



American Tragedian: The Life of Edwin Booth

Daniel J. Watermeier

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When John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Abraham Lincoln, his older brother Edwin was devastated. A leading stage star, Edwin Booth thought his career had ended. But with the support of countless theatergoers, over the next thirty years Booth would overcome the shadow of John Wilkes's infamy and steadily advance a reputation as America's greatest-ever Shakespearean actor, *the* American tragedian par excellence.

Daniel J. Watermeier has, through decades of tireless research paired with his own sharp insight, put together the most complete Edwin Booth biography to date. Drawing on a wealth of archival materials and contemporary theatrical scholarship, *American Tragedian: The Life of Edwin Booth* gives more attention than previous biographies to Booth's apprentice and journeyman years; his rise in antebellum America to stardom with a new, acclaimed style of acting; his work as an innovative theater builder and theatrical producer; his several foreign tours; and his nationwide tours in the late 1880s. It also addresses Booth's critical reception in dozens of cities in America and abroad and situates his professional activities within the events and trends of the time.

As interesting as it is informative, Watermeier's book offers an in-depth look at the triumphal career and tumultuous life of one of the American stage's most celebrated figures.

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