

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

Answer: Ausable stood out among other secret operatives in a number of ways. On the sixth and top floor of a dark French hotel, he had a modest room in a musty corridor, hardly the scene of a romantic adventure. He was a messy, obese man with an odd accent. Despite having lived in Paris for more than twenty years after moving from Boston, he still struggled to speak French and German and kept his American accent. Typically, a spy gets messages delivered covertly to him by gorgeous women; Ausable was not that kind of spy. He only received a routine call setting an appointment. He deviated from the stereotype of a secret agent in a number of ways, including the ones listed above. Additionally, we saw how he handled Max in the narrative by fabricating a false balcony and persuading Max to jump off the building in order to permanently get rid of Max.

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

Answer: A young, amorous writer named Fowler had come to meet Ausable. He saw an unknown man in Ausable's room pointing a small automatic pistol at him and Ausable, giving him his first thrill of the day.

Read and Find Out (Page 15)**Question 1: How has Max got in?**

Answer: Max had used a passkey or master key to enter Ausable's room.

Question 2: How does Ausable say he got in?

Answer: Max may have entered the room via the balcony, according to Ausable. He grumbled that someone had broken into his room through that obtrusive balcony for the second time in a month.

Think about it (Page 18)

Question 1: “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? Discuss in groups or in class some stories or movies featuring spies, detectives and secret agents, and compare their appearance with that of Ausable in this story. (You may mention characters from fiction in languages other than English. In English fiction you may have come across Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, or Miss Marple. Have you watched any movies featuring James Bond?)

Answer: In fiction, secret spies are typically portrayed as ideal gentlemen who are tall, dark, and handsome with amazing speaking abilities and an alluring manly voice. Usually, they are accompanied by lovely women and sturdy buildings. Some spies smoke cigars or pipes like Sherlock Holmes, and they pull off risky exploits just as in James Bond films. These films demonstrate the employment of cutting-edge tools that support the capture of criminals and the defeat of wicked villains. The definition of detectives or spies given above does, however, have certain exclusions. Satyajit Ray, a well-known Bengali director, invented the detective character Feluda, which is a perfect illustration. Feluda was a tall, attractive, and athletic secret agent with incredible analytical ability, keen perception, and excellent observation skills.

Question 2: 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 detailed in his conversation with Fowler how his room was a part of a larger apartment and how the living room that was connected by a door had a balcony. Further details were provided, and Max was immediately persuaded by the claim that someone had previously entered his office by that balcony. Max was more likely to believe Ausable's story because of his quick wit and calm demeanour in the face of such chaos.

Question 3: 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 believe Ausable had planned to get rid of Max earlier. He kept his cool and capitalised on the circumstance and the events as they occurred. To get Max to believe him, he made up the tale of the balcony outside the window. When the doorbell rang, he pretended to have called the police to check on him and make sure everything was okay. Max became terrified and despondent as a result of all these things. Without looking outside, he jumped out of the window after becoming restless.