



THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR



Introduction: Robert Arthur's "The Midnight Visitor" unfolds a gripping detective story featuring the cunning secret agent Ausable. The narrative revolves around a high-stakes encounter with Max, Ausable's rival, and the ingenious strategies Ausable employs to outsmart his adversary.

Ausable's Mission:

Ausable, the detective, anticipates retrieving sensitive papers in his hotel room. However, Max, his rival, ambushes him at gunpoint, demanding the coveted documents.

Ausable's Remarkable Response:

Despite the threat, Ausable exhibits remarkable composure. He weaves a fictional tale about a non-existent balcony, befuddling Max and creating a diversion.

Fowler's Bewilderment:

Fowler, Ausable's friend, is astonished to discover the unexpected nature of the seemingly unfit secret agent. The suspense builds as Max holds them at gunpoint.

The Inventive Balcony Ruse:

Ausable, sensing danger, invents a fictional balcony below the window, convincing Max that the police are at the door. Max, fearing arrest, leaps to his demise, unaware of the nonexistent balcony.

Adventurous Evening Turns Lethal:

What begins as a planned evening for Fowler transforms into an unexpected and perilous encounter with a secret agent, leading to a life-or-death situation.

The Wine Delivery Twist: As Max awaits on the imaginary balcony, a waiter arrives with a wine delivery. Ausable reveals the absence of police and the non-existence of the balcony, leaving Fowler bewildered.

Ausable's Quick Wit Triumphs:

Ausable's quick thinking and clever storytelling prove triumphant. Max's nervousness and panic lead to his fatal decision, as he jumps from the hotel's top floor.

Conclusion:

"The Midnight Visitor" delivers a compelling message about maintaining composure in challenging situations. Ausable's wit and resourcefulness showcase the power of quick thinking and adaptability, ultimately saving him from a perilous encounter.

Extract Based Questions:

Q1: And then there was his accent. Though he spoke French and German passably, he had never altogether lost the American accent he had brought to Paris from Boston twenty years ago.

(a) Who is 'he' in the above extract? Ans: 'He' in the above extract is Ausable, a secret agent.

(b) Where is he at present?

Ans: At present, he is about to enter his room on the sixth floor of a French hotel.

(c) Find the word from the extract that means the opposite of 'fluently'

Ans: The word is 'passably'.

(d) What is the present tense of 'speak'?

Ans: 'Speak' is its present tense.

Q2: "You are disillusioned", Ausable told him. "But take cheer, my young friend. Presently you will see a paper, a quite important paper for which several men and women have risked their lives, come to me. Some day soon that paper may well affect the course of history. In that thought is drama, is there not?" [CBSE2015]

(a) Who is 'my young friend' in the above extract?

Ans: 'My young friend' in the above extract is Fowler, a young romantic writer.

(b) What is the 'important paper' referred to here?

Ans: The 'important paper' referred to here is a report regarding some new missiles.

(c) Find a word from the passage that means the same as 'disappointed'

Ans: The word is 'disillusioned':

Top 10 PYQs:

Short Answer Questions (40-50 words each)

1. How did Max go out of Ausable's room to save himself from the police?

Answer: Max was very nervous to find the police at the door. He went out of the window saying that he would wait on the balcony. He warned Ausable to send them away or he would shoot him. Max did not confirm the balcony and stepped out of the window and died.

2. How did Ausable kill Max without using a weapon?

Answer: Ausable was an intelligent spy. When he found Max waiting for him in his room, he made up a story of a balcony under his window. He convinced Max about the balcony. Thus, when someone knocked at the door, Max, fearing it was the police, jumped out of the window and died.

3. Did Max really deserve to get a chance to accomplish a risky task?

Answer: I do not believe that Max deserved a chance to accomplish a risky task, as he is very smart, gun. A spy without these nor very intelligent. He did not even look threatening to Fowler except seeing apparent qualities will most likely be a failure.

4. How did Ausable befool Max about the balcony?

Answer: Ausable was a very intelligent spy agent. When he found Max waiting for him in his room, he immediately thought of the plan. He told Max that there is a balcony from where people enter his room and Max must have also entered from there. Max was convinced about the story and hence when someone knocked at the door, he ran towards the balcony to hide and died.

5. What was the real story of the balcony below the window of Ausable's room?

Answer: Ausable had an instant and fertile mind. He could cook up all kinds of stories that fit in different situations. Actually, there was no balcony below the window of his room. Ausable cooked up a story that the balcony below his room had become a big nuisance. It was the second time that someone had got into his room through it. Actually, he wanted to confuse Max and make him jump out of the window to get rid of him.

6. What position did Max take before he jumped out of the window?

Answer: Max kept his body twisted. In this way, he could keep his gun pointed at Ausable and Fowler. He grasped the frame with his free hand to support himself. He swung his other leg up and over the windowsill. The moment he heard the knocking getting louder at the door, he positioned himself to jump out of the window.

7. Ausable was a successful secret agent. What qualities can be attributed to him? Give some examples.

Answer: Ausable was very fat. He appeared to be a slow and sluggish person. But inside that fat body, he had a very sharp brain. It was through his presence of mind, intelligence and cleverness that he got rid of Max easily. When Max heard a knock at the door Ausable told him that it was the police whom he had supposedly called for the extra protection of the papers. Max wanted Ausable to send them away quickly while he waited on the balcony. Ausable had actually ordered a drink and it was the waiter knocking at the door. He used the false story to mislead Max. Max was neither facing police escaping to a balcony. Instead, he unknowingly jumped to his death from the sixth floor, failing in his mission. Ausable's clever trick ensured his victory without violence. That way Ausable got rid of Max. The way Ausable got rid of Max proves that he was a clever secret agent.

8. Write a character sketch of the secret Agent Ausable.

Answer: Ausable was a secret agent. He was a fat and sloppy fellow. In his appearance, he did not seem to be a romantic figure. He came to Paris from Boston twenty years ago. He could speak French and German passably. He had not lost the American accent. Ausable was a very intelligent person. He had a great presence of mind. He did not lose heart in a difficult situation when he faced a man with a pistol in his hand. He remained cool. He made up a story about the balcony. He made Max nervous by telling him about the police. He got Max killed without any fighting or shooting. Fowler who was initially disappointed upon meeting Ausable, was greatly impressed by his intelligence and quick thinking by the end of the story.