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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 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

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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.

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

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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.

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 most instantly recognizable of kings remains a figure of

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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.

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

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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

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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.

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Thomas Becket

The Rise And Fall Of A Tudor Dynasty

Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)

Treason and Trust

Edward VI

Spanning nearly one thousand years of British history, an

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entertaining and informative study chronicles the scandalous and adulterous behavior of Britain's royal family and its historical repercussions, from the reign of Henry II to the marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Original. 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

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Protestant propaganda that buried her reputation during her younger sister, Elizabeth I's reign. But what if she had succeeded?

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, deposition and murder, he had both to maintain a grip on power and to convince England that his rule

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was both rightful and 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.

When Henry IV seized the throne from his cousin Richard II, people saw it as a hopeful new beginning for England. The first monarch to have English as his mother tongue since the Norman conquest, Henry seemed to embody the ideals of chivalric kingship: mercy, piety, military prowess and learning.

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Yet deposing a crowned monarch was not a stable foundation on which to build a reign. Henry IV found himself challenged from all sides, plagued by conspiracies, rebellions, assassination attempts, and crippling debts, while his tense relationships with parliament and with his own son, Shakespeare's Prince Hal, saw his grip on power falter. Nevertheless, he was the first king and founder of a Lancastrian dynasty which would go on to shape England for centuries to come. In this lively study, Catherine Nall reappraises a monarch who weathered upheaval and uncertainty and held on to the throne through sheer force of will.

The Making of England

Henry V (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry I

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Edward VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry IV (Penguin Monarchs)

Ladybird Histories: Kings and Queens

A Study in Insecurity

George IV (Penguin Monarchs)

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 Athelstan 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 omens, raven

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harbingers and blood-red battlefields. As well 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 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 fashioned a nation that endures to this day.

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

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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

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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.

"For fans of Hilary Mantel and The Tudors, this is the dramatic story of the concluding episode in England's War of the Roses, featuring three brothers, two of whom became kings, Edward IV and Richard III, famous from Shakespeare's great history play Richard III"--

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

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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.

The Brothers York

A Lusty Romp Through the Extramarital Adventures That

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Rocked the British Monarchy

The Phoenix King

James I (Penguin Monarchs)

Athelstan (Penguin Monarchs)

The Story of Catherine of Braganza

Henry II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Life of Lady Margaret Douglas

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

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ends of the earth; a new Church of England rose from the ashes of past conflict, and the English Renaissance bloomed 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 reign and the failure to marry that threatened her line, Elizabeth lived under constant threat. But, facing down her enemies and creating a compellingly inscrutable public persona, the last and

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

"Young Katherine of Aragon, daughter of Spain's powerful monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, was an exquisite prize in the royal marriage market. Golden-haired, sixteen years old she was sent to England to marry the future king, Arthur, Prince of Wales. But when Arthur died a few months after their wedding, Katherine's bright future was suddenly eclipsed. It took his younger brother Henry VIII eight long years to do the honorable thing and marry her. Their union was briefly happy until Katherine failed to bear a son, and Anne Boleyn caught Henry's eye.."--

'To be a medieval king was a job of work ... This was a mar

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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 post-conquest founding of England as a new realm: wealthy, stable, bureaucratized and self-confident.

A major new biography of the most infamous king of England
A Heroic Failure

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A Failed King?

Aethelred the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

The Failed King

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

Royal Affairs

Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England

Henry VIII

“An entertaining yet highly accurate guide to this larger-than-life royal dynasty” (Claire Ridgway, author of The Fall of Anne Boleyn). From the bloody Wars of the Roses to Queen Elizabeth I’s iconic rule, the Tudor Dynasty was a fascinating period of English history—and monarchs such as Henry VIII have become a part of modern pop

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culture, appearing in endless TV shows, novels, and movies, as well as parodies and satires. After all these centuries, how do you separate the truth from the legends? This guide—with beautiful color illustrations—debunks the myths, provides lots of fun facts, and offers a journey through the Tudor era that's not only informative, but humorous and entertaining. "A wonderfully irreverent and engaging introduction to the Tudors." —Suzannah Lipscomb, author of 1536: The Year that Changed Henry VIII "Putting the events and people of 500 years ago into a clear, modern context, this is as witty and punchy an introduction to the period as you could hope for." —Justin Pollard, historical consultant

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for Showtime's The Tudors

Ladybird Histories: Kings and Queens is the ideal first reference book for primary school children. It is packed with information about England's monarchs, in chronological order, including King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I, and Queen Victoria. Full of fascinating facts, this handy book will help schoolchildren with their history studies.

