

Archetype Vol. 2 Sainthood

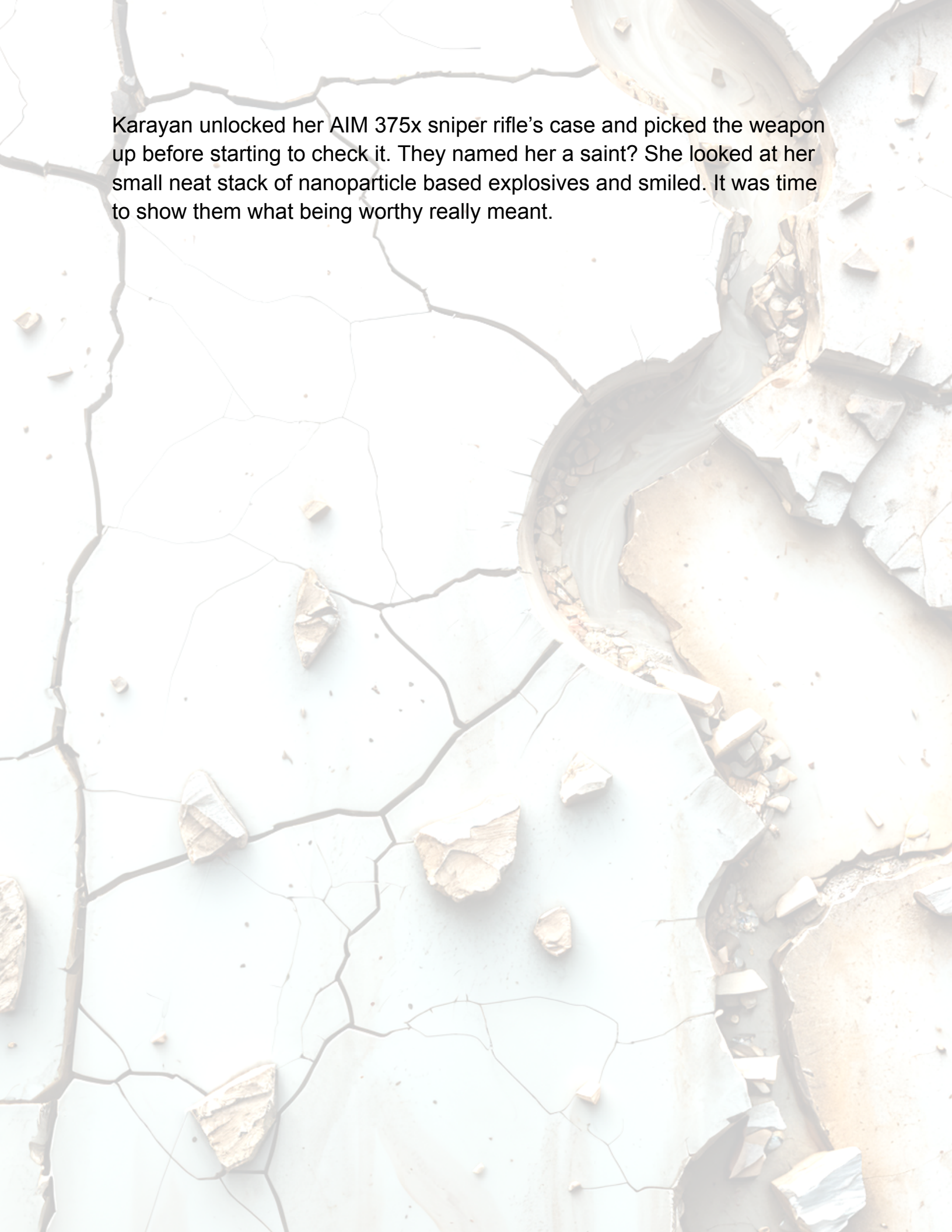
“They named me Saint. As if killing 42 common thugs was something worthy of a blessing from God. I will show them what it means to be worthy.”

