





## Geronimo Stilton

#### **A CHRISTMAS TALE**



Scholastic Inc.

New York Toronto London Auckland Sydney Mexico City New Delhi Hong Kong Buenos Aires

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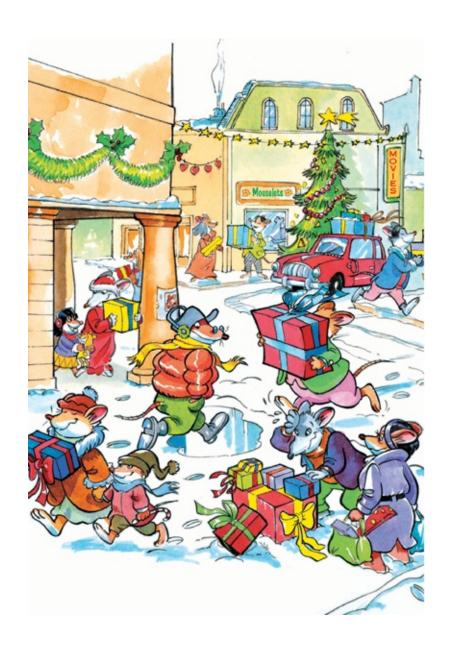
# IT WAS A COLD DECEMBER MORNING

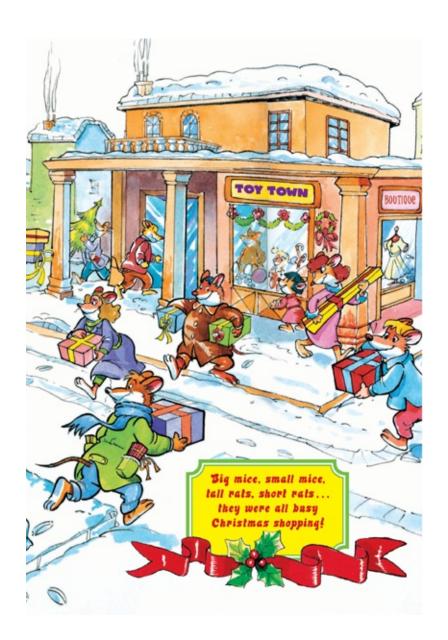
How cold was it, you ask? It was so cold that the cheese sandwich I had for breakfast turned into a **CHEESE PSPSICIE!** 

I zipped up my winter coat. I wrapped my favorite scarf around my neck. It's cheddar yellow. My favorite nephew, Benjamin, gave it to me. It always keeps my snout very warm! Then I stepped out of my mouse hole\* into the **frozen gir**.

I scampered down the street, toward the center of town. I had just taken a few steps when it began to snow! Snowflakes

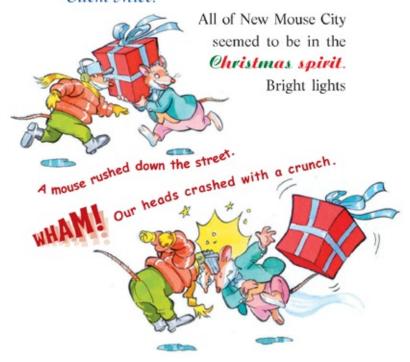
\* I live at 8 Mouseford Lane. By the way, my name is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton. I am the publisher and editor of *The Rodent's Gazette*, the most famouse newspaper on Mouse Island!





swirled down from the sky. They landed on my whiskers like tiny Walte Dotte Doubles.

I smiled. It was snowing on Christmas Eve! How perfect! As I walked past the shops, I began to hum that famouse Christmas carol "Silent Mice."



flickered in the store windows. Mice scurried by, their arms filled with presents.

I gazed up at the star on top of a Christmas tree when suddenly...

**WHAM!** I crashed into a mouse crossing the street! He carried an enormouse red box. He seemed to be in quite a rush.

**SLAM!** I slipped on the ice. I landed right on top of my poor tail. Ouch!

I stood up, rubbing my tail. A look of



surprise came across the mouse's face. "Geronimo Stillon! Is that you?"

I couldn't believe it. It was my old friend from school, **Buddy Pawpal**.

