



# A SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING RODENT ...

That morning was just like any other morning. I woke up and smelled the cheese – hot Cheddar, that is. I like to make a whole pot every day.

Then I stuffed my paws into my **COMFY CAT-FUR SLIPPERS**. I shuffled to the window to check the weather. The forecast was for rain. But when I looked outside, I just saw lots of clouds. Clouds, and a very suspicious-looking rodent with dark sunglasses across the street. **How odd.**





I took a shower and gobbled down my breakfast – melted Cheddar toast. Yum! Then I headed for the station. I was humming one of my **favourite love songs**, “Beady-Eyed Beauty”, when I saw him again. That same suspicious-looking rodent with the sunglasses was walking right behind me. **How strange.**



A few minutes later, I arrived at my stop. I scampered out the door. Guess who was right on my tail? You got it. Mr. Dark Sunglasses. **How very odd!**



At last, I reached my office at 17 Swiss Cheese Centre. I couldn't believe it. Mr. Sunglasses had beaten me there. I was starting to get a little **CREEPED OUT**. A chill ran down my fur. What did he want from me? **Why was he following me?**



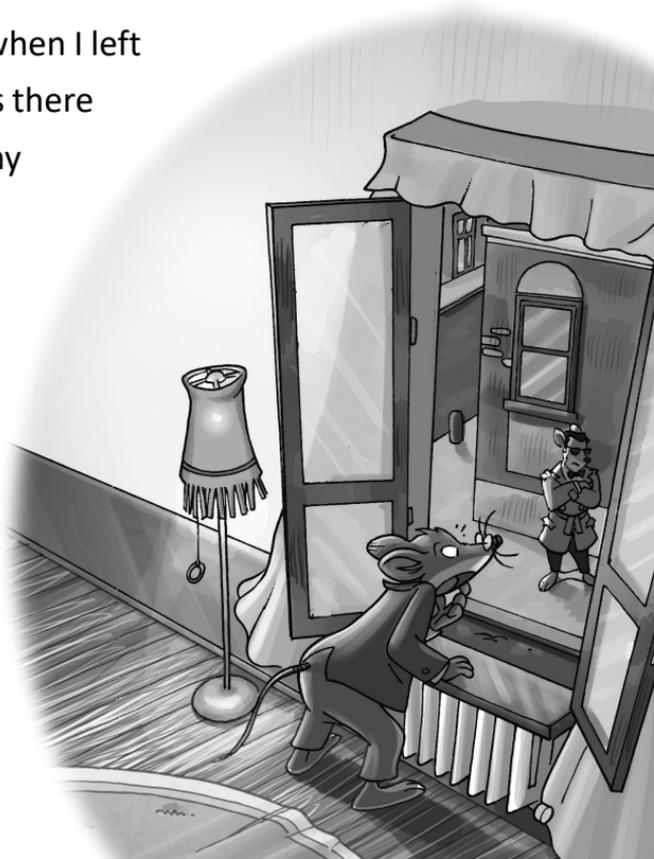
Part of me was afraid to find out. What if he mistook me for an *escaped con rat*? What if I reminded him of someone he didn't like? What if he hated my tie? I decided there was only one thing left to do. I raced up the stairs to my office and slammed the door. Then I buried my snout in my work.

But when I looked out the window at lunchtime, guess who I saw? **Yep, it was that mouse again!**





He was there when I left  
the office. He was there  
when I reached my  
house. He was  
there after I  
**WOLFED  
DOWN** a  
super-size  
three-cheese  
pizza for  
dinner.





Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. I just had to find out who that mouse was. With a squeak, I yanked open the door to my house. Then I stuck out my snout and yelled, **"WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?"**



**WHO ARE YOU  
AND WHAT DO YOU WANT  
FROM me?**



**WHO ARE YOU?**

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# DON'T YOU RECOGNISE ME?



Even though I was **SCREAMING** at the top of my lungs, the rodent barely reacted. Instead he calmly took off his sunglasses and smiled. Or was it a smirk?

## **How strange!**

The rodent looked so familiar. Was it the trench coat? Was it the paws in the pockets? Was it the *perfectly groomed* fur?

I touched a paw to my own head. Hmmm ... my fur was getting a little long. I made a mental note to make an appointment at Clip Rat's Salon and Day Spa.





I was still thinking about furcuts when the rodent suddenly tapped me on the forehead. He stared into my eyes.

**CHEESE NIBLETS!**

Was he trying to hypnotise me? I gulped. I'd read about bad mice like this.

First they put you **UNDER A SPELL**. Then they break into your mouse hole and steal all your money!

The rodent's beady eyes seemed to drill right into me. I was so nervous I could barely see straight. I tried practising the deep-breathing techniques I had learned in Penny Pretzel Paw's yoga class. They didn't work. I guess I wasn't paying enough attention in class.

Just then, the rodent leaned in closer. I broke out in a cold sweat. "This is it," I mumbled to myself.

**"Goodbye, cruel world."**

But instead of hypnotising me, the rodent snickered.

