

# THE CASE OF THREE FINGERPRINTS

‘Mr. Robert, you are looking a bit preoccupied now a day’ said Crick.

‘Yes, we are winding up a case’ replied Mr. Robert.

‘A case and no knowledge to me, you should give a brief outline to me at least’ said Crick becoming a bit depressed as he had let a case just pass under his fingers.

‘Yes, you can listen. It so happened that Mr. Erin was reading a horror novel on the roof which was bit like a roof over another roof. It was daytime and he was reading the hundredth page out of a total one hundred and seventy pages. When we got the notice, of course on the same day of death, was half past eleven and he was dead between half past ten and eleven’ said Mr. Robert.

‘And how can you be sure about the time gap?’ asked Crick.

‘That is because when Erin’s sister came to visit him at half past ten he was still reading. He ordered his sister to keep the tea cup beside him. We also were informed that after calling Erin for three times, he turned towards his sister’ replied Mr. Robert.

‘So he was deep in the middle of spooky activities and so it was a lot difficult for his sister’ said Crick supporting Mr. Robert.

‘We have carefully observed the whole case and it seemed that it was not an attempted murder but something like an accident death. While reading he might have moved his chair a bit to and fro but the balance failed and he crashed his head on the roof and so it is finished’ finished Mr. Robert.

‘Could you show me some photos of the Mr. Erin?’ asked Crick becoming a bit inclined to the case.

‘We have three to four photos but the case is completed and what will you do with that thing?’ enquired Mr. Robert.

‘No, just the events attract my attention’ said Crick.

Mr. Robert then showed a few photos of Erin. He was wearing a black shirt as it was described by the cop. Crick observed the Erin's photos and then asked if he can keep a photo in which Erin's head portion, neck and shoulder was completely visible. The cop replied affirmatively.

After the departure of Mr. Robert, Crick showed the photos to Jim.

'Could you recognize something on the photo?'

'Except for the black shirt there is nothing more to describe' replied Jim.

'Again you missed it. Gaze upon the third photo' and Crick pointed his index finger to the photo.

'What! Is there any message embedded in it?'

'Shut up you fool, can't you see the three finger marks over Erin's shoulder?'

'Yes. But what does it mean?' asked Jim.

'I can't clearly say but some fault is present in the deduction of Mr. Robert. He has quite early jumped to conclusions. I hope that I should be able to see the dead body tomorrow.'

'I am going to inform Mr. Robert about this' hurried Jim.

'Wait. Just ask him to come here again' replied Crick.

After about one hour Mr. Robert was seen in front of Crick's house.

'Have I missed something in the case?' asked the cop.

'You are quite early. You can take these photos and if possible I will see the dead body which I hope would be lying as such' replied Crick.

Robert departed from that place and gave his assurance about the position of the dead body.

The next day started with a fine, sunny morning. Both Crick and Jim along with John went to Erin's house. They were welcomed by a beautiful and white young lady. She was about twenty and two, and always a smile passed through her lips. She was curious to know who the visitors were and after the introduction and purpose of visit they were led into the house.

The house was well furnished and clean without the presence of visible dust particle. The house was large enough to handle two families but it was unfortunate on the part of house that only four members lived in it out of which one died recently.

The visitors were made comfortable on the sofas and were offered a glass of water.

Crick hurriedly drank the water and asked Miss Jennifer about the death of her brother.

‘Sir, it is my bad fortune that he died at such a young age of twenty five. He was fond of reading horror and spooky articles and novels. I can also remember that he had completed the novel ‘The Moonless Night’ in three days’ Jennifer was interrupted by Crick.

‘Is that the book written Sir James Mac?’

‘Yeah’

‘I took just half an hour to read that’ boasted Crick.

‘But how come is that possible?’

‘I asked one of my college peers to tell me about that and over!’

‘That was a good one’ replied Miss Jennifer.

