

‘Michelle! You should have been back three minutes ago’, complained Mr Armstrong. He nearly filled the doorway that led from the office to the salesroom of Armstrong’s Fine Jewellery.

‘Sorry, Mr Armstrong’, Michelle said, quickly hiding her mobile phone. ‘But I was late going to lunch so ...’

‘Not my problem, Michelle. You know the rules.’ He turned and waddled out to the shop floor.



Michelle sighed. It didn't matter how hard she tried, nothing was ever good enough for her boss. She pulled a face at her mobile. She needed to call the sports centre where she coached the girl's junior football team, but now it would have to wait.

*She was just about to leave the office when she heard a loud crash from the salesroom.*





‘Nobody move!’ a man’s voice shouted.

‘Please don’t!’ someone cried. Michelle didn’t recognize this voice either.

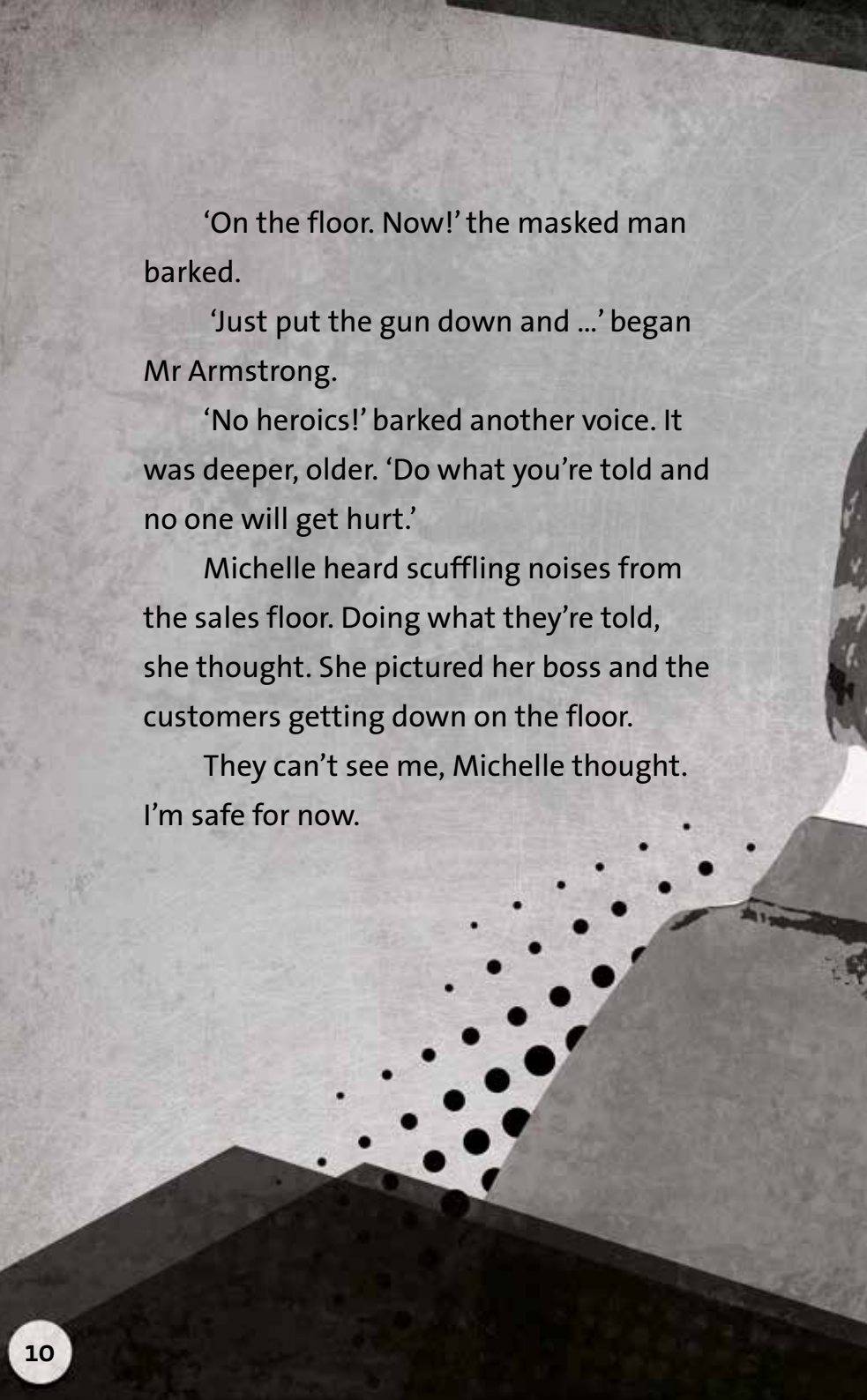
Michelle’s pulse pounded at her temples. Her mouth was dry.

She could just glimpse a figure on the sales floor. He had a black ski mask pulled down over his face and he was holding a pistol.

She felt herself starting to panic. Her heart slammed in her chest. She took a deep breath.

*There’s got to be something I can do, she thought.*

*But what —?*



‘On the floor. Now!’ the masked man barked.

‘Just put the gun down and ...’ began Mr Armstrong.

‘No heroics!’ barked another voice. It was deeper, older. ‘Do what you’re told and no one will get hurt.’

Michelle heard scuffling noises from the sales floor. Doing what they’re told, she thought. She pictured her boss and the customers getting down on the floor.

They can’t see me, Michelle thought. I’m safe for now.

