



**Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #2**  
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*Blue Beetle*  
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The Blue Beetle's bug broke through a dense fog over Midway City.

Beetle attentively manned the controls of the Bug. He engaged the auto pilot and lowered the power to Save Mode before swiveling in his chair one hundred and eighty degrees to face Peacemaker.

"Spill it. I need to know everything. Tell me about the scarabs, the reprogramming of the Nuclear Family, all of it. What happened at S.T.A.R. Labs? What is The Reach?"

Peacemaker smirked and pulled out a cigar. "You're pretty cocky for an eccentric millionaire. Or is it billionaire yet?" He asked, shaking his match to put it out.

"Let's keep it ambiguous. I said spill it." Blue Beetle shot back.

"Fine, but before we get into all that, there are some things you should know about your mentor." Peacemaker said gruffly.

Ted's eyebrows popped straight up. "I'm all ears."

"Okay, Garret found the scarab in a pyramid. That much you know. That much everyone knows. The story really starts years later. Dan was on a return dig to the pyramid where it all started. He was part of a privately-funded project. The funding was provided by Sparkington J. Northup. Northup worked in antiquities. He was constantly traveling. At the last minute he saddled Dan's team with his kid. Sparkington J. Northup II.

He was fifteen at the time. As much as it was an inconvenience to the crew they took to him quickly. He was an alright kid despite being a little spoiled."

Peacemaker stopped talking abruptly and looked around. "You got an ashtray?"

Ted turned and hit a button the console of the Bug. An ashtray with a vacuum attachment came from a panel in the floor collecting the remainder of the cigar. A second panel then opened and sprayed out an air neutralizer mist.

Peacemaker looked at Ted and shook his head. "Dan was always impressed with your inventions." Peacemaker said then paused before adding, "Nerd."

"Get back to your story. I presume you're talking about this Sparky kid I've heard so little about?"

"Right. Halfway through the dig Dan and his team discovered a second sarcophagus, with a second scarab. Physically it was identical to Dan's but there *were* differences. Dan could sense it was more...powerful, more complete. That night, as the team slept in their tents, the scarab awakened. The next morning Sparkington woke with it fused to his spine."

Ted sat up in his chair. "To his spine? Dan's scarab never did that."

"Correct. The scarab spoke to Sparky. It communicated with him. Turns out, the two scarabs were part of a collective of sentient beings called The Reach. These scarabs were deemed obsolete by The Reach and cast off from the collective. Dan's scarab was older than the one that attached to Northup's; it had its own...personality. It gave Dan his powers without taking over his personality. It didn't know how to. It read his DNA and copied it making the scarabs personality the same as Dan's."

"But Sparky's scarab had its own personality?" Ted inquired.

"Not at first. After the dig Sparky was in the hospital for a month. It didn't look good. That's when the scarab took over. It formed an

exoskeleton around him. A costume too, it must have picked up from his subconscious that he wanted to be Dan's sidekick. The costume was a modified version of Dan's Blue Beetle costume. Dan was happy to take him on. Having a sidekick had pretty much become a tradition in the superhero gig."

"It didn't last long, did it? Sparky disappeared."

"For the first few months things were peachy. The Blue Beetle and Sparky were quite the duo. They faced down a round robin of villains on a nightly basis. Posed for the press, the whole nine. Sparky was finally mastering the powers of the scarab when its own personality re-emerged. When the scarab took over he lost it. He attacked Dan, it drove him insane. The scarab had to be removed. Half of it was. The other half was buried deep in his spine. Sparky lived but the piece of the scarab in his spine reacted violently when it was near Dan's. The only way to keep it inactive was to keep it far away. Sparky was put into protective custody. Dan never saw him again. That was 25 years ago."

"What do you have to do with any of this? Don't tell me...you're Sparky?" Ted asked. His tone was doubtful.

"No. That would be silly." Peacemaker stood up and unbuttoned his shirt. He turned his back to Ted and removed it revealing half of a scarab fused to his spine. "But I do know where the other half of that scarab went."

"You're not Sparky, but you were there?"

"Yeah, when Sparky attacked Dan the first time he called in a few friends for help. I was lucky enough to be in the room when they removed the first half of the scarab. The half containing the Operating System, if you will. The other half is all memory."

"Like a computer?" Ted asked.

"Right."

"Where does S.T.A.R. Labs fit into all this? I know they had Dan's scarab but how did it come in to contact with Sparky? How did the Nuclear

Family get involved?"

