

BACKGROUND GUIDE
HOW BAD CAN I BE? THNEEDVILLE CITY COUNCIL



WMIDMUN-XXII

HISTORY



For centuries, the majestic Truffula Valley remained untouched. The rolling hills, cliffs, and mountain sides were covered in fluffy oranges, pinks, and golds as far as the eye could see. The Valley was home to a variety of animals, including the Humming Fish, Bar-ba-loots, and Swomee Swans. Joats munched on the grass, Lunks wandered about, and Thwerlls danced in the streaming sunlight.

The lush forests were eventually discovered by a group that became known as the First Greenville Settlers. They were amazed by the abundance of resources and the sheer freshness and natural beauty of it all.

The settlers cleared out an area in the middle of the forest, in the center of the Truffula Valley. They began building their homes when they were shocked by the arrival of the Lorax, a short, stout, and stern character. He told them to cease their tree felling efforts and stop all lumber operations. He spoke for the trees, he said, as the trees cannot speak for themselves.

The settlers were perplexed; they had never seen anyone like the Lorax before. But the settlers were open to the ideas, for they found the Truffula trees to be less than ideal anyway. Truffula trees were inefficient for lumber purposes, as their yield was extremely low and it was hard to get big pieces from the thin trees. It was also not a hard, stable wood like they had hoped. But most importantly, the residents were dissuaded by the Lorax, who kept appearing when they tried to harvest the trees. The Truffula trees were important to the ecosystem as they were the nesting places of Swomee Swans and provided the fruit that made up the diet of the Bar-ba-loots.

Years pass as Greenville grows and grows. People from all over admired the beauty of the Truffula Valley and the crystal clear Crisling River, where the Humming Fish lived. Greenville becomes a popular tourist destination because of its luscious Truffula sights, crystalline waters, and friendly animals. Greenville also branded itself as an environmentally conscious suburb, which also attracted many families and young adults who were interested in nature and sustainability.

Greenville was also a hotspot for the organic, farm-grown, hand-picked produce trade. The climate was favorable, having light seasons where crops could grow all year-round. Even the most delicate plants—including Truffula Trees, which had a narrow margin of survivable temperatures—could grow in the valley in which Greenville was nested. Some claimed that the crisp, sweet air of the Truffula trees gave the fruits and vegetables of Greenville a special freshness. Indeed, many retirees relocated to Greenville in pursuit of the fresh air. Doctors began prescribing Greenville as a place of relaxation and detoxification for the ill.

HISTORY



After the Thneed's sudden meteoric rise to fashion fame, the demand for the product was sky high. The Onceler, Thneed Inc.'s CEO, grew production as fast as he could to meet demand. To do so, he hired from all over the world not only assembly line workers and knitting machine operators, but inventors, publicists, and artists to help speed up production and promote the product. The Onceler attracted all sorts of talents and skills to the Greenville area—housing immediately had to be created in order to fit everyone.

People came from all over the world, looking to work at the Thneed factory. With millions of products sold, they believed the Onceler was “Too Big to Fall.” His momentum seemed unstoppable. However, after a couple of months, the final Truffula Tree was chopped; leaving the factory useless without any natural resources.

Unfortunately, as slews of eager workers continued to immigrate to Greenville, they found the Thneed factory crumbling and abandoned. Where there were colorful trees and endless resources, there was only a gray wasteland. These immigrants took refuge in Greenville, a place that valued beauty and clean aesthetics. They admired the rows of cobblestone houses, paved roads that were full of life, and the sparse, remaining greenery. It seemed like paradise—a high density suburb that was walkable, full of locally-owned businesses, and an easy place to live overall. But these expectations were marred by the rampant and extensive pollution. Residents found themselves choking on the smoggy air, caused by the toxic pollution of the Thneed factory. As it turns out, the wood of Truffula trees releases a terrible smoke upon burning that causes premature aging when one is exposed to it for too long.

After the Thneed

Five years pass and the terrible Greenville smog lingers. In fact, the town is so tainted by pollution that it has taken on a new name: Thneedville, as the town is no longer full of greenery.

A smart, established politician by the name of Allen Wiggins runs for mayor on the platform of clean air and reestablishing the beauty of the past. He promises a wall around Thneedville to solve all their problems. He is soon elected mayor and immediately begins fulfilling his promise. The Dome is constructed around all of Thneedville to protect it from the smog and to help regulate the climate.

