

OWNEY

tales from the rails

Produced
by
Soren Schafft and Glenn Lucas

Performed
by
Trace Adkins

Directed, Produced and Animated
by
Jerry Rees

Written
by
Jerry Rees and Stephen Michael Schwartz

Music and Lyrics Written and Produced
by
Stephen Michael Schwartz

Underscore Composed and Mixed
by
Chris Rhyne

Illustrated
by
Fred Cline

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PAGE 1

On most days, when Sam got home from school, he was happy.

But on this day, he was sad.

On most days, Sam threw squeak toys for his puppy to chase.

But on this day, there was no squeaking.

PAGE 2

Sam's Grandpa sat next to him. "This letter just arrived for you, my fine young sir!"

"It's not a *real* letter," grumbled Sam. "You just wrote it yourself."

"Well, that I did," admitted Grandpa. "But it still looks pretty real to me."

"It probably just says something like, *I love you, Sam*,'" fussed Sam.

"Astounding!" exclaimed Grandpa. "You must have X-ray eyes!"

Grandpa was trying to make Sam smile. It didn't work.

"What's the matter, Sam?" asked Grandpa.

PAGE 3

"Billy called our puppy a mutt..." mumbled Sam.

"What's wrong with that?" asked Grandpa. "He *is* a mutt. I like mutts!"

"But Billy said that mutts aren't worth a penny," pouted Sam.

"Aw, don't listen to that silliness," Grandpa chuckled. "A mutt's worth isn't measured by *money*. It's measured by qualities like charm and bravery, loyalty and smarts!"

"Really?" Sam sounded hopeful. Then he thought for a moment. "What is a mutt anyway?"

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"A mutt is a mix of different dog breeds," said Grandpa. "Mix a Dachshund and a Yorkie and you've got yourself a Dorkie!"

"A Dorkie?"

“Made you smile,” chuckled Grandpa. “You try.”

Sam mixed two more dog breeds. “What’s this one called?”

“A Newfypoo!”

Sam laughed out loud. His puppy barked happily.

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“A Newfypoo is what you get mixing a Newfoundland and a Poodle,” explained Grandpa. “I’ve seen Bowzers, Chiweenies, Pinny-Poos and Rat-A-Pins! All of them mutts, and each one more special than the next. But the most special mutt of all was a mix of Terrier and *mystery*.”

Sam’s eyes grew wide with wonder.

Grandpa’s eyes sparkled with mischief.

PAGE 6

“His name was Owney. Owney, the post office pooch!” announced Grandpa. “That’s a mail pouch he’s perched upon, full of important letters.”

“Wow! Where’d he get all those tags?” asked Sam.

“From postal workers all over the country and all over the world.”

“Postal workers like you, Grandpa?”

“You bet,” Grandpa grinned proudly.

PAGE 7

Sam scrunched his nose a little. “Are you making this up?”

“Not at all, Sam!” Grandpa insisted, holding up his right hand to swear it so. “Owney was a real dog and the story I’m about to tell you is true – as told to me by my own Grandpa who was there when it all happened!”

PAGE 8

“Look!” cried Sam. “My puppy is sitting on a bag just like Owney!”

“Well, what do you know,” chuckled Grandpa. “A pair of perching pooches. Say that five times fast!”

“No chance,” giggled Sam.

“Shall we start the story?” asked Grandpa.”

“Okay, Grandpa, but make sure my puppy can see.”

PAGE 9

“I’ll tell you what, Sam, you can turn the page,” said Grandpa. Sam was about to do just that when Grandpa added with a sense of mystery, “And, as you turn the page, let’s imagine that we’ve transported right into the middle of Owney’s town.”

PAGE 10

Sam’s eyes widened as a wonderful pop-up scene unfolded before them. “Where are we?”

“Albany, New York,” replied Grandpa. “This is definitely the right place to find Owney. But first we need to travel back to his time, over a hundred years ago – the late 1800’s. Back when most folks used a horse and buggy to get around instead of a car.”

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“We did it!” exclaimed Sam as the scene changed.

