

WALT DISNEY

Jungle Book



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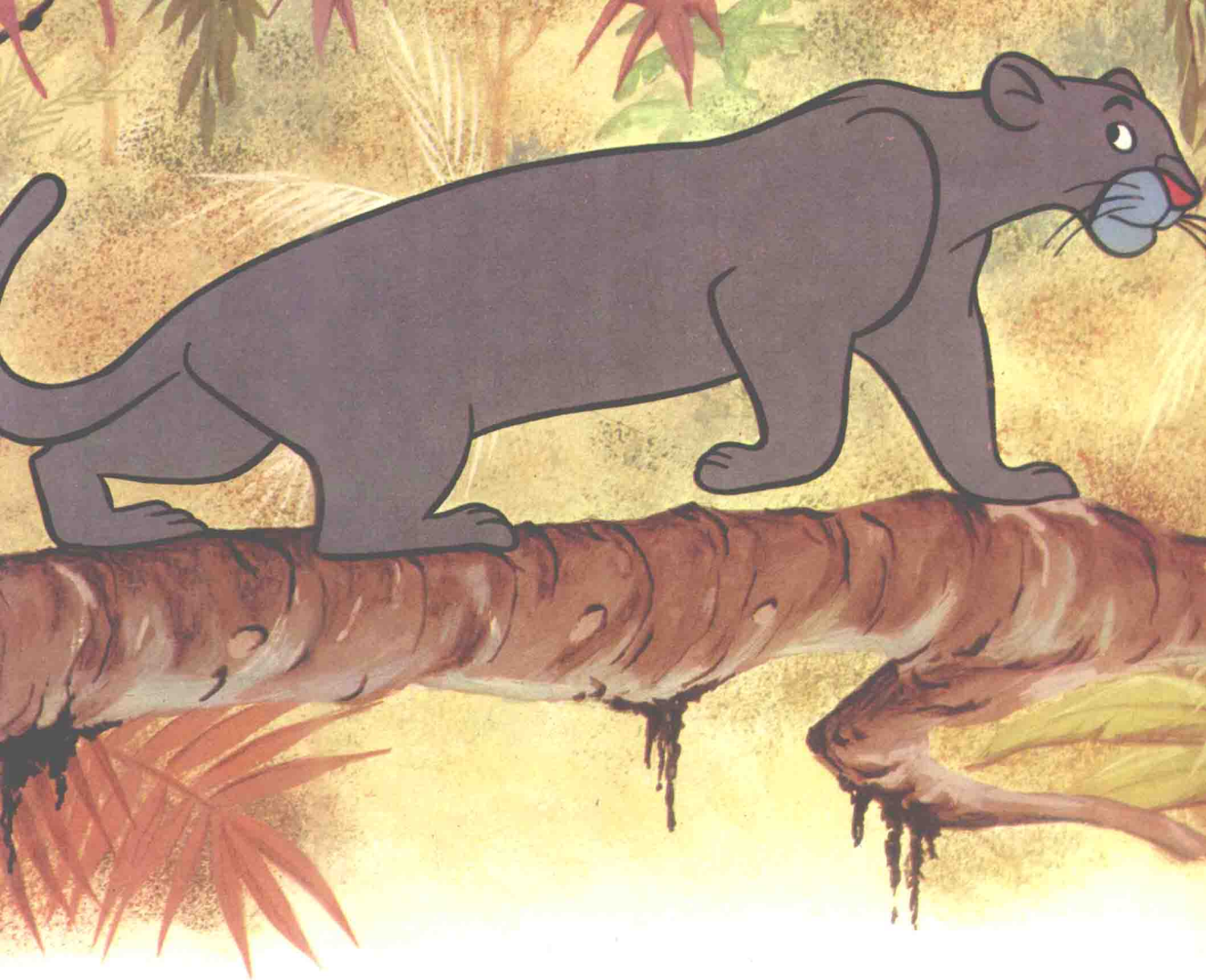
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THE JUNGLE BOOK

Bagheera the panther suddenly stood up. He had been alarmed by a strange sound. It was not one of the usual jungle noises, like the trill of a bird or a cry of alarm from some animal which had just been caught. It was a loud howl that went on and on, making him feel fear and concern at the same time.

“It sounds like a man-cub!” he thought.

