

MUDMAN

The Okefenokee swamp is the largest fresh water ecosystem in North America. Located in the states of Georgia and Florida in the southern United States, it is a mysterious place with stories and legends handed down through generations. The men working the swamp for a living report strange sightings of a creature covered in mud and vegetation which vanishes underwater when approached. They call this creature Mudman.

Mudman was a human who lived in a small shack in the swamp. After living in isolation for forty years, he gave his soul to the afterlife. His body was eaten by alligators, his spirit joined the swamp, where he appears as a monster. He stalks his victims and at the opportune time drags them to their deaths, suffocating them in the mud. He leaves their bodies to be consumed by the creatures living in the bog.

Inhumane screams are heard as Mudman's troubled spirit deals with the deaths of his innocent targets, as he has not lost the human emotion of caring. He had been a gentle man in life and this trait remains in the afterlife. His shack is still a fixture in the swamp, where his animal friends gather to listen to his tales of how he used to hunt the creatures he now calls his friends. His tales attract all swamp inhabitants, large and small. He seeks forgiveness from the bullfrogs for eating their legs, the alligators for selling their hides, and the snakes he killed for sport.

The mudman is caught between two worlds, the human and the spiritual, not willing to give up either. His spiritual presence explores the swamp, seen as a misty fog. His physical form appears as a monster willing to sacrifice those who populate the swamp, snatching their lives.

Many have sought the truth about Mudman, entering the swamp at night never to return, leaving their questions unanswered. The legend of the Okefenokee swamp will not be in dispute when you become his next victim.

MUDMAN GOES ON VACATION

Except for the occasional croak of the bullfrog, the swamp was quiet. Mudman was tired and bored, in need of a holiday. He gathered his friends from the bog and told them of his plans. He was going to Louisiana to vacation in the bayou. He said he wanted to bask in the most disgusting smelling mud known to exist in a bog and the swamp there was thick with weeds he could immerse himself in. This trip sounded just like something he needed. His friends wanted to go with him, but he refused their company. Mudman wanted to go it alone. He needed time to reflect on his life in the swamp and where it was taking him.

The day of departure arrived, and Mudman's friends gathered to see him off. His spirit left the Okefenokee swamp and after a brief time, he found himself buried in the glorious mud of the bayou. His senses were heightened by the rich smell of the muck and seaweed the marsh offered. Rotten fish filled the swamp, providing an unending supply of food to gorge on while he was here. Before long, the creatures that occupied the bayou realized they had a special visitor, as it was not often a mudman came to visit. The visitor basked in the attention he received from this group.

Darkness fell in the swamp. This was the time of day the Mudman craved, as his lust to find victims and bury them in the mud was the strongest at nightfall. He longed to suffocate his prey and steal their souls

for his own personal gain. Mudman wallowed in the stinking ooze. He rose from the bottom of the bayou, seaweed and mud dripping off his head sending feelings of pleasure throughout his body.

Suddenly the sound of a motor boat approaching caught his attention. Mudman froze and then disappeared under the water. He waited for the opportune time to make this man his first victim of the bayou. Mudman rose from the water, pulling the man out of his moving boat and drowning him in the mud. The swamp monster left the man's body for his bayou friends to eat, a token of appreciation for being so kind to him.

Mudman enjoyed his vacation immensely but was glad to get home to familiar surroundings. His friends were happy to see him, as life in the swamp returned to normal. Everyone was relieved Mudman was back in the Okefenokee swamp.

ANOTHER DAY IN THE SWAMP

The sweltering summer sun rose over the Okefenokee swamp. The Mudman woke, the rich smell of the bog dominating his senses. He knew it was going to be a good day. He decided he would treat himself to a nice long mud bath before beginning his morning. He lay in the bottom of the swamp letting the mud cover his body, instilling a sense of well being. He snacked on his favorite food, rotten fish, while he wallowed in the bog. He was the de facto leader of the swamp, the other inhabitants looking to him for guidance in their daily affairs.

The swamp monster called his governing committee together. The members included the bullfrog who was always croaking his big mouth off, the alligator who could never find enough to eat, the snake who was always whining about the bad reputation he had, and the giant snail who acted as an alternate. The Mudman made the final decisions on important issues. The lowly fish, especially the carp, were at the bottom of the totem pole having no one on the committee representing their interests.

