

Read the excerpt and then answer the questions that follow.

from *Life of Pi*

by Yann Martel

- 1 Yann Martel's exciting novel, *Life of Pi*, recounts the adventures of Piscine Patel (Pi), while he is trapped on a small boat with a tiger after the disastrous wreck of a ship carrying his father's zoo. Pi, the narrator, uses flashbacks to tell the story of his harrowing journey.
- 2 I slept in fits that night. Shortly before sunrise I gave up trying to fall asleep again and lifted myself on an elbow. I spied with my little eye a tiger. Richard Parker* was restless. He was moaning and growling and pacing about the lifeboat. It was impressive. I assessed the situation. He couldn't be hungry. Or at least not dangerously hungry. Was he thirsty? His tongue hung from his mouth, but only on occasion, and he was not panting. And his stomach and paws were still wet. But they were not dripping wet. There probably wasn't much water left in the boat. Soon he would be thirsty. I looked up at the sky. The cloud cover had vanished. But for a few wisps on the horizon, the sky was clear. It would be another hot, rainless day. The sea moved in a lethargic way, as if already exhausted by the oncoming heat. I sat against the mast and thought over our problem. The biscuits and the fishing gear assured us of the solid part of our diet. It was the liquid part that was the rub. It all came down to what was so abundant around us but marred by salt. I could perhaps mix some sea water with his fresh water, but I had to procure more fresh water to start with. The cans would not last long between the two of us—in fact, I was loath to share even one with Richard Parker—and it would be foolish to rely on rainwater.
- 3 The solar stills were the only other possible source of drinkable water. I looked at them doubtfully. They had been out two days now. I noticed that one of them had lost a little air. I pulled on the rope to tend to it. I topped off its cone with air. Without any real expectation I reached underwater for the distillate pouch that was clipped to the round buoyancy chamber. My fingers took hold of a bag that was un-expectedly fat. A shiver of thrill went through me. I controlled myself as likely as not, salt water had leaked in. I unhooked the pouch and, following the instructions, lowered it and tilted the still so that any more water from beneath the cone might flow into it. I closed the two small taps that led to the pouch, detached it and pulled it out of the water. It was rectangular in shape and made of thick, soft, yellow plastic, with calibration marks on one side. I tasted the water. I tasted it again. It was salt-free. "My sweet sea cow!" I exclaimed to the solar still. "You've produced, and how! What a delicious milk. Mind you, a little rubbery, but I'm not complaining. Why, look at me drink!" I finished the bag. It had a capacity of one litre and was nearly full. After a moment of sigh-producing, shut-eyed satisfaction, I reattached the pouch. I checked the other stills. Each one had an udder similarly heavy. I collected the fresh milk, over eight litres of it, in the fish bucket. Instantly these technological contraptions became as precious to me as cattle are to a farmer. Indeed, as they floated placidly in an arc, they looked almost like cows grazing in a field. I ministered to their needs, making sure that there was enough sea water inside each and that the cones and chambers were inflated to just the right pressure. After adding a little sea water to the bucket's contents, I placed it on the side bench just beyond the tarpaulin. With the end of the morning coolness, Richard Parker seemed safely settled below. I tied the bucket in place using rope and the tarpaulin hooks on the side of the boat. I carefully peeked over the gunnel. He was lying on his side. His den was a foul sight.

