THE MAD ELEPHANT OF MANDLA

by

QUINN E. HIGGINS

A THESIS

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The most remarkable stories are, of course, those which do not appear--for obvious reasons.

Rudyard Kipling

I wish to extend thanks to the memory of Joseph Rudyard Kipling, whose stories have given me many hours of enjoyment. All authors share a part of themselves in everything they write, and for that part of himself he shared with me I am truly grateful.

Thanks also for the support of Professor Richard Stevenson and the Honors College in assisting me to return and complete my work after a three-year absence. It is nice to know, in this age of faceless and nameless education, that the Honors College places such a high degree of importance on each individual student.

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Above all, this is for my family. They always knew I could do it.

APPROVED: 

Dr. Richard Stevenson

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INTRODUCTION

I write of all matters that lie within my understanding, and of many that do not. But chiefly I write of Life and Death, and men and women, and Love and Fate according to the measure of my ability.[1]

ARTISTIC PURPOSE

Early in my academic career, I developed an interest in narrative structures and techniques. Through such works as Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone, Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and Wayne C. Booth's The Rhetoric Of Fiction, I began to see that how a narrator presents the material is as important as what the narrator presents. This discovery was the beginning of my development as a critical reader, and also marked the point at which I became an intelligent writer as well.

As I began to understand the value of successful narration, I learned to recognize key characteristics which identified a particular author. As any high school writing instructor teaches, every author has a particular

"voice", unique to his or her style. Indeed, it is this unique voice that we, as writers, search to find in ourselves.

The task for the student is to coax the voice into revealing itself, without altering the work being studied. Narrative tools, such as person, distance, reliability or unreliability, are necessary for creating a voice. But voice is something more - that part of himself the author gives to the work - the texture, the *feel* he or she imparts to a text. James Joyce once said that "nothing comes from the artist that is not a part of the man," and voice is what identifies that part.

I became intrigued with this question of voice, and experimented with various styles of composition, in attempts at re-creating particular voices. My first efforts dealt more with drama and poetry than with fiction, as I relied mainly on structure as a medium of imitation. My first attempt was little more than a crude mimicry of Cavalier poetry, but I enjoyed it immensely. My next task was to rewrite the ending of "Miles Gloriosus," by Plautus. The original ending always seemed contrived to me. How can a self-centered braggart suddenly say, "Well, it was a fair catch, and justice has been done,"[2] after he finds out that his servant has betrayed him and his mistress has fled? It was as jarring to me as if I had read that Shylock gave

donations to the NAACP. I rewrote the ending and tried to keep the soldier more in character. In Plautus' ending the character turnaround was too sudden and too extreme. In my ending, Pyrgopolynices sees what happens, blames it on someone else, and follows a pretty girl who happens to walk by. In my opinion, my ending keeps more with the established characterization of the swaggering soldier. Although comedy does not always concern itself with realism, I think the sudden break in character by Pyrgopolynices detracts from the humor and weakens the impact of the original ending.

Given my interest in narrative voice and structure, especially in fiction, it was only natural for me to write a creative thesis on the topic. It was here that my lifelong appreciation for The Jungle Books entered the picture. (A Kipling note here on the term "lifelong" as it applies to a 26-year old:

> 'In August was the Jackal born;
> The Rains fell in September;
> "Now such a fearful flood as this,"
> Says he, "I can't remember!"'[3])

Suffice it to say that Kipling has been my favorite author ever since I was old enough to choose my own reading. My edition of The Jungle Books belonged to my

father, who received the copy in 1947. I appropriated the volume in 1973, and I have read it more times than I can remember.

My primary intent has been to utilize my skills in the study of narration in order to identify and re-create Kipling's voice through the careful study of his style. The result is "The Mad Elephant of Mandla," a full-length story meant to be a complement to The Second Jungle Book. In this story I deal with a topic that Kipling ignores, with regards to Mowgli's development. In "Letting In The Jungle," Mowgli is a small boy recently cast out of the Jungle as well as the Man-Pack. In the next story, "Red Dog," Mowgli is suddenly the Master of the Jungle. Kipling fails to give us a transitional story, one that accounts for this momentous change in both attitudes and time.

In "The Mad Elephant of Mandla," I take Mowgli on a journey, both physically and emotionally, in order to provide the much needed transition between small boy and young man. Through conflict, Mowgli sees that he alone has the ability to maintain order when the Jungle is threatened by man. This realization acts as a catharsis, enabling Mowgli to come to terms with his place in the Jungle society. As a bridge between the Mowgli of "Letting In The Jungle" and the Mowgli of "Red Dog," "The Mad Elephant of Mandla" allows the reader to make the

transition along with Mowgli, smoothing the jarring lapse in thematic continuity.

KIPLING: HIS REPUTATION AND HIS ART

I have encountered two major obstacles to the successful completion of this thesis. The first obstacle deals with the academic value of narrative re-creation. Anyone can parody an author by the repetition of obvious characteristics, but to capture the true tone requires an in-depth understanding, not only of the author's works, but of the literary mechanics behind the creation of the stories themselves. I had to understand narrative structure and technique in order to re-create a voice successfully. Regardless of which author I chose, the tools of that re-creation remained essential to my development as a successful writer. It is one thing to be familiar with narration, but to be able to write in another's voice requires an in-depth knowledge of the subject, a knowledge which enables me to understand more fully my own voice.

The second obstacle I encountered was the general lack of attention given to Kipling by the academic community. I was at first daunted by the task of

presenting a case for Kipling's acceptance as an author of literary merit, but the more I read, the more I realized what a tremendous critical reputation Kipling did in fact possess. In the introduction to Kipling And The Critics, Elliot Gilbert makes the point that, "Indeed, no major work of his has ever been out of print--a remarkable record."[4] This fact did not surprise me at all, considering that in 1907 Kipling became the first Englishman to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. In a letter to Henry James, William James referred to Kipling as "more of a Shakespeare than anyone yet in this generation of ours,"[5] and went on to call him "the biggest literary phenomenon of our time."[6]

When Kipling appeared on the literary scene in London, his works were received by an appreciative public. His first collection of stories, titled Plain Tales From The Hills, is full of the realism and vulgarity of life as it occurs--stories such as "Thrown Away," in which a despondent young subaltern takes his own life after an imagined slight, and "Cupid's Arrows," in which a young girl purposely loses an archery match in order to avoid the unwanted attentions of a rich suitor. The day-to-day world of India had been relatively unknown to the English public before Kipling, and his Indian stories became immensely popular. Kipling gave the

British people a first-hand view of a strange land, full of wonder, as Birkenhead wrote:

> All around is the infinite waste of India, obscure, monotonous, immense, inhabited by black men and pariah dogs, Pathans and green parrots, kites and crocodiles, and long solitudes of high grass. No writer had ever revealed all this to the British public before Kipling.[7]

Although Kipling's early stories have a wide variety of topics and themes, one major theme began to develop as he established himself as a writer, due in part to the numerous relocations to which Kipling was subjected in his formative years. In nearly all of his major works (Kim, The Jungle Books, Captain's Courageous) the main theme is the search for identity. In Rudyard Kipling and the Fiction of Adolescence, Robert Moss writes, "His uprooted heroes, adventurous and spirited but lonely, are always in some sense autobiographical creations."[8] When this assertion is applied directly to the Mowgli stories, we see this theme operating on a variety of levels. Mowgli is completely accepted by neither the Jungle nor civilization, but exists as a strange synthesis of the two. When we consider Kipling's early years we find a series of radical transitions, which may very well have played a major role in the subsequent creation of Mowgli's character.

