

A Child of the Jago

A screenplay

written by

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(c) 2024

Adapted from the novel

A Child of the Jago

written by

Arthur Morrison

A public domain title

OVER BLACK: SHOREDITCH - LONDON. ENGLAND 1897

FADE IN:

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - MIDSUMMERS NIGHT

A narrow street, all the blacker, but for a lurid sky; The welkin an infernal coppery glare. Contorted forms of those who sleep occupy the pavements.

At one end a narrow passage with POSTS gives menacing entrance to where the other loses itself in the black beyond Jago Row, and from where Jago Row begins south with Meakin Street and ends north at Honey Lane.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Slinking forms of great RATS follow one another quickly between the posts then scatter.

A small CROWD gathers around a FIRE. The POLICE in force as the flickers disappear and settle into a sullen flush. Upon the pavement some writhe wearily, others despair as they loll. A few talk.

EXT. HAGGERSTONE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Ragamuffin NEDDY WRIGHT 10, sobs quietly as he stands upon the low bridge set over the canal.

He trembles as he ties a brick to his neck and lets himself down, until his head disappears beneath the water, leaving a thin sphere of air to his anonymity.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

NARRATOR V.O

For one hundred years the blackest pit in London festers. Half way along this street a narrow archway gives upon Jago Court, the blackest hole in all of this pit. A square of two-hundred and fifty yards, or less- this is all there is of the Jago. But in this square the human population swarm in thousands. New Jago Street and half Jago Street lie parallel.

EXT. JAGO COURT - NIGHT

At the entrance, luckless KIDDO COOK 20s sits with his head in his hands before he looks around himself.

KIDDO COOK
Ahhh.... I wish I was dead an' kep'
a cawfy shop.

He eyes meet a DOZING MAN who snorts just a yard away.

Kiddo Cook feels inside his coat pockets and produces a pipe and screw of paper.

KIDDO COOK (CONT'D)
This is a bleed'n' unsocial sort o'
ev'nin' party, this is. An' 'ere's
the on'y real toff in the mob with
'ardly 'arf a pipeful left, an' no
lights. D' y' 'ear me lord?

He leans towards the Dozing Man.

KIDDO COOK (CONT'D)
Got a match?

DOZING MAN
(twitches)
Go t''ell.

KIDDO COOK
O' wot 'orrid langwidge! It's
shocking blimey. Arter that y'
ought to find me a match. C'mon.Go
t''ell.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE, a lank man sits the other side with his back to the wall. He pushes up his battered tall hat and produces a box of matches.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE
Hell? And how far's that? You're in
it.

He throws out a bony hand and glances up. Over his forehead a greasy black curl dangles as he shakes and shudders against the wall.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE (CONT'D)
My God, there can be no hell after
this!

Kiddo Cook lights his pipe in the hollow of his hands.

KIDDO COOK

Ah! That's a comfort. Mr Beveridge,
any'ow.

He hands back the matches. Old Man Beveridge tilts his hat and remains silent.

Dolled up MRS LEARY 30s fervently passes by and enters the court. She grips a shawl about her shoulders.

A well dressed middle-aged MAN follows her inside. He's unsteady on his feet. He catches Kiddo Cook's idle eye.

KIDDO COOK (CONT'D)

There's Billy Leary in luck ag'in.
'is missis do pick 'em up, s'elp
me. I'd carry the cosh meself if
I'd a woman like 'er.

THUMP!!

A dark and heavy BUNDLE is pushed from the entrance. The thing rolls over and tumbles on the pavement.

Two Jago RATS crawl over to where he lies with a thick smear across his face. About his head the source of a dark trickle sources the gutter deviously over broken flags.

The drab stuff of his pockets poke out. His waistcoat gapes where his watch guard once stood.

His boots are removed by the Jago Rats before they disappear into the deeper shadows of the night.

DICKY, a malnourished boy of eight years wears a man's coarse jacket.

He steps out of the gutter and flings a curse at them before he replaces his hands inside his ragged trouser pockets and trudges towards the entrance.

He steps over the bootless Bundle.

DICKY

(pipes up)
Done 'im for 'is boots.

Old man Beveridge pushes back his hat at once and looks up at him.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE

Dicky Perrott!

He beckons him with his finger and he approaches.

Old man Beveridge's skeleton hand shoots out and grabs him by the scruff.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE (CONT'D)
 (ominously)
 It-never-does-to-see-too-much.
 (pauses)
 Now go home.

He pushes the boy away and relapses against the wall.

Dicky pulls up his collar then enters the court.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - NIGHT

Through the darkness, Dicky appears inside a room where a small heap of guttering grease is spread across the mantelpiece which emits a little flame from its drooping wick.

A thin railed iron bedstead bent and staggered stands against the right wall.

Upon its murky coverings his mother HANNAH 30. She sits half dressed. Her dolorous face empty of expression and weak of mouth. She neglects her wheezing BABY who cries next to her.

HANNAH
 Where 'a' you bin, Dicky? It's sich
 low hours for a boy.

He ignores her complaint.

DICKY
 Got anythink to eat?

HANNAH
 (listlessly)
 I dunno. P'raps there's a bit o'
 bread in the cupboard.
 (pauses)
 I don't want nothink. It's too 'ot.
 An' father ain't bin 'ome since
 tea-time.

Dicky rummages through the cupboards and finds a crust. He gnaws at it as he crosses to where the Baby lies.

DICKY
 (affectionately)
 Ullo, Looley.

He bends down and pats her muddy cheek. Baby Looey's tiny flea bitten face strangely old as she thinly wails.

DICKY (CONT'D)
W'y she's 'ungry, Mother.

He picks up the baby and holds her in his arms, then sits on a small box and feeds her morsels of chewed bread. Hannah looks over at him dolefully.

HANNAH
She's that backward, I'm quite wore out. More 'n ten months old, an' don't even crawl yut. It's a never endin' trouble, is children.

She sighs and stretches wearily upon the bed.

Dicky carries baby LOOEY towards the grimy open window.

His POV: A dull flush spread across the blackness down below as the holler of the Jago reverberates inside the room.

DICKY
I don't s'pose father's 'avin' a sleep outside, eh?

Hannah sits up.

HANNAH
Wot? Sleep out in the street like them low Ranns an' Learys? I should 'ope not. It's bad enough livin' 'ere at all, an me being used to different things once, an all. You ain't seen 'im outside 'av ye?

DICKY
No I ain't seen 'im. I jist looked in the court.
(pauses)
I 'ope 'e's done a click.

HANNAH
(winces)
I dunno wot you mean, Dicky. You-you're gittin' that low an' an'- W'y, copped somethink, o' course. Nicked somethink. You know. If yu say sich things as that I'll tell 'im wot you say, an' 'ell pay you.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

We ain't that sort o' people, you ought to know I was alwis kep' respectable an' straight all my life, I'm sure, an'-

DICKY

I know. You said so before, to father. I 'eard w'en 'e brought home that there yuller prop- the necktie pin. Wy, where did 'e git that? 'E ain't 'ad a job in munse and munse. Where's the yannups come from wot's bin for to pay the rent, an' git the toke, an' milk for Looey? Think I dunno? I ain't a kid. I know.

HANNAH

(tearfully)

Dicky, Dicky! You mustn't say sich things! It's wicked an' low. An' you must alwis be respectable an' straight, Dicky, an' you'll, you'll git on then.

DICKY

Straight people's fools, I reckon. Kiddo Cook says that, an' 'e's as wide as Broad Street. W'en I grow up I'm goin' to git toffs' clo'es an' be in the 'igh mob. They does big clicks.

HANNAH

They git put in a dark prison for years an' years, Dicky, an' if you're sich a low an' wicked boy, father'll give you the strap- 'ard. Gimme the baby an' git to bed, go on, 'fore father comes.

He hands her the baby, then takes off his jacket and lies upon the bed.

DICKY

It's the mugs wot git took. An' quoddin' ain't so bad.

(closes eyes)

S'pose father'll be smugged some day, eh, Mother?

Hannah walks about the room with the baby in arms. Dicky sits up wide eyed and awake.

DICKY (CONT'D)

Wy don't you come to bed?

HANNAH

Waitin' for father. Go to sleep.

DICKY

Them noo 'uns in the front room.
Ain't the man give 'is wife an
'idin' yut?

HANNAH

No.

DICKY

Nor yut the boy- umpty-backed 'un?

HANNAH

No.

DICKY

Seems they're mighty pertickler.
Fancy theirselves too good for
their neighbours; I 'eard Pigeony
Poll say that, only Poll said-

HANNAH

You mustn't never listen to Pigeony
Poll say that, Dicky. Ain't you
'eard me say so? Go to sleep. 'Ere
comes father.

Footsteps sound up the staircase as Dicky stares up at the filthy window.

His father JOSH 32, enters the room as Dicky lies still and listens.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Lor, Josh, where ye bin? I'm almost
worn out a-waitin'.

JOSH

Awright, awright. Got any water up
'ere? Wash this 'ere stick.

She searches about for water, then a quick undertone scream as the stick rattles heavily upon the floor.

HANNAH

It's sticky!
(gasps)
O my gawd, Josh, look at that- an'
bits of 'air. Too!

The great shadow of an open hand shoots up and crosses the ceiling.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

O Josh! O my gawd! You ain'y 'av ye? Not- not-not-not that?

JOSH

Not wot? Gawblimey, not what? Shutcher mouth. If a man fights, you've got to fight back, aincher? Anyone 'ud think it was a murder, to look at ye. I ain't sich a damn fool as that. 'Ere pull up that board.

She lifts the floorboard with a jarring sound and where he hides the bloodied stick.

HANNAH

You'll git in trouble, Josh. I wish you'd git a reg'lar job, Josh like wot you used-I do-I do.

EXT. JAGO COURT - DAWN

The coshed subject with blood dry upon his face moves a leg.

EXT. EAST LONDON ELEVATION MISSION - DAY

Dicky stands unobtrusively close to the entrance with his big jacket buttoned over and where an ardent young TICKET ELEVATOR stands just inside the doorway.

Through the window he licks his lips as he gazes at the assortment of delicious CAKES inside a tea room.

NARRATOR V.O

The triumphs of the East End Elevation Mission and Pansophical Institute are known and appreciated far from East London, by people who know less of that part than of Asia. Indeed, they are greatly appreciated by these. They are kept perpetually on tap for the aspiring Eastender, the Higher Life, the Greater Thought, with other radiant abstractions, mostly in the comparative degree, specifics all for the manufacturer of the superior person.

CARRIAGES draw up and EMINENCES exit, then enter the building.

The distinguished BISHOP himself dressed in uncommon clothes draws up with three LADIES present and they are duly welcomed by the Ticket Elevator.

Dicky, like a flash, makes a dash into the clean white brick building unchallenged.

INT. MISSION HALL - DAY

Dicky moves obscurely along the walls whilst the CHORAL SOCIETY sing at their lustiest, amid the claps of hands and flutter of handkerchiefs.

His POV: CAKES, FRUIT JUICES set in a small tea room at the back of the hall.

TEA ROOM

Dicky appears from behind a heavily drooped curtain that separates the room from the hall. The table guarded by a sour-faced MAN.

There comes a sudden burst of applause from inside the hall as a new wing is declared open, then some more singing and clapping.

Beat.

The tea room now amassed with ELEVATORS as people stand and chat in groups whilst they munch and sip tea and cakes.

The sour-faced Man distracted as Dicky ducks and dodges vaguely among the legs and round skirts when he makes a snatch at a plate at the table, before he vanishes.

The Bishop beams over his tea cup as two COURTIERS of the clergy bethink him. He passes his hand downward over the rotundity of his waistcoat and glances down.

BISHOP

Dear, dear. Why- what's become of my watch?

There hangs three inches of black ribbon with a cut end. The Bishop stares blankly at the Courtiers.

EXT. LUCK ROW - DAY

Dicky with shut fist makes full drive towards home.

EXT. OLD JAGO - DAY

Dicky nears the archway to Jago Court. A boy, a trifle bigger than himself throws a sharp punch as he flies past. He misses.

A hulking GROUP of older BOYS attempt to grab his arm, but he is quicker and manages to dodge them and enter the courtyard.

INT. JAGO COURT - DAY

Dicky climbs the staircase when he is confronted by BOBBY ROPER 8- a pale hunchbacked boy, clean and wistful. He barges him aside. The Boy misses a step and stumbles down the stairs.

DICKY
Git out, 'ump!

INT. PERROTTS HOME - DAY

Stoutly built Josh has a hard, leathery face, and for his age looks much older. The bristle around his mouth untrimmed.

He sits upon the bed and plucks at a piece of fried fish on oily paper as his wife grubs hopelessly about the cupboard shelves for a screw of paper which is a sugar basin.

Dicky enters at a burst.

DICKY
Mother- Father look! I did a click!
I got a clock- a red 'un!

Josh stops with fish in hand, poised in the air. Hannah turns to look with a fallen chin.

HANNAH
O Dicky! Dicky, you're awful low,
wicked boy. My gawd, Josh- 'e-
'e'll grow up bad, I said so.

Josh bolts the pinch of fish and sucks his fingers as he springs to the door. After a quick glance down the stairs he shuts it and turns to the boy.

JOSH
Where d'je get that, ya young
devel?

He snatches the watch from the palm of his open hand.

DICKY

Claimed it auf a ol' bloke w'en 'e
was drinkin' 'is tea, father.

JOSH

Did 'e run after ye?

DICKY

No-didn't know nuffin' about it. I
cut 'is bit o' ribbon with my
knife.

He holds up his treasured blade with a handle.

DICKY (CONT'D)

Aincher goin' to let's 'ave a look
at it?

Josh looks doubtfully towards his wife, before he slips the
watch inside his own pocket and catches his son by the
collar.

JOSH

I'll give you somethink, you damn
young thief!

He slips off his belt.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You'd like to have us all in stir
for a year or two, I s'pose, goin'
thieving watches like a growed up
man.

He plies the belt savagely with the boy truly shocked,
breathless and choking, spins with piteous squeals as the
baby wakes with feeble sympathy.

With a rip the boy's collar leaves his old jacket. Josh feels
it and with a quick drive of his fist to the neck and sends
the boy staggering across the room.

He catches the bed frame and limps out to the landing as he
sobs grievously into the bend of his sleeve.

HANNAH

'Adn't you better take it out at
once, Josh?

JOSH

Yes, I'm goin'.

He turns the watch in his hand.

JOSH (CONT'D)

It's a good 'un- a topper.

HANNAH

You won't let Weech 'ave it, will ye, Josh? 'E-'e never gives much.

JOSH

No bloomin' fear. I'm goin' up 'oxton with this 'ere.

EXT. JERRY GULLEN'S BACKYARD - DAY

Dicky squeezes through a hole in the fence and weeps upon the shaggy neck of CANARY - Jerry Gullen's donkey.

DICKY

O' Canary, it's a blasted shame.

EXT. NEW JAGO STREET - DAY

Ragamuffins, TOMMY RANN 12 and JOHNNY LEARY 13 throw a flurry of fists at one another during a vicious brawl, until Johnny Leary is knocked to the ground.

Close by, older boy JOEY DAWSON picks up a shovel and chases Tommy Rann away.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - CONT'D

Dicky emerges from Jerry Gullen's yard and heads towards the Posties.

NARRATOR V.O

Forever at war at the Old Jago are the Leary's and the Ranns. The Leary's scarcely pretend to rivalry, rather factious opposition. The Ranns glorify in the style and title of Royal Family and dominate the Jago. They are mighty fighters- Men and women among the Leary's, and when a combat arises it is a hard fought one, animated. The two families ramify throughout the Jago and under the Rann standards by kin, or by custom are the Gullens, the Fishers, the Spicers and the Walshes.

(MORE)

NARRATOR V.O (CONT'D)

While in the Leary's train come the Dawsons, Greens and Harnwells. So all of the Jago wants to be on one side or the other, and those who are not are worse for it, since neutrality means double drubbings.

Capless Tommy Rann flies into Dicky arms, breathless, exultant. He carries a purple bump on his head.

TOMMY RANN

I just ran into Johnny Leary and Joey Dawson, one after the other. I pretty nigh broke Johnny Leary's neck. Now Joey Dawson's brother is after me with a bleed'n shovel. C'mon.

Together they scarper to find a place to hide.

NARRATOR V.O

This is a Rann and Leary fight and is in its early stages.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. RECEIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BOB THE BENDER 30s has his head bandaged by a young NURSE while SAM CASH 20s covers his bloodied nose with his hands.

