Case of the Accidental Drowning

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**I** was not quite sure as to why I was being called down to investigate an accidental drowning at Sandyside River but fortunately, it was a sunny day and I could not think of a better place to be. Who knows, maybe once I was done, I would get a little fishing in.

When I arrived, there were a few police officers and a small gathering of onlookers. Two of the officers were standing on the public docks talking to what looked like an extremely well tanned gentleman who was wearing a bathing suit. Next to them in the water was a canoe that looked like it had seen better days.

After approaching the trio, I introduced myself to the tanned fellow, who was looking very upset, and asked him what had happened.

“It’s simply terrible Inspector! My friend Jim and I were out canoeing when I suggested that we give the Sunnyside rapids a go,” said the distraught man as he pointed in a southern direction towards the rapids. “Jim was a little concerned as he had never been in a canoe before today but I told him there was no need to worry, I would steer, all he had to do was paddle. Unfortunately, the rapids were a little more difficult than I remembered. I‘m not sure exactly what happened or when he fell out, all that I know is that when I got to the end of the rapids, I turned around and he was not there.”

I looked down at the canoe and observed that there were a couple of lifejackets and one wooden paddle with a large crack within the blade. I was just about to inquire as to how the paddle became damaged when the man stated, “Hell, I didn’t even notice that. My paddle is broken. I guess I must have cracked it on one of the rocks while I was traversing the rapids.”

“Yes, that is possible, “ I said. “But it is more likely that it cracked when you used it to hit Jim!”

Why did Inspector Nose suspect that Jim’s drowning was not an accident?