

## Edward VI Penguin Monarchs The Last Boy King

In 1461 Edward earl of March, an able, handsome, and charming eighteen-year old, usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI. Ten years on, following outbreaks of civil conflict that culminated in him losing, then regaining the crown, he had finally secured his kingdom. The years that followed witnessed a period of rule that has been described as a golden age: a time of peace and economic and industrial expansion, which saw the establishment of a style of monarchy that the Tudors would later develop. Yet, argues A. J. Pollard, Edward, who was drawn to a life of sexual and epicurean excess, was a man of limited vision, his reign remaining to the very end the narrow rule of a victorious faction in civil war. Ultimately, his failure was dynastic: barely two months after his death in April 1483, the throne was usurped by Edward's youngest brother, Richard III.

Shortlisted for the Financial Times and McKinsey Best Book of the Year Award in 2011. “A masterpiece.” —Steven D. Levitt, coauthor of Freakonomics “Bursting with insights.” —The New York Times Book Review A pioneering urban economist presents a myth-shattering look at the majesty and greatness of cities America is an urban nation, yet cities get a bad rap: they're dirty, poor, unhealthy, environmentally unfriendly . . . or are they? In this revelatory book, Edward Glaeser, a leading urban economist, declares that cities are actually the healthiest, greenest, and richest (in both cultural and economic terms) places to live. He travels through history and around the globe to reveal the hidden workings of cities and how they bring out the best in humankind. Using intrepid reportage, keen analysis, and cogent argument, Glaeser makes an urgent, eloquent case for the city's importance and splendor, offering inspiring proof that the city is humanity's greatest creation and our best hope for the future.

A startling, subversive novel about a teenage girl who has lost everything and will burn anything. Fourteen-year-old Lucia is a young narrator whose voice will long ring in your ears. She is angry with almost everyone, especially people who tell her what to do. She follows the one rule that makes any sense to her: Don't Do Things You Aren't Proud Of. Orphaned and living with her elderly aunt in poverty in the converted garage of a large mansion, Lucia makes her way through the world with only a book, a Zippo lighter, and a pocket full of stolen licorice.

Expelled from school, again, Lucia spends her days riding the bus to visit her mother in The Home. When Lucia discovers a secret Arson Club, she will do anything to be a part of it. Her own arson manifesto is a marvellous anarchist pamphlet, written with biting wit and striking intelligence. The voice of teenaged Lucia is a tour de force: a brilliant, wrenching cry from the heart and mind of a super-smart, funny girl who can't help telling us the truth, a riveting chronicle of family, misguided friendship, and loss. How to Set a Fire and Whyis Jesse Ball's most accessible novel yet; after Silence Once Begunand A Cure for Suicide, the pyrotechnics on display here will dazzle. 'I was captivated from the first line..... Lucia belongs with all the great child truth tellers: David Copperfield, Huck Finn, Holden Caulfield..... I loved her and I loved the book, every page of it.' Peter Heller, author of The Dog Stars andThe Painter

A Brittle Glory (Penguin Monarchs)

Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

Mary I (Penguin Monarchs)

The May King

The Last Catholic King

William II (Penguin Monarchs)

King in Waiting

A major new title in the Penguin Monarchs series In his fascinating new book in the Penguin Monarchs series, Richard Abels examines the long and troubled reign of Aethelred II the 'Unraed', the 'Ill-Advised'. It is characteristic of Aethelred's reign that its greatest surviving work of literature, the poem The Battle of Maldon, should be a record of heroic defeat. Perhaps no ruler could have stemmed the encroachment of wave upon wave of Viking raiders, but Aethelred will always be associated with that failure. Richard Abels is Professor Emeritus at the United States Naval Academy. He is the author of Alfred the Great War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England and Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

'He seems to have laboured under an almost child-like misapprehension about the size of his world. Had greatness not been thrust upon him, he might have lived a life of great harmlessness.' The reign of Edward II was a succession of disasters. Unkingly, inept in law, and in thrall to favourites, he preferred digging ditches and rowing boats to the tedium of government. His infatuation with a young Gascon nobleman, Piers Gaveston, alienated even the most natural supporters of the crown. Hoping to lay the ghost of his soldierly father, Edward I, he invaded Scotland and suffered catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Bannockburn. After twenty ruinous years, betrayed and abandoned by most of his nobles and by his wife and her lover, Edward was imprisoned in Berkeley Castle and murdered - the first English king since the Norman Conquest to be deposed.

Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, became king at the age of nine and died wholly unexpectedly at the age of fifteen. This book gives full play to the murky, sinister nature of Edward's reign, and also an account of a boy learning to rule, learning to enjoy his growing power and to come out of the shadows of the great aristocrats around him.

The medieval king was a job of work.... This was a man who knew how to run a complex organization. He was England's CEO. The youngest of William the Conqueror's sons, Henry I came to unchallenged power only after two of his brothers died in strange hunting accidents and he had imprisoned the other. He was destined to become one of the greatest of all medieval monarchs, both through his own ruthlessness, and through his dynastic legacy. Edmund King's engrossing portrait shows a strikingly charismatic, intelligent and fortunate man, whose rule was looked back on as the real post-conquest founding of England as a new realm: wealthy, stable, bureaucratISED and self-confident.

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Shakespeare's Kings

How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier

The Watchers

Aethel the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

The Daughter of Time

A Prince Among Princes

William II (1087-1100), or William Rufus, will always be most famous for his death: killed by an arrow while out hunting, perhaps through accident or perhaps murder. But, as John Gillingham makes clear in this elegant book, as the son and successor to William the Conqueror it was William Rufus who had to establish permanent Norman rule. A ruthless, irascible man, he frequently argued acrimoniously with his older brother Robert over their father's inheritance - but he also handed out effective justice, leaving as his legacy one of the most extraordinary of all medieval buildings, Westminster Hall.

Known as 'the anarchy', the reign of Stephen (1135-1141) saw England plunged into a civil war that illuminated the fatal flaw in the powerful Norman monarchy, that without clear rules ordering succession, conflict between members of William the Conqueror's family were inevitable. But there was another problem, too: Stephen himself. With the nobility of England and Normandy anxious about the prospect of a world without the tough love of the old king Henry I, Stephen styled himself a political panacea, promising strength without oppression. As external threats and internal resistance to his rule accumulated, it was a promise he was unable to keep. Unable to transcend his flawed claim to the throne, and to make the transition from nobleman to king, Stephen's actions betrayed uneasiness in his role, his royal voice never quite ringing true. The resulting violence that spread throughout England was not, or not only, the work of bloodthirsty men on the make. As Watkins shows in this resonant new portrait, it arose because great men struggled to navigate a new and turbulent kind of politics that arose when the king was in eclipse.

Cnut, or Canute, is one of the great 'what ifs' of English history. The Dane who became King of England after a long period of Viking attacks and settlement, his reign could have permanently shifted eleventh-century England's rule to Scandinavia. Stretching his authority across the North Sea to become king of Denmark and Norway, and with close links to Ireland and an overlordship of Scotland, this formidable figure created a Viking Empire at least as plausible as the Anglo-Norman Empire that would emerge in 1066. Ryan Lavelle's illuminating book cuts through myths and misconceptions to explore this fascinating and powerful man in detail. Cnut is most popularly known now for the story of the king who tried to command the waves, relegated to a bit part in the medieval story, but as this biography shows, he was a conqueror, political player, law maker and empire builder on the grandest scale, one whose reign tells us much about the contingent nature of history.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format In the popular imagination, as in her portraits, Elizabeth I is the image of monarchical power. The Virgin Queen ruled over a Golden Age: the Spanish Armada was defeated and England's enemies scattered; English explorers reached almost to the ends of the earth; a new Church of England rose from the ashes of past conflict, and the English Renaissance bloomed in the genius of Shakespeare, Spenser and Sidney. But the image is also armour. In this illuminating new account of Elizabeth's reign, Helen Castor shows how England's iconic queen was shaped by profound and enduring insecurity—an insecurity which was both a matter of practical political reality and personal psychology. From her precarious upbringing at the whim of a brutal, capricious father and her perilous accession after his death, to the religious division that marred her state and the failure to marry that threatened her line, Elizabeth lived under constant threat. But, facing down her enemies with a compellingly inscrutable public persona, the last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs would become a timeless, fearless queen.

