

Suddenly Badger said, 'Doesn't this worry you just a tiny bit, Foxy?'

'Worry me?' said Mr Fox. 'What?'

'All this ... this *stealing*.'

Mr Fox stopped digging and stared at Badger as though he had gone completely dotty. 'My dear old furry frump,' he said, 'do you know anyone in the whole world who wouldn't swipe a few chickens if his children were starving to death?'

There was a short silence while Badger thought deeply about this.

'You are far too respectable,' said Mr Fox.

'There's nothing wrong with being respectable,' Badger said.

'Look,' said Mr Fox, 'Boggis and Bunce and Bean are out to *kill* us. You realize that, I hope?'

'I do, Foxy, I do indeed,' said the gentle Badger.



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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 with dumplings every day for breakfast, lunch and supper.

Bunce was a duck-and-geese farmer. He kept thousands of ducks and geese. He was a kind of pot-bellied dwarf. He was so short his chin would have been under water in the shallow end of any swimming-pool in the world. His food was doughnuts and goose livers. He mashed the livers into a disgusting paste and then stuffed 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 full of apple trees. He never ate any food at all. Instead, he drank gallons of strong cider which he made from the apples in his orchard. He was as thin as a pencil and the cleverest of them all.