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SF PERUSALS

The Jungle Book

A Play

Rudyard Kipling

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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THE JUNGLE BOOK

First produced by the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, at the New Vic Studio Theatre, King Street, Bristol, on 22nd November 1983, with the following cast:

Gisborne/Head Man	Richard Coombs
Abdul Gafur/Akela	Tom Griffin
Amira/Chil the Kite	Lisa Bowerman
Elder Mowgli	Michael Corbidge
Villager/Hathi/Grey Brother	Guy Moore
Father Wolf/Priest/Buck	Ian Crowe
Mother Wolf	Anji Carroll
Tabaqui/Man/Noisy Monkey	Kean Rand
Shere Khan	Andrew Black
Baloo	Geoffrey Owen
Bagheera	Michael Brazier
Younger Mowgli	Antony Howes
Kaa	Julia Ford
Tha/2nd Monkey	Paul Rosewell
First Tiger/Head Monkey	Bryan Kennedy
Buldeo/Buck	David Hudson
Messua	Susan Tordoff

The play directed by John Hartoch

Subsequently presented by Walter Jokel for Portman Theatre Productions at the Adelphi Theatre, Strand, London on 5th December, 1984 with the following cast:

Gisborne/Hathi/Second Monkey	Jon Iles
Abdul Gafur/Bagheera	Jonathan Izard
Villager/Younger Mowgli	Emlyn Harris
Amira/Chil the Kite	Julia Lintott
Older Mowgli/Tha	David Banks
Father Wolf/Head Monkey/Priest	Gareth Tudor-Price
Mother Wolf/Indian Woman	Carol Ann Ford
Tabaqui	Jonathan Hartman
Shere Khan	Simon Cuff
Akela/First of the Tigers	Nicholas Geake
Baloo/Buldeo	Jeremy Sinden
Grey Brother/Noisy Monkey	James Mathews
Kaa	Fenella Fielding

Fourth Monkey	Conor McGivern
Messua	Catherine Shipton

The play directed by John Hartoch

Act I Scene 1 Gisborne's Verandah
Scene 2 The Wolf Cave
Scene 3 The Council Rock
Scene 4 The Jungle
Scene 5 The Bank of the River
Scene 6 The Jungle
Scene 7 Gisborne's Verandah

Act II Scene 1 Gisborne's Verandah
Scene 2 The Jungle
Scene 3 The Cold Lairs
Scene 4 The Jungle
Scene 5 A Jungle Path
Scene 6 The Village
Scene 7 The Plain
Scene 8 The Ravine

PRODUCTION NOTES

Doubling
As may be seen from the cast-lists, doubling is essential to the nature of the piece. *It is a story being told by a group of actors who assume different roles when called upon.* As it can be done with a very large cast (the more the merrier in I, 3 and II, 3!) or with as few as thirteen it would be folly for me to offer a definitive doubling list. To attempt it with fewer than thirteen is not recommended as the more crowded scenes become too thin and I, 5 becomes very nearly impossible!

Set
In order that the actors should be as comfortable and confident as possible some form of stage-padding is essential. In Bristol we used rubberized horse-hair, in London pile carpeting. The rest of the set should consist of an upper level for Gisborne's balcony and various important focusings (Kaa, Mowgli in II, 8, etc.), and a number of other levels which could be supplied simply by rostra, or, as we did at Bristol, with scaffolding and "shelves" (see illustration). The important thing is to make the Jungle functional, not naturalistic, so that we are always aware of the actors telling the story. A central platform for Akela's rock is essential. Gisborne's verandah should be made as real as possible within the overall style.

Costume
For the Gisborne scenes costume and props should be completely realistic. For the Jungle scenes the animal costumes should be easy to move in and should not suggest too strongly any particular animal (with exceptions as given in the Costume List, page vii). Let the actors create the animal characters through their bodies, their faces and voices. Don't be tempted to do it for them. For the scenes in the Indian village "quick-change" dhotis, saris and turbans are easily made.