Born in 1865, Kipling spent the first six years of his life in Bombay and, as small children will, he accepted his environment as universal. At mealtimes he had to be reminded to speak English to his parents, instead of the more familiar Hindi. It came as a tremendous shock, therefore, when he and his sister Trix were sent to a small boarding-house in Southsea, England. It was common at the time for British colonial parents to send their children back to England in order to avoid the terrible infant mortality rate. This "House of Desolation," as Kipling called it in Something Of Myself,[9] was his home for the next six years. The cruel treatment inflicted on him by the proprietor and her son left an undying mark on Kipling's soul. In 1935, when asked if the house still stood, Kipling replied, "I don't know, but if so, I should like to burn it down and plow the place with salt."[10]

After his "rescue" from Southsea, he spent the next four years at the United Services College at Westward Ho! The object of this school was to enable boys to pass the Army examination. Founded in 1874 by retired Army and Navy officers, the United Services College was an attempt at providing a decent education at an affordable price. Kipling received his first journalism experience as the editor of The United Services College Chronicle, which

proved to be good training for his work on The Civil and Military Gazette in Lahore, India.

Once again, however, Kipling found himself on the outside looking in. At Southsea he had been unfamiliar with British conventions, and was confused by a culture that was foreign to him. At Westward Ho! he stood out again, since he was not among the group preparing for a career with the military or civil service. Due to his poor eyesight he did not participate in any of the culturally important games, which further increased the social and professional distance between himself and the other boys.

THE JUNGLE BOOKS

This characteristic of being alone in a crowd followed Kipling for the rest of his life, and greatly affected his writing. Nowhere is this theme more pronounced than in the Mowgli stories of The Jungle Books. These eight stories function as a type of journey in themselves, as Mowgli progresses through certain recognizable stages in the search for his identity. The stories that best illustrate Mowgli's development are "Mowgli's Brothers," "Tiger! Tiger!" and the final story in The Jungle Books, "The Spring Running."

In "Mowgli's Brothers," Kipling introduces the reader to the world of the Jungle. The most important statement that Kipling makes in this story is that even though Mowgli has grown up in the society of the wolfpack, and kept every law of the Jungle, he does not, and cannot, belong. There is an intrinsic difference which Mowgli cannot overcome. This is the first instance in which Kipling states that cultural and societal barriers cannot be breached. One of Kipling's most

famous sayings is "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." In the scene in which the Pack confronts Mowgli, the wolves say, "A man! A man! What has a man to do with us?"[11] The wolves know, if Mowgli does not, that it takes more than just keeping laws to be truly included.

In "Tiger! Tiger!" Mowgli returns to human society, but once again experiences rejection. Coming from the Jungle, where Jungle Law is "as perfect as time and custom can make it,"[12] Mowgli does not understand or accept the artificial conventions of Man. Mowgli makes no caste distinctions, and calls money "The stuff that passes from hand to hand and never grows warmer."[13] Mowgli tempers imperfect human customs with the primeval innocence of the Jungle, but the imperfections of human nature (i.e. superstition and greed, which we see again in "The Mad Elephant of Mandla") result in Mowgli's rejection by the village. The Pack cast him out for being more than wolf, and the village cast him out for being more than man. At this point Kipling creates a powerful autobiographical paradox. Kipling's own success as a writer had its roots in his ability to look at society from without, and Robert Moss draws the parallel between Mowgli and Kipling with his assertion that "The boy's alienation from his own society accounts for both his unhappiness and spectacular successes."[14] If Mowgli

had been raised in the village, he probably would have become like all the nameless boys who tease him in "Tiger! Tiger!" Kipling's upbringing and experience, like Mowgli's, are the very causes behind his crisis of identity and his literary success.

In "The Spring Running," the final Mowgli story, Mowgli leaves the Jungle, but only because it has ceased to provide him with what he needs as a human being. At this point Mowgli begins to come to grips with his dual identity, since he has matured to the level where he requires more from the Jungle than it can give him. The important aspect to consider is that Mowgli leaves of his own accord, and is not driven by anything more than his own changing needs. In "Red Dog," the dying Akela tells Mowgli to return to his own people:

"Go back before thou art driven."

"Who will drive me?"

"Mowgli will drive Mowgli. Go back to thine own people. Go to Man."

"When Mowgli drives Mowgli I will go," Mowgli answered.[15]

Mowgli moves into adulthood, recognizing that the Jungle is shut to him only because he has outgrown it. Mowgli goes forward to meet Man, but carries with him a unique blend of Jungle innocence and human intelligence. To complete the transition symbolically, Bagheera pays

the same price to release Mowgli as he had paid to buy Mowgli into the Pack. "It was a long hunt," Bagheera says to Mowgli, "but he lies dead in the bushes now--a bull in his second year--the Bull that frees thee, Little Brother. All debts are paid now."[16] With the perfect symmetry of the Jungle complete, Mowgli leaves to live among "those mysterious things that are called men."[17]

ARTISTIC FORM

My choice of the short story for re-creation purposes was fairly simple. I wanted to re-create Kipling's voice, and since Kipling's forte was the short story my choice became obvious. The single plot and intensity of focus of the short story enabled me to maintain Kipling's voice without turning the story into a mere repetition of archaic speech and Jungle description. The form of the short story forced me to stay focused on the characters, as well as the development of the plot.

Specifically, I wanted to bridge the gap between "Letting In The Jungle" and "Red Dog," since I see the gap as a major flaw in The Jungle Books. In the first story, "Mowgli's Brothers," Kipling used a convention related more to bedtime stories than literature to excuse the omission of details about Mowgli's childhood when he wrote, "Now you must be content to skip ten or eleven whole years, and only guess at all the wonderful life that Mowgli led among the wolves, because if it were

written out it would fill ever so many books."[18] At the beginning of "Red Dog," Kipling gives a half-hearted introduction to Mowgli's new life as a young adult, but neglects to deal with Mowgli's psychological maturation. The Mowgli we meet in "Letting In The Jungle" has recently been cast out of the Jungle as well as the village, but in the beginning of "Red Dog," Kipling says of Mowgli, "all the Jungle was his friend, and just a little afraid of him."[19] There is no transition between an outcast young boy and a feared young adult. In order to fill the gap I had to use the medium of the short story.

AUDIENCE

"The Mad Elephant of Mandla" is meant to be inserted into The Second Jungle Book between "Letting In the Jungle" and "Red Dog." As such, I expect my audience to be familiar with the Mowgli stories. Although Kipling makes many internal references to the other stories (such as the opening line to "Tiger! Tiger!": "Now we must go back to the first tale"[20]), no single story is meant to stand alone. The stories do depend on each other for support, as each Mowgli story either builds upon or draws from the other stories, and mine is no exception. In the text I make many references to other Jungle Book stories that should be recognized by readers familiar with these stories. I do this not to be witty, or to show off my familiarity with Kipling's stories, but because my audience expects it from Kipling, and therefore expects it from me.

My readers are the ultimate critics as far as the merit of this work is concerned, but they have an extra responsibility as well. Not only will they tell me the

impact of my story, but they will also tell me how close I come in my attempt to re-create Kipling's voice. In "The Mad Elephant of Mandla," I have attempted to write in Kipling's style, while still creating a good story. This double duty has been particularly difficult at times, since I have had to create a plot that is thematically plausible in the context of The Jungle Books, as well as to re-create Kipling's voice. I would prefer to have my audience tell me, with regard to "The Mad Elephant of Mandla," that Kipling wrote a lousy story rather than that I wrote a good one.