- 4 After I had gathered what I needed for the day from the locker and was ready to go, I tossed another piece over the tarpaulin in front of Richard Parker. It had the intended effect. As I drifted away I saw him come out into the open to fetch the morsel of fish. His head turned and he noticed the other morsel and the new object next to it. He lifted himself. He hung his huge head over the bucket. I was afraid he would tip it over. He didn't. His face disappeared into it, barely fitting, and he started to lap up the water. In very little time the bucket started shaking and rattling emptily with each strike of his tongue. When he looked up, I stared him aggressively in the eyes and I blew on the whistle a few times. He disappeared under the tarpaulin. It occurred to me that with every passing day, the lifeboat was resembling a zoo enclosure more and more: Richard Parker had his sheltered area for sleeping and resting, his food stash, his lookout and now his water hole. The temperature climbed. The heat became stifling. I spent the rest of the day in the shade of the canopy, fishing. It seems I had had beginner's luck with that first Dorado. I caught nothing the whole day, not even in the late afternoon, when marine life appeared in abundance. A turtle turned up, a different kind this time, a green sea turtle, bulkier and smoother-shelled, but curious in the same fixed way as a hawksbill. I did nothing about it, but I started thinking that I should.
- 5 The only good thing about the day being so hot was the sight the solar stills presented. Every cone was covered on the inside with drops and rivulets of condensation. The day ended. I calculated that the next morning would make it a week since the Tsimtsum had sunk. The Robertson family survived thirty-eight days at sea. Captain Bligh of the celebrated mutinous *Bounty* and his fellow castaways survived forty-seven days. Steven Callahan survived seventy-six. Owen Chase, whose account of the sinking of the whaling ship, *Essex*, by a whale inspired Herman Melville, survived eighty-three days at sea with two mates, interrupted by a one-week stay on an inhospitable island. The Bailey family survived 118 days. I have heard of a Korean merchant sailor named Poon, I believe, who survived the Pacific for 173 days in the 1950s. I survived 227 days. That's how long my trial lasted, over seven months.

*Richard Parker is the name of the tiger trapped on the boat with the narrator.

from *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. ©2001, Harcourt Books.

Answer to following questions using the excerpt above from *Life of Pi*. Be sure to carefully read all directions.

1. Read the following statement about the text and the directions that follow:

Despite the fact that Richard Parker is a dangerous tiger, the narrator cares about his well-being.

Choose one detail (sentence) from paragraph one that **best** supports this inference.

2. Read the excerpt from the text and the directions that follow.

As I drifted away I saw him come out into the open to fetch the morsel of fish. His head turned and he noticed the other morsel and the new object next to it. He lifted himself. He hung his huge head over the bucket. I was afraid he would tip it over. He didn't. His face disappeared into it, barely fitting, and he started to lap up the water. In very little time the bucket started shaking and rattling emptily with each strike of his tongue. When he looked up, I stared him aggressively in the eyes and I blew on the whistle a few times. He disappeared under the tarpaulin. It occurred to me that with every passing day, the lifeboat was resembling a zoo enclosure more and more: Richard Parker had his sheltered area for sleeping and resting, his food stash, his lookout and now his water hole.

What central idea is expressed in the excerpt?

- A. The narrator is fearful of Richard Parker.
 - B. The narrator feels sorry for Richard Parker.
 - C. The narrator wants control over Richard Parker.
 - D. The narrator would be lonely without Richard Parker.
3. Which sentence from the text best supports your answer for Question 2?
- A. "As I drifted away I saw him come out into the open to fetch the morsel of fish."
 - B. "His face disappeared into it, barely fitting, and he started to lap up the water."
 - C. When he looked up, I stared him aggressively in the eyes and I blew on the whistle a few times."
 - D. "Richard Parker had his sheltered area for sleeping and resting, his food stash, his lookout and now his water hole."
4. Choose a set of sentences that best reveals the central idea of the text.

The only good thing about the day being so hot was the sight the solar stills presented. Every cone was covered on the inside with drops and rivulets of condensation. The day ended. I calculated that the next morning would make it a week since the *Tsimtsum* had sunk. The Robertson family survived thirty-eight days at sea. Captain Bligh of the celebrated mutinous *Bounty* and his fellow castaways survived forty-seven days. Steven Callahan survived seventy-six. Owen Chase, whose account of the sinking of the whaling ship, *Essex*, by a whale inspired Herman Melville, survived eighty-three days at sea with two mates, interrupted by a one-week stay on an inhospitable island. The Bailey family survived 118 days. I have heard of a Korean merchant sailor named Poon, I believe, who survived the Pacific for 173 days in the 1950s. I survived 227 days. That's how long my trial lasted, over seven months.

5. Read the sentence from the text.

"The sea moved in a lethargic way, as if already exhausted by the oncoming heat."

Which word best defines lethargic as it is used in the sentence?

- A. blistering
- B. chaotic
- C. rhythmic
- D. sluggish

6. Write one paragraph in response to the following question. Support your answer using details from the text.

What do the stories of survival in the last paragraph suggest to the reader about the narrator?