Thirty years after the fall of Thneed Inc., the Dome around Thneedville still stands. The idea of minimalism and the “clean” aesthetics is extremely popular—people want things simplified. Additionally, as the population grew and the land remained constant, the density of Thneedville increased. This resulted in space-saving measures including elimination of traditional farming and removal of green spaces to make room for housing. However, Thneedville is almost entirely self-sustainable; they have advanced water systems and constant, complex technological developments. Citizens of Thneedville all eat Sejeltin, a jelly-like substance infused with all essential nutrients. Though produced in Thneedville, all components of Sejeltin are imported from Whoville.

HISTORY



A shrewd businessman, Aloysius O'Hare, used his O'Hare Air money to campaign for mayor five years ago and won. He has not since held elections and has decided to continue holding the position. Though out of the norm, his satisfaction rate is high. Unfortunately, there is also little political engagement in Thneedville. In his time as both corporate and political head of state in Thneedville, O'Hare has installed extensive cameras and security systems in and out of Thneedville that many are not aware of. However, citizens remain happy because of the clean streets, abundance of resources, and low poverty rates. Thneedville is full of entertainment as well, boasting an arcade complex, ski slopes, and a waterpark.

CURRENT STATYS



After the city began planting trees, several major changes occurred. The O'Hare Air Corporation was dissolved and split into subsidiaries, with members of the O'Hare family controlling different sections of the former megacorporation. The Thneedville City Council, formerly under the sole control of Aloysius O'Hare, was also dissolved, and a new public forum consisting of Thneedville's best and brightest, as well as consultants from multiple backgrounds, has been assembled to rebuild the city government. Finally, the city has turned its focus to the devastated lands beyond the outer walls, with an eye toward improving the land and rebuilding Greenville's former beauty, under the new name of Thneedville.



NON-CANON MEMBERS ARE ASTERISKED*

1. Ted Wiggins

Ted Wiggins is an ordinary boy from Thneedville's Central District, who first discovered the Once-ler in his former factory and home. Ted has joined the council as the President of the Thneedville Middle School Student Council, and an accomplished motorcyclist.

2. The Once-ler

The Once-ler is a former industrialist, businessman, and leader of the larger Thneedville community. Coming from humble beginnings, he started the Thneed company and is mostly responsible for the current state of the environment around Thneedville. Currently, the Once-ler has a large amount of savings from his time as the richest person in the area, as well as a truly unimaginable amount of stored Thneeds.

3. Aloysius O'Hare

Aloysius O'Hare is the CEO and Founder of O'Hare Air, the massive 'everything company' that operated Thneedville's entire government. In the wake of O'Hare Air's antitrust breakup, he is in charge of the Air Sales Department, Robotics Department, and Cars Department.

4. Mrs. Wiggins

Mrs. Wiggins is Ted's mother and an armored truck specialist for Thneedville Bank and Trust. As an expert in transportation, security, and finances, Mrs. Wiggins is an indispensable member of the Thneedville community and a helpful member of the new council.

5. Audrey

Audrey is a botany major at the University of Thneedville and a family friend of the Wiggins clan. Her expertise on plant life and ecology, combined with her aptitude for gathering classmates to organize protests, makes her one of the foremost environmental activists in Thneedville.

6. The Lorax

The Lorax speaks for the trees, for the trees have no tongues. Although he fled Thneedville when the Once-ler's machines cut down the final truffula tree, he has returned now that the people of Thneedville have chosen a new direction for their government. The Lorax can speak to any animal, and can even communicate with trees if he makes physical contact with them.

7. Grammy Norma

Grammy Norma is one of the few people in Thneedville who can remember the time before the Once-ler's company destroyed the trees. She is a retired member of the Thneedville Civilian Militia, and despite her old age, is still incredibly active and capable.

8. Cy the O'Hare Delivery Guy

Cy is the O'Hare Delivery Guy, and as such is a major part of the O'Hare Corporation. Despite this, he took the side of Ted and the rest of the citizenry when it came to deciding whether to grow trees once again. Cy is in charge of the Shipping and Acquisitions Department of the newly separated O'Hare Corporation.

9. Wesley the Glowing Child

Wesley the Glowing Child was only 7 when he was exposed to radioactive waste in Thneedville's Industrial District. In the 5 years since then, he has acquired his signature glowing skin, but also some interesting powers, including X-ray vision, super strength, and the ability to float in place for up to five minutes.

10. Steve Stiffles*

Steve Stiffles is a city council member from the Medical District of Thneedville, which includes Thneedville General Hospital, Thneedville Pharmacy, and the Thneedville Medical Products Factory. Steve is a doctor who worked in the emergency room for two decades before joining the council.

