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# YU THE GREAT

## CONQUERING THE FLOOD

A  
CHINESE  
LEGEND

# **YU** THE **GREAT**

CONQUERING THE FLOOD

A  
CHINESE  
LEGEND



**GRAPES  
UNIVERSE™**

**STORY BY  
PAUL D. STORRIE  
PENCILS AND INKS BY  
SANDY CARRUTHERS**

**CHINA**

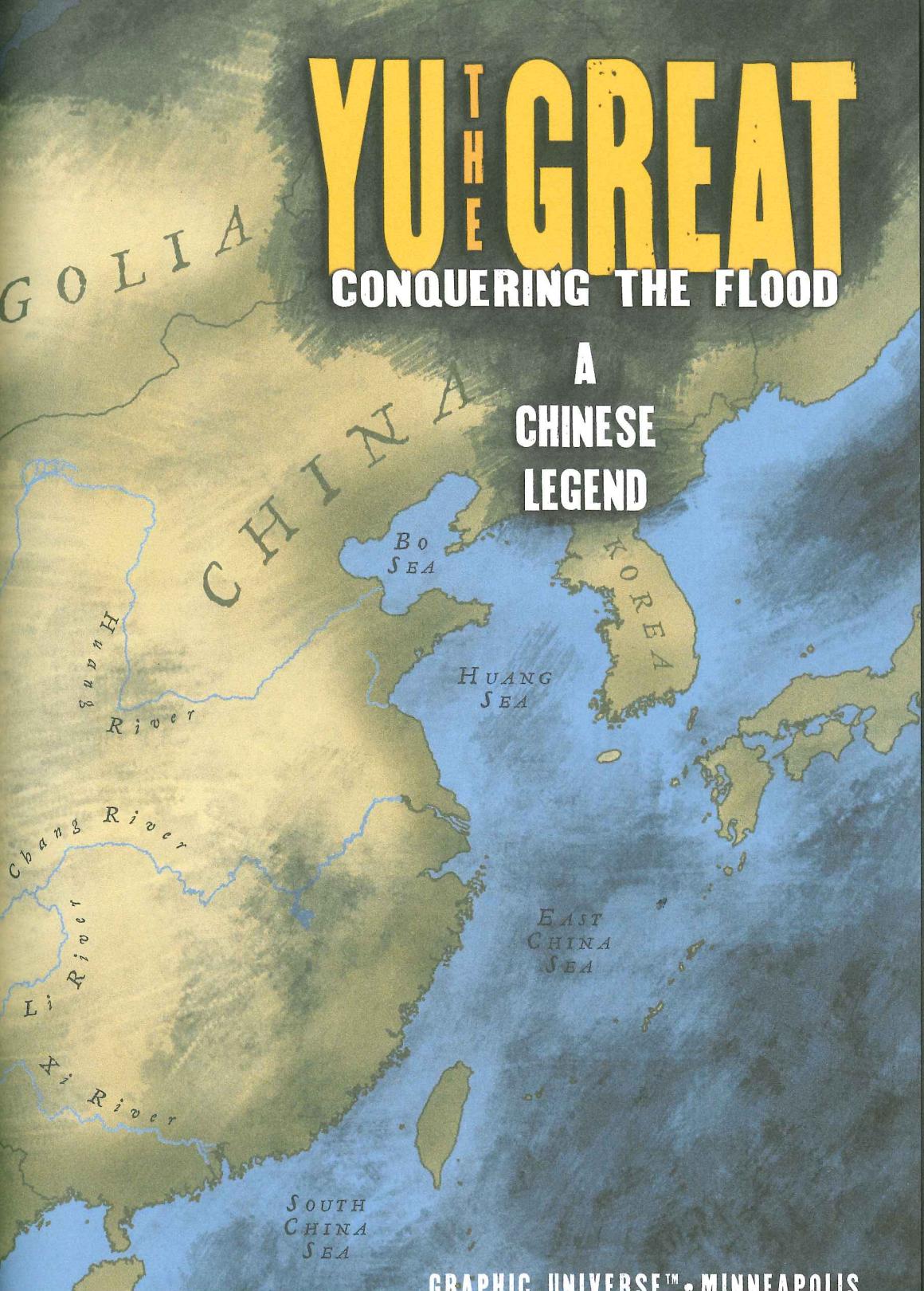
**Chang River**



# YU THE GREAT

CONQUERING THE FLOOD

A  
CHINESE  
LEGEND



**YU THE GREAT: CONQUERING THE FLOOD** TELLS THE LEGENDARY BEGINNING OF THE XIA DYNASTY (CA. 2100–1700 B.C.) OF CHINA. THE XIA DYNASTY IS THE FIRST CHINESE EMPIRE (FAMILY OF RULERS) DESCRIBED IN HISTORICAL RECORDS. YU IS CONSIDERED THE FIRST XIA EMPEROR (RULER). YU'S LIFE STORY HAS FICTIONAL PARTS, BUT HE MAY HAVE BEEN A REAL PERSON. SOME LATER CHINESE TEXTS DESCRIBE YU AS A KIND AND STRONG EMPEROR WHOSE BUILDING PROJECTS SAVED CHINA FROM FREQUENT FLOODS. *YU THE GREAT* DRAWS ON *LAND OF THE DRAGON: CHINESE MYTH* (EDITED BY TONY ALLAN), *AN INTRODUCTION TO ORIENTAL MYTHOLOGY* (BY CLIO WHITTAKER), AND OTHER TEXT SOURCES, AS WELL AS MANY HISTORICAL ART RESOURCES, INCLUDING MORE MODERN MANCHURIAN ELEMENTS, TO MAKE YU A CHINESE HERO FOR THE AGES.

