

The Lorax Play

Act I: Scene I

(Characters sit downstage, children looking at the ground)

Storyteller 1:

At the far end of town, where the Grickle-grass grows
And the wind smells, slow-and-sour when it blows

And no birds ever sing, excepting old crows...
Is the Street that a creature named the Lorax knows

It is here, deep in the Grickle-grass, some people say,
Where you'll discover you can still see, today,

Where the Lorax once stood
Just as long as it could
Before somebody lifted the Lorax away.

Child 1:

What was the Lorax? And why was it there?
And why was it lifted and taken somewhere

From the far end of town where the Grickle-grass grows?
The old Once-ler still lives here. And he's the only one who knows?

Storyteller 1:

You won't see the Once-ler. Don't knock at his door.
He stays in his Lerkim on top of his store.

(Storyteller points)

He lurks in his Lerkim, cold under the roof,
Where he makes his own clothes out of miff-muffered moof.

And on special dank midnights in August, he peeks
Out of the shutters and sometimes he speaks

(OLD Once-ler opens his shutters)

And tells how the Lorax was lifted away.
He'll tell you, perhaps... if you're willing to pay.

Child 2:

How much does it cost to hear the great story
Of the Once-ler and his days of glory?

Storyteller 1:

On the end of rope, he lets down a pail,

(Once-ler lets down pail)

And you have to toss in 15 cents and a nail and the shell of a great-great-great-grandfather snail
(Children searches in their pockets)

Child 3:

I have 15 cents!!!

(Kids look on the ground for other items on the ground)

Child 3:

And here is a nail!

Child 1:

I found a shell of a great-great-great-grandfather snail!

Child 2:

We have the money, where is the pail?

(Storyteller points)

(OLD Once-ler pulls up the pail, only showing his hands)

OLD Once-ler:

I will call you by the Whisper-ma-Phone for the secrets I tell are for your ears alone

(Children grab Whisper-ma-Phone)

Act I: Scene II

OLD Once-ler: Now I'll tell you how the Lorax got lifted and taken away...

It all started way back...

Such a long, long time back...

CURTAINS OPEN

Way back in the days when the grass was still green
And the pong was still wet and the clouds were still clean,

And the song of the Swomee-Swans rang out in space...
One morning, I came to this glorious place.

(Swans fly across stage singing)

(Children put their hands to their ears and act as if it was the sweetest song they have ever heard)

(Young Once-ler walks onto stage, acting out what the Old Once-ler is saying)

And I first saw the trees! The Truffula Trees!
The bright-colored tufts of the Truffula Trees!
Mile after mile in the fresh morning breeze.

(Truffula Trees enter swaying and smiling)

(Children make note of the beautiful trees)

And, under the trees, I saw Brown Bar-ba-loots
Frisking about in the Bar-ba-loot suits
As they played in the shade and ate Truffula Fruits.

(Bar-ba-loots enter, jumping/leap frog)

From the rippulous pond came the comfortable sound
Of the Humming-Fish humming while splashing around.

(Fish enter)

Fish: come on girls!

(Fish do little dance)

SONG: “HAPPY DAPPY BARBALOOTS”

But those trees! Those trees! Those Truffula Trees!
All my life I’d been searching for trees such as these.

The touch of their tufts was much softer than silk.
And they had the sweet smell of fresh butterfly milk.

I felt a great leaping of joy in my heart.
I knew just what I’d do! I unloaded my cart.

In no time at all, I had build a small shop.
Then I chopped down a Truffula Tree with one chop.

(Chop down tree: Lorax pops out)

(Animals give a confusing look)

(Storyteller 1 sits)

Act I: Scene III

(Storyteller 2 enters)

Young Once-ler: What you doing in my tree stump buddy?

Lorax: Your tree stump! Your tree stump! Mr. I am the Lorax I speak for the...

Young Once-ler: Forget it I don’t really need the stump...

(Once-ler runs back to his shop with the tree)

Storyteller 2:

And with great skillful skill and with great speedy speed,
The Once-ler took the soft tuft. And knitted a Thneed!

