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(*Jungalbook*)

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# JUNGALBOOK

## CHARACTERS

Baloo, the bear  
Bagheera, the panther  
Sherakhan, the tiger  
Mowgli, the human boy  
Akela, leader of the wolf pack  
Grab, a wolf  
Hathi, the elephant  
Grey, a wolf  
Kaa, the python  
Perchy, the monkey  
Chil, the vulture  
Hyena  
Buffalo  
Humans

## [THE CHARACTER GROUPINGS ARE SUGGESTED DOUBLING FOR EIGHT ACTORS.]

Only HUMANS wear masks, excluding MOWGLI. Different animals are suggested by posture and voice. Costumes are playground clothing, grade-school level, with suggestions of jungle: shorts, tennis shoes, etc., with maybe a claw or two.

Several actors can play HUMANS as well as part of the ELEPHANT. Even though the characters are all referred to as "him's," most of them can be played either male or female, with pronouns changed to match. MOWGLI is a boy, and BAGHEERA seems to me more moving as male; but SHERAKHAN, for example, was played by a woman in our original production, and the effect was striking. AKELA might be a she-wolf, as well, especially since wolf packs are sometimes led by the female.

## SETTING

Not a jungle, but a jungle gym: an arch of monkey bars, say eight feet tall at apex, spreading sideways across the stage. These can be straight and businesslike, real jungle gym bars; or they can be tangled and intertwined at odd angles. The structure is fully naked, not decorated by vine or leaf or painted ornament, not representing jungle in any pictorial way.

The other item of scenery is a long, frail, light blue fabric, which at rise is absent. This fabric will be unfurled at the proper time by two offstage actors to become the River.

*(Jungalsounds in the darkness. Roar, monkey's chatter, snarl. Increasing, louder and louder, till the jungal is close and loud. Lights up on the playground of the jungal. Kid-dressed animals, all shapes and sizes, changing shape, all playing children's games. Not jump rope or jacks; rather, chasing, tossing, surrounding, scuffling, attacking, and defending. One large animal doesn't move quickly. Lumbers toward us, speaks.)*

BALOO: To eat in the jungal  
ya must kill.  
Therefore it's law in the jungal:  
Never kill for pleasure.  
The Law uv the Jungal is older than I am  
and I'm pretty old.  
I'm Baloo the baare.  
I teach the Law uv the Jungal to baarcubs, wulfcubs,  
all uv'em.  
If yoo live as long as me,  
yoo will see  
none uv these animals survive  
without  
the Law uv the Jungal.

*(A fight breaks out over a prize. BALOO steps over, breaks it up. To the fighters:)*  
Law uv the Jungal:  
The meat belongs to the killer.  
Steal it from him, yoo die.

*(Two wolves fight: BALOO breaks them up.)*  
Fight if yoo must,  
but cat may not kill cat,  
nor wulf kill wulf.

*(The two wolves obey silently, move apart. A big creature is lurking around: BALOO faces it.)*  
Hunt on your own ground.  
Otherwise some may go hungry.

*(A HUMAN—masked, with robot movements—walks across the stage. Animals hide.)*  
*(To us.)* Stay clear uv Man.  
If yoo kill one man,  
men and men and men will return  
to murder your people.  
Seven times over.  
Never kill Man,  
and never kill for the pleasure uv killing.

*(Two wolves—who will later be GRAB and GREY—are tussling over a small bundle. As they toss and snatch it from each other, it emits baby cries—made by MOWGLI offstage.)*  
Wulfs may not—*(They're not listening; BALOO shakes head wearily.)*

Wulfs are slow learners.

*(Turns to another wolf who's playing elsewhere.)*  
Akela!

*(AKELA looks at him: BALOO gestures toward the fight. AKELA leaps down, breaks up the scuffle.)*

AKELA: Hey! Break it up! Cut it!

*(GRAB and GREY kneel, bend heads to ground.)*

GRAB: SORRY, Akela.

GREY: *(Points at GRAB.)* He stole my meat!

AKELA: *(To GRAB.)* Put it down. Yoo hear me?

BALOO: Law uv the Jungal:  
Obey the Leader of the Pack.

*(GRAB sets bundle down.)*

AKELA: *(Sniffing at bundle.)* What kind uv meat is it?

GRAB: Mancub.

AKELA: *(Recoils.)* Human meat?

GREY: Still alive.

*(AKELA sniffs at the bundle, nudges it with his paw: a loud baby cry comes from it, making all of them jump back.)*  
I saw it first.

GRAB: Nuh-uh. I saw it.

GREY: I did!

GRAB: I did!

GREY: Me!

GRAB: Me!

*(They jump together; AKELA shoves them apart. He stares at the bundle, puzzled.)*  
BALOO: Word uv the Leader of the Pack is law,  
but the law also says  
seven times over, never kill Man.

AKELA: Yeah, yeah.

GRAB: So who gets it, me or him?

AKELA: *(Annoyed, confused: cuffs him.)* Shuddup for a minute, willya?

*(BAGHEERA appears.)*

BAGHEERA: Akela.

*(GRAB and GREY huddle behind AKELA as BAGHEERA the panther approaches, powerful and polite.)*

Good hunting, Akela.

AKELA: Good hunting, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: (*Calm, smooth.*) I am a panther  
and have no right to meddle in  
wulf business.

But Jungal Law states that  
a hunter's meat may be bought  
for a price.

Am I right, Baloo?

BALOO: Bagheera knows the Law.

AKELA: You wanna buy this mancub meat from us?

BAGHEERA: Close by here  
is a freshkilled bulllll,  
fatter and juicier than this little bundle.  
For this price  
will the wulfpack let the mancub live?

AKELA: Trade a whole big bull for a little mancub?  
Sure. Right?

GRAB: Sure! Bull's better than mancub.

GREY: Yoo bet!

AKELA: Yoo got a deal, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: Will yoo also  
let the mancub run with yoor pack?

AKELA: (*Puzzled again.*) Yoo want us  
to raise the cub?

BAGHEERA: I want the cub to live.

A panther is no animal to  
nurse

a cub. You have motherwulfs in your pack  
who will care for a humancub.

Will you raise the mancub?

AKELA: (*Looks at GRAB and GREY, who grumble.*)  
I dunno about that part—

(*Snarl offstage.*)

SHERAKHAN: (*Off.*) Wheere's my meeet!

(*BAGHEERA steps back slightly; wolves pack up behind AKELA as SHERAKHAN the  
Tiger springs on.*)

Where is it!

BAGHEERA: Where is what, Sherakhan?

(*SHERAKHAN stops, crouches to fight when he sees BAGHEERA. But then he sees  
the bundle.*)

SHERAKHAN: That's my kill. Get away from it.

AKELA: We're makin a deal here—

SHERAKHAN: (*Shoves him away.*) Outta my way.

AKELA: (*Standing firm before the bundle.*)

Hey!

We don't take orders from tigers.

We're makin a deal with the panther  
so yoo go mind yoor own  
tigerbusiness.

(*SHERAKHAN is wary of BAGHEERA, who also takes a stance of defense.*)

SHERAKHAN: That meeet is mine, Bagheera.

That mancub's mother and father  
arr in my stomach.

BAGHEERA: (*Angry.*) You killed the parents?

(*Stops himself; calm.*)

Shouldn't eat Man, Sherakhan.

You'll lose your teeth.

SHERAKHAN: You just back away, Panther.

AKELA: The mancub belongs to the Freepeople Wulfpack, Sherakhan.

Back away yourself.

SHERAKHAN: Yooo

watch yoor tail, Bushyface.

That meet belongs to me.

AKELA: Bushyface? Bushyface, huh?

Well, I

Akela

Leader uv the Freepeople Wulfpack

have accepted Bagheera's bargain

and will take this mancub

to grow up part uv my pack.

That's my word;

my teeth defend it.

And also: (*Snaps fingers.*)

GRAB: My teeth!

GREY: My teeth!

BAGHEERA: And mine, oh mighty tiger.

SHERAKHAN: (*Looks at them all together.*) Eeeeeeeeasy talk,

One by one yoor not so brave.

BAGHEERA: Sneak up behind them one by one:

that's yoor way,

brave tiger.