Last of the Royal Blood

A Heroic Failure

George V (Penguin Monarchs)

James I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Summer King

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

George IV (Penguin Monarchs)

Richard I (1189-1199) through a series of astonishing dynastic coups became the ruler of an enormous European empire. One of the most dynamic, restless and clever men ever to rule England, he was brought down both by his catastrophic relationship with his archbishop Thomas Becket and his debilitating arguments with his sons, most importantly the future Richard I and King John. His empire may have ultimately collapsed, but in Richard Barber's vivid and sympathetic account the reader can see why Henry II left such a compelling impression on his contemporaries.

Henry VI, son of the all-conquering Henry V, was one of the least able and least successful of English kings. His long reign, which started when he was only nine months old, ended in catastrophe, with the loss of England's territories in France and a bankrupt England's long decline into civil war: the wars of the Roses. Yet, failure though Henry undoubtedly was, he remains an enigma. Was he always, as he became in the last disastrous years of his rule, a holy fool, simple-minded to the point of insanity and prey to the ambitions of others? Or was he more active and, as some have suggested, actively malign? In this groundbreaking new portrait, James Ross shows a king whose priorities diverged sharply from what England expected of its monarchs, and whose fitful engagement with government was directly, though not solely, responsible for the disasters that engulfed the kingdom during his reign.

Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death midway through his reign; and the intractable Hundred Years War with France began under his leadership. Yet Edward managed to rule England for fifty years, and was viewed as a paragon of kingship in the eyes of both his contemporaries and later generations. Venerated as the victor of Sluys and Crecy and the founder of the Order of the Garter, he was regarded with awe even by his enemies. But he lived too long, and was ultimately condemned to see thirty years of conquests reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a feted king who ended his life a heroic failure."

For a man with such conventional tastes and views, George V had a revolutionary impact. Almost despite himself he marked a decisive break with his flamboyant predecessor Edward VII, inventing the modern monarchy, with its emphasis on frequent public appearances, family values and duty. George V was an effective war-leader and inventor of 'the House of Windsor'. In an era of ever greater media coverage—frequently filmed and initiating the British Empire Christmas broadcast—George became for 25 years a universally recognised figure. He was also the only British monarch to take his role as Emperor of India seriously. While his great rivals (Tsar Nicolas and Kaiser Wilhelm) ended their reigns in catastrophe, he plodded on. David Cannadine's sparkling account of his reign could not be more enjoyable, a masterclass in how to write about monarchy, that central—if peculiar—pillar of British life.

Edward IV, 1461-1483

Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)

A Study in Insecurity

Cnut (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward IV (Penguin Monarchs)

The Reign of Anarchy

The Quest for Fame

Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, became king at the age of nine and died wholly unexpectedly at the age of fifteen. All around him loomed powerful men who hoped to use the child to further their own ends, but who were also playing a long game - assuming that Edward would long outlive them and become as commanding a figure as his father had been. Stephen Alford's wonderful book gives full play to the murky, sinister nature of Edward's reign, but is also a poignant account of a boy learning to rule, learning to enjoy his growing power and to come out of the shadows of the great aristocrats around him. England's last child monarch, Edward would have led his country in a quite different direction to the catastrophic one caused by his death.

