

Cast away by robert zemeckis

Literature



Cast Away by Robert Zemeckis

Robert Zemeckis' 'Cast Away' uses dramatic scenes of being at the edge of an ocean on a tiny uninhabited desert island in the Pacific to represent the theme of survival in a thrilling, haunting and heart-stopping way. The effects of natural sounds of the roaring ocean and whistling wind are used as the background music showing Chuck adopting a cave for shelter. Visualising being stranded in such a place after a plane crash brings up the thought of how to start a new civilisation from scratch if it ever becomes impossible to be rescued. The film evokes feelings of loneliness and abandonment. What makes Chuck survive four years alone is patience and the strength of his mind. He faces hunger and disease but at no place does the director give the impression that the survivor has lost any hope or surrendered himself to fate as when he finally decides to make his own raft. Instead the director shows how much it is possible to learn about survival skills by being on the 'edge' of life.

'Life of Pi' is another survival tale this time revolving around a lone youth who after surviving a sunken Japanese freighter finds himself sharing a lifeboat with a hyena, a hungry Bengal tiger, an injured zebra and an orangutan trapped at sea. So he has to engage in a bizarre relationship with his fellow beasts. The tiger named Richard Parker does away with the other animals so eventually Pi has to contend with him alone and does so for 227 days before reaching the coast of Mexico. What makes Pi survive is his detailed knowledge and experience with animal behaviour as he is the son of a zookeeper. He is also brave and cunning. This is demonstrated by his constant messages to give the impression that the tiger is more afraid of him than the other way round. He reassures himself "I was no longer afraid of it."

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It wasn't ten feet away, yet my heart didn't skip a beat (p. 180), Later Pi mentions how the tiger though fearsome is "dead in the eyes... [and that] his brute strength meant only moral weakness. It was nothing compared to the strength in my mind" (p. 299). As if Pi's ordeal with the tiger was not enough, he then has to satisfy the Japanese authorities. This time his skills of storytelling come to his rescue.

Both films exhibit survival under extreme circumstances. The battles against loneliness, hunger and facing the elements of nature are present in both.

The common nature of survival is perseverance against the odds, of enduring the basic survival problems and striving to get through. Both Chuck and Pi had mental strength besides the physical and put it to good use too, but there were also demonstrations of spiritual strength. The second author emphasizes this aspect greater to show how this provided the greater ability to survive. He points out that to Pi, spiritual worry was something alien (p. 87) to him, and his following message is apt for all survival situations: "Remember: the spirit, above all, else counts. If you have the will to live, you will" (p. 223).

Bibliography

Film 1: ' Cast Away' directed by Robert Zemeckis

Film 2: ' Life of Pi' directed by Ang Lee, based on Yann Martel's novel

Book: ' Life of Pi' by Yann Martel, Harvest Books (and others).