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Empress Catherine II brought Europe to Russia, and Russia to Europe, during her long and eventful reign (1762—96). She fostered the culture of the Enlightenment and greatly expanded the immense empire created by Czar Ivan the Terrible, shifting the balance of power in Europe eastward. Famous for her will to power and for her dozen lovers, Catherine was also a prolific and gifted writer. Fluent in French, Russian, and German, Catherine published political theory, journalism, comedies, operas, and history, while writing thousands of letters as she corresponded with Voltaire and other public figures. The *Memoirs of Catherine the Great* provides an unparalleled window into eighteenth-century Russia and the mind of an absolute ruler. With insight, humor, and candor, Catherine presents her eyewitness account of history, from her whirlwind entry into the Russian court in 1744 at age fourteen as the intended bride of Empress Elizabeth I's nephew, the eccentric drunkard and future Peter III, to her unhappy marriage; from her two children, several miscarriages, and

her and Peter's numerous affairs to the political maneuvering that enabled Catherine to seize the throne from him in 1762. Catherine's eye for telling details makes for compelling reading as she describes the dramatic fall and rise of her political fortunes. This definitive new translation from the French is scrupulously faithful to her words and is the first for which translators have consulted original manuscripts written in Catherine's own hand. It is an indispensable work for anyone interested in Catherine the Great, Russian history, or the eighteenth century. The extraordinary story of the Maid placed in the France of her time, presenting her and her contemporaries in all their humanity to the general reader. Who was this notorious and enigmatic country girl, on trial for her life? A fine resource for cooks and gardeners, offering detailed description of the qualities of some 40 European pear and ten Asian pear cultivars, with color photographs of most of them. Also covers pear history, cultivation, storage, and uses in the kitchen. An asset: most of the excellent recipes spec

How much do you know about the Tar Heel State? There's so much to learn about North Carolina that even natives of the state don't know. In this trivia book, you'll learn more about North Carolina's history, pop culture, sports, unsolved mysteries, and so much more. In *The Great Book of North Carolina*, you'll find the answers to the following questions: How did North Carolina get its name? Why is it known as the "Tar Heel State"? What happened to the "Lost Colony"? Which famous pirate was killed in the Outer Banks? What popular recreational activity was invented in the state? What soda company got its start in North Carolina? Which sport originated from the Tar Heel State? Which NBA legend was raised in North Carolina? What urban legends haunt the state? What's the most haunted spot in North Carolina? And so much more! This book is packed with facts about North Carolina. Some of the facts in this book may shock you. Others may give you chills. But the one thing they all have in common is that they're all interesting! Whether you feel like an amateur or a pro on North Carolina trivia, you're bound to walk away with plenty of new knowledge about the state once you finish this book. Your friends won't stand a chance at your next trivia night! So, what are you waiting for? Get started now to learn more about North Carolina! As Moiraine Sedai recognizes young Rand al'Thor as the Dragon Reborn, the prophesied hero who alone can stand against the power of the Dark One, the Horn of Valere, destined to play a key role in the final confrontation, is stolen "History of the American Negro in the Great World War" is an account of the services of people of African origins in WWI, based on the official records of the War Department, including tributes from French and American commanders. The work is an important source of historical information about the role of black soldiers in the battles, which is often omitted in most historical works. This definitely won't be a history lesson...The Great is Tony McNamara's distinctive comic take on the rise and reign of Catherine the Great of Russia. The action spans the course of Catherine's adult life as she learns the ways of the world and takes on the challenge of political power with all of its attendant responsibilities, excesses and sorrows. It is at once a coming of age story, a family drama and a wild satire on power. New York Times Bestseller Winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize Winner of the J. Anthony Lukas Award "Nimbly splices together history, science, reporting and personal experiences into a taut and cautiously hopeful narrative.... Egan's book is bursting with life (and yes, death)." —Robert Moor, New York Times Book Review

