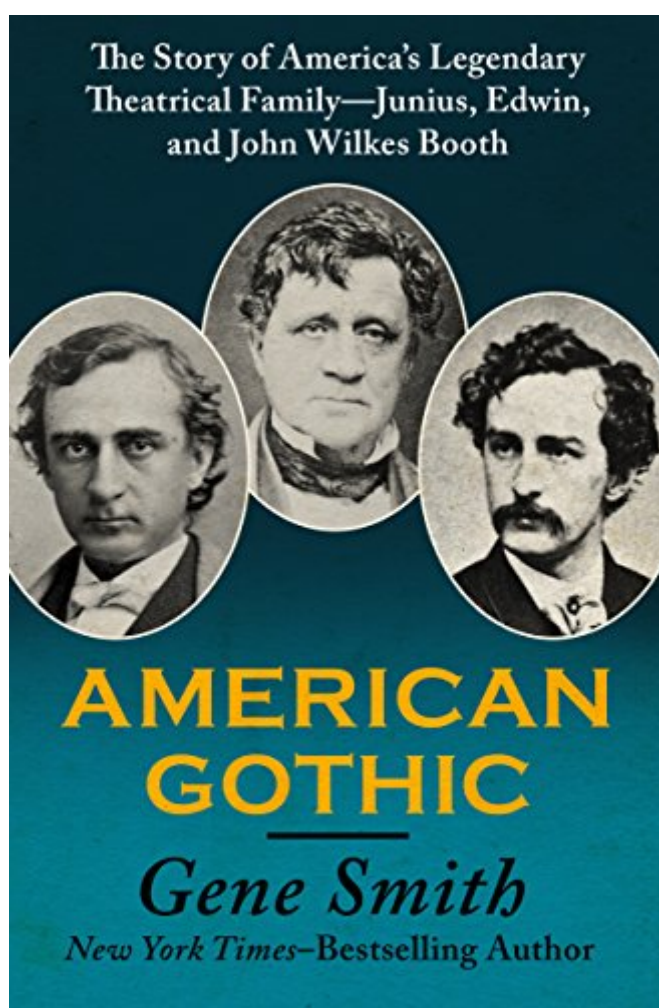


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American Gothic: The Story Of America's Legendary Theatrical Family—Junius, Edwin, And John Wilkes Booth



Synopsis

A New York Times “bestselling author’s” lively account of a family of famous actors who became notorious after the assassination of President Lincoln (The New Yorker). Junius Booth and his sons, Edwin and John Wilkes, were nineteenth-century America’s most famous theatrical family. Yet the Booth name is forever etched in the history books for one terrible reason: the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth at Ford’s Theatre on April 14, 1865. In American Gothic, bestselling historian Gene Smith vividly chronicles the triumphs, scandals, and tragedies of this infamous family. The preeminent English tragedian of his day, Junius Booth was a madman and an alcoholic who abandoned his wife and young son to move to America and start a new family. His son Edwin became the most renowned Shakespearean actor in America, famously playing Hamlet for one hundred consecutive nights, but he suffered from depression and a crippling fear of inheriting his father’s insanity. Blessed with extraordinary good looks and a gregarious nature, John Wilkes Booth seemed destined for spectacular fame and fortune. However, his sympathy for the Confederate cause unleashed a dangerous instability that brought permanent disgrace to his family and forever changed the course of American history. Richly detailed and emotionally insightful, American Gothic is a gripping good tale that brings to life the true story behind a family tragedy of Shakespearean proportions (The New York Times).

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Customer Reviews

Fascinating bio of one of the great American theater families, and the tragic ending for one of them.

If you're a fan of Edwin Booth, you'll love this book. But even if you know not a jot but who killed Abraham Lincoln, you'll love this deeply in-depth study of an important American family. The attention to detail and accuracy are amazing. If you aren't a history buff, this book may make you one.

Fascinating story of a very eccentric stage family.

This book was a wonderful read; well researched, full of historical fact and full of excerpts from letters written by the Booths as well as by figures surrounding them.

Excellent book, well written about the family. It puts into perspective just how big stars these men were in their day. It also puts into perspective what it meant that John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln: it would be like Brad Pitt or George Clooney being an assassin. That's how big he was. Really enjoyed the read.

Very interesting read about the Booth acting family. I enjoy reading about well-known historical characters.

Typical high quality Gene Smith

Educational.

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