



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2022-23)

QUESTION BANK – THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR- by Robert Arthur

Class: X

Sub: ENGLISH

I.SUMMARY

The story is about a witty secret agent named Ausable. He was with a writer named Fowler throughout the evening as Fowler was interested in spending time with a secret agent but when he spends time with Ausable he realizes that he is exactly the opposite of what he had imagined and that he was a bore. Ausable then told Fowler that he had been thinking wrong and that soon he would be looking at a report that would change the country's future. Then Ausable takes Fowler to his room and when they entered the room a guy with a gun named Max was standing in the room. He asked them to be comfortable until the reports about the missiles arrived in 30 minutes as he was there to steal the reports. This was the first adventure out of many that Fowler had expected when he had thought of meeting a secret agent. While they were talking, Ausable started with a story about how a guy had entered from the balcony last month below his room. While this talk was going on, a sudden knock was heard at the door. Ausable said that it must be the police as he wanted them to check on him after sometime because he wanted to make the reports that were coming in extra secure. Max, pointing his gun towards them, said that he would be waiting in the balcony and that Ausable should send away the police otherwise he would shoot them and even take the risk of being caught by the police. As the doorknob is turned, Max jumps out of the window and a loud scream is heard. The door opens and a waiter comes in and says that he has brought the wine that Mr. Ausable had ordered. He keeps the bottle, tray and glasses on the table and leaves. Fowler is surprised and asks him about the police to which Ausable replied that there were no police. Then Fowler asked what about the person who was waiting in the balcony outside the window to which Ausable replied that the person would not return and that there was no balcony there. This shows the quick wit of Ausable as he took advantage of the situation and made Max nervous due to which he jumped out of the window without thinking and looking down. He had jumped from the top floor of the hotel and would have possibly died. This is how Ausable outwitted Max and saved himself from a very dangerous situation.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

Question 1.

How is Ausable different from other secret agents?

Answer:

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.

Question 2.

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

Answer:

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.

Question 3.

How has Max got in?

Answer:

Max had got in with a masterkey or passkey.

Question 4.

How does Ausable say he got in?

Answer:

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.

Question 5.

Why is it necessary to always have a good presence of mind?

Answer:

The presence of mind is very important in every aspect of life, which means having self-control in stressful situations along with the ability to think and act calmly even if chaos or conflict surrounds us.

Question 6.

What are the main reasons for 'Intimidation'?

Answer:

People can be intimidated for many reasons, such as reputation, body and verbal language, unpredictability, reputation or uncertainty about the value they have to the other person.

Question 7.

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?

Answer:

No, I don't think that Ausable had thought up his plan earlier to get rid of Max. He maintained his calm composure and took advantage of events and the situation as they happened. He made up a story of the balcony outside the room to convince Max into believing him and then when there was a knock at the door, he said that he had called the police to check on him and make sure that everything was alright. All these things made Max desperate and shiver in fear. He became restless and without checking outside, he jumped out of the window.

Question 9.

What story did Ausable frame about calling the police?

Answer:

As soon as there was a knock at the door, Max enquired of it. Ausable told him that he had already informed the police to check if everything was okay at intervals because of the important papers. Ausable told Max that they were on their duty to check.

Question 10.

“A procrastinist is one who delays action and invites a tragedy to happen with him”.

Is Max a procrastinist, why, why not?

Answer:

No, Max is not a procrastinist. He did not delay the action of his own. He had to wait until the paper he was seeking, arrived. He was overconfident and foolish enough to be duped by Ausable so simply and easily. He believed Ausable and did not confirm anything himself.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. 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?

Answer:

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.

2. What was Ausable's problem? How did he solve it?

Answer:

Ausable was a secret agent in an organisation. He had gone out with Fowler to spend the evening in a French music hall. When they returned to Ausable's room in the hotel, they found Max standing in the middle of the room. He had a revolver in his hand. Ausable did not lose his calm. With unique presence of mind, he fabricated a story. He said that it was the second time someone had entered his room through the balcony under the window. Max took the concocted story as true.

Instantly, there was a knocking on the door. Max got panic stricken when Ausable remarked that there were the police. He had requested them to provide him extra security. Max was bewildered. He went towards the window and jumped on the non-existing balcony from the sixth floor. Max met with his death. Thus, Ausable's problem was solved.

3. How did Max attempt but failed to acquire the secret paper from Ausable?

Answer:

Max's organisation had ordered him to grab the secret report on missiles which the people of Ausable's organisation had managed to get. He used a passkey and entered Ausable's hotel room at midnight. He was holding a revolver in his hand since he intended to grab the report at pistol point. Ausable invented the fake story of a balcony extending under his window just to embarrass Max.

He remarked that it was the second time in the month that somebody had got into his room through that balcony. Instantly there was a knock at the door. Ausable's remark that police had arrived to check on him unnerved Max.- To save his life, Max rushed towards the window. In hot haste, Max dropped to the non-existent balcony and met his tragic end. Thus he failed to acquire the secret paper.