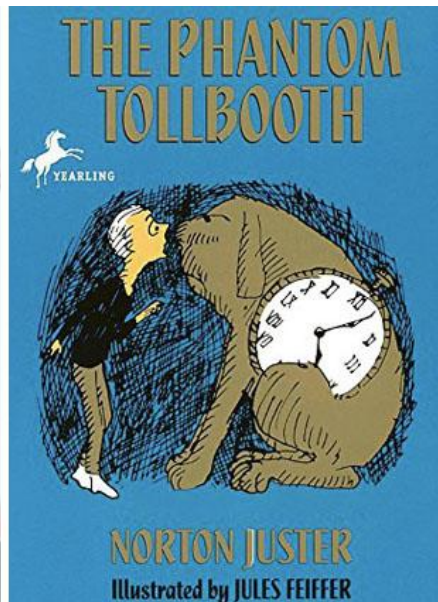




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Matt Shakman To Direct TriStar's 'The Phantom Tollbooth' Adaptation

By Mike Fleming Jr on Dec 8, 2017 1:14 pm



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EXCLUSIVE: [TriStar](#) is setting [Matt Shakman](#) to direct [The Phantom Tollbooth](#), a live-action/hybrid adaptation of Norton Juster's classic children's book. Shakman is the artistic director of the Geffen Playhouse who spent five years as executive producer of *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and directed two *Game of Thrones* episodes last season, "East Watch" and "The Spoils of War." He chose this over a number of offers as he steps up to a big feature. The script is by Michael Vukadinovich, and the current draft is a rewrite by Phil Johnston, who just wrote and directed *Wreck-It Ralph 2*. Donald De Line and Ed McDonnell are producing.

Originally published in 1961 with illustrations by Jules Pfeiffer, *The Phantom Tollbooth* is an empowering children's story revolving around Milo, an apathetic kid who's bored by everything. Things change when a tollbooth mysteriously appears in his room. When he drives in his toy car because he's got nothing better to do, he finds the magical Lands Beyond. Milo discovers that two kingdoms — Dictionopolis and Digitopolis — are at

odds over one's emphasis on words and the other on numbers. He has to free two kidnapped princesses, Rhyme and Reason, and must use his noggin to become a hero.

The film will be made as hybrid/live action, because there are exotic characters in the parallel universe, including Tock, an oversized watchdog with a clock in his side, and The Humbug, a flying bug dressed in a suit and top hat. The book, a staple of classrooms and libraries, has often been compared to the imagination of Alice in Wonderland.

TriStar chief Hannah Minghella and Nicole Brown are overseeing the film, which originally began as a Warner Bros project. It languished there, and became a passion for Minghella and Tom Rothman. Warner Bros has an option to be involved in a co-production, but that hasn't yet been decided.

Shakman is repped by UTA, Principato-Young's Allen Fischer and attorney Todd Rubinstein.

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