"Buddy! What are you doing here?" I asked.

"Shopping, of course," Buddy said. "I want to *impress* my friends and relatives, so I'm buying all of the **WOTTEST** gifts. Have you seen the new **Cheese-o-Matic?** It slices, dices, grates, grinds, chops, mashes, smashes—and then it washes itself when it's done! It costs a **fortune**, but it's worth it."

"Uh, no, I haven't heard of it," I replied.

"Have you bought your gifts yet?" Buddy asked. "I bet you spent a lot of **money**, right?"

"I don't think how much money you

spend on a gift is important," I said. "It's the *thought* that counts."

Buddy laughed and slapped me on the back. "Oh, Geronimo, you always were a Strange Mouse!" he said. Then he hurried away, calling out behind him. "Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Season's Greetings! Happy Holidays!"



## Buy! Buy! Buy!

I spent the morning walking in the snow and looking at the decorations all around New Mouse City. It was lunchtime when I got back home. All that walking had made me **HUNGRY!** I chomped on a triple-decker cheese sandwich.

I yawned. All that walking had made me tired, too! But it was Christmas Eve, and I was expecting a houseful of guests. I decided





to take a nap so I would be well rested in the evening.

First I took a warm bath with BIUE CHEESE-SCENTED bubbles. Then I put on my soft pajamas decorated with pepperoni pizza slices. Finally, I fed MANNELD, my little red fish.

"Have some crumbs of Christmas pie, my friend!" I said.

I snuggled into my comfy couch. Outside, the **Snow** was really coming down. I felt warm and cozy. I turned on the TV.

A loud commercial blared out.

"DUY! DUY! DUY! HURRY DIFORI IT'S TOO LATE!"

I clicked off the TV and turned on the radio instead. But it wasn't any better. A horrible jingle filled my ears.

"Shop! Shop! Shop!
Shop until you drop!
If you don't spend your money
Your friends will look at you funny!"

I shut off the radio and picked up a magazine. But every page had an ad for a new product. Unde Ratsy's Whisker Polish! Chester's

Cheddar Soda Pop! RATZOIDS, THE HOTTEST VIDEO GAME OF THE YEAR!

I closed the magazine. Then I closed my eyes and started to nap. But before I could fall asleep, the phone rang.

"This is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton," I answered.

"Mr. Stilton, I can tell you are a smart mouse," said the squeaky voice on the other end. "That is why I know you will take me up on this special offer. For just \$19.99 you can own your very own ANTICAT ALARM!"

"But there aren't any CATS in New Mouse City!" I said.

"But what if there were? Then you'd be in big trouble without this alarm, wouldn't you? So you'd better buy it, Mr. Stilton!"

I couldn't take it anymore. "LEAVE ME ALONE!" I cried. Then I slammed down the receiver.

I **snuggled** back into the couch. Then I looked out the window at the falling snow.

Even that was ruined!

A plane flew across the sky. It dragged a sign behind it...



The telephone rang again.

I grabbed the phone. "STOP CALLING ME! I DON'T WANT TO BUY ANYTHING! LEAVE ME ALOGGOGGGONE!"

On the other end, a tiny voice squeaked in surprise.

"Uncle Geronimo! Are you all right?"



### I Don't Want to Be Alone!

It was my nephew Benjamin. 1
I cheered up right away. I love
Benjamin! He is the sweetest little
mouselet in the whole world.

"I'm all right, Benjamin," I answered. "I can't wait to see you tonight for Christmas Eve."

"But that's why I'm calling,"
Benjamin said. "I wanted to wish
you a Merry Christmas before I leave
with Aunt Thea."

I could not believe my ears. "Leaving?" I asked. "Aren't you going to spend Christmas here with me, like you do every year?"

I heard my sister's voice next.

"We are going on a cruise to a tropical island. I am not inviting you because you always get SEASICA! See ya, big brother."

I hung up the phone and frowned. Yes, I do get SEASICE. But I couldn't believe my sister would leave me on Christmas! And to take Benjamin

with her, too! It was downright cruel.

I called my cousin Trap 3 next to make sure he was still coming. He told me he was going to San Mouscisco to take a cooking class.