SHERAKHAN: Oooooooh, unbeaten panther.

Afraid for yoor little baby mancub?

Mommy? MommyMommyMommyMommy

(*BAGHEERA's back coils to spring, but the fight is stopped by BALOO's words.*)

BALOO: Cat may not kill cat

nor wulf kill wulf,

Law uv the Jungal.

(*The two cats freeze; slowly BAGHEERA pulls away.*)

BAGHEERA: Yoo kill defenseless dangerous Man  
and make trouble for the whole Jungal.  
I can't punish yoo myself,  
but I will live to see yoo pay the price.  
Go feed on rats and porcupines, Tiger.

SHERAKHAN: I am Sherakhan  
and I feed wherever I choose.  
That mancub will come to my teeth in the end  
when yoo bushtailed thieves grow tired uv toying with it.  
Take good care uv him,  
mommy Bagheera.

*(TIGER springs away and off.)*

AKELA: Showed that Tiger.

GREY: Do we eat the mancub now?

AKELA: *(Punches him.)* No, stupid. We get the bull.

GREY: Oh. Yeh.

BAGHEERA: What will you name the mancub?

AKELA: Name? Oh, right.

We'll call him

uh

let's see.

He's got no fur on his skin

so we'll call him

Mowgli.

*(Wolves laugh.)*

BALOO: *(To us.)* Means Little Frog.

BAGHEERA: Keep him safe.

AKELA: He's safe as long as I'm leader.

BAGHEERA: Nobody's leader forever.

*(AKELA stares at him, silent. Then turns away, uncomfortable.)*

AKELA: So where's this bull?

BAGHEERA: Top uv the hill. Over there.

AKELA: *(Tosses his head in gesture to the wolves.)* Let's go.

*(The wolves leave. BAGHEERA stops AKELA.)*

BAGHEERA: Akela!

*(AKELA stops: BAGHEERA points to bundle.)*

AKELA: Oh. Yeah.

*(AKELA picks up bundle awkwardly, leaves to follow wolves.)*

BALOO: If I were you, Bagheera,  
I'd keep one eye on that wulpack  
and that little frog.

BAGHEERA: I'm not a mother for cubs! *(Pause.)*

But I will watch.

Will you teach him the Law?

BALOO: I'll teach him, till he grows and returns to Man.

Time will come, if I know humans,

for that little Frog Mowgli

to teach that tiger some manners.

He may even be some help to yoooo

someday.

BAGHEERA: Nobody helps Bagheera.

*(BAGHEERA springs away. BALOO, alone, turns to us.)*

BALOO: Seasons pass by quick

to an old baare

like me.

As many years as *(Holds up hand.)*

toes on my paws

pass by me like nothin.

But this many years

are plenty

for a prime wulf

even a wulf leader

to get old and get slow.

*(GRAB and GREY enter, hunting. AKELA enters with them; but when GRAB and GREY scurry across and off, AKELA stops, panting and tired. He walks after them.)*

And this many years to a

little human kid

well

that's his whole life,

enuff years to grow up from baby frog to

Mowgli the Mancub,

walkin on two feet like a human

or a baare.

Nuff years for him to learn

all the special ways uv the Jungal,

all the language uv

batsplash, grassrustle, footprint,

all the slow secret signals uv the Jungal—

*(MOWGLI has entered behind BALOO, silent and crouching; he now jumps up, screeching "CAW" in BALOO's ear. BALOO whirls around ready for battle with some great pterodactyl. MOWGLI laughs uproariously.)*

BALOO: Mowgli!

How many times have I tooooold yoo

the Jungal is no place for playing at danger?

MOWGLI: As many times as there are nutts on the palm tree.

BALOO: I've squashed bigger creatures than yoo  
for less uv a scare.

MOWGLI: Yoo deserve it  
for making me,  
King uv the Jungal,  
spend all morning listening to yoor silly old  
junnrrnngalll Laaaaaaws.

(Enter PERCHY the Monkey, chased by GRAB and GREY. MOWGLI leaps to join them. MOWGLI and the three wolves surround PERCHY, who tries to escape, but the delighted wolves and MOWGLI taunt him fiercely, dancing round in a ring.)

BALOO: Mowgli—(Sighs: to us.)

And of course,  
he has plenty of time to play with his packmates  
the wulfs.

GRAB & GREY & MOWGLI: Monkeeface, Monkeeface  
uggllee you!  
Bull butt stinks,  
and yoo doo too!

(PERCHY tries to get away, but GREY blocks him and MOWGLI imitates his funny walk. Wolves laugh. PERCHY tries to run: MOWGLI imitates.)

Monkeeface, Monkeeface  
ugggleee yoo!  
Snakes are skinny  
and yoo arr too!  
Monkeeface, Monkeeface  
ugggggleeee yoo!  
Spiders got long arms,  
and yoo doo too!

(PERCHY waves arms and shouts, trying to scare them; wolves recoil slightly, but MOWGLI imitates, and the wolves scream with laughter. BALOO shakes head wearily, lumbers toward them.)

BALOO: Awwwwwwllllright.

Leave him alooooooone.

MOWGLI: We're just havin fun!

BALOO: Perchy, go way.

(PERCHY the Monkey hops away; stops, gives a raspberry to wolves, exits fast. Wolves bark, but BALOO silences them.)

Yoo got nothin better to do?

GREY: Better than listnin to fatt bayerrrrrrs—

BALOO: (To GREY.) Now listen, Grab—

GREY: I'm Grey!

GRAB: I'm Grab!

GREY: He's Grab!

BALOO: Whichever. This fatt old bayer  
has fat old paws, so careful  
with your loose tongue.  
Hear me?

GRAB: Yeh, yeh.

GREY: Sure, sure.

BALOO: Go play. Play good.

(GRAB and GREY run off. MOWGLI starts to follow.)  
Mowgli!

MOWGLI: Whaaaaat?

BALOO: Not so fast. Ya got lessons to learn.

MOWGLI: Awwww!

More stupid old Jungal words?

BALOO: Yoo gotta learn  
yoo're too small to go  
tantalizing monkees.

MOWGLI: Aww, Perchy the Monkee's just silly and stinky.

BALOO: Monkey can bite just like everybody.

MOWGLI: (Pointing off.) Grab and Grey getta go play.  
How come I gotta sit arownd reciting yoor old lessons?

BALOO: Grab and Grey got wulfteeth and wulf claws.  
Yoo have mancub babyteeth and no claws.  
I teech yoo Masterwoords  
for yoor own safety.

MOWGLI: What's a mancub?

BALOO: Yoo.

MOWGLI: (Clambering about on the bars.) Aaa! I'm a wulf.  
I run as fast as any wulf,  
I climb better than I run,  
I swim better than I climb;  
wulf like me got nothing to be safe from.

BALOO: The jungal will teech yoo feeer  
someday.

MOWGLI: Jungal's my playgrownd.

What's "feeer"?

I don't know that word "Feeeer."

BALOO: You should feer this jungal.

The rain is late this year.

Jungal gets dry, food gets scarce,

tempers get brittle as sticks.

If that tiger Sherakhan catches you alone  
you'll learn feeer real quick.

MOWGLI: Stupid old tiger. I'll stare in his eyes.  
Like this.

(Stares in BALOO's eyes. BALOO must turn away.)

BALOO: Yoo have  
human eyes.

MOWGLI: Nobody meets my eyes.  
Not yoo,

not Akeia,  
not Sherakhan.  
That's why I'm the biggest, best wulf,  
and I'll have my own pack someday  
and do whatever I want  
all day long.  
Mowgli, Ruler uv the Jungal!

BALOO: Is that what yoo arr?  
Well, Baloo wishes to speak with yoo,  
O Master uv Birdnests.

(BALOO has walked to the bottom of the tree where MOWGLI is climbing. He now gives it a solid rap with his fist: the tree shivers and shakes; MOWGLI loses balance, topples, falls tumbling to the ground at BALOO's feet. BALOO picks him up by the ear.)

Jungal is wide,  
and yoo  
arr tiny.  
Jungal is mighty,  
yoo  
arr weak.  
Jungal is thick,  
yoo  
thin.  
Jungal is full uv creatures  
could swallow yoo  
without chewing.  
Does Mowgli hear?