11. Robert "Bob" Bopper*

Bob is a toymaker and owner of the Bopper Stopper Toy Store, the most successful toy store in the Thneedville Downtown Shopping Area. He represents the Toymaking District on the Council, and is always coming up with new toys for the children of Thneedville.

12. Margaret March*

Margaret March is a city council member who represents the Army Barracks District of Thneedville, which houses the Thneedville Civilian Militia, an armed force that protects the city from the wastes beyond it. Margaret is also the Vice Commander of the Militia, and wants to lead it into a better, more environmentally conscious future.

13. Eloise Eastwood*

Eloise Eastwood is the city council representative of the brand-new Botany District, although she formerly represented the Industrial and Air Packaging District. She is a political ally of Aloysius O'Hare and wishes to continue the industrial tradition in Thneedville, despite the new environmental policy of the city.

14. Jacob Jacobson*

Jacob Jacobson is a city council member representing the most populous part of Thneedville, the Residential District. He is also the massively wealthy owner of JJ's Ski Resort, which has until now used almost exclusively artificial snow due to global warming. He hopes the new environmental policies of the council may mitigate these effects to bring real snow back to Thneedville.

15. Pearl Pendleton*

Pearl Pendleton is a city council member representing the Office District, including both the massive office supply store chain Binders and the corporate offices of companies including O'Hare Air, Tim's Trims (a barbershop chain), and Jackage's Packages (a mail company). Pearl wants to reduce the environmental impact of these offices on the city's infrastructure.

16. Claire Crystal*

Claire Crystal is a famous model and the representative of the famous Thneedville Jewelry District, which sells diamonds, rubies, brymands, tubies, and even the exceedingly rare flimmer-bumbler jewels. She is looking to improve mining practices around Thneedville and create a better public reputation for the council.

17. Larry O'Hare*

Larry O'Hare is Aloysius O'Hare's oldest child, son, and CFO of O'Hare Air. Now that the company has been dissolved, he has inherited the financial aspects of the company, including O'Hare Venture Capital, O'Hare Hedge Fund, and the O'Hare Stock Exchange (OHSE). His goal is to financially grow the company he's now in charge of, while supporting his father in his bid to keep air sales relevant.

18. Mary O'Hare*

Mary O'Hare is Aloysius O'Hare's younger child, the sister of Larry O'Hare, and the COO of O'Hare Air. As the chief of operations, she ran the company's security and research sectors, which she has taken charge of in the wake of O'Hare Corporation's dissolution. These departments include the Security and Special Operations Department, the Research Development Laboratory, and O'Hare Air Limited, the company in charge of researching new air flavors.

19. The Cat in the Hat

The Cat in the Hat is a trickster, teacher, and friend, as well as an expert on creating chaos with his many gadgets and gizmos. Assisted by Things 1 and 2, his loyal friends, the Cat wishes to bring more fun to a new and free Thneedville.

20. The Grinch

The Grinch is a reformed grump who formerly hated Christmas, and tried to 'steal' it from the city of Whoville. He has since decided to become a friend to the people of Whoville, and pursue his lifelong dream of being a mechanic, designing the highly popular 'Who-Sleigh', a speedy and flashy automobile shaped suspiciously like a sleigh.

21. Hooey the Parrot

Hooey the Parrot is a professor of English at the University of Thneedville, and an infamous fan of tongue twisters. He has authored several books and is also the head of the board for the Thneedville City Library, making him one of the most well-read and respected academics in the region.

22. Pop from Hop on Pop

As the father of two children who constantly hop on him, Pop has had enough. He is a government restructuring consultant who has helped several cities rebuild their governments after similar dissolutions in the past, and has political connections throughout the world. To make a better future for his beloved (and jumpy) kids, Pop has joined the Thneedville Council as a consultant.

23. The Wocket in a Pocket

The Wocket, a simple creature who enjoys hiding out in unsuspecting people's pockets, is an accomplished spy and infiltrator. He has worked for intelligence agencies throughout the world, and has been hired by the provisional Thneedville government to aid in their intelligence-gathering and new intelligence infrastructure.

24. Horton the Elephant

Horton is a kind and warm elephant who helped the people of Whoville when they were in danger. He is the largest and most physically powerful member of the council, and has a family of elephants who use their super-hearing to help those smaller than them.

25. Sam-I-Am

Sam-I-Am is the proud owner of the Green Eggs and Ham Diner, which serves almost exclusively the dish of the same name. He's a persuasive speaker who has convinced many people to try his dubiously colored signature meal, and has joined the council to help them appeal to the people of Thneedville.