Geronimo Stilton

THE FIRST SAMURAI

By Geronimo Stilton

PAPERCUTZ NEW YORK
OUR ADVENTURE BEGAN AT THE NEW MOUSE CITY GOURMET FAIR, WHERE I HAD ARRANGED TO MEET MY COUSIN TRAP.

UNCLE, WE'RE EARLY. IT'S NOT YET NOON. TRAP WON'T HAVE ARRIVED YET.

BY THE WAY, I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED MYSELF YET. MY NAME IS STILTON. GERONIMO STILTON AND I EDIT THE RODENTS' GAZETTE, THE MOST FAMOUS PAPER ON MOUSE ISLAND!

TRAP'S USUALLY NEVER ON TIME. THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL BE EARLY!
WHAT--?! Who are you?

IT'S ME, GERONIMO! I HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL....

WHAT'S GOING ON? Why are you in disguise?

AND WHY ARE YOU SO EARLY?

...LET'S SAY THAT I OVERDOED IT A BIT AT A STAND WHERE I WASN'T INVITED....

IT'S BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR, AT THE LAST GOURMET FAIR....

...AND I WAS BANNED FROM EVER ATTENDING THIS EVENT AGAIN.

THEN I CERTAINLY WON'T LET YOU IN!

I PROMISE I WON'T MAKE TROUBLE THIS TIME....
TRY TO UNDERSTAND... A FAIR WITH THE BEST CHEFS IN NEW MOUSE CITY... HOW COULD I MISS IT?

REMEMBER TO BEHAVE YOURSELF. YOU GAVE ME YOUR WORD AS A RODENT!

DON'T WORRY, COUSIN. I'LL BE A MODEL VISITOR...

THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

HMM...

HMM...

WILL YOU GET A MOVE ON?!
THANK YOU.

INCREDIBLE... I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D STILL REMEMBER ME...

MAYBE THIS TIME YOU'LL BEHAVE, SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO RUN THIS RISK NEXT YEAR!

TRY TO STAY CALM AND DON'T GET YOURSELF NOTICED AS YOU USUALLY DO...

ER-- UNCLE...

BEING CALM ISN'T HIS STRENGTH, ESPECIALLY WITH THE AROMA OF FOOD IN THE AIR!

I'M CURIOUS TO SEE HOW HE'S GOING TO CONVINCE THE CHEFS TO LET HIM SAMPLE THEIR SPECIALTIES... BUT NOW I HAVE TO DO A FEW INTERVIEWS.

IT'S REALLY STRONGER THAN HE IS, HUH?

HE'S THE BIGGEST Glutton OF ANY RAT I'VE EVER KNOWN...
GOOD AFTERNOON, MY NAME IS STILTON, GERONIMO STILTON, AND I EDIT THE RODENT'S GAZETTE. I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS...

I ALREADY SPOKE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUE AND LET ME TELL YOU, HE BEHAVED VERY BADLY!

HE TOLD ME THAT TO GIVE ME A GOOD REVIEW, HE'D HAVE TO TASTE EVERYTHING...

I THOUGHT HE MEANT A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING...

...NOT EVERYTHING!

WE'RE RUINED...

WHAT HAPPENED?

HE SAID HE WAS CURIOUS TO TRY OUR LATEST DISHES... THAT HE'D WRITE A FABULOUS REVIEW...

HE ATE EVERYTHING WE'D COOKED, AND WE DON'T HAVE MORE DISHES FOR VISITORS TO THE FAIR.

TRAP...
TRAP HAS GOTTEN CARRIED AWAY. HE'S PROMISING ARTICLES IN EXCHANGE FOR ENORMOUS MEALS!

PERISHING PROVOLONE! UNCLE TRAP REALLY IS A HUGE GLUTTON!

WE HAVE TO FIND HIM BEFORE HE MAKES MORE TROUBLE!

WELL, WE JUST NEED TO FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF CHAOS...

...THERE'S TRAP!

GOOD AFTERNOON, I'M MR. STILTON. I'M HERE TO REVIEW YOUR DISHES FOR THE RODENT'S GAZETTE...

REALLY...

GERONIMO, CAN'T YOU SEE I'M WORKING?

WHAT WORK? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I THOUGHT I'D HELP YOU WITH YOUR INTERVIEWS...

EXCUSE US FOR A MOMENT...

I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO HELP ME...

I KNOW, YOU NEVER WANT TO BE HELPPED, SO I THOUGHT I'D TAKE THE INITIATIVE...

BZZZZZ
Since when did cheese start buzzing?

Don't change the subject! You're getting the rodent's gazette in trouble!

It must be one of those genetically modified cheeses...

Are you listening to me?

Maybe I'll have a taste...

Stop, trap!

The cheese spoke to me!

Geronimo, you come close, too!

A talking piece of cheese? Maybe we should call someone...

