Almost every educated person in today’s society, kid or adult, has heard of Sir Isaac Newton and how he was a scientific genius. Most people know him as the guy that asked why the apple fell, but he did so much more than that, which actually probably never even happened. *Isaac Newton* by James Gleick tells the story of all that Isaac Newton was during his lifetime and what he is today. The biography goes into depth about his variety of experiments, obsessions, and aims to define his personality using various sources and quotes.

Gleick has a different chapter for almost every major topic that Isaac Newton experimented with. Through quotes directly from Newton’s journals, as well as from other biographies, Gleick creatively attempts to take the reader through Newton’s thought processes that provoked his discoveries. A few of the explanations given by Newton were extremely vague and made it hard to follow his thinking behind the math he explains. For example, his Proposition XI, Problem VI, Section III of his most famous work, the *Principia*, his proof simply explains how to draw the figure that is pictured on the page. It seems simple to follow as you see which angles and line segments he comments are equal, but when it’s over there is no explanation for what any of the lines mean or why they matter. This is most likely why the *Principia* is rarely cited in physics books; because it took other scientists to further interpret problems like this to be able to explain them to a more basic reader.

Gleick also aims to touch on Isaac Newton’s personal life in addition to his stories of experimentation and discovery. Beginning in his childhood, it seemed that Newton never really belonged. His family life was never central to his identity since he started shadowing scholars at age ten and moved away from home until his mother fell ill decades later. It is also frequently mentioned that many students and professors at Cambridge did not understand Newton and avoided him due to his mumbling to himself. The only “friends” ever mentioned of Newton are acquaintances of scientists like Samuel Pepys and John Locke who exchanged letters with Newton for a few years. During a year of madness for Newton, he cut off communication to both of these men with rude, accusatory letters about their negative impact in his life. When looking at Newton from today’s more advanced psychological perspective, it seems possible he had a disability that could relating to Asperger’s syndrome. Asperger’s syndrome is a syndrome on the autistic spectrum that combines a lack of social skills, high intelligence or talents, and repetitive and obsessive tendencies. All of these qualities apply to what we learn about Isaac Newton in Gleick’s biography.

Although many people have heard of Newton’s great scientific work, Gleick does a good job shedding light on his personality that people are less familiar with. The biography includes examples of Newton’s own writings, examples of his intense fear of criticism, his lack of social relationships, and his obsessive habits in order to depict a more personal view of Isaac Newton for the reader.