

James I Penguin Monarchs The Phoenix King

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. 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.

Charles II has always been one of the most instantly recognisable British kings - both in his physical appearance, disseminated through endless portraits, prints and pub signs, and in his complicated mix of lasciviousness, cynicism and luxury. His father's execution and his own many years of exile made him a guarded, curious, unusually self-conscious ruler. He lived through some of the most striking events in the national history - from the Civil Wars to the Great Plague, from the Fire of London to the wars with the Dutch. Clare Jackson's marvellous book takes full advantage of its irrepressible subject.

'To be a 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, bureaucratized and self-confident.

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.

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

Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)

Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

The Phoenix King

TrooFriend

Henry II (Penguin Monarchs)

Charles II (Penguin Monarchs)

William III & Mary II (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 defeat. Perhaps no ruler could have stemmed the encroachment 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.

Traces the political, social, and economic history of Great Britain during the Stuart dynasty, from the accession of James I to the death

Queen Anne

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. 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. 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 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 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 to 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.

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, establishing parliament on a new 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 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' which began it, to the creation of the Bank of England, the modern British armed forces and, most crucially, a realm in which royal power required popular consent.

Edward VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Cnut (Penguin Monarchs)

A Monarchy Transformed

The Last Catholic King

James II

England Under Siege, 1588-1688

Partners in Revolution

The Reign of Anarchy

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 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 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 how personalities interacted but, unlike many, he shows a capable and impressive king at the centre of them.

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 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 Purcell to write some of his greatest music.

'First and foremost, he survived, and that was no mean achievement' James's reign marked one of the rare breaks in England's monarchy. Already James VI of Scotland, on Elizabeth I's death he became James I of England and Ireland, uniting the British Isles for the first time and founding the Stuart dynasty. Thomas Cogswell's dramatic new biography brings James to life as a complex, learned, curious man and, above all, a great survivor. 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.

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 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, 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.

A Study in Insecurity

An Abbreviated Life

James II (Penguin Monarchs)

England's Conqueror

King in Waiting

The Holy King (Penguin Monarchs)

George I (Penguin Monarchs)

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

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.

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.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. The cultural richness of the reign of Edward the Confessor marks the high point of Anglo-Saxon England. The saintly Edward has become one of the legendary figures in English. James Campbell's brilliant little book is the most insightful look at his personality and reign yet published.

SPECTATOR AND TELEGRAPH BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2015 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.

George I was not the most charismatic of the Hanoverian monarchs to have reigned in England but he was probably the most important. He was certainly the luckiest. Born the youngest son of a landless German duke, he was taken by repeated strokes of good fortune to become, first the ruler of a major state in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and then the sovereign of three kingdoms (England, Ireland and Scotland). Tim Blanning's incisive short biography examines George's life and career as a German prince, and as King. Fifty-four years old when he arrived in London in 1714, he was a battle-hardened veteran, who put his long experience and deep knowledge of international affairs to good use in promoting the interests of both Hanover and Great Britain. When he died, his legacy was order and prosperity at home and power and prestige abroad. Disagreeable he may have been to many, but he was also tough, determined and effective, at a time when other European thrones had started to crumble.

The Uncrowned King

The Summer King

The Lucky King

James I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Sainted King

Madness and Majesty

Britain 1603-1714

A Prince Among Princes

The brief, eventful reign of James II was one of the most catastrophic in British history. Powerful and popular when he came to the throne, James managed, despite great reserves of good will and deference, to so alienate his supporters that he had to flee the country. And yet, as David Womersley's lucid account shows, most of James's life was spent not as king but first as Duke of York (after whom New York is named) and later, after attempting to convert his realm to Catholicism, in exile, thereby creating the spectre of a Jacobite restoration that would haunt the monarchy for generations. Ultimately, James II was a man whose blindness to subtlety and lack of understanding of political reality brought about his downfall.

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

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.

