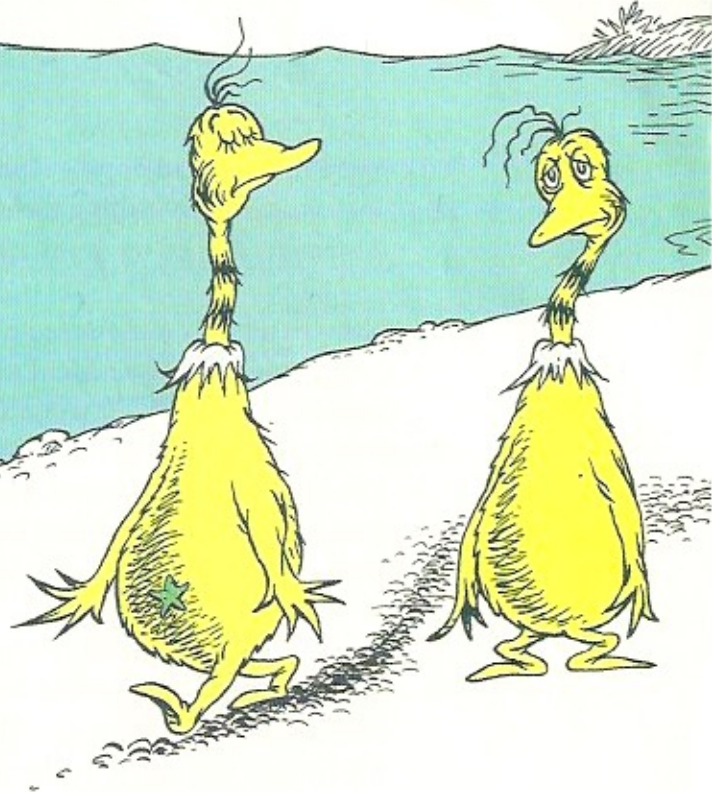


The SNEETCHES

Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel)



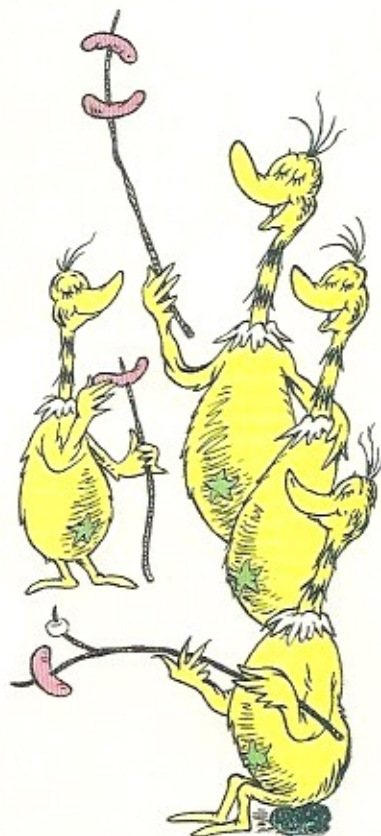
Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches
Had bellies with stars.
The Plain-Belly Sneetches
Had none upon thars.

- 5 Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small
You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.

- But, because they had stars, all the Star-Belly Sneetches
Would brag, "We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches."
With their snoots in the air, they would sniff and they'd snort
10 "We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!"
And whenever they met some, when they were out walking,
They'd hike right on past them without even talking.

- When the Star-Belly children went out to play ball,
Could a Plain Belly get in the game . . . ? Not at all.
15 You only could play if your bellies had stars
And the Plain-Belly children had none upon thars.

