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Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (293 p.)
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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	The mystery of kuru : a disease like no other -- Barflies and flatworms : how speculation and pure chance advance a new science -- Cannibalism : an answer guaranteed to stir things up -- Igor and Bill : the discoveries that bring kuru to world attention -- The life of a cell : a miraculous, and often precarious, complexity -- The death of a cell : by subterfuge, piracy, or out-and-out assault -- When is a virus not a virus? : when a disease-causing agent reproduces without genes -- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease : waking up to the potential of a devastating affliction -- Magnificent molecules : the proteins that make life possible -- Protein origami : building the gothic cathedrals of life -- Stanley Prusiner's Heresy : an infectious agent that's a protein and nothing but -- An infectious idea : the campaign for the minds of researchers -- A portrait of the prion : and the experiments that point to their role in the human brain -- Mad cow disease : the uncertain ground where politics and science intersect -- Mad cow in humans : no barrier after all -- The Americas : mad mink, then cows -- Into the wild : deer, elk, moose, and caribou -- Origins : attempting to find where prions come from -- Cats but not dogs : when prions jump the species barrier -- Alzheimer's disease : plaques and tangles but so far no

prions -- Parkinson's disease : looking more and more like a prion disease -- Lou Gehrig's disease : the emerging picture of a prion-like process in ALS -- Chronic traumatic encephalopathy : the athletes' plague -- And in the end...

Sommario/riassunto

"Discovered and identified as the cause of mad cow disease only three decades ago, the prion is a protein molecule that, when misshapen in the brain, becomes fatal. Novel and controversial, prions have provoked a scientific revolution. They challenge the very foundations of biology: A disease-causing entity with no genetic material at all? A molecule capable of infecting, multiplying, and killing? This book recounts the birth of prion science and the imaginative detective work scientists have undertaken as they struggle to find the answers to devastating brain diseases from mad cow and Creutzfeld-Jakob disease to Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's, and others. As in each of his best-selling books, Jay Ingram here makes complex scientific concepts accessible and shows how little-known events may have profound significance. He describes the development of prion science as a rough-and-tumble affair, with rivals, eccentrics, interfering governments, and brilliantly creative people all playing salient roles. Weaving biology, medicine, human tragedy, discovery, and bitter scientific competition into his account, he reveals the stunning potential of prion science, whose discoveries may unlock the answers to some of humankind's most destructive diseases"--Provided by publisher.
