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Autore	Toker Leona
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Nota di contenuto	1. Introduction 2. Pnin: The Quest That Overrides the Goal 3. Mary: "Without Any Passport" 4. King, Queen, Knave, or Lust under the Linden 5. The Defense: Secret Asymmetries 6. Glory: "Good Example of How Metaphysics Can Fool You" 7. Laughter in the Dark: Guinea Pigs and Galley Slaves 8. Invitation to a Beheading: "Nameless Existence, Intangible Substance" 9. The Gift: Models of Infinity 10. Bend Sinister: The "Inner" Problem 11. "Reader! Bruder!" Broodings on the Rhetoric of Lolita 12. Conclusion.
Sommario/riassunto	Vladimir Nabokov described the literature course he taught at Cornell as "a kind of detective investigation of the mystery of literary structures." Leona Toker here pursues a similar investigation of the enigmatic structures of Nabokov's own fiction. According to Toker, most previous critics stressed either Nabokov's concern with form or the humanistic side of his works, but rarely if ever the two together. In sensitive and revealing readings of ten novels, Toker demonstrates that the need to reconcile the human element with aesthetic or metaphysical pursuits is a constant theme of Nabokov's and that the tension between technique and content is itself a key to his fiction. Written with verve and precision, Toker's book begins with Pnin and follows the circular pattern that is one of her subject's own favored devices.