"That's what we need to find out. You set a course for S.T.A.R. Labs." Peacemaker said with one eye shut and the other one peering down the barrel of his broken down sawed off shotgun.

"Sure. What facility?"

"Texas." Peacemaker answered.

"What's your plan?" Beetle asked. His tone suggested that he fully expected a plan before taking action.

Peacemaker snapped his hot gun closed. "Plan? I figure we'll play it by ear."

"I have clearance. They'll talk to us." Beetle replied.

"Ted Kord HAD clearance. Since your little coming-out party on national television your clearance will be on hold." Peacemaker said sharply. "You have no idea what you've done, do you?"

"We'll play it by ear then." Ted answered avoiding the subject. "Phasers to stun." He added firmly and then turned to the controls of the Bug.

"Nerd."

### **El Paso, TX...**

"Come on Jamie! It's just a little further." Paco grinned and motioned for his friend to follow him.

"Where are we going?! This better not be like the time you tricked me into running away from home."

"We're almost there. I know it's here. I know it." Paco answered looking out over a small valley in the desert to another peak a couple of hundred feet away.

“What’s here?” Jamie demanded.

“The Fortress of Solitude!” Paco answered finally.

“What? The Fortress of...” Jamie’s jaw dropped and annoyance washed over his face as it turned red. “You got me up at 6 A.M. on a *Saturday* to drag me out into the desert and you’re telling me we’re looking for the Fortress of *Solitude*?!”

“Geez. Take it easy. I know it’s out here. I read on the internet that Superman flies through here all the time. Louie at Mike’s Mechanics saw him with his own eyes.”

“Oh, well, if Louie says so then it must be true.” Jamie replied sarcastically.

Paco feigned shock. “You would dare question the credibility of Louie?”

“Louie is an alcoholic! And I’ll just go ahead and say it: I question your credibility even more than his right now.” Jamie said and dropped his backpack on the ground as he did so he noticed a big shadow zipping across the ground.

“Look!” Paco shouted, pointing at the sky.

“Is that what I think it is?” Jamie asked looking up.

“Yeah! That’s the Blue Beetle’s Bug! Now, what were you just saying about my credibility?” Paco replied, excitedly pointing at himself with both thumbs out.

Jamie sighed. “It’s still not the Fortress of Solitude.”

“Look.” Paco yelled again. “There’s something on fire out there. We have to check this out.”

### **S.T.A.R. Labs...**

As fast as the Bug was, the flight to Texas had still taken three hours. For any one who has ever been on a road trip, three hours in a car isn't all that different than three hours in the Bug. Needless to say Ted and Peacemaker were both ready to get out and stretch their legs.

When the duo finally reached S.T.A.R. Labs, Ted let out a sigh of relief. His relief was short lived. Smoke billowed from what used to be one of S.T.A.R. Labs' largest facilities.

"We're too late. What do you think did this?" Ted asked.

"The rest of the Nuclear Family..." Peacemaker answered.

"That is one whacked-out robot family." Ted replied.

They stepped out of the bug and slowly approached a large hole in the side of the building. There were tracks in the sand leading from the building to a gaping hole in the fence around the perimeter.

"They're obviously not here anymore." Ted commented.

"Shhh." Peacemaker said and motioned for Ted to look around the corner.

The pair of heroes inched their way into the building. Ted had his BB gun ready and Peacemaker was armed with his sawed off shotgun

"Do you hear that?" Peacemaker asked.

"I don't hear anything." Ted answered.

"Really? It's like...it's a song. One of those songs you can't get out of your..." Peacemaker trailed off. He lowered his gun and started walking faster.

"What..." Ted started to protest but stopped himself when he saw a blue glow coming from the Peacemaker's back. "Ah...Peace? Mr. Maker?"

Peacemaker kept walking as though he were in a daze.

“Great.” Ted mumbled and followed the blue light down a dark hallway.

Ted pulled a flashlight from a utility pouch, but by the time he looked up Peacemaker was gone.

“This day just keeps getting better and better.”

The labs were a wreck. There was debris at every turn and Ted started to explore, peering into every room he passed until he came upon one in particular. He entered the room cautiously and saw something of great interest to him. On a table against the far wall lay a stack of devices in various stages of assembly just like the one he found on Father’s back.

“Scarabs...tons of them.” Ted approached the table and picked one up to study it. It had circuit boards running all through it. He pulled it apart and then laid it down with the others.

