

Chasing Lincoln's Killer Study Guide

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James L. Swanson

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Plot Summary

“Chasing Lincoln's Killer” is the story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was the United States President during the Civil War, which was a very turbulent time in America's history. The majority of the American people had very strong feelings, either in favor of Northern policies or for the Southern cause. John Wilkes Booth was one of those people. Despite the fact that Booth lived and worked in the North, he was a firm supporter of the Confederacy. He hated Lincoln and Lincoln's policies.

Booth believed that Lincoln was the key to winning the Civil War for the South. He and some like-minded people planned to kidnap Lincoln several months before the assassination. Their plan was to take him to the South and trade him for Southern prisoners or for concessions that would help the South win the war. That plan failed.

Booth was a famous actor and could have walked into Lincoln's office at almost any time. He could have shot Lincoln during Lincoln's second inauguration. While Booth wanted to help the South win the war, he also wanted to get escape punishment. When the South formally surrendered, making it clear that the South was going to lose the Civil War, Booth was spurred into action. He felt that killing Lincoln might prompt the Confederate soldiers to continue to fight.

Booth was well-known at Ford Theatre but he didn't have a role in the play that was being performed on that fateful Friday night. He found out that the Lincoln's planned to attend the play, “Our American Cousin,” and gathered three men to help him with a bold plan. Booth planned to kill Lincoln while sending three others to kill Vice-President Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward. Booth believed that the triple assassination would cripple the Union government.

Booth entered Lincoln's theater box and shot Lincoln in the head with a Derringer. He then scuffled with the Lincoln's guest for the performance, Major Rathbone. When Booth jumped to from the box to the stage, Rathbone threw him off-balance. Booth broke his leg which greatly slowed his escape and contributed to his capture.

An Army surgeon, Dr. Leale, was in the audience and he rushed to Lincoln's side. He knew almost immediately that Lincoln would die from the wound. Dr. Leale had Lincoln's body taken from the theater and they wound up at the Peterson House, a nearby boarding house. Lincoln died a few hours later.

Booth's co-conspirators were not as successful. One of them failed to kill his target and the other simply backed out of even trying. Booth managed to escape into the countryside but only one of the men, David Herold caught up to Booth. The two men went into hiding while Secretary of War Edwin Stanton set out to find Lincoln's killer. Booth was quickly identified as the murderer and a group of his co-conspirators were named. Two of the men were captured quickly but Booth managed to evade the hunters for 12 days.



Members of a Calvary unit surrounded Booth in a tobacco shed at a farm in the countryside across the Potomac River. Herold surrendered but Booth refused. An officer ordered the shed set on fire but Booth continued to refuse to leave the building. A non-commissioned officer named Boston Corbett slipped up to the barn and shot Booth through a gap in the boards. Booth was paralyzed but lived long enough for the soldiers to drag him from the shed. The other members of the plot, including a woman who had provided aid, were hanged a short time later.



From 1861 through 1865; Prologue, and Chapter 1

Summary

The first section is titled "From 1861 through 1865." This section details the overall events of this time in American history. The author writes that the United States was involved in a Civil War that had begun because of two questions. The first was the right to keep slaves. The second was whether a state had the right to secede. Lincoln was elected as president in 1860. He believed that slavery was wrong and that the United States had to remain united. The Civil War lasted 4 years and more than half a million men died to fighting and disease.

The next section of the book is the Prologue. The weather in Washington, D.C. Was "ugly" on March 4, 1865, when Abraham Lincoln was being sworn in for another term in office. A photographer, Alexander Gardner, took photos of the event. He captured the faces of several key people that day, including Lincoln, staff members, and some guests. John Wilkes Booth's is photographed on a balcony. Lincoln is "at the height of his power" because the North is on the verge of victory in the Civil War. He gives a speech that is just 701 words in length. An excerpt from that speech is included and Lincoln urged everyone to prepare to "bind up the nation's wounds." He said that included caring for the wounded soldiers and for the widows and orphans.

Just a month later, Union forces captured the Confederate capital city of Richmond, Virginia. The people of the North celebrated. A few days after that, Booth was at a bar with friends. He said he was in a perfect position to kill Lincoln during Lincoln's inauguration. A few days after that, Lincoln made an impromptu speech from the White House. He called on the band to play "Dixie," saying the Union forces had "captured it." The following evening, Lincoln made a longer speech, saying he was glad the war was near an end and that he wanted to grant blacks the right to vote. Booth was among those listening to Lincoln's speech, along with his friends Lewis Powell and David Herold. He threatened to kill Lincoln and pledged that Lincoln would never give another speech.

In Chapter 1, Booth woke on April 14, just days after the Confederate surrender, feeling devastated. He knew all the events of the past days, including Lincoln's visit to Richmond where he had sat at the desk of Jefferson Davis, who had briefly held the office of president of the Confederacy.

John Wilkes Booth was 26 years old. His family was famous as a theatrical group. They were wealthy and Booth was privileged as a member of the family. His father was Brutus Booth and his brother was Edwin.



During this time, Booth was living at the National Hotel, just a block from Ford Theatre where he often performed. Actors often got mail at Ford's and on the morning of April 14, Booth walked over to pick up his mail. A messenger from the White House had arrived at the theater earlier that day with a letter from Lincoln's wife, Mary, announcing that Lincoln would be attending a performance that evening.

Booth heard the news, that Lincoln and some others, including General Ulysses S. Grant, would be at the theater that evening. A comedy titled "Our American Cousin" was being performed. Booth was not in that play but was ultimately familiar with it. He was also very familiar with the theater, the streets around it, and the exact spot where Lincoln would be seated during the performance. Booth knew that he didn't have a lot of time and he began to prepare to assassinate the President.

Meanwhile, Lincoln was going about his day. He met with members of this cabinet. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles wrote in his diary that Lincoln had reported having a dream about water. Welles wrote that Lincoln had reported the same dream prior to major events of the Civil War. The author wrote that Lincoln believed in dreams and had once warned his wife to put their son's pistol away, based on a dream. Lincoln went about the rest of his day with routine tasks, planning to meet Mary at 3 that afternoon.

At the Ford Theatre, Henry Clay Ford posted an announcement that President and Mrs. Lincoln would attend the show that evening. James Ford borrowed some flags to decorate the President's box. Booth talked briefly with James and saw the flags as more proof that the President would be at the theater. Dr. Charles Leale heard that Lincoln and General Grant would be attending that evening's play, and he decided to attend for the chance to get a glimpse of Grant.

Booth went about his day. He went to the Kirkwood House where Vice-President Andrew Johnson was staying. Johnson had no security but Booth didn't approach him. Instead, Booth sent up a note, asking only if Johnson was "at home." He then visited Mary Surratt, a 42-year-old widow who owned a boarding house. She was the mother of John Surrat, a "Confederate secret agent." Booth gave Mary Surrat a package and asked if she would leave it for him at her country inn. He said he would be leaving Washington that evening and would pick up both the package and some guns from the inn. She did as he asked. When she arrived at the tavern, she told John Lloyd, the tavern keeper, to hold the guns and Booth's package for pickup. She also instructed him to provide whiskey to the riders who picked up the items.

Booth chose a Deringer for the assassination though he had other weapons available. He also took a knife with him.

Booth and his co-conspirators gathered that evening at the Herndon House Hotel. This was located near the theater. Months earlier, Booth had planned to kidnap Lincoln and hold him as a hostage of the Confederacy. Booth wasn't alone in this idea. There had been other plans of kidnapping and assassination in an effort to help the Southern cause. Booth's co-conspirators included John Harrison Surratt, Lewis Powell, David



Herold, and George Atzerodt. There were several others around this core group. They had tried to kidnap Lincoln once already, but that plan failed.

Atzerodt was supposed to kill the Vice-President Johnson in his room at the Kirkwood House. Lewis Powell was supposed to kill William Seward, who was recovering at home from a recent carriage accident. David Herold was supposed to wait outside the Seward home, then accompany Powell out of the city to a meeting place. Booth was supposed to enter Ford Theatre and kill Lincoln.

Without their knowledge, Booth wrote a letter about the plan and their certainty that this would spur the Confederacy to fight on. He gave it to a friend with instructions to take it to a newspaper the following day. He signed all of their names to the letter. The friend, fearing that he would be implicated in the assassination, destroyed the letter.

The Lincolns had dealt with a great deal of emotional stress over the years of Lincoln's presidency. Their son, Willie, died in 1862. Both parents grieved the loss. Lincoln's first term as president was especially difficult because of the war. While Mary stood firmly by her husband's side, she had critics who pointed out her jealous nature and her shopping habits.

The Lincolns were late leaving for the theater. The Grants and several others had decided not to attend the performance with the Lincolns but Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris, went with the Lincolns. There was some discussion about waiting for the Lincolns to arrive but the performance began at 8 o'clock. It was a half hour later that the Lincolns arrived. The performance stopped and the orchestra played "Hail to the Chief" while the audience stood and applauded for the President. Lincoln bowed to the audience from his place in the presidential box.

Analysis

The author made an important note in the first section of the book. He points out that the people involved in the Civil War were all Americans. The only real way to differentiate between a Union soldier and a Confederate soldier was by their uniforms. Once a man took off his uniform, it was impossible to tell at a glance whether he was a Union supporter or a Confederate sympathizer. This is important because it means that Booth and others who support the Southern cause don't stand out by looks alone. This allows Booth to get near enough to kill Lincoln without giving any of Lincoln's protectors a chance to stop the assassination.

