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Sommario/riassunto	Hospices have played a critical role in transforming ideas about death and dying. Viewing death as a natural event, hospices seek to enable people approaching mortality to live as fully and painlessly as possible. Award-winning medical historian Emily K. Abel provides insight into several important issues surrounding the growth of hospice care. Using a unique set of records, Prelude to Hospice expands our understanding of the history of U.S. hospices. Compiled largely by Florence Wald, the founder of the first U.S. hospice, the records provide a detailed account

of her experiences studying and caring for dying people and their families in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although Wald never published a report of her findings, she often presented her material informally. Like many others seeking to found new institutions, she believed she could garner support only by demonstrating that her facility would be superior in every respect to what currently existed. As a result, she generated inflated expectations about what a hospice could accomplish. Wald's records enable us to glimpse the complexities of the work of tending to dying people.
