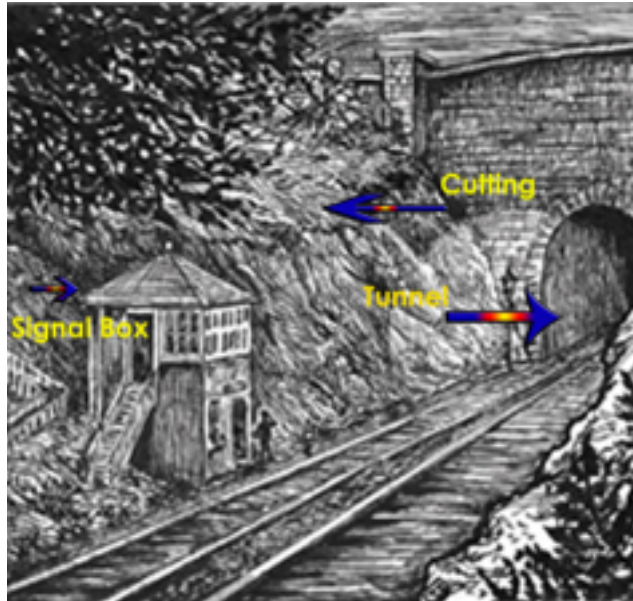


# The Signalman

Charles Dickens



*Retold by Kieran McGovern - complete graded version [here](#)*

‘Hello! You down there!’

The signalman was standing at the door of his box, directly below me. I was sure he could hear my voice but he did not look up. Instead, he looked in the opposite direction down the railway line.

There was something strange about the way he did this, something I could not explain. I looked again, using my hands to protect my eyes from the bright sunset.

‘Hello! I am up here!’

This time he turned around. He looked up to where I was standing, high above him.

‘Is there a path? I want to come down and speak to you.’

He did not answer. Just then, a train came past, forcing me to move back. When I looked again he was refolding the flag he was carrying.

I repeated my question. He looked at me for some moments, without speaking. Then he pointed with his flag towards a point in the distance.

I walked over to that point and looked closely around me. There was a very rough path, and I followed it.

The cutting was deep and unusually steep. It took me a few minutes to climb down low enough to see the signalman again.

He was standing between the rails, waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and his right elbow rested on his right hand.

**cutting** - ground cut for a railway or road