



The Jungle Law

Victoria Vinton

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In the tradition of *The Hours* and *The Master*, *The Jungle Law* offers a glimpse into the life of Rudyard Kipling, author of the beloved classic, *The Jungle Book*.

In 1892, at the age of twenty-six, Rudyard Kipling arrived in Vermont, virtually penniless, with a newly pregnant wife and the germ of a story about a feral child who was raised by a pack of wolves. Having fled the literary high life in London, he hoped to find a quiet corner in which to raise a family and work, where he might build a sanctuary that could offer him refuge from the scrutiny incurred by his burgeoning fame and the wounds of his own troubled past.

From this literary footnote, Vinton has fashioned a novel of wisdom and grace. She brings to life Kipling's early years in Bombay where he lived as the pampered son of a well-connected British family and explores the repercussions of the abandonment he felt when, at age six, he was severed from his family and sent to live in a foster home in England that he later dubbed "The House of Desolation." And she shows how those experiences formed the basis of his art, how from this cauldron of comfort and pain he wrote *The Jungle Books* and created his most enduring character, Mowgli.

Mixing fact and invention, Victoria Vinton parallels Kipling's story with that of his neighbors, the Connollys, who are forced to question the decisions they have made in the wake of Kipling's presence in their lives. Eleven-year-old Joe Connolly finds himself drawn to Kipling and his stories, seeing in the adventures of Mowgli a template for his own escape. Jack, his father, views Kipling's influence over his son as a challenge to his very sense of self. And Addie, Jack's wife, must embrace and assimilate these changes in order to hold her family together, as each is confronted by the unsettling power of the imagination.

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