

Freedom's Foursome #1 - "Scarabax Strikes"

Written by Steven Bland

Somewhere, on a distant planet in the Alpha Centauri system, its ruler, a humanoid alien beetle named Scarabax was sitting on his throne with a staff of immense cosmic power in his possession. His loyal subjects, and there were many, bowed before his presence.

"ALL HAIL SCARABAX, LORD OF KIROPS!" His subjects chanted.

I have ravaged this once proud world and made its people my servants, Scarabax thought. But it is *not enough*.

I crave more power, more planets to conquer, he continued.

"Leave me," Scarabax told his subjects. They obeyed.

The alien conqueror rose from his throne and left for his war room. Upon entering, Scarabax met with his general, who was standing before a viewing screen which showed an image of the planet Earth.

"General Ang," the alien conqueror said. "Have you found another suitable planet worthy of my conquest?"

"Yes, my lord," Ang replied, before showing Scarabax the viewing screen that showed the planet Earth.

"Yes, this planet shall do nicely," the alien conqueror said with a cruel smile.

"But, Lord Scarabax," General Ang said. "Earth has a presence of powerful people protecting it."

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"They shall not stand in my way," Scarabax told his general. "For I have the cosmic staff!"

Scarabax commanded. "Summon your Beetle Battalion at once and have them join us,"

Scarabax commanded.

"At once, my lord," General Ang answered as he went to summon his troops. Soon, they joined their general and their ruler in the war room.

With the power of his staff, Scarabax opened up a dimensional portal which led to Times Square in New York City.

Scarabax turned to General Ang and the Beetle Battalion.

"FOLLOW ME," Scarabax commanded. "WE ARE GOING TO CONQUER EARTH!"

The alien ruler, accompanied by General Ang and the Beetle Battalion, went through the portal, which transported them to Times Square in New York City.

Scarabax, General Ang, and the Beetle Battalion soon appeared before a large crowd of people.

"PEOPLE OF EARTH," Scarabax proclaimed. "HEAR ME, AND HEAR ME WELL!"

"I AM SCARABAX, SUPREME RULER OF KIROPS," the alien conqueror added. "AND I HEREBY PROCLAIM MYSELF SUPREME RULER OF YOUR PLANET AS WELL!"

"AND WITH ME, IS MY LOYAL GENERAL, ANG," he continued.

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"IF YOUR ARMED FORCES ATTEMPT TO DEFY LORD SCARABAX," General Ang said.

"THEY WILL FACE THE FURY OF MY BEETLE BATTALION!"

"YOUR FATE IS SEALED," Scarabax said.

Elsewhere, at SWAT headquarters, a phone rang in Captain Leslie Kirby's office. Kirby, himself, picked it up.

"SWAT headquarters. Captain Leslie Kirby speaking," he said.

There was a brief pause.

"WHAT?" A stunned Kirby asked. "ALIEN BEETLES? WALKING LIKE MEN? AND THEY'RE CAUSING A PANIC IN TIMES SQUARE?"

"We're on our way," Kirby said before hanging up the phone. His lieutenant, John Scioli, had just entered the room, noticed by the SWAT captain.

"Scioli, we gotta get everyone to Times Square," Kirby told his lieutenant. "And I mean *everyone!*"

"What's the situation, sir?" Scioli asked.

"We got a huge swarm of beetles in Times Square," Kirby answered.

"Beetles?" Scioli asked. "But, wouldn't exterminators be more appropriate to deal with this?"

"Not this time," Kirby answered. "These beetles are *humanoids!* And aliens from another planet, to boot!"

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"Aw, geez," Scioli muttered.

"My sentiments exactly! Let's go," Kirby said. "Time's a'wastin'!"

Kirby and Scioli both rushed to mobilize the SWAT teams.

Minutes later, they left headquarters.

Soon, the SWAT teams arrived in full force on the scene at Times Square. Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and their men quickly got out of their vehicles and wasted no time getting their weapons ready.

Getting out his bullhorn, Captain Kirby moved it toward his mouth and started to speak.

