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SF PERUSALS

The Jungle Book

by Tracey Power

Adapted from the novel by
Rudyard Kipling

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THE JUNGLE BOOK
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THE JUNGLE BOOK was first produced by Geordie Productions in Montreal, Canada. The performance was directed by Dean Patrick Fleming, with sets by Amy Keith, costumes by Susana Vera, and lighting by Ana Cappelluto. The Production Stage Manager was Melanie St Jacques. The cast was as follows:

MOWGLI . . . . . .Oliver Koomsatira
BALOO/MONKEY KING. . . . . Harry Standjofski
BAGHEERA/FATHER WOLF/MONKEY . . . . . Quincy Armorer
SHERE KHAN . . . . . Chip Chuipka
TABAQUI/MONKEY . . . . . Glenda Braganza
RAKSHA/AKELA/MONKEY . . . . . .Paula Hixson
PERCUSSIONIST . . . . . Kristie Ibrahim

NOTES ABOUT CASTING AND CONCEPT

The Jungle Book is to be performed by an ensemble of at least five performers. It should consist of one actor to play Mowgli, and two women and two men to play all the other characters. An onstage musician will provide the soundscape for the production. A percussionist was used for the premiere production.

Sample Casting Breakdown

Actor 1: Baloo - Monkey King - Human, Shere Khan
Actor 2: Bagheera - Father Wolf - Monkey 3, Shere Khan
Actor 3: Mowgli - Young Mowgli Puppeteer
Actress 1: Raksha - Akela - Kaa - Monkey 2
Actress 2: Tabaqui - Monkey 1

If using a cast of 5: In Scene 11, Baloo will need to take Bagheera's lines while that actor plays Shere Khan.

The monkeys and humans are in masks, and all other characters can be created using either masks or puppets. Besides Kaa and Rann, any puppets should allow the actor to use his/her own movement to portray the animals body.

Kaa the rock snake had an oversized head and a long winding body. Rann can be a kite type bird on the top of a bamboo stick. Young Mowgli is a puppet of a two year-old boy.

The actors will play multiple characters. Actors will also assist in the vocals/sounds of the soundscape along with the musician. The actors should have strong movement, and vocal skills. While *The Jungle Book* is not a typical musical or dance piece it is meant to contain elements of movement and song that resonate the Indian jungle that inspired Rudyard Kipling.

THE MUSIC

Depending on what instruments are being played by the productions' musician, the music for *The Jungle Book* can be creatively interpreted by the Director. Some things to keep in mind are *The Law of the Jungle* is written in the style of beat poetry for Baloo, it does not need to be sung but set to rhythm. The music for the lullaby, *Jungle Favour* has been included with the script and was originally performed with drum accompaniment and in a subsequent production with ukulele.

The Monkey Song was originally performed in the style of beat poetry with drum accompaniment and in the subsequent production was sung and accompanied by banjo and kazoo. The music for *The Monkey Song* written by Steven Charles is available by emailing the author at traceypower@shaw.ca.

Special thanks for the script development assistance of Brian Dooley, the Citadel Theatre Play Development Program, Geordie Productions and Playwright's Workshop Montreal. Special thanks also to my family for their incredible love and support.

Scene One

(Lights up on **THREE MONKEYS** *who sit staring into the eyes of the audience.)*

(After just long enough…)

MONKEY 1.

OOH OOH OOH OOH

(They listen for a response.)

MONKEY 2.

OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH

(They listen for a response and then laugh uproariously.)

MONKEY 3.

OOH OOH OOH OOH AGH AGH AGH

MONKEY 1 & 2.

OOH OOH OOH OOH AGH AGH AGH

MONKEY 1, 2, & 3.

OOH OOH OOH OOH AGH AGH AGH

(Ooh ooh ooh agh agh agh, monkey chaos. Dancing, rolling jumping around, beating their stomachs in rhythm and waving their arms.)

(A drum beat cuts through the chaos.)

(The **MONKEYS** *stop and listen for the sound.)*

(The drum rhythms increase and ***THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE*** *begins.)*

*(***BALOO** *enters. A much more grounded energy than the monkeys who continue to dance wildly and laugh at* **BALOO**.*)*

(The music, sounds and movement surround the audience and transport them into the deepest part of the Indian jungle.)

BALOO.

