

Reading Guide

For

Life of Pi

By

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Mrs. Vance

Life of Pi – Reading Guide

VOCABULARY

crux – a central point

fiasco – a disaster

illogical – defying reason

obscurely – vaguely

purveyors – suppliers or sellers of something

1. Who is the first speaker in the book? What kind of person does he seem to be? How can you tell?
2. Do you believe everything the narrator says in the "Author's Note"? How reliable do you think he is? Why?
3. Who first tells the author about Mr. Patel's story? How many storytellers does this make in the book so far?
4. What is most significant about the story that the author hears?

PART ONE: Toronto and Pondicherry CHAPTER 1

VOCABULARY

acuity – sharpness

agnostics – people who do not believe it is possible to know whether God exists

blanched – turned pale

cosmogony – a model of the origin or creation of the universe

elicited – drew out or evoked

indolence – laziness

intriguing – arousing curiosity; fascinating

Kabbalist – a person who studies a form of mystical Judaism

repose – rest

trifling – insignificant

1. What we can determine about Mr. Patel from his tone?
2. What were Mr. Patel's two majors in college? What connection does he make between the two?
3. Near the end of this chapter, the story makes an abrupt change. We started the chapter with the narrator talking about his love of animals and his personal beliefs about God. At the end of the chapter, however, he begins talking about doctors, nurses, and his medical health. What do you think the author is trying to convey here?
4. What can we infer about the narrator so far?

CHAPTER 2

NO VOCABULARY

1. Chapter 2 is very short. Why do you think the author included this chapter? What is hinted at in this chapter?

CHAPTER 3

VOCABULARY

Artesian well – a well drilled through rock which uses natural pressure to force water up

credible – believable

tomfoolery – foolish behavior

1. What significant trait did the narrator and Mamaji share?
2. What distinction does Mr. Patel make between the ocean and the swimming pool?
3. In this chapter, we finally learn the full name of our narrator is Piscine Molitor Patel. How did he get this name and why is it significant?

CHAPTER 5

VOCABULARY

imperceptible – unable to be noticed

lackeys – low-level servants

modulations – changes in the sound of something

parched – extremely dry

1. What might be significant about the name Pi?
2. What qualities does Pi show in choosing to change his own name? What kind of person is Pi Patel?

CHAPTER 6

VOCABULARY

apothecary's – shopkeeper's

zesty – spicy, flavorful

1. Once again, the point of view shifts from first person to third person. Who do you think is speaking in this chapter?
2. Who is the narrator in this chapter describing?
3. What detail does the author note in this chapter?

CHAPTER 7

VOCABULARY

akin – like

atheist – a person who does not believe in God

avowed – sworn

bane – poison

carrion – decaying flesh

Communist – someone who subscribes to the political philosophy that all materials should be equally shared by members of society

contrite – repentant; regretful of one's actions

daubed – smeared

deluded – tricked

implored – begged

jowls – the lower part of the cheeks

organic – produced without the aid of chemicals; natural

proffered – gave

venerable – sacred

1. Analyze the description of Mr. Kumar in this chapter. What language and imagery does Pi use to describe him?

2. Why does Mr. Kumar love the zoo?
3. Explain what animals represent to Mr. Kumar and how his views on animals differ from Pi's.
4. Why does Mr. Kumar call the zoo his "temple"?
5. Describe the relationship between Pi and Mr. Kumar.
6. Why does Mr. Kumar not believe in God?
7. How are atheists like believers, according to Pi?
8. What problem does Pi have with agnostics?

CHAPTER 8

VOCABULARY

depraved – obscene

patriarch – the male head of a family

placid – calm

sari – a garment typically worn by Indian women which is wrapped around the body and then draped from a shoulder

searing – burning

tremulous – timid

vigilance – constant caution and watchfulness, especially as protection against danger

1. According to Pi, why do zoologists "commonly say...that the most dangerous animal in a zoo is man"?
2. What animal does Pi's father believe is "even more dangerous than us"?
3. Pi says, "The obsession with putting ourselves at the centre of everything is the bane not only of theologians but also of zoologists." What might he mean by this?
4. Pi's father thinks that it is important that Pi and his brother, Ravi, know how dangerous animals can be. What does Mr. Patel do to show his sons how dangerous tigers are? What theme of the book does this episode emphasize?