James's reign marked one of the very rare major breaks in England's monarchy. Already James VI of Scotland and a highly experienced ruler who had established his authority over the Scottish Kirk, he marched south on Elizabeth I's death to become James I of England and Ireland, uniting the British Isles for the first time and founding the Stuart dynasty which would, with several lurches, reign for over a century. Indeed his descendant still occupies the throne. A complex, curious man and great survivor, James drastically changed court life in London and presided over such major projects as the Authorized Version of the Bible and the establishment of English settlements in Virginia, Massachusetts, Gujarat and the Caribbean. Although he failed to unite England and Scotland, he insisted that ambassadors acknowledge him as King of Great Britain and that vessels from both countries display a version of the current Union Flag. He was often accused of being too informal and insufficiently regal - but when his son, Charles I, decided to redress these criticisms in his own reign he was destroyed. How much of the roots of this disaster were to be found in James's reign is one of the many problems dramatized in Thomas Cogswell's brilliant and highly entertaining new book.

The elder daughter of Henry VIII, Mary I (1553-58) became England's ruler on the unexpected death of her brother Edward VI. Her short reign is one of the great potential turning points in the country's history. As a convinced Catholic and the wife of Philip II, king of Spain and the most powerful of all European monarchs, Mary could have completely changed her country's orbit, making it a province of the Habsburg Empire and obedient again to Rome. These extraordinary possibilities are fully dramatized in John Edward's superb short biography. The real Mary I has almost disappeared under the great mass of Protestant propaganda that buried her reputation during her younger sister, Elizabeth I's reign. But what if she had succeeded?

Written by Philip Ziegler, one of Britain's most celebrated biographers, George VI is part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format If Ethelred was notoriously 'Unready' and Alfred 'Great', King George VI should bear the title of 'George the Difficul'. Throughout his life, George dedicated himself to the pursuit of what he thought he ought to be doing rather than what he wanted to do. Inarticulate and loathing any sort of public appearances, he accepted that it was his destiny to figure conspicuously in the public eye, greeted his birth, battled his crippling stammer and got on with it. He was not born to be king, but he made an admirable one, and was the figurehead of the nation at the time of its greatest trial, the Second World War. This is a brilliant, touching and sometimes funny book about this reluctant public figure, and the private man. Philip Ziegler is the author of the authorised biographies of Mountbatten, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. His other books include The Duchess of Dino.

William IV, The Black Death and most recently Olivier. Initially a diplomat, he worked for many years in book publishing before becoming a full-time writer.

Mary I

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Phoenix King

Edward II

England's Conqueror

Edward the Confessor

Atheistan (Penguin Monarchs)

An authoritative life of Edward the Confessor, the monarch whose death sparked the invasion of 1066 One of the last kings of Anglo-Saxon England, Edward the Confessor regained the throne for the House of Wessex and is the only English monarch to have been canonized. Often cast as a reluctant ruler, easily manipulated by his in-laws, he has been blamed for causing the invasion of 1066—the last successful conquest of England by a foreign power. Tom Licence navigates the contemporary webs of political deceit to present a strikingly different Edward. H prosperity between periods of strife. More than any monarch before, he exploited the mystique of royalty to capture the hearts of his subjects. This compelling biography provides a much-needed reassessment of Edward's reign—calling into doubt the legitimacy of his successors and rewriting the ending of Anglo-Saxon England.

Compares the historical kings with their portrayal in Shakespeare's plays

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format Henry VII was one of England's unlikeliest monarchs. An exile and outsider with barely a claim to the throne, his victory over Richard III at Bosworth Field seemed to many in 1485 like only the latest in the sequence of violent convulsions among England's nobility that would come to be known as the wars of the roses - with little to suggest that the obscure Henry would last any longer than his predecessor. To break that cycle of division, usurpation, d and rule, Henry was effective. Here, Sean Cunningham explores how, in his ruthless, controlling and personal kingship, Henry VII did so in the process founding the Tudor dynasty and, arguably, helping to lay the foundations for modern government. Sean Cunningham is a Principal Records Specialist at The National Archives. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he has published widely on late medieval and early Tudor England. His books include, most recently, a historical biography of Henry VII.

