



The Lorax: Thneedville In Crisis

Crisis Committee of ENMUNC IV

Crisis Director - Finn Reilly

Chair - Diya Nair

A Letter From The Crisis Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to The Lorax: Thneedville in Crisis at ENMUNC IV. During this committee, you will be exploring the wondrous mysteries left by the greatest contribution to society in 2012: *Dr. Suess' The Lorax*. I still remember seeing this movie in theaters and while I did not think of the political themes behind it at the time, I knew it was destined for brilliance long into the future.

My name is Finn (he/him) and I speak for the trees! I am a second-year student at Emory originally from Topeka, Kansas. I am studying Business and International Studies at the Oxford College Campus. This is my second year as a member of the Emory International Relations Association and my second year staffing Emory conferences. I currently serve as the Head Delegate of the Oxford Campus's Model UN Team. While *The Lorax* wasn't always my favorite movie, I've had the song "Let it Grow" memorized for years and last summer, I started to question what happened with the governmental gap in a post "Let it Grow" society. I'm so excited to share this curiosity with you and see where you take this committee!

Get ready for something you never thought could be so complex. I hope to see you use your wildest imagination to create not just a new government, but perhaps even a new society in Thneedville. Don't be afraid to make inferences and stretches about your characters (while remaining somewhat reasonable) and try to find connections to how authoritarianism works in our real world. In the meantime, I'll be brushing up on my rhyming and performative skills for the best crisis updates you can fathom. Please don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions beforehand! I'm looking forward to seeing how you all work in this committee and remember that unless you care a lot, it won't be as fun, it will not!

Sincerely,

Finn

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A Letter From The Chair

Dear Delegates,

My name is Diya Nair and I am a first-year at Emory, originally from Woodbridge, New Jersey. I am a prospective Human Health major, currently serving as the Junior Head Delegate of the Oxford International Relations Association!

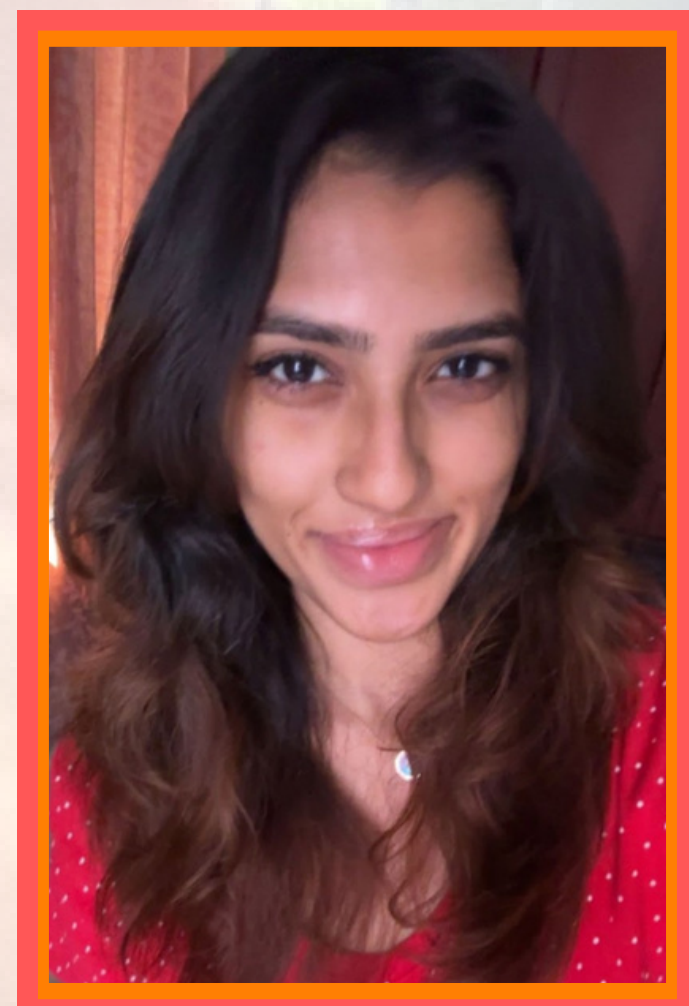
Having been doing Model United Nations since middle school, I am ecstatic to serve as your Chair – especially for a committee as whimsical and imaginative as The Lorax! From being inspired by the Once-ler at age 7 to start my own Thneed business (it failed), to fangirling over the fact that Taylor Swift voiced Audrey, the Lorax holds a special place in my heart. While all that baby Diya got out of the movie was a good laugh at O’Hare’s ridiculous haircut, re-evaluating this cinematic masterpiece brings forward critical messages across the themes of government and environmentalism. I hope this committee enables you to combine your creativity with problem-solving to address these challenges and grow as future changemakers. In the words of The Lorax himself, “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better – it's not.” So, bring your diplomacy toolkit and a little bit of silliness to build a bright future for the citizens of Thneedville.