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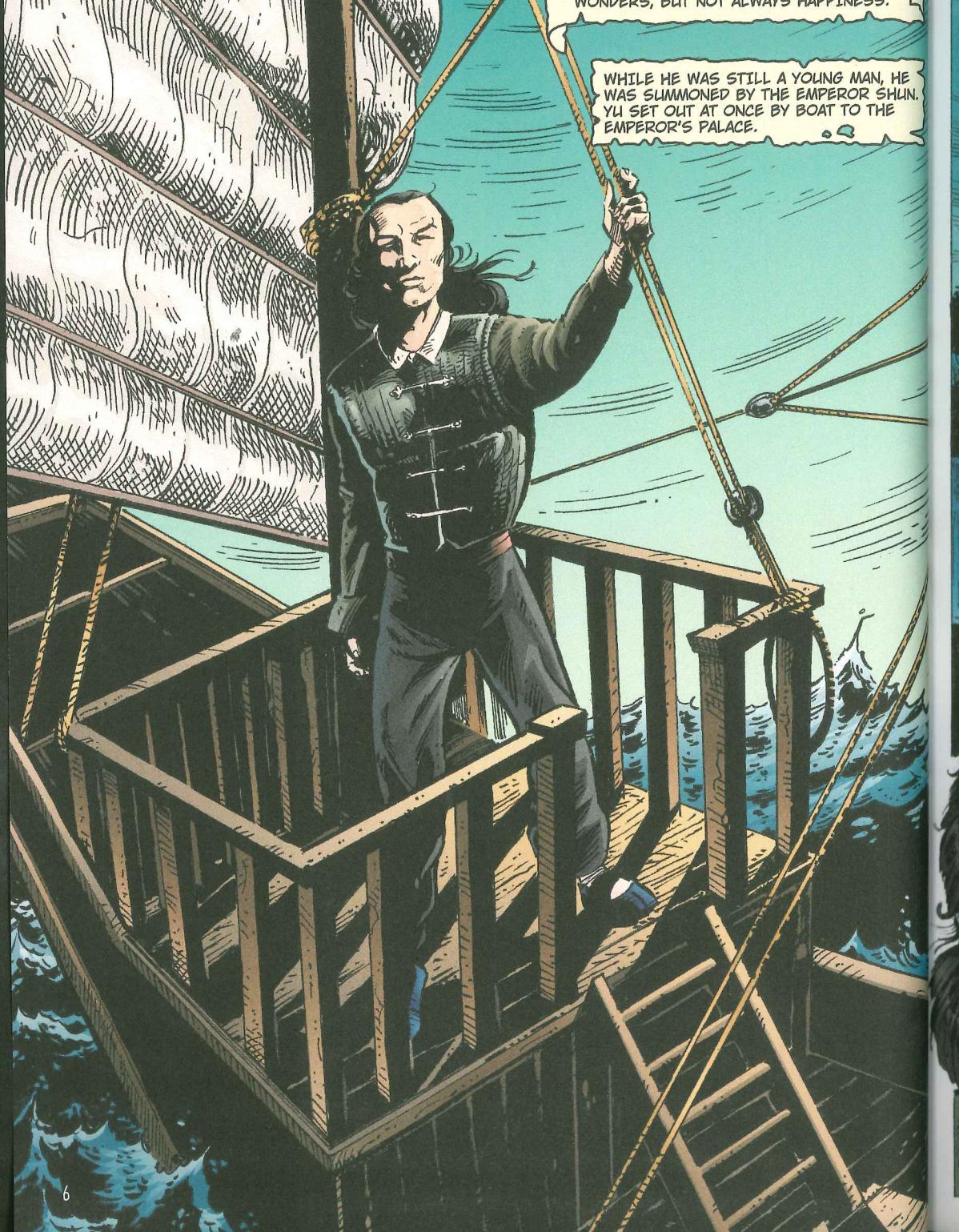
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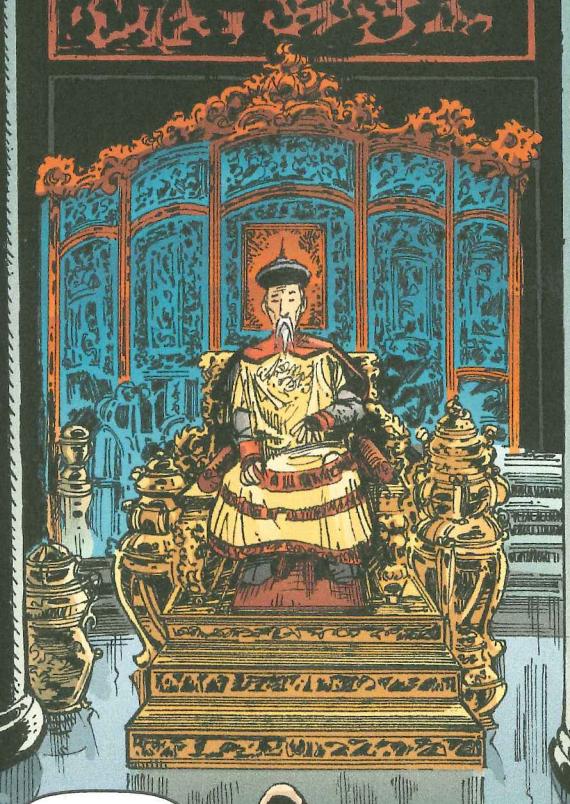
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# THE STORY OF GUN

YEARS BEFORE,  
GUN HAD BEEN  
SUMMONED BY  
ANOTHER  
EMPEROR, THE  
EMPEROR YAO,  
FOR THE SAME  
REASON THAT  
SHIN HAD  
SUMMONED YU.



GREAT  
EMPEROR YAO,  
I HAVE ANSWERED  
YOUR CALL.

HOW MAY  
I SERVE  
YOU?



SOME SAY THE  
FLOODS ARE A  
PUNISHMENT FROM  
HUANG DI, THE  
YELLOW EMPEROR,  
RULER OF THE  
HEAVENS.

FOR TOO LONG HAVE  
THE FLOODWATERS  
COVERED THE LAND.  
FOR TOO LONG HAVE  
THE PEOPLE  
SUFFERED.



SOME SAY  
THAT THEY ARE  
CALSUED BY THE  
WATER GOD, GONG  
GONG, SIMPLY FOR  
HIS PLEASURE.

WHICHEVER IS  
TRUE, THE FLOODS  
MUST BE TAMED  
FOR THE SAKE OF  
MY PEOPLE.







BUT IN THE CELESTIAL PALACE,  
HUANG DI, THE EMPEROR OF  
HEAVEN, WAS NOT SO PLEASED.

NO MATTER WHAT THE  
REASON, GUN HAD STOLEN  
FROM HIM. SUCH AN INSULT,  
EVEN FROM HIS GRANDSON,  
COULD NOT GO UNPUNISHED.



SEND  
FOR  
JURONG!

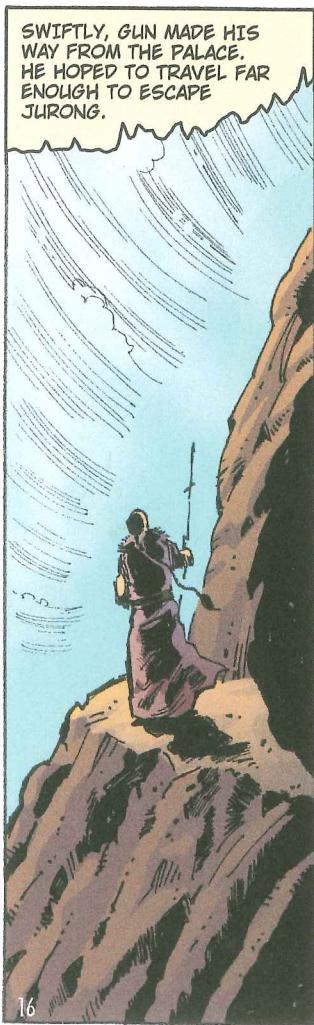
JURONG, THE GOD OF  
FIRE, WAS HEAVEN'S  
EXECUTIONER. IT WAS  
HIS TASK TO PUNISH  
ALL THOSE WHO  
OFFENDED THE GODS.



I COMMAND THAT  
YOU SEEK OUT GUN  
AND PUNISH HIM  
FOR DARING TO  
STEAL FROM  
ME!

WITHOUT HESITATION, THE GOD OF  
FIRE DESCENDED TO EARTH TO OBEY.





WHILE GUN WAS BEING HUNTED,  
THE FLOODWATERS ONCE AGAIN  
ROSE UP AND SWALLOWED THE  
LAND. GUN WAS IN DESPAIR TO  
SEE HIS WORK UNDONE.

FAR TO THE NORTH, GUN CLIMBED  
THE SNOW-COVERED SIDE OF  
MOUNT FEATHER.

HE HOPE THAT THE  
ICY COLD WOULD  
PROTECT HIM FROM  
HIS FOE.





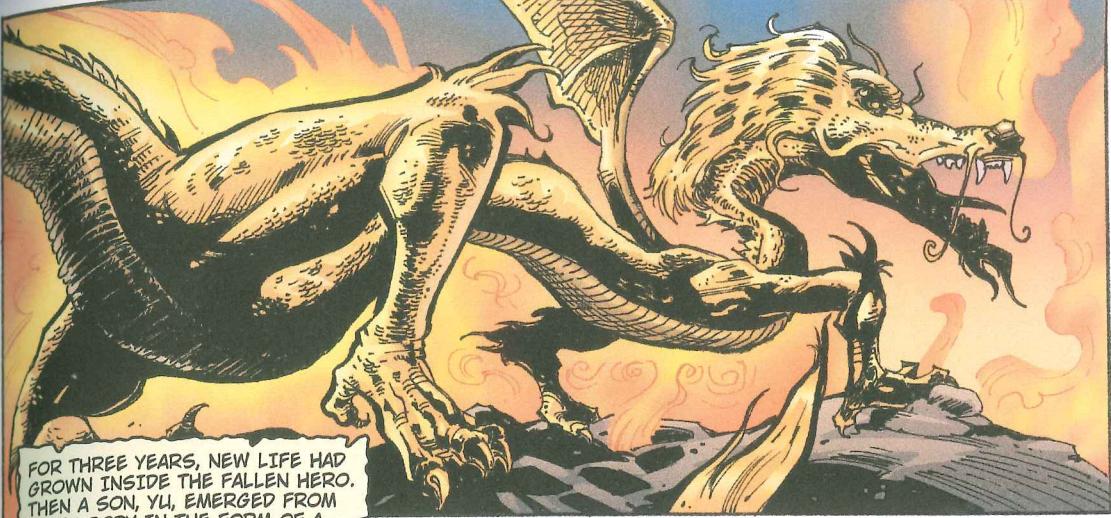
STRANGELY, NO ANIMALS DISTURBED THE BODY, AND IT SHOWED NO SIGN OF DECAY.