(Once-ler pretends to knew the Thneed)

Lorax: Mister! I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees.
I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues.
And I’m asking you, sir, at the top of my lungs

What’s that THING you’ve made out of my Truffula tuft?

Young Once-ler: Look, Lorax, There’s no cause for alarm.
I chopped just one tree. I am doing no harm.
I’m being quite useful. This thing is a Thneed.
(Holds out Thneed)

A Thneed's a Fine-Something-That-All-People-Need!
It's a shirt. It's a sock. It's a glove. It's a hat.
But it has other uses. Yes, far beyond that.

(Once-lers pop out of the shop)

Once-ler 1: You can use it for carpets.

Once-ler 2: For pillows!

Once-ler 1: For sheets!

Once-ler 3: Or curtains!

All: Or covers for bicycle seats!

(Once-lers leave the stage)

(Lorax getting very mad)

Lorax: Sir! You are crazy with greed.
There is no one on earth who would buy that fool Thneed!

Young Once-ler: But the very next minute I proved he was wrong.
For, just at that minute, a chap came along.

Buyer: Wow that the Thneed you have knitted is great.
I happily buy it for three ninety-eight!

Young Once-ler: (laughing pointing at the buyer)
You poor guy!
You never can tell what some people will buy.

Lorax: I repeat, I speak for the trees!

Young Once-ler: I'm busy, be quiet if you please
(Lorax leave, Once-ler rushes across the room, and picks up the phone)

Storyteller 2: He called all his brothers and uncles and aunts and said...

Young Once-ler: Listen here! Here's a wonderful chance
For the whole Once-ler Family to get mighty rich!
Get over here fast! Take the road to North Nitch.
Turn left at Weehawken. Sharp right at South Stitch.

SONG: "DIRECTIONS"

(Bring Factory on, Once-ler family and Ben go in the windows of the factory and knit)

Storyteller 2: And, in no time at all, in the factory he built
The whole Once-ler Family was working full tilt.
They were all knitting Thneeds just as busy as bees,
To the sound of the chopping of Truffula Trees.

Young Once-ler: Oh! Baby! Oh! How a business can grow!
Now, chopping one tree at a time is too slow.

(Designated students drive axe hacker)

Storyteller 2: Quickly he invented a Super-axe-hacker
Which whacked off four Truffula Trees at one smacker.

(Walks off stage)

Once-ler Family: We are making Thneeds four times as fast as before!

(Kids and OLD Once-ler walk across the stage)

Child 2: And that Lorax?...

Old Once-ler: He didn't show up any more.

Act I: Scene IV

CLOSE CURTAINS (SCENERY CHANGES TO POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT)

Old Once-ler:

My business was such a success!

I didn't stop to realize I was making a mess.

Thneeds were something that all people needed.

I did not listen to the Lorax who pleaded.

He did not understand how much money I was making!

I could charge a hundred dollars and people would keep taking!

PAUSE

As time when on the sky began to turn gray, the ponds began to get dark, and us Once-lers? WE STAYED!!!

I did not understand what hard pollution could do!

If you were as rich as I was you would do the same too!

OPEN CURTAINS

Storyteller 3: You remember the Lorax who had walked away quite sore?

Well, the very next week he knocked on the Once-ler's office door.

(Lorax and Barbaloots enter)

Lorax: I'm the Lorax who speaks for the trees

Which you seem to be chopping as fast as you please.

I'm also in charge of the Brown Bar-ba-loots

Who played in the shade in their Bar-ba-loot suits

And happily lived, eating Truffula Fruits.

NOW...thanks to your hacking my trees to the ground,

There's not enough Truffula Fruit to go 'round.

And my poor Bar-ba-loots are all getting the crummies

Bear 1: we had gas, and no food, in our tummies!

(Bears rolling on ground holding their tummies)

Bear 2: We loved living here. But we can't stay.

Bear 3: We have to find food. And I hope that we may.

Lorax: Good luck, guys (waves goodbye, bears walk off slumped over with frowns and waving)

Young Once-ler: I feel sad to watch them go but... business is business! And business must grow regardless of crummies in tummies, you know!

