This is an ambitious exploration of the story of a nation. Yale historian Abbas Amanat offers a revealing look at how events, people, and institutions are shaped by currents that sometimes reach back hundreds of years. Amanat combines chronological and thematic approaches, exploring events with lasting implications for modern Iran and the world. Drawing on diverse historical scholarship and emphasizing the twentieth century, he addresses debates about Iran’s culture and politics. Political history is the driving narrative force, given impetus by Amanat’s decades of research and study. He layers the book with discussions of literature, music, and the arts; ideology and religion; economy and society; and cultural identity and heritage.