The Great Lakes—Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario, and Superior—hold 20 percent of the world's supply of surface fresh water and provide sustenance, work, and recreation for tens of millions of Americans. But they are under threat as never before, and their problems are spreading across the continent. *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* is prize-winning reporter Dan Egan's compulsively readable portrait of an ecological catastrophe happening right before our eyes, blending the epic story of the lakes with an examination of the perils they face and the ways we can restore and preserve them for generations to come. The Great Lakes are the largest collection of fresh surface water on earth, and more than 40 million Americans and Canadians live in their basin. Will we divert water from the Great Lakes, causing them to end up like Central Asia's Aral Sea, which has lost 90 percent of its surface area and 75 percent of its volume since 1960? Or will we come to see that unregulated water withdrawals are ultimately catastrophic? Peter Annin writes a fast-paced account of the people and stories behind these upcoming battles. Destined to be the definitive story for the general public as well as policymakers, *The Great Lakes Water Wars* is a balanced, comprehensive look behind the scenes at the conflicts and compromises that are the past-and future-of this unique resource. American markets, once a model for the world, are giving up on competition. Thomas Philippon blames the unchecked efforts of corporate lobbyists. Instead of earning profits by investing and innovating, powerful firms use political pressure to secure their advantages. The result is less efficient markets, leading to higher prices and lower wages. *The Wheel of Time* is now an original series on Prime Video, starring Rosamund Pike as Moiraine! In *The Great Hunt*, the second novel in Robert Jordan's #1 New York Times bestselling epic fantasy series, *The Wheel of Time*®, Rand al'Thor and his companions set out to retrieve a powerful artifact from The Dark One's Shadowspawn. For centuries, gleemen have told the tales of The Great Hunt of the Horn. So many tales about each of the Hunters, and so many Hunters to tell of... Now the Horn itself is found: the Horn of Valere long thought only legend, the Horn which will raise the dead heroes of the ages. And it is stolen. In pursuit of the thieves, Rand al'Thor is determined to keep the Horn out of the grasp of The Dark One. But he has also learned that he is The Dragon Reborn—the Champion of Light destined to stand against the Shadow time and again. It is a duty and a destiny that requires Rand to uncover and master extraordinary capabilities he never imagined he possessed. Since its debut in 1990, *The Wheel of Time*® has captivated millions of readers around the globe with its scope, originality, and compelling characters. The last six books in series were all instant #1 New York Times bestsellers, and *The Eye of the World* was named one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's *The Great American Read*. *The Wheel of Time*® New Spring: The Novel #1 *The Eye of the World* #2 *The Great Hunt* #3 *The Dragon Reborn* #4 *The Shadow Rising* #5 *The Fires of Heaven* #6 *Lord of Chaos* #7 *A Crown of Swords* #8 *The Path of Daggers* #9 *Winter's Heart* #10 *Crossroads of Twilight* #11 *Knife of Dreams* By Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson #12 *The Gathering Storm* #13 *Towers of Midnight* #14 *A Memory of Light* By Robert Jordan and Teresa Patterson *The World of Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time* By Robert Jordan, Harriet McDougal, Alan Romanczuk, and Maria Simons *The Wheel of Time Companion* By Robert Jordan and Amy Romanczuk *Patterns of the Wheel: Coloring Art Based on Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time* At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied. *Biography of Catherine II (1729-1796), 'the Great', empress of Russia from 1762 till 1796.* For nearly a century the two most powerful nations on earth, Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia, fought a secret war in the lonely passes and deserts of Central Asia. Those engaged in this shadowy struggle called it 'The Great Game', a phrase immortalized by Kipling. When play first began the two rival empires lay nearly 2,000 miles apart. By the end, some Russian outposts were within 20 miles of India. This classic book tells the story of the Great Game through the exploits of the young officers, both British and Russian, who risked their lives playing it. Disguised as holy men or native horse-traders, they mapped secret passes, gathered intelligence and sought the allegiance of powerful khans. Some never returned. The violent repercussions of the Great Game are still convulsing Central Asia today. Of all prehistoric monuments, few are more emotive than the great stone circles that were built throughout Britain and Ireland. From the tall, elegant, pointed monoliths of the Stones of Stenness to the grandeur of Stonehenge and the sarsen blocks at Avebury, circles of stone exert a magnetic fascination to those who venture into their sphere. In Britain today, more people visit these structures than any other form of prehistoric monument and visitors stand in awe at their scale and question how and why they were erected. *Building the Great Stone Circles of the North* looks at the enigmatic stone structures of Scotland and investigates the background of their construction and their cultural significance. **THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER** At the age of forty-eight, writer and film critic David Denby returned to Columbia University and re-enrolled in two core courses in Western civilization to confront the literary and philosophical masterpieces -- the "great books" -- that are now at the heart of the culture wars. In *Great Books*, he leads us on a glorious tour, a rediscovery and celebration of such authors as Homer and Boccaccio, Locke and Nietzsche. Conrad and Woolf. The resulting personal odyssey is an engaging blend of self-discovery, cultural commentary, reporting, criticism, and autobiography -- an inspiration for anyone in love with the written word. Learn how a Prussian princess grew up to be Russia's longest-ruling female leader! Born in 1729, Princess Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbs was never supposed to come to power. But at age sixteen, she married the heir to the Russian throne. By 1762, Sophie, known now as Catherine, overthrew her immature and incompetent husband, Peter III, to lead the nation. Catherine became the sole ruler of Russia. This exciting *Who Was?