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Opening extract from

The Clumsies Make a Mess of the Big Show

Written by

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The Clumsies
make a mess
of the BIG show

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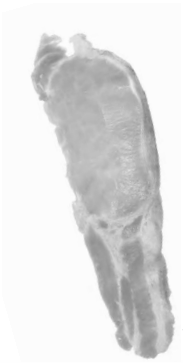
For Sausage

The Clumsies also make a mess in:

The Clumsies Make a Mess

The Clumsies Make a Mess of the Seaside

Trolley



It was a Tuesday morning and the Clumsies were enjoying their breakfast when the door crashed open and Howard staggered in, muttering.

'Extraordinary,' he muttered.

'What is?' asked Purvis.

'Must have gone mad,' he muttered.

'Who must?' asked Purvis.

'It's over,' he muttered, 'and I should know, I had to work right through it. We don't need one now. Especially not one that looks like that.'

'Gglggggdgng ggglgggggdggl?' said Mickey Thompson, with his mouth full of banana.

'Eh?' said Howard.

'He said what don't we need one of that looks like what?' explained Purvis.

'Ygsh,' confirmed Mickey Thompson.

'Tut,' said Howard. 'Don't speak with your mouth full, Mickey Thompson.'

'Shggyg,' said Mickey Thompson, adding a spoonful of egg.

'So what is it we don't we need one of that looks like something?' asked Purvis.

'A Christmas tree,' said Howard. 'It's the middle of January! The time for Christmas trees has been and gone, but Mr Bullerton's just put one up in the foyer."

'Whosha ggmshgggggmshgg?' crunched Mickey Thompson.

'What did I just say?' said Howard, brushing toast crumbs off his face.

'G-gumf,' swallowed Mickey Thompson.

'What's a Christmas tree?'

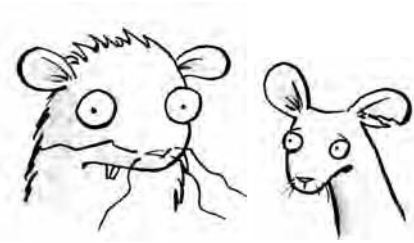
'Well… you know,' said Howard.

'No, we don't,' said the mice.

'Well, it's… it's…' Howard fluttered his hands up and down. The mice stared at him, uncomprehendingly.

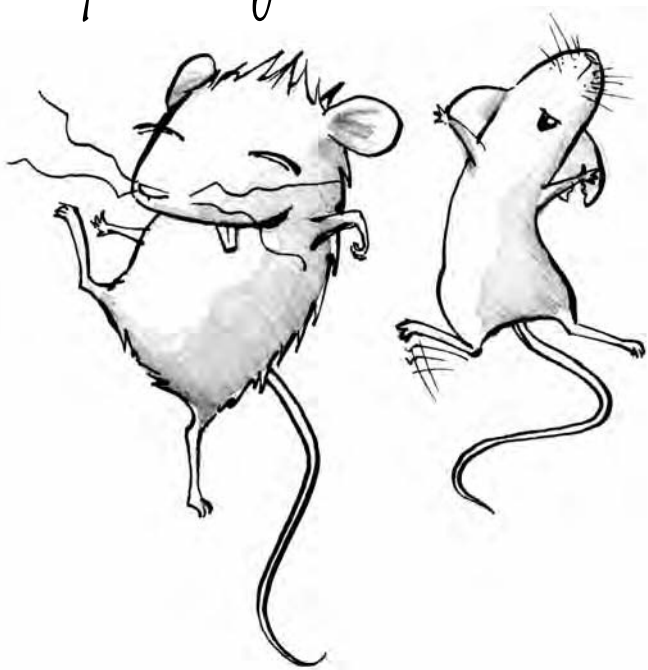
'It's a tree,' said Howard. 'That you have at Christmas time.'

The mice stared at him, baffledly.



'And you decorate it with lights and stars and fairies and stuff,' said Howard.

Purvis and Mickey Thompson started bouncing and squeaking.



'And then you take it down again,' said Howard, 'which is part of the point. Stop that – it goes right through my head.'

'Can you take us to see it?' said Mickey Thompson. 'Can you? Can you?'

'I expect so,' sighed Howard. 'As long as you're quiet.'

'When?' said Purvis. 'Wh—Oh!'

'What?' said Howard.

'Post!' said Purvis, and the Clumsies dived under the desk. There was a clacketty, rattley noise

out in the corridor and the postman arrived, pushing a trolley piled high with post.

'Delivery for Howard Armitage!' announced the postman, coming in with a large box. 'It's work. From Mr Bullerton.'

'Marvellous,' said Howard.

'He said to say you're to do it straight away.'

'Wonderful,' said Howard.

'It gets better,' said the postman, going out and coming in again with another large box. And another. And another.

And another.

Trolley

'Done something to upset his highness?' asked the postman, cheerfully.

'Very probably,' said Howard.

'Behaving strangely, he is,' said the postman, 'what with the tree and everything. It's the complaints, you know.'

'Err, what is?' said Howard.

'People have been complaining about him making them work all through Christmas,' said the postman, 'and he hasn't taken it well. Come to think of it, Howard, he hasn't been right since

that conference you went on together.'

'Hmm,' said Howard, guiltily.

'Don't mind if I do,' said the postman. 'Got a thirst on, all those boxes.'

'Bother,' *whispered* Mickey Thompson, to Purvis. 'If he's stuck doing all that work he won't have time to take us to see the tree.'

'We'll just have to go by ourselves then, won't we?' whispered Purvis. 'Come on.'

'What, now?' *squeaked* Mickey Thompson. 'We can't go now.'

'Why can't we?' said Purvis, starting to tiptoe out.

'Err, err, Ortrud's asleep,' said Mickey Thompson.

'Well, that's OK. We can take her to see it another time,' said

Purvis. 'Come on! Let's go!'

'I don't want to,' said Mickey Thompson.

'Yes, you do,' said Purvis. 'You said you did, before.'

'And now I don't.'

'Why ever not?'

'Oh, no reason,' said Mickey Thompson, trying to sound casual.

Purvis advanced on Mickey Thompson and there was a small scuffle.

'Gerroff!' said Mickey Thompson, **'All right.'**

'Tell me,' said Purvis.

'It,' whispered Mickey Thompson, and pointed towards the corridor.

'What it?' asked Purvis.

'That… post trolley. It's… there.'

'Oh, don't be so soft,' said Purvis. 'Come along.' And he led the way into the corridor, where the trolley was waiting. It was wooden and big, with wheels and shelves, and it was saying something.