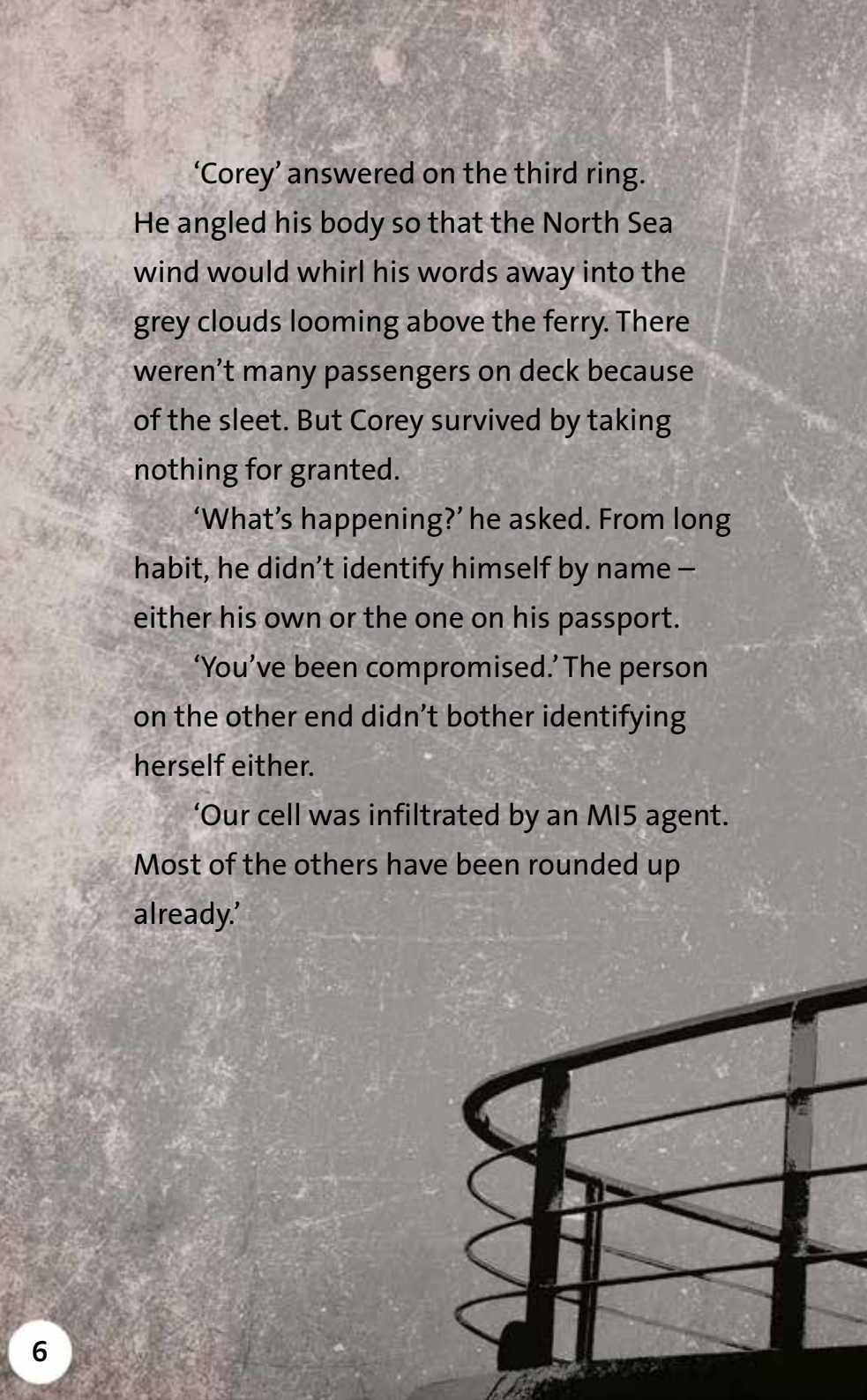


The man, whose carefully forged passport said his name was Corey, wasn't expecting the phone in his pocket to ring, but he wasn't particularly surprised when it did.

*He'd learned long ago that things seldom went according to plan.*





‘Corey’ answered on the third ring. He angled his body so that the North Sea wind would whirl his words away into the grey clouds looming above the ferry. There weren’t many passengers on deck because of the sleet. But Corey survived by taking nothing for granted.

‘What’s happening?’ he asked. From long habit, he didn’t identify himself by name – either his own or the one on his passport.

‘You’ve been compromised.’ The person on the other end didn’t bother identifying herself either.

