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Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth

Janet O. Francis

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Giblin, James Cross. *Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth*. Clarion Books, 2005. ISBN 0618096426. \$22.00. 244 p.

Reviewer: Janet O. Francis

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Informational

Subject: Booth, John Wilkes, 1838-1865--Juvenile literature; Booth, Edwin, 1833-1893--Juvenile literature; Lincoln, Abraham, 11809-1865-Assassination--juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

There have been theatre dynasties in many families, but none have cut quite the swath in American history made by Junius Booth and two of his ten children. Edwin, the older of the two became a famous and revered actor, established the famous Boston Players Club, built and lost a theater, and earned enough money during his sixty years to provide an unusually comfortable lifestyle--when he was working. John Wilkes Booth, the favorite of his parents, became a hiss and a byword among the community for his determined hatred of the North and the anti-slavery administration of Abraham Lincoln. The upshot of his hatred was his assassination of Lincoln at the Ford theatre and his subsequent death. Although his family had not shared his penchant for the South, they all suffered its consequences. The theatre where Edwin was performing was closed the next day and he was not able to appear safely in public for more than a year.

The text is well documented and abundantly illustrated with photographs from the Harvard Theatre Collection; the historical account is brought to life through firsthand accounts of family members. Francis' writing style is engaging and readable, retaining the essence of masterful storytelling while providing an excellent historical and familial background for one of America's most notorious characters.