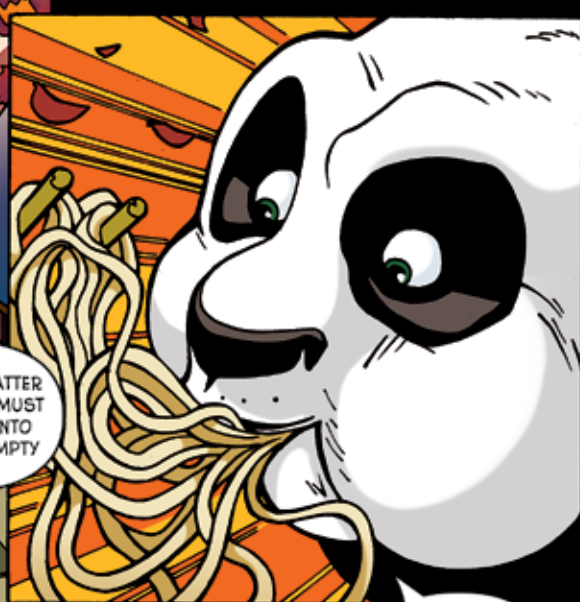


JADE PALACE.

WHILE HELPING HIS FATHER MR. PING DOWN AT THE NOODLE SHOP, PO IS SUMMONED BY MASTER SHIFU.

AN UNKNOWN EMERGENCY LOOMS.

A TRUE WARRIOR, NO MATTER HOW AWESOME, MUST NEVER SPRINT INTO BATTLE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.



THAT'S WHY I CARB LOAD EVERY TIME I'M SUMMONED.



YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN A MARATHON BUTT KICKING SESSION WILL PRESENT ITSELF AND DEMAND, "I HOPE YOU HAVE THE ENDURANCE TO GO THE EXTRA MILE, CHAMPION OF THE GOOD FIGHT!"

THEN AGAIN, THERE REALLY ARE A LOT STAIRS BETWEEN MY BOWL OF NOODLES AND MASTER SHIFU...

Let The Fur Fly

Written by: Jason M. Burns
Art by: Aurelio Mazzara
Colors by: CV Design
Letters by: David Hedgecock



AND I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THIS CRAMP IN MY SIDE HAS MORE INTESTINAL FORTITUDE THAN I DO, THOUGH IN MY DEFENSE, IT DOES HAVE THE UPPER HAND BEING AN INTESTINE AND ALL.



THEY REALLY SHOULD CONSIDER ADDING A JADE ELEVATOR AT THE JADE PALACE.



PO! THANK GOODNESS YOU HAVE ARRIVED.

NEED... WATER. MOUTH... DESERT. STAIRS... EVIL.



WAIT. THAT'S NOT...



SPLSHHHHH



TOO SALTY. IT TASTES LIKE BATHING BROTH.



THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S NOT FOR DRINKING...



BUT FOR TIGRESS' FEVER.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER? IT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DUMPLINGS I MADE, DOES IT? I MEAN, OKAY, I DROPPED ONE ON THE GROUND... FOUR TOPS... BUT I DIDN'T SERVE THEM. AT LEAST, I DON'T THINK I DID.



DUMPLINGS ALL KIND OF LOOK THE SAME AFTER A WHILE.

SHE HAS TAKEN ILL NOT BY FOOD, BUT BY THE POISON-DIPPED BLADE OF A BANDIT'S SWORD.



WILL SHE BE OKAY?

SHE WILL IF WE CAN RETRIEVE THE ANTIDOTE.

THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? LET'S HIT THE PHARMACY AND GET HER PRESCRIPTION FILLED!



IT'S NOT THAT EASY, I'M AFRAID. THE ONLY KNOWN ANTIDOTE FOR SUCH A POISON IS FOUND IN THE THREE-PRONGED LEAF OF THE RARE BOTONGY PLANT.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAVE ANY OF THOSE GROWING IN THE GARDEN OUT BACK, DO YOU?

NO, PO. THE ONLY PLACE THAT THE BOTONGY PLANT GROWS IS IN THE FOREST OF ISOLATION.

THERE'S A "BUT," ISN'T THERE? THERE'S ALWAYS A "BUT" IN KUNG FU.



THE FOREST OF ISOLATION IS AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS PLACE. FEW HAVE EVER ENTERED AND RETURNED, AT LEAST NOT THE SAME AS WHEN THEY LEFT.

THEY PROBABLY SHOULDN'T PUT THAT ON THE TRAVEL BROCHURE.

ONLY THE DRAGON WARRIOR CAN BE ENTRUSTED WITH SUCH A MISSION.





FIRST, YOU MUST TRAVEL THROUGH THE DESERT OF DESERTION, A PLACE SO UNINHABITABLE THAT EVEN THE CACTI MIGRATED FAR FROM ITS ARID REACH.

