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Sommario/riassunto	Spontaneous human combustion, ventriloquism, sleepwalking, secret societies, plague, doppelgangers, disguises, corpses, night burials, locked doors, and mysterious manuscripts-these are only a few of the Gothic devices that appear in the writings of late eighteenth-century American author, Charles Brockden Brown. Brown's work presents us with the dark underside to Enlightenment optimism as he questions the extent to which human beings can draw accurate inferences from sensory data and foresee the outcome of their actions. In advance of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Ambrose Bier