PAGE 12

“Is that puppy Owney?”

“That’s him all right,” smiled Grandpa. “Back when he was just a teensy thing.”

“He’s all alone. Where’s his owner?”

“Off in some other town, I figure,” sighed Grandpa. “You see, his owner worked at the Albany Post Office for awhile. But when he moved away, he left Owney behind.”

“Poor Owney!” cried Sam.

“Yup, pretty tough on the little pup,” nodded Grandpa. “Owney had every right to mope around and feel sorry for himself. But, like most mutts, he was pretty clever so instead of whinin’ over having no home, he made the Albany Post Office his new home.”

“He lived at the post office?”

“He moved right in!”

PAGE 13

“When Owney went to sleep at night, he could have complained about having no pillow but instead, he pretended that a pile of mailbags in the corner was a whole *mountain* of pillows. And he was the king of that mountain!”

“Good for Owney,” smiled Sam.

“For the rest of his life, mailbags were his favorite place to sleep.”

“Why’d he like them so much, Grandpa?”

“Nobody knows for sure, Sammy, but I figure it was because of those wonderful smells.”

“Smells?”

“Sure,” said Grandpa, “Back then, there were no computers or emails. You wrote a letter with a pencil or a pen on a real piece of paper.”

“Can you smell paper?” asked Sam.

PAGE 14

“Oh, without a doubt! When your Grandmother used to write me love letters, the paper always carried a whiff of her sweet-smelling perfume... Heavenly!” Grandpa inhaled deeply and made a silly smile, as if smelling the best thing ever.

“You’re funny, Grandpa,” Sam smiled.

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“And a dog’s nose is much more sensitive than yours or mine,” continued Grandpa, “so they detect even the tiniest smells. I’ll bet you Owney was lying there dreaming about all the smells his little puppy nose was sniffing from inside the bags – cherry pie, peanut brittle, the gentle scent of a rose garden, smoke from a campfire... small clues about who wrote all those letters and what they were doing at the time.”

PAGE 16

“Who’s that man?” asked Sam.

“Why, that’s mail clerk, Clark. He’s the newest member of the Albany Post Office, starting his very first day of work.”

“He looks surprised,” said Sam.

“Well, you’d be surprised, too, if a pile of mailbags started barking at you!” chuckled Grandpa.

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*“On the post office floor
Underneath a stack of mail
I thought I heard a “woof”
And then I saw his tail
When up from the pile
Popped the cutest puppy smile
That’s when I fell in love with Owney!”*

“Did Clark like Owney and take care of him?” asked Sam.

“Yes, indeed,” nodded Grandpa. “In fact, he declared himself to be Owney’s new owner!”

PAGE 18

“Before you know it, Owney’s cute little puppy smile had won the heart of every mail clerk in the Albany Post Office. They *all* became his owners!”

“All of them?” asked Sam in surprise.

“Every last one,” chuckled Grandpa. “From *no* owner to a whole *team* of owners. That little rascal had a way of turning things around. Clark and all his friends took care of Owney and shared their food with him. And Owney took great joy in watching them work – sorting the mail and locking the bags.”

“Why did they lock the bags, Grandpa?”

PAGE 19

“Because every piece of mail inside those bags was important, and they wanted to be sure that none of them were lost or stolen. It was very serious work, Sammy. But in the middle of all that seriousness, Owney made folks laugh. He even barked out orders and pretended to be in charge of the whole operation!”

“What kind of orders did he bark?” asked Sam.

“Well, I believe it went something like this – one woof...the out of town pile – two woofs...the in-town pile – three woofs...*lunch!*”

PAGE 20

“Owney often wondered, in his doggy way, where the bags went to when they were tossed onto the wagons and carried off.”

“Did he ever find out, Grandpa?”

To Sam’s delight, Grandpa answered by singing another little rhyme:

*“We stack all the mailbags
On the horse and cart
Head to the station
Where the trains depart
The mail car is loaded up
We hear the whistle blow
The call for “all aboard”
And away we go!”*

“Toot toot!” added Sam.

“Woof woof!” added his puppy.

