

AN EXCHANGE OF TWO FLOWERS

by Sarah Zettel



CHAPTER TEN

At the Gates

I.

March 22, 1839

The Foreigners' Factories

Canton, Guangdong Province

China

"Something's wrong," whispered Elliot. "Where are the boats?"

Elliot stood at the rail of the *Louisa* with the boatswain, Mr. Henderson. Overhead, the ropes creaked as the sails strained to allow the ship to make headway against the Pearl River's current.

Elliot had gone to Macao thinking he would finally sever the Gordian knot of the opium trade in China. He'd had an answer, one that would please the Imperial commissioner, Lin Zexu, and the British lords of the East India Company.

But he'd failed. Ramsey was intractable. The Company needed the opium money, and that was that. His smile and his shrug at Chinese law were more intractable than any fury could have been.

So, here they were now, beating up channel, on their way back to Canton and the factories. Elliot normally passed this voyage below decks trying to read some of the endless paperwork that his office accumulated. This time, though, he'd been too restless for anything but pacing the foredecks, smoking cigarettes and watching the water.

Watching for gun boats. Watching for smoke rising from the shore. Watching for any sign that the high commissioner had carried out his threats to try to arrest the English traders who continued to defy Chinese law and pour opium into the country.

But now that Canton's low hills spread out before them, all Elliot saw was...absence.

The docks should have been invisible behind a black mass of junks, sampans, oar boats, dows, row boats — anything and everything small enough to maneuver up to the shore. Instead, he had a clear view of the waterline, and the docks, and the white and blue factory buildings beyond.

He'd never seen the docks empty. Not once.

"Bring me a glass," he ordered Henderson. At the same time, he shaded his eyes with his hands and squinted at the approaching shore. The flags all flew on their poles. He couldn't make out any rising smoke. No quick flashes from gunfire. Henderson brought the spyglass and Elliot put it at once to his eye.

The square and promenade in front of the factories was as empty as the docks.

This is bad.

And he was not the only one who thought so.

"Should I order the mate to turn her about, sir?" asked Henderson.

"Turn tail and run?" Elliot snapped. "Tell the mate to bring us straight in, Mr. Henderson."

To his credit, Henderson's salute was crisp and unhesitating. "Aye, sir."

"And, Henderson? Tell him to ready the guns."

II.

But the *Louisa* met no resistance as she anchored, and none as her boat put into the dock. The shore and the square remained eerily quiet. Elliot felt his guts tightening the whole way. Ridiculous thoughts flickered through his head.

What if they're already dead? What if Lin's men have already taken them all? What if there are soldiers just inside, waiting for us to land?

Elliot glanced again at the rifles resting under the gunwales, loaded and ready. He remembered the last time he'd been with a man who tried to take the Chinese on headfirst. He remembered the fist in his gut. The boot on his back.

He remembered the opening salvo of this latest episode; the neat square of soldiers, the silken cord, the spasms of the dying man. The shouts and the riot and the terrible uncertainty as to what would happen next.

At last, he saw a uniformed man run from the factory and down the dock. Elliot slapped the glass back against his eye.

It was Johnston.

Emile Johnston, his deputy, whole and unhurt. Elliot shifted the glass to take in the veranda, and the factory windows. He saw men at the rail, and men behind the windows.

Safe.

Johnston waved his cap at them, without breaking stride. Elliot lifted his hand in answer. His bowels loosened, and for a minute he thought he was going to embarrass himself. And he didn't care.

Lin hadn't moved yet. He was in time.

The oarsman maneuvered them up to the dock. The mate tossed Johnston the line so he could help them make fast.

"What's happened?" Elliot jumped over the gunwale. "Where're the boats...?"

"Still trying to find out, sir," said Johnston. "The whole place has been cleared of Chinese. Servants, porters, the shopkeepers. Everybody. It's because of this new edict from Commissioner Lin. I've got it on your desk..."