CHAPTER 9

VOCABULARY

diminish – lessen

perceived – believed

1. What is a "flight distance"?
2. How can a zookeeper minimize an animal's flight distance?

CHAPTER 10

VOCABULARY

detractors – those who are against something; opponents

disrepute – low esteem

essence – the basic quality

subjective – personal

1. The author of this book, Yann Martel, spends a lot of time explaining both the human and animal experience of a zoo. Why do you think that Martel goes into such detail explaining how zoos work?

2. What, according to Pi, does “an animal hate above all else”?

CHAPTER 12

NO VOCABULARY

1. What does the narrator mean when he says that whomever he visits “bobs” on the “ocean of memory”?
2. This chapter contains the first mention of someone named Richard Parker, who “still preys on [Pi’s] mind.” Who do you think Richard Parker might be?

CHAPTER 13

VOCABULARY

anarchy – a social state in which there are no leaders; chaos

ascendancy – the act of rising

larder – a place where food is kept

1. Even though, as Pi has explained, lions are dangerous, circus lion tamers are able to control them relatively easily. How can they do this?
2. What, according to Pi, accounts for most “hostile and aggressive behaviour” among animals?

CHAPTER 14

VOCABULARY

amenable – agreeable

cantankerous – grumpy; ill-tempered

compliant – going along without arguing

omega – the end

strenuous – difficult, tiring

CHAPTER 15

VOCABULARY

Ganesh – a Hindu god who is the lord of overcoming obstacles and of beginnings; he is portrayed as having the head of an elephant

Kaaba – the structure around which the holiest pilgrimage of Islam takes place

Krishna – a very important Hindu deity, manifestation of the supreme god, heroic warrior, and guide

Lakshmi – Krishna’s mother

Murti – in Hinduism, an image of the divine spirit

Simpatico – likable

Virgin Mary of Guadalupe – a vision of the Virgin Mary (Mother of the Jesus Christ) that appeared to an indigenous Mexican man; most popular religious figure of Mexico

1. What is strange about the house that the narrator describes at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What is the tone of his language as he describes the religious objects—does he sound pleased or disapproving?

CHAPTER 16

VOCABULARY

Bhajan – a Hindu devotional song

Brahman – In Hinduism, the fundamental power of the universe

finite – having an end or limit

fundamentalists – people who strictly adhere to principles or rules

Nadaswaram – wind instrument used in Indian classical music

Quebecoise – a woman from Quebec, Canada

reverent – showing respect or honor

Samskara – in Hinduism, a sense impression that forms a bridge to consciousness

sanctified – made holy

Sultriness – humidity and heat

weft – a filling of thread, as used in weaving

1. Pi begins his discussion of religion with an examination of Hinduism, the first religion he practiced. Using Pi's explanation as a basis, describe, in your own words, the concept of Brahman nirguna.
2. As opposed to Brahman nirguna, what is Brahman saguna?
3. Pi tells us that "we are all born like Catholics," by which he means we have no religious bent, but are in a kind of Limbo. What does Pi say made him a Hindu?

