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Class-X

English

Footprints without Feet

Chapter-3

The Midnight Visitor



Robert Arthur

Part - 2

Neha Rajvanshi

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I told them to check on me to make sure everything was all right."

Max bit his lip nervously. The knocking was repeated

"What will you do now, Max?" Ausable asked. "If I do not answer the door, they will enter anyway. The door is unlocked.

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Swiftly : तेजी से
Swung : मोड़ना



And they will not hesitate to shoot."

Max's face was black with anger as he backed swiftly towards the window. He swung a leg over the sill. "Send them away!" he warned. "I will wait on the balcony.

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Send them away or I'll shoot and take my chances!"

The knocking at the door became louder and a voice was raised. "Mr Ausable! Mr Ausable!"

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Keeping his body twisted so that his gun still covered the fat man and his guest, the man at the window grasped the frame with his free hand to support himself. Then he swung his other leg up and over the window-sill.

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Shrilly : चीखते हुए



The doorknob turned. Swiftly Max pushed with his left hand to free himself from the sill and drop to the balcony. And then, as he dropped, he screamed once, shrilly.

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Deftly : तेजी से / सावधानी से



The door opened and a waiter stood there with a tray, a bottle and two glasses. "Here is the drink you ordered for when you returned," he said, and set the tray on the table, deftly uncorked the bottle, and left the room.

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Stammered : हकलाना

White-faced, Fowler stared after him. "But..." he stammered, "the police..."

"There were no police."

Ausable sighed. "Only Henry, whom I was expecting."

"But won't that man out on the balcony...?" Fowler began.

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"No," said Ausable, "he won't return. You see, my young friend, there is no balcony."

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COMPREHENSION



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Question 1. How is Ausable different from other secret agents?

Answer : Ausable was not a smart secret agent as Fowler had expected. He was very fat. He spoke French and German with a slight American accent. He used ordinary telephones to make calls.

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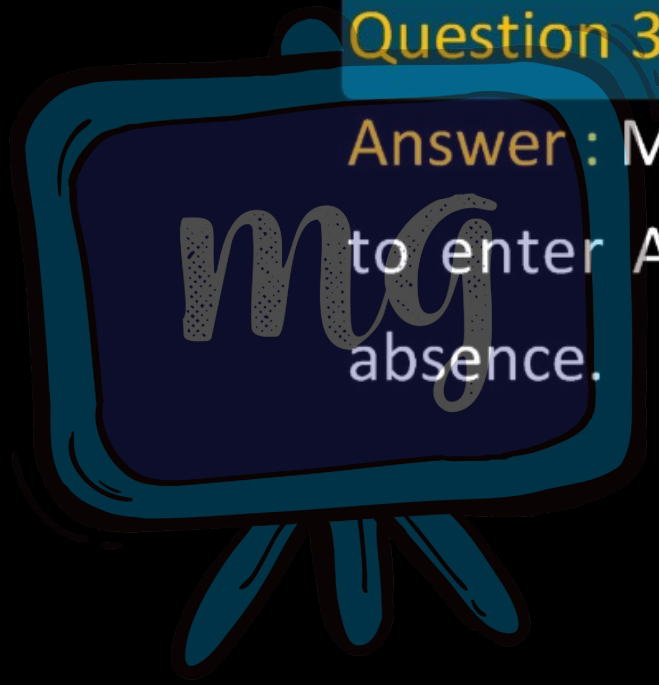
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Question 2. Who is Fowler and what is his first authentic thrill of the day?

Answer : Fowler is a writer. He wants to meet Ausable to cover him up for writing for his publication. Fowler's first authentic thrill of the day came when he saw a man in Ausable's room pointing a pistol towards Ausable and himself.

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Question 3. How has Max got in?

Answer : Max has used a passkey to enter Ausable's room in his absence.

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Question 4. How does Ausable say he got in?

Answer : Ausable says that Max got in his room through an ordinary window. It was in the balcony.

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Question 5. "Ausable did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read". What do secret agents in books and films look like, in your opinion?

Answer : Secret agents in books and films look like perfect men with perfect physique. They are well built with a tall figure.

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They would smoke a pipe (like sherlock Holmes) or a cigar. Movies based on James Bond show hi-tech gadgets which help them to catch the criminal. Generally they wear a long over coat and a hat. They have keen and sharp eyes with brilliant brain that can solve any mystery or problem.

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Question 6. 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 : Ausable creates a description of how his room was a part of a bigger apartment and

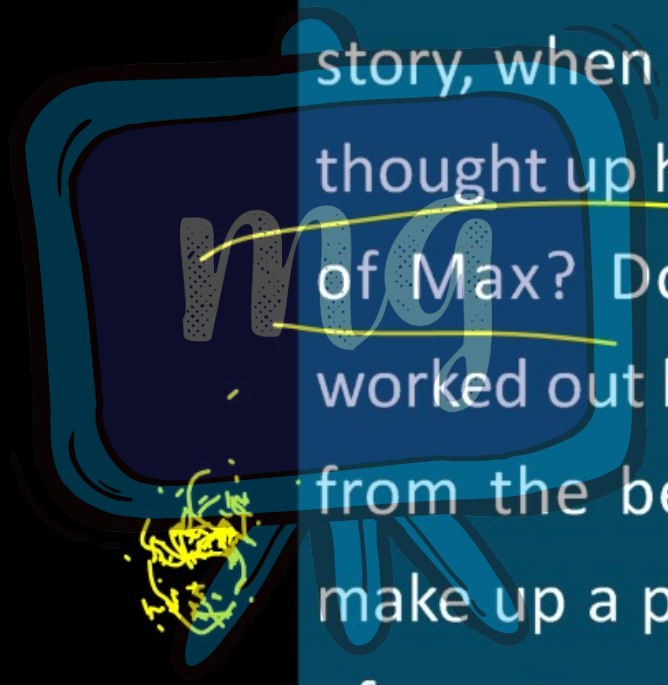
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how the living room had a direct connection with a balcony. He also told that somebody broke into his room through that balcony and this made it a convincing story. His action that was full of irritation and very normal played a part in convincing Max.

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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?

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Answer : I think it was not pre planned by Ausable. He was very smart, clever and quick witted and was able to make this plan then and there only. He did not take any time to let Max know about the presence of a balcony.

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The timing of the knock on the door was perfect because he had already asked the waiter, to bring him a bottle of drink and two glasses after he returned. Therefore he was expecting this 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.