

The Brief Life of Jack Sheppard

by
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Jack Sheppard	22	Male
Edgeworth Bess	23	Female
Joseph "Blueskin" Blake	30's	Male
Poll Maggot		Female
Justice Walters		

JACK ARRIVES AT THE PUB

*Blueskin and bess are at the ba
enter Jack to fix something*

BLUESKIN BLAKE

I'm a big bluster of a man. There are
holes and windows of opportunity too small
for me.

JACK SHEPPARD

Mumbles

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Boy speak out what do you want?

JACK SHEPPARD

I've come to fix the door

EDGEWARE BESS

Ah yes.

INSIDE NEWGATE PRISON CONDEMNED CELL

JACK SHEPPARD addresses the audience.

JACK SHEPPARD

Hello. You haven't heard about me. I'm not much. There's no reason for you to. I haven't done anything worth you taking notice. Unless you follow the court proceedings, but let's face it, who can keep up with all of those? I'm a thief, like many others. Yesterday I was convicted of burglary and rightly so. I knew the rules of the game I played. You probably know that with that comes a date at Tyburn. I begged them to commute the sentence to transportation but they refused. You can understand, who wants to die, and why would they want me to live? They didn't listen so I'm going to hang. And look we've only just met. You look a little shocked. There's no need to feel sorry for me. No, you haven't heard about me but I'm going to introduce myself to you all, in a very special way. I'm about to do something extraordinary. Something sublime. Something of note. And you are all going to be talking about me. What I'm going to do I have to do, but that's not to take anything away from it. Now what I'm going to do has been done before. Even I've done it before. But not here. Not in Newgate Prison. Not from the condemned cell. That's what will make what I'm about to do so special. That's what will have you talking about me. That's right, I'm going to escape. Tomorrow you will be fascinated to read or hear about how, with a little help from my friend, Blueskin Blake. Hello Blue.

Enter BLUESKIN BLAKE.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Here's the spike you wanted. I smuggled it in.

JACK SHEPPARD

Thank you Blue. I freed my chains,

*JACK SHEPPARD frees his chains
with the spike.*

and took a solid, locked from the
outside, door off its hinges, how I hid as
woman, scaled an impossible sheer wall,
flew like a bat and disappeared. Enjoy,
because it's a great story. Oh, if you
could have only been there to see it.
Imagine it would look something like
this..

FIRST CELEBRATION IN PUB

BLUESKIN enters the THE THREE TUNS the EDGEWARE BESS is behind the bar.

EDGEWARE BESS

Blueskin! How are you my fine friend?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Good, I got a surprise for you..

Enter JACK SHEPPARD.

EDGEWARE BESS

Jack Sheppard, how on earth I thought they were stringing you up tomorrow.

JACK SHEPPARD

Bess? What are you doing here? Blue, I said check and see if the place was empty. Blue, how many times? One of the fundamental things about this industry is keeping things quiet. I despair.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

But it's only Bess. We can trust Bess.

JACK SHEPPARD

I'm not saying we can't trust Bess.

EDGEWARE BESS

Oh that's nice to know. You're an arse. How dare a runt of a thing like you come in here and start spreading aspersions. Unwelcome and untrue aspersions.

JACK SHEPPARD

Bess, dear Bess. I could never lay an aspersion at your door. Not I. I love you, Bess you know that.

EDGEWARE BESS

And you know full well it's not reciprocated.

JACK SHEPPARD

It was an example. No reflection on you. Blue has no idea about secrecy. He has to learn, it's too important.

EDGEWARE BESS

It was a bloody aspersion, that's what it was. I've had it with you, Jack. So how did you get him out Blue?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

We done very well. It was all Jack really. I just got a spike and a dress inside for him.

EDGEWARE BESS

Jack got himself out alone. Look at the size of his head, he's like a giant dwarf. He's no good for nothing.

JACK SHEPPARD

Have you forgot so quickly? I'm the one that broke you out of jail.

EDGEWARE BESS

Broke me out! You got me in there. Anyway, the door was falling off its hinges. My grandmother could have broken out of there.

JACK SHEPPARD

But look I stand before you. Proof that I, I on my own have broken out of the condemned cell at Newgate.

