



DEVIL MAY CRY

- Deadly Fortune 2 -

BINGO MORIHASHI

REWRITTEN BY

VERGIL APOLOGIST ∞

ORIGINALLY TRANSLATED BY

THE ORIGINAL DEVIL MAY CRY

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デビルメイクライ 4

DEVIL MAY CRY®

-Deadly Fortune-2

森橋ビンゴ 原作/カプコン

小説ストーリー協力/安井健太郎

大人気ゲーム、完全ノベライズ!

S ダンテ VS 神!

スニーカー
文庫

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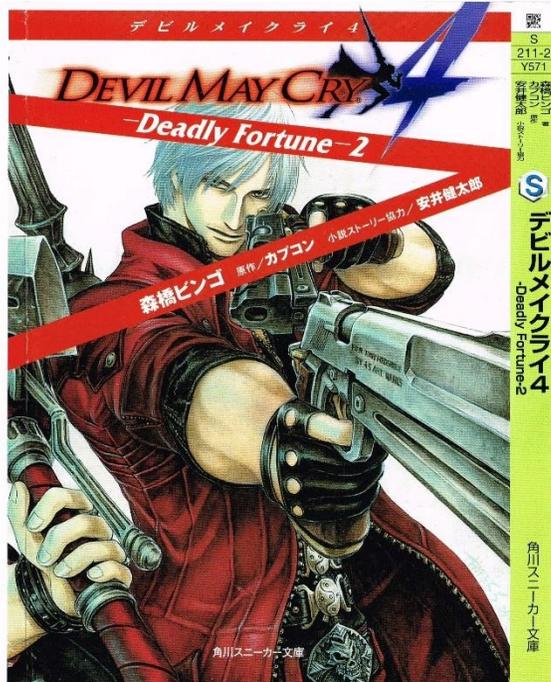
魔剣教団の“神”に、デビルハンター、ダンテが挑む。
神の内部に囚われたネロ、そしてキリエの命運は!?

●森橋ビンゴ

2002年から4年間、株式会社カプコンに在籍、「デビルメイクライ」シリーズの開発に関わるがたわら、小説執筆活動を行う。現在はカプコンを退社し、フリーランス。

東京移住から3か月、いまだに部屋にテレビも冷蔵庫も洗濯機もない。でも慣れた。人間って大抵の事はどうにかするんだと思う。

カバーイラスト/THORES柴本
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「さあ……おはよの時間だ、坊や！」ダンテの声に、ネロは目覚めた。フォルトゥナの上空に屹立する、“神”の体内で……。ついにその野望を露わにした魔剣教団、そして教皇サンクトゥス。巨大な人型兵器、“神”を起動する鍵としてその体内に囚われたネロとキリエを救い出すべく、デビルハンター・ダンテは、悪魔を蹴散らしながら疾駆する！全世界を魅了した大人気ゲーム、シリーズ最新作の完全ノベライズ、第2巻登場！



ダント

かつては魔帝に仕え、現在はダンテの相棒として行動をとっている悪魔。魔剣教団に「アロリア」として潜入し、その正体を探っていた。ダンテの母によく似た美貌を持つ。

トリッシュ

魔剣士バードと人間の間に生まれた、凄腕のデビルハンター。魔剣教団の正体を探りに来たこのファルトゥナの街で、思わぬ「身内」との出逢いを果たすことになる。

レディ

デビルハンターを生業とする人間の女性。ダンテとの出逢いは敵として、だがのちに和解。現在は商売とともにする仲間である。厄介ことをよくダンテの所に持ち込んでいる。

ネロ

魔剣教団に所属する若き戦士……だが、教団の真の姿を知り、幼なじみのキリエを救うべくたったひとりで戦いを挑む。魔剣を抜えるなど、悪魔との間わりを思わせる能力を持つ。

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デビルメイクライ 4

-Deadly Fortune-2

著/森橋ビンゴ

原作/カプコン

小説ストーリー協力/安井健太郎



角川文庫 15768



By the side of the docks, there stood a woman - though her height was average, she was dwarfed by the gigantic weapon she carried.

She'd come there because that's where her intel told her she'd be able to locate her target, but there appeared to be no sign of demonic activity nearby.

“Was it a prank call or something?”

She muttered to herself as she sighed and looked up at the moon. Her “target” was not a bird nor a beast, and definitely not a human being - rather, a kind of creature that didn't belong in this world, yet still sometimes found its way in - a demon.

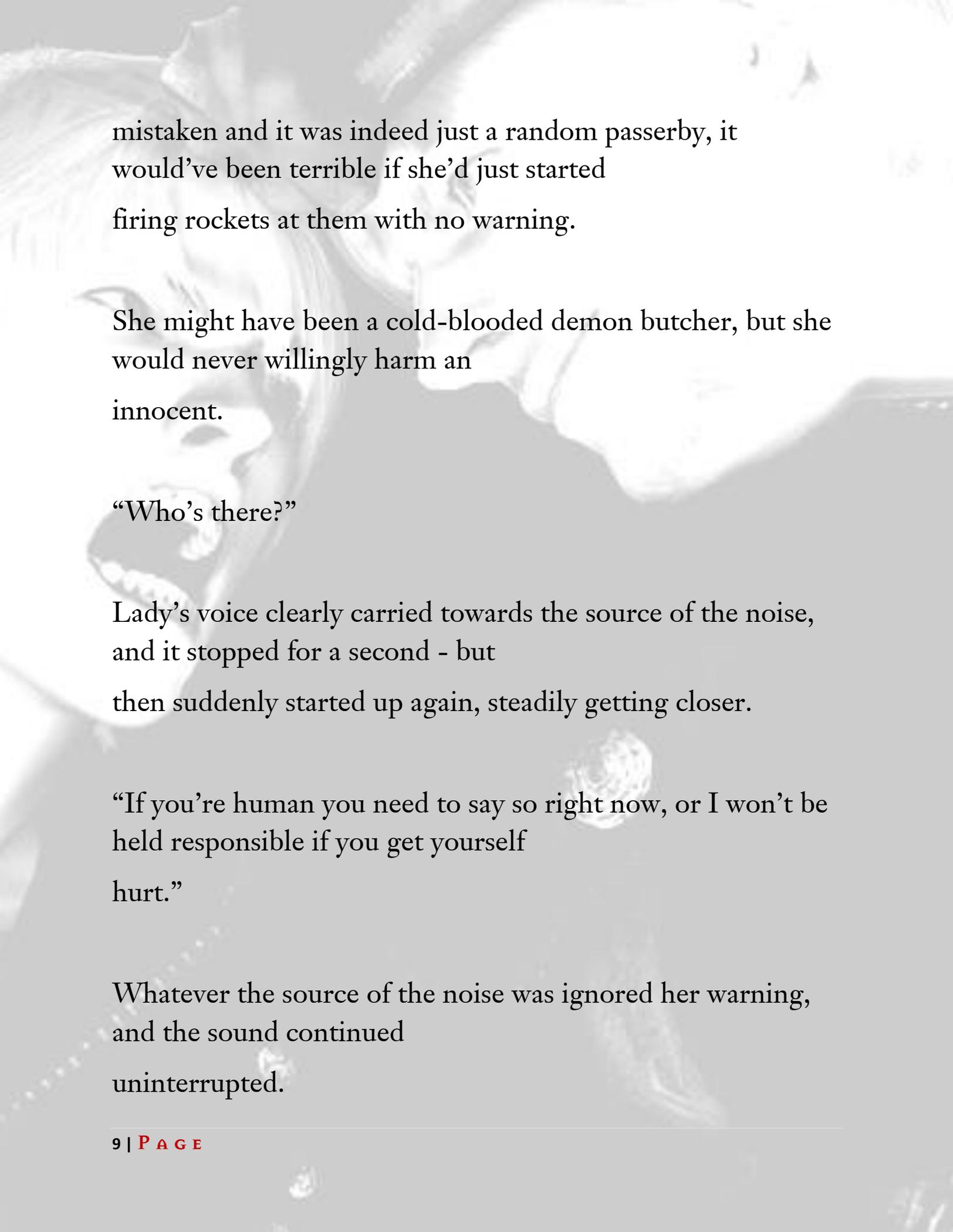
Because that's what she, the woman called Lady, was - a devil hunter.

She sighed disappointedly again, and turned to look at her parked motorcycle.

But right as she did so, something started feeling wrong - if she strained her ears, she could hear a faint sound of metal clanking against stone, which was steadily approaching her location, right in the direction of the corner of her eye.

Lady bent down slightly, holding her huge weapon. It was a rocket launcher with a bayonet at the end, a tool she herself designed to help her hunt demons.

Though she'd picked up her weapon, she had no idea what her enemy looked like, so it wasn't like she could just start blindly firing away, and besides, it wasn't like she could tell by that sound alone whether it was a demon or a human approaching - it sounded less like some creature, and more like something inorganic, like machine parts working together. If she turned out to be



mistaken and it was indeed just a random passerby, it would've been terrible if she'd just started firing rockets at them with no warning.

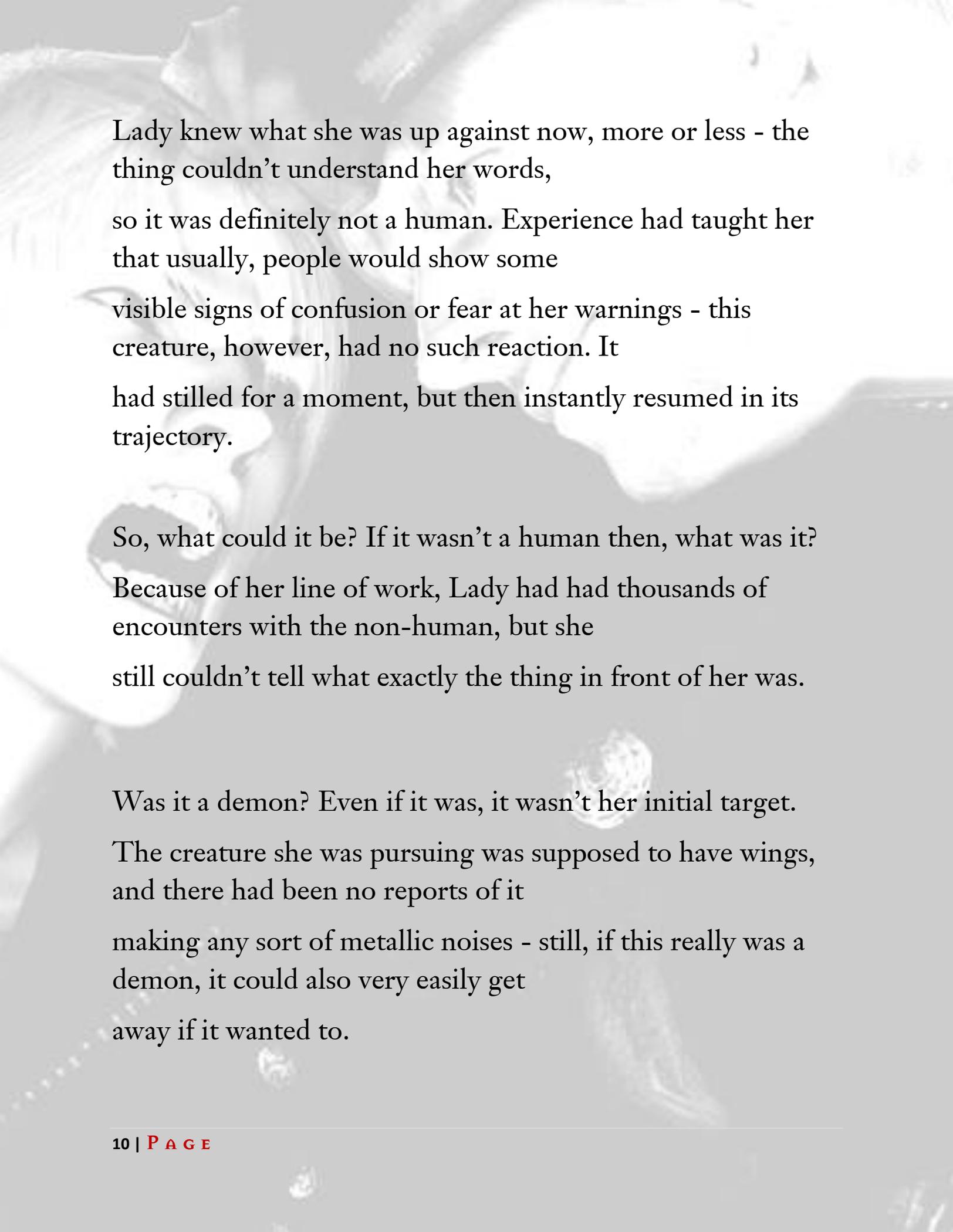
She might have been a cold-blooded demon butcher, but she would never willingly harm an innocent.

“Who’s there?”

Lady’s voice clearly carried towards the source of the noise, and it stopped for a second - but then suddenly started up again, steadily getting closer.

“If you’re human you need to say so right now, or I won’t be held responsible if you get yourself hurt.”

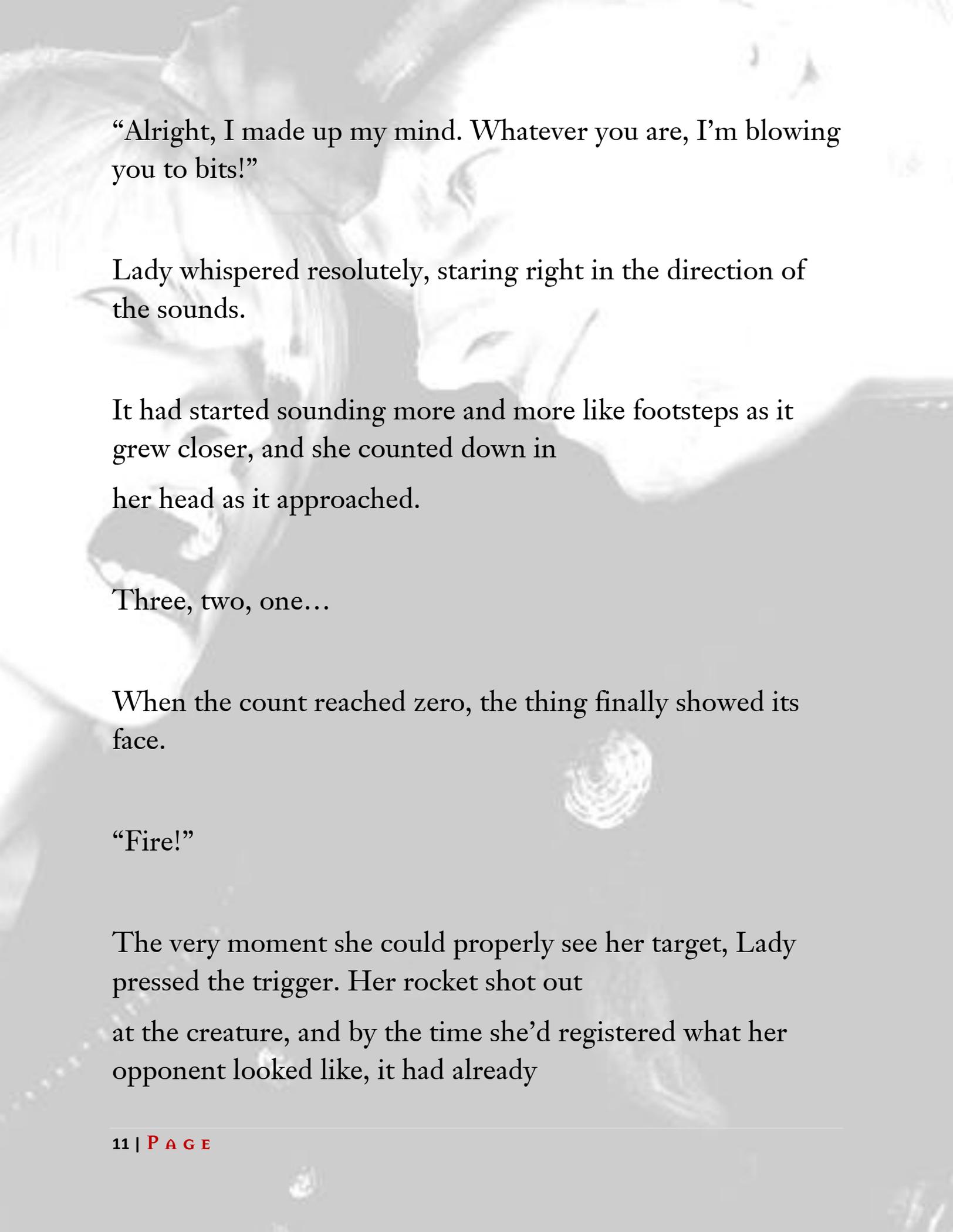
Whatever the source of the noise was ignored her warning, and the sound continued uninterrupted.



Lady knew what she was up against now, more or less - the thing couldn't understand her words, so it was definitely not a human. Experience had taught her that usually, people would show some visible signs of confusion or fear at her warnings - this creature, however, had no such reaction. It had stilled for a moment, but then instantly resumed in its trajectory.

So, what could it be? If it wasn't a human then, what was it? Because of her line of work, Lady had had thousands of encounters with the non-human, but she still couldn't tell what exactly the thing in front of her was.

Was it a demon? Even if it was, it wasn't her initial target. The creature she was pursuing was supposed to have wings, and there had been no reports of it making any sort of metallic noises - still, if this really was a demon, it could also very easily get away if it wanted to.



“Alright, I made up my mind. Whatever you are, I’m blowing you to bits!”

Lady whispered resolutely, staring right in the direction of the sounds.

It had started sounding more and more like footsteps as it grew closer, and she counted down in her head as it approached.

Three, two, one...

When the count reached zero, the thing finally showed its face.

“Fire!”

The very moment she could properly see her target, Lady pressed the trigger. Her rocket shot out at the creature, and by the time she’d registered what her opponent looked like, it had already

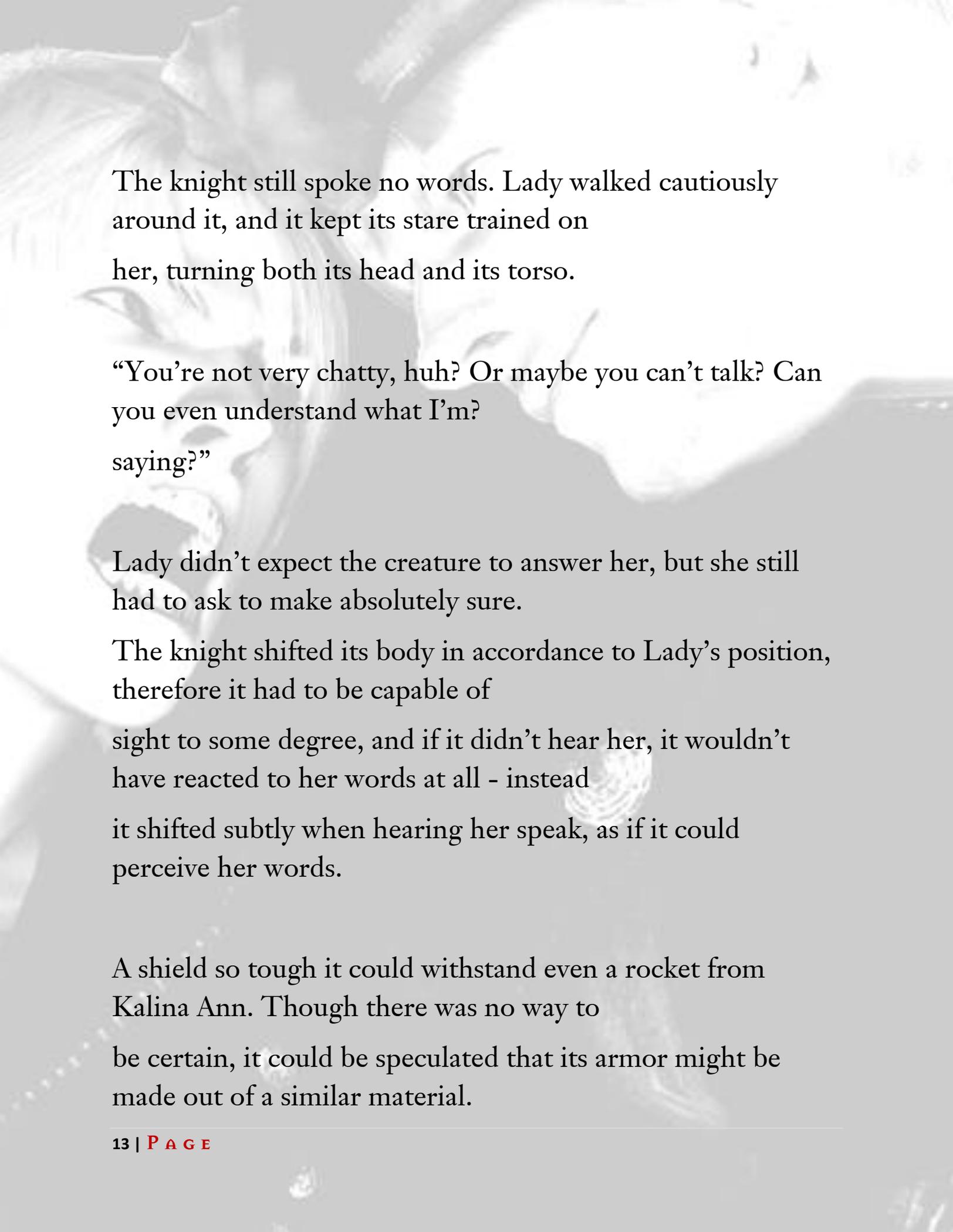
been hit by her missile.

“Is that... armor?”

The figure looked like an old timey knight, complete with a spear and a huge shield that it held in its hands. The knight turned to look at the rockets that were shooting towards it without flinching, just mechanically raising its gigantic shield so that it covered most of its body. The missile hit the shield, and the resulting explosion raised a huge cloud of smoke. Once it dissipated, Lady could barely believe the sight in front of her eyes - the armored knight remained unscathed. It might have used its shield to protect itself, sure, but Lady’s rocket launcher, Kalina Ann, was usually able to crush regular demons to smithereens in just one blow.

Lady smiled wryly, hoisting Kalina Ann behind her back.

“What, you get lost on the way to a costume party?”



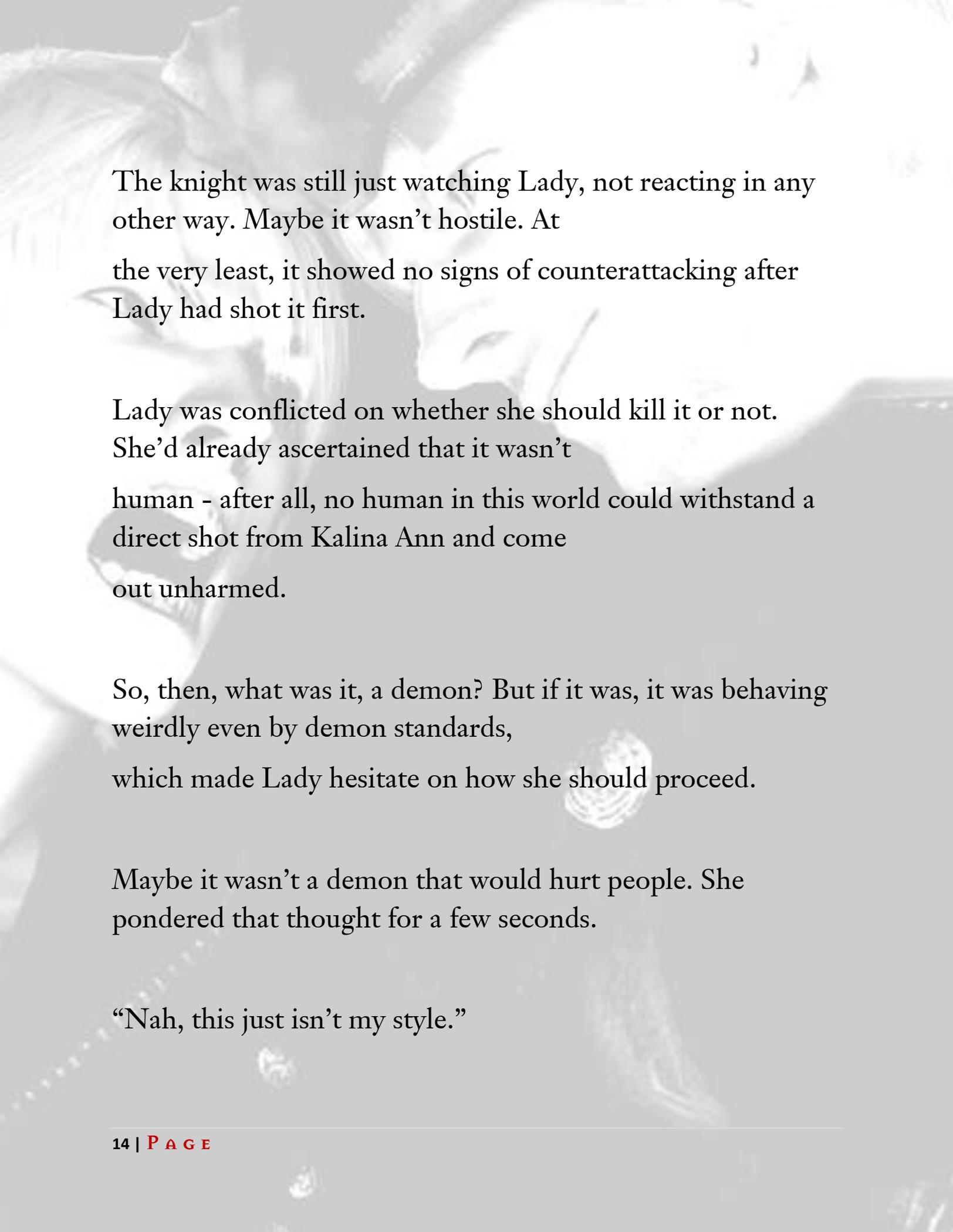
The knight still spoke no words. Lady walked cautiously around it, and it kept its stare trained on her, turning both its head and its torso.

“You’re not very chatty, huh? Or maybe you can’t talk? Can you even understand what I’m saying?”

Lady didn’t expect the creature to answer her, but she still had to ask to make absolutely sure.

The knight shifted its body in accordance to Lady’s position, therefore it had to be capable of sight to some degree, and if it didn’t hear her, it wouldn’t have reacted to her words at all - instead it shifted subtly when hearing her speak, as if it could perceive her words.

A shield so tough it could withstand even a rocket from Kalina Ann. Though there was no way to be certain, it could be speculated that its armor might be made out of a similar material.



The knight was still just watching Lady, not reacting in any other way. Maybe it wasn't hostile. At the very least, it showed no signs of counterattacking after Lady had shot it first.

Lady was conflicted on whether she should kill it or not. She'd already ascertained that it wasn't human - after all, no human in this world could withstand a direct shot from Kalina Ann and come out unharmed.

So, then, what was it, a demon? But if it was, it was behaving weirdly even by demon standards, which made Lady hesitate on how she should proceed.

Maybe it wasn't a demon that would hurt people. She pondered that thought for a few seconds.

“Nah, this just isn't my style.”

Even as Lady readied her shot, the knight didn't move, and still showed no signs of hostility. Lady tried poking the thing with the tip of her rocket launchers bayonet, but it didn't react in the slightest. It had made no protest or plea for its life - even if it was truly unable to talk, if it was sentient it should still be able to communicate through gestures or body language, but it did no such thing. Following that logic, she could only classify it as a thing, and without a doubt a inhuman one.

When her shot was ready, Lady pointed Kalina Ann at the knight and smirked.

“Sorry pal, this isn't your lucky day!”

Lady jumped backwards as she pulled the trigger.

The knight seemed to have noticed her attack, and when three missiles were launched in its direction, it blocked one with its shield.

The other two, just as she planned them to, hit the creature in the junctions between armor

pieces.

That finally garnered a reaction from the knight, who switched weapons to the spear, seemingly having realized its shield was no longer helping. However, it did not seem to have any emotional reactions to having been hit, it didn't cry out or flinch - though it did seem to have registered Lady as an enemy, now.

The knight raised its spear high, and somehow it made a sound like a motorcycle revving. When the noise subsided; part of its back armor unfolded in the shape of wings.

Lady kept jumping backwards as she shot and reloaded her cannon, when her gut feeling told her to drop on the ground to roll to the right. Sure enough, the knight's spear fell down in the spot where she'd been standing seconds before, and she was mildly impressed at the bulky thing's speed.

The knight was now floating in the air, a blue-white flame shooting out from the wing shaped contraptions at its back.

“Is that a jet propeller? Damn, you got good stuff on you.”

Lady shrugged. She’d battled countless demons, but this was her first time seeing one that employed at least seemingly human technology like that.

While still suspended in midflight, the knight held its spear up high, and it, too, became enveloped in blue flames - yup, this creature was definitely using human-made weapons. As far as she knew, when demons used their demonic weapons, they were called devil arms, and that was definitely not one of those.

While she was lost in thought, the knight rushed at her, but even at such impressive speed, it was still only moving in a straight-line forward. After you’d seen it once, you could avoid it no

problem.

She dodged the attack and retaliated with a rocket from Kalina Ann, and this time all three projectiles got the thing in its weak spots between armor pieces. The knight still showed no reaction - it got hit pretty bad, the shots should have caused massive damage, yet there was no blood or other unspecified bodily fluid leaking from between the armor plates.

“So, you’re telling me the armor is the body?”

It occurred to Lady that demons without a flesh body were very, very rare in the human world. The two worlds were kept very tightly separated from one another, and even when gates or portals were opened and demons managed to get it, usually only those with a physical body made it through.

There were such things as nebulous, intangible demons made purely of energy that in the human

world had no corporeal form. When those entities somehow managed to enter the human world, it would be through attaching themselves to other matter as a substitute for a physical body - like,

for example, old dolls or torture instruments, seeing as those types of demon feed on strong human emotions.

Having recalled that, Lady wasn't too surprised by the possibility that this could be the type of foe she was facing.

It wasn't even that impressive, armor is made of many pieces, sure, but you know what would have been even more impressive? A demon that could manage to make itself a body out of sand.

Now that she would've wanted to see.

Having said that, there were still flaws in that theory. The likelihood of a demon attaching itself to

some ancient armor from a museum or something wasn't impossible, but then it would still be

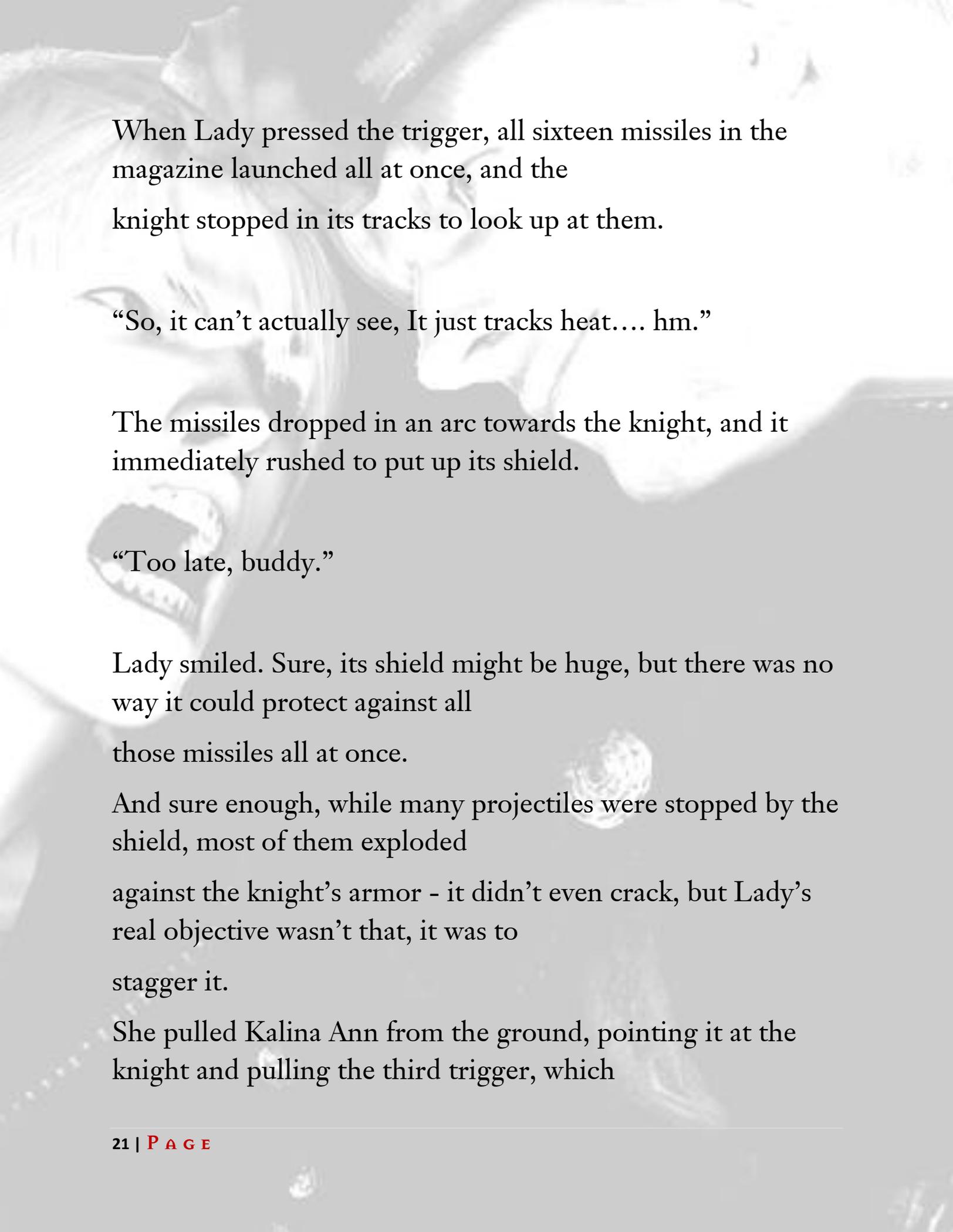
subjected by the physical limitations of that object - it would've crumbled from a single shot from

her cannon. Could it have been some kind of modern armor that was possessed? That would've been way too much of a coincidence - again, not impossible, but too specific to be likely.

The knight's shield also bore a particular emblem on it. Lady had a feeling she'd seen it somewhere before, but she couldn't quite place it.

Taking advantage of her moment of hesitation, the knight appeared to prepare itself to charge again. Noticing this, Lady again picked up Kalina Ann, stabbing the weapon's bayonet into the ground and holding it vertically.

As the creature launched its attack, Lady unhurriedly pulled the second trigger of her rocket launcher. The Kalina Ann has three triggers: the first one fires the rockets from the main muzzle, the second one launches many smaller missiles from the back of the weapon.



When Lady pressed the trigger, all sixteen missiles in the magazine launched all at once, and the knight stopped in its tracks to look up at them.

“So, it can’t actually see, It just tracks heat.... hm.”

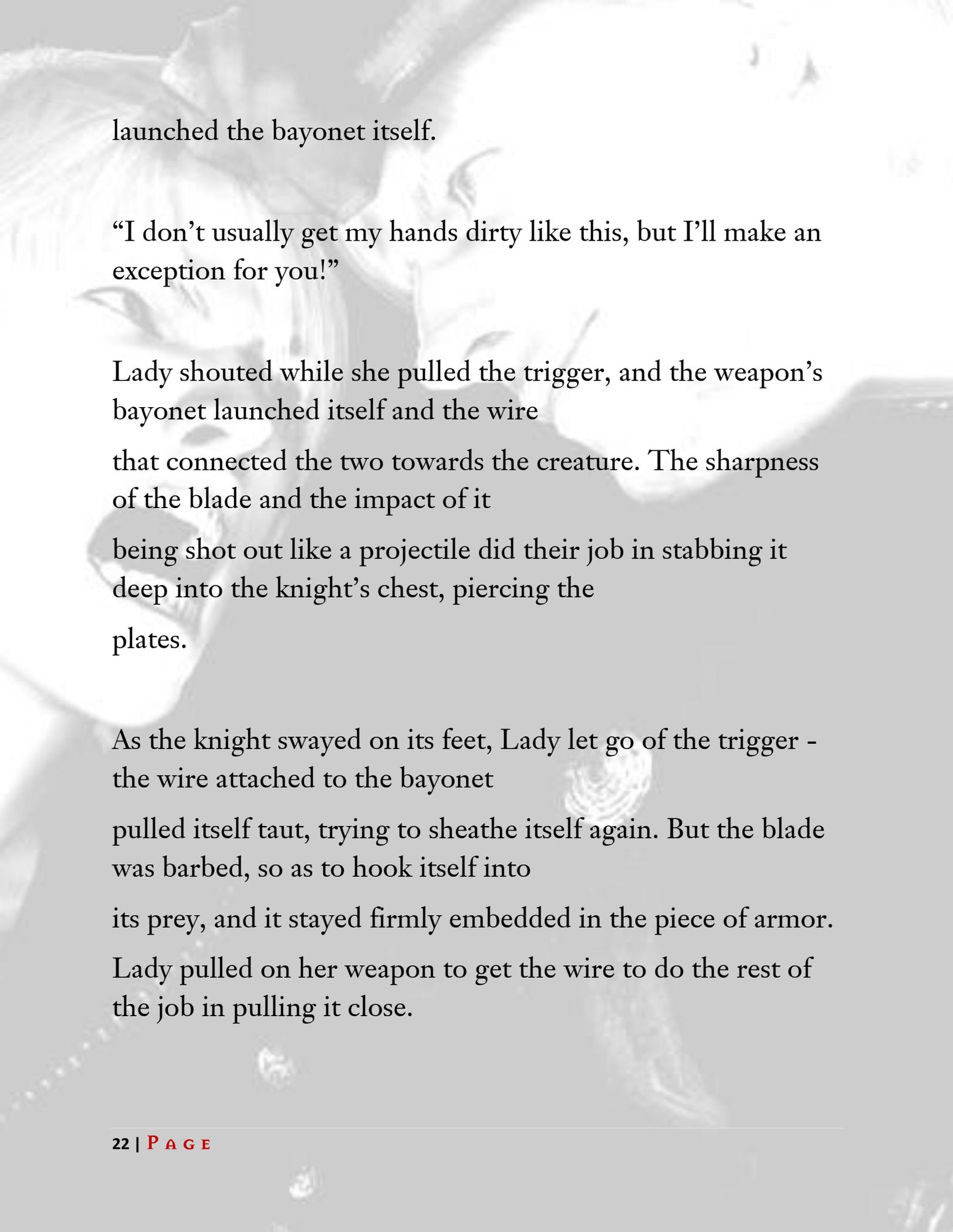
The missiles dropped in an arc towards the knight, and it immediately rushed to put up its shield.

“Too late, buddy.”

Lady smiled. Sure, its shield might be huge, but there was no way it could protect against all those missiles all at once.

And sure enough, while many projectiles were stopped by the shield, most of them exploded against the knight’s armor - it didn’t even crack, but Lady’s real objective wasn’t that, it was to stagger it.

She pulled Kalina Ann from the ground, pointing it at the knight and pulling the third trigger, which

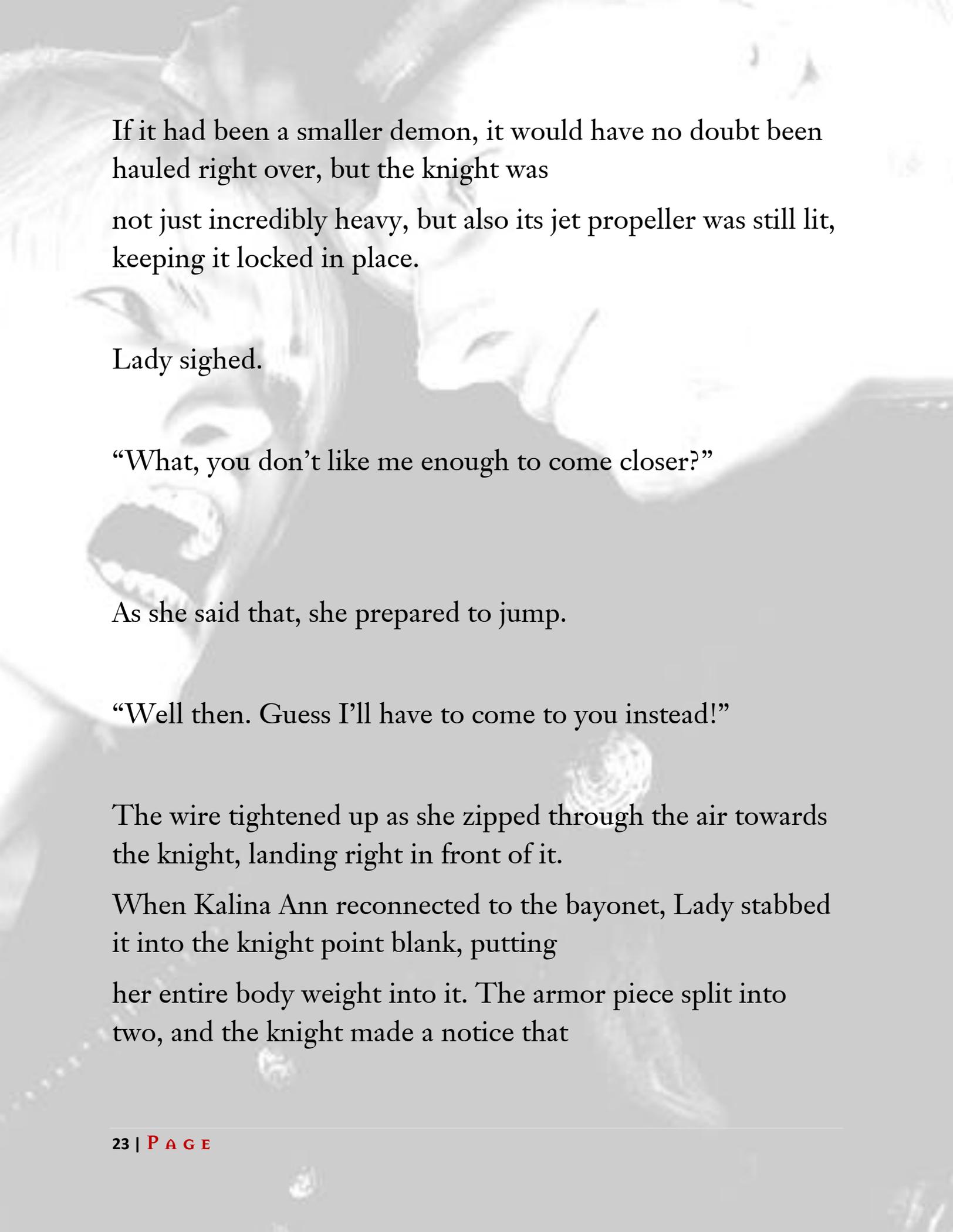


launched the bayonet itself.

“I don’t usually get my hands dirty like this, but I’ll make an exception for you!”

Lady shouted while she pulled the trigger, and the weapon’s bayonet launched itself and the wire that connected the two towards the creature. The sharpness of the blade and the impact of it being shot out like a projectile did their job in stabbing it deep into the knight’s chest, piercing the plates.

As the knight swayed on its feet, Lady let go of the trigger - the wire attached to the bayonet pulled itself taut, trying to sheathe itself again. But the blade was barbed, so as to hook itself into its prey, and it stayed firmly embedded in the piece of armor. Lady pulled on her weapon to get the wire to do the rest of the job in pulling it close.



If it had been a smaller demon, it would have no doubt been hauled right over, but the knight was not just incredibly heavy, but also its jet propeller was still lit, keeping it locked in place.

Lady sighed.

“What, you don’t like me enough to come closer?”

As she said that, she prepared to jump.

“Well then. Guess I’ll have to come to you instead!”

The wire tightened up as she zipped through the air towards the knight, landing right in front of it.

When Kalina Ann reconnected to the bayonet, Lady stabbed it into the knight point blank, putting her entire body weight into it. The armor piece split into two, and the knight made a notice that

could be vaguely interpreted as pained as it fell to the ground like a marionette with its strings cut.

Just like she'd expected, the way the thing died was unlike any human or demon she'd seen before, vanishing like fog into pale blue light.

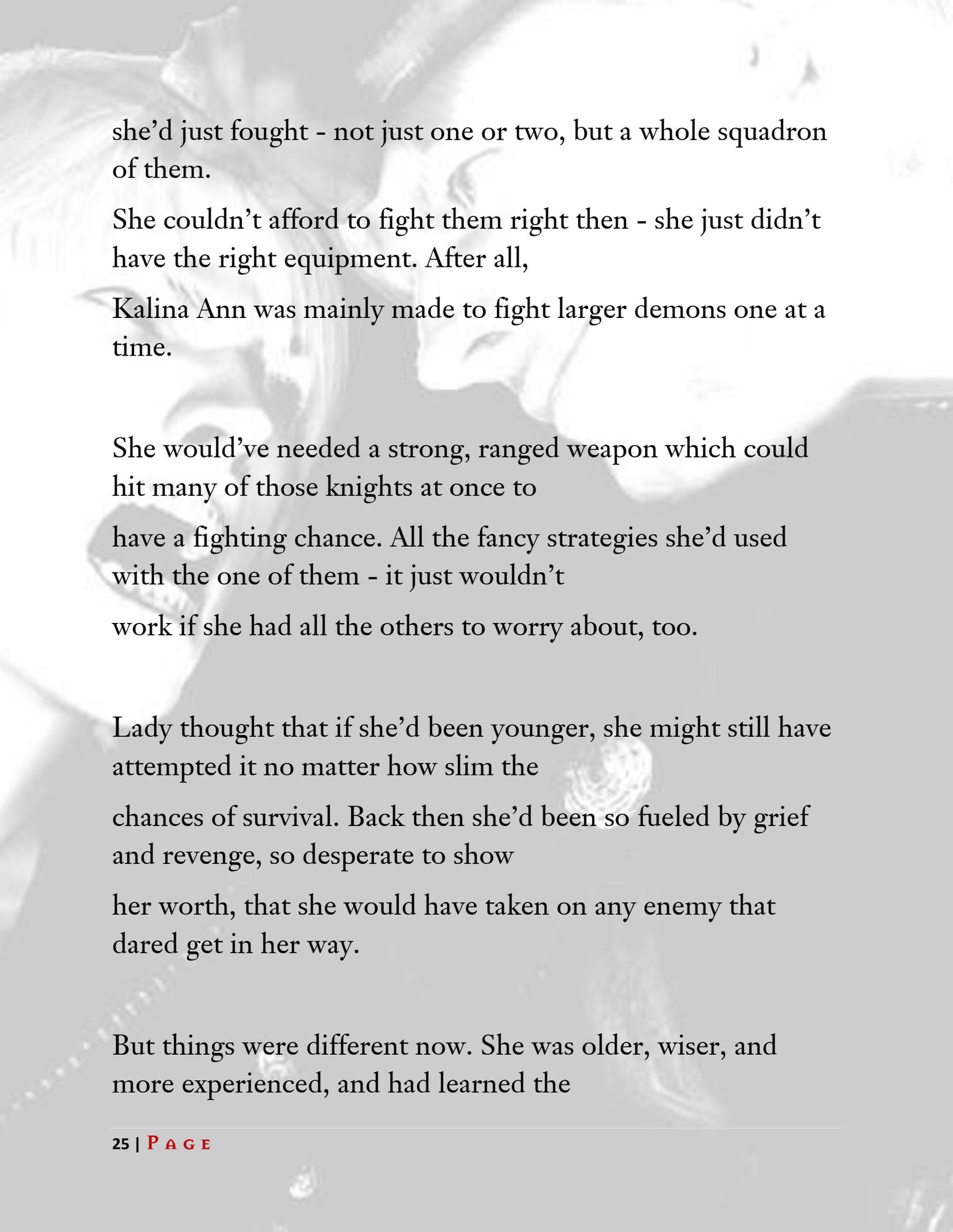
“Alright, now what?”

Lady whispered as she bent down to pick up the leftover pieces of the broken armor, thinking it would be useful to look into its materials, but the moment her fingers made contact with it, she stopped - or, more accurately, she had to stop.

She was surrounded.

“Would you look at that, it seems like it brought its friends over.”

Lady straightened up and looked around. She was surrounded by other knights much like the one



she'd just fought - not just one or two, but a whole squadron of them.

She couldn't afford to fight them right then - she just didn't have the right equipment. After all,

Kalina Ann was mainly made to fight larger demons one at a time.

She would've needed a strong, ranged weapon which could hit many of those knights at once to

have a fighting chance. All the fancy strategies she'd used with the one of them - it just wouldn't

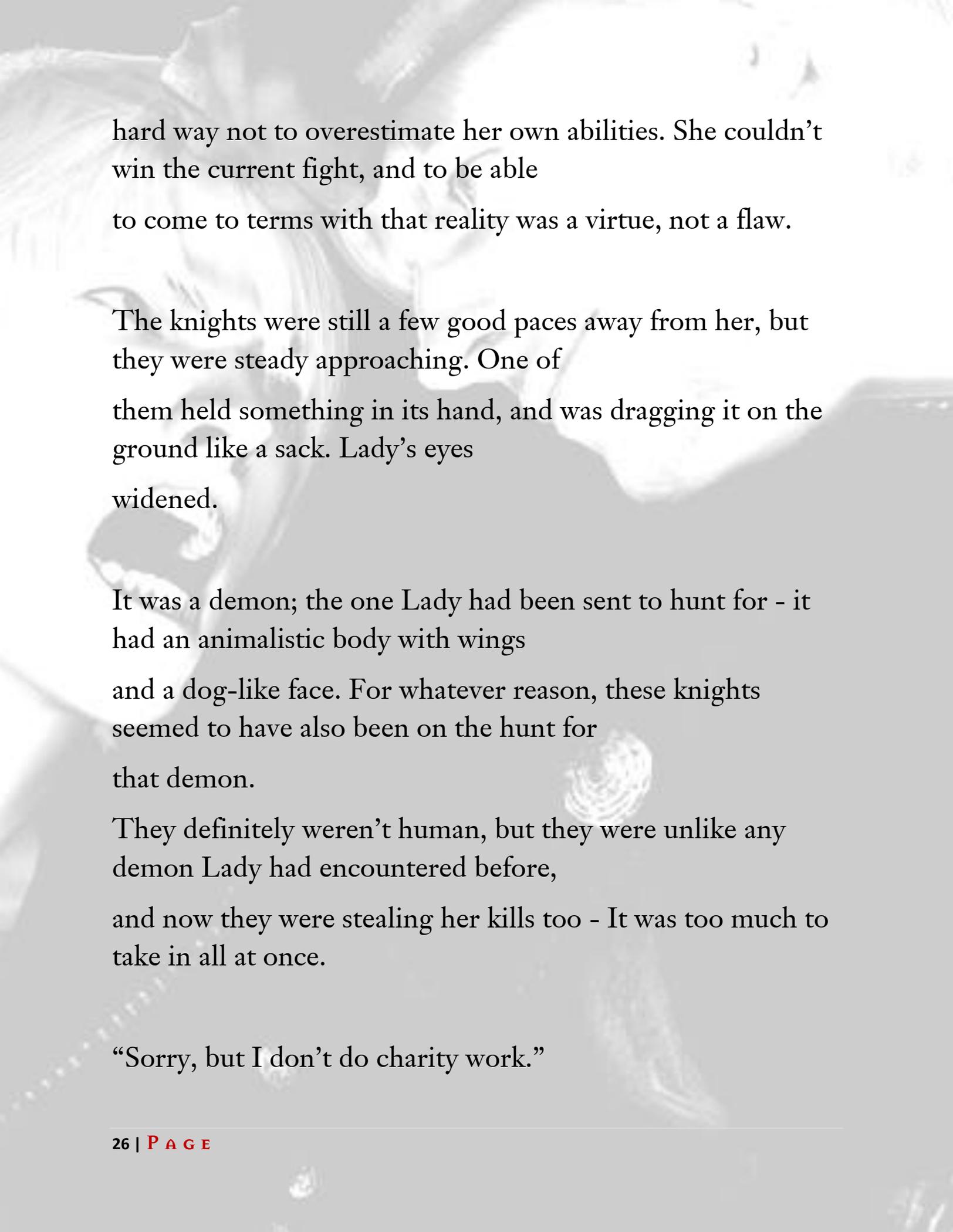
work if she had all the others to worry about, too.

Lady thought that if she'd been younger, she might still have attempted it no matter how slim the

chances of survival. Back then she'd been so fueled by grief and revenge, so desperate to show

her worth, that she would have taken on any enemy that dared get in her way.

But things were different now. She was older, wiser, and more experienced, and had learned the



hard way not to overestimate her own abilities. She couldn't win the current fight, and to be able to come to terms with that reality was a virtue, not a flaw.

The knights were still a few good paces away from her, but they were steady approaching. One of them held something in its hand, and was dragging it on the ground like a sack. Lady's eyes widened.

It was a demon; the one Lady had been sent to hunt for - it had an animalistic body with wings and a dog-like face. For whatever reason, these knights seemed to have also been on the hunt for that demon.

They definitely weren't human, but they were unlike any demon Lady had encountered before, and now they were stealing her kills too - It was too much to take in all at once.

“Sorry, but I don't do charity work.”

Lady pointed Kalina Ann high up in the sky. The knights reacted to that and rushed towards her, but just then she shot her bayonet next to her motorcycle - when she let go of the trigger, she was pulled in its direction faster than they could reach her. By the time they'd realized what had happened, she was already driving away.

The knights could fly, sure, but Lady was confident that her bike was faster.

She'd had it modified specifically to outrun demons, after all.

As if to prove her point, she lost them in just a couple of minutes.

Truth to be told, she was little disappointed - with their skills, they should have been able to chase after her for a good while, but they'd given up just like that, as if they'd had no interest in fighting Lady in the first place.



The only thing she'd managed to make out of that night's confusion, was how those knights appeared to be hunting demons.



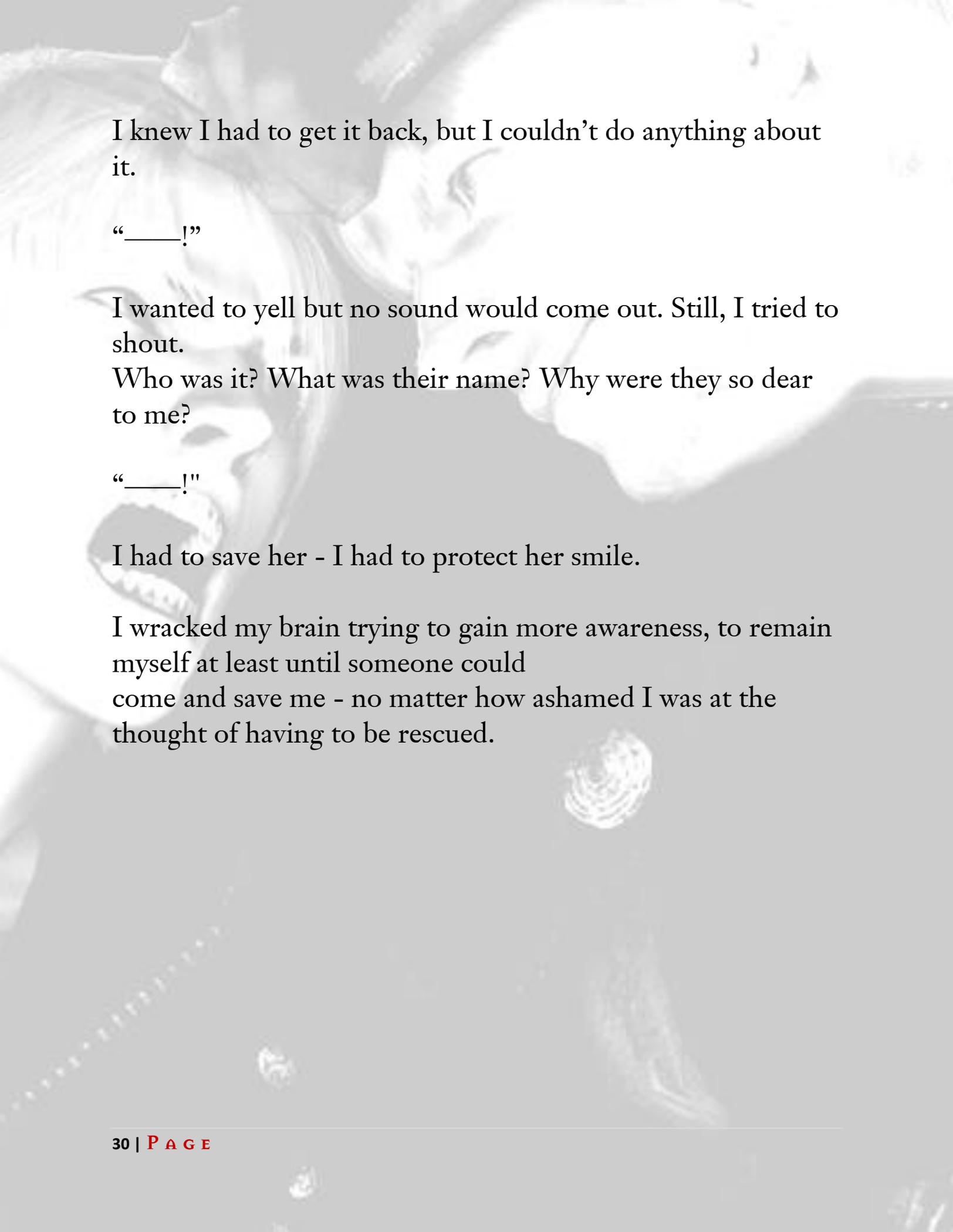
Was I dreaming? Or was it real?

When I tried to move my hands or my feet, no part of my body would respond. Oddly enough, I wasn't unsettled by that feeling - I just felt calm, like I was bathing in warm sunshine, like everything was comfortable and at peace. It was too good of a feeling - enough that part of me was afraid that if I fully indulged in it, I'd never want to leave or come back.

I didn't know why. I couldn't remember my name, only that I didn't want to forget it.

Who am I?

I couldn't talk or make a sound, or form a coherent thought. All I knew was that I felt like I'd lost something important - someone I cared about? Part of myself?
Both?



I knew I had to get it back, but I couldn't do anything about it.

“_____!”

I wanted to yell but no sound would come out. Still, I tried to shout.

Who was it? What was their name? Why were they so dear to me?

“_____!”

I had to save her - I had to protect her smile.

I wracked my brain trying to gain more awareness, to remain myself at least until someone could come and save me - no matter how ashamed I was at the thought of having to be rescued.



After it had absorbed Nero, the savior flew up into the sky with a loud roaring noise.

While undercover in the Order, Trish hadn't been able to get a lot of details, but she could understand the situation now that she was seeing it with her own eyes - all it was, was a humanoid shaped weapon.

While looking at the ascending savior, Dante couldn't help but be reminded of the Demon Emperor he'd fought - Mundus, the king of hell.

His power was too much to be able to fully cross into the human world, so he had to take on a proxy appearance - that of a gigantic, God-like statue. A statue much like the one Dante was looking at right now.

“Damn, those guys really all do think the same.” As it moved further up and away, the savior unfolded gargantuan wing-like appendages from its back.

Dante couldn't stop himself from laughing. "Check it out! It's got wings!" At his side, Trish sighed with an exasperated expression on her face. "The design shows terrible taste." While they were busy checking out the savior, there was a harsh coughing sound at their backs. When he turned to take a look, Dante saw Credo - the man had been grievously injured by the vicar, but he'd finally regained consciousness.

Dante walked up to him, pointed at the flying savior and asked: "Hey, where's that thing going? It's not complete yet, is it? Dante didn't spare much thought to the man's physical condition - not that he didn't care, but he knew that no matter what comforting words he might say to him, he couldn't be saved from those wounds.

Besides, even if they hadn't talked before, Dante got the sense that Credo was too proud to accept help or reassurance from a man who was supposedly the enemy up until a few moments before. Credo glared down at the wound on his chest, using the rubble and debris to support his weight as he attempted standing up.

He looked up at Dante and Trish, and spoke with a rasping voice. "It is in his heart to save the world from chaos... He

will begin by driving it out.” After hearing Credo’s words, Trish whispered:

“Now he has what he needs...

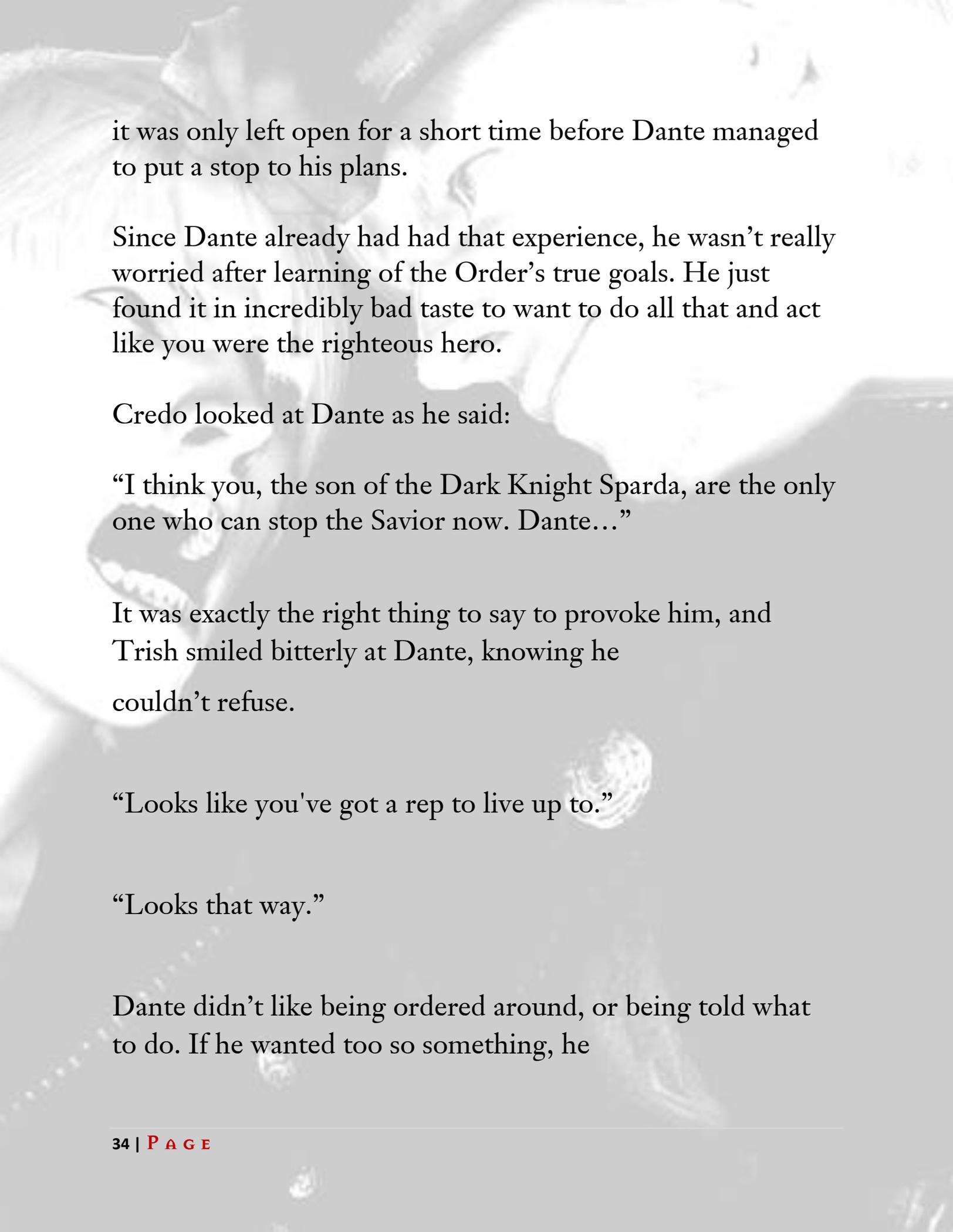
Yamato.” Ages before, Sparda had used Yamato to seal the Hellgate closed.

As for the “chaos” that Credo had referred to, it was plain that the Order planned to unleash literal hell on earth, only to play hero and fight the demons off to make themselves look like Sparda reborn, or some similar crock like that. Dante shrugged; it was nothing he hadn’t seen before.

In particular, Dante thought back to one specific occurrence - one where a particularly nasty demon obsessed man had decided to raise a tower - a tunnel that connected directly to the demon world.

That man, who wanted demonic power to turn himself into a god, eventually managed to break the seal.

Thankfully, the whole structure was still only man-made - the seal was broken, but it didn’t end in catastrophe, because



it was only left open for a short time before Dante managed to put a stop to his plans.

Since Dante already had had that experience, he wasn't really worried after learning of the Order's true goals. He just found it in incredibly bad taste to want to do all that and act like you were the righteous hero.

Credo looked at Dante as he said:

“I think you, the son of the Dark Knight Sparda, are the only one who can stop the Savior now. Dante...”

It was exactly the right thing to say to provoke him, and Trish smiled bitterly at Dante, knowing he couldn't refuse.

“Looks like you've got a rep to live up to.”

“Looks that way.”

Dante didn't like being ordered around, or being told what to do. If he wanted too so something, he

would just do it - but in this instance, he couldn't talk back to Credo.

Maybe it was because such a prideful man was making a last request of him. That he was going

through the effort of asking, by itself, made Dante want to respect him. To think a human who'd

accepted demonic power could maintain such a strong sense of self - yeah, his words were worth

listening to.

Credo coughed a mouthful of blood as he stared at Dante.

He looked like just standing was taking

everything out of him, but despite that, Dante didn't try to help him upright, and Credo didn't ask

him to.

“Please... honor my one last request... Save them... Kyrie... and... Nero...”

Before he could properly finish speaking, Credo had begun falling forwards. Dante caught him

instantly.

He died how an illusion fades - by vanishing faintly in a cloud of white light.

Surely, this was how angels died - others who'd gained the same demonic power often didn't meet such a pretty looking end. Or rather, this must've been how Credo had envisioned it, because it, too, had been shaped by his expectations, much like his demonic shape was - at least, that was Dante's theory.

Once Credo's body had vanished completely, Dante sighed softly.

"I'll do it. I wouldn't want to deny anyone their dying request."

Having said that, Dante and Trish looked at each other. Seems like Trish was much of the same mind as him.

At first, they'd only taken on this job because it seemed entertaining enough. For that reason, they

hadn't really been taking it seriously - yeah, demons are capable of heinous atrocities, and humans who would use them for their goals even more so, but Dante was no spring chicken anymore. He'd already seen too much, fought too many enemies to take every new demon that declared itself lord on their word.

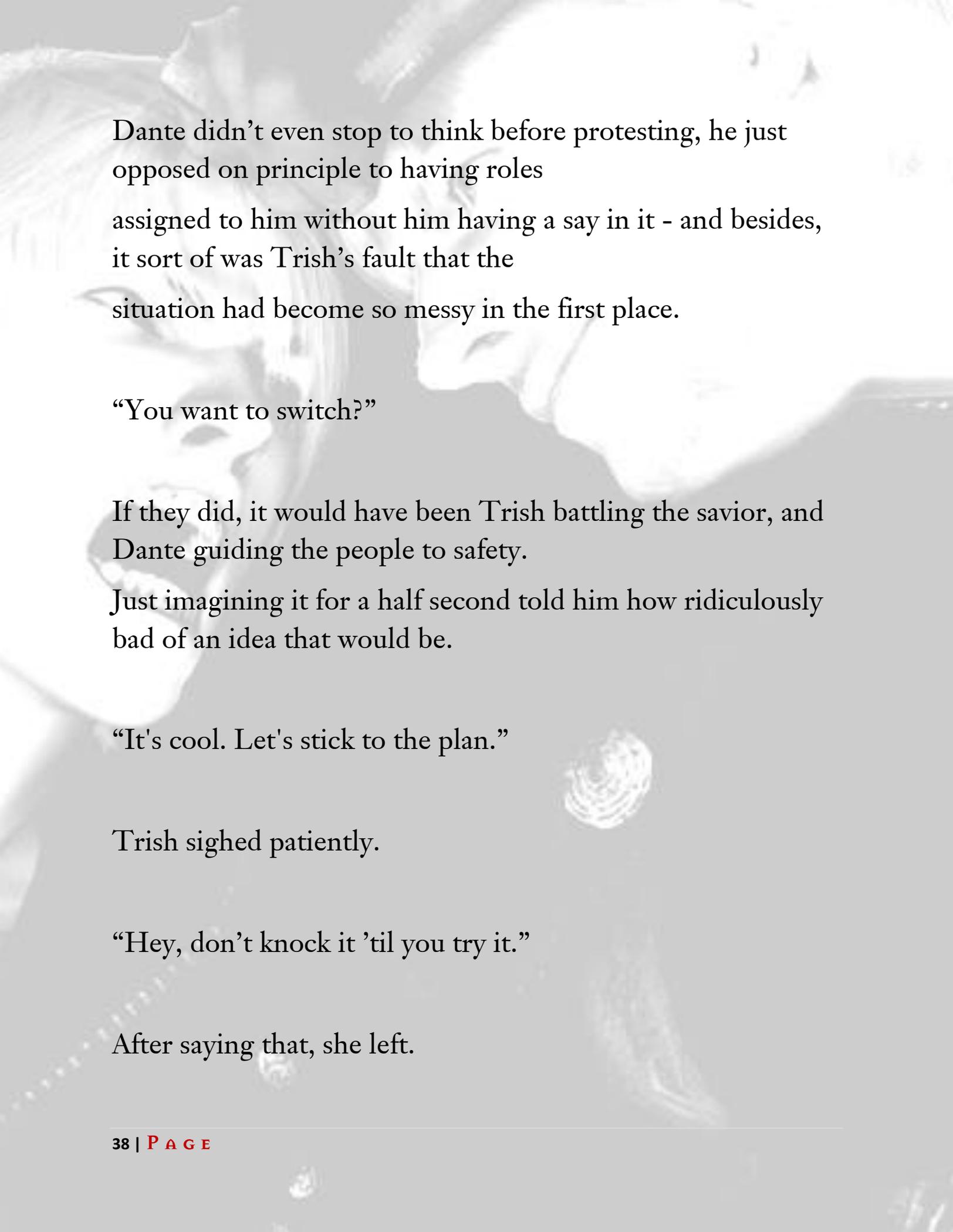
But seeing Credo die touched something inside Dante - it really drove home how abominable the Order's actions were, and how imperative it was that they were destroyed.

“It's going to be a lot of work.”

Trish smiled as she stepped up to Dante.

“I'll sweep the city and evacuate the people.”

“Hey! Is this your way of ditching and dumping this mess on-”



Dante didn't even stop to think before protesting, he just opposed on principle to having roles assigned to him without him having a say in it - and besides, it sort of was Trish's fault that the situation had become so messy in the first place.

“You want to switch?”

If they did, it would have been Trish battling the savior, and Dante guiding the people to safety.

Just imagining it for a half second told him how ridiculously bad of an idea that would be.

“It's cool. Let's stick to the plan.”

Trish sighed patiently.

“Hey, don't knock it 'til you try it.”

After saying that, she left.



“Alright, let’s deal with the body first.”

Dante muttered to himself as he went in the opposite direction from Trish.



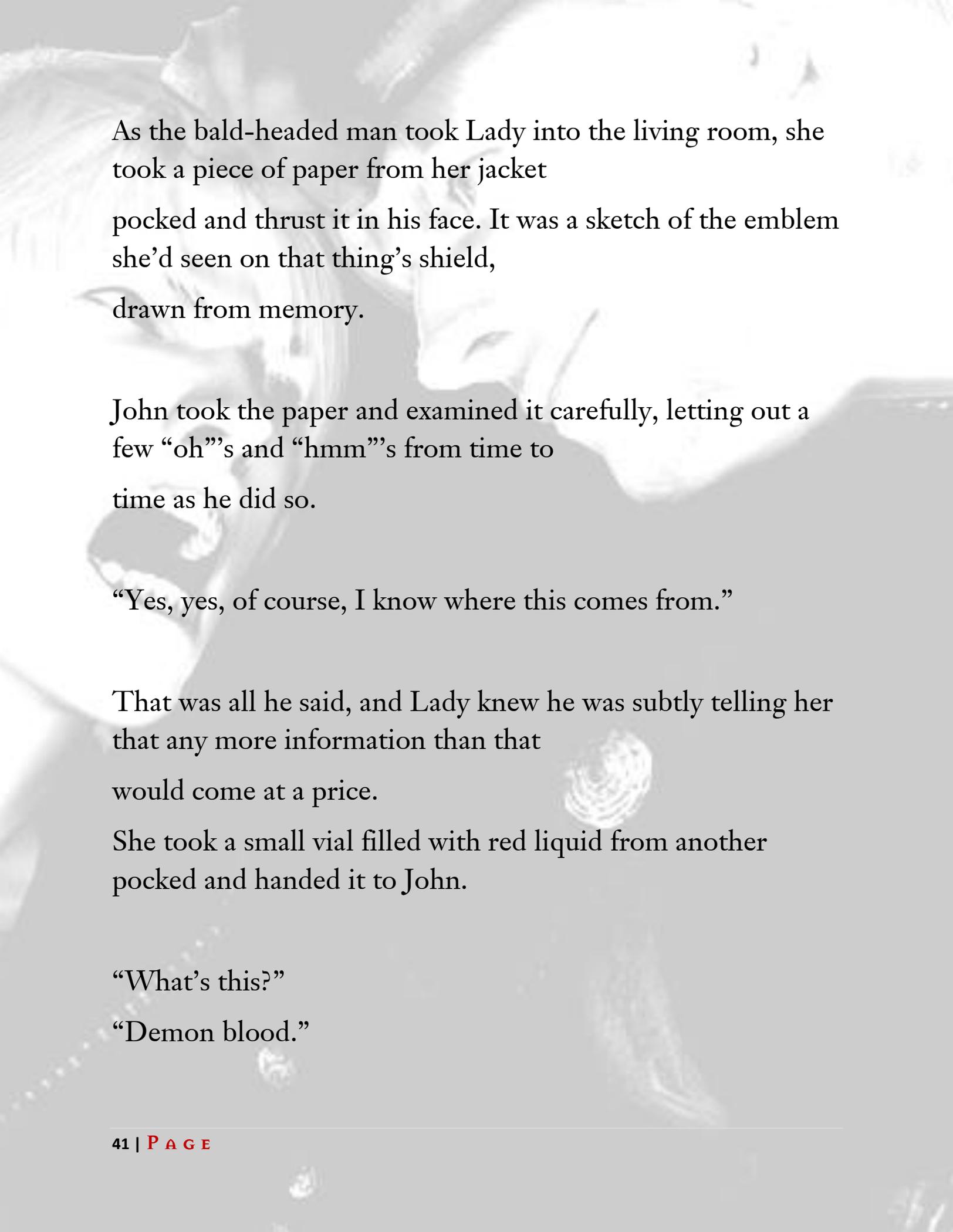
For Lady, who makes her living as a demon hunter, learning about them is crucial.

Officially, to the general public, demons don't exist. So, to get her intel, Lady has to rely on a handful of sources of a more... dubious nature.

Such as John - a collector of supernatural artefacts. She'd gone to him many times, but she rarely got useful information out of him, and for that, he was usually more a last resort than anything.

It didn't help that the man also had an incredibly unsettling presence - as soon as he saw her, a broad, repulsive grin broke out on his face.

“Lady! To what do I owe the pleasure?”



As the bald-headed man took Lady into the living room, she took a piece of paper from her jacket pocked and thrust it in his face. It was a sketch of the emblem she'd seen on that thing's shield, drawn from memory.

John took the paper and examined it carefully, letting out a few “oh”s and “hmm”s from time to time as he did so.

“Yes, yes, of course, I know where this comes from.”

That was all he said, and Lady knew he was subtly telling her that any more information than that would come at a price.

She took a small vial filled with red liquid from another pocked and handed it to John.

“What's this?”

“Demon blood.”

When Lady replied, John merely laughed in response, pushing the bottle back to her.

“Is this a joke? Miss Lady, what sort of simpleton do you take me for?”

Lady didn't like John's attitude one bit. Well, not just John, but all those collector types like him,

who take every opportunity to flaunt their knowledge or expertise, as if to show how much better?

than everyone else they are - that arrogance pisses Lady off, and maybe if she were to try to

unpack why it would have something to do with them reminding her of her father, but she had no

desire to do so - after all, her father was long dead and buried, and deserved to be spared not

even a passing thought.

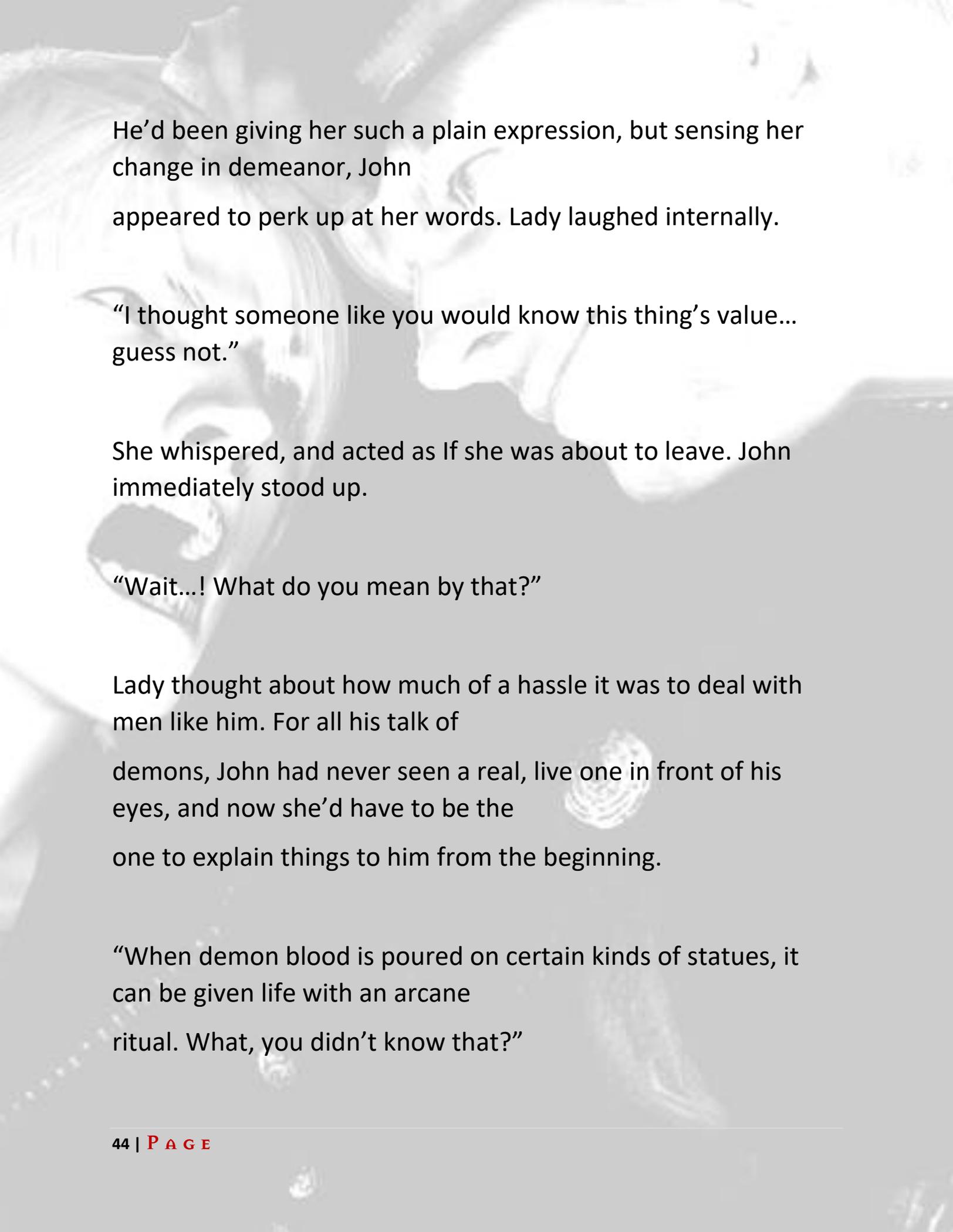
Just as Lady expected, John launched on a tirade about why, exactly, he was right.

“You see, the type of blood that flows through the veins of demons cannot remain in a liquid state after entering contact with our world’s air. Demons bleed, yes, but that blood will evaporate in the blink of an eye, and what remains left over will immediately condense and crystallize. See, I already have a few pieces of those crystals, right here...”

Despite John knowing that Lady had been hunting demons for years, he still took his own word over hers. Maybe he thought she was trying to cheat him, or that he was the only one truly in the.

know, that he was the real deal and everyone else merely chasing fairytales - fair enough. It seemed like Lady would have to be his wake-up call and be the one to teach him a lesson, for a change. She took the bottle back and straightened up.

“Alright, forget it.”



He'd been giving her such a plain expression, but sensing her change in demeanor, John appeared to perk up at her words. Lady laughed internally.

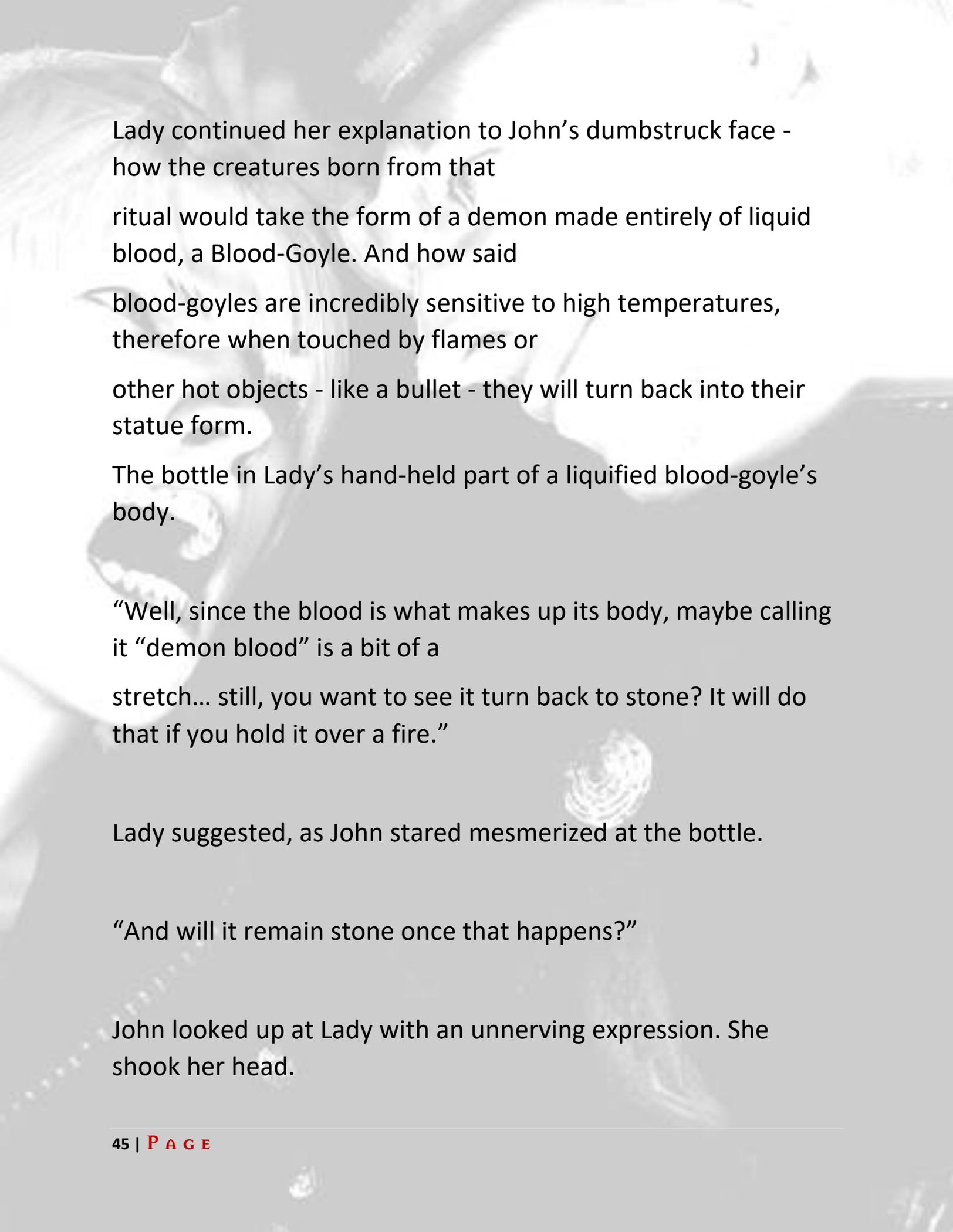
"I thought someone like you would know this thing's value... guess not."

She whispered, and acted as if she was about to leave. John immediately stood up.

"Wait...! What do you mean by that?"

Lady thought about how much of a hassle it was to deal with men like him. For all his talk of demons, John had never seen a real, live one in front of his eyes, and now she'd have to be the one to explain things to him from the beginning.

"When demon blood is poured on certain kinds of statues, it can be given life with an arcane ritual. What, you didn't know that?"



Lady continued her explanation to John's dumbstruck face - how the creatures born from that ritual would take the form of a demon made entirely of liquid blood, a Blood-Goyle. And how said blood-goyles are incredibly sensitive to high temperatures, therefore when touched by flames or other hot objects - like a bullet - they will turn back into their statue form.

The bottle in Lady's hand-held part of a liquified blood-goyle's body.

"Well, since the blood is what makes up its body, maybe calling it "demon blood" is a bit of a stretch... still, you want to see it turn back to stone? It will do that if you hold it over a fire."

Lady suggested, as John stared mesmerized at the bottle.

"And will it remain stone once that happens?"

John looked up at Lady with an unnerving expression. She shook her head.

“No, it will go back to its liquid form after a little while.”

As soon as he heard this, John took a lighter and held it up to the bottle. Lady waited patiently for him to get through with it, as he was so focused on the task and examining the phenomenon that he couldn't even speak.

Of course, it went exactly the way she'd explained - and once John had ascertained that she was telling the truth, he changed his tune completely.

“This is wonderful! What an intriguing phenomenon!”

He spoke excitedly with shimmering eyes, even taking Lady's hands in his.

Lady didn't think this was anything special - she'd just happened to encounter a blood-goyle while out on a job, and when a piece of its body broke off when she killed it, she took it with her, thinking it could prove useful in some way. She didn't expect him to get so... touchy about it.



“This will become a treasured piece in my collection!”