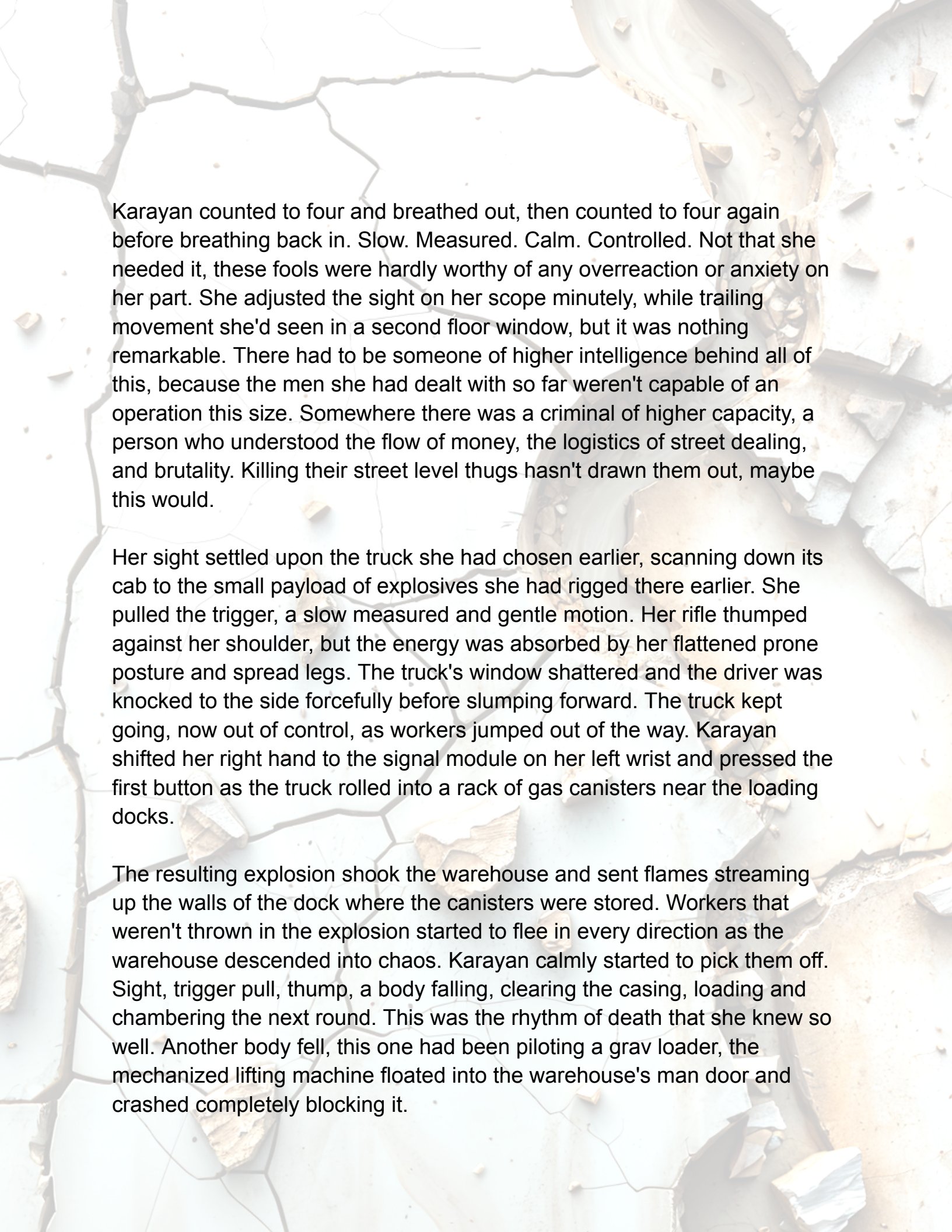
-Saint Kerasunkeru

Karayan pulled herself up with only her left arm, touching her chin to the metal bar and counting the fortieth repetition silently inside her head. She could already feel the nanites coursing down her veins and repairing her muscles. This was what working out meant for her now, a race against her need for exertion and the nanites' need to repair her. All a part of the game that was her life, a competition against the very thing that sustained her, the innate core of her being; Madrafa never got to rest. She let go and grabbed the bar with her right hand, at least the nanites let her sweat, she gloried in that. Then she stopped and looked at her newscaster's screen, they were talking about her. *“The mysterious vigilante has now killed forty two local gang members..”* She hadn't realized it had been that many. *“Locals are saying the vigilante is a woman. They have taken to calling her Saint Kerasunkeru...”* Saint 42, for forty two lives, the people's desperation had made them insane. She dropped to her feet, the only real benefit of exercise for her was the mental clarity it provided, and that was gone now.