EDGEWARE BESS

What do you think you are? You wouldn't have to break out if you didn't keep getting caught. The best thing would not to get taken in the first place. Ah you're a fool.

Exit EDGEWARE BESS.

JACK SHEPPARD

You should have seen me tonight Bess, flying out through a rope from the roof.. Oh God. Nothing, I get nothing from her.

How can she not be impressed by that? How did we get in to this, Blue?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

What other choice had any of us?

JACK SHEPPARD

I did, you know I was a carpenter's apprentice. For me it was a choice. I looked around and saw what I owned. Nothing. A few tools, barely a set of clothes and shoes so worn out they were more like bits of leather tied to my feet. My mother thinks it was Bess then turned me wrong, but she weren't.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

You like Bess don't you. I can tell.

JACK SHEPPARD

Of course I like Bess. How can you think you've just discovered that? Everyone knows that. What exactly do you bring to this partnership Blue? It ain't wits for sure. And I've strength for the pair of us.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

You can trust me.

JACK SHEPPARD

Well that's to be seen. That will be a first when thieves trust each other.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

I'll will see you right Jack.

JACK SHEPPARD

I hope so or there's no place in my gang for you.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

It's our gang I think.

JACK SHEPPARD

Our gang my gang, let's face it we're not much of a gang at all really. I'd have said a gang should be minimum of three. We Blue are a partnership.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Yes we are, Jack.

JACK SHEPPARD

This is some life isn't it? See I think took to thieving because of this African fellow. He used to lean on the corner of Vere Street and I'd walk past him every morning. Well we got talking and he used to use a greeting from his homeland. It was a long slow greeting. "How's your job?" I'd say. "None" he'd reply. "Money?" None, "Food?" None. Whatever I could think of. He'd say none. And at the end we would both say "How's life?" And he'd always reply "Great." And I couldn't. I couldn't say life was great, not with all the haves around and me definitely falling into the rather less enviable category of "have not and unlikely to ever have". That's when I knew work wasn't for me.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

I can see that.

JACK SHEPPARD

Not real work, working for someone else. But if someone tells me breaking is an easier life, I'll put them straight. I still work hard, I just get more for it. The constant worry of a tap on the shoulder. The gallows is where we'll end they say. I can't argue with that. There's a noose made for me already but I've flown it. And I'll keep flying it.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

You'd better lie low Jack.

JACK SHEPPARD

Oh good thinking. I hadn't thought of that. Thanks Blue. I'd better lie low. But it relies on all I know. There's a price on my head and ears are everywhere. There's a ready market for spilled truths. The crown's double-sided shilling is easily earned.

JACK GOES TO SEE HIS MOTHER

Enter JACK SHEPPARD

MRS. SHEPPARD

Oh Jack, Thank the Lord. How is this possible?

JACK AND BESS AND ARREST

*BLUESKIN enters the THE THREE TUNS
the EDGEWARE BESS is behind the
bar.*

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Have you heard the news?

EDGEWARE BESS

No, I can't say that I have. No Jack with you?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

That's the news. He's been taken.

EDGEWARE BESS

Not again? Can't that boy keep himself out of jail for more than a minute? You'd think he almost likes it there.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

No-one likes it there. You know. And they've taken him back to Newgate. He won't get out again.

EDGEWARE BESS

Well of course not. He'll be hanged. Even boys are hanged for stealing handkerchieves and he's had a whole house out. So why are you alright, what happened then?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

He was informed upon. But not me. I don't know why.

EDGEWARE BESS

Aren't you worried?

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Jack's mouth'll stay tight. I'm sure of it.

EDGEWARE BESS

What a fool. That's the end of him. Good riddance.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

It weren't his fault. Someone grassed him.

*Enter MRS SHEPPARD, pointing at
EDGEWARE BESS.*

MRS. SHEPPARD

YOU. You're the cause of this. You the reason my Jack is taken.

EDGEWARE BESS

What are you saying, you madwoman. That I sold your son to the constables. Laughable you old bat.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Mrs. Sheppard, calm down. I don't like shouting. Stop shouting.

MRS. SHEPPARD

You, it's all you. He'd have never have been in this mess if it wasn't for you and your fancy ways.

