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Sommario/riassunto	By 1400, the once-mighty Byzantine Empire stood on the verge of destruction. Most of its territories had been lost to the Ottoman Turks, and Constantinople was under close blockade. Against all odds, Byzantium lingered on for another fifty years until 1453, when the Ottomans dramatically toppled the capital's walls. During this bleak and uncertain time, ordinary Byzantines faced difficult decisions to protect their livelihoods and families against the death throes of their homeland. In this evocative and moving book, Jonathan Harris explores individual stories of diplomatic maneuverings, covert defiance, and sheer luck against a backdrop of major historical currents and offers a new perspective on the real reasons behind the fall of this extraordinarily fascinating empire.