MOWGLI: (Sulky and bruised.) I hear.

BALOO: Yoo will learn feeer  
soon enuff.  
Meanwhile  
I teach yoo Masterwoords so yoo  
can stay alive.  
What arr the Masterwoords?

MOWGLI: One blood,  
yoo and me.

BALOO: (Lets go of his ear.) Good.  
Mowgli is wise and learns quick. (Ruffles the boy's hair.)  
And why do I teach yoo the woords?

MOWGLI: 'Cause Mowgli is tiny  
while Jungal is wide.

BALOO: Correct.

MOWGLI: Mowgli is weak  
while jungal is mighty.

BALOO: Correct.

MOWGLI: Mowgli is thin  
while Baloo is fat.

(BALOO looks at him, raises paw to cuff him; MOWGLI covers head. BALOO lowers paw. MOWGLI uncovers, sighs with relief; thus is offguard when BALOO cuffs him

gently, just enough to send MOWGLI rolling across the ground smack into the tree-bottoms. BAGHEERA appears.)

BAGHEERA: Baloo.

(BALOO stops. MOWGLI rubs his head.)  
(Calm, detached.) Is the mancub some  
coconut  
to bat abaaaowt  
with yoor flat feet?

BALOO: We cannot spoil the boy, Bagheera.  
He must learn the Law uv the Jungal . . .

BAGHEERA: (Gently scornful.)  
Ooooooh, naaaaow, how can his little head carry  
awwwwwll your looooooong talk?

BALOO: Is anyone too little to be killed?  
No. So I teach him strict,  
so I discipline him,  
veeeeery softlee,  
when he forgets.

BAGHEERA: (Chuckling.) Where did you learn "softly,"  
Old Ironfeet?  
He's battered head to foot by your "softly."  
The boy is no treetrunk to  
sharpen your blunt claws upon.

BALOO: He will remember and thank me someday.

MOWGLI: If I live.

BAGHEERA: Are you in one piece, Mancub?

(MOWGLI is silent, uncertain.)

BALOO: Yoo may speak, Mowgli.  
Yoo know Bagheera the Panther?

MOWGLI: I have seen Bagheera.  
I have heard that Bagheera  
never misses his hunt.

BAGHEERA: (Chuckles.)  
Well, I don't hunt mancubs  
tonight, so have no fear.

MOWGLI: (Stands.) That "fear" again.  
What is feeer? Will you tell me?

BAGHEERA: (Pauses.) Yoo'll find it. Soon enough.

(CHIL the Vulture screeches on overhead.)

CHIL: Yaaa! Yaaa!  
Draaaaaooooowt!  
Yaa! Yaa!

BALOO: What are yoo screeeeeeeeching abowt, Vulture?

CHIL: (Hopping about, rather happily.) No rain! Drought!  
No rain!

jungal people thirsteeeee!  
Chil the Vulture feeds well!

MOWGLI: What's drought?

BALOO: Waterholes dry up,  
food gets scarce,  
we all get hungry  
and Chil that vulture gets happy.

CHIL: Draaaaaaooowwt!

BALOO: (To BAGHEERA.) Come to the River with us?

BAGHEERA: I will be there. (BAGHEERA exits.)

BALOO: All the Jungal obeys this one law, Little Frog.  
And it is not a pretty sight.

(BALOO and MOWGLI exit. CHIL continues to shout.)

CHIL: Pritty for Chil! Pritty for Chil!  
Lotsa food for Chil!  
No water, no eating for everyone else,  
everyone starves,  
lotsa food for Chil!  
Pritty for Chil!  
Pritty for Chil!

(As CHIL speaks, the long, light blue fabric of the River unfurls across the stage.  
At first it ripples high, then settles, till it barely moves, till it lies flat and motionless. CHIL inspects the River.)

(Hopping, happy.)  
River all dry!  
All mud!

(Enter AKELA leading GRAB and GREY. AKELA is older, slower, wearier. CHIL screeches at them.)

Yaa! Chil feeds! Yaa!

AKELA: Get outta here, Chil.

CHIL: Oooooold Akela! Yaa!  
See how long you live in drowwt,  
ooooold and tired Akela!  
Yaa! Yaa!

(AKELA gestures: GRAB and GREY bark and jump at CHIL, who flurries away and exits.)

GRAB: Showed him.

AKELA: Shuttup and drink.

(AKELA laps at the River. GRAB looks at GREY; they kneel and drink. BALOO and MOWGLI have entered.)

BALOO: The River's fallen. Drying up.  
Summer heet will turn owt green jungal black

and we awl go hunnngrny.  
Time for Water Truce.

GRAB: Whatsatt?

AKELA: (Punches him quiet.) Shh! Lissen.

BALOO: Until the rayne comes again,  
anyone can drink at this river  
free from harm.  
While the Truce lasts,  
to kill any animal beside this river  
will be punisht  
by death.

AKELA: Everybody hear that?

GRAB: Sure.

GREY: Yeh. Swell.

MOWGLI: Do all the meat eeters really follow this troooce?

BALOO: Everyone's thirsty:  
everyone obeys.

AKELA: Ugly time, Little Frog,  
We all gotta watch for ourselves,  
so yoo be careful.  
First to drop are ones like yoo,  
small and weak.

GRAB: And hairless.

GREY: And skinny.

(GRAB and GREY laugh. AKELA frowns.)

MOWGLI: I'll get by.  
Maybe I'll just staaare the river in the eye.  
Like this:

(He stares at GRAB, then at GREY: both must turn their eyes away from his. They growl.)

Till the water comes back.

(Enter SHERAKHAN. Behind the tiger, a giggling hyena.)

SHERAKHAN: Staaare in my eyes, Manling.

(Wolves tense, pack together.)  
Look in my eyes and see if  
you'll live.

HYENA: Yeh, yeh, staare in his eyes. Yeh, yeh, yeh.

BALOO: We're under the Water Truce here, Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN: Good hunting  
to the teeeeecher uv the law.  
Good hunting to the Freepeople wulfpack.

(HYENA punctuates with laughter.)  
And especially to Akela, leader uv the pack.

How is your limp, Akela?  
How is your naked mancub?

MOWGLI: I'm a wulf.

HYENA: Mancub's a wulf! Hahahahahahaha

SHERAKHAN: Well, yoo're safe by this river, little wulfee.  
Leave this river, though . . .

(SHERAKHAN flexes claws, staring at MOWGLI.)

HYENA: An I get the scraps! Hahaha!

(Hopping toward MOWGLI.)

I get all yoor scraps.

How do yoo taste? Heee heehee

(Tries to lick/bite MOWGLI.)

(AKELA, who has been growling, steps in, kicks the hyena over on his back.)

AKELA: Grubby, foot-licking hyena.

(HYENA cowers, whimpers as AKELA stands over him.)

Mowgli's in my pack.

Yoo go follow yerrr mangy tigerr  
and keep cleer uv Mowgli  
and me.

BALOO: (Quiet, urgent.) Akela. Cool off.

AKELA: Pick yer friends better, Tiger.

Hyeena stinks.

SHERAKHAN: Hyena's got doggie smell. Just like yoo. (Advances on Akela,  
pushes him.)

Wanna pick on meee  
instead uv hyeena? Huh?

(Pushes AKELA again, who looks away, tense: used to fighting back, but unsure  
and hesitant. HYENA picks himself up, starts giggling.)

AKELA: Don't do that.

BALOO: Water Truce, Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN: Nobody's killing heer.

AITTTT we, Akela?

(Pushes him again. SHERAKHAN advances; AKELA backs away, avoids, trying to  
cool it off.)

AITTTT we, oold limpwulf?

AKELA: (Furious, ready to spring but frightened.) Eennnnnnnuff!

SHERAKHAN: Nuff what, Mancub likker?

AKELA: We're at the River.

SHERAKHAN: Ho ho.

Yer brayve by the truce river.

I'll meet yoo

anywhere you like, Bushfoot.

And then I'll meet yoor little pet Mancub.

AKELA: (Fierce growl.) Nuff!

