



## A Small Dog's Big Life: Around the World with Owney

By Irene Kelly



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From 1889-1897 a small dog captured the public's imagination - Owney, a stray who wandered into an Albany, NY Post Office. Owney became a world traveller, at first accompanying mailbags around the United States and then setting sail around the globe. His travels were followed by newspapers in many countries. His irresistible spirit won hearts wherever he went. In fictional letters, newspaper accounts, and lively watercolour paintings, Irene Kelly tells the colourful story of an irresistible celebrity.

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 4—In 1889, a winsome stray wandered into a post office in Albany, NY, where he was quickly adopted by the staff. His intrepid spirit soon led him to jump aboard the mail cars of various trains and travel to post offices all over the country, where clerks gave him tags to commemorate his visits. His adventures captured the public's imagination and, in 1895, he made a trip around the world as the official mascot of the U.S. Postal Service. Kelly tells Owney's story through fictional letters written by people who may have encountered the dog along his journey. In most cases, the voices are lively and distinctive, although they suffer at times from the necessity of stilted explanations, and some of the typefaces are difficult to read. The two maps included are fairly useful, but the one depicting Owney's U.S. travels lacks a key. The watercolor illustrations are serviceable, but facial expressions (both canine and human) are disappointingly bland and uniform. An author's note ties the story together, separates fact from fiction, and reveals the slightly disturbing details of Owney's demise. Overall, this is an effective treatment of a tale that's strange but true. Young dog lovers will be fascinated.—*Rachael Vilmar, Atlanta Fulton Public Library, GA*  
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From [Booklist](#)

PreS-Gr. 2. From the time the scruffy dog strayed into the post office of Albany, New York, in 1889, Owney became the office mascot. For seven years he rode the mail trains he loved, traveling about 143,000 miles across the U.S and collecting more than 1,000 commemorative mail tags from the clerks. He even boarded a steamship for a voyage to the Far East and Egypt. Now those mail tags are part of a special exhibit at the National Postal Museum, which also includes a taxidermist's model of Owney. In fictionalized letters and newspaper accounts, illustrated by lively watercolor paintings, Kelly recounts the story of the dog who traveled the world and returned each time to cozy welcome in the post office. The lively pictures evoke both the daring adventure and the warm story about those who loved the mutt with strong, spindly legs and "a straggly, but waggly, tail." *Hazel Rochman*  
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Review

In fictionalized...accounts, illustrated by lively watercolor paintings, Kelly recounts the story of the dog who traveled the world... -- *Booklist, July 1, 2005*

Overall, this is an effective treatment of a tale that's strange but true. Young dog lovers will be fascinated. -- *School Library Journal, August 2005*

The unorthodox format is well suited to spark interest in... reading and writing...both in and out of the classroom. -- *Kirkus, June 1, 2005*

Using a liberal variety of fonts and writing styles alongside her bright, mixed-media drawings, Kelly develops a kaleidoscopic story... -- *Kirkus Reviews*

### Users Review

From reader reviews:

**Cindy Martin:**

As people who live in the modest era should be update about what going on or facts even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era which can be always change and move forward. Some of you maybe can update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what type you should start with. This A Small Dog's Big Life: Around the World with Owney is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and need in this era.

**Gregory Howard:**

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