC Comics))** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Animal Man Vol. 4: Splinter Species (The New 52) (Animal Man (DC Comics)):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. When Buddy, Oscar nominated actor, investigates missing animals,

there will be Blood!

**By** KBoticusBuddy Baker for best actor?**Story:** After Buddy's son, Cliff, dies from the Rot infection, and his wife leaves him, taking Maxine with her, he starts heavy drinking and living a messier lifestyle. Amidst his grief, his agent contacts him and informs Buddy that he's been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his film, "Tights" where he plays the "Red Thunder", a street level superhero who comes on hard times. The media just won't leave Animal Man alone! There's at least something of a look into the life of a celebrity who's on fire at the time. Buddy takes up a mission to find a lot of kidnapped pets to keep himself busy. Meanwhile Maxine, with the help of Socks enters the Red and sets out on her own little mission to find Cliff and bring him back to life. It was really cool to see Maxine shaping the Red to her whim. The Red looked really cool with the organ fields, and the bone pirate ship on the back of a giant manatee! Buddy, being plagued by "visions" of animals screaming out to him, comes upon the splinterfolk, former humans who have changed out the parts of their bodies for a mishmash of animal parts, declaring that they wish to be one with the Red. They themselves are on a mission to capture Baker so they can get his blood to bring to their boss, Brother Blood! As Maxine gets close to her goal, Blood invades the red, kills some warriors, and seeks out the Parliament of Limbs. Then, something truly shocking happens! This book got better as it went along. This is some nice setup for what I hope to be a great conclusion!

**Art:** I'm still not a fan of Travel Foreman's art. His penciling style looks amateur at best, with very sketchy, loose lines. He also has a bad habit of leaving the background blank in many panels and that gives the look of his issues a very plain, uninteresting feel. Thankfully, Steve Pugh does most of the issues here, and his art is much better. I'm glad he finished the book. Art absolutely matters, and it's important that Pugh did such a great job finishing this volume. There's some cool spreads here, and I loved the contrast of blue and red that has been present in this whole run. But, I know that this is the last volume by Pugh as volume 5 has all new artists.

**Overall:** This seemed to be a cooldown volume after the big Rotworld crossover with Swamp Thing. Buddy mostly mourns his son, the loss of his family, and sets out to discover why animals have gone missing. There's some great setup, and I loved seeing more of the Red. Lemire and Pugh have done some great stuff with expanding the world of the Red. I'm glad to see Lemire use a classic DC villain like Brother Blood. I'd have to give this book 3 1/2 stars. I wasn't really impressed by it, but it was good.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Cool down time

**By** CodyIf you read the first three trades, then you may be a tad disappointed with this one since it's more of a reflection and grieving period. Kinda like the calm before the storm. But I really like the new elements Lemire set up, like social media and the press getting in Animal Man's way of saving people. In fact the press is ruthless even asking questions if his family is just actors to get him an award. Overall, this is a cool down period for Animal man, and a set up period for a very disturbing final arc.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Utterly Dark Times For Animal Man

**By** Anarchy in the USEvery time I think Animal Man will peter out, especially after the Rotworld crossover, Jeff Lemire reignites the story of Buddy Baker with new threats to his family and the Red. And as history as shown us in Buddy Baker's lifespan through solo series, writers can only say so much before ending their ties to Buddy and his family affairs. But after the events of the Rot, you have to wonder where Lemire can take this now. Where he takes it is regret, pain, loss, and trying to get back on ones feet while dealing with those feelings and sets up for the final act of Lemire doing Animal Man.

