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Sommario/riassunto	This engaging, deeply researched study provides the richest and most nuanced picture we have to date of cinema-both movies and movie- going-in the early 1910's. At the same time, it makes clear the profound relationship between early cinema and the construction of a national identity in this important transitional period in the United States. Richard Abel looks closely at sensational melodramas, including westerns (cowboy, cowboy-girl, and Indian pictures), Civil War films (especially girl-spy films), detective films, and animal pictures-all

popular genres of the day that have received little critical attention. He simultaneously analyzes film distribution and exhibition practices in order to reconstruct a context for understanding moviegoing at a time when American cities were coming to grips with new groups of immigrants and women working outside the home. Drawing from a wealth of research in archive prints, the trade press, fan magazines, newspaper advertising, reviews, and syndicated columns-the latter of which highlight the importance of the emerging star system-Abel sheds new light on the history of the film industry, on working-class and immigrant culture at the turn of the century, and on the process of imaging a national community.
