A Perfectly Messed Up Story

AUTHOR: Patrick McDonnell
ILLUSTRATOR: Patrick McDonnell
PUBLISHER: Little Brown and Company
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ART MEDIUM: pen and ink, brush pen, crayon and watercolor on watercolor paper
GENRE: Humor
LIFE SKILLS: Caring, Perseverance, Pride, Sense of Humor

SYNOPSIS:
Louie deals with spilled jelly, orange juice, finger prints, and even smudgy crayon marks all over his beautiful story, learning a very important lesson in the process.

BOOKTALK:
Have you ever worked really hard on a drawing or story, only to have someone spill their drink on it? Perhaps you’ve worked really hard on a story, but then torn the paper by erasing too hard or damaging it another way. Louie has a wonderful story and he can’t wait to tell it, but suddenly he notices something strange on the page and it smells a little like jelly! Will his story be ruined? Read A Perfectly Messed Up Story to find out!

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR: Patrick McDonnell

Patrick McDonnell is the artist behind the popular comic strip Mutts, as well as twelve books for children. An avid animal lover, Patrick has used his work to raise money for animal welfare causes. He and his wife have a rescued Jack Russell Terrier and a formerly feral cat as pets.

Other books written by the author:

Cats and Dogs
Yesh
The Gift of Nothing
Art
Just Like Heaven
Hug Time
South
Wag!
Me...Jane
The Monsters’ Monster

CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining):
None

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. How do you think Louie felt when he first discovered the jelly in his story?
2. Did how Louie’s feelings change from when he discovered the jelly to when the crayons got smudged on the page?
3. Have you ever had something you worked on ruined by a spill (or rip, or tear)? How did you feel and how did you deal with it?
4. How did Louie feel at the end of the book? If Louie were to write another book, what do you think he might call it?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Art:
- Make art out of mistakes! On a blank sheet of paper, use crayons to make a scribble. Trade papers with a partner and turn their scribble into something new! Maybe you see the shape of an animal in the mess, or maybe it looks like a train or a plane. What can you make the scribble into?
- On a sheet of paper, draw something that would not be good to eat when reading a book. Then write about the reasons why this is not good.

K.6.1 Use objects or animals from the real world as subject matter for artwork.
1.6.1 Demonstrate skills of perception in production of artwork.
2.6.1 Demonstrate refined perceptual skills in the production of artwork. Demonstrate refined perceptual skills in the production of artwork.

Language Arts:
- Write your own “perfectly messed up story”.

A Perfectly Messed Up Story is a bit unusual because it seems that the world outside the story (whoever is eating all that peanut butter and jelly!) is literally dropping into the story and changing how the story goes. What other ways could the outside world influence a story? Write your own story where the main character is affected by things happening in the real world. How does your character react? What problems does it cause for your character? How does your character solve those problems?

3.W.3.3 Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that –
Establish an introduction (e.g., situation, narrator, characters).
Include specific descriptive details and clear event sequences.
Include dialogue.
Connect ideas and events using introduction and transition words.
Provide an ending.

Mathematics:

- Count up the number of different foods and items that ruined the book.

**Mathematics: 1.NS.1:** Count to at least 120 by ones, fives, and tens from any given number. In this range, read and write numerals and represent a number of objects with a written numeral.

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**
Author's website: [http://mutts.com/](http://mutts.com/)

Patrick McDonnell website: