

*Big Babies Or: Why Can't We Just Grow Up? by Michael Bywater.
Granta Books 2006.*

As its title suggests, this is a rant about the nanny state and the way Western civilisation infantilizes its citizens, and what a glorious rant it is. Michael Bywater can claim his place as primus inter pares among Grumpy Old Men as well as earning the gratitude of all of us who agree with every syllable that he writes.

Big Babies is divided into 12 chapters, each one investigating a different aspect of the subject, and each chapter contains discrete boxed sections giving specific examples from real life which are, in most cases, so ludicrous as to defy conventional description.

Michael Bywater has done all of us who feel that we know best what is right for us, and who despise the reductio ad absurdum of modernity, a huge favour; this is a text that should be required reading in every office of local and national government, as well as being used to hammer the heads of the idiots who presume to decide what is best for us.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh