



Isaac Newton

Kathleen Krull , Boris Kulikov (Illustrations)

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What was Isaac Newton like? Secretive, vindictive, withdrawn, obsessive, and, oh, yes, brilliant. His imagination was so large that, just "by thinking on it," he invented calculus and figured out the scientific explanation of gravity. Yet Newton was so small-minded that he set out to destroy other scientists who dared question his findings. Here is a compelling portrait of Newton, contradictions and all, that places him against the backdrop of 17th-century England, a time of plague, the Great Fire of London, and two revolutions.

Isaac Newton Details

Date : Published April 6th 2006 by Viking Books

ISBN : 9780670059218

Author : Kathleen Krull , Boris Kulikov (Illustrations)

Format : Hardcover 126 pages

Genre : Biography, Science, Nonfiction, Childrens

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From Reader Review Isaac Newton for online ebook

Cameron says

this was a very good book lots of information and i learned a lot of things about Isaac Newton. One of the things I learned about Isaac Newton was that he had a hard life when his mom got married the man she married did not want to have kids in her house so she sent him to live with his grandparents. He used when he got older he spent days just experimenting he would go threw without eating or sleeping and he wouldn't even notice. Isaac Newton would experiment things on him self like poking and putting stuff in his eye many people were amazed that he didn't go blind with all of the things he did to his eye. he went to Cambridge college until one day there was a plague was happening so he had to go home which he hated all he wanted to was go back to college. it took to long but eventually he went back to college and he was glad he did. He had a hard beginning but Isaac Newton he ended his life on a good note.

Becky B says

Halfway through this book I didn't know if I could even finish it, but I finally did. Krull is incorporating a LOT of her own ideas about why Newton did something or what he did/didn't really do. Even though she usually prefaces this by saying "he probably...", it still has this tone like *but only an idiot would disagree with me*. Given that this is written for middle school and upper elementary ages, what do you think they are going to do when bullied by an author? Yes, take that author's word as solid truth. And if you can't separate opinions from facts, how do you know what to trust?

My second major issue with this book is that all of the sources she cites were written within the last 20 years. She's writing about a guy who lived almost 400 years ago, and the oldest book she consulted was from 1993? I would think a publishing biographer would need to include some sources a little bit closer to the time the subject actually lived. Not good research modelling for the target age group.

Another thing I really don't like is that though Krull acknowledges Newton himself said he was a Christian, she writes everything about his Biblical studies and the Church of England like it was some sort of torture he was forced to go through and he couldn't have possibly chosen to do those things of his own accord.

Lastly, since it is aimed a group of students who are in the formative years of becoming good writers and are usually just beginning to learn about doing serious papers on non-fiction issues, I do not like the writing style Krull models. She is VERY relaxed. She would write great, captivating fiction for this age group (as evidenced by the parts in this she speculates on and makes up). I feel like I'm reading a novel written like it is the journal of a young teenager. She includes sentence fragments (for example, p. 8 "For eight years."), some run-ons, and inserts her own opinions all over the place. This book would have been much better if Krull had turned it into a fiction novel based on Newton's life. It wouldn't have taken that much re-writing to do. She does incorporate some interesting facts and does a good job of explaining the science, but overall not a good biography.

Anna W says

I am currently reading Isaac Newton by Kathleen Krull. It talks about the life of Newton and when he is at a collage everyone is sent home because of a highly contagious disease called the plague it causes aches and high fevers and the telltale sign of having it is black swells. Newton calls this a wondrous year where he increases his studies. This is kind of depressing because today's there would probably be a cure. Also Newton must not like people very much because it killed one of every four people. And this book talks of many other events where he shows that he doesn't like people. Sitting alone at meals after everyone had already cleared out. Not paying attention to his teachers in class, and saying mean things about his stepfather. This book is ok and I give it one star.

AGastolek says

This is a biography of Sir Isaac Newton. He is viewed as one of the most influential scientists of all times, but many of the readers do not know that he was "secretive, withdrawn, obsessive, ruthless, bitter, perhaps in need of therapy". The book concentrates on his achievements and also exposes his vindictive side.

The author, Kathleen Krull, uses short chapters to present the life of the scientist. Each chapter focuses on significant events in Newton's life that shaped him as a person and cultivated his brilliant mind. The language that the author chooses and the included anecdotes make this biography a fast and an interesting read. The book is illustrated by Boris Kulikov whose black-and-white drawings present a satirical view of seventeenth-century life in England.

The book is well researched. At the end of the book, the author lists the bibliography including books and articles especially for young readers. Additionally, there is a list of web sites verified in 2005 and related to Newton's life and achievements. I found this book well written and informative and believe that any middle school student can learn a great deal about Sir Isaac Newton from this publication.

Kaycee says

Everyone knows about Sir Isaac Newton, the brilliant scientist; but how about Sir Isaac Newton, the neurotic enemy? Or Sir Isaac Newton, the strange outsider? Kathleen Krull gives a detailed and accurate description to Isaac Newton's life. She introduces to the reader the various stages of Newton's life going from his birth and lonely childhood to his school days and brilliant scientific discoveries to his death. The science in the book is well-explained and is accessible to readers just learning about gravity and Newton. The book includes a table of contents, an index, a bibliography containing further reading options for young readers, and a list of web sites that can be visited for further information. This book would definitely be a good introductory book on Newton and his contributions to science for students in grades 4-7.

Claire says

Please note: In Chapter Nine, Ms. Krull writes how some scholars speculate Isaac Newton may have been gay. This portion of the book was completely unnecessary!!!!!! Thank goodness it was my turn to read aloud to my children.

