

Part 1 Chapter 2

Part 1 Chapter 2 Summary

Chapter 2 introduces a new, unnamed character who lives in Scarborough. The author provides a physical description of a "small, slim man" with an Indian complexion. He is purposeful in his movements and wears a warm, winter coat even though the weather is mild.

Part 1 Chapter 2 Analysis

The reader is given no indication as to who this newly introduced character is. The author is creating more suspense for his story by setting the stage for multiple locations. Additionally, this chapter is not written using a first-person point of view as the first chapter was but a third-person point of view instead.

Part 1 Chapter 3

Part 1 Chapter 3 Summary

The main character tells the story of how he got his name. He was named after a swimming pool in Paris that was visited by one of his father's good friends, Francis Adirubasamy. The main character feels a great deal of affection for Mr. Adirubasamy and calls him Mamji, a respectful affectionate term for uncle in his native tongue. Mamji, in his younger years, was a champion competitive swimmer.

Even though the main character's family did not enjoy swimming the same way Mamji did, the main character's father loved the talk of it. Mamji would indulge him with the talk of the swimming pools in Paris, where he studied for 2 years in the early 1930's. He would tell them about the swimming pools, about their histories and about those built and used for the Olympics. He also discussed at length and in colorful detail the lack of hygiene of the French and their swimming pools.

In Mamji's opinion, there was no rival to the spectacular pool, Piscine Molitor. It was ideal for a competitive swimmer because it contained two pools, one indoors and the other outdoors. Even more important, the water was clean. It also included changing rooms, hot showers, an exercise room, a beach, a sunning deck and a bar, among other amenities.

To Mamji and the main character's family, this pool was spoken of with reverence and admiration. When the main character was born, he was named after the swimming pool: Piscine Molitor Patel.

Part 1 Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter, the reader learns the main character's full name and how he got it. The reader learns more about the main character, along with a little history of his immediate family and his early years.

Swimming is an important theme for Piscine and his childhood. Also important in this chapter is the introduction of Mamji. The author begins to fill in details about Piscine and the reader gets to know more about his history in this chapter. We find out that his father is a zookeeper who loved to talk about swimming as an escape. Again, the theme of simplicity appears in Piscine's description of swimming and the pleasure of the rhythm of a good stroke.

Part 1 Chapter 4

Part 1 Chapter 4 Summary

In Chapter 4, the narrator introduces the Pondicherry Zoo. Pondicherry is the territory in India where Piscine grew up. Once Pondicherry became a territory of India in 1954, the Pondicherry Botanical Gardens became a zoo founded by Piscine's father, Mr. Santosh Patel. Mr. Patel had been a hotelkeeper and thought that the transition to zookeeping would be natural. The zoo became a source of a little enjoyment and many headaches.

To Piscine, the zoo was heaven on earth. He loved growing up in and around the zoo. His life was surrounded by animals. He awoke to the roar of lions as his morning alarm and enjoyed his meals with the sounds of monkeys and exotic birds. On his way to school, he would walk past the habitations of various other exotic animals.

Piscine then discussed the "nonsense" that animals are not happy living in a zoo. He argued that animals in the wild are driven by hunger and fear having to defend themselves from the environment, predators and parasites. Thus, they become creatures of habit, moving around in the same area and using the same routes year after year. The area they inhabit becomes their home. He used an analogy that if someone were to barge into your home and declare you free to go, you would think that person was crazy and ask him to leave. You own your home and want to remain there. Animals feel the same. Consequently, in the zoo, their home, a territory is created for them where they do not have to worry about predators or hunger. He said that after the animals settle in, they come to feel like a landowner rather than a prisoner. They become protective of their territory and treat it as they would their territory in the wild. Piscine argued that most animals actually prefer the zoo with its lack of disease and predators and abundance of food and water.

Piscine also understood that zoos are generally not favored by many because of the confinement of the animals. He likened this opinion to religion, in that both are plagued by the issues of freedom and confinement. The chapter closes by relating that the zoo no longer exists, except in memories.

Part 1 Chapter 4 Analysis

The image of Piscine as a child reveling in the wonder of the animals underscores the themes of simplicity and beauty of nature. Considering the amount of the chapter devoted to Piscine's discussion of captivity versus freedom, it foreshadows that this subject will become a more pervasive theme in the book. There is also foreshadowing in this chapter that shows the reader how Piscine may handle challenges in his life based on his experiences while he was growing up with the animals and having considered their freedom and confinement at great length.

