

THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST

Think about it

Question 1. Bill Bryson says, “I am, in short, easily confused.” What examples has he given to justify this?

Answer: Bill Bryson says, “I am, in short, easily confused.” He gives some examples to justify the said statement. He would go looking for the lavatory in a cinema, for instance, and end up standing in an alley on the wrong side of a selflocking door. He tells that his particular specialty was returning to hotel desks two or three times a day and asking what his room number was.

Question 2. What happens when the zip on his carry-on bag gives way?

Answer: The side of the bag flew open and everything within was extravagantly ejected over-newspaper cuttings and other loose papers, a 14- ounce tin of pipe tobacco, magazines, passport, English money, film. His documents came falling down, coins bounced onto the floor and his fingers began to bleed as he had gashed his finger on the zip.

Question 3. Why is his finger bleeding? What is his wife’s reaction?

Answer: His finger is bleeding because he had gashed his finger on the zip. His wife did not show anger or exasperation. Instead, she looked at him with an expression of wonder and said that she could not believe that he did that for a living.

Question 4. How does Bill Bryson end up in a “crash position” in the aircraft?

Answer: Once on an airplane, the author leaned over to tie a shoelace. At the same moment someone in the seat ahead of him threw his seat back into full recline. That is when the author found himself pinned helplessly in the crash position. It was only by clawing the leg of the man sitting next to him that he managed to get himself freed.

Question 5. Why are his teeth and gums navy blue?

Answer: On a plane flight, the author was writing important thoughts on his notebook while sucking thoughtfully on the end of his pen. The pen had leaked. The author’s mouth, chin, tongue, teeth and gums were now colored navy blue.

Question 6. Bill Bryson “ached to be suave”. Is he successful in his mission? List his ‘unsuave’ ways.

Answer: No, he is not successful in his mission to be suave. He does a lot of things in unsuave ways. He would rise from dinner tables looking as if he has just experienced an extremely localized seismic event, get in a car and close the door leaving 14 inches of coat outside, wear light-coloured trousers discovering at the end of the day that he has sat various times on chewing gum, ice cream, cough syrup and motor oil.

Question 7. Why do you think Bill Bryson's wife says to the children, "Take the lids off the food for Daddy"?

Answer: Bill Bryson's wife says to the children, "Take the lids off the food for Daddy" because she was afraid that if Bill would take off the lids, he might create another awkward situation. She knew that such situations keep happening with her husband quite often especially when he travels.

Question 8. What is the significance of the title?

Answer: The title 'The Accidental Tourist' is very precise and significant. The author, in his entire story, gives numerous instances which prove him to be an accidental tourist. He is a tourist who keeps facing humorous accidents and troubles. He travels a lot and yet makes undeliberate mistakes while doing things that others do without any evident difficulty.