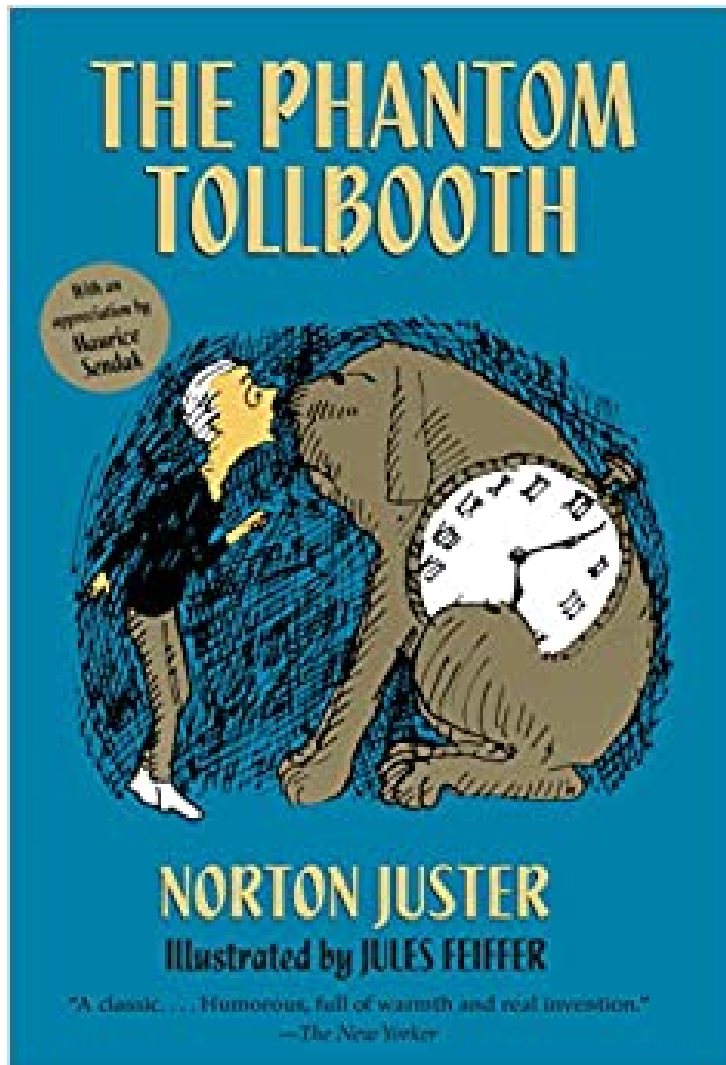


The Phantom Tollbooth

by

Adam Rubin



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Synopsis

With almost 5 million copies sold 60 years after its original publication, generations of readers have now journeyed with Milo to the Lands Beyond in this beloved classic. Enriched by Jules Feiffer's splendid illustrations, the wit, wisdom, and wordplay of Norton Juster's offbeat fantasy are as beguiling as ever. "Comes up bright and new every time I read it . . . it will continue to charm and delight for a very long time yet. And teach us some wisdom, too." --Phillip Pullman
For Milo, everything's a bore. When a tollbooth mysteriously appears in his room, he drives through only because he's got nothing better to do. But on the other side, things seem different. Milo visits the Island of Conclusions (you get there by jumping), learns about time from a ticking watchdog named Tock, and even embarks on a quest to rescue Rhyme and Reason. Somewhere along the way, Milo realizes something astonishing. Life is far from dull. In fact, it's exciting beyond his wildest dreams!