Props
For the Gisborne scenes, realistic. For most of the Jungle scenes, mimed. For certain moments in the Jungle (I, 5) and for the village use very obvious props. All such items as jewellery for villagers, fire-pot, shovel, hoe, food-basket, etc. we formalized by painting them black. The reason for these levels is to accentuate the difference between "present time" (Gisborne scenes) and "flashback" and, once again, to underline the story-telling element. It may be felt advisable to mime all props apart from those in the Gisborne scenes, but, having tried this, I decided there was something to be gained by having the human beings surrounded by objects and possessions, thereby contrasting them with animals. Equally I wanted to be able to mime

a bed, or a fire-brand without the audience feeling it to be awkward, so the formalized props helped, enabling Mowgli, for instance, to take a totally imaginary fire-brand from a very solid fire-pot without it seeming wrong.

Special Effects

The "faces in the dark" for I,1; II,5 and II,8 are achieved by the actors each having a small torch which they train on their faces.

For a small, or medium-sized theatre, it is exciting and satisfying to have all the sounds acoustically or vocally made. Perhaps not everyone will be able to find or afford live sitar and tabla-players and may have to fall back on recorded music but all the animal noises can be made by human agency. A few hours experimenting with the cast will produce impressive cicadas, tree-frogs, wolves and other unidentifiable but undeniably "jungly" noises. A good "baby" is essential to help create the illusion of the baby Mowgli in I,2 and I,3. The "tiger" is more difficult, the best sound being achieved by an inhalation through a sort of croak at the back of the throat, but practice is necessary if the actor is not to lose his voice. The fire can be suggested by the simple method of slapping two fingers against an extended palm; the echo effect by having other actors repeat exactly the last syllables and intonation of each phrase of Mowgli and Shere Khan (II, 8).

The "chant" in I,5 should be something which conjures up primeval movements, not specifically Indian in its feel. We used a simple Indian folk-song tune, gave it a strong bass-feeling and sang it in 5ths, so that we ended up with something sounding like a synthesis between Hindu, Red Indian and Gregorian chant!! The Road Song of the Bandar-Log (II,3) should sound like so many wooden spoons beating on tin kettles. The snake's dance should be weird and willowy.

The misnamed "sitar chord" at the end of scenes refers to the run of the scale played by a sitarist at the start of a raga.

Movement and Mime

A great deal of time and effort must be spent on movement. Observing and imitating the animals is essential to the success of the piece. In my productions I had the invaluable assistance of a mime-artist (Geoffrey Buckley) but also a great deal was achieved by the actors themselves. The necessity for the monkey-fight in the second act to be exciting and athletic cannot be stressed enough.

The death of Shere Khan was achieved by the actor concerned falling off a level into the arms of a group of catchers who entered at the last moment for this purpose. In London Simon Cuff threw himself (none too cheerfully at first!) off a nine-foot level and was never dropped, but this is not to be attempted without expert training. In Bristol Andrew Black fell off a level only four-foot high, and in a small theatre this was quite acceptable.

Short Version

The first version of this play, with which we toured schools in Avon and Stroud, lasted 75 minutes, had a set consisting of a children's climbing-

frame and a large piece of matting, and was considered suitable for seven-to-eleven-year-olds. To discover this script within the full-length one, simply get rid of the Gisborne scenes (I,1; I,7; II,1; II,2), start at "Now Chil the Kite . . ." (page 4), cut from line on page 10 (Scene 4) to line page 17 (Scene 5) and have cast and Shere Khan recite final poem without the activity from Mowgli, Abdul and Amira (II,8).

J.G.H.

COSTUMES

ACT I

SCENE 1
Gisborne: jodhpurs, jacket, shirt, cravat, boots
Abdul: white turban, breeches, jacket, contrasting sash, dagger, bare feet
Older Mowgli: loin-cloth with hunting-knife
Villager: white turban, shirt, dhoti

SCENE 2
Cast in standard animal costumes, ranging from grey to sandy brown
Specials—**Tabaqui:** sandy yellow
Shere Khan: dull orange with faded stripes on back

SCENE 3
Baloo: brown with some padding
Bagheera: black with a blue sheen

SCENE 4
Mowgli: actor removes top of his basic animal costume and plays with torso naked. Since Mowgli is meant to be naked until Scene 6 of Act II this seems the best way of expressing it while distinguishing him sufficiently from the beasts

SCENE 5
First of the Tigers: sandy-coloured costume with black stripes, the latter velcro'ed so that sandy-coloured strips can be overlaid. When Tiger gets stripes, the Chorus, as creepers, remove strips revealing black stripes
Men: white dhotis and turbans

