SUMMARY

CHAPTER 61

This chapter is about fishing and how a vegetarian learns to catch and kill his first fish. It is a milestone chapter, as Pi makes the adjustments necessary to keep him and RP alive.

In his first attempt at fishing, Pi uses his shoe to try to fish and in the process loses the tackle. This teaches him a lesson: he cannot go on losing tackle. He must fish properly. He has no idea how to get bait. Also RP is getting agitated again, so if he does not feed Richard Parker, he will not survive.

Then he is saved by flying fish landing in the boat. Now he has bait and a bit of food for RP. He tries to give RP one of the fish but the fish gets away. More fish fly into the boat. Pi watches RP despatch the fish easily while he is struggling to catch the fish. Pi struggles to kill the fish he has caught and weeps as he kills it. He cannot do it without wrapping it in a blanket.

Using that fish head, he tries to catch fish again and catches a much bigger dorado. This time he kills the fish and he is happy with his catch. He is grateful that he has caught the fish. As he kills the fish, it flashes in different colours across its scales. He throws it at RP who eats it. He eats his water and biscuits and feels good about the day’s work. He says a prayer of thanks to Lord Vishnu

CHARACTER

CHAPTER 61

In this chapter we see the differences between Richard Parker and Pi. When RP has to catch and kill the fish, he does so with ease and efficiency. He is a killing machine you might say.

Pi on the other hand needs to give up his lifelong beliefs, his vegetarian principles and his innocence in order to deal with his first catch.

Using a shoe as bait, shows how little Pi understands about fishing. However, he is a quick learner.

Remember what Pi said that he learned from the little things he did not see before?

The flying fish was a gift that helped him start the process of becoming a hunter. He is happy to watch RP killing the fish but when he has to kill his first fish he weeps. He cannot kill it without hiding it in a blanket. He struggles to kill it unlike RP.

With his second fish however, he is more efficient at reeling it in and he kills it quickly. He is proud of his hunting skills and does not feel the same remorse he felt the first time. He is glad to be able to feed RP. He does remember, though, to say a prayer of thanks. And as he goes to sleep, he sees the fish’s dying flashes. Nonetheless he enjoyed fishing. He goes through the routine of cleaning behind him, sorting the fish before he goes to sleep.

 THEMES

CHAPTER 61

In the business of surviving, one can get used to anything. Pi starts off innocent like a child but learns about the bloody business of killing quickly. It was either kill or be killed.

To feed Richard Parker, he must kill the fish. Now RP is his alter ego. So to keep himself alive, he must kill the fish. When he is being a child, he acts according to the religious principles he was taught; he cries because he hurts the fish. He cannot face himself because he is acting out of character. However, the ‘wild being’ inside himself, wants to live and will not be satisfied unless it is fed.

In that mode, Pi is an efficient killer of fish- he is RP. When he returns to his other self, he remembers to pray and say thank you. He enjoys the work of the day. He feels satisfied with his actions because he fed himself. He admires that alter ego RP but he remains afraid of it.

The adult Pi atones for the killing of the fish with his prayers and comments that one can get used to anything.

This first day where he is the killer, marks the end of his childhood. Something in him dies like the dorado. On the other hand, he learns the power of routine and that being busy makes one forget to feel sorry for oneself.

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 62

This chapter is about water. When Pi wakes after a fitful sleep, he realises that RP is thirsty. Pi checks out the solar stills. They are all full of water. He drinks water himself and prepares a bucket of water for RP. He pulls himself towards the boat. He sees that the boat is a stinking mess of carcasses. Pi leaves a bit of fish and the bucket of water for RP. Then he throws another piece of fish at RP. RP must see Pi as the provider of food and water. Pi also blows the whistle. He realises that the boat is like a zoo enclosure: shelter for sleeping, food stash, water and lookout.

Pi attempts to fish and he catches nothing. However, the solar stills are filling with water again. Pi realises that it has been a week since the Tsimtsum sank.

CHAPTER 63

Pi lists all the people who survived at sea. The longest surviving person survived 173 days at sea. Pi survived 227 days at sea. Pi says that his routine is one of the factors that keeps him going. Discipline is very important. Prayers happen 4 times a day. Mornings are busy: fishing, working on the solar stills, fixing knots and drying fish. Afternoons are quieter: checking out his body and dealings with sores. Then there is time to feed RP, check the solar stills, cure the fish, check the flares in case a ship passes and other necessities. He watches RP a lot, forgets to wish for rescue and loses track of time.

