

## 'Life of Pi' Chapter Summaries and Questions



### Author's Note

The fictional author arrives in India, tired and unhappy with his current progress on a novel. He decides it isn't working and mails the notes for it to a fake address in Siberia. While he ponders his novel in Pondicherry, he meets a man named Francis Adirubasamy in a coffee shop. The man has a story for the author, one "that will make [him] believe in God." At first unsure, the author thinks the man is a religious fanatic. Adirubasamy refers the author to a man in Toronto by the name of Patel.

1. Why has Martel chosen to begin with a fictionalised author's note?
2. Martel presents an idyllic description of Indian (p x). What does this set up in reader's minds?
3. Martel suggests that fiction is "the selective transforming of reality". How valid is this assertion?
4. What is Martel suggesting was missing from the story set in Portugal?
5. Adirubasamy tells the author that he "has a story that will make you believe in God". Does 'Life of Pi' achieve this?
6. Martel ends the 'Author's note' with the suggestion that without art, "we sacrifice our imagination at the altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams" (p xiv). Explain this statement.

## PART ONE

### Chapter 1

The novel changes to Pi Patel's voice now, told in the first person as a memoir. The narrator first introduces himself as a graduate in both Religious Studies and Zoology at the University of Toronto. He describes his thesis on the thyroid gland of a three-toed sloth and goes on in detail about that sloth. He was given great credit for his knowledge in the zoology field but also held back because of his inability to divide religion and science. He describes the Goddess Lakshmi, a Hindu deity and how he misses India despite his love for Canada. He also describes how he misses Richard Parker. He goes on to mention his time in Mexico and a situation in an Indian restaurant in Canada.

7. Why does Pi say he chose the three-toed-sloth as his subject of study? How might the sloth "soothe [his] shattered self"? (p 3)
8. In what way does the three-toed-sloth remind Pi of God?
9. Pi suggests that "When you've suffered a great deal in life, each additional pain is both unbearable and trifling." (p 5) Explain what he means.
10. Pi explains that Oxford "is fifth on the list of cities I would like to visit before I pass on, after Mecca, Varanasi, Jerusalem and Paris." (p 6). Explain Pi's choice of cities.
11. Why does the waiter's comments in the restaurant wound Pi?

## Chapter 2

Returning to the Author's narration, we learn that Pi Patel lives in Scarborough and is a small man of about forty. He speaks very fast and begins his story. This Chapter reminds the reader that Chapter one was the beginning of an interview, which will continue.



## Chapter 3

Pi relates about Francis Adirubasamy, a friend of the Patel family. As a world champion swimmer, he always tried to teach the Patel family to swim, but only succeeded with Pi. We also learn that Francis was a great fan of the swimming pools of Paris, including one in particular, the Piscine Molitor, which his family subsequently named Pi after. It is only at this point that the reader is given Piscine Molitor Patel's full name.

12. Why was swimming Mamaji's "gift" to Pi?
13. What is it about Mamaji's stories that captivate Pi's father? Why might he have chosen to name his son after a swimming pool in Paris when Pondicherry has the expanse of the Indian Ocean at its feet?

## Chapter 4

Pi describes the beautiful Pondicherry Zoo, run by his father, a former hotel operator. He compares the keeping of a zoo to the keeping of a hotel and how animals are similar to hotel occupants. While growing up in a zoo, Pi learns much of the world of nature. He loves the beauty and perfection of it all and sees the animals as happy for having their own territories. He claims that animals in the wild do not truly have freedom because they are dictated by their predators and the space restrictions.

14. Pi questions the notion that animals are unhappy in zoos because their freedom is curtailed. Explain the reasons he gives.
15. The Chapter ends with Pi comparing peoples' problems with zoos with their problem with religion and suggests that "Certain illusions about freedom plague them both." (p 19) What might he mean?

## Chapter 5

Pi was unhappy as a child with his name (Piscine), as it was often mispronounced as "pissing" when it is meant to be pronounced as "pea-seen". For that reason as he grows up and enters the next level of school, he makes a show of jumping up during roll call and announcing to the class that his name is "Pi" even illustrating it with the mathematical symbol on the chalkboard.

16. Why is it, as Pi suggests, "a law of human nature that those who live by the sea are suspicious of swimmers"? (p 22)
17. Pi explains "in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge." (p 24) How does this explain Pi's character and nature?

## Chapter 6

The author interjects again, describing Patel's cooking ability as an adult and his back stock of food, enough to "last the siege of Leningrad."



## Chapter 7

Pi meets with Satish Kumar, a very particular teacher of his – a communist, atheist, biology teacher, and one of Pi's favorites. Satish Kumar begins to relay his belief that all things can be described scientifically, describing his bout with polio and how medicine saved him as a child, not God. Pi comments on how atheists are more acceptable than agnostics, who are full of doubt.

18. Explain the reason Mr Kumar sees religion as darkness and Pi sees religion as light.
19. Pi sees atheists and agnostics very differently. Why is this?

## Chapter 8

Visitors to the zoo are responsible for performing a great deal of horrible things with the animals, declaring humans as the worst of all animals. Pi's father shows the boys a tiger that has not been fed for three days, a standard condition in the wild. Watching what occurs when a goat is introduced to the cage scares "the living vegetarian daylight" out of Pi. His father goes on to describe the strength of every animal in the zoo against human beings, that is of course except guinea pigs.

20. Why does Pi suggest that the most dangerous animal in a zoo is man and that even more dangerous is *Animalus anthropomorphicus*?
21. Why might Pi have "anthropomorphized the animals until they spoke fluent English"? (p 34)

## Chapter 9

Starting here, Pi describes some of the science of zoology and zoo keeping. Here he goes on about flight distance and how far an animal will stay from an enemy. That distance can be diminished by offering ample food, water, and shelter.

22. What does Pi's father's "intuitive gift" say about the relationship between animals and humans?

## Chapter 10

Pi describes animals that would not enjoy captivity, those that were captured and brought to the zoo or those few zoo bred creatures that temporarily feel the instinctual call to leave. He describes how animals are leaving something not seeking something when they escape.

## Chapter 11

As an example, Pi tells of a leopard in the mountains of Switzerland who survived there for two months.



