



Blue Beetle #1
Chris Paugh

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Foreword

Forward By DrDread

The ancient Egyptians were a kooky and cockeyed bunch. They were ahead of their time in engineering and sociology, yet so naive in the workings of the world.

Case in point, the scarab.

The Egyptians knew all animals came from parents. Everything, that is, but the scarab. The scarab would just mysteriously pop out of the ground, no awkward parental units required. No one ever saw a scarab die of old age, and if you stepped on one, you knew another would come out of the ground to replace it. Wow, that's some crazy reincarnation voodoo, man.

In truth, the scarab was nothing else but the common dung beetle. The dung beetle would lay its eggs in, well, dung. Dung would be used as fertilizer by the humans farming on the floodplains of the Nile to grow their crops. The baby dung beetles would hatch and have to dig their way out of the fields the humans made.

In short, the ancient Egyptians worshipped crap dwelling insects as the divine icons of everlasting life.

I've always liked this story. It reminds me that no matter how high someone might put you up on a pedestal, we all come from humble beginnings.

I know, I know. "What does this have to do with the Blue Beetle?"

It is from humble beginning that the Blue Beetle comes from.

For those who might not know the Blue Beetle, here's a slight spoiler. Blue Beetle is Ted Kord, a normal guy who inherits a superhero legacy that he probably doesn't deserve.

I'll give my buddy Ted some credit; he is a genius and has a rapier sharp wit. However, he is neither in the top ten most intelligent people on Earth nor the richest. He also isn't the strongest, bravest, heartiest, fastest nor handsomest of the superheroes. Truth be said, he isn't even the best Blue Beetle.

Humble beginnings.

I was excited to hear that Ted would have a new beginning here at DC2. Chris Paugh has created a thoroughly fun story, a gripping read and a fantastic introduction of Blue Beetle to both new and older readers.

In keeping with the celebration of humble beginnings, I hope you all join me in wishing the DC2 Ted Kord all the best of luck. He's gonna need it.

Blue Beetle

Issue 1 of 4: "Lessons of the Past"

Written by Chris Paugh

Cover by Chris Paugh (with finishes by Brandon Herren)

Edited by David Charlton

Egypt, 5th Dynasty (circa 2495 BC)...

The smell of incense arose through the hot desert air. The temple filled with people from miles around. They had all made the pilgrimage here to the temple of Khephir god of the sun, creation, life and resurrection. Word had spread through out the land that a descendent of Khephir would appear on this day.

A man entered the temple adorned in the blue robes of the cult of Khephir. He made his way to a large stone scarab that occupied the center of the room. Showing his great strength given him by Khephir he grabbed the heavy stone and slowly lifted it above his head. Still holding it up he declared, "I am Khamiji descendent of Khephir. I am here to free you of the tyrant Nubwai."

With that he carefully laid the giant stone back in its place. A hush came over the crowd. At first they all stood in shock and amazement. Then one by one they began to kneel before Khamiji. All save one were now on their knees. When Khamiji saw the one man who still stood he looked at him and asked, "Are you the one who is here to slay me?"

With that the man pulled a large blade that began to glow with gold light. Rushing at Khamiji he ran the blade through his chest. When he pulled the blade out a white hot light began to emanate from the wound. In a flash it moved into the metal scarab that hung around Khamiji's neck. The blade lay on the temple floor covered in blood. Khamiji slumped over landing on the blade, the scarab resting in his puddle of blood. The crowd grabbed the man who had killed Khamiji and executed him on the spot.

The people were so enraged by what they bore witness to, that they

stormed right up the steps of the palace and demanded that Nubwia step down at once. Upon his refusal a bloody battle ensued. Eventually the people succeeded and Nubwia despite having had Khamiji killed was over thrown. Thus the prophecy of Khamiji was fulfilled...

Khamiji was entombed with his scarab. The people of the city believed that he would one day be returned to them by Kheprhir.

Five nights ago...

David Clinton walked down the long row of prison cells towards the door at the end that lead to the courtyard. The maximum security prison reeked of mildew and urine. David was no stranger to the system. He was not surprised at all when a new guy attacked him to try and make a name for him self. As the fresh meat took a swing at him he spun around grabbing his arm and breaking it in three places. Not totally satisfied with the punishment David went the extra mile and bit the new guy's nose off. If you're going to do something' you'd better do it right his grand mother used to tell him. The guards rushed him and tackled him to the ground. It only took them four minutes and thirty nine point fifty eight seconds this time he noted as they beat him for struggling.

