Eric was slumped over his desk in the office, fast asleep, arms dangling by his side, head twisted sideways on the desktop, oblivious to the pencil squashed under his left ear when Gladys Crabbe pushed noisily through the doorway into the room clutching a box of tissues. She ripped a tissue from the box, sniffed loudly and started dabbing at her nose – a nose that would have made Rudolf proud.

Startled by the noisy intrusion, Eric sat up suddenly, his mind groggily trying to work out where he was.

‘Oh, it’s just you Gladys’, he mumbled as the brain-fog cleared.

‘Yes, sorry you had to pull a 24 hour shift at short notice Eric, but this damned cold has laid me low. I’m a bit better now - thank you for asking’ Gladys replied as she sat at her desk and started to organise her work space.

‘Anything much happening?’ she asked casually as she re-adjusted the tissue box a few millimetres so that its long axis was parallel to the side edge of her desk.

‘Oh God, don’t ask - it’s been a nightmare of a day Gladys. You wouldn’t believe it’ a clearly exasperated Eric replied.

‘Really? How so?’ Gladys asked, interested now.

’That damned crowd doing the Quick Crossword. Do you know, they posted over 580 comments. Five-hundred-and-eighty! Can you believe it? All because of one tricky clue. Honestly Gladys, I thought it would never end. I had to read every single damned comment and no word of a lie Gladys, I’m knackered. I can’t wait to get out of here so I can go home.’

‘Goodness me’ Gladys tut-tutted. ‘There must’ve been lots of comments to delete.’

‘Well, do you know, there was just the one that I had to mod off. One out of 580-odd at last count. If I’d had my way, I’d have deleted the lot just so I get some relief. I swear, if I get my hands on that setter, I’ll …’

‘Now, now Eric, calm down. It’s all over now and I’m here to take over, so you scoot along home’ Gladys soothed.

Eric stood up, grabbed the coat from the back of his chair, bade Gladys a goodnight and headed for the door grumbling ‘Five hundred and eighty bloody comments – for fu…’

‘Eric! Manners!’