



Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?

Jean Fritz , Tomie dePaola (illustrator)

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This entertaining volume sheds light on the life of England's King George III. It begins when he was a bashful boy who blushed easily, goes on to his early days as king, and finally examines his role in the American Revolution - when Americans ceased to think of him as good King George. Fascinating history made accessible for young readers.

Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? Details

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Author : Jean Fritz , Tomie dePaola (illustrator)

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Becky says

I am so glad I read Jean Fritz's Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? I found this one to be a delight. And not just because I happen to love Horrible Histories' Born 2 Rule. (I should probably make that love, love, love, LOVE. I love Horrible Histories, the show in general, and the songs very, very much.) I've almost always enjoyed studying British literature and British history more than American. Though in the case of this book, you get a bit of both!

Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? is about the reign of George III. How he came to the throne, what kind of king he was, what he was remembered for, etc. A lot of the focus is on the conflict, the war, with the American colonies. But it isn't just about the American Revolution either. Plenty of attention is placed on the royal family which I loved.

This biography is definitely for mid-to-upper elementary students. A good read aloud for first grade it isn't! There is a lot of text per page, but, there are also plenty of illustrations. And the illustrations are by Tomie dePaola. Some are in color, others are in black and white. But the important thing is that there are illustrations. I've mentioned it before, but, it's worth repeating. When I had to choose a nonfiction book for report, required reading, I decided which book based on the length and the number of illustrations. This one would have been well received by me!

I read a reprint edition that came out circa 2009. It was originally published in 1977.

Monique says

Soo finished this cute little book on the way home because hey I love all things English kings and royalty AND because this is the King from the cutest song on my beloved Hamilton soundtrack-- I read this little cutey book in about half an hour so I can recommend it to history classes reviewing the Boston Tea Party .. the most adorable history of George and his petulant moods and how he became King with America as a thorn in his side...ah how I wish I had Hamilton to relay history to middle school Nique as History was always a close second for me as a major in Undergrad but to learn of how we got where we are has always intrigued me..know your history or be doomed to repeat it right..yea so George basically lost his mind trying to get the fiercely independent American citizens to pay taxes to help replenish the funds lost on the French-Indian War..then to have the French back the Americans it was comical and insightful to learn what others thought of the rebellious Americans and how the glorious Hamilton played a role in everything..Very cute book I would say its so easy to comprehend and there are no really troublesome words to pronounce or define (Love Jean Fritz for making relatable and easy to teach history books kids really read--we have about fifteen titles in the library) so around ages 8 and up but very informative and easy to understand, questions on what would you do from King's point of view and was his persistence for war to his detriment or a display of his positive rule and wish for good for his people? Hmm glad I spent time with this lil one today now to a 4th grade history class :)

Shelli says

I found this picture book biography about King George III to be extremely interesting and informative. Recently my daughter and I covered the American Revolution in our U.S. History studies and I would have loved to have read this while we were learning about that time, but we enjoyed it very much now. It was intriguing hearing about the “dreaded tyrant” from a different perspective (one not of the rebellious colonists seeking freedoms from a ruler an ocean away). Jean Fritz did a nice job of writing a fairly objective book that humanized King George, making him feel like “just George.” After putting down the book I can say I have a different feeling of him and would be interested to learn more. Tomie dePaola's distinctive illustrations complemented the story well, adding a bit of humor to the text.

Halley Hopson says

Yes, I am aware this is a 48 page children's book.

Yes it is about King George the third AKA the king from Hamilton the musical.

Yes I did giggle my way through this book because Lin Manuel Miranda's king from the show very conveys the king as a demented, put out, angry child who is annoyed about not getting his way.

It was totally worth the dollar I spent on it at the thrift store.

Mackenzie Sipes says

Personal Reaction: I thought this book was really good. It provided an interesting point of view on King George the Third. I really enjoyed that they talked about King George's early life. There is not a lot of books that discuss the early life of royalty and I feel like it makes them more relatable.

Read Aloud: I think children could enjoy listening this during a read aloud for the silly humor that is incorporated into the story. Since the book includes a lot of large blocks of text it might take multiple readings to get through the whole story. There is a lot of information that is in the story that could create discussion in the classroom.

Curriculum: I would introduce this book in a topic about the American Revolution. Students can read this book to get a perspective about the American Revolution and what is the point of view from the England's side. The book also provides extra comments from the author about historical events that he explains within the book that could be used as an extra resource.

Darlene says

I read this biography aloud to my children. It is recommended for ages 8-11, but even my 4 year-old enjoyed it.

Fritz presents factual information in such a way that it is entertaining and fun! I found the events surrounding the Boston Tea Party to be very interesting, and I did not realize how much the independence of the American colonies bothered King George.

We loved this biography, and we plan to read more of Fritz's biographical series! This book makes a great complement to your American history studies!

