Blue Beetle trailer promises a classic superhero origin story

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Xolo Maridueña stars as Jaime Reeves, who encounters alien biotechnology in *Blue Beetle*.
Is there anything better than a good superhero origin story? There's something about watching an ordinary person, struggling with self-doubt, discover their unique hidden strengths and own their power that never fails to capture our imaginations. It's the bread-and-butter of the superhero genre, and we're getting yet another origin story this August, when Warner Bros. releases *Blue Beetle*, focused on the latest incarnation of the classic comic book character. The first trailer just dropped, and it looks like a fun, family-centric summer film.

The Blue Beetle character first appeared in DC Comics in 1939. Back then, he was a police officer who gained his superpowers by ingesting something called Vitamin 2X, giving him a distinct advantage when fighting crime. The character was rebooted in 1964 by Charlton Comics, in which an archaeologist named Dan Garrett acquired mystical abilities from an ancient Egyptian scarab. The mantle passed to Garrett's student, Ted Kord (and to DC Comics), in 1966. The scarab element also

featured in the 2006 retconned *Blue Beetle*, revealed to be an alien artifact. The scarab bonded with a teenager named Jamie Reyes, and the protective extraterrestrial armor Reyes acquired as a result led to him joining forces with the Teen Titans and Justice League, among others.

Reyes is the Blue Beetle in this new film from the DC Extended Universe, played by Xolo Maridueña (*Cobra Kai*). It was originally intended for release on HBO Max, but Warner Bros. and DC Films decided to add the film to their slate of upcoming theatrical releases instead. New DC Studios co-CEO James Gunn has said *Blue Beetle* won't be connected to prior films in the DCEU, so if it's a box office success, it could be incorporated into the new franchise. Director Angel Manuel Soto decided not to follow one of the classic storylines, opting instead to cherrypick his favorite moments from the character's entire run.

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Per the official premise:

> *Recent college grad Jaime Reyes returns home full of aspirations for his future, only to find that home is not quite as he left it. As he searches to find his purpose in the world, fate intervenes when Jaime unexpectedly finds himself in possession of an ancient relic of alien biotechnology: the Scarab. When the Scarab suddenly chooses Jaime to be its symbiotic host, he is bestowed with an incredible suit of armor capable of extraordinary and unpredictable powers, forever changing his destiny as he becomes the superhero Blue Beetle.*

The cast also includes Bruna Marquezine as Penny, Jaime's romantic interest; Belissa Escobedo as Jaime's younger sister Milagros; George Lopez as his Uncle Rudy; Adriana Barraza as Nana; Elpidia Carrillo as Rocio; and Damián Alcázar as Alberto. Raoul Trujillo plays Carapax the Indestructible Man,

a character drawn from the Ted Kord *Blue Beetle* series, while Susan Sarandon plays Victoria Kord, Ted's widow, a new villainous character. Bonus: Harvey Guillén (*What We Do in the Shadows, Werewolves Within*) will appear in the film, although we don't yet know in what role.

We meet Jaime Reyes working with his sister, apparently cleaning the homes of the fabulously wealthy. We next see him outside a swanky office building, hoping to get a better job for them both. That's when a clearly anxious Penny gives him a cardboard burger container to guard with his life, warning him not to open it. But of course, at the urging of his family, he opens it and finds a pretty blue Egyptian scarab. The scarab activates and attaches itself to his face, to everyone's horror—yep, just like the face huggers in *Alien*. And then his entire body sprouts that extraterrestrial armor. "Host acquired," a disembodied AI voice declares.

Jaime might be the scarab's chosen one, but that doesn't mean he's in control. Penny explains that it's "some kind of world-destroying weapon." While it's "designed to protect its host, sometimes it does what you want and sometimes it doesn't." Then there's the fact that Victoria Kord wants the artifact back: "The scarab chose you, but it belongs to me." (Clearly the scarab begs to differ.) And he has to face off against Carapax, it seems, who warns, "The love you feel for your family makes you weak." This being a feel-good superhero origin story, I think we'll find out it actually makes him stronger, and he'll figure out how to use this unexpected gift for good.

Blue Beetle hits theaters on August 18, 2023.

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