EDGEWARE BESS

Ha, fancy ways! Do you call these fancy ways? What have I done? Did I destroy the boy? Was it my fault he fell in love with me? He's your boy, you're supposed to look after him. Some mother you are.

MRS. SHEPPARD

Don't talk to me about mothering. What would a harlot know?

EDGEWARE BESS

We all have to do what we have to do. I never asked your boy to do anything.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

He's not a boy. Will you stop shouting. I can't bear the shouting.

*BLUESKIN drags MRS. SHEPPARD out
of the pub.*

TAKEN TO NEWGATE

Jack is centre stage chained. He speaks to the audience.

JACK SHEPPARD

We've been here before haven't we. This time we should get to know each other a bit, do you think? You think me scrawny? That's what everyone says but pound for pound I can see myself right. A good big-un can always beat a good little-un they say. Well maybe. Everyone always wants to be taller that's what us short-uns say, that's what a girl wants. It's never dark, handsome and tall, is it? No, always Tall first, like it's the most important. Tall dark and handsome. Well I'm none of them. Ha! There's times I wished I was, of course, to see over a crowd, pick the highest and sweetest fruit, reach the highest ledge, the thing just out of my grasp. Whatever it may be. But then again isn't that why we have ladders? And I ain't never cracked my head in a doorway. Never will again at this rate. What a stir I caused when I got out last time. What a stir. Was that my moment? Everyone was talking about the great escape of the notorious rogue Jack Sheppard. I didn't think it would be quite so soon I ended back in here again. Not so soon at all. They aren't going to let me get away again. They've doubled the guards and set my newly forged chains in stone. That's it for me I fear. That's the end of it. A brief life. I didn't know many people, those that I did, I'd hesitate to call friends.

BESS COMES TO SEE JACK

EDGEWARE BESS

I come to say goodbye.

JACK SHEPPARD

Of all the faces to see. The one I see in my mind's eye the most. Does this mean you cared, that you cared for me?

EDGEWARE BESS

Course not don't be soft. You're not a boy Jack. How could I care for you? How long have I known you? You stared at me for 5 years solid and never said a word. That puts a girl off. Shyness does, plus you're so short.

JACK SHEPPARD

I'm not shy now.

EDGEWARE BESS

You haven't grown any.

JACK SHEPPARD

Doesn't bother me.

EDGEWARE BESS

Bothers some.

JACK SHEPPARD

Why would you not care about what a man is? What he's about?

EDGEWARE BESS

Girls do, but looking up to a man who is about something is much more attractive than looking down on a fellow. To imagine being swept away, helpless like a mouse in a cat's paws. Out of control, at someone's mercy. Look at you, you're a little by-man, a sparrow man, kitten man, a puppy boy, a little tit, a tiny titmouse, a mouse man, a baby, a squib, a runt baby, a little kid, a baby goat a hairless rat baby. You're a boy.

JACK SHEPPARD

I'm twenty two

EDGEWARE BESS

A boy, you know nothing. No pain, no
heartache, no nothing.

JACK SHEPPARD

I've had pain.

EDGEWARE BESS

The heartbreak of a boy is a fleabite. A
frippery. Have your heart trampled on,
smashed to the ground, spat on. Then again
and another time. Over and over til the
heart cannot remember a time without a
boot pressed on it. Then tell me you've
heartbreak.

So I say I don't pick my friends well. What choice do I have? The bobs and crackers I mix with, well they're all thieves, and you can never trust a thief. Trust me. Most of them, they weren't brought up right. I've never thought it right for a boy to be raised weak. These arms have sawed and hammered, nailed chiselled, planed and sanded enough wood to make 50 houses. These arms, well let me show you.

Jack gets up and takes his chains off.

JACK SHEPPARD

See these muscles are tight. Oh the chains? This must be our little secret. No chain and padlock can keep me shackled. But I like to keep the guards unaware of such a little detail. See, I have rubbed my wrists and ankles red raw so much as they are bleeding, look. It wouldn't serve my purpose well for them to know too much.

Enter KEEPER BILL PITT

KEEPER BILL PITT

Caught in the act!

JACK SHEPPARD

Aside to audience

This is no good. Not again. Will I never learn?

