

*The Eighth
Acolyte Reader*



© 1992 by The Acolyte Press
Printed in The Netherlands by Krips Repro, Meppel
First Edition published November, 1992

All rights reserved. Except for brief passages quoted in a newspaper, magazine, radio or television review, no part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Cover design and painting by Mario de Graaf

The Acolyte Press
P. O. Box 12731
1100 AS Amsterdam
The Netherlands

CIP-GEGEVENS KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK. DEN HAAG

Acolyte

The Eighth Acolyte Reader / [ed. Frank Torey]. -
Amsterdam: The Acolyte Press
ISBN 90-6971-044-7
Trefw.: homoseksualiteit ; mannen / verhalen ;
oorspronkelijk - Engels.

Chisock Mountain

by Jotham Lotting

Normally on a Sunday I'll sleep in, enjoy a couple of nice jerk-offs with snoozes in between and not get up until I'm aggravated into it, but this morning was different. There was no time for my cock, even though it was sticking out of my pajamas like a monkey wrench and tingling.

I got up and went to the bathroom and looked in the mirror. There staring back at me was my usual stupid fourteen-year-old face with mussed-up hair the color of horse chestnuts and gold-flecked hazel eyes. Maybe that was half the trouble; who'd want a little brother who looked as dumb as that hanging around him all weekend? I splashed water on my face and rubbed the water in. It didn't make any difference.

"Robbie?"

What now? I thought. "Yes, Grandma."

"You up already? I haven't even started the pancakes."

"That's okay. I'm not awful hungry."

"You're not?" Boys and pancakes and Sunday mornings went together like Laurel and Hardy, at least according to my grandmother. I could have added sleeping in and jerking off, too – on any Sunday morning but today.

"I'll just catch some orange juice and Sugar Pops," I shouted down.

"Are you sick?"

"No, Grandma. I feel fine."

I brushed the night grunge off my teeth, inspected my chin to see if there was a new zit coming out beside the three that were going away (there wasn't), and then went back to my bedroom. I batted that stupid penis of mine into submission and tucked it down inside my Jockey shorts. Then I dressed the rest of the way and hit the stairs, taking them, as usual, three at a time.

Grandma had to feel my forehead, of course. Then she complained about being a 65-year-old lady and burdened with bringing up a teenage boy *all alone*. She made it sound like I was hyper-active or a juvie-D. I slugged down the juice, gobbled up the cereal and tossed off a glass of milk.

"Don't eat so fast," Grandma said. "It's bad for your digestion."

I hit my stomach and belched.

"Robbie!"

I leaned across the table and kissed her cheek.

"Wipe your mouth before you do that. Now you've got milk all over..."

But I was out in the hall grabbing up my fishing pole and creel. "See ya for supper. I'm off to the creek."

I had no intention of fishing. I hopped on my mountain bike and pedaled over to Rick Crozier's where I stashed the pole and creel in his garage.

"What ya *doin'*?" he wanted to know.

"That's for me to figure out."

"You want to be alone, huh?"

"Sort of," I said, because what I had to do definitely couldn't include Rick, even if he had been another biking fanatic, which he wasn't.

By then it was maybe nine-thirty. The cabin was a long ways away. If you were sixteen plus and had a car you could be there in three quarters of an hour. On my bike, using the trails direct, it would take twice that long.

I set off west out of the village, crossed McClusky's corn field where Theo and I used to hide and compare peckers and tell stories and fool around. After that my way was through the woods. Close to town the trail was wide; us kids used it with our bikes. We had a course, with jumps in it, even. I took a couple of the jumps, just to prove my style hadn't deteriorated since last Easter's rally. Then I headed out of there, up toward Chisock Mountain.

