

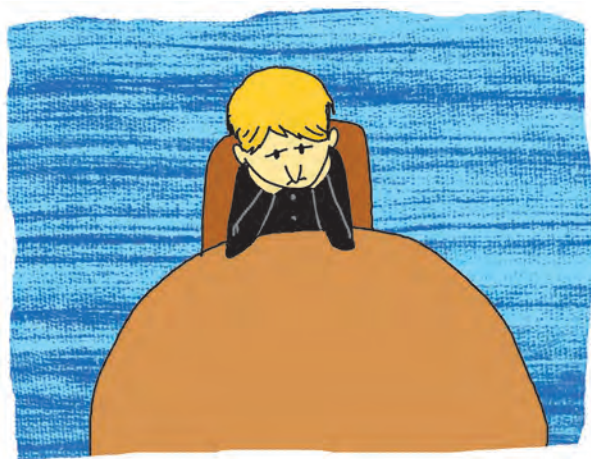


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The Phantom Tollbooth (A Book Review)



Milo was a young boy who lived in San Francisco in the States. He lacked for nothing. Being an only child, at home he was surrounded by all sorts of expensive toys. In school too, there was nothing that he could complain about. But ...! But Milo was bored! Nothing really interested him. He thought of everything as a waste of time, and school as the greatest waste of time of all. Poor Milo!



‘There’s nothing for me to do, nowhere I’d care to go, and hardly anything worth seeing,’ he thought. (You must have guessed by now that Milo belonged to an age when TV, video games and computers were not invented!)

But on one long afternoon like any other, Milo suddenly received a huge parcel with a bright blue envelope attached to one side. The envelope was addressed to him, ‘FOR MILO, WHO HAS PLENTY OF TIME’! Wouldn’t you be surprised if something like this

happened to you? So was Milo.

‘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.’ – Milo was an honest boy, so he admitted the last bit to himself.

He couldn’t return the parcel; there was no sender’s address on it. So, just in order to be polite, Milo decided to open the envelope.

‘ONE GENUINE
TURNPIKE TOLLBOOTH,’

it was written inside,

‘EASILY ASSEMBLED AT HOME,
AND FOR USE BY THOSE WHO
HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED IN
LANDS BEYOND.’

Like you, Milo was also intrigued by the words, ‘lands beyond’. There



was also a list of the contents of the parcel. It contained –

‘One (1) genuine turnpike toll-booth : 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.’

Because Milo had nothing else to do, he followed the ‘directions’ and erected the tollbooth. It was a proper booth with windows and a roof and a coin box.