SCENE 6
Kaa: hood, long dress decorated with python-markings, skirt slit up sides to hip-level. Lycra tights in complementary colour. Bare feet

SCENE 7
Amira: orange sari

ACT II

SCENES 5 AND 6

Villagers: longish, loose shirts for the men, with turbans and dhotis. All dhotis white, some shirts coloured. Saris and cholis for women in yellow, russet, orange, tan. Copper and brass bangles

Buldeo: long, loose shirt in striped material. No turban. Tiger-tooth necklace. Sash

Priest: white, long dhoti. Bare head and torso. Silk braid (white) over shoulder

Messua: white sari and choli. Gold sandals. No jewellery

ACT I

SCENE 1

The verandah of Gisborne's bungalow in a clearing in the Indian jungle. Evening

The bungalow is set C *on an upper level, as naturalistic as possible. Far left is a statue of Krishna, far right a statue of a demon with an elephant's head. The interior of the bungalow is suggested by a curtain through which people entering from the house must pass. There are the remains of a meal on a small table. Gisborne sits at the cluttered table, occasionally sipping from a glass at his elbow. A young girl's voice is heard, off, singing a plaintive Indian song which Gisborne is enjoying. The song breaks off with a slap and a cry*

Gisborne Abdul! Abdul!

Abdul enters; a middle-aged, Muslim butler

Abdul Sahib?

Gisborne Your daughter has a beautiful voice, Abdul. Why won't you let her sing?

Abdul Ha! She is a dreamer, Sahib. She sings and forgets her work. I make her remember her work.

Gisborne Must you beat her so frequently?

Abdul Am I not her father, Sahib?

Gisborne (*one last try*) It would please me to hear her cries less often.

Abdul (*pouring Gisborne another drink; with a gesture of barely-disguised contempt*) Yes, Sahib. When I beat her you shall not hear. Thank you, Sahib. (*He makes to go*)

A Hindu villager appears, breathless from running

Villager Gisborne, Sahib! The Red One!! The Red One has killed a man!!

Gisborne Abdul! Who?

Villager A forest guard. I do not know his name. By the Kanye stream. His head smashed—poh!—like an egg!

Abdul hands Gisborne his rifle. Gisborne checks it

Gisborne The Red One. I knew he'd turn to man in time. There's plenty of game about, even for him. This must have been done for devilry.

Abdul Yes, Sahib. He is the very devil!

Gisborne Let's see now. He lies up in the rocks at the back of the sal trees.

Villager Not now, Sahib. Now he will be raging to and fro.
Abdul Yes, Sahib. Remember the first kill is a triple kill always. Man-blood makes them mad. He may be in the thicket now, even as we speak.

They look towards the thicket. A growling noise. Gisborne raises his gun

Older Mowgli emerges from the thicket, growling. He laughs

Older Mowgli Fear not. The tiger that killed has gone to drink, and now he is asleep under a rock behind the hill. He will not wake again.
Gisborne You killed him? Where is the skin?
Older Mowgli Not worth the taking.
Gisborne The whiskers? Do you not take the whiskers?
Older Mowgli I? Am I a lousy shikaree of the Jungle to set flame to a tiger's whiskers? Let him lie. Chil, the Kite, shall eat his fill today.
Gisborne Where is your gun?
Older Mowgli Ah! My gun! May I see the Sahib's?
Abdul Do not trust him with it, Sahib. He is a thieving jungle gypsy.

Gisborne offers the gun. Mowgli takes it, with a hard look at Abdul

Older Mowgli Arré! It is very fine. But I need no such weapon. I have just as good. (*He draws his hunting knife*)
Gisborne You killed a tiger with that?
Older Mowgli He was sleeping. I jumped on his back, pulled back his head. For a moment he knew, then . . . (*he gestures*) . . . a dog's death for a dog.

Gisborne nods to the Villager to ascertain the truth

The Villager vanishes

Older Mowgli He will find it as I say.
Gisborne If he does, and you killed a tiger with nothing but a hunting knife, you are a man who could be useful to me. I am the warden of the forests of this area. Would you work for me? For the Government? For Queen Victoria?
Older Mowgli (*laughing*) I have heard of this great Queen Vittoria. But in the Jungle I am King. Should a king work for a queen?
Gisborne But there are other things . . . money . . . a pension . . .
Older Mowgli Money is stupid. It breeds hatred and killing between men. May I come in, Sahib? I have never yet looked within a white man's house.

