



The Whispering House of the Once-ler

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Pip stood at the edge of the silent valley, gazing up at a strange and rickety wooden house towering high into the overcast sky. The lonely structure swayed softly in the cool breeze, shrouded in misty gray shades.



Walking carefully through the tall grickle-grass, Pip approached the base of the winding, spindly boards. Everything was quiet except for the mournful whistle of the wind through the abandoned chimney.



High up near the top shutter, a squeaky window slowly creaked open. Down rattled a small metal bucket attached to a long, frayed rope, stopping right at Pip's eye level.



Remembering the old legend, Pip dropped fifteen cents, a nail, and the shell of a great-great-great grandfather snail into the bucket. The bucket was quickly pulled back up into the shadowy heights of the dark tower.



From inside the murky window, a deep, raspy voice began to whisper down through a long tin pipe. The voice spoke of a distant time when the valley was bright, filled with soft tufts of glorious color and happy forest creatures.



Pip listened in awe as the Once-ler described the magical Truffula trees that once stretched as far as the eye could see. Yet a shadow fell over the tale as the Once-ler confessed how thoughtless greed led to the fall of the very last tree.



A heavy sadness lingered in the chilly air as the storyteller paused. Pip looked out over the bleak, dusty landscape, realizing how much natural beauty had been lost to careless choices.



Suddenly, two long green-gloved hands appeared at the edge of the window sill, holding a tiny, glowing object with extreme care. The Once-ler's voice grew soft and full of tender warmth.



Down came the bucket one last time, bearing the very last Truffula seed in the world. The Once-ler reminded Pip that unless someone cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better.



Holding the precious seed closely against Pip's chest, the young traveler turned away from the lonely house. With newfound purpose, Pip walked back toward the sunlit horizon, ready to plant a forest anew.