Part 1 Chapter 5

Part 1 Chapter 5 Summary

The story about how Piscine got his name is not over. As he grew up and entered school, the trouble he received for his name was never ending from his classmates to his teachers. No one could properly pronounce his name, so they chose to call him names such as "Pissing Patel."

Finally Piscine got to change schools and attend the medium secondary school where his brother went. On the first day of school, all the students took their turns introducing themselves. When it came time for Piscine to introduce himself, he ran to the chalkboard and wrote "My name is Piscine Molitor Patel, known to all as Pi Patel." Pi repeated his introduction in each one of his classes. Much to Pi's delight, the name stuck.

Part 1 Chapter 5 Analysis

We now know the full story of Pi's name. This scene is significant because it serves as further development of our main character. We have a better understanding of who he was as a young man and what he experienced as a child growing up.

Part 1 Chapter 6

Part 1 Chapter 6 Summary

Chapter 6 is a short chapter that reintroduces a nameless male character who was first discussed in Chapter 2. He is described as a great cook with an extensive spice collection. For the first time, we learn that the scene takes place in India, but this gentleman cooks Western meals, like Mexican food, very well. He also keeps an abundant amount of food in his home.

Part 1 Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter, unlike Chapter 2, in which our nameless main character is introduced, is written in first person. Both this chapter and Chapter 2 are printed in italics, clearly showing that the author wants these scenes set apart from the rest of the book. We do not yet know who this character is or what his significance is.

Part 1 Chapter 7

Part 1 Chapter 7 Summary

Pi introduces one of his favorite teachers from his youth, Mr. Satish Kumar. Mr. Kumar was a Communist and the first atheist Pi had ever met. He is described as looking quite peculiar with a balding head and a large, round belly.

Mr. Kumar visited the zoo often and Pi recalls the first time he saw Mr. Kumar at the zoo. Not knowing how to handle the situation, Pi kept his distance until Mr. Kumar saw him and waved him over to the Indian rhino exhibit. As they watched the rhinos and their roommates, the goats, Mr. Kumar remarked that he wished that the country's politicians could get along as well as the goats. Pi, not knowing much about politics answered back that religion is the answer. Mr. Kumar refuted his answer and went on to explain his atheistic beliefs to young Pi. Mr. Kumar's atheism dated back to his childhood when his body was racked with polio and he cried out to God, but God never came. Although Mr. Kumar's discussion frightened young Pi, Mr. Kumar would become his favorite teacher and mentor and the reason he studied zoology. From this discussion Pi began to learn that atheists were just people with a different faith. Pi says, however, that he cannot tolerate agnostics. We are all entitled to have doubts about our faith at one time or another. One cannot, however, choose doubt as a philosophy of life.

Part 1 Chapter 7 Analysis

As the chapters progress, Pi is being developed as a character through the impact of others on his life. For example, in this chapter we learn about the teacher who had the greatest impact on his life. We also learn that even though Pi and Mr. Kumar had differing views on religion, Pi is tolerant and without compromising his own beliefs, learns to feel kinship with those of alternate religions. The one issue that Pi and Mr. Kumar did agree upon is the sacredness of the zoo. Mr. Kumar called it his temple and for Pi, it's his paradise.

Part 1 Chapter 8

Part 1 Chapter 8 Summary

Pi's father had a sign near the entrance of the zoo that read, "Do you know which is the most dangerous animal in the zoo?" Next to the sign was a curtain with a mirror behind it. Zookeepers consider man the most dangerous threat to the zoo. The danger is manifest in man's cruelty toward the animals. Pi goes on to list incidences of foreign and dangerous objects that have been fed to zoo animals throughout history. Fortunately, at his father's zoo, they had few incidences of animal cruelty. Pi tells the story of a snake charmer who tried to steal a cobra and a woman who dangled her sari in the lion's cage thinking they ate only meat.

Pi's father taught him that the second greatest danger in the zoo was anthropomorphism. We try to see in the animal what we want to see in ourselves, for better or worse. Pi says this is the bane of theologians, as well as zoologists.

To erase any anthropomorphism in his children, Mr. Patel marched his sons out to the tiger's den where a starved tiger was given a live goat. His father lectured that the boys were never to try to pet the tiger. The family watched in terror as the hungry tiger devoured the goat. Following the tigers, Father took them to the homes of the lions and leopards, the bears, the hippos, the hyenas, orangutans, the ostrich and elephants. At each stop he revealed to them how quickly and easily each of the animals could kill or maim them. The family ended their tour at the cages of the guinea pigs where Father took a guinea pig out of its cage and handed it to Pi saying that they were not dangerous and could be touched.

