



STUDY COURSE MATERIAL

ENGLISH

SESSION-2020-21

CLASS-X

TOPIC: CHAPTER-2 [THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR]

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SUMMARY

❖ TEACHING MATERIAL

- ✚ Ausable was a secret agent. He was staying in a French hotel. A young and romantic writer named Fowler came to meet him. Fowler was disappointed to see Ausable. He was a sloppy fat fellow. His room was at the top and sixth floor of that musty and gloomy hotel. When they both entered the room and Ausable switched on they found that a man was standing in the centre of the room. He had a pistol in his hand. It was the first thrill of the day for Fowler. The name of the man with a gun was Max.
- ✚ He said that he had come there to snatch the report from Ausable which he was expecting to receive. Ausable remained silent and cool. He seemed to be angry with the management of the hotel. He cocked-up a story about the balcony. He told him that there was a balcony just below the window of his room and last month too an unknown person had entered the room through that balcony.
- ✚ Max told Ausable that he had used a master key to enter the door. He wished that he should have entered through the balcony way. It would have been much easier. There was still half an hour for the report to arrive.
- ✚ There was a sudden knocking at the door. Ausable smiled. He said it must be the police because he himself had called them for the protection of such an important report.
- ✚ Max was nervous. He jumped through the window to the balcony. But there was no balcony as Ausable had told. He fell down to the ground from the sixth floor and was killed.
- ✚ Then the door opened. The waiter entered the room with a tray a bottle of wine and two glasses. Ausable had ordered for them. The waiter left. Fowler did not know anything about the balcony. He feared that Max would return soon. But

Ausable told him the fact that he would never return. Thus, Fowler was much impressed by his cleverness and presence of mind.

Main Points of the Story

- Fowler was a young and romantic writer.
- He wanted to meet Ausable because he wanted to write a book on detectives.
- Ausable was a detective in Paris who was fat and sloppy and hardly looked like a secret agent.
- When Ausable switched on the light, he found Max standing with a pistol in his hand in the room.
- Max had come to take a particularly important report concerning missiles forcibly from Ausable.
- Ausable cooked up a false story to entrap crafty Max.
- He told Max that the balcony below his window had become a big nuisance.
- It was the second time in a month that somebody got into his room through the balcony.
- He also made Max panicky by telling him that the knockings at the door were of the police, whom he had already informed.
- When Max become panicky, he came to the window and jumped out of it.
- A loud cry was heard and in this way, Ausable got rid of his crafty enemy.
- Later on, it was found that the knockings at the door were made by the waiter, who entered the room with a bottle and two glasses as ordered by Ausable.

Main Characters of the Story- The Midnight Visitor

Character Sketch

1.Ausable: He is a different kind of secret agent. Generally, secret agents that are described in detective books and shown in films, are very smart and gun-friendly. Wine and dark-eyed beauties are associated with them. However, Ausable doesn't present such a romantic picture. He is very fat and sloppy. Physically, he may be fat but mentally he is very agile and quick-witted. He knows all the tricks of his trade. He is very quick to react and can cook up stories that may fit in all kinds of situations. He convinces even the crafty Max that there is a balcony below the window of his room.

2. Max: Max is a secret agent and a rival and enemy of Ausable. He is slender, a little less than tall. He appears crafty and has a countenance of a fox. There is nothing especially menacing about him except his pistol. He enters Ausable's room to take away a very important paper concerning some new missiles.

3. Fowler: Fowler is a young and romantic writer. He wants to write a book on detectives. Fowler forms a very romantic and grand picture of a secret agent in his mind. He finds Ausable not cracking pistols or surrounded by dark-eyed beauties like James Bond. He feels let down after meeting Ausable.

Word meanings

Romantic: imaginative; having a fantastic view of reality

Passably: just well enough; tolerably well

Espionage: spying

Sloppy: (here) carelessly dressed

Prosaic: ordinary

Chuckled: laughed quietly, without opening his mouth

Wheezed: spoke breathing noisily and heavily

Missiles: weapons directed by remote control or automatically

Shrilly: piercingly; in a high pitch

Authentic- of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine.

Halfway- at or to a point equidistant between two others.

Wheezed- spoke breathing noisily and heavily

Slender- gracefully thin.

Countenance- a person's face or facial expression.

Menacing- suggesting the presence of danger; threatening.

