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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Introduction -- Chapter One -- Chapter Two -- Chapter Three -- Chapter Four -- Chapter Five -- Chapter Six -- Chapter Seven

-- Chapter Eight -- Chapter Nine -- Chapter Ten -- Chapter Eleven -- Chapter Twelve -- Chapter Thirteen -- Chapter Fourteen -- Chapter Fifteen -- Chapter Sixteen -- Chapter Seventeen -- Chapter Eighteen -- Chapter Nineteen -- Chapter Twenty -- Chapter Twenty-One -- Chapter Twenty-Two -- Chapter Twenty-Three -- Chapter Twenty-Four -- Chapter Twenty-Five -- Chapter Twenty-Six -- Chapter Twenty-Seven -- Chapter Twenty-Eight -- Chapter Twenty-Nine -- Chapter Thirty -- Chapter Thirty-One -- Chapter Thirty-Two -- Notes

Sommario/riassunto

In his preface, the anonymous author of *Courtesans and Opium* describes his book as an act of penance for thirty years spent patronizing the brothels of Yangzhou. Written in the 1840s, his story is filled with vice and dark consequence, portraying the hazards of the city's seedy underbelly and warning others against the example of the Fool. Chinese literature's first true "city novel," *Courtesans and Opium* recounts the illustrious career of a debauched soul enveloped by enthralling pursuits and romantic illusions. While socially acceptable marriages were arranged and often loveless, brothels offered men accomplished courtesans who served as both enchanting companions and sensual lovers. These professional sirens dressed in the latest styles and dripped with gold, silver, and jewels. From an early age, they were taught to excel at various arts and graces, which transformed the brothel into a kind of club for men to meet, exchange gossip, and smoke opium at their leisure. The Fool's fable follows five sworn brothers and their respective relationships with Yangzhou courtesans, revealing in acute detail the lurid materialism of this dangerous world—its violence and corruption as well as its seductive but illusory promise. Never before translated into English, *Courtesans and Opium* offers a brilliant window into the decadence of nineteenth-century China.