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Sommario/riassunto	Chinese literature has traditionally been divided by both theorists and university course providers into 'classical' and 'modern.' This has left nineteenth-century fiction in limbo, and allowed negative assessments of its quality to persist unchecked. The popularity of Qing dynasty red-light fiction – works whose primary focus is the relationship between clients and courtesans, set in tea-houses, pleasure gardens, and later, brothels – has endured throughout the twentieth century. This volume explores why, arguing that these novels are far from the 'low' work of 'frustrated scholars' but in their provocative play on the nature of relations between client, courtesan and text, provide an insight into wider changes in understandings of self and literary value in the nineteenth century.