A BOOK OF THE YEAR 2021, AS CHOSEN BY THE TIMES, NEW STATESMAN AND TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT 'A big historical advance. Ours, it turns out, is a very un-insular "Island Story". And its 17th-century chapter will never look quite the same again' John Adamson, Sunday Times A ground-breaking portrait of the most turbulent century in English history Among foreign observers, seventeenth-century England was known as 'Devil-Land': a diabolical country of fallen angels, torn apart by seditious rebellion, religious extremism and royal collapse. Clare Jackson's dazzling, original account of English history's most turbulent and radical era tells the story of a nation in a state of near continual crisis. As an unmarried heretic with no heir, Elizabeth I was regarded with horror by Catholic Europe, while her Stuart successors, James I and Charles I, were seen as impecunious and incompetent, unable to manage their three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. The traumatic civil wars, regicide and a republican Commonwealth were followed by the floundering, foreign-leaning rule of Charles II and his brother, James II, before William of Orange invaded England with a Dutch army and a new order was imposed. Devil-Land reveals England as, in many ways, a 'failed state': endemically unstable and rocked by devastating events from the Gunpowder Plot to the Great Fire of London. Catastrophe nevertheless bred creativity, and Jackson makes brilliant use of eyewitness accounts - many penned by stupefied foreigners - to dramatize her great story. Starting on the eve of the Spanish Armada's descent in 1588 and concluding with a not-so 'Glorious Revolution' a hundred years later, Devil-Land is a spectacular reinterpretation of England's vexed and enthralling past.

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.

The Unexpected King

The North Sea King

Queen, Matriarch, Empress

Oliver Cromwell (Penguin Monarchs)

Victoria (Penguin Monarchs)

Not Just a British Monarch

William I (Penguin Monarchs)

Aethelred the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

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.

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 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.

King of Britain for sixty years and the last king of what would become the United States, George III inspired both hatred and loyalty and is now best known for two reasons: as a villainous tyrant for America's Founding Fathers, and for his madness, both of which have been portrayed on stage and screen. In this concise and penetrating biography, Jeremy Black turns away from the image-making and back to the archives, and instead locates George's life within his age: as a king who faced the loss of key colonies, rebellion in Ireland, insurrection in London, constitutional crisis in Britain and an existential threat from Revolutionary France as part of modern Britain's longest period of war. Black shows how George III rose to these challenges with fortitude and helped settle parliamentary monarchy as an effective governmental system, eventually becoming the most popular monarch for well over a century. He also shows us a talented and curious individual, committed to music, art, architecture and science, who took the duties of monarchy seriously, from reviewing death penalties to trying to control his often wayward children even as his own mental health failed, and became Britain's longest reigning king.

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.

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.

Henry VI

James II, 1685-1688

James I

William III and Mary II

Athelstan (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward IV (Penguin Monarchs)

George V (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry V (Penguin Monarchs)

'After my death,' George V said of his eldest son and heir, 'the boy will ruin himself within twelve months.' The forecast proved uncannily accurate. Edward VIII came to the throne in January 1936, provoked a constitutional crisis by his determination to marry the American divorcée Wallis Simpson, and abdicated in December. He was never crowned king. In choosing the woman he loved over his royal birthright, Edward shook the monarchy to its foundations. Given the new title 'Duke of Windsor' and essentially sent into exile, he remained a visible skeleton in the royal cupboard until his death in 1972 and he haunts the house of Windsor to this day. Drawing on unpublished material, notably correspondence with his most loyal (though much tried) supporter Winston Churchill, Piers Brendon's superb biography traces Edward's tumultuous public and private life from bright young prince to troubled sovereign, from wartime colonial governor to sad but glittering expatriate. With pace and panache, it cuts through the myths that still surround this most controversial of modern British monarchs. 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 tragedy of Charles I dominates one of the most strange and painful periods in British history as the whole island tore itself apart over a deadly, entangled series of religious and political disputes. In Mark Kishlansky's brilliant account it is never in doubt that Charles created his own catastrophe, but he was nonetheless opposed by men with far fewer scruples and less consistency who for often quite contradictory reasons conspired to destroy him. This is a remarkable portrait of one of the most talented, thoughtful, loyal, moral, artistically alert and yet, somehow, disastrous of all this country's rulers.

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 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 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 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.

James I (Penguin Monarchs)The Phoenix KingPenguin UK

Treason and Trust

The Star King

Henry VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry VI, 1422-1461

The Afflicted King

George IV (Penguin Monarchs)

The Quest for Fame

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

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.

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.

Imagine having the perfect friend, one who never steals, lies or bullies. Now you can, with the TrooFriend 560, the latest in artificial intelligence! What can go wrong with a robot buddy? Especially one that's developing human characteristics and feelings, and who has just run away with her human?

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.

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 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.

George III (Penguin Monarchs)

The Making of England

Devil-Land

The Failed King

England's Protector

From Playboy Prince to Warrior King

A Failed King?

Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)

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 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 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.

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Charles I (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward the Confessor

Henry IV (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Father of His People