



# A VERY SPECIAL MORNING

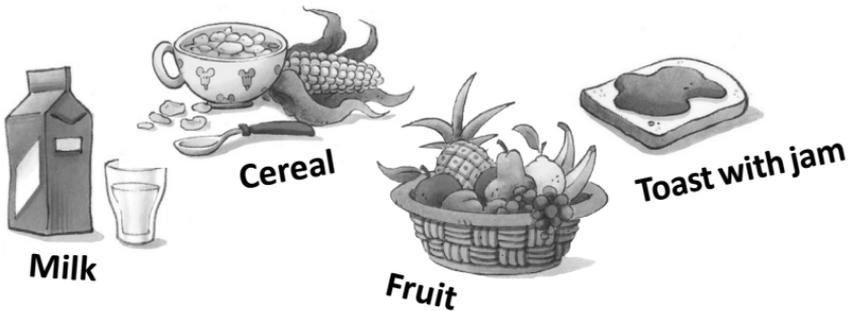
It's true. **I am not a morning mouse.** But one autumn day, things got off to an especially bad start. Maybe it was because my alarm clock went off too early, or because I had to skip breakfast. Then again, maybe it was because I was in a ***MAD RUSH***. That morning just started off on the wrong paw: it was a typical bad day. You know what I mean. It was one of those days





when anything that could go wrong did go wrong.

I'm the kind of mouse who likes routine. In the morning, I wake up **s l o w l y**, stretch **l a z i l y** and cuddle back under my covers, and lounge for a while. I like to pick out my clothes carefully and then eat a hearty, leisurely breakfast before I leave for work.



I'm not the kind of mouse who **JUMPS** out of bed at the crack of dawn and immediately starts doing yoga. No way!

As I was saying, that morning things seemed to be **extra topsy-turvy**.

First, the alarm went off extra early. It rang at 6:30 a.m., an hour before I usually get up! I stretched my arm, turned it off, and turned over to catch a



GERONIMO



STILTON



**I'M NOT LIKE THIS!**



**I'M LIKE THIS!**

few more ZZZs. I couldn't even think about getting up. **It was just too early.** But I knew I had to force myself out of bed, because it was a very special day for my nephew Benjamin! It was **Career Day** at his school, and I had been invited to be a **GUEST SPEAKER**. On **Career Day**, different people come in to talk about their jobs, and I was going to tell Benjamin's class about mine.

Oops, I'm sorry. I haven't told you what I do. I'm a writer, editor, and publisher. I publish the most famous newspaper on Mouse Island, *The Rodent's Gazette*.



Everybody in New Mouse City reads it! My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*.

If you want to know the truth, the thought of speaking in front of Benjamin's friends, his teachers, and the other guests made my tail quiver. It made my whiskers shakyy and my paws soggy with sweat. I'm a very shy mouse and I get terrible stage fright when I have to speak in front of people. I stammer and mix up words. I become clumsy. I get so **FRAZZLED** I usually make a fool of myself! Nevertheless, I knew it was a very special day for Benjamin. I'd jump though flaming hoops for my nephew! I had to be super cool and smart, too.

**"I'll make Benjamin proud!"**



# I'M NOT A MORNING MOUSE!

I was already stressed out about my speech. To ease my nerves, I took a deep breath and repeated these words: *I will not embarrass Benjamin. I am a smart, successful mouse.*

I was starting to relax when the phone rang. I jumped up to answer it and bumped my head on the shelf over my bed.

**OUCH!** What a nasty wake-up call!



GERONIMO



STILTON



I answered the phone. It was my sister Thea.

“Geronimo, you’re still in bed, aren’t you?” she said. “Hurry up! Don’t you remember what day it is? Please, try not to look like a **FOOL** in front of everybody. Benjamin looks up to you!”

“I’m awake (almost),” I muttered. “And of course I remember what day it is! Don’t worry. I have no intention of looking like a **FOOL** (but I usually end up looking like one anyway).”



I hung up the phone and sighed. Now I was nervous all over again! I repeated my mousetra\* aloud: “I WILL NOT EMBARRASS BENJAMIN. I AM A SMART, SUCCESSFUL MOUSE.”

When I finally found the oomph to get up,

\*A MOUSETRA, LIKE A MANTRA, IS A PHRASE THAT YOU REPEAT TO GIVE YOURSELF COMFORT OR CONFIDENCE.



it was 6:50 a.m. I had to move like a mouse in a rat race! That's when my mobile phone rang. It was Grandfather William.