Part 1 Chapter 8 Analysis

Pi presents an interesting contrast in this chapter, which opens by stating that humans are the most dangerous animals in the zoo and providing, in detail, the many ways zoo animals are tortured by humans. The chapter closes with an exhaustive description of the many ways that the animals are dangerous to humans. Pi developed a healthy respect for the power of all the animals, but at the end of the chapter, he was more frightened by what his brother, Ravi, was going to do to him for having falsely accused him of wrongdoing. Ravi provided foreshadowing when he threatened that Pi will be the next goat thrown into the tiger's den.

Part 1 Chapter 9

Part 1 Chapter 9 Summary

Another aspect of being a zookeeper is getting the animals used to having humans nearby. Pi believes that it is an art to be able to reduce the animals' flight distance or the minimum distance they need from a human before they flee. The flight distance varies from animal to animal. Pi's father had the knowledge and instinct to understand the animals and put them at ease around humans. As a result, he created a zoo of healthy, stress-free, well-socialized animals. A zookeeper knows whether he has been successful at creating a good environment for his animals if they are relaxed enough to reproduce. The animals at Pi's father's zoo multiplied readily.

Part 1 Chapter 9 Analysis

Pi continues to introduce the reader to the world of zookeeping and his observation of animal behavior. The reader is given further insight into the delicate balance between humans and animals in the zoo and that to have a successful zoo, the balance must be respected.

Part 1 Chapter 10

Part 1 Chapter 10 Summary

As comfortable as a zoo may be, there are always animals that try to escape. The desire to escape may result from unsatisfactory habitat. Another common escapist is the mature adult animal, for they are often too set in their ways to adapt to new surroundings. Animals are usually escaping from something rather than planning to escape to somewhere. Animals inherently want to feel safe, so if they don't feel safe in one place, they move to another. They become dangerous only to those who come between them and their safe haven.

Part 1 Chapter 10 Analysis

Pi further characterizes animal behavior for the reader and discusses why animals may try to escape confinement. He makes the point that animals do not try to change their surroundings unless there is something drastically wrong.

Part 1 Chapter 11

Part 1 Chapter 11 Summary

Pi tells the story of a female black leopard that escaped from the Zurich Zoo during the winter. Apparently, she and the male she was sharing her habitat with were not getting along. She escaped one night, much to the alarm of the residents of the city. Search parties and dogs tried to find her, but to no avail. She remained on the loose for 10 weeks and was discovered by a farm worker under a barn. He shot her and killed her. She had existed quietly, living off roe-deer, trying to fit in to her new surroundings.

Part 1 Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter examines the balance that the animals seek in their surroundings. Safety is also a theme. Animals are seeking simply to exist in a safe, favorable and comfortable environment and live peacefully with those around them. Furthermore, if they do not feel safe, they flee until they are able to find a safe place.

Part 1 Chapter 12

Part 1 Chapter 12 Summary

The nameless man continues to tell his story even though it agitates him. The author is afraid he may want to stop, but Richard Parker is still heavy on his mind. When the author visits his home, he always prepares an amazing vegetarian feast that is much too spicy for the author. He loves the food, but it leaves him in tears with his stomach in knots.

Part 1 Chapter 12 Analysis

The reader now knows that the italicized chapters are a flashback to the main character of the book, Pi, imparting his story to the author. The Author's Notes at the beginning of the book use this same italicized print and tell the story of how the author stumbled upon a man--who turned out to be Mamji--with a story to tell about a man he knows, Pi. This book is a result of the author's interviews with Pi. The italicized chapters tell the story of discovering this story and putting it together.

Part 1 Chapter 13

Part 1 Chapter 13 Summary

A lion in a zoo will attack not because it is hungry--zoo animals are well fed--or because it is mean but simply because its territory has been invaded. So, circus trainers must establish that the ring is *their* territory by entering before the lions while they watch. Once the trainer can establish that he is the super-alpha male, his wishes will be granted, whether they be jumping through hoops or rolling over.

A trainer must make sure that he or she maintains dominance and that their alpha status is clearly understood. If the animals begin to feel any social insecurity, aggressive, deadly behavior is likely. Part of an animal's sense of safety is tied to its social rank.

In the example of a circus trainer with lions, it's a matter of brains over brawn. The circus trainer must psychologically maintain his alpha male status and do so calmly, which puts the animals at ease and persuades them to do whatever the trainer wishes.

