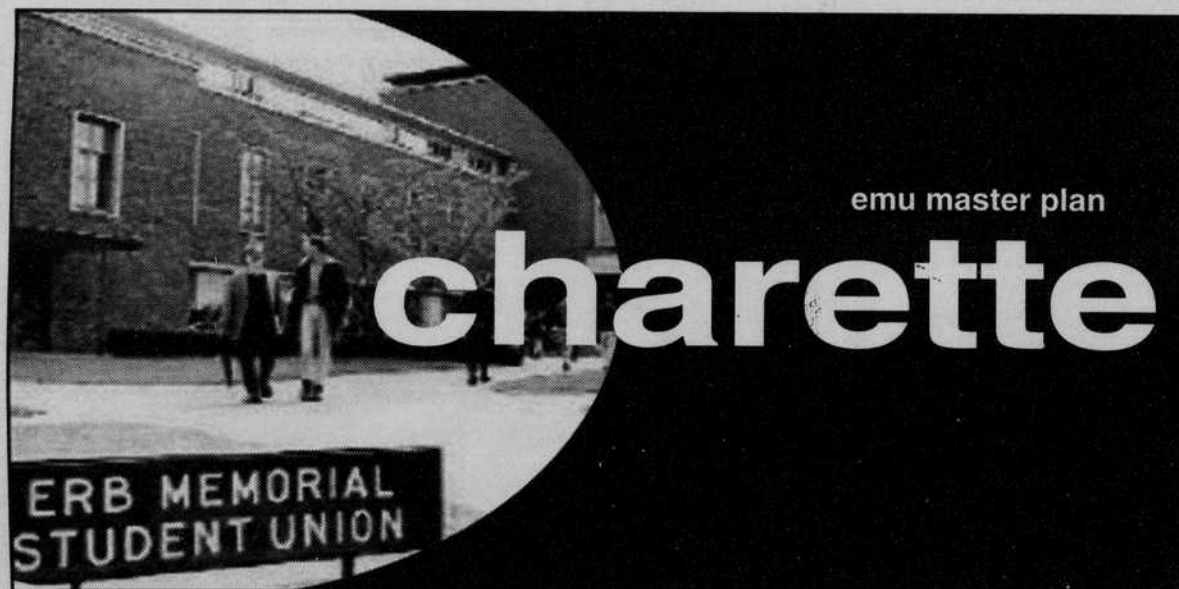


Stone Soup

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emu master plan

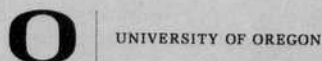
charette

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Woman slips Michael clues about women

Chapter 8. At last!

In Chapter 7, on a plane to Hong Kong, Monty filled Michael with 10,000 years of population statistics, and the green-eyed woman kept reading.

The Emerald is printing "And the Dew is Our National Treasure" in serial form, with an installment every Tuesday in the Pulse Relax section. Earlier installments can be found at www.dailyemerald.com.

At the moment I begin to speak, the woman with green eyes jerks forward, sending a wave of glistening, scented hair cascading around her shoulder. She makes a small, cute "snih" of a sneeze. Magnificent! Then she sneezes again, undoes her seat belt, stands and walks away.

"People think we just need more food," says Monty, more successful in his pursuit than I am in mine. "And with more land under cultivation, and more chemicals, we should have it. But we overwork the land, depleting the soil. World food production is declining. Also, we lose 24 to 26 billion tons of topsoil each year. And we use more energy: In 1900, it took one calorie of energy to produce one calorie of food. Today it takes 12 to produce one."

I no longer feel like being civil. "Why do you waste your time on something that can't be stopped?"

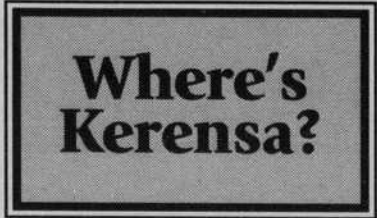
"But it can," he says. "In every culture where women get more education, birth rates go down."

The intercom clicks on and the stewardess announces: "We begin our descent to Hong Kong..."

Immediately, I stand and look around. The girl with green eyes is five rows back. And Fate left an empty seat beside her! I hurry, take the seat, catch my breath, and begin "You remind me of someone." God, how stupid! She keeps reading. "I mean, you remind me of someone I'm looking for, someone who's vanished."

Without turning her head, she asks, "And do you think I am she?" Her use of the correct pronoun suits her bearing.

"No."
She scrutinizes my face quickly, then turns back to her reading.



"It's just," I stammer, "that she left." No response. "Just left. Without real goodbyes. Where would a young woman, a young attractive, unmarried woman, a woman such as yourself, go if she walked away from everything?"

She closes her book but doesn't raise her eyes. I wait. Then she asks, "Was she your lover?"

"No." More long seconds. She looks at me. Her face seems sad. I take a breath. "I'm willing to hear anything," I say.

Her lip quivers, and her shoulders tense. Then she tosses back her hair as though to shake off whatever restrains her. "For thrills, my high school friends would steal outhouses and line them up on Main. It was Iowa fun. But I wanted a bigger life, and the boy who owned the local hardware had dreams of expanding, so we got engaged."

Then the chain stores moved in, and he took a job at Home Depot. Our families went from being merchants to being wage earners over night. All we had left to keep our dignity was tradition, which meant for me marriage, children, laundry and old age." She blinks back a tear. "It was easier to vanish than to see them hurt again."

She turns away and searches in her purse. Her shoulders shake. Then she sits up bravely and holds back her hair. "In many countries, a young, educated woman is the last reward of an elder statesman's triumphs. I attend a dozen events each year, staying for a week or two, delighting in the best of people, food, everything. Then I'm free in every way except to go back home."

Peter Wright is a printer living in Portland. He received his bachelor's degrees from UC Berkeley, served in the U.S. Navy, worked as a stock broker and taught at Stanford University. © Peter Wright, 2002. All rights reserved.

Chai

continued from page 3

found at almost any grocery store.

The idea is to mix all these things up in varying degrees with a small amount of water, then boil them into a concentrate. And then of course, add the tea itself. Most chai is caffeinated, because it's usually mixed with certain types of black tea. Green tea is also used, but it's caffeinated, as well. There is no reason decaffeinated teas can't be used, however. Another tea commonly used with chai these days is maté — it contains no caffeine.

If you're going to pursue the home-

made route, some good advice would be to use whole ingredients. For example, use whole nutmeg instead of powdered, real vanilla beans instead of vanilla concentrate, etc. These things are sometimes harder to find, but the fun part here is grinding everything down with a mortar and pestle.

For a final touch, add milk, honey or sugar. For an even richer result, use sweetened milk, condensed milk or half and half.

Or try something entirely different. All of these suggestions are somewhat arbitrary, so the experimentation is the best part.

Contact the Pulse reporter at aaronshakra@dailyemerald.com.

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