



Cynan Jones

The Dig

'The Dig turns the reader into a helpless animal; transfixed, waiting for that blow to the skull.'

Beyond the picturesque views of tourist Wales life on the farms can be hard and cruel. A sheep-farmer, numbed with grief at the shocking, accidental death of his wife, struggles on alone through the lambing season. Still unable to grasp the finality of his loss or plan for the farm's future, he doggedly, sleeplessly continues the exhausting ritual of bringing lambs safely into life.

Meanwhile a rat-catcher and badger-baiter plies his violent, illegal trade, seeking out setts for strong boars to fight against trained dogs. The local magistrate turns a blind eye while the baiter covers his tracks and pockets his cash. Tension increases as the police become suspicious but badgers are still needed for the distant, secret fights where men drink, place bets and cheer at first blood. Gradually the parallel lives of the widowed farmer and the hunter draw closer and overlap, with disastrous consequences for both.

Through small, telling details award-winning writer Cynan Jones subtly conveys the bonds of man's relationship with the land and the realities of life in rural west Wales.

Written in his characteristic understated yet poetic style, *The Dig* is a powerful, unforgettable novel.

Winner of the Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize 2014.

'The Dig turns the reader into a helpless animal; transfixed, waiting for that blow to the skull. The first, unexpected emotional whump is actually the worst, but the story that unfolds from this shock is like a badger bait: you can root for the underdog but the game is rigged - there can only ever be one outcome.'
The Guardian

'It is a book that will get in your bones, and haunt you.'
The Telegraph



Cynan Jones was born in 1975 near Aberaeron, Wales where he now lives. His work includes the novels *The Long Dry* (Parthian, 2006), *Everything I Found on the Beach* (Parthian, 2011), and *Bird, Blood, Snow* (Seren, 2012). Further work has appeared in *Granta Magazine*, *New Welsh Review* and various anthologies.

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