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Elephantina A Huge Misunderstanding delightful and quirky

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Elephantina. A Huge Misunderstanding, Andrew Drummond, Unireps, \$29.95

EVERYTHING about this book is delightful and quirky. The construction, content and style, all of it smacks of an artful and intelligent designer, a human one. The inside at least is the effort of Andrew Drummond.

Set in the 18th century, the prose reflects the greatest moralistic and breathy meanderings of those days. This style juxtaposed with the content provides a reading experience rich with humour.

It is a story about an elephant that dies on the side of a road near Dundee, Scotland in 1706.

The tale is told from the journal of Gilbert Orum, a voice howling with repressed neurosis. Indeed, if the editor's opinion is taken into account along with the damning and divergent footnotes, it becomes rather obvious Orum's account is completely unsound.

There are other indicators to support this. An engraver by trade he is under the employ of Dr Blair, a surgeon-apothecary who is set upon making it into the annals of the Royal Society with the dissection of the deceased pachyderm.

Orum, although morally opposed to Blair's labours, has many bills to pay. So, various parts of the elephant are traded in the village. This results in a rampaging Bacchanalian frenzy.

It is just past the centenary of Dr Patrick Blair's death in 1830 that Orum's opportunistic account comes to be published. This edition will suit the private collection of any booklover with an appreciation for the discerningly daft.

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