If you have any questions about the committee or Model UN procedure, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am looking forward to seeing you all shortly!

Sincerely,

Diya

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Content Discussion & Guidelines

All delegates are required to maintain decorum and respect for one another both inside and outside the committee. No derogatory, offensive, or hateful behavior of any kind is tolerated. If there is any hostile behavior, you will receive a warning and then will be respectfully removed from the committee and not allowed to participate with any subsequent inappropriate behavior. Any form of speech, crisis note, or directive that contains harmful language or actions against marginalized or underrepresented groups will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic language. Any personal attacks on any other delegates will also be strictly prohibited.

You will be representing characters of diverse beliefs, opinions, and backgrounds, but you are responsible for how you act through your character. Represent your characters' political stances and social circumstances as accurately as possible without being derogatory and be respectful towards all individual beliefs and opinions in the room.

In addition, please note that use of technology will not be allowed during active committee sessions unless needed for accessibility or medical reasons.

Thank you in advance for working to make ENMUNC a safe environment that fosters healthy and lively debate. For any questions or concerns, please contact your CD or ENMUNC's Secretary General. We are always here to answer any questions or concerns you have and want to make your time at ENMUNC the best.

The First Publication of The Lorax

The Lorax, published by Theodor Seuss Geisel, more commonly known as Dr. Seuss, in 1971, has left an indelible mark on literature and environmental consciousness. The children's book served as a poignant allegory for environmental stewardship and the consequences of unchecked industrialization. The Lorax tells the tale of a fantastical land called the Truffula Forest and its guardian, the Lorax, who speaks for the trees in the face of a relentless industrialist known as the Once-ler. Dr. Seuss crafted this story as a cautionary fable, highlighting the devastating impact of deforestation and the importance of conservation. The Lorax's iconic phrase, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not," resonates as a call to action for readers of all ages.

In 2018, researchers investigated the life of Dr. Seuss and his inspiration for the Lorax, trying to learn more about the character that had captured the world's imagination. This led to their proposal that the Lorax was based on a real-life creature, the Patas Monkey, which Geisel encountered during a trip to Kenya in 1970. This discovery has added a layer of depth to the Lorax's legacy, suggesting that its environmental message is rooted in the observable destruction of natural habitats.

The Lorax was ahead of its time, serving as an example of the real danger to the environment in the present, and not just the future. Beyond its environmental themes, *The Lorax* has become a cultural touchstone, sparking discussions about sustainability. The book's enduring popularity is a testament to its timeless relevance, as contemporary society grapples with environmental challenges. *The Lorax* reminds us that even one individual can have the power to leave a lasting change in the natural world.

Dr. Seuss' The Lorax (2012)

The 2012 retelling by Illumination added depth to this story transforming the picture book into a full-length feature film. Including the original story of the Once-ler creating a business empire that destroyed the Truffula Forest, the movie expands to look at a society birthed in the aftermath of this ecological disaster and a boy named Ted who seeks answers about the history of the trees.

In this story, the Once-ler is given more depth as a person who didn't want to destroy the forest but instead was pressured to by his family. Additionally, a friendship is established between him and the Lorax and the forest creatures before the eventual chopping of the last tree and the departure of the Lorax. In the future, Ted has a crush on a girl named Audrey and leaves his town of Thneedville to visit the former Truffula Valley to learn about the trees from the Once-ler. These actions are caught by Aloysius O'Hare, a "gazillionaire" who runs a company that sells clean air to the Thneedvillians and seemingly controls the government and public surveillance systems as O'Hare keeps an eye on Ted when he leaves town and threatens him and his family with violence if he doesn't give up on bringing trees back.

