

The Blue Mantis #2 - "The Confrontation"

Written by Steven Bland

In her private lab at the Orion Corporation, Tina Madison started work on constructing a streamlined suit of mechanized body armor as well as a streamlined high-tech helmet.

"I *must* have the Blue Mantis back, Madison thought. "And since my underlings have failed to deliver him to me, I must do the job *myself*. But, in order for me to accomplish the task, I must match and counter the Blue Mantis's powers. Powers which *I* gave him!"

Meanwhile, the Blue Mantis flew through the night sky. Soon, he arrived at Stanley Stevens's secret laboratory and entered through the secret entrance.

Once the new superhero was inside, Stanley greeted him.

"Welcome back, Wesley," Stanley asked warmly. "How did the rescue go?"

"The mother and her child are safe," Blue Mantis said as he removed his face mask. "And I also apprehended the high-tech criminals who started the fire in the first place."

"Good work," Stanley told him.

Wesley glanced at the clock. It read 11:00 p.m.

"I - - I have to get back home," Wesley said. "My mom will be worried about me."

"Of course," Stanley said, as he handed Wesley his civilian clothes. "But I want you to be back here tomorrow, *in costume*. And bring your civilian clothes with you.

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"Okay," Wesley said, before he put his full head mask back on.

After sprouting his wings, the Blue Mantis flew off.

Upon reaching his home in Brooklyn, the Blue Mantis landed in a secluded spot and folded his wings back into his shoulder blades. Then, he used his superhuman agility to get up to his second story window, which he entered through. Once inside, he quickly took off his costume, changed into the civilian clothes he had brought with him, hid the costume under his bed, and got back under the covers.

The next morning, at her private lab in the Orion Corporation, Tina Madison continued working on her helmet as well as on her mechanized suit of body armor. The helmet was almost completed, but she took a break to add nanobots to the mechanized armored suit.

Once I put on this armored suit and activate it, it will inject me with nanobots that should increase my strength, speed, and agility to superhuman levels, she thought.

Meanwhile, the Blue Mantis arrived at Stanley's private laboratory and entered through the secret entrance.

"Welcome Wesley," Stanley said as the superhero unmasked. "There's someone I want you to meet."

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Stanley turned his head to another direction.

"Hey, Mortimer," Stanley said. "Can you come over here, please?"

Soon, a humanoid robot entered the room and stopped next to Stanley.

"Wesley, this is Mortimer," Stanley said as he introduced Wesley to the robot. "Mortimer is a highly intelligent robot of my own design. He will be teaching you how to do judo."

"Judo," Wesley asked.

"Yes, Stanley said. "No matter how strong you are, there will always be someone who is even stronger than you. And, sooner or later, you will run into someone who is much, much stronger. This is where a knowledge of judo can be a real asset. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Wesley replied.

"Good," Stanley said. "Mortimer will be your sparring partner. When you apply judo, the stronger your enemy is, the more it helps you. By using muscular leverage, you can turn the force of your enemy's strength against him. Do you hear me?"

"Yes," Wesley answered.

"Good," Stanley said. "Mortimer, you and Wesley can begin practicing now."

Mortimer lunged toward Wesley who instinctively braced himself. The autistic young man dodged the robot's attack and grabbed it.

"Good work, lad," Stanley told Wesley. "Now, shift your weight."

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Wesley shifted his weight and Mortimer went over and down.

"Well done, Wesley," a proud Stanley gushed.

The rest of the morning passed quickly as Stanley and Mortimer continued to instruct Wesley in basic blocks, kicks, punches, and throws.

Wesley learned quickly and well.

Back at her private lab in the Orion Corporation, Tina Madison had just finished constructing her high-tech helmet and streamlined mechanized suit of body armor, which she put on.

She activated the helmet and soon found herself seeing everything in 360 degrees.