Everything should have been making me feel good. There was that nice smell of cedars baking out in the sun. There were clouds of gnats dancing like smoke over my head and so interested in getting it on with each other that they had no time to bother one sweaty kid pedaling away under them. A woodpecker stopped pecking as I went by and tried to stare me down with first one eye then the other. This was home to me. A guy could be himself in the woods, and do absolutely everything he wanted and needed to do: spit, piss, shit, fish, hunt, jerk off and fall asleep afterwards, run around in the buff, talk to himself, swim if you could find a pool, get muddy and dirty and smelly.

But today the woods was just something I had to get through on the way to the cabin which was where I figured I'd find Jonno. He was always at the cabin weekends. There was a time when I'd be there too. He'd

come by late Friday afternoon when he got out of work and we'd throw a case of beer and a case of Coke in the back of his pick-up and kiss Grandma good-bye and we'd be gone till Sunday night. But that hadn't happened for three months now.

One time when I was in the seventh grade – it was before Jonno had his job in the mill over in Thunder Valley and moved out of Grandma's – I'd smoked some pot. He smelled it on my clothes and flipped. He caught me in the shower and shook me until my teeth about rattled loose, and then he shouted at me, nose to nose, "You ever, ever do that again and you're no brother of mine – I don't *know* you, get it!?" I'd been too scared to even look at cigarette since then, but it felt like he was carrying out his threat now, only I didn't know what I'd done.

The trail became steeper in the upper part of the valley. I shifted down and went to work. I've got pretty good legs. I've never been real fast, like on the football field, but put me on a bike and I can keep going just about all day.

Now cedars gave way to maple and beech. The trail left the valley bottom and started working its way up the west ridge, switching back and forth through patches of ground hemlock. There was more sunlight here; the day was heating up. Already my T-shirt was soaked through with sweat; sweat was dripping off my nose and my chin. I liked the way my muscles worked. I liked the feel of the bike under me, obeying my will. It helped make up for the nervousness I felt about meeting Jonno.

The higher I climbed the fewer and smaller were the springs. I stopped at one of the last of them and stripped off my T-shirt and rinsed it out and put it back on wet. Then I washed some of the dirt and sweat off my face and pedaled up to join the road.

Sure enough, Jonno's pick-up was parked outside the cabin. I stashed my bike against a tree and walked around to the other side where the porch was. There you can look out over the valley, way down to our village and the railroad line before it buries itself in the Chisock Tunnel.

Standing on the porch was a boy I'd never seen before.

"Uh," I said, "is Jonno around?"

The boy stared at me like he was asking himself who in the world I was. I was wondering the same thing about him. "He's gone down to fetch water," the boy told me. "There's no running water in the cabin." As though I didn't know! "You have to bring it up from the spring in buckets."

He talked with the kind of half-light voice kids have when it's about to change. His hair was blond, slightly curly; his eyes were blue – all in

all he was one handsome dude, for a 12- or 13-year-old.

"Jonno didn't say he was expecting any visitors this weekend," the boy continued.

"Except you." I climbed up the porch steps and walked through the open door into the living room. "I'll just wait."

The inside of the cabin hadn't changed at all. It still smelled of wood and varnish and pine smoke. There was still that half-wrecked caribou head on the long wall, the Navajo carpets on the floor, the bench Great-Grandpa Johnson had carved, the posters of Old Faithful at Yellowstone Park.

The boy had followed me in. "You been here before," he suggested.

"Lots of times," I said. "I'm Jonno's brother."

"You're Robbie!"

"Yes, I'm Robbie!" So Jonno had been talking about me – to this kid. I was definitely not pleased. In fact I was getting more and more pissed off. I'd half expected some woman to be lurking around up here, but this boy was one unpleasant surprise. "Okay, you know my name," I said as sarcastically as I could. "Maybe you can tell me yours."

"Uh, Travis."

"First or last?"

"Kyle Travis."

"Why are you here, Kyle Travis?"

"Because Jonno – your brother – invited me."

"To do what?" I swung around and stared at him.

The boy colored. "What do you mean?"

