

Easy reading: The Life of Pi: Book review (level 1) – text

The Life of Pi is a very popular book and now it is also going to be a 3D film.

The book and its author

The Life of Pi is about a teenage boy from India, called Pi, who travels across the Pacific Ocean in a lifeboat. His companion in the lifeboat is an enormous tiger. It was written by the Canadian author Yann Martel, and has sold seven million copies worldwide.

The story

At the start of the book, we learn about Pi's childhood in India. His father is a zookeeper and the family live in a house in the zoo. Pi and his brother help their father in the zoo and learn to look after the animals.

When Pi is 16, his family decide to close the zoo and move to Canada. They sell some of the animals to zoos in North America and the family take the animals with them on a ship to Canada. On the way, there is a terrible storm and the ship sinks. Pi finds himself in a lifeboat with a hyena, zebra, orang-utan and a tiger. When he sees the animals, Pi is scared and he jumps into the ocean. Then he remembers there are sharks in the ocean and he climbs back into the lifeboat. Sadly, Pi's family and the ship's sailors die in the storm. One by one, the animals in the lifeboat kill and eat each other, till only Pi and the tiger are left alive. Luckily for Pi, there is some food and water on the lifeboat, but he soon needs to start catching fish. He feeds the fish to the tiger to stop it killing and eating him. He also uses a whistle and his knowledge of animals from the zoo to control the tiger.

Pi and the tiger spend 227 days in the lifeboat. They live through terrible storms and are burnt by the Pacific sun. They are often hungry and ill. Sometimes, Pi is happy and hopeful, but sometimes he feels sad and lonely. Finally, they arrive at the coast of Mexico, but you will have to read the book to find out what happens in the end!

What do you think?

Three teenagers give their opinions on *The Life of Pi*.

'I think it's an excellent book and I couldn't stop reading it. In one chapter, Pi is in the lifeboat and he sings "Happy Birthday" to his mother on the day of her birthday, even though he thinks she is dead. It was a very sad moment and I wanted to cry.'

Alex, 15

'I didn't like this book because it's very slow and boring. In some chapters, there isn't any action and we only read about what Pi is thinking.'

Danny, 16

'What a fascinating book! I enjoyed the story, but I also learnt so much about animals and surviving at sea. It's a book for everyone to enjoy, old and young, men and women.'

Paula, 18

Robin Newton