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES

The writers which have influenced me the most have been those who can make literature come alive to me, whether through scenery or characterization. The aspect of Kipling's art that I enjoy most is his incredible skill at setting up a scene. Kipling had an amazing facility with narration, positioning every action in the story so that events flow uninterruptedly. I have been drawn to other authors who possessed this skill, and without exception they have been European.

Chief among these authors is Victor Hugo, whose delicate sense of phrasing makes every sentence a delight to read. Despite the loss due to translation, Hugo, more than any other author, has the ability to make scenes come to life, whether it be a misshapen Quasimodo shouting "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" from atop a stone gargoyle less frightening than he, or a desperate and despondent Jean Valjean escaping through the sewers of Paris.

Just as Victor Hugo created living scenes, Charles Dickens created living characters. He created stock characters, true, but his original characters come alive. Jean Valjean is not always real to me, but I am certain that I have met Bill Sykes before. Through his understanding of human nature, Dickens created people who jump out of the pages and talk to me, even after I close the book. I live with the irrational assurance that some day the old woman who sat at the base of the guillotine and knitted in A Tale of Two Cities will knock on my door and try to sell me a sweater.

The one characteristic shared by these authors is their ability to manipulate language in order to convey their meaning. Hugo excelled in imagery and scene, and Dickens created people we meet every day. I see Kipling, always the outsider, as a combination of Hugo and Dickens, in that Kipling has the power to take me to the Seeonee and show me Mowgli as he insulted the dholes of the Dekkan. I have seen the Cold Lairs in my dreams, and listened to Akela give his monotonous cry: "Look well, O wolves!"

TECHNIQUES

My most obvious techniques are, of course, those which Kipling used. Unlike Kipling, I have no first-hand experience with the Indian Jungle or its inhabitants as a whole. Curiously enough, however, Kipling had never been to that part of India in which the Mowgli stories take place, relying on pictures and descriptions of the area from his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hill. I believe, then, that my disadvantage in this area is negligible, since I have Kipling's own works from which to draw my scenery.

Kipling's narrative point of view can best be described as a limited third-person center of consciousness. Mowgli's is the only mind that Kipling enters, and then only at a shallow level. One of the most emotional scenes in the Mowgli stories occurs in "Letting In The Jungle," when Mowgli convinces Hathi and his three sons to destroy the village. Kipling maintains his narrative point of view, refusing even at this point to invade Mowgli's mind too deeply. In "The Mad Elephant

of Mandla," I retain this point of view, choosing to relate Mowgli's emotional state through his actions. This gives the readers the opportunity to identify more with Mowgli's turmoil, since I let the readers fill in the gaps of emotional description with their own ideas of what Mowgli must feel.

Kipling changes his narrative distance throughout the stories, intruding at one point, only to disappear the next. At the end of "Tiger! Tiger!" Kipling's narration intrudes into the conclusion, saying, "But that is a story for grown-ups."[21] These intrusions generally appear only at the beginning and ending of the stories. In the main body of the text, Kipling's narrator moves back and reports on the action without giving personal opinions or value statements. Thematically, I tried to use some of the characteristics openly present in The Jungle Books. In the opening paragraph of "Red Dog" (in which the author is intrusive), the narrator tells the reader that "you will never be told how he met the Mad Elephant of Mandla, who killed two-and-twenty bullocks drawing eleven carts of coined silver to the Government Treasury, and scattered the shiny rupees in the dust."[22] This is, of course, where I got my title, as well as a general outline for the plot.

Another recognizable characteristic is the strange fact that Mowgli never gets any information first-hand.

Another character (usually minor) always tells Mowgli what is happening, or what will happen. We first see this in "Mowgli's Brothers," where Tabaqui, the Jackal, acts as a messenger to give Mowgli information. In "How Fear Came," Ikki, the Porcupine, is the first character to warn Mowgli of the coming drought. In "The Mad Elephant of Mandla," I use this convention with Ikki, the Porcupine, The Mad Elephant himself, and the small boy of the village.

My greatest narrative problem was in the dialogue. Since I created a new character in the Mad Elephant, I had little previous conversation on which to base my new dialogue. Hathi speaks but little, except when he tells the story in "How Fear Came." Only one of his sons ever speaks at all, and then says only two words. Strange as it may seem, I created the dialogue by thinking of what I would say if I were the elephant. I based Mowgli's reaction on his established character, cautious yet curious.

Kipling had a tremendous ability to draw his stories to a close, quickly and with impact. My two favorite endings are from "Letting In The Jungle" and "Red Dog." Both of these endings are single paragraphs of no more than 43 words. I kept my ending short and to the point also, but needed 73 words to do so. The quick close is analogous to the rhyming couplet of the Elizabethan

sonnet, drawing its strength from its brevity and power of summation. Kipling uses the quick close in all eight of the Mowgli stories, demonstrating his amazing skills of conclusion with a similar power of summation and closure.

THE MAD ELEPHANT OF MANDLA

(1990)

With silent feet and sharpened fang
We share the night with none save Mang
To drive the doe and herd the fawn
The hunt is ours until the dawn!

Good Hunting! all, the Night is ours
We be Four, strong in our powers
Ask of the buck, bewildered by fright
Who owns the Jungle this dreadful Night?

Night-Song of the Four

As Mowgli watched the village die under the growth of the Jungle, the smell of Messua's blood faded from his mind. He would never forget the sight and smell of her

blood on the thongs, but the pain of the memory lessened as he saw the village disappear under the new spring grasses. Mowgli watched the buck drink from the broken tanks behind what had been the temple, and when all that remained was the half-buried face of one of their gods, Mowgli wiped his palms on the clean earth and went away.

Mowgli returned to the Jungle not as the Man-cub who had been cast out, but as the Master of the Jungle returning to his own. Once again he hunted with Bagheera, and ran with the Four, but he had changed in the subtle manner of men, passing from adolescence into manhood. The people of the Jungle knew this even if Mowgli himself did not, and either avoided him completely, or treated him with a new respect. The leaders of each people brought all the news to Mowgli that they would naturally hear, and as a result very little happened that Mowgli did not know about.

Hard as it may be to tear a village from its moorings, harder still is it to tear a man from his reputation. Buldeo, the village hunter, was famous for miles around, and Mowgli was not surprised to hear from Ikki the Porcupine that Buldeo had returned, and was living in a different village. At first Mowgli's anger grew, but Bagheera spoke to him.

"Peace, Little Brother," the big cat purred. "The fight is over, and thou hast won. Wouldst thou pursue

every member of the village and drive them each away? The village of the Man-Pack is no more. Let thy anger go ere it destroy thee."

Mowgli sat still and thought. He had no concern for where the villagers went after their homes were destroyed, as long as they went far away. Mowgli had not considered that even one of them might return to the vicinity. For those who tilled the soil, a plot of black earth and a handful of seed could make a home, but Buldeo had been a man of importance in the village, and reputations are difficult to replace. Not for nothing did his fame as a hunter spread nearly to Khaniwara, and Buldeo was loath to leave such recognition behind. He took up residence in a slightly smaller village to the North, where he had a sister, and was received with great solemnity.

"Men are like Chikai, the Rat, always scurrying to the nearest hole after leaving the first, as if afraid to remain over-long in the light," Mowgli said. "Am I blood-brother to the dhole to snuff at a hole in the dirt to catch a mouse? No, Bagheera, my stomach is full, and I am tired of chasing mice. The thought of that old man living so near troubles me, but so long as Buldeo comes not to me, I will not go to him."

