

RESOURCES:

http://www.wikisummaries.org/wiki/Life_of_Pi

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/lifeofpi>

<http://www.prezi.com/hpqjswashnyi/life-of-pi-on-anthropomorphism>

Oxford Exam Success Literature / Course Hero / Lit Charts / X-Kit Achieve / Macrat / Mrs Sperry.com

PICTURE SOURCES:

Google images

CHAPTER 21

The author sits in a café after talking with the adult Pi, and he thinks about their conversation.

He notes Pi's words about 'dry, yeastless factuality' and 'the better story.'

The following two quoted phrases are some of the most important in the book, and they will be repeated. 'Dry, yeastless factuality' is the boring reality of doubt, the agnostic's universe (to Pi), while 'the better story' is a reality brought to life through the imagination and faith.

The author feels that his own life seems mundane compared to Pi's.

He considers Pi's religious philosophies, which value moral truth or 'moral sense' above intellectual truth in understanding the universe, and on love as 'the founding principle of existence.'

He notes Pi's profound belief in love being the uniting force of his three religions.

He also contemplates 'God's silence' and says it is 'confounding' but adds there is a 'trusting sense of presence ... and purpose.'

CHAPTER 22

Pi goes back to narrating.

Pi describes the final deathbed moments of an atheist, who he imagines would take a 'leap of faith' at the last minute and might see the white light.

He then describes an agnostic, by clinging to 'dry, yeastless factuality' and miss the 'better story' due to his lack of imagination and faith.

This recalls his reflections on atheists in Chapter 7 which sums up the main theme that faith/religious belief and love make for a 'better story' and provide a richer experience and understanding of life and its purpose.

This chapter foreshadows (an indication of what is about to happen later in the story) the 'better story' of Pi's experiences, as well as his decision to tell a 'dry, yeastless', but seemingly factually 'true', story to the sceptical Japanese investigators at the end of the novel.

It raises another question central to the novel: What is 'truth' and what is 'imagination'?

Is there a clear distinction between the two, or between scientific 'truth' and religious or imaginative 'truth'?

QUESTIONS

1. What impact is the growing friendship with Pi Patel having on the fictional author? (3)

Pi's life is so full and meaningful, and Pi himself is full of life that the author is convinced of his own life being empty and monotonous.

2. What do the phrases, 'dry, yeastless factuality' and 'the better story' suggest? (3)

The author, has finished another visit with Pi, is thinking about what Pi has said to him. It is suggested that the 'better' story is not necessarily the 'factual' or believable story and that there might be something lacking in the relating of mere facts. Perhaps the story Pi is telling the narrator is not precisely factual.

CHAPTER 23

The 16 - year- old Pi, keeps his religious activities quiet; his parents have no idea that he is also a Christian and a Muslim. Mr. Patel is not religious and Mrs. Patel and Ravi are indifferent to religion yet they are culturally Hindu. Pi's devout Hinduism is of his own doing. One day, Pi is at a seaside walkway with his family.

They are confronted (by coincidence) by Pi's imam, priest and pandit, the religious leaders with whom Pi has been practising his Islam, Christianity and Hinduism.

Each religious leader is shocked to discover that Pi is not just a Hindu, Christian or Muslim, but rather all three simultaneously. Pi's parents are also surprised to learn Pi's secret.

The three 'wise men' have all seen Pi in their places of worship. When the priest, pandit and imam all commend on Pi's faith, they are sure the others must be mistaken about which religion Pi practises. The three men get into a heated argument over whose faith is superior. They insist Pi pick one religion. Pi says he just wants to love God. His father says they are all trying to love God in their own and tells the men, 'there is freedom of practice in this country'. He then takes the family out for ice cream.

The 'wise men', unlike Pi, cannot accept the commonality between the three religions, even after Pi explains himself in a simple and direct way. However, they are unable to argue with Pi's simple truth.