SHERAKHAN: Stop me. (AKELA growls, desperate; SHERAKHAN keeps advancing.  
Suddenly AKELA stops, stands his ground, is about to spring. BAGHEERA has ap-  
peared behind them.)

BAGHEERA: (Calm; cleaning himself.) Heeet

makes everyone nervous.

Doesn't it, Sherakhan.

(SHERAKHAN whirls to face BAGHEERA. GRAB and GREY appear frightened of the  
panther. AKELA only slowly relaxes. BAGHEERA lounges forward slowly.)

BALOO: (Relieved.) Good hunting, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: Good hunting, Baloo.

Good hunting, Sherakhan.

Do yoo evrrrr hunt anyone

yoor own size?

(BAGHEERA is face to face with SHERAKHAN. Silence: the two cats do not take eyes  
off each other. Finally SHERAKHAN steps back, snorts, chuckles.)

SHERAKHAN: I'm hungry.

Got no more time to play.

But yoo and that crusty wulf

can't watch that manboy forever.

HYENA: An I'll get the scraps!

(SHERAKHAN cuffs him silent; starts to go, turns back.)

SHERAKHAN: That bull

that paid for this boy's life

tenn yeeeeers back

is long since eaten.

If any wulfs get hungry,

I usually have food to spaaare

at my meals.

Anyone come with me?

(GRAB and GREY look at each other, start to follow the tiger. AKELA cuts them off,  
facing SHERAKHAN.)

AKELA: Not a chance.

We aren't hyenas

to pick at your scraps.

(SHERAKHAN looks at him, at the wolves; the HYENA starts to laugh, and the tiger  
joins in. They exit, laughing. GRAB and GREY grumble.)

Lucky for that tiger

we're at this river.

Let's go.

(Starts to walk off opposite. GRAB and GREY don't move. AKELA stops, turns to  
them. Furious.)

Let's go!



(GRAB and GREY hesitate, then follow AKELA, who stomps off.)

MOWGLI: I don't understand.

I don't understand.

What's Sherakhan got so much against me?

BALOO: Look at yourself in the water,  
and you'll see.

MOWGLI: I've seen what I look like. (He looks at his reflection anyway.) Lotsa times.

BALOO: Then don't you see  
ya got no fur? No claws? No fangs?  
Yoo arr no wulf?

(MOWGLI is staring down at the River, puzzled as though seeing something strange.)

MOWGLI: I'm just different looking, is all.

BALOO: Yoo have fingers.

Yoo stand on feet like me.

MOWGLI: (Trying to laugh it off.) What am I? A bayer?

BALOO: Told yoo already.

Yoo were born human,  
and the tiger hates all humans.

Yoo're only alive in the jungal  
because yoor life was bought from the wulf pack  
for a just-killed bull.

MOWGLI: Who killed the bull?

BAGHEERA: (Cuts BALOO off.) Doesn't matter.  
That's long past.

MOWGLI: (Looking at him.) Thanks for sticking up for AKELA.

BAGHEERA: (Quickly.) I don't protect wulfs.

(Then more slowly.) Sherakhan's a bully.

Hunts cattle and slow little animals  
smaller than himself. A coward.

Got catblood like me  
so I don't like watching him  
bully old wulfs and little mancubs.  
That's all.

MOWGLI: You're right.

Sherakhan's all talk. Big wulf like me . . .

BALOO: Yoo're not a wulf.

MOWGLI: Big old BAYER like me,

I'll just staare in his eyes, he'll run away  
biting his tayle.

Ha! Let'im pick on me some time.

(He starts to walk off, lumbering like BALOO.)

BALOO: Where're yoo goin?

MOWGLI: Gonna teach lessons to the pack.

BALOO: Don't go alone.

Sherakhan's still around.

MOWGLI: So? Think I can't handle that notooth bully?

BALOO: Doo what I tell yoo.

BAGHEERA: Let him go, Baloo.

(BALOO glares at BAGHEERA.)

Mowgli is Ruler uv the Jungal.

He can walk where he pleases.

(MOWGLI sticks his tongue out at BALOO, turns, lumbers off like a bear. BALOO turns to BAGHEERA with exasperation.)

BALOO: Yoo spoil him. This is dangerous.

BAGHEERA: He's just a cub. Why not let him play?

BALOO: Just a cub, and the tiger nearby.

BAGHEERA: He is watched.

Been safe these ten years.

Why arr yoo all uv a sudden afraid?

BALOO: Akela's old, gonna miss his kill one time soon,  
and those wulfs will turn on him.

They'll forget yoor bargain  
and leave nothing between Mowgli and Sherakhan.

BAGHEERA: Nothing but me.

BALOO: Even yooo

can't protect him forever.

(Pause.) Why do you keep this secret?

BAGHEERA: I am not one to nurse cubs.

BALOO: This cub believes the whole jungle is safe for him.

He's gotta know who guards him,

and who's been guarding him.

I'll tell him if you want.

BAGHEERA: No.

Don't yooo

tell him.

(BAGHEERA leaves, running after MOWGLI. BALOO shakes his head, grumbles to himself as he exits. The River furls up and away. When it's gone, enter the wolves, GRAB, GREY, and AKELA, playing, jumping, pawing, cavorting.)

GRAB: Why do we gotta keep with that Littllllle Frog?

GREY: Get Sherakhan all mad at us.

AKELA: The pack made a promise, that's why.

Beforr yoo were born.

GREY: Bet yoo were there, hun?

GRAB: Beforr we were born.

GREY: Yer old enuff.

(GRAB and GREY laugh. AKELA is stung: covers it by attacking them playfully. They scuffle and yelp with delight. Enter MOWGLI, lumbering and rolling like BALOO. Speaks in low Baloovoice.)

MOWGLI: Hulloo. I'm Mowwwwgli the bayer!

*(He jumps in, roaring like a bear. They scuffle and laugh, till suddenly GRAB and GREY step away. Slowly they begin to circle and chant, with AKELA standing by, annoyed.)*

GRAB & GREY: Manncubb  
Manncubb  
ugggggleee yoo  
Figs arrr naked,  
and yoo arr, too.

*(MOWGLI laughs uncertainly; is worried by their growing ferocity.)*

Manncub Manncub  
ugggggleee yoo  
Birdies arr toothless,  
and yoo arrr, too.  
Manncubb Manncubb  
uggggggleeee yoo  
Humans arrrrr stinky,  
and so arrrrrr yoo!

AKELA: *(Steps in.)* Nuff. Knock it off.

*(GRAB and GREY hesitate; till GREY starts circling AKELA. GRAB joins in.)*

GREY: Kela Kela  
oooold yoo  
Buffaloes limp  
and yoo doo, too.

AKELA: *(Restrained.)* Hey . . .

GREY & GRAB: Kela Kela  
oooold yoo  
Deer walk backwards  
and yoo doo, too.  
Kela kela  
oooooooooold yooo  
Oldies get hurt  
and yoo will, tooo!

*(GRAB and GREY scream with laughter, run off. AKELA stands, shaken. MOWGLI approaches, touches him.)*

MOWGLI: Why'd they do that?

AKELA: *(Shakes him off.)* Get away, willya.

*(Pause. AKELA lowers head. MOWGLI sulks.)*

MOWGLI: Thought I wuz one uv the pack:

AKELA: Yoo're just young.  
Like them.  
Tiger makes'em strange,  
say stuff they don't  
mean.

MOWGLI: Tiger's after me, not them.

AKELA: Nobody gets yoo while  
I'm around.

MOWGLI: *(Pauses.)* Would I be in yoor pack even if I wasn't a wulf?

AKELA: *(Looks at him, chuckles wearily.)* Even if yoo were a tigercub, Flatface.  
*(Shoves his head playfully.)* Wulf keeps a promise.  
No big deal.

*(AKELA looks at MOWGLI; then turns, follows wolves. MOWGLI sits, sulks. PERCHY the monkey enters behind him. Walks up, staring at MOWGLI. MOWGLI notices.)*

MOWGLI: Get away.