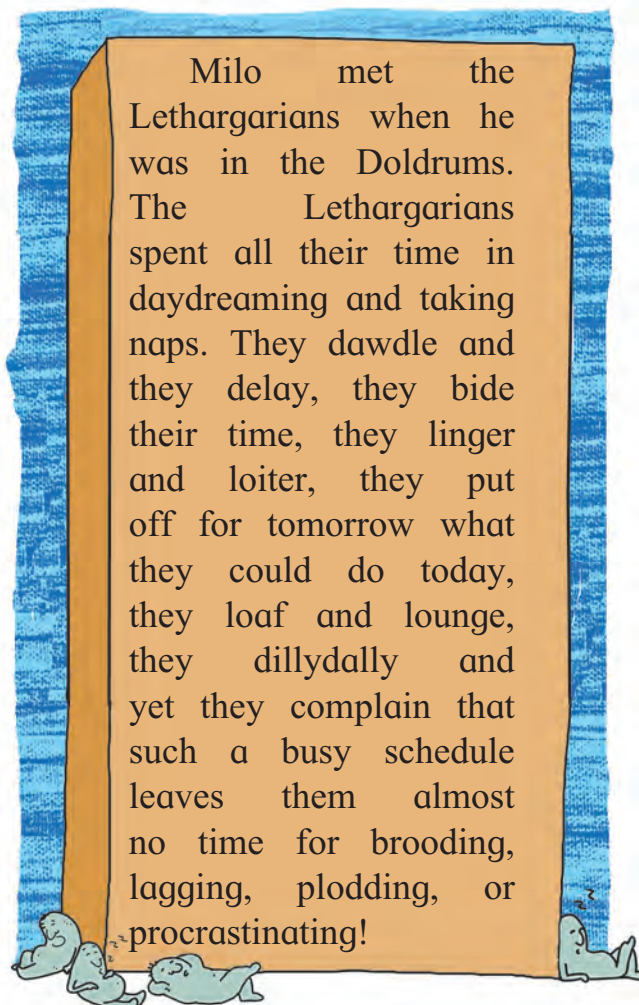
‘But what’s the use?’ thought Milo

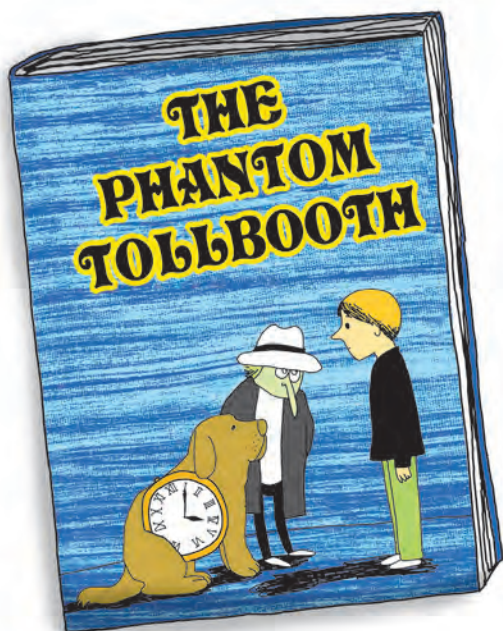
– there was no highway attached to the booth! Nevertheless, Milo set up the precautionary signs, unfolded the map and chose a destination. He chose it at random because he had never heard of any of the places shown on the map, and so one was as good as any other!

Milo was not sure that this new game would turn out to be interesting. However, he sat in his toy car, approached the booth, paid the toll with the coins, and drove past the toll booth. But when he looked back, Oh wonder of wonders, the toll booth had disappeared along with Milo’s room and even his house! He found himself speeding down a highway into an unknown territory!

What happened next is the story of Norman Juster’s novel, ‘The Phantom Tollbooth’!

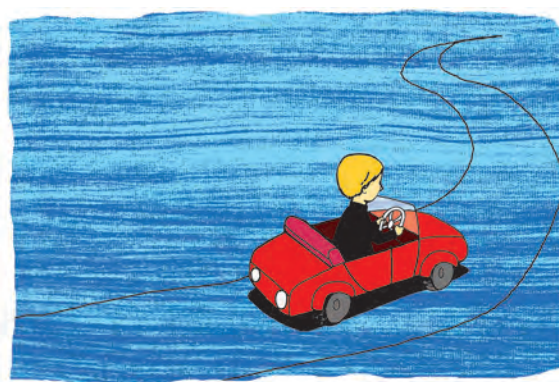
Though Milo didn’t know it then, he had begun his journey in the land of expectations. He was in the kingdom of wisdom. He had many adventures there. He had to rescue the princesses Rhyme and Reason from castles of air. Was





Milo find his life interesting later on? You must read the novel to find it out.

The novel 'The Phantom Tollbooth' was written more than 50 years ago but it continues to be a classic of children's literature. It is a fantasy but it has an important message for children all over the world. It has helped them to look at their school and studies in a new light.



he successful in his mission? Who were the strange people and creatures he met there? What happened to the toll booth? Did Milo see it again? Did

POINTERS

1. Read the passage and answer the following:
 - (a) Which book is introduced in the passage?
 - (b) Where does the story take place?
 - (c) Who is the main character in the story?
 - (d) Why is the tollbooth called a 'phantom' tollbooth?
 - (e) When was the book written?
 - (f) Who has written the book?
2. List the various people and places mentioned in the passage. The places Milo visits and the people he meets have unusual names. Write the meanings of those names.
3. List the various things that the Lethargarians do or want to do. Can you sum up all of it in one word or phrase?
4. In the novel, the Lethargarians give a whole day's time table of their activities. Can you guess what it would be like? Use your own ideas and prepare their time table.
5. Try to write interesting time tables for imaginary people or creatures.

6. Activity :

Start a collection of new and interesting words. Write the words in coloured ink on cards of equal size and arrange them in alphabetical order. Try to use the words in your writing or conversation from time to time.

7. Discuss what makes the following sentences funny.

- * Your wasted time will be refunded.
- * There was no highway attached to the booth.

8. The following boxes represent a word or phrase, through a special arrangement of letters. Guess the words.

Example : S T O N E Cornerstone	S T A N D I 	F A L L
R E A D I N G 	S T A R 	B B A A C C K K

Try to represent the following words or phrases using such special graphic arrangements.

- fair and square • side by side • round table • breaking news • an ice cube
- once upon a time • Hurry up • cool down • as big as

9. Write a review of your favourite book. Use the following points :

- * Title of the book * Author/Authors * The central idea or story
- * The important characters * Some special features of the book
- * Why it is your favourite book.