Mowgli lay back on the cool grass and listened to evening begin its serenade. Soon it would be time to

clear his mind and begin preparations for his nightly hunt. Try as he might Mowgli could not shake an uneasy feeling. In the Jungle punishment settles all debts, but Mowgli knew that Jungle Law extended only as far as the Jungle. Men had their own laws, and Mowgli had seen the bloodstained thongs that such laws created. Even so, Mowgli would not pursue Buldeo.

"Eowa! Night begins," yawned Bagheera, as he stretched each paw out, one after the other. "Dost thou hunt with me this night?"

"No; I hunt with the Four to-night," Mowgli said, rising. "It has been long since I joined them in their night runs, and I wish to hear the old songs again. Good Hunting!" Mowgli started off towards the Waingunga searching for his four companions, and found them near a thicket by the river.

"Good Hunting, Little Brother," Grey Brother said. "Art thou here to run with us to-night, or only to claim Pack-right?"

"Indeed, I had forgotten," laughed Mowgli. "With you four to hunt for me I could lie about and do nothing, yet still feed when I chose. Shall I even determine the kill beforehand? Buck would be good, but nilghai even better."

"As you will, Little Brother," Grey Brother replied. "But Pack-right of nothing is still nothing. Best thou

shouldst hunt with us to ensure the kill."

"Be it so, then. I will come." Mowgli and the Four began their hunt, with Mowgli still chuckling over Grey Brother's joke. Pack-right, as Jungle Law states, allows the stronger to plunder the weaker for his kill, a thing that Mowgli, out of pride, would never think of doing. And of course no hunter in the Jungle would ever dream of contesting a kill with Mowgli. There would be no future in it.

Grey Brother lowered his head a little and began the song unique to the Four, which they had made up together, and sang as they ran through the Jungle. Mowgli's heart lifted as he listened to the familiar strains that reminded him of happier times before the Pack had cast him out. Here is a rough translation of part of the song, and you can imagine how Mowgli enjoyed being there to hear it:-

Hi! Hi! Hi! What says the air?
The moon is up, we leave the lair
Time to hunt this well-lit night
And chase the buck with strong-toothed might

Hi! Yii! Yii! What passes there?
A doe and buck, a well-matched pair

Which of the two shall we pursue?
Our successes many, our misses few!

Ya-la-hi! How shall we go?
Ambush the buck by hunting slow?
To-night we run and chase our prey
I'll not wait for him to come my way!

Yalaha! Pick up the scent
Find which way the young buck went
Chase him long (ignore the fawn)
Bring him to ground before the dawn!

Hi! Yai! Yai! The buck has turned!
Now's the time for which we yearned
Fly at the throat, I'll at the back
We'll bring him down, on four sides attack!

Hai! Mai! Mai! Now back to lair
Our night-work is finished there
We're full-fed, so give the call
The day to Man - Good Hunting all!

Mowgli was fairly pulled along by the words and the rhythm, much the way a regiment on the march cannot help

but step livelier when the band strikes up the regimental colors. Mowgli lost himself in the familiar attitudes of the hunt. It was a welcome respite after the traumas of the village. He had nearly forgotten the simple pleasures of Jungle life.

After the kill Mowgli returned to find Akela and give him the front shoulder of the buck they had killed. The Lone Wolf was turning milky white with age, and walked with the stiff-legged gait peculiar to the aged. He found the old wolf near the Council Rock, where Akela spent most of his time.

"Ho, Man-cub, hast thou returned to feed me fat?" Akela felt no shame in accepting Mowgli's gift, since he knew Mowgli acted out of love and respect instead of pity.

"Yes, Akela. The Jungle cried out to me to return. The old smells are new to me again, and it is good to run with the Four. The Jungle is again the Jungle, and I am again Mowgli."

"The Jungle has always been, Little Brother. It is thee who hast changed," the old wolf replied.

"I? How have I changed? Do I not still run with the Four? Art not thou and Bagheera my friends?"

"Yes, indeed, Little Brother, and always will be. But answer this: What do those not of our Jungle call us? Remember, the wolves of the Seeonee are masterless, and

are the Free People no longer."

Mowgli stood silent for a moment, then answered slowly. "Others call this Mowgli's Jungle. But what is that to me? Am I at fault for what others say?"

"I speak not of fault, but of what is. Thou art no longer a naked man-cub playing with shiny pebbles in the moonlight, but the Master of the Jungle. Remember thou the lesson to befriend the cubs of the stranger, since they may grow up to be fierce? Thou hast indeed grown, and the people of the Jungle fear thee for more than the look in thine eyes. Thou hast strength beyond thy limbs, Little Brother. There is the strength of a man's cunning behind thee. Thou knowest all the laws and customs of the Jungle, and can use them at thy will. Tell me, what news of the Jungle dost thou know?"

"Some seek to bring me news of what they see and hear," Mowgli replied. "But I do not understand-"

"Hast thou ever wondered why?" Akela interrupted. "Before thou left the Jungle would any so much as tell thee if it were night or day? Nay, Little Brother. The Jungle knowest, as thou wouldst, if thou wouldst only see."

"Knowest what? Thou speakest in riddles."

"Hear this, then. I will speak plainly those words which thou dost not choose to believe. Thou art now a man, Little Brother, a man among beasts. The Jungle saw

what thou didst to the village of the Man-Pack that cast ye out, and it knows the terrible weight of thy vengeance. It fears thee, Little Brother. Even I cannot look thee in the eye for long, and I love thee. The Jungle knows that ye, and ye alone, can destroy it. No other has ever had such power over the Jungle - not even in the stories told by Hathi."

"But I gave my pledge ere I left not to betray those of the Jungle," Mowgli said. "They should not fear."

"Whether thou wilt or no is not the meat of the nut," Akela replied, "but that thou can. With one blow Bagheera could snap thy neck like a dry twig in the summer, or Kaa could crush thee like a young monkey."

"But they would not, and I do not fear."

"And in that, Little Brother, art thou a man. Thou knowest, and are not afraid. Those of the Jungle fear that which they cannot see."

"Man I may be, then, but it changes nothing. The people of the Jungle hath cast me out, yet I will remain. Let them look for a master elsewhere."

"Nay, Little Brother, let thou look, for it follows thee wherever thou shalt go. Look to thyself, for I speak truly."

Mowgli went away feeling very alone and confused. He was known by all, yet accepted by none. Cast out of the Jungle for being more than wolf, and then rejected by

the village for being less than human, Mowgli struggled to find his place. He was not of the Jungle, and yet not of the village. He existed as an uncomfortable combination of the two, and felt at home in neither one.

Mowgli felt a need to get away, to escape from these conflicting pressures. He wanted more than anything else to regain that brief camaraderie he had experienced before the pack had cast him out, but his place in the Jungle was now more confusing than ever.

"Am I never to find peace in the Jungle?" Mowgli thought to himself. "I only wish to live as I will. Is the Jungle not content to have cast me out but to pursue me? And when I return must I be master over those who first cast me out? Nay, it shall not be so. I shall go away from here to live on my own. I will show to those who fear me that Mowgli can live with Mowgli apart from the Jungle."

As he had done in the past, Mowgli decided to make a Running, this time not to discover new things but to escape from that which he did not understand. Mowgli had an intelligence beyond his years, since his very survival depended on his wits, but this was more reaction than conscious thought. Mowgli had never considered his place in the overall aspect of the Jungle community. Indeed, it was Bagheera, the panther raised among men, who first alerted Mowgli to the previous confrontation with the

Pack. It was Bagheera's advice then that saved Mowgli's life, and Akela's also, the night the Pack disbanded and Mowgli left to live among men. This current threat of a new identity frightened Mowgli, and instead of facing the problem head on, he reacted like most adolescents entering manhood, and chose to flee.