*(MONKEY stares. Dances around MOWGLI. MOWGLI scowls. MONKEY sits beside MOWGLI, imitating scowl and sulk. MOWGLI turns glaring at the MONKEY. MONKEY imitates, glaring back. MOWGLI stands threatening; MONKEY stands threatening back. MOWGLI roars; MONKEY screeches. MOWGLI shoves; MONKEY shoves back. MOWGLI beats fists on the ground; MONKEY likewise. MONKEY imitates MOWGLI's every action until suddenly MOWGLI stops, stands, listening. Pulls the MONKEY with him, and they climb up behind trees to watch.)*

*Enter SHERAKHAN the Tiger, strolling, looking about. Stops, pauses; listens. Smells something. MOWGLI and the monkey are very still.*

*Enter opposite, GRAB, running from some fast game. He almost collides with the TIGER.)*

SHERAKHAN: Good hunting.

GRAB: *(Freezes with panic.)* Good hunting, Sherakhan.

SHERAKHAN: *(Lounging catlike.)* ReIIIIlllaaaaaaax.  
I'm not hunting  
young woooooolves . . .  
right now.

GRAB: Good thing.

SHERAKHAN: Though I do wonder how  
such fine hunters as you Freepeepul  
are content to be led by a  
dying old wulf—what's his name?—  
and a hairless mancub.

GRAB: Akela is pack leader.

SHERAKHAN: I hear that even  
Akela yoor old leader  
cannot look this manling in the eyes.

*(GRAB growls, nods.)*

Does this manling  
belooooong  
in the Jungal?  
With his fingers  
and staaaaaaaring eyes

and furless skin?  
Is he one uv us?  
Arrr their no brayve wooolves  
to tayke  
back  
the pack  
from this naked Manboy?

GRAB: He grew up with us.  
Akela protects him, is all.

SHERAKHAN: Akela protects him,  
while Akela's alive.

(MONKEY's getting bored with being silent; he's been hanging by one hand. He slips, catches himself, laughs briefly before MOWGLI can slap a hand over his mouth. SHERAKHAN looks up, but cannot see them through the trees. Silence. GRAB takes this opportunity to turn away, but SHERAKHAN notices.)  
Wait.

(GRAB freezes.)  
I have fed full tonight  
on a large buck.  
Come with me.  
I will take yoo too it,  
and you can feed with me.  
And we'll talk  
about Akela  
and about a leader for yoor Pack.

(SHERAKHAN starts to walk off, turns, looks at GRAB. GRAB looks around, follows. SHERAKHAN lifts a paw to pat GRAB's head; GRAB pulls away. SHERAKHAN smiles, leaves. GRAB follows. MOWGLI makes sure they're gone before letting go the MONKEY, who chatters angrily. MOWGLI climbs down, stares after the wolf and the tiger.)

MOWGLI: (Holds up hand, looks at it.) Stupid ugly fingers.  
Ugly crummy bare skin.  
Why do I have to look like this!

(He's clenching his fist, furious. MONKEY imitates. MOWGLI notices.)  
Yoo have others who look like yoo?

(MONKEY doesn't understand.)  
Thought I did. I guess  
I was wrong.

(MOWGLI looks sad. MONKEY mimics sadness. MOWGLI giggles. They begin to mimic each other, ending by pulling tail and hair, laughing and chattering. Enter KAA the Python, moving sinuously and silently until he is just behind them. Emits a long hiss.)

KAA: YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAASSSSSSSSSSSS.

(MOWGLI and MONKEY turn to see him.)

MOWGLI: Rock snake!

(They dive for the trees. KAA follows them with eyes, calm.)

KAA: Ssssstayy yoo sssssssssso!

(MOWGLI and MONKEY freeze, looking at KAA. KAA holds their gazes with his eyes, moves slowly toward them.)

Kaa ssss seeeeees.  
Kaa seeeeees  
hayyyyyrrlesssss monkeeeee,  
Kaa feeeeeeds.

(MOWGLI and MONKEY are hypnotized, as KAA moves in. Enter BAGHEERA behind the snake.)

BAGHEERA: Good hunting, Kaa.

(The moment is enough for the MONKEY to snap out and scurry away. MOWGLI shakes his head, but KAA looks back and hypnotizes him.)

KAA: Ssstay!

MOWGLI: (In the instant of consciousness.) One Blood, yoo and mee.

(KAA stops, stares at him, puzzled.)

KAA: Whaaat monkeee is thiss  
who speeeeks Massssterrr wooodds?

BAGHEERA: No monkey, Kaa  
A friend uv mine.

KAA: Friend uv Bagheera?  
This creature isss noo catt.

BAGHEERA: This is the manncub, Kaa.  
Ward uv the Freepeepul wulfpack.

KAA: Aaaaah!  
Ward uv Bagheera.  
Kaaa knooooows.

BAGHEERA: Must be  
good hunting elsewhere,  
Kaa.

KAA: I spaare this mancub  
for his Massssterrr woords.  
That other monkee  
is not passst my chase.  
But have caaaaare, manling.  
Kaa feeds on monkeees  
whoo look  
like  
yoo.  
Kaa seeeeeees,  
Kaa knooooooooooooooooooooooooowwwwwssssssssssssss.

(KAA moves off after the MONKEY.)

MOWGLI: Good hunting, Kaa.  
Somewhere else.

BAGHEERA: Kaa will feed well enough.

No monkey survives the stare uv the python.

What did you see in his eyes, Little Frog?

MOWGLI: *(Looks at BAGHEERA, then away; shudders.)* Feeer.

*(Pause. Jungalsounds.)*

You saved my life.

BAGHEERA: The Masterwoords saved yoo—

MOWGLI: You saved me.

I'm lucky yoo were here.

BAGHEERA: *(Considers saying something, decides against it.)* Yoo should be more careful.

MOWGLI: Baloo taught me

always repay a favor.

Don't know how a little guy like me

can pay back a life to Bagheera the Panther.

*(MOWGLI reaches out tentatively to touch BAGHEERA's back. BAGHEERA pulls away, awkward.)*

BAGHEERA: I didn't ask for payment. *(Pause.)*

I am not one to be

petted.

MOWGLI: *(Thinks, then smiles.)* I wasn't gonna pet.

It's just that

most uv my friends in the jungal

can't quite reach back to scratch the

itch

they get

right here—I'll show yoo—

right here between the shoulderblades.

But I have these. *(Holds up hand.)*

Maybe these ugly fingers uv mine can

be some good.

BAGHEERA: *(Cautious.)*

I have

had

an itch

there . . .

*(MOWGLI reaches back; BAGHEERA warily lets him scratch his back near the neck. BAGHEERA is tense at first, but quickly relaxes, lounges, even purrs and stretches at the scratching. Howl offstage. BAGHEERA coils up.)*

I smell the tiger.

*(BAGHEERA leaps off into the jungal; opposite, GRAB scrambles on, watching behind him. MOWGLI confronts him.)*

MOWGLI: Grab!

GRAB: *(Whirls.)* Whaddya want?

MOWGLI: Been talking to Sherakhan, have ya?

GRAB: What about it?

MOWGLI: Hyeenas talk to him, too.

GRAB: Get outta heer, Goggle-eyes.

Yoo're no part uv the jungal,

furless, funnyface manbaby.

Go back to yoor human village

where yoo belong.

*(Behind GRAB, enters a tired or wounded buffalo, groaning.)*

Beat it, manbaby!

MOWGLI: What for?

*(MOWGLI is pushed aside by GREY entering opposite. With him is AKELA.)*

GREY: Heer it is! The buffalo! Heer, Akela!

GRAB: Stand back for Akela!

Leader uv the Pack show yoor stuff!

*(MOWGLI steps away, inconspicuous. AKELA is puzzled and confused, looking at GRAB and GREY.)*

We saved this kill for yoo.

AKELA: Why'd ya do that?

GREY: Get him!

Arr yoo still

Leeeeder? Spring, Akela!

*(AKELA, flustered and confused, crouches and springs on the buffalo, which bellows. As he does so, SHERAKHAN steps onstage behind the buffalo.)*

SHERAKHAN: Steal my kill, Akela?

*(Claws out, SHERAKHAN cuffs AKELA powerfully across the face, sending the WOLF sprawling on his back, badly hurt. SHERAKHAN moves at him.)*

Jungal Law forbids that. Yoor punishment—

AKELA: *(Trying to pull himself up.)* Wulfs! Defend me!