I sighed. "It sounds like fun, Trap," I said.

"Have a nice trip."

Was I really going to be alone on Christmas?
I called the rest of my family to see what they were doing.

My grandfather William Shortpaws

was packing up his cheesecolored camper. He was going on a

cheese-tasting tour in Cheddarton
with his cook, Tina Spicytail 5.

My dear aunt Sweetfur 6 was going to a concert in Mouseport. I understood. She adores the great *elassical* composer Mousart.

I called every relative I could think of even Uncle Samuel S. Stingysnout ?! He never says no to a free meal. But even he said he was busy!

I tried not to **PANIC**. My family was away. But I still had my friends, didn't I?

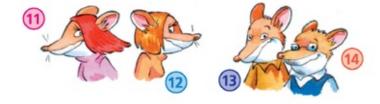
I did not. I called all of my friends from *The Rodent's Gazette*, but they were all busy. Pinky Pick (8), my assistant editor, was going



to a FUZZY FUZZBORN concert. Kreamy O'Cheddar 9, my right-hand mouse, was going skiing on Slipperyslopes Glacier. Mousella MacMouser 10, Merenguita Gingermouse 11, Zeppola Zap 12, Blasco Tabasco 13, and Larry Keys 14 were going to an art show in Mousefort Beach.

You will not believe who I called next. I phoned Creepella von Cacklefur (15), the spooky rodent who wants to marry me. But she was going to visit her creepy family in the VALLEY OF THE VAIN VAMPIRES.

So it was true. I was going to spend



Christmas all alone! I was so sad
that I began to cry. Salty tears
soaked my whiskers.

"I don't want to be alone!" I
wailed. "What kind of Christmas
will I have without my friends and family?"
I hugged Hannibal's fishbowl.

"You are the only one who loves me,
Hannibal!" I sobbed.



Hannibal, the little red fish



# IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUCH A NICE CHRISTMAS...

paper hearts decorated the tree. The table was set with place cards. Everything looked so **beautiful!**But it only made me sadder. My friends and family would have liked the decorations so much!
But now they would never see them.

I looked at the gifts under the tree. I had made them with my own paws!

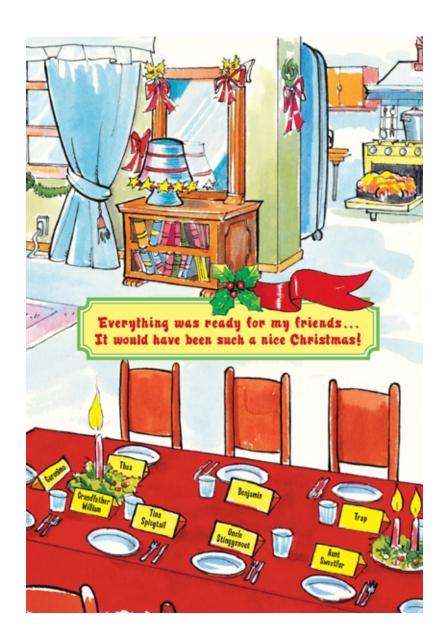
A paperweight for Grandfather William. A photo frame for Aunt Sweetfur. Chocolate sweets for Trap. Sweet-smelling sachets for Thea. And for Benjamin, a letter that told him how much I loved him.

Thinking of Benjamin made me sad again. I looked at the table where I had set up our Christmas game, Mouse-o-thatia. I love Hannibal, but I can't play board games with him. If only my friends and family were coming...

"We would have had so much fun," I said, drying my tears. "It would have been such a nice Christmas!"









I could not bear to look at the presents and decorations. I put on my winter coat again and went outside. Heavy snow fell from the sky. It reminded me of Parmesan flakes shaking down on pasta.

I had not gone far when I bumped into a figure wrapped in scarves. THIN SCARVES, LONG SCARVES, WIDE SCARVES, HEAVY SCARVES, you name it—this rodent looked like a scarf mummy!

"Stiltod? Gerodibo Stiltod?" the strange figure mumbled.

Then I knew who it was — Mrs. Ratillis, the sweet old lady who lives in the apartment above mine. I could tell by the way she talked that she had a bad cold.

