

'Jungle Book': A Wild Adventure Worthy of The Children's Classic

The thought of remaking *The Jungle Book* was probably enough to cause fans of the Disney's famous animated film to cry, "Panthers and tigers and bears, oh my ..."

Fortunately, those who love the classic children's movie won't be disappointed with the studio's live-action/CG hybrid of *The Jungle Book*. Except for some scary moments, which could spook smaller children, the latest pic is totally family friendly, filled with moral lessons, humor, music and drama.

Remarkably shot entirely on stages in Los Angeles, the movie, which adapts the Rudyard Kipling-authored stories, tell of Mowgli (newcomer Neel Sethi), the human boy raised by a family of wolves and who befriends various jungle animals.

The boy enjoys a special bond with his fiercely protective mother wolf Raksha (voiced by Lupita Nyong) and support from the wolf pack's alpha male Akela (Giancarlo Esposito).

"No matter where you go or what they may call you, you will always be my son," Raksha tells Mowgli.

But Mowgli, called "the man-cub," finds he is no longer welcome in the jungle when fearsome tiger Shere Khan (Idris Elba)—who bears the scars of man—promises to eliminate what he sees as a threat.

"You change your hunting ground for a few years, and everyone forgets how the law works." Shere Khan proclaims to the animals. 'Well, let me remind you. A man-cub becomes a man, and man is forbidden!"

Urged to abandon the only home he's ever known, Mowgli embarks

on a captivating journey of self-discovery, guided by panther-turned-stern mentor Bagheera (Ben Kingsley) and the free-spirited bear Baloo (Bill Murray).

Along the way, Mowgli encounters jungle creatures who don't exactly have his best interests at heart, including Kaa (Scarlett Johansson), a python whose seductive voice and gaze hypnotizes the man-cub. He also comes across smooth-talking King Louie (Christopher Walken)—a gigantopithecus, an ancestor of the orangutan—who tries to coerce Mowgli into giving up the secret to the elusive and deadly red flower: fire.

Directed by Jon Favreau (*Iron Man*, *Elf*), *The Jungle Book* seamlessly blends live-action with photo-realistic CGI animals and Indian environment, especially in 3D—as the film immerses the audience to an enchanting and lush world that shows the beauty and danger of the jungle. All the locations were computer-generated special effects.

Although the film is a live-action adaptation of *The Jungle Book* from the 1967 children's movie, the filmmakers reportedly decided to include elements from the Kipling novel to make the film more adventurous and dangerous.

Indeed, the man-eating Shere Khan is menacing and frightening, while the mobster-like King Louie is an imposing and creepy character. On the lighter side, Baloo is hilarious and adorable as the honey-seeking bear.

Mowgli tells Bagheera: "I'm helping Baloo get ready for hibernation."

To which, Bagheera replies: "Bears don't hibernate in the jungle."

Baloo then quips: "Not full hibernation, but I nap a lot."

Despite coming across somewhat dark due to the-boy-is-in-danger plot line, the movie is lighthearted, featuring iconic

songs such as “The Bare Necessities,” “I Wanna Be Like You” and a jovial musical score.

Disney is reportedly planning a sequel already since *The Jungle Book* is already generating very strong reviews and currently stands at 90-plus percent on review aggregating website Rotten Tomatoes.

On the whole, *The Jungle Book* offers more than just the bare necessities of a typical remake for adults and kids as it features exciting action, while extolling the virtues of family and friendship, overcoming fear and defeating hatred with love and unity.

Content Watch: Rated PG for some sequences of scary action and peril, *The Jungle Book* features scenes of fighting depicted between various animals in the film, where they are seen attacking and biting one another. Although these scenes are intense, they are depicted without any details of injury or bloodletting. The film contains several scenes where characters face threatening situations and engaged in tussles. For instance, there are scenes where Mowgli is being pursued or cornered by animals. There are scary moments of attacking beasts, which could frighten smaller children. As far as spiritual content, a character tells Mowgli that elephants created the animals in the jungle and are considered having deity-like persona. The animals bow down as an act of reverence, respect and even worship when they encounter elephants. {eoa}