## Chapter 12

Going back to the author, we learn that Pi is often upset about something, that whoever Richard Parker is, he still “preys on his mind”. He mentions that he visits Patel often and that every time he’s there Pi cooks very spicy food.

23. The author suggests that “Memory is an ocean and he bobs on its surface.” What role does memory play in storytelling? In survival? In understanding life experience?
24. Why is it that Richard Parker still preys on Pi’s mind?

## Chapter 13

Again focusing on animal training, Pi discusses lion taming. He discusses the act of establishing dominance over a lion with a whip and establishing alpha male status. It actually calms most animals to know their place in the order of things. Without unknowns, they don’t need to worry.

## Chapter 14

With more on lion training, Pi describes how the lower the social standing of an animal, the easier it is to train them. It will be loyal and loving with a trainer because the trainer offers it protection and food, something all creatures seek in nature. It serves to display how an animal clearly stronger than a human might submit to a human being which it could easily kill.

## Chapter 15

The author returns, describing Pi’s home as very religious, similar to a temple. There are numerous religious artifacts representing numerous different religions, from Hinduism to Christianity and Islam. He only describes the area without making comments. This Chapter begins the discussion of the various religious discussions in the next few Chapters.

25. What is the function of the fictional author’s input into the story?
26. Create a table that lists the icons and central beliefs of each of the three faiths that Pi embraces.

## Chapter 16

Pi’s first visit to a Hindu temple as a child is full of wonderment and worship rituals. He describes the details of the rituals and what they stand for in the religion. He is a very religious man and enjoys it, but explains that fundamentalism is flawed with a story about Krishna disappearing before possessive milkmaids. He mentions both Christians

for their trust in love and Muslims for their awareness of God in everything. He makes a very circuitous description of how different the religions are and yet how with a different hat they are completely interchangeable.



27. Pi suggests that “many people seem to lose God along life’s way.” Why is this the case? Is this true of our community/ society?
28. Describe the significant rituals of each of the religious traditions that Pi embraces.
29. Pi says “the universe makes sense to me through Hindu eyes.” What eyes do we use to make sense of the universe? Why is/ isn’t that through the eyes of faith?
30. Summarise Pi’s view of religion.

## Chapter 17

On a trip to Munnar, Pi notices a trio of hills, each with a temple, church, or mosque on it. Seeing the three equally spaced and realizing his foundation in the Hindu faith, he goes to meet Jesus Christ. He sees a priest from a distance and is astounded by his acts of love. He is confused, but enters the church anyways, wondering which statue is meant to represent the Catholic god.

The following day he meets Father Martin on a return trip and learns more of Christianity and the nature of Jesus and his sacrifice. Pi tries to understand by comparing Hindu deities to the Christian faith but fails in doing so. Over the course of days, the two meet often and Pi asks numerous questions, attempting to learn more. Many of the answers end with “love” as the simple answer and Pi begins to relate Christianity with the concept of love. He decides he will become a Christian, praying at the church, then going back to the Hindu temple and giving thanks for helping him find the Catholic faith.

31. Pi suggests that Catholics have a “reputation for severity”. What stereotypes do we associate with religion generally and Christianity, Hinduism and Islam specifically?
32. Pi sees the Catholic concept of Christ sacrificing his life for the sins of man to be a “weird story” and “peculiar psychology”. Is that what religion is? Is that what faith is?
33. Pi sees God as “God should be. With shine and power and might.” Is scepticism about God because mankind wants something obviously omniscient and omnipresent?

## Chapter 18

A year passes and Pi experiences the same curiosity when he witnesses the Great Mosque. He sees it but is afraid to enter, so enters a local bakery instead. While talking to the bakery’s owner, the owner is called to prayer by the muezzin (the man at the mosque who calls the time for prayer). He witnesses the bakery owners relaxed, repetitive prayer motions and later thinks on it while praying at the Catholic Church.

34. Pi's strength is his inquiring mind. How important is this to Pi and to faith generally?



## Chapter 19

He goes back to the bakery to ask the baker questions on the religion and is led to the mosque where he participates in the bowing and prayers with the other Muslims.

35. Pi makes a distinction between the essence of faith and the practice of faith. "I challenge anyone to understand Islam, its spirit, and not to love it. It is a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotion." Why might it be difficult to make this distinction?

36. 'Life of Pi' was first published in Canada on September 11 2001. What contribution might the book make towards interreligious discourse in a post 9/11 world?

## Chapter 20

Pi relays that the baker is also named Satish Kumar, the same as his biology teacher and is a Sufi or Muslim mystic. He begins to see Kumar's home as a holy place and after praying with him for a while feels the profundity of those prayers and relays that he currently practices all three religions every day. He even describes an instance in which he witnessed the Virgin Mary in Canada.

37. Pi described Mr and Mr Kumar as "the prophets of my youth". What do these two men teach Pi and why is it a peculiar combination?

## Chapter 21

The author returns again to discuss his afternoons with Pi. He ponders the words of Pi related in the next Chapter about religion and atheism.

## Chapter 22

Pi thinks on how an atheist might experience death, upon that final revelation. He once again brings up his unhappiness with agnosticism and how an agnostic in death might cling to "dry, yeastless factuality" and miss the "better story" as mentioned by the author in Chapter 21. He does not appreciate their lack of imagination and faith.

38. Chapter 22 holds a key statement in the novel – if we lack imagination (faith), we miss the better story. To what extent is this true?

## Chapter 23

A couple of years have passed since Pi's last relation of events in his life and he's been practicing his religions in triplicate for a couple of years, now 16. While at the beach, all three of the religious leaders Pi studies with appear and meet his family. He knows his choice of religious multiplicity will not be accepted and when the priest says Pi is a good



Christian, the others react confusedly. They argue for a bit, declaring Pi as their own until they agree that it is okay for him to be so religious and a seeker of God. However, they end up deciding that he cannot be of all three religions and must choose one. His reply, "I just want to love God" quiets them all and they walk away. The family walks on with some ice cream and the matter is left alone.



39. Why is there a need for 'competition' among religion?
40. How do each of religious men see the others? Why is it that these men are focusing on the differences between their faiths while Pi is focused on the similarities?
41. Pi says "Bapu Gandhi said 'All religions are true.' I just want to love God." Why are the religious men so bothered by Pi's practice of all three faiths simultaneously?

