

Mijbil The Otter

Summary of the Chapter

After the death of the dog, the author thought to have another pet. Early in 1956, he travelled to Southern Iraq. He saw there some Arab people having an otter. Then, he also thought of having an otter. He told this to his friend. His mail was due; therefore, with a friend he went to Basra to receive his mail. His friend collected his mail and went away. After he had left, he received a sack in which there was something. The sack was for the narrator and there was an otter in it. The narrator christened it, Mijbil. First the otter slept on the floor but soon he entered the bed till the servant bought tea. When it went to bathroom it plunged and rolled in the bath tub joyfully. The narrator was extremely surprised when he found it struggling with the water tap. It had learnt how to turn on the tap. It spent most of its time playing with the rubber ball and marbles.

He was staying at Basra while he had to move to England and then to Camusfearna. But the problem was that some of the airlines did not allow transporting animals. Therefore, the narrator had to choose a different flight that allowed animals on board. As a result, Mijbil was packed in a box of its size. Then the narrator went for the meals. When he returned to his room, he noticed blood coming out from the air holes. He got frightened. He hurriedly opened it and saw that Mij was almost unconscious. He removed all the sharp edges from the box and placed it again into the box. The time was passing and he managed to hire a taxi. There were only ten minutes in his flight. So he sat at the back seat of the taxi and placed the box on his lap. Somehow he managed to catch the flight and he boarded the plane. The air hostess was somewhat friendly and she allowed the narrator to place the otter on his lap. But as soon as the narrator opened the box the otter disappeared in the plane. This frightened the passengers. But the airhostess helped him to find out Mij again.

In London people did not recognize otters. They used to make blind guesses to recognize the animal. The most surprising event was when the labourer was digging his hole in the street. On seeing the animal, he placed down his tools and when the narrator neared him, he shouted, what is that supposed to be.

Quick Revision Notes

- In the beginning of 1956, the author was in Iraq. One day on the way to Basra, he casually mentioned to a friend that he would love to have an otter instead of a dog as a pet.
- A few days later, the author got an otter from his friend. Two Arabs brought it for him in a sack.
- The author stayed in Basra for a few days. Very soon the otter became very friendly with the author. It loved to play with water all the time. It played with a rubber ball also.
- The author named his otter Mijbil. He made for it a body-belt. He would take it on a lead to the bathroom. There the otter would go mad playing with water. It could even turn the tap and make the water flow at full pressure.
- After some days, the author was to come back to London. The transporting of Mijbil became a problem. British airline did not permit animals on its flights. Another airline agreed to take the animal if packed in a box.
- The author made a small box for the otter. He had to face a lot of difficulty and it made him late for the plane.
- While in the plane, the otter escaped from the box. There was a lot of hue and cry. At last, the otter came back and settled on the author's knees.
- After an eventful journey, the author and his otter at last reached London where he lived in a flat.
- The otter spent most of its time playing with its toys. Sometimes the author took it out for a walk. He would take it on a lead as if it were a dog.
- Opposite to the author's flat, there was a primary school that had a low outer wall about thirty yards long. The otter would jump on to it and go running all the length of the wall.
- Different people made different guesses as to what animal it was. They would say it was a baby seal, squirrel, a walrus, a hippo, a beaver, a bear cub or even a leopard with spots.
- Very few Londoners had ever seen an otter. They were filled with surprise on seeing such a strange animal.

- One day a labourer was digging a hole in the street. Looking at the author's otter, he exclaimed, "Here, Mister, what is that supposed to be?"