

The original production of *THE JUNGLE BOOK* was staged at Rowan College of New Jersey with the following cast (in alphabetical order):

Amy Adamek	Wolf Cub
Shelby Adams	Dari
Sean Barner	Young Mowgli
Nora B. Graneto	Wolf Cub
Jennifer Hearn	Kaa/Massua
Debra Heitmann	Mother Wolf
John K. Kucher	Willies/Bagheera
Elise Lepore	Wolf
Andrea Mings	Rann
William C. Morris	Hathi
Haasan O. Morse	Wolf
Joseph Ranoia	Fielding/Shere Khan
Dominic Sano	Hanley/Tabaqui
Jayson Stockdale	Rudyard Kipling/Mowgli
Jody Thorp	Wolf/Monkey
Paul E. Tonden	Price/Akela
Jonathon Townley	Wolf/Monkey
Matthew J. Zumbo	Crofts/Baloo

ACT ONE

SETTING: *At one side of the stage is a dormitory room at the United Services Boarding School, Devon, England. The remainder of the stage is in darkness.**

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *RUDYARD KIPLING, a sixteen-year-old boy, is sitting at a desk writing. A moment later he reads what he has written.*

RUDYARD (*looking at his manuscript*). "It was seven o'clock of a warm evening in Seconee Hills when Father Wolf woke from his day's rest.

(He begins to write again. Two teenage boys, FIELDING and HANLEY, quietly enter the room, creep up to the desk and yell at RUDYARD who jumps.)

FIELDING and HANLEY. Indian boy, Indian boy, Indian boy!

RUDYARD. I'm not Indian. I'm British—just like you.

HANLEY. But you were born in India.

FIELDING. And monkeys are born in India. Perhaps he's a monkey. *(He and FIELDING mimic monkeys.)*

HANLEY. Or a hyena! *(He and FIELDING screech like hyenas and laugh.)*

* See Production Notes for scenery suggestions.

FIELDING. But with that round face—

HANLEY. —and those squinty eyes behind those glasses, he looks most like—

HANLEY and FIELDING. —a frog! (*They laugh uproariously.*)

HANLEY. A squatty little toad. (*He and FIELDING imitate frogs.*)

RUDYARD. Please go back to your own rooms. I'm studying.

FIELDING. Let's hear you croak, little frog. (*He grabs RUDYARD by the arm. RUDYARD emits a wolf howl.*)

HANLEY (*also grabbing RUDYARD*). That's not a frog. (*RUDYARD howls longer and louder.*)

FIELDING. Quiet. You'll bring up the headmaster. (*Again, RUDYARD howls, breaking away from them.*)

HANLEY. Be quiet!

FIELDING. Pipe down. You'll get us in trouble. (*The offstage voice of HEADMASTER PRICE is heard as RUDYARD howls again.*)

PRICE'S VOICE (*offstage*). Hullo! What's going on in there?

HANLEY. It's old man Price.

FIELDING. I knew that howling would bring him up here.

(He and HANLEY hide under the bed as RUDYARD howls once more. PRICE and WILLIES, a chaplain, enter.)

PRICE. Mr. Kipling!

RUDYARD (*embarrassed*). Oh...Sorry, Headmaster Price. Hello, Chaplain Willies.

WILLIES (*with tongue-in-cheek*). What a relief! I came prepared to administer last rites.

PRICE. What was all that baying about?

RUDYARD. I was just trying out a sound, sir—for a story I'm writing.

PRICE. Where does your story take place? An insane asylum?

RUDYARD. In the jungle, sir. I was trying to duplicate the sound of a—a wolf. I figure the more realistic my story, the better chance I have of winning the gold cup in Master Crofts' English class.

PRICE. Gold-plated cup. The United Services Boarding School cannot yet afford pure gold.

RUDYARD. Yes, sir.

PRICE. Well, Chaplain Willies, we found only one howling wolf up here, but when we were downstairs having our tea, it sounded more like a whole pack.

