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Opening extract from
**The Clumsies Make a
Mess of the Zoo**

Written by
Sorrel Anderson

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Children's Books**

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The Crumsies

make a

mess of the zoo

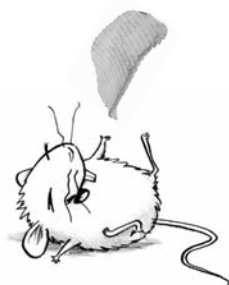
Illustrated by Nicola Slater

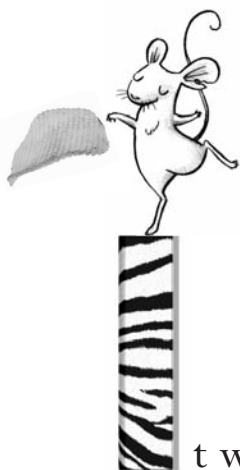


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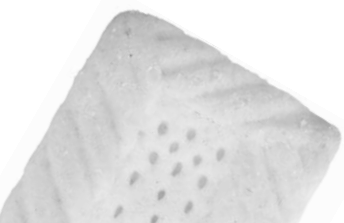
Nervous Exhaustion







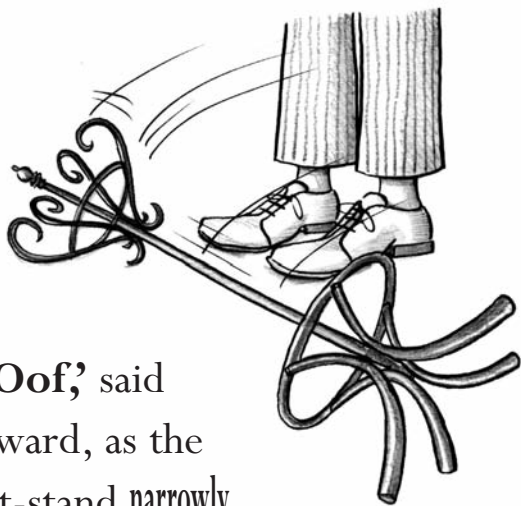
It was a Tuesday morning and everyone in the office was feeling cheerful. Howard was **humming** a tune and reading a magazine. Purvis and Mickey Thompson were playing a game and eating crisps. And Ortrud the very small elephant was frolicking, knocking things over.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘LOOK OUT,
HOWARD,’

shouted Purvis, as Ortrud
crashed into the coat-stand.



‘Oof,’ said
Howard, as the
coat-stand narrowly
missed him.

‘That was close,’ said Mickey
Thompson.

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‘It’s ever so nice when Mr Bullerton’s away, isn’t it, Howard?’

‘Yes,’ said Howard. ‘Ever so.’

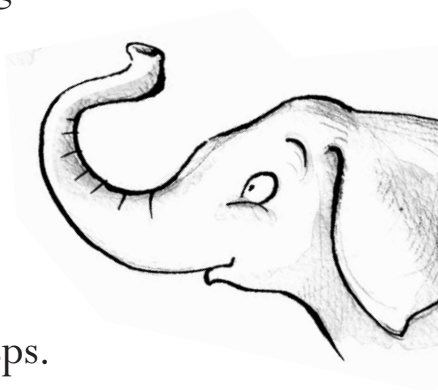
‘How long do you think he’ll be gone?’ asked Purvis.

‘Who can tell?’ said Howard. ‘I heard he’s been told by his doctor to have a long rest. He’s suffering from

**Nervous
Exhaustion.’**

Purvis gasped and Mickey Thompson
dropped his bag of crisps.

‘Quite,’ said Howard.



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‘Are you sure?’ asked Purvis.

‘I have it on good authority,’
said Howard.

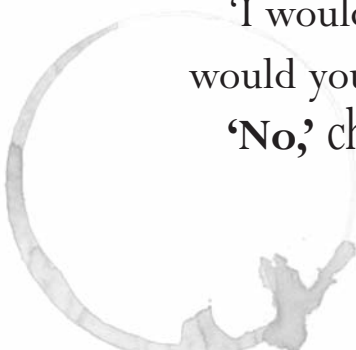
‘Gosh,’ said Mickey
Thompson. **‘Nervous
Exhaustion,** eh?’

‘Bit of a **SHOCK,** isn’t it?’ said
Howard, flicking through his
magazine.

‘Yes,’ chorused the mice.

‘I wouldn’t have thought it,
would you?’ said Howard.

‘No,’ chorused the mice.



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Howard resumed his humming and the mice exchanged glances. Mickey Thompson **r^{aise}d** an eyebrow at Purvis, and Purvis shrugged. Mickey Thompson prodded Purvis, and Purvis **coughed**.

‘Er, Howard?’ said Purvis.

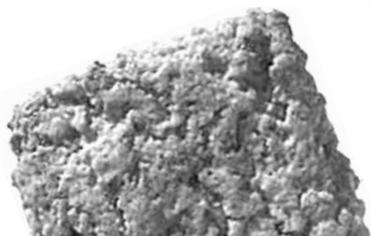
‘Mmm?’ said Howard.

‘What’s **Nervous Exhaustion?**’

‘Hazard a wild guess,’ said Howard.

‘Feeling nervous?’ hazarded Purvis.

‘And?’ said Howard.



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‘Exhausted,’ said Purvis.

‘Exactly,’ said Howard.