Megan Bernhard says

Can't You Make Them Behave, King George is a story about King George III that starts when George was just a boy and very ill-mannered. As George grows up along the path of becoming king he is tutored and begins to act like a king. After searching for the perfect queen the story gives an account of their marriage, crowning, and their growing life together. The book accurately and authentically conveys factual information by giving dates from history and presents facts from the story of the king's life accompanied with illustrations. The information is organized by being presented in a story. The information is easy to follow because it is chronologically presented. At first I was turned off by the book because it looks dated but I was too quick to judge a book by its cover. The information is presented in a way that is easy to follow along with while still learning a lot of information. The illustrations are cartoonish which is appealing for the reader to also follow along with. They are interactive by using speech bubbles. I think the author does a good job at writing clearly and presenting that they understand what they are writing about. I would use Jean Fritz's books in the classroom as additional resources for lessons on historical events. I think it is important to be able to learn information not just by reading a textbook or listening to a lecture and Jean Fritz allows reader to read an enjoyable story and learn information.

Megan Moriarty says

This book is about King George 3's life starting from childhood and ending with his death. Its a kid-friendly way to introduce king George 3 to students during teaching the American Revolution and Colonial America. The book gives background on his life that help students understand why he was the way he was. Its a silly book that is full of facts about his life. This book is great for all students but is best for 3-4th grade since it aligns with these grades standards.

This book would be great to use during a Revolutionary war. The teacher will read the book so students get more background about King George III and why he became a tyrant. The students will pick the part of the book they found most interesting, draw a picture about it, and explain what is going on in that part and why they picked it.

Dolly says

This is a very readable biography about King George III, the enemy of the colonists during the Revolutionary War. It's a fairly objective look at his life and the choices that he made.

I grew up watching the Schoolhouse Rock video of No More Kings, created in 1975, and I got the

impression that King George III was an excessive spendthrift and an emotionally bankrupt jerk who deserved our rebellious response to his taxes. I thought it was interesting to see that this book was published at about the same time (1977), but I don't remember ever reading it.

The narrative is informative, without being overwhelming or too boring, providing a substantial amount of detail about King George III's life. I thought it was telling about his character that he was quite frugal and did not live in excessive luxury.

We recognized Tomie dePaola's distinctive illustrative style and we thought the pictures complemented the story nicely. We all learned a little bit about him and I must admit that I was more sympathetic toward him after reading the book. Still, I couldn't help breaking into song...

*"Rockin' and a-rollin', splishin' and a-splashin',
over the horizon, what can it be?
Looks like it's going to be a free country.*

Heather says

My boys really enjoyed this and told me that 'lots of other kids should read it because it's so funny'. We read it in two days and I've found them looking through it over and over again.

The book treated King George very well and we learned a lot about him we hadn't already known. I liked that it mainly focused on him and not so much on the battles. I liked this better than George vs. George for actually learning about the King. George vs. George, however, discussed the battles more in-depth.

A nice addition to our study of the American Revolution. Highly recommended.

O2snowwhite says

AMAZING!!! Jean Fritz's passion for history is apparent in all of her books. She relates historical happenings as they happened, making sure to add in details that most people don't focus on in the history books. She includes accurate background information so we can see King George as a human being with all the faults, insecurities, etc. so that we can relate to him and see who he really was. This book tells all about King George and his conflicts with the colonists. It reads just like a storybook, is illustrated, and is kid-friendly. I highly recommend this book and anything Jean Fritz has written.

Paige Cedergreen says

Personal Reaction: I think this book portrayed King George's life and legacy in a relatable and interesting way. Students can relate to feeling pressure from their parents to act a certain way and wanting to be perfect

to please their parents.

Read Aloud: I would read this aloud to 2nd and 3rd graders to begin a unit on autobiographies or a social studies unit on king's or history of royalty in other countries. Students could compare the royal hierarchy to those in power in the United States.

Independent Reading: I would recommend this book to those that consider themselves history buffs or enjoy learning about the past kings and queens. Specifically students in 2nd and 3rd grade because the amount of words per page and difficulty level of the words might be too much for those in first grade unless they are advanced.

For Narrative: I would use this book to teach about conflict. Clearly King George had a lot of conflict throughout his life and I would have students fill out a graphic organizer following the reading of the book to talk about what events led up to the conflict and what events followed the conflict.

Laura Verret says

I had just purchased and read *Will You Sign Here, John Hancock?* (also by Jean Fritz) before I came across *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?* I have decided that I like Jean Fritz's works.

His Life.

We often think that kings and princes only ever do whatever it is that they want to do and whenever they choose. However, this is not true: it certainly wasn't true of poor King George the Third of the Hanover kings!

When George was a little boy, it seems that his favorite pastimes were blushing and being lazy. But, of course, a little boy who was in line to be the King of England could not behave in such a way. No, no, no! He must sit up straight, eat his food properly, and do all sorts of other bothersome things that civilized people are required to do.