‘But your brother Erin is truly an enthusiastic reader. I have heard from people that it is so ghastly that people could not complete the novel and of fear they read only two to three pages per day. My goodness your brother was a giant reader’ commented Crick.

‘Now he is no more. Had he been murdered or just an accident is still a dilemma for our family but the cops have assured that it is an accident.’

“One direct question, where were you between half past ten to eleven that day?”

‘Sir in the store house just below the roof, in the store house’ replied Miss Jennifer.

‘Hey Crick. Come on, this way to the roof’ shouted Mr. Robert.

‘Yeah coming. You can also join us, Miss Jennifer’ said Crick.

‘Thank you sir, but I have to help my mother in some work’ and Jennifer went into the kitchen.

Crick followed the staircase behind Mr. Robert to reach the roof. It was exactly like it was described by him- a roof over roof. All the four reached the dead body and Crick examined it thoroughly and without any hint of others he checked the shoulder and took the marks of those fingerprints. They were some rusted particles. Crick then saw his hands and saw those particles in his hands and concluded that another person had visited Erin on the day of death. The sister was holding tray with both his hands so she couldn’t have got the rusted particles from the border of stairs. Crick then surveyed the whole roof and then mocked Mr. Robert.

‘Robert, you are early to jump onto the conclusion. Simple is the case but one thing is to be concluded. The only problem is betwixt half past ten and eleven who visited Erin?’ said Crick.

‘Is he the murderer?’ asked Robert eagerly.

‘Nah, he is not but he can describe my hypothesis, I am sure of that’ pacified Crick.

‘So what is this new hypothesis?’ this time Jim caught the big question.

‘None of your business let me complete my work and then everything’s clear to describe it to you’ said Crick.

On way back to Jennifer’s house Crick saw a person was reading newspaper. A burly man, neatly shave, wearing a golden spectacle, a red tray was near him waiting to be over ruled from that place.

‘Sir is red your favorite colour?’ asked Crick.

‘Why any problem to you?’ asked the person with a tone of adamant nature.

‘Nah I thought you were wearing the same shirt three days ago, so it was concluded that...’

How come you know that I had this one over my body?’ the person cut short the words of Crick.

‘All the three papers beside you have the red mark and so it might be the case that this shirt was guilty of marking its fragrance over these newspapers. Leave that, tell me who went through this path on the day I described your shirt?’ asked Crick.

‘After Jennifer came down, Mr. Hurl went through the stairs. He is a common visitor. He went up and disappeared. I am sure about this because at eleven when we all went there no was there except the body and book of Erin and I also have seen none coming down before eleven also’ replied the person.

‘Why hadn’t you described these facts to us?’ thundered Robert.

‘I thought that it was my mistake that I saw someone go up. It might have been also that no one went but as Mr. Hurl goes up at about half past ten every alternate day, I assumed someone went up. Moreover I have heard only footsteps not the complete person’ replied the person.

‘Most probably Mr. Hurl comes to this site by foot’ interrogated Crick.

‘Yeah, but how could you know so much, even the resident next to this house doesn’t knows about Mr. Hurl’ mocked the person.

‘Moreover I can tell you another thing that your name is perhaps Sam Granville’ boasted Crick and merrily said thanks to Sam and left the place.

‘Are you a god in disguise?’ shouted Sam visualizing the speed of Crick.

‘The letter placed on your table makes this clear’ said Crick while increasing his rate of fall of footsteps.

‘Why did you run?’ asked Mr. Robert.

‘This Mr. Hurl might have gone from here. When we were coming to Erin’s house he had already packed and sent all his items in a vehicle (panting), this mysterious disappearance is a false fact and according to my hypothesis all the facts are going correct. I only require this Mr. Hurl to complete the chain of incidents.’ Crick took a long breath before pressing the door bell.

‘Now can you tell your hypothesis?’ asked Jim.

“Let’s share it with Mr. Hurl. It is bad not to share nice ideas with someone woven deeply in it’ replied Crick and waited for the door to open.

