

The Jungle Book

ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR

The ensemble exit. Mowgli (still with the fire-pot), Baloo and Bagheera move over to beneath a tree and settle down for a midday nap. Mowgli is positioned between the two others. Chil and Bill remain as before.

Chil Ahh, would you look at that!

Bill It's all that singing. No wonder they're tired.

Chil It's lovely, isn't it.

Bill Well, I've heard better.

Chil Not the singing. Them. Who would have thought it? A bear, a panther and a man-cub together. You don't see that every day.

Bill Actually I do. Well, most days. They're always together.

Chil You're heartless, you are. You haven't got a sentimental bone in your body.

Bill A few mice ones though. I tried to avoid them, but you know how it is.

Chil sees three monkeys enter on an elevated part of the stage.

Chil Shh, here comes trouble.

The monkeys stop, ideally elevated, to finalise their plans. Throughout the conversation, Monkey Three seems almost to be having a different conversation to the others.

Monkey One There he is.

Monkey Two Which one is he again?

Monkey Three Does anyone have any nuts?

Monkey One He's the one without claws.

Monkey Two The furry one?

Monkey Three I could really go some nuts.

Monkey One The one that looks a bit like you.

Monkey Two What do I look like?

Monkey Three I wish I'd had a bigger breakfast.

Monkey One Let's try to wake him up.

Monkey Two I'll throw some nuts at him.

Monkey Three So you DO have nuts!

Monkey One No, don't do that, you might wake the others.

Monkey Two Why don't we just grab him?

Monkey Three Does that mean I can have the nuts?

Monkey One Look, will you just shut up about the stupid nuts!

Monkeys Two and Three react with undiluted shock.

Monkey Three How dare you!

Monkey Two Did you really just call nuts stupid?

Monkey Three Some days I really don't think I know you.

Monkey Two It's not the nuts' fault. They're not the stupid ones.

Monkey Three Precisely. What did the poor nuts ever do to you?

Monkey One Alright, I'm sorry.

Monkey Three If you're sorry then give me some nuts.

Monkey One I haven't got any. He's got them.

Monkey Two I'm not sure I have, actually. I think I may have dropped them on route.

Monkey Three Really? Well let's go and look for them.

Monkey Two Okay.

They start to move away.

Monkey One Wait! What about the man-cub?

Monkey Three How can he look for them? He's asleep.

Monkey One I know he's asleep. We need to get him, remember. We're meant to be capturing him so that he can weave sticks together to protect us from the wind.

Monkey Three Oh yes. Come on then, let's grab him.

Before Monkey One can do anything to stop them, Monkey Three and Monkey Two grab hold of Mowgli and 'lift' him up and away. Monkey One watches on in shock.

Mowgli Hey! What's going on?

Before Mowgli has the chance to call out further, he is hurried off.

Monkey One Well I'm a monkey's uncle.

He exits after them as Baloo and Bagheera sit up, suddenly aware that all is not as it should be.

Bagheera Mowgli!

Baloo *(panicked)* Where is he?

Chil *(calling over)* They took him. The nutty ones.

Bagheera The Bandar-log! After them, Chil, mark their trail.

Chil I can't. I'm otherwise engaged. Bill will go.

Baloo Which way did they go?

Bagheera That way. I can hear them. Come on.

They exit quickly.

Chil Go on, Bill, after them.

Bill I'm still digesting.

Chil Just go, will you!

Bill Alright, I'm going, I'm going.

Bill exits after Mowgli et al. complaining as he leaves.

Bill It's do this and do that, get me this, follow the monkeys that.

He leaves as Chil shakes her head despairingly.

Chil *(to audience)* Honestly, I've met slugs with more gumption.

Suggested scene change music: "We Are Wolves (Interlude)"