



Roald Dahl's

FANTASTIC MR FOX



THE VERY CLEVER MR FOX!



Reading

Today we're going to find out what happens to our fox family.

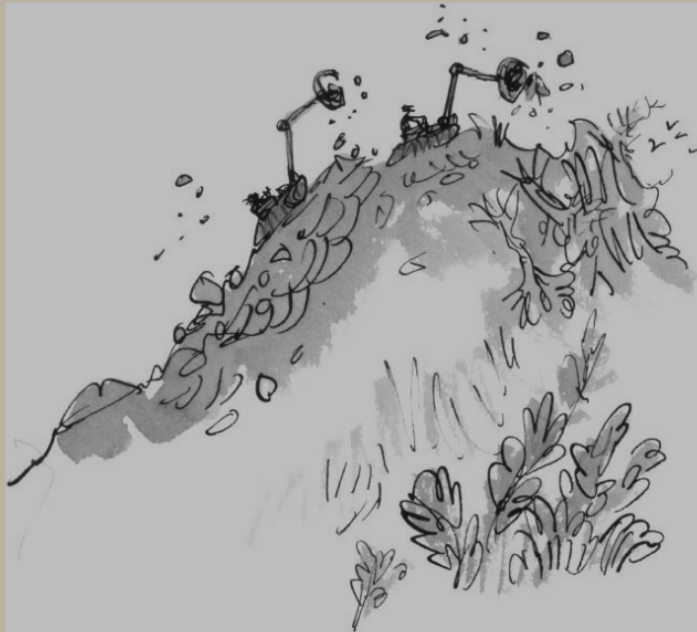
Our 3 farmers are determined to use whatever it takes to catch them...I wonder if they can escape?



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The Race

Now there began a desperate race, the machines against the foxes. In the beginning, the hill looked like this:



After about an hour, as the machines bit away more and more soil from the hilltop, it looked like this:



Sometimes the foxes would gain a little ground and the clanking noises would grow fainter and Mr Fox would say, 'We're going to make it! I'm sure we are!' But then a few moments later, the machines would come back at them and the crunch of the mighty shovels would get louder and louder. Once the foxes actually saw the sharp metal edge of one of the shovels as it scraped up the earth just behind them.

'Keep going, my darlings!' panted Mr Fox. 'Don't give up!'

'Keep going!' the fat Boggis shouted to Bunce and Bean. 'We'll get him any moment now!'

'Have you caught sight of him yet?' Bean called back.

'Not yet,' shouted Boggis. 'But I think you're close!'

'I'll pick him up with my bucket!' shouted Bunce. 'I'll chop him to pieces!'

But by lunchtime the machines were still at it. And so were the poor foxes. The hill now looked like this:



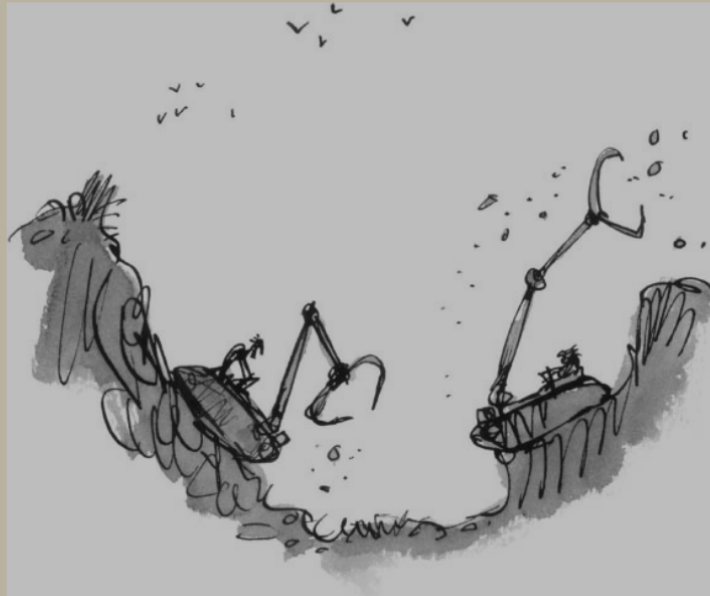
The farmers didn't stop for lunch; they were too keen to finish the job.

'Hey there, Mr Fox!' yelled Bunce, leaning out of his tractor. 'We're coming to get you now!'

'You've had your last chicken!' yelled Boggis. 'You'll never come prowling around *my* farm again!'

A sort of madness had taken hold of the three men. The tall skinny Bean and dwarfish pot-bellied Bunce were driving their machines like maniacs, racing the motors and making the shovels dig at a terrific speed. The fat Boggis was hopping about like a dervish and shouting, 'Faster! Faster!'

By five o'clock in the afternoon this is what had happened to the hill:



The hole the machines had dug was like the crater of a volcano. It was such an extraordinary sight that crowds of people came rushing out from the surrounding villages to have a look. They stood on the edge of the crater and stared down at Boggis and Bunce and Bean.

'Hey there, Boggis! What's going on?'

'We're after a fox!'

'You must be mad!'

The people jeered and laughed. But this only made the three farmers more furious and more obstinate and more determined than ever not to give up until they had caught the fox.