PAGE 21

“One day Clark noticed that a mailbag was missing. Owney was missing, too!”

“Were they lost?” asked Sam.

“Well, the *bag* was lost,” explained Grandpa. “It had fallen off a wagon on the way to the train. But Owney wasn’t lost at all. He had seen the bag fall, and decided to stay behind to guard the U.S. Mail.”

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“That feisty little guy wouldn’t let anyone touch the mailbag unless they were wearing the proper postal uniform!”

“He was pretty smart, huh?”

“Newspapers called it ‘*an exhibition of excellent dog sense!*’. Not bad for a mutt.”

PAGE 23

“Wow, Owney looks a lot bigger now!” exclaimed Sam.

“Yup, Owney went from pup to grownup,” smiled Grandpa. “And, in the process, his bravery grew, too. So one day when that train whistle blew – *whoo-ooo* – Owney jumped *all aboard* with Mail Clerk Clark!”

“But I thought Clark worked at the post office,” said Sam.

“Well, Clark was just as curious about the big ol’ steam trains as Owney. So he got a job with the Railway Post Office. Now they could *both* accompany the mail by rail.”

PAGE 24

“Did Owney like riding the train?”

“What could be better? A buddy at his side, sharing lip-smackin’ snacks... A pile of postal pouches to perch upon...”

“Not another tongue twister, Grandpa...” snickered Sam.

“Sorry, Sammy, sorta slipped out,” Grandpa grinned. “But the best part of Owney’s new adventure was discovering that there was a great big world out there. Bigger than anything he had ever imagined! Going miles farther than his doggy paws could ever take him! And this hissing, rumbling, rocking train would let him explore it all!”

PAGE 25

“Owney’s canine eyes spied many new wonders like this crane rig called *mail-on-the-fly*. To save time, the postal workers used a special catcher-arm to snag mailbags while the train was still chuggin’ along!”

PAGE 26

“After they snagged a bag of *incoming* mail, they’d kick a bag of *outgoing* mail right off the train.”

“Sounds fun!” exclaimed Sam.

“And tricky,” added Grandpa. “Put the catcher-arm out too early and it could slam into a telegraph pole, ripping right off the train! Too late, and you’d miss the bag. A missed mailbag would get five points counted against a clerk.”

“Like a bad grade?”

PAGE 27

“Yup. And I guess Owney didn’t want his friends to get bad grades,” said Grandpa. “Newspapers tell stories of him barkin’ at tired postal clerks who’d fallen asleep, so they’d wake up and remember to catch the mail.”

“Good for Owney!” said Sam.

PAGE 28

“Once they got the new mail aboard the train, Clark and all the other clerks sorted it and bagged it just like they did back home in Albany. To Owney’s delight, he was riding in a *moving post office!*”

PAGE 29

“When the train arrived at the town of Boston, Owney was in for a big surprise. Boston had its very own post office.”

“Like the one in Albany?”

“The building looked a little different, but it was full of friendly mail clerks who wore the same uniforms that Owney was used to seeing. And, just like in Albany, they sorted envelopes and stuffed mailbags, and, most importantly of all, *shared their food with Owney!* Even though he was far away from home, that little mutt felt right at home.”

“Now he had *two* homes!” smiled Sam.

“And Owney would soon discover that there were homes like this waiting for him all over the country.”

PAGE 30

“Every time the train reached a new town, there’d be another United States Post Office with mail clerks who had heard how clever Owney was. They were all happy to call him family.”

“That’s a pretty big family,” Sam guessed.

“In the thousands!” boasted Grandpa.

PAGE 31

“And many of those good people gave Owney special tags and prizes to show how much they liked him. This shiny tag was presented to him in Boston.”

PAGE 32

“Where did Owney keep all the tags?”

“He let folks attach them to his collar. He was rightly proud!”

PAGE 33

“Owney loved to stand for hours in the door of the mail coach as the train chugged across the country. One day he saw a steamboat delivering mail. Sort of a postal paddlewheel.”

“The mail went on trains *and* boats?” asked Sam.

