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4A3 - SIENA JOHNS

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.

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.

The gripping story of the Levellers, the radical movement at the

heart of the English Revolution The Levellers, formed out of the explosive tumult of the 1640s and the battlefields of the Civil War, are central figures in the history of democracy. In this thrilling narrative, John Rees brings to life the men—including John Lilburne, Richard Overton and Thomas Rainsborough—and women who ensured victory and became an inspiration to republicans of many nations. From the raucous streets of London and the clattering printers' workshops that stoked the uprising, to the rank and file of the New Model Army and the furious Putney debates where the Levellers argued with Oliver Cromwell for the future of English democracy, this story reasserts the revolutionary nature of the 1642-51 wars and the role of ordinary people in this pivotal moment in history. In particular Rees places the Levellers at the centre of the debates of 1647 when the nation was gripped by the question of what to do with the defeated Charles I. Without the Levellers and Agitators' fortitude and well-organised opposition history may have avoided the regicide and missed its revolutionary moment. The legacy of the Levellers can be seen in the modern struggles for freedom and democracy across the world.

'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 no-

bles 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.

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.

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.

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 newest edition to the Visual Bilingual Dictionary series, this title will help the international visitor—whether for business or recreational—adsorb essential vocabulary in Portuguese.

"The first new biography of Cromwell in several years, this rounded account interweaves his political and military careers, and explores his passionate religiosity. Synthesizing much recent research on Cromwell's early life, Gentles presents to students a fresh view of him as a lay preacher, a soldier, and as lord protector"—Provided by publisher.

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Churchill and Napoleon* The last king of America, George III, has been ridiculed as a complete disaster who frittered away the colonies and went mad in his old age. The truth is much more nuanced and fascinating—and will completely change the way readers and historians view his reign and legacy. Most Americans dismiss George III as a buffoon—a heartless and terrible monarch with few, if any, redeeming qualities. The best-known modern interpretation of him is Jonathan Groff's preening, spitting, and pompous take in *Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway masterpiece. But this deeply unflattering characterization is rooted in the prejudiced and brilliantly persuasive opinions of eighteenth-century revolutionaries like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, who needed to make the king appear evil in order to achieve their own political aims. After combing through hundreds of thousands of pages of never-before-published correspondence, award-winning historian Andrew Roberts has uncovered the truth: George III was in fact a wise, humane, and even enlightened monarch who was beset by talented enemies, debilitating mental illness, incompetent ministers, and disastrous luck. In *The Last King of America*, Roberts paints a deft and nuanced portrait of the much-maligned monarch and outlines his accomplishments, which have been almost universally forgotten. Two hundred and forty-five years after the end of George III's American rule, it is time for Americans to look back on their last king with greater understanding: to see him as he was and to

come to terms with the last time they were ruled by a monarch. 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.

"An exceptional and compelling biography about one of the Tudor Age's most complex and controversial figures." —Alison Weir Thomas Cromwell has long been reviled as a Machiavellian schemer who stopped at nothing in his quest for power. As King Henry VIII's right-hand man, Cromwell was the architect of the English Reformation; secured Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and plotted the downfall of his second wife, Anne Boleyn; and was fatally accused of trying to usurp the king himself. In this engrossing biography, acclaimed British historian Tracy Borman reveals a different side to one of history's most notorious characters: that of a caring husband and father, a fiercely loyal servant and friend, and a revolutionary who was key in transforming medieval England into a modern state. Thomas Cromwell was at the heart of the most momentous events of his time—from funding the translation and dissemination of the first vernacular Bible to legitimizing Anne Boleyn as queen—and wielded immense power over both church and state. The impact of his seismic political, religious, and social reforms can still be felt today. Grounded in excellent primary source research, Thomas Cromwell gives an inside look at a monarchy that has captured the Western imagination for centuries and tells the story of a controversial and enigmatic man who forever changed the shape of his country. "An intelligent, sympathetic, and well researched biography." —The Wall Street Journal "Borman unravels the story of Cromwell's rise to power

skillfully . . . If you want the inside story of Thomas Cromwell . . . this is the book for you." —The Weekly Standard "An engrossing biography. . . . A fine rags-to-riches-to-executioner's-block story of a major figure of the English Reformation." —Kirkus Reviews "An insightful biography of a much-maligned historical figure." —Booklist