## **Chapter 24**

Ravi goes on to tease Pi about the encounter and his multiplicity. He jokes about religious holidays and how Pi more or less gets every day as a holiday by recognizing three religions.

## **Chapter 25**

Pi rails against those that do not accept his religious choices openly. He comments on their close mindedness. Regardless of his opinions though he is not allowed in any of the standard churches, temples or mosques and is forced to worship on his own. He decides that religion is played out within, not outside.

42. Why does people's judgement impact on faith?

## **Chapter 26**

Pi goes to his father for religious items. He asks for a Christian baptism and an Islamic prayer rug. Pi's father goes on about the differences between the religions trying to dissuade his son but is stopped by his son's litany of details about each religion. His father states that they are Indian and that he should be Hindu to which Pi replies that both Christian and Muslim faith have been in India for centuries. His parents begin to pass him back and forth and change topics repeatedly. His mother tries to introduce new books to him and when he brings up Francis's multiple passports he only disturbs her that much more.

## **Chapter 27**

Discussing Pi's requests, his parents compare his spiritual quest with the changes of the political status of India under Indira Gandhi. They compare them both as foolishness and decide Pi will eventually get over it (as they hope Gandhi will), giving into his requests in the end.

43. Why does faith challenge us and seem so at odds with modernity?

44. What position does Pi's mother and father take to his beliefs?



### **Chapter 28**

Pi takes his prayer rug outside and absorbs the beauty of the outdoors. His family watches him in a mixture of curiosity and embarrassment through it all, including his joy at being baptized. Eventually his parents come to accept him despite his brother's teasing.

45. What is prayer? What conventions govern prayer? Are these conventions necessary?

### **Chapter 29**

Despite the major issues on the political landscape (which he understands but does not care for) Pi is happy with his life in the zoo and with God. His father though is very much so upset by Gandhi's takeover of the government and how that will affect his zoo. Because it appears more and more so as though the zoo will fail in India, Pi's father decides to leave India for Canada.

46. What role do cultural institutions play as keepers of truth?

### **Chapter 30**

Returning to the author, he narrates the meeting of Pi's wife, a Canadian, second generation Indian pharmacist. He realizes then that the house is filled with not only religious evidence but marriage evidence. He thinks that maybe Pi's wife had cooked the horrible spicy dishes for him, but learns later that it was in fact Pi.

47. The author observes that "Life has taught him not to show off what is most precious to him." What has provided this lesson?

### **Chapter 31**

As Pi awaits Mr. Kumar (the Sufi) in his father's zoo, he worries because he cannot recognize him, rubbing his eyes as an excuse for not seeing him arrive. When he does arrive, they take a walk and discuss the different animals and how they interact, especially the Zebras. The other Mr. Kumar arrives and Pi lets them both feed the Zebras with a carrot. They all marvel at the beauty of the experience. The two Kumars, representing science and religion interact the same with nature in this scene.

48. What is the significance of this chapter and what does it say about the views of science and religion?

49. If science explains what we know and religion explains what we do not (yet) know, might they be part of the same continuum of knowledge and understanding?



## Chapter 32

Zoomorphism is when an animal sees another as one of its own. Pi explains this in terms of the lion tamer once again, and how a lion will see the human tamer as an alpha creature. He gives numerous examples such as a mouse living in peace with a snake for weeks. The snake for whatever reason does not eat the mouse. Eventually a second, younger snake eats the mouse. He describes the process in detail and how the snake must feel regret for eating a mouse.



## Chapter 33

The author returns, looking at Pi's old photographs. Most are of Pi in Canada, but four remain from Pi's childhood. Richard Parker is in one picture, though not recognizable as the reader has not yet been introduced to Richard Parker. Pi comments that he is said he cannot remember his mother, as he has no picture of her.

50. What is significant about the 4 photos that Pi has left of his life before the Pacific Ocean?

## Chapter 34

Pi's father sells the animals to zoos across the ocean, many in America. Pi compares himself and his brother to the animals soon to be shipped overseas. It takes over a year to prepare to leave, due to so much paperwork for such a substantial transfer. Eventually the Patel family prepares to leave and Americans arrive to check out the animals.

## Chapter 35

The date of Pi's family's departure is given as June 21, 1977 (summer solstice) on the Japanese freighter, Tsimtsum along with the animals in their cages. He is incredibly excited to be leaving. This Chapter delivers the final beautiful descriptions of India and Pi's mother country for the book.

51. Pi reflects "Things didn't turn out the way they were supposed to, but what can you do? You must take like the way it comes at you and make the best of it." What might explain Pi's acceptance of the chances of life?

## Chapter 36

The author interrupts again, having arrived early to Pi's. Pi's son runs out, late for practice after which Pi apologizes for not introducing the author to his son, his four year old daughter, a dog, and a cat. He states "this story has a happy ending", having finally revealed to the author that there are other people in his life. This is the last time the author interjects as this is the last Chapter in Part 1 of the book.

52. What makes the fictional author comment that this story has a happy ending?  
53. Why does Yann Martell choose to end Part 1 with this scene of domesticity?

## **PART TWO**

### **Chapter 37**



After the Tsimtsum sinks, Pi is stuck aboard a lifeboat with a zebra whose leg is broken. He sees Richard Parker in the water and calls him to him and helps get him aboard. When he finally realizes what he is doing, he sees that he has helped bring aboard Richard Parker, a 450 pound Bengal tiger. Pi immediately jumps overboard to escape.

54. Pi questions the purpose of reason. Why does he struggle with this?
55. Pi addresses his questions about life and the sense of the tragedy to Richard Parker. Why is this?

### **Chapter 38**

Returning to his days on the boat, Pi describes the voyage on the Tsimtsum. He describes the chimpanzee and her bananas and Ravi's vivid interest in the engine room where he thinks something is off. One night, late, Pi hears an explosion and tries to wake his brother. He fails and heads up top to the deck to see what has happened. When he tries to go back below, the stairwell is blocked by water so he runs to three Chinese crew people who give him a life jacket and a whistle and throw him over board. The ship is sinking.

