

Life of Pi

by
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Based on 'Life of Pi'
A novel by Yan Martel

Translated into English
by Frederic Cassidy

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Hundreds of people ice skate on an outdoor rink in Quebec. They are all bundled up and circle around in the same direction.

With his back turned to this winter scene, a 50-something Indian man faces the camera.

MR. PATEL

(addressing the audience)

My name is Piscine Molitor Patel. I live here in Montreal, but I was born in Pondicherry on the 3rd of September 1953. I miss the heat of India. As much as I miss the Tika Massala with Bhaja onions, the family mopeds, the earwax cleaners, banana leaves that double as umbrellas...

Each example is illustrated by colorful detailed shots.

MR. PATEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But I love Canada. It is a vast country, cold beyond reason, populated by compassionate, intelligent people with bad hairdos.

"Science footage" of a Canadian man as he revolves a full 360 degrees. His hairdo is indeed atrocious.

STOCK FOOTAGE

MR. PATEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I attended the University of Quebec. My thesis in Zoology was a study of the thyroid gland of the three-toed sloth, a creature whose only occupation is lethargy. It sleeps 20 hours a day...

Hilarious stock footage of the animal who appears to move in slow motion.

MR. PATEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...If you place a bowl of water on the animal's head, you will find it there the next day, swarming with insects. The sloth is most active at nightfall, that is... if he's in the mood.

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED:

1

We see a sloth drag itself pathetically, then roll into a ditch.

2

EXT. DAY - MEXICAN BEACH

2

MR. PATEL (V.O.)

I chose the sloth because its calm
and quiet behavior soothed my
shattered soul.

On a beach, a young boy around 12 (Pi), ragged, emaciated,
skin and lips burnt and chapped by the sun, screams. (no
sound is heard)

MR. PATEL (V.O.)

I never forgot Richard Parker. I
still don't understand why he
abandoned me without ceremony.
Without any kind of goodbye.
Without so much as looking back
even once.

We do not see Richard Parker.

3

EXT. DAY - MONTREAL, WINTER

3

MR. PATEL

(to camera)

This pain is like an axe that, to
this day, chops at my heart.

4

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

4

MR. PATEL (V.O.)

After hearing my story, everyone at
the hospital treated me very
nicely.

The child lays in a white bed, surrounded by people who all
display some kind of illness. With arms and legs in casts or
heads bandaged, they bring him gifts of clothing, crucifixes,
Mexican toys. A woman caresses his hair while wiping tears
from her eyes. A nurse brings him a thick guacamole...

MR. PATEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The first time I turned on a
faucet, the water gushed out so
over-abundantly, I fainted.

As SEEN FROM ABOVE, the child collapses on the floor in SLOW
MOTION. We follow the gushing tap water as it begins to fill
the sink.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED:

4

CREDIT SEQUENCE

The credits appear as reflections on surface of the water.

5

INT. DAY - POOL IN INDIA

5

As SEEN FROM ABOVE, a child appears to be swimming in the sink.

We shift into a horizontal position, discovering that we are in fact in a swimming pool.

PI - AS A CHILD (V.O.)
I am Piscine Molitor Patel, named
after the swimming pool in Paris
where my father met my mother.

At the end of the pool, an adult Indian man is gesticulating.

PI (V.O.)
That guy over there... he's my
father.

6

INT. DAY - PI'S BEDROOM

6

We discover Ravi, a boy barely older than Pi. He's whispering into Pi's ears. Our protagonist listens, riveted.

PI (V.O.)
My cousin Ravi told me that when my
father was born, his lungs were
filled with amniotic fluid. The
doctor had to act fast to save his
life.

7

INT. DAY - DELIVERY ROOM CIRCA 1930

7

The doctor grabs the baby by the feet and spins him over his head.

PI (V.O.)
It worked. He coughed and spit it
out, but the centrifugal force
pushed his flesh and blood towards
his upper body.

We follow the baby as it spins and coughs. Its body stretches like in a cartoon.

8 INT. DAY - PI'S BEDROOM

8

RAVI

That's why your father's chest is
so large and his legs are so
skinny.

Pi stares at him, mouth agape.

9 INT. DAY - INDIAN SWIMMING POOL

9

Pi looks into camera and acquiesces with a nod. He then shows
us...

...His father at the other end of the pool, who strikes a
pose, accentuating his muscular upper body. His shoulders are
exaggeratedly squared, his hips are narrow and his legs are
very slender.

10 EXT. DAY - PONDICHERRY

10

PI (V.O.)

At the end of the 1940s, while the
French were still trying to
frenchify Pondicherry as diligently
as the British were attempting to
turn India into Essex county...

Indians sporting berets exit a boulangerie, baguettes in
hand. At a busy intersection, a traffic cop dons a French
"képi" hat, cloak and white baton.

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

...my father went to study in
Paris, on a grant from the Colonial
Administration...

We see the father watching the famed "waiter's race" in
Montmartre. (in 1948)

11 EXT. DAY - DELIGNY SWIMMING POOL

11

PI (V.O.)

An avid swimmer, he often
frequented the Deligny pool. Its
water was directly drawn from the
Seine river without being filtered
or heated.

Stock footage of the Deligny "boat-pool", docked at the foot
of the Alexander Bridge in front of the "Grand Palais."

(CONTINUED)

11

CONTINUED:

11

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

One evening, he discovered that
dead fish were being removed daily
from the pool.

In the deserted pool, a lifeguard scoops up a team of dead
fish with a net.

12

INT. DAY - PISCINE MOLITOR (MOLITOR POOL)

12

PI (V.O.)

Thanks to a few floating tenches
and freshwater smelt, my father
emigrated to the "Piscine Molitor"
in Paris. It was there that the
dancing troupe of Bharata Nathiam,
on tour in Paris, happened to be
swimming.

In the middle of this magnificent pool, the female dancers
rehearse some of their dance moves in the water. Their
colorful saris are soaked and cling to their bodies in a
sensual manner.

From the tallest diving board, Pi's father swan-dives into
the pool. As he begins to see through the myriad of bubbles
at the bottom of the pool, he is surprised to discover before
his eyes the most beautiful girl in the dancing troupe. She
is smiling at him as her hair and sari undulate underwater.

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

And that's how I came to this world
bearing the name of... "Piscine
Molitor Patel."

13

EXT. DAY - PONDICHERY BEACH

13

PI (V.O.)

As soon as I turned seven, my
father began my aquatic training.

The child emulates a breast stroke as his stomach rests on a
stool. Shot from above, his late-afternoon shadow stretches
across the sand giving us the impression that he is flying.

14

EXT. DAY - POOL IN INDIA

14

Later, the father triggers a stop watch. He is comfortably
seated in a rickshaw, following his son who is swimming laps
in a pool.

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

14

At the end of the pool, the boy dunks his head, executing an underwater turn...

15

EXT. DAY - HIPPOPOTAMUS POOL

15

... a hippopotamus head emerges from its watering hole. The animal swims towards the edge of the pool. We are in the Pondicherry Zoo.

PI (V.O.)

After running a hotel in Madras, my father became director of the Pondicherry Zoo, built on land owned by the Maharajah of Gingee.

In front of the hippo pen, Pi's father is addressing a group of visitors.

The animal lurches out of the water and rushes to a feeding trough. A keeper is pouring him feed-pellets.

PI'S FATHER

Personally, I prefer running a hotel for animals than one for humans. It's a thousand times more gratifying.

The crowd laughs.

Meanwhile, the hippo suspiciously sniffs the contents of his trough.

PI (V.O.)

Yeah right! In a zoo, the guests never leave their rooms. They entertain flocks of visitors and each one has his special culinary needs.

The hippo knocks over its trough and angrily tramples its food.

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

They incessantly complain about the slow pace of room service....

A cacophony of screams, roars, neighing, braying, trumpeting as zoo employees scramble from one pen to another.

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

...and never, ever do they leave a tip.

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

The frantic employees get peppered with flying peanuts.

16

INT. DAY - SCHOOL STAIRWAY AND HALLWAY

16

Pi, wearing his schoolbag and uniform, scales the worn staircase of the school.

PI (V.O.)

There are names that are more or less heavy to carry. Bob, for example, weighs about as much as a feather. But "PISCINE MOLITOR PATEL" is a ball and chain that I've been dragging around since kindergarten.

He enters a hallway that leads to several classrooms. The students are dutifully lined up waiting to enter their respective rooms. One of the smallest boys calls out to Pi.

STUDENT

(with irony)

How are you, Pissing Patel?

Stifling his rage, Pi passes by, making a beeline for his classroom.

GROUP OF STUDENTS

(in unison)

Pssssss... Pssssss... Pssssss...

Pi loses it. He jumps onto one of the boys. The students surround them, screaming.

17

INT. DAY - CLASSROOM

17

The teacher is writing a quiz on the chalkboard. Pi, punished, is forced to stand in a corner of the classroom. In the afternoon sunlight, his shadow is projected on the wall.

In the scorching humidity, the teacher catnaps while the students focus on their exam.

In front of a sun-drenched window, a student squeezes water out of a rubber syringe. Two neighboring students look at Pi and try to contain their laughter.

The teacher wakes from his stupor. His eyes scan the room and fall upon Pi's silhouette. His shadow gives the impression that he is urinating on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

TEACHER

(offended)

Are you pissing Patel?

ALL THE STUDENTS

(in concert)

Psssss... Psssss... Psssss...

In the corner, Pi sinks his head into his shoulders.

18

INT. DAY - OTHER CLASSROOM

18

Pi is seated among other students in the third row of a classroom, which is much larger and more modern than the previous one.

PI(V.O.)

The first day of middle school,
when it came time to introduce
ourselves, I decided once and for
all to shut off this faucet of
humiliation...

In the front row, a short, chubby and bespectacled boy stands up.

SHORT CHUBBY & BESPECTACLED BOY

(introducing himself)

Ganapathy Kumar.

He sits back down. The boy sitting directly behind him immediately stands up.

OTHER BOY

(introducing himself)

Shamshool Hudha.

It's Pi's turn now. Instead of saying anything, he steps away from his desk and walks to the front of the class.

PI

My name is....

Grabbing a piece of chalk, he writes on the blackboard:

Piscine Molitor Patel = π (PI) = 3.14116

He underlines it vigorously and sets the chalk back down.

TEACHER

Well done Pi, but next time ask
permission before coming up to the
board.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

Pi returns to his seat, beaming, while the rest of the students stand up and introduce themselves.

19 EXT. DAY PLAYGROUND

19

PI (V.O.)

Within a few months, my name
created a new fad.

STUDENT WEARING GLASSES

(to the camera)

My name is Omega.

OTHER STUDENT

(also to camera)

My name is Delta!

PI (V.O.)

There you have it! A small greek
letter, as simple as a shed with a
corrugated roof... That was all I
needed to shelter myself from the
shame.

We see Pi crouched under a small shed with a wavy corrugated
roof. It is the visual embodiment of the letter Pi: π . Rain
is pouring onto the shelter...

As the camera pulls back, we discover that someone is
actually urinating on the shed.

20 INT. MORNING - PI'S BEDROOM

20

Pi is in deep sleep. Daylight filters through the blinds. We
move in closer, toward a large alarm clock.

PI (V.O.)

There are many kinds of alarm
clocks. Mine weighed 5.798 tons.

The clock strikes 6.

21 EXT. MORNING - PONDICHERRY ZOO

21

At that very moment, a magnificent African elephant trumpets,
flapping its ears, clamoring for its morning feed. Zoo
keepers run towards the large animal with pitchforks full of
hay.

ZOO KEEPERS

It's coming, it's coming!

22 INT/EXT. DAY - PI'S BEDROOM

22

Pi jumps out of bed, starts brushing his teeth in a rush.

PI (V.O.)

How lucky was I to have a zoo
director as a father. I had
hundreds of animals all to myself!
No Maharajah's son could ever make
that claim...

There is a knock on Pi's window. He quickly moves to open it.

A giraffe's head appears. We discover that Pi's second story
room is located directly above the giraffe's pen. He feeds
the animal several salad leaves.

23 INT/EXT. DAY - KITCHEN

23

Pi gulps down his tea and spreads butter on a pancake which
he discretely slips in his satchel. He quickly takes off.

MOTHER

Be respectful to others and work
hard!

24 EXT. DAY - PONDICHERRY ZOO

24

Pi runs down the zoo pathways.

He makes a sudden stop in front of a fence, whistles the
opening notes of the "Marseillaise". Behind the bars, a group
of meerkats stand to attention, staring at him like
disciplined soldiers. Pi takes off.

A little further, a baboon seems to be calling out to him,
screaming and gesturing with its arms. Pi walks towards it
with an exasperated sigh. He turns his back to the animal
and leans onto the cage. The baboon instantly calms down as
it meticulously starts picking through the boy's hair.

PI(V.O.)

We all have our little habits, but
animals cherish them even more than
we do.

He takes off, placing his school bag over his head as he runs
under a giant tree filled with peacocks. A bird dropping
lands on his bag, then another, and then some more!

As he arrives at the Camel's pen, he grabs a handful of hay
and wipes off his bookbag.

(CONTINUED)

24

CONTINUED:

24

The animal approaches, disapprovingly. Pi extracts the buttered pancake from his satchel and triumphantly hands it to the Camel. The animal finds it delectable.

Pi jets off.

25

INT. DAY - CLASSROOM

25

Pi gets up from his seat and makes his way to the front of the class.

TEACHER

(to the students)

For today's presentation, Pi will address a topic he knows quite well.

The teacher steps away from his desk and sits on a chair to listen.

Slightly intimidated, Pi slips on a pair of glasses that are too big for him. They nonetheless give him an instant boost of confidence, lending him a "professorial" air like his father.

PI

Well. In your opinion, are animals happier in nature or in a zoo?

STUDENTS

(together)

In nature!

Pi takes a moment to readjust the glasses, in the exact same manner as his father.

PI

(smiling)

What do animals do in nature? They need to find food, water, keep away from predators and defend their territory.

We see a sleeping lion being attacked by a swarm of bees. He wakes up abruptly, swiping his paws at the insects. But the big cat ends up scurrying away.

PI (CONT'D)

On the other hand, in a good zoo, animals are fed, washed, given shelter and a sense of security!

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER

You forget one thing Pi, the lack of space... In a zoo, their space is infinitely more limited than in nature.

PI

Do you really think that if Gnus had nice thick grass growing in the same place all year round, they would migrate thousands of miles just to discover new horizons?

The students listen attentively. One of them, however, remains skeptical.

STUDENT

Between wandering thousands of miles and running circles in a zoo, isn't there a happy medium?

PI

What's an animal pen in a zoo? Just a "territory" that has different dimensions.

TEACHER

(nodding)

Elaborate that point...

Pi readjusts his glasses, mulls it over for a second.

PI

In the stone age, men had to collect water at the river, pick fruit in the valley, find a cave to sleep in. Today everything is assembled in one place.

SUPERIMPOSED on the screen are parallel images: a "bear skin in a cave" next to a "bed with a down comforter"; a "waterfall" next to a "sink with a faucet" ; a "cherry tree loaded with fruit" next to "a jar of jam".

PI

In zoos, we've only done for animals what man has already done for himself. We've taken all the elements of a good territory and concentrated them in one enclosure... Any questions?

(CONTINUED)

The students are a bit taken aback. They look at each other, undecided.

STUDENT

Doesn't it drive animals crazy to do the same thing every day?

PI

On the contrary. Animals are extremely attached to their daily rituals. Even the smallest of changes bother them.

We see a bear rise onto its hind legs, trying to intimidate a garden hose that has "invaded" his territory. An antelope nervously scratches its hoof in the ground in front of a shadow cast by a ladder.

OTHER STUDENT

If animals in captivity are so happy, why do so many of them run away?

PI

It's very rare for an animal to escape from a zoo. On the other hand, many people keep wild animals in their homes where they're incapable of providing them with proper "territories". It's mainly those animals that escape..

ANOTHER STUDENT

(sardonic)

To go where?... To a zoo?

PI

Generally, they seek shelter in the first place that looks safe. An old ruin, a cellar, a sewer... Take a city like Tokyo and turn it upside down...

We see a SUPERIMPOSED image of Tokyo.

PI (CONT'D)

...you wouldn't believe the number of wild animals that would fall out!

A giant hand grabs the city, turns it upside-down and shakes it.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED: (3)

25

Snakes, monkeys, Komodo dragons, alligators and lemurs rain down - accompanied by a burst of colorful exotic birds that fly off.

ANOTHER STUDENT

What about freedom?... My dad says
we have no right to take the
freedom away from any other living
being...

Ruffled by this question, Pi nervously rubs his eye. We now notice that his glasses don't have any lenses. Pi momentarily forgets his little ploy and slips his finger through the frame.

PI

To free animals from a Zoo, would
be like going to people's houses,
breaking down their doors, throwing
them out in the street and telling
them "go now, you are free!"

SUPERIMPOSITION: a family wearing pyjamas stands in a street. Their belongings are being thrown out of the house's windows: mattresses, clothes, kitchen utensils.

FATHER

(complaining)

This is our home!

The students clap as Pi moves away from the desk. He nods authoritatively to the teacher and returns to his seat.

26

INT. MOVIE THEATER

26

PI (V.O.)

A day before that fateful Sunday in
May of 1964, my parents brought my
cousin Ravi and me to the Jeeva
Rukmani movie theater to see a love
story.

On the screen of this large Pondicherry theater, two lovers from a 60's musical coo and sing in reverberating tones.

27

INT. MOVIE THEATER - CONCESSION STAND

27

PI (V.O.)

During the intermission, they
bought us honey flavored ice cream.

The kids eat their ice cream in the large movie hall. The mother gives the father a worried look.

28 **EXT. NIGHT - ROADWAY**

28

PI (V.O.)
On the way home, much to my
mother's objections, my father
played "the headlight game."

Driving down a straight road, the father turns off the
headlights. They plunge into complete darkness, the kids in
the back seat scream out of fear and delight. The father
turns the head lights back on. The mother lectures him. He
turns them off again... Screams abound!

