

## The Jungle Book

Mowgli thrust his dead branch into the fire <sup>till</sup> 'til the twigs lit and crackled, and whirled it above his head among the cowering wolves.

“Thou art the master,” said Bagheera in an undertone. “Save Akela from the death. He was ever thy friend.”

Akela, the grim old wolf who had never asked for mercy in his life, gave one piteous look at Mowgli as the boy stood all <sup>Change ; to , Delete,</sup> naked; his <sup>Delete,</sup> long, black hair tossing over his shoulders in the light of the blazing branch that made the shadows jump and quiver.

“Good!” said Mowgli, staring around <sup>Delete,</sup> slowly, and thrusting out his lower <sup>em dash</sup> lip. “I see that ye are dogs. I go from you to my own <sup>Delete,</sup> people – if they be my own people. The jungle is shut to me, and I must forget your talk and your companionship, but I will be more merciful than ye are. Because I was all but your brother in blood, I promise that when I am a man among <sup>Add ,</sup> men I will not betray ye to men as ye have betrayed me.” He kicked the fire with his foot and the sparks flew up. “There shall be no war between any of us and the <sup>lowercase</sup> Pack. But here is a debt to pay before I go.” He strode forward to where Shere Khan sat blinking stupidly at the <sup>Delete,</sup> flames, and caught him by the tuft on his chin. Bagheera followed close, in case of accidents. “Up, dog!” Mowgli cried. “Up, when a man speaks, or I will set that coat ablaze!”

Shere Khan’s ears lay flat back on his head, and he shut his eyes, for the <sup>delete</sup> the blazing branch was very near.

“This <sup>cattle killer</sup> cattle-killer said he would kill me in the Council because he had not killed me when I was a cub. Thus and thus, then, do we beat dogs when we are men! Stir a whisker, Lungri, and I ram the Red Flower down thy gullet!” He beat

Shere Khan over the head with the <sup>Add ,</sup> branch and the tiger whimpered and whined in an agony of fear.

“Pah! Singed <sup>jungle cat</sup> jungle-cat—go now! But remember when next I come to the Council Rock, as a man should come, it will be with Shere Khan’s hide on my head. For the rest, Akela goes free to live as he pleases. Ye will *not* kill him, because that is not my will. Nor do I think that ye will sit here any longer, lolling out your tongues as though ye were somebodies, instead of dogs whom I drive em dash out – thus! Go!”

The fire was burning furiously at the end of the branch, and Mowgli struck right and left round the circle, and the wolves ran howling with the sparks burning their fur. At last there were only Akela, Bagheera, and perhaps ten wolves that had taken Mowgli’s part. Then something began to hurt Mowgli <sup>Delete,</sup> inside him, as he had never been hurt in his life before, and he caught his breath and sobbed, and the tears ran down his face.