

PLAYS FOR
NewAudiences

**A DIVISION OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY
2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404**

The Jungle Book

Adapted for the Stage by
Ashley Griffin

From the book by
Rudyard Kipling

*For Ann Whitley, my dear friend and the greatest teacher anyone could wish for
and
"Mrs. Beethoven," (Rosemarie Bock)
A beautiful person, and the best librarian there ever was.*

The Jungle Book was commissioned by Maor Performing Arts in January, 2019.
*The original production premiered in July, 2019, produced by Maor Performing Arts and
directed by Rachel Klein.*

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Cast List

Mowgli (*A Human*)
Bagheera (*A Panther*)
Ladakee (*A Human*)
Shere Khan (*A Tiger*)
Baloo (*A Bear*)
Kaa (*A Python*)

The Wolves

Akela
Raksha
Grey
Hazel
Lupin
Remy

The Elephants

Captain Hathi
Winifred
Hallie
Junior

The Monkeys

Queen Louise
Princess Lilu
Princess Linu
Princess Lulu

The Outsiders

Luna (*A Snail*)
Ms. Teggy-Winkle (*A Porcupine*)
Geri (*A Hedgehog*)
Luna (*A Bat*)
Argas (*A Peacock*)
Katarina (*A Cat*)
Parvana (*A Butterfly*)

The Vultures

Flappy
Dappy
Tappy
Zappy

NOTE: *With the exception of the actors playing Mowgli, Bagheera and Baloo, all actors may play multiple roles. All roles are gender non-specific and pronouns may be adjusted/changed. Also, in any group scene where primarily only one animal group is present, the entire company (other than named characters in the scene) should become the "ensemble" of wolves, elephants, monkeys, etc*

Scene 1

MOWGLI lies asleep center stage. Slowly, all the animals (except **AKELA**) enter, form a semi-circle around **MOWGLI** and stare at her. **BAGHEERA** and **LADAKEE** stand to the side, observing.

As they speak, **AKELA** enters and acts out the narration.

BAGHEERA

It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seeonee hills when Akela, the leader of the Wolf pack, woke up from her day's rest –

HAZEL

Stretched herself,

GREY

Yawned,

RAKSHA

And spread out her paws one after the other,

AKELA

To get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

LADAKEE

Is that how it started Bagheera?

BAGHEERA

Shh. Yes.

LADAKEE

I thought it started when I went to fetch the water...

BAGHEERA

No, the story began a long time before you came into it.

LADAKEE

Did it start with Shere Khan then?

BAGHEERA

No, it started at seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seeonee hills...

ALL (SANS LADAKEE)

When Akele, the leader of the Wolf pack, woke up from her day's rest –

LADAKEE

Stretched herself, yawned and spread out her paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

BAGHEERA

Yes.

LADAKEE

Well? Keep going!

GREY

No sooner had she made her way out of her den, than she stumbled across the human-cub.

RAKSHA

The human-cub was much smaller than.

HAZEL

So small, Akela could gently pick her up and carry her between her teeth.

ALL

You must use your imagination.

BAGHEERA

Many legends are told of these Indian jungles. But none so curious as the story of this small child called -

ALL

Mowgli.

HAZEL

I named her that!

RAKSHA

Shh!

LADAKEE

It's a very pretty name.

HAZEL *smiles.*

BAGHEERA

Had I known how deeply I was to become involved; I would have obeyed my first impulse when I saw the child and gotten as far away from it as I could.

AKELA

How can you say such a thing, Bagheera? Besides, it was me and the wolves that raised her. You didn't have anything to do with it until later.

RAKSHA

Akela knew this human cub would have to have nourishment soon.

GREY

And a dry place to sleep!

ALL

It was a long way to the nearest human village.

SHERE KHAN

Thank goodness.

ALL (sans SHERE KHAN)

And without Akela, Mowgli would soon perish.

AKELA gently tries to wake MOWGLI with her paw. MOWGLI adjusts into a more comfortable position. AKELA tries again. MOWGLI rolls over and starts snoring. Finally AKELA just whacks her. MOWGLI wakes with a start. The other ANIMALS gasp and step back, waiting to see what will happen. AKELA sniffs MOWGLI. MOWGLI laughs and playfully bats her away. AKELA is startled. They stare at each other for a moment. Finally AKELA holds out her paw. MOWGLI sniffs it, then takes it.

MOWGLI

And that's how I came to be raised as a wolf cub in the jungle!

