

Flash fiction based on this prompt:

*Femme fatales entrance to a noir story is hindered by the too small doorway*

Contains: *BBW, Noir*

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### **The Bloated Puffin**

I stood staring out the window of my dark office into the city. It was raining again. It always seemed to be raining in this city. The drops of water down the cheap uneven panes of glass cast distorted my view of the city lights and gave the place a surreal quality. Like a dream one never woke from. Or was it a nightmare?

I lit another cigarette and poured a few more drops of whiskey into my glass. I needed to get another case, and fast. Catching Mrs Evans' husband with another woman had been simple enough, but my fees barely covered Miss Cunningham's salary for the week. My battle-axe of a landlady would be hounding me for the rent check any day now.

As if simply thinking of my young doe-eyed assistant had summoned her, Sally buzzed my intercom just as I'd finished rolling my cigarette and was getting it lit.

"There's a... woman here to see you, Stan."

"Send her in, Sally."

"Umm... you'd better come out here."

I couldn't help but sigh. Sally knew I preferred to speak to potential clients in private. Comes with the territory. People scared and desperate were more likely to be straight with me if we were alone. Still, work was work, so I turned the old brass knob and stepped out into the waiting room.

It took me less than two seconds to understand Sally's hesitation. This woman was huge. Massive even. She looked like she'd had a fork in her hand since she was old enough to eat solid food. She had on a coat that had to be custom made. The

tailor must have needed at least two or three cows' worth of suede to construct the thing. Still, her face was pretty enough. Chubby cheeks of course, but pretty eyes and a well-shaped nose. Shining blonde curls fell down to her hefty shoulders, and her expression seemed more annoyed than angry or afraid. So that was something, anyway.

"Can I help you miss...?"

"York, Devon York."

"What can I do for you, Miss York?"

Devon York hesitated, her blue eyes darting to the small desk where Sally sat, pretending not to listen in. I knew the book she was staring at was nothing but a phone directory. Of course, Sally Cunningham listened in on all my client meetings, but Miss York didn't know that.

"Would you like to speak in my office, Miss York?"

"It's Missus, and yes, I believe I would."

I turned and stepped back into my dark office, holding the door. Mrs York didn't seem like the kind of woman who needed me to walk her through a door, and anyway I doubted we would fit through the opening together.

I'd never been more keenly aware of how much smaller my office door was than the outer entrance to my office. Devon York walked cautiously up to the opening, more of a lumber than a stride, then stopped just short of halfway through. I turned to see the poor woman struggling with the old wood frame. Her hips hadn't passed through at all, and her bulging waist was squeezed tightly in the opening.

"I *-hrng-* don't think this will *-huff-* work, Mister Slade..."

"Why don't you tell me what your trouble is, Missus York?"

Devon's face went red as the tomatoes sold down on Market street.

"I... I think my husband is intentionally making me fat..."