JUNGLE BOOK

SCENE 1

SONG – Welcome To The Jungle

*SOUND EFFECTS ECHO (jungle sounds)*

*Lights come up on Mowgli standing on Council Rock*

Mowgli: Hear me, people of the jungle. We are of one blood. It is I Mowgli, the Little Frog! You have nothing to fear. I will never leave you. Do you hear me, Baloo? Do you hear me Bagheera? Do you hear me, Kaa? Do you hear me, Father and Mother Wolf? Let the jungle listen to the things I have done. Shere Khan said he would kill! At the gates of twilight he would kill Mowgli the frog. *(Holds up the dagger)* Let him come! I am ready! I am Mowgli Keeper of the Law and Guardian of the jungle!

*Lights go out and jungle sound effects play.*

SCENE 2

*Lights come up on a Nyra sitting by a fire stirring a cooking pot.*

Nyra: (*laughing to herself and impersonating Mowgli*) I am Mowgli. Let the jungle listen to the things I have done. Shere Khan said that he would kill Mowgli the Frog! (*chuckles to herself.)* Kill Mowgli? Little did Shere Khan know of the future. What a boastful boy, that Mowgli.

Chitra enters and speaks directly to the audience.

Chitra: If you’ll be patient, I’m sure I can persuade Nyra to tell the story.

Nyra: (*squinting and looking around)* Who’s there? Who speaks? Is that you Chitra?

Chitra: Yes Nyra.

Nyra: Come closer. Don’t make me squint. You know my eyes aren’t what they once were. *(Chitra comes closer)* Did I hear you talking to someone?

Chitra: Yes.

*Rikki-Tikki (a mongoose) enters.*

Rikki-Tikki: *(chanting in a lively fashion)* Eye to eye and head to head. Turn for turn and twist for twist. The hooded cobra, again, has missed. Thanks to Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Thanks to Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Thanks to Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Oh, yes.

Nyra: There’s that mongoose again. Must he follow you everywhere you go? *(To Rikki-Tikki)* Begone!

Chitra: He means no harm.

Nyra: No harm? Last week he turned over my cooking pot and spilled the stew and yesterday he stole an egg.

Chitra: An egg. There’s nothing Rikki-Tikki-Tavi enjoys more than an egg. Oh, yes.

Nyra: Especially when the egg belongs to someone else. *(A threatening gesture)* Be off with you! Son of Mischief!

Rikki-Tikki: *(dancing off stage)* Eye to eye and head to head. Turn for turn and twist for twist. The hooded cobra, again, has missed thanks to Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Oh yes.

Nyra: Conceited mongoose.

Chitra: *(To audience)* Like Mowgli, Nyra can understand the language of the jungle creatures. I never have any idea what they’re saying.

Nyra: Get yourself a proper pet. A tame monkey or a parrot. A mongoose may be fine for trapping snakes, but otherwise it’s nothing but aggravation. One thing after another. Overturned cooking pots and stolen eggs.

Chitra: Nyra.

Nyra: Eh?

Chitra: *(Gesturing to the audience)* We have visitors.

Nyra: Visitors? *(Nyra steps beside Chitra. Squints into the audience.)* So we do, so we do. And there’s no need to tell me why they’re here. Visitors come to this village for only one reason, to hear the story of the jungle boy. The one the wolves named Mowgli. *(chuckles)* What a peculiar name to give a child. For it means Little Frog. Did you ever hear the like, Little Frog? Only I, Nyra, know the true story. You’ll have to pay something. A good storyteller is worth a coin or two. I can’t be expected to tell this strange tale week in and week out without something to show for my trouble.

Chitra: Our visitors have a coin of worth.

Nyra: A coin of worth eh? I’ll be the judge of that. Let me see it. *(Takes the coin and examines it before putting it in her pocket.)* Make yourselves comfortable then while I tell you a story from the book of the jungle.

*Rikki-Tikki enters dancing gleefully*

Rikki-Tikki: Eye to eye and head to head. Turn for turn and twist for twist. The hooded cobra, again, has missed. Thanks to Rikki-Tikki. Oh, yes.

