

Booth



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A gripping historical novel in the bestselling tradition of *The Alienist* and *Time and Again*, *Booth* brings vividly to life a figure who continues to haunt the American imagination--John Wilkes Booth. The story begins as an elderly John Surratt, the only conspirator to escape a hanging sentence for the murder of Abraham Lincoln, is asked by film director D.W. Griffith to recount the harrowing events of his youth during the screenings of Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation*. The request prompts Surratt to reread his detailed diaries, begun in 1864 when he was first befriended by John Wilkes Booth and was unwittingly enmeshed in Booth's plot to assassinate the President. Told through a series of flashbacks, the novel both chronicles the young, naive Surratt's tragic coming of age as he belatedly realizes the nature of the plot Booth has sucked him into, and illuminates the motivations, larger-than-life appetites, and appeal of the charismatic and world-famous stage actor. As Surratt delves further into the diaries and transcripts, it is clear the young Surratt has become trapped in Booth's web of seduction and betrayal. Further insight into the assassination plot is revealed in a surprising twist when the genuine diary that Booth left behind, explaining his actions and implicating others around him, falls into Surratt's hands (a Booth diary, with several missing pages, does exist and is on public display at the Ford Theater in Washington). Compulsively readable, and filled with brilliant period detail--as well as a dozen reproductions of

actual photographs of the conspirators and their execution, Booth is a powerful evocation of a dangerous, chaotic, and tragic time in our history, a story that continues to resonate to this day.

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