

Geronimo Stilton

MAGICAL MISSION



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Text by Geronimo Stilton

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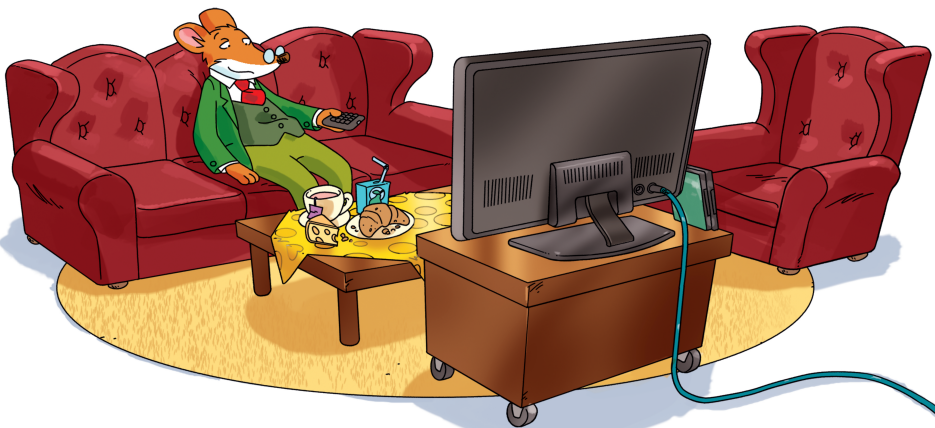


A MYSTERY? IN LONDON?

One **morning** I was half-listening to the news on TV when a news flash jostled me from my daze.

“Mystery in London’s Trafalgar Square!” the announcer squeaked.

I sat up. A **mystery**? In **LONDON**? Now *that* sounded interesting.





I leaned forward to listen.

“London’s **TRAFALGAR SQUARE** is one of the city’s most popular tourist destinations. At its center stands Nelson’s Column, a monument commemorating Admiral Horatio Nelson, which is guarded by four **immense** bronze lion statues. But recently, one of those lions has been scaring the tails off everyone by **ROARING** insults at passersby! The police at *Scotland Yard* have been unable to explain this disturbing phenomenon . . .”

I turned off the TV and scratched my head.

Hmm . . . A **statue** that roared. Now *there* was a good story for my newspaper!

Oops — I forgot to introduce myself! My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*. I run *The Rodent’s Gazette*, the most famous newspaper on **MOUSE ISLAND**.

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, I was thinking about the news report. Whoever heard of a **talking** statue?

Just then I remembered something. The other day I had cut out an interesting article about **London** and **TRAFALGAR SQUARE**. But where had I put it?

I searched the living room, then wandered into my home office. I **s p o t t e d** it immediately, wedged under the corner of



my desk — the desk was **wobbly**, and I had used the article to stabilize it!

Pulling out the piece of newspaper, I **SMOOTHed** it and read the





paragraph I had remembered: “The renowned art expert Professor Reginald Rattling will be inaugurating the exhibition ‘**Mice and Cheese in Art**’ at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday. The exhibit will be on display at the **National Gallery**, one of the leading art museums in London, in Trafalgar Square. Her Majesty the **Queen of England** will be in attendance.”



DON'T HURT ME! TAKE MY CHEESE!

That's it! I knew there was a connection. The main entrance to the National Gallery is on **TRAFALGAR SQUARE** . . . the same square where the **bronze** lion had suddenly started roaring!

Right then I had a terrible thought. What if that lion began **roaring** mean insults during the inauguration? Moldy mozzarella! Poor Professor Ratting would be **humiliated** right in front of the Queen!

The professor had been my **art history** teacher at college, and I admired him a lot. I felt awful for him.

I paced **BACK** and **FORTH**, thinking



about the talking lion statue. But the more I thought, the less I understood. *What a mystery!*

I'd like to say I spent the rest of the morning trying to figure out the **mystery**, but I didn't. Don't get me wrong, I would have done anything to help *Professor*



PROF. RATTING

Professor Reginald Rattating taught ancient art history for many years at the University of New Mouse City. Geronimo was one of his best students. When Geronimo graduated, the professor presented him with a degree in Mousomorphic Literature.



Rattling, but I had other things on my mind. Today was the first day of a well-deserved **vacation** from my hectic office.

I shuffled over to my desk and began surfing the Internet for the perfect place to go on my **VACATION**.

There were so many **OPTIONS**! I could travel to Paris and see the **EIFFEL TOWER**, or I could go to Athens and take photos of the **Parthenon**, the ancient Greek temple. Then again, if I went to **ROME**, I could see the famous **Colosseum**.

What I wanted was a **CULTURAL** vacation. I wanted to learn something exciting, something **INTERESTING**, something new. I surfed for hours, searching for the perfect **vacation** spot



until my brain felt like it was about to **EXPLODE!**

Finally, I decided to take a break. I **scampered** to the cabinet in my living room, hoping for inspiration. Maybe a tasty piece of **vintage** cheese would help.

I was just reaching for a morsel of cheese when out of the corner of my eye, I spotted something **flying** out of the chimney. It **zipped** around my head and landed on my snout!

Terrified, I closed my eyes and screeched,

“Don’t hurt me! Take my cheese!”



But **nothing** happened. I opened an eye. The thing was still on my snout. I realized I was looking at a **PAPER AIRPLANE!**

How strange! I lifted the plane off my



snout. I **examined** it closely, and saw there was *writing* on the airplane's wing. It **read**:

