

Life of pi

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Over the course of this unit, I have read the so called “ life changing” novel “ The Life of Pi” by Yann Martel. This work of art happens to be a national best seller and has collected many literature awards. Piscine Molitor Patel, the young Indian protagonist is faced with a traumatic set of events which developed into a marvelous story of a castaway’s voyage, in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. This essay will discuss the essential factors which enabled Pi to overcome the extreme circumstances and survive, to fulfill the archetypal quest hero pattern.

The three main factors that saved Pi’s life are his religion, sanity, and will power. Pi Patel, a native of India is born and raised and lives at his father’s Pondicherry Zoo. Pi believes in three faiths, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam which plays a major role in his development as a character. At the age of 16, Pi’s family boards a Japanese cargo ship with their animals, in hope of starting a new life in Canada. However, the ship sinks and Pi is forced onto a lifeboat with his three other companions. Over the course of the story, Pi endures gruesome events on the ocean in his lifeboat.

Pi overcomes all the conditions and survives, due to the motivation of his best friend, Richard Parker the Bengal tiger. Pi Patel was successful in his quest to survive, and demonstrated the archetypal hero quest pattern. The outrage stage begins when his ship sunk, and mostly everyone dies except for him and three others. Pi “ commits to the journey,” but it’s not as if he has a choice; he’s about to be on a voyage for two hundred and twenty seven days. Pi faces the challenge and adventure stage, when he becomes companions and Richard Parker’s master on the boat.

He faces the “ heart of the storm” when he goes against his religion, and green diet and starts to eat meat to survive. Pi finds out that his reward is the fact of living. Pi is blessed by god, and motivated by Richard Parker to be still be living. Pi overcomes many more obstacles and truly fulfills the Hero Quest Pattern, by surviving the length of days on the ocean by himself. “ Religion will save us ... Since when I could remember; religion had been very close to my heart” (Martel 29). Religion serves a major purpose within Pi’s life, and was essential to his overall survival during the harsh two hundred and twenty seven days on the ocean.

From the beginning of Pi’s life, religion has always been a strong commitment and interest to him. Pi was born a Hindu, but was introduced to two other faiths; Christianity, and Islam which he decided to follow as well all at the same time. Pi committed himself to all three religions, and as he said himself, “ I just want to love God” (Martel 76). It is believed that Richard Parker, the Bengal tiger is a “ guardian angel” for Pi. Pi demonstrates this by exclaiming, “ THIS IS GOD’S CAT” (Martel 231).

In a sense, the tiger is sent from god by looking out for Pi and making him want to survive. As a child Pi would pray every day and stay faithful to his religions, and he continued to while on the boat. Every day Pi would have his religious rituals and pray to god for his survival. His religion gave him hope of being rescued by praying every day. On the ocean for that amount of days would test anyone’s faith, Pi kept himself going by relying on his faith, as he states, “ Faith in God is an opening up, a letting go, a deep trust, a free act of love – but sometimes it was so hard to love.

Sometimes my heart was sinking so fast with anger, desolation and weariness, I was afraid it would sink to the very bottom of the Pacific and I would not be able to lift it back up" (Martel 231). Throughout the darkest of days, Pi would turn to his religion to keep him going and never give up which allowed him to survive over the period of two hundred and twenty seven days. After the bloody battle between Pi and the cook, Pi remarked, "Solitude began. I turned to God. I survived" (Martel 245). The protagonist Pi Patel also had to keep his sanity in order to survive.

Due to the horrid, gruesome events that occurred on the lifeboat, it would definitely test Pi's mental strength. On the life boat, there were four people all together; the crazy cook, the Taiwanese sailor, Pi, and his mother. However, when Pi tells his story to the two Japanese men for the transportation ministry, he retells his story only with animals instead of the people. Pi tells the men how there was first a zebra on the boat with a broken leg, a nasty hyena, orange juice the orangutan, and Richard Parker the Bengal tiger.

In his story, the zebra broke his leg and then the hyena ripped it off and killed it. The orangutan had enough of the hyena, so he attacked it out of courage. Not surprisingly the hyena killed it as well. So there were three left; with the hyena about to attack Pi, Richard Parker killed the hyena. And from that point on, Pi tamed the tiger and became companions throughout the rest of his story. When the two men did not believe his animal story, he told the story only with people. The hyena being the revolting cook, the zebra as the Taiwanese man, orange juice as his mother.

The two Japanese men confirm the two stories as they state, " So the Taiwanese sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan, the cook is ... the hyena - which means he's the tiger! " (Martel 346). But wait, what about Richard Parker? Metaphorically, Pi must've been the tiger. The tiger symbolized strength, power, and bravery, which Pi had all of those traits. So what really happened on the boat, was the story of the people. In the carnivorous setting, Pi chose to cope with his surroundings by making the people, the animals in his head.

Pi witnessed some devastating events that would mentally corrupt any normal human being such as when the " zebra" was being killed, " There was blood everywhere, coagulating to a deep red crust. A single fly buzzed about, sounding to me like an alarm bell of insanity" (Martel 141). The poor boy witnessed cannibalism within the life boat, and also his mother being killed right in front of him by the cook, " He hurled something my way. A line of blood struck me across the face. No whip could have inflicted a more painful lash. I held my mother's head in my hands" (Martel 344).

Pi kept his sanity by imagining the animals instead of the real life events, which in the end helped Pi keep his emotions and mental strength in check. The last but not least important factor in Pi's survival is his will power. Being on the ocean alone for two hundred and twenty seven days would make most people give up; however not Pi Patel. As pi exclaims, " My life is like a memento mori painting from European art: there is always a grinning skull at my side to remind me of the folly of human ambition. I mock this skull. I look at it and I say, " You've got the wrong fellow.

You may not believe in life, but I don't believe in death. Move on! " (Martel 6). Piscine does not believe in death and fights for his life day in and day out, regardless of the temptation to just give up. Throughout the course of being stranded on the ocean, Pi overcomes many storms, gruesome murders, and extreme loneliness. Most human beings would just give up and commit suicide, but Pi was motivated to live by his companion Richard. His companion and the right mindset allowed Piscine to push through the extreme circumstances and survive.

In the letter from the Japanese transportation ministry, it gave Pi recognition for his battle, " Mr. Piscine Molitor Patel, Indian Citizen, is an astounding story of courage and endurance in the face of extraordinary difficult and tragic circumstances" (Martel 354). Overall, the three combined factors which this essay discussed aided Pi's mission to survive and enabled him to overcome so many obstacles. Pi had strong faith and religion, a very good mental state to keep his sanity, and also strong will power which allowed him to push through the harsh enduring environment.

Piscine is the definition of a hero, and followed the Quest Pattern, because in fact he did complete his goal of surviving and being rescued. The novel was a very good piece of literature, and had one of the best plot twists which revealed a completely new side to the story. Both stories that Pi told were very interesting, and real. The animal story is real to Pi, because that was his way of coping with the actual events. The Japanese ship the " Tsimtsum" sank on July 2nd, 1977 and Pi Patel was rescued on February 14th, 1977. Piscine Molitor Patel survived two hundred and twenty seven days on the rough ocean, and is a true hero.