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# FLYING SQUIRRELS

3D ANIMATED SERIES 26x13'  
9-12 YEARS







## GENERAL SYNOPSIS

An ancient tribe that existed thousands of years ago held the balance between the forces of nature. They were the Muiyis, who dwelled in the Sacred Citadel of old Dragon City. A magical oasis full of nature and wildlife, where they lived in peace with themselves and their environment. One day, when they saw that the conquerors and their wars were approaching their little paradise without mercy, they sought to protect it, gathering everything valuable from their mystical world into one place: The Sacred Chest. This, without realizing would become the most powerful object in the universe. And in turn, the conquerors most desired treasure.

The cure would in that case be worse than the disease. When it seemed too late to bring back the balance, the Muiyis sealed the Sacred Chest with a spell; that only the true descendant of pirates and of a good heart will be able to access its content and restore order in the universe. The Chest was buried in the depths of the Cave of Hell, the citadel was swallowed by the desert and the key was passed down from generation amongst pirates and sailors. The story of the Sacred Chest became legend, and the desire to capture its contents amongst the inhabitants of modern and chaotic Dragon City was dissolving with the years.



## And now who wants it?

Those that never forget. Dark characters for whom the Chest is an obsession that gets stronger with the years. They await the day that the Cave of Hell reopens to venture into its depths and capture all its power.

Topping the list is the DCorp, a huge corporation that controls everything in town, including the mayor. Their goal is world domination, exploiting every corner of the world without the slightest worry for the decimation of natural resources or of humanity itself. On their side we meet Massimo Giangrandi, the high school principal and mafia boss, responsible for committing despicable crimes throughout the city. The entrance of the cave is not unknown to him.

Massimo was part of the first generation who tried to reach the Sacred Chest fifteen years ago. Five friends that left Dragon City in search of the ancient treasure, and were never seen together again since. Only some know what really happened on that day in the Cave of Hell.

Each one has their own version of events, and hold their own stories of revenge.

Dragon City is awakening. A solar eclipse will reopen the Cave of Hell, putting the fate of humanity at risk. While in the Underworld, in the guts of the city, the misuse of power has begun to wreak havoc. The imbalance of the forces of nature is about to reach its peak.

## And where is the chosen one?

On the flip side of the coin we have Joseph Drake, Pierre Corso, Pep Morgan, Jon Ferro and Sara Monk. They are The Flying Squirrels; teenagers, best friends, students, streetball fans and the heroes in this adventure. Each one with a unique story. Among them is “the chosen one”; the incorruptible, free and kindhearted descendant of pirates; someone able to undertake the great responsibility of gaining access to all the power of the universe. And this person will certainly need their friends to achieve their goal.

The game is ready to begin. With the help of Mui San, the youngest and least experienced brother of the ancient Mui tribe, the Flying Squirrels will find their destiny. The preparation of their quest will be physical, mental and spiritual. When they decide to commence the journey, it will be long, full of danger and adventures, teaching them many lessons along the way. Then they will discover that just by knowing and accepting themselves, they shall be strong enough to withstand the final stretch in the Cave of Hell. It is then that their friendship will face their toughest test. Only as one strong unit will they be able to succeed where their parents failed.

Only united will they be able to discover where the true power of the universe resides.

**They are the Flying Squirrels.**



## CONCEPT

Flying Squirrels is an adventures and mystery series, with touches of humour.

The story takes place in a near future, in the mega-metropolis of Dragon City, a city older than Rome that conceals thousand-year-old secrets and the subterranean worlds on which it was built. The planet is monitored by the powerful Builder Corp, financial elite that wants to control Dragon City. Within this setting, four adolescent friends must find the last magical element beyond Builder Corp's reach: A Chest that grants all wishes. To do this, they join forces with the intrepid Sara Monk, who will help them in their adventures. The main purpose of the series is to recover the passion for adventure, whilst narrating the passage from the CONCEPT adolescence to adulthood. On a symbolic level, Builder Corp (or Upperworld) represents adult control, while the city's subterranean worlds and The Cave of Hell (or Underworld) relate to the more basic emotions of childhood. In this vertical outline, the protagonists are in the middle, confronting both adult control and their own emotions, in the process of adolescent growth. The Sacred Chest that grants all wishes illustrates the idea that growing does not mean we have to stop dreaming, but instead means learning to accept the consequences of our decisions. Even when the decision is to not make a decision, we are making a choice and therefore we must face the consequences.