THESE ARE THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE
MANY AND MIGHTY ARE THEY
YOU MUST FOLLOW THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE
FOR THE NUMBER ONE LAW IS OBEY
FOLLOW THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE
LISTEN AS WELL AS YOU CAN
KILL ONLY FOR FOOD AND SURVIVAL
AND NEVER, EVER KILL MAN
NEVER, EVER KILL MAN

(Offstage – a tiger roars.)

(The roar stops the monkeys' laughter and **BALOO***.)*

(The **MONKEYS** *scatter offstage.)*

KEEP PEACE AND THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE
WILL PROTECT YOU AND THOSE WHO RUN FREE
FEAR NOT THE LORDS OF THE JUNGLE
AND A LORD YOU ONE DAY MAY BE
FOLLOW THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE
LISTEN AND NEVER LOOK BACK
THE STRENGTH OF THE PACK IS THE WOLF
AND THE STRENGTH OF THE WOLF IS ITS PACK
……THE STRENGTH OF THE WOLF IS ITS PACK

Scene Two

(The wolf den, **TABAQUI** *a snoopy busybody of a jackal is lazing around.)*

TABAQUI. Hmmmm, I love this part of the jungle.

(She breathes it in.)

So fresh, so green.

FATHER WOLF. Hhrumph

TABAQUI. The rest of the jungle is all dried up…there's like no food!

FATHER WOLF. You eat too much, Tabaqui.

TABAQUI. Seriously! The rivers are all dried up, the lakes are all like…Uh, where's the water? You'll see. Humans will come here too and you'll see.

FATHER WOLF. You can't blame it all on humans.

TABAQUI. Uh…just did.

RAKSHA. There's a drought.

TABAQUI. Yeah, whatever, ya know…Shere Khan, my great master, he's gonna hunt here now.

FATHER WOLF. He can't! The food on this land is ours!

RAKSHA. Bah, Shere Khan is strong but too slow! He can only catch cattle.

FATHER WOLF. Cattle. Pathetic.

TABAQUI. So should I tell him he's welcome?

FATHER WOLF. You jackals are mischief!

(Offstage – **SHERE KHAN** *roars.)*

Out!

(He growls.)

TABAQUI. I'm going, geez. Touchy, touchy. You can share, ya know.

*(***TABAQUI** *exits.)*

*(***SHERE KHAN** *roars again.)*

FATHER WOLF. Fool! His noise will scare the deer away!

*(***RAKSHA** *smells for the scent.)*

RAKSHA. It's not deer he hunts.

*(***SHERE KHAN** *– a full throated roar as he misses his kill.)*

He's missed.

FATHER WOLF. Serves him right.

RAKSHA. Something's coming!

(We hear young **MOWGLI** *running towards the wolf den. He enters afraid and lost.)*

FATHER WOLF. *(about to leap)* A human! Look! It's a man-cub.

RAKSHA. A man-cub? I've never seen one.

*(***RAKSHA** *and* **FATHER WOLF** *carefully get a little closer to* **MOWGLI**.*)*

So little! So bold!

(Enter **SHERE KHAN**, *limping, his paw is wounded.)*

SHERE KHAN. There you are!

*(***RAKSHA** *protects* **MOWGLI**.*)*

FATHER WOLF. Shere Khan.

SHERE KHAN. Give him to me!

FATHER WOLF. We don't take orders –

SHERE KHAN. He's mine! *(suspiciously)* His parents have... Run. Off…

RAKSHA. You're in our part of the jungle now, and by our laws, you will not kill him.

SHERE KHAN. His parents tried to kill me!

RAKSHA. So the child should be punished?!

SHERE KHAN. *(holds out a wounded paw)* Their traps. I'll be lame because of them!

RAKSHA. Then go, lame one! The cub is mine!

SHERE KHAN. Grrrr!!!

RAKSHA. Hunter of cubs. Frog-eater. Fish-killer! Beware. One day this cub will hunt you!

FATHER WOLF. Shere Khan! You know it's dangerous to come between a mother and her cub.

SHERE KHAN. I swear, one day to my teeth he'll come!

RAKSHA. Go!

*(***SHERE KHAN** *limps out.)*

FATHER WOLF. Shere Khan will not forget this, Mother.

RAKSHA. We'll keep him safe. He's all alone now.

FATHER WOLF. We must ask the pack, he's not one of us.

