



## A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire

By Geoffrey Wawro

Audible Studios on Brilliance, 2016. CD-Audio. Condition: New. Unabridged. Language: English . Brand New. The Austro-Hungarian army that marched east and south to confront the Russians and Serbs in the opening campaigns of World War I had a glorious past but a pitiful present. Speaking a mystifying array of languages and lugging outdated weapons, the Austrian troops were hopelessly unprepared for the industrialized warfare that would shortly consume Europe. As prizewinning historian Geoffrey Wawro explains in *A Mad Catastrophe*, the doomed Austrian conscripts were an unfortunate microcosm of the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself--both equally ripe for destruction. After the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914, Germany goaded the Empire into a war with Russia and Serbia. With the Germans massing their forces in the west to engage the French and the British, everything--the course of the war and the fate of empires and alliances from Constantinople to London--hinged on the Habsburgs ability to crush Serbia and keep the Russians at bay. However, Austria-Hungary had been rotting from within for years, hollowed out by repression, cynicism, and corruption at the highest levels. Commanded by a dying emperor, Franz Joseph I, and a querulous celebrity general, Conrad von Hotzendorf,...



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