THE HAUNTED CASTLE
Dear mouse friends,
Welcome to the world of

Geronimo Stilton
Geronimo Stilton
A learned and brainy mouse; editor of The Rodent’s Gazette

Thea Stilton
Geronimo’s sister and special correspondent at The Rodent’s Gazette

Trap Stilton
An awful joker; Geronimo’s cousin and owner of the store Cheap Junk for Less

Benjamin Stilton
A sweet and loving nine-year-old mouse; Geronimo’s favorite nephew
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Phone Call for Mr. Stilton!

It began like any other ordinary morning. **As usual**, I woke up in a great mood. **As usual**, I scurried over to my office. **As usual**, I squeaked “good morning” to all my colleagues.

Oh, excuse me. I almost forgot to introduce myself. My name is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton. I am the editor of the most famous
newspaper in New Mouse City, *The Rodent’s Gazette*.

The staff began our daily editorial meeting. We were in search of an **idea** for a new column. But none of us could agree on what it should be **about**.

As the reporters were pitching a few concepts, the phone rang.

**Ring, ring, rinnnnnnng!**

I picked up the receiver. “Hello, Stilton here, *Geronimo Stilton!*”

**Bzzzzzz . . . bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz . . .**

It was a **bad connection**.

An operator with a nasal squeak cut in. “Mr. Stilton, will you accept a **collect call**?”

**Bzzz . . . bzzzzzzz . . .**

The line kept buzzing.

Who could be calling me
collect? It was so **strange**!

“A **collect call** means **you pay** for the phone call!” the operator explained. Well, of course I knew that! “Do you accept the charges? Hmm? Do you accept or not? I need an answer here! **I don’t have all day to twiddle my whiskers while you make up your mind, you know!**”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I was a bit distracted by the buzzing on the line,” I explained. “I accept, of course!”

Suddenly, I heard a **familiar** voice squawk, “Geronimo? Is that you, Geronimo?”

_Bzzzzzz . . . bzzz . . ._

I **recognized** that squeak right away. It belonged to my **Uncle Samuel S. Stingysnout**!
“Geronimo!” Uncle Samuel shouted. “I’m calling to invite you to Penny Pincher Castle for the **ceremony** that will take place on October thirty-first. Will you come or not?”

I didn’t have a clue what he was talking about. “What **ceremony**?” I asked.

“You know, the **ceremony**, Geronimo!” he yelled. **“THE C-E-R-E-M-O-N-Y!”**

“Yes, I heard you, but what **ceremony** are you squeaking about?” I asked, trying to be polite.

**“GERONIMO!”** he hollered. **“ALL the relatives are coming! The only one who won’t be there is YOU!”**

I was starting to lose my patience. “But
what is this ceremony?”

He continued as though I hadn’t spoken. “Plus I’ve organized everything! You wouldn’t want me to waste all that effort, would you?” Before I could get a squeak in edgewise, he went on, “So it’s all settled, then. I will expect you, Benjamin, Thea, and Trap for the ceremony. . . .”

At that point, my whiskers were shaking with exasperation. “WHAT CEREMONY???” I shrieked.
That was when we got cut off.

It was all so strange! You see, the relationship between the Stilton family and the Stingysnout family is strained, for one simple reason: The Stingysnouts are a bit stingy.

If you look up the word stingy in the dictionary, you’ll find this definition:

**STINGY:**
(adjective)
Placing too much importance on money and not wanting to spend it.
I told my sister **Thea**, my cousin **Trap**, and my nephew **Benjamin** that we had been invited to Penny Pincher Castle. These were their reactions:

"I don’t want to go to Penny Pincher Castle! It’s colder than iced cheese there — all because Uncle Samuel won’t spend the money to turn on the heat."

"I don’t want to go to Penny Pincher Castle! There’s never anything to eat there — all because Uncle Samuel won’t spend the money to put cheese in the fridge."

"I don’t want to go to Penny Pincher Castle! It’s so dark and spooky there — all because Uncle Samuel won’t spend the money to turn on the lights."
The Stingysnout Family

The Stingysnouts come from the Valley of Lack, where the ancestral family home, Penny Pincher Castle, is located on top of Cheap Change Hill. For years, Uncle Samuel has lived there with his son, Stevie, and his younger sister, Chintzina.

Years and years ago, Samuel’s great-grandfather, Cheddar Cheapskate Stingysnout, married Serena Stilton, Geronimo’s great-grandmother. Despite being distantly related, the two families do not get along — mostly because the Stingysnouts are so cheap! The Stiltons and the Stingysnouts see each other only during family ceremonies, like weddings and funerals.
Samuel Stingysnout

The head of the Stingysnout family, Samuel, is a real master of frugality. His motto is “I need to set an example for the other Stingysnouts!” He prides himself on finding new (and often extreme) ways to save money. He’s been known to wake before dawn so he can sneak over to his neighbor’s house to read his newspaper instead of buying his own.

Samuel washes himself without soap so he doesn’t have to purchase any. He refuses to spend money on toilet paper, and some family members believe he’s been wearing the same pair of underwear for more than a decade. He even wears pants inside out so he doesn’t have to wash them!

When Samuel makes tea, he dips the tea bag in the water for a second — PLUNK — and then he takes it out right away. “This way tea bags can last for years and years,” he tells anyone who will listen. But perhaps his cheapest (and grossest) habit is this: After he brushes his fur, he pulls stray whiskers out of the comb and uses them as dental floss. Eww!
The Stingysnout Family

The Stingysnouts are distantly related to the Stiltons. Not all of them are able to make it to the ceremony (probably because they don’t want to spend money on the trip!)

**STEVIE** Samuel’s son. When it’s time to bathe, he soaps himself up while he’s still dry and turns on the shower at the last minute to save money on hot water.

**CHINTZINA** Samuel’s younger sister. When she was a mouseling, she never laughed, because she didn’t want to waste energy.

**THRIFTELLA** Stevie’s cousin. For perfume, she uses only free samples.

**SAMUEL S. STINGYSNOUT** Geronimo’s uncle. He wakes up early to read his neighbor’s newspaper.

**PENNIFORD AND SAVEANNA** Ivy’s children, Samuel’s niece and nephew. They make cheddar pops last for three years by taking one lick at a time and then wrapping them up again.

**WORTHINGTON** Thriftella’s twin brother. He always wears the same shirt; his secret is that he changes its patches every three years.
ZELDA  Stevie’s journalist cousin. She wears shoes with heels made of steel so they don’t wear out.