FOR THREE YEARS, GLIN'S BODY LAY IN THE SNOW, UNCHANGED.



THEN, SOMETHING AMAZING TOOK PLACE...

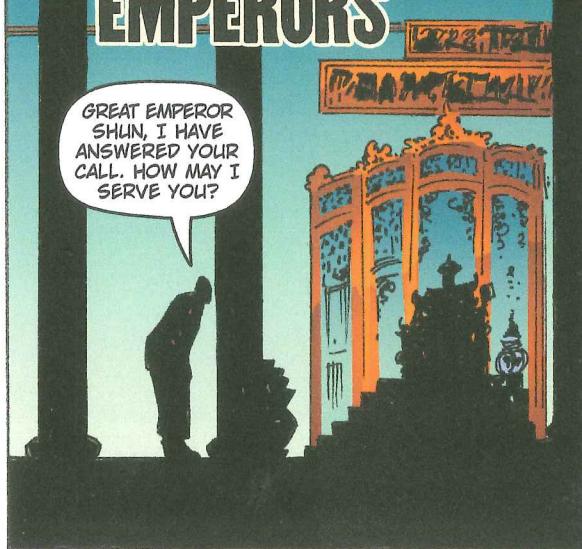


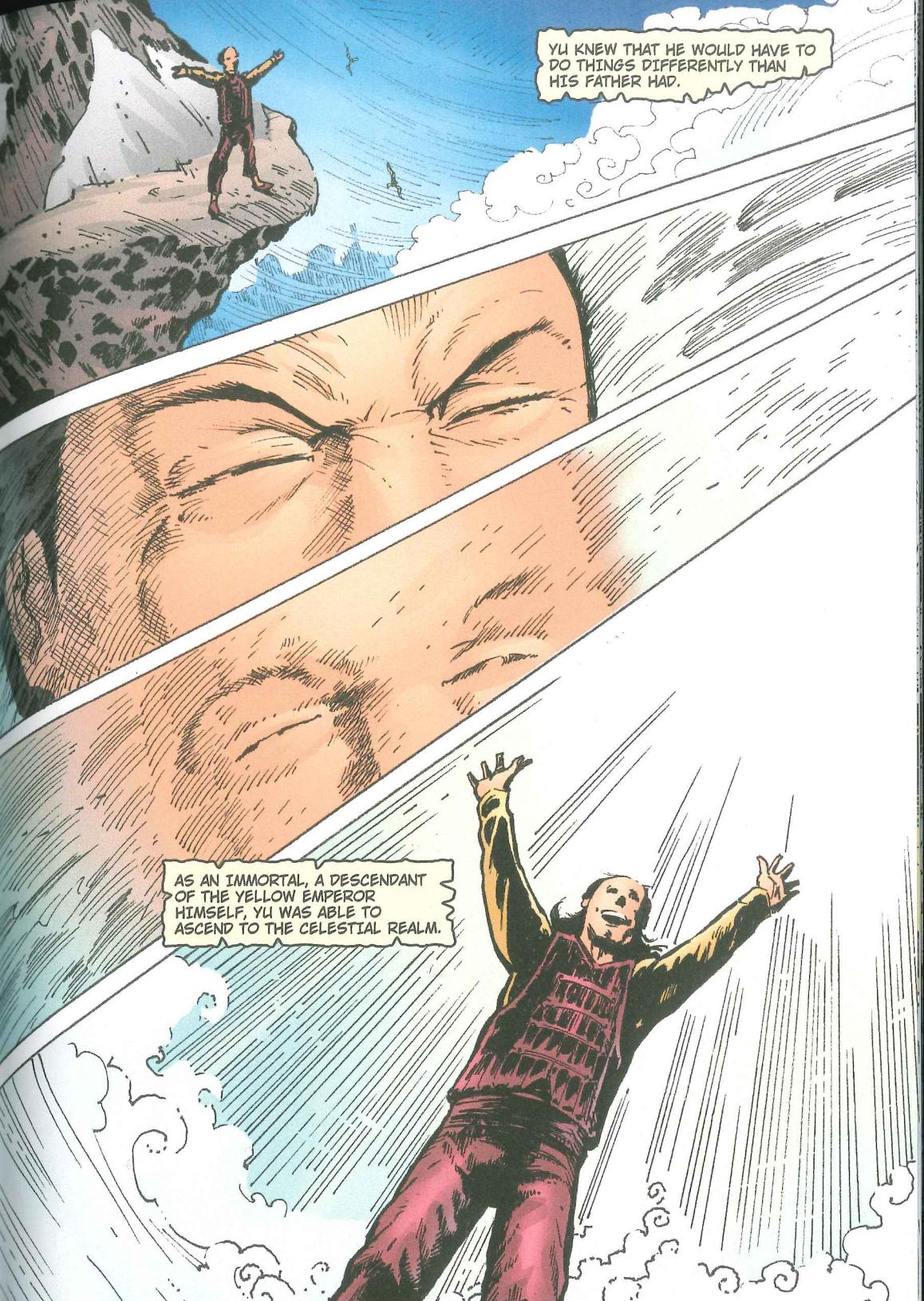


WHEN YU GREW TO BE A MAN AND THE EMPEROR CALLED, HE KNEW WHAT HE MUST DO.



# EMPERORS





YU KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY THAN HIS FATHER HAD.

AS AN IMMORTAL, A DESCENDANT OF THE YELLOW EMPEROR HIMSELF, YU WAS ABLE TO ASCEND TO THE CELESTIAL REALM.



ONLY TO HIS  
FATHER'S PALACE.

HE HAD GOOD REASON  
TO FEAR HUANG DI.



YU KNEW THIS WAS THE PATH HE MUST FOLLOW,  
BUT HE WAS NERVOUS TO FACE THE ONE WHO SENT  
JURONG TO PUNISH HIS FATHER.

CAUSE OF HIS RELATION TO  
THE YELLOW EMPEROR, YU WAS  
ASCORDED AT ONCE TO HUANG  
DI'S PRESENCE.

GREAT  
HUANG DI, RULER  
OF HEAVEN, I  
UNDERSTAND YOUR  
ANGER.

EVEN THOUGH I  
ADMIRE MY FATHER FOR  
TRYING TO BRING COMFORT  
TO THE PEOPLE OF CHINA, I  
KNOW THAT HE CHOSE THE  
WRONG PATH.