CHAPTER 17

VOCABULARY

cassock – a garment worn by Roman Catholic and Anglican priests

charismatic – charming or appealing

defiler – someone who desecrates a holy site

deportment – behavior

indignation – offence; anger at being improperly treated

innumerable – having such numbers as to be uncountable

intuitive – able to perceive information without rational thought

lament – a cry of grief

lethargy – sluggishness, laziness

obscure – not clearly seen

petulant – rude

rectory – the place where a priest lives

resignation – surrender

sanctum – a sacred place

serene – calm, without care

splurged – indulged extravagantly

tantamount – equal, amounting to the same thing

unremittingly – constantly; without rest

usurpers – those who overtake things by force

vestibule – a space between an inside and outside door; a lobby

1. Although Pi goes to a Christian school, he knows very little about Christianity. What are his first thoughts about the religion?
2. It is a natural thing for people to compare new concepts to what they already know. Pi's first religious experiences were in the Hindu temple. Now, he has been exposed to Christianity, and this new religion is difficult for him to understand. What is it about Christianity that confuses Pi so much?
3. In Father Martin's opinion, what does it take to be a Christian?
4. Compare and contrast the first time Pi goes into the Catholic Church in Munnar with the last time he goes there.
5. If Pi loves the fact that Hinduism is so broad and that it takes into account the existence of God in all living things, what does he like most about Christianity?
6. What is ironic about Pi's reaction to becoming a Christian?

CHAPTER 18

VOCABULARY

callisthenic – athletic; relating to exercise

entailed – involved

hovel – a small, dirty dwelling

incongruous – inconsistent

mosque – a public building in which Muslims worship

unfurled – unrolled

1. Compare and contrast the ways Pi comes to know Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam.
2. What does the Muslim man do that makes the greatest impression on Pi?

CHAPTER 19

VOCABULARY

Imam – the prayer leader of a mosque

1. Why does Piscine like praying in the mosque?

CHAPTER 23

VOCABULARY

apoplectic – extremely angry; enraged

bemused – puzzled, bewildered

esplanade – a level, paved path

existential – concerning the purpose for one's existence

incredulous – unable to believe something; amazed

orthodox – conforming to teaching or tradition

pandit – a wise and well-educated man

pastoral – relating to a minister or a pastor

revelation – the act of making something known

secular – not relating to the church

1. Why is Pi scared when he realizes that all of the religious leaders have come to see him?

2. Briefly outline each religious man's argument for his own religion and against the other two.
3. Although each religious man fights for Pi, what does Pi want for himself?
4. What does ice cream seem to symbolize in this chapter?

CHAPTER 25

VOCABULARY

resolve – a sense of purpose; determination

1. How does Pi's life change after word gets out that he has been practicing several different religions?
2. What does Pi do to combat the changes in his life?

CHAPTER 26

VOCABULARY

zeal – passion

1. What argument does Pi use when his parents say he must choose one religion and stick to it?
2. Describe Pi's argument with his mother in this chapter.

CHAPTER 27

VOCABULARY

cusp – point of change; verge

1. Does Mr. Patel support or oppose technology?
2. Why is Pi's father confused by Pi's religious devotion?
3. Why is Pi's father more willing to accept Christianity than Islam? Why is this ironic?

CHAPTER 28

VOCABULARY

extremity – far end

mottled – spotted

1. Why does Pi prefer praying outdoors?
2. What evidence do we have that Pi's family supports his religious endeavors?
3. What can we tell about Pi's personality, based on his religious convictions?

CHAPTER 29

VOCABULARY

furrows – lines, wrinkles

precarious – easily upset; in constant danger

1. What causes the Patel family to finally leave India?
2. Why does Pi make a point of telling us the animals' reactions to Mrs. Ghandi's actions?

CHAPTER 30

VOCABULARY

conjugal – relating to marriage

icons – religious images and figures

nemesis – someone who exacts revenge; enemy

1. What is the surprise that Pi has for the writer at his home?
2. Why would Pi keep this surprise secret?

CHAPTER 31

VOCABULARY

herbivores – animals that eat only plants

1. What is humorous about the way Pi greets Mr. Kumar, the baker?
2. Is Pi entertaining Mr. Kumar, the Muslim baker, Mr. Kumar, his teacher, walks up. Both Mr. Kumars end up feeding the zebras, animals that have intrigued both of them. What does this meeting symbolize, and why is it important to this novel?
3. What words does each Mr. Kumar say upon seeing the zebra? Why does the author juxtapose these two statements?

CHAPTER 32

VOCABULARY

assimilated – absorbed into a system

1. What is “zoomorphism”?
2. What is the greater meaning in Pi’s story about the mouse and the viper?
3. Why does zoomorphism occur?