"Mrs. Ratillis, you should be inside on a day like this!" I said. "Let me take you home."

I love Mrs. Ratillis. Before I go to work, I always bring her a hunk of cheese. And I make sure she gets a free copy of *The Rodent's Gazette*. It's in large print because she has poor eyesight.

Mrs. Ratillis began to sob under her scarves.

"Dear Gerodibo, I dan't find Doonflower!"

It was hard to understand Mrs. Ratillis through her stuffy snout. But I knew what she meant.

Mrs. Ratillis

"You can't find Moonflower, your nightingale?" I asked.

She nodded. "My poor Doonflower flew out the window.

Where could he be? What a sad dight I will hab all by myself!"

"You will not be alone tonight, Mrs. Ratillis," I said quickly. "Come to my place at seven. We will have a wonderful Christmas together!"

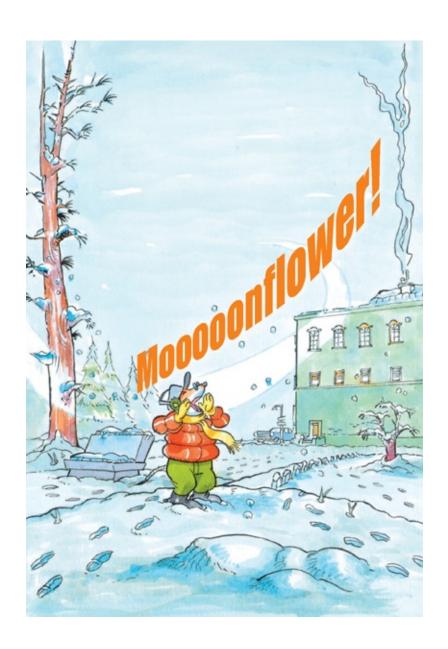
I told Mrs. Ratillis that I would look for Moonflower. I took her up to her apartment. Then I went back out.

It was so cold! I began to wish I had borrowed some scarves from Mrs. Ratillis. Soon icicles hung from my whiskers. I hate when that happens!

But I had made a promise to Mrs. Ratillis. I walked up and down the streets of New Mouse City, looking for her bird.

#### "Mooooooooonflower!"

But I could not find the nightingale anywhere!





I kept walking. The snow kept falling. It was very cold. I hummed a Christmas tune to keep warm: "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Rodent." But it didn't help. Soon I felt an icicle hanging from my snout.

I hate when that happens!

I walked past the biggest toy store in the city. That is when I noticed a woman holding the paw of a tiny blond mouse. They were both staring at the store window.

"Look, Mommy," the little girl said. "That is the **teddy bear** I always dreamed of!"

Curious, I stepped closer to the window. A sweet-looking **stuffed bear** sat on a pillow in the store display. Around its neck



was a big yellow bow the color of smooth American cheese.

I got a warm feeling inside. It was a feeling so warm that it melted the

icicle on my snout!

I quickly ran into the store. The salesmouse recognized me right away.

"Mr. Stilton! How may I help you?"

"I'd like to buy that **teddy bear** in the window, please," I said.

Minutes later, I rushed out of the store. I walked up to the mommy mouse and her daughter. I took off my cap and bowed.

"May I introduce myself?" I asked. "My name is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton."

The mommy mouse turned red. "Geronimo Stillon? The famouse newspaper mouse?" she said. "It is an honor to meet you."

I looked at the little mouselet. "I would

like to give this **teddy bear** to your daughter as a gift," I said. "Would that be all right?"

The woman's eyes got teary. "That is too much!" she said.

I smiled. "It is not **too much** if it will make your daughter's dream come true."

I gave the teddy bear to the cute little mouselet.

"You are so kind, Mr. Stilton," said the woman. "Rattina, thank Mr. Stilton."

Rattina squeaked with delight and hugged the **stuffed bear**. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" she cried. Then she turned to her mother. "Are we going home?"

Her mother sighed. "There is no hurry. We're all alone. No one is waiting for us there."

I had an idea.

"Allow me to invite you to my home for Christmas," I said. "Come to 8 Mouseford Lane at seven o'clock. I will make a meal that is whisker-licking good. The will have a wonderful Christmas together!"





