The Man from Nowhere  Bernard Smith

Summary

This adventure story is set in Oman, in the Middle East. A man is flying his private plane home from a holiday in India. As the plane approaches the Oman coastline, he tells his wife about the natural beauty of the Wahiba Desert, which he remembers from the time he worked in Oman. As the plane descends, it flies into a flock of birds, one of which smashes into the cockpit window. The man is struck by flying glass and loses consciousness. His wife is unable to control the plane, which crashes in the desert.

With the radio out of action, and limited food and water supplies, the man, despite his head injury, decides to walk to the coast to find help. He leaves his young son and wife, who has a foot injury, with the plane. By early evening, the man reaches the coast, more dead than alive in the fierce heat. He collapses on the beach, where he is discovered by a villager. Help is summoned, and the man is flown to the nearest city for treatment. At the hospital he lies in a deep coma. The nurse attending him hears him say a few words in English.

Inspector Ibrahim of the Omani police and Doctor Singh discuss the mystery patient, who was carrying no identification. The inspector decides to check all visa records for foreigners working in Oman. Meanwhile, at the plane the wife and child survive by drinking the water which condenses over night under the wings of the plane. A television news broadcast featuring a picture of the man fails to elicit any information about the man's identity. The doctor and the inspector think the man may have been involved in an accident, but cannot do anything more until he regains consciousness. Back at the plane, the wife and child soak clothing in petrol from a leaking tank so as to have a distress signal ready in case they see a plane.

When the man awakes on the fourth day, he has total memory loss until the nurse reminds him of the words he said while unconscious. He remembers his name is Christos Bardis; he is a Greek shipping tycoon. He also remembers how his plane crashed, and urges Inspector Ibrahim to do everything possible to find his family. The doctor, however, is pessimistic about their chances.

The inspector calls for police helicopters, and devises a plan with the doctor to search the Wahiba Desert systematically. Bardis leaves his bed, ignoring the nurse's protests, and insists on accompanying the inspector. By the time the helicopters reach the Wahiba Desert, there is only about two hours' daylight left. The search seems to be fruitless until Bardis notices a fire in the distance. Andy, his son, has heard the engine and has set light to the petrol-soaked suitcase. The flames spread to the plane itself though. With difficulty the boy drags his mother to safety away from the fire.

The inspector's helicopter lands near the burning plane, where they find the boy and his mother, who is alive but very weak. Medical help is immediately summoned. At last Bardis is reunited with his family.
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Check your reading

Chapter 1
1. 1 d, 2 a, 3 b, 4 c

Chapter 2
1. c, f, a, b, d, e

Chapter 3
1. 1 b, 2 c, 3 e, 4 a, 5 d

Chapter 4
1. 1 e, 2 d, 3 b, 4 c, 5 a

Chapter 5
1. The boy's father looked at the man on the beach. He was still alive. The men took him back to the village and washed him. The head man called the police on his radio telephone. A helicopter arrived with a doctor, who said they had to get the man to hospital in Muscat. At the hospital, a nurse sat next to his bed all night. The man talked in his sleep but she couldn't understand him.

Chapter 6
1. 1 T, 2 ?, 3 ?, 4 T, 5 T, 6 ?, 7 T, 8 ?
2. In the desert, Andy and his mother didn't have much food or drink, and her foot hurt a lot. Andy heard something running out of the plane's engine – it was petrol. Andy's mum told him to put a suitcase full of clothes under the engine. Then they could burn the suitcase if they heard a plane coming.

Chapter 7
1. a television newsreader, b Inspector Ibrahim, c Doctor Singh, d Inspector Ibrahim, e Andy, f Andy's mother

Chapter 8
1. 1 b, 2 d, 3 e, 4 a, 5 c

Chapter 9
1. c, e, d, b, a

Chapter 10
1. a the plane, b Andy and his mother, c Bardis, d Bardis, e Inspector Ibrahim, Bardis and the pilot

Chapter 11
1. a Andy, b Andy, c the pilot, d Bardis, e Bardis, f Inspector Ibrahim

Chapter 12
1. 1 d, 2 a, 3 e, 4 c, 5 b

After reading