MICHAEL MISMERMUSSE  Samuel’s cousin and an antiques dealer. He sells old bread crusts, passing them off as ancient sculptures.

IVY  Samuel’s daughter. She doesn’t pronounce double letters so she can save her breath. She’s the spitting image of her father.

FRUGELLA  Michael’s sister and Samuel’s cousin. She eats only fat-free cheese so she can save calories.

GRANDMA CHEAPERLY  Samuel’s mother. She recycles old bedsheets to make her blouses.

GRANDPA CHEAPERLY  Samuel’s father. He always leaves the house in slippers so he doesn’t wear out the soles of his shoes.

HOARDEN ACCOUNTS  Ivy’s husband. In the winter, he wears three pairs of long underwear so he doesn’t have to turn the heat on.
I convinced Thea, Trap, and Benjamin to **GO** anyway. After all, family is family! Plus it seemed like this **ceremony** was important.

“All right, I’ll go.” Thea sighed. “As long as we take my **convertible**. But Gerry Berry, what’s the scoop on this **ceremony**?”

“All right, I’ll go,” Trap mumbled. “But no way am I getting in that girly **PINK** convertible. Let’s go in my **van**.”
And, Germeister, what’s the deal with this **ceremony**?"

“All right, I’ll go,” Benjamin squeaked. “But can we please take an **airplane**? And, Uncle Geronimo, can you explain what this **ceremony** is?”

“All right, I’ll go.” I sighed. “Even though I don’t have a clue what the **ceremony** is. But only if you all quit arguing! You know I can’t stand **bickering**!”

Thea took advantage of the confusion and **jumped** into her car. “You’re right,
Gerry. Let’s stop this silly squabbling. Come on, everyone, hop in!”

Trap grabbed the map of Mouse Island. Once I managed to convince him he was holding it upside down, we figured out the route we needed to take. Thea revved up the engine, I clutched my stomach nervously (I always get carsick when she drives!), and we departed.

By **late evening**, we arrived at the Valley of Lack. It is called the Valley of Lack because it is **lacking** in everything. There is little water and very little light, so there are very **few** plants. There are even **fewer** animals: very **few** birds in the sky, very **few** fish in the rivers, and very **few** squirrels in the forest. Even the **inhabitants** of the valley are **scarce**, and they squeak very **little** (to save their breath!).
To enter the valley, you must cross a little-known gorge called Loneliness Passage. Next you must bump along a very infrequently used street. (To save money, it has never been paved!)

At the end of the valley is the Reduction River, which merges with the river in New Mouse City. The river water is always very low. At the end of the river is Little Lake, which holds just a drop of water, with few fish, few ducks, and few reeds.

Before arriving at Penny Pincher Castle, you must pass through a small city called Scantytown, which can be reached by only one road that has just one lane. In the village, we passed very few stores, only one town square, and very, very few rodents.

As we drove, the weather grew worse. The sky turned black and threatened to storm.
A freezing wind whipped up. Then it began to pour.

What thunder!
Badaboom Badaboom Badaboom Badaboom
What lightning!

Even my sister the speed rat was forced to drive slowly and carefully. We continued to the highest peak of the mountain, where Penny Pincher Castle was located.

As we drove, we saw a lightning bolt hit Uncle Samuel’s castle! Eeeek! Benjamin leaped into my lap in terror. I leaped into Trap’s.

WHAT A FRIGHT!
The Very Saddest of Ceremonies

We knocked on the great door of Penny Pincher Castle. A thin rodent with hazel fur and bushy white eyebrows came out. He was dressed all in black, like an undertaker. It was Uncle Samuel!

He was crying so hard, tears were dripping down his snout like a fountain. He reached out and dried his tears on my sleeve!

"Hello, my dear niece and nephews, my most delicate cheese niblets,” Uncle Samuel bawled. “Thank goodness you’ve arrived in time for the ceremony!”
“Certainly, certainly,” I replied. “Um, Uncle Samuel . . . what exactly is this ceremony all about?” Uncle Samuel wiped his tears on the collar of my jacket.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah, it’s so sad . . . the very saddest of ceremonies!”

“Yes, so I see, but what kind of ceremony is it?” I asked.

Uncle Samuel dried more tears on my jacket pocket. “Uuuuuuuuuuuuvhhhhhh, I can’t explain it. I’ll just end up crying harder!”

“I understand. But could you at least tell us what the ceremony is called?” I asked desperately.

Uncle Samuel blew his snout on my tie. “Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooohhhhhhh.
all right, I will explain it. Brrrrgggghhh,” he said, blowing his snout one last, long time.

I couldn’t take it anymore. My jacket was drenched with his tears and my tie was green with his snot!

“What ceremony is it? Just tell us!”

“Ууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууууu
few feet from us, illuminating the castle with a very sinister light. “Eeeeeeeek! This weather is downright terrifying!” I squeaked.

Uncle Samuel, on the other paw, was pleased. “I absolutely adore this weather! You see, when lightning strikes, there is no need to turn on the lights, and we can save money on our electric bill!”

“Uncle Samuel, can you please let us in?” Thea asked impatiently. “It’s raining cats and rats out here!”

Uncle Samuel just giggled. “Splendid! There will be no need to take a shower, and we can save money on our water bill!”

I rolled my eyes. There was no reasoning with this rodent.
But Just Who Was Uncle Bigwig?

Uncle Samuel let us in and guided us down a dark hallway, which had no electricity (to save money!). To light the way, he held up a five-armed candelabra with just one candle in it (to save money, of course!).

The castle seemed much more run-down than the last time I’d seen it.

It really was in need of some restoration! Drops of water were falling from the ceiling, the floors were full of holes, and the walls were moldy.

“So, Uncle Samuel,” Thea began, “just how old was Uncle Bigwig?”

Uncle Samuel murmured, “Um . . . maybe sixty . . . or seventy . . . no, he was eighty!”
“What kind of work did Uncle Bigwig do?” Trap asked.

“Uhm . . . maybe a painter . . . or a lifeguard . . . no, no, he was a lawyer!”

“Where did Uncle Bigwig live?” Benjamin inquired.

“Um . . . maybe in Mousefort Beach . . . or San Mouscisco . . . no, no, he lived in Scantytown!”

“So who exactly was Uncle Bigwig?” I demanded.

