

LIFE OF PI

by

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Based on the original novel by Yann Martel

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1

EXT. PONDICHERRY ZOO, INDIA, 1961 - DAY

1

CREDITS OVER: a magical fairy tale world in collage - images of fantastic creatures striped and spotted, hooved and horned.

Goats and warthogs mingle in an open field; a baby giraffe tries to reach leaves over a fence; rhinos roll happily in rich red mud, looking like giant muddy boulders, while nearby, black and white Malayan tapirs cool themselves in watering holes.

Exotic monkeys with comical faces cling lovingly to one another, swing from trees, climb over one another, prance and screech; a probiscus monkey with a 'Jimmy Durante' nose pointing out through the plane of the screen. Flamingoes strut about in the aviary, their pink feathers reflected in the water.

A sloth droops lazily from a tree branch, unfazed, while a nearby hummingbird zips manically from flower to flower like Tinkerbell...

... the Pondicherry zoo is a children's paradise nestled in a botanical garden.

WRITER (V.O.)

You were raised in a zoo?

3

EXT. PONDICHERRY ZOO, INDIA, 1961 - DAY

3

There's a flurry of activity in the animal clinic behind a monitor lizard that wanders the main path. ZOO WORKERS gather in the doorway, talking excitedly.

No one notices the lizard.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

Born and raised in Pondicherry, in what was the French part of India. My father owned the zoo, and I was delivered on short notice by a herpetologist who was there to check on the Bengal Monitor Lizard.

The zoo owner (FATHER - late 20s) hurries down the path as quickly as his heavy leg brace will allow and hurries into the animal clinic.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 Mother and I were both healthy...

The lizard crawls away.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 but the poor lizard escaped and was
 trampled by a frightened
 cassowary...

5 INT. PI'S HOME, KITCHEN, MONTREAL - DAY

5

A modest row house. There is a French influence to the decor,
 along with books and artwork that celebrate the spiritual.

PI PATEL (50 - intelligent, Indo-Canadian) cooks an Indian
 meal. The often-skeptical WRITER (late 30s, a disheveled
 French Canadian), watches Pi.

ADULT PI
 The way of karma; the way of God.

WRITER
 I assumed your father was a
 mathematician - because of your
 name.

ADULT PI
 Oh, far from it. I was named after
 a swimming pool.

WRITER
 There's a swimming pool named 'Pi?'

ADULT PI
 (He chuckles.)
 You see, my uncle, Francis, was
 born with too much water in his
 lungs. They say the doctor swung
 Francis around by the ankles to
 clear the water out and that's what
 gave him the huge chest and skinny
 legs that made him such a great
 swimmer.

WRITER
 (Amused.)
 Is Francis actually your uncle? He
 said he was friends with your
 father.

PI

I call him 'Mamaji,' my 'honorary
uncle' - my father's best friend,
my swimming guru.

6 EXT. ASHRAM SWIMMING POOL, PONDICHERRY, 1966 - DAY

6

ADULT PI (V.O.)

I trained with him three times a
week at the ashram. His lessons
would save my life in the end...

A young Indian boy - PI AT AGE FIVE - surfaces from a pool,
gasping. He looks up at the large chest and skinny legs of
Mamaji (late 30s). Mamaji reaches down to scoop Pi out of the
water.

MAMAJI

A mouthful of water will not harm
you - but panic will.

Mamaji carries Pi back over to the water's edge.

MAMAJI (CONT'D)

Remember to breathe. Don't hold
your breath. Good boy.

Mamaji unceremoniously tosses Pi back in.

7 INT. PI'S HOME, KITCHEN, MONTREAL - DAY

7

ADULT PI

(Regarding lunch:)

I hope you don't mind vegetarian.

WRITER

No, not at all... And your name?

ADULT PI

Hmm?

WRITER

You - you were going to tell me how
you got your name, I think.

ADULT PI

I got it from something Mamaji once
told my father. Most travelers
collect postcards or teacups on
their journeys - but not Mamaji.
Mamaji collects swimming pools.

(MORE)

ADULT PI (CONT'D)
 He swims in every pool he comes
 upon...

8 EXT. THE PISCINE MOLITOR, PARIS, 1959 - DAY 8

Mamaji stands admiring the Piscine Molitor, a pool of sparkling magnificence. Attractive French men and women in bathing suits, the setting a celebration of idealized beauty.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 One day Mamaji said to my father
 that of all the pools in the world,
 the most beautiful was a public
 pool in Paris. That the water there
 was so clear you could make your
 morning coffee with it, that a
 single swim there changed his life.

Mamaji dives into the crystal clear water - and we follow, taking in the divine miracle of his underwater journey across the pool.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 Before I was born, he said to my
 father, "If you want your son to
 have a clean soul, you must take
 him one day to swim in the Piscine
 Molitor." I never understood why my
 father took this so much to
 heart...

9 INT. PI'S HOME, MONTREAL - DAY 9

ADULT PI
 ... but he did, and I was named
 "Piscine Molitor Patel."

10 EXT. PI'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, 1972 - DAY 10

PI (AGE 11) leans against the railing of a balcony, reading "L'Ile Mysterieuse (The Mysterious Island)" by Jules Verne.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 Imagine me trying to explain that
 name to my schoolmates. I barely
 made it to the age of eleven
 before...

A boy (BULLY #1) calls up to him from the courtyard below.

BULLY #1
Hey PISCINE!

Pi glances down, all the boys in the courtyard watching him.

BULLY #1 (CONT'D)
Are you Pissing right now?

Pi freezes. The other boys laugh uncontrollably.

ANOTHER BOY
Look at him he's Pissing!

ADULT PI (VO)
With one word my name went from an elegant French swimming pool to a stinking Indian latrine. I was Pissing everywhere.

11 I/E. SCHOOLYARD, 1972 - DAY 11

BOYS in school uniform kick a ball. Pi attempts to join. Bully #2 intercepts the pass.

BULLY #2
No Pissing in the schoolyard!

12 INT. SCIENCE CLASS, 1972 - DAY 12

ADULT PI (V.O.)
Even the teachers started doing it - not deliberately, of course...

SCIENCE TEACHER
So then - what might occur if we release gas too quickly? Pissing?

Pi is aghast. Several students splutter and howl, whispering the slip to others. Laughter ripples around the room, all eyes on Pi.

BOY
He said Pissing!

SCIENCE TEACHER
That's enough - order!

ADULT PI (V.O.)
When we returned the next year for our first day of school, I was prepared.

SC. 13 INT. INDIAN HISTORY CLASS, 1973 - DAY 13

Class is held in a large open room. Roll call.

BOY
Present sir.

HISTORY TEACHER
Piscine Patel...

PI - AGE 12, rises, crosses to the front.

PI (AT 12)
Good morning. I am Piscine Molitor
Patel, known to all as...
(He writes "PI" on the
board.)
... "Pi," the sixteenth letter of
the Greek alphabet...

Pi writes π , then quickly charts out a general notion of the
concept on the chalkboard.

PI (CONT'D)
... which is also used in
mathematics to represent the ratio
of any circle's circumference to
its diameter - an irrational number
of infinite length, usually rounded
to three digits, as...
(He writes "3.14.")
3.14. PI.

Pi underlines his name, faces the class.

HISTORY TEACHER
Very impressive, Pi. Now sit down.

WRITER (V.O.)
And from then on you were Pi?

ADULT PI (V.O.)
Well, no. Not quite ...

As Pi returns to his seat, Bully #2 leans forward,
whispering:

BULLY #2
Nice try, Pissing.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
But I still had the whole day ahead
of me. French Class was next...

14 INT. FRENCH CLASS, 1973 - DAY 14

Pi repeats his act in French, 3.14159265 on the board.

PI (12)
*Je m'appelle Piscine Molitor Patel -
 dit 'Pi'...*

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 Then Geography...

15 EXT. GEOGRAPHY CLASS, 1973 - DAY 15

Class is held out of doors in a courtyard. Pi, at a portable chalkboard, writes and says: 3.14159265358979323846.

PI (12)
 These are the first twenty decimal
 places of Pi.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 My last class of the day was
 Mathematics....

16 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY, 1973 - DAY 16

A LIBRARIAN runs down the hall, a huge book tucked under his arm, followed by dozens of students. He reaches Pi's class, pushes his way through the crowd.

LIBRARIAN
 Slowly, Slowly! Slowly, Slowly!

17 INT. MATH CLASS, 1973 - CONTINUOUS 17

Close on Pi writing digits. Pull back - the entire chalkboard is filled with numbers. All watching are stunned. The librarian compares Pi's writing to the math book.

LIBRARIAN
 It is right... He's really doing
 this!

Students clap and cheer - even the bullies. Several chant along with him as he writes:

ALL
 1! 4! 9! 3! 1! PI! PI! PI!

ADULT PI (VO)
By the end of that day, I was Pi
Patel, school legend.

18 INT. PI'S KITCHEN - DAY

18

The writer laughs, then ventures onto a new topic.

WRITER
Mamaji tells me you're a legend
among sailors, too. Out there all
alone -

ADULT PI
I don't even know how to sail. And
I wasn't alone out there. Richard
Parker was with me.

WRITER
Richard Parker...? Mamaji didn't
tell me everything. He just said I
should look you up when I got back
to Montreal.

ADULT PI
So what were you doing in
Pondicherry?

WRITER
Writing a novel.

ADULT PI
By the way, I enjoyed your first
book. The new one, is it set in
India?

WRITER
No, Portugal, actually. But it's
cheaper living in India.

ADULT PI
Ah. Well, I look forward to reading
it.

WRITER
You can't. I threw it out. Two
years trying to bring it to life,
and then one day it sputtered,
coughed, and died.

ADULT PI
I'm sorry.

WRITER

(Shrugs, making light of
it.)

I was in a coffee house in
Pondicherry one afternoon, mourning
my loss, when this old man at the
next table struck up a
conversation.

ADULT PI

Yeah, Mamaji. He does that.

WRITER

When I told him about my abandoned
book, he said:

(Imitating Mamaji:)

"So... a Canadian who's come to
French India in search of a story.
Well, my friend, I know an Indian
in French Canada who has the most
incredible story to tell. It must
be fate that the two of you should
meet."

ADULT PI

I haven't spoken about Richard
Parker in so many years... What has
Mamaji already told you?

WRITER

He said you had a story that would
make me believe in God.

ADULT PI

(Pi laughs.)

He would say that about a nice
meal. As for God, I can only tell
you my story; you will decide for
yourself what you believe.

WRITER

Fair enough.

ADULT PI

Let's see, then - where to begin?

CUT TO: MONTAGE
OF PONDICHERRY,
1954:

19 EXT. PONDICHERRY, SHORELINE 1954 - DAY 19

- The SHORELINE - Bicycles and pedestrians; policemen in round, flat-top French hats.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

Pondicherry is the "French Riviera of India." In the streets closest to the ocean, you might think you were in the South of France.

20 EXT. ASHRAM STREET, 1954 - DAY 20

- Grey ASHRAM buildings, which give way to images of...

21 EXT. PONDICHERRY CANAL, 1954 - DAY 21

- The CANAL, and just beyond it, INDIAN PONDI.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

A few blocks inland, there's a canal; just beyond that is Indian Pondicherry...

SC. 22 EXT. PONDICHERRY MUSLIM QUARTER, 1954 - DAY 22

- The MUSLIM QUARTER, women in head scarves pass men baking flatbread over coals, the mosque in the background.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

And the Muslim Quarter is just to the West.

18 INT. PI'S HOME - CONTINUED 18

ADULT PI

When the French handed Pondicherry back to us in 1954, the town decided that some sort of commemoration was in order.

25 EXT. ZOO ENTRANCE, 1955 - DAY 25

The sign on the gate reads: "JARDIN BOTANIQUE DE PONDICHERRY."

ADULT PI (V.O.)

My father, who was a clever businessman, came up with one.

(MORE)

ADULT PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He ran a hotel, and he got the idea
 to open a zoo in the local
 Botanical Gardens instead.

Father oversees a SIGN PAINTER as the painter who adds the
 words 'AND ZOO' to the sign.

26 EXT. THE NURSERY - CONTINUOUS 26

WOMEN WORKERS plant and dig in the Botanical Gardens nursery.
 As MOTHER (refined - 20's) passes by, she admonishes a worker
 who pulls up a sapling with too much force.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 As it also happened, my mother was
 a botanist in the Gardens. They
 met, married, and a year later my
 brother Ravi was born. I came two
 years after that.

27 INT. PI'S HOME, OUTER ROOM, MONTREAL - DAY 27

WRITER
 It sounds magical, growing up in-

The Writer stops, realizing that Pi's eyes are closed in
 prayer. The Writer watches in awkward silence, his head
 halfbowed.

