

THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

Just to give you an idea of the immense variety of the Jungle Law, I have translated into verse (Baloo always recited them in a sort of sing-song) a few of the laws that apply to the wolves. There are, of course, hundreds and hundreds more, but these will do for specimens of the simpler rulings.

Now this is the Law of the Jungle--as old and as true as
the sky;

And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf
that shall break it must die.

As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth
forward and back--

For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength
of the Wolf is the Pack.

Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but
never too deep;

And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not
the day is for sleep.

The jackal may follow the Tiger, but, Cub, when thy
whiskers are grown,
Remember the Wolf is a hunter--go forth and get food
of thine own.

Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle--the Tiger, the
Panther, the Bear;
And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar
in his lair.

When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither
will go from the trail,
Lie down till the leaders have spoken--it may be fair
words shall prevail.

When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must
fight him alone and afar,
Lest others take part in the quarrel, and the Pack be
diminished by war.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, and where he has
made him his home,
Not even the Head Wolf may enter, not even the Council
may come.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, but where he has
dugged it too plain,

The Council shall send him a message, and so he shall
change it again.

If ye kill before midnight, be silent, and wake not the
woods with your bay,
Lest ye frighten the deer from the crops, and the brothers
go empty away.

Ye may kill for yourselves, and your mates, and your cubs
as they need, and ye can;
But kill not for pleasure of killing, and SEVEN TIMES NEVER
KILL MAN.

If ye plunder his Kill from a weaker, devour not all in
thy pride;
Pack-Right is the right of the meanest; so leave him the
head and the hide.

The Kill of the Pack is the meat of the Pack. Ye must
eat where it lies;
And no one may carry away of that meat to his lair, or
he dies.

The Kill of the Wolf is the meat of the Wolf. He may
do what he will,
But, till he has given permission, the Pack may not eat
of that Kill.

Cub-Right is the right of the Yearling. From all of his
Pack he may claim

Full-gorge when the killer has eaten; and none may
refuse him the same.

Lair-Right is the right of the Mother. From all of her
year she may claim

One haunch of each kill for her litter, and none may
deny her the same.

Cave-Right is the right of the Father--to hunt by himself
for his own.

He is freed of all calls to the Pack; he is judged by the
Council alone.

Because of his age and his cunning, because of his gripe
and his paw,

In all that the Law leaveth open, the word of the Head
Wolf is Law.

Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and
mighty are they;

But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch
and the hump is--Obey!