Karayan walked to her table, the one piece of furniture she had, nothing else was necessary. The old thing was covered in weaponry, magazines, ammo cases, and knives among other things. But what she needed now were her pills. She opened one of the bottles and counted the seven pills remaining, adding that to other bottles and doing the calculations in the head. One hundred and eighty two days until she would need more of them. That was part of her existence now too, a pill a day kept the madness under control. She popped the pill into her mouth and drowned it in a few fingers of whiskey straight from her bottle before swallowing. Anything to feel something, even for the briefest of moments.

Karayan unlocked her AIM 375x sniper rifle's case and picked the weapon up before starting to check it. They named her a saint? She looked at her small neat stack of nanoparticle based explosives and smiled. It was time to show them what being worthy really meant.

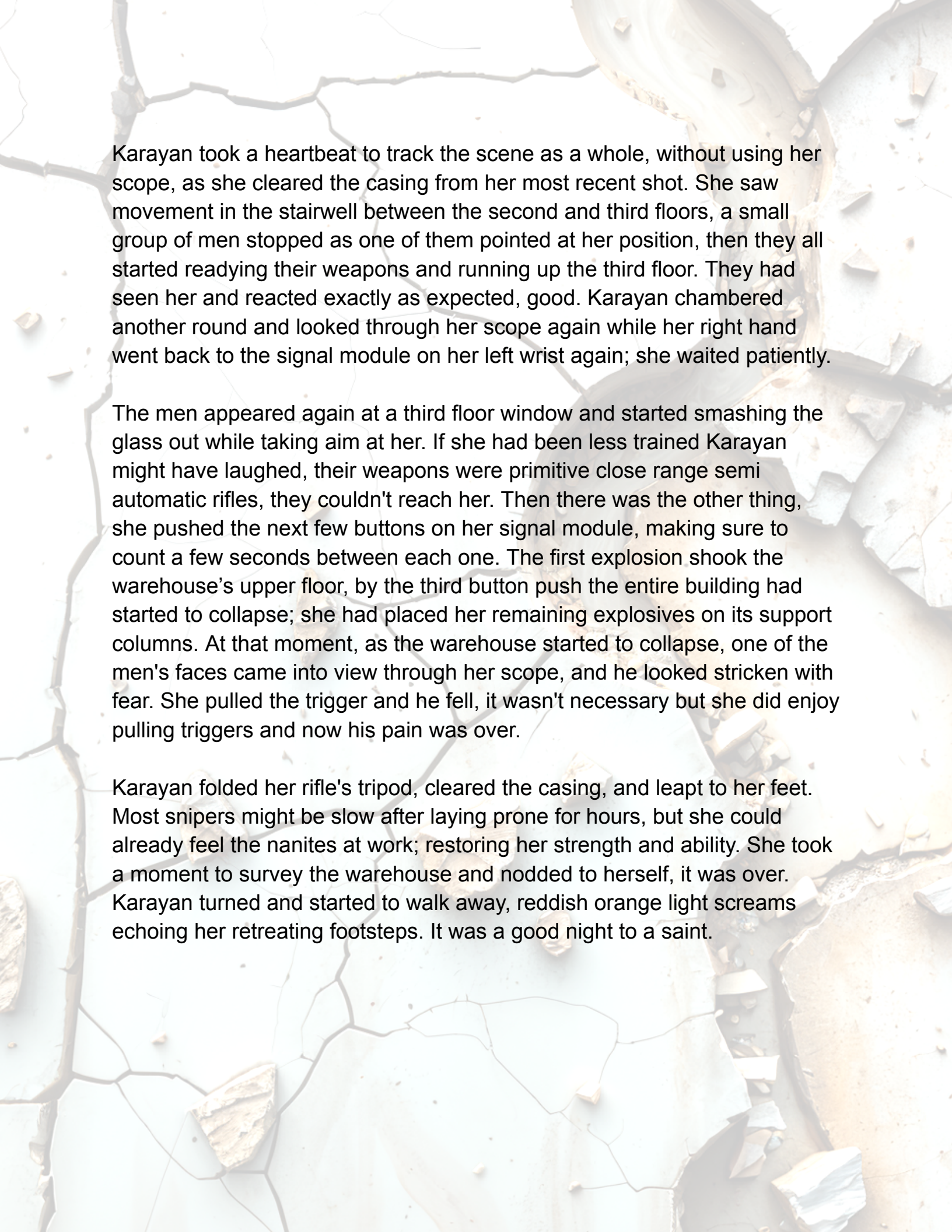




Karayan counted to four and breathed out, then counted to four again before breathing back in. Slow. Measured. Calm. Controlled. Not that she needed it, these fools were hardly worthy of any overreaction or anxiety on her part. She adjusted the sight on her scope minutely, while trailing movement she'd seen in a second floor window, but it was nothing remarkable. There had to be someone of higher intelligence behind all of this, because the men she had dealt with so far weren't capable of an operation this size. Somewhere there was a criminal of higher capacity, a person who understood the flow of money, the logistics of street dealing, and brutality. Killing their street level thugs hasn't drawn them out, maybe this would.

Her sight settled upon the truck she had chosen earlier, scanning down its cab to the small payload of explosives she had rigged there earlier. She pulled the trigger, a slow measured and gentle motion. Her rifle thumped against her shoulder, but the energy was absorbed by her flattened prone posture and spread legs. The truck's window shattered and the driver was knocked to the side forcefully before slumping forward. The truck kept going, now out of control, as workers jumped out of the way. Karayan shifted her right hand to the signal module on her left wrist and pressed the first button as the truck rolled into a rack of gas canisters near the loading docks.