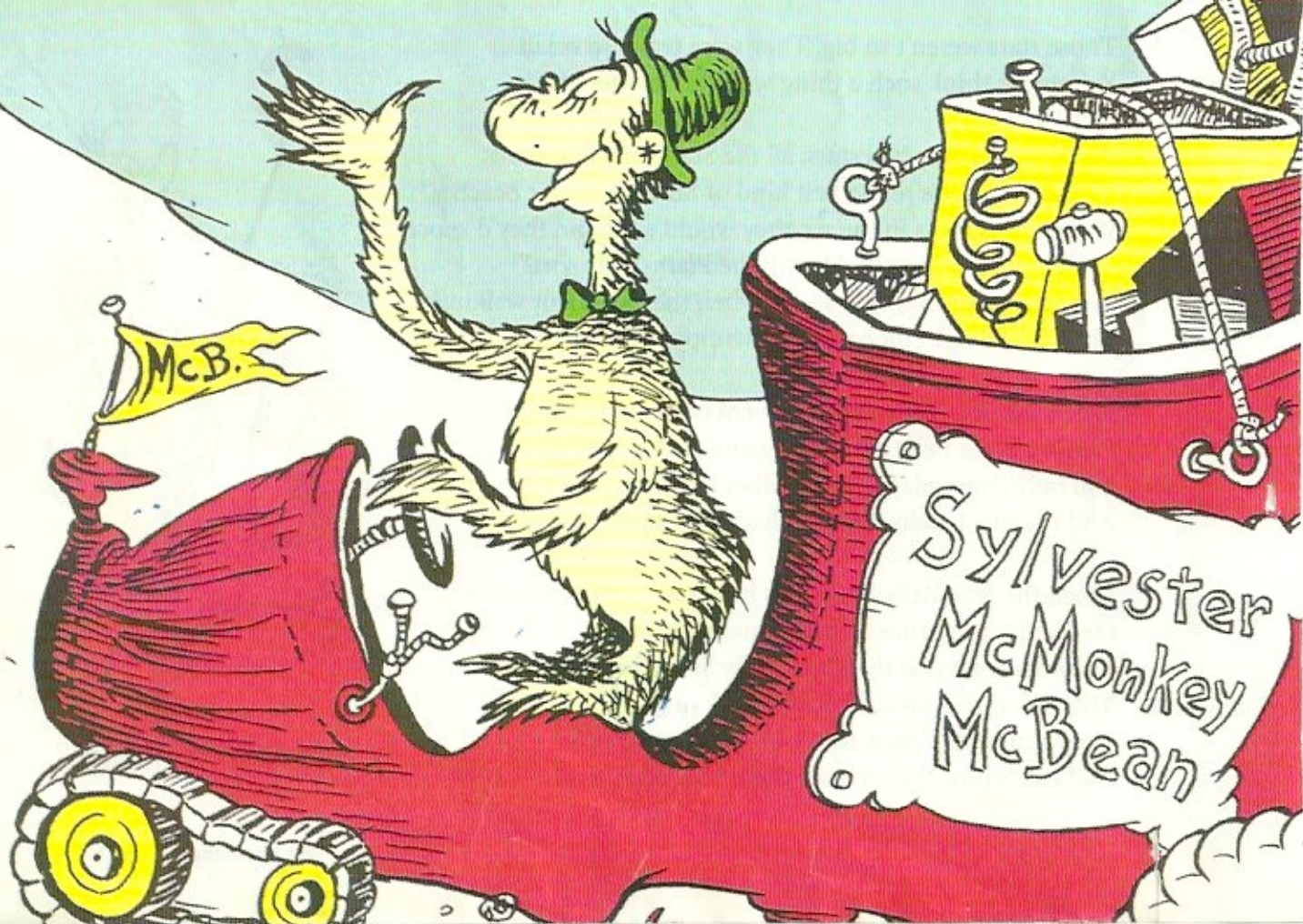
- When the Star-Belly Sneetches had frankfurter roasts
Or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts,
They never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches.
20 They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches.
They kept them away. Never let them come near.
And that's how they treated them year after year.