Lincoln spoke several times over the course of this story from windows of the White House, which was called the Executive Mansion at this time in history. The author noted that Booth was standing just above Lincoln during the inauguration. A woman in the crowd during another of Lincoln's speeches noted that it would be an easy matter for someone to shoot Lincoln. That speech was given during the dark and Lincoln's son was holding a lamp so those gathered could see the President. In that situation, it would be difficult to determine who even fired a gun. The author seems to be making a point to



set the scene for the upcoming assassination. There is no real protection around Lincoln or his family, even on the White House grounds.

The author described Booth and his passions in Chapter 1. These included Southern honor and manners. It seems that Booth is deeply romantic and dramatic at heart, which may be attributed, at least in part, by his theatrical upbringing. As an actor, he was famous. Many people in both the North and the South recognized him. He was considered almost impossibly handsome. The reader should remember that Booth was treated like a rock star of the day. He was probably welcomed into almost any home or event, simply by showing up. He was probably invited to all sorts of events and parties, and was likely surrounded by people vying for his time and attention. The author also writes that Booth was drawn by the “romance of lost causes,” which may have accounted for at least part of his devotion to the South. It should be noted that he was living and performing in Washington, D.C., at this time, meaning he lived and worked among the Northerners despite claiming to be devoted to the Southern cause.

Mary Surratt's role in the assassination seems, on the surface, to be fairly benign. Booth gave her a package and asked her to leave it at a tavern she owned in the country. She was also supposed to tell the innkeeper to get some guns ready for Booth to pick up. The key to Mary Surratt's guilt is that her son was a Confederate spy which meant that she was probably involved in espionage as well, at least on some level. Later, the author will introduce a conspiracy theory involving the assassination. The leader of the manhunt for Booth was determined to return Booth to Washington for trial, but someone shot him before he could be captured. The idea is that someone wanted to be certain Booth couldn't reveal all the details about the assassination plan. This, along with Surratt's role in the planning, could be enough to make the reader wonder if there was more to Lincoln's assassination than Booth and his few close conspirators.

The author repeatedly makes the point that any number of people had access to the President and that there was a marked lack of security. Booth and his band of conspirators could have killed Lincoln long before the night at the Ford Theatre. Booth was well known and could have had an audience with Lincoln almost at a moment's notice. He could have walked into the White House and murdered Lincoln before anyone could have stopped him. However, the author also notes that doing so would have been a suicide mission. Though Booth and his conspirators were determined to help the Southern cause, they really didn't want to die for it.

Booth's choice of weapon could have been made on a whim but it could also be a significant indication of his personality. He chose a Derringer. It fires a single shot and the only way to fire again is to reload. That means Booth has one shot to kill Lincoln and to make his escape. There are other guns available to him, including some that shoot multiple rounds without reloading. The author suggests that Booth's theatrical nature prompted his choice. Booth's nature is one of the book's themes.

Every plan of this sort has a weak link. The weakest link in Booth's plan was Atzerodt. He didn't really want to kill Johnson and he apparently had reservations about it from the beginning. The author points out that Atzerodt might have walked out of the planning



meeting with Booth and gone straight to the authorities. That would have put a stop to the assassination and prompted a manhunt for the conspirators. While that seems like a possibility, the reader should keep in mind that Booth and Surratt were staunch supporters of the South. Their rhetoric would have been difficult to ignore, especially considering Atzerodt was apparently often in their company. It seems more reasonable to believe that he would agree to go along with the plan, even though he does back out before carrying out his part.

There is yet another example of the lack of security as Lincoln attends the theater performance with his wife and friends. There isn't a guard at the door and there isn't anyone charged with protecting Lincoln, even though there had been threats against him throughout his presidency, mainly related to the Civil War.

Discussion Question 1

Describe how Booth planned to cripple the Union by killing three of its top leaders.

Discussion Question 2

Describe John Wilkes Booth and the aspects of his nature that would make him a likely candidate to carry out the assassination.

Discussion Question 3

Describe security around Lincoln and the White House during this time in history. What has changed with modern practices and why do you think these changes occurred?

Vocabulary

secede, conflict, resume, illumination, delirious, desire, observer, appropriate, inauguration, rejoiced, patriotic, henchmen, executive, serenading, scampering, aspiring, chaos, incite, notorious, quirks, optimism, eloquent



Chapters 2-4

Summary

In Chapter 2, Booth had a rented horse and a theater employee agreed to hold the horse in the alley outside the theater. About 10 o'clock, Booth went through the theater and had a drink at the Star Saloon. He didn't speak to anyone while he was there. Next, Booth went through the theater lobby and discovered that there was only one servant, Charles Forbes, near the door to the box where the Lincolns were watching the play. Forbes allowed Booth to enter the box.

Abraham Lincoln was holding Mary's hand and no one heard Booth enter. Booth had hidden a piece of a music stand in the box earlier that day and he used it to bar the door from the inside. Booth waited for a specific moment in the play when he knew the audience would laugh loudly, covering the sound of his gun. Lincoln never saw Booth. The bullet struck him in the back of the head and Lincoln's head slumped forward.

Major Rathbone immediately recognized the sound of the gunshot. He rose and confronted Booth. The men fought and Booth hit him with a knife. Rathbone managed to deflect the blow with his arm.

Booth jumped to the stage but Rathbone grabbed for him, throwing him off-balance and causing him to hurt his leg in the landing. By this point, some people knew something was wrong but some thought the noise and movement was part of the play. Booth stopped in the middle of the stage and yelled the Virginia state motto, "Sic semper tyrannis," which means "thus always to tyrants." He then yelled that the South had been avenged and rushed from the stage. Clara shouted from the box that Booth had shot Lincoln.

In Chapter 3, Secretary of State William Seward was at his home, recovering from a serious carriage accident. Lincoln had visited a few days after the accident and was worried about Seward. Seward's daughter, Fanny Seward, was caring for her father. She was her father's favorite child and was well-educated. The fact that Seward was at home meant Powell knew he was be at home. The fact that Seward lived in a 3-story mansion meant Powell would have difficulty finding him.

Powell entered the house by pretending to be a messenger for Seward's doctor. He claimed to have new medicine and insisted on seeing Seward. A servant, William Bell, tried to take the delivery from Powell but Powell insisted on seeing Seward. Powell continued to push his way toward the staircase and the servant relented, leading the way. Seward's son, Frederick, confronted Powell and Powell continued to insist on seeing Seward. Powell figured out where Seward was and fought with several members of the household in his attempt to kill Seward.



Powell used a knife on Seward and everyone initially believed Seward was dead, but he survived. Fanny ran to the window and screamed toward the street. David Herold was waiting for Powell but the yelling from the house scared him into leaving. The fighting continued in the house and Powell, believing he'd killed Seward, ran away. William Bell chased him for awhile but couldn't keep up with Powell's horse.

In Chapter 4, an Army major named Joseph Stewart was in the audience at the theater. He was the only person who chased Booth but Booth got away. He rode his horse through downtown. He reached a bridge that was literally the only way for Booth to get out of the city. It was manned and there was a curfew in effect. Booth lied his way through the block and was allowed to leave the city.

Back at the Seward house, Fanny worried about another attack. Seward was alive and conscious, though he had a serious knife wound to his face.

At Ford Theatre, Dr. Charles Leale rushed to Lincoln's box. Rathbone asked Leale to look at his wound first. Leale assured Rathbone that the wound wasn't fatal and turned his attention to Lincoln. Because Rathbone was cut with a knife, Leale expected to find that Lincoln had also been stabbed. He searched for wounds on Lincoln's torso before finding the bullet hole in the back of Lincoln's head. Leale removed clotted blood from the wound in an effort to avoid brain damage and did a version of resuscitation known at the time. He announced that Lincoln, though still alive, wouldn't survive.

Meanwhile, George Atzerodt was armed with a revolver and a knife. He went to the hotel where Johnson was staying. It would have been easy to go to Johnson's room and ask to see the vice-president, but Atzerodt simply couldn't bring himself to do the deed. Both Powell and Atzerodt were stuck inside the city. Herold went to the bridge and, despite the curfew, gained permission to pass. He was out of the city. Booth was worried because he didn't have the skills to survive days of hiding in the woods.

A young actress named Laura Keene managed to get into the president's box by carrying a pitcher of water. Once there, she asked to "cradle" Lincoln's head in her lap and Leale, for some unknown reason, allowed it. Keene's dress was soon soaked with Lincoln's blood and bits of brain matter. She was never well-known as an actress but became well-known for this moment of theatrical maneuvering.

Dr. Leale didn't want to let the United States President die in the theater. He organized men to carry Lincoln out of the building but then was at a loss. He knew Lincoln would not survive the jostling trip back to the White House in a carriage. He sent someone to a house across the street but no one was home. Then someone from a boarding house next door called out and Leale had Lincoln taken inside. The boarding house was called the Peterson House and this is where Lincoln died.

Analysis

The theater box that Lincoln occupied at the time of the assassination was a little more complex than just a seating area. There was an inner part of the box and Booth blocked



the door of the outer part using a piece of a music stand. He gained entry and blocked the door without alerting anyone to his presence.

The description of the assassination is fairly graphic. The author writes that the bullet traveled through Lincoln's brain and stopped just behind his eye. The descriptions continue to be this graphic as the story goes on to include the actions of the surgeon who first attended Lincoln. That surgeon pulled a glob of clotted blood from the wound, which includes some brain matter. In modern terms, these details would not be too much for most readers but some might find the graphic details disturbing.