Behemoth, or The Long Parliament is essential to any reader interested in the historical context of the thought of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). In *De Cive* (1642) and *Leviathan* (1651), the great political philosopher had developed an analytical framework for discussing sedition, rebellion, and the breakdown of authority. *Behemoth*, completed around 1668 and not published until after Hobbes's death, represents the systematic application of this framework to the English Civil War. In his insightful and substantial Introduction, Stephen Holmes examines the major themes and implications of *Behemoth* in Hobbes's system of thought. Holmes notes that a fresh consideration of *Behemoth* dispels persistent misreadings of Hobbes, including the idea that man is motivated solely by a desire for self-preservation. *Behemoth*, which is cast as a series of dialogues between a teacher and his pupil, locates the principal cause of the Civil War less in economic interests than in the stubborn irrationality of key actors. It also shows more vividly than any of Hobbes's other works the importance of religion in his theories of human nature and behavior.

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'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.

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.

This title was first published in 2001. For the English people, the image of the monarchy is deeply bound up with the idea of nationhood. This book surveys aspects of England's royal heritage dialogue from the late middle ages to the 19th century. It concentrates on monumental sculpted portraits because that was the way in which the image of the monarchy was customarily presented in the most immediate and permanent form at large scale in the public arena. The aim of such memorials was to consolidate and commemorate shared loyalties and beliefs, focusing on the monarchs. They were sometimes protected by railings, more often than just by their talismanic value. There was widespread resistance to the idea that Oliver Cromwell should be commemorated by public memorial. The English generally remained uncomfortable with the idea of republicanism. The monarchical government of the middle ages, thought to be sanctioned by God, was very different from the figurehead the monarchy has become.

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

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback 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.

A major new title in the Penguin Monarchs series In his fascinating new book in the Penguin Monarchs series, Richard Abels ex-

amines 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.

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.

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.

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.

'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.

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.

The classic, bestselling biography of one of the most controversial figures in British history from 'One of the finest historians of the age' *The Times Literary Supplement* From Fenland farmer and humble backbencher to stalwart of the good old cause and the New Model Army, Oliver Cromwell became the key figure of the Commonwealth, and ultimately Lord Protector. In this fascinating and insightful biography, Christopher Hill reveals Cromwell's life from his beginnings in Huntingdonshire to his brutal end. Hill

brings all his considerable knowledge of the period to bear on the relationships God's Englishman had with God and England, giving an unprecedented insight vital to understanding Cromwell.

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. The first volume in a pioneering account of Oliver Cromwell--providing a major new interpretation of one of the greatest figures in history Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)--the only English commoner to become the overall head of state--is one of the great figures of history, but his character was very complex. He was at once courageous and devout, devious and self-serving; as a parliamentarian, he was devoted to his cause; as a soldier, he was ruthless. Cromwell's speeches and writings surpass in quantity those of any other ruler of England before Victoria and, for those seeking to understand him, he has usually been taken at his word. In this remarkable new work, Ronald Hutton untangles the facts from the fiction. Cromwell, pursuing his devotion to God and cementing his Puritan support base, quickly transformed from obscure provincial to military victor. At the end of the first English Civil War, he was poised to take power. Hutton reveals a man who was both genuine in his faith and deliberate in his dishonesty--and uncovers the inner workings of the man who has puzzled biographers for centuries.

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.

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.

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 icon-

ic 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.

Oliver Cromwell was an undistinguished backbench MP in his forties when the English Civil War began. Like many other gentleman farmers, he recruited a regiment and led it to war. However, unlike most of the amateur leaders, he demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for soldiering and rose to become one of Parliament's leading generals. Ultimately he would use his power-base within the army to seize power and rule all Britain. General Sir Frank Kitson's concise military biography reveals how and why Cromwell proved so successful. His accessible narrative provides an excellent potted history of the Civil War, peppered with asides on the practicalities of soldiering in the 17th century.

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.

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 ex-

tremes - 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.

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.

For a man with such conventional tastes and views, George V had a revolutionary impact. Almost despite himself he marked a deci-

sive 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.

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

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 percep-

tive 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?

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 marvelous 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*