He silently made his way towards the noise and before long found a half-sunken canoe lying alongside the bank of the great river. There was a basket in the bow of the canoe, which stuck up

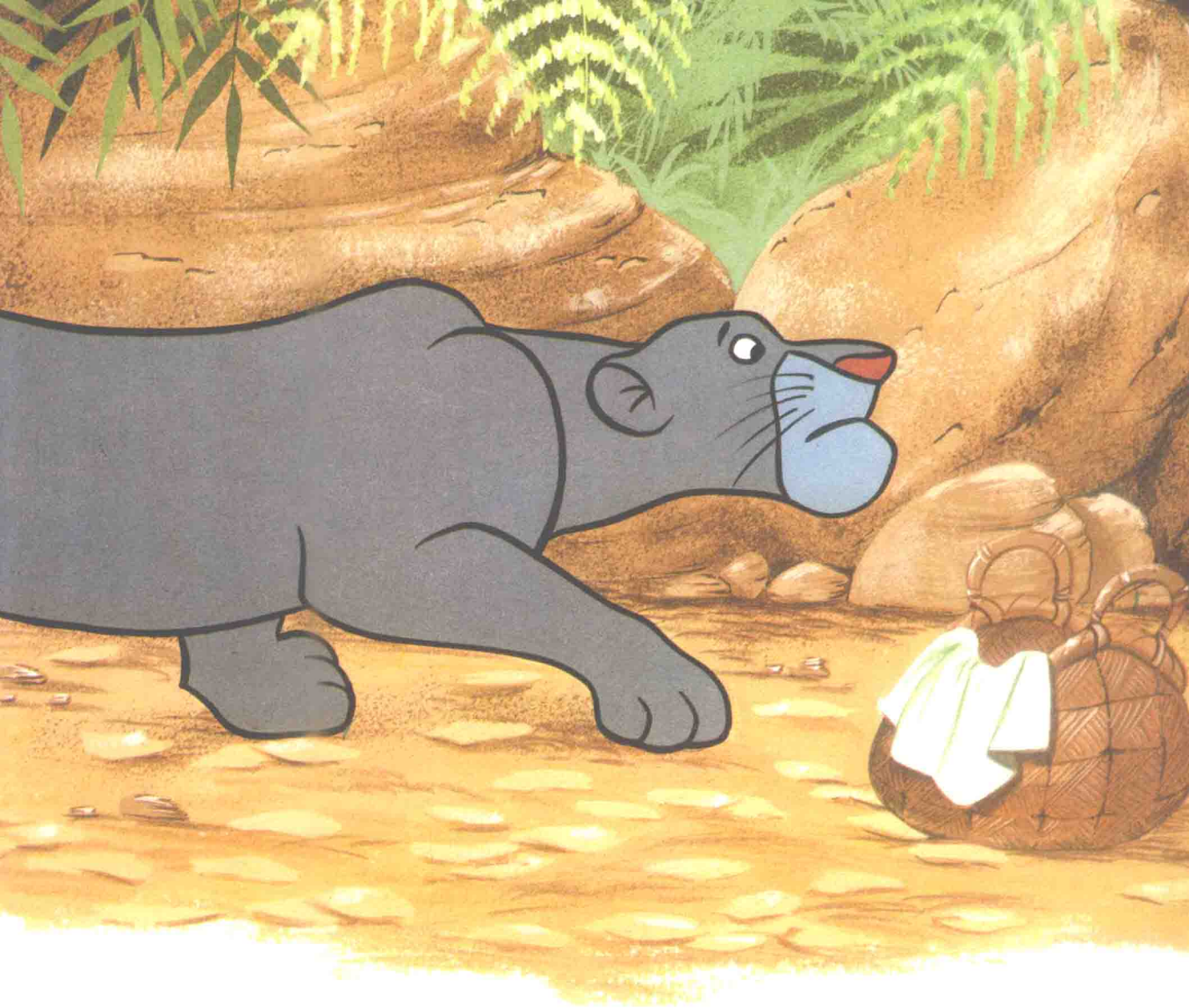
out of the water. The cries were coming from the basket.

“It really is a man-cub!” exclaimed the panther. “What shall I do now? If I leave it it’s sure to die.”

Bagheera suddenly remembered Rama the wolf’s cave, where some cubs had just been born.

“I don’t think Mother Wolf will mind looking after one more,” he muttered to himself. “The man-cub will be fine with the wolves and have everything he needs.”





Bagheera very carefully picked up the basket with the baby inside and carried it into the area where Rama's cave was. He left it at a safe distance before turning back and hiding behind some bushes. Then he waited to see if his plan would work.