"Yes, yes, I've seen it."

"You've seen it?" Johnston repeated.

Elliot drew himself up. "Yes, Mr. Johnston. Somebody sent it to me while I was at Macao. I take it that somebody wasn't you."

From the look on Johnston's face, he was belatedly realizing this little oversight might have been a mistake. "I wanted to make sure we had a good grip on the situation before..."

"A grip!" Elliot bellowed. "You goddamned incompetent! You should have called me back at once! Have you even got a man watching the gates? Any lookout at all!"

"I...sir...that is...Mr. Dent thought..."

Which was the last bloody straw.

"IS MR. DENT IN CHARGE HERE OR ARE YOU?" Elliot didn't wait for his answer. "You're bloody useless, Johnston! Get out of my sight! Get up to the gates and find out what the hell's happening, *if* you can handle that much!"

"Yes, sir!" Johnston turned on his heel and ran.

Finally doing something right. Elliot set his jaw and strode across the square to his office. Men were streaming out of the building now, all of them shouting questions.

"I don't know!" he shouted back, even though he hadn't understood a single

one of them. "I don't know, damn it!"

He stormed into the office. "Get me Morrison!" he shouted as he passed... someone. He did not know who. He did not care. What mattered was that shortly after he had gotten into his office and thrown his cap onto the desk, Mr. Morrison appeared in the doorway and bowed.

"Shut the door and tell me what the hell's been going on."

Morrison obeyed both commands. Elliot listened while the translator told him about how Lancelot Dent had been Johnny-on-the-spot to take the delivery of Lin's edicts as they came in. How Dent had asked specifically for Old Mr. Thom to be his translator, and heard them read out, alone, in the Consoo house.

How Howqua and Mowqua had been paraded through the street in chains.

How the Board of Trade had met in near hysteria, and how Dent had spent the entire time telling them it meant nothing. Nothing at all. A little show on the part of the latest mandarin bigwig.

The Board of Trade had written a letter all on their own and sent it to Mr. Lin.

"I don't suppose you've got a copy of this letter, have you Mr. Morrison?" asked Elliot through clenched teeth.

"I can get you one, sir."

"Do that."

But before he could move, a single knock sounded on the door, and Johnston walked in. Morrison fell back into the corner.

"Well?" Elliot barked to his deputy. But he already knew. He could see it in how pale Johnston had turned, and the way his hand shook as he took off his cap.

"Sir. They've done it. They've closed the gates."

Closed the gates. The words echoed around Elliot's skull. Closed the gates.

Closed the gates, trapped us here. Two hundred sitting ducks, and only the Louisa within hail.

Of course he'd sent word to the *Lady Charlotte* when he'd left Macao, asking for her master to bring her in, just in case. Lin's edict had been beyond anything he'd yet seen from an Imperial official, and they needed to be ready. No matter what Lord Ramsey, or Mr. Dent might try to say.

But *Lady Charlotte* was not here yet. Elliot didn't even know for sure she was on the way. Lord Ramsey could have countermanded him.

"You helped bring us to this, you blasted idiot!" he bellowed at Johnston.

"You listened to that goddamned merchant instead of carrying out your sworn duty!"

“Sir, I thought...”

“You thought!” It was laughable. One hundred thousand Chinese held back by a wall that might as well have been made of tissue paper. And, oh, yes, *they* held the keys to the gates. “You thought, Mr. Johnston or Mr. Dent thought? Hmmm? You don’t answer me, Mr. Johnston. Cat got that idiot tongue of yours?”

“You’ll want to start an evacuation,” said Johnston stiffly. “I’ll draft an order...”

“The hell you will,” said Elliot. “Despite Mr. Dent’s best efforts, I’ve already seen the high commissioner’s edict. Lin wants Mr. Dent? Very well. Lin can have him.”

Johnston went dead white. Johnston stared.

