

Richard Iii Penguin Monarchs A Failed King

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 Pope and 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 see 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 agonising, 54-inch-waisted years.

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback 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 reason why Henry II left such a compelling impression on his contemporaries. Richard Barber has written for Penguin The Penguin Guide to Medieval Europe, The Holy Grail and Edward III and the Triumph of the English. He is a major figure in medieval studies, both as a writer and as a publisher.

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

'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 the throne with 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, but 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 realisation of the conquest founding of England as a new realm: wealthy, stable, bureaucratized and self-confident.

William I (Penguin Monarchs)

A Ruler and his Reputation

Henry V (Penguin Monarchs)

A Prince Among Princes

The Sainted King

England's Protector

The Steadfast

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.

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.

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 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 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

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.

A Study in Insecurity

Aethelred the Unready

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

Richard III

Henry II

James I (Penguin Monarchs)

Aethelred the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

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.

Richard Abels examines the long and troubled reign of Aethelred II the "Unraed," the "Ill-Advised." It is characteristic of Aethelred's reign that its greatest surviving work of literature, the poem The Battle of Maldon, should be a record of heroic defeat. Perhaps no ruler could have stemmed the encroachment of wave upon wave of Viking raiders, but Aethelred will always be associated with that failure.

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'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.

Treason and Trust

A Heroic Failure

John (Penguin Monarchs)

Richard I (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward IV (Penguin Monarchs)

A Simple and God-Fearing King

Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)

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

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 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.

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.

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.

Athelstan (Penguin Monarchs)

A Failed King?

Henry III (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward II (Penguin Monarchs)

Madness and Majesty

Elizabeth II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Failed King

Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death 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 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 conquered. His 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 king who ended his life a heroic failure.

Henry II, through a series of astonishing dynastic coups, became the ruler of an enormous European empire that stretched from the Channel almost to the Mediterranean. One of the most dynamic rulers to rule England, he was brought down by his catastrophic relationship with his archbishop Thomas Becket, and his debilitating arguments with his rebellious sons Richard and Geoffrey, and later his own empire may have ultimately collapsed, but in Richard Barber's vivid and sympathetic account we see why Henry II left such a compelling impression on his contemporaries. He creates a portrait of a man whose learning, whose zeal for good government left a legacy that survives in Britain today, yet whose fiery temper and desire for control would ultimately destroy him.

For many, Richard III is an obsession-the Richard III Society has a huge membership, and Shakespeare's Histories have contributed to, if not his popularity, certainly his notoriety. Now, with the discovery of his remains under a parking lot in Leicester, England, interest in this divisive and enigmatic figure in British history is at an all-time high. It is a compelling story to scholars as well as general readers, who are drawn to the strong narrative history that David Horspool delivers in this groundbreaking biography of the king. Richard III dispassionately examines the legend as well as the man to uncover both what we know and what way that his reputation has been formed and re-formed over centuries. But beyond simply his reputation, there is no dispute that the last Plantagenet is a pivotal figure in English history-his death marks the end of the House of Plantagenet, the end of the House of the Roses, and, arguably, the end of the medieval period in England-and Horspool's biography chronicles this tumultuous time with flair. This narrative-driven and insightful biography lays out a vivid picture of the king's historical character and to his background in the medieval world. Above all, it is authoritative in its assessment of a king who came to the throne under extraordinary circumstances.

In September 2015 Queen Elizabeth II becomes Britain's longest-reigning monarch. During her long lifetime Britain and the world have changed beyond recognition, yet throughout she has stood as a symbol of stability, continuity and public service. Historian and senior politician Douglas Hurd has seen the Queen at close quarters, as Home Secretary and then on overseas expeditions as Foreign Secretary. Hurd's biography and role of Britain's most greatly admired monarch, who, inheriting a deep sense of duty from her father George VI, has weathered national and family crises, seen the end of an Empire and headed off the break-up of the United Kingdom. Hurd creates an arresting portrait of a woman deeply conservative by nature yet possessing a ready acceptance of modern life and the awareness that, for this to work, change must come.

A Brittle Glory (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

A Study of Service

Richard II
Edward III, 1327-1377
George V (Penguin Monarchs)
The Tudor King Who Never Was

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.

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

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.

