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

Written by  
**Sorrel Anderson**

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# The Crumsies

make a

mess of the zoo

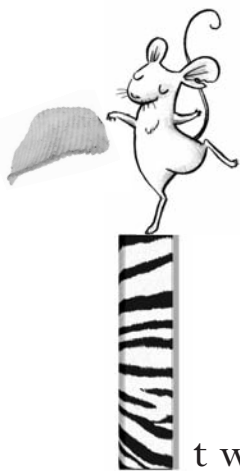
Illustrated by Nicola Slater



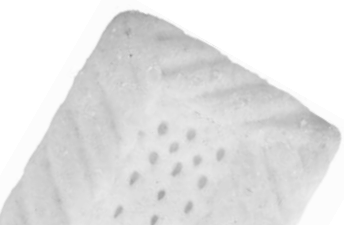
# Nervous Exhaustion







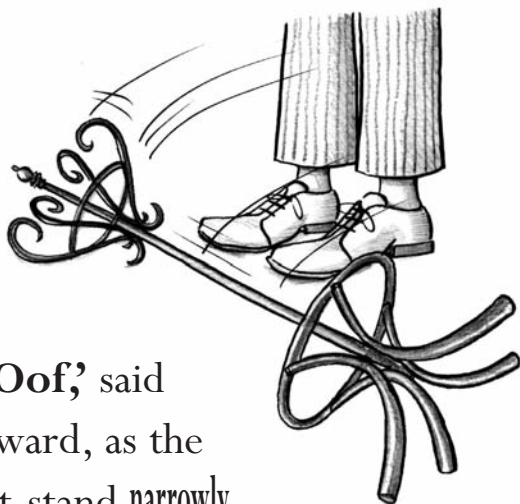
It was a Tuesday morning and everyone in the office was feeling cheerful. Howard was **humming** a tune and reading a magazine. Purvis and Mickey Thompson were playing a game and eating crisps. And Ortrud the very small elephant was frolicking, *knocking things over.*



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘LOOK OUT,  
HOWARD,’

**shouted** Purvis, as Ortrud  
cra<sup>s</sup>hed into the coat-stand.



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

‘That was close,’ said Mickey  
Thompson.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘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.

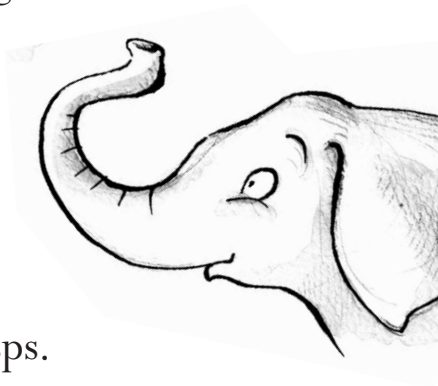
‘Who can tell?’ said Howard. ‘I heard he’s been told by his doctor to have a long rest. He’s suffering from

**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.

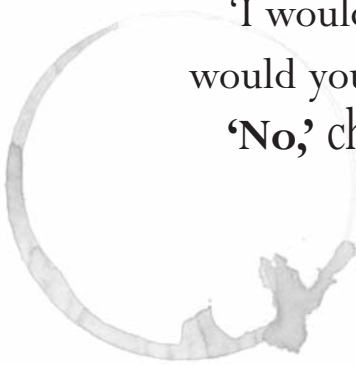
‘Gosh,’ said Mickey  
Thompson. **‘Nervous  
Exhaustion,** eh?’

‘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<sup>aise</sup>d** an eyebrow at Purvis, and Purvis shrugged. Mickey Thompson prodded Purvis, and Purvis **coughed**.

‘Er, Howard?’ said Purvis.

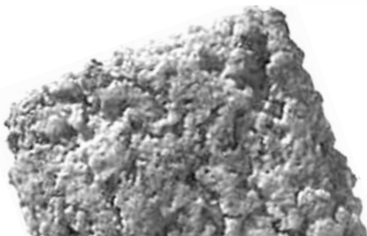
‘Mmm?’ said Howard.

