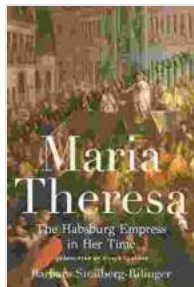# Maria Theresa: The Habsburg Empress Who Shaped Europe

Maria Theresa was one of the most powerful and influential women in European history. As the Holy Roman Empress and ruler of the Habsburg Empire, she oversaw a period of great change and prosperity for her vast

domain. Maria Theresa was a devout Catholic and a strong advocate for education, culture, and the arts. She also played a key role in the Seven Years' War, which reshaped the political map of Europe.

Maria Theresa: The Habsburg Empress in Her Time

by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 163956 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 1056 pages

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Early Life and Education

Maria Theresa was born in Vienna on May 13, 1717. She was the eldest child of Emperor Charles VI and his wife, Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Maria Theresa received a thorough education that included languages, history, geography, and mathematics. She was also a talented musician and singer.

Reign as Holy Roman Empress

In 1740, Maria Theresa's father died and she became the Holy Roman Empress. She was only 23 years old at the time, and her accession to the throne was not without its challenges. Many of the European powers, including France and Prussia, had designs on the Habsburg territories.

Maria Theresa faced these challenges with determination and resolve. She formed alliances with Russia and Saxony, and she raised a large army to defend her empire. In the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748),Maria Theresa successfully defended her territories.

After the war, Maria Theresa embarked on a program of reforms to modernize the Habsburg Empire. She introduced a new tax system, reformed the army, and established a system of public education. She also patronized the arts and sciences, and she founded several universities and academies.

The Seven Years' War

In 1756, Maria Theresa was drawn into the Seven Years' War. This conflict was fought between France, Austria, and Prussia, and it had a profound impact on the political map of Europe. Maria Theresa allied with France and Russia, while Prussia allied with Great Britain.
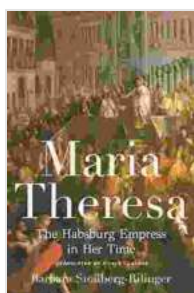
The Seven Years' War was a long and bloody conflict, and it resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. In the end, Prussia emerged victorious, and Maria Theresa lost Silesia, a valuable province that had been part of the Habsburg Empire for centuries.

Later Reign and Legacy

Despite the loss of Silesia, Maria Theresa's reign was a period of great progress for the Habsburg Empire. She reformed the government, expanded the army, and promoted education and the arts. She also encouraged the development of industry and trade.

Maria Theresa died in Vienna on November 29, 1780. She was 63 years old. She was succeeded by her son, Joseph II.

Maria Theresa was one of the most important figures in European history. Her reign was a time of great change and progress for the Habsburg Empire. She was a devout Catholic, a strong advocate for education and the arts, and a skilled diplomat and military strategist. Her legacy continues to inspire people around the world.

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