* title explores how Catherine was able to turn Russia into one of the great powers of Europe by expanding its borders, helping improve its educational system, and advocating for the arts. Her three-decade reign is considered the Golden Age of Russia, and she is called Catherine the Great. Vol. 2. Comprises the supplement published by Lycett in 1863, covering molluscs found in geological formations besides the Great Oolite

Are you looking to learn more about Texas? Sure, you've heard about the Alamo and JFK's assassination in history class, but there's so much about the Lone Star State that even natives don't know about. In

this trivia book, you'll journey through Texas's history, pop culture, sports, folklore, and so much more! In The Great Book of Texas, some of the things you will learn include:- Which Texas hero isn't even from Texas?- Why is Texas called the Lone Star State?- Which hotel in Austin is one of the most haunted hotels in the United States?- Where was Bonnie and Clyde's hideout located?- Which Tejano musician is buried in Corpus Christi?- What unsolved mysteries happened in the state?- Which Texas-born celebrity was voted "Most Handsome" in high school?- Which popular TV show star just opened a brewery in Austin? Whether you consider yourself a Texas pro or you know absolutely nothing about the state, you'll learn something new as you discover more about the state's past, present, and future. Find out about things that weren't mentioned in your history book. In fact, you might even be able to impress your history teacher with your newfound knowledge once you've finished reading! So, what are you waiting for? Dive in now to learn all there is to know about the Lone Star State! Foreword by Neil Gaiman The world's leading Arthurian authority reimagines one of the most beloved and influential legends—the story of King Arthur and his Knights—for a new century in this gorgeous keepsake edition, illustrated with luminous full-color paintings and drawings by internationally acclaimed Tolkien artist John Howe. The stories of King Arthur and Merlin, Lancelot and Guinevere, Galahad, Gawain, Tristan and the rest of the Knights of the Roundtable, and the search for the Holy Grail have been beloved for centuries and are the inspiration of many modern fantasy novels, films, and shows. These legends began when an obscure Celtic hero named Arthur stepped on to the stage of history sometime in the sixth century, generating a host of oral tales that would be inscribed some 900 years later by Thomas Malory in his classic *Morte D'Arthur* (The Death of Arthur). The Great Book of King Arthur brings these legends into the modern age, using accessible prose for contemporary readers for the first time. In addition to the stories in *Morte D'Arthur*, John Matthews includes many tales of Arthur and his knights either unknown to Malory or written in other languages, such as the story of Avenable, the girl brought up as a boy who becomes a famous knight; Morien, whose adventures are as fantastic and exciting as any found in Malory's work; and a retelling of the life of Round Table favorite Gawain, from his strange birth to his upbringing among the poor to his ascension to the highest position—Emperor of Rome. In addition, there are some of the earliest tales of Arthur, deriving from the tradition of Celtic storytelling. The epic hero is represented in such powerful stories as “The Adventures of Eagle-boy” and “The Coming of Merlin,” which is based on the early medieval text *Vita Merlini* and tells a completely new version of the great enchanter's story. The Great Book of King Arthur includes 15 full-color paintings and 25 pencil drawings. This is quite possibly the most interesting, fun and entertaining book you'll ever find about the state of Colorado. It comes packed with interesting stories, history, trivia and fun facts that will spark your curiosity about the great state of Colorado. Neither a comprehensive 'life and times' nor a conventional biography, this is an engaging and accessible exploration of rulership and monarchical authority in eighteenth century Russia. Its purpose is to see how Catherine II of Russia conceived of her power and how it was represented to her subjects. Simon Dixon asks essential questions about Catherin'es life and reign, and offers new and stimulating arguments about the Enlightenment, the power of the monarch in early modern Europe, and the much-debated role of the "great individual" in history. 