Booth's personality came into play again as he was leaving the stage. He shouted out the Virginia state motto and then yelled out that the South had been avenged. The author writes that Booth recognized this as his final moment on stage. This is another example of Booth's vain nature and of his need to be in the limelight. Booth's nature is a theme that drives a great deal of the action in the book.

There are some graphics in the book that show the mindsets of the time. There was naturally a great deal of public interest in the assassination and several graphics depicted the assassination. One of the graphics shows Booth preparing to go into the theater box while the Devil looked on. Another showed Lincoln standing as Booth jumped to the stage. Lincoln never stood up and of course there wasn't a tangible evil presence, the graphics serve as a means of showing how the people perceived the event.

Powell and Herold were supposed to work as a team to kill Seward. Powell was not familiar with Washington, D.C., and Herold was going to help him get out of the city. Herold was holding Powell's horse outside the Seward house and was supposed to wait for Powell. When Fanny began screaming out the window, Herold panicked and decided to leave without Powell. He did leave Powell's horse but he left the city without Herold. The entire situation was an example of the fact that the men planned the assassinations quickly and didn't really go through possible scenarios. Powell didn't know how to get out of the city and was literally stuck there until he was captured. The assassination plans and the fallout are one of the book's themes.

The reader should remember that the fastest way for news to travel was by word of mouth. Booth left the theater and rode through downtown without being stopped by anyone because no one yet knew about the assassination. Booth rushed from the city and even passed through a group of soldiers after having just assassinated the President. No one stopped to question him and the soldiers allowed him to pass, even though there was a curfew in effect and they were not supposed to allow any traffic that late. The other members of the conspiracy continued to travel at this time too. This was an important part of Booth's plan because he really believed that they could all get out of town before news of the three assassinations spread.

Laura Keene is an interesting aside to the story of Lincoln's assassination. She wasn't of any medical value at the scene but she recognized the theatrical element to the situation. She probably knew that she could become famous for her first-hand account



of the assassination and she was smart enough to cash in on that. She was never a renowned actress but she did become well known for her contact with the dying President. She was dressed in her costume from the play and there's no explanation for why Leale even allowed her to "cradle" Lincoln's head. She apparently didn't ask if she could help, but merely asked if she could hold Lincoln's head. Looking at the information the author gives on Leale, it seems unlikely that he would allow it, but he apparently did. The end result is that Keene had a dress stained with Lincoln's blood. The dress no longer exists, according to the author, though there are swatches of it that survived the years. It's left to the reader to decide how big a role Keene really plays in the story and whether her part is significant.

Leale's thoughts after realizing that Lincoln was going to die seem to focus on having the President die with a level of respect befitting the office. It was Good Friday, which is a holy day in many religions. The fact that the Lincolns were at a theater on this date was a bit outrageous and may have brought censure from some people. Leale, as a member of the military, was interested in preserving the President's dignity and reputation. He didn't want Lincoln to die in this house of entertainment. This is a sign of the era and an indication of the typical mindset of the time period.

There are several brief paragraphs designed to introduce various characters and their roles in the assassination. Later, Booth would seek out medical attention from Dr. Samuel Mudd. In this chapter, the author notes that Mudd and his family were at home in the hours after the assassination when Booth and Herold were getting out of Washington. The author merely mentions Mudd then moves on to other topics, but it's enough to make the reader wonder or remember Mudd's role in the coming events.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the assassination.

Discussion Question 2

Why did Leale want to be certain that Lincoln didn't die at the theater?

Discussion Question 3

What do you think of Laura Keene's role in the event? Compare her actions to people who stop to look at the scene of a crime or accident.

Vocabulary

vain, jeopardized, ill-mannered, pest, elite, diplomatic, bedridden, confidants, avenged, exaggeration, muzzle, vestibule, incredible, horrified, abandoning, patrons, hovered, spurred, pursuit, cherished, marvel, vanished, miraculously



Chapters 5-6

Summary

In Chapter 5, Booth and Herold arrived at Surratt's tavern. No one this far from Washington, D.C., yet knew about the assassination. In Washington, news was spreading through the streets. At first, everyone was saying that Seward and Lincoln had both been killed. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton had declined to attend the play with the Lincolns. He visited Seward and then went home. At 10 o'clock, he was preparing for bed. His wife answered the doorbell and a messenger related that Seward was dead. Stanton initially doubted the story because he'd been at Seward's house just an hour earlier. He rushed to the Seward house and found that Seward was alive but that the story of the attack was real. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles arrived at the Seward home and the two men heard that Lincoln had been shot. Stanton realized the two attacks might be part of a larger plan and ordered guards for all members of the cabinet and for Vice-President Johnson.

Stanton and Welles then rushed to the theater where they had to push through a mob of people in the street. The people had gathered as news of the assassination spread. When a group of men carried the lifeless body of President Lincoln up the stairs, the people got a glimpse of his body. He was now very near death but still holding to life.

Meanwhile, Herold had caught up with Booth and they arrived at Surrattsville, Maryland. They went to the tavern and Herold woke the innkeeper. Booth was now aware that his leg was severely injured and he remained on his horse while Herold collected the items from Mr. Lloyd. Booth couldn't contain himself and announced to Lloyd that he was "pretty certain" they had assassinated Lincoln and Seward. Lloyd didn't understand Booth's words and went back to bed.

Back in Washington, Lincoln was taken to a back bedroom of the boarding house. People began pushing their way inside in an effort to get another look at the President. When Stanton arrived, he set up a temporary command center, posted guards, and took control of the situation. He realized the attacks might be part of a larger plot and feared that the Confederates might even be marching to attack Washington, D.C., in force. He began the investigation and was soon certain Booth was responsible for Lincoln's assassination. He launched a manhunt which came up empty with regard to Booth but investigators soon found information further implicating Booth and they began to piece together the band of conspirators. Mary Surratt was questioned.

Leale examined Lincoln's body and found only the single gunshot wound. He allowed Mary to sit beside her husband but he didn't respond to her at all. Leale sent for the Lincoln's oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln, two additional surgeons, and Lincoln's pastor. Leale also sent a messenger in search of a Nelaton probe, a special piece of equipment to probe the brain. When the other doctors and the probe arrived, they probed into Lincoln's brain but eventually gave up and just waited for him to die. At one point, Mary



Lincoln cried out and fainted, and doctors banned her from the bedroom for the remainder of the vigil.

Booth and Herold arrived at the home of Dr. Samuel Mudd. Mudd had been part of a conspiracy to kidnap Lincoln months earlier. Mudd examined Booth and announced that his leg was broken. He fashioned a splint and allowed Booth and Herold to get some rest. He didn't yet know about the assassination.

In Chapter 6, Lincoln was near death. There were three doctors in the room. Each was monitoring the President with a watch in hand. At 7:22 and 10 seconds, Lincoln's heart stopped. Lincoln's pastor prayed. Stanton sent telegrams to spread the news to the nation. Robert Lincoln told his mother that his father was dead. She couldn't bring herself to enter the room. She returned to the White House about an hour and a half later.

Stanton was alone in Lincoln's room later that morning. He took a lock of Lincoln's hair and sent it in a sealed envelope to Mary Jane Welles, wife of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. Mary Jane was one of Mary Lincoln's closest friends. She later framed the lock along with a flower from the funeral. Lincoln's body was placed in a plain wooden coffin and taken back to the White House.

Vice-President Johnson took the oath of office at 11 o'clock. He didn't give a formal address.

Lieutenant David Dana was heavily involved in the hunt for Booth but he was following a lot of false leads. Stanton called for help with the investigation. He was certain there was no impending attack on Washington but feared Booth and the others would make it to the safety of the South.

Booth remained in bed while Samuel Mudd and Herold headed to town in search of a carriage to better transport Booth. When they reached the nearby town of Bryantown, Herold saw Union forces. Knowing they were searching for Lincoln's assassin, Herold made an excuse and returned to the Mudd house. Mudd continued into town and heard the Booth had killed Lincoln. He didn't indicate that he knew where Booth was, but returned home and insisted that Booth and Herold leave immediately.

Analysis

Stanton was very close to Lincoln. As Secretary of War, he was in charge of planning, recruiting, and training. He and Lincoln became very close during the war, probably because of all the time they spent working out details. Stanton was the kind of man who readily stepped up to take charge, and he was the first to take steps to provide protection for the other high-ranking government officials. If Atzerodt hadn't backed out, Stanton would have been too late to protect Johnson. Stanton's reaction to the assassination is part of a larger theme in the book.



As noted in the style section of this guide, it's impossible to tell exactly what are the author's opinions and what are facts from reliable documents. This chapter includes one of those cases. The author writes that the doctors probed Lincoln's brain, searching for the bullet for possible removal, "as if that would have helped Lincoln." The author is probably right in that there was nothing the doctors could do to save Lincoln's life. Even with modern-day medical techniques, Lincoln would likely have died within a few hours of the shooting. However, the author seems to criticize the doctors for their "tinkering." It seems likely that the doctors were desperate to find something that would save Lincoln and that their "tinkering" was simply their best efforts at doing something rather than waiting for Lincoln to die. It's left to the reader to determine which passages are opinion and which are fact, and whether the author's opinions are valid.

