

Mowgli is Rescued

Mowgli has lived with the wolf pack in the jungle since he was a baby. Bagheera the panther and Baloo the bear have been his friends and teachers. One day, Mowgli is captured by the monkeys and taken to their home on the edge of the jungle. Bagheera and Baloo, with the help of Kaa the rock python, are determined to rescue Mowgli the man cub.

The cloud hid the moon and, as Mowgli wondered what would come next, he heard Bagheera's light feet on the terrace. The black panther had raced up the slope almost without a sound and was striking – he knew better than to waste time in biting – right and left among the monkeys, who were seated around Mowgli in circles 50 and 60 deep. There was a howl of fright and rage, and then Bagheera tripped on the rolling, kicking bodies beneath him. A monkey shouted, 'There is only one here! Kill him! Kill!'

A scuffling mass of monkeys, biting, scratching, tearing and pulling, closed over Bagheera. Five or six laid hold of Mowgli, dragged him up the wall of the summer-house and pushed him through the hole of the broken dome. A man-trained boy would have been badly bruised for the fall was a good 15 feet, but Mowgli fell as Baloo had taught him to fall, and he landed on his feet.

Then from the ruined wall nearest the jungle rose up the rumbling war-shout of Baloo. 'Bagheera,' he shouted, 'I am here. I climb! I haste! AHUWOO! The stones slip under my feet!' He panted up the terrace only to disappear to the head in a wave of monkeys, but he threw himself squarely on his haunches and, spreading out his forepaws, hugged as many as he could

hold. He then began to hit with regular bat-bat-bat, like the flipping strokes of a paddlewheel. A crash and a splash told Mowgli that Bagheera had fought his way to the tank where the monkeys could not follow.

Kaa had only just worked his way over the west wall, landing with a wrench that dislodged a coping stone into the ditch. He had no intention of losing any advantage of the ground and coiled and uncoiled himself once or twice to be sure that every foot of his long body was in working order. All that while the fight with Baloo went on and the monkeys yelled in the tank around Bagheera. Then Kaa came straight, quickly, and anxious to kill. The fighting strength of a python is in the driving blow of his head, backed by all the strength and weight of his body. A python four or five feet long can knock a man down if he hits him fairly in the chest. Kaa was 30 feet long. His first stroke was delivered into the heart of the crowd around Baloo ... and then there was no need of a second. The monkeys scattered with cries of, 'Kaa! It is Kaa! Run! Run!'

The Jungle Book, Rudyard Kipling

