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The French Revolution continues to generate historical controversy. During the last thirty years, consensus on its meaning has disappeared. Scholarship and debate constantly reinterpret both the event as a whole and its constituent parts, changing our perceptions and understanding of it. Today the French Revolution is still being rewritten as history. In this volume, eight of the most distinguished scholars in the field present new interpretations of major themes in the history of the French Revolution. They explore areas of intellectual, political, religious, and social development. Two hundred each age, we are often told, rewrites the past in its own image. In the case of the French Revolution, this is an understatement. In the second half of this century the scholarship has seemed to be in a state of almost permanent revolution as historians have taken up one interpretative or methodological approach after another. Some of the story of this historiographical roller-coaster ride may be known to readers, thanks to William Doyle's best-selling text book Origins of the French Revolution, which begins with a long and detailed survey "Writings on Revolutionary Origins since 193
French Revolution, revolutionary movement that shook France between 1787 and 1799 and reached its first climax there in 1789—hence the conventional term "Revolution of 1789"—denoting the end of the ancien régime in France and serving also to distinguish that event from the later French revolutions of 1830 and 1848. The French Revolution was a period of major social upheaval that began in 1787 and ended in 1799. It sought to completely change the relationship between the rulers and those they governed and to redefine the nature of political power. It proceeded in a back-and-forth process between revolutionary and reactionary forces. Why did the French Revolution happen?