Once they were done with the flogging it was off to solitary confinement. David didn't mind being alone at all, in fact he preferred it. It gave him time to think. David's obsession was time. He had counted four hours and twenty seven minutes since he had been in the small dark room. A bright light nearly blinded him. He heard a very familiar voice speak to him in hushed tones.

"David Clinton I have come to give you everything you ever wanted." said the voice.

"What, — how did you get in here? Who are you?"

"I am called Chronos now, but I once went by the name David Clinton."

"Then you're ...me?"

"You betchya."

"Yes, I knew it!!" he screamed. "How, how do I finally do it?"

"Listen very carefully... "

Four nights ago, Egypt...

Dan Garrett entered the building at the center of the city. The tall cathedral ceilings and the beautiful marble pillars left him in awe. Every since they uncovered this building and cleared it, Dan had been coming here at night when he couldn't sleep. This particular night he was kept awake by guilt. The whole time he had been on this dig, he was neglecting his responsibility as the Blue Beetle. He felt selfish to have the power granted him by the scarab and not use it.

He could hardly believe it had been twenty years since he found the scarab in this very city. *My, how time flies when your life is constantly in danger* he laughed to himself. He decided it was time to live his own life.

The task of studying the city had been abandoned for years due to a lack of funding. It was two years ago that Dan had returned to this city thanks to a contribution from his friend Ted. Ted would be joining him tomorrow on the dig. He was always a good student and friend.

He had met Ted Kord when he enrolled at the college where Dan had been teaching. Ted was a self-made man who left home at an early age. Ted was different, a genius. After leaving home he went on to work his way through college by selling things he would invent on the weekends. After school, he made quite a name for himself with his company Kord Omniversal. *To think he was a student of mine*, Dan thought to himself.

When Dan had finally grown tired enough to sleep through the guilt he headed downstairs. As he was about to exit the building a flash of light caught his eye. Something didn't feel right. Summoning the power of the Blue Beetle scarab Dan went to investigate. Now clad in the black and blue uniform that materializes when he uses the scarab he turned the corner and entered the main room of the building. Dan looked up to see a man floating just above eye level.

He appeared to be made of light at first but as Dan's eyes quickly adjusted to the brilliance of the light, he could make out the yellow suit with black trim.

"Blue Beetle your help is greatly needed. You must come with me now." the being spoke in a strange fuzzy voice.

"Hold on, just a minute. Who are you, and what is the problem?" Dan asked cautiously.

"I am Waverider one of the Linear Men who police the time stream. The rest will be explained along the way. We have but one opportunity." He responded and with that both men disappeared in a flash of light.

Yesterday, Egypt...

We all walk on ground where dinosaurs once roamed and fires once burned. Somehow timelessness is much more self evident in this place. As I look around the ruins of this newly discovered ancient city, I feel small. Like a bug. Three nights ago Dan Garrett a.k.a the Blue Beetle a.k.a my friend disappeared. I have been looking for him since. He was last seen walking the streets of this city. The other archeologists have abandoned the city saying that it is cursed and that is why he disappeared. The others don't know that Dan is also the Blue Beetle. I have a funny feeling that fact is related.

I search the building at the center of town for the thirtieth time. I have a gut instinct about the main room. Something happened in here. I turn and notice it for the first time. Above the entrance in Egyptian letters is an inscription.

Ted stop Chronos. Find the Warlogog.

Below the inscription is an arrow pointed to the corner of the room. Level with the floor is a big square stone. I pull a hammer and chisel from my dusty old backpack. I chip away at thousands of years of dirt that has hardened into the crack around the square stone. After two hours I have cleaned around the stone enough to push it over and expose a crawl space behind it. I barely hear the loud thud as the stone cracks on the marble floor.

I'm dumbfounded by what I see. Standing just inside the opening is a small figurine bearing an uncanny resemblance to Dan. With my flashlight in one hand I begin to crawl down the small opening. When I reach the end of the space there is a huge room. I pull a lantern from my bag and light it. As the small light illuminates the room around me, I realize I am in a tomb. There are all kinds of gifts made of silver and gold. Many of them in the shape of a scarab beetle. When I look over to the sarcophagus I get a funny feeling. When I look up on the top of it I get a nauseous feeling. It's the scarab Dan uses to summon his Blue Beetle powers and costume.

I take the scarab off the top of the tomb and put it my bag. I shudder at the thought before I decide to look inside. The top of the heavy coffin crashes to the ancient floor. It's a mummified body and it is wearing the Blue Beetle costume. I'm not sure how it is possible, but somehow I know it. The Blue Beetle is dead.

I split my emotions in half between the pain of losing my dear friend and fear of what this all means. It's right about that time that I throw up. The weight of this situation crashes down on me like a passenger jet hitting a go-cart.

