

68 — A YOUNG ENGLISH GIRL AND AN
AMERICAN SOLDIER

She was wearing a tartan dress. It seemed to be a wonderful dress for a very young girl to be wearing on a rainy, rainy day. "I thought Americans despised tea" she said. I replied that some of us never drank anything *but* tea. I asked if she'd care to join me. "Thank you", she said, "Perhaps for just a fraction of a moment". I got up and drew a chair for her, the one opposite me, and she sat down on the forward quarter of it, keeping her spine easily and beautifully straight. When I was seated, I couldn't think of anything to say, though I smiled again, I remarked that it was certainly a terrible day out. "Yes; quite," said my guest, in the clear, unmistakable voice of a small-talk detester. She placed her fingers flat on the table edge, like someone at a séance, then, almost instantly, closed her hands.

"Usually, I'm not terribly gregarious," she said, and looked over at me to see if I knew the meaning of the word. "I purely came over because I thought you looked extremely lonely. You have an extremely sensitive face."

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