I bowed . . .



I decided to head back home. The snow was almost up to my knees! I could feel an icicle hanging from each of my ears.

I hate when that happens!

I took a shortcut through the park.

"Mooooonflower!" I called out.

Suddenly, I heard a yell behind me.



#### "HEY YOU! STOP RIGHT THERE!"

I turned and saw a dark shadow.

"Give me your money!" the mysterious rodent shouted.

Normally, I would have been **afraid**. But it was Christmas Eve. I wanted to help this mouse.

"Don't you know it's Christmas Eve?" I said softly.

"Give me your money!" the mouse said again. But this time, his voice was



shaking. Then I heard him sob.

I walked up to him. "Are you all right? May I help you?" I asked.

Now I could see the mouse in the light of the streetlamp. He was **SHORT** and **SKINNY** with a Sad look in his eyes.

"I am so sorry," he said in a soft voice.
"I've never done this before. But I didn't know what else to do. If I told you, you'd understand, I promise. But you don't want to listen to me, I'm sure."

I put my paw on his shoulder. "I would be happy to listen to you," I said. "Come to my

house tonight. We ean talk over a slice of nice ripe cheese."

Then another voice rang through the night. "What is going on here?" a police mouse asked us.

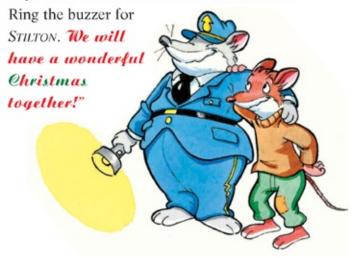
"Everything is fine, Officer," I said.

The police mouse glanced at the **SKINNY** mouse by my side. He frowned. "Hmmm. And who is this?"

"He is a friend," I said. "We were about to go to my house for *Christmas Eve* supper."

The police mouse sighed. "Lucky you," he said. "My shift is almost over. But I'm all alone tonight."

"Then come with us!" I said. "I'll see both of you at seven o'clock at 8 Mouseford Lane.





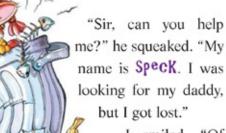
I decided to look in one more place for Moonflower. I headed to the harbor. It was very cold by the water. Soon I could feel an icicle hanging from the tip of my tail.

I hate when that happens!

"Moooonflower!" I called out.
"Moooonflower!"

"Hey, Mister!" a small voice cried. It surprised me! I slipped on a fish bone.

Splat! I landed inside a BARREL of rotten fish. I climbed out of the slippery barrel. Sording bongs stuck to my fur. A stinky lobster sat on top of my head. I brushed off the slimy mess. Then I saw a very tiny mouse standing in front of me.



I smiled. "Of course I'll help

you. Where are your dad and mom?"

"I don't have a mom anymore," the little mouse said. "Daddy works at a restaurant here at the harbor. He has a very INPORTANT job!"

I took his little paw in mine. The harbor was lined with seafood restaurants. We checked them out, one by one. But Speck did not see his father in any of them.

Then we came to a **VERY EXPENSIVE- LOOKING RESTAURANT**. The host walked up to us. My fur and coat were still dripping with **fish guts**. The host frowned and held his nose.

"WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?" he asked sharply.

"My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*," I said. "This little mouse is lost. He is looking for his father. Does he work here?"

The mouse snorted. "If you are Geronimo Stillon, then I am SANTA MOUSE!" he said. "Stillon is a BiG CHEESE in this town. He is not a Smelly Sewer rat like you. Get out of here!"



I started to protest. But then Speck ran toward the restaurant's kitchen.

"Daddy! Daddy!" he cried.

A rodent wearing a cook's apron came out. He hugged the little mouse.

"Is everything OK, Speck?" he asked.

The snooty host sniffed. "This is a restaurant, not a day-care center!" he said. He glared at the cook. "You are fired! That will teach you to waste time instead of working."



Then one of the waiters ran over to the host. The waiter pointed at me and whispered something in the host's ear. The host turned as pale as a piece of MOZZZZOROWA.

"Are you sure?" he asked the waiter.

