Margie Palatini • Barry Moser
SIMON & SCHUSTER BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS
READER’S THEATER FUN

The GRAPES are here.
FOX is there.
But ... he has a PLAN!

And what a plan it is!

Margie Palatini and Barry Moser, who collaborated on EARTHQUACK! and THE THREE SILLY BILLIES, give an ingenious - and hilarious - twist to the well-loved Aesop’s fable “The Fox and the Grapes.”

“... a riotous treat for eyes and ears ...”
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL
STARRED REVIEW

“... a celebration of team spirit ...”
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

“ ... a delightful third collaboration ...”
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL “BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR”
CCBC CHOICES 2010
VERMONT RED CLOVER BOOK AWARD NOMINEE 2010

BOOKSENSE PICK
MULTI-STATE AWARD NOMINEE

“... belly-quacking ...”
KIRKUS, STARRED REVIEW

“... a rollicking retelling.”
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY ‘BEST OF THE BEST’
MULTI-STATE AWARD WINNER & NOMINEE

“... hip and punny text ...”
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

“Comic flourishes galore ...”
KIRKUS

“... riotous fun ...”
BOOKLIST
Reader’s Theater

LOUSY ROTTEN STINKIN’ GRAPES

Margie Palatini • Barry Moser
adapted by the author
used with permission for non-profit use only

CHARACTERS

FOX
BEAR
BEAVER
PORCUPINE
POSSUM
SKUNK
NARRATORS
CHORUS
NARRATOR 1: FOX eyed a bunch of **TANTALIZING GRAPES**
    hanging from a vine growing high on a tree.

FOX: Those **JUICY MORSELS** are for me!

NARRATOR 2: The **PROBLEM** was ... FOX was only *so* high ...
    and the **GRAPES** were so, so, *so* high.

    After all ... I am a *fox*. I have a *plan*.

**CHORUS: PLAN ALPHA**

FOX: Hmmmm ... ADD this to that ....
    **MULTIPLY** that to this ... **SUBTRACT** here from there,
    carry the two, minus the one .... **AND**
    **GRAPES!**

**voila!**

**CHORUS: HOP. SKIP. JUMP.**
    **FLYING LEAP. AND**

NARRATORS 1 & 2: **NO GRAPES.**
NARRATOR 1: FOX climbed out from the thicket and brushed off his coat.

FOX: Perhaps ... a bit of a ... BOOST is needed.

NARRATOR 2: But where to get a BOOST?

CHORUS: GRUNT. GRUNT. GRUNT.

NARRATOR 1: Fox turned.

NARRATOR 2: He grinned.

FOX: Why, Bear, old buddy! I say ... do you like GRAPES?

BEAR: Grapes? ... Uh? ... duh ... do I? ... I think I do. I think I do ... Yup! ... I do.

FOX: EXCELLENT! Look and listen. Here’s the plan ...

CHORUS: PLAN BRAVO

FOX: YOU stand --- here.
   I will stand on your head -- there.
   On the count of THREE --
   you give a bit of a BOOST -- and voilà!

GRAPES!
NARRATOR 1: Bear looked at the PLAN. He looked at the GRAPES. He looked at the TREE.

NARRATOR 2: He stared at his big front paws and thought.

BEAR: Uh? Duh ... you know there Fox ... I’m thinkin’ ... maybe ... I could just wrap my paws around that -----

FOX: Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! Bear, Bear, Bear, my dim buddy. YOUR job is BRAWN. Not BRAIN. You leave the thinking to me. After all ... I’m the fox. Sly. Clever. Smart. I know how to get GRAPES.

BEAR: If you say so.

NARRATOR 1: BEAR stood here. FOX climbed up and stood on top of BEAR’S head --- there.

CHORUS: One. Two. Three ------ AND ...

NARRATOR 1 & 2: NO GRAPES.

FOX: Maybe a little more lift, thrust and ... OOMPH is needed here.

BEAR: If you say so.
NARRATOR 1: Now, where to find **OOMPH**?

CHORUS: **PAT. SLAP. PAT. SLAP. PAT. SLAP.**

NARRATOR 2: FOX peered down at the pond.

NARRATOR 1: He grinned.

FOX: Why, *Beaver*, dear pal! I say ... do you like **GRAPES**?

BEAVER: Grapes? ... Oh, yes indeedy. Indeedy I do!

FOX: EXCELLENT! Look and listen. Here's the plan ...

CHORUS: **PLAN BRAVO --- PART TWO**

FOX: Bear stands -- *here*. YOU stand on bear's head -- *there*. I stand on your tail. *And* on the count of **THREE** -- Bear gives a **BOOST** -- as you give an **OOMPH** -- which brings me --- *there* --- and **voilà!**

**GRAPES**
NARRATOR 1: Beaver looked at the PLAN. He looked at the GRAPES. He looked at the TREE.

NARRATOR 2: He tapped his front tooth and thought.

BEAVER: Fox ... I’m thinkin’ if I just start a chewin’ on the tr---

FOX: Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! Beaver, Beaver, Beaver, my dentally challenged chum.

YOU just mind the OOMPHING. Leave all that thinking to me. After all ... I’m the fox. Sly. Clever. Smart. I know how to get GRAPES.

BEAVER: If you say so.

NARRATOR 1: BEAR stood here.

BEAVER stood on BEAR’S head --- there.

NARRATOR 2: FOX stood on BEAVER’S tail.