Nyra: Chitra, do something about that mongoose. I can’t think straight when he’s about. Running this way, running that way. How can I concentrate?

Chitra: Com along with me Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. I’ll fix you a nice bowl of warm milk.

Rikki-Tikki: Warm milk for Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Warm milk for Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Oh yes.

Nyra: *(To audience)* That mongoose is in and out of my hut twenty times a day. Into everything he is. Now where was I? Ah, yes. Mowgli. To begin with, you must see in your mind’s eye the animals who inhabit our story. *(As she names the characters they stand/come on to stage).* There’s Baloo, the friendly bear. Bagheera, the panther. Father Wolf and Mother Wolf. Tabaqui, the treacherous jackal. Kaa, the great python snake. Mang, the bat. Mor, the peacock. The wolves of the pack. And the monkeys of the treetops. The jungle is home to not one but many. There are numerous citizens and you will meet them in time. However *(She looks right and left, on guard)* there is one you must meet at once. For, without him, our wondrous tale would be quite different. I speak of that cunning and dangerous tiger…

TYGER TYGER POEM

ALL: (*Whispered)* Shere Khan.

Nyra: Yes, Shere Khan.

*Sound effect of a tiger growling. The other animals of the jungle look around afraid. Shere Khan leaps up from behind Council Rock.*

Shere Khan: Hear the words of Shere Khan. He is mine, the man-cub. He belongs to me. Only Shere Khan has the right to hunt down the human beings of the village.

Nyra: *(To the audience)* Long ago, he came into the village and terrorized all who lived here. There is nothing to fear more than the breath of a man-eating tiger. In the confusion, Mowgli’s father was struck down by the fearsome cat and Mowgli, barely able to walk, wandered off into the jungle. Oh wicked, wicked Shere Khan. *(Nyra exits).*

Shere Khan: Hear the words of the great Lord Shere Khan! I have the right to rule this jungle. For I am not the strongest and the most merciless? I, Shere Khan, fear nothing. Nothing! Not even the mighty elephant. When the time is right I will make my move and conquer.

*Sound effect of a tiger growling. Shere Khan leaves the stage and the lights go down.*

SCENE 3

*Tabaqui and the wolves (all except Father and Mother Wolf) enter.*

Tabaqui: There’s no use trying to impress a jackal such as I with your wolf howlings. The cry of a jackal is more than a match. (*Tabaqui throws back his head and howls.)* There. What did I tell you? Don’t I have a fine voice?

Wolf: Doesn’t matter. Jackals are not welcome at Council Rock. Father Wolf and Mother Wolf forbid it. You gnaw bones after others have eaten away the meat. Because you are too lazy to hunt for yourself.

Tabaqui: What a harsh opinion you have of Tabaqui. Anyway I am not here by choice. I am here on my master’s business.

Wolf: Your Master?

Tabaqui: The great and the powerful Shere Khan.

Wolf : Shere Khan shouldn’t be in this jungle. Father Wolf has forbidden it.

Tabaqui: Ah, young wolves, you have forgotten something. This is the dry season of the water hole. All jungle creatures are free to quench their thirst. That is the law. Jungle Law.

Wolf: True. That is the law. Jungle Law.

*Father Wolf appears on Council Rock. The wolves bow their heads.*

Father Wolf: What brings you to Council Rock, scavenger?

Wolf: Scavenger, scavenger.

Tabaqui: A jackal can’t help being what he is, Father Wolf. Can a Leopard change its spots?

Wolf: What do you want Tabaqui?

Tabaqui: It’s not what I want. I wouldn’t presume. It’s what my master desires.

Father Wolf: Your master is a man-killer and I have forbidden him from the jungle trails.

Tabaqui: Ah Father Wolf, it is as I told the young ones. Ths is the dry season. All are welcome at the water hole. That is Jungle Law.

Father Wolf: Shere Khan entered the village and there he killed a man.

Tabaqui: An accident. He would speak to you on a matter of great importance. He begs you grant him an audience, O wise majestic Father Wolf.

Father Wolf: I am feeling generous this morning. I will grant him an audience.

Tabaqui: Too kind, too kind. I shall convey your message to my master. He awaits in the tall grass. He has no wish to intrude. Such a gentleman is Shere Khan. *(Tabaqui exits)*

*Mother Wolf joins Father Wolf on Council Rock.*

Mother Wolf: What’s this, husband? Conversing with a jackal and granting an audience to a fearsome prowler?

Father Wolf: Things are different during the dry season of the watering hole.

Mother Wolf: They must be when jackals and rogue tigers feel free to wander in and out of the jungle.

Father Wolf: Let’s see what the fellow has to say. I am curious.

*Father Wolf howls. The other wolves join in and the other animals of the jungle gather on the stage.*

Mor: Imagine. Shere Khan. Here. Who would have thought it?

Kaa: It’sssss a bad businessssss.

*The other animals murmur in agreement.*

King Monkey: I hope he’s been well fed. *(Monkeys cackle.)*

Father Wolf: Silence!

Tabaqui: May he enter, great and powerful Father Wolf? My master, Shere Khan?

Mother Wolf: I am not in favour of this.

Father Wolf: Let him enter.

Tabaqui: Father Wolf, *present* ruler of the jungle, awaits your presence, Shere Khan.

*Shere Khan enters. The other animals step back in fear.*

Shere Khan: Charming, Charming. To see so many old friends. Speaking of old, you’re looking splendid, O divine and ancient Father Wolf. Sad that most of your teeth are gone and your eyes are dim. Splendid nevertheless. Quite splendid.

Mother Wolf: Say what you have to say and be gone.

Shere Khan: Your tongue is sharp, Mother Wolf, but I’ll pretend I didn’t notice. I understand a man-cub from the village wandered into the jungle and has been given shelter here.

Father Wolf: What is he has?

Shere Khan: Only I, Shere Khan, have the right to hunt man. I demand what is mine. Give me the man-cub.

Mother Wolf: Never. He is safe in the wolf den.

Shere Khan: Surely, the young wolves don’t want a man-cub running the pack?

Father Wolf: I decide these things, not you. I know your hatred of man. I know your hatred of those who live in the nearby village. That is why I banished you years ago. Nothing has changed.

Shere Khan: No offense, but you are too old to lead the pack. I say we take a vote. Let’s elect a new leader.

Tabaqui: What a wonderful idea!

Father Wolf: You haven’t changed at all. Where others have a heart, you have a bitter root. Hear me well, Shere Khan. You will not have the man-cub.

Shere Khan: The man-cub is mine. Give him to me.

Father Wolf: You are insolent. The man-cub is under my protection.

Mother Wolf: You will never have him.

Shere Khan: In that case…why not send him back to the village? To his own people? It would be a kind this to do.

Tabaqui: Another wonderful idea! Oh, where do you get such wonderful ideas, Shere Khan?

Mother Wolf: Back to the village? You have taken his scent. You would follow him there.

Father Wolf: He stays with us. He will run with the pack. He will learn the ways of the jungle. He will learn jungle law.

Shere Khan: I protest!

Father Wolf: Baloo.

Baloo: Here, great king.

Father Wolf: Bagheera.

Bagheera: Here, mighty monarch of the jungle.

Father Wolf: Kaa.

Kaa: Here I am, Father Wolf.

Father Wolf: You three, bear, panther and python. I charge you with the education of the man-cub.

Shere Khan: Once again, I protest.

Baloo: I’ve seen the little man-cub in the den, toddling here and there. Why he looks like a little frog.

Bagheera: Yes, yes he does.

Kaa: Quite sssssssso.

Mother Wolf: That will be his name. Little Frog. Or, in jungle talk, Mowgli.

Father Wolf: He can do us no harm. Let him be accepted.

Shere Khan: Surely you jest.