The waiter nodded. I saw **drops of sweat** form on the host's whiskers.

"Mr. Stilton, I had no idea it was really you," he said. "Please, allow me to serve you dinner, Mr. Stilton. We would be **proud** to serve such a **famouse rodent** as yourself, Mr. Stilton."

"I COLL COT STAY LEASE ACCORDA" I said angrily. I turned to Speck's father. "Come with me. I will help you get another job where you will be treated with more respect!"

We left with our HEADS HELD HIGH.

Speck looked up at me as we walked down the street. "Daddy is a cook. That is a very MPORTANT job, isn't it?"

"Of course it is," I replied. "Every job is important.

It takes all kinds of mice to make

the world go round.

And what job could be more MPORTANT than feeding hungry mice?"

Then I shook his father's paw. "Come to my home at 8 Mouseford Lane at seven o'clock tonight. We will have a wonderful Christmas together!"

I hurried home. My heart felt as light as a cheese puff. I was not going to be alone on Christmas!

Still, I had to find Moonflower. I called out the nightingale's name all the way home. But I didn't see him anywhere.

I reached the front of my building, feeling

sad. What was I going to tell Mrs. Ratillis?

Then a heard a little **chirp**. It was coming from the mailbox. There, trembling from the cold, was **Moonflower!** I bundled



him under my jacket and ran upstairs to find Mrs. Ratillis.

"DOONFLOWER!" she cried out.

I left them both and walked downstairs

to my apartment. I reached for the doorknob...

But the door was open!

I carefully stepped inside.

It was dark. Not a single light was on.

What was going on?













# A Wonderful Christmas Together

The lights suddenly came on. All of my friends and family were there! They began to sing:



I was shocked. "But I thought you were all going away!" I said.

"Of course not," Thea said. "We just wanted to **surprise** you. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without you, Gerrykins!"

"We love spending the holiday with all our family and friends," said Aunt Sweetfur.

"And it's FREE!" added Uncle Samuel Stingyfur.

Benjamin ran up and hugged me. "I love you. Uncle Geronimo. This is going to be the best Christmas ever!"

Soon all of the new friends I had met that day arrived. We all sat around the table. Trap stood up and clinked a glass with his spoon.

"SPEECH! SPEECH!" he cried.

I cleared my throat. "My whiskers are fluttering with happiness," I began. "It is



wonderful to be with all of my loved ones this year. And now I have many new friends, too! I am a very **lucky** mouse."

🐺 I wiped a tear from my eye.

Trap rubbed his tummy. "THAT'S VERY MOVING.
GERONIMO. NOW LET'S EAT!" he shouted.

I ran into the kitchen. I came back carrying a Christmas feast. I had made a smiss cheese pie, a big salad with BLUE CHEESE CHUNKS, cheddar cheese soup, and A SMALL (HRISTMAS TREE MADE OF (REAM (HEESE! Everyone licked their whiskers.

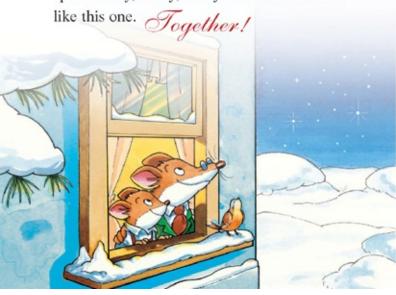
I smiled. It was exactly how I dreamed my Christmas would be!

After dinner, Benjamin and I cleared the table. I looked out the window. The **5now** had stopped falling, and the sky was clear.

Against the black sky, I saw a very tiny, very bright star. It fell through the sky.

"Look, Benjamin. A falling star," I whispered. "Let's make a wish."

I held Benjamin's paw, and we watched until the star disappeared. I don't know for sure what Benjamin wished for. But I bet he had the same wish as I did: to be able to spend many, many, many more Christmases













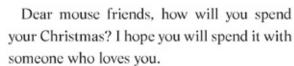




# ALL WE NEED Is Love





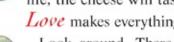




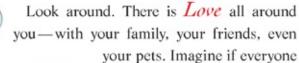


That is something I learned a long time ago. You can have all the cheese in the world, but if you don't have love in your life, the cheese will taste like moldy socks! Love makes everything better.