29 **INT. NIGHT - PI'S BEDROOM**

29

PI (V.O.)
Come bedtime, I felt something was
amiss.

PI'S FATHER
(gravely)
Good night kids. Sleep tight. A
little lesson awaits you tomorrow.

MOTHER
You wouldn't dare do such a thing!

PI'S FATHER
My dove... It may be cruel, but
it's one of life's lessons.

MOTHER
Precisely! We've always taught him
to uphold life as the most sacred
thing in the world.

PI'S FATHER
Yes, but this might very well save
his own life one day.

The father turns the light off. The parents walk down the
hallway, continuing their discussion.

RAVI
(in a panic)
What did you do this time?

PI
Nothing! Nothing at all!!!

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

RAVI

That time we blew the circuits...
you told him I shot the water gun
at the electric plugs!

PI

Of course not!

RAVI

You told him about the rhino-melon?

30

EXT. DAY - RHINOCEROS PEN (FLASHBACK)

30

From behind the fence, Ravi tosses a melon as if it were a
basketball.

The melon flies up, drops down and lands... right smack on
the rhino's horn!

The boys cheer triumphantly!

31

EXT. NIGHT - GIRAFFE PEN

31

Pi's bedroom window is the only one lit in the house. The
giraffe seems to be listening in on the kids' anxious
conversation...

RAVI

(in the distance)

Your father noticed we sold stamps
from his collection!?!

PI

No, no... Of course not!

FADE TO BLACK.

32

INT. DAY - PI'S BEDROOM

32

The bedroom door opens abruptly.

PI'S FATHER

Time to get up now!

33

EXT. DAY - ZOO PATHWAY

33

Escorted by the parents, the kids walk as if they are being
led to the plank. The zoo employees stand still and quiet,
following them with their eyes.

34

INT. DAY - GROTTO FOR THE BIG CATS

34

They arrive at a hot and humid circular grotto, lined with series of empty cages meant to house the big felines. A single goat can be seen in one of them. The kids are anxious.

PI'S FATHER

Which do you think is the most dangerous animal of the zoo?

RAVI

(panicked)

A... a goat?

The father shrugs his shoulders and gives a signal to a zookeeper who opens a trap. Instantly, a loud roar, both savage and forceful, causes the boys to pull back. A 500 pound tiger enters the cage next to the one housing the goat. The frail animal is frozen, like a deer caught in the headlights.

PI'S FATHER

The tiger! That is the most dangerous animal!

KIDS

(in unison)

Yes father!

Yes Uncle!

PI'S FATHER

You must never touch or pet a tiger or even so much as think of putting your hands in it's cage. Is that clear?

KIDS

(in unison)

Yes father! Yes uncle!

MOTHER

Santosh!!!

PI'S FATHER

I want them to remember this lesson for the rest of their lives.

He signals the zookeeper. Pi's mother, outraged, squeezes the kids in her arms.

The keeper opens the gate separating the two cages.

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED:

34

Though terrified, the kids watch the spectacle. We hear hooves beating on the ground, bleating, a roar and a sinister cracking sound. The kids turn their heads into the mother's lap. She starts dragging them out.

MOTHER

(to her husband)

Don't you ever speak to me again!

PI'S FATHER

But, my dove... It's for their own good! Better lose a goat than a child!

MOTHER

(to the children)

No one has the right to take any life, not even that of a fruit fly! He who gives himself the power over life and death, will always end up as someone else's goat!

She pulls the kids out, leaving her husband behind. He turns to the keeper who looks at him uneasily.

PI'S FATHER

(to the keeper)

It's for their own good.

The keeper nods hypocritically.

35

EXT. DAY - PONDICHERRY STREET

35 *

With his bookbag slung over his shoulder, Pi walks through a street in Pondicherry. He reaches a small church. Its front door are open. Pi approaches, intrigued.

*
*
*

PI (V.O.)

Animals are not the only ones who have rituals, men do too... and theirs are even more of a mystery to me....

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*
*
*
*

He enters the church, captivated by the soft light filtered through the stained glass windows. He hears a whisper and stops. He looks around, surprised to see no one... The whispering starts up again.

*
*
*
*

Pi finally realizes that the sound is coming from a nearby confessional. He makes out the silhouette of the Priest through the mesh of the door. He notices the confessing man's shoes, sticking out from under the curtain.

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*

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

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

I was immediately drawn to the glow
of votive candles, the murmur of
the confessionals, the sunlight
shining through the stained glass
and the clickety clacking of the
censer.

Nearby, an old Priest is untangling a censer.

But Pi's eyes keep wandering till they fall onto a Christ
figure. The boy stares in disbelief at the bloody hands and
feet nailed to the cross.

OLD PRIEST (O.S.)

If you have some time, we could
talk, you and I...

PI

About what?

OLD PRIEST

About God's love.

The look in the Priest's eyes and his wrinkled face lend him
a wise and benevolent air. Pi smiles at him.

36

EXT. DAY - PONDICHERRY STREET

36

Pi, book bag slung over the shoulder, walks down the street
reciting:

PI

(whispering)

Our father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom
come, thy will be done on earth as
it is in heaven...

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

When I was small, my parents were
not very religious, it was my aunt
Rohini who would take me to the
Hindu temple...

A six year old Pi holds his aunt's hand. She leads him down a
long, balmy corridor punctuated by shafts of sunlight. The
boy walks slowly, taking his time to contemplate the vivid
murals strewn with colorful flowered garlands. He gets a good
whiff of smoke from the smoldering incense sticks and cones.

(CONTINUED)

36

CONTINUED:

36

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

I instantly loved the fragrance of
musk and sandal wood, the patter
of bare feet on the stone floor,
the sculpted cones of red kukum
powder, the baskets of saffron
seeds from the East Indies...

He stops, too shy to come any closer to the Murti statue,
bathed in light and shimmering ornaments. A Pandit walks up
to him.

PANDIT

The two of us could have a chat, if
you'd like.

PI

About what?

PANDIT

About the finite in the infinite
and the infinite in the finite.
About Brahma, Nirguna, Shiva,
Krishna, Shakti and Ganesha, for
starters...

Pi stares at him, wide-eyed.

37

EXT. DAY - DOCKS

37 *

Pi and Ravi sit side by side at the docks. The afternoon is
nearly over. As they chat, they are busy shelling cardamon
seeds.

RAVI

So what are you now, Christian or
Hindu?

PI

Both... I like them both.

RAVI

Not that I know anything... but are
you sure they are compatible?

PI

For Christians, it's easy. God
sacrificed his son to take away
man's sins.... Get it?

RAVI

No.

(CONTINUED)

PI

Umm... Well it's as if father said:
"Piscine, every night the lions
kill a llama or an antelope... and
that's unacceptable to me... So,
I've decided to feed you to the
lions to take away their sins..."
Then I would say: "OK father,
sounds great... let me just clean
up first.
Alleluia my son.
Alleluia my father."

Ravi stares at him, flabbergasted.

PI (CONT'D)

For the Hindus, it's very
complicated. To start with, there
are so many gods it's impossible to
remember all of their names... one
day, Krishna disguised himself as a
baby and ate some dirt. But his
adopted mother saw him and scolded
him.
I didn't eat any, he said
Come on! It's not nice to lie, she
said. Open your mouth!
But when he opened his mouth, she
was shocked to see that the entire
universe was inside it!

As a SUPERIMPOSITION, we enter the baby's mouth. Inside are:
spinning stars and planets, waterfalls and mountains, candles
and cows pulling carts, a baby sucking its mother's breast,
flames, and dead leaves flying in the wind.

Ravi is even more flabbergasted.

PI

You see, it has nothing to do with
Christianity, so that means they
are completely compatible...

Pi stops. He hears the 'call to prayer' echoing from a nearby
minaret.

PI

(under its spell)
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

37

CONTINUED: (2)

37

RAVI

It's coming from the mosque. It's
the call to prayer...

Pi gets up and walks in the direction of the minaret tower,
as if he were drawn by a magnet.

PI

Lets go see?

RAVI

(objecting)

I don't believe it... you've
completely lost your mind!

Pi walks to the mosque without looking back.

38

EXT. DAY - MOSQUE

38

Pi enters the mosque, fascinated by the multitude of sandals,
shoes and multicolored slippers scattered across the entrance
of the building.

He steps inside just as the entire assembly of men turns
toward Mecca and bows down to pray. All the while, the Imam
chants verses.

The Imam notices Pi, the sole person standing amid the mass
of crouched figures. He gestures, inviting him to join in
the prayer. Pi joins in without any hesitation.

PI (V.O.)

And that's how I also became a
Muslim. I was charmed by the deep
vibration of the arabic language,
even if there are ninety nine ways
to say Allah and by the time you've
listed them all it's too late to
talk to him...

Pi exits the mosque into a inner garden.

IMAM (O.S.)

Tell me, young man... I think
there's someone here who would like
to meet you.

PI

Really... who?

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

IMAM

He who is greater than the immense,
the almighty, the indescribable...

39

EXT. DAY - PIER

39

Pi and his parents take a stroll down the pier, amid other
ramblers. They are eating ice cream cones.

PI (V.O.)

Week after week, I kept delaying
the moment when I'd admit to my
parents that I had converted to
three religions at the same time.
But one Sunday afternoon, fate beat
me to it...

Pi notices the old Priest sitting on a nearby bench. He tries
to pretend not to have seen him and looks straight ahead,
hiding between his parents.

Much to his surprise he sees the Imam walking straight
towards them.

Pi turns around, wanting to drag his parents in the opposite
direction, but then, yet another shock: the Pandit is
hurrying to catch up with them.

The Priest gets up from his bench at the very moment when the
Imam and the Pandit reach the family.

Pi's parents stop walking, surprised, while the boy looks
down at the pier under his feet, as if he wanted to
disappear underneath.

OLD PRIEST

(taken aback by the
presence of the two
others)

Mr and Mrs Patel, I am proud of
your son. He is a good Christian
and I wanted to talk to you about
his first communion.

The parents are as astonished as the two other men.

IMAM

You must be mistaken. This boy is a
good Muslim. He never misses the
Friday prayer and his knowledge of
the Koran is expanding every day
...

(CONTINUED)

PANDIT

You are both wrong, Piscine Molitor
Patel was born Hindu, his lives as
a Hindu and will die a Hindu...

IMAM

He was born Hindu, granted, but he
chose to become a Muslim. Isn't
that right Pi?

OLD PRIEST

(sternly)

There is but one salvation through
Jesus Christ, you know that well
Piscine!

Blushing intensely, Pi still stares down at his feet. The
parents glare at each other in utter disbelief.

IMAM

(sternly)

Piscine! Christians and Hindus are
idolatrous... There is but one God!

PANDIT

Listen to your heart, Piscine...
You are Hindu! The Muslims are
uncivilized and Christians are
cannibals...

The old Priest's face turns purple, as he purses his lips
scornfully.

IMAM

(heating up)

Uncivilized! This from a slave
driver who bows in front of cows,
unbelievable!

PANDIT

(heating up too)

Who is this Muhammad anyway? Just
an illiterate merchant who got a
sunstroke on his camel.

OLD PRIEST

(heating up as well, to the
Pandit)

Right. And that's not enough to
base religion on... Not anymore
than your myths that popped out of
a children's cartoon strip!

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED: (2)

39

Pi slowly looks up, stunned to see such anger on the faces of the three religious men. He looks at them as if he were seeing them for the first time.

IMAM

(furious)

When one eats pork and kills his own god by nailing him to a cross, one shouldn't be telling others what to think!

As the three religious men continue to throw barbs at each other, not leaving any room for Pi's parents to interject, Pi slips away. He turns his back to the group and walks away.

PANDIT (O.S.)

What about the religious wars? And polygamy? You are both equally barbarous!

OLD PRIEST (O.S.)

What about the caste system? You slave driver.

IMAM (O.S.)

Fanatic!

PANDIT (O.S.)

Cannibal!

OLD PRIEST (O.S.)

Ignoramus!

PANDIT (O.S.)

Corruptor!

IMAM (O.S.)

Scoundrel!

Pi turns around and sees that the three men have come to blows. The boy runs away, horrified.

40

EXT. DAY - FURTHER DOWN THE PIER

40

Pi's mother and father continue walking down the pier. They finally catch up with Pi who is waiting for them. The boy has a sheepish look on his face.

FATHER

(to Pi)

Correct me if I'm wrong, but Hindus believe in reincarnation right?

(CONTINUED)

PI

Yes...

FATHER

Then with any luck you'll be
reincarnated into a tadpole
swimming in holy water or a flea in
a prayer rug...

MOTHER

Santosh... Pi is entitled to
believe in God, if he so chooses.

FATHER

(heating up)

Yes, but which one? If until now he
thought the unifying element of all
religions was God, he now has the
answer...

MOTHER

(heating)

Well atheists aren't any more
tolerant... You are living proof of
that.

FATHER

(raising his voice)

I would never allow myself to tell
anyone...

PI

You aren't going to fight now too?
That's the last thing I need!

His parents immediately stop and look at each other with a
certain sense of amusement.

Pi takes them by the hand and they resume their stroll down
the pier.

An elegant Indian man of a certain age drives a convertible
Bugatti along a winding road. He is wearing racing gloves,
clearly enjoying the speed at which he is driving.

PI (V.O.)

Our landlord, the Maharajah of
Ginjee, loved speeding. But his
love for animals was even greater.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

As he enters a turn, he spots a small lizard crossing the road. He slams on the brakes and turns the steering wheel abruptly, sending the Bugatti off the road.

The car ends its off-road trek by bumping into a tree, without sustaining much damage. As the Maharajah breathes a sigh of relief, a cobra slips off a tree branch and lands on the back seat. The Maharajah turns the ignition and looks into the rear view mirror. He sees the cobra in attack position.

He has no time to react. The cobra bites into his neck.

42

INT. NIGHT MAHARAJAH'S PALACE

42

The maharajah's son is seated on a throne-like chair embedded with precious stones. His father's counselors surround him. They are studying a detailed map.

MAHARAJAH'S SON

(pointing to a neighborhood
on the map)

And why not here? It looks like
there's room to spare.

A COUNSELOR

Yes, but we would have to raze all
the houses and relocate a great
number of people...

MAHARAJAH'S SON

(pointing to another zone)

And what about here?

ANOTHER COUNSELOR

There? But that's the Pondicherry
Zoo! Your father...

MAHARAJAH'S SON

My father had a liking for animals,
I know. But animals had a liking
for him too, most notably a certain
cobra.

The eldest counselors exchange looks of quiet resignation.

43

EXT. DAY - PONDICHERRY ZOO

43

The Maharajah's son is perched on an elephant's back, flanked on either side by two of the (younger) counselors.

(CONTINUED)

The pachyderm makes its way through the main path of the Zoo spreading panic amongst the monkeys. They emit high pitched screams. In the ostrich pen, the giant birds run away snapping their beaks.

The Patel family escorts the elephant. They walk Indian-file: Pi's father first, his mother behind him, then Pi accompanied by his cousin Ravi.

The Father tries to speak to the Maharajah's son, but the young man is whispering into one of his counselor's ears.

MAHARAJAH'S SON

(designating the monkey
cage)

If we designed an eighteen hole
course, we could tee-off here and
tear down the director's house to
make room for a club house...

They reach a pen inhabited by a rhinoceros who happens to be surrounded by goats. The goats panic at the sight of the elephant. The rhino furiously starts beating its hooves into the ground.

PI'S FATHER

Your excellence, I am prepared to
carry you on my own back, but
please. You must descend from that
elephant before you trigger a
collective panic in the zoo.

A COUNSELOR

(whispering in the young
man's ear)

Your father always visited on foot.

The Maharajah's son relents with a frown.

PI'S FATHER

(trying to convince his
guest)

In this pen, you can see a very
interesting form of cohabitation!
This rhinoceros suffered from
severe loneliness so we offered him
the company of goats. They have
since become inseparable. The
public finds these sort of
things...

(CONTINUED)

MAHARAJAH'S SON
(cutting him off)
Where are the lions?

PI'S FATHER
The lions?... We...we have no
lions.

MAHARAJAH'S SON
That the king of jungle not be
present to welcome the new
Maharajah...

A COUNSELOR
...is what's known as a 'faux pas.'

The other counselors smile complacently.

MAHARAJAH'S SON
I have been told you once ran a
hotel in Madras. If you wish to
return to your prior profession, I
offer you stewardship of the
Shalimar.

PI'S FATHER
Thank you, but I prefer running a
hotel for animals, it's a thousand
times more gratifying.

The group reaches the hippopotamus pen. The Maharajah's son
leans towards one of the beasts that yawns in his face,
projecting its rank hippo breath. He pulls away, disgusted.

MAHARAJAH'S SON
(to one of his counselors)
There, where the rhinoceros is.
That's where we'll put the sand
trap!

PI'S FATHER
I have a lifetime lease signed by
your father. This zoo was the apple
of his eye.

MAHARAJAH'S SON
His eyes, Mr. Patel, are forever
closed now.

PI'S FATHER
Yes. But a lease is still a lease.

(CONTINUED)

43

CONTINUED: (3)

43

PI'S MOTHER

Just because someone has passed
away, doesn't mean you can't still
hurt them.

The Maharajah's son is thrown-off for a moment.

MAHARAJAH'S SON

Anyhow, nothing prevents me from
raising the rent if I so choose.

PI'S FATHER

(dismayed)

So be it... but I cannot raise the
admission price just like that. I
intend on keeping the zoo
accessible to all.

MAHARAJAH'S SON

A zoo without a lion...

With a gesture, he indicates that the visit is over.

44

EXT. DAY - SMALL CIRCUS

44

The large snout of a bear passes in front of us.

As it moves away, we realize that the bear is pedaling on a
unicycle in front of small circus tent.

Sitting around a campfire, clowns drink tea and smoke
cigarettes.

A 60's style Indian automobile pulls up in front of the big
top. Out step Pi and his father.

Grabbing his son by the hand, the father approaches a heavily-
bearded lady. She points them in a specific direction.

45

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE A CIRCUS TRAILER

45

A wrinkled old man sits on the steps of a circus trailer. Pi
and his father stand before him.