ADULT PI
 Amen. Let's eat.

WRITER
 I didn't know Hindus said 'amen.'

ADULT PI
 (As he serves food:)
 Catholic Hindus do.

WRITER
 Catholic Hindus?

ADULT PI
 We get to feel guilty before
 hundreds of gods instead of just
 one.

WRITER
 But you're a Hindu first?

PI

None of us knows God until someone introduces us. I was first introduced to God as a Hindu. There are 330 million gods in the Hindu religion - how can I not come to know a few of them?

28 EXT. OUTSIDE THE PATEL HOME, 1966 - NIGHT

28

YOUNG PI (5) and Ravi listen to Mother quietly singing a gentle tune as she kneels before their home, using rice powder to draw a Kolam pattern - a geometric design meant to bring the home prosperity.

PI (V.O.)

I met Krishna first...

MOTHER (V.O., IN TAMIL)

Yashoda once accused baby Krishna of eating dirt: "Tut, tut, you naughty boy - you shouldn't do that..."

29 INT. PI'S BEDROOM, 1966 - NIGHT

29

It is raining outside. Pan from the window; Mother lies in bed with Pi as they continue sharing this story for the thousandth time. Mother's voice plays over (Note: they speak in Tamil throughout the following dialogue):

PI

...But he didn't!

MOTHER

That's what he told her. "I didn't eat dirt!" "No? Well, then open your mouth." So Krishna opened his mouth.

Pi opens his mouth in imitation.

MOTHER (TAMIL) (CONT'D)

And what do you think Yashoda saw?

PI (TAMIL)

What?

MOTHER (TAMIL)

She saw in Krishna's mouth the whole entire universe.

30 PI AND RAVI'S BEDROOM, 1966 - NIGHT 30

Pi has made a tent of his blanket, a flashlight glowing beneath the covers. In his tent, Pi flips through the pages of a Hindu comic book, enthralled by the story of Krishna...

The panels of the comic book show Krishna's mouth falling open, revealing stars and planets, the universe unfolding in wondrous detail.

34 PONDY TEMPLE COURTYARD, 1966 - NIGHT 34

A tank ceremony is about to begin. The tank is a square reservoir the size of a soccer field; Pi's family sits among the crowd on the steps that lead down to the water.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

The gods were my superheroes growing up. Hanuman, the monkey god, lifting an entire mountain to save his friend Lakshmana. Ganesh, the elephant-headed, risking his life to defend the honor of his mother Parvati. Vishnu, the Supreme Soul, the source of all things. Vishnu sleeps, floating on the shoreless cosmic ocean and we are the stuff of his dreaming.

FATHER

(With quiet sincerity.)
Spectacle. Don't let the stories and pretty lights fool you, boys. Religion is darkness.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

My dear 'Appa' believed himself part of the 'new India.' As a child, he'd had polio; he used to lie in bed, wracked with pain, wondering where God was. In the end, God didn't save him; Western medicine did.

Below, Mother watches the ceremony, lost in contemplation.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

My 'Amma' went to college and thought her family was part of the 'new India' as well - until her parents cut her off because they thought she was marrying beneath her. Her religion was the only link she had to her past.

36 EXT. MUNNAR TEA FIELDS, 1973 - DAY

36

Rocky mountaintops jut up through a sea of clouds and mist.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

I met Christ in the mountains when I was 12. We were visiting relatives, tea growers in Munnar. It was our third day there; Ravi and I were terribly bored.

Ravi walks up to Pi, coins in hand, and whispers.

RAVI (14)

Challenge. I'll give you two rupees. Run into that church and drink the Holy water.

37 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1973 - DAY

37

Pi leans down to the font beside the door and drinks. He's about to leave again when he notices the stations of the cross depicted on plaques that encircle the church.

PRIEST

You must be thirsty. Here, I brought you this.

Not knowing what else to do, Pi takes the glass and drinks. An awkward pause as he searches for something - anything - to say. He finally points up to one of the paintings.

PI

Why would a god do that? Why would he send his own son to suffer for the sins of ordinary people?

The Priest smiles down upon Pi.

PRIEST

Because He loves us. God made Himself approachable to us - human - so we could understand Him.

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

We can't understand God in all His perfection, but we can understand God's son and His suffering as we would a brother's.

38 INT. PI'S DINING ROOM, MONTREAL - INTERCUT/CONTINUOUS 38

ADULT PI

That made no sense. Sacrificing the innocent to atone for the sins of the guilty? What kind of love is that?

39 EXT. PLANTATION HOME, MUNNAR, 1973 - DAY 39

Ravi and other kids play cricket. Pi sits by a stream, lost in thought.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

But this Son - I couldn't get Him out of my head.

41 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, MUNNAR, 1973 - DAY 41

Pi stands quizzing the priest near the altar.

PI

If God is so perfect and we're not, why would He want to create all this? Why does He need us at all?

PRIEST

All you have to know is that He loves us. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." This Son taught us to love one another...

The priest's words continue as Pi leans in, listening.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

The more I listened to the priest, the more I came to like this Son of God.

42 INT. PI'S BEDROOM, 1973 - DAY 42

Pi kneels, smiling, in an attitude of worship.

PI
Thank you, Vishnu, for introducing
me to Christ.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
I came to faith through Hinduism
and I found God's love through
Christ, but God wasn't finished
with me yet.

43 EXT. MUSLIM QUARTER, 1973 - DAY 43

As Pi wanders through the Muslim Quarter, the call to prayer plays out over a loudspeaker affixed to the nearby mosque. Pi watches as people pray.

ADULT PI (V.O.)
God works in mysterious ways - and
so it was He introduced Himself
again, this time by the name of
Allah.

Pi crosses inquisitively up the few steps of a mosque in the Muslim quarter, looking inside, where dozens of the FAITHFUL are lined up row upon row, praying.

A43 EXT. PONDICHERRY MOSQUE, 1973 - DAY A43

The speaker on top of the mosque plays the Muslim call to prayer.

44 INT. PI FAMILY HOME, 1973 - DAY 44

Pi is out in front of the house kneeling on a prayer mat, repeating a prayer. Father passes by with friends. He stops to watch Pi.

45 INT. FAMILY KITCHEN/DINING ROOM, 1973 - DUSK 45

Father sits at the dinner table with his family. The servant offers a dish of lamb to Father only. Father pops a bite into his mouth, savoring it.

FATHER
This lamb is exquisite - it's best
dish on the table. You are all
missing out...

As he chews, Father notices Pi completing a blessing.

FATHER (CONT'D)

You only need to convert to three more religions, Piscine, and you will spend your life on holiday.

RAVI

(Laughing:)

Are you going to Mecca this year, Swami Jesus? Or to Rome, for your coronation as Pope Pi-us?

MOTHER

You stay out of this, Ravi. Just as you like cricket, Pi has his own interests.

FATHER

No Gita, Ravi has a point, no? You cannot follow three different religions at the same time, Piscine.

PI

Why not?

FATHER

Because believing in everything at the same time is the same as not believing in anything at all.

MOTHER

He's young Santosh - he's still finding his way.

FATHER

And how can he find his way if he does not choose a path?

(To Pi:)

Listen: instead of leaping from one religion to the next, why not start with reason? In a few hundred years, science has taken us farther in understanding the universe than religion has in ten thousand.

MOTHER

That is true. Your father is right. Science can teach us more about what's out there -

(With a hand to her heart:)

- but not what is in here. Art, music, literature - they all spring from our faith.

FATHER

Some eat meat, some eat vegetable. I do not expect us all to agree about everything. But I would much rather have you believe in something I don't agree with than to accept everything blindly. And that begins with thinking rationally. Do you understand?

Pi nods.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Good.

Pause.

PI

I would like to be baptized.

Father and Mother react. Ravi stifles a laugh.

46

EXT. PI'S STREET - DAY

46

Pi walks down the front steps of his row house, stretching and rubbing his belly at the end of a good meal. The writer follows.

WRITER

So you're a Christian and a Muslim?

ADULT PI

And a Hindu, of course.

WRITER

And a Jew, I suppose?

ADULT PI

Oh, well, I do teach a course on the Kabbalah at the University. And why not? Faith is a house with many rooms.

WRITER

But no room for doubt?

ADULT PI

Plenty. On every floor. Doubt is useful. It keeps faith a living thing. After all, you can't know the strength of your faith until it's been tested.

47 INT. THE TIGER FEEDING AREA, 1973, PART 1 - DAY 47

Pi (12) and Ravi (14) cross into a drab cement enclosure behind the tiger exhibit. A hallway with closed gates at both ends leads out to the exhibit.

RAVI
Where's Selvam? We shouldn't be in here without him.

PI
Stop worrying. I have seen him do this a thousand times. I want to meet our new tiger.

He drops meat on the floor by the bars.

RAVI
Pi!...

PI
Hello! Richard Parker!

48 EXT. MONTREAL STREET - DAY 48

Pi and the writer walk along a Montreal street. The Writer stares at Pi, bewildered.

WRITER
A tiger? Richard Parker was a tiger?

ADULT PI
He got his name through a clerical error. A hunter caught him drinking from a stream when he was a cub and named him Thirsty. When Thirsty got too big, the hunter sold him to our zoo - but the names got switched on the paperwork. The hunter was listed as Thirsty and tiger was called Richard Parker. We laughed about it and the name stuck.

47 EXT. THE TIGER FEEDING AREA, PART TWO 1973 - DAY 47

RAVI
Let's go. Before we get into trouble.

PI
I want to see him close up.

RAVI

You're not a zoo keeper. Come on!

An adolescent BENGAL TIGER appears at the other end of the hall. Ravi bolts, running out of the feeding area. Pi is enchanted.

PI

(offering meat)

That's it, Richard Parker. It's for you.

Pi holds the lamb through the bars, The tiger walks slowly down the hallway, regarding Pi with a detached curiosity, as unthreatening in his manner as a large housecat. Pi begins trembling from sheer excitement.

He doesn't hear the approach of uneven footsteps - Father appears, followed by Ravi. Just as Richard Parker approaches the offering.

FATHER

No!!!

Father yanks Pi violently away from the cage, wrenching Pi's hand through the bars. Richard Parker, startled, raises his head, hissing. He turns and bounds back out through the gate at the other end of the hallway, disappearing into the exhibit area. Father spins Pi around and shoves him against the wall.

FATHER (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?! Are you out of your mind? Who gave you permission to come back here? You have just ignored everything I have ever taught you!

PI

I just wanted to say 'Hello' to him.

FATHER

You think that tiger is your friend. He is an animal, not a playmate!

PI

Animals have souls. I've seen it in their eyes.

Father turns to Ravi, who stands by the gate.

FATHER
Find Selvam!

50 EXT. THE FEEDING CAGES, 1973 - A SHORT TIME LATER 50

Father, Pi and Ravi watch as Selvam carries a goat into the feeding area.

SELVAM
(In Tamil:)
You're sure, Mr. Patel? Pi's just a kid.

FATHER
(In Tamil:)
Do it. Go ahead.

Selvam sets the goat down and ties a piece of rope around the animal's neck.

FATHER (CONT'D)
(To the boys:)
Animals don't think like we do; people who forget that get themselves killed. That tiger is not your friend. When you look into his eyes, you are seeing your own emotions reflected back at you - nothing else.

Selvam ties the goat to the bars at the gate area where Pi had been about to feed Richard Parker.

RAVI
(Quietly, to Pi:)
Don't be stupid! Say you're sorry.

Mother arrives at the gate with a WOMAN WORKER and rushes to Pi's side.

MOTHER
What have you done, Piscine? You know what your father said about coming back here.

PI
I'm sorry. I was...

Mother turns to Father, quietly - referring to the goat:

MOTHER
What are you thinking?

FATHER

This is between a father and his sons.

(In Tamil:)

Selvam, the gate.

MOTHER

He said he's sorry. You want to scar them for life?

FATHER

Scar them? That boy almost lost his arm!

MOTHER

But he's still a boy!

FATHER

He will be a man sooner than you think, and this is a lesson I do not want them ever to forget.

(Turning to Selvam:)

Selvam.

Selvam opens the far gate. Richard Parker re-enters the hallway. He sees the goat and slinks forward, lowering his body, his ears flattening against his skull. The goat freezes. Everyone watches in silence, transfixed by the intensity of the tiger. Pi watches the animal spirit glowing up within Richard Parker's eyes as instinct takes over.

In a sudden, single burst, Richard Parker bolts the length of the hallway, claws reaching out through the bars of the cage toward the goat.