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

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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. Henry III was a medieval king whose long reign continues

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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 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 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 known today as the driving force behind the building of Westminster Abbey, but he deserves to be better

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understood for many reasons - as Stephen Church's sparkling account makes clear. Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a highly collectible format

The Sainted King

The Lost Tudor Princess

John (Penguin Monarchs)

The Last Boy King

An Evil King?

The Father of His People

The Children of Henry VIII

Queen, Matriarch, Empress

For a man with such conventional tastes and

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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

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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.

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

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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 unmourned. Stella Tillyard has not written a judgemental book, but a very human and enjoyable one, about this most colourful of all British kings.

Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, became king at the age of nine and died wholly

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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 long-awaited biography of the genius who masterminded Henry VIII's bloody revolution in the English government, which reveals at last Cromwell's role in the downfall of Anne Boleyn "This a book that - and it's not often you can say this - we have been awaiting for four hundred years." --Hilary Mantel, author of Wolf Hall Since the sixteenth century we

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have been fascinated by Henry VIII and the man who stood beside him, guiding him, enriching him, and enduring the king's insatiable appetites and violent outbursts until Henry ordered his beheading in July 1540. After a decade of sleuthing in the royal archives, Diarmaid MacCulloch has emerged with a tantalizing new understanding of Henry's mercurial chief minister, the inscrutable and utterly compelling Thomas Cromwell. History has not been kind to the son of a Putney brewer who became the architect of England's split with Rome. Where past biographies portrayed him as a scheming

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operator with blood on his hands, Hilary Mantel reimagined him as a far more sympathetic figure buffered by the whims of his master. So which was he--the villain of history or the victim of her creation? MacCulloch sifted through letters and court records for answers and found Cromwell's fingerprints on some of the most transformative decisions of Henry's turbulent reign. But he also found Cromwell the man, an administrative genius, rescuing him from myth and slander. The real Cromwell was a deeply loving father who took his biggest risks to secure the future of his son, Gregory. He was

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also a man of faith and a quiet revolutionary. In the end, he could not appease or control the man whose humors were so violent and unpredictable. But he made his mark on England, setting her on the path to religious awakening and indelibly transforming the system of government of the English-speaking world.

A Royal Tragedy

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

Thomas Cromwell

Victoria (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

Winter King

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The Tudor Tutor
House Of Treason

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE INDEPENDENT • From bestselling author and acclaimed historian Alison Weir comes the first biography of Margaret Douglas, the beautiful, cunning niece of Henry VIII of England who used her sharp intelligence and covert power to influence the succession after the death of Elizabeth I. Royal Tudor blood ran in her veins. Her

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mother was a queen, her father an earl, and she herself was the granddaughter, niece, cousin, and grandmother of monarchs. Lady Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, was an important figure in Tudor England, yet today, while her contemporaries—Anne Boleyn, Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I—have achieved celebrity status, she is largely forgotten. Margaret's life was steeped in intrigue, drama, and tragedy—from her auspicious birth in 1530 to her parents' bitter divorce, from her ill-fated love affairs to her

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appointment as lady-in-waiting for four of Henry's six wives. In an age when women were expected to stay out of the political arena, alluring and tempestuous Margaret helped orchestrate one of the most notorious marriages of the sixteenth century: that of her son Lord Darnley to Mary, Queen of Scots. Margaret defiantly warred with two queens—Mary, and Elizabeth of England—and was instrumental in securing the Stuart ascension to the throne of England for her grandson, James VI. The life of Margaret

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Douglas spans five reigns and provides many missing links between the Tudor and Stuart dynasties. Drawing on decades of research and myriad original sources—including many of Margaret's surviving letters—Alison Weir brings this captivating character out of the shadows and presents a strong, capable woman who operated effectively and fearlessly at the very highest levels of power. Praise for *The Lost Tudor Princess* “This is a substantial, detailed biography of a fascinating woman who lived her

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extraordinary life to the full, taking desperate chances for love and for ambition. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in the powerful women of the Tudor period.”—Philippa Gregory, The Washington Post “Tackling the family from an unexpected angle, Weir offers a blow-by-blow account of six decades of palace intrigue. . . . Weir balances historical data with emotional speculation to illuminate the ferocious dynastic ambitions and will to power that earned her subject a place in the

