

## MILO AND THE MAGICAL STONES

By Marcus Pfister

Milo lives happily with other cliff mice on a small island. The mice love their island because it provides them with food and shelter from rough storms. After one storm, Milo leaves his cave and he finds a strange glowing stone. He takes the stone back to his cave and the glow and warmth of the stone attracts other mice. Eventually everyone wants to have a glowing stone. There are two endings to this story, a happy ending and a sad ending, based on how the mice respond to their desire to have a glowing stone of their very own.



**WITS Connection :** Talk it out, Seek Help

### Questions and Activities



#### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover of the book.
  - a. What do you think is magical about the stone?
  - b. What do you think would be magical for a mouse?
2. What other stories have you read that have magical stones? *Stone soup, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Sylvester and The Magic Pebble.*
3. The sub-title states that this is a story with two endings? What do you think this means?
4. Have you ever been surprised by an ending of a book or a movie?



#### QUESTIONS DURING THE READING

1. Page 1: What would mice living on a cliff on the edge of an island need to survive?
2. Page 2: How would you describe life on the island during the summer? What did the mice do on long summer nights?
3. Page 3: What was it like in winter? What did the mice do to survive?
4. What did the mice have to share in order live on the island? What are the advantages of sharing? What can be challenging about the act of sharing?
5. Why did the mice want a glowing stone of their very own?
6. What does Balthazar mean when he said, "The stones belong to the island. If you take something from the island, you must give something in return."



#### QUESTIONS AFTER THE READING

Happy Ending:

1. Do you think it was easy for Milo to think of a way to give something back to the island?
2. What do you suppose the other mice were thinking/feeling as they watched Milo take several days to create a gift for the island?
3. What were the different ways in which the rest of the mice "gave something back" to the island? *They replaced what they had taken with decorated stones.*

Sad Ending:

1. The story says that "Milo watched his friends sadly" and that "there was nothing he could do but get back to work on the gift he had thought to give the island." Do you agree that there was nothing Milo could have done? What would you have done?

2. The other mice desired the heat and light from the glowing stones. Where else could they have looked for heat and light?
3. When the mice took all the glowing stones back to their caves how did this affect their community? How did this affect Milo and Balthazar? How did this decision affect the island?
4. Even though they had warmth and heat were the mice happy? Were they safer?
5. The mice eventually competed with one another to gather as many glowing stones as possible. Did each mouse really need their own stone? *No, they didn't really need the stones.*
6. What is the difference between a "need" and a "want"? What are some "needs" in your life? What are some "wants"? *Everyone's needs and wants are different.*
7. In what other ways could Milo and Balthazar have talked it out with one another in order to persuade their friends not to take all the glowing stones?



## ACTIVITIES AFTER THE READING

- Distribute the *What happens next?* handout. Brainstorm the different ways in which the child on the card could respond to their desire to play on the swing. Ask students to draw two possible endings to the scenario, one that ends happily and one that ends with a sad consequence.

- Chutes and Ladders

Materials:

- *Chutes and Ladders Card Template*
- *Chutes and Ladders Gameboard*
- Game pieces and dice

Distribute the *Chutes and Ladders Card Template* to students. Describe the difference between a chute and a ladder in this game. Ask students to write four chute statements (bad things) about the story and four ladder statements (good things) about the story and add a consequence.

Card Example:

Action: Milo gave up talking it out with his friends.

Consequence: They took more stones than they needed and did not replace what they took until the island caves collapsed.