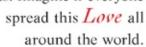
























# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

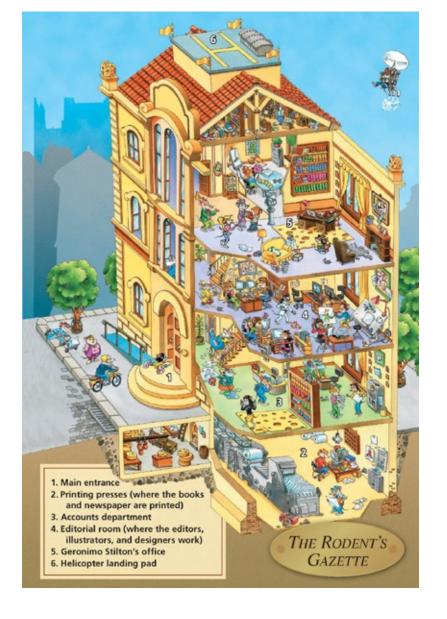


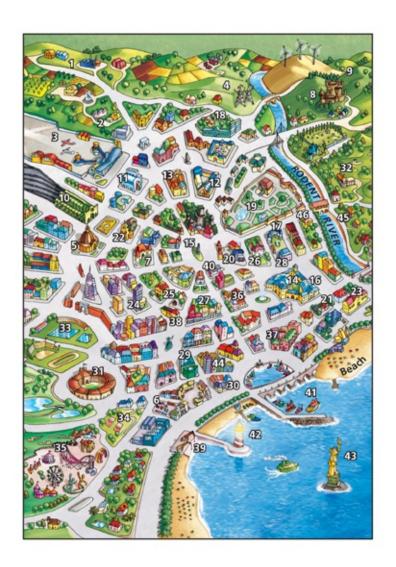
Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, **GERONIMO STILTON** is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been

running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.

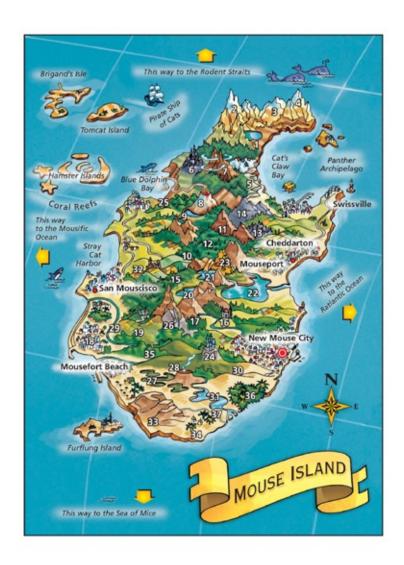




### Map of New Mouse City

- 1. Industrial Zone
- 2. Cheese Factories
- Angorat International Airport
- 4. WRAT Radio and Television Station
- 5. Cheese Market
- 6. Fish Market
- 7. Town Hall
- 8. Snotnose Castle
- The Seven Hills of Mouse Island
- 10. Mouse Central Station
- 11. Trade Center
- 12. Movie Theater
- 13. Gym
- 14. Catnegie Hall
- 15. Singing Stone Plaza
- 16. The Gouda Theater
- 17. Grand Hotel
- 18. Mouse General Hospital
- 19. Botanical Gardens
- Cheap Junk for Less (Trap's store)
- 21. Parking Lot
- 22. Mouseum of Modern Art
- 23. University and Library
- 24. The Daily Rat

- 25. The Rodent's Gazette
- 26. Trap's House
- 27. Fashion District
- 28. The Mouse House Restaurant
- 29. Environmental Protection Center
- 30. Harbor Office
- 31. Mousidon Square Garden
- 32. Golf Course
- 33. Swimming Pool
- 34. Blushing Meadow Tennis Courts
- 35. Curlyfur Island Amusement Park
- 36. Geronimo's House
- 37. Historic District
- 38. Public Library
- 39. Shipyard
- 40. Thea's House
- 41. New Mouse Harbor
- 42. Luna Lighthouse
- 43. The Statue of Liberty
- 44. Hercule Poirat's Office
- 45. Petunia Pretty Paws's House
- 46. Grandfather William's House