INT. BAG OF NAILS P.H - NIGHT

SNOB SPICER 30s is knocked out cold with a quart pot and MRS HARNWELL 30s has a piece of her EAR bitten off.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

RESIDENTS shout obscenities at one another from their window sills and front doors whilst scuffles and yells give rise to sporadic fights.

Upon a succession of piercing screams made by her victim betokens the arrival of female Jago champion SALLY GREEN 30s.

She wrestles with her ANTAGONIST, using every means at her disposal- teeth and nails gnaw at her nape as she falls on top of her and claws at every inch of her flesh. The sufferer's screams audible.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - EARLY HOURS

Josh snores thunderously on the floor, piebald and road-dust.

Dicky wakes and searches cupboards for a crust before he quietly steps over his father and exits.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET AND BEYOND - MORNING

The RANNS split up and attack the LEARYS inside their homes. They use sticks with nails that stick out. The Learys defend with iron railings and pokers.

GINGER STAGG 20s lies in his passage with an open wound to his cheek.

EXT/INT. THE FEATHERS P.H - DAY

The grimeiest and vilest public house of all Jago is hijacked by a dozen Learys. The Ranns swarm after them in their droves. The Learys throw chairs, bottles and pewter pots to fend them off.

MOTHER GAPP (landlady) hangs hysterically onto the beer pulls in the bar.

A partition wall comes flying down with a crash, bringing shelves and glasses with it.

The Ranns rush over the ruin and beat the Learys down as they heave them out of the windows.

Having cleared the house of the enemy, the Ranns seize the liquor. They pull pints and drink from bottles, before they raid the cellar of all its barrels.

Mother Gapp sits at a table, limple, and helpless as she blasphemes, until the Ranns finally decide to clear off.

EXT. JAGO STREETS - LATE EVENING

The Learys hunt down the drunken Ranns in turn. A hundred or so sweep the Jago from Honey Lane to Meakin Street.

EXT/INT. JERRY GULLENS HOUSE - NIGHT

The Ranns take refuge upon the third floor whilst below the Learys smash windows and ravage room by room, smashing furniture and everything in their wake.

PIP WALSH 20s hurls flower pots down the barricaded staircase as BILLY LEARY 30s attempts to climb to the top, but is thrown back and lands head first with a crash before he is carried away.

MRS WALSH pours boiling water over the advancing Learys before they scatter with screams of blue murder.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - NIGHT

Hannah fastens the door with baby Looey in arms. She trembles with fear, since the ensuing fights with the Ranns and the Learys spills onto every street that touches the Jago. She stares out of the window fraught with worry.

Her POV: Mass brawls on every street.

CU: A MAN lies on his side with a cut to his temple.

HANNAH (ASIDE)
Josh, where are you?

The hunger cries from baby Looey torment her, so she throws on a coat and exits with the baby in arms.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

Hannah scurries along the pavement with her head down. She bumps into a red faced, stripped to the waist SALLY GREEN 30s. She carries a black eye and a bunch of clotted hair in hand.

SALLY GREEN
(scathingly)
Wotcher lookin' at?

Hannah attempts to ignore her remark, but she blocks her path.

SALLY GREEN (CONT'D)
Fink you're too good to talk to the likes of me, eh?

Sally Green drags her down by her hair, until she falls on top of the whimpering baby whilst she screams to high heaven as she bites into her shoulder and scratches at her eyes.

Hannah lies sprawled upon her face, under her arm the baby with muddied eyes and a cut cheek, cries weakly.

Sally Green hangs on to her nape like a terrier with clenched jaws.

Dicky appears from around the corner and immediately leaps upon his mother's attacker.

He kicks, strikes and bites, but feeble in comparison to the strength and weight of Sally Green.

Vanquished Jago champion fighter Nora Walsh peers from her window and spots the brutal attack upon Hannah, her baby, and now Dicky.

She appears with a glass bottle in hand and smashes it over Sally Green's head, then uses the jagged edge to cut into her as she stabs her about the face, eyes, mouth and anywhere else she can access.

Sally Green finally releases her grip and rolls on her back. Norah Walsh continues to stab and cut her about her breasts and stomach as her yells finally become a whimper before they cease altogether.

A STRANGER appears and pulls Norah Walsh off of Sally Green, before she chases him away with the blood soaked broken bottle still in hand.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - NIGHT

Hysterical and helpless Hannah is helped by buxom blonde PIGEONY POLL 20s, as she lies her down upon the bed and loosens her hair, then wipes her neck.

PIGEONY POLL

It's alright, darlin' you're safely indoors now. She can't 'urt you anymore.

Dicky, his face tearful and distorted holds the baby in his arms and wipes the the mud from her eyes.

He sits down upon his little box and gazes over to the bedside and cries.

Police whistles echo through the night as the screams and yells from the street fights continue to rage between the Ranns and Learys.

Josh enters at a rush and sees his wife as she lies bloodied, beaten and bruised. He grits his teeth with anger.

JOSH

Who did this to her?

PIGEONY POLL

Sally Green.

JOSH
 (gritted teeth)
 Her brother will pay for this.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. MEAKIN STREET - MORNING

Dicky skips along the shop-filled street and reaches Mr Weech's coffee shop where WEECH himself stands at the door.

The half bald Man grins and beckons him as he stands in his white apron and white whiskers.

Dicky alert dodges his advances and skips by.

WEECH
 W'y Dicky Perrott, I belive you
 could do with a cup o' cawfy!

He stops in his tracks and turns and grins.

WEECH (CONT'D)
 An' eat a slice o' cake too, I'll
 be bound.

He returns to him and smiles gleefully.

WEECH (CONT'D)
 Ah, I knew it. I can always tell.

He rubs Dicky's cap about his head and draws him into the shop, then with a gentle pressure upon his shoulders sits him down at a table.

Weech brings a pot of coffee and two cakes to the table and stands emotionally as Dicky scoffs every crumb and drinks every molecule of coffee in one gulp.

DICKY
 Goes down, awright, don't it?

WEECH
 Ah, I like to see you o' enjoying
 yerself. I'm very fond o' young
 'uns, specially clever 'uns like
 you.
 (pauses)
 Yus, you're the sort of boy as can
 'ave cawfy an' cake w'enever you
 want it, you are.
 (pauses)
 You know...

(MORE)

WEECH (CONT'D)

(winks & grins)

that was a fine watch you found the other day. Y'ought to a brought it to me.

Dicky stares at him alarmed by his knowledge of the watch. Weech steps forward and pushes back his chair.

WEECH (CONT'D)

(eyes fixed)

You needn't be frightened. I ain't goin' to say nothink to nobody. But I know all about it, mind, an' I could if I liked. You found the watch and it was a red 'un, on a bit o' ribbon. Well then, you went and took it 'ome, like a little fool. Wot does your father do? W'y 'e ups and lathers you with 'is belt, an' 'e keeps the watch 'isself. That's all you git for your pains. See- I know all about it.

DICKY

Oo toldjer?

WEECH

Ah!

(taps nose with finger)

I don't want much tellin'. It ain't much goes on, 'ereabout I don't know of. Never mind 'ow. P'raps I got a little bird as w'spers- p'raps I do it some other way. Any'ow, I know. It ain't no good any boy trying to do somethink unbeknownst to me, mindjer.

With his head askew his grins widens.

WEECH (CONT'D)

But it's awright bless yer. Nobody's none the wuss for me knowing about 'em... Well we was takin' about the watch, wasn't we? All you got after sich a lot o' trouble was a woppin' with a belt. That was too bad. Sympathetically After you findin' sich a nice watch- a red 'un an' all- you gits nothink for yerself but a beltin'.

(pauses)

(MORE)

WEECH (CONT'D)

Never mind , you'll do better next time. I'll take care o' that. I don't like to see a clever boy put upon. You go an' find another, or somethink else, anythink good an' then you bring it 'ere.

DICKY

I didn't find it. It was a click- I sneaked it.

WEECH

(dismayed)

Eh? What? A click? Wot's a click? Sneaked? Wot's that? I dunno nothink about no talk o' that sort. It's my belief it means somethink wrong- but I dunno- an' I don't want to.

(pauses)

'Ear that? Eh? Don't let me 'ave no more o' that, or you better not come near me again. If you find somethink, awright, you come to me and I'll give you somethink for it, if it's any good. It ain't no business o' anybody's if you find it, o' course, an' I don't want to know. But clicks an' sneaks them's Greek to me, an' I don't want to learn 'em. Unnerstand that? Nice talk to respectable people, with yer clicks an' sneaks!

Dicky blushes with guilt as he listens intently.

WEECH (CONT'D)

When you find anythink, jist like you found that watch, don't tell nobody, an' don't let nobody see it. Bring it 'ere quiet when they ain't no p'liceman in the street, an' come right through to the back o' shop, an' say, I come to clean the knives. Unnerstand? I come to clean the knives. There ain't no knives to clean- it's only a way o' tellin' me you got somethink without other people knowin'. An' then I'll give you somethink for it- money p'raps, or p'raps cake or wot not. Don't forgit I come to clean the knives. See?

DICKY

Yes.

WEECH

There's no end o' things to be found all over the place, an' a sharp boy like you can find 'em every day. If you don't find 'em, someone else will. There's plenty o' em about on the look out, an' you got jist as much right as them. Only mind!

(wags finger)

You can't do anythink without, an' if you say a word- if you say a word.

(bangs fist on table)

Something'll happen to you. Somethink bad.

(amiable again)

Now you jist go a find somethink. Look sharp about it, an' don't go an' git in trouble. The cawfy's a penny, an' the cake's a penny-ought prop'ly to be twopence you owe me, an' you better bring somethink an' pay it off quick. So go along.

With his hands deep inside his pockets, Dicky gets to his feet and trudges out of Mr Weech's shop door. The worried expression upon his pale little face bears the scars of yesterday's beating.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - DAY

Dicky hangs around the doorways and windows of the shops for an opportunity to pilfer something of value. One savvy SHOPKEEPER appears in the doorway.

SHOPKEEPER

Clear off!

As he makes off Dicky spots a NURSE GIRL. She leaves a perambulator at the front of another shop window before she enters.

He steps within reach of the perambulator and pulls back the skin rug from which a little fat leg sticks out and waves about.

The Nurse Girl steps out of the shop and grabs his arm before he makes haste without the skin rug.

A tall MAN uses his fingertips to grab him by the shoulder, but quick as a weasel he ducks under the Man's arm to avoid the catch from another.

He then scarpers under the belly of a standing horse and the head of another that trots across the platform of a tram car, behind the driver's back and through towards the Posties.

EXT. NEW JAGO STREET - DAY

Dicky slouches with disappointment as he crosses the street where he spots the new pastor - REVEREND HENRY STURT 40s. He is tall and has a stick, and wears a tall hat.

He looks right and left at the grimy habitations about him before a beady eyed POLICEMAN stops him to talk.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - DAY

Dicky enters and immediately spots his mother lying ragged upon the bed. Baby Looey lies beside her, sick and ailing and disregarded.

He attempts to lift her, but she cries even more as she rolls her head and raises her little hand vaguely towards it, with feverishly working fingers. He feels her head and she screams, for the hard, sharp lump at the side.

EXT. JAGO COURT - DAY

Upon leaving the room Dicky notices the opposite door flung wide open. He quietly steps forward and listens. He cautiously enters the well-furnished room with an alert ear.

INT. THE ROPERS HOME - DAY

He searches the room for something of value. The CLOCK on the mantelpiece attracts him. It is small, cheap and nickel plated, cylindrical of an American maker. He whips the clock under his big jacket and darts out. CUT TO:

INT. JAGO COURT STAIRWELL - DAY

Halfway down he meets with Bobby Roper ascending. Straight away he notices the bundle under Dicky's jacket and seizes his arm.

BOBBY ROPER
 (angrily)
 Where 'a' you bin? Bin in our room?
 What you got there?

DICKY
 Nothin' o' yours 'ump. Git out o'
 that.

Dicky pushes him aside.

DICKY (CONT'D)
 If you don't le' go I'll corpse ye!

The two Boys wrestle and wrangle down the stairs and along the street.

INT. JAGO COURT STAIRWELL - CONT'D

OLD FISHER descends. His grimy face wrinkled with deposits of mud. He stops at the open door belonging to the Ropers and takes a peep inside.

INT. THE ROPERS HOME - CONT'D

Encouraged, Old Fisher ventures within. He eyes the PINK VASES as he makes for a SMALL CHEST. He grabs the smaller articles and fills his pockets. The larger tools he grabs hold.

INT. JAGO COURT STAIRWELL - CONT'D

Old Fisher tramps up the stairs, then returns with BOB 30s and his MISSUS 30s. They burst inside the Ropers with added fervour.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - DAY

Dicky with a sharp elbow to the ribs finally manages to escape the clutches of hunchback boy Bobby Roper.

EXT. THE ROPERS HOME - CONT'D

Old Fisher, Bob and his Missus emerge with more ill gotten gains as Bobby Roper appears. He stands and sobs as he helplessly smears his face with his sleeve.

Old Fisher stumps past him with clumsy affectation of absent mindedness whilst Bob and his Missus just look down at him indifferently, before they vanish one floor above.

INT. MR. WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

Dicky enters and blows hot as Weech serves CUSTOMERS. He spots the bulge under Dicky's jacket.

WEECH

Ah, yus, Dicky. I was expecting you. Come through.

He leads him into the shop parlour and he produces the clock. Weech surveys with no great approval.

WEECH (CONT'D)

You'll 'ave to try an' do better than this, you know. But any'ow 'ere it is, sich as it is. It about clears auf wot you owe, I reckon. Want some dinner?

DICKY

Awright.

WEECH

Come out an' set down. I'll bring you somethink 'ot.

He sits down and Weech brings him a salty bloater, coffee and some burnt toast, and a cake supplement.

Weech swings back in his seat and watches him scoff it all down.

WEECH (CONT'D)

Done?

DICKY

Awright.

WEECH

Don't 'ang about 'ere then. Bloaters a penny, bread a a'penny, cawfy a penny, cake a penny. You'll owe thrippance a'penny now.

EXT. OLD JAGO - DAY

Riddled with guilt Dicky deviously takes the circuitous route home as he trudges through rear gardens and climbs through fences that belong to a row of houses that border Jago Court.

INT. JAGO COURT ENTRANCE - DAY

A commotion on the stairwell as Dicky looks up the stairs. He is met with urgency by Tommy Rann.

TOMMY RANN

Come on, 'ere's a barney.
They're a pitchin' into them
noo'uns - Roperses. Roperses sez
Fisherses is sneaked their things.
They are a gittin' of it!

From the stairwell the shouts, curses, bumps and sobs, and cries a plenty.

EXT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING - DAY

Full of people; Men and Women, Ranns and Learys together.

Beneath skirts and between legs Dicky and Tommy Rann catch a look at the vociferous furore that unfolds before their eyes as the Ropers struggle to close their door with those on the outside who skid with their feet forward.

Their attackers strike and maul. MR ROPER'S arm seized by one the baying group as Norah Walsh grabs the pale faced MRS ROPER by the hair and drags her head down.

The Reverend Henry Sturt barges through the crowd. He takes Norah Walsh by the shoulder and flings her back among the others.

He then turns around the Man who has hold of Mr Roper's arm. He lets go and backs off.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

(furiously)

What is this?! What is all this?!

He bends his frown on all the people about him as they shrink uneasily, their blank expressions fall away. And like a lion tamer he flings them back and commands them with his hard, intelligent eyes.

TOMMY RANN
 (whispers to Dicky)
 I've seen 'm before. He's a Parson.

DICKY
 'ow'd yer know that?

TOMMY RANN
 I can tell by 'is clothes.

DICKY
 O' yeah.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
 Understand this, now!
 (stamps his stick)
 This is not a sort of thing I will
 tolerate in my parish, nor in any
 other place I might meet it! Now go
 away and try to be ashamed of
 yourselves- go, all of you, I say
 to your own homes. I shall come
 there and talk to you again soon.
 Go along- Sam Cash. You've a broken
 head already. Take it away. I shall
 come and see you too.

Those still on the stairs melt away.

Dicky pushes his own door open and looks back at the
 hunchback Boy who appears from behind his swooning Mother and
 points at him.

BOBBY ROPER
 There y'are, that's 'im! 'E begun
 it! 'e took the clock!

Dicky immediately drops behind the door and shuts it quick.