OLD MAN

A lion? What for?

FATHER

To appease my landlord.

OLD MAN

There's no lion for sale here.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

FATHER

Even an old one, close to
retirement age?

PI

He would be very happy at our
house, it's an animal's paradise.

The old man sighs. He reluctantly gets up and motions to Pi's
father to follow him into the trailer.

FATHER

(to Pi)

Wait for me here.

Once alone, Pi can't resist peeking through a hole in the big
top.

46

INT. DAY - INSIDE THE BIG TOP

46

The circus ring is deserted, save a lanky young man who is
rehearsing a trick with soap bubbles. (he is blowing cigar
smoke into the bubbles) He acknowledges Pi with a nod, not
paying him much more attention.

A large cage stands in the center of the ring. On a stool is
a whip with a studded handle...

Pi approaches, hypnotized.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Go ahead, I know you're dying to.

A female midget stands behind him. With a quick motion, she
invites him to step into the cage.

Pi timidly grabs the whip and tries in vain to crack it. On
his third try, a man's hand catches his wrist. It's the lion
tamer himself.

TAMER

Give me that.

With a smooth and flowing arm movement he extracts a smart
crack from the whip, bursting a smoke bubble that had
wandered into the cage. Pi jumps back.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Do you know why a tamer always
enters a cage before the beasts?

(CONTINUED)

PI

(timidly)

Um... To make sure they know
they're in *his* territory.

TAMER

Well done. But you must speak
louder if you want to become a
tamer. You are the dominant one,
the super Alpha male!

The tamer gives a signal to someone we don't see.

PI

If I had a choice, I'd rather be a
clown... I've already seen a tiger
at work...

At that very moment, a loud yet muffled purring sound
emanates from behind him. Pi turns around, pale. Three
magnificent lions have just entered the cage through a trap
door. The tamer cracks his whip.

TAMER

Come on you lazy bums! You're not
here to drag your tails!
(whip cracks)
Hop to it!

The lions simultaneously jump onto their respective podiums
lined up in the cage. They all sit. Pi is both fascinated and
petrified.

TAMER (CONT'D)

(to Pi)

Stay calm and dominating. Never
take your eyes off them.
(whip cracks)
Hop!

The lions switch places on the podiums.

TAMER (CONT'D)

If you challenge a big cat, he will
not attack you. If you lower your
eyes, you're dead.

Pi acquiesces, not looking very reassured.

TAMER (CONT'D)

(into Pi's ear)

That's why the cage is round...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED: (2)

46

TAMER (CONT'D)

So they have no angle to hide from
your gaze.

PI

So... they can't be sent to the
corner?

TAMER

A feline always measures himself
against you. If you lower your eyes
first, he will read it as a sign of
inferiority and a breach of his
territory.

He walks up to one of the lions and points the whip at him.
The beast instantly stands on its hind legs.

TAMER (CONT'D)

This one is the star of the show,
know why?

PI

He's the fiercest?

TAMER

Quite the contrary. He is an Omega
type, a weakling, a coward. He is
prepared to do anything to be
accepted by the Alpha-male... in
other words, by me!

PI'S FATHER (O.S.)

Piscine! Piscine!

PI

It's my father.

47

EXT. DAY - IN FRONT OF CIRCUS TENT

47

Pi bursts out of the big top at the very moment his father is
about to step in. The father is carrying a rolled-up lion
hide on his shoulder.

PI

(pointing to the lion hide)
Weren't you supposed to buy a live
one?

PI'S FATHER

(annoyed)
That's all I could get for the
money I had set aside for this.

(CONTINUED)

47

CONTINUED:

47

PI

What are we going to do with it?

PI'S FATHER

Give it to the Maharajah's son. He
can always use it as a throw rug.

Father and son exchange a sly smile.

PI'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I hope you didn't wander around the
lion's cages.

PI

I didn't leave the tent.

PI'S FATHER

Fine. I wouldn't want to have
wasted a good goat for nothing.

48

EXT. MORNING - ZOO WALKWAYS

48

Once again, Pi leaves for school.

Under the peacock laden trees, Pi runs with his satchel above
his head, shielding himself from their droppings.

As ritual has it, he hands the buttered pancake to the camel.
This time around, Pi looks preoccupied.

PI (V.O.)

When you live with animals, the
danger is to project human thoughts
and feelings onto them.

CAMEL

(chewing)

So? This Maharajah's son. Is he
giving us the boot, or what?

HIPPOPOTAMUS

He doesn't have the balls.

MARMOSET (exotic monkey)

You idiots! You know what he's
going to do? He's going to raise
the rent so high, we're going to be
forced out on the street!

OSTRICH

(stressed)

What on earth will become of us!

(CONTINUED)

48

CONTINUED:

48

Pi runs away.

49

EXT. EVENING - ZOO ENTRANCE

49

The sun is setting. Pi returns from school, bookbag in hand. He stops in front of the Zoo's entrance. Two employees are hoisting a sign that reads: "Final Closure, March 15th 1965." Pi, stunned, runs onto the zoo grounds.

50

EXT. DAY - ZOO WALKWAYS

50

He stops in front of an animal pen. He can't believe his eyes. A buffalo is suspended above the ground by a large harness. An army of (western) men in white work-clothes and rubber boots are bustling around the beast. One of them sports a horrendous "Canadian hairdo."

He shines a flashlight into the buffalo's eye and pries open its jaws so that another helper can photograph its teeth.

A second veterinarian lifts the animal's tail to gather a few samples which he places in a test tube.

Others take notes. They all speak French with heavy Quebecois accents.

Pi takes off, running. He slows down when he sees some thirty zoo employees and animal keepers sitting on the ground. The eldest of them is addressing the crowd.

ELDER EMPLOYEE

The maharajah has guaranteed two thirds of us watering and gardening jobs... For the others, you may work as caddies, but only on a part time basis...

Pi spots his father and tries to join him. But a man stops him in his tracks, indicating to him to 'keep quiet.'

In front of the elephant pen, Pi's father answers a reporter's questions. He is noticeably intimidated by the Canadian news crew filming the interview.

REPORTER

Elephants, giraffes, crocodiles, close to one hundred and fifty magnificent creatures will soon depart for the Montreal zoo. Along with their owner Mr. Santosh Patel...

51 **INT. DAY - PATEL HOME**

51

Pi bursts into the living room and falls into his mother's lap, bawling. She is surrounded by a half dozen of her sari-clad friends. They watch with compassion, fanning her with Indian hand-fans fluttering rapidly.

MOTHER

Of course, I would follow my husband to the end of the earth, but still! And Piscine! A boy of twelve! To uproot him from his native soil to go to Sri Lanka or Pakistan, fine. But Canada! A country where people live half the year like Eskimos?

Pi climbs up the stairs, on all fours.

52 **INT. DAY - PI'S BEDROOM**

52

He rushes to open one of his books. He sees pictures of Canadian Mounties on horseback, frozen lakes, rivers with floating logs...

He quickly shuts the book, worried.

53 **EXT. DAY - CANADA IN WINTER**

53

Pi imagines himself bundled in a checkered coat and snow-cap with ear-flaps. He stands before other Canadian kids.

PI

My name is Piscine Molitor Patel,
AKA Pi, as in 3.14...

MEAN KID

Yeah right! And my name is Square Root!

The kids burst into laughter. Pi walks away, head lowered.

GROUP OF KIDS

Pissing Patel! Pissing Patel!
Pssssssssssssssssssss...

54 **INT. DAY - LIVING ROOM, PATEL HOUSE**

54

Indian movers are packing the Patel's furniture.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. Patel has transformed the kitchen into what looks like a traditional market: swathes of multi-colored fabric, Indian knickknacks, a rainbow of spices, tea, coffee, tobacco, bags of Indian rice - all stacked in disarray.

The mother is running about, labelling each category of objects. The father enters the room with a package in hand.

FATHER

Please tell me you're not taking
all of that with us.

MOTHER

You're taking the whole animal
kingdom.

FATHER

That's entirely different my dove.
Those animals will be our
livelihood over there.

MOTHER

And the colors of India, don't you
think they will help us survive
there too?

She hands him a photograph.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Look. Everything is grey there.

FATHER

That's because the photograph is in
black and white.

MOTHER

Oh no! I've seen plenty of photos!
The country of Canada is black and
white! How could you pick such a
place?

FATHER

It's the only country that offered
me co-directorship of a zoo.
Without that, I'd lose everything,
the animals and my job.

Resigned, she points inquisitively to the package. On it, is
a drawing of a baseball player with a caption that reads:
"The Montreal Royals."

(CONTINUED)

54

CONTINUED: (2)

54

FATHER (CONT'D)

It's for Pi. A welcoming gift from
the current director of the Quebec
Zoo... my future colleague.

55

EXT. DAY - ANTELOPE PEN

55

With Ravi's help, Pi is training to become a proper little
Canadian.

With tennis rackets tied to his shoes, he tramples through
the sandy antelope pen reciting:

PI

Caribou... Beaver... Raccoon...
Moose...

56

EXT. DAY - IN FRONT OF THE PATEL HOUSE

56

Armed with a rolling pin, Pi tries to play baseball. He
swings as Ravi pitches him several balls.

PI

(punctuating each hit)
The Toronto Bluejays! The
Chicoutimi Cardinals! The St
Eustache Bisons! The Winnipeg
Goldeyes!

57

INT. DAY - KITCHEN

57

The two boys devour enormous makeshift hamburgers, made with
nans and other Indian products.

PI

(sputtering)
Sunny side up... BLT... Greasy
spoon... Quarter pounder with
cheese...

58

EXT. DAY - DOCK IN INDIAN PORT

58

Strapped in a harness, the zoo's elephant is lifted by a
giant loading crane. His trumpeting melds with the ship's
horn.

A line of zebras, antelopes and buffalo walk up a gangplank.

A cage filled with over-excited monkeys is lifted by the
crane, passing the ship's smoke stack.

(CONTINUED)

58

CONTINUED:

58

A hand slaps a "This Way Up" sticker on a cage filled with bats who are hanging upside-down.

A group of butchers file onto the gangway carrying huge cuts of beef. Large hoists drop bales of hay on board.

59

EXT. DAY - BRIDGE OF THE SHIP

59

On the forward bridge, a trap door in the deck has been opened to let the giraffe stretch its head and neck out (the ceiling being too low in the storage area). Above it, sailors stretch a canvas to shelter the animal from the sun.

60

EXT. EVENING - ON THE DOCKS

60

The mooring lines are cast off. The ship slips away from the dock. "Tooooooot"

Pi and his parents are on the bridge.

On the dock, the entire staff of the zoo, dressed impeccably, salutes its ex-boss.

A bit further down the dock are the mothers's friends, dressed in colorful saris. Being former members of her dance group, they perform a choreographed goodbye. The music is supplied by the ship's horn.

Finally, Ravi arrives on his bicycle. Pi spots him.

Pulling a baseball from his pocket, Ravi gathers momentum and hurls it all the way up to Pi...

...who catches it with his new (Montreal Royals) baseball mitt.

As the boat pulls away, Ravi gets smaller and smaller on the dock. Pi keeps waving at him with his gloved hand.

FADE TO BLACK.

61

EXT. NIGHT - ON THE DECK OF THE TSIMTSUM SHIP

61

Night has fallen. Under a canopy of stars, the ship glides on a perfectly tranquil ocean.

On the dimly lit deck, Pi walks with difficulty, carrying a bale of hay larger than him. He drops it down before him.

The giraffe's head pops out of its hatch and begins to eat the hay at deck-level.

(CONTINUED)

61

CONTINUED:

61

Pi squats Indian-style in front of the animal.

PI

You used to come to visit me at my window. You see, now it's my turn...

The giraffe chews, attentively.

PI (CONT'D)

...to think that there are sea lions and sea elephants, but no sea giraffes. It's not fair...

PI'S FATHER (O.S.)

Piscine! There are 250 animals to feed. At this rate, the last ones won't eat before we get to Canada.

62

EXT. DAY - ON THE DECK OF THE SHIP

62

The first rays of the morning sun break over the horizon. On the deserted deck, a seagull is perched on a ventilation stack. Another seagull lands on a nearby railing and cries out to its feathered friend.

Just as the first seagull opens its beak to answer, the sound of an elephant trumpeting rings out loudly, amplified through the ventilation stack.

The winged visitor flies away in terror.

63

INT. DAY - IN THE STORAGE AREA

63

Inside the ship's storage area, the "alarm clock" elephant trumpets furiously, flapping its ears.

Pi's father works hard to fork over mounds of hay, but the pachyderm doesn't deem the service rapid enough.

A cacophony of sounds fills the area. Cages are stacked together like in an overcrowded shantytown. Stress and hunger have whipped the inhabitants into a state of restlessness.

Pi slaloms between the cages, bending under the weight of a wheelbarrow full of bananas.

Pi's mother is removing zebra droppings from inside the animal's cage. She has fastened her sari in a knot to keep it from getting soiled.

(CONTINUED)

Pi sees a little spider crawl up from the bananas bunches onto his hand. He drops it on the ground and is about to crush it with his foot...

PI'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Piscine...

He stops mid-motion.

PI'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

If an animal a thousand times stronger than you were on the verge of killing you, you'd certainly be happy if it changed its mind... Right?

Pi spares the spider.

PI'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

You know Pi, it is possible to disrespect God or Man. You have to be very determined to do so, but it is possible. But there is one thing you must respect unconditionally... and that is life.

Pi nods in agreement and grabs the wheelbarrow. Suddenly, in a nearby cage, a monkey grabs onto the bars and yowls. We recognize the baboon previously seen at the zoo, the one that likes to pick through Pi's hair.

Pi sighs and leans his back against the cage. The animal calms down and methodically starts picking.

PI

(to his mother)

What about germs, they are living things. When we're sick and take medicine, we are not respecting their lives...

The ape relishes the tasty treats, unnoticed by Pi or his mother.

PI'S MOTHER

Respecting life starts with your own. The greatest crime is to let oneself die... But, you have lice!

(CONTINUED)

63

CONTINUED: (2)

63

Pi looks up and notices the ape feasting on the little parasites. The father bursts into the storage room, in full sweat.

PI'S FATHER

I'm not going to make it by myself...

PI'S MOTHER

Pi has lice and my herbs are at the bottom of a crate...

PI'S FATHER

(pointing at the ape)

In terms of treatments, nothing beats that one.

Pi lets himself be handled by the baboon, grimacing stoically.

64

INT. NIGHT - PI'S CABIN

64

Pi is lying on his cabin bed, his mother at his side.

As she hugs him, Pi props himself onto his elbows and looks out of the porthole, catching the final moments of the red sunset.

The top rim of the blood-red sun disappears under the horizon line.

MOTHER

There, the sun's gone down... Now it's your turn.

Pi lays down and his mother pulls the sheet up to cover him. The boy knits his brow.

PI

Mother?

MOTHER

Yes?

PI

Sometimes, when the sun goes away, I'm scared it's never going to come back...

As she always does, Pi's mother slowly caresses his forehead - the part between his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED:

64

MOTHER

(softly)

You know, the sun always comes back... Even in countries where night lasts several months, it always ends up coming back...

Pi's father enters the cabin and approaches the bed. He gently rubs the nape of her neck.

FATHER

As a matter of fact, it's in the cold countries that the sun gives the best of itself, as if to make up for lost time... as if to excuse itself for leaving all of the heat in India...

MOTHER

(smiling in agreement)

They are called "Aurora Borealis"... we may well see some in Canada, because it's not far from the North Pole...

FATHER

Hmmm... Sorry, my dove, but the glow of the aurora borealis is a result of the earth's geo-magnetic fields, and...

Pi is falling asleep. His mother puts her finger in front of her lips, signaling to the father to stop talking.

PI

(cracking one eye open)

I like the other story better...

The father shrugs his shoulders, plants a loud kiss on Pi's forehead and leaves the cabin.

MOTHER

Sleep tight my Piscine...

She turns off the light switch and exits the room.

65

INT. NIGHT - CABIN

65

Laying on his bunk, Pi is having a hard time falling asleep. He tosses and turns, irked by a pillow that seems too hard.

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED:

65

Pi gets an idea. He grabs his baseball glove from the foot of the bed and lodges it under the nape of his neck.

His head rests on the glove like an egg in a nest. He closes his eyes, satisfied...

66

EXT. NIGHT - HOCKEY RINK

66

The glow of an aurora borealis lights up the sky. The sound of young boys screaming echoes in the night.

We discover two Hockey teams facing off in the night.

The condensation from the kid's exhalations shows us how freezing it is.

Decked out in a goalie's outfit, Pi guards the goal. He is awkward on skates, barely managing to stay upright on the ice.

An opponent shoots. Pi skids, letting the puck slip into the net.

Another attack. The puck is shuffled from stick to stick. Pow. Another goal for the other team.

Pi is more and more uncomfortable. He slips and falls... another goal gets by him.

As he trembles in front of his posts, the ice begins to crack around him.

He looks out, befuddled. Another goal! The ice cracks even more. Water starts spurting out.

Pi once again tries to stop the puck. The ice cracks open and he falls waist-deep into the water.

Without anyone noticing, he disappears entirely under the ice.

67

INT. NIGHT - UNDER THE ICE

67

Pi thrashes underwater, blowing bubbles. Through the glassy ice, we see skaters moving above, leaving tracks on its surface. No one notices Pi. He is suffocating... about to drown.

68 INT. NIGHT - SHIP CABIN

68

Pi wakes abruptly from his nightmare, his head emerging from the water. His cabin is inundated for real. A siren screams. The ship is sinking!

He dives from his bunk and swims towards the hallway.

69 INT. NIGHT - SHIP HALLWAY

69

As soon as he enters the hallway, he is swept by a powerful current. The ship is steeped at an angle, sinking.

Pi clings onto the rail of a stairway that leads downward. Water is pouring violently into the hole.

PI
(screaming)
Mother!!!! Father!!!!

The stairwell is now completely filled with water. Pi is ripped off the rail by the powerful current. He catches onto the ceiling. Right above him is a trap door that happens to be open. But the current is too strong for him to pull himself up.