The helmet works, she thought. I can see everywhere at once. And once the Blue Mantis and I meet again, I will see if the helmet's echolocation can nullify his camouflage ability, should he attempt to use it to escape me.

Then, she activated her streamlined suit of mechanized body armor. The armor soon injected her with nanobots.

"Yes! It's working," Madison said. "I can feel the nanobots increasing my strength!"

"But, *how strong am I, now?*" Madison wondered as she walked over to a huge bank of equipment.

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Madison tried to lift the bank and she did it successfully. Soon, she was holding it over her head.

"This bank of equipment weighs tons," Madison crowed. "And I'm lifting it as if it were a feather!"

She carefully set the bank down.

"Now, I must find out how fast, how agile I am," Madison said.

Madison went to and entered a room which had a special treadmill inside it. She got on the treadmill and started running as fast as she could. Her top speed was one hundred twenty miles per hour.

Then, she easily did a few flips and somersaults.

"Impressive," Madison said to herself. I am now a physical match for the Blue Mantis himself!

Meanwhile, at Stanley Steven's hidden laboratory, Stanley talked to Wesley.

"I'm very proud of you, son. You have learned every judo move Mortimer and I have taught you very quickly," a proud Stanley said. "And I have a special surprise for you."

Wesley clapped his hands in glee. Soon, Mortimer started clapping his hands in glee, too.

"I have created two special weapons for you, which will be quite useful to you," he added.

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Stanley reached for a couple of yellow devices.

"Try these babies on," Stanley told Wesley as the former handed the devices to the latter.

"There's one for each forearm."

"But, there's no way I can put them on. Neither of these has a wrist or arm band," Wesley said.

"Just place one on each forearm," Stanley said. "The devices will do the rest."

Wesley placed one of the devices on his left forearm. The device quickly assembled itself into a special high-tech vambrace on it.

"Amazing," Wesley said with an excited smile.

"Now, place the other device on your other forearm," a grinning Stanley enthusiastically told the autistic young man.

Wesley placed the other device on his right forearm. The device, like its twin, quickly assembled itself into another special high-tech vambrace which surrounded his right forearm.

"Your bracers each have an argon matrix laser sickle claw, which can cut through only inorganic matter. Each claw is activated by a simple flick of your wrist," an enthusiastic Stanley told Wesley.

"Try it."

Wesley did as Stanley told him. With a flick of each wrist, each bracer generated a sickle claw that was made out of laser light.

"And with another flick of each wrist, you can make the sickle claws go away," Stanley added.

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With another flick of each wrist, Wesley made the argon matrix laser sickle claws deactivate.

"Good," Stanley said. "Now, activate the laser claws again. I want you to practice using at least one of them."

With another flick of each wrist, Wesley reactivated his argon matrix sickle claws.

Stanley turned his attention to Mortimer.

"Mortimer," he said. The humanoid robot responded.

Stanley pointed to a cinderblock on the other side of the room. Mortimer's eyes were soon directed toward the cinderblock.

"See that cinderblock over there?" Stanley asked his robotic assistant. "I want you to go over there and bring it here."

Mortimer obeyed the command.

Stanley then turned his attention to Wesley and pointed him to the cinderblock that Mortimer was holding.

"See that cinderblock that Mortimer is holding?" Stanley asked the autistic young man. "I want you to use one of the sickle claws to cut it."

Wesley followed the order and the sickle claw from his right bracer sliced through the cinderblock like a hot knife through butter.

"Incredible," an amazed Wesley said.

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"Well done, young man," Stanley gushed.

Wesley started to clap his hands in glee, but Stanley stopped.

"Hold it, fella," Stanley warned. "You gotta power down the claws first."

"Oh, right," Wesley responded.

With a flick of each wrist, Wesley deactivated the sickle claws. Then, he clapped his hands in glee.

"But now, you need to practice using those sickle claws in a fight. Follow me," Stanley told Wesley as the former rose up and led the latter back to the training room.