Dr. Mudd's role in the events surrounding Booth's escape is convoluted by prior involvement. Mudd and Booth actually met much earlier when Booth was involved in a plan to kidnap Lincoln. The plan was to move Lincoln from the Union strongholds into Confederate-ruled territories where Lincoln might be traded for Confederate prisoners or used as some other bargaining chip in the Civil War. The plan hit problems and was never carried out, though Mudd had been designated to help the kidnapers escape the area. When the plan wasn't carried out, Mudd apparently didn't expect to see Booth again. Then Booth showed up in the middle of the night, disheveled and tired, and in need of medical attention. Mudd recognized Booth who somehow managed to keep quiet about the assassination. Mudd probably knew that something was going on but he apparently didn't ask and Booth didn't give details. Later, Mudd's actions would be seriously questioned but he managed to avoid being hanged with the conspirators.

Stanton took a lock of Lincoln's hair, sealed it in an envelop, and sent it to Mary Jane Welles. His motivation for this act is only briefly discussed. Mary Jane Welles and Mary Lincoln were good friends. Mary Jane had helped when the Lincoln's son became ill and died. It may be that Stanton saw the connection between the Lincolns and Mary Jane Welles as one of the most important personal relationships the Lincolns had. Regardless of the motivation, the lock of hair became a treasured keepsake. Welles framed it along with a flower from the funeral. This is yet another example of the various reactions of people to the assassination.

There is only a little description of the Peterson House. It was a boarding house and there were people living there at the time of the assassination. Lincoln was taken to a bedroom at the back of the house. The house became something of a command post for Stanton and there were doctors, a pastor, family, and officials crowded into the rooms in the hours leading up to Lincoln's death.

The author wrote that Lincoln would have liked the simplicity of the plain wooden box used for a coffin to transport his body back to the White House. This is another case where he seems to be offering an opinion rather than a fact, though it seems that he is probably correct in this instance. There is not a lot of information offered about Lincoln prior to the days leading up to the assassination, but he was, by all accounts, a man of simple tastes. This is another case in which it's left to the reader to decide if the analysis is correct.



Mudd was in a quandary when he learned that Booth had killed Lincoln. Mudd had been involved in the plot to kidnap Lincoln but he hadn't been included in the plan to kill the President. He was sympathetic to Booth's situation but he really didn't want to be involved. Mudd's willingness to participate in the kidnapping but not in the murder is not defined. It may be that he simply hadn't had time to prepare to hide Booth and feared being brought to justice along with Booth. It may also be that he was willing to support the Confederacy, but not to the point of murder.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think the doctors probed Lincoln's brain? Were they hoping to repair the damage or was there some other motivation?

Discussion Question 2

How was Lincoln moved back to the White House? What does the author say about the coffin used to move the body?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the Peterson House. Why was Lincoln taken there to die rather than taken back to the White House?

Vocabulary

mayhem, saturated, hovered, swarming, glimpse, ascending, lurk, typical, establishment, impulsive, grotesque, catastrophic, premeditated, deterioration, martyr, muck, vegetation, vanished, distress, confirmation, tyrant, consulted

Chapters 7-10

Summary

In Chapter 7, Lincoln's death prompted people to call Easter Sunday Black Easter. Booth and Herold arrived at the home of a Confederate named Cox. Booth remained at the home of Cox and his son for several days. No one knows the details of their conversations but Cox put them in touch with a man named Thomas Jones who could help them get across the Potomac River. Jones had served as a Secret Service agent for the Confederacy. He took on the task but warned that Booth and Herold needed to remain hidden until Jones decided the crossing was safe. Booth and Herold agreed. Jones was to return with food and supplies for the two men, who were hiding in a wooded area. Booth specifically asked for newspapers so he could read what was being said about the assassination.

George Atzerodt had managed to get out of Washington, D.C. He was in Maryland, north of Booth's location. When he arrived at the home of an acquaintance, someone teasingly asked if he had killed Lincoln. Atzerodt answered to the affirmative and gave details about the attack on Seward. One of the guests later informed authorities. The manhunt continued. Stanton knew Booth was guilty but didn't know how he had managed to escape.

Jones returned to Booth's hideout on April 17. He had supplies and newspapers. Booth was horrified to find that he wasn't being lauded as a hero. Union troops passed nearby and Booth agreed with Jones that they needed to wait longer before attempting to make a move.

In Chapter 8, the manhunt continued. Officers again questioned Mary Surratt at her boarding house. Lewis Powell arrived during the questioning, claiming he had been hired to do some work for Surratt. She claimed she didn't know him. Caught in the lie, he was arrested without incident. Mary Surratt, her daughter Anna, and a boarder were also arrested. Officers searched the house and found several Confederate photos as well as a picture of John Wilkes Booth. Mary Surratt was imprisoned and later hanged among the conspirators.

Stanton was in charge of the manhunt but he was also still focusing on bringing the Civil War to an end and beginning reconstruction in the war-torn South. He handed over some of the duties of the manhunt to others.

In Chapter 9, Booth continued to hide. He had now been on the run for days without clean clothes or a bath. All this was contrary to his usual fastidious appearance. He and Herold were bound for homes of Confederate sympathizers in Virginia and their appearance might have meant they weren't welcomed.



Booth had been “stunned” by the newspaper accounts of the assassination. There was no mention of his reasons for killing Lincoln. Booth had heard a lot of criticism against Lincoln prior to the assassination but all that seemed to be forgotten. In addition, Powell's attack on the Seward household was vicious. Booth didn't understand why Powell would have attacked Seward's family and the nurse. Booth began to believe the newspapers were suppressing the letter he'd written as a way of explaining why he shot Lincoln. In fact, his friend had become afraid of being associated with the plot and had burned the letter rather than delivering it. Booth began writing in his small date book, detailing the assassination and his reasons for carrying it out.

Mudd was afraid that he would be implicated in the plot because he treated Booth and allowed him to spend a night at his house. He sent his cousin to town soon after Booth left the Mudd house. The cousin was supposed to casually mention to Union troops that some strangers had stopped by Mudd's house. He did but the troops didn't act on the tip for days. By the time they arrived, Booth was long gone and Mudd pretended that he didn't know the identity of the men. He was vague in his answers. The troops searched the area but soon left. Mudd thought he had successfully thrown off any suspicion but the officer actually felt certain that Mudd was “guilty of something.”

On April 19, Lincoln's funeral was held. The manhunt continued. Officers searched the home of Booth's sister and confiscated anything related to Booth, whether it related to the assassination or not. George Atzerodt remained at his cousin's home for several days and was arrested there without incident. As soon as he was in custody, he confessed to his role in the assassinations and to the foiled kidnapping plot. He mentioned plenty of names, including Dr. Samuel Mudd and Mary Surratt. With both Powell and Atzerodt in custody, the search for Booth intensified. Stanton offered a huge reward for Booth, Herold, and John Surratt, Mary Surratt's son. He was actually out of the country at the time of the assassination but officials felt certain he was involved during the early days of the investigation.

In Chapter 10, Jones saw the Union troops leaving town, chasing a tip that Booth was in another county. Booth and Herold had been hiding in the woods for four nights by that point. At dark, Jones took Booth and Herold to the Potomac River where his servant had hidden a boat. Booth tried to pay Jones but he accepted only 18 dollars, the price he'd paid for the boat. Booth was to navigate using a compass while Herold rowed. Jones went home and later guessed that Booth and Herold had probably reached their destination across the river. They were actually rowing the wrong way. They landed the boat at another point in Maryland where Herold found they were near the home of a friend. They stayed there for the following days.

The manhunt continued and officers again questioned Mudd. He claimed one of the men wore a false beard. When he was shown a picture of Booth, Mudd seemed surprised and claimed to suddenly realize the man was John Wilkes Booth. At one point, officers questioned Thomas Jones because of his reputation as a Confederate Secret Service officer. Jones refused to admit anything and was imprisoned briefly.



Analysis

For the first time in Chapter 7, the author reveals that Booth had no illusions about his ability to escape. He told Thomas Jones that he knew his chances were slim and that he didn't intend to be taken alive. Jones believed Booth. Jones apparently told of his role in Booth's attempts to escape years after all the relevant parties were dead. He had held off while there were people who might be hurt by his information, but had told his story to a journalist once he felt it was safe. Jones had been a Confederate spy and had been imprisoned for his role in the Confederacy. He was not particularly afraid of danger but he also wasn't foolish. He did a great deal for Booth but he drew the line when it became likely that he would be caught.

The officials conducting the manhunt were desperate for leads and for some successes to report. At one point, they arrested anyone remotely connected with the assassination. Edman Spangler was a stagehand at Ford's Theatre. He held Booth's horse while Booth was inside the theater. Spangler was arrested and held in prison as a possible accomplice. The owners of Ford's Theatre were also arrested and the theater was confiscated. While history shows that these people weren't involved in the assassination, the investigators at the time were under pressure to show quick results.

Thomas Jones was an interesting piece of Booth's attempted escape. He was a former Confederate Secret Service agent and had spent years helping the Confederate cause. He was not afraid of danger and willingly put himself in harm's way to help Booth. He apparently supported Booth's action and helped Booth because of his devotion to the South.

John Surratt and his mother, Mary Surratt, were known Southern sympathizers. The author notes in another chapter that Mary Surratt had moved to Washington, D.C., "under a cloud of suspicion." The author doesn't go into deeper detail but the reader has to remember the situation of this era. The country is clearly divided in the support of the North or the South. Southern sympathizers so far North might be in danger and would be treated as traitors if they were caught actively supporting the South. John Surratt's name was one of the first to be suggested as being part of Booth's co-conspirators. He was actually out of the country at the time and didn't have anything to do with the assassination, but he knew that he would be accused and might even be found guilty by association. He left the United States and didn't return for years.