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'We'll Never Let Him Go'

At six o'clock in the evening, Bean switched off the motor of his tractor and climbed down from the driver's seat. Bunce did the same. Both men had had enough. They were tired and stiff from driving the tractors all day. They were also hungry. Slowly they walked over to the small fox's hole in the bottom of the huge crater. Bean's face was purple with rage. Bunce was cursing the fox with dirty words that cannot be printed. Boggis came waddling up. 'Dang and blast that filthy stinking fox!' he said. 'What the heck do we do now?'

'I'll tell you what we *don't* do,' Bean said. 'We don't let him go!'

'We'll never let him go!' Bunce declared.

'Never never never!' cried Boggis.

'Did you hear that, Mr Fox!' yelled Bean, bending low and shouting down the hole. 'It's not over yet, Mr Fox! We're not going home till we've strung you up dead as a dingbat!' Whereupon the three men all shook hands with one another and swore a solemn oath that they would not go back to their farms until the fox was caught.



'What's the next move?' asked Bunce, the potbellied dwarf.

'We're sending you down the hole to fetch him up,' said Bean. 'Down you go, you miserable midget!'

'Not me!' screamed Bunce, running away.

Bean made a sickly smile. When he smiled you saw his scarlet gums. You saw more gums than teeth. 'Then there's only one thing to do,' he said. 'We starve him out. We camp here day and night watching the hole. He'll come out in the end. He'll have to.'

So Boggis and Bunce and Bean sent messages down to their farms asking for tents, sleeping-bags and supper.



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The Foxes Begin to Starve

That evening three tents were put up in the crater on the hill – one for Boggis, one for Bunce and one for Bean. The tents surrounded Mr Fox's hole. And the three farmers sat outside their tents eating their supper. Boggis had three boiled chickens smothered in dumplings, Bunce had six doughnuts filled with disgusting goose-liver paste, and Bean had two gallons of cider. All three of them kept their guns beside them.

Boggis picked up a steaming chicken and held it close to the fox's hole. 'Can you smell this, Mr Fox?' he shouted. 'Lovely tender chicken! Why don't you come up and get it?'

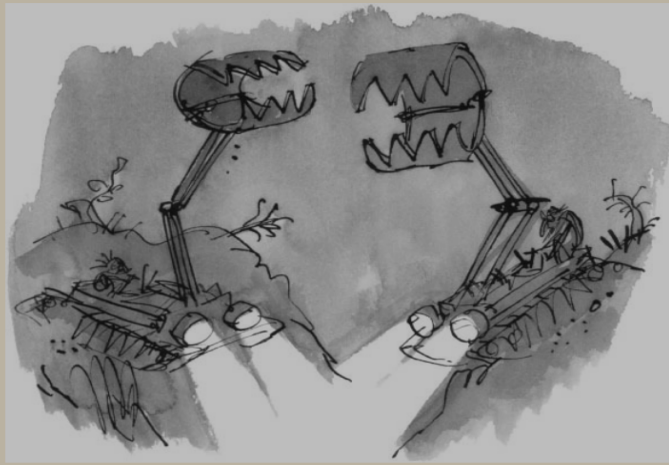
The rich scent of chicken wafted down the tunnel to where the foxes were crouching.

'Oh, Dad,' said one of the Small Foxes, 'couldn't we just sneak up and snatch it out of his hand?'

'Don't you dare!' said Mrs Fox. 'That's just what they want you to do.'

'But we're so *hungry!*' they cried. 'How long will it be till we get something to eat?'

Their mother didn't answer them. Nor did their father. There was no answer to give.



As darkness fell, Bunce and Bean switched on the powerful headlamps of the two tractors and shone them on to the hole. 'Now,' said Bean, 'we'll take it in turn to keep watch. One watches while two sleep, and so on all through the night.'

Boggis said, 'What if the fox digs a hole right through the hill and comes out on the other side? You didn't think of that one, did you?'

'Of course I did,' said Bean, pretending he had.

'Go on, then, tell us the answer,' said Boggis.

Bean picked something small and black out of his ear and flicked it away.

'How many men have you got working on your farm?' he asked.

'Thirty-five,' Boggis said.

'I've got thirty-six,' Bunce said.

'And I've got thirty-seven,' Bean said. 'That makes one hundred and eight men altogether. We must order them to surround the hill. Each man will have a gun and a flashlight. There will be no escape then for Mr Fox.'

So the order went down to the farms, and that night one hundred and eight men formed a tight ring around the bottom of the hill. They were armed with sticks and guns and hatchets and pistols and all sorts of other horrible weapons. This made it quite impossible for a fox or indeed for any other animal to escape from the hill.

The next day, the watching and waiting went on. Boggis and Bunce and Bean sat upon small stools, staring at the fox's hole. They didn't talk much. They just sat there with their guns on their laps.

Every so often, Mr Fox would creep a little closer towards the mouth of the tunnel and take a sniff. Then he would creep back again and say, 'They're still there.'

'Are you quite sure?' Mrs Fox would ask.

'Positive,' said Mr Fox. 'I can smell that man Bean a mile away. He stinks.'



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Task for today

When the farmers are trying to get the foxes they shout to each. See if you spot the speech in the text and record it in the speech bubbles provided. There is a separate sheet to work on or record them in your book. (I've given you an example one on the next slide to look at of the speech between the foxes so you get the idea.)



Wake up! They're digging us out!

Oh my! Are you sure?

Of course! Listen!

They'll kill us all!

Oh no they won't!

But they will, they will! What will we do?

What's going on Mummy?