Sort review

"I read *The Phantom Tollbooth* first when I was 10. I still have the book report I wrote, which began 'This is the best book ever.'"—Anna Quindlen, *The New York Times*
"A classic--Humorous, full of warmth and real invention."—*The New Yorker*
"The *Phantom Tollbooth* is the closest thing we have to a modern *Alice in Wonderland*."—*The Guardian*
"The book lingers long after turning the final page. . . . A classic indeed." —*Los Angeles Review of Books*
"You loved the humor and adventure . . . and [now] you'll marvel at [the book's] wit, complexity, and its understanding of how children perceive the passage of time." —*Entertainment Weekly*
From the Back Cover
Illustrated in black-and-white. This ingenious fantasy centers around Milo, a bored ten-year-old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Joining forces with a watchdog named Tock, Milo drives through the tollbooth's gates and begins a memorable journey. He meets such characters as the foolish, yet lovable Humbug, the Mathemagician, and the not-so-wicked "Which," Faintly Macabre, who gives Milo the "impossible" mission of returning two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom.
About the Author
Norton Juster was an architect and planner, professor emeritus of design at Hampshire College, and the author of a number of highly acclaimed children's books, including *The Dot and the Line*, which was made into an Academy Award-winning animated film. He collaborated with Sheldon Harnick on the libretto for an opera based on *The Phantom Tollbooth*. The musical adaptation, with a score by Arnold Black, premiered in 1995 and is performed in schools and theaters nationwide. Jules Feiffer is the author of several books for young readers, including *The Man in the Ceiling* and *A Barrel of Laughs, a Vale of Tears, I Lost My Bear, Bark, George, and Meanwhile*.... He has won a number of prizes for his cartoons, plays, and screenplays. Mr. Feiffer lives in New York City.
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Chapter I: Milo
There was once a boy named Milo who didn't know what to do with himself — not just sometimes, but

always. When he was in school he longed to be out, and when he was out he longed to be in. On the way he thought about coming home, and coming home he thought about going. Wherever he was he wished he were somewhere else, and when he got there he wondered why he'd bothered. Nothing really interested him — least of all the things that should have. "It seems to me that almost everything is a waste of time," he remarked one day as he walked dejectedly home from school. "I can't see the point in learning to solve useless problems, or subtracting turnips from turnips, or knowing where Ethiopia is or how to spell February." And, since no one bothered to explain otherwise, he regarded the process of seeking knowledge as the greatest waste of time of all. As he and his unhappy thoughts hurried along (for while he was never anxious to be where he was going, he liked to get there as quickly as possible) it seemed a great wonder that the world, which was so large, could sometimes feel so small and empty. "And worst of all," he continued sadly, "there's nothing for me to do, nowhere I'd care to go, and hardly anything worth seeing." He punctuated this last thought with such a deep sigh that a house sparrow singing nearby stopped and rushed home to be with his family. Without stopping or looking up, Milo dashed past the buildings and busy shops that lined the street and in a few minutes reached home — dashed through the lobby — hopped onto the elevator — two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and off again — opened the apartment door — rushed into his room — flopped dejectedly into a chair, and grumbled softly, "Another long afternoon." He looked glumly at all the things he owned. The books that were too much trouble to read, the tools he'd never learned to use, the small electric automobile he hadn't driven in months — or was it years? — and the hundreds of other games and toys, and bats and balls, and bits and pieces scattered around him. And then, to one side of the room, just next to the phonograph, he noticed something he had certainly never seen before. Who could possibly have left such an enormous package and such a strange one? For, while it was not quite square, it was definitely not round, and for its size it was larger than almost any other big package of smaller dimension that he'd ever seen. Attached to one side was a bright-blue envelope which said simply: "FOR MILO, WHO HAS PLENTY OF TIME." Of course, if you've ever gotten a surprise package you can imagine how puzzled and excited Milo was; and if you've never gotten one, pay close attention, because someday you might. "I don't think it's my birthday," he puzzled, "and Christmas must be months away, and I haven't been outstandingly good, or even good at all." (He had to admit this even to himself.) "Most probably I won't like it anyway, but since I don't know where it came from, I can't possibly send it back." He thought about it for quite a while and then opened the envelope, but just to be polite. "ONE GENUINE TURNPIKE TOLLBOOTH," it stated — and then it went on: "EASILY ASSEMBLED AT HOME, AND FOR USE BY THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER TRAVELED IN LANDS BEYOOND." "Beyond what?" thought Milo as he continued to read. "THIS PACKAGE CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS: "One (1) genuine turnpike tollbooth to be erected according to directions. "Three (3) precautionary signs to be used in a precautionary fashion. "Assorted coins for use in paying tolls. "One (1) map, up to date and carefully drawn by master cartographers, depicting natural and man-made features. "One (1) book of rules and