"Geronimo! Are you ready?" he asked. "You're not going to be late, are you? Of all days, not today! And I beg you, please don't make a **FOOL** of yourself. Benjamin really looks up to you! And above all, remember: the family's good name is at stake here, as well as that of *The Rodent's Gazette*."

My whiskers got all in a knot just listening to him.

"Of course, Grandfather," I answered. "I know Benjamin looks up to me."

I tried to cut him off, but he went on and on for a full ten minutes! I had just hung up when the doorbell rang.

It was Aunt Sweetfur.

"Good morning, Geronimo," she said. "I was just passing by and thought I'd stop in to say hello. I hope it's not a bad time."





“Thank you, Aunt Sweetfur,” I replied. “No, you’re not bothering me at all. Come right in.”

“I brought you something sweet to give you a little courage. I know how hard it is for you to talk in front of a crowd. But, please, try to do your very best. **Benjamin looks up to you!**”

“It’s always a pleasure talking with you, Aunt Sweetfur, and your goodies are such a treat,” I told her.

She stayed for ten minutes, which was enough time to leave me **cheesecake cookies**, a warm smile, and a couple of tips.

I was looking forward to savouring a rich and creamy cookie when I got a text message.

It was from Petunia Pretty Paws.

Wow, Petunia was so sweet to text me. And she had written “**See you soon!**”

Hmm, could it mean maybe, just maybe, she wanted to see me?

With my head





swirling in the clouds, I began *daydreaming* about her. I started to text Petunia back, but my paws were all clammy. Just thinking about her made my fingers feel like jelly. When I looked down to see what I had typed, it was all a **JUMBLE**.

I had wanted to write: “Thanks, I hope to see you soon, too,” but I was so *jittery*, my fingers kept slipping on the keys. I went to erase the message, but accidentally punched the SEND button! What bad luck.

### **Why me?**

Then the doorbell rang again. This time it was Trap! He whipped into the house like a **Tasmanian devil!**

“Gerry, Gerry, quite contrary, why aren’t you ready?” Trap asked. “You know whenever you have to hurry, you get all **FRAZZLED**.

And then you end up having a bad day.”

“If you would leave me alone so I could get ready, I wouldn’t have to rush,” I said.





"Are you nervous?" he asked.

"No, I'm not nervous."

"See. You *are* nervous. It's a bad case of jitters, I tell you."

"I said no, I'm not nervous."

"Are you sure?" Trap prodded. "Because when you get nervous, you always make a **FOOL** of yourself."

"I'm not nervous! But if you don't let me get ready, I'm going to —"

"Calm down," Trap said. "I told you, you're nervous. Just try to relax, or we're all going to end up looking silly."



**"ENOOUGH,  
I GET IT!"**

I screeched.

When I finally got rid of Trap, it was 7:50 a.m. Now I really *was* late! Benjamin said he'd wait for me at his school bus stop at 8 a.m. **Yikes!** I wasn't ready and had run out of time!

I quickly washed my face, dressed, and ran outside



... without eating my breakfast!

**It was definitely turning out to be a bad day!**



# DEFINITELY A BAD DAY



The alarm clock went off too early: at 6:30 a.m.!

When the phone rang, I was startled and hit my head on the bookshelf.



I beg you!



I get it!



Just for you!



Yum!



Aunt Sweetfur brought me some whisker-licking good cookies that I didn't have time to eat!

Luckily, I got a text message from my friend Petunia Pretty Paws!



I'm here!!



Ouch!

Trap stormed in and made me even more nervous than before!



# THANKS, I PREFER GETTING CARSICK

I got to the bus stop just in the nick of time. As soon as Benjamin saw me, he gave me a **HIGH FIVE** that made my paw sting! He was so excited that I almost forgot that I was having a bad day. I even forgot that I hadn't eaten breakfast!

He grabbed my jacket, dragged me to the back of the bus, and sat me down in his favourite seat in the very last row. When I was a little mouseling, I could never sit in the back of the bus: **I THREW UP EVERY TIME I TRIED!**

But I didn't say anything to Benjamin: I wanted the day to be **VERY SPECIAL** for him. I couldn't let him down! So I sat in the back of the bus and crossed my whiskers that I wouldn't get sick. Unfortunately, my stomach was as empty as a cookie jar after a mouseling birthday party, and I always get queasy when I'm hungry.