And given how much cheese you've eaten, you're more cheese than a mouse by now!

Cousin, it seems like the cheese knows you, too!
WHAT CHEESE? IT IS I, PROFESSOR VON VOLT?

PROFESSOR, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HIDING IN A PIECE OF CHEESE?

UNCLE, I DON'T THINK IT'S.....

I'M NOT INSIDE THE CHEESE!

WHAT HAPPENED? IS THERE A PROBLEM?

YES, THE TEMPOGRAPH, WHICH I USE TO MAKE SURE HISTORY IS NOT GETTING CHANGED, BEGAN VIBRATING!

THE PIRATE CATS?

I BELIEVE SO! THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU TO JOIN ME ASAP!

OKAY, BUT HOW CAN WE DO THAT?

YOU REALLY DON'T LIKE TO MAKE THINGS EASY, PROFESSOR!

SCIENCE WOULDN'T BE ANYTHING WITHOUT A TOUCH OF FANTASY... LIL, TRAP?

YES?

THERE'S NO POINT INSPECTING IT. THE CHEESE IS PLASTIC.

OH.

I'VE PLACED AN ENTRANCE TO MY LABORATORY IN THE POT ON THE LEFT. YOU JUST HAVE TO GET INTO IT AND A PNEUMATIC TUBE WILL BRING YOU TO ME.
Good! If you need us, Professor, let's not keep you waiting!

Trap!

Geronimo!

Professor, your lab looks an awful lot like a culinary stand...

What have you done! My wonderful cheese soup!

The pot on the left! Von Volt said the pot on the left!

I followed the smell...

What have you done?

Quick, the situation is coming to a boil!

Benjamin, Thea, and Buggy Wugsy have already gone in. Follow me so we don't lose any more time.

Don't worry, that soup was nothing special!
THANKS FOR NOT MAKING ME GO IN FIRST!

WHY?

WELL, THIS WAY, I CAN LAND ON SOMETHING SOFT... THAT IS, ON TOP OF YOU!

OH, NO!
SPLAT

Why do you smell like cheese soup?

Let's forget about that, Professor von Volt! The others have arrived.

They're waiting for us by the temporograph. Hurry! There's no time to lose.

I observed a change in the temporal flux. The pirate cats are traveling into the past!

It's always them!

Don't they ever rest?
JAPAN IS A COUNTRY THAT LIES OFF THE COAST OF EASTERN ASIA. IT'S MADE UP OF MANY ISLANDS, FOUR MAJOR ONES AND ROUGHLY THREE THOUSAND ITS-ITSY-BITSY ONES! 75% OF THE COUNTRY IS MOUNTAINOUS, LARGELY OF VOLCANIC ORIGINS. THE LARGEST PLAIN, KANTO, IS THE SITE OF THE CAPITAL, TOKYO.

ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THEY'RE IN JAPAN IN 1603.

THE PIRATE CATS AREN'T VERY PRECISE, IT'S TRUE, BUT THEY Seldom MAKE A MISTAKE IN THE DESTINATION FOR THEIR TRIPS. THIS IS WHY I NEED YOU TO GO TO JAPAN AND INVESTIGATE! COME, YOUR COSTUMES ARE IN THE SPEEDRAIL!

THEIR REASON FOR BEING THERE, HOWEVER, ESCAPES ME!

MAYBE THEY MADE A MISTAKE!

ACTUALLY... I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING SIMPLER. GERONIMO, TRAP, AND BENJAMIN WILL BE STREET PERFORMERS, ACCOMPANIED BY THEA AND BUGSY WUGSY.

SAMURAI WERE VERY FAMOUS WARRIORS WITH NOBLE ORIGINS IN THE FEUDAL ERA. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY SKILLED IN THE USE OF THE SWORD AND HAD TWO SABERS AS THEIR EMBLEM, A SHORT ONE (WAKIZASHI) AND A LONGER ONE (KATANA). THEY FOLLOWED A VERY RIGID CODE OF HONOR.

I'VE ALREADY BEEN TO JAPAN! THIS TIME I'LL BE ABLE TO DRESS LIKE A SAMURAI!

YOU, A SAMURAI? SINCE WHEN DID YOU GET SO BRAVE?
VERY GOOD. THE COSTUMES ARE ALL HERE AND ALSO THE EQUIPMENT THAT WILL LET YOU UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE OF THE TIME. NOW, HURRY UP! YOU HAVE TO PREVENT THE CATS FROM CHANGING THE PAST!

DON'T WORRY, PROFESSOR, WE'LL SEE TO IT!

WHERE EXACTLY ARE WE HEADED?

YOU'LL ARRIVE A LITTLE BIT AWAY FROM EDO, THE ANCIENT NAME FOR TOKYO. HIDE THE SPEEDRAT AND DISGUISE YOURSELVES WITHOUT ANYONE DISCOVERING YOU!

