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Sommario/riassunto	In the pages of this slim, powerful book Rob Riemen argues with passion that "nobility of spirit" is the quintessence of a civilized world. It is, as Thomas Mann believed, the sole corrective for human history. Without nobility of spirit, culture vanishes. Yet in the early twenty-first century, a time when human dignity and freedom are imperiled, the concept of nobility of spirit is scarcely considered. Riemen insists that if we hope to move beyond the war on terror and create a life-affirming culture, we must address timeless but neglected questions: What is a good society? Why art? Why culture? What is the responsibility of intellectuals? Why anti-Americanism? Why nihilism? Why the cult of death of fundamentalists? In a series of three essays, the author identifies nobility of spirit in the life and work of Baruch Spinoza and of Thomas Mann; explores the quest for the good society in our own time; and addresses the pursuit of truth and freedom that engaged figures as disparate as Socrates and Leone Ginzburg, a Jewish Italian intellectual murdered by Nazis. "The forces now aligned against humanistic values are manifold," observes George Steiner in the foreword to the book. In

this imaginative and compelling volume, Riemen addresses these forces and speaks to every reader who believes in the power of classical ideas to restore Western civilization's highest values.