The chapter ends on a mildly humorous note. The three religious men walk away, essentially dissatisfied that none of them has 'won.'

QUESTIONS

1. What is ironic about the meeting of the three religious men? (3)

Rather than acting like men of God, faith, and love – practising the principles each has been teaching Pi – they act like competitors with Pi as the prize.

2. Briefly outline each religious man's argument against the other two religions.

What is the point of this scene? (4)

The priest asserts that Christianity is an all-exclusive religion – 'There's salvation only in Jesus.' He discounts Hindus as 'idolaters,' and dismisses Muhammad as an 'illiterate merchant.' The pandit insists that both Islam and Christianity are foreign, colonialist faiths imposed upon the native Hindus. The Imam asserts that Hinduism, with its caste system, is a system of slavery. He insists that both Hindus and Christians are idolaters. The point of this scene: While Pi has seen beauty and truth in all three faiths – and does not see them as exclusive – the three religious men criticize other religions than pointing out the beauties of their own.

3. Explain what Pi's father means when he says, 'there is freedom of practice in this country' (2)

India allows its citizens to practise or follow whatever religion they choose to. There is no legal persecution on the basis of faith. There is supposed to be religious tolerance.

4. In light of the theme of faith, what is Pi's possible motivation for calling these three men 'the wise men'? (3)

Pi respects and admires the wisdom of all three men.

It is a reference to the 'three wise men' of the Christian nativity story.

These men were not Christians but they recognised Jesus as God, showing that different beliefs are all in search of God.

CHAPTER 24

Ravi mocks Pi for his practice of three faiths for some time.

His confidence and light-hearted approach to life contrasts with Pi's earnestness and thoughtfulness. Despite Ravi ridiculing Pi, he does seem to care for Pi, and Pi admires his older brother. They get along well as opposites.

CHAPTER 25

Pi notes the tendency of religious believers to rush to God's defence while they ignore humans in need. He feels they do not realize religion is about dignity.

After the meeting on the walkway, Pi is rejected by all three churches. Each of the religious leaders and their followers saw Pi as having betrayed their religion and as having tricked them.

He changes Christian churches and only goes at crowded times to the temple. Pi's religion is under attack. Pi speaks about the need to defend one's own religion, and God, from the inside. Pi feels that people should spend their energy helping other and looking into their own hearts. Pi's increasing isolation among people who do not understand him and his religious beliefs foreshadows his extreme isolation in Part Two.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Yann Martel make this chapter about Ravi's teasing Pi so short with so relatively few examples and a general dismissal at the end? (2)

The adult Pi already knows the end of the story he is telling. Memory of his brother and their relationship is painful.

2. Discuss TWO IRONIES that Pi points out in this chapter? (3)

Pi mentions the irony of humans believing they need to defend and protect the Almighty. The second irony is now that everyone knows he practises more than one religion, he is made to feel unwelcome at all three religions.

CHAPTER 26

Pi tells his father he would like to be baptized and receive a prayer rug. Pi's father tries to dissuade him from a Christian baptism and an Islamic prayer rug. He tries to put boundaries on his worldview. They tell him he can only pick one faith, and he does not need to practise faith at all. Pi is unconvinced. His mother attempts to distract him with books, one of them being Robinson Crusoe and a volume by Robert Louis Stevenson. Robinson Crusoe is a book about a castaway who survived on a tropical island and ironically, Crusoe also found God in his isolation. His parents give in, and Pi come to treasure his rug.

QUESTIONS

1. According to you, what is the primary conflict in this chapter, represented by Pi, his father and his mother? (4)

It is faith, apathy and reason.

Pi represents faith and he identifies similarities in the three religions rather than the differences.

Pi's father represents bafflement or apathy. He makes a vague attempt to protest Pi's position but ultimately simply sends Pi away.

Pi's mother represents reason. She tries to reason with Pi, offer analogies then exhausts herself in her inability to dissuade him from his beliefs.

