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Sommario/riassunto	How Americans adapted European royal illuminations for patriotic celebrations, spectacular expositions, and intensely bright commercial lighting to create the world's most dazzling and glamorous cities. Illuminated ftes and civic celebrations began in Renaissance Italy and spread through the courts of Europe. Their fireworks, torches, lamps, and special effects glorified the monarch, marked the birth of a prince, or celebrated military victory. Nineteenth-century Americans rejected such monarchical pomp and adapted spectacular lighting to their democratic, commercial culture. In American Illuminations, David Nye explains how they experimented with gas and electric light to create illuminated cityscapes far brighter and more dynamic than those of Europe, and how these illuminations became symbols of modernity and the conquest of nature. Americans used gaslight and electricity in parades, expositions, advertising, elections, and political spectacles. In the 1880s, cities erected powerful arc lights on towers to create artificial moonlight. By the 1890s they adopted more intensive, commercial lighting that defined distinct zones of light and glamorized

the city's White Ways, skyscrapers, bridges, department stores, theaters, and dance halls. Poor and blighted areas disappeared into the shadows. American illuminations also became integral parts of national political campaigns, presidential inaugurations, and victory celebrations after the Spanish-American War and World War I.