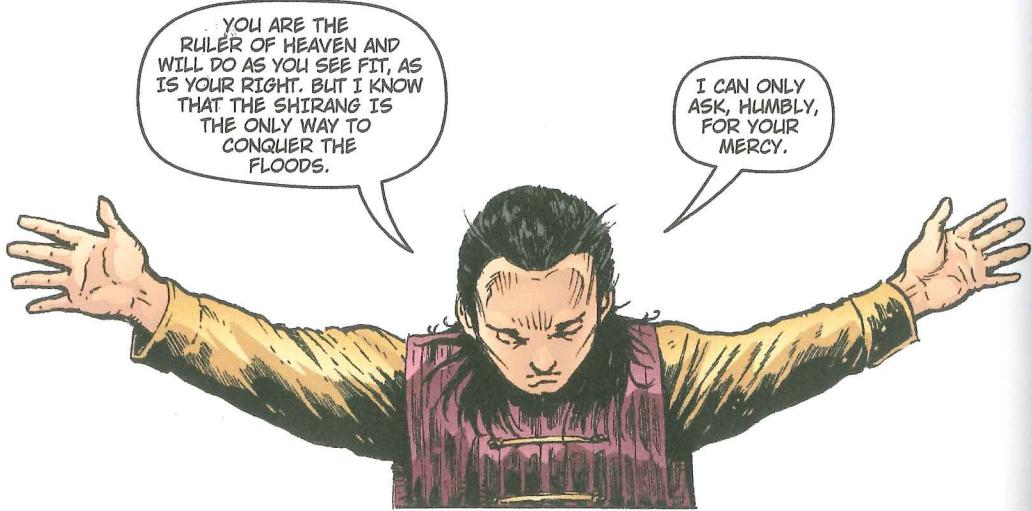
BUT I BEG YOU,  
DO NOT HOLD HIS  
MISTAKE AGAINST ME.  
DO NOT HOLD HIS  
MISTAKE AGAINST THE  
PEOPLE OF CHINA.

THEY HAVE  
SUFFERED  
GREATLY FOR  
SO LONG.

I SEE YOU HAVE  
LEARNED FROM YOUR  
FATHER'S MISTAKE. IT  
IS GOOD THAT YOU  
SHOW THE PROPER  
RESPECT.

WHAT DO  
YOU WANT  
OF ME?



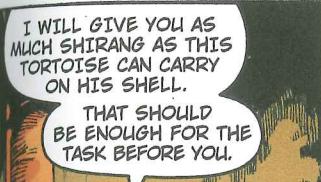


HERE IS ONE OF  
THOSE WHO LED  
YOUR FATHER ASTRAY.  
IT IS ONLY FITTING  
THAT HE HELP YOU IN  
YOUR TASK.



IT SEEMS UNFAIR THAT I SHOULD  
SUFFER THIS PUNISHMENT ALONE,  
SIMPLY BECAUSE MY FRIEND THE OWL  
HAD WINGS TO FLY AWAY.

SILENCE!  
DO NOT  
THINK THAT  
BECAUSE HE DOES  
NOT SHARE THIS  
PUNISHMENT THAT  
HE HAS ESCAPED  
MY WRATH.



Hmmm...  
IT OCCURS  
TO ME THAT YOU WILL  
NEED TO TRAVEL GREAT  
DISTANCES, TO THE  
FARTHEST CORNERS  
OF THE LAND.



I WILL ASSIGN  
THE GREAT WINGED  
DRAGON, YING LONG,  
TO HELP IN THAT  
REGARD.



YOU ARE  
MORE GENEROUS  
THAN I HAD DARED  
TO HOPE, GREAT  
EMPEROR.

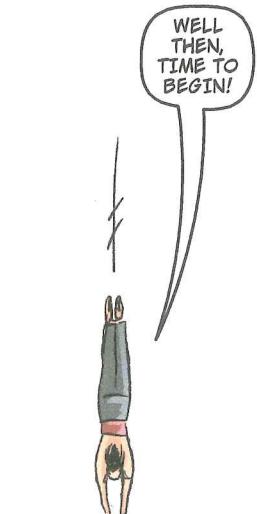
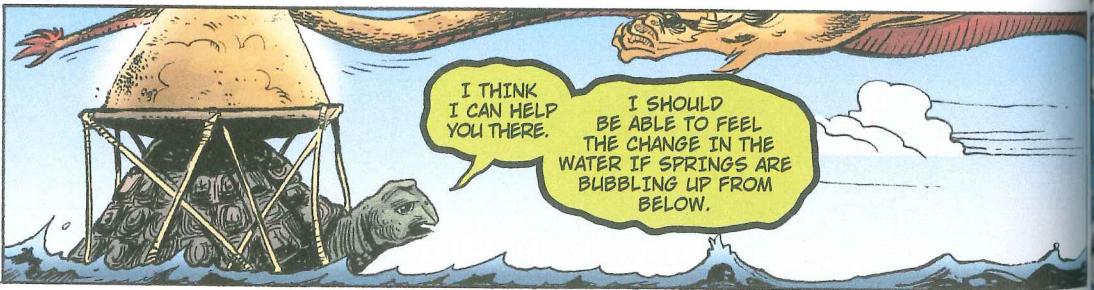
GO ABOUT  
YOUR WORK  
WITH MY  
BLESSING,  
GREAT-  
GRANDSON.

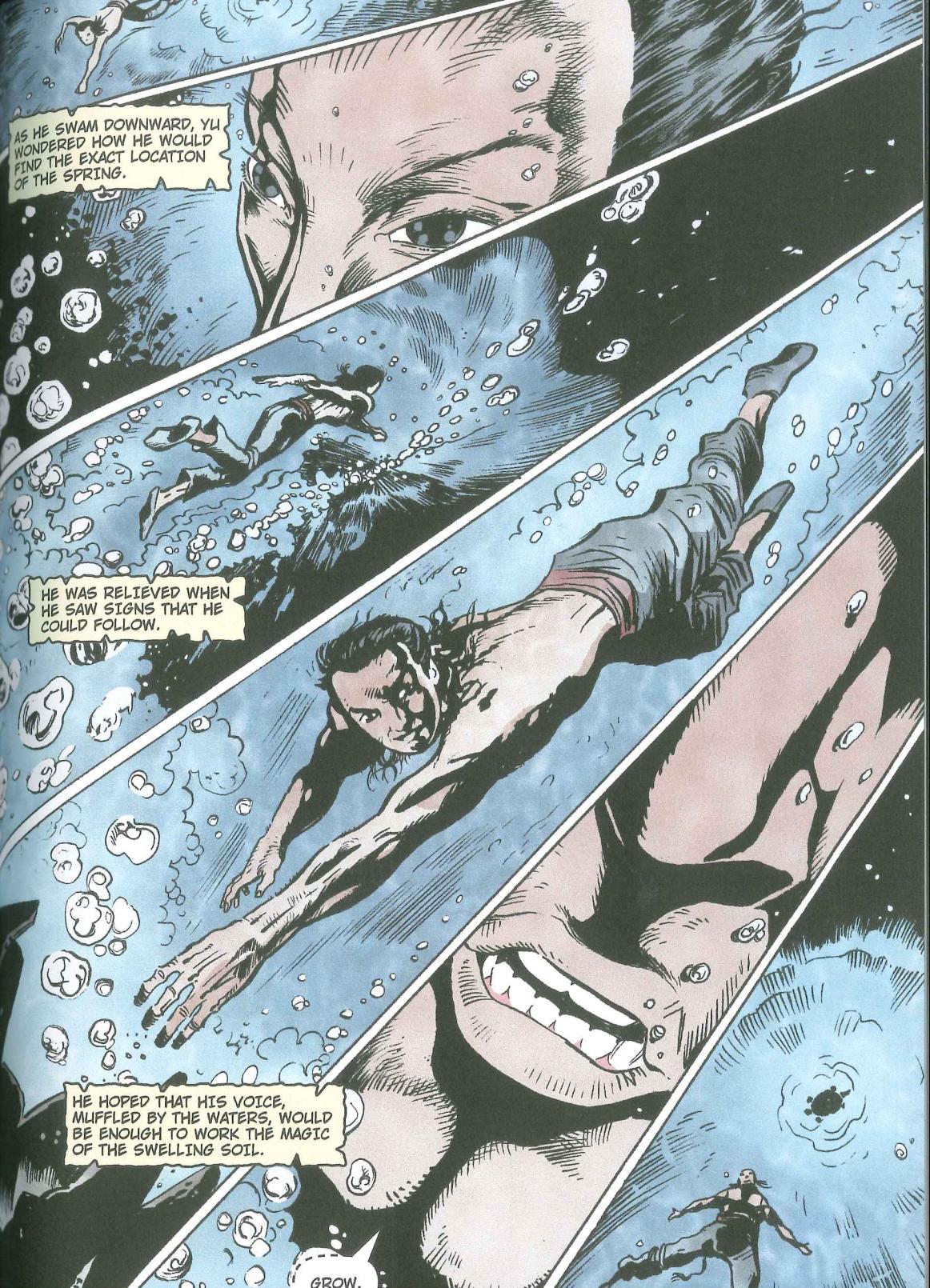


## YU CONQUERS THE FLOOD

YU RETURNED FROM THE HEAVENS WITH HIS TWO COMPANIONS. HE IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT HIS FATHER'S UNFINISHED WORK.