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**spotlight.”—The New York Times Book Review
King-makers - Conspirators - Criminals -
Nobles - Seducers The Howard family - the
Dukes of Norfolk - were the wealthiest and
most powerful aristocrats in Tudor England,
regarding themselves as the true power
behind the throne. They were certainly
extraordinarily influential, with two Howard
women marrying Henry VIII - Anne Boleyn
and the fifteen-year-old Catherine Howard.
But in the treacherous world of the Tudor
court no faction could afford to rest on its**

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laurels. The Howards consolidated their power with an awesome web of schemes and conspiracies but even they could not always hold their enemies at bay. This was a family whose history is marked by treason, beheadings and incarceration - a dynasty whose pride and ambition secured only their downfall.

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

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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 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 see thirty years of conquests

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reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a fêted king who ended his life a heroic failure. 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 Becket and his debilitating arguments with his sons, most

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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.

**From Playboy Prince to Warrior King
The Daughter of Time**

George V (Penguin Monarchs)

Not Just a British Monarch

The Quest for Fame

Warrior, Priest, Rebel

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The True Life of Mary Stuart Henry III (Penguin Monarchs)

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE starring Saoirse Ronan and Margot Robbie. A biography "as enthralling as a detective story," of the woman who reigned over sixteenth-century Scotland (New York Times Book Review). In *Mary Queen of Scots*, John Guy creates an intimate and absorbing portrait of one of history's most famous women, depicting her world and her place in

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the sweep of history with stunning immediacy. Bringing together all surviving documents and uncovering a trove of new sources for the first time, Guy dispels the popular image of Mary Stuart as a romantic leading lady—achieving her ends through feminine wiles—and establishes her as the intellectual and political equal of Elizabeth I. Through Guy's pioneering research and superbly readable prose, we come to see Mary as a skillful

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diplomat, maneuvering ingeniously among a dizzying array of factions that sought to control or dethrone her. It is an enthralling, myth-shattering look at a complex woman and ruler and her time. "The definitive biography . . . gripping . . . a pure pleasure to read."—Washington Post Book World First published in 2004 as Queen of Scots Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible

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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 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 the cycle of division,

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usurpation, deposition and murder, he had both to maintain a grip on power and to convince England that his rule was both rightful and effective. Here, Sean Cunningham explores how, in his ruthless and controlling kingship, Henry VII did so, in the process founding the Tudor dynasty.

King John ruled England for seventeen and a half years, yet his entire reign is usually reduced to one image: of the villainous monarch outmanoeuvred by

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rebellious barons into 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 account, Nicholas Vincent unpicks John's life through his deeds and his personality. The youngest of four brothers, overlooked and given a distinctly unroyal name, John seemed doomed to failure. As king, he was reputedly cruel and treacherous, pursuing his own

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interests at the expense of his country, 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 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 harshly because, ultimately, he failed as a warlord?

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Profiles Henry VII as an enigmatic and ruthless king of a country ravaged by decades of conspiracy and civil war, discussing the costs of establishing a Tudor monarchy and the ways he set the stage for Henry VIII's reign.

King in Waiting

Mary I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Merry Monarch's Wife

A Revolutionary Life

The Unexpected King

A Novel

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Mary Queen Of Scots (tie-In)
Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)
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

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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.

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A revisionist new biography reintroducing readers to one of the most subversive figures in English history—the man who sought to reform a nation, dared to defy his king, and laid down his life to defend his sacred honor **NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY KANSAS CITY STAR AND BLOOMBERG** *Becket's life story has been often told but never so incisively reexamined and vividly rendered as it is in John Guy's*

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hands. The son of middle-class Norman parents, Becket rose against all odds to become the second most powerful man in England. As King Henry II's chancellor, Becket charmed potentates and popes, tamed overmighty barons, and even personally led knights into battle. After his royal patron elevated him to archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, however, Becket clashed with the King. Forced to choose between fealty to the crown and the values of his

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faith, he repeatedly challenged Henry's authority to bring the church to heel. Drawing on the full panoply of medieval sources, Guy sheds new light on the relationship between the two men, separates truth from centuries of mythmaking, and casts doubt on the long-held assumption that the headstrong rivals were once close friends. He also provides the fullest accounting yet for Becket's seemingly radical transformation from worldly bureaucrat

