**MIJBIL THE OTTER:**

**Read the extracts and answer the questions that follow.**

1. Two days later, Mijbil escaped from my bedroom as I entered it, and I turned to see his tail disappearing round the bend of the corridor that led to the bathroom. By the time I got there he was up on the end of the bathtub and fumbling at the chromium taps with his paws. I watched, amazed; in less than a minute he had turned the tap far enough to produce a trickle of water, and after a moment or two achieved the full flow.

(a) Who was Mijbil?

 (b) What was the cause of the narrator’s surprise?

(c) What do you know about Mijbil?

 (d) Where did Mijbil go?

2. With the opening of that sack began a phase of my life that has not yet ended, and may, for all I know, not end before I do. It is, in effect, a thralldom to otters, an otter fixation, that I have since found to be shared by most other people, who have ever owned one.

 (a) Which creature emerged from the sack?

(b) With what was the otter coated?

 (c) What was the new phase’ of the author’s life?

(d) Why does the otter named ‘Maxwell’s otter’?

3. 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’sfavourites toys for his 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) What is the real play of an otter?

 (b) What are the Mij’s favourite toys?

(c) How did he conduct with them?

 (d) What do you know about Mij?

4. Early in the New Year of 1956, I travelled to Southern Iraq. By then it had crossed my mind that I should like to keep an otter instead of a dog and that Camusfearna, ringed by water a stone’s throw from its door, would be an eminently suitable spot for this experiment. When I casually mentioned this to a friend, he as casually replied that I had better get one in the Tigris marshes, for there they were as common as mosquitoes and were often by the Arabs.

(a) Where did the writer go?

(b) That did he want as a pet?

 (c) What ‘experiment’ did Maxwell think Camusfearna would be suitable for?

(d) Why did the author think of keeping an otter in place of a dog as a pet?