

# The theme of survival in life of pi



Life of Pi is a novel by Yann Martel that illustrates man's will to survive and an unlikely alliance that rises as a result. This is a story that plunges deep into every aspect of human nature, giving the reader an experience that is hard to forget. I recommend this book for those who need a new adventure in their life, as the mesmerizing words, phrases, and heart-stopping moments woven within the pages of this story are a blessing to the mind and soul.

The story opens on the colorful life of Piscine Patel, an Indian boy whose family owns a popular zoo. Although his family business already gives him a remarkable title to bear, Piscine is quite the character all on his own. For instance, at only age fourteen, he practices Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, melding the three religions together by finding what connects them all to each other. He is as equally faithful to one practice as he is to another.

Although this is frowned upon, Piscine is content with his faith and his life, with one exception: his name. It is often misheard, said incorrectly, or made fun of. When Piscine begins attending a new school, he introduces himself as "Pi", and that is how he is known for the rest of the story. Over time, Pi's parents grow unhappy with the Indian government. They wish to find freedom and a new life, and so they make plans for their many species of animals and set out on a ship to Canada, taking the creatures with them. But on the third night, Pi is awoken by a sound that is alien to him. Searching for an answer, he makes his way up to the main deck, where a state of pandemonium occurs. The ship's crew are all hustling and bustling about. When Pi finally has a chance to recollect himself, he asks a few crew members what is going on, only to have a life jacket thrust into his hands

and be thrown overboard, landing on one of very few lifeboats. There are no other human survivors. Pi's family is lost. Pi is now trapped on a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific, along with one hyena, one zebra, one orangutan, and one bengal tiger, who is called Richard Parker. Before Richard Parker, who has been hiding under the lifeboat's tarpaulin, even shows himself, the hyena soon has both the zebra and the orangutan dead within several days.

Pi leads himself to believe that it is only himself and the hyena left aboard, until Richard Parker brings the creature's life to a sudden and violent end. Terrified, Pi constructs a raft out of supplies found on the lifeboat, and attaches it to the end of the boat, putting as much distance between himself and Richard Parker as possible. For a while, Pi accepts the inevitable probability of his imminent death. And then he discovers something within himself; a fighting warrior who drives him to face his fear, and place his life back into his own hands. From then on, he decides to become dominant over Richard Parker, realizing he has nothing to lose. He works every day to show that he is superior, while also using some of his resources to keep Richard Parker alive. Soon, his fear is vanquished, and he and Richard Parker seem to be living in a civil manner, a relationship that, although rocky, depends on mutual trust.

They grow not only to tolerate each other, but to need each other as well. Remarkably, Richard Parker becomes the only thing keeping Pi's sanity in check. Things are going well, until they find land. Their relationship, or alliance, or whatever it might be called, was unfortunately at an end. Pi was quickly rescued from the island, whereas Richard Parker, his only companion for months, stayed behind to begin a new life in the vast jungles of the island

they had discovered. Confused, half out of his mind, and heartbroken, Pi watches with weary eyes as his last friend, the last connection to his past life, grows farther and farther away. For the rest of his life, he is forever grateful for this unexpected friend, who turned out to be the only thing keeping him alive through the tragic accident. Even as an old man with a family, he knows with every fiber of his being that Richard Parker is the reason he is still standing there today. Life of Pi may be fiction, but its effects on the human spirit are very real and very beneficial. If you love to read, and even if you don't, this story is one that will keep you intrigued and intellectually stimulated. Yann Martel has created a masterpiece that will remain timeless forever.