

Commute

(Sound of train pulling out from station. Sounds from inside of train)

Dan

Hey! Gil, buddy, wake up!

Gil

(Confused and disoriented) What?

Dan

It's your old friend, Dan. Let me just slide in next to you. I guess you must have got on the train early, to have fallen asleep like that.

Gil

Asleep? Was I asleep?

Dan

You looked pretty conked out to me there, pal. Must have been a long day.

Gil

(Coming around) Yes. Yes it was. And now I'm here on the train.

Dan

As usual. This commute gets pretty old, but what can you do? It's just too expensive to live in the city. (Pause as train sounds). Are you all right? You don't look too well.

Gil

As you said, it was a long day.

Dan

Yeah. I guess it can get hard even at the magazine business, right?

Gil

Right you are. (Thinks for a bit as sound of train continues). Say, Dan, what do you think about this? There's a guy, and he has this dream. It's no ordinary dream, this one is more vivid and real than any he's ever had before... Do you dream in color?

Dan

Um. Never thought about it. I guess not.

Gil

Yeah, most men don't. And this guy, he doesn't either, but this time the dream is in color and it's real and it's his life, his day to day life, very detailed events that happen to him throughout the day, all through the day, until something... terrible happens at the end.

Dan

Something terrible? What happens?

Gil

He's in a terrible accident and everyone dies. Everyone, even him. Except... Except he wakes up, then, and realizes it was just a dream.

Dan

Oh, I get it! This is one of your stories, for the magazine...

Gil

Yes. For the magazine.

Dan

Okay, so he has this dream and it ends badly and now he wakes up. So?

Gil

So the next day, as he goes through the day, things start happening just as he dreamed them.

Dan

Oooo, I like this. You mean the things happen like the dream, and he's starting to get nervous.

Gil

Yes. Nothing major, but people say things to him just like in the dream and he starts to feel like the dream was more than a dream.

Dan

Like a premonition. Yes, it has some possibilities. What does he do?

Gil

What would **you** do? If you had the dream.

Dan

Well, for one thing I guess I'd sure stay away from wherever that final accident was. (Laughs)

Gil

What if you couldn't?

Dan

I don't understand.

Gil

Well, let's say the accident takes place on the train – like this one. The same one he takes home every single day at 5:30pm. So he has to take the train home, he doesn't have a choice. Besides, he isn't quite sure there's anything more to it than just a series of coincidences.

Dan

Well, the first thing I'd do would be to make sure just one thing didn't happen like the dream. What kinds of things are going to be in the dream?

Gil

That's good. Okay, so he is going to get a call from his wife in the middle of the day and she's going to meet him for lunch in the city.

Dan

Then I'd make sure I didn't get that call. I'd leave early for lunch, just take off and then we couldn't meet.

Gil

Yes! That's exactly what to do. Only... only when you're out at the restaurant she drops on by, just by chance, so you end up having lunch with her anyway.

Dan

By chance? Well, I'd have made sure I went to a place she didn't know about.

Gil

Yes, that's what he did, but she showed up anyway. A very long shot, but there you have it.

(Train sounds as it passes through tunnel)

Dan

So now he's getting more nervous.

Gil

Yes. It's beginning to seem like fate now.

Dan

But he still has free will. What else is in the dream?

Gil

A big shot from the ad agency is dropping by, totally unexpected. And he'll be asked to show him around.

Dan

So he doesn't go back to work.

Gil

Exactly. He knows what will happen, and that will stop it. Except... As he's walking along the street, many blocks from the office, a limo with the boss pulls over to the side and they call to him.

Dan

It's the boss and the ad guy?

Gil

Yes. And he has no choice – he doesn't want to lose his job, he can't very well just flee, even though his entire body tells him to do so.

Dan

So the noose is closing in on him. (A little nervous himself) Anything else?

Gil

As he leaves work he finds he has left his wallet at the restaurant.

Dan

So earlier he should be extra careful with it. Um, he makes sure he has the wallet with him when he leaves the restaurant.

Gil

Yes, he does that. He's very careful, he puts it inside his briefcase and locks it and makes sure not to open it again.

Dan

And?

Gil

And just as he is about to leave work he gets the call that the restaurant found his wallet there.

Dan

But it's in the case!

Gil

No, he looks in the case but it's no longer there.

Dan

(Very nervous now) Okay, it's a tight spot, but nothing can force him to get on the train he normally takes.

Gil

Yes.

Dan

(Somewhat pleading) That's the whole point, isn't it. I mean, can't he just take a later train, one that he doesn't usually take. That should screw up the whole fate thing.

Gil

Yes.

Dan

So he goes to the station and just waits until the train, the one in his dream, leaves the station. He's safe.

Gil

Yes. He goes to the station and sits on the bench. As he sits, the events of the day take their toll on him. He's worn out, and he falls asleep.

Dan

(With dreadful realization) He falls asleep?

Gil

Yes. And the next thing he knows, he's **on** the train anyway.
(Pause) (Resigned) There was nothing he could do about it.

(Silence as the train sounds louder and louder)

Dan

(Panicked) So what happens, Dan? What happens to the man?!
(Pause as train sounds even louder) What's the end of the sto...

(Abrupt end of both train sounds and Dan talking)