2. Discuss the IRONY in the choice of book Pi's mother offers him as a distraction. (3)

Pi's mother suggests he reads Robinson Crusoe, the famous shipwreck adventure that is parallel to Pi's story. It is ironic that Crusoe is also a castaway and finds God in isolation.

CHAPTER 27

Pi overhears his parents discussing him. They do not know what attracted him to religion. The Patels consider themselves a secular, modern family of the 'New India.' They are particularly puzzled by his interest in Islam as Muslims are 'outsiders' in India. Despite their reservations, Pi's parents conclude his religious obsession is a mostly harmless phase.

They then discuss Mrs Gandhi, the current prime minister and lament her 'foolishness' which they hope will soon pass. It is a period of political turmoil called 'The Emergency,' when the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency for the country, effectively suspending all constitutional rights so that she will not be expelled from office for electoral fraud.

QUESTIONS

1. Other than religion, discuss the outside influence that begins to impose itself on Pi's family in this chapter. Refer to the plot event that is being foreshadowed. (2)

The political turmoil in India begins to impose itself on the lives of Pi's family. The family's emigration to Canada is clearly foreshadowed.

2. What biological theory does Mr Patel's attitude toward technology resemble? Why is this significant? (4)

Mr Patel says that one must adapt to new technology or go the way of the dinosaur, echoing Darwin's theory of evolution. (2)

This is significant because it is compared to human society and the need for them to adapt with the natural world and the need to be able to adapt. (2)

CHAPTER 28

He prays in his yard, with his parents and brother watching him like an exotic creature. He can see an aviary and an open yard from the spot where he prays. The place where Pi prays is important and described in loving detail, but the rug makes him feel he can be 'at home anywhere.'

He gets baptized in the presence of his parents, a ritual he describes as 'slightly awkward' but cleansing. The baptism water that trickles down Pi's neck has the effect of a 'monsoon rain.' The water of Pi's baptism symbolises God's grace and washing away of sin and it also foreshadows Pi's weeping for his lost innocence in Chapter 91.

He compares religions to nations. People can have residencies in many countries, why not residencies in many faiths?

CHAPTER 29

Pi explains the political climate of the 1970s as 'troubled times in India'. The Tamil Nadu government, the local government of Pondicherry, is overtaken by Mrs Gandhi in 1976 who suspends all constitutional rights to avoid being expelled from office.

Pi's father considers this overthrow a troubling symptom of Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorial power over the country. Pi is not affected by the political troubles at first, as his world consists of the zoo's daily routines.

Pi's parents decide that the zoo cannot remain profitable in such a political climate, and they grow outraged at the government's actions which destroy their hope for the 'New India.'

Mr. and Mrs. Patel agree to move to Canada. They want a better life for both themselves and their children. To Pi and Ravi, Canada seems impossibly far away.

QUESTIONS

1. To what does Pi compare his baptism—being sprinkled with a beaker-full of water? (1)

He compares it to a refreshing monsoon rain.

2. What causes the Patel family to leave India? (3)

Mr. Patel is alarmed by the fact that Mrs. Gandhi, the president of India, destroys the government of Tamil Nadu, the Indian state that includes Pondicherry.

He thinks that Mrs. Gandhi has too much power and will eventually turn India into a police state. He feels that he has no choice but to leave India and emigrate to Canada for a better future.

CHAPTER 30

This chapter returns to the author's first person. The visiting writer meets Pi's wife Meena. This comes as a shock to the author. Meena Patel is a pharmacist who, like Pi, is Indian. The writer never noticed Pi was married; Pi is a shy man who hides what is precious to him. The author begins to see signs of her all over Pi's house which he had not noticed any until that point because he had not been looking for them.

He wonders if Meena is the one who has been cooking spicy food for him but confirms that the cook is indeed Pi himself.