CHAPTER 33

VOCABULARY

prominently – in a manner which stands out or is obvious

1. Pi shows the writer a picture of Richard Parker. What can we infer about Richard Parker, based upon this picture?
2. What do we find out about Pi’s mother in this chapter?

CHAPTER 34

VOCABULARY

profusely – in abundance

sullenly – gloomily

1. How do Pi and Ravi feel about moving to Canada?

CHAPTER 35

NO VOCABULARY

1. How old is Pi when he and his family move to Canada?
2. Why does Pi's mother really worry about the brand names of items in Canada?

CHAPTER 36

VOCABULARY

unperturbed – not bothered

1. Upon meeting Pi's son and daughter, the writer says that "this story has a happy ending." Why does the writer need to say this?

PART TWO: The Pacific Ocean CHAPTER 37

VOCABULARY

tarpaulin – a heavy cover

vigorous – strong, healthy

1. What has happened to Pi at the beginning of this chapter?
2. At first, Pi wants to save Richard Parker. Then he pushes him away. Why does Pi do this?
3. Why would Pi want to save Richard Parker in the first place?

CHAPTER 38

VOCABULARY

beckon – summon, call

davits – small cranes that are attached to boats and are used to lift cargo

dyspeptic – having an upset stomach

ensconced – settled in

listing – leaning heavily

melancholy – depressing

pandemonium – extreme disorder and noise

1. How does this chapter begin? What does this tell us about Pi?
2. What is the problem with the *Tsimtsum* that causes it to sink?
3. What does Pi mean when he says, "the ship vanished into a pinprick hole on my map"?

CHAPTER 40

VOCABULARY

fluctuating – going up and down at irregular intervals

grommets – reinforced eyelets or holes

pro – the front part of a ship

1. Pi finally hoists himself into the lifeboat. Even though he shares the small lifeboat with a zebra and a Bengal tiger, he really does not give the animals a second thought. He says he "just held onto the oar." Why does Pi not consider the fact that he will have to share the lifeboat with two large and potentially dangerous animals?

CHAPTER 41

VOCABULARY

- astride** – with one leg on each side of
- flotsam** – floating debris
- gunnel** – the top edge or rim of a boat
- listless** – having no energy
- marauding** – attacking
- semblance** – likeness
- subordinate** – under
- transfixed** – held motionless

1. What is the literary term that is used in the following quote from Chapter 41?
“Fear and reason fought over the answer. Fear said Yes.”
2. Why does Pi think Richard Parker does not try to kill the zebra?
3. Looking back to when the ship first started sinking, why did the sailors throw Pi overboard into the lifeboat?
4. Why is it fortunate for Pi that the hyena is in the lifeboat?

CHAPTER 42

VOCABULARY

- colossal** – huge, gigantic
- dispersed** – scattered
- dissembling** – pretending
- malevolent** – mean
- manna** – something good that appears unexpectedly
- matriarch** – the female head of a family
- oblivion** – the state of being entirely forgotten
- reaping** – harvesting
- tentative** – cautious, not certain

1. To whom does the following quote refer?
“She came floating on an island of bananas in a halo of light, as lovely as the Virgin Mary. The rising sun was behind her. Her flaming hair looked stunning.”
2. When Pi sees the “island of bananas,” he does not think to grab them to use as food later. He does, however, retrieve an item from the “island” that later proves to be a godsend. What is this item?

CHAPTER 44

VOCABULARY

- abstract** – existing in the mind; theoretical
- zenith** – the highest point

1. What is the worst time of day on the lifeboat? Why?

CHAPTER 45

VOCABULARY

albeit – although

amicably – happily; in a friendly manner

bask – to indulge

callous – cruel, unfeeling

disheveled – messy

empathy – feeling of identification with another

incongruous – out of place

remonstrations – objections

resolutely – determinedly

1. What is Pi's mental condition in this chapter?
2. At the beginning of this chapter, Pi notes that the night has passed, and he is cold. Still, he says that noticing that he is cold is "a distracted observation." Why would something as simple as recognizing if he is hot or cold be of no importance to Pi?
3. What surprising and upsetting fact does Pi learn about himself when he notices that the hyena has bitten off the zebra's leg?
4. Pi is worried about Orange Juice's safety in light of the fact that there is also a hyena on board. If a hyena is such a fierce predator, why does it not attack Orange Juice?

