



Jemmy Button

By Jennifer Uman, Valerio Vidali

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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 Fuegan 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

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Jemmy Button By Jennifer Uman, Valerio Vidali Bibliography

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- 48 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 1-3-This picture book is based on the true story of Orundellico, a boy from Tierra del Fuego who was taken to Victorian England by a British sea captain. The captain gave the child's family a mother-of-pearl button in exchange for him, hence his nickname, "Jemmy Button." The boy experienced the music, food, and education of England, but realized where he belonged when he returned home. These historical details are related via an endnote, but the story itself wisely focuses on the emotions and sensory experiences of Orundellico's journey. From the cover where he peeks out through lush greenery, to the vast visions of the night sky over the island, illustrations of Orundellico's home pop with color. The scenes in England, in contrast, feature muted tones, with people who appear only as silhouettes, emphasizing the boy's sense of displacement. This treatment brings the story home for young readers and provides an excellent discussion-starter.-Kathleen Kelly MacMillan, Carroll County Public Library, MDα(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

At the beginning of this title, a boy sits on the highest branch of a jungle, gazing up at the moon in a cloudless sky. Close to the end, the boy sits atop the highest roof in the city, gazing at a sky clogged with thick clouds that resemble a choking smog. These evocative bookends deepen the nuance of a tale inspired by the true story of Orundellico, a boy traded for a button and taken from his home in Tierra del Fuego in the early nineteenth century. Delivered to Victorian England, he became a celebrity in demand by no less than the royal family before his eventual return to his homeland. Sparing most of these details, which are explained in two short appended paragraphs, the story is told in an ingenuous style that is powerfully enhanced by the impressionistic art, replete with obscured adult figures and a melancholy tone. An unusual read-aloud is also a complex, unique offering for independent readers. Grades 1-3. --Jesse Karp

Review

In this true story, a boy from Tierra del Fuego is transported to London in the early 1800s. The powerful, spare text contrasts Jemmy's innocent island life with the isolation he feels in England. His alienation is cleverly reinforced by gauche, oil and collage illustrations using flat patterns and color to compare the island's verdant vegetation and quiet, starry nights with the sterile, geometric shapes of urban London. The ultimate home-away-home story, beautifully rendered. - Kirkus

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Young:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one using theme for entertaining like comic or novel. Typically the Jemmy Button is kind of reserve which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Julia Sullivan:

Reading can be called brain hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book especially a book entitled Jemmy Button your mind will drift away through every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a reserve then become one application form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get before. The Jemmy Button giving you one more experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful facts for your better life with this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary paying spare time activity?

Liliana Stevens:

Is it you who having spare time subsequently spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Jemmy Button can be the respond to, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your free time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a geek activity. So what these publications have than the others?

Jesse Mansell:

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