We don't see what happens next - but the family does.

ON THE CAGE: Only a few seconds have passed, but Richard Parker has already turned to go back into his enclosure, the lifeless goat in his mouth. The family watches - Father is impassive, Ravi traumatized; mother wraps her arms around Pi.

52

INT. PI AND RAVI'S BEDROOM, 1976 - MORNING

52

A rainy early morning in monsoon season. Pi (now 16) lies in bed, reading "Notes from the Underground." Ravi is still asleep. The radio plays in the other room.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

... and so has placed the country in a State of Emergency.

(MORE)

NEWS ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Under the directive, the states of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu will be placed under the direct authority of the central government. Police will be granted powers to arrest and indefinitely detain citizens responsible for the uprising. Unauthorized...

Ravi's alarm goes off. Ravi reaches to shut it off.

55 55 EXT. PI'S SCHOOL, PONDICHERRY, 1977 - DAY 55

End of the school day. Pi, in raincoat, walks out to the street, where student bicycles are lined up by the hundreds. He gets his bike.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

Things changed after the day of Appa's lesson. The world had lost some of its enchantment. School was a bore - nothing but facts, fractions and French. Words and patterns that went on and on. I grew restless, searching for something that would bring meaning into my life. And then I met Anandi...

59 I/E. DANCE STUDIO, PONDICHERRY, 1977 - DAY 59

CLOSE ON ANANDI (15) radiant, graceful, eyes aglow, dancing with passionate intensity.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

Mother made me study music, and one day my teacher came down with the flu; he asked if I could take his place one afternoon playing rhythms for a dance class.

Pi watches her, hopelessly in love, absent-mindedly drumming along. He is drumming for a class of a dozen female students; a DANCE MASTER (female) accompanies the beat vocally - "Tumtikita..." etc. The dance master claps her hands, interrupting to teach.

DANCE MASTER

No. If you do not concentrate, you cannot express your love of God through dance. Feel the ground beneath your feet;

(MORE)

DANCE MASTER (CONT'D)

open your gaze out onto the horizon, let that spiritual energy pulse through you and out into the world through *abinea*. Anandi, come to the front; lead them.

Anandi obeys; Pi watches her, lost in admiration, until the teacher taps a wood block to get his attention. The girls in the class giggle - Pi blushes, embarrassed.

60

I/E. THE TOWN MARKET/THE BANYAN TREE, 1977 - DAY

60

Anandi walks with two of her FRIENDS through the town market. ACROSS THE MARKET, Pi hides behind a flower seller's stall. Gathering his courage, he peers out, searching for Anandi. She is nowhere to be seen. He walks into an open area of the market that surrounds a banyan tree. Suddenly, he hears a voice behind him.

ANANDI

Why are you following me?

Pi turns - Anandi stands before him, her friends a short distance behind her, eavesdropping.

PI

What?

ANANDI

You were following me.

PI

(After a beat, to cover his evident guilt:)

What does this mean?

Pi vaguely imitates the hand gesture - pinching the tips of his fingers together - that he saw Anandi use in the dance rehearsal. Anandi stares at him, bewildered.

PI (CONT'D)

In the dance, you went from *Pataka*, which means the forest, and then you did-then you did *Samputa*, which means something that is hidden, and after that you did this... and then you did *Chatura*.

Pi demonstrates her dancing. Anandi smiles, while her friends giggle at his performance.

PI (CONT'D)

But at the very end you did this...

(Repeating the gesture:)

None of the other dancers did that.

What did you mean? The God of love
is hiding in the forest?

ANANDI

No - that also means the lotus
flower.

PI

The lotus flower is hiding in the
forest? Why would a lotus flower
hide in the forest?

Anandi blushes. She has no answer.

62 EXT. THE ZOO EXHIBITS, 1977 - DAY

62

Pi and Anandi stand at the Bengal Tiger cage, Pi proudly
introducing Anandi to the zoo's finest exhibit.

PI

And this is Richard Parker. He's
the most magnificent creature we've
ever had here.

(Beat.)

Look at the way he's turning his
head. Showing off - like a dancer.

ANANDI

No, he heard something - he's
listening. You see?

Pi beams.

64 INT. PATEL DINING ROOM, 1977 - DUSK

64

Pi sits at dinner with the family, a half-smile on his face,
obviously lost in thoughts about Anandi. Father's voice
gradually breaks through into Pi's consciousness.

FATHER

So...you see? We have talked about
it for some time... Do you
understand what I'm saying? Pi?

Pi glances over.

PI

Sorry. You've been...

FATHER

Worried. For my family. Our animals are worth far more abroad than here in India, and if the town council stops supporting us, I don't know where we'll be. So... it is what we have to do. Do you understand?

PI

I'm sorry... what are we talking about?

RAVI

We are leaving India.

PI

What??

MOTHER

We are selling the zoo.

FATHER

The zoo itself was never ours to sell - the land belongs to the town. But the animals are ours, and if we sell them, we will have enough to start a new life.

PI

But where would we go? Our life is here Appa!

FATHER

Canada. I have some opportunities for work in Winnipeg. I'll be shipping most of the animals for sale in North America; we can get freighter passage for the whole family. So, it is settled. We will sail like Columbus!

PI

But Columbus was looking for India!

EXT. PONDICHERRY, BENEATH THE PIER, 1977 - DAY

Pi and Anandi sit together on the crossbeams beneath the dock. Anandi takes a length of colored silken threads, tying them around Pi's wrist to serve as 'Rakhi' - a sisterly blessing for protection on his journey.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

It takes a lot of work to sell a zoo; before we left Anandi and I had time enough to break each other's hearts. Of course, I promised I'd come back one day... It's funny... I remember everything else about our last day, but I don't remember saying goodbye...

As she finishes, Pi reaches out impulsively to hold her hand.

67 EXT. CARGO SHIP DECK, 1977 - DUSK

67

Sunset. Pi stands at the railing of the cargo ship, staring out at the Chennai shoreline. Mother approaches.

MOTHER

Pi, they're serving dinner below.
(Beat.)

Pi doesn't respond. Mother approaches and stands beside him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(After a beat.)

Piscine, You have a whole life ahead of you. We're doing this for you and Ravi. Come inside and have some dinner.

68 INT. THE TSIMTSUM, MESS HALL, 1977 - DAY

68

The family stands in the mess hall line along with the CREW. The FRENCH COOK, a grizzled and thoroughly unpleasant man, loads a plate and slides it over the counter to Mother. The meal consists of liver and onions, sausages, and rice soaked in gravy. Mother points at her rice.

MOTHER

My sons and I are vegetarians. Do you have anything - ?

The French Cook ladles ore gravy over her rice.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

No - no! Not more gravy.

FRENCH COOK

(Thick French accent:)

You don't want gravy?

MOTHER
 (Quickly switching to
 French:)
No, I want something vegetarian. I-

The cook takes her plate, sets it on the counter in front of Father. The following takes place in French (subtitled).

FRENCH COOK
There. No problems.

FATHER
**She asked if you have something
 vegetarian.**

FRENCH COOK
**Vegetarian - the cow that produced
 this liver was vegetarian, the pigs
 that went into these sausages were
 vegetarian.**

FATHER
**Very funny. But she doesn't eat
 liver.**

FRENCH COOK
 (Getting irritated:)
**Then she can eat the sausages, the
 rice, the gravy.**
 (To Mother:)
Or you can go cook your own food.

FATHER
**How dare you talk to my wife like
 that?**

The cook shoves a plate of plain rice over the counter.

FRENCH COOK
**Here's your rice. I cook for
 sailors, not curry eaters.**

Father grabs the cook's forearms, yanking him halfway over the high counter.

FATHER
What did you call us??

FRENCH COOK
Let go of me!

FATHER
**Who do you think you are? You're
 nothing but a servant!**

FRENCH COOK
I feed people! You feed monkeys!

FATHER
I'll teach you respect!

Sailors descend on the two, pulling them apart.

A SHORT TIME
 LATER -

69 INT. THE *TSIMTSUM* MESS HALL, 1977 - DAY

69

The family sits eating silently in the aftermath of the scuffle. A TAIWANESE SAILOR comes alongside Pi carrying a plate of rice with gravy. He speaks with a Taiwanese accent and a gentle smile.

TAIWANESE SAILOR
 Hello, I am happy Buddhist, so I
 eat rice next to gravy. On ship,
 gravy is not meat. Is taste. Okay?
 You try?

Pi smiles in gratitude, but the gravy looks anything but appetizing.

70 INT. *TSIMTSUM* CARGO HOLD, 1977 - DAY

70

Pi eats a banana from the food set aside for the animals in the cargo hold. He sits next to the transport cage of ORANGE JUICE, a female orangutan with a baby orang in her arms. Animal crates and cages surround Pi, the air filled with screeches and growls.

Father enters the hold, carrying food for the animals.

FATHER
 (Noting Pi's banana:)
 Don't worry - we will have plenty
 of fresh supplies after we stop in
 Manila.

Father mixes tranquilizer pills into food for the orangs.

PI
 Why give O.J. a tranquilizer? She's
 not going to cause any trouble.

FATHER
 The stress of traveling is not good
 for the animals.
 (MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

And it helps with the seasickness.
We don't want to be cleaning up
after a seasick orangutan, do we?

Pi looks up, notices Father watching him.

Father tries to smile along with his little attempt at humor,
but his manner is stiff, his eyes furtive and uneasy.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

My father was a businessman - he
had never handled the animals
himself. I realized that leaving
India must have been harder for him
than it was for me.

71 EXT. MONTREAL GARDENS - DAY

71

Adult Pi and the Writer sit on a bench in the gardens. Pi has
fallen silent, reflective.

WRITER

... So...

ADULT PI

Have I forgotten anything?

WRITER

I think you've set the stage. So
far we have an Indian boy named
after a French swimming pool on a
Japanese ship full of animals
heading to Canada.

ADULT PI

Yes. Now we have to send our boy
into the middle of the Pacific, and

-

WRITER

And make me believe in God.

ADULT PI

Yes. We'll get there.

72 EXT. A TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE PACIFIC, 1977 - DUSK

72

Moving in on the Mariana Trench, an ominous gash of darkest
blue...

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 It was four days out of Manila -
 above the Mariana Trench, the
 deepest spot on earth...

Zoom closer until the blue fills the screen...

ADULT PI (V.O.)
 Our ship, the *Tsimtsum*, pushed on,
 bullishly indifferent to its
 surroundings. It moved with the
 slow, massive confidence of a
 continent.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 EXT. THE *TSIMTSUM* - NIGHT 73

Lightning and thunder. The freighter sailing in ominous weather, the name *Tsimtsum* emblazoned on its hull. Choppy seas, rains, a storm.

74 INT. CARGO SHIP, THE FAMILY CABIN - NIGHT 74

Darkness - the faint glow of a nightlight. Close on Pi's sleeping face, the cabin swaying in the storm.

BANG. A loud, deep rumble breaks into his consciousness. The ship shakes. Pi's eyes open. He looks around, listens. Nothing. He leans over the side of his bunk and wakes Ravi.

PI
 Ravi? Did you hear that?
 (Pause)
 Ravi?

RAVI
 ... I'm sleeping.

PI
 It's a thunderstorm! Let's go
 watch!

RAVI
 Are you crazy? We'll get hit by
 lightning.

PI
 No, we won't. It'll hit the bridge
 first.

RAVI
Don't tempt a storm, Pi.

On the other side of the narrow room, Mother shifts uncomfortably on the double bed she shares with Father.

75 INT. SHIP HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 75

Pi heads upstairs to the deck.

76 EXT. THE CARGO DECK - CONTINUOUS 76

The deck of the ship is dark. Pi steps out into a bracing rain and walks to the rail, wind whipping his hair. He laughs, exhilarated, as rain splashes over his face. Throwing arms wide, Pi dances in imitation of Anandi's dance, slipping more than once on the rain-soaked deck, shouting in giddy adolescent triumph.

PI
More rain, lord of storms! Let it
rage!

He finishes, laughing as he falls against the railing. The deck lights suddenly all come on at once; a warning alarm sounds over the loudspeakers.

Pi slips to the front of the deck and stands up, watching in horror as a wave washes over the bow, carrying several sailors overboard. He pushes himself away from the railing and runs back down below.

INT. THE STAIRS TO THE CABINS/LOWER LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Pi stumbles down the tilted staircase.

PI
AMMA! APPA! RAVI! GET OUT, GET OUT!