“Strange.” He said then looked over the lab a little further. When he came back to the table the scarab had moved. “That’s not where I...”

Ted watched as the scarab inched closer to the others. They appeared to be repairing themselves. Circuits grew as if from nowhere. Seconds later it was fully reassembled.

“I must have activated something.” The scientist in Ted begged him to try another. The superhero in him told him it was a bad idea.

At that moment a loud crash came from down the hall. Ted ran out of the room to check it out with his flashlight out and his BB Gun ready. “Peacemaker? Is that you? I found something.”

As Ted spoke the words he caught a glimpse of something at the end of the hall in the dark. It was a giant black and blue figure.

“I don’t suppose you’re friendly?”

“Ted. Get back!” It was Peacemaker but his voice was different. More mechanical.

“What did you find?” Ted had barely gotten out the words when the figure lit up with a blinding blue light and launched at him. Ted barely ducked out of the way as the figure changed courses and flew strait up through the ceiling.

Ted launched a grappling gun at the figure’s foot and was pulled behind it flying them both up and out of the building.

“Thanks for that trick, Bruce.” Ted mumbled under his breath as he held on for dear life.

“Where are we going?” He shouted at the figure.

“To your grave!” It shouted. It was Peacemaker’s voice again, but he was clearly no longer in control. The robotic figure that had taken over raised an arm and it turned into a cannon. It fired a shot at Ted and missed, but hit the rope. Ted plummeted towards the ground.

“Oh my God! Did you see that, Jamie? That thing almost took off the Blue Beetle’s head.” Paco and Jamie ran at a full sprint across the sand to the spot where Ted had landed.

“Do you think we should call someone?” Jamie said as they ran.

“Let’s see if he’s okay. Maybe he knows how to call the Justice League.” Paco replied.

When the two boys approached the spot they found Ted bleeding in the crater in the sand created on impact. He was injured but still breathing.

“Is he...dead?” Paco asked.

“No, he’s breathing.” Jamie answered. “Should we take him to the hospital?”

“The...Bug...” Ted managed to get the words out before he started coughing. His mouth was full of sand.

The boys looked at one another briefly then Paco spoke up. "You heard the man. Let's get him to his ship."

Paco and Jamie dragged Ted to the bug leaving behind a trail of blood mixed with sand. Ted held on to consciousness just enough to retrieve a remote control from a utility pouch and opened the door to the Bug. The boys helped him inside and climbed in themselves. Ted pushed some buttons on the controller and passed out.

"What do we do?" Jamie asked. At that moment a screen lit up on the Bug's console. A red dot flashed on the screen and seemed to be moving across it at an incredible speed.

"Whoa!" Paco said with glee. "He must have put some kind of tracking device on that thing that dropped him."

"We should really get out of here before—" Jamie barely got the words out when the door to the Bug closed. "Oh boy."

Paco grinned from ear to ear. "We can't just leave him anyways. The guy is bleeding. Probably to death."

"We're stuck in here? Push some buttons. Do something!"

"No. No way, man." Paco looked over at Ted who was out like a light. "Give me that first aid kit over there on the wall." Paco took it and bandaged up Ted's arm which had been the source of all the blood.

The Bug started to move and the two youths fell to the floor.

"It's moving. Now it's moving. Crap. Crap. Crap. No one even knows where we are.

We're going to die, dude." Jamie said.

"Stop it. This is the best day of our lives. How many people can say they saved the Blue Beetle from certain death?"

"I dunno. Like, everyone in Powers, Inc. half of the Justice League, maybe even the Teen Titans. Besides that, it was just his arm. His arm

was bleeding. You can't really say certain death." Jamie retorted.

"Whatever. He was totally going to die. I mean if I hadn't made you come out here today. The Blue Beetle would be dead. How do we not go with him?"

"Fine. It's not like we have a choice at this point. Where do you think this thing is taking us anyways?" Jamie gave in.

"I don't know, Jamie, but it'll be one hell of a ride!"

**To Be Continued...**

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Blue Beetle #1 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 1 (of 4): Lessons of the Past.

When archaeologist Daniel Garrett disappears in a recently discovered ancient city, it's up to his former student and friend Ted Kord to find him. But before he can begin his search he makes a shocking discovery! Don't miss this 4-part mini-series starring the newest hero of the DC2!

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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)

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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 #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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