“Oh, Uncle Bigwig was the heir to ALL THE Stingysnout property!” Uncle Samuel said quickly. “It was all his! Even this castle belonged to him!”

I found this all very strange! How could this castle belong to a mouse none of us had ever heard of?
Finally, we arrived in the enormous banquet hall. All the relatives were gathered there — the Stiltons and the Stingysnouts. First we saw Aunt Sugarfur and Uncle Kindpaws with the twins, Squeakette and Squeaky. Grandma Rose was there, too. She had left Grandpa Hayfur to care for the farm so that she could take part in the ceremony (which showed how important this ceremony was!).

In the middle of the room, standing tall, was Grandpa William Shortpaws. As soon as he saw me, he squeaked, “Well, well, well, Grandson. You’re late as usual! Come on, move those paws!”

Next to Grandfather William were Tina Spicytail, Aunt Sweetfur, and Uncle Grayfur.
And of course Uncle Gagrat and Uncle Worrywhiskers never missed a big family event.

Suddenly, someone **Blasted** a toy trumpet in my ear. I almost jumped **Out of my fur.** “**AAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHH!**”

Once my ears stopped ringing, I shouted, “**Who Did That?**”

Naturally, it was Uncle **Gagrat**, who is famous for being the family prankster! “**Got ya** again, Geronimo!” he said triumphantly.

Trap giggled. “Good one! Germeister is such a ’fraidy mouse!”

I turned **Red** with **Embarrassment**. As you’ve probably guessed, Trap and Uncle Gagrat come from the same branch of the family tree.
Uncle Samuel announced, “It is time for Larry Legalmouse, Uncle Bigwig’s lawyer, to read the will.”

Larry Legalmouse entered. He was a skinny mouse who wore tiny spectacles on the tip of his snout. He consulted a pile of papers, cleared his throat, and began.

“Ahem, well, here we are, right, rather, I mean, as it stands, considering, let me clarify, so that,
despite the fact, be that as it may, surely, but, however . . .”

A rumble of impatience rose from the Stilton and Stingysnout families. Finally, Trap shouted, “Enough of this legal mumbo jumbo! Just cut to the cheese already!”

“Now, now, I know you’re all anxious to hear what’s in the will, but there’s no need to be rude!” the lawyer declared. “Just one minute!” Then he cleared his throat and began to read the will:

“I, Bigwig Stingysnout, leave all that I own to . . .”

The whole family whispered, “To . . . ?”

“I, Bigwig Stingysnout, leave all that I own to . . .”

The whole family shouted: “To whoooooooommm?”
“I, Bigwig Stingysnout, heir of the Stingysnout estate, leave all that I own, by which I mean Penny Pincher Castle, to Uncle Samuel and Uncle Samuel alone!”

“YES!” Uncle Samuel exclaimed. “Uncle Bigwig left me the CASTLE!” He pumped his paw in the air like a mouseling at a mouseketball game.
I found this all quite **strange**!

Uncle Samuel cleared his throat.

“In order to **celebrate** my new ownership of the **castle**, I want to offer a drink to everyone: **a nice glass of water**, which will refresh you (and help save money).”

I sighed. So did the rest of the family.

Then Uncle Samuel **announced**, “Then I will give a short — I mean very, very, very short — in fact, the very shortest of **eulogies** in honor of our dear Uncle Bigwig!”

With that, he **began** a long, very long, in fact, one might say it was the loooooooongest of speeches.

“I will be brief, no, very brief, no, the briefest, I will not make a long speech — no, no, no, what I mean to say is that I don’t want to bore you with my words, I will not
keep you all here when you no doubt have better things to do, no, I will not speak for hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours, telling you all sorts of things that you don’t care about, things that might be boring, things that might interest only me, what I mean is, things that are from my point of view, things I feel, things I notice, things I perceive, things you would avoid hearing if you could, well, what I am trying to say is that today I will not make a boring, rather very boring, in fact the most boring of funeral speeches, I imagine that if I did, you might fall asleep, ha, ha, ha, I realize that maybe you don’t want to hear me, so I
will be brief, no, I will be very brief, you will see how quickly my speech will end, I will be as quick as a gerbil on a wheel, I will only say a few, no, very, very few, no the fewest of words, only important things, what is essential, things that are basic, so I will repeat (as I have already said, I said it already, didn’t I? I think I did, I think I told you already, of course, so, as I have already said . . .) so I repeat that I will be very brief, because I
know long speeches are boring and I don’t want to bore you, no, no, no, absolutely not, there is no way that I plan to bore my dear relatives, family is the most important thing in the world, ha, ha, ha, even though we are talking about death, your happiness is very important to me, so I will make a short and painless speech, I will try to sum up in a few, rather very few, that is, the fewest of words, the basic concepts, as it were. So as I was saying, it is time to bury Uncle Bigwig!”
Even though the **speech** was incredibly long and boring, I managed to stay awake. And I noticed that Uncle Samuel didn’t say **anything** specific about Uncle Bigwig.

I found that quite **strange**!

As I **chatted** with the other Stilton and Stingysnout relatives, I noticed that **not one of them** seemed to know Uncle Bigwig. As far as I could tell, the only one who knew him was **Uncle Samuel**.

I found that very **strange**!

Out of curiosity, I went to look in the Stingysnouts’ family **album**, which listed all the relatives — including their first names, last names, and **photographs**. But
the album was missing!

Who had taken it?
Who?
Who??
Who???

I found it all very, very strange!

Uncle Samuel moaned, “Ooohhh, poor, dear Uncle Bigwig! How he will be missed!” He accompanied us to a room next to the banquet hall. A coffin sat in the center of the room. Then he left, closing the door behind him.

Although I didn’t remember Uncle Bigwig, I was still sad that he was gone. So I headed toward the coffin to pay my respects.

Now, as you know, dear reader, I am not the most coordinated of rodents. Without meaning to, I tripped and bumped into the coffin. That was how I discovered it was
so light it almost seemed ... empty!

I extended my paw to see why it was so light, but right at that moment, Uncle Samuel returned and yelled, “Geronimo, stop, what are you doing? Don’t touch that!” He was so alarmed he tripped, too! He bumped into the coffin and accidentally pushed it off the table — onto my paws!
“Oouuuuuucghhh!” I shrieked. But before I could move...

“No one touch the coffin!” Uncle Samuel commanded. “Uncle Bigwig... ummm... has left us because of a very contagious disease... er, acute ratitis!”

