My dear mouse friends, I hope you enjoy this story. I have spent many hours chiseling it into stone for you!
My ears were **ringing** from the pounding of the chisel, even though I was wearing my earmuffs.

But wait! I should introduce myself.

My name is **Geronimo Stiltonoot**, and I’m sure that you have figured out by now that I am a cavemouse. I live in the village of Old Mouse City.

I run *The Stone Gazette*, the city’s most famous newspaper. (Actually, it’s a stone slab. Paper hasn’t been invented yet.) We carve one for every rodent in the city!

It’s hard work, but life is hard for us **cavemice**. When you live in the **stone age**, danger is waiting around every corner!

We cavemice risk our **fur** every time we step out of our caves. That’s why I wrote up my **will** just this morning. You never know what might happen! For example, a
giant meteorite could fall from the sky and squash me. Or the volcano could explode with boiling lava the color of fiery orange cheddar.

Or maybe Tiger Khan will invade with his army of saber-toothed TIGERS. Or a rampaging T. REX could chomp on my tail or bury me in a giant pile of dung. (Yuck! What a terrible way to go!)
Or worst of all — the **GREAT ZAP** could strike me down and singe my fur!

Fortunately, **disasters** like these don’t happen every day. But there are plenty of other daily dangers to worry about. For example, the **MAIL-A-DACTYL** is always dropping letters carved in stone right on top of my head! *Ouch!* Sorry, what was I saying?

Oh, yes. *My will...*

I keep it here at the entrance to my **CAVE**, and every once in a while I make a few changes.
I, GERONIMO STILTONOOT, 
BEING OF SOUND FUR AND WHISKERS, LEAVE:

— TO MY SISTER, THEA, 
   THE STONE GAZETTE
— TO MY COUSIN TRAP, MY AUTOSAURUS
— TO MY DEAR NEPHEW, BENJAMIN, 
   MY CAVE
— AND EVERYTHING ELSE, INCLUDING 
   MY SEASHELLS, TO MY GOOD 
   MYSTERY-SOLVING FRIEND, 
   HERCULE POIRAT
On the wall next to my will is a cave painting of my family and friends. I had it painted by Pablo Picasstone, the village artist, so I could always be close to them. They are more important to me than cheese.

If it weren’t for them, I’d probably be extinct by now!
Let me introduce everyone in the painting to you. The one with white fur shaped like an onion on top of her head is Grandma Ratrock. She’s a very strict rodent! If I spill even a crumb of cheese on my clothes, she’s the first one to scold me. She says she does it for my own good.
The rodent who’s pinching my right ear is my cousin Trap. He never misses a chance to play a trick on me! He runs the Rotten Tooth Tavern, which is famous for its deep-fried cheese nuggets.

That’s my sister, Thea, in the purple dress. She’s a very lively and active rodent! She’s a special reporter for *The Stone Gazette*, and she’s always on the hunt for a scoop.

And that cute young rodent in front is my nephew, Benjamin. He’s very smart — as sharp as cheddar, I always say.

Like I said, my family is very important to me. We are always there for one another, no matter what. That’s the only way to survive in the Stone Age!