As the landing and stairwell clears Reverend Henry Sturt
 removes his hat and enters the Ropers home.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - DAY

Dicky appears sheepish after he bolts the door and stands in
 front of his mother as she cleans the grease ridden
 mantelpiece with a cloth.

HANNAH
 They're y' are, Dicky. Comin'
 inderin' 'ere jest when I'm a
 puttin' things to rights.

Baby Looey lies on her back. She turns her little head feverishly from side to side while she clutches in her little hand a stump of bread and cries.

Dicky attempts to feed her, but her dry mouth rejects the tiny morsel in his hand. He feels her head and turns to his mother.

DICKY

Mother, I believe Looey's queer. I think she wants some med'cine.

Hannah shakes her head peevishly.

HANNAH

O, you an' Looey's a nuisance. A lot you care about me bein' queer. You an' yer father too, leavin' me alone like this, an' me feelin' ready to drop, an' got the room to do an' all. I wish you'd go away an' stop 'inderin' me like this.

He takes another look at baby Looey, then slouches out the room.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - DAY

Dicky peruses the perimeters of the Jago and steps into the main drag from the Posties.

He loiters, lurks and lounges about shop door fronts and gazes through windows on the prowl to steal something of value.

Shopkeepers on the look out for such a thing move him away.

EXT/INT. THE PERROTTS HOME - DAY

The Reverend Henry Sturt stands at the door and confronts Hannah as she stands with baby in arms.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

It has come to my attention that your boy stole a clock from the home of the Ropers.

HANNAH

There ain't no clock 'ere reverend.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
 May I come inside to check for
 myself?

HANNAH
 Dicky ain't 'ere. 'is gone out.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
 I still need to check.

HANNAH
 You can 'ave a look, but it ain't
 'ere.

She steps aside for him as he enters.

EXT. NORTON FOLGATE - DAY

Dicky trudges further up the street and spots a toy shop with carts and dolls, and hoops that dangle above, and wooden horses that guard two baskets by the door.

One basket contains spinning tops, whips, boats and woolly dogs. The other filled with shiny, round metal boxes, nobly decorated with shiny pictures. Each box has a little crank handle and plays music.

EXT/INT. TOY SHOP - DAY

Dicky pokes his head inside, as some tinkle from an instrument plays. A LADY with a small GIRL by her side queries the price of the pretty music box, as the Girl cranks the handle and it plays a tune.

The SHOP BOY notices Dicky's interest and steps outside to shove him away. Dicky saunters off with hands in pockets as he whistles a tune to himself.

The Shop Boy reenters the shop and makes a sale of purchase to the Lady and then hands the music box to the infant as they exit and walk up the street with Dicky's beady eyes upon them.

From across the street Dicky takes up position upon the steps of a boarded up shop for a perfect view of the toy shop.

The little Girl grips the music box in hand as she and her Mother trot off.

Dicky quickly jumps to his feet and follows them for a bit before he checks back towards the toy shop where he makes his move for the basket.

And as the bigger Shop Boy steps back inside, Dicky makes a grab for a music box which he throws under his jacket and then scarpers. The sharp eyed shop Boy reemerges and immediately gives chase.

SHOP BOY
THIEF! COME 'ERE!

STREETS.

Dicky goes full pelt with the Shop Boy in hot pursuit.

SHOP BOY (CONT'D)
Stop thief!

Through passages and alleyways Dicky cannot shake off the Shop Boy who makes ground. And others join the hunt to capture the boy as the shouts of "thief!" echo behind him.

Upon his last intake of breath, the Boy turns one last corner whilst rolling and tripping, and falls against a large, unkempt WOMAN whose clothes slip from her shoulders.

WOMAN
'Ere y' are, boy.

She flings him by his shoulders through a doorway to which she stands and blocks as his PURSUERS fly past.

EXT. JAGO COURT - DAY

The Ropers in the company of the Reverend Henry Sturt pack up their belongings, and with the help of a CHARITY WORKER load up a truck with furniture.

Dicky approaches from the street with his hand on the music box hidden in the lining of his jacket.

He walks up to the tail of the truck and when he gets a chance, bundles the music box beneath the exposed bedding on the back, then leaves it there.

As Bobby Roper is about to board the truck, his sharp eye lies upon him.

BOBBY ROPER
Look there! 'E put 'is 'and in the
truck an' took somethink!

DICKY
(backs away)
Ye lie! I ain't got nothink.
(MORE)

DICKY (CONT'D)
 (opens his jacket)
 Think I got yer bloomin' bedstead?

The overloaded truck begins to slowly move off as a brick is hurled from outside The Feathers public house. The brick just misses Mrs Roper's head and disturbs the rear wheel of the truck.

With a wobble the chest of drawers and bedstead shift and the MUSIC BOX comes to light.

The truck stops. Mr Roper jumps off and re-positions the chest of drawers and bedstead, then holds up the music box for the Reverend to see.

MR ROPER
 Look at that, sir. You'll witness I know nothing of it, won't you? It ain't mine, an' I've never seen it before. It's been put in for spite. To put a theft on us. When they come for it, you'll bear me out, won't you? That was the Perrott boy as was to do that. I'll be bound. When he was behind the truck.

The Reverend Henry Sturt nods his head in agreement.

INT. BAG OF NAILS P.H - NIGHT

Josh dances by the bar with a tankard of cider in hand whilst in close company with the MEN of the high mob.

NARRATOR V.O
Those of the High Mob are the flourishing practitioners in burglary, the mag, the mace, and the broads, with an outer fringe of such dippers- such pickpockets- as could dress well, welsbers, and snidesmen. These the grandees of rascality, live in places far from the Jago. Some drive in gigs and pony traps. But they find The Bag of Nails convenient and a secluded exchange and house of call, and here they meet, make appointments, design villainies and toss for sovereigns.

EXT. BAG OF NAILS - NIGHT

Spread out on the kerb, old man Beveridge smokes a blackened bit of clay pipe as Dicky attempts to step over his long legs.

Old man Beveridge hauls him to his side, then points his pipe in the direction of two well dressed MEN who loiter outside the drinking house.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE

See that man with the furs?

DICKY

(looks over)

What?

Mean 'im in the ice cream coat, smokin' a cigar? Yus.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE

And the other with the brimmy tall hat, and the red face, and umbrella?

DICKY

Yus.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE

What are they?

DICKY PERROTT

'Igh mob. Oaks. Toffs.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE

Right. Now, Dicky Perrott, you Jago whelp, look at them- look hard. Some day, if you're clever- cleverer than anyone in the Jago now- if you're only scoundrel enough, and brazen enough, and lucky enough- one of a thousand- maybe you'll be like them; bursting with high living, drunk when you like, red and pimply. There it is- that's your aim in life- there's your pattern. Learn to read and write. Learn all you can, learn cunning, spare nobody, and stop at nothing, and perhaps-

(points with pipe)

It's the best the world has for you, and that's the only way out, except gaol and the gallows.

(MORE)

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE (CONT'D)
 So do your devilmost, or God help
 you, Dicky Perrott- Though he
 won't, for the Jago's got you.

INT. THE PERROTTS HOME - DAY

Dicky sits next to baby Looey on the bed and wipes his head.
 He calls to his father.

DICKY
 Father, there's somethink wrong
 wit' Looey.

JOSH
 Blimey!

Josh picks up the baby and carries her out with Dicky at his
 heels.

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY

The STUDENT DISPENSER takes a look at the baby's eyes as she
 wails, before he makes up some powder.

STUDENT DISPENSER
 This'll keep her quiet for now. But
 she needs milk you can pick up from
 the chandlers when you leave.

JOSH
 Right.

Dicky grabs baby Looey and they exit with the powder.

EXT. MR. WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

Dicky passes the coffee shop as Weech steps outside and calls
 him back with a sad rebuke in his voice tone.

WEECH
 Dicky Perrott, come 'ere. Come 'ere
 Dicky Perrott.

He shakes his head solemnly as Dicky slouches up.

WEECH (CONT'D)
 What was that you found the other
 day, an' didn't bring to me?

DICKY

(withdraws a step)
Nuffin'.

WEECH

It's no good you tellin' me that,
Dicky Perrott, when I know better.
You know very well you can't
pervert me knowin'.

He searches Dicky's face, but he shifts his own gaze.

WEECH (CONT'D)

You're a wicked an' ungrateful
'ound, an' 've a good mind to tel a
p'liceman to find out where you got
that clock.

(pauses)

Come 'ere now- don't you try
runnin' away. Wot! After me a
takin' you in when you was 'ungry,
an' givin' you cawfy an' cake, an'
good advice like a father, an' a
bloater an' all, an' you owin' me
thrippance 'a'peny besides, then
you goes an'-an' takes your
findin's somewhere else.

(pauses)

Now don't you go an' add on a
wicked lie to your sinful
ungratefulness, wotever you do.
That's wuss an' I alwis know.
Dontcha know the little 'ymn?

(sings)

An 'im as does one fault at fust
an' lies to 'ide it, it makes it
two.

(pauses)

It's bad enough to be ungrateful to
me as is bin so kind to you, an'
it's worse to break the fust
commandment. If the bloater don't
infloence you, the 'oly 'ymn
ought. 'ow would you like me to go
an' ask yer father for that
thrippance 'a' peny you owe me?
That's wot I'll 'ave to do if you
don't mind. To find somethink an'
pay it at once, an' then I won't. I
won't be 'ard on you, if you'll be
a good boy. But don't git playin'
no more tricks- cos I'll know all
about 'em. Now go and find
somethink quick.

Dicky runs towards the Posties.

EXT. PARIS CHURCH STABLE - SUNDAY MORNING

Reverend Henry Sturt preaches to a small crowd of PARISHIONERS in an alley.

NARRATOR V.O

This is the morning of importance, a time of excitement in the Jago. The fight between Billy Leary and Josh Perrott is about to come off in Jago Court. The assurance that there is money is a sovereign liniment for Billy Leary's bruises. They are bruises and he hastens to come by this money, least it melts by caprice of his backers, or the backers themselves fall at unlucky odds with the police. Billy Leary makes little of Josh Perrott; his hardness and known fighting power not withstanding, since there is a full stone and half between their weights. And Billy has four, or five inches better in height, and a commensurate advantage in reach? And his own hardness is well proved enough.

EXT. THE POSTIES - MORNING

A clique of HIGH MOBSMEN swagger in check suits and billycocks, gold chains and lumpy rings as they head towards Jago Court.

INT/EXT. JAGO COURT - MORNING

In his excitement Dicky flies down the stairwell and out onto the street.

His POV: Eight to ten High Mobsmen approach.

BACK TO SCENE

Dicky tears back up the stairwell.

INT. THE PERROTTS HOME - MORNING

Dicky gasps.

DICKY

'Ere they are, father. 'ere they are. They're comin' down the street, father.

He dances in a frenzy about the room and the landing.

JERRY GULLEN and Kiddo Cook enter and Dicky quietens.

KIDDO COOK

It's time, Josh.

Josh gets to his feet and drags off his spotted coat and waistcoat and flings them on the bed, before he is helped out of his ill-mended blue shirt.

He gives a hitch to his trouser band and tightens his belt. He is ready.

He turns to his wife as she clutches baby Looley in her arms.

JOSH

(grins)

Ta-ta ol' girl. Back agin soon.

KIDDO COOK

(also grins)

With a bob or two for ye.

HANNAH

Don't, Josh, don't. Good gawd, Josh. I wish you wouldn't.

He immediately turns his back on her and exits.

DICKY

Good luck, father. Go it!

Hannah leans over baby Looley and sobs.

HANNAH

I wish I was dead.

Dicky rushes over to the window, the sash line held up with a stick.

DICKY

Aincher goin' to look, Mother?
Wontcha 'old up Looley?

She doesn't look up, instead looks down at the baby.

At the window, Dicky Perrott attempts to readjust the stick as the sash-line comes down upon his head with a thump.

DICKY (CONT'D)
 (rubs head)
 OUCH!

He realigns the stick before he leans out of the window and clings to the broken sill.

His POV: The Courtyard fuller than ever. A scuffle persists in one corner. High Mobsmen stand against the back fences.

On Cocko Harnwell's doorstep, Billy Leary sits and waits, his head just visible because of the press around him.

A close GROUP appears in the archway and pushes into the crowd, which gives way at its touch. Josh cropped hair and bare shoulders marks the centre of the group.

Another group moves out from Cocko Harnwell's doorstep, with Billy Leary. His tall bulk shines pink and hairy.

DICKY O.S CONT'D
 (excitedly)
'E's in the court, Mother.

The High Mobsmen move up towards the middle of the court, and some from small groups push back the crowd. In the centre a cobbled area five or six yards across.

All around it a bustling crowd packed in tight. Those at the back stand on sills and climb fences. Every window a clump of heads.

The Women yell savagely or cheerily down and across as the two groups emerge at the press and each side of the square.

Josh and Billy Leary stand in front of each other with their SECONDS. A High Mobsmen turns about his fellows.

HIGH MOBSMAN
 Any more 'fore they begin? Three to
 one on the big 'un- three to one!
 (looks about)
 'Ere, I'll give fours- fours to one
 on Leary! Fourer one! Fourer one!

A shake of the heads as Josh and Billy Leary step out and begin to spar.

DICKY O.S
They're a sparrin', Mother.

The Men rush together and Josh is forced back by weight and Billy Leary's great fists with left and right smack shots to his face that leaves no marks on Josh leathery skin.

Josh fights for the body as he drives his knuckles into Billy Leary's ribcage with force that jerks a thick grunt from his lips with each blow.

A roar from the press encourages the Men to go forward.

DICKY O.S (CONT'D)

Go for it, Father! Fa-ther! Fa-ther!

The Men in hold sway this way and that over uneven stones as blood runs copiously from Billy Leary's nose over his mouth and chin.

Josh spits away a tooth over Billy Leary's shoulder. They clip and haul as they to and fro, each striving to gain a foothold over the other, before Josh stumbles over a hole and tumbles with Billy Leary on top of him.

Cheers and yells rent the air as both men are dragged to their own sides by their Seconds.

Next round: The two Men rush out again into a tangled knot, before Josh drives left and right on the mark to spoil Billy Leary's wind, then gets back. Billy Leary comes back after gasping and blowing, and Josh feigns a lead and brings Leary round on his heel and off again in chase.

Josh meets him and once again drives at his ribs, then moves away. Billy Leary's wind going fast as his Partisans howl savagely at Josh.

HIGH MOBSMAN

I'll take that four-to-one!

TOSSER

I'll take a quid on Perrott!

HIGH MOBSMAN

Not with me, you won't! Evens if you like?

TOSSER

Done, at evens! A quid!

Josh meets with Billy Leary at full dash, himself puffing and blowing. A heavy blow to his head as he continues to strike Billy Leary's ribs.

Both men grunt and gasp as they go at it.

BACK TO SCENE

At the window, Dicky shadow punches and kicks the air with excitement.

DICKY

Father's 'it 'im on the jore agi'n.
's eyes a bungin' up. Go it,
father!, bash 'i-i-i-m! Father's
landin' 'im- e -

His Mother creeps up to the window and looks out.

POV: The Jago mob sways and bellows about the shifting edge of an open path in the midst of where her husband and Billy Leary, bruise, bloody and gasping fight and batter infuriously.

BACK TO SCENE

She creeps back to the bed and leans over baby Looey's unclean little frock, till a fit of tense shuddering befalls the child and she looks up again.

Dicky's POV: The Men give knock for knock, Billy Leary winces from another body blow, swings his right desperately upon Josh Perrott's ear and knocks him down.

Josh is quickly up again to the exulting shouts of Billy Leary's camp. Kiddo Cook brings him back to his corner. He bears a wide grin on his face.

DICKY O,S CONT'D

*Father's awright, Mother. I see 'im
laughin'. And 'is smashed Leary's
nose all over 'is face.*

Out again and Josh active and daring, while Billy Leary cautious and stiff. Josh rushes in and strikes at his tender ribs once more as he takes two blows callously on his head and sends his left at the nose with a smack.

Billy Leary rushes at him like a raging bull and Josh is driven and battered back without response. He manages to duck and slip away, then come again, fresh and vicious flings his corneous fists hard and lasting like a bag of bullets.

Josh suddenly twists his ankle on a hole beneath him and falls into Billy Leary's arms. Like a flash his neck clips inside the big man's left arm as Leary pounds the imprisoned head with his clenched fist.

The crowd whoop and yell as Kiddo Cook looks on distracted and dismayed as Billy Leary hammers his face to a pulp, before Josh's right hand shoots up from behind and over Billy Leary's shoulder and grips him at the chin, with slow tight muscle he forces Leary back over his bent knee.