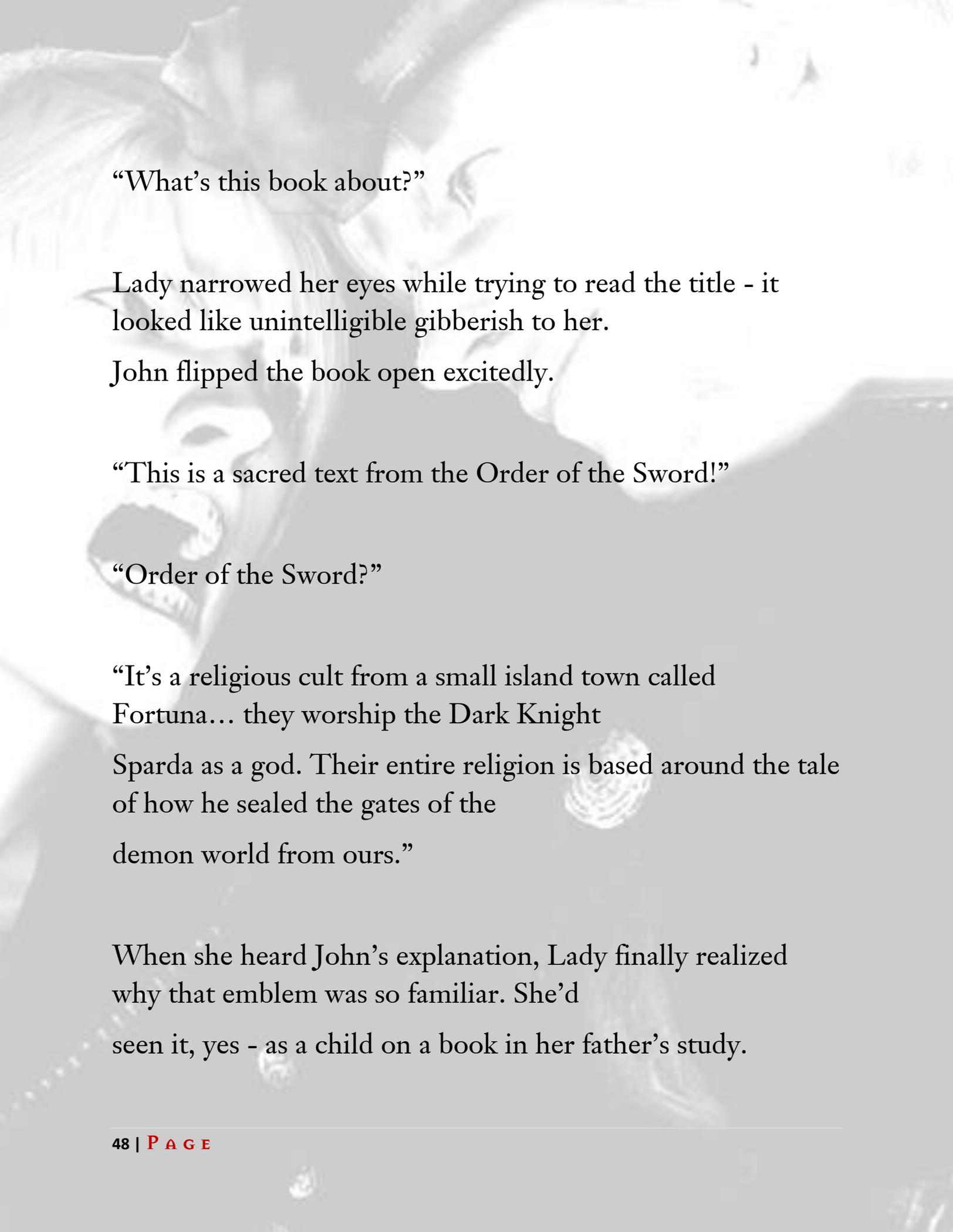
Lady waited in silence while John took the vial, handling it with care, and went to put it with the rest of his collection.

He really was a pain to deal with, Lady thought, but still, he truly did have some priceless pieces in his collection - which meant he did have some really good information when she could get him to talk.

When John emerged from his storage room, he was holding a thick book in his hands.

“So, about that emblem you showed me...”

While he spoke, John showed Lady the cover of the ancient book, and sure enough, it bore that same exact emblem on it.



“What’s this book about?”

Lady narrowed her eyes while trying to read the title - it looked like unintelligible gibberish to her.

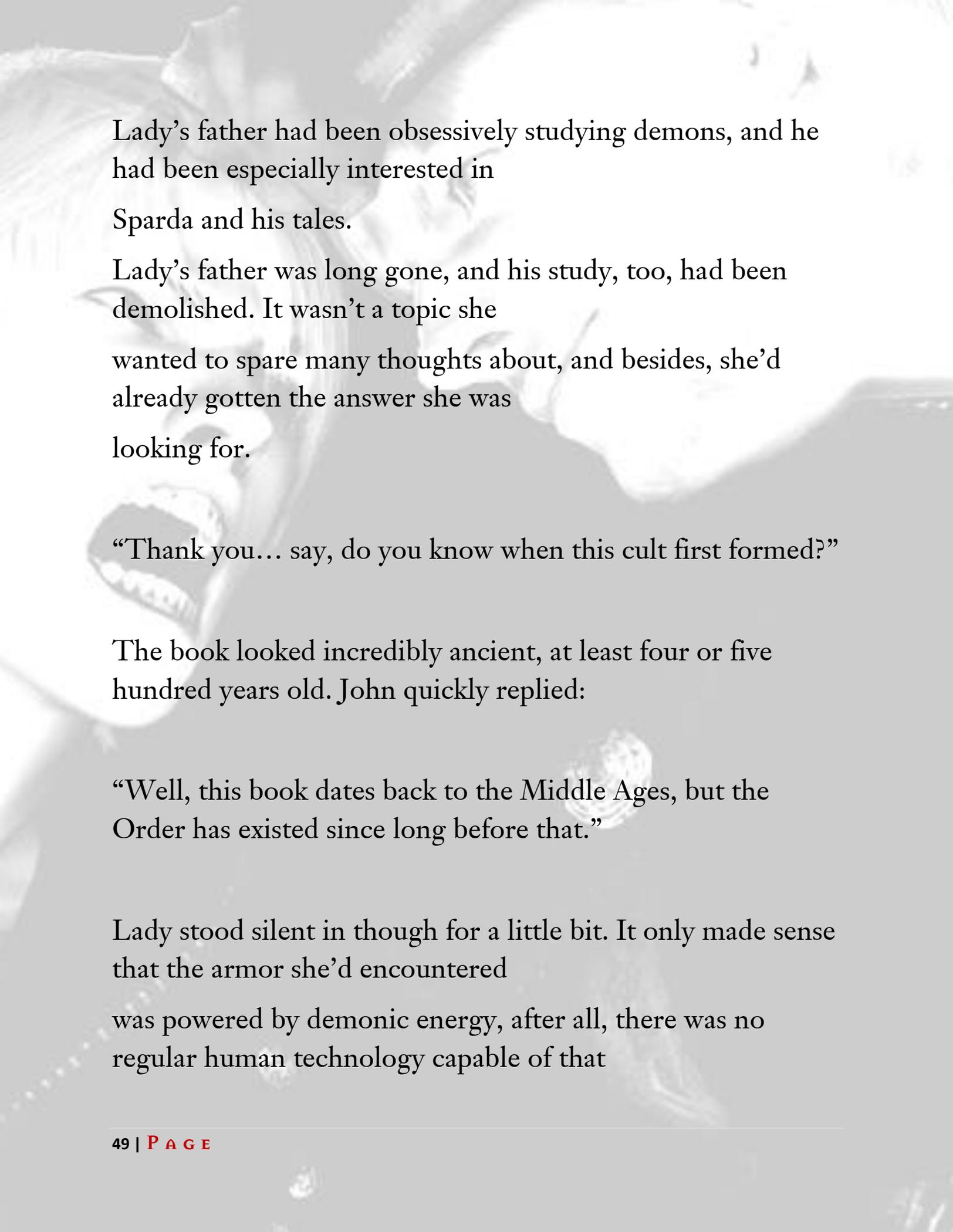
John flipped the book open excitedly.

“This is a sacred text from the Order of the Sword!”

“Order of the Sword?”

“It’s a religious cult from a small island town called Fortuna... they worship the Dark Knight Sparda as a god. Their entire religion is based around the tale of how he sealed the gates of the demon world from ours.”

When she heard John’s explanation, Lady finally realized why that emblem was so familiar. She’d seen it, yes - as a child on a book in her father’s study.



Lady's father had been obsessively studying demons, and he had been especially interested in Sparda and his tales.

Lady's father was long gone, and his study, too, had been demolished. It wasn't a topic she wanted to spare many thoughts about, and besides, she'd already gotten the answer she was looking for.

“Thank you... say, do you know when this cult first formed?”

The book looked incredibly ancient, at least four or five hundred years old. John quickly replied:

“Well, this book dates back to the Middle Ages, but the Order has existed since long before that.”

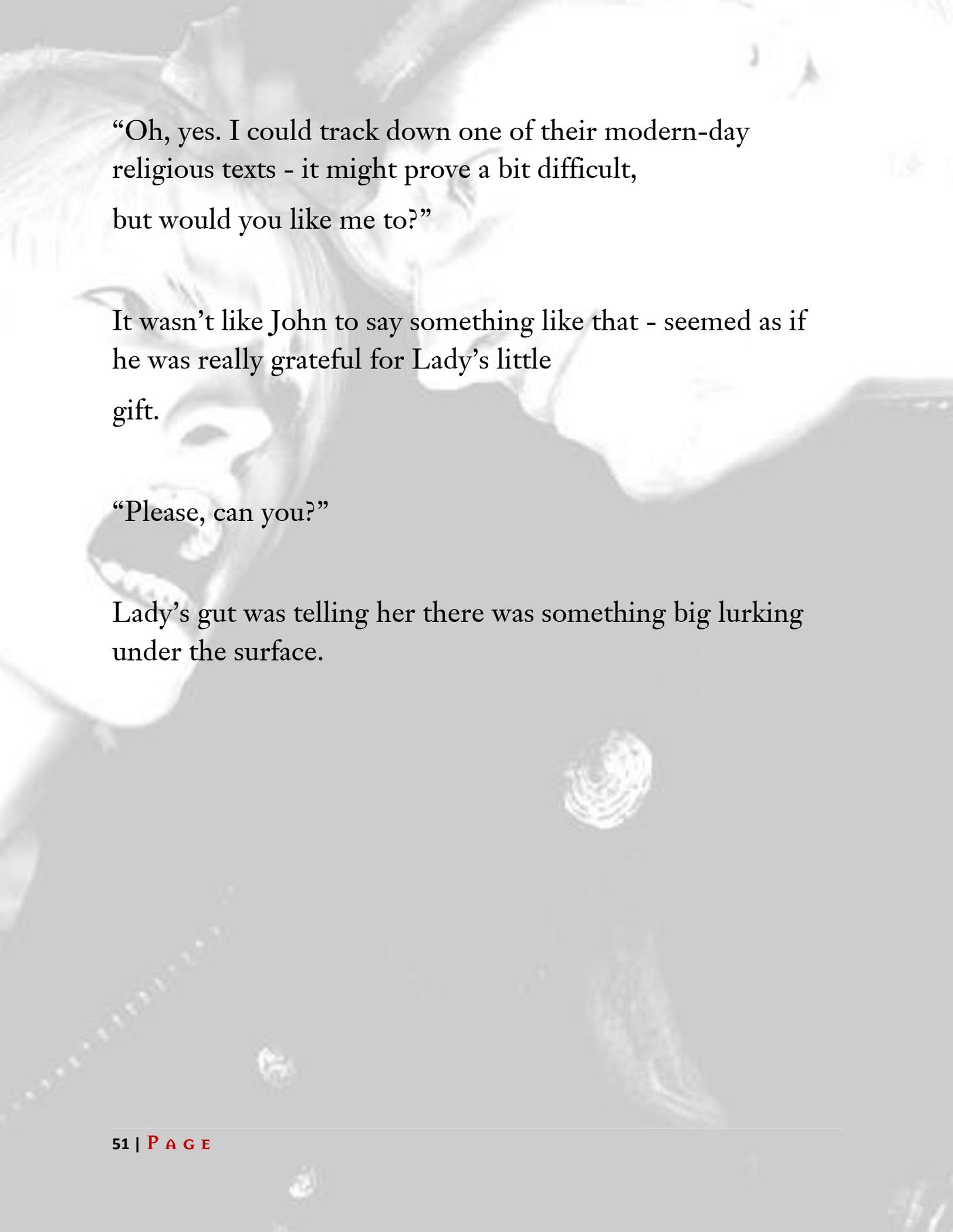
Lady stood silent in thought for a little bit. It only made sense that the armor she'd encountered was powered by demonic energy, after all, there was no regular human technology capable of that

degree of strength - but if it had been some kind of demonic power, harnessed after centuries of study on the matter, it could be achieved.

That armor was definitely too new to have existed for centuries, though, so if they had some type of arcane knowledge that had been passed on, it was still being used. She knew she couldn't discard the possibility - after all, her own father had managed to put together the same kind of ancient spells to open a gate to the underworld.

“And this cult, it's still active to this day?”

If the Order was still alive and kicking, then it wouldn't be a stretch to think they were the ones who made those armored knights? The question was, why would a religion have based on tales of magic and demons survive to this day while also being up to date enough to use modern technology? And what purpose did those armors serve?



“Oh, yes. I could track down one of their modern-day religious texts - it might prove a bit difficult, but would you like me to?”

It wasn't like John to say something like that - seemed as if he was really grateful for Lady's little gift.

“Please, can you?”

Lady's gut was telling her there was something big lurking under the surface.



After the Savior's successful activation, Agnus walked to the location of his Holiness Sanctus. He was now in the Savior's main control room, the Machina ex Deus. Although the Savior could function by itself, more complex actions still required it to be steered by a conductor.

Agnus was seeing Sanctus' transformed form for the first time - it was unlike his own, having only added wings and horns to Sanctus' otherwise mostly human appearance.

Agnus, who'd seen countless people go through the Ascension Ceremony and gain new powers, was a little disappointed in how little he'd changed - of course, it didn't mean the Ceremony had failed, but he couldn't help but mentally compare this form to Credo's angelic transformation.

Since Sanctus was supposed to be the figurehead of the Order, the one their followers would look

up to, to think he still looked so deceptively human made it all the more disappointing.

Well, the vicar was very old, so his spirit might not have accepted the Ascension fully - he thought of that possibility.

“You’ve worked very hard, Agnus.”

Sanctus smiled at him, and Agnus collapsed at his feet. The vicar walked up to Agnus, noticing that he was shaking like a leaf - as to the reason why, though, he couldn’t say.

“What’s wrong? What are you so afraid of?”

When he heard Sanctus speak, Agnus realized he’d been shaking - had he? Why was he so scared?

When Sanctus put his hands on Agnus’ shoulders, he realized the source of that feeling. Sanctus’ body radiated incredibly powerful demonic energy, and it had instantly subdued Agnus’ own.

At once, he was ashamed of ever having doubted the vicar’s power.

The result of the Ascension Ceremony depends on the candidate’s own spirit.

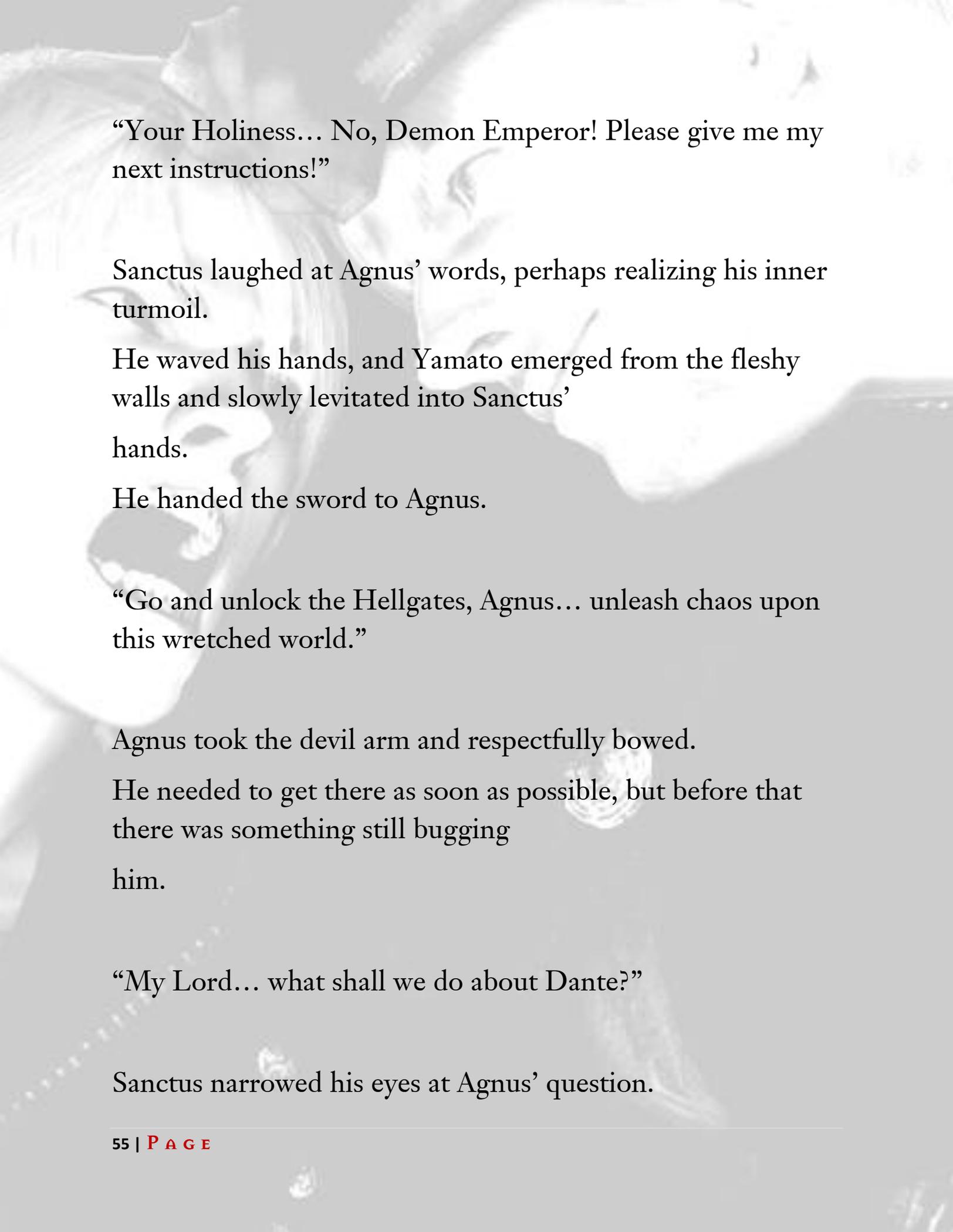
When Agnus felt Sanctus' true power, he sighed at the vastness of it.

He was by no means a devout believer - he held no particular feelings of respect towards the Dark Knight Sparda. No, what Agnus was truly interested in was the study of demons themselves - far from Credo's lofty ideals. He'd followed and believed in Sanctus' words, yes, but deep down he was only after his own goals.

Now, though, from the bottom of his heart he felt nothing but blind faith and devotion for Sanctus' overwhelming demonic power.

“Your Holiness!”

No, that wasn't the correct way to address him anymore, Agnus feared. He didn't think there were words that properly described it - someone of Sanctus' caliber was no longer merely the head of a small religion. He was fit to rule both the human world and the underworld, and should be addressed as such.



“Your Holiness... No, Demon Emperor! Please give me my next instructions!”

Sanctus laughed at Agnus’ words, perhaps realizing his inner turmoil.

He waved his hands, and Yamato emerged from the fleshy walls and slowly levitated into Sanctus’ hands.

He handed the sword to Agnus.

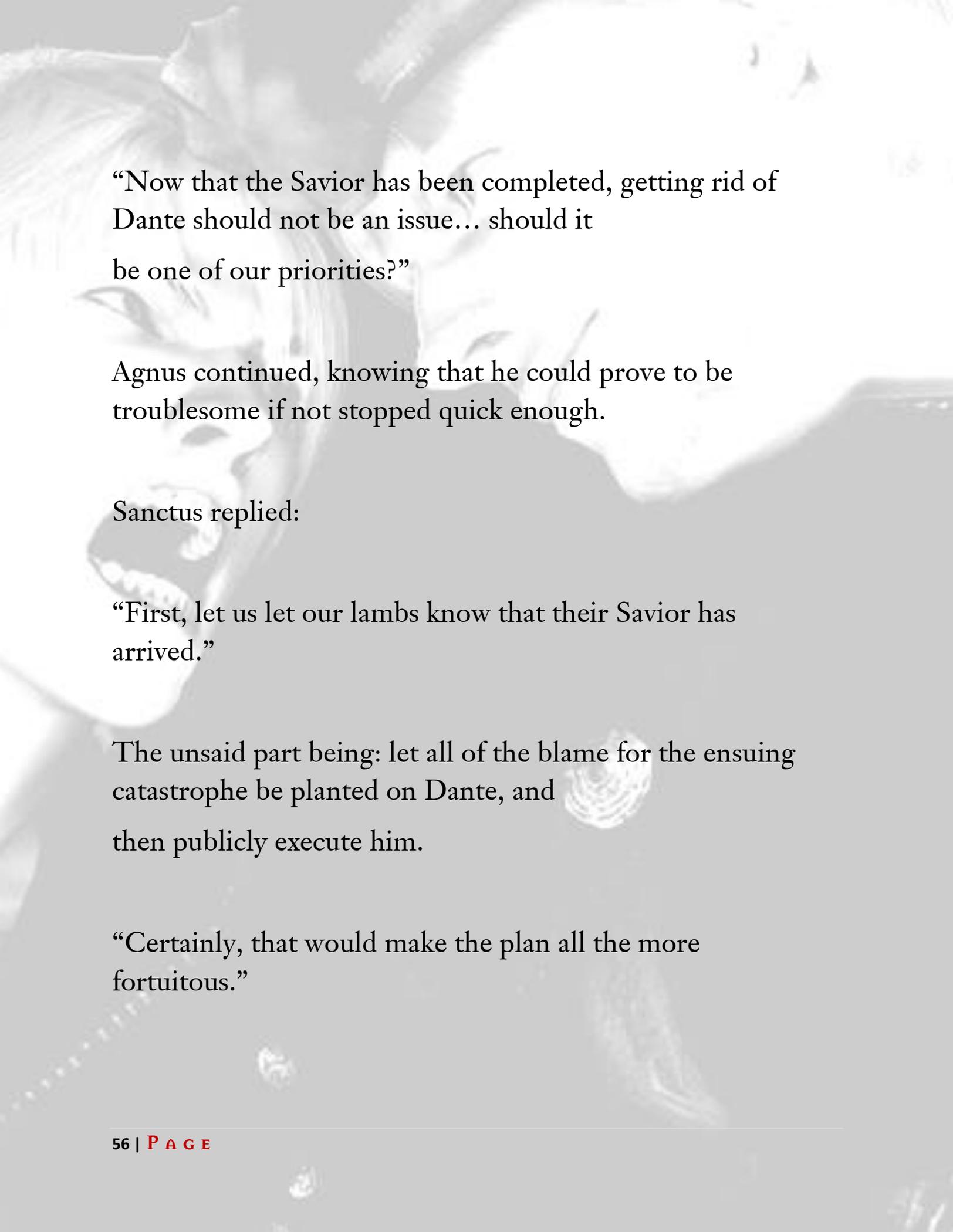
“Go and unlock the Hellgates, Agnus... unleash chaos upon this wretched world.”

Agnus took the devil arm and respectfully bowed.

He needed to get there as soon as possible, but before that there was something still bugging him.

“My Lord... what shall we do about Dante?”

Sanctus narrowed his eyes at Agnus’ question.



“Now that the Savior has been completed, getting rid of Dante should not be an issue... should it be one of our priorities?”

Agnus continued, knowing that he could prove to be troublesome if not stopped quick enough.

Sanctus replied:

“First, let us let our lambs know that their Savior has arrived.”

The unsaid part being: let all of the blame for the ensuing catastrophe be planted on Dante, and then publicly execute him.

“Certainly, that would make the plan all the more fortuitous.”

However, Agnus knew that he couldn't underestimate Dante's strength. It would be convenient if he didn't go directly after the Savior, but so far, he'd proven unpredictable beyond Agnus' understanding.

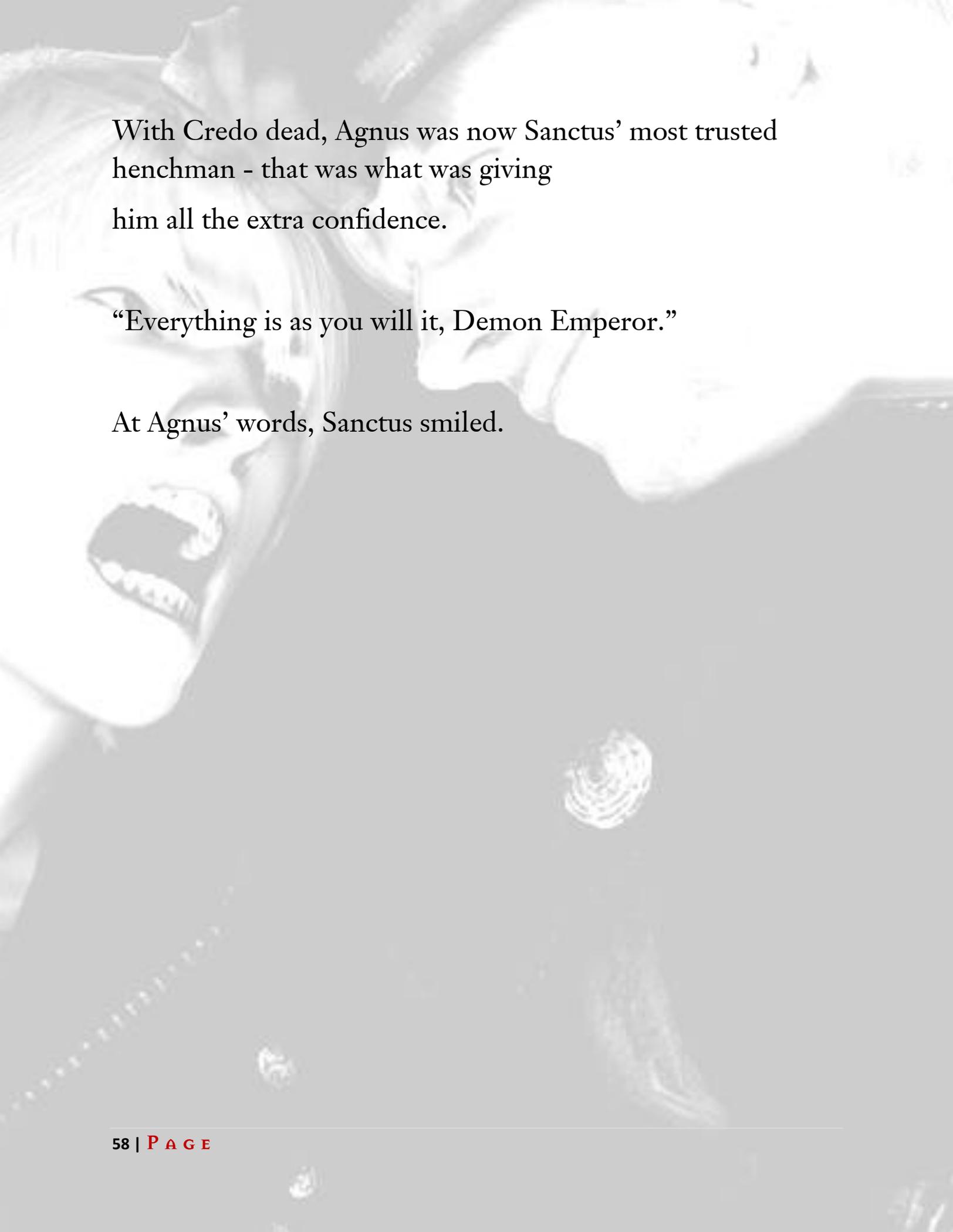
“If I were to encounter him first, though, would it be acceptable to dispose of him?”

Agnus once again asked - after all, they had to switch their target from Dante to Nero in the first place because he was too strong to capture.

But now he had a trick up his sleeve - with Yamato he could unleash the Hellgate. If he were to do that, he might be able to meet Dante head on, or so Agnus thought.

Sanctus seemed to have come to similar conclusions, as he agreed with Agnus' proposal.

“So, it shall be. If that were to occur, we'll also blame the sins on the demons.”



With Credo dead, Agnus was now Sanctus' most trusted henchman - that was what was giving him all the extra confidence.

“Everything is as you will it, Demon Emperor.”

At Agnus' words, Sanctus smiled.



Having left the Order HQ, Dante stopped to look up at the sky. When he'd first been in the forest it had been sunny and clear, but now it was dark grey with clouds - though the sun still shone bright behind them.

“Strange weather, huh.”

There was no indication it would rain - still, Dante kept sniffing the air.

“This smell, though...”

He'd fought countless demons, and by now, he could use his heightened sense of smell to pick out the scent of demon clear as day and follow their tracks like a hound.

Dante focused his senses on that smell - but just as he began following it, he heard a loud metallic screeching in the distance.

He looked around, and on the bridge stood a demon he'd never seen before.

It had scales like a big overgrown lizard, and looked a bit like a demon Dante knew was called a Blade, but its head wasn't shaped quite right.

“Aw, are you the baby lizards' mommy?”

Well, now that he'd seen it, he had no choice but to kill it - that was what Dante thought as he prepared to approach the demon, who roared again.

As it did that, lighting struck from the dark clouds above, directly into the demon. It made a deafening crashing sound, and the air filled with smoke around the area of impact - but Dante paid it no mind, continuing on his way.

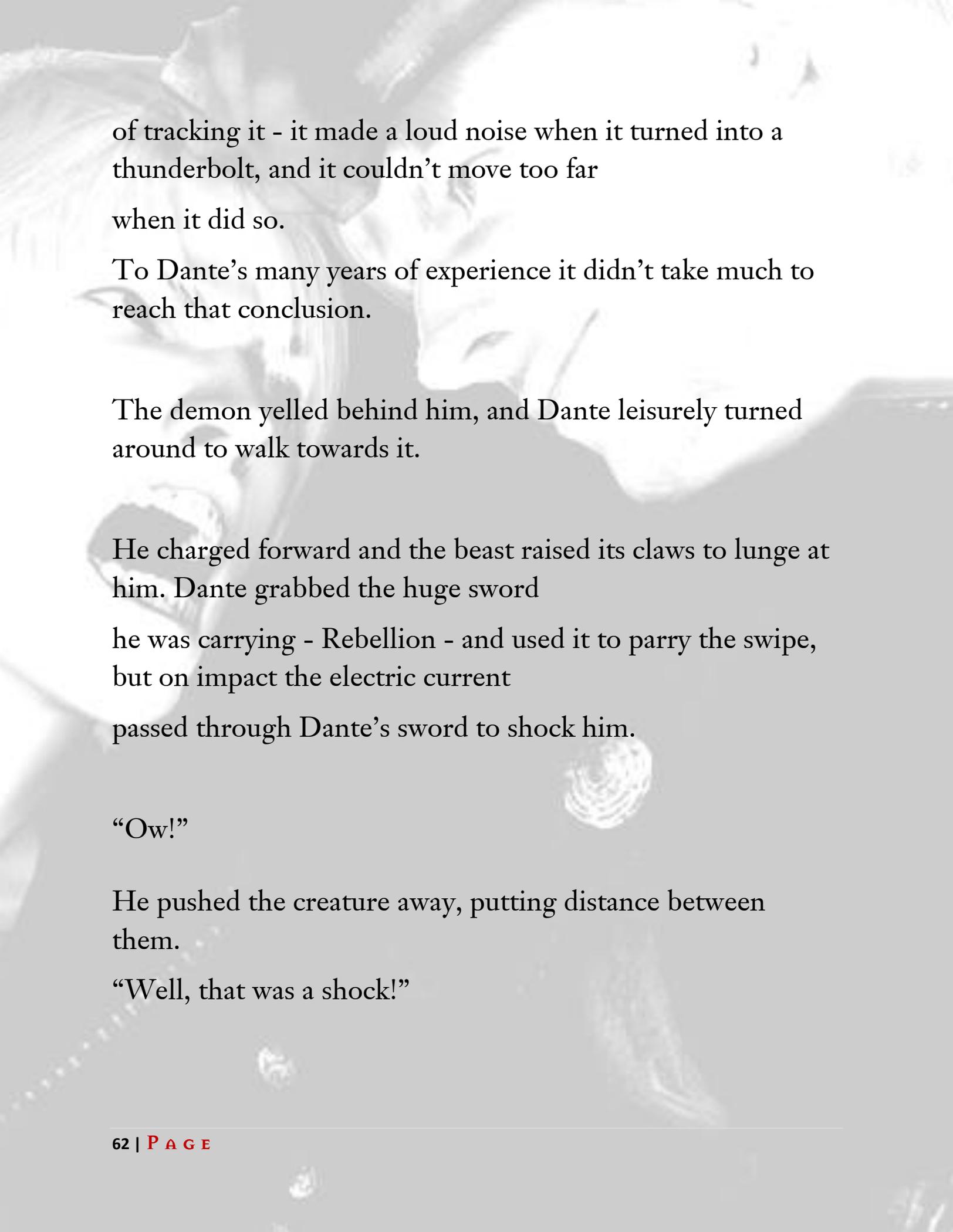
When the smoke cleared, though, the demon wasn't there anymore, so he had to stop.

The clouds kept on rumbling lowly, and lighting struck the ground around Dante - it was a few meters from him at first, gradually getting closer and closer.

Dante simply looked at it in silence, feeling the demonic energy get stronger as the thunder closed in on him. In the next few strikes, he'd pinpointed its location.

“You got a pretty showy way of walking; anyone ever tell you that?”

Dante didn't bother turning around as he spoke. The demon was now standing behind him - it appeared that his whole body could meld with the thunder to essentially teleport. So then, the lighting around Dante was the creature's footprints. It seemed pretty convenient for the purposes



of tracking it - it made a loud noise when it turned into a thunderbolt, and it couldn't move too far when it did so.

To Dante's many years of experience it didn't take much to reach that conclusion.

The demon yelled behind him, and Dante leisurely turned around to walk towards it.

He charged forward and the beast raised its claws to lunge at him. Dante grabbed the huge sword he was carrying - Rebellion - and used it to parry the swipe, but on impact the electric current passed through Dante's sword to shock him.

“Ow!”

He pushed the creature away, putting distance between them.

“Well, that was a shock!”

The demon heard Dante's voice and lunged at him again. If he used his sword against it while it was charged, it would do nothing but hurt, so to be safe the only way to attack was with a gun.

That was Dante's train of thought as he jumped back and unholstered Ebony and Ivory, his dual guns.

He aimed them at the creature, but something seemed off.

Dante was right in front of the demon, yet it turned around frantically like it couldn't see him. At

first, Dante thought it was picking up on some other demon's presence - but he could feel

nothing, and there was no way in hell there was some stray demon that the beast could sense

and Dante could not.

Right then, the demon began crawling slowly on the ground, so unlike the swift movements from

before.

Dante had encountered and fought with countless types of demons in his life - the general rule of

thumb was, if a demon appears to lack eyes or a nose or another similar organ, they will still evolve to have a way around it to replace that function.

Dante carefully observed the beast that was now on the ground right in front of him - no eyes to be found in its head, and if its behavior could be taken as evidence, no other way to see either.

That was rare.

“Is it a malformation or did it evolve that way?”

Dante muttered to himself, and the beast immediately reacted to the sound.

“Well, it’s definitely got good ears!”

As if closing in on his voice, the demon charged at him - Dante pointed a gun at the creature and pulled the trigger.

“Time to go to work, guys!”

He shouted, using his supernatural speed to fire bullet after bullet.

Sometimes, when he used Ebony and Ivory, Dante still thought of a certain woman - Nell Goldstein, expert gunsmith.

“You know, most normal people can't pull a trigger that many times in a second.”

She'd said with a smile. She was the one who designed Dante's Ebony and Ivory - guns though enough to be able to withstand the speed and rate at which he fired them. Regular people wouldn't be able to use them at all - after all, no human being could shoot that fast. Only someone with demon blood running through their veins, like Dante, could do it.

The guns themselves were made so that Dante could fully exploit his potential. Nell designed them and Dante put them together, and to him, they're his most beloved weapons - not just mere

tools, but his trusted partners.

Ebony and Ivory fired dozens of bullets, rendering the demons' protective scales moot - still, the creature's body was too large to be truly affected by it.

As it staggered slightly, Dante put away Ebony and Ivory and instead picked up another firearm from his coat - Coyote-A, his shotgun.

Dante looked at Coyote-A for a split second before pointing it at the demon.

When he first started his business, Dante didn't bother with firearms other than Ebony and Ivory.

After all, they were enough by themselves to take care of most demons, and if it came to it, he'd

just have to dust off good old Rebellion. Sometimes he acquired guns along the way of a mission,

but he wouldn't keep them. This time, he just happened to bring Coyote-A with him, no real

reason behind it.

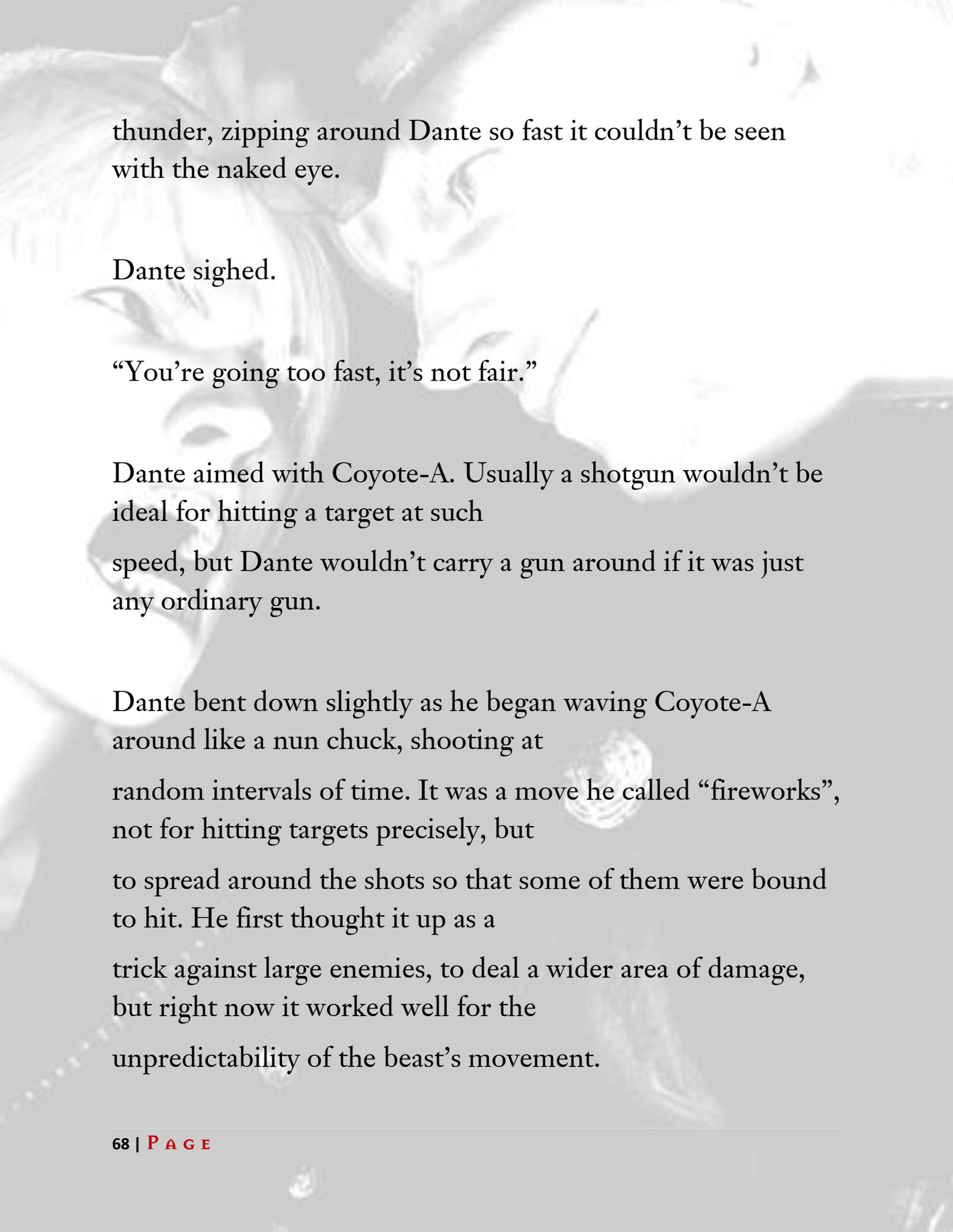
“You don’t take orders even from me, huh? Like an actual coyote.”

Walking slowly towards the demon, Dante waited until he was at a close enough range before shooting. The shell fired a barrage of tiny shots, which all hit the beast at once, causing it to recoil sharply.

Dante chuckled.

Even a regular shotgun would’ve done a lot of damage at close distance, so a shot from Coyote-A was pretty devastating - but this beast was still pretty strong, even when injured, so he couldn’t take it too lightly.

Dante made a flashy maneuver to open up his second shot, but the demon stood tall - probably too big to be able to fight only with a gun, plus the electric current was probably weakening the impact. Just as Dante readied to fire again, the demon shouted and melded again with the



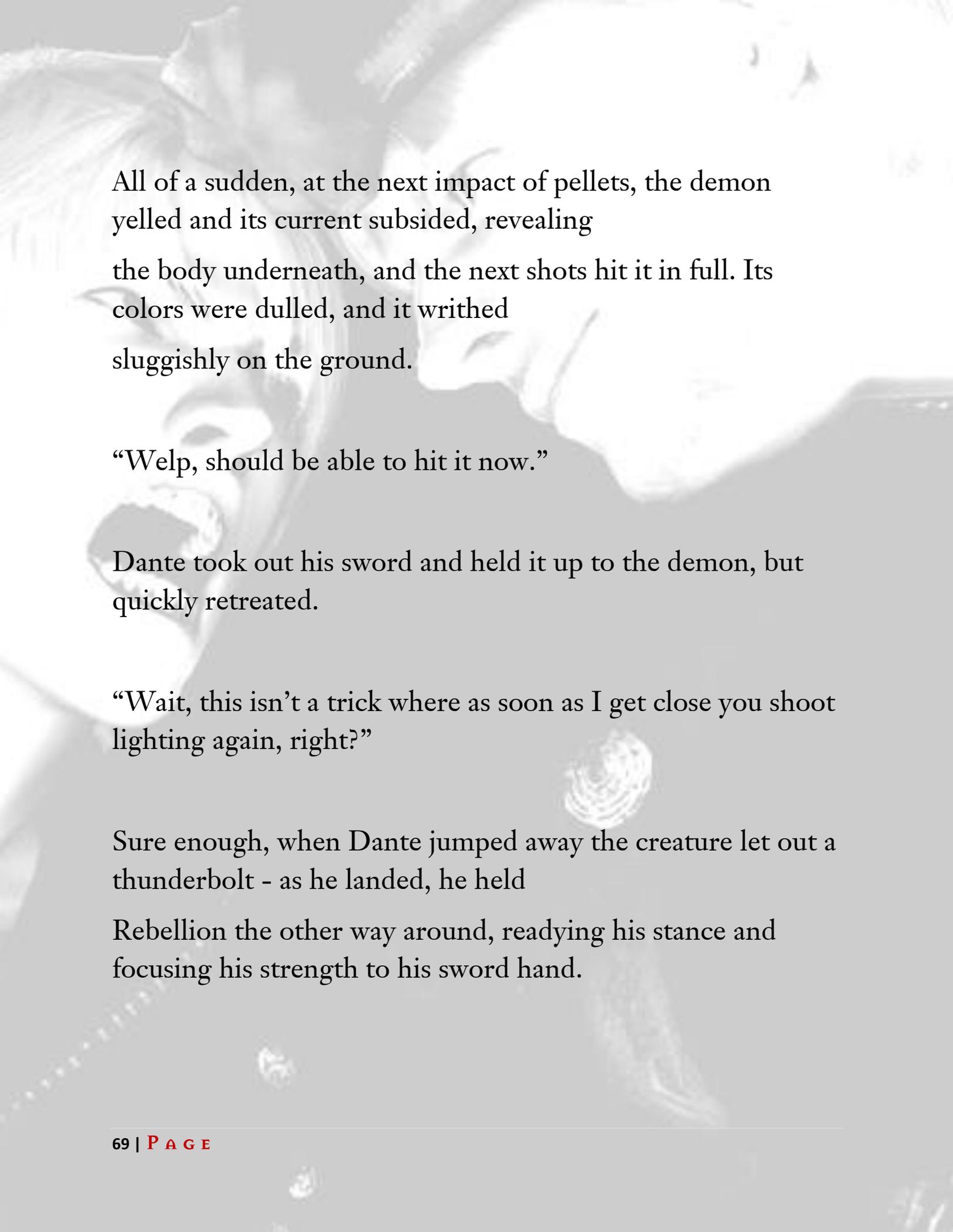
thunder, zipping around Dante so fast it couldn't be seen with the naked eye.

Dante sighed.

“You're going too fast, it's not fair.”

Dante aimed with Coyote-A. Usually a shotgun wouldn't be ideal for hitting a target at such speed, but Dante wouldn't carry a gun around if it was just any ordinary gun.

Dante bent down slightly as he began waving Coyote-A around like a nun chuck, shooting at random intervals of time. It was a move he called “fireworks”, not for hitting targets precisely, but to spread around the shots so that some of them were bound to hit. He first thought it up as a trick against large enemies, to deal a wider area of damage, but right now it worked well for the unpredictability of the beast's movement.



All of a sudden, at the next impact of pellets, the demon yelled and its current subsided, revealing the body underneath, and the next shots hit it in full. Its colors were dulled, and it writhed sluggishly on the ground.

“Welp, should be able to hit it now.”

Dante took out his sword and held it up to the demon, but quickly retreated.

“Wait, this isn’t a trick where as soon as I get close you shoot lightning again, right?”

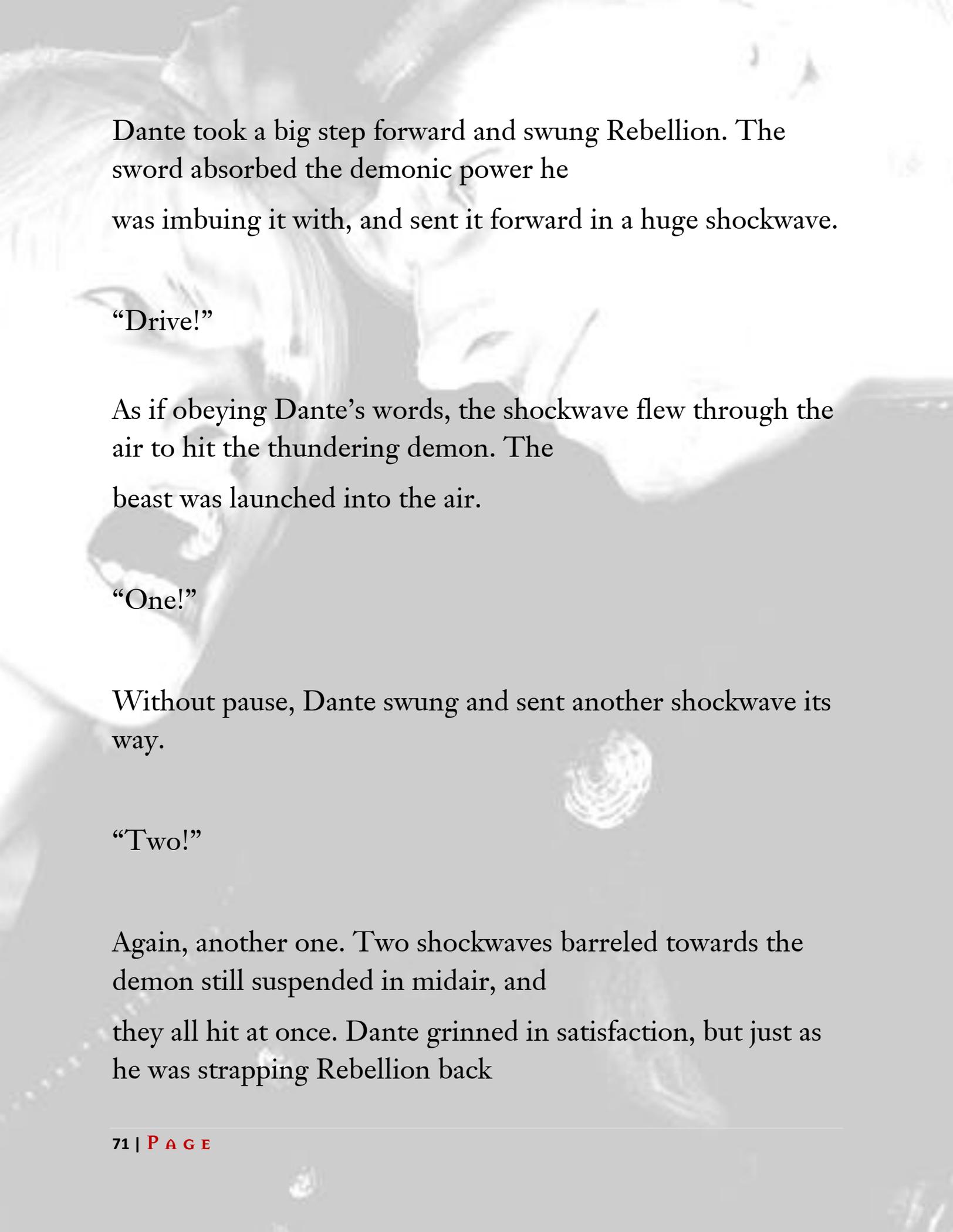
Sure enough, when Dante jumped away the creature let out a thunderbolt - as he landed, he held

Rebellion the other way around, readying his stance and focusing his strength to his sword hand.

Dante had been in countless fights, and through it all, he'd used all sorts of weapons - Ebony and Ivory, Coyote-A, and many devil arms of various nature and abilities. He was even confident in his ability to take on foes unarmed, with his own bare hands. But out of all of those, the one weapon he could rely on the most was his sword, Rebellion - perhaps because it was the first weapon he'd ever owned.

When Dante was very young, he'd been taught how to fight by his father, Sparda. He was the one who told him that the sword represented his ability to protect those he loved - they were words he'd never forget.

Dante had learned many skills with his sword - some of them taught by Sparda, some of them he taught himself. And out of all of them, there were definitely a few that didn't require him to touch the enemy directly to work.



Dante took a big step forward and swung Rebellion. The sword absorbed the demonic power he was imbuing it with, and sent it forward in a huge shockwave.

“Drive!”

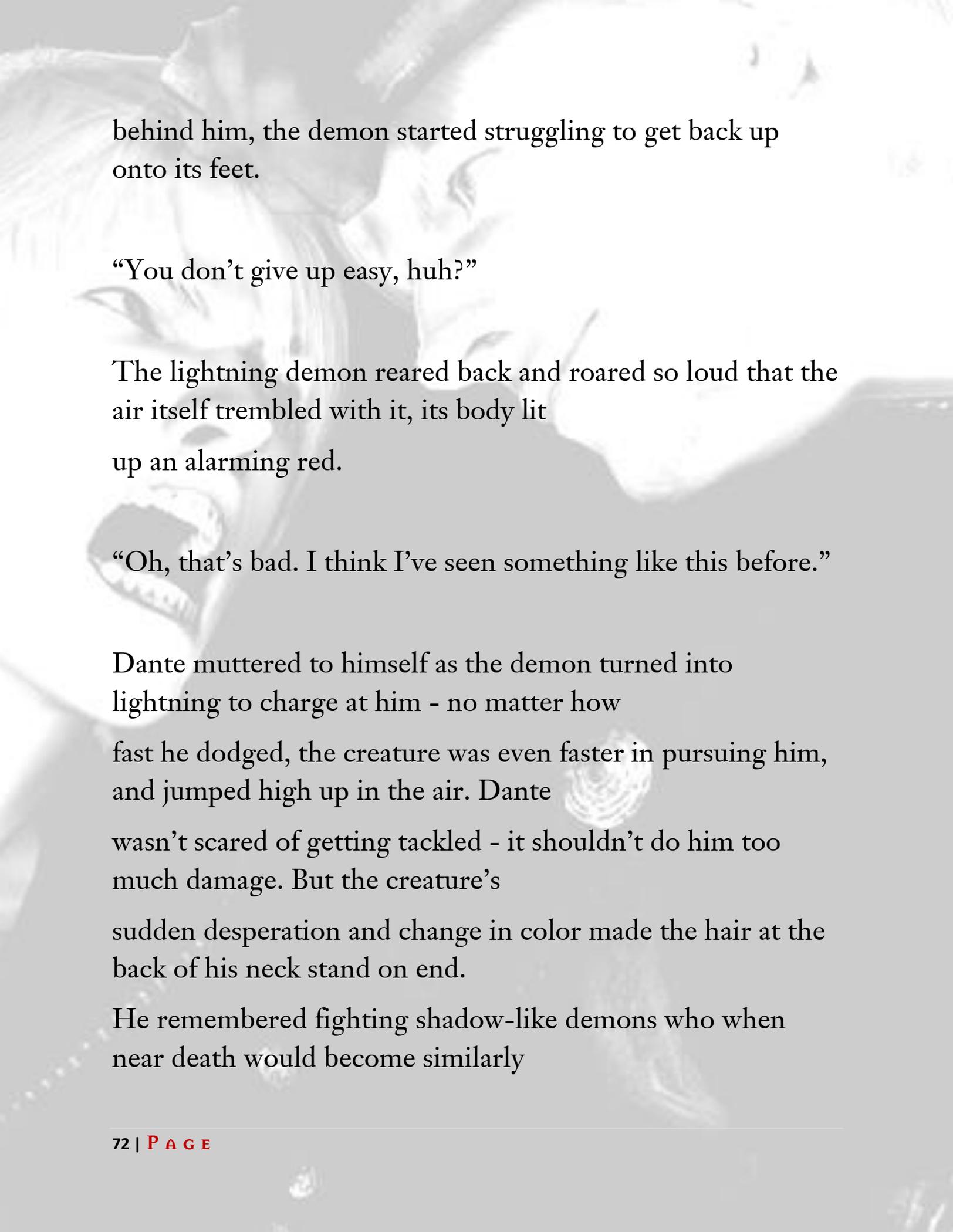
As if obeying Dante’s words, the shockwave flew through the air to hit the thundering demon. The beast was launched into the air.

“One!”

Without pause, Dante swung and sent another shockwave its way.

“Two!”

Again, another one. Two shockwaves barreled towards the demon still suspended in midair, and they all hit at once. Dante grinned in satisfaction, but just as he was strapping Rebellion back



behind him, the demon started struggling to get back up onto its feet.

“You don’t give up easy, huh?”

The lightning demon reared back and roared so loud that the air itself trembled with it, its body lit up an alarming red.

“Oh, that’s bad. I think I’ve seen something like this before.”

Dante muttered to himself as the demon turned into lightning to charge at him - no matter how fast he dodged, the creature was even faster in pursuing him, and jumped high up in the air. Dante wasn’t scared of getting tackled - it shouldn’t do him too much damage. But the creature’s sudden desperation and change in color made the hair at the back of his neck stand on end.

He remembered fighting shadow-like demons who when near death would become similarly

frantic, only to explode when killed.

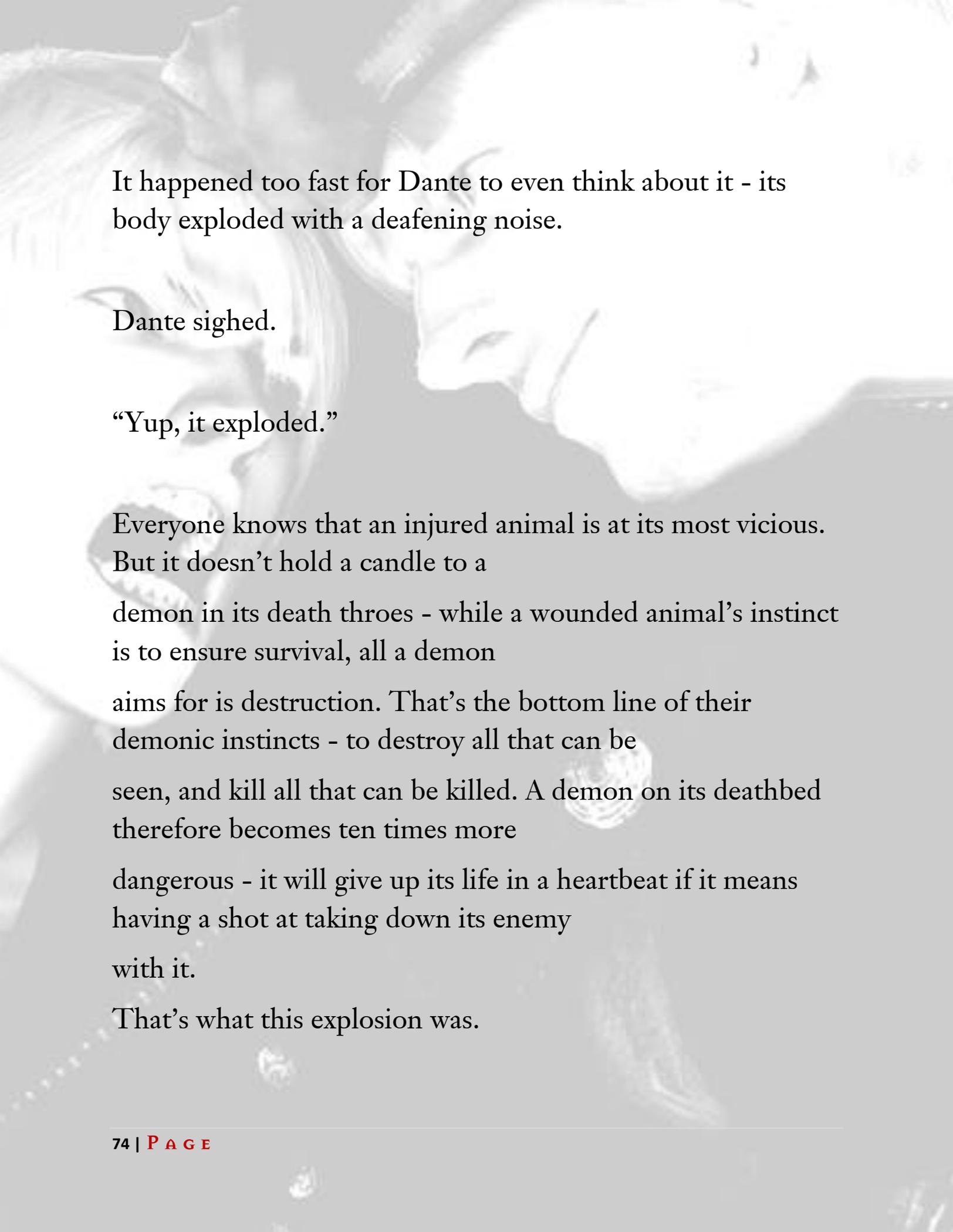
That's what this creature was reminding Dante of - though Dante wanted to take it out of its misery, it was clear it was only going to die when it damn well pleased to.

“What a pain.”

The beast was approaching him, but Dante sent a wave of demonic power to his feet to make a platform under himself to jump high enough to avoid its charge.

“C'mon, it's past your bedtime.”

As he passed the demon in midair Dante pulled out Ebony and Ivory and shot a barrage of projectiles at it. It fell to the ground when hit, and just as Dante landed and prepared to shoot again, the creature let out a pained sounding roar.



It happened too fast for Dante to even think about it - its body exploded with a deafening noise.

Dante sighed.

“Yup, it exploded.”

Everyone knows that an injured animal is at its most vicious. But it doesn't hold a candle to a demon in its death throes - while a wounded animal's instinct is to ensure survival, all a demon aims for is destruction. That's the bottom line of their demonic instincts - to destroy all that can be seen, and kill all that can be killed. A demon on its deathbed therefore becomes ten times more dangerous - it will give up its life in a heartbeat if it means having a shot at taking down its enemy with it.

That's what this explosion was.



“What a waste of time.”

Dante resumed walking towards his destination.



After learning of the existence of the Order of the Sword, Lady had had many other jobs in the meantime, and she'd come to a few conclusions.

First of all: the armored knights appeared to be hunting demons and taking their bodies back with them - and not just demons, either. They were also collecting devil arms - in short, robbing Lady of both her kills and the leftover spoils from said kills that should have been rightfully hers. There was no way to deny that.

And second of all, they really didn't seem to react to non-hostile interactions - they'd retaliate if attacked, but if left alone they would not strike first, acting as if Lady didn't even exist, just single-mindedly focusing on their task. That probably meant they had no interest in human beings, and

were only driven to grab demons and devil arms to take them back... somewhere. Why though?

There was nothing pointing to a potential answer.

It was all one huge headache - it could be assumed that those knights were somehow related to

the Order of The Sword... in other words, the only way to get to the bottom of this was to go

directly to the source - Fortuna.

Lady didn't really like that plan, not one bit. Sure, if she allowed the knights to continue butting on

in other hunters' jobs, it would interfere with both her livelihood and her reputation - but even so,

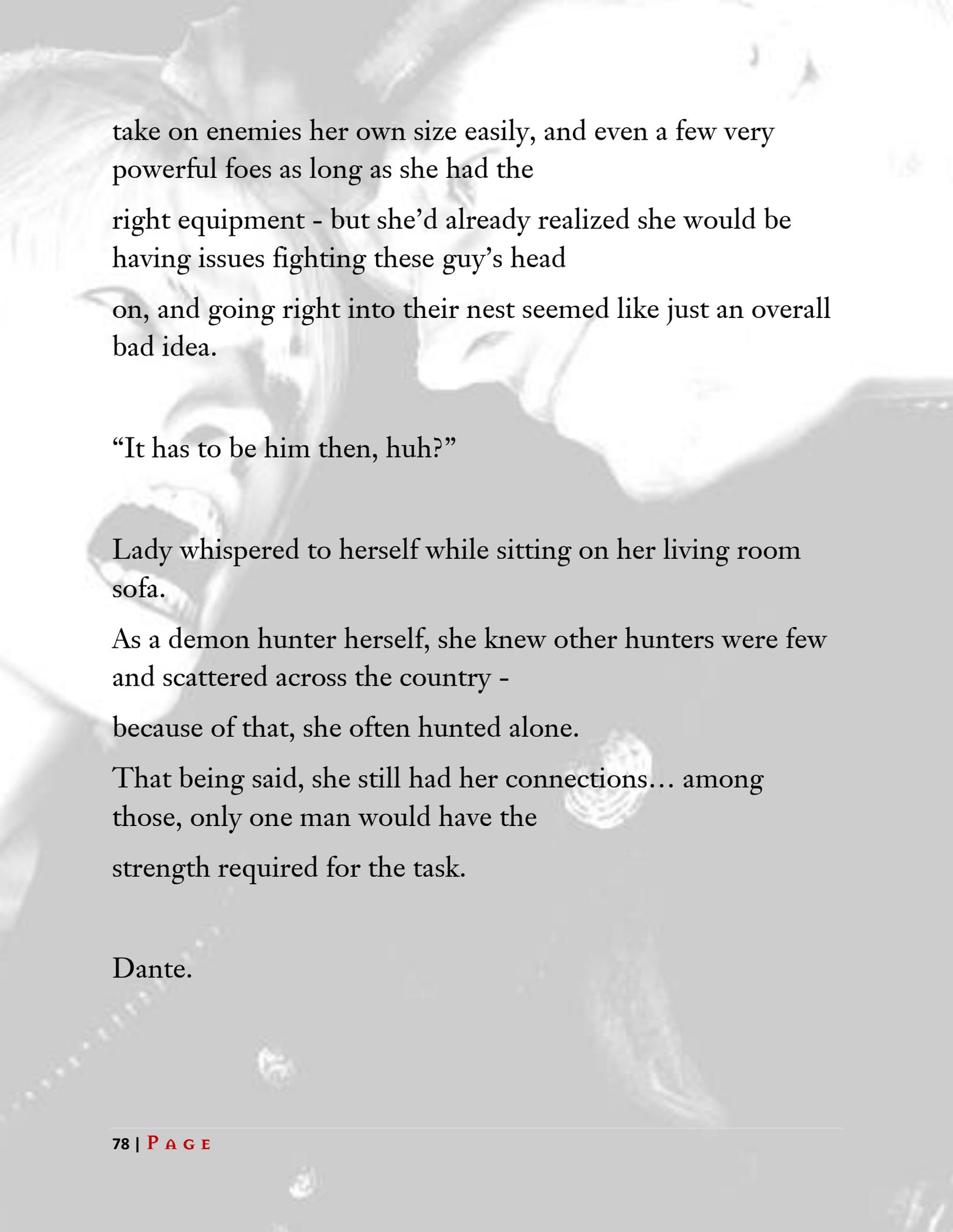
going straight to Fortuna would be too much of a gamble.

Not only would it be incredibly

expensive to travel all the way out there, but what if it proved too much to handle?

Fighting those knights really was an issue for Lady.

Lady fought mainly with firearms, and as a result, she wasn't the brawniest type. Yeah, she could



take on enemies her own size easily, and even a few very powerful foes as long as she had the right equipment - but she'd already realized she would be having issues fighting these guy's head on, and going right into their nest seemed like just an overall bad idea.

“It has to be him then, huh?”

Lady whispered to herself while sitting on her living room sofa.

As a demon hunter herself, she knew other hunters were few and scattered across the country -

because of that, she often hunted alone.

That being said, she still had her connections... among those, only one man would have the strength required for the task.

Dante.

That was the man's name... probably. She didn't know if it was his actual name, she'd never asked, but it was what he called himself, so it was the name she used. She'd heard some people call him Tony from time to time, but as far as she was aware that was just a pseudonym, an alias he'd used to hide his identity a long time ago. Well, he was a grown man, he was allowed a secret or two - she wouldn't pry.

The reason why Dante's strength was unparalleled were the circumstances of his birth - a man who was half human, half demon?

Honestly, it was kind of a funny thought to her.

From the first moment they'd met, Lady had already known that he wasn't human.

Damn, how long had it been since then?

“Ugh, what a mess of a situation.”

Lady sighed while getting on her bike.



She entered the seedy alleyway where she knew his shop was
- sure enough, when she looked up
she could see the “Devil May Cry” neon sign.

An unsuspecting client might look at that and assume he was
running an actual serious business
- she tried to think of it from that perspective, from time to
time.

She didn’t bother knocking, instead just pushing the large
wooden door straight open and barging
into his office.

There was Dante, stuffing his face with pizza with his feet
kicked comfortably on his desk.

“Pizza again?”



For as long as she'd known him, whenever Dante had nothing to do, he'd always be either drinking, eating pizza, or scarfing down ice cream sundaes like a little kid... truly, him and his unhealthy habits never changed.

“Something wrong with that?”

As Dante chuckled in Lady's general direction, his mouth still full of pizza, she looked at his side.

“Oh, hey Trish. You here too?”

Trish was sitting next to him, on the desk.

Lady had met her a few years after she'd met Dante - yet she still didn't know a lot about her. She

knew that she was Dante's ex-partner, and that she wasn't human.

Last she'd heard, she'd been busy traveling around the world or something.



“Can’t I be?”

Trish shrugged in response. She wasn’t as easy to lure into playful banter as Dante was - and every once in a while, she’d disappear for long periods of time, only returning to Devil May Cry when she pleased.

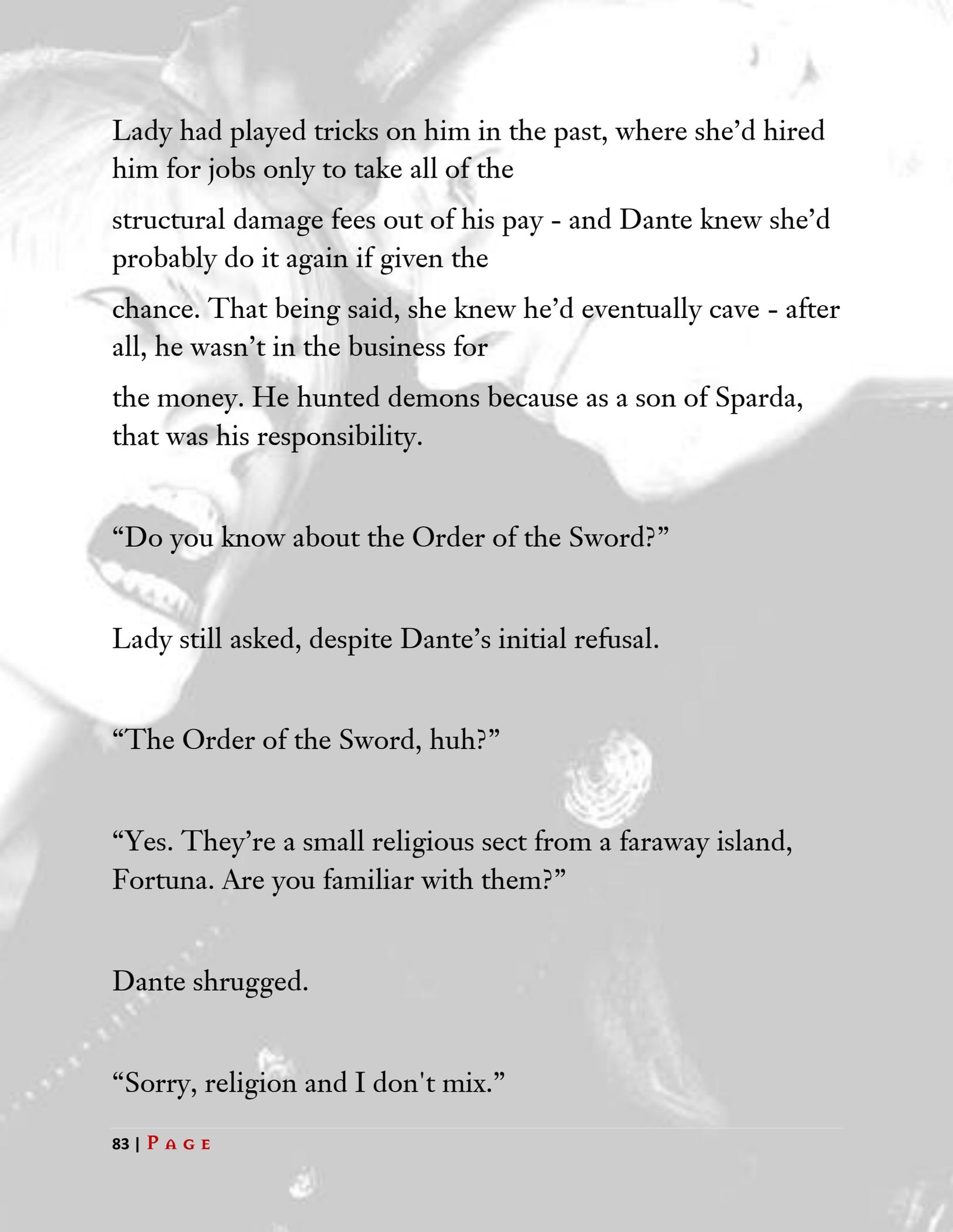
“I never said that.”

Lady replied. Honestly, it was more boring when Trish wasn’t there.

“I’ve got a job for you, Dante.”

Lady came up right in front of Dante before speaking - at her words, his face went a little sour.

“I’m not interested.”



Lady had played tricks on him in the past, where she'd hired him for jobs only to take all of the structural damage fees out of his pay - and Dante knew she'd probably do it again if given the chance. That being said, she knew he'd eventually cave - after all, he wasn't in the business for the money. He hunted demons because as a son of Sparda, that was his responsibility.

“Do you know about the Order of the Sword?”

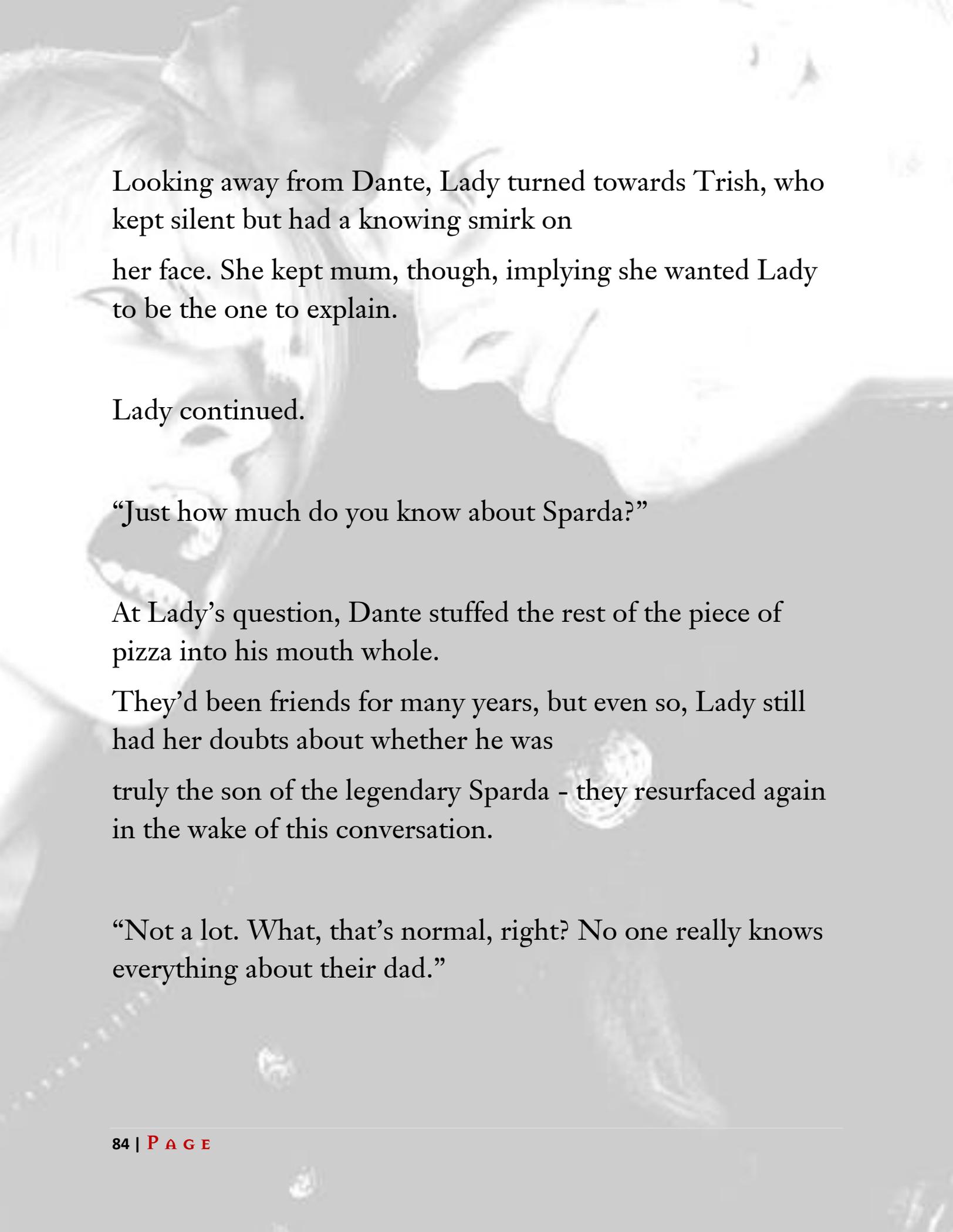
Lady still asked, despite Dante's initial refusal.

“The Order of the Sword, huh?”

“Yes. They're a small religious sect from a faraway island, Fortuna. Are you familiar with them?”

Dante shrugged.

“Sorry, religion and I don't mix.”



Looking away from Dante, Lady turned towards Trish, who kept silent but had a knowing smirk on her face. She kept mum, though, implying she wanted Lady to be the one to explain.

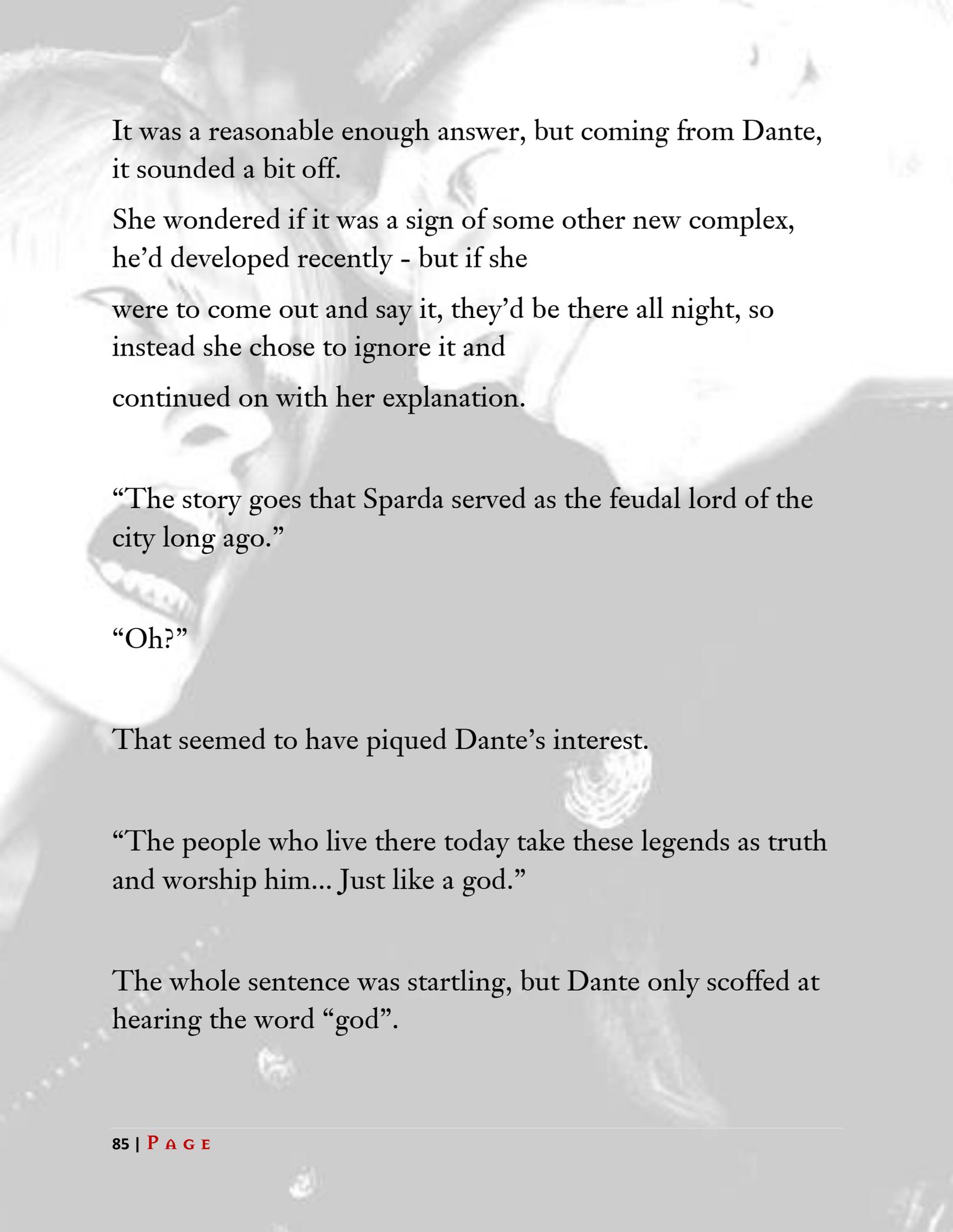
Lady continued.

“Just how much do you know about Sparda?”

At Lady’s question, Dante stuffed the rest of the piece of pizza into his mouth whole.

They’d been friends for many years, but even so, Lady still had her doubts about whether he was truly the son of the legendary Sparda - they resurfaced again in the wake of this conversation.

“Not a lot. What, that’s normal, right? No one really knows everything about their dad.”



It was a reasonable enough answer, but coming from Dante, it sounded a bit off.

She wondered if it was a sign of some other new complex, he'd developed recently - but if she were to come out and say it, they'd be there all night, so instead she chose to ignore it and continued on with her explanation.

“The story goes that Sparda served as the feudal lord of the city long ago.”

“Oh?”

That seemed to have piqued Dante's interest.

“The people who live there today take these legends as truth and worship him... Just like a god.”

The whole sentence was startling, but Dante only scoffed at hearing the word “god”.

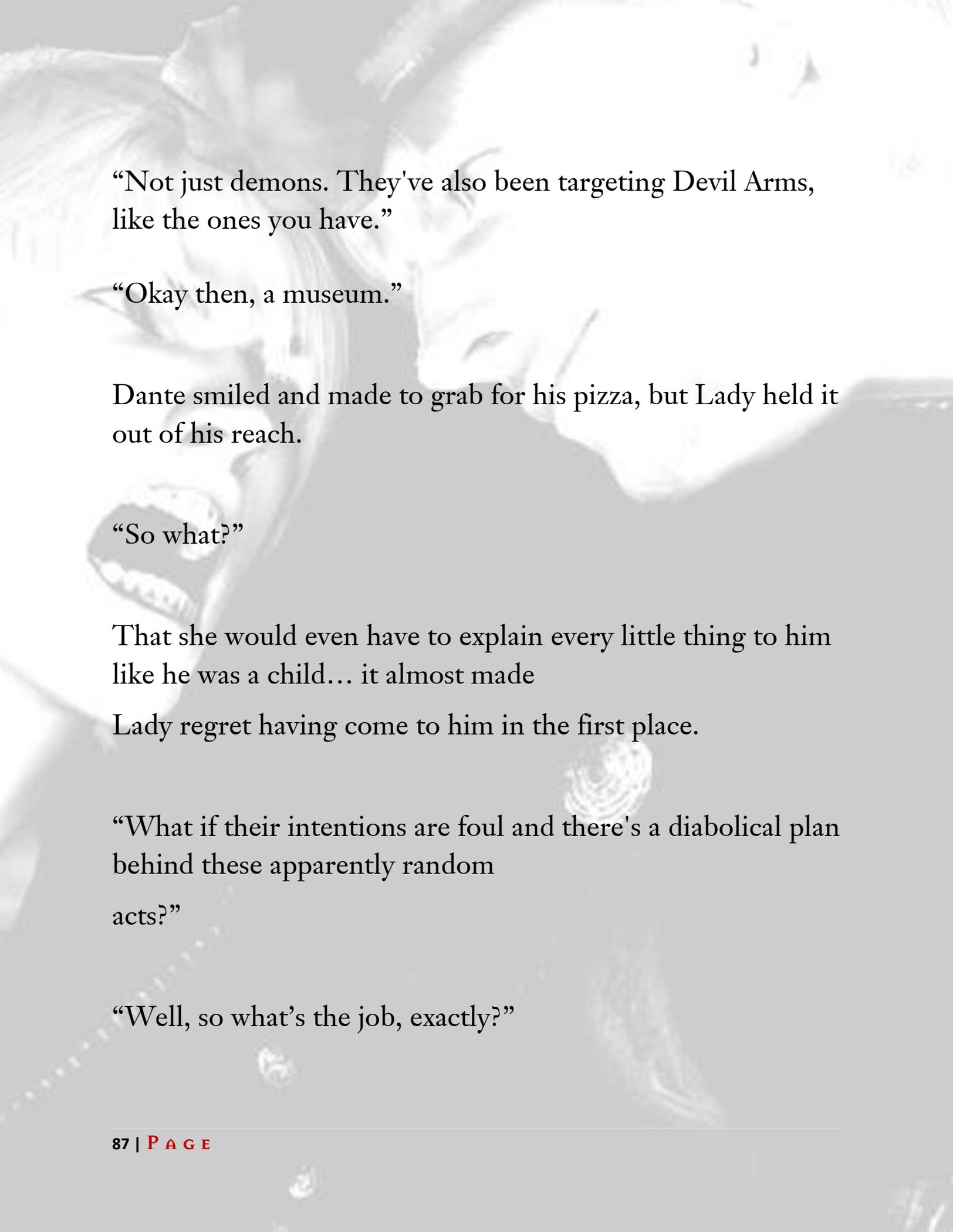
“They worship a demon as a god?”

Dante asked with nonchalance, but Lady could tell he was intrigued - as much as he might not want to be, Dante couldn't help but be curious about his father's past. She didn't really get it, but if he could also get some closure out of this whole mess, she'd be happy for him.

“Peaceful worship can't be condemned, but the real problem is the Order. Lately they've been running amok, catching demons and have even butted in on some of my jobs.”

“Maybe they're starting a zoo.”

Dante interrupted her before she could get to her actual point, which ticked her off a bit. Honestly, he could never let others finish talking before butting in - Lady grabbed the pizza out of his hands in her annoyance.



“Not just demons. They've also been targeting Devil Arms, like the ones you have.”

“Okay then, a museum.”

Dante smiled and made to grab for his pizza, but Lady held it out of his reach.

“So what?”

That she would even have to explain every little thing to him like he was a child... it almost made

Lady regret having come to him in the first place.

“What if their intentions are foul and there's a diabolical plan behind these apparently random acts?”

“Well, so what's the job, exactly?”



“These Order goons have already interfered with my business twice - I can’t work like this, I need you to deal with it.”