Hysterical monkeys swirl past him, screaming in panic. The water keeps rising. Pi is running out of strength. Now submerged, he pushes his mouth towards the water's surface, in vain. Only his hand manages to reach above the surface.

Suddenly a man with a tattooed arm grabs his wrist. It is one of the ship's sailors. He pulls Pi up into the hallway one story above.

FRENCH SAILOR
(in French)
Vite! Suis moi... Par ici!
(Quick! Follow me... This way!)

They run up the hallway, water rising behind them.

They reach a vertical ladder. The Frenchman forcefully grabs Pi and makes him climb ahead of him.

Pi climbs up through a hatch.

70 INT. NIGHT - STORAGE ROOM

70

Pi enters the dark room amidst a cacophony of screaming animals. It is filled with crates and animal cages, some of them open.

(CONTINUED)

The sailor points to a door at the opposite end of the room.

SAILOR

(whispering)

That door there! Go open it!

Pi moves in the direction of the door, not fully understanding why.

He turns back and sees that the sailor hasn't budged. His head is prudently poking out from the hatch.

The sailor, annoyed, waves his hand, ordering Pi to proceed.

Increasingly worried, Pi advances in the darkness.

Suddenly, a roar is heard. Pi turns around. A panicked black panther menacingly flashes its teeth.

Pressing his back to the wall and without ever diverting his eyes from the beast, Pi makes his way around the room towards an old-fashioned fire extinguisher. Pi grabs a handful of sand from the bucket, ready to cast it into the panther's eyes.

The cat approaches, ever more threatening.

Meanwhile, the French Sailor steals into the room, making his way towards another door which he begins to open quietly.

Pi, horrified, understands that the French sailor used him to divert the panther, used him like live bait!

PI

No! Mister!!!!

The panther turns around, notices the sailor and leaps towards him in a roar.

The Frenchman manages to slip out and slam the door in the cat's face.

Pi rushes towards the open hatch from which he entered.

The panther leaps in his direction.

Pi slides on the ground and disappears into the hole, feet first... falling into the water, which has risen up to the hallway ceiling!

71 **INT. NIGHT - SHIP HALLWAY BELOW**

71

Below, Pi is immediately swept by the water current.

Some sixty feet away, the boy is able to latch on to a ventilation inlet. He rips off its aluminum grill and manages to pull himself into the duct, which hasn't yet been filled with water.

72 **INT. NIGHT - INSIDE THE DUCT**

72

Pi claws his way up, propelled by his despair. At the opposite end of the duct is a faint light...

73 **EXT. PRE-DAWN - IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN**

73

Only the stern of the ship remains above sea level. Its propellers and rudder are suspended above the water. Under a pouring rain, amidst sinister cracking noises, the vessel is in its final sinking stage.

Dozens of animals swim around the boat, bleating, trumpeting, mooing....

Suddenly two hands appear on the edge of a ventilation stack. Pi pulls himself out, not without difficulty. At that moment, the ship emits a terrible screech and finally sinks. A half dozen pink flamingos fly off the rails.

In the nick of time, Pi jumps into the water. He strenuously tries to swim away from the swirling currents.

74 **EXT. DAY - HIGH SEAS UNDER VIOLENT WINDS**

74

Pi fights his way through the debris, horrified by the sight of floating bodies of ship employees.

PI

Mother... Father...

Battered by waves and trembling in the freezing rain, he spots a lifeboat. A skilled swimmer, Pi does the crawl towards the raft.

On its bow, a peacock fans out its feathers, attempting to dry itself.

Pi grabs hold of a rope and hoists himself up. He comes face to face with a wet rat that stares at him with red eyes, as if to say: go away.

Pi lets out a scream and the rat runs away.

(CONTINUED)

A tarpaulin covers most of the life boat, secured by a rope that is woven through its eyelets. In the middle of this stretched canvas lays a Zebra that had managed to jump from the ship. Its hind legs have ripped through the tarp, leaving only its upper body apparent.

On the opposite end of the boat, some sort of wet dog is shivering. The creature is rolled-up in a ball, tucked in a coiled rope ladder.

Standing on the lifeboat, Pi scans the ocean in despair.

PI (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Father!!! Mother!!!... Allah!...
Krishna!.... Jesus!... Help!!!!

*
*

Suddenly his face brightens.

PI (CONT'D)
Richard!... Richard Parker! Hold
steady Richard Parker!

A large descending wave reveals Richard Parker, swimming desperately in the ocean.

It's a 500 pound Bengal tiger.

Half engulfed by waves, the beast is frantically trying to reach a mound of floating wood debris.

PI (CONT'D)
Go Richard Parker! You're almost
there!

The tiger manages to climb onto the debris, looking as awkward as a wet cat.

PI (CONT'D)
You made it Richard Parker!

With the motion of the waves, the wood slowly drifts toward the lifeboat. Pi stiffens, starting to get worried. The tiger continues to get closer.

Pi grabs an oar and clumsily tries to row, hoping to move the life boat away. To no avail. The cat is now less than ten feet away.

PI (CONT'D)
No!! No!! Go away!

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED: (2)

74

With the tip of the oar, Pi tries to push the floating debris away. But it's too late. In one leap, the tiger lands onto the tarpaulin of the lifeboat.

Pi lets go of the paddle and jumps in the water.

75

EXT. DAY - TURBULENT WATER

75

Pi wades through the freezing choppy water attempting to distance himself from the life boat.

Suddenly, a shark fin glides by, less than 3 feet from him. He shivers in terror and swims in the opposite direction. Other fins appear around him. Sharks abound!

He swims back to the life boat and grabs the floating oar. Stretching out his arm, Pi manages to slip the paddle's handle between the tarpaulin and the boat's rim. He pushes it in a few feet, creating a sort of branch protruding from the boat.

He pulls himself up, balancing his legs on the rim of the vessel. He ends up hanging on the oar, suspended over the ocean.

The tips of bigger waves kiss his back.

Shark fins circle underneath, brushing against his shirt.

Amidst the floating debris, a life-buoy drifts by.

Reaching out, Pi is able to latch onto it. He pulls it out of the water and slips it onto the end of the oar. He then wedges his upper body into its hole, finally able to let go of his grip. His back rests on the inside of the buoy.

In this miserable position, battered by waves, the boy cries his eyes out.

PI (V.O.)

A Bengal tiger above, sharks below,
night all around, sharp stings from
the icy waves... but most
excruciating was the certitude that
neither Allah, nor Jesus, nor
Krishna would ever return my father
and mother to me.

*
*
*
*

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Would you mind sticking to the
basics of the story, without so
many details?

76

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

76

Pi, in his hospital bed, takes a moment to study his interviewers: two Japanese men in suit-and-ties (Okamoto and Chiba). They sit in chairs facing him.

Leaning on a door, a cleaning woman and a nurse also listen to Pi's tale.

PI

The ship sank. My family died.
There. Now you can turn off your
tape recorder.

The two Japanese men look at each other.

MR. OKAMOTO

You have displayed great courage
Mr. Patel... but the insurance
company which employs us absolutely
needs to find out why the Tsimtsum
sank, do you understand? We would
also be delighted to hear the rest
of your story.

The nurse and cleaning woman nod approvingly.

PI

What have you got there, in the
bag?

Pi points to a paper bag from which two sandwiches stick out.

MR. OKAMOTO

It's... Its' just our lunch.
Would... Would you care to have
some?

He hands the bag to Pi who hastily dumps the sandwiches on his lap. The boy grabs one of them and takes a large bite.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

Is it good?

MR. CHIBA

(complaining, in Japanese)
It looks rather tasty.

77

EXT. DAY - CHOPPY OCEAN

77

Still hanging from his oar, Pi has fallen asleep. Suddenly some floating wreckage bumps into his back.

(CONTINUED)

77

CONTINUED:

77

It is a piece of the ship's bridge bearing the vessel's name: TSIMTSUM.

On one of its posts is a beacon made of red glass. Through its cracked face, we can see a broken light bulb and a metallic reflector.

Pi extricates the reflector. On its shiny surface, he sees his exhausted face and dark rings under his eyes.

On the boat, the zebra is still in the same place, wedged in the tarpaulin. The peacock and the "wet dog" haven't moved. But there is no sign of any tiger. He has disappeared.

Pi throws the mirror onto the tarp, slips his feet over the edge of the boat and lifts himself up as best he can. He finds himself standing at the prow, and scans the ocean around him.

PI (V.O.)

Richard Parker was no longer on board. He probably tried to swim back to the Gulf of Bengal. By now, he must have already reincarnated into a tiger shark.

Suddenly a yelp erupts behind him. Pi turns around. The "wet dog" has uncurled itself and stands to attention: it is a spotted hyena. The horrendously ugly and terrifying animal flashes its sharp teeth.

78

EXT. EVENING - IMMENSE OCEAN

78

The rain has stopped. The weather has settled.

The sun is setting on the horizon. On the water's surface, reflections of red clouds glow like pieces of molten metal.

The life boat is a mere spot drifting on waves. The zebra lets out a devastating neigh.

79

EXT. NIGHT - CALM SEA

79

Pi is on the prow of the lifeboat, the peacock is perched on the stern and the zebra is still stuck in the middle.

With its red eyes and raised ears, the hyena runs in circles, going "yip-yip-yip-yip-yip". At the center of this circle is the zebra.

Each time the hyena passes the peacock, the bird stiffens and fans its tail.

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

79

On the other end of the craft, Pi holds up the oar, trying to keep the animal at bay. The zebra remains stuck in its tragically pathetic position.

Suddenly a terrible cry is heard. The hyena stops dead in its tracks, hairs bristling, baring its teeth.

Every one on board is frozen. Even the zebra rolls its eyes to see...

...an almost-human hand appears on the edge of the boat, catching a grip on the tarpaulin rope. Another hand appears, then the head of a female orangutan.

In a single bound, the ape leaps into the vessel.

Floating next to the boat, is a cargo net filled with bunches of bananas. This little island, which brought the ape to the life boat, collapses, dispersing bananas into the ocean.

The female ape walks on the stretched tarp, not knowing where to take refuge. She finally sits the farthest away possible from the hyena.

Every one on the craft is now seated.

80

EXT. NIGHT - CALM SEA

80

Ravi's face appears as a SUPER-IMPOSITION, a figment of Pi's imagination.

RAVI

So, you are trying to be like Noah?

Pi shrugs his shoulders.

RAVI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What's your mailing address:

"Piscine Molitor, Pacific Ocean?"

Again, Pi shrugs his shoulders.

RAVI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you had a giraffe you could use
it as a mast!

At that moment, Pi's attention is caught by the female ape. Hit by motion sickness, she pants, her tongue hanging out, moaning. Then, no longer able to hold it in, she vomits onto her feet.

(CONTINUED)

80

CONTINUED:

80

Pi bursts into laughter. Progressively his guffaw turns into crying, then sobbing.

FADE TO BLACK.

81

EXT. NIGHT - CALM SEA.

81

The moon is reflected on the ocean's surface.

On the life boat, everyone sleeps. Pi is in a foetal position, his hands interlocked between his legs. He dreams.

PI'S DREAM

Suddenly a brief yet heavy rain falls upon him.

An enormous eye looks at him from a few feet away. It is a whale that quickly dives back under, casting its tail above the water.

UNDER WATER (DREAM CONTINUED)

The whale swims under the life boat which appears silhouetted against the sunlight.

It begins singing, as if to sound an alarm call.

82

INT. DAY - COCKPIT OF A PROPELLER AIRPLANE

82

The whale-call rings through the copilot's headset. He leans over and looks out his window.

The whale is blowing its hole, pointing them to where the life boat is.

The copilot quickly grabs his radio transmitter.

83

INT. DAY - SUBMARINE (DREAM CONTINUED)

83

The submarine's radio operator receives the message. He rips his headset off and yells out.

84

EXT. DAY - OCEAN SURFACE (DREAM CONTINUED)

84

The submarine emerges on the bubbling ocean surface. Its siren is sounding.

Pi stands on the life boat and faces the sub. Thinking he's finally saved, Pi waves his arms energetically. The animals all sit and observe the sub, as if they understood what was actually going on.

85 **EXT. DAY - SUBMARINE GANGWAY (DREAM CONTINUED)**

85

Pi's father appears on the gangway, followed by his mother. Instead of exhibiting any kind of joy, they sullenly stare at Pi with anguish.

The sirens scream louder and more violently, sounding like...

86 **EXT. DAY - TURBULENT WATER**

86

...the hyena, the peacock and the ape - all screeching in unison!

Pi is startled out of his sleep. The hyena is attacking the zebra which is trying to stand up, braying in terror. The ape is jumping up and down, slapping the tarp while the peacock flaps its wings, losing its feathers!

The hyena suddenly jumps onto the zebra, inadvertently pushing it overboard in a splash. The screaming peacock flies off and disappears.

The frustrated hyena turns around on the tarpaulin. Pi grabs the oar to defend himself. But the carnivore, baring all its teeth, opts for the ape.

The two face off, in a duel of animal screams!

The orangutan attacks first. She whacks the dog on the head, but the hyena bites the ape in the neck.

Pi averts his eyes. We hear the sounds of the fight, grunting, then silence.

Pi takes a peek. The ape is sprawled on its back, dead. The hyena starts approaching in Pi's direction...

It circles around him slyly. Pi holds up the oar, edging backward towards the hole in the tarpaulin made by the zebra.

The hyena is about to leap... when all of a sudden, it sinks down onto itself, eyes bulging in terror.

Pi is shocked, in disbelief.

Behind the boy, the enormous Bengal tiger surges out through the hole in the tarp. He growls furiously.

Pi turns around, drops the oar and falls on his behind. The tiger jumps over him, biting the hyena in the neck.

From very far away, we hear a sinister cracking sound.

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED:

86

He lets go of his prey and slowly turns toward the boy who is trembling like a leaf.

At that very moment, a rat comes out of nowhere, running on the tarpaulin and jumping onto Pi. It makes its way onto the boy's head and grasps onto his hair.

Richard Parker's eyes follow the rat. Flashing his enormous teeth, he approaches menacingly.

Without thinking, Pi grabs the rat and throws it to the tiger. Screeching, the rodent disappears into the cat's gaping mouth.

Satisfied with this offering, Richard Parker grabs the hyena's body and drags it under the tarp, as if into his lair.

87

EXT. DAY - CHOPPY OCEAN

87

Pi shakes uncontrollably. He looks out at the ocean in complete despair. He sits at the tip of the life boat, as the tiger noisily devours its prey.

PI

(murmuring)

I don't want to die... I don't want to die... I don't want to...

Pi's mother (o.s.)

Piscine...

He suddenly stops and closes his eyes.

SUPERIMPOSED flash back of the mother.

PI'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

...the greatest crime is to let oneself die...

Pi opens his eyes again. His gaze falls upon a rolled up rope, fixed on the prow. It's in the exact same position as the whip in the lion tamer's cage. Pi calms down, his trembling eases.

The tiger, momentarily interrupted in his feeding, seems to answer with a growl.

Pi quickly moves to gather the other oars hanging off the side of the boat. He lays four paddles on the tarp, forming a square.

(CONTINUED)

87

CONTINUED:

87

Under a bench, he spots several orange life vests. One by one, he grabs and unfolds them, slipping them onto the oars.

He then retrieves the life-buoy he had previously used on his branch-like device. He places it in the center of the square.

Using the rope that secures the oars to the sides of the vessel, Pi ties the whole contraption together. He pulls his knots extra-tight.

After fastening a mooring line to his floating device, he launches it into the water. It floats off, the rope becoming taut.

Under a bench at the prow of the lifeboat, two lockers sit side by side. Pi opens the first one, pulling out an upside down umbrella and some blankets.

He tries to open the second one when Richard Parker, annoyed by the commotion, sticks his head out of the hole in the tarp.

Pi throws the umbrella and blankets on his raft and jumps. He falls awkwardly, his stomach landing on the buoy.

He gives some slack to the line and floats away, finding safety some thirty feet away from the life boat.

88

EXT. DAY - TURBULENT OCEAN

88

The raft serves its purpose, floating on the waves. But finding a sense of balance on it is difficult. Pi tries to sit as best he can, uncomfortable.

From the boat, Richard Parker looks at Pi with curiosity. He then returns to his lair.

Shark fins begin to appear, circling the makeshift raft. Pi's surge of courage has now completely waned.

Pulling on the rope, he gets closer to the boat.

PI (V.O.)

Compared to the raft, the lifeboat seemed as secure as a fortress... But my options were dire: perching over a tiger or hovering on this raft over sharks...

UNDER THE OCEAN

(CONTINUED)

88

CONTINUED:

88

We see Pi's buttocks dipping into the water.

89

EXT. DAY - RAINY WEATHER

89

Pi double-checks the tightness of all of his knots.

Rain suddenly starts to pour. He wraps himself in his blankets.

He opens the inverted umbrella, which turns out to be a rain catcher. Pi places it above his head.

With its rubber tube in his mouth, he sucks on the first drops.

90

EXT. NIGHT - HEAVY RAIN

90

Night falls. The rain continues, pouring harder and harder.

His blankets are soaked. He wears one of them in a hood-like manner. He is freezing, shivering, his gaze staring out blankly.

PI'S FANTASY

Pi dozes off. In a SUPER-IMPOSITION: He imagines the tiger diving majestically into the water and swimming rapidly towards him.

Half-asleep on his raft, Pi morphs into a goat that can't stop bleating...

MR. CHIBA (V.O.)

Richard Parker... That's a strange name for a tiger...

91

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

91

Okamoto and Chiba are still seated in front of him. A hospital patient, two paramedics, and a nun have now joined the cleaning woman and nurse.

Under Mr. Chiba's scornful eye, Pi, in his hospital bed, finishes off the last sandwich before proceeding.

PI

But it's a strange story! The entire Khulna district in Bangladesh was terrorized by a tiger who had attacked a man in a field in plain daylight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

91

CONTINUED:

91

PI (CONT'D)

They found his corpse stuck in the
fork of a tree. The peasants
decided to hire a bounty hunter...