CHAPTER 46

VOCABULARY

abomination – horror

amok – wild, mad

capsize – turn over; sink

placid – calm

plummeted – fell rapidly

pungent – aromatic

viscera – the internal organs of the body

1. Earlier, the hyena bit off the zebra's leg. The zebra's leg was broken anyway, and although the injury was probably painful, the zebra continued to live. In this chapter, the hyena launches a full-scale attack on the zebra. What is Orange Juice's reaction to the hyena's attack, and why do you think she has that reaction?
2. What does Pi conclude by the sunset of the second day?

CHAPTER 47

VOCABULARY

coherence – organization

delirium – insanity

empirical – able to be proven scientifically

kinetic – full of energy

1. How does Pi discover Richard Parker? What is Pi on his way to do when he first sees the tiger?

2. The hyena has already killed the zebra. Now it has also killed Orange Juice. If the hyena wanted food, why would it kill the orangutan when it had not eaten all of the zebra?
3. Pi's story is told in first-person. He was the one who experienced what happened, and he is telling us the story directly and in his own words. So far, the recounting of what happened in Pi's life is very intense and even scary. How would it affect this novel if it was told in third-person? How would the story be different if someone who was not involved in the action of the book told us what happened?
4. Of the animals in the lifeboat, two have names (Richard Parker and Orange Juice) and two do not (the hyena and the zebra). Why are these two sets of animals treated so differently?

CHAPTER 48

VOCABULARY

befuddled – confused

imperative – necessary

marauder – a raider

1. How did Richard Parker get his name?
2. What is significant about the story of Richard Parker's name?

CHAPTER 49

VOCABULARY

asphyxiation – suffocation

compelling – forcing

consent – agreement

conundrum – a difficult or complex situation

deliberation – a discussion or consideration taken on by a group

insouciant – not showing respect or fear; cocky

putrid – rotten

reprieve – a period of delay from punishment

sustenance – food

1. When Pi realizes that Richard Parker is aboard, he completely loses his hope of survival. Even so, finding that Richard Parker is there makes him more relaxed and happy. Why is that?
2. Pi says, "the divining rod in my mind dipped sharply and a spring gushed water when I remembered that I was on a genuine, regulation lifeboat..." Why would the author choose to explain one of Pi's revelations in this manner?
3. The zebra is easy prey, having no place to go. Even so, Richard Parker, in three days of hunger and thirst, makes no effort to kill it. In fact, the tiger is so quiet that Pi does not even realize he is there. Why does Richard Parker sit by quietly while the hyena kills the zebra?

CHAPTER 50

VOCABULARY

propulsion – a pushing forward

1. Martel constructs this plot so that the animals that end up with Pi are very specific. There are an orangutan, a zebra, and the two predators, the tiger and the hyena. Why did Martel choose these particular animals for the story and how would this novel be different if he chose four other animals?
2. Pi is telling us the story years after it happened. When he was shipwrecked, he was just sixteen years old. As he tells us the story, he is considerably older, married, and the father of two children. Why, then, would he accurately remember so many details about the lifeboat, especially the exact dimensions of the boat? Could he be changing the story at all, whether accidentally or deliberately?

CHAPTER 51

VOCABULARY

cache – a hiding place

deluge – an overflowing; a flood

hasp – a fastener

suppleness – softness

supplication – prayer

unambiguous – definite, easily known

1. Pi has stressed before the importance of noticing the details of one's environment. How does this help him when he goes looking for water?

CHAPTER 52

VOCABULARY

ampoule – a small vial

1. Why does Pi make a point of listing every item he has in the boat?
2. It is only after he has taken stock of the survival rations that Pi falls asleep. Remember, he has not slept at all in three days. Why would he pick that moment to fall asleep?