"Reactivate your sickle claws," Stanley told Wesley. "And I'll begin the training sequence."

With a flick of each wrist, Wesley reactivated the laser sickle claws and Stanley went to the training rooms control panel where he activated the simulation, which caused many enemy drone planes to appear.

"These enemy drones will be coming at you fast and furious, Wesley," Stanley warned. "I want you to try to take out as many as you can and as fast as you can. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," Wesley replied.

"Good. Now, let's begin, shall we?" Stanley asked as he started the simulation.

Wesley started using his laser sickle claws and his superhuman speed to destroy the enemy drones that were coming toward him.

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Meanwhile, at her laboratory at the Orion Corporation, Tina Madison looked at another item at her disposal: a snowboard-like flying device which she soon mounted and activated cybernetically. Soon, she, and the device, rose up from the floor.

My Sky Board's two air rotors are keeping me airborne, she thought.

Then, she and the board turned around and moved forward.

And its mini jet-like engine can swivel and propel me and my board in any direction I wish, she thought. I also designed the Sky Board to have a laser cannon and seeking missiles.

Madison's right hand reached at the Sky Board's port and a high-tech grenade was launched from the board into the air at arm's height and into her hand.

And to provide me with one of my special grenades at a moment's notice, she thought as she threw the grenade at a three-inch sheet of solid steel, which was soon destroyed.

Perfect, Madison thought with a cruel smile.

Later, at Stanley's secret base, Wesley was still practicing the use of his argon matrix laser sickle claws by slicing enemy drones who were coming at him. Wesley had already destroyed tens and hundreds of them and only three were left. Soon, the last three were destroyed.

"Well done, Wesley," a proud Stanley said as he deactivated the simulation.

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"You took down three hundred and three enemy drones without missing a beat," Stanley told Wesley. I'm so *proud* of you."

"Thanks, Stanley," Wesley said.

Wesley then looked at the time. The clock read 3:00 p.m.

"Stanley, I need to get home right away," Wesley said. "I'm going to a party at a friend's house tonight."

"Okay, fella. Have fun," Stanley said with a smile as he handed Wesley his street clothes. "But I want you to start wearing your Blue Mantis costume under your street clothes. Just in case."

"In case of what?" Wesley asked.

"In case some supervillain or monster were to show up anywhere near you," Stanley answered. "If that happens, I want you to always be ready."

"Okay," Wesley said.

He soon sprouted his wings and quickly flew out through the lab's secret entrance. In minutes, he arrived at this home in Brooklyn, landed in a secluded spot, folded his wings back into his shoulder blades, changed in secret, and used his superhuman agility to get up to and enter his second story window.

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Meanwhile, at her private lab at the Orion Corporation, Madison was at a lab table where she was filling pellets with a special chemical gas she concocted herself. Once every pellet was filled, she put them all inside a special purse of her own design. Then, she filled a canister with another special chemical.

The gas in each of my pellets is potent enough to render anyone unconscious for hours, Madison thought. And this canister releases a fine chemical spray which neutralizes the effects of the gas from my pellets.

Now, I am ready to go after the Blue Mantis tonight, she thought.

Madison got out a special remote control and, pressing a button on it, opened a secret passage.

I know where he lives! He *will not* escape me again, Madison thought as she flew through the secret opening.

Later that night, inside his house, Wesley prepared to leave. He was ready to go to Carly Connors's house for the party.

"I'm off to Carly's house for the party, Mom," Wesley told his mother.

"Have fun, dear," Mrs. Walker told her son.

Soon, Wesley was out the door.

Once he was outside, Wesley started walking. Madison followed him.

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Once she and Wesley were far enough away from his house, Madison threw a gas pellet at Wesley. The gas that the pellet released knocked the autistic young man unconscious.

Madison scooped up Wesley and flew off with him.

Minutes later, Madison flew Wesley to her lab at the Orion Corporation. The secret entrance opened up to receive them.