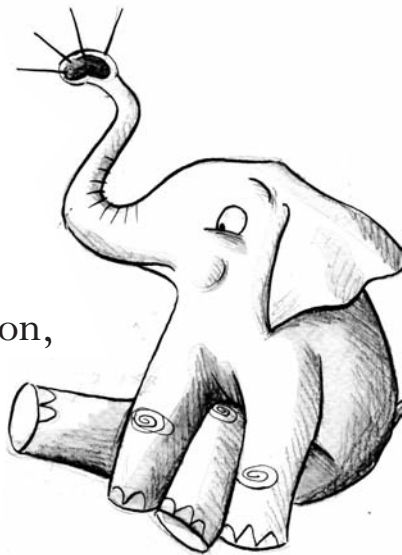
Mickey Thompson selected a
crisp and ate it, *worriedly*.

‘So what you’re saying,’ he
said, ‘is he’s *spooked* and
pooped.’

‘If you must,’
said Howard.

‘*Loop
poopedy
pooped*,’

said Mickey Thompson,
loudly, and Ortrud
started
trumpeting.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘Enough,’ said Howard.

‘But it isn’t like him,’ said
Purvis. ‘Mr Bullerton’s normally
so... so...’

‘Bossy,’ said Mickey
Thompson.

‘Yes,’ said Howard, ‘and...’

‘Shouty,’ said Purvis.

‘Yes,’ said Howard, ‘and...’

‘Stomp y,’ said
Mickey Thompson.



‘Yes,’ said Howard, ‘and...’

‘Angry,’

said Purvis.

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Howard **thumped** the magazine down on the desk.

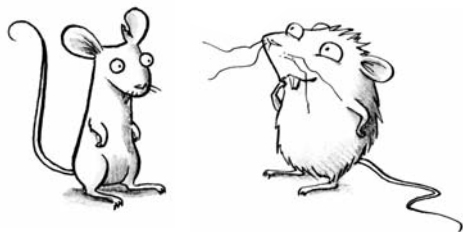
‘And,’ he said.



‘And what, Howard?’ asked Purvis.

‘And now I can’t remember what I wanted to say,’ said Howard.

‘He’s getting forgetful,’ **muttered** Mickey Thompson, to Purvis.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘What?’ said Howard.

‘It’s a symptom,’ said Mickey Thompson.

‘What is?’ said Howard.

‘Forgetfulness,’ said Mickey Thompson, cheerfully. ‘You’re growing elderly.’

‘**WHAT!**’

shouted Howard.

‘We were discussing Mr Bullerton,’ explained Purvis.

‘I know we were,’ said Howard. ‘I am well aware of that, thank you very much, and I am **NOT** forgetful.’



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‘Of course not, Howard,’ said Purvis.

‘I’m a young man in the prime of life,’ said Howard.

‘Yes, Howard,’ said Purvis, rummagi_ng for tea bags. ‘But what do you think caused it? The **Nervous Exhaustion**, I mean.’

‘I don’t know,’ said Howard, ‘but I expect I shall get the blame, as usual.’

‘Maybe we should make him a get well card,’ suggested Mickey Thompson.

‘Maybe we shouldn’t,’ said



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Howard. 'I've been given strict instructions to leave him alone, in **peace** and **quiet**.'

Purvis handed Howard a cup of tea, and Howard **brightened**.



'And I'll tell you what,' he continued. 'While Mr Bullerton's away, I intend to enjoy some **peace** and **quiet** of my own.'

The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘TRUMPET!’

trumpeted Ortrud,
crashing into a rubber plant.



‘Tut,’ said Howard,
as the rubber plant narrowly
missed him. ‘What’s wrong with

The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

Ortrud? Why's she hurtling?

'I'm not sure,' said Purvis.

'Why are you hurtling,

Ortrud?'

Ortrud **tooted**, and
hurtled faster.

**'LOOK OUT,
HOW—** Whoops, too
late,' said Mickey Thompson, as
Ortrud smashed into a
cupboard, and the cupboard
landed on Howard.

'Harrumph,' said Howard,
extricating himself.

'What this elephant needs
is fresh air and exercise.'



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘Shall I open the window?’
offered Purvis.

‘That won’t be nearly airy
enough for this situation,’ said
Howard, taking a gulp of tea. ‘I
think we’d better take the day
off and go out somewhere.’

‘HURRAY!’ cheered

Mickey Thompson, bouncing.



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‘Where shall we go?’ said Purvis, **h^opping**.

‘Where? Where?’

‘Where do you fancy?’
said Howard.

‘Seaside?’ suggested Purvis.

‘**T**oo salty,’ said Howard.

‘Countryside?’ suggested
Purvis.

‘*T*oo muddy,’ said Howard.

‘A woodland walk?’ suggested
Purvis.

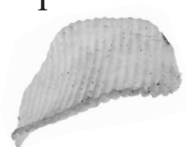
‘**T**oo woody,’ said Howard.

‘**O**oh. **O**oh,’ said Mickey
Thompson, *waving* his hand in
the air.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘Yes, Mickey Thompson?’ said Howard.

‘**CRISP FACTORY,**’  **shouted** Mickey Thompson.

‘Too... What do you mean, *crisp factory?*’ said Howard.

‘They conduct guided tours, and provide free samples. It says so, here,’ said Mickey Thompson, ***jabbing*** the back of his crisp packet.



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‘No,’ said Howard.

‘But, Howard,’ said Mickey Thompson.

‘No crisp factories,’ said Howard.



Mickey Thompson sighed, and ate another crisp, dejectedly.

‘I wonder what Ortrud would like to do,’ said Purvis. Everyone looked at Ortrud, as she started on another circuit of the room.

‘It’s difficult to tell,’ said Howard.

‘If only we could speak elephant,’ said Mickey Thompson.