The quest for justice was a recurring theme in the book, seen from the moments after the assassination. The division between the North and the South is another recurring theme. The two themes come together as the manhunt for Booth and Herold went on for days following Lincoln's death. The men charged with catching Booth were relentless. Even though they made some mistakes and had some near-misses when Booth was within reach, they continued to search. Secretary of War Stanton put out notice that there was a total of \$100,000 in reward money for the three men thought to be at the heart of the conspiracy. This meant that Booth and Herold had to be careful because there were many people – in addition to the Union soldiers – looking for justice.



However, the ongoing Civil War and the clear division of loyalties meant that they were able to find people willing to help them. Dr. Samuel Mudd treated Booth and planned to send the soldiers in the wrong direction to give Booth more time to get away. Mudd did insist that Booth leave his farm, which was understandable because he didn't want to be charged in the assassination that he knew nothing about. Jones helped Booth and Herold hide, provided supplies, and helped them get started across the river. If Booth and Herold had followed Jones' instructions, they might have fully escaped justice. Describe Thomas Jones' role in Booth's escape. Why was Jones willing to go to such lengths to help Booth?

Discussion Question 1

Describe Booth's interaction with Mudd and Mudd's response to being drawn into helping Booth after the assassination.

Discussion Question 2

What was Stanton's role in the Civil War and in the manhunt?

Discussion Question 3

Describe Thomas Jones' role in Booth's escape. Why was Jones willing to go to such lengths to help Booth?

Vocabulary

foiled, frantic, pursuers, progressed, evidence, hoist, worsening, maniac, dragnet, massive, tribunal, reconstruction, delegate, deplored, jostled, profoundly, spectacle, confiscated, implicated, emitted, gesture, tarried, alleged



Chapters 11-14; Epilogue

Summary

In Chapter 11, Booth and Herold left their hiding place and again rowed across the Potomac River. This time they reached their intended destination of Virginia. Jones had instructed them to contact a former Southern spy named Elizabeth Queensberry. She was initially suspicious but when Herold mentioned Jones, she agreed to help. She probably knew the identities of the men. She got horses for them and Booth and Herold set off. They stopped at the home of Dr. Richard Stuart and the men expected to be welcomed with traditional Southern hospitality. Stuart had figured out their true identities. Stuart gave them food and insisted they leave immediately. Booth wrote Stuart a letter and berated him for his rudeness.

Booth and Herold next went to the home of a black man named Lucas. They threatened him into allowing them to stay for the night. The next day, Lucas's son drove the wagon that took Booth and Herold farther South to Port Conway. There, a fisherman named William Rollins agreed to take them across the Rappahannock River to Port Royal. While they were waiting for Rollins to prepare for the crossing, 3 soldiers arrived. Herold discovered they were Confederates and he identified himself and Booth as Lincoln's killers. The soldiers agreed to help Booth and Herold. Rollins took the five men across the river.

They arrived at Locust Hill and stopped at the home of Richard Garrett. The soldiers identified Booth as a wounded Confederate soldier and asked Garrett to take care of him for a few days. Garrett's own sons had returned safely from the war and he agreed. The Garretts lived up to Booth's expectations of Southern hospitality. They had a leisurely meal and Booth played with the Garrett children. Herold went to the town of Bowling Green where he bought shoes and spent the night.

Back in Washington, D.C., one of the investigators got a tip that two men had recently crossed the Potomac River. The two men seen were not Booth and Herold but the tip prompted officials to send soldiers to that spot. The investigation continued and Mudd was arrested.

The next day, the Garretts learned that a large reward had been offered for the men who assassinated Lincoln. They talked with Booth about the assassination, speculating on the killer's motivation. Booth still didn't reveal that he was the killer, but he told them why he'd done it. Booth knew that it was time to move on and asked for a map of the region. When he became "agitated" at the sight of riders passing by the farm, the Garretts began to be suspicious. When he and Herold ran into the woods at the sight of soldiers passing by, the Garretts became more so.

The 16th New York Calvary arrived at Port Conway on April 25. They learned where Booth had crossed the river and that he was now accompanied by soldiers. Rollins and



his wife knew the soldiers and identified them by name. They also knew that one of the soldiers, Willie Jett, had been courting a young lady in Bowling Green. The soldiers headed in that direction.

The Garretts had become convinced that having Booth in the house was dangerous. They gave in to Booth's demands to stay another night but refused to let them stay in the house. He insisted that Booth and Herold spend the night in a tobacco shed on the property. The Garretts had become worried that Booth and Herold would steal horses during the night. After Booth and Herold were inside the shed, one of the Garrett sons quietly locked and bolted the door from the outside.

Meanwhile, the Calvary reached Bowling Green and captured Jett. He told them where Booth and Herold were staying, then led them to the farm. The soldiers arrived while it was still dark. The Garretts were soon roused. Booth and Herold woke to the sound of horses. Booth told Herold that he would not let the soldiers capture him alive.

One of the officers sent Richard Garrett's son, John, into the barn to talk to Booth. Booth threatened to kill him and John ran out without accomplishing anything. Herold decided he would give himself up. Booth called him a coward but Herold left the barn and was taken into custody. Officers decided to burn the barn in an effort to force Booth out. They made the Garretts pile kindling by the barn but Booth threatened them and they ran back out of pistol range. The soldiers then set the barn on fire.

The soldiers could see inside the barn and they watched Booth. He was still determined that he wouldn't be captured alive. The soldiers expected Booth to rush out but he remained inside. One of the soldiers was named Boston Corbett. He was at the side of the barn, watching Booth through cracks in the wall. He put his gun through the slat and fired, striking Booth in the neck. Booth was paralyzed and dying.

The soldiers rushed inside and pulled Booth out of the burning building. They eventually moved him to the Garrett's porch and called for a doctor who confirmed that there was nothing that could save Booth's life. Herold was tied a short distance away and watched the entire scene. Booth was in terrible pain and asked the soldiers to kill him. One of the officers took all the possessions from Booth's pockets, including a diary, money, keys, compass, knife, and tobacco.

The officers had not intended for Booth to die. There was a theory that the assassination was part of a Confederate plot and that Booth had been instructed to kill Lincoln, perhaps by high-ranking Confederate officials. They really wanted to capture him alive so that he might give names of those Confederates, or name others involved. However, the officers had not given any order on the subject. When officers asked who fired the shot, Corbett said he was afraid Booth was going to shoot some of the other soldiers.

In Chapter 12, one of the officers, Lieutenant Edward Doherty, wrapped Booth's body in a blanket and prepared to transport it back to Washington, D.C. Another officer, Everton Conger, rushed ahead to tell Stanton that Booth had been killed and to claim a share of



the reward money. Stanton ordered an autopsy to be certain that the body was John Wilkes Booth. Several people were called to identify him and his body was photographed. Officials claimed that Booth had been buried at sea but he was actually buried in an unmarked grave at Old Arsenal Penitentiary.

In Chapter 13, the people arrested in connection with the crime included the Garrett sons, but Stanton soon freed everyone except eight that he identified as conspirators in the assassination. They were Mary Surratt, Lewis Powell, David Herold, George Atzerodt, Samuel Arnold, Michael O'Laughlen, Edman Spangler, and Samuel Mudd. With the exception of Mudd, no one who helped Booth and Herold after the assassination was punished.

Mary Surratt, David Herold, George Atzerodt, and Lewis Powell were hanged. Samuel Arnold and Michael O'Laughlen were found guilty in the failed plot to kidnap Lincoln and were sentenced to prison. Edman Spangler was the man who held Booth's horse outside Ford's Theatre. Though he had no role in the assassination, he was found guilty and imprisoned.

There was a rush to claim the reward money and it took more than a year for the government to pay out. Boston Corbett was among those who received a share. He got \$1,653, as did every other non-commissioned officer among the Calvary that captured Herold and killed Booth. Corbett was not punished for shooting Booth because there was no clear order issued on the subject. He was notorious for awhile but eventually went mad and disappeared.

In Chapter 14, more than two months pass after Booth's death. Mary Surratt, Herold, Atzerodt, and Powell were hanged at the Old Arsenal Penitentiary. One graphic in the book is from a transcript of the trial in which the government claimed Mary Surratt was the "center of the conspiracy."

In the Epilogue, the author tells the fates of several of the people involved. President Andrew Johnson released John Wilkes Booth's body in 1869. Booth's brother buried it in an unmarked grave in the family plot at Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland. Johnson and Stanton didn't see eye-to-eye and Johnson tried to fire Stanton from his position as Secretary of War. Stanton refused to step down and was later named to the Supreme Court, but died before he could take that position. Seward survived but was always conscious of the scar on his face. His wife died just a couple of months after Lincoln's death and his beloved daughter, Fanny, died a year later. Major Rathbone and Clara Harris married but he later went crazy and killed her before committing suicide. Some 20 years after Lincoln's death, Thomas Jones told a journalist about his role in helping Booth, then he wrote a book.

Ford's Theatre was eventually restored as a museum and theater. Guests include modern-day presidents but no one sits in Lincoln's box, out of respect for the slain president. There are items on display of historic value, including the door to Lincoln's box and Booth's pistol. The Peterson House still stands as well and modern-day visitors can stand in the room where Lincoln died.



Analysis

Herold believed that he wasn't really guilty of anything and that's why he gave himself up. He had not been present when Booth shot Lincoln. He was at the Seward house but his only role in that attack was to stand outside and hold Powell's horse. He hadn't personally taken part in any of the attacks and he believed that he would be cleared of any real involvement. He apparently thought he would be forgiven for having helped Booth escape and that he would be allowed to just go home. Herold was actually hanged, as revealed in a later chapter.