In fact, as soon as the bus took off bumping and thumping, my stomach started **SLOSHING**.

After the first curve, I was as white as a ghost.



After the second curve, I was as green as pistachio ice cream.

After the third curve, I felt dismally dizzy.



### **What a ghastly ride!**

Then the bus hit a pothole, and a loose spring in the seat poked me right in the tail. I yelped and jumped up, landing two rows up, right in between a cute pigtailed mouseling and a freckle-faced mouseling. I was wedged between them like a slice of Cheddar on a grilled cheese sandwich. Their squeaky voices poked holes right through my eardrums.

### **What a ghastly ride!**

“Are you Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*?” the freckle-faced mouseling asked.



“Is it really you?” asked the pigtailed mouseling.

“Is it really, really you? Are you the one who writes all those books?”

I smiled, pleased with myself.

**“Of course it’s me!”** I insisted.

“Good,” the boy mouseling said. “I wanted to tell you that on PAGE TWENTY–SEVEN of your last book, there is a mistake in the SEVENTH WORD on the FIFTEENTH LINE. You spelled ‘cheese’ with only one ‘e’! I’m surprised – I never expected it from you!”

The girl mouseling had to have her say as well. “It’s true! I saw it, too! My aunt is best friends with Sally





Ratmousen's hairdresser's sister, and she said that Sally said that it was just **SCANDALOUS!**"

Hmph. Sally Ratmousen was the publisher of **The Daily Rat**, my paper's competitor. Leave it to her to be catty. I tried to change the subject, but the mouselings would not stop. I can't stand gossip!

### **What a ghastly trip!**

Luckily, Benjamin came to my rescue.

"Come on, Uncle Geronimo," he said. "I want to introduce you to my friends."

I was about to follow him to our seat in the back of the bus when the two mouselings stopped me.

"Stay here, Mr. Stilton," they said. "If you sit in the back, you might throw up. You know who told me that you get carsick? My neighbour's sister's ..."

I felt my stomach **GRUMBLE** and **GROWL**. I wondered if I should stay with the two gossipy, catty, extra-chatty mouselings.

### **I decided I would rather get carsick!**



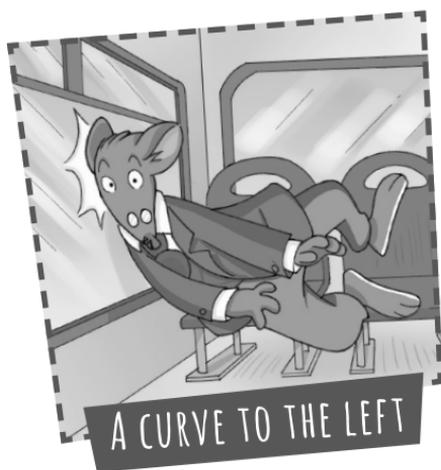
# “GERONIMO STILTON ...” “PRESENT!”

I took a seat at the back of the bus, hoping I wouldn't feel queasy again.

“Hang on, Uncle Geronimo,” Benjamin reassured me. **“We're almost there!”**

The trip seemed endless.

A curve to the left ... A curve to the right ...





**BANG!**  
**BANG!**  
**BANG!**



The school bus did another three curves to the right and four curves to the left. A couple of **beastly bumps** made me hit my head on the roof! In the meantime, Benjamin was busy showing me the schedule for the morning at Little Tails Academy. I couldn't bear to look at it: **I was woefully woozy!** (I always get sick when I read on a moving vehicle.)

Here, read it yourselves:

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
8:30AM	Science	English	Reading	Reading	Science
10:30AM	Maths	Science	Maths	Gym	English
LUNCH					
1:30PM	Gym	Reading	Music	Maths	Maths
2:30PM	Art	History	History	Library	History

When I finally got off the bus, my head was spinning as if I had just got off the tallest, **MOST RICKETY** roller coaster of all time.



There was no doubt, it was a bad day.

I stumbled towards school. As soon as I stepped through the doors, a thousand memories came flooding back.

## **They were such happy memories!**

I learned so much! I got into so much mischief! I made so many friends: Hercule Poirat, my detective friend; Kornelius von Kickpaw (he's Secret Agent 00K, but don't tell anyone!); and, obviously, my joke-loving cousin Trap.

