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# Big George

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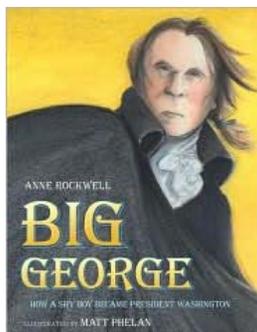
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Anne Rockwell. *Big George: How a Shy Boy Became President Washington*. Illustrated by Matt Phelan. Harcourt, Inc., 2009. ISBN 9780152165833. \$17.00. 48 p.

Reviewer: Jan Staheli

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Biography;

Subject: Washington, George, 1732-1799--Juvenile literature; Presidents--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

George Washington was born in Virginia when England still ruled The Thirteen Colonies. He was a fearless horseman and woodsman, well educated, tall, the best dancer in Virginia, and shy. His father died when he was eleven, and he was afterward raised by his older brother, Lawrence. George fought with the English at Fort Duquesne and was one of only a few who survived the battle. After learning the terrible lessons of war, he returned home, married Martha Custis, and began to farm, which he found fascinating. But when the colonists rebelled against the English king he responded to their plea for a leader, not desiring to fight, but feeling he had a duty to the fledgling government and those who fought for it.

Rockwell has written a biography for young people that will quickly catch their interest. Her style is spare and sympathetic. She presents intriguing facts that are less well known, which will engage the reader and acquaint them with the human side of the iconic American general and president. The illustrations, done with gouache and pencil, are subdued but revealing. Matt Phelan has a gift for drawing expressive faces with just a few lines. The paper has weight and sheen, which enhances the pictures and gives solidity to the book and its contents. This book will be a good choice for elementary age readers, from 3+ up, and for all who are pleased to read a good biography on America's own Big George.

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