As he speaks, the boy peers into the paper bag and discovers
a pack of cookies and a chocolate bar. He grabs the pack of
cookies.

PI (CONT'D)

May I?

After shooting CHIBA a resigned look, OKAMOTO gives Pi the go-
ahead, but he grabs the bag to reclaim the chocolate bar.

Pi opens the pack, extracts three cookies and discretely
tucks them under his pillow as he continues his story:

PI (CONT'D)

So they attached a goat to a stake
and waited several nights. When the
tiger showed up, the hunter
realized it was female accompanied
by her two month old cub. He killed
the mother anyway, but the little
one ran away, meowing in fear...

Pi pulls out another cookie and nibbles at its four corners.

The two Japanese men sigh.

PI (CONT'D)

The cub probably wandered for a few
days until he showed up, tired and
hungry, at the entrance of a palace
built over two centuries ago by
Europeans.

FLASHBACK

The baby tiger walks up the palace steps. It staggers through
vast rooms that had once been resplendent, climbs up a
magnificent marble staircase with a threadbare carpet, enters
a dining hall with a table that could seat a hundred guests.
The cushions of all the chairs are ripped open. The animal
enters the billiard room, passes under a cobwebbed hookah,
brushes past sublime paintings covered in dust, precious
marquetry gone moldy....

92

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

92

Pi slides the half-eaten cookie under the pillow, and pulls
another one from the package.

(CONTINUED)

92

CONTINUED:

92

PI

It's actually the owner, a
descendant of a British Lord, who
found the cub.

FLASHBACK

A thirty-something man, very British looking, slowly opens a
door and discovers... the orphan tiger cub curled up and
asleep on a tiger skin laid out on the floor as a carpet...

The man lifts the telephone handset and dials a number.

BRITISH MAN

(whispering)

Hello, is this the police..?
There's a baby tiger sleeping in my
living room... My name is Richard
Parker...

93

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

93

PI

But the telephone connection was
bad and the only thing the officer
heard was...

FLASHBACK

A uniformed police officer tries to make out what the man on
the phone is saying.

BRITISH MAN'S VOICE

(through the phone)

Crrrrr.... Hello, is this the
police? Crrrrr.... There's a baby
tiger sleeping in my living room...
Crrrrrrrrrrrrr... Richard Parker....

94

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

94

As Pi starts the whole rigmarole again with a new cookie.
Chiba and Okamoto start fidgeting on their chairs.

MR. OKAMOTO

(interrupting)

Mr Patel, it certainly is an
amusing story but in no way does
it explain the sinking of the
TSIMTSUM. We are here to gather
details of your story.

(CONTINUED)

94

CONTINUED:

94

PI
Tell me gentlemen... Have you ever
been hungry?

MR. CHIBA
(in Japanese, eyeing the
pack of cookies)
It won't be long now.

OKAMOTO turns the tape machine back on "record."

95

EXT. DAY - CALM SEA, CLEAR SKY

95

The sun beats down. The ocean is as flat as a pond. Even the
air is still.

There is no sign of any tiger on the life boat.

Pi pulls on his mooring line, bringing the raft in closer. He
carefully climbs onto the life boat and fastens his rope.

Laying on his stomach he slides to the edge of the tarpaulin
and ever-so-gently lifts it up to take a peek underneath.

Richard Parker's rib cage moves up and down with regularity.
He is asleep, laying in the shade of the tarpaulin,
surrounded by bits of the hyena's carcass.

PI (V.O.)
(taking a whiff and
grimacing)
To urinate, for a tiger, is
tantamount to planting a sign that
says: Private Property. Luckily,
Richard Parker had taken pains to
only mark his territory at the
bottom of the boat.

Getting up, Pi quietly opens the second locker. He pulls out
a box that contains some sort of Norwegian "survival"
crackers.

Feverishly tearing open a package, he devours a half dozen of
them like an animal until he's covered in crumbs.

Feeling full, he throws the box of crackers onto his raft.

Reaching into the locker, he pulls out a second box. It is
filled with a myriad of objects as well as a manual.

Pi starts looking for something to drink. His lips are
parched. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

95

CONTINUED:

95

Again, he gingerly lifts the tarp.

In front of Richard Parker, a small puddle of freshwater, remnant of the last rainfall, sways gently with the rocking of the boat.

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

With his shade, his hyena carcass
and a little puddle of rainwater...
Richard Parker had it made in his
lair. I, on the other hand, beaten
by the sun, dreamt of having a long
straw to steal even the tiniest
droplet of his water.

Pi finds a small, graded container. He knots a piece of string into the shape of a little basket and places the cup inside it.

Armed with his mini-makeshift bucket, he makes his way towards the bow.

Through the opening the tarp, he slides the container inside and lowers it slowly.

96

INT. DAY - UNDER THE TARPAULIN

96

The little cup tethered to the string brushes against the cat's whiskers. The tiger shudders in its sleep.

97

EXT. DAY - ON THE TARPAULIN

97

Pi focuses on his task, gulping painfully. The rocking of the boat complicates his maneuver.

98

EXT. DAY - UNDER THE TARPAULIN

98

The cup finally reaches the puddle. Scraping the bottom of the deck, Pi is able to fill it with water. Richard Parker purrs in his sleep.

99

EXT. DAY - ON THE TARPAULIN

99

Pi carefully raises the container. The water is filled with floating particles... But Pi doesn't care, he downs it in one gulp.

Still thirsty, he repeats the whole maneuver.

100 **INT. DAY - UNDER THE TARPAULIN** 100

The cup dips into the puddle, rubbing against the deck. This time though, as the cup goes up it passes the tiger's open eye.

101 **EXT. DAY - ON THE TARPAULIN** 101

Pi slurps down the drink, then realizes he fished something with the cup.

He turns the cup upside down and something drops into the palm of his hand. It is a giant claw.

He peaks under the tarp, in the shade he notices the animal's paw. A claw is indeed missing. In its place is a bloody scab, a reminder of the accident.

Pi's gaze moves up to Richard Parker's face. He is staring straight at the boy. Pulling his whiskers back, the cat lets out a guttural roar.

Dropping the cup, Pi jumps onto the tarp. Richard Parker's paw misses the boy by a hair!

Fleeing the vessel, Pi grabs the box of objects and unties the line. He jumps onto his raft and pushes off violently with his foot.

102 **EXT. DAY - CALM SEA** 102

Pi lets go of the rope line, allowing his tethered raft to drift out.

Richard Parker stands up on the stern, quivering with anger, his fur blowing in the wind.

A huge roar rings over the ocean, like a warning call.

FADE TO BLACK.

103 **EXT. DAY - CHOPPY OCEAN, STRONG WINDS** 103

The sky has darkened. The swells are deep yet slow-moving.

On the lifeboat, the tiger is getting a breath of fresh air, his back turned to Pi.

The boy sits cross-legged on the buoy. He has laid out the contents of the box before him on a folded blanket.

(CONTINUED)

Pen in hand, he is taking inventory of the objects, drawing up a list on the pages of the survival guide.

One by one, he methodically places the objects back in the box.

PI

(spoken aloud)

- 35 cartons of 'Bergen' Norwegian crackers...
- 1 large "Poulain" dark chocolate bar...
- 192 tablets of anti-seasickness medicine...
- 32 vomit bags
- 4 rocket flares
- 1 Swiss army knife
- 1 graded container... (he casts his gaze towards the lion): need to get it back
- 2 rectangular sponges...
- 2 fishing kits with hooks... But no bait!
- 1 sewing kit...
- 3 packs of Chinese filtered cigarettes...
- 1 survival manual
- 1 ballpoint pen... (showing it to an imaginary person)

-Plus: 1 rain collector, 1 buoy (he taps on his seat), 5 oars, 8 life vests, 3 wool blankets, 1 banana net, 1 signaling mirror, 1 lifeboat, 1 Bengal tiger, 1 nice little Indian boy... three unreliable and incompatible Gods... and... one claw.

*
*

Proud of himself, Pi closes the box and places it on his lap.

The tiger saunters back into its lair.

Looking around, Pi takes in the hugeness of the ocean around him. He scans it a second time.

His little floating shell bounces on the waves.

His chin start to tremble. Pi silently starts to cry, unable to hold it in...

104

EXT. DAY - UNDER A CRUSHING SUN

104

PI (V.O.)

"Warning," the manual said. "Never drink your own urine." That's not likely when you've been called Pissing Patel your whole life.

Shivering with cold, Pi uses a sponge to gather dew off the life vests.

He desperately squeezes the sponge over his open mouth.

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

The manual also said: "find shelter, the elements can kill you faster than hunger or thirst." What do you do when the only shelter is already occupied by a tiger?

Pi goes back to the life boat to retrieve the oar he had previously used as a 'branch' to hang on.

Using the Swiss army knife's corkscrew, he patiently carves a hole in the flat part of the paddle. He then carves a notch in the handle.

He raises the oar like a mast at the center of his raft, lashing a rope into the top hole and using the bottom notch to wedge on the buoy.

He then throws a blanket over it, creating a sort of teepee.

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

According to the manual, on a clear day the horizon as seen by the naked eye "amounts to a distance of four kilometers." Given the scale of the Pacific Ocean, it was about as likely for me to be spotted by passing ship than to win the lottery. But it couldn't hurt to try my luck...

Having extracted the Chinese cigarettes from their boxes, he sews them one by one onto a blanket using his trusted sewing kit.

At the upper tip of the mast, where the oar is flat, he attaches a flare, ready to be launched at any moment... On the other side of the paddle, he places the reflector mirror salvaged from the beacon.

(CONTINUED)

104

CONTINUED:

104

As seen from afar, the raft is but a tiny speck bouncing on the waves. The reflector emits bursts of light, sending out makeshift distress calls.

As seen from closer up, the cigarettes sewn on the blanket read: HELP.

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

No word in the manual though, on the Alpha-male struggle between a boy and a tiger stranded together on a lifeboat...

105

EXT. NIGHT - CALM SEA

105

Night falls. The setting sun fires up the horizon. On the lifeboat, Richard Parker is laying down like a dog, ignoring Pi.

On the raft, the boy, stiff, skin wrinkled by constant exposure to water, tries to find a comfortable position.

Below him, through an opening in the craft, he sees a myriad of shiny spots.

He gets on his knees and dips his face into the water, eyes wide open.

UNDERWATER

The dense water is teeming with millions of luminescent plankton particles and green phosphorescent bubbles. In this aquatic wonderland, a huge number of colorful fish crisscross each other, bursting in reflections of gold, blue and green...

Little by little, the colors fade. The sun disappears below the horizon.

106

EXT. NIGHT - CALM SEA

106

Pi, appeased, wraps himself in a blanket and lays on his back.

The stars have taken over the sky. Pi stretches out his arm, holding a whistle he found on one of the life vests.

Varying its angle with the wind, the whistle produces a strange melody. Silhouetted against the night sky, the tiger listens.

FADE TO BLACK.

107

EXT. DAY - STORMY SKY

107

Sitting on his raft, Pi carves into his makeshift mast using Richard Parker's claw.

He stops what he's doing when he notices the cat moving into its 'observation position.' The tiger half raises himself on his hind legs, his front paws resting on the gunnel of the boat. The animal looks off toward the horizon then majestically turns his head. His gaze lands on Pi.

The boy looks at him with a newfound admiration.

PI

Hey Richard Parker! There's something I have to tell you... You are the most extraordinary creature in all of nature!

The tiger stares at him, moving his ears.

PI (CONT'D)

You know, it would've been pretty depressing to have been stuck with a turkey or a warthog!

As he talks to the cat, Pi pulls on the mooring line drawing his raft towards the boat. The tiger keeps staring him down, unflinching. Pi maintains direct eye contact with him.

PI (CONT'D)

You are so magnificent!... Know what!? I want you to survive... But if you kill me, I won't be able to save you... Do you understand that?

They defiantly stare each other down.

PI (CONT'D)

The only way out is if I am the super Alpha male! You may disagree, but you don't have a choice old man!

The boy starts hoisting himself on board. Richard Parker emits a dull growl.

(CONTINUED)

107

CONTINUED:

107

PI (CONT'D)

(loud)

For starters, I was on this
lifeboat first. This is my
territory!

He climbs aboard and cracks the rope as if it were a whip.
Richard Parker growls menacingly, but does not attack. Pi
never averts his eyes from the cat's.

PI (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I am the Alpha male!!! I'm the one
who's boss!

He cracks his whip again. The tiger backs off, purring...

Pi walks forward three steps and urinates on the whole width
of the tarpaulin.

PI (CONT'D)

(loud)

Starting here, this is my
territory! You have been warned!

He sits down and chews on a cracker, masticating noisily on
purpose. Richard Parker growls and returns to his lair. We
hear a cracking sound underneath. The tiger is chewing on the
hyena bones, gobbling them up in small pieces.

With a delayed reaction, Pi starts to tremble as he eats.

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

I could no longer kid myself. If I
wanted to avoid ending up a carcass
like that hyena, I absolutely had
to feed Richard Parker. But how?
And with what?

MR. OKAMOTO (V.O.)

Didn't you say you found fishing
equipment?

108

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

108

In the hospital room, three other patients and two other
nurses have joined the crowd, listening.

(CONTINUED)

108

CONTINUED:

108

PI

Have you ever tried to extract a sample of flesh from a live tiger, with a swiss army knife and no anaesthesia?

MR. OKAMOTO

I don't get it.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

What is he talking about?

The crowd watches, perplexed.

PI

In order to catch a fish, what I needed was... a fish. So there: without a fish, you get no fish.

They all look at him with eyes like saucers.

PI (CONT'D)

To fish, you need bait.

109

EXT. DAY- STORMY SKY

109

The raft is butted against the lifeboat. Pi stands up slowly and removes the last oar hanging off the side of the vessel.

He gingerly lifts a corner of the tarp. Richard Parker purrs. Pi carefully slips the oar over the rim, using it like a pizza paddle, trying to grab remnants of the hyena carcass.

Suddenly, the tiger swats the paddle with force, letting out a roar.

The boy drops everything and jumps in the water. At the same time, Richard Parker surges onto the prow, ready to jump. He settles for an angry roar.

Pi pulls himself onto his raft, shivering.

FADE TO BLACK.

110

EXT. EARLY MORNING - CHOPPY OCEAN

110

The sun is barely rising. The tiger is watching Pi from his observation post. He yawns, his gigantic jaws wide open.

(CONTINUED)

110

CONTINUED:

110

PI (V.O.)

His mouth was like a terrifying cave, framed by stalactites as sharp as swords. The look he gave me suggested I'd be visiting it very soon.

111

EXT. DAY - LIFE BOAT

111

The constant motion of the waves is wearing out the mooring line connecting Pi's raft to the lifeboat. It is starting to fray.

112

EXT. DAY - TUMULTUOUS OCEAN

112

The big cat stares Pi down, impenetrably.

PI

(to Richard Parker)

You know, we have a problem here: I need some bait. What would you do in my place? Cut off your ear or your toe?

The mooring line suddenly snaps! The raft starts drifting away.

Without the stability afforded by the line, the raft starts rocking dangerously with the waves. Pi's floating clump of life vests and oars threatens to fall apart.

113

EXT. DAY - ON THE LIFEBOAT

113

Similarly, the lifeboat, freed from its floating anchor, also starts rocking more violently. The tiger is visibly seasick. He stands with his four legs somewhat spread apart, growling.

114

EXT. DAY - RAFT

114

Using the lid from the box, Pi rows as fast as he can.

Fighting the waves, bouncing on the discombobulated craft, he manages to draw closer to the life boat.

115

EXT. DAY - ON THE LIFEBOAT

115

Tossed by the incessant movements of the boat, the tiger throws up, stricken by intense seasickness. He immediately disappears into his lair.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

115

PI (V.O.)

Without my raft serving as a floating anchor, the lifeboat was doing a fancy jig. One thing became clear, Richard Parker did not have "sea legs"... This detail could very well save my life.

116 EXT. DAY - RAFT

116

Coming within range of the lifeboat, Pi reels in the soaked rope floating off the raft. Onto its frayed end, he fixes one of the larger fish hooks. He then casts the rope off like a lasso.

The hook latches onto the rim of the lifeboat. Pi delicately pulls on the line. But the small hook doesn't withstand the weight and starts bending.

Just as the hook gives out, Pi manages to grab the rim of the boat. He takes a peak, making sure the tiger is under the tarp.

The poor animal is in a sorry state, retching with nausea.

Pi takes advantage of this to jump on board.

117 EXT. DAY - ON THE LIFEBOAT

117

Pi quickly secures the raft's mooring line. Taking off his shredded shirt, he places it underneath the rope to prevent it from chafing. Just to be sure, he fastens a second rope to the mooring line. Instantly, the lifeboat regains its stability.

As Pi is working, an enormous silhouette moves behind him.

Pi quickly turns around then freezes, petrified. Richard Parker, crazy with sea-sickness, stares at the boy from less than six feet away. He purrs.

The tiger is poised to jump. Pi closes his eyes, unable to move.

All of a sudden, a slap in the face scratches his cheek!

He opens his eyes: a flying-fish is flopping on the bridge. Richard Parker watches, as amazed as the boy.

Pi grabs the wiggling fish and in one movement, casts it into the cat's face - just as he had done with the rat.

(CONTINUED)

117

CONTINUED:

117

But the fish flies off, escaping from the tiger's jaws which snap in mid air. Richard Parker growls in frustration!

Then, a whole school of flying-fish sails over the boat, slamming into the both of them.

With wings aflutter... the fish hit the tiger and the boy - who screams in pain. Some fall onto the tarp, others thrash and fall back into the water. Some end up in Parker's lair...

118

EXT. DAY - ON THE OCEAN

118

The ocean bubbles and swirls around the lifeboat. A school of Dorado fish is chasing the flying fish.

119

EXT. DAY - ON THE LIFEBOAT

119

Bare chested, Pi ducks, trying to avoid being cut by the flying fish's razor-like fins...