TOKYO HAS BEEN THE CAPITAL OF JAPAN SINCE 1615, WHEN THE EMPEROR DECIDED TO MOVE THE SEAT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND HIS OWN RESIDENCE THERE. UNTIL THEN, IT HAD BEEN CALLED EDO, FROM THE NAME OF THE CASTLE (NAMED EDO-JO), BUILT IN 1457, THAT DOMINATED THE AREA.

THE PREPARATIONS WERE ALL MADE. ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS TO BEGIN THE MISSION...

...PROVIDING THAT OUR PILOT DIDN'T MAKE US CRASH FIRST.

SLOW DOWN!

COUSIN, WE'RE TRAVELING THROUGH TIME. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SLOW DOWN?
In the meantime, Catarzione III, Emperor of the pirate cats, his daughter Tersilla, and their assistant, Bonzo, had arrived in Japan. In 1803, they'd made mistakes, however, in a few of their calculations...

Mount Fuji! Mt. Fuji is a volcano and the tallest mountain in Japan (3.776 meters). Its snowy peak is one of the most famous symbols of the country. The Japanese consider it holy, and make a pilgrimage to its slopes at least once during their lives.

What are we doing near Mt. Fuji?

You told me we had to go to Japan, and this is Japan, right?

Mt. Fuji's far from Boo. How do you think we're going to get there?

Umm...
WE'LL FIND A WAY TO GET AROUND AND WE'RE NOT IN A HURRY. NO ONE KNOWS WE'RE HERE AND OUR MOUSE MASKS ARE STILL WORKING!

I STILL DON'T GET WHAT WE'RE DOING IN JAPAN IN 1803... IT'S COUNTRY-SIDE ALL AROUND HERE!

YOU'RE ALWAYS MOUSING OFF,* AND THAT'S WHY YOU'LL ALWAYS BE AN ASSISTANT, WHILE MY FATHER IS EMPEROR OF THE PIRATE CATS!

*TALKING NONSENSE!

I'M FINALLY GOING TO MEET ONE OF MY PEERS, THE HEAD OF JAPAN! FINALLY, SOMEONE WHO WILL UNDERSTAND THE WEIGHT OF POWER!

HOW DARE YOU ADDRESS YOUR EMPEROR THAT WAY?! BEG FOR MY PARDON IMMEDIATELY!

YOU MEAN HE'S FAT LIKE YOU?

FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, OH, SUPREME EMPEROR!

LET'S GO, WITHOUT LOSING ANY MORE TIME! SOO'S STILL FAR AWAY.

WAIT FOR US: YOU'VE GOT THE MAP!
IN THE MEANTIME, WE'D ARRIVED NEAR EDO, HIDDEN THE SPEEDRAID AND PUT ON OUR COSTUMES.

ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE
IN OLD JAPAN, THE SIMPLEST BUILDINGS WERE BUILT OUT OF INEXPENSIVE MATERIALS LIKE WOOD AND STRAW, AS THE COUNTRY WAS FULL OF FORESTS. MORE IMPORTANT BUILDINGS WERE BUILT OUT OF MORE DURABLE MATERIALS, SUCH AS STONE.
Yum! It seems right that we arrived in time for dinner!

How many times have I told you not to build a fire close to the huts, Hayao? All it takes is one spark and everything’ll go up in flames!

Do fires happen often around here?

Oh, when Tokugawa came things got better. He barred construction of new buildings with thousands of roofs, which prevented the destruction of entire districts in a single blaze, even though...

Even though...?

Recently, the fires have resumed, but this time they’re also happening in buildings made of stone. They say it’s...

Fools, and my nephew, say that the ghost of the old commander is behind these fires, that he can’t find peace after the defeat at Sekigahara.
YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE. WHO ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS GERO-NIMURA STIL-TAO AND THIS IS MY COUSIN TRAPOSHIRO. WE'RE ACTORS AND WE'VE COME TO SENGU TO LOOK FOR WORK.

ACTORS THAT'S FANTASTIC! WELCOME, FRIENDS! I'LL GET THE FIRE READY FOR DINNER.

DINNER PROCEEDED CALMLY. WE HAD A MISSION TO CARRY OUT, BUT WE CERTAINLY COULDN'T REFUSE SUCH A WARM WELCOME!

UNTIL...

SINCE YOU'RE HERE, WHY DON'T YOU PERFORM NOW? SOMETHING SIMPLE, JUST TO LET US SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE!

WHAt... <COUGH>... <COUGH>...<COUGH>...

YES, DEFINITELY! WE KNOW THE TASTES OF THE COURT VERY WELL! WE CAN TELL YOU IF YOU'LL BE SUCCESSFUL!

I'LL GO RIGHT NOW AND GET AN OLD SAMURAI SUIT OF ARMOR, SO YOU CAN USE IT FOR THE PERFORMANCE!