His family worried about him, but he passed the test of kingship with flying colors; he looked the part, he dressed the part, he spoke the part, and he even acted the part! He was a very popular king.

Then, one day, one of his officials suggested that he tax the Americans to help pay for a war that they had just fought. 'What a good idea!' George thought. Well, it turns out that it WASN'T a good idea, but it seems to be the only one that makes us remember George III these days. He was the king that lost America.

Of course, George did other things, too, but this was the most important. George seems to have thought it very important, too; he had nightmares for years afterwards about losing the American War. It wasn't long after this that he went mad and then – well – that was the end of that!

Conclusion. Interesting, fun, and comical, *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?* will delight young readers with its whimsical accounts.

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Katie Fitzgerald says

This month, while the Old School Kidlit Reading Challenge has been focusing on nonfiction, I decided to finally sit down and read a stack of the late Jean Fritz's books about the history of the United States. In total, I read 8 titles:

And Then What Happened, Paul Revere? illustrated by Margot Tomes (1973)
Why Don't You Get a Horse, Sam Adams? illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (1974)
Where Was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May? illustrated by Margot Tomes (1975)
What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin? illustrated by Margot Tomes (1976)
Will You Sign Here, John Hancock? illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (1976)
Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? illustrated by Tomie dePaola (1977)
Where Do You Think You're Going, Christopher Columbus? illustrated by Margot Tomes (1980)
Shh! We're Writing the Constitution illustrated by Tomie dePaola (1987)

All of these except the last one are biographies of key figures in early America. In each biography, Fritz focuses on a representative quirk of each individual she profiles, which serves as a unifying thread for the important events of that person's life. For John Hancock, whose signature looms so large on the declaration of independence, this is his desire for attention and the ostentatious ways he went about trying to get it. For Sam Adams, it is his refusal to learn to ride a horse, for Columbus, his terrible sense of direction and tendency to stumble upon good fortune, and for King George, his blind paternalism toward the colonists, even when they have made very clear their disdain for him. In the last book, Shh! We're Writing the Constitution, Fritz tells the story of the difficulties and compromises that occurred among different historical figures as the U.S. Constitution slowly took shape.

In both types of books, Fritz focuses heavily not just on historical events, but on the personalities of the key figures who contributed to the outcomes of these events. Fritz does not simply idolize these men for their greatness; instead she shows both how they were ordinary (stubborn, foolish, insufferable, laughable, quirky, selfish, etc.) and extraordinary. No one is treated as all good or all bad, but instead they are portrayed as very human. For a reader like me who reads books mainly for their characters, I found this approach refreshing and endearing. Whereas I struggle to focus on lengthy informational texts that try to drill details into my memory, the "characters" in each of these books were fascinating to me. As I read in the evenings, I kept saying to my husband, "Hey did you know...?" and "I never knew that..."

None of these books is enough on its own to convey all the details of the discovery of America, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, or the drafting of the Constitution, but every single one of them provides context for understanding those events on a more personal and emotional level. The straightforward facts which are included alongside the biographical details are made more memorable by Fritz's engaging and humorous writing style, and everything she writes about comes to life in a way that school textbooks never could. They would make wonderful read-alouds for elementary kids who are studying colonial America, but they are just as entertaining as independent reads for older readers who want a refresher.

Also wonderful are the illustrations for each volume. There are three illustrators for these books: Margot Tomes, Trina Schart Hyman, and Tomie dePaola. Though all three artists' styles suit the mood and content of the books, my personal favorite is Hyman. Her pictures have the most detail, and in my opinion, the most personality. Tomes is a close second - I especially like the way she draws children - but found that I associated dePaola too much with other books and other genres to feel like he was a good fit for this subject matter. Still, I think the designer for these books did a great job of keeping a consistent look to the whole series that places the reader in a particular frame of mind regardless of who drew the pictures.

Now that I have read all of these books, I understand why they were so popular in my school library during childhood and why I hear so much about them in homeschooling circles. I plan to use them with my kids when we study U.S. history and I hope they will learn to love history (as I never did as a child) by observing how much fun Fritz clearly had writing about it.

This review also appears on my blog, [Read-at-Home Mom](#).

Haleigh Easterling says

Summary -- This book shed light on the Life of King George III. Beginning with a shy little boy, and following him on his journey to become King, the author focuses on the facts of his story that are often not told. The story ends with his role in the American Revolution, and describes why Americans stopped thinking of him as a "good" King.

Evaluation -- My students LOVED this book. It allowed them to relate and find personal connections with a person from history as well as learn why he was no longer considered a good King to the people in America. I think it helped them relate to the topic.

Teaching Point -- I would absolutely introduce this book to help students make sense of the American Revolution. I think this novel added a personal connection to the story that they loved. They read this as partners which was a very appropriate level for them as fourth graders.
