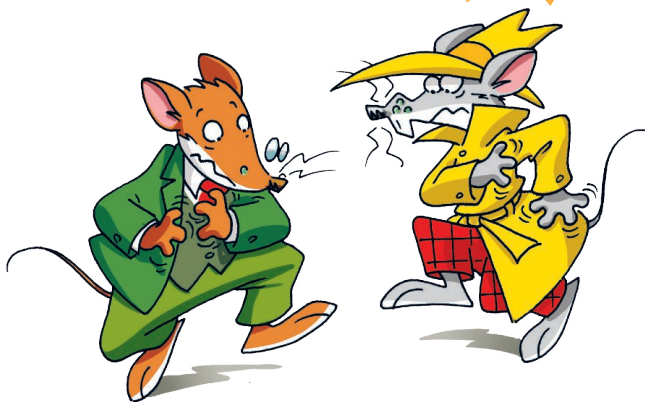


# Geronimo Stilton

## **THE HUNT** FOR THE **CURIOUS CHEESE**

**PLUS a bonus  
Mini Mystery and  
cheesy jokes!**



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# THE HUNT FOR THE CURIOUS CHEESE

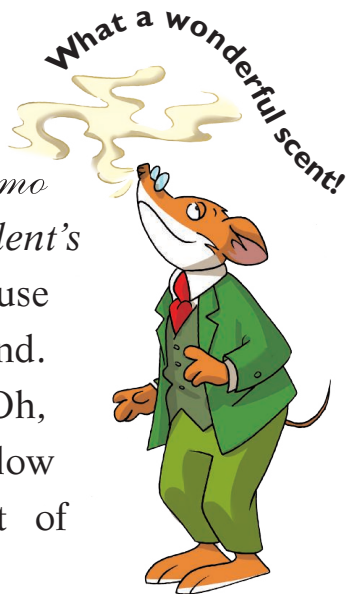




# FREE CHEESE TASTING

It was a windy afternoon in February. I was sitting in my office when I **smelled** something in the air. Intrigued, I sniffed again. Yep . . . it was the wonderful aroma of **cheese!**

Oops, sorry, I haven't introduced myself. My name is Stilton, *Gerónimo Stilton!* I run *The Rodent's Gazette*, the most famous newspaper on Mouse Island. Anyway, where was I? Oh, yes. I decided to follow that **delicious** scent of cheese . . .





I scurried past Singing Stone Square and down Rocky Rat Road. The **SCENT** of cheese was becoming more and more intense. The cheese was near. **I could feel it!** I turned the corner and almost ran smack into what looked like a basement door. I read the **SIGN**:

**FREE CHEESE TASTING.  
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.**  
Head down the stairs for  
some sweet cheesy samples!





By now, I'm embarrassed to say, I was practically **DROOLING** all over myself. Yes, if there's one thing I cannot resist, it's *whisker-licking-good* cheese!

I scampered down the stairs and found myself in a **dark**, dingy cellar with **crumbling** walls. In the middle of the cellar, there was a table with a million different kinds of cheeses on it (well, okay, maybe not a **million**, but there were a lot). Next to the table there was a sign that read: **Surprise Sample**. Next to it was a gigantic wedge of cheese.

Puzzled, I scratched my whiskers. What was a **Surprise Sample**? I had no idea, but I wasn't going to worry about it because I was currently overwhelmed by





the scent of my favorite treat in the world . . . **cheese!** I grabbed a fork and a dish and headed straight for the table.

But just as I was approaching the table I thought I heard someone giggling. “*Hee, hee, hee!*”

I **whirled** around. Was someone watching my every pawstep? No, there was no one in sight. I took another step, and then it happened. As I passed the giant wedge of cheese, it grabbed me!

“**Surprise!** Bet you didn’t expect the cheese to catch the mouse!” a voice called out.

“Heeeeeeeelp!” I squeaked, my heart **hammering**. I felt like I was starring in the terrifying horror movie *Revenge of the Rodent-Chomping Cheese Chunks!*

I was about to **FAINT** from fear when



the giant wedge of cheese began laughing **hysterically**. How odd!

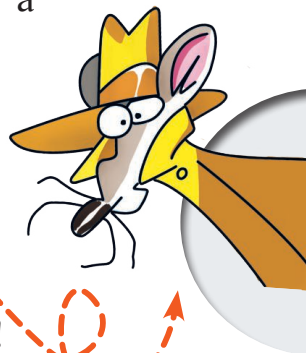
Suddenly, I spotted something else that was odd. A tail was sticking out of the cheese! Then a little door in it snapped open and a mouse with **GRAY** fur and a **yellow** trench coat peeked out.

“How did you like my little **joke**, Stilton?” the mouse squeaked.

It was my friend **Hercule Poirat**, the famous detective!

I should have known. Hercule was always **playing** weird pranks on me and loved to surprise me.

“Very funny,” I muttered. Then I braced myself. Every time Hercule **surprises** me, he wants me to get involved in one of his crazy cases.





“Stilton, I need a little help solving a strange mystery that involves . . . **cheese!**” my friend said.

See what I mean?



THE BANANACYCLE

I tried to make an excuse, but before I knew it, I had agreed to help, starting later that day, and Hercule sped off on his **yellow** bananacycle. **RATS!**