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Sommario/riassunto	On a winter night in 1743, a local magistrate was stabbed to death in the churchyard of Rye by an angry butcher. Why did this gruesome crime happen? What does it reveal about the political, economic, and cultural patterns that existed in this small English port town? To answer these questions, this fascinating book takes us back to the mid-sixteenth century, when religious and social tensions began to fragment the quiet town of Rye and led to witch hunts, riots, and violent political confrontations. Paul Monod examines events over the course of the next two centuries, tracing the town's transition as it moved from narrowly focused Reformation norms to the more expansive ideas of the emerging commercial society. In the process, relations among the town's inhabitants were fundamentally altered. The history of Rye mirrored that of the whole nation, and it gives us an intriguing new perspective on England in the early modern period.