

The Grand Canyon National Park is the scene of action for a puzzling mystery that morphs into a perilous confrontation with espionage agents for Pat Marshall. She hires P.I. Harry Hamilton to locate her missing brother, duels with FBI agents and U.S. State Department officials and entices Park Ranger Scott Cantrell to reveal top secret information on the trail that leads to a death defying outcome.

The Canyon Caper

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4691.html?s=pdf>

A PAT MARSHALL NOVEL

The Canyon Caper

Mystery, Intrigue and Romance
in the Grand Canyon

The background of the cover features a wide, panoramic view of the Grand Canyon at sunset. The sky is a gradient of blue and orange, with the sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the layered rock formations. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of a man and a woman are visible from the back, looking out over the vast canyon. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right, their forms partially overlapping the canyon's edge.

D K Elliott

Copyright © 2010 D K Elliott

ISBN 978-1-60910-148-0

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.

Printed in the United States of America.

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.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2010

IV. JIMMY

Pat was startled out of a sound sleep by a nerve-jangling ring of the telephone. It took her a few seconds to realize where she was and why. She picked up, and was greeted by a now familiar voice.

“Okay, Pat, the game’s afoot. See you downstairs in fifteen minutes.”

The telephone was dead before she had a chance to respond. She shook the cobwebs out of her head and organized her thoughts. *There’s no time for a shower—only enough time to sponge down, add deodorant, brush my hair, fix the make-up, and visit the toilet.* She jumped back into the dark-gray skirt, aqua collared blouse and neck scarf she had taken off only a couple of hours ago. She shook her head and slipped on her black, low-heeled shoes. “What have I gotten myself into?” She took one last look in the mirror for a final checkup and left the room for the elevator. She could not believe she was dressed in the outfit she had put on almost eighteen hours ago. It was so out of character.

When she entered the lobby, it was nearly empty except for the desk clerk, a couple of men, and Harry, who sat in a chair behind one of the pillars. When he looked up, he motioned to her to join him, rose from the chair, and picked up his luggage.

THE CANYON CAPER

She started and opened her mouth to express surprise at the luggage, but before she uttered a word, he put a finger to his lips.

When she reached him, he whispered, "Let's go." They left the hotel, he flagged down a cruising taxicab, and they hopped in. He gave the driver an address she judged to be at least a block from their target. She looked at him, ready to question whether he'd made an error, but the instant she opened her mouth, he waved her off.

He leaned back in the seat, stretched and yawned. "Well, Honey, it was a long, tiring meeting. I'm bushed. Thanks for waiting up for me. It'll be good to get home and hop into bed." He pointed to the cabbie and winked.

She got the message and smiled. "I know, you must be pooped, Darling. I am too. We can rest up on the weekend. Maybe we can take in a movie." They kept up this charade until the cabbie pulled up to the curb at the address Harry had given.

The cabbie turned around. "Okay, you two lovebirds, your love nest awaits you. You want me to wait until you're safely inside?"

Harry looked at Pat and grinned. "No, that isn't necessary. We know our neighborhood. It's safe here at this hour. What's the tab?" He paid the cabbie, putting his hand on her purse when she instinctively reached for the money. "Okay, Honey, we're home."

They left the cab and watched it depart. After he checked out the streets and adjoining buildings in the area, he motioned for her to remain quiet and headed to Jimmy's building with her in tow.

She was unable to bear the stealthy routine any longer. She grabbed him by the arm and whispered, "I'm scared. How are we to get into the apartment without alerting the neighbors?"

What if a patrol car comes by? What if someone's walking a dog? Maybe we're making a big mistake."

He gave her a frosty stare. "Calm down. We're *not* making any moves if there's risk of exposure. I wouldn't have entertained this break-in if I didn't think the odds of success were good. I'm not risking my license and my lifestyle to get into an apartment where we may learn absolutely nothing."

He took her arm and escorted her the rest of the way to Jimmy's place. She felt submissive, and it frightened her. When they reached the building, he scanned the surrounding apartments and the street. "Okay, there's no sign of activity. It appears the coast is clear." He escorted her down the alley between Jimmy's building and its neighbor that overlooked Jimmy's apartment and stopped below one of its windows. He opened his luggage and withdrew several items, put them in his pocket, and propped the luggage on end against the building.

He turned to her and said, "The luggage gives me the height I need to reach the window. Your job is to brace the luggage so it's steady and will support me. Don't worry, the luggage case is reinforced. I've used it before."

