Roald Dahl

**Fantastic Mr Fox**

**Chapter 1 The Three Farmers**

Down in the valley there were three farms. The owners of these farms had done well. They were rich men. They were also nasty men. All three of them were about as nasty and mean as any men you could meet. Their names were Farmer Boggis, Farmer Bunce and Farmer Bean.

Boggis was a chicken farmer. He kept thousands of chickens. He was enormously fat. This was because he ate three boiled chickens smothered（使窒息）with dumplings every day for breakfast, lunch and supper.

Bunce was a duck-and-goose farmer. He kept thousands of ducks and geese.He was a kind of pot-bellied dwarf（小矮人）. He was so short his chin would have been underwater in the shallow end of any swimming-pool in the world. His food was doughnuts（甜甜圈） and goose-livers. He **mash**ed the livers into a disgusting paste and then **stuff**ed the paste into the doughnuts. This diet gave him a tummy-ache and a beastly temper.

Bean was a turkey-and-apple farmer. He kept thousands of turkeys in an orchard（果树） full of apple trees. He never ate any food at all. Instead, he drank gallons of strong cider（苹果酒）which he made from the apples in his orchard. He was as thin as a pencil and the cleverest of them all.

Boggis and Bunce and Bean

One fat, one short, one lean.

These horrible crooks（恶棍）

So different in looks

Were none the less equally mean.

That is what the children round about used to sing when they saw them.

**Chapter 2 Mr Fox**

On a hill above the valley there was a wood.

In the wood there was a huge tree.Under the tree there was a hole.

In the hole lived Mr Fox and Mrs Fox and their four Small Foxes.

Every evening as soon as it got dark, Mr Fox would say to Mrs Fox, ‘Well, my darling, what shall it be this time? A plump(圆鼓鼓) chicken from Boggis? A duck or a goose from Bunce? Or a nice turkey from Bean?’ And when Mrs Fox had told him what she wanted, Mr Fox would **creep** down into the valley in the darkness of the night and help himself.

Boggis and Bunce and Bean knew very well what was going on, and it made them **wild with rage**. They were not men who liked to give anything away. Less still did they like anything to be stolen from them. So every night each of them would take his shotgun（猎枪） and hide in a dark place somewhere on his own farm, hoping to catch the robber.

But Mr Fox was too clever for them. He always **approach**ed a farm with the wind **blow**ing in his face, and this meant that if any man were lurking （潜伏）in the shadows a head, the wind would carry the smell of that man to Mr Fox’s nose from far away. Thus, if Mr Boggis was hiding behind his Chicken House Number One, Mr Fox would smell him out from fifty yards off and quickly change direction, **head**ing **for** Chicken House Number Four at the other end of the farm.

‘Dang and blast that lousy beast!’ cried Boggis.

‘I’d like to rip（撕裂）his guts（内脏） out!’ said Bunce.

‘He must be killed!’ cried Bean.

‘But how?’ said Boggis. ‘How on earth can we catch the blighter（讨厌鬼）?’

Bean picked his nose delicately with a long finger. ‘I have a plan,’ he said.

‘You’ve never had a decent plan yet,’ said Bunce.

‘Shut up and listen,’ said Bean. ‘Tomorrow night we will all hide just outside the

hole where the fox lives. We will wait there until he comes out. Then . . . Bang! Bang-bang-bang.’

‘Very clever,’ said Bunce. ‘But first we shall have to find the hole.’

‘My dear Bunce, I’ve already found it,’ said the crafty Bean. ‘It’s up in the wood on the hill. It’s under a huge tree . . .’

**Chapter 3 The Shooting**

‘Well, my darling,’ said Mr Fox. ‘What shall it be tonight?’

‘I think we’ll have duck tonight,’ said Mrs Fox.

‘Bring us two fat ducks, if you please. One for you and me, and one for the children.’

‘Ducks it shall be!’ said Mr Fox. ‘Bunce’s best!’

‘Now do be careful,’ said Mrs Fox.

‘My darling,’ said Mr Fox, ‘I can smell those goons a mile away. I can even smell

one from the other. Boggis **gives off** a filthy stink of rotten（腐烂的） chicken-skins. Bunce reeks（有…的恶臭味）of goose-livers, and as for Bean, the fumes of apple cider hang around him like poisonous gases.’

‘Yes, but just don’t get careless,’ said Mrs Fox. ‘You know they’ll be waiting for you, all three of them.’

‘Don’t you worry about me,’ said Mr Fox. ‘I’ll see you later.’

But Mr Fox would not have been quite so cocky (自大的)had he known exactly where the three farmers were waiting at that moment. They were just outside the entrance to the hole, each one **crouch**ing behind a tree with his gun loaded. And what is more, they had chosen their positions very carefully, making sure that the wind was not blowing from them towards the fox’s hole. In fact, it was blowing in the opposite direction. There was no chance of them being ‘smelled out’.

Mr Fox crept up the dark tunnel to the mouth of his hole. He poked his long handsome face out into the night air and **sniff**ed once.

He moved an inch or two forward and stopped. He **sniff**ed again. He was always especially careful when coming out from his hole.