### **Chapter 39**

After being thrown, he lands on a lifeboat's tarpaulin, losing his life jacket. He manages to keep the whistle though. As he tries to recover the Chinese crew members start yelling at him. Immediately afterwards a Zebra crashes aboard, followed by the boat breaking free of the freighter and hitting the water.

### **Chapter 40**

Back in the water after jumping away from Richard Parker, Pi clings to a buoy hoping to keep far enough from Richard Parker not to be eaten. He sees though that there are sharks in the water, so when he cannot see Richard Parker under the tarpaulin, he wedges an oar under it and climbs out of the water.

56. Pi reflects "I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the Pacific, hanging on to an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me." Why doesn't Pi simply give up?

### **Chapter 41**

Pi comes closer and closer to the boat on the oar and decides that if Richard Parker is beneath the tarpaulin, he will not come out with Pi out of sight. Pi comes aboard and comments on how amazing the zebra looks, wondering why it hasn't been eaten yet. He sees yet another animal aboard too, a spotted hyena. He cynically thinks that the crewmembers might have tossed him overboard to get rid of the hyena and save

themselves. He assumes the tiger fell overboard because there is no way a tiger and a hyena could exist together.



57. Martel injects some humour into the narrative with Pi reflecting “I never thought that finding myself confined in a small space with a spotted hyena would be good news, but there you go.” What does this say about Pi’s character?

## Chapter 42

Floating in the ocean, Pi comes across a female orangutan named Orange Juice. He grabs the banana net she drifts towards him on and climbs aboard the boat, causing the hyena to scream.

58. Why does Orange Juice bring both “joy and pain in equal measure”?  
59. Comment on Martel’s choice of animals. What might each represent?

## Chapter 43

While Pi thinks to himself that there are likely hundreds of rescuers out looking for him, that he and Orange Juice will be rescued from their ocean prison, the hyena continues to pace the boat, at one point jumping onto the tarpaulin for a moment before running back in fear. It starts barking and running around the zebra while Pi sits in fear contemplating just how disturbing the hyena is as a creature. Eventually the hyena vomits and lies down.

60. On what does Pi base his assumption that hundreds of rescuers are looking for them? What does the reality suggest about the insignificance of the ship in the Pacific and the insignificance of human beings in creation?

## Chapter 44

When the sun comes up, Pi still sits on the oar, afraid to enter the boat with the predators. He wonders what the dark will do to the animals before hearing the barking of the hyena and the grunting of the orangutan. Beneath the boat, water predators continue to make noise as well. Pi is surrounded.

## Chapter 45

As the sun comes up, Pi searches in vain for the rescue ship he is sure must be looking for him. He sees below that the hyena is finally eating the zebra, even though the zebra is still alive. As the boat rocks, Pi becomes nauseas. When he moves, he witnesses Orange Juice looking sick as well, wondering why she is still safe, not yet killed by the hyena.

61. Pi reflects that his “sense of empathy is blunted by a terrible, selfish hunger for survival”. How has Pi changed since the ship sank (in these early days of his journey on the Pacific)?
62. Orange Juice provides Pi a moment of relief. Comments on the significance of the animals that end up on the boat with Pi.



### **Chapter 46**

In his memory, the second night aboard the boat was the worst of them all, regardless of the 226 other nights. He sees more sharks in the water and watches as Orange Juice searches for her sons (as he puts the emotion to her). As the zebra continues to protest being eaten, the hyena becomes enraged and tears into the animal noisily. The hyena slips and slides in blood, eating the zebra from the inside out, while it's still alive. The sight angers Orange Juice, causing her to roar, to which the hyena roars back. When the zebra spouts blood, the sharks react in a frenzy of their own and even more noise ensues. Finally, after a long time of ample noise, it all stops and Pi is left with his thoughts, crying in the night over the loss of everything he knows.

63. What is it about the second night that leads Pi to remember it being a night of “exceptional suffering”?
64. Why does Orange Juice react the way she does to the zebra's demise?

### **Chapter 47**

When the sun dawns again, Pi sees the zebra is still moving. It doesn't die until noon, but as soon as it does, the hyena attacks Orange Juice. The two fight for a while as Orange Juice attacks the hyena, beating him. He also remembers that she was once a pet who became too big for its owners. Eventually the hyena snags her throat though and as Pi is afraid that he will be next he moves toward the Hyena to do what he can. In doing so, he sees that Richard Parker is still beneath the tarpaulin. He struggles back up above and collapses into delirium for the rest of the night.

65. What side of Orange Juice do we see in this Chapter and what does it suggest to us about animal instinct versus human instinct?
66. What function does the grizzly details of the death of the zebra and Orange Juice serve in the story? Why has Yann Martel chosen to go into this level of detail?

### **Chapter 48**

Finally we learn how it is that Richard Parker came by a human name. When a half dozen people are found dead in a mountain area of Bangladesh, a hunter is hired to capture the panther they believe did it. It turns out to be a Tiger with her cub. The hunter captures the two and sends them off to Pondicherry zoo. On the paperwork the names of the hunter and the tiger cubby (Thirsty) are mixed up and Pi's father finds it amusing enough to leave it as is.

## Chapter 49



Finally, Pi realizes that he's been awake and hasn't eaten or drank anything in three days. For some reason, the situation with Richard Parker, as hopeless as it seems, perks up Pi who begins to look for a source of drinking water. He no longer fears the hyena because of the tiger's presence and he now figures out the prior odd behavior of the other animals was likely in response to the presence of the tiger. He cannot however figure out why the tiger is acting so strange, assuming it's either the sedatives or seasickness.

67. Pi says that having "lost all hope" he "perked up and felt much better". Explain this apparent contradiction.
68. Pi rationalises that the hyena's behaviour can be explained because "in the face of such a superior predator, all of us were prey". What does this suggest about nature and our place within in?

## Chapter 50

Here, Pi describes in minute detail every aspect of the lifeboat, from the size to the shape and room Richard Parker is taking up under the tarpaulin. He notes there are five oars but that he has no strength to row.

