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Monarchs Englands Conqueror

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***George IV spent most of his
life waiting to become king:
as a pleasure-loving and***

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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

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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

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of all our kings. Yet despite his life of luxury and indulgence, George died alone and unmourned. Stella Tillyard has not written a judgemental book, but a very human and enjoyable one, about this most colourful of

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all British kings.

The first major biography of a truly formidable king, whose reign was one of the most dramatic and important of the entire Middle Ages, leading to war and conquest on an unprecedented scale. Edward

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I is familiar to millions as "Longshanks," conqueror of Scotland and nemesis of Sir William Wallace (in "Braveheart"). Yet that story forms only the final chapter of the king's action-packed life. Earlier, Edward had defeated

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***and killed Simon de Montfort
in battle; traveled to the Holy
Land; conquered Wales,
extinguishing its native rulers
and constructing a
magnificent chain of castles.
He raised the greatest armies
of the Middle Ages and***

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summoned the largest parliaments; notoriously, he expelled all the Jews from his kingdom. The longest-lived of England's medieval kings, Edward fathered fifteen children with his first wife, Eleanor of Castile and, after

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her death, erected the Eleanor Crosses—the grandest funeral monuments ever fashioned for an English monarch. In this book, Marc Morris examines afresh the forces that drove Edward throughout his relentless

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career: his character, his Christian faith, and his sense of England's destiny—a sense shaped largely by the tales of the legendary King Arthur. Morris also explores the competing reasons that led Edward's opponents

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(including Robert Bruce) to resist him. The result is a sweeping story, immaculately researched yet compellingly told, and a vivid picture of medieval Britain at the moment when its future was decided.

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Henry III was a medieval king whose long reign continues to have a profound impact on us today. He was on the throne for 56 years and during this time England was transformed from being the private play-thing of a French

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speaking dynasty into a medieval state in which the king answered for his actions to an English parliament, which emerged during Henry's lifetime. Despite Henry's central importance for the birth of parliament

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and the development of a state recognisably modern in many of its institutions, it is Henry's most vociferous opponent, Simon de Montfort, who is in many ways more famous than the monarch himself. Henry is principally

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known today as the driving force behind the building of Westminster Abbey, but he deserves to be better understood for many reasons - as Stephen Church's sparkling account makes clear. Part of the Penguin

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***Monarchs series: short, fresh,
expert accounts of England's
rulers in a highly collectible
format***

***From the celebrated historian
and author of Europe: A
History, a new life of George
II George II, King of Great***

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***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.***

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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

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***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***

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***continental politics, as a
result of which he was the
last British monarch to lead
his troops into battle, at
Dettingen in 1744.***

The Sainted King

Henry I

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

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***Queen, Matriarch, Empress
Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)
From the Earliest Period to
the Reign of King Stephen
A Failed King?***

***James I (Penguin Monarchs)
On Christmas Day 1066,***

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*William, duke of
Normandy was crowned in
Westminster, the first
Norman king of England.
It was a disaster:
soldiers outside,
thinking shouts of*

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*acclamation were
treachery, torched the
surrounding buildings.
To later chroniclers, it
was an omen of the
catastrophes to come.
During the reign of*

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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

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*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*

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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

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*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*

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judgement of God, the Domesday Book. England had been transformed forever.

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts

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*of England's rulers -
now in paperback William
III (1689-1702) & Mary
II (1689-94) (Britain's
only ever 'joint
monarchs') changed the
course of the entire*

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*country's history,
coming to power through
a coup (which involved
Mary betraying her own
father), reestablishing
parliament on a new
footing and, through*

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*committing Britain to
fighting France,
initiating an immensely
long period of warfare
and colonial expansion.
Jonathan Keates'
wonderful book makes*

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*both monarchs vivid, the
cold, shrewd 'Dutch'
William and the
shortlived Mary, whose
life and death inspired
Purcell to write some of
his greatest music.*

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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

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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

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*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*

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of Sluys and Crécy 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

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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 fêted

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*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

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*he marked a decisive
break with his
flamboyant predecessor
Edward VII, inventing
the modern monarchy,
with its emphasis on
frequent public*

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*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*

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*coverage--frequently
filmed and initiating
the British Empire
Christmas*

*broadcast--George became
for 25 years a
universally recognised*

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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

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*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*

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*Monarchy, that
central--if
peculiar--pillar of
British life.*

*John (Penguin Monarchs)
England's Protector
Henry III (Penguin*

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Monarchs)

The Making of England

The Phoenix King

*George V (Penguin
Monarchs)*

The Dutiful King

The Father of His People

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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

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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

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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

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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

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last child monarch,
Edward would have led
his country in a quite
different direction to
the catastrophic one
caused by his death.
King John ruled England

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for seventeen and a half years, yet his entire reign is usually reduced to one image: of the villainous monarch outmanoeuvred by rebellious barons into

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agreeing to Magna Carta
at Runnymede in 1215.

