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Sommario/riassunto	During the many years that they were separated by the perils of the American Revolution, John and Abigail Adams exchanged hundreds of letters. Writing to each other of public events and private feelings, loyalty and love, revolution and parenting, they wove a tapestry of correspondence that has become a cherished part of American history and literature. With Abigail and John Adams, historian G. J. Barker-Benfield mines those familiar letters to a new purpose: teasing out the ways in which they reflected-and helped transform-a language of sensibility, inherited from Britain but, amid the revolutionary fervor, becoming Americanized. Sensibility-a heightened moral consciousness of feeling, rooted in the theories of such thinkers as Descartes, Locke, and Adam Smith and including a "moral sense" akin to the physical senses-threads throughout these letters. As Barker-Benfield makes

clear, sensibility was the fertile, humanizing ground on which the Adamses not only founded their marriage, but also the "abhorrence of injustice and inhumanity" they and their contemporaries hoped to plant at the heart of the new nation. Bringing together their correspondence with a wealth of fascinating detail about life and thought, courtship and sex, gender and parenting, and class and politics in the revolutionary generation and beyond, Abigail and John Adams draws a lively, convincing portrait of a marriage endangered by separation, yet surviving by the same ideas and idealism that drove the revolution itself. A feast of ideas that never neglects the real lives of the man and woman at its center, Abigail and John Adams takes readers into the heart of an unforgettable union in order to illuminate the first days of our nation-and explore our earliest understandings of what it might mean to be an American.

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