Foremost medieval historian Anne Curry offers a new reinterpretation of Henry V and the battle that defined his kingship: Agincourt Henry V's invasion of France, in August 1415, represented a huge gamble. As heir to the throne, he had to the political willderness amid rumours that he planned to depose his father. Despite a complete change of character as king - founding monasteries, persecuting heretics, and enforcing the law to its extremes - little had gone right since. He was insecure in his kingdom, his reputation low. On the eve of power, Agincourt was a battle that Henry should not have won - but he did, and the rest is history. Within five years, he was heir to the throne of France. In this vivid new interpretation, Anne Curry explores how Henry's hyperactive efforts to expunge his past failures, and his experience of crisis - which threatened to ruin everything he had struggled to achieve - defined his kingship, and how his astonishing success at Agincourt transformed his standing in the eyes of his contemporaries, and of all generations to come.

The Terrors of Kingship

The Great Plays and the History of England in the Middle Ages: 1337-1485

The Red King

Triumph of the City

The Unexpected King

Edward II (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry VI

The short, action-packed reign of James II (1685-88) is generally seen as one of the most catastrophic in British history. James managed, despite having access to tremendous reserves of good will and deference, to so alienate his supporters that he had to flee for his life. And yet, most of that life was spent not as king but first as heir to Charles II, as Duke of York (after whom New York is named) and then in the last part of his life as the first Jacobite 'Pretender', starting a problem that would haunt Britain's rulers for generations.

No English king has so divided opinion, both during his reign and in the centuries since, more than Richard III. He was loathed in his own time for the never-confirmed murder of his young nephews, the Princes in the Tower, and died fighting his own subjects on the battlefield. This is the vision of Richard we have inherited from Shakespeare. Equally, he inspired great loyalty in his followers. In this enlightening, even-handed study, Rosemary Horrox builds a complex picture of a king who by any standard failed as a monarch. He was killed after only two years on the throne, without an heir, and brought such a decisive end to the House of York that Henry Tudor was able to seize the throne, despite his extremely tenuous claim. Whether Richard was undone by his own fierce ambitions, or by the legacy of a Yorkist dynasty which was already profoundly dysfunctional, the end result was the same: Richard III destroyed the very dynasty that he had spent his life so passionately defending.

From the celebrated historian and author of Europe: A History, a new life of George II George II, King of Great Britain and Ireland and Elector of Hanover, came to Britain for the first time when he was thirty-one. He had a terrible relationship with his father, George I, which was later paralleled by his relationship to his own son. He was short-tempered and uncultivated, but in his twenty-three-year reign he presided over a great flourishing in his adoptive country - economic, military and cultural - all described with characteristic wit and elegance by Norman Davies. (George II so admired the Hallelujah chorus in Handel's Messiah that he stood while it was being performed - as modern audiences still do.) Much of his attention remained in Hanover and on continental politics, as a result of which he was the last British monarch to lead his troops into battle, at Dettingen in 1744.

In a Europe aflame with wars of religion and dynastic conflicts, Elizabeth I came to the throne of a realm encircled by menace. To the great Catholic powers of France and Spain, England was a heretic pariah state, a canker to be cut away for the health of the greater body of Christendom. Elizabeth's government, defending God's true Church of England and its leader, the queen, could stop at nothing to defend itself. Headed by the brilliant, enigmatic, and widely feared Sir Francis Walsingham, the Elizabethan state deployed every dark art: spies, double agents, cryptography, and torture. Delving deeply into sixteenth-century archives, Stephen Alford offers a groundbreaking, chillingly vivid depiction of Elizabethan espionage, literally recovering it from the shadows. In his company we follow Her Majesty's agents through the streets of London and Rome, and into the dank cells of the Tower. We see the world as they saw it-ever unsure who could be trusted or when the fatal knock on their own door might come. The Watchers is a riveting exploration of loyalty, faith, betrayal, and deception with the highest possible stakes, in a world posed between the Middle Ages and modernity.

