

### When Shit Hit the Fan

In the midst of a land ravaged with war, a small group of close friends founded a small militia. They made it their mission to defend their small country from the two opposing nations using their home for their battles. These four young men recruited as many people as they could to help out with their cause.

Jonah, a kind-hearted young man and exceptional strategist, was unanimously chosen as their leader. Marco, the best fighter and strongest man among them, was treated as second in command. Nick, their recon specialist, helped raise morale with his naturally high spirits. Lastly, there was Johnny, the best sniper in the militia and typically a voice of reason. However, tragedy struck one night when they found themselves in the crossfire of a sudden battle, hiding inside a rundown building.

“Jonah! Jonah,” Johnny yelled.

“What?! What is it, Johnny?” Jonah asked.

“It’s Nick... We fucking lost Nick,” Johnny said.

Jonah’s heart felt heavy as he spoke, “He... He died?”

Marco walked in behind Johnny, “No, he means literally ‘lost.’ Another building we passed by collapsed behind us and he may have still been inside. His death isn’t confirmed and it’s unlikely.” Marco shook his head as he relayed this information to Jonah.

“That building was about 100 yards back. We’ll have to launch an impromptu rescue mission then.” Jonah sat on the ground and closed his eyes to think.

“Are you friggin’ serious, Jonah?” Johnny said, complaining, “We got 11 other recruits with us in the middle of a battlefield! Are we really gonna risk our lives because Nick *might* be alive?”

“He’s our best friend, Johnny,” Jonah said.

“I don’t know about this. I can’t do this, guys. We gotta keep moving forward. That’s our best chance at survival.” Johnny turned to the rest of the militia. “You guys are with me, right?”

There was a silence between all of them. Distant gunshots and mortars echoed. The screams of wounded soldiers added to the deadly cacophony. And the endless patter of the rain on the shattered glass windows filled in the tense silence.

As the horrifying sounds of war dragged on, the recruits looked at each other and some started nodding.

Marco shook his head and yelled at Johnny, “That’s enough! If you don’t like how the leader handles things that’s between you and him, not the rest of the team!”

Jonah stood silent as the two bickered, he disliked confrontation and was unsure of what to say.

“Huh?” Johnny said, “Are you serious?”

“Damn right I’m serious. You’re basically encouraging a god damn mutiny.” Marco walked up to Johnny, towering over him.

“I... That wasn’t my intention,” Johnny said, quietly.

Marco looked at the other members of the militia behind Johnny, “A team *without* respect and a leader that doesn’t *demand* it is a recipe for disaster. That’s why I’m here. You all had better get your shit together or you can all leave and never come back! Nick deserves better.”

Johnny looked down at the floor in shame. “I’m sorry, Marco. Truth is, I’m scared, man!”

Marco growled in exasperation, lifting Johnny by the collar of his shirt, “I’m disappointed in you, Johnny. Nick is *your* best friend too, and when shit hit the fan, you *always* pulled through for us. You’ve saved our lives more times than we can count. Shit was bound to get tougher sooner or later, but Jonah’s always kept everyone safe. I need you to believe in him like we believe in you, Johnny.” Marco let Johnny go and gave him a slight but forceful push back.

“Don’t... Don’t try to butter me up, bastard.” Johnny’s voice cracked as he held back tears. “To hell with it. Let’s hurry up and get Nick, then get the hell out of here!”

“You heard that, Jonah?” Marco turned to Jonah.

“Yeah... Loud n’ clear.” Jonah nodded.

Johnny let out a sigh as he composed himself, “Alright, what’s the plan?”

Jonah took out a pen and some scrap paper to scrawl on. “Two squads. Snipers and gunmen remain here. Marco and I will get Nick. Less of us moving around as one unit out in the open the better, at least for now. Gunmen defend this building at all costs. Don’t let either side inside without killing them.”

As Jonah and Marco began to set out, Johnny turned to yell at them, “Guys! I just want you to know that I love you. Seriously. Tell Nick that when you see him too.”

“You can tell him yourself, Johnny.” Marco smiled as he looked back at Johnny.

“So, what are *you* gonna tell Nick when we see him?” Jonah asked Marco.

“I guess I’ll tell him what kinda bullshit he’s put us through.” Marco laughed, “How ‘bout you?”

Jonah smiled. “I’m gonna ask him what hell our recon guy was doing *behind* the rest of the group!” Jonah smiled as the two walked out of the doorway and on to rescue their missing brother-in-arms.