



Rebellion: The History of England from James I to the Glorious Revolution

Peter Ackroyd

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The Stuart monarchy brought England and Scotland into one realm, albeit one still marked by political divisions that echo to this day. More importantly, perhaps, the Stuart era was marked by the cruelty of civil war, and the killing of a king. Shrewd and opinionated, James I's attitude toward the English parliament sowed the seeds of the division that would split the country during the reign of his hapless heir, Charles I. Charles's nemesis, Oliver Cromwell, Parliament's great military leader and England's only dictator, began his career as a political liberator but ended it as much of a despot as the king he executed.

In Peter Ackroyd's *Rebellion*, England's turbulent seventeenth century is vividly laid out before us, but so too is the cultural and social life of the period, notable for its literature, including Shakespeare's late masterpieces; Jacobean tragedy; the poetry of John Donne and John Milton; and Thomas Hobbes's great philosophical treatise, *Leviathan*. Ackroyd also gives us a very real sense of the lives of ordinary English men and women, lived out against a backdrop of constant disruption and uncertainty.

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