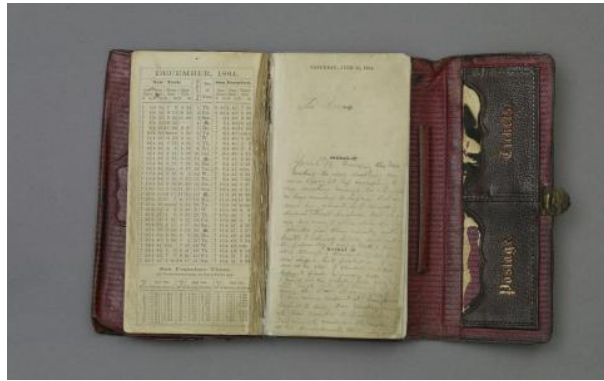


0. MISSING PAGES of a DIARY - Story Preface

1. FORD'S THEATRE
2. A SHOCKING DEATH
3. DIARY of JOHN WILKES BOOTH
- 4. MISSING PAGES of a DIARY**



5. THE STATUE of LIBERTY
6. HMS RESOLUTE
7. OLMEC GLYPHS
8. MOUNT RUSHMORE

This image depicts the first written page from an 1864 appointment book which John Wilkes Booth used as a diary after he shot President Lincoln. This artifact is part of the museum collection of the National Park Service, maintained at Ford's Theatre National Historic Site in Washington, D.C. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith. Credit: Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. [Online via the Library of Congress](#). Click on the image for a full-page view.

Before he [fled Washington](#), John Wilkes Booth had packed neither food nor clothes. A “wanted man,” he would seek help outside the city. Traveling lightly helped him to ride quickly.

After a week “on the run,” the actor-turned-assassin was in despair. Totally dependent on Southern sympathizers, he was at least able to see some newspapers. He was not pleased with what he read. His diary continues, on the 21st of April:

After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being chased by gunboats till I was forced to return wet cold and starving, with every mans hand against me, I am here in despair. And why; For doing what Brutus was honored for, what made Tell a hero. And yet I for striking down a greater tyrant than they ever knew am looked upon as a common cutthroat. My action was purer than either of theirs. One, hoped to be great himself. The other had not only his countrys but his own wrongs to avenge. I hope for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone. A country groaned beneath this tyranny and prayed for this end. Yet now behold the cold hand they extend to me. God cannot pardon me if I have done wrong. Yet I cannot see any wrong except in serving a degenerate people.

Then, Booth makes a statement which has caused people to wonder at his meaning ever since:

The little, very little I left behind to clear my name, the Govmt will not allow to be printed.

What was it that he left behind? And ... how could he clear his name when so many [people had witnessed](#) his actions?

A bit further, Booth again writes that he might be able to explain what he did:

To night I will once more try the river [the Potomac] with the intent to cross, though I have a greater desire to return to Washington and in a measure clear my name which I feel I can do. I do not repent the blow I struck. I may before God, but not to man.

Recognizing the intensive, twelve-day manhunt would likely end badly for him, Booth pens his last-known written words:

To night I try to escape these bloodhounds once more. Who who can read his fate. God's will be done. I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. Oh may he, may he spare me that and let me die bravely.

I bless the entire world. Have never hated or wronged anyone. This last was not a wrong, unless God deems it so. And its with him, to damn or bless me. And for this brave boy [David Herold] with me who often prays (yes before and since) with a true and sincere heart, was it crime in him, if so, why can he pray the same I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but “I must fight the course” Tis all that's left me. (Booth diary quotes, above, from [Manhunt](#), by James L. Swanson, pages 389-391.)

Twelve days following the assassination, Booth was captured near [Port Royal](#), Virginia—about sixty miles south of the crime scene. He died in the very manner he so feared—[like a criminal](#).

The missing pages of his diary remain missing (see Steers' *Lincoln Legends*, pages 196-197), while Booth (unlike our next subject, Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi) remains infamous.

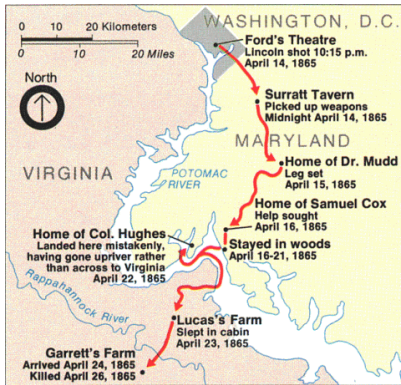
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MISSING-PAGES-of-a-DIARY-National-Treasure-Book-of-Secrets>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MISSING-PAGES-of-a-DIARY-National-Treasure-Book-of-Secrets>

Media Stream

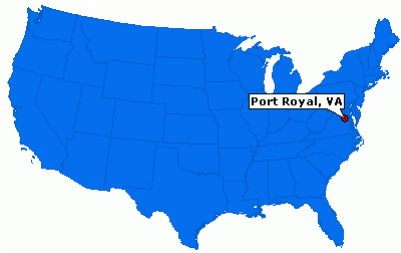


Booth Escape Route - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Park Service.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Booth-Escape-Route-Map-Locator>



Port Royal, Virginia - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy epodunk.com website.

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Wilhelm Tell - Statue

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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