YU HAD ALL THE SHIRANG THE TORTOISE CARRIED AND ALL THE POWER AND WISDOM OF YING LONG THE DRAGON. BUT EVEN SO, YU KNEW THAT HIS WORK WOULD TAKE A VERY LONG TIME.

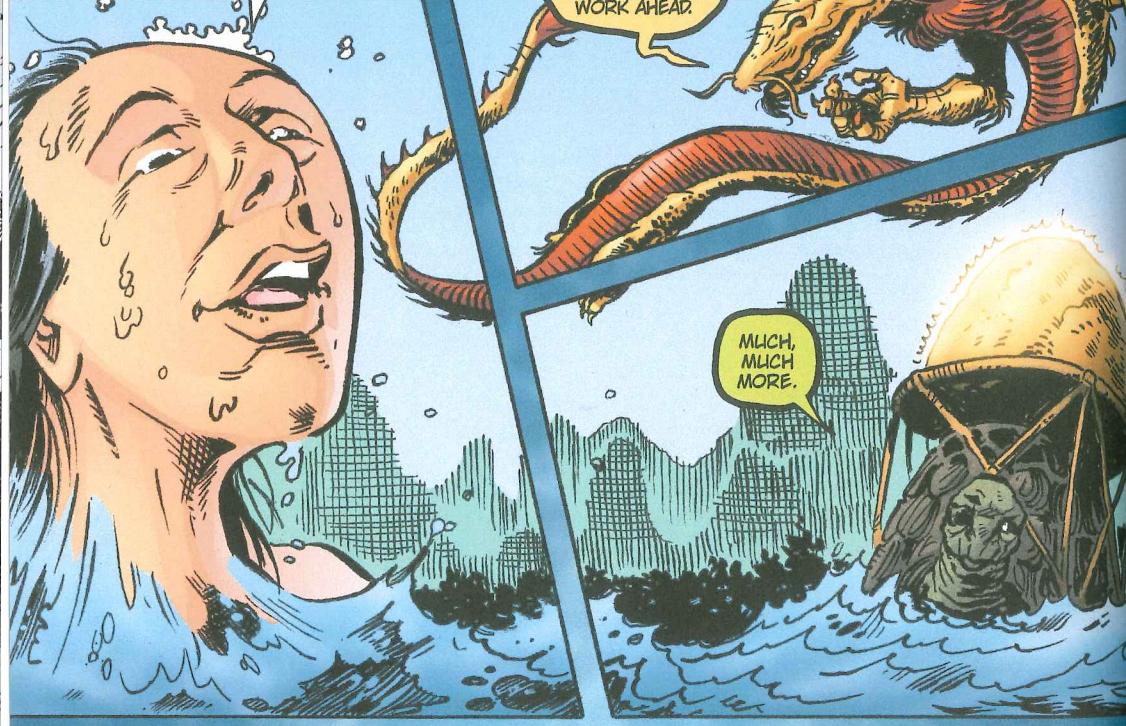




AS HE SWAM DOWNWARD, YU WONDERED HOW HE WOULD FIND THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE SPRING.

HE WAS RELIEVED WHEN HE SAW SIGNS THAT HE COULD FOLLOW.

HE HOPED THAT HIS VOICE, MUFFLED BY THE WATERS, WOULD BE ENOUGH TO WORK THE MAGIC OF THE SWELLING SOIL.



# THE WATER GOD

WHAT IS  
THE MATTER, YU?  
OUR WORK GOES  
WELL. WE HAVE  
BLOCKED COUNTLESS  
SPRINGS.

IN SOME PLACES,  
WE HAVE EVEN BEEN ABLE  
TO USE THE SHIRANG AS  
YOUR FATHER DID, TO SOAK  
UP THE FLOODWATERS  
AND LEAVE NEW,  
FERTILE LAND.

WHY  
ARE YOU SO  
TROUBLING?

I HAVE RECEIVED  
BAD NEWS FROM THE  
EMPEROR. IT SEEMS THAT  
IN SOME PLACES OUR WORK  
IS BEING UNDONE. THE  
FLOODWATERS ARE  
RETURNING.

Ugh!  
I WAS AFRAID  
THIS MIGHT  
HAPPEN.

WHAT  
DO YOU



THE FLOODS, BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN--THEY MUST BE THE WORK OF GONG GONG, THE WATER GOD.



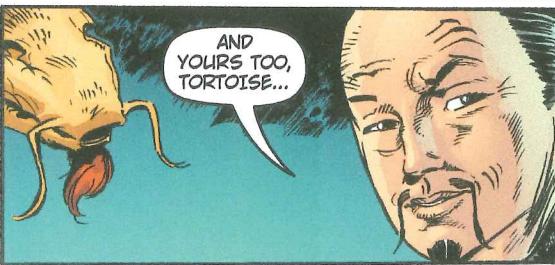
HE IS PROBABLY ANGRY THAT WE ARE STOPPING THE FLOODS, AND HE'S FOLLOWING BEHIND US, UNDOING WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

WHETHER HUANG DI ORDERED THE FLOOD IN THE FIRST PLACE OR NOT, HE HAS GIVEN HIS BLESSING TO OUR WORK.

WHY WOULD HE LET GONG GONG INTERFERE?



PERHAPS HUANG DI WANTS US TO DEAL WITH GONG GONG AS PART OF OUR WORK.



AND YOURS TOO, TORTOISE...



EVEN WITH YOUR HELP, YING LONG...

Ahem.

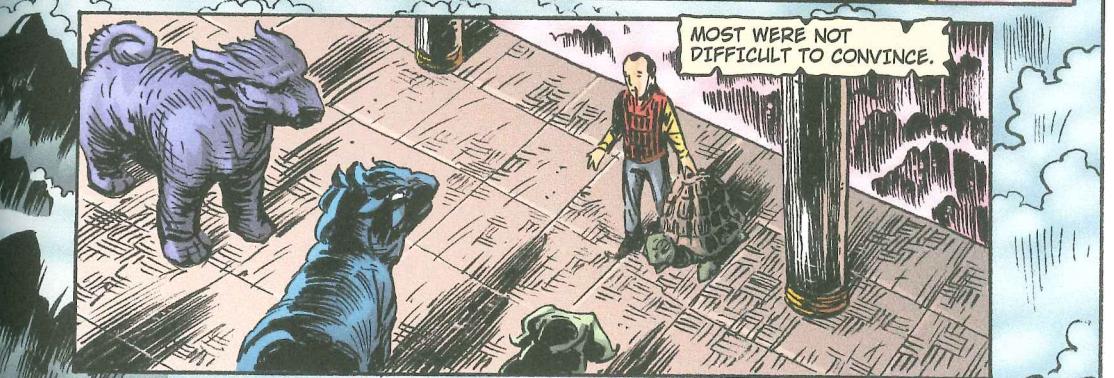


I FEAR THAT GONG GONG IS TOO POWERFUL TO DEFEAT.



I THINK THAT IN THE MORNING, WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK FOR OTHER ALLIES!

THE NEXT DAY, YU BEGAN TO SEEK OUT EVERY SORT OF MAGICAL CREATURE HE COULD FIND.