Gisborne motions him to enter. He does so on tiptoe. Abdul keeps a close watch. Mowgli looks into the next room

Ha! That is a bed. For sleeping. I have seen such a thing before. (*Looking at the bottle*) And this . . . this is the drink that makes fools out of men.
Gisborne Not exactly. The men are fools already. The drink just shows them for what they are.
Older Mowgli Can the Sahib not be what he is without the help of this?

The Villager dashes in. He stares at Mowgli

Gisborne Well?
Villager It is true, Sahib. The Red One is dead. His throat is cut. It is magic, Sahib! A great magic!!

Mowgli looks at him

The Villager raises his hands to ward off the magic and runs off

Older Mowgli It is as I said. There are many rich things here. Is the Sahib not afraid that he may be robbed? I have never seen such a gun.
Abdul Only a thief from the Jungle would rob here.

Mowgli stares at him, then smiles

Older Mowgli In the village where once I lived it was the custom when a goat bleated too loud to cut its throat. But have no fear. I am going.
Gisborne Wait. One moment. I do not know your name.
Older Mowgli I am called Mowgli.
Gisborne Mowgli . . .?
Older Mowgli The Frog. So I was named by my mother, Raksha.
Abdul Raksha! The Demon!! Sahib this is indeed not a gypsy but a devil!
Gisborne Leave us will you, Abdul.
Abdul But Sahib . . .
Gisborne Leave us. I shall be all right. I have my gun and you are within call.
Abdul Sahib.

Abdul goes, with a warning glance at Mowgli

Gisborne Will you talk, Mowgli?
Older Mowgli A man must talk sometimes with other men. There are none in the Jungle. (*He sits*) Tell me, Sahib, why does a man like you, a man with servants, a man with money, a man with a gun—why does such a man need this drink which takes away his manhood?
Gisborne Oh, it's not as bad as all that, Mowgli. It only makes men foolish when they drink too much.
Older Mowgli And the Sahib does not drink too much?
Gisborne I'm a long way from home, Mowgli, a long way from my own people.
Older Mowgli Ah! This I understand. Once I, too, longed for my home. When first I lived amongst men.
Gisborne You mean you had a home which was not amongst men?
Older Mowgli Indeed, Sahib. My home was in the Jungle, as it is now. And my friends. . . . The tale is a long one but this night is a night for talking and if the Sahib wishes he shall hear.
Gisborne Please.
Older Mowgli Ha! Where to begin?

The Lights begin to fade as the sun sets

I am no teller of tales. The start I do not remember. My mother, Raksha, told me of it in later years. It seems it was at this season, a night such as

this between the time when the sun dies and the moon rises. And on that night also a tiger hunted Man before his Night was upon him.

Gisborne His Night?

Older Mowgli Have patience, Sahib. See! The sun goes down. Let us watch it sink. Then I shall tell thee.

Black-out. A low drumbeat

A Face appears high in the darkness (see Production Notes), descending as it speaks. After the first two lines other Faces appear, rising from below. On the fifth line a spoken "round" begins, the cast being divided into groups, Faces appearing and disappearing and each group resting the verse while a howl is heard. As each group finishes the Faces vanish. The first Face repeats the final sentence

Face 1 Now Chil the Kite brings home the night
That Mang the Bat sets free—
Face 2 The herds are shut in byre and hut
Face 3 For loosed till dawn are we.
Groups This is the hour of pride and power
Talon and tush and claw.
Oh hear the call! (*Howl*) Good hunting all
That keep the Jungle Law!

As Face 1 repeats the final sentence, the Lights come up on 1st Narrator

Face 1 sees him and scuttles away

Scene 2

The Wolf Cave

Actors must establish the cave area, the cave entrance, the ledge outside the cave

The Lights come up on the lower (non-naturalistic) "Jungle" level revealing Mother and Father Wolf. All other cast, except Shere Khan and Tabaqui are up stage on different levels with their backs to us. Cast make jungle sounds. 1st Narrator looks around at the Jungle then begins

1st Narrator It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seonee Hills when Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, yawned, and spread his paws out one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

2nd Narrator turns and speaks

2nd Narrator Mother Wolf lay with her big, grey nose dropped across her four, tumbling, squealing cubs, and the moon shone into the mouth of the cave where they all lived.