“Sir,” he said, and that one word had more force and energy than any he’d spoken yet. “You can’t mean that.”

“And why the hell not! I am not going to risk two hundred lives not to mention my own neck for Lancelot Dent!”

“Sir, please. I know I was wrong. I accept your reprimand. Cashier me if you want. But you have to listen to me now. You cannot give a British citizen up to the Chinese! You’ll be branded a traitor!”

Elliot felt his face flush. Johnston held his hands up.

“Yes, I know. I know! Whitehall’s a world away, but the Company isn’t. The Company’s on our doorstep in Macao. If Lord Ramsey hears that you’ve just up and handed an Englishman over, that the Chinese arrested, jailed and *killed* an Englishman, what’s he going to do?”

Send the war ships in. The navy wasn’t a world away either. The navy was a day away. And getting closer all the time. Elliot’s racing, furious thoughts slammed to a halt.

Never mind what Lord Ramsey would do. What would the captain of the *Lady Charlotte* do when he arrived and heard that Elliot had permitted an Englishman to be taken?

“Your sworn duty is to protect British life and property,” said Johnston urgently. “You *cannot* do this.”

His ears were ringing. His throat was raw. He could hear them coming, all those Chinese soldiers. Massing outside the wall. All because of Lancelot Dent.

All because of the opium.

The opium the Company was too stupid to give up, even though every man in

the factories could be slaughtered the minute Lin gave the order. And Lin would give the order if he felt like that was what it would take to placate the Emperor.

Well.

A cold and terrible calm settled over Elliot's mind.

Lin's sworn duty was to carry out the orders of his Emperor. Elliot's sworn duty was to protect British lives, and property.

Lin would do his duty, that much was clear. So, Elliot had better bloody well do his.

Elliot made himself let out a long breath. He folded his hands behind his back so Johnston couldn't see how tightly he clenched his fists. He even managed a smile.

"You're right, Mr. Johnston. I don't know what came over me." He laughed. "Just another boycott, isn't it? We've been through it all before."

"Yes, sir." Johnston looked like he was about to faint with relief, or maybe just piss himself. Elliot felt a perverse sympathy.

"Still, that was a good idea you had. We should draft an evacuation order. Probably we won't need anything so drastic, but best to have it ready, just in case."

"Yes, sir. I'll get right on that."

"Thank you, Mr. Johnston. And just close the door on your way out, will you?"

Johnston's retreat was a hasty one. The door slammed behind him. He'd probably forgotten that Morrison was still in the office, standing quietly in a corner, not saying a single word to call attention to himself.

Smart man, Morrison.

"Mr. Morrison," said Elliot. Morrison bowed, not in the English style, but in the Chinese, hands folded just so, back straight as an iron rod. "I believe I am in need of your help."

III.

March 24, 1839

The Foreigners' Factories

Canton, Guangdong Province

China

That last thing Lancelot Dent expected to get out of Mr. Lin's dramatic little

quarantine was a night of fun.

But here he was scrambling over the rooftops under the light of a full moon, just like when he was a boy back home with his brother Tom. He felt like any minute now, Father would lean out the window and holler at them to come down before they broke their fool necks!

Out by the gates, the soldiers were starting up their noise again. This had become part of the drama. As soon as the sun went down, they set about an hourly beating gongs and blowing of conchs. Apparently, the idea was that if they disturbed the foreigners' sleep, it would increase their desperation, and thus their willingness to hand over their own to Lin's gentle ministrations.

But what that noise actually accomplished was to let Dent know that the soldiers were all busy by the gate, and that for the next fifteen minutes or so, this portion of the wall was unguarded.

The boats might be gone, but the factories still had a series of escape routes, if a man knew where to look. For instance, the gap between the Dutch factory roof and the wall wasn't more than a yard. And only another yard separated the wall from the roof of the Consoo House.

All easy enough for a tall fellow still in his prime and perfectly used to ship ladders and country houses.

