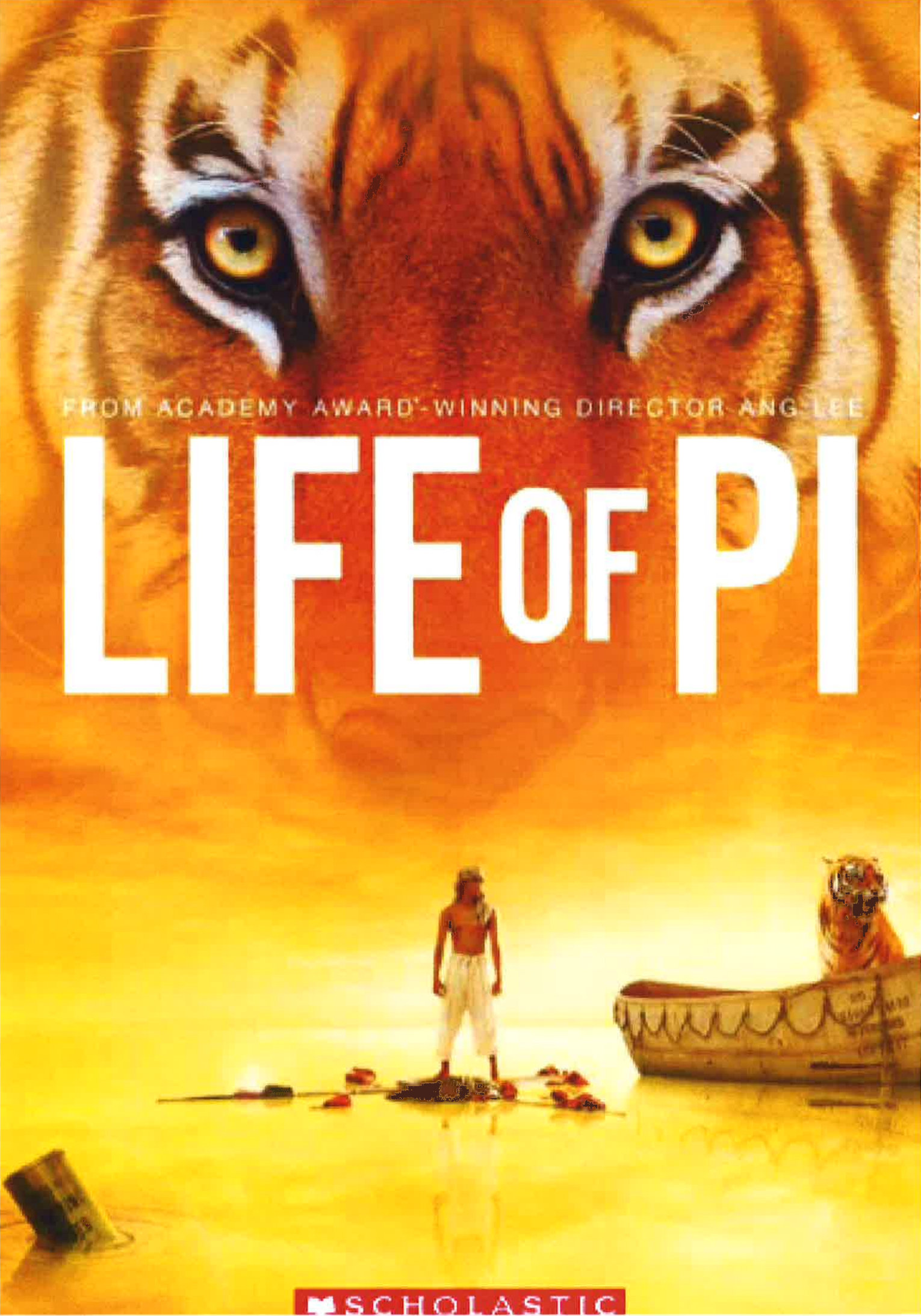


The poster features a large, close-up image of a tiger's face at the top, with its intense yellow eyes looking directly at the viewer. Below the tiger's face, the text "FROM ACADEMY AWARD®-WINNING DIRECTOR ANG LEE" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The title "LIFE OF PI" is prominently displayed in the center in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the poster, a small scene depicts a young man in a white shirt and pants standing on a small, makeshift raft in the middle of a vast, calm ocean. To his right, a tiger is visible in a small boat. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and adventurous.

