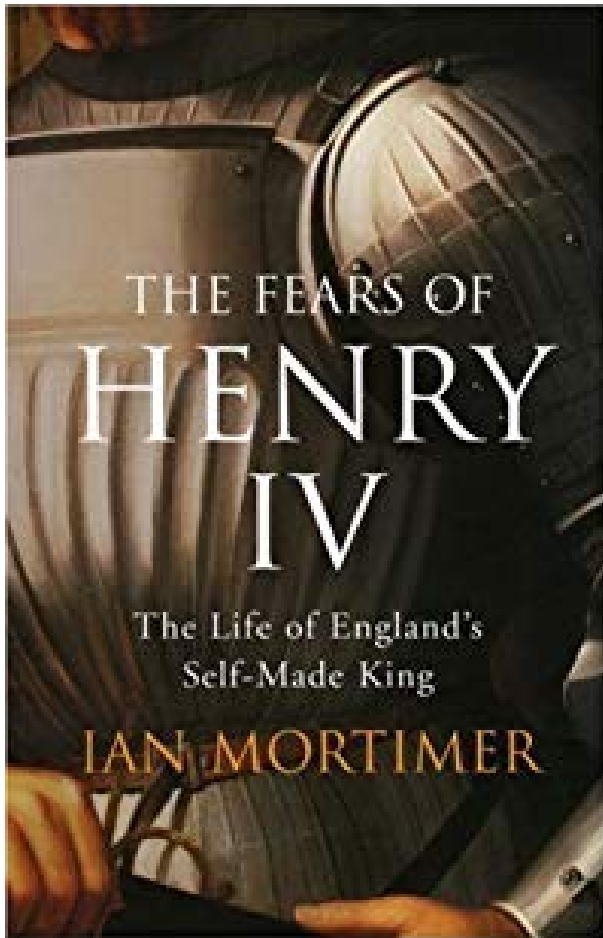


Fears of Henry IV: The Life of England's Self-made King



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An author with a strong track record now tackles the turbulent reign of Henry IV, the first Lancastrian king. By 1405, King Henry IV had already survived at least eight plots to dethrone or kill him in the first six years of his reign. Henry had not always been so unpopular. The son of John of Gaunt, he was courteous, confident, well-educated, musical and spiritually fervent.

In 1399, at the age of thirty-two, he was enthusiastically greeted as the saviour of the realm when he ousted from power the insecure and tyrannical King Richard II. Therein lay Henry's weakness. By making himself King he had broken God's law and left himself starkly open to criticism.

Enemies everywhere tried to take advantage of his questionable right to the crown. Such overwhelming threats transformed him from a hero into a duplicitous murderer: a king prepared to go to any lengths to save his family and his throne. But against all the odds, what Henry achieved was to take a poorly ruled nation, establish a new Lancastrian dynasty, and introduce the principle that a king must act in accordance with Parliament. He might not have been the most glorious king England ever had, but he was one of the bravest,

and certainly the greatest survivor of them all.