



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

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

Bean pulled a flask from his pocket and took a swig 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,’ Buncie said.

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



4

## The Terrible Shovels

Down in the hole, Mrs Fox was tenderly licking the stump 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 tail-less for the rest of my life.' He looked very glum.

There was no food for the foxes that night, and soon the children dozed 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-scrapping of shovels digging into the soil.

‘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.



**Task: To make a plausible prediction as to what happens next.**

SC1: I can use my own knowledge, from own experiences and knowledge from other stories, to predict.

SC2: I can use knowledge of what has happened so far in the text to predict.

SC3: I can explain why I think my prediction will happen.

Write a prediction as to what you think will happen. Make sure you include the above success criteria in your prediction as I did yesterday in my example. Don't forget to send your prediction to your teacher 😊

Once you have written your prediction, you can read the end of the chapter to find out what actually happens! This is on a separate document on the website.