Before they had a chance to execute the maneuver, lights flooded the street in front of the building.

He pulled her down to the alley pavement and crouched in the shadows. "Damn it!"

She began to shake, her face overspread with fear.

He gently squeezed her arm, put his hand over her mouth, and put a finger to his lips.

A patrol car cruised slowly by.

A cat scampered across the street and captured the officers' attention. Their muffled comments and laughter drifted into the alleyway where Harry and Pat hoped they were concealed.

The patrol car passed without stopping.

He expelled a heavy breath. "Whew, close!"

THE CANYON CAPER

She could not stop shaking.

He scolded her. "Get a hold of yourself, Pat. I need you. I can't pull this off alone."

She forced a smile and nodded her head.

They got up and went back to work.

He hoisted himself on the luggage case, steadied himself against the wall, and withdrew a long, thin, serrated blade from his pocket. He slipped the blade between the top and bottom sashes of the window with ease. "Thank God my judgment was right; these forty-some year old windows are well worn. Now, let's hope Jimmy doesn't have an alarm system—that my earlier assessment was correct."

He worked the serrated edge of the blade against the old sash lock and gradually forced it to the open position. He muttered, "Good! Jimmy never replaced this golden oldie with the new tamper-proof variety." Once the lock was fully open, he slowly raised the lower sash. She watched him feel for any evidence of an alarm system. He turned and gave her an A-OK hand signal. With the sash fully open, he crawled in, turned, and motioned to her to carry the luggage around to the front door.

She picked up the luggage and edged along the surface of the building to the street, shaking, panting and straining to hear for signs of life. She reached the corner of the building and scanned the area. Every shadowy movement threatened to be someone about to discover their break-in. She swallowed hard and raced up the front steps with the luggage as he opened the door. She tiptoed through the vestibule and into Jimmy's apartment. He carefully closed and locked the doors behind her. Once inside, she stopped panting and fought to hold back tears.

"Harry, don't ever ask me to do this again!"

He put his arm around her and squeezed. "Why? This was fun. I thought you were a lot more venturesome."

She glared at him, still annoyed and frightened at what he had put her through and ignored his effort at affection. “Now what?”

“Well, we don’t flood the place with lights. I’ve closed and locked the window and drawn the shades. We’ll use the lights in the closets, the refrigerator, and anything else that won’t set the joint ablaze. I also have a flashlight, so we’re okay for light. First, we have to find Jimmy’s address book and any appointments book he may have so we can identify and locate his friends. Then we’ll look for any evidence of his vacation plans. I only pray all this isn’t salted away in a laptop or other device. If it is, we’ll have fun decoding it. I had to do that once, and it was no picnic.”

She was still on edge. “Okay, let’s go to it. I wanna be out of here as soon as possible.”

They searched every drawer, closet, cabinet, and other places that promised useful evidence. Their net find was an address book, an appointments book, spare keys to the apartment, and notes Jimmy had taken for his trip to the national parks. Harry looked surprised. “You’d think a twenty-seven-year-old would have all this stuff stored electronically. Why keep it on paper?”

She tossed a hand. “I do the same thing with addresses and appointments even though I have them on my BlackBerry. They serve as backup in case the BlackBerry dies or I misplace it.”

He nodded. “That makes sense. Well, we’ve a lot to do with all we’ve uncovered. I noticed there was nothing in the apartment related to Jimmy’s work at State. On the other hand, there’s a supply of art paper, canvases, brushes, and assorted tubes of oils and watercolor paints. You can readily see he practices art, but not that he’s gainfully employed. Jimmy’s become a much more interesting person than I imagined, based on your profile of him.”

THE CANYON CAPER

He tapped her on the shoulder. "Okay, I think we've exhausted everything here. Let's take what we found back to the hotel and look it over in the morning. When we're done with it, I'll return everything before Monday."

She shot him a quick look. "You mean *another* break-in! I don't think so!"

He laughed. "Why do you think I took the spare keys for the apartment? Relax, I'll handle the rest of our little project," and motioned for her to leave the apartment. He turned all the lights off, raised the shades he had drawn, and led her out through the front doors, checking that both were locked. The building and the apartment were now secure.

They walked several blocks to a main road where there was significant traffic. She became anxious and searched the area nervously.