The film reaches its climax when Ted, his family, and Audrey are chased through the streets of Thneedville before he manages to rupture a hole in the wall surrounding the idyllic plastic town, revealing the barren landscape outside. Coming together through song, the Thneedvillians decide to let the tree go and remove O'Hare from power.

This ending paired with other clues of life in Thneedville set the stage for this committee with many questions. What is the health of the population like? It is made clear in the first song that the toxicity in the water caused a child to start glowing. And as the townspeople had to pay for clean air, there now exists a gap in the market of air. After all, the trees didn't grow fast enough to replenish before the entire forest was gone. With a new power vacuum and needs to address the environment, the film's conclusion begins our committee.

Scenario

Committee Structure

As this committee takes place in the immediate aftermath of the film, all members will be portraying characters that have been placed on a committee determining the future of Thneedville. This includes O'Hare and small children who participated in the "Let It Grow" song. Missing membership from this committee will be the Lorax himself who has yet to return after the fall of the forest. Perhaps the committee can find a way to bring him back? You will all be tasked with working together to find a way forward. Many characters have ambiguous backgrounds which will allow you to explore a wide array of characters to write to in your crisis notes and develop your arcs as long as they are within reason (so Marie who is three can't just write to the head engineer of the O'Hare factory with the plan of becoming the new president. At least, not right away). Remember that if you are unable to complete the goals of the topics, you all may face an existential doom.

Timeline

The first crisis update for this committee will take place immediately after the conclusion of the song "Let it Grow." From then it can be assumed that crisis updates will happen every week within the story. Depending on the speed of directives and crisis notes, this may change but it should be assumed that the committee will largely follow the week by week timeline.

Who Can I Write To?

Delegates are invited to be creative and come up with outside characters to write to. It would be appreciated if delegates choose to write to other characters from the film that do not appear or write to other Dr. Seuss characters. As all Dr. Seuss characters will be canon in this community, it should be assumed that the distance from Thneedville may cause delays in the arrival of supplies if characters are known to live in other places such as Whoville. **Please note that writing to the Lorax will not be possible as nobody knows where he has gone...**

Topic I: Building a New Government of Thneedville

Thneedville is at a crossroads. Before Ted introduced trees, the city of Thneedville lived in peace as it was under the complete control of the O'Hare Air Company. Though there is reference to a government, government officials never appeared in the film leading to the conclusion that O'Hare was the controlling entity since he operated all public surveillance in the city. Now that he has been taken out of power what will happen next? Who should be in charge?

Your task will be to reorganize the government and figure out who will be your new head. You also need to create structures to prevent an authoritarian regime from regaining power and protect citizens from unrest and rioting. If not, who is to stop another person from taking dominion?

Another major task delegates will face includes the facilitation of clean air for Thneedvillians. O'Hare still has control of his factory currently despite his ousting from power. With a rupture in the wall outside of Thneedville unclean air is starting to flow in. How can you fix this? A Truffula seed has been planted, but since the tree will grow slowly, ensuring that it is protected will be important.

Questions to Consider

- How can you structure a new government of Thneedville that adequately serves and protects the people?
- Who should be tasked with heading the new government? Do you want a head at all? What can be done to prevent someone from gaining too much power?
- How can you prevent violence from erupting in Thneedville? Can you maintain trust from the population?
- What should be done about O'Hare?
- How can you guarantee the supply of clean air to the population?

Topic II: Restoring the Natural Environment

When Ted took a bulldozer to the wall around Thneedville, many Thneedvillians took a look at the outside world for the first time in their lives. The situation is bleak. With no trees and constant cloudiness, the water, soil, and air quality are beyond terrible. With no wildlife and no trees growing, the Truffula Valley is in a terrible state that needs immediate attention.

Your task will be to find solutions to the environmental damage. If Thneedville is to survive without an authoritarian strongman, access to the outside world is a necessity. But with nowhere safe to go, work needs to be done to clean this land and resuscitate it. How can you allocate resources to rebuilding this environment? Can you get support of those with these resources and the struggling community?