‘What’s **Nervous Exhaustion?**’

‘Hazard a wild guess,’ said Howard.

‘Feeling nervous?’ hazarded Purvis.

‘And?’ said Howard.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘Exhausted,’ said Purvis.

‘Exactly,’ said Howard.

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

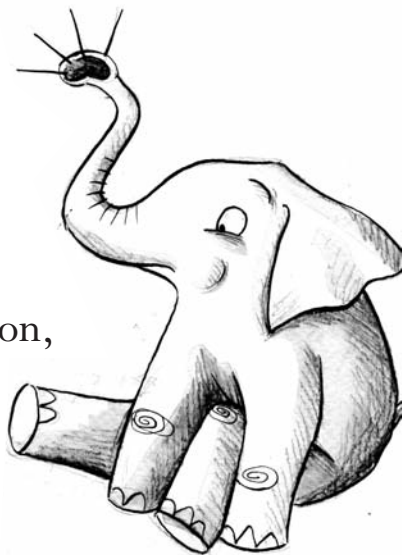
‘So what you’re saying,’ he said, ‘is he’s *spooked* and *pooped*.’

‘If you must,’ said Howard.

‘*Loop pooped 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...’

‘**S t o m p y,**’ said

Mickey Thompson.

‘Yes,’ said Howard, ‘and...’

‘**Angry,**’

said Purvis.



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

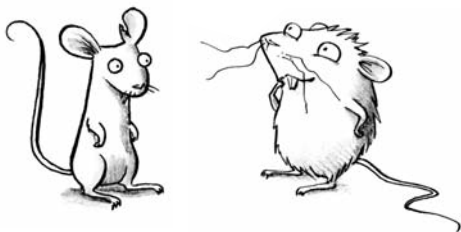
‘And,’ he said.



‘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.’



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

‘Of course not, Howard,’ said Purvis.

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

‘Yes, Howard,’ said Purvis, rummaging 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



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

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**.

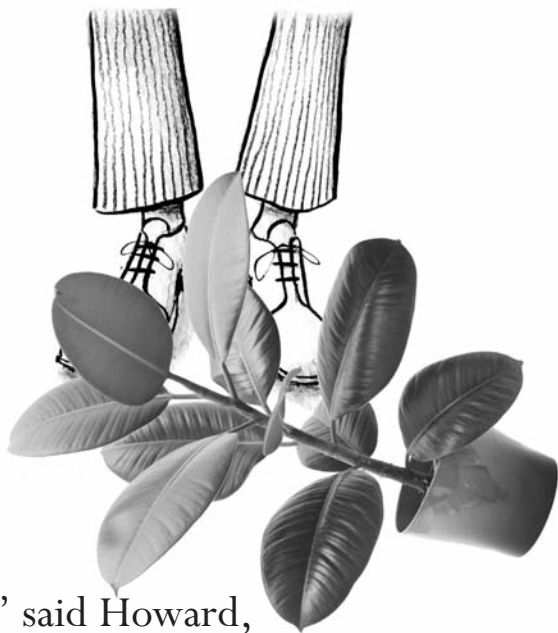


'And I'll tell you what,' he continued. 'While Mr Bullerton's away, I intend to enjoy some **peace** and **quiet** of my own.'

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.



The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo

'Where shall we go?' said Purvis, **h<sup>o</sup>PPing**.

'Where? Where?'

'Where do you fancy?' said Howard.

'Seaside?' suggested Purvis.

'**T**oo salty,' said Howard.

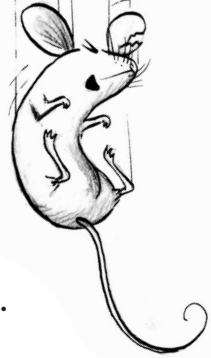
'Countryside?' suggested Purvis.

'*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.



*The Clumsies Make a Mess at the Zoo*

‘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.