Luke Benson says

This is the odyssey of one of the most influential people in history. Even Einstein called Newton the greatest genius of all time. I always appreciate an inspiring story, especially when they're true. And what's more inspiring than a chronicle about a man that was knighted in the great dining hall at Cambridge, where he once waited tables. He began his life as a bastard child who wasn't expected to live past infancy. He was then abandoned by his mother when just a few years old, but ended his life in the company of great thinkers, Kings and Queens, and finally was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. Sir Isaac Newton was a game changer in science and math, he was hailed as "the glory of the British nation." His monument reads, "Let mortals rejoice that there has existed such and so great an ornament of the human race," and after reading this book I have to agree.

Ruth Ann says

This is the second book in the Giants of Science Series and Krull does not disappoint. The reader learns about Newton's many contributions: inventing calculus, defining the scientific method, constructing a reflective telescope, theorizing about light and color, joining the Royal Society, and most importantly, his famous book, Principia. Newton's Three Laws of Motion were a landmark in scientific thinking.

But Krull goes beyond sharing Newton's scientific work. The reader learns of his lonely and isolated childhood, his jealousy and reluctance to publish his findings, and his devout, but divergent religious beliefs. After many years at Cambridge, Newton spent 27 years as the Warden of the Mint and eventually the Master of the English Mint. As his scientific work became known throughout the world, England was proud. Isaac, was knighted, and became Sir Isaac. Even after his death, he became more famous.

Michael Kearney says

Good read. It could have used a few more illustrations, they were excellent.

Rainflight says

Not a bad book! I did read it in one sitting for school and it took about 1.5-2 hours. It can be a little boring but overall gets the information across!

Melissa says

I'd suggest any parent to read this prior to your child, but I'm not rating it since I simply scanned it and discarded it. I picked it up at the library and scanned it because it looked well, fluffy, and there was a part that I'm pretty sure the author bias was coming through in regards to how terrible church going must have

been for him and then flipping through I saw the word "homosexual" and I thought, what has this got to do with a scientist biography for middle schoolers? And it was solely speculation that he might have been gay. Does this have anything to do with the man's scientific achievements? Perhaps if he were definitely gay and it kept him from presenting a paper in front of someone of importance or something, it might have been considered worthy to be included, but speculating on someone's sexuality without extensive looking into the matter when there is little proof should be reserved for an in depth study in an adult non-fiction book. A simple scan tells me that Krull's books will not make it onto my schooling list, unfortunately. Thankfully there was a book entitled Isaac Newton and Gravity by Steve Parker right next to it. More than just cartoon illustrations and must more appropriate for the "gathering facts" stage that is elementary school. And the only comment talking about his bachelorhood is he "was often awkward in social situations. He was a strong Protestant, he never married, and he avoided women."

Sally says

JBIO NEWTON

This book was well-written for ages 10 and up.

Wow, little boy Isaac sure could have used a hug. He had a *horrible* childhood. My first impressions after finishing this book is that I'm certain he was autistic. (very intelligent, socially awkward-to-monstrous, hyper-sensitive to criticism, rigid and uncompromising, etc.) Being autistic made him difficult to understand, at best, and a strangely intelligent, freakish oddball at worst. I wonder if his mother was autistic as well. How else could you explain that she abandoned him at age 3 to remarry; didn't come back to live with him until that husband died; and despite being wealthy, refused to pay for his tuition at Cambridge, forcing him to earn his keep by serving the other students (even emptying their chamber pots)?

His obsession with alchemy, which he kept secret his whole life, was a surprise to me. Also his devotion to God, which I admire.

p 115 "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

p 100 "In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence."

Major contributions to science:

laws of motion (gravity)
optics (white light is many colors)
scientific method (evidence-based hypothesis -> theorem -> law)
calculus

further study:

www.isaac-newton.org (commentary on Newton's heretical ideas)
[http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Exhibitions/...](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Exhibitions/)
www.newton.cam.ac.uk/newton

Anthony Fleck says

It was pretty good.

Jenn says

Although this had a strong basis in the facts of Newton's life--as well as decent explanations of his scientific work and discoveries--I was turned off by the author's relentless disparaging of Newton's character. Not that I want whitewashing, but this book left a bad taste of fault-finding and sensationalism, not balance and fairness. Don't think I'll be looking into any more Krull biographies.

Melissa Mcavoy says

Arguably Isaac Newton is the most influential scientist ever. In lively and anecdotal prose Krull explains and contextualizes Newton's massive scientific contributions and illuminates his prickly and often vindictive personality. Wry pen and ink illustrations compliment this irreverent treatment.

Krull's Giant's of Science series sets a high bar for entertaining and informative biographies. Her conversational and assured tone carries the reader along as she explains the personalities and scientific accomplishments of these fascinating and influential individuals; her Isaac Newton is no exception. While most of her unflattering observations are well supported by facts included in the text, some of her more speculative topics: his sexual orientation, mental illness and religious beliefs, suffer from a treatment that feels too glib and condescending. For example can it really be right to refer to the man who elucidated the scientific method, developed calculus, the reflecting telescope, the laws of motion, the theory of gravity and of optics as "several slices short of a loaf." While Krull does provide a bibliography, her lack of source notes combined with her sensationalist speculations diminishes her otherwise excellent and valuable book.

Front matter includes acknowledgments for research help and contents. Back matter includes a bibliography that highlights books and articles suitable for young readers, websites and an index. The lack of source notes, quotation sources or even an annotated biography is a real flaw in an otherwise outstanding, and highly readable, biography.