The litter of cubs was tumbling about by the door of the lair under the watchful gaze of the mother. The baby's sudden ear-piercing cry made them run to safety. Rama, the father, leapt up, ready to defend his cubs, and ran towards the cries. He stopped

dead, surprised to see the small basket, and then carefully lifted the corner of the blanket.

“Hey, come and look at this!” he called. “It’s a pretty little man-cub!”

“Isn’t he small!” exclaimed Mother Wolf. “He looks so naked!”

“We want to see him, Mother!”





The cubs stood on their hind legs so that they could look at the man-cub. They seemed to like him.

“What shall we do with him?” asked Rama. “If we leave him it won’t be long before he dies.”

“I can look after him,” said Mother Wolf. “One more in the litter won’t make much difference.”

“That’s a good idea,” replied Rama. “We’ll call him Mowgli.”

Nine years have passed since Mowgli was adopted by the wolf pack, and the baby has turned into a fine, strong boy. He has learnt to speak the language of the jungle, to hunt and, more importantly,

how not to be hunted himself. The cubs he grew up with are now healthy young wolves who think of him as one of them.

One day Rama the wolf came into the cave looking worried. "Shere Khan the tiger has returned," he said. "He knows that the man-cub



lives with us and he wants to eat him. This means he is very dangerous. He will kill any wolf that tries to protect the boy.”

“No tiger is going to eat Mowgli!” exclaimed Mother Wolf, baring her teeth menacingly. “We must do whatever we can to save him.”

“The Council has to decide on that,” replied Rama. “We could be putting the whole pack in danger by protecting Mowgli. Shere Khan is stronger, much stronger, than any of us.”



When the moon came out all the members of the large pack of wolves met on the council rock. Bagheera the panther was invited as he had been the one who brought the man-cub to them, so he had the right to have a say in any decision.

“Those who want Mowgli to stay with us should speak first,” said the chief wolf.

“I, Rama, say we must defend the man-cub. For nine years he has been just like another wolf, fighting and hunting with us. Are we going to abandon him when he most needs us? I say we should defend him against that evil tiger.”

“You are Mowgli’s adopted father, that’s why you think that,” said an old wolf. “It is true that the boy behaves like a real wolf. But we must remember that he is not one. First and foremost is the safety of the pack. We can do very little against Shere Khan. Do you think men would put their village in danger to protect one of us? Let men worry about defending him. I think the man-cub should go back to his own people.”

“It hurts me to say that old Kolo is right,” added the chief after he had thought for a few minutes. “We have all learnt to love Mowgli as one of us, but no wolf would allow the whole pack to be sacrificed to save him. Mowgli must go back to his people. The Council has spoken!”

“I will take Mowgli to the men’s village,” said Bagheera, who had been silent until then. “I was the one who saved him nine years ago, and I shall save him again now, while his own brothers abandon him.” The pack broke up in silence.

That same night Bagheera went to find Mowgli. The boy was delighted to see his beloved old friend.

“Come along, little man, let’s go for a walk.”

“Where are we going?” asked the boy. “You haven’t come for me for a long time.”

“We’re going to the village where men live. You ought to have gone back to them long ago,” said Bagheera, “and now you really must.”

“I don’t want to go there!” protested Mowgli. “I want to go on living in the jungle.”

“It’s no good arguing. You’ve got to go to the village, and you’re going, even if you don’t want to.”



Mowgli strode along in a rage. He knew arguing with the panther was useless, but that did not stop him complaining all the time they were walking.

“I’m tired, Bagheera,” he said, “I can’t walk another step.”

“All right, we’ll rest tonight, and tomorrow we’ll set off early.

“Come on, let’s get up into that tree. We can sleep on one of the branches.”





They climbed up to a branch several feet above the ground. Bagheera stretched himself out and soon fell asleep. Mowgli, with his back against the trunk, went on complaining bitterly, saying how much he wanted to stay in the jungle where he had grown up.

“Go to sleep now, Mowgli,” growled Bagheera, half asleep, “we’ve got a long walk ahead of us tomorrow.”

Something moved in the branches beyond the tree they were resting in. Then the head of an enormous python appeared by Mowgli's ear, with a pleased expression on its face at finding the boy there. "Heavens, a man-cub! What a treat I'm going to have for my supper!" said Kaa to himself.

"What's the matter, little friend?" he asked, going closer to the boy. "You look worried."

"Bagheera has made up his mind that I've got to go to the village where men live, and I don't want to go," replied Mowgli.

"Quite right! It would be much better if you stayed—with me, forever."