PAGE 34

“Plus streetcars. And dogsleds!” exclaimed Grandpa.

“Naw...” snickered Sam. “Puppy doesn’t believe you either.”

“Truth!” promised Grandpa.

PAGE 35

“Up in Michigan’s snowy north, they used dog power to get the mail through. And let’s not forget mustangs.”

“Like dad’s car?” asked Sam.

PAGE 36

“Like a tough little *horse* called a mustang. It belonged to a young lady mail carrier who rode a sixteen mile delivery loop next to Loop Loop Creek, believe it or not, up in northern Washington. They called her ‘Plucky Miss Malott’.”

PAGE 37

*“Plucky Miss Malott, Plucky Miss Malott
 Gives the post office everything she's got
 And only on Christmas lets her horse trot
 But that's the way it is with Plucky Miss Malott
 Up until now I most forgot
 That hard drivin' dame
 With the cute little name
 But don't call her cute
 You might get yourself shot
 Or a kick from the boot of
 Plucky Miss Malott, Plucky Miss Malott, Plucky Miss Malott.”*

PAGE 38

“Owney became a celebrated traveler,” continued Grandpa, “using the railway system to cross the whole United States again and again, from city to city and state to state just like the U.S. Mail!” And Grandpa rhymed –

*“Boston, Brooklyn, Wichita
 Denver, Dayton, Omaha
 Ashland, Oakland, San Jose
 Nashville, Knoxville, Oyster Bay!”*

PAGE 39

“What was Owney’s favorite place?” asked Sam.

“He was plenty happy wherever he went,” shrugged Grandpa. “A Kentucky newspaper put it this way – *the effete East, the burly West, the languid South and the energetic North are all the same to his dogship.*”

“His *dogship?*” laughed Sam.

PAGE 40

“You heard me,” teased Grandpa. “It’s written on this lucky horseshoe tag he was awarded in Baltimore, Maryland. Why, he was declared *‘First In Everything’* by this tag from Boston, Massachusetts. Down in El Paso, Texas, the folks gave him a silver token that was good for one drink at the parlor. And in Corry, Pennsylvania, he even got a 25 cent coin!”

“Did he spend it?” asked Sam.

“He saved it,” said Grandpa, sounding very proud of Owney. “Like all his other tags.”

PAGE 41

“Even though Owney loved the adventure and friendship and gifts that came from riding the rails, it wasn’t all fun and games,” declared Grandpa, sounding a little more serious than usual. “One time Owney took a train up north to Montreal, Canada, all by himself.”

“Why’d he do that?” Sam wondered.

PAGE 42

“Well, maybe he wanted to see a big ol’ moose, or hear a goose honk in French,” mused Grandpa. “But when the train got back home, and the door of the mail car opened, what do you think Clark saw?”

“Owney?” Sam guessed.

PAGE 43

“There was *no* Owney!” exclaimed Grandpa. “And Clark started to worry himself into a knot! He knew that sometimes there were wrecks and train derailments. Once in a while trains even got held up by robbers who’d break in and take whatever they thought was worth stealing.”

“Did Owney get held up?” gasped Sam.

“Sort of...” said Grandpa. “But not by robbers...”

PAGE 44

“Is Owney in prison?” asked Sam.

“I guess you could call a kennel dog prison,” said Grandpa. “When Owney’s train crossed the border into Canada and reached Montreal, he followed the mailbags to the local post office, which was his usual habit. Seemed like a good idea. But wouldn’t you know it, they locked him up!”

“I’ll bet Owney wasn’t happy about that,” muttered Sam.

“You got that right,” Grandpa agreed. “He was a freedom loving mutt. He wanted out. And he missed his friends. Without Clark, Owney was lonely...”

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“And without Owney, Clark was lonely,” sighed Grandpa. Then he sang in a wonderfully wistful way –

*“When you go traveling with Owney
You’re never in a lonely world
Wherever Owney goes
A chain of friendship grows
He jingles when he walks
That’s his stamp of approval.”*

*“You could never find a better cmony
To join you on your daily ride
If the weather turns bad
There’s no need getting sad
As long as Owney’s by your side.”*

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“Did they ever let Owney go?” asked Sam.

