

BAGHEERA. So that's what happened. I have to be more on guard. Especially if I'm teaching Mowgli how to protect himself.

BALOO. Speaking of Mowgli, have you seen him?

BAGHEERA. He's probably sleeping late again.

BALOO. Sleeping? He's worse than a teenager.

BAGHEERA. He is a teenager.

BALOO. That's right. Seems only yesterday he was a little cub.

BAGHEERA. You've taught him well, Baloo.

BALOO. And you've *protected* him well, Bagheera. Shere Khan does not come near him when you're around.

BAGHEERA. Yes, but I may not always be around. It's time for him to learn to protect himself.

BALOO. And it's past time for his daily lessons.

BAGHEERA. I'll go wake him with my paw.

BALOO. Be gentle with him, Bagheera.

BAGHEERA. I'll only tap him with my left paw. I use my *right* paw when I'm serious.

BALOO. And when do you use both paws?

BAGHEERA. When I meet the likes of Shere Khan. *(They laugh as BAGHEERA exits.)*

BALOO *(calling to offstage)*. Wake up, little frog, or you'll have the fear o' Bagheera in you! *(To himself.)* "The fear o' Bagheera—" I *am* a poet. Let's see if I can keep this going. *(Offstage trumpeting is heard.)*

Someone is coming very near.

Well, my goodness, look who's here.

(HATHI, an elephant, enters.)

BALOO. Well, if it isn't our largest inhabitant,
My friend, Hathi, the elephant.

HATHI. Morning. How is it with you, Baloo?

BALOO. Not bad, not bad, I will confirm.

And how's my favorite pachyderm?

HATHI. Baloo, are you trying to be a poet today?

BALOO. A poet—a poet you say?

Why think you that, Hathi, I pray?

HATHI. Because your verse

Is getting worse,

And your rhyming words

Are for the birds!

(He laughs.) Well, on to work. I'm clearing out some trees near the river. The water buffalo are getting so fat they need more room to get down to the water.

BALOO. Good luck, Hathi.

HATHI *(with bravado)*.

Now onward and upward before the day is done.

My duties demand me ere the setting sun.

No laggard or sluggard dare I be

When destiny's labor calls to me.

(A pause.) Now *that's* poetry. *(He exits.)*

BALOO. Show-off. *(The voices of MOWGLI and BAGHEERA are heard offstage.)* Ah, here they are.

(MOWGLI and BAGHEERA enter.)

MOWGLI *(yawning)*. Morning, Baloo.

BALOO. Morning, is it? *(Looking upward.)* The sun says it is noon.

MOWGLI. Good. I'll have my lessons after lunch. *(He starts to leave. BALOO stops him.)*

BALOO. You'll have your lessons *with* lunch. In fact, your first lesson today is concerned with food. And, by the way, today's lessons will all be in rhyme.