Lousy Rotten Stinkin’ Grapes
Author: Margie Palatini
Illustrator: Barry Moser

- **Summary:** In this book, Fox is trying to figure out how in the world he can reach to get the grapes off the tree. He turns to his friends Bear, Possum, Porcupine, and Beaver for help; but allows them to only follow his plan. Fox tries to stack everyone on top of each other to become tall enough to reach the tree. Because he is “sly, clever, and smart,” his plan will work and no one else’s will. Fox’s plan doesn’t work, and each of his friends have their own way of getting the grapes. Fox is the only one who doesn’t get to eat the grapes in the end.

- **Awards Received:**
  - *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year in 2009
  - Bill Martin Jr. Picture Book Award in 2011

- **Reviews:** In a review on Amazon by the Wall Street Journal, this book is one that appeals to families and is a good spin on the Aesop fable that it is based off of. In another review provided by Barnes and Noble, Publishers Weekly felt that although this story is more entertaining than the original fable, the moral of the story is less clear. The theme “the pride comes before the fall” is developed throughout the story and “young readers will reach along with fox while listening to this future classic.”

- **Author Information:** Margie Patalini’s website is located at [www.margiepalatini.com](http://www.margiepalatini.com)

- **Illustrator Information:** An interview with the illustrator, Barry Moser, is located at [http://www.olswanger.com/moser.shtml](http://www.olswanger.com/moser.shtml)

- **Discussion Questions:**
  - **Before**
    - Have you ever had a good idea that nobody wanted to listen to?
    - If so, how did you feel?
    - Have you ever ignored someone else’s idea because you thought yours was better?
  - **During**
    - What idea do you think the fox has to reach the tree?
    - Why won’t the fox listen to anyone else’s plan?
    - Do you think the fox will end up getting the grapes?
  - **After**
    - Do you feel sorry for the fox? Why or why not?
    - What can we learn from the fox’s behavior in the story?
    - What could the fox have done differently to get the grapes

- **Curricular Activities**
Reading/oral language – This book is an example of the genre of fables. Go to your library and check out a collection of fables. Compare and contrast the characters, settings, and morals.

Writing – Write a letter to Fox telling him how you feel about the way he treated his friends and why he didn’t get grapes in the end. Explain to him how he could go about things differently next time if he wants to succeed.

Math/Technology – Give a height for each of the friends that Fox uses to reach the grapes; and a height of the tree. As Fox comes across each of his friends, do the math problem on the board to see as a class if Fox will be able to reach.

Science – Construct a lesson about grapes. What sizes and colors do they come in? Where in the world are they grown?

Social Studies – Have the students choose a Core Democratic Value that applies to the story and share with the class why this value connects to what happens in the story.

Art – The students will create a picture of an animal other than the ones that helped Fox in the story. Their picture will show the plan that this animal used in order to get the grapes. For example, if the students chose a giraffe, they could draw the giraffe using its long neck to reach the grapes. This will allow them to be creative and brainstorm different ideas other than the ones in the story.

Cooking/food – Play a grape toss game with the students. The students will be in teams and answer questions about the story. If they answer correctly, they can toss the grape to their partner for bonus points!

Related Books:
- *Dog Heaven* written and illustrated by Cynthia Rylant
- *That Cat Can’t Stay* written by Thad Krasnesky
- *Ant and Grasshopper* written by Luli Gray
- *How Rocket Learned to Read* by Tad Hills

Other titles by Palatini:
- *The Cheese*
- *Gone with the Wand*
- *Bedhead*
- *Stinky Smelly Feet: a Love Story*
- *Moo Who?*
- *Sweet Tooth*

Other titles by Moser:
- *The Chesire Cheese Cat* by Carmen Deedy
- *Alice Illustrated*
- *Sit, Truman!*

Websites for further study or enrichment:
- Margie Palatini - [http://www.margiepalatini.com/activities/coloring](http://www.margiepalatini.com/activities/coloring) - This website is the author’s official website. It provides coloring pages, mazes and word searches, riddles, and games relating to her books.
- Margie Palatini’s Blog - [http://margiepalatini.wordpress.com](http://margiepalatini.wordpress.com) - This website allows the students to search for a particular book and read what the author has to say about it, and also see pictures of the characters. There are polls where the students can vote for their favorite characters from different stories.

- Cavendish Library [http://cavendishlibrary.org/blog/?p=218](http://cavendishlibrary.org/blog/?p=218) On this website there are ideas for activities based on this book. The students can make a Venn diagram comparing the original Aesop’s fable to Palatini’s version.