CHAPTER 31

Pi describes the one-time meeting of the two Mr. Kumars, the atheist biology teacher and the Muslim baker. This shows Pi's two great passions – zoology and religion – and how he reconciles these two within his own personality.

The two Mr. Kumars equally influence Pi. They join Pi for an outing at the Pondicherry Zoo. Pi introduces them to a Grant's zebra. Neither have ever seen an exotic zebra before but both are fascinated by this beautiful animal. They both view it with a sense of wonder: one from the point of view of a scientist/atheist and the other as a Muslim Sufi.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the meeting of the two Mr. Kumars? (4)

Mr. Kumar, the teacher, represents pure science. In the past, he has asserted that he does not believe in God, only in science.

Mr. Kumar, the baker, is a devout Muslim. He thinks that God manifests himself in nature.

Both men admire the zebras, so their meeting represents the symbolic meeting of science and spirituality.

2. Explain what the different responses of the two men to the zebra indicate about their different world views. (4)

Mr Kumar, the biology teacher, classifies and admires the zebra as a fine specimen; the Sufi praises Allah for this wonderful creation of God. (2)

This indicates that both men admire the animal, one from a scientific point of view, the other from a religious point of view. (2)

CHAPTER 32

Pi explains that animals can come to unusual living arrangements if necessary, through a process called zoomorphism – where an animal treats another type animal as one of its own species.

In the Pondicherry Zoo, he is seen examples of the 'freak suspension of the predator-prey relationship.'

He attributes zoomorphism to the 'measure of madness' in all living things.

Pi's knowledge of zoomorphism adds to the believability of the story in Part Two.

The impulse to invent a better story to improve one's reality and make it more livable is a natural desire. Pi says even animals do this, whether consciously or not.

For example, a lion does not think a human is really a lion but given the right conditions and circumstances, a lion may be willing to accept the human as one of its own.

When a lion cub is faced either with life as an orphan or life with a foster mother, then the lion cub will probably accept a dog as a mother.

QUESTIONS

1. Refer to Pi's explanation of zoomorphism.

1.1 State why zoomorphism occurs by referring to Pi's examples. (3)

Pi thinks that zoomorphism happens because it is the only way for animals to survive and make sense of their lives.

For example: Pi describes how the lion cubs bond with a dog and says that if the lions knew that their mother was dead, they would be sad. By bonding with another mother, even if it is a dog, they can cope better with their situations.

1.2 What does the Pi's explanation of zoomorphism foreshadow? (2)

This explanation foreshadows a series of events involving loss and the need for those left behind to rebuild new groups and make sense of their lives.

CHAPTER 33

The author and Pi look through Pi's photo albums showing him old family photos.

Pi has many records of his wedding, his college graduation and his student life.

There are four random photos of his childhood in India all sent to him by Mamaji but none of his family. Pi points out one photo of the mysterious Richard Parker in one hazy, black-and white zoo photo.

Pi's mention of Richard Parker being part of Pi's family memorabilia (objects, such as family photographs, which are associated with important events) indicates the role animals play in Pi's identity and his concept of family. In Part Two he refers to the animals on the ship as his 'extended family'.

Pi cannot remember what his mother looks like and he is distressed.

Pi's ordeal has involved the loss of all his belongings from India.

CHAPTER 34

Back to Pi's narrative: The family prepare to emigrate to North America, Canada, and they sell the zoo. It takes a year to prepare all the legal requirements.

The sales make enough money to pay the family's journey.

They arrange for some of the animals to travel with them across the Pacific, where they will be delivered to enthusiastic North American zoos. Pi and Ravi are apprehensive about this journey and they do not want to move to Canada.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the family's memorabilia reveal about Pi? (3)

He has many photographs of his life in Canada but only four random photos from his earlier life in India.

The photos in Canada reveal Pi's true feelings through his eyes. He smiles but his eyes are sad.

The absence of a photograph of his mother and his inability to remember her face troubles him deeply. The author mentions a photograph of the mysterious Richard Parker, another reminder that the story is far from over.