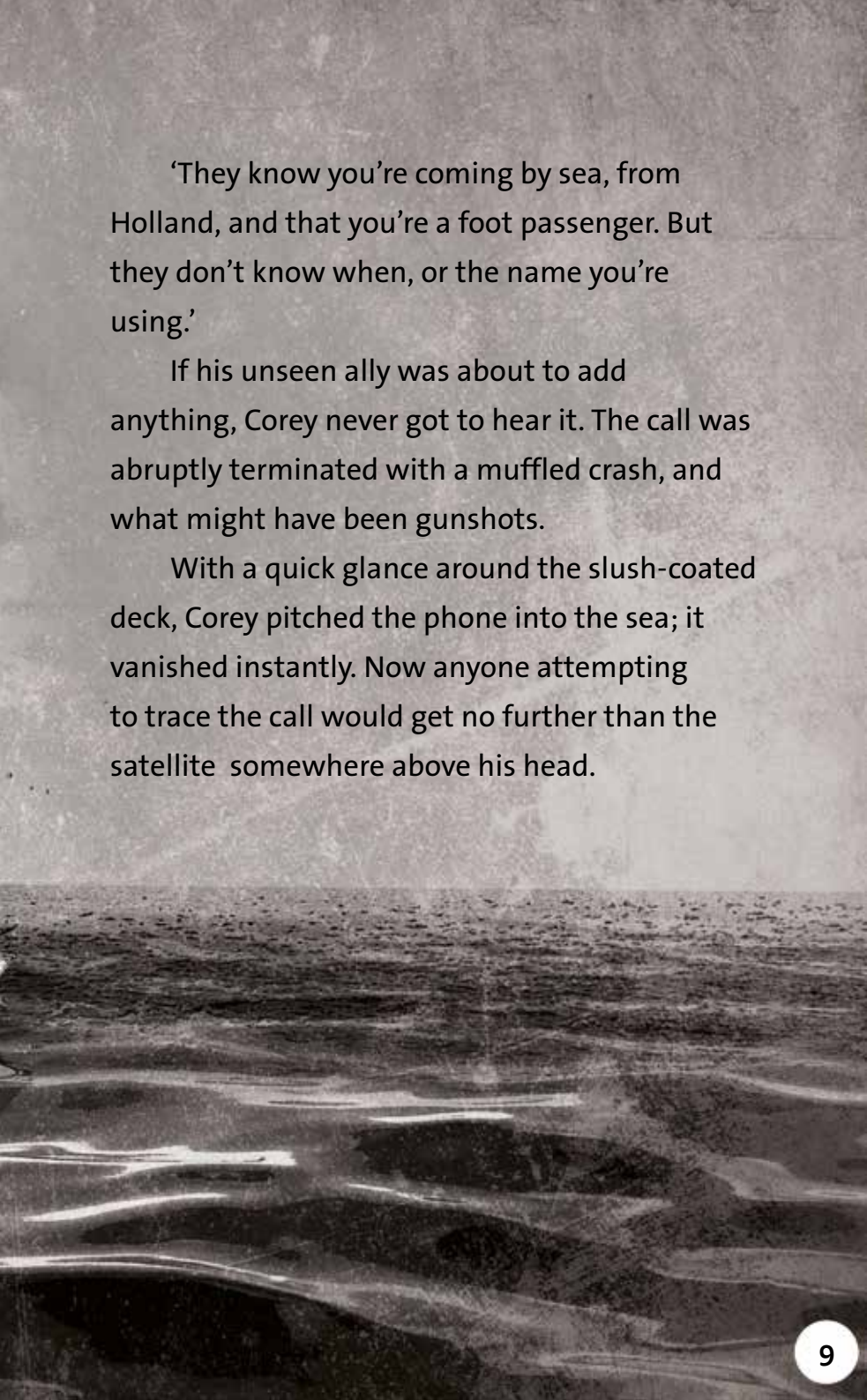
‘Our cell was infiltrated by an MI5 agent. Most of the others have been rounded up already.’

‘How compromised?’ Corey asked, indifferent to the fate of his co-conspirators. If they were wiped out, there were other cells which would pay him the balance of his fee. He cared nothing about the causes for which he maimed and murdered. No more, in fact, than he cared about his victims.

*All that mattered to him was the money, and for this assignment he expected to be paid a great deal.*







‘They know you’re coming by sea, from Holland, and that you’re a foot passenger. But they don’t know when, or the name you’re using.’

If his unseen ally was about to add anything, Corey never got to hear it. The call was abruptly terminated with a muffled crash, and what might have been gunshots.

With a quick glance around the slush-coated deck, Corey pitched the phone into the sea; it vanished instantly. Now anyone attempting to trace the call would get no further than the satellite somewhere above his head.



Hitching his rucksack to a more comfortable position, he began to prowl the boat, flexing his knees as the ungainly vessel wallowed through the deepening swell.

Most of the people he could see were similarly burdened, marking them out as foot passengers like himself. None of them would be any good. They'd attract exactly the kind of attention he needed to avoid when the ferry docked at Harwich.