"ALL RIGHT, CREEP," Kirby said. "LEAVE THIS PLANET AND GO BACK TO WHEREVER IT IS YOU CAME FROM, RIGHT NOW! AND TAKE YOUR CREEPY CRAWLY STOOGES WITH YOU!"

"OR WE'LL KICK YER KEISTERS RIGHT *HERE* AND RIGHT *NOW*," the SWAT captain added.

"Fool! I am Scarabax, the Supreme," the alien conqueror said.

"And Scarabax doesn't *take* orders," General Ang said.

"He *gives* them! As do I," he added, before turning to his Beetle Battalion.

"BEETLE BATTALION, DESTROY THEM," General Ang exclaimed as he pointed them towards the SWAT teams.

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The insectoid soldiers drew their weapons and fired at Kirby, Scioli, and their men.

"TAKE COVER," Captain Kirby told his men. They obeyed.

Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and their men hid behind their vehicles where they each quickly loaded their grenade launchers. Once their weapons were ready, they were, too.

"All right, men," Kirby told his fellow officers. "Let's take these creeps down!"

Kirby, Scioli and their men emerged from behind their vehicles and quickly aimed their weapons at the invaders.

"EAT EXPLOSIVE SHELLS, CREEPS," Kirby exclaimed as he, Scioli, and their men fired their grenade launchers at General Ang and his army who quickly used their armored wings to sheathe and shield themselves.

Once there were no more explosive shells to be thrown, the Beetle Battalion soldiers unsheathed themselves.

"Your puny weapons have no effect on us, Earthlings," General Ang boasted.

Kirby, Scioli, and their men quickly hid back behind their vehicles and regrouped.

"What do we do now, Captain?" Scioli asked his superior.

"Let's try our gas grenades," Kirby told his lieutenant.

Kirby, Scioli, and their men quickly loaded gas grenades into their launchers. With their weapons ready, they showed themselves and immediately aimed their weapons.

"You think our weapons can't stop you?" Kirby asked General Ang. *Steven* "We'll see about that!"

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Kirby turned to his men.

"Okay, men," the SWAT captain said to them. "Let 'em have it!"

Kirby, Scioli and their men fired their gas grenades at General Ang and his army, but they were unfazed by the attack.

"Captain, our gas grenades had no effect," Scioli told Kirby.

"Of course, witless humans," General Ang said. "That is because we have no lungs!"

Elsewhere, Keith Kendall, Angela Park, Bill Stone, and Danny Ramirez were each at their respective occupations. Suddenly, they each received a mental message from Forzon.

I hear you, Forzon. What's up? Keith, Angela, Bill, and Danny each communicated mentally.

Freedom's Foursome, you are needed, Forzon said telepathically. Suit up as soon as you can. Inform me when you're ready and I will teleport you to my laboratory. There, I will brief you on the crisis at hand.

Keith, Angela, Bill, and Danny each accessed a pocket dimension where their special uniforms were stored. After obtaining their suits, the four immediately donned them. Minutes later, they were suited up.

I'm ready, Keith, Angela, Bill, and Danny each communicated to Forzon mentally.

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The four costumed heroes were transported to Forzon's laboratory and command center. Keith, Angela, Bill, and Danny quickly went to the viewing screen which showed Scarabax, General Ang, and the Beetle Battalion standing before Kirby, Scioli, and the rest of the SWAT team

"As you can see, a dangerous new menace has arrived on Earth in Times Square," Forzon told them.

"SURRENDER, HUMANS! YOUR FORCES ARE *NO MATCH* FOR ME AND MY BEETLE BATTALION," General Ang said. "SCARABAX'S REIGN IS *INEVITABLE!*"

"BOW BEFORE ME, MEATBAGS," Scarabax exclaimed on the viewing screen. "*BOW BEFORE THE MIGHT OF YOUR NEW RULER - - SCARABAX!*"

"Bow?" Captain Kirby asked. "*NEVER!*"

"WE WILL *NEVER* BOW TO YOU," he added. "*EVER!*"

"*YOU DARE* DEFY ME?" An irate Scarabax asked.

"I SHALL MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU," he added, before firing energy blasts from his staff at Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and the SWAT team who all ducked for cover.

