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The Jungle Books (A Penguin Classics Hardcover)



Synopsis

The story of Mowgli, the abandoned boy who is brought up by wolves in the jungles of Central India, is one of the greatest literary myths ever created. As he embarks on a series of thrilling escapades, Mowgli encounters such unforgettable creatures as the bear Baloo, the graceful black panther Bagheera and Shere Khan, the tiger with the blazing eyes. Other animal stories in The Jungle Books range from the dramatic battle between good and evil in "Rikki-tikki-tavi" to the macabre comedy, "The Undertakers." With The Jungle Books, Rudyard Kipling drew on ancient beast fables, Buddhist philosophy, and memories of his Anglo-Indian childhood to create a rich, symbolic portrait of man and nature, and an eternal classic of childhood. This edition contains both of Kipling's Jungle Books, as well as "In the Rukh," the story that introduced readers to Mowgli. Part of Penguin's beautiful Hardcover Classics series, designed by the award-winning Coralie Bickford-Smith, these delectable and collectible editions are bound in high-quality, tactile cloth with foil stamped into the design.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I love Ingpen's work with Sterling Illustrated Classics. This edition of The Jungle Book is going to be my daughter's literature book next year (3rd grade, 9 years old). This is our third volume illustrated by Ingpen. I intend to add as many of them as I can find to my kids' permanent collections. Kipling's original jungle stories were published as serials in a magazine. They were later collected into The

Jungle Book, Books 1 and 2. I have four copies of The Jungle Book, and they each have a different selection of stories in them! The Mowgli stories that most people are familiar with - from his early life until he leaves the jungle - make up most of Book 1. Each story was also published with a poem. This edition has all of the original stories from Book 1 and the accompanying poetry. A couple commenters have called the pictures "too graphic." This is such a personal distinction that I can't really comment, other than to say that I will hand the book off to my daughter with no concern. There are plenty of drawings of Mowgli that show half or all of his naked booty. There is a picture of him tanning Shere Khan's hide. There is a picture of the Indian god Shiv. There are two scenes of animals fighting - Baloo being attacked by monkeys, and Rikki Tikki Tavi attacking a cobra. There is no gore that I noticed, nor any particularly frightening or violent images. The books itself seems like good quality - the paper is thick, the binding is tight, the printing is crisp, and there is a sewn-in ribbon bookmark. The Wind in the Willows has held up nicely to regular, light use during school time. The two-page illustrated spreads are especially beautiful. The pictures have a very true-life feel; they aren't cartoonish at all.

I evaluated three series of abridged/paraphrased classics: Great Illustrated Classics, Stepping Stones, and Classic Starts. I specifically read Treasure Island in all three versions, but also evaluated the Jungle Book and other stories in at least two of the versions. The Classic Starts version of the Jungle Book and other stories is the most complex in language and sentence structure. It's not as easy for a beginning reader to read as Stepping Stones or Great Illustrated Classics, but offers a much better story by virtue of more adjectives, adverbs and clauses in the sentence structure. With these paraphrased versions, there is always the dilemma one faces: whether to wait until the genuine, original story is accessible or risk turning the reader off with a poor paraphrase that lacks the vibrancy of the real thing, but possibly gain the enjoyment of a classic gem much earlier than the original text would afford. In the case of the Jungle Book in particular, you also have the movie. I imagine it would be hard to follow the real story after the movie. I'm glad my kids will have heard Kipling's version before Disney's. Personally, I bought the books intending to read to my kindergarten age children, rather than have them read. We found the Classic Starts to have by far the best versions of the stories, notwithstanding the originals which are just too long for us, in language that is hard to be understood. Since I am reading them aloud, we've forgone the simplest versions which are perhaps a bit too butchered to really stand out as the excellent stories the originals gained a reputation for. I feel that the Classic Starts are rich enough that they easily match original versions of simpler tales like The Little House on the Prairie or Charlotte's Web.

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