

Unit

4

Supplementary

The Midnight Visitor

Robert Arthur



Warm Up

Study the title of the story 'The Midnight Visitor'. Discuss in groups what the story is all about.

a. Certain professionals can be identified by their appearance.

What comes to your mind first when you think of a 'pilot' or a 'traffic policeman'? Discuss in pairs and share your thoughts with the class.

b. Let us try to picturise people in a few interesting professions (based on common perception there can be exceptions).

Form groups of four and draw a picture of one or two of the following:

- ❖ scientist
- ❖ soldier
- ❖ journalist

In your attempt to sketch you may include the following:

- ❖ typical dress
- ❖ hair style
- ❖ accessories

Sometimes appearances can be deceptive, as in the case of Ausable, a secret agent, who despite his common looks, with his resourcefulness and presence of mind outwits a deadly criminal. Read the story to see how this happened.

AUSABLE did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read. Following him down the **musty** corridor of the gloomy French hotel where Ausable had a room, Fowler felt let down. It was a small room, on the sixth and top floor, and scarcely a setting for a romantic adventure. Ausable was, for one thing, fat. Very fat. And then there was his accent. Though he spoke French and German passably, he had never altogether lost the American accent he had brought to Paris

from Boston twenty years ago. "You are disappointed," Ausable said **wheezily** over his shoulder. "You were told that I was a secret agent, a spy, dealing in **espionage** and danger. You wished to meet me because you are a writer, young and romantic. You envisioned mysterious figures in the night, the crack of pistols, drugs in the wine. "Instead, you have spent a dull evening in a French music hall with a **sloppy** fat man who, instead of having messages slipped into his hand by dark-eyed beauties, gets only a **prosaic** telephone call making an appointment in his room. You have been bored!" The fat man chuckled to himself as he unlocked the door of his room and stood aside to let his frustrated guest enter. "You are disillusioned," Ausable told him. "But take