The tobacco barn on the Garrett Farm was typical of such structures of this time frame. It was not a huge building and it was used for drying tobacco plants that had been harvested from the Garrett's fields. The barn was built so that air would flow through it, meaning there were large gaps between the boards of the barn. This is why the soldiers were able to see inside the building once the fire was lighting up the interior.

The author apparently presents another opinion during this chapter. He writes about the events immediately leading up to the capture of John Wilkes Booth and points out flaws in the process. He says the soldiers had the opportunity to rush into the barn and capture Booth alive but didn't. They sent a civilian in first, which seems a reckless choice even for that time frame. Then they set the barn on fire rather than just fighting their way in. Booth was armed and had no intention of being taken alive. The author says that the soldiers would certainly have suffered a few casualties if they had rushed into the barn, but goes on to write that those losses would have been acceptable for the possibility of capturing Booth alive. It's left to the reader to decide whether the soldiers reacted responsibly or if they did make mistakes.

There are several graphics in the final sections of the book, including a photo of Mary Surratt, Powell, Herold, and Atzerodt hanging on the gallows at the prison. There are also photos of several of the conspirators, including several of Powell. The author describes the photos of Powell as "haunting." Young readers may be surprised to find that these men look very much like modern-day people, including their clothing. Some of the clothes are clearly dated to that period, such as the ties and suits worn by O'Laughlen and Arnold, but Powell is wearing a trench coat in one set of photos and what appears to be a black pullover in another.

Some of the graphics may be disturbing to young readers. There is a photo of the hanging and another of the hoods worn by those about to be executed. However, the graphics have value in showing the events were real and that the book seeks to be historically accurate.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the fates of at least four of the people involved.



Discussion Question 2

Mary Surratt was hanged as a co-conspirator. Do you think she was really guilty in the assassination? Research outside the book to support your answer.

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Thomas Jones eventually told his story?

Vocabulary

operatives, essence, credentials, pungent, chiding, poise, militant, sustained, treachery, proprietor, denouncing, vowing, emancipation, inspire, commuted, verdict, depiction, rapid, confinement, violated



Characters

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was the president of the United States and president of the Union during the Civil War. Some call the era the most turbulent in American History. The rebellion lasted 4 years and Lincoln was in office to see the war's conclusion, but not long enough to help the country begin the rebuilding process. Lincoln was a firm believer that the Union was on the right side of the conflict and he made public speeches to that effect.

Lincoln was married to Mary Todd Lincoln and was father to two sons. He was a man of simple tastes and ideas, and he was determined to reunite the United States. He talked about the fact that blacks should have equal rights and believed that slavery was wrong. He had a sense of humor, as evidenced by one of his speeches in which he spoke of the Union having “captured” the traditional southern song, “Dixie.”

Lincoln took part in many important decisions during this period but most people remember him for his assassination. He and his wife, Mary, were at Ford's Theatre on a Friday night in 1865 when John Wilkes Booth entered the presidential box and shot Lincoln in the head at point-blank range. Lincoln never reacted and died a few hours later.

John Wilkes Booth

Booth was an actor who came up with the plan and carried out the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. He was 26 years old at the time of the murder. He was popular as an actor and was “impossibly vain,” probably at least partly because of his popularity. His family was theatrical and he was wealthy.

Booth was a staunch Confederate supporter and he was devastated by the news that the Confederacy had literally fallen to the Union troops. His devotion to the Southern cause was his reason for killing Lincoln. He felt that he could revive the Confederate will to fight by assassinating the president. The author noted that he failed in this endeavor because the Civil War was essentially at an end and Lincoln's death didn't change that. Booth wrote a letter explaining his reason for assassinating Lincoln and expected that letter to be published in a major newspaper. The friend who was entrusted with delivering the letter was afraid of being connected with the assassination, and he burned it instead of delivering it.

Booth was immediately identified as Lincoln's killer and a manhunt ensued. He had meticulously planned the assassination but seemed unprepared for the next step which had him on the run with few friends and few supplies. He remained at large for 12 days before a group of soldiers found him. Booth seemed to know he had little chance to escape but he stalled and essentially played a role during his final hours of life.



The plan was to take Booth back to Washington, D.C., alive, but someone shot him and those in command quickly realized that he wasn't going to live. He died before being returned for trial. Booth's body was initially buried in a prison graveyard but was eventually released to his brother for burial in the family's plot.

Mary Todd Lincoln

Mary was the wife of Abraham Lincoln. She stood firmly beside him during his presidency despite the fact that there were difficult times facing him as President and them as a couple. They lost their son Willie during Lincoln's term and Mary apparently had trouble dealing with that loss. Her critics failed to notice the positive aspects of her character but noted that she was jealous and had expensive shopping habits. Mary was present when her husband was assassinated. She was not injured.

Major Henry Rathbone

Rathbone was the guest of President and Mrs. Lincoln on the night of the assassination. He was in the theater box with the Lincolns when Booth entered and shot the President. Rathbone immediately recognized the sound of the gunshot and fought with Booth. Booth struck at him with a knife and might have killed Rathbone if the Major hadn't deflected the blow. The wound was not fatal and Rathbone continued the fight, throwing Booth off balance as he leaped from the box. It was Rathbone who caused Booth's injury to his leg.

While Rathbone seems to be something of a hero in the event, he insisted that the doctor look at his wound before attending Lincoln. The author notes that Rathbone later married Clara Harris but he had some sort of breakdown and murdered Clara before committing suicide.

Edwin M. Stanton

Stanton was the Secretary of War at the time of Lincoln's assassination. In that position, he was very close to Lincoln. He had been in charge of planning, training, and recruiting for the Civil War. Stanton visited Seward just an hour before the attack. Stanton was the first to take action to protect other high-ranking government officials after he learned of the attacks on Seward and Lincoln. He rushed to Lincoln's side and immediately took charge of the manhunt, even though he was still responsible for the final stages of the Civil War.

William H. Seward

Seward was the Secretary of State at the time of Lincoln's assassination. He was at home, recovering from a carriage accident when the assassination occurred. Lewis Powell entered Seward's home and tried to murder him as part of Booth's plan to cripple



the Union. Seward's family managed to fight off Powell but Seward was seriously injured when Powell cut his face. Initial rumors were that Seward was killed, but he recovered. The author notes that Seward always turned the scarred side of his face away when he was being photographed.

Dr. Charles Leale

Leale was an Army surgeon who attended the play on the night of the assassination because he heard that General Grant would be in attendance. He was the first doctor to attend to Lincoln and the first to discover the fatal gunshot wound in Lincoln's head. Leale knew Lincoln was dying but felt it was important that he not die in the theater. He led the effort to get Lincoln out of the theater but knew he would never survive the trip to the White House. Leale was among the doctors with Lincoln when he died.

David Herold

Herold was one of the conspirators in the assassination. He was to hold the horses while Lewis Powell assassinated Seward in his home. Herold panicked when the Seward household erupted in chaos and left Powell on his own. Herold was an accomplished outdoorsman and Booth was relieved to have Herold's help as he tried to escape into the countryside.

Herold caught up with Booth and they attempted to escape together. When it became evident that they weren't going to escape, Herold surrendered. He believed that he would not be punished because he hadn't taken an active role in Lincoln's murder. He was wrong and he was hanged with several of the other conspirators.

Lewis Powell

Powell was supposed to assassinate Secretary of State William Seward in Seward's home. Powell managed to gain access to Seward and struck him with a knife but didn't kill him. He was captured without incident. Booth was upset about Powell's brutal attack, which included injuries to several members of Seward's household.

George Atzerodt

Atzerodt was supposed to murder Vice-President Johnson at the hotel where Johnson was staying at the time. Atzerodt could be considered the weakest link in the group of Booth's conspirators. He didn't have the courage to go through with his role but he also didn't go to the authorities to warn of the planned assassinations. He went to Johnson's hotel but left without taking any steps toward the assassination.



Mary Surratt

Mary Surratt was the mother of John Harrison Surratt, a Confederate spy. She owned a boarding house in Washington, D.C., and owned a tavern in the country nearby. She delivered a package to the tavern at Booth's request and informed the tavern keeper to prepare guns for pickup. She was hanged as a conspirator in the assassination of President Lincoln.

Dr. Samuel A. Mudd

Dr. Mudd treated Booth's broken leg and gave him a place to stay until he learned that Booth was involved in the assassination of President Lincoln. Mudd had been heavily involved in the plan to kidnap Lincoln but was unwilling to help Booth after the murder. Mudd was held in prison until 1869.

Sergeant Boston Corbett

Corbett was present when the Calvary surrounded Booth and Herold at the Garrett farm. He saw an opportunity to shoot Booth and took it. He was something of a celebrity for awhile because he was the man who killed Booth, but that fame faded fairly quickly. He eventually went mad and simply disappeared.



Symbols and Symbolism

Confederates and Confederacy

Confederate soldiers were fighting for the Southern cause. They were also called Rebels and wore gray uniforms. The Confederacy referred to the Southern as a whole, including their military and the geographical region that formally joined the Southern cause.

Union Soldiers

Union soldiers were fighting for the Northern cause. They were also called Yankees and wore blue uniforms. Some Union soldiers were heavily involved in the manhunt for John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators.

The Civil War

This was a major conflict in the history of the United States. The war lasted four years and more than 600,000 deaths. John Wilkes Booth believed in the Southern cause and believed that assassinating Lincoln would make the Confederate soldiers fight harder.

