



David Beard

Reader Weekly

Roy Booth is the most prolific and most renowned author in Northern Minnesota. You'd pass him on the streets of Hibbing without a second glance. His dozens of published works never line the shelves of the local Barnes & Noble. Yet the works of Roy Booth have been read worldwide and performed before thousands in more than 200 cities. His most recent play, "The Unmasking of Sherlock Holmes," is now available from Heuer Publishing (<http://www.hitplays.com/>).

About Roy C. and Cynthia Booth...

Booth's Minnesota roots run deep. Roy was born in Bemidji in 1965; his parents were from Bemidji and Hibbing. Booth was educated in Northern Minnesota, finally graduating with an MA from Bemidji State University. Roy's partner in work and in the home is Cynthia. Roy and Cynthia are deeply involved in regional theatre, where they have worked in the role of actor, director, designer, choreographer, and stage manager. They have played small roles (and served as extras) in films produced in the Minnesota, as well — such work is an important part of keeping their craft.

For Roy and Cynthia, writing is a craft. Sometimes, it's an invisible craft. Roy has made contributions to theater and to

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motion pictures as a silent partner, revising scripts drafted by others. But as Minnesota's most visible figure in contemporary drama, it is harder and harder for Booth to work behind the scenes. He has served as a guest and as a moderator on panels at regional conventions on writing, especially writing in science fiction (Booth has tried his hand at dystopian fiction in short plays like "Ratopolis.")

Booth places emphasis on the title "playwright," a term that should not be mistaken for "playwrite" or "playwriter." To Booth, a playwright is like a wheelwright (someone who made wheels for carriages and carts). Just like a wheelwright, a playwright works carefully to produce something in three dimensions. A play and its staging is not just a collection of words (like a poem) or the recounting of events (like a short story); it must be manifest in a three-dimensional space. Booth reminds us that playwrights have as much in common with sculptors as they do with novelists.

Beyond that analogy, Booth recognizes that theatre is a collaboration. Booth collaborates with other authors (including other playwrights like Cynthia, Michael Paslawski, Russel J. Krook III, Louise Bottrell and others). He collaborates with the theatrical craftsmen and artists who make his works come alive, and he collaborates with the audiences who make his plays real in their imaginations.

A Night at the Theater...

Many of Booth's works play with classic story structure, giving audiences a satisfying night at the theatre. To the extent that the storyline is familiar, audiences slip comfortably into the events on the stage. To the extent that Booth plays with that story structure, offering surprises as he goes, the audience is delighted. His willingness to play with familiar conventions makes his work accessible worldwide; a few of his works have seen performance