The tiger is busy swatting with its paws and snapping its jaws, aiming for a catch. He finally nabs a fish which he promptly eats alive.

Pi takes advantage of this distraction to untie the mooring line and jump back on his raft. He lands hard, almost capsizing his craft!

PI

Thank you Krishna! Thank you G.....

*

*

A flying fish jets out and slaps him across the face!

*

120

EXT. DAY - ON THE RAFT

120

The raft drifts away. Now it is the Dorado's turn to be chased by sharks.

A few flying fish have landed at the bottom of Pi's skiff. He quickly throws a blanket over them.

Using a corner of the blanket, he grasps onto one of the fish, trying to wedge it between his knees.

He starts twisting the fish wrapped in the blanket. He closes his eyes, horrified by what he is about to do.

Large tears run down his cheeks. Pi doubles his efforts. The boy lets out a scream and with a brittle crack, kills the fish.

(CONTINUED)

120

CONTINUED:

120

Opening the blanket, Pi sadly looks at the dead fish and its bloody gills.

PI'S MOTHER

(in superimposition)

He who gives himself the power over
life and death, will always end up
as someone else's goat!

Pi turns his gaze away from the fish, in the direction of Richard Parker...

FADE TO BLACK.

121

EXT. NIGHT - CALM WEATHER

121

Many dead flying-fish are lined up on Pi's blanket.

With a blank expression, the boy uses the tiger claw to gut them one by one.

122

EXT. DAY - CLEAR WEATHER

122

Mid-morning.

Aboard his raft, Pi is fixing a hook to a fishing line. He ballasts it with three large lead weights. He picks one of a dozen flying-fish head. He places it on the hook.

He casts his line and waits... Nothing happens.

LATER

The sun has hit its midday zenith.

There is a tug on the fishing line, something is biting. He pulls the line in.

The hook has lost its bait. Pi, lazily grabs another fish head (there are only three left) and places on the hook.

LATER

The afternoon is nearing its end.

Pi still waits, bored. He's run out of flying-fish heads.

Suddenly, the fishing line gets taut. With gusto fueled by his despair, Pi pulls abruptly. He grabs on to the mast to avoid falling overboard.

(CONTINUED)

He grips as hard as he can, but the fishing line is slipping out little by little.

Pi wraps the line around the mast, using it like a winch. He pulls with all his might...

As the raft rocks and practically capsizes, a huge dorado appears at the water's surface, thrashing.

Leaning back and pulling, Pi is able to heave the fish onto the craft. It lands at the base of the mast.

He feverishly attaches the fishing line to the mast, as the fish threatens to break the whole craft apart with its violent movements.

Pi grabs the swiss army knife. From afar, we see him kill the dorado with one bold swing.

After a moment, the fish stops moving. Its scales become iridescent with a rainbow of colors.

Using both the claw and the army knife, Pi guts the fish.

He removes the innards and hangs them up, replenishing his stock of fishing bait. He cuts a filet from the fish and sets it aside.

He then tows his raft toward the lifeboat. He climbs aboard the larger vessel, holding up the bloody dorado. The boy's whistle is lodged between his lips.

Making a conspicuous effort not to step beyond his designated "territory," Pi waves the prize, blowing into the whistle. Treeeeeeeeeeeee...

The big cat comes out of its lair, excited by the smell of fish.

Pi throws the dorado at the beast's feet. The tiger sniffs it and promptly rips its head off.

The boy's arms and chest are covered in his victim's blood.

PI

(loud)

You get it now?... There's only
master on this boat, me: Piscine
Molitor Patel!... AKA Pi: three
point one four one six!....

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (2)

122

He blows his whistle one more time and proudly steps back onto his raft.

123 EXT. DAY - LIGHT BREEZE

123

The sky is filled with enormous white cumulus nimbus clouds. Standing on his raft, Pi scans the horizon.

PI (V.O.)

The manual also said: "*Green water is shallower than blue water.*"

All around him, as far as the eye can see, the water is a magnificent deep blue...

124 EXT. DAY - CALM SEA, HARSH SUN

124

The sun beats down. Not a breath of wind. The life boat and raft are at a stand-still.

On the washed out blanket, the sewn-on cigarette letters are completely shredded.

The banana net trails in the water behind the raft. With its large mesh, it is useless for catching fish.

With his tattered shorts and burned skin, his myriad of scabs and scars, Pi is slumped on the raft. A fishing line is attached to his wrist. Fish are not biting.

With his other hand, Pi holds up and reads the manual - for the hundredth time.

PI

*"Remember, time is distance.
Latitude can be measured with your
fingers if needed."*

Pi nods, with irony.

125 EXT. DAY - ON THE LIFEBOAT

125

The wind has lifted. The tiger, appearing thinner, rests his two front paws over the edge of the boat. He dreamily watches a school of dorados swimming along side the craft.

126 EXT. DAY - ON THE RAFT

126

Using the claw, Pi carves another notch into the mast, adding another day to his count. Tens of groups of 6 notches, crossed with a 7th one, already line the oar.

127 **EXT. NIGHT - ROUGH SEAS, STORM**

127

Rain falls hard. Pi drinks voraciously as he fills the rain catcher. Once it is full, he proceeds to fill the metal box, the vomit bags, the metal tubes the seasickness pills came in...

In the lifeboat, Richard Parker also quenches his thirst. He laps up water from puddles formed by water falling through the tear in the tarpaulin.

Later still, rain continues to fall just as hard. Everything is sopping wet. Pi is frozen, shivering under his useless shelter.

128 **EXT. NIGHT - TURBULENT OCEAN, STORMY SKY**

128

The rain has stopped. The swells are high.

Around the raft, the water is bustling with fish.

Pi holds a paddle underwater, it has been rigged with a fish hook. Waiting for the right moment, he jerks it out in a single movement. As he continues, he manages to retrieve several fish, hooked by the gills or their stomachs.

Soon, the lower part of his raft is teeming with wiggling fish.

With short, vigorous bursts from his whistle, Pi throws the tiger's share of food onto the tarpaulin. The boy's arms glisten with fish scales. The animal quickly gulps down the fish.

129 **EXT. DAY - RAFT**

129

Pi has fixed fish bones onto the mast of his raft.

He uses them as hooks to hang strips of fresh fish. The aim is to cure the food for less plentiful days.

130 **EXT. DAY - HARSH SUN**

130

Later, dazed by the heat, Pi squeezes water from the disintegrating sponge onto his body, trying to keep himself wet. The air is completely still.

*

He then writes a new list in his manual.

PI (V.O.)
(murmuring)
The smell of a fresh cut lawn...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

130

CONTINUED:

130

PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Particles of dust dancing through a
ray of sunlight... Those little
berries you pluck off of wild
plants, the kind that roll down
your arm...

Each memory is shown as a SUPERIMPOSED image.

Pi closes his eyes to better savor these memories... when he
opens them again, he is blinded by the sun. In the glare, he
sees Ravi seated on railing.

*
*
*

RAVI
(*ironic*)
Are you bored? Would you like to
return to dry land?... Just ask
Jesus how to walk on water... Or,
Krishna, with his six arms. I'll
bet he swims a mean crawl and could
tow you back to the Ganges...

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

We see the images SUPERIMPOSED.

*

131

EXT. NIGHT - RED SKY

131

From behind the raft, Pi reels in a sort of dragnet, made of
fabric that was probably once his underwear.

He picks a few tiny crabs off the fabric, eating them as
avidly as candy.

PI
(to Richard Parker)
I don't know if I ever told you
this, but I love watching my
parents eat sunflowers seeds... My
mother shells them all first, then
eats them, whereas my father eats
them one by one...

Using Richard Parker's claw, he concentrates on extracting a
tiny piece of meat from a larger piece of crab.

PI (CONT'D)
(continuing)
...that may sound like a minor
detail, but it means a lot...

132

INT. DAY - PATEL FAMILY KITCHEN (FLASHBACK)

132

Sitting Indian-style at a low table, Pi's father and mother
are each shelling their last sunflower seed.

(CONTINUED)

132

CONTINUED:

132

The father chomps his down and is left with a bowl full of empty shells. Whereas the mother is just beginning to savor her mound of shelled seeds.

He watches her eat, with envy.

PI'S MOTHER

(with irony)

I know someone who's about to start begging...

PI'S FATHER

You misjudge me...

She purposefully takes her time, relishing each seed with exaggeration.

The father gives her a sheepish look. He holds out his hand... and she taps it. Pi joyfully takes in the scene.

133

EXT. NIGHT - CLEAR WEATHER

133

Pi wakes up abruptly.

On the horizon, a dim light flickers on and off.

He hastily launches a rocket flare. A comet of red light fills the sky with a hissing sound.

The flare falls back into the water. Everything is dark again. The light on the horizon has disappeared.

After a while, Pi sits back down. He notices that Richard Parker is also camped out on the prow of his vessel.

PI

(to the tiger)

So you can't sleep either, huh?

Mechanically, he picks up the empty flare cartridge and smells it...

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

I remembered that smell... Cumin!

He closes his eyes.

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

Yummmmmmm... bell peppers sauteed with cumin... Sardines marinated in cumin... lentils with cumin...

(CONTINUED)

133

CONTINUED:

133

Each memory is ILLUSTRATED by enormous piles of food. Pi digs into the dishes with his fingers.

Pi notices that Richard Parker is looking at him. The boy talks directly to him.

PI (CONT'D)

Antelope with cumin, gazelle with
cumin... goat "à la" cumin.

134

EXT. DAY - CALM SEA

134

The sun is high.

On the lifeboat, Richard Parker is growing impatient, moving in circles. He growls and menaces, starving.

PI

I'm doing the best I can, Mr
Parker... I'd like to see you
try!... Go ahead, dive! Go out and
earn your keep!

The fishing line suddenly gets taut. Pi tugs on it abruptly. Nothing but an empty fish hook comes up.

Dejected, he grabs the last piece of bait and is about to fix it onto the hook when something bumps into the raft. The bait slips through his fingers and sinks into the water... His eyes well up with tears.

Turning around, he realizes the bump was that of a sea turtle, leaning onto his raft, resting.

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

The manual was explicit: *"the sea
turtle provides ample amounts of
nutrition and a valuable supply of
calories. The first step in
neutralizing a turtle is flipping
it onto its back."*

Pi approaches the turtle and attempts to grab its shell. The animal snaps and savagely bites into his arm.

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

*"In order to avoid its sharp beak,
grab it by the back flippers..."*

Pi manages to heave it out of the water and turn it onto its back, knocking down his "teepee."

(CONTINUED)

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

*"Now, carve a deep incision at the
base of the neck."*

Armed with his Swiss army knife, Pi looks at the turtle, perplexed. Its head and neck have completely disappeared inside.

He leans over, trying to peer into the shell's opening. All of a sudden, the turtle-head pops out, beak first. Pi dodges it and strikes it with the knife... From behind, we see the boy's stabbing motions.

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

*"Its blood coagulates very quickly
but it has a creamy taste and is
rich in protein..."*

Pi sits up. From afar, we see him drink.

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

To think that only a while back, I
didn't eat bananas because you have
to snap their stems in order to
peel them. That little sound of
breaking cartilage disgusted me...

We see the image of the banana as a SUPERIMPOSITION.

Catching a whiff of the blood, Richard Parker roars with impatience. Pi pours over his survival manual.

His finger runs under the following indication...

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

*"To remove the belly shell, carve
around its edges and pull..."*

Pi leans in and pulls. We hear (but do not see...) the loud suction sound of the belly shell ripping off. He stands up and turns to Richard Parker.

PI (CONT'D)

(with authority)

Stand back! I'm coming!

Pi maneuvers the raft. About to climb aboard the lifeboat, he whistles hard.

PI (CONT'D)

Stand back!...

(CONTINUED)

134

CONTINUED: (2)

134

Despite his impatience, the tiger retreats to the entrance of his lair. Arms extended, Pi hoists up the turtle shell and drops it in front of the tiger like a bowl of dog food.

As the cat surges to feast on it, Pi quickly retreats, whistling as hard as he can.

PI (CONT'D)

Without me you are dead!... Is that understood?

Richard Parker lifts his head for an instant, his snout covered in blood. He gives Pi a cold stare.

135

EXT. DAY - CALM SEA

135

Day is coming to an end. The ocean is calm and smooth.

PI (V.O.)

My new goal was to have the option to take refuge on the lifeboat at any given moment. In case of a shark attack or my raft capsizing. This would be key to my survival.

Pi stands up on the lifeboat. He brandishes a turtle shell as if it were a shield. In his other hand, he holds the whip.

Like a gladiator facing his adversary, Pi steps to the edge of his "territory." He cracks the whip loudly.

Instantly, the tiger leaps from its lair, swatting at the boy. Its paw hits the shield and Pi is cast overboard.

He climbs right back on the craft, without any other protection than the whip.

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

"Do not give in to mental idleness," said the manual. "Do math exercises in your head"... I had a much better challenge: "if you happen to have a tiger on board, break him!"

Pi stands up on the very prow of the lifeboat, dripping wet.

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

To achieve that, I suggest the next four steps: "First: Rock the boat."

(CONTINUED)

He forcefully shifts his weight from one leg to the other, causing the boat to teeter side to side - creating the same rocking movement that had previously made the tiger seasick.

As Richard Parker starts moving towards him, Pi cracks the whip and rocks ever more violently.

The animal stops in its tracks, noticeably less self-assured.

PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*"Second: provoke a border
incident."*

Still rocking the boat, Pi makes his way to the edge of his territory.

PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*"Third: With as much ill will as
you can muster, show your outrage
and defy your adversary."*

Pi screams and cracks the whip.

PI (CONT'D)
A tiger has dared to set foot in my
territory! This is scandalous
violation! An immeasurable affront!

Richard Parker doesn't move. He is visibly racked by nausea.

PI (CONT'D)
(with increased energy)
You think you scare me with your
striped pyjamas? You smelly stuffed
animal you!

Richard Parker's aggressive demeanor has given way to a more pitiful look. He vomits a bit of bile and retreats towards his lair, his tail tucked between his legs.

PI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*"Four: now that the tiger has
linked his seasickness with your
anger, add a hefty dose of
humiliation."*

Pi lifts a corner of the tarpaulin, under which Richard Parker has taken refuge. He slides in an oar to pick up some of the tiger's excrements.

(CONTINUED)

135

CONTINUED: (2)

135

The boy grabs some of the refuse with his hands and sniffs it. He rolls his eyes, then stares the tiger down with disdain.

The tiger sheepishly averts his eyes.

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

*"Finally: give the tiger time to
get over it, then repeat steps one
through four."*

136

EXT. NIGHT - SPECTACULAR SUNSET

136

Using the claw, Pi carves another notch in the mast.

He counts and recounts the dozens of marks, he stops and calculates...

In the middle of the ocean, against the reddening sky, Pi begins singing in his native language. From the subtitles we understand that it is a birthday song for his mother.

137

EXT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

137

A patient and a nurse weep, handkerchiefs in hand.

Pi is sitting up against his pillows, facing a growing assembly of people. Other patients and hospital personnel have since joined in. They listen, riveted by his tale.

PI (V.O.)

There is no middle ground for a
castaway. If the fishing is bad,
you starve...

138

EXT. DAY - ON THE OCEAN

138

PI (V.O.)

...if the fish are biting, you
stuff yourself before they rot...
Under the beating sun, you dream of
rain. But once you're soaked to the
bone, you long for sunshine....

A sequence of quick images illustrates each step.

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

...you move from one terror to the
next. But the true killer is
monotony.

(CONTINUED)

138

CONTINUED:

138

Pi, dazed, breaks the backbone of a cat fish. He pulls out the spinal filaments and sucks them down mechanically.

A small fluttering sound appears behind him. He pays no mind to it, but a strange shadow catches his attention...

A white sea bird has landed on the rail, less than 3 feet from him.

Pi stares at it in fascination... he then offers the bird a few strands of his fish spine. The bird cranes its neck and pecks the piece of flesh in one precise movement.

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

Had it started talking in Hindi, it would not have fazed me...

Pi reaches out with his hand and the bird stretches its neck...

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

He was the only friendly visit I got in my 137 days adrift...

139

EXT. DAY - HOSPITAL BED

139

PI

(mimicking the gesture)

And then I broke its neck with my two hands.

A shiver runs through the crowd.

Okamoto and Chiba let their annoyance with him start to show.

PI (CONT'D)

My mind was saying: a messenger sent by man. But my stomach was saying: fresh meat! I drained its blood into a turtle shell and used it to mix with its liver, heart, brain and entrails, all chopped up. I devoured it down to the cartilage.

As a murmur of disgust spreads through the group, Pi grabs the empty pack of cookies belonging to the Japanese men. He shakes the package to double-check if it's empty.

(CONTINUED)

139

CONTINUED:

139

PI (CONT'D)

(to Chiba)

A little while back, didn't I see a
chocolate bar at the bottom of that
bag?

The two men give each other a tacit look. Chiba reaches for
the bag.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

There goes our dessert!

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

Hmm... What's most annoying is he's
hoarding most of it under his
pillow.

PI

What did he say?

MR. OKAMOTO

That he can't wait to hear the rest
of your story.

Pi takes his time, biting into his second piece of chocolate.
He casts them a malicious eye.

PI

Where was I?

MR. CHIBA

(with a certain lassitude)

The part where your bird visitor
ends up chopped to bits...

PI

Oh yes!... A few days later, I
understood where this visitor came
from.

140

EXT. DAY - FLAT OCEAN

140

The lifeboat drifts on an ocean as calm as a lake. Pi and
Richard Parker are lying at either end of the vessel, like
two corpses.

Suddenly, a bump is heard! The lifeboat shakes and wobbles!
Big branches with large green leaves creep over the vessel.

(CONTINUED)

140

CONTINUED:

140

Pi stands up but is instantly whipped by the bough of a tree, knocking him flat on the tarp.

The tiger roars...

141

EXT. DAY - IN THE ISLAND

141

The boat plows forward into a sort of bayou which looks more like a forest of roots. The mangrove trees have tentacles that anchor them into the marsh. The water is laden with floating lilies and other aquatic plants.