Storyteller 3: The Once-ler meant no harm. He most truly did not.
But he had to grow bigger. So bigger he got.
He biggered his factory. He biggered his roads.
He biggered his wagons. He biggered the loads.

Young Once-ler: Of the Thneeds we ship out. We will ship them forth
To the South! To the East! To the West! To the North!

SONG: “FOR HE’S A JOLLY GOOD ONCE-LER”

(Once-ler brushing his shoulders off, startled at the Lorax tapping him on the shoulder)
(Lorax and Swans walk on)

Lorax: I am the Lorax, (sounding a bit sick)
Once-ler! You’re making such smogulous smoke!
My poor Swomee-Swans... why, they can’t sing a note!

(Some swans appear who are trying to sing, but can’t)
No one can sing who has smog in his throat.

Swan 1: We cannot live here. We are moving away.

Swan 2: I know what you’re asking. “Where will we go?”

Swan 3: We would like to tell you, but we don’t rightly know.

Swan 1: We may have to fly for a month... or a year...
To escape from the smog you’ve smogged-up around here!

(Swans fly away, coughing)
(Fish enter)

Lorax: Your machinery chugs on, day and night without stop.
Making Gluppity-Glupp. Also Schloppity-Schlopp.
And what do you do with this leftover goo?...
I’ll tell you. You dirty old Once-ler man, you!

You’re glumping the pond where the Humming-Fish hummed!
No more can they hum, for their gills are all gummed!

(Fish rolling around sick)

Fish 1: We must go away, Oh! Our future is dreary!

Fish 2: We’ll walk on our fins and get woefully weary!

Fish 3: In search of some water that isn’t so smeary.
I hear things are just as bad up in Lake Erie.

(Fish walk away)

SONG: “SADDY WADDY BARBALOOTS”

Act II: Scene I

(Once-ler gets very angry and points at Lorax)

Young Once-ler: All you do is yap-yap and say, “Bad! Bad! Bad! Bad!”
Well, I have my rights, sir, and I’m telling you
I intend to go on doing just what I do!

And, for your information, you stick in the mud, you
Hear what I thinking and you’ll really boo hoo.

Once-ler Family:
We are figgering on biggering
And BIGGERING
And BIGGERING

Young Once-ler:
And your righteous ideals we will be a-triggering.
Turning MORE Truffula Tress into Thneeds!

Once-ler Family: which everyone, EVERYONE, EVERYONE needs!

(Storyteller 4 enters)

Storyteller 4: And at that very moment, they all heard a loud whack!
From outside in the fields came a sickening smack
Of an axe on a tree. Then we heard the tree fall.
The very last Truffula Tree – the last of them all!

(Everyone gasps from off stage)

Once-ler Family: No more trees.
No more Thneeds.

Once-ler: No more work to be done. Goodbye, Goodbye... to everyone

(Once-ler waves good-bye to family)

(Lorax placing rocks into the word UNLESS)

Storyteller 4: Now all that was left ‘neath the bad-smelling sky
Was the big empty factory... The Lorax... and the Once-ler

(The Lorax gives a glance to the Once-ler and starts to get up to leave)

Storyteller 4: And all that the Lorax left in this mess
Was a small pile of rocks, with the one word... UNLESS.
Whatever that meant, well, the Once-ler just couldn’t guess.

Act II: Scene II

OLD Once-ler:
That was long, long ago. But each day since that day
I’ve sat here and worried and worried away.
Through the years, while my buildings have fallen apart,

I've worried about it with all of my heart.
But now that you're here,
The word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear.

(Children look at Once-ler)

Old Once-ler: UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better. Sad to say, but, it's not.
"SO...CATCH!"

(Once-ler throws a seed to the children)

Child 3: What is this?

Old Once-ler: It's a Truffula Seed. It's the last one of all! You are in charge of the last Truffula Seed! And a Truffula is what everyone needs.

Child 2: I will plant a new Truffula Tree, I will treat it with care

Child 1: I will give it clean water and feed it fresh air.

Child 3: I will grow a forest and protect it from axes that hack.

All: Then the Lorax and all of his friends may come back.

(All characters come back onto the stage)

SONG: "WE CAN TURN THIS WORLD AROUND"