He put his arm around her shoulders. "Relax! Couples out in the early morning hours are not unusual here, particularly on the weekend. If you act natural, we won't be conspicuous." He hailed a taxi, they climbed in, and he had the driver take them back to the hotel. They walked through the now vacant lobby, past the desk clerk, who did not even bother to look up from his paperwork, and entered the elevator. He held her hand. "Will you be all right? Is there anything I can do for you?"

She was not that fatigued. "Thanks, Harry, I'll be fine. Don't call me until at least ten o'clock." The elevator stopped at her floor first. She left with a half-hearted, "Good night."

He called after her. "If you need me for anything, anything at all, just ask."

She acted as if he said nothing and headed for her room.

He watched her disappear down the hall and wished she had asked for some companionship before she called it a night. However, he figured she could not wait to shed the clothes she

probably felt she had lived in for a week. He visualized her undressing and falling into bed and wondered what it would be like to lie beside her.

When he reached his room, he was too wired to hit the sack. The thrill of his first full day with Pat and the excitement of the break-in had him stimulated. He sat down at the desk in the room and quickly scanned the material he had taken from the apartment. Satisfied he knew what he had and how to decrypt it, he undressed, except for his briefs, lay in bed and thought about sharing it with Pat. When his fantasy got too erotic for his own comfort, he considered his options. "Do I spend it or bank it? She's worth me banking it, as long as withdrawal doesn't take forever." He rolled over and forced himself to think of anything other than Pat Marshall and finally drifted off.

Early Saturday morning, Harry woke with the sun streaming in the window. He had a habit of not drawing blinds or shades, so he had no need for an alarm to rise early, which worked fine in late spring, summer, and early fall. Late to bed and early to rise kept Harry healthy and wise, if not wealthy. He showered, ordered room service of coffee and Danish, dressed, and sat at the desk to work on the material collected the night before.

First, he decided to organize the individuals in Jimmy's address book into two categories: those listed with only business addresses and those listed by their full formal names or informal nicknames with personal addresses. He listed the two groups on separate sheets.

Second, he identified the entries in Jimmy's appointments book for weekday evenings and weekends during the past eight months. These, he reasoned, were the most likely social contacts they will want to interview. Some of these individuals were identified by names and others were identified only by initials, which he was able to link to names in most cases. Each

THE CANYON CAPER

time a name was noted in the appointments book for these time periods, he tallied it on one of the two lists.

When this step was completed, he had a frequency count of Jimmy's appointments with each person. Five individuals accounted for over eighty percent of Jimmy's evening and weekend appointments—three males and two females. None were couples. One male was on the professional list, and the other two males and the two females were on the personal list, which he found interesting, given Pat's profile of Jimmy as girl shy.

Satisfied, he began to work on the notes Jimmy had made for his vacation. The coffee and Danish arrived, which gave him an excuse to take a break. It was only eight-thirty. He thought about Pat asleep in her room, remembered her request to sleep late, and decided he'd catch up with the latest news on TV.

After he finished the coffee and Danish, he returned to Jimmy's vacation notes. The notes were in Jimmy's personal shorthand, but he had little trouble deciphering them. Most of the notation had to do with planned dates for his trip, travel times, and accommodations. This was all routine stuff and not informative. However, one item caught his eye and left him puzzled. The notation was simple, but he wasn't certain in his attempt to decipher it. It read,

7 p d 3 M

He noted it on the lists of interview prospects in the event one of them might shed some light on its meaning. By now it was nine-thirty, and he decided to wake up Pat if they were to gain a full day's work. He rang her room and got a quick pick-up.

"Yes, is this you Harry?"

He smiled. "No, it's Mac the Knife. Who the hell did you expect to call?"

“I’m awake,” she murmured. “I have to shower and dress. Order me coffee and Danish. I’ll be up in thirty minutes.”

She arrived at his room simultaneously with the coffee and Danish. He had ordered two of each—a second breakfast for him—for them to dine together while he revealed what he had accomplished. When she walked in, his eyes bugged out of his head. She was dressed in a light-blue denim shirt, black, tight-fitting slacks, a light-blue bandanna, and black loafers, no socks. He had never seen anyone so adorable. Her apparent clothing strategy to appear businesslike didn’t have the intended effect. Sitting together, sipping coffee, and noshing on Danish, gave him a warm sense of satisfaction he rarely, if ever, felt before. She listened to his review and focused on what he was saying, apparently oblivious to what he was feeling.