“Well, first there was a bit of a fuss,” Grandpa explained. “The Montreal folks sent a letter to the Albany folks, explaining that they had Owney locked up.

“What did the Albany folks do?”

“They sent a letter back to the Montreal folks sayin’ *let the dog go!*”

“Did they let him go?”

“No. The Montreal folks sent a letter back to the Albany folks saying that first they wanted to be paid for the food and lodging they had provided Owney.”

Sam scratched his head. “But if they hadn’t locked Owney in a cage in the first place, they wouldn’t have had to feed him at all.”

PAGE 47

“I agree with your logic, Sam,” chuckled Grandpa. “But, the Canadian Postmaster insisted that Owney would not be set free until the Montreal Post Office had been paid back for Owney’s keep – every last cent!”

“How much money?” asked Sam. “A thousand dollars?”

“A whopping two dollars and fifty cents!” declared Grandpa. “I know that doesn’t sound like much, but back then folks didn’t get paid a lot of money. So to them it was a big deal. Clark and his mail clerk friends all pitched in a few pennies each and raised the money to buy Owney’s freedom.”

PAGE 48

“Everyone was so pleased to have Owney back that they gave him even more tags!”

“He must have been happy,” smiled Sam.

“Happy and *heavy*,” Grandpa groaned. “Too heavy! By now there were five or six pounds of kindness hung around that little pup’s neck. He needed some protection from all that affection!”

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“Well, the hero who saved the day was none other than the head of the whole United States Post Office, Postmaster General John Wanamaker!”

“Wow!”

“Always alert to improve things, the Postmaster had a special harness made that would spread the weight more evenly. The tags were no longer a pain in the neck.”

PAGE 50

“Owney was free to run and play. And his jingles made music, so they say! When Owney trotted into town, folks could hear him coming. The way they told it, *he jingled like the bells on a junk wagon.*”

“A *junk wagon*?” asked Sam. “That sounds a little mean.”

“Aw, Owney was rough around the edges and he seemed to like it,” said Grandpa with a twinkle in his eye.

PAGE 51

“He made quite a stir when he went *cling-clanging* right smack into the middle of a fancy dog show!”

“Did they kick him out?” asked Sam.

“No, sir, they made Owney welcome at many exclusive dog shows! The *people* did, that is. The fancy *dogs* probably would have kicked him out if they could.”

PAGE 52

Then Grandpa showed Sam a clipping from an old newspaper. “Listen to what was written about Owney when he visited a San Francisco dog show in 1893 – ‘*Owney isn’t out for a prize, just merely for a visit. Speaking about this to a reporter, Owney said that he had never made any pretensions to a pedigree or any noble ancestry. He just simply wishes it impressed on the minds of the people that he is an example of what a dog can do for himself if he will only try.*’”

PAGE 53

“Did Owney really talk to a reporter?” Sam gasped.

“I reckon the reporter exaggerated that part of the story a teensy bit,” Grandpa winked.

“I thought so,” smiled Sam. “Did Owney ever win a medal?”

“He did, indeed! That same year in Los Angeles, Owney won a special medal at the fifth annual bench show. They described ‘*his point of superiority being that he was the best traveled dog in the whole show.*’”

“Maybe my puppy will win a medal someday, too,” Sam whispered excitedly.

PAGE 54

“By train and by trot, Owney crossed these United States many a time. Even Mexico played host to his joyous jingles. But now it was time to circle the Earth!”

“He went around the whole world?” asked Sam in amazement.

“He *raced* around the whole world,” nodded Grandpa. “Just five years earlier, a man named Mr. Train – and I’m not kidding, Mr. George Francis Train – had traveled around the world in just 67 days. He left from Tacoma, Washington and wound up *back* in Tacoma, Washington. They put up a shiny plaque in that town to celebrate his accomplishment. If Owney could beat that record, it would sure make the news!”

PAGE 55

“So, on August 19, 1895, Owney left Tacoma for his own world tour. The trip was organized by Assistant Postmaster Stockings.”

