



2016

The Jungle Book

Whitney Troxel

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Movie Review

Title: The Jungle Book

Main Performers: Neel Sethi, Bill Murray, Ben Kingsley

Director: Jon Favreau

Reviewer: Whitney Troxel

Studio: Disney

Year Released: 2016

Run Time: 1 hr 45 min

MPAA Rating: PG

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent



Review

Discovered as a small child in the jungle, Mowgli was raised by a pack of wolves. However, when Shere Khan, a tiger, learns of his presence in the jungle, he threatens not only to kill Mowgli but anyone else who tries to protect him. Bagheera, a black panther, volunteers to take Mowgli to the man village in order to protect him and the wolf pack. Angry that Mowgli escaped, Shere Khan kills Akela, the leader of the wolves, in order to bring Mowgli back. Mowgli meets Baloo, a loveable but lazy bear, on his way to the village. Desperate to get Mowgli to safety Bagheera enlists Baloo's help but Mowgli is kidnapped by monkeys and taken to King Louie, a giant orangutan. While with King Louie Mowgli discovers Shere Khan killed Akela. Mowgli returns with a torch to confront Shere Khan, not realizing he has set the jungle on fire. Shere Khan attempts to turn Mowgli's friends against him, but instead they attack Shere Khan giving Mowgli enough time to run to the forest. Using everything he's learned from living in the jungle, Mowgli sets a trap and defeats Shere Khan.

This version of the *Jungle Book* has many strengths, from the acting to the realistic animation of the animals and scenery. It's greatest strength, however, is nostalgia. The movie score uses many of the same themes as the original animated classic. It very subtly brings up pleasant memories of the first movie without distracting from what is happening on the screen. Shortened versions of *The Bare Necessities* and *I Wanna be Like You* also make an appearance in the film. It was impressive how well *The Bare Necessities* fit into the plot of the movie, however it definitely felt very forced when King Louie began singing *I Wanna be Like You*. Overall it was an enjoyable movie. It explored new sides of the characters while remaining true to their essence. The Shere Khan in this version of the *Jungle Book* is much more threatening than in the cartoon. As a result, there are a few scenes that may be too intense for younger children.