

# The Jungle Book

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## Chapter 1

### *Mowgli's Brothers*

The Wolf family lived in a cave. It was seven o'clock on a very warm evening in the Seonee Hills in India. The moon shone into the cave. Father Wolf woke up happily. He scratched himself, yawned and stretched his paws. Mother Wolf lay with her cubs. 'Augrh!' said Father Wolf, 'it is time to hunt again'. All the family left the cave together. Father Wolf started to run down the hill while Mother Wolf and cubs were walking slowly towards the river. Father Wolf stopped suddenly when he saw bushy tailed Tabaqui coming towards them. 'Good luck to you, O chief of the wolves,' said the bushy tailed jackal.

Father Wolf was not happy to see the jackal so close to his family. The wolves of Seonee Hills hated Tabaqui and they always looked down on him. Jackal Tabaqui was always making mischief. The other animals in the jungle were afraid of Tabaqui because he ran through the jungle, biting everything in his way. He was not respectable or reliable.

'What are you doing here?' said Father Wolf, firmly. 'There is no food here.' Tabaqui smiled and said: 'For

a wolf, there may be no food, but a dry bone is a good feast for me.' He then looked at the wolf family. 'How beautiful your children are! How large their eyes are! And so young too!' cried Tabaqui.



*'Shere Khan changed his hunting place,' said Tabaqui.*

Father Wolf did not like Tabaqui talking about his cubs. He felt uncomfortable. Tabaqui continued talking and gave Father Wolf a piece of important news: 'Shere Khan, the Big One, has changed his hunting place. He says he is going to hunt among these hills,' said Tabaqui to Father Wolf.

Shere Khan was the tiger who lived near the Waingunga River. 'He has no right to hunt here' said Father Wolf angrily. The jackal smiled and asked 'Have you got a message for Shere Khan?'

'Get out of here! Go and hunt with your master,' said Father Wolf.

'Okay. I'm going now,' said Tabaqui quietly.

After Tabaqui left, Father Wolf ran down to the little river and rejoined his family. He heard an angry roar of a tiger in the valley. It was a roar from Shere Khan. 'The fool,' said Mother Wolf. 'He jumped at a woodcutter's camp-fire and burned his feet.' Father Wolf took a few steps forward and saw Shere Khan and Tabaqui together. The tiger was licking his foot to help with the pain.

Father Wolf and his family slowly made their way back to the cave. Upon arriving at the cave, Mother Wolf screamed 'Something is coming up the hill. Get ready,' Father Wolf was ready to attack. Then he saw the most wonderful thing in the world. 'A man's cub. Look!' said Father Wolf. He was a naked brown baby who could just walk. The baby looked up into Father Wolf's eyes and laughed.

'Is that a man's cub? I have never seen one before,' asked Mother Wolf. Father Wolf grabbed the baby's back softly. He did not want to hurt the baby.

‘How little! How sweet!’ said Mother Wolf kindly.

‘I could kill the baby with a touch of my foot. But look at him. He’s not afraid,’ said Father Wolf.

‘And he is so lovely,’ said Mother Wolf.

There was moonlight in the cave. The wolf family was admiring the man’s cub when suddenly they heard a scream: ‘My master, my master! It went in here!’ It was Tabaqui’s voice and soon afterwards, Shere Khan and Tabaqui entered the cave.

‘It is a great honour to have you here in our cave,’ said Father Wolf angrily. ‘What do you want, Shere Khan?’

‘I’m looking for a man cub. Oh, here he is! Give it to me. It is mine,’ said Shere Khan.

‘The Wolves are free people. They only take orders from the Head of the Pack, not from you,’ replied Father Wolf. ‘The man’s cub is ours.’

Shere Khan roared angrily. Mother Wolf came forward and told Shere Khan to leave the cave.

‘The man’s cub is mine. I will keep him. He will run and hunt with the Pack,’ said Mother Wolf.

Shere Khan was scared of Mother Wolf’s words so he decided to leave the cave. Tabaqui hurriedly followed him. When they went out, Shere Khan shouted ‘Each dog barks in his own yard. The man cub is mine.’

The wolf family stayed silent for some time and watched the man cub. 'We will call him "Mowgli." Mowgli,' said Father Wolf.

'Mowgli. A nice name.'

