**MIJBIL THE OTTER:**

**EXTRACTS:**

5. I cabled to England, and when, three days later, nothing had happened, I tried to telephone. The call had to be booked twenty-four hours in advance. On the first day, the line was out of order. On the second day, the exchange was closed for a religious holiday. On the third day, there was another breakdown. My friend left, and I arranged to meet him in a week’s time. Five days later, my mail arrived. I carried it to my bedroom to read, and there, squatting on the floor, were two Arabs; besides them lay a sack that squirmed from time to time. They handed me a note from my friend; “Here is your otter”.

(a) What was the main problem in getting the mail?

(b) What did the writer get in the package?

(c) What did he see when he entered his room?

 (d) Why did the sack squirm from time-to-time?

6. Mijbil, as I called the otter, was, in fact, of a race previously unknown to science, was at length christened by zoologists Lutrogale perspicillataMaxwell, or Maxwell’s o For the first twenty-four hours Mijbil was neither hostile nor friendly; he was simply al and indifferent, choosing to sleep on the floor as far from my bed as possible. The s night Mijbil came on to my bed in the small hours and remained asleep in the crook of knees until the servant brought tea in the morning and during the day he began to lose apathy and take a keen, much too keen, interest in his surroundings.

(a) ‘Maxwell’s otter’. Why was the otter given this name?

 (b) What was his behaviour during the first twenty-four hours?

 (c) What shows that the otter tried to be friendly on the second night?

 (d) When did Mijbil come to the writer’s bed?

7. The creature that emerged from this sack on the spacious tiled floor of the bedroom resembled most of all a very small, medieval conceived, dragon. From the tip of the tail, he was coated with fur like pointed scales of mud armour’ whose tips were visible a soft velvet e that of a chocolate-brown mole.

 (a) Which creature is being talked about here?

(b) What did it resemble?

 (c) Why was he covered with mud?

(d) What does ‘mud armour’ imply here?

8. Very soon Mij would follow me without a lead and come to me when I called his name. He spent most of his time in play. He spent hours shuffling a rubber ball around the room like a four-footed soccer player using all four feet to dribble the ball, and he could also throw it, with a powerful flick of the neck, to a surprising height and distance. But the real play of an otter is when he lies on his back and juggles with small objects between his paws. Marbles were Mij’sfavourite toys for this pastime: he would lie on his back rolling two or more of them up and down his wide, flat belly without ever dropping one to the floor.

(a) How did Mij play with the rubber ball?

(b) What is the real play of the otter?

 (c) How did the otter spend most of his time?

(d) What did he look like while playing?

9. When I returned, there was an appalling spectacle. There was complete silence from the box, but from its air holes and chinks around the lid, blood had trickled and dried. I whipped off the lock and tore open the lid, and Mij exhausted and blood-spattered, whimpered and caught at my leg. He had torn the lining of the box to shreds when I removed the last of it so that there were no cutting edges left, it was just ten minutes until the time of the flight, and the airport was five miles distant. I put the miserable Mij back into the box, holding down the lid with my hand.

 (a) Why did the writer call it an appalling spectacle?

 (b) Why was the writer nervous?

(c) What were the observations of the writer when he returned?

 (d) Why did the writer put Mij back into the box