From above, we see the lifeboat disappear into this mass of chlorophyll, as big as a football field.

142

EXT. DAY - AT THE CENTER OF THE ISLAND

142

Sunbeams filter through the canopy of this strange floating island. Luminous shafts spotlight the boat as it floats through the intertwining vines, tropical leaves and arching tree trunks.

Like Pi, the tiger ducks to avoid branches that sweep overhead.

The craft finally comes to a stop in the thick marsh.

Richard Parker looks at Pi, perplexed and bewildered. Finally, with a grumble, he leaps onto the unstable ground.

At times sinking up to his belly, otherwise stumbling due to fatigue and the softness of the terrain, the beast moves away awkwardly and finally disappears.

Pi also steps off the craft. Being lighter than the tiger, he merely sinks to his ankles.

He notices sharp cries echoing intermittently. Birds live in the upper regions of the trees.

Pi spots a puddle of water in the fold of a large leaf. He tastes it first, then drinks it down avidly. He then breaks off a piece of the leaf, sniffs it and nibbles at it prudently. It's not too bad.

Stepping over branches, stumbling and wading through puddles, Pi makes his way deeper into the jungle.

143

EXT. DAY - IN THE FOREST

143

Pi keeps advancing with increasing difficulty. The trees have more and more menacing shapes.

144

EXT. DAY - LATE IN THE DAY

144

Exhausted, Pi makes his way into a small clearing that has a different kind of flora. He starts to make his way through it.

He suddenly sinks in, down to his knees. He desperately tries to extract himself from this mire.

It's as if he were stuck in quicksand. He attempts to grab the nearest low-lying branch, in vain. The more he moves, the more he sinks.

Suddenly the vegetation around him seems to take life. The lily pads slowly start to envelop him. Small vines stretch out and delicately begin to enlase his body.

Pi panics. But every movement makes him sink even more and the plants continue to enshroud him.

Like a bug in a Venus fly trap, the boy is almost entirely engulfed in this chlorophyll cocoon.

INSIDE THE CARNIVOROUS PLANT

Pi is suffocating. His face is already covered in the plant's gastric juices. He manages to push one arm out of this cocoon.

OUTSIDE THE CARNIVOROUS PLANT

Pi's hand desperately reaches toward the sky. Suddenly, a tattooed arm grabs his. (it's the same sailor from the TSIMTSUM who had pulled him out of the flooded hallway)

With a tight grip, the sailor manages to pull Pi out little by little.

FRENCH SAILOR

You again! We have to stop meeting like this.

Standing in his own lifeboat, the sailor extracts the boy from the plant, as it makes a sucking sound.

Pi falls into the sailor's boat. Using large leaves, the man quickly wipes the gastric juices off the boy.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

D'you ever see a Venus fly-trap swallow a bug?

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

144

Through his swollen eyelids, Pi stares at the sailor,
bemused...

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Well, this damn island is nothing
but a carnivorous plant. And you...
are the fly!

145 INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

145

The two Japanese investigators look at each other.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

A carnivorous island!

MR. CHIBA

He's putting us on.

146 EXT. NIGHTFALL - ON THE ISLAND

146

In the half-light, the French sailor steers his lifeboat
through the mangroves, sculling with his oar like a
gondolier.

Pi, in shock and exhausted, slowly comes to.

147 EXT. NIGHTFALL - LITTLE BEACH

147

The craft makes its way out of the thicket and lands on a
soft little beach. It appears to be made up of coral-like
debris.

Pi's lifeboat is there too, fastened to a branch.

The French sailor takes the boy in his arms and lays him on
the ground. He grabs a rain catcher and gives the boy water.

Pi grabs a handful of coral and runs it through his fingers.
The debris is made up of bones - bones of birds and small
mammals...

Pi falls asleep. The attentive sailor lays a blanket over the
boy.

FADE TO BLACK.

148 EXT. DAY - ON THE BEACH

148

The sun rises. OFF SCREEN we hear a repetitive sound of metal
scraping.

(CONTINUED)

Pi cracks one eye open with difficulty. The French sailor is seated a few feet away, his back turned to the boy.

He is sharpening the Pi's swiss army knife against the blade of an identical army knife.

Pi tries to sit up, but can't. Brushing the blanket off to the side, he discovers that his ankles and wrists are bound.

The French sailor stops sharpening the blades. He briefly looks back and immediately turns away.

FRENCH SAILOR

Do not look at me... Do not look
into my eyes!

He continues to sharpen the knives relentlessly, enraged. Pearls of sweat bead on his forehead.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Don't worry, you'll barely feel a
thing... I am used to doing this
with precision.

Pi's eyes, full of anxiety, look down. He notices the whistle still hanging on his necklace.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

(in a muted voice)
You think I enjoy doing this?..

Pi manages to place the whistle between his lips. He blows as hard as he can, but no sound comes out.

The sailor turns around and sees him trying to activate the whistle, in vain.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Who are you trying to round up...
huh? The Salvation Army?

Pi blows even harder, without any result.

Enraged, the sailor rips the whistle out of the boy's mouth and blows into it, even more forcefully.

The whistle abruptly unplugs and a sharp sound rips through the silence.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Is that what you wanted??? huh???
Is that what you wanted?

(CONTINUED)

Borderline hysterical, the sailor blows into the whistle again, full-force, right into Pi's ear.

Then, suddenly, he throws the whistle away.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Fate sure is strange if you think about it... I, for one, started out as a butcher's apprentice and now I end up like this, on a carnivorous island!

Pi keeps tugging on his ropes.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

(teary-eyed)

Believe me, I'd rather keep you alive. We could have played pick-up-sticks. I made a set with twigs from the trees here. Do you like pick-up-sticks little boy?

He glances over his shoulder and looks at the boy - who freezes in terror.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Don't look at me! I said don't look at me!

Pi hides his loosened bonds under the blanket.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

(turning his gaze away)

Try to understand! Help me out here... If I don't eat you, the island will! Would you rather be digested by this bloody oversized plant?

Pi stares at the man, his eyes widening with fear.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

(whimpering)

I tried to catch a few birds, but all I got was pecked by their sharp beaks!

He turns around to face Pi, brandishing one of the knives. He shows the boy traces of scars on his arms.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

Look... see? I'm not lying to you.

(CONTINUED)

Leading with the knife, the sailor approaches - looking sorry and genuinely sad.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry little guy.... Close your eyes, please....

Pi looks at him, eyes wide open, terrified.

FRENCH SAILOR (CONT'D)

(begging)

Help me please, it'll help things go quick. (yelling) I said close your eyes!!!!

A dull growling sound comes from behind him. The sailor raises his arm, but stops mid-motion. He slowly turns around... Only a few feet away, the famished tiger flashes its sharp teeth.

With a roar, Richard Parker leaps onto the Frenchman, latching onto his throat. We hear his spine crack.

The tiger drags the lifeless body and disappears into the marshy jungle.

Trembling, Pi grabs the knife that the sailor dropped and cuts his bonds.

He gets up and staggers forward, trembling with all his limbs. He cuts the rope holding his boat, pushes the craft toward the ocean and jumps inside.

Sculling with the oar, the boy gets away as fast as he can, aided by a current that sweeps him out.

He looks back and spots Richard Parker's fur through the foliage.

He is hit by a sudden boost of energy, as if he were madly excited to gather as much distance possible between himself and the tiger.

The island is now a good kilometer away. Despite the bouncing motion of the waves, Pi remains still - never leaving the floating land mass from his sight.

A very distant roar is heard.

(CONTINUED)

149

CONTINUED:

149

Pi stays motionless, staring at the island. Sounds of waves flopping against the lifeboat echo out.

Pi realizes that he has just condemned Richard Parker to a certain death, while the tiger has just saved his life.

Tortured by remorse, Pi grabs the oar and starts sculling. The craft slowly pushes its way back toward the island.

150

EXT. DAY - NEAR THE ISLAND

150

The boat lands against the first mangrove roots.

Pi stays still, crouched Indian-style, staring into the thicket.

Time passes. A breeze begins to blow.

Suddenly Pi stands up. Branches start moving and cracking.

Richard Parker appears, carrying some sort of fabric in his teeth. Pi stiffens.

In a single bound, the tiger leaps onto the tarpaulin. Never averting his eyes from the tiger, Pi pushes off with the oar.

As the raft moves away, Parker releases the piece of fabric. It is the sailor's arm.

151

EXT. NIGHT - GLORIOUS SUNSET ON THE WATER'S SURFACE

151

Lifted by the swells, the boat seems to glide on the water's surface.

Richard Parker is at the prow, his fur blowing in the wind.

Pi stands at the rear of the vessel. He fastens a human finger to a fishing hook... and casts the line as far as he can...

FADE TO BLACK.

152

EXT. EVENING - UNDER WATER

152

A turtle swims towards the vessel. It goes straight for the submerged banana net. Baited fish hooks have been fixed to its mesh.

The turtle pecks at a piece of bait. Suddenly, the net closes up on the animal.

153 **EXT. EVENING - ON THE LIFE BOAT**

153

At the prow, Pi is hurting as he attempts to haul in the net. The turtle is heavy and his strength has greatly diminished.

Meanwhile, the tiger sleeps under the tarpaulin, sheltered from the sun.

UNDER WATER

A mako shark has tuned in to the turtle's distress signals. It jets towards the net which is bobbing on the surface.

154 **EXT. EVENING - ON THE LIFEBOAT**

154

Pi's face is wrenched under the strain of his task. Suddenly, the shark lunges out of the water, capturing the turtle and net in its jaws.

Pi does not let go. He pulls even harder! The shark fights and suddenly beats its tail so forcefully, it propels itself on board.

Pi lets go of the turtle. The shark thrashes wildly on the tarpaulin. In two movements, it slips into the hole above Richard Parker's lair.

The tiger roars. A noisy struggle ensues, the boat rocks and pitches violently!

Pi edges towards the hole in the tarp. Through the shade, we see a furious Richard Parker violently whacking the predator with his paws.

Pi jumps up and grabs the last oar hanging off the side. He detaches it and starts beating the shark. Anything to help Richard Parker.

Suddenly, the fish's jaws lock onto Richard Parker's front leg. He lets out a gargantuan roar.

Pi edges back on the tarpaulin...

PI (V.O.)

At that moment, I pictured a patrol guard 200 miles away hearing a tiger at two O'clock!

We see a SUPERIMPOSED image of a patrol guard, perched on the lookout tower of a ship, dumbstruck.

Silence suddenly returns.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED: 154

Pi carefully lifts the edge of the tarpaulin.

155 INT. EVENING - UNDER THE TARPAULIN 155

The shark is dead, shredded to pieces. Richard Parker licks his bleeding paw.

156 INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM 156

PI

(to his interviewers)

After that incident, I preferred catching only the smallest of sharks, babies in fact... I'd poke their eyes out with Richard Parker's claw.

The audience and the two interviewers stare at him, stunned.

Through the hall window, we see that the sky has darkened. Lightning causes the audience to turn their heads towards the window.

157 EXT. DAY - STORMY SKY, HEAVY SEAS 157

A thunder clap echoes across the sky. Heavy rain begins to fall. Other bolts of lightning splinter on the horizon...

On the lifeboat, Richard Parker growls, trembling, his paws spread apart. He is worried and seasick.

The waves get taller and taller. On the raft, Pi tries to keep his possessions from falling into the water.

Suddenly, a white bolt of lightning rips through the sky making a huge noise. It's as if the water has been stabbed and a giant incandescent tree is planted there for a few seconds.

Drenched, Pi marvels at the sight.

With the swells becoming too big, the boy pulls the raft towards the boat and jumps aboard. He holds his rope/whip in his hand. The tiger is undeniably seasick.

As the next lightning strikes, Pi screams with laughter. He cracks the whip so that it coincides with the sound of thunder!

Richard Parker can't believe his ears. The child has tamed the elements of nature and his whip produces a terrifying blast...

(CONTINUED)

157

CONTINUED:

157

PI

Ladies and Gentlemen, come one,
come all, to Piscine Molitor
Patel's biggest Aquatic Circus in
the world! For tonight's grand
finale, I present the largest
stowaway-rat in the history of
navigation!

Pi, completely fired up, continues to crack the whip,
screaming - as the lightning bolts flash across the turbulent
ocean. Thunder booms all around the boat.

Terrorized by all of this, the tiger disappears under the
tarpaulin.

A large wave smashes abruptly onto the vessel, tempering the
boy's zeal.

158

EXT. DAY - STORM

158

The raft glides on the face of waves as if it were surfing.
The lifeboat rocks and rolls furiously.

159

EXT. DAY - ON THE TARPAULIN

159

Pi lays on the tarp, holding on to dear life. Another wave
hits. He loses his grip.

Swept by the water, Pi falls into the hole in the tarp,
directly into Richard Parker's lair...

160

INT. DAY - UNDER THE TARPAULIN

160

Pi lands on the bottom of the boat in a puddle strewn with
bits of fish...

At the other end of the vessel, the tiger is half engulfed by
water. His eyes are flashing with panic and he has pangs of
nausea.

Pi hangs onto his bench, trying to avoid slipping towards the
tiger. Luckily for the boy, the endless stream of water
entering through the rip in the tarp slides down to the
opposite end of the vessel.

Water continues to flood the lifeboat. Suddenly, the craft
starts teetering up and down from prow to stern, so that
alternately, boy and tiger are nearly drowned.

With each wave, Pi has to fend off the turtle shell (AKA
tiger's food bowl) which is violently propelled against him.

(CONTINUED)

160

CONTINUED:

160

Pi notices that he is latching onto a knot in the rope that is holding the tarpaulin in place.

He feverishly unties the knot, so that enough of the tarp can lift open and release some of the surging water inside the craft.

161

EXT. NIGHT - AMIDST THE STORM

161

Towing its tiny raft, the lifeboat is tossed like a bottle in the ocean, emptying itself and taking water in.

162

INT. NIGHT - UNDER THE TARPAULIN

162

Hours go by and Richard Parker never ceases to growl. Boy and tiger each hold onto their respective benches, clinging for survival.

FADE TO BLACK.

163

INT. NIGHT - CALM WEATHER, CHOPPY SEAS

163

Pi opens his eyes. Calm has returned, the storm has passed.

Through the opening in the tarp, he sees thousands of stars in a clear sky.

Exhausted, the boy falls asleep.

164

EXT. DAY - NICE WEATHER, LIGHT BREEZE

164

Pi comes up through the hole, his eyes blinking. Standing on what's left of the tarpaulin, he makes his way towards the bow.

Nothing but an oar and two life vests are left of the raft. Everything else was destroyed and cast out to sea.

PI (V.O.)

My little floating city was gone.
Never had I felt so miserable.

As a tearful Pi stands still, the tiger comes out and lays on his stomach at the other end of the craft.

165

EXT. DAY - CALM SEA

165

From above, the vast blue waters shimmer in the low-angled light.

The lifeboat glides through the frame.

(CONTINUED)

165

CONTINUED:

165

At the stern: Richard Parker is laying on his stomach like a dog, staring out onto the vast ocean.

At the prow: Pi lays on his side, dozing off, as if he had given up the fight.

166

EXT. DAY - HARD RAIN

166

From the bottom of the boat, we hear the rain falling hard on the tarpaulin.

Stretched out on the wooden deck, Richard Parker laps up the freshwater in the puddle that has naturally re-formed under the tear.

On top, Pi is resting on the bridge, unfazed by the storm. He drinks from little pools that have formed in the loosened tarpaulin.

167

EXT. EARLY MORNING - CLOUDY SKY

167

The sun rises. Pi is asleep, rolled in a ball at the end of the craft.

Suddenly a little noise disturbs him in his sleep. Flop, flop, flop, flop.

He cracks an eye open. A little flying-fish wiggles on the tarp.

Pi instantly jumps on it, twisting its head with his bare hands. He feverishly starts biting into it, spitting out the scales.

Underneath, Richard Parker rumbles and a begins to stir. Suddenly he jumps on the stern, purring.

Pi eats as much as he can as quickly as possible. The tiger smacks the deck with its paw.

Pi grabs the whistle hanging around his neck and blows. His mouth is so dry though, barely a peep comes out.

He throws the rest of the fish to Richard Parker, who eats it in a gulp.

168

EXT. DAY - BLUE SKY

168

The prow of the lifeboat bobs up and down with the gentle swells. Each time the prow dips down, Pi calls out to a different God.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

PI
Brahma... Allah... Krishna...
Jesus... Vishnu... I beg you, for
once, set aside your differences...
and create a little miracle
together... save us!!

*
*
*
*
*
*

The prow continues it's endless "bowing" movements.

*

Pi bursts into frame, as if on a spring. His eyes, like saucers, stare at a fixed point...

PI (CONT'D)
A ship! Richard Parker! A ship! A
ship!!!

As the tiger comes out of its lair, the boy waves at a huge oil tanker. Even though it's far away, it's headed straight in their direction.

PI (CONT'D)
Saved! Parker! We are saved!!

The ship gets bigger fast.

PI (CONT'D)
Thank you Krishna!... Thank you
Jesus!... Thank you Allah!

*
*

The enormous tanker approaches, parting the water with its bow.

PI (CONT'D)
Richard Parker! That's it, we're
saved! We're saved! Hurray for
God!...

*
*

Suddenly, Pi stiffens. The ship is headed their way but it's not slowing down. Like a gigantic blind mountain, it's approaching faster and faster.

The stem of its bow gets bigger and bigger, lifting up huge waves before it.

The tiger, fur bristling with fear, roars in terror.

Pi grabs the oar and dunks it off the back end of the craft, desperately trying to steer the lifeboat away.

The wave from the tanker's bow lifts the tiny boat like a cork and casts it off several feet away.

(CONTINUED)

168

CONTINUED: (2)

168

A huge steel cliff brushes by them like an unstoppable machine.

Pi tries to stand despite the heaving and rocking of the lifeboat. He blows his whistle with all his might... amidst the giant monster's deafening racket...

169

EXT. DAY - ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SHIP

169

Unaware of the commotion below, an Asian sailor leans back on the railing, staring at the smoke billowing from his cigarette. In the background below, the lifeboat is being tossed in the choppy waters. Pi waves frantically, in vain...