*(GRAB and GREY stand stock-still. AKELA looks at them. The buffalo has escaped.)*

SHERAKHAN: Defend yoorself, dead wulf.

MOWGLI: Ambush cowards! *(He jumps out, tries to pull AKELA away.)*

Akela, get away from here—

AKELA: *(Shoves MOWGLI aside.)* Outta my way.

I'm no dog

like them.

All I need is one bite at yoor throat—

*(He swipes weakly at SHERAKHAN, who cuffs him down again.)*

SHERAKHAN: GOOOD!

Dead wulf and manboy,

both in one meal.

(BAGHEERA springs on, flinging SHERAKHAN down, standing over him poised to kill the TIGER with one blow.)

BAGHEERA: (Agonized and furious.) Yoo sicken me.

Yoo make me ashamed.

Make stupid young wulfs betray their leader  
so yoo can sneak up on one who's dying.

Is there no  
coward snake-thing  
yoo won't do?

(BAGHEERA will kill him; but stops, hesitates, lowers paw just slightly. The TIGER sees the chance, hurls himself against BAGHEERA's side. The PANTHER falls back, the TIGER leaps up; the two cats face off like two karate masters.)

SHERAKHAN: Agayn

and agayn

yoo keep me from my meat.

The buffalo was my kill. I'll catch it,  
and let yoo protect yoor wooolfes,  
O untamed Bagheera.

But watch yoor mancub closely.

I taste him;

my teeth sharp at the feel uv his flesh.

Ride on this panther's back now,  
boy.

If I meet yoo alone,

truce or no truce,

yoo will end where yoo should have begun.

(SHERAKHAN roars, exits.)

GRAB: (Innocent.) Is Akela hurt?

(MOWGLI screams, hurls himself at the wolves, who run off; he starts to follow, but AKELA, who has pulled himself up partially, moans and crumples. MOWGLI runs to him.)

MOWGLI: I saw them plant the trap.

I saw it. I'm stupid and blind . . .

AKELA: Good thing yoo didn't  
fight the tiger for my sake.

We'd both be gone, instead uv  
just me.

MOWGLI: Yoo're not hurt that bad.

AKELA: Long time

since the old days uv  
mancub

rolling naked in the dust.

MOWGLI: I'm a wulf.

No fault uv mine I was born human.

I'm one skin with the Freepeople wulfpack.

AKELA: Wulfpack

is no wulfpack.

They follow the Tiger.

Lick his hindpaws.

Eat his scraps.

Led me to his ambush.

This hunting is ended;

Yoo arr human.

Go to man.

MOWGLI: I won't go.

I'll hunt alone in the jungal.

AKELA: Can yoo help me up,

Little Brother?

I was Leader uv the Pack

when the wulfs

were

a pack.

(MOWGLI helps him to his feet. BALOO has entered behind.)

Feet in the dark that leave no mark,

Silent blow uv paw,

This is the hour uv pride and power.

Talon, Tooth, Claw

Hear my call: Good Hunting All

that keep the Jungal Law!

(He leaps in the air, falls limp to the ground. MOWGLI touches him)

BAGHEERA: Good hunting, Akela.

BALOO: Good hunting, Akela. (Pauses.)

I heard the ruckus.

Is this Sherakhan's work?

(BAGHEERA nods.)

MOWGLI: By my small and weak and clawless hands

I swear

Sherakhan will pay for this.

BALOO: Mowgli.

Yoo must decide now.

MOWGLI: (Still kneeling to hold AKELA.) Decide what?

BALOO: Akela

can't protect yoo anymore.

All yoor protectors will be gone  
some night.

Yoo can wait for Sherakhan to catch yoo  
alone.

Yoo can hide, or run to some other Jungal,

or run to the manvillage.

Or yoo can face Sherakhan.

What will yoo do?

MOWGLI: Why do I

have to face the Tiger?

BALOO: Tiger wants yoo dead—

MOWGLI: (To BAGHEERA.) Sherakhan ambushed Akela.

Yoo are Master.

Can't yoo punish Sherakhan?

BAGHEERA: Me?

MOWGLI: Kill him.

BAGHEERA: (Stunned.) Me, kill Sherakhan?

BALOO: (Shaking head.) Mowgli,

don't you see Bagheera?

Don't yoo see Sherakhan?

Panther and tiger,

they are the same kind.

BAGHEERA: I can fight Sherakhan,

I can defend yoo from his teeth,

but kill him?

BALOO: It is against the Law.

MOWGLI: Aren't you Master uv the Jungal?

BALOO: Not uv the Law.

BAGHEERA: The Law is my master. And yooors.

MOWGLI: (Bowing head.) Leave me alone then.

My last friend is gone,

and I'm alone.

BALOO: Mowgli—

MOWGLI: No one left to defend me.

Let Sherakhan ambush me. Let him catch me alone—

BALOO: (Roaring.) Stop it!

Yoo're too old to insult

yoor true guardian.

(BAGHEERA has turned his back.)

Akela was not yoor only protector.

There is another

who has watched yoo closely

from the day yoo were born.

He has kept yoo from trouble

and given yoo

yoor life

more times than yoo or I can count.

He would never tell yoo,

but Akela is gone

and yoo must know

who has guarded yoo ever since he

bought yoor life

for the price uv a bull

ten yeers back.

MOWGLI: (Looks at BAGHEERA, who stands unmoving with his back turned.) But I never hardly saw yoo.

BAGHEERA: (Slowly.) I smell

and I hear

farther than yoo can see.

BALOO: The Jungal is careful uv whatever Bagheera protects.

(MOWGLI rises, approaches BAGHEERA.)

MOWGLI: (Softly.) All my life?

(BAGHEERA turns, raises head, bends back to show his neck.)

BAGHEERA: What dyoo see here?

MOWGLI: (Peering.) A spot without fur. What is that?

BAGHEERA: The mark uv a collar.

Only Baloo

and now yoo

have seen it.

I was born

in

the cages uv the King's Palace at Oodyepoor.

My mother was trapped in the jungal

by men using the stranglevine

which they call rope.

I was raised with this

rope

around my neck,

fed with an iron pan in a cage.

When I grew,

I felt my strength

and bit the vine in two with my jaw.

I returned

and became most terrible in the Jungal.

Am I not, Baloo?

BALOO: All the Jungal fears Bagheera.

BAGHEERA: Terrible and

alone.

Yoo are like me,

Little Frog.

I grew up like yoo

alone

and different

in a world uv strange creatures.

The humans fed me and cared for me,

and I pay them back

with your life.

But kill that tiger . . . I can't doo that.

Not even for yoo.

(MOWGLI steps away, stunned by all this.)

MOWGLI: This is

feer

I guess.

Huh?

Grow up a wulf,

whole jungal is my big friend,

till all uv a sudden I'm no wulf,  
I'm no baare,  
I'm not even a silly stinky monkey.  
What am I?  
Some hooman with no fur?  
Where do hoomans live?

BALOO: Manvillage. At the edge uv the jungal.

MOWGLI: Will they protect me?

BALOO: Don't know.

MOWGLI: They have to.  
Wet dark jungal is all my enemy,  
all ambush and teeth and tiger.  
Hoomans have to protect me!

(MOWGLI runs off. BAGHEERA starts to follow; BALOO blocks him.)

BALOO: Bagheera!  
This time I tell yoo:  
let him go.

BAGHEERA: (Looks after MOWGLI, then back at BALOO; plaintive.) Will he come back?

BALOO: It's up to him.

(CHIL the Vulture caws in the distance.)  
No need to leave Akela for that vulture.  
The River will take his body.

(BALOO picks AKELA up by the feet, carries him away over his back. BAGHEERA still looks after MOWGLI; then follows BALOO off. MOWGLI enters opposite, skulking about.)

MOWGLI: This whole manvillage is like  
one big panther cage.

(Noises off. MOWGLI hides, watches as HUMANS enter, leading ELEPHANT. The robotlike HUMANS wear neutral masks; they carry whips, snapping them at the elephant to goad him into place. ELEPHANT is also led by rope, which they tie to a tree. One of the whips gets snapped too close to the ELEPHANT's face; the ELEPHANT panics, skitters. HUMANS snap whips, taunt ELEPHANT to get him to stay still; ELEPHANT grows more frightened as they taunt, till ELEPHANT screams—a big scream made of two voices.)