THEY FOUND THE WATER GOD,  
GONG GONG, ON MOUNT KUAN JI  
AND CONFRONTED HIM THERE.

GONG  
GONG!  
THE  
FLOODS  
MUST  
END!

IF YOU  
DO NOT STOP  
FLOODING THE  
LAND, I WILL  
DESTROY  
YOU!

FOOL!  
I AM GONG  
GONG, GOD OF  
WATER. WHO  
ARE YOU TO  
CHALLENGE  
ME?

I AM  
YU, SON OF  
GUN, GREAT-  
GRANDSON OF  
HUANG DI.  
I FIGHT THE  
FLOODS WITH  
THE BLESSING  
OF THE YELLOW  
EMPEROR.

SOME SAY THAT  
YU KILLED GONG  
GONG THAT DAY.

OTHERS SAY THAT  
GONG GONG RAN  
AWAY FROM YU'S  
GREAT ARMY.

IF I  
MUST KILL  
YOU TO STOP  
THEM, THEN  
I WILL.

AFTER ALL THE RAIN STILL FALLS FROM

WHICHEVER IS TRUE, YU  
SOON RETURNED TO HIS WORK.

AFTER YU CONFRONTED GONG GONG,  
THE PLAINS THAT WERE FILLED WITH  
THE SHIRANG DID NOT FLOOD AGAIN.

WHAT?  
HAVE I DONE  
SOMETHING  
WRONG?

NO,  
NOT AT  
ALL.

I WAS  
JUST NOTICING  
HOW LITTLE  
SHIRANG WE  
HAVE LEFT.

FOR NOW?  
WHAT DO YOU  
MEAN? GONG GONG  
IS DEFEATED.  
THE LAND IS  
SAFE.

IS IT?  
WHAT HAPPENS  
IF WE HAVE HEAVY  
RAINS NEXT  
YEAR?

WHAT HAPPENS  
IF TOO MUCH  
SNOW MELTS ON  
THE MOUNTAINS IN  
SPRINGTIME AND  
RUNS DOWN ONTO  
THE PLAINS?

YOU ARE  
A WISE MAN,  
YU, TO THINK  
BEYOND THIS  
DAY OR THE  
NEXT.

WELL THEN,  
WISE MAN, HOW  
WILL YOU DEAL WITH  
RAINS THAT HAVE YET  
TO FALL AND SNOW  
THAT HAS YET  
TO MELT?

NOT TO  
WORRY—THE  
FLOODWATERS  
ARE ALMOST  
GONE.

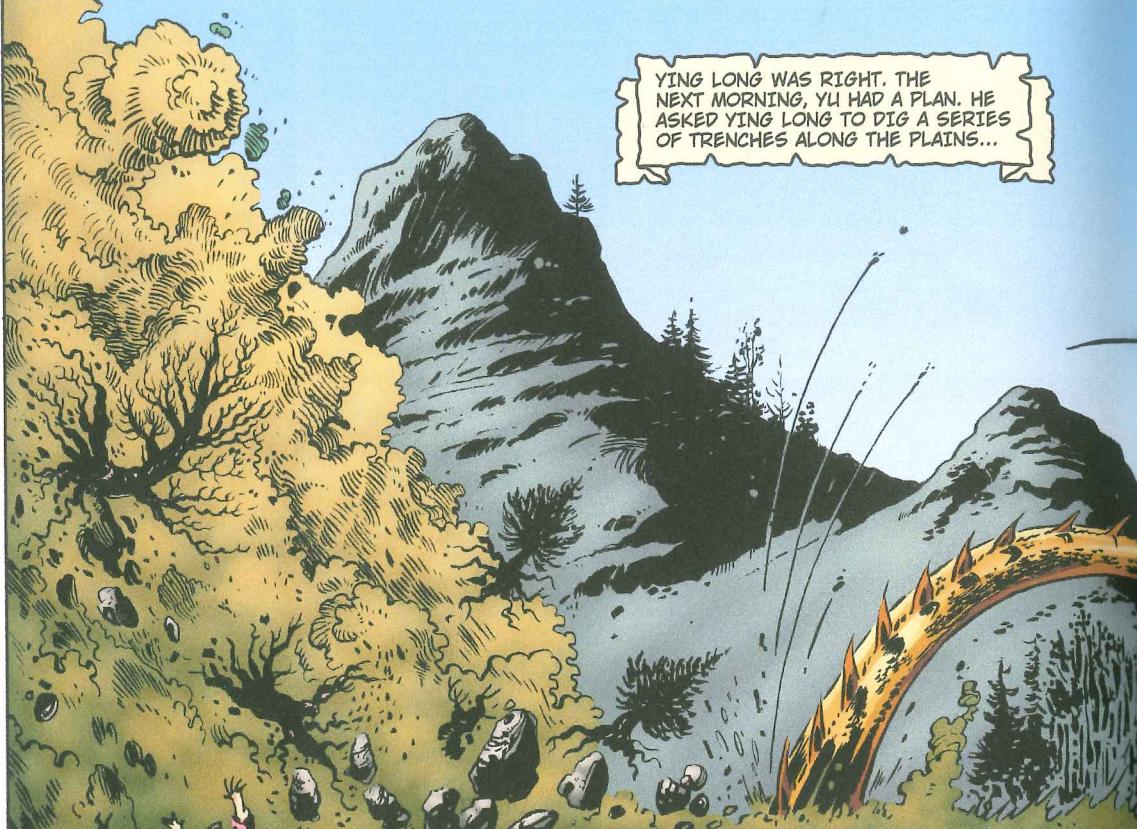
FOR  
NOW.

A VERY  
GOOD QUESTION.  
GIVE ME SOME  
TIME TO PONDER  
IT. PERHAPS I  
WILL FIND AN  
ANSWER.

HE  
WILL, YOU  
KNOW.

WE  
WILL SEE.

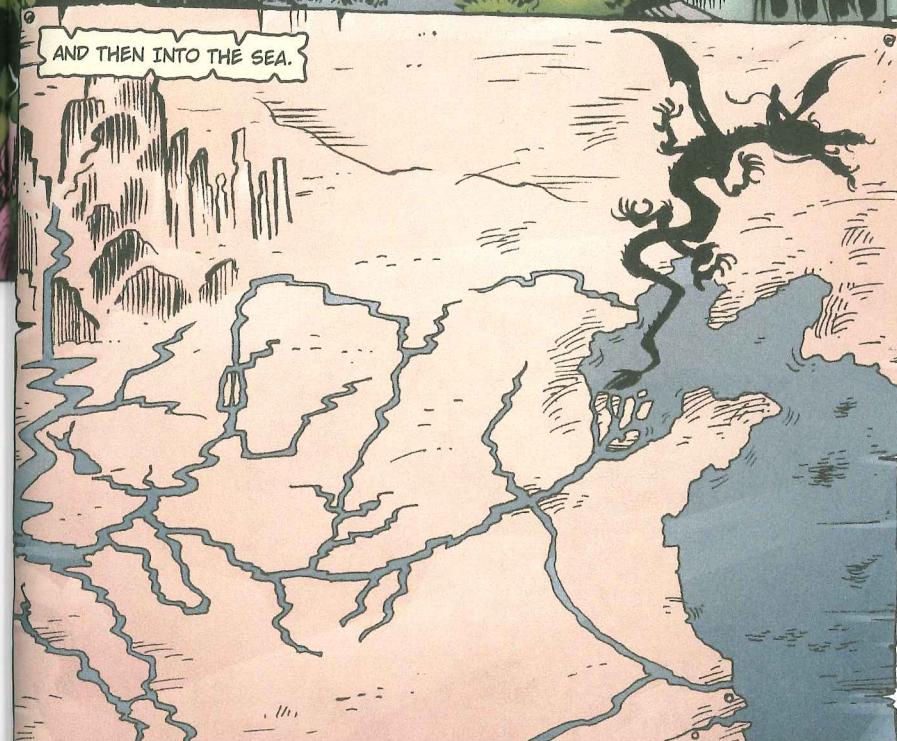




YING LONG WAS RIGHT. THE NEXT MORNING, YU HAD A PLAN. HE ASKED YING LONG TO DIG A SERIES OF TRENCHES ALONG THE PLAINS...