Part 1 Chapter 13 Analysis

Animals, like humans, need to know where they belong. They are social creatures but prefer to have a well-defined social order. Humans are no different. Our intelligence enables us to be dominant creatures, but if we question our rank or give up our power, we are likely to be attacked by another wishing to be the alpha male. This chapter includes foreshadowing of what Pi will be facing later in the story.

Part 1 Chapter 14

Part 1 Chapter 14 Summary

The animal most agreeable to the wishes of the trainer is the one with the lowest social standing of the group--the omega. The omega animal sees that it can gain the most by maintaining closeness to the alpha male. So generally, it is the omega animals that are asked to do the most difficult tricks because they are the most eager to please.

Part 1 Chapter 14 Analysis

In this chapter we continue to learn more about animal behavior and hierarchy. We learn that the omega, or less dominant, animal is preferred for training. Having this knowledge will undoubtedly be useful to understanding Pi's story. Pi is imparting his zoological knowledge to the reader so that the reader will understand future events in the story.

Part 1 Chapter 15

Part 1 Chapter 15 Summary

The author describes the man's home as a temple, full of religious symbols and artifacts. In the entryway is a picture of Ganesha, with an elephant head. This god represents one who overcomes obstacles and enjoys good luck, wisdom and learning. Scattered around the home are a cross, a picture of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe and a photo of Kaaba, an Islamic religious symbol. In his kitchen cabinet is a shrine with Ganesha again and Krishna playing the flute. There is another Virgin Mary in the dining room, as well as a brass Ganesha sitting in his office. In his office are a prayer rug and a wooden crucifix on the wall. Next to the man's bed is a Bible.

Part 1 Chapter 15 Analysis

It is likely from the vestiges of the man's home that he is deeply interested in religious expression. Pi as an adult is being further characterized. We can see that he has had a great number of religious influences on his life since the early story in the book about his discussion with his teacher, the atheist. He appears to have brought with him these influences throughout his life. The reader may now wonder what experiences have brought these religious interests to his life. Each one of the symbols in his home represents a belief or an experience in his life.

Part 1 Chapter 16

Part 1 Chapter 16 Summary

Pi believes that we are born without religion and don't have any until we are introduced to it. Pi was introduced at a very early age by his mother's sister. His Aunti Rohini saw to it that she accompanied her sister and newborn nephew in the Hindu rite of passage. From that day on Pi's interest in religion grew.

He still is a Hindu. He is faithful to the rites and rituals and their meanings. He is introduced to the different aspects of the Brahman. One is the world soul. Nirguna goes beyond understanding and even words. Saguna has qualities and fits within human understanding, which is expressed in the world around us, vegetation, animals and earth. Pi explains that the human soul seeks, throughout many lives, to become united with the Brahman. The difficulty or ease of this path is determined by Karma.

Pi introduces a woman, Antieji, as he calls her, a Quebecois and his foster mother in Toronto. When she first heard of Hare Krishnas, she thought it meant "hairless Christians." He corrected her but also explained that Hindus are a little bit Christian, just like Muslims are like Hindus and Christians like Muslims.

Part 1 Chapter 16 Analysis

The reader learns, very importantly, that Pi is a Hindu, despite all the religious relics from different faiths present in his home. Knowing his religious persuasion is very important to the story. His beliefs become the glasses through which he sees the world and the events that happen to him. In this section, he reveals the depth of his religious beliefs; they permeate his life, his mind and his soul. His Antieji is used in this scene to illustrate his belief that the major world religions are interrelated and intertwined. This belief is what allows him to house the various religious symbols in his home.

Part 1 Chapter 17

Part 1 Chapter 17 Summary

At the age of 14, Lord Krishna led Pi to meet Jesus Christ. The Patels took a rare family vacation to Munnar, famous for its tea estates and surrounded by hills. It began as a typical family vacation with tours of the tea estates and visits to the national park where they fed goats. During the first morning in Munnar, Pi observed three hills that stood out from the others. Atop each hill was a temple. A Hindu temple resided on one, a mosque on the second and a Christian church on the third hill.

Pi had never been inside a Christian church and one afternoon he decided to investigate. The first building he came to was the rectory. He watched the priest and assistant priest seated in their office, studying. He was moved that these men were at the ready to receive anyone. Then he dared himself to walk into the church. No one was there and he looked around a little and left.