CHAPTER 53

VOCABULARY

bated – held back

crevasses – deep cracks

emerged – come out

futile – hopeless

implored – begged

lithesome – possessing grace and flexibility

oppressive – overwhelming

poignancy – emotional impact

ponderous – heavy, weighty

robustly – strongly

thrall – state of being absorbed

wavered – went back and forth

1. Pi has the choice of staying in the lifeboat with Richard Parker or jumping overboard and attempting to swim to safety. Why does he choose to stay in the lifeboat?
2. Just as Pi is at the depth of his sorrow about his impending death, something changes in him. What happens to turn Pi's outlook around?
3. What event saves Pi from an attack by Richard Parker? Is this event likely, given Pi's situation, or is it hard to believe? What characteristic of Pi does this event reveal?
4. What does Pi say he discovered when he started to give up on life?

CHAPTER 54

VOCABULARY

attrition – wearing away; wearing down

erratic – unpredictable

treachery – treason

1. How does Pi plan to rid himself of Richard Parker?

CHAPTER 55

VOCABULARY

inert – unmoving

mantra – a word or phrase that has mystical powers when repeated by a person

panorama – a complete and unobstructed view

1. Pi starts to doubt his plan to outlast Richard Parker. What seems to be the biggest hole in the plan?

CHAPTER 56

VOCABULARY

adversary – opponent

1. What does Pi consider "life's only opponent" and why is it such a problem?
2. Why does Pi say it is important to express fear?

CHAPTER 57

VOCABULARY

brackish – salty

edification – improvement of understanding or knowledge

resonant – echoing

1. What is prusten and when does it occur?
2. What is the benefit for Pi if Richard Parker continues to live?
3. What does Pi now plan to do to keep Richard Parker alive and yet keep himself safe? How will he accomplish this feat?

CHAPTER 58

VOCABULARY

cryptic – difficult to understand; mysterious

daunted – intimidated

exertion – effort

1. Why is it important that Pi forgets about being rescued?

CHAPTER 59

VOCABULARY

disconsolate – deeply sorrowful; unable to be comforted

dregs – the last bits of something

evanescent – vanishing like a vapor

luminescence – the emission of light; glowing

mien – appearance

splayed – spread apart

tremulously – as if experiencing tremors; shaking

1. What is so important about the fact that the raft can be used to anchor the lifeboat?
2. What does Pi consider “good news wearing a foul dress” and what does it mean to Pi?
3. What language does Pi use to describe the sunset over the Pacific that he watches in this chapter? Why does he use this device?

CHAPTER 60

VOCABULARY

sage – a wise man

throe – spasm

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

CHAPTER 61

VOCABULARY

cowed – intimidated

exasperation – extreme irritation

onslaught – a fierce attack

rebuked – scolded

sanguinary – bloodthirsty

sentient – having the ability to feel

1. Pi has plenty of food at his disposal, so why would he consider fishing in the first place?
2. Thanks to the school of flying fish that land in the lifeboat, Pi now has bait to fish for others. The only thing he has to do is kill one of the flying fish. How does he feel about this?
3. 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

VOCABULARY

assessed – took stock of; analyzed

loath – very reluctant

marred – damaged

procure – get

rivulets – small streams

stifling – suffocating

1. What is it about his current setup with Richard Parker that reminds Pi of a zoo?

CHAPTER 63

VOCABULARY

imprinted – pressed

1. How long was Pi shipwrecked?
2. What are two things that Pi says helped him survive.

CHAPTER 66

VOCABULARY

agile – able to move easily; graceful

ambit – pattern of movement

carapace – a bony shell that covers an animal

lateral – relating to the side of something

muster – rouse

ventral – on the lower surface

1. The first time Pi fishes, he takes only one small flying fish, which he wraps in a blanket to avoid touching directly. Later, Pi no longer feels the need to use a blanket to wrap around a fish. He has absolutely no problem with touching fish with his own two hands. What can account for this change in him?