SO THAT WATER COULD FLOW FROM THEM TO THE RIVERS...



AND THEN INTO THE SEA.

# THE MARRIAGE OF YU

MANY YEARS PASSED WHILE YU AND HIS COMPANIONS TRAVELED CHINA, CONQUERING THE FLOOD.

NOT LONG AFTER YU TURNED THIRTY, THE AGE WHEN MOST MEN OF HIS TIME MARRIED, HE SAW A STRANGE SIGHT.

LOOK AT THAT! WHAT A REMARKABLE CREATURE!

WELL, MY FRIEND, IT SEEMS YOU ARE A FORTUNATE MAN.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE OLD PROPHECY?

THE MAN WHO SEES A NINE-TAILED FOX WILL SOMEDAY RULE THIS LAND.

THE MAN WHO WEDS A TUSHUN GIRL WILL LEAVE HIS SON A THRONE.

TAKING THE PROPHECY TO HEART, YU TRAVELED TO TUSHUN HILL.

HE ASKED FOR HER HAND IN MARRIAGE. BOTH NU JIAO AND HER FATHER WERE OVERJOYED AT THE IDEA.

THERE HE MET NU JIAO, THE DAUGHTER OF A LOCAL LORD. HE IMMEDIATELY FELL IN LOVE.

UNFORTUNATELY, NU JIAO'S HAPPINESS WAS SHORT-LIVED. THOUGH SHE LOVED HER HUSBAND, HE WAS ALMOST ALWAYS AWAY, DOING HIS GREAT WORK CONTROLLING THE FLOODS.

BUT WHEN SHE REALIZED SHE WAS GOING TO HAVE YU'S CHILD, HER SADNESS MELTED AWAY. SHE WAITED FOR HIS NEXT VISIT SO SHE COULD TELL HIM THE WONDERFUL NEWS.

BUT YU DID NOT COME HOME.  
AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS, NU JIAO  
SET OUT TO FIND HIM, EVEN  
THOUGH HE HAD OFTEN SAID HIS  
TRIPS WERE TOO DANGEROUS  
FOR HER.

NU JIAO KNEW THAT YU WAS  
WORKING IN THE MOUNTAINS.

WHAT SHE DID NOT KNOW WAS THAT YU  
COULD STILL CHANGE HIS SHAPE, AS HE  
HAD WHEN HE CHANGED FROM A DRAGON  
INTO A BOY.

YU HAD TAKEN THE SHAPE OF A  
BEAR AS HE DIG CHANNELS  
THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS TO  
HELP DRAIN AWAY MELTING SNOW.

AHHEEE!!

WHEN YU FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH  
HER, HER FEAR OVERWHELMED HER.

SO GREAT WAS HER TERROR THAT  
SHE TRANSFORMED INTO STONE.



NOT REALIZING THAT THE  
FEARSOME CREATURE WAS  
ACTUALLY HER HUSBAND,  
NU JIAO FLED AS FAST  
AS SHE COULD.

YU, FORGETTING THAT HE HAD CHANGED  
TO A BEAR, CHASED AFTER HER TO FIND  
OUT WHY SHE HAD RUN AWAY.  
HE DID NOT REALIZE  
THAT HE WAS ONLY  
FRIGHTENING HER  
MORE.



IT WAS ONLY WHEN HE HEARD  
HIMSELF CRY OUT AS A BEAR THAT  
YU REALIZED HIS MISTAKE.



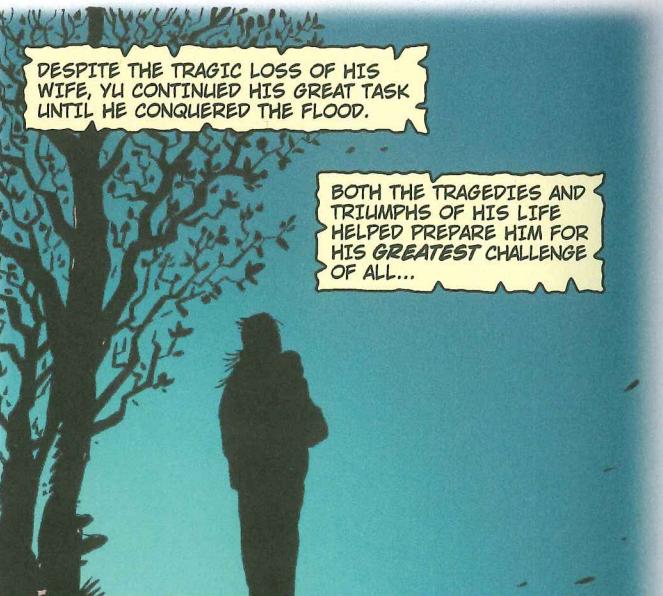
NU JIAO GREW TOO TIRED TO RUN ANY  
FARTHER. EXHAUSTED, SHE COLLAPSED  
AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAINS.



Nooooooo!

NU JIAO!  
FORGIVE ME.  
I DID NOT  
REALIZE...





## EPILOGUE

...FOR EMPEROR SHUN  
DECIDED THAT YU SHOULD  
FOLLOW HIM UPON THE  
DRAGON THRONE.



## GLOSSARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

**CELESTIAL PALACE:** in Chinese myth, the home of the gods, or heaven

**DRAGON:** in mythology, a magical serpent, often very large. Dragons appear in myths from several countries, but they are very important in China. Dragons appear in Chinese art and literature, on building decorations, and in ceremonies and festivals.

**DRAGON THRONE:** the traditional seat of Chinese emperors

**DYNASTY:** a series of kings or emperors, all from the same family, who rule one after another

**EMPEROR:** the ruler of an empire, or a very large kingdom or territory. In Chinese history, the emperors were believed to be descended from the gods.

**GONG GONG** (gung gung): the Chinese water god, responsible for storms and flooding

**GUAN** (guhn): a Chinese hero, a grandson of Huang Di and the father of Yu

**HUANG DI** (hwong dee): the Yellow Emperor, the immortal ruler of heaven

**IMMORTAL:** a person or creature that lives forever. In Chinese myth,

immortals can travel between heaven and Earth.

**JURONG** (jub-rung): the Chinese god of fire

**NU JIAO** (noo je-ow): Yu's wife

**PROPHECY:** a prediction of something to come in the future

**QI** (chee): Yu's son

**SHIRANG** (shee-rang): in the Yu legend, a magical soil that swells to plug holes and absorb water. Yu uses the shirang to help stop China's floods.

**SHUN** (shuhn): a Chinese emperor

**XIA** (shee-ah): the first Chinese dynasty described in historical records

**YAO** (yow): a Chinese emperor

**YELLOW EMPEROR:** Huang Di, the ruler of heaven. In Chinese culture, the color yellow symbolizes power and authority.

**YING LONG** (ying long): the flying dragon given to Yu by Huang Di

**YU** (yoo): a Chinese hero, founder of the Xia Dynasty. He is often called Da Yu, a Chinese phrase meaning Yu the Great.

## FURTHER READING AND WEBSITES

Behnke, Alison. *China in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2003. This book features information on the history and cultural life of China, from ancient times to the present.

Cheng, Sonia. *Myths and Civilization of the Ancient Chinese*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 2001. Cheng retells several major myths, adding historical and cultural details about ancient China.

