





# TRY NOT TO DROWN!

That morning started out just like any other.

I jumped in the shower and got dressed. Then I made myself a **GOURMET** breakfast. Well, okay, it wasn't anything too fancy — just a flaky **cheese croissant** and a cup of **hot cheddar**. Still, it was delicious!

Finally, I headed off to the office. As I walked, I tried to think of an idea for my next *book* . . .

Oh, I'm sorry, I haven't introduced myself! My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*. I run *The Rodent's Gazette*, the most famous newspaper on Mouse Island.





Anyway, as I was saying, as I got in to work, I was still thinking of ideas for the *book* I wanted

to write. But I was having trouble concentrating. A **RAGING**

wind had kicked up outside!

The wind **SLAMMED** the branches of the old tree growing right outside my office against the

window panes. In the distance I

could see the harbor of New Mouse City. I used my **BINOCULARS** to scan the sea shining

on the horizon. The waves were **HUGE** and **FEROCIOUS!**

I shivered. Did I mention I'm afraid of wild weather?

Just then, I had another frightening thought. Today was the day of the ***Mouse Island Family Regatta***, an annual sailing competition. The winner would take home the

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Family Cup. Then I remembered that *The Silver Squeaker*, my grandfather William Shortpaws's boat, would be **racing** against *The Sure Whisker*, my archenemy Sally Ratmousen's boat.

Holey cheese, I felt sorry for anyone who had to brave the **sea** that day! I was feeling lucky to be **WARM** and safe in my office when suddenly the phone rang.

Riiiiinnnnnnnnng!

I picked up the receiver and a squeaky female voice demanded, "Hey, **sailor mouse**, I need to get you a pair of rain boots. What's your **PAW** size?"





I blinked. “Well, I’m a size ten and a half,” I answered. “But I’m not a sailor mouse, I’m a **NEWSPAPER** mouse. Who are —”

“How **tall** are you, sailor mouse?” she interrupted me. “I need to get you a **RAINCOAT**.”

I scratched my head. “I’m three and a half tails tall. But who is this?” I demanded.

“Are you **allergic** to anything, sailor mouse?” the voice went on, **ignoring** my question.



By now I’d had it with this obnoxious mouse, but for some reason I found myself answering her.



“Well, I’m not really allergic to anything, but one time I —”

The voice interrupted me again. “Okay, listen, sailor mouse, don’t have all day to **squeak** it up. You’ve got to get on board that ship, cast off, and hope you don’t

**CAPSIZ**! That north wind is **BLOWING**



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strong today! But don't you worry, I've got it all under control. I'll pack everything up and get it to you faster than a speedboat at full throttle. I'll even put in our super-heavy-duty **Everything for the Water Rat** brand life preserver.



On a day like today you're gonna need it!"

Now I was really confused.

**“Everything for the Water Rat?”** I mumbled.

“We're the best sailing supply store in all of New Mouse City!” exclaimed the voice.

I wanted to ask why a newspaper mouse would

**capsize:** when a boat loses stability and turns over or on its side

**cast off:** to untie a boat from the dock in order to leave

**full throttle:** full speed

**life preserver:** a device used to keep you afloat in the water

**speedboat:** any variety of engine-powered boat designed to go very fast



need **sailing** supplies, but the voice kept on squeaking.

“Anyway, beats me why you sailor mice like to go out in the middle of a **storm**, but that’s none of my business, I just work here. Good luck, and ***try not to drown!***” the mouse added before hanging up.

I blinked. Huh?

Just then, my office door **BURST** open and a rodent dressed in a sailor suit rushed in. He dumped a **pile** of packages containing a





raincoat, boots, ropes, sails, oars, a life preserver, and a bunch of other stuff on my desk!

I wanted to run after him, but at that moment my phone **RANG** again. It was Grandfather William. **ACK!** He was probably calling to yell at me for not working hard enough!

“Sorry, Grandfather, **I’M BUSY**. Call you later!” I squeaked, quickly hanging up on him.

But before I could go anywhere, Freddy Fanfur, the **sports** reporter for *The Rodent’s Gazette*, strode into my office. He ran toward me, **waving** the sports page in the air.

“Geronimo, this is too **DANGEROUS!**” he shrieked. “If only you had asked me earlier . . . I would have warned you!”

“Warned me about what?”

I asked.







But before I could get to the bottom of things, my aunt Sweetfur arrived, **SOBBING** hysterically into her lace hanky.

**“Oh, my poor nephew!”** Why did you agree to do this?” she wailed.

Before I could reply, my cell phone rang again.

I stared at the number.

**RATS!** It was Grandfather William again. I let it go to voice mail.

At that moment, **Daniel E. Deadfur**, owner of the local funeral parlor, arrived.

“Don’t worry, Geronimo. I’ll take care of your burial,” he said, smiling.

“Um, well, that’s nice of you,” I said. Then I shook my head. What was

*My poor nephew!*



*Don't worry....*





going on around here? What burial?

A minute later my entire staff barged in.

**“Mr. Stilton! Please don’t go!”**

they squeaked, waving their paws in the air.

Why was everyone so worried about me?

“Will someone please tell me what is going on?!” I squeaked, feeling a **HEADACHE** coming.

My secretary Mousella turned on the TV . . . and that’s when my headache turned into a full-blown ***panic attack!***