Billy Leary swings, impotent as he struggles. Then with an extra wrench from Josh, up comes Billy Leary's feet from the ground, higher and higher, until Josh flings him heavily over, heels up and drops him on his weight.

A roar from the Ranns as Josh sits on Kiddo Cook's knee and takes a drink from a bottle.

Billy Leary lies like a man fallen from a rooftop. His Seconds turn him on his back and drag him to his corner where he lies limp and senseless with a cut to the back of his head.

The High Mobsman checks his watch and times him out.

HIGH MOBSMAN

Time!

The crowd howls and dances as Josh stands and raises his arms victoriously as he is smacked on the back and offered more drinks from his supporters.

BACK TO SCENE

Dicky spins back from the window laughing. In a flush he runs down the stairs.

Hannah sighs her relief. She lies the baby on the bed and looks down from the vacated window.

Her POV: Her husband among the jubilant crowd, looks up and beckons her. He points to his bare shoulders.

BACK TO SCENE

Hannah grins and grabs his shirt, waistcoat and coat and hurries down the stairs.

KIDDO COOK

(sings)

Three cheers for the missis!

Hannah bears a huge grin as she enters the press.

KIDDO COOK (CONT'D)

I said 'e'd 'ave a bob or two for you, didn't I?

Hannah smiles at him as she joins her husband. She quickly hauled towards Mother Gapp's encircled by a jubilant crowd.

INT. MOTHER GAPP'S - DAY

Hannah sits proudly with a drink by Josh's side when Dicky enters at a rush. Josh feels his pockets and flicks him a penny.

He plucks at his Mother's arm.

DICKY

Mother, Pigeony Poll's at 'ome
nussin' Looey. She told me to tell
you to come at once.

She immediately gets to her feet, mystified. She exits with Dicky at her heels.

INT. PERROTTS HOME - DAY

Pigeony Poll sits by the window with the baby in her arms - a pale misgiving in her dull expression.

Hannah and Dicky enter at a rush when Pigeony Poll quickly gets to her feet.

PIGEONY POLL

I-I come in, Mrs Perrott, mum. I
come in because I see you goin'
out, and I thought the baby'd be
alone. She's 'ad a sort o' fit- all
stiff an' blue in the face, and
grindin' 'er little mouth. She's a
left auf now-but I-I dunno what to
make of 'er. She's so-so...

Hannah stares blankly and lifts the baby whose arms drop and hang. The wizenage gone from her face, and the lids down on her strained eyes. Her pale lips lie in ease of the old pinching- parted in a smile.

Hannah's chin drops.

HANNAH

(bemused)

Lor.

She sits on the bed with the baby in her arms.

Pigeony Poll croaks as she creeps away from the room with her face bowed in the bend of her arm like a weeping schoolboy.

Dicky just stares, confounded as Josh comes in and gazes stupidly with his mouth open. He tiptoes towards the bed.

Kiddo Cook enters and snatches the baby from his mother and exits in a rush.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

Baby Looey's corpse lies on a bed. Dicky lies spread over her and sobs with his arms outstretched - a soak of muddy tears.

DICKY

O' Looey, Looey. Can't you 'ear?
Won't you never come to me no more?

EXT. LUCK ROW - NIGHT

The Reverend Henry Sturt walks along the pavement. He hears a raucous chant that comes from within Mother Gapp's public house.

VOICES

*Six bloomin' long munse in a
prison. Six more bloomin' munse I
must stay, for meetin' a bloke in
our alley, an takin' 'is uxter
away! Toora-li-Toora-li-looral.
Toora-li-toora-li-lay. A coshin' a
bloke in our alley, an takin' 'is
uxter away.*

DISSOLVE TO

FOUR YEARS LATER

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

Three POLICEMEN on the heels of a MARAUDER makes for the archway that leads to Jago Court.

Two of the Policemen stop at the archway and give up the chase while the third, younger of the three dives straight through in pursuit of the Marauder.

EXT. JAGO COURT - NIGHT

The Marauder dives into an open door to his right and out into a backyard. The gutsy Policeman flies over low fences and through other houses, until he can chase no more and the Marauder disappears into the black.

The young Policeman gasps for air as he trounces back through the narrow passage where a FIRE GRATE is adroitly dropped from a window and lies him flat out with a bleed to his head.

The remaining two Constables cautiously drag him to his feet and away from the Jago.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The Reverend Henry Sturt steps out of a solicitors office. He bears a smile of satisfaction as he walks on.

NARRATOR V.O

There is much talk about the Jago being demolished. Many think it's a shame that so much money destined for the benefit of the Jago should go on bricks and mortar, instead of being distributed among themselves. It is also felt that a social danger if Jago Court should be extinguished. What would become of the Jago without Jago Court? Where will Sunday mornings be spent? Where will the fights take place? And where will residents pitch and toss? The buildings have been sold as they stand to the house wreckers, and the house wreckers have devolved the work of getting the lodgers out.

INT. CHURCH SOCIAL CLUB - DAY

Under the watchful eye of the Reverend, RESIDENTS of the Jago indulge in activities, such as cards, bagatelle whilst some jump and swing from horizontal bars and others box one another within a contained environment.

EXT. LUCK ROW - DAY

The Reverend Henry Sturt tramps along the street and comes across Josh. He notices that he has an object hidden under the skirt of his coat. He claps a friendly hand upon his shoulder and smiles.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

How d'ye do, Josh?

Josh turns about during his awkwardness and hastens to shift the object as he taps his cap peak with his forefinger, before he shakes the Reverend's hand, and looks this way and that during his mingled gratification and embarrassment.

JOSH
Very well, thanks, Father.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
And what have you been doing just lately?

JOSH
Oo-odd jobs, Father.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)
(knowing grin)
Not quite, such odd jobs as usual,
I hope, Josh, eh?

He playfully twitches Josh's button-hole like he is a child.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)
I once heard of a very odd job in the Kingsland Road that got a fine young man six months holiday, eh, Josh?
(pauses)
He'd been out a few weeks from that six moon.

JOSH
(sheepishly)
Awright, Father, you do rub it into a bloke, no mistake.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
Ah, there's a deal of good in a blister sometimes, isn't there, Josh?
(pokes object)
What's this I see- a clock? Not another odd job, eh, Josh?

Josh gives up and reveals the nickel plated American clock to the Reverend.

JOSH
No s'elp me , Father, it's all straight- all fair trade, Father- jist a swop for somethink else, on me solemn davy. That's wot it is, Father- straight.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

Well I'm glad you thought to get it, Josh.

(pinches button-hole)

You never have been a puntual churchgoer, you know, Josh, and I'm glad you've made arrangements to improve. You'll have no excuse now, you know, and I shall expect you on Sunday morning- promptly. Don't forget - I shall be looking for you.

He shakes Josh's hand and moves on, leaving Josh to grin at the expectation of a visit to his parish.

FLASHBACK:

NARRATOR V.O

The clock was indeed an exchange, though not altogether an innocent one. Early this morning Josh had found himself scrambling out of Brick Lane, accompanied by a parcel of nine pounds of tobacco, and extremely conscious of the hasty scrambling of several other people around the corner who had eyed and noted him, and were to head him off at the next street. There was only one place to get rid of the parcel and that was at Weech's- a muddy yard, abutted on Weech's back fence, and it is no uncommon thing for a Jago on the crook, hard pressed, to pitch his plunder over the fence with a whistle and double out into the crowd and call upon Aaron Weech for the purchase money as soon as an opportunity served.

INT. MR WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

WEECH hands out shillings singly into Josh's outstretched hand. He pauses after each as though it is his last. Josh gives him a deathly stare as he stands persistent and holds his ground, and after the fifth shilling drops into his palm, Weech stops altogether.

JOSH

More.

WEECH

Nah, I'm done. But I'll tell ye wot ye can 'ave.

He fetches a nickel plated American CLOCK. The same clock, stolen from the Ropers four years previously by his son Dicky.

WEECH (CONT'D)

'Ere, take it.

Josh, fain to accept, does so before he walks out with it stuck under his coat.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MAGISTRATES COURT - DAY

In the dock stands Dicky, plus two other BOYS from the Fats-a-running Gang.

MAGISTRATE

For your part in the robbery you will all receive six lashings from the bird rod. Take them down.

(pauses)

And if I shall see you in my court again, it will be double drubbings, do you hear me?

They nod in agreement.

INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM - DAY

Dicky yelps with each lash he suffers from the BIRD-ROD.

EXT. GREAT GOODS DEPOT - EARLY HOURS

Carts and vans go to and fro, laden with goods. Dicky keeps watch for any such vehicle unguarded at the tailboards.

His POV: A cart loaded with packages.

NARRATOR V.O

Four years since baby Looey lost her life. Dicky Perrott, a quick witted scout for the fat's a-running industry. And if one should cross Meakin Street via Luck Row he keeps his way among the courts ahead.

DICKY
 (shouts)
 Fats a-runnin'!

He waves his hand and the FATS A-RUNNING GANG scuttle from the alley behind him. They quickly seize the cart, then melt away inside the courts of the Jago.

The DRIVER attempts to give chase, but is quickly hindered from doing so as other hands distract him.

EXT. HOXTON STREET - DAY

Dicky stands among the Gang and is duly handed a few coffers shared out by Tommy Rann for his part in the hoist.

TOMMY RANN
 Split!

Dicky heads for the Posties.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - EVENING

Dicky, along with a large gang of LOAFERS, older than himself, sweep the streets and stop every Man, Woman, Child and make them empty their pockets.

A HOBBLEDYHOY snatches Dicky, but he manages to slip away through the gang.

He turns his attention to a smaller Gang of four BOYS who roll orange and nut seller OLD BIDDY FLYN. She is dressed in rags with a basket perched over her arm.

She screams and yells as they snatch her BROOCH and then grab her MONEY BAG tied around her waist with a piece of string, before they throw the empty BASKET back at her.

She staggers away as she rolls her head along the wall and sobs.

EXT. JAGO COURT PASSAGE - NIGHT

Dicky keeps watch from his position as he looks up and down the street.

His POV: The Loathers suck oranges with relish as they share the few coffers taken from Bidy Flyn.

EXT. LUCK ROW - NIGHT

A LAD 17, runs pell-mell with a quarter parcel clipped under his arm. He is collared by the Fats a-running Gang.

LAD
Stow it, Bill! The bloke's a-
comin'!

He is quickly rolled by half-a-dozen hands as they snatch the parcel and throw him over the flags.

The clatter of a LIGHT VAN comes rattling down the street, the HORSE gallops, the CARMAN lashes out and shouts..

CARMAN
STOP 'IM! STOP THIEF!

The Boys from the gang stop for a second and grin back at the pale faced Carman as he looks this way and that.

CARMAN (CONT'D)
A man's stole somethin' auf my van.
Where's 'e gawn?

A boy from the Gang shouts back.

BOY#1
No good, guv'nor. The ball's
stopped rollin'. You've lawst 'im.

CARMAN
My gawd. I'm done. There's two
quids worth of bacca- an' I on'y
got the job o' Monday. Bin out nine
munse!

BOY#2
Was it a parcel like 'ere?

He lifts a second PACKAGE over the tailboard.

CARMAN
Yus- put it down! Gawd! Wotcher up
to?

The Gang swarm over the van as they guffaw and fling out the load.

The Carman attempts to fight them off with his whip and catches one boy flush in the eye.

CARMAN (CONT'D)
'Ere- 'elp! 'Elp!

He climbs upon the van in a desperate attempt to save his load, before he is pushed off and then kicked about the head.

He lies unconscious on the floor while his boots are removed. They lift him onto the van with the tailboard raised, then one of the older BOYS leads the horse and the whole lot away.

EXT. THE JAGO - NIGHT

Cosh Carriers lurk on landings. On a step PIGEONY POLL sings hideously whilst drunk.

Four BOYS attempt to roll OLD MAN BEVERIDGE when he loiters up against a wall. He brings out his case-knife and swings wildly. He catches one Boy in the arm who runs off bleeding.

The others scatter like rats, before he stomps the streets in search of them.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Dicky and Tommy Rann sit and smoke tobacco from a pipe. Tommy Rann coughs relentlessly.

TOMMY RANN

This!

Dicky gets to his feet.

DICKY

Ah, I'm goin' 'ome.

He walks off and leaves Tommy Rann to finish the pipe.

INT. PARIS CHURCH STABLE - MORNING

Josh and Kiddo Cook stand among the congregation as it grows bigger by the minute with Men and Women from the Jago.

They join the Reverend Henry Sturt in song, a few hymns before he begins his sermon.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

I see we are much bigger this morning. And I welcome our new churchgoers with the warmth that our Lord provides for each and everyone of you.

(clears throat)

(MORE)

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)

Now, I know that most of you already know we are in the process of building a new site for our church. With some funding from private enterprise and with some of my own money we are now able to go ahead.

(pauses)

The houses on this site will obviously have to be destroyed, but tenants will be given good notice before that happens. In the meantime you must continue to pay your rent, though most of the amount will be reduced.

EXT. PARIS CHURCH STABLE - DAY

Josh and Kiddo Cooke walk along the street bearing a grin at one another.

KIDDO COOK

(nudges Josh)

A fine voice you have Josh Perrott.

JOSH

(nudges back)

Get auf! I saw you too.

Behind them the Reverend Henry Sturt looks on and smiles.

EXT EDGE LANE - NIGHT

Old foes Josh and Billy Leary stand guard at a bonfire just inside the boardings that surround the Jago.

EXT. JAGO COURT - DAY

The POLICE hold the area in force and escort gangs of MEN with their tumbrils.

The Reverend Henry Sturt appears and spots Dicky. He guards a small heap in the weaving of rush bags. A BABY lies on top of it.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

That's right, Dicky Perrott, my boy.

Dicky looks happy and flushed.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)
Rush bags, eh?

He hands Dicky another rush bag from the heap.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)
And whose are they?

DICKY PERROTT
Missis Bates, Father.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
Would Dicky Perrott like to work
every day and earn wages?

DICKY
Yus, I would, Father.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
Well then, you come to my room for
tea tomorrow and we'll see what we
can do.

The wreckers tear down the foul old houses and leave a cloud
of dust where Jago Court once stood.

EXT/INT. MR. GRINDER'S SHOP - DAY

Dicky wears a soiled cut down apron as he wipes clean MR
GRINDER'S pots and kettles in an eager agony to sell
something.

Kiddo Cook passes and gives him a secret wink. Dicky smiles
back at him to acknowledge the fact.

Old Man Beveridge, his tatters flying and "Hard Up" chalked
on his tall hat. He stops abruptly at the sight of Dicky at
his new job.

Hunchback Bobby Fisher walks past and sneers his disapproval.

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE
Dicky Perrott? Hum- hum - hey?

Short, stout Italian, MR GRINDER appears in the shop door.

MR GRINDER
Dicky?

DICKY
Yus, Mr. Grinder?

MR GRINDER

I need you to run an errand for me.

DICKY

Yus, Mr Grinder.

MR GRINDER

Come with me.

He follows Mr Grinder back inside the shop, then exits with a small trolley loaded with a parcel that he begins to wheel down the street.

The whiskered Weech appears at the shop door bearing a knowing smirk as he looks down at Mr Grinders neck tie.

WEECH

Good mornin', Mr Grinder, good mornin', sir.

He strokes his left palm with his right fist and nods pleasantly.

WEECH (CONT'D)

I'm in business meself, over in Meakin Street- name of Weech- p'raps you know the shop? I just 'opped over to ask...

Mr Grinder leads him into the shop.

WEECH (CONT'D)

To ask if it's correct you're awferrin' brass roasting-jacks at a shillin' each?

MR GRINDER

(aback)

Brass roasting-jacks at a shillin'? Why, no!

Weech eyes the JAM and PICKLE JARS on the counter.

WEECH

Nor yut seven-poun' jars o' jam and pickles at sixpence?

MR GRINDER

No!

WEECH

Nor doormats at fourpence?

MR GRINDER
 Fourpence? Cert'nly not!

Weech's face falls into a blank complexity as he paws his ear with a doubtful, absent murmur.

WEECH
 Well I'm sure 'e said fourpence,
 an' sixpence for pickles, an' bring
 round after the shop was shut.
 (briskly)
 But there, there's no 'arm done,
 an' no doubt it's a mistake.

He turns his back to leave. Mr Grinder restrains him.

