



The Thieves' Opera: The Remarkable Lives and Deaths of Jonathan Wild, Thief-taker and Jack Sheppard, House-breaker

Lucy Moore

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Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard were criminals as famous in their time as Dick Turpin.

They thrived in the criminal underworld of the eighteenth century.

From Gay's 'Beggars' Opera' and Hogarth's 'Industry and Idleness' to the 1969 film 'Where's Jack' the exploits of Jack Sheppard, burglar and escapologist extraordinaire, and Jonathan Wild, a gang boss who for twelve years convinced the Establishment of his probity, have lived in song, drama and story for almost three centuries.

Now Lucy Moore takes us deep into their world — the gaudy, bawdy, rowdy and dangerous London underworld of the early eighteenth century — and shows how in that violent yet oddly intimate society two very different criminals, who brought about each other's downfall, could in the process achieve immortality in the popular imagination.

'Lucy Moore's account...vividly re-creates the turbulent London underworld of the 1720s, and reminds us that crime never really changes' – Stella Tillyard, Mail on Sunday

'Fascinating...A treasure-house of intriguing information' – Daily Mail

'She handles her material with aplomb, juxtaposing two interconnected lives, and dovetailing in contextual socio-historical entr'actes; on crime and punishment, homosexuality, prostitution, madness and medicine, finance, politics and class, to name but a few – Spectator

'Lucy Moore leads the reader through the thieves' dens of Georgian London, portraying the underworld with panache and bringing its hero-villains once more back to life' – Roy Porter, author of London: A Social History

Lucy Moore was born in 1970. She was brought up and educated in Britain and the United States before reading history at Edinburgh University. She lives in London.

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