WILLIES. Perhaps it was a pack of wolves, Headmaster Price. (*He looks suspiciously at the bed.*) Were some of the boys up here teasing you again, Rudyard?

RUDYARD. Uh...no, sir.

WILLIES. Don't let them pick on you because of your size and looks. Maybe it's time you learned a bit of self-defense. (*Raising his voice as he moves toward the bed.*) Remind me sometime to tell you about my days as a boxer in the Queen's Navy. Undefeated, I was.

RUDYARD (*enthusiastically*). Yes, sir.

PRICE (*glancing at RUDYARD's manuscript*). I assume this story of yours takes place in India.

RUDYARD. That's right, sir.

PRICE. Do you wish you were still living there?

RUDYARD. I...I'm adjusting, I suppose. Anyway, I'll be returning to India when I graduate next year.

PRICE. You're fortunate to have parents who sent you back to England for a good education.

RUDYARD. I know, sir.

PRICE. Well, let us return to our tea, Chaplain Willies.

WILLIES. Rudyard, when the weather turns warm, I'll teach you some boxing moves.

RUDYARD. Thank you, sir.

PRICE. I thought the Bible taught us to be peacemakers, Chaplain Willies.

WILLIES. It does. But if neither party is willing to make peace, sometimes a little war is necessary. *(He and PRICE laugh and exit. HANLEY and FIELDING emerge from under the bed.)*

HANLEY. That was close.

FIELDING. You almost got us into trouble.

RUDYARD. It was your fault.

HANLEY. Couldn't take a little good-natured teasing, eh?

FIELDING. Now where were we, Hanley? *(They shove RUDYARD.)*

HANLEY. Playing with our little frog, Fielding.

(They jostle RUDYARD and make frog sounds until RUDYARD emits another loud howl. There is an immediate knock on the door. FIELDING and HANLEY again bolt for the bed but are stopped short as the door opens and CROFTS, a teacher, enters.)

CROFTS. Evening, gentlemen.

BOYS *(relieved)*. Hello, Master Crofts. Evening, sir. Etc.

CROFTS. I thought this was study hour.

HANLEY. It is. We're—we're working on our short stories.

CROFTS *(suspiciously)*. Perhaps I could see them.

FIELDING. Well, we haven't exactly started writing them yet. We were discussing, uh—

HANLEY. *Ideas*. You taught us, sir, we must *think* before we write.

FIELDING. Excellent advice, sir. Well, uh, now that we've thought—

HANLEY. —we can begin to write. Good night, sir. *(He and FIELDING exit quickly with a loudly whispered frog sound or two.)*

CROFTS. Kipling, I have a feeling you *have* begun to write.

RUDYARD. Yes, sir.

CROFTS. The jungle story you were telling me about?

RUDYARD *(holding up the manuscript)*. Would you like to see what I've done so far?

CROFTS. It'll have to wait until class. I'm on my way to play rehearsal. *You* should join our drama group, Kipling. Didn't you tell me your father performs in plays back in India?

RUDYARD. My *mother*, sir. My father is the curator of a museum. But anyway, I prefer to write.

CROFTS. Maybe you've made the right choice. *(Glancing at the manuscript in RUDYARD's hand.)* Let's see...you need an apostrophe here and a capital "s" there.

RUDYARD *(making the corrections)*. Thank you, sir.

CROFTS. And remember—don't overwrite. When in doubt, be brief.

RUDYARD. Yes, sir.

CROFTS. Well, on to rehearsal. *(Starting to leave, then stopping.)* By the way, did you ever decide on a name for your Indian boy—the one raised by wolves?

RUDYARD *(with a wry smile)*. I think so, sir. I just came up with an idea—thanks to a couple of my "chums."

CROFTS. Well, good luck. There'll be keen competition for the gold cup. Even boys like Hanley and Fielding may buckle down for *that* honor.

RUDYARD. Yes, sir.

CROFTS. Good night.