A CHRISTMAS TALE
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 popsicle**!

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 air**.

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

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*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 famous newspaper on Mouse Island!*
Big mice, small mice, tall rats, short rats... they were all busy Christmas shopping!
swirled down from the sky. They landed on my whiskers like tiny white butterflies. I smiled. It was snowing on Christmas Eve! How perfect! As I walked past the shops, I began to hum that famous Christmas carol “Silent Mice.” All of New Mouse City seemed to be in the Christmas spirit. Bright lights
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 enormous 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 Stilton! 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 HOTTEST 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!”**