CHAPTER 68

VOCABULARY

roused – stirred

1. Review what Pi says in Chapter 4 about how easily animals adapt to zoos. Then, compare that with how well Pi and Richard Parker are adapting to their new environment.

CHAPTER 70

VOCABULARY

forbearance – patience

goad – provoke

impose – establish as the authority
reluctantly – unwillingly

1. What does killing his first turtle teach Pi?

CHAPTER 71

VOCABULARY

afflicting – troubling
affronted – insulted
construe – interpret correctly
malaise – illness; weakness
misconstrue – interpret as offensive
piqued – bothered
vexed – agitated

1. What does Pi do to step up his efforts to control Richard Parker?

CHAPTER 72

VOCABULARY

covert – secret
cuffed – struck

1. Compare and contrast Pi's method of controlling Richard Parker with the actions of an average circus lion tamer.

CHAPTER 73

VOCABULARY

disconsolate – sad, dejected

1. Other than being saved, what is Pi's greatest wish? Why is this?

CHAPTER 74

VOCABULARY

consecrated – made sacred
desolation – complete ruin

1. What does Pi mean when he says that "God's hat was always unraveling, God's pants were falling apart. God's cat was a constant danger. God's ark was a jail..."

CHAPTERS 75 AND 76

VOCABULARY

arduous – difficult
deference – respects
ominous – threatening

1. What is Pi's motivation to clean up after Richard Parker after the tiger defecates?

CHAPTER 78

VOCABULARY

abates – lets up

apathy – lack of feeling

conversely – oppositely

expendable – easily used and replaced

jubilation – celebration

perpetually – continually

provisions – food stores

1. Why are there “many skies” and “many seas”?
2. Explain the mathematical allusions Pi makes in describing role of a castaway. Why are they particularly appropriate for Pi?
3. How has Pi’s outlook about the ocean changed since he was first shipwrecked?

CHAPTER 80

VOCABULARY

defiant – not submissive

gregarious – outgoing, talkative

horde – huge number

1. Why does Pi say that he is “more set on eating than on staying alive” when he catches the dorado?
2. What is significant about the fact that Richard Parker does not fight Pi for the dorado?

CHAPTER 82

VOCABULARY

torrential – violently gushing

1. When we first meet Pi, he is an intellectual, bookish boy. How is Pi different now? What were the top three most significant things that have happened to him that have affected him the most?

CHAPTER 83

VOCABULARY

hillocks – small hills

hovering – hanging

monotonous – dull

pummeled – violently beat

1. According to Pi, what happens to us when we face continual terror?
2. Why is an orange whistle the only thing that “remain(s) between (Pi) and death”?

CHAPTER 84

VOCABULARY

alighted – landed

archipelago – a group of islands

behemoths – giants

glint – a flash of light

supernatural – unable to be explained rationally; mystic

CHAPTER 85

VOCABULARY

celestial – above the Earth; heavenly

1. Why does Pi praise Allah when he sees the lightning?

CHAPTER 86

VOCABULARY

bulwarks – the section of a ship's side rising above the upper deck

juggernaut – something that crushes everything else in its path

languishing – becoming depressed or weak

sentinel – a watchman

1. Pi shouts, blows a whistle, and even sets off a flare, yet the oil tanker takes no notice of him. Why does no one on the oil tanker see Pi?
2. At the end of this chapter, Pi tells Richard Parker that he loves him. Why does Pi love Richard Parker?

CHAPTER 88

NO VOCABULARY

1. Pi finds floating waste indicating the presence of humans. How does this sight make him feel? What kind of language does he use to describe it?

CHAPTER 89

VOCABULARY

emaciated – starved

prostrate – lying flat

subjugation – defeat

1. What is important about the fact that Pi starts to imitate Richard Parker in his daily routine?

CHAPTER 90

VOCABULARY

abundant – plentiful

amoral – being outside the concepts of right and wrong

disconsolately – hopelessly; miserably

Infernal – hellish

1. What finally marks the rock bottom of Pi's suffering?
2. Although Pi is still alone, he carries on a conversation with someone. With whom is Pi speaking?
3. The mystery speaker has killed two people. What were the circumstances that led to this? Does the speaker have any regrets about it?
4. The mystery speaker turns out to be another shipwreck victim, of French origin. What happens to him?
5. How does Pi feel when Richard Parker kills the man?