MR GRINDER
 Look 'ere, I want to know about
 this. Wotja mean? Oo said fourpence
 for doormats?

WEECH
 O' I expect it's jest a little
 mistake, that's all, an' I don't
 want to git nobody into trouble.

MR GRINDER
 Trouble? Nice trouble I'd be in if
 I sold brass smoke-jacks for a bob!
 There's somethink 'ere as I ought
 to know about. Tell me about it
 straight.

WEECH
 Yus, p'raps I better. I can feel
 for you, Mr Grinder, 'avin' a
 feelin' 'art an' bein' in business
 meself. Where's your boy?

MR GRINDER
 Gawn out.

WEECH
 Comin' back soon?

MR GRINDER
 Not yut. Come in the back parlour.

He follows Mr Grinder through to the back.

PARLOUR

WEECH

Your boy importuned me to buy goods at the prices I mentioned. To be delivered at night. But then agin, p'raps the boy, bein' new to the business 'ad mistaken the prices, an' was merely doin' 'is best to push 'is master's trade.

MR GRINDER

(gloomily)

No fear o' that.

(shakes head)

Not the least fear o' that. 'E knows the cheapest doormats I got's one and six- I 'eard 'im tell customers so outside a dozen times, an' anyone can see the smoke-jacks are ticketed five an' nine.

(pauses)

I thought that boy was too eager an' willin' to be quite genavin'.

WEECH

Yup.

MR GRINDER

'E ain't 'ad me yut, that's one comfort. If anythink'ud bin gawn, I'd 'a' missed it. But out 'e goes as soon as soon as 'e comes back, you can take yer davy on that.

WEECH

Ah, It's fearful the wickedness there is about ain't it? It's enough to break ye 'art. Sich a neig'b'ood an' all! Wy, If it was known as I would give you this 'ere little friendly information, bein' in business meself an' knowin' wot it is, my life wouldn't be safe 'ow'ver. It wouldn't be, Mr Grinder.

MR GRINDER

Wouldn't it? You mean them in the Jago, I s'pose.

WEECH

Yus. There a awful lot, Mr Grinder- you've no idea.

(MORE)

WEECH (CONT'D)

The father o' this 'ere boy as I've warned you against 'e's in with a desprit gang, an' they'd murder me if they thought I'd come an' told you honest, w'en you might be 'a' bin robbed, as is my nature to. They would indeed. So o' course you won't say wot I toldja, nor 'oo give you this 'ere honourable friendly warnin'- not to nobody.

MR GRINDER

That's awright. I won't let on. But out 'e goes promp. I'm obligè to ye, Mr Weech.' Er-r wot'll ye take?

WEECH

Nothink at all, Mr Grinder. Thanks all the same. I never touch nothink, an' I'm glad to- to do my moral job, so to speak, as comes in my way. Scatter seeds o' kindness you know, as the psalm says, Mr Grinder. Your boy ain't back is he?

MR GRINDER

Not yut.

Weech peers cautiously about himself then goes on his way.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The inclement weather rains down upon the smiling Dicky as he pulls the unladen trolley back to Mr Grinders shop.

INT. MR GRINDERS OIL SHOP - CONT'D

Dicky enters and empties his pockets, then lies the loose change down upon the counter where Mr Grinder stands with a cold look and tightened fists.

DICKY

Walker's 'is paid, an' Wilkins 'is paid. Two an' ten an' four an' three's seven an' a penny.

Mr Grinder looks sourly and counts the money. He pitches the old penny in the till and shakes the rest of the coins in his closed hand, still staring moodily into the boy's face.

MR GRINDER

It's three an' six a week you come
're at.

DICKY

Yus, sir.

MR GRINDER

Three an' six a week an' yer tea.

Dicky stands innocently with his hands tucked beneath his apron.

MR GRINDER (CONT'D)

So as if I found out about anythink
about- say brass roastin'-jacks for
instance- I could give ye yer three
an' six an star y'auf unless I did
somethink wuss.

Dicky looks down at the floor disappointedly.

MR GRINDER (CONT'D)

But s'posin' I didn't find out
anythink about- sat seven-pun jars
O' pickles, an' s'pose I wasn't
disposed to suspect anythink in
regard to- say doormats, then I
could either give ye a week's
notice or pay y'a week's money an'
clear ye out on the spot, without
no more trouble.

He drops the money from his right hand to his left.

MR GRINDER (CONT'D)

'Ere y' are. Two, three-and-sixes
is seven shillin's, an' you can git
yer tea at 'ome with yer dirty
little sister. Git out o' my shop!

Dicky closes his hand on the money and nervously stutters.

DICKY

W-w-wot for, sir? I ain't done
nothink.

MR GRINDER

No, an' you shan't do nothink,
that's more. Out ye go! If I see ye
near the place agin, I'll 'ave ye
locked up!

Dicky slinks to the door but turns back with tremulous lips.

DICKY
 Woncher gimme a chance, sir? S'elp
 me, I done me best. I-

Mr Grinder gives a short rush from behind the counter and Dicky flees.

EXT. JAGO STREETS - DAY

Dicky takes the dark turnings and hides himself in doorways. He glances down at the white apron still tied around his little waist.

He opens his wet hand and stares at the seven shillings pay as he kneels down and sobs uncontrollably.

He unties his apron and stuffs it under his jacket, then with reluctant feet drags himself towards the Old Jago.

INT. THE PERROTTS NEW HOME - DAY

Dicky hands his father the seven shillings given to him by Mr Grinder.

JOSH
 What's this, boy?

DICKY
 It's wot Mr Grinder gave me, then
 told me to git out o' 'is shop.

JOSH
 Right!

His father takes off his belt and whips the boy black and blue as he lies quietly and sobs on the floor. When his father finally stops, he gets up and runs out.

EXT. JAGO ROW - NIGHT

Dicky shuffles down the street. A hand comes on his shoulder.

PIGEONY POLL
 (hoarsely)
 Wot's the matter, Dicky?

He turns to see the mild, coarse face of her and notices she holds a cohesive lump of broken toffee which she pulls along with a glutinous piece of paper from her pocket.

PIGEONY POLL (CONT'D)

Gawn, 'ave a bit. Wot's the matter?

Dicky thrusts his hand away and flees.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Dicky wanders and stumbles into Jerry Gullens new abode where he comes across his confidant; Gullen's old donkey- Canary.

He lifts his nose from a small heap of straw dust and mouldy hay, swept into a corner. Dicky looks up at Gullen's window as he strokes Canary's neck and the tears roll down his cheeks.

DICKY

I wish I could be like yoo, Canary.
I wouldn't 'ave to git the belt.

EXT. MR GRINDERS SHOP - EVENING

Nearing closing time, Mr Grinder carries his merchandise in from the pavement. Dicky watches him from the opposite side of the road.

His POV: Mr Grinder with a long pole unhooks a cluster of pails and watering-pots- the doormats he lets fall onto the flags while he carries in the pots and pails.

BACK TO SCENE

Dicky scuttles across the road and opens his knife as he runs. He goes around the back to where Mr Grinder's lock-up is kept, and once there he cuts the string that holds the MATS together.

He collects the thickest one and rolls it under his arm, then disappears down an alley behind the shop.

Mr Grinder appears and hooks his finger in the string among the mats and pulls up nothing. He stoops and notices the string cut.

He looks about suspiciously and flings the mats over and begins to count them.

He stands erect, then stares up and down, and across the street with his mouth wide open, before he makes short rushes left and right whilst scratching his head.

Finally he picks up the mats and takes them back inside, counting them as he does so.

EXT/INT. MR WEECH'S SHOP - EVENING

Weech pulls down his shutter into place.

DICKY O.S
(shouts)
Clean the knives!

Weech looks up knowingly as Dicky appears with the carpet rolled under his arm. He points his finger at the doormat.

WEECH
(aback)
Wot, that?

After a sharp look about the almost deserted street, he runs to Jago Row corner and looks down there, then rushes back and leads Dicky into the shop and closes the door.

WEECH (CONT'D)
(keenly)
Oo toldjer to bring that 'ere?

DICKY
(sullenly)
Told me? Nobody told me. Don'cher want it?

WEECH
Ow much did 'e tell ye t' ask for it?

DICKY
Tell me? Oo?

WEECH
You know. Ow much didjer say 'e said?

DICKY
(mystified)
Dunno wotcher mean.

Weech breaks into a loud laugh but with a keen eye still fixed upon the boy's face.

WEECH
Ah, It's a good joke, Dicky, ain't it?
(chuckles)
But you can't 'ave me ye know. Mr Grinder's a old friend o' mine, and I know 'is little larks.
(MORE)

WEECH (CONT'D)

What did 'e tell ye to do if I
wouldn't 'ave that doormat?

DICKY

Tell me? Wy 'e never told me
nothink. 'E gimme the sack this
afternoon, an' chuck me out.

WEECH

Then wotcher got ye apron on now
for?

Dicky looks down at his apron.

DICKY

Oh. I jist put it on agin- o'
purpose.

Weech grins again at looks at the doormat.

WEECH

That's right, Dicky, never let ye
wits go a-ramblin'. A sharp boy
like you's a lot too good for a
shop-boy, slavin' away from mornin'
till night, an' treated ungrateful.
Wot did 'e sack ye for?

DICKY

I dunno, took a fit in 'is 'ead, I
s'pose. Wotcher goin' to gimme for
this mat? It's a two an'three mat.

Weech's eyes focus on a piece of stale cake.

WEECH

Want somethink to eat doncher?

DICKY

(sulkily)

No I don't. I want money.

WEECH

Aweright. You ain't 'ad much to
drink an' eat 'ere for a long time,
though. But i'll do the 'an'some,
seein' you're bin treated
ungrateful by Grinder. 'Ere's
twopence.

Dicky resolute, holds onto the mat.

DICKY

Twopence ain't enough. I want
fourpence.

WEECH

Wot?! Fourpence? Wy, you're mad.
Take it away.

Dicky rolls the mat and heads towards the door.

WEECH (CONT'D)

'Ere. I'll make it thrippance,
seein' you've bin treated so bad.
Thrippance-an' a slice of cake.

DICKY

(doggedly)

I don't want no cake. I want
fourpence an' I won't take no less.

Weech gives in and slides his hands through his trouser
pocket and produces some loose change.

WEECH

Ah, well, jist for this once, then.
You'll 'ave to make it up next
time. Mindjer, it's only because
I'm sorry for ye bein' treated
ungrateful. Don't ye go and treat
me ungrateful, now.

Dicky pockets his pence and goes on his way. Weech chuckles
to himself as he carries the doormat out back.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - NIGHT

The little clock on the mantle ticks away busily during the
silence as Dicky lies awake in bed with his eyes closed. He
overhears Hannah talking to his father.

HANNAH

Wot if somebody earwigged Mr
Grinder and told a tale that
brought about Dicky's dismissal?
Somebody who p'raps wanted the
situation for somebody else.

Josh just grunts a reply to his wife. Dicky's face taut with
anger.

EXT/INT. MOTHER GAPP'S P.H - NIGHT

BOBBY RANN and BILLY LEARY drink affably from the same pot while NORAH WALSH and SALLY GREEN chat amicably"

Inside the bar Jago and Dove Laners mingle and lend pinches of tobacco.

Outside the entrance Dicky squeezes his frame through the legs and skirts that occupy the bar and takes up a position in the club room.

NARRATOR V.O

The feud between the Jago and Dove Lane is eternal, just as that between the Ranns and the Learys, but like the Rann and Leary feud, it has its paroxysm and its intervals. And in both cases the close of a paroxysm is signalled by a great show of amity between the factions. Dove Laners had been heavily thrashed; their benjamins and kicksies had been impounded in Meakin Street. Dove Lane itself had been swept end to end by the victorious Jago, and the populations of both were dotted thickly with bandaged heads. There is little reason left for fighting. So peace declared and Dove Laners invited to Mother Gapps for a sing-song, mainly because of the large club room behind the bar, set at the back and named "The Club Room" which had been made into two rooms by cutting away the crazy partitions from the crazy walls.

In a succession of large groups Dove Laners begin to squeeze and push through Mother Gapps doors.

Their caps pulled down to their ears, their hands in their pockets, their shoulders humped, and their jackets buttoned tight.

They lurch into the bar and grin at the greetings that meet them, but with less assumption of cordiality.

CLUB ROOM

Josh, along with four other stewards stand at the door and greet Dove Laners with a smile.

But with barely room to move a shoulder they revert back inside the room before the crush of bodies begin to fill the whole place. .

A PIANIST begins to play and the singing commences. The club room now filled to the brim with no space left to either stand or sit.

Still they keep coming and enter in their droves as the tobacco smoke thickens and all that can be seen are bandaged heads within the walls that look fit to burst.

PUD PALMER, one of the reception committee sings and is accompanied by his chorus, a step dance, and all his company stamp their feet in sympathy as they sing along with raised voices.

CHORUS

She's a fighter, she's a biter,
she's a swearer, she's a teaser.
The gonophs down aar alley they
calls 'er Rorty Sal; but as I'm a
pertikiler sort o' bloke, I calls
'er Rorty Sairer, I'm goin'-

CRACK! - CRASH!

The club room floor gives way and Dicky is flung about as he clings to COCKO HARNWELL'S coat tails before he is trampled to death.

The rent of howls from Men and women rush like swimmers through a breaker as the sound of smashing glass erupts about them.

A struggling mob of Jago and Dove Laners fall five feet onto the barrels in the cellar, panic stricken and jumbled with tables, pots, wooden forms, lit pipes, and splintered joinery.

DOVE LANER

(bawls)
It's a trap!

Instantly Jago and Dove Laners go at it as a vicious brawl ensues within the hole, and for those who manage to climb out.

Billy Leary is laid out with a piece of flooring that covers his body while Josh and Pud Palmer batter Dove Laners with quart pots.

From inside the bar a voice is heard shouting.

DOVE LANER (CONT'D)
Dove Laners are exterminating the
Jagos!

A torrent of Jago bursts through the doors and pour through the bar, over to the club room threshold into the confusion below.

Dicky, frightened and bruised grabs a post and climbs up onto the bar counter as blackened Mother Gapp dances amid broken pots and glass while she screams inaudibly.

Dicky stumbles along the counter and climbs over the broken end of a partition where he falls into the arms of Kiddo Cook, who comes in with the rush.

KIDDO COOK
(yells)
Put the boy out!

He turns and heaves Dicky over heads and shoulders behind him. Somebody catches Dicky by his leg and arm as his head is smashed against the door post, before he comes down on the flags with a crash.

A crowd beats against the front of Mother Gapp's as reinforcements come from everywhere-

RALLYING CRY
Jago! Jago! 'old tight!

Dicky gets to his feet, shaken and sore. He enters the back passage to Mother Gapp's and climbs through the fence and into the back yard.

He looks through a door to the club room and down into the cellar where a pit of writhing forms, and a din that rises louder than ever.

A short figure stands black against the light, and holds by the doorpost. BOBBY ROPER looks down at the riot when Dicky springs upon him, raging in his remembrance.

He pulls him by the arm and strikes at him furiously, savagely striking him again, and again.

Bobby Roper trips over a broken floorboard and pitches headlong into the cellar where he strikes a barrel and rolls over between two more, then out cold.

Dicky races away from the scene and back towards the Jago.

STREETS

His POV: sporadic fighting between Jago and Dove Laners - a free for all.

EXT/INT. MOTHER GAPP'S - NIGHT

Exhausted, Josh exits the bar and limps home with a sprained ankle. The Reverend Henry Sturt enters and rushes towards the club room.

He looks down at the aftermath and climbs down into the cellar. He lifts Bobby Roper's hunched frame over his shoulder and out of the hole, then carries him home.

INT. THE PERROTT'S NEW HOME - DAY

Josh lies on the bed with a swollen ankle while his wife Hannah tends to their two year old baby EM. Josh opens his eyes and lifts his head to look around.

JOSH
Dicky, Come 'ere!

Dicky stiffly approaches his father with caution.

DICKY
Yes, Father.

JOSH
Get out an' bring some money 'ome.
We're skint.
(pauses)
We've got nothink to eat. The baby
needs to eat.

DICKY
Yes, Father.

Dicky picks up his jacket and trounces out.

EXT. ST. PAULS CATHEDRAL - DAY

Well-dressed CROWDS gather in groups. On the prowl for a click, Dicky recognises a POGUE HUNTER from the High Mob who deals in purses. He watches this Man's movements closely.

POV: In the thick of the crowd the Pogue Hunter stands behind one LADY after another.