## Chapter 51

As he keeps looking, Pi becomes desperate and unhooks the tarpaulin to look where Richard Parker is hiding. He spots multiple life jackets which he mistakes for the tiger and is scared again. Eventually he opens the compartment that was under the tarpaulin, which when opened blocks the opening to Richard Parker's den. He finds in there numerous survival supplies. He immediately drinks four cans of water and throws his vegetarian diet away to eat animal fat enhanced biscuits. After looking through the materials at his disposal he decides he has enough food for 93 days and enough water for 124 days.

## Chapter 52

Pi does inventory of the lifeboat, comes up with: food, water, ropes, rain catchers, a notebook, and more from the locker. He finally has a decent night's sleep.

69. Comment on the detail Pi includes in his list.

## Chapter 53

Pi tries to decide what is best for him, certain of death if he stays on the boat and certain of death if he jumps overboard. He once again falls into despair over his losses and the only thing that keeps him going is a short prayer he keeps telling himself, "so long as God is with me, I will not die. Amen." He decides to build a raft from the life jackets in the boat and the ropes in the locker. He puts the buoy in the middle and sets it attached to the front of the boat. The hyena is freaking out and Pi hopes to finish before it's too late.



It's then that Richard Parker finally rises to his full size and quickly kills the hyena. The tiger moans from the rocking of the boat, clearly seasick and turns to face Pi. Afraid for his life, Pi still manages to note the beauty of the tiger. When a rat runs across Pi's head, Richard Parker tries to attack. He cannot quite make it because of the motion of the boat though and it gives Pi to throw the rat at the tiger. Satisfied with his treat, Pi is able to retreat and escape the tiger's attack. He notices soon afterward that Richard Parker had vomited in his space.

With the time he's given, Pi quickly finishes the raft and gets aboard. He keeps it close to the lifeboat, but it floats and offers a source of safety to keep away from the tiger. When it starts raining and Pi goes to get a rain catcher, Richard Parker hears and goes to attack, forcing Pi to quickly push away from the boat.

### **Chapter 54**

In the cold and wet, Pi cannot sleep and as the sea gets worse and the rain gets harder, he worries the raft will not hold. He decides he needs new plans, of which he manages to craft five. None of them will work, so he decides he can win against Richard Parker via attrition. He thinks he can simply outlive the tiger that will not have water or food.

### **Chapter 55**

After a full night and half a day of rain, Pi is exhausted and barely remembers what he was thinking before. He eventually falls asleep when the sun finally arrives. He sees Richard Parker jumping across the expanse of water and attacking him and remembers that tigers can drink salt water. Ultimately he concludes that plan 6 is ultimately doomed from the start.

### **Chapter 56**

Pi ruminates on the nature of fear and that regardless of how smart you might be, fear will destroy you. It attacks all of the parts of the body and will defeat you. He decides fear is his greatest opponent.

### **Chapter 57**

Richard Parker seems full and watered and is making a purring type sound that his father told him is contentedness. He decides that the only way he can survive is if they both survive. The only way to accomplish that is to tame the tiger. He realizes he has a way of defeating fear now and staying alive.

He pulls out his whistle and with huge gestures and circus performer flare, makes the tiger step back and cringe. For a moment at least, Pi instills fear in the tiger. His seventh plan is created, keeping Richard Parker alive.



## Chapter 58

Pi finds a survival guide and begins listing the tips from it. There are numerous useful tips and some specific ways to keep alive while adrift, but not a spot on training tigers or co-existing with a 450 pound predator. He must create his own training plan, starting with the dictation of territory, creation of shelter, and more.



70. Comment on the usefulness of the survival manual.

71. Pi says "Survival had to start with me." Comment on the survival Pi had to come to terms with.

## Chapter 59

Pi begins to note the effects of his movement on the lifeboat and the raft and how they maneuver within the sea. When he pulls the boat closer, the boat rocks and waves, upsetting Richard Parker. As Richard Parker howls, the last vestiges of life in the rats and cockroaches flee the boat.

When Pi returns to the tarpaulin he notes that Richard Parker has marked his territory only underneath the cover. He snags some rain water that has collected and drinks it, then replaces it with his own urine and marks the top of the tarpaulin to claim his own territory.

His next step is to pull out the solar stills and string them along behind the boat. He adds a seat and a small shelter to the raft and watches the tiger. When he has his raft sufficiently stocked, he lets it out and watches Richard Parker from afar.

While he's watching, he notices below that there are dozens of different creatures in the sea below him. He sees that there are even more creatures than he originally thought when he only saw dolphins on the boat.

72. Discuss the significance of the two life forms left adrift in the Pacific.

73. From the raft Pi has a different perspective of the ocean than he did from the ship. How might this be a metaphor for our view of the world?

## Chapter 60

Waking up in the middle of the night, Pi compares the beauty of his surroundings with a Hindu story he remembers from his youth of Markandeya, who sees the cosmos when he falls from Vishnu's mouth. The thought makes Pi feel very small compared to the universe, and he prays before going back to sleep.

74. What does viewing the ocean at night teach Pi about his predicament?

## Chapter 61

Pi feels much stronger and better about his situation as he attempts fishing to catch food using his shoes. After failing, he looks for more bait in the locker and still finds nothing.



When he notices Richard Parker staring at him he freezes until a flying fish hits him in the face. He sees the fish flopping around inside the locker and tosses it Richard Parker. Unfortunately, the tiger misses the fish, but more fish begin to jump out of the water to escape predators. While Pi is berated with fish, Richard Parker takes the chance to eat the fish and feed amply. Before heading back to his raft, Pi grabs one of the fish for himself.

As he agonizes over killing the fish to use as bait, he reaches tears comparing himself to Cain in his crime. The flying fish works wonderfully as bait though and he manages to catch three of the large dorado. This time around he has no problem killing the fish as they are for Richard Parker instead. He feeds Richard Parker and uses the opportunity to blow his whistle and show his dominance once more.

75. What is Pi's explanation for the fact that he wept over the having to kill the flying fish, yet killed the dorado he caught without a second thought?

## **Chapter 62**

Pi has trouble sleeping and decides to take some time paying attention to Richard Parker. He notes that he is probably thirsty and starts looking for a way to get water to the tiger without digging into his own supply. The solar stills that he set up have succeeded in creating a large amount of water though, so he puts the water in a bucket and adds some sea water for Richard Parker. He throws fish to the tiger and attaches the bucket to a bench for him. When he goes for the fish and notices the water, Pi blows his whistle and looks Richard Parker directly in the eyes and sends him running. After another bout of fishing, Pi has no more success, but he notes a sea turtle which he might have to turn to in the future. It's been one week since the freighter sank.