Halfway down, Pi hits water. He dives, searching for his family. The hall lights flicker - the passage falls dark an instant before the emergency lights come on in the water below, which nearly reaches the ceiling. Pi dives, trying to swim against the flowing current; he's astonished to find a ZEBRA swimming toward him, passing overhead. He tries to swim further, but the enormous force of rushing water and air is too great; he scrambles backward, groping toward the stairwell.

EXT. THE CARGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Pi bursts on deck, coughing and gagging for air.

PI
HELP!! SOMEBODY HELP ME!!

Pi sees movement - animals running. He scrambles toward them, the ship groaning as it lists sideways.

Oxen and deer are visible on the far side of the deck, backlit by emergency lights; Pi hears monkeys screeching, the clatter of hoofs pounding. In the distance, Sailors shout orders in panicked voices.

Pi comes onto the lower deck, where he sees three men - the Buddhist (Taiwanese Sailor) from the dining hall; the JAPANESE CAPTAIN, and SAILOR #1 - arguing with the French cook, who has climbed into the stern of one of the lifeboats that hangs off the side of the ship. Pi runs to the Captain.

PI (CONT'D)
Please save my family!

JAPANESE CAPTAIN
Don't scare. Okay? Wait stay here.

He grabs a life vest and starts to put it on Pi.

JAPANESE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Here, put this on!

PI
You have to help them, please! Oh no my family, please. You have to help them, my family is back there.

JAPANESE CAPTAIN
We don't have time.

The Taiwanese Sailor jumps onto the ship.

TAIWANESE SAILOR
We help. You must go.

PI
Who let all the animals out?

They shove a life vest over Pi's head.

SAILOR #1
You have to go now.

PI

No wait! My father - he can't swim -

JAPANESE CAPTAIN

This is your last chance--just go!

PI

No please!

They guide Pi to the side, where a section of the ship's railing has been removed to give access to the lifeboat. They push Pi over the edge; Pi falls onto the lifeboat, bouncing on the protective tarp that is still stretched taut across the bow. He grabs at the rope holding the bow, trying not to slip off. The sailors are shouting at the French cook, who stands at the stern.

SAILOR #1

Hey! You! What are you doing?!

FRENCH COOK

Loosen the lines! Bring it down!

SAILOR #1

Tie it down! Tie it down!

FRENCH COOK

(to the sailors:)

Jump! Jump!

The sailors look towards the upper deck. Pi follows their looks and watches in horror as a zebra launches itself over the side of the ship, careening through the air toward the safety of the lifeboat. The French cook staggers backward and jumps out of the way, falling to the water below. Pi throws up his arms as the life boat starts to drop. The zebra arcs through the air, missing the tarp, landing on the exposed stern with a sickening thud, shattering the rear bench. The force sends the rig lines spinning.

The lifeboat plummets to the water below. The impact spins it around, nearly washing Pi overboard. He is left clinging to the back of the tarp, the zebra on the floor of the lifeboat before him. As the lifeboat drops down the side of the swell, Pi slides to the front of the tarp. The Tsimtsum's propeller rises behind him.

As Pi steadies himself, a swell lifts the lifeboat, crashing it onto the deck of the Tsimtsum. It drops back into the sea, rolling over completely. The vessel instantly rights itself - the lifeboat is designed to be virtually unsinkable. Pi lands on the lifeboat's floorboards, next to the zebra.

Pi sees the Tsimtsum at an angle, it's bow dipping below the water. As he tries to get up, Pi notices the orange emergency whistle that dangles from the vest. He grabs it and blows, shouting between blasts.

PI
HELP! HELP! SOMEBODY, HELP ME!

The deck lights of the freighter glow with a cheery, unnatural brilliance. By the light of the ship, Pi can just make out a distant figure in the water.

PI (CONT'D)
HEY! OVER HERE!

Pi spies a lifebuoy tied to a rope. He grabs it and heaves it as far as he can across the water. OUT IN THE WATER, the lifebuoy splashes a few yards away from the shadowy figure.

The moment Pi feels the tug on the line, he jumps into the uncovered part of the boat, lies back and begins hauling the rope in. Nearly finished, he lifts his head to peer over the side and sees who he's rescued.

PI (CONT'D)
Richard Parker?

A beat - and then Pi realizes what he's done. He scrambles backward in horror, trying to throw the rope overboard.

PI (CONT'D)
NO! GO AWAY!

Richard Parker paddles toward the boat. Pi grabs an oar, wielding it against the approaching tiger. Richard Parker tries to grab the oar. Pi yanks the oar away, falling onto his back.

He listens as Richard Parker claws his way up the side of the swaying boat, coughing and gagging water. Pi scrambles backward, oar still in hand. He rises and jumps overboard.

79 EXT. THE OCEAN - CONTINUOUS 79

Pi plunges into the roiling water. An enormous wave rolls toward Pi - filling his lungs with air, Pi dives under, away from the assault of the raging storm.

80 EXT. BENEATH THE WATER - CONTINUOUS 80

Silence as Pi hangs below the surface, arms wide, groping for focus and calm.

Lightning casts a blazing white veil over the surface of the water above him, backlighting fish and animals, waves frozen in time like wrinkled bedsheets, their motionless texture pocked and dimpled with raindrops. As the sky explodes in white flashes, the scene is caught in surreal still shots.

A hippo swims past, it's heavy form moving gracefully.

Pi swims toward the camera - then freezes, reacting in horror as...

A shark swoops past him and up toward the struggling animals near the surface. Pi dives defensively - the camera follows. Ahead, the *Tsimtsum* is visible, fifty feet beyond Pi, its deck lights dipping below the surface, casting an eerie underwater glow, bubbles flowing up to the surface; nearby, Pi can make out the floating oar.

81 EXT. THE OCEAN/THE BOAT - CONTINUOUS

81

Pi bursts above water in total panic, throwing his arms around the oar, coughing up sea water and bile. The lifebuoy floats a dozen feet off; he swims toward it. He grabs the oar moments before a huge wave sweeps him up and over the lifeboat. He lands on the other side, the oar lost, and drags himself onto the stern. He jumps over the kicking zebra and scrambles onto the boat tarp.

An oar sticks out from under the boat cover, hanging out over the front of the lifeboat. Pi climbs out on the oar, keeping himself a safe distance from the tiger he assumes is beneath the tarp. The air vibrates with a tremendous belching groan; Pi looks over to the cargo ship, watching, astounded...

PI

Amma! Appa! Ravi! I'm sorry! I'm sorry...!

WIDE SHOT - from top, looking down into the water: the *Tsimtsum* abruptly keels and sinks beneath the surface. Pi watches in horror as the *Tsimtsum* plummets into the depths of the Mariana Trench, it's deck lights gradually fading. Pi bursts into tears as waves from the sinking vessel buffet his lifeboat.

Pi weeps uncontrollably.

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAWN

The storm has passed, but the skies are still heavy with disgusting grey clouds. Pi has hung the lifebuoy on the oar and now sits on it, slumped in exhaustion and shivering.

With what energy he still has, he weeps - his face is puffy and swollen from a night of tears.

Pi watches a shark fin knife through the waves. His feet have been trailing in the water; he quickly lifts them out. He raises his head, looking at his new surroundings - water and air, clouds and sky. Nothing on the horizon.

Pi creeps forward on the oar, pulling himself onto the gunnels - the side of the boat. No sign of Richard Parker.

The zebra comes into view in the stern of the lifeboat, injured legs folded beneath it, staring indifferently into space.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY

Pi stands a few feet away from the zebra, using an emergency bucket to bail water out of the bottom of the boat, exhausted from the effort. He pauses to catch his breath, then becomes aware of a slight movement at one side of the tarp.

A SPOTTED HYENA lurches furtively into view from beneath the tarp, then disappears again. Pi freezes, dumbfounded.

PI

Hari?

Hari, the hyena, with a sloping, bear-like forehead and the nervous manner of a beaten dog, reappears. Pi instantly dives across the tarp, scrambling for safety on the oar. The hyena staggers and stumbles listlessly. Pi turns to face the creature, struggling for calm.

PI (CONT'D)

Looks as though your drugs haven't worn off yet.

The screech of a terrified animal echoes across the water - the hyena looks out to port, the hair rising on its back, then staggers beneath the tarp.

Pi squints into the rising sun. An enormous bundle of bananas bobs into view. The bundle twists and rolls - and Orange Juice, the orangutan tries desperately to stay on top.

PI (CONT'D)

Orange Juice!! This way!

Within moments, the bundle is within reach of the lifeboat; Pi catches the oar handle in the netting that binds the bananas together and pulls it against the side of the boat. O.J. falls onboard in a stuporous fog.

PI (CONT'D)
Welcome to Pi's ark!

The netting, wrapped around the handle of the oar, pulls loose from the bananas, which tumble out of reach. As Pi reels the netting in, O.J. moans in distress. Pi throws a banana to O.J. but she is too sick to react.

PI (CONT'D)
(A sudden realization)
Where is your boy, Orange Juice?
(Pause)
I'll bet Mother and Father found him. They'll all be here soon.

O.J. turns to look at Pi, a look of inconsolable sadness in her eyes - as though she knows better what lies ahead.

84

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY

84

High noon. Intolerable heat. Flies circle the zebra, landing on Pi's face and arms. He's too exhausted to brush them away. The only sound is the incessant lapping of water against the hull. Pi stares out across the ocean - no rescue in sight. He pushes himself upright, calling over the waves.

PI
HELLO...! HELLO...! ANYBODY?

Pi kneels and bangs his bailing bucket against the hull. The hyena emerges, shaking its head violently in an attempt to clear its thoughts. It screams in frustration and begins yipping. Pi picks up the oar and pokes the hyena to fend it off. He watches with increasing alarm as the hyena paces in frantic circles - whatever tranquilizers this animal received are wearing off. The boy wraps his grip around the paddle, prepared to defend himself.

The hyena abruptly stops pacing, coughing and retching - then lies down, shaking from emotional and physical distress. It sets its head on the edge of the tarp, predator eyes fastened on Pi.

85

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DUSK

85

A boy, a hyena, a zebra and an orangutan silhouetted against the last fading light of day.

Pi has hung the paddle and lifebuoy off the end of the boat and perches on the bow. The hyena's eyes seem to glow in the last light, fixed on Pi. Pi stares back.

Pi fights fatigue as waves splash interminably against the hull. He winces at each creak of the lifeboat; his eyes glaze over as he stares out at the endless, dusky seascape. Pi sees movement in the shadows. The hyena attacks the zebra; the zebra barks and squeals. O.J. reacts to the violence, crying out.

PI
No! Stop it! Stop it! No! Stop it!
Stop it! NO!!! NO!!! NO!!!

86

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAWN

86

Silence. Morning. Hazy. Pi slumps over the oar, eyes half open, glazed. He has stayed up a second night for fear of being attacked, and now he slowly nods sideways, giving in to exhaustion despite himself, and tumbles into the water.

Pi gasps in shock as the water slaps him into full consciousness. He climbs back onto the life ring - coughing, tired, wet, sad and fearful.

The lifeboat rolls and growls beneath Pi's feet as he stares - and then he notices O.J. The poor orang is sitting on a side bench half-hidden by the tarp, and horribly seasick. Her tongue lolls out of her mouth and she's visibly panting.

PI
I'm sorry, O.J.; I don't have any
seasickness medicine for you -

And then it strikes him.

PI (CONT'D)
Supplies! Ah, supplies!

Pi pulls up the edge of the tarp nearest the bow. A row of benches with hinged lids curve around the bow. Pi opens the rearmost bench and finds a "LIFEBOAT MANUAL AND NAVIGATIONAL GUIDE" in a plastic bag along with a pencil lying on top of bags of supplies. He pulls out the manual and flips through it - an illustration shows that the boat is lined with compartments. He opens the next bench - it's stuffed with life jackets.

He tosses one of the life jackets to O.J., who has no idea what to make of it. O.J. turns to watch him, utterly bewildered.

An hour later. Pi finishes tying a knot in a piece of rope that joins oars to the lifebuoy. Pull back to reveal that Pi has built a makeshift raft, tying three oars into a triangle around the lifebuoy and using the banana net to gather the life vests into a bunch beneath.

Pi sits back, mopping his brow, then begins pushing and dragging his raft over to the edge of the lifeboat to launch it.

The hyena comes out from under the tarp to see what all the noise is. As it paces, it gets too close to O.J., who suddenly comes to life, rising up to her full height, pulling back her lips and roaring. The hair on the hyena's neck and shoulders stands up - suddenly, it launches an attack. Pi cries out, flinching - but O.J. uses one of her long arms to thump the beast on top of the head.

Pi cheers the blow -

PI

YES!

But the hyena gets up in an instant - it attacks again, this time going for O.J.'s throat.