TRAPOSHIRO AND I REALLY SHOULD HAVE A LITTLE REHEARSAL FIRST...
LATER...

UNCLE, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

I'M A SCAREDY MOUSE, BUT WHAT ALTERNATIVE DO WE HAVE?

NO! NO! NO! NO!

MAYBE THEY DON'T WANT Geronimo TO SING?

NO, DEAR, THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT NOH THEATER.

Noh Theater
Noh drama was a type of theater popular in 14th-century Japan, which retold stories of heroic events from Japanese tradition through song, acting, and dance. The actors were all men, even in women's roles, and they wore distinctive masks.

ALLOW ME TO PERFORM A DANCE BEFORE MY BROTHERS BEGIN THEIR PLAY...

???

A woman who acts? What kind of strangeness is this?
ONLY MEN PERFORM IN NOH THEATER!

AH!

!!

THESE ORANGES WILL BE BETTER IN MY BELLY, AFTER THE PLAY...

!!

LOOK OUT, UNCLE!

PLONK

PLONK

PLONK

PLONK

PLONK

PLONK
Ronin were samurai who didn’t serve a single lord, but rather wandering warriors available to work for pay.

Wonderful, Uncle!

You were incredible!

That’s why he didn’t want to perform... Gero-nimura stil-Tao is a Ronin who’s pretending to be an actor!

They can still be eaten, right?

Ohhhh!

He speared them...

...on the fly...

...with a wooden samurai!
LATER THAT NIGHT...

FIRE! FIRE!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

ONE OF THE HOUSES IS GOING UP IN FLAMES! WE NEED TO HELP WITH THE BUCKETS!

HOW CAN WE HELP?

ZZZ

WAKE UP, TRAP. THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE.

GO UP IN THE WATCHTOWER AND SHOW US THE FLASHPOINT.

ZZ-- MUM, LET ME SLEEP...

BUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

THE GUARD'S ASLEEP!
HE'S MORE THAN ASLEEP. IT SEEMS LIKE SOMEONE PUT HIM OUT OF ACTION. THIS IS NOT THE WORK OF A GHOST...

THE FIRE'S THREE STREETS DOWN, ON THE LEFT!

Okay!

?! TAP TAP ?!

Our "ghost" is on the roof. We've got to catch up with him!

Moldy mozzarella! We're high up!

I'll help you climb up!

STOP!

?!
What agility!

Did you see him?

How'd you get up?

We jump!

There was a little ladder. Didn't you see it? What do we do now?

There!

Trap, if we manage to catch him, I'll get you breakfast for a week when we get back home!

We can't let him get away!

Pluff pluff!
Almost there.

Almost there.

???

GOT 'M!

RRRIIPP!

NO!

By a whisker...

Now we know it's not a ghost causing these fires and we've got a clue...
IN THE MEANTIME, MY FAME AS AN ACTOR HAD SPREAD TO THE FOUR WINDS AND I HAD BEEN INVITED TO COURT.

WHAT'RE ALL THESE COMINGS AND GOINGS?

THE EDO-JO CASTLE ISN'T YET FINISHED. THE WING FOR SHOGUN TOKUGAWA IYASU IS READY, BUT THERE'S STILL MUCH TO DO.

SO WHY DOES THE EMPEROR WANT TO SEE US?

NO, NO, TOKUGAWA IYASU ISN'T THE EMPEROR. HE'S THE SHOGUN! THAT'S A VERY POWERFUL FAMILY WHO GOVERNS THIS REGION.

SHOGUN
THE TITLE THAT IN ANCIENT JAPAN WAS GIVEN TO THE HEAD OF MILITARY EXPEDITIONS. STARTING IN 1185, THE TITLE BECAME HEREDITARY AND SHOGUN BECAME THE DE FACTO RULERS OF THE COUNTRY, WHILE THE ROLE OF EMPEROR MAINLY RETAINED A HISTORICAL FUNCTION.

WE'VE FINALLY DISCOVERED WHY THE PIRATE CATS HAVE COME TO THIS PERIOD TO GET A FiefDOM TO PASS DOWN TO THEIR OWN DESCENDANTS!

THE LAST FEW DAYS, THE SHOGUN HAS BEEN DECIDING HOW TO DIVIDE THE FIEFDOMS AMONG HIS MOST FAITHFUL SUBJECTS.

RELAX! I'M HERE TO PROTECT YOU, TRAP THE CAT-NABBER!

BUT WHY ARE THEY LIGHTING THE FIRES? WHAT DO THEY GAIN FROM DESTROYING THE CITY?
THAT'S THE SHOGUN! GO TO THE GUARDS TO SPEAK WITH HIM. YOU'RE EXPECTED!

AHEM... HELLO, I AM GERO-NINJURA. STIL-TAO, SHOGUN IYASU WANTED TO SEE ME...

