

## Excerpt from Life of Pi by Yann Martel

I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the Pacific, hanging on to an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me. Had I considered my prospects in the light of reason, I surely would have given up and let go of the oar, hoping that I might drown before being eaten. But I don't recall that I had a single thought during those first minutes of relative safety. I didn't even notice daybreak. I held  
5 on to the oar, I just held on, God only knows why.

The elements allowed me to go on living. The lifeboat did not sink. Richard Parker kept out of sight. The sharks prowled but did not lunge. The waves splashed me but did not pull me off.

I watched the ship as it disappeared with much burbling and belching. Lights flickered and went out. I looked about for my family, for survivors, for another lifeboat, for anything that might bring me hope. There  
10 was nothing. Only rain, marauding waves of black ocean and the flotsam of tragedy.

The darkness melted away from the sky. The rain stopped.

I could not stay in the position I was in forever. I was cold. My neck was sore from holding up my head and from all the craning I had been doing. My back hurt from leaning against the lifebuoy. And I needed to be higher up if I were to see other lifeboats.

15 In the morning I could not move. I was pinned by weakness to the tarpaulin. Even thinking was exhausting. I applied myself to thinking straight. At length, as slowly as a caravan of camels crossing a desert, some thoughts came together.

I thought of sustenance for the first time. I had not had a drop to drink or a bite to eat or a minute of sleep in three days. Finding this obvious explanation for my weakness brought me a little strength.

20 Richard Parker was still on board. In fact, he was directly beneath me. Incredible that such a thing should need consent to be true, but it was only after much deliberation, upon assessing various mental items and points of view, that I concluded that it was not a dream or a delusion or a misplaced memory or a fancy or any other such falsity, but a solid, true thing witnessed while in a weakened, highly agitated state. The truth

of it would be confirmed as soon as I felt well enough to investigate.

25 How I had failed to notice for two and a half days a 450-pound Bengal tiger in a lifeboat twenty-six feet long was a conundrum I would have to try to crack later, when I had more energy. The feat surely made Richard Parker the largest stowaway, proportionally speaking, in the history of navigation. From tip of nose to tip of tail he took up over a third of the length of the ship he was on.

You might think I lost all hope at that point. I did. And as a result I perked up and felt much better. We see  
30 that in sports all the time, don't we? The tennis challenger starts strong but soon loses confidence in his playing. The champion racks up the games. But in the final set, when the challenger has nothing left to lose, he becomes relaxed again, insouciant, daring. Suddenly he's playing like the devil and the champion must work hard to get those last points. So it was with me. To cope with a hyena seemed remotely possible, but I was so obviously outmatched by Richard Parker that it wasn't even worth worrying about. With a tiger  
35 aboard, my life was over. That being settled, why not do something about my parched throat?

I believe it was this that saved my life that morning, that I was quite literally dying of thirst. Now that the word had popped into my head I couldn't think of anything else, as if the word itself were salty and the more I thought of it, the worse the effect. I have heard that the hunger for air exceeds as a compelling sensation the thirst for water. Only for a few minutes, I say. After a few minutes you die and the discomfort of  
40 asphyxiation goes away. Whereas thirst is a drawn-out affair. Look: Christ on the Cross died of suffocation, but His only complaint was of thirst. If thirst can be so taxing that even God Incarnate complains about it, imagine the effect on a regular human. It was enough to make me go raving mad. I have never known a worse physical hell than this putrid taste and pasty feeling in the mouth, this unbearable pressure at the back of the throat, this sensation that my blood was turning to a thick syrup that barely flowed. Truly, by  
45 comparison, a tiger was nothing.

And so I pushed aside all thoughts of Richard Parker and fearlessly went exploring for fresh water.

**A1. Read lines 1-3**

List 5 things you learn about Pi and his situation in this section. (5)

**Read lines 1-11.**

**A2.** How does the writer show Pi's situation and the danger he faces? [5]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate..*

**Read lines 12- 21**

**A3.** What impressions do you get of Pi in these lines? How does the writer show you what he is like? [10]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology.*

**Read lines 20-46**

**A4.** How does the writer create a sense of drama and tension around Pi's situation? [10]

*You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology.*

**To answer this question you should consider the passage as a whole.**

**A5.** "The writer encourages us to think Pi is brave."

To what extent do you agree with this view? [10]

You should write about:

your thoughts and feelings about Pi as he is presented in the passage as a whole

how the writer has created these thoughts and feelings

***You must refer to the text to support your answer.***

## SECTION B: 40 marks

*In this section you will be assessed for the quality of your **creative prose writing** skills.*

*24 marks are awarded for communication and organisation; 16 marks are awarded for vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.*

*You should aim to write about 450-600 words.*

Choose **one** of the following titles for your writing:

[40]

- Either,**        (a)    Feeling trapped.
- Or,**            (b)    The family.
- Or,**            (c)    Write about a time when you traveled somewhere new.
- Or,**            (d)    Write a story which begins:  
I bet you didn't think I could do that, did you?...

*The space below can be used to plan your work.*