

# Introductory Lesson

## Before Reading

① *In pairs, answer the following questions:*

- a Look at the front cover of the book. Can you tell where the story takes place? Can you tell when? Why/Why not?
- b In what parts of the world can you find jungles? Can you name some of the animals which live in them? Do you think that they get along with each other? Discuss.
- c Do you think that wild animals and people can live together as friends? Justify your answer.
- d Would you like to live in a jungle? If so, what would you do there? Do you think you could learn things from the animals? Discuss.

② *What do you think these pictures mean in the story?*



Joseph Rudyard Kipling



Joseph Rudyard Kipling, a British poet, short story writer and novelist is famous for his tales for children. Kipling was born in Bombay, India in 1865 and had a happy childhood living among the wonderful sights and sounds of India. But at the age of six, he was sent to a foster home in England.

The difficult experiences of those years affected the writing he did later in his life. The headmaster at his boarding school in England encouraged him to write and at sixteen, when he returned to India, he became a newspaper writer. In 1892, Kipling married and moved with his wife to Vermont, USA. They had two daughters and he wrote *The Jungle Book* in 1894 and *The Second Jungle Book* in 1895. His tales of Mowgli are the most famous of these stories about the Indian jungle. In 1896 he and his wife returned to England, where their son was born. *Captains Courageous* was published the following year and his Indian spy novel, *Kim*, was published in 1901. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, but refused the position of British Poet Laureate\*. Kipling travelled and wrote until his death in London in 1936, at the age of 72. His autobiography, *Something of Myself*, which he wrote in 1935, was published after his death.

\* A Poet Laureate is a poet recognised in a country as its most respected poet. A Poet Laureate is often expected to compose poems for special national occasions.

3 Read about Rudyard Kipling and answer the questions that follow.

- What kinds of literature did Kipling write?
- When did Kipling begin to write?
- What influenced Kipling's writing later in his life?
- What did Kipling do when he returned to India?
- Where did Kipling write *The Jungle Books*?
- In what year did Kipling win the Nobel Prize for Literature?
- What position did Kipling refuse to accept?

# INDIA



*Bagheera*



*Mowgli*



*Kaa*



*Baloo*



Bihar

West  
Bengal

Orissa



Shere Khan



Father Wolf



Mother Wolf



Messua



Messua's  
husband



Grey Brother



Akela

## The Man-Cub

It was seven o'clock one warm evening in the jungle. Father Wolf woke up in his cave and stretched sleepily in the moonlight. Mother Wolf lay nearby with her four sweet little cubs.

Suddenly they heard Shere Khan, the old tiger who lived near the river twenty miles away. He was roaring angrily. Shere Khan had a bad leg, so he usually hunted only cows near the village, because they ran slowly. But this night was different. He was noisy and hungry for something else. Mother Wolf knew what.

"He's hunting a Man tonight."

Father Wolf was not happy. The Law of the Jungle says an animal can kill or eat Man only when teaching its children. There were many such laws in the jungle. All the animals followed them because they knew that there was always a good reason for these laws.

Shere Khan's roar grew louder, ending in a short terrible cry. Mother Wolf knew what that meant.

"He's missed. But wait – something's coming up the hill – get ready!"

The leaves moved and the wolves heard a small noise near the cave. Father Wolf was ready to jump at any enemy, but then he saw a little brown baby walk out of the trees. The baby looked up into Father Wolf's face and laughed.

"A Man's cub. Look!"

Mother Wolf looked in wonder at the baby.

"Is that a human baby? I've never seen one before ... Bring it here."

Father Wolf carefully picked up the baby in his mouth and put it down next to his own cubs.

"How little! Yet, how brave," said Mother Wolf softly. She watched the baby push its way in beside the other cubs and begin to eat with them.

Suddenly, Shere Khan's huge square head filled the mouth of the cave.

"What brings you here, Shere Khan?"

Father Wolf's words were polite, but his eyes were angry.

"A human baby went this way. Give it to me!" the hungry tiger roared.

"The wolves are free and take orders only from the Head of the Pack."

Shere Khan roared more loudly and Mother Wolf jumped forward, her eyes shining like two bright green moons.

"The baby is ours. He will not be killed. He will live to run with the pack and hunt with the pack; and in the end – he will hunt you! Now go!"

Father Wolf was surprised. He forgot how she was when they first met. Like all she-wolves, she was terrifying and dangerous when she was angry. Shere Khan understood too and backed out of the cave, still hungry and growling.

"The pack must decide."

When they were alone, Mother Wolf laid herself over her cubs and Father Wolf spoke to her seriously.

"Shere Khan is right. We must present the baby to the pack. Do you think they will let us keep him, Mother?"

"Father, he came by night, alone and hungry; yet he was not afraid! We must keep him."

Mother Wolf named the baby Mowgli. She and Father Wolf knew they had to follow the Law of the Jungle. By Jungle Law,



when a wolf marries and has cubs, he must present them to the Pack Council. There, the other wolves must look at them well to remember what they look like. When they know their faces, they cannot kill them by mistake – any wolf who kills a cub must die himself. Then the cubs are free to run where they please until they are old enough to kill for their own food. This meeting was held every month, under the full moon at Council Rock.

On this night, there were about forty wolves of every size and colour at the meeting place. Akela was the leader of the pack. He was a great grey wolf who hunted alone and so was known as The Lone Wolf. When it was time, Father Wolf pushed Mowgli into the centre of the circle. The baby sat there, laughing and playing with some small stones.

Then, out of the dark, they all heard the voice of Shere Khan.

“This baby is not a wolf! He’s mine! Give him to me!”

There was much growling and snarling, but they listened to Akela. His eyes moved around the circle of wolves.

“Look well, O wolves! Look well! Remember the face of this cub and keep him safe! Remember, too, that we do not take orders from anyone outside the pack!”

Just then, a four-year-old spoke up.

“Indeed, what do we need a human baby for?”

“The Law of the Jungle says that if there is an argument about a cub joining the pack, two others of the pack who are not his father or mother must speak for him. Who speaks for this baby?”

There was only one other animal the wolves let speak at the Council meetings and that was Baloo, the sleepy brown Bear who taught new cubs the ways of the jungle. He slowly stepped forward into the circle.