

# **TIGER! TIGER!**

## **(The First Jungle Book)**

### **by Rudyard Kipling**

*What of the hunting, hunter bold?  
Brother, the watch was long and  
cold.*

*What of the quarry ye went to kill?  
Brother, he crops in the jungle still.  
Where is the power that made your  
pride?*

*Brother, it ebbs from my flank and  
side.*

*Where is the haste that ye hurry by?  
Brother, I go to my lair — to die.*

Now we must go back to the first tale. When Mowgli left the wolf's cave after the fight with the Pack at the Council Rock, he went down to the plowed lands where the villagers lived, but he would not stop there because it was too near to the jungle, and he knew that he had made at least one bad enemy at the Council. So he hurried on, keeping to the rough road that ran down the valley, and followed it at a steady jog-trot for nearly twenty miles, till he came to a country that he did not know. The valley opened out into a great plain

dotted over with rocks and cut up by ravines. At one end stood a little village, and at the other the thick jungle came down in a sweep to the grazing-grounds, and stopped there as though it had been cut off with a hoe. All over the plain, cattle and buffaloes were grazing, and when the little boys in charge of the herds saw Mowgli they shouted and ran away, and the yellow pariah dogs that hang about every Indian village barked. Mowgli walked on, for he was feeling hungry, and when he came to the village gate he saw the big thorn-bush that was drawn up before the gate at twilight, pushed to one side.

«Umph!» he said, for he had come across more than one such barricade in his night rambles after things to eat. «So men are afraid of the People of the Jungle here also». He sat down by the gate, and when a man came out he stood up, opened his mouth, and pointed down it to show that he wanted food. The man stared, and ran back up the one street of the village shouting for the priest, who was a big, fat man dressed in white, with a red and yellow mark on his forehead. The priest came to the gate, and with him at least a hundred people, who stared and talked and shouted and pointed at Mowgli.

«They have no manners, these Men Folk», said Mowgli to himself. «Only the gray ape would behave as they do». So he threw back his long hair and frowned at the crowd.

«What is there to be afraid of?» said the priest. «Look at the marks on his arms and legs. They are the bites of wolves. He is but a wolf-child run away from the jungle».

Of course, in playing together, the cubs had often nipped Mowgli harder than they intended, and there were white scars all over his arms and legs. But he would have been the last person in the world to call these bites, for he knew what real biting meant.

«Arre! Arre!» said two or three women together. «To be bitten by wolves, poor child! He is a handsome boy. He has eyes like red fire. By my honor, Messua, he is not unlike thy boy that was taken by the tiger».

«Let me look», said a woman with heavy copper rings on her wrists and ankles, and she peered at Mowgli under the palm of her hand. «Indeed he is not. He is thinner, but he has the very look of my boy».

The priest was a clever man, and he knew that Messua was wife to the richest villager in the place. So he looked up at the sky for a minute and said solemnly: «What the jungle has taken the jungle has restored. Take the boy into thy house, my sister, and forget not to honor the priest who sees so far into the lives of men».

«By the Bull that bought me», said Mowgli to himself, «but all this talking is like another looking-over by the Pack! Well, if I am a man, a man I must become».

The crowd parted as the woman beckoned