“Hey! Wait a minute,” Sam cried. “Stockings is *our* last name!”

“That’s right, Sam. Your Great-Great-Grandpa Stockings was one of Owney’s great friends.”

“Wow! So this really is a true story!!!”

“Like I’ve been sayin’,” grinned Grandpa. “Owney was given luggage so he could pack his doggy things.”

“Did he bring a squeak toy?”

PAGE 56

“He brought a blanket, a brush, a comb, and some of his extra fancy tags. When Owney jangled up the gangway of the good ship Victoria, hundreds of people cheered him on!”

“But he liked riding on trains,” said Sam. “How did they get him on a ship?”

“Steamboats like The Victoria carried mail on the oceans where trains couldn’t go,” explained Grandpa. “So there were lots of mailbags aboard for Owney to sleep on.”

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“Out at sea, Owney was treated like a king. He had free access to the kitchen and was invited to dine with the ship’s Captain! They feasted on plumduff and lobscouse, and –”

“Plum-*what?* And lob-*what?*” asked Sam, who looked very confused. “Did you make up those words, Grandpa?”

“Now I don’t use made up words for a true story, Sam,” chuckled Grandpa. “Plum pudding and meat stew with biscuits is all that means. And they ate so many other tasty treats, I can’t even begin to tell you.”

PAGE 58

“And Owney didn’t have to pay for any of it,” Sam smiled. “Because he was just a dog.”

“Well, in a way he did work for his meals,” Grandpa corrected him.

“What kind of work?”

“He was the official rat catcher!”

“Gross...”

“Well, it made the cook very happy not to have rats scurrying around in the kitchen,” replied Grandpa. “And when the cook was happy, Owney got more food!”

PAGE 59

“When Owney arrived in Japan, the officials were very impressed with his decorations! They thought he must be either a dog of very high rank, or the property of a distinguished person. Owney was given a passport bearing the personal seal of his Imperial Majesty, the Mikado!”

“Who was he?” asked Sam.

“The Emperor of Japan,” explained Grandpa. “Ruler of the whole country. He gave Owney permission to enter Japan. But inside the passport there was a list of certain rules Owney was expected to obey during his visit.”

“Like not jumping on the couch?” asked Sam.

PAGE 60

“Owney was forbidden from riding a horse while carrying fire,” said Grandpa.

“What?!”

“He was also asked not to drive too fast on narrow roads. I have a hunch Owney would have obeyed both of those rules, even if he hadn’t been asked...”

PAGE 61

“Owney’s journey took him from the United States to Japan, then on to China, Singapore, Suez, Algiers, Azores, and finally all the way back to where he started.”

“Did he break the world record?” asked Sam anxiously.

“Well, no, Owney took longer than 67 days,” admitted Grandpa. “Circling the globe took him a full 132 days. But everyone agreed that it was still a rightly rapid rate of travel for a dog who attracted so much attention.”

PAGE 62

“Along the way, Owney met lots of nice folk who made a fuss over him, scratchin’ his head and the like, which means a lot to a dog. And he collected over two hundred new tags, medals and certificates to add to his collection!”

“What a lucky dog!” exclaimed Sam.

“You know, I’ll bet that’s exactly how he felt, Sam,” smiled Grandpa.

PAGE 63

“Owney, who was now called ‘The Globe Trotter’, and who was probably the best-known and the most popular dog in the whole wide world, was happy to be back home.”

“He looks a little tired,” said Sam.

“Well, by this time he was getting on in years,” explained Grandpa. “He limped a bit and had lost the sight in one eye. He figured it was time to retire from so much traveling.”

“Was he old like you, Grandpa?” asked Sam.

PAGE 64

“Old and scruffy, just like me,” laughed Grandpa. “Yup, I think Owney was starting to look at those Albany mailbags the same way I look at our couch these days – a cozy refuge upon which to park the ol’ caboose, if you get my drift.”

“I wonder if he snored like you?” snickered Sam.