The next day, he returned and met Father Martin. He asked Father Martin to tell him a story, which he did. Pi found the story of Jesus odd, that the Son had to pay the price for the sins of mankind. He could not imagine why a god would subject himself to torture, pain and death. Father Martin assured him that it was because of love. Pi felt that this god is too human and he became bothered by him. For three days, however, Pi returned to speak with Father Martin to hear more and to ask more.

As much as Pi is bothered by the story of Jesus, he is moved. He continued to think about what he had learned. On the family's last day in Munnar, Pi rushed up the hill to meet with Father Martin one final time. He told the Father that he wanted to become a Christian. Father Martin told him that he already was a Christian in his heart. Pi was overjoyed and entered the church, finally feeling like he belonged. He stayed and prayed and then raced over to the Hindu temple on the first hill and thanked Lord Krishna for having put Jesus in his path.

Part 1 Chapter 17 Analysis

Pi, even as a young man is deeply spiritual and responds deeply and freely to his spiritual experiences. Even though this chapter tells a seemingly simple story, it says much about Pi as a young man. He embraced different viewpoints even though he was a bit scared at first. To him, Christianity connects with humanity in a different way than Hinduism. The reader is learning more about the spiritual development of Pi, which will undoubtedly shape the story in the pages to come. Also, the depiction of the three hills foreshadows Pi's own religious discoveries.

Part 1 Chapter 18

Part 1 Chapter 18 Summary

Nearly a year later, Pi discovered Islam. He was out one day exploring his town and happened upon the Muslim quarter of town. He was drawn to a mosque and had a peek inside. He saw a large open room, the sanctuary, with long straw mats covering the floor. He continued on his tour of the Muslim quarter and happened upon a very small shop that was selling small flat breads. After gaining the attention of the shopkeeper, they began to talk. While there, Pi was able to witness the man saying his prayers. Watching this expression, Pi thought of Islam as little more than "hot-weather yoga for the Bedouins."

Part 1 Chapter 18 Analysis

Again, the reader sees Pi's continuing interest in discovering religion. It is very interesting that his childhood meanderings and adventures seem to lead him to find religion.

Part 1 Chapter 19

Part 1 Chapter 19 Summary

Pi visited the shopkeeper again and asked him about what being a Muslim was like. Pi attended a service with the man and noticed the openness of the sanctuary and that all the attendees sat randomly on the floor cross-legged. When it came time to pray, he felt a deep connection to the religion as soon as his forehead hit the floor.

Part 1 Chapter 19 Analysis

The reader sees Pi explore his religious attraction further. This time it has led him to Islam. He also says in the chapter that he is attracted to the brotherhood and devotion of the religion. Pi is a religious explorer, an explorer of the mystical. All his adventures as a young man lead him to different religious discoveries.

Part 1 Chapter 20

Part 1 Chapter 20 Summary

The man who introduced Pi to Islam was a Sufi, a Muslim mystic. His name was Satish Kumar. He shared the same surname as Pi's communist, atheist mentor. These two men, Pi says, taught him biology and Islam and were the reason he studied zoology and religion in college. He calls them the prophets of his youth.

Mr. Kumar, the Muslim, had a very personal, loving relationship with God. He and Pi would pray and chant together. Pi felt full of glory when he would leave Mr. Kumar's very small, two-room shack. One day after leaving, he was riding home on his bike, came to the crest of a hill where he could see forever and suddenly felt like he was in heaven. He felt God very close to him. He felt God close to him one other time in Canada, where he saw the Virgin Mary through a puff of fine snow falling from the trees.

Part 1 Chapter 20 Analysis

Pi's religious experiences are very deep and meaningful to him. Religion and deep convictions are a very important part of this story. To Pi, it seems that God is God, no matter if He is found in a mosque or a temple or a church.

Part 1 Chapter 21

Part 1 Chapter 21 Summary

The author is sitting at a café, thinking over an afternoon spent with his interview subject. He thinks of phrases that echo in his mind and how they relate to his own life. He makes a list of the words and phrases used to describe divine consciousness, including "...a realization that the founding principle of existence is what we call love...."

Part 1 Chapter 21 Analysis

These interludes that the author includes help the reader to understand what is being presented. He is setting the reader up for an amazing story that is believable only if it happens to an amazing person. He wants to make sure that the reader does not miss the depth of our main character, Pi and the depth of his soul and convictions. We see that his convictions are just as pure and deep as they were when he was a boy before the foundations of his beliefs are shaken by events.

