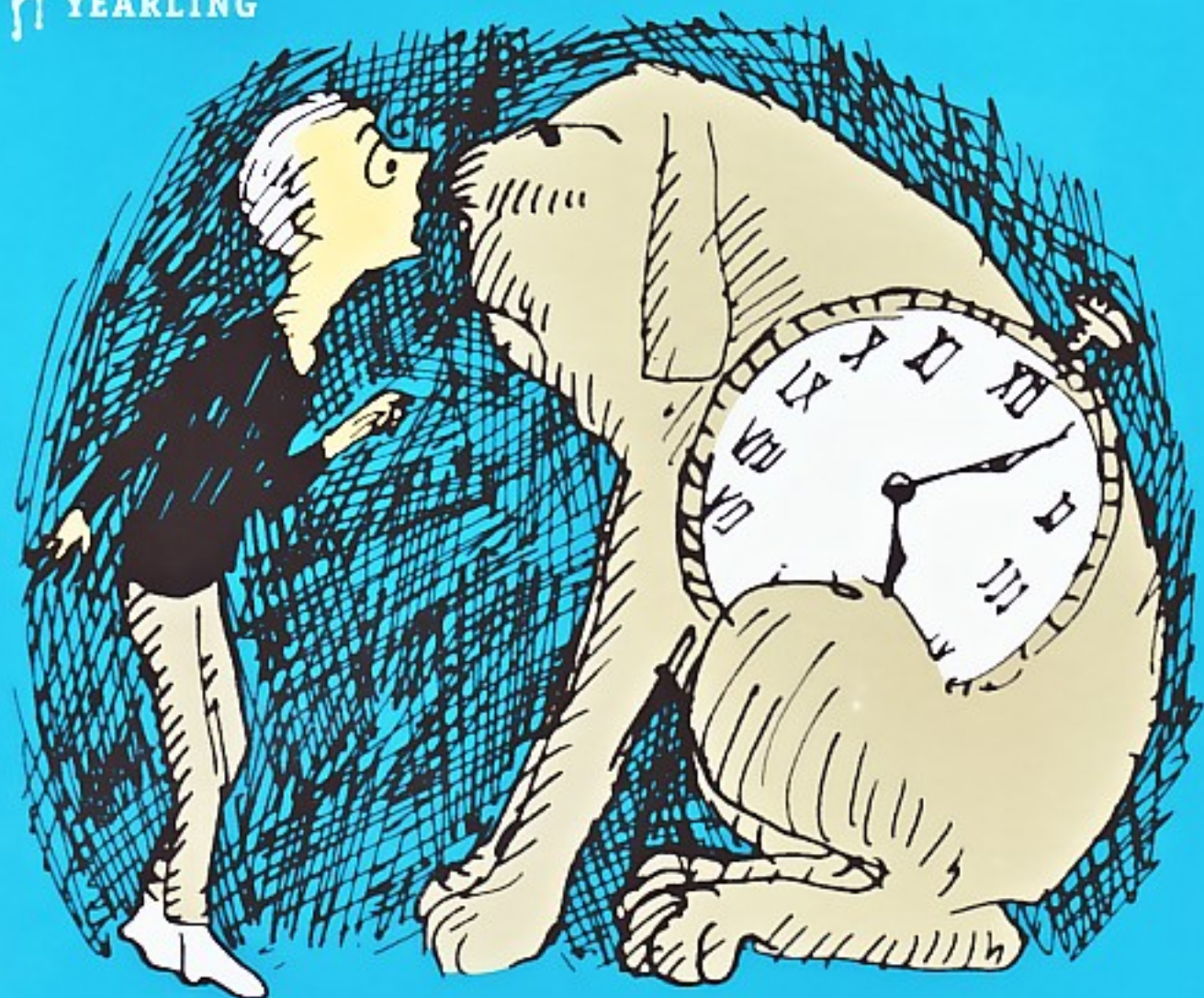


THE PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH



YEARLING



NORTON JUSTER

Illustrated by JULES FEIFFER

With an appreciation by Maurice Sendak

1. 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.

A Journey to the Lands Beyond . . .

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. . . .

www.randomhouse.com/kids

US \$6.99 /\$8.99 CAN

ISBN 978-0-394-82037-8



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A Yearling Book
New York
RL: 6.3
009-012

Cover art © 1961, renewed 1989 by Jules Feiffer
COVER PRINTED IN THE USA