

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910971012003321
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Titolo	Red-light novels of the late Qing // Chloe F. Starr
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden, : Brill Biggleswade, : Extenza Turpin [distributor], 2007
ISBN	9786611920951 9781281920959 1281920959 9789047428596 9047428595
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (319 p.)
Collana	China studies ; ; 14
Disciplina	895.134809
Soggetti	Chinese fiction - Qing dynasty, 1644-1912 - History and criticism Courtesans in literature
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [275]-285) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Preliminary Material / C.F. Starr -- Chapter One. Text And Context / C. F. Starr -- Chapter Two. The Narrator Framed / C.F. Starr -- Chapter Three. Characterisation In Context / C.F. Starr -- Chapter Four. Structure: The Textual Representation Of Itself / C.F. Starr -- Bibliography / C.F. Starr -- Index / C.F. Starr.
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.