Father Wolf Aurgh! It is time to hunt again.

Tabaqui enters, sniffs, comes to the cave mouth

Tabaqui Good luck go with you, O Chief of the Wolves; and good luck and

strong, white teeth go with the noble children, that they may never forget the hungry in the world.

During the following the cast turn round, as they speak their lines, to watch the scene. The narration should flow but each Narrator should register as an individual. Diagonal lines mark division of narration as used in production. From this point narration is given to suitable cast-members, and the designation "Narrator" refers to whomsoever is chosen to do that particular piece

Narrator It was the jackal/Tabaqui/the dish-licker/and the wolves of India despise Tabaqui/because he runs about making mischief/and telling tales/ and eating rags/and pieces of leather from the village rubbish-heaps./But they are afraid of him too/because Tabaqui/more than anyone else in the Jungle/is apt to go mad/and then he forgets that he was ever afraid of anyone/and runs through the forest biting everything in his way./Even the tiger runs and hides when little Tabaqui goes mad./

Father Wolf Enter then, and look. But there is no food here.

Tabaqui For a wolf, no, but for so mean a person as myself a dry bone is a good feast. Who are we, the Jackal People, to pick and choose?

Narrator He scuttled to the back of the cave where he found the bone of a buck with some meat on it.

Tabaqui All thanks for this good meal.

Cub-noises from the Chorus members

How beautiful are the noble children. How large are their eyes. And so young too. Indeed, indeed I might have remembered that the children of kings are men from the beginning.

Narrator Tabaqui knew as well as anyone else that there is nothing so unlucky as to compliment children to their faces;/and it pleased him to see Mother and Father Wolf look uncomfortable.

Tabaqui Shere Khan, the tiger, has shifted his hunting-grounds. He will hunt among these hills for the next moon. So he has told me.

Father Wolf He has no right! By the Law of the Jungle he has no right to change his quarters without due warning. He will frighten every head of game within ten miles, and I, I have to kill for two these days.

Mother Wolf His mother did not call him "Lungri—the Lame One" for nothing. He has been lame in one foot since his birth. That is why he has only killed cattle. Now the villagers of the Waingunga are angry with him, and he has come to make our villagers angry. They will scour the Jungle for him when he is far away and we and our children must run when the grass is set alight. Indeed we are very grateful to Shere Khan.

Tabaqui Shall I tell him of your gratitude?

Father Wolf (*chasing him out*) Out!! Out and hunt with thy master. Thou has done enough harm for one night!

Tiger noises from Shere Khan (off) and cast (on)

Tabaqui I go. Ye can hear Shere Khan below in the thickets. I might have saved myself the message.

Tabaqui exits

Father Wolf The fool! To begin a night's work with that noise. Does he think that our bucks are like his fat Waingunga bullocks?

Mother Wolf Hssh! It is neither buck nor bullock he hunts tonight. It is Man.

The tiger noises grow

Father Wolf Man! Faugh! Are there not enough beetles and frogs in the tanks that he must eat Man?

Tiger noises grow to a roar and break off in a howl of pain

Mother Wolf He has missed. What is it?

Father Wolf The fool has had no more sense than to jump at a woodcutter's camp-fire, and he has burned his feet. Tabaqui is with him.

Mother Wolf Something is coming up the hill. Get ready.

Father Wolf Man? A man's cub. Look!

Father Wolf and Narrator establish the position of the (invisible) baby. Baby noises from one of the chorus

Narrator Directly in front of him, holding on by a low branch, stood a naked, brown baby who could just walk—he looked up into Father Wolf's face and laughed.

Mother Wolf Is that a man's cub? Bring it here.

Father Wolf gingerly picks up the "baby". The baby noises become distressed. He takes the "baby" into the cave and puts it down. Cub noises

How little! How naked!

Angry baby noise

How bold! Ahai!

Noises of baby disturbing cubs

He is taking his place with the others. So this is a man's cub. Now was there ever a wolf could boast of a man's cub among her children?

Father Wolf I have heard now and then of such a thing, but never in our pack or in my time. He is altogether without hair and I could kill him with a touch of my foot. But see, he looks up and is unafraid.

