

# 10th Standard - English

## Mijbil the Otter Summary

### I

Author's decision to keep a pet otter

The author went to southern Iraq early in the new year of 1956. He decided that he would keep a pet otter instead of a dog. His place of living Camusfearia had much water around it. So it would be suitable for it.

The author and his friend in Basra

The author's friend heard it. He suggested him to take one otter from the Tigris marshes. There the otters were in plenty. He and his friend were going to Basra to collect one. His friend's mail had reached the Consulate- General. But his mail had not.

An otter given to him by the Arabs

The author cabled the message to England. There was a delay of a few days due to fault in the line or holidays. At last the mail arrived. He went to his room to read it. There he saw two Arabs with the otter. They said it was for him.

### II

Strangeness of the otter

With that otter, the author says, his life underwent a change. This phase of his life still continues. The creature given to him looked like a small dragon.

The otter had pointed scales of mud armour on his back. Between tips there was a soft velvet fur. He was like that of a chocolate-brown mole. There was a lot of dust and mud on him. He took months to shed his mud over his body.

Otter identified and domesticated

The author called the otter Mijbil. His race was unknown to science. Zoologists gave him the name *Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli* or Maxwell's otter. At first Mijbil was aloof. He chose to sleep on the floor. The next night he came to the author's bed. He slept in his knees. In the day he took a keen interest in his surroundings. The author made him a body-belt. He took him to the bathroom. The otter was wild with joy in the under water of the bathtub.

Otter in the bathtub

Two days later, Mijbil escaped from the author's bedroom. He went to the bathroom. He entered the bathtub. He turned the tap. There flowed full tap water. Later he showed anger when the tap did not open.

Mij fully at home

Soon Mij followed the author when he called his name. He spent hours moving a rubber ball round the room. He would throw it also like a soccer player. The real play of an otter is when he lies on his back. He plays with small objects between his paws. His favourite toys were marbles.

**III**

Preparing to take Mij back home

Days passed peacefully at Basra.

The author feared to transport Mij to England and to Camusfeama. The British airline would not fly animals. So he booked a flight to Paris on another airline and another to London. Mij was put into a box to be habitual to it.

The otter and his box

It was flight time. The author returned from his meal. He found complete silence from the box. Blood had trickled from the airholes of the box and dried. He at once opened the box. Mij lay tired and blood-covered. He had torn the inner lining of the box. It was just ten minutes to the flight. The airport was five miles distant. The author put Mij back into the box.

The author in the aeroplane

The author sat in the car holding the box. The driver sped through the streets of Basra like a bullet. The aircraft was waiting to take off. The author rushed in. He covered the place near his seat with newspapers. He gave a parcel of fish to the airhostess for the otter. He told her of the last event of the otter. She suggested him to keep Mij on his knee.

Mij out of the box

Soon Mij was out of the box. He disappeared very soon. There were cries and shrieks inside the aeroplane. A woman stood and called "A rat! A rat!" The author saw Mij's tail beneath the legs of an Indian. The author's face got covered in curry. The airhostess assured the author that she would find the animal. The author returned to his seat. Very soon Mij came to him on his own.

## **IV**

### Playing by Mij with ping-pong balls

Mij and the author remained in London for nearly a month. He would play with toys, ping-pong balls, marbles, rubber fruit etc. He played with a suitcase with the ping-pong ball. He would catch ball off the suitcase cover. He would hide from it and walk off it. This would become his favourite game.

### Mij's playing in the outings

The author exercised Mij on a lead outside. Mij developed certain habits on those walks in the London streets. He went with him like children playing, running and touching things in the streets. He would take the author near the primary school outer wall. He would then gallop on it. This interested the pupils and the staff to distraction.

### Queries about Mij

Mij's presence made the Londoners guess about his kind. Otters belong to small group of animals called Mustellines. These are shared by the badger, mongoose, weasel, stoat, mink and others. The author received several questions. It could be 'a baby seal', 'a walrus', 'a hippo', 'a beaver', 'a bear cub', 'a leopard'. But Mij was nothing but an otter.

### Question by a labourer

The author awarded the highest score to a question from a labourer. He was digging a hole in the street. He saw the author with the otter. He laid down his tool. He came near him and glared. He then growled out, "Here, Mister—what is that supposed to be?"