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Daylight slices these buildings in half. In the top half I see faces and it's not easy to tell which are people, which the work of stonemasons. Below is shadow where almost everything takes place: clarinets and lovemaking, fists and the voices of sorrowful women. A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things. Hep. It's the rocking steel above and the shadows below that does it. When I look over strips of green grass lining the river, at church steeples and into the cream and copper halls of apartment buildings I'm strong. Alone, yes, but top-notch and indestructible--just like the City in 1926 when all the wars are over and there will never be another one. The people down there in shadow are happy about that. They don't understand that however beautiful, however considerate, the City can hurt you.

I haven't got any muscles, but I know how to defend myself. Mostly it's making sure no one knows everything about me. Second, I watch everything and everyone. I figure out their plans, their reasonings sometimes long before they do. A complicated existence, but a price willingly paid to live here exposed to all sorts of ignorance and criminality, because this is the only life for me.

I have lived long, maybe too long, in my own mind. People say I should get out more. I agree that I am closed off in places nobody else sees, but if you have been left

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standing, as I have, while your partner overstays at another appointment, or promises to give you exclusive attention after supper, but is falling asleep just as you have begun to speak....well it can make you inhospitable if you aren't careful, and inhospitable is the last thing I want to be. There is so little of it in this town; you have to be smart to figure out how to be welcoming and defensive at the same time. If you don't know how you can end up out of control or controlled by something outside yourself like that hard case last winter. Word was, something evil ran the streets all through 1925, and underneath the good times, nothing was safe--even the dead. Proof was the outright attack a woman made on the very subject of a funeral ceremony. It was at the beginning of the new year, 1926, and folks believed it foretold the commencement of all sorts of destruction. That the attacker, draped in black, was sent from hell to warn the good and rip up the faithless. I don't know who was crazier--the doomsayers or the figure draped in black--but I'd bet on the religious gossips for nuttiness, because, sth, I know that woman.