



The Midnight Visitor

?name



Fowler, a young writer with dreams of high-stakes espionage, followed the heavy and unassuming Ausable down the hallway. He felt let down, as this ordinary-looking man didn't fit the image of a dashing secret agent at all.



They walked through the dim, musty corridor of the old French hotel toward Ausable's small room on the sixth floor. Fowler sighed, thinking his night would end in boredom rather than the thrilling adventure he had hoped to write about.



As Ausable stepped into the room and flicked on the light, both men froze at the sight of a slender man standing in the center. The intruder, Max, held a small automatic pistol pointed directly at them, his eyes cold and determined.



Ausable began to grumble about a balcony outside his window, claiming it was the second time this month someone had broken in that way. He looked at the window with such genuine frustration that Max began to believe the invisible balcony really existed.



Max admitted he had used a master key and hadn't known about the balcony, looking regretfully at the window. Ausable kept the lie going, describing how the balcony belonged to the next apartment and extended right under his own window sill.



Suddenly, a sharp, rhythmic knocking echoed from the door, causing Max to jump in alarm. Ausable smiled calmly and told Max that it was likely the police, whom he had asked to check on him for extra security.



Terrified of being caught by the authorities, Max backed away toward the window while keeping his gun leveled at the two men. He hissed a warning that he would wait on the balcony and told Ausable to send the police away quickly.



With one final glance at the door, Max swung his leg over the window sill and dropped into the darkness, expecting to find solid ground. A sharp scream pierced the night air as he realized too late that there was no balcony at all.



The door opened to reveal a waiter holding a tray with a bottle and two glasses, just as Ausable had expected. Fowler stood breathless and amazed, realizing that the greatest weapon a spy possesses is not a gun, but a sharp and steady mind.