To KEEPER BILL PITT

Bill, I don't know what happened, the chains somehow fell off, I'm now sure if you put them on properly, it was as if they weren't locked in place or something.

KEEPER BILL PITT

Let me have a look. These are undone.

JACK SHEPPARD

That's what I'm saying.

KEEPER BILL PITT

Have you picked these?

JACK SHEPPARD

With what? My bare hands and teeth? I've no tools, look, check me?

KEEPER BILL PITT checks JACK SHEPPARD over. He finds nothing.

KEEPER BILL PITT

No, you haven't. How on earth?

JACK SHEPPARD

Like I said, they weren't put on properly and sort of fell off. That's the only explanation I'd say.

KEEPER BILL PITT

See, Jack I don't trust you.

JACK SHEPPARD

And me being a convicted criminal as well.

KEEPER BILL PITT

I know you've escaped before.

JACK SHEPPARD

Three times, Bill.

KEEPER BILL PITT

But not from Newgate. Not on my watch. See, if you were to get out of here, it'd be my pocket that gets it worst. So that ain't going to happen Jack. Ain't going to happen at all.

JACK SHEPPARD

No you're probably right Bill.

KEEPER BILL PITT

I know I am. I like you Jack, sorry to see you hang. I am, truly.

Exit KEEPER BILL PITT

JACK SHEPPARD

Didn't search real well did he?

JACK SHEPPARD reveals a pin and a bar.

ESCAPE 4 FROM NEWGATE

The scene is now a theatre with a variety act evening. An assistant enters with an escape trick such as being locked in a trunk. JACK SHEPPARD explains the trick and performs an escape.

JACK SHEPPARD

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to my great escape, tonight I will perform the amazing trick of escaping from this locked trunk. A member of the audience will check the locks etc. etc.

GET OUT JACK

JACK SHEPPARD

You look but you do not see. Look at the floor, see the gap beneath the floorboards, follow it to the air brick. See the sag in the ceiling, showing me the way to a rotten joist and a soft spot in the wall. Who needs a window or a door.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

That maybe true but Blue can see women like you can't.

Jack winces.

JACK SHEPPARD

I go over things, imagine, walkthrough them. I never do anything unless I have walked through the dream of it. As an imaginary future world, I place myself there and play the part in my head. If I have to climb through a window and I have a hold on the sill and then my next move is to reach for a gutter and... I can't get a hand to it... and I stop return and grab a rope, hammer, whatever I need and return again. It's like that for everything, my shoes, I picture their grip on a moss covered tile, a wet parapet, the talc on my hands, there... Stop I have forgotten something I'm in a spot with no way down. Blueskin thinks I'm crazy but he'd never plans lunch. For him things just happen.

WANDERING ALONE

(Jack dressed as a tramp in hiding enters and empty stage. He calls the audience forward and puts his finger to his mouth.)

JACK SHEPPARD

Shhh. Not a word of this to anyone. So I did it. Escaped form the toughest cell in Newgate, and everyone knew I was going to too. It's so much the sweeter to have accomplished the impossible. Not that there was ever a doubt. Leave, leave Jack. Take yourself to France, to Wales, to Birmingham. Hide and run, cover and turn, flee and never return. That's what everyone told me to do. But I haven't. Not Jack Sheppard. I have only swapped the sun for the stars. And hidden like a fox in the night. Two weeks I have been hidden at home. Dressed as a tramp. Skulking in the shadows, hiding. How bright that sun looks from the darkness. How sharp that line between the two. A wall that dares to be scaled. Taunting me tempting me into the light. What I want to do is tell you who I am. I am Jack Sheppard. I hear conversations people asking what am I up to? Do you know who I am? The Jack Sheppard.

PUB SCENE ALONE

Jack is disguised in a pub

JACK SHEPPARD

Do the grey hairs cover wise heads or give dress old fools with false.... Have they seen life or passed it by. Are the smiles of knowing or of pain. Silence crackles and spits through their intermittent laughter. What do they think when they throw a glance past me? Too dangerous to hold a gaze, I may be crazed, violent or both.

