Abandoned to Ourselves
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This book shows how the centerpiece of the Enlightenment—society as the symbol of collective human life and as the fundamental domain of human practice—was primarily composed and animated by its most ambivalent figure: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Displaying this new society as an evolving field of interdependence, the book traces the emergence and moral significance of dependence itself within Rousseau's encounters with a variety of discourses of order, including theology, natural philosophy, and music. Underpinning this whole scene we discover a modernizing conception of the human Will, one that runs far deeper than Rousseau's most famous trope, the “general Will.”