Ever since, John has
come to be seen as an
archetypal tyrant. But
how evil was he? In this
perceptive short

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account, Nicholas
Vincent unpicks John's
life through his deeds
and his personality. The
youngest of four
brothers, overlooked and
given a distinctly

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unroyal name, John seemed doomed to failure. As king, he was reputedly cruel and treacherous, pursuing his own interests at the expense of his country,

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losing the continental
empire bequeathed to him
by his father Henry and
his brother Richard and
eventually plunging
England into civil war.
Only his lordship of

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Ireland showed some success. Yet, as this fascinating biography asks, were his crimes necessarily greater than those of his ancestors - or was he judged more

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harshly because,
ultimately, he failed as
a warlord?

Foremost medieval
historian Anne Curry
offers a new
reinterpretation of

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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

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throne, he had been a failure, cast into the political wilderness amid rumours that he planned to depose his father. Despite a complete change of

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character as king -
founding monasteries,
persecuting heretics,
and enforcing the law to
its extremes - little
had gone right since. He
was insecure in his

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kingdom, his reputation low. On the eve of his departure for France, he uncovered a plot by some of his closest associates to remove him from power. Agincourt

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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

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interpretation, Anne
Curry explores how
Henry's hyperactive
efforts to expunge his
past failures, and his
experience of crisis -
which threatened to ruin

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everything he had
struggled to achieve -
defined his kingship,
and how his astonishing
success at Agincourt
transformed his standing
in the eyes of his

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contemporaries, and of all generations to come. The future William II was born in the late 1050s the third son of William the Conqueror. The younger William, -

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nicknamed Rufus because of his ruddy cheeks - at first had no great expectations of succeeding to the throne. This biography tells the story of

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William Rufus, King of
England from 1087-1100
and reveals the truth
behind his death.

The Life and Murder of
William II of England
William I (Penguin

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Monarchs)

The Reign of Anarchy

William III and Mary II,

1688-1702

A King at Sea

Stephen

Henry V (Penguin

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Monarchs)

King Rufus

William III and Mary II, England's only ever 'joint monarchs', changed the course of the country's history, coming to power through a coup, re-establishing parliament on a new

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footing and initiating a long period of expansion that transformed England into a world power. Jonathan Keates' account of their dramatic reign makes both monarchs vivid: the shrewd 'Dutch' military champion William of Orange, and the vulnerable, shortlived Mary, whose life as a 'celebrity' royal

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and untimely death at thirty-four inspired Purcell to write some of his greatest music. As Keates makes clear, William and Mary's reign was crucial to the evolution of the modern nation, from the 'Glorious Revolution' that began it, to the creation of the Bank of England, the modern British

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armed forces and, most crucially, a realm in which royal power required popular consent.

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

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'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

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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

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Society.

King John is one of those historical characters who needs little in the way of introduction. If readers are not already familiar with him as the tyrant whose misgovernment gave rise to Magna Carta, we remember him as the villain in the stories of Robin Hood.

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Formidable and cunning, but also cruel, lecherous, treacherous and untrusting. Twelve years into his reign, John was regarded as a powerful king within the British Isles. But despite this immense early success, when he finally crosses to France to recover his lost empire, he meets with disaster.

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John returns home penniless to face a tide of criticism about his unjust rule. The result is Magna Carta – a groundbreaking document in posterity, but a worthless piece of parchment in 1215, since John had no intention of honoring it. Like all great tragedies, the world can only be put to rights by the

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tyrant's death. John finally obliges at Newark Castle in October 1216, dying of dysentery as a great gale howls up the valley of the Trent.

'Stephen risked being seen as a man who never quite transcended the essential flawed-ness of his claim to be king. His actions betrayed

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uneasiness in his new skin'
Remembered as a time in which
'Christ and his saints slept', Stephen's
troubled reign plunged England into
anarchy. Without clear rules of
succession in the Norman monarchy,
conflict within William the Conqueror's
family was inevitable. But, as this

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resonant portrait shows, there was another problem too: Stephen himself, unable to make good the transition from nobleman to king.

