

In this second book of the Edsel Mook trilogy, J.D. Brayton follows his characters from The Clabber Grrrl's Retreat to present a mystery/thriller full of danger, plot twists and political intrigue as they fight a shadow world of violent supremacist organizations masquerading as respectable political parties in the deep South.

EYE SKIN

by J.D. Brayton

**Order the complete book from the publisher
[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

**<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/9428.html?s=pdf>
or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

#2 IN THE EDESEL MOOK STORIES

EYE SKIN

From the Author of The Clabber Grrrl's Retreat



J.D. BRAYTON

From the master of Post-Gonzo Crime Pulp

Copyright © 2017 J.D. Brayton

ISBN 978-1-63492-605-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author. Any reference to locations or historical events in this novel are merely vehicles of plot, and not intended to be inclusive of fact or legal precedent.

Any Scientific or Medical references in this work of fiction are pure voodoo nonsense invented by the author to make this novel interesting—nothing more.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Clabberation L.L.C.

2017

First Edition—gluten free

snakes. Absolutely bring Mildred home. Then I'll explain my sorrowful existence to her."

Mook wished he had the presence of mind to photograph the look on the guileless face of a midget son of a faith-healing cultist on this the first occasion fine Jamaican rum rolled over his gospel tongue. By 2 P.M. Lucien further impressed Mook by inventing the Lucky Charms and Rum cocktail. He looked on with approval knowing he had done his duty for mankind by saving one more soul from the abyss of sobriety. Once the little man had his rum buzzed freak on he'd teach him the mechanics of the tooth brush and the electric razor.

Picklespoon returned Mook's call at dinnertime. They agreed to meet the next morning.

~§~

Ducks and Monkeys

He sat on a bench alone near the lake in Piedmont Park, feeding ducks. Picklespoon recognized the slouch, the jaw covered now with a three-month impersonation of a beard. He wore sunshades, the big round Rodeo Drive type that either makes one look like a junkie movie star or a smudged widow. He was pulling dried bacon bits from a brown lunch sack and flipping a palm full at a time in a wide range, watching as the ducks waddled ferociously from one morsel to another. Some raised above the ground, hop flew, pecked the heads of rivals. J.J. Picklespoon ambled closer trying not to grin. Here he was —ghost of hurricanes past; drinking from one sack and feeding winged urchins from another. He didn't flinch when Picklespoon sat down, leaned forward, elbows on knees, looking across the lake at the other shore, watching grackels with long wings float by under a mid-morning sun.

"And here you are, early bird —feeding duck critters in the land of the living." "Scurrilous louts. I much prefer monkeys. Thumbs make for interesting housemates." "I'd make a horrible pun about being blown away but..." "Spare me. There are no coincidences. Ducks are idiots." "I'd ask how but..." "The Gulf of Mexico is like a crowded parking lot in Tijuana. Wait long enough and someone will take your money." "Chiapas?" "I have kin there. I'm a monkey's uncle." "Death has done wonders for your sense of humor."

They sat a while, smiling together, looking at the reflections of morning sun, simmering aqua-vermeil, chattering nannies, a sailboat with lovers. A brisk wind from the Northeast. Canoes striving. Children beckoning balls, and to their left —a drunk on a ratty blanket passed out wearing one boot. His head resting on a scavenged stack of Esquire magazines.

"Not much has changed." "Been here before?" "Never. But ducks are ravenous and stupid wherever you go."

Picklespoon turned at looked him over, closely. "I don't see any new scars." "There's a poetic answer to that observation, but why be maudlin? It involves the caustic origins of interior pain. You don't particularly look like shit either, Picklespoon. Heavier maybe. Some extra grey." "The Okeechobee diet favors me, Chester. Quiet life. Egrets are smarter than Atlanta ducks." "Chester. Chester. It's been ages since ol' Chester Dade died wretchedly on Boehner Island surrounded by unctuous swarthy strangers and slaves. May the worms and crabs prosper. Let's have a moment of silence on his behalf." "I barely knew Chester, Edsel. Timing is everything. I take it you've been to Pahokee?" "Hot scene you have there." "You spoke to my pal, Major Wholeman. He was suspicious. It's your face, I guess." "He thinks I'm from Alaska." "No, actually he doesn't. Says your last place of residence was a trailer park near Dog Island. He's a tough one. Can't put much over on him. Good thing he had no reason to run prints." "Just an angler looking for bait." "Strangers are getting the twice-over in Pahokee. By now you know about our specific troubles?" "Deviant fire-starters in Florida. Go *figure*." "That's only the crescendo. There was quite a build-up. I lost nearly everything in that fire." "I'm saddened to know this. I have empathy. It's a long road back." "This meeting rates as one of the most intense examples of synchronicity in my personal experience. Atlanta, eh? I have a tale to tell. You first."

Edsel Mook stopped feeding the ducks. "I have a daughter I thought was my half-sister who joined a snake-kissing cult in Alabama and became the holy grail of mutated venom-infused blood. They drained her. She was kidnapped. I believe she is here. I'm traveling with a dwarf. Your turn."

J.J. Picklespoon drew in a long, studied breath and let it out.

"That's quite a tale. Now here's mine."

~ * ~

Edsel Mook was out of duck bits well before J.J. Picklespoon wound through his tale of lost kid, separate detective work, burned store, and the call from a Georgia detective who ran the serial number on two of Picklespoon's stolen rifles –which ultimately put him on the trail to Atlanta.

