

# Excerpt from SON OF A TRICKSTER

His tiny, tightly permed maternal grandmother, Anita Moody, had never liked him. As far back as Jared could remember, she'd watched him suspiciously with her clear black eyes. She never let him come closer than an arm's length from her, making him sit on the ratty blue couch while she sat in the kitchen of her small house near the Bella Bella Band Store. Once, when she was chatting with someone, she stopped when she noticed him, tensing as if she expected him to go haywire.

"Wee'git," she'd say if his parents left them alone. "If you hurt her, I will kill you and bury you where no one can resurrect you. Get, you dirty dog's arse."

"I'm Jared," he'd said.

"Trickster," she'd said. "You still smell like lightning."

She was a cuddly grandma with his cousins, sitting them at the kitchen table and giving them popcorn balls, homemade fudge and caramel apples. She knitted mittens with their names embroidered on the back. The last birthday present she'd given him was a jar of blood with little animal teeth rolling around the bottom.

"She doesn't believe me, does she? No faith. None."

"Jared, buddy, this isn't about you," his dad had said. "She doesn't like me," Jared said.

"She doesn't mean it," his dad said.

His mother spat. "Sonny boy, it's got nothing to do with you and everything to do with what a fuck-up she thinks I am."

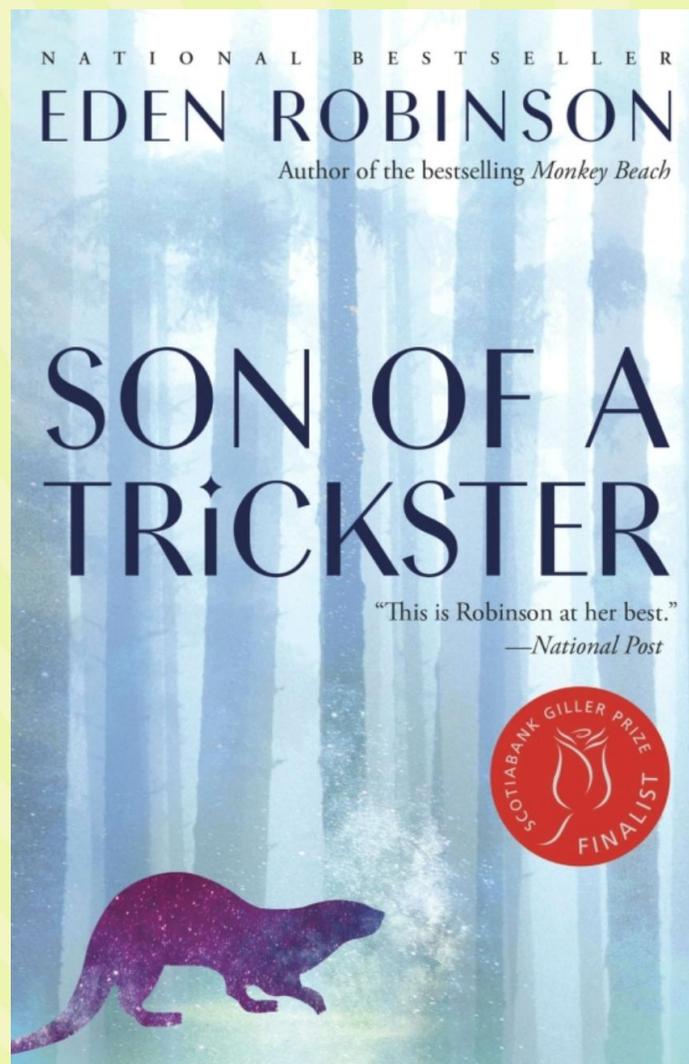
"She'd never hurt you," his dad said.

"Because I will fuck her up one side and down the other if she lays a single finger on you," his mom said. "I will fuck her up good."

## WARNING TO TEACHERS:

This excerpt from *Son of a Trickster* includes some foul language. The novel as a whole contains scenes of sex, violence and substance abuse.