"Jesus Christ!" I walked into the bedroom. There was one big bed, and, over against the inside wall, a cot where I'd always slept but which was now covered with clothes, Jonno's and the kid's, and a suitcase and a couple of brown paper bags spilling over with snacks and games. The big bed had obviously been slept in, the covers stripped back. Two pillows were bunched together toward the middle. The little bed hadn't been used by anyone.

"*That's* what I mean," I said, throwing my head in the direction of the double bed with its lewd expanse of bare bottom sheet. "That's what he's got you up here for, isn't it?"

The kid just stood there in the doorway with his mouth hanging open. "I can't believe this," he said, mainly to himself.

I grabbed him by the shoulders. "You're his whore-boy!" I yelled. "You're my big brother's fuck!" Then I gathered the spittle in the front of my mouth and exploded it into his face.

He flinched, and reached up and touched his cheek. He had this kind of scared, hurt look that just made me madder. I clenched my fists and got ready to pound him into the floor, when Jonno suddenly appeared out in the living room with two buckets full of water in his hands.

"What the hell's going on here?" he said, setting the buckets down.

I said nothing. The boy said nothing.

"Kylie, that's my brother."

"I know," said the boy.

"You better leave us alone, Kylie. Looks like we got family matters to straighten out."

Kyle backed away, which was a good thing for him, for I was already charging. I got in one good blow to Jonno's left titty, but then he had me wrapped in his arms, spun around so my back was against his chest, and we fell to the floor, struggling.

"Get out," I heard Jonno tell Kyle again.

"You'll be okay?" the boy asked.

"Yes, now scram!"

I managed to get in a kick on one of Jonno's shins. He wrapped his legs around mine. I jabbed an elbow into his ribs. He got my arms stretched crossways over my chest. Now the only weapon I had was the back of my head. Maybe I could get him on the nose. But I found I couldn't. I was effectively, totally immobilized.

"You're sure?" Kyle said.

"Yes, yes."

"He looks pretty mad."

"Kylie... just go."

I heard the porch door slam.

"Jesus Christ, what does he think I am?" Jonno panted into my ear, still holding me fast. "Does he think I can't deal with my own little twerp of a brother? What business is it of his anyhow? Interfering kid – sometimes he drives me crazy!"

"I'm not just an interfering kid," Kyle yelled through the window. "And sometimes *you* drive *me* crazy."

"Me, too," I said.

And *that* sounded to me like the funniest thing anybody had ever said. In fact the whole situation seemed absolutely hilarious. The fight went out of me and I felt a laughing jag coming on.

I should explain that I'm susceptible to them. All of a sudden something will happen that absolutely kills me. It doesn't have to be much: a joke which is really pretty rotten, or somebody trips. Once a

teacher sneezed when he wasn't expecting it and snot went all over the blackboard and he tried to wipe it away with an eraser which only made it worse. That set me off for the whole rest of math class, until the teacher kicked me out. Some comedians do it to me, too, like Danny Kaye was the greatest. I must have laughed for a week over *The Court Jester*, with that business of the flagon with the dragon and the vessel with the pestle, and then one day Jonno and I were reciting the scene back and forth – this was maybe three years ago – and he came up with "the chalice with the phallus" and I laughed all night so hard my stomach muscles were killing me in the morning.

Well, it was happening now, and there was nothing I could do about it. I started to shake, from my tummy right down to my balls.

"What the fuck, little brother!" Jonno said, still holding me like I was in a straight jacket. "Are you bawling, or laughing, or getting ready to throw up?"

Well, that really did it. The laughter took over. I was finished. I was through. I went limp except for the muscle spasms which had taken over my whole body. Jonno recognized the signs. He released me. I curled up in a ball and lay there on the floor, howling and shaking and gasping and tears streaming out of my eyes.

"What's wrong with him?" I heard Kyle say. He'd come back into the living room. "Is he epileptic or something?"

"Naw. He's just got a weird sense of humor."

"Weird is the word," said Kyle.

"Get him a Coke. He likes Coke. They're out in the cool chest."

"I *know* they're out in the cool chest!"