Tabaqui (*off*) My Lord, my Lord, it went in here.

Shere Khan and Tabaqui enter

Father Wolf runs from the cave and meets the tiger

Father Wolf Shere Khan does us great honour. What does Shere Khan need?

Shere Khan My quarry. A man's cub went this way. Its parents have run off. Give it to me.

Father Wolf The Wolves are a free people. They take orders from the Head of the Pack and not from any striped cattle-killer. The man's cub is ours—to kill if we choose.

Shere Khan Ye choose and ye do not choose! What talk is this of choosing? By the bull that I killed, am I to stand nosing into your dog's den for my fair dues? It is I, Shere Khan, who speak!!

Mother Wolf (*attacking Shere Khan's rear from the cave mouth*) And it is I, Raksha—the Demon—who answer! The man's cub is mine, Lungri—mine, to me! He shall not be killed. He shall live to hunt with the pack; and in the end, look you, hunter of little naked cubs—frog-eater—fish-killer—he shall hunt thee! Now get hence or back thou goest to thy mother lamer than ever thou camest into the world! Go!!

Shere Khan Each dog barks in his own yard! We will see what the Pack will say to this fostering of man-cubs. The cub is mine, and to my teeth he will come in the end, O bush-tailed thieves.

Shere Khan and Tabaqui exit

Mother Wolf collapses, panting

Father Wolf Shere Khan speaks this much truth. The cub must be shown to the pack. Wilt thou still keep him, Mother?

Mother Wolf moves back into the cave. Cub and baby sounds

Mother Wolf Keep him! He came naked, by night and alone; yet he was not afraid. Look, he has pushed one of my babes to one side already. And that lame butcher would have killed him and would have run off to the Waingunga while the villagers here hunted through all our lairs in revenge! Keep him? Assuredly I will keep him. Lie still, little frog. Oh thou Mowgli, for Mowgli—the frog—I will call thee—the time will come when thou wilt hunt Shere Khan as he has hunted thee.

Father Wolf But what will the Pack say?

Tableau. A "broken chord" on the sitar. The Lights snap bright. Energetic movement as actors take their places

Scene 3

The Council Rock

The set and actors must establish Akela's Rock, the circle of Wolves, an area in the centre for cubs

Narrator The Law of the Jungle lays down clearly that as soon as a wolf's cubs are old enough to stand on their feet he must bring them to the Pack Council in order that the other wolves may identify them./Father Wolf waited until his cubs could run a little, and then on the night of the Pack Meeting took them and Mowgli and Mother Wolf to the Council Rock/

The Lights fade to moonlight

A hilltop covered with stones and boulders where a hundred wolves could hide./

Akela Akela, the great, grey, Lone Wolf who led the pack by strength and cunning, lay out at full length on his rock.

Narrator And below him sat forty or more wolves of every size and colour./

Cub noises

There was very little talking at the Rock. The cubs tumbled over each other in the centre of the circle where their mothers and fathers sat,/and now and again a senior wolf would go quietly up to a cub, look at him carefully, and return to his place on noiseless feet./Sometimes a mother would push her cub far out into the moonlight, to be sure that he had not been overlooked./Akela from his rock would cry./

Akela Ye know the Law—ye know the Law. Look well, O Wolves!

Mothers Look well! Look well, O Wolves!

Narrator And the anxious mothers would take up the cry./At last—and Mother Wolf's neck-bristles lifted as the time came—Father Wolf pushed "Mowgli the Frog" into the centre——

Baby noises

—where he sat laughing and playing with some pebbles in the moonlight.

Akela Look well, O Wolves.

Shere Khan (*off; from the back of the auditorium*) The cub is mine! Give him to me. What have the free people to do with a man's cub?

Akela Look well, O Wolves! What have the Free People to do with the orders of any save the Free People? Look well!

Unease among the Wolves

Young Wolf What have the Free People to do with a man's cub?

Old Wolf What does the Law say?

Wolves The Law! What does the Law say?

Akela What does the Law say, Baloo?

Narrator The only other creature who is allowed at the Pack Council——

Baloo Baloo, the sleepy brown bear who teaches the wolf-cubs the Law of the Jungle——

Narrator —rose up on his hindquarters and grunted.