## PLOTS

The main plot that guides the story line of the whole series revolves around the adventures that the Flying Squirrels experience in order to reach the Cave of Hell and obtain the Sacred Chest. Our protagonists are opposed by the omnipresent Builder Corp, as well as Massimo Giangrandi and Sumo Kabuto.

To this group objective must be added the personal motivations of each protagonist, which guide the successive plots. For Pierre, discovering the Cave of Hell is a way of finding out what happened to his father. For Joseph, it presents the possibility of obtaining glory and being the best. The story of Francis Corso is fundamental due to the emotional component, especially if we consider that Pierre has lived all his life with the stigma of being the son of a traitor. Although Francis does not appear in the story until the last episode, his presence is palpable throughout the whole series. The problematic relationship of Sara Monk and her father, the detective Monk, forms another sub-plot that adds complexity to both characters. The detective is obsessed with catching Massimo, what leads him to be an absent father. This draws Sara into trying to uncover Massimo's murky business, to win her father's approval.

Also in the past lies the explanation as to why Francis Corso fled with the Sacred Chest. Francis, Massimo, Moses and Nagai Kabuto, Sumo's father, were the team of pirates that tried to get hold of the Chest 15 years ago. They were a team like the Flying Squirrels, but one of the death traps of the Cave of Hell was the reason of the tragic end of Nagai Kabuto. Francis knew that Massimo was extremely ambitious and was aware of the danger of the

Chest falling into his hands. Yet he did not feel his character was strong enough to bear the weight involved in opening the Chest. And that is why he decided to flee with it. His intention was to do good, even when this meant betraying his team. Massimo, torn apart by the death of his friend Nagai, and full of anger over Francis' betrayal, has waited many years to come face to face with Francis again and exact his revenge. Moses on the other hand, has retired and lives in the abandoned shipyards of the port.

There are also romantic sub-plots in the new generation. Both Pierre and Joseph find Sara attractive. But she is too mature for them. The plot becomes more complex when Sara sets her sights on Sumo Kabuto, the Flying Squirrels' personal enemy.

Sumo Kabuto also has personal reasons for pitting himself against the Flying Squirrels. On the one hand, he wants to get his hands on the Sacred Chest. On the other, he wants to take revenge on Francis Corso for having fled with the wish that the Chest grants, instead of using it at the time to bring his father back to life. This thirst for revenge has been stoked by Massimo throughout all these years.

And finally, there is the symbolic plot that transposes the rivalry between Francis and Massimo onto the new generation. Pierre occupies his father's place, while Joseph, with his more ambitious side, could end up doomed just like Massimo. It will be in the hands of the boys to succeed where their parents failed so miserably.



## EPISODES

### EPISODE 1: THE DRAGON AWAKES

It's a gloomy evening in Dragon City. A flashy, blacked out car comes to a halt in a bleak corner of 54th Street. A man steps out of the car. His short hair carefully combed to the back, wearing a formal suit and immaculate shoes. He is seen entering an old antique store. Three elderly women are waiting at the other side of the counter, they recognize the man. He is Massimo Giangrandi. He has come in search of answers. He speaks of a mysterious game and wants to know when it is due to start again. It is also revealed that the son of the "traitor" has returned to the city. This awakens his thirst for revenge. Suddenly we hear a noise from the back of the shop which interrupts the conversation. It is one of the employees who dropped something on the floor. The old ladies get back Massimo's attention. They take out a magic box and consult the contents - some tarot cards - on the counter. It is still too early, they tell him. But they warn that Dragon City is waking up.

Joseph Drake, Pep Morgan, Jon Ferro and Sara Monk are a young group of very good friends. They go to high school together and are big basketball fans. They call themselves the Flying Squirrels. Pirate blood runs through their veins, as well as the thirst for adventure. They suspect that Giangrandi - the high school principal - is deeply involved in matters related with the mafia. And tonight, while he visits the old antiques store, they have decided to sneak into his Secret vault in search of evidence.