'A tremendous novel that combines powerfully moving moments with hilarious satire' Daily Mail 'Eva Thorvald is the new Olive Kitteridge' Elisabeth Egan 'Kitchens of the Great Midwest is terrific' Jane Smiley, Guardian Have you met Eva Thorvald? To her father, a chef, she's a pint-sized recipe tester and the love of his life. To the chilli chowdown contestants of Cook County, Illinois, she's a fire-eating demon. To the fashionable foodie goddess of supper clubs, she's a wanton threat. She's an enigma, a secret ingredient that no one can figure out. Someday, Eva will surprise everyone. One by one, they tell their story; together, they tell Eva's. Joyful, quirky and heartwarming, this is a novel about the family you lose, the friends you make and the chance connections that make a life. On the day before her eleventh birthday, she's cultivating chilli peppers in her wardrobe like a pro. Abandoned by her mother, gangly and poor, Eva arms herself with the weapons of her unknown heritage: a kick-ass palate and a passion bordering on obsession. Over the years, her tastes grow, and so do her ambitions. One day Eva will be the greatest chef in the world. But along the way, the people she meets will shape her - and she, them - in ways unforgettable, riotous and profound. So she - for one - knows exactly who she is by the time her mother returns. Special paperback edition with questions for reading groups, interview, guide to the Midwest, recipes and more! Reproduction of the original: A Legend of the Great Queen by G.J. Whyte-Melville The Great Controversy is a work by Ellen G. White, a founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, considered a prophetess or messenger of God among Seventh-day Adventist members. The book tells about the ever-persistent controversy between the good and the bad, represented by the opposition of Christ and Satan and the forces of angels that accompany them. Can a good company become a great one and, if so, how? After a five-year research project, Collins concludes that good to great can and does happen. In this book, he uncovers the underlying variables that enable any type of organization to Distinguished archeologist Zahi Hawass guides readers through the architectural landscape of ancient Egypt—its houses, palaces, temples, and tombs. Hundreds of photographs and a compelling text unveil the culture's mysteries as unearthed through major excavations. As he leads you on a tour of important sites, and discusses his own adventures, Hawass offers fresh insight into how people lived, prepared for death, and perceived their place within the universe. A compact connoisseur's guide, with recipes, to today's cutting-edge array of chocolates and chocolate makers from former Chez Panisse pastry chef David Lebovitz. In this compact volume, David Lebovitz gives a succinct cacao botany lesson, explains the process of chocolate making, runs through chocolate terminology and types, presents information on health benefits, offers an evaluating and buying primer, profiles the world's top chocolate makers and chocolatiers (with a whole chapter dedicated to Paris alone!), and shares dozens of little-known factoids in sidebars throughout the book. The Great Book of Chocolate includes more than 50 location and food photographs, and features more than 30 of Lebovitz's favorite chocolate recipes, from Black-Bottom Cupcakes to Homemade Rocky Road Candy, Orange and Rum Chocolate Mousse Cake to Double Chocolate Chip Espresso Cookies. His extensive resource section (with websites for international ordering) can bring the world's best chocolate to every door. A self-avowed chocoholic, Lebovitz nibbles chocolate every day, and with The Great Book of Chocolate in hand, he figures the rest of us will too. How much do you know about Ireland? There's so much to learn about the Emerald Isle that even its residents don't know. In this trivia book, you'll learn more about Ireland's history, pop culture, folklore, and so much more! In The Great Book of Ireland, you'll learn: How did Ireland get its name? Why is it known as the Emerald Isle? Who was St. Patrick really? What do leprechauns and shamrocks have to do with St. Patrick's Day? Which Irish company had a 9,000-year lease? What is Ireland's top attraction? Which movies have been filmed in Ireland? Which famous novel may have been based on an Irish myth? Which legends did the Irish believe in? And so much more! This book is packed with trivia facts about Ireland. Some of the facts you'll learn in this book are shocking, some are tragic, and others will leave you with goosebumps. But they're all interesting! Whether you're just learning about Ireland or you already think you're an expert on the state, you'll learn something you didn't know in every chapter. Your history teacher will be interesting at all of your newfound knowledge. So what are you waiting for? Get started to learn more about Ireland! Presents both hard facts and military, social, and political histories of the world's one hundred most violent events, from the second Persian War in 480 BCE to the modern war in the Congo. Anthony O'Hear presents a personal tour of the most impressive, influential and era-defining books mankind has ever produced. "Paradise Lost", "The Canterbury Tales", "Don Quixote": great literature can be read by anyone, with a little help. Anthony O'Hear leads the way with this captivating journey through two-and-a-half millennia of books as dark, powerful, erotic, thrilling, politically astute and awe-inspiring as any modern bestseller. We begin with Homer, whose poems of epic struggle have made him the father of Western literature. After Greek tragedy, Plato, and Virgil's "Aeneid" comes Ovid, whose encyclopaedic "Metamorphoses" is an inexhaustible source for European art and literature. Via St Augustine we reach Dante, the author of "The Divine Comedy", a sublime, terrifying tour through "Hell", "Purgatory" and an ecstatic vision of "Paradise". Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Milton, Pascal, Racine and finally Goethe complete the cast list. In each case, O'Hear patiently draws out themes, focuses on key passages and explains why they are important. Personal, passionate, painstakingly researched and beautifully illustrated, this is a grand work of reference. But it is also a narrative history shot through with a love of literature, and a deeply-held belief in its power to shape everyone's world. The Great Book of Alaska is an entertaining, instructive and interesting Trivia & Facts book about the Last Frontier state. You'll learn more about Alaska's history, pop culture, folklore, sports, and so much more! My father was the son of a gentleman of Oxfordshire that had a small estate near to the town of Eynsham, in that county. The monks of Eynsham Priory had the land afore-time; and 'twas said that here, as elsewhere, there was a curse upon such as held for their own uses that which had been dedicated to God's service. How this may be I know not, though there are notable instances—as, to wit, the Russells—in which no visible curse has fallen on the

holders of such goods; but it is certain that my father's forbears wasted their estate grievously. Being but the third son, he had scarce, in any case, tarried at home; but, matters being as they were, the emptiness of the family purse drove him out betimes into the world. Being of good birth and breeding he got, without much ado, a place about the Court, which was not, however, much to his liking. I have heard him say—and this, though, as will be seen hereafter, he was a great lover of monarchy—that, between a weak king and villainous courtiers, Whitehall was no place for an honest gentleman. Robert Carr, that was afterwards Earl of Somerset, he liked little, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, he liked yet less, being, as he was wont to say, by so much a greater villain than Somerset as a duke is greater than an earl. He was right glad, therefore, to leave the "sunshine of the Royal presence;" for so did men speak of the Court in the hyperbolic language of those times, even for so dismal and outlandish a part as Ireland. But I know not whether he did not wish himself back, for of Ireland he would never afterwards speak with any measure of patience, declaring that he knew not which were the worse, the greediness and cruelty of the English conquerors, or the savagery and unreason of the native people. Here he tarried for some three or four years, having, indeed, had bestowed upon him an estate, which, for its boundaries, at least, was of considerable magnitude, but from which he received nothing but trouble. Who hath it now I know not; and, indeed, he charged me to have nought to do with it, saying—for I remember his very words—"If they will give thee the whole island in fee, say them nay, for it is fit for nothing but to be drowned under the sea." Yet his next venture was not one whit happier, as will be readily concluded, when I say that he took service with Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he chanced to fall in with at Cork, at which place Sir Walter touched on his way to the Indies in search of gold. Gold got they none, but of hard blows not a few, and of pains and sickness still more. My father was with the boats that sailed up the river Orinoco, and caught in his arms, I have heard him say, Walter Raleigh the younger, when this last was slain by a bullet from a Spanish arquebuse. From this voyage he came back beggared in and purse not a little broken in health; to the end of his days indeed he suffered much at times from the fever that he contracted in those parts. The year following that wherein Raleigh was beheaded, came what seemed at the first sight good news, namely, that the Bohemians had bestowed the crown of their country upon the Elector of Bavaria, husband to the Princess Elizabeth, the king's daughter. Thereupon there arose such a tumult of joy throughout the country as the oldest man living scarce remembered to have heard before. There was nothing too good to be hoped for as about to come from this promotion. Indeed, I have heard my father say that he was himself present when the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Abbott) preached a sermon wherein he declared that this event was foretold in Scripture, naming even the chapter and verse, which were, if I remember right, in the Book of the Revelation. My father was carried away with the rest, and having, as may well be thought, a special gift for choosing for his own that which should be the losing side, forthwith took service with the Elector, to whom King James, though scarce approving of the cause, sent at this time auxiliaries to the number of four thousand. In this army my father had a captain's commission, with pay to the amount of four shillings by the day—handsome wages, only that he never received of them so much as a doit. Nor did the campaign recompense the defect of gains by any excess of glory. It was, indeed, as barren of laurels as of gold; and my father, who, being favourably known of old time by the Princess, was appointed to command the guard of the Elector, arrived in his Highness's company at the Hague without a penny in his pocket, and scarce a coat to his back.