The meeting was held at Mudman's shack, the upcoming alligator hunt on the agenda. This hunt was a deadly game between man and beast, typically the beasts being the only casualties. The thought of losing an innocent member of his adored swamp family made Mudman angry. The Mudman arranged a series of classes, with the senior alligators as facilitators, to teach the unwary reptiles of the dangers of the hunt and how to avoid being caught.

Mudman would also be involved in the hunt, waiting in ambush for hunters out alone at night. As these men shine their powerful flashlights searching for alligators, he will strike dragging the poor unsuspecting victims into the mud. Once suffocated, Mudman will leave their bodies to feed his swamp family in retribution for their crimes.

The committee also discussed the upcoming swamp games. These are friendly competitions which assess the skills of various species; the winners awarded prizes, usually their favorite food. In addition, the governing body talked about the annual clean up, where trash would be picked up from the bottom of the bog and taken to the swamp's landfill. This dump was a deserted hull of a boat which sunk in the swamp during a hurricane twenty years ago.

The meeting ended and the committee members went on their way happy with what they had accomplished. Night fell and the only sound heard was the bullfrog as he happily feasted on insects. The

full moon shone on the lily pads, a reminder of the swamp's beauty that takes backstage to the dark side of this mysterious place.

MUDMAN MEETS MUDWOMAN

The swamps inhabitants were excited, the mudman had a date. He had been introduced to a mudwoman when he visited a friend in a neighboring swamp. She was the widow of a mudman who lost his life when he got caught in a machine that cuts weeds from the bottom of the river. He was chewed up and deposited on a barge being pulled behind the boat, a common way for swamp creatures to lose their lives.

Her name was Mable, and she was on a man hunt, finally free from her abusive husband who had treated her like dirt. She was ready to hookup with a slimy mudman, to feel his seaweed in her hair and sense the sweet smelling mud emanating from his body. Mudman was excited at the prospect of having a woman he could call his own.

Mudman treated Mable to his hot mud spa and fed her hard to find rotten carp for lunch. He told her how beautiful she was and how adorable she smelled. She knew what he wanted, and she was not ready to give it up until concessions were made regarding their future. She told the mudman she would stay celibate until marrying. He told her he understood, but he was not ready for marriage. She wanted to continue dating but with no intimacy involved. He agreed to this arrangement, but said he wanted to be free to date other mudwomen should the opportunity arise. Mable agreed to these terms, hoping this handsome mudman would change his mind and marry her.

Mudman had no plans to get married, as the last thing he needed was a controlling wife to watch his every move. He was afraid she would limit his freedom and be opposed to him being the ruler of the swamp. He was not willing to stop preying on victims and making them members of the bog underground by slowing drowning them in his mud hell.

After a few weeks, the mudman decided dating was not for him and the appeal of having a girlfriend passed. He broke up with Mabel and returned to his old ways in the swamp, enjoying the company of his friends. His leadership was respected by the swamp community, instilling a sense of pride for his accomplishments. He could never give up this life, living in the mud of the Okefenokee swamp.

CATASTROPHY IN THE SWAMP

The relentless sun beat down on the swamp, evaporating water from the unusually dry environment. The prolonged drought caused the mudman to move farther into the bog to find the disappearing vegetation. The swamp creatures were being crowded into smaller areas as the waters receded.

The low water levels coincided with the alligator hunt, which the humans took full advantage of. Unfortunately, Mudman's friend the alligator soon became a victim; shot in the head by a hunter, his hide harvested and sold.

Many swamp inhabitants that lived in Mudman's district were forced to leave, searching for deeper water. This left the swamp monster sad, as his kingdom grew smaller, causing the mudman great distress. This was his ancestral home, and he would dry up and die before he would leave.

The days passed; the drought worsened. The mudman refused to leave, his will to live growing weaker each day. Starvation might be the end of him. Then a miracle happened. The rains returned saving the mudman and the few swamp creatures that remained, giving them a second chance at life. The swamp soon returned to normal, and the mudman's former friends came back, restoring his dynasty.

The mudman aged gracefully, but his short life soon ended. His friends in the swamp realized he was gone after not seeing or hearing from him for over a week. They knew he was resting peacefully in the bottom of the swamp, his beloved mud now his grave. It was exactly where he wanted to be.

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