FROM ACADEMY AWARD®-WINNING DIRECTOR ANG LEE

LIFE OF PI



 SCHOLASTIC

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PI PATEL

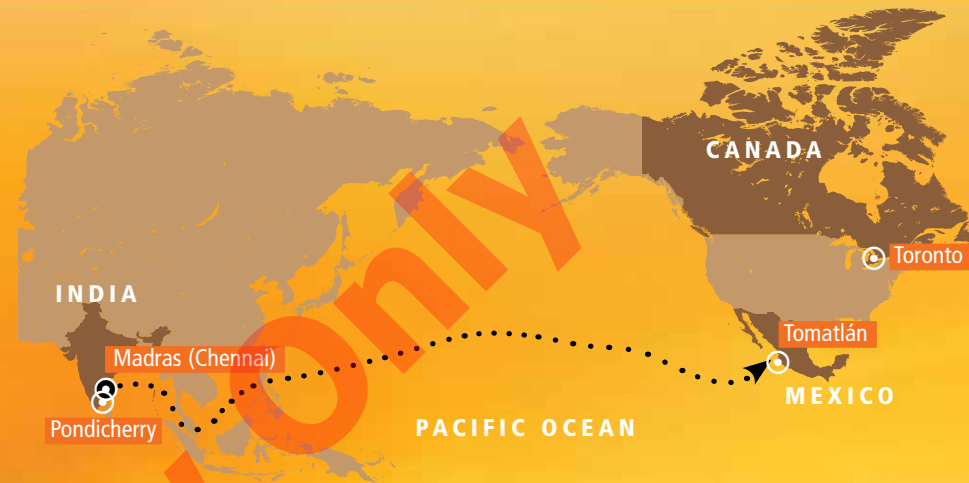
Pi Patel is a young boy from Pondicherry in the south of India. Pi is very interested in religion and he loves animals.

THE PATEL FAMILY

Pi lives with his mother and father and older brother, Ravi. They have a zoo. The star animals are their Bengal tigers.

THE PACIFIC

The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean.



THE STORY

When Pi is fifteen, the family sail for Canada on a ship called the *Tsimtsum*. This is the start of Pi's amazing adventure. Years later, Pi meets a Canadian writer. The writer helps Pi write down his story.



LIFE OF PI

CHAPTER 1

WRITER'S NOTE

I am a writer from Canada. I went to India to write a story. I wrote for many months, but in the end the story did not work. Before I went back home, I decided to explore the south of India. I arrived in Pondicherry, on the south-east coast.

I was at the Indian Coffee House, on Nehru Street, when an old man started talking to me. I told him I was a writer.

"I know a story that will make you believe in God," he said.

I ordered two more coffees. "Where does this story take place?" I asked.

"It starts right here in Pondicherry – at the zoo. It ends in your country. But you must talk to Pi Patel," he said. "It's his story."

"Where can I find Mr Patel?" I asked.

"In Canada."

I went home to Canada. I searched through nine pages of Patels in the phone book, and then I found him – Mr Pi Patel. He agreed to meet me. We met often as he told me his story.

Pi Patel lives in Toronto. He studied zoology and religion at university. His hair is a bit grey now, although he is only forty. He cooks wonderful meals for me in his kitchen. He has enough food in the cupboards to last his whole life.*

Pi's house is a temple inside. In fact, it is many temples. Ganesha, the Hindu God with an elephant head, is in the hall. The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, is in the living room. On a table in the office is a book covered by a cloth. The book is the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam.

Pi is married. He and his wife have a son, a daughter, a dog and a cat. So this story has a happy ending.

Sometimes Pi gets upset when he's telling me his story. After all these years, he still thinks about Richard Parker every day.