## **Chapter 63**

Pi steps back from his narrative a bit and compares his 227 days to the duration of other castaways in history. He trumps them all, and gives credit to how busy he kept himself. His prayers were a large part of it, as well as Richard Parker. Richard Parker for his part is staying away because of the heat and the motion of the boat. He mentions as well that he does not remember any specific dates or times in order, just the beginning and ending of his journey.

76. What function did routine play in ensuring Pi's survival?  
77. Pi prays 5 times a day in adherence to Muslim practice. In what way does this assist in his survival?  
78. Why does Pi stop looking for rescue vessels?

## **Chapter 64**

Pi describes how his clothes disintegrate and his skin begins to feel the damage of his days at sea. His boils and sores would not heal because of how horrible the sea water and sun were on the skin.



## Chapter 65

Pi reads through the navigation instructions in his survival guide to no avail, not quite understanding them without sea or navigation training. He recognizes that he can control his life but he has absolutely no control over what direction he's going or how to change that direction.

79. The survival manual assumes scientific knowledge that Pi doesn't have. Explain the paradox.

## Chapter 66

After a while of failed hook and line fishing, Pi decides to start impaling them. The revulsion he felt early on has passed and he has no trouble with killing them any more. At times, the use of the banana net from the boat is useful and he catches so many fish that he feels covered in their scales. He has even stooped to killing turtles and wrestling them aboard.

80. Pi says that he "descended to a level of savagery [he] never thought possible". What does this suggest about the human instinct for survival?

## Chapter 67

The distractions of the day are becoming more and more important as monotony and boredom begin to overtake Pi. He witnesses the eco-system of algae, worms, slugs, shrimp, and fish growing and living on or around his raft. He eventually begins eating the crabs and barnacles living on or around the lifeboat.

## Chapter 68

Richard Parker is probably the biggest distraction, as Pi watches the tiger's sleeping patterns and style while he himself cannot sleep.

## Chapter 69

There is a slight light in the distance which causes Pi to set off flares that smell like spices. It reminds him of his home and his family and a deep depression hits him. The light illuminates the sea and both he and the tiger watch it, with the despair that he might not ever be rescued.

## Chapter 70

Here, Pi goes into great detail about how to slaughter a sea turtle. He has to do it on the lifeboat. He hopes the heat will keep Richard Parker to himself. He slaughters the turtle by cutting his neck with a hatchet and draining the blood into the beaker. He drinks the blood and saws the shell off with a knife. When he finally gets the shell from his belly after much work and cannot quite kill the turtle, throwing him down to Richard Parker

and heading back to his raft. He decides he must quit working so hard for the tiger and act as the “alpha”.



## **Chapter 71**

Pi goes over the play by play manner in which he was able to tame a tiger on a lifeboat. To begin, the first step is to provoke the animal, almost to the point of attack by not quite. Keep eye contact, and when the tiger gets near blow on a whistle and drop anchor to rock the boat until the tiger is sick. Afterwards, retreat to your own area and leave the tiger be. After a while, the tiger should associate the sound of a whistle with incredible illness and only the whistle will be needed.

## **Chapter 72**

When Pi begins trying to intimidate Richard Parker in their training he uses a turtle shell shield and promptly gets smacked into the water. After a while, he’s able to recover and with more and more turtle shells he keeps trying. Eventually, with a fifth shield, he’s able to intimidate the tiger and come out victorious.

81. What does Pi’s persistence at training Richard Parker say about his personality and his ordeal?

## **Chapter 73**

Pi ruminates on how great a book would be, something to read over and over and enjoy differently each time. He wishes for scripture to read and compares himself to similarly stranded Hindu figures. He also thinks on the Gideon Bible he found in a hotel room and how great an idea it is to spread faith in places of rest. He would even go so far as to enjoy a novel at that point, but the only piece of reading he has left is the survival guide and his own choppy diary, written in tiny lettering to conserve paper. Nothing is in order and days are not catalogued. Rather it is just a mess of his ideas as they come to him and the experiences he’s undergone.

82. Pi longs to have “a long book with a never-ending story”. What might be his reasons and what does this add to Martel’s message about the nature of stories?

## **Chapter 74**

Pi uses his religious rites to calm himself, regardless of how hard they are to perform. At his worst moments, he pronounces his love of God the most. His things and his spirit are quickly falling apart though and it takes only the thought of his family to spark a small bit of hope.

83. Pi struggles with faith during his ordeal but remains faithful. What accounts for this?

## **Chapter 75**

Pi sings Happy Birthday to his mother on a day he guesses to be her birthday.

## Chapter 76

Pi is in the process of cleaning up Richard Parker's feces, noting how rarely they come now from such a horrible diet. He notes as well that Richard Parker has begun to hide them as a sign of deference to Pi and a show of bowing to Pi's dominance. By rolling the feces about and staring at Richard Parker, he's able to exert yet a further degree of dominance over the tiger.



## Chapter 77

The food is running lower by the day, so Pi begins to ration his biscuits further, eat turtles, and every part of the fish that the body can digest. He goes so far as to imagine the various extravagances of Indian cuisine in the stead of the fish parts he devours. In a fit of absolute hunger and despair, Pi tries to eat Richard Parker's feces, catching it in a cup and adding water. When he attempts to eat it though, he realizes there is nothing there to get, no nutrients, only waste so he dumps the rest out. He continues to get sicker.

## Chapter 78

There is much variance in the weather, from the clouds to the rainfall. He ponders the different sounds of the sea, the wind, and the moon, and all of those many nights spent drifting. Everything is a circle to him, with no land on the horizon, and only the sun beating down every day. He ponders whether there is anyone else out there "also trapped by geometry, also struggling with fear, rage, madness, hopelessness, apathy." Everything that happens causes joy and despair at the same time. The sun is painful but it cures the meat for Pi to eat and powers the stills that create fresh water. The night is something of relief but is cold and unknown. When he is hot, he wishes to be wet, and when wet, wishes to be dry. And all the while he is both extremely bored and absolutely terrified.