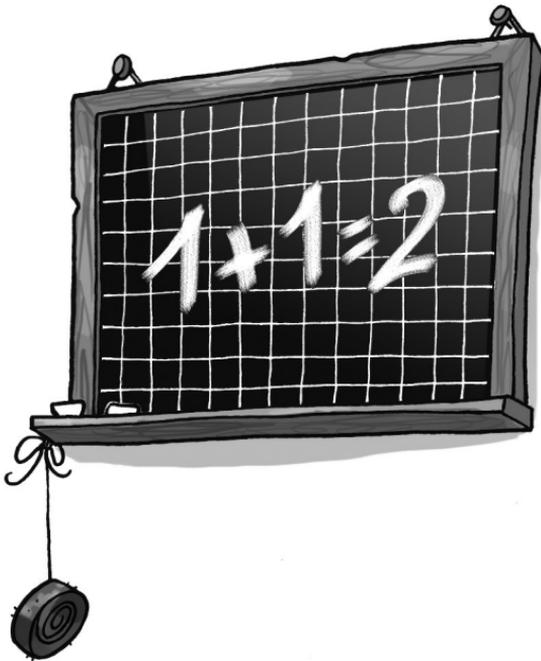
"Don't you recognise me, Geronimo?" he said.

MY NAME IS ...



“It’s **Kornelius von Kickpaw.**”

I could hardly believe my eyes. The last time I’d seen Kornelius, I was still learning how to do maths and tie my shoes. **We were friends in primary school!**





# A MOUSE WEARING A TRENCH COAT

In school, Kornelius sat at the desk behind me. He always wore a trench coat no matter what the weather was like. And he always wore dark sunglasses even when it wasn't sunny!

Yes, he was an odd sort of mouse, but we were good friends anyway. One time *wendell wild whiskers* and his gang stuffed me into a locker. Kornelius came to my rescue. He ripped open the locker and made Wendell apologise. After that, the bullies never picked on me again. I always felt safe when Kornelius was around.

I smiled thinking about those days. Even though we hadn't squeaked in years, Kornelius would always be a **great friend**.

Do you have any friends like Kornelius? If you do,





you are very lucky. As my dear aunt Sweetfur likes to say, **“Whoever finds a friend ... finds a treasure!”**

I invited Kornelius into my house. Then I showed him around. It didn't take very long. My mouse hole isn't very big. Still, I'm super-proud of it. I especially love my kitchen with my mega-huge fridge.

While we were in the kitchen, I whipped up some tasty cheese on toast. Kornelius munched it down in two seconds flat! **Did I mention he's a big mouse?**

Finally, we sat down in my living room to chat. We had so much catching up to do. We squeaked about old times, old friends, and my job at *The Rodent's Gazette*.

“So what kind of work do you do,



Kornelius?" I asked.

My friend held up his paw.

"It's **TOP SECRET**," he whispered. "You

have to promise you won't tell anyone."

I gasped. Why was my friend being so *mysterious*? Was he a professional burglar? Was he in the witmouse protection programme?

"I promise," I agreed, eyes wide.

Kornelius put his paws around my shoulder. Then he leaned in close and whispered, "**My code name is 00K. I'm a secret agent.**"



VK  
THE VON KICKPAW  
ESTATE

I was convinced Kornelius was **PULLING MY PAW**. I mean, I'd seen secret agents before in the movies, but not in New Mouse City.

"I'm not acting, Geronimo," my friend insisted. He drove me to his mansion in the country. On the way there, Kornelius explained that he was involved with secret missions for the government of Mouse Island.

**I felt like I was in a dream.**

At last, we reached the mansion.