Father Wolf: Once the dry season of the water hole has passed, I order you to leave this jungle. Take care that on day Mowgli does not hunt you.

Shere Khan: And to think I approached this audience with utmost politeness.

Tabaqui: The most polite tiger I ever saw. Has anyone ever seen such a polite man-eating tiger?

Father Wolf: Leave.

Shere Khan: I leave, Father Wolf. But remember this. The man-cub…this little frog, this Mowgli….is mine.

*Sound effect of a tiger growling. Shere Khan leaves the stage. Tabaqui runs off after him.*

Tabaqui: Ignore them Shere Khan. We don’t need them.

Wolf: Go away You heard Father Wolf! Mowgli stays! You’re not wanted here.

*The animals all leave the stage. The lights go out.*

SCENE 4

*The lights come up on the village. Mowgli’s mother is crying out for her lost baby.*

Messua: My little baby! My little lost Nathoo!

Chitra: You musn’t worry Messua. The men will find him.

Messua: They should be back by now.

Chitra: You must be patient.

Messua: How can I be? Nathoo is all I have now!

*Toomai enters.*

Chitra: There. What did I tell you? The searchers are back.

Messua: Toomai, you have found the baby?

Toomai: *(Shaking his head sorrowfully)* Not a trace of the baby.

*Messua sobs. Chitra steps to her, puts one arm around her shoulder and tries again to offer comfort.*

Chitra: There, there Messua. Don’t give up hope.

*Nyra enters.*

Nyra: The men of the village never found Nathoo and, as the years passed…five, ten, twelve…Messua grew accustomed to the lonely life. Life was far from lonely for Mowgli however. He grew strong, running with the wolf pack, and he was as inquisitive as Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Poor Bahgeera was at his wit’s end trying to educate the boy. Mowgli hated sitting still for lessons.

*Baloo and Mowgli enter from one side of the stage as Nyra leaves from the other.*

Baloo: Now man-cub, Bagheera tells me you have been neglecting your lessons.

Mowgli: I know all the Jungle Laws Baloo. I am tired of Bagheera’s lessons.

Baloo: Well, it’s time for my lesson now and I’m going to teach you everything a bear needs to know. You could call them the bear necessities.

SONG – The Bare Necessities.

*Mor and Mang enter.*

Mang: Have you heard the news?

Baloo: What news?

Mang: They’re saying Father Wolf is getting too old to lead the pack.

Baloo: That again. *(Rolls his eyes)*

Mowgli: Who says!

Mang: We hear things.

Baloo: Such big ears for a peacock and a bat.

*Bagheera and Kaa enter*

Bagheera: There you are Mowgli. Kaa and I have been looking for you. I hope you haven’t been visiting those monkeys.

Mang: The monkeys are so silly.

Bagheera: Clamouring over stones, proclaiming themselves kings and queens of the jungle.

Kaa: Ssssssillly creaturesssssss.

Bagheera: Mowgli, have you been studying the fish in the river, as I instructed you?

Mowgli: *(glances at Baloo smiling)* Oh yes Bagheera. The big fish and the little fish and all the fish inbetween.

Bagheera: That is good to hear.

*King monkey enters wearing a lopsided crown on his head.*

King Monkey: Look who’s here! Look who’s here!

Bagheera: *(Sighing)* Who?

King Monkey: Me! Me! Me! King Monkey. Monkey King.

Bagheera: We have no time for silly monkeys.

King Monkey: I’ve come with an invitiation.

Mor: What sort of an invitiation?

King Monkey: I’m having a birthday party and I want to invite the man-cub.

All: Mowgli?

King Monkey: He is the man-cub isn’t he?

Mor: That crown looks silly on your head you know.

King Monkey: It doesn’t look silly. Everybody knows that the monkeys are the wisest and the cleverest and the handsomest folk in the jungle. We are envied by everyone. You are just jealous. *(He produces a mirror and admires himself. The others laugh.)*

Bagheera: Enough foolishness. It is time for school.