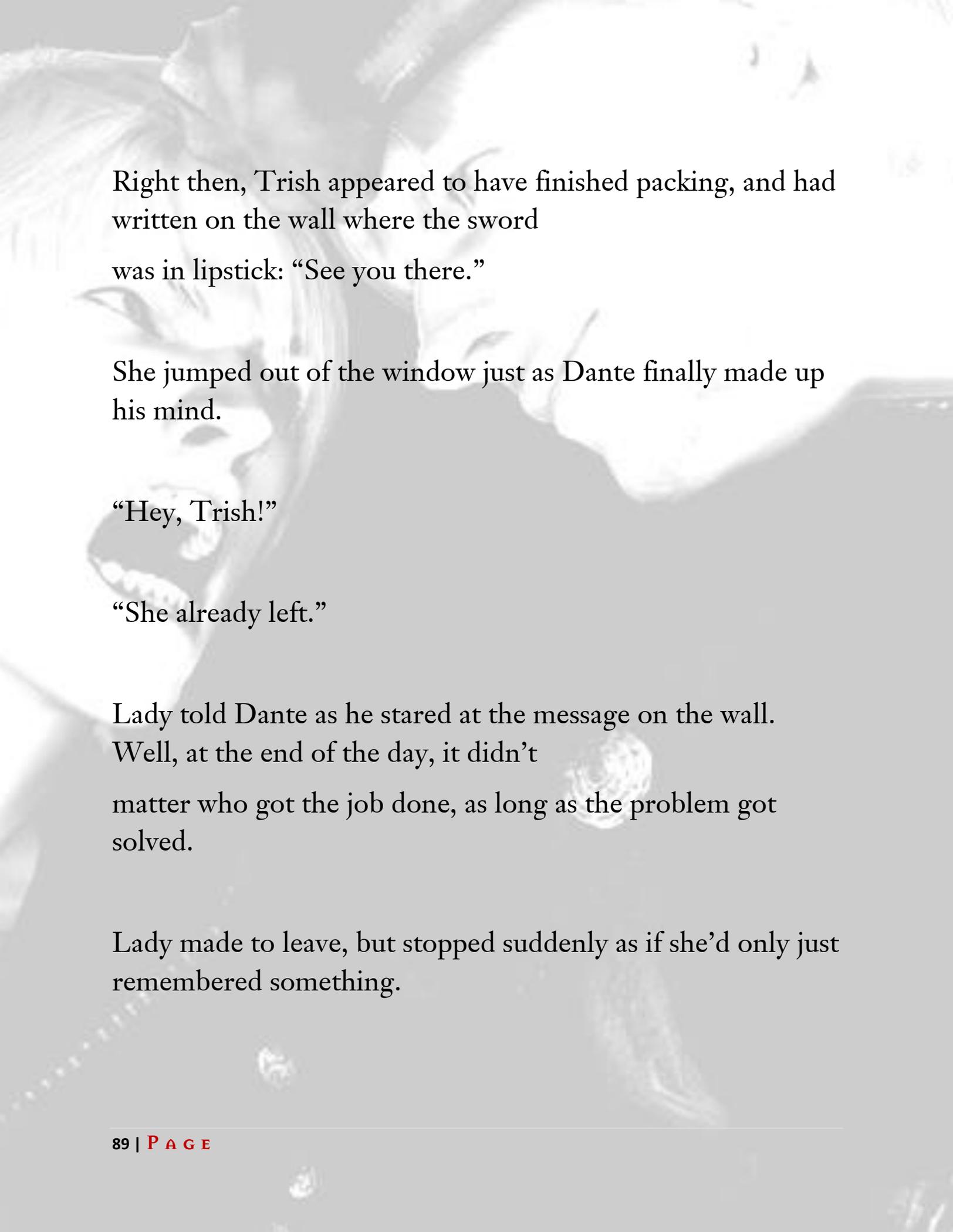
Lady returned Dante his pizza while he seemed to ponder her words.

Behind his back, Trish had gotten off the couch and was packing the huge sword that hung on the wall, as well as some various devil arms that he had lying around in the office - he didn’t seem to notice at all, and Lady didn’t bring his attention to it.

“There were some freaky armored knights, clearly not human, that seem to be doing the Order’s bidding. If anything, it could be a way to kill time?”

Once Lady was done talking, Dante scarfed down the rest of the pizza and finally replied.

“It has been too quiet, recently.”



Right then, Trish appeared to have finished packing, and had written on the wall where the sword was in lipstick: “See you there.”

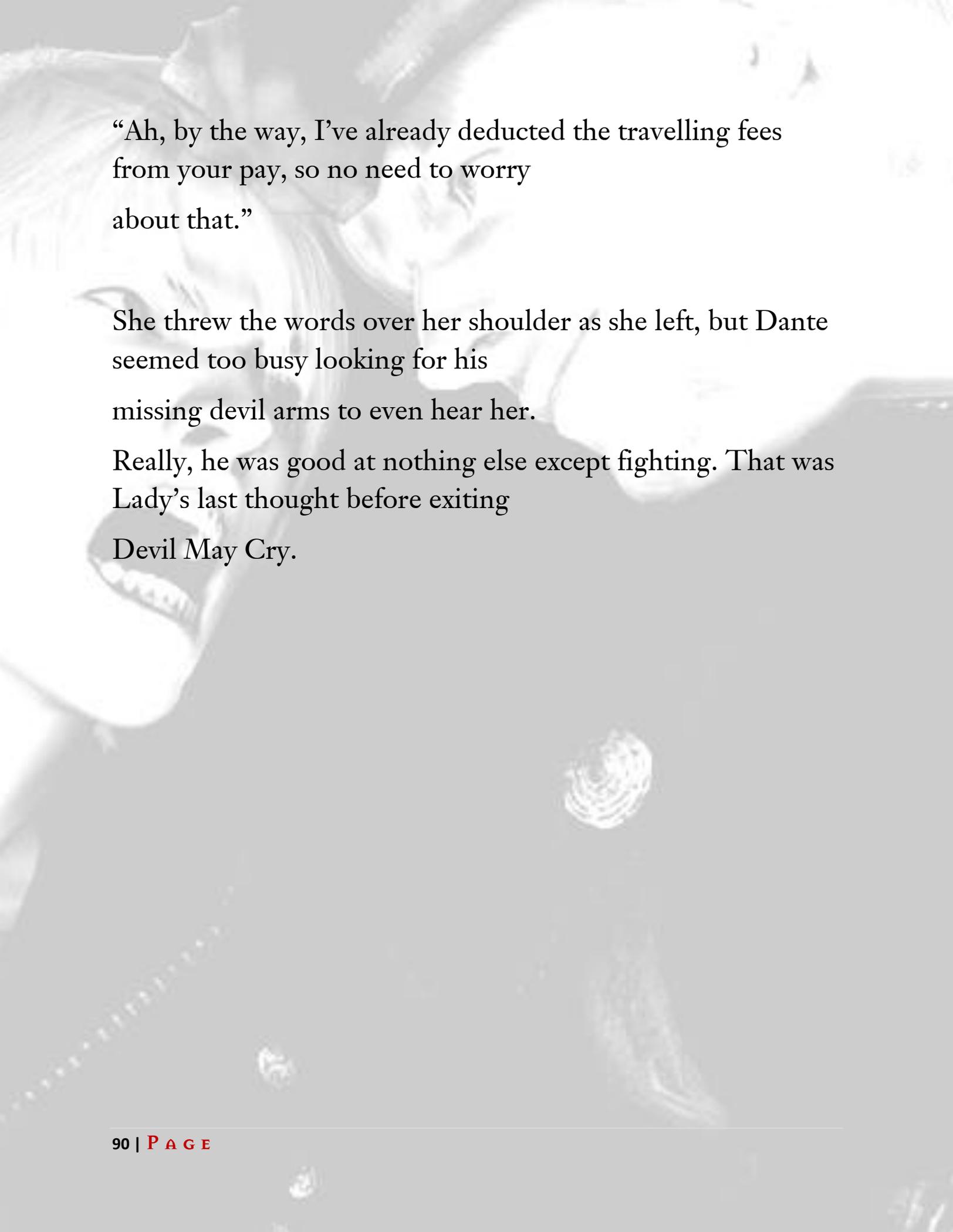
She jumped out of the window just as Dante finally made up his mind.

“Hey, Trish!”

“She already left.”

Lady told Dante as he stared at the message on the wall. Well, at the end of the day, it didn’t matter who got the job done, as long as the problem got solved.

Lady made to leave, but stopped suddenly as if she’d only just remembered something.



“Ah, by the way, I’ve already deducted the travelling fees from your pay, so no need to worry about that.”

She threw the words over her shoulder as she left, but Dante seemed too busy looking for his missing devil arms to even hear her.

Really, he was good at nothing else except fighting. That was Lady’s last thought before exiting Devil May Cry.



Agnus was in Fortuna's Opera House. He'd never been there to attend mass or other celebrations, before - still, he walked in like he was familiar with the place, stopped at a dead end corridor and pressed his finger against the wall - said wall immediately opened up to reveal a secret passageway.

Even among the Order, very few people knew of all the secret passages hidden away all over the island.

Agnus smiled as he began descending the stairway that had just appeared at his feet.

In truth, that passage had existed long before the Opera House itself - but it had been lost to time, buried under layers of dirt and sand for centuries.

A few years after the Opera House had been constructed, Sanctus himself had ordered Agnus to

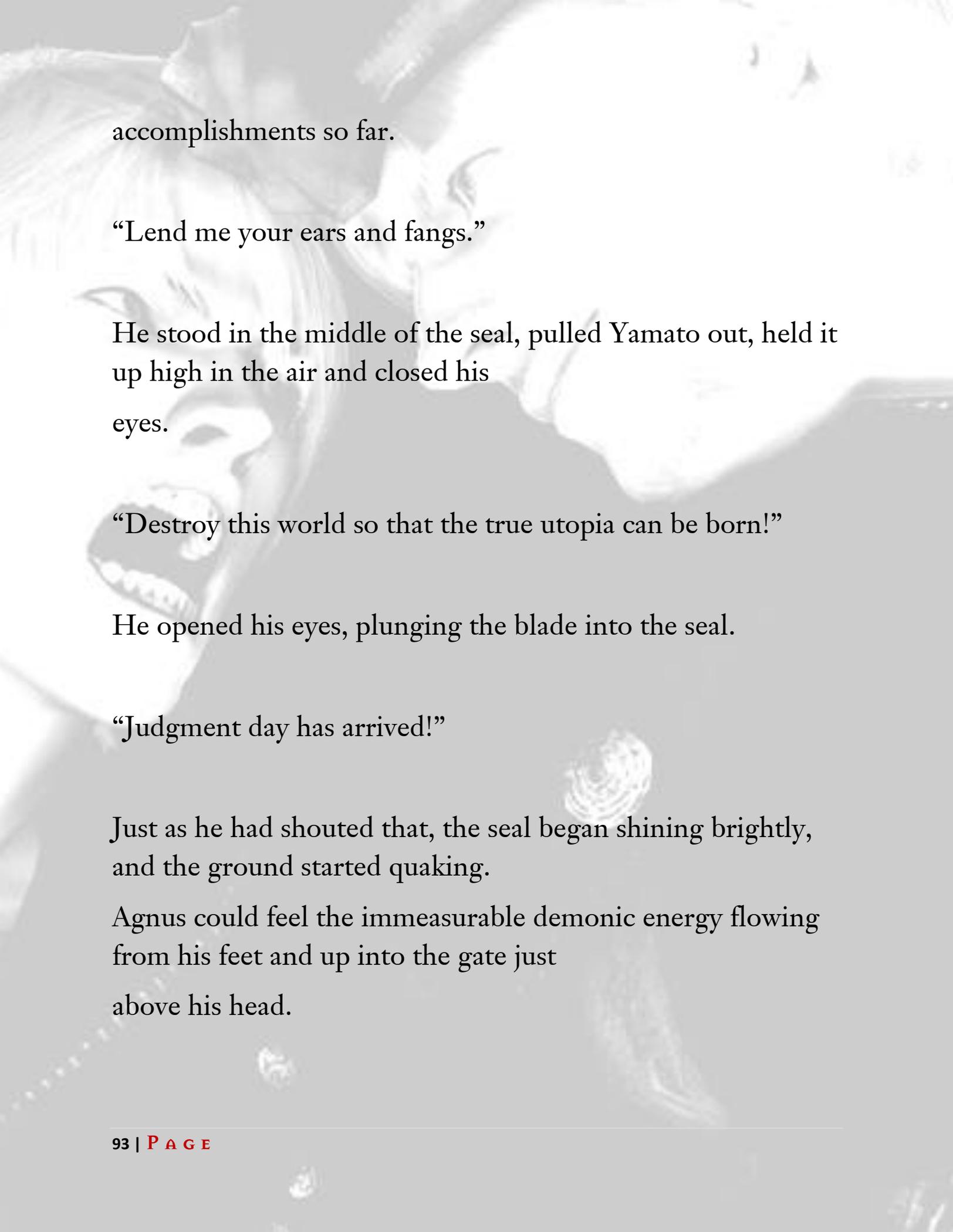
unearth it. He'd seen mention of it in many ancient documents, and pinpointed its location to be under the Opera House - sure enough, their excavation proved it true.

That passage led directly underneath the Hellgate, right in the dead center of town - the place where the gate's lock lay.

Agnus walked carefully through the narrow corridor, feeling a little breathless. He'd been there many times, to research and investigate, yet he could never quite get used to the oppressive air the place held.

“Let's do this.”

Agnus told himself as he held Yamato, both as an encouragement to himself to get through the sense of unease that being there brought him, and as a way to cheer himself for his



accomplishments so far.

“Lend me your ears and fangs.”

He stood in the middle of the seal, pulled Yamato out, held it up high in the air and closed his eyes.

“Destroy this world so that the true utopia can be born!”

He opened his eyes, plunging the blade into the seal.

“Judgment day has arrived!”

Just as he had shouted that, the seal began shining brightly, and the ground started quaking.

Agnus could feel the immeasurable demonic energy flowing from his feet and up into the gate just above his head.

“Gaze upon the culmination of my research, hell itself unleashed! It shall surpass the world as it was over two thousand years ago... chaos reborn!”

He shouted into the void.

Yamato could unlock the seal to the underworld, but it didn't need Agnus in order to do so. As

long as someone could wield it, they could do it - Agnus' excitement wasn't only due to the main

gate unlocking. The three smaller hellgates that Agnus had built in strategic areas of Fortuna were

meant to summon demons for his research, yes, but that wasn't their only purpose - they had

been built in the places where demonic energy was most concentrated, and when the gate was

active, it further enhanced said demonic activity - thus all of Fortuna's demonic energy would be

connected as if through a spiderweb.

That day, the main Hellgate would be unleashed - by itself, it would not happen all at once, but

gradually over time, a side effect of the two worlds' opposing natures. Demonic energy could only flow into the human world slowly until it reached the necessary concentration to properly connect it to the underworld, and a massive passage like the Hellgate would require even more of that.

Left to its own devices, it could take centuries for it to open completely - Agnus knew that all too well.

But if he had already opened smaller hellgates all throughout the island, sharply increasing the concentration of demonic energy, well... it could be opened right away. That was the accomplishment that Agnus was so proud of.

“Come, demons!”

He laughed hysterically.



Dante looked up to stare at the large stone slab - a Hellgate connected straight to the underworld.

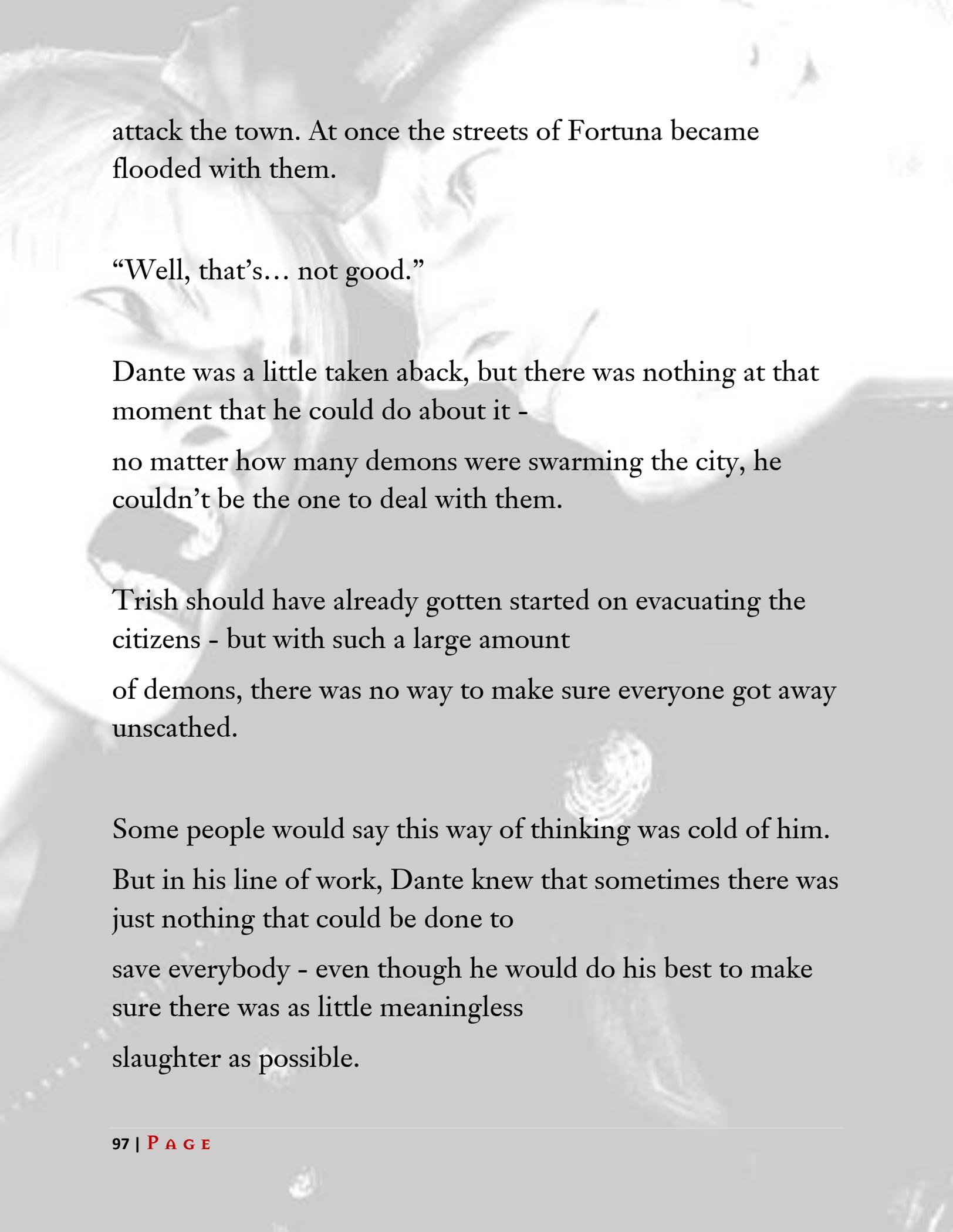
“Damn, I’m too late.”

As he muttered to himself, the Hellgate started shining with otherworldly light, but Dante didn’t seem fascinated by it - after all, it was something he’d already seen happen many times.

Though there was something about the spectacle in front of him that caught Dante’s attention -

the sheer number of demons that appeared to emerge from the slab, so many that they couldn’t

be distinguished with the naked eye, and instead looked more like a chaotic tsunami ready to



attack the town. At once the streets of Fortuna became flooded with them.

“Well, that’s... not good.”

Dante was a little taken aback, but there was nothing at that moment that he could do about it -

no matter how many demons were swarming the city, he couldn’t be the one to deal with them.

Trish should have already gotten started on evacuating the citizens - but with such a large amount

of demons, there was no way to make sure everyone got away unscathed.

Some people would say this way of thinking was cold of him.

But in his line of work, Dante knew that sometimes there was just nothing that could be done to

save everybody - even though he would do his best to make sure there was as little meaningless

slaughter as possible.

That's why Dante was a demon hunter in the first place, after all - because he just couldn't stand cruel demons who killed innocents indiscriminately.

Having said that, Dante still picked up his pace.



Something in the general direction of the gate made a loud bang, and he couldn't help but glance over - to see the savior had appeared above the Hellgate. Seemed like after it left HQ it had been laying low, waiting for the gate to open to show itself to the public.

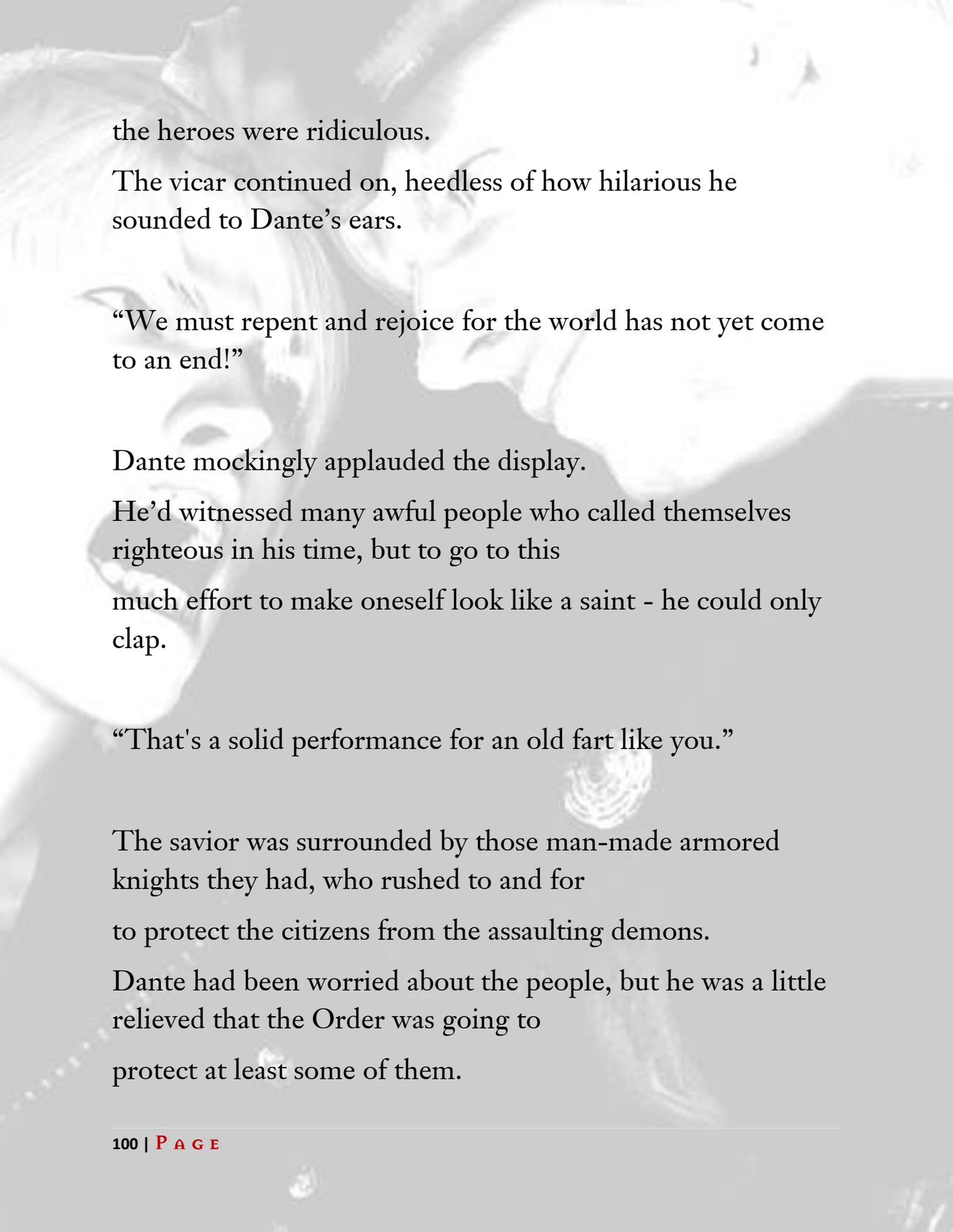
Something shone brightly from the savior's forehead, a beam of light that caught the demons in its path and reduced them to nothing.

The vicar stood tall on the savior's head, looking down at the streets.

“Do not fear! Our Savior has come for us, to deliver us salvation!”

The sound carried all the way from up there, though Sanctus' booming voice was a bit muffled by the distance Dante could hear it loud and clear.

He snorted - the whole concept of them summoning all those demons just to kill them to look like



the heroes were ridiculous.

The vicar continued on, heedless of how hilarious he sounded to Dante's ears.

“We must repent and rejoice for the world has not yet come to an end!”

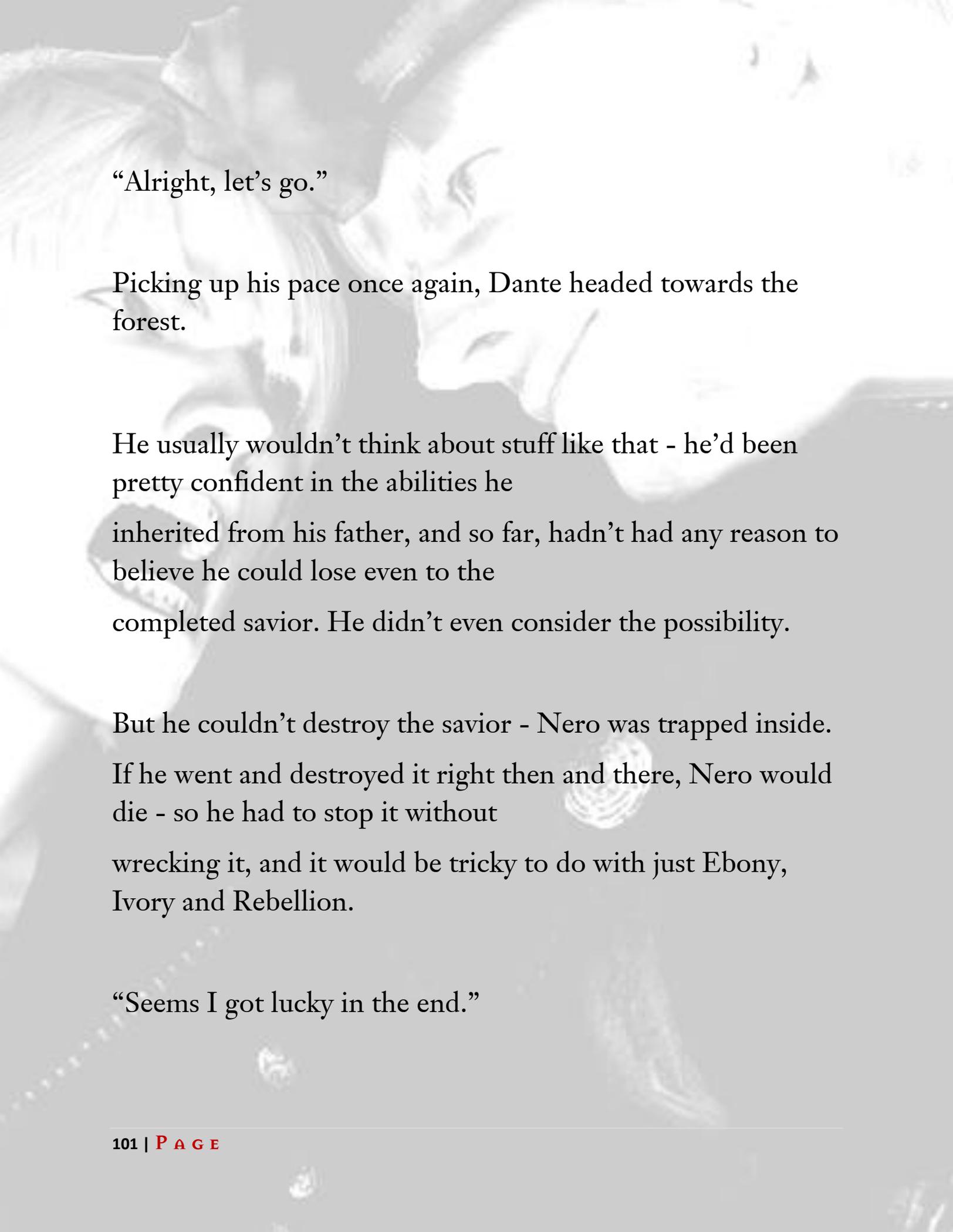
Dante mockingly applauded the display.

He'd witnessed many awful people who called themselves righteous in his time, but to go to this much effort to make oneself look like a saint - he could only clap.

“That's a solid performance for an old fart like you.”

The savior was surrounded by those man-made armored knights they had, who rushed to and for to protect the citizens from the assaulting demons.

Dante had been worried about the people, but he was a little relieved that the Order was going to protect at least some of them.



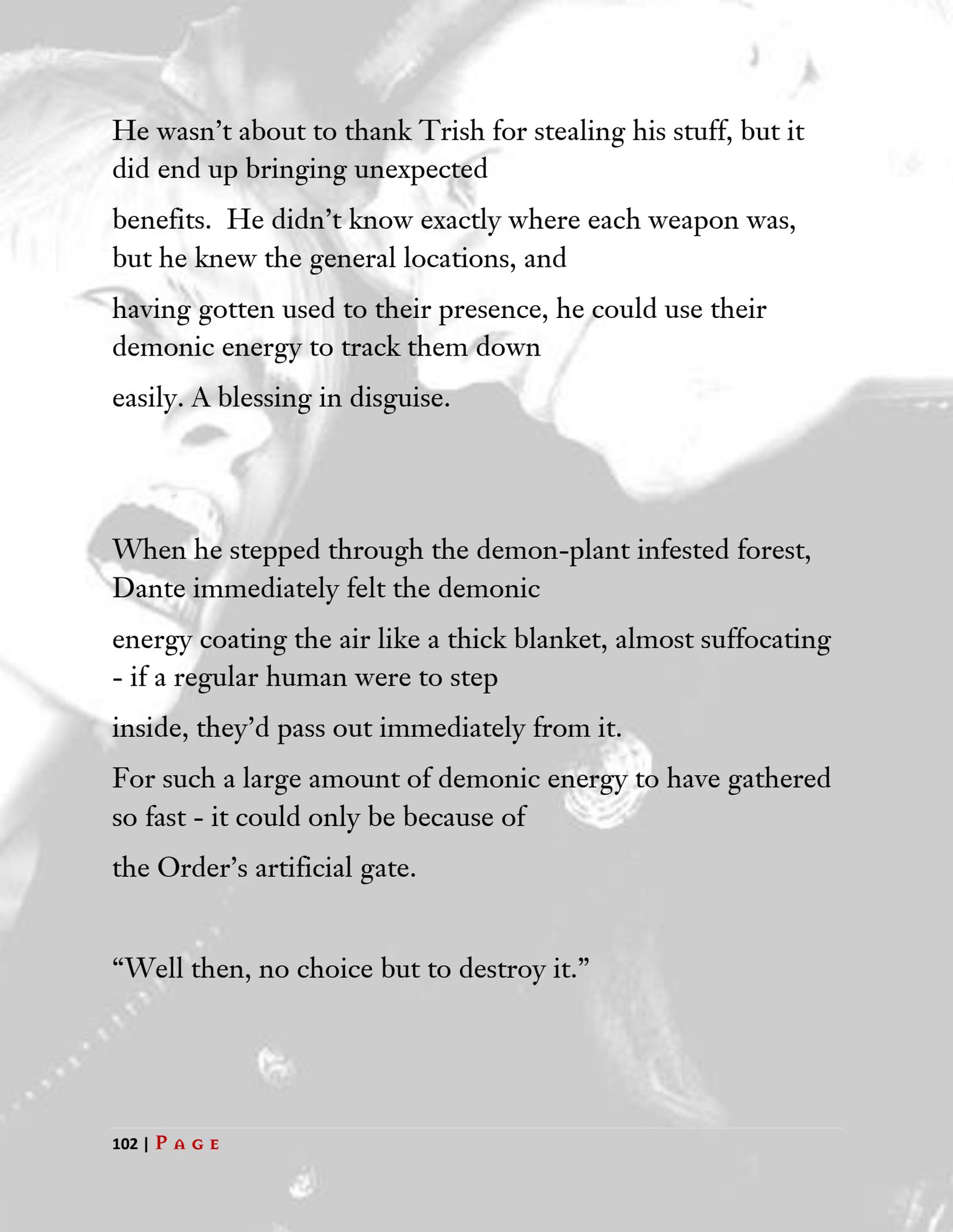
“Alright, let’s go.”

Picking up his pace once again, Dante headed towards the forest.

He usually wouldn’t think about stuff like that - he’d been pretty confident in the abilities he inherited from his father, and so far, hadn’t had any reason to believe he could lose even to the completed savior. He didn’t even consider the possibility.

But he couldn’t destroy the savior - Nero was trapped inside. If he went and destroyed it right then and there, Nero would die - so he had to stop it without wrecking it, and it would be tricky to do with just Ebony, Ivory and Rebellion.

“Seems I got lucky in the end.”



He wasn't about to thank Trish for stealing his stuff, but it did end up bringing unexpected benefits. He didn't know exactly where each weapon was, but he knew the general locations, and having gotten used to their presence, he could use their demonic energy to track them down easily. A blessing in disguise.

When he stepped through the demon-plant infested forest, Dante immediately felt the demonic energy coating the air like a thick blanket, almost suffocating - if a regular human were to step inside, they'd pass out immediately from it. For such a large amount of demonic energy to have gathered so fast - it could only be because of the Order's artificial gate.

“Well then, no choice but to destroy it.”

Dante whispered as he walked forwards - the plan was to destroy the hellgates, get his devil arms back, and go back to the savior.

The forest was swarmed with demons, but they were still nothing really to worry about - honestly,

Dante was a bit disappointed. What with the actual gate opening he had hoped to meet some foes he might have a bit of a challenge going against, yet so far it seemed like only the lesser

devils had decided to come out and play - but just as he thought that, he stopped in his tracks.

Right in the middle of the forest, above the artificial gate, was a huge looking demon - it flew

around in the air, scattering countless seed-shaped things across the ground... probably the

cause of the drastic change in the forest.

He chuckled as he ran in the direction of the falling seeds.

“Anyone ever tell you that littering is bad?”

He kicked one of the seeds that hadn't landed yet, sending it flying against another seed.

Dante kept running around, jumping and kicking the all the seeds he could get to, like he'd been

playing football with them - many smashed against tree trunks or crashed into one another, and

all those who didn't all flew in the same direction -

The dragon-shaped demon finally appeared to notice, stopped in midair and opened its huge

mouth to reveal what looked like a woman's torso - its actual body.

“What in the- “

As soon as its maw opened, the seeds that were still flying through the air all pelted her in the

face - Dante laughed as he saw it happen.

“Did you bite your tongue? Sorry, I couldn't hear you just now.”



The devil screeched in Dante's face.

“How rude! How dare you speak like that to me, the master of this forest!”

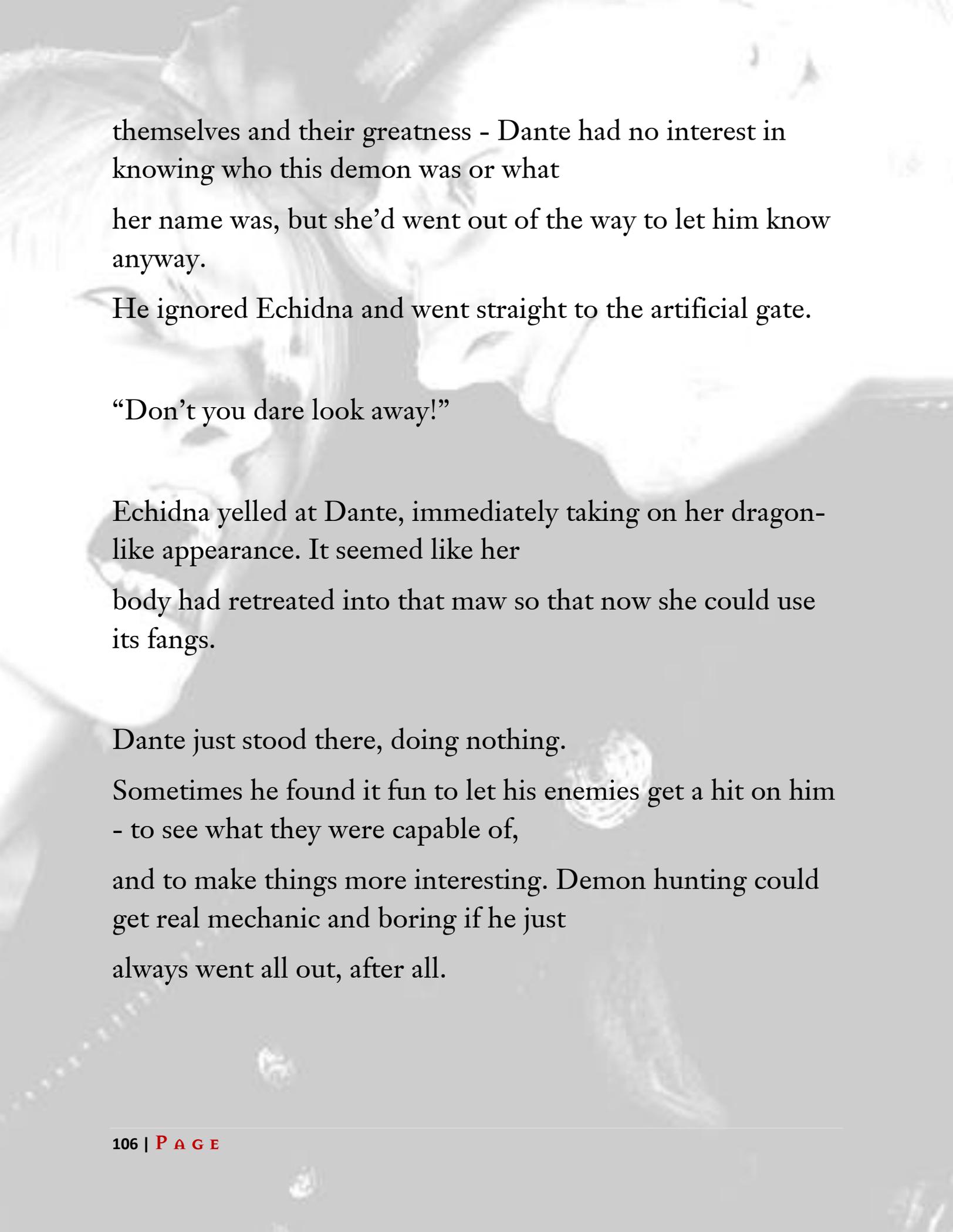
Dante shrugged in response.

“I don't know about that. Far as I know it's humans who own this forest, you can't just up and claim it as your own.”

The furious demon sneered at Dante.

“You insolent creature. The moment my children embraced this forest and became one with it, it belonged to me! I, the great Echidna!”

Demons who could speak human language were usually very flashy and eager to announce



themselves and their greatness - Dante had no interest in knowing who this demon was or what her name was, but she'd went out of the way to let him know anyway.

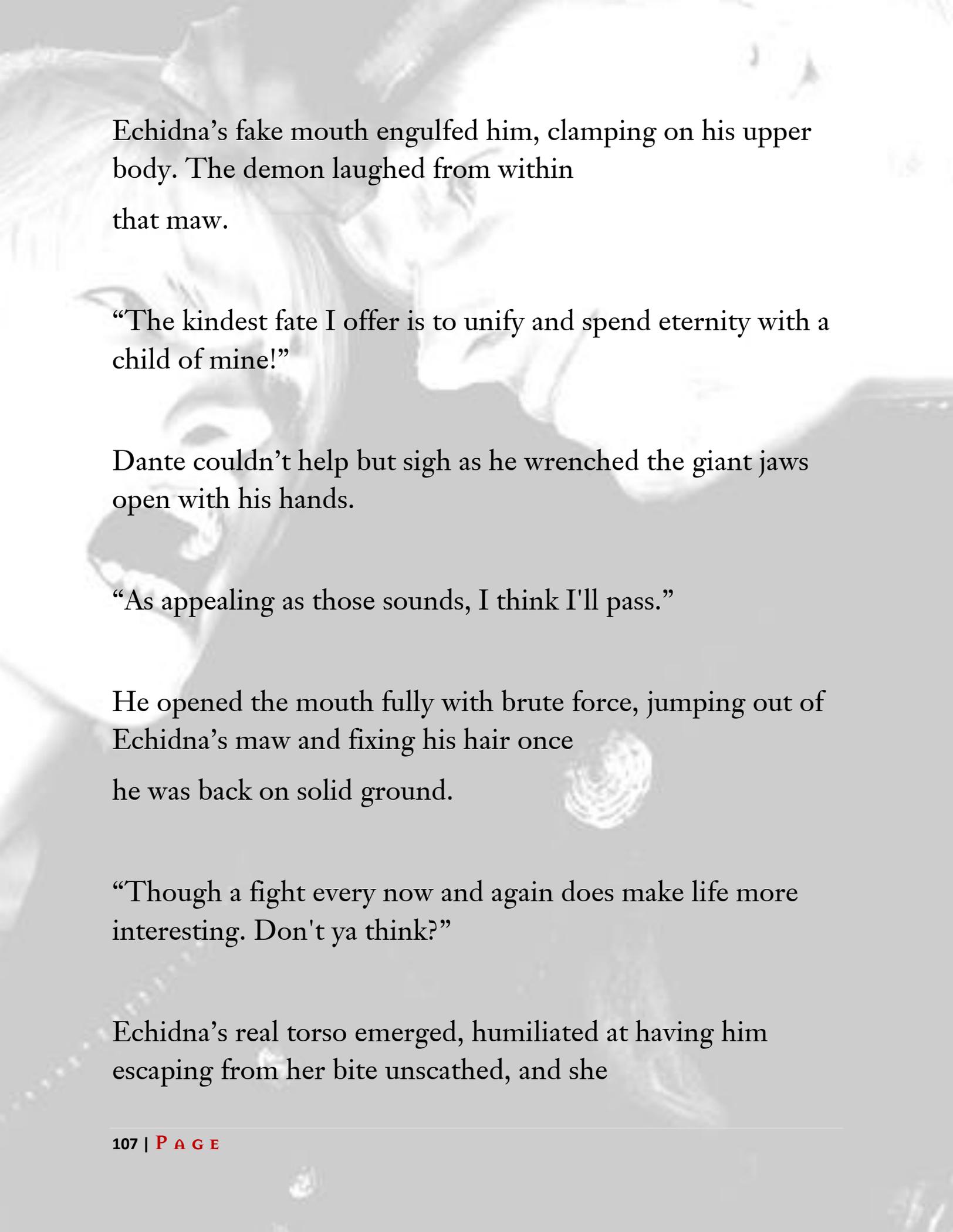
He ignored Echidna and went straight to the artificial gate.

“Don't you dare look away!”

Echidna yelled at Dante, immediately taking on her dragon-like appearance. It seemed like her body had retreated into that maw so that now she could use its fangs.

Dante just stood there, doing nothing.

Sometimes he found it fun to let his enemies get a hit on him - to see what they were capable of, and to make things more interesting. Demon hunting could get real mechanic and boring if he just always went all out, after all.



Echidna's fake mouth engulfed him, clamping on his upper body. The demon laughed from within that maw.

“The kindest fate I offer is to unify and spend eternity with a child of mine!”

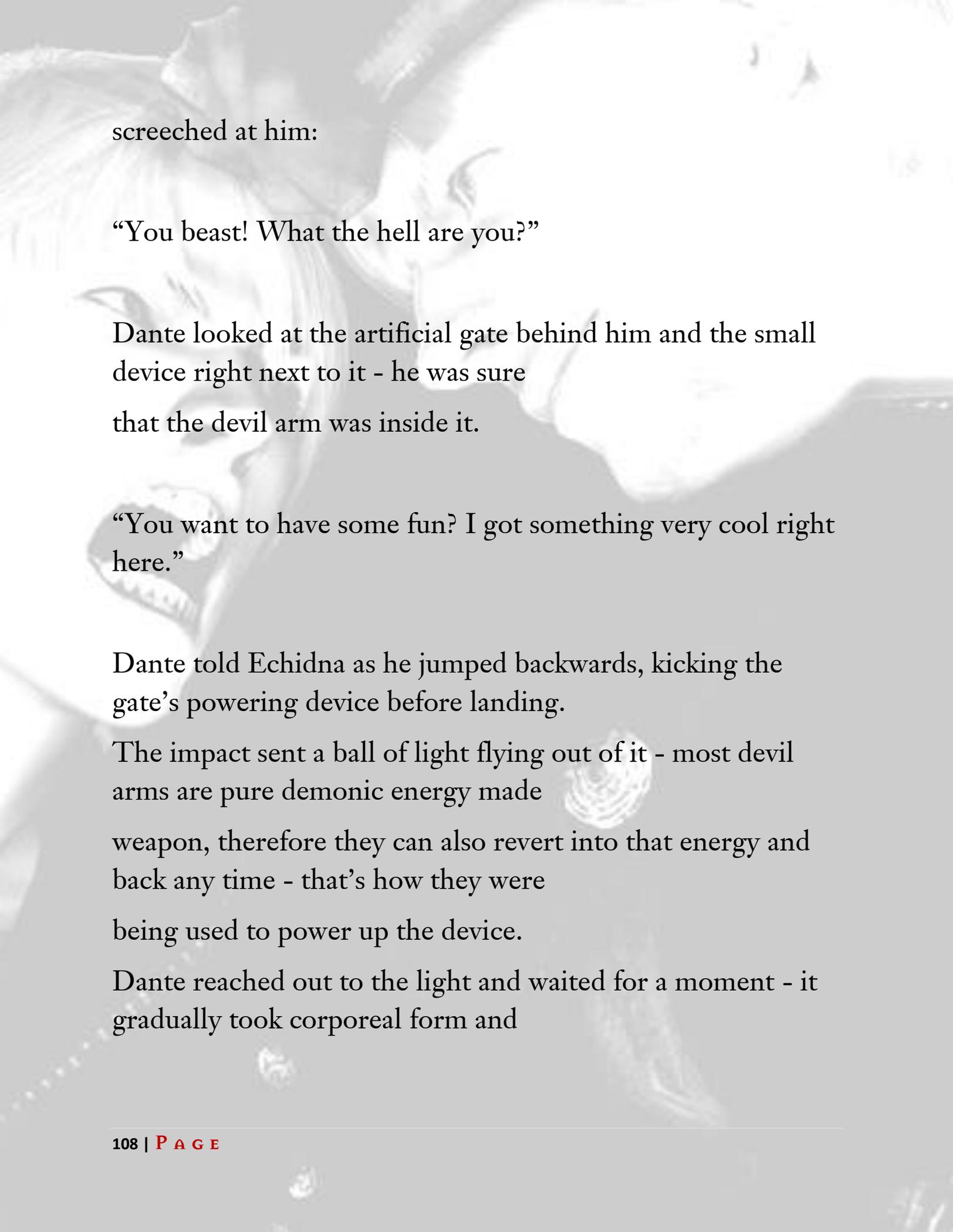
Dante couldn't help but sigh as he wrenched the giant jaws open with his hands.

“As appealing as those sounds, I think I'll pass.”

He opened the mouth fully with brute force, jumping out of Echidna's maw and fixing his hair once he was back on solid ground.

“Though a fight every now and again does make life more interesting. Don't ya think?”

Echidna's real torso emerged, humiliated at having him escaping from her bite unscathed, and she



screached at him:

“You beast! What the hell are you?”

Dante looked at the artificial gate behind him and the small device right next to it - he was sure that the devil arm was inside it.

“You want to have some fun? I got something very cool right here.”

Dante told Echidna as he jumped backwards, kicking the gate’s powering device before landing.

The impact sent a ball of light flying out of it - most devil arms are pure demonic energy made weapon, therefore they can also revert into that energy and back any time - that’s how they were being used to power up the device.

Dante reached out to the light and waited for a moment - it gradually took corporeal form and

landed in his hand, responding to his own demonic energy to resume its previous shape.

“Alright, which one is this one?”

Dante had no idea which devil arm went into which gate, but that didn't really matter, any one of them could be used against Echidna.

He smirked as he saw the shape it had taken - it would surely prove interesting to use.

The demonic energy unfolded to cover Dante's body, though calling this one a weapon, strictly, might be a bit of a stretch:

Shock Steel Gilgamesh.

The demonic metal had hardened after melding with Dante's own body, its purpose to give its wearer's hits extra impact. Trish had been the one to explain the process to him, but truthfully, he

didn't really give a damn how exactly it worked, as long as it did.

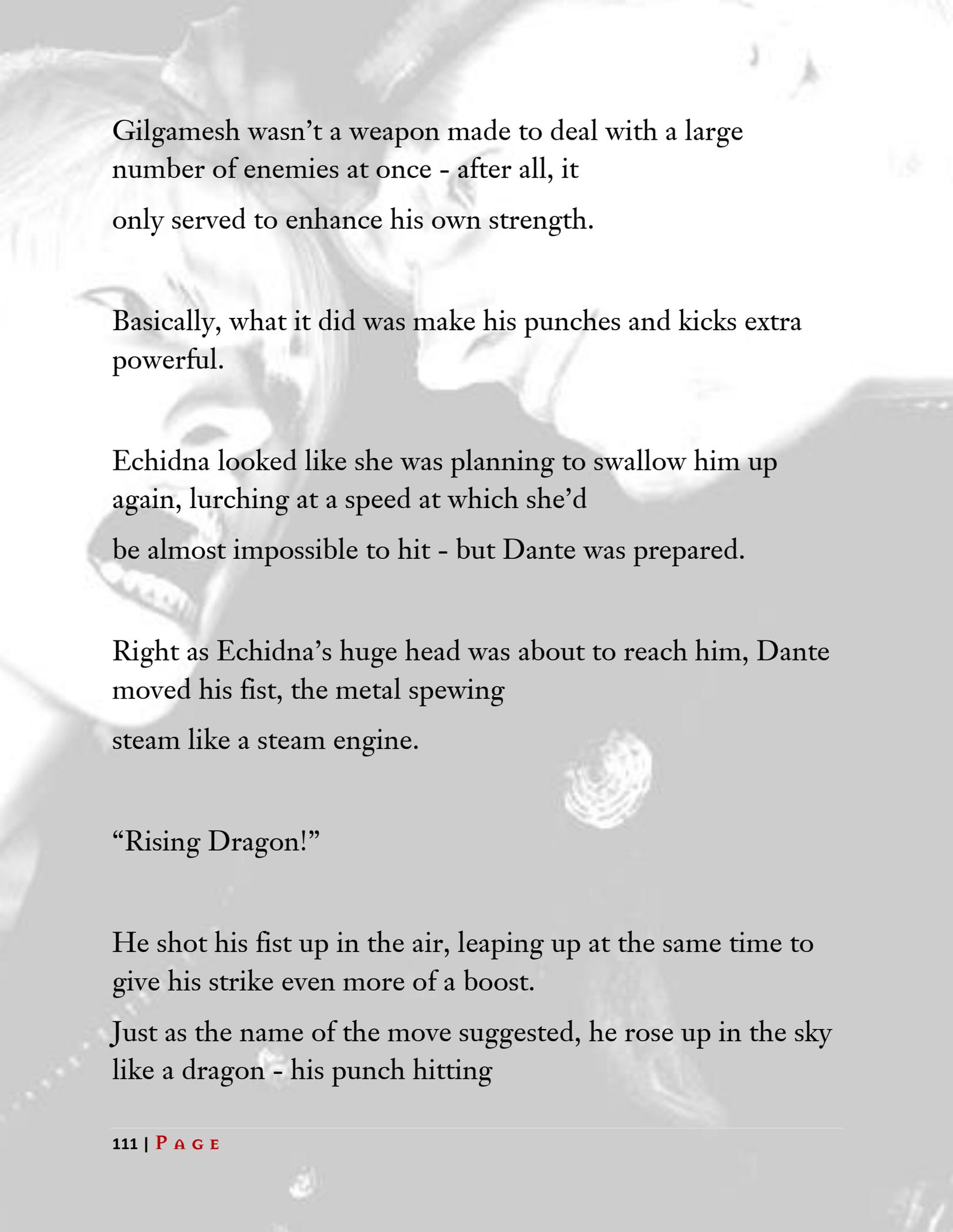
Gilgamesh had taken on a slightly armor like appearance, wrapping Dante's limbs and back - it had morphed into this shape according to Dante's own will. It was the shape which he had found, after much experimentation with the devil arm, worked best to make the most of its abilities.

“Alright, are you feeling it?”

Echidna didn't respond to his jabs, instead just rising into the air to slam into him at top speed.

Dante stood his ground, concentrating into a battle stance with his right fist ready. The metallic claw made a noise like an engine roar - Gilgamesh was charging up for impact.

“Isn't it a beauty?”



Gilgamesh wasn't a weapon made to deal with a large number of enemies at once - after all, it only served to enhance his own strength.

Basically, what it did was make his punches and kicks extra powerful.

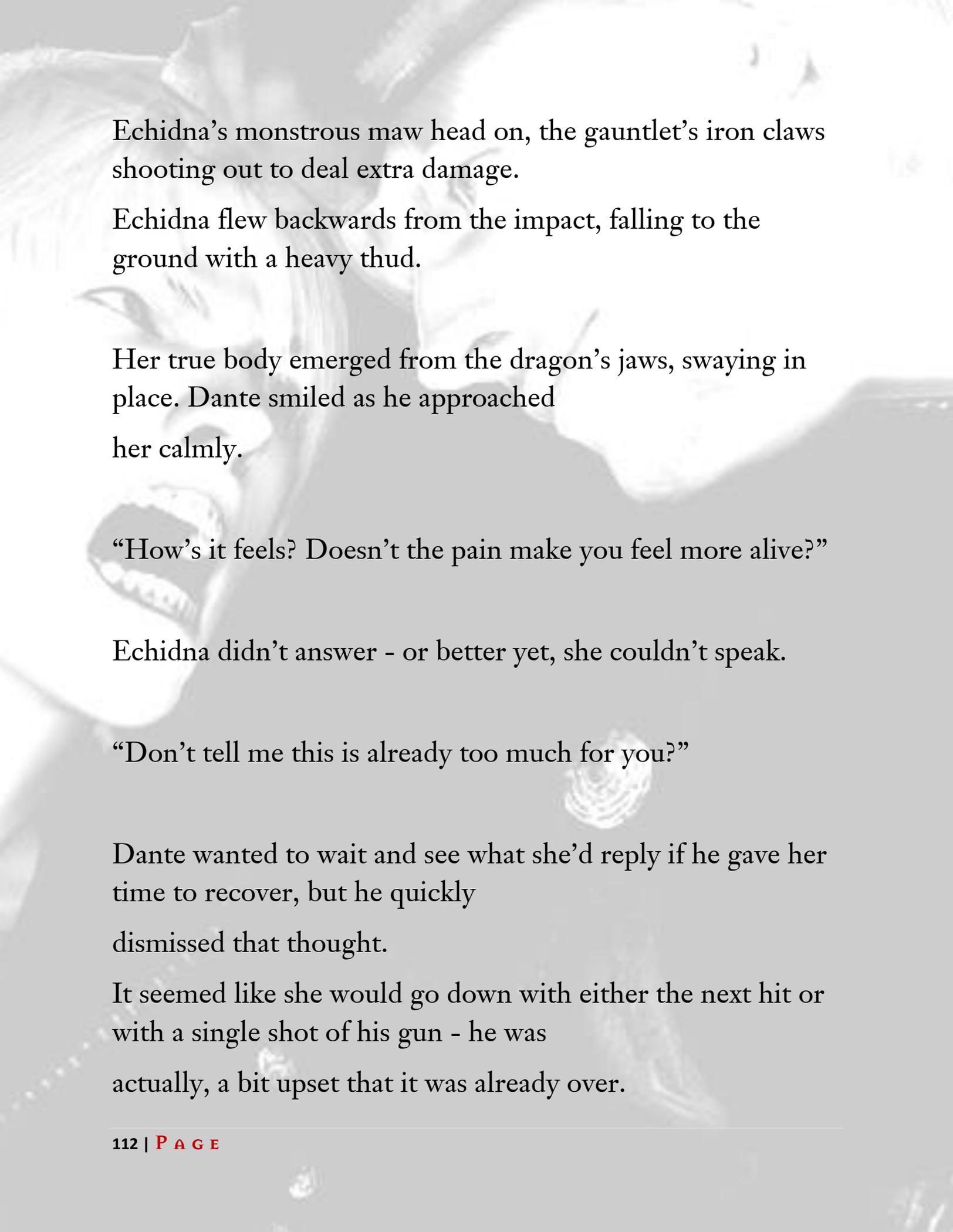
Echidna looked like she was planning to swallow him up again, lurching at a speed at which she'd be almost impossible to hit - but Dante was prepared.

Right as Echidna's huge head was about to reach him, Dante moved his fist, the metal spewing steam like a steam engine.

“Rising Dragon!”

He shot his fist up in the air, leaping up at the same time to give his strike even more of a boost.

Just as the name of the move suggested, he rose up in the sky like a dragon - his punch hitting



Echidna's monstrous maw head on, the gauntlet's iron claws shooting out to deal extra damage.

Echidna flew backwards from the impact, falling to the ground with a heavy thud.

Her true body emerged from the dragon's jaws, swaying in place. Dante smiled as he approached her calmly.

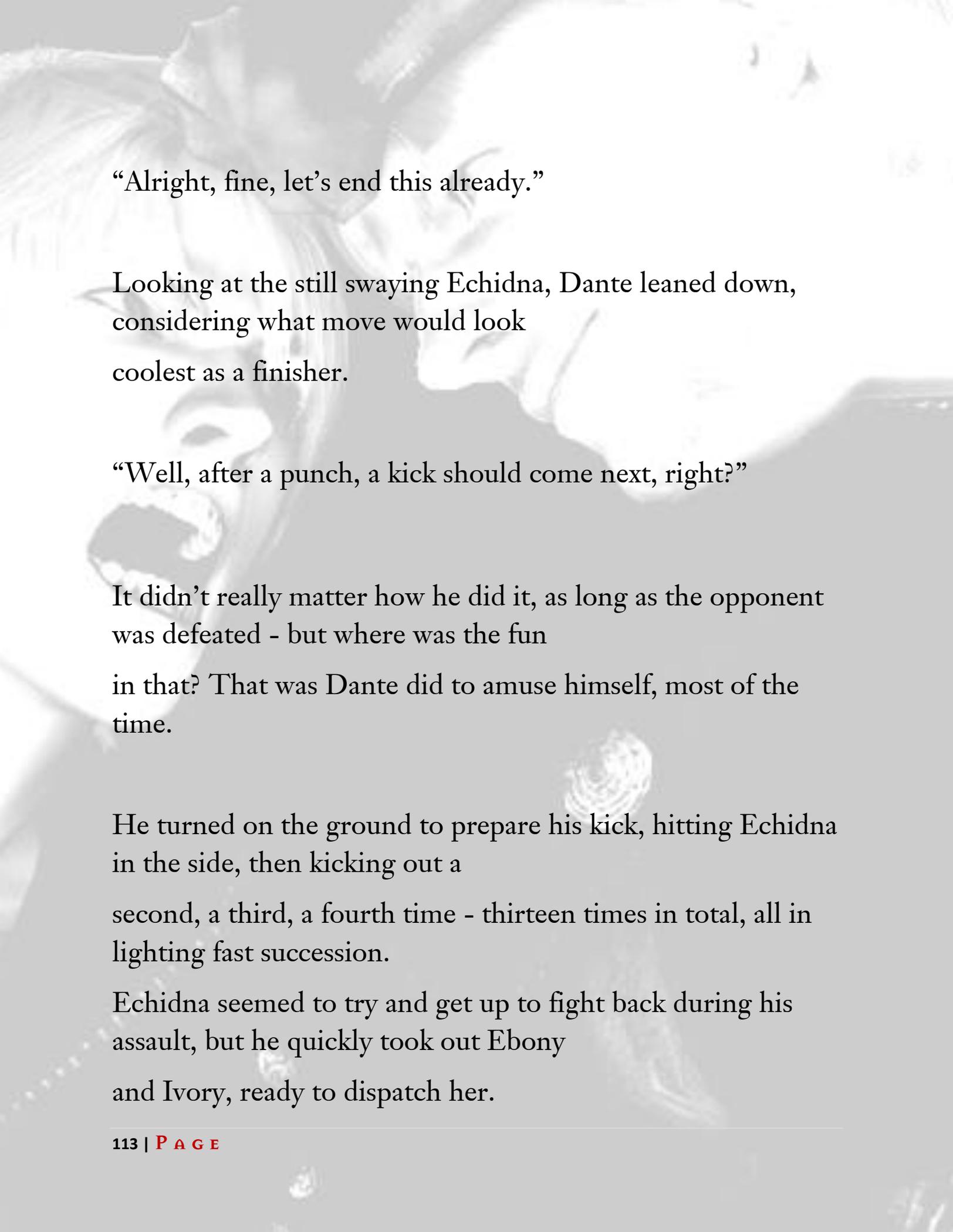
“How's it feels? Doesn't the pain make you feel more alive?”

Echidna didn't answer - or better yet, she couldn't speak.

“Don't tell me this is already too much for you?”

Dante wanted to wait and see what she'd reply if he gave her time to recover, but he quickly dismissed that thought.

It seemed like she would go down with either the next hit or with a single shot of his gun - he was actually, a bit upset that it was already over.



“Alright, fine, let’s end this already.”

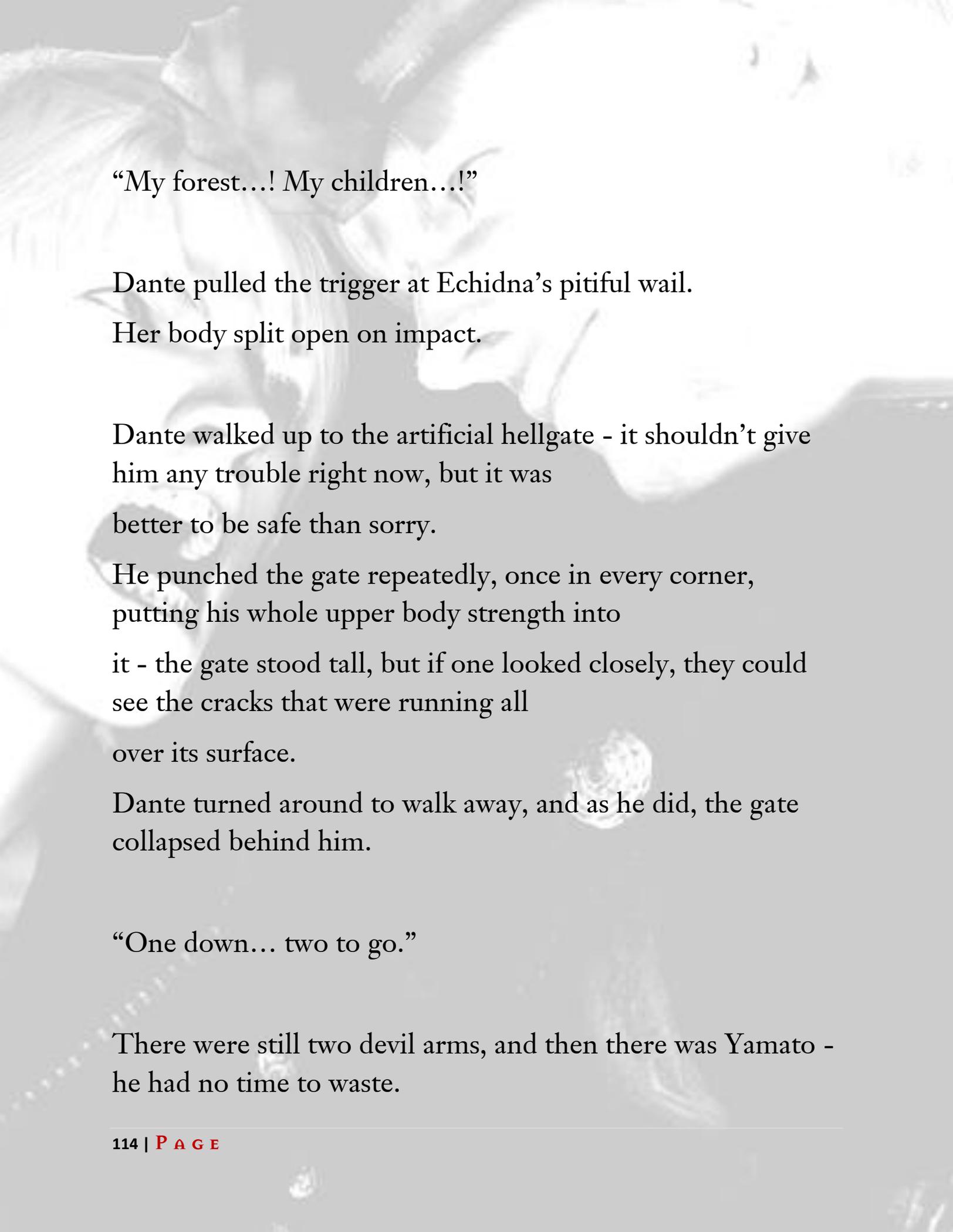
Looking at the still swaying Echidna, Dante leaned down, considering what move would look coolest as a finisher.

“Well, after a punch, a kick should come next, right?”

It didn’t really matter how he did it, as long as the opponent was defeated - but where was the fun in that? That was Dante did to amuse himself, most of the time.

He turned on the ground to prepare his kick, hitting Echidna in the side, then kicking out a second, a third, a fourth time - thirteen times in total, all in lightning fast succession.

Echidna seemed to try and get up to fight back during his assault, but he quickly took out Ebony and Ivory, ready to dispatch her.



“My forest...! My children...!”

Dante pulled the trigger at Echidna’s pitiful wail.
Her body split open on impact.

Dante walked up to the artificial hellgate - it shouldn’t give him any trouble right now, but it was better to be safe than sorry.

He punched the gate repeatedly, once in every corner, putting his whole upper body strength into it - the gate stood tall, but if one looked closely, they could see the cracks that were running all over its surface.

Dante turned around to walk away, and as he did, the gate collapsed behind him.

“One down... two to go.”

There were still two devil arms, and then there was Yamato - he had no time to waste.



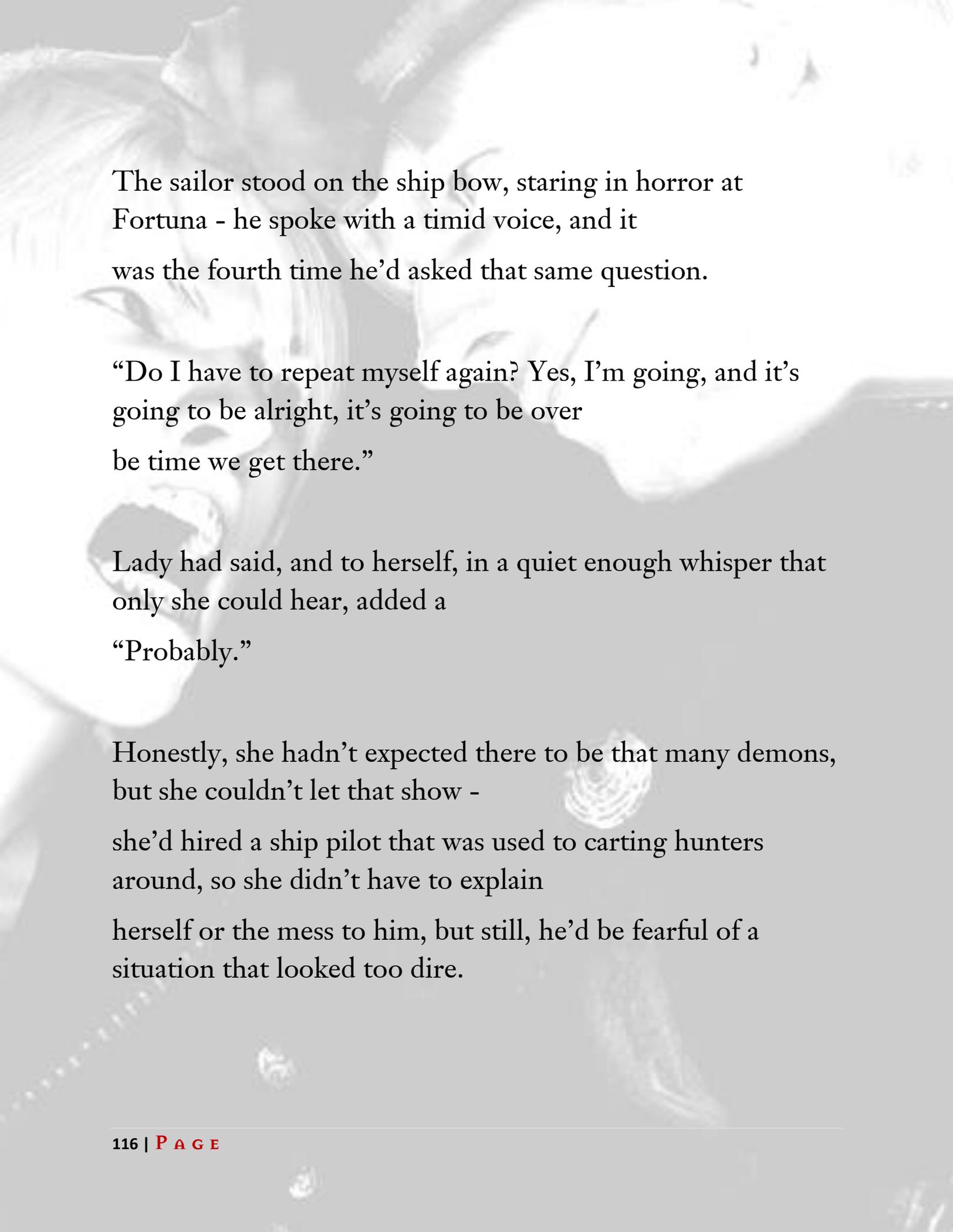
Lady gazed at the scenery in the distance while feeling the sea breeze against her skin.

She could make out the outline of Fortuna Island, but it would still be quite a while before she actually, got there.

“Hope that guy’s actually doing his job over there.”

Even from that far away, she could see the chilling sight of the enormous Hellgate with demons swarming out of it, and the giant statue floating above the island. A regular human demon hunter by themselves would be done for, but it was nothing Dante and Trish couldn’t handle.

“You sure you want to go there, miss?”



The sailor stood on the ship bow, staring in horror at Fortuna - he spoke with a timid voice, and it was the fourth time he'd asked that same question.

“Do I have to repeat myself again? Yes, I'm going, and it's going to be alright, it's going to be over be time we get there.”

Lady had said, and to herself, in a quiet enough whisper that only she could hear, added a

“Probably.”

Honestly, she hadn't expected there to be that many demons, but she couldn't let that show -

she'd hired a ship pilot that was used to carting hunters around, so she didn't have to explain

herself or the mess to him, but still, he'd be fearful of a situation that looked too dire.

He returned inside with a doubtful expression, and Lady touched Kalina Ann lightly while she watched him walk away.

“Good thing I brought this with me just in case...”

Initially, she was going to go to Fortuna herself, but had relegated the task to Dante and Trish - a few days after they'd left, Trish had sent her a letter asking her to bring them a ferry back a month later, since it would probably be pretty difficult for them to return the traditional way after having just destroyed the Order.

She thought a month was a pretty long time for a mission like that, and she didn't expect that when she arrived, that'd be the sight that would have greeted her. If worst came to worst, she'd have to fight too.

The ship had slowed down in its course a few hours ago - Lady suspected that the pilot was too

afraid of whatever was going on there, and was trying to delay their arrival.

Lady had begun walking back to the bridge, when she saw a demon right above her head.

It was draped in darkness like a cloak, with an appendage that resembled a hat.

It floated high in the air, waving its long red claws around.

“You flew all the way here?”

Lady pulled out a gun from its holster on her thigh, but before she could pull the trigger the demon swiped at her with its talons.

She almost fell down trying to avoid it, and when she looked back up at it, it was just floating in

place doing nothing. It seemed like it only had those claws to attack.

It let out an insufferable hoarse sound, like it was laughing at her.

“What did you say? I can’t hear you.”

Lady fired a round of bullets as it kept on its otherworldly chuckle, swaying like a cloth in the wind to avoid them, and then lashing out with those claws - Lady jumped back to dodge them, and they tore into the ship’s deck instead.

The attack itself was easy enough to avoid, but if it damaged the ship too badly, it would be bad news. Lady anxiously turned to look at Kalina Ann - not a good idea. It would do more damage than a gun, yes, but there was no guarantee she wouldn’t singlehandedly sink the ship with a stray rocket or two.

The demon continued looking down at Lady and making that ungodly laughing noise.

“Didn’t anyone teach you that it’s rude to stare?”

Lady knew this was a flaw of hers - it was very easy for her to lose her temper and get riled up.

She told herself to keep her cool, but she could barely keep her anger in check - she wanted so

badly to lash out at the demon with everything she had, but she had to think of the ship's integrity

first of all. She didn't even know if the demon was sentient and trying to ridicule her on purpose -

still, she couldn't stop herself from picking up Kalina Ann and pointing it at the creature floating

placidly above her.

“Get down.”

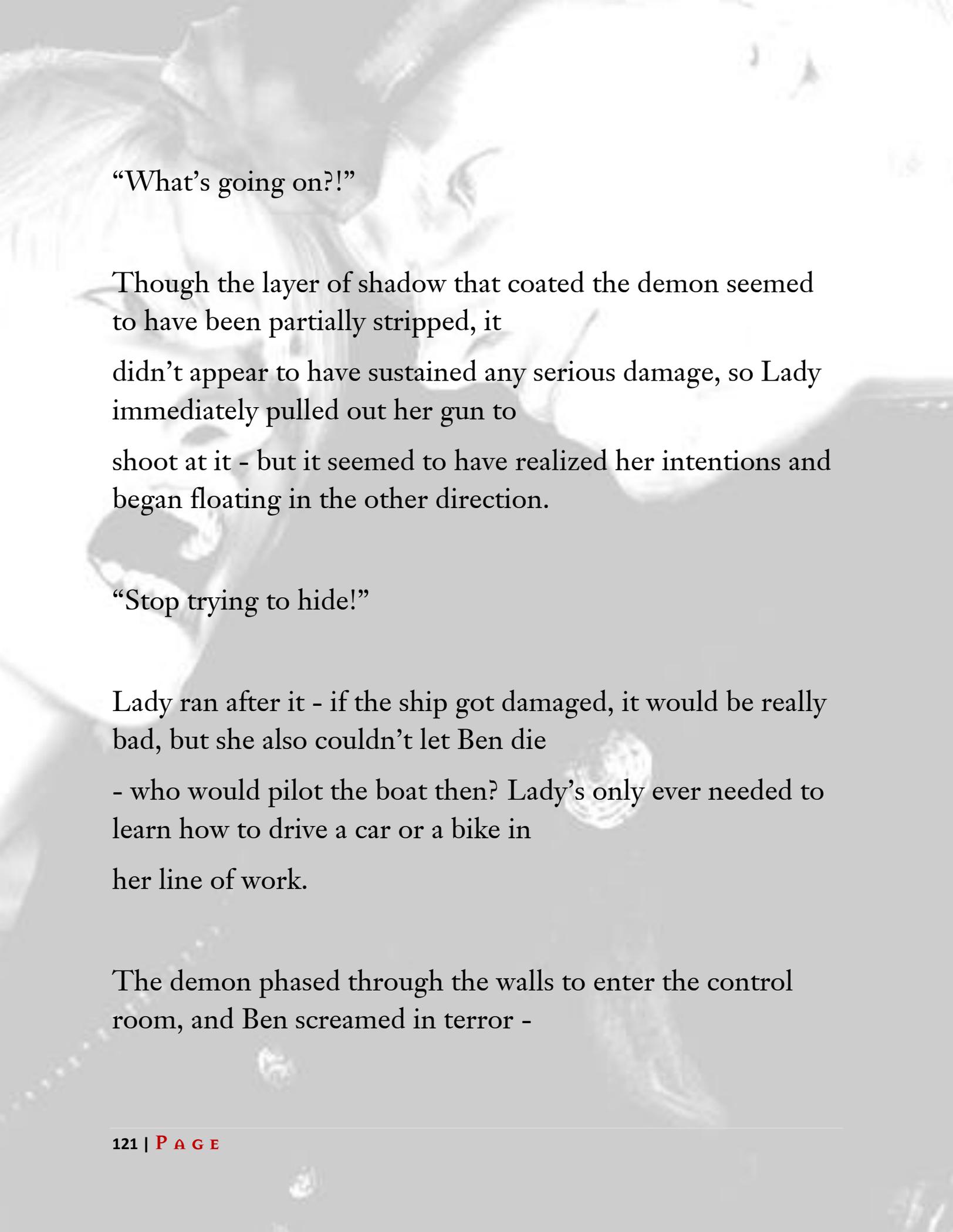
Lady pulled Kalina Ann's trigger. The rocket flew towards the demon who elegantly dodged it, but

that was to be expected - what the demon didn't know was that the rocket was about to U-turn,

and hit it anyway - which was exactly what happened.

The missile exploded on impact, and Lady covered her face with her hands to protect herself.

The sailor ran out of the bridge, having heard the racket.



“What’s going on?!”

Though the layer of shadow that coated the demon seemed to have been partially stripped, it didn’t appear to have sustained any serious damage, so Lady immediately pulled out her gun to shoot at it - but it seemed to have realized her intentions and began floating in the other direction.

“Stop trying to hide!”

Lady ran after it - if the ship got damaged, it would be really bad, but she also couldn’t let Ben die - who would pilot the boat then? Lady’s only ever needed to learn how to drive a car or a bike in her line of work.

The demon phased through the walls to enter the control room, and Ben screamed in terror -

Lady pointed her gun at it, but she couldn't shoot, or she risked damaging the console.

The creature once again phased through the ceiling, back where it was where Lady first

encountered it - it seemed like it could pass through solid walls at will, which was bad, but as long

as she could keep it above deck, it should be fine.

She should try to lure it in a place where it was safer to fight it, then - Lady fired her gun at it,

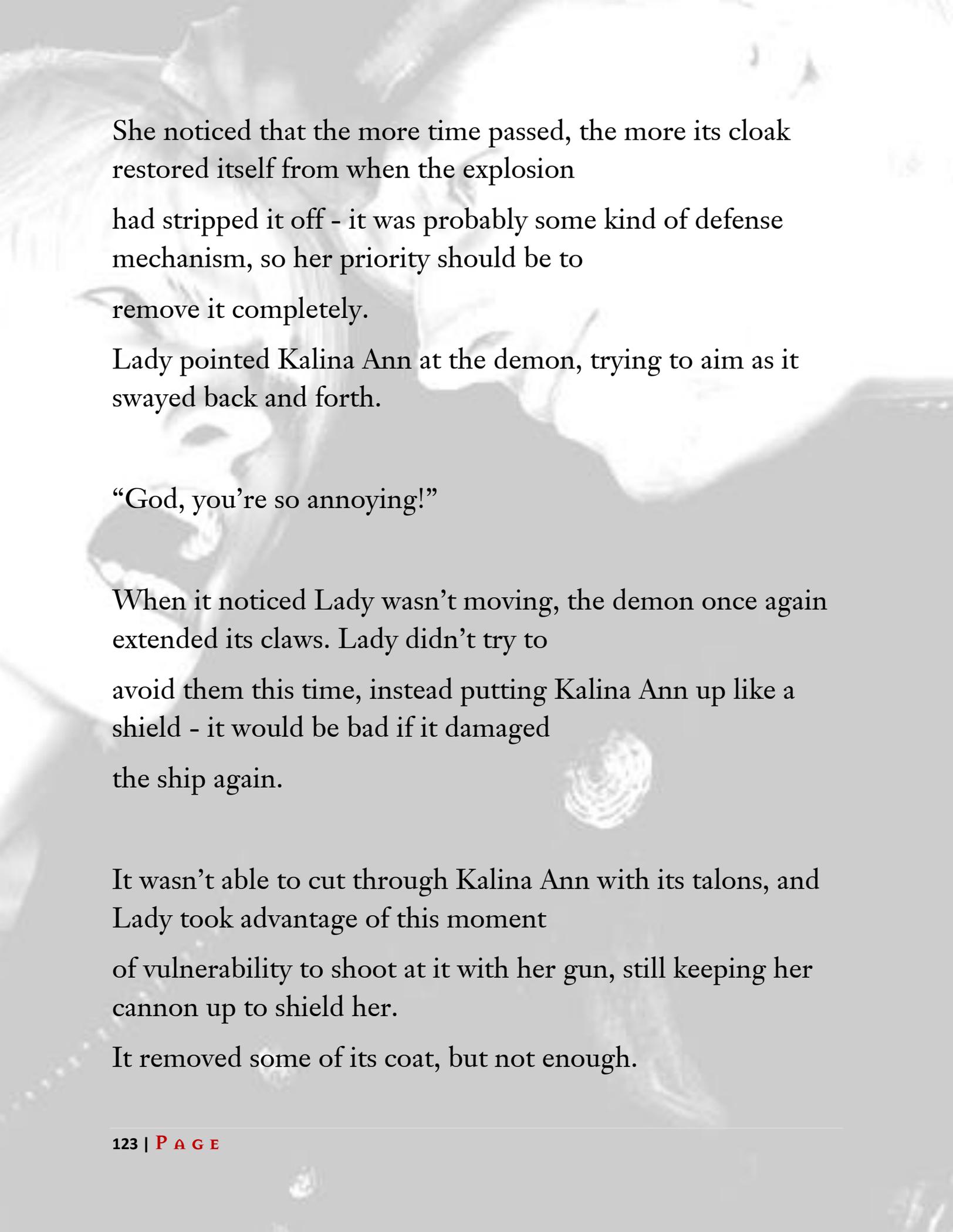
intentionally directing it towards the deck.

“Stay put and don't try running!”

Truthfully, deep down she was a bit nervous that there might be more demons of this kind nearby

- but as she looked around, she couldn't see any, so she put those worries aside to focus on the

one right in front of her.



She noticed that the more time passed, the more its cloak restored itself from when the explosion had stripped it off - it was probably some kind of defense mechanism, so her priority should be to remove it completely.

Lady pointed Kalina Ann at the demon, trying to aim as it swayed back and forth.

“God, you’re so annoying!”

When it noticed Lady wasn’t moving, the demon once again extended its claws. Lady didn’t try to avoid them this time, instead putting Kalina Ann up like a shield - it would be bad if it damaged the ship again.

It wasn’t able to cut through Kalina Ann with its talons, and Lady took advantage of this moment of vulnerability to shoot at it with her gun, still keeping her cannon up to shield her.

It removed some of its coat, but not enough.

The demon seemed to be keeping its distance - from that she could gather that the same strategy wouldn't work twice, but she'd never been good at the whole "wait for an opening to attack" business.

Lady put down Kalina Ann and took a grenade from her pouch - she threw it directly at the demon without pulling the pin out, instead detonating it herself by shooting at it. She didn't do that to damage it, but to cloud its vision with the smoke from the explosion.

Lady kicked her rocket launcher to pick it up, and she fired while the smoke was still thick - as

Kalina Ann's blast combined with the previous explosion, a large, pale, insect-like creature fell out of the cloud.

"Wow, you're even uglier underneath."



It looked almost humanoid in its prime, but once stripped, it really was just one big ugly bug.

It tried crawling away as it felt Lady approach, with none of its previous finesse - she shot at it repeatedly until it stopped struggling and went limp.

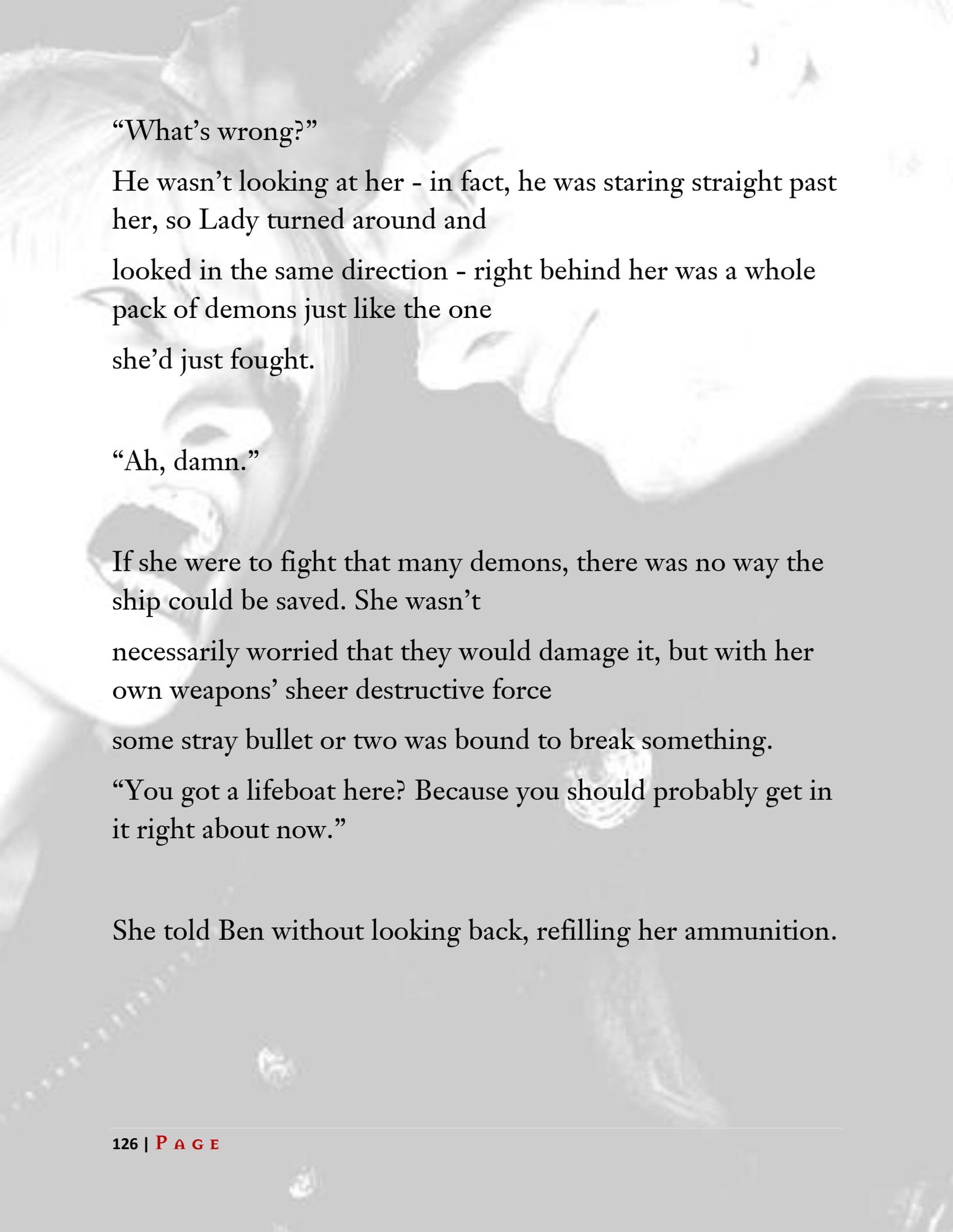
She sighed in relief and turned to look at Ben.

“You ok? Any injuries?”

Ben seemed to be scared speechless, and barely reacted to her words.

“Hey, I’m talking to you. You want me to throw you overboard?”

She made the empty threat almost like a joke to cheer him up, but just as his fearful expression started to recede, it returned tenfold in less than a minute.



“What’s wrong?”

He wasn’t looking at her - in fact, he was staring straight past her, so Lady turned around and looked in the same direction - right behind her was a whole pack of demons just like the one she’d just fought.

“Ah, damn.”

If she were to fight that many demons, there was no way the ship could be saved. She wasn’t necessarily worried that they would damage it, but with her own weapons’ sheer destructive force some stray bullet or two was bound to break something.

“You got a lifeboat here? Because you should probably get in it right about now.”

She told Ben without looking back, refilling her ammunition.



After he got out of the forest, Dante was back in Fortuna Castle - it was starting to feel nostalgic by now.

The roads leading to and from it were twisting and treacherous like a maze - probably made intentionally so to protect it from attacks in ancient times.