GREAT. I'LL BE PICKING SAND OUT OF MY FUR FOR WEEKS.



BEYOND THE DESERT, YOU MUST THEN SET SAIL ON THE SERPENTINE SEA, AN OCEAN SAID TO BE THE HOME TO MONSTERS SO FIERCE THAT THE WATER ITSELF TASTES OF UNPURIFIED EVIL.

HMM. I HAVEN'T HAD FRESH SEAFOOD IN AWHILE...

FOCUS, PO.



WITH NO MEANS OF GOING AROUND IT, YOU'RE ONLY OPTION WILL BE TO SCALE KABUKI CREST, A MOUNTAIN SO HIGH THAT IT IS SAID YOU CAN REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE GREAT CONSTELLATIONS ABOVE.

BUT THE THIN AIR...

A TRUE WARRIOR NEEDS ONLY ONE BREATH PER OBSTACLE, PO.

SAYS THE THINNER, MORE NIMBLE RED PANDA.



AND FINALLY, SHOULD YOU SURVIVE THE JOURNEY UNTO THIS POINT, YOU WILL THEN HAVE TO CROSS THE CANYON YOU SHOULD NEVER CROSS.

SERIOUSLY. THAT'S WHAT IT'S CALLED? HOW COME YOU NEVER SEND ME TO PLACES LIKE THE RESTAURANT OF THE ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET?

SORRY. I DIDN'T NAME IT.

THE GOOD NEWS IS, ONCE YOU GET TO THE OTHER SIDE, YOU'LL HAVE ARRIVED AT YOUR DESTINATION... THE FOREST OF ISOLATION.



THIS ISN'T SO BAD. ASIDE FROM ALL OF THE STICKY MUSHROOMS GROWING ALL OVER THE GROUND, THIS SHOULD BE A CAKE WALK FROM HERE ON OUT.



AND LOOK... THERE'S THE BOTONGY PLANT.

I GUESS SHIFU WAS RIGHT AFTER ALL. I HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT MYSELF.



I CARE NOT WHAT YOUR INNER MONOLOGUE STATES, PANDA, ONLY THAT YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON LAND THAT YOU ARE NOT WELCOME ON.



THERE'S CLEARLY BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING. I'M NOT HERE FOR TROUBLE, JUST ONE OF THESE FUNKY PLANTS.

I REPEAT, I COME IN PEACE.



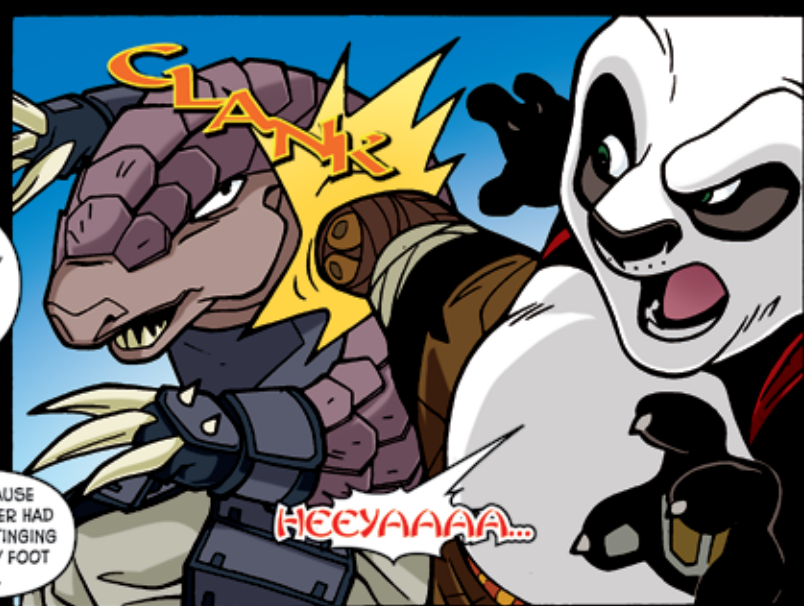
AND SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO REMOVE THE BOTONGY PLANT FROM MY FOREST, YOU WILL LEAVE IN PIECES.



I SHOULD WARN YOU, I AM THE DRAGON WARRIOR.

HA! YOUR TITLE MEANS NOTHING IN THE FOREST OF ISOLATION, PANDA. I AM THE CHINESE PANGOLIN, AND NO SOUL, DRAGON WARRIOR OR NOT, HAS EVER BESTED ME.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU HAVE NEVER HAD TO FACE THE STINGING STENCH OF MY FOOT BEFORE.



CLANK

HEEYAAAAA...



... OOWWWW!

