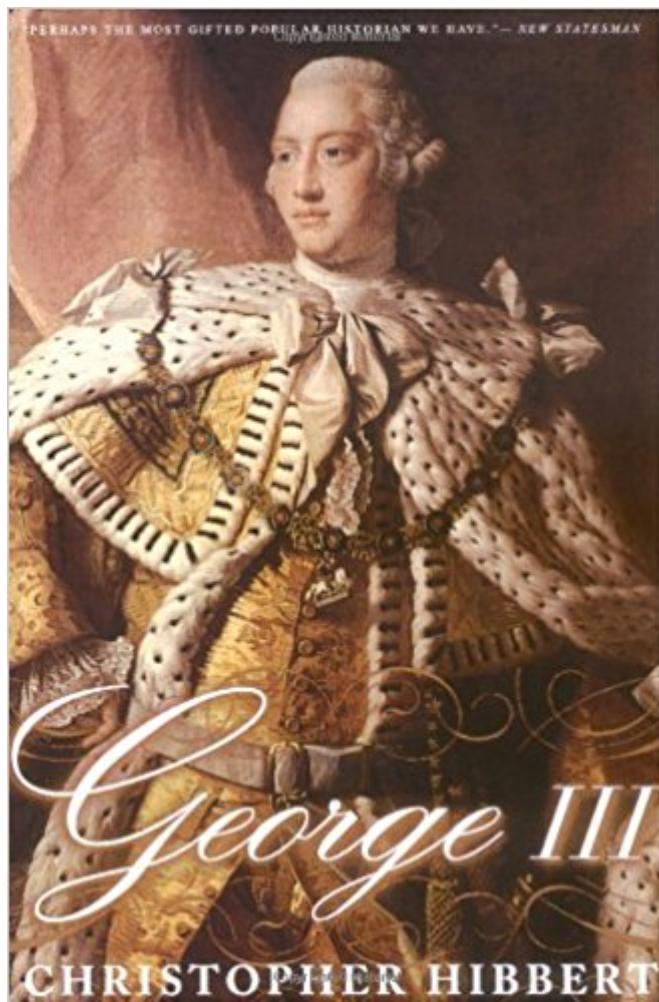


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# George III: A Personal History



## Synopsis

In *George III: A Personal History*, British historian Christopher Hibbert reassesses the royal monarch George III (1738-1820). Rather than reaffirm George III's reputation as "Mad King George," Hibbert portrays him as not only a competent ruler during most of his reign, but also as a patron of the arts and sciences, as a man of wit and intelligence, indeed, as a man who greatly enhanced the reputation of the British monarchy until he was finally stricken by a rare hereditary disease. Teeming with court machinations, sexual intrigues, and familial conflicts, George III opens a window on the tumultuous, rambunctious, revolutionary eighteenth century. It is sure to alter our understanding of this fascinating, complex, and very human king who so strongly shaped England's and America's destiny.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Poor George III. Americans think of him as a tyrant whose unjust taxes provoked their revolution. Moviegoers envision a nightshirt-clad lunatic running through the palace halls in *The Madness of King George*. The handsome, gracious, conscientious young man of 22 who mounted the throne in 1760 may well be a revelation to many readers of Christopher Hibbert's elegant new biography. At 75, Hibbert is the dean of popular British historians and the author of more than 30 books spanning five centuries of European life; his experience enables him to convey prodigious research with the lightest of touches in his intimate account, which focuses on the king's personal character. Though Hibbert capably covers the period's political events and shows George to be a hardworking

constitutional monarch, he prefers to direct our attention to the loving husband, devoted (though sometimes domineering) father, hearty appreciator of (very conventional) fine art, knowledgeable patron of literature, and avid all-around reader whose interests ranged from architecture to agriculture. This affectionate portrait makes it all the more distressing when George's bouts of madness (the result of a hereditary metabolic disease) begin in 1788 and permanently incapacitate him long before his death in 1820. Old-fashioned narrative biography doesn't get much better than this. --Wendy Smith --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"George III make[s] a simply unputdown-able theater of the personal and political absurd. Altogether entertaining." -- The New York Times Book Review "In Christopher Hibbert, George III has a sympathetic and scrupulous interpreter. Hibbert reveals a many-sided constitutional monarch, whose tragic private life overshadowed his public image." -- Boston Globe

This book arrive within the parameters of it's promise but on the longer end.I am reading the book now and am really enjoying learning about the King Americans wanted away from.Have more to go but would recommend it.