He bends his arm to slip something into his own pocket, then moves to another part of the Crowd where MEN are standing.

He stealthily lets a piece of CRUMPLED NEWSPAPER drop, then leaves the crowd altogether.

BACK TO SCENE

Dicky wriggles towards the crumpled piece of newspaper and slips it under his jacket, then clears away.

BACK STREET

Dicky opens the crumpled newspaper where a couple of PURSES were to be found: One with a silver clasp, the other quite new.

He opens the quite new purse and examines the shininess of the lining. He perceives a cunning pocket at the back, lying flat against the main integument- and in it a SOVEREIGN!

Dicky gulps with delight at the sight before his eyes. The Pogue Hunter who had missed by sense of touch the flat pocket in the back of the purse. He skips back to the Jago with a huge smile and a clenched fist.

EXT. KINGSLAND RAILWAY STATION - DAY

With the aid of a stick Josh dressed in a peak cap and buttoned up jacket waits his turn to purchase a ticket as he stands at the ticket office.

JOSH
(steps forward)
Canonbury.

He pays for his ticket and waits for the train.

Beat.

He steps off the train and heads out of the station.

EXT. CANONBURY STREETS - DAY

He tramps through one quiet street after another and inconspicuously peers over garden walls and inspects stable yards and kitchens as he searches for items to steal.

He peeps in hope at all the gates and gardens in hope. He spots an empty horse and cart and deliberates before he continues dispirited and angry through the streets and out onto the main thoroughfare.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - EVENING

Josh sits with a pint of cider and a board of bread and cheese.

His POV: A glass of silver money on a shelf behind the bar.

BACK TO SCENE

He shakes his head at the possibility as he downs another gulp of cider before he gets up and leaves.

EXT. CORNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh heads back towards the station when his eyes fall upon a ladder reared nearly upright against the back wall.

He lingers there in trepidation of what lies beyond the second floor window it reaches, whereupon the top sash is a little open.

He buries his stick under his jacket up to the collar and gingerly climbs the ladder, until he reaches the second floor window.

He attempts to lift the pane from the bottom, but it is stiff, so he breaks the pane of glass with his stick, then lifts the sash and climbs into the darkened room.

BEDROOM

All is quiet inside the house, except for a ticking watch on a dressing table that distinctly catches his ear.

He feels for it and finds it with a chain that hangs from the bow.

The door is ajar and the landing is dark as he makes his way through the house.

DRAWING ROOM

A gross, pimply MAN in shirt sleeves and socks sits up on a sofa at the sound of the opened window higher in the house.

He takes a drink from a glass by his side and carefully listens.

STAIRWELL

The Man goes quietly and softly up the stairs.

Above, Josh comes out on the landing, illuminated by the light down the stairs. He tiptoes along the landing to take a look down, before he becomes aware of heavy breathing, and up behind the stair rails rises a fat head, followed by a fat trunk between white shirt sleeves.

Josh sinks into the shadow on the narrow landing as the Man's foot reaches the top stair. Josh springs with a straight left hander that takes him on the broad chin and sends him down the stairs in a heap, with a crash and a roar.

BEDROOM

Josh rushes back to the bedroom he entered through and quickly climbs out of the window and slides back down the ladder, then runs up the dark street with the sound of muffled roars and screams in his ears.

He runs every street and takes every corner before he falls into a walk. And when at a safe distance he stops and checks the watch beneath a street light. His delight, evident as he pumps his fist and grins to himself.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - MORNING

In the back room Josh nurses his swollen ankle with two wet cloths.

NARRATOR V.O

Josh Perrott's luck is worse than he thinks, for the gross pimply man he robbed last night is a High Mobsman- so very high a mobsman that it would be slander, and libel, and a very great expense to write him down a mobsman at all. He is, in fact, the King of the High Mobsman, spoken of among them as the Mogul. And after all this, to be robbed in his own house and knocked downstairs by a casual buster was an outrage that inflicted the Mogul with wrath infuriate. Because that was a sort of trouble that never seemed a possibility, to a person of his eminence, and because the angriest victim of dishonesty is a thief.

(pauses)

(MORE)

NARRATOR V.O (CONT'D)

However, Josh had got clean away, that was plain, and he'd taken the best watch and chain in the house, with the Mogul's initials stamped on the back. So that respectable sufferer had sent for the police and gave his attention to the alleviation of bumps and the washing away of blood.

(pauses)

With the police now on the look-out for a man with a large gold watch with the Mogul's monogram on the back, the word has also been passed by telegraph through underground channels, till every fence in London had been warned the stolen watch belonged to the Mogul.

Josh ties up his bootlaces and grabs the watch and chain with an excited eagerness not seen in him since the fight with Billy Leary.

With the watch firmly tucked away inside his inner pocket he takes the short walk to Hoxton.

NARRATOR V.O (CONT'D)

Josh, anxious to fence his plunder without delay. The watch seemed to be something especially good, and he determined to stand out for a price well above the usual figure, for sway of common thieves commanded such prices as did that of the High Mob. All of it was bought and sold on the simple system first called into being seventy years back, and more by the Prince of Fences Ikey Solomons. A silver watch would fetch six shillings, never more, and never less. A gold watch is worth twice as much- an uncommonly good one, a rich man's watch will bring as much as eighteen shillings if the thief were judge enough of its quality to venture the demand. This time Josh will resolve to put pressure on the fence and get something as near a sovereign as might be, and as to the chain so thick and heavy, he'll fight his best for the privilege of sale by weight.

INT. THE OLD CLOTHES SHOP - DAY

Josh enters and approaches the counter where COHEN the old bespectacled Jewish fence immediately looks up, suspicious of what has been brought before him.

COHEN
Vot is id?

He holds out his hand with a customary air of contempt for what is coming.

Josh places the watch in his hand and he brings it to his face and turns it over. He looks hard at Josh and again at the watch. He hands it hastily back as he holds it gingerly by the bow.

COHEN (CONT'D)
Don' vant dot, nod me, an' nod 'im,
I mean. No, no.

He turns away and waves his hand by way of contamination.

COHEN (CONT'D)
Take id away.

JOSH
Wot's the matter? Is it cos o' the
letters on the back? You can easy
send it to church, can't ye?

Cohen continues to wave away the suggestion.

COHEN
Take id away I tell you. I- e von't
'ave nodden to do vid it.

JOSH
Wot's the matter with the chain,
then?

Cohen walks to the back of the shop as he wags his hands desperately.

COHEN
Noddin' to do vid it- take id away-
nodden to do vid it.

Confounded, Josh stuffs his prize back in his pocket and exits.

INT. MOTHER GAPP'S - DAY

Workman pull down boards and restore partitions.

Mother Gapp stands at a distance as Josh Perrott shows her the watch. She shakes her head in refusal to even look at it.

MOTHER GAPP

Lor, Josh Perrott, wot 'a' ye bin up to now? Want to git me lagged now, do ye? Ain't satisfied with breakin' up the 'ouse an' ruinin' a pore widder that way. You git out, go on. I 'ad 'nough o' you!

INT. WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

Josh stands alongside a charmed Weech and shows him the watch.

WEECH

Dear me, it's a wonderful fine watch, Mr Perrott- a wonderful fine watch. An' a beautiful chain.

He stares at the monogram as he purrs.

WEECH (CONT'D)

It's reely a wonderful article. 'Ow they do git 'em up, to be sure! Cost a lot o' money too, I'll be bound. Might you be thinkin' o' sellin' it?

JOSH

Yus o' course. That's wot I brought it for.

WEECH

Ah, it's a lovely watch, Mr Perrott- a lov-erly watch, an' the chain matches it. But you mustn't be too 'ard on me. Shall we say four pound for the little lot?

JOSH

(doggedly)
Five.

WEECH

Five pound's a awful lot o' money, Mr Perrott.

(MORE)

WEECH (CONT'D)

You're too 'ard on me, reely I
'ardly know 'ow I can scrape it up.
But it's a beautiful little lot,
an' I won't 'aggle. But I ain't got
all that money in the 'ouse now. I
never keep so much money in the
'ouse- sich a neighb'r'ood, Mr
Perrott! Bring it 'round to-morrer
mornin' at eleven.

JOSH

Awright, I'll come. Five quid,
mind.

WEECH

Ah, yus. It's reely more than I
ought!

Josh exits carrying a huge grin.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - NIGHT

As a treat the family sit around a coal fire and for supper
they eat fish from oily paper.

EXT. MR WEECH'S SHOP - MORNING

Josh marches towards the shop with his cap pulled down and
his hands inside his buttoned up jacket pocket.

A plain clothes CONSTABLE taps him on the arm while another
comes up on the other side.

CONSTABLE#1

Mornin' Perrott. We've got a little
business with you at the station.

JOSH

(aback)
Me? Wot for?

CONSTABLE#2

Oh well. Come along, p'raps it
ain't anything- unless there's a
gold watch and chain on you from
Highbury. It's just a turnin' over.

JOSH

Awright. It's fair cop. I'll go
quiet.

CONSTABLE#2

That's right, Perrott, it ain't no
good playing the fool, you know.

They lead Josh past Weech's shop. He spots Weech's whiskered face and patch of shining scalp that peeps over the bloaters and plum cakes in the window.

He suddenly makes a dash for it and ducks, wrenching his arm free. He dashes over the threshold and sends Weech's whiskers and apron flying, as he gallops through the door and out to the back yard.

The Constables spring upon him and drag him out through the shop and out onto the street.

CONSTABLE#1

Wotcher mean?

CONSTABLE#2

Call that goin' quiet?

Caught in a double arm lock Josh's face pale white and contorted with rage.

JOSH

Awright.

(gritted teeth)

I ain't got nothin' agin you. I'll
go quiet.

EXT. CURTAIN ROAD - SAME DAY

Dicky prowls and eyes a CABINET MAKER at work on an unfinished office table outside of his shop.

When the Cabinet Maker steps back inside he pounces and pilfers his two-foot ruler then dashes down an alley at full pelt.

INT. WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

Weech looks oddly at the boy, but takes the two-foot ruler with alacrity and brings him a rasher of bacon, and a cake.

When Dicky finishes the cake, Weech shuffles around his pockets and hands him a penny. Dicky looks up with a surprising grin.

EXT. LUCK ROW - DAY

Dicky tramps along and is met by an eager Tommy Rann.

TOMMY RANN
Dicky, 'ave you 'eard?

DICKY
No. 'eard wot?

TOMMY RANN
Yer' ol' man's bin smugged.

DICKY
Wot?

TOMMY RANN
Ye. The story goes 'e was quietly walkin' along Meakin when up came Snuffy an' another split an' smugs 'im. Josh 'ad a go at Weech's door to cut 'is lucky out at the back, but was caught. That was smart, to get through Weech's and out to the courts, but it was a no go.

Dicky's chin drops before he runs off teary eyed.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - DAY

Hannah sits on the bed with Em in her arms as she laments. Dicky puts an arm around her and attempts to console her through his own tears.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Dicky rushes in and approaches the counter.

DICKY
Where's my father? You brought 'im 'ere this mornin'.

The STATION SERGEANT looks down at him and grins.

STATION SERGEANT
Josh Perrott's little'n are ye?

DICKY
Yus.

STATION SERGEANT
'e'll be brought up to-morrer
mornin'.

DICKY
Where?

STATION SERGEANT
North London Police Court.

Dicky flies out the door.

INT. NORTH LONDON POLICE COURT - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Josh is brought in. He lurches into the dock composedly.

Dicky, Hannah and some of the Jago look on from the gallery.

In the witness stand a CONSTABLE kisses the book then reads out details of the arrest and consequences of information received.

CONSTABLE#1
It was the morning in question that myself and my colleague received information that concerned a stolen watch. We stopped Josh Perrott in Meakin street, to talk to him. We found in his pocket a gold watch and chain. The watch itself with an inscription on the back.

Beat.

With his head bandaged with sticking plaster the PROSECUTOR puffs and grunts up to the witness box and kisses the book. The watch and chain are produced for his benefit.

MAGISTRATE
(to Prosecutor)
Do you recognise this watch and chain?

PROSECUTOR
Yes. They're mine.

MAGISTRATE
And do you recognise the prisoner?

PROSECUTOR
Yes.

MAGISTRATE

Then tell us how you know this person.

PROSECUTOR

I met him on the stairs of my abode when he beat me about the head and flung me down the stairs.

Beat.

POLICEMAN

I was called to an address in Highbury and discovered the victim, bleedin', with a head wound. Also there was a ladder to the back of the house, leaning up to the second floor window. It was opened. There were muddy marks on the sill, and I found a stick in the bedroom.

He produces the stick.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

It was lying on the floor.

MAGISTRATE

Would you like to question any of the witnesses, Mr Perrott?

JOSH

No.

Josh lurches serenely out of the dock and waves his cap at the gallery to his friends and family as Dicky quickly rushes out.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

NARRATOR V.O

Josh's stay at Holloway is cut short with his trial sent to the Old Bailey, and not a mere County Sessions at Clerkenwell, like a simple lob-crawler or peter-claimer. Josh's case is a case of burglary with serious violence, such as fitting for the Old Bailey, and not even a High Mobsmen could come to trial with greater glory.

INT. NEWGATE PRISON - DAY

Dicky, Hannah and little Em queue to see Josh. They stand with other visitors, very noisy by a double iron railing filled with wire mesh.

At the far end Josh stands with other PRISONERS while a screaming hubbub of questions and answers fill the air.

Josh lounges against the railing with his hands inside his pockets while Hannah does little, but look at him dolefully through the wire and pipe. Baby Em smudges her little face up against the railing and Dicky just stares at the ground with his hands inside his trouser pockets.

NARRATOR V.O

In such a case as his, the Jago will be for ever disgraced if Josh's pals neglect to get up a "break" or subscription to pay for his defence. Things are never flourishing in the Jago, but this is not the sort of break a Jago can shirk, less it turns against when his own time comes. So enough has been collected to brief an exceedingly junior counsel who will do his useless best with the facts too strong, even for the most inexperienced advocate the evidence of the prosecutor is nowhere to be shaken and the verdict of guilty without leaving the box.

INT. THE OLD BAILEY - DAY

Josh stands in the dock while the sentence is past upon him.

JUDGE

Five years. Take him down

Sobs and murmurs from his family and supporters in the gallery.

INT. OLD BAILEY SIDE ROOM - DAY

Hannah weeps in good earnest, as Dicky blinks very hard at wall. Tommy Rann sits at a table bitterly moody with the sentence past upon Josh.

JOSH
 (to Hannah)
 I s'pose you'll 've to do wot you
 can with rush bags, an' sacks, an'
 match boxes, an wot not.

She assents.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 An' if you 'ave to go in the
 work'ouse- well it can't be 'elped.
 You won't be no wuss auf 'n me.

BILL RANN
 (interjects)
 O' she'll be awright.

He jerks his thumb cheerfully towards Hannah.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)
 Think they'll make it Parkhurst?

JOSH
 (moodily)
 I've bin put away this time- fair
 put away.

BILL RANN
 Wot? Narkin' dues is it?

Josh nods his head.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)
 Oo done it then? Oo narked?

JOSH
 (shakes head)
 Never mind. I don't want 'im druv
 out o' the Jago 'fore I come out.
 I'd be sorry to miss 'im. I know
 'im- that's enough.

GUARD enters the room. Hannah immediately jumps out of her seat and kisses her husband before he shakes hand with Billy Rann.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Well, good luck to all you Jagos.
 They're takin' me to where the dogs
 don't bite.

Dicky shakes his father's hand too.

DICKY
Good bye, Father.

GUARD
Time's up! Time to go!

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - DAY

The Reverend Henry Sturt steps out of his small parish and walks towards the Jago.

NARRATOR V.O
Josh Perrott's lagging has secured his family a special call. Not that the circumstances novel, or uncommon, or does he have any hope of being able to help. He is but one man who swims in a howling sea of human wreckage. In the Jago wives like Hannah Perrott temporary widowed by absence of their husbands are to be counted in scores, and most are in a worse case than she.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - DAY

The sparsely furnished room is filled with sacks and cardboard boxes.

Hannah's face has grown long and blacker under the eyes as she sits on the bed and stitches shirts, whilst Dicky, thinner and lankier sits upon the floor and glues matchbox covers, after pale faced little Em pastes them up for him first.

The Reverend steps into the room and gently smiles at little Em as she looks up at him with her weary, hungry eyes.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
Good morning to you all. And how are we getting along, then? I see you have your hands full. I take it you are getting by more comfortably now.