I was truly shocked. I had never, ever heard of acute ratitis!

I found that very strange indeed!
By this time, it was quite late at night, and it was pouring rain outside.

“It’s too late for a burial now,” Thea declared.

“Quite right, my little CHEESE PUFF,” said Grandfather William. Thea was his favorite grandchild. “We will bury Uncle Bigwig TOMORROW!”

Uncle Samuel reluctantly agreed. (He’d probably figured out a way to save money by burying Uncle Bigwig in the middle of the
night!) He led us up a creaky staircase to our rooms. He was holding his usual five-armed silver candelabra with only one lit candle, because there was no electricity in the castle.

As we climbed, I couldn't help noticing that the candle's flame cast gloomy shadows on the walls. I heard Uncle Samuel whisper under his breath, "I can't bear to think of how much money this candle is costing me!"
Penny Pincher Castle

NORTH SIDE
1. Well
2. Pantry
3-7. Bedrooms

8-9. Bathrooms
10. Aunt Chintzina's Study
11. Attic
Uncle Samuel accompanied Thea, Trap, and Benjamin to their rooms. Then he led me a bit farther to a **dark door**, murmuring, “For you, dear nephew, I have saved the **best** room... the room where our **dearly departed** used to sleep. That’s right—it’s Uncle Bigwig’s old room!”

Then he blew his snout on my tie.

I muttered, “Er, thank you, Uncle Samuel, but I can sleep somewhere else—”

“No, no, no, **I insist**. You will sleep here!” He opened the door, and the
room lit up (well, barely, since we only had one candle). The walls were covered with peeling paint. In the middle of the room was a very, very old bed that wobbled on just three legs.

Uncle Samuel blew his snout on the sleeve of my jacket.
“Poor Uncle Bigwig... Everything is just the way he left it before he... well, you know... before he croaked!”

With that he left, muttering, “Good night, dear Nephew. A bit of advice: Don’t think too much about our dear uncle. Don’t worry about catching acute ratitis. Don’t think about the fact that this was his room. And don’t think about the fact that he died right here in this bed. Don’t think about the fact that we will bury him tomorrow, and don’t think about the legend of Penny Pincher Castle — you know, the one about it being full of ghosts. I guess what I mean is... sweet dreams!”

Before he left, he blew his snout on the collar of my jacket.

“Uncle, don’t you have a tissue?” I groaned. He nodded mournfully. “I do have one, but
I don’t want to use it up!”

Once he was gone, I slipped under the covers fully clothed. I was freezing my tail off!

I tried to think happy thoughts. But it was hard. “Oh, for the love of all that’s warm and cheesy . . . what mouse bumps!”

I had the mouse bumps because:

a) I was in the dark! Uncle Samuel took the candle with him (to save money!).
b) It was terribly cold! The flames in the fireplace weren’t real, but were painted on (to save money!).
c) I kept hearing creepy noises! The windows creaked. The glass was broken and hadn’t been repaired (to save money!).
d) I was petrified! It was so drafty the curtains blew around and looked like ghosts!
I tried to **sleep**, but I couldn’t. I was **too afraid**!

It was a dark and stormy night. **Lightning bolts** lit up the windows and cast **spooky shadows** over the room. The wind whistled and seemed to whisper: **BIGWIG...**

**BIGWIIIIIIIG...**

**BIIIIIIIGWIIIIIIIG...**

I decided to go down to the kitchen to make myself some hot tea. Maybe I wouldn’t be so terrified if I had a nice, full belly.

I tiptoed down the **creaky** staircase,
feeling my way carefully, because I didn’t have a candle. I was almost glad of the darkness . . . who knows what horrors would have been visible if it had been light?

At last, I arrived in the kitchen. Thank goodness!

Just then, I heard someone pawing around behind the corner — and a monstrous shadow appeared on the wall! A huge, threatening paw was reaching for me! It looked like the claw of an enormous cat!

“Wh—who’s there?” I cried.

What could it be?

From behind the corner, out popped — Thea, Trap, and Benjamin!

“Huh? You’re here, too?” they yelped.

“Huh? You’re here, too?” I yelped.

“We wanted to make some hot tea,” my sister explained.
It turned out making hot tea was easier said than done! We looked through all the cupboards and found only one tea bag, which, naturally, had been used!

While we heated up the water, I decided to confide in my family. “There’s something bizarre about that coffin. It is way too light. It’s very strange!”

“Hmm, well, why don’t we go check it out?” Thea suggested. That’s my sister for you. She’s totally fearless!

I shuddered at the thought. The idea of touching that thing made my fur stand on end.

But not Thea’s. She scurried into the room with the coffin. She felt around in the dark until she found it. Then she lifted the cover and cried out, “It’s emptyyyyyyyyyyyyy!”
It's emptyyyyyyyyyyy!

Emptyyyyyyyyyyyyyy??

Emptyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy??

It's emptyyyyyyyyyyyyyy??!
Stop, You Little Fur Ball!

"The coffin is empty!"

Thea squeaked in disbelief.

"Wh-wh-what?" I stammered. "The coffin is empty?" I gulped. "Does that mean Uncle Bigwig has come back to life?! Maybe—maybe he's a zombie!"

"Creepy cheese curls, where is Uncle Bigwig?" Trap screeched.

"What if Uncle Bigwig never existed?!” Benjamin whispered.

At that moment, I glimpsed a shadow slipping by us. By this time, my nerves were totally shattered. "Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh!!!” I shrieked.
The shadow was as quick as lightning. Faster than the mouse who ran up the clock, it sped toward the corridor.

But Trap grabbed it by the tail. “Stop, you little fur ball!”

We lit a candle, which revealed a snout with hazel-colored fur and bushy white eyebrows.

“WHAAAAAAT?” we all shouted in shock.
“Huh?”

“Uncle Samuel?”

“What are you doing here?”

“And why is the coffin empty?”

“Oh, forgive me, my dears! I think I have a little explaining to do. . . .”
“Forgive you?!? Why?” Thea demanded.

“Just what do you need to explain?” Trap asked, looking skeptical.

By this time, we had made quite a ruckus. One by one, our other family members began trickling into the room. After a few minutes, all the Stiltons and all the Stingysnouts had arrived.