All these old barren lips have once tasted sweet. See The old couple. I've heard it said that fading eyes are clouded with the ghosts of flush youth. Can a man look at his crone with eyes of love, not see the bittered skin, but gaze on own young beauty, mistake the misery drenched face for the carefree flush of young love? It is not possible, no mind could delude itself so completely. More, how can he bear to have teeth that don't work, legs that ache and crack.

JACK SHEPPARD

Are they talking about me? They probably are, dammit what else could they be talking about and with me so close to them. I don't blame them. What else have to discuss? Have they jobs that fulfil them, a residence that delights them? Maybe they are discussing a broadsheet about me, reliving my escape. Look they smile, I have brought a smile to a face I know not.

JACK BREAKS IN TO BESS'S

BESS'S BEDROOM

(BESS is asleep, enter JACK wearing the most rich clothing and carrying a bag, through the locked door. Jack sees the clothes of a man lying on the ground. Jack walks to the bed and leans to talk. BLUESKIN is in the bed.)

JACK SHEPPARD

To audience

Another man. What did I expect? I'm not a fool. I know what she does, what she has to do. I just have to live with it... But Blue... Blue, anyone, what does it matter?

Jack picks up clothing obviously belonging to BLUESKIN.

Blue? Blue, Bess, it's me.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

I thought you was gone Jack. We all did.

JACK SHEPPARD

Whatever.

Exit BLUESKIN.

EDGEWARE BESS

What are you doing back here? Get out of here. You're nothing but trouble. You can't kick a customer out like that.

Bessie. BESSIE. Who did you least expect to see on such a glorious morning. Your Jack was it? Well here I am. Are you ready?

EDGEWARE BESS

No Jack, no. What are you doing here? You're not supposed to be here. It's not safe Jack. Get out go, go away.

JACK SHEPPARD

Don't tell me you're not pleased to see me. Come on my lovely. My princess. Let's get you dressed up. I've got such things for you. Look.

EDGEWARE BESS

Jack, no. What are you playing at? You should be far far from here.

JACK SHEPPARD

Look at this.

(Jack holds up a beautiful dress.)

When I saw this, oh, I had to stop, close my eyes and picture you in it. I'd just let myself into a little place to get me some new togs, when I saw this. Then I could do nothing but rush it here to behold you in it. My Bessie in such a thing. I had to see it.

EDGEWARE BESS

Are you mad? What are you thinking of? Go Jack, go. Why are you in London at all? You shouldn't be here. Oh my dear Jack, it's so dangerous.

JACK SHEPPARD

It's not dangerous It'll be fun, what's wrong with fun? And but us ever need know. No=one in their right mind will expect me to be in Town. And we'll be disguised.

EDGEWARE BESS

That's not a disguise, if you wear those clothes it will be a beacon, a horn to call the hounds. Don't do this. If it's to prove something to me, then I don't need a symbol. I give myself to you. I throw myself at you. Don't make me see you throw yourself to the wolves. Every corner has a whisperer keen to sell your corpse.

JACK SHEPPARD

You think that's what Jack Sheppard wants? I came back for you? No, I came back for my people and their adoration, not your love. Your one small and beautiful heart, I wish it were enough. But its beats are drummed out like the tick of a watch in A stone breaker's yard. No, a thousand yards filled with muscle-bound men hammering with iron. The rings beating to one name My name. You can't say you haven't heard, you've seen the whispers of a city, London, are of nothing else. Deny it. My name is a waking thought, a lover's gambit, a friend's greeting. "Can you believe the news today? Have you heard what Jack has done?"

EDGEWARE BESS

Does my heart mean so little to you?

JACK SHEPPARD

Of course not but let's share in my glory. Outside of that window is a world enamoured by me. By me. Lords to layabouts, bakers butchers and tars. Sailors who will carry stories of me to the four corners of the world. If I can't enjoy that then what is there to enjoy?

EDGEWARE BESS

I can give you love, safe love. Let's leave together now.

JACK SHEPPARD

I can't. Don't you realise, I have no need to fear. No-one has my art for escaping, never has and never will. Understand, there is no prison can keep me.

EDGEWARE BESS

They will have an army surround you. The king himself will order it. They will chain you, lock you up, not let you move.

JACK SHEPPARD

You think that Jack Sheppard can be kept in chains?

