

= Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories =

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories is a picture book collection by Theodor Seuss Geisel, published under his more commonly known pseudonym of Dr. Seuss. It was first released by Random House Books on April 12, 1958, and is written in Seuss's trademark style, using a type of meter called anapestic tetrameter. Though it contains three short stories, it is mostly known for its first story, "Yertle the Turtle", in which the eponymous Yertle, king of the pond, stands on his subjects in an attempt to reach higher than the moon until the bottom turtle burps and he falls into the mud, ending his rule.

Though the book included "burp", a word then considered to be relatively rude, it was a success upon publication, and has since sold over a million copies. In 2001, it was listed at 125 on the Publishers Weekly list of the best @-@ selling children's books of all time.

= = Plot overview = =

= = = ? Yertle the Turtle ? = = =

The eponymous story revolves around Yertle the Turtle, the king of the pond. Dissatisfied with the stone that serves as his throne, he commands the other turtles to stack themselves beneath him so that he can see farther and expand his kingdom. However, the stacked turtles are in pain and Mack, the turtle at the very bottom of the pile, is suffering the most. Mack asks Yertle for a respite, but Yertle just tells him to be quiet. Then Yertle decides to expand his kingdom and commands more and more turtles to add to his throne. Mack makes a second request for a respite because the increased weight is now causing extreme pain to the turtles at the bottom of the pile, as well as hunger. Again, Yertle yells at Mack to be quiet. Then Yertle notices the moon rising above him as the night approaches. Furious that something "dares to be higher than Yertle the King", he decides to call for even more turtles in an attempt to rise above it. However, before he can give the command, Mack decides he has had enough. He burps, which takes away Yertle's throne and tosses the turtle king off the turtle stack and into the mud, leaving him "King of the Mud" and freeing the others.

= = = ? Gertrude McFuzz ? = = =

The second story recounts the tale of the "girl @-@ bird" Gertrude McFuzz, who has one small, plain tail feather and envies Lolla Lee Lou, who has two feathers. She goes to her uncle, Doctor Dake, for something to make her tail grow. He tries to tell her that her tail is just right for her species, but she throws a tantrum. He gives in and he tells her where she can find berries that will make her tail grow. The first berry makes her tail exactly like Lolla Lee Lou's, but greed overtakes her. Now wanting to surpass Lolla Lee Lou, she eats the entire vine, causing her tail to grow to an enormous size. However, the added weight of too many feathers does not allow her to fly, run or even walk. She panics by yelping repeatedly, while being stuck on the hill. Her uncle, who hears her painful yelps, sends for the rescue, and many other birds are forced to carry her home and pluck out her tail feathers, which takes a few weeks, causing her to be sore. Though she has only one feather left as before, she now has "enough, because now she is smarter."

= = = ? The Big Brag ? = = =

The third and final story tells of a rabbit and a bear, who both boast that they are the "best of the beasts", because of the range of their hearing and smelling abilities, respectively. However, they are humbled by a worm who claims he can see all around the world right back to his own hill, where he sees the rabbit and bear, whom he calls "the two biggest fools that have ever been seen".

= = Publication history = =

A stack of turtles drawn similarly to those featured in " Yertle the Turtle " first appeared on March 20 , 1942 , in a cartoon for the New York City newspaper PM , where Seuss worked as an editorial cartoonist . The illustration shows two stacks of turtles forming the letter " V " on top of a large turtle labelled " Dawdling Producers " , with a caption reading " You Can 't Build A Substantial V Out of Turtles ! " .

Seuss has stated that the titular character Yertle represented Adolf Hitler , with Yertle 's despotic rule of the pond and takeover of the surrounding area parallel to Hitler 's regime in Germany and invasion of various parts of Europe . Though Seuss made a point of not beginning the writing of his stories with a moral in mind , stating that " kids can see a moral coming a mile off " , he was not against writing about issues ; he said " there 's an inherent moral in any story " and remarked that he was " subversive as hell " . " Yertle the Turtle " has variously been described as " autocratic rule overturned " , " a reaction against the fascism of World War II " , and " subversive of authoritarian rule " .

In 2003 , reporter John J. Miller also compared Yertle to the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein , saying that " [i] ts final lines apply as much to Saddam Hussein as they once did to the European fascists " .

The last lines of " Yertle the Turtle " read : " And turtles , of course ... all the turtles are free / As turtles , and maybe , all creatures should be . " When questioned about why he wrote " maybe " rather than " surely " , Seuss replied that he didn 't want to sound " didactic or like a preacher on a platform " , and that he wanted the reader " to say ' surely ' in their minds instead of my having to say it . "

The use of the word " burp " ? " plain little Mack did a plain little thing . He burped ! " ? was also an issue before publication . According to Seuss , the publishers at Random House , including the president , had to meet to decide whether or not they could use " burp " because " nobody had ever burped before on the pages of a children 's book " . However , despite the publishers ' initial worries , it eventually proved to be a hit ? in 2001 , Publishers Weekly reported that it was 125th on the list of best @-@ selling hardcover children 's books in the United States , at just over one million copies .

The book is dedicated to the Sagmaster family as a tribute to Joseph Sagmaster , who had introduced Seuss to his first wife , Helen Palmer , when they were both attending Oxford University . Sagmaster is quoted as saying that bringing the two together was " the happiest inspiration I 've ever had " .

= = Adaptations = =

Although Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories has not been directly adapted , several characters from the book have appeared in other media . Yertle is a character in the 1996 ? 1997 television series The Wubbulous World of Dr. Seuss , and in Stephen Flaherty 's Broadway musical Seussical , Yertle serves as a judge and Gertrude McFuzz acts as Horton 's love interest . The story was also turned into a dance number in the 1994 film In Search of Dr. Seuss .

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories is a 1992 animation directed by Ray Messecar and narrated by John Lithgow (later released and cropped to widescreen format on Blu @-@ Ray part of Who 's Who in the Dr. Seuss ?) .

The Red Hot Chili Peppers adapted the story in the song " Yertle the Turtle " on their second album , Freaky Styley , released in 1985 .