

# The Hose Rack

by **Lynda Phillips**

Johnny climbed up to the top of the hose rack and moved into position. He carefully glanced down at Stoker, who was standing patiently waiting, and called "OK, Stoker, I'm ready! Pull up the first one!"

"Right, Johnny!" Stoker called, going over to the pulley.

Johnny watched as Stoker attached the hose to the hook and started pulling the hose toward the top of the rack. Once the hose reached the top of the rack, it would be his job to disconnect it and hang it on one of the rods. It was tedious work, but he preferred working with Stoker than doing latrine duty.

Johnny reached in front of him, leaning over the edge of the rack a little, and grabbed the hose. He pulled it toward him, removed it from the hook, and hung it on one of the rods. Leaning back, he started lowering the hook back down to Stoker for the next one.

Johnny and Stoker worked in compatible silence. They were almost done, when Johnny called down "How many more do we got?"

Stoker looked at the pile and said "Only two more. How about a cup of coffee when we're done? My treat."

"Sure," Johnny answered, watching as Stoker attached the hose. "Can hardly wait. It's not every day you treat me to coffee!"

Stoker chuckled as he bent down and picked up a hose. Attaching it to the hook, he grabbed the rope and started pulling it up to Johnny. Once the hose reached the top, he stood and watched Johnny as he started to unhook it.

Johnny reached forward, leaning slightly over the edge to grab the hose. As he started to lean back, his foot slipped and he lost his balance. He jerked on the rope, hoping to keep himself from falling. But Stoker was unprepared for the sudden movement, and he was unable to prevent the pulley from striking Johnny in the head.

Johnny, stunned by the blow, fell back with a gasp, letting go of the rope. Johnny briefly felt himself falling before striking something hard. He thought he heard Stoker yelling his name as he disappeared down a tunnel of darkness.

Stoker watched in stunned silence as the pulley struck Johnny in the head and he fell from the rack, landing in a jumbled heap on the concrete parking lot. Dropping the rope, he screamed "JOHNNY!" and ran towards him.

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"Hey, is there any coffee left?" Chet asked, as he entered the kitchen. "I could really use some."

"Sure." Roy said, "How'd it go?"

"Awful, Roy," Chet complained, "I swear, every time Gage knows I'm going to be stuck with latrine duty, he makes a bigger mess."

"I think you're just being paranoid," Roy answered. Then, glancing toward the door, "How were Johnny and Stoker doing with the hose hanging?"

"I glanced outside and they were almost through," Chet answered, accepting the cup from Roy. "Thanks."

Chet no sooner had taken a sip than Stoker's panicked scream of "Johnny!" echoed through the station. Chet and Roy quickly put their cups down and ran toward the back parking lot to see what had happened.

Stoker knelt down next to Johnny and placing a hand on his shoulder, asked "Johnny?" Glancing up at the sound of running feet, he saw the others coming from the station. Turning back to Johnny, he prepared to roll him onto his back.

Roy stopped him. "Stoker, don't move him."

"But, Roy.."

"Don't move him," Roy repeated, kneeling down next to him. "We may be dealing with neck and back injuries." Giving Stoker a chance to compose himself asked, "What happened?"

"Johnny hit his head on the pulley and fell from the hose rack," Stoker answered softly "Is he going to be all right?"

Roy paused in checking Johnny out and glanced up at the top of the hose rack. It was approximately a 12 to 15 foot drop to the ground. Returning his attention to Johnny, he proceeded to check him out.

Johnny was lying on his left side, in a semi-fetal position. Roy carefully ran his hands down the back of Johnny's neck and back. He took a quick glance at the deep laceration on Johnny's forehead, before turning to Chet and saying, "Chet, Marco, I need the cervical collar, the backboard, drug box, and bio phone. Cap," switching his attention to him, "We need an ambulance."

"Right away, Roy," Chet said, getting up and running toward the squad, Marco right behind him.

"I'll call it in," answered Cap.

Roy's attention returned to Johnny as he checked Johnny's extremities for broken bones. Finding none, he carefully palpated Johnny's rib cage to determine if any of his ribs were broken. Glancing up into Stoker's worried face, said, "It doesn't appear anything is broken."

"Then why the backboard and collar?" Stoker asked.

"It's just a precaution," Roy answered, placing a hand on Stoker's arm "Johnny's going to be all right."