Part 1 Chapter 22

Part 1 Chapter 22 Summary

Pi briefly imagines the point just before one meets death and how it must be for an atheist or an agnostic. He imagines the atheist's instant change of heart to believe when he sees the white light. The agnostic continues his doubt and explains the white light away as the chemistry of the brain's failing.

Part 1 Chapter 22 Analysis

The author shows the reader how Pi uses some of the phrases of divine consciousness, especially relating to death and the lives of atheists and agnostics and how they discover their lives are mundane and non-spiritual only at their deaths. The author is surprised by how struck he is that his own life may be flat and lacking. In the presence of a man as pious as Pi, he feels that his life lacks depth.

Part 1 Chapter 23

Part 1 Chapter 23 Summary

Pi felt totally comfortable in his religious exploration and expression. Regarding those to whom it mattered, however, they were not comfortable with his practice of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Neither his parents nor his religious teachers knew of his interfaith practices and once they all found out, they decided to come together for a discussion.

Neither of Pi's parents was very religious. His father was, foremost, a businessman. Pi's mother was indifferent on the subject, even though she had a Hindu upbringing and had been schooled as a Baptist. Although she was more interested in books and reading than religion, she never noticed Pi's interest in various religious books. As long as he was reading, she was happy.

Much to Pi's horror, once all the parties had converged, the three wise men, as Pi called them, began to claim Pi as their own. Each thought that he was more faithful to their religion than to the others. Then they began disparaging each other's beliefs. Pi and his parents were silent. Finally, Pi's father stepped in to remind them that the country allowed for freedom of religion. They argued that he could not be a Muslim, Hindu and Christian at the same time. All eyes were on Pi awaiting his decision. Pi said that all he wanted to do was love God and he reminded all of them of Ghandi's words that "All religions are true." He was embarrassed. After the group fell silent for a few minutes, Pi's father interjected that he could not blame Pi for wanting to love God. The wise men left and Pi and his family went for ice cream.

Part 1 Chapter 23 Analysis

This episode is Pi's first experience with standing up for his beliefs. His faith is challenged by all those in his life that mean anything to him. Although he's red-faced and embarrassed, he stands up to them and uses the words of Ghandi, whom they all respect, to defend himself and his beliefs. This story foreshadows the challenges to come in which Pi will have to defend himself and his beliefs.

Part 1 Chapter 24

Part 1 Chapter 24 Summary

When Ravi, Pi's elder brother, finds out about the meeting with Pi, his parents and the three religious men, he gives Pi grief to no end.

Part 1 Chapter 24 Analysis

Ravi is as non-religious as Pi's parents but with a sense of humor about the whole subject. Pi does not share how he felt about all of the teasing from his brother. Perhaps it helped him to have a sense of humor about the whole embarrassing episode.

Part 1 Chapter 25

Part 1 Chapter 25 Summary

Pi continued to be persecuted for his interfaith practices. He felt people should pay more attention to themselves at the least or run to the defense of the widowed and homeless rather than attack him. He changed Christian churches, no longer lingered after Muslim prayers and attended Hindu temple at busy times when he was not detected.

Part 1 Chapter 25 Analysis

Rather than feeling he fit in everywhere, in every religion, as he once felt, Pi seems to not fit in, or feel welcome anywhere. Through his experience he still maintains his religious convictions and practices, although he has had to adjust to make it work for him and remain somewhat undetected. Even at this early age, Pi feels that he is further enlightened than those around him and he can see past the issues that divide religions to see what to him is more important--care for the widowed and homeless.

Part 1 Chapter 26

Part 1 Chapter 26 Summary

Pi decided that he wanted to have a Christian baptism and that he wanted a prayer rug so he could pray outside. To get these things, he had to muster the courage to talk to his father about them. He told his father his request. His father questioned his desire. He told him that he wanted to be baptized and pray to Allah because he loved God. His father said that he could not be both Muslim and Christian. Then his father told him to talk to his mother about it. He tried to talk to his mother, but she avoided the subject, telling him to first talk to his father. Then she tried to talk to him about a book. Realizing that the subject of his religion was important to Pi, she conceded to the discussion. She told him he must choose a religion. He argued this point with her until she put her hand to her forehead. His mother conceded to his wishes.

Part 1 Chapter 26 Analysis

Pi now finds out that not even his parents really support his interfaith practices. In fact, they don't quite understand why he's religious at all. In this chapter, his parents come off as quite self-involved, neither of whom wants to condemn or support him on his religious journey. Pi doesn't really reveal how he feels after learning of his parents' feelings other than to remark that it took courage for him to bring up the subject with his father.

