

KAA'S HUNTING

By Rudyard Kipling.

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All that is told here happened some time before Mowgli was cast out of the wolf pack, and when Baloo was teaching him the law of the jungle. The big, serious old brown bear was delighted to have so quick a pupil, for the young wolves only learn as much of the laws of the jungle as applies to their own pack and tribe, and run away as soon as they can repeat the hunting verse: "Fest that make no noise; eyes that can see in the dark; ears that hear the voice in the trees; hair sharp, white teeth; all these things are the marks of our brothers, except Taboo and the hyena, when we eat." But Mowgli, as a man cub, had to learn a great deal more than this. Sometimes Bagheera would come lounging through the jungle to see how his pet was getting on, and would purr with his head against a tree while Mowgli recited the day's lesson to Baloo. The boy could climb almost as well as he could swim, and swim almost as well as the coticles of the jungle. Then they would go into the hope of nothing, and the monkeys would come and invite the jungle people to climb up their trees and fight them, or would stampede the jungle people to cross the water, how to tell a rotten branch from a sound one, how to speak to the wild when he came upon a hive of them fifty feet above ground, what to say to Mang, the bat, when he disturbed him in the branches at mid-day, and how to warn the water-snakes in the pools before he splashed down like them. None of the jungle people like being disturbed, and all are very ready to be a little irritated. The too, Mowgli taught the strangers' hunting-call, which has to be repeated a thousand times, and is answered every time one of the jungle people hunts outside his own grounds. It means, translated: "Give me leave to hunt here, because I am hungry," and the answer is, "Leave, then, for food, but not for pleasure."

This is to show you how much Mowgli had to learn by heart, and he grew very fond of saying the hunting-call over and over again, as Baloo said to Bagheera one day when Mowgli had been beaten and run off in a temper. "A man cub is a man cub, and he must learn all the law of the jungle."

"It is small he is," said the black panther, who would have spoiled Mowgli if he had had his own way. "How can his little head carry all the long talk?"

"Is there anything in the jungle too little to be killed? No. That is why I teach him these things, and that is why I hit him very softly when he forgets."

"Softly! What dost thou know of softness, old iron feet?" Bagheera grunted. "The fire and all bruised to-day by thy softness. Ugh!"

"Better should be bruised from head to foot by me who love him, but he should come to me through ignorance and I answered very earnestly. "I am now teaching him the master words of the jungle that shall protect him with the birds and the snake people and all that hunt on four feet—except his own pack." He can now claim protection, if he will only remember that he was born in the jungle. Is not that worth a little beating?"

"Well, look to it, that thou dost not kill the man cub. He is not true trunk to trunk, but the boy is true to his own like. Give help than to ask it!" Bagheera stretched out one paw and admired the steel-blue talons at the end of it—"still, I should like to know."

"My head is ringing like a bee-hive," said a sultry little voice over their heads, and Mowgli slid down a tree trunk very angry and indignant, adding, as he reached the ground, "I am not to be had by Bagheera and not to the old fat falcon!"

"That is all one to me," said Baloo, though he was hurt and grieved. "Tell Bagheera, then, the master words of the jungle that shall catch them to-day."

"What words for such people?" said Mowgli, delighted to show off. "The jungle has many tongues. I know them all."

Little thou knowest, but not much. See, Bagheera, they never thank their teacher. Not a wolf has come back to thank old Baloo for his teaching. Say the word for the hunting peoples, then, great scha."

"We be all of one blood—ye and I," said Mowgli, giving the words the bear accent.

"Good! Now for the birds."

Mowgli repeated, with the kit's whistle at the end of the sentence.

"Now for the snake people," said Bagheera.

The answer was a perfectly indescribable hiss, and Mowgli was too much bent, his hands together to his head, and hopped and jumped onto Bagheera's back, where he sat, sideways, drumming with his heels on the glossy skin, and making the worst faces he could think of at Baloo.

For some time he was afraid of being dropped. Then he grew angry, but knew better than to struggle, and then he began to think. The first thing was to send back to Baloo, and he did so, and the monkeys were going to him, knew his friends must be left far behind. It was no use to look down, for he could only see the upper sides of the branches, so he stared up and down, and by these they could travel even in the night if necessary. Two of the strongest monkeys caught Mowgli under the arms and swung him up, and then the monkeys people through the land is one of the things nobody can describe. They have their regular roads and cross-roads, and hills and down hills, and eat from trees, or seven or ten times above ground, and by these they can travel even in the night if necessary. Two of the strongest monkeys caught Mowgli under the arms and swung him up, and then the monkeys people through the land is one of the things nobody can describe.

"Now, a snake, especially a very old python, is a very dangerous thing, and they have their blunts upon them to break the bones of the next tree."

"It is the bandar-log that we follow now," said Baloo, but the words stuck in his throat, for that was the first time in his memory that one of the jungle people had come to be interested in the doings of the

"Twenty or thirty monkeys bounded away to bring him nuts and wild pawpaws; but they will fall on the roof and it will be a long time before they can get to the ground again."

"Indeed," Baloo began, "I am no more than the old and sometimes very foolish teacher of the law to the Seconee wolf cubs, and Bagheera here."

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