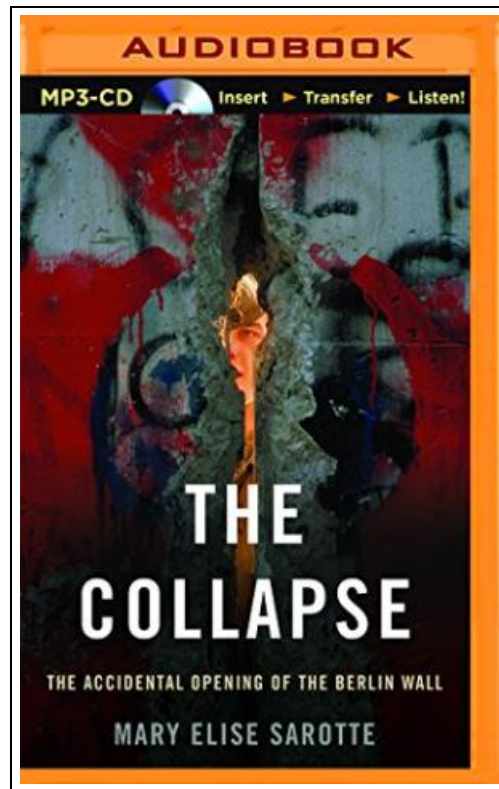


## The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall



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*(Meagan Roob)*

## THE COLLAPSE: THE ACCIDENTAL OPENING OF THE BERLIN WALL

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Audible Studios on Brilliance, 2015. CD-Audio. Condition: New. Unabridged. Language: English . Brand New. The Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 to end all traffic between the city's two halves: the democratic west and the communist east. The iconic symbol of a divided Europe, the Wall became a focus of western political pressure on East Germany; as Ronald Reagan's famously said in a 1987 speech in Berlin, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall! But as award-winning historian Mary Sarotte shows in *The Collapse*, the opening of the Wall on November 9, 1989 was not, as is commonly believed, the East German government's deliberate concession to outside influence. It was an accident. A carelessly worded memo written by mid-level bureaucrats, a bumbling press conference given by an inept member of the East German Politburo, the negligence of government leaders, the bravery of ordinary people in East and West Berlin these combined to bring about the end of nearly 40 years of oppression, fear, and enmity in divided Berlin. When the news broke, Washington and Moscow could only stand by and watch as Tom Brokaw and other journalists narrated the televised broadcast of this critical moment in the thawing of the Cold War. Sarotte opens her story in the months leading up to that fateful day. Following East German dissidents, she shows how their efforts coalesced around opposition to the regime's restrictions on foreign travel. The city of Leipzig, close to the border with Czechoslovakia, became a hothouse of activism, and protests there quickly grew into massive demonstrations. The East German Politburo hoped to limit its citizens' knowledge of these marches, but two daring dissidents, East Berliners Aram Radomski and Siegbert Schefke, managed to evade the Stasi and film the largest of them from a church tower.

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