"We gotta get down there," Bill said. "*Pronto!*"

At will, Keith and Bill assumed their superhuman forms. Keith's body was converted to a liquid metal form with organic nanomachines while Bill became a being of pure electrical energy given structure through orange rocky armored plating.

"Good luck, Freedom's Foursome," Forzon told the team as he teleported them to the scene.

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The superhero team soon appeared before Scarabax, General Ang, and the Beetle Battalion, as well as Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and the entire SWAT team.

"Captain Kirby, who are these costumed people who just came out of nowhere?" Scioli asked his superior.

"I don't know, Scioli," Kirby answered. "So let's just hang back, watch, and listen."

"Not so fast, Scarabax," Galvanex said. "You're not taking over our planet on *our watch!*"

"WHO DARES?" Scarabax asked.

"*We* dare," Galvanex answered. "Freedom's Foursome!"

"Looks like we got nothin' ta worry about," Kirby told Scioli. "Those costumed guy seem to be on *our side.*"

General Ang turned toward his army.

"BEETLE BATTALION," he said, before directing them toward the superheroes.

"ATTACK THE INTERLOPERS." he commanded. His army obeyed.

"All right, team," Galvanex told his teammates. "Let's take these creeps down!"

Each member of the Freedom's Foursome took on one quarter of the Beetle Battalion.

Expanding and morphing his fists into jackhammers and using his fluidity, Galvanex took on and defeated the first quarter of the Beetle Battalion.

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Increasing her personal density, Incredibelle made herself invulnerable to the weapons used by the second quarter. Then, the female member of the Freedom's Foursome made herself intangible and plunged each fist into the soldiers and solidified her fists, causing the insectoid soldiers pain and discomfort. Working as quickly as she could, Incredibelle repeated the process until the soldiers of the entire third quarter were down for the count.

Forming solid ice maces in his hands with his ice flames as he took to the sky and soared higher, Coldfire dive-bombed with incredible speed on the third quarter, toppling them like toy soldiers.

Fulgurite combined his electrical energy with his superhuman strength and durability to deliver very powerful punches that overpowered the fourth quarter.

With all of the Beetle Battalion defeated, Scarabax was the only one left standing.

"We took care of General Ang and his foot soldiers, Scarabax," Galvanex said. "And now, we're going to take care of *you!*"

Galvanex turned to Coldfire.

"Coldfire, stop him cold," the leader of Freedom's Foursome said. "*Literally!*"

"You got it, fearless leader," Coldfire said as he quickly froze the extra-terrestrial conqueror in a solid block of ice.

"CHILL OUT," Coldfire exclaimed.

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"Puny human! You think this paltry prison can hold me?" Scarabax said before breaking free of his icy prison easily. "NEVER!"

"You may have defeated my general and his Beetle Battalion," the extra-terrestrial conqueror. "BUT YOU *WILL NOT DEFEAT ME!*"

The alien conqueror quickly turned his attention to Coldfire. Shooting an energy blast from his staff, Scarabax hit the ice flame covered superhero, knocking him unconscious.

"COLD FIRE," Galvanex, Incredibelle, and Fulgurite exclaimed in unison.

"BIG MISTAKE, CREEP! THAT WAS *OUR BUDDY* YOU JUST KNOCKED OUT," Fulgurite exclaimed as he, Galvanex, and Incredibelle charged toward the alien conqueror.

"KEEP BACK," Scarabax exclaimed as he fired energy blasts from his staff to try and keep the three remaining heroes at bay.

Fulgurite surrounded himself with a protective electrical energy field, Galvanex used his malleable liquid metal body to evade the blasts, while Incredibelle lowered her density so that the energy blasts passed through her.

"It's going to take a *lot more* than *that* to stop us," Galvanex said as he and his teammates continued toward their enemy.

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The three heroes quickly approached their quarry. Galvanex formed his hands into giant pile-drivers while Incredibelle increased her personal density. The three heroes soon started pounding away at the alien conqueror, who quickly shielded himself with his armored wings which successfully resisted the blows.

"ENOUGH," Scarabax exclaimed as he quickly unsheathed himself. Then, he swatted aside the three remaining members of Freedom's Foursome.