CHARACTER

CHAPTER 62

Pi is learning the art of survival. He did not realise how important the solar stills are until he checks on them. After that, he checks and empties the solar stills every day. They are an essential part of his survival tactic.

His second survival tactic, is making sure RP sees him as the bringer of food and water. He begins to see the boat as an aspect of the zoo. He spends his day fishing, observing RP, and taking care of their food and water needs. He has survived a week.

CHAPTER 63

Pi creates a routine and the older Pi comments that this routine is one aspect that made it possible for him to survive from 2 July 1977 to 14 February 1978. His routine shows his self-discipline. He strictly keeps his prayers routine as well as caring for the raft, the solar stills, the food he fishes and the water. He looks after RP and does his best to look after his own skin. He forgets about rescue and about the passage of time. His memories are not in a time order. In retelling the story, he may not have the time order right. At first he looks for a possible ship to rescue him. He had his flares ready, but after a few weeks, he stops hoping in that way. The sun, the weather and the sea make him and RP tired quickly so a lot of resting has to happen.

THEMES

CHAPTER 62

The solar still are compared to cows who produce the milk of life. Pi will have a consistent battle to get enough water. Separating the raft and the boat means that RP and Pi occupy different spaces. Pi keeps his space clean and suitable for him and RP’s place is smelly and full of left-over bones- a sign of a carnivore.

This and previous chapter chronicle Pi’s transition from vegetarian to carnivore. The separation between the two, indicates Pi’s need to separate these different aspects of himself. He wishes to be a vegetarian, and not that basic survival instinct that is represented by RP. At the same time Pi needs to keep his survival instinct under control. So he observes that side of himself often.

CHAPTER 63.

This chapter is about this balance between survival and being the prayerful human being of his youth Also if you read between the lines you will see that this chapter shows you his physical deterioration. Checking out sores and scabs tell us that his body is struggling to cope.

Watching Richard Parker and keeping him fed on dried fish, tells us what Pi ate and how Pi had to look after himself or he would become difficult for himself to handle.

Time not being relevant and the ability to forget is also part of this survival process.

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 64

This brief chapter refers to the wear and tear on Pi’s clothes and how his body has to cope with salt water and without clothing. His clothes fall apart. He gets salt water boils especially on his bum because he is often wet and not protected from the element. Each one takes a while to heal. The sun both burns and heals.

CHAPTER 65

The list of things to do and the advice offered, provides Pi with much to think about. However, he knows nothing of navigation in terms of currents, stars, the horizon or even direction. Also he would not have been able to guide his boat anywhere. So he drifts and in drifting he follows the Pacific Equatorial counter current.

CHAPTER 66

Chapter 66 discusses the methods he uses to fish and how successful or not he is. Mostly he is only moderately successful and this is bad news for the starving castaways. He changes to a fishing gaff and experience teaches him to be more successful. The cargo net with hooks hung from it is his most successful method. Some days he is so successful and catches more fish than he can ever eat or cure. Then he feels like the god of fish. But this is seldom. Catching a turtle proves a lot of food although it is very heavy and so difficult for the weakened Pi to bring on board. This can take up to two days.

CHARACRER

CHAPTER 64

Most of Pi’s time at sea is spent naked because his clothes simply fall apart. Pi suffers as a result. So he does not only suffer loneliness and fear, but also over-exposure to sea, rain, sun and wind. He survives nonetheless, showing his tenacity and the care he takes to keep himself as healthy as possible.

CHAPTER 65

Pi is aware of the beauty of the stars but has no sense of direction and has no control over where he is drifting. He also has nowhere to aim for.

CHAPTER 66

Pi gains experience as a fisherman and learns from his mistakes. He is also capable of adapting what he has in order to be more effective. He no longer feels sad to kill the fish but becomes efficient at it. In fact, he wishes he has more hands so that he can bring in the fish more effectively. He also remembers to tie up the gaff so that he does not lose it overboard. In fact, some days he is so successful, that he is covered in scales and feels he could be seen as a silver sea god.

Pi describes the difficulty of bringing onto the boat any turtle that would bump into it. Turtles can weigh over 100 pounds which is too heavy for Pi. He works out a way to rope the turtle against the side of the boat. Then he bit by bit pulls the turtle up.

