



Introduction

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Chapter 8: Mijbil The Otter

By- Gavin Maxwell

Chapter 8: Mijbil The Otter

Summary

1. Maxwell Decides to keep an Otter:

Maxwell travelled to Southern Iraq in 1956. He decided to keep an otter as a pet. As his native place of living, Camusfearna, had much water around so, an otter was suitable for the experiment.

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2. Maxwell and his friend Travel to Basra:

When Maxwell mentioned about his wish to keep an otter as a pet to his friend, he suggested him to take an otter from Tigris marshes as they are quite common there. They were going to Basra to collect their mails. The mail of his friend reached but his mail did not arrive.

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3. Maxwell Mail Arrives and He Gets the Otter:

Maxwell sent a telegram to England as his mail had not arrived. For three days, there was no reply. He tried to make a phone call but due to some problems he was not able to get through. Finally, after five days his mail arrived. Once his mail arrived, he went to his room to read it.

There, he saw two Arabs with an otter. They told that it was for him.

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4. Strangeness of the Otter:

The otter changed the life of Maxwell. The otter came on to the tiled floor from the sack (bag). At once, it appeared like a small dragon. From head to tail, his body was coated with mud. In between the mud, a velvet fur-like creature resembling a chocolate brown mole appeared. There was a lot of dust on his body. It took Maxwell a month's time to remove all the dust from his body.

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5. Domestication of the Otter:

Maxwell named the otter as Mijbil. In short, he was called Mij. For the first twenty-four hours, the otter was neither unfriendly nor friendly. He was aloof and indifferent. He kept on sleeping on the floor far from the bed. The second night, he came onto Maxwell's bed and slept in the crook of his knees. In the day, he kept a keen interest in his surroundings. Maxwell made a body belt for him. The otter liked playing in the water in the bathroom.

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6. Mijbil's Escape from the Bedroom:

Two days later, Mijbil escaped from Maxwell's bedroom. He went to the bathroom. He entered the bathtub and turned the tap on with his paws within minutes.

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7. Mijbil Becomes Friendly:

Within a very less time, he became very friendly. He followed Maxwell when he called his name. He spent most of the time in playing with the rubber ball. He played it like a soccer ball. His favourite toys were the marbles.

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8. Taking Mijbil Back to Home:

Days passed peacefully at Basra. Maxwell had a fear of transporting Mij to England and then to Camusfearna. The British airlines would not fly animals. He booked a flight to Paris and then from there to London. The airlines told him to pack Mij in a box. He made a box for Mij. He put him inside the box before the flight so that he become habitual to it. Then Maxwell went to have lunch.

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9. The Otter and the Box:

When Maxwell came back after sometime, he was shocked to see a complete silence from the box. Blood was coming out from the airholes. He opened the box. He saw Mij covered with blood. Only 10 minutes were left for the flight and the airport was five miles away. He kept Mij inside the box and held the lid with his hands.

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10. Maxwell Leaves for Airport:

Maxwell sat in the car with the box beside him. The driver drove the car very fast. Just when the aircraft was about to take off, he was rushed through to it by the angry officials at the airport.

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11. Maxwell in the Aircraft:

Maxwell had booked the front seat for him. He covered the floor around his seat with newspapers. He gave the parcel of fish to the airhostess for the otter. She suggested him to keep the otter on his knees.

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12. Mijbil Goes Out of the Box:

Mij was out of the box at once. He disappeared in the aircraft. There was a woman shouting, "A rat! A rat!" in fear. Maxwell tried to catch the otter but he failed. The airhostess told him to be seated and said that she would find the otter for him. Very soon the otter came near Maxwell and climbed on his knees. He started rubbing his face and neck with his nose.

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13. Mijbil Reaches London:

Maxwell remained in London for almost a month. Mij kept on playing with ping-pong balls, marbles, rubber fruit and a terrapin shell that Maxwell had bought from the marshes.

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14. Mijbil Plays Outside the House:

Maxwell exercised Mij on a lead on the streets. Mij quickly developed certain habits during the walks on London streets. There was a primary school opposite to Maxwell's house. He would take Maxwell near the outer wall of it which was some two feet high. He would then gallop on to this.

This distracted the students and the staff. The people in London were not able to recognise the otter and made wild guesses.

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Conclusion

In the chapter – Mijbil the Otter, the story explained the beautiful bond of the author with his pet otter, Mijbil and the series of incidents that followed during their onward journey to London.

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