We listened in silence while Samuel tearfully tried to explain. “Okay, I will tell you everything — absolutely everything!” He took a deep breath before continuing. “A few weeks ago, I found an ancient scroll in one of the drawers in the Great Hall. When I found this scroll, I was afraid that I
would have to share the castle with all of the **Stingysnouts** and all of the **Stiltons**,” Uncle Samuel sobbed. “I am old, and I have lived my whole life in this **castle**. This is my home, and I am very attached to these walls! **I was afraid of losing my home. Do you understand?** I was so afraid I made up Uncle Bigwig and said he was the **sole** heir to the Stingysnout fortune. But Uncle Bigwig never existed! I **pretended** he left everything to me — I pretended he was **dead** . . . and I invited you all here for this **fake ceremony** to read his **fake** will, in which I made believe that he left me the **castle**.”

Everyone stared at him in disbelief. Finally, Grandfather William found his squeak. “You mean, it was all **fake**?!”

“**Yessssssss! It was all faaaaake!**” Uncle Samuel screeched. “No one has died!
As of today, on the occasion of the marriage of Cheddar Cheapskate Stingysnout and Serena Stilton, the Stingysnout and Stilton families are bound together. From this day forward, they promise their eternal friendship.

With this scroll, Cheddar and Serena declare that just as their love will last for eternity, so too will these families forever be friends. They will share the castle in which their love did flourish.

And so Cheddar and Serena leave this castle to all the descendants of the Stingysnout and Stilton families, so that they may always live together in harmony, just as we two do.

In good faith,
Cheddar and Serena
Can you ever forgive me, my dear relatives?”

Thea shook her snout. “You found out the castle belonged to **ALL OF US**, and you wanted to keep it **ALL FOR YOURSELF**? That’s terrible, Uncle Samuel.”

No one knew what to do next. So all the **Stiltons** and all the **Stingysnouts** except me and **Uncle Samuel** shut themselves into the banquet hall to figure it out.

I stayed with **Uncle Samuel** to keep him company. He had been incredibly selfish, it’s true, but I didn’t want to leave him **alone**.

Uncle Samuel didn’t say a word. He just wept quietly.

Finally the door burst open, and the family filed back into the room.

Trap **ANNOUNCED**, “The family has decided to forgive you, but . . .”

“**Hooray!** Thank you, thank you!”
Uncle Samuel rejoiced.

“. . . but we have a few conditions,” Trap continued. “First, you need to restore the castle. Next, you must invite all of us to spend our vacations here!” Trap paused. “And finally, you will pay for our room and board.”

There was a moment’s silence. Then Uncle Samuel muttered, “Restore the castle? Invite guests? Pay for your vacations?” His fur had turned paler than a slice of Swiss. “I see. So — you want to bankrupt me!"

With that, he fainted.

Gulp!
How About a Few Jokes?

Benjamin and I helped Uncle Samuel up when he **came to**. There was a moment of silence. Then Uncle Gagrat Stilton **shouted**, “Why so down in the snout, everyone? Never fear, Uncle Gagrat is here to lift your spirits! How about a few **jokes**?”

A mouse walks into a bookstore and asks, “How much for the book *A Thousand and One Nights*?” The salesclerk answers, “That’ll be twenty dollars, sir.”

The mouse thinks about it for a minute, then replies, “That’s too much. How much for just one of the nights?”
What’s a cat’s motto?
The worst things in life are fleas!

What does a cat read in the morning?
A newspaper!

All of the Stiltons laughed — but none of the Stingysnouts did!

Uncle Gagrat giggled. “Okay, here’s another one for you. . . .”

Why do lazy rats bake bread?
Because they want to loaf!
All of the Stiltons laughed — but none of the Stingysnouts did!

Uncle Gagrat pretended not to notice. He continued:

**What does a ghost say when he makes a mistake?**
“I made a boo-boo!”

**How does a mouse feel after taking a shower?**
Squeaky clean!

Once again, all of the Stiltons laughed — but none of the Stingysnouts did!

Uncle Gagrat rolled his eyes. “Oh, you didn’t find that funny? I guess you mice
didn’t inherit the Stilton funny bone! Don’t worry; \textit{I will explain everything later.} . . .”

The Stingysnouts looked at him in confusion. They were whispering behind their \textit{paws}, like they were trying to figure out why Uncle Gagrat was laughing so hard. It was obvious they didn’t find his jokes funny. And that seemed to make them sad.

The \textit{saddest} one of all was \textit{Chintzina}, Uncle Samuel’s younger sister. Chintzina never laughs — Uncle Samuel forbids it. He says that \textit{laughing is a waste of energy}!

I looked at Chintzina more closely. It was hard to tell how old she was. She was dressed in drab, \textit{patched} clothing. She still had curlers in her fur. When I thought about it, I realized she’d been wearing curlers every time I’d seen her! Who knew how she would have looked without them? It was as if they
had become a permanent part of her head.

Chintzina knits in her spare time. Her specialty is **multicolored** socks, which she makes out of wool she finds here and there. “Put a sock in it, Chintzina! After all, that’s the only thing you know how to make! Ha ha ha!” Uncle Samuel always teases her.
“I don’t get it!” Uncle Gagrat shouted in frustration. “Don’t you mice ever laugh? What about if someone tickles your paws with a feather? Not even then, I’ll bet!”

He consulted his favorite book, *The Wacky Rat’s Joklepedia*, and muttered, “Hrm, I think there’s a joke in here somewhere about — ahh — yes — here it is!” He turned to the group and announced, “I’d like to dedicate this joke to a very special rodent, our dear Chintzina!”

*Special! Special! Special! Special!*
All of the Stiltons laughed — but none of the Stingysnouts did!

Until Aunt Chintzina

shut her eyes,

wrinkled her lips,

curled her whiskers,

and opened her mouth.

I thought she was about to sneeze, but instead . . .

SHE BURST OUT LAUGHING!

It was an extraordinary, UPROARIOUS, fabumouse laugh!

In fact, her laughter was so contagious
heee! Ho ho ho! Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

heee! Ho ho ho! Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

heee! Ho ho ho! Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

heee! Ho ho ho! Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!
that all the other *Stingysnouts* began to laugh, too!

**LAUGHTER IS CONTAGIOUS!**

At that moment, Uncle Gagrat whispered, “Nephew, I think I’m in love...”

“What? When did this happen?” I asked him.

“Just now!” he exclaimed.

I looked around. “But with whom?” I asked.

“With that *enchanting creature*!” he replied.

I looked around again. “What enchanting creature?” I asked in confusion.