Booth's Derringer

This was the weapon Booth chose when he went to assassinate Lincoln. This pistol had a single shot and Booth had other weapons available. He may have been seeking to make the assassination as theatrical as possible by using the Derringer.

The Peterson House

This was a boarding house across the street from the Ford Theatre. Dr. Leale didn't want to allow Lincoln to die in the theater, which was a house of entertainment, so he rushed Lincoln outside without a planned destination. Someone called out from the boarding house and Leale ordered that Lincoln be taken inside. That was where Lincoln died. This was where Stanton initially set up a command post to begin the investigation into the assassination and the manhunt for those responsible.

Surratt's Tavern

This was a tavern which doubled as an inn for travelers. The tavern was owned by Mary Surratt but she had leased it to Mr. Lloyd at the time of the assassination. Booth and



Herold stopped there to pick up a gun, binoculars, and liquor as they began their escape attempt.

The Assassination

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln became a major event in American history. John Wilkes Booth carried out the attack, believing he would become a hero for helping the Southern cause. Instead, the majority of people began to think of Lincoln as a martyr and condemned Booth and his co-conspirators.

The Tobacco Shed

This was a building on the Garrett Farm. Booth and Herold were locked in the shed when the Garretts became suspicious about their true identities and agendas. The shed was a traditional drying shed with spaces between the boards on the building's sides. This allowed air to circulate but it also allowed a soldier to shoot Booth.

The Montauk

This was a ship that was used as a prison to hold several of the conspirators who were awaiting trial following the assassination.

Our American Cousin

This was the play that was being performed the night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Booth was familiar with the play so he knew where the various actors would be at any point during the performance.

Settings

The President's Box

This is a small, private seating area reserved for President and Mrs. Lincoln. They were there on the night Booth assassinated Lincoln. The box is still in existence today and presidents still sometimes visit the theater, though none of them sit in Lincoln's box, out of respect for Lincoln's memory.

The Ford Theatre

This was the theater where Booth killed Lincoln. The theater was typical of performance houses of the day. There were private boxes reserved for special guests and the Lincolns sometimes took advantage of one of the boxes. The boxes could be joined together so the Lincolns could watch the performance with their guests on the evening Lincoln was murdered. The book includes some details, such as the existence of underground passageways. The building has been restored and modern-day plays are performed there. The building is also, in modern times, a museum to Lincoln's assassination and visitors can see the preserved door to Lincoln's box, the famous peephole, and other items related to the murder.

Washington, D.C.

This is the capital of the United States. This is where Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated in front of a large crowd. The city is not described in great detail though there are specific places that are described. These places include the Capitol building, several homes, the theater where the assassination occurred, and the room where Lincoln died.

The Garrett Farm

This was a traditional Southern farm during the time of the assassination. Booth and Herold found themselves welcomed here until the Garretts became suspicious that Booth might be something other than a Confederate soldier. The farm was not described in great detail. It was near Bowling Green and apparently had agricultural interests that included tobacco. This was where Booth and Herold were cornered and capture. Herold was taken into custody and Booth was killed.

The Old Arsenal Penitentiary

This is the prison where Lewis Powell, David Herold, George Atzerodt, and Mary Surratt were hanged. The book includes a photo of the four, dangling from a scaffold in the prison yard.



Themes and Motifs

Booth's Nature

Booth was a famous actor and part of a theatrical family. He was wealthy and was accepted as an important member of society. He was handsome and in demand. He was vain and self-centered with a tendency toward drama. He loved Southern manners and was often a supporter of lost causes. All these things make Booth a likely candidate to kill Lincoln.

Booth wanted to support the Confederacy and that desire didn't end when the Union captured the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, making it clear that the North was going to win the Civil War. Booth felt that assassinating Lincoln, Johnson, and Seward would cripple the Union and give the Confederate soldiers the desire to continue the fight. He had planned to kidnap Lincoln months earlier with the same goal in mind. Even though that plan failed, Booth remained determined to do something to help the Southern cause.

While Booth was planning to support the South, he didn't want to die for it. He was famous and could have gained an audience with Lincoln at almost any time. Security around the President was non-existent and Booth could have walked into the White House and shot Lincoln in his office. He knew, however, that he probably wouldn't be able to escape and he sought another plan that would make it possible for him to live after the assassination.

Booth shot Lincoln in the head with a Derringer, a pistol that held only one bullet. It may have been his dramatic nature that prompted him to choose that gun over some other pistol that held multiple rounds. Another example of his dramatic nature is seen in the moments after the murder. He jumped onto the stage and took time to shout a couple of lines, probably because he realized this would be his final moment on any stage. He shouted the Virginia state motto and then yelled out that the South had been avenged.

When he was on the run, he asked for newspapers. He was in serious need of medical attention for his broken leg, was hungry, and was dirty with filthy clothes. None of these things really mattered to Booth as much as news. He wanted to know for certain that Lincoln was dead and expected to read articles lauding Booth as a hero for killing the Union President.

North versus South

The Civil War was ongoing during most of Lincoln's first term in office. The battle centered around the state's rights to choose for themselves whether to allow slavery and whether they could leave the United States. Lincoln believed that states shouldn't be able to do either. He wanted to end slavery and he felt that states should not have



the right to secede. This prompted a division that resulted in the Civil War and pitted the majority of the Southern states against the Northern states.

The South was mainly agricultural, which explained the reason most Southern states and Southern people felt they should have the right to continue the practice of keeping slaves. The North was largely industrial which explained to some degree why they were more open to the idea of abolishing slavery. In addition to the economics, there were cultural differences that also existed, further separating the North from the South in both geography and ideals.

Booth was a Southern sympathizer and believed that killing Lincoln would help the Southern cause. He had planned to kidnap Lincoln months earlier but that plan failed. As the Confederacy began to fall, Booth saw killing high-ranking Union officials as a way to rally the Southern troops. Though he killed Lincoln, his plan didn't have the effect he'd planned.

The author makes the point that this separation is not as clear as many wars because the participants were very similar in appearance. The Union soldiers wore blue uniforms while the Southern soldiers wore gray, but it would be impossible to tell by appearance who was a Southern supporter without the uniform. This was true in the case of Booth, who was a Southern supporter though he lived in Washington, D.C. Booth's plan to assassinate Lincoln, Johnson, and Seward was prompted by his devotion to the Southern cause.

It should be noted that the division was not clearly North against South. There were Southern sympathizers in the North, as is seen with Booth and the Surratts. Likewise, there were some people in the South who felt Lincoln was right and who supported the Union.

The Reaction to the Assassination

Lincoln was president during a time of war and general unrest. Historically, it means that the nation was divided in their opinions. There were many who supported his stand on the war, slavery, and state's rights, but there were many others who hated him for those stands. Most people probably had strong opinions about him, one way or the other. Booth was among those who hated Lincoln and he felt that he would be hailed as a hero for the assassination.

When he got newspapers detailing the assassination, he was furious. Instead of the expected response, the stories were lauding Lincoln as a martyr and Booth had no supporters among the press. While there were a few people he met along his escape route who supported his action, no one publicly called him a hero.

People are naturally drawn to tragedy and Lincoln's assassination was no different. One young actress held Lincoln's head in her lap only because she recognized the theatrical value of being with the dying President. As the Army surgeon moved Lincoln across the street to a boarding house, people rushed into the streets, hoping for a glimpse of the



President. News spread quickly, even though it was word-of-mouth until Stanton sent out wires and newspapers were able to print special editions.

Within a short time, theaters were holding plays about the assassination. There were pamphlets and special newspapers devoted to the assassination and the manhunt that followed. This demonstrates that people were deeply moved by Lincoln's death and were curious about the details. That interest continues to modern-day readers, as evidenced by books like this one that examine various aspects of the assassination and the people involved.

Ford Theatre's Role

Lincoln was shot at Ford Theatre and there were some who believed that the owners might have played a role in the assassination. Booth was very familiar with the theater and was able to move through it to Lincoln's box without being questioned. Booth's presence was a common occurrence and no one even wondered why he was present for a play in which he had no role. As the manhunt hit problems, the owners were arrested and questioned. Some believed they must have played a role in the plan to kill Lincoln.

Booth knew all the details of the theater and of the play. He saw indications that the Lincolns would be attending the play on that particular evening and he knew which box was reserved for the Lincolns. He was able to go into the theater before the Lincolns arrived. He hid a piece of a music stand that he used that evening to bar the door, keeping others out until he had plenty of time to shoot Lincoln. He knew when there would be laughter from the audience and felt that would give him a better opportunity to fire the shot without the audience realizing what was happening.

After Lincoln was shot, Dr. Leale saw the situation as something that could be dangerous to Lincoln's honor. The date was Good Friday, a religious holiday, and Lincoln was at a house of entertainment rather than observing the religious event. Leale felt that Lincoln shouldn't die in the theater and he rushed to get the President out, even though he didn't have a plan of where to take him.

The theater has been renovated for modern-day performances, but no one sits in the box Lincoln occupied. The author says that it's a sign of respect but it seems possible there might also be a level of superstition involved. The theater is also a modern-day tourist attraction where visitors can look over items preserved from the day of the assassination.

The Quest for Justice

Within a short time of the attacks, Secretary of War Stanton began organizing an investigation and a manhunt for the men responsible for the assassination. Stanton set up a temporary command post at the boarding house where Lincoln was dying and began his work even before Lincoln drew his last breath. Almost immediately, officials



began receiving information about the conspiracy and Booth was identified as Lincoln's assassin. It didn't take Stanton long to learn the identities of the others involved in the assassination plan.

