



SCEPTRE

**'In a league of his own'** Christopher Fowler, *Independent on Sunday*

**'A writer unafraid to take risks'** Michael Arditti, *Independent*

**'Arnott's ability to powerfully resurrect an era is astonishing'**

Jimmy Boyle, *Guardian*

**'His prose is as smooth as a seersucker suit, as sweet as a purple heart'**

Robert MacFarlane, *Observer*

**'Compulsive reading, powerful writing'** Dominic Bradbury, *The Times*

**'His fictional (or, more accurately, factional) characters bristle with authenticity'**

Erwin James, *Guardian*

**'Arnott is quite brilliant at excavating the cultural minutiae of the time to bring the period vividly to life'** John Tague, *Independent on Sunday*

**'Once again he has skewered an age to the page'**

Mark Sanderson, *Evening Standard*

## **THE FATAL TREE**

**by Jake Arnott**

Sceptre . 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 .

Hardback . £16.99

**Jake Arnott** burst onto the literary scene with his debut novel, *The Long Firm*, a cult hit that has sold over a quarter of a million copies and was subsequently made into a BAFTA-nominated BBC TV series. All his novels have been greeted with great acclaim, noted for their originality, wit, intelligence, gripping plots and Arnott's unerring ability to bring defining eras of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to life. His most recent novel, *The House of Rumour* (2012), was variously described as 'virtuoso . . . Highly entertaining and perhaps even mind-expanding' (*Sunday Times*), 'a brilliant achievement' (*Independent on Sunday*) and 'a supremely intelligent book as well as a surprisingly warm one' (*Independent*).

**'A more wicked, deceitful and lascivious wretch is not known in England' – Jack Sheppard of Edgworth Bess**

Now Arnott is back with a triumphant new novel – with a difference. For the first time, he has turned to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, transporting the reader to the pungent streets of 1720s London. And for the first time, a woman is at the centre of his tale: Elizabeth Lyon, aka Edgworth Bess, lover and partner in crime of the notorious jail-breaker, Jack Sheppard, who publicly blamed her for leading him astray. A shameless, wounding lie, according to Bess's version of events, which she dictates from the condemned cell at Newgate to a Grub Street writer; a man who turns out to have his own nefarious story to tell . . .

...2/ The story, the author, the jacket!

Sceptre, Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0DZ

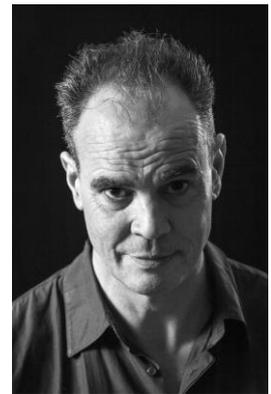


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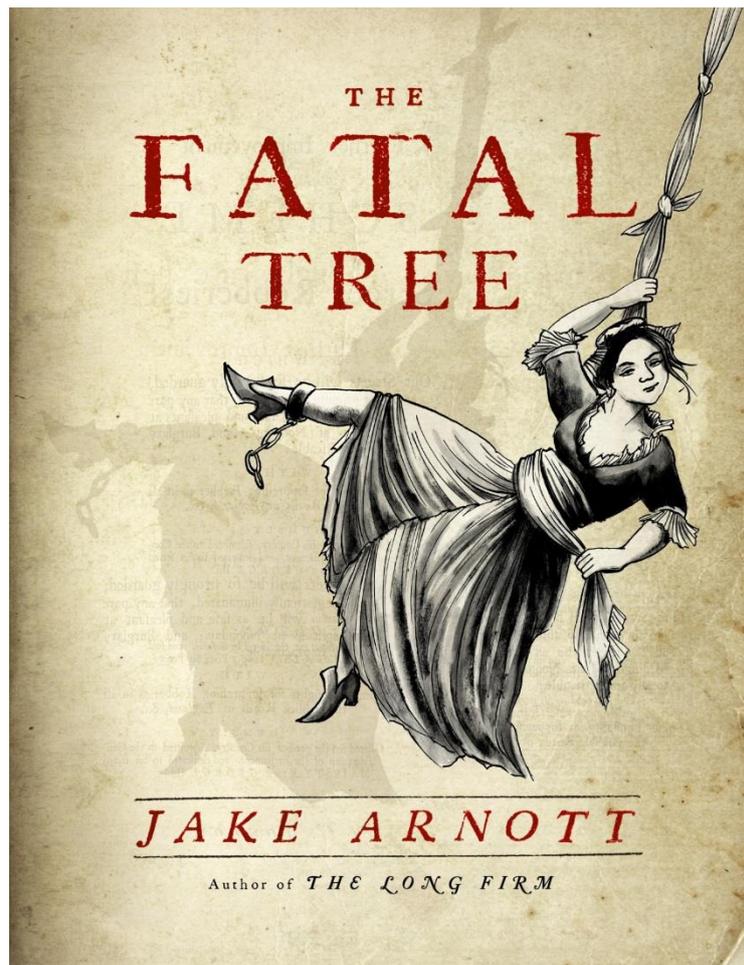
Drawing on the true story of the most famous criminal couple of their age and the corrupt ‘thief-taker general’ whom they challenged, Arnott masterfully blends fact and fiction in this riveting tale of crime and rough justice, love and treachery. Steeped in the street slang of the era, *The Fatal Tree* vividly conjures up London’s murky underworld, its brothels, illicit dens and molly-houses. And it brings alive a period that seems uncannily familiar, with its financial crash, a widening gap between rich and poor, law enforcers feathering their own nests and a proliferation of coffee houses, where news spread almost as quickly as on the internet. This is a novel that makes Georgian London tangible – and fascinating: a tour de force by one of Britain’s most inventive and exciting novelists.

**About the author:**

**Jake Arnott’s** bestselling debut novel, *THE LONG FIRM*, was published by Sceptre in 1999 and has been followed by *HE KILLS COPPERS*, *TRUECRIME*, *JOHNNY COME HOME*, *THE DEVIL’S PAINTBRUSH* and *THE HOUSE OF RUMOUR*. Both *THE LONG FIRM* and *HE KILLS COPPERS* have been made into widely praised TV dramas. He lives in London.



Credit: Crispin Hughes



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