RAKSHA. They have to let us keep him. He needs us.

(to **MOWGLI** *now)*

Shhh. Be still, little frog. Shhhh.

FATHER WOLF. I know nothing of humans, Raksha. We'll need help. Bagheera. He once lived among men, he knows their ways, he'll make a great protector.

RAKSHA. Then let's ask Bagheera to watch over him until he's strong enough to take care of himself.

FATHER WOLF. And Baloo. He can teach him like he teaches the wolf cubs.

RAKSHA. O Mowgli, Mowgli the Frog, I'll call you. Don't be afraid of Shere Khan, one day you will hunt him, just as he's hunted you.

(Drums begin.)

(Transition: ***THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE****)*

Scene Three

*(***BALOO, MOWGLI, BAGHEERA, TABAQUI** *enter.)*

BALOO.

BECAUSE OF HER AGE AND HER WISDOM,
BECAUSE OF HER BARK AND HER PAW,
AKELA, LEADS THE WOLF PACK

*(***AKELA** *enters.)*

ALL.

THE WORD OF AKELA IS LAW.
THE WORD OF AKELA IS LAW

AKELA. I have a request to allow this man-cub into the pack?

BALOO. Yes, Akela. A man-cub. This is Mowgli. He's harmless, unafraid of our jungle.

AKELA. I see.

BALOO. I've agreed to teach him, as I teach the wolves. He'll be my greatest student.

AKELA. Bagheera?

BAGHEERA. His wolf family have asked for my protection –

TABAQUI. A cat? Ha! Go home! On behalf of Shere Khan, I want to say, a man-cub has no place –

AKELA. Hush, Tabaqui!

BAGHEERA. It's an honour –

TABAQUI. Oh, please, he'll die in the winter rains, scorch in the sun. If Shere Khan doesn't kill him first!

BAGHEERA. To kill him will bring shame and fear to the jungle.

AKELA. To kill a human means sooner or later humans will come to kill us. Then everyone in the jungle will suffer.

BALOO. Buh, this little bump. He couldn't kill a horsefly.

TABAQUI. He doesn't belong. He's a human!

BAGHEERA. He'll be a better friend than an enemy when he's grown, Akela. The man-cub is no threat to us if he's taught to think like us, behave like us –

BALOO. We'll be his family.

(Offstage: **SHERE KHAN** *roars.)*

*(***MOWGLI** *stops, afraid of Shere Khan.)*

BAGHEERA. We hear you, Shere Khan –

TABAQUI. Shere Khan will be our leader one –

AKELA. Enough! Right now, I'm your leader! I make the law! Baloo. Bagheera. Though I'm skeptical, I trust your judgment. You'll be responsible for his actions, so, train him well, for Tabaqui is right about one thing…he is a human.

TABAQUI. You see? I told you! I told you, he's human, I told –

AKELA. The man-cub is one of us!

(Drum begins.)

*(***AKELA** *exits.)*

*(***TABAQUI** *follows* **AKELA** *out.)*

TABAQUI. I– He's one of us? Wait Akela, how?…He can't be– Akela, hold up, Shere Khan…

(Transition: ***THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE****)*

(Over the drums we hear the sound of the monkeys in the trees as if they had been listening to all this.)

Scene Four

(The young **MOWGLI** *begins to run and play and as he does grows into a twelve year-old boy.)*

*(***SHERE KHAN** *lingers in the background and sneaks off.)*

BALOO.

I TEACH HIM THE LAWS OF THE JUNGLE –
AS OLD AND AS TRUE AS THE SKY;
TEN YEARS OLDER, THE MAN-CUB HAS GROWN
TO AN OLD BEAR, HOW SUMMERS DO FLY.

*(***MOWGLI** *is in a pounce position concentrating on a fish.)*

MOWGLI. *(thinking he hears* **SHERE KHAN***)* I hear you Shere Khan!

BALOO. Buh, Mowgli, never mind Shere Khan. Concentrate… "Feet that make no noise, eyes that see in the dark…"

MOWGLI. "Ears that can hear the winds in the lairs, and sharp white teeth!" Rahhhh!

(He leaps at the fish and it swims away.)

Ah, Baloo!

BALOO. *(laughing)* Louder than an elephant's trunk. How can such a little bump make so much noise?

MOWGLI. I'm not a little bump!