MOWGLI and the ANIMALS exit, (except for BAGHEERA, SHERE KHAN and JUNIOR.) SHERE KHAN watches from the back as JUNIOR tugs on BAGHEERA who finally notices her and looks down.

JUNIOR

Bagheera? How did you come to have so much to do with it?

BAGHEERA

One night, ten years later, after Mowgli had gone to sleep, the wolf pack met at Council Rock because Shere Khan the tiger had returned to their part of the jungle.

SHERE KHAN *smiles and exits.*

Scene 2

The WOLVES enter and sit in a circle.

BAGHEERA

This meeting was to change the human cub's entire future.

JUNIOR

Wow.

JUNIOR *grabs some popcorn and watches the scene with rapt attention.*

AKELA

Shere Khan hates humans and will surely kill Mowgli and all who try to protect her. And if she discovers that we have sheltered the child...*(A beat.)* Are we all in agreement about what needs to be done?

REMY

Mowgli can't live with us anymore?

GREY

That's not fair!

HAZEL

She's like our sister!

RAKSHA

Surely she's entitled to the protection of the pack?

LUPIN

Even the strength of our pack is no match for this tiger.

REMY

But the girl can't survive alone in the jungle.

JUNIOR *tugs on BAGHEERA again. BAGHEERA sighs.*

JUNIOR

I thought you said this is when you come into the story.

BAGHEERA

Shh. *(A beat.)* I'm sorry to say it is.

JUNIOR

You haven't said anything.

BAGHEERA

Give me a minute! *(She turns to the group.)* Akela? *(To herself)* Why do I always have to try and help? *(Back to the wolves)* Perhaps I can be of assistance?

LUPIN

How?

BAGHEERA

I know of a human village where the child will be safe. Mowgli and I have taken walks into the jungle before –

JUNIOR

So you came into the story before this...

BAGHEERA

Shh! Beginnings and endings are complicated!

JUNIOR

But –

BAGHEERA

Suffice it to say that this is where I become important to the story.

JUNIOR

Oh, ok.

BAGHEERA

(Back to the wolves) I –

JUNIOR

(Thinking) But you're not really that important, are you? The wolves raised her. All you did was take Mowgli on a couple walks.

BAGHEERA

Shh!

JUNIOR

I'm just saying.

BAGHEERA

(Again, back to the wolves) I'm sure Mowgli will go with me. We'll practically be at the human village by the time she realizes what's happening.

AKELA

So be it. Good luck, friend. There's no time to lose.

All the WOLVES howl.

Everyone exits.

Scene 3

BAGHEERA

And so, that's how the human cub and I began our long journey through the jungle.

MOWGLI *enters.* *The rest of the CAST becomes the jungle around them.*

MOWGLI

(With a yawn) Bagheera? Why're we going on such a long walk in the middle of the night?

BAGHEERA

Uh...because...well...we're having an adventure! Haven't you always told me you wanted to go on a walk some night when the moon makes everything look different?

MOWGLI

Oh boy! Yes! And to think I always thought you were sooooo boring! But don't tell Akela! She'll be awfully angry.

They walk a while longer. MOWGLI keeps yawning.

MOWGLI

Bagheera?

BAGHEERA

Hmm?

MOWGLI

I want to go on a walk...but I don't think I can stay awake much longer. We've gone pretty far. Shouldn't we be heading back?

BAGHEERA *puts MOWGLI on her back and carries her.*

BAGHEERA

Mowgli, this time... we're not going back.

MOWGLI

What do you mean?

BAGHEERA

I'm taking you to the human village.

MOWGLI

WHY?!

BAGHEERA

To protect you from Shere Khan who has returned to this part of the jungle. She hates humans. If she found you, she'd kill you.

MOWGLI

But why?

BAGHEERA

She's not going to allow you to grow up and be just another hunter with a gun.

MOWGLI

Oh! Well, we'll just explain to her that I'd never do a thing like that!

BAGHEERA

She'd kill you before you got a word out.

MOWGLI

I'm not afraid of her.

The JUNGLE laughs.

BAGHEERA

Don't be foolish. *(Setting her down.)* Come on. We'll spend the night here.

MOWGLI

But...I don't want to go to the human village. I want to stay in the jungle.

BAGHEERA

(As she falls asleep) You, alone in the jungle? Don't make me laugh. You wouldn't... survive...one...

And she's asleep.

MOWGLI *stays awake, trying to figure out what to do.*

MOWGLI

I would! I want to stay!

*She checks to make sure **BAGHEERA** is really asleep, then sneaks off.*

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