Another major task in this topic will be finding ways to cultivate land and bring wildlife back. While the people of Thneedville have survived for decades, the lack of natural vegetation and good soil indicates that nutrition levels are low in the toxic city. Finding ways to cultivate land will be a must. And as work is done to clean the environment, work should also be done to restoring wildlife numbers to restore a functioning ecosystem.

Questions to Consider

- What resources exist that can be used to revive a long dead environment?
- Are there ways to spread tree growth quickly enough to survive and take care of the land?
- Do you even want to restore the natural environment or only focus on yourselves? If history has taught anything, it's that protecting the environment is essential. Did everyone learn though?
- How can animal rights be represented in this new era? What legislation can be done to protect the environment (if a new government can function)?
- How can you guarantee the supply of clean air to the atmosphere?

How To Prepare For This Committee

The best way to prepare for a committee based on a popular movie is to watch the movie itself. I cannot emphasize enough that if you have not seen this movie in the last six months, you should try finding it and watching it at least once. Using easter eggs and being able to connect essential and nonessential parts of the plot to politics is extremely important and we will be watching to see how well you can do that.

Other ways that I recommend you prepare include reading the original book, researching modern authoritarianism, and learning about environmental damages and policies. When it comes to creating your arc, be creative! I want to see how you can create magic with your character. Do not be afraid to push limits (we'll tell you if you're going too far). As some characters have little information about them, you can take the drivers seat to determine what facts about their life may be important in this committee. If this broad ability to find your arc is daunting, please reach out and I'll see how I can be of service to you.



Character Dossier

As explained earlier in this document, some of these characters have little backstory but appear with lines in the movie. This will give you a starting point and then allows you to use your imaginations to create an arc that could reasonably go to many places. Does a child start a communist movement? Were other people hiding old truffula seeds? The need to invent characters to write to may be present and expected without much scrutiny as long as it is explained who you are writing to and why you can, as is often a need in other crisis committees.



Ted Wiggins: Ted is the main protagonist from the movie. Ted is a teenage boy who first sought information on trees seeds to impress Audrey, a neighbor girl that he had a crush on. Now he's led a movement in planting the first seed in Thneedville. It is unclear where he wants to go next. After all, he's just a kid. Is he to fill the power vacuum? What is his relationship to Audrey?



Bernice Wiggins (Ted's Mom): Bernice Wiggins is Ted's mom who helped in bringing trees back to Thneedville. She is solidly against O'Hare and really cares about her son but also enjoyed the artificial environment of Thneedville before helping plant a tree. Now she faces a new path forward. She needs to continue to protect her family but also decide how life will be in a new Thneedville.



Grammy Norma: Grammy Norma is Ted's maternal grandmother. She remembers when trees were everywhere as a child and was so excited to see trees coming back. She is vivacious and surprisingly athletic and is theorized to have ties to the Once-ler given that she tells Ted how to find him in the film and knows what he likes. Not afraid to speak her mind, Grammy Norma takes a firm belief that trees must return.

Character Dossier



The Once-ler: The destroyer of the ecosystem, The Once-ler is an old, former gazillionaire who lives in a decrepit home in the middle of what was once the Truffula Valley. The Once-ler regrets his actions of destroying the environment and fighting with the Lorax and is glad to bring trees back. In this committee it is determined that the Once-ler has re-entered society to help fix Thneedville.



Aloysius O'Hare: Founder and CEO of the O'Hare Air Company, O'Hare is a gazillionaire who controls Thneedville and the useful air. At the end of the movie he is removed from power but not explicitly removed from society giving him the chance to be represented in this committee. Perhaps he can get some old followers back? Against trees, O'Hare will work to see how he can advance new interests in this restructured society.



Audrey: Audrey is a high school girl that Ted has a crush on, though it is not explicitly known if she reciprocates by the end of the movie. Audrey has been fascinated with trees for a long time and painted a mural on her house of trees before it was vandalized by the O'Hare company. Using arts to raise awareness of Trees, Audrey hopes to see a brighter future for the Thneedville environment.



Cy the O'Hare Delivery Guy: Cy is just the O'Hare Delivery Guy but if he hadn't started singing "Let it Grow" at the end of the movie it may not have ended well for the trees. Now Cy is out of a job with the end of O'Hare but is passionate about letting trees grow. Having been a humble worker for O'Hare air, Cy has the opportunity to become a leader among the community.