Mowgli: School, school. Always school. Still, it is good to know things, isn’t it?

Mang: Oh, I nearly forgot.

Baloo: What?

Mang: I heard it from the other bats last night.

Bagheera: What? What?

Mang: Shere Khan is back in the forest.

Mowgli: *(Fiercely.)* Shere Khan better watch his step!

Kaa: Careful little frog. Careful.

Mowgli: Baloo, why does Shee Khan hate me so?

Baloo: Because he fears you. He hates what he fears.

Bagheera: Come, come Mowgli. Make us proud and recite our jungle law.

SONG – Jungle Law.

Bagheera: Well done Mowgli. We are very pleased with you.

Mowgli: I am pleased that my teacher’s are pleased. Can I go and play now?

King Monkey: Oh, Mowgli, you must come to the Deserted City. We can scamper about and play hide and seek in the ruins. Such fun. Look carefully at my crown! Isn’t it lovely? I found it in the treasure room.

Bagheera: What treasure room?

Mang: Ignore him. He’ll only tell you a silly monkey lie.

*Rikki-Tikki-Tavi runs on stage.*

Rikki-Tikki: *(out of breath)* Eye to eye and head to head. Turn for turn and twist for twist.

All: The hooded cobra, again has missed thanks to Rikki-Tikki-Tavi.

Rikki-Tikki: Ah yes. Greetings.

Mor: What brings you from the man village in such a hurry?

Rikki-Tikki: Have you heard the news?

Mang: You mean about Shere Khan? Yes, we know about that.

Rikki-Tikki: No about Father Wolf. He was on the hunt and he missed his kill.

Mowgli: Father Wolf missed his kill!

Rikki-Tikki: It’s true and the news is spreading fast through the jungle.

Baloo: When the head wolf misses his kill, jungle law says that another can take his place.

Bagheera: This is serious.

Mowgli: We musy go to Father Wolf.

*The animals exit. The lights go out and jungle sound effects echo.*

*The lights come up on Council Rock. All the animals are gathered talking and Father Wolf is sat on top of Council Rock. Father Wolf holds up his hand for silence.*

Father Wolf: Hear me, people of the jungle. This meeting is declared open. Where is Shere Khan?

Mother Wolf: Show yourself, prowler of the jungle.

Tabaqui: He’ll be here. Never fear.

*Shere Khan enters. The other animals hiss and growl at him.*

Shere Khan: Thank you, thank you. I’m overwhelmed by my reception. Flattered even.

Mowgli: Say what you have to say, Shere Khan.

Shere Khan: What have we here? Ah it’s the little man-cub. Does he speak for you now, Father Wolf?

Mowgli: No one speaks for Father Wolf.

Bagheera: Mowgli, it is not your place to speak out.

Shere Khan: You should teach your pupils better manners, Baloo.

Father Wolf: Mowgli means well.

Shere Khan: I bear him no grudge. Honestly, I mean what I say. I have only one thought in mind. What’s best for the jungle. I want to like everyone. I want everyone to like me. Can’t we be friends?

SONG – Can’t we be friends?

Father Wolf: You have called for this meeting. We are listening.

Shere Khan: You are blunt, Father Wolf, and I shall be the same. I have spoken to some young wolves. They think it’s time for change. You are too old and too weak to lead the pack. When you took the man-cub in, it was the beginning of your decline. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

Mother Wolf: You only say that because you fear Mowgli.

Shere Khan: Fear? Fear! I fear nothing. You must accept what is what, Father Wolf. You are finished.

Other animals: Impossible.

Tabaqui: Nothing is impossible for Shere Khan.

Shere Khan: I shall lead the pack!

Father Wolf: You!?

Shere Khan: And why not? It’s my destiny to rule the jungle.

Father Wolf: By what right?

Shere Khan: Because I, Shere Khan, fear nothing!

Mowgli: You are not welcome here.