The plan goes smoothly: Sara watches Massimo near the antiques store and she monitors her friend's progress from her computer. Joseph, Pep and Jon are in close proximity to the high school. They carry video and audio equipment to record everything in their path. They've entered into the sewers, taking different routes. Joseph is

the first to enter, and a ferocious wolf welcomes him. When all hope seems lost for him, Pep arrives and shoots the wolf, tranquilizing it with a dart. Then Jon appears, just in time to decrypt the passcode to the Secret vault. Once inside they come across hundreds of foreign objects. Among them is an old map of the city protected by bullet proof glass and various old photos and newspaper clippings. When they get back to investigating the vault, the wolf wakes up and goes back to attacking the intruders. Bringing together their strengths and abilities, the Flying Squirrels manage to get away from the relentless guard and escape unharmed, although leaving behind a trail of destruction and without noticing that a small camera recorded the raid.

Without suspecting that anything happened on his property, Giangrandi leaves the Antique store without any answers. However, the tarot cards continue to announce to the old ladies what is coming up in Dragon City. The tarot has shown four friends. But it is the emergence of a fifth character that makes them celebrate ecstatically. It is the young Pierre Corso. His admission into the school and the group of friends closes the first circle of an ancient prophecy. The Flying Squirrels, now complete, are "The Five", a special group destined to take on a mission so important, that it could change the course of everything. Soon the courage and loyalty of these great friends will be put to the test. The game is about to begin.



## EPISODE 2: THE SON OF THE DESERT

Dawn breaks over the chaotic and rowdy Dragon City, while in the desert, silence engulfs everything. In this mystical environment, Muyi San, the youngest and least experienced member of the ancient Muiy tribe, receives a revelation and goes in search of the Master of the tribe in order to find out its meaning. In the sacred temple, the wise leader listens to the young apprentice and immediately consults the ancient calendar. Suddenly, a beam of light moves through the stone calendar and reveals something highly surprising: in very little time there will be a solar eclipse and the Cave of Hell will open. Just like the ancient prophecy dictates. This can only mean one thing: that the mysterious chest that was hidden thousands of years ago, will be able to be taken by "The chosen one". In the center of the city, Pierre Corso is sleeping, without a clue of what is going on hundreds of kilometers from his bed. But his dream isn't a pleasant one. He is having a nightmare, the same recurring nightmare as always: He's a little boy who watches with pride as his father winks to him from the podium of the winners of the fencing championship. Suddenly there is complete darkness, and then the flashing lights of police cars, that indicate a tragedy. Little Pierre is escorted by two officers through the halls of a boarding school where a crowd is gathered; pointing and whispering "the son of the traitor". Just when everything seems to get worse, Joseph wakes up, with the rest of the Flying Squirrels around him ready to introduce them. Meanwhile, in the police department, the chief Syd Monk receives a mysterious phone call. It's a man; he sounds very nervous



and refuses to reveal his identity. He tells him that he is undergoing a major investigation that involves the most powerful organization in Dragon city. He asks for protection. Monk asks for more information but the man says it's not safe to speak on the phone and hangs up, promising to contact him again. Monk, obsessed with catching Massimo Giangrandi, suspects that whoever was on the other side of the call has the evidence to do so.

On the other side of the city, Vladimir assures Massimo Giangrandi that the Flying Squirrels are the ones who entered his Secret vault, but they don't have any evidence to prove it. Sick of the nosey youngsters, Giangrandi conspires with Sumo Kabuto to distract the Flying Squirrels by challenging them to a game of street ball. To encourage and manipulate Sumo, Massimo reminds him that Pierre's family had to do with what happened to his ill-fated father and that therefore, the Flying Squirrels are also his enemies. Confident that they will win with their new team member, the Flying Squirrels accept the challenge. However, with the help of Massimo and his evil ways, they are eventually defeated by Kabuto and his coyotes.

Finally after a long tribal ceremony, the desert spirits choose Muiy San to be in charge of searching for "The Five", where amongst them the chosen one will eventually be found, to guide them to The Cave of Hell.

