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One of the tragedies of autism is that, as Schreibman writes, "[t]he field... is littered with the debris of dead ends, crushed hopes, ineffective treatments, and false starts." Drawing from her own extensive clinical experience, psychologist Schreibman, director of the Autism Research Program at UC-San Diego, provides a comprehensive account of this mysterious disorder within the context of the controversies and contentions of the field. Arguing that autism is entirely biological in origin, Schreibman systematically discounts past and present popular causal theories, such as "refrigerator mothers" and the measles/mumps/rubella vaccine. Although expertly guiding readers through a detailed analysis of characteristics, diagnosis and treatment, Schreibman never forgets to illuminate the human side of autism. The disturbing, and often tragic, impact of simplistic and unsubstantiated treatments, like facilitated communication, secretin and holding therapy, serve as evidence that "bad science can lead to as much mischief as no science." It reminds parents that, despite how far researchers have come, it will take years of research to fully understand the biology of autism. This book is strongly recommended for parents and professionals dealing with this debilitating illness.