Ted stop Chronos.

The words ring in my head all the way back to my camp site. I try my best to sleep but can't. I roll over and look at my backpack in the corner of the tent. The scarab. Dan has mentioned before that he would like to pass it along one day. Is that what he intended by leaving it for me to find? I pull it from the bag and look at it for a full five minutes. Finally I make my decision. I walk out into the night. The crisp desert air encompassing me, I raise my arms high above me with the scarab in my hands. I shout the magic word "khamiji" as I've seen Dan do many times and...

Nothing.

Today...

I charter the next flight back to the states. The whole flight home all I can think about is Dan and what could possibly have happened. I mean Dan is a veteran superhero. This didn't just happen to him it was done. I don't have many friends And Dan was a good one. I have every intention to find out what happened to

him. Poor Dan. I know he'd been agonizing over his decision to leave his life in the states as the Blue Beetle. I wish I felt as passionate about something as he did about archeology. Not that I don't enjoy selling brilliant inventions and watching the money stack up. It's what I'm good at, and I mean good. But still it would be nice to feel strongly about something.

When I finally get home I have an idea. For hours I work on it. I got most of the tech from the research and development department of my company Kord Omniversal. Some of it I developed myself. If the scarab won't work for me I'll just have to fake it. With my designs for light weight armor I can take a bullet to the belly and not even flinch. You can't even tell its armor. Waynetech doesn't even have this yet. If I'm going to investigate a superhero's death I think I should be prepared for super villains.

I take the extra time to paint the armor I plan to use. With Dan gone I choose to pay my respects by taking up his name. I modify the design a bit and add a pair of yellow goggles to the mask. They are fully equipped with night vision, infrared, an internal computer screen and anything else a bored millionaire inventor can come up with in his free time. Now I just need a ride.

Years back Dan asked me to design him a ride to use as the Blue Beetle. I call it the Bug. It's a flying ship that I designed to look like the Blue Beetle Dan wore on his chest. He never could get used to the flying and parked it after a few weeks. It's actually quite amazing how aerodynamic a beetle shaped ship can be if done correctly. Like I said bored millionaire inventor.

I head to Dan's apartment. I have a good idea what I'm looking for. Dan once told me that he kept files on the criminals he's battled with. When I find the cabinet he keeps them in I start to pour through them. No mention of any Chronos any where. I take mental notes on some of the others in the files.

Warlogog.

What is the Warlogog?

I do a quick internet search and come up with very little. Maybe enough to scratch the surface. A web site put together by a Dr. Henlein called

worlogogsearch.org. All I find on the site are his address and a brief definition. .

Warlogog: map of space and time.

Lucky me, he lives here in the city. I think I should pay this Doctor Henlein a visit.

The address takes me to an old church that's been converted to a house. The cross on top has been replaced with a clock. I leave my ship on idle floating above the house and repel down. I walk up the old concrete staircase leading up to the front door. It's already opened a crack when I approach. I push it open and announce my arrival.

"Hello? Dr. Henlein?"

"Come in. Please." I hear a raspy elderly voice from inside.

"Dr. Henlein I presume." I answer back trying to sound confident."

I look up to see the old man step into the light creeping through the door. He looks elderly, but less feeble than he sounds.

"Yes I'm Dr. Henlein. Blue Beetle is it?"

"Yeah it is. How do you know me? "

"There is a Beetle on your chest is there not?"

I walked right into that one.

"Yes of course."

"Please come in and sit down I rarely get company."

I may be stating the obvious, but something is very strange about this old man. I follow him into the dusty old building anyways. Looking around I see clocks everywhere. All in various stages of assembly.

"You a clock collector Doc.?" I ask trying to ease into a conversation.

"Yes, I love my clocks." He answers me as though he were waiting for me to ask.

"How many clocks do you own?"

"Over three thousand timepieces."

"You don't say."

"Would you like some coffee or tea Mr. ... ah... Beetle?"

"No thanks and you can call me Blue. How long have you been collecting watches and clocks?"

"For as long as I remember. Will you let me show you my most prized possession?"

"Yeah I'd like that. You make these yourself?"

"Yes, most of them, it's a passion of mine you might say."

"No kidding."

We go downstairs to an office I assume once belonged to a parishioner. With his back turned toward me, Henlein opens a safe. When he's done he turns back toward me holding a pocket watch.

"Did you know that the first clocks only had an hour hand on them?"

"No, I never really studied watches that far back." I answer him with a lie to keep him talking.

"It's true, in fact the mobile clock didn't debut until the fifteen hundreds. The minute hand came along around sixteen seventy five. This watch is one of the first ones to have a minute hand. It was made in Egypt."