BALOO. Right. Sorry, when you're as big as I am you tend to lose perspective.

MOWGLI. Yeah, well, I have perspec-perspec-a-tive.

BALOO. Number one rule, kid: "Be quiet."

MOWGLI. It's hard.

BALOO. Why, even a big ol' bear like me can sneak up on an unsuspecting swimmer!

MOWGLI. They're too fast and my tummy's too empty. Let me climb that nut tree and get some lunch.

BALOO. Buh! Nuts won't make you strong. Look at you, you're all skin and bone. Don't you want to be strong like me?

MOWGLI. Yes. But not as hairy.

BALOO. You're kidding? A fur coat like this? You know what this is worth?

(No answer, **MOWGLI** *shakes his head,* **BALOO** *laughs.)*

Come on kid. Again. I told Bagheera I'd have you strong by spring.

MOWGLI. I'll show Bagheera.

(He boxes **BALOO***.)*

I can fight off an elephant, I can fight off a jackal, I can fight off a big ol' bear –

BALOO. You think so? Well what about an angry tiger?

MOWGLI. Ah, Baloo. You think I can't fight off a tiger with these?

(He flexes his muscles.)

BALOO. Hmmm. Maybe a very, very small one… Come on now, I'll show you one more time, but you must watch very closely.

MOWGLI. But I'm hungry.

BALOO. Mowgli.

MOWGLI. Alright, I'm watching.

*(***BALOO** *gets ready by the river. A* **MONKEY** *appears.* **BALOO** *does not notice the monkey.)*

BALOO. Feet that make no noise…eyes that can see in the dark…

MOWGLI. *(Sees the* **MONKEY***; he's never seen one that close before.)* Huh…

MONKEY 1. *(hushes* **MOWGLI***)* Shhhh.

(Flashes **MOWGLI** *a big monkey grin.)*

*(***MOWGLI** *walks toward the* **MONKEY***.)*

(They circle each other.)

*(***MOWGLI** *flexes his muscles.)*

(The **MONKEY** *imitates* **MOWGLI***.)*

BALOO. Ears that can hear the wind in their lairs…and sharp white teeth.

*(***MOWGLI** *lifts his right foot then his left.)*

(The **MONKEY** *copies him.)*

(They both have two feet.)

MONKEY 1. *(quietly)* Oo oo oo oo.

MOWGLI. Oo oo oo oo.

MONKEY 1. Ee ee ee ee

MOWGLI. Ee ee ee ee.

(The **MONKEY** *laughs and dances around,* **MOWGLI** *imitates him.)*

(seeing his tail)

You have a tail!

BALOO. Caught ya!

MOWGLI. Baloo, look!

(The **MONKEY** *disappears.)*

BALOO. Ha ha! Did you see that, Mowgli? Did you see that?

MOWGLI. *(covering up)* Uhh…yes, Baloo. That was amazing!

BALOO. You think you can do that?

MOWGLI. Of course I can, I…I have the best teacher in the whole jungle.

BALOO. Buh!…It's nothin'.

MOWGLI. Can we eat now?

BALOO. Sure, kid. Lets go find Bagheera.

*(***BALOO** *and* **MOWGLI** *exit.)*

(The **MONKEY 1** *enters.)*

MONKEY 1. Agh agh agh agh! The man-cub, the man-cub!

*(***MONKEY 2 & 3** *enters.)*

MONKEY 2. You saw the man-cub?

MONKEY 1. He's all grown now.

MONKEY 3. He's all grown now?

MONKEY 2. He's all grown now.

MONKEY 1. He has feet just like us, he has arms just like us, he's smart just like –

(forgets)

MONKEY 2. We must tell him he's our brother! We must tell him he's our brother!

MONKEY 3. He can be our leader now. Then all in the jungle will see how smart the monkey people really are.

MONKEY 2. How excellent the monkey people really are!

MONKEY 1. We are excellent! We are excellent! We are –

MONKEY 2. Ooh ooh ooh, aah aah aah!

MONKEY 1, 2, & 3. Ooh ooh ooh, aah aah aah!

*(***MONKEYS** *exit.)*

(Transition: Music)

Scene Five

*(***MOWGLI** *enters, using a bamboo stick as a weapon, pretending he's on the hunt for Shere Khan.)*

MOWGLI. *(roaring like* **SHERE KHAN***)* Ha ha! Shere Khan! It's me, Mowgli the frog. Where are you Shere Khan?…I can hear you.