By this time the sun was inching towards the western horizon, and the voices of the night began to silence the sounds of the day. Mowgli said nothing to anyone, but set off along the Waingunga, following the well-worn trail on the west side of the river. He travelled north at a steady pace, at odds with the flow of the river, following every bend and curve of the trail. At times the path ran close to the river, and Mowgli heard the quick scraping splash of small crocodiles startled into the water. Other times Mowgli would hear a sudden crashing in the underbrush, then the even thump-thump-thump of a buck leaping away into the night after being interrupted at his evening drink. Mowgli did not concern himself about being detected, since he was travelling for speed and not for silence. He was content instead to let his steady footfalls echo through the Jungle.

As the moon rose, the Waingunga turned abruptly east, and Mowgli followed the lazy s-curves along the river. In the moonlight the river slid slowly by, black as Bagheera and silent as Kaa, older even than that

gigantic python. The underbrush along the bank thinned out on a wide sandbar, and the moon played among the eddies. Mowgli turned and watched as the river flowed endlessly into the night.

"River, thou knowest no master, yet serve all," Mowgli spoke aloud. "Never dost thou leave but sure to return again. What dost thou care for us of the Jungle? Spring rain, summer drought, to thee it is all one. Ere Kaa came from the egg thou flowed, and when the memory of Mowgli is but dust underfoot still wilt thou rise and fall between thy banks. None think of thee unless thou art needed. Just so has Mowgli been to the Jungle, and so too will the Jungle be to Mowgli. I shall not return unless I have great need."

Mowgli returned to the trail, leaving the sandbar to the wading night birds, standing like silhouetted sentinels in the water. The birds continued to hunt undisturbed, wading on backward stilts, moving forward now and again to capture the small frogs that croaked and chirped along the sandy margin.

Mowgli began giving the Stranger's Hunting Call out of habit, as he was nearing the edge of his regular hunting ground. He knew from Bagheera that an empty stomach leads to carelessness, and carelessness among strangers ends in fighting. As soon as Mowgli heard the cautious reply, "Hunt then for food, but not for

pleasure," he became a silent wraith, moving like a shadow among the thickets where the deer would bed after feeding in the open glades. With a leap and a bleat the hunt ended. As Mowgli finished his meat and drink the sun began to color the eastern horizon. Mowgli had resumed the rhythm of the Jungle shortly after he returned from the village which cast him out, and the dawn found him twenty feet above the ground, asleep in the safety of a tree.

Near midday Mowgli awoke, broke his fast on the remains of the night's kill, and resumed his journey eastward. The river began to run fairly straight as Mowgli entered unfamiliar territory. Mowgli paid no attention to the tremendous change between the environment of the Jungle by day as opposed to the Jungle by night. A passing visitor would have been astonished by the amazing transformation that accompanied the dawn. If night belonged to the strong, to the spring, and to the kill, then day was owned by the myriad of creatures that sported among the branches or scuttled along the ground, disappearing into unseen burrows, only to reappear some distance away. The very air seemed alive with noise and movement, in stark contrast to the oppressive depth of the night, when even the slightest sound could spell death to its maker.

Mowgli noticed none of this simply because to him

all was as it should be. His was a mind trained to detect deviations, just as every predator learned to notice differences in behavior, differences that often singled out an individual for the kill. One of the herd might limp slightly, due to age or perhaps disease. Another could react less quickly when startled, giving the hunter a crucial split-second more to spring. For the wolves of the pack this skill was instinctive, a sense born out of eons of survival. In Mowgli, millennia removed from his primitive ancestors, the skill was relearned. Although he could recognize changes, he never obtained the ability to sense them, and was therefore surprised when a previously unseen flock of crows rose chattering into the sky.

Instantly Mowgli dropped to his knees to peer through the brush in front of him. Crows do not flock in such numbers without cause except in the breeding season, and that was long past. As scavengers, such birds marked a recent kill, and from the sheer numbers it had to be a large kill indeed. Peering intently, Mowgli could make out a long line of brown dust just beyond the farthest patch of brush: a road. He approached quietly, wary of any human contact.

As Mowgli neared the road he heard the "hrrf, hrrf" of an agitated elephant. Mowgli first heard this sound at the sacking of the village which cast him out, but he

never expected to hear it again. The scene that greeted him went beyond his experience with the destruction of the village. A gigantic bull elephant stood shuffling in the dust in the middle of the road. His huge tusks were painted for nearly half their lengths, and his inflamed eyes darted wildly about the carnage. His trunk curled and uncurled, much like a small boy caught in a lie will knuckle his fists, as if unsure of what to do with his hands.

Not since the fight at the Cold Lairs so many years ago had Mowgli seen such killing. Several wooden carts lay shattered in the road, on their sides or upside-down completely, some with their wheels still spinning lazily in the sunlight, and all destroyed. Many of the carts had their sides torn off, and the wheel spokes were snapped like a broken children's toy. Splintered wood littered the road; here and there metal bands, twisted crazily, glittered in mute surprise.

Eleven pairs of bullocks, some still yoked to the carts, reflected in flesh the destruction in wood. The brutes, one pair per cart, must have stood passively by as the enraged bull tore through the convoy, since the carts were still fairly evenly spaced. This lead Mowgli to believe that the attack was sudden, since the drivers had no time to avoid the onslaught. The bullocks lay at odd angles in slowly drying pools of blood, some with

shattered necks, others with crushed rib cages. Still others, pounded repeatedly, were unrecognizable lumps of flesh.

Men also lay with the slaughtered beasts. From his vantage point Mowgli could not tell how many men were mingled with the bullocks, but even if he had toured the wreckage carefully, he would not have been able to count the dead accurately. The damage was too severe. No animal in the Jungle is as capable of causing destruction as an elephant, and confrontations with them do not last long.

Mowgli remained in hiding, uncertain of the bull's reaction to the sight of another man. The bull shuffled about aimlessly, his anger spent, but Mowgli took no chances. The elephant strode over to a nearby cart and plunged his trunk into the cargo, flinging the stuff into the dust. Not until a piece rolled to his hiding place did Mowgli recognize it as a coin, similar to the ones he saw in the village, but minted in silver. The bull continued to scatter the shiny rupees around the road until the cart was empty, then he moved on to another cart and began his curious game anew.

Had Mowgli understood the value of money he would have been amazed at the treasure before him, flung so casually into the dirt by the elephant. Those bullock-cart loads of silver represented the value of as many as

three or four years' worth of taxation on any one of the small kingdoms to the North. Occasionally some progressive king sent off a portion of his revenue to be exchanged for government securities, but this shipment would never reach the English at Khaniwara. Rupee after rupee landed in the dirt, a showering fountain of useless wealth.

Mowgli watched silently as the bull elephant emptied each cart in turn. The bull, exhausted by his own rage, stood swaying in the midst of the carnage, surrounded by a hard carpet of silver. Suddenly he turned, ears forward, and lifted his trunk as if to catch a scent. The wind, absent before, had picked up just enough to betray Mowgli's presence. The bull stood, alert but uncertain, unable to identify Mowgli by his scent -- part man, part wolf, part Jungle.

At that moment Mowgli spoke, seeking protection with the Master-Word of the elephants. "We be of one blood, ye and I," said Mowgli, giving the words the particular accent of the elephant-people.

"Hhrrumm! Show thyself, for I do not know what thou art, and my strength is in me," the bull replied. Agitated, he rocked from side to side. For one awful moment Mowgli expected the elephant to charge his hideout.