The choice completely confused The Muiy's. None of them, except the Master, had faith in the ability of the youngest of the brothers. Not even Muiy San himself. Will the young apprentice be able to fulfill the great mission assigned to him?

In the antique store, the old ladies celebrate a new revelation seen through the tarot cards: The son of the desert has started his journey. Something big is going to happen in Dragon City, and fast.



### EPISODE 3: SOMETHING BEHIND THE THRONE

In the editorial office of the newspaper; 'The Insider', entertainment section journalist Rita Ching looks for ways to escape the tabloids and get into the world of investigative journalism. After speaking with her boss in vain, frustrated she turns to her colleague Bruno Monroe, from the Crime section. But instead of solace, she finds her friend to be strangely nervous and upset. He seems to be behind a very big, dangerous case. Monroe doesn't want to reveal anything. Ching leans over his Laptop and sees a photo of a mysterious looking woman with black hair who catches her eye. 'Who is it?' She asks herself, but before she can question Bruno, he hurries her out. Ching suggests he goes to the police. Monroe ensures her that he's spoken to the chief Monk, but seriously doubts that anyone will be able to protect him. But from who? One phone call to Massimo Giangrandi will put an end to Bruno Monroe's curiosity. It is the 'Pirate Queen' on the line. She asks Massimo to dispose of the reporter who's going in far too deep with their investigation. He accepts her request, but asks for something in return. For Giangrandi, what could be worth more than taking a man's life?

Meanwhile, seeking to fulfill his mission, the noble Muyi San crosses the desert on the way to Dragon City. Overhead an eagle flies, as if it were following his steps. On his way, the young apprentice comes across various characters and hurdles that interfere with his pilgrimage. The wise

young apprentice knows how to use his strengths however, so that he can come out on top in all the challenges that face him, without violence; keeping his curiosity and permanent state of zen intact. Without suspecting what destiny awaits them, the Flying Squirrels only have basketball on their minds. The boys are not just going to sit back after Sumo Kabuto and the Coyotes beat them in front of the whole school. So they use their time to train in an old abandoned factory that they converted into their hideout, thus defeating their rivals in a re-match. But Sara prefers to analyze the images obtained in Massimo's private vault. Two things especially catch her attention: a place on the map called 'The Cave of Hell' and an old photo of a young Giangrandi and three other boys. Pierre recognizes his father amongst the four smiling faces in the picture. What did Francis Corso and Massimo Giangrandi have to do with each other? Back in the editorial office of The Insider, Rita Ching is finishing off her days writing when she receives a call from Bruno Monroe. She can't hear him well at all. He is being chased. Rita urges him to tell her where he is, but he only says that she must remember the keyword: Operation Conquest. The phone call is cut off all of a sudden and Rita is left alone without a clue as to what to do. Night falls in Dragon City, with more than just one mystery surrounding the metropolis.



#### EPISODE 4: BURNT TO ASHES

Muyi San finally reaches the city in the back of an old, rickety truck carrying. The vast city, being as chaotic as it is modern, excites and surprises him. The eagle that accompanied Muyi from the beginning of the journey continues to monitor his steps, and even saves him from getting hit by a bus. For the young monk, the city seems to be far more dangerous than the desert he knows so well.

Meanwhile, in the high school, Sara keeps looking for clues about the other two people in Massimo's old photo. Walking through the halls she notices the school trophy cabinet. One of the faces from the photo stands out amongst the team portraits of the yearly basketball champions. It is Nagai Kabuto, Sumo's father. He disappeared 15 years ago, around the same time as Francis Corso. Sara begins to connect the dots, but Sumo Kabuto surprises her, stealing her computer with the photo open on the screen. The Flying Squirrels come to the rescue. And after a wild chase through the halls of the high school, Sara's computer falls in the hands of the principal. Just as Massimo is about to discover what its all about, Sumo invents something to cover up Sara and return her computer to her. He says that Pierre and his friends are the problem, not her. What does Kabuto mean?