Dante thought it would be ironic if this was really the way Sparda had had the castle made - he wouldn't have had to backtrack so much if there was any other way to get through it.

The castle was also full of demons, which kept Dante mildly entertained on his trek through it.

While on his way, he noticed an intensely foul stench - definitely a demon. He couldn't help but wrinkle his nose in disgust.

“Whew, that’s got to be a big one for sure.”

Dante whispered as he headed towards the source of the smell - the same direction where he could feel the hellgate was. It must have come out of that gate, then.

Dante stopped as he entered a big, empty courtyard - there was a blizzard storming throughout it, and he couldn’t see a few meters past him.

As he looked around, he saw that yes, the place was out in the open, but it was also surrounded by the castle’s walls, so there was no way there could be a blizzard there - it must’ve been another effect of the demon there.

The hellgate was likely nearby, so Dante walked blindly through the snowstorm, and stopped again, when he saw something - he couldn’t make it out clearly, but something was indeed glowing faintly a few paces ahead of him. Another demon?



The light source slowly approached him.

“Oh, damn.”

He couldn't help but gawk slightly at the sight in front of him - it looked like two naked women, dancing in midair through the snowstorm, flashing pale pink light.

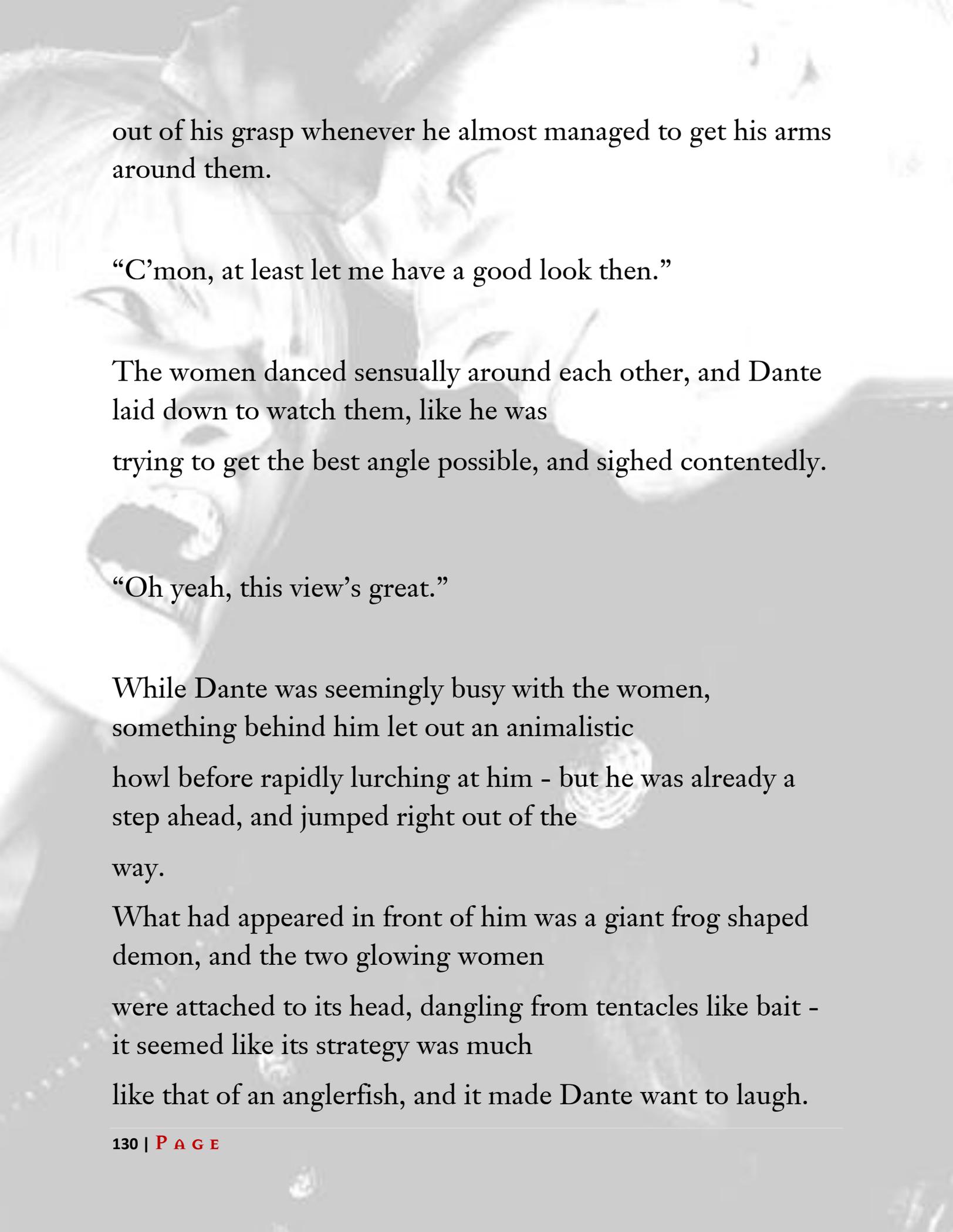
They made some sounds like laughter, and waved their hands at him in a come-hither motion.

“Yeah, baby!”

Dante shouted as he ran up to them, but just as he got near, they floated away.

“So, I can't touch? Fine by me.”

He said that, but he still kept playfully trying to catch up - they still outran him, though, slipping



out of his grasp whenever he almost managed to get his arms around them.

“C’mon, at least let me have a good look then.”

The women danced sensually around each other, and Dante laid down to watch them, like he was trying to get the best angle possible, and sighed contentedly.

“Oh yeah, this view’s great.”

While Dante was seemingly busy with the women, something behind him let out an animalistic howl before rapidly lurching at him - but he was already a step ahead, and jumped right out of the way.

What had appeared in front of him was a giant frog shaped demon, and the two glowing women were attached to its head, dangling from tentacles like bait - it seemed like its strategy was much like that of an anglerfish, and it made Dante want to laugh.

“What...? How did you know!?”

The demon seemed confused by Dante’s prompt reaction to its attack.

Dante fanned his hand in front of his nose before responding.

“No offense, the babes are very convincing, but that smell? Hoo! There's no covering that up!”

Truth be told, he’d known of the demon all along - after all, it was that smell that led him to it in the first place.

The creature became enraged at Dante’s reply, and sent spit flying everywhere as it shouted:

“Weakling, insult the great Dagon like that again and you’ll regret it!”

Though the demon could speak human language, he talked in an almost incomprehensible gurgle.

Dante was also a bit disappointed that he didn't seem to know who he was - it wasn't like he

wanted to be famous, but high order demons generally tended to have at least heard of him, yet

this one and even Echidna before seemed like they hadn't - and as such, weren't the least bit afraid

of him.

“Huh, guess I must've been too idle lately. Or maybe it's you guys who live under a rock?”

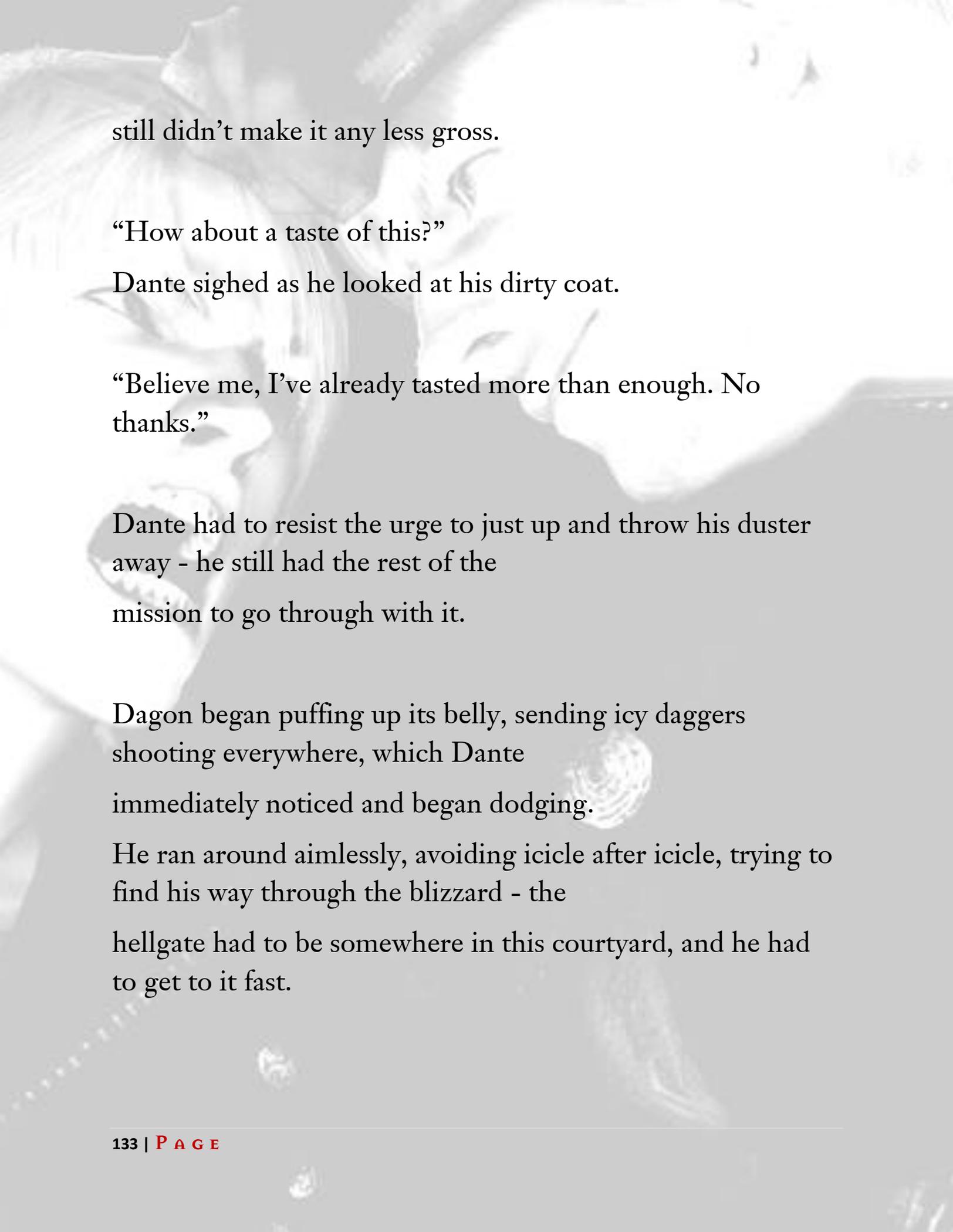
Dante asked the demon in front of him, though he looked like he had no idea what nonsense he

was even spouting.

“Shut up!”

As he yelled, a gust of wind blew from the side, sending Dante's coat flapping in his face - which

proved fortunate, as it shielded him from getting the giant toad's filthy spittle all over his face. It



still didn't make it any less gross.

“How about a taste of this?”

Dante sighed as he looked at his dirty coat.

“Believe me, I've already tasted more than enough. No thanks.”

Dante had to resist the urge to just up and throw his duster away - he still had the rest of the mission to go through with it.

Dagon began puffing up its belly, sending icy daggers shooting everywhere, which Dante immediately noticed and began dodging.

He ran around aimlessly, avoiding icicle after icicle, trying to find his way through the blizzard - the hellgate had to be somewhere in this courtyard, and he had to get to it fast.

As Dagon's assault came to an end, he let out a deafening roar, the vibrations of which shook the ground - when he exhaled, the storm cleared. He was obviously trying to show off, wanting Dante to be able to see him clearly so he'd be more scared.

And he might have been, had he been an ordinary person - the sight that greeted him was the hellgate, right at the end of the courtyard, and countless demons identical to Dagon ready to emerge from it.

But from Dante's point of view, the snow clearing only meant he could actually see where the hell he was going.

As the last of the demons stepped out of the gate, it shouted and so did all of its brethren - did they each have their own name? Dante didn't know and didn't really care, he just smirked as he ran towards the gate. The pack of toads assumed he was trying to attack, so they took a

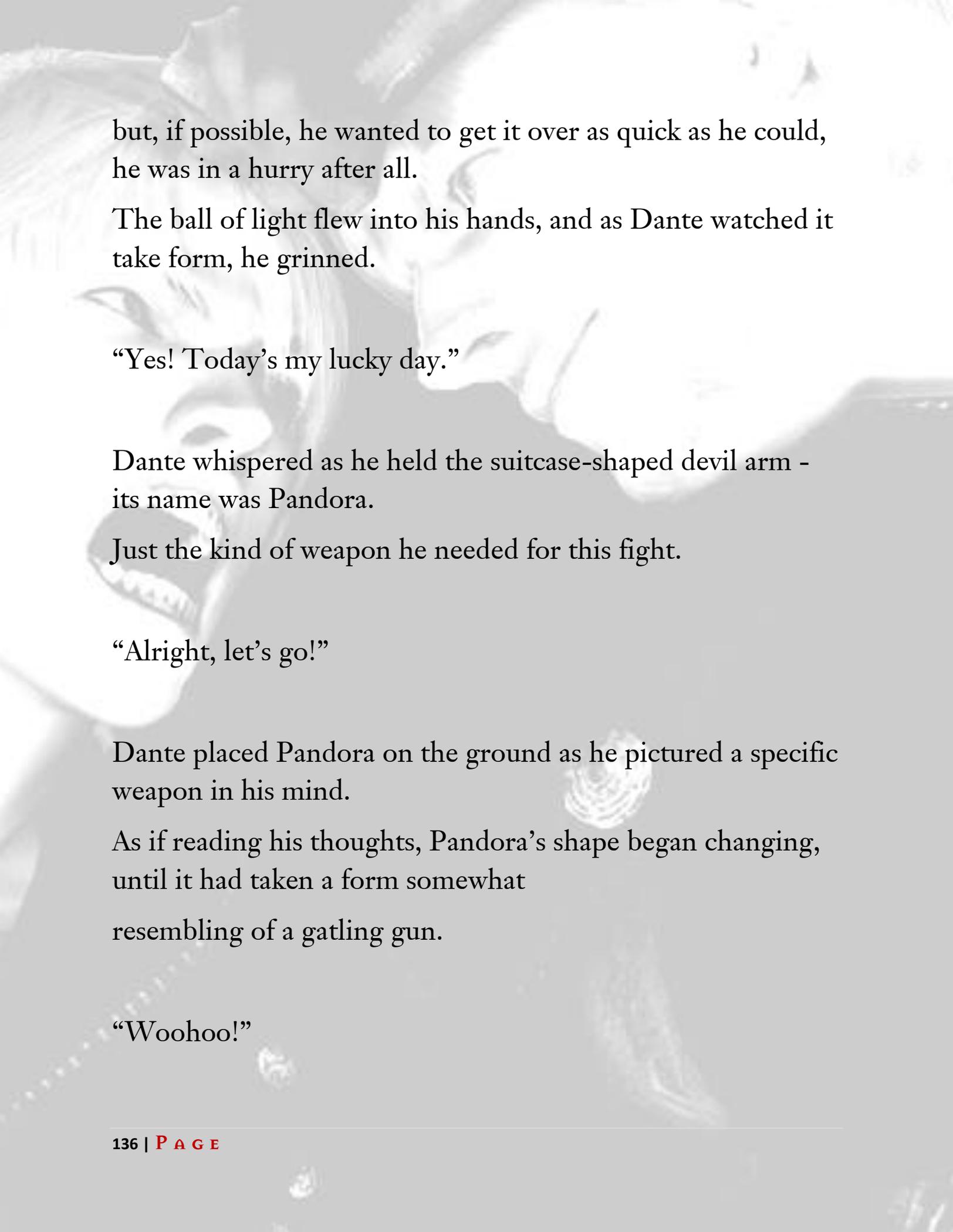
defensive stance - but Dante merely jumped right over them, and when he landed on one of the creatures, he used its body like a trampoline to jump again.

They screamed in indignity as he kept using them as stepping stones to reach the gate, but he ignored them until he landed in front of the gate's device. Because of the creatures' massive bulk, they couldn't turn around to face him with no difficulty, and kept bumping into one another trying to navigate the cramped space - Dante found it hilarious to look at.

He eventually looked away from the ridiculous sight to kick the device - he hoped the weapon it would contained be the one most suited for this type of fight.

“C'mon, is it that one?”

Well, no matter which devil arm it would end up being, Dante could still kick those frog's asses -



but, if possible, he wanted to get it over as quick as he could, he was in a hurry after all.

The ball of light flew into his hands, and as Dante watched it take form, he grinned.

“Yes! Today’s my lucky day.”

Dante whispered as he held the suitcase-shaped devil arm - its name was Pandora.

Just the kind of weapon he needed for this fight.

“Alright, let’s go!”

Dante placed Pandora on the ground as he pictured a specific weapon in his mind.

As if reading his thoughts, Pandora’s shape began changing, until it had taken a form somewhat resembling of a gatling gun.

“Woohoo!”

Dante laughed as he pulled the trigger - what had once been the suitcase's handle.

The current weapon's form shot out bullets at an incredibly high speed, and it took no time at all

to pelt the numerous demonic toads with them - but the firing power apparently wasn't quite

enough to dispatch them with just that, so Dante stopped in his tracks, restored Pandora to its

original shape and began thinking about a different weapon.

That was Pandora's power.

The devil arm had been created by a certain demon gunsmith, one Machiavelli - he was famous

all over the underworld for his demonic weapons, which Dante had encountered a good deal of during his adventures.

Pandora, in particular, had no fixed appearance or ability - in its natural state it looked like a

suitcase, but that was just the default setting.

It could essentially take on the shape of any weapon, as long as its owner could imagine it - it



would read their mind and memory to change into whatever they desired it to be.

Dante picked up Pandora again as the devil arm stretched and eventually settled on a rocket-like shape.

“How about this?”

The rocket launcher fired three missiles in the middle of the gaggle of demons - it caused a massive explosions that sent even the gigantic creatures flying.

Dante reloaded the weapon to the sound of the huge frogs' pained shouts.

“Alright, just so I know I haven't gotten rusty!”

Pandora contracted again, this time taking the form of a shuriken covered in sharp blades. Dante

launched it with gusto, as if trying to send it rotating all around the courtyard, trying to get all the staggered demons at once.

It hit one and then another, immediately flying to its next target without missing a beat - because it wasn't acting as just a shrunken, but also going after the enemies its owner desired like it was tracking them.

Some of the demons were sent flying again, others slammed into the ground - Dante laughed as the weapon flew back into his hands.

“Only one last form to check out.”

He could feel Pandora's eagerness to change its shape - it was a form he'd used a few times

before, but truthfully, he had no idea how to describe it or what to classify it as. He just pictured it with his mind's eye and there it was.



Pandora had expanded to surround Dante in a huge mechanical circle, rocket barrels all around it.

Dante recalled Trish's reaction to seeing this form:

“You're really one big overgrown kid.”

Well, Dante had kind of based this form on things he'd seen in movies and comics - but c'mon, who wouldn't want to fly around in a huge rocket launching contraption like that?

“It's not a kid thing, it's a man thing.”

Was what Dante had told Trish lamely to counter her argument.

“Just a little bit more!”

Dante shouted as he pressed the weapon's newly formed lever. It fired a barrage of missiles from

its numerous barrels, sending them flying all over the courtyard, exploding on impact when they landed on the frog demons.

In the wake of Dante's ruthless assault, not only had the creatures been decimated, but the gate had also been smashed to bits.

Dante sighed as he reverted Pandora to its initial state.

That was the true destructive power of Pandora - the reason it was also named the "Calamitous Ordinance".

He combed a hand through his hair to fix it, dusting his coat to rid it of the leftover demonic toad gunk.

"Alright, now to get back on the road."

As he made to grab Pandora again, Dante noticed it wasn't shut completely closed.

“Oh, no, this won’t do!”

He quickly stepped on it to force it closed, and only picked it up once he was absolutely sure it wouldn’t open. Dante sighed in relief.

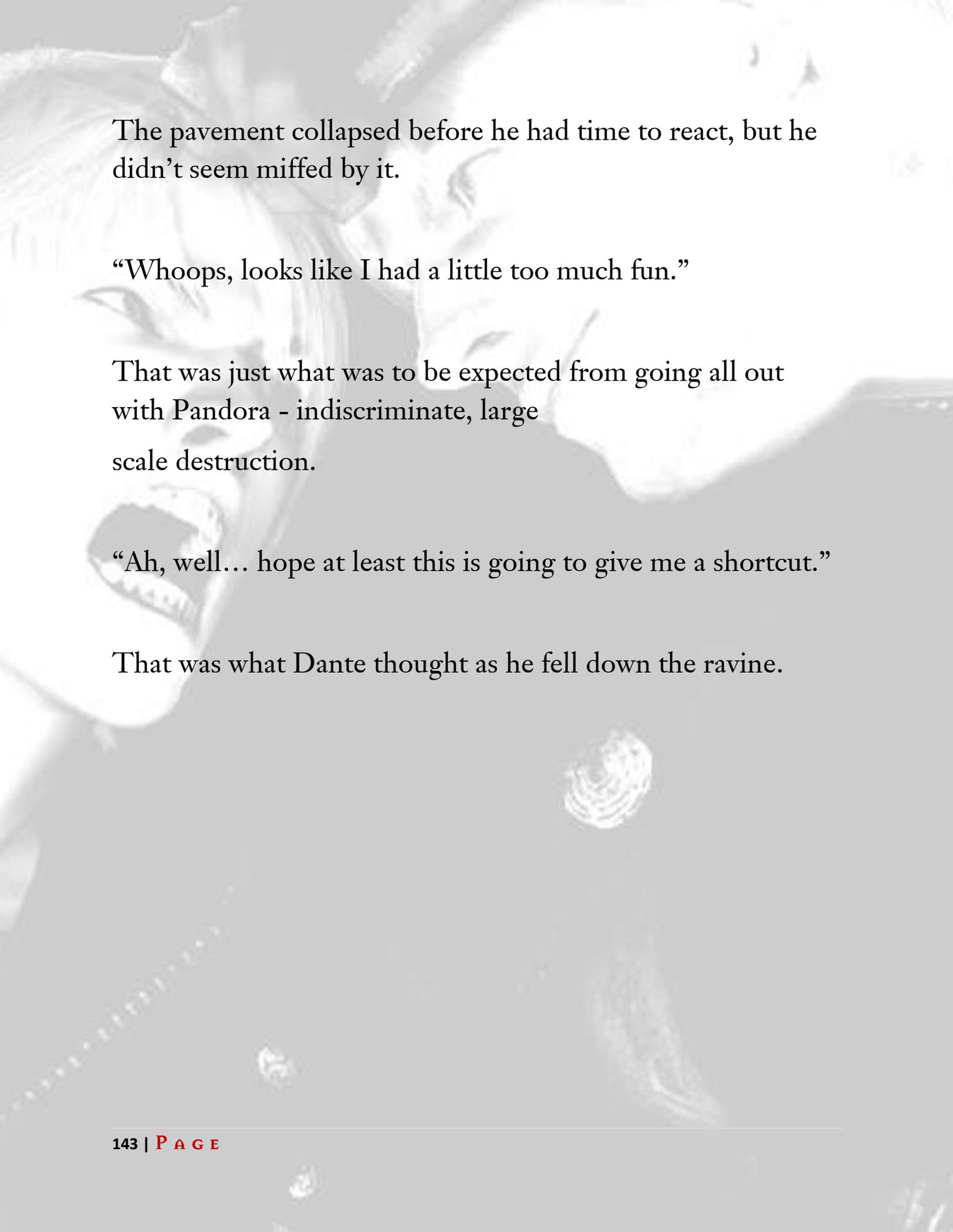
Pandora was a very dangerous weapon - if used incorrectly, it could very easily do irreparable damage even to its owner.

One might be fooled to think its suitcase form would be innocuous, but in truth, it was the most devastating of its abilities - Dante had learned this from painful, painful experience.

“Hopefully the whole building won’t come down.”

Dante muttered to himself as he hoisted Pandora over his shoulder.

Just as he did that, he heard the ground make a noise - when he looked down, there was a large crack at his feet.



The pavement collapsed before he had time to react, but he didn't seem miffed by it.

“Whoops, looks like I had a little too much fun.”

That was just what was to be expected from going all out with Pandora - indiscriminate, large scale destruction.

“Ah, well... hope at least this is going to give me a shortcut.”

That was what Dante thought as he fell down the ravine.



Berial had returned once again to the human world. He still hadn't fully recovered from his last battle, but he couldn't stand having suffered such humiliation - to be defeated by a man, no, a boy, who didn't even come up to his calf... unacceptable.

It was too great of a shame to bear - he had to have a rematch. That was the resolve that pushed him to cross the gate despite his still healing wounds.

He saw no sign of the young man, though - who even was he?

Berial lost himself in thought in front of the artificial gate created by arrogant humans.

The boy did have demonic power, true, but he couldn't be a full-blooded demon - Berial would have heard of him otherwise. For that reason, he initially thought he had to be a completely separate species - but maybe he was a hybrid, someone of both human and demon blood? Such creatures were extremely rare, but not unheard of.

Berial thought of Sparda, the backstabber who had betrayed his entire species to defend humans and even sired offspring with a human woman - the very concept of it was almost unbelievable to him.

How could one fall in love with a puny, weak creature like a human, enough to reproduce with?
them?

To demons, humans were nothing but prey. That had been the way of the worlds since before they were separated, and most demons still thought of it that way - Berial definitely did.

“I just don’t understand.”

Berial muttered to himself as he looked up at the sky.

Why did Sparda betray his brethren?

Two thousand years ago, Berial was still a weak and sniveling little thing, but even he had heard

rumors of Sparda - the Demon Emperor’s right and left hand, one of the very reasons why

Emperor Mundus had even managed to take the throne in the first place.

Berial had never seen him in person, but he had admired him, hoping to achieve his strength

some day - yet he had betrayed them, killed his own, turned on their Emperor to protect humanity.

How could he do that? Two thousand years and Berial still had no answer.

To him, it was unthinkable that another demon would want to mate with a human - who could be

the unlucky creature that had fathered that whelp?

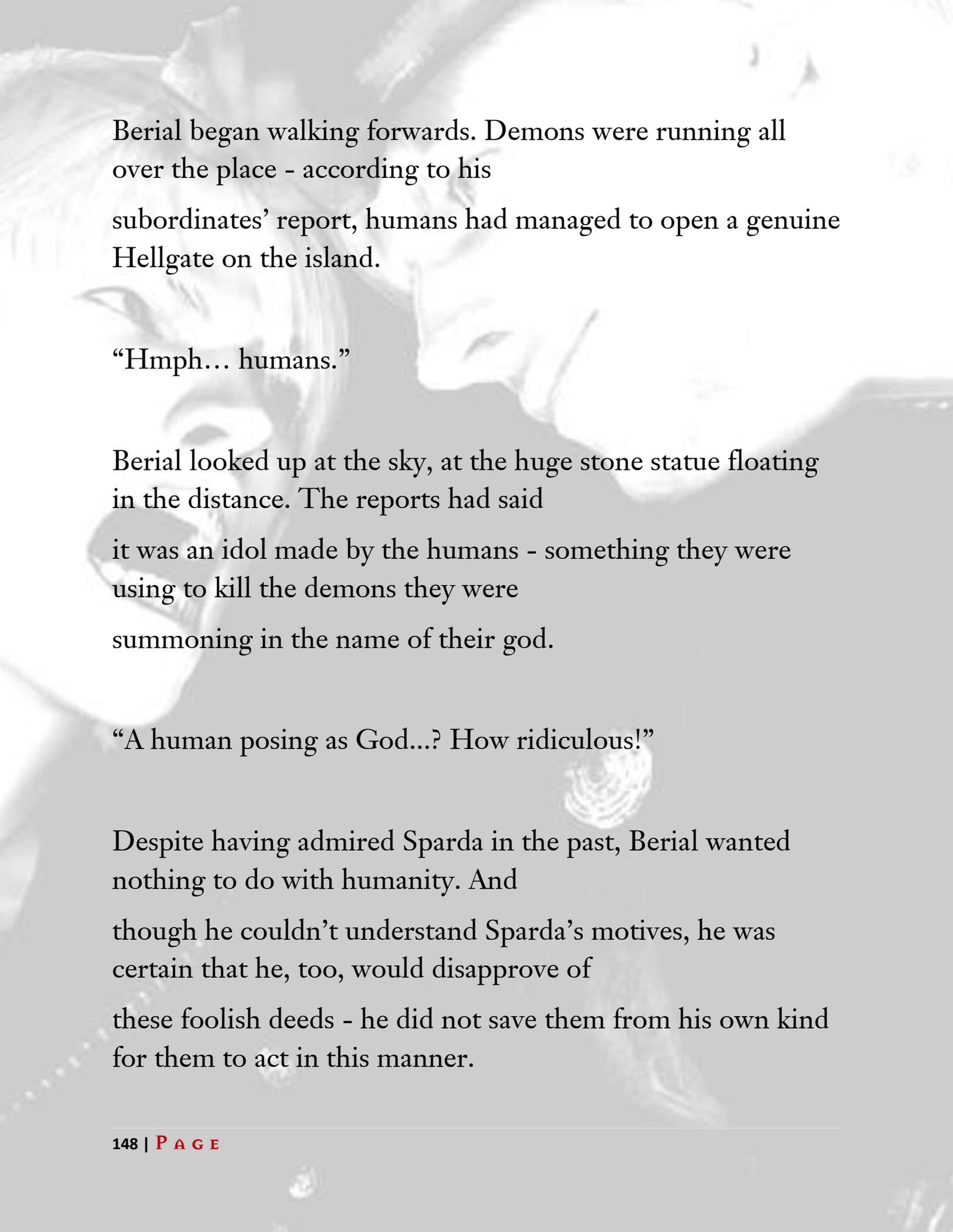
Maybe he was another seed of Sparda? It wasn't out of the question.

As for Sparda's son, Berial had heard of him.

He had also never met him in person, but there were plenty of rumors going around in the underworld - they said he greatly resembled Sparda's human disguise, that he had pale silver hair and always dressed in red, and that he wielded one of Sparda's swords.

Though from his battle when he once again sealed their Emperor - he might even have surpassed his father in terms of strength.

If he thought of it, that young man did greatly resemble what was said of Sparda's son - but he couldn't be the Dante he'd been hearing about for years. As long as there was human blood running through his veins, he'd age same as the lot of them, and the boy was far too young.



Berial began walking forwards. Demons were running all over the place - according to his subordinates' report, humans had managed to open a genuine Hellgate on the island.

“Hmph... humans.”

Berial looked up at the sky, at the huge stone statue floating in the distance. The reports had said it was an idol made by the humans - something they were using to kill the demons they were summoning in the name of their god.

“A human posing as God...? How ridiculous!”

Despite having admired Sparda in the past, Berial wanted nothing to do with humanity. And though he couldn't understand Sparda's motives, he was certain that he, too, would disapprove of these foolish deeds - he did not save them from his own kind for them to act in this manner.



“You don't say...”

He suddenly heard a human sounding voice from somewhere behind him - he quickly turned around, but saw nothing there.

“Over here.”

He followed the voice and turned around again, yet still saw nothing.

“What the...”

He had finally found the source of the voice - a man was sitting on his tail.

He waved his tail around right away, and the man jumped in the air, making a few fancy flips to extinguish the fire his clothes had caught.



Once he landed, he took a look at the burned article of clothing before speaking.

“Wish you would've noticed me earlier... Now my coat's all charred.”

Berial growled when he saw the man.

“You... Sparda's bastard spawn!”

Pale silver hair, all dressed in red, and carrying a huge sword that was definitely not of human origin - it all checked out. That had to be the infamous son of Sparda, Dante.

“Finally, someone over here who's heard of me!”

“Of course, I have heard of you... Sparda, who killed endless of his kin and sealed us all away... you're that traitor's son! I hadn't expected to find you here.”

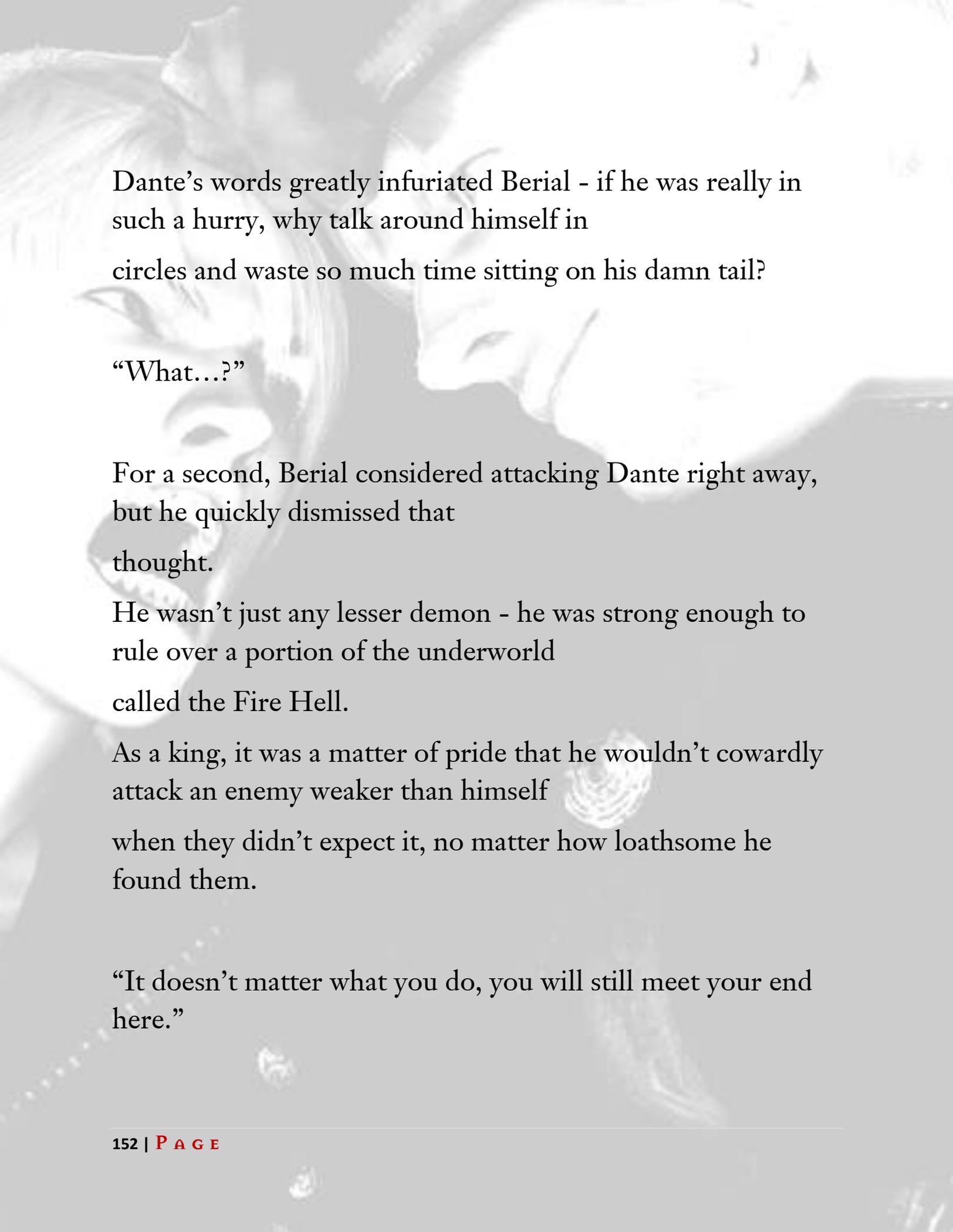
Dante mockingly applauded.

“Well, all the other big shots in this place had no idea who I was! I’m not exactly happy to be a demon celebrity, but I was starting to feel a bit ignored. Plus, since you know who I am, you’ll be extra motivated to fight your best, right?”

Berial’s first impression of Dante was that he was a man with a sharp tongue - unlike what he’d heard about Sparda, who was rumored to be cold and quiet. He’d assumed his son would share the same personality, but it seemed like he had to correct that notion.

Dante pointed at the man-made gate behind Berial.

“Hey, so, I got to grab something over there, I wouldn’t mind playing with you first if you really want to, but it would spare me a lot of time and hassle if you’d let me get it.”



Dante's words greatly infuriated Berial - if he was really in such a hurry, why talk around himself in circles and waste so much time sitting on his damn tail?

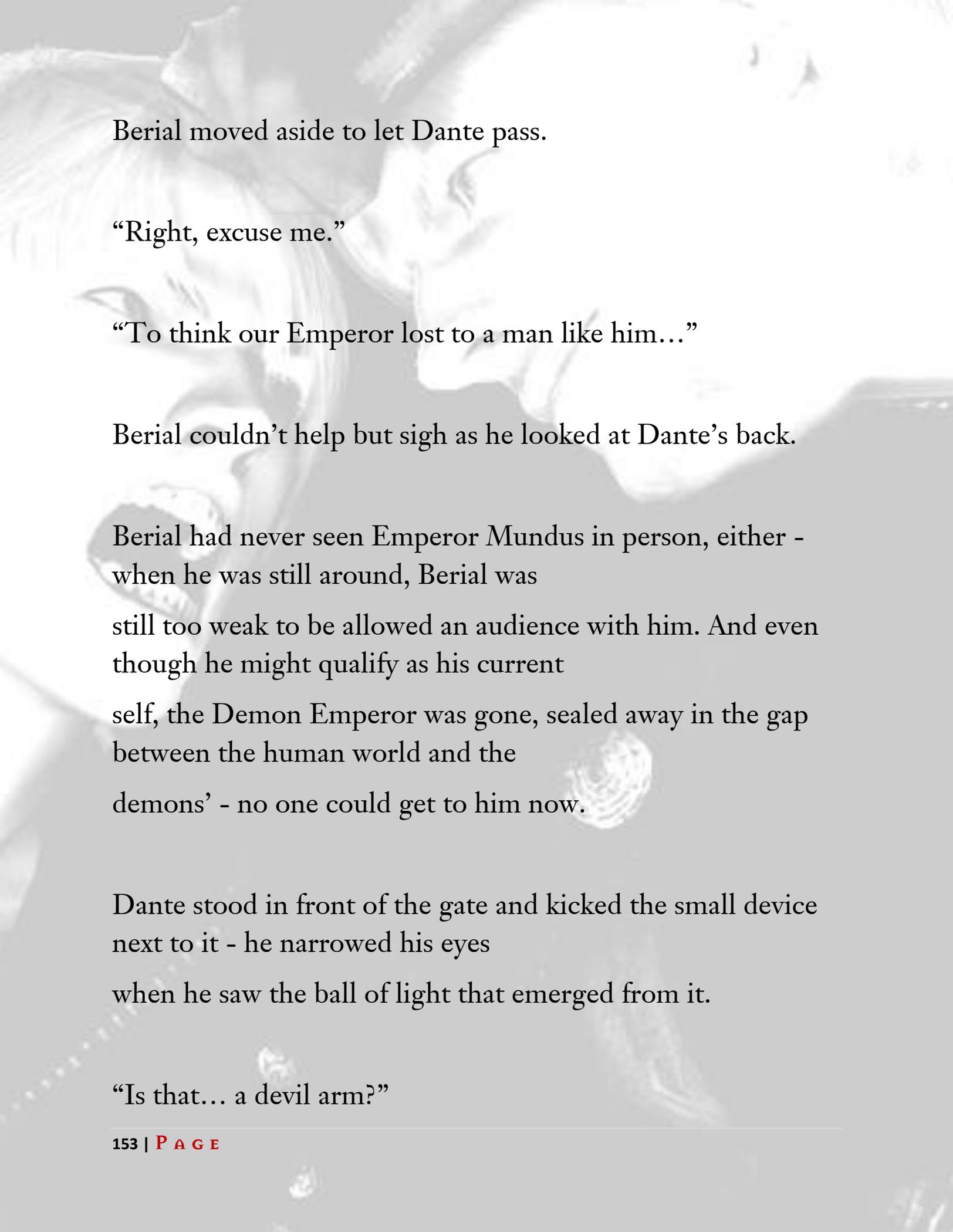
“What...?”

For a second, Berial considered attacking Dante right away, but he quickly dismissed that thought.

He wasn't just any lesser demon - he was strong enough to rule over a portion of the underworld called the Fire Hell.

As a king, it was a matter of pride that he wouldn't cowardly attack an enemy weaker than himself when they didn't expect it, no matter how loathsome he found them.

“It doesn't matter what you do, you will still meet your end here.”



Berial moved aside to let Dante pass.

“Right, excuse me.”

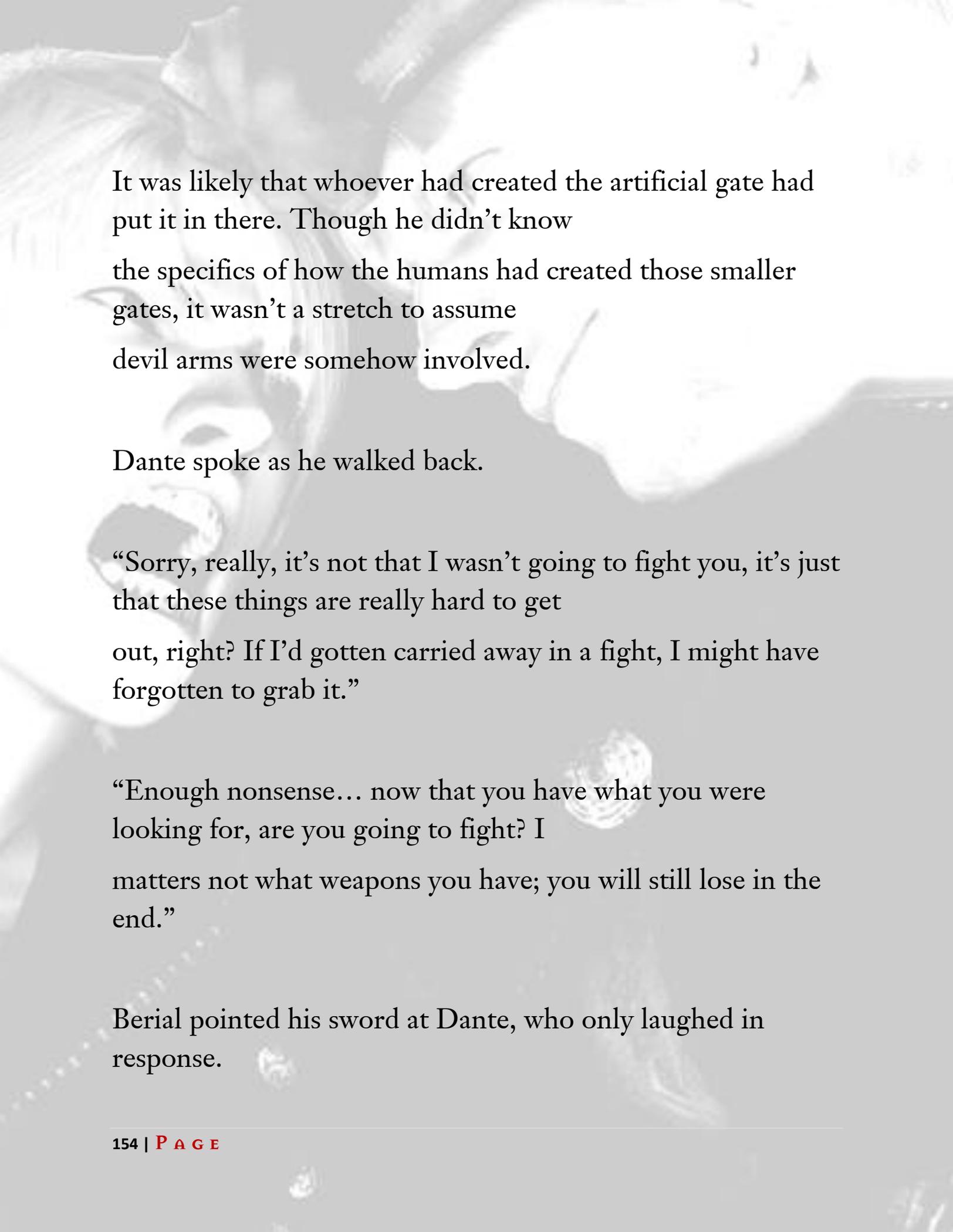
“To think our Emperor lost to a man like him...”

Berial couldn't help but sigh as he looked at Dante's back.

Berial had never seen Emperor Mundus in person, either - when he was still around, Berial was still too weak to be allowed an audience with him. And even though he might qualify as his current self, the Demon Emperor was gone, sealed away in the gap between the human world and the demons' - no one could get to him now.

Dante stood in front of the gate and kicked the small device next to it - he narrowed his eyes when he saw the ball of light that emerged from it.

“Is that... a devil arm?”



It was likely that whoever had created the artificial gate had put it in there. Though he didn't know the specifics of how the humans had created those smaller gates, it wasn't a stretch to assume devil arms were somehow involved.

Dante spoke as he walked back.

“Sorry, really, it's not that I wasn't going to fight you, it's just that these things are really hard to get out, right? If I'd gotten carried away in a fight, I might have forgotten to grab it.”

“Enough nonsense... now that you have what you were looking for, are you going to fight? I matters not what weapons you have; you will still lose in the end.”

Berial pointed his sword at Dante, who only laughed in response.

“Whatever you say, big guy.”

The ball of light unfolded in Dante’s hands, gradually turning into a devil arm that encased his back in the shape of wings - it was not a weapon Berial had ever seen, but the demonic essence it emanated was immediately familiar to him.

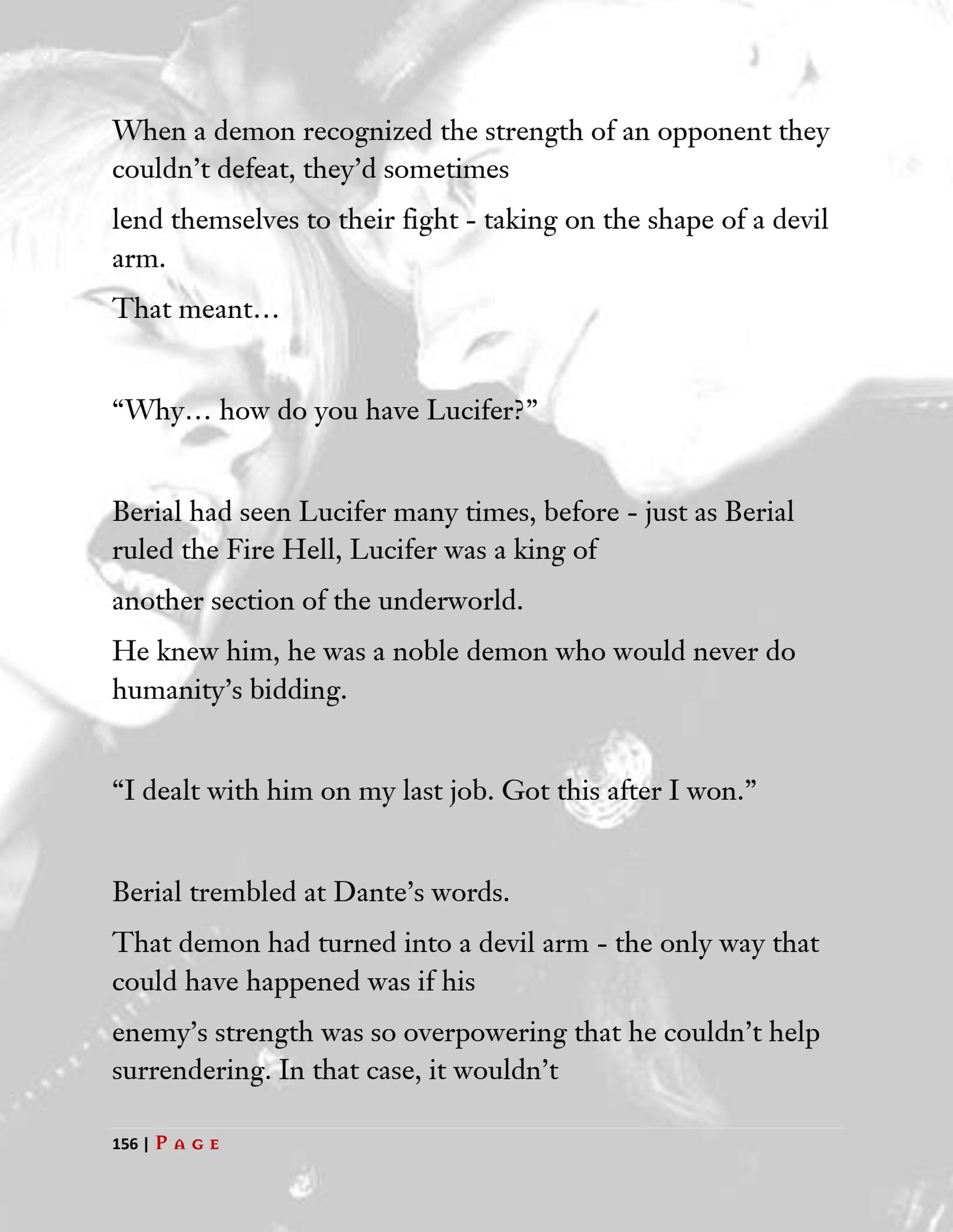
“...Lucifer!”

Berial couldn’t help but shout as Dante curiously looked at the weapon at his back.

“You knew each other? Was he your friend?”

Berial looked away self-consciously.

Most devil arms were merely weapons made by demons, but some of them were made from demons themselves - that is, their soul made weapon.



When a demon recognized the strength of an opponent they couldn't defeat, they'd sometimes lend themselves to their fight - taking on the shape of a devil arm.

That meant...

“Why... how do you have Lucifer?”

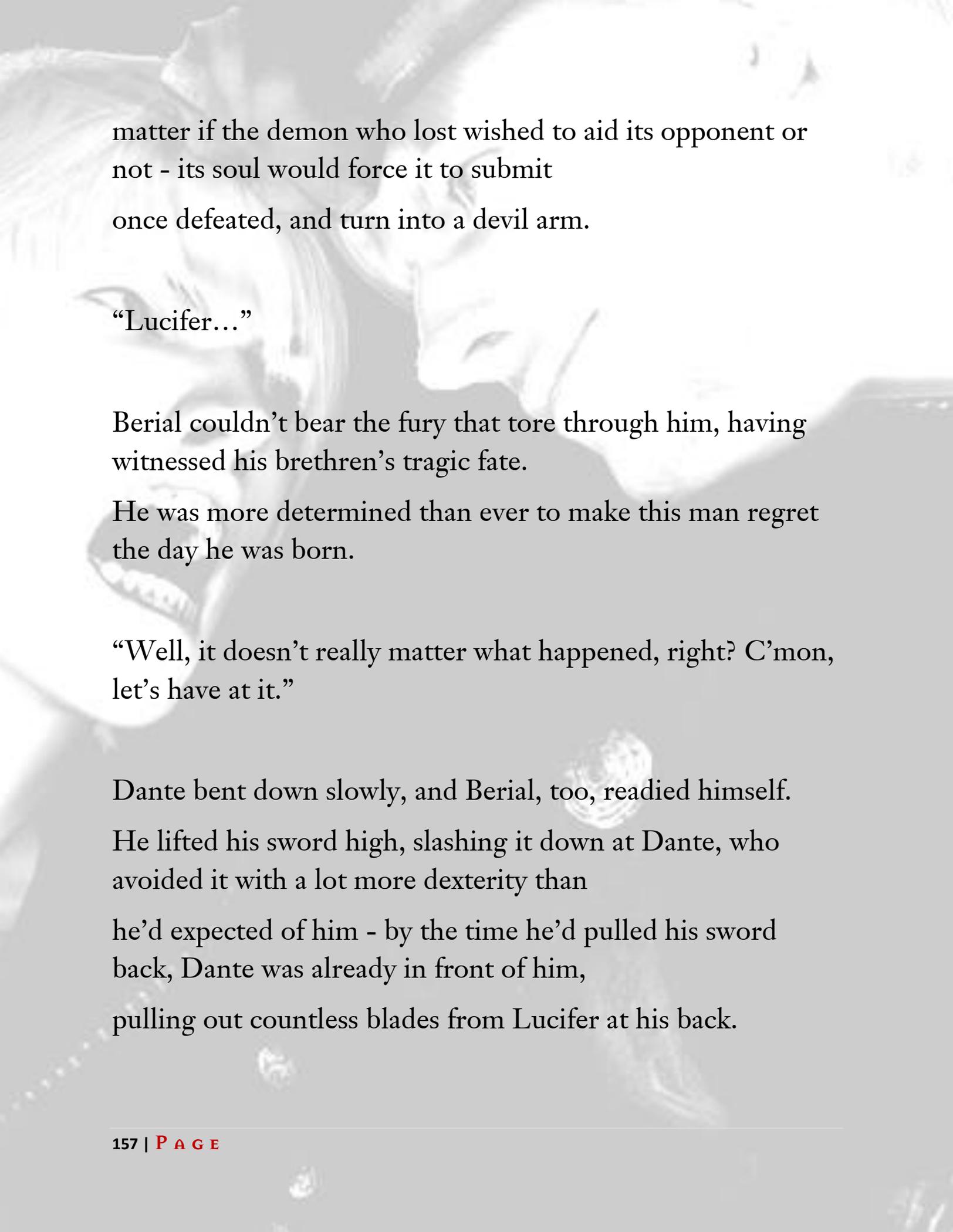
Berial had seen Lucifer many times, before - just as Berial ruled the Fire Hell, Lucifer was a king of another section of the underworld.

He knew him, he was a noble demon who would never do humanity's bidding.

“I dealt with him on my last job. Got this after I won.”

Berial trembled at Dante's words.

That demon had turned into a devil arm - the only way that could have happened was if his enemy's strength was so overpowering that he couldn't help surrendering. In that case, it wouldn't



matter if the demon who lost wished to aid its opponent or not - its soul would force it to submit once defeated, and turn into a devil arm.

“Lucifer...”

Berial couldn't bear the fury that tore through him, having witnessed his brethren's tragic fate.

He was more determined than ever to make this man regret the day he was born.

“Well, it doesn't really matter what happened, right? C'mon, let's have at it.”

Dante bent down slowly, and Berial, too, readied himself.

He lifted his sword high, slashing it down at Dante, who avoided it with a lot more dexterity than

he'd expected of him - by the time he'd pulled his sword back, Dante was already in front of him,

pulling out countless blades from Lucifer at his back.



“First I whip it out!”

Berial parried with his sword, but Dante was still too fast.

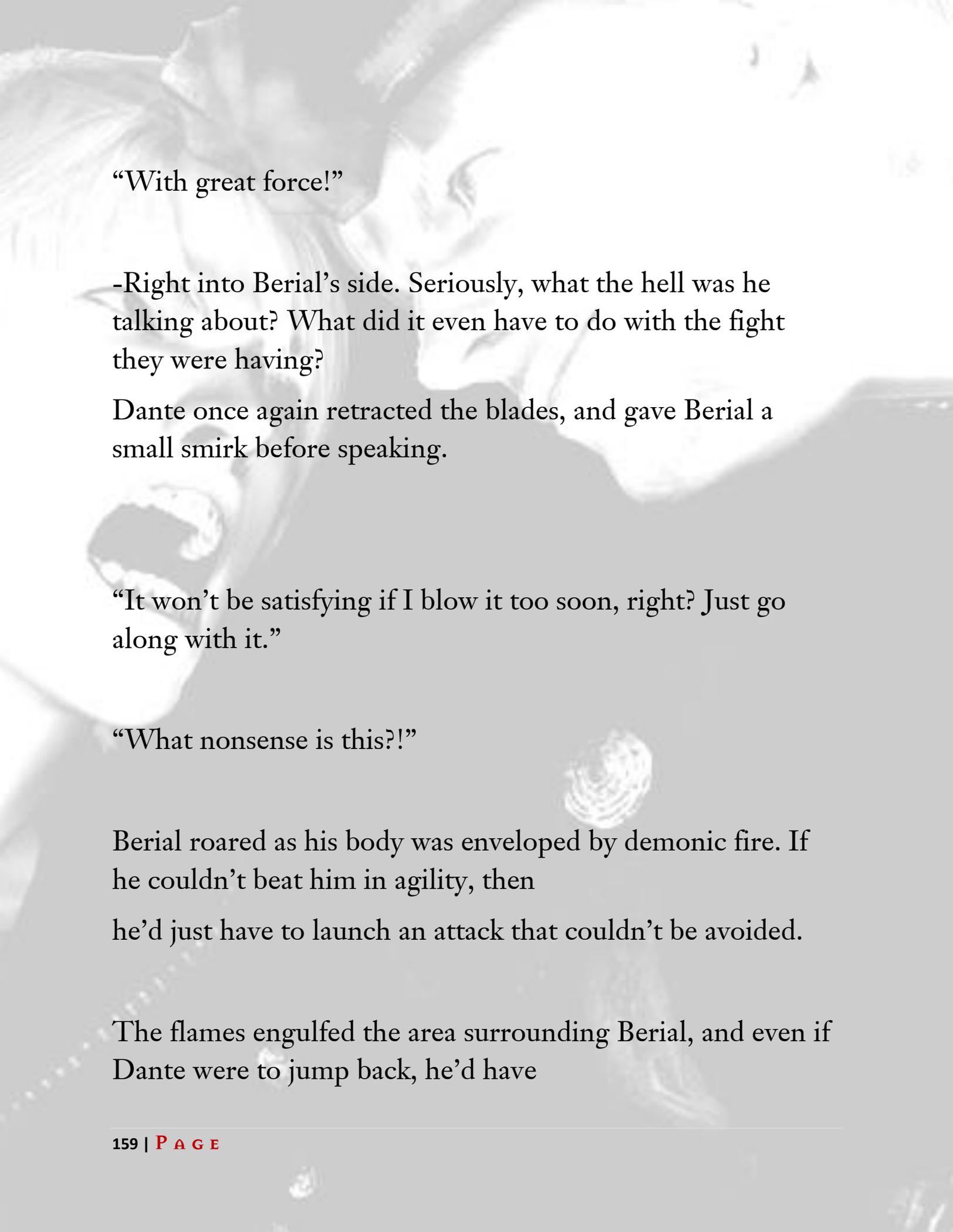
“Then I thrust it!”

Dante yelled as he stabbed a barrage of blades into Berial’s neck - they were too small to do any real damage to his gargantuan body, and he swatted Dante away with his hand only for him to use it as a platform to jump backwards.

When he landed, Dante made a motion and the blades retracted - he looked more like he was dancing rather than fighting, not pressing any serious offense, and Berial found it humiliating.

“Come and fight seriously!”

He swung his swords towards Dante, but he rolled away just in the nick of time, and once again sent blades flying-



“With great force!”

-Right into Berial’s side. Seriously, what the hell was he talking about? What did it even have to do with the fight they were having?

Dante once again retracted the blades, and gave Berial a small smirk before speaking.

“It won’t be satisfying if I blow it too soon, right? Just go along with it.”

“What nonsense is this?!”

Berial roared as his body was enveloped by demonic fire. If he couldn’t beat him in agility, then he’d just have to launch an attack that couldn’t be avoided.

The flames engulfed the area surrounding Berial, and even if Dante were to jump back, he’d have

to keep his distance so he wouldn't be burned - he would use this distance to his advantage to counterattack.

But he seemed to have completely miscalculated Dante's response - he didn't jump back at all, instead letting himself be burned as he surged forwards. Any regular old demon would have been reduced to ashes by that point, yet Dante showed no fear, running through the fire and coming up to Berial. His clothes were all charred, but he didn't seem to care.

“Every angle...! It penetrates!”

This was unprecedented. Berial was taken aback both by Dante's nonsensical remarks and his actions, leaving him wide open to be attacked. By the time he had regained his wits, Berial's body was jammed full of those tiny blades - they still wouldn't cause him any serious injury, their size



too small to pierce any internal organs.

Berial turned to face Dante.

“Son of Sparda...! Just try and dodge this!”

He shouted - right before his sword could descend on Dante, he saw the man had a rose in his mouth.

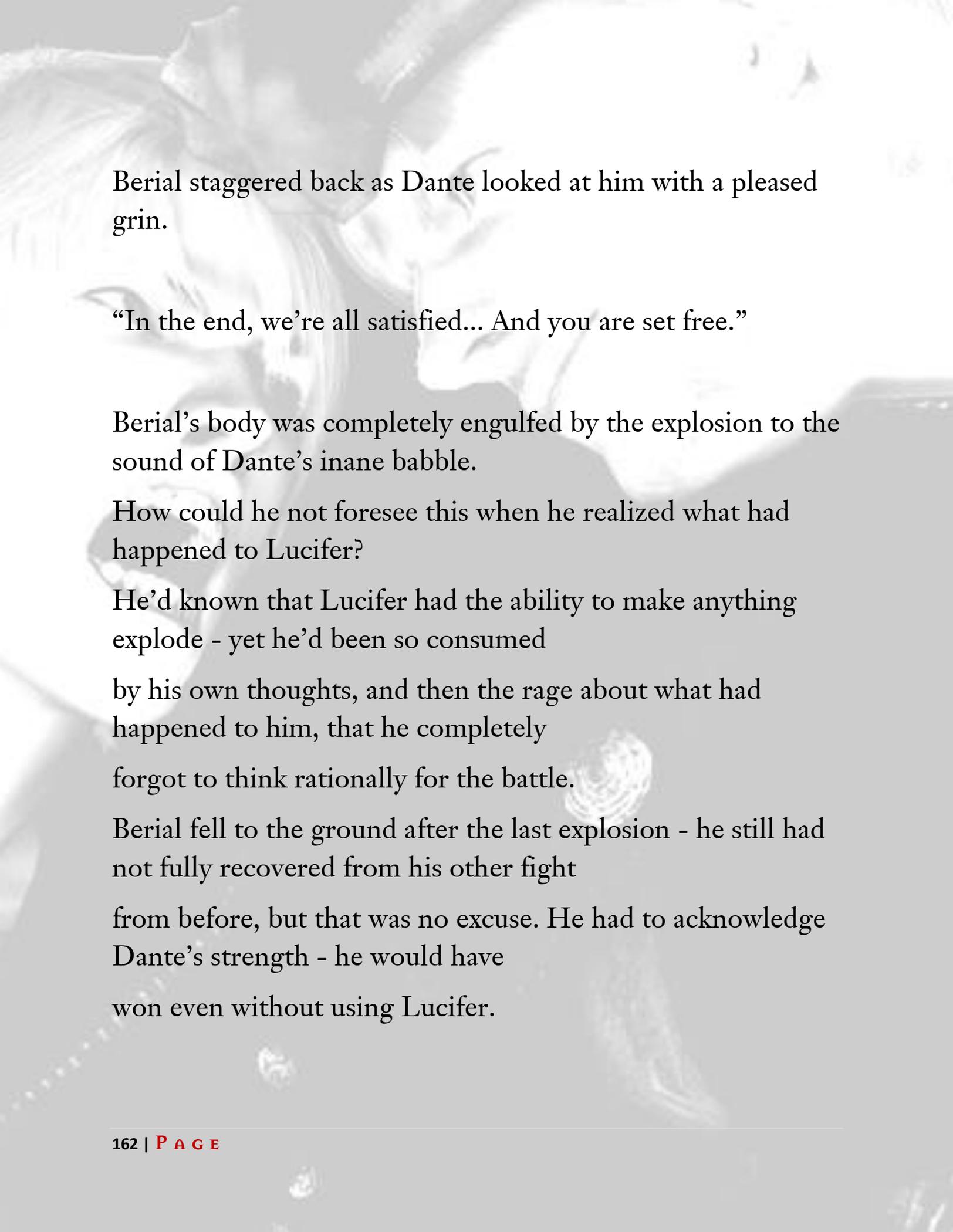
“Until...!”

Dante threw the rose at him.

“What...?”

As soon as the rose touched him, one of the blades exploded - and so did all the other ones, one by one, like dominos falling.

“This is...!”



Berial staggered back as Dante looked at him with a pleased grin.

“In the end, we’re all satisfied... And you are set free.”

Berial’s body was completely engulfed by the explosion to the sound of Dante’s inane babble.

How could he not foresee this when he realized what had happened to Lucifer?

He’d known that Lucifer had the ability to make anything explode - yet he’d been so consumed

by his own thoughts, and then the rage about what had happened to him, that he completely

forgot to think rationally for the battle.

Berial fell to the ground after the last explosion - he still had not fully recovered from his other fight

from before, but that was no excuse. He had to acknowledge Dante’s strength - he would have

won even without using Lucifer.



“If you go back with your tail between your legs, I’ll let you leave, you know.”

Dante had said.

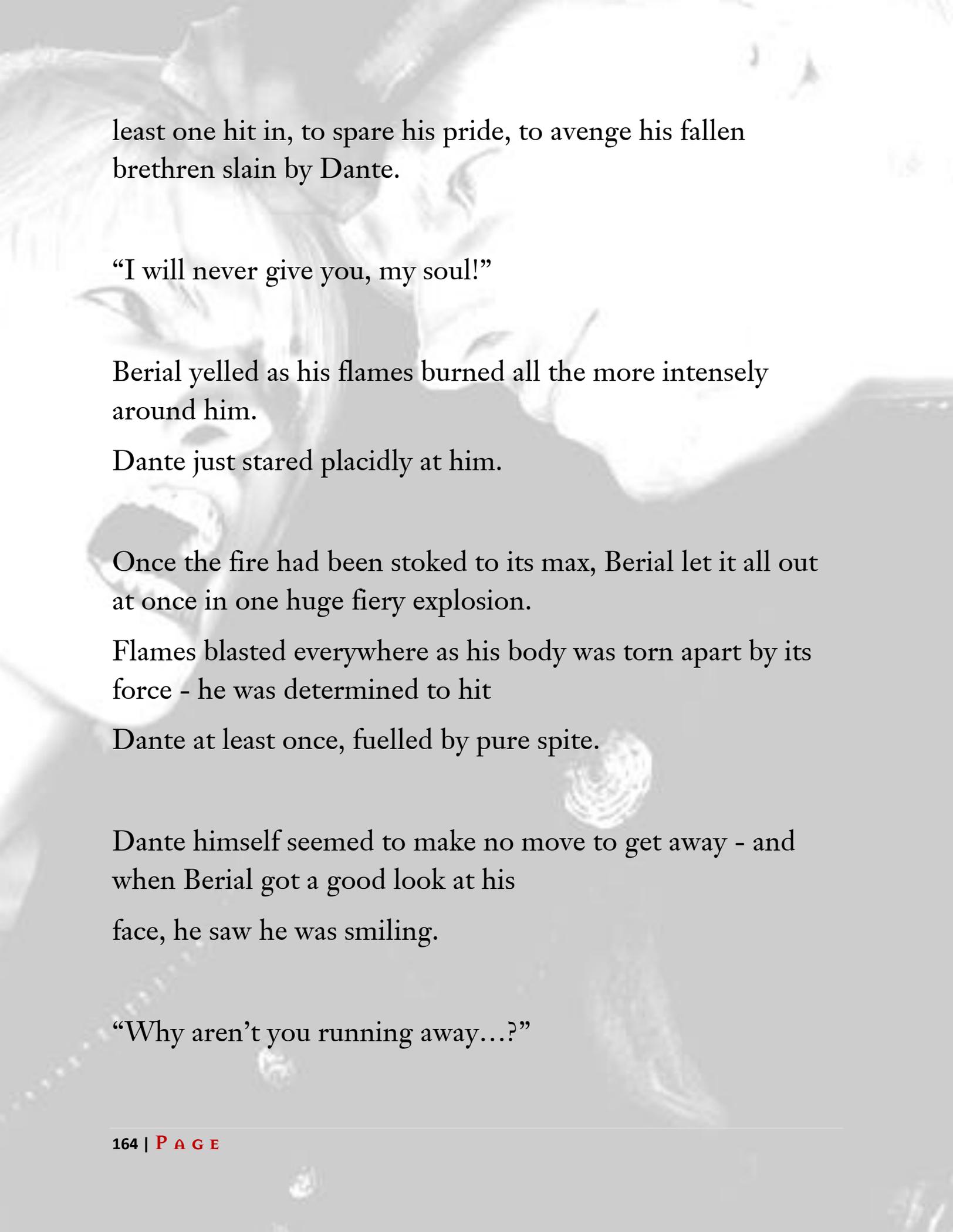
Berial finally got how Lucifer had been turned into a devil arm - this man just could not be defeated.

But he couldn’t let him have the satisfaction of giving in - he had too much pride for that.

If he let himself surrender, he, too, would be turned into a devil arm - his own soul had already admitted defeat. There would be no fate more humiliating than that.

“I’ve retreated once and will not do so again.”

Berial leaned on his sword like it was a cane, staring at Dante in front of him. He had to get at



least one hit in, to spare his pride, to avenge his fallen brethren slain by Dante.

“I will never give you, my soul!”

Berial yelled as his flames burned all the more intensely around him.

Dante just stared placidly at him.

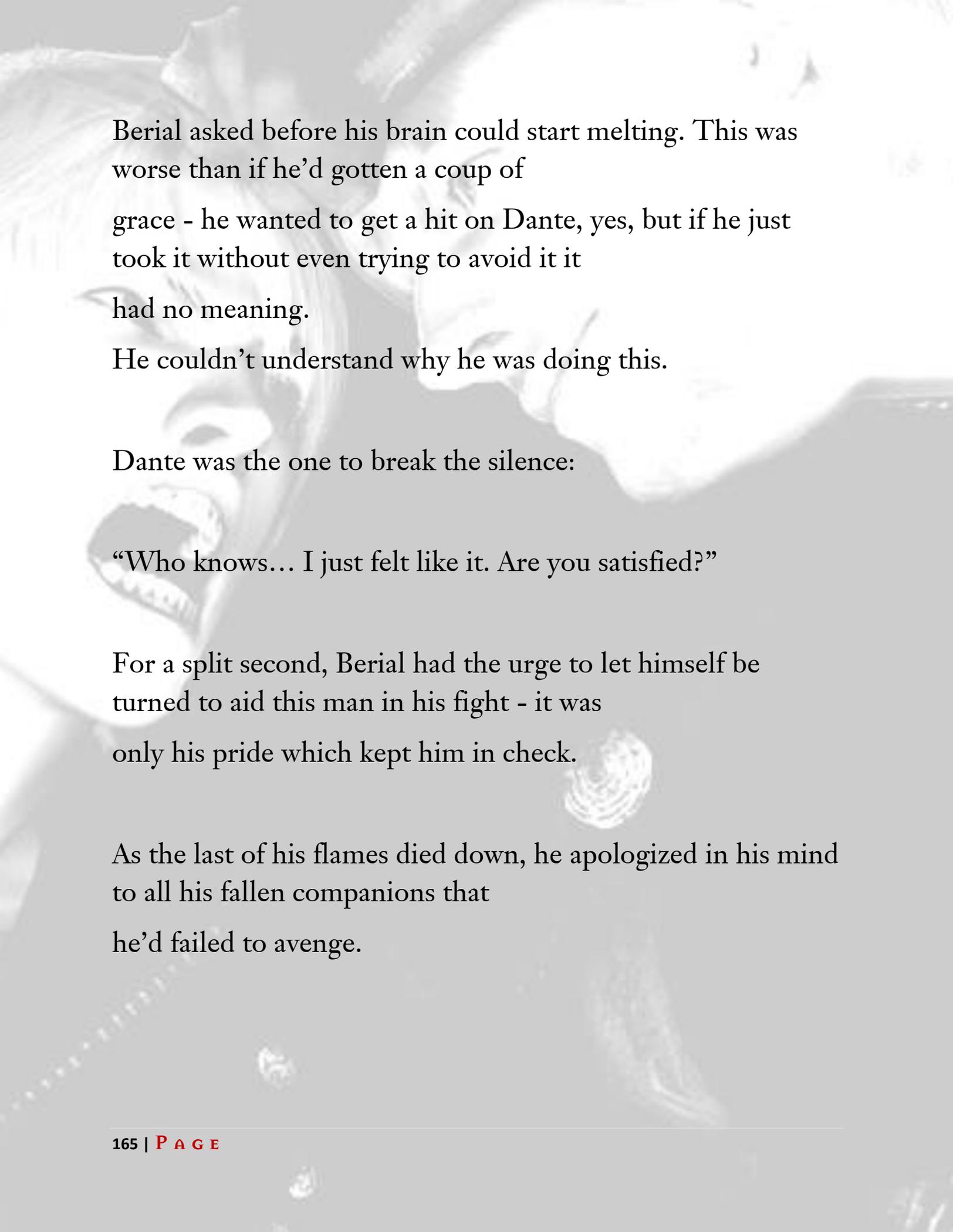
Once the fire had been stoked to its max, Berial let it all out at once in one huge fiery explosion.

Flames blasted everywhere as his body was torn apart by its force - he was determined to hit

Dante at least once, fuelled by pure spite.

Dante himself seemed to make no move to get away - and when Berial got a good look at his face, he saw he was smiling.

“Why aren’t you running away...?”



Berial asked before his brain could start melting. This was worse than if he'd gotten a coup of grace - he wanted to get a hit on Dante, yes, but if he just took it without even trying to avoid it it had no meaning.

He couldn't understand why he was doing this.

Dante was the one to break the silence:

“Who knows... I just felt like it. Are you satisfied?”

For a split second, Berial had the urge to let himself be turned to aid this man in his fight - it was only his pride which kept him in check.

As the last of his flames died down, he apologized in his mind to all his fallen companions that he'd failed to avenge.



After defeating the demon named Berial, Dante quickly destroyed the gate and looked up to the savior floating in the distance.

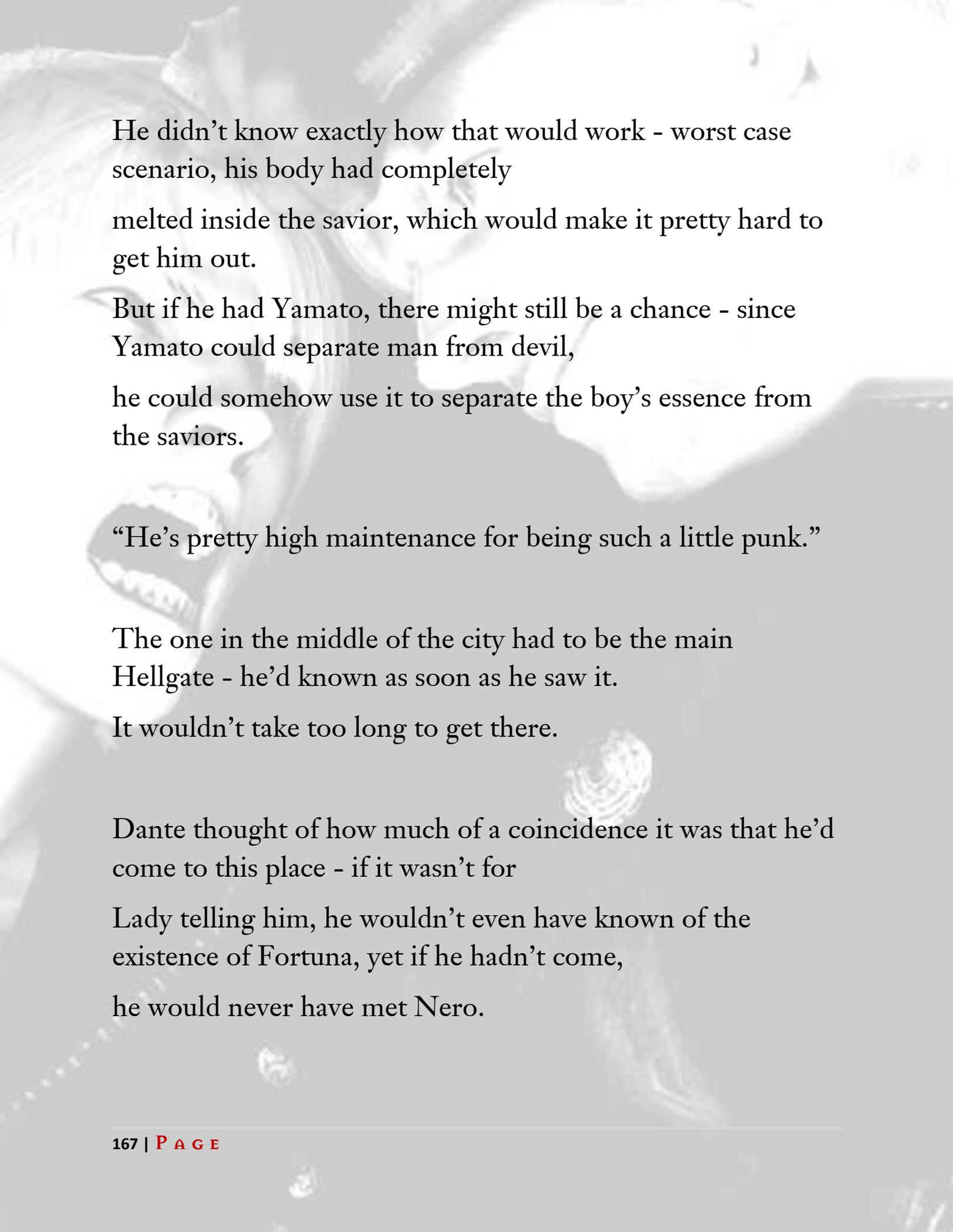
It was pretty far away, and Dante held up his hand to it, closing his fist as if he were trying to crush it.

“You don't look so big from where I'm standing.”

Now that he'd gotten back the devil arms from the gates, all that was left were the last two - one of which was stuck in the savior's body.

“Now it's just you and me, Mr. Savior.”

Yamato had opened the Hellgate, and he had to get it back fast - not just to close the gate, but also, to save Nero, who was trapped inside the savior.



He didn't know exactly how that would work - worst case scenario, his body had completely melted inside the savior, which would make it pretty hard to get him out.

But if he had Yamato, there might still be a chance - since Yamato could separate man from devil, he could somehow use it to separate the boy's essence from the saviors.

“He's pretty high maintenance for being such a little punk.”

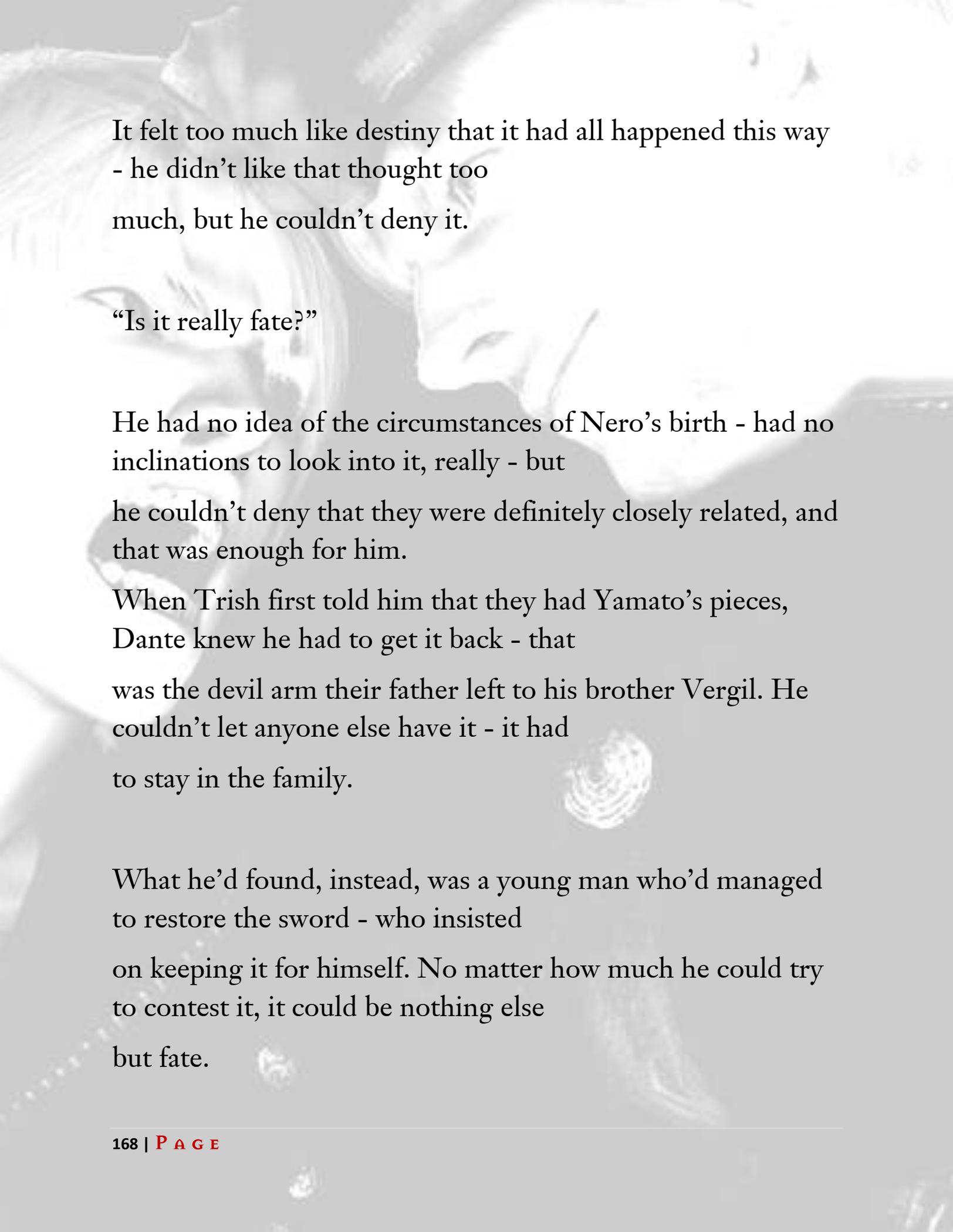
The one in the middle of the city had to be the main Hellgate - he'd known as soon as he saw it.

It wouldn't take too long to get there.

Dante thought of how much of a coincidence it was that he'd come to this place - if it wasn't for

Lady telling him, he wouldn't even have known of the existence of Fortuna, yet if he hadn't come,

he would never have met Nero.



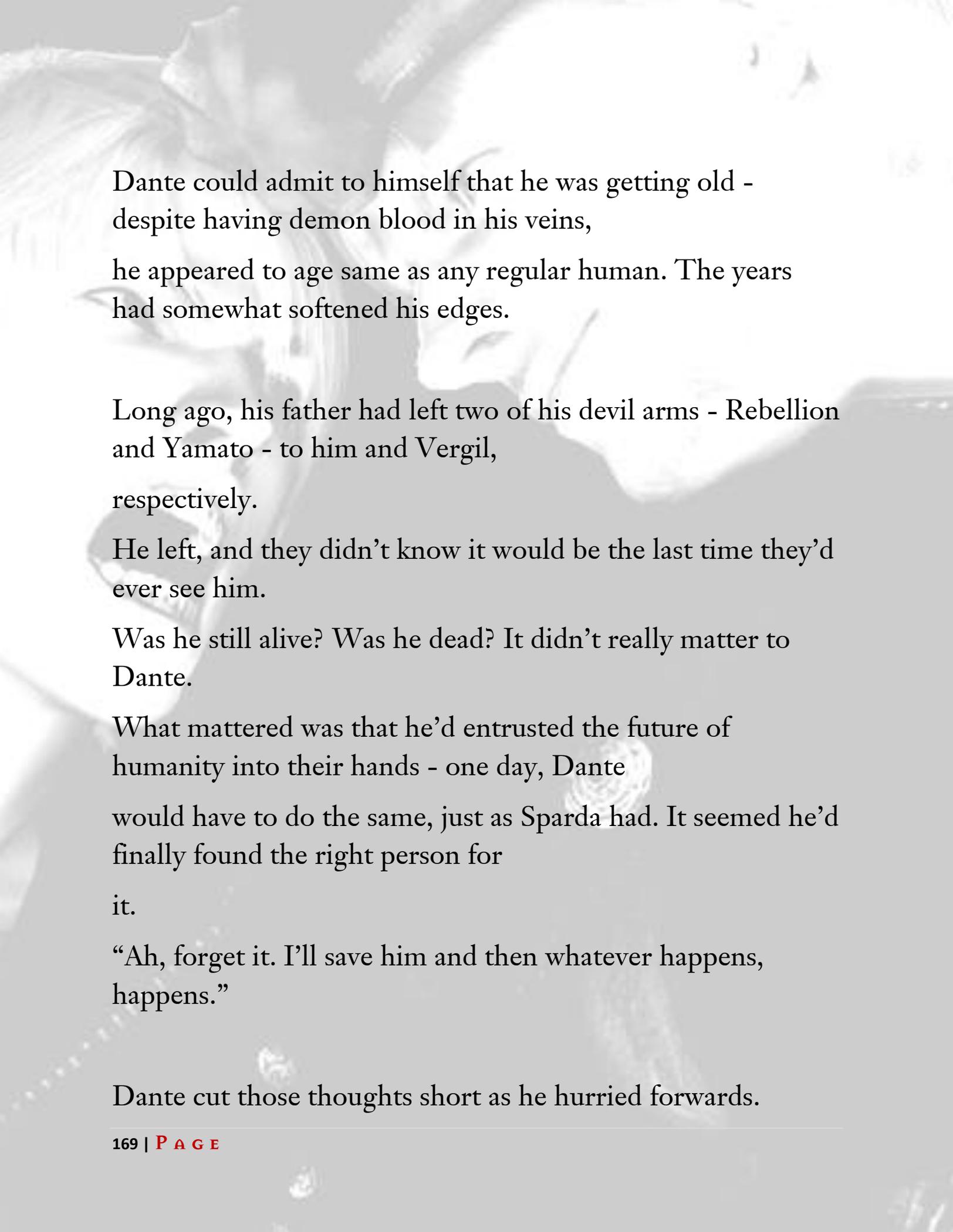
It felt too much like destiny that it had all happened this way - he didn't like that thought too much, but he couldn't deny it.

“Is it really fate?”

He had no idea of the circumstances of Nero's birth - had no inclinations to look into it, really - but he couldn't deny that they were definitely closely related, and that was enough for him.

When Trish first told him that they had Yamato's pieces, Dante knew he had to get it back - that was the devil arm their father left to his brother Vergil. He couldn't let anyone else have it - it had to stay in the family.

What he'd found, instead, was a young man who'd managed to restore the sword - who insisted on keeping it for himself. No matter how much he could try to contest it, it could be nothing else but fate.



Dante could admit to himself that he was getting old - despite having demon blood in his veins, he appeared to age same as any regular human. The years had somewhat softened his edges.

Long ago, his father had left two of his devil arms - Rebellion and Yamato - to him and Vergil, respectively.

He left, and they didn't know it would be the last time they'd ever see him.

Was he still alive? Was he dead? It didn't really matter to Dante.

What mattered was that he'd entrusted the future of humanity into their hands - one day, Dante would have to do the same, just as Sparda had. It seemed he'd finally found the right person for it.

“Ah, forget it. I'll save him and then whatever happens, happens.”

Dante cut those thoughts short as he hurried forwards.