Murmured- say something in a low or indistinct voice.

Missile- : weapons directed by remote control or automatically

Raise the devil- make a noisy disturbance.

Grimly- in a very serious, gloomy, or depressing manner.

Nuisance- a person or thing causing inconvenience or annoyance.

Question and Answers

1. How was Ausable different from the other secret agents?

Ans. Ausable, unlike other secret agents, was very fat with an accent of German. Fowler was expecting a smart and active agent having messages slipped into his hand by a dark beauty. Whereas, Ausable received a telephone call making an appointment in his room.

2. Why did Fowler feel let down after meeting Ausable?

Ans. The young writer, the Fowler, had formed a very romantic and grand picture of a secret agent in his mind. This picture was based as it is found in books or shown in films. He found Ausable not cracking pistols or surrounded by dark-eyed beauties like James Bond. Rather he was a fat and sloppy man. He lived in a very small room on the sixth floor. Fowler felt rather let down after meeting Ausable.

Q3. What is the important paper that Ausable talks of?

Ans. Ausable is a secret agent. He has been assigned an important job. He has an important paper regarding some new missiles under his custody. The paper may well affect the course of history. It is of so much importance that several men and women have risked their lives to get them. Even Max, a secret agent himself, comes to grab them from Ausable's room.

Q4. How did Fowler have his first authentic thrill of the day?

Ans. Fowler was rather bored and disillusioned after meeting the secret agent, Ausable. But soon, he had his first authentic thrill of the day. The moment Ausable switched on the light, he found a man standing halfway across the room. He had a small automatic pistol in his hand. Fowler was stunned. The man demanded the report concerning some new missiles from Ausable. Fowler had his first authentic thrill of the day.

Q5. Why and how did Max enter Ausable's room?

Ans. Max's entry was not merely accidental. He had entered Ausable's room through a passkey. When Ausable switched on the light, he found him standing with a small automatic pistol in his hand. He had come to grab a very important paper that was related to some new missiles. Several men and women had already risked their lives to get that report.

Q6. Describe Max as a secret agent.

Ans. Max was a secret agent and a rival and enemy of Ausable. He was slender, a little less than tall. He appeared crafty and had pointed countenance of a fox. There was nothing especially menacing about him except his pistol. He came to Ausable's room to steal a very important paper concerning some new missiles. He is outwitted by Ausable and made to jump out of his window.

Q7. What was the real story of the balcony below the window of Ausable's room?

Ans. 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.

Q8. What position did Max take before he jumped out of the window?

Ans. 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.

Q9. What story did Ausable cook up regarding the arrival of the police? How did it affect Max?

Ans. Ausable was very quick of mind. His sharp brain could cook up any story that could fit in a particular situation. When Max heard a loud knocking at the door, he got nervous. Ausable told Max that the knocking at the door announced the arrival of the police. After all, he was holding an important paper concerning missiles. He had sought police protection. He told the police to check on him to make sure that everything was all right. This unnerved and confused Max.

Q10. 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. Ausable created a convincing story about the presence of a balcony. He said that twice in a month somebody had entered his room through the balcony. On being questioned by Max about the balcony, he replied with extreme irritation that it was not his balcony. This reaction, which looked natural, played a part in convincing Max. He further told Max explanatorily that his room was earlier a part of a larger unit and the adjoining room was the one which had the balcony. He said that it extended under his window. His manner of description and speaking convinced Max that there was indeed a balcony under his window.

Q11. Looking back at the story, when do you think Ausable thought up his plan for getting rid of Max? Do you think he had worked out his plan in detail right from the beginning? Or did he make up a plan taking advantage of events as they happened?

Ans. It seems that Ausable had worked out the plan right from the beginning. He did not take any time to let Max know about the presence of a balcony. His story seemed pretty much thought out and he was convincing in his narration. The timing of the knock on the door was perfect because he had already asked the waiter, Henry, to bring him a bottle of drink and two glasses after he returned. Therefore, he was expecting his knock on the door and accordingly, he told Max that it was the police whom he had asked to check in to make sure everything was

alright. At the end, the calm with which he told Fowler, who was terrified, that there was no police and that he had expected the waiter to come in with his order shows that he was not surprised by the sudden turn of events and Max's turning up at his room. Such a detailed and well-knit plan gives the impression that it was pre-planned and that he was prepared for it.