



The Perfect King

Ian Mortimer

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King for fifty years (1327—77), Edward III changed the face of England.

He ordered his uncle to be beheaded; he usurped his father's throne; he started a war which lasted for more than a hundred years, and taxed his people more than any other previous king. Yet for centuries, Edward III was celebrated as the most brilliant king England had ever had.

In this first full study of the man, Ian Mortimer shows how Edward personally provided the impetus for much of the drama of his reign. Edward overcame the tyranny of his guardians at the age of seventeen and then set about developing a new form of awe-inspiring chivalric kingship. Under him the feudal kingdom of England became a highly organized, sophisticated nation, capable of raising large revenues and, without question, the most important military nation in Europe. Yet under his rule England also experienced its longest period of domestic peace in the Middle Ages, giving rise to a massive increase in the nation's wealth through the wool trade, with huge consequences for society, art and architecture. It is to Edward that England owes its system of parliamentary representation, local justice system and the English language as "the tongue of the nation."

As the King who re-made England and forged a nation out of war, Edward III emerges as the father of the English nation.



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