Once he'd unlocked the Hellgate, Agnus stood waiting for Dante in the Opera House - as long as he was headed for the Savior he'd pass through there, that much he was certain of.

The Savior was complete, the Hellgate was open, and now they only had Dante left to take care of - which should be child's play for the completed Savior, but Agnus still wanted to defeat him by himself.

He wouldn't even have dared to think about it before, he'd analyzed Dante's powers enough to know how spectacularly bad that idea would have been.

But things were different now - the Hellgate was open, after all.

Agnus' main power was the ability to leech off demonic energy from other entities - it had been essentially useless up to that point, due to just how few natural sources of demonic energy there are in the human world, and the demons summoned from the fake hellgates all being lower classes.

With the Hellgate open, though, the entire island was brimming with demonic energy - almost like being in the underworld itself. Agnus didn't even have to do a thing, just sit around and wait for his body to soak up the energy.

“It's all so wondrous!”

Agnus smiled as he felt the demonic energy accumulating within him - at this rate, he could possibly even defeat Dante - and even if he couldn't, well... he could always absorb his energy

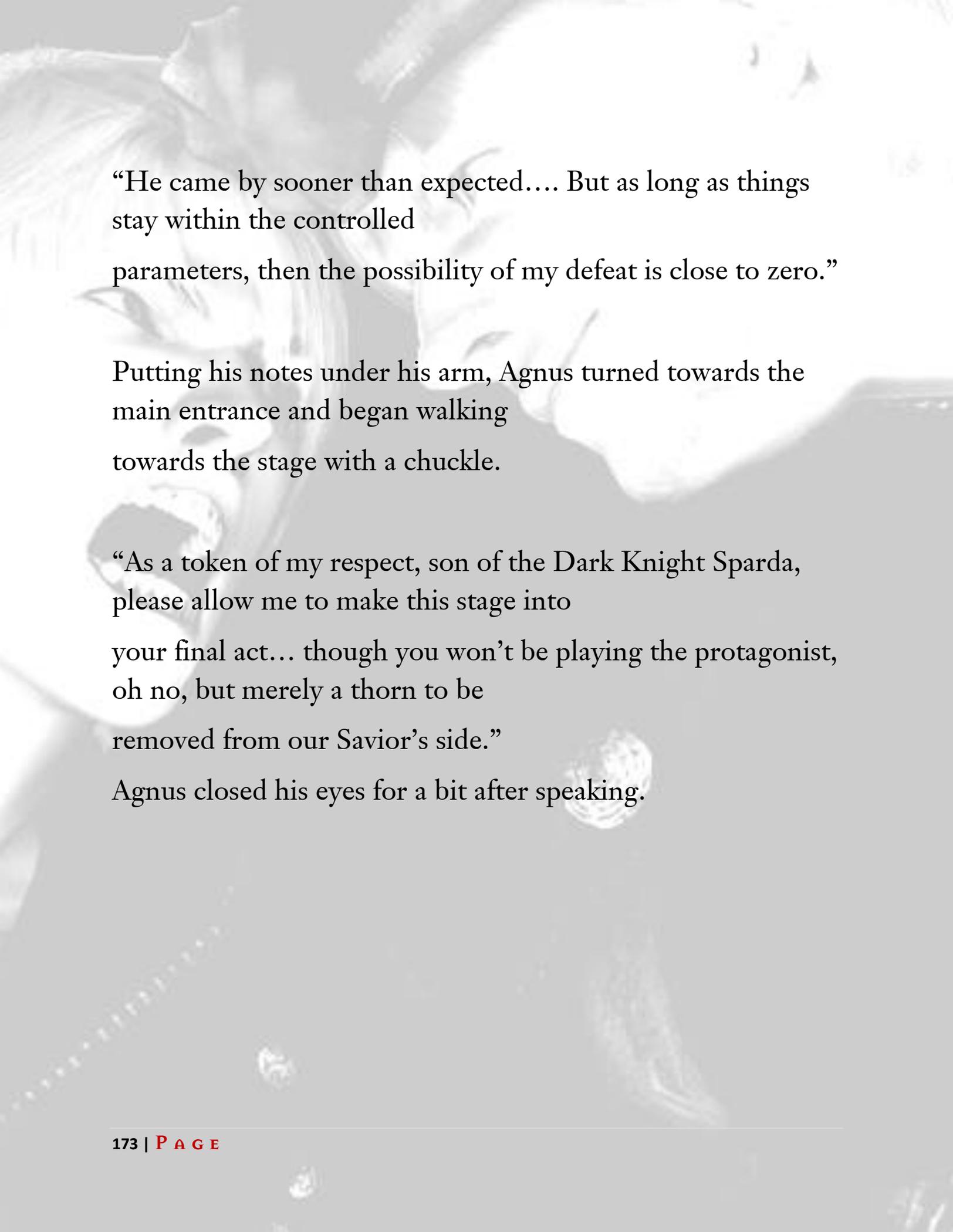
and grow even stronger.

“Then... with that in mind, I should probably calculate the percentage of my chances of winning...”

Agnus had taken on his angelic form to better absorb the demonic energy, but he turned back into his human appearance so that he could take his beloved notepad out of his breast pocket to begin scribbling calculations on it.

He had put up a warding around the Opera House, so that lesser demons couldn't enter, but his rapidly approaching enemy was strong enough to break through it with ease - that much he could tell even without feeling his presence yet.

Agnus closed the notepad when he felt something break through the ward and enter the Opera House - indeed, the only one with that kind of power could only be Dante himself.



“He came by sooner than expected.... But as long as things stay within the controlled parameters, then the possibility of my defeat is close to zero.”

Putting his notes under his arm, Agnus turned towards the main entrance and began walking towards the stage with a chuckle.

“As a token of my respect, son of the Dark Knight Sparda, please allow me to make this stage into your final act... though you won’t be playing the protagonist, oh no, but merely a thorn to be removed from our Savior’s side.”

Agnus closed his eyes for a bit after speaking.



A beam of light nearly blinded Dante as he walked into the theatre that was ripe with the stench of demons - it wasn't a regular room light, but a spotlight meant for on stage performances.

A man stood on the stage illuminated by the dazzling lights; his head downcast as if he had forgotten his lines.

Dante immediately recognized him from Trish's description - that had to be Agnus, the Order's head Alchemist.

He was a tall man - though you almost couldn't tell due to his pronounced hunch - with dark skin, a unique hairstyle and wearing a very impractical looking monocle.

Agnus looked like he was completely unaware of Dante's arrival as he began talking to himself -

Dante wasn't one for sneak attacks, so he didn't try to mask his presence, instead walking up to the stage with his back straight.

His footsteps echoed on the old wooden floor, and the place's enhanced acoustics made them even louder - and yet, Agnus did not look his way. Dante stopped to think about it.

It was impossible that he hadn't noticed him by now, but why was he ignoring him? Agnus was vulnerable and easy to sneak up on like this, yet he continued on without a care in the world.

Dante couldn't help but listen in on his monologue.

“Humans... They are but stubborn and foolish.”

Agnus held up a human skull in his hand as he slowly turned back, as if he were delivering a line from a play.

Dante looked around the dark theatre, the only source of light pointing at Agnus - so, was he trying to paint himself as the main character while Dante stood in the darkness?

He thought he'd finally realized what must be going on in his head.

He must have assigned Dante the character of a villain who, tired of being ignored, stalks up to

forcefully take his place on the stage, and for that reason he'd been pretending he wasn't there, and he somehow must've been confident enough to show his back, unafraid of the possibility of getting attacked.

Dante chuckled, also turning his back to Agnus - he wasn't opposed to the idea of playing along for a bit.

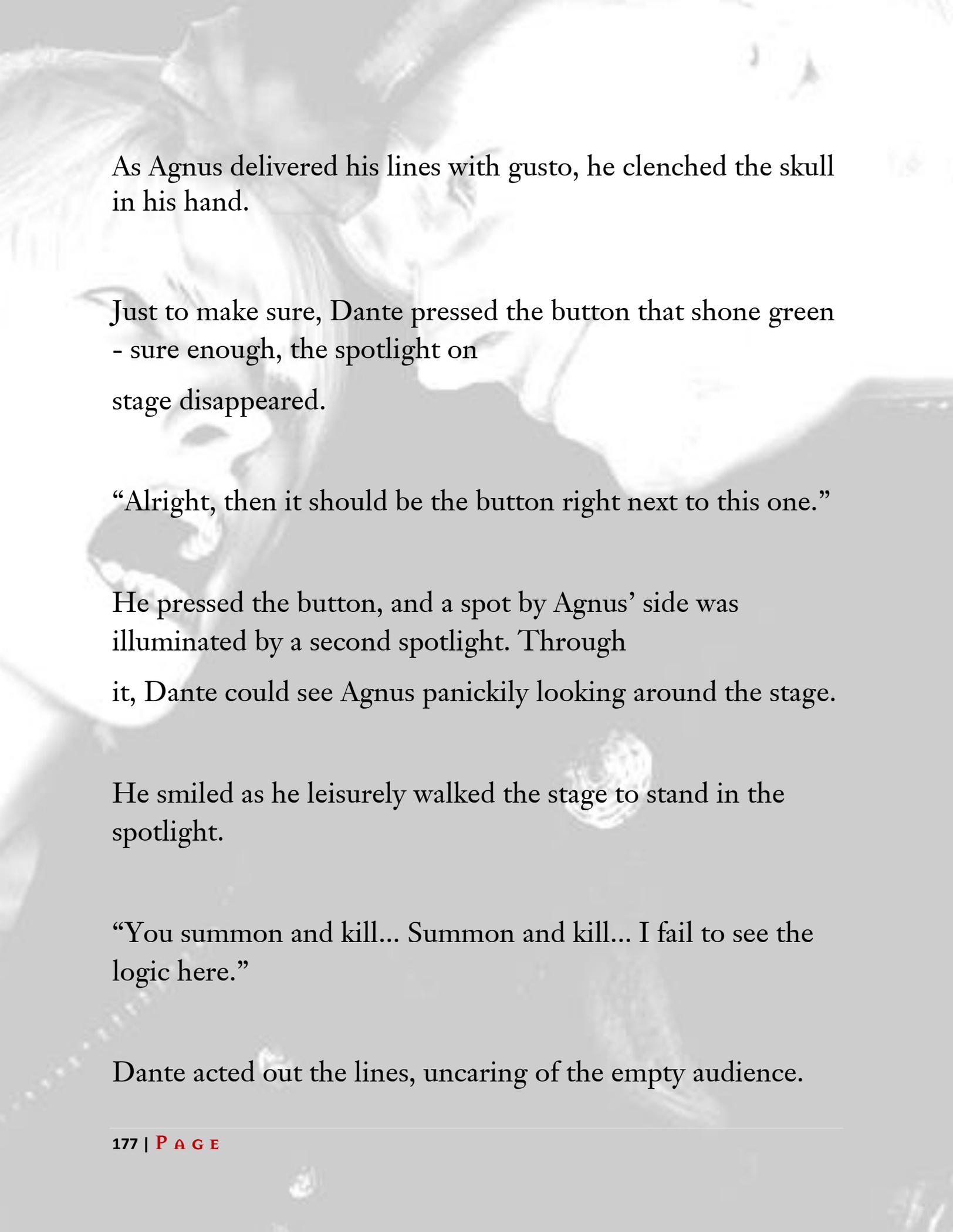
He walked to the end of the stage with light steps - theatres had all sorts of light setups, right?

There must be another spotlight or two that he could use - but as he looked at the lighting panel, only one of the spotlights was greenlit, the one that currently illuminated Agnus. He could shut it off, sure, but where was the fun in cutting his little show short? He would still make him understand that he was full of shit by the end of it, but he didn't want to ruin his fun quite so soon.

“Damn, I didn't think this through.”

Dante muttered as Agnus twirled around the stage.

“It takes a journey to Hell for them to accept and praise their God. A fact that tickle's irony's judgment.”



As Agnus delivered his lines with gusto, he clenched the skull in his hand.

Just to make sure, Dante pressed the button that shone green - sure enough, the spotlight on stage disappeared.

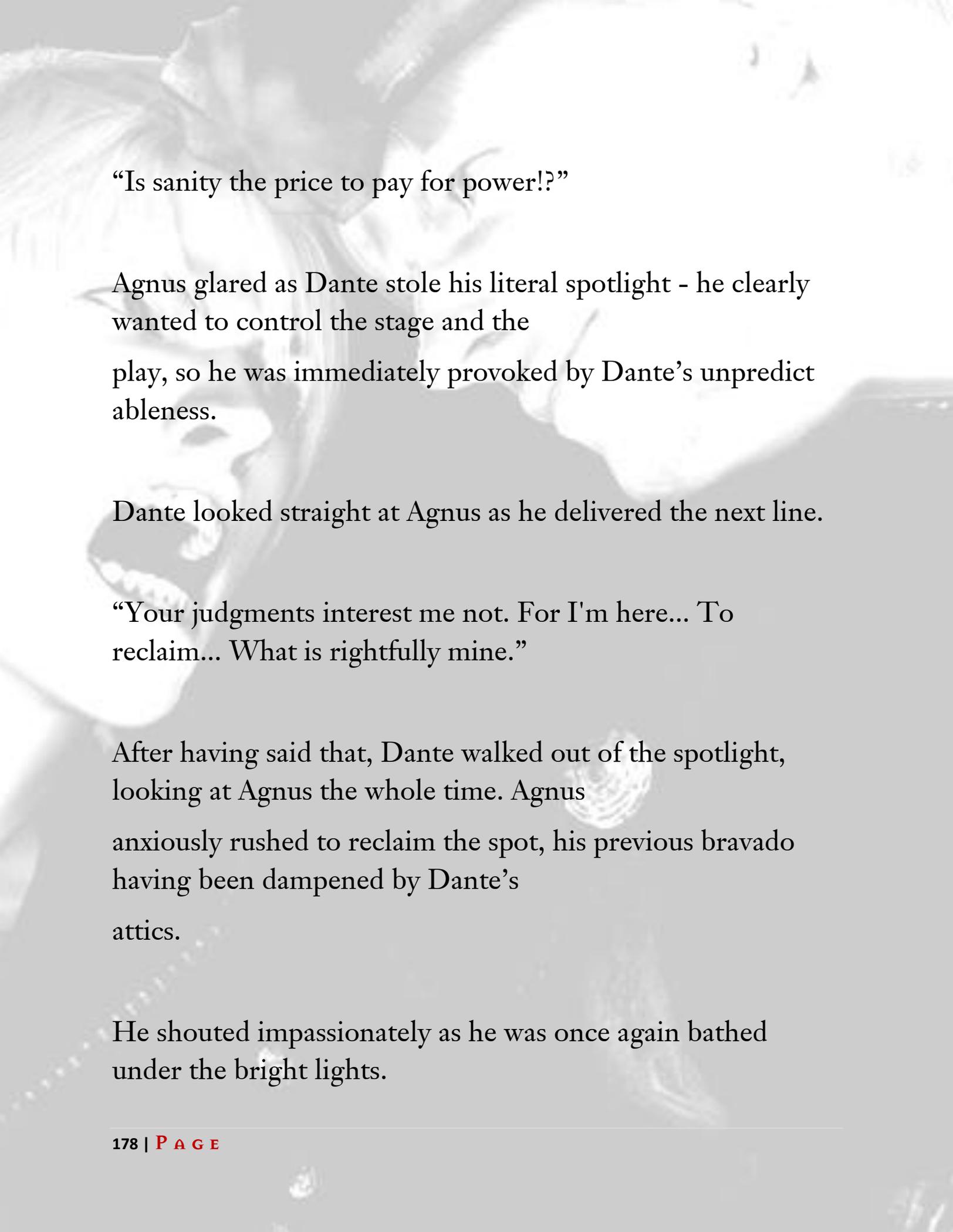
“Alright, then it should be the button right next to this one.”

He pressed the button, and a spot by Agnus’ side was illuminated by a second spotlight. Through it, Dante could see Agnus panickily looking around the stage.

He smiled as he leisurely walked the stage to stand in the spotlight.

“You summon and kill... Summon and kill... I fail to see the logic here.”

Dante acted out the lines, uncaring of the empty audience.



“Is sanity the price to pay for power!?”

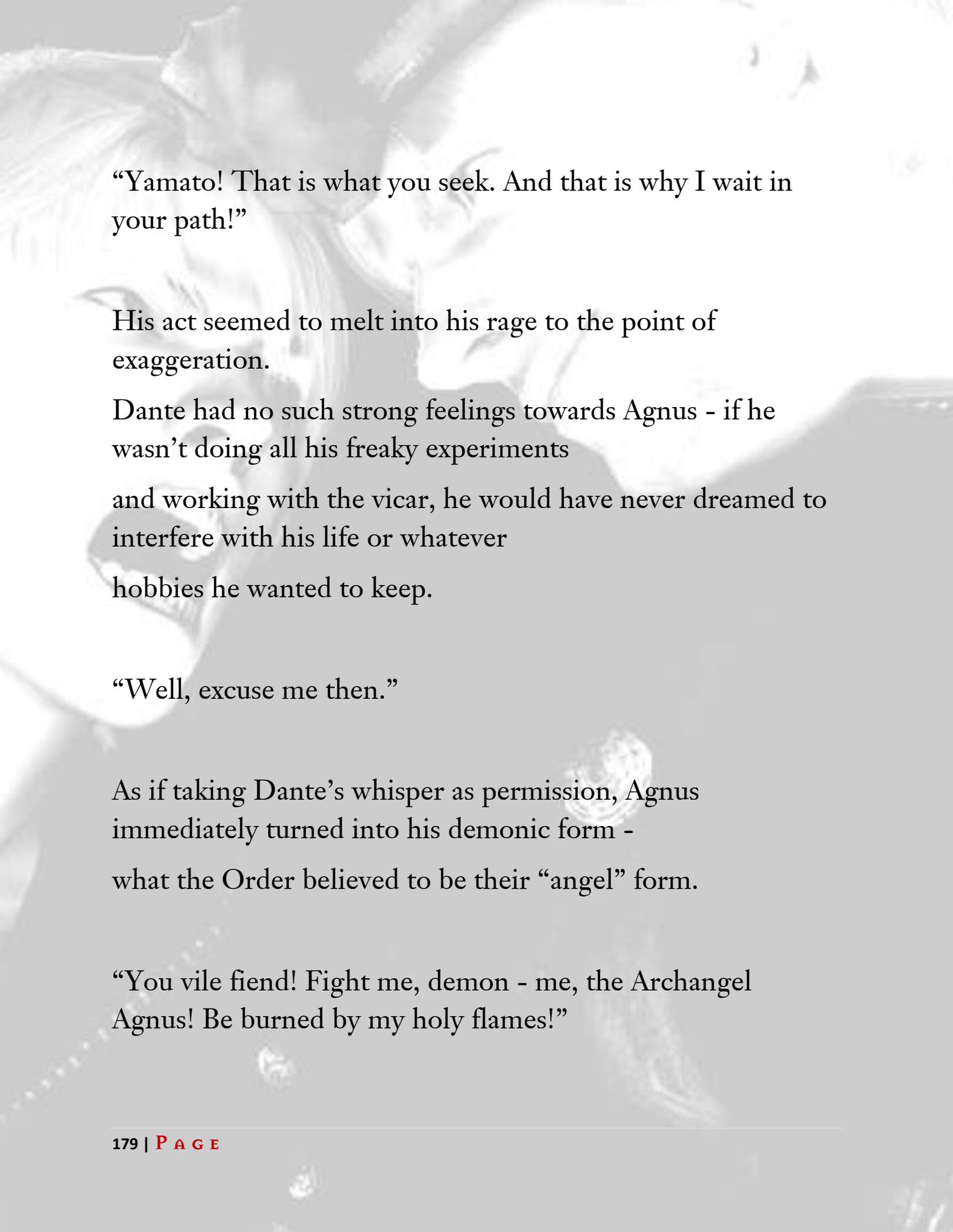
Agnus glared as Dante stole his literal spotlight - he clearly wanted to control the stage and the play, so he was immediately provoked by Dante’s unpredictableness.

Dante looked straight at Agnus as he delivered the next line.

“Your judgments interest me not. For I’m here... To reclaim... What is rightfully mine.”

After having said that, Dante walked out of the spotlight, looking at Agnus the whole time. Agnus anxiously rushed to reclaim the spot, his previous bravado having been dampened by Dante’s antics.

He shouted impassionately as he was once again bathed under the bright lights.



“Yamato! That is what you seek. And that is why I wait in your path!”

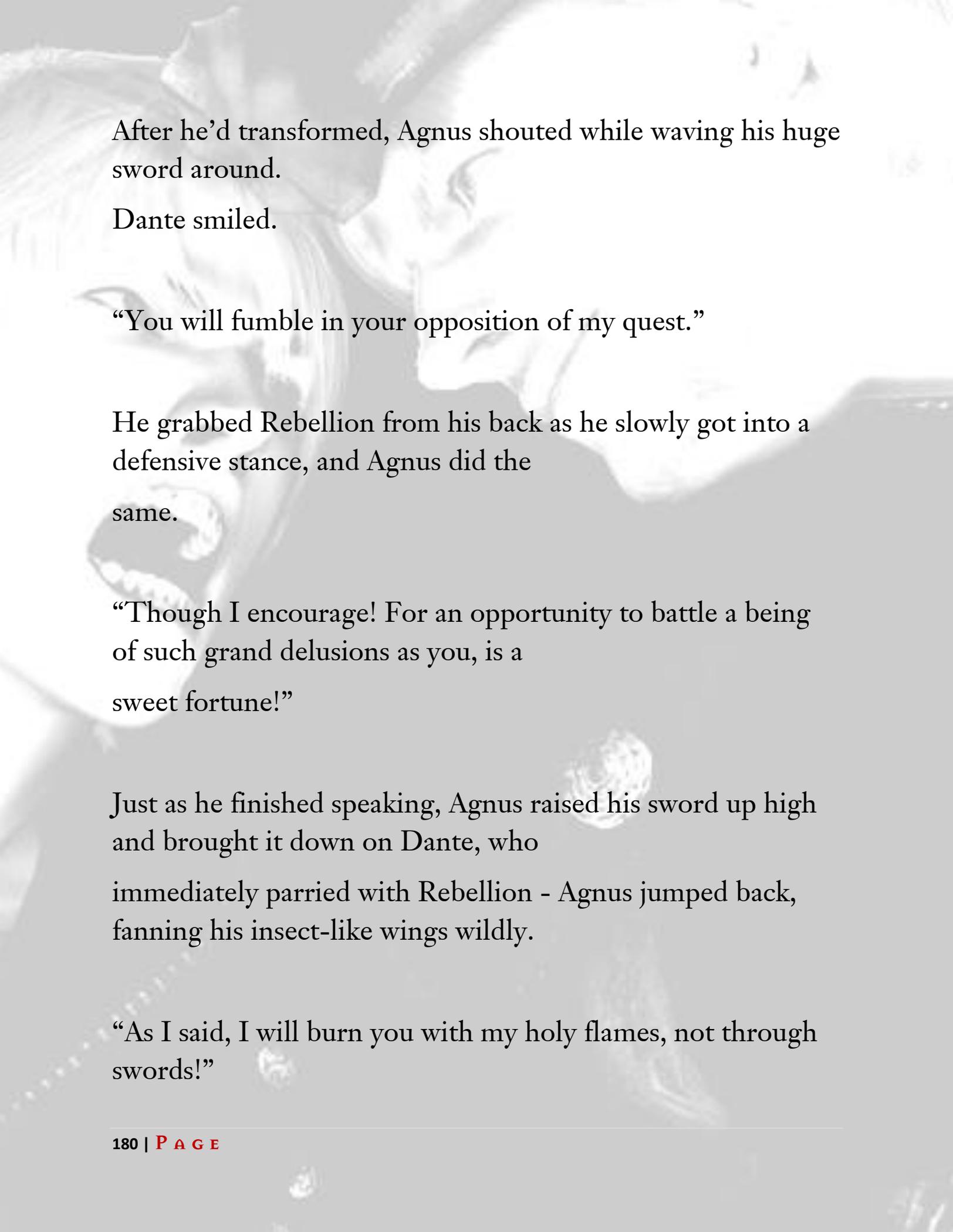
His act seemed to melt into his rage to the point of exaggeration.

Dante had no such strong feelings towards Agnus - if he wasn't doing all his freaky experiments and working with the vicar, he would have never dreamed to interfere with his life or whatever hobbies he wanted to keep.

“Well, excuse me then.”

As if taking Dante's whisper as permission, Agnus immediately turned into his demonic form - what the Order believed to be their “angel” form.

“You vile fiend! Fight me, demon - me, the Archangel Agnus! Be burned by my holy flames!”



After he'd transformed, Agnus shouted while waving his huge sword around.

Dante smiled.

“You will fumble in your opposition of my quest.”

He grabbed Rebellion from his back as he slowly got into a defensive stance, and Agnus did the same.

“Though I encourage! For an opportunity to battle a being of such grand delusions as you, is a sweet fortune!”

Just as he finished speaking, Agnus raised his sword up high and brought it down on Dante, who immediately parried with Rebellion - Agnus jumped back, fanning his insect-like wings wildly.

“As I said, I will burn you with my holy flames, not through swords!”



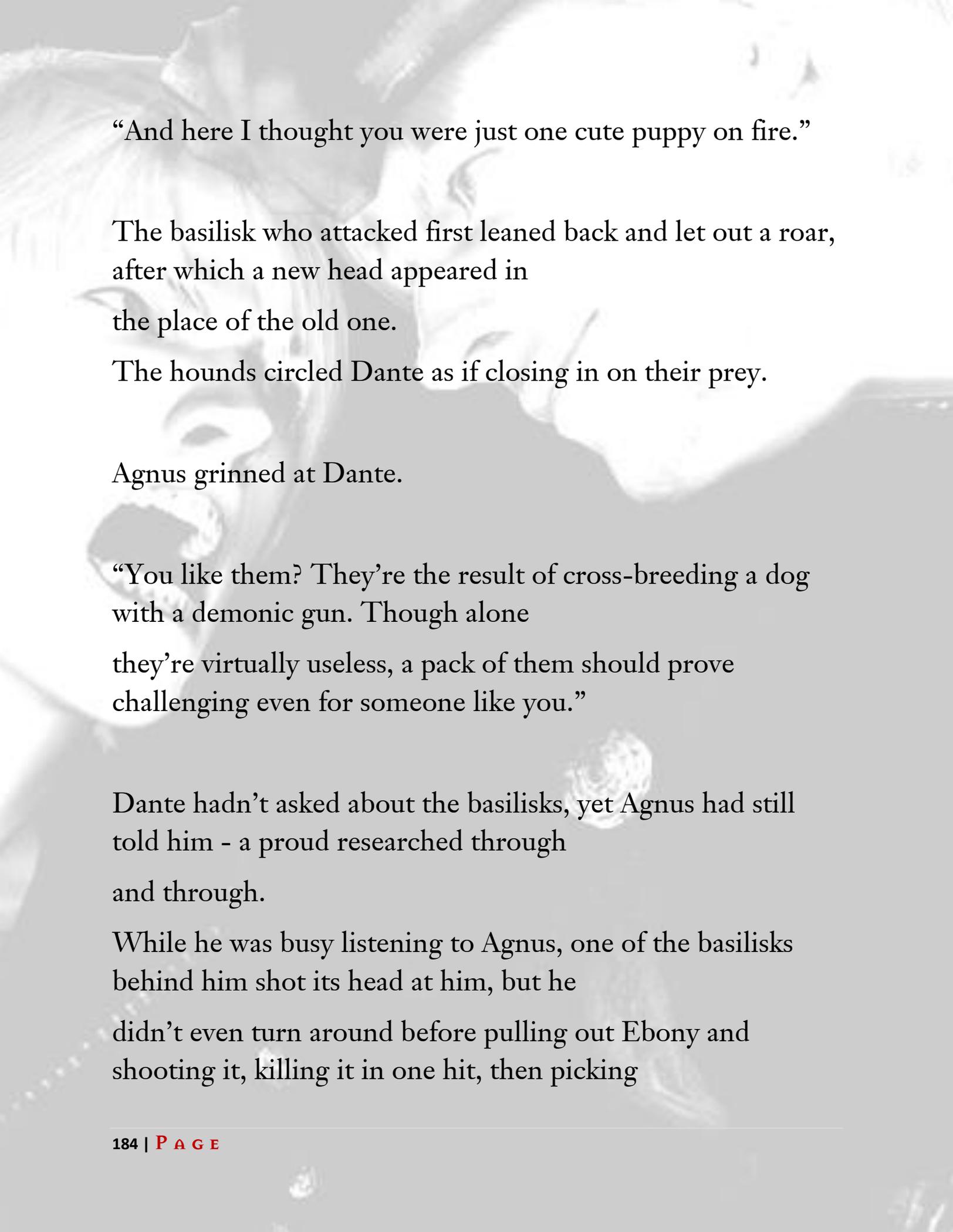


He yelled almost as if making up excuses as he folded in on himself while in mid-air - at the same time, strange lights began shining from behind his wings, not too dissimilar from the light of a hellgate when a demon passes through it.

As Agnus shouted out, four things shot out from the lights - they were vaguely dog shaped demons, with fire coming out from their heads. One of the creatures - a Basilisk - cried out in Dante's direction before shooting its detachable, flaming head right at him.

“Oh?”

Though he easily blocked the first two with Rebellion, he had to use his arms to protect his body from the other two - they didn't do a whole lot of damage, but their fire had singed the sleeves of Dante's coat, and he quickly put it out with his hands.



“And here I thought you were just one cute puppy on fire.”

The basilisk who attacked first leaned back and let out a roar, after which a new head appeared in the place of the old one.

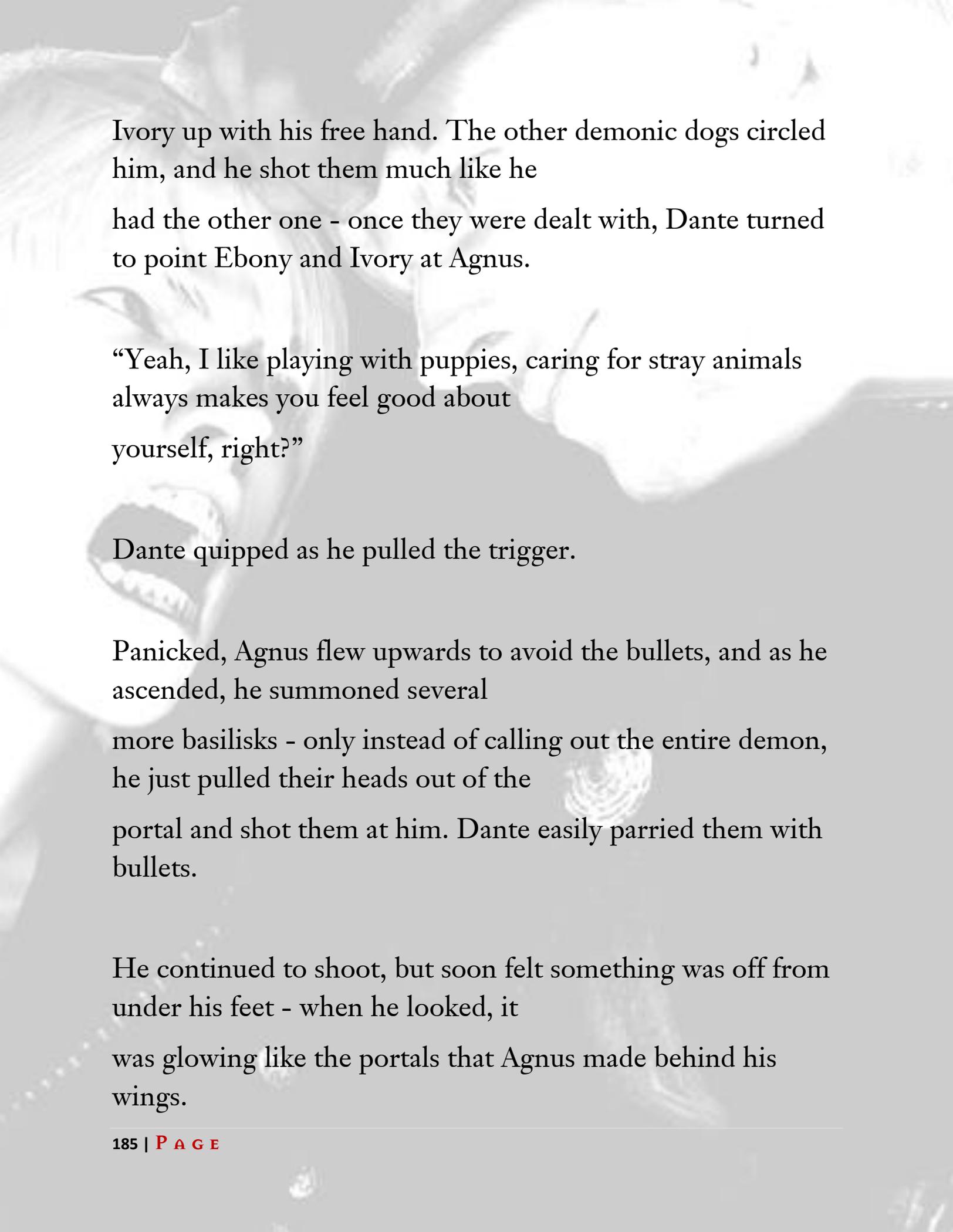
The hounds circled Dante as if closing in on their prey.

Agnus grinned at Dante.

“You like them? They’re the result of cross-breeding a dog with a demonic gun. Though alone they’re virtually useless, a pack of them should prove challenging even for someone like you.”

Dante hadn’t asked about the basilisks, yet Agnus had still told him - a proud researched through and through.

While he was busy listening to Agnus, one of the basilisks behind him shot its head at him, but he didn’t even turn around before pulling out Ebony and shooting it, killing it in one hit, then picking



Ivory up with his free hand. The other demonic dogs circled him, and he shot them much like he had the other one - once they were dealt with, Dante turned to point Ebony and Ivory at Agnus.

“Yeah, I like playing with puppies, caring for stray animals always makes you feel good about yourself, right?”

Dante quipped as he pulled the trigger.

Panicked, Agnus flew upwards to avoid the bullets, and as he ascended, he summoned several more basilisks - only instead of calling out the entire demon, he just pulled their heads out of the portal and shot them at him. Dante easily parried them with bullets.

He continued to shoot, but soon felt something was off from under his feet - when he looked, it was glowing like the portals that Agnus made behind his wings.

He quickly jumped back just as a few fish-shaped demons leaped out from the floor.

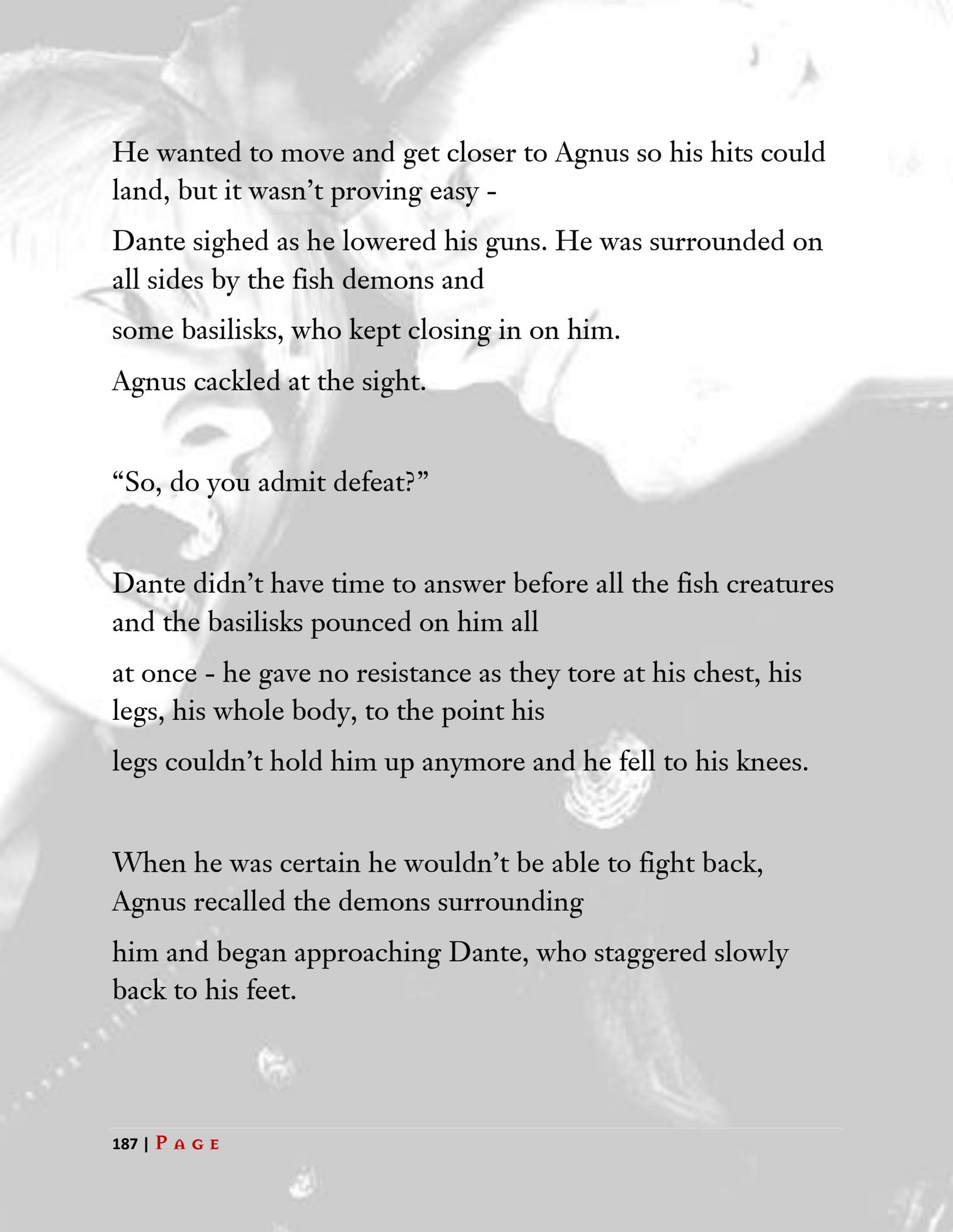
They had a fin on their back like sharks, only the ends were razor sharp like a blade - another of Agnus' creations, it seemed.

“First puppies, now sharks... what are you, a zookeeper?”

The creatures jumped up in the air before burrowing into the ground, their dorsal fins the only indication of where they were at that moment. Dante shot at them, but the exposed part was tougher than it looked, and the bullets just bounced off.

“Don't you belittle the fruits of my labour!”

Dante ignored the bladed fishes to fire at Agnus, but he quickly managed to rise out of the way of his bullets.



He wanted to move and get closer to Agnus so his hits could land, but it wasn't proving easy -

Dante sighed as he lowered his guns. He was surrounded on all sides by the fish demons and some basilisks, who kept closing in on him.

Agnus cackled at the sight.

“So, do you admit defeat?”

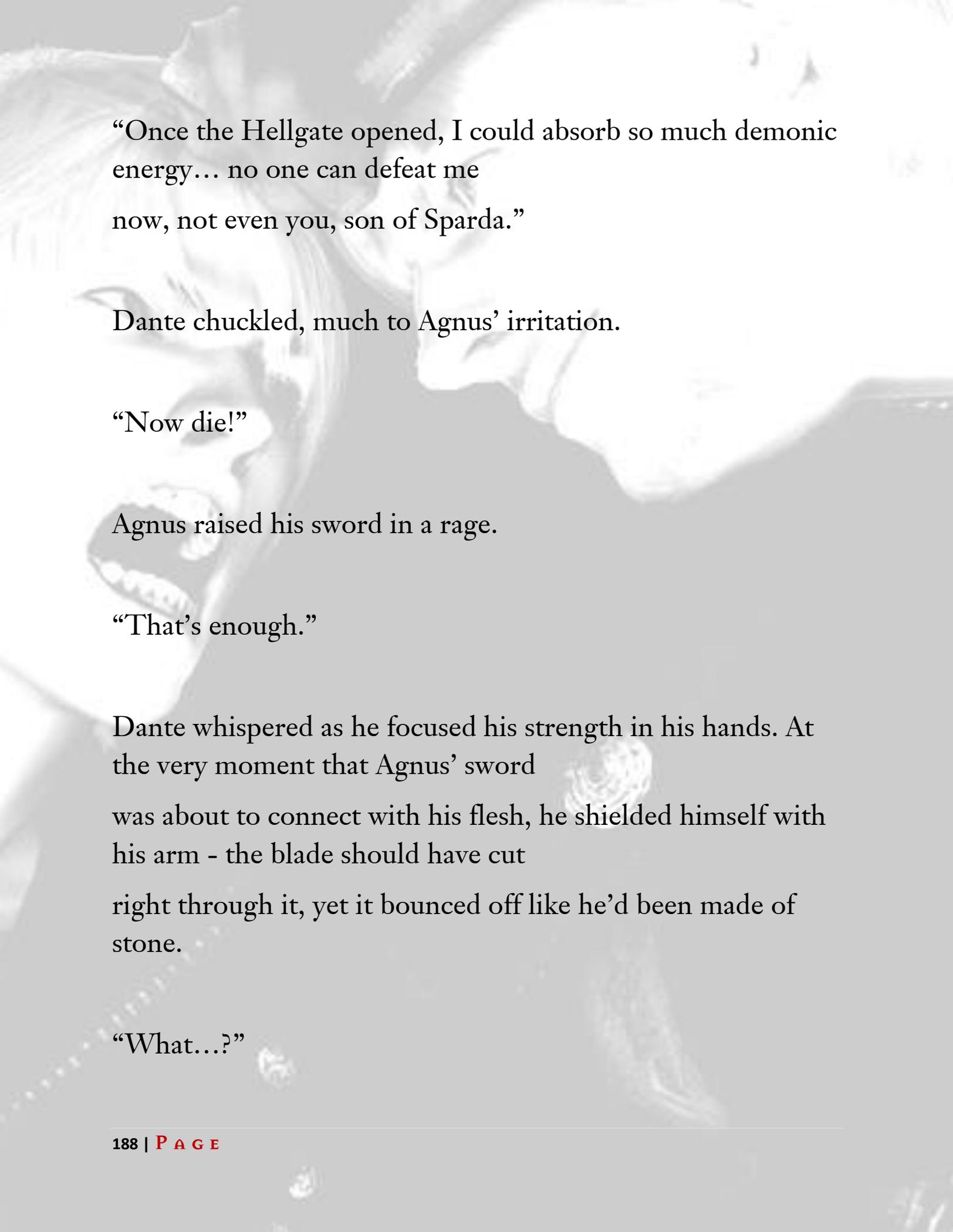
Dante didn't have time to answer before all the fish creatures and the basilisks pounced on him all

at once - he gave no resistance as they tore at his chest, his legs, his whole body, to the point his

legs couldn't hold him up anymore and he fell to his knees.

When he was certain he wouldn't be able to fight back, Agnus recalled the demons surrounding

him and began approaching Dante, who staggered slowly back to his feet.



“Once the Hellgate opened, I could absorb so much demonic energy... no one can defeat me now, not even you, son of Sparda.”

Dante chuckled, much to Agnus’ irritation.

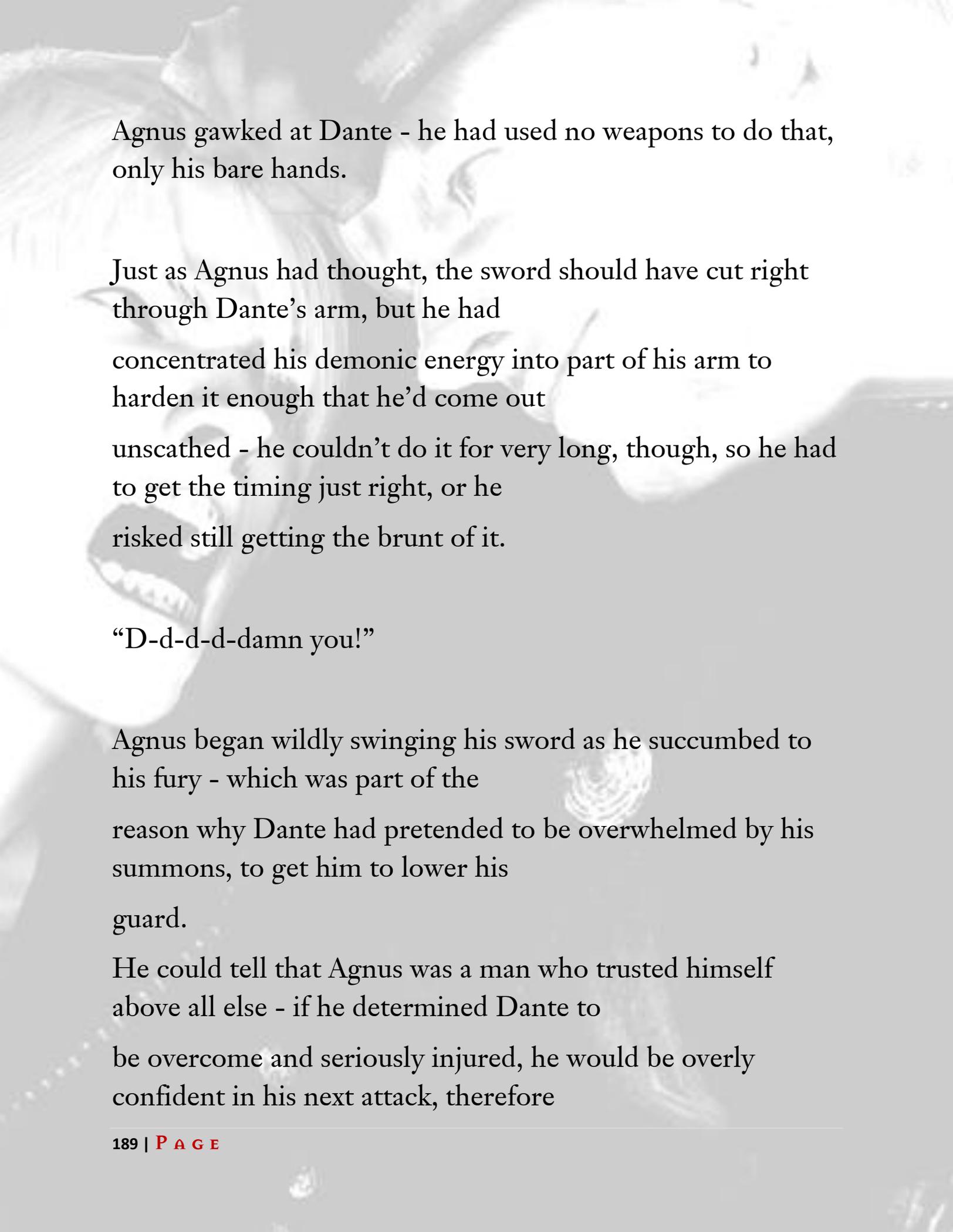
“Now die!”

Agnus raised his sword in a rage.

“That’s enough.”

Dante whispered as he focused his strength in his hands. At the very moment that Agnus’ sword was about to connect with his flesh, he shielded himself with his arm - the blade should have cut right through it, yet it bounced off like he’d been made of stone.

“What...?”



Agnus gawked at Dante - he had used no weapons to do that, only his bare hands.

Just as Agnus had thought, the sword should have cut right through Dante's arm, but he had concentrated his demonic energy into part of his arm to harden it enough that he'd come out unscathed - he couldn't do it for very long, though, so he had to get the timing just right, or he risked still getting the brunt of it.

“D-d-d-d-damn you!”

Agnus began wildly swinging his sword as he succumbed to his fury - which was part of the reason why Dante had pretended to be overwhelmed by his summons, to get him to lower his guard.

He could tell that Agnus was a man who trusted himself above all else - if he determined Dante to be overcome and seriously injured, he would be overly confident in his next attack, therefore

throwing all caution to the wind and relying purely on the offensive.

Through his life, Dante had seen humans do experiments and research on demons and all sorts of other stuff in that ballpark, but never on Agnus' level. He had to commend the guy for that, but he still couldn't classify him as a first-class scientist - he was much too prone to losing his reason to his temper, and he couldn't help but find that a bit pitiful.

“You bastard, you t-t-t-tricked me!”

Agnus shouted as he kept stabbing repeatedly at Dante. If only he could calm down a little, he could stop and analyse Dante's patterns and strategies against him - he could realize that Dante, though he appeared to be standing perfectly still, was also preparing an attack.

“Alright, time to end this.”

As Agnus readied the strongest sword strike, he could muster, Dante took a step forward. It was the same principle of when he'd hardened his arm to shield against Agnus' attack, but this time it was offensive, not defensive.

Just as Agnus' sword was about to hit, Dante slammed his fist into his abdomen, sending all of Agnus' momentum right back to him, cracking right through his hardy exoskeleton.

“You're lucky you're still standing, Mr. Archangel. A regular human would've been pulverized by that, you know?”

Dante pulled back as he spoke to Agnus, who slowly floated down, stock still and seemingly unaware of what had just happened.

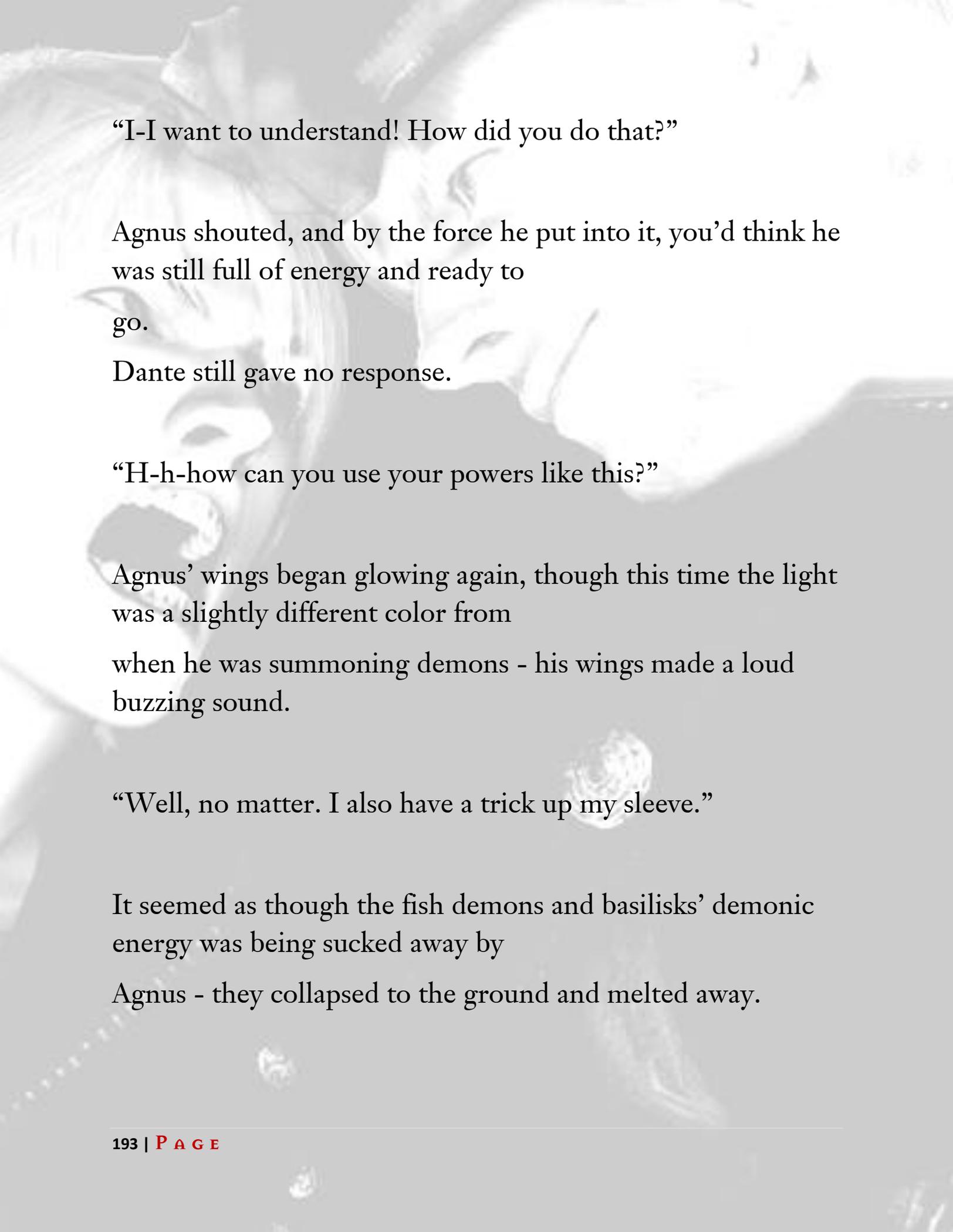
“Hey, did you hear me? You still with me?”

Agnus fell to the ground, and shook as he tried to get back up.

“W-w-w-what just...what happened? Huh?!”

In Agnus’ worldview, he was the genius researcher who could understand anything he put his mind to - that Dante would have made an attack that he wasn’t able to detect was unthinkable. It only took a sixth of a second to completely debilitate him - it was insultingly easy to understand now that it had already happened, but he had never considered the possibility of it. He’d been too conceited about his own strength, or maybe he’d simply dismissed the thought that it could happen so fast.

Though Agnus’ body had already begun crumbling, he flew up into the air towards Dante, who merely stared at him in silence.



“I-I want to understand! How did you do that?”

Agnus shouted, and by the force he put into it, you’d think he was still full of energy and ready to go.

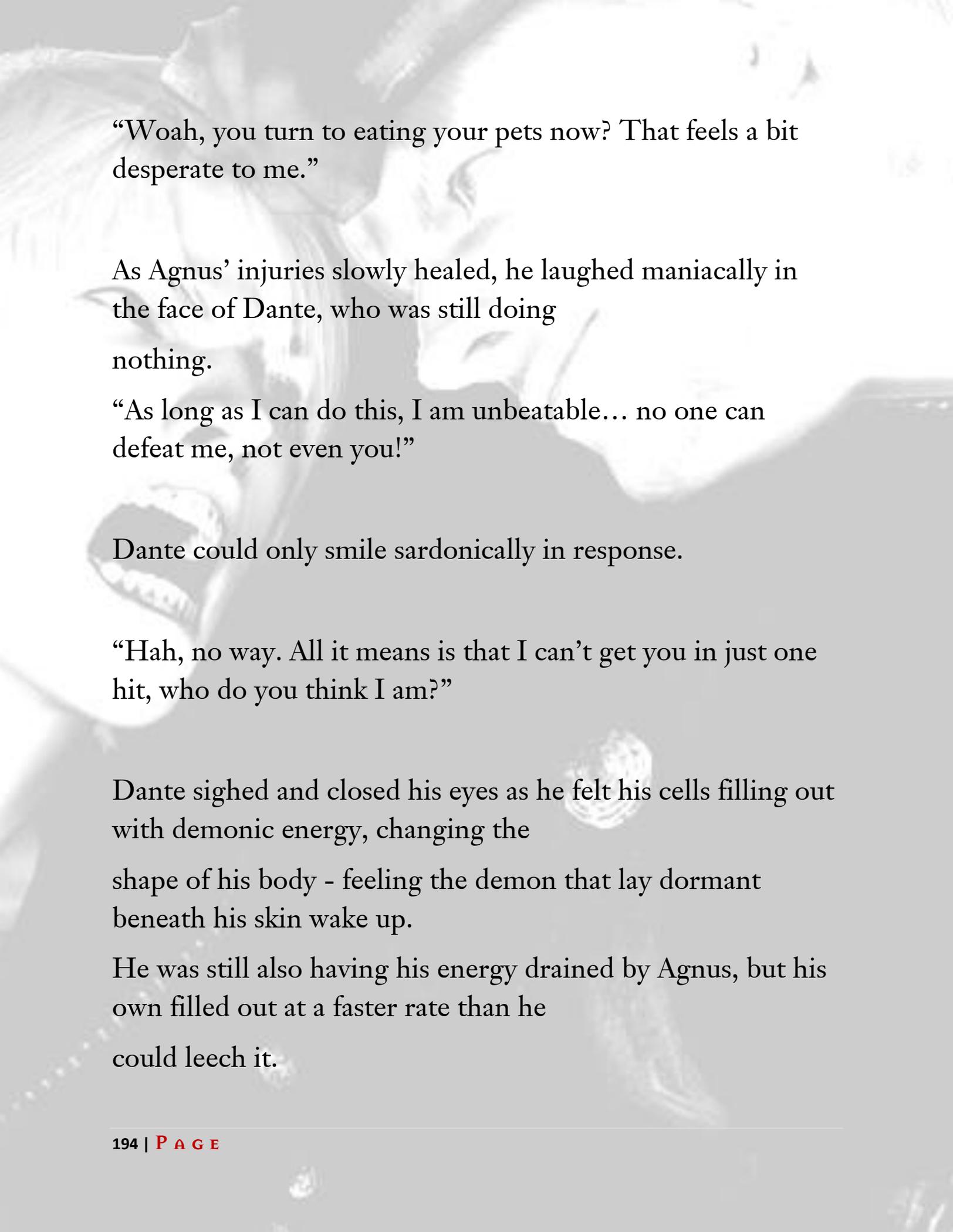
Dante still gave no response.

“H-h-how can you use your powers like this?”

Agnus’ wings began glowing again, though this time the light was a slightly different color from when he was summoning demons - his wings made a loud buzzing sound.

“Well, no matter. I also have a trick up my sleeve.”

It seemed as though the fish demons and basilisks’ demonic energy was being sucked away by Agnus - they collapsed to the ground and melted away.



“Woah, you turn to eating your pets now? That feels a bit desperate to me.”

As Agnus’ injuries slowly healed, he laughed maniacally in the face of Dante, who was still doing nothing.

“As long as I can do this, I am unbeatable... no one can defeat me, not even you!”

Dante could only smile sardonically in response.

“Hah, no way. All it means is that I can’t get you in just one hit, who do you think I am?”

Dante sighed and closed his eyes as he felt his cells filling out with demonic energy, changing the shape of his body - feeling the demon that lay dormant beneath his skin wake up.

He was still also having his energy drained by Agnus, but his own filled out at a faster rate than he could leech it.

Dante's now fully demonic self-grabbed Rebellion.

Agnus immediately began panicking as he took in Dante's new form, and let himself fall out of the air from shock - Dante took the opportunity to close in and swing at him with Rebellion.

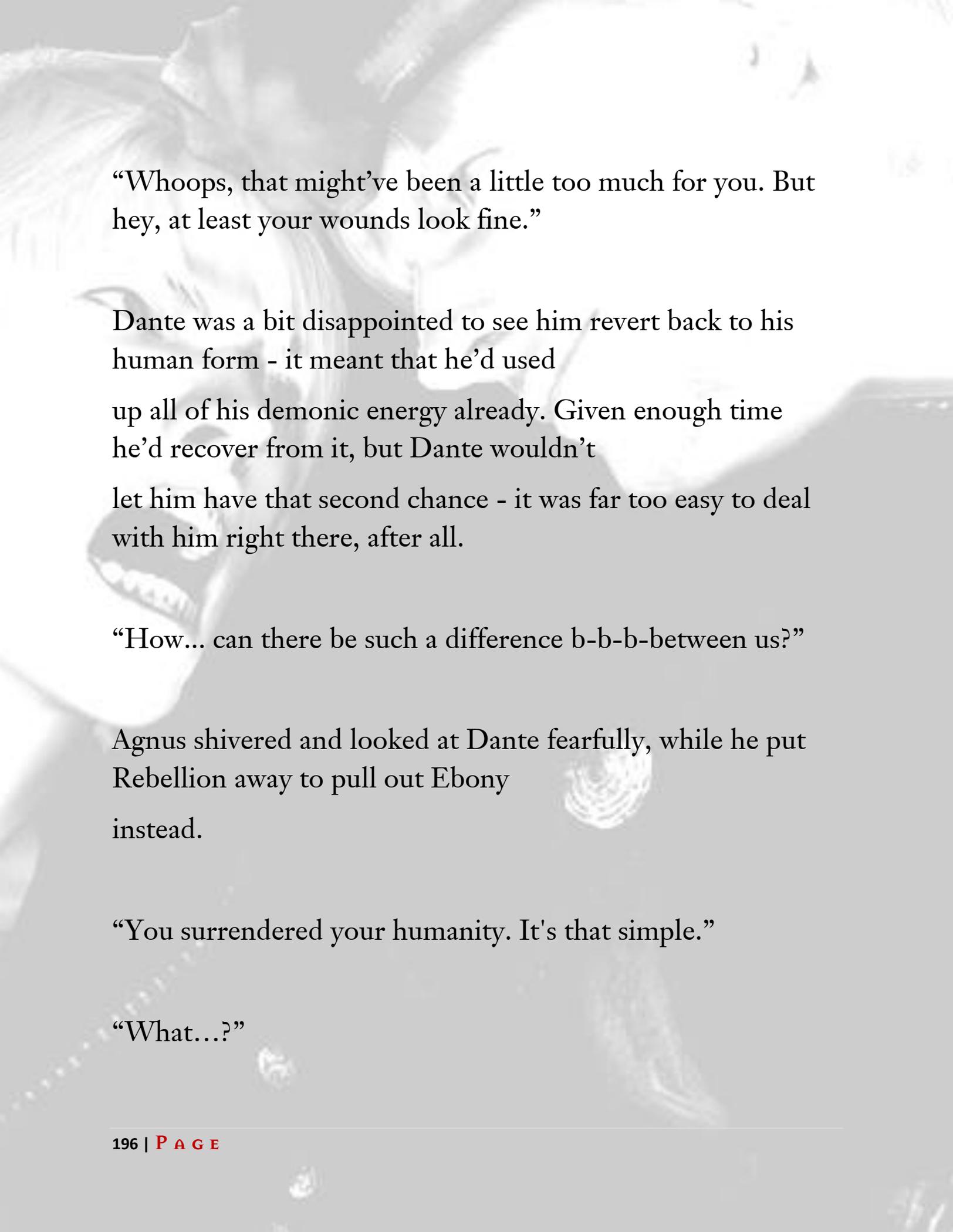
Even in his regular body he could do huge amounts of damage to demons with this move, moving fast enough that he couldn't be visible to the naked eye.

As it was, in his current form the demonic energy radiated off of him in waves, forming a dark spiral around Rebellion.

The sword stabbed deep into Agnus' body, sending him flying backwards.

“Agh.....!?”

As Dante let go of his Trigger, Agnus also turned back to his human form while lying on the ground.



“Whoops, that might’ve been a little too much for you. But hey, at least your wounds look fine.”

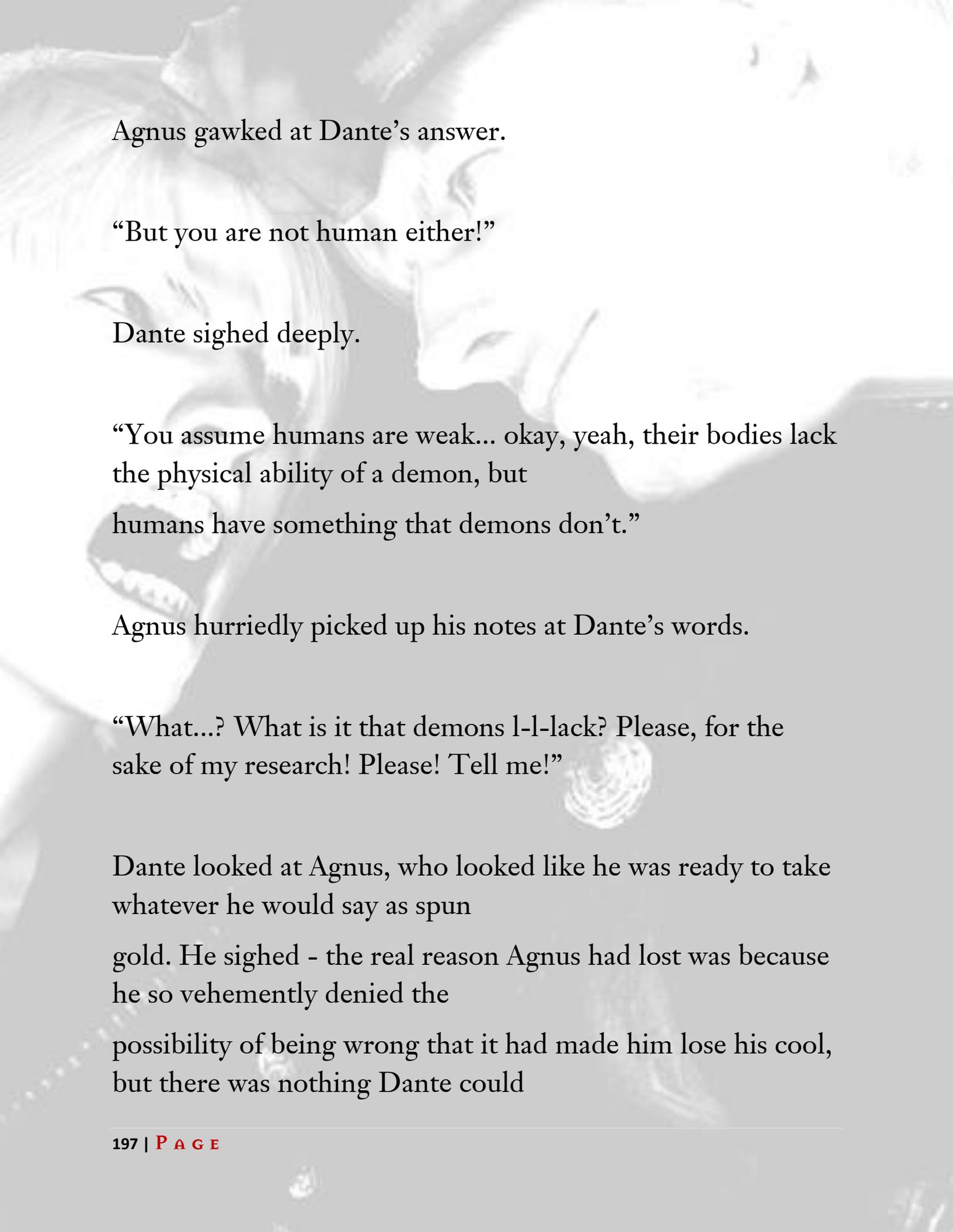
Dante was a bit disappointed to see him revert back to his human form - it meant that he’d used up all of his demonic energy already. Given enough time he’d recover from it, but Dante wouldn’t let him have that second chance - it was far too easy to deal with him right there, after all.

“How... can there be such a difference b-b-b-between us?”

Agnus shivered and looked at Dante fearfully, while he put Rebellion away to pull out Ebony instead.

“You surrendered your humanity. It's that simple.”

“What...?”



Agnus gawked at Dante's answer.

“But you are not human either!”

Dante sighed deeply.

“You assume humans are weak... okay, yeah, their bodies lack the physical ability of a demon, but humans have something that demons don't.”

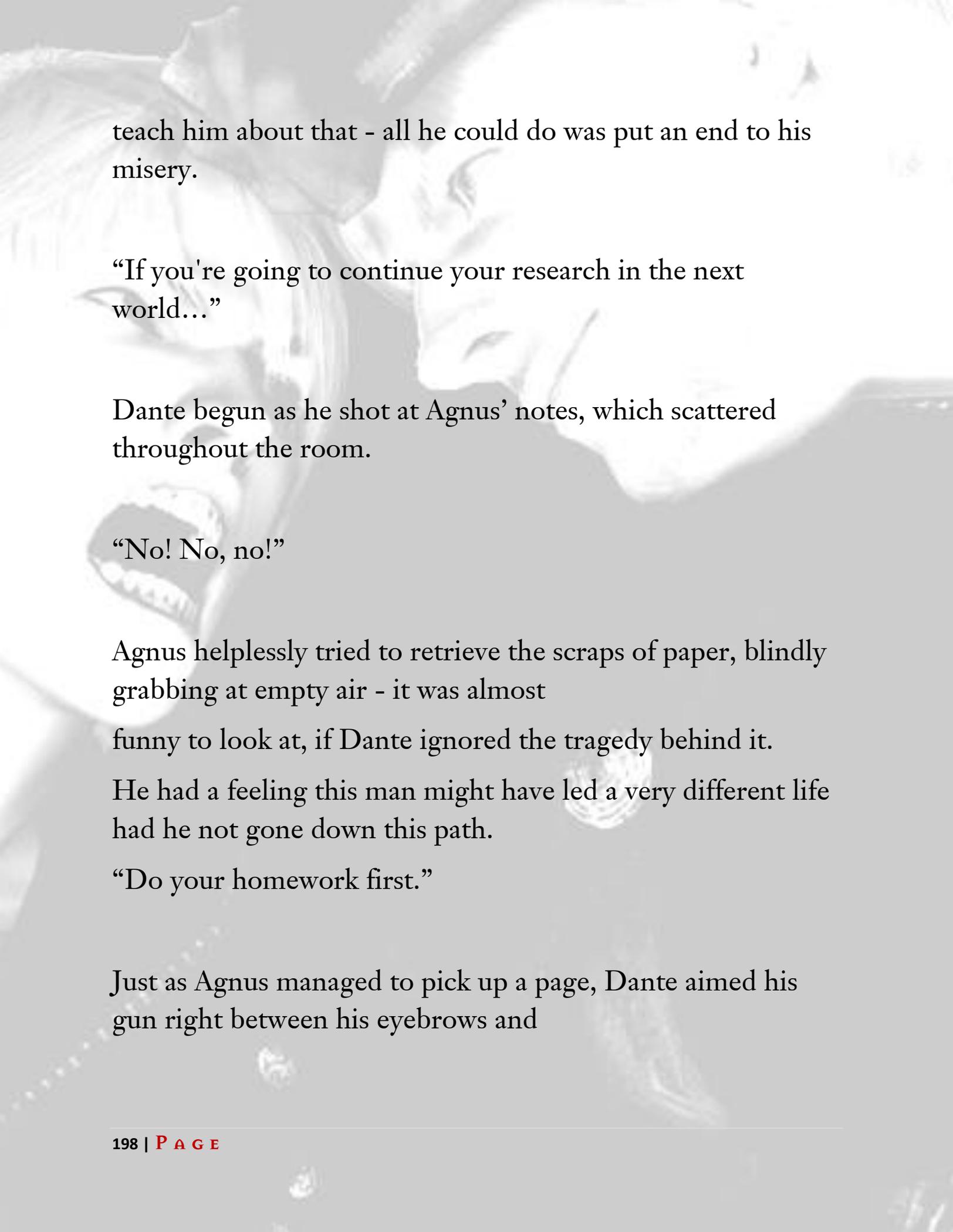
Agnus hurriedly picked up his notes at Dante's words.

“What...? What is it that demons l-l-lack? Please, for the sake of my research! Please! Tell me!”

Dante looked at Agnus, who looked like he was ready to take whatever he would say as spun

gold. He sighed - the real reason Agnus had lost was because he so vehemently denied the

possibility of being wrong that it had made him lose his cool, but there was nothing Dante could



teach him about that - all he could do was put an end to his misery.

“If you're going to continue your research in the next world...”

Dante began as he shot at Agnus' notes, which scattered throughout the room.

“No! No, no!”

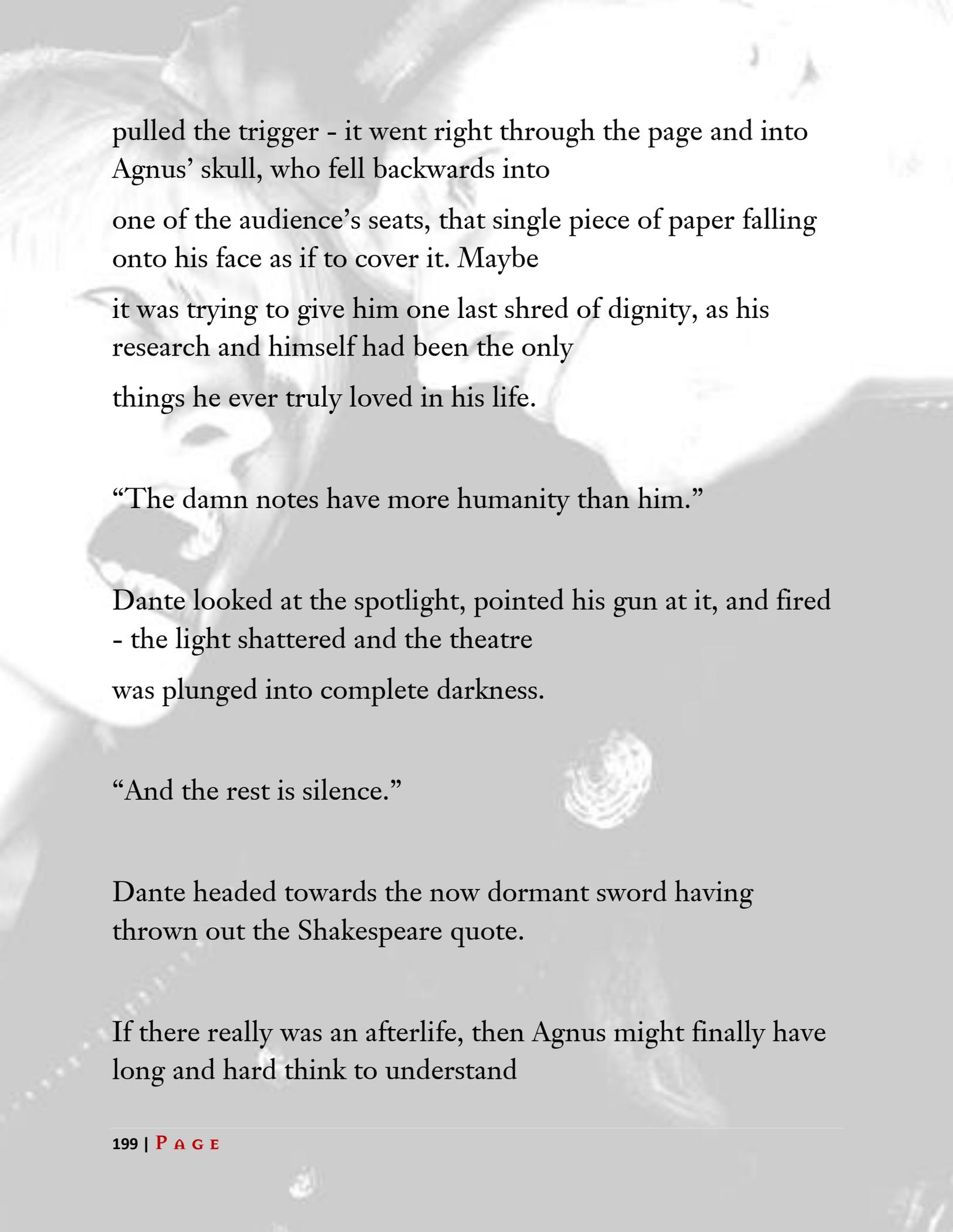
Agnus helplessly tried to retrieve the scraps of paper, blindly grabbing at empty air - it was almost

funny to look at, if Dante ignored the tragedy behind it.

He had a feeling this man might have led a very different life had he not gone down this path.

“Do your homework first.”

Just as Agnus managed to pick up a page, Dante aimed his gun right between his eyebrows and



pulled the trigger - it went right through the page and into Agnus' skull, who fell backwards into one of the audience's seats, that single piece of paper falling onto his face as if to cover it. Maybe it was trying to give him one last shred of dignity, as his research and himself had been the only things he ever truly loved in his life.

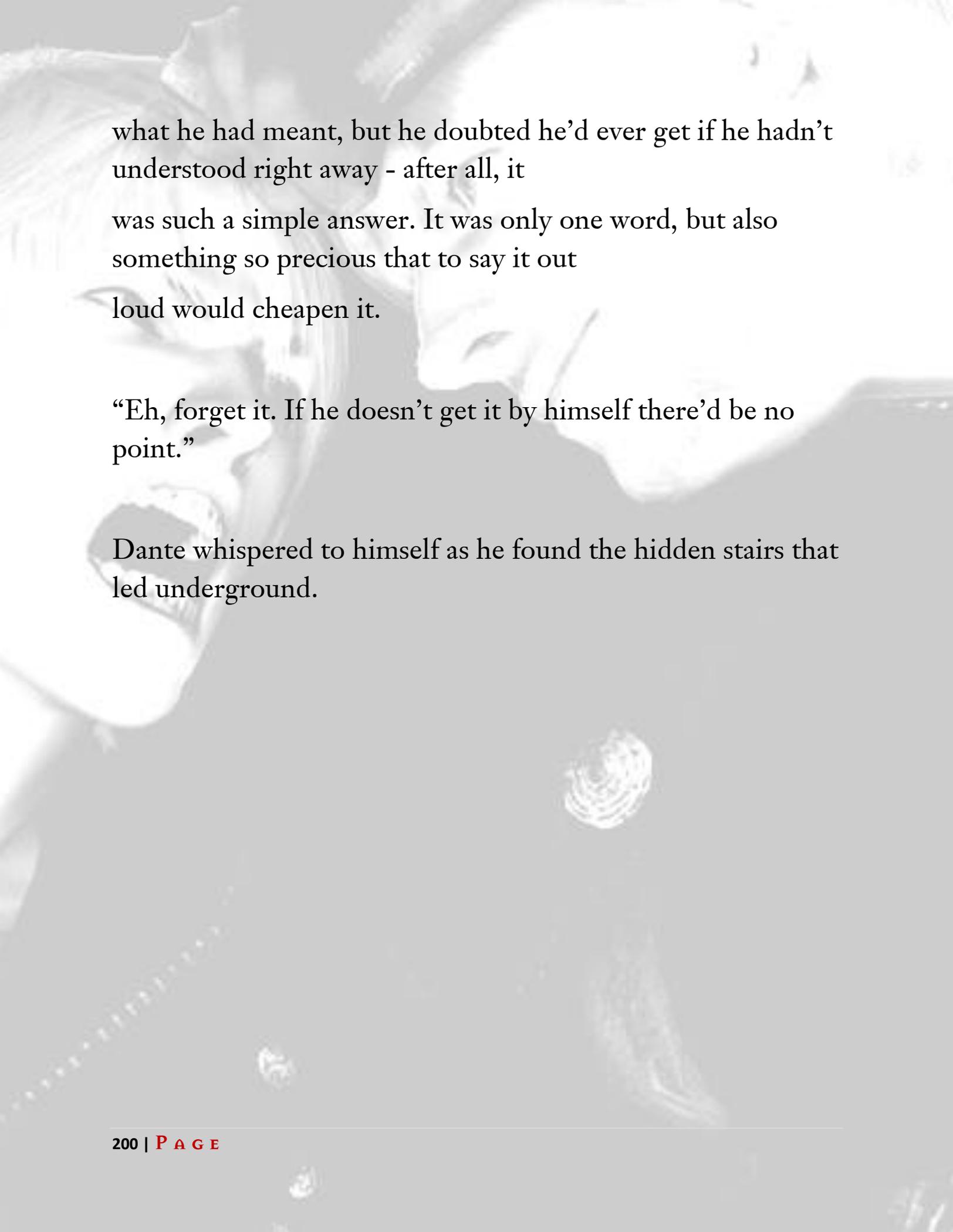
“The damn notes have more humanity than him.”

Dante looked at the spotlight, pointed his gun at it, and fired - the light shattered and the theatre was plunged into complete darkness.

“And the rest is silence.”

Dante headed towards the now dormant sword having thrown out the Shakespeare quote.

If there really was an afterlife, then Agnus might finally have long and hard think to understand



what he had meant, but he doubted he'd ever get if he hadn't understood right away - after all, it was such a simple answer. It was only one word, but also something so precious that to say it out loud would cheapen it.

“Eh, forget it. If he doesn't get it by himself there'd be no point.”

Dante whispered to himself as he found the hidden stairs that led underground.



It wasn't too difficult to lead the citizens to safety since they were already so afraid - on their own, they'd fallen to such chaos that once Trish appeared, no one cared about who she was, only that she sounded like she knew what she was doing, so they'd follow her lead.

Fortuna, by now, was far too dangerous to stay in, so she'd gathered them in Port Caerula - it was both far enough from town to be relatively safe, and large enough to host most of the population.

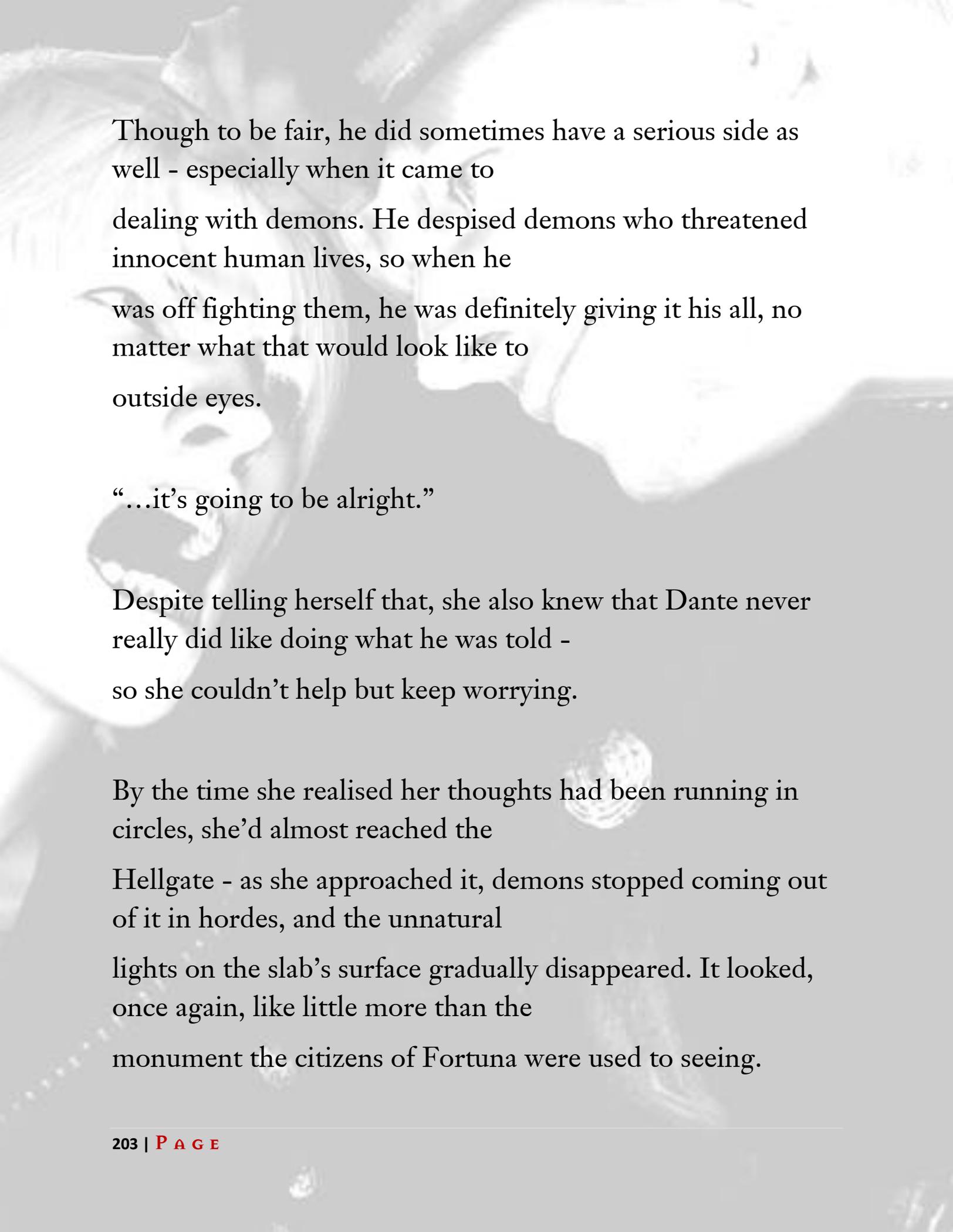
She'd led the people to the port warehouse, instructing them not to leave for any reason, and putting a simple warding spell around it for good measure - it wasn't something she could naturally do, but she'd found a devil arm hidden in the Order HQ which could - they'd hoarded so

many arcane artefacts and devil arms, and even though she felt a bit bad for stealing, she took all those that seemed like they'd be useful to her current task.

Once she was sure the citizens were as safe as they could be, Trish immediately rushed to the Hellgate in the middle of the city - it had been a while since her and Dante had split up, yet the gate was still up and running, and it left her feeling a bit anxious.

It's not like she feared Dante could lose, because he couldn't - but she'd known him for a long time, and knew all too well how sloppy he could be. Rather, she was afraid he'd gotten lost, or carried away fighting something, or hell, maybe he'd even gotten sucked into the Hellgate itself... one could never know with Dante.

She knew they both knew the situation was dire, but he wasn't above goofing off during an emergency - she knew him far too well to doubt that.