And then there was *Veronica Stiffwhiskers*, my sworn enemy at Little Tails Academy. She was such a cute rodent, perfect in every way, and good at everything. **TOO GOOD.** The school had never seen such rivals as the two of us. We competed in everything, and she always won.

I stopped in front of the school's display case. I looked at all the students' plaques, medals, and trophies. Her name was everywhere. *Veronica Stiffwhiskers*, *Veronica Stiffwhiskers*, *Veronica Stiffwhiskers*.

She won the maths challenge, the spelling competition,





the essay contest, and I always got second prize. Second prize wasn't that bad, but I would have loved to be **NUMERO UNO** just once!

For years, I dreamed of having my name on a plaque or trophy in that display case. I sighed and walked away, feeling a little sad. I tried to console myself that, in spite of being number two, I had done quite well for myself: I'm the editor-in-chief and publisher of a newspaper, I have lots of friends, and I even won the RATITZER PRIZE. Despite all that, though, I still would have liked to see my name inside that case.

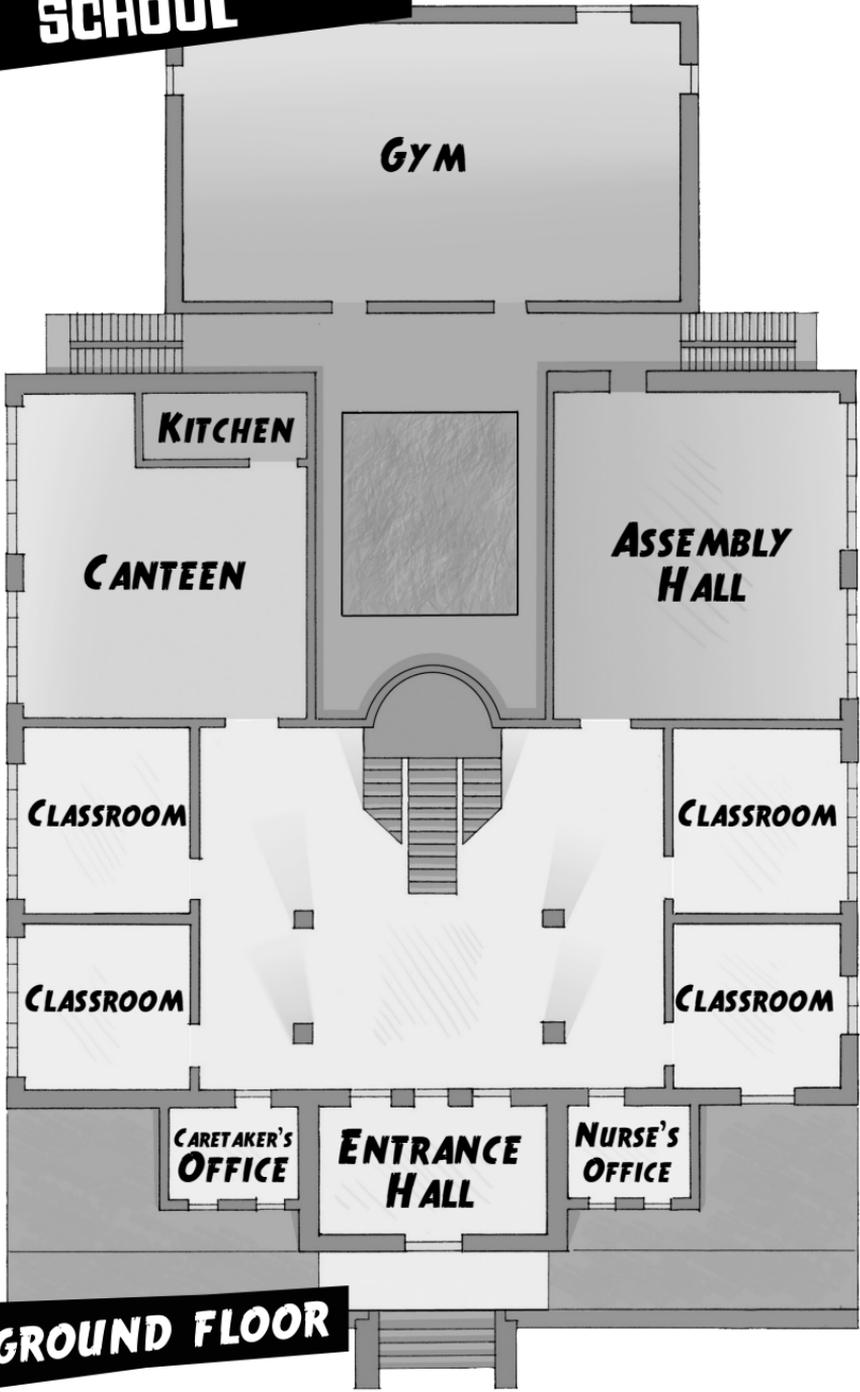
While these thoughts were rumbling through my head, Benjamin led me through the halls to his classroom.