Character Dossier



Rose: A Thneedville citizen, Rose is the mother of Wesley, a child that glows. Wesley started glowing after exposure to the water in Thneedville which is a high concern for Rose. As such Rose supports the growing of trees but still needs to find a solution for her son. What can she do about his health? How can she make lasting change in her city?



Wesley Who Kind of Glows: Wesley is a glowing child who was exposed to the water in Thneedville and now glows. Though he is young, the dangerous conditions of Thneedville's environment have pushed him into the political landscape. Is he just a symbol or the next child activist?



Dan: Dan is the father of Wesley, the glowing child and is married to Rose. Like his wife, he is deeply concerned about his son's health noting that glowing is not good and supporting letting trees grow. Now, as Rose is, he is on a new path forward. How can he protect his son's health and support a new government? Can he become a leader and make change?



Marie Who Is Three: Marie is a three-year-old who really wants to see a tree and sings about it during "Let it Grow" at the end of the movie. Despite her young age, her influenced in the movement has propelled her in the political world. Will she replace Greta Thunberg as the influential young climate activist?

Character Dossier



Pipsqueak: Animals of the environment, bar-ba-loots are little animals akin to small bears. They eat the fruits of the Truffula trees and all had to leave when the Truffula Valley was destroyed. In this committee Pipsqueak, a bar-ba-loot who was a child when the valley was destroyed will be present. It's assumed that he grew up and has come back to represent the bar-ba-loots as they try to restore the trees.



Hummingfish: The hummingfish are fish that lived in the Truffula Valley with other animals before the water was polluted. These fish can live both above and in water and like the other animals in this committee, it is assumed that they can speak with humans and one will be there to represent the animals. Can the water be cleaned? If it makes people glow, what effects could it have on fish?



Bill The Swomee Swan: Swomee Swans are birds that lived in the Truffula valley with other animals before all the trees were destroyed. In this committee Bill, who was a child swan when everything was destroyed will have returned to represent the Swomee Swans. Bill was also a Swomee Swan that knew the Lorax and the Once-ler back when the Truffula Valley still had trees.



Aunt Grizelda: Aunt Grizelda is the Once-ler's aunt who appears in flash backs in the movie. Aunt Grizelda was against the Lorax and believed in destroying trees in the name of profit. In this committee it is determined that she has been living as a wealthy woman in Thneedville since she cut ties with the Once-ler. Will Aunt Grizelda be willing to sacrifice her luxurious lifestyle to restore the Truffula Valley?

Character Dossier



Bret: Bret is twins with Chet and is an older brother of the Onceler. He acts in a compulsive manner and plays with Chet in wreaking havoc on local animals while working for the Once-ler's thneed company. In this committee Bret has been living in Thneedville with Chet and is seeing the Once-ler for the first time in years. Does he want to bring in a new era? Or stick with the one that made his family money?



Chet: Chet is twins with Bret and is an older brother of the Onceler. He acts in a compulsive manner and plays with Bret in wreaking havoc on local animals while working for the Once-ler's thneed company. In this committee Chet has been living in Thneedville with Bret and is seeing the Once-ler for the first time in years. Can he find common ground with the Once-ler? Or stick with the status quo?



Morty: Morty is one of two security guards for O'Hare. Despite loyalty throughout the film, he and McGurk betray O'Hare at the end. Now his life is at a cross-roads as he will lose his job if O'Hare's company goes down. Does he really want to betray the man who gave him a livelihood? Or is he ready to move on from O'Hare air? How can he secure a safe future for himself?



McGurk: McGurk is one of two security guards for O'Hare. Despite loyalty throughout the film, he and Morty betray O'Hare at the end. Now his life is at a cross-roads as he will lose his job if O'Hare's company goes down. In an unstable state can he ensure that he will have the means to survive? Can he secure other employment? Or is going back to O'Hare the safe move?

Character Dossier



Uncle Ubb: Uncle Ubb is the uncle of the Once-ler who helped him chop down trees to destroy the Truffula Valley. He antagonized him before starting to make money off of him with the Thneed company but left when the last tree was gone. Married to Aunt Grizelda, Uncle Ubb has been living comfortably in Thneedville ever since the Thneed company collapsed using the wealth it created. What is he to do now?

Works Cited

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