He pointed one paw at Chintzina. “She is the rodent of my dreams!”

I was shocked. “But why?”

He sighed dreamily,
“Aaaaaaahhh, I love her laugh....”
For the whole next week, Uncle Gagrat courted Aunt Chintzina with a vengeance. He was determined to win her over.

First he brought her a box of heart-shaped chocolates, but Uncle Samuel just shouted, “Eating these sweets will rot your teeth and cost money at the dentist!”

Poor Chintzina.

Next Uncle Gagrat tried to serenade her from beneath her window, but Uncle Samuel just shouted, “Save your squeak, you silly rodent!”
you’re wasting your breath and your time!

And time is money!”

Poor Chintzina.

Next Uncle Gagrat got her a big bouquet of flowers, but Uncle Samuel just shouted, “Hmph! Why don’t you buy her some vegetable seeds instead! At least then we could plant the seeds and eat the **vegetables** to save money!”

Poor Chintzina.

Meanwhile, however, her love for Uncle Gagrat was growing.

At the end of the week, much to everyone’s surprise, Aunt Chintzina and Uncle Gagrat **ANNOUNCED**, “We have some great news! **We want to get married!** In fact, we ARE getting married . . . in a week!”
All of the Stiltons and all of the Stingysnouts were in shock!

“You really want to get married?”

Thea asked excitedly.

“In a week?”

asked Benjamin, his eyes wide.

“WHAAAAT? How much is that going to cost me?” Uncle Samuel shrieked.

“Are you trying to bankrupt me??” Then he PRINTED.

I woke him up. “Uncle Samuel, it doesn’t matter how much it costs! Look
at Aunt Chintzina! She’s happy!”

“Ohh, it’s soooo romantic!” Thea sighed.

“They’re just like Romeo and Juliet!”

“First the **vacations** at my expense, now a **wedding**.” Uncle Samuel complained.

“My family really **does** want to bankrupt me!”

He pulled out a **tattered** notebook and began to write down all sorts of **numbers**. “Let’s do the math. Dear **Chintzina**, no **wedding** dress: You
can get married in what you are wearing right now — a Bathrobe and curlers (to save money!). Instead of flowers in your bouquet, we can use a bunch of artichokes from the neighbors’ garden (to save money!). Instead of printing wedding invitations, we can write them out by paw on a roll of toilet paper (to save money!). As for decorations, we won’t have any centerpieces — instead, let’s pick bunches of weeds from outside the moat (to save money!). And for the wedding rings, I have just the thing! Two plastic gold rings that I found in an Easter egg. I’ve been saving them for years, because I knew they’d be useful one day. We won’t have a real wedding reception; we
can eat in the kitchen (to save money!). It’ll be **just** the three of us: you, your husband, and me (to save money!). And here’s the

**Wedding Menu:**

**Appetizer:** 1 bean!

**First course:** 1 piece of spaghetti with 1 drop of tomato sauce and 1 basil leaf!

**Second course:** 1 shrimp!

**Side dish:** 1 leaf of lettuce, dressed with 1 drop of oil, 1 drop of vinegar, and 1 grain of salt!

**Dessert:** 1 crumb of cake and 1 chocolate!

**Followed by:** 1 drop of coffee!

**Drinks:** Unlimited water (from the faucet)!
I’ve drawn up (to save money!)

But Chintzina was sick of being bossed around by her cheapskate brother. She put her paw down.

“This is going to be the happiest day of my life!” she declared. “I want a real wedding reception! I want to share my joy with all of the rodents I hold dear. I’m going to invite all of the Stiltons and all of the Stingysnouts so I can share everything I have. Loving means sharing what you have, however large or small it may be!”

Uncle Samuel buried his snout in his paws. “First the vacations at my expense, then the wedding, and now the reception! You all really, really, really do want to bankrupt me!”

He fainted again.
My, How You’ve Changed!

When we woke up the next day, Chintzina was nowhere to be found.

“Where is my sisteeeeeeerrrrrrrr???” Uncle Samuel shrieked.

Trap giggled. “She went to New Mouse City. She said she needed to buy things for the wedding . . . lots of things!”

Uncle Samuel turned whiter than fresh
mozzarella. Instinctively, his paw reached for his wallet. “B-b-buy things? F-f-for the wedding? L-l-lots of things?”

Trap nodded, smirking. “Uh-huh. And Chintzina didn’t go alone. She was with her friends: all of the Stilltons and all of the Stingysnouts! She said she had to go to the Furdresser . . . to the Beautician . . . to the tailor . . . to the Florist . . . to the perfume shop . . . to the Jewelry Store . . . and also to —”

Uncle Samuel cut him off with a shriek. “Noooooooonoo! How much is all that going to cost me? You meddling mice are really trying to bankrupt me!”

He paced nervously for hours, waiting for Chintzina to return. When she finally scampered through the door, he ran to meet her. “Chintzina!” he gasped. “You’ve changed more than Lady RatRat at the MouseTV Music Awards!”
Chintzina Goes to the City

First Chintzina went to the beautician for a nice cheese face mask.

Now her fur is as soft as a peach!

Then she got contact lenses and went to the furdresser for a furcut.

Now she has a chic new do!

Next she went to the tailor to buy a wedding dress.

Now she doesn’t have to wear patched clothing!
After that, Chintzina went to the flower shop to pick a bouquet for the wedding.

Now she's blooming like her flowers!

Then she went to the jewelry store and bought a new necklace.

Now she feels like a real glamour mouse!

Finally, she went to the perfume shop to get a new scent!

Now she smells as good as she looks!
The rodent in front of us was unrecognizable.

It was chintzina . . .

but it wasn’t . . .

but it was!

“Yes, I’ve changed, Samuel,” she said, smiling. “This morning I got up and said to myself, ‘Enough with these curlers!’ So I made a few changes. What do you think?”

Samuel opened his snout to ask, “What did all this cost?” But before he could, Uncle Gagrat threw himself adoringly at her paws. “Dear Chintzina, I thought you were beautiful before, but now you are really stunning!”

“It’s true, you look gorgeous!” said Thea
approvingly. “That new furdo really brings out the **sparkle** in your eyes!”

Chintzina gave Uncle Gagrat a kiss on the whiskers. “Dearest Gagrat, it’s not the **clothes**, the **jewelry**, and the **perfume** that make me look so beautiful! Your faith in me has helped me regain faith in myself! You’ve helped me **realize** that the best beauty secret in the world is **love**!”