PI (CONT'D)

NO!! NO!! NO!! NO!!

O.J. gets pulled down to the floor of the boat, the battle continuing out of view. Pi searches through the piles of rope, finding a knife. He rises and dashes forward.

Pi reaches the end of the tarp. The hyena retreats. O.J. lies in the stern, dead.

Pi, enraged, confronts the hyena.

PI (CONT'D)

Come on! Come on!! COME ON...!!!

Pi feels the tarp move under his feet... suddenly, Richard Parker launches like a blur from under the canvas, going straight after the hyena. Pi falls backward on the tarp, stunned.

As the tiger clamps his jaws around the hyena, finishing it off, Pi leaps back to the bow, shoving his makeshift raft into the water. The raft splashes in the water and the tiger turns; Pi looks back and comes face-to-face with Richard Parker.

The tiger stands with front feet on the crossbench, sniffing the sea air, examining his surroundings for the first time, agitated by this open air environment. As he turns to go back under the tarp, his gaze falls on Pi. Richard Parker's ears swivel, and his lip twitches, revealing a canine as long as a finger.

Pi, terrified, grabs an oar and holds it out, trying to prevent an attack. Unfortunately, he also blocks Richard Parker's path back under the tarp. The tiger tries to go around the oar, and when Pi blocks his way, the tiger swings a paw, knocking the oar into the ocean with such force that Pi is spun completely around with his back to the tiger. He falls into a crouch, cowering, prepared to die.

Richard Parker's predator instinct takes over. He snarls and pounces on the tarp, menacingly close to Pi - then hesitates, unsettled by the softness of the tarp beneath his feet. The tiger retreats, examining his surroundings.

Pi jumps toward the raft. He belly flops into the ocean and rises in a panic, trying to scramble up onto the raft, only to have it flip completely over his head.

A88 EXT THE RAFT - DAY

A88

Grey, lifeless skies above the vastness of the ocean. Pi shivers, his eyes glassy, his lips chapped and skin waxen from hours of exposure. He tries various ways to re-shape the raft.

A shark slips up alongside Pi and bumps him, sending Pi scrambling back to the safety of the raft.

91 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY

91

Pi pulls the raft to the back of the lifeboat, tying the rope line on one of the tarp hooks. Hands appear on the gunnels. Pi lifts his head over the bow. The tiger is nowhere in sight. Pi quietly climbs aboard. He tries in vain to control his chattering teeth and shaking limbs as he opens the starboard bow storage bench.

He sees a duffel bag, zips it open and rifles through the contents. It contains an array of survival supplies - as he lifts it out, his eye falls upon a stack of cans marked "Water." He pops a hole in a water can with the can opener and drinks one, tilting his head back and closing his eyes in ecstasy. He throws a few on the raft. He grabs a couple of boxes marked "Baked Wheat Biscuits." Pi tears open a box and stuffs a biscuit into his mouth.

The biscuits are so dry that he is barely able to chew them - crumbs fall from his lips into the supply hatch.

A rat skitters out from under the tarp, grabbing biscuit crumbs, then retreating.

A low growl. Richard Parker charges out from his den and bounds onto the tarp. Pi staggers in terror and falls helplessly into the storage bench, with only his head poking out above the tarp.

The tiger steps toward Pi, then hesitates - again, the softness of the tarp unnerves him. He steps back off the tarp and paces the stern.

Pi creeps out of the storage bench - then watches in horror as Richard Parker swivels and charges him again, this time beneath the tarp. The rat scurries back out of hiding and Richard Parker's head follows, looming up out from the gap between the tarp and the storage bench. Pi jumps onto the tarp, out of the tiger's reach.

Richard Parker scrambles backward and reappears at the far end of the tarp, roaring, prepared to attack from above - then halts, watching in astonishment as the rat hops around the lifeboat, finally running up Pi's shirt and landing on Pi's head.

Pi grabs the rat by the tail and throws it. The rat sails, paws and tail stretched wide, across the boat. Richard Parker opens his mouth and the rat flies in, its tail disappearing between the tiger's lips like a spaghetti noodle.

As Richard Parker enjoys his treat, Pi climbs backward over the bow, unhooking the rope, grabbing the water cans and the biscuits and slipping over the side, falling into the water.

He drops onto the raft and pushes himself back with his feet. The raft floats back and hits the end of the ropeline with a jerk. Pi remembers the rope and goes back to untie it.

Suddenly Richard Parker appears at the bow and lunges at him, almost falling off the front of the lifeboat onto Pi. The tiger scrambles back onto the boat and off the tarp, while Pi paddles the raft away.

When he is finally at a safe distance, fear and stress overwhelm Pi - he throws up what little food and water he has taken.

92 EXT. THE RAFT, BEHIND THE LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

92

A full moon, backlit clouds rolling through the skies, reflected in the water below. Pi floats behind the lifeboat, weeping, surrounded by nothing but terror and the abyss. A thick range of clouds moves in, threatening to cut off the light from the moon and stars.

Pi watches Richard Parker on the lifeboat, a shadowy silhouette on the bow ahead. The tiger takes the zebra carcass under the tarp. The clouds blot out the sky. Darkness envelops them.

93 EXT. ABOVE THE RAFT - EARLY MORNING

93

Angle on Pi, the raft and boat from above, lost on an endless ocean, the bright colors of morning light dancing on the surface of the water.

Pi has taken out his pencil and now writes on the back page of his survival manual, his voice heard over:

PI (WRITING V.O.)

"My name is Pi Patel. I have been in a shipwreck. I am on a lifeboat alone - with a tiger. Please send help."

He tears the page out and stuffs it into an empty water can, sealing the opening with a plastic lid. He tosses it as far as possible; the can splashes down, rippling the water, then bobs, going nowhere. Pi stares at the bobbing can, crushed as he sees the futility of this plan.

A defeated pause, and then Pi looks up and sees the majesty of his surroundings. The cloud cover breaks; dawn light glows down on Pi.

A grunt from the lifeboat. Pi turns, surprised. He grabs the tow line and reels into the lifeboat.

He lifts the tarp; Richard Parker's eyes glow out at him from the shadows, greeting Pi with a low snarl. Pi gingerly lowers the tarp and casts the raft back from the bow. He looks up.

PI (CONT'D)

(In awe, shuddering:)

God... I give myself to you. I am your vessel. Whatever comes... I want to know. Show me.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE RAFT - DAY

Pi sits on his makeshift raft, flipping through his manual. The foldout map of the manual shows the ocean's currents, longitudes, latitudes, and depths. Pi stares at the chart, bewildered by it all. He rises up on his knees, looking out at the ocean around him, then sits back, hand to forehead.

PI
There are no lines!

95 EXT. THE RAFT - DAY - MONTAGE 95

Montage - Pi struggling with discomfort on his raft.

PI (READING - V.O.)
"Set your house in order and dig in for the battle to survive. Establish a strict schedule for eating, keeping watch and getting rest. Do not drink urine or sea water.

Keep busy, but avoid unnecessary exertion. The mind can be kept occupied by playing card games, Twenty Questions, or I Spy. Community singing is another sure-fire way to lift the spirits. Telling stories is highly recommended. Above all, don't lose hope."

- Pi scratches marks into the side of the boat to indicate the passage of time - it is his 11th day at sea.

A96 EXT. THE RAFT - A SHORT TIME LATER

A96

Pi is still reading his survival manual. The waves pick up. The lifeboat rocks. Somewhere beneath the tarp, the tiger lets out a faint groan of discomfort. On Pi as he contemplates this...

PI (READING V.O.):
"Few things can sap the spirit faster than seasickness. Waves are more strongly felt when a boat turns sideways to the current. A sea anchor is used as a drag to keep the boat's head to the wind.
(MORE)

PI (READING V.O.): (CONT'D)
 Proper use of them can increase
 control and reduce seasickness
 during rough seas...

Pi takes a sea anchor from inside his life ring and tosses it overboard. As soon as the sea anchor has been deployed, the raft slows down and the anchor lines go taut.

97

EXT. RAFT - DAY

97

Pi has rigged an additional line between the open end of the lifeboat and his raft.

PI (READING V.O.)
 For castaways who must share their lifeboats with large dangerous carnivores it's advisable to establish a territory as your own. The following course of action is recommended.
 Step one: choose a day when waves are moderate but regular.
 Step two: with the lifeboat facing into the waves, making the ride as comfortable as possible, blow your whistle soothingly.
 Step three: turn the lifeboat sideways to the waves, accompanied by harsh aggressive use of the whistle. With sufficient repetition, the animal will associate the sound of the whistle with the discomfort of seasickness. Similar methods have long been used by circus trainers, though they generally lack access to rough seas.

He reels in this line, turning the boat sideways to the waves. The rocking increases. Pi blows the whistle several times harshly ("warning" signal) as the rocking increases. From within the boat, he hears the tiger groan. He grabs the original lifeline that connects the raft to the boat and hauls himself in. Pi grins, spits out the whistle.

PI (CONT'D)
 (A ringmaster's call:)
 Let the trumpets blare, let the drum rolls begin! Prepare to be amazed! Here it is, for your enjoyment and instruction, the show you've been waiting for all your life will soon begin!
 (MORE)

PI (CONT'D)
 Are you ready for the miracle of
 it? Well, then - I give to you...

Pi lets go of the second line, raising his hand with a flourish.

PI (CONT'D)
 ... the ASTOUNDING BENGAL TIGER!

He pulls the raft next to the tarp end of the lifeboat. The tiger crawls out from under the tarp, violently ill.

PI (CONT'D)
 (Rocking the boat:)
 Hello, Richard Parker. Sorry about
 the choppy ride.

Pi pulls himself onto the bow. Richard Parker tries to lift his head, then groans, giving it up. Pi lifts the whistle to his mouth and blows it repeatedly as he advances to the front edge of the tarp, opens his fly and pisses in a straight line across the midpoint of the boat.

PI (CONT'D)
 (Pointing:)
 MINE! YOU UNDERSTAND? YOURS - MINE!
 (He blows his whistle)
 You understand?

He steps back to observe the effect of this provocation on the seasick tiger. Richard Parker staggers to the edge of the tarp. He takes a deep sniff and winces, groaning, his tongue hanging out in distaste. The tiger turns away from Pi, facing the stern. Pi thinks the battle is won - until the tiger lifts his tail and sprays him with a tremendous burst of urine.

PI (READING V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Step four: disregard steps one
 through three.

A97 EXT. THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

A97

Pi pulls in the solar still. Pi bends down to suck fresh water from the straw that protrudes from a water still, delighted to discover that it works. He carefully pours some of the water into a can for himself, then pours the rest into a bucket.

B97 EXT. THE RAFT/THE LIFEBOAT - A SHORT TIME LATER

B97

Pi pulls himself up to the bow of the lifeboat, sets a bucket of water in the boat and blows his whistle. Richard Parker sticks his head out from under the tarp.

PI

Here, Richard Parker. I've got some water for you.

Pi blows the whistle once more, casting the raft adrift again. Richard Parker sniffs, then begins lapping greedily at the water.

103 EXT. RAFT - INSERT

103

INSERT of Pi writing in manual - text on page reflects Pi's accompanying V.O.

PI (VO)

In the zoo, we fed our tigers an average of five kilos of meat a day. Richard Parker will be getting hungry soon.

104 EXT. RAFT - CONTINUOUS

104

Pi chews for a moment, then spits out a blob of biscuit and presses the food ball onto his hook, savoring the crumbs that remain in his mouth. He tosses the hook and biscuit onto the water - the hook sinks, leaving the crumble of biscuit floating uselessly on the surface. Pi watches helplessly as fish rise to the surface to nibble at the soggy crumbs.

PI (V.O.)

Tigers are powerful swimmers, and, if he gets hungry enough, I'm afraid the little bit of water between us won't be any protection. I need to find a way to feed him. God made tigers carnivores, so I must learn to catch fish. If I don't, I'm afraid his last meal will be a skinny vegetarian boy.

Pi thinks a moment. He takes off one of his shoes, using the knife to cut a sliver of leather off the side. He presses the hook through the leather and tosses it in the water. Pi pulls in his fishing line - the leather is gone.

A SHORT TIME
LATER -

105

EXT. RAFT - DAY

105

Pi has cut his shoe into a dozen bits of leather and tried fishing several times - Always with the same result. Richard Parker, watching, mops at his jaw to wipe away drool - he's clearly getting hungry.

PI

Patience!

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT/THE RAFT - DUSK

Pi still fishes with no success. Richard Parker stares in the water at the dorado. He leans over the side of the boat, pawing hungrily at the surface as fish streak past - but the fish elude him. Richard Parker leans out further, striking with both paws - and finally jumps in altogether.