Once they were inside and have landed, Madison immediately placed Wesley's unconscious form onto a table and fastened its clamps around his wrists and ankles. She then placed a cybernetic helmet on Wesley's head. The helmet was connected to a machine.

With her victim firmly in place, Madison revived him with another whiff of gas.

Soon, Wesley regained consciousness.

"Coming around, Wesley?" Madison asked. "Good."

Wesley pulled against the clamps around his wrists and ankles.

"Don't bother, Wesley," Madison told Wesley as he continued to pull. "The clamps around your wrists and ankles are too strong for even you to snap!"

"You can't escape," she told him. Again, Wesley kept pulling. "Once I reprogram your brain, you will serve only me!"

"NO! NEVER," Wesley defiantly exclaimed.

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"You have no choice, honey! I *made* you!" Madison said as she went to activate the brainwashing machine. "And that makes you *my* property!"

The brainwashing machine was turned on and Wesley was mustering up every ounce of his willpower to fight off the machine's effects, while at the same time, continuing to pull at his clamps.

Minutes passed as Wesley continued to resist the machine and try to pull himself free from the table.

Soon, Wesley broke free. The clamps were torn off the table which held him prisoner and the autistic young man quickly removed the brainwashing helmet that was on his head.

"*HOW DID YOU GET LOOSE?*" Madison asked. "*HOW?!*"

Without answering, and with dazzling speed, Wesley removed his street clothes, revealing his Blue Mantis costume underneath and put on his gloves and full-head mask. Then, the yellow vambraces, at Wesley's command, assembled themselves onto his forearms.

Soon, a battle between the two broke out. The Blue Mantis attacked Madison, who, thanks to her mechanized suit of body armor and the nanobots in her body, easily countered his every move.

"You're *no match* for *me*, Wesley," Madison told the autistic young man as she grabbed his arms forcefully. "My mechanized suit of body armor injects nanobots into my body which greatly augment my strength, speed, and agility to superhuman levels, which now surpass your own."

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Suddenly, the Blue Mantis remembered his judo training from Stanley earlier and used it to turn Madison's own augmented strength against her and throw her into a wall at great speed. The impact stunned Madison.

"HOW? *HOW?!?*" Madison asked as she recovered and got back up.

The autistic superhero didn't answer as he continued to use judo blocks, kicks, punches, and throws on his enemy.

Then, the Blue Mantis, with a flick of each of his wrists, activated his laser sickle claws and used them to destroy every piece of equipment in Madison's lab, which had started to catch fire.

Madison watched in agony as her erstwhile victim was laying waste to her laboratory.

"N-NOOOOOO! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!?*" Madison screamed as she rose up. She immediately tried to stop the Blue Mantis before he could cause any more damage.

The laboratory exploded and the Blue Mantis flew out as fast as he could, away from the explosion. However, he was knocked into a nearby tree and was rendered unconscious.

Eventually, a few hours later, the superhero recovered and turned his attention to the remains of the destroyed laboratory.

Oh, no, he thought. Dr. Madison was in there. I have to try and save her.

With a flick of each wrist, the Blue Mantis deactivated his argon matrix laser claws.

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The Blue Mantis entered what was left of the laboratory and searched everywhere for Madison, but couldn't find her or any trace of her body.

What happened to her? Did she survive somehow? The superhero wondered as he flew off.

Along the way, he noticed Carly Connors's house and saw Carly waving goodbye to her guests as they were leaving. The Blue Mantis stuck around, hovering overhead.

"Thanks for the party, Carly," one of the guests told her.

"I had a great time," another guest told her.

"Glad you enjoyed it," Carly said.

Once all the guests were gone, Carly was alone in her thoughts for a few minutes.

Why didn't Wesley show up? What could have happened? Carly thought.

I guess I'll never know, she thought as she went back inside and closed the door.

Well, that's it, the disappointed and dejected Blue Mantis thought as he flew off. I may as well head for home.

THE END

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