# Narrative Writing Samples: Shutdown (Cutscene 1) | Mia Michel

**Game Context:** A survival action game set during a zombie outbreak, where social relations and managing scarce resources matters as much as direct combat.

**Scene Context:** X, a lone survivor who has stayed alive this long by never being noticed, breaks her own rule while scavenging an abandoned nightclub for supplies and triggers an ambush. She's saved by a wandering stranger, Sailo, and s has to decide whether to trust enough to bring him back to her hideout.

**Trigger:** X escapes the infected crowd (BITTEN) after collecting supplies and reaches the upper floor.

**Narrative Purpose:** Introduce Sailo, establish contrasting survival philosophies, and offer the player a potential companion.

**Gameplay Transition:** The cinematic concludes before the player travels to X's hideout with Sailo. Control returns to the player at the next location, where X and Sailo continue toward the hideout.

**INT. ABANDONED CLUB — UPPER FLOOR. DUSK**

X scrambles up through the railing gap, breathing hard, blood and soot streaked across her jacket. Below, a fire is spreading through the ground floor. She collapses onto her back.

A BITTEN (ZOMBIE) - once human, face split open - lunges into frame from behind her.

**X**
(startled)
Ugh!

The Bitten jumps her. She gets an arm up, holds it back by the throat. It snaps and drools above her face. X's hand scrabbles at her hip for a dagger. She finds it, but it's knocked away by the Bitten.

**X**
No!

The Bitten rears back for the kill—

A gunshot cracks off-screen. The Bitten's head bursts. Its body slumps, dead weight, onto X. She shoves the corpse off. Then looks up, chest heaving.

SAILO stands a few meters off, pistol still raised, unhurried. Black cap, gold-flecked hair, three earrings each ear. He looks at her, his head cocked to the side. Faintly smirking.

X instantly grabs her dagger. Then throws it. Sailo ducks. It nicks his cheek.

**X**
You deranged psycho!

**SAILO**
(touching the cut, amused)
That's how you thank me for helping you?

**X**
(getting up, weapon raised)
Helping me? An inch to the right and my head would've been wiped off. Unless that was the plan.

**SAILO**
Maybe.
(beat)
Why would I bother, though?

**X**
(raising her pack)
You don't want what's in here?

**SAILO**
Should I? What's in there? Condoms?

**X**
(sputtering)
Condoms?! Are you—

He smirks. She shoves him.

**X (CONT'D)**
No wonder you're out here alone. Whatever group you had probably couldn't wait to dump you.

The smirk drops off his face, just for a second. X notices. Her expression shifts. She looks away.

**SAILO**
(flat)
You're alone too.

He reaches out and flicks a curl off her shoulder. X flinches. Not away, but ready. She wipes the Bitten's blood from her arm. Her eyes never leave him.

**X**
I'm not. And if you behave, I might show you where the hideout is.

**SAILO**
That's okay. You shouldn't show your hideout to a *deranged psycho* like me.

He holsters his gun, heading for the exit.

**X**
You're always running, aren't you?
(off his look)
You can't do that forever. There's a rhythm to it.
(beat)
Run. Hide. Repeat. Don't show them who you are. If they know who you are, you die.

**SAILO**
Is that a pretty poem you made up to cope?

X grinds her teeth. He starts again for the exit.

**X**
Do you ever hesitate to kill them?

**SAILO**
Do you?

**X**
No cure. No person left in there. Sentiment doesn't change that. Do you agree?

He doesn't answer right away. His face stays unreadable.

**SAILO**
Why does it matter to you?

X hesitates. A faint sound of the BITTEN in the background rises from below. She lowers her weapons.

**X**
Because…just come with me.

Sailo studies her. A beat.

**SAILO**
Lead the way.

**FADE TO GAMEPLAY**