**ANIMAL MAN VOL.4: SPLINTER SPECIES** collects issues #20-23 and the **ANIMAL MAN ANNUAL #2**. After the powerful events of Animal Man Vol. 3: Rotworld: The Red Kingdom (The New 52), Buddy Baker has hit rock bottom. His son is dead, his wife and daughter have left him, and he's been cut off from the Red Kingdom. He alone and wanting. But something happens abruptly. Buddy's independent film he made, "Tights", has gotten Buddy nominated for Best Actor. All of a sudden Buddy is famous with reporters, news media, and even twitter followers chasing him down when he just wants to be alone and grieve. And with only a few days until the Oscars, Buddy has to get his life back on track and decides to go back to superhero duties in his current mental state, where he finds an occult named the Splinterfolk who graft animal parts to themselves to join the Red. And Maxine has become the sole avatar/queen of the Red. With her new powers, she's looking at trying to bring Cliff back. But things do not turn out the way they want for both Buddy and Maxine...and things just keep getting worse.

One of the biggest and best aspects of Lemire's Animal Man series since the start of the New 52 is the strong emphasis on family ties (and disturbing horror here and there), creating a book where you really care these characters. With the Rotworld, Lemire started getting away from those aspects for more action heavy event with Scott Snyder's Swamp Thing. It lost most of those emotional aspects, even if it was still an engaging event, but I felt personally the series focused better on Buddy and his family. Thankfully, Lemire goes back to the emotional family ties and things get just darker for the Baker family, while still adding the tension and action to offset things.

The first and big factor is the fallout effect of Cliff's death and Buddy's loss in life. This is a good thing considering way too often writers kill off a character for shock value with little mention or fallout from said characters death, so Lemire actually takes his time to make Cliff's death count. This is most prevalent in the Annual #2 and issue #20, which are also stand-alone tales in ways. The Annual dealing with Buddy having a flashback 4 years earlier against The Spider Queen just before Maxine was born, making for happier memories for Buddy, and issue #20 dedicated to Buddy's role as Chaz in "Tights", making his film character a metaphor against his personal life and Cliff. These two issues do not propel the main arching story line, but focus on the fallout of Cliff's passing and I commend Lemire on the effort put forth.

Then comes the three-part "Splinter Species" arc in issues 21-23, where things

pick up in steam. Buddy tries to get his life on track but doing various good deeds and finds and fights off these new splinter people who cut up animals and stitch them to their bodies. The Splinterfolk are setup for the big badguy reveal at the end of this book and next volume, which I will not spoil who he is, but I love his New 52 origin and design. We'll have to wait for more on the character in the next volume though. The big factor in this arc is the paparazzi getting involved and affecting on Buddy's personal and hero life. This makes for some fast, unique, and scary way of how modern celebrity culture might interact with a minor superhero who's also a sometime actor. This makes for a gripping experience added that the media is exploiting Buddy's personal life like real life shows of Inside Hollywood or TMZ do to people. Even to the point Twitter comments are constantly shown from various poster including fans and haters alike. It's pretty potent and well done mix Lemire balances, and I think he pulled it off. And while the attention is on Buddy, Maxine continues to be the positive thing in Animal Man in her attitude about the Totems, her family, and even Cliff. She has fun moments rebuilding the Red with her cat Socks and Shepherd, trying to find the soul of Cliff in the endless Red and on a pirate ship captained by a giraffe. So her segments are fun and lighter in tone. The art is excellent by Steve Pugh who does issues #21 -#23 and captures Buddy's emotions with every panel and the intricate details of the Red making Animal Man one of my favorite comics. This is also Pugh's final issues on art duties, which I think he goes out on a bang. Travel Foreman returns and does all of the Annual to great design of the Spider Queen to an utterly potent splash page of a young and happy Cliff Baker flying in the wind of Buddy's arms. It's sad and powerful stuff. And Timothy Green II and John Paul Leon do issue #20 of the "Tights" part 2 story, which is still strong. Now why the 4 stars? I seriously love this book and am giving it a 4 star out of 5, but why not go 5 stars? Beyond the typical information that this series is graphic in gore and violence, this 4th volume is depressing. For me, I love the darker qualities to match Buddy's emotions from his numerous personal problems, but some reviewers will just feel down after reading the first half of the book. Not to mention it goes very quickly. Only three issues worth the main arc, while the Annual and issue 20 mostly deal with the fallout of Cliff's death. They are potent, but they do not propel much. The Annual is mostly a flashback and the "Tights" issue is 90% showing the film. It gets it that the film is to convey Buddy's character on film to his personal issues, but it still doesn't propel the main story. Lemire could of shown a few pages on the Tights segments, then done something else to show his agony over Cliff in modern times. I enjoy the focus on Buddy's heartache, but half of the book is dedicated to two issues that can be stand alone tales. Regardless, ANIMAL MAN VOL.4: SPLINTER SPECIES is back on track where Lemire focuses on Buddy's strong family ties since the bigging of the New 52, over the action packed Rotworld. A powerful first half dedicated to the fallout of Cliff, some great insights of celebrity culture on a superhero, plenty of gore and violence, the characters are still loveable, and great art across the board make this series still one of the best. Again, I was tempted to give a 5 star rating, but I am giving it a 4 star out of 5, because some readers might not like the dark tonality shift, the short focus on the "Splinter Species" arc, and the Annual/Issue #20 mostly stand alone tales. None the less, if you have been reading Animal Man since the get-go, this is still a great series and ends on a massive cliffhanger where you will want to see next. So after this volume, I am sadden to say/write it, but Animal Man will be cancelled in issue #29. That makes volume 5, Animal Man Vol. 5: Evolve or Die! (The New 52), the next and final volume of Buddy Baker and family together as the last. I do not know why it is getting cancelled either for lack of revenue or something, but this great series will end. Thankfully, Animal Man will live on under writer Jeff Lemire in Justice League United, a newly formed version of Justice League of America, only in Canada and in Space. But that book will be nothing like this series and will not have the Baker family in it. So Animal Man fans pick this up and finish up the remainder of this phenomenal series when it comes due.

