

Arabs in Dark Glasses

Janet killed a cat one day, and I think I fell in love. “Was that the one?” she asked casually, not slowing down.

“What one?” We whipped around the corner at thirty miles an hour.

“The one you said was purring in your backyard all night.”

“I think so.”

“Good.” She smiled a little bit and shifted into fourth gear. Everything happened so perfectly it seemed choreographed. That was how things went with Janet. Every time I was with her, it was like being on a secret mission for which only she had been given the instructions. It was amazing, the power this gave her, because everyone wanted so desperately to be involved in these missions. Whenever she was near, people were nervously cool, speaking in hushed, secretive tones, like operatives meeting in distant, sinister places.

“What is it that you do, exactly?” I asked her once, after making love.

“I’m a systems operator.” It was better than any answer I could have dreamed of. Another man might have asked a follow up question. Not me. I knew what not to ask a spy.

I give our relationship four months. I figure I stay any longer and I risk catching a stray bullet meant for my lover, like Bond’s wife in *In Her Majesty’s Secret Service*. But I plan to enjoy it thoroughly while I’m here. I take a different route every time I go over to her apartment, doubling back every so often. I never sit with my back to the door. I’m watching for Arabs in Dark Glasses.