Part 1 Chapter 27

Part 1 Chapter 27 Summary

Pi overheard his parents discussing him later that day. They question how he got to be so religious, especially during a time of progress and modernization in India. They interjected their political views regarding Mrs. Gandhi and Pi's father sees her as a passing phase, just as they hope Pi's religious fervor is a passing phase. Pi's father questioned why Pi was so interested in Islam since, in his opinion, it was so foreign to Hinduism. They both wished that Pi could be more normal.

Part 1 Chapter 27 Analysis

In this chapter we see, through Pi's eyes, how his parents see him. The reader also learns more about their values. They certainly value progress and secularism in wishing their son was not so religious and old fashioned. What we do not see in this chapter is how Pi feels about this discussion between his parents. Every child who has a relatively good relationship with his parents seems to have some desire for their approval. That desire is not apparent in Pi at this point. During his parents' discussion of politics, Pi inserts some foreshadowing that his family will be moving to Canada. The reasons or timing are not included at this point.

Part 1 Chapter 28

Part 1 Chapter 28 Summary

Pi talks about his prayer rug and that he lost it. He lovingly recalls what it looked like and that it reminded him of the sacredness of the earth and creation underneath it. He most often prayed outside because he preferred the outdoors to anywhere else. He had a quiet corner of the yard underneath a shade tree picked out where he would pray. That spot would always remain in his memory as a special one. He recalls his baptism as an uncomfortable event. His father and mother attended against their wills but luckily his brother could not be there. The actual baptism was, for him, as refreshing as a warm summer rain.

Part 1 Chapter 28 Analysis

Pi stood up for himself and got what he wanted, a prayer rug and baptism. Then he loses the rug and his baptism is awkward. This chapter provides further characterization of Pi. He's still young and loses things and his baptism was not as glorious as it could have been. He does not dwell on these points, however. Rather he goes on and on about the beauty of his prayer rug and what it felt like to kneel on it and ends the chapter with the description of the baptism feeling like an all-consuming cleansing, even though it was only a trickle of water poured over his head.

Part 1 Chapter 29

Part 1 Chapter 29 Summary

Pi's father became fed up with the political direction of India and decided that the family must flee to Canada. Pi explores the reasons why his family needed to move, that his father hoped to provide a better life for their family and that the anxiety and worry over the political situation in India was taking a toll so heavy it was no longer worth it for them to stay.

Part 1 Chapter 29 Analysis

There are big changes on the horizon for the Patel family as a result of the increasingly dictatorial actions of Mrs. Gandhi, the ruler of India at the time. Pi's father wanted to raise his family in a progressive India, but when he saw that that was not going to happen, he decided it was time to move. Furthermore, he saw that the political climate would not be good for his livelihood. To Pi and his brother, Canada was an unimaginable country they knew nothing about and that was very far away. The reasons for choosing to move to Canada are not revealed.

Part 1 Chapter 30

Part 1 Chapter 30 Summary

The author is back at Pi's home. This time he meets Pi's wife. He didn't know Pi was married since he'd never mentioned his wife. They all chat briefly in the entryway of the home. Meena is her name, she's dressed in a white lab coat and she is a pharmacist on her way to work. After she departs, Pi, with a smile, tells the author that he's made special chutney for him.

Part 1 Chapter 30 Analysis

The characterization of Pi continues and the reader now learns that Pi is married. His wife is also of Indian descent. The reader learns the beginning and the end of the story at the beginning of the book and the rest of the book is used to fill in the middle part of the story and tell the adventures of Pi.

Part 1 Chapter 31

Part 1 Chapter 31 Summary

Pi invited his Muslim mentor, Mr. Kumar, to the zoo. This was the first and only time Mr. Kumar and Mr. Kumar meet and by chance at that. Pi nervously awaited Mr. Kumar and ushered him into the zoo. Mr. Kumar had never been to a zoo before and was struck with wonder. Pi showed him the zebras, which he had never seen before. He could not believe that they were naturally black and white. At the zebra exhibit they run into Mr. Kumar, the teacher. Pi gave both men carrots to feed the zebra. Mr. Kumar, the teacher, remarked about the royalty of the zebra and shared with the other two its Latin name. Mr. Kumar, the baker, remarked at its wonder and praised God.