And Dent had an appointment. In fact, he had an invitation. He'd found it tucked underneath his door just this morning. A tiny scrap of paper. He'd almost missed it.

Consoo House. Midnight, it read, along with two Chinese characters that served as a signature.

Howqua.

Dent smiled as he slid down the roof. His boot-heels caught the gutter, stopping his fall.

He listened. No noise in the alley, just the endless banging and honking away by the gates. Nobody up and about that he could see. Which was a bit of a surprise. Elliot had spent the whole of last night prowling the grounds.

Probably he thought he was being a diligent officer. Actually, Elliot was turning from a minor irritant to a full-fledged impediment. One would think a man used to command would spend his energy keeping people's spirits up and making sure they all stayed calm and collected. A united front, that was what was called for, until this whole thing blew over.

But Elliot? Call for calm? Oh, no. That old woman was spending all his time in a mad scramble designed to panic everybody. He seemed convinced that the Chinese were going to swoop down and murder all the foreigners in their beds. He was spending every waking minute writing letters, answering edicts, and making plans to evacuate the factories as soon as possible. Evacuate!

Idiot.

Dent gathered his knees under him. He measured the distance between the roof and the wall, and he jumped. He hit the wall hard. The edge dug into his ribs, forcing out all the air. Dent clutched the edge, and waited.

Nothing. Overhead, the clouds shifted. Lovely full moon tonight. Plenty of light. He gauged his distance again, and jumped, and landed, not quite cat-footed on the Consoo House roof.

Of course he was scrambling into a trap.

It could not have been more bloody obvious if they'd tried. A mysterious note purporting to be from Howqua? He and the rest of the world knew Howqua had been removed, in his chains, to house arrest as soon as the gates had shut. And setting the meeting at midnight, *outside* the factory wall? What else could this be but an attempt to draw Dent out to where he could be arrested. He'd have to be a bigger fool than Elliot not to see that.

Of course, he was acting a little bit like a fool. A truly smart man would have stayed in bed.

The problem was, this whole ridiculous ploy left him with a nagging question. Exactly who was behind this?

If it really was Howqua trying to lure him out, that was bad enough. But what if someone inside the factories was behind this farce? Say Mr. Morrison whose loyalty was more than a little murky? Or perhaps it was Charles King trying to curry favor with the Chinese? After all, Lin's edict promised favor and riches to any foreign trader who handed his fellows to the Chinese.

Or what if it was Elliot himself? King he could handle. Morrison he could ignore. Elliot, now. Elliot could make real trouble.

He had to find out, and there was nobody he could trust to do the job for him. But that didn't mean he had to walk in whistling. The pistol in his coat pocket thumped reassuringly against his chest as he slid and scrambled along the roof to the rear of the Consoo House.

He'd already kept whoever was here waiting for a good long hour. They had

to be getting impatient. Pretty soon, their fellow conspirators would come along, demanding to know what the hell was going on. Either that, or they'd up and leave.

All Dent had to do was hunker down in the shades, watch the show and count the noses.

Dent hooked his fingers around the edge of the roof tiles and let himself dangle. His shoulders protested. God, this was harder than it used to be.

He let himself drop. An exhilarating heartbeat later, he hit the street's hard-packed dirt. Pain shot up through his ankles and knees, but he kept his balance and held his breath. Out by the gates, the conchs sounded, the gongs rattled. Dent straightened, and checked his pistol.

"Nice night for a stroll," murmured a man behind him.

Dent turned, and there was Charles King. The puritanical trader also had a pistol. Only his was out, and pointed right at Dent's chest.

So. Dent felt himself smile. He also raised both hands. Because despite current evidence to the contrary, he really wasn't a fool.

"Thought it might be you, King. Plan to hand me in for Lin's reward, do you?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Dent. It ain't me that's gonna hand you in."

King stepped to one side. A man's shape moved forward from the shadows. Charles Elliot.