84. How does the seemingly barren and inhospitable environment provide sustenance for Pi?

## Chapter 79

There are numerous kinds of sharks in the waters always around the lifeboat. Pi enjoys their beauty as a pleasant distraction. He decides to catch one and when the Mako shark flops onto the boat, Richard Parker attacks it viciously. The shark manages to bite the tiger on the foot though and the ferocity of his roar and attack send Pi to the raft. After Richard Parker finally kills the shark, Pi is able to retrieve bits of the meat, though in the future he decides he will catch small sharks with a stab to the eye for quick kills.

## Chapter 80

Another group of flying fish arrives and as Pi hides behind one of his turtle shells, Richard Parker eats them out of the air. One of the Dorado flies into the lifeboat on its own and brings Pi great joy. Richard Parker sees the fish as well and the two stare at

each other until Pi is able to stare down the tiger, proving that he has actually mastered the tiger in full. He now feels more comfortable on the lifeboat as the alpha.



### **Chapter 81**

Pi thinks back on how amazing it was that he survived. He thinks on the fact that Richard Parker is a zoo tiger and not a wild one, meaning he relies on Pi solely for his food and water. He is still unable to believe the relationship he has with the tiger.

### **Chapter 82**

The sole and most important purpose in his life is to find and keep fresh water. He keeps it very carefully stored and adds salt for Richard Parker. There's rarely enough water to drink though. The food is even harder as Pi gives most of the fish he catches to Richard Parker. He eats everything he does catch as quickly as possible though so that the tiger doesn't get to it. He compares himself to an animal, sinking lower over time to survive.

### **Chapter 83**

When a monstrous storm strikes, the like of which could probably sink the lifeboat, Pi decides he will risk a night with Richard Parker in the lifeboat. He crawls under the tarpaulin and closes it over the top of the boat, holding tight to keep from being tossed onto the tiger. When the storm clears up, Pi's raft and most of his food are gone. Luckily, some water remains. As the day comes, Richard Parker emerges and watches Pi fix the broken bits of the boat and remove the water from it. He doesn't appear to have any interest in bothering Pi.

### **Chapter 84**

As a whale swims by, Pi thinks of them as the ocean's communicators, sharing his plight with the whole ocean. The whales themselves though were already harpooned, likely by a Japanese ship and when a few dolphins swim by, he's unable to reach them with his gaff. When he sees birds, he hopes they mean there is land nearby. Regardless, he catches one and eats its organs, throwing the rest to Richard Parker.

### **Chapter 85**

A brilliant lightning storm appears and offers Pi a bit of excitement. He hopes for Richard Parker to enjoy it with him, but the tiger is scared to shaking. Pi however is overwhelmed but not afraid, praising Allah and tries further to help Richard Parker enjoy it.

### **Chapter 86**

Pi finally sees a ship, sending him into ecstatic daydreaming of his family in Canada. When he finally realizes that the ship is a tanker, much too large to see him in the water, he barely has time to get out of its way before he's crushed. Barely escaping the tanker's



vector, Pi is able to maneuver out of the way, sending a flare off of the side of the ship in the process. Richard Parker merely naps with mild interest in the proceedings. Pi swears to save the tiger, happy as he is with his only true companion.



85. What significance does Richard Parker's presence take on after the encounter with the ship?

### **Chapter 87**

Using a dream rag, which is nothing more than a wet cloth, Pi covers his face and stops air from entering his lungs, plunging him into a deep sleep that offers him a bit of release.

86. What function does the dream rag serve? What does this say about 'escapism'?

### **Chapter 88**

Drifting into a large mass of foul smelling garbage, Pi's able to snag a wine bottle from the mess and write a short message explaining his situation and toss it back into the water.

87. What prompts Pi to write a message and set it adrift in the bottle?

88. Refer to news articles about the 'Pacific Garbage Patch'.

### **Chapter 89**

Everything that Pi has gathered is quickly breaking apart. His life vests have turned white, and the sun has even destroyed how everything smells. Richard Parker is emaciated in the same manner as Pi and his pen finally runs out, ending his journal entries. That last entry is about his own wasted condition and his guess that both he and Richard Parker will soon be dead. A bit of rain brings him hope but not enough and when Richard Parker does not move, he pokes him to see if he is still alive, guessing that he won't be for long.

89. Why has Martel chosen to make the wasted condition of Pi and Richard Parker coincide with the pen running out of ink?

### **Chapter 90**

When Richard Parker loses his vision, it is only a short while before Pi does as well. Not only that but Pi can no longer stand up or eat. He is physically beaten that the insult of blindness is nearly too much to bear.

Out of nowhere though, Pi hears a voice, at first thinking it to be his imagination and then having a full conversation with the voice about food. The voice discusses the joy of eating meat dishes with Pi to which Pi replies that a carrot would be good as well. He realizes that the other voice is very much a meat eater and he believes he might be "talking" to Richard Parker. When he asks if the voice has killed a man, the voice replies

that he has killed not only a man but a woman and eaten them both. Pi quickly changes the subject.



After a while, he realizes that the voice has a French accent and thinks that someone else must actually be there. He tells the voice his name and receives a response, asking for food. The both of them are completely blind from lack of nutrition and continue to exchange stories of food. Pi tells the man that he has no food when the other offers a trade and the two commiserate further until Pi invites him aboard to discuss things closer, to enjoy each other's company. Eventually the other fellow comes aboard and when the two embrace, it is clear that he is trying to kill and eat Pi rather than befriend him. Richard Parker responds swiftly, killing and eating the other castaway. Richard Parker saves Pi's life, but Pi is completely mortified by the act and brought to tears.

## **Chapter 91**

After rooting around in the other boat, Pi finds a bit of water and food. The tears brought on by the death of the other man have returned his vision a little bit. He rinses them further and in two days, they've completely recovered. When his vision returns he sees the final results of Richard Parker's attack on the body of the other castaway. In a final confession he admits he used bits of the dead man's flesh for bait and even ate small dried bits himself.

