

THE ADVENTURES OF
SWAMP DOG SAM

Chapter One

INTO THE BOX

“Dang dog! Out of my way!”

Mister kicks at me. I duck. I scramble to a corner and stay out of sight until our owner forgets all about me.

I’m Sam. Sometimes my mama calls me Sammy. She says I was born happy but Mister’s gonna take it right out of me. Mama says I should be rolling in grass and splashing in mud puddles ‘cause I’m a puppy. But that’s not what I do. Uh-uhh. I hide and wait. Wait for Mister to fall asleep. That’s when we look for food ‘cause Mama, my brothers and I are always hungry.

Mister has plopped onto a chair at the kitchen table, chewing bacon. His long hair is matted and dirty like my fur. We both need a bath and a good brushing.

I keep waiting. Sure enough, Mister’s eyes begin to close. He puts his head down on the table and snores. Half-eaten bacon hangs off his plate.



Ugurkose

I crawl toward the table.

“*ER-R-R-R!*” My tummy growls louder than Mister’s snoring.

“Don’t do it, Sam!” Mama snaps.

“But Mister didn’t feed us last night,” I whine. “I’ve been sucking on an old kibble, but it’s harder than a rock. I’m so hungry, Mama!”

“Get to the door, Sam, ready to run. I’ll get that bacon for us.”

Mama pushes me aside. Something inside my gut twists. I should be brave and get that food myself. But instead, I listen to Mama.

I crawl to the screen door, tapping open and shut in the breeze. I peek outside. My older brothers, Boss, Skippy, and Stinkie, are digging in the garbage can, looking for scraps.

Mama creeps toward Mister... leaps up and grabs the bacon in her teeth...

C-R-A-S-H! R-R-R-R-E-E-K!

The garbage can crashes to the ground and Mister’s eyes open. He swats at Mama, knocking her and his plate to the floor.

“Thief! Blasted dog! Look what you made me do!” Mister stands, kicks his chair and bangs his knee! “MONGRELS! I give you dogs a home, and you do this? Thankless hounds! Ingrates!”

I am halfway out the door when... *B-L-A-M!* Mister kicks Mama. She yelps, landing on pieces of the broken plate.

Mister backs Mama into a corner with his fist raised.

I’m no hero, but I know what I have to do. I run over and sink my teeth into Mister’s hand— *BITING HIM— DOWN TO THE BONE!*

He howls and screams, “Good-for-nothing-pup!”

When I let go, Mister chases Mama and me out the door. I run faster than the rabbits in the yard, but I can’t keep up with Mama. She runs and doesn’t look back... calling, “Come on, Sammy!”

I scramble over an old tire, but I trip on some metal rods. It’s Mister’s fault for having so much junk in the yard. I watch Mama disappear down the road. At least *she* got away!

I don’t have long to miss Mama ‘cause Mister’s hot on my trail. I circle round the house and dive under a pile of rags next to the rickety porch.

Mister disappears into the shed. When he comes out, he’s holding a big box.

Boss, Skippy, and Stinkie are still looking through the garbage. Mister grabs each of them by the scruff of the neck and shoves them into the box. I cover my eyes and hope he won’t find me.

“*F-E-R-R—E-E-E-T!*” Mister whistles. I poke my head out from under a red rag. My ears fly up like they do when I’m on alert or I’m scared—and in this case I’m both. Mister grabs the rag with me wrapped inside and shoves the whole tangled mess into the box with my brothers. He slings our box into the trunk of his rusty, worn-out car, hollering, “IT’S ALL YOUR FAULT, YOU MISERABLE MUTTS!”

Chapter Two

INTO THE SWAMP

B-A-N-G!

“Blasted pile of junk... stay shut!”

The car has stopped. Mister’s yelling and making a racket. He’s kicking the door over and over. I’m so scared, I try to burrow under Stinkie, but he won’t budge!

SCRE-E-E-ECH! Mister opens the trunk and grabs our box. We wobble in his arms, howling and barking.

“Shush up!”

K-E-R-P-L-U-N-K!

Our box hits the ground, and the top flap opens. Mister’s face is redder than the rag in our box. He looks right at me.

My ears fly up!

“WELCOME TO THE OKEFENOKEE SWAMP!” Mister shouts.



OKEFENOKEE SWAMP

FUN FACTS (SAMPLE)

***Who is the most famous alligator in the Okefenokee Swamp? OSCAR!** He was a real alligator and close to 100 years old when he died. Most alligators live around fifty years. Oscar died peacefully in an isolated and private part of Okefenokee Swamp Park, located north of the refuge, in 2007. Oscar's bones are on display at the Okefenokee Swamp Park Visitor Center in Waycross, Georgia. Don Berryhill is responsible for piecing Oscar's bones together.

Did you know Oscar was hunted for his hide? To protect Oscar and other alligators from poachers, Franklin D. Roosevelt designated the Okefenokee Swamp as a federal wildlife refuge in 1937.

Did you know Oscar's bones contain shotgun pellets? Oscar managed to survive! He was one tough gator!

Did you know Oscar liked to bask in the sun to warm up? Yep! And he liked to crawl in the water to cool off. Keep reading to find out why!