

# The signalman by charles dickens



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- A diary entry by the signalman  
Day 16 It was 2 past midnight on that dreary Thursday. There was a cool breeze entering from the mouth of the tunnel, which makes my work all the easier since it is almost always damp down here.

I was going about with my honest work, when, I hear this voice that seemed to come from the direction of the red light. I looked down the track, and lo and behold, there was a man standing there, waving at me, as in warning. He was shouting “ Look Out! Look Out!” I ran towards the man, and was just a hair’s breadth away, when he disappeared. When I telegraphed both ways, the reply was the same: No danger.

I thought it was just my imagination, but it was so real. Then the accident happened 6 hours later, and, wondering about it, thought it was a very strange coincidence. I do not believe that this was a coincidence, but logic tells me that there is no other explanation, unless I deem myself not of sound mind. Day 19 It was a bright sunny day, light penetrating through the darkness, and I had gotten over the shock of the event that happened 6 months ago. I was down the track, having walked there, and saw the same specter standing under the red light again.

It was silent, apart from the dripping of water from clammy stones, and it was totally unlike before. Whereas before it was waving, now it had both hands before its face. I sat down, partly out of uncertainty of what to do, mainly because of shock. I must have been close to 5 minutes when I looked out again, but it had disappeared.

A few hours later, a train was passing by, when I heard screams from one of the cabins. I signaled the driver to stop, and step on the brakes he did, but it was too late. The train stopped 150 yards down. When I reached the train, I discovered that a beautiful young lady had died at the moment.

This second incident has really set my mind thinking. There could be no logical explanation to the two chilling events. I have come to the conclusion that whenever the specter appears, a death on the line will be near. Day 259The specter has been appearing for a week now, and I have been troubled by its appearance. It has appeared at the same spot as it has before, but this time it has regained its voice and shouts “ For God’s sake, clear the way!” I have had no sleep or rest for the past week, always on the lookout for a fateful event to happen.

Why can not the specter tell me when it is going to happen and all the details? At least then I will be able to prevent the loss of another innocent life. I cannot telegraph danger down the lines. What proof do I have that an accident is going to happen? They will just label me insane and I’ll lose my job. I have no choice but to wait for a death to happen. How I curse the specter.

.. just standing there shouting Danger! Danger! Day 261A man from the Company visited me today. At first I thought he was the specter, as he had shouted down “ Halloa! Below there!” which is exactly what the specter says.

But he turned out not to be a specter, and I we had a talk about my job. At the end, I let my conscience take the better of me, and told him that I was troubled. He immediately pounced upon what I said, and he promised to pay

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me a visit tomorrow to talk about it. All throughout the meeting, I heard the specter down at the danger light, and he must have noticed my fear and how I went to the door to look down the track several times. I am getting very worried, and I wonder if I should tell the truth to the man from the Company tomorrow.

Day 262The man came as he said he would, and I told him all about my fears and the coincidences. Obviously, he, a man of very sound logic, did not believe my story. He came with his logic and left without believing my interpretation of the coincidences. Oh..

. how I wish the specter would tell me what is going to happen. Will it be a train crash? Another passenger dying suddenly? I am jittery at the moment, and I will end with this sad note for the night. Mayhap nothing is going to happen, and the specter will go away tomorrow.