The fit lasted a good five minutes. Kyle went out and came back with a Coke and gave it to Jonno. "I'm not going near him until he's safe," Kyle said.

Slowly I got my laughter under control and climbed up onto the couch. Jonno passed the Coke on to me.

When everything's come unglued and you don't know what's going on and deep down you're scared, there's nothing like a Coke. I let the sweet bubbly pour down my throat, then put my elbows on my knees and stared down into the Navajo rug. I belched. A few last giggles came up with the gas.

"Okay, we're going to talk," Jonno said.

"You've got me at a bad time," I said. It seemed unfair to be cornered now, after my double explosion of anger and the laughs. This wasn't the way it was supposed to go at all. But then I'd never known

what I'd find up here on Chisock Mountain.

"You didn't *have* to come here today, you know."

"Okay, maybe not today," I said, "but *some* day."

"Robbie, I've got a life to lead. I'm an adult now."

"And being grown up means you forget all about your family? Give me a break."

"I didn't forget about you."

"That was hard for me to know."

"And, just as I was afraid of, you're morally offended."

"He saw the bed," Kyle explained, "and he spit in my face."

Jonno turned on Kyle. "Do you melt?"

"No, but..."

"Like a piece of candy? Or the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*?"

"Of course not..."

"Cause if you melt, you and I'll just have to stop doing some of the things we do."

I started to giggle again. I thought of the kid dressed up like the Wicked Witch of the West slowly sinking down in those black robes until he was nothing.

"He called me a whore-boy," Kyle said.

"I heard that, and I think, Robbie, you should apologize to Kyle."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because it's inaccurate."

"Oh, it was true love you were doing all over that double bed last night, right?"

"No, it wasn't love, not for me, not for Kyle. But it was darned nice, as you'd realize if only you'd loosen up a bit." He walked over and sat down beside me on the couch and gripped my knee. "Who showed you how to jerk off, when you were nine? Me, right? Who ran interference for you when you were getting it on with Tony Scoreze and little Donny Beamer? I remember you telling me – you'd have been, what, twelve? – exactly how long Theo McClusky's peener was when he peed, and how it wasn't much bigger when the two of you had it pointing at the sky. And then there was that Pakistani kid who was here just one summer..."

"Jesus, Jonno, do you have to say these things with *him* around?" That was completely unfair. Because it was all in the past. I didn't do those things any more. None of us kids did. I made up *normal* jerk-off stories these days.

"I wouldn't if you'd apologize," Jonno said. "I just want him to know if he fits the definition of a whore, so does his accuser."

"Did."

"Okay, did."

I turned to Kyle. "I'm sorry about the spit."

"He doesn't care about that, believe me," said Jonno. "He does care about the name."

"I'm sorry I called you a whore-boy."

Kyle shrugged rather self-consciously and said, "Forget it."

"Robbie's got a temper," Jonno said, "but he doesn't hold grudges. Now I'm going off to the store to telephone Grandma that my little brother will be up here on the mountain with us tonight. Meantime, you two get acquainted."

Jonno climbed into the pick-up and drove away. Kyle and I sat staring at the floor like two boys who'd been in a fight waiting outside the headmaster's office. Then Kyle said, "Would you like to play Monopoly?"

It was a good suggestion. We wouldn't have to talk about anything that mattered, just shake the dice and buy hotels and paper railroads.

But about five minutes later, Kyle said, "You look like Jonno, sort of."

"I do?" I said.

"Younger, of course."

Well, that seemed crazy to me. Jonno is tall and wiry. He's got a good build but it's a slender build and he has a sort of long face. I'm stocky. I don't mean fat – I'm not fat, no way – but I'm built much closer to the ground. My face is sort of square. I'll never be as tall as my brother, but I bet I'll weigh as much.

A few minutes later Kyle said, "Jonno's okay. He's a good friend. A kid doesn't have too many older friends, you know."

"Or too many older brothers," I said, letting some of the bitterness I felt come out.

He looked up from a fistful of toy money. "I told him he was fucking up."