2. State the difference between the author's account (in italics) and Pi's account in Chapter 34. (2)

Pi's account is factual and detailed. The author's account is sentimental

3. Comment on Pi and Ravi's reaction on the move. (2)

Both hated the idea of leaving India.

They felt like two animals being shipped off to a zoo.

This brings them closer together as they have something in common now.

CHAPTER 35

Pi's family leave Madras, India and embark on a Japanese cargo ship named the Tsimtsum, headed for Canada, on June 21, 1977. The ship had Japanese officers and Chinese sailors from Taiwan. They say good-bye to friends and neighbours.

Pi describes his mother's sadness at leaving India. She tries to stock up Indian cigarettes – even though she is not a smoker. She is worried about entering a foreign country. Her last actions are touching which show a strong love for her homeland.

Adult Pi imagines his mother's sadness upon leaving and her curiosity about how life will be different in Canada.

Teenage Pi is excited for the boat journey, which he is sure will be an adventure.

As an adult, he mentions that things did not work out the way the family had planned: 'Things didn't turn out the way they were supposed to...you must take life the way it comes at you and make the best of it.'

Pi is about to experience that 'contraction' of God's presence as the Tsimtsum appears at the harbour.

QUESTIONS

1. What would the real reason be for Pi's mother to worry about brand names of items that might not be available in Canada? (4)

This is Gita Patel's way of expressing her apprehension about leaving everything familiar behind and facing an entirely new life in a new country and culture.

Just as Pi said earlier that an animal removed from its known environment will become anxious, Pi's mother, preparing to leave her familiar surroundings, is reacting in a similar manner.

2. Discuss the significance of the cargo's ship's name. (4)

The word 'tsitsum' means 'contraction' or 'withdrawal' and originates from the important religious idea presented by Isaac Luria (mentioned in Ch 1).

Luria was a Kabbalist teacher (Jewish mystic) whose theory of creation involved the concept of 'tzimtzum', a process in which God contracted his infinite light in order to create the universe, hiding himself so that his creation might become independent of him. This concept is important for Pi later as the ship, the Tsimtsum sinks, giving Pi 'room' to create his own universe (and dependence) in order to find true faith. The sinking may symbolize God withdrawing from Pi for this purpose.

CHAPTER 36

The author is visiting Pi's house and meets Pi's children for the first time: a teenage son who is a baseball player, Nikhil (goes by the name 'Nick'), runs out of the house; then his four-year-old daughter named Usha who is holding an orange cat, Moccasin, and laughing. This cat is clearly a reference to Richard Parker.

There is also a dog in the house, Tata, an additional member of the family.

The author notes that Pi's story has 'a happy ending.'

Yann Martel has shown Pi's happy childhood and happy adulthood but now he will show the suffering that lies in between.

QUESTIONS

1. What surprises the narrator in chapter 36? (3)

Pi has a son, a daughter, a cat and a dog.

The narrator said earlier that Pi hides everything precious to him; he seems to have kept his family hidden.

2. Upon meeting Pi's son and daughter, the writer says that 'this story has a happy ending.' Explain what the 'author' implies by this statement. (3)

The 'author' realises that Pi is not alone in the world.

Even though the 'author' has suspected that Pi has lost his immediate family in some disaster, he realises Pi has formed his own family in Canada and his life has turned out fine.

PART TWO

CHAPTER 37

Pi begins the narrative with the sinking of the Tsimtsum. Everything is in turmoil and Pi is alone in a lifeboat. Pi is glad to see a face from the past, the Bengal tiger named Richard Parker struggling to swim and Pi encourages him to swim to the lifeboat.

He has lost his parents and Ravi and all their animals. He cries out, 'Every single thing I value in life has been destroyed. Am I allowed no explanation?'

Pi throws Richard Parker a lifebuoy. As he pulls him in, he realizes what he is doing the tiger climbs aboard the lifeboat.