170

EXT. DAY - ON THE WATER

170

The stern of the tanker passes by them. The ship's propellers chop through the water with explosive banging sounds. The boy's calls are drowned in the din.

The lifeboat bounces on the ocean swirls.

The enormous ship chugs away. Pi screams but his voice is gone. The tiger keeps staring at the disappearing ship.

After a while, the animal turns his gaze and briefly comes into eye contact with the boy. Pi is welling up with tears.

Disturbed by what has just occurred, the tiger lays down for another nap.

PI

(yelling)

Don't give up, Richard Parker! I
will save you, Richard Parker! I am
the one who is going to save you!

*
*

The oil tanker is nothing more than a dot on the horizon.

171

EXT. EVENING - LIGHT BREEZE

171

Pi and Richard Parker are laying down on opposite ends of the craft.

PI

(murmuring)

I'm hungry... I'm hungry...

The tiger doesn't move so much as a whisker.

(CONTINUED)

171

CONTINUED:

171

PI (CONT'D)

Richard Parker... How many fish do
you think are in the ocean? Huh?
100 million? 10,000 million??
Billions?

Pi sits up and looks at the surrounding water.

Suddenly every fish in the ocean, of every size and species,
surges out of the water, into the sky. They stay there
motionless, dripping wet, as if they were fixed in invisible
epoxy display cases...

172

EXT. DAY - FLAT OCEAN, BRIGHT SUN

172

The sun has hit its zenith. The light is almost white, the
heat unbearable.

Richard Parker is sprawled at his end of the vessel. He's
completely still except for his panting and his tongue
hanging out.

Laying not far away, Pi sluggishly scrapes the last strips of
flesh from the turtle shell/tiger's food bowl.

The boy and the cat are emaciated. Everything on the boat is
run-down, worn, bleached by the sun and the salt. All the
ropes including the 'whip' are tattered and frayed.

Pi rubs his eyes, blinded by the glare. Rings of light dance
through his vision - which had already begun to get veiled
and diminished.

He rips a piece of dark turtle flesh and throws it to Richard
Parker.

The piece of meat lands a foot away from the beast's snout.
The tiger blinks but doesn't budge a hair.

PI

Don't die on me, Richard Parker...
Don't leave me here alone...

He gets up and limps over to the cat... The boy brushes his
hand against his back without any reaction. A tuft of hair
remains in his hand.

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

As a zookeeper, I was failing
miserably. My father would not have
been proud of me.

(CONTINUED)

172

CONTINUED:

172

Pi falls back, exhausted by this last effort. He lays motionless. His vision has become more and more blurred.

He closes his eyes and, like the tiger, is about to give up on life...

173

EXT. DAY - CALM SEA, BLUE SKY

173

White puffy clouds pop out of the azure sky.

The calm ocean is deep emerald green, a color we have not yet seen.

The lifeboat drifts. No one seems to be aboard.

We move back. The face of a young Mexican girl enters the frame. She watches as the boat gently lands on a sandy beach.

AS SEEN FROM ABOVE: Pi is laying on the back deck. The boat slowly rocks with the waves washing ashore.

Stirred by this new sensation, Pi awakens slowly and sits up. The little girl sees him and quickly runs away, disappearing into the thicket of a tropical forest.

Pi sits there for a moment, dazed. He looks around: the beach lined with coconut trees is deserted...

He gets up and staggers toward the front of the boat. He slips down onto the sand, gets up and awkwardly walks a few steps.

Richard Parker then steps out of his lair. He takes in the trees for a moment.

Like Pi, he stumbles to the prow of the boat and jumps on land.

Without even looking at the boy, the tiger walks forward, unsteady. He goes about a hundred and fifty feet on the sand, then, changing his mind, moves in the direction of the trees.

Pi is kneeling, his skin and lips charred by the sun. (just as we had seen him at the beginning of the story).

PI

(crying out)

Richard Parker! Richard Parker!

A tear runs down his cheek. He watches the tiger, devastated.

(CONTINUED)

173

CONTINUED:

173

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

I was certain he would turn my way.
He would look at me. He'd growl or
flatten his ears... In some way, he
would conclude our relationship.
But no. He took three more steps
and disappeared from my life
forever.

The tiger slips between the trees. Pi's face is streaming
with tears.

He slumps into the sand.

174

EXT. NIGHT - MEXICAN BEACH

174

The rising water laps at the boy's ankles.

Suddenly, a small group of Mexican men come running. They are
escorted by several kids led by the little girl who first
spotted Pi.

They gather around the boy, plugging their noses and covering
their mouths.

Some of them men heave the boat onto shore, others grab Pi
and place him on a sort of stretcher.

They take off, running.

Pi lets himself be carried, his eyes wide open, quiet. Tears
continue to run down his cheeks.

PI (V.O.)

I wept like a child. Not because I
was overcome at having survived my
ordeal. I was weeping because
Richard Parker left me so
unceremoniously. This botched
farewell hurts me to this day...

175

EXT. DAY - SMALL FISHING VILLAGE

175

The small cluster of people is running through the main road
of the fishing village.

176

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

176

PI

(tears in his eyes)
I wish so much I had one last look
at him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

176

CONTINUED:

176

PI (CONT'D)

If only I had gotten his attention.
I would have told him: Richard
Parker, it's over. I couldn't have
done it without you... Thank you
for saving my life. You will always
be with me, in my heart...

The audience, now twice as large, is deeply moved. Patients,
doctors, nurses, visitors, everyone is crowded shoulder to
shoulder in the narrow room. Many sit on the edge of the
window. Women dry their eyes with handkerchiefs.

177

EXT. DAY - MEXICAN HOUSE

177

Pi sits in a basin filled with steaming water. A half dozen
women scurry around him, annoyed by all the little kids who
want to get close the Indian boy.

Three women clean him vigorously with scrub brushes, while
others pour hot water over him.

Pi talks to them in English. Every one smiles, not
understanding.

PI

(grimacing in pain)

You know my skin is brown! I'm not
a dirty little white boy!

The women nod "yes" with their heads but keep scrubbing.

178

EXT. DAY - AROUND A TABLE

178

Pi is seated at a table with large steaming plates. The women
keep bringing more and more of them. Pi eats voraciously with
his fingers.

A few men approach disapprovingly. One of them removes
several food plates.

The man

(in Spanish)

You're crazy! You want to kill him!

But Pi latches on to the plate as the man tries to remove it,
still stuffing his face.

As the men and women continue to fight, an uniformed officer
enters the house. He is accompanied by a journalist who
immediately snaps a picture of Pi. Flash!

179

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL ROOM

179

Still in his bed, Pi finishes his story. Other than Chiba and Okamoto who exchange dubious looks, the audience is still.

In the ensuing silence, many discretely wipe their eyes. Others cry openly.

The audience is twice as large as before. Patients, doctors, nurses, ordinary visitors, everyone is crammed into the narrow room. Many sit on the window sill.

MR. OKAMOTO

Very interesting.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

What a story...

MR. OKAMOTO

(to Mr. Chiba, in Japanese)

This boy has way too much imagination.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

He should be a writer! This reminds me of a manga... About a dragon that lives on a floating castle, and...

MR. OKAMOTO

Mr. Chiba...

MR. CHIBA

Hem... Excuse me.

MR. OKAMOTO

This boy is hiding something from us.

MR. CHIBA

Hee hee... yes, cookies under his pillow!

MR. OKAMOTO

...

MR. CHIBA

Sorry. I'm sorry!

(CONTINUED)

PI
(noticing their skepticism)
You don't like my story?

MR. OKAMOTO
On the contrary, we like it very
much... It's a shame that it is not
credible.

A murmur of protest rings through the crowd.

PI
Tigers exist. Lifeboats exist.
Oceans exist. Just because those
three things haven't ever come
together, you refuse to believe it?

MR. CHIBA
What did he say?

Okamoto shoots Chiba down with his eyes.

The audience is following the exchange between Pi and his two
interviewers. It shows its disapproval.

MR. OKAMOTO
The female orangutan could not have
gotten to the lifeboat on a net
full of bananas.

PI
Really? And why not?

MR. OKAMOTO
Because bananas don't float.

PI
Yes they do!

MR. OKAMOTO
No... And that's just one detail
among many...

PI
(to the crowd)
Does someone have a banana?

A woman in the corner of the room searches through her purse.
She pulls out a banana and waves it. The fruit passes from
hand to hand, till it reaches the Japanese men.

(CONTINUED)

PI (CONT'D)

(pointing to an adjoining
bathroom)

There's a sink in there. Go see for
yourselves.

MR. OKAMOTO

That's not necessary, let's move
on...

PI

I insist.

A rumble from the crowd seems to back up his insistence.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

What do we do?

MR. OKAMOTO

(also in Japanese, handing
him the banana)

Go ahead... We've come this far.

Chiba enters the rest room and runs the faucet in the sink.

PI

So, what gives?

MR. CHIBA

The sink is almost full...

PI

Go ahead, put the banana in it.

MR. CHIBA

Done.

PI

So?

A moment passes. The audience holds its breath.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

Does it float?

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

It floats.

(CONTINUED)

PI

It floats?

AN OLD MEXICAN MAN

(poking his nose in the
bathroom)

It floats!

The whole crowd erupts in sounds of satisfaction. Their enthusiasm leads to clapping.

MR. OKAMOTO

(getting angry)

That's enough!... Everyone out!...
This is an official investigation!

MR. CHIBA

(pushing the people out of
the room)

Go! Go! Everyone out!...

They all exit the room. Many of them give Pi offerings, pecans, lichees, mangos... Pi thanks them with an Indian-style bow, laying out the fruit on his sheet like spoils of war...

As soon as the last person has left, Chiba closes the door.

PI

You want to know the truth?

Okamoto and Chiba sit back down.

MR. OKAMOTO

We are listening, Mr Patel.

PI

Here's the truth: I am an ass. I should have never let those bananas drift away like that. I could have survived on them for 3 weeks before they rotted away.

Okamoto sighs...

MR. CHIBA

An ass? Did he say an ass? There was an ass on board?

(CONTINUED)

MR. OKAMOTO

Now that the audience has left, why
don't you tell us what really
happened.

Pi shuts up. Stubborn. He sorts the gifts of fruit into
categories.

Okamoto and Chiba exchange weary glances.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

(in Japanese)

With his fragile airs, this brat is
tough.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

What if we dropped the whole thing?

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

To be humiliated by a twelve year
old? There are better things to put
on your resume.

Chiba thinks about it.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

Mr. Patel, you are an intelligent
and reasonable boy...

PI

Intelligent, who knows. But
reasonable, that's for sure. Reason
is life's most useful toolbox. You
can't survive on a lifeboat with a
tiger without knowing how to use
it.

MR. CHIBA

What is he saying?

MR. OKAMOTO

Mr. Patel, we believe in your
abilities to survive. But taming a
tiger? Come on.

PI

(repeating the lion tamer's
words)

You have to remain calm and
dominating. Never avert your eyes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

179

CONTINUED: (5)

179

PI (CONT'D)

A big cat that's challenged will not attack. Lower your eyes, and you are dead...

MR. OKAMOTO

(interrupting)

Mr. Patel... What really happened?

PI

(becoming gloomy)

I know what you want. The story that will simply confirm what you already know.

The two Japanese men acquiesce in silence.

Pi closes his eyes, pulls himself together and concentrates. Chiba takes this opportunity to change the cassette in the recorder. The two men cast each other hopeful glares.

Pi opens his eyes. A tear runs down his cheek. He is solemn.

PI (CONT'D)

(with a muted voice)

Well... The cargo ship sank. I swam like mad... A sailor covered in tattoos helped me into a lifeboat... There was another sailor on board. He had a broken leg from jumping off the ship... My mother came later.. She had been adrift, clinging onto a mountain of bananas...

Pi stops. More tears flow down his cheeks.

Chiba pushes the recorder in closer.

PI (CONT'D)

After several days without food, the tattooed man wanted to amputate the other man's leg, to use it as bait... But the injured sailor tried to defend himself and ended up jumping off the boat...

Chiba looks at Okamoto, who discretely shushes him.

PI (CONT'D)

(plunging into his sadness)

Then, the tattooed man turned to my mother. I saw in his eyes that he was going to kill her...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

179

CONTINUED: (6)

179

PI (CONT'D)

She was saved by flying fish, a whole swarm of them... Later, we got hungry all over again but I let a turtle get away. He hit me and my mother slapped him in the face... Then, he stabbed her right in front of me... He cut her flesh into strips and hung them up to dry...

The Japanese men are frozen.

PI (CONT'D)

(crying, his voice
cracking)

I refused to eat any... But I accepted the fish he caught with it...

MR. OKAMOTO

(softly)

Go on Mr Patel, go on...

PI

(pulling himself together)

He knew he had gone too far... one day, on purpose, he left his knife behind, in plain sight... I stabbed him three times in the stomach... He fell onto his knees and showed me his throat... I stabbed him in the Adam's apple... Later, I ate his liver... After that, I was alone, the whole time... until I reached the shore on that beach nearby...

He stops talking, deep in his thoughts. His eyes are glazed.
The two investigators don't dare to move.

MR. OKAMOTO

We... Words are not enough to say how much we are sorry for your terrible pain...

Pi nods.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

You have demonstrated great courage in overcoming this great ordeal, Mr Patel.

PI

Yeah, I'd say so.

(CONTINUED)

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

Did you notice, the mother arrives
on a floating bunch of bananas,
like the female orangutan.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

That's not all, everything else
matches. He invented a story with
animals that is completely
patterned on what really happened.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

The orangutan is his mother... The
injured sailor is..

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

The zebra... The tattooed man is...

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

The tiger.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in Japanese)

No, the tattooed man is the hyena.
The hyena kills the orangutan...

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

In that case, who is the tiger?

Mr Okamoto's eyes turn to Pi. Mr Chiba follows his gaze.

MR. CHIBA (CONT'D)

Ah yes... The hyena is killed by
the tiger. It's him. He's the
tiger.

Mr Okamoto acknowledges this silently. He looks at Pi with a
certain deference.

MR. OKAMOTO

(gently)

Mr. Patel, excuse me for asking,
but at any time did the injured
sailor or tattooed man say anything
about the sinking of the TSIMTSUM?

(CONTINUED)

PI

No, never.

Mr Okamoto pulls out a form and starts going down a checklist.

MR. OKAMOTO

(in a professional tone)

Did they mention an explosion?

PI

No.

MR. OKAMOTO

Nothing regarding the engines or the hull?

PI

No, nothing.

MR. OKAMOTO

Nothing about other ships or objects at sea?

Pi shakes his head.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

So the ship sank bow first?

PI

Yes.

MR. OKAMOTO

Did it appear to you that the cargo was properly stowed?

PI

I don't know.

MR. OKAMOTO

(giving up with a sigh)

Fine... We have enough for our report now.

He hands Pi his business card. Chiba follows suit.

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

Contact us for the insurance money.

Pi agrees distractedly as Okamoto gives Chiba a signal to get going.

(CONTINUED)

MR. OKAMOTO (CONT'D)

Now, all that's left is to thank
you for your testimony... and to
wish you, hem... a good recovery.

PI

(pointing toward the
bathroom)

Before you leave, could you give me
the banana?

Okamoto instructs Chiba to get it. He reluctantly walks to
the bathroom.

He returns with the fruit and hands it to Pi.

MR. CHIBA

(in Japanese)

He will just put it under his
pillow...

MR. OKAMOTO

Goodbye, Mr Patel.

PI

Goodbye and safe travels.

The two men bow Japanese-style and exit.

Pi listens to their footsteps growing distant in the hallway.

As soon as they are definitely gone, he goes to break the
stem of the banana with his fingers. But he stops in mid
motion, wanting to avoid that disturbing sound of breaking
cartilage. He slips the banana under his pillow.

In the hallway, the hospital activities return to normal.
Nurses ambulate, their push-carts making their clicking
metallic sounds.

Pi grabs the remote and switches on the television located in
the corner of the room.

The bad reception causes images to fuzz and distort. A
Spanish commentator narrates. (without subtitles)

It is a documentary on sloths. The sleepy animal drags itself
pathetically on the ground, to a comic effect.

Appeased, Pi watches with a smile.

180 **EXT. DAY - HOSPITAL**

180

We leave through the window, climb up the side of the building, sail over the roof.

The investigators' car drives away, down the coast.

We continue to rise until the ocean fills the frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

181 **EXT. DAY - MONTREAL STREET**

181

The Indian man seen at the beginning (PI at 50 years of age), calmly proceeds down a snowy street. Passers-by are bundled in winter-wear.

He steps into a small market, buys several fruit and exits.

He continues on his way, buys a newspaper. Further down, he gives some change to a beggar.

Arriving at steps of his apartment building, he calmly climbs the stairs, pulls out his keys and enters.

182 **INT. DAY - HALLWAY AND STAIRWAY**

182

He opens his mailbox, grabs a few envelopes. He holds them in his mouth for a moment, in order to lock the mailbox. He then proceeds up the staircase.

He gets to the landing, pulls out his keys and opens his front door.

183 **INT. DAY - APARTMENT**

183

His apartment is an exercise in simplicity and good taste. It is bright and everything seems to be in its place. Indian images adorn the walls.

Mr Patel places the newspaper and bag of fruit on the kitchen table, then removes his parka.

He goes to the sink and fills a water kettle to make some tea.

Further away, in the apartment, voices of children squabbling can be heard.

Listening to them, Mr Patel sits down, smiling. He turns the newspaper over in order to start from the back page.

(CONTINUED)

He reaches into the bag and retrieves two bananas, which he separates.

He reads and is about to break the stem of the banana when he stops mid-action... he then mechanically pulls on a little string necklace.

He draws the string out from inside his shirt... at the end of it dangles: **Richard Parker's claw.**

Piscine Molitor Patel slits the banana open lengthwise with the tiger claw.

He carefully wipes off the relic and slips it back under his shirt. He bites into the fruit, wholeheartedly.

THE END