

## THE STORY OF MOWGLI

*A Jungle Story from India*



*"Listen," said Mowgli, raising his hand.*

*One of the most famous of modern authors is the English writer, Rudyard Kipling, whose picture is shown on page 376. The following story is adapted from Kipling's "Jungle Book."—THE EDITOR.*

SUPPOSE that you were a tiny little East Indian boy whose home was on the edge of a great jungle. Suppose that you were sitting one night before a camp-fire with your mother and father, and that suddenly, out of the dark, came a tiger, black and tawny and very fierce. Would you have been frightened? Mowgli wasn't.

The Great Tiger was hungry, and when he saw human flesh he jumped. The baby's mother and father got away. Left to himself, and just old enough to walk, Mowgli crawled away through the long grass.

Father Wolf was stretching himself after a nap when he heard a rustling in the grass outside his cave.

"Look!" he called to Mother Wolf,

"A man's cub!"

"The man's cub is mine," said Mother Wolf. "He shall live to run with the Wolf Pack and to hunt with us. And he shall hunt the Great Tiger."

"The man's cub must be shown to the Animal Pack," said Father Wolf, when the brown baby had settled down to a rough and tumble play with the wolf cubs. "Will you keep him?"

"Keep him!" gasped Mother Wolf. "He came naked, by night, alone and very hungry. Yet he was not afraid! Certainly I will keep him. The time will come when he shall hunt Great Tiger."

So Mother Wolf kept the brown baby and named him *Mowgli*, which means *Frog*.

So Mowgli grew until he was no longer a baby, but a boy, running about, strong and healthy.

On the night of the Animal Pack

meeting, when the three young wolf cubs were old enough to go, Father and Mother Wolf took their children to the Council Rock. And they took Mowgli, too.

The Council Rock was a bare hill-top where the animals met, and where the cubs must be shown to the Animal Pack before they could be accepted by the animals.

And so, when Father and Mother Wolf took their three cubs and Mowgli to the meeting of the Pack, Mowgli was thrust forth into the center of the circle.

"You know the law of our pack," said Lone Wolf, their leader.

A roar came from behind the rocks. It was the voice of Great Tiger demanding the body of Mowgli.

Fearful of Great Tiger, one of the young wolves spoke up, asking why this man-cub was taken into the tribe.

Now there was a law among the animals that says, when there is a dispute concerning the acceptance of a cub, two members of the Pack who are not its mother or father must speak for it.

Up rose Brown Bear, teacher of the wolf cubs, and he spoke for Mowgli. Then came the Black Panther. He said that the law allowed a price to be paid for any cub that is objected to. In payment for the man-cub Black Panther gave a bull, newly killed. So Mowgli was taken into the Pack.

Mother Wolf fed him as she fed her own cubs. Sleepy Brown Bear taught him the law of the jungle. Black Panther was his friend.

As he grew up, Mowgli learned to hunt and to protect himself, and to climb trees like a monkey. He could swim as well as he could run, and he could climb as well as he could swim. So he grew strong and brown and wise.

"Little Brother," said Black Panther one day when Mowgli was twelve years old, "how often must I tell you that Great Tiger is your enemy!" But Mowgli only laughed, fearing nothing.

"Lone Wolf is growing old," continued Black Panther. "Soon he will no longer be the leader. Go down to the men's huts in the village and get some Red Fire. Then you will be the master."

Now all animals live in deadly fear of Red Fire. Only man can tame and use fire.

That same night Mowgli went down into the village. Pressing his face close against a window, he watched the boy who lived there put some of the burning coals from the fire into a basket lined with clay. Mowgli walked in, took the basket of fire from him, and disappeared into the dark.

When the Animal Pack met at the Council Rock, Lone Wolf, who had been the leader for twelve years, was very still, for he knew he was too old to be a leader any longer.

Mowgli sat up quite straight with the pot that held the Red Fire clasped between his knees. Black Panther was at his side.

"Give his body to me," snarled Great Tiger, when he saw Mowgli.

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Rudyard Kipling, famous author,  
who wrote the *Jungle Book*.

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*(Continued from page 376)*

"Yes, give the man-cub to Great Tiger," said the young wolves, for they hated Mowgli. Restlessly they circled around Mowgli, and Great Tiger roared hungrily.

"Now is the time," whispered Black Panther, and Mowgli arose, holding the fire-pot in his hands.

"Listen," he said, raising his hand. "Listen, you wolves. You have often said that I am a man-cub. I thought myself your brother, and would have staid with you always. But now that you have turned against me, you cannot say what shall be done. I, the man-cub, have here a little Red Fire, which you cowards fear." Mowgli looked about.

"Listen," he continued, again raising his hand. "Lone Wolf shall go and live as he pleases. You shall not kill him, now that he is old, because that is not my will. I will go to the village to my own people. When next I come to the Council Rock, I shall bring Great Tiger's skin on my head."

Mowgli strode off to say goodbye to Mother Wolf and his foster brothers, the wolf cubs.

The dawn was breaking when Mowgli went down

the hillside, alone, to meet his people in the village. He made signs to show that he was hungry.

The priest was called and a great crowd gathered. He was taken home by a kindly woman, who fed and clothed him, and made him sleep in a house. But the house frightened him, for it seemed like a trap.

He was sent out to herd the buffaloes, with the other boys. But it was tiresome business, and he longed to go back to the jungle.

One day, as he sat watching the buffalo herd, Gray Brother, one of Mother Wolf's cubs, came to him.

"Great Tiger will wait for you by the village gate tonight," said the wolf cub. "But Great Tiger has eaten, and is slow and drowsy from too much food."

"Then we will catch him," said Mowgli. "Tomorrow night I shall have the skin of Great Tiger."

With the help of the wolf cub, Mowgli divided the buffaloes into two herds. One herd was driven to the foot of the ravine where Great Tiger lay sleeping. The other herd went to the head of the ravine. The two herds formed a rough circle, with Great Tiger in the center.

Then Mowgli stampeded one of the herds and the wolf cub stampeded the

other. Down the buffaloes dashed from either end of the ravine.

Great Tiger was trapped. The great animals rushed over him, trampled him and crushed him, and when they had passed by, Great Tiger lay dead.

After Mowgli had stripped the tiger's body of its skin, he and the wolf cub herded the buffaloes and drove them back.

"Sorcerer, wizard, enchanter! Leave us," cried the village people as Mowgli neared the gates. The boys who herded the buffaloes with him had told all the villagers how the wolf cub had talked with him. So with sticks the village people drove Mowgli back to the jungle.

On the great skin of Great Tiger which lay spread on the Council Rock, Mowgli stood and around him the animals circled, begging him to be their leader.

"No," said Mowgli, for he was a man-cub and was wise. "I will not lead you. I promise you I will stay in the jungle, but I will hunt alone and be free of any tribe."

So Mowgli hunted only with the wolves who were his foster brothers, and lived a long life in the jungle. And that is the story of Mowgli.