Pi suddenly realizes the danger of sharing a tiny lifeboat with an adult tiger and tries to push Richard Parker away with an oar but he is too late. Richard Parker climbs into the lifeboat. Pi steps over a zebra jumps overboard terrified of the tiger!

Martel abruptly changes the narrative's tone from one of observation and maturity to a scene of total chaos. We finally see who Richard Parker is – a fully grown Bengal tiger. Martel will explore many ideas on Pi's lifeboat. One of the strongest is the fierce will to survive found in all living things. Richard Parker is the first example of this when he swims to the lifeboat.

CHAPTER 37

This chapter marks the beginning of Pi's long ordeal.

Pi calls on heaven to explain his plight. His question, 'Why me?' comes out of the Old and New Testaments: Christ on the cross and God punishing Job as a test of faith.

This question is dramatic irony: 'What is the purpose of reason?'

It is reason and 'being able to shine at practicalities' that will prove crucial to Pi's survival and ultimately make him a strong and independent person.

The fact that he also addresses these questions to Richard Parker as if he is a human again suggests the lack of clear distinction between humans and animals.

Pi refers to the animals which have drowned as 'my extended family'.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss and compare how the tone differs from Part One to Part Two. (4)

In Part One, Pi reflects on his experiences and shares his knowledge of the world. His tone of voice is contemplative and philosophical.

In Part Two, Ch 37, his tone of voice becomes abrupt and urgent.

Short utterances (when Pi verbalises his thoughts to Richard Parker) and the use of onomatopoeia provide a sense of immediacy. The reader feels part of his life and death scenario. This is also the climax of the novel.

2. How does Martel convey the start of Pi's spiritual journey at sea?

Pi questions the meaning of reason and mortality '*...what is the purpose of reason...?*' / '*Isn't it ironic, Richard Parker?*' / '*We're in hell yet still we're afraid of mortality.*'

Reason fails to give him the answers he needs.

Despite this, he is afraid to die and go to heaven which is ironic because he feels he is already in hell.

CHAPTER 38

Pi's story goes back to BEFORE THE SHIPWRECK. Pi and his family are travelling peacefully and enjoying the journey. Four days after leaving the Philippines and entering the wide Pacific Ocean, the Tsimtsum pushes through tempestuous weather then sinks.

Pi's description of that night: An explosion wakes him up 4h30 (Pi thinks it came from the engine room) and he wanders onto the main deck. It is windy and raining but he is positive they will overcome the storm. The rest of his family is still asleep. Pi is feeling adventurous and tries to wake up Ravi to explore the ship but he ignores him. Pi starts to explore on his own.

He sees the ship leaning far over the one side with the lifeboats dangling. He runs towards the cabin but the stairway to his family is blocked with water. He becomes very anxious. He runs for help then finds three crew members and asks them to save his family. One crew member tosses him a life jacket with an orange whistle then throws him overboard. Pi is saved but his family and zoo animals die. The cause for the sinking of the Tsimtsum is never discovered, but it is important as a concept – Isaac Luria's 'tzimtzum,' where God withdraws himself to 'make room' for creation, as God now withdraws from Pi.

CHAPTER 39

Pi falls forty feet and lands on the half - unrolled tarpaulin covering a lifeboat on the ship's side. He loses the life jacket in his fall. The crew members toss a Grant zebra out of the ship. It misses the tarpaulin and lands on a bench injuring itself and crying out in distress. The lifeboat shakes at the impact, then plunges into the water.

CHAPTER 40

The narrative fast forwards to where Pi jumped overboard to escape Richard Parker in Chapter 37. Pi clings to a floating oar and then finds a lifebuoy. He climbs onto the buoy just as a shark swims around him. Pi sees the zebra in the lifeboat but not Richard Parker. He wedges the oar under the tarpaulin and hangs onto it, dangling off the edge of the lifeboat. Pi realizes he is alone in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by sharks and a Bengal tiger. His adult self wonders why he did not just let go of the oar and succumb to death. Pi slips the lifebuoy over himself, making himself more comfortable and floats safely through the night.

Pi is trapped between a tiger and sharks, alone on a stormy ocean. Martel uses a lot of space to describe Pi's situation in the lifeboat and the details of Pi's setting become important to his survival. Pi's will to live overwhelms his reasoning, as his adult self recognizes just how logically hopeless his position was. Pi remains clinging to the oar, trying to keep himself separate from the lifeboat and out of Richard Parker's territory.

CHAPTER 41

While Pi watches the Tsimtsum disappear beneath the waves, he also looks around for survivors or rescuers but is surrounded by wreckage and sees no humans.

Pi climbs on top of the tarpaulin expecting the tiger to attack him but Richard Parker remains hidden. The loss of his family is enormous, but his grief is delayed as Pi needs to focus on his own survival. The tarpaulin becomes an important boundary in the boat.

The zebra is still on the boat and has a severely broken leg. Pi admires the dying creature's beauty and wonders why Richard Parker has not killed it yet.

Then a hyena appears from under the tarpaulin. Pi assumes that Richard Parker must have drowned, as a tiger and a hyena cannot share a small space on the lifeboat.

Pi realizes the ship's crew members threw Pi overboard from the sinking ship as bait for the hyena to save space for themselves in the lifeboat. Pi is afraid of the hyena but less so than he was of Richard Parker. He decides he prefers the 'upfront ferocity of a dog' to the silent, stealthy tiger.

Dawn breaks and it is now sunny and warm on the Pacific Ocean. It must be noted that this account is one version of Pi's survival story. In another version, towards the end of the novel, there are humans on the lifeboat with Pi instead of animals. This first account is believable (maybe factually true) because the wild animals act like wild animals, instead of as humans given animal identities.

CHAPTER 42

Pi sees a popular member of the Pondicherry Zoo, the orangutan, Orange Juice, floating towards him on 'an island of bananas' held together by netting.

Pi is so happy to see her but feels they will both die on the open ocean. She is the mother of two male orangutans. She climbs aboard the boat and joins Pi. The bananas float away, but Pi salvages the netting.

Pi is heartbroken that such a gentle creature is experiencing so much pain, confusion and shock. The net will later become one of Pi's most precious possessions. He will also deeply regret not taking any of the bananas when he had the chance.

In Pi's second story, the 'human version' of his story, Orange Juice is replaced by Pi's own mother, and here are some similarities: as Orange Juice had given birth to two sons, Gita Patel had two sons, Pi and Ravi.

QUESTIONS

1. What awful realisation comes to Pi after he discovers the hyena on board the lifeboat? Mention what he learns about human nature with this realization. (3)

Pi was ironically 'saved' by the crew who threw him into the lifeboat.

If it was not for the hyena, the sailors would have not thrown him into the lifeboat and he would not be alive.

Their actions also show that human beings are willing to commit terrible atrocities in order to survive.

2. Pi spends time explaining his position on the oar. According to you, why would this be important?

The details show his practical nature and a strong, basic instinct to survive.

3. Discuss the imagery of Pi's description of Orange Juice and what it suggests about his relationship with this animal. (4)

Pi describes Orange Juice as 'lovely as the Virgin Mary' / 'fertility Goddess...and spread of comfort' of whom he is very fond. He remembers her at the zoo as being gentle, protective and maternal who also had two orangutan sons. He compares her to his own mother, Gita Patel and this places emphasis on how much he misses her. Her arrival brings the net which will be important to Pi's survival later in the novel.

CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the text below then answer the questions that follow:

The ship sank. It made a sound like a monstrous metallic burp. Things bubbled at the surface and then vanished. Everything was screaming: the sea, the wind, my heart. From the lifeboat I saw something in the water. I cried, 'Richard Parker, is that you? It's so hard to see. Oh, that this rain would stop! Richard Parker? Richard Parker? Yes, it is you!' I could see his head. He was struggling to stay at the surface of the water. 'Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu, how good to see you, Richard Parker! Don't give up, please. Come to the lifeboat. Do you hear this whistle? TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! You heard right. Swim, swim! You're a strong swimmer. It's not a hundred feet.' He had seen me. He looked panic-stricken. He started swimming my way. The water about him was shifting wildly. He looked small and helpless. 'Richard Parker, can you believe what has happened to us? Tell me it's a bad dream. Tell me it's not real. Tell me I'm still in my bunk on the Tsimtsum and I'm tossing and turning and soon I'll wake up from this nightmare. Tell me I'm still happy. Mother, my tender guardian angel of wisdom, where are you? And you, Father, my loving worrywart? And you, Ravi, dazzling hero of my childhood? Vishnu preserve me, Allah protect me, Christ save me, I can't bear it! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!'

CHAPTER 37

1. Describe the difference in tone between sentence one and sentence two of the extract. (2)

Sentence one is bluntly factual while sentence two is poetic/makes use of figurative language

2. Refer to 'like a monstrous metallic burp'.

Identify the figure of speech and phonic device and explain why it is effective. (4)

- * The simile compares the sound the ship makes as it sinks to something that is being devoured and then belched out.
- * The alliteration of the 'm' emphasizes the creature/monster-like attributes of the metal ship. The combined effect is of something sinister or malevolent.

3. How does Pi's use of hyperbole in 'Everything was screaming: the sea, the wind, my heart' affect your understanding of his emotions at the time? (2)

- * The wind might be making a screaming sound but neither the sea nor his heart can literally scream.
- * This convey to the reader Pi's intense distress as the ship sinks.

4. Explain why Pi refers to 'Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu' when he sees Richard Parker. (2)

Pi adheres to Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Therefore, in his joy at seeing Richard Parker alive he calls out to important figures from all three these religions.

5. Who is Richard Parker and how did he get his name? (2)

Richard Parker is a Bengal tiger who was mistakenly named after the hunter who found him.

6.1 Quote from this passage to prove that Pi deliberately makes the listener believe that Richard Parker is a person without explicitly stating that he is not human. (1)

'You're a strong swimmer' / 'He had seen me' / 'He looked panic-stricken' / 'He looked small and helpless.' / 'Can you believe what happened to us?' / 'Tell me it's a bad dream'

6.2 To which important theme of the novel does this purposeful ambivalence link? (1)

Anthropomorphism

7. Bearing in mind the second story that Pi later tells the Japanese investigators, comment on why Pi is so desperate for Richard Parker to make it to the lifeboat. (2)

In the second story, Pi is actually the tiger / Richard Parker symbolizes Pi. In this version of the story, Pi is desperate for Richard Parker to make it to the lifeboat because he himself wants to survive.

8. 'You're a strong swimmer.'

8.1 With regards to the first story that Pi tells the investigators, why is it true that Richard Parker is a strong swimmer? (1)

Tigers are good swimmers

8.2 With regards to the second story that Pi tells the investigators, why is it true that Richard Parker is a strong swimmer? (1)

Pi is a very strong swimmer because Mamaji taught him to swim well.

9. Pi asks Richard Parker to tell him that what has happened is 'not real'. Critically discuss the use of this phrase in the context of the novel as a whole. (4)

In both versions that Pi gives the Japanese investigators, the ship sinks, therefore the loss of Pi's family is real and his longing for this not to be true is what prompts him to say this.

However, this version where he talks to Richard Parker is 'not real' because Richard Parker is a character that Pi has created to distance himself from the horrible events that later take place on the lifeboat.

In addition, since this novel is a work of fiction, none of the story is real in the usual sense of the word.

This all links to the theme of storytelling in the novel where stories may be inventions but they may also be true or contain truth.

