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Starred Review Typically viewed as solitary geniuses, the two most prominent scientists of twentieth-century America_Einstein and Oppenheimer_here appear in their defining social contexts. Einstein may have achieved remarkable feats in the apparent isolation of a Swiss patent office. Yet Schweber deflates the myth of the iconoclastic loner, detailing the revolutionary's extensive debt to the community of European researchers. Schweber's insightful narrative indeed reveals how Einstein's subsequent reliance upon his unaided talents left him stranded in sterile theorizing, cut off from the collaboration of younger colleagues exploring quantum mechanics. As one of those colleagues, Oppenheimer captured the limelight as the director of the Manhattan Project, a position awarded him because of the leadership he had already demonstrated in fusing the diverse talents of pioneering scientists at Berkeley. But the publicly triumphant Oppenheimer delved deep in Vedic scripture and American Pragmatism trying to quell self-doubts born of his ambivalent Jewishness and his costly tardiness in reaching the frontiers of physics. Schweber finally confronts readers with ruptures in both men's public lives, as Einstein breaks with institutions resistant to his personal imperatives and Oppenheimer self-destructs in the glare of a security-clearance hearing.