"I am Mowgli, late of the Seeonee wolf pack. Man-

cub they call me," Mowgli called from the concealment of the brush. He had no intention of coming out until the bull became calmer. "I was taught the Master-Word for your people by Hathi, my friend. I share nothing with those who lay so still in the dust, and I mean no evil. I will show myself if you honor the Master-Word."

"Hathi I know, and of you I have heard. The Master-Word is the Master-Word, rage or no rage. Do not fear."

Warily Mowgli crept out of the brush, but did not approach. Unlike men, the people of the Jungle generally behaved in a predictable manner, and Mowgli did not understand this rampage.

"Such killing," Mowgli began cautiously, "is not customary of your people."

"There was a great wrong," the bull replied. "The Code of Tha gives me the right, and I have taken what is mine. Now I am finished, and would leave this place to the kites."

"Evil I understand. Indeed it must have been a great wrong to merit such retribution."

The bull looked keenly at Mowgli and said, "I have heard of thee, and of thy understanding. I will tell thee the story so that only the truth shall be known. But first I must leave here and wash, for this smell clouds my thoughts, and I must regain myself ere I speak."

The bull turned and headed for the river trail. Mowgli followed, glad to leave the place to the waiting kites. They travelled a long two miles until they reached a wide sloping sandbar. The bull waded into the river and began to wash away the taint of his revenge. After the cool water of the Waingunga had taken away all evidence of the scene at the road, the bull walked from the river and began his story.

"Thou knowest the Law, Man-cub, but not the Code of Tha, although thou hast seen its workings. To the Jungle Tha gave the Law, but to his nearest people he gave not only the Law, but also the Code. He did this to prevent his people from becoming tyrants in the Jungle, since by our size and great strength we could destroy at will. The Code says that we must do no evil, lest evil be done to us."

"But the killing at the road..."

"Was punishment for harm done to me. Though we seek no evil, the Code allows us retribution. Hathi has such a story, as thou knowest. Mine is much the same. Some time ago men came to the Jungle with the Red Flower and much noise. They walked in a line, and there was much smoke. In my fear and confusion I was driven into the open, where I was struck by some unseen hand. Never have I felt such pain, and my blood ran freely."

The old bull was describing a native drive, where

beaters with torches and gongs force the animals out of the brush so that they can be shot in the open. The beaters walk in a line towards men with guns and spears, and drive the animals forward. The elephant had been hit by an iron slug from an old muzzle loader. Since it was common for these slugs to be recovered from the dead animal and reused, any non-fatal wound was likely to fester quickly, thus causing great pain.

"In the smoke and panic I escaped, and went away to heal. When I again became whole I returned to seek vengeance. Following the stink of Man to the road I found many men and their bullocks. Some pointed long sticks at me and I saw smoke, but I felt no pain. Then many ran, but many also stayed to try to keep me from their carts. What is left of them, today you saw in the dirt. Now my rage is gone and I am clean again."

"But men do not forget, and thou will be hunted," Mowgli told the bull. "Men are never content with justice, but must always have the upper hand. They will hunt thee, and destroy the Jungle to do it, or I know nothing of man."

"I have no fear of man, as thou hast seen, but I wish no harm to come to the Jungle because of me. The only village in this area lies to the north, so I will go south until they forget me."

"Go, then, and fear not for thy people. An old

enemy of mine may be involved, if this village is indeed the one to which he fled after our last meeting. I go north to the village. There is much I would know."

Mowgli left the bull at the Waingunga and set his course to the north. Mowgli remembered what Ikki the Porcupine had told him about Buldeo's return; how Buldeo had gone to a village in this area. Mowgli suspected that Buldeo had resumed his old ways of hunting in the Jungle, but he needed to find out for sure. Mowgli had heard tales of such hunting while in the village of the Man-Pack, but had scoffed at them as lies. If Buldeo were indeed responsible, and the attack on the bull was intentional, Mowgli was not fully aware of the seriousness of Buldeo's actions. The Government of India guards her elephant population carefully, and any unauthorized hunting is considered poaching, which is a major offense. Just as there is one whole department that does nothing but hunt and catch elephants, there is another whole department that does nothing but hunt and catch elephant poachers. These men are wilder even than the elephant hunters, and if you think for a moment you will see that this must be so.

Mowgli gave the area of the road a wide berth. Evening was approaching, and by now men would have gathered at the wreckage. "Time enough for that tomorrow," Mowgli thought, and settled down to the night's

kill. Later, in the comfort of a tree, Mowgli considered the situation. If Buldeo and his Tower musket were behind the attack on the elephant, Mowgli knew that Buldeo would push for another drive, using the destruction of the convoy as an excuse. Mowgli also knew that much of the Jungle could be destroyed by such a drive, since men would use fire to force the animals out in the open.

"But what is that to me?" Mowgli asked himself. "The Jungle has cast me out, and to it I owe nothing. Why should I not pass this by, since the Jungle has passed me by?"

But Mowgli could not forget that he might have been, in part, responsible for the situation. If Buldeo had come here, it was because Mowgli destroyed his village. Mowgli could not erase the doubt from his mind. "I will go to the village," Mowgli decided, "but I do not know what I hope to find."

Mowgli was up with the dawn, and by mid-morning he was looking down at a small village centered inside a neat patchwork of tilled fields. The thatched roofs glistened slightly with the morning dew and the streets were a bustle of activity. From his small hilltop, Mowgli looked to his left and saw the herdboys taking the cattle out to graze. Mowgli thought for a moment of the long, lazy days he had spent with the buffaloes as he

waited for word of Shere Khan's return. His pleasant reverie was broken by the ugly memory of the events after the Lame Tiger's death, and he shook his head to dismiss the scene from his mind. Leaving the hilltop Mowgli descended towards the herdboys. If there was any news to hear, the herdboys would be most likely to tell it. Mowgli approached cautiously, aware that he might alarm the boys. Although Mowgli had grown accustomed to wearing a loincloth in the village, and continued to do so in the Jungle, he knew that the sudden appearance of a stranger could frighten the boys into flight.

"Ho, there, herdboy," Mowgli called, the human speech coming naturally to his mind. "Do not run away. I am nothing to be afraid of."

The small boy seemed frightened of the young man who carried a knife on a string around his neck, but Mowgli's words calmed him.

"Who are you?" the boy asked. "You are not from here."

"No, I do not live here. I used to live in another village not far from here," Mowgli replied, telling the boy just enough to ease his fear. "Tell me, what is the news? I saw many men by the road. What do they do?"

"You have not heard?" The boy wriggled with excitement. "It happened yesterday. Fifteen carts of coins pulled by forty bullocks passed by on the way to

Khaniwara. A herd of elephants attacked the men and destroyed the carts. My mother's uncle was there. He is a man of importance. He said many elephants were injured, but many more came from the Jungle and all the men ran away. Some men were killed and all the bullocks, too. My mother's uncle told me."

"A herd of elephants?" Mowgli said. "I saw no elephants. Where did they go?"

"I do not know," the boy replied. "The Brahmin says the elephants are Jungle demons and must be destroyed. Even now Buldeo consults with the Brahmin and the other hunters."

Mowgli's heart sank. The situation was as he feared.

"And who is this Buldeo?" Mowgli asked, feigning ignorance.

"Buldeo is the bravest hunter in the Jungle! My mother's uncle says so, so it must be true," the boy exclaimed. "He came here some time ago after a terrible battle with a demon-boy from the Jungle. Buldeo had just killed a huge tiger (that even had a reward offered for it!) when the demon-boy tried to take the tiger away. Some say the demon-boy and the tiger were brothers! There was a great battle, lasting for days, but Buldeo finally defeated the demon. The battle was so terrible it knocked over every hut in the village. Buldeo saved

everybody's life, and said that it was better to build new huts than new burial-pyres. He is very brave."

Mowgli could not help but chuckle at the last part of the boy's tale. He remembered the evenings when the men would gather under the peepul-tree and weave strange and wondrous stories about gods and men and ghosts. Buldeo's stories were always the most outlandish. He had a true flair for storytelling, as Mowgli knew, but the truth was rarely involved. Mowgli had listened to the dishevelled Buldeo tell his tale on the night Akela and the Four sang the old hunter home from the Jungle. The truth was strange enough without half-truths being told.

The boy chattered on, as small boys with something to say will, telling Mowgli that Buldeo and the other hunters were planning a huge drive for that very evening. An old elephant transfer pen, left over from the catching drives earlier in the year, still stood just beyond the fields. The hunters hoped to drive the elephants into it just before dark, where they would be shot like cattle. Three of Buldeo's hunters had worked as elephant catchers, and would oversee the operation.

"Only my mother's uncle and a few others know of this," the boy said proudly. "Buldeo says that the English would not allow this if they knew. My mother's uncle says they will not find out. After all, this is our Jungle. We were here before the English. Besides,

Buldeo says he has done this before. The meat is no good, he says, but some men will pay much money for the sake of the white teeth. Buldeo says our village will become very rich if we can get many teeth to sell. I cannot go to the drive to-night. My mother says I am too little. If you go, will you tell me about it?"

"If I go," Mowgli said quietly, "surely you will hear of it. I may want to speak to such a brave man as Buldeo. Where is his hut?"

"He has the largest hut in the village," said the boy. "You will see it from the gate."

"And where is the holding-pen?"

The boy pointed to his right, into the Jungle, and Mowgli went to examine the stockade. He found the transfer-pen a short distance away in a clearing. The ground all around it was packed hard by the trampling of many feet. The pen was small; no more than a temporary confinement for newly-caught elephants. This pen had no capture funnel leading to its gate, and the posts were only about twelve feet high, but it had enough space to contain at least five elephants. From his concealment Mowgli saw a few men working to build a makeshift funnel leading to the mouth of the pen. Leaning against the pen, his Tower musket cradled in his arms, stood Buldeo.

Mowgli's first thought was of Messua and her pain, and his terrible anger returned. Through Buldeo's pride

and ignorance Mowgli had been forced from the village, and Messua and her husband had been dispossessed of everything they owned, and nearly killed. There Buldeo stood, directing yet another outrage against the Jungle and its people. Mowgli saw many fire-pots near the pen, and knew that Buldeo planned a drive by fire, the most destructive form of drive. Lacking enough men to make a sufficient line of beaters, the hunters would set fire to the Jungle in order to drive the animals forward. Many creatures would die in the fire.

"But what is that to me?" Mowgli thought. "The Jungle has cast me out, and the Pack looked for my death. I owe nothing to the Jungle, nor to anyone. Yet if I do nothing a great evil will be done, an evil I can stop."

Mowgli continued to watch Buldeo, and remembered his pledge to Bagheera. "Buldeo comes not to me, but to the Jungle. Am I then such a part of the Jungle that I should feel my rage? Shall I forget the harm done to me, and act to stop this madness? The Lone Wolf was right. The Jungle follows me, and will not let me go. Man I must be, but of the Jungle also. I alone can stop this. Be it so, then. I shall teach Buldeo his lesson, and this time he shall know who is the teacher."

It was still only mid-morning, so Mowgli had plenty of time to plan before the drive was to begin. He moved further into the Jungle to collect his thoughts, taking

one of the fire-pots with him. Mowgli knew he had to act before the drive began, since he could not stop the fires after they had been set. He also had to find a way to deal with Buldeo. Mowgli hoped his theft of the fire-pot would not be discovered, but if the plan forming in his mind was to work, such a tool would be indispensable.

As the day wore on, more and more people began to gather outside the gate. The hunters had left much earlier, to begin their preparations for the drive. By mid-afternoon most of the villagers had left their work to come together and talk about the evening drive, which was soon to commence. In such small villages, excitement was rare, and the people made the most of any situation that lent color to their drab lives. In an existence composed of sowing and reaping; and sowing again, any break in the monotony was eagerly welcomed.

Meanwhile, Mowgli lay in wait at the edge of the Jungle, with the fire-pot at his side.

"So long ago, but nearly yesterday, I brought away from Man such a pot to the Jungle, to save myself at the Council Rock," Mowgli thought. "Now I will return to Man that which I took, and save the Jungle. I have indeed changed, Akela. Would I that thou were here to see it."

Carrying the pot and a long, dry branch, Mowgli slipped unnoticed into the deserted village. Since everyone was outside, near the gate, Mowgli had no fear

of being discovered. He quickly located Buldeo's hut from the boy's description, and stopped beside the mud-and-thatch wall.

"So, Buldeo, wouldst thou destroy the Jungle by fire? Then reap thine own reward as I bring your fire to you." Mowgli thrust the dead branch into the coals till the end lit, then poked the crackling wood under the dry thatch of the roof. The bound grasses caught easily, and in no time the entire roof was engulfed in flame. The hard, packed-earth walls, accustomed to the distant heat of the sun, cracked in the fire and began to crumble. As it burned, the roof fell into the hut, setting everything within aflame. The walls groaned as they shifted, and the sound of Buldeo's hut settling upon itself alerted the preoccupied villagers.

Mowgli departed, taking his fire-pot with him, as soon as the first flames spread on the roof. When the villagers arrived at the hut, they could do no more than prevent the fire from spreading to the rest of the village. Buldeo's hut was a smoking, crumbled ruin.

"It is an evil omen," said one of the villagers. "Out of nothing our fire comes back to us. The gods of the Jungle are angry with us."

"Fool, it was no more than a cooking fire left untended," another replied. "Keep your superstitious nonsense to yourself."

"His sister does his cooking in her hut," said a third.

"And what of Buldeo's past?" the first man insisted. "Remember, he was involved with demons in his last village."

"But he won, and destroyed the demon," replied the second man.

"So he says," replied yet another. "All I know is what I see, and I have seen the place where his last village stood. There is nothing on that spot but grass and creeping vines."

"Our village was quiet before he came, and now we have murderous elephants attacking convoys, and huts burning down by magic," another muttered to no one in particular.

"Omen or no, I have no wish for my home to be destroyed," the second man said, no longer sure of himself. "We must find Buldeo and tell him what has happened. Look near the pen, before the drive begins. Find also the Brahmin. He will know what this means. I want nothing to do with demons. If the demon-spirit has indeed followed Buldeo, we have much to discuss."

The uneasy villagers moved away from the ruin of Buldeo's hut. Each one was thinking about the various stories connected with Buldeo and the demon-child. Buldeo said he destroyed the demon, but at the cost of an

entire village. Soon a new story spread that Buldeo had not defeated the demon-child after all, but was instead pursued from the area and his village was destroyed in retribution. Superstitious minds and loose tongues created many variations to the story, but more and more villagers began to believe that Buldeo was the cause of the evil. Had not a herd of elephants attacked the convoy, for no reason? Had not men died in the attack, again for no reason? And it was Buldeo's hut, Buldeo the demon-fighter, that burned to the ground.

As the villagers mumbled to themselves, Mowgli returned to the transfer-pen to look for Buldeo. Mowgli found him with the other hunters inspecting the funnel leading to the pen. Since the trees obscured the village from their view, they saw no smoke, and were unaware of what had happened. Mowgli cached the pot out of sight and approached, still concealed, to hear what Buldeo was saying.

