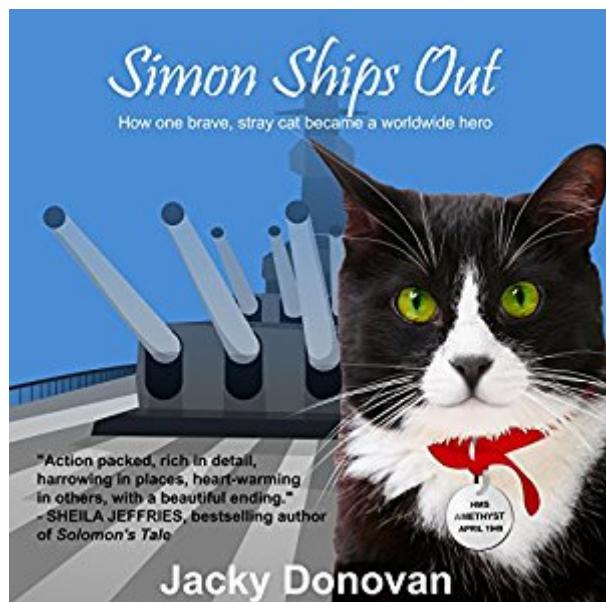


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# Simon Ships Out: How One Brave, Stray Cat Became A Worldwide Hero: Based On A True Story



## **Synopsis**

When Simon, an orphaned young cat, is smuggled on board HMS Amethyst, his simple life amidst the streets of Hong Kong is transformed into an adventure fit for heroes. Bringing joy and compassion to those on board, Simon is the only puss to have been awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal, the highest honour for animal gallantry in wartime. Based on the true events of Amethyst's Yangtze Incident, Simon's quirky yet emotional cat's-eye narrative is sure to move and entertain all who listen to it.

## **Book Information**

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

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## **Customer Reviews**

British author Jacky Donovan, originally from Southampton but now living in London, is a regular contributor to Huffington Post and Sabotage Times. But her love of cats and her inimitably keen sense of humor and the appreciation of the rare camaraderie between animals and humans have resulted in this her second novel **SIMON SHIPS OUT** (her first novel **'INSTANT WHIPS AND DREAM TOPPPINGS -A TRUE LIFE DOM ROM COM** is still very popular). In addition to her literary career Jacky works for charity fundraising for Breast Cancer and Gay Pride - while hopping between London and Gran Canarias, experiencing more derring-do than most. She is a colorful personality who happens to write very well! To fully appreciate this novel, based on fact, and narrated by the cat named Simon, a bit of history helps appreciate the extensive research Jacky has done. 'Simon was found wandering the dockyards of Hong Kong in March 1948 by 17-year-old Ordinary Seaman George Hickinbottom, a member of the crew of the British frigate HMS Amethyst stationed in the city

in the late 1940s. At this stage, it is thought Simon was approximately a year old, and was very undernourished and unwell. Hickinbottom smuggled the cat aboard ship, and Simon soon ingratiated himself with the crew and officers, particularly because he was adept at catching and killing rats on the lower decks. Simon rapidly gained a reputation for cheekiness, leaving presents of dead rats in sailors' beds, and sleeping in the captain's cap. The crew viewed Simon as a lucky mascot, and when the ship's commander changed later in 1948, the outgoing Ian Griffiths left the cat for his successor Lieutenant Commander Bernard Skinner, who took an immediate liking to the friendly animal.

The little cat's story begins while sitting outside at the harbor on Hong Kong's Stonecutters Island, near fishermen who sometimes give it a little fish, in a harbor filled with giant ships. It's also telling of other cats (eg. JoJo, Uboat, Chairman) in the area, exchanging stories with each other - except for Chairman. Chairman is very territorial and gets angry at trespassers. The others are international travelers. And then something grabs his tail - it's a human (George) with warm hands, and he's soon carrying the little cat onto a ship, or rather sneaking the little cat on board. And soon afterwards, the little cat has a name - 'Simon.' George soon is asleep, snoring along with other humans nearby, and a bit later a furry dog (Peggy) appears - she's a regular on the ship and not like the mean dogs on shore that bark and chase cats. Simon then follows Peggy for a tour of the HMS Amethyst, a destroyer that had made it through WWII. Peggy's friendship with Simon quickly convinces the Captain that Simon should be treated well, and the danger of being thrown overboard as an unwanted stowaway passes. He's then assigned the duty of 'rat catcher' and given the rank of Ordinary Seaman. And then everyone prepares for patrol duty to protect British interests around the Straits of Malaysia. Simon quickly ingratiates himself with the crew, particularly through his skill at catching and killing rats. There was no doubt what was happening - Simon would often leave presents of dead rats in sailors' beds and sleep in the captain's cap. Official orders than mandated that the Amethyst travel up the Yangtze River to Nanjing. Once there, Communist guns opened fire, with one round landing in the captain's cabin - killing the captain and seriously wounding Simon.

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