As Animal Man, Buddy Baker channels the power of the life force called the Red to protect all life on Earth. But fighting for the Red cost him the love of his life and the life of his son. Abandoned by his wife and daughter, grieving the loss of his child, failed by the totems who gave him his power, Buddy wants nothing more than to be left alone. But vicious predators are about to invade the Red. Perversions of both science and sorcery threaten to drain every drop of power not just from Buddy, but from his daughter as well. There's a new species at the top of the food chain, and Animal Man must evolve or die Jeff Lemire (JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK) and a pack of comics' greatest talents including Steve Pugh (JOHN CONSTANTINE, HELLBLAZER), Travel Foreman (The Immortal Iron Fist), Francis Portela (LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES) and John Paul Leon (Earth X) present a whole new breed of terror in ANIMAL MAN: SPLINTER SPECIES! Collects ANIMAL MAN #20-23 and ANIMAL MAN ANNUAL #2.

"I don't want to overhype it, but if you don't love it from the very first page, you're not human." MTV Geek "The best thing to come out of the DC relaunch. Absolutely knocked it out of the park...Gold stars for the creative team." io9 "ANIMAL MAN has the sensational Jeff Lemire at the helm." Entertainment Weekly "A great introduction to Animal Man for new readers, while also giving long-time fans something fresh to be excited about." IGN About the Author Award-winning Canadian cartoonist Jeff Lemire is the creator of the acclaimed monthly comic book series SWEET TOOTH published by DC/Vertigo and the award winning graphic novel Essex County published by Top Shelf. Now one of DC Comics cornerstone writers, Jeff was prominent in the publisher's recent "New 52" line-wide

relaunch as the writer of ANIMAL MAN and FRANKENSTEIN: Agent of S.H.A.D.E. He has also written the monthly adventures of SUPERBOY and THE ATOM and is set to tackle JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK. In 2008 Jeff won the Schuster Award for Best Canadian Cartoonist and The Doug Wright Award for Best Emerging Talent. He also won the American Library Association's prestigious Alex Award, recognizing books for adults with specific teen appeal. He has also been nominated for 5 Eisner awards and 5 Harvey Awards. In 2010 Essex County was named as one of the five Essential Canadian Novels of the Decade. He currently lives and works in Toronto with his wife and son.