

ACT TWO

SETTING: *The Council Rock.*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *SHERE KHAN is addressing the wolf pack—or he leads them into the area if no intermission is used.*

SHERE KHAN. And I say to you, if Akela were a true leader, he would be here with you right now.

1ST WOLF. But Akela is out hunting.

SHERE KHAN. In the daytime? He used to hunt only at night, but now he is too old and feeble to find enough food for his family in one hunting.

(TABAQUI enters, unseen by the others, and remains in the shadows.)

2ND WOLF. He may be old, but he is still our leader.

SHERE KHAN. And why is he still your leader? Because no one else has been brave enough to challenge his leadership.

TABAQUI. He's right!

3RD WOLF. That is true. No one else has challenged Akela.

SHERE KHAN. He is too weak to lead you any longer.

TABAQUI. Hear! Hear!

4TH WOLF. Perhaps he speaks the truth.

SHERE KHAN. Not only that, but he brought a man-cub into your midst.

TABAQUI. Right!

5TH WOLF. But that was ten years ago.

SHERE KHAN. And for ten long years he has eaten your food, breathed your air and occupied your space. *(Several WOLVES agree among themselves.)*

6TH WOLF. But we like Mowgli.

7TH WOLF. He has been our friend.

SHERE KHAN. No man can be a friend of the jungle. You have had your brains washed by Akela and his kind... Down with Akela! Say it. *(The WOLVES look at each other undecidedly. SHERE KHAN signals to the still unnoticed TABAQUI.)*

TABAQUI. Down with Akela!

SHERE KHAN. Who will join the wise wolf who has spoken?

8TH WOLF *(after a moment)*. I will.

TABAQUI and 8TH WOLF. Down with Akela!

SEVERAL WOLVES *(joining them)*. Down with Akela!

ALL. Down with Akela!

TABAQUI. And down with his cub—the outsider Mowgli!

TABAQUI and 8TH WOLF. Down with Mowgli!

SEVERAL WOLVES *(joining them)*. Down with Mowgli!

ALL. Down with Mowgli!

SHERE KHAN. Follow me, my friends. We shall seek out the traitors, and they shall be ours!

ALL *(chanting as they leave)*. Down with Akela! Down with Mowgli! Down with Akela! Down with Mowgli! Etc. *(They exit, SHERE KHAN in the lead and TABAQUI joining the rear, as the chanting fades in the distance.)*

(The scene shifts to the edge of the jungle just outside a village. Gates are seen in the distance. MOWGLI enters cautiously.)