Baloo The Law of the Jungle says that if there is any dispute in such a matter the cub must be spoken for by at least two members of the Pack who are not his father and mother.

Akela Who speaks for this cub?

Shere Khan roars, off

Among the Free People, who speaks?

Silence

Baloo None? Then I will speak for the man's cub. There is no harm in a man's cub. I have no gift of words but I speak the truth. Let him run with the Pack, and be entered with the others. I myself will teach him.

Akela We need yet another. Baloo has spoken. Who speaks besides Baloo?

Bagheera drops into the circle. The Wolves react

Narrator A black shadow dropped down into the circle.
Bagheera It was Bagheera, the black panther.
Narrator As cunning as Tabaqui,/as bold as the wild buffalo, as reckless as the wounded elephant,/but with a voice as smooth as wild honey and a skin softer than down.
Bagheera Oh Akela, and ye the Free People, I have no right in your assembly; but the Law of the Jungle says that if there is a doubt which is not a killing matter in regard to a new cub, the life of that cub may be bought at a price. And the Law does not say who may or may not pay that price. Am I right?
Wolves (*severally*) Good! Good! Listen to Bagheera. The cub can be bought for a price. It is the Law.
Bagheera To kill a naked cub is shame. Besides, he may make better sport for you when he is grown. Baloo has spoken on his behalf. Now to Baloo's word I will add one bull, and a fat one, newly killed, not half a mile from here if ye will accept the man's cub according to the Law. Is it difficult?
Wolves What matter? He will die in the winter rains. He will scorch in the sun. What harm can a naked frog do us? Let him run with the pack. Where is the bull, Bagheera?
Bagheera Down the hill where the stream bends.

All exit, except Mother Wolf, Father Wolf, Akela, Baloo and Bagheera

Akela (*with irony*) Look well, O Wolves!
Shere Khan (*off*) The cub is mine! To my teeth will he come!!
Bagheera Ay, roar well! For the time comes when this naked thing will make thee roar to another tune, or I know nothing of Man.
Akela (*to Baloo*) Take him away. And train him as befits one of the Free People.

Tableau—sitar chord

Scene 4

Mother Wolf, Father Wolf and Akela exit

Bagheera sleeps. Daylight Baloo begins to recite the Jungle Law

Baloo Now this is the Law of the Jungle—as old and as true as the sky.
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die.
As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back—
For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.

Cubs enter, gradually joining in

Baloo
Cubs Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply but never too deep;

And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the day is for sleep.
The Jackal may follow the Tiger, but cub, when thy whiskers are grown,
Remember the Wolf is a hunter—go forth and get food of thine own.

Younger Mowgli joins the cubs

Cubs
Younger Mowgli
Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle—the Tiger, the Panther, the bear;
And trouble not Hathi the silent, and mock not the boar in his lair.
When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must fight him alone and afar,
Lest others take part in the quarrel and the Pack be diminished by war.

One by one the wolf cubs drift away. Only Mowgli's bored voice is heard

Younger Mowgli The lair of the Wolf is his refuge, and where he has made him his home,
Not even the Head Wolf may enter, not even the council may come.

.....

By now Baloo is asleep

Younger Mowgli If ye kill before midnight be silent, and wake not the woods with your bay . . .
Baloo? Baloo!!

Baloo (*waking*) Hmmm? "If ye kill before midnight be silent . . ."

Younger Mowgli Baloo! Enough! For one moment enough!

Baloo What is it, Little Brother?

Younger Mowgli Baloo, why must I learn the Law? It is dry like the earth and I thirst for water not dust.

Baloo Ah, Mowgli, thou shouldst know that the Law is like the Giant Creeper. It drops across everyone's back and no-one can escape it.

Younger Mowgli Shere Khan ignores it when it suits him.

Baloo Nevertheless, soon it may be that thou wilt see how all the Jungle obeys at least one Law, and it will be no pleasant sight.

Younger Mowgli How shall that be?

Baloo Little Brother, I am hungry and thirsty. Fetch me a wild yam.

Younger Mowgli (*laughing*) Nay, Old Blind One, dost thou not know that the wild yams are tough and dry this season?

Baloo Then let us go swim in the deep pool below the bee-rocks.

Younger Mowgli Nay, I swim there no longer. The foolish water is all going away and I do not wish to break my head when I dive.