“Huh?” Uncle Samuel snorted. “**love**? A beauty secret?”

“Oh, yes,” Chintzina sighed. “**love** changes you inside and out — and the best part is, it’s **free**!”
Uncle Samuel stammered, “Y-yes, but the clothes, jewelry, and all the rest aren’t free, and who will pay for it? Chintzina doesn’t have a dime!”

I was outraged at Uncle Samuel’s shoddy treatment of his sister. So I stepped forward and said, “I will pay for it! Consider it my wedding gift to Aunt Chintzina.”

Uncle Gagrat shook his snout. “That’s very kind of you, Nephew, but I will pay. I am happy to make my future wife happy.”

But Chintzina put out her paws to both
of us. “Thank you, Geronimo. Thank you, Gagrat. You are true gentlemice. But I don’t need your help — I can pay for it on my own!”

“That’s right!” Thea *SHOUTED*. “She can pay for it on her own!”

Uncle Samuel *opened his eyes wide*. “Huh? On her own? How?”

Aunt Chintzina giggled under her whiskers. “This morning, when I went out with my friends, I visited all of the boutiques in the city. And guess what, Samuel? I only know
how to make **socks**, but a lot of rodents like my socks! They are really **fashionable** in New Mouse City right now!”

Thea turned on the television. A journalist appeared and **announced**，“A new trend has spread through the city: **MULTICOLORED** socks! All the trendiest rodents simply **MUST** have a pair! The trend began this morning at the most fashionable boutique in the city. It seems that the socks are the work of a certain **Chintzina Stingysnout**. We are searching for her so she can give us an interview!”

A moment later, the phone rang: It was **journalists** looking for Chintzina! Every **boutique** on Mouse Island wanted to buy her socks. And the **bank** wanted to offer her a loan to open her own sock boutique!
“Way to go, Chintzina! Sock it to ’em!” cried Trap, giving her a hearty slap on the back.

We would like to give Chintzina Stingysnout a loan!

We would like to interview Chintzina Stingysnout!

We would like to order a hundred pairs of Chintzina Stingysnout’s designer socks!
Love is good for you...

Love is good for you! It warms your heart.
Yes, love gets you off to a great start!
You’ll find yourself smiling if love you learn –
Happiness, joy, and contentment you’ll earn.
Love yourself above all.
Rich or poor’s not important at all.
Inside your heart, you’ll find life’s true measure –
You’ll discover love is your greatest treasure!
If you love the world and those around you,
You’ll find that friends surround you.
Give them your trust, respect their feelings.
You’ll see love can do all kinds of healing!
Love the nature that surrounds you:
Flowers, fields, and oceans around you!
Even a small insect should be respected.
All’s worth loving, nothing neglected!
Love is good for you! It warms your heart.
Yes, love gets you off to a great start!
You’ll find yourself smiling if love you learn —
Happiness, joy, and contentment you’ll earn.
How About a Dance?

The day of the wedding was upon us in no time. The ceremony was beautiful, and the food at the reception was whisker-licking-good! My cousin Trap cooked for everyone. He might be a trickster, but he’s also a fabumouse chef!

After the meal, the music began.

It was right at that moment that I smelled some sweet rose perfume. A high-pitched squeak screeched in my ear: “Hi, Geronimo! Nice ceremony, isn’t it?!”

It was Zelda Stingysnout, Stevie’s journalist cousin! Her furdo was combed into a fluffy pompadour and she had a red rose pinned in front of her ear. She was
wearing a black dress with a heart-shaped pendant inscribed with her initials, Z.S. On her paws were steel high heels that looked like they’d crush your toes if she happened to step on them.

“You’re right, Zelda,” I replied. “Chintzina and Uncle Gagrat make a great couple!”

Zelda winked at me. “Don’t you think we would make a great couple, Geronimo? How about a dance?”

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Name: Zelda
Last name: Stingysnout
Who she is: A distant relative of Geronimo Stilton
Profession: Journalist. She writes the “Romantic Rodent” column for The Daily Rat, rival newspaper of The Rodent’s Gazette.
Distinguishing characteristics: She always wears a red rose in her furdo.
What a fabumouse party!

You look gorgeous!

This is the happiest day of my life!

Hooray!

Ha ha ha!!
Bride and Groom!

What a beautiful dress!

Best of luck!

Congratulations!

Mmmmm, how delicious.
Before I could reply, Zelda grabbed my paw and dragged me out to the middle of the dance floor.

“Make spaaaace!” she shrieked to the rodents around us. Then she pulled me into a sweeping waltz, making me spin around like a top!
Desperate to make conversation as we dances, I asked Zelda, “So, you’re an expert on romance, right? What do you do during your free time? Do you write poetry? Paint? Embroider?” Those were the most romantic hobbies I could think of.

“Of course not!” Zelda exclaimed. “Those are way too tame for a sportsmouse like me! I am a practitioner of Martial Arts.”

“Martial Arts?” I asked, surprised. “Really?”
“You betcha!” Zelda responded. “Here, let me show you. . . . – haaaiiiiiiyaaaaaaaaa!”

Before I could protest, Zelda began demonstrating her karate moves.

First she stuck a finger in my **EYE**.

Then she flung her paws against my **CHEST**.

Next she boxed my **ears** with the purse.

I fell **flat on my snout** in the middle of the room.

She twirled around. “**Haaaiiiyaaaaa!!!**” she shouted, stepping on my tail with her **STEEL** heels.
I lay on the floor, moaning like a gerbil who’d fallen off his wheel.

“Oh, dear!” Zelda cried. “For such a handsome mouse, you are awfully **fragile**! But have no fear. Your Zelda-bear will take good care of you!”

When they saw me curled up on the floor, all the relatives gathered around and began gossiping.

“What happened?”

“Well, it looks like **Geronimo** wants to marry **Zelda**. He got down on his paws to propose!”

“Oh, that’s so **romantic**!”

“So there’s going to be another **wedding**!”

“Well, no, you see, she **rejected** him. . . .”

“Oh! I heard he’s already dating someone. . . .”