CHORUS: One. Two. Three --- And

NARRATORS 1 & 2: NO GRAPES.

FOX: I believe we need just an inch or two more ... SCOOCCH!
NARRATOR 1: Fox measured this. He weighed that.

NARRATOR 2: He turned around ... and grinned.

FOX: Why, Porcupine, you short scooch of a fellow ... do you like GRAPES?

PORCUPINE: Grapes? ... I suppose I do enjoy a grape or two now and then.

FOX: EXCELLENT! Look and Listen. Here’s the plan ...

CHORUS: PLAN DELTA

FOX: Bear stands --- here. Beaver stands --- there.
   
   YOU stand on Beaver’s tail.
   
   I stand on YOU. And on the count of THREE --

Bear BOOSTS as Beaver OOMPHS,

while you SCOOCH,

which brings me --- there --- and voila! GRAPES.

NARRATOR 1: Porcupine looked at the PLAN.
   He looked up at the GRAPES.

NARRATOR 2: He looked at his back full of quills.
PORCUPINE: Excuse me, Fox. But I have a suggestion ... Perhaps if I just point my qui----

FOX: Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! Porcupine, my little friend, let us not get all prickly. YOU just be a SCOOCCH and leave the ideas to me. After all ... I'm the fox. Sly. Clever. Smart. I know how to get GRAPES.

PORCUPINE: If you say so.

NARRATOR 1: BEAR stood here. BEAVER stood on BEAR'S head there. PORCUPINE stood on BEAVER'S tail.

NARRATOR 2: FOX stood very carefully on PORCUPINE'S back.

CHORUS: One. Two. Three --- AND

NARRATOR 1 & 2: NO GRAPES.
NARRATOR 1: Fox rubbed his feet.

NARRATOR 2: He pulled a bramble from his tail.

NARRATOR 1: He uncurled his whiskers.

NARRATOR 2: He got out his pencil and ERASER.

FOX: What might be helpful is a wee ... catch and swing ...
    Yes! Catch and swing should DEFINITELY do it.

NARRATOR 1: BEAVER looked at BEAR, who looked at PORCUPINE.

BEAR, BEAVER, PORCUPINE: If you say so.
NARRATOR 1:  FOX spied two tiny eyes peeking through a bush.

FOX:  Ah! Possum, my dear ... do you like GRAPES?

POSSUM:  Me? ... Why, yes. Yes, I do like grapes. Thank you for asking. I like grapes very much.

NARRATORS 1 & 2:  Fox grinned.

FOX:  EXCELLENT! Look and listen. Here’s the plan ...  

CHORUS:  PLAN ECHO

FOX:  BEAR stands --- here. BEAVER stands on BEAR’S head --- there. PORCUPINE stands on BEAVER’S tail. I stand on PORCUPINE. YOU stand on me. So on, so on, and so on. Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Which LIFTS you --- whose tail CURLS around here --- then SWINGS back to me --- who I grab ... ending up there ... and voilà!

GRAPES
NARRATOR 1: POSSUM stared at the GRAPES. She stared at the BRANCH.

NARRATOR 2: She stared at the PLAN.

POSSUM: Pardon me. But it all seems so CONFUSING and COMPLICATED. Perhaps if I ---

FOX: Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! Possum, Possum, Possum, my pet. Now, don’t worry those few little hairs on your extremely unattractive head. Nothing to fret over and faint dead away. Trust me, my dear. After all ... I am the one here who is sly, clever, and smart. I know how to get GRAPES.

POSSUM: ... If you say so.

NARRATOR 1: SO ... BEAR stood here. BEAVER stood there. PORCUPINE stood on BEAVER’S tail. FOX stood --- carefully --- on PORCUPINE ...

NARRATOR 2: And POSSUM stood on FOX ready to swing into action.
CHORUS: One. Two. Three --- And
BOOST. OOMPH. SCOOCCH. SWING.
... SNIFF? SNIFF? SNIFF!

FOX, BEAR, BEAVER, PORCUPINE, POSSUM: Oooh! Eeeeh! Oh-oh.

CHORUS: Crash. Crunch. KABOOM.

NARRATORS 1 & 2: ... NO GRAPES.

SKUNK: Whatcha doing?
FOX: Blast that bunch of fruit! There is simply NO POSSIBLE way
to get those GRAPES --- and that is that!

NARRATOR 1: POSSUM looked at PORCUPINE, who looked at BEAVER.

NARRATOR 2: ... Who looked at BEAR.

POSSUM: Um ... I can RUN up the tree and TOSS them down.

PORCUPINE: I can AIM and SHOOT them down.

BEAVER: I can CUT them down.

BEAR: Uh ... duh ... I can give the tree a SHAKE.

NARRATORS 1 & 2: FOX glared.

FOX: Oh, really? ... Then WHY didn’t one of you say something before?

POSSUM: Well ... after all ... you are the fox.

PORCUPINE: Sly.

BEAVER: Clever.

BEAR: Smart. Duh ... VERY SMART.
NARRATOR 1: FOX turned with a huff and SNIFF.

FOX: Well, do as you wish. I, for one, wouldn’t think of eating those LOUSY, ROTTEN, STINKIN’ GRAPES NOW ... even if I could ... They’re probably SOUR anyway.

BEAR, BEAVER, PORCUPINE, POSSUM, SKUNK: ... If you say so!

CHORUS: THE END!