

12-6-2017

The Lorax

Noel Michel
University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog

eCommons Citation

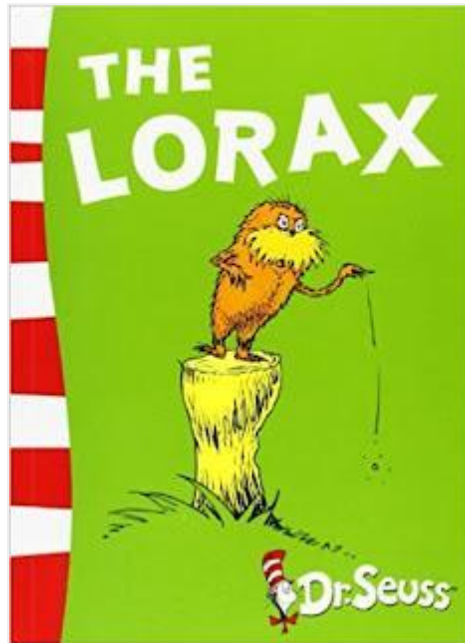
Michel, Noel, "The Lorax" (2017). *Rivers Institute Blog Archive*. 311.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog/311

This Blog is brought to you for free and open access by the Rivers Institute at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rivers Institute Blog Archive by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

The Lorax

Noel Michel, 2020 Cohort



As River Stewards, our program’s mission is to “engage in interdisciplinary and experiential learning, civic engagement, and sustainable community development around rivers;” But how do we stay motivated to accomplish this goal? Today, if you were to google how much trash is in our oceans you would see statistics such as “8 million tons of trash is dumped in the world’s oceans and rivers everyday” or “There is a plastic island the size of Texas in the Pacific Ocean”. We live in a throwaway culture society where everything is just for now, and it doesn’t matter where it goes. On our last river cleanup, I could not step one foot without seeing a piece of plastic to be picked up. Because of these facts it is difficult to motivate myself to wake up early on a Saturday morning to attend a river cleanup. After all, it’s just going to be as dirty again in a week or in a month, right? Why don’t we just give up?

Sometimes these thoughts enter my brain, like a poison they try to coax me into giving up, into not caring. But then I remember when I was growing up learning how to read. I was a slow learner at first and was not able to read until the end of first grade, which is unusual for most children. My parents were even considering holding me back a year. When my grandmother heard of what was happening she made it her mission to help me read. One book we read together over and over and over again was The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. There was a rhyme in that book that she would always have me read, it was

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, its not.”

Because my grandma took the time out of her life to work with me to learn to read I was not held back and caught up with the other students in my grade. The following year I even got a special award issued from my school saying I was above and beyond the reading level for me age group. My grandma did this because she cared and loved for me more than anything else and did not mind taking this time even if it did take her away from other tasks, took a very long time, and only showed short progress. She cared a whole awful lot and things got better. A year later she passed away of a sudden heart attack. I never forgot her, what she did for me, and the lessons I learned from her about caring.

I think of this Dr. Suess quote and my grandmother a lot of the times when I am waking up early on a Saturday morning to go work the RiverMobile, or walking my compost from Stuart hill to Kennedy Union (where the only compost bins are located on campus) in the freezing rain. It is a slow process trying to save the world but I refuse to lose hope. I care about my relationship with the planet and I'm not going to stop. I would clean 1000 more rivers, plant 1000 more trees. I don't mind being the Lorax. If I am the Lorax other people will want to be too. And someday I know we all will be.