He inched forward a little more. The front half of his body was now in the open. His black nose twitched from side to side, sniffing and sniffing for the scent of danger. He found none, and he was just about to go trotting （快速小跑）forward into the wood when he heard or thought he heard a tiny noise, a soft rustling sound, as though someone had moved a foot ever so gently through a patch（一快） of dry leaves.

Mr Fox **flatten**ed his body against the ground and lay very still, his ears pricked（刺痛）. He waited a long time, but he heard nothing more.

‘It must have been a field-mouse,’ he told himself, ‘or some other small animal.’

He crept a little further out of the hole . . . then further still. He was almost right out in the open now. He took a last careful look around. The wood was murky（阴暗的） and very still. Somewhere in the sky the moon was shining.

Just then, his sharp night-eyes caught a glint of something bright behind a tree not far away. It was a small silver speck（灰尘）of moonlight shining on a polished surface. Mr Fox lay still, watching it. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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The smoke from the three guns floated upward in the night air. Boggis and

Bunce and Bean came out from behind their trees and walked towards the hole.

‘Did we get him?’ said Bean.

One of them shone a flashlight on the hole, and there on the ground, in the circle of light, half in and half out of the hole, lay the poor tattered bloodstained remains of . . . a fox’s tail. Bean picked it up. ‘We got the tail but we missed the fox,’ he said, **toss**ing the thing away.

‘Dang（该死的）and blast!’ said Boggis. ‘We shot too late. We should have let fly the moment he poked（戳）his head out.’

‘He won’t be poking it out again in a hurry,’ Bunce said.

Bean pulled a flask（酒瓶）from his pocket and took a swig（大口）of cider. Then he said, ‘It’ll take three days at least before he gets hungry enough to come out again. I’m not sitting around here waiting for that. Let’s dig him out.’

‘Ah,’ said Boggis. ‘Now you’re talking sense. We can dig him out in a couple of hours. We know he’s there.’

‘I **reckon** there’s a whole family of them down that hole,’ Bunce said.

‘Then we’ll have the lot,’ said Bean. ‘Get the shovels!’

**Chapter 4 The Terrible Shovels**

Down the hole, Mrs Fox was tenderly licking（舔）the stump（残肢）of Mr Fox’s tail to stop the bleeding. ‘It was the finest tail for miles around,’ she said between licks.

‘It hurts,’ said Mr Fox.

‘I know it does, sweetheart. But it’ll soon get better.’

‘And it will soon grow again, Dad,’ said one of the Small Foxes.

‘It will never grow again,’ said Mr Fox. ‘I shall be tailless for the rest of my life.’He looked very glum.

There was no food for the foxes that night, and soon the children **doze**d **off.** Then Mrs Fox dozed off. But Mr Fox couldn’t sleep because of the pain in the stump of his tail. ‘Well,’ he thought, ‘I suppose I’m lucky to be alive at all. And now they’ve found our hole, we’re going to have to move out as soon as possible. We’ll never get any peace if we . . . What was that?’ He turned his head sharply and listened. The noise he heard now was the most frightening noise a fox can ever hear – the scrape-scrape-scraping of shovels digging into the soil.（scrape 发出刺耳的刮擦声）

‘Wake up!’ he shouted. ‘They’re digging us out!’

Mrs Fox was wide awake in one second. She sat up, quivering all over. ‘Are you

sure that’s it?’ she whispered.

‘I’m positive! Listen!’

‘They’ll kill my children!’ cried Mrs Fox.

‘Never!’ said Mr Fox.

‘But darling, they will!’ sobbed Mrs Fox. ‘You know they will!’

Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch went the shovels above their heads. Small stones and bits of earth began falling from the roof of the tunnel.

‘How will they kill us, Mummy?’ asked one of the Small Foxes. His round black

eyes were huge with fright. ‘Will there be dogs?’ he said.

Mrs Fox began to cry. She gathered her four children close to her and held them

tight.

Suddenly there was an especially loud crunch above their heads and the sharp

end of a shovel came right through the ceiling. The sight of this awful thing seemed to have an electric effect upon Mr Fox. He jumped up and shouted, ‘I’ve got it! Come on! There’s not a moment to lose! Why didn’t I think of it before!’

‘Think of what, Dad?’

‘A fox can dig quicker than a man!’ shouted Mr Fox, beginning to dig. ‘Nobody

in the world can dig as quick as a fox!’

The soil began to fly out furiously behind Mr Fox as he started to dig for dear life

with his front feet. Mrs Fox ran forward to help him. So did the four children.

‘Go downwards!’ ordered Mr Fox. ‘We’ve got to go deep! As deep as we possibly can!’

The tunnel began to grow longer and longer. It sloped steeply downward. Deeper and deeper below the surface of the ground it went. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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After about an hour, Mr Fox stopped digging.

‘Hold it!’ he said. They all stopped.They turned and looked back up the long tunnel they had just dug. All was quiet.

‘Phew!’ said Mr Fox. ‘I think we’ve done it! They’ll never get as deep as this. Well done, everyone!’

They all sat down, **pant**ing **for**（渴望）breath. And Mrs Fox said to her children, ‘I should like you to know that if it wasn’t for your father we should all be dead by now.

Your father is a fantastic fox.’

Mr Fox looked at his wife and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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