'What will our pack say about the man's cub?' asked Father Wolf.

The leader of the pack was Akela, the Great Grey Lone Wolf. There was a pack meeting for Mowgli at the Council Rock—a hilltop covered with stones. A hundred wolves could gather there. Father Wolf pushed Mowgli into the centre. All the wolves at the Rock were looking at Mowgli. He sat in the centre and played with some pebbles, laughing in delight. Akela went closer and looked at Mowgli. 'He looks well!' he said. Then a strong roar came from behind the rocks. It was Shere Khan. 'The cub is mine. Give it to me.'

All the wolves growled. 'Who speaks for this cub?' asked Akela. There was no answer. The sleepy brown bear Baloo was also at the Pack Council. Baloo is an old wise bear who teaches wolf cubs the Law of the Jungle. He is peaceful and eats only nuts and honey. 'The man's cub is not dangerous. I speak the truth. Let him run with the pack,' said Baloo. 'I will teach him the Law of the Jungle.' After his talk, a black shadow dropped down into the circle. It was the Black Panther Bagheera. He looked at Mowgli carefully. Mowgli was still playing

with the pebbles in the centre. All the wolves came and looked at Mowgli one by one. After some time, Akela said to Father Wolf 'Take him away,' They all heard an angry roar in the night. It was Shere Khan again. He hid and listened to the decision of the pack and he got very angry because the wolves did not give Mowgli to him.

Mowgli grew up with the cubs of the family. Father Wolf taught him the meaning of things in the jungle. When he was not learning, he sat out in the sun and slept, ate and went to sleep again. When he felt dirty or hot, he swam in the jungle lakes. When he wanted honey and nuts, he climbed up trees to get them. Baloo showed him how to get honey and nuts. He grew stronger and stronger. He loved to go into the dark heart of the jungle with Bagheera. He watched Bagheera hunting. His love of danger worried Mother Wolf a lot. She was afraid that Shere Khan would go after Mowgli so she always told Mowgli not to trust Shere Khan but Mowgli always forgot her advice. Unfortunately for Mowgli, Shere Khan was always crossing his path in the jungle.

One day Bagheera warned Mowgli: 'Listen Little Brother! Shere Khan will kill you one day. He has wanted you since he first saw you.'

'I have the pack, I have you, and I have Baloo to protect me. Why should I be afraid of Shere Khan?' said Mowgli, laughingly.

‘Akela is very old. He can’t lead the pack for much longer. You are a man’s cub so some young wolves think you have no right to be in the pack. Remember that there are some wolves that hate you,’ Bagheera said, stretching himself and shutting his eyes. . He added regretfully, ‘Akela cannot hunt anymore. They may choose another leader at Council Rock.’



*Tabaqui went to the cave to tell Mowgli rudely to join the Council Rock.*

Mowgli returned to the cave and stayed there all day. Tabaqui came to the cave and ordered him to join the meeting at Council Rock. At the Rock, Shere Khan announced that it was the end of Akela's leadership. He wanted to be the leader of the pack. 'No man's cub runs with the pack in the jungle. Give him to me,' shouted Shere Khan.

'He's our brother in blood,' Akela replied.

'He's a man. A man. A man!' the pack shouted. Most of the young wolves gathered round Shere Khan growling at Mowgli. Bagheera and Akela got ready to fight for Mowgli but Mowgli stopped them. He was angry with the pack. He had no idea that these wolves hated him.

'Yes, you are right. I'm a man' he shouted.' I was your brother in blood but I don't call you my brothers any more. I will go to my own people. But one day I will come back to bring your skin to Council Rock, Shere Khan,' said Mowgli angrily. 'I know I will have your skin.'

Then something began to hurt Mowgli deep down. He started to cry.

'What is happening to me? I don't want to leave the jungle. What is this feeling inside me? Am I dying Bagheera?' Mowgli stammered.

'No, Little Brother. Those are only tears. Cry Mowgli. Cry,' replied Bagheera.

'I have never cried before,' said Mowgli to Bagheera.

Mowgli went to the cave to say goodbye to Father Wolf, Mother Wolf and four cubs.

'Will you forget me?'

'We will never forget you Mowgli. We all love you very much,' said Mother Wolf sadly.

'Come soon!' said Father Wolf.

'I will surely come back, said Mowgli with tearful eyes.