I am a wisp, a ghost, as graspable as a glint of the sun off a ripple. A magician's coin. The people recognise that and worship me for it. There are three things that last for beyond a lifetime, death, children and fame. And fame is the most glorious of these for it is the least obtainable and most sort.

EDGEWARE BESS

Are you thinking straight Jack, I've never heard you speak so.. This is strange talk.

JACK SHEPPARD

Strange would be for me not to frolic in my sunshine. Everyone knows who I am. Look.

To Audience.

Hello, world, do you know my name? Then what is it?

AUDIENCE

Jack Sheppard.

A DAY IN LONDON

FINAL PUB SCENE

PRISON

KEEPER BILL PITT

What do you need a good night's sleep for.
You'll be having enough rest tomorrow.
(Bell rings 12) That's the last time
you'll hear that. Single figures from now
on.

KEEPER BILL PITT

Have you men to hang on your legs?

JACK SHEPPARD

I'll not be needing them.

KEEPER BILL PITT

Do you know what it's like to hang Jack,
specially such a little one as you.

JACK SHEPPARD

Course I do.

KEEPER BILL PITT

Could be dancing for a fair time, my son.
And that won't be pretty. I've seen many a
man hanged, some I've liked and some I
ain't. I've not enjoyed even seeing the
ones I've hated struggle and writhe.
You'll need men beneath you. Men you can
trust to know what they're doing. I can
organise that Jack. Or I can see to it
that no-one can get near. Its a small
price to pay. In the scheme of things. And
I do like you Jack. Despite the trouble
you caused me.

JACK SHEPPARD

I'll not need no-one. See this scrawny
neck, its slippery. Trust me. Slippery as
eel. And you should know.

CHAPLAIN MOTHER AND JOURNALIST

REV TOM PURNEY

It's a sorry day, your last on earth.
I give you solace, the chance for birth.
If you repent in a way that's permanent.
I can assure your place in the firmament.

JACK SHEPPARD

Who's this fool?

MRS. SHEPPARD

Pleas Jack listen to the preacher.

JACK SHEPPARD

I can look God in the eye as much as any man can. I've never hurt anyone, clubbed in a skull or stuck a man because they looked at me wrong. Never beat a child or broke no heart.

MRS. SHEPPARD

Mine Jack, you're breaking mine Jack.

JACK SHEPPARD

But through anything I've done to you.
I've always treated you right.

MRS. SHEPPARD

To see a child taken from you. My poor boy.

JACK SHEPPARD

We'll see, but I've never done anything that I didn't have to do. And I've seen you right. Look at the clothes you're in. Would a carpenter's apprentice have ever been able to deck you out in finery?

REV TOM PURNEY

As God's glory and wonders never cease.
I have brought you a bible to bring you peace.

JACK SHEPPARD

The only piece I need is a piece of iron small enough to hide and big enough to break these chains. All the bibles in the world ain't worth a rusty nail to me.

REV TOM PURNEY

Confess, confess poor boy repent.
And I'll ensure you're heaven sent.
I'll write down every word you say to me,
And blessed will your soul's journey be.

JACK SHEPPARD

Oh get him out. I can't bear this. If this is a taste of heaven then Hell can not be such torment. Listen my friend. I'm not telling you a thing. God, you say can hear my thoughts. Your ears on the other hand will soon result in a printed confession and a pretty profit. Now unless you can find it within your heart to reach into those pockets and find me a decent price these will be the last words I say to you. And take note please these aren't rhyming.

REV. TOM PURNEY takes MRS. SHEPPARD to one side.

REV TOM PURNEY

What I'm about to say I should not be saying, in fact far from it. But it is my place to give comfort. A name, Alexander, Casanova. There have been great generals, greater lovers. Brilliant stars of men we know not of. Their stories lost midst history itself. We remember the beautiful mad, the gloriously obsessed. Jack Sheppard has a gift that rises him above the mundane, beyond the glorious, out of sight of the great. The name Jack Sheppard may last a lifetime more than his brief appearance here. Who knows in 250 years time some very special few may still listen to stories about him. The escape from authority, to ride carefree in the face of conformity, to laugh open chested at fear and risk. To cheat death itself. How many souls have been sold for a shilling and yet Jack plays with the Devil with skill and artistry. Members of my Parish, who in penury, hunger and despair smile at the work of Jack Sheppard. Smile? Laugh, cheer and gain hope. Hope to emulate, to know that hope exists somewhere for a lucky few around them.