Cap hurried over to the radio bay and picked up the mike. Clearing his throat, he said, "LA, this is Station 51. We have a paramedic down at our location. Respond an ambulance. Repeat, we have a paramedic down at our location. Respond an ambulance."

"Station 51, 10-4. Time out 0900."

Cap replaced the mike and went to the squad, where Marco and Chet were pulling out the requested equipment. Reaching down, he picked up the bio phone and cervical collar, "I'll give you a hand. Got

everything?"

"Thanks, Cap," Marco said, as he pulled the backboard from its compartment "Yeah, that's everything."

Roy glanced toward the bay door and watched as Cap, Marco, and Chet hurried over to where they were. He took the collar Cap handed him, and carefully slipped it around Johnny's neck. Once it was secured, he looked at the others, saying, "OK, we're going to slowly ease him over onto the backboard. It's very important that we keep his back straight and to keep his head from moving."

At their nods of understanding, he continued, "Cap, place your hands along side his head and keep it from moving when we move him onto the board. Marco, slide the board closer to Johnny. That's it."

Roy watched as the others positioned themselves to place Johnny on the backboard. When everyone was ready, Roy said, "Chet, you hold the board steady. All right, on the count of three, ease him over. One... Two... Three."

Carefully, they eased Johnny onto the backboard, with Cap keeping Johnny's head from moving. Once Johnny was on the board, Roy carefully straightened his arms and legs. Now that Johnny was on the backboard, Roy took the time to examine the laceration on Johnny's head.

"Marco, hand me a sterile pad from the drug box," Roy said, glancing over at him. Once Marco got the requested pad and handed it to him, Roy proceeded to carefully clean the laceration. Roy noted that it was deep, almost to the bone, and that it was still bleeding. Reaching for the drug box, he pulled it closer and removed another pad. He handing it to Chet.

"Chet, I want you to open this and apply pressure. Once you get the bleeding stopped, tape it down."

"Right, Roy," Chet watched as Roy continued cleaning the laceration for a few more moments. When Roy paused, he asked, "Ready?" At Roy's nod, Chet put the pad on the injury and applied pressure.

"Cap, can you get Rampart on the line while I take Johnny's vitals?"

"Sure, Roy," Cap said, pulling the bio phone over and opening the lid. A moment later, "Rampart, this is Squad 51. How do you read?"

"Squad 51, go ahead."

"We have a victim of a fall. Stand by for vitals."

"Standing by, 51."

"Stoker, hand me the BP cup and can you write down the vitals as I call them out?"

"Sure, Roy." Stoker said, getting the BP cup and handing it to Roy.

Roy took the BP cup from Stoker and carefully placed it around Johnny's right arm. Placing the stethoscope in his ears, he pumped the bulb, and then slowly released the pressure. Glancing over at Stoker, said "BP 110/50." Then placing his hand on Johnny's diaphragm, "Respirations 16." and a moment later, taking Johnny's wrist, "Pulse, 76."

Sitting back on his heels, Roy took his penlight from his pocket. Carefully, placing his hand on Johnny's

forehead, checked his pupil reactions and for signs of bleeding in the ears, nose and mouth.

"How is he?" Marco asked, as Roy reached for the receiver Cap held out to him.

"Looking good, Marco," Roy answered. Then, at the sound of sirens, said, "Why don't you go meet the ambulance?"

"Right," Marco said standing, "You're sure he's going to be all right?"

"I'm sure," Roy answered, looking up at him. At his continued hesitation "Marco, Johnny's going to be all right."

Roy took the receiver from Cap as he watched Marco head toward the bay. Taking a deep breath he said, "Rampart, this is Squad 51. We have a male, 26 years of age. He fell from a hose tower, approximately 15 feet in height, to the concrete parking lot and is unconscious. He has a deep laceration on his right temple, with profuse bleeding. Bleeding is currently under control." Then glancing at the paper that Stoker handed him, continued "Vitals are: BP 110/50, respirations 16, pulse 76. Eyes are equal and reactive. There is no sign of bleeding in the ears, nose, or mouth. I have applied cervical collar and he is on a backboard. Rampart, be advised that the victim is John Gage."

Brackett glanced at Dix in surprise as he studied the information provided by Roy. After a few minutes, he asked, "Does he respond to pain stimuli, 51?"

"Stand by, Rampart."

"Standing by, 51."