NO FAIR! YOU'RE WEARING ARMOR!

FOOLISH, PANDA, I AM ARMOR. WHERE YOU WERE BORN WITH FUR BUILT FOR SHEDDING, I WAS BORN WITH PLATES MEANT FOR PROTECTING.

AND AS THEY SAY, THERE IS NO BETTER OFFENSE THAN A GREATER DEFENSE.



YOU MUST FACE YOUR OWN DEFEAT, PANDA. YOU CAN NOT CONQUER THAT WHICH CAN NOT BE PUNCHED OR KICKED BY YOUR KUNG FU FOOLERY.

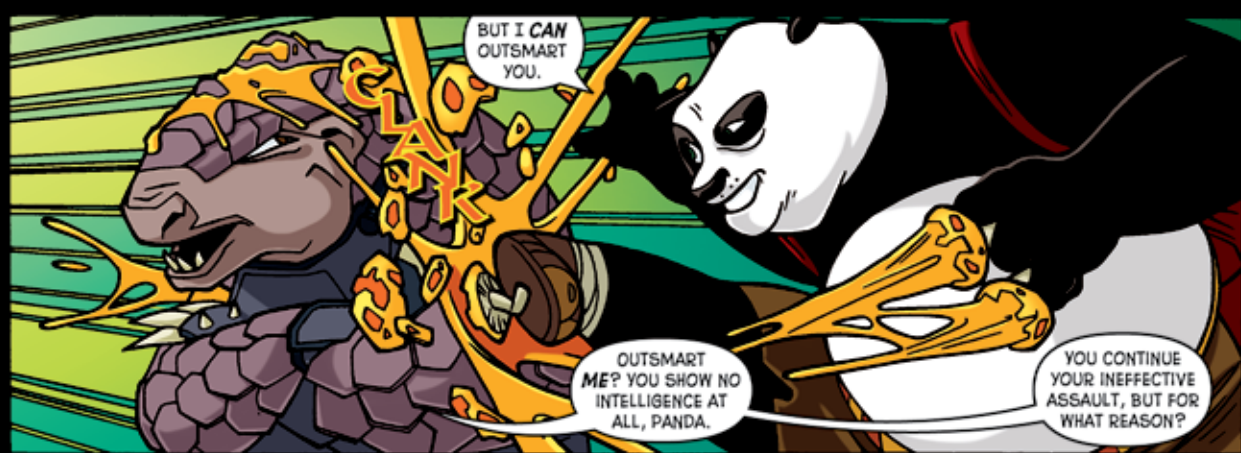


YOU'RE RIGHT, PANGOLIN...

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEAT YOU PHYSICALLY...

CLANK

STILL YOU TRY EVEN WHEN YOUR MISSION IS A FRUITLESS ONE?



BUT I CAN OUTSMART YOU.

CLANK

OUTSMART ME? YOU SHOW NO INTELLIGENCE AT ALL, PANDA.

YOU CONTINUE YOUR INEFFECTIVE ASSAULT, BUT FOR WHAT REASON?



WELL FOR STARTERS, BECAUSE I HAVE A FRIEND WHO'S COUNTING ON ME, AND I DON'T PLAN ON LETTING HER DOWN.



I CAN NOT MOVE!

AND FOR THE RECORD, MY KARATE CHOPS WERE TROJAN HORSES MEANT TO DISGUISE MY TRUE INTENTIONS.



THAT'S BECAUSE I'VE FILLED YOUR PLATES WITH THE STICKY INNARDS OF THOSE WEIRD MUSHROOMS YOU'VE GOT GROWING ALL AROUND THIS PLACE.

BUT DON'T WORRY; I'M SURE THEY'LL LOOSEN UP AFTER IT RAINS.



BUT IT ONLY RAINS EVERY SEVEN DAYS IN THE FOREST OF ISOLATION.

I GUESS "THEY" WERE WRONG AFTER ALL THEN.

THE GREATEST OFFENSE IS ACTUALLY THE ABILITY TO PROBLEM SOLVE, AND AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, MY PROBLEM IS SOLVED.

SEE YOU AROUND, MR. DEFENSE.



HOW IS SHE DOING, MASTER SHIFU?

MUCH BETTER NOW, THANKS TO YOU, PO.

WHY DO I FEEL LIKE THERE'S ANOTHER "BUT" COMING?

WELL, IT SEEMS AS THOUGH NO MATTER HOW MUCH I EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF HER ILLNESS, TIGRESS IS CONVINCED THAT THE SOURCE WAS NOT THE POISONED TIP OF A BLADE BUT...



FOOD POISONING!

I ONLY DROPPED ONE OF THE DUMPLINGS ON THE FLOOR! I SWEAR!

COME BACK HERE, PO.

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN ISOLATION!

THE END