STIL-TAO! FINALLY! I'VE HEARD MUCH TALK ABOUT YOU! THEY SAY YOU WERE ABLE TO SPEAR 10 ORANGES WITHOUT LOOKING!

WELL, ACTUALLY...

AND IF YOU DID THIS FOR THE PEASANTS, I IMAGINE THAT AT THIS EVENING'S CELEBRATION, YOU'LL DO EVEN BETTER!

I DON'T KNOW F...

DON'T CONTRADICT HIM. IT COULD BE DANGEROUS!

THIS EVENING, I'LL ASSIGN STRONGHOLDS TO MY MOST FAITHFUL REPRESENTATIVES AND YOU WILL PERFORM A PLAY WORTHY OF MY COURT!

UH-OH, THINGS AREN'T LOOKING SO GOOD HERE...
IT’LL BE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING!

HURRAH!

STILTON AND HIS FRIENDS HAVE COME TO SWIPE THE HERRING FROM OUR BARREL!

WHAT’S GOING ON?

HAVE THEY IDENTIFIED US?

THAT SUFFERING SQUEAKER! ALWAYS STOKING HIS PAWS INTO EVERYTHING!

NO, BONZO ASSURED ME THEY DIDN’T RECOGNIZE US YESTERDAY EVENING. BUT WE HAVE TO ACT WITH GREAT CAUTION AND TIME IS PRESSING!

WHEN WE MAKE THE SHOGUN OUR OFFER, HE’LL GIVE US ALL WE ASK FOR!

WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO DO THE HARD WORK?

WE HAVE TO GIVE THE SHOGUN ALL OUR SUPPORT IF WE’RE GOING TO CONVINCE HIM WE’RE HIS ALLIES AND DESERVE HIS HELP!
Even though we’ve arrived after the battle of Sekigahara, we still have a good chance of getting the freedom we want and becoming Tozama Daimyo!

AND WHAT’S THAT!

Bon-Zai! Don’t slack off! Be quick with that sack!

Yes, okay!

This time Geronimo and his family can try every way they wish but they won’t be able to stop us!

Hee Hee Hee!

Hmm...

Maybe that’s the way to the kitchen...

Trad, we’re in trouble!

Geronimo has to perform tonight and we don’t even know where the pirate cats are!
THEA, YOU STAY WITH THE KIDS AND TRY TO COME UP WITH AN IDEA FOR MY PERFORMANCE THIS EVENING. WE NEED SOMETHING SPECIAL...

GERONIMO AND I WILL DEAL WITH THE INVESTIGATION...

...MY NOSE FOR INVESTIGATING IS SECOND ONLY TO MY NOSE FOR CHEESE!

NO...

NO...

NO...

NO...

HOW DARE YOU!

WE'RE SO SORRY!

IT'S NOT EVEN HIM...

TRAP, YOU CAN'T ACT THIS WAY! THESE ARE GOVERNMENT DIGNITARIES, WHILE WE ARE SIMPLE ARTISTS!

If we want to carry out our investigation, we have to be more discreet.

Another way to investigate is to figure out what might be attracting the pirate cats—which freedom they’re looking at.

Did you want to ask me something?

But all we have to do is find who has a tune with this pattern and we’ll find out who set the fire!

Ask that rodent for information.

Uh...

Do you know where the kitchen is?

He’s incorrigible...

As I recall, the kitchen should be this way...

Since trap had been drawn to the kitchen, it was left to me to find a trustworthy person that I could ask for information...

Excuse me, cousin!
...IN ORDER TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MYSTERY!

-SAHEM!- EXCUSE ME...

GERO-NINJA RIA STIL-TAO!
I JUST FINISHED MY SHIFT. IF YOU WANT TO SPEAK WITH THE SHOGUN, HE’S IN THE HALL.

NO, NO...

...I JUST WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE!

I’M JUST A GUARD. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

I KNOW THAT THE PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED THIS EVENING, BUT I WANTED TO GET SOME INFORMATION, SO WE COULD MAKE OUR PERFORMANCE FIT THE OCCASION.

THE PLAY’S ALMOST READY NOW...

SEKIGAHARA, OCTOBER 21, 1600.

AFTER THE BATTLE THAT DECIDED TOKUGAWA IESU’S VICTORY, WE ALL KNEW THAT WE WERE HEADED TOWARDS A NEW ERA FOR JAPAN...
...so no one lost any time: everyone rushed to Tokugawa Ieyasu to swear allegiance to him.

The Tozama Daimyo, however, had to prove their allegiance to the shogun, since they hadn’t fought for him.

The Fudai Daimyo, who were already vassals of Tokugawa, weren’t going to have any problem getting the territories they deserved.

Tokugawa has been very prudent with them, which is why, for the past three years, he’s still been choosing who he’ll award the last fiefdoms to.