The Last Boy King

Victoria (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry II (Penguin Monarchs)

William I (Penguin Monarchs)

Richard II

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

From Playboy Prince to Warrior King

In 1461 Edward earl of March, an able, handsome, and charming eighteen-year old, usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI. Ten years on, following outbreaks of civil conflict that culminated in him losing, then regaining the crown, he had finally secured his kingdom. The years that followed witnessed a period of rule that has been described as a golden age- a time of peace and economic and industrial expansion, which saw the establishment of a style of monarchy that the Tudors would later develop. Yet, argues A. J. Pollard, Edward, who was drawn to a life of sexual and epicurean excess, was a man of limited vision, his reign remaining to the very end the narrow rule of a victorious faction in civil war. Ultimately, his failure was dynastic: barely two months after his death in April 1483, the throne was usurped by Edward's youngest brother, Richard III.

The formation of England occurred against the odds: an island divided into rival kingdoms, under savage assault from Viking hordes. But, after King Alfred ensured the survival of Wessex and his son Edward expanded it, his grandson Atheistan inherited the rule of both Mercia and Wessex, conquered Northumbria and was hailed as Rex totius Britanniae: 'King of the whole of Britain'. Tom Holland recounts this extraordinary story with relish and drama, transporting us back to a time of ovens, ram harbingers and blood-red battlefields. As well as giving form to the figure of Atheistan - devout, shrewd, all too aware of the precarious nature of his power, especially in the north - he introduces the great figures of the age, including Alfred and his daughter Aethelflaed, 'Lady of the Mercians', who brought Atheistan up at the Mercian court. Making sense of the family rivalries and fractious conflicts of the Anglo-Saxon rulers, Holland shows us how a royal dynasty rescued their kingdom from near-oblivion and fashioned a nation that endures to this day.

Edward the Confessor, the last great King of Anglo-Saxon England, canonized nearly 100 years after his death, is in part a figure of myths created in the late middle ages. In this revealing portrait of England's royal saint, David Woodman traces the course of Edward's twenty-four-year-long reign through the lens of contemporary sources, from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Vita Edwardi Regis to the Bayeux Tapestry, to separate myth from history and uncover the complex politics of his life. He shows Edward to be a shrewd politician who, having endured a long period of exile from England in his youth, ascended the throne in 1042 and came to control a highly sophisticated and powerful administration. The twists and turns of Edward's reign are generally seen as a prelude to the Norman Conquest in 1066. Woodman explains clearly how events unfolded and personalities interacted but, unlike many, he shows a capable and impressive king at the centre of them.

On the death of Henry VIII, the crown passed to his nine-year-old son, Edward. However, real power went to the Protector, Edward's uncle, the Duke of Somerset. The court had been a hotbed of intrigue since the last days of Henry VIII. Without an adult monarch, the stakes were even higher. The first challenger was the duke's own brother: he seduced Henry VIII's former queen, Katherine Parr; having married her, he pursued Princess Elizabeth and later was accused of trying to kidnap the boy king at gunpoint. He was beheaded. Somerset ultimately met the same fate, after a coup d'etat organized by the Duke of Warwick. Chris Skidmore reveals how the countryside rebellions of 1549 were orchestrated by the plotters at court and were all connected to the (literally) burning issue of religion: Henry VIII had left England in religious limbo. Court intrigue, deceit and treason very nearly plunged the country into civil war. Edward was a precocious child, as his letters in French and Latin demonstrate. He kept a secret diary, written partly in Greek, which few of his courtiers could read. In 1551, at the age of 14, he took part in his first jousting tournament, an essential demonstration of physical prowess in a very physical age. Within a year it is his signature we find at the bottom of the Council minutes, yet in early 1553 he contracted a chest infection and later died, rumours circulating that he might have been poisoned. Mary, Edward's eldest sister, and devoted Catholic, was proclaimed Queen. This is more than just a story of bloodthirsty power struggles, but how the Church moved so far along Protestant lines that Mary would be unable to turn the clock back. It is also the story of a boy born to absolute power, whose own writings and letters offer a compelling picture of a life full of promise, but tragically cut short.