Richard Parker strikes and splashes as fish streak past. Pi grins at the tiger's predicament - but the moment Richard Parker realizes he can't climb back aboard, he begins swimming toward the raft. Pi snaps to, recognizing the danger he's in. He reels the raft over to the lifeboat, practically leaping onto the bow.

As he hauls the raft aboard, Richard Parker manages to catch the netting on the raft with one paw. Pi leans back against an oar with all his weight, trying to lever the raft aboard; the weight of the tiger tips the entire bow lower in the water. Pi is about to lose the struggle when the tiger's claw rips through the netting, and the lifeboat springs back up in the water; the momentum flips the raft up onto the boat.

Pi turns, watching as Richard Parker swims up behind him alongside the bow. He digs into the supply box and rises with a hatchet in his hand, crossing to stand over the tiger and blowing the whistle threateningly.

Standoff. Pi pumps the axe a few times, but cannot bring himself to kill the tiger. Richard Parker stares up at Pi a long moment, then paddles to the stern, trying once again to pull himself aboard at the other end of the boat.

PI

What am I doing?

Pi kicks at the side of the boat in frustration, and is surprised to hear a metal clunk. He finds a rectangular aluminum air box used for bouyancy: Pi then pulls the tarp back fully for the first time and examines the contents below.

As he removes one of the floorboard panels, imagining new uses for the wooden slats, he hears Richard Parker scratching at the hull of the boat.

PI (CONT'D)
Wait - I'm thinking.

107 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - NIGHT 107

Pi has tied a bunch of the flotation boxes to his raft and loaded it with all the provisions from the lifeboat. He points a flashlight beam over the side at the exhausted Richard Parker, the tiger's face and whiskers just above the surface of the water, scratching at the side of the boat.

Pi backs to the other end of the boat, pushing his raft into the water with one hand as he rocks the boat to help Richard Parker climb in. The moment the tiger is aboard, Pi climbs onto the raft and pushes off, retreating to safety, blowing the whistle to remind Richard Parker who's in command.

As he floats away, Pi collapses, exhausted, on the raft.

A107 EXT. THE RAFT - DAY A107

Pi goes through the supplies listed in his survival guide, matching supplies to the pile of booty he's just retrieved from the lifeboat.

PI (WRITING - V.O.)
93 cans of water...

B107 EXT. THE RAFT - DAY B107

Pi removes all of the lifejackets from under the life ring, stacking them onto his latest raft structure. The empty banana netting now drapes beneath the raft; Pi notices that dorado are attracted to the net and gets an idea.

One of the dorados gets very close to the net - Pi realizes his opportunity. He hauls in the netting and wrestles the dorado onto the raft, flailing against the creature's strength and throwing his full weight onto the creature to keep it from sliding back into the ocean, riding it like a bucking bronco. Pi grabs a hatchet from the raft and strikes the fish over and over again. As the fish begins to die, it flashes all kinds of colors in rapid succession - blue, green, red, gold and violet flicker and shimmer neon-like on its surface. Pi starts back, watching this colorful display in terrified wonder. Finally, the fish ebbs to grey, lifeless.

PI
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Pi is devastated. He weeps, bringing his hands together, pressing them against his forehead, murmuring a prayer to himself and bowing over the dead fish in abject grief.

PI (CONT'D)
Thank you, Lord Vishnu. Thank you
for coming in the form of a fish
and saving our lives. Thank you...

108 EXT. THE RAFT/THE LIFEBOAT - A SHORT TIME LATER 108

Pi reels himself over to the lifeboat. He moves around to the side of the boat, grabs the dorado by the tail and throws the entire fish over the side and into the stern. It lands with a thud, and from somewhere inside the boat, Richard Parker lets out a grunt of surprise.

After a moment, Pi hears the wet mashing noises of the tiger devouring the fish. As Pi pushes away from the lifeboat, he puts the whistle in his mouth, blowing a few sharp blasts to remind Richard Parker who's in charge.

112A EXT. THE RAFT - NIGHT 112A

A full moon. All around the raft, the green surface of the water glows with millions of flecks of glowing plankton - and beneath the surface, fish swim past at multiple depths and in multiple directions. Pi brushes his fingers over the surface of the water. The surface ripples where he touched it, the plankton glowing more brightly, the effect moving outward and downward through the water, an ever-expanding ring.

Pi hears a faint, rapid succession of blows. He peers into the encroaching darkness but can see nothing. Richard Parker is nowhere to be seen. The blows stop and Pi returns his attention to the light show below.

Pi senses movement deep within the water, a cone of rushing energy pressing up toward the luminescent surface.

Suddenly, the glowing silhouette of a huge creature wrapped in phosphorescent plankton - a HUMPBACK WHALE - streaks to the surface nearby, its mouth gaping. Fifty feet in length, it thrusts itself up into the air. Pi barely has time to react, gripping the raft and holding on for his life as the whale comes crashing back down into the water.

The animal slips back into the ocean, creating a wave that sends the raft swirling across the water's surface, submerging for a moment, then bouncing off the side of the lifeboat.

Pi's neatly-stacked water cans and biscuits tumble over the side of the raft and into the ocean.

The whale disappears into the night, leaving Pi open-mouthed and shaken.

PI (V.O.)

Of course, I brought all the biscuits and water on the raft with me to keep them safe. Idiot.

116

EXT. THE RAFT/LIFEBOAT - LATE AFTERNOON

116

A calm day; gentle waves. Afternoon, the sun beating down. Pi wears his shirt wrapped around his head to hold off the heat.

PI (V.O. - CONT'D)

Hunger can change everything you ever thought you knew about yourself.

Pi uses his knife to cut another scratch into the hull. There are 38 scratches on the side of the lifeboat. He glances down, staring longingly at the fish that swim just beneath the raft, then looks across the lifeboat, where the gaff lies hooked in the tarp close to the tiger's end of the boat. Richard Parker is nowhere to be seen.

Pi reaches out with the boat hook to try to snag the gaff, but it is hooked deeply into the tarp. He lays the boat hook on the tarp and climbs aboard, crawling forward to free the gaff. As he wiggles the hook free, Richard Parker's head pops out from beneath the tarp only a few feet away.

Pi's winces, prepared for an attack. In an instant, he's struck hard across the face - a stunning blow that sends him backward onto the tarp.

Pause. Pi opens one eye. Richard Parker hasn't moved. Pi looks down - a slender grey-blue fish with wings is flopping about on the tarp. Pi has been hit by a flying fish.

Richard Parker has seen the flying fish as well. He rises to his haunches. Pi grabs the flying fish and tosses it to Richard Parker.

PI (CONT'D)

Here, it's yours.

The tiger stands, jaws opening in anticipation...

And then the fish extends its wings, veering at the last second and dropping into the water. Richard Parker tries to bat the fish down, but it's too quick for him. The tiger turns back toward Pi with a questioning glare.

The air around the boat whirs to life as they are struck from all directions by a school of flying fish that descends upon them like a swarm of locusts. Some sail clear over the boat; a number crash into the side. Other, less fortunate fish land in the boat, where they start a racket of flapping and flailing. Pi yelps in anguish as he is struck repeatedly.

The school of fish is being pursued through the ocean by tuna. It is a feeding frenzy - the ocean boils with jumping fish and snapping jaws.

Richard Parker becomes totally absorbed in the kill, leaping, blocking, and batting down as many of the fish as he can.

A fat, three-foot long yellowfin tuna lands onboard, cracking hard against the center bench and falling, stunned and twitching, into the boat.

Pi sees Richard Parker's head swivel in his direction. In a moment of insanity brought on by hunger, Pi reaches back and grabs the boat hook from the tarp, shoving it aggressively into the tiger's face just as Richard Parker launches forward.

The boat hook catches Richard Parker square in the mouth; the tiger staggers back in shock and growls in outrage. Pi rises up to his full height, staring directly into the tiger's eyes and shouting in fury, his gaze wide, his posture defiant.

PI (CONT'D)
MINE!!!! MINE!!! AHHH!!
AAAAHHHH!!!!

Boy and tiger face off for several seconds, both panting, neither blinking nor showing fear, as the rain of fish gradually slows around them.

Richard Parker turns his focus from Pi and takes in the situation around him. Realizing that he stands up to his knees in a pile of flying fish, he turns his attention to a more convenient meal.

Pi uses the gaff to snag the tuna, shoving it to the farthest edge of the bow. As he rises, late afternoon light casts golden flames across the surface of the water, throwing Pi into backlight.

Pi picks up the boat hook and turns to face Richard Parker.

EXT. THE RAFT - SUNSET

Pi takes a small piece of tuna and gingerly raises it to his lips, tasting flesh for the first time. A pause as he savors the taste, considering... and then hunger takes him over. He grabs at the tuna, stuffing pieces into his mouth, devouring it.

A132 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY

A132

Pi uses a bandage from the first aid kit to wrap a cut on his leg. As he works, he glances back toward the boat, deep in contemplation.

PI (V.O.)

I can't risk my life every time I
have to climb onto the boat for
supplies. It's time to settle this.
If we're going to live together, we
have to learn to communicate.

B132 EXT. THE RAFT - DAY

B132

Pi reaches into the stern, prying loose a seven-foot strip of wooden molding that lines the front edge of the seats.

PI (V.O.)

Maybe Richard Parker cannot be
tamed, but with God's will, he can
be trained.

Pi works intently with his knife, whittling the strip of molding into a long tapered wand with a handgrip on one end.

133 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY

133

Pi crosses the tarp, approaching Richard Parker with his new training stick.

The tiger backs off as Pi approaches - curious and annoyed. Pi uses the stick to probe into the tiger's territory, testing his limits; Richard Parker gets angry, batting at the stick. Pi looks away, tries again, then turns to face Richard Parker, who growls, angry and begins batting at the stick.

PI

NO!

Pi gives the tiger a stern glare. RP stops, stares back, then backs off.

PI (CONT'D)

Good.

Pi reaches into a pouch behind his back, taking out a piece of fish. He places it on the end of the stick and reaches out, offering it to Richard Parker, who sniffs the air.

Pi puts the fish on the bench. Richard Parker eats the fish, then backs up, growing calmer.

Pi takes out another fish, reaches out to tap the bench, then tosses the fish on the bench. Richard Parker takes the fish, eats.

Pi tosses the next piece near the edge of the tarp and taps, encouraging Richard Parker to follow his direction.

PI (CONT'D)

Go Richard Parker. Go. Go on home;
I'll leave you alone. I'll respect
that. I promise. Go, c'mon.

Richard Parker stares at Pi. Pi raises his arms and yells, chasing Richard Parker around the bench and under the tarp.

PI (CONT'D)

Yes!

Pi sits, the battle over.

137 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT/THE RAFT - DAY

137

The sun is high. Pi raises the adjustable canopy he has rigged on his raft and sits beneath it. He feels the wind on his face and watches Richard Parker lounge in the stern of the lifeboat. Pi smiles, for a moment genuinely happy.

He uses his knife to carefully sharpen his pencil, then begins writing in the margins of his survival manual, which are covered with journal entries...

'LIFE IS GOOD' MONTAGE - Pi's raft has transformed again. Fish strips dry on lines; he has fashioned new tools, rigged an elaborate water collection system out of turtle shells, and a collapsible shade umbrella.

- Pi trims his fingernails, a fish bone toothpick in his mouth.

PI (WRITING - V.O.)

I never thought a small piece of shade could bring me so much happiness. That a pile of tools - a bucket, a knife, a pencil- might become my greatest treasures. Or that knowing Richard Parker was here might ever bring me peace. In times like these, I remember that he has as little experience of the real world as I do. We were both raised in a zoo by the same master. Now we've been orphaned, left to face our ultimate master together. Without Richard Parker, I would have died by now. My fear of him keeps me alert. Tending to his needs gives my life purpose.

138 EXT. RAFT - DAY

138

A school of dolphins, hundreds of them, pass in the distance, the blue sea roiling.

PI

Dolphins, Richard Parker!

Just beyond the school of dolphin, something else catches Pi's attention on the horizon - a freighter, much like the *Tsimtsum*, is within a few miles of their position.

PI (CONT'D)

Hey! HEY!! WE'RE HERE!! OVER HERE!!

Pi scrambles to the storage locker, pulling out the flare gun. He loads and fires - the flare arcs high up into the air, a miniature white star leaving a bright trail of fire and smoke as it falls to the earth.

LATER -

139 EXT. RAFT - SUNSET

139

It's grown noticeably darker. The freighter is far off now.