IV.

"Thank you, Mr. King. You're dismissed," said Elliot crisply. "I'll take it from here."

Unfortunately, King was not ready to leave. *No discipline*, thought Elliot irritably.

"Are you sure?" said King. "I could..."

"No, thank you," replied Elliot. "You get inside. Won't do to have the patrols catch you out here." Elliot held out his hand, but kept his eyes on Dent. Dent, because he was vile, but not stupid, stayed where he was, hands up, idiot grin in place.

King handed his pistol over to Elliot, raised his hat, and left them there, vanishing back up the alley, and into whatever bolt hole he'd found for himself.

"Inside, Mr. Dent." Elliot gestured toward the Consoo House's side door.

"Gladly," Dent nudged the door with his toe and found it open. "Wouldn't do

for us both to get arrested now, would it.”

Elliot didn't answer. He just followed Dent into the main hall. He'd left a lamp lit in there, but turned down low so the light wouldn't attract anybody's attention.

Dent walked over to the front bench, giving himself plenty of sea room.

Elliot kept the pistol trained on him. He also locked the door.

“Should I be saying my prayers, Captain?” Dent asked.

“All for your own protection, Mr. Dent.” Elliot tucked the key into his breast pocket. “Can't have those heathen Chinese sneaking in and spiriting you off, can we? Must protect English lives and property!”

I'll have one of you, Elliot thought, and the surge of satisfaction surprised him. This one. This man who moved heaven and earth to pour a river of poison into a country, and just because it was his poison and he made money from it.

This once, he'd have to listen to Elliot and do what he said.

“You'll forgive me for saying, Elliot...”

Dent's hand moved. Elliot didn't shoot. He charged. He swung the pistol and clouted Dent along-side the head. Dent dropped to the floor and Elliot aimed a kick at Dent's back. The man screamed, and Elliot kicked him again, this time in the ribs, hard enough to flip him onto his back. While Dent gasped, Elliot knelt down and grabbed the gun out of his breast pocket.

“Now,” Elliot, a pistol in each hand, backed away and sat on the nearest bench. “You can say whatever you want, Mr. Dent.” He tucked his pistol into his pocket and took Dent's in both hands. “The whole reason I brought you here was so we could have a chat, just the two of us. Man to man.”

Elliot cracked Dent's revolver open and started emptying out the bullets.

Dent got slowly to his knees. Blood dripped from his temple, and the corner of his mouth.

“Bite your tongue?” Elliot asked. “Painful. I know.”

Dent grinned. God help them both. Was there nothing that could wipe the grin off this man's face? “You must have a very low opinion of me, Elliot to think I'd fall for this scheme.”

“But you did fall for it. Not because you're a fool, though. But because you love a show. You always have to see what's going on for yourself. That's why I knew you'd come. And over the roofs. Obvious route. I tried it myself once, just in case it was needed.”

“What commendable foresight.” Dent tried, and failed to get to his feet. He tried again, and this time he managed it. He groped for the nearest bench and sat. He also winced. Elliot watched impassively. “So, what am I to expect now?”

“I told you. A private little chat. You see, I’ve got a choice to make, Mr. Dent, and I very much need your help making it.”

“Of course, superintendent.” Dent spat onto the floor. “All you had to do was ask.”

A thousand images flashed before Elliot’s mind.

Clara in the moonlight, declaring the children must leave. Clara’s restless fingers telling the beads she never wore openly.

The upside-down cup, the mass of leaves, cotton blossoms, poppy blossoms, tea leaves. Notes and coins showering down and disappearing into the ocean.

Letters — dozens of them, hundreds — passing back and forth like flocks of birds.

Dent laughing. Dent scheming. Dent seeing no further than his next pay day. Dent responsible for penning them all in this cage and refusing to acknowledge what he had done.

Clara.

His children, her children, sent away, back to England, a country that would turn away from them as it had turned away from him.