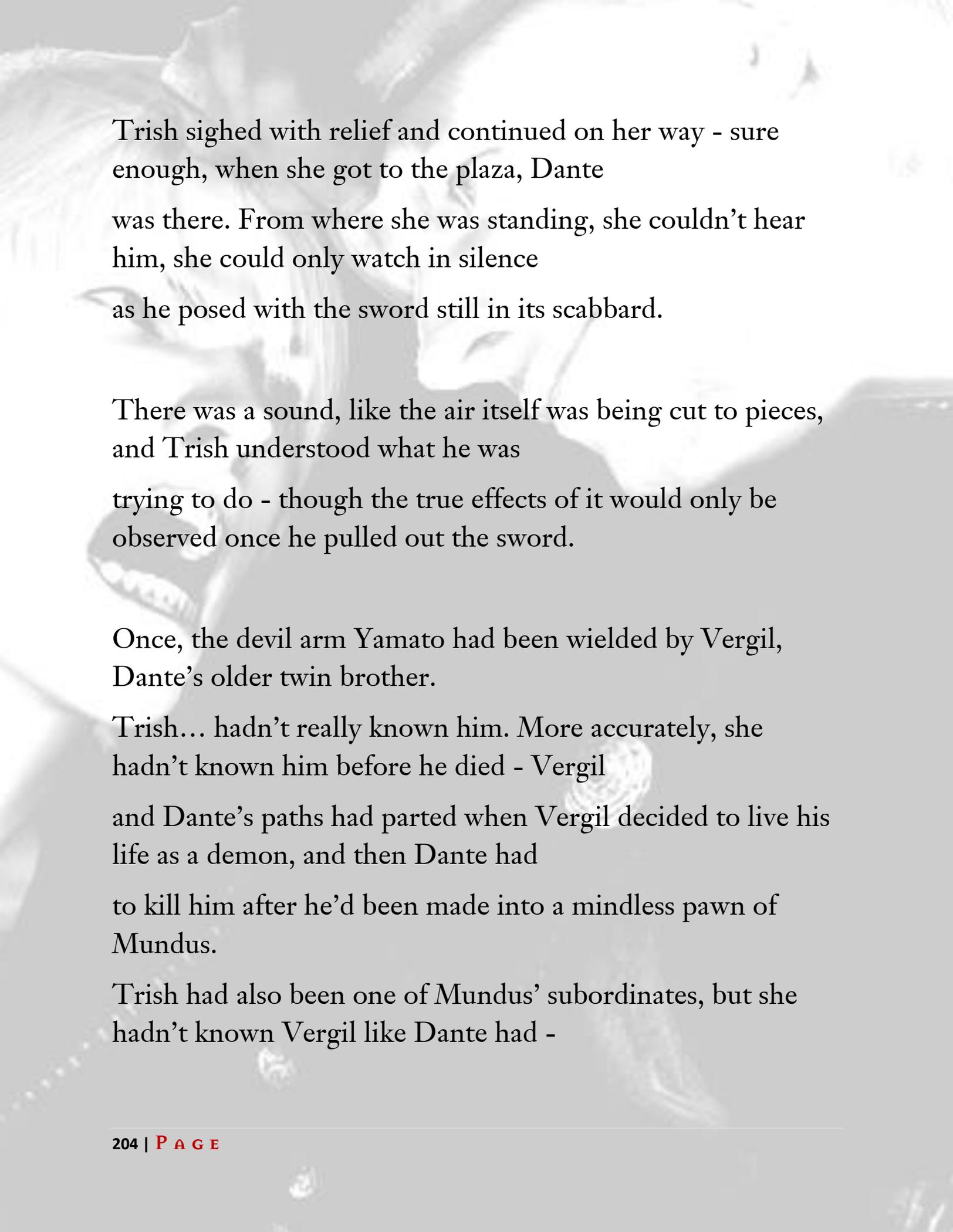


Though to be fair, he did sometimes have a serious side as well - especially when it came to dealing with demons. He despised demons who threatened innocent human lives, so when he was off fighting them, he was definitely giving it his all, no matter what that would look like to outside eyes.

“...it’s going to be alright.”

Despite telling herself that, she also knew that Dante never really did like doing what he was told - so she couldn’t help but keep worrying.

By the time she realised her thoughts had been running in circles, she’d almost reached the Hellgate - as she approached it, demons stopped coming out of it in hordes, and the unnatural lights on the slab’s surface gradually disappeared. It looked, once again, like little more than the monument the citizens of Fortuna were used to seeing.



Trish sighed with relief and continued on her way - sure enough, when she got to the plaza, Dante was there. From where she was standing, she couldn't hear him, she could only watch in silence as he posed with the sword still in its scabbard.

There was a sound, like the air itself was being cut to pieces, and Trish understood what he was trying to do - though the true effects of it would only be observed once he pulled out the sword.

Once, the devil arm Yamato had been wielded by Vergil, Dante's older twin brother.

Trish... hadn't really known him. More accurately, she hadn't known him before he died - Vergil and Dante's paths had parted when Vergil decided to live his life as a demon, and then Dante had to kill him after he'd been made into a mindless pawn of Mundus.

Trish had also been one of Mundus' subordinates, but she hadn't known Vergil like Dante had -

the Vergil she'd known was Vergil in name only, completely devoid of personality or soul.

She watched as Dante twirled the sword around. She'd never seen him use a katana before, so it was hard to imagine that he'd be any good at the more precise moves - yet he moved as if he'd been born already knowing how to handle the sword. Maybe he'd learned from observing Vergil?

If that was the case, then, a part of Vergil still lived on through Dante - he might not realize it, but it was there. It was enough to make her feel how important he was to Dante, even though he'd never expressed it with words before.

Dante finally noticed Trish and turned to look at her, pointing to the gate with his finger. When she looked past him, she saw that the gate had a crack in it - his attack with Yamato had split it cleanly in two. Trish laughed while watching the upper part fall as if in slow motion.

“Isn’t this a major cultural artefact?”

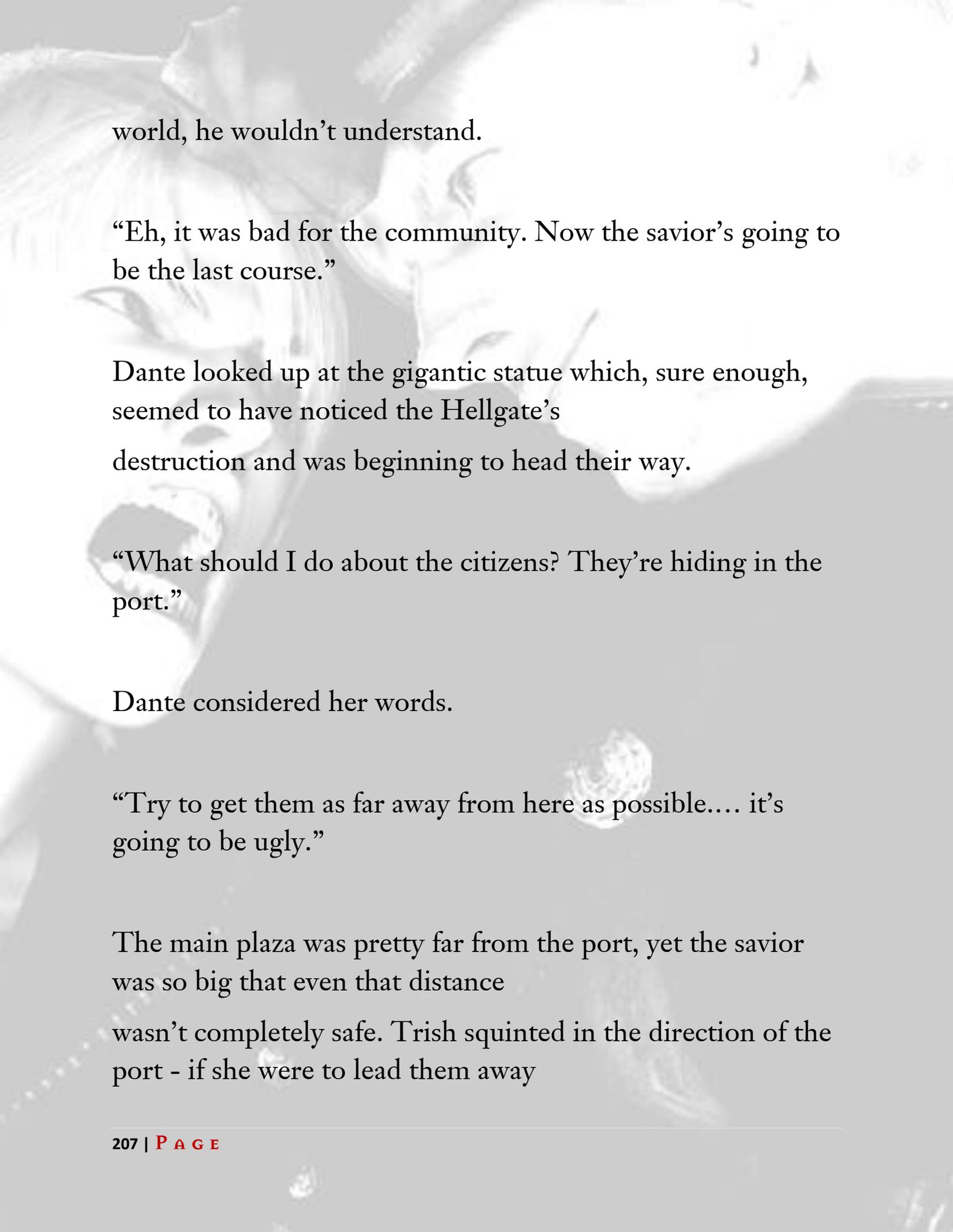
The gate made a loud crashing sound in the background.

Dante shrugged and looked at Yamato. He was probably wondering why Sparda hadn’t destroyed the gate in the first place - if he could seal it, he had more than enough strength to crush it, too.

But Trish understood - Sparda was a demon. The underworld was his birthplace, unlike Dante who’d been born in the human world - even if he swore himself protector of humanity and eventually got accustomed to life among humans, he might never truly have stopped missing his home.

She, like Sparda, was also a pure demon who’d been born and raised in the underworld, which was why she understood - she felt the same way?

She dedicated a large chunk of her free time to learning about devil arms and demonology partly because of that reason... which she would never tell Dante about. He was born in the human



world, he wouldn't understand.

“Eh, it was bad for the community. Now the savior's going to be the last course.”

Dante looked up at the gigantic statue which, sure enough, seemed to have noticed the Hellgate's destruction and was beginning to head their way.

“What should I do about the citizens? They're hiding in the port.”

Dante considered her words.

“Try to get them as far away from here as possible.... it's going to be ugly.”

The main plaza was pretty far from the port, yet the savior was so big that even that distance wasn't completely safe. Trish squinted in the direction of the port - if she were to lead them away

again, how far could they get? It was good that the gate was destroyed, that meant no more demons would emerge, but there was still a massive amount of them still crawling around, and it would be difficult to keep the citizens safe while fighting at the same time.

“Then, should I take them to the forest?”

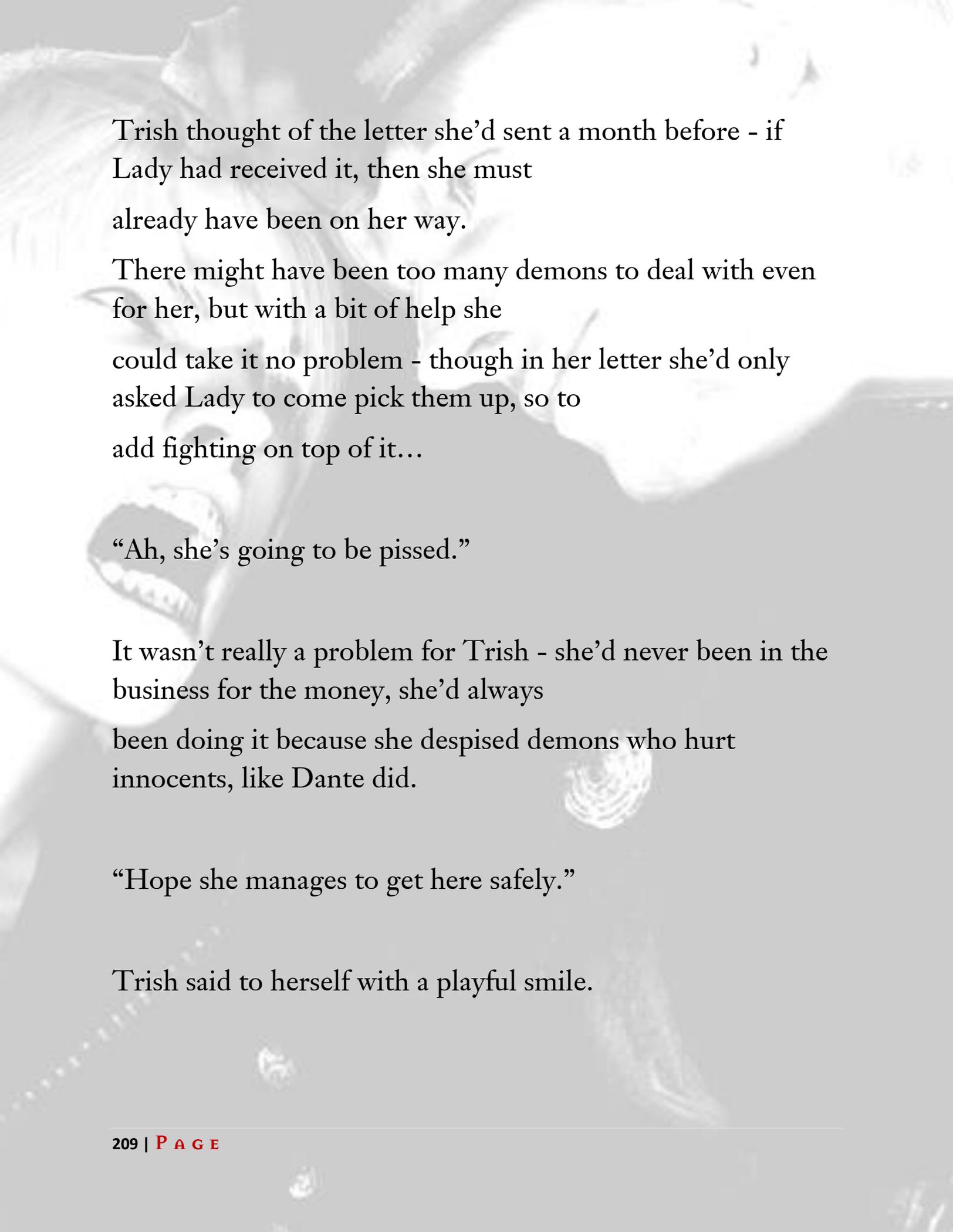
Trish muttered half to herself - Dante raised his eyebrows.

“Getting there should be no problem, but the place is teeming with demons. You sure you don’t want to switch places?”

Yeah, in hindsight, it was a pretty bad idea. Trish shrugged.

“Well, no matter then, I have my own plan B.”

Dante said nothing in reply, only waved at her in farewell as she left.



Trish thought of the letter she'd sent a month before - if Lady had received it, then she must already have been on her way.

There might have been too many demons to deal with even for her, but with a bit of help she could take it no problem - though in her letter she'd only asked Lady to come pick them up, so to add fighting on top of it...

“Ah, she's going to be pissed.”

It wasn't really a problem for Trish - she'd never been in the business for the money, she'd always been doing it because she despised demons who hurt innocents, like Dante did.

“Hope she manages to get here safely.”

Trish said to herself with a playful smile.

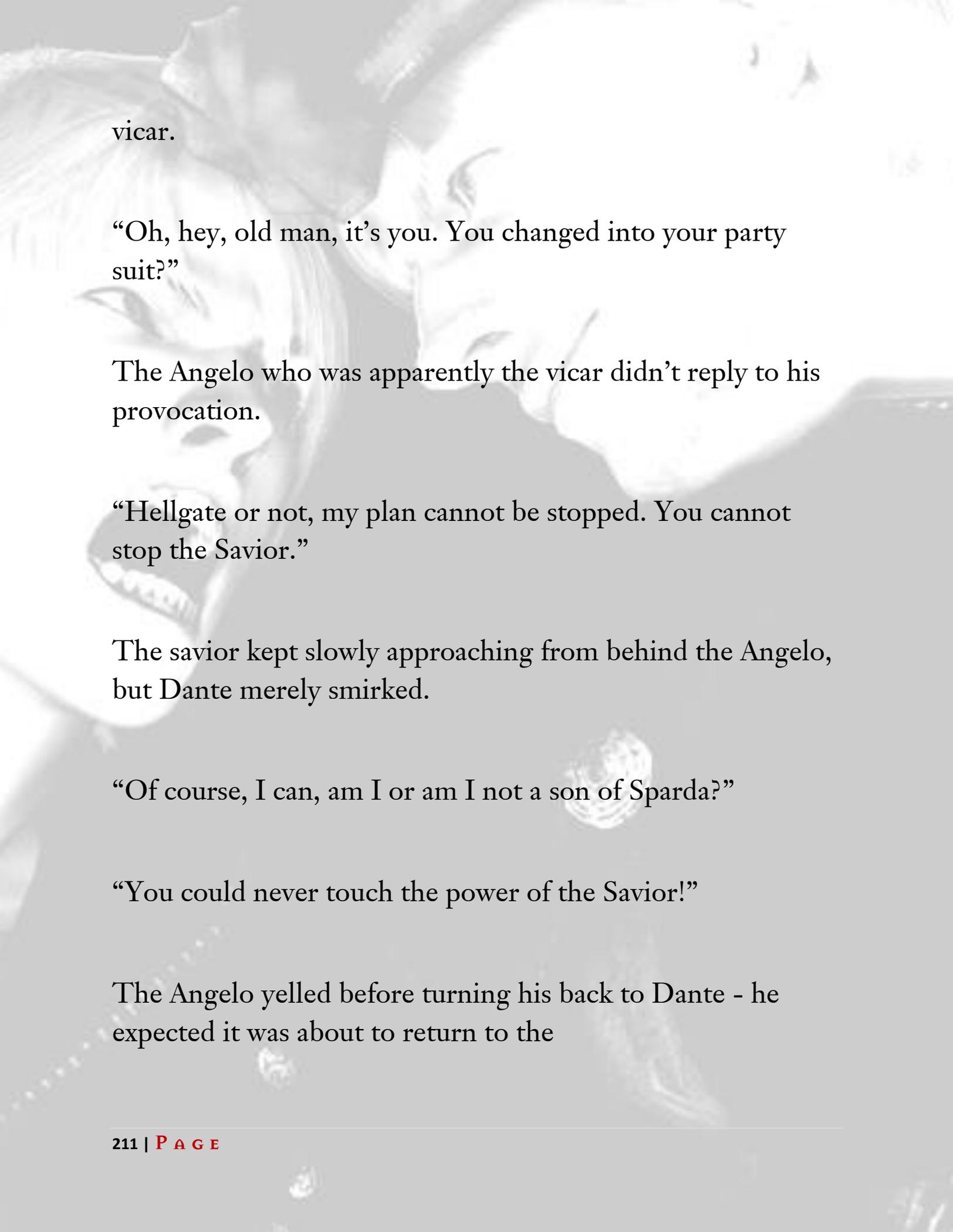


Once Trish had left, Dante ran up the outer wall of the Opera House, seeing as it was the tallest building around - to be honest, he didn't really need to run, the savior was approaching either way, but he couldn't stand the thought of that mad old geezer and his fake demons looking down on him.

As he waited on top of the roof, one of the Angelo's that surrounded the savior began approaching Dante - first flying at top speed, then gradually slowing down as it got closer and closer. It likely wasn't coming to attack.

"You destroyed the Hell Gates!"

The Angelo spoke with a familiar, old sounding voice - it took Dante a beat to realize it was the



vicar.

“Oh, hey, old man, it’s you. You changed into your party suit?”

The Angelo who was apparently the vicar didn’t reply to his provocation.

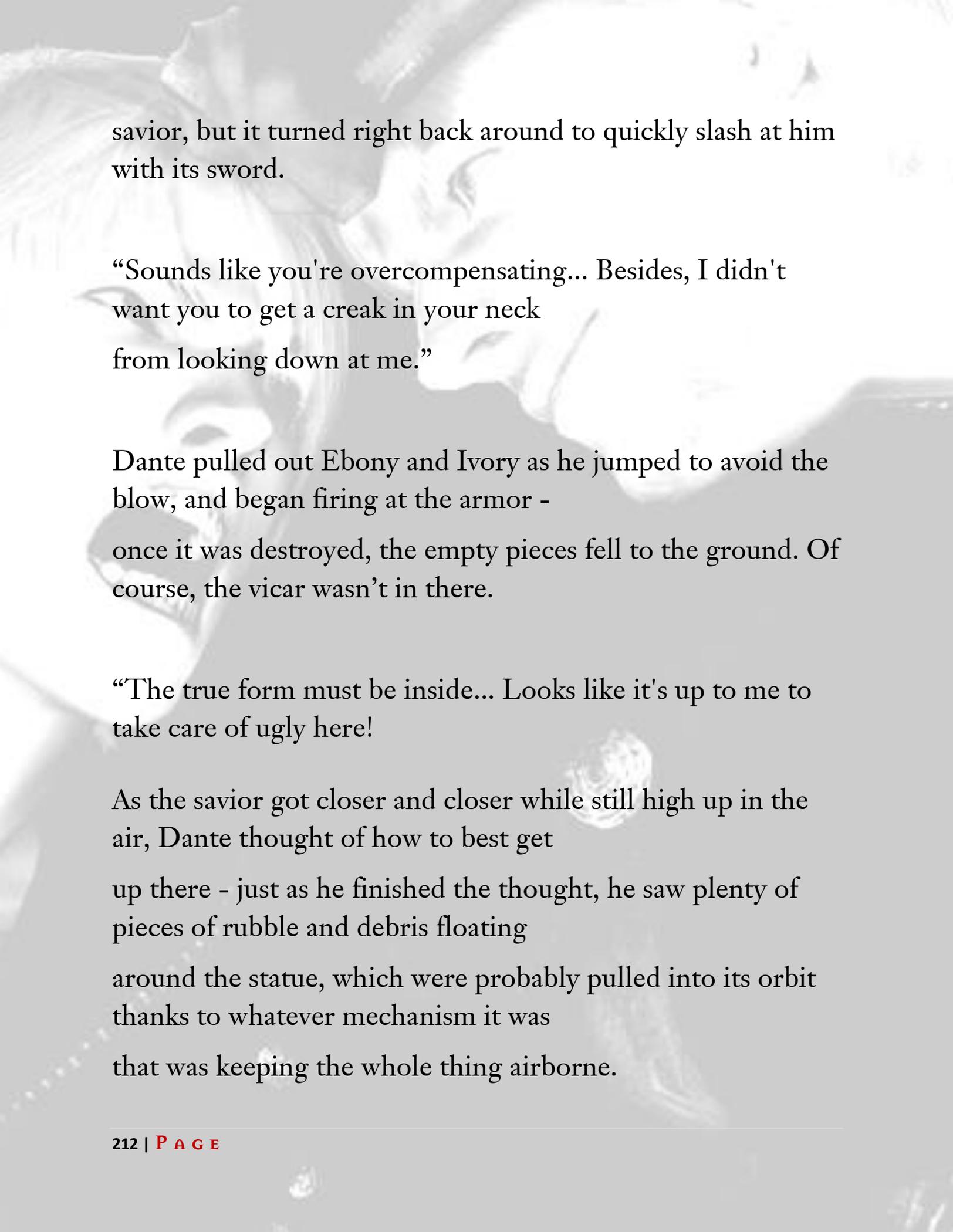
“Hellgate or not, my plan cannot be stopped. You cannot stop the Savior.”

The savior kept slowly approaching from behind the Angelo, but Dante merely smirked.

“Of course, I can, am I or am I not a son of Sparda?”

“You could never touch the power of the Savior!”

The Angelo yelled before turning his back to Dante - he expected it was about to return to the



savior, but it turned right back around to quickly slash at him with its sword.

“Sounds like you're overcompensating... Besides, I didn't want you to get a creak in your neck from looking down at me.”

Dante pulled out Ebony and Ivory as he jumped to avoid the blow, and began firing at the armor - once it was destroyed, the empty pieces fell to the ground. Of course, the vicar wasn't in there.

“The true form must be inside... Looks like it's up to me to take care of ugly here!

As the savior got closer and closer while still high up in the air, Dante thought of how to best get up there - just as he finished the thought, he saw plenty of pieces of rubble and debris floating around the statue, which were probably pulled into its orbit thanks to whatever mechanism it was that was keeping the whole thing airborne.

“You even made me platforms to stand on... this much generosity is starting to make me uncomfortable.”

Dante said as he leaped from piece to piece to stand on the highest piece of rubble - they appeared to be fragments of the Order HQ building which must have been ripped off when the savior first took flight; he recognized the patterns on the shards of floor.

Plenty of Angelo's were also flying all around the place, but Dante just smirked, ignoring them as he jumped onto a nearby piece of rubble.

“No point in fighting these guys, or I'll be here all day... got to deal with the big one first.”

The savior seemed to have noticed Dante's presence, and he waited in trepidation to see what

tricks it had up its sleeve as he dodged the various Angelo's and jumped from platform to platform - when the giant statue reared back to attack, Dante was pretty surprised to note that it didn't seem like it was about to use that same light beam that it had used against the demons, instead raising its fist high up in the sky as if to strike.

Sure enough, the enormous fist came down towards Dante, who quickly jumped onto another platform to avoid it - he'd evaded it well enough, but the platform he'd just been standing on had been smashed into the ground.

“Seriously?”

Dante had no other way to go but to jump up onto the savior's hand - it wasn't ideal, but it would have to do. He ran up from the hand to the wrist, all the while looking at the statue's torso.

“Now where in the world did you hide the kid?”

As soon as it noticed his distraction, the savior swung its hand to shake Dante off - that launched him into the air, and he quickly grabbed Rebellion to stab it in the chest so that he wouldn't fall off.

Dante stared at the savior as he held himself up with one hand - he couldn't destroy it until he managed to rescue Nero. He had to figure out where the kid was being held before anything.

“Damn, this is getting complicated.”

So he couldn't destroy the savior yet, had to dodge all of its attacks and the Angelo's flocking all around the place, all the while trying to locate and rescue Nero.

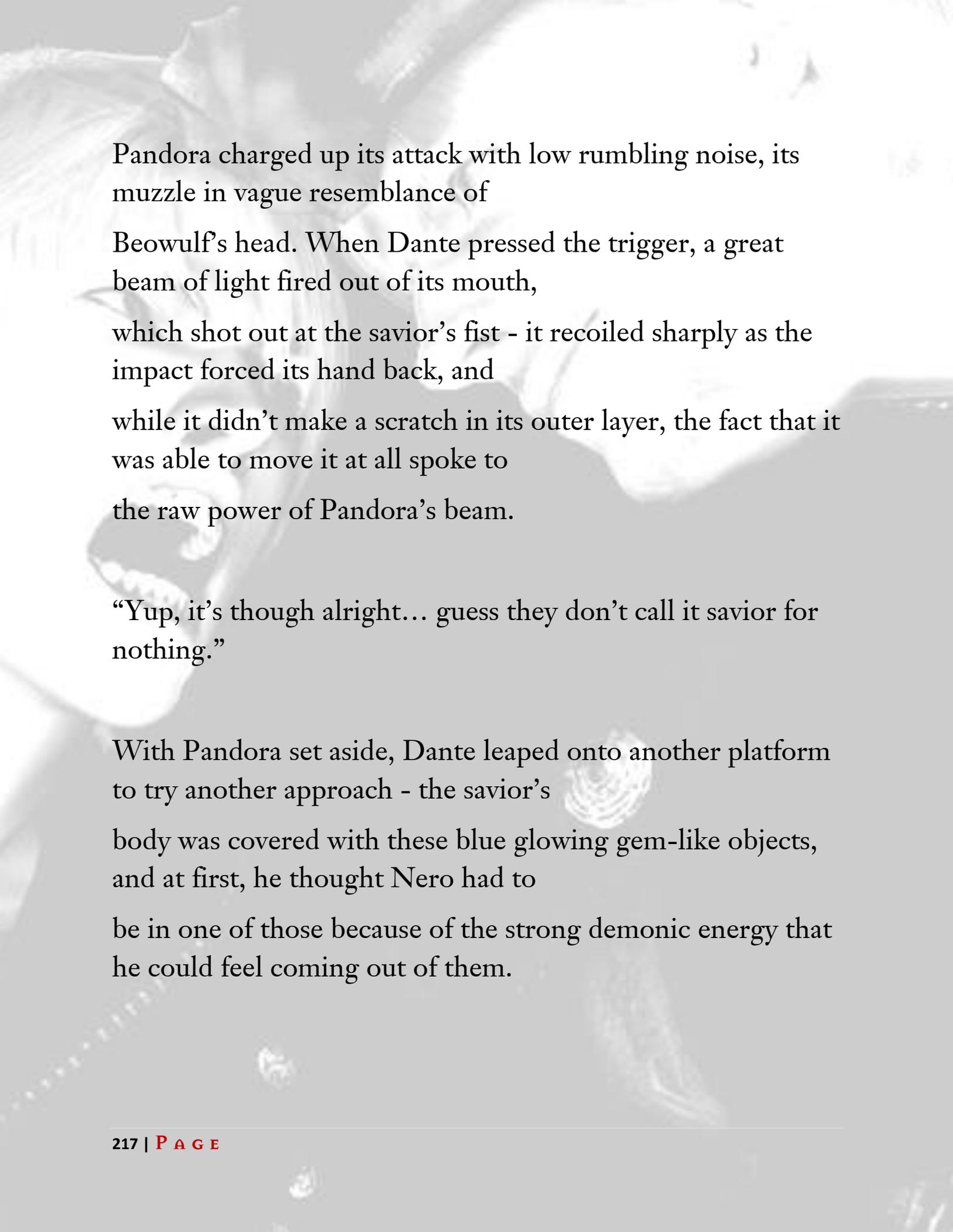
Dante didn't have the time to properly finish that thought before the savior had opened its hand, rearing back to attack once again.

He'd managed to climb onto Rebellion to use it as a foothold, but was now considering leaving it there to jump onto a nearby platform - he stopped when he noticed that the savior had made a fist and turned its palm around, intending to crush him.

“Guess I can't keep on dodging!”

Dante smiled as Pandora unfolded in his hands, its shape changing from the suitcase into a huge sphere.

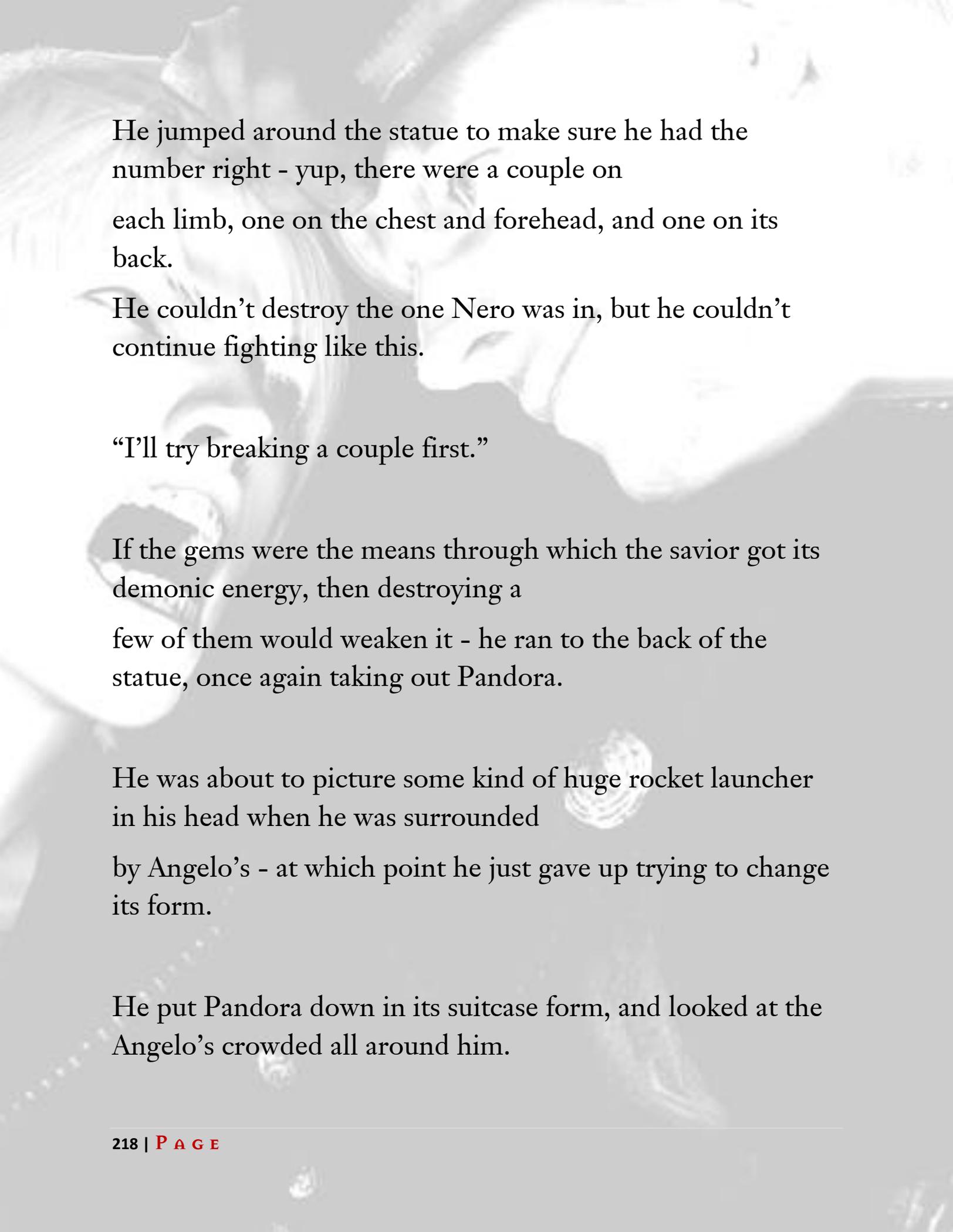
This time, when Dante used his imagination to change Pandora's shape, he had a certain demon in mind - an insanely strong demon that could control light itself.



Pandora charged up its attack with low rumbling noise, its muzzle in vague resemblance of Beowulf's head. When Dante pressed the trigger, a great beam of light fired out of its mouth, which shot out at the savior's fist - it recoiled sharply as the impact forced its hand back, and while it didn't make a scratch in its outer layer, the fact that it was able to move it at all spoke to the raw power of Pandora's beam.

"Yup, it's though alright... guess they don't call it savior for nothing."

With Pandora set aside, Dante leaped onto another platform to try another approach - the savior's body was covered with these blue glowing gem-like objects, and at first, he thought Nero had to be in one of those because of the strong demonic energy that he could feel coming out of them.



He jumped around the statue to make sure he had the number right - yup, there were a couple on each limb, one on the chest and forehead, and one on its back.

He couldn't destroy the one Nero was in, but he couldn't continue fighting like this.

“I'll try breaking a couple first.”

If the gems were the means through which the savior got its demonic energy, then destroying a few of them would weaken it - he ran to the back of the statue, once again taking out Pandora.

He was about to picture some kind of huge rocket launcher in his head when he was surrounded by Angelo's - at which point he just gave up trying to change its form.

He put Pandora down in its suitcase form, and looked at the Angelo's crowded all around him.

“You might want to keep yourself at a safe distance.”

He told the demons as he kicked Pandora open - it unlocked with a blinding flash of light.

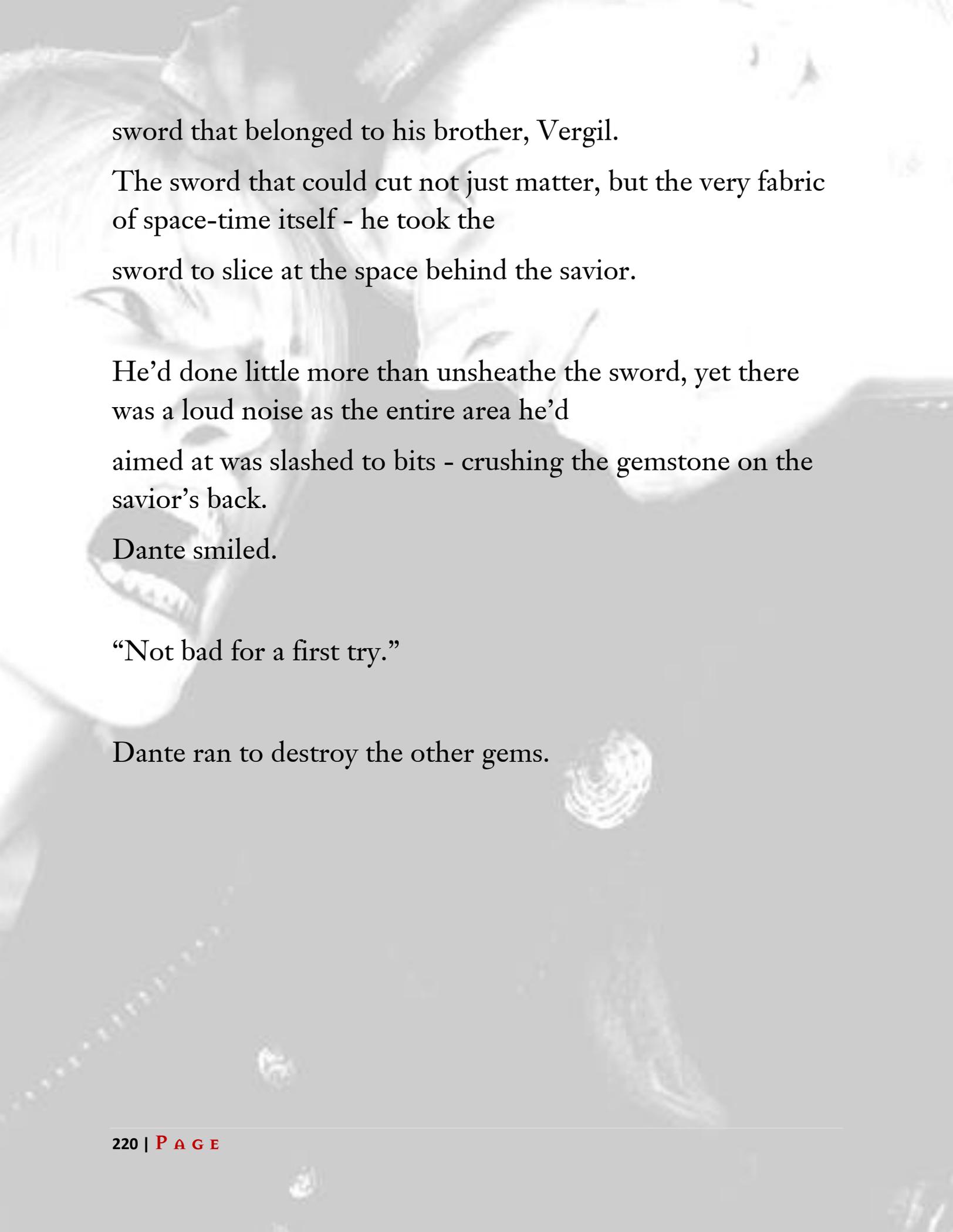
This was Pandora in its unadulterated form, pure destructive power that took no orders or followed any specific target - the Angelo's instantly melted under the light.

Dante shielded his face with his arm, eventually closing the suitcase with his foot - when he looked around all the Angelo's were gone, but the savior was unscathed. It was probably too far away to be affected by the beam.

“Guess I need a change of tactics.”

Dante put Pandora away to take out Yamato.

He and the savior faced each other as he slowly pulled out the sword from its scabbard - the



sword that belonged to his brother, Vergil.

The sword that could cut not just matter, but the very fabric of space-time itself - he took the sword to slice at the space behind the savior.

He'd done little more than unsheathe the sword, yet there was a loud noise as the entire area he'd aimed at was slashed to bits - crushing the gemstone on the savior's back.

Dante smiled.

“Not bad for a first try.”

Dante ran to destroy the other gems.

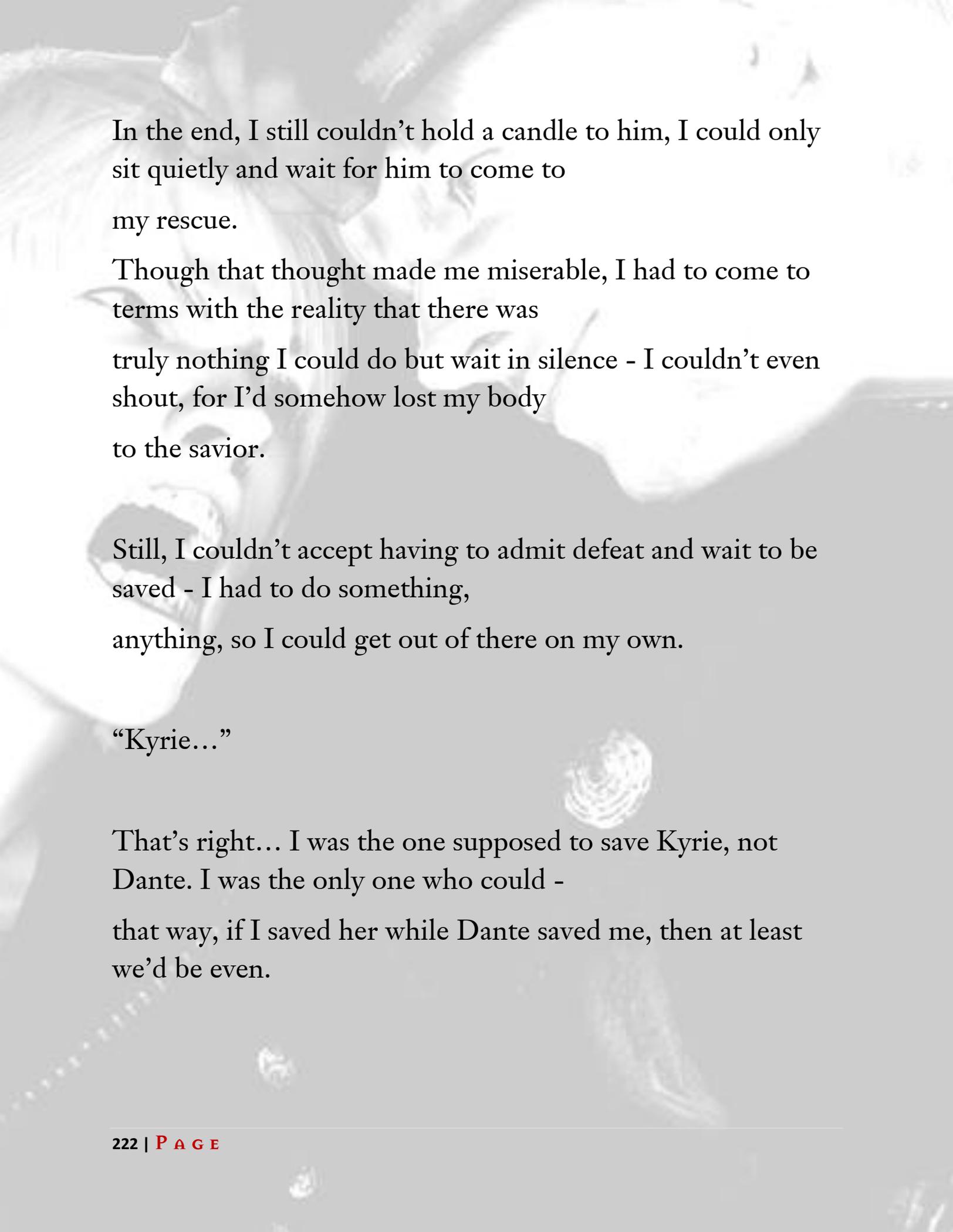


I awoke to an inexplicable nostalgic feeling - as my head gradually cleared, my once fuzzy memories seemed to get more distinct. For whatever reason, I'd finally remembered who I was and why I was there.

It might have been because I could feel like part of me was nearby... part of me? Wait, no, that wasn't it... it was something that was mine by birthright? What was it?

“...Dante?”

I thought to myself - I remembered this name. He was here, right now, by my side - part of me was safe in the hands of Dante.



In the end, I still couldn't hold a candle to him, I could only sit quietly and wait for him to come to my rescue.

Though that thought made me miserable, I had to come to terms with the reality that there was truly nothing I could do but wait in silence - I couldn't even shout, for I'd somehow lost my body to the savior.

Still, I couldn't accept having to admit defeat and wait to be saved - I had to do something, anything, so I could get out of there on my own.

“Kyrie...”

That's right... I was the one supposed to save Kyrie, not Dante. I was the only one who could - that way, if I saved her while Dante saved me, then at least we'd be even.



I might have to accept his help, but there had to be something I could still do to help myself.

“_____!”

I kept trying to scream, fruitlessly.

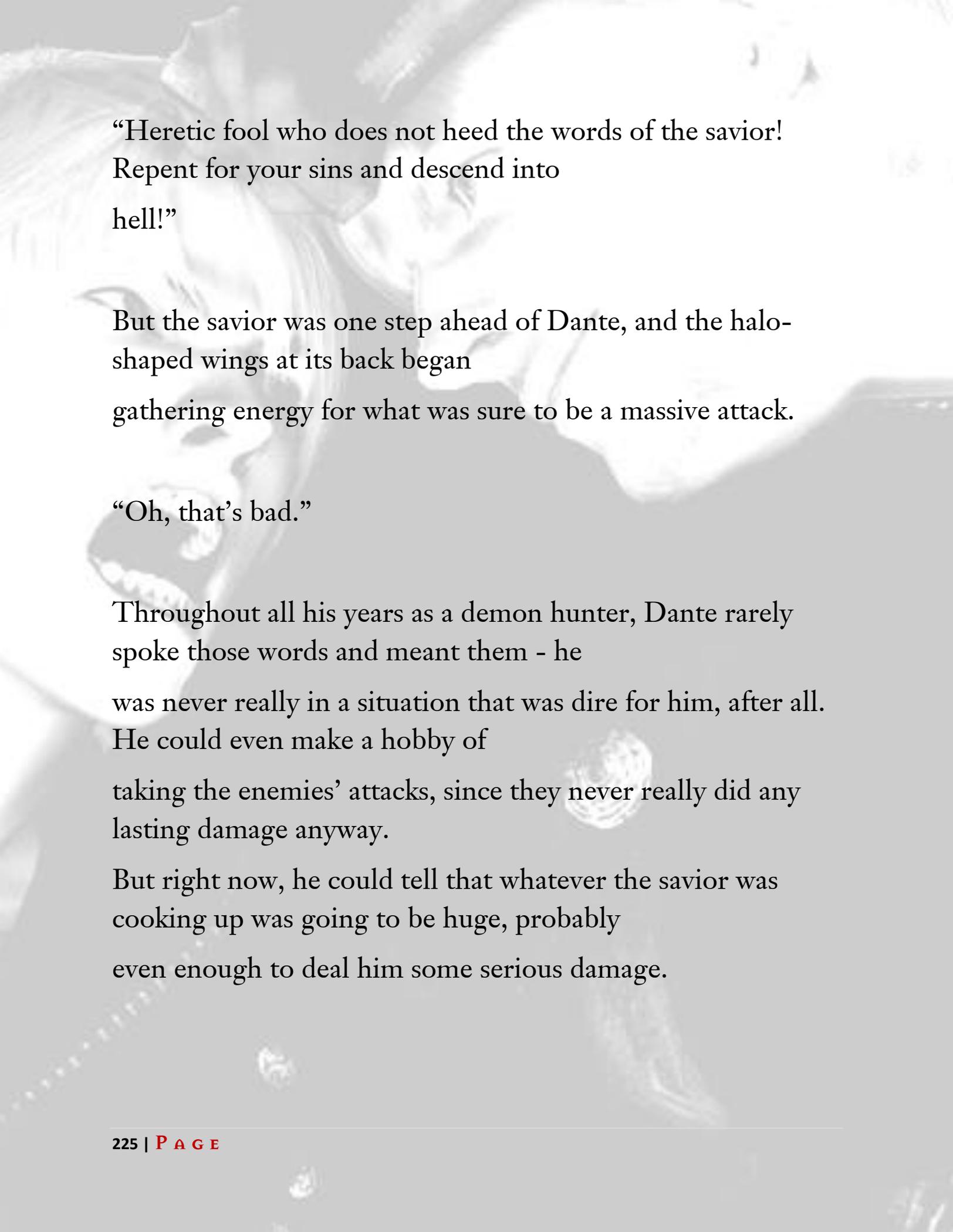


Dante noticed a fluctuation in the savior's energy as it turned to face him.

“...Is that you, kid?”

He couldn't say for certain, but right then, from behind the gem on the savior's chest, deep within the statue, he thought he'd heard it once again - a soul crying out, one that was bound to his by blood.

If he'd felt it right, then, there was only one thing to do - and jumping back to rebellion, which was still embedded in the savior's chest, was the perfect place to start.



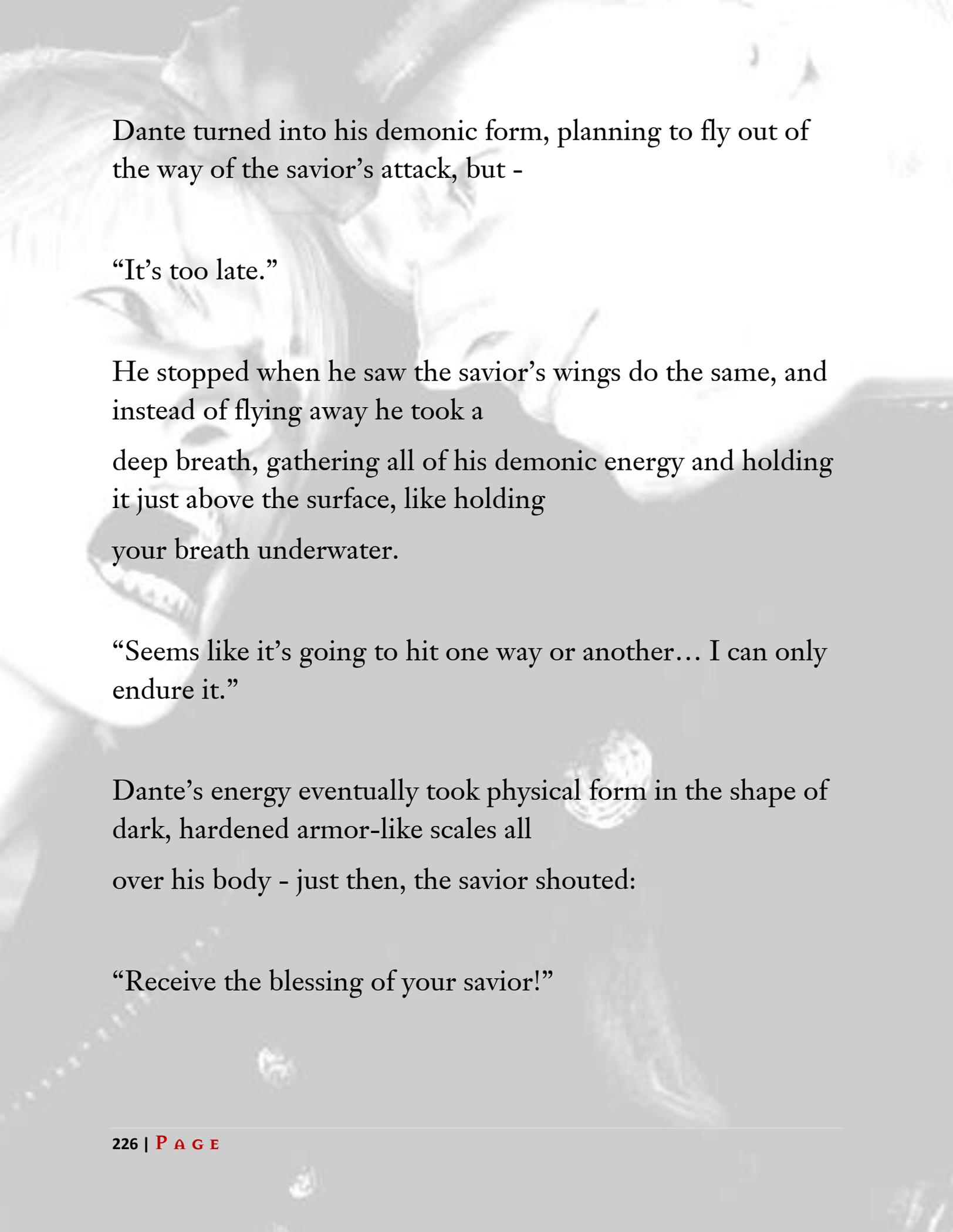
“Heretic fool who does not heed the words of the savior!
Repent for your sins and descend into
hell!”

But the savior was one step ahead of Dante, and the halo-shaped wings at its back began gathering energy for what was sure to be a massive attack.

“Oh, that’s bad.”

Throughout all his years as a demon hunter, Dante rarely spoke those words and meant them - he was never really in a situation that was dire for him, after all. He could even make a hobby of taking the enemies’ attacks, since they never really did any lasting damage anyway.

But right now, he could tell that whatever the savior was cooking up was going to be huge, probably even enough to deal him some serious damage.



Dante turned into his demonic form, planning to fly out of the way of the savior's attack, but -

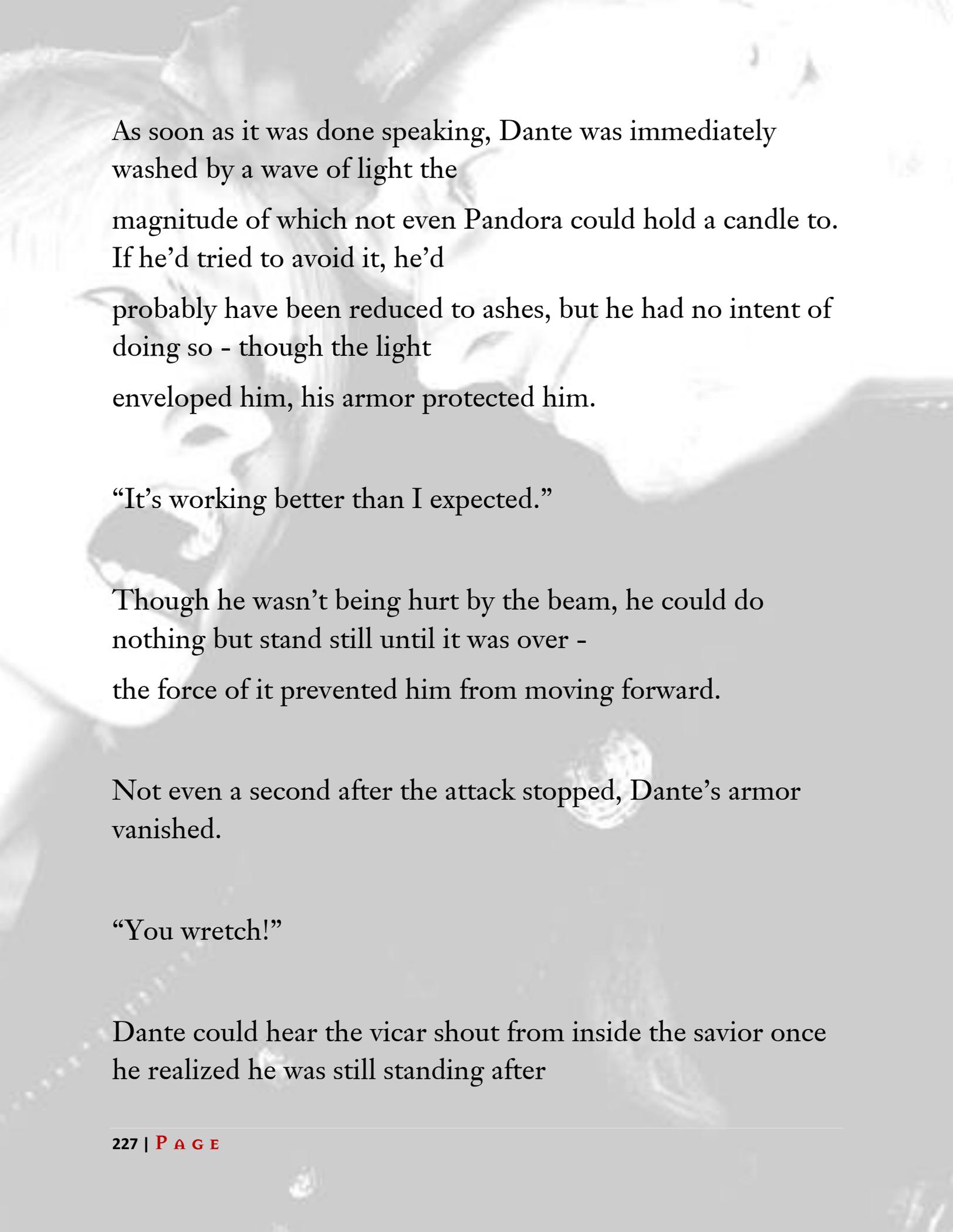
“It's too late.”

He stopped when he saw the savior's wings do the same, and instead of flying away he took a deep breath, gathering all of his demonic energy and holding it just above the surface, like holding your breath underwater.

“Seems like it's going to hit one way or another... I can only endure it.”

Dante's energy eventually took physical form in the shape of dark, hardened armor-like scales all over his body - just then, the savior shouted:

“Receive the blessing of your savior!”



As soon as it was done speaking, Dante was immediately washed by a wave of light the magnitude of which not even Pandora could hold a candle to. If he'd tried to avoid it, he'd probably have been reduced to ashes, but he had no intent of doing so - though the light enveloped him, his armor protected him.

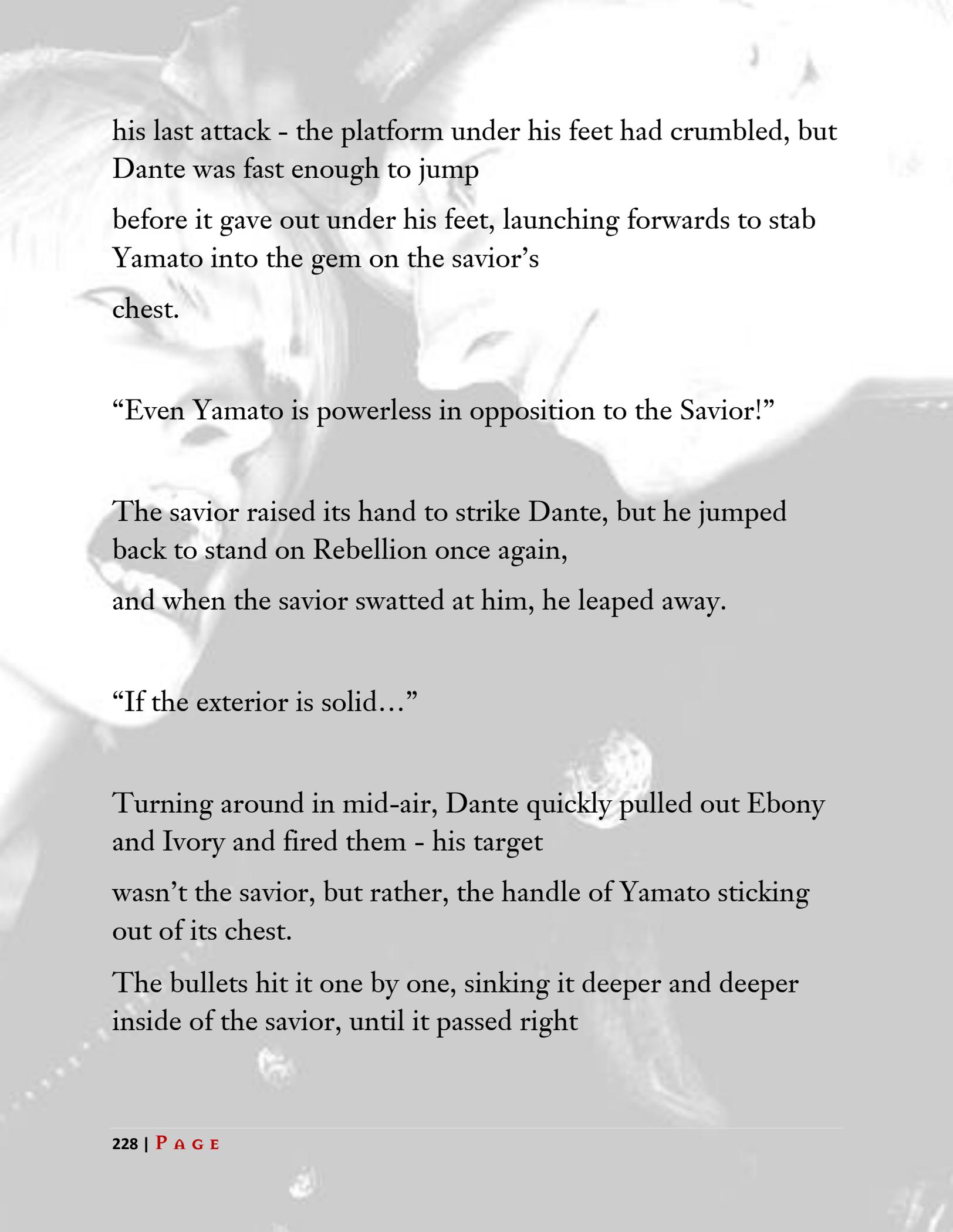
“It’s working better than I expected.”

Though he wasn’t being hurt by the beam, he could do nothing but stand still until it was over - the force of it prevented him from moving forward.

Not even a second after the attack stopped, Dante’s armor vanished.

“You wretch!”

Dante could hear the vicar shout from inside the savior once he realized he was still standing after



his last attack - the platform under his feet had crumbled, but Dante was fast enough to jump before it gave out under his feet, launching forwards to stab Yamato into the gem on the savior's chest.

“Even Yamato is powerless in opposition to the Savior!”

The savior raised its hand to strike Dante, but he jumped back to stand on Rebellion once again, and when the savior swatted at him, he leaped away.

“If the exterior is solid...”

Turning around in mid-air, Dante quickly pulled out Ebony and Ivory and fired them - his target wasn't the savior, but rather, the handle of Yamato sticking out of its chest.

The bullets hit it one by one, sinking it deeper and deeper inside of the savior, until it passed right

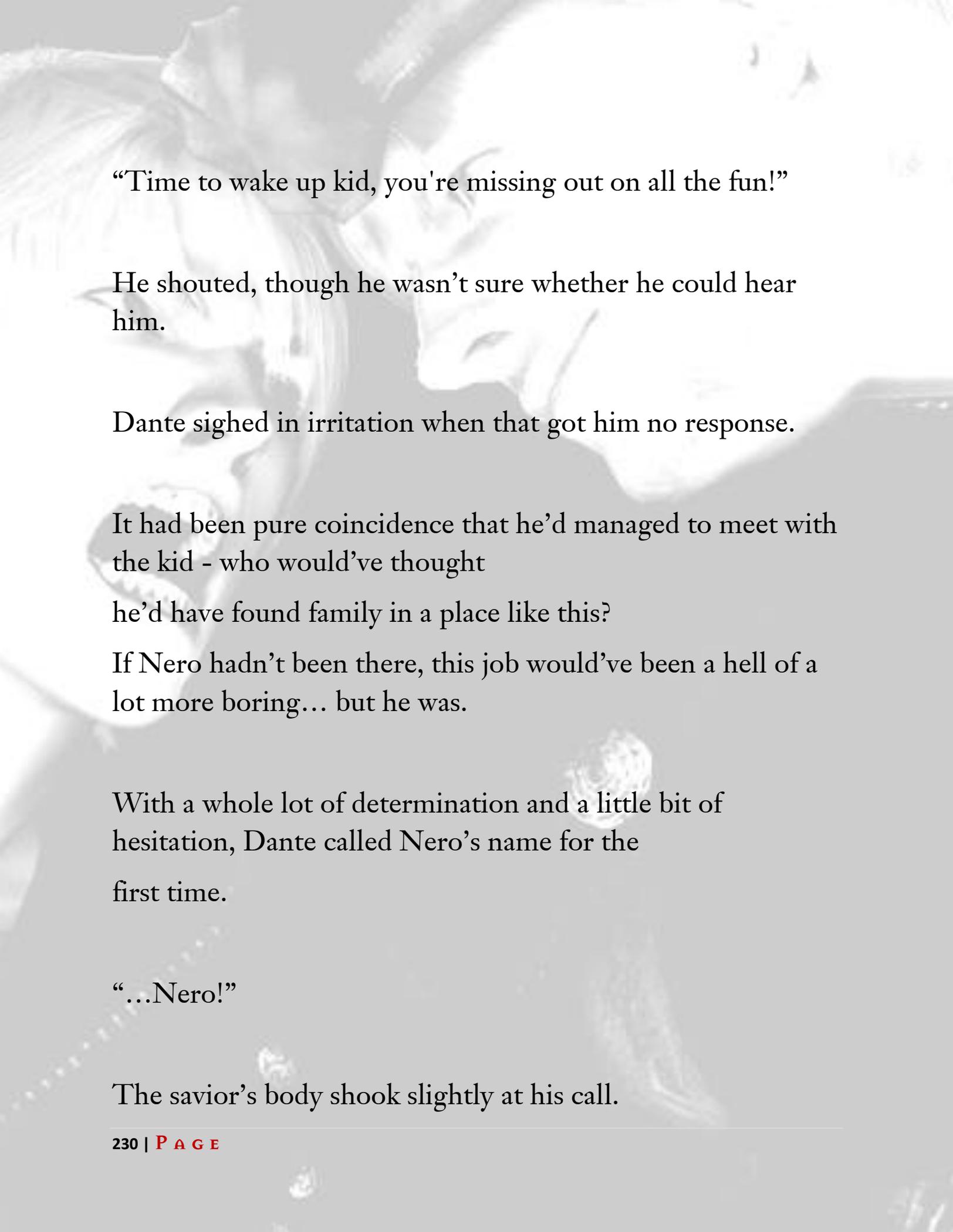
through the gem and disappeared within it - just as Dante landed once again on top of the Opera House.

“...then you got to take it out from the inside.”

The savior stopped dead in its tracks while still trying to attack Dante, and suddenly fell out from the sky, collapsing to its knees - as if he'd commanded it to, Rebellion flew out from its place within the savior's torso and bounced back into Dante's hand.

“No...! What have you done!?”

The vicar shouted furiously, but Dante didn't answer - he merely stared at the savior's chest, where he'd smashed the gem and pierced it with Yamato. He'd done all that he could, and if that wasn't enough to save Nero then there was nothing more that could be done.



“Time to wake up kid, you're missing out on all the fun!”

He shouted, though he wasn't sure whether he could hear him.

Dante sighed in irritation when that got him no response.

It had been pure coincidence that he'd managed to meet with the kid - who would've thought

he'd have found family in a place like this?

If Nero hadn't been there, this job would've been a hell of a lot more boring... but he was.

With a whole lot of determination and a little bit of hesitation, Dante called Nero's name for the first time.

“...Nero!”

The savior's body shook slightly at his call.

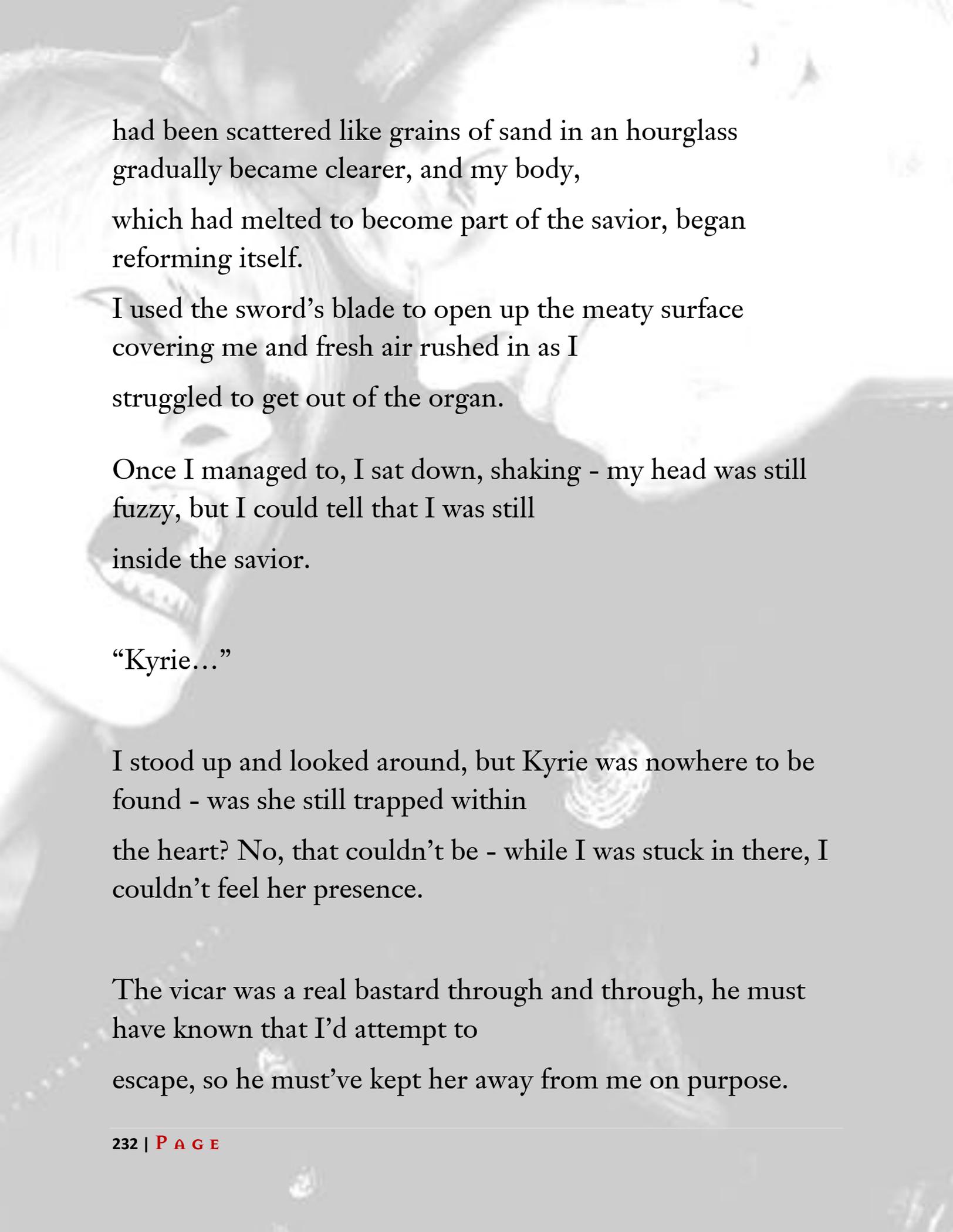


The first thing I managed to conjure up from my memories was my right arm - it was slightly ironic, no matter how much I might despise this arm, it was still the first thing about myself I could remember.

I could feel something nearby - Dante must have sent it to me.

I reached out with my right hand without hesitation, to break through the oppressive binding all over my body, and once it passed through, I could finally touch it - part of me, my most beloved possession - Yamato.

I held it firmly in my hand, like it was meant to be there, and as soon as I did, my memories that



had been scattered like grains of sand in an hourglass gradually became clearer, and my body, which had melted to become part of the savior, began reforming itself.

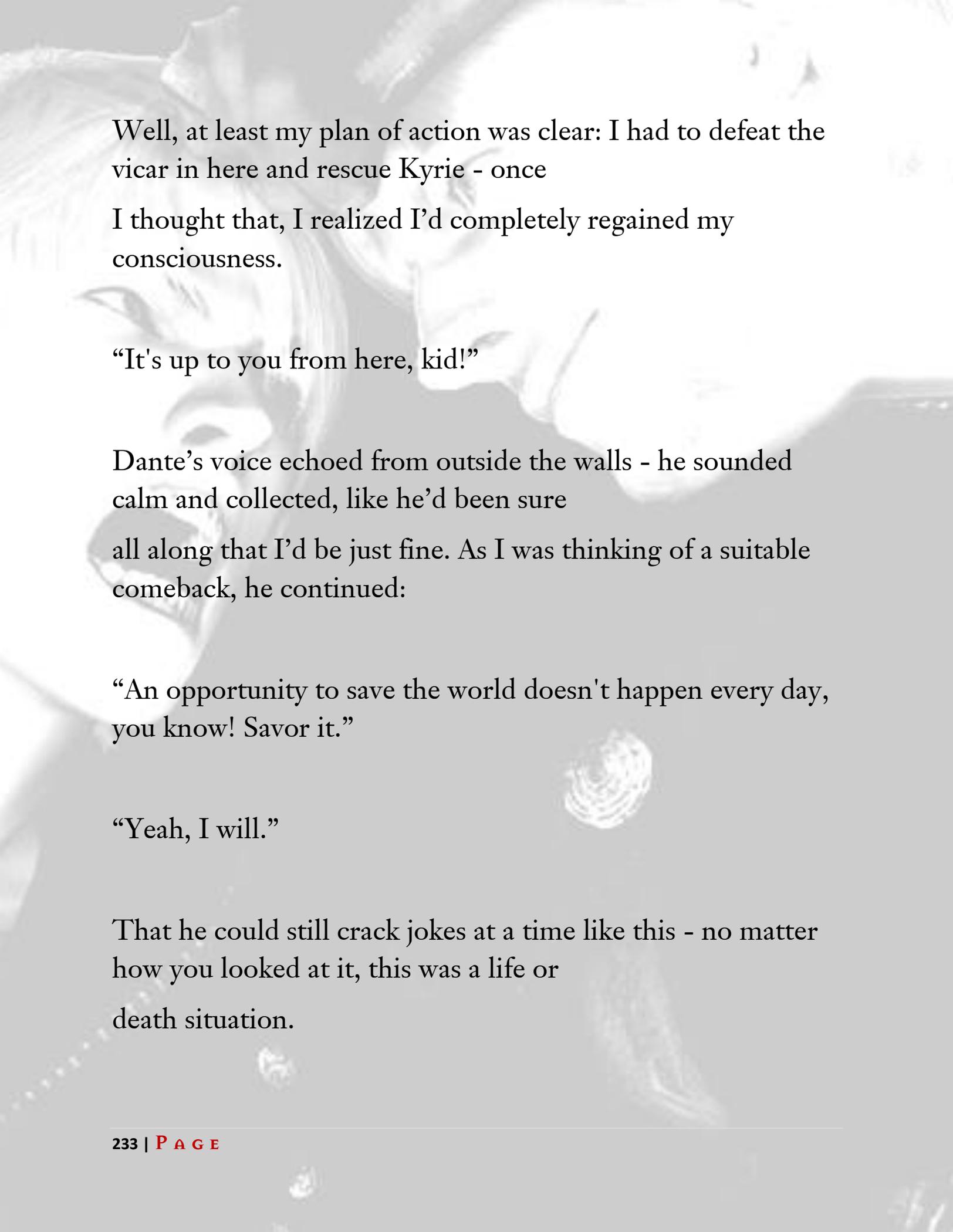
I used the sword's blade to open up the meaty surface covering me and fresh air rushed in as I struggled to get out of the organ.

Once I managed to, I sat down, shaking - my head was still fuzzy, but I could tell that I was still inside the savior.

“Kyrie...”

I stood up and looked around, but Kyrie was nowhere to be found - was she still trapped within the heart? No, that couldn't be - while I was stuck in there, I couldn't feel her presence.

The vicar was a real bastard through and through, he must have known that I'd attempt to escape, so he must've kept her away from me on purpose.



Well, at least my plan of action was clear: I had to defeat the vicar in here and rescue Kyrie - once

I thought that, I realized I'd completely regained my consciousness.

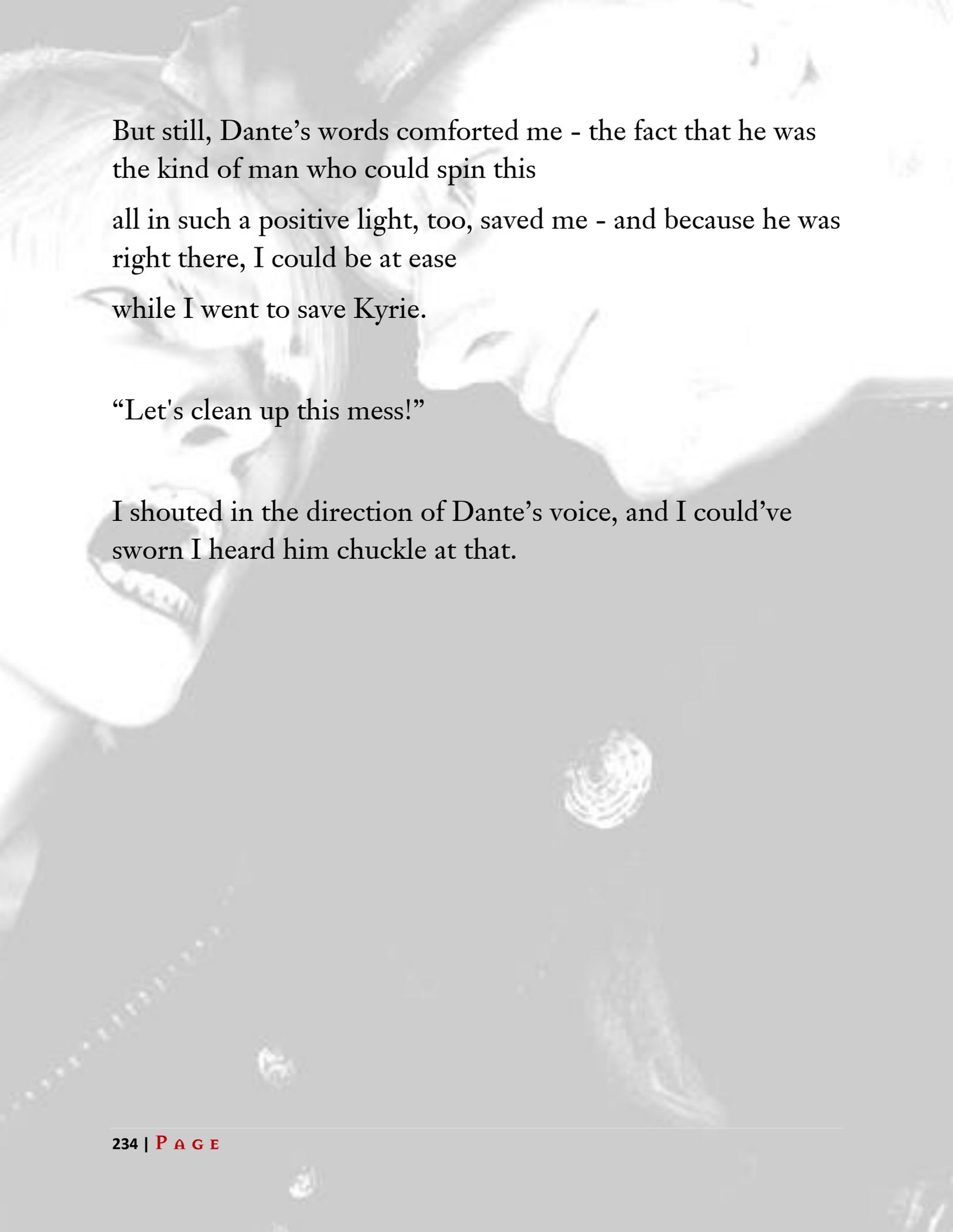
“It's up to you from here, kid!”

Dante's voice echoed from outside the walls - he sounded calm and collected, like he'd been sure all along that I'd be just fine. As I was thinking of a suitable comeback, he continued:

“An opportunity to save the world doesn't happen every day, you know! Savor it.”

“Yeah, I will.”

That he could still crack jokes at a time like this - no matter how you looked at it, this was a life or death situation.



But still, Dante's words comforted me - the fact that he was the kind of man who could spin this all in such a positive light, too, saved me - and because he was right there, I could be at ease while I went to save Kyrie.

"Let's clean up this mess!"

I shouted in the direction of Dante's voice, and I could've sworn I heard him chuckle at that.





Once the pack of demons was taken care of, at least for the time being, Lady began heading towards Fortuna.

There were still a whole lot of demons swarming the skies, and Ben hesitated while holding the rudder.

“Hey, I already paid the extra fees, I need to get to work. Besides, I did my job, right? You didn’t even get a scratch.”

Ben sighed.

“Going right into a place that crawling with demons is pure suicide! If I’d known this was going to be

such a dangerous job I would've refused.”

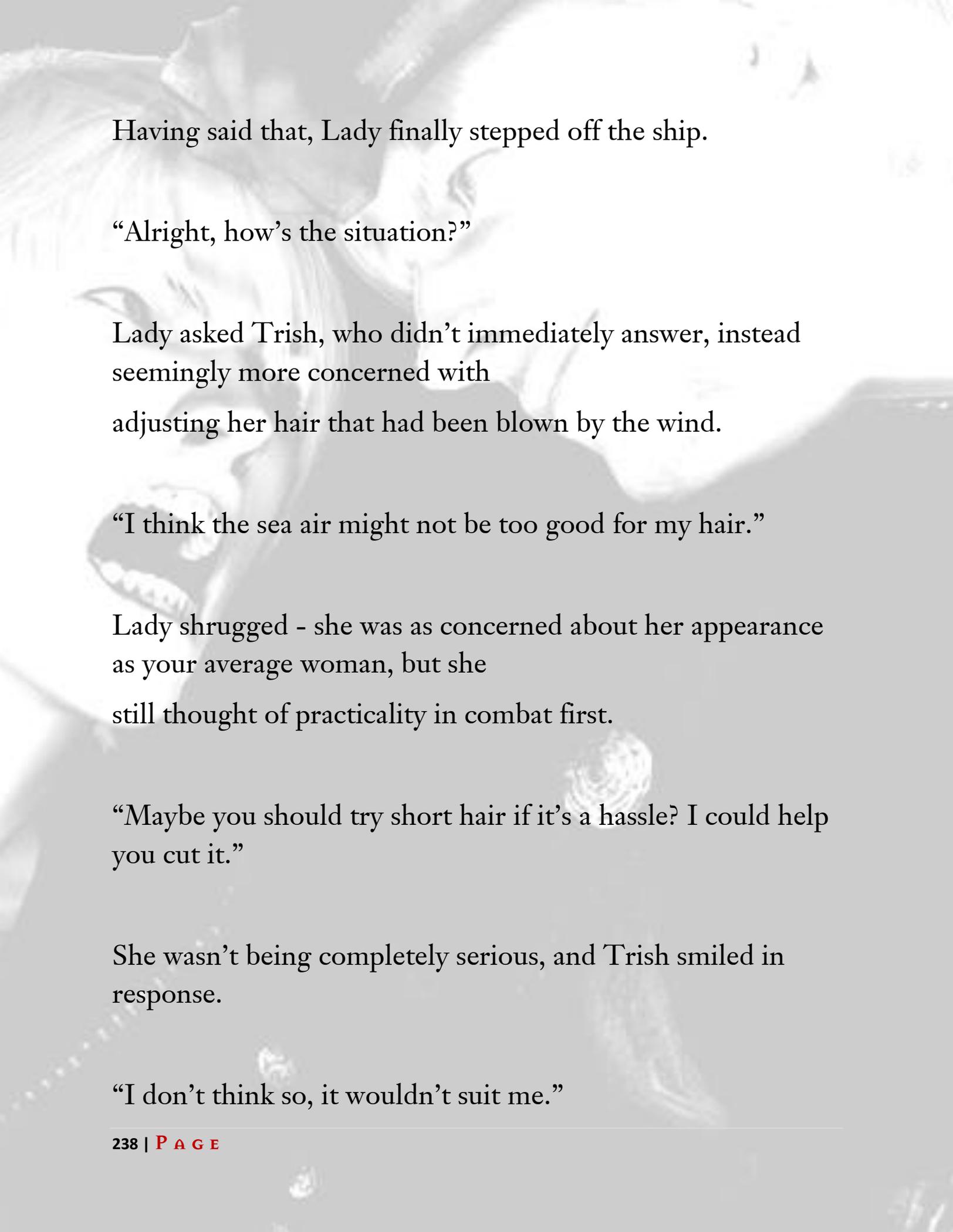
Though he said that, he seemed to have made up his mind, as the ship picked up speed and smoothly sailed towards the island.

Lady walked to the deck, to look at the rapidly approaching port - she wanted to confirm the state of the situation, but unexpectedly, when she looked, she didn't see any demons, only Trish.

When she saw her on the incoming ship, Trish waved her hand at her, and Lady saluted in response - the ship docked not too long after that.

Ben once again looked uneasy, and Lady warned him as she left:

“You can go back to sea if you think it'll be safer, but don't even dream about running away without me.”



Having said that, Lady finally stepped off the ship.

“Alright, how’s the situation?”

Lady asked Trish, who didn’t immediately answer, instead seemingly more concerned with adjusting her hair that had been blown by the wind.

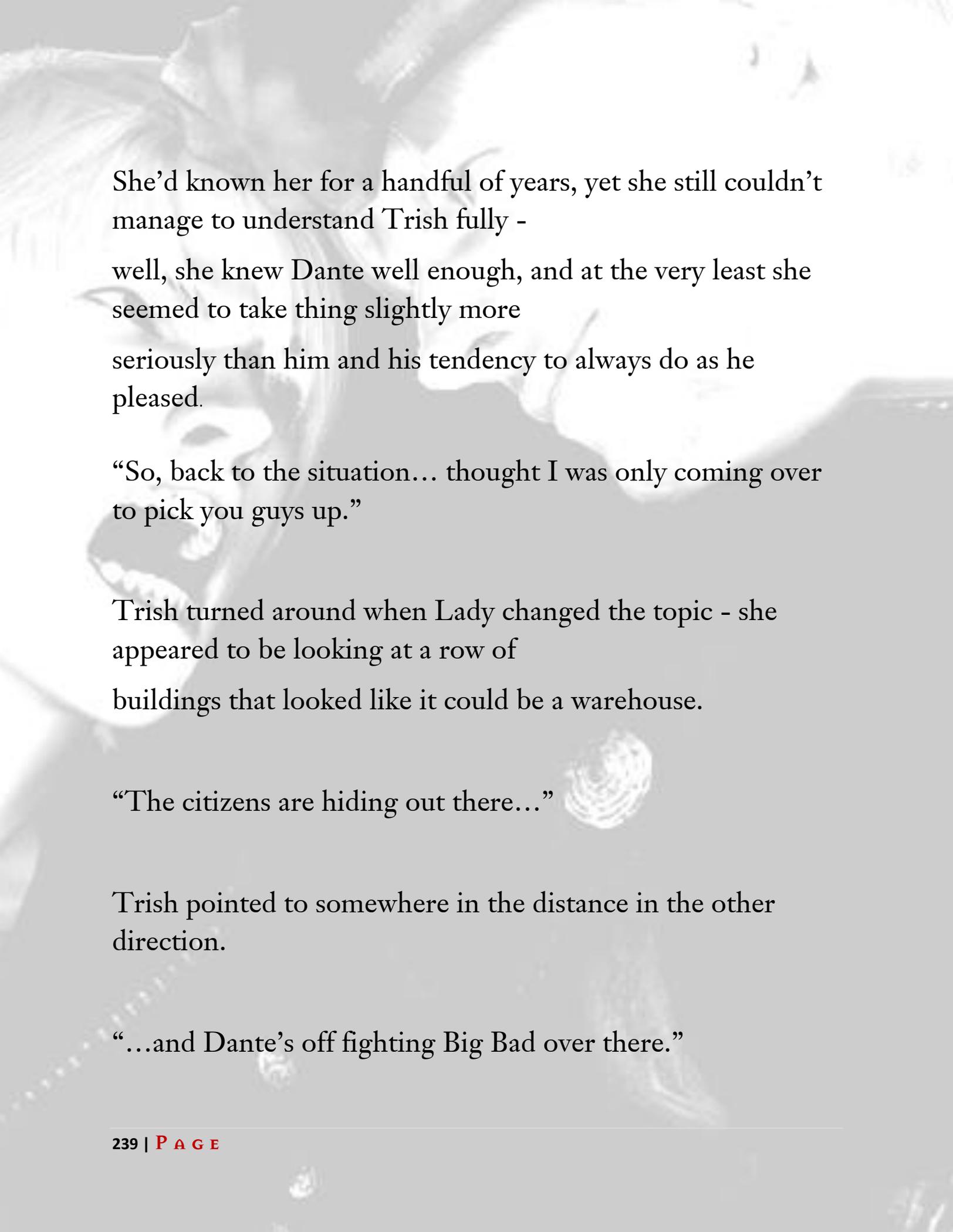
“I think the sea air might not be too good for my hair.”