(Jumps out.) Leave him alone!

(He leaps toward the HUMANS, waving his arms and screaming monkeylike to scare them. They are taken aback by this wild creature, but they try to fend him off with their whips. MOWGLI grabs the whips out of their hands, shouting. He snaps at the HUMANS who turn and clip-clop terrified offstage. MOWGLI hurls the whips after them. Turns to HATHI the ELEPHANT, who is staring at him oddly.)

You're safe. They're gone.

HATHI: (double-voice scream.) WHOOO-  
OOOOOOOOO're YOOOOOOOO?

MOWGLI: (Jumping back.) One blood, you and me!

HATHI: Jungaltalk!

WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT AAAAAAAAAArrr YOOOOOOOOO?

MOWGLI: I'm Mowgli the wulf.

HATHI: DOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOON'T gimme  
that.

You're no wulf. What are ya?

Yer sure funny-lookin.

MOWGLI: What're yoo?

HATHI: (Proud.) I'm Hathi the Elephant.

You never seen an elephant?

MOWGLI: Only in the jungal.

HATHI: I didn't know little boys lived in the jungal.

MOWGLI: I'm no boy. Have yoo even been  
to the jungal?

HATHI: BEEEEEN THERE?

My father's father's father MAAAAAAADE the jungal, boy.  
PULLED the jungal owt uv the ground with his trunk  
DUG with his TUSK to make rivers  
STRUCK with his foot to make ponds and trees.  
I am LOOOOOOORD uv the jungal,  
boy.

MOWGLI: If yoo're Lord uv the Jungal,  
how come yoo're trapped to that treee?

HATHI: (Hesitates; gestures after HUMANS.) Humans.

MOWGLI: (Looking after them, astonished.) Those are hoomans?

HATHI: Trapped me in the jungal when I was  
no bigger than yoo.

Brought whips, brought this (Pulls at rope with his neck.),  
made me  
carry their wood.

MOWGLI: Those ugly silly animals  
arr hoooomans?

Well I'm not one uv them. (Imitates their robot walk.)

HATHI: Yoo look like them.

They forget  
whooo I am.  
But I don't forget.  
I will leave this human place  
and go back to the jungal  
before I die.

MOWGLI: How do they keep yoo here?

HATHI: With this. (HATHI strains at the rope.)

MOWGLI: Well, I'm no human. (He goes to fiddle with the rope.)

HATHI: What're yoo doing?

(With one or two tugs, MOWGLI figures out how the slipknot works; he takes the rope off HATHI's neck, stands holding it.)

MOWGLI: See?

Humans trap yoo. I'm Mowgli  
and I set yoo free.  
I'm no human.  
Yoo can go back to the jungal now.

*(HATHI steps away, awkward; twists neck; staggers away and stares at MOWGLI, amazed.)*

HATHI: What are yoo, anyway?  
Yoo look just like'em, but yoo set me freee.  
Yoo say yoo're not human,  
but yoo know how to use rope.

MOWGLI: What's rope?

HATHI: Yoo're holding it in yoor fingers.

MOWGLI: This is rope?

HATHI: Fingers, skin, eyes; ya use the rope.  
Sorry, boy. Yoo're human,  
and stuck with it.

*(MOWGLI stands staring at the rope.)*

I owe you my freedom.  
Yoo got enemies?  
I'll step on'em for ya.

MOWGLI: *(Slow.)* No.

I take care uv my own  
enemies.  
From now on.

HATHI: Okay then. *(Turns to go, stops, turns back.)*  
Good hunting,  
jungal boy.

MOWGLI: Good hunting,  
Lord uv the Jungal.

*(HATHI gives a final trumpet shriek, exits. MOWGLI looks at knot on tree; fiddles with it, unties it, throws rope over his shoulder. Carries it off as he exits.)*

*As MOWGLI circles around behind the set, jungal sounds arise from offstage, and the River unfurls in front; when MOWGLI comes back around, he is in the Jungal. MOWGLI kneels at the River. Bends down, cups hands, drinks/touches lips to fabric.*

*Behind, enter KAA. MOWGLI turns quickly, sees KAA. KAA writhes sensuously, dancing slowly, not especially noticing MOWGLI.)*

KAA: Yyaaaaa shhhhh sssss

MOWGLI: One blood,  
you and me.

KAA: *(Draws up startled; sees the boy, continues dancing.)* Sssss!  
Mannnnling.  
Sssssmmmmmmmmelll

watrrrrrr  
Is watrrrrrr  
gooooood?

MOWGLI: Water is good,  
what there is uv it.

KAA: Watrrrr  
is in the air.  
Sssssmmmmelll!  
Look up!

MOWGLI: *(Looks up.)* Clouds!

KAA: Claaaowwwds.  
sss  
full uv rayyyyn  
dripfullll  
sssss  
Kaaaaaa  
will make  
rayyyynnn.

MOWGLI: Yoo  
will bring rain?

KAA: Kaaaa  
will daance,  
daaaaaaaaaaanssssss  
at the top  
uv the mowntayn  
and make  
rayyyyn.

MOWGLI: Soon?

KAA: Nowwww.  
Rayyyyn  
will covrrr the mowntayn  
and choke the riverrrrr  
when Kaaa  
danssss esss.

MOWGLI: The rain will flood this river?

KAA: Kaaa  
will danssssss,  
and the River  
will rise  
to draaaown  
bear and elephant and giraffe  
if they stand in its paaaath.  
When Kaa  
daaaans esss  
atop  
the mowntayn  
Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa shhhhhhhhhhh sssssssssssssssss.

*(KAA circles behind the set, still writhing; climbs up the rear of the set very slowly, almost imperceptibly, throughout the following scenes.)*



MOWGLI *inspects the area; stands thinking. Tugs at the foot of a tree, then sits, thinking, looking at the rope. BAGHEERA enters behind him silently.*

BAGHEERA: *(Slowly.)* The humans  
won't help yoo?

MOWGLI: *(Rises to meet him.)* No.  
Nobody helps me  
more than yoo.  
And yoo've done all yoo can.

BAGHEERA: I have decided.  
Yoo can stay in the jungal  
and be safe.  
I will kill Sherakhan.  
I'll hunt him and jump on his back  
and kill him.  
Than you can stay.

MOWGLI: What about the Law?

BAGHEERA: Law's not the only master in the Jungal.  
I will leave the jungal if I have to  
or die, or be punished.  
But I will kill Sherakhan,  
and yoo will stay.

MOWGLI: I owe my life to you.  
I owe yoo more than I can pay back  
ever.  
I'll face the tiger myself.

BAGHEERA: Yoo're just a cub.

MOWGLI: Yoo  
belong in the jungal.  
More than me.  
I will face Sherakhan.

*(MOWGLI picks up the rope. BAGHEERA leaps away, tense at the sight of it. MOWGLI kneels, ties one end of the rope to the foot of a tree.)*

BAGHEERA: *(Hissing.)* No one in this jungal uses that.

MOWGLI: *(Calm, still tying rope.)* No one's able to use it.  
But me. I have fingers. See?  
I have human eyes. And skin.  
Makes me different, for all time.  
And makes this rope mine.

BAGHEERA: Law as old as  
human kind  
says  
when manthing enters the jungal,  
animals must disappear  
for their lives.  
You can't live in this jungal  
if yoo use  
that.

*(Silence. MOWGLI is finished tying the rope, leaving the rest with the lasso coiled, inconspicuous behind the tree. Stands now to face BAGHEERA.)*

MOWGLI: I know.

*(Pause.)*

BAGHEERA: I will be close by.

*(BAGHEERA stalks away. MOWGLI looks around once more. He goes to the River, sits beside it. Relaxes, looking at us. Begins to sing, carelessly, in a cheerful tune that belies the words. Sings overloud, for distant ears.)*

MOWGLI: Before the peacock flutters  
before the monkeys cry  
before the vulture swoops a furlong clear,  
through the Jungal very softlee flits a shadow and a sigh—  
he is fear, O little hunter, He is Fear.