Excellent\*\*

Historian Christopher Hibbert brings his considerable talent for writing personal biographies to the fascinating subject of Britain's King George III. Not only is Hibbert's scholarship solid, but he also does a wonderful jo of combining all the important elements of the King's life into an entertaining and compelling read. George III was on the throne for almost 60 years during a period of great social and political upheaval throughout the western world, yet many don't know much about him. Americans especially know little more about him than the tyranical caricature popularized during the American Revolution. The book begins with a chapter about the King's dissolute father whose personality and relationship with his family were remarkably similar to that of George III's own son, the future George IV. Hibbert establishes George III's own unique personality by examining both his early upbringing and the key political players who helped shape his dedication to duty. George III certainly lacked the flamboyance of both his father and son. In contrast, he was sober and prudish, but nevertheless quite interesting and complex. During his reign he weathered both the American and French Revolutions, long periods of war abroad, and various periods of political unrest at home. Throughout, Hibbert paints a portrait of a monarch selflessly concerned about his subjects and

dedication to providing thoughtful leadership. As for his personal life, the King was faithfully resigned to an arranged marriage with a rather plain and increasingly unpleasant woman with whom he had 15 children. The family dynamics make for great reading. His relationships with most of his sons were difficult and a sources of much frustration since they frequently refused to comply with his strict mandates. His many daughters were mostly confined to the royal household and were expected to wait attendance on the King and Queen. A few daughters managed to escape into marriage late in life, and others had scandalous love affairs with the King's courtiers. All of this family drama was further acerbated by the mysterious "madness" that George III began to suffer from periodically in his middle age. By the time the madness begins, Hibbert has done such a wonderful job of establishing the King's decency and dignity that the reader cannot help but be moved as these very qualities are brutally stripped away by his disease. Also, there is an appreciation of the magnitude of the political crisis it precipitated. My one complaint about this book is that, at least in this American's opinion, Hibbert almost completely glosses over the American Revolution. His general analysis - that the Americans unjustly demonized the King - has some merit, but it virtually ignores the significant economic and social changes that created the Revolution. Perhaps such political theory is beyond the scope of this personal biography, but it should be examined more thoroughly, not only with regards to the American Revolution but also with regards to how these changes were successfully integrated into the British constitutional monarchy.

This very well-written and researched book provides a wealth of detail on the life of Britain's King George III and his family. The last British king of the American colonies, George III directed the ill-advised war against his independence-minded colonies. Long and terribly destructive, the war saw the defeat of George's armies and navies in North America. Still, having spent eight years fighting the Americans, the King quickly decided to lay the foundations of a lasting peace and friendship between the two countries. Hibbert depicts King George as a constitutionally-minded monarch and a competent ruler. Initially detested by his people, he ended his life and reign greatly loved. Certainly his greatest challenges revolved around his large and dysfunctional family and his fight with porphyria and insanity. "George III" is a scholarly work. Though not an easy read, it is an interesting one!

Excellent readable bio. I learned a lot about the era and George III. I made a point of visiting Kew Palace and the gardens after reading about them in this book.

Very interesting and well written. I expected more personal details about the king, from the sub title. But I think the personal refers to Christopher Hibbert's view of the King.

Excellent book. Interesting, informative and easily read.

Very detailed, personal account of an interesting and complex character. For history buffs like me, you'll love the fascinating details about family life, medical history, etc. A little too much about politics and military strategy, but not so much that I wouldn't recommend to others.

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