Roy placed the receiving over his shoulder and carefully leaned forward. Placing his fist on Johnny's sternum, he slowly moved it in a circle, applying pressure. Roy smiled slightly, as Johnny moaned in protest at the slight pain this caused. Grabbing the receiver off his shoulder said, "Rampart, he responds to pain stimuli."

This brought a slight smile to Brackett and Dixie's face. Turning back to the phone, Brackett said, "51, start an IV D5W, keep head and back immobilized, and transport as soon as possible."

"IV D5W, keep head and back immobilized, and transport as soon as possible." Roy repeated, indicating the needed items in the drug box to Stoker and Chet "Ambulance is at scene and our ETA is approximately 15 minutes."

"10-4, 51. We'll be waiting."

"10-4, Rampart. Squad 51, out."

Roy carefully inserted the IV in Johnny's arm. A moment later, the gurney was by his side and he held the IV bag aloft as they carefully lifted Johnny onto it. Once Johnny was secured on the gurney, they hurried to the ambulance and loaded him in.

As the ambulance pulled out, Cap turned to Marco, saying "Take the Squad in to Rampart and keep us posted."

"Will do, Cap," Marco said, going over to the squad and getting in. A moment later, the squad exited the

bay.

Dixie met the ambulance at the door and watched as they unloaded Johnny. Directing them to Treatment 2, she followed them through the door and took another set of vitals. A moment later, Brackett entered and she glanced up at him saying, "BP is up to 120/60, pulse is 76, and respirations are 16."

"Good." Brackett said, checking the laceration on Johnny's head. "That doesn't look too bad. It's going to need stitches though." Then glancing at Roy, asked, "What exactly happened, Roy?"

"Johnny and Stoker were out hanging hose. Johnny was at the top of the hose rack. Stoker said he hit his head on the pulley, then fell the 15 feet to the concrete parking lot. I don't know if he is unconscious from the fall or the blow to the head. Stoker didn't say."

Brackett paused in his examination, glancing at Dixie, and said "Dix, get x-ray up here. I want a full skull series."

"Right away, Kel."

"You don't think it's serious, do you, Doc?"

"No, Roy, I don't." Brackett said, returning his attention to Johnny "I think we're just dealing with a mild concussion. But I want to be sure that's all we're dealing with." Glancing toward the door as it opened and the portable x-ray was rolled in. Going over to the technician said, "I want a full skull series, especially the right temple area. And I want them as soon as possible."

"Right away, Doctor Brackett."

As the technician set up his equipment, Brackett took Roy by the arm and led him to the door. "Why don't you wait in the lounge and I'll come get you once the x-rays are back."

"All right, Doc." Roy said, heading off, "Do you know how long it will probably take?"

"Shouldn't be more than an hour." Brackett said. Then at the worried look on Roy's face, "Don't worry, Roy. Johnny's going to be just fine."

Roy and Marco sat quietly in the lounge, waiting for word on Johnny. Marco had arrived shortly after Roy and had joined him in the lounge for coffee. At this point of time, all they knew was that Johnny had a mild concussion and that Brackett had sutured closed the laceration on Johnny's head. Now, they were just waiting for word on the results of the x-rays, hoping that nothing would show up on them.

Roy and Marco glanced up as the door opened and Brackett walked in. Standing, Roy asked, "Well, Doctor?"

"Good news, Roy. There is no sign of a skull fracture," Brackett said with a smile. "We've also removed the collar and have him off the backboard."

"Then he's going to be all right," Roy stated in relief.

"Yes, Roy. He's going to be just fine," Brackett said. "We'll be keeping him here for observation for a few hours. But if nothing develops, he'll be able to go home tomorrow."

"That's great," Marco said, relief evident in his voice. "Can we go see him?"

"Why not?" Brackett said heading toward the door. "He's unconscious at the moment, but is starting to show signs of waking up."

Roy and Marco entered the treatment room, followed by Brackett, and quietly walked over to the examination table where Johnny was lying. Roy glanced down into Johnny's face, silently studying the bandage on Johnny's right temple. He noticed that Dixie had cleaned the dried blood off of Johnny's face and with it gone, Roy could tell that Johnny was a little on the pale side.

A moment later, Johnny groaned softly, moving his head a little. Roy leaned down and said softly "Johnny? Johnny, can you hear me?"

Johnny groaned again, moving his head slightly. He heard his name being called and thought he recognized the voice as belonging to Roy. As he heard it repeated, he slowly opened his eyes to see three fuzzy figures standing next to him. It only took a few seconds for his eyes to focus, and he recognized Roy.

