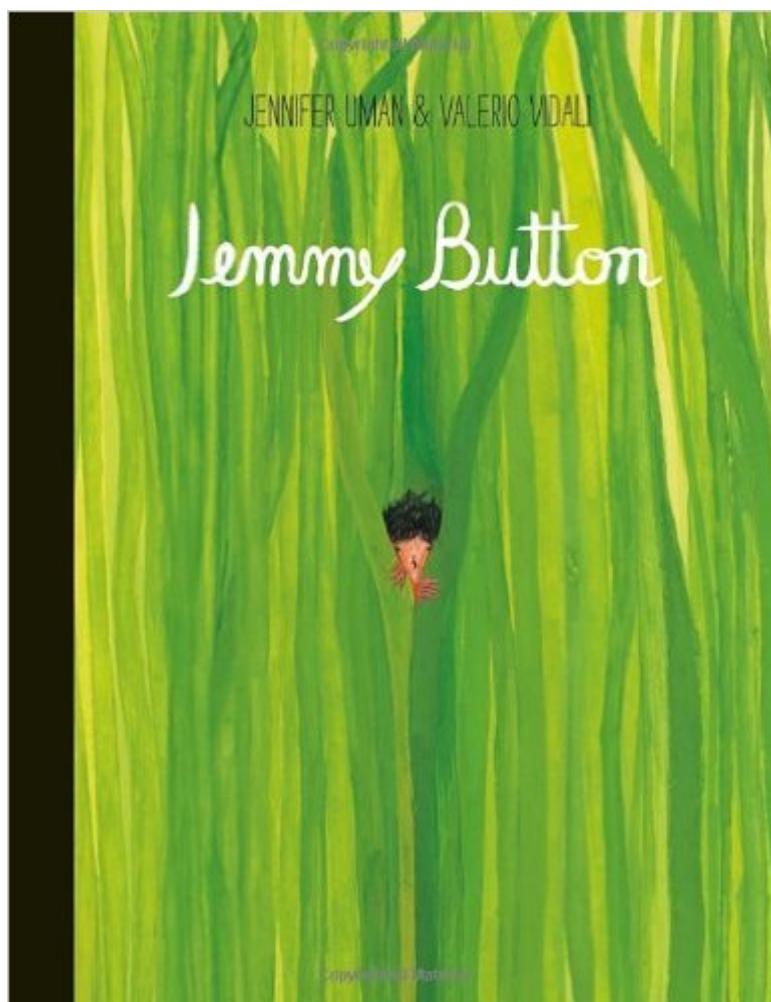


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# Jemmy Button



## Synopsis

A beautiful collaboration based on a true story. Exchanged for the single mother-of-pearl button that gave him his nickname, an indigenous Tierra del Fuego boy named Orundellico spent many years in England in the early 1800s as part of a failed experiment in forced civilization. Less a biography than an attempt to represent this alienating experience from Jemmy's point of view, it is distinguished by lyrical prose-poetry ("Come away with us and taste our language, see the lights of our world," the British explorers tell Jemmy) and intensely creative and beautifully conceived paintings. On matte pages, Jemmy, a paper-doll figure with red ochre skin and curly black hair, walks naked through throngs of top-hatted and gowned silhouettes, all the same shade of blue. His guardians buy him clothes and take him to concerts, but the paintings show him always set apart from his companions. "Jemmy felt almost at home. Almost, but not quite." As a snapshot of colonial betrayal, it evokes regret, longing, guilt, and awe--an assortment of feelings that might make the book more attractive to grownups than to children. - Publishers Weekly

## Book Information

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Templar; First Edition edition (March 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763664871

ISBN-13: 978-0763664879

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 0.5 x 12.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,244,105 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #113 in Â Books > Children's Books > Biographies > European #179 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Dysfunctional Relationships #336 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Abuse

Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 12

## Customer Reviews

I don't know what young children are supposed to make of this story. That a young boy from Tierra del Fuego got the opportunity to travel to England, learn the language and other customs, be a celebrity, and that it was all a grand adventure? But afterwards, despite their best intentions, the

boy reverted back to a naked savage? Well, you win some, you lose some. This story is of necessity since it is just a young children's picture book that leaves a lot of Orundellico's (aka Jemmy Button's) story out. He wasn't just given to the sailors in exchange for a button, he was bought like a slave. He was taken away from the only home and way of life he ever knew and taken halfway around the world to an entirely different culture, not to mention climate. He was displayed pretty much like a circus freak. He was treated like a thing, an object to be studied, perhaps with revulsion, perhaps with wonder. But in any case, this was not a consensual arrangement (how could he possibly have consented or not, even had he been given the opportunity to do so?), but rather a vile example of our European colonial heritage. And that's to say nothing of what happened when he was returned to his home (which, of course, could never really be his home again, could it?). All the book tells us is that he again shed his clothes as soon as he realized he was home. But that's only the beginning of the story. The hope was that he would civilize his people, but how can one man, removed from his people for years, do such a thing? How could he even teach them his new language (even assuming he wanted to), let alone everything else about Western civilization? Instead, he was an outcast and attacked by his people. Later, more missionaries came and he became their unwilling project.

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