



THE MIDNIGHT'S VISITOR

INTRODUCTION

The story is about a secret agent, Ausable who has spent an evening with a writer named Fowler who had expected that as he would be meeting a secret agent he would be looking into a lot of adventure. But instead, he rather gets bored when he meets Ausable as the things that happened were exactly the opposite of what he had imagined. How Ausable gets rid of his unexpected guest proves his expertise as a secret agent.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Jay Arthur Jr.

was a writer of speculative fiction known for his work with 'The Mysterious Traveler radio' series and for writing 'The Three Investigators', a series of young adult novels. Arthur was honoured twice by the Mystery Writers of America with an Edgar Award for Best Radio Drama. He also wrote scripts for television such as The Twilight Zone and Alfred Hitchcock's TV show, Alfred Hitchcock Presents.

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CHARACTER SKETCH

Ausable is the main character of the story *The Midnight's Visitor*. He is a secret agent or a spy who had a small room, on the sixth and top floor, of a gloomy French hotel. Ausable was a short and stout (fat) man, with no similarity to a secret agent in his looks. Though he spoke French and German passably, but he had never lost his American accent which he had brought to Paris from Boston twenty years ago. Fowler (a young writer) got disappointed after his meeting with Ausable, because he was not the exact one that Fowler had thought him to be. Instead of having messages slipped into his hand by dark-eyed beauties, he only got a prosaic telephone call making an appointment in his room. Although he is not Physically very strong and does not have exact looks like a secret agent but at the end of the story he clearly emerges as the super scheming and ever alert secret agent. Ausable proves his great presence of mind and absolutely amazing intelligence with his actions.

ASSIGNMENT-1

Q1. How does Ausable manage to make Max believe that there is a balcony attached to his room? Look back at his detailed description of it. What makes it a convincing story?

Ans. When Ausable says that he had complained to the hotel management earlier as well about someone entering the room from the balcony that was below his room, Max started thinking that had he known there was a balcony, it would have been much easier for him to get to Ausable's room. Ausable then tells Max that he wanted extra protection for the papers that were supposed to come in that day and that he had informed the police who were knocking on the door, checking on him. This made Max very nervous and he thought that he would wait for the police to go on the balcony. Without realizing, he jumped out of the window and did not realize that there was no balcony. So the way Ausable thinks calmly and quickly makes the story a lot more convincing.

Q2. How is Ausable different from other secret agents?

Ans. Ausable is different from other secret agents because he was very fat, lived in a room on the top floor of a gloomy French hotel and could only speak French passibly although he had been living in Paris for over 20 years. His voice still had an American touch to it . He used to receive messages via telephone instead of dark eyed beauties getting him his messages. So he was very different from the way other secret agents are.

Q3. Who is Fowler and what is his first authentic thrill of the day?

Ans. Fowler is a young writer who comes to meet Ausable. He is bored sitting with Ausable in a music hall as he had thought that the country's secret agent would be thrilling and exciting but nothing of that sort happened. After some time when they were coming back to Ausable's room, Fowler saw a man holding a gun standing in the room. So that is when he feels that the life of a secret agent can be exciting.

Q4. How has Max got in?

Ans. Max had got in with a masterkey or passkey.

Q5. How does Ausable say he got in?

Ans. Ausable says that he thought that Max had got in through the balcony. He said that it was a nuisance as it was not even his own balcony and that it was the second time somebody had got in using that same balcony.

ASSIGNMENT – 2

Short Answer Type Questions:

- Q1. Describe Ausable as a secret agent?
- Q2. Describe Fouler and his purpose of visiting Ausable?
- Q3. How did Fouler get the first thrill of the day?
- Q4. Who was Max and why did he come into Ausable's room?
- Q5. What story did Ausable cook about the balcony?
- Q6. What was Max after?
- Q7. What was the story behind the sound of knocking at the door?
- Q8. Why and how did Max panic to jump out of the windows?
- Q9. Did Ausable pre plan all he did or it was just his spontaneous but wise reaction to the situation in hand?

ASSIGNMENT – 3

Long Answer Type Questions:

Q1. Give a character sketch of Ausable, highlighting his quick and wise understanding of the situations and people?

Q2. How was the crafty rival of Ausable, Max, trapped in the outwitted to a tragic end?

Q3. Max was smart and crafty but Ausable was more than a match for him. Comment.

Q4. Why was Fouler disappointed to meet Ausable? What was his opinions of Ausable in the end?

THE END