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Sommario/riassunto	This book is a full survey of the philosophy of tragedy from antiquity to the present. From Aristotle to Zizek the focal question has been: why, in spite of its distressing content, do we value tragic drama? What is the nature of the 'tragic effect'? Some philosophers point to a certain kind of pleasure that results from tragedy. Others, while not excluding pleasure, emphasize the knowledge we gain from tragedy - of psychology, ethics, freedom or immortality. Through a critical engagement with these and other philosophers, the book concludes by suggesting an answer to the question of what it is that constitutes tragedy 'in its highest vocation'. This book will be of equal interest to students of philosophy and of literature.