Part 1 Chapter 31 Analysis

Mr. Kumar and Mr. Kumar represent the two sides of Pi, his piety and his interest in creation. The two sides of his character, represented by Mr. Kumar and Mr. Kumar, meet at the zoo. Pi finds great wonder in God's creation, the animals and also finds great interest in their behavior, which leads him to study zoology in college. The reader sees in this meeting the way his two mentors interact, as well as how the two sides of his character interact. One side praises God for his wondrous creation; the other is interested in the biological lineage of the animal.

Part 1 Chapter 32

Part 1 Chapter 32 Summary

Pi discussed the strange living arrangements of some of the zoo animals. He likened it to anthropomorphism, where an animal takes another being and treats it like it would one of its own kind. He cites the example of the goats living with the rhinos and an example of a mouse living peacefully in the viper cage for a few weeks. He explains the phenomenon that life sometimes has a brand of denial and craziness that enables it to survive and save itself.

Part 1 Chapter 32 Analysis

The behavior of the animals is also an important theme of this book and in this chapter, animals and creation are further characterized by Pi. This chapter provides one more example of how life breaks its own rules to survive. Animals are not self-aware which helps them to survive. For example, if the mouse living with the vipers realized how scrumptious and vulnerable his soft flesh was to the vipers would he really have set up house so comfortably in their cage? This chapter also foreshadows Pi's relationship with Richard Parker.

Part 1 Chapter 33

Part 1 Chapter 33 Summary

The author is again with Pi looking at photo albums. They look at more recent photos and move backward. They look at wedding photos, photos from the University of Toronto and photos from Brazil, where Pi studied the three-toed sloth. From life in India there are very few pictures; although many were taken, they were lost. All that he has were pictures provided by Mamji. He identifies Richard Parker in one of the photos. Pi laments that he is forgetting what his mother looks like, what her voice sounds like. It's a source of pain for him.

Part 1 Chapter 33 Analysis

The reader begins to see a painful part of Pi's life. It is hinted and foreshadowed that the time between his life in Toronto and leaving India is poisoned with pain. It's foreshadowed in this chapter that something tragic happens to Pi's family, so that he can no longer see them.

Part 1 Chapter 34

Part 1 Chapter 34 Summary

The Patel family sold the zoo. Because of impending regulatory changes on the trade of endangered animals there was a rush by foreign zoos to snatch up the Pondicherry collection. Even though there was great interest in most of their collection, it took more than a year for all the paperwork to be completed and the animals to be re-located to their new homes. It took equally as long for the family to get all its paperwork completed and approved for immigration to Canada. Finally, the family prepared to move.

Part 1 Chapter 34 Analysis

Although Pi's father believes he's doing the right thing for the family in moving them, nothing is easily accomplished in preparing for the move. One can imagine how excruciating it must have been to have made up their minds to move and then not be able to leave for an entire year because of the paperwork.

Part 1 Chapter 35

Part 1 Chapter 35 Summary

The Patels departed for Canada June 21, 1977, on a cargo ship. Before leaving, Pi made sure to say goodbye to Mamji, his mentors, Mr. and Mr. Kumar and all his friends. He felt excitement at their departure; however, his mother was sad. As the ship left the harbor, Pi waved his goodbyes to India. "Things didn't turn out the way they were supposed to, but what can you do? You must take life the way it comes at you and make the best of it," Pi said.

Part 1 Chapter 35 Analysis

The sadness and longing of Pi's mother and the closing sentence that things don't turn out as planned foreshadows something terrible happening, probably on the ship as the Patel family travels to Canada. His mother is dressed in her best clothing with her hair fixed up and adorned with flowers. Does this foreshadow her death?

Part 1 Chapter 36

Part 1 Chapter 36 Summary

The author arrives at Pi's home for another interview. He's early and quickly meets Pi's teenaged son, Nikhil, who is leaving for baseball practice. The author is welcomed into Pi's home and a small dog rushes up to greet him. He didn't know Pi had a dog, either. In the living room the author spots a young girl holding a cat. Pi introduces her as his daughter, Usha and the cat is Moccasin. His daughter is 4. The author promises the reader a happy ending to his tale.

Part 1 Chapter 36 Analysis

The reader can sense impending doom because of the author's use of foreshadowing. In earlier chapters we know that Pi will somehow lose his parents. We also know that the move to Canada does not go as planned. The author now comforts us with the rosy picture of Pi's current home life and that the story will end happily, no matter how difficult it gets in the middle. Perhaps the author does this because he fears that the reader would not continue if he jumped right into the difficult part without foreshadowing a happy ending.

Life of Pi by Yann Martel

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