And among these lords, is there one who arrived at the last minute? Or who’s acting strangely?

For sure, I can’t say that the Meowzaki family has been schooled well in proper behavior. But, on the other hand, they’re asking for a fiefdom that no one else wants!

Well, it’s one of the provinces nearest Edo Castle and too much under the influence of the shogun.

I’m going now. See you after the performance!

Uncle, you have to get ready!

Uhm... yes.

How come?

In the meantime, any news?

We managed to find two of the Old Court Company’s costumes, but you and trap at least have to make an attempt now...
I think the pirate cats are hiding behind the Meowzaki family. They're the last ones who got here to ask for a peaceful resolution.

But if we know who they are, why don't we unmask them?

We don't have any proof and the Shogun favors them...

A little later, that evening...

Ieyasu-sama, if I might say a word before the beginning of the ceremony...

We'll only take a moment and won't disturb you more!

Catord Meowzaki, what other strange proposal do you have for me?
I have the plans with me for a cart that can carry people and things without using horses or mules!

Interesting! How does it work?

We're developing the last technical details, but if you'll grant my request...

You persist in your desire for the performance next to the castle, even though it's so small.

I get it! The cats want to get their hands on the district that's called Minato ku today. It's the center of the Japanese automobile manufacturing business. They will become very rich!

To be near you, my shogun, is very important!

To conclude...
TO SHOW THE MEOWZAKI FAMILY’S DEDICATION, WE CARRIED OUT OUR OWN INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE RECENT FREQUENT FIRES AND FOUND THE CULPRIT!

?! ?! ?!

HAYAO? BUT WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?

WE FOUND HIM THIS AFTERNOON IN THE VICINITY OF THE CASTLE, AND WE KNOW HE'S DARED TO START FIRES NEAR HIS HOUSE MANY TIMES.

THE SITUATION'S GETTING COMPLICATED...

I'M INNOCENT. I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

BUT THEY CAN'T ACCUSE HIM WITHOUT PROOF!

HAYAO IS A LEATHER TANNER. THE WORD OF TWO DIGNITARIES IS ENOUGH TO CHARGE HIM, UNFORTUNATELY.
As you see, my Shogun, we haven't just foiled a direct threat to Bo's castle. But, if you award this fiefdom to the Meowaki family, there will be no more fires!

Ham...

I admit I'm an absent-minded rat, but I'm not an arsonist!

Just yesterday, I put out one of the fires that had flared up!

We can testify to that. He woke us up immediately!

-Gulp.

This is going to go badly if we don't do something...

But we have proof!

And who's to say he didn't wake you up after starting the fire? Or that you aren't his accomplices?
WE RIPPED THIS SCRAPER OF FABRIC WHEN WE WERE CHASING HIM ON THE WATCHTOWER. WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT, AND WE CAN IDENTIFY HIM!

-SOULPH-

SO WE CAN EASILY SHOW WHO THE CULPRIT IS!

TRAP, DON'T YOU SEE THAT WE'RE DISCUSSING SOMETHING IMPORTANT HERE?

YES, I KNOW, BUT YOU KNOW... I SPENT SO MUCH TIME INVESTIGATING... I WANT TO SAY WHO THE CULPRIT IS!

ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE Figured OUT WHO THE CULPRIT IS?

OF COURSE, I ALREADY KNEW BEFORE, BUT I WAS WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT!

SO GO AHEAD THEN!
SO? ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHO THE CULPRIT IS, IN YOUR OPINION?

IEYASHU-SAMA, MEMBERS OF THE COURT OF EDO...

AFTER CAREFUL INVESTIGATION AND HOURS OF EXTENSIVE INQUIRIES, THE TRUE CULPRIT GAVE HIMSELF AWAY BEFORE MY VERY EYES. I WAITED UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT TO BE SURE. BUT NOW I CAN TELL YOU THAT THE CULPRIT IS--

THE DIGNITARY HOKIUDA!

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO PROVE IT!

OHHH!!
I NEED TO TEAR OFF HIS MASK!

HE’S THE CULPRIT!

YOUR MASKS ARE REALLY STUDY, YOU CRUMMY CATS!

STOP!

ORDER! ORDER!

GET HIM OFF ME!

BUT WHAT’S HE DOING?

I ONLY ARRIVED IN 500 THIS MORNING. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO HAVE SET A FIRE YESTERDAY EVENING?

REALY?

WELL... THEN MAYBE... I COULD BE MISTAKEN...
STOP!

It's a dress like many others; it could be anybody's!

Call the Watchtower guard to testify then!

The culprit is this fake samurai! Look: the fabric we found is the same as what he's wearing!

He didn't see me when I hit him over the head!
BONZO, WHEN WE GET HOME, I’M GOING TO THROW YOU INTO THE SEA...