"Galvanex, Whatta we do now?" Fulgurite asked his leader.

Galvanex quickly generated a spectro-analyzer device and started using it to analyze their extra-terrestrial opponent.

"Scarabax *must* have a weak spot *somewhere*," Galvanex said. "If we can *find* it, maybe we can *exploit* it."

Soon, Galvanex's spectro-analyzer picked up powerful energy readings from Scarabax's cosmic staff and noticed its effect on the alien conqueror.

Scarabax aimed his cosmic staff at the three heroes. The staff crackled with cosmic energy and was about to discharge a powerful blast at the villain's mental command.

"Look out," Incredibelle warned. "Scarabax is about to fire his energy blasts at us again!"

As the energy bolt was discharged from the staff, a solid wall of ice suddenly formed in front of the three superheroes, shielding them from the bolt of energy.

Galvanex, Incredibelle, and Fulgurite looked upward and saw Coldfire hovering above them.

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"Looks like I regained consciousness just in time," Coldfire said with a smile. "You guys all right?"

"We are now, buddy," Fulgurite answered.

"We need to target Scarabax's staff," Galvanex said.

"Obviously," Incredibelle said. "It generates powerful cosmic energy blasts!"

"It does more than that," Galvanex said. "It also augments Scarabax's strength and durability exponentially."

Galvanex generated a tractor beam emitter and used it on Scarabax's cosmic staff to try and separate it from the alien conqueror's grasp.

Feeling his staff about to be pulled from his hand, Scarabax made every effort to resist.

"You shall not seize my staff," the alien conqueror vowed. "SO SWEARS SCARABAX!"

"Unhhh! He's - - resisting," Galvanex said as he continued to use his tractor beam on the staff.

Fulgurite used his electrical energy to supercharge Galvanex's tractor beam emitter, giving it more power.

"Not for long," Fulgurite vowed.

Soon, the supercharged tractor beam pried the cosmic staff from the alien conqueror's hands.

"Nice work, guys," Coldfire told Galvanex and Fulgurite. "And now, I'll make sure Scarabax won't be able to get at his staff."

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Using his ice flames, Coldfire quickly encased the cosmic staff in a solid block of ice.

Then, after increasing her personal density to the maximum, Incredibelle delivered a powerful punch to render Scarabax unconscious.

With Scarabax defeated, Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and the rest of the SWAT team quickly approached the superhero team to thank them.

"Well done, Freedom's Foursome," Captain Kirby said. "Top-notch job."

"Thank you, Captain - -?" Galvanex asked.

"Kirby," Captain Kirby replied as he proffered his hand for a handshake. "Captain Leslie Kirby."

Galvanex powered down and shook Captain Kirby's hand. Fulgurite and Coldfire soon powered down as well, and they along with Incredibelle took turns shaking Kirby's hand.

Captain Kirby then introduced Lieutenant Scioli.

"And this is my lieutenant, John Scioli," a proud Kirby said. "The best partner a guy could ever have."

Scioli proffered his hand for a handshake. Galvanex, Fulgurite, Coldfire, and Incredibelle each took turns shaking his hand as well.

"It's a pleasure to meet you all," Scioli said.

"Likewise," Fulgurite said.

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"You guys will be sticking around for a long time, we hope?" Kirby asked. "We can always use more superheroes like you."

"Yes, we will," Galvanex answered. "You can always count on us."

"Anytime," Fulgurite said.

"Anyplace," Coldfire said.

"Anywhere," Incredibelle said.

"And you can count on us, too," Kirby said. "Whatever you need from us, it's yours. All you have to do is ask."

"Thank you, Captain Kirby," Incredibelle said. "Well, we have to be going now."

Forzon, the threat from Scarabax, General Ang, and the Beetle Battalion is over, Galvanex communicated to Forzon mentally.

The four costumed heroes were teleported away from the scene as Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and the SWAT team watched.

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"I tell ya, Scioli," a smiling Captain Kirby said. "There go a bunch of *real heroes*."

"You said it, Captain," a smiling Lieutenant Scioli said.

"Good luck, Freedom's Foursome," they said in unison.

THE END



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