“Yes, a certain **Petunia Pretty Paws**. . . .”
“What a fickle rodent he is!”
“Yes, Zelda is really mad. . . . She stepped on his tail with her steel heels. . . .”
“Poor Geronimo . . .”
At first, I was too weak to protest. But as soon as I got my breath back, I yelled with the last of my energy, “Oh, for the love of cheese, I don’t want to get married! That is, er, I don’t want to marry Zelda!”
Zelda put her paws on her hips. “Is that so, Geronimo? Well, that’s good, because I wouldn’t marry you if you were the last rodent on Mouse Island!” She turned her tail and stomped off, her steel heels clicking.
I sighed with relief. That Zelda was quite a mouse!
A Long, Long, Long Trip

I said good-bye to **Uncle Samuel** and all the other **Stingysnouts**, who hugged me one by one. By now we had become good friends! I even said good-bye to **Zelda**, who had decided to forgive me. She whispered in my ear, “So, handsome, when will **see each other** again?”

**Blushing**, I replied, “Good-bye, Zelda. Er, I’m sure we’ll see each other again — sooner or later!” I jumped in Thea’s car to **leave** for New Mouse City.

“Come on, Thea. We’re leaving!” I shouted.
As soon as we drove out of sight, I let out a sigh of relief. Zelda meant well, but I am way too big a ’fraidy mouse to date her!

We drove all night, until finally, at dawn, we reached New Mouse City.

I stopped at home to drop off my bags. I took a quick shower, nibbled on a snack (hot cheese and a cheddar muffin), and then scampered over to The Rodent’s Gazette.

I entered the office whistling. I am always in a good mood when I go to work, because I love my job! Plus all the rodents who work at the newspaper are my friends.

I scurried into the editorial office. The reporters, photographers, illustrators, and designers were all busy in a meeting.

Who knew what they were squeaking about?
"What are you squeaking about?"

I asked curiously.

"Geronimo, while you were away, we thought of a new idea," Priscilla Prettywhiskers answered.

I smiled. "Great! I love new ideas."

"You remember we were supposed to create a new column?" Priscilla continued.

"Oh, yes, of course, the new column!" I replied.

"Well, we realized we didn’t have a romance column, so we approached the most famous love expert in all of New Mouse City. She used to work for *The Daily Rat*, but I am happy to tell you, Geronimo, that this rodent
(who coincidentally is an admirer of yours) has already signed a contract!"

A light went off in my head.

Romance column?
The most famous love expert?
An admirer of mine?

“In fact, I believe she is also one of your distant relatives,” Priscilla went on. “Her name is . . .”
I leaped up. “WHAT’S HER NAME???”
Shorty Tao, Patty Plumprat, Gigi Gogo, Merenguita Gingermouse, and Dolly Fastpaws all shouted, “Her name is Zelda Stingysnout!!”

“Zelda Stingysnout?” I gasped. “Holey cheese, I am a DEAD MOUUUUUSE!”

At that moment, I heard a familiar squeak. “Hey, handsome, aren’t you thrilled? I’m coming to work for you! Now we can see each other every day! Are you happy now, you fine-furred fellow? Kissy kissy kissy, you adorable mouse, you lovable rat, you sweet little snuggle bunny!”

That was the last thing I heard before I Fainted.

My staff had to revive me with stinky cheese salts.
Well, dear reader, I bet you’d like to know what happened once Zelda came to work with us. And I’d like to tell you. But that’s a story for another day, or my name isn’t Geronimo Stilton!
Don’t miss any of my fabumouse adventures!

#1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye
#2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid
#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
#11 It’s Halloween, You ‘Fraidy Mouse!
#12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!
#13 The Phantom of the Subway

#14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire

#15 The Mona Mousa Code
#16 A Cheese-Colored Camper
#17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!
#18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands

#19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton
Check out these exciting Thea Sisters adventures!
Be sure to read all my adventures in the Kingdom of Fantasy!

The Kingdom of Fantasy

The Quest for Paradise:
The Return to the Kingdom of Fantasy

The Amazing Voyage:
The Third Adventure in the Kingdom of Fantasy

The Dragon Prophecy:
The Fourth Adventure in the Kingdom of Fantasy

The Volcano of Fire:
The Fifth Adventure in the Kingdom of Fantasy
Check out these very special editions featuring me and the Thea Sisters!

The Journey to Atlantis

The Secret of the Fairies
Meet Creepella von Cacklefur

I, Geronimo Stilton, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as spooky as my friend Creepella von Cacklefur! She is an enchanting and mysterious mouse with a pet bat named Bitewing. YIKES! I’m a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think Creepella and her family are awfully fascinating. I can’t wait for you to read all about Creepella in these fauna-ly funny and spectacularly spooky tales!
Meet Geronimo Stiltonoot

He is a cavemouse—Geronimo Stilton’s ancient ancestor! He runs the stone newspaper in the prehistoric village of Old Mouse City. From dealing with dinosaurs to dodging meteorites, his life in the Stone Age is full of adventure!

#1 The Stone of Fire
#2 Watch Your Tail!
#3 Help, I’m in Hot Lava!
#4 The Fast and the Frozen
Join me and my friends on a journey through time in this very special edition!

The Journey Through Time
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.
1. Main entrance
2. Printing presses (where the books and newspaper are printed)
3. Accounts department
4. Editorial room (where the editors, illustrators, and designers work)
5. Geronimo Stilton’s office
6. Helicopter landing pad
Map of New Mouse City

1. Industrial Zone
2. Cheese Factories
3. Angorat International Airport
4. WRAT Radio and Television Station
5. Cheese Market
6. Fish Market
7. Town Hall
8. Snotnose Castle
9. 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
20. Cheap Junk for Less (Trap’s store)
21. Aunt Sweetfur and Benjamin’s House
22. Museum 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. 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. Slippery slopes 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
Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
till the next book.
It’ll be another whisker-licking-good adventure, and that’s a promise!

Geronimo Stilton
WHO IS GERONIMO STILTON?

That’s me! I run a newspaper, but my true passion is writing adventure stories. Here in New Mouse City, the capital of Mouse Island, my books are all bestsellers! My stories are funny, fa-mouse-ly funny. They are whisker-licking-good tales, and that’s a promise!

THE HAUNTED CASTLE

I was just minding my business at home when I got a telephone call from my uncle Samuel S. Stingysnout. He wanted to invite the entire Stilton family to creepy, faraway Penny Pincher Castle for a big surprise. Moldy mozzarella—I’m not much of a traveling mouse, and I hate surprises. But Thea, Trap, and Benjamin were going, so I couldn’t say no. I could tell this was going to be one super-spooky trip!