



Thieves' Opera

Lucy Moore

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Georgian London was a city of extraordinary contrast: its elegance and refinement thrived amid appalling filth and foul smells, decadence and depravity. Crime was everywhere, from pickpockets and prostitutes to murderous highwaymen, as London bulged with riches from its overseas colonies. The Thieves' Opera is the story of the city, and of its two greatest criminals, Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard. Wild, whose excesses led to his being known as "Thief-taker General," dominated London's criminal world. And Sheppard spent his time drinking, gambling, housebreaking, and whoring. When Sheppard refused to bow to Wild's authority, Wild had him arrested. But Sheppard's extraordinary ability to escape from prison-repeatedly-made him a celebrated folk hero. Eventually the rivalry spiraled to a dramatic climax involving the entire city. An eminently readable blend of popular history and scholarship, this book is a fascinating window into a world that confounds the modern imagination.

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