

READING GROUP GUIDE

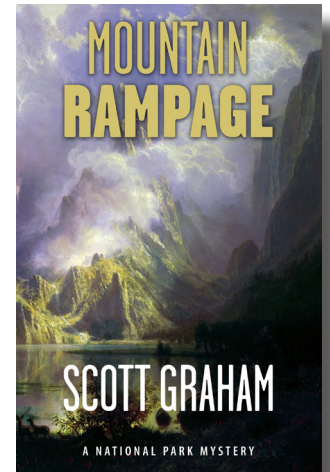
MOUNTAIN RAMPAGE

A NATIONAL PARK MYSTERY

by Scott Graham

INTRODUCTION

While running an archaeology field school for college students in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, Chuck Bender finds himself in the crosshairs of an unknown killer when he defends one of his team leaders from false murder accusations. In the meantime, a fresh graveyard of majestic Rocky Mountain rams—all missing their valuable horns—has appeared within a short hike of the students' dig, Chuck's under unprecedented pressure from his old archaeology professor-turned-boss, and the handsome local doctor is flirting with Chuck's wife, Janelle. Add a messy discovery in an old mine shaft, and it's a wonder Chuck still has time to tuck in his step-daughters and try to discipline his bed-hopping brother-in-law. The unearthing of cold, hard facts—and artifacts—keeps readers guessing and sleuthing with Chuck until the last page.



With relentless and adept plot twists, a slew of fascinating new characters alongside the welcome return of old favorites, and plenty of national park history, *Mountain Rampage* explores the challenges and thrills of archaeological digs, the joys and heartaches of family relationships, and the stark beauty of one of America's most breathtaking wild places.

"Filled with murder and mayhem, jealousy and good detective work—an exciting, nonstop read. Well done!"
—ANNE HILLERMAN, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Rock with Wings*

"In *Mountain Rampage*, Scott Graham delivers taut writing, solid plot twists, a cast of interesting characters, and an appealing protagonist both men and women will love. Get ready for a leave-you-breathless high country southwestern adventure."

—MICHAEL MCGARRITY, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Hard Country*

"Graham's clever tale is tailor-made for those who prefer their mysteries under blue skies..."
— KIRKUS REVIEWS



CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. After Chuck takes the students to see the Rocky Mountain ram graveyard, he says, “What you saw back there is yet another example of what people are willing to do—what they’re willing to risk—to come up with something others will pay big bucks for.” What are some other examples of these kinds of risks going on in the world today? Do any of them make you feel the same kind of anger Chuck feels toward the poacher?
2. After reading *Mountain Rampage*, do you think you’d enjoy participating in an archaeological dig? Why or why not?
3. When Clarence’s knife is found as evidence, Clarence instantly becomes defensive toward the police, saying, “We’re still plenty different from the upstanding, white-bread folks of Estes Park, and different is all that matters.” What do you make of this statement, especially in light of the recent, racially-charged police encounters in the news?
4. Chuck is more comfortable in the outdoors than in his personal life. What strengths of Chuck’s as an outdoorsman might he apply to improving his personal relationships?
5. The young characters portrayed in *Mountain Rampage* are disparaged by older characters in the book as self-absorbed and hormonally driven. Do today’s young people deserve such condemnation?
6. Greed is the overwhelming human desire explored in many murder mysteries. What examples of greed did you see in *Mountain Rampage* and how were they explored?
7. Some of the environmental/ecological concerns raised in *Mountain Rampage* in areas such as poaching and mining degradation are not as severe in the United States as they were decades ago. Are they still deserving of attention? Should efforts aimed at addressing such concerns be directed overseas, where such problems remain severe?
8. Who was your favorite character? Describe a scene in which that character became real to you.
9. Most murder mysteries are constructed as tightly woven morality plays, *Mountain Rampage* included. For good or ill, which characters’ morals stood out most prominently to you?
10. The author has said that “Our national parks truly are ‘America’s best idea.’ I’m a champion of the thousands of park staffers and employees who dedicate their professional lives to protecting and preserving our parks for future generations.” What has your own national park experience(s) been like? Where would you like to visit?



ABOUT SCOTT GRAHAM



For more about Scott and the National Park Mystery Series, visit ScottFranklinGraham.com

Scott Graham was raised in the Rocky Mountain town of Durango, Colorado, where echoes of Colorado's violent gold-mining past featured in *Mountain Rampage* resonate to this day. He has explored the high mountains of his home state his entire life, including numerous hiking, climbing, and backpacking trips deep into the Rocky Mountain National Park wilderness.

Graham 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 is an avid outdoorsman and amateur archaeologist who enjoys mountaineering, skiing, hunting, rock climbing, and whitewater rafting with his wife, who is an emergency physician, and their two sons.

Scott is available to discuss *Mountain Rampage* with reading groups in person or via Skype. For more information, email anne@torreyhouse.com.

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