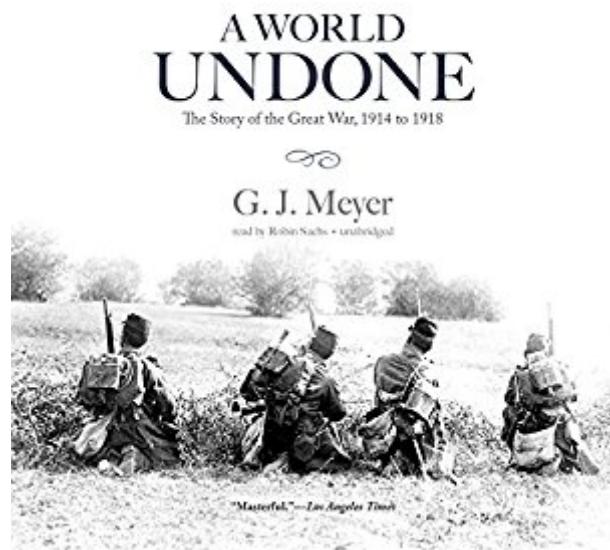


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# A World Undone: The Story Of The Great War, 1914 To 1918



## **Synopsis**

The First World War is one of history's greatest tragedies. In this remarkable and intimate account, author G. J. Meyer draws on exhaustive research to bring to life the story of how the Great War reduced Europe's mightiest empires to rubble, killed 20 million people, and cracked the foundations of the world we live in today. World War I is unique in the number of questions about it that remain unsettled. After more than 90 years, scholars remain divided on these questions, and it seems likely that they always will. *A World Undone* does not claim to have all the answers - if answers are even possible. However, it will provide listeners with enough information to understand why the questions persist, and perhaps in some cases, to arrive at conclusions of their own. *A World Undone* is a grand, tragic story brilliantly told. About the author: G. J. Meyer is a professional writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, Harper's, and many other publications. While working for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, he was awarded a Nieman Fellowship by Harvard University. He is the author of the New York Times best seller *The Tudors*, the Edgar Award-winning *The Memphis Murders*, and other works.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This book should be required reading for college level history. It describes in detail the events that would shape European history for the next hundred years. Everything would have been different without WWI, which toppled four empires and seeded resentments that would trigger WWII and result in the Cold War. Amazing, infuriating, enlightening read.

This voluminous recounting of the First World War gives a deep understanding and appreciation of the scale of losses suffered by soldiers and civilians. It reveals the cost of war in so many painful ways. Perhaps more alarming is the constant theme of lies by political leaders...lies to their populace and themselves. Further, the military leaders grabbed at every opportunity to gain power and position, their egos paramount to logic. I was also troubled by the willingness to lie to the public through propaganda. The war could have been ended years earlier, but the errant thinking of commanders and politicians allowed thousands more to die, be maimed, and crushed mentally. Sadly, the perception gained from this treatise seems to be applicable to the present, not just this war of 100 years past. The author has a pleasant, easy-to-read style. Some will find the tale too long. A true history buff will enjoy each page.

A very good "standing at a distance" synopsis of World War One with cleverly conceived "background" chapters that provide historical outlines of relevant topics. This is a general account, however, with no real description of the war from the perspective of a common foot soldier or civilian. Still I found it to be an enjoyable and well-written book that should be included in any moderately sized collection on the Great War.

This August will mark the 100th anniversary of the start of WWI. I expect we will be hearing a lot about that war as the anniversary draws near. If you were to desire preparing for the event I can think of no better book to read than this one. This is the second book by G.J. Meyer that I have read in the last few months. The first book was a biography of the Borgias that I found remarkably refreshing in its approach to the subject and its challenges to accepted beliefs. In this book Meyer takes a very complex war and makes it understandable. Where most historians would bog themselves and their readers down with unnecessary details, facts, and figures Meyer uses only enough to illustrate his point and convey the scope of the events. The statistics from WWI are astounding and are certainly difficult to avoid but they can also bog down and dull a reader's interest. Meyer uses what is necessary and has made the history understandable and readable and I will be looking for more books by this talented author.

This book filled my need for a one-volume account of World War I, and Meyer does an excellent job of explaining the stupidity that led to the war, the stupidity that guided how the war was fought, and the stupidity that guided the postwar deliberations. And we're talking about stupidity on both sides.

Many generals on both sides should have tried for crimes against humanity. There are numerous places when Meyer summarizes a battle by citing the number of casualties (in the hundreds of thousands) suffered by each country. Those outcomes were repeated time and time again. Insanity has often been defined as doing the same action over and over again and expecting a different result. There's no better example of that than World War I. Reading about World War I can be daunting because of all the countries involved and the two theaters. Meyer's account helped me to understand those aspects, and his frequent insertion of background explanations added to my understanding. I highly recommend this book.

I greatly enjoyed this book. This topic has held a fascination with me and this is the first book that I have read that was not too dry. I never ceased to be captivated by the horrific grinding global conflagration as presented in this book. Mr. Meyer does a superb job presenting all the major political and military players leading up to and during this war. He covers all the major battles on all of the fronts of the war including the Balkans and Turkey. Often I find myself enjoying the first couple of hundred pages of a non-fiction tale such as this and then struggled to stay interested to the end of the book. That was not the case with "A World Undone." Mr Meyer skillfully transports us from one "theatre" of battle to another in this truly global war. He interjects background information on the various players delving into the history of the Romanovs of Russia, the Hapsburgs of Austria and the Hohenzollerns of Germany. He takes short breaks from the battlefield to discuss such things as the deprivation of those left at home in Germany, the propaganda campaign in England and Germany, and the new role of women in working for the war effort. The book emphasizes the lasting repercussions of the war with the fall of the Russian monarchy, the break up of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. The book only makes brief mention of the air war in Europe and only discusses the naval battles fleetingly. Mr. Meyer does discuss the U-boats in reference to the probable role they played as an impetus to the U.S. joining in the War. If potential readers are looking for battle scenes involving the "Doughboys" from the United States, they will be disappointed. The Americans joined the Entente late in the war. Little time is spent on their involvement. Readers interested in the above aspects of WWI might look somewhere else in the vast array of books on this subject. In spite of these omissions, I found this to be a fascinating survey of the Great War. Anyone interested in a very readable book on WWI will not be disappointed.

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