Shere Khan: Insolent brat! *(He holds up his paw and spreads his fingers, preparing to pounce)*

Mowgli: Come on, come on, you poor excuse for a bungalow cat. I am not afraid of you.

Shere Khan: You should be.

*Just as Shere Khan is about the leap, Baloo steps between them.*

Baloo: Stop! Harm a hair on his head and you’ll have me to deal with.

Shere Khan: I shall return in two days’ time when the sun rises. *(To Father Wolf)* You will give me your answer. I advise you to think carefully, old one. Very, very carefully. His life *(gestures at Mowgli)* could depend on it.

*Shere Khan exits.*

Tabaqui: Oh. You’ll make a great ruler Shere Khan! What a pleasure to serve one such as you!

*Tabaqui follows Shere Khan off stage.*

Mowgli: Shere Khan will never rule. This is swear! Hear me, people. We are of one blood you and I. Shere Khan will never rule. So says Mowgli, Keeper of the Law and Guardian of the Jungle.

*The lights go out and the animals leave the stage.*

SCENE 5

*The lights come up on the Deserted City. The Monkeys are signing and chanting happily.*

Monkey 1: Monkey see, Monkey do. We are not in a zoo.

Monkey 2: We romp around and play with glee. In jungle bush, from tree to tree.

Monkey 3: Here we go in a flung festoon. Halfway up to the jealous moon.

Monkey 4: Don’t you envy our pranceful bands? Don’t you wish you had extra hands?

Monkey 5: Wouldn’t you like if your tail were so. Curved in the shape of a cupids bow?

Monkey 6: Now you’re angry, but never mind. Brother, thy tail hangs down behind.

*King Monkey enters. The other monkeys whoop and hoot in delight making a circle and dancing around him. Mowgli enters.*

Mowgli: Greetings King Monkey. I salute you on this day of days.

Monkey 1: It’s the man-cub.

*The monkeys stop dancing.*

King Monkey: What’s so special about this day?

Mowgli: It’s your birthday.

King Monkey: My birthday you say…

Mowgli: You invited me.

King Monkey: I did? When?

Mowgli: Yesterday. Don’t you remember?

King Monkey: Yesterday is a long time ago.

Monkey 7: Who can remember yesterday? Remembering tomorrow is hard enough.

Monkey 3: Let’s toss coconuts at Baloo.

Monkey 4: No let’s take Mowgli prisoner.

*The Monkeys make a circle around Mowgli, laughing and chanting ‘Prisoner, prisoner’ as they dance around him.*

Monkey King: Yes. *(The Monkeys stop dancing and sit in a ring around his feet.)* And we won’t let you go until you tell us the secret of the Red Flower.

SONG – I Want To Be Like You.

Mowgli: The Red Flower? Oh, I know what you mean. The Red Flower is what man calls fire, but I don’t know the secret.

King Monkey: I thought, since you’re a man-cub, you’d know the secret of man’s Red Flower.

Mowgli: I only know what I’ve been taught by Baloo, Bagheera and Kaa.

King Monkey: Well, since you don’t have the secret. I will have my birthday present now.

Mowgli: I don’t have a gift either. I didn’t know I was supposed to bring one.

King Monkey: No gift? In that case, you shall have one.

Mowgli: But it isn’t my birthday.

King Monkey: What shall it be?

Monkeys: What shall it be?

King Monkey: A bonnet or a bee?

Monkeys: A bonnet or a bee?

King Monkey: We shall see.

Monkeys: We shall see. We shall see.

King Monkey: How about…this! (*He dips behind some ruins and hands Mowgli a magnificent bejewelled dagger.)* Happy Birthday Mowgli. What do you think?

Mowgli: Never have I seen such a tooth! With such a tooth as this, Shere Khan will walk in fear.

*Mowgli runs off with the dagger and the monkeys dance off stage in the opposite direction. The lights go out.*

SCENE 6

*The lights come up on the village. Chitra, Nyra and Messua are sat round a fire. Toomai enters dragging Mowgli with him, who is struggling and trying to get away.*

Mowgli: Let me go! Let me go!