“I don’t...” began Dent.

“You do. Because you’ve already read the edicts while I was...called away to Macao.”

Dent’s mouth twitched. He took a deep breath and his whole face spasmed. “I don’t know what King told you.” He coughed. More blood flecked his chin.

“And I don’t care what you have to say about it now. I want to talk about my choice, Dent. It’s from Mr. Lin. He says if I want to save all the lives of the people in our factories, I can either hand him over all the opium currently aboard the English ships, or I can hand him you.

“Now, here’s where I need your help, Mr. Dent,” Elliot said. “I need you to decide. Which will it be?”

Dent’s bloody smile faltered. In his mind, Elliot saw a coin turning in the air, turning and tumbling. No destiny. No hand of God reaching down to save lives, the world, the whole long future, just chance, luck, and desperation, all spinning together.

For the first time, Elliot saw fear, real fear, leech into Dent's gaze.

"You wouldn't dare give me to Lin."

"Wouldn't I?" Elliot lifted his eyebrows. "It's just you and me here, Dent. Outside the wall. Exactly where you should not be when there's a whole host of police crawling through the streets looking for you quite specifically. I can blame the Chinese for *everything* and no one will blink an eye." Elliot smiled. "Well, there might be a little grumbling. Here and there. But if you're even still alive, you'll be in Lin's dungeon, and it'll just be too late, won't it?"

"You've lost your mind," breathed Dent.

"And what will the rest of the factories do when they learn you are the reason I was in Macao when this began? Hmm?" Elliot set the empty pistol on the bench beside him.

Finally, Dent's eternal grin dropped away. But it was too late.

"I could have stopped this," Elliot told him. "Entered into negotiations with the Cohong. But you conspired with a Chinaman, a *Chinaman*, Dent, just so you could see your way clear to undercutting the lot of them."

"It's a lie!" Dent shouted, and immediately doubled-over from the pain in his ribs.

"Yes, it's a lie, but it's one all your stout fellows on that farcical Board of Trade will believe. I could throw you into the street right this second," Elliot nodded toward the door. "And they'd take a vote of censure and paint your name off your door. And your partner would step in and take your profits and might remember to write a note of condolence to your widow. I am *all* you've got, Dent. I can hand Lin the opium, Mr. Dent, or I can hand him you. I leave the matter entirely in your hands. Tell me, sir. Which is it going to be?"

He would open China. If he could do it by handing over the opium, he'd do it that way. If he could do it by bringing in the entire fleet to shoot out the smuggling boats, or the pathetic Chinese forts, or Commissioner Lin himself, he'd do it that way. Either way. Any way.

But he wouldn't do it for Palmerston, or Queen and Country, and especially not for this man or any of the others trapped in here with them.

He'd do it for his children, out on the ocean, holding onto each other and not knowing who would be there to help them when the night got dark.

He'd do it for Clara.

He'd do it for the humiliations and the deaf ears turned toward one Captain

Charles Elliot. First and last. Forever and ever, amen.

To hell with clinging to honor for men who knew none. To hell with pride in front of those who demanded he crawl. To hell with right and wrong and all the rest of it. What mattered was this moment, now.

Elliot's heart thundered in his chest. This was it. This was what it felt like to be truly alive and know his own power. This was the feeling of being shot at and missed. Of being able to shout, I'm still here. I'm alive and I'm stronger than all of you.

You should be proud, Mr. Dent. The fate of nations in your hands. Everything depends on what you want to save. Why, it's just like in the magazines. Your money or your life, Mr. Dent? Which is it?

Elliot watched his man struggle, watched him look in every direction for escape. But there was no escape.

But let him try. Oh, please, let him try.

Dent wiped at the blood staining his mouth. He spat straight at Elliot's boots, but he winced again. Elliot didn't flinch.

"The opium," whispered Dent. "Take the opium."