Lady shrugged - she was as concerned about her appearance as your average woman, but she still thought of practicality in combat first.

“Maybe you should try short hair if it’s a hassle? I could help you cut it.”

She wasn’t being completely serious, and Trish smiled in response.

“I don’t think so, it wouldn’t suit me.”



She'd known her for a handful of years, yet she still couldn't manage to understand Trish fully - well, she knew Dante well enough, and at the very least she seemed to take thing slightly more seriously than him and his tendency to always do as he pleased.

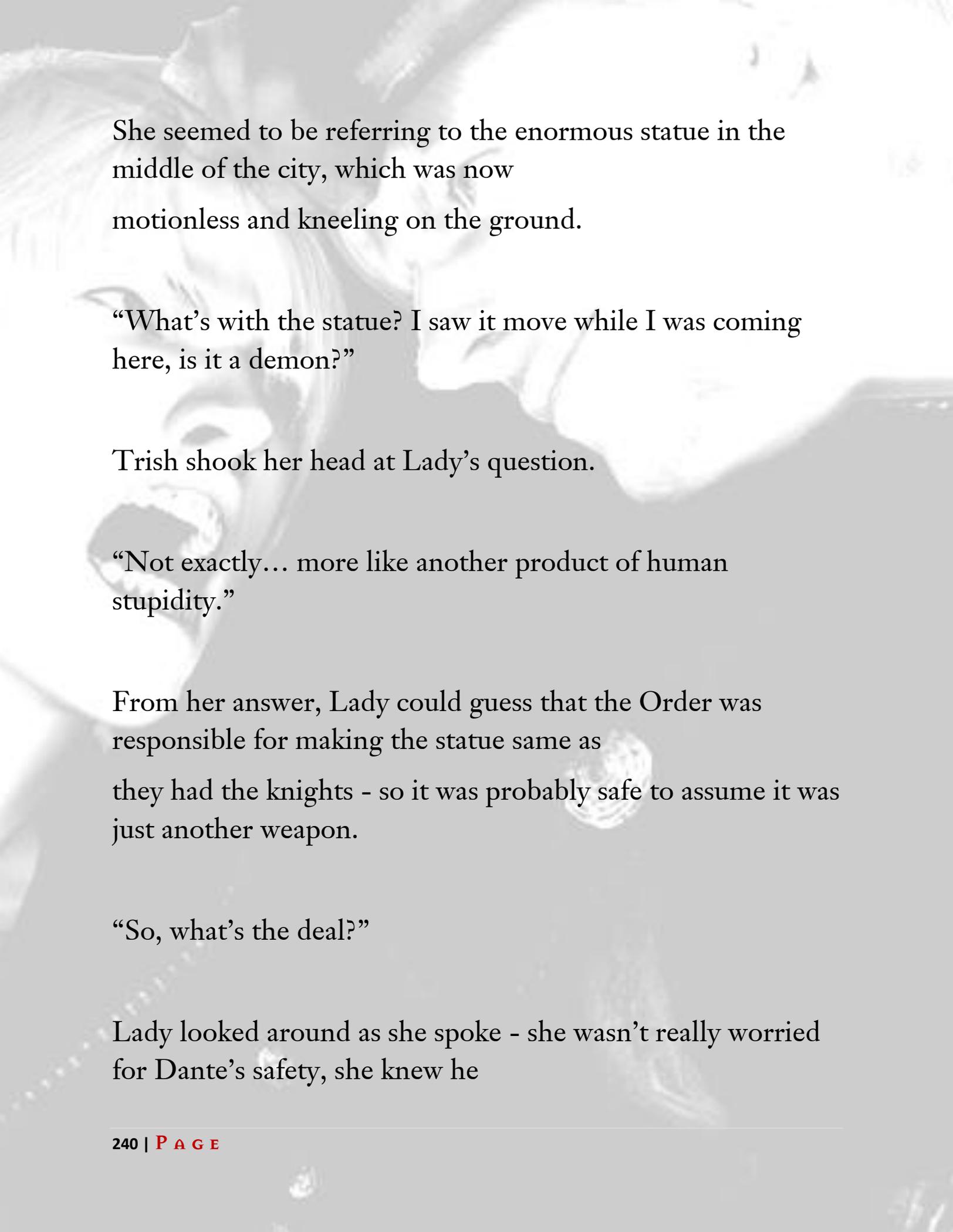
“So, back to the situation... thought I was only coming over to pick you guys up.”

Trish turned around when Lady changed the topic - she appeared to be looking at a row of buildings that looked like it could be a warehouse.

“The citizens are hiding out there...”

Trish pointed to somewhere in the distance in the other direction.

“...and Dante's off fighting Big Bad over there.”



She seemed to be referring to the enormous statue in the middle of the city, which was now motionless and kneeling on the ground.

“What’s with the statue? I saw it move while I was coming here, is it a demon?”

Trish shook her head at Lady’s question.

“Not exactly... more like another product of human stupidity.”

From her answer, Lady could guess that the Order was responsible for making the statue same as they had the knights - so it was probably safe to assume it was just another weapon.

“So, what’s the deal?”

Lady looked around as she spoke - she wasn’t really worried for Dante’s safety, she knew he



could handle himself, but she was pretty worried about the property damage this was all going to amount to.

Trish seemed to catch onto her drift.

“The deal is, I need your help. The big fight over there could be potentially very destructive - I need to take the citizens to the forest so they’ll be safe.”

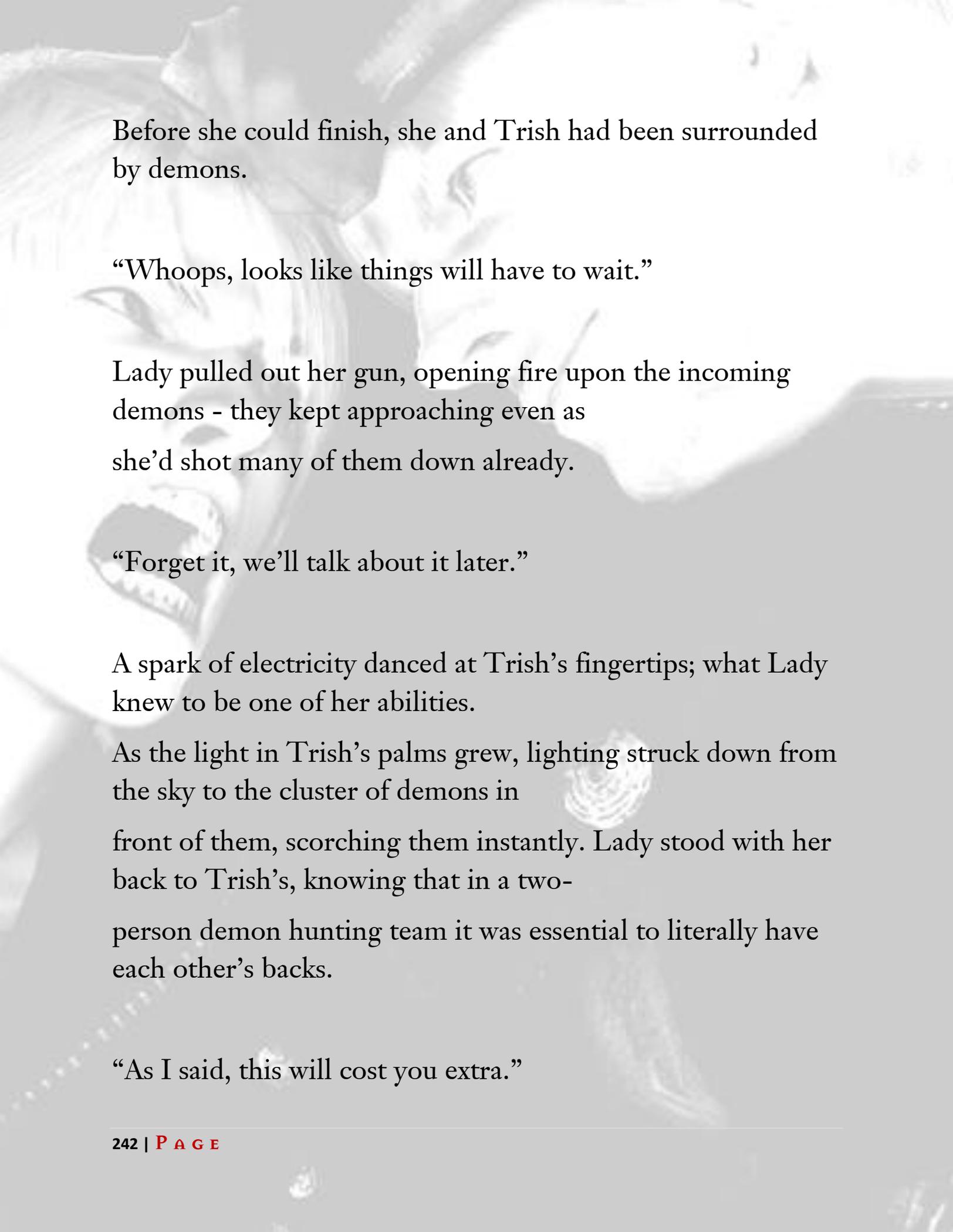
“...so, you’re telling me you want me to play the bodyguard.”

Trish smiled.

“That’s right!”

Lady sighed while she once again looked around the place.

“Hope you know I’ll be putting this on your tab - “



Before she could finish, she and Trish had been surrounded by demons.

“Whoops, looks like things will have to wait.”

Lady pulled out her gun, opening fire upon the incoming demons - they kept approaching even as she'd shot many of them down already.

“Forget it, we'll talk about it later.”

A spark of electricity danced at Trish's fingertips; what Lady knew to be one of her abilities.

As the light in Trish's palms grew, lightning struck down from the sky to the cluster of demons in front of them, scorching them instantly. Lady stood with her back to Trish's, knowing that in a two-person demon hunting team it was essential to literally have each other's backs.

“As I said, this will cost you extra.”

“Oh, is this your famous generosity acting up again?”

Trish quipped back as she grabbed her guns - like Dante, she also wielded double guns.

As she pulled the trigger, it shot out her electricity like a bullet towards the demons.

It sure was convenient to be able to do that - Lady sighed, Dante also used his demonic energy to make his own bullets from nothing - it was both very cost efficient and it made the guns hit twice as hard.

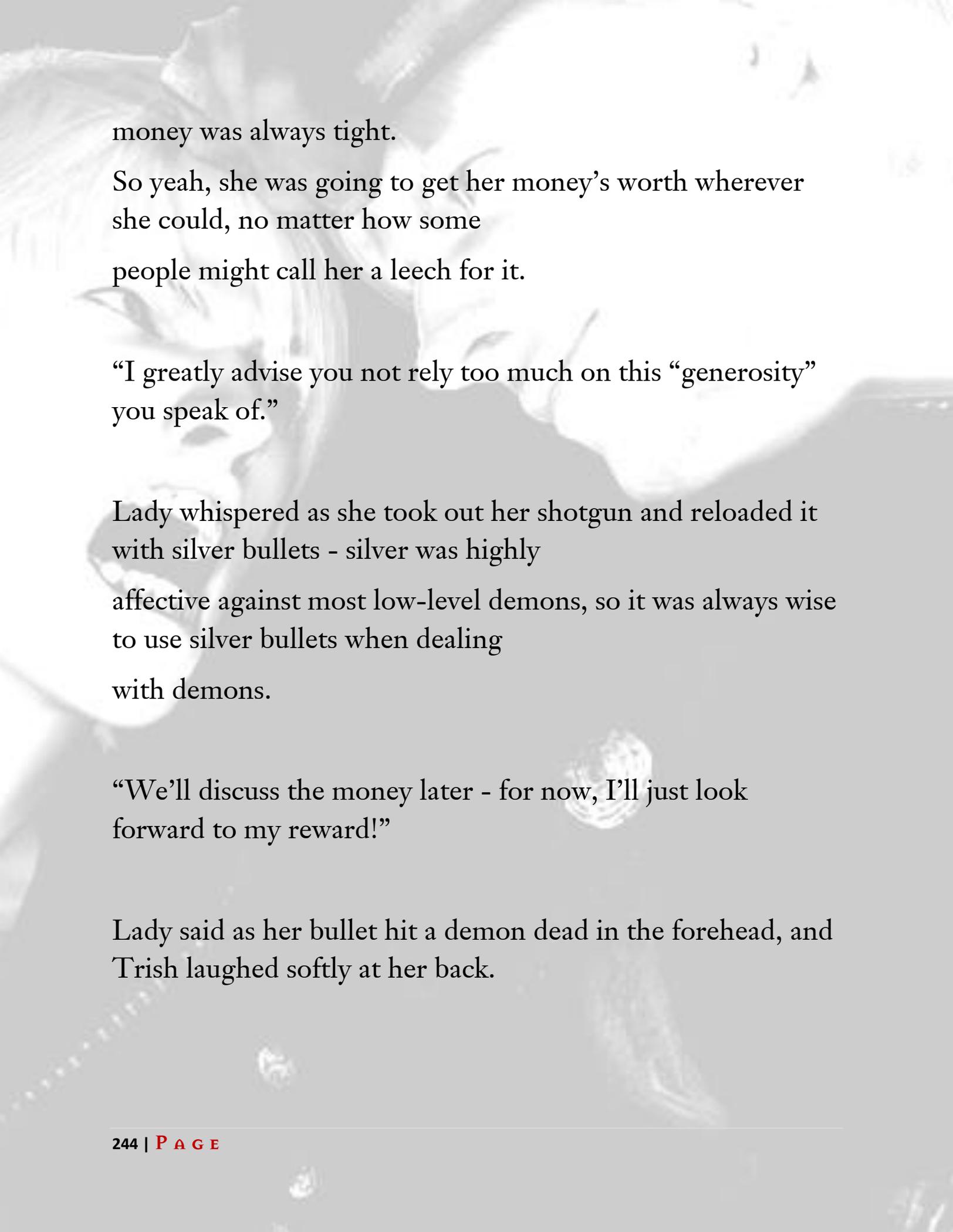
As a mere human, she couldn't do that - she had to rely on her arsenal of guns and assorted firearms to do the job... and those didn't exactly grow on trees.

Despite what it might look like, Lady also wasn't in the business for the money, but out of pure

and simple hatred for demons - that was her true motive.

But demon hunting, when you were just a regular old human, was expensive - she had to be

constantly maintaining and expanding her arsenal, and no matter how well she might get paid,



money was always tight.

So yeah, she was going to get her money's worth wherever she could, no matter how some people might call her a leech for it.

“I greatly advise you not rely too much on this “generosity” you speak of.”

Lady whispered as she took out her shotgun and reloaded it with silver bullets - silver was highly affective against most low-level demons, so it was always wise to use silver bullets when dealing with demons.

“We’ll discuss the money later - for now, I’ll just look forward to my reward!”

Lady said as her bullet hit a demon dead in the forehead, and Trish laughed softly at her back.



Nero was as rescued as he could currently be, so Dante's job was essentially done - as long as

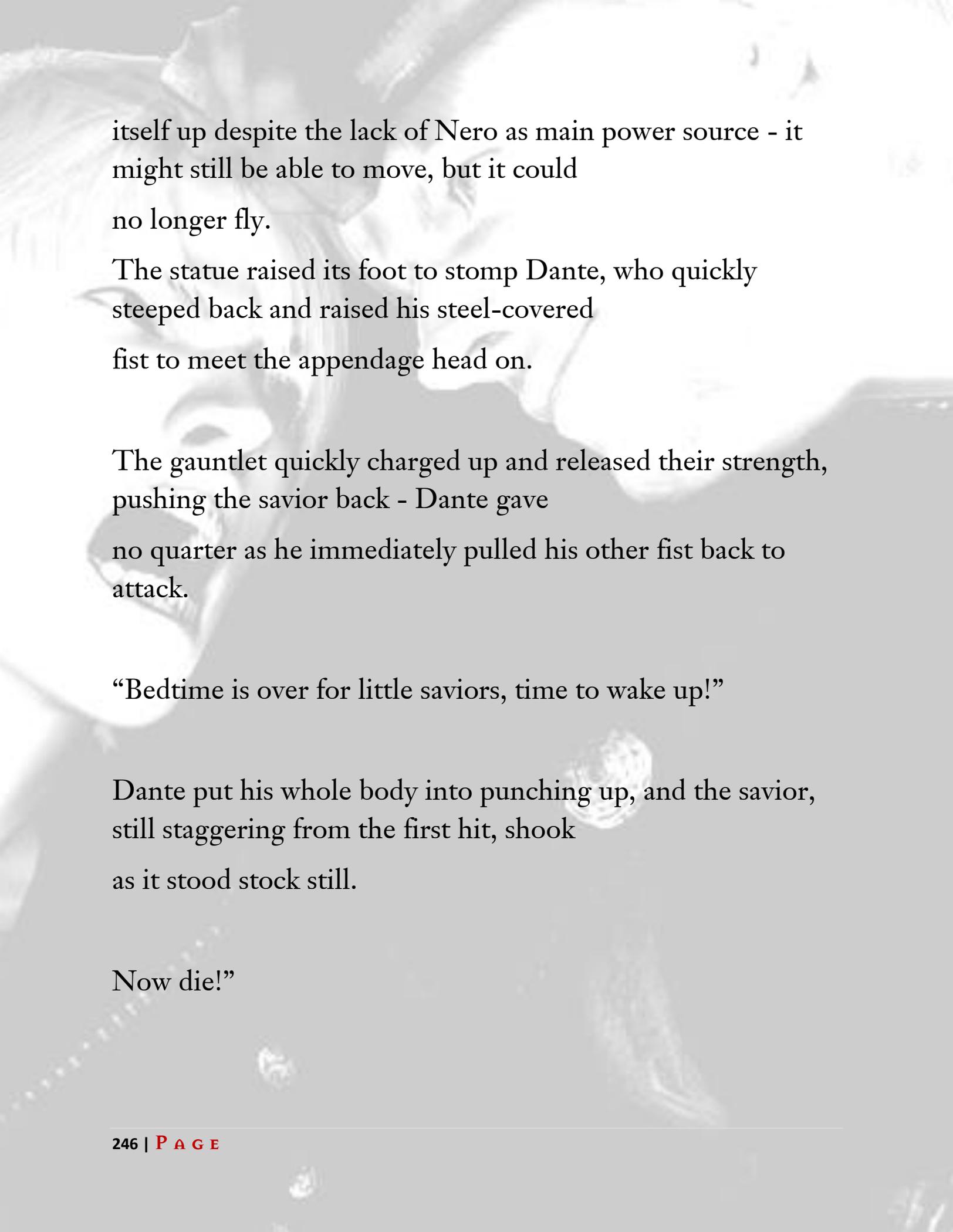
Nero could defeat the vicar, getting the devil sword Sparda back would just be a matter of time.

“Guess that means I get to play with the savior for a while.”

Dante jumped from his spot-on top of the Opera House's roof, and looked up at the savior once he landed.

“You poor thing, you can't even move without Nero powering you up. That must be pretty confusing for the big guy in charge.”

As Dante took out Gilgamesh, melding the demonic metal to his body, the savior's body propped



itself up despite the lack of Nero as main power source - it might still be able to move, but it could no longer fly.

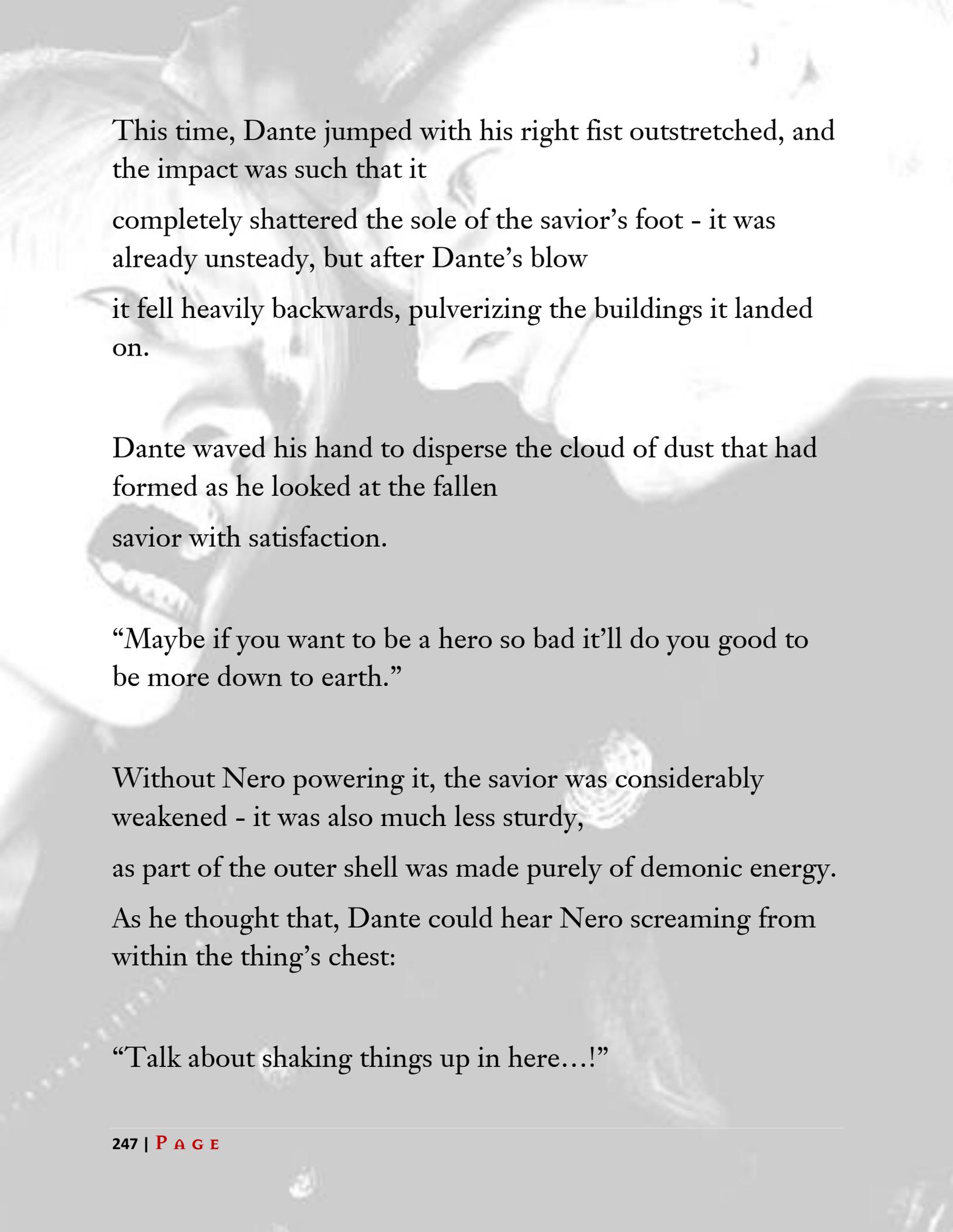
The statue raised its foot to stomp Dante, who quickly stepped back and raised his steel-covered fist to meet the appendage head on.

The gauntlet quickly charged up and released their strength, pushing the savior back - Dante gave no quarter as he immediately pulled his other fist back to attack.

“Bedtime is over for little saviors, time to wake up!”

Dante put his whole body into punching up, and the savior, still staggering from the first hit, shook as it stood stock still.

Now die!”



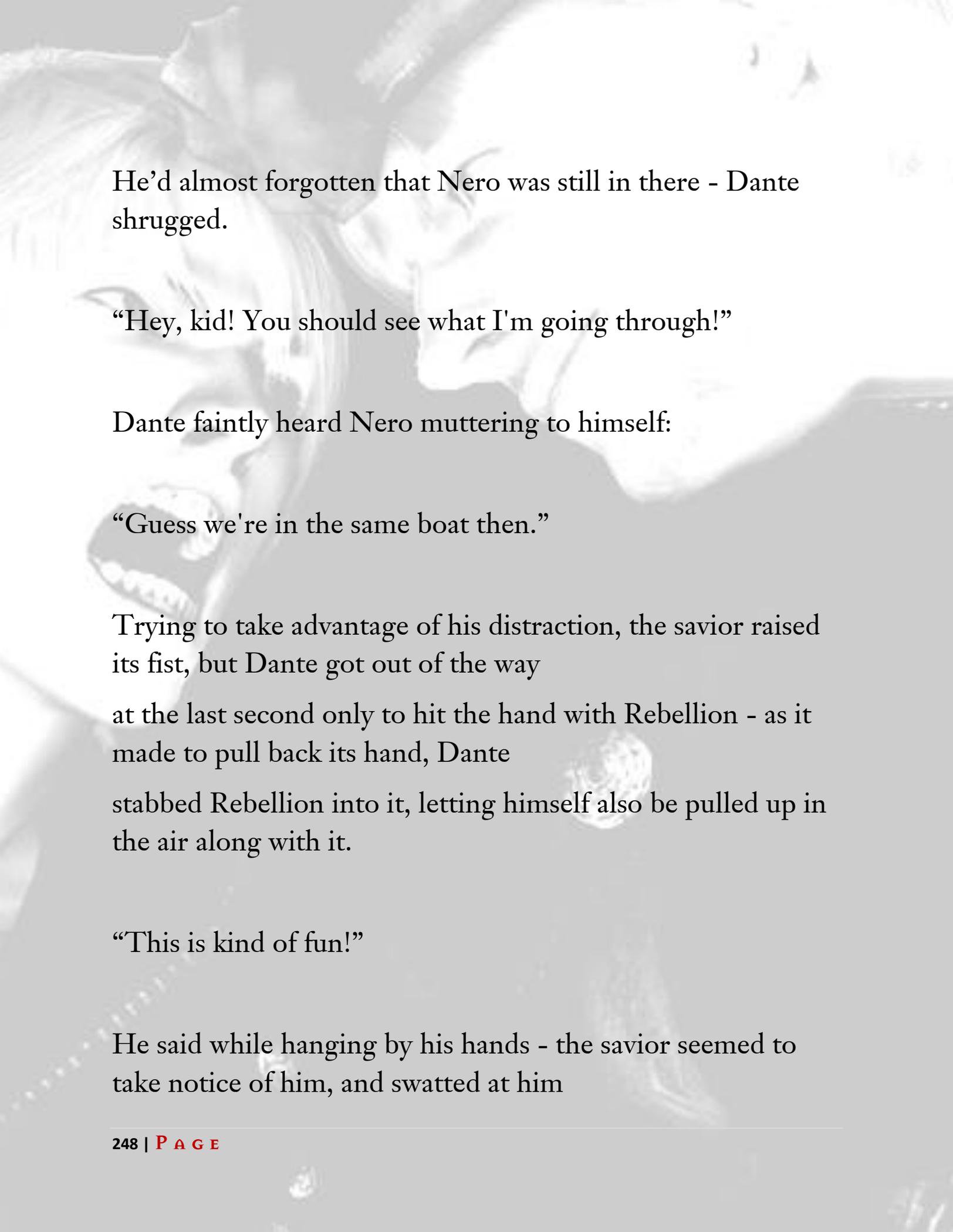
This time, Dante jumped with his right fist outstretched, and the impact was such that it completely shattered the sole of the savior's foot - it was already unsteady, but after Dante's blow it fell heavily backwards, pulverizing the buildings it landed on.

Dante waved his hand to disperse the cloud of dust that had formed as he looked at the fallen savior with satisfaction.

“Maybe if you want to be a hero so bad it'll do you good to be more down to earth.”

Without Nero powering it, the savior was considerably weakened - it was also much less sturdy, as part of the outer shell was made purely of demonic energy. As he thought that, Dante could hear Nero screaming from within the thing's chest:

“Talk about shaking things up in here...!”



He'd almost forgotten that Nero was still in there - Dante shrugged.

“Hey, kid! You should see what I'm going through!”

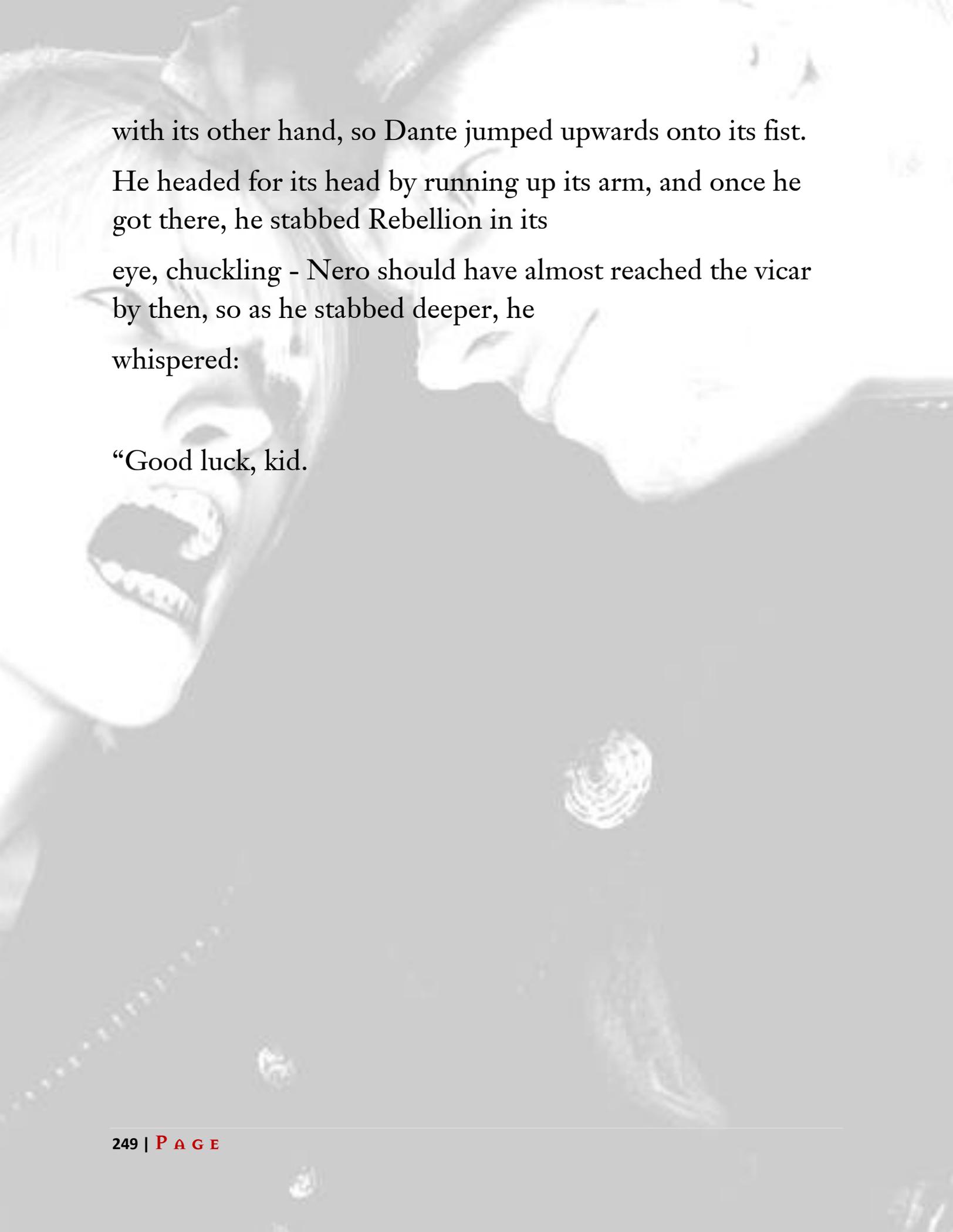
Dante faintly heard Nero muttering to himself:

“Guess we're in the same boat then.”

Trying to take advantage of his distraction, the savior raised its fist, but Dante got out of the way at the last second only to hit the hand with Rebellion - as it made to pull back its hand, Dante stabbed Rebellion into it, letting himself also be pulled up in the air along with it.

“This is kind of fun!”

He said while hanging by his hands - the savior seemed to take notice of him, and swatted at him



with its other hand, so Dante jumped upwards onto its fist. He headed for its head by running up its arm, and once he got there, he stabbed Rebellion in its eye, chuckling - Nero should have almost reached the vicar by then, so as he stabbed deeper, he whispered:

“Good luck, kid.



Inside the savior's body was like a huge labyrinth, and the whole place was crawling with demons.

Maybe they were there for the same reason I was, to power up the whole thing - I felt my battle

instincts gradually returning as I took them on one by one.

How long had I been trapped here? Thinking logically, it had probably only been a few hours, but I

felt like I'd been comatose for years, and my body was still a bit sluggish.

Not only that, but though I'd managed to get Red Queen and Blue Rose back, they weren't doing

too well - definitely unusable in combat. Yamato was incredibly powerful, sure, but it still made me

a bit uneasy - I wasn't very used to it yet.

The first demons I killed with it; I almost didn't realize it had happened - I looked at the sword in

awe. Somehow, the mere sight of it quelled my anxiety.

I'd been taught what devil arms were and this was definitely one, but how had I managed to wield one? And why was part of me, deep down, so convinced that this sword was a piece of myself?

As I walked through the savior's labyrinth, I felt no confusion, like my body instinctively knew where to go - the vicar had mentioned having the Devil Sword Sparda, maybe its presence was guiding me?

“What is this feeling?”

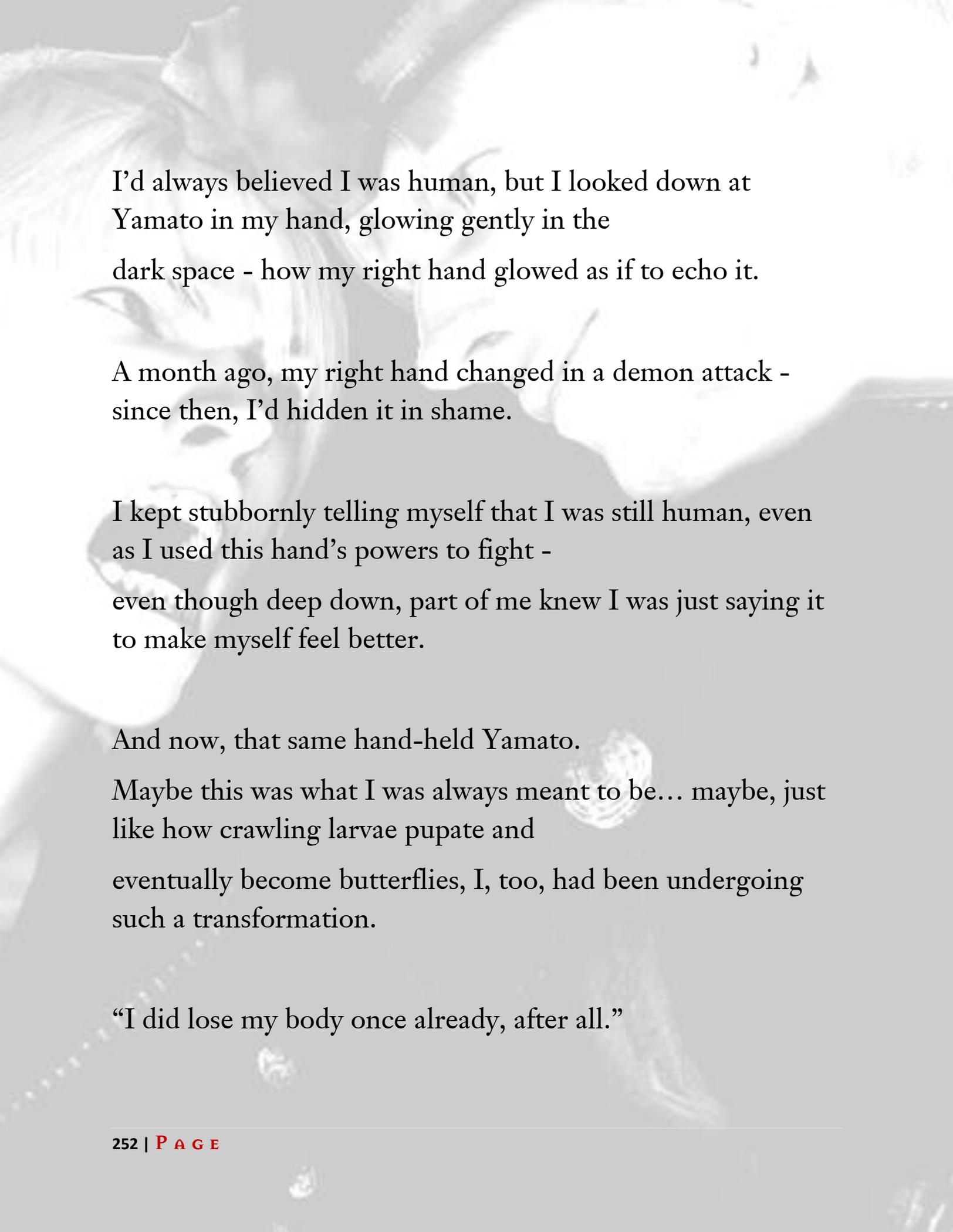
I remembered then the vicar's words about the mysterious man he'd met before I was born.

How the man allegedly claimed to be the son of Sparda, and how the vicar said that he thought

he must have had me with a woman from here - was it even real, or just a crazy old man's

delusion? I had no way of knowing, so I couldn't say, and yet I couldn't shake that thought - I was

sure, my body was reacting to the Devil Sword Sparda.



I'd always believed I was human, but I looked down at Yamato in my hand, glowing gently in the dark space - how my right hand glowed as if to echo it.

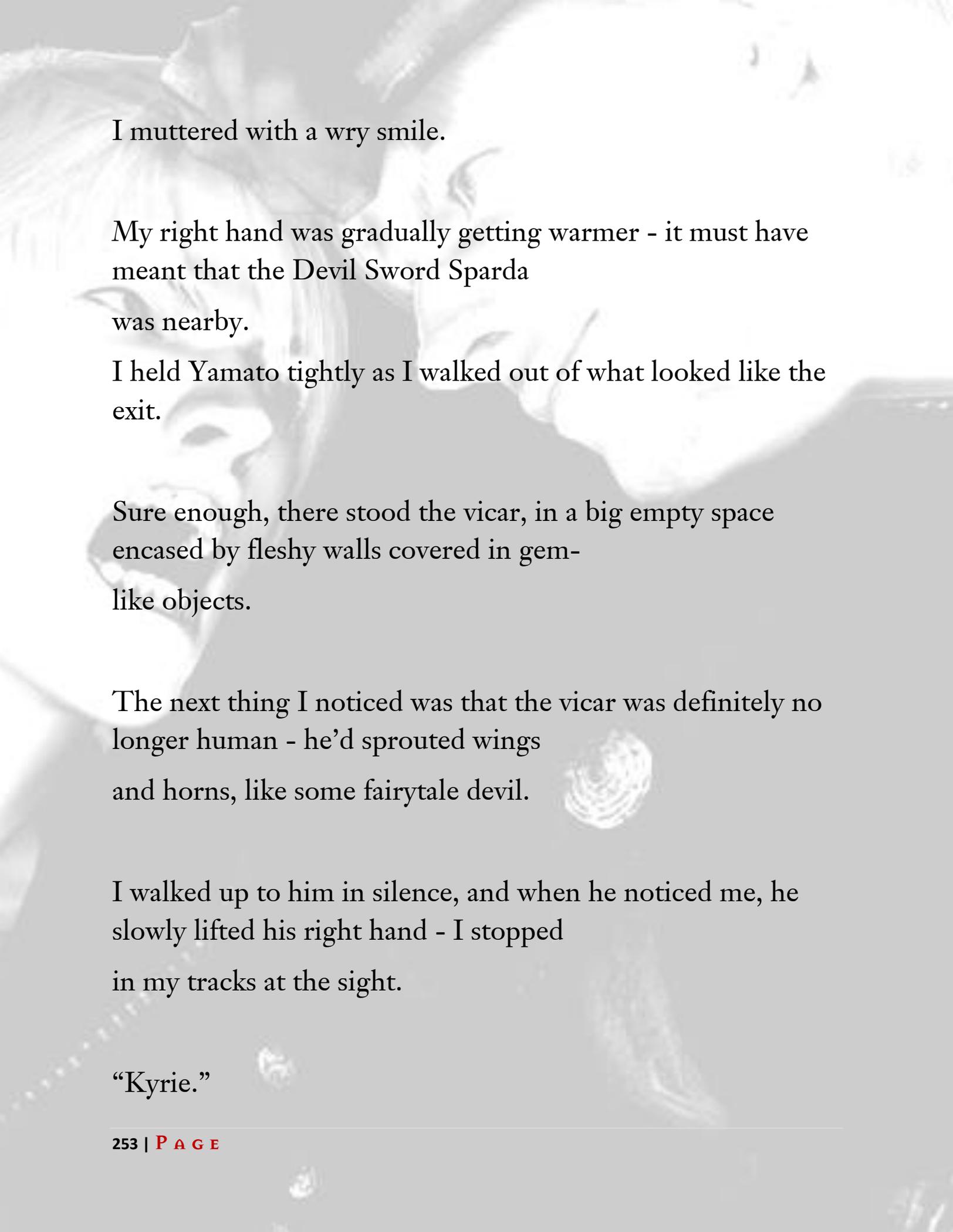
A month ago, my right hand changed in a demon attack - since then, I'd hidden it in shame.

I kept stubbornly telling myself that I was still human, even as I used this hand's powers to fight - even though deep down, part of me knew I was just saying it to make myself feel better.

And now, that same hand-held Yamato.

Maybe this was what I was always meant to be... maybe, just like how crawling larvae pupate and eventually become butterflies, I, too, had been undergoing such a transformation.

“I did lose my body once already, after all.”



I muttered with a wry smile.

My right hand was gradually getting warmer - it must have meant that the Devil Sword Sparda was nearby.

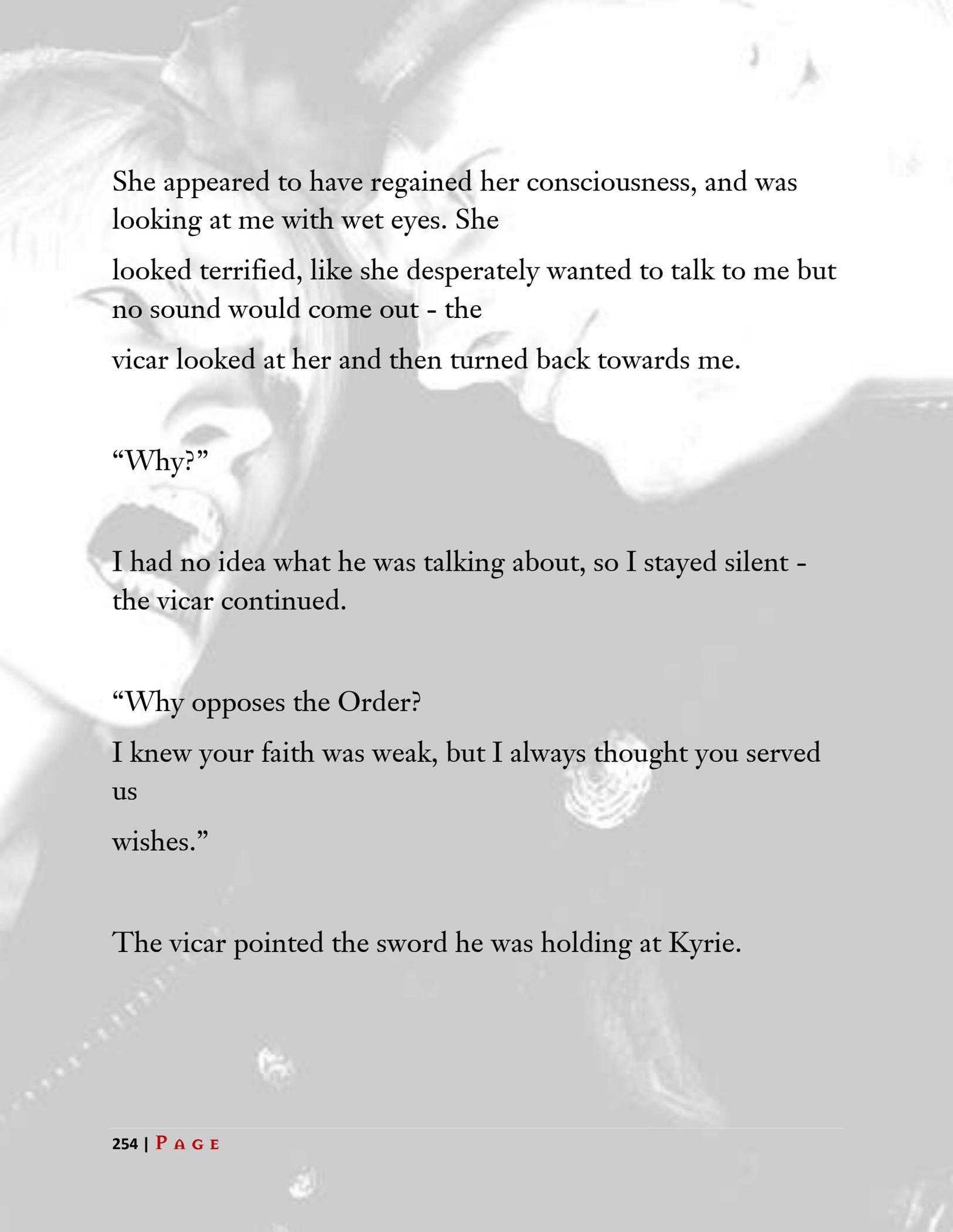
I held Yamato tightly as I walked out of what looked like the exit.

Sure enough, there stood the vicar, in a big empty space encased by fleshy walls covered in gem-like objects.

The next thing I noticed was that the vicar was definitely no longer human - he'd sprouted wings and horns, like some fairytale devil.

I walked up to him in silence, and when he noticed me, he slowly lifted his right hand - I stopped in my tracks at the sight.

“Kyrie.”



She appeared to have regained her consciousness, and was looking at me with wet eyes. She looked terrified, like she desperately wanted to talk to me but no sound would come out - the vicar looked at her and then turned back towards me.

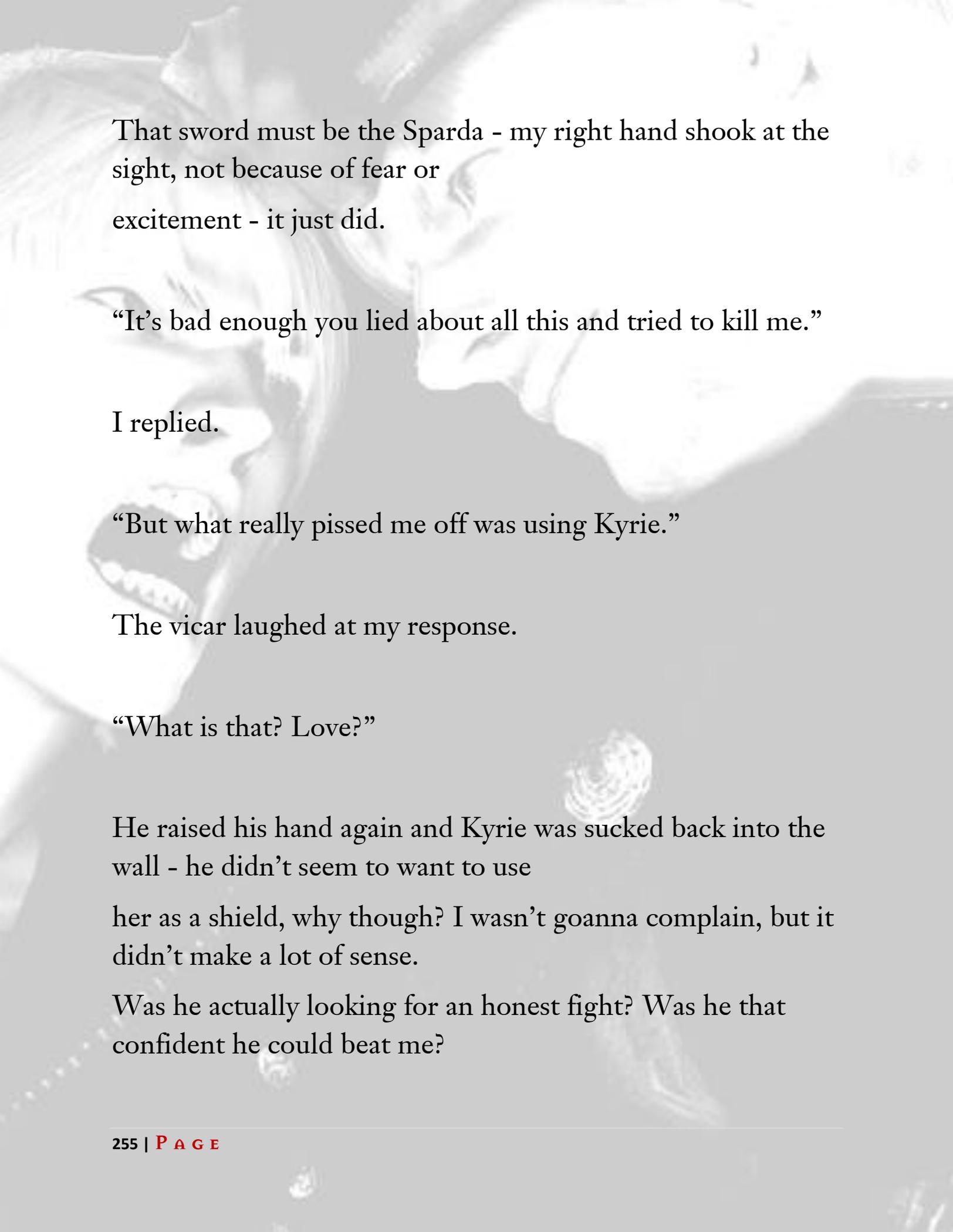
“Why?”

I had no idea what he was talking about, so I stayed silent - the vicar continued.

“Why opposes the Order?”

I knew your faith was weak, but I always thought you served us wishes.”

The vicar pointed the sword he was holding at Kyrie.



That sword must be the Sparda - my right hand shook at the sight, not because of fear or excitement - it just did.

“It’s bad enough you lied about all this and tried to kill me.”

I replied.

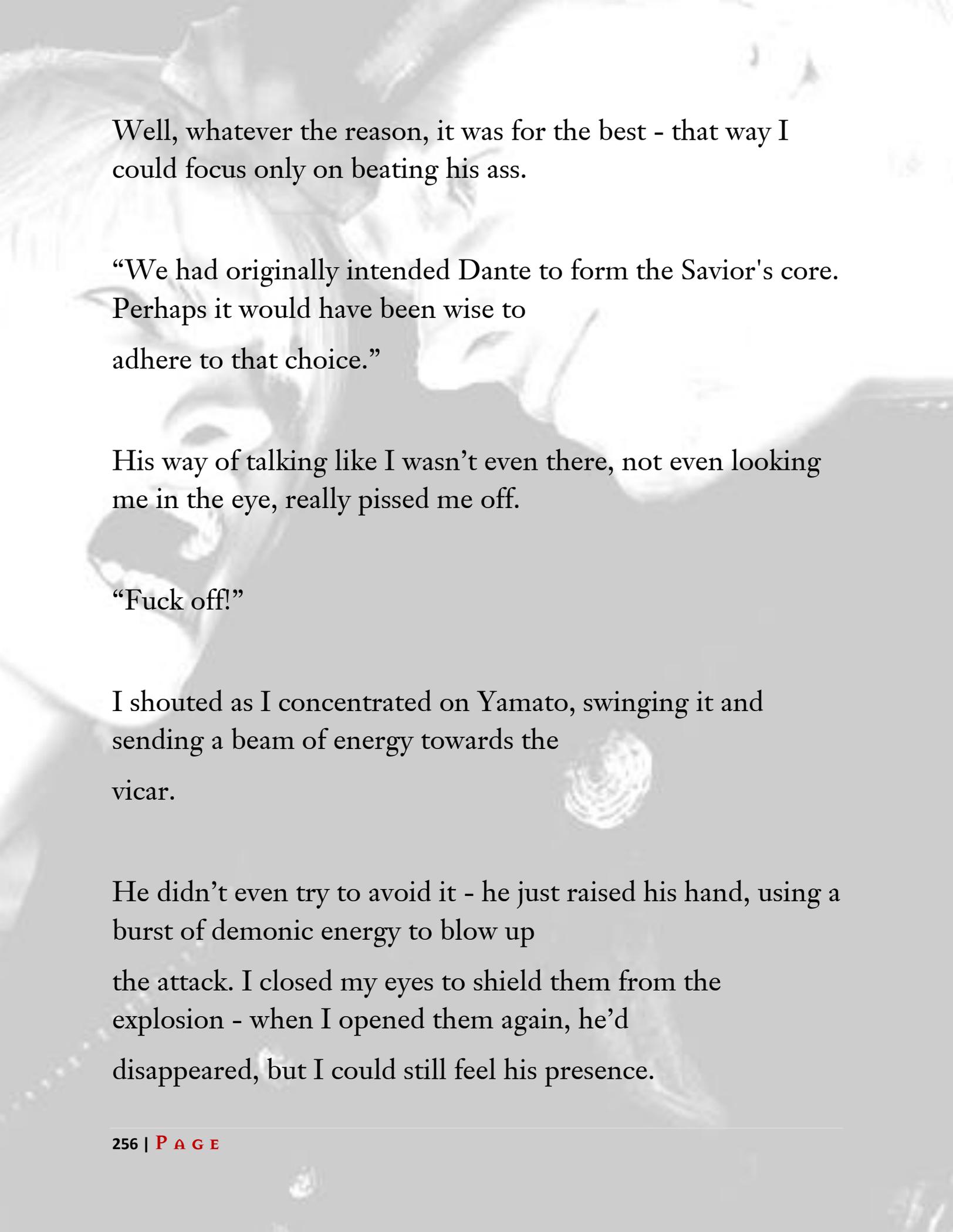
“But what really pissed me off was using Kyrie.”

The vicar laughed at my response.

“What is that? Love?”

He raised his hand again and Kyrie was sucked back into the wall - he didn’t seem to want to use her as a shield, why though? I wasn’t goanna complain, but it didn’t make a lot of sense.

Was he actually looking for an honest fight? Was he that confident he could beat me?



Well, whatever the reason, it was for the best - that way I could focus only on beating his ass.

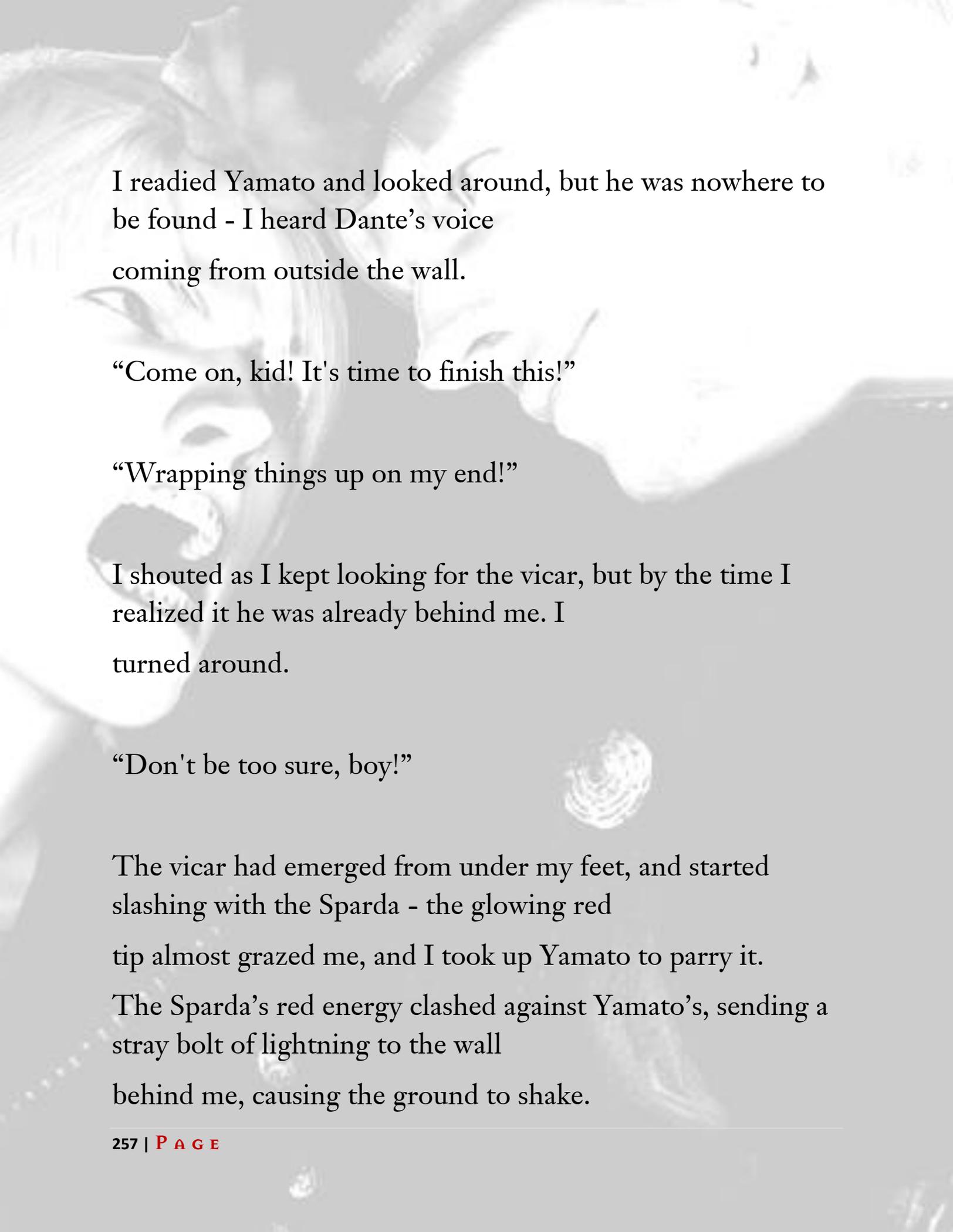
“We had originally intended Dante to form the Savior's core. Perhaps it would have been wise to adhere to that choice.”

His way of talking like I wasn't even there, not even looking me in the eye, really pissed me off.

“Fuck off!”

I shouted as I concentrated on Yamato, swinging it and sending a beam of energy towards the vicar.

He didn't even try to avoid it - he just raised his hand, using a burst of demonic energy to blow up the attack. I closed my eyes to shield them from the explosion - when I opened them again, he'd disappeared, but I could still feel his presence.



I readied Yamato and looked around, but he was nowhere to be found - I heard Dante's voice coming from outside the wall.

“Come on, kid! It's time to finish this!”

“Wrapping things up on my end!”

I shouted as I kept looking for the vicar, but by the time I realized it he was already behind me. I turned around.

“Don't be too sure, boy!”

The vicar had emerged from under my feet, and started slashing with the Sparda - the glowing red tip almost grazed me, and I took up Yamato to parry it.

The Sparda's red energy clashed against Yamato's, sending a stray bolt of lightning to the wall

behind me, causing the ground to shake.

“Although flawed, the power of the Savior is beyond that of which you can defeat!”

The vicar once again disappeared into the ground.

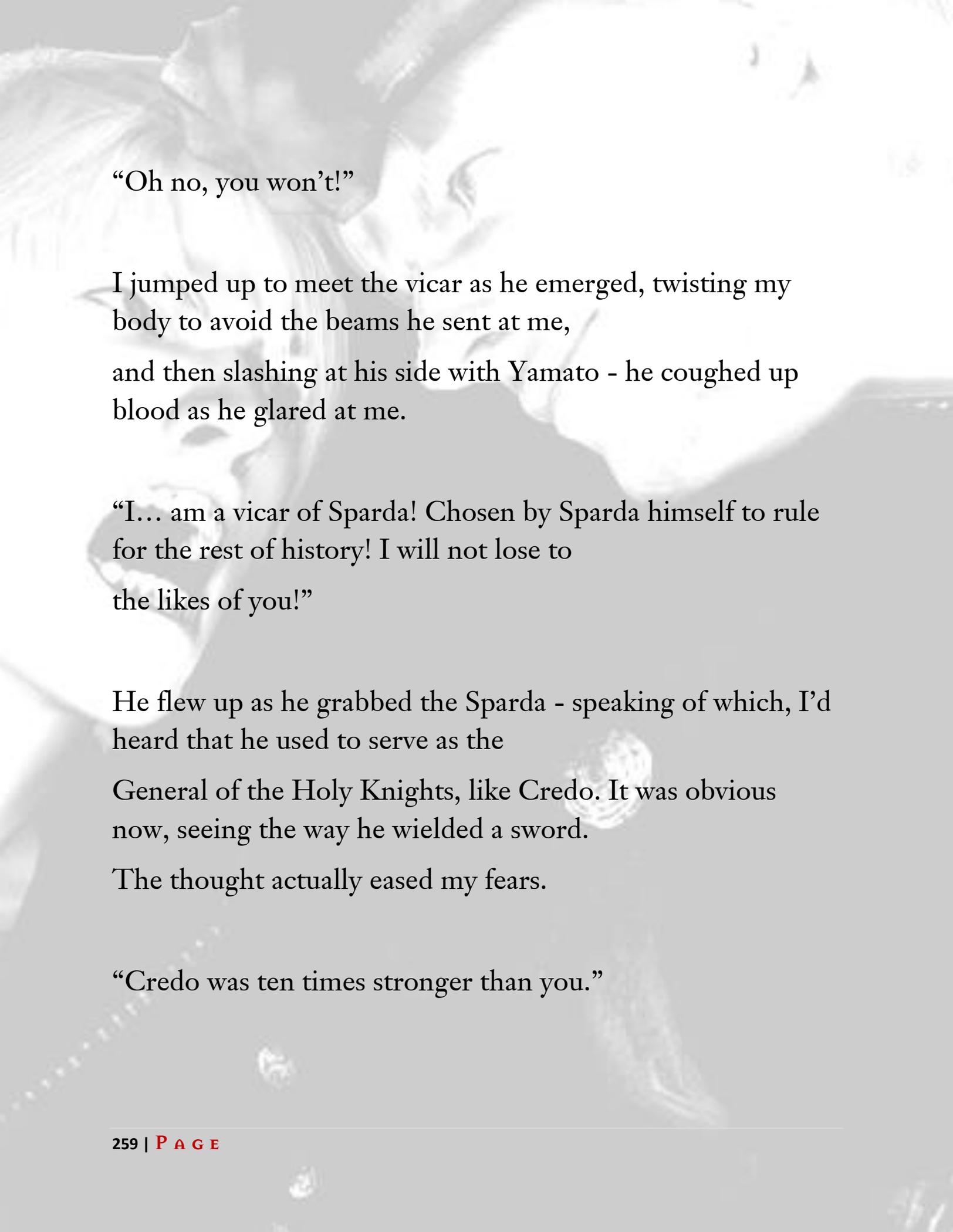
“Aren’t you a bit old to be playing hide and seek?”

I couldn’t hold myself from the cheap jab - I was livid.

The vicar could phase through the savior’s walls freely, so I had to get him in one go - I closed my eyes and concentrated on feeling his presence and the Sparda’s - well, the Sparda’s, mainly, since

the vicar’s presence ebbed and flowed, but the Sparda’s energy glowed like a signal in the back of my mind.

Finally, I located them - the vicar was above me, rearing back the Sparda to attack.



“Oh no, you won’t!”

I jumped up to meet the vicar as he emerged, twisting my body to avoid the beams he sent at me, and then slashing at his side with Yamato - he coughed up blood as he glared at me.

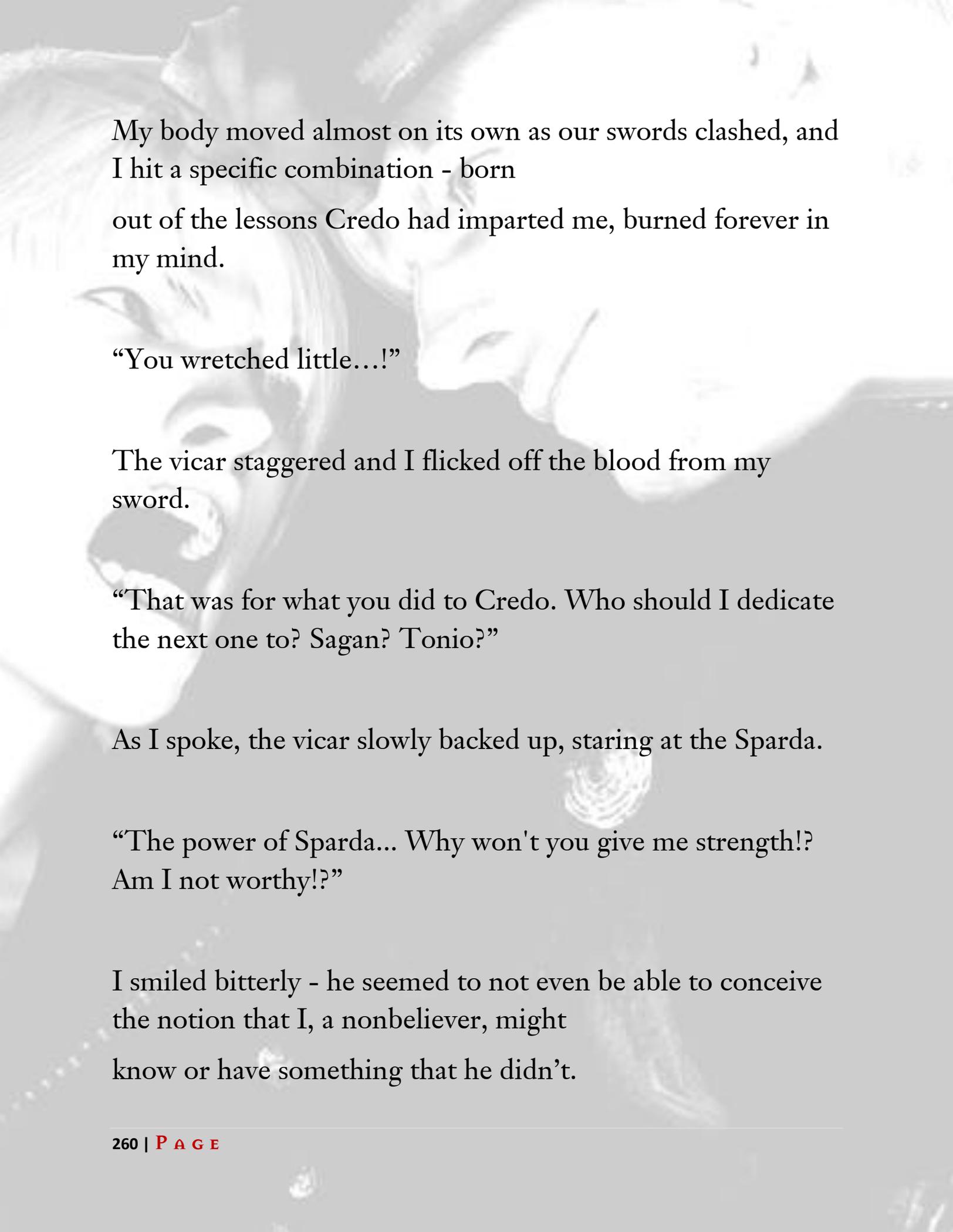
“I... am a vicar of Sparda! Chosen by Sparda himself to rule for the rest of history! I will not lose to the likes of you!”

He flew up as he grabbed the Sparda - speaking of which, I’d heard that he used to serve as the

General of the Holy Knights, like Credo. It was obvious now, seeing the way he wielded a sword.

The thought actually eased my fears.

“Credo was ten times stronger than you.”



My body moved almost on its own as our swords clashed, and I hit a specific combination - born out of the lessons Credo had imparted me, burned forever in my mind.

“You wretched little...!”

The vicar staggered and I flicked off the blood from my sword.

“That was for what you did to Credo. Who should I dedicate the next one to? Sagan? Tonio?”

As I spoke, the vicar slowly backed up, staring at the Sparda.

“The power of Sparda... Why won't you give me strength!? Am I not worthy!?”

I smiled bitterly - he seemed to not even be able to conceive the notion that I, a nonbeliever, might know or have something that he didn't.

“Aren’t you the vicar? Shouldn’t you already know?”

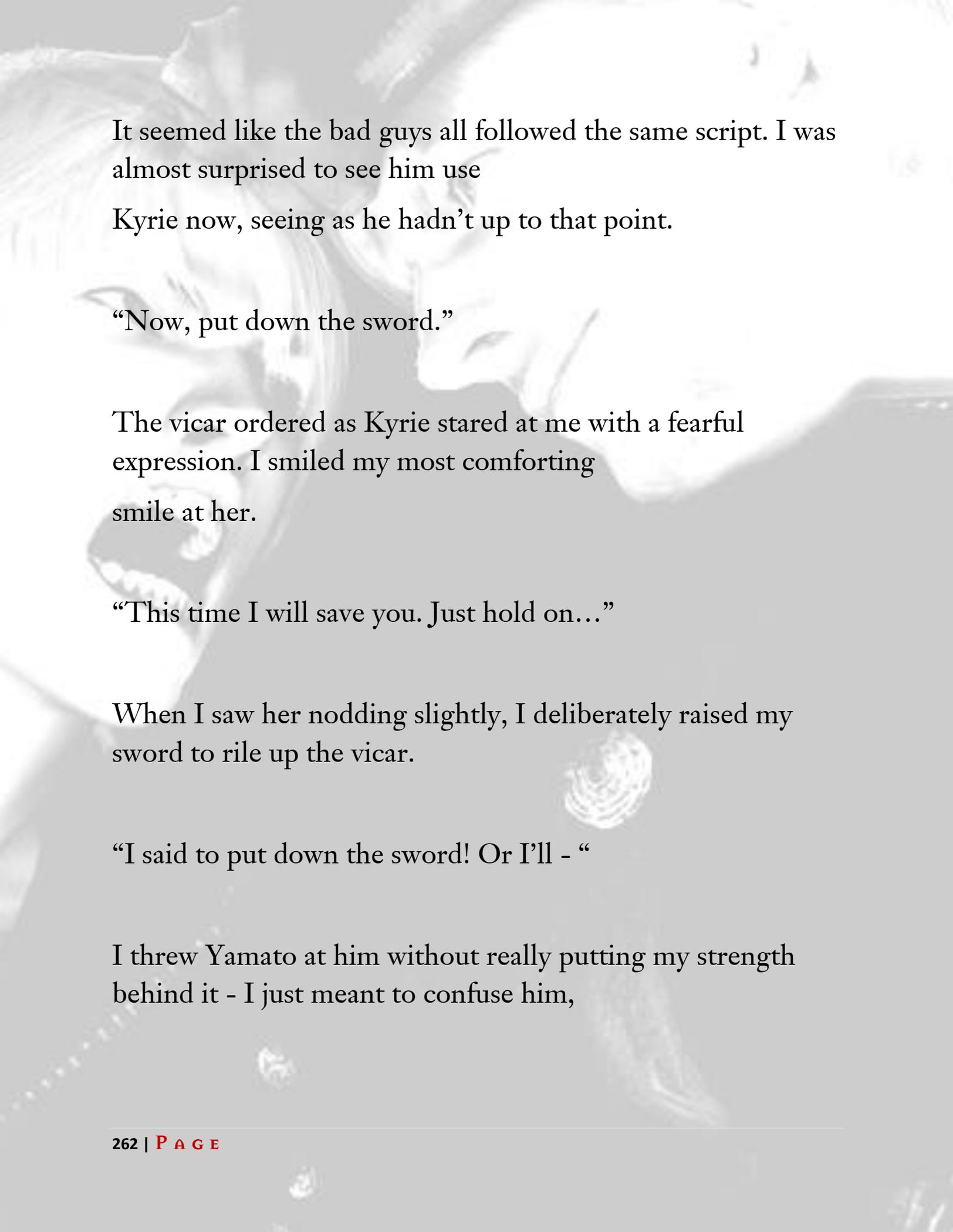
He looked at me with a blank stare.

“Never could take those legends too literally. But I do know that Sparda had a heart. A heart that could love another person, a human. And that is what you lack.”

I said as I pointed Yamato at his throat - when he suddenly phased down into the ground, reappearing a short distance away. Kyrie emerged from the wall behind him.

“Well then, since you think so highly of love, what shall you do now?”

The vicar pressed the Sparda against Kyrie’s chest, and I sighed.



It seemed like the bad guys all followed the same script. I was almost surprised to see him use

Kyrie now, seeing as he hadn't up to that point.

“Now, put down the sword.”

The vicar ordered as Kyrie stared at me with a fearful expression. I smiled my most comforting smile at her.

“This time I will save you. Just hold on...”

When I saw her nodding slightly, I deliberately raised my sword to rile up the vicar.

“I said to put down the sword! Or I'll - “

I threw Yamato at him without really putting my strength behind it - I just meant to confuse him,

and as he stared at the sword, distracted from me and Kyrie, I stretched out my right hand - my devil bringer, my only other weapon.

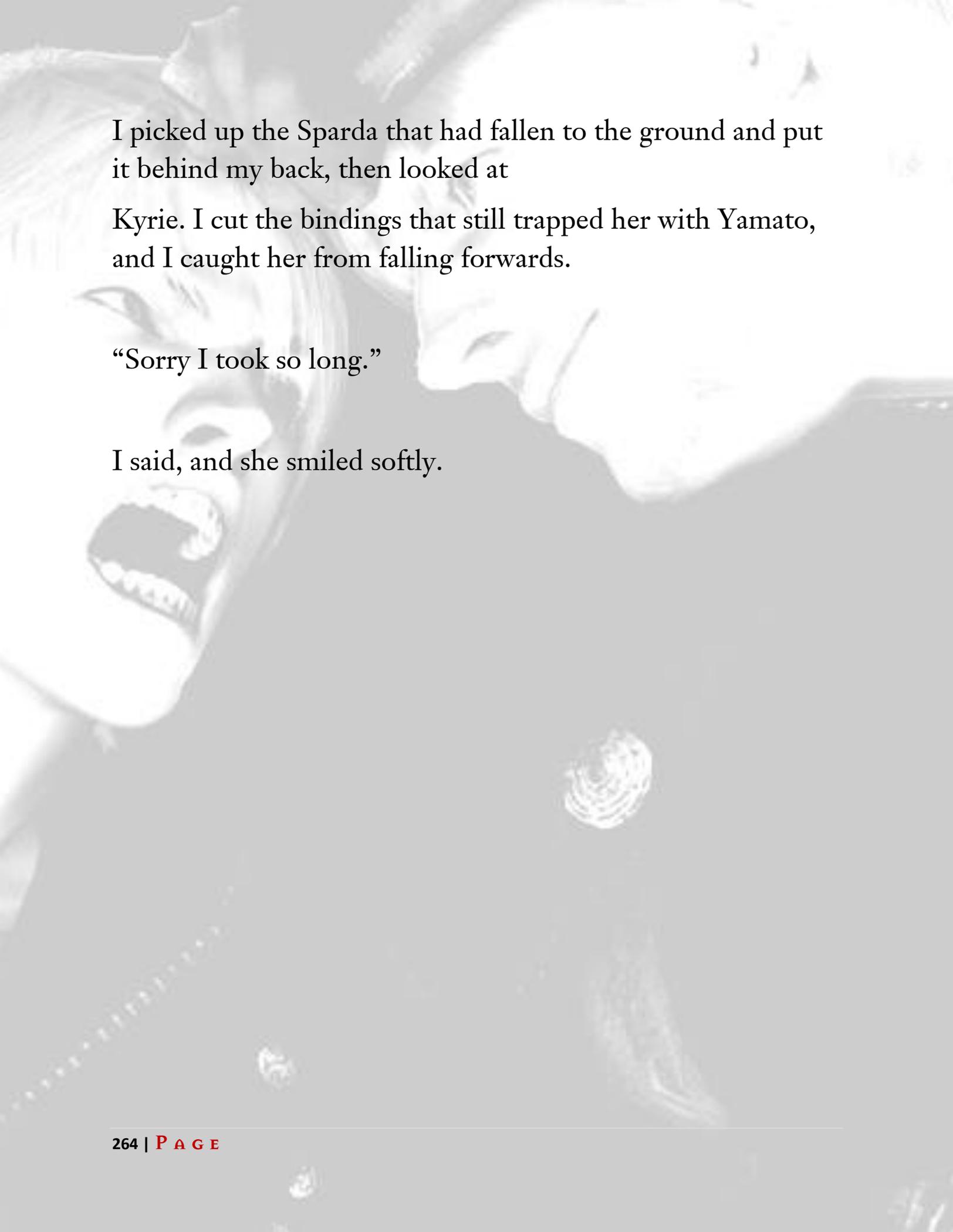
I grabbed him before he even had the chance to touch Kyrie, and slammed him into the wall. He crumpled in on himself on impact, and I jumped up to grab Yamato in midair.

Let this piece of shit finally do a real favor to humanity by disappearing from existence - that was my thought as I smirked and descended upon him, sword in hand.

“Jackpot!”

I smashed Yamato into him, cleaving his body in two.

The vicar let out one horrible dying scream before disintegrating into smoke - dying a true demon's death at last.



I picked up the Sparda that had fallen to the ground and put it behind my back, then looked at

Kyrie. I cut the bindings that still trapped her with Yamato, and I caught her from falling forwards.

“Sorry I took so long.”

I said, and she smiled softly.



“Damn, this guy’s though.”

Dante looked at the savior - despite having lost many parts of its outer shell and looking a bit like one of those broken ancient statues that you’d find in a museum, it was still moving.

Well, Nero had been saved and seemed to be doing well, so destroying it shouldn’t be a problem.

Or at least, that was what he’d been trying to do - Dante had tried all manners of attacks on it, and had only managed to chip away at the outer shell bit by bit.

The savior raised its fist once again and Dante helped Rebellion up - he’d planned to use it to block the attack, but it didn’t come. The savior had stopped.



Dante sighed and looked up at the sky.

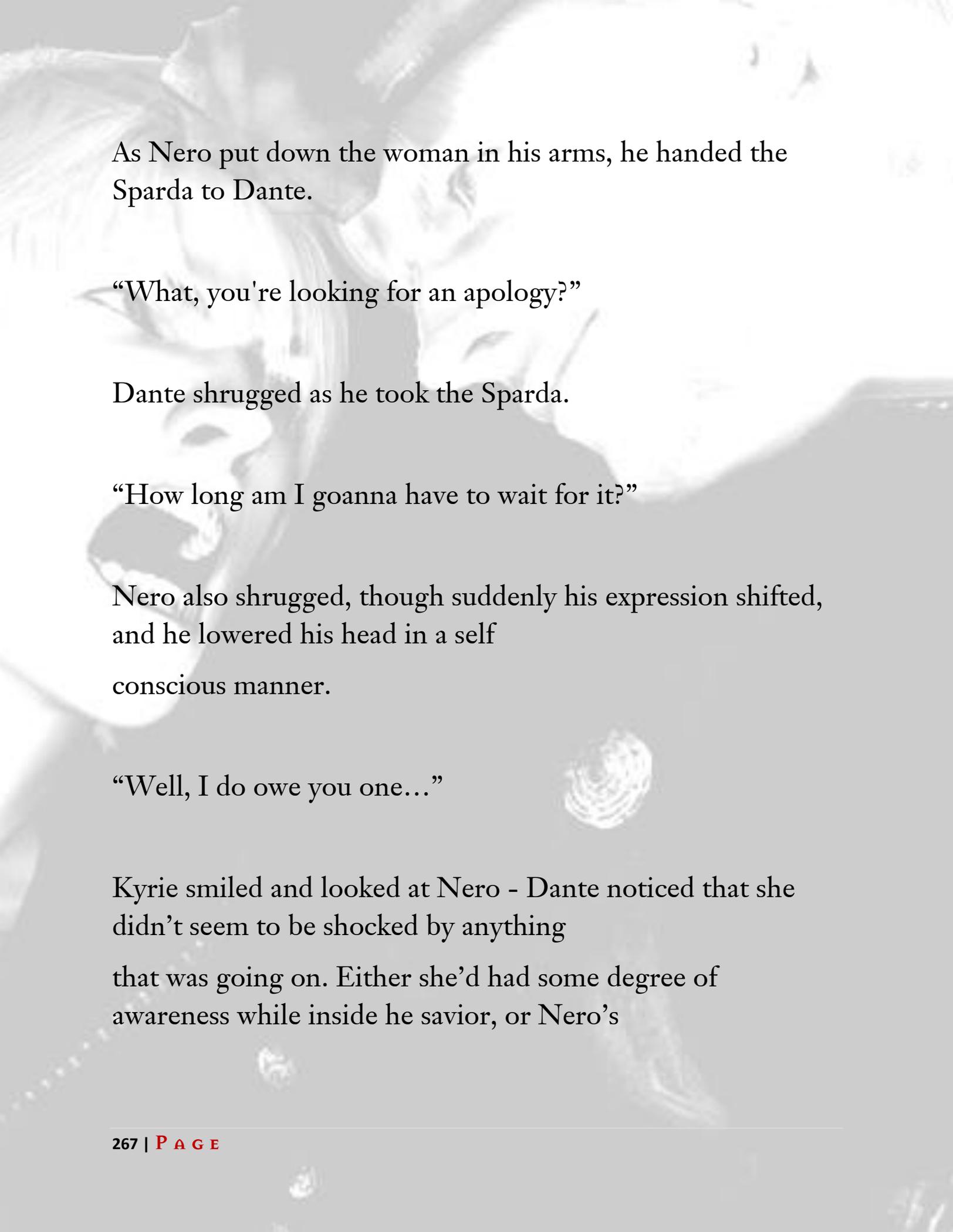
“And here I was thinking I could get it destroyed before the kid was done so he’d see how cool I was when he came back...”

Just as he said that, he saw Nero jumping out from the savior’s head, a beautiful woman held in his arms - he couldn’t help but think that like this, he looked like a prince out of a fairytale.

He shrugged and began walking towards him.

“Took your time.”

Dante said, mostly just irritated that he hadn’t been able to make himself look cool - truth be told, he’d have appreciated it if the kid had tangoed with the vicar for longer.



As Nero put down the woman in his arms, he handed the Sparda to Dante.

“What, you're looking for an apology?”

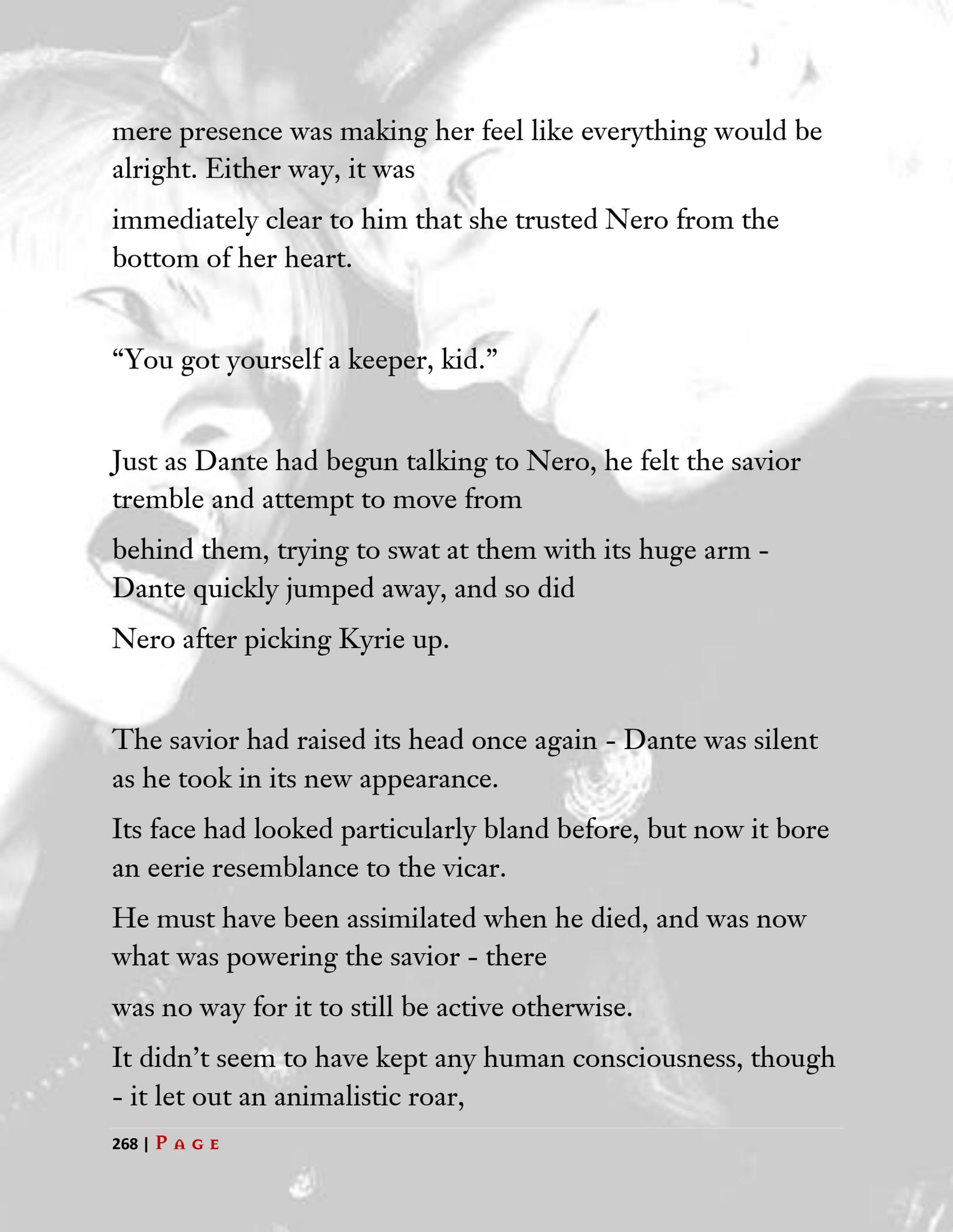
Dante shrugged as he took the Sparda.

“How long am I goanna have to wait for it?”

Nero also shrugged, though suddenly his expression shifted, and he lowered his head in a self-conscious manner.

“Well, I do owe you one...”

Kyrie smiled and looked at Nero - Dante noticed that she didn't seem to be shocked by anything that was going on. Either she'd had some degree of awareness while inside he savior, or Nero's



mere presence was making her feel like everything would be alright. Either way, it was immediately clear to him that she trusted Nero from the bottom of her heart.

“You got yourself a keeper, kid.”