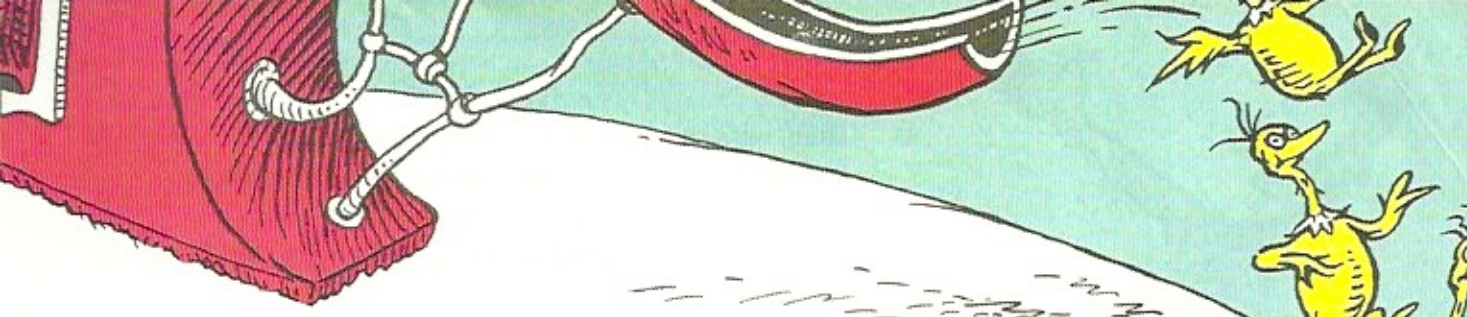


Then ONE day, it seems . . . while the Plain-Belly Sneetches
Were moping and doping alone on the beaches,
25 Just sitting there wishing their bellies had stars . . .
A stranger zipped up in the strangest of cars!

"My friends," he announced in a voice clear and keen,
"My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean.
And I've heard of your troubles. I've heard you're unhappy.
30 But I can fix that. I'm the Fix-it-Up Chappie.
I've come here to help you. I have what you need.
And my prices are low. And I work at great speed.
And my work is one hundred per cent guaranteed!"

Then, quickly, Sylvester McMonkey McBean
35 Put together a very peculiar machine.
And he said, "You want stars like a Star-Belly Sneetch . . . ?
My friends, you can have them for three dollars each!"





"Just pay me your money and hop right aboard!"

So they clambered inside. Then the big machine roared

40 And it klonked. And it bonked. And it jerked. And it berked

And it bopped them about. But the thing really worked!

When the Plain-Belly Sneetches popped out, they had stars!

They actually did. They had stars upon thars!

Then they yelled at the ones who had stars at the start.

45 "We're exactly like you! You can't tell us apart.

We're all just the same, now, you snooty old smarties!

And now we can go to your frankfurter parties."

"Good grief!" groaned the ones who had stars at the first.

"We're *still* the best Sneetches and they are the worst.

50 But, now, how in the world will we know," they all frowned,

"If which kind is what, or the other way round?"

Then up came McBean with a very sly wink

And he said, "Things are not quite as bad as you think.

So you don't know who's who. That is perfectly true.

55 But come with me, friends. Do you know what I'll do?

I'll make you, again, the best Sneetches on beaches

And all it will cost you is ten dollars eaches."

"Belly stars are no longer in style," said McBean.

What you need is a trip through my Star-Off Machine.

60 This wondrous contraption will take *off* your stars

So you won't look like Sneetches who have them on thars."

And that handy machine

Working very precisely

Removed all the stars from their tummies quite nicely.



65 Then, with snoots in the air, they paraded about
And they opened their beaks and they let out a shout,
“We know who is who! Now there isn’t a doubt.
The best kind of Sneetches are Sneetches without!”

Then, of course, those with stars all got frightfully mad.
70 To be wearing a star now was frightfully bad.
Then, of course, old Sylvester McMonkey McBean
Invited *them* into his Star-Off Machine.

Then, of course from THEN on, as you probably guess,
Things really got into a horrible mess.

75 All the rest of that day, on those wild screaming beaches,
The Fix-it-Up Chappie kept fixing up Sneetches.
Off again! On again!
In again! Out again!
Through the machines they raced round and about again,
80 Changing their stars every minute or two.
They kept paying money. They kept running through
Until neither the Plain nor the Star-Bellies knew
Whether this one was that one . . . or that one was this one
Or which one was what one . . . or what one was who.

85 Then, when every last cent
Of their money was spent,
The Fix-it-Up Chappie packed up
And he went.

And he laughed as he drove
90 In his car up the beach,
“They never will learn.
No. You can’t teach a Sneetch!”

But McBean was quite wrong. I’m quite happy to say
That the Sneetches got really quite smart on that day,
95 The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches
And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches.
That day, all the Sneetches forgot about stars
And whether they had one, or not, upon thars.



Theodor Seuss Geisel

Creature Feature

Dr. Seuss is the pen name of **Theodor Seuss Geisel** (1904–1991), who began drawing fantastic animal cartoons while he was still a child. (His father ran the local zoo.) An art teacher told him that he would never learn to draw, and twenty-seven publishers rejected his first children's book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937). Even so, Dr. Seuss went on to write and illustrate more than forty children's classics, full of nonsense rhymes, wacky creatures, and his special brand of wisdom.

