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Sommario/riassunto	Among all the great discoveries and inventions of the nineteenth century, few offer us a more fascinating insight into Victorian society than the discovery of anaesthesia. Now considered to be one of the greatest inventions for humanity since the printing press, anaesthesia offered pain-free operations, childbirth with reduced suffering, and instant access to the world beyond consciousness. And yet, upon its introduction, Victorian medics, moralists, clergymen, and scientists, were plunged into turmoil. This vivid and engaging account of the early days of anaesthesia unravels some key moments in