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • An "urgently readable" (Newsweek) biography of the captivating tsar who changed Russian history—from the New York Times bestselling author of *Nicholas and Alexandra, The Romanovs*, and *Catherine the Great* "Enthralling . . . as fascinating as any novel and more so than most."—The New York Times Book Review

Against the monumental canvas of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe and Russia unfolds the magnificent story of Peter the Great, crowned co-tsar at the age of ten. Robert K. Massie delves deep into his life, chronicling the pivotal events that shaped a boy into a legend—including his "incognito" travels in Europe, his unquenchable curiosity about Western ways, his obsession with the sea and establishment of the stupendous Russian navy, his creation of an unbeatable army, his transformation of Russia, and his relationships with those he loved most: Catherine, the robust yet gentle peasant, his loving mistress, wife, and successor; and Menshikov, the charming, bold, unscrupulous prince who rose to wealth and power through Peter's friendship. Impetuous and stubborn, generous and cruel, tender and unforgiving, a man of enormous energy and complexity, Peter the Great is brought fully to life. Taking as its focus memorials of the First World War in Britain, this book brings a fresh approach to the study of public symbols by exploring how different motives for commemorating the dead were reconciled through the processes of local politics to create a widely valued form of collective expression. It examines how the memorials were produced, what was said about them, how support for them was mobilized and behaviour around them regulated. These memorials were the sites of contested, multiple and ambiguous meanings, yet out of them a united public observance was created. The author argues that this was possible because the interpretation of them as symbols was part of a creative process in which new meanings for traditional forms of memorial were established and circulated. The memorials not only symbolized emotional responses to the war, but also ambitions for the post-war era. Contemporaries adopted new ways of thinking about largely traditional forms of memorial to fit the uncertain social and political climate of the inter-war years. This book represents a significant contribution to the study of material culture and memory, as well as to the social and cultural history of modern warfare. There is no shortage of biographies of Catherine the Great, of varying quality and degrees of sensationalism. But there exists no brief account of her reign that incorporates the extensive research findings of the last twenty years and presents them accessibly, accurately, and concisely to the student and the general reader. Following her magisterial *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, Isabel de Madariaga has written the most informative, balanced and up-to-date short study of this spectacular period in Russian history. De Madariaga establishes an authoritative account of the events of Catherine's life, disentangling the myth from the verifiable reality. But her principal aim is to provide an account of the achievements of the thirty-four-year reign. Well-read and intelligent, Catherine presided over a fundamental reorganization of central and local government, of financial administration, of law, and of literary and cultural life. De Madariaga tracks the changes and explains the reforms, placing them in the context of eighteenth-century Europe and the ideas of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. Chapters on the wars against the Turkish empire, the annexation of the Crimea in 1783, and the partition of Poland demonstrate Catherine's part in building Russia into a formidable European power. The text is distinguished throughout by the attention paid to historical controversies over the interpretation of Catherine's policies and to the historiography on the period in general. Praised by French writers of her day and attacked by later historians for her neglect of the welfare of the serfs, Catherine's achievements are now measured against the difficulties she met. The book points to the problems Catherine faced, the human and material resources on which she could draw, and the intellectual climate in which she operated. De Madariaga considers past and present assessments of Catherine and consolidates balanced judgments, profound understanding, and exhaustive research into a highly assimilable form.

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