## **Chapter 92**

The two arrive on an island made entirely of plant mass. There is only green, which Pi finds soothing as his favorite color and the shade of Islam, but Pi thinks it to be an illusion until he steps on it and smells the plants. He falls to the ground and decides to taste the algae, a sugary coating and salty inside. He weeps in joy at having found food after going to sit under the shade of a tree.

Richard Parker also leaves the boat, with all the strength he can muster and leaves for the midst of the island. Afraid of the tiger claiming the island as his own, Pi returns to the boat after eating and resting, to be joined later by a much livelier and fed Richard Parker.

The next day, the two return to the island and eat again. After Pi returns to the boat, Richard Parker comes charging at him. He tries to stop him with the whistle, but the discomfort of the tiger forces him into the water where he swims toward the boat instead.

The next day, the two go out for more of the same, regaining their strength. Pi attempts walking for the first time again and they are feeling much healthier. After another day, Pi decides to explore the island a bit, seeing all kinds of ponds, trees and thousands of tiny meerkats. The meerkats are huddled around a pond snagging fish from below and Pi soon joins them by soaking the fresh water of the pond. Richard Parker soon arrives and decimates the meerkats. They simply allow it, not knowing anything of predators on their algae island.

After a few more days, Pi cleans out the lifeboat and explores the island further. He decides it must be about 7 miles in diameter and 20 miles around. He continues and makes further scientific judgments of the algae on the island as well.



As time passes, the two regain much of their health and strength. With the tiger regaining so much strength, Pi decides to resume training to keep him safe. He teaches the tiger how to jump through hoops, not quite able to teach him the more complicated rolling hoop tricks.

On a particular night, Pi decides to sleep in a tree with the thousands of meerkats that climb them every night. In the morning all of the furry little creatures crawl off of him and head for the ponds. He eventually brings supplies and continues sleeping in the trees, enjoying the meerkats' company. One night, he notices a dead fish in the pond that causes the meerkats to yell. In the morning the dead fish is gone.

In further travels on the island, Pi finds that the island may be carnivorous with a tree that holds a human tooth. He tests this by dropping a meerkat onto the algae at night and watching it scurry back up the tree. He decides that the island emits some kind of acid at night to digest whatever is still on it. It's time to leave the island. When he leaves, he brings a plentiful supply of water, meerkats, and fish as well as some of the algae (though it dissolves at night in the acid). He waits for Richard Parker and when the tiger returns sets back out to wander the sea in his boat.

90. Time passes at a different pace in this chapter. Why?

### **Chapter 93**

With everything around him run out, Pi is out of resources. He reaches the lowest point thus far, and decides to turn to God.

91. Pi observes "It was natural that, bereft and desperate as I was, in the throes of unremitting suffering, I should turn to God." Why is this "natural"?

### **Chapter 94**

The lifeboat comes ashore in Mexico and Pi stumbles off onto the beach. Richard Parker follows him and bolts into the jungle, never looking back. Pi feels alone, abandoned by the tiger, until he compares the beach to God and he feels its embrace. As he cries over losing Richard Parker, people find Pi on the beach, despairing that he didn't have a proper good bye to end the story. He regrets to the very day he tells the author the story that he didn't say "farewell. God be with you," to Richard Parker.

To a local village the people on the beach take Pi to be bathed and fed. He eats for days, and is eventually taken to a hospital and finally to his foster mother in Canada. Pi's story ends with special thanks to everyone who helped him along the way.

92. Why does Pi wish he had farewelled Richard Parker with "God be with you"?

## **PART THREE**

### **Chapter 95**

The author finally returns, discussing the arrival of Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba to Tomatlan. At first arriving in Tomatan, the wrong city, they travel over 1500 KM via a ferry boat and broken car to reach Tomatlan, their actual destination. After 41 hours of unpleasantness, they arrive at the Benito Juarez infirmary and interview Pi for hours, recording everything. In the end they give a copy of the entire tape and a copy of the report to the author.



### **Chapter 96**

Pi meets the Japanese men, introducing themselves as interviewers on behalf of Japan, trying to learn about the sinking of the Tsimtsum. They tell him they had a good trip in between discussing between themselves in Japanese. They hand Pi a cookie and then start an interview.

### **Chapter 97**

“The Story”

### **Chapter 98**

After asking for a break and giving Pi another cookie, the Japanese men discuss how they think Pi is crazy. They also note how Pi is hoarding cookies, offering him yet another and leaving the room temporarily.

### **Chapter 99**

The two Japanese men return and inform Pi that his story is not believable. He asks why and they mention that bananas do not float, to which Pi proves them wrong by floating two bananas in front of them. Their second point is the carnivorous island, which seems impossible. Pi states that it is unlikely that certain other plants would make sense if one had never seen them, such as a Venus Fly trap. The missing tiger is the third argument to which Pi mentions that animals escape all the time and are never found. He is angry that his story is “hard to believe” and they step aside again, commenting that he stole their entire lunches.

When Mr. Okamoto tries to discuss the sinking of the ship, Pi has none of it and they continue to argue over the truth of Pi’s story. The conversation tugs back and forth ending with idle conversation to ease the stress.

Finally, Pi angrily starts a story designed so as not to “surprise you. That will confirm what you already know.” He tells them a second story without animals in which a French Cook, a sailor with a broken leg and Pi’s mother are with him on the lifeboat. The cook cuts off the sailor’s leg and when he dies, eats him, greatly disturbing Pi and his mother. A while later Pi’s mother and the cook argue and the cook kills Pi’s mother, throwing her head to Pi. Afterwards, Pi kills the cook and finally, alone, he turns to God.

Mr. Okamoto points out the parallels in the stories and analogous situations and the two don't know what to believe. They continue to press for details about the actual sinking of the ship and continue to annoy Pi who has only bad things to say about the crew of the ship.



With neither story offering a different outcome, Pi requests that they choose which story they like best. The two men enjoy the first story, to which Pi offers thanks and begins to cry. The two men finally thank Pi and leave, commenting that they'll hide from Richard Parker. Pi comments "He's hiding somewhere you'll never find him."

## **Chapter 100**

When Mr. Okamoto finally submits his report, it does not explain why the ship sank and at the end he footnotes it with a comment stating that Pi Patel's is a great story of amazing survival as he survived "in the company of an adult Bengal tiger."