The resulting explosion shook the warehouse and sent flames streaming up the walls of the dock where the canisters were stored. Workers that weren't thrown in the explosion started to flee in every direction as the warehouse descended into chaos. Karayan calmly started to pick them off. Sight, trigger pull, thump, a body falling, clearing the casing, loading and chambering the next round. This was the rhythm of death that she knew so well. Another body fell, this one had been piloting a grav loader, the mechanized lifting machine floated into the warehouse's man door and crashed completely blocking it.



Karayan took a heartbeat to track the scene as a whole, without using her scope, as she cleared the casing from her most recent shot. She saw movement in the stairwell between the second and third floors, a small group of men stopped as one of them pointed at her position, then they all started readying their weapons and running up the third floor. They had seen her and reacted exactly as expected, good. Karayan chambered another round and looked through her scope again while her right hand went back to the signal module on her left wrist again; she waited patiently.

The men appeared again at a third floor window and started smashing the glass out while taking aim at her. If she had been less trained Karayan might have laughed, their weapons were primitive close range semi automatic rifles, they couldn't reach her. Then there was the other thing, she pushed the next few buttons on her signal module, making sure to count a few seconds between each one. The first explosion shook the warehouse's upper floor, by the third button push the entire building had started to collapse; she had placed her remaining explosives on its support columns. At that moment, as the warehouse started to collapse, one of the men's faces came into view through her scope, and he looked stricken with fear. She pulled the trigger and he fell, it wasn't necessary but she did enjoy pulling triggers and now his pain was over.

Karayan folded her rifle's tripod, cleared the casing, and leapt to her feet. Most snipers might be slow after laying prone for hours, but she could already feel the nanites at work; restoring her strength and ability. She took a moment to survey the warehouse and nodded to herself, it was over. Karayan turned and started to walk away, reddish orange light screams echoing her retreating footsteps. It was a good night to a saint.