The Last Boy King

King John

Athelstan (Penguin Monarchs)

William II, 1087-1100

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William I

A Heroic Failure

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)

An upstart French duke who sets out to conquer the most powerful and unified kingdom in Christendom. An

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invasion force on a scale not seen since the days of the Romans. One of the bloodiest and most decisive battles ever fought. This riveting book explains why the Norman Conquest was the single most important event in English history. Assessing the original evidence at every turn, Marc

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Morris goes beyond the familiar outline to explain why England was at once so powerful and yet so vulnerable to William the Conqueror's attack. Why the Normans, in some respects less sophisticated, possessed the military cutting edge. How William's hopes of a united

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Anglo-Norman realm unravelled, dashed by English rebellions, Viking invasions and the insatiable demands of his fellow conquerors. This is a tale of powerful drama, repression and seismic social change: the Battle of Hastings itself and the violent 'Harrying of the North'; the sudden

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introduction of castles and the wholesale rebuilding of every major church; the total destruction of an ancient ruling class. Language, law, architecture, even attitudes towards life itself were altered forever by the coming of the Normans. Marc Morris, author of the bestselling biography of

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Edward I, A Great and Terrible King, approaches the Conquest with the same passion, verve and scrupulous concern for historical accuracy. This is the definitive account for our times of an extraordinary story, a pivotal moment in the shaping of the English nation.

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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

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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

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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

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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

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persona, the last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs would become a timeless, fearless queen.

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

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rulers in a collectible format If Ethelred was notoriously 'Unready' and Alfred 'Great', King George VI should bear the title of 'George the Dutiful'. 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.

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Inarticulate and loathing any sort of public appearances, he accepted that it was his destiny to figure conspicuously in the public eye, gritted his teeth, 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

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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

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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.

William IV, the 'Sailor King', reigned

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for just seven years. Rash and impetuous as a young man, he was sent to join the navy by his father, George III, to bring him to order, but he was overpromoted at an early age and saw his years of active service marked by a series of calamities. He was also notorious for his mounting

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debts and his long relationship with the actress Mrs Jordan, with whom he had ten children. Yet, as Roger Knight, one of Britain's foremost naval historians, shows in this concise and perceptive biography, William's bluff, unpolished sailor's manner made him popular with the people.

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Inheriting the throne amid strikes, riots and the push for parliamentary reform, he helped see the country through the great constitutional crisis of the era. Despite his many flaws, he was perhaps a better king than sailor, leaving the monarchy in a healthier state than when he found it, and

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enabling the smooth succession of his niece, Victoria.

The Unexpected King

A Great and Terrible King

Henry II (Penguin Monarchs)

Anne

Aethelred the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

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King in Waiting

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

Oliver Cromwell (Penguin Monarchs)

William II (1087-1100), or William Rufus, will always be most famous for his death: killed by an arrow while out hunting, perhaps through

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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

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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.

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Charismatic, insatiable and cruel, Henry VIII was, 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

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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

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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

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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. The formation of England occurred against the odds: an island divided

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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 Athelstan inherited the rule of both Mercia and Wessex, conquered

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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 omens, raven harbingers and blood-red battlefields. As well

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as giving form to the figure of Athelstan - 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

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Mercians', who brought Athelstan 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

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fashioned a nation that endures to this day.

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

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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

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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

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teaches a course on biography. Her previous books include *The Young Disraeli*; a study of Edwin Lutyens, *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*

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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.

England's Conqueror

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The Crusader King

An Evil King?

Edward I and the Forging of Britain

The Last Catholic King

The Norman Conquest

George VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Last Queen of England

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William III (1689-1702) & Mary II (1689-94) (Britain's only ever 'joint monarchs') changed the course of the entire country's history, coming to power through a coup (which involved Mary betraying her own father), reestablishing parliament on a new footing and, through

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committing Britain to fighting France, initiating an immensely long period of warfare and colonial expansion. Jonathan Keates' wonderful book makes both monarchs vivid, the cold, shrewd 'Dutch' William and the shortlived Mary, whose life and death inspired

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Purcell to write some of his greatest music.

Although he styled himself 'His Highness', adopted the court ritual of his royal predecessors, and lived in the former royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court, Oliver Cromwell was not a king - in

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spite of the best efforts of his supporters to crown him. Yet, as David Horspool shows in this illuminating new portrait of England's Lord Protector, Cromwell, the Puritan son of Cambridgeshire gentry, wielded such influence that it would be a

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pretence to say that power really lay with the collective. The years of Cromwell's rise to power, shaped by a decade-long civil war, saw a sustained attempt at the collective government of England; the first attempts at a real Union of Britain; the beginnings of empire; a

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radically new solution to the idea of a national religion; atrocities in Ireland; and the readmission to England of the Jews, a people officially banned for over three and a half centuries. At the end of it, Oliver Cromwell had emerged as the country's sole ruler: to his

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enemies, and probably to most of his countrymen, his legacy looked as likely to last as that of the Stuart dynasty he had replaced.