(pretending **TABAQUI** *is* **SHERE KHAN***)*

Ahaaa! Shere Khan! I found you!

TABAQUI. Uh, excuse me? Do I look like Shere Khan to you?

*(***TABAQUI** *struts off.)*

*(***BALOO** *continues his lesson with* **MOWGLI***.)*

*(***BAGHEERA** *sits observing.)*

BALOO. Mowgli! Pay attention. Now, the master words for the hunting people –

MOWGLI. Baloo, we did this already.

BALOO. One day you'll have done everything already and then you'll be forced to start doing things again otherwise you'll have nothing left to do.

*(***MOWGLI** *stops.)*

MOWGLI. Huh?

BALOO. Buh, I'm a smart bear. Again, the hunting people…

MOWGLI. *(in the hunting people voice, pretending he is a hunter.)* We be of one blood, you and I.

BALOO. Stand still. Now, the birds.

MOWGLI. Uhhhhh...

*(***MOWGLI** *pauses trying to remember.* **BALOO** *taps his temple and then* **MOWGLI***'s to get him to concentrate. He doesn't know his own strength.)*

BALOO. Concentrate.

*(***MOWGLI** *repeats, with a bird-like whistle and flaps around like a bird.)*

MOWGLI. Ow!!…Oh yeah, Illoo! Illoo! We be of one blood, you and I. Illoo! Illoo!

BALOO. *(pats* **MOWGLI** *on the head, lovingly but obviously very hard)* Buh, good boy Mowgli.

MOWGLI. Ow! Not again Baloo!

BAGHEERA. Baloo!

*(***MOWGLI** *scampers off and continues to play, acting out the capture of Shere Khan.)*

You're too rough. How can his little head carry all your talk?

BALOO. He has to learn Bagheera, that's why I hit him, very softly, when he forgets.

BAGHEERA. Softly! What do you know of softness, old iron feet?

BALOO. The master words will protect him.

BAGHEERA. From you? Just make sure you don't kill him.

*(***BALOO** *and* **BAGHEERA** *notice* **MOWGLI** *acting like a monkey.)*

BALOO. Mowgli!

*(***BALOO** *scoops up* **MOWGLI** *and pins him to the ground.)*

Have you been playing with monkeys?

MOWGLI. Uh…Yes…

BAGHEERA. Animals without law, eaters of everything?

MOWGLI. They came down from the trees and were nice to me.

BALOO. Monkeys! Monkeys aren't nice, monkeys have never been nice. Except when they want something. But that's not nice!

MOWGLI. Nicer than you!

BALOO. Mowgli.

MOWGLI. They said I was their brother. Their blood brother.

BAGHEERA. A monkey will say anything.

BALOO. They're crazy, ridiculous –

MOWGLI. – They stand on two feet just like me.

BAGHEERA. The monkeys are not like us.

MOWGLI. They're like me! Let me up, Baloo!

BALOO. We don't drink where the monkeys drink; we don't go where the monkeys go; we don't hunt where they hunt; and we don't die where they die.

MOWGLI. Bagheera, help!

BAGHEERA. They're liars, they're thieves, shameless –

(We hear howling and laughing in the air among the branches.)

MOWGLI. Let me up, Baloo!

BAGHEERA. They're trouble! Do you hear?

*(***BALOO** *lets* **MOWGLI** *up.)*

BALOO. Nice! No one thinks monkeys are nice! You can't trust a monkey!

BAGHEERA. The monkeys are forbidden, Mowgli! Forbidden! Baloo should have warned you.

BALOO. I–I?

(We see **MONKEYS 1 & 2**. *When the* **MONKEYS** *see that* **BAGHEERA** *and* **BALOO** *are not paying attention…)*

MONKEY 1. Psssst!

*(***MOWGLI** *sees the* **MONKEYS** *and out of spite he takes off into the trees with them.)*

BAGHEERA. You're his teacher.

BALOO. Yes, but how could –

BAGHEERA. You need to be more observant –

BALOO. But the monkeys – He's growing up, he –

MONKEY 1 & 2. *(calling out from the trees)*

THERE'S NONE IN THE JUNGLE
SO WISE AND GOOD
AND CLEVER AS THE MONKEY KIND!

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