### **The school had changed so much!**

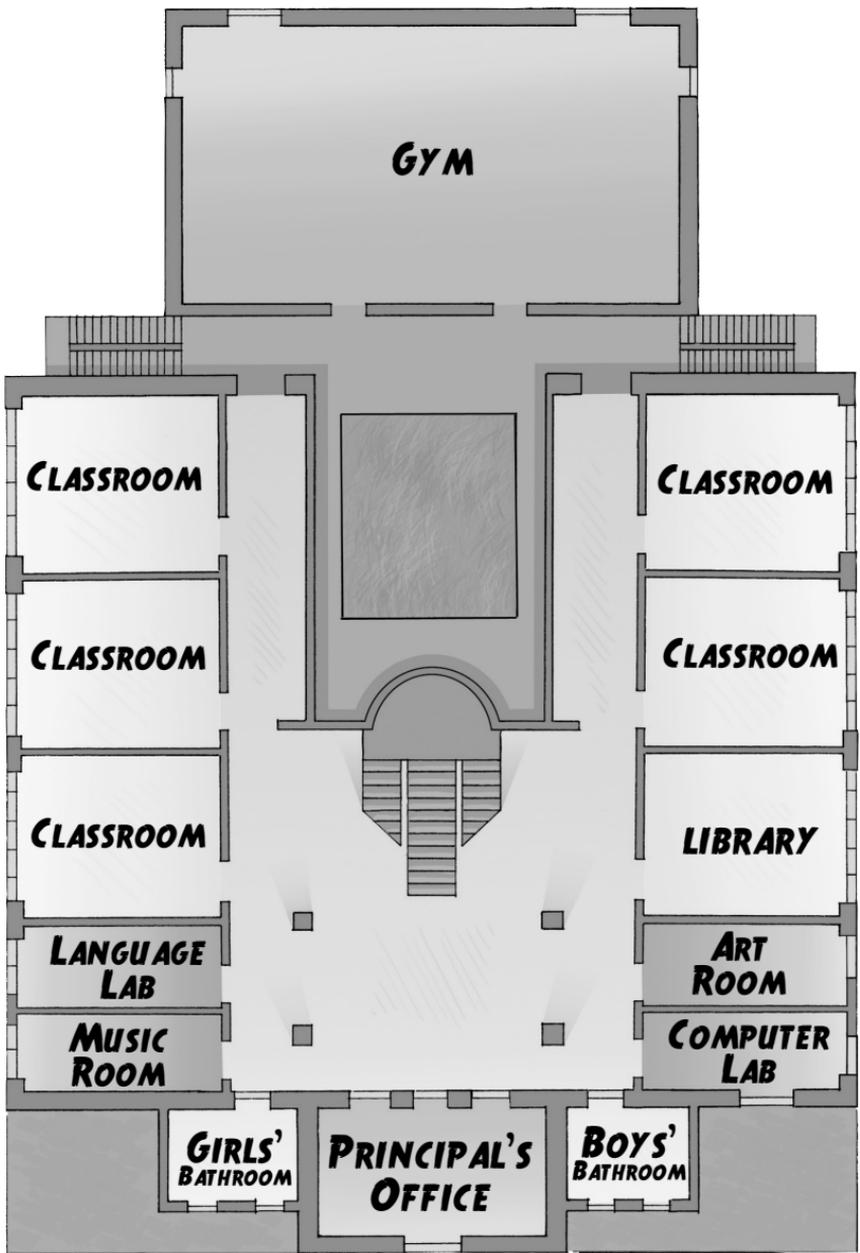
It was the same, but very different.

It was more modern: it had a computer lab, a new gym, language and music labs, an auditorium, and a *spectacular* art room. **Everything was state of the art!**

# MAP OF BENJAMIN'S SCHOOL



**GROUND FLOOR**



**FIRST FLOOR**