His adult-self comments that he became a savage.

THEMES

CHAPTER 64

On Pi’s journey, he is stripped naked by the elements. Not only is he often hungry but he also suffers from exposure and heals slowly.

CHAPTER 65

Pi drifts at sea. He knows nothing of his direction and does not understand where he going or how far he travels. He is clueless about the natural world around except where it can provide him with fish and water. He sees its beauty like the beauty of a starry night. However, his direction and the passing time is out of his control…as with life in general.

CHAPTER 66

Vegetarian Pi becomes a hunter and a gatherer in order to live. He learns how to hunt (fish, catch turtles) more effectively with experience. He no longer can be the person he was. He has learnt ’savage’ behaviour in order to survive. When he is hunting, he becomes more like Richard Parker- an efficient hunter who makes ‘spilt-second decisions’ in order to land a kill. He becomes ‘bolder and more agile’. He develops an instinct and a feel for what to do. Feeling like a fish god, Pi shows that he has developed a sense of control, a hunter’s grace and beauty. He does everything in his power to feed himself. His adult self comment that the boy Pi was sensitive to the smallest form of violence- snapping open a banana but the boy on the boat was a predator- a savage.

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 67

Pi watches what grows under the boat or on the side of the boat. He has the time to take in the minute details of his life at sea.: algae, shrimp, worms and crabs. He tries to eat them all too. Only the crabs are tasty. To him they are like sweets.

CHAPTER 68

Pi seldom sleeps for long but rests a great deal. Richard Parker seems to sleep most of the time, only sometimes being up to look at the world. Pi observes Richard Parker from behind when Pi is collecting supplies one would guess.

CHAPTER 69

Sometimes Pi thinks he sees a light on the horizon. That could be a ship. Then he releases a flare to show the ship where he is. Hope is always dashed. The flares smell like cumin and reminds him of home. He realises that his raft is so small and close to the water, that a ship would never see him. His little circle of life will not dissect with the path of a ship. He needs to find land.

CHAPTER 70

Pi begins to butcher turtles so that he can drink the blood and give RP the meat and the shell. He describes what hard work it is to kill a turtle. He asks himself if the effort is worth the cup of blood he can drink from it. He also realises that he cannot depend on feeding RP all the time. He has to tame him too.

CHARACTER

CHAPTER 67

This chapter shows what Pi does with his many hours of ‘spare’ time. It shows his observation skills which is why he does so well at university later. This also shows the boy’s perpetual hunger.

CHAPTER 68

The difference in sleep pattern between RP and Pi shows that RP leaves the decision making to Pi who worries and plans ahead in order to survive. Thus far Pi is in charge. Pi takes control of the raft, the water and catching food. He remains alert for danger or any issues that could spell disaster such as losing his fishing equipment.

CHAPTER 69

Rescue always remains at the back of his mind and over time he sends up a good many flares. Despite the many times that he thinks he may have seen the lights of ship, Pi realises that he is too small to be seen by a big ship. He hopes but he also knows that that may be hopeless.

CHAPTER 70

Pi is prepared to work very hard to keep on surviving. Catching a turtle is very hard work for a starving and weak young boy like him. Yet he catches a good many and gives most of the turtle to RP. He is determined even though killing a turtle is very much a carnivorous act. He forgets to be horrified by the brutal act of pulling out the turtle and slaughtering it.

THEMES

CHAPTER 67

Pi’s powers of observation and his scientific mind comes up in these chapters. Pi describes the sea and its creatures as a peaceful and busy world, probably in contrast to his lonely and brutal new life.

CHAPTER 68

The splitting of Pi’s experience, shows us that Pi must have slept or rested a great deal. He is after all also RP. Perhaps there was many a time that the boy Pi is hardly there and that the survivor and brutal RP is more often present in the experience.

CHAPTER 69

All castaways hope for rescue. Pi knows this is a hope against hope. So all the hopefully sending up of flares, smells to Pi like home and food. RP is not really interested in the flares and their light at all. He does not participate in the hope of rescue. His function is survival. Pi’s small circle of life just has to cope with his situation.

CHAPTER 70

The above point is made very clearly in Pis description of killing turtles and drinking its blood. Most of the task of pulling the turtle apart is given to RP, the more brutal of the two. Pi, the boy is scientific and curious, prayerful and hopeful. RP is strong, without guilt, and lives only in survival mode- eating, hunting sleeping.