**The Race**

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

(picture in book)

After about an hour, as the machines 1 away more and more soil from the hilltop, it 2 like this:

(picture in book)

Sometimes the foxes would gain a little ground and the clanking noises would grow fainter and Mr Fox would say, ‘We’re 3 to make it! I’m sure we are!’ But then a few moments later, the machines would 4 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 5 up the earth.

‘Keep going, my darlings!’ 6 Mr Fox. ‘Don’t give up!’

‘Keep going!’ the fat Boggis 7 to Bunce and Bean. ‘We’ll get him any moment now!’

‘Have you caught sight of him yet?’ Bean 8 back.

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

‘I’ll 9 him up with my bucket!’ shouted Bunce. I’ll 10 him to pieces!’

But by lunchtime the machines were still at it. And so were the poor foxes. The hill now 11 like this:

(picture in book)

The farmers didn’t 12 for lunch: they were too keen to 13 the job.

‘Hey there, Mr Fox!’ 14 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 15 around my farm again!’

A sort of madness had taken hold of the three men. The tall skinny Bunce and dwarfish pot-bellied Bunce were 16 their machines like maniacs, racing the motors and making the shovels 17 at terrific speed. The fat Boggis was 18 about like a dervish and 19 , ‘Faster! Faster!’

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

(picture in book)

The hole the machines had dug was like the crater of a volcano. It was such an extraordinary sight that the crowds of people came rushing out from the surrounding villages to have a look. They stood on the edge of the crater and 20 down at Boggis, Bunce and Bean.

‘Hey there, Boggis! What’s going on?’

‘We’re after the fox!’

‘You must be mad!’

The people jeered and 21 . But this only made the three farms more furious and more obstinate and more determined than ever not to give up until they had 22 the fox.