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In Jerusalem and Northern Ireland, territorial disputes have often seemed indivisible, unable to be solved through negotiation, and prone to violence and war. This book challenges the conventional wisdom that these conflicts were the inevitable result of clashing identities, religions, and attachments to the land. On the contrary, it was radical political rhetoric, and not ancient hatreds, that rendered these territories indivisible. Stacie Goddard traces the roots of territorial indivisibility to politicians' strategies for legitimating their claims to territory. When bargaining over territory, politicians utilize rhetoric to appeal to their domestic audiences and undercut the claims of their opponents. However, this strategy has unintended consequences; by resonating with some coalitions and appearing unacceptable to others, politicians' rhetoric can lock them into positions in which they are unable to recognize the legitimacy of their opponent's demands. As a result, politicians come to negotiations with incompatible claims, constructing territory as indivisible.