I didn't say anything.

"I told him that months ago. He just played it sloppy and didn't think. He was scared to face you. Typical!"

When Jonno got back we spent the rest of the afternoon spelunking. Chisock Mountain is honeycombed with caves. Last summer Jonno and I had run across the entrance to a new one that looked like people had been going in and out of a lot, but we'd never had time to explore it. Now we did. We only had two flashlights. I took one and Jonno the other, and Kyle held onto Jonno's hand.

It was awesome in there: cool, damp, the sound of water dripping and in a few places running – always that sound of water moving about, our voices echoey and hollow, our flashlights lighting up all these stalagmites which looked like things out of your bad dreams that listened to what your heart was saying.

You can have quarrels outside on the mountain. Here, *in* it, you're the only warm, live things around, and you're drawn together. At one point, when we were taking a break from all the climbing and wiggling through narrow passages and were sitting, with our flashlights off, giving their batteries, too, a rest, shoulders touching, against a dry wall, Jonno put an arm around me and Kyle each and said, "You know, this wouldn't be half so good if I didn't have on one side of me my favorite kid" – and I could feel him ruffling Kyle's hair – "and on the other side of me my little brother, who's a whole lot better little brother than a guy like me deserves."

I ducked – I don't like having my hair ruffled – and said, "And don't you forget it, either," glad of the total darkness because what he'd said had almost made me cry.

Back at the cabin, with the sun getting low, we started a charcoal fire in the porch barbecue grill and Jonno went to the cool chest and brought out three thick T-bone steaks he'd picked up in the store when he'd called Grandma and laid them out on the grill.

I breathed in that delicious smell of hardwood smoke and roasting beef. "Man," I said, "does that ever make my mouth water!"

"Oh-oh, I guess I'd better duck," Kyle said.

"Now, none of that!" Jonno laughed.

We sat on the railing and watched the sun go down all red behind the western ridge, me and Kyle drinking Cokes and Jonno beer. All my muscles felt nicely tired from the weird positions we'd got into creeping through that cavern.

Later, with the steak inside of us and night coming on, Jonno and Kyle curled up together on the porch swing. They were darned if they were going to hide how they felt about each other, at least from me. I felt like the famous third party that turns company into a crowd, so I slipped inside the dark cabin, pulled out the couch into the double bed it then becomes and lay down on it in all my clothes. I wondered how much sleep I'd get that night. I had so much to think over: my brother being what all the kids I knew would call a queer. But did that change anything, really? I loved him just as much, maybe more, now that I knew his weaknesses. The only thing was, I'd never have any nieces or

nephews. It would be up to me to have all our family's kids....

The next thing I knew it was the middle of the night. I was having what I figured was a wet dream – and that's a stupid name if there ever was one, because usually the dreaming part isn't wet and for the wet part you're no longer dreaming. Anyhow, I seemed to be having one of those things, and I was thinking, typically, oh, shit, I know, I just *know* before the good bit comes along I'm going to wake up. And sure enough I did, only what was happening wasn't a dream.

"What the fuck!" I gasped.

There was just a little light coming into the cabin from a half-moon that had heaved itself up into the sky and was shining in through the back windows. I could see a pair of shoulders and a real head bowed over my crotch and moving slowly up and down. Someone had sneaked up on my bed, unzipped my fly, brought out my cock so carefully I'd never woken up, and was sucking up a storm on it. It didn't take more than a couple of heartbeats for me to recognize that slightly curly head of hair.

"Jesus, Kyle," I gasped, "what are you *doing!*"

As though I didn't know.

"I mean..." But I couldn't even think straight by then, much less talk. Getting a BJ was something I'd dreamed about, jerked off to, but never had had done to me, and, let me tell you, if you don't know already, it's like a taste of heaven before you get there. The feeling was *so good!* I couldn't have stopped it happening even if I'd wanted to.