"Roy," Johnny said, smiling slightly.

"Johnny," Roy answered back, returning the smile. "How are you feeling?"

"All right," Johnny answered as he looked around. The smile turned into a puzzled frown as it registered where he was "What happened?"

"Don't you know?" Marco asked.

"No," Johnny said, trying to sit up, then groaning as a stab of pain went through his head. Laying back on the table, asked "What are you doing here, Marco?"

"Somebody had to drive the squad," Marco answered. Then looking at Brackett "What's wrong with him, Doc?"

"He's just a little disoriented, Marco," Brackett assured him, pushing between them to check on Johnny. "It's normal under the circumstances." Turning his attention to Johnny, Brackett asked, "Do you remember what happened, Johnny?" At Johnny's negative response, said, "What do you remember?"

"I remember coming to work," Johnny said. Then, after a moment of thought, "Cap gave out the assignments and I was to hang hose with Stoker..." Johnny paused; putting his hand to his head, noticing it was bandaged for the first time. After a few minutes, he glanced at Roy and asked, "I fell off the hose rack, didn't I?"

"Yes, you did. According to Stoker, you hit your head on the pulley, then fell off the hose rack."

"Oh," Johnny said, as he continued rubbing his head "I don't remember hitting my head." Glancing at Brackett asked, "What's the diagnosis, Doc?"

"You had a deep laceration on your temple that took seven stitches to close and you have a mild concussion," Brackett said, giving him a smile, "From the height Roy said you fell from, Johnny, you were lucky."

"Scared you didn't I?" Johnny asked sheepishly.

"Yeah. You did," Marco said, "I didn't know what to expect when I heard Stoker scream your name."

"That goes for the rest of us too, Johnny," Roy said, drawing Johnny's attention "You really gave us a scare back at the station."

"Sorry. Didn't mean to," Johnny said softly. "Is Cap mad?"

"No," Roy said, patting his shoulder "Just worried and concerned. He'll be happy as a clam when he finds out you're ok." Then, at Johnny's continued silence and sulky expression, Roy added, "Even Chet will be glad to have you back next shift."

"You're kidding me." At Roy's shake of the head "Chet? You're talking about Chet, right?"

"Yes, Johnny. Our Chet," Roy said, pleased to see the smile back on Johnny's face.

"You know something else, Johnny?" Marco asked. At Johnny's glance "Chet stopped the bleeding. He held the pressure bandage on your head and got the bleeding stopped."

"He did?" At Marco's nod "Gee. I guess he really does care."

"We all do, Johnny," Roy answered "And don't you forget it."

"I won't," Johnny said, trying to stifle a yawn. Looking at Brackett asked, "When can I get out of here?"

"You're being admitted for observation and if nothing develops between now and tomorrow morning, you'll be released tomorrow afternoon. As soon as your room is ready, we'll be moving you to it. Now, while I go check on your room, why don't you try to get some rest?"

"All right, Doc. Be seeing you." Turning his gaze to Roy and Marco said, "I suppose you need to get back to the station."

"Yeah. We got to get going," Roy agreed reluctantly "Or Cap is going to think there is something seriously wrong with you."

"And we'll never hear the end of it for making him worry," Marco added.

"I know what you mean," Johnny answered, not bothering to hide the yawn this time. Looking over at Roy said "I'm sorry, Roy. Hope you don't get stuck with Brice."

"Don't worry about it," Roy said, giving him a smile "It wasn't your fault. Besides, it's only one shift this time. And we can survive one shift with Brice, can't we, Marco?"

"Sure can," Marco said. Then placing his hand on Johnny's shoulder, "Don't worry about a thing, Pal. You just concentrate on getting out of here."

"I will. You know how I hate hospitals," Johnny said sleepily.

"Yeah. I know," Roy said, quietly chuckling. "But you seem to keep coming back."

"Roy!" Johnny protested weakly, as his eyes started drifting shut.

"Take it easy, Johnny," Roy said as he headed toward the door. "I'll see you in the morning."

"So long, Partner," Johnny said softly "Be seeing you, Marco. Tell the guys I'll see them next shift."

"We will, Johnny," Marco said, joining Roy at the door.

Roy and Marco stood by the door and watched as Johnny drifted off to sleep. They watched Johnny sleep for a few minutes, relieved that he would be all right and that they would have good news for the others. Then, so they wouldn't disturb Johnny, quietly opened the door and headed back to the station.

The End