

*The Eighth  
Acolyte Reader*



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# Spy

by **Paidrig MagUidhir**

"He's a spy. He's a spy, and he's going to take the whole place down!"

"Dick, come on. You're talking about a ten-year-old – and a very sweet ten-year-old, I might add."

I usually didn't make breezy remarks like that to the camp staff, but Dick, who was my waterfront head, had been with me since the beginning. We each knew what the other liked, even though we never talked about it.

"That may be one reason he was sent here: to... to.... Damn, I'm not sure, but did you see him this morning?"

We'd had nude swimming at our waterfront ever since I'd bought the place ten years ago.

"No, I couldn't make it. Why?"

"He was there with a *clipboard*, for Chrissake, and he was asking questions and taking notes!"

Now Dick had my attention. Erin, the boy under discussion, was a first-time camper – a green-eyed, copper-haired, white-skinned beauty of a boy. If one was to cast bait, he'd be a sure lure. His application had come late, as he had, but there was nothing slow in the outgoing way he'd won everybody's hearts.

"Well, maybe he's... he's...."

"He's what?" Dick prodded. "Writing a novel, an expose? What do we know about him? Look, all the questions he's asking...."

"What kind of questions?"

"Come down to free swim this afternoon and find out for yourself. He told me he's very interested in interviewing you, as a matter of fact!"

"Okay, I will."

The waterfront was a delight as ever: bare bottoms bobbing all over the place, tanned and rugged boys swimming and boating and sunning themselves. Erin's still-white body stood out from the others – and damned if he didn't have his clipboard, with a pen and paper on it. The little twit even had a sheet of plastic over the paper to keep it from getting

wet.

As soon as he saw me he hurried over. "Hello, Boss. I thought I'd find you here."

"Good guess. I come as often as I can."

"Yah, I know. That's what I wanted to talk to you about."

Now, what the hell did he mean by that? He settled his naked rear end on the grass, crossed his legs and laid the clipboard, now uncovered and threatening, over his scarred little knees.

"Can I ask you a few questions?" he said. His nose was so pert, his neck so dirty. Why did I suddenly feel so nervous?

"About what? Why?"

"You. It's for a research project I'm working on."

He asked me how old I was.

I told him.

Was I married?

"No? Why not?"

"None of your business."

He simply smiled and made a note. What was my job during the year?

"Teacher."

He shook his head knowingly and made another note. I was beginning to sweat, and it wasn't from the sun.

Why was I always taking pictures of the campers, especially at the waterfront, he wanted to know, and why did I use a motor-drive.

I said you had to waste a lot of film to get one good shot – which I'd use for publicizing the camp, of course.

There was something frightening to his smile as he made still another note.

"Look, Erin, why don't you put away your research project and go for a swim like the other boys, okay?"

He nodded, tucked his clipboard in his bag and wiggled his neat little ass towards the water.

I decided to go to the office and check his application.

Excellent student, only child, artistic rather than sports-minded, no home problems, father Assistant District Attorney for sex abuse cases in the... Whow! What!? His father was the local well-known abuse hunter?! I'd let the fox into the chicken house in more ways than I cared to contemplate.

Okay, I thought, how do we handle this one? I'd led a nice, simple life: nude kids in the summer, nice work in the winter. But the world

was crazy all around me, and this one charming character could bring down my whole house of cards with nothing but innuendo. It had happened elsewhere; I didn't want it to happen here.

Best to confront the lad and try to defuse whatever suspicions his father had sown in him. I told Erin's cabin counselor I wanted to see the boy after lights-out in my quarters.

He showed up right on time in sandals and an over-sized T-shirt. There were suspicious bulges where I figured underpants should have been. I invited him to sit down on the chair by my table, but he plopped himself up on my bunk, revealing a long expanse of firm upper leg.

"Look, Erin," I began, "I don't know how to deal with this totally, but I'm a bit concerned with the kind and amount of questions you're asking. I'm confused by all of this, especially when your dad's involved with sex prosecution the way he is. Ah, Erin... are you listening to me?"

He had fallen on his side on my bunk, his head resting on his hand. He'd kicked off his sandals and was scratching the back of one leg with the toes of the other. His T-shirt was inching up his legs, revealing what surely could only have been a naked ten-year-old underneath.

"It's what I told you. I'm working on a project, research like."

"Yes, but for whom and why?"

"Oh, you mean the stuff my dad does. I read all the stuff he gets, all these reports, although he doesn't know I read them, and, well, you know..."

I didn't know, actually.

"And last winter I saw your camp mentioned. Nothing special, just that there was a lot of naked stuff going on. I don't think my dad paid any attention. He didn't say anything when I asked to come here this summer."

"Your dad doesn't know we swim naked?"

By now Erin had squirmed to the far edge of the bed and had turned on his belly. The T-shirt was above his waist, revealing a slightly sun-burned pair of buns.

"My dad doesn't know anything. I chose this place. That was part of my research. But I think I'm finished with it now."

I got up and stood by the bunk. "And what did your research tell you?" I asked.

He reached out and took my hand and rolled to his side, facing me. My guess had been quite correct: under that over-long T-shirt he was totally, stunningly, up-standingly naked!

"Well," he said, "I figured you were the best one to sleep with. You

won't tell anybody anything." He pulled on my hand and I found myself collapsing on the bunk beside him. His head snuggled against my chest. Reaching over my head he snapped off the little light on my bedside table. "Now," he continued, "I read in one of the reports where this man took the boy and...."