STOP, EVERYONE! IF ANYONE TAKES A STEP, I’LL TRIM HIS SAILS!

AHHH!

IF YOU WANT YOUR SHOGUN IN ONE PIECE, THROW DOWN YOUR ARMS!

CLUNK

CLUNK

MOLDY MOZZARELLA, CATARONE! IT’S TOO LATE! YOU’RE NOT GOING TO GET A FEUDOM!

THEN I’LL BE SATISFIED WITH BECOMING THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN! AND THE RULES APPLY TO YOU, TOO, YOU LOUSY RAT! THROW DOWN YOUR SWORD!

*CRUSH HIM!
CLUNK

SO I WILL BE THE EMPEROR OF THE CATS AND OF JAPAN AT LAST!

CLUNK

CLUNK

CLUNK

CLUNK

CLUNK

CLUNK

BUT WHAT--

GRRRRNG

GRRRRNG
HURRY, GET THE SHOCSUN TO SAFETY!

HELP ME PULL HIM OUT!

STIL-TAO KNOCKED THE TRAITOR OUT OF THE GAME!

STOP HIM!

YOU SUFFERING SQUEAKERS! THIS TIME YOU'VE WON, BUT THE NEXT TIME...

WHERE AM I? WHO ARE YOU? I WANT MY HERRING CROQUETTES!

SEE YOU LATER!

STIL-TAO, YOUR SKILLFULNESS AND ACCURACY HAVE SAVED JAPAN. THANKS!

HURRAY FOR STIL-TAO!

UNCLE, THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!

DON'T WORRY, THEY DEFINITELY WON'T BE SEEN IN JAPAN AGAIN!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING...? I DIDN'T...
In the end, we didn’t have to create an artistic act at all; the shogun said that we’d already done enough for that evening and should just think about enjoying ourselves!

But a few actors invited Thea to participate in a type of play that had recently begun in Japan, kabuki!

Kabuki: A form of popular theater that began at the start of 1800, characterized by a very elaborate style, in which music and dance are very important. In the beginning, it was only performed by women, but then men replaced them. Kabuki plays retell the deeds of historical figures and events that really happened.

When it was time for us to go, we were very sad to leave such a nice celebration, but we were happy to have saved the history of Japan!

But we’d made Professor wait too long, and he was undoubtedly worried.
DID IT GO WELL?

WE SCARED OFF THE PIRATE CATS, THANKS TO MY INVESTIGATIVE NOSE!

HONESTLY, YOU ACCUSED A RODENT WHO WAS INNOCENT!

I DID THAT ON PURPOSE TO UNCOVER THE CATS!

WHAT?

YOU PROMISED ME THAT IF I CAPTURED THE CULPRIT, YOU'D TREAT ME TO BREAKFAST!

MY DEAR RODENT FRIENDS, Farewell until the next adventure... A Whiskerful of an Adventure written by Stilton. Geronimo Stilton.
Welcome to the time-tripping twelfth GERONIMO STILTON graphic novel from Papercutz, the cheese-loving folks dedicated to publishing great graphic novels for all ages. I'm Salicrup, Jim Salicrup, the Editor-in-Chief around here, happy that my job isn't even half as dangerous as being editor of The Rodent's Gazette!

Wow! I was thrilled just to know that this GERONIMO STILTON graphic novel would be taking place in Japan in 1603, but when I discovered that Thea Stilton was back, as well—I simply can't tell you how excited I was! **MOLDSY MOZZARELLA!** THEA STILTON #1 “The Secret of Whale Island” is coming soon, and fans couldn't be any happier! While Thea actually does appear in the series, the real stars are the Thea Sisters, five students at Mouseford College, who want to become journalists like their hero, Thea Stilton! If you love Thea Stilton you'll want to pick up THEA STILTON #1 “The Secret of Whale Island”? Everyone's talking about how Thea may now become the real super-star in the Stilton family! Even if she sort of made a big boo-boo when she tried to perform...

The above scene is a great example of how much the world has changed! It's hard to believe that there was a time when women weren't allowed to become actors, and now, through the wonder of time travel, that same woman is such a successful journalist that she's inspiring a whole new generation of girls to follow in her footsteps.

But why should the Stiltons have all the fun? How would you like to take a short, quick trip through time? Simply turn the page and you'll see actual pages from the very next GERONIMO STILTON graphic novel in your future: “The Fastest Train in the West”! Ironically, your peek into the future is set in the Old West! That's what we love to call a Time Paradox, something that doesn't really make any sense. Something that should be impossible, yet there it is!

See you in the future!
Special preview of GERONIMO STILTON #13 “The Fastest Train in the West”!

AND BESIDES, I'M VERY GLAD TO AVOID ANOTHER FLIGHT IN THE SPEEDRAT WITH TRAP! THAT WOULD BE THE THIRD IN A SHORT TIME!

TRAP, YOU SHOULD TRY TO GET HIRED AS A WORKER AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE. THEN, TRY TO KEEP OUR COUSIN FROM SLOWING DOWN THE CONSTRUCTION WORK.

HEE! HEE! HEE!

Hey!

REMINDER, WE DON’T KNOW WHERE OR WHEN THE PIRATE CATS WILL SWING INTO ACTION!

MOLDY MOZZARELLA! IT’S THE FIRST TIME I’VE DRIVEN THE SPEEDRAT WITH ONLY ONE PASSENGER! I’LL TRY OUT SOME NEW AEROBATICS!

CALM DOWN, COUSIN, WE’LL SEE TO IT!

DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, TRAP! WE’VE GOT VERY LITTLE TIME TO FIND THOSE SCOUNDRELS!

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COME ON, KIDS, LET’S GO CHECK OUT THE WILD WEST!

THE WILD WEST (FAR WEST OR OLD WEST) WAS A TERM USED IN THE 1800s FOR THE REGION BETWEEN THE GREAT PLAINS AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, EXTENDING WESTWARDS FROM THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND TOWARDS CANADA. THE AREA WAS INHABITED BY NATIVE AMERICANS, THAT IS TO SAY, AMERICAN INDIANS.
IN THE MEANTIME, TRAP AND THEA HAD REACHED THE CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR THE RAIL LINE THAT WAS HeadN EASTWARDS.

BUT IF WE LEAVE THE SPEEDRAIL HERE, HOW WILL WE GET IT BACK? IT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT!

EASY, WE'LL BRING IT WITH US!

THE WORK SITE MOVES WITH THE WORKERS, SO THE CRATES WON'T REMAIN HERE.

LIKE NOT?

THEY'LL COME WITH US UNTIL THE WORK IS FINISHED. IT'S ENOUGH TO PROVIDE EXACT INFORMATION. THIS CRATE WILL BE ONE OF THE MANY THAT ARE FOR THE INAGURATION!

GREAT! NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO START LOOKING FOR THOSE CRUMMY CATS!

EXCUSE ME, GENTLE-MOUSE!

WHO ME?
My cousin and I would like to help with the wonderful project you're working on! What can we do?

Well, you can give the stokers a hand. Your cousin can deal with the supplies. In the last few days there've been a lot of problems with the inventory.

The crates seem to have gotten scrambled. Sometimes it takes a whole day to find the pieces we need.

Between these glitches, the explosion in the tunnel, and the bad weather when we got here, it's not funny!

Okay! We'll start looking here!

*Looking here* for what?

No, my cousin meant we'd start looking for work here!

Ah!

We're seeing the paw prints of the pirate cats here!

I wonder how Geronimo's faring?

Right! They must be the one who've created the confusion with the supplies.
THE WILD WEST WAS TURNING OUT TO BE MUCH WILDER THAN WE'D EXPECTED!

HURRY UP WITH THAT KNOT! YOU DON'T WANT THE SHERIFF TO DISCOVER LIP?

HOLD ON! I'M ALMOST DONE!

REMEMBER, BROTHER, AS SOON AS YOU LEAVE, WE SPLIT UP. MEET AT THE OLD QUARRY!

HAII!!!

?!?

CRRAAAAAAM!

Don't miss GERONIMO STILTON #13!
Geronimo Stilton boxed sets!
Three Graphic Novels collected in each box!

Available at booksellers everywhere.
Geronimo Stilton knows how to deal with annoying oranges!

GERONIMO STILTON IS THE EDITOR OF THE RODENT'S GAZETTE, THE MOST FAMOUS PAPER ON MOUSE ISLAND. IN HIS FREE TIME HE LOVES TO TELL FUN, HAPPY STORIES. IN THIS ADVENTURE, GERONIMO HAS TO FACE HIS WORST ENEMIES, THE PIRATE CATS, WHO HAVE DISCOVERED A WAY TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AND CHANGE HISTORY...

JAPAN, 1603. GERONIMO AND HIS FRIENDS DON'T KNOW WHY THE PIRATE CATS WENT BACK TO THIS PRECISE POINT IN TIME, BUT THEY ARE SURE THE PIRATE CATS ARE UP TO NO GOOD! POSING AS A TRAVELING TRouPE OF ACTORS, GERONIMO SOMEHOW MANAGES TO CONVINCE THE LOCALS THAT HE'S REALLY A SHOGUN, AND NOT THE FIRST SAMURA! WILL GERONIMO BE ABLE TO UNCOVER THE PIRATE CATS' PLAN IN TIME TO STOP THEM? OR HAVE THE PIRATE CATS FINALLY WON?

"Geronimo fans will eat this up quicker than a wheel of cheddar."
-Washington Times
"Is it fact? Is it fiction? It's faction, and it's fun!" -Shelf-Employed

www.geronimostilton.com