

Long Way Down

A scene by Ellie Tsang Kirkner.

I LOVE playing w/ character dynamics! For fun, I put these 3 together to see what would happen. Each propels the narrative forward in their stories, so exploring how this trait would generate conflict was quite the experiment!

- Ellie :)

The Cast:

	<p>Joel (<i>The Last of Us</i>)</p> <p>A smuggler in his late 40's, Joel's identity has been broken and rebuilt through the fungal apocalypse that ravaged humanity.</p> <p>Reference: Joel</p>
	<p>Kim Kitsuragi (<i>Disco Elysium</i>)</p> <p>A detective with the Revachol Citizens Militia, Kim is a reserved man defined by his by-the-book approach and dry sense of humor.</p> <p>Reference: Kim</p>
	<p>Vi (<i>Arcane</i>)</p> <p>Nonchalant and unorthodox, Vi is a tough-as-nails young woman who solves problems with her street smarts and her fists.</p> <p>Reference: Vi</p>

INT. ELEVATOR - INDUSTRIAL RUINS

A decrepit service elevator in the belly of an old industrial building.

Three survivors stand pressed against adjoining walls. A weak attempt to reclaim what personal space they can. Their packs jostle on their backs as the elevator descends in shuddering stops and starts.

A lone construction lamp rattles from a hook in the ceiling.

KIM watches it.

The elevator lets out a grating metallic SHRIEK and then grinds to a violent stop. The light flickers, then dies.

The elevator settles. The three take stock of their surroundings. Thick eddies of dust swirl in the flashlight beams.

JOEL

Well. That is not good.

Vi points her light to a wide hole in the ceiling. Rainwater slowly drips in around the edges.

VI

(whistles low)

This place is really coming down,
huh?

She glances at Kim with a guarded frown.

KIM

(calm, but tinged with blame)

Hm. The generator upstairs must
have run out of fuel.

VI

I checked, okay! That tank was
nearly full!

As she says "full," she hits the nearby wall with her fist for emphasis, and the elevator jostles. The three of them stiffen, eyes wide and arms slightly extended for balance. The metal suspension cables groan, the reverb echoing through the elevator shaft before fading into a tense silence.

Both men look at Vi with thinly veiled disbelief.

Vi holds her hands up in front of her, palms out, and gives a slight nod of concession.

KIM
(sighs in frustration)
What now?

JOEL
Find a way outta here.

VI
Really? Great plan!

Vi stabs at the "door open" elevator button with the pad of her thumb. Once. Twice.

JOEL
(sighs)
'right then.

She pushes the button again, really leaning into it. Then a quick tap. Then again. And again. If she keeps at it, something's gotta give.

VI
(under her breath)
C'mon-c'mon-c'mon-c'mon.

Kim buries his face in his hand.

Joel nudges Kim to get his attention, and gestures to the hole in the ceiling.

JOEL
(to Kim)
Reckon I can get up there, with a little help.

KIM
It's worth a shot.

Kim steadies himself against the wall of the elevator and laces his fingers to boost him. Joel hefts up into the wide hole in the ceiling, but a crumbling edge gives way and he slips.

JOEL
Whoa!

Vi side steps to avoid him, and the debris, as he falls. Joel lands on his back, hard - the wind knocked out of him.

A small metal door covering a PANEL on the elevator wall loosens and drops to the floor with the impact. The elevator bounces from Joel's fall. Kim and Vi both instinctively retreat to opposite walls of the elevator while it wobbles, cables whining.

VI

Okay. Shit. Not that way either.

Joel begins to get to his feet, ignoring the hand up Kim offers him. Standing, Joel rolls his shoulders with a tired grimace. Feeling every one of his forty-something years today.

KIM

It's too risky for you to climb out. We'll have to try something else.

VI

(rudely)

What'd I just say?

Joel examines the newly revealed electrical panel in the wall, hardly listening.

JOEL

If y'all are done... (his voice trails off)

He turns to face them and nods at the exposed panel.

JOEL

-we might have something here.

Kim looks contemplative. Vi pushes past Joel roughly.

JOEL

Whoa there, now wait just a- (minute.)

Vi lands a forceful kick to the open panel. Electric components crunch under her boot, blue sparks crackle. The elevator lurches. The three tense. Beat.

KIM

(frustrated, scolding)

What the hell do you think you are doing?!

VI

(unapologetic, she shrugs)

Eh, that usually works for me.

JOEL

(to himself, under his breath,
exasperated)

I'm sure it does.

VI

Listen, old man-

As Joel turns away, Vi scowls. Suddenly, the whole building rumbles low. A deep buzzing of electric currents flooding machinery. The singular light above blinks back on, and the elevator resumes its shuddering, turbulent descent. The three look at each other, brightening slightly.

JOEL

Don't expect a 'thank you.'

VI

Wouldn't dream of it.

Mechanical whirring from the elevator begins to blend with the distant, alien sound of some creature. The elevator DINGS pleasantly as it arrives at the basement floor and the three jump, startled by the sound. The doors open a few inches before jamming.

Then...

A MONSTROUS HOWL from somewhere beyond the elevator doors. It is wet and raw and desperate. And god, it's getting closer.

The three snap into action with newfound urgency. Kim crouches, visually scanning the busted control panel while Vi wrestles in vain to open the door with her bare hands. Joel looks to the door - to the gaping hole in the ceiling, then back. Trapped.

The sound of massive, heavy footfalls echo somewhere nearby, followed by another inhuman scream. Vi looks through the gap in the door. She drops the open bag from her shoulder with a melodic THUD, revealing her HEXTECH GAUNTLETS inside.

Joel grabs Kim roughly by the shoulder and drags him away from the panel by the door.

JOEL

Right. New plan. We're gonna need
to clear a path through.

KIM

So you *do* know how to kill one.

Vi dons her Gauntlets. Steam HISSES from the mechanized joinery as the Gauntlets power-up, emitting a blue light as she makes a fist.

JOEL

Not exactly. Got a few ideas though.

Joel pulls his shotgun from over his shoulder and loads two fat slugs in.

JOEL

(to Kim)

I'll take the lead, you follow.

Vi braces her armored gauntlets against the elevator doors and begins to pry them open, fighting for every inch they give way.

Kim retrieves his sidearm from the holster on his hip. He pushes his glasses up the bridge of his nose. His forehead is bathed in sweat.

KIM

(to Joel)

I'm ready.

Joel looks at the pistol in Kim's hands and sucks in a breath.

JOEL

(to Kim)

Uh, how many shots does that thing have?

At the elevator door, Vi struggles, feet slipping under her as she strains to push the doors further. She's no longer opening the metal elevator doors, she's bending them outward, peeling them open like the petals of a terrible metal flower, to make her own-fucking-door! The plates on her gauntlets shudder and POP with the effort. Flecks of spit fly from her mouth as she howls.

The monstrous sounds outside are louder, more crazed and insistent. Kim looks at Joel solemnly.

KIM

One. Just one.

With a ROAR, Vi pushes through the pain and the metal gives way to her. She steps back from the opening in the elevator door, revealing a MONSTROSITY, humanoid, that lurks out-of-focus in the darkened hallway beyond.

Vi looks over her shoulder to them. A bead of sweat runs from her brow, merges with a fresh cut on her cheek, and paints a red trail down to her chin.

VI

Then you better make it count.