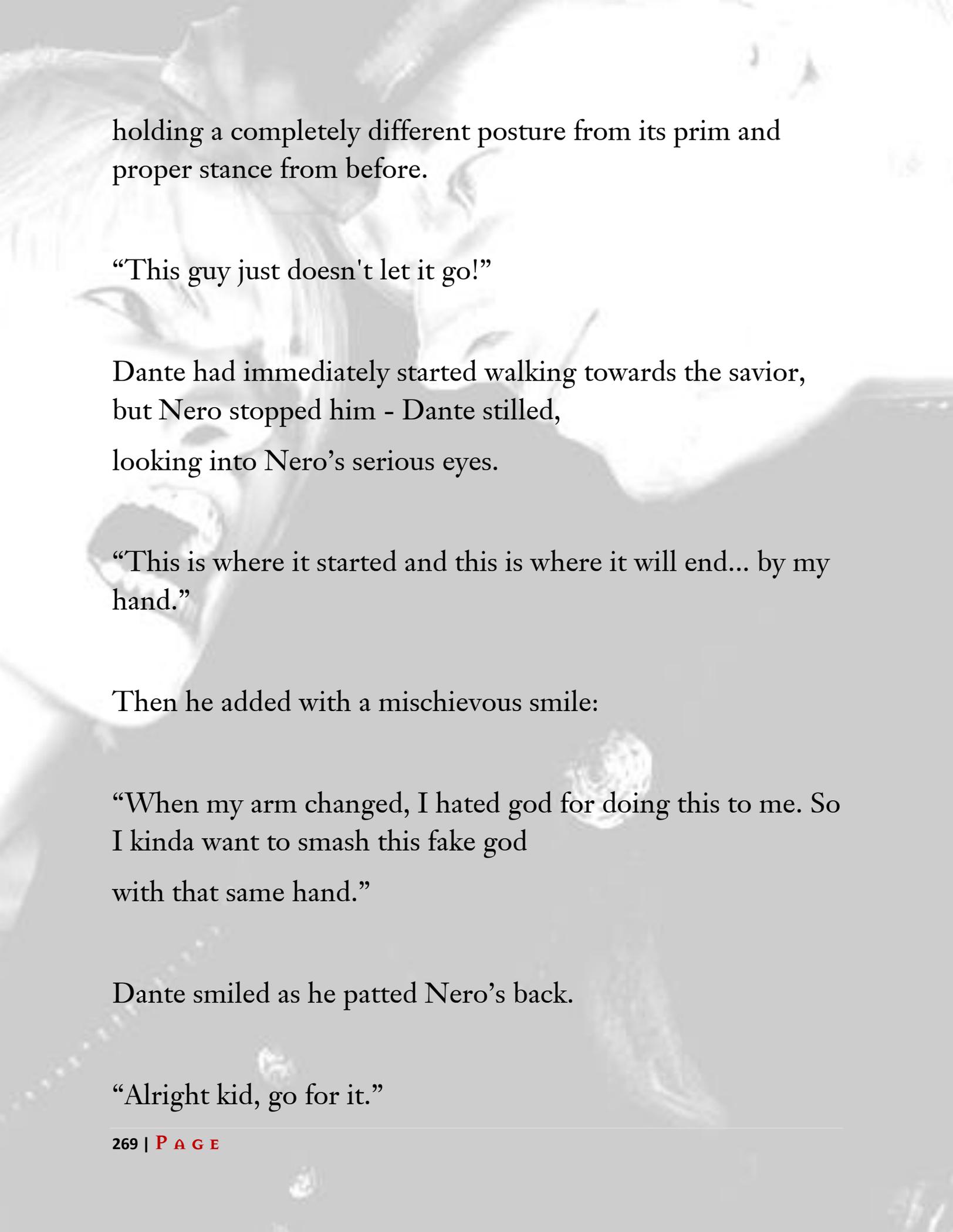
Just as Dante had begun talking to Nero, he felt the savior tremble and attempt to move from behind them, trying to swat at them with its huge arm - Dante quickly jumped away, and so did Nero after picking Kyrie up.

The savior had raised its head once again - Dante was silent as he took in its new appearance.

Its face had looked particularly bland before, but now it bore an eerie resemblance to the vicar.

He must have been assimilated when he died, and was now what was powering the savior - there was no way for it to still be active otherwise.

It didn't seem to have kept any human consciousness, though - it let out an animalistic roar,



holding a completely different posture from its prim and proper stance from before.

“This guy just doesn't let it go!”

Dante had immediately started walking towards the savior, but Nero stopped him - Dante stilled, looking into Nero's serious eyes.

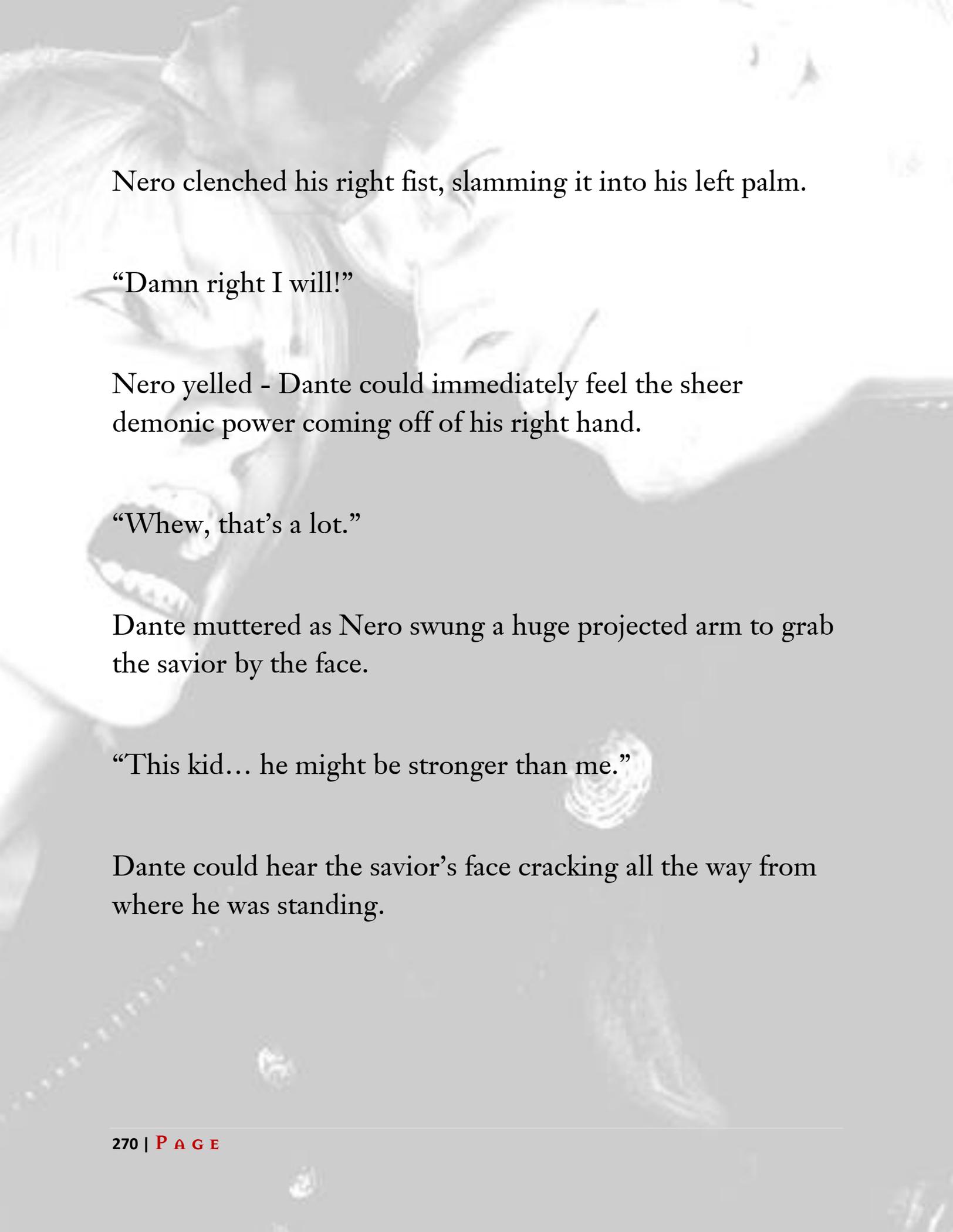
“This is where it started and this is where it will end... by my hand.”

Then he added with a mischievous smile:

“When my arm changed, I hated god for doing this to me. So I kinda want to smash this fake god with that same hand.”

Dante smiled as he patted Nero's back.

“Alright kid, go for it.”



Nero clenched his right fist, slamming it into his left palm.

“Damn right I will!”

Nero yelled - Dante could immediately feel the sheer demonic power coming off of his right hand.

“Whew, that’s a lot.”

Dante muttered as Nero swung a huge projected arm to grab the savior by the face.

“This kid... he might be stronger than me.”

Dante could hear the savior’s face cracking all the way from where he was standing.

“And now you die!”

Nero tightened his hand while shouting, and the savior’s head exploded - the entire area was filled with clouds of dust from the impact, and once it cleared Dante could see Nero doing a little self-conscious victory pose. He really was still a kid.

“Hey, no need to be embarrassed, I’m sure you’ll have the perfect pose down in a year or two.”

Dante told him once Nero came back, and he looked a bit pale as he took in his words.

“Uh... I’m not really planning on making it into a habit or anything.”

“Right, right, my bad.”

Dante replied - yeah, no matter how closely related they might be, Nero probably wouldn’t grow

up to be a little Dante clone - even back when he had his twin brother, their personalities couldn't have been more different.

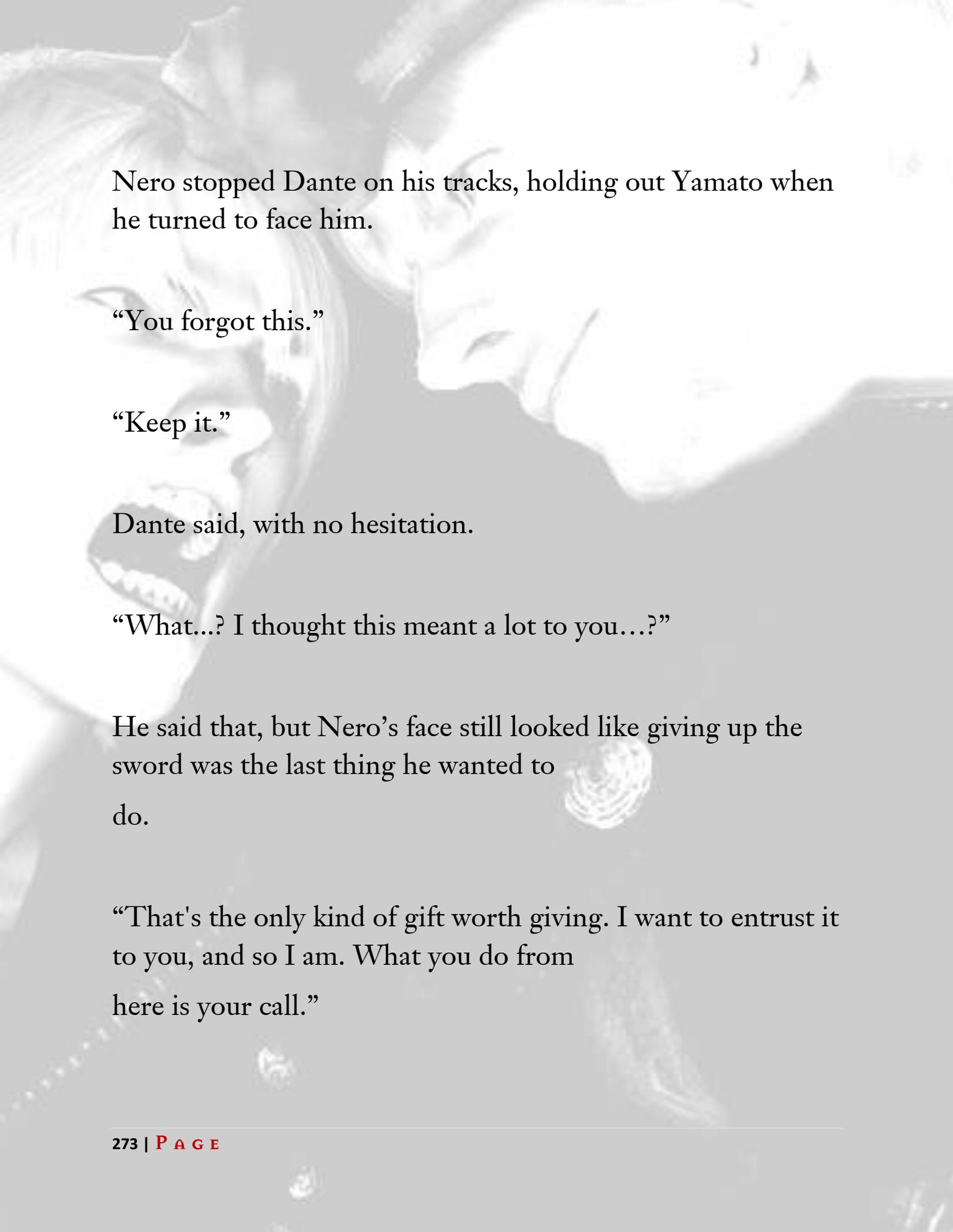
“Well, kid, whatever you want to do, here's a piece of advice: take it easy. If you take yourself too seriously not only is life goanna be boring as hell, but it'll be bound to hurt you in the end.”

What Dante said to Nero - in a way, he was speaking through him the words he wished he'd told his brother Vergil - his twin brother who so stubbornly pursued power above all else, he ended up leaving Dante behind, who had instead decided to take the path of humanity.

“That's all I had to say... take care, kid.”

Dante began walking past Nero.

“Wait!”



Nero stopped Dante on his tracks, holding out Yamato when he turned to face him.

“You forgot this.”

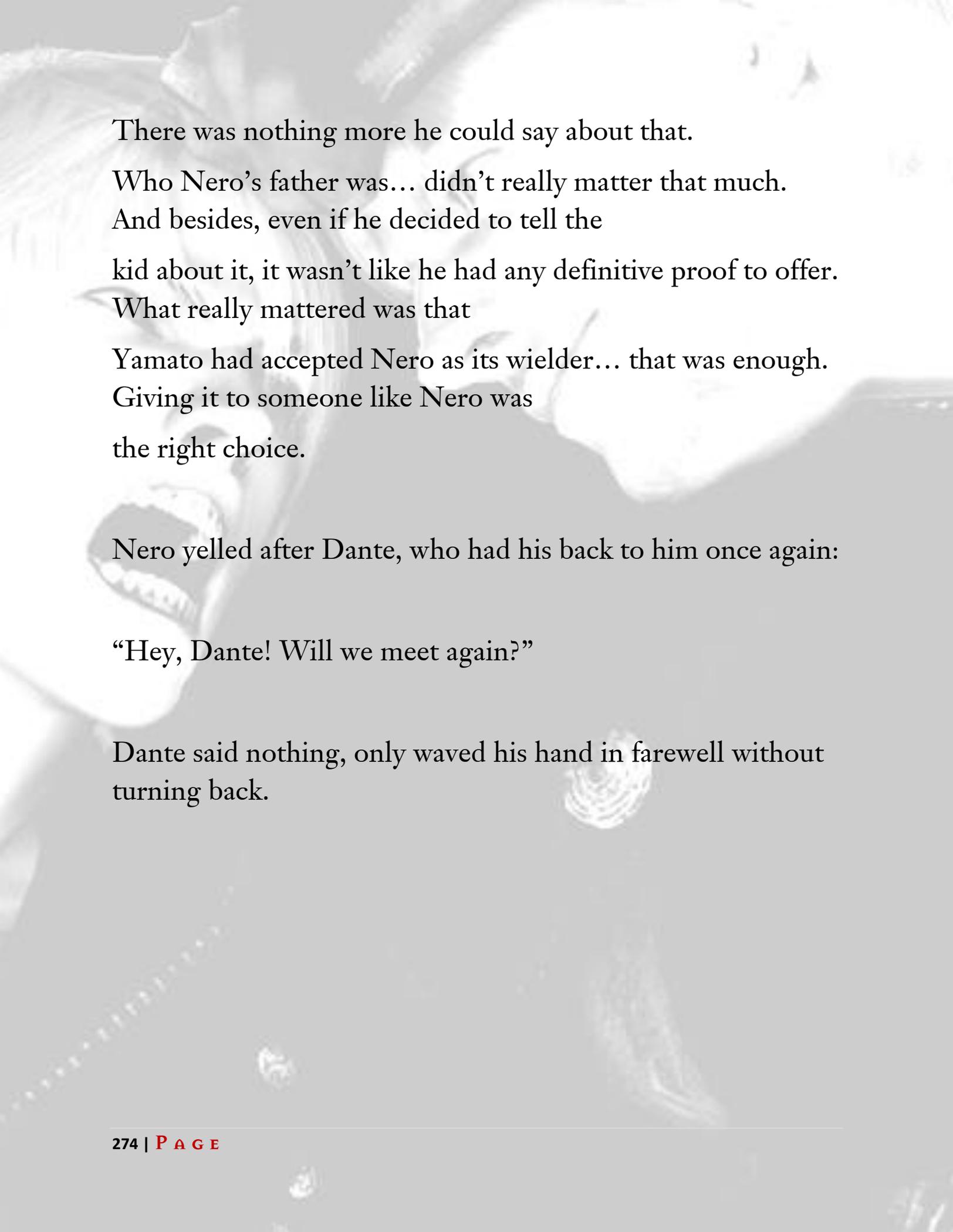
“Keep it.”

Dante said, with no hesitation.

“What...? I thought this meant a lot to you...?”

He said that, but Nero’s face still looked like giving up the sword was the last thing he wanted to do.

“That's the only kind of gift worth giving. I want to entrust it to you, and so I am. What you do from here is your call.”

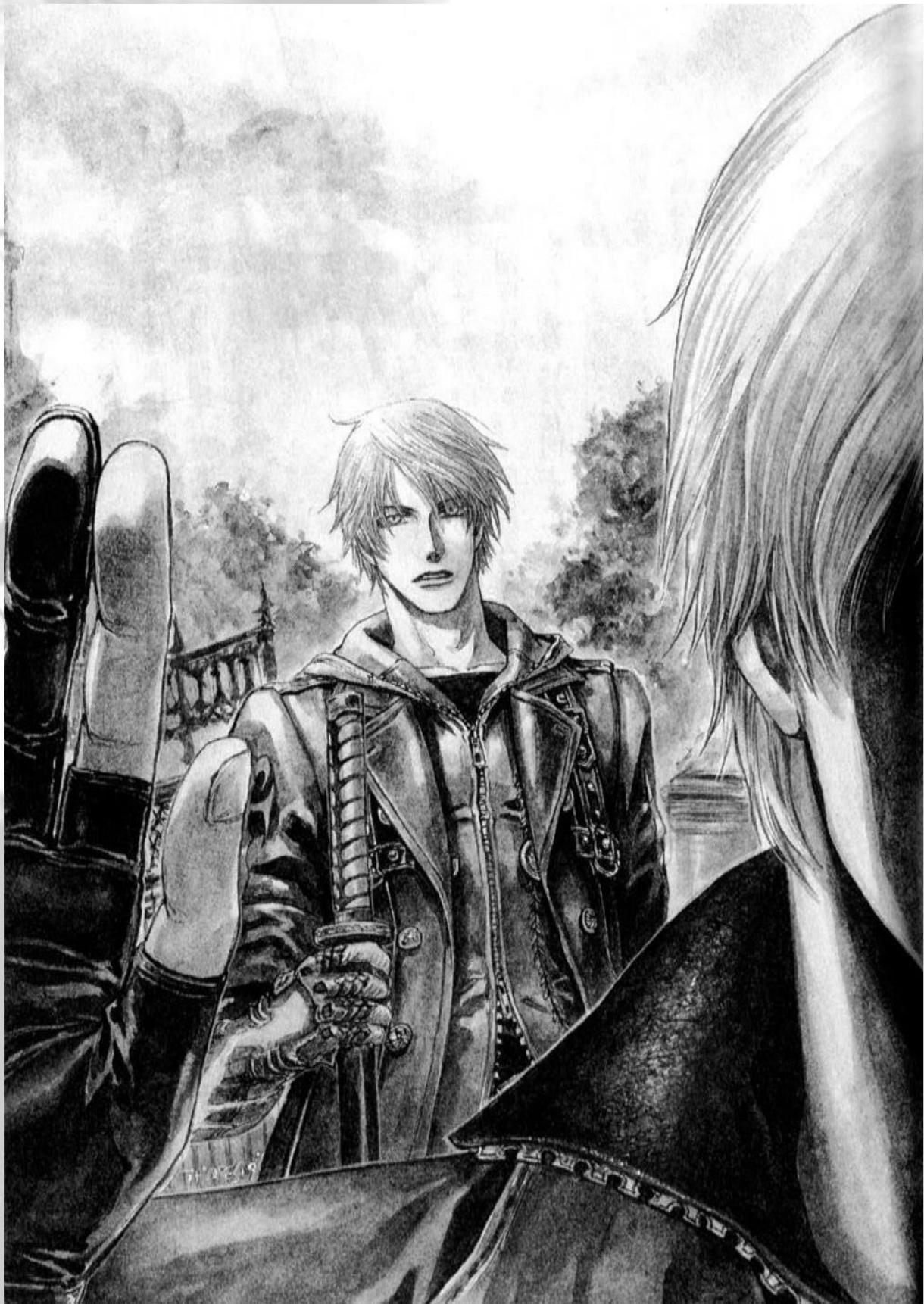


There was nothing more he could say about that.
Who Nero's father was... didn't really matter that much.
And besides, even if he decided to tell the
kid about it, it wasn't like he had any definitive proof to offer.
What really mattered was that
Yamato had accepted Nero as its wielder... that was enough.
Giving it to someone like Nero was
the right choice.

Nero yelled after Dante, who had his back to him once again:

“Hey, Dante! Will we meet again?”

Dante said nothing, only waved his hand in farewell without turning back.





Once he'd left the plaza, Dante began heading for the port to meet up with Trish - but before he could get there, he bumped into Lady, who looked like she'd been waiting for him.

“Well, the damage's much worse than expected, but at least you haven't been slacking off.”

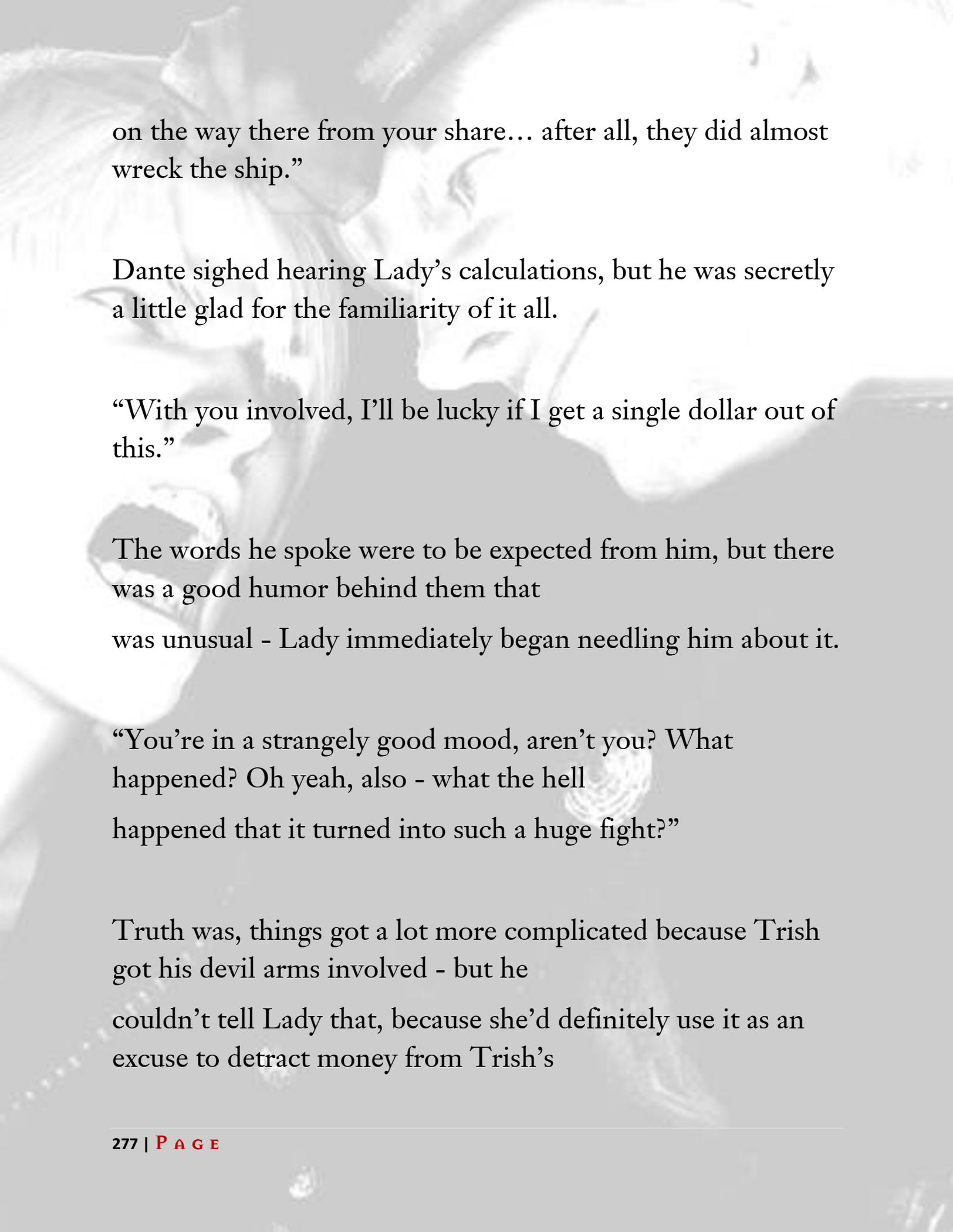
Dante stared at her in slight confusion - why would Lady be here, wasn't she the one who hired him for this job?

“Trish asked me to come pick you guys up.”

“That right? Thanks.”

Dante continued forward, and Lady followed after him.

“Don't worry, I've already deducted the rent for the ship and my fee for fighting all those demons



on the way there from your share... after all, they did almost wreck the ship.”

Dante sighed hearing Lady’s calculations, but he was secretly a little glad for the familiarity of it all.

“With you involved, I’ll be lucky if I get a single dollar out of this.”

The words he spoke were to be expected from him, but there was a good humor behind them that was unusual - Lady immediately began needling him about it.

“You’re in a strangely good mood, aren’t you? What happened? Oh yeah, also - what the hell happened that it turned into such a huge fight?”

Truth was, things got a lot more complicated because Trish got his devil arms involved - but he couldn’t tell Lady that, because she’d definitely use it as an excuse to detract money from Trish’s



pay, and she might not take it as well as him.

“C’mon, tell me, don’t I have the right to now since I was the one who hired you?”

Lady kept pestering him as he stayed silent and eventually, cryptically shrugged.



Once Dante had left, I stood in the now dead quiet plaza - so many things had happened that it didn't seem real, it felt like I'd just woken up from a dream.

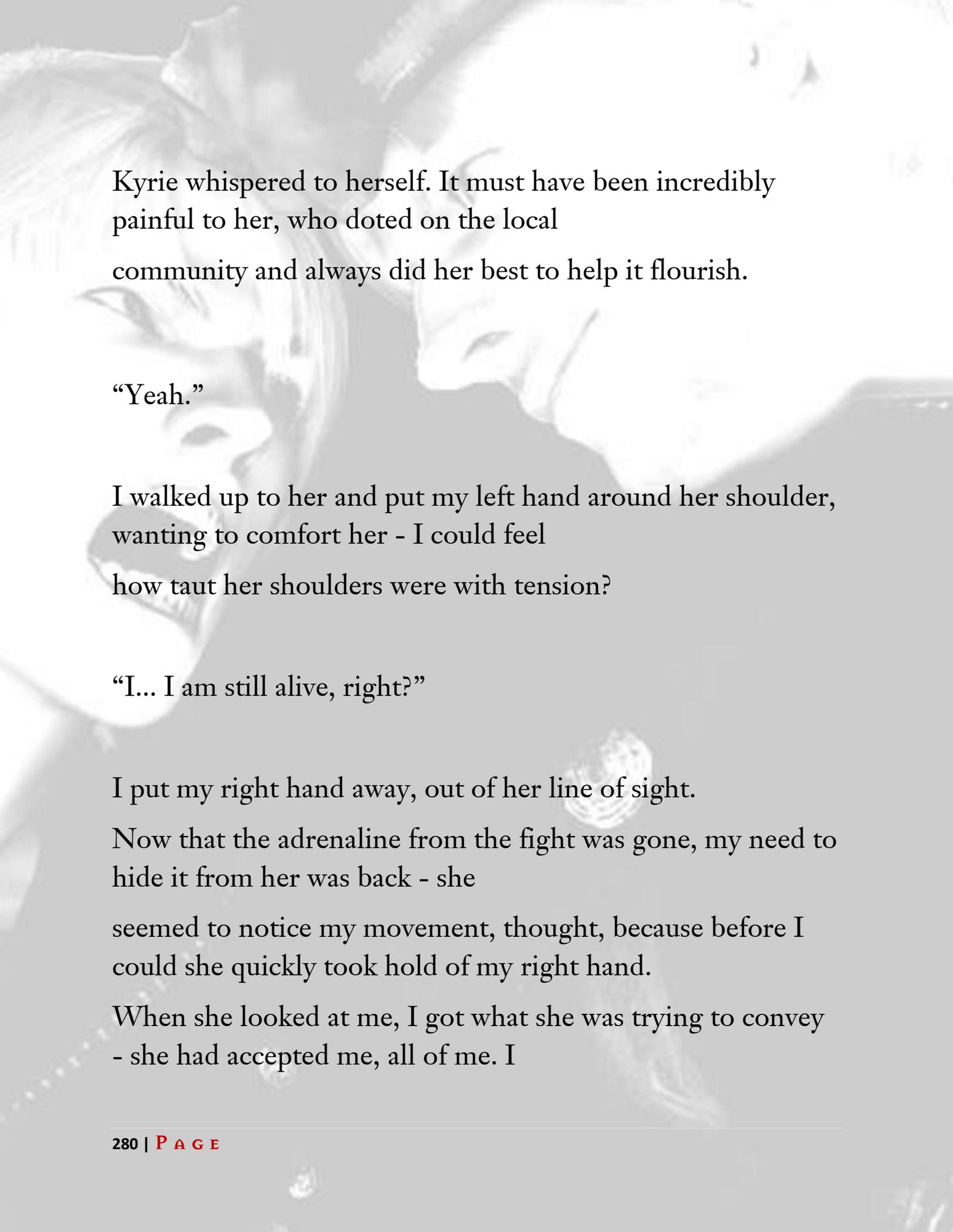
“So... Is this the end?”

Kyrie whispered at my side - I was asking myself that same question.

“Maybe... Maybe.”

Kyrie took a few steps away to look around - the city was in ruins; buildings were collapsed all over the place - the once beautiful town had been destroyed like it had never existed.

“The city's a wreck.”



Kyrie whispered to herself. It must have been incredibly painful to her, who doted on the local community and always did her best to help it flourish.

“Yeah.”

I walked up to her and put my left hand around her shoulder, wanting to comfort her - I could feel how taut her shoulders were with tension?

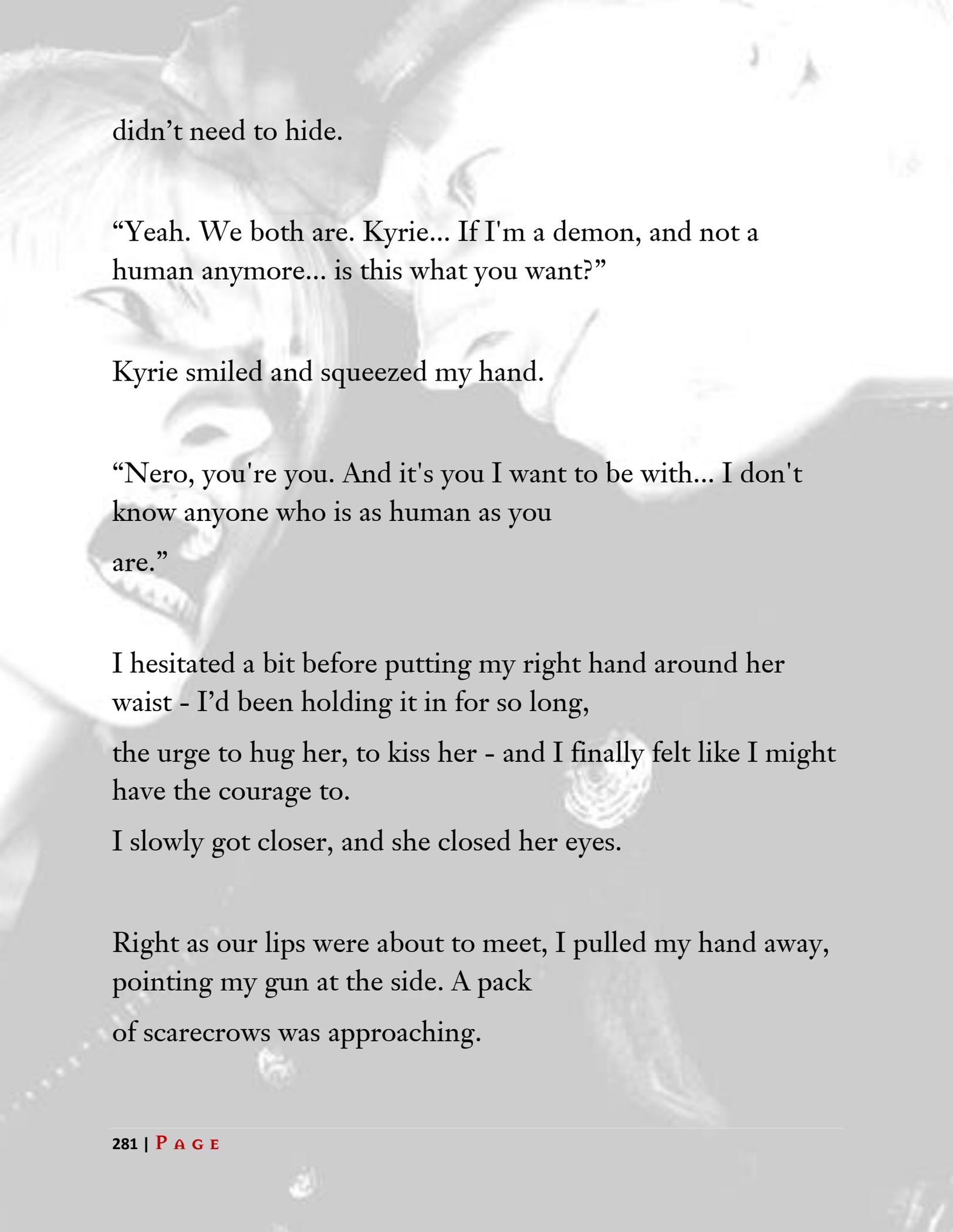
“I... I am still alive, right?”

I put my right hand away, out of her line of sight.

Now that the adrenaline from the fight was gone, my need to hide it from her was back - she

seemed to notice my movement, thought, because before I could she quickly took hold of my right hand.

When she looked at me, I got what she was trying to convey - she had accepted me, all of me. I



didn't need to hide.

“Yeah. We both are. Kyrie... If I'm a demon, and not a human anymore... is this what you want?”

Kyrie smiled and squeezed my hand.

“Nero, you're you. And it's you I want to be with... I don't know anyone who is as human as you are.”

I hesitated a bit before putting my right hand around her waist - I'd been holding it in for so long, the urge to hug her, to kiss her - and I finally felt like I might have the courage to.

I slowly got closer, and she closed her eyes.

Right as our lips were about to meet, I pulled my hand away, pointing my gun at the side. A pack of scarecrows was approaching.



I sighed, turning to leave Kyrie's side - seemed like there were still some guests who hadn't left the party.

The scarecrows surrounded us.

“Looks like they're determined to interrupt. Guess that kiss is goanna have to wait.”

Internally, I actually breathed a sigh of relief - I don't know what I would've done had our lips actually touched.

“It's alright... I'll wait.”

It was such a simple answer, but it filled me with joy.

“Thanks... now.”

I launched my Devil Bringer at the scarecrows as I yelled -

“Let's rock!”



It had been a month since the incident in Fortuna - things had been calm and quiet ever since.

Dante had passed the time by reading magazines, Trish had been dropping by from time to time - everything went back to the usual routine.

After all the excitement of the month before, Dante had enjoyed his free time doing absolutely nothing for about a week before he began getting terribly bored - the comic magazine he was reading, too, had already been read at least four times.

As Dante yawned, the door to his office opened loudly - when he looked, he saw someone in a white suit with two big suitcases in her hands walk in.



“Sorry to keep you waiting, here’s your cash.”

Lady said as she set the suitcases on the desk - but Dante saw right though her, he already knew that no matter how big the container was, there was bound to be only crumbs in there, so he didn’t even bother looking up from his comics.

“Huh...”

Suddenly, he heard Trish’s high-pitched voice, and he couldn’t help but look at the case - which was almost completely empty.

“Don't you think we deserve a little more?”

Trish attempted to reach out to grab the case, but Lady pulled it away before she could.

“I’m afraid my calculations are correct, sorry.”

She took the other case and opened it up - this one was actually empty.

“First of all, you’ve got the transport fees, then repair fees for my rocket launcher - those I had to take from my personal funds, so I had already deducted them.”

Lady took some money from the case with a few stacks in it, and put it in the empty one.

“Then you’ve got my share for fighting all those demons, both in the city and on the ship... it’s extra labour, I have to count it.”

At that point, the two cases held equal amounts of money.

“And... that’s how it is.”



By the time she was done, the money was divided basically into 70% and 30%, and she pushed the smaller portion to Dante. Trish looked at him in irritation.

“You call this sincerity?”

Lady shrugged, then looked between the two of them before speaking with a more pointed tone than before.

“Was it not your fault that things escalated to the level that they did? Bringing Sparda into the spotlight?”

Dante fidgeted and made to bury his face into the magazine, but he could feel Trish’s sharp stare

boring holes into his skull - he had ended up caving and telling Lady everything in the end... even

the things Trish didn’t want her to know, so naturally, she thought he’d snitched on her.

“I’m sorry, but I have to deduct this from your share.”

Lady reached into Dante’s money and took put some back into her case - by the end of it, there was just one bill left in his share.

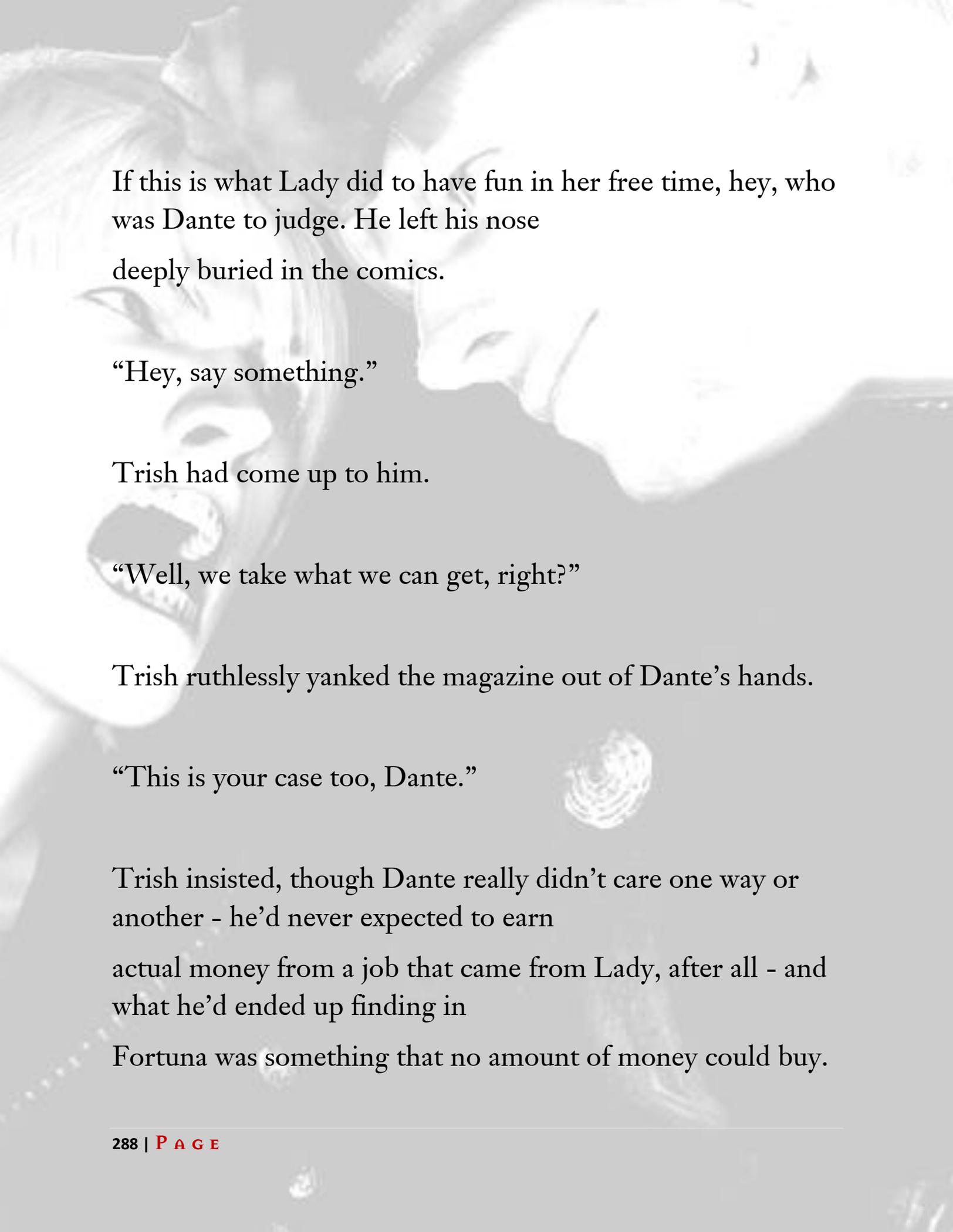
“Any objections?”

Lady looked between Dante and Trish with a mischievous smirk.

Honestly, she didn’t have to do this whole song and dance, she could’ve made the calculations at home and sent them the money - the fact that she’d come to do it in person in the first place proved that she, too, was bored sick by the lack of demon activity following the Fortuna incident.

Trish looked at Lady and spoke in a bitter tone:

“I object.”



If this is what Lady did to have fun in her free time, hey, who was Dante to judge. He left his nose deeply buried in the comics.

“Hey, say something.”

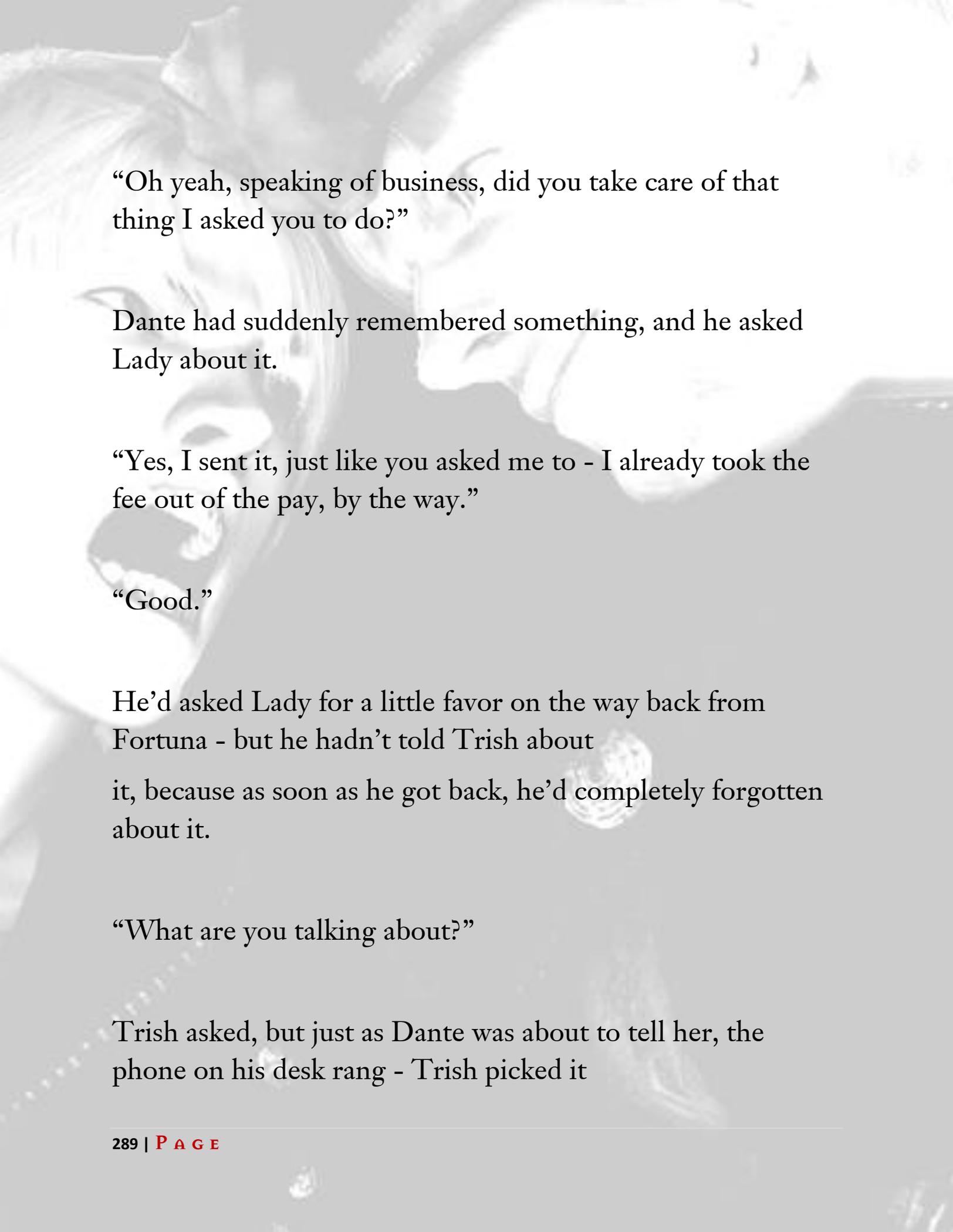
Trish had come up to him.

“Well, we take what we can get, right?”

Trish ruthlessly yanked the magazine out of Dante’s hands.

“This is your case too, Dante.”

Trish insisted, though Dante really didn’t care one way or another - he’d never expected to earn actual money from a job that came from Lady, after all - and what he’d ended up finding in Fortuna was something that no amount of money could buy.



“Oh yeah, speaking of business, did you take care of that thing I asked you to do?”

Dante had suddenly remembered something, and he asked Lady about it.

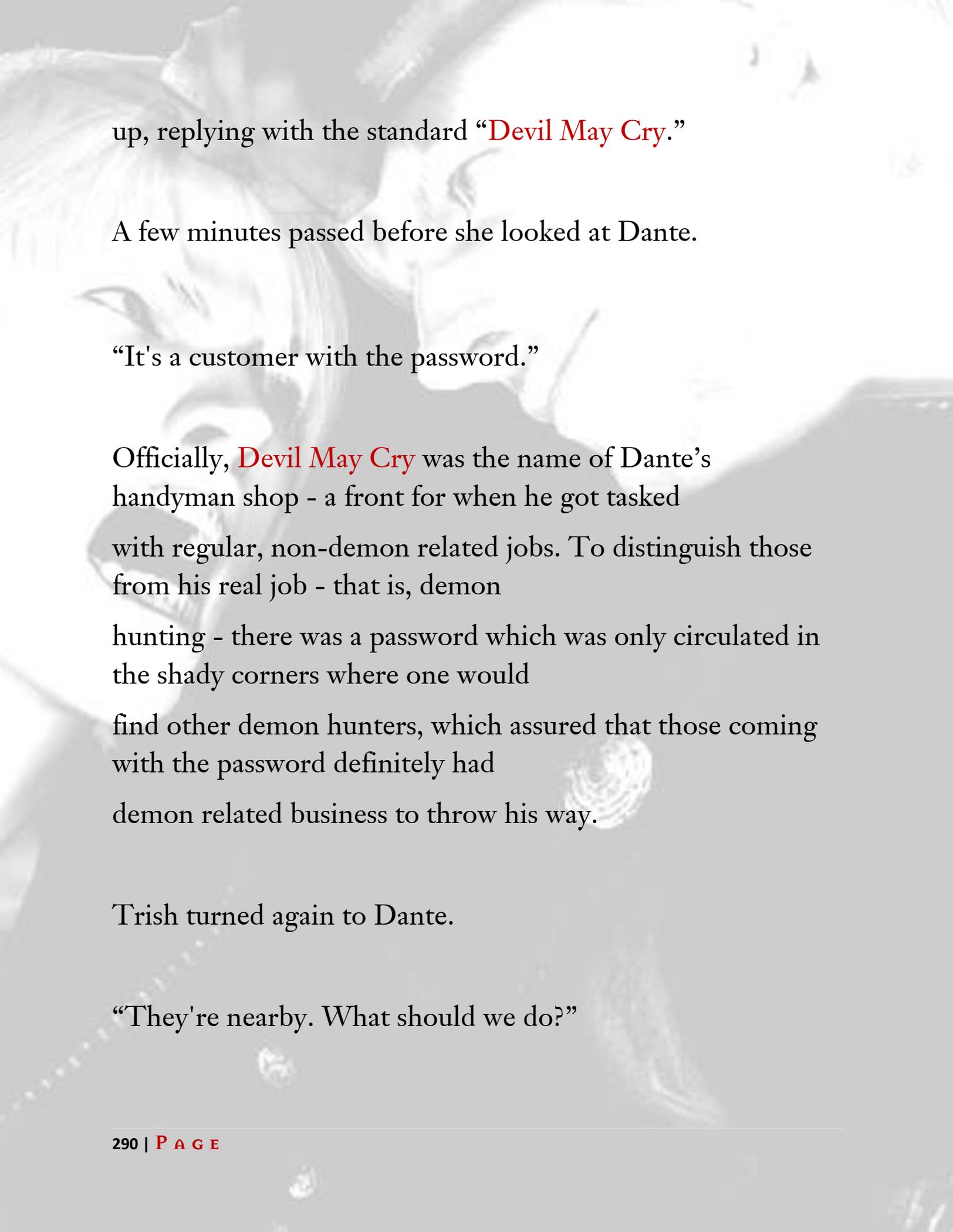
“Yes, I sent it, just like you asked me to - I already took the fee out of the pay, by the way.”

“Good.”

He'd asked Lady for a little favor on the way back from Fortuna - but he hadn't told Trish about it, because as soon as he got back, he'd completely forgotten about it.

“What are you talking about?”

Trish asked, but just as Dante was about to tell her, the phone on his desk rang - Trish picked it



up, replying with the standard “**Devil May Cry.**”

A few minutes passed before she looked at Dante.

“It's a customer with the password.”

Officially, **Devil May Cry** was the name of Dante's handyman shop - a front for when he got tasked with regular, non-demon related jobs. To distinguish those from his real job - that is, demon hunting - there was a password which was only circulated in the shady corners where one would find other demon hunters, which assured that those coming with the password definitely had demon related business to throw his way.

Trish turned again to Dante.

“They're nearby. What should we do?”



Dante stood up without hesitation.

“You need to ask?”

Dante grabbed his coat from the wall, picked up Rebellion, and checked his guns while walking out the door, when suddenly Lady came to stand in the way.

“What? You got more fees to detract or something?”

Lady laughed as she replied.

“Can I come along?”

For Lady to offer to tag along... she must have been seriously bored this past month.

“Do what you want, but don't expect to get paid.”

“No worries, I'm in this business purely out of passion.”



Lady turned to Trish.

“What about you?”

Trish smiled in response.

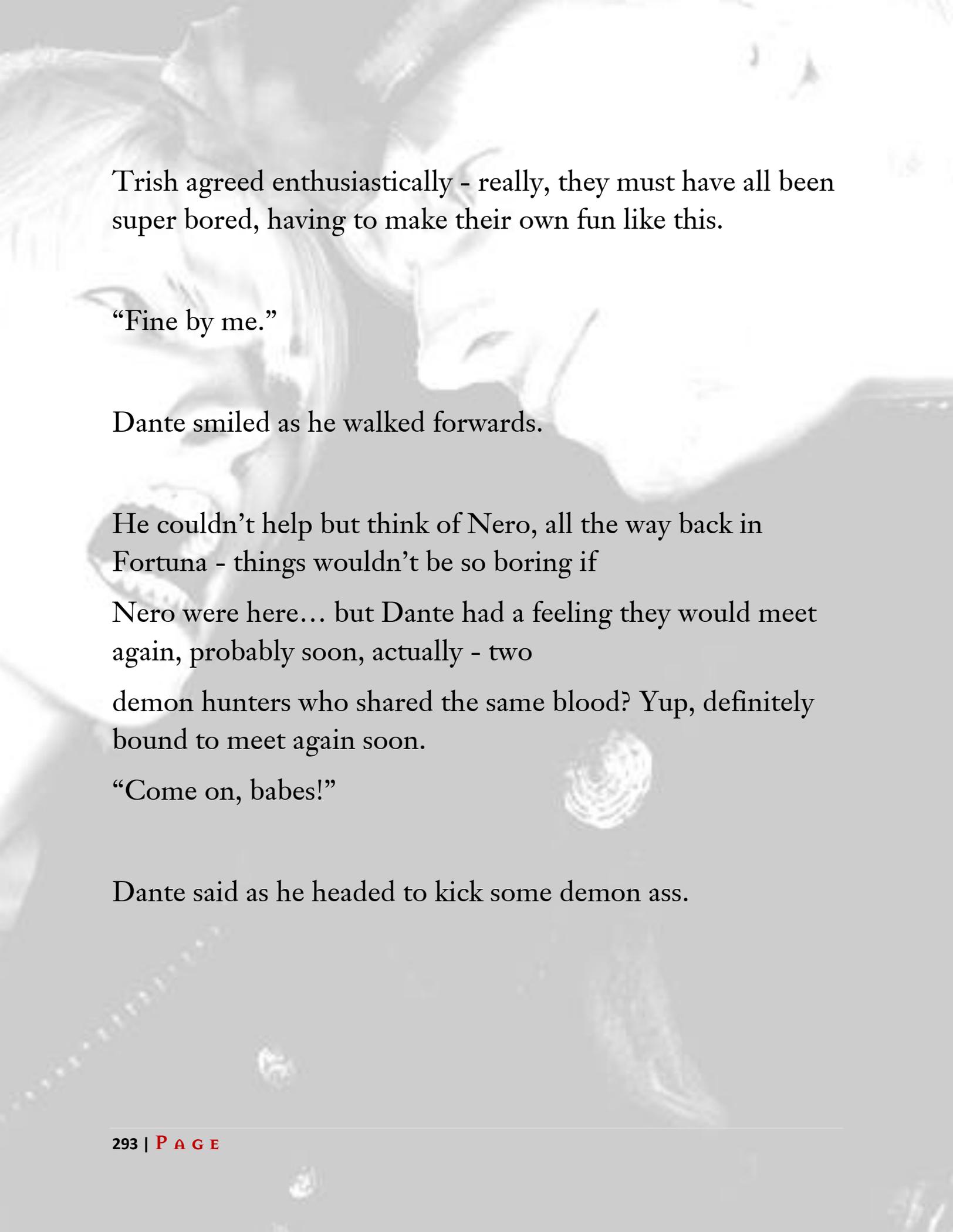
“Can’t deny it.”

Dante twirled Ebony and Ivory around with his hands as he slammed the door open.

“That said...”

Lady spoke up like she’d just remembered something, and turned to look at the two suitcases that were still in the office.

“Why don’t we make a little bet? Whoever kills the most demons gets the whole pay.”



Trish agreed enthusiastically - really, they must have all been super bored, having to make their own fun like this.

“Fine by me.”

Dante smiled as he walked forwards.

He couldn't help but think of Nero, all the way back in Fortuna - things wouldn't be so boring if

Nero were here... but Dante had a feeling they would meet again, probably soon, actually - two

demon hunters who shared the same blood? Yup, definitely bound to meet again soon.

“Come on, babes!”

Dante said as he headed to kick some demon ass.



I'd been abandoned in front of the orphanage as a baby, and no one knew who my parents were - including me.

The late head of the orphanage at the time gave me my name - since I was wrapped up in a black blanket, they called me "Nero", "black" - much how you would name a kitten or a puppy.

I don't hate it, it kind of sounds like some ancient roman saint - I think it suits me.

When I was little, I couldn't accept having been orphaned - I spent all my time thinking about why I'd been abandoned, but that was a question no one had any answers to.

There were rumors going around that my mother might have wanted to hide a shameful pregnancy - Fortuna is small, and everyone knows each other, so if someone was found to be

with child out of wedlock, people would've talked...and around the time I was found, there was no one who could have been a possible candidate.

There had been foreigners coming in and out of the island though, so that might have played a part in it - a man could've come by, gotten a woman pregnant without knowing about it, she couldn't take care of the baby of a foreigner, so she abandoned that child at the orphanage's doorstep...

It wasn't unreasonable. Honestly, it was probably the theory closest to the truth.

When I was a kid and other children would tease me for my uncertain lineage, I'd get angry and fight back, but since then I've stopped caring - Kyrie, Credo and their parents might not have been my biological family, but they were family enough to make me forget about my anguish.

Now their parents were gone, and Credo was too... all I could do now was protect Kyrie.



She's pretty much my only family left, and as long as she's by my side, I know things will be fine -

she's the one who accepted me, no matter what I was, human or not - so I will try not to lose myself to these doubts anymore.

“Nero!”

I was cleaning up our new rented apartment, when Kyrie called me from the kitchen - once I came up to her, I saw she was wearing her apron.

“Can you help me carry the food?”

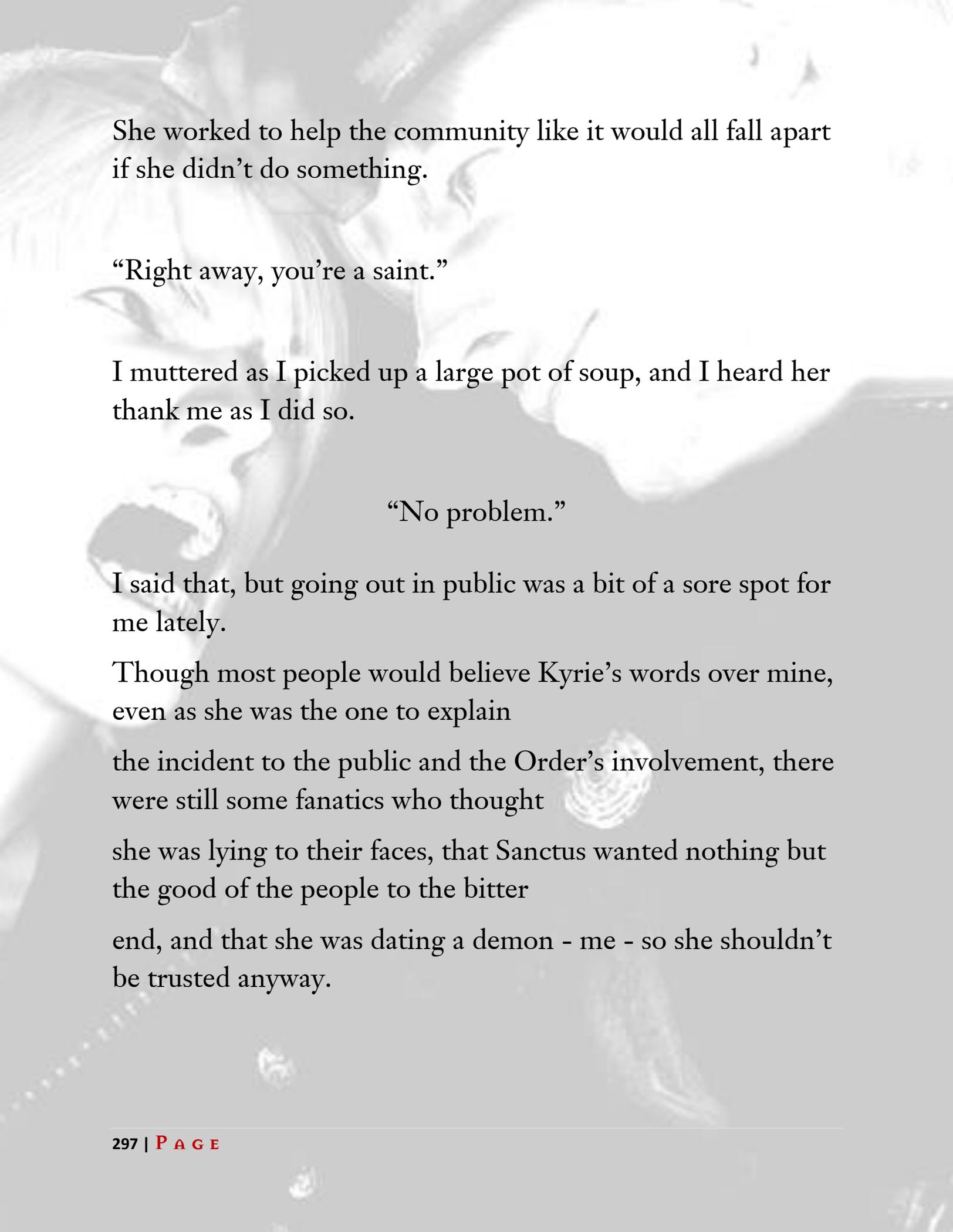
When I heard that, I sighed a little bit.

Fortuna was still going through some serious reconstruction, and there were many people who

were still homeless and taking refuge in the Opera House.

Kyrie'd been up since early morning

cooking for them - her dedication left me a bit speechless.



She worked to help the community like it would all fall apart if she didn't do something.

“Right away, you're a saint.”

I muttered as I picked up a large pot of soup, and I heard her thank me as I did so.

“No problem.”

I said that, but going out in public was a bit of a sore spot for me lately.

Though most people would believe Kyrie's words over mine, even as she was the one to explain the incident to the public and the Order's involvement, there were still some fanatics who thought she was lying to their faces, that Sanctus wanted nothing but the good of the people to the bitter end, and that she was dating a demon - me - so she shouldn't be trusted anyway.

Ever since the incident, I hadn't been hiding my arm anymore - so naturally, many people assumed the worst of me, that I was some kind of demon in disguise.

I was honestly expecting it - it's annoying but I don't regret it.

I wasn't expecting to be worshiped or anything, just the arm doesn't prove I'm really a descendant of Sparda after all - but this demon arm is a part of me, so I'm proud of it.

When I said this to Kyrie, she smiled softly and nodded her head.

“I think sooner or later, everyone will manage to understand.”

It was thanks to this arm that Kyrie was still here by my side, and if some people thought she'd been seduced by a demon, well, that was on them.



I put down the pot in my hands to grab my coat, but as I was doing so, Kyrie spoke up.

“Oh, but isn’t today such a nice day outside? You’ll be too hot if you wear this.”

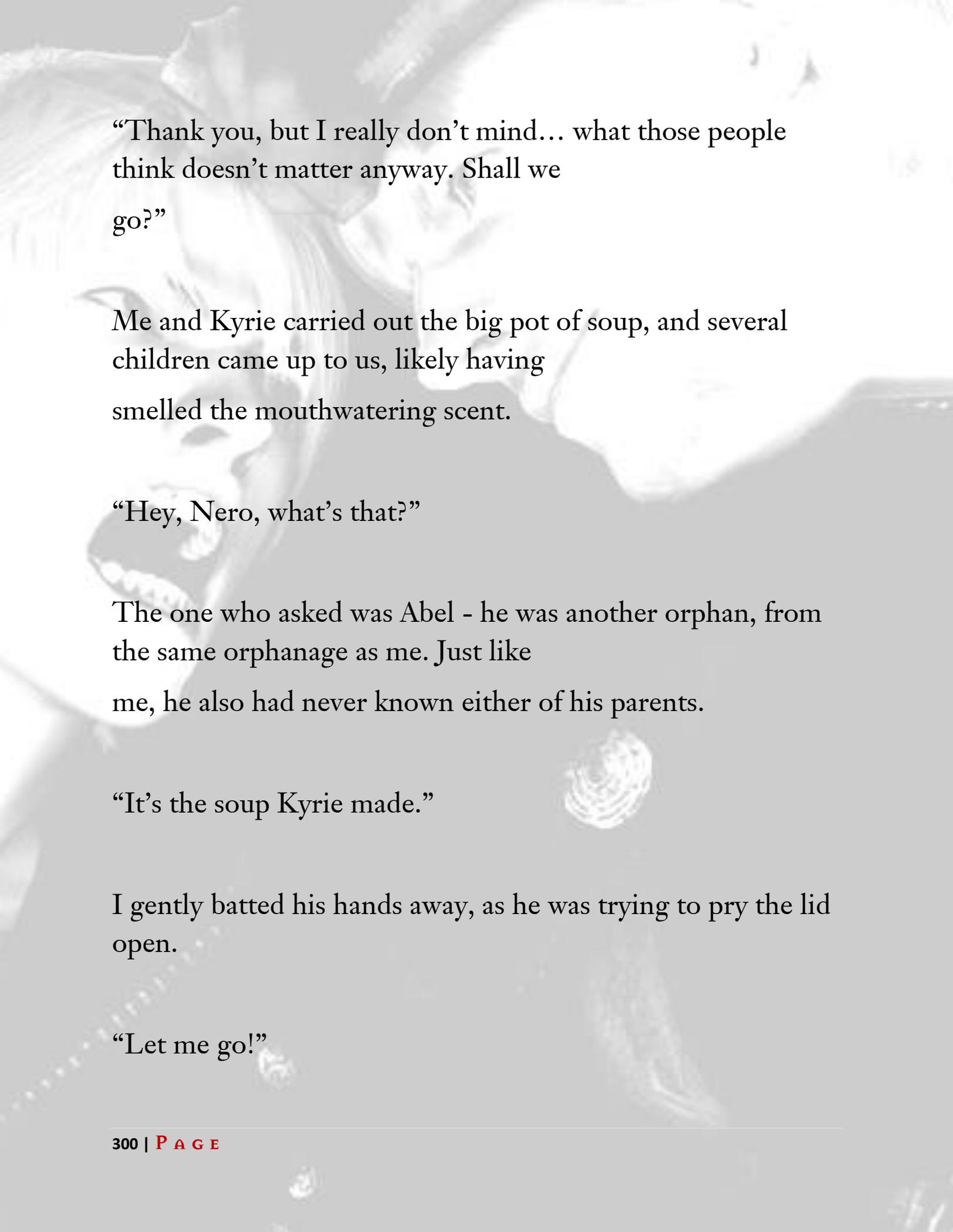
I didn’t answer, instead just looked at my right hand. Kyrie noticed and came up to me.

“You said you didn’t want to hide anymore, right?”

She took my coat and carefully folded it before putting it on the table.

“Yeah, and I don’t care about the idiots who might hate me and think I’m a demon, but... I don’t want them to think that way about you.”

Kyrie smiled a little sadly as she heard me speak.



“Thank you, but I really don’t mind... what those people think doesn’t matter anyway. Shall we go?”

Me and Kyrie carried out the big pot of soup, and several children came up to us, likely having smelled the mouthwatering scent.

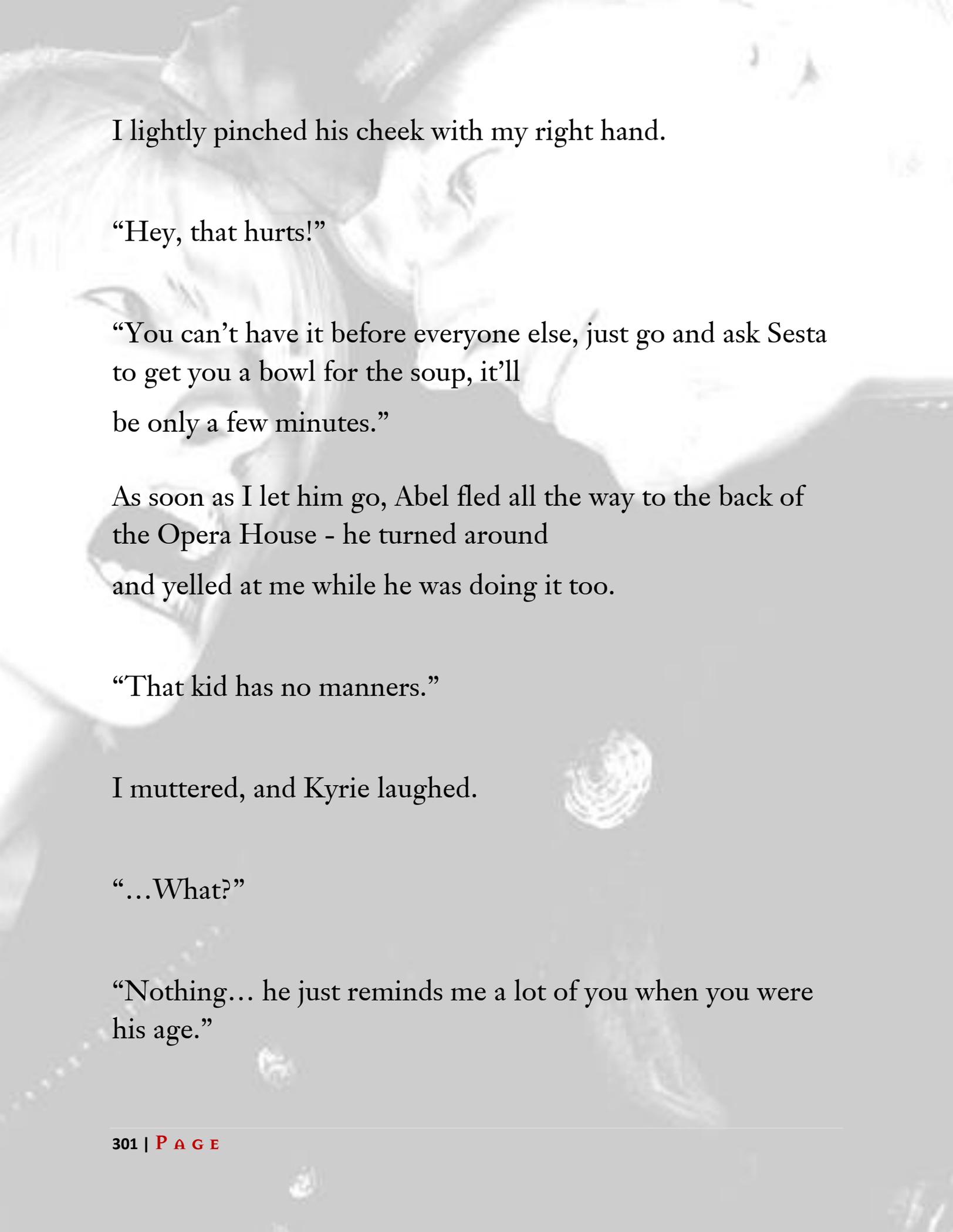
“Hey, Nero, what’s that?”

The one who asked was Abel - he was another orphan, from the same orphanage as me. Just like me, he also had never known either of his parents.

“It’s the soup Kyrie made.”

I gently batted his hands away, as he was trying to pry the lid open.

“Let me go!”



I lightly pinched his cheek with my right hand.

“Hey, that hurts!”

“You can’t have it before everyone else, just go and ask Sesta to get you a bowl for the soup, it’ll be only a few minutes.”

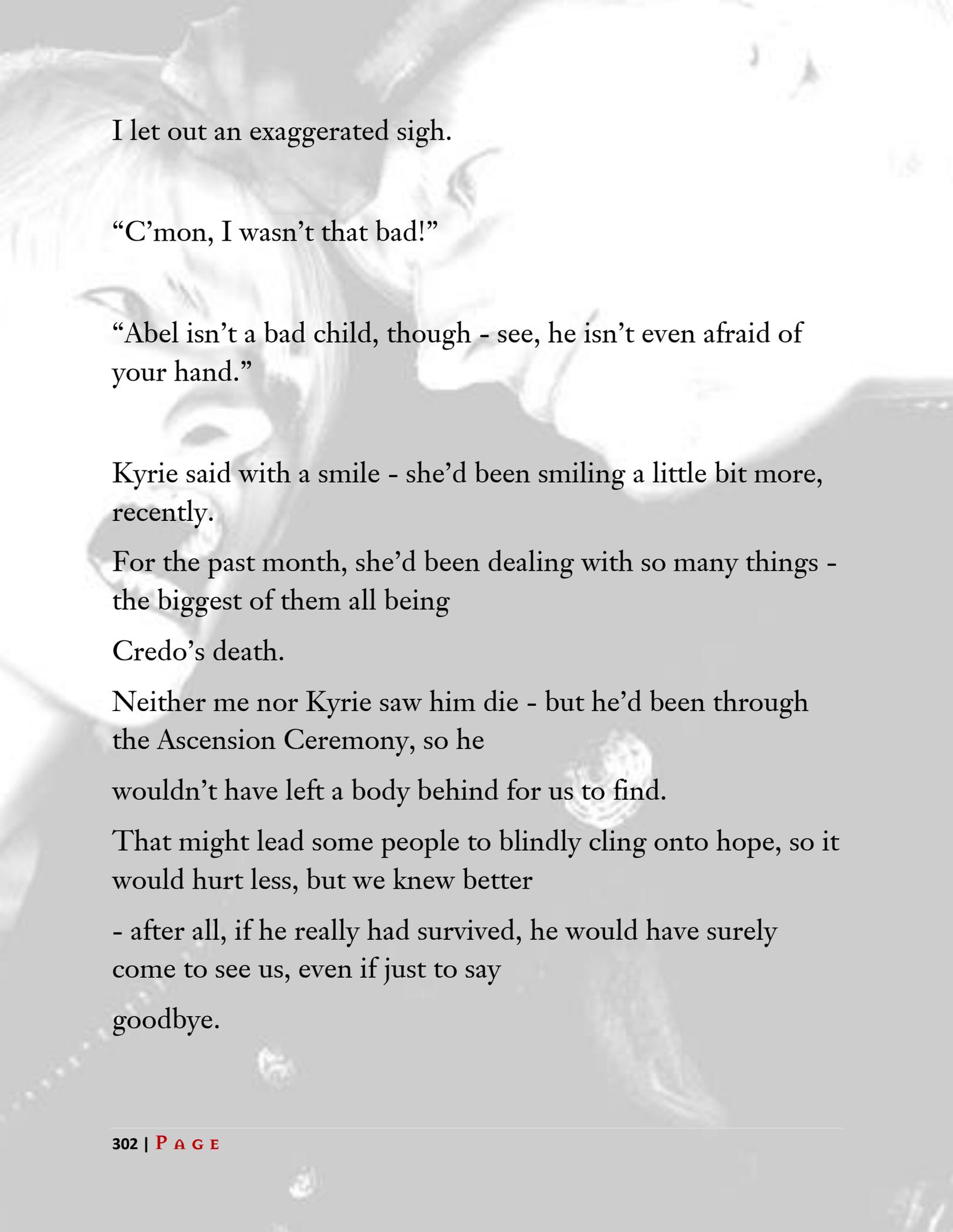
As soon as I let him go, Abel fled all the way to the back of the Opera House - he turned around and yelled at me while he was doing it too.

“That kid has no manners.”

I muttered, and Kyrie laughed.

“...What?”

“Nothing... he just reminds me a lot of you when you were his age.”



I let out an exaggerated sigh.

“C’mon, I wasn’t that bad!”

“Abel isn’t a bad child, though - see, he isn’t even afraid of your hand.”

Kyrie said with a smile - she’d been smiling a little bit more, recently.

For the past month, she’d been dealing with so many things - the biggest of them all being

Credo’s death.

Neither me nor Kyrie saw him die - but he’d been through the Ascension Ceremony, so he

wouldn’t have left a body behind for us to find.

That might lead some people to blindly cling onto hope, so it would hurt less, but we knew better

- after all, if he really had survived, he would have surely come to see us, even if just to say

goodbye.

The fact that we hadn't seen him at all ever since the incident... we had to accept what that meant: that Credo was dead.

Around two weeks ago, a cemetery had been built for all the victims of the incident. It's what's been done with the ruins of the original HQ, and right now, it was still pretty rudimentary - once all the reconstruction work was done, it would definitely get some renovations.

I hoped that day came sooner rather than later - it might be likely, too, though the people were still tired, some life was beginning to come back to their faces.

Despite its many scars, Fortuna was healing, each day a little more.

I looked at Kyrie next to me. Before all this, I never really cared for this city - it felt stifling, the people clearly didn't like me, and I thought there'd be no place for me here.

But I was still here. And I was determined to protect it - this city that Kyrie loves so much.



“Everything alright?”

I’d gotten so lost in my thoughts that I must have stopped walking, so Kyrie had stopped too to check up on me. I shook my head.

“Hey, Nero!”

Suddenly, I heard someone call my name from behind me - I looked back and saw Carl, holding a big wooden box in his hands.

He waved at me as he walked over.

“Did something happen? I’m a bit busy right now, I’m taking food to the Opera House.”

Carl didn’t seem to have listened to a word I’d just said, instead just running up to me with that box while panting. I sighed.



“This package is for you! Sorry, I can see you’re busy, if you want, I can take it to your office for you?”

I frowned at his words.

“Package? From who?”

Carl looked at the label on the box before answering me.

“Um, it just says “Dante”.”

“Dante?”

I couldn’t help but check - yup, the sender’s name was Dante.

“Why did he send me something?”



Carl groaned, and I stared at him.

“Wait... did you open it up?”

Carl laughed, a bit embarrassedly.

“Sorry, sorry, I just thought it had to be one of the relief packages sent for the city.”

“So, this wouldn’t have even gotten to me if there wasn’t a name on it, huh... well, whatever, what’s in it?”

Carl looked thoughtful for a few seconds before he answered.

“Huh, it looked kind of like a signboard?”

“...a sign?”

“Well, maybe it would be more accurate to call it a neon sign.”

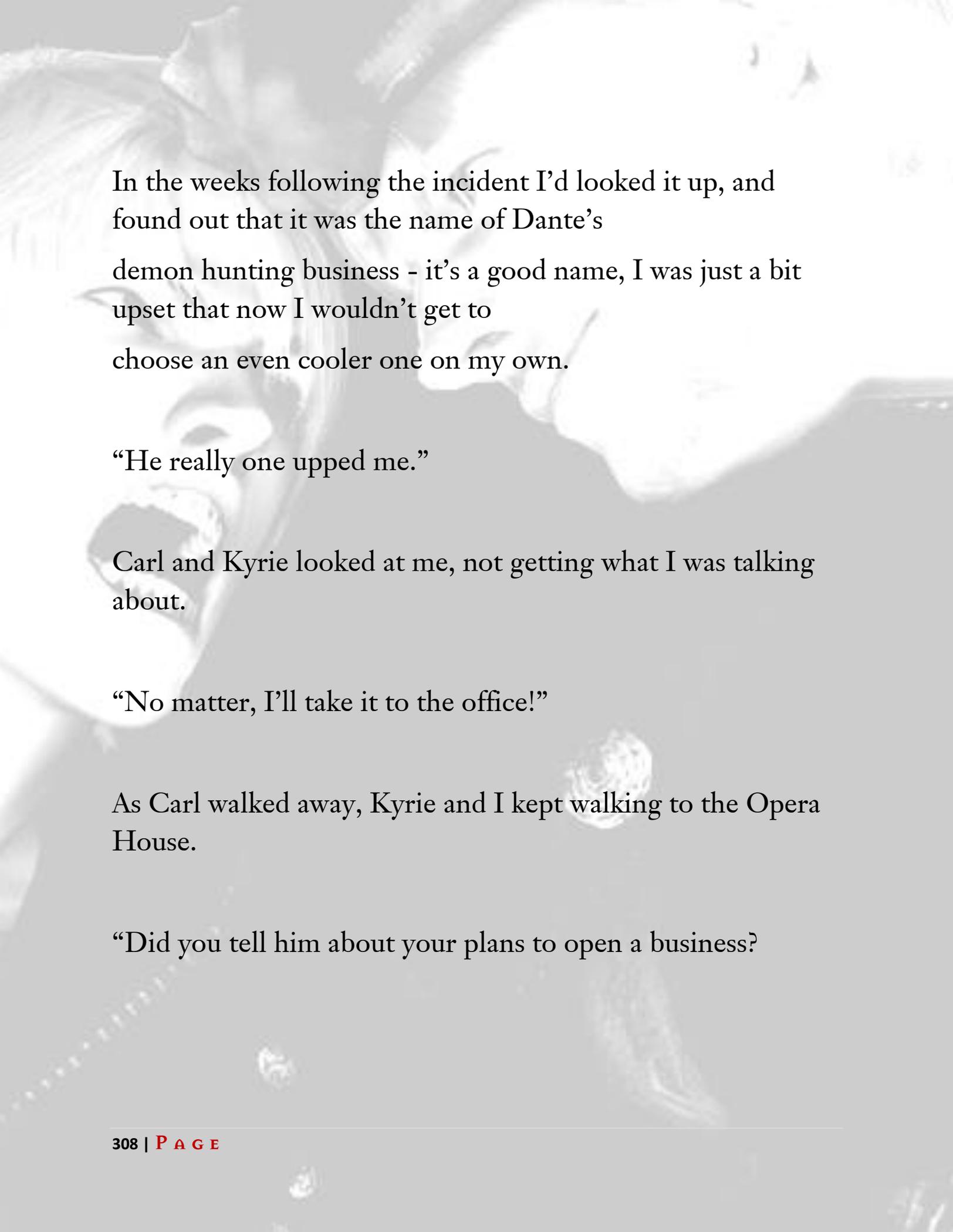
I had no idea why Dante would have sent something like that to me - just then, Carl put the box on the ground to open it up, and sure enough, there was a neon sign in there - it was turned off, obviously, so I couldn't tell what color it would be when lit - the tubes were twisted into words, and I read it out.

“**Devil May Cry...?**”

As soon as I read it, I knew what it meant.

I was going to open an office, here in Fortuna - with the knights gone someone had to keep the demon population down, and Dante must have read right through me.

Devil May Cry, huh.



In the weeks following the incident I'd looked it up, and found out that it was the name of Dante's demon hunting business - it's a good name, I was just a bit upset that now I wouldn't get to choose an even cooler one on my own.

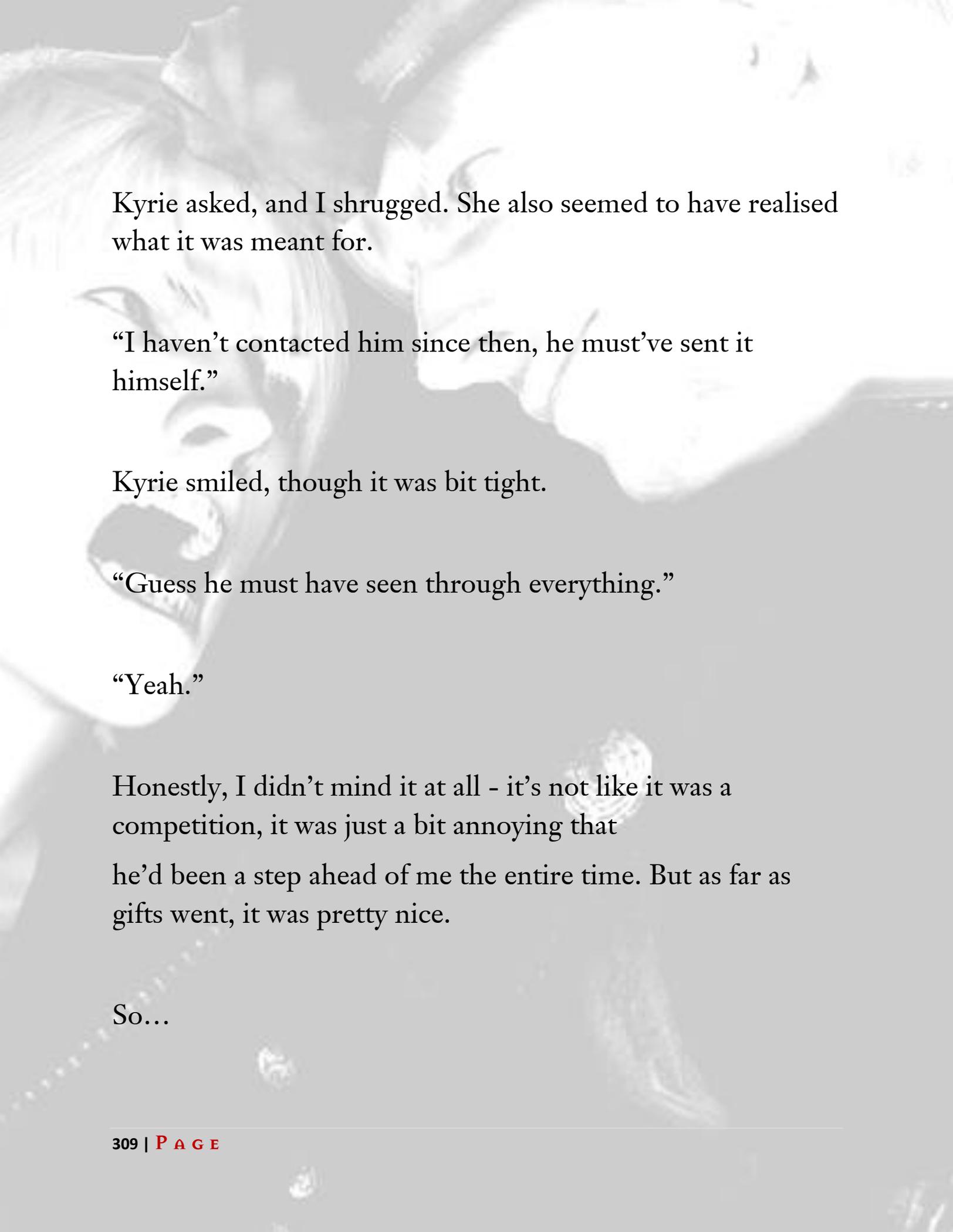
“He really one upped me.”

Carl and Kyrie looked at me, not getting what I was talking about.

“No matter, I'll take it to the office!”

As Carl walked away, Kyrie and I kept walking to the Opera House.

“Did you tell him about your plans to open a business?”



Kyrie asked, and I shrugged. She also seemed to have realised what it was meant for.

“I haven’t contacted him since then, he must’ve sent it himself.”

Kyrie smiled, though it was bit tight.

“Guess he must have seen through everything.”

“Yeah.”

Honestly, I didn’t mind it at all - it’s not like it was a competition, it was just a bit annoying that he’d been a step ahead of me the entire time. But as far as gifts went, it was pretty nice.

So...

Devil May Cry.

It was a really good name - that was my thought as me and Kyrie walked up to the Opera House.

The sky was clear - today was goanna be a good day.

I wished every day were more like today, and that's why I had to keep fighting demons - to keep Kyrie and this city safe, and keep having good days like this one.

I couldn't wait to get back to the office to hang up the sign, so that I could tell everyone:

If you've got demon problems, then come to **Devil May Cry.**