"Wow Doc, you really know your watches." I try to humor him.

"Yes thank you. I've spent many years getting to know the business. Now what

exactly brings you here again?"

"What can you tell me about the worlogog?" I ask casually.

"The worlogog. Oh, you must have found my website. It is the ultimate timepiece. No ones sure if it actually exists. It is said to be a scale map of space and time. Legend has it that who ever possess it can bend time to their will."

He returned the old watch to his safe and sat down behind his desk. "Seems silly for an old man like me to be searching for such a thing, but as I said timepieces are my passion. Of course I can't really get out on search expeditions at my age. That is why I put up that website a few years back. I had hoped that if it was ever discovered to be real someone would contact me."

"Well, do you think the legend is true?"

"I don't know. I'm just an old man who collects timepieces."

"Do you know anything else about it?"

"Only what I have told you."

"Does the name Chronos mean anything to you?"

"No, I don't think it does."

"Okay, thanks Dr. Henlein. It's been...interesting."

Blue Beetle leaves the house and tugs on the rope hanging from the ship. As he is pulled up Doctor Henlein looks out the window and watches him leave.

"You can come out now." He shouts behind him. "He's gone."

Three figures pile out of a back room where they've been watching everything.

"Do you think he bought it, Chronos?" One of them asks.

"Yes, Chronos, I think he did."

The old man stood up from his desk and pulled his button down shirt apart revealing an hour glass on his chest.

"The time is near." He tells the three other men. "Soon, he will lead us right to it."

After I leave the old man's house I head home. It's almost morning and I'm hungry. You can't pull the bug through a drive up window.

The old man was obviously lying. He became visibly shaken when I asked him about, Chronos. What is he hiding?

I sleep most of the day. I wake up in the afternoon and hit the weights. If I'm going to be wearing the Blue Beetle uniform I had better keep my guns sculpted. It's pretty revealing for bullet proof armor. I work out harder than I ever have before. The pain of Dan's death is finally catching up with me. I let the frustration get the best of me.

I drop the dumbbells and kick over the table in my home gym. I feel overwhelmed. Mystical scarabs, all powerful artifacts, I mean when the hell did my life become a Brendan Frasier movie. To top it all off the scarab Dan left for me won't even work. Sit down Ted take a deep breath and count to ten.

I had Dan's sarcophagus moved to a museum across town where he had been sending the other artifacts... Along with it I sent some stone tablets and the contents of the room I found Dan in. I have a lot of my own stuff here too. I told a bunch of my millionaire friends that I blew most of my money on them. It's a good way to keep them at arms length. I'll make an after hours visit tonight to keep from having to answer too many questions.

When I fly across the city I take it all in for the first time. It's beautiful. On my way to the museum I spot a dubious looking character following a girl down an alley. He is definitely not trying to help her carry her grocery bag. I'm right above them now in stealth mode. I watch him pull a knife and make my move.

Repelling down out of the bug I land a flying kick to his chest. He hits the pavement and tries to get back up to run, that's when I hit him with the knockout punch. He goes down again, this time he doesn't get back up.

The girl he was following gives me a big hug.

"Thank you, thank you!!"

I could get used to this.

Once I make it inside the museum, I head for the lab. I find the artifacts from Dan's tomb. I still can't believe this is happening. I look at the shabti I found inside the crawlspace with Dan's face on it. The expression almost looks as though it is trying to tell me something. I shrug it off and keep going over everything. I find a scroll in a vase. When I unroll it I find a map of the stars. There's text across the top in hieroglyphics. Before I get a chance to read it I hear a noise behind me. I turn to check it out and as soon as I do I catch a blow to the face.

It's the madmen. I read a file on them at Dan's apartment. They are creepy looking creatures with bright colored hair and clothing. Each one is identical to the others, the only difference is they're all different colors. Some of them are bright shades of green and others are bright yellow and so forth. They usually travel in a pack. It is unclear where they come from.

Apparently I have inherited Dan's enemies along with the Blue Beetle name.

"I don't know what you freaks want, but if you're looking to get your teeth handed to you I'm the guy you're looking for."

I shove the scroll in my backpack and I fight. I fight hard. I use every bit of my aikido training and then some. When one rushes me I use his weight against him and send him flying into some others who fall to the ground. I feel their facial bones give way from some of my strikes. They keep coming. It's almost like they enjoy it.

"It's not him, it's a new one." They scream through berserk laughter.

"It will still feel good to grind his bones." another shouts.

More and more of them show up. As quickly as I can knock them out more take

their place. This is not working for me. I have to take this outside where I can use the bug for back up. The flow breaks for a moment.