Game board direction: GO TO THE NEXT CHUTE

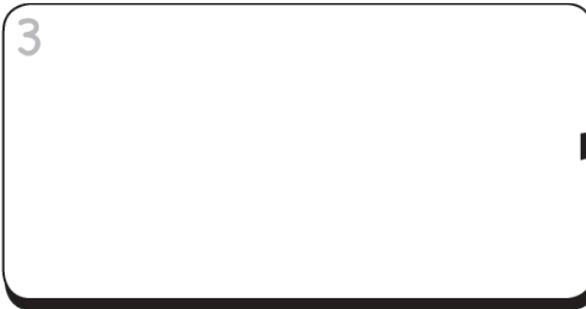
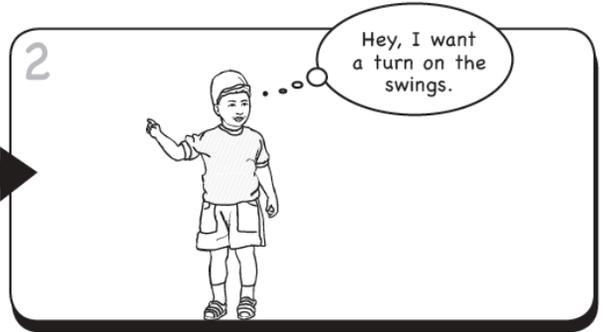
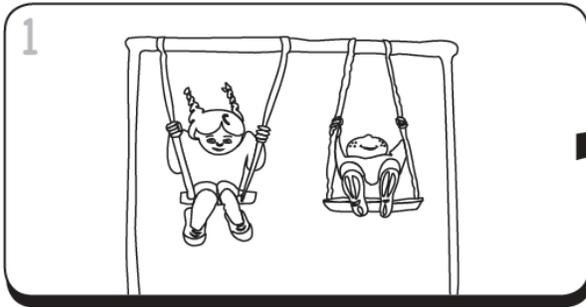
Students cut out their cards once they have filled them in. Assemble students in groups of four and ask each group of four to shuffle their cards together to create a deck of 32 cards. Distribute a *Chutes and Ladders Gameboard* to each small group. Students roll the die to determine how many spaces they may move. If they land on a chutes and ladder spot they pick a card, read the statement to proceed to the next chute or ladder. Students only move on the chutes and ladders if instructed by a card. First player to the finish wins the game.

- Ask students to bring a small rock with them to school. Decorate the rocks with words and pictures that describe how we can give back to environment. Take the rocks back outside and create a path with them in a suitable area on the school grounds.
- Read the sequel, *Milo and The Mysterious Island*. The story takes Milo and his friends off the island to discover other mice who look and behave differently from them. Compare the actions and consequences that take place in each book.

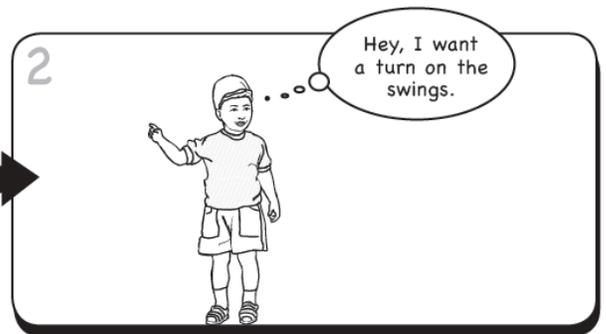
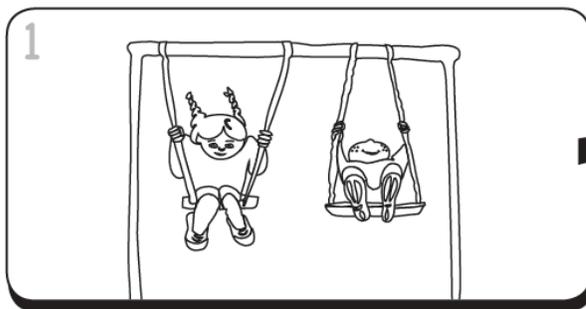
# MILO AND THE MAGICAL STONES: *What happens next? Happy and Sad Endings.*

Think about what might happen next in the story. What response would create a sad ending? What response could create a happy ending? Finish the stories by drawing the details in the empty boxes.

## Happy Ending



## Sad Ending



## MILO AND THE MAGICAL STONES: *Chutes and Ladders Card Template*

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<p>Action <u>Milo gave up talking it out with his</u> <u>friends.</u></p> <p>Consequence <u>They took more stones</u> <u>than they needed and did not replace</u> <u>what they took until the island caves collapsed.</u></p> <p>GO DOWN THE NEXT CHUTE</p>	<p>Action _____</p> <p>Consequence _____</p> <p>GO DOWN THE NEXT CHUTE</p>
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<p>Action _____</p> <p>Consequence _____</p> <p>GO UP THE NEXT LADDER</p>	<p>Action _____</p> <p>Consequence _____</p> <p>GO UP THE NEXT LADDER</p>
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**MILO AND THE MAGICAL STONES: *Chutes and Ladders*:  
Gameboard**

# Chutes and Ladders