William I (Penguin Monarchs)England's ConquerorPenguin UK

James's reign marked one of the

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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. Edward VI (Penguin Monarchs)

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Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

The Quest for Fame

Partners in Revolution

Henry VI

From Playboy Prince to Warrior

King

Richard I (Penguin Monarchs)

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*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*

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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

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the lens of contemporary sources, from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Vita Ædwardi Regis to the Bayeux Tapestry, to separate myth from history and uncover the

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*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*

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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

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*prelude to the Norman
Conquest in 1066.*

*Woodman explains clearly
how events unfolded and
personalities interacted
but, unlike many, he
shows a capable and*

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impressive king at the centre of them.

Henry I, son of William the Conqueror, ruled from 1100 to 1135, a time of fundamental change in the Anglo-

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Norman world. This long-awaited biography, written by one of the most distinguished medievalists of his generation, offers a major reassessment of

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Henry's character and reign. Challenging the dark and dated portrait of the king as brutal, greedy, and repressive, it argues instead that Henry's rule was based

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*on reason and order. C.
Warren Hollister points
out that Henry laid the
foundations for judicial
and financial
institutions usually
attributed to his*

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grandson, Henry II.

Royal government was

centralized and

systematized, leading to

firm, stable, and

peaceful rule for his

subjects in both England

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and Normandy. By mid-reign Henry I was the most powerful king in Western Europe, and with astute diplomacy, an intelligence network, and strategic marriages

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*of his children
(legitimate and
illegitimate), he was
able to undermine the
various coalitions
mounted against him.*

Henry strove throughout

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*his reign to solidify
the Anglo-Norman
dynasty, and his
marriage linked the
Normans to the Old
English line. Hollister
vividly describes*

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*Henry's life and reign,
places them against the
political background of
the time, and provides
analytical studies of
the king and his
magnates, the royal*

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administration, and relations between king and church. The resulting volume is one that will be welcomed by students and general readers alike.

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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

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*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*

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*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',*

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starting a problem that would haunt Britain's rulers for generations. 'To be a medieval king was a job of work ... This was a man who knew how to run a complex

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*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*

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*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*

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ruthlessness, and through his dynastic legacy. Edmund King's engrossing portrait shows a strikingly charismatic, intelligent and fortunate man, whose

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*rule was looked back on
as the real post-
conquest founding of
England as a new realm:
wealthy, stable,
bureaucratised and self-
confident.*

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*Not Just a British
Monarch*

*George IV (Penguin
Monarchs)*

*Elizabeth I (Penguin
Monarchs)*

The Failed King

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*William of Malmesbury's
Chronicle of the Kings
of England*

*Victoria (Penguin
Monarchs)*

*William II (Penguin
Monarchs)*

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*William III and Mary II
Henry II (1154-89) 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*

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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.

Richard I's reign is both controversial and seemingly contradictory. One of

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England's most famous medieval monarchs and a potent symbol of national identity, he barely spent six months on English soil during a ten-year reign and spoke French as his first language. Contemporaries dubbed him the 'Lionheart', reflecting a carefully cultivated reputation for bravery, prowess

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and knightly virtue, but this supposed paragon of chivalry butchered close to 3,000 prisoners in cold blood on a single day. And, though revered as Christian Europe's greatest crusader, his grand campaign to the Holy Land failed to recover the city of Jerusalem from Islam. Seeking to reconcile this conflicting

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evidence, Thomas Asbridge's incisive reappraisal of Richard I's career questions whether the Lionheart really did neglect his kingdom, considers why he devoted himself to the cause of holy war and asks how the memory of his life came to be interwoven with myth. Richard emerges as a formidable warrior-king,

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possessed of martial genius and a cultured intellect, yet burdened by the legacy of his dysfunctional dynasty and obsessed with the pursuit of honour and renown.

No English king has so divided opinion, both during his reign and in the centuries since, more than Richard III. He was

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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-

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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.

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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.

James II (Penguin Monarchs)

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Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

A Study in Insecurity

The Red King

William IV (Penguin Monarchs)

A Simple and God-Fearing King

A Prince Among Princes

William III & Mary II (Penguin Monarchs)

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Succeeding to the throne at the age of only nine months, Henry VI had a turbulent reign: he inherited a war with France and, in time, found himself at war with his own nobles. James Ross surveys this eventful life, including Henry's deposition at the hands of Edward IV and his eventual return to the throne.