After a call from Bruno, Rita Ching jumps from her desk and rushes to Monroe's office. When she gets there, she sees two security guards taking his computer. Without understanding what's really going on, she feels certain that her colleague really had his teeth into

something big with his investigation. She calls the chief of police and tells him a bit about the case, saying that they must go to Bruno's home to rescue the evidence before it's too late.

Relentless in her curiosity and sure of having a bomb of a news story in her hands, Ching escapes from her work in 'The Insider' and manages to sneak into Monroe's house. There she discovers a maze of newspaper clippings and photographs. A red thread running through the room from side to side fancifully connects the data. Just when Rita starts to connect the dots, an unexpected visitor interrupts her break-in. It is Vladimir, Massimo's right-hand man, who within minutes; covers the house with petrol, sets it on fire and leaves. Ching is able to go unnoticed but the smoke begins to suffocate her. When all seems lost, someone breaks the front door down and carries her out. It's chief Monk. Just in time for Ching, but too late for Monroe.

After wandering through Dragon City's streets, Muyi San finds a map which shows his first stop: the Antiques shop. The old ladies recognize him before he even comes through the door. Delighted with his arrival, they show him what the cards have revealed to them in the last few days. Muyi San explains that the time has come for the key and its carrier to come out into the light. 'The five', among which is 'The chosen one' must be guided and prepared in order to fulfil their destiny in the Cave of Hell. The old ladies, ecstatic with the news, use the cards so they can show Muyi San where to find them. The start of the game is getting closer and closer.



## EPISODE 5: THE SILENT VISITOR

A new day begins in Dragon City. As he does every morning, Jon Ferro starts his daily routine very early preparing the bread in 'The good croissant'. His passion and dedication when working the bread dough was like that of a samurai. His mother, a strong, kind and caring woman, rushes to leave him his breakfast. She insists that he eats it before carrying on with his work. For Ferro, a big-hearted guy, it's impossible to resist when his mother spoils him.

However, things won't be so easy-going at high school today. The presence of a small, mysterious man in a poncho will make everybody curious. It's Mui San, coming in search of 'The five', where 'The chosen one' will eventually be found. First he introduces himself to Pep, then to Sara, Joseph and Pierre. He surprises them in their classes, in the library, in the dining room, causing them a few problems. Then, without saying a word, the apprentice disappears. Everyone is baffled. Since then, Mui San's presence only meant trouble to the Flying Squirrels. How will the little man from the desert get into the group and be able to convince them of his mission? Rita Ching goes to the police station to give her statement. Suddenly, in chief Monk's office, she spots the photos that Syd pinned to the blackboard. It's the pyramid structure of the mafia, with Massimo at the top. Vladimir is there as well, Rita recognizes him as the man who lit the fire. Massimo Giangrandi is back in Monk's sight.

With new clues at hand, Monk looks for the mayor to ask for his support. He tells him about what happened to Bruno Monroe. Also about Rita Ching's statement which could incriminate Vladimir and could finally get to Massimo. But far from spurring on the immediate arrest

of Giangrandi, the mayor asks Syd Monk to be patient. He assures Syd that he and his people have a parallel investigation on Massimo concerning tax evasion, and that they will definitely have enough evidence soon to put him away. Monk returns to his office with his hands tied. Now he can only trust and hope. Will he be able to?

Meanwhile, in the high school gym, Massimo Giangrandi is putting things in his protege Sumo Kabuto's head. The plan is to defeat The Flying Squirrels in their next meeting, and they both know that it won't be in a basketball court but in the Cave of hell. To encourage him, Massimo reminds Sumo that Francis Corso, Pierre's father, is responsible for the death of his father. The strong feeling of revenge boils up inside them both.

Vladimir reports back to Massimo, stating that he did what was instructed and 'removed all the evidence'. Massimo gives the 'Pirate Queen' a call to ask her to fulfill her part of the deal. What is it that Massimo Giangrandi craves so much?

At the end of the day Jon arrives to the Flying Squirrel's hideout with Mui San. A few hours before, the young apprentice turned up in the bakery making friends with the kind and patient Jon. From their own past experiences, Sara, Pep, Joseph and Pierre suspect that it would only bring problems having the unusual, little man around. Until they discover that he has a mark on his tunic, identical to the chest on the ancient map, just above the Cave of Hell. Could Mui San hold the answers they've been waiting for?