God knows' their only hope lies in the grave alone. Hope that the normal walls of circumstance can be scaled and that to some freedom lies beyond. To hear tales retold of such a marvel is miraculous. A carpenter too. A skilled man. Despite my frock, I have been enamoured, engaged, inspired and intoxicated by the exploits and deeds of a man that has distracted me from ethereal glories. This is nature. Let us remember you can only die young in glory if you are young. The old have missed that chance.

NEWGATE PRISON

*(Jack is in Chains on the floor,
enter MRS. SHEPPARD)*

MRS. SHEPPARD

Jack, Jack my dear boy.

JACK SHEPPARD

Oh please mother. So you hear I'm taken
and you seize the chance to come and nag
me.

MRS. SHEPPARD

I'll

JACK SHEPPARD

A son can do no wrong in a mother's eyes,
but you'd never know that from listening
to her.

MRS. SHEPPARD

Why did you?

JACK SHEPPARD

Don't question Jack Sheppard. I don't
know.

MRS. SHEPPARD

It was that girl.

JACK SHEPPARD

Maybe, oh please don't. I've had no
choice. I am what I am. What's done stays
done. To regret is to think I could have
done things differently. Jack Sheppard
wouldn't have been Jack Sheppard if he'd
made a different choice. Did you want a
son who toiled and bore drudgery with a
smile hiding fury within? Jack Sheppard is
what you made him. I'm your blood. And
what do I owe you? Six years old when you
placed me in the workhouse. Yet I've never
begrudged you my childhood. I've seen you
right when others wouldn't, haven't,
don't.

STAR STRUCK WOMAN

JACK SHEPPARD

No man can hold me, no hand can build a thing to keep me. I am a sprite, a wisp, a magician's coin, here for a second then gone in thin air.

If a man can lift it in, a man can lift it out. The man who built this he may have been skilled, but he wasn't skilled and desperate. If it can be built it can be broken, put together it can be ripped apart.

I see inside a lock. Where others see the case, I see more, the iron housing is like a piece of glass through which I see the tumble and teeth smiling at me in welcome. You see a door yet I behold an empty frame with the passage beyond beckoning.

With teeth and nails and wit and muscles hard as the oak that forged them. With patience and speed and sweat and brains. If I need to sacrifice a nail, I'll give a finger or an arm without second thought. What good is an arm to a dead man? Nothing has no weak spot, except for me.

THE LAST ESCAPE

The scene is now a theatre with a variety act evening. An assistant enters with an escape trick such as being immersed in water. There must be a chance of fatality. JACK SHEPPARD explains the trick and attempts to perform an escape. The trick however goes horribly wrong and we are left seeing the dead body of JACK SHEPPARD floating in the water.

JACK SHEPPARD

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to my great escape, tonight I will perform the amazing trick of escaping from this chest of water. A member of the audience will check the locks etc. etc.

MOTHER'S LAMENT

MRS. SHEPPARD

Sheppard wasn't my name. I took it for all the good it did me. He was always the boy. He liked a pretty thing. More than most. A shiny thing, a dazzling glint. He never saw a grey cloud or felt the rain.

GENERAL WRITING

JACK SHEPPARD

KEEPER BILL PITT

I get fined every time there's an escape.
Not Jack again. This time I promise he
won't get away.

JACK SHEPPARD

What's done can't be undone.

JACK SHEPPARD

What is the boy to the man?

JACK SHEPPARD

Friends are forced upon us by
circumstance, could a Duke not be a friend
if by accident they lived in this Hell.
And restored would they not drop us like a
leper's handkerchief.

BLUESKIN BLAKE

Lets get our swag on.

JACK SHEPPARD

Prison holds no fear. Prison is the start
of the game. I like to win Blue, I never
knew it but I like to win.
Taken, grassed. Could have been any one of
you couldn't it? It's always someone you
know though isn't it? You already know me
then. You know I'm a thief and a good one.
What am I doing here, if I'm so good you
say? I'm a good thief, but I'm not good in
picking friends.