



Thief-Taker Hangings: How Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Wild, and Jack Sheppard Captivated London and Created the Celebrity Criminal

By Aaron Skirboll

Rowman & Littlefield. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Thief-Taker Hangings: How Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Wild, and Jack Sheppard Captivated London and Created the Celebrity Criminal, Aaron Skirboll, After the Glorious Revolution, a not so glorious age of lawlessness befell England. Crime ran rampant, and highwaymen, thieves, and prostitutes ruled the land. Execution by hanging often punished the smallest infractions, and rip-roaring stories of fearless criminals proliferated, giving birth to a new medium: the newspaper. In 1724, housebreaker Jack Sheppard-a "pocket Hercules," his small frame packed with muscle-finally met the hangman. Street singers sang ballads about the Cockney burglar because no prison could hold him. Each more astonishing than the last, his final jailbreak took him through six successive locked rooms, after which he shimmied down two blankets from the prison roof to the street below. Just before Sheppard swung, he gave an account of his life to a writer in the crowd. Daniel Defoe stood in the shadow of the day's literati-Swift, Pope, Gay-and had done hard time himself for sedition and bankruptcy. He saw how prison corrupted the poor. They came out thieves, but he came out a journalist. Six months later, the author of Robinson Crusoe and...



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