## Map of Mouse Island

- 1. Big Ice Lake
- 2. Frozen Fur Peak
- 3. Slipperyslopes Glacier
- 4. Coldcreeps Peak
- 5. Ratzikistan
- 6. Transratania
- 7. Mount Vamp
- 8. Roastedrat Volcano
- 9. Brimstone Lake
- 10. Poopedcat Pass
- 11. Stinko Peak
- 12. Dark Forest
- 13. Vain Vampires Valley
- 14. Goose Bumps Gorge
- 15. The Shadow Line Pass
- 16. Penny Pincher Castle
- 17. Nature Reserve Park
- 18. Las Ratayas Marinas
- 19. Fossil Forest
- 20. Lake Lake

- 21. Lake Lakelake
- 22. Lake Lakelakelake
- 23. Cheddar Crag
- 24. Cannycat Castle
- 25. Valley of the Giant Sequoia
- 26. Cheddar Springs
- 27. Sulfurous Swamp
- 28. Old Reliable Geyser
- 29. Vole Vale
- 30. Ravingrat Ravine
- 31. Gnat Marshes
- 32. Munster Highlands
- 33. Mousehara Desert
- 34. Oasis of the
  - Sweaty Camel
- 35. Cabbagehead Hill
- 36. Rattytrap Jungle
- 37. Rio Mosquito





# Don't miss any of my other fabumouse adventures!



#1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye



#2 The Curse of the Cheese



#3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House



#4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!



#5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle



#6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!



#7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count



#8 Attack of the **Bandit Cats** 



#9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo



#10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee





#### Be sure to check out these exciting Thea Sisters adventures:





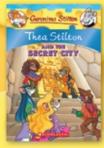
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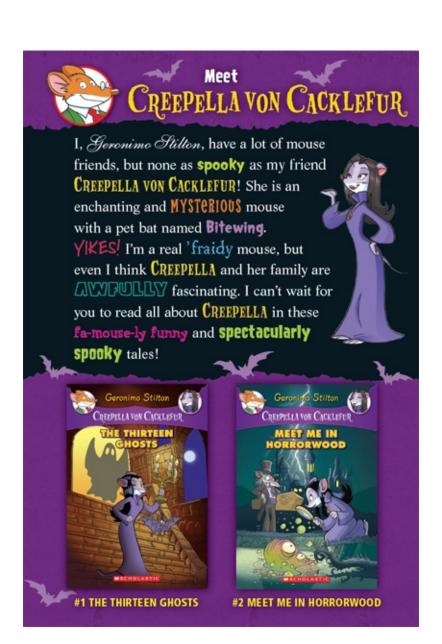
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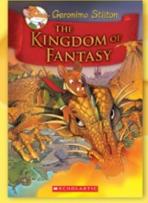
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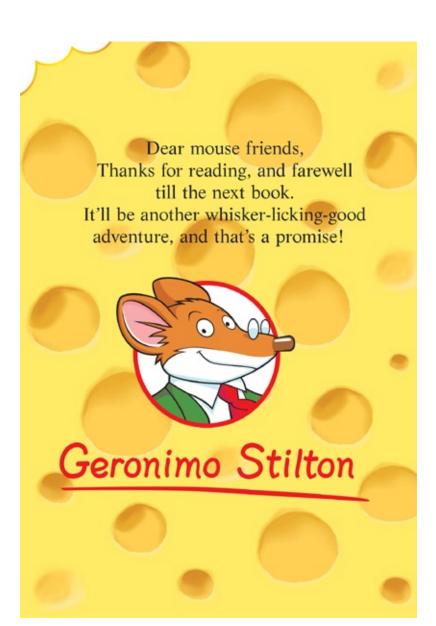
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eISBN 978-0-545-39364-5

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Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami.

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Text by Geronimo Stilton

Original title Una tenera, tenera, tenera storia sotto la neve

Cover by Winny Rope

Illustrations by Winny Rope

Graphics by Cheesita de la Pampa

Special thanks to Tracey West

Translated by Lidia Morson Tramontozzi

First printing, October 2005