140 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

140

It is late now. Pi loads the last flare into his gun and raises it into the air - then stops. The freighter, now a fleck on the horizon, hasn't seen them. Pi watches as the dark form of the boat sinks from view.

Pi fires one last time, staring up at the archways of smoke and the darkening sky. Pi lowers the flare gun. Richard Parker yawns and turns away.

PI (WRITING - V.O.)
Above all, don't lose hope...

The flare burns a hole into the night.

141 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT, MONTHS LATER - DAY 141

HIGH ANGLE ("book cover" shot) - looking down on the boat, adrift in the middle of the ocean. Pi lies curled on the tarp in the bow; Richard Parker lies in the stern. Beneath the boat, the ocean swirls with traffic, including an enormous whale shark. It passes beneath the boat, the creature's form blotting out the depths.

A141 ONBOARD - A141

A series of shots to show that Pi has grown gaunt, his eyes wild from exhaustion and endless solitude. The tarp has faded; the paint on the boat has become sun-bleached and weather-beaten. Pi's hair has grown long; his skin has darkened from olive-caramel to cocoa. The shirt has begun to take on a look of thread-worn transparency.

He taps on the aluminum hull of the boat with his thumb in time with his recitation:

PI
...645682948602814931815602496...

EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

Richard Parker gazes into the distance; Pi stares intently at the tiger.

PI
What are you looking at...? Tell me. What do you see?

The tiger turns and looks over the side of the boat into the water; Pi rises and looks over the side as well, staring into the depths...

RP'S POV - starting on his own reflection in the water and traveling downward, through schools of darting tuna, squid and lantern fish, past fleeting memories of a storm and zoo animals struggling to survive in churning waters and into the darkest recesses of the sea, Pi finding a broken ship and memories of a former life lying dormant on the ocean floor...

OUT OF POV - Richard Parker looks over at Pi as he gazes into the water.

Cut to an extremely wide shot of the boat floating in a sea of stars.

PI (WRITING - V.O.) (CONT'D)
Words are all I have left to hang
onto..

147 EXT. LIFEBOAT - DAY 147

Pi's fingers tremble as he writes in his manual, the tiny cramped letters barely legible, every white surface of the page covered.

PI (WRITING - V.O.)
Everything mixed up, fragmented.
Can't tell daydreams, night dreams
from reality anym --

The lead in his tiny stub of a pencil runs out, worn to a nub of wood. Pi slowly puts down his pencil, brooding.

148 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY 148

Pi lies on the tarp, his position nearly unchanged, beating a drum rhythm on the hull, a wreck of conflicted thoughts and frayed nerves.

We hear a distant rumble of thunder. Pi raises his head. Dark thunderclouds rise up over the horizon blackening the heavens. Another rumble of thunder, this one closer.

PI
Storm! Storm, Richard Parker!

149 EXT. LIFEBOAT - DAY 149

Pi takes down the canopy on the raft. Pi begins quickly stowing his gear in the storage bench, beneath the tarp. Richard Parker flees to the safety of his den under the tarp. As Pi stows gear, he remembers his manual and takes it out from his waistband.

The storm front sweeps across the ocean in a squall line, high winds and rain striking Pi and the lifeboat with tremendous force. The manual slips from his hands and Pi is knocked off his feet and into the water. He lifts his head out of the water in time to watch the manual flying off into the storm.

PI

No!

The manual is gone. Pi ties himself to the lifeboat with a rope from the raft.

150

EXT. LIFEBOAT - DAY

150

a stunning display of clouds and lightning fills the sky, as Pi looks on in awe. The sky lights up, a vivid white splinter of lightning crashing down from the sky, puncturing the water near the lifeboat. The water is shot through with what looks like the white roots of an enormous celestial tree; the clap of thunder is tremendous.

PI

Praise be to God, Lord of All
Worlds, the Compassionate, the
Merciful!

A wave washes Pi off of the tarp and onto the floor of the boat. Pi climbs onto the bench. He looks up in wonder at the sky, overwhelmed by the magnificence of the roiling clouds.

PI (CONT'D)

It's beautiful... Where are you,
Richard Parker? You have to see
this!

Another angle: he begins unbuttoning the tarp, calling excitedly to Richard Parker.

PI (CONT'D)

Come out Richard Parker! Come see
the hand of God!

Pi continues to unfasten the tarp.

PI (CONT'D)

Don't hide yourself! He's come to
us! It's a miracle!

A huge wave envelopes the lifeboat, submerging the craft completely - and then the boat pops to the surface like a cork. Pi resumes opening the tarp. He tears it aside, exposing the terrified animal to the storm.

PI (CONT'D)
 COME OUT AND SEE GOD RICHARD
 PARKER!

The sky lights up all around them. The tiger begins roaring, pawing at the air, eyes wide, crazed with fear. Pi turns to face the storm.

PI (CONT'D)
 WHY ARE YOU SCARING HIM! I'VE LOST
 MY FAMILY - I'VE LOST EVERYTHING! I
 SURRENDER! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?

A wave washes Pi overboard, and the raft comes crashing down on top of the lifeboat, then slides away. Pi climbs back on board. He lies on the bench, coming to his senses, realizing the extent of the danger they face. He sees Richard Parker cowering miserably at the stern.

PI (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry Richard Parker!

Pi crawls to the bow in time to see the raft, no longer tied to the lifeboat, drifting away. Pounded by rain and surf, he works his way around the edge of the boat, re-hooking the tarp to tarp hooks. With only four left unfastened along one side, he pulls himself under the tarp.

151 INT. THE LIFEBOAT, UNDER THE TARP - CONTINUOUS 151

Thunder, rain and surf hammer the tarp from above; Pi pulls himself under the tarp. Richard Parker's grunts and labored breathing can be heard, but man and beast are only fully visible when lightning strikes, Pi trying to stay as far away from the tiger as he can manage. Before long the boat is tossing Pi and the tiger as though in a washing machine, the two helplessly colliding with one another, Pi choking as water splashes in.

152 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY 152

Pi wakes in the sloshing water under the tarp. Sunlight filters in from above. The storm has passed. Richard Parker lies listlessly in the side bench. Pi climbs out of the waterlogged hull. A double rainbow pierces majestic clouds, the sun breaking through.

153 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - DAY 153

The gentle sound of water lapping at the side of the lifeboat; the breeze rattling the tarp. Time has passed;

life on the boat has grown tougher for Pi, his supplies more meager, since the raft was lost.

Pi lies in the bow, exhausted, delirious. He pulls himself upright, takes a drink of water and looks around, confused.

Richard Parker lies in the stern of the boat, severely emaciated, his coat dull, his eyes clouded. Shivering, Pi uses the last of his strength to drag himself over to the tiger. The animal's body is curled, his tail flat. Some of his fur has fallen away from his shoulders and haunches. He's a skeleton in an oversized bag of fur. Pi reaches out to place a hand on the tiger. He gently touches him on one spot.

PI
We're dying, Richard Parker. I'm
sorry.

Pi sits and places the tiger's head on his lap.

PI (CONT'D)
Amma, Appa, Ravi - I'm happy I'm
going to see you soon.
(Pause)
Can you feel the rain?

Richard Parker raises his head slightly; his tail twitches.

PI (CONT'D)
God, thank you for giving me my
life. I'm ready now.

158 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT/THE ISLAND - DAY

158

Pi lies, unconscious, in the bow of the lifeboat. Waves lap at the sides of the boat, which presses against the shore of an island.

A gust of wind blows across Pi's face, tousling his hair. Pi gradually opens his eyes. A beat. He tips his head back.

Pi's POV - above and behind him, the tops of trees.

Pi turns, looking at the island, amazed. The trees have a pale bark with an amazing profusion of leaves, their color burning with a neon-like intensity. There is no sand; instead the ground is an intricate, tightly webbed mass of tube-shaped seaweed, about two fingers in diameter.

Pi turns to look back to the stern; he calls under the tarp.

PI
Richard Parker?

Pi rises, stepping out of the boat. The seaweed is rubbery - uncertain ground. His legs are wobbly. He hooks the gaff on a root and falls to the ground. Pi tears up a piece of the seaweed and examines it. He takes an experimental bite. Soon he's grabbing handfuls of the seaweed, eating as fast as he can.

Pi climbs the ridge on unsteady legs. A forest comes into view with nearly symmetrical ponds dotting the island here and there, many of them reaching 40 feet in diameter.

Half the island seems to be covered with meerkats - thousands of them standing together in groups all over the island. The moment the first of the meerkats notices Pi, it turns and stands on its hind legs - and the others immediately follow suit.

EXT. THE ISLAND - DAY

Pi walks slowly forward, taking in the meerkats and the island. Gradually, the meerkats return to all fours - their squeaking and barking noises coming and going in waves throughout the herd. They pay him so little attention that Pi has to shove them aside with his legs in order to walk.

PI

Excuse me... Go on, move!

Pi walks beyond the throng of meerkats toward a pond, pausing to examine the fish bones that litter the edge of one of the ponds. The edge is steep; he gets too close, slips down the side and into the water. Pi tastes the water. He begins a gentle, blissful breaststroke across the pond.

Pi hears a commotion. He lifts himself up to peer over at the meerkats. In the distance, Richard Parker blazes a trail through the meerkats, catching, pinning and eating as many as he can. Pi smiles, watching the tiger.

LATER:

164

EXT. THE TREE - SUNSET

164

Pi sits cradled in a nest of branches, rigging a hammock. As the last rays of the sun disappear, he hears a commotion below on the island and pushes aside branches to see better. The meerkats are abandoning the ponds, scurrying up onto land and running for the forest, their collective stampede noisier than a herd of elephants. Richard Parker, in the meantime, runs for the shoreline, scrambling down the ridge as fast as possible and leaping into the lifeboat.

The trunk beneath Pi is swarmed as meerkats settle upon all the branches in the tree. Several invade Pi's hammock, sitting on him, climbing over him, making themselves comfortable at his expense.

PI
Hey! Hey! Hey c'mon. Hey! Hey-get
away. This is my bed!

Pi shoves them off as best he can and settles in for the night.

165 EXT. UP IN THE TREE - NIGHT

165

Pi sleeps, nestled in the branches of the tree.

Meerkats snore - at least one of them in the branches beneath Pi does. Pi wakes up, staring grumpily into the darkness at the noisy offender.

He is amazed to discover that what he can see of the island from his perch is bioluminescent. The leaves of the tree around him and the seaweed below all glow in gentle greens, while the ponds beneath seem to shimmer like liquid silver - it is a scene at once beautiful and threatening.

Pi hears a burbling noise coming from the pond at the center of the tree. He looks down; fish bubble to the surface. One of the larger fish writhes in agony at the surface before falling still along with the others.

Pi watches as the water below begins churning with the bodies of the dead fish, the surface of the water aswirl with the flash of fins - then gradually the fish begin to disappear, as though slowly dissolving in the water. Pi stares at the mysterious pool, then looks out over the island to where the lifeboat is anchored along shore -

Richard Parker is visible, sitting in the boat, staring up at the island.

166 EXT. THE LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

166

CLOSE ON RICHARD PARKER staring into the night.

168 EXT. LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

168

WIDE ANGLE - looking over the tiger's shoulder, taking in the entire island. From this distance, it looks - and sounds - as though the island is gently expanding and contracting with the tides... as though it is breathing.

169 EXT. UP IN THE TREE - NIGHT

169

Pi notices fruit growing on one of the branches above his head. He looks around at the rest of the tree, but the fruit only seems to grow along the one branch. Pi plucks one of the fruits and examines it. Each stem that he pulls causes a leaf to peel off. He reaches the center of the ball, peeling back the last of the leaves, to reveal a tooth.

FLASH FORWARD
TO:

170 INT. PI'S HOME, MONTREAL - LATE AFTERNOON

170

WRITER

It was human tooth?

ADULT PI

Don't you see, the island was carnivorous.

WRITER

Carnivorous? Like... a Venus flytrap?

ADULT PI

Yes, the *whole island* - the plants, the water in those pools, the very ground itself. During the day, those pools held fresh water, but at night, some chemical process turned the water in those pools into acid - acid that dissolved those fish, that sent the meerkats scurrying into the trees and Richard Parker running to the boat.

WRITER

But where did the tooth come from?

ADULT PI

Years ago, some poor fellow just like me must have found himself stranded on that island.... And like me he thought he might stay there forever. But all that the island gave him by day, it took away again by night. To think - how many hours spent with only meerkats for company? How much loneliness taken on?

(MORE)

ADULT PI (CONT'D)

All I know is that eventually he died, and the island digested him, leaving behind only his teeth. I saw how my life would end if I stayed on that island. Alone and forgotten. I had to go back to the world, or die trying.