## TRANSITION FROM THE 2D ILLUSTRATIONS INTO THE 3D SERIES

The technology planned for the series is CGI, from construction and development of the characters and 3D backgrounds (Autodesk Maya); to post-production techniques and Motion Graphics (Adobe AfterEffects) with some traditional animation and comic techniques. All this will be integrated, to achieve a final result that will be very close to the aesthetics of contemporary western comics. All the colour details, lighting, textures are designed to create a credible “moving comic” universe, which will provide great freedom in terms of shots and frames, always maintaining the classical cinematographic narrative concept (which is also found in the aforementioned comics) where the story is more important than being spectacular, or the technique used. The aesthetic goal of the use of color and texturing techniques typical 2D on the figures and backgrounds modeled in three dimensions, is to avoid the typical style of 3D textures that are often flat and hard.



### NARRATIVE USE OF 2D ILLUSTRATIONS INTO 3D SERIES

From the narrative point of view, the transition from 3D to 2D/illustration is a tool used to punctuate moments in the story, to highlight actions or remark turning points in the narrative facts. For example, transitions to short flashbacks or situations where the action seems to get “paused”, the step from 3D over 2D serves to intensify the moment and give it visual significance that accompanies the script. This “comic-like” integration will not be used more than a few times per episode, and only in case the story justified it, since the series is basically in 3D.





## CHARACTERS

### SARAH MONK

She is a high school friend of the Flying Squirrels, although she is much more mature than them. She is intelligent and calculating. She remains calm when the boys' emotions get the better of them. She has a natural beauty, which lies especially in her mysterious and distant attitude. She has a good command of technology and great powers of deduction. She is the brains behind the Flying Squirrels' adventures. She always gets her hands on the latest technological devices, which she "borrows" from the office of her father, Detective Monk. Sara's main aim is to uncover the dirty business of Massimo Giangrandi. Being so efficient and brainy, Sara runs the risk of being too cool and never showing her emotions.

Sara's family history is complicated: her mother died when she was very young. Since then, she has lived with her father, detective Monk, the chief of police. Detective Monk is obsessed with catching Massimo, which is why he stopped paying attention to his daughter a long time ago. To win her father's approval, Sara wants to discover Massimo's secrets no matter what.





## JOSEPH DRAKE

Like Dumas' D' Artagnan, Joseph is the group leader and the sacrificed hero. He is the quixotic type that, no matter how injured he is, always returns for more. His main aim is to always reach seemingly unattainable goals and to be the best.

He is enthusiastic and is always seeking to exceed himself. He is protective and always looks after his friends. He is brave, valiant and very sure of himself, although a little proud. One of his greatest fears is to fail and let himself and others down. Being so competitive, he also runs the risk of becoming extremely ambitious.

As well as being a skilful basketball player, he is very good at skateboarding and parkour. Joseph's history is special, because he was an orphan from birth. Although his parents do not appear throughout the story, he is a descendant of pirates. He was adopted by Francis Corso when he was a boy and spent his childhood with Pierre as if they were brothers.

However, when Francis escaped with the Sacred Chest and Pierre was taken abroad, Joseph had to grow up in boarding schools and care homes.







## PIERRE CORSO

Pierre is the tormented hero, in the style of Aramis of the Three Musketeers. He has attitude and is too cool to be true. He is elegant, refined and gentlemanly in his manners, being the descendent of a family of renowned corsairs. He is analytical and reserved, and his thoughts always have a deeper meaning than those of the rest of the team. His main aim is to find out what happened to his father. He bears the burden of being “the son of a traitor”, dragging this with him throughout the story. His greatest fear is to not arrive at the truth. Due to his personality, he runs the risk of falling into impractical theorising and into inaction due to over-analysis. He is extremely skilful at roller-skating and nobody can beat him at fencing.

Pierre is also a maternal orphan. As a child he was raised by his father, but when they had to flee and Francis disappeared, he was forced to grow up with private teachers and governesses outside of Dragon City. Now he has returned and will not rest until he has uncovered the mystery.



## TECHNICAL DETAILS

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