\* We recommend that you review this excerpt and the novel before sharing it with your students.



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When Jared was almost five, his mother decided they should move, so his dad found work at Eurocan, a pulp-and-paper mill in a town called Kitimat. His mom showed it to him on the map, tracing his finger over the ferry route they were going to take up the Inside Passage. They packed up their townhouse in one weekend, forfeiting their damage deposit. As they were loading the last boxes late in the evening, his grandmother came and stood in front of the moving truck. Jared ducked behind his mother.

"Don't," his dad said, grabbing her arm. "Maggie. Think."

His mom jerked her arm away. His dad lifted Jared and propped him on his hip. His mom got into the driver's side. She revved the engine. His grandmother stared at his mother, waiting.

"Maggie," his dad said. "Momma," Jared said.

His mom turned the engine off. She got out and went to stand nose to nose with her mother. His dad slid behind the wheel.

"I've lost all patience with you, old woman. Don't push me." "Be careful," his grandmother said. "You know what he did to me. That isn't your son. It's the damn Trickster. He's wearing a human face, but he's not human."

"You're one to talk."

"Marguerite, listen to me. He's dangerous."

"Lay your old-school crap on my boy one more time and I will fuck you up your dry, lifeless ass."

"I tried," his grandmother said, backing down, moving to the side of the road to stand in the grass. "You have no ears."

"Fuck off and stay fucked."

His dad placed Jared's hands on the steering wheel.

"Toot, toot," his dad said. "Let's blow this Popsicle stand, Jelly Bean."

His mom got in the passenger side and slammed her door shut. "I think you missed a couple of swears, Hon," his dad said.

She gave him the stink eye. They started off for the ferry terminal. His grandma was a shrinking figure in the side mirror.

His dad stopped at a stop sign, looking both ways even though no one was around. "You should learn some French so you can swear at her some more."

"Are you taking her side?"

"Lord Almighty, no. Don't run me over, Mags. Ahhhh."

She'd slugged his shoulder. Jared rocked with his dad, whose laugh started in his belly, bouncing him against the steering wheel.

"I'm just saying Jelly Bean here is going to know the best curse words in kindergarten."

"Damn... tooting right, he will," his mom said.

Jared hadn't been on a ferry since he was a baby and he was so excited when he saw it, he bounced up and down, clapping. Driving inside was like being swallowed by a giant whale, like in the stories his babysitter Barbie read to him from the Bible. His dad grabbed a backpack and slung it over his shoulder before tucking Jared under his arm like a football. They crammed into the elevator with other sleepy passengers. His dad sat Jared on his shoulders. His mom rested her head against his dad's arm.

"It's okay, Hon," his dad said.

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They found some seats, but Jared whined to go onto the deck and his dad agreed to take him while his mom set up their sleeping bags on the floor. The wind was cold and the ferry gave a toot before pulling away from the terminal. Jared covered his ears until he was sure it was the only toot. The lights sparkled on the black water. The mountains were giant black lumps against the starry sky.

The ferry rounded a point and Jared's dad lifted him up so he could say goodbye to Bella Bella. The buildings and streets looked different from the ferry. He waved.

"Goodbye to all that," his dad said.

Nana Sophia, his father's mother, lived in Prince Rupert with her fourth husband, Jim-Bob, whose real name was Reginald. No one had ever explained the nickname to him. They laughed in a way that told him it was a grown-up joke.

They drove off the ferry at the Rupert terminal and his mom wanted to visit her friends, but his dad wanted to stop in to see his mother first. Nana Sophia's house was on a steep hill and her front yard was a cliff. A wooden ramp with rickety railings led from the sidewalk to her front door, and Jared ran back and forth while they waited for Nana Sophia to answer the door. The ramp jiggled and rattled. They waited and waited and his parents argued about who had been supposed to tell her when they were coming in. They went out to a restaurant and Jared ate fish nuggets dipped in ketchup.