A Failed King?

The Failed King

The Making of England

Henry VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward V (Penguin Monarchs)

Queen, Matriarch, Empress

Henry V (Penguin Monarchs)

Charismatic, insatiable and cruel, Henry VIII was, as John Guy shows, as John Guy shows, a king who became mesmerized by his own legend - and in the process destroyed and remade England. Said to be a 'pillager of the commonwealth', this most instantly recognizable of kings remains a figure of extreme contradictions: magnificent and vengeful; a devout traditionalist who oversaw a cataclysmic rupture with the church in Rome; a talented, towering figure who nevertheless could not bear to meet people's eyes when he talked to them. In this revealing new account, John Guy looks behind the mask into Henry's mind to explore how he understood the world and his place in it - from his isolated upbringing and the blazing glory of his accession, to his desperate quest for fame and an heir and the terrifying paranoia of his last, agonising, 54-inch-waisted years.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format Queen Victoria inherited the throne at 18 and went on to become the longest-reigning female monarch in history, in a time of intense industrial, cultural, political, scientific and military change within the United Kingdom and great imperial expansion outside of it (she was made Empress of India in 1876). Overturning the established picture of the dour old lady, this is a fresh and engaging portrait from one of our most talented royal biographers. Jane Ridley is Professor of Modern History at Buckingham University, where she teaches a course on biography. Her previous books include The Young Disraeli; a study of Edwin Lutyns, The Architect and his Wife, which won the 2003 Duff Cooper Prize; and the best-selling Bertie: A Life of Edward VII. A Fellow of the Royal Society for Literature, Ridley writes for the Spectator and other newspapers, and has appeared on radio and several television documentaries. She lives in London and Scotland.

George IV spent most of his life waiting to become king as a pleasure-loving and rebellious Prince of Wales during the sixty-year reign of his father, George III, and for ten years as Prince Regent, when his father went mad. The days are very long when you have nothing to do' he once wrote plaintively, but he did his best to fill them with pleasure - women, art, food, wine, fashion, architecture. He presided over the creation of the Regency style, which came to epitomise the era, and he was, with Charles I, the most artistically literate of all our kings. Yet despite his life of luxury and indulgence, George died alone and unloved. Stella Tillyard has not written a judgemental book, but a very human and enjoyable one, about this most colourful of all British kings.

Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death midway through his reign; and the intractable Hundred Years War with France began under his leadership. Yet Edward managed to rule England for fifty years, and was viewed as a paragon of kingship in the eyes of both his contemporaries and later generations. Venerated as the victor of Sluys and Crecy and the founder of the Order of the Garter, he was regarded with awe even by his enemies. But he lived too long, and was ultimately condemned to see thirty years of conquests reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a fted king who ended his life a heroic failure."

Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)

The Father of His People

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

*The Sainted King*

*George VI (Penguin Monarchs)*

*Not Just a British Monarch*

*Edward VI (Penguin Monarchs)*

*On Christmas Day 1066, William, duke of Normandy was crowned in Westminster, the first Norman king of England. It was a disaster: soldiers outside, thinking shouts of acclamation were treachery, torched the surrounding buildings. To later chroniclers, it was an omen of the catastrophes to come. During the reign of William the Conqueror, England experienced greater and more seismic change than at any point before or since. Marc Morris's concise and gripping biography sifts through the sources of the time to give a fresh view of the man who changed England more than any other, as old ruling elites were swept away, enemies at home and abroad (including those in his closest family) were crushed, swathes of the country were devastated and the map of the nation itself was redrawn, giving greater power than ever to the king. When, towards the end of his reign, William undertook a great survey of his new lands, his subjects compared it to the last judgement of God, the Domesday Book. England had been transformed forever.*

*Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)*

*Edward VI*

*The Dutiful King*

*The North Sea King*

*A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I*

*James II (Penguin Monarchs)*