“You probably couldn’t tell us apart!” grinned Grandpa. “Owney took one more trip way out west to San Francisco in 1897. He attended a convention of the National Association of Railway Clerks. Well, these were all his old friends, his family – thousands of them – the whole audience! And when Owney took center stage they went nuts! They gave him a rousing, fifteen-minute ovation! They cheered! They clapped! They whistled!”

PAGE 65

“Even Clerk Clark?”

“Especially Clerk Clark!” said Grandpa, launching into a tongue twister. “Clerk Clark clapped continuously, creating a crazy commotion at the convention! Say that five times fast!”

“No way!” Sam kidded.

Grandpa’s voice turned thoughtful now. “Of all the awards Owney had received during his whole lifetime, this display of affection was the greatest by far. The best reward.”

PAGE 66

“To this day, folks still celebrate Owney’s amazing life,” smiled Grandpa, “in books and museums and even in *song*.”

Sam cuddled with his puppy and listened happily as Grandpa sang.

PAGE 67

*"I'm a post office clerk
 Here in Albany, New York
 Devoted to my work
 Busy as a stork
 Making sure the mail
 Gets to every neighborhood
 Now here's where the story gets good!"*

*"On the post office floor
 Underneath a stack of mail
 I thought I heard a "woof"
 And then I saw his tail
 When up from the pile
 Popped the cutest puppy smile
 That's when I fell in love with Owney!"*

*"When you go traveling with Owney
 You're never in a lonely world
 Wherever Owney goes
 A chain of friendship grows
 He jingles when he walks
 That's his stamp of approval!"*

*"You could never find a better crony
 To join you on your daily ride
 If the weather turns bad
 There's no need getting sad
 As long as Owney's by your side!"*

*"We stack all the mailbags
 On the horse and cart
 Head to the station
 Where the trains depart
 The mail car is loaded up
 And when the whistle blows
 Owney hops aboard
 And away he goes
 And so the legend grows
 All aboard!!!!"*

*"Everywhere he goes in this great big nation
 Owney gets a token of appreciation
 Everywhere he goes in this great big nation
 Owney gets a token of appreciation!"*

*“Owney has been honored
From Seattle to Quebec
With tokens of affection
Proudly placed round his neck
I’ve never seen a dog
Command so much respect
Let’s hear it for our post office pooch!”*

*“Everybody’s talkin’ ‘bout Owney
The pride of the US Mail
Bags are tossed about
Trains go in and out
But Owney knows exactly
The route to be taken!”*

*“Yankee Doodle riding on his pony
Would buckle under such a strain
But when the whistle blows
Everybody knows
Owney’s riding on that train
Yes, when the whistle blows
Everybody knows
Owney’s riding on that train!”*

*“Boston, Brooklyn, Wichita
Denver, Dayton, Omaha
Ashland, Oakland, San Jose
Nashville, Knoxville, Oyster Bay”*

*“Flagstaff, Evansville, Muncie, Queens
Albuquerque, Lancaster, New Orleans
Louisville, Jackson Hole, Syracuse
Pasadena, Little Rock, Baton Rouge”*

“Go little Owney! Good luck little pup!”

PAGE 68

“How did Owney’s story make you feel, Sam?” asked Grandpa.

“Like I’m proud to own a mutt!” exclaimed Sam.

“Have you picked a name for your puppy yet?” inquired Grandpa.

“Tags!”

“Ah, a fine choice,” nodded Grandpa. “Now, if you don’t mind, I’ll just open that letter I brought you earlier today, and – why lookie-here! It’s a pair of tickets for Sam and Tags, good for one ride on the Owney Express!”

“No it’s not,” snickered Sam. “You’re just joking.”

PAGE 69

“Okay, you busted me, Sam,” winked Grandpa. “I am joking about the tickets. But I’m one hundred and infinity percent serious about that train ride! Let’s go!”

“Can we start in Albany?” Sam asked, hugging Tags with excitement.

“Albany station!!! All aboard!!!” bellowed Grandpa.

“Toot-toot!” hooted Sam.

“Woof-woof!” barked Tags.

Jingle-jangle, added Owney from across the years.