

'I foresaw all sorts of opposition from my parents if they should discover what I was about to do, so I decided to steal out of London as quickly and as quietly as possible...'

The year is 1927. Philip Allingham, aged 21, stares out of an office window near Piccadilly Circus, musing on life's futility. He has tried his hand at pretty well every job his parents would consider respectable, and failed at every one of them. He is bored and broke. 'Suddenly it dawned on me — and the relief at the discovery was extraordinary — that there was nothing at all to prevent me from earning my living reading the future in other people's hands.'

So begins the career recounted by Allingham in this thrillingly vivid and richly comic memoir. Or, rather, the series of careers, as the subtitle reveals: 'Being the True History of a Young Man's Adventures as a Fortune-Teller, Grafter, Knocker-Worker, and Mounted Pitcher on the Market-Places and Fairgrounds of a Modern but still Romantic England.' Billed by its original publishers as 'an astonishing autobiography of an English gentleman turned county fair mountebank', *Cheapjack* was an instant best-seller when it first appeared, in 1934, but has long been unobtainable. This reprint includes a new introduction by Francis Wheen and an afterword by Julia Jones, biographer of Philip's sister, the crime novelist Margery Allingham, whose involvement with *Cheapjack* was kept a family secret.

Foreword from  
Vanessa Toulmin  
National Fairground  
Archive

PUBLISHED BY



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ISBN 978-1-899262-02-1



£12.99



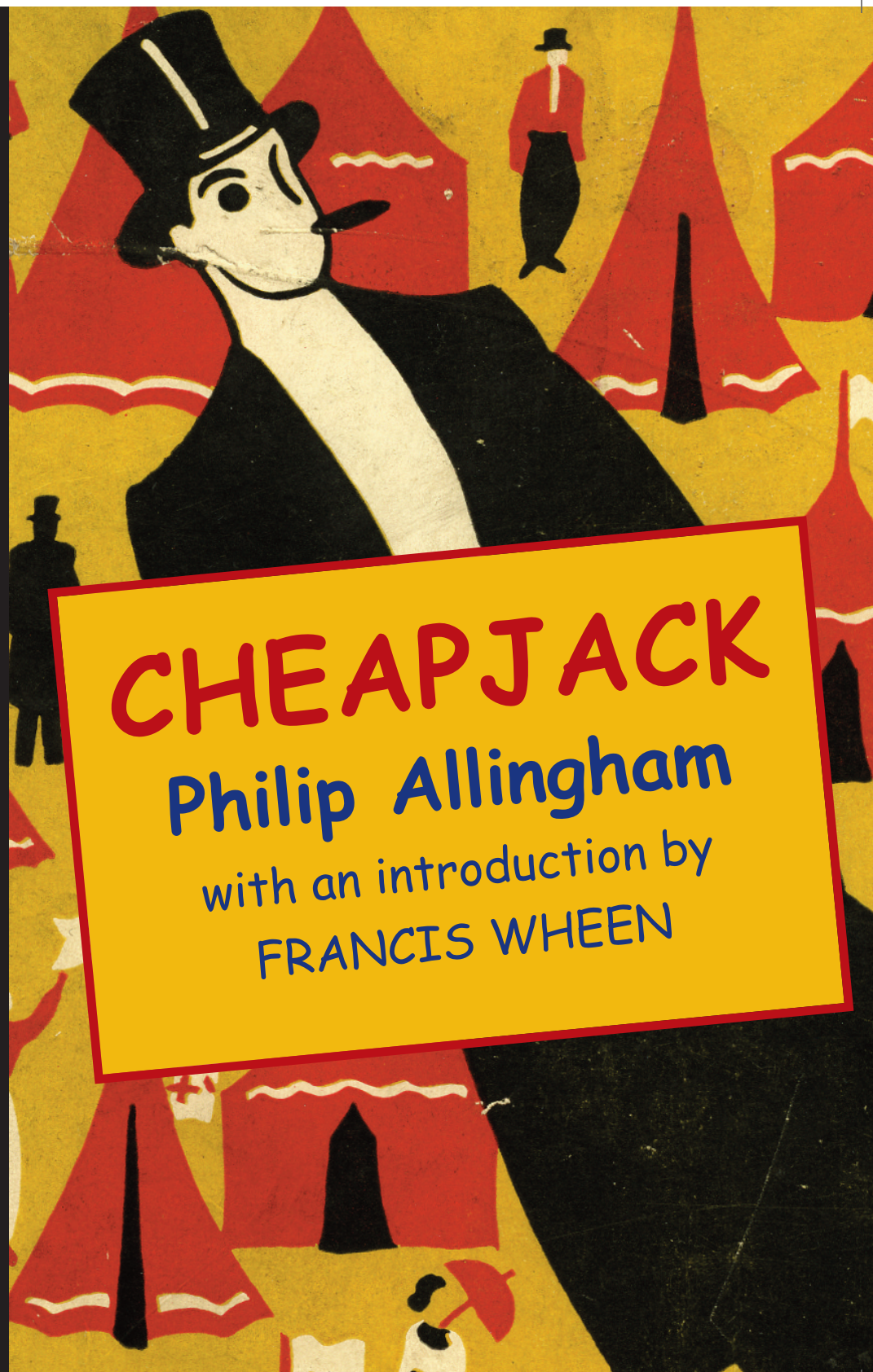
**CHEAPJACK**



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**CHEAPJACK**

**Philip Allingham**

with an introduction by  
**FRANCIS WHEEN**