



## The Jungle Book

*Rudyard Kipling (1865- 1936)*

Read by:	Phil Chenevert	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Sometimes the tart nature of motivational stories can be more easily received and internalized if the message is cloaked in the sweetness of animals, anthropomorphic characters, who, sentient and capable, experience the vagaries of the world's ways and then draw and express some moral from the experience. Rudyard Kipling, the Englishman who felt keenly the burden of his privilege, wrote *The Jungle Book*, published in book form in 1894, a series of short stories that had been published in several magazines in 1893 and 1894. There is some very recent evidence (2010) found in a poignant handwritten note, discovered in a rare first edition of the book, that Kipling wrote these beautiful and wholly entertaining stories for his daughter, Josephine, who died at the age of six in 1899. The stories

that comprise the Jungle Book enjoy great popularity due to Disney's 1967 animated film version, that was followed by a second Disney adaption in 2003. Several other film and stage adaptations have also contributed to the work's popularity. The stories contain nearly everything Kipling knew and had learned about the Indian Jungle during his childhood in India. The best known of the stories are the three that concern the man-cub "Mowgli," who is raised by wolves. The stories and their accompanying verses offer helpful safety tips for persons, families and communities. Many have looked deeper into these stories, and, as with Orwell, have interpreted the work as being a sophisticated commentary on the politics and society of the time.

**Rudyard Kipling** (December 30, 1865 – January 18, 1936) was a British poet, novelist, and short story writer notable for his tales and poems of British soldiers in India and for his children's stories. He was born in Bombay to a family that thought of themselves as "Anglo-Indian". His father taught sculpture and design and his mother was a notably vivacious woman. He was sent to England as a youth to be exposed to British customs and education, attending preparatory school United Services College in Devon. Unable to afford to attend Oxford or obtain a scholarship, he returned to India as a young man to write for the Civil and Military Gazette in Lahore, now part of Pakistan, where he found his calling as a writer. He started publishing stories and decided to relocate in London, traveling the Pacific and crossing North America in the process. In 1892 he married Carrie Balestier, an American, and relocated to the family property near Brattleboro, Vermont, where he built a house modeled on Mughal architecture and wrote the Jungle Book, Captains Courageous, and other stories and poems. He returned to England in 1896, settling first in Devon and then acquired Bateman's in Sussex in 1902, an ancient house built in 1634 with a mill and 33 acres, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Kipling was very popular in his peak years, which coincided with the prime of the British Empire. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, the first English language writer to receive the Nobel and to this day its youngest recipient. To some degree he has become associated with conservative imperialist perspective of the colonial English, but it bears mention that his work focuses on the moral sense of duty and responsibility inherent in that culture and less so any sense of superiority. More to the point, he is best remembered as a prolific, imaginative and heartfelt stylist who was an innovator in the short story form and possessed a genius for narrative.