Richard III: villain or hero? He was only on the throne for just over two years, yet Richard is probably the most controversial monarch in British history: to some a hunchbacked schemer, usurper and murderer of the 'princes in the Tower', to others a very capable and much maligned ruler. Now you can judge for yourself. Surviving documents from his reign, including letters in Richard's own hand and extracts from official papers, are reproduced here from the 500-year-old originals. Each key document is beautifully reproduced in a double-page spread which also includes an extended contextualising caption and a modern transcription where necessary. The original sources are woven together by a brief narrative history of the reign, fully illustrated in colour with portraits, photographs and other material from the archives. Featured documents include: * Letter from Richard to his mother, 1484 * Richard's official justification for taking the throne, 1484 proclamation against Henry Tudor, 1485 * Richard's letter to the Lord Chancellor requesting the Great Seal 1483

Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)
Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)
The Reign of Anarchy
Henry VI (Penguin Monarchs)
Last Queen of England
Henry IV (Penguin Monarchs)
Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)

The untold story of Henry VIII's elder brother, the Tudor king who never was.

Richard II (1377-99) came to the throne as a child, following the long, domineering, martial reign of his grandfather Edward III. He suffered from the disastrous combination of a most exalted sense of his own power and an inability to impress that power on those closest to the throne. Neither trusted nor feared, Richard battled with a whole series of failures and emergencies before finally succumbing to a coup, imprisonment and murder. Laura Ashe's brilliant account of his reign emphasizes the strange gap between Richard's personal incapacity and the amazing cultural legacy of his reign - from the Wilton Diptych to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Piers Plowman* and *The Canterbury Tales*.

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A Royal Enigma

The Red King

George III (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Unexpected King

The Terrors of Kingship

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

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.

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 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 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?

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

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

The Afflicted King

Prince Arthur

The Phoenix King

A Brittle Glory

An Evil King?

Richard II (Penguin Monarchs)

England's Conqueror

A detailed study of the role of the king's servants, before and during Richard's reign, explores the practical aspects of obedience, as well as the structure of service relationships and the late medieval client systems.

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 acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback Edward III ruled England for fifty years. He was a paragon of kingship in the eyes of his contemporaries, the perfect king in those of 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 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. Jonathan Sumption is a former history fellow of Magdalen College Oxford. He is the author of Pilgrimage and The Albigensian Crusade, as well as the first four volumes in his celebrated history of the Hundred Years War, Trial by Battle, Trial by Fire, Divided Houses and Cursed Kings. He was awarded the 2009 Wolfson History Prize for Divided Houses.

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 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.

Henry II (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward IV, 1461-1483

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

The Quest for Fame

William II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Making of England

From Playboy Prince to Warrior King

A startling, subversive novel about a teenage girl who has lost everything and will burn anything. Fourteen-year-old Lucia is a young narrator whose voice will long ring in your ears. She is angry with almost everyone, especially people who tell her what to do. She follows the one rule that makes any sense to her: Don't Do Things You Aren't Proud Of. Orphaned and living with her elderly aunt in poverty in the converted garage of a large mansion, Lucia makes her way through the world with only a book, a Zippo lighter, and a pocket full of stolen licorice. Expelled from school, again, Lucia spends her days riding the bus to visit her mother in The Home. When Lucia discovers a secret Arson Club, she will do anything to be a part of it. Her own arson manifesto is a marvellous anarchist pamphlet, written with biting wit and striking intelligence. The voice of teenaged Lucia is a tour de force: a brilliant, wrenching cry from the heart and mind of a super-smart, funny girl who can't help telling us the truth, a riveting chronicle of family, misguided friendship, and loss. How to Set a Fire and Why is Jesse Ball's most accessible novel yet; after Silence Once Begun and A Cure for Suicide, the pyrotechnics on display here will dazzle. 'I was captivated from the first line..... Lucia belongs with all the great child truth tellers: David Copperfield, Huck Finn, Holden Caulfield..... I loved her

and I loved the book, every page of it.' Peter Heller, author of *The Dog Stars* and *The Painter*
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.

The Summer King

The Father of His People

Henry II, 1154–1189

The Crusader King

Anne

Not Just a British Monarch

Oliver Cromwell (Penguin Monarchs)