EPILOGUE

July 25, 1839

The Cliffs Over Canton

China

High Commissioner Lin stood alone on the cliffs above the harbor. A small shrine had been set up at the cliff's edge, dedicated to the Goddess of the Sea. He'd lit the incense himself. The brisk wind carried its small thread of white smoke inland.

Down below, the great trenches were already filled with bags of opium confiscated from the foreigners. Commandant Guang Xie did well in his choice of men to guard the wagons and the warehouses. Now they worked with axes and shovels, breaking open the chests and tossing all the poison into a stew of lime and seawater. More of that corrosive brew would be poured over the top once the trenches were filled.

And this was just the beginning. Thousands of chests still waited in the

warehouse. Tens of thousands of pearls. Tens of thousands of lives.

The wind blew, carrying with it the tang of lime and the thick, sweet scent of rot.

Men waited in jail. Men waited in their houses for the warrants that had yet to be written. Away in the Forbidden City, the Emperor waited for his reports.

He will be pleased.

None of the foreign traders had been arrested, but that had turned out not to be necessary. They had all opened their holds to Guang Xie's careful men. Every ship in the harbor had been inspected. Every chest, every bag was in those rotting piles. Every foreign captain would now sign their bond and pledge that their ship carried not one pearl of opium.

Wu Bingjian had been right about one thing. In the end, the English Captain Elliot had proved a reasonable man and open to being persuaded toward correct behavior.

Reverently, because he knew he was being watched, Lin Zexu took an enamel case from his sleeve. It was wrapped in red silk and hung with a golden seal. Inside the case lay the petition to the Goddess of the Sea that he had written yesterday with his finest and most careful calligraphic hand. It most humbly implored her to move the fish and the other of her creatures out of the way, for he must soon wash the poison from the trenches down into her realm.

He explained the necessity of his action and begged her forgiveness. He prayed that what he did now was right.

Lin drew back his arm and threw the case as far as he could. The sunlight glinted on gold and silk as it spun and tumbled through the air like a dropped coin.

While one man stood above the ocean, another stood on his veranda, watching the smoke rise.

Lin's petition broke the foam for a heartbeat, and was gone.

Also in that case were two *weiqi* stones, one black and one white. At the bottom of the ocean they were once again in play, each of equal worth, each in their place to shape the game and the long, slow sweep of the future.

And now all that men and stones and gods could do was wait and see.

SUGGESTED READING

A great deal has been written about how tea came to the West, and about the First Opium War. People can and do spend a lifetime researching the subject. I'm listing just a few of the more readily available English sources here for those who are interested in reading more about this historical period.

I hope you enjoy.

Ellis, Markman, Empire of Tea: the Asian Leaf that Conquered the World, 2015:
Reaktion Books

Hohenegger, Beatrice, Liquid Jade, 2006: St. Martin's Press

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Courseware: [https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/rise_fall_canton_01/pdf/
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AN EXCHANGE OF TWO FLOWERS



MEET THE AUTHOR: *Sarah Zettel*

A woman who wears many hats, and many names, Sarah Zettel has never met a genre she doesn't like. A bestselling and award-winning author, she's won critical acclaim for her mystery, young adult and historical fiction. Sarah also writes elegant, and bestselling, Regency-era mystery and romance under the name of Darcie Wilde. With her newest book, *The Other Sister* (available August 28), Sarah enters the realm of suspense, bringing with her a unique fairy tale flare.

A self-confessed stone-cold history geek, Sarah has always loved deep dives into the details that brought us to where we are now. So, she was delighted with the chance to explore the connection between tea and the

rise of empires for the 2018 Summer Reading Series: *An Exchange of Two Flowers*.

Sarah currently lives and writes in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where she keeps a husband, a son, and more old books and embroidery floss than any one person really ought to own. Her favorite tea is second-flush Darjeeling. Except when it's Irish Breakfast. Except when it's a nice herbal mint.



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