Baloo That is thy loss. A small crack might let in some wisdom. Still perhaps it will not happen. We must wait and see how the mohwa blooms.

Now, where were we? Ah, yes . . . "If ye kill before midnight be silent . . ."

Younger Mowgli If ye kill before midnight be silent, and wake not the woods with your bay
Lest ye frighten the deer from the crops and the Brothers go empty away.
Ye may kill for yourself and your mates, and your cubs as they need and ye can,
But kill not for pleasure of killing, and seven times NEVER KILL MAN.

Younger Mowgli continues to recite sotto voce while the Narrators take over. During the following passages the cast perform choreographed removal of any "Jungle" scenery (hanging creepers) to leave a bare set. Also two sides of a river must be established

Narrator That spring the mohwa tree that Baloo was so fond of, never flowered. The greeny, cream-coloured, waxy blossoms were heat-killed before they were born, and when he stood on his hind legs and shook the tree, only a few, bad-smelling petals came down./Then, inch by inch, the untempered heat crept into the heart of the Jungle . . .

The Lights become brighter

. . . turning it yellow, brown, and at last black./The birds and the monkey-people went North early in the year, for they knew what was coming,/and the deer and the wild pig broke far away to the perished fields of the villages, dying sometimes before the eyes of men too weak to kill them./Mowgli, who had never known what real hunger meant, hunted for deep-boring grubs under the bark of trees,/robbed the wasps of their new broods/and scraped out of deserted rock-hives honey, three years old, black as a sloe and dusty with sugar./And the heat went on and on, and sucked up all the moisture, till at last the main channel of the Waingunga was the only stream that carried a trickle of water between its dead banks.

Hathi enters on the higher level

Hathi And when Hathi, the Elephant, who lives for a hundred years and more, saw a long, lean blue ridge of rock show dry in the very centre of the stream, he knew that he was looking at the Peace Rock.

Narrator And then and there he lifted up his trunk and proclaimed the Water Truce, as his father, before him, had proclaimed it fifty years before.

Hathi The stream is shrunk—the pool is dry,
And we be comrades, thou and I . . .

Voices take up the cry

Scene 5

The Bank of the River

Animals enter—Hathi, Baloo, Deer, Fawn, Wolves—upstage

All The stream is shrunk—the pool is dry
And we be comrades, thou and I;
With fevered jowl and dusty flank
Each jostling each along the bank;
And by one droughty fear made still
Foregoing thought of quest or kill.
Now 'neath his dam the fawn may see
The lean pack-wolf as cowed as he,
And the tall buck, unflinching, note
The fangs that tore his father's throat.
The pools are shrunk—the streams are dry,
And we be playmates, thou and I,
Till yonder cloud—good hunting!—loose
The rain that breaks our Water Truce.

Younger Mowgli and Bagheera enter last of all

Bagheera wanders into the stream. Some consternation from the others

Bagheera We are under one Law indeed. Good hunting, all you of my blood! But for the Law it would be good hunting indeed.

Deer The Truce! Remember the Truce!!

Hathi Peace there, peace! The Truce holds, Bagheera. This is no time to talk of hunting.

Bagheera Who should know better than I? I have become an eater of turtles—a fisher of frogs. Ngyaah! Would I could get good from chewing branches.

Fawn We wish so very greatly.

Bagheera Well spoken, little Bud-horn. When the truce ends that will be remembered in thy favour.

Deer If any of us live through the Truce. We die like butterflies in the cold season.

Mother Wolf The Men-folk too. They die beside their ploughs and their oxen with them.

Baloo The river has fallen since last night. O Hathi, hast thou ever seen the like.

Hathi It will pass. It will pass.

Baloo We have one here that cannot endure long.

Younger Mowgli I? I have no long fur to cover my bones. But if thy hide were taken off, Baloo . . .

Baloo Never have I been seen without my hide! It is not seemly to talk in such a fashion. It is not good to make a jest of thy teacher.

Shere Khan and Tabaqui enter, moving to the downstage bank

Shere Khan Not good! What would ye have?

Tabaqui That naked thing running to and fro pulls the best of us by the whiskers for sport.

Shere Khan The Jungle has become a whelping-ground for naked cubs now. Look at me, Man-cub.

Mowgli stares. Shere Khan turns away

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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