*(Stops, listens a moment; continues.)*

Very softly down the glade  
runs a waiting watching shade  
and the whisper spreads and widens far and near;  
and the sweat is on the brow  
for he passes even now—  
he is fear, O little hunter, he is Fear . . .

*(SHERAKHAN has entered behind him. The TIGER stalks on ready to spring, but seeing the boy's helpless posture, stops, chuckles.)*

SHERAKHAN: I seee  
your protectors  
sleep,  
Manling.  
Yoo and I arr alone.

*(MOWGLI turns, casually; rises to face the TIGER, though some distance away, and always between the TIGER and the unseen rope.)*

MOWGLI: *(Friendly.)* Welcome,  
Murderer.

SHERAKHAN: We all murderrr, Manling.

MOWGLI: *(Still calm.)* Yoo murderred Akela  
on his homeground.

SHERAKHAN: All grownd is hunting ground for me.

MOWGLI: Yoo did not kill for food  
but for revenge  
and for sport  
and for the pleasure uv killing.  
Only the coward Tiger  
breaks Jungal law.

SHERAKHAN: Jungal Law is made  
to keep safe old bears  
and young foolish manboys.  
I am Sherakhan the Tiger:  
I ask no safety uv law  
nor do I give it.

MOWGLI: Do you respect the Water Truce  
by this River?

SHERAKHAN: (*Chuckling.*) Baloo your bumblebear is farrt away  
with his laws and trooces.  
My stomach  
has growled  
ten seasons for yoo.  
No speech saves yoo now.

MOWGLI: I must dance my death then.

(MOWGLI starts hopping, dancing, skipping about. SHERAKHAN puzzles.  
MOWGLI skips close to him, past him; SHERAKHAN makes a grab, misses because he  
cannot turn as fast as MOWGLI. MOWGLI smiles. SHERAKHAN laughs, revolving to  
watch MOWGLI dance.)

SHERAKHAN: Run, boy,  
climb.  
Run, and I catch yoo.  
Climb, I catch yoo.  
Swimm, I catch yoo.  
But runn, dooo runnn.  
I enjoy the sport.

(MOWGLI slows, stops, standing before the tree under which the rope is coiled. He  
lets out a breath, sinks to his knees as if exhausted.)

MOWGLI: Yoo are right.  
I have from yoo  
ten years uv life.  
I can run no longer.  
Will you have mercy on me,  
O terribal Sherakhan?

SHERAKHAN: I have hunting to finish tonight.  
Yoo weary me.

(MOWGLI has gripped the rope behind him, now stands, steps toward the TIGER.)

MOWGLI: Take me then  
and  
CHOKE!

(SHERAKHAN leaps; MOWGLI leaps to meet him, noose out, straight at the TIGER;  
slips the rope over SHERAKHAN's head as he ducks down under the TIGER's too-high  
swing, scurries past and away before the TIGER can turn. SHERAKHAN jumps after  
him, away from the bars; the loop tightens round his neck. Pulls angrily. MOWGLI  
stands out of reach. TIGER rages, growls.)

SHERAKHAN: No goooooood,  
clevttttt mannboy.  
I chew through this vine  
and run yooooooo  
down!

MOWGLI: Will you? Look then!

(Points up to where KAA has reached the top of the bars; KAA begins to dance.  
Thunder.)

See where Kaa daaaaaansssses  
atop the mowntayn?

(MOWGLI laughs and dances. The TIGER is hypnotized.)  
Hear, Sherakhan?  
Rain?  
Have yoo seen the rise uv this river?  
When the new rain  
floods off the mowntayn?

(MOWGLI climbs a tree out of reach, shouts over the thunder.)  
Have you drunk tonight?  
Drink yoor fill,  
Sherakhan!

(The River starts rippling, breaking SHERAKHAN out of his trance. He runs, tugs  
at the rope, tries to climb. The rope holds him back. Claws at it. His paws can't quite  
reach the neck. Lurches, hurts his neck, struggles snarling left and right. The River  
is rippling higher and higher. SHERAKHAN hurls himself at the tree, staggers back,  
stands, raises two paws, roars loud and long—till the River fabric snaps up high in  
the air, covering the TIGER from sight.)

KAA's dance has ended: The SNAKE leaves. The fabric floats down descending  
slowly, till the River settles to level, subsides. The TIGER has disappeared.

The thunder has stopped. Distant howl of wolves.)

GRAB & GREY: (Off.) Sherakhan! Sherakhan!

(Wolves enter.)

GREY: Sherakhan!

GRAB: Save us from the thunder!

(MOWGLI jumps down, faces the wolves.)

MOWGLI: I AM SHERAKHAN!

(BAGHEERA has entered with BALOO, watching. MOWGLI is breathing hard and  
fast, pacing catlike with bared teeth.)

Master uv the Jungal,  
me, Sherakhan!  
I kill, I eat, I murder where I please!  
I rip the Jungal with my teeth,  
I crush the sky with my jaw!  
Sherakhan!  
Hyenas and dogs  
follow me, lick my feet for scraps.  
Dogs! Fangmouth dogs with lolling tongues  
I'll slash with my talon!  
Sherakhan!

*(Leaps at the wolves, swinging fists over head like a little boy trying to fight. GRAB and GREY are terrified; they run off. MOWGLI stops, panting, wild-eyed.)*

I am Sherakhan  
and the ants at the bottom uv the river  
have my hide for a gift.  
Sherakhan!

*(Sees BALOO and BAGHEERA; he attacks them, leaping and clawing. BAGHEERA fends him off, BALOO catches and hugs him. He beats furiously at BALOO; stops; hands go to head, eyes clenched tight shut.)*

Ww  
what  
is it—  
Baloo  
Bagheera, help me . . .  
am I dying?  
Some insect is stinging my eyes.

BALOO: Yoo make tears.  
Tears like men use.

MOWGLI: The jungal hurts me,  
but I don't want to leave it.  
I'm two Mowglis.

BALOO: Man goes to man.  
Let them fall, Mowgli.  
They arr only tears.

MOWGLI: I broke the Law.  
Used manthing.  
Dost the jungal cast me out?

BALOO: Yoo killed the Tiger.  
No one but Mowgli commands Mowgli now.

MOWGLI: I'll stay then.  
Can I stay?

BALOO: Stay  
if yoo can.  
But the jungal is full uv wulfs  
and tigers.  
Will yoo spend yoor life  
killing them all with rope  
just to show yoo belong heer?

MOWGLI: Bagheera?  
Yoo bought my life from the Pack.  
Yoo are Master uv the Jungal.  
Will yoo command me to stay?

BAGHEERA: *(Head is bowed.)* When I was grown,  
the cage uv my youth  
could not hold me.  
Yoo are grown  
now,  
Little Brother.  
This Jungal

uv yoor youth  
cannot hold yoo.  
Baloo knows more than I do,  
and his woord  
is my woord.  
By the bull that bought yoo  
I set yoo free.

*(BAGHEERA steps away, facing away from them. MOWGLI looks after him, then down.)*

MOWGLI: I'll live in that village then.  
But I'll never be human like them.  
I am Mowgli  
and the Jungal is my home.

BALOO: No more to say.  
Just hold a thought  
at night  
sometimes  
for this fatt  
old baaare.

MOWGLI: I will.  
Bagheera?

*(BAGHEERA can't speak, can't look at him. MOWGLI waits for an answer; then turns away, dries eyes. Walks away. Only when MOWGLI is almost off does BAGHEERA speak, painfully, without turning.)*

BAGHEERA: *(Can hardly bear to say these words.)* Remember Bagheera!

*(Still can't look at MOWGLI; steps farther away.)*  
Remember  
Bagheera loved yoo!  
Good hunting on a new trail.

*(Another step away.)*  
Remember Bagheera!

*(The PANTHER leaps off and is gone. MOWGLI looks after him; turns; leaves the jungal. BALOO watches him go.)*

BALOO: *(After he is gone.)* One blood  
yoo and me.

*(The words "one blood, yoo and me" are taken up in whispers by the whole cast. The chanting of the words grows as BALOO turns, walks off. Chanting modulates to chattering, cawing, snarling. Jungalsounds loud for a moment; then quick silence.)*

CURTAIN