HANNAH
No, Father. It's less than a shillin' a day, wot wit Dicky an' Em doin' the matchboxes. 'e's gettin' good at it.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
 You can apply for parish relief,
 Mrs Perrott.

HANNAH
 No thanks, Father. We'll manage
 some'ow.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
 You know where to find me should
 you change your mind, Mrs Perrott.
 Keep it up.

He turns and exits. Hannah forces a smile at Dicky and baby Em.

EXT. SPITALFIELDS MARKET - DAY

Kiddo Cook loads fruit and veg boxes onto a waiting cart.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - DAY

Heavily pregnant Hannah tramps the flags as she searches for food. From a greengrocers shop an unregarded turnip rolls and stops at her feet.

She picks up the turnip as though it was delivered especially from the Almighty. She hides it under her coat and gnaws at it as she drags herself towards Jago-ward.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - RAINY EVENING

As Kiddo Cook climbs the stairs he becomes conscious of sounds of anguish, muffled by the Perrotts door.

SOBS. GROANS. CRIES.

Kiddo Cook hesitates and then lightly taps on the door. The knock lies unanswered so he pushes the door open and enters.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - EVENING

At his second step he stands and stares as his chin drops.

KIDDO COOK
 Good gawd!

At a burst he exits and takes the steps three at a time.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - RAINY EVENING CONT'D

He stands on the flags and looks this way and that, then with a quick glance he dashes off through the mud.

EXT. JAGO ROW - RAINY EVENING

Kiddo Cook enters through a door of another house.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

He flies up the stairs to the landing below as Pigeony Poll opens her door at a burst. He calls up to her.

KIDDO COOK (CONT)
Go over to Perrotts, quick! Run for
gawd's sake, or the woman'll croak!
I'm auf to Father's.

He rushes back down the stairs and away.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - EVENING

A young SURGEON enters followed by the Reverend Henry Sturt.

Hannah is stretched out on her ragged bed tended by anxious clumsiness by Pigeony Poll while little Em sits tearful, abashed in a corner nibbling on a piece of turnip.

The Surgeon immediately kneels down and delivers an unconsenting CHILD into its black inheritance.

EXT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - NIGHT

The Surgeon steps out and is met by the Reverend and they walk together in sync.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
Is it well?

SURGEON
(shrugs)
People will call it so.
(pauses)
The boy's alive, and so is the
mother. But you and I may say the
truth. You know the Jago far better
than I. Is there a child in all
this place that wouldn't be better
of dead- still better unborn?

(MORE)

SURGEON (CONT'D)

But does a day pass without bringing you just such a parishioner? Here lies the Jago, a nest of rats, breeding, breeding as only rats can, and we say it is well. On high moral ground we hold the rights of rats to multiply their thousands. Sometimes we catch a rat. And we keep it a little while-nourish it carefully and put it back into the nest to propagate its kind.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

You are right, of course, but who'll listen if you shout it from the housetops? I might try to proclaim it myself, if I had time and energy to waste. But I have none- I must work, and so must you. The burden grows day by day, as you say. The things hopeless, perhaps, but that is not for me to discuss. I have my duty.

SURGEON

That's right. Quite right. People are so very genteel, aren't they?
(chuckles)
But, hang it all, men like ourselves needn't talk as if the world was built of hardbake. It'd a mighty relief to speak the truth to a man who knows- a man not rotted through with sentiment. Think how few men we trust with the power to give a fellow creature a year in gaol, and how carefully we pick them! Even damnation is out of fashion, I believe, among theologians. But any noxious wretch may damn human souls to the Jago, one after another, year in year out, and we respect his right; his sacred right.

EXT. THE POSTIES - STORMY NIGHT

The two Men separate and go in opposite directions as the driving rain and wind whips Dicky home to meet his new brother.

NARRATOR V.O

As the months and years went by, things grew a little easier for the Perrotts. Father Sturt saw to it that there was enough food while Hannah renewed her strength. He had a bag of linen sent. More, he carries his point as to parish relief by main force. As for Dicky he continued with the occasional click, during quiet times carrying suitcases at the train station for travellers. And a new parish had been opened and the gradual removal of the Old Jago itself had begun. The County Council had bought a row of houses at the end of Jago Row, by Honey Lane, with a design to build big barrack dwellings on site. The scenes of the Old Jago Court were repeated with less governed antics.

EXT. PORTLAND PRISON - DAY

The huge doors open and Josh is set free. He carries his luggage inside bag and heads towards the train station.

INT. TRIAN - DAY

Josh takes his seat and waits for the train to leave the station.

EXT. SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET - DAY

Dicky now seventeen years of age had grown to five-foot two. He wears a cap with cloth peak and ear-laps tied at the top with strings, slap up kicksies, cut saucy and a bob-tail coat, though all these glories torn and shabby, and are second-hand.

Dicky stands resolutely on the footway as Kiddo Cook hoves in dragging a barrow load of carrots and cabbages. He pulls up and wipes his cap lining with a red cotton handkerchief.

KIDDO COOK

T'cheer, Dicky! Ol' man out to-day, ain't 'e?

DICKY

Yus. Spect 'im up to-night.

Kiddo Cook nods and wipes his face.

KIDDO COOK

S'pose the mob'll git up a break
for 'im. But 'e'll 'ave a bit o'
gilt from stir as well, won't 'e?
'e'll be awright

He stuffs his handkerchief into his trouser pocket, pulls his cap tight and bends to his barrow handles.

Dicky turns idly to his left and slouches to the corner of Meakin Street. He loafs for while before he makes off up the street.

EXT. MEAKIN STREET - DAY

Dicky breezes past the row of shops to his left which includes the chandlers shop, the dispensary, the barbers, and Walkers cook-shop- foggy with steam, its windows all a trickle. And further down on the opposite side Aaron Weech's coffee shop.

Dicky glances in as he comes by the door and meets the eye of Weech who bursts into an eager smile and comes forward.

WEECH

Good mornin'! You're quite a
stranger, reely, Mister Perrott!

Dicky stops and grunts a cautious salutation.

WEECH (CONT'D)

Do come in, Mr Perrott. Wy, is the
good noos right wot I 'ear about
yer father a-comin' 'ome from-from
the country?

DICKY

Yus.

WEECH

Well I am glad t' 'ear that now.
But there wot'll you 'ave, Mr
Perrott? Say anythink in the 'ol
shop an' welcome! It's sich an
'appy occasion, Mr Perrott, I
couldn't think o' chargin' you a
'a'peny. 'Ave a rasher now, do.
There's one on at this very moment.
Sairer! Ain't that rasher done yut?

Dicky nods and takes a table. Weech sits down opposite him.

WEECH (CONT'D)

Just like 'ol times, ain't it? An' that reminds me I owe you a shillin'. It's that pair of noo boots you chucked over the back fence a fortnight ago. W'en I come to look at 'em they were better wot I thought, an' so I says to meself, This won't do, says I. On'y ninepence for a pair o' boots like them, ain't fair, I says, an' I'd rayther be at a lawss on 'em than not be fair. Fair's fair, as the apostle David says in the Proverbs, an' them boots is worth very near one-an'-nine. So I'll give Mr Perrott another shillin', I says, the very next time I see 'im, an' there it is.

He places a shilling on the table. Dicky pockets it as he scoffs the rasher of bacon and downs the coffee and cake.

WEECH (CONT'D)

Ah, it'll be quite a pleasure to see yer father agin, that it will. Wot a blessed release. Free from the lor o' 'appy condition, as the 'ymn says, I 'ope 'e'll be well an' 'arty. And if there should be anythink in the way o' a friendly lead, or a subscription, or, wot not, I 'ope-remember this, Mr Perrott, won'tcher?- I 'ope you'll let me 'ave a chance to put down somethink good. Not as I can reely afford it, ye know, Mr Perrott-trades very pore, an' it's sich a neighb'r'ood!- but I'll do it for yer father-yus, if it's me last copper. Ye won't forget that, will ye? An' if 'e'd like any little relish w'en 'e comes 'ome-sich as a 'addick or a bit o' 'am-wy, I'll wrap it up and send it.

INT. MOTHER GAPP'S - EVENING

Josh stands at the bar with drink in hand, surrounded by his closest Jagos.

Hannah steps in with Em and baby Josh in arms. Dicky follows behind.

Josh kisses her sulkily then ordered her a drink while Em, distrustful falls into ease when she handed an allowance of gin.

He looks down at the new baby and tickles his chin.

JOSH
So who've we got 'ere, then?

HANNAH
Little Josh.

He takes the baby from her and sits him on his knee as the baby screams its rejection of its father's sober glare while Dicky stands at his father's elbow with a dutiful pride.

JOSH
There was nobody at 'ome w'en I got there.

HANNAH
We came, but yu weren't there, Josh- Waterloo.

JOSH
An' not one visit in three years, either

HANNAH
We couldn't afford it, Josh. Twennie-five shillin's there and back agin.

EXT. MOTHER GAPP'S - NIGHT

The Perrotts carry each other home after a night of merriment and free-flowing alcohol.

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - MORNING

Josh rises out of the bed and a heap of matchboxes catches his eye, stacked in the corner of the room, and nearby the material for more.

JOSH (ASIDE)
(musingly)
Support 'ome industries. Yus. Two-pence a gross.

He kicks the heap to splinters, then strolls out into the street and surveys the Jago.

The NEW CHURCH catches his notice as Billy Rann and Jerry Gullen pass-by.

BILLY RANN
(sings)
Wayo, brother-in-law!

JERRY GULLEN
(sarcastically)
Nice sort o' thing, ain't it?

He jerks his thumb at the church.

JERRY GULLEN (CONT'D)
The street's clean ruined. Wot's
the good o' livin' 'ere now? Wy, a
man mustn't even do a click,
blimey!

JOSH
(grins)
An' doncher?

Jerry Gullen's face breaks into a wide grin as he goes on his way with a wink and a whistle.

Old man Beveridge comes into view with a fresh chalk mark written on his hat- "HARD UP"

OLD MAN BEVERIDGE
And so you're back again, Josh
Perrott! Back again! Pity you
couldn't stay there, isn't it? Pity
we can't all stay there.

Josh stares at him indignantly as the Reverend Henry Sturt appears from his church. He puts a warm hand upon Josh's shoulder.

REVEREND HENRY STURT
What! Home again without coming to
see me! But there, you must have
been coming. I hope you haven't
been knocking long? Come in now, at
any rate. You're looking
wonderfully well. What a capital
thing a holiday is, isn't it-a good
long one?

He takes Josh by the arm and hauls him towards the club door as SAM CASH comes hurrying around Luck Row with his finger through a string, and on that string a bunch of grouse.

The Reverend turns back while he still clings onto Josh's arm.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)

Dear me. Here's our dear friend Sam Cash, taking something home for his lunch. Come, Sam, with such a fine lot of birds as that. I'm sure you'll be proud to tell us where they came from. Eh?

SAM CASH

(offended)

I've bin 'avin a little shootin' with a friend.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

Dear, dear, what a charming friend! And where are his moors? Nowhere about the Bethnal green Road, I suppose, by the goods depot?

(pauses)

Come now, I'm sure Josh Perrott would like to know. You didn't get a little shooting in your holiday, did you, Josh?

Josh grins, but Sam Cash shuffles uneasily, with a hopeless sidelong glance in search of a hole wherein to hide.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)

Ah, you see, he doesn't want his friend's hospitality to be abused. Let me see-two-four-six-why there must be nine or ten brace, and all at one shot, too! Sam always makes his bag at one shot, you know, Josh, whatever the game is. Yes, wonderful shooting. And did you shoot the label at the same time, Sam? Come! I should like to look at that label!

Sam Cash immediately bolts. Josh guffaws joyously.

REVEREND HENRY STURT (CONT'D)

There-he's very bashful for a sportsman, isn't he, Josh? But you should come and see the club at once. You shall be a member.

INT. MR. WEECH'S SHOP - DAY

Weech sheepishly looks out over his plum cakes in the window.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - DAY

Josh and Bill Rann stroll down the street in close communication.

BILL RANN

Are you on for a job? Cos I got one cut an' dried-a topper, an' safe as 'ouses.

JOSH

Wot sort o' job's this?

BILL RANN

Wy, a bust-unless we can screw it.

JOSH

Awright. Depends o' course.

BILL RANN

O' it's a good un.

He grins and slaps his leg in rapturous amusement.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)

O' it's a good un- You can take yer davy o' that. I've bin a thinkin' about it for a fortnight, but it wants two. Damm, it's nobby!

He grins again and makes two taps of a step dance.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)

Wotjer think?

(suddenly serious)

Wotjer think o' screwin' a fence?

JOSH

Wot fence?

Bill Rann, with a grin burst wide again, bends low with an outstretched chin and elbows out.

BILL RANN

Wy, ole Weech!

Josh grits his teeth and looks sharply in Bill Rann's upturned face.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)

Eh? Eh? 'Ow's that strike ye, ole cock?

BILL RANN (CONT'D)

It'll be a fair cop for 'im. 'e's treated us all pretty mean, one time or other. I bet 'e owes us fifty quid atween us, wot with all the times 'e's squeegeed us for a bit. It'll on'y be goin' to bring away our own stuff!

JOSH

(fiercely)

G-r-r-r. It was 'im as put me away for my laggin'! Bleedin' ole swine!

Bill Rann stops, surprised.

BILL RANN

Wot 'im? Ole Weech narked ye? Owjer know that?

JOSH

It was 'is terror at the sight of my dash at 'is front door.

(reflects)

'im on. It's one way o' payin' 'im, an' it'll bring a bit in. On'e 'e better not show 'isself w'ile i'm abaat! 'E wouldn't git auf with a punch on the chin like the bloke at 'ighbury!

He turns up his nostrils with a tigerish snarl.

BILL RANN

Blimey! So it was 'im, was it? I often wondered oo you meant. Well flimpin' 'im's the best way. Won't 'e sing a bleed'n' 'ymn w'en 'e finds 'e's stuff weeded! But there-let's lay it out.

NARRATOR V.O

Weech's back fence will be his undoing. It is the obvious plan. The alleys in the rear are a perfect approach. The wash-house window the point of entrance.

(MORE)

NARRATOR V.O (CONT'D)
*Old boxes and packing wood litters
 the yard, and it should be easy to
 mount boxes and lift the catch,
 then slide through. The robbery
 planned for tonight.*

INT. PERROTTS NEW HOME - NIGHT

Josh sits on the bed while Hannah stares out of the window and wonders. Baby Josh and Em asleep in the other room.

HANNAH
 Wot's goin' on?

JOSH
 I'm doin' a click with Billy. It's
 all set up an' ready.

HANNAH
 Lor, Josh, d'yu 'ave to?

JOSH
 I toldjer, it's all set up. Now
 shutcher mouth, I'm goin'!

He ups and leaves, slamming the door behind him.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

Josh joins Bill Rann hiding in a doorway.

BILL RANN
 Wy, wot's up? You ain't bin boozin'
 'ave ye?

JOSH
 (snarls)
 No, I ain't. Got the tools?

BILL RANN
 Yus. Come under the light. I
 couldn't git no twirls, an' we
 shan't want 'em. 'Ere's a
 screwdriver, and two gimlets, an' a
 knife for the window-ketch, an' a
 little james, an' a neddy-

JOSH
 A neddy?!

BILL RANN
 A neddy for Weech!

JOSH

G-r-r-r! I might take a neddy to a man!

BILL RANN

That's awright. But it 'ud frighten 'im pretty well, wouldn't it? Look 'ere. S'pose we can't find the oof? Wy shouldn't we wake up Mr weech all quiet and respeckful, an' ask 'im t' 'elp us? 'E's all alone, an' I'm sure 'e'll be glad t' 'blige w'en 'e sees this 'ere neddy, without waitin' for a tap. W'y blimey I b'lieve 'e'd be afraid to sing out any'ow for fear o' bringin' in the coppers to find all the stuff 'e's bought on the crook. It's all done once we're inside.

They walk along the other side of the street and watch Weech as he pulls up his shutters.

All is quiet, not a soul about. And when the lights go out above the shop door, and the window above it, they pass on, cross the road, and stroll back, then listen at the door.

The clock in a distant steeple strikes twelve and at the fourth stroke, the loud bells of St. Leonard's bang out their chorus.

EXT. REAR OF SHOP - NIGHT

Josh and Bill Rann plunge into an alley. Rats scatter. They step into the muddy yard where Weech's rickety back fence stands before them.