Chinatown Online, "Yu the Great Conquers the Flood"  
<http://www.chinatown-online.co.uk/pages/culture/legends/yu.html>

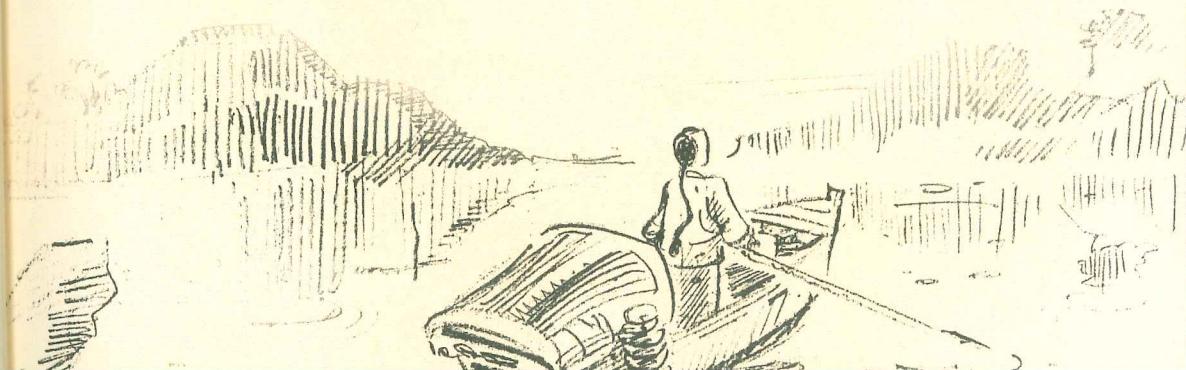
The culture section of this website looks at some of the historical roots of the Yu legend.

The National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan  
<http://www.npm.gov.tw/>

The museum's website features online exhibits of Chinese painting, tapestry, ceramics, and other treasures. The website's Explore and Learn section includes a kids' corner, with interactive pictures of Chinese life.

## CREATING YU THE GREAT

In creating this story, author Paul Storrie adapted traditional retellings found in *Land of the Dragon: Chinese Myth* (edited by Tony Allan), *An Introduction to Oriental Mythology* (by Clio Whittaker), and other sources on Asian myth. Artist Sandy Carruthers used details from Chinese art, mythology and folklore, museum exhibits, and traditional architecture to shape the story's visual details—from the emperors' robes to the number of toes on Ying Long the dragon. Wang Ping used her knowledge of Chinese culture and history to ensure accuracy.



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**YING LONG** (ying long): the flying dragon given to Yu by Huang Di

**YU** (yoo): a Chinese hero, founder of the Xia Dynasty. He is often called Da Yu, a Chinese phrase meaning Yu the Great.

Behnke, Alison. *China in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2003. This book features information on the history and cultural life of China, from ancient times to the present.

Cheng, Sonia. *Myths and Civilization of the Ancient Chinese*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 2001. Cheng retells several major myths, adding historical and cultural details about ancient China.

Chinatown Online, "Yu the Great Conquers the Flood"  
<http://www.chinatown-online.co.uk/pages/culture/legends/yu.html>

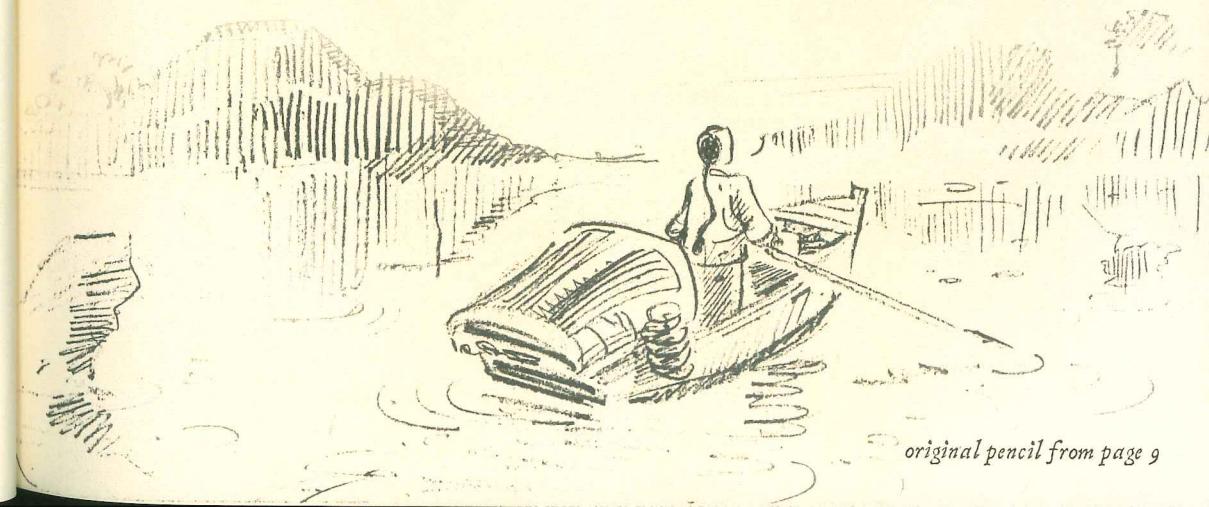
The culture section of this website looks at some of the historical roots of the Yu legend.

The National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan  
<http://www.npm.gov.tw/>

The museum's website features online exhibits of Chinese painting, tapestry, ceramics, and other treasures. The website's Explore and Learn section includes a kids' corner, with interactive pictures of Chinese life.

## CREATING YU THE GREAT

In creating this story, author Paul Storrie adapted traditional retellings found in *Land of the Dragon: Chinese Myth* (edited by Tony Allan), *An Introduction to Oriental Mythology* (by Clio Whittaker), and other sources on Asian myth. Artist Sandy Carruthers used details from Chinese art, mythology and folklore, museum exhibits, and traditional architecture to shape the story's visual details—from the emperors' robes to the number of toes on Ying Long the dragon. Wang Ping used her knowledge of Chinese culture and history to ensure accuracy.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE ARTIST

**PAUL D. STORRIE** was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He has returned to live there again and again after living in other cities and states. He began writing professionally in 1987 and has written comics for Caliber Comics, Moonstone Books, Marvel Comics, and DC Comics. His work includes *Hercules: The Twelve Labors*, *Amaterasu: Return of the Sun*, *Robin Hood: Outlaw of Sherwood Forest*, *Robyn of Sherwood* (featuring stories about Robin Hood's daughter), *Batman Beyond*, *Gotham Girls*, *Captain America: Red, White and Blue*, and *Mutant X*.

**SANDY CARRUTHERS** was born in Nova Scotia, Canada. His family moved to Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, when he was young. His illustrated published works include *The Men in Black*, *Invaders from Mars*, *Alien Nation*, and *Captain Canuck*. His Web-published works at [www.sandycarruthers.com](http://www.sandycarruthers.com) include *The Ronin and the Lily* and *Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada*. Carruthers currently resides in Charlottetown, PEI, with his partner, Holly; daughter, Eryn; and three cats, Max, Baby, and Harry. He teaches graphic design full-time at Holland College, PEI. Somewhere among all this, he does have a life and will continue his studies of dragons, thanks to Yu.

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# FROM AN ANCIENT EMPIRE . . . . . . CAME ONE OF CHINA'S GREATEST HEROES

THE GREAT EMPEROR SHUN HAS CALLED YU BEFORE THE DRAGON THRONE. ALL OF CHINA IS BESET BY TERRIBLE FLOODS. HOMES, FARMS, AND VILLAGES ARE BEING WASHED AWAY, AND SHUN BELIEVES YU IS THE ONLY ONE TO SAVE THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE. YU VOWS TO END THE FLOODS, BUT FIRST HE MUST FACE THE ANGRY YELLOW EMPEROR, THE RULER OF THE GODS—AND YU'S OWN GRANDFATHER. WILL THE YELLOW EMPEROR HELP YU OR SET A TRAP FOR HIM? AND HOW WILL YU EVER STOP THE FLOODS?

## GRAPHIC MYTHS AND LEGENDS TITLES:

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