

So long, my beloved protector. I shall miss you both more than words can say. (*Fighting back tears, BALOO and BAGHEERA exit hurriedly. MOWGLI smiles.*) Why they're nothing but a couple of old softies after all. (*To the WOLVES as he embraces two or three of them.*) Farewell, my brothers and sisters. Do not forget me—just as I shall never forget you. I leave you with my affection and my friendship forever. (*He extends his hand toward a WOLF who looks at it quizzically.*) It is a human custom. (*The WOLF slowly places his paw into MOWGLI's hand.*) And I am human. (*He exits. Some of the WOLVES sob softly.*)

MOTHER WOLF. There—there. No tears.

6TH WOLF. But we'll never see him again.

MOTHER WOLF. I think we will. It's true he'll live among his own people in the village. No doubt he'll marry—and perhaps someday have cubs of his own. But I truly believe he will return from time to time and sit among us and tell of the wonders of being a man. Just as we'll remind him of the wonders of our magnificent jungle. Come children of Akela—let us raise our voices of gratitude and send our little frog on his way. (*She howls in the direction where MOWGLI exited. Other WOLVES join her as they exit.*)

(*The scene changes to the United Services Boarding School where a lecturer has been set into place to suggest a speaker's platform. Applause is heard as PRICE enters and steps to the lectern. He carries a gold-plated award cup and an envelope.*)

PRICE. And now to conclude our end-of-the-year ceremonies at United Services Boarding School, I shall announce the winning entry in the annual short story competition. It should be noted that the winner will be honored by serving

as next year's editor of our literary magazine—the *Chronicle*... And now the winner... (*He opens the envelope and withdraws a card.*) This year's gold cup goes to "Mowgli's Brothers" by Rudyard Kipling.

(*Applause is heard offstage. RUDYARD enters and takes the cup from PRICE who exits.*)

RUDYARD. Thank you. Thank you very much. I am indebted to many people for this award... to Headmaster Price, my surrogate father... to Master Crofts for teaching me the rules of good writing... to Chaplain Willies who has provided me with guidance—and good strong tea when I desperately needed it. (*Offstage laughter is heard.*) And finally to my competitors—especially Fielding and Hanley who helped a little frog hop higher than he thought he could... Thank you all!

(*Applause is again heard offstage as WILLIES enters.*)

WILLIES (*shaking hands with RUDYARD*). Well done, Rudyard.

RUDYARD. Thank you, Chaplain Willies. You deserve a part of this for keeping me awake so I could finish the story.

WILLIES. Now if I could just learn how to keep you boys awake during Sunday worship services.

(*They laugh as WILLIES exits and FIELDING and HANLEY enter.*)

FIELDING (*after a pause*). Well, Kipling—con-con-

RUDYARD. Is "congratulations" the word you're looking for, Fielding? It's not so hard to say.