While Booth found several people to help him along the route, there were also thousands of people looking for him with the intention of turning him over to authorities. Those involved in the manhunt got many tips that were clearly aimed at helping bring Booth and his co-conspirators to justice. Booth was shot when he was captured but several of the others were hanged and many gathered to see justice served.

The Quest for Justice is related to the quest for vengeance. While many people wanted justice, some simply wanted revenge for Lincoln's murder. The two are nearly interchangeable and it's difficult to determine who was involved in the manhunt because of their desire for justice, who wanted revenge, and who was merely interested in the reward.

Styles

Point of View

The story is written in third person from the perspective of the author. The author explains in the first pages of the book that he was born on Lincoln's birthday, creating a connection to the former president. When the author was 10, his grandmother gave him a gift that included a rendering of the gun Booth used in the assassination along with a piece of a newspaper clipping of the event. That sparked the author's interest in the topic and the book is the result of his research into the event.

While the story may be factual, there are opinions included. This means the reader has to determine which pieces of information are the author's opinions and which are documented facts. For example, the author mentions Booth's state of mind in the moments leading up to the murder. There seems to be no way to know for certain what Booth was thinking on those moments. He didn't speak to anyone and, in truth, no one even saw him after he entered the private box where the Lincoln's were seated. The author's opinions seem reasonable but it's left to the reader to decide how much of the writing is opinion and how much is documented fact.

The author gives some details about the sources of his information, including those for the graphics scattered throughout the book. There are a few other instances of sources, such as diaries, eyewitness accounts, and conversations between specific people. The diaries are easy to accept because they are likely part of public records. It seems possible that the author may have gotten some of his other information from unreliable sources, which means the reader may not want to depend on this book as a complete, factual account of the events. An example of this is seen in the epilogue when the author writes that one of the participants in the manhunt exaggerated his role. He doesn't quantify this statement, which means the reader has to decide if the author is reliable and if he got the information from a reliable source.

Language and Meaning

The story is written in modern language and the majority of the story is a straightforward account of the events leading up to the murder and then leading up to the arrests and executions of various participants. The majority of the scenes are presented in chronological order and the murder occurs fairly early, with the rest of the story focusing on the manhunt for those who participated in the assassination.

There is some information about the Civil War because of Booth's sympathy toward the Southern cause. His motivation for the assassination is clearly outlined by the author. Booth was, according to the author, a racist who supported the South and felt that killing Lincoln would rally the Confederates to continue the fight.



The language of the story is fairly simple. The reader with an average vocabulary will find few unfamiliar words and those are generally explained. For example, Booth's final words on the stage after the murder are spoken in a foreign language. They are a state motto and the author includes the translation.

There is a suggestion of a larger conspiracy though that topic is not explored fully in this book. The commander of the manhunt had fully intended to take Booth back to Washington, D.C., alive, but a member of the manhunt shot Booth before he could be captured or surrender. The author suggests the possibility that there might have been a larger conspiracy involving high-ranking Confederate officials, but doesn't offer opinions of what those might be or of the ramifications of such a conspiracy.

While the historical information may be considered dry by some, the author presents the events in a way that reads more like a novel than a simple historical account. He examines the various characters, their lives, and their interactions with each other. This makes the book an interesting read, especially for those with an interest in history or in this particular subject.

Structure

The book is divided into 14 chapters. The chapters are titled by number only with no indication of what's in each chapter.

The book also includes an Introduction, a List of Major Participants, a section titled From 1861 through 1865, a Prologue, and an Epilogue. The Introduction is a two-paragraph section that indicates the author's first interest in Abraham Lincoln and the assassination that ended his life and his presidency. The author was born on Lincoln's birthday. On his 10th birthday, his grandmother gave him an engraving of the pistol used in the assassination with part of a newspaper article about the event. The author writes that he knew from that point that he would have to know the rest of the story, and his research for this book was his way of achieving that. The section includes a photo of the author when he was 10.

The list of major participants is eight groups of people involved in the assassination. The groups are President Lincoln and his family, the guests who attended the theater, the cabinet members, the doctors, the Confederate leaders, the conspirators, the accomplices, and the manhunters. There are 28 people identified in all.

The next section is "From 1861 through 1865." This section outlines major events during those years, including identification of the Confederates and Union soldiers and some of the effects of the war.

The Prologue includes a look at Lincoln's inauguration and the fact that John Wilkes Booth appears in a photo of that day. There is also an excerpt from Lincoln's inaugural speech. The Epilogue includes a look at the events immediately after the death of Booth. His brother claimed the body. There are also details about some of the other

members of this story and their fates. The author concludes that Booth didn't accomplish his ultimate goal, which was to spur the Southerners to continue the fight.

There are several pictures and graphics throughout the story, including photos of major players, a playbill from the play being performed the night of Lincoln's death, newspaper clippings, and a photo of four of the conspirators after they were executed.



Quotes

In one photograph, on a balcony above the stands, a young man with a black mustache and wearing a top hat gazes down on the president. It is the famous actor John Wilkes Booth.

-- Narrator (Prologue paragraph 2)

Importance: This indicates that Booth was granted admission to the president's inner circle without question. Booth was famous and he could have killed the president on this day. The fact that he sets up an elaborate plan indicates that he really doesn't want the assassination to be a suicide mission.

Twenty-six years old, impossibly vain, an extremely talented actor, and a star member of a celebrated theatrical family, John Wilkes Booth was willing to throw away fame, wealth, and a promising future for the cause of the Confederacy.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph 3)

Importance: This is an important look at Booth and his devotion to the Southern cause, which is why he was willing to risk his life in order to kill Lincoln. While he hated Lincoln and all that Lincoln was accomplishing, his larger drive was to rally the Confederacy to continue the fight.

In a few moments, Booth knew, Harry Hawk would be alone onstage and would speak a line guaranteed to produce such energetic laughter that it would drown out the sound of just about anything, including, Booth hoped, the sound of a pistol shot.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph 12)

Importance: Booth was about to shoot Lincoln and he was timing the shot to coincide with a particular line of a play. The fact that Booth is so familiar with the play and the theater is an important part of the story.

The bullet struck him in the head, on the lower left side, just below the ear. The ball ripped through his chestnut-colored hair, cut the skin, penetrated the skull, and because of the angle of Lincoln's head at the moment of impact, made a diagonal tunnel through Lincoln's brain.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph 18)

Importance: This is one example of the level of detail included in the book. The author gives many such details as a means of making the reader understand the full story of the assassination.

If he was going to escape the theater, he had to get out of the box at once.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph 22)

Importance: This demonstrates that Booth had every intention of living past the assassination. He had many opportunities to kill Lincoln. There was limited protection



around the President during this era and Booth's fame would have ensured that he could have gotten an appointment to see Lincoln at the White House just about anytime.

Stewart was the lone audience member who chased Booth.

-- Narrator (Chapter 4 paragraph 1)

Importance: Some of the people in the audience were aware that there was something going on but most of them thought it was some part of the play. Lots of people in the audience could have stopped Booth but there was only one man who even gave chase.

Still down on his knees, with all eyes fixed upon him, Dr. Leale announced his diagnosis and prediction: 'His wound is mortal; it is impossible for him to recover.

-- Narrator (Chapter 4 paragraph 34)

Importance: This is the moment when Dr. Leale first lets anyone know that Lincoln is going to die. Mary Todd, Major Rathbone, and Miss Harris are among the people in the box at this time.

Then the terrible truth emerged: It was both.

-- Narrator (Chapter 5 paragraph 8)

Importance: This happened in a time when word-of-mouth was the main way for news of this kind to travel. People had been rushing from the Seward neighborhood to tell about the attack on the Seward household while others were rushing from Ford Theatre to tell about the attack on Lincoln. When the news began to meet, there was some confusion as some wondered if it was possible that both men had been attacked at the same time.

Abraham Lincoln died this morning at 22 minutes after 7 o'clock.

-- Edwin M. Stanton (Chapter 6 paragraph 16)

Importance: This was the body of a telegraph Stanton wrote to begin spreading the news that Lincoln had died. The message was brief but the significance to the nation was immense.

Easter Sunday 1865 would forever be known as Black Easter to those who lived through it. Abraham Lincoln's murder transformed a time of rejoicing in the capital to a time of mourning.

-- Narrator (Chapter 7 paragraph 2)

Importance: Lincoln's assassination was an important event across the country. He had won his second term in office, indicating that he was popular with the people, and many gathered to hear his speeches.

Many other people in the theater were rounded up, including the Fords. Stanton suspected the participation in the plot by other theater employees. How else could Booth have escaped so smoothly and easily?



-- Narrator (Chapter 8 paragraph 15)

Importance: The manhunt began within hours of the assassination, long before Lincoln died, and Booth was named as the assassin almost immediately. However, Stanton, who was heading up the investigation, quickly grew frustrated when he couldn't find Booth and many people were arrested and questioned. One of those was a man who simply held Booth's horse while Booth was in the theater.

Whatever papers Booth read, they all condemned him for his heinous act. Even worse, Booth saw the beginning of a change in how Abraham Lincoln was viewed by America.

-- Narrator (Chapter 9 paragraph 4)

Importance: Booth had expected that people would call him a hero for killing Lincoln and he was genuinely surprised that didn't happen. He was even more angry that so many people viewed Lincoln as a martyr, meaning that Booth didn't accomplish his goal which was to help the Southern cause.