"You three know to set the fires," Buldeo told the hunters. "You others go with them and make much noise. I will go back into the Jungle, behind the pen, so that I may approach the beasts without being seen. If they do not see me, I can surprise them with my first shot. Wait here a while before you set out, so that I may take my place. Remember, if we succeed we will be rich men, and even if the Government finds out, we can say we acted in

self-defense. Wait till I am ready."

Buldeo left the group of hunters with their fire-pots and moved off behind the pen. Mowgli stayed behind and waited for the hunters to leave, so that he could set fire to the pen. Mowgli reasoned that the burning pen would at least delay the drive, and in the meantime he could think of a more permanent solution. Just as the hunters started to leave, a breathless messenger from the village rushed in to tell the news.

"Buldeo is haunted by a demon-spirit," he told the astonished hunters. "It followed him from his village and even now caused his own hut to burn completely, while his neighbor's huts were scarcely touched. Some say the spirit seeks vengeance. The Brahmin consults the gods for guidance. Let us leave this place quickly and return to the village."

"But what of Buldeo?" asked a hunter. "He went back into the Jungle. Should we not bring him with us?"

"I have no wish to see Buldeo until the Brahmin speaks," replied the man. "Go find him if you dare, but if he is pursued by angry spirits I want no part of him."

"We will return with you," they said. "Let Buldeo look to himself." They made their way back to the village with many a backward glance, as if afraid to see Buldeo appear.

"Oh, what a cub's cub it is," thought Mowgli, after

the men had left. "Buldeo and I are now alone in the Jungle, and his own kind have turned on him. It is time for his lesson."

Mowgli followed Buldeo's tracks until he found the old man near a fallen tree. Buldeo leaned his musket against the log to light his pipe, and Mowgli chose that moment to slip up behind him. As silently as he knew how, Mowgli reached out his hand and drew the musket to himself. Mowgli stepped back a few paces and called out. Buldeo whirled, dropping both pipe and tobacco.

"Good hunting, old man," Mowgli began. Buldeo stared in surprise. "Last we met you used this"-- Mowgli shook the musket -- "to drive me from your village. Then you bound Messua and her man, to burn them as witches. I was there that night. It was I who set them free along the road to Khaniwara."

Buldeo, deprived of his only weapon, glanced about in fear, expecting wolves to appear at any moment. "You look for my people," Mowgli continued. "They are near, but will remain hidden unless I wish otherwise. Know also that it was I who destroyed your village, not some demon-child whom you fought and vanquished. I asked the people of the Jungle to do my bidding, and they obeyed. You should have known when the Jungle moved against you not to anger it again."

Buldeo cringed in fear. "Spare an old man. I meant

no harm."

"Well you can say now you meant no harm," Mowgli said, his voice full of scorn. "You bound your own kind to the point they bled, and would have killed them out of idleness. Had I wanted your death you would have been in many pieces, and your mother would not have recognized what was left. I only wanted the Jungle to be clean of your kind, but you returned to inflict further injury, this time to the Jungle itself. Now there is another price to pay. Go to the pen. I will follow."

Buldeo stumbled haltingly back to the pen, giving no thought to resistance. How can a man fight against someone whom the Jungle itself obeys? Mowgli brought out the fire-pot he had hidden, and motioned for Buldeo to pick it up.

"You sought to bring fire to the Jungle, to destroy heedlessly in your hunt," Mowgli told him. "I took fire to your village instead, and destroyed your hut; and others also." Buldeo groaned in dismay. "Those you directed to begin the flames wait for you at the village gate. They have many questions for you concerning the demon-child you said you destroyed. Before you go back to them I will allow you your fire, but you must burn what I choose."

Mowgli found a stout limb and threw it to Buldeo's feet. "Here, Buldeo, get that aflame. You will need it

to burn down the pen. I do not wish it to stand."

Buldeo moved obediently to the pen with the burning branch. He stooped down to touch the flame to a post, and moved around the enclosure, stopping every few feet to repeat the process. In moments small fires cropped up around the perimeter. A few minutes later the entire structure was awash in flames, and the smoke billowed into the sky. The dry wood caught quickly, and Mowgli had to step back from the heat. The fire, contained by the margin of packed earth, turned in upon itself as the posts began to fall. The pen then resembled a funeral-pyre, with wood stacked upon wood.

Mowgli looked down at the Tower musket in his hands. To him the musket was everything cruel about men, used only for killing and pain. As Buldeo watched, horrified, Mowgli took two steps forward and threw the musket into the flames. The polished wooden stock quickly caught fire, and the brass clamps, of which Buldeo was so proud, blackened in the heat. The charge went off with an impotent bang as the weakened breech shattered with the force of the powder. The useless ball dropped into the ashes amid a tiny shower of sparks.

Mowgli turned to Buldeo. "Thus do we do in the Jungle. Go back to your people, if they will have you. Do not return to the Jungle, or your life is forfeit."

Buldeo stood, his shoulders hunched. He looked with

disbelief at the charred, blackened shape that was left of his musket. He turned away without a sound, and walked back to the village.

When Buldeo returned, blackened by the smoke, the villagers were waiting for him outside the gate. They had watched the smoke rising from the Jungle, and all of them decided that Buldeo was indeed pursued by demons. "Go away!" they shouted. The Brahmin, as opportunistic as the rest of his caste, sided with the villagers and said the gods had spoken. "Keep your demons away from our village," he told Buldeo. "Your hut is destroyed; there is nothing for you here. Your sister made this bundle for you. Take it and get hence quickly. This village is shut to you."

Buldeo took the bundle wordlessly. He left the village a broken man, and was not heard from again.

Mowgli remained at the fire, watching the pen turn to ashes. "I am finished here," he thought. "I will return to my people, as they say they are, and assume my rightful place among them. I will run no more. If master I am, and this I have seen, then master I will be."

So Mowgli returned to the Seeonee, as the Master of the Jungle, and no poachers ever dared to enter his Jungle again.

NOTES

[1] Rudyard Kipling, Life's Handicap, (London: Macmillan London Limited, 1891; Suffolk: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1982), ix.

[2] Plautus, "Miles Gloriosus," in The Pot of Gold and Other Plays, ed. E.V. Rieu, trans. E.F. Watling (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 212.

[3] Rudyard Kipling, The First Jungle Book, (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1895), 96.

[4] Elliot L. Gilbert, ed., Kipling and the Critics, (New York: New York University Press, 1965), v.

[5] Randall Jarrell, "On Preparing to Read Kipling," in Kipling and the Critics, ed. Elliot L. Gilbert (New York: New York Univesity Press, 1965), 134.

[6] Jarrell, 134.

[7] Lord Birkenhead, Rudyard Kipling, (New York: Random House, 1978), 93.

[8] Birkenhead, 93.

[9] Robert F. Moss, Rudyard Kipling and the Fiction of Adolescence, (London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1982), 10.

[10] Rudyard Kipling, Something of Myself, The Collected Works of Rudyard Kipling, vol. 24, (Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1941) 360.

[11] Angus Wilson, The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling,

(New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 19.

[12] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 67.

[13] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 14.

[14] Rudyard Kipling, The Second Jungle Book, (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1895), 183.

[15] Moss, 112

[16] Kipling, The Second Jungle Book, 211.

[17] Kipling, The Second Jungle Book, 242.

[18] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 28.

[19] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 14.

[20] Kipling, The Second Jungle Book, 183.

[21] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 23.

[22] Kipling, The First Jungle Book, 31.

[23] Kipling, The Second Jungle Book, 223.

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