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Sommario/riassunto	Pocket Essentials is a dynamic series of books that are concise, lively, and easy to read. Packed with facts as well as expert opinions, each book has all the key information you need to know about such popular topics as film, television, cult fiction, history, and more. Often alchemy is seen as an example of medieval gullibility and the alchemists as a collection of eccentrics and superstitious fools. In this Pocket Essential, Sean Martin shows that nothing could be further from the truth. It is important to see the search for the philosopher's stone and the attempts to turn base metal into gold as metaphors for the relation of man to nature and man to God as much as seriously held beliefs. Sir Isaac Newton devoted as much time to his alchemical studies as he did to his mathematical ones. This book traces the history of alchemy from ancient times to the 20th century, highlighting the interest of modern thinkers like Jung in the subject. It covers a major, if neglected area of Western thought.