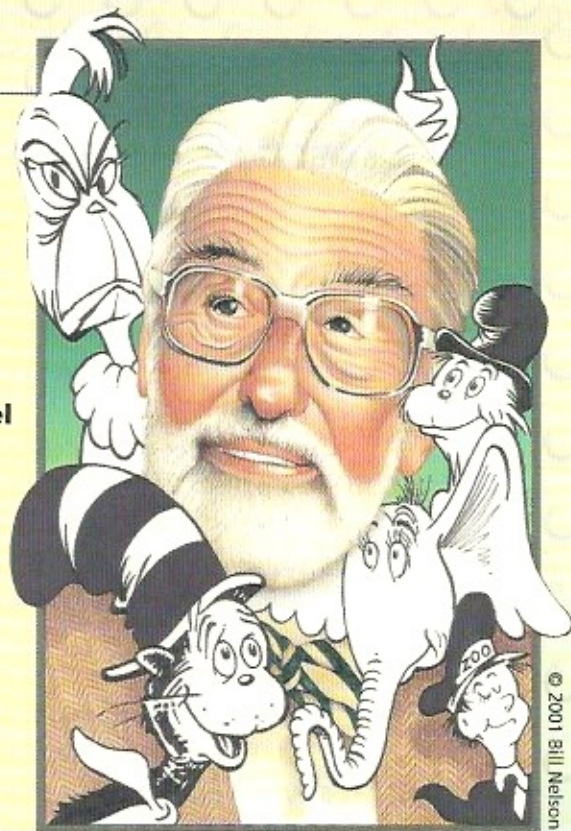
Judging by the number of books Dr. Seuss has sold—at least 200 million copies—he is one of the most popular writers in history. As he did in “The Sneetches,” Dr. Seuss often used his zany characters to look at serious issues as if “through the wrong end of a telescope.”

Dr. Seuss explained how he decided on his pen name:

“The ‘Dr. Seuss’ name is a combination of my middle name and the fact that I had been studying for my doctorate when I decided to quit to become a cartoonist. My father had always wanted to see a Dr. in front of my name, so I attached it. I figured by doing that, I saved him about ten thousand dollars.”

For Independent Reading

Books by Dr. Seuss that use wacky-looking creatures to convey a serious message include *The Lorax* (about protecting the environment) and *The Butter Battle Book* (about war).



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Literary Response and Analysis


Reading Check

1. Why do one group of Sneetches think they're better than the other group? How do they treat that group?
2. What offer does McBean make to the Plain-Bellies? What offer does he then make to the Star-Bellies?
3. When does McBean finally leave? What happens afterward?

Interpretations

4. What one word might describe the Star-Bellies? the Plain-Bellies?
5. What opinion does McBean have of the Sneetches in general? Do you think he is right or wrong? Why?
6. Why do the Sneetches finally change their behavior?
7. What words has Dr. Seuss made up to keep lines **rhymed**? Can you find at least one **internal rhyme**—two or more rhyming words *within* a line?
8. Read lines 75–88 aloud. Feel the beat as you say the words. How does the **rhythm** suggest the way the Sneetches feel? What does the change in rhythm and in line length suggest about McBean?
9. Working with a partner, mark the **rhyme scheme** of at least three stanzas of "The Sneetches." Use the letter code you learned earlier (see page 380). Which stanzas are different? Do the differences "make a difference"? Why or why not?
10. Read a few stanzas of this poem aloud; then, copy two stanzas onto

a piece of paper. Scan them, marking stressed and unstressed syllables in each line (see page 380). Is the meter identical in every line?

11. What do you think is the **moral**, or lesson, of this poem? Can you think of anyone in real life who behaves like the characters in "The Sneetches"? (For ideas, look back at your Quickwrite notes.) 
12. If someone tells you, "I don't like your tone of voice," you know the person is talking about your attitude. In literature, **tone** refers to the writer's attitude toward a subject. The tone of a work can be serious, playful, sarcastic, bitter, and so on. What tone do you detect underneath the funny nonsense rhymes and bouncy rhythms?

Writing Wordplay

To make his lines rhyme and to add to the fun, Dr. Seuss sometimes changes a spelling, adds a new ending sound, or even invents a word. Find the funny words invented by Dr. Seuss in lines 4, 40, and 57. What word does each made-up word rhyme with?

Write a line of poetry to rhyme with the following line. (Since no word in English rhymes with *orange*, you'll have to invent a rhyming word.)

Eva was eating an orange



Reading Standard 3.4

Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through rhythm and rhyme.