After a span of two minutes the sound of opening of door was heard and a person, trembling grasping the door stood in front of the four.

‘So you had not leaved this abode?’ asked Crick in a polite manner creating a benign atmosphere.

‘What is the problem with you four?’ the lips of Mr. Hurl quivered while he spoke this to Crick.

‘I just wanted to ask- how could you bend yourself at an angle of semi-right angle and stand beneath the roof for three hours?’ asked Crick.

‘But I have not done any harm to anyone; I just wanted to protect myself. Please let me free’ requested Mr. Hurl.

‘You are captured in freedom and asking the others to snatch you away from the clutches of handcuffs. How foolish!’ exclaimed Crick ‘don’t worry, can we all come inside? I assure you that you would repent why we all came late to your house.’

‘Then you all are welcome’ welcomed Mr. Hurl becoming submissive.

‘Quite well maintained, do you visit his house regularly and may I get the purpose of it?’ asked Mr. Robert becoming rather serious.

‘It so happened that three years back I had taken a loan from Erin and I had promised to repay it within one year. But it so happened that it took a half year extra to repay that loan. So he asked me to come to his every alternate day to provide him help. Sometimes it was to capture certain goods from the market and bring it back or like that. If I was of no use that day then he would reject me for that day’ replied Mr. Hurl.

‘But it doesn’t makes any sense?’ interrogated Jim.

‘Rather you should say that you wanted to marry his sister Miss Jennifer. Thus as a brother he was taking your test if you could manage various works that could work as a helping hand for his sister you see it’s so simple’ said Crick.

‘Brilliant, how could you know this? It was embarrassing on my side to enunciate that to all of you’ asked Mr. Hurl.

‘It was simple. Let me go back to real case. That day Mr. Hurl went out of his house to reach Erin’s but before he wanted to meet Jennifer. He saw no one inside the house but door was open. He waited for some time then an urge came to him to get his alternate work done from Erin.

On the way he saw Jennifer in the store house and talked a few words and then bid him and started towards her brother’ said Crick and rested for a few minutes.

“How could you know that they talked?” asked Jim.

“Simple, while passing through store house to get into the roof it is impossible to get unnoticed. Next he steadily moved to the roof. Walking over each step he reached the place where Erin was reading the novel. He waited a few moments. Seeing that Erin was completely in the novel he started moving towards Erin.

He slowly called him by tapping in his shoulder with his three fingers except the little and thumb. A person who has read till hundredth page of the book is surely going to freak out when someone taps that way on his shoulder. Probably you could know that if you are able to reach hundredth page of that novel.

With a sudden feeling of excitement and a bit of fear in the heart, Erin turned back and gazing upon the face of Mr. Hurl he gave a short shriek but at that moment his chair turned and due to imbalance he fell down with a peal of breaking of some hard object.

A natural tendency arose in Mr. Hurl to run away but he turned back and was shocked to see Miss Jennifer. She had come there from the hearing of the crash. With a worried face Mr. Hurl explained the matter. Presuming him to be true, she led him into the side wall beyond the second roof where a design is present at an angle of half right angle to hide him.

Naturally the cop was called by Jennifer herself but nothing was told by her with the fear that they would misunderstand the matter and put Mr. Hurl behind the bars. Mr. Robert searched the possible locations of the thief but didn’t go into that part as some rusted particles were present there. He assumed that this was a pure case of an accident and dismissed it. But to make it believe that it was a serious one, he dragged it for one more day. Am I correct, Mr. Robert?’

‘You read my mind perfectly, lest it was hard for me to earn praise for this case’ said Mr. Robert.

“Yeah, that was why you became worried when I said you had wound up quite earlier’ said Crick  
‘but you look a bit worried Mr. Hurl, have I left some incidents?’

“You explained the matter as if you were there in those moments, really I am amazed’ said Mr.  
Hurl feeling a sense of relief.