Toomai: Be still, wild thing from the jungle.

Chitra: Who is this boy, Toomai?

Toomai: Long have I heard rumours of a wild boy living in the jungle. I caught him spying on the village from the tall grass. Planning mischief no doubt. He has the smell of wolves on him. Have you never heard of children raised by wolves? They bring bad luck. We must drive him from the village.

*Mowgli howls and Toomai moves to strike him with his spear. Mowgli cowers in fear.*

Messua: No Toomai! The boy is frightened. You mustn’t harm him. *(To Mowgli)* There’s nothing to fear. I won’t let anyone hurt you. How old are you boy?

Mowgli: *(Shakes his head.)* I don’t know.

Nyra: He looks about eleven or twelve.

Messua: The same age my Nathoo would be.

Nyra: Messua, could this boy be Nathoo?

Messua: *(Moves closer to Mowgli and looks into his face)* His eyes are the same colour. His nose and chin are the same as his father’s. Give me your hand boy.

*Cautiously Mowgli holds out his hand.*

Chitra: What is it?

Messua: He is my Nathoo. I recognise this scar on his hand. Nathoo, I am your mother. You have come back to me.

Mowgli: I have come for the Red Flower to help Father Wolf. *(He points at the fire)*

Messua: Let him take some fire, Chitra.

Toomai: Don’t be foolish Messua. He’ll set the village on fire.

*Mowgli wriggles free of Toomai’s grip, grabs a stick from the fire and runs from the stage. Messua calls after him. The lights go out.*

SCENE 7

*The lights come up on Council Rock. It has been two days and the animals are gathered waiting for Shere Khan.*

Father Wolf: Two days have passed and the dawn has risen. Where is Shere Khan?

*Shere Khan enters.*

Shere Khan: I am here, Ancient one. I await your answer.

Father Wolf: And you shall have it. I will never agree to you leading the pack. I will never give you Mowgli.

Shere Khan: Then I will eat you! I will devour you! *(He throws back his head and roars. Prowling round the stage he snarls and lurches at the animals gathered.)*

Mowgli: Stop! Shere Khan!

Shere Khan: *(Snarls)* The man-cub.

Mowgli: My brother and sister wolves, hear me well. Father Wolf has never done you any harm. Yes, he is old, but he is wise. It is not enough to be strong. You must have wisdom, too. Wisdom is what Father Wolf possesses. Honour him for that.

Father Wolf: I have decided that Mowgli will lead the pack until one of the young wolves is strong enough and wise enough to assume leadership.

Shere Khan: No, no. Remember, I am the only creature without fear. Because I fear nothing, I must lead.

Mowgli: You are a coward.

Shere Khan: I am no coward.

Mowgli: We shall see.

*Mowgli exits and quickly returns with the burning stick from the fire. He moves towards Shere Khan.*

All: The Red Flower!

Shere Khan: *(Cowering and covering his face)* No! No! No! Don’t come closer. Take it away!! Take it away!

*Mowgli steps closer to the tiger, poking the fire stick at him.*

Wolf: Do you see? Shere Khan is afraid.

Shere Khan: Please, please. I beg of you. I’ll do whatever you command. Take it away.

Mowgli: Go. Leave this jungle Shere Khan and never return.

*Shere Khan flees followed by Tabaqui. The animals shout after him ‘Coward, coward.’*

Mowgli: Never forget. Shere Khan lied to you. He said he was afraid of nothing and you believed him. Don’t be easily fooled by words. It’s deeds that count.

Father Wolf: So wise. He will make a good leader.

Baloo: Don’t forget Father Wolf, he had good teachers.

Mowgli: (*Mowgli stands on council rock and addresses the audience.)* Hear me, people of the jungle. We are of one blood, you and I. You have nothing to fear, for I am always with you. I am Mowgli, Keeper of the Law and Guardian of the Jungle! *(Mowgli freezes with his fist in the air in celebration.)*

*The animals cheer as the lights fade.*