I don't think his head bobbed more than seven or eight times before I was on the final rise. I shuddered, I gurgled, I shivered, I groaned, and I came off in that blond kid's mouth like I'd never come off in my life before. It was the best come ever – and that was just with a boy, so I could hardly imagine what a *real* blow-job, from a girl, would be like!

Kyle moved up and stretched out beside me. I felt really great. Okay, maybe Kyle had two-timed my brother, and so had I, but none of that kept me from having this wonderful light feeling that seemed to start in my balls but was flowing all through me like molten gold.

"Why'd you do that?" I asked him at last.

"I wanted to."

"And my brother?"

"Yeah, we talked it over, Jonno and me. We'd made it twice already. The last time was a couple of hours ago. After that, Jonno said, 'You like my little brother?' and I said, 'Sure, but he doesn't like me,' and Jonno said, 'He does, only he doesn't know it,' and I asked him, 'Does *he* like boys, too?' Do you, Robbie?"

"No," I said. "I go for girls."

"That's what Jonno figured, but he said it didn't matter; you'd had your share of kids. 'Rest up,' he told me, 'then go in and make him feel welcome.' So, well, that's what I did."

"Okay," I said, "I feel welcome."

"You mean it?"

"Yup, I mean it."

"And you'll come visit us here weekends?" He said it like he hoped I would.

"Sure, I'll come."

"You could bring a girl, you know."

Not very likely, I thought, at least for a couple of years. But I had to tease him. "You'd like that, eh?"

Kyle laughed. "Naw. I got Jonno. Cocks are better."

"They are not!"

"They are so."

"They are not."

"They..."

We never finished that argument. Kyle went back to my brother's bed and I drifted off to sleep again.

Jonno had to be at the mill at 7:30 the next morning, so we were up before the sun. He offered to drive me home. That would have been way out of his way and I refused. A cup of coffee and two Oreo cookies and I hopped on my bike, waved good-bye to him and Kyle as they were loading the pick-up, and set off down the mountain trail.

It was like I hardly had to touch the pedals. Down I went through that cool dawn light, down through a couple of lenses of mountain fog, everything smelling as sweet as the Garden of Eden must have smelled before God got all up tight about snakes and apples and the people he'd made running around in the starkers.

The sun was over the east ridge when I bottomed out in the valley. I looked at my watch: quarter to seven. I had all the time in the world, even if I wanted to catch Grandma before she went out on her Monday morning shopping trip.

I stopped at a pool near where the creek comes out of the mountain. The black surface of the water was so still you could see the dimples of water-bugs walking on it. Even though the air was pretty chilly, I stripped off and plunged in and shouted and whooped and splashed up a storm and probably scared every frog out of there, and drove their tadpoles crazy.

After a while I climbed out, and lay down on the bank, and listened to all the birds of the valley putting out their 'here I am' and 'this is my territory' messages. A beam of sunlight shot through the trees and hit me on the chest. I closed my eyes and jerked deliciously off. Then I got on my bike again and pedaled home.

When Grandma opened the door she said, "That was some fishing trip, huh." I kissed her head as she walked away from me. She complained I had messed up her hair-do.

"Grandma," I said, "it's only eight o'clock."

"I know it's only eight o'clock. Why did you have to deceive your grandmother?"

"Um, a kid can change his mind, can't he?"

"Well, it's good you found that brother of yours, anyhow."

"Yes. Grandma, you know what I was thinking?"

"I haven't the faintest idea what you were thinking. I never do."

"Could you make those pancakes you were going to make for us yesterday morning but didn't – today?"

"Well, that settles it that you're not sick." She turned around and peered at me. Nowadays she has to peer up a bit, because she's a little woman and I'm not so little anymore. "No definitely not sick. And... you're growing up."

"Grandma... do you think...?"

"I heard you the first time. Well, let's see if I have enough eggs in the refrigerator." She started off in the direction of the kitchen.

"Thanks, Grandma. I love you."

"I just wish your father was among us still to tell you what every young boy should be told before he gets himself in trouble."

And I thought, 'Grandma, if only you knew...!'