With Weech's house dark and silent, they peer over the fence. The yard pitch black, but for faint angular tokens here and there of heaped boxes and lumber.

BILL RANN

(whispers)

We won't tip 'im the whistle this time.

(smothered chuckle)

Over!

They climb over the fence with quiet care and lower themselves gingerly on the other side.

EXT. WEECH'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

BILL RANN
 (whispers)
 Clear 'ere. C'mom.

Josh takes up position and grabs hold of a crate. He carries it the four or five yards towards the wash-house window, then reaches for his knife and cuts away at the putty from the pane itself, until the pane is released from the window.

Below, Bill Rann looks up. Josh hands him the pane of glass and lies it down quietly on the soft ground.

Above, Josh turns the catch and lifts the sash then pushes the frame up evenly. Josh manoeuvres his legs one at a time through the narrow opening then turns over and lets himself down. He beckons Bill Rann to do the same.

INT. WASH-ROOM -NIGHT

Once inside Bill Rann opens a small tin can with one inch of candle. With a lit match he lights the candle to gain some light and a quick view of the wash-house is taken.

JOSH
 There ain't nothin' to waste time
 over 'ere. Come on!

BILL RANN
 (angrily)
 Shut up, you damn fool!
 (whispers)
 D'jer want to wake 'im?

JOSH
 Why not?

Bill Rann shakes his head as they apply themselves to the inner door of the room. He produces his tools and set to work on the lock, until he finally releases the screws and jams out the catch.

INT. ADJOINING ROOM - NIGHT

They quietly make their way through to the room behind the shop where a low table, four horse-hair covered chairs, a mirror and a cheap walnut side board is situated.

EXT. WEECH'S SHOP - NIGHT

The slow step of a POLICEMAN stops and pushes at the shop door to test its fastening. He walks off.

BACK TO:

ADJOINING ROOM

Bill Rann sits down and begins to untie his boots.

BILL RANN
(whispers)
Take auf yer boots

He slings them by the laces over his shoulder.

JOSH
No!

BILL RANN
Awright. You set down 'ere w'ile I
slip upstairs an' take a peep. I
bet th stuff's in the garret. Best
on'y one goes quiet.

INT STAIRS TO LANDING - NIGHT

Josh sits quiet as Bill Rann takes his tin lantern and creeps up the stairs.

He gains the stair-head and listens for a moment, before he tip-toes along the small landing, and then half-way up the steep and narrow garret stairs when he hears a sound and stops.

A heavy tread, with a kick of a boot on the skirting board along the landing. It's Josh ascending in his boots.

Bill Rann grits his teeth and backs down the garret staircase and meets Josh at the foot. He grabs him by the scruff and pulls him into the turn of the stairs.

BILL RANN
Are ye balmy?
(furiously)
D'je want another five stretch?

A loud creak, and a soft thump gives from behind the door at the other end of the landing- a match is struck.

BILL RANN (CONT'D)

Keep back on the stairs. 'E's 'eard you.

Josh sits back on the stairs with his legs drawn up and perfectly still and out of sight from the door when Bill Rann blows out his candle.

The soft tread of bare feet and the squeak of a door handle, then a light on the landing. Weech stands at his open door in his shirt and a candle in hand, his hair rumpled, his head aside, his mouth a little open, his unconscious gaze upward as he listens intently. He takes a slight step forward.

Josh springs from the stairs, his shoulders humped, his face thrust out as he walks deliberately across the landing.

Weech turns his head quickly. His chin falls on his chest as his candle tilts and shoots its grease on the floor.

The door swings wider as his shoulders strike it and he screams like a rabbit that's seen a stoat.

Then with a wrench he turns, lets drop the candle and runs shrieking to the window, flings it open and yells into the black street.

WEECH

'Elp! 'Elp! P'lice! Murder! Murder!
Murder! Murder!

Bill Rann bounds across the landing and grabs Josh by the arm.

BILL RANN

(roars)
Run Josh-run, ye blasted fool!

JOSH

Go-on! Go-on! I'm comin'!

Bill Rann takes the bottom flight at a jump.

WEECH

Murder! Murder! Mu'r-r-

Josh has him by the shoulder, swings shim back from the window and grabs his throat, then drags him across the carpet.

Weech's arms wave uselessly while his feet feebly seek to hold the floor.

JOSH

Now-

Josh glares down into his writhen face below his own and raises his knife like a cleaver.

JOSH (CONT'D)

sing a hymn! Sing a hymn as'll do
ye most good! You'll cheat me w'en
ye can, an' w'en ye can't you'll
put me five years in stir, eh? Sing
a hymn you snivellin' nark!

Josh offers to slash his slaty face.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You'll put down somethin' 'an'some
at my break, will ye? An' you'll
starve my wife an' kids all to the
bones an' teeth four year! Sing a
hymn, ye cur!

Another feint at slashing with his knife to the sounds of Men beating thunderously at the shop door, and the shrill of screams outside.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Won't sing yer hymn? There ain't
much time! My boy was goin'
straight and' earnin' wages.
Someone got 'im chucked! A man 'as
time to think things out, in stir!
Sing, ye son of a cow! Sing! Sing!

Twice he hacks the livid face. The third, below the chin and Weech's head falls back. Josh puts out the flaring candle and listens momentarily to the roar outside and the heavy shaking of the shop door.

DEEP VOICE O.S

Open-open the door!

He looks out from the open window.

POV: A scrambling crowd as more and more People run in. A flash of a bulls-eye dazzles him. He staggers back.

VOICES

Perrott! Perrott!

He throws down his knife and makes for the landing, but slips on the greasy floor and stumbles against the heap of flesh beneath his feet.

He dashes up the narrow stairs and flounders through the back garret, over bags and boxes, and heaps of mingled modities, then throws up the sash and climbs onto the sill and swings round on the dormer frame, then with hands and knees onto the roof.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Yells and loud whistles rise through the air with shouts of his own name.

INTO. WEECH'S SHOP - NIGHT

The blows on the shop door cease with a splintering crash and the trampling of feet on the floorboards.

BACK TO:

ROOFTOP

Irregular in shape and height, Josh's progress is slow and Men were gaining as they climbed onto the roof to give chase.

He slides down an old drainpipe and descends into-

EXT. LUCK ROW - NIGHT

Josh scurries away from the drainpipe and knocks over a MAN standing in his way.

EXT. OLD JAGO STREET - NIGHT

He runs past his own home and across to a black doorway just as the Reverend Sturt roused by the persistent din opens his window.

The passage is empty and for an instant he pauses, breathless to the pounding of heavy feet that give chase and holler "Murderer" and then his name.

EXT THE JAGO - NIGHT

Into a back yard and over a fence, then through another passage and into-

EXT. JAGO ROW - NIGHT

He nears an open unrecognisable waste of eighty yards square, skirted by the straight streets and yellow barracks with the new Board School standing dark.

Along the straight streets the Men are rushing, along with more POLICE.

Some dismantled houses stand empty and dark. He turns into the pitch black yard of the nearest one and his foot turns over a stone. He pitches headlong.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

The dungeon littered with rubbish as he lies among it a little while, breathless and bruised. His foot useless when he attempts to stand up. He takes off his boot and rubs his ankle.

Here Josh stays buried within the rubbish and where he sits and waits as knots of Men hurry by. He catches snatches of their talk.

MAN O.S

A man was murdered in his bed!

WOMAN O.S

No, it was a woman. Husband did it!

Josh holds his head in hands at the voices above and grimaces with the pain from his broken ankle.

VOICES

Murder! Murder! Murder! Murder!

EXT. THE PERROTTS NEW HOME - NIGHT

The Reverend Henry Sturt stands guard on the landing outside the Perrotts door. The stairs full of Jagos- mostly women, including Mrs Walsh dressed in a shawl and petticoat.

She attempts to reach Hannah who stands inside her door trembling, but the Reverend sends her grumbling away.

MRS WALSH

(angrily)

Ye drove 'im too it!

EXT. NEW JAGO STREET - NIGHT TILL DAY

The police hold every alley, every corner of every street as a house to house search for Josh ensues.

And in the grey of the morning itself, amid the ruins carefully examined a SERGEANT is startled to hear a voice from underground.

JOSH

Awright, I'm done- it's a fair cop.
Come an' 'elp me out o' this 'ole.

INT. THE CROWN COURT - DAY

NARRATOR V.O

The Lion and the Unicorn had been fresh gilt since Josh was there before, but the white-headed old gaoler in the dock is much the same. And the big sword-what did they have a big sword for? Stuck there over the red cushions. And what is the use of a sword six feet long? But perhaps it isn't six foot after all-it looks longer than it is, and no doubt it is only for show and probably a dummy with no blade.

A well dressed BLACK MAN sits among the LAWYERS.

JOSH V.O

Now wot does 'e want? W'y 'ave they let 'im in? A nice thing to made a show of.

Josh loosens his necktie.

JOSH V.O (CONT'D)

The evidence is a nuisance. Wot is the good of it all? Over and over, and over agin. At the inquest. At the police court an' now 'ere.

Wearing a long, red gown, the bespectacled JUDGE enters with a bunch of flowers in hand. He sits at the end of the bench, instead of in the middle, before the sword.

After hearing all the evidence, the Judge begins sums up.

Beat.

JUDGE

Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?

FOREMAN

(rises)

We have.

JUDGE

Do you find the prisoner at the bar guilty, or not guilty?

FOREMAN

Guilty.

JUDGE

And is that the verdict of you all?

FOREMAN

Yes.

From the gallery Hannah sobs in disbelief.

A pale PERSON in his black gown comes walking to the bench and stands like a tall ghost at the Judge's side, his eyes raised and his hands clasped.

The Judge takes a black thing from the seat beside him and arranges it on his head. He turns to Josh.

JUDGE

Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you according to law?

JOSH

No, sir. I done it. On'y 'e was a worse man than me!

JUDGE

Joshua Perrott, you have been convicted, on evidence that can leave no doubt whatever of your guilt in the mind of any rational person, of the horrible crime of wilful murder. The circumstances of your awful offence there is no need to recapitulate, but they were of the most brutal and shocking character.

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You deliberately, and with preparation, broke into the house of the man whose death you have shortly to answer for in a higher court than this, whether you broke in with a design of robbery as well as of revenge by murder I know not, nor is it my duty to consider; but you there, with every circumstance of callous ferocity sent the wretched man to his last account which you must shortly render for yourself. Of the ill-spent life of that miserable man- your victim, it is not for me to speak, nor for you to think. And I do most earnestly beseech you to use the short time yet remaining to you on this earth in true repentance, and in making your peace with Almighty God. It is my duty to pronounce sentence of that punishment which not I, but the law of this country, imposes for the crime which you have committed. The sentence of the Court is that you be taken to a place of whence you came and thence to a place of execution, and that you be there Hanged by the Neck till you be dead, and may the Lord have mercy upon your soul!

BLACK MAN

(rises)

Amen!

The Gaoler takes his arm as he looks through the glass partition where Hannah stumbles as Dicky attempts to hold her up with both arms. Josh steps towards them, but is hurried away by the Gaoler.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

The Perrott family sit at a table in abject silence, except for the sobs that come from Hannah, and the cries from little EM.

NARRATOR V.O

All this hard thinkin will be over in half an hour or so. What's to come now doesn't matter- no more than a mere punch in the eye. The worst is over.

Dicky consoles his Mother while little Josh kicks and curses his father who just holds his head in his hands.

EXT. OLD BAILEY - DAY

A small CROWD gather at the corner as the bell tolls and a BLACK FLAG is raised.

NARRATOR V.O

This was not a popular murder. Josh Perrott was not a man that had been bred to better things. He did not snivel and rant in the dock, and he had not butchered his wife, nor child, not anybody with a claim on his gratitude, or affection, so nobody sympathised with him, nor got up a petition for pardon, nor wrote tearful letters to the newspapers. And the crowd who watch the black flag- a small one, and half of it from the Jago.

EXT. THE PERROTTS NEW HOME - DAY

The sound of the bell tolls as a knot of PEOPLE stand at the Perrotts front doorway. The Reverend Henry Sturt goes across to speak to Kiddo Cook who stands at the bottom of the stairway to drive off intruders.

KIDDO COOK

They say she's been settin' up all night, Father. An' Polls just looked in at the winder from Walsh's, an' says she can see 'em all kneelin' round a chair with that little clock o' theirs on it. It's-it's more'n 'alf an hour yet.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

I shall come here myself presently and relieve you. Can you wait? You mustn't neglect trade you know.

KIDDO COOK

I'll wait all day, Father, if ye like. Nobody shan't disturb 'em.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

Have you heard anything?

KIDDO COOK

No, Father. They ain't moved.

CU: The BELLS from St Leonard's beat out the inexorable hour.

EXT. SHOREDITCH CHURCH - DAY

Kiddo Cook and Pigeony Poll leave the church a happily married couple. She wears a long white dress, he a smart black suit. On the steps they kiss to a cheer from GUESTS as a PHOTOGRAPHER gets a snapshot.

EXT. NEW JAGO STREET - DAY

Dicky walks in a sort of numb, embittered fury.

NARRATOR V.O

What should he do now? His devilmost. Spare nobody and stop at nothing. Old man Beveridge was right all those years ago- The Jago had got him, and it held him fast. Now he goes doubly sealed of the outcasts- a Jago with a hanged father. He is a Jago and the world's enemy. And Father Sturt is the only good man in it, as for the rest he would spoil them if he could.

Jerry Gullen's Canary harnessed, and Jerry himself is piling the barrow with bottles and rags. Dicky stops and looks at him.

JERRY GULLEN

Good ole moke for wear, ain't 'e?

DICKY

Yus.'E'll peg out soon now.

JERRY GULLEN

'im? Not 'im. Wy, I bet 'e'll live longer'n you will. 'E ain't goin' to die.

DICKY

I think 'e'd like to.

Dicky sludges on and comes to the ruined houses to a tumult of yells and a crowd of thirty to forty LADS who stream across the open waste, waving sticks.

DICKY (CONT'D)
Come on! Come on, Jago. 'Ere they
are!

A fight, and Dicky finds himself in the thick of it.

DICKY (CONT'D)
Come on, Jago! Jago! 'ere they are!

He runs past the board school and into-

EXT. HONEY LANE/DOVE LANE- DAY

A small crowd of DOVE LANERS break and flee straight ahead. The Jagos go after them, until they are suddenly taken by a full MOB, broken by the rush as they fight stoutly with the street now filled with a surge of combat.

CHANTS- "Jago! Jago, hold tight!"

Thin, wasted and shaken Dicky fights like a tiger and grabs a stick off a Dove Laner who he floors. He bludgeons apace, callous to every blow as he fights through the thick and burst out at the edge of the fray.

He pulls his cap tight and swings back, knocking over a furtive leather apron Hunchback who turns and comes at his heels.

DICKY
(yells)
Jago! Jago, hold tight! Come on
Father Sturts boys!

He goes down from a punch under the arm from behind, and as he rolls, face under he catches a single glimpse of the Hunchback as he runs away. A shout goes up.

JAGO V.O
*Stabbed! Chived! They've stabbed
Dicky Perrott!*

The fight melts away as somebody turns Dicky on his back. He moans and lies gasping. He lifts his dabbled hands and looks at them. They try to lift him, but the blood pours so fast they put him down again.

DICKY
(faintly)
Take me 'ome. Not 'awspital.

A SURGEON comes running with a POLICEMAN at his heels. He rips away the clothes about the wound and shakes his head.

SURGEON

His lung.

Water is brought, along with old clothes. They lift his body onto a discarded door and carry him towards the surgery.

INT. SURGERY - DAY

Pearly Poll and Kiddo Cook tear through the shutter and stop at the surgery door.

PEARLY POLL

Good gawd, Dicky. Wot's this?

Dicky's eyes fall upon the flowered bonnet that graces her wedding as his lips lift with a shade of a smile.

DICKY

Luck, Pidge!

The Reverend Henry Sturt pushes through a crowd at the door and enters. He lifts his eyebrows questionably as the Surgeon looks at him and shakes his head.

The Reverend Henry Sturt bends over and takes Dicky's hand.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

My poor Dicky. Who did this?

DICKY

Dunno, Fa'er.

NARRATOR V.O

*The lie- the staunch Jago lie.
Though shalt not nark.*

DICKY

Fetch mother, an' the kids, Fa'er.

REVEREND HENRY STURT

Yes, my boy.

DICKY

Tell Mist' Beveridge there's
'nother way out-better.

FADE TO BLACK.

END