traffic regulations, which may not be bent or broken.”And in smaller letters at the bottom it concluded:“RESULTS ARE NOT GUARANTEED, BUT IF NOT PERFECTLY SATISFIED, YOUR WASTED TIME WILL BE REFUNDED.”Following the instructions, which told him to cut here, lift there, and fold back all around, he soon had the tollbooth unpacked and set up on its stand. He fitted the windows in place and attached the roof, which extended out on both sides, and fastened on the coin box. It was very much like the tollbooths he’d seen many times on family trips, except of course it was much smaller and purple.“What a strange present,” he thought to himself. “The least they could have done was to send a highway with it, for it’s terribly impractical without one.” But since, at the time, there was nothing else he wanted to play with, he set up the three signs,SLOW DOWN APPROACHING TOLLBOOTHPLEASE HAVE YOUR FARE READYHAVE YOUR DESTINATION IN MINDAnd slowly unfolded the map.As the announcement stated, it was a beautiful map, in many colors, showing principal roads, rivers and seas, towns and cities, mountains and valleys, intersections and detours, and sites of outstanding interest both beautiful and historic.The only trouble was that Milo had never heard of any of the places it indicated, and even the names sounded most peculiar.“I don’t think there really is such a country,” he concluded after studying it carefully. “Well, it doesn’t matter anyway.” And he closed his eyes and poked a finger at the map.“Dictionopolis,” read Milo slowly when he saw what his finger had chosen. “Oh, well, I might as well go there as anywhere.”He walked across the room and dusted the car off carefully. Then, taking the map and rule book with him, he hopped in and, for lack of anything better to do, drove slowly up to the tollbooth. As he deposited his coin and rolled past he remarked wistfully, “I do hope this is an interesting game, otherwise the afternoon will be so terribly dull.”Read more

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The Pushcart War (New York Review Children's Collection)

What people say about this book

BB, "Fun for the whole family!. We gave this to our daughter for Christmas as her "something to read." Although she was more than capable of reading it herself, since my husband had never read it before, I suggested that he read it aloud to the whole family. The word play is great fun and had us all in stitches."

Margaret, "Excellent!. Excellent book for my 5th graders! They loved it! The story takes Milo on several adventures that are fun and entertaining! The journey is filled with puns and word play. The book explains the literal meaning of idioms which is hard for some children but this enchanting book explains it in an entertaining way."

Ebook Library Reader, "Timeless. Still wonderful. It even made me laugh as I read it to my granddaughter!"

KELLY, "Nice. Love that I'm able to follow along with my child. I purchased to keep up with and read along with my child due to this being the book her school is on."

George V. Neville-Neil, "Word play for everyone. If you love language or want to encourage someone who might someday live it then this is a wonderful book. I'd somehow missed out on this one as a kid but a footnote in a dissertation I reviewed mentioned this book and since the author of the dissertation clearly had good linguistic tastes otherwise I grabbed a copy and here we are. Certainly got me out of the Doldrums."

steve o, "Fun quirky story. My 7th grader had to read this book for school, she had a hard time with the story line and the big words. I read it as a family read aloud and even my husband got in the story plot and we couldn't wait to see what was going to happen next! Not something I would ever normally pick but it was so entertaining for us all!"

Wendell's Mommy, "I need more stars!. I don't care what it says on the cover, if this is ONLY a book for children, I'm a circus acrobat. And since I'm a 66 yr. old crippled lady and NOT a circus acrobat, this must not be a book just for children. What is it? It's a wonderful collection of delightful play with words and numbers, puns and logic, profound insights and pure fun. Milo is a boy who is ALWAYS bored. Then, one day he comes home from school to find The Phantom Tollbooth, with directions for assembly, a book of rules, maps, and two coins for the toll. Luckily, Milo also has a driveable toy electric car, so, after the tollbooth is together, he gets in his little car, drops in one of the coins, and off he goes, looking for something that he hopes might not be boring. And so he goes, having fun times, meeting creatures we all know...a dog with a clock for a body (a watch dog, of course), a large bug that brags without reason and claims always to know the answers (a humbug). He goes to a banquet, but has to eat his words, and wishes he