171 EXT. ISLAND/LIFEBOAT - DAY 171

Pi loads the boat with water and meerkats; the tarp is piled high with roots and seaweed.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

I spent the next day preparing the boat. I filled my stores with fresh water, ate seaweed until my stomach could take no more, and brought as many meerkats as I could fit into the storage locker for Richard Parker. I couldn't leave without him, of course - it would mean killing him. And so I waited for his return. I knew he wouldn't be late.

He blows his whistle, calling:

PI
RICHARD PARKER!

172 EXT. THE ISLAND/LIFEBOAT - SUNSET 172

Richard Parker runs down the ridge and jumps into the stern. Pi climbs aboard and shoves off.

CUT TO:

173 EXT. OCEAN NEAR ISLAND - LIFEBOAT - SUNSET 173

Pi and the tiger watch as the island recedes into the distance, lit by the late afternoon sun.

PI (V.O)

No one has ever seen that floating island since; you won't read about those trees in any nature book. And yet if I hadn't found those shores, I would have died. And if I hadn't discovered that tooth, I would have been lost, alone forever.

(MORE)

PI (V.O) (CONT'D)

Even when God seemed to have abandoned me, He was watching. Even when He seemed indifferent to my suffering, He was watching. And when I was beyond all hope of saving, He gave me rest, then gave me a sign to continue my journey.

177 EXT. THE MEXICAN COAST/THE JUNGLE - DAY

177

Pi leans over the side of the lifeboat. He falls overboard. We follow him underwater, his feet - hit a sandy bottom.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

By the time we reached the Mexican shore, I was afraid to let go of the boat. My strength was gone. I was so weak. I was afraid that in two feet of water, so close to deliverance, I would drown. I struggled to shore and fell upon the sand. It was warm and soft, like pressing my face against the cheek of God. And somewhere two eyes were smiling at having me there.

An empty coastline, nothing but sand, rocks and jungle. Pi struggles to bring the lifeboat ashore. Richard Parker is hiding under the tarp, nowhere to be seen. Pi pulls the painter line until the boat is on the beach, then collapses on the sand.

177 EXT. THE MEXICAN COAST/THE JUNGLE - DAY

177

Pi collapses on the beach. He hears Richard Parker coming a moment before he sees him; Pi turns, looking up as the tiger jumps over the boy, stretching in the air above him and landing in the water ahead of him.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

I was so spent I couldn't move. And so Richard Parker went ahead of me.

Richard Parker walks along the beach, his gait clumsy and uncoordinated from so much time spent at sea.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

He stretched his legs and walked along the shore.

Richard Parker stops, staring ahead into the forest, his back to the boy. Pi watches the tiger from behind, Richard Parker's ribs gently rising and falling as he smells the jungle air.

ADULT PI (V.O.)

At the edge of the jungle, he stopped. I was certain he was going to look back at me, flatten his ears to his head, growl - that he'd bring our relationship to an end in some way. But he just stared ahead into the jungle.

178 INT. PI'S HOME, DINING ROOM, MONTREAL - SUNSET 178

On Adult Pi alone:

ADULT PI

And then Richard Parker, my fierce companion, the terrible one who kept me alive, disappeared forever from my life.

181 EXT. THE MEXICAN COAST/THE JUNGLE - DAY 181

Pi lies on the sand a few yards from the water. A group of six MEXICAN LOCALS hurry down the beach to him.

ADULT PI

After a few hours, a member of my own species found me. He left and returned with a group who carried me away.

Pi sobs uncontrollably as they carry him to safety.

ADULT PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I wept like a child, not because I was overwhelmed at having survived, although I was. I was weeping because Richard Parker left me so... unceremoniously. It broke my heart.

174 INT. PI'S HOME - DINING ROOM - MONTREAL - NEAR SUNSET 174

It is near sunset, the light from the windows casting the room in a golden hue - the same lighting we have just seen as Pi was leaving the island.

ADULT PI

You know, my father was right. Richard Parker never saw me as his friend. After all we'd been through, he didn't even look back. But I have to believe that there was more in his eyes than my own reflection staring back at me. I know I felt it - even if I can't prove it. I just wish...

(Beat. He sighs.)

You know, I've left so much behind. My family, the zoo, Anandi, India - I suppose in the end the whole of life becomes an act of letting go. But what always hurts the most is not taking the moment to say goodbye. I was never able to thank my father for all I learned from him, to tell him that without his lessons I would never have survived...

And I know he's a tiger, but I wish I'd said: 'It's over. We've survived. Thank you for saving my life. I love you, Richard Parker. You will always be with me. May God be with you.'

The Writer shakes his head, astonished.

WRITER

I don't know what to say.

ADULT PI

Hard to believe, isn't it?

A pause as the writer decides how to respond.

WRITER

It is a lot to take in, to figure out what it all means.

ADULT PI

If it happened, it happened. Why should it have to mean anything?

WRITER

Well, some of it is pretty incredible.

Pi nods - a half-smile - then rises, crossing to the bookshelf.

ADULT PI

I was the only one who survived the shipwreck, so the Japanese shipping company sent two men to talk to me in the Mexican hospital where I was recovering. I still have a copy of their report.

Pi takes a tattered notebook out of the bookcase.

ADULT PI (CONT'D)

They had insurance claims to settle, and they wanted to find out why the ship sank. They didn't believe me either.

Pi hands the notebook to the Writer. On top, there is a newspaper article with the headline "BOY RESCUED: 227 DAYS IN THE PACIFIC." The Writer unclips the article, revealing the insurance report beneath. We hear Okamoto's first line over the report.

A175 INT. INFIRMARY - MEXICO, 1978 - DAY

A175

OKAMOTO

Thousands of meerkats? On a floating carnivorous island? And no one has ever seen it?

YOUNG PI

Yes. Just like I told you.

CHIBA

Bananas don't float.

OKAMOTO

(In Japanese:)

Why are you talking about bananas?

CHIBA

You said the orangutan floated to you on a bundle of bananas. But bananas don't float.

OKAMOTO

(In Japanese:)

Are you sure about that?

YOUNG PI

Of course they do. Try it for yourself.

OKAMOTO

In any case, we are not here to talk about bananas or meerkats.

YOUNG PI

I've just told you a long story. I'm very tired.

OKAMOTO

We're here because a Japanese cargo ship sank in the Pacific.

YOUNG PI

Something I never forget. I lost my whole family.

Pause.

OKAMOTO

(In Japanese:)

Get him some water.

(In English:)

We don't mean to push you. And you have our deepest sympathies. But we've come a long way. And we're no closer to understanding why the ship sank.

YOUNG PI

Because I don't know. I was asleep. Something woke me up. It may have been an explosion; I can't be sure. And then the ship sank. What else do you want from me?

CHIBA (OFF)

A story that won't make us look like fools.

OKAMOTO

We need a simpler story for our report. One our company can understand. A story we can all believe.

(Chiba gives Pi a glass of water.)

YOUNG PI

So.... a story without things you never seen before.

OKAMOTO

That's right.

YOUNG PI
Without surprises. Without animals
or islands.

OKAMOTO
Yes. The truth.

B175 INT. PI'S HOME, MONTREAL - DAY

B175

WRITER
So what did you do?

ADULT PI
I told him another story. Four of
us survived...

YOUNG PI (V.O. - OVERLAPPING)
Four of us survived...

C175 INT. INFIRMARY, MEXICO, 1978 - DAY

C175

YOUNG PI
...The cook and the sailor were
already onboard. The cook threw me
a lifebuoy and pulled me aboard.
Mother held onto some bananas and
made it to the lifeboat. The cook,
the cook was a disgusting man. He
ate a rat. We had food enough for
weeks, but he found the rat in the
first few days - and he killed it,
and dried it in the sun and ate it.
He was such a brute, that man. But
he was resourceful. It was his idea
to build the raft to catch fish. We
would have died in those first few
days without him. The sailor was
the same man who brought rice with
gravy, the Buddhist. We didn't
understand much of what he said,
only that he was suffering. I can
still hear him - the happy Buddhist
who only ate rice with gravy. He
had broken his leg horribly in the
fall. We tried to set it as best we
could, but the leg became infected
and the cook told us we had to do
something or he'd die. The cook
said he'd do it, but mother and I
had to hold the man down. And I
believed him - we needed to do it.

(MORE)

YOUNG PI (CONT'D)

So... I kept saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry", but he just kept.. looking at me, his eyes so... I'll never understand the point of that man's suffering. We didn't save him, of course. He died. The morning after, the cook caught his first dorado, and I didn't understand what he'd done at first, but Mother did, and I'd never seen her so angry. 'Stop whining and be happy,' he said. "We need more food or we'll die. That was the whole point." 'What was the point?' Mother asked. "You let that poor boy die in order to get bait? You monster!" The cook got furious. He started towards her with his fists raised, and Mother slapped him hard, right across the face. I was stunned. I thought he was going to kill her right then. But he didn't. The cook didn't stop at bait either, no. The sailor, he went the same way the rat went - the cook was a resourceful man. It was a week later that he... Because of me. Because I couldn't hold onto a stupid turtle. It slipped out of my hands and swam away and the cook came up and punched me on the side of the head and my teeth clacked and I saw stars. I thought he was going to hit me again, but then Mother started pounding on him with her fists and screaming, "MONSTER! MONSTER!" She yelled at me to go to the raft - "Nee poda!" I thought she was coming with me or I'd never have... I don't know why I didn't make her go first. I think about that every day. I jumped over and turned back just as the knife came out. There wasn't anything I could do; I couldn't look away... He threw her body overboard. Then the sharks came. I saw what they... I saw. The next day I killed him. He didn't even fight back. He knew he had gone too far, even by his standards. He'd left the knife out on the bench. And I did to him what he did to the sailor. He was such an evil man, but worse still, he brought the evil out in me.

(MORE)

YOUNG PI (CONT'D)

I have to live with that. I was alone in a lifeboat, drifting across the Pacific Ocean. And I survived.

176 INT. PI'S HOME - DINING ROOM - MONTREAL - SUNSET

176

ADULT PI

After that, no more questions. The investigators didn't seem to like the story, exactly - but they thanked me, they wished me well, and they left.

Pause. The Writer speaks his thoughts aloud as the realization strikes.

WRITER

So... the stories... Both the zebra and the sailor broke their leg. And the hyena killed the zebra and the orangutan. So ... the hyena is the cook. And the sailor is the zebra, mother is the orangutan... and you're... the tiger.

ADULT PI

Can I ask you something?

WRITER

Of course.

ADULT PI

I've told you two stories about what happened out on the ocean. Neither explains what caused the sinking of the ship, and no one can prove which story is true and which is not. In both stories, the ship sinks, my family dies, and I suffer.

WRITER

True.

ADULT PI

So which story do you prefer?

WRITER

The story with the tiger. That's the better story.

ADULT PI
 (Heartfelt:)
 Thank you. And so it goes with God.

WRITER
 (Pause. He looks up.)
 Mamaji was right. It is an amazing
 story. Will you really let me write
 it?

ADULT PI
 Of course. Isn't that why Mamaji
 sent you here, after all?

They hear a car pulling into the alleyway alongside the
 house.

ADULT PI (CONT'D)
 My wife is here. Would you like to
 stay for dinner? She's an
 incredible cook.

WRITER
 I didn't know you had a wife.

ADULT PI
 And a cat, and two children.

WRITER
 So your story does have a happy
 ending.

ADULT PI
 Well, that's up to you. The story's
 yours now.

The Writer smiles. Outside, car doors slam; we hear voices as
 Pi's wife and children cross around to the front. Pi rises
 and moves to the door. The Writer glances one final time at
 the report. He flips the page and hesitates, reading the last
 few lines aloud.

WRITER
 (Reading:)
 "Mr. Patel's is an astounding story
 of courage and endurance
 unparalleled in the history of
 shipwrecks. Very few castaways can
 claim to have survived so long at
 sea, and none in the company of...
 (He looks up at Pi)
 ...an adult Bengal tiger."

PI

(Off:)

We have a guest. Let me introduce
you...

THE WRITER stands and faces Pi. We see his POV - on Pi,
holding his daughter in arms, surrounded by his family,
smiling...

DISSOLVE TO:

183

EXT. THE MEXICAN COAST/THE JUNGLE - DAY

183

YOUNG PI'S POV of Richard Parker from behind as he stares
into the jungle, the tiger's ribs gently rising and falling
as he smells the jungle air - and then he walks forward and
disappears into the swaying trees.

The moment that the tiger is out of view, all the color
drains out of Pi's world; his view of the trees loses all
dimension and fades to black and white as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END