This is Pi Patel's story.

* Zoology is the scientific study of animals.

PART ONE

PONDICHERRY

CHAPTER 2

Before my father moved to Pondicherry, he owned a hotel in Madras. He had always loved animals, however, and in Pondicherry, he decided to open a zoo. Running a zoo is not easy for a hotelkeeper. The 'guests' never leave their rooms and they receive visitors all day long. There is a lot of cleaning to do because they don't use bathrooms. My father loved the Pondicherry Zoo, but running it gave him many headaches.

I loved growing up in a zoo. The lions woke me at six every morning, roaring loudly. As I ran for the school bus, a sleepy orang-utan waved to me. After school, the elephant searched my pockets for fruit.

People often think animals in the wild are 'happy' because they are 'free'. They imagine a lion. It watches an African sunset, sitting proudly with its family under a beautiful tree. Then bad men catch it and put it in a small cage in a zoo. It sits in its new prison and thinks sadly about its old life.

This is not the way it is.

Animals in the wild never have enough food. They must fight every day to keep their home and they get sick. Are they free?

In the wild, an animal has its own territory where it can find food and water, and avoid danger. A zoo cage is just another territory. Food appears every day, there is always

water and there is no need to go hunting. The animal does not feel like a prisoner. It feels like a landowner.

But I know many people think zoos are a bad thing. Close down all the zoos if you want to. Anyway, Pondicherry Zoo no longer exists.



CHAPTER 3

My favourite teacher when I was young was Mr Satish Kumar, my science teacher. One day I saw him at the zoo. He was watching the Indian rhinos. At first, we had only one rhino called Peak. He was lonely and he stopped eating. While my father searched for a second rhino, he put some goats in with Peak for company. It worked brilliantly. Peak loved the goats, and they loved him. When the second rhino arrived, she learnt to love the goats too. The goats watched the rhinos in their pool. The rhinos guarded the goats while they ate. These living arrangements were very popular with the visitors.

Mr Kumar saw me and smiled. 'Hello, Pi!' he said.

'Hello, Mr Kumar. It's good of you to come to the zoo,' I said.

'The zoo is my temple,' he said. 'If our politicians were like these goats and rhinos, we'd have fewer problems in our country.'

'Religion will save us,' I said. Religion was always close to my heart, as you will see.

'Religion is darkness, Pi,' said Mr Kumar. 'Why believe in something that you cannot see, hear or touch?'

I had never heard such words.

'When I was your age, Pi, I had polio – a terrible illness – and I spent all my time in bed,' continued Mr Kumar. 'I asked every day, "Where is God?" God never came. Medicine saved me. When we die, it's the end.'

I said nothing.

Mr Kumar was an atheist – he believed that there was no God, only science. Science was his religion. Mr Kumar was the reason I studied zoology at the University of Toronto.

CHAPTER 4

One Sunday morning, before the zoo opened, Father took me and Ravi into the big cat house. Mother came too. Father looked at us with a very serious face.

'I have an important lesson for you boys today,' he said.

'Is this really necessary?' said Mother. She looked unhappy.

'Yes, it is,' said Father. 'It may save their lives.'

Our Bengal tiger, Mahisha, was in his cage. He roared, and the whole building seemed to shake.

'Ravi, Pi, I'm going to show you how dangerous tigers are,' Father said. 'You must never try to touch a tiger or even get close to one. They are not your friends.'

Babu, the keeper, came in with a live goat. Mahisha growled. Babu put the frightened little goat into a small cage next to Mahisha's cage. There was a door between the two cages. Babu pulled open the door. The poor goat disappeared in a few seconds.

Mother, Ravi and I refused to speak to Father for a week. After that, whenever Ravi was angry with me, he always said, 'Wait until we're alone. You're the next goat!'

CHAPTER 5

When I was a baby, my aunt took me to a Hindu temple. I remember the smell, the beautiful colours and a feeling of mystery. Religion entered my body on that day.

I am a Hindu. The world makes sense to me through Hindu eyes. Hindus believe that God is in everything.