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to devout man of God. Here is a Becket seldom glimpsed in any previous biography, a man of many facets and faces: the skilled warrior as comfortable unhorsing an opponent in single combat as he was negotiating terms of surrender; the canny diplomat "with the appetite of a wolf" who unexpectedly became the spiritual paragon of the English church; and the ascetic rebel who waged a high-stakes contest of wills with one of the most

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volcanic monarchs of the Middle Ages. Driven into exile, derided by his enemies as an ungrateful upstart, Becket returned to Canterbury in the unlikeliest guise of all: as an avenging angel of God, wielding his power of excommunication like a sword. It is this last apparition, the one for which history remembers him best, that will lead to his martyrdom at the hands of the king's minions—a grisly episode that Guy recounts in chilling and

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dramatic detail. An uncommonly intimate portrait of one of the medieval world's most magnetic figures, Thomas Becket breathes new life into its subject—cementing for all time his place as an enduring icon of resistance to the abuse of power.

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

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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 Ædwardi 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

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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 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.

Foremost medieval historian Anne Curry offers a new reinterpretation of Henry

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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 been a failure, cast into the political wilderness 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

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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 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

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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 Reign of Anarchy

The Afflicted King

A Prince Among Princes

A Simple and God-Fearing King

Your Cheeky Guide to the Dynasty

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Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)

Katherine of Aragon, the True Queen

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry I, son of William the Conqueror, ruled from 1100 to 1135, a time of fundamental change in the Anglo-Norman world. This long-awaited biography, written by one of the most distinguished medievalists of his generation, offers a major reassessment of 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 on reason and order.

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C. Warren Hollister points out that Henry laid the foundations for judicial and financial institutions usually attributed to his grandson, Henry II. Royal government was centralized and systematized, leading to firm, stable, and peaceful rule for his subjects in both England 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 of his children (legitimate and illegitimate), he was able to undermine the various coalitions mounted against him. Henry strove throughout his reign to solidify the

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Anglo-Norman dynasty, and his marriage linked the Normans to the Old English line.

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

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

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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 Lutyens, *The Architect and his Wife*, which

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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.

Charles II is restored to the English throne, and his court is lively and even scandalous. The country is eager for succession to be clear and certain: The next king will be the son of Charles II and his queen, Catherine of Braganza. Yet Catherine, daughter of the king of Portugal and a Catholic, has never been

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popular with the English people. She is also having great difficulty conceiving an heir, even as many of Charles's well-known mistresses are bearing his children with ease. Catherine is aware that courtiers close to Charles are asking him to divorce her and take another wife—yet she is determined to hold her title in the face of all odds. The ninth novel in the beloved Queens of England series, *The Merry Monarch's Wife* brings Catherine of Braganza to life and plunges readers into the tumultuous world of Restoration England.

"Nothing consumed Henry VIII, England's

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wealthiest and most powerful king, more than his desire to produce a legitimate male heir and perpetuate the Tudor dynasty. To that end he married six wives, became the subject of the most notorious divorce case of the sixteenth century, and broke with the pope, all in an age of international competition and warfare, social unrest, and growing religious intolerance and discord. Henry fathered four children who survived childhood, each by a different mother. In *The Children of Henry VIII*, renowned Tudor historian John Guy tells their stories, returning to the archives and drawing on a

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vast array of contemporary records, personal letters, ambassadors' reports, and other eyewitness accounts, including the four children's own handwritten letters. Guy's compelling narrative illuminates their personalities, depicting siblings often scarred by jealousy, mutual distrust, bitter rivalry, even hatred. Possessed of quick wits and strong wills, their characters were defined partly by the educations they received, and partly by events over which they had no control. Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, although recognized as the king's son, could never forget his illegitimacy.

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Edward would succeed his father, but died while still in his teens, desperately plotting to exclude his half-sisters from the throne, and utterly failing to do so. Mary's world was shattered by her mother Catherine of Aragon's divorce and her own unhappy marriage. Elizabeth was the most successful, but also the luckiest. Even so, she lived with the knowledge that her father had ordered her mother Anne Boleyn's execution, was often in fear of her own life, and could never marry the one man she truly loved. John Guy takes us behind the façade of politics and pageantry at the Tudor court, vividly

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capturing the greatest and most momentous family drama in all of English history."--Publisher's website.