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Sommario/riassunto	American liberals and conservatives alike take for granted a progressive view of the Constitution that took root in the early twentieth century. Richard Epstein laments this complacency which, he believes, explains America's current economic malaise and political gridlock. Steering clear of well-worn debates between defenders of originalism and proponents of a living Constitution, Epstein employs close textual reading, historical analysis, and political and economic theory to urge a return to the classical liberal theory of governance that animated the framers' original constitutional design. Grounded in the thought of Locke, Hume, Madison, and other Enlightenment figures, classical liberalism emphasized federalism, restricted government, separation of powers, and strong protection of individual rights. New Deal progressives challenged this synthesis by embracing government as a force for social good rather than a necessary evil. The Supreme Court has unwisely ratified the progressive program by sustaining many legislative initiatives at odds with the classical liberal Constitution. Epstein addresses both the Constitution's structural safeguards against state power and its protection of individual rights. He sheds light on

contemporary disputes ranging from presidential prerogatives to health care legislation, while exploring such enduring topics as judicial review, economic regulation, freedom of speech and religion, and equal protection.