Now is my chance. I run as hard as I can for the door. On the other side of the door hangs the rope I use to get in and out of the bug. I give it a tug and it starts to pull me up. I have madmen attached to my leg and they won't let go. When I get close enough to reach into the bug I manage to get out a gun I invented. It emits an electric shock and a high powered current of wind.

Hanging onto my rope I aim and fire. They fall to the earth below us. Even more questions loop through my head. Climbing into the bug I see below that the madmen have taken off. Once I figure out what happened to Dan I'll have to track them down. Man, my face hurts. I haven't been hit that hard since I was a kid. I put the bug on auto pilot and pull out the scroll. As I begin to translate the text I can feel the blood rush to my head. It's a message from Dan.

Ted this is a map of the stars as they were during ancient Egypt. Use it to find the worlogog. The pyramids were built in correlation to the stars. It is hidden in the divine triad. Do not worry about me. I am long gone but rest assure I died happy. Take the scarab, it will not work for you, but when the time is right you will know what to do. You are capable of great things never forget that.

The sun rises as the tears stream down my cheek. The bug lands softly on top of my home. For the first time ever I feel passionate about something. I am the new Blue Beetle.

To be continued!

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC2 Universe.

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From the same author on Feedbooks

Blue Beetle #2 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 2 (of 4): Time Is On My Side.

Ted takes the fight to Chronos' door step In the second installment of the DC2 debut of The Blue Beetle! Plus, Dan Garret is laid to rest, but what familiar faces show up at the funeral?

Blue Beetle #3 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 3 (of 4): The Evolution of Madness.

Now that Dan Garret has been laid to rest, it's time for Ted's world to turn upside down. The Madmen attack and Ted finds that being a superhero comes with some major pitfalls. Don't miss the debut of the Praying Mantis --- and how is he connected to the Madmen?

Blue Beetle #4 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 4 (of 4): The End of the Beginning.

The Blue Beetle mini concludes but Ted is just getting started. Read the final chapter in his first adventures as a superhero to see what's next for Blue Beetle!

Gotham: City of the Dead #1 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 1 (of 4).

The weekly event kicks off as the son of the Governor is kidnapped. Batman runs down the clues and all roads lead to Arkham. Batman confronts Professor Crane, who makes a surprising request from the Dark Knight. And why have Ted Kord's laboratories been getting robbed? Blue Beetle is in Gotham to find out!

Gotham: City of the Dead #2 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 2 (of 4).

Blue Beetle races to the aid of the Dark Knight as Batman's life literally flashes before his eyes! What keeps the bogeyman up at night? Plus, the dead are walking the streets of Gotham City. How can this be?

Gotham: City of the Dead #3 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 3 (of 4).

The undead march on in part three of Gotham: City of the Dead. Scarecrow and Dr. Dee see their evil plans come to fruition but why undead? President Maxwell Lord has a plan and an end game in sight. How far will one man go to protect an old friend? Also, more guests arrive in Gotham to pitch in. And oh yeah, Batman is there too!

Gotham: City of the Dead #4 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 4 (of 4).

Gotham: City of the Dead comes to an explosive conclusion in part four of four The Devil's Last Dance and Other Neat Things. Betrayals, Malicious intent and more Zombies! Scarecrow is going down, but who's taking him there? Find out this and more in this final chapter!

Powers, Inc. #5 (2006)

Powers, Inc.: Blue and Gold.

The team is separated and in the fight of their lives. Follow Blue Beetle, Booster Gold and Looker as they battle to save San Francisco from certain doom. What does Booster know about this crisis? The trio turns to an unlikely source. Booster Gold is banned from an unlikely place and has Looker been holding out on the team?

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #1 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Interview With a Superhero.

It's a fresh start for the Blue Beetle as he takes leave from Powers, Inc. and moves to Midway City. Ted's got his inventor's cap firmly in place to kick off a new business venture, but not everyone is happy about his relocation.

Plus, what's been keeping Ted Kord up at night? What is STAR Labs not hiding anymore? Friends and enemies emerge and a nuclear attack is imminent.

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #2 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Secret Origins

Mysteries unravel and ravel back up in the second installment of the ongoing series starring Ted Kord. A destroyed S.T.A.R. Labs facility, replicating scarabs and two familiar faces you may know

join the fray as Ted tries to find the answers to a few urgent questions.

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #3 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Rebirth.

With Peacemaker taken over by a scarab and the Nuclear Family still on the warpath, two El Paso teens come to Ted Kord's rescue as the secret history of the Blue Beetle continues to unravel, with a shocking cliffhanger that changes everything!

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #4 (2010)

Blue Beetle: The End Is Nigh...Again.



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