"There's a two-degree of separation in my finale." "You couldn't possibly..." "No worries. You never really met him. We became, if not friends, I'd say, tolerant allies. His name is Charleston Terser. He was the F.B.I. agent –again, no worries, he's since retired to the private sector –assigned to your father's missing person case." "All the dead are missing...to a degree." "Do you speak from personal knowledge?" "I put his ashes on my forehead." "The rest of the story is we both knew you weren't guilty. Then that big blow came and liquefied South Florida. Boehner Island was entirely stripped, with the exception of a few poles sunk in the mud." "Somewhere clown fish are swimming through the ruins of slave camp razor wire." "We found three or four of them; bodies, unidentifiable. No names. Migrants, most likely. Helicopter. Dogs. It was a fairly big deal. We were concerned that you might have been one of those cadavers. Forensic test proved otherwise, thanks to the copious

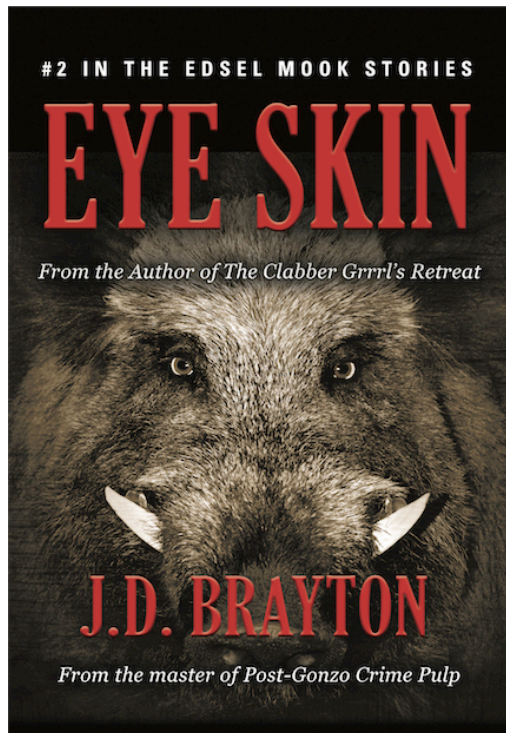
amounts of evidenciary blood samples your abductors left all over the sunshine state." "Blood is everything. Family is not to be trusted. This seems to be our meditation." "Indeed. I think it's time you and Terser met face to face." "I, in turn, think it's time Terser meets my dwarf face to face." "His office is fifteen minutes Away." "I want you to know that I'm not partial to cops. Yourself excluded." "I'll vouch." "I'm traveling on forged paper." "So much the better. No one but our quorum will know you exist. This is an advantage." "Offices are not where I tend to flourish. I will be hungry in the next hour. Surely there's funky soul food being prepared in a nice out-of-the-way shack sauce shack in the red clay of Georgia." "I've seen few shacks so far in Atlanta. Everyone has indoor plumbing. I'll pose the question. Terser has an office assistant that appears to be magical. If anyone knows, she will." "Strange shit about a black op descending on Bogg's Knoll. If you saw the place you'd wonder who *exactly* would bother." "Ever since I've been here I've tried to merge and adapt my years in the swamps tracking wild pigs and transplanted anaconda into a common sense logic based protocol. It hasn't worked. This weird macabre whirlwind is spiraling into an E-5 tornado, worse than your best friend Hurricane Andrew." "I think the ducks and I need a stiff drink with our grits." "I'll come by and pick you up in an hour n'change. You prep your charge and I'll prep mine." "When our story is written they won't accuse us of lack of diversity." "Extinctus amabitur idem."

~§~

“**L**ook who the possum dragged in. Been on a bender?” “Family business.” “Ernest is annoyed with you, John. Your cellphone is locked. Too full of messages. He expects you to be reachable at all times.” “Tell him I’m humbled to be so damned important.” “Tell him yoself. Get in. I’ll drive.”

Ramjack opened the door and sat in the passenger seat. Mason Spillcheck motioned that he use the seatbelt. Ramjack petulantly complied. “This car isn’t a Cadillac, it’s a fuc’n white watermelon.” “Beats walkin’ in darkie town. Why the Greyhound bus station, car troubles?” “Exactly.” “What’s wrong with the family, if you don’t mind me askin’.” “I do mind.” “Man gets touchy when he get hung-over.” “I’m not hung-over. The boss’ fried chicken recipe makes my anus itch.” “I wouldn’t tell him that today, fi’were yawl. The shit’s hit the fan with Tallmadge up and dying mysteriously. All kinds of innuendo.” Spillcheck made certain to break the last word into separate syllables. “It makes Hurley unopposed. The Lord has seen fit to smile upon us this day. Sugarfoote is’z good as elected. Brother Loafe is a mite excited. He has lots of work for you me’n Phurd.”

Spillcheck trolled his way through slow traffic on Interstate 75, past the golden dome of the capitol building, south, toward East Point. After 15 minutes mutely riding in one another’s company, Spillcheck spoke up. “Too bad about them bikers.” “What do you mean?” “Them all blew outta Hurley’s place drunk n’ paid. Both keeled outside of Madison. Head on. Bam! Both dead. Dang ol’ chicken truck.” “No shit?” “Don’t that beat all?” “Was the truck making a delivery to the boss’ factory?”



In this second book of the Edsel Mook trilogy, J.D. Brayton follows his characters from The Clabber Grrrl's Retreat to present a mystery/thriller full of danger, plot twists and political intrigue as they fight a shadow world of violent supremacist organizations masquerading as respectable political parties in the deep South.

EYE SKIN

by J.D. Brayton

**Order the complete book from the publisher
[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

**<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/9428.html?s=pdf>
or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**