



# Powder Monkey

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[Robert Dunbar](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

?I had gone away to sea, faced terrible perils and survived.? Thus 13-year-old Samuel Witchall, the ?powder monkey? of the title, in the closing pages of this debut novel. It is a conclusion reached only after the young boy has undergone some horrific experiences on the Royal Navy frigate called Miranda. The year is 1800, British warships are patrolling the seas between France and Spain and conditions on board are primitive and harsh. Samuel?s story is one of initiation into such cruelties, his witnessing of numerous unfeeling acts of violence and degradation ? but also one from which he gradually learns something of the nature of friendship and loyalty. While some of the more grotesque characters and incidents in the novel touch on the stereotypical, there are some highly atmospheric moments. Best of all occurs when the frigate docks at Gibraltar and the Governor and family are entertained on the ship: the nuances of petty snobbery and social positioning are skilfully and wittily portrayed. Dowswell?s is an engrossing novel, a perfect introduction to the sort of maritime yarn familiar from a writer such as Patrick O?Brian.

Running Order:

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