



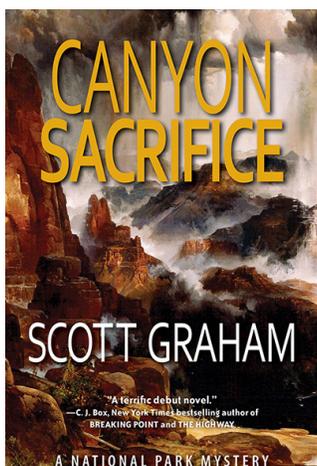
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## Reading Group Guide

# CANYON SACRIFICE

### A NATIONAL PARK MYSTERY

BY SCOTT GRAHAM



### INTRODUCTION

In Tony Hillerman fashion, this page-turner brings the rugged western landscape, the mysterious past of the Ancestral Puebloan people, and the Southwest's ongoing cultural fissures vividly to life. A deadly struggle against murderous kidnappers in Grand Canyon National Park forces archaeologist Chuck Bender to face up to his past as he realizes every parents' worst nightmare: a missing child. This is the first book of Scott Graham's National Park Mystery Series.

"A terrific debut novel . . . Along with archaeologist Chuck Bender, we experience the evocative wonder and amoral beauty of the Grand Canyon while at the same time learning the inside—and often frustrating—workings of a contemporary national park." —C.J. BOX, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Stone Cold*

"Graham has created a beautifully balanced book, incorporating intense action scenes, depth of characterization, realistic landscapes, and historical perspective." —*REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE*

"This riveting series debut showcases Graham's love of nature and archeology, simultaneously interjecting some serious excitement. Graham is to be commended for weaving together several cultures into one story. Recommend to readers who enjoy Tony Hillerman, Nevada Barr, and C.J. Box's Joe Pickett series." —*LIBRARY JOURNAL*

"Graham has created a story [of] richness and depth. . . . Graham's comfort and familiarity with his subject make the story an enjoyable read." —*DURANGO HERALD*

"A glorious portrait of one of the most compelling landscapes on earth, a place that can kill just as easily as it thrills. This is a topnotch read."  
—WILLIAM KENT KRUEGER, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Tamarack County*

"*Canyon Sacrifice* delivers it all and then some."  
—MARGARET COEL, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Killing Custer*

"As unpredictable and twisty as a switchback trail plummeting into its depths, Graham's thriller sucks you into the mysteries of the canyon and the story of an unsuspecting family whose lives will never be the same." —TED BOTHA, author of *The Girl With the Crooked Nose*

## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I was raised in Durango, Colorado, among the ancient structures of the Ancestral Puebloans. I'm one of many Durangoans who enjoy archaeological-site exploration in the Four Corners region as an intellectually fulfilling avocation, one my parents shared with me, and my wife and I shared with our sons. Having selected national parks as the setting for my mystery series, I needed a vocation that would take my protagonist, via work contracts, from one national park to another. I also wanted a vocation for my protagonist that readers would find interesting, and one that would place him outdoors, where my mysteries play out. Making a professional archaeologist of Chuck Bender fulfilled all those needs and enabled me to research and write about the world of archaeology in the western United States, a source of endless fascination to me and, I hope, to my readers.



**Scott Graham** is the author of the acclaimed National Park Mystery series, featuring archaeologist Chuck Bender and Chuck's spouse, Janelle Ortega. In addition to the National Park Mystery series, Scott is the author of five nonfiction books, including *Extreme Kids*, winner of the National Outdoor Book Award. Scott is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys backpacking, river rafting, skiing, and mountaineering. He has made a living as a newspaper reporter, magazine editor, radio disk jockey, and coal-shoveling fireman on the steam-powered Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. He lives with his spouse, who is an emergency physician, in Durango, Colorado.

Learn more at [scottfranklingraham.com](http://scottfranklingraham.com).

Graham is available to discuss *Canyon Sacrifice* with reading groups in person or virtually. For more information, email [kirsten@torreyhouse.com](mailto:kirsten@torreyhouse.com).

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. How does Chuck's perspective on social media and technology evolve over the course of the novel? What helps foster this change in perspective?
2. Does Chuck ultimately learn to communicate and work with a team/with his family?
3. In your view, why does Chuck refuse to fully commit to his new life with Janelle and her daughters? Does this change?
4. How does Graham interweave Chuck's experience as an archaeologist with the journey he is forced to take to find Carmelita?
5. At what point does Chuck and/or Janelle realize that Miguel is not the one who took their daughter (at least alone)? Is there resistance to this thought? Feigned ignorance?
6. How does the natural terrain of the Grand Canyon play a part in this novel? Is it merely background?
7. Was this a story solely testing a new father's love for his stepdaughter or is it something more complex?
8. How does Graham tie in the history of the Anasazi people to the present-day plot line?
9. How is truth masked and unmasked throughout the novel?
10. How are the Anasazi people and other Native groups portrayed?



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Torrey House Press publishes books at the intersection of the literary arts and environmental advocacy. THP authors explore the diversity of human experiences with place and engage community in conversations about landscape, literature, and the future of our ever-changing planet, inspiring action toward a more just world. We believe that lively, contemporary literature is at the cutting edge of social change. We seek to inform, expand, and reshape the dialogue on environmental justice and stewardship for the natural world by elevating literary excellence from diverse voices.

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