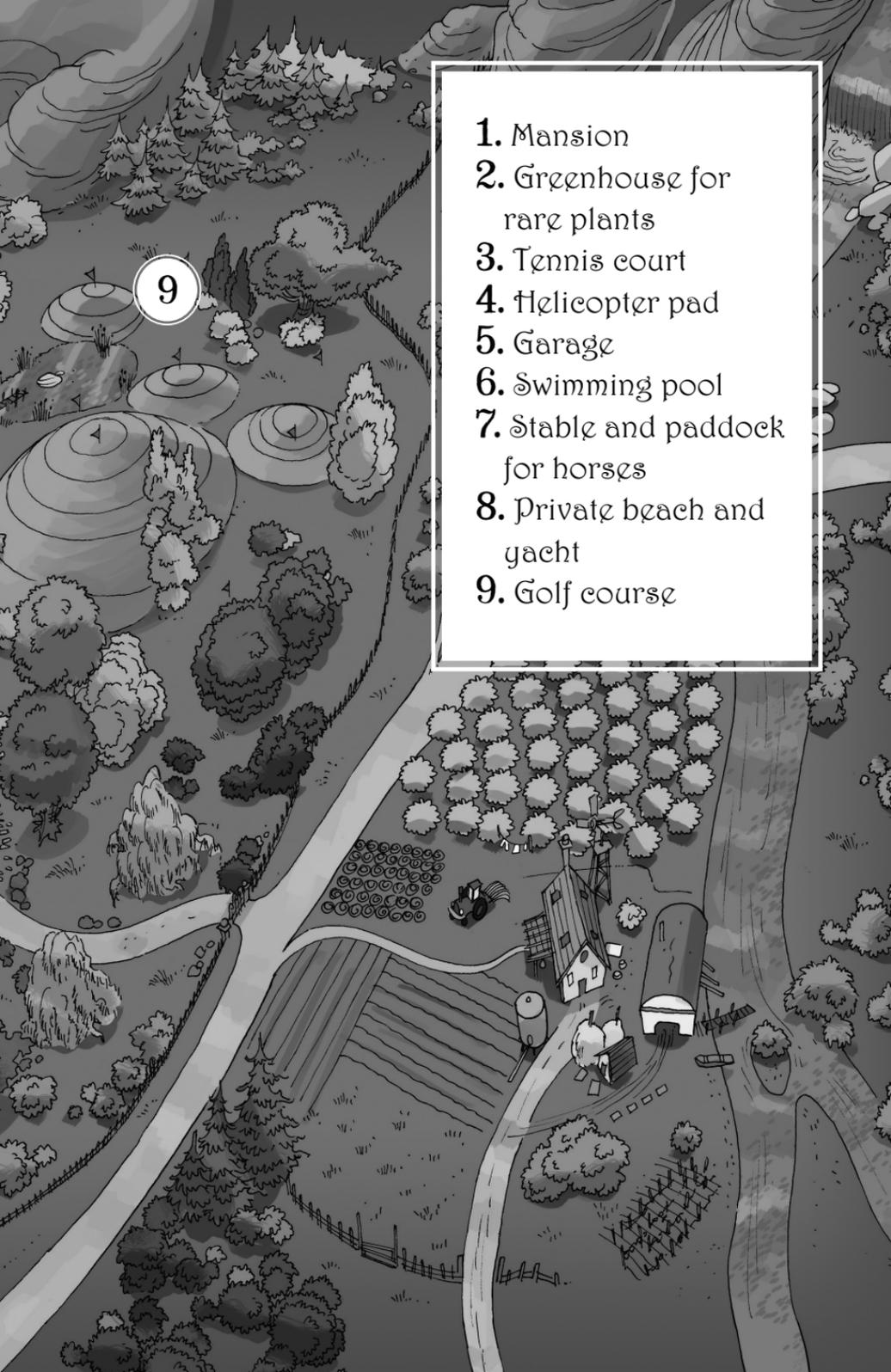
What a sight!

I knew my friend was rich, but this place was more spectacular than Elvis Mousely's estate! The property was surrounded by a gleaming wrought-iron gate with the letters VK inscribed at the entrance. The driveway wound its way past a perfectly manicured lawn.



VK





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1. Mansion
2. Greenhouse for rare plants
3. Tennis court
4. Helicopter pad
5. Garage
6. Swimming pool
7. Stable and paddock for horses
8. Private beach and yacht
9. Golf course

I spotted a greenhouse, tennis courts, and a stable for horses.

The inside of the mansion was almost as amazing as the outside. The entrance was made of white marble. Two magnificent gold and **DIAMOND-STUDED** chandeliers glimmered over our heads. And there was even a fountain shaped like a gigantic wedge of cheese in the hallway. Kornelius ushered me into the living room. It was filled with priceless antiques. Paintings by famous artists decorated the walls. I stared at a painting of a gorgeous rodent hanging above the fireplace.

Wow, what a *stunning* mouse! I couldn't take my eyes off her.

"That's my sister, Veronica," said Kornelius. "She's a secret agent, too. Her code name is 00V."

Just then, I sensed something behind me. When I turned around, **my jaw dropped**. It was her! It was 00V! My heart began racing like a car at the Indy Mouse 500. Did I mention I get a little nervous around beautiful rodents?

“Is that you on the wall? Uh, er, in the frame? I mean, in the painting?” I babbled.

The rodent flashed me a tiny smile. **Or was it a smirk?** Then she vanished. A delicate perfume lingered in the room.

Wow, what a *stunning* mouse!

I wondered if I could ask her out for a cup of hot Cheddar sometime. Too bad she disappeared so quickly.

I was still dreaming about OOV when Kornelius led me into the library. We sat down on two comfy leather pawchairs.



Without a word, Kornelius patted the arm of his chair. Seconds later, the rug slid aside. We were sitting on top of a trapdoor! Before I could let out a squeak, I found myself zipping down a steep, dark tunnel.

**“Tell me when it’s over!” I cried.**





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## 00K'S SECRET LAB

1. Trapdoor
2. Tunnel
3. Secret lab
4. Computer area
5. Mega-globe
6. Instruments for scientific analysis
7. Control stations for wind tunnels
8. Garage for 00-car, 00-motorbike, 00-plane, and other vehicles
9. Lift for the 00-vehicles
10. Secret exit for the 00-vehicles
11. Secret dock for 00-boats