had given a shorter and yummiier speech. If I started telling you all the delightful word play I would have to eventually copy the entire book. The author does a magnificent job and his love of words is obvious. No phrase is too small to take literally or juggle into new meanings. Yet, even in the happy lands of Dictionopolis and Digitopolis....a city that uses numbers like Dictionopolis uses words...there is a problem. Throughout the entire Empire of Wisdom, there is no Rhyme or Reason, who were exiled. Milo, Tock, the watchdog, and the Humbug, start off to bring Rhyme and Reason back to the Empire of Wisdom. They have, of course, many adventures, but the mission doesn't actually become dangerous until they reach the Mountains of Ignorance, where they are beset by terrible demons: the Everpresent Wordsnatcher, who constantly interrupts, the Terrible Trivium, who wastes time doing unimportant, repetitive tasks, the Senses Taker, who wastes time filling out forms with useless information until the person is too bored to go do something more important, the long-nosed, green-eyed, curly-haired, wide-mouthed, thick-necked, broad-shouldered, round-bodied, short-armed, bowlegged, big-footed monster, who is, of course, none of these things, and is, in real life, the Demon of Insincerity. There are too many demons and monsters to mention here, but everyone is a demon you will recognize from your own life, slowing you down, wasting your time, and trying to confuse you. After a couple of close calls, the three make it to The Castle In The Air and rescue the sisters, bringing Rhyme and Reason back to the Empire of Wisdom. There is much celebration, but Milo, worried that he has been away for so long, gets back in his little car and returns home, where only an hour has passed and the only thing that has changed is Milo, himself, who is no longer bored. It's a marvelous book, quite suitable for children...none of the "demons" are scary to the youngest child, but I honestly don't believe a child can really appreciate the book's play with words, phrases and numbers. You would have to stop and explain a lot. I'd wait until my kid had a good grounding in the English language before I'd give her this book and, if she didn't like it, I'd try again a few years later. But don't forget to read it yourself. This is one of my favorite books of all time, and five stars just aren't enough to rate it with."

APK, "These days as pertinent to Adults as it is to children.. I personally feel there is something more abstract in this book outside of puns and mathematical conundrums that can only work properly with rhyme and reason...There's the metaphor of the introduction Sort of a story of creation of sorts?Two brothers who cannot get along who only agreed on one principle that they must agree to never agree with one another even when they do...which in essence makes that agreement null May be beyond the grasp of most 10 year olds.I have found there are books in mainstream curriculum that are either read way to soon or way too late.The QUEST for knowledge it's significance it's provision for purpose and it's a journey impossible to complete in this life is a lesson that needs to be imprinted in the minds as young as possible but for a 10 year old to quote Aristotle "The Greatest Knowledge is realizing how little you know" is too abstract a concept. For 12 and up I find this book to be classic literature not just for children."

Occasional Buyer, "Enjoyed it just as much as when I read it as a child. Can't believe it's been 40-odd years since I had read this book. Still remains just as clever and made me laugh out loud a few times. Still love the clever word-play! Book was in reasonably good condition for having been read many times before. Might have been a library book at one point. Two sticky notes in the back from a child who was apparently planning a party. :-)"

Ebook Library Reader, "Classic psychological adventure story promoting the value of vocabulary.. The story deals skillfully with early teenage resentment against learning and life's demands for an increasingly complex knowledge of vocabulary. Set through the mind's eye of an angry young teen, it follows his journey through an imaginary world beset by political issues linked to a never-ending multitude of words and phrases."

CC, "It's a fun book, for those who enjoy Alice in wonderland. It's a fun book, for those who enjoy Alice in wonderland"

Janine Leah Scambler, "This book made me fall back in love with teaching. Old fashioned children's book so suitable for reading with young children or slightly older children for independent reading. Was given a copy by a friend when I fell out of love with my job and it made me remember the joy that learning can be. Highly recommended."

The book by Adam Rubin has a rating of 5 out of 4.8. 6,900 people have provided feedback.

Book Information

Language: English

Calendar: 16 pages

Item Weight: 6.4 ounces

Dimensions: 5.25 x 0.66 x 7.63 inches

Paperback: 272 pages

Reading age: 8 - 12 years, from customers

Lexile measure: 1000L

Grade level: 3 - 7

Hardcover: 320 pages

Board book: 26 pages

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