What was the mistake the author made?

We have learnt to expect that trains will be punctual.

After years of conditioning, most of us have developed an unshakable faith in railway timetables.

Ships may be delayed by storms; flights may be cancelled because of bad weather; but trains must be on time.

Only an exceptionally heavy snowfall might temporarily dislocate railway services.

It is all too easy to blame the railway authorities when something does go wrong.

The truth is that when mistakes occur, they are more likely to be ours than theirs.

After consulting my railway timetable, I noted with satisfaction that there was an express train to Westhaven.

It went directly from my local station, and the journey lasted a mere hour and seventeen minutes.

When I boarded the train, I could not help noticing that a great many local people got on as well.

At the time, this did not strike me as odd.

I reflected that there must be a great many people besides myself who wished to take advantage of this excellent service.

Neither was I surprised when the train stopped at Widley, a tiny station a few miles along the line.

Even a mighty express train can be held up by signals.

But when the train dawdled at station after station, I began to wonder.

It suddenly dawned on me that this express was not roaring down the line at ninety miles an hour, but barely chugging along at thirty.

One hour and seventeen minutes passed, and we had not even covered half the distance.

I asked a passenger if this was the Westhaven Express, but he had not even heard of it.

I determined to lodge a complaint as soon as we arrived.

Two hours later, I was talking angrily to the station master at Westhaven.

When he denied the train's existence, I borrowed his copy of the timetable.

There was a note of triumph in my voice when I told him that it was there in black and white.

Glancing at it briefly, he told me to look again.

A tiny asterisk conducted me to a footnote at the bottom of the page.

It said: 'This service has been suspended.

When many local people boarded the train with the writer, he was not surprised.

Nor was he surprised when the train stopped at Widley.

But when it stopped at each station, he began to wonder why it was going SO slowly.

Finally, when the train reached Westhaven, the writer spoke to the station master, who denied the existence of an express.

They argued, and the writer was shown this timetable footnote, which said: “This service has been suspended.”

When I finally boarded the train, I was looking forward to a pleasant journey to the village of Slowleigh, where my friends live.

I sat in my seat, got out a book and was already reading when the train started.

According to the timetable, the train was due to arrive in Slowleigh at 4.30.

I had been so interested in my book that I had a shock when I looked at my watch.

It was almost 4.30.

I closed my book and waited for the train to slow down.

It didn't.

In fact, the train was going very fast-and that was Slowleigh, wasn't it?

The train went straight on.

I asked the other passengers why the train hadn't stopped and they told me it was the express to the city.

I didn't believe it.

Then the ticket collector came along.

He looked at my ticket and I tried to explain, but in the end I had to pay the full fare to the city.

By the time we arrived in the city, it was six o'clock.

The journey had lasted two hours and I was miles away from my original destination.

I rang my friends and said I would get a fast train back.

Then I checked the timetable: there was no fast train back to Slowleigh, only a slow one, at 7 o'clock.

By the time I finally reached Slowleigh Station, it was nine o'clock at night.

My pleasant little train journey had taken 4.5 hours!

The wall is too high (for me) to climb.

The wall is low enough ( for me) to climb.

I can't stand queuing at the cinema.

I don't mind helping you.

Never had I seen anything like it before.

Hardly had I started when they told me to stop.

Little did she know that she was being watched.

Two minutes passed before anything happened.

The time is exactly two minutes past twelve.

My friend refused to lend me any money.

He denied that he had stolen the money.

I borrowed three books from the public library.

Then I lent one of them to a friend.

When the writer consulted his railway timetable, he wanted to know the quickest way of getting to Westhaven by rail.

At what point did the writer realize that the train was not travelling at the speed of an express train? After the train had stopped at several small stations.

When the writer went to the station master, he complained about the train scheduled as an express train having in fact been a slow one.

We have learnt to expect trains to be punctual.

Only were it to snow exceptionally heavily, might railway services be temporarily dislocated.

The express train went directly from my local station to Westhaven in a mere hour and seventeen minutes.

One hour and seventeen minutes passed, and we still had to cover half the distance.

When he denied the train's existence, I asked if I might borrow his copy.

Even a mighty express train can be delayed by signals.

I determined to lodge a complaint immediately on arrival.

Sounding triumphant, I told him that it was there in black and white.

Glancing at it briefly, he told me I should take another look.