CHAPTER 91

NO VOCABULARY

1. Richard Parker has disposed of most of the human flesh from the other shipwrecked man. What does Pi do with the rest of the flesh?

CHAPTER 92

VOCABULARY

chimera – an illusion

conjecture – a guess

consternation – concern

copiously – abundantly

diurnal – active in the daytime

euphoria – extreme happiness

gait – style of walking

laden – burdened

multitude – a large number

olfactory – relating to the sense of smell

pliable – flexible

porosity – absorbency

rote – automatic; done without thought

symbiotic – deriving mutual benefit from each other; living off each other

vagaries – whims

1. Why is the island such a godsend to Pi?
2. Richard Parker has been feeding on the life forms on the island. In fact, he kills many more animals than he can eat. Why does Richard Parker continue killing animals, even after he is no longer hungry?
3. Compare and contrast Pi and Richard Parker's relationship on the lifeboat with their relationship on the island.
4. Once Pi begins sleeping on the island, he awakens to find himself covered in meerkats. He misses the meerkats then morning comes and they leave him. Why does Pi become so attached to the meerkats?
5. Pi finds a tree that seems to bear fruit. He painstakingly climbs the tree, but abandons the fruit entirely. What sinister secret does the tree hide?
6. Why do Pi and Richard Parker finally leave the island?
7. What might the symbolic significance of the island be?

CHAPTERS 93 AND 94

VOCABULARY

botch – ruin

1. What happens the last time Pi ever sees Richard Parker?
2. Why, according to Pi, is it important to “conclude things properly”?
3. Why does Pi say he turned to God after leaving the island?
4. Why does Pi credit Richard Parker with saving his life?
5. Richard Parker has been set free in the jungles of Mexico. He will no longer have to be behind bars in a zoo or trapped in a lifeboat. Why, then, does Pi refer to the jungle as “free confinement”?

PART THREE: Benito Juarez Infirmary, Tomatlan, Mexico CHAPTERS 95 AND 96

NO VOCABULARY

1. Why have members of the Japanese Ministry of Transport come to interview Pi?
2. How is the trip made by the Japanese men like the trouble with communication that resonates as a theme of the book?

CHAPTER 98

NO VOCABULARY

1. Why does Mr. Okamoto say that Pi “thinks (he and Mr. Chiba) are fools”?

CHAPTER 99

VOCABULARY

imploing – pleading

ruminants – animals that chew cud

scimitars – curved swords

1. Still disbelieving Pi’s story, Mr. Okamoto questions why no one else has seen an island of floating algae like the one Pi describes. What is Pi’s answer to Mr. Okamoto?
2. Aside from questions about the island, what else does Mr. Okamoto find unbelievable about Pi’s story?
3. What is Pi’s defense when Mr. Okamoto says that his stories are hard to believe?
4. In the alternative version of Pi’s story, who is the zebra and what is the evidence to support this?
5. Who is the orangutan? What is the evidence to support this?
6. Who is the hyena? What is the evidence to support this?
7. Who is the tiger? What is the evidence to support this?
8. If we go on the assumption that the second story, the one where Pi recounts what happened to the people on the lifeboat, is closer to reality, why does Pi come up with the story about all of the animals?
9. What do the representatives of the Maritime Department want to focus on? What does Pi want to focus on?
10. Why does Mr. Okamoto feel that Pi’s story is doubtful?
11. What does Pi say about reason in this chapter?

CHAPTER 100

VOCABULARY

licit – lawful

quadrant – a quarter of a circle

1. What is the official report on the sinking of the Tsimtsum? Why did it sink?
2. Why is Pi's story irrelevant to the report about the Tsimtsum?
3. What is interesting about the fact that this book ends at Chapter 100?
4. What does Mr. Okamoto's final report indicate about his feelings about Pi's story?