When he finished the review, she nodded and gave him a thumbs up. “That’s great work, Harry. I’m ready to start phoning the individuals you identified. Maybe they could help us decipher the cryptic note Jimmy made.”

“Maybe, but I’m not counting on it.” He handed her the lists. “You, of course, will make the calls. Tell them you’re concerned for Jimmy’s whereabouts. Carefully probe them for everything and anything they know about his trip and his planned activities. Ask them if they noted anything unusual about his state of mind prior to the trip. Leave the cryptic note until the end of the interview, otherwise they may spend too much valuable time guessing what it means.

“If they ask how you had gotten their name and number, tell them Jimmy gave it to you. Tell them you gave each other contacts in the event of an emergency or if you had difficulty reaching one another. If they want you to visit with them, give them a date sometime next week, but don’t stop the interview. Do the best you can to complete it. You’re bright enough to figure out how to keep them talking.”

THE CANYON CAPER

“Gotcha. Okay, let’s start.” She pulled out her cell phone.

He raised a hand. “Whoa! Not the cell phone. That device is vulnerable to eavesdropping and traceable to you. Use the room phone.”

Pat was a little nervous, but she kept up a good front. She was about to investigate her brother’s life after years of benign indifference on her part and discreet obfuscation on his part. She knew she violated his privacy with the break-in of his apartment and the telephone calls she was about to make. She wondered how he will react when he finds out.

The first call she made was to a Gerry Allen from the professional list.

After two rings, she was greeted with a lighthearted, “Hello.”

She introduced herself and stated the purpose of her call.

Allen responded. “Oh, Jimmy told me he had a sister. It’s nice to meet you, even though it’s only over the phone. Are you here in Washington?”

She confirmed she was. “I’m really concerned about Jimmy, and thought I may be able to acquire more information if I came here. May I ask you some questions about my brother?”

“Ask away. Maybe it will be better if you come to my apartment. Will that help?”

“It’s kind of you to offer, but I have a lot on my plate; perhaps next week sometime. Right now, it’d be helpful if we talked over the phone.”

“Okay, Pat, I’ll do my best to answer your questions.”

She was relieved. “Thank you, Mr. Allen. Did Jimmy communicate with you in any way, including postcards, since he left for his vacation?”

“Not at all, but I didn’t expect him to call or write. I handle his investments and advise him on financial matters.”

She was disappointed. “I see. So your association with my brother is primarily professional. I didn’t know that.” She realized she had misspoken and hoped Allen overlooked it and not question why she called him. She quickly charged ahead. “I suppose my brother’s failure to call me as he promised has nothing to do with his financial affairs. He’s not in any financial straits is he?”

Allen delayed before responding. “I know of nothing that raises questions about his behavior based on his financial situation. I’d rather not say more. Jimmy hasn’t authorized me to discuss his financial affairs with you or anyone else. You understand my position, Pat, don’t you?”

She was mildly embarrassed. “Of course I do. I wonder, though, did you notice anything unusual about Jimmy’s attitude or behavior before he left on vacation?”

“Nothing I can put my finger on. He seemed perfectly normal.”

She thanked him for his time and decided not to question him about the cryptic note in Jimmy’s papers. She had hit a dead end on her first call. She turned to Harry and filled him in on the Allen call. “Maybe I’ll do better on my next call.” She looked at the other list and decided to try Sheila Morgan.

She dialed the number and, after several rings, a woman’s voice answered. “I’m sorry I’m not home to receive your call. Please leave a message at the beep. I’ll return your call as soon as I can.”

Another dead end. She decided not to leave a message and hung up. She shrugged and looked at Harry.

He spread his hands. “Aren’t you glad you don’t make cold calls for a living?” He laughed.

She grimaced—on to the next name on the list, Walter Goodman.

THE CANYON CAPER

She was relieved when after three rings she heard, “Hello. Walter Goodman. Who is this?”

She went through the routine and received a somewhat curt response.

“So why are you calling me, and where did you get my name and number?”

She was taken aback, but managed to give the explanation she and Harry had rehearsed.

Goodman sounded dubious about her reason for calling him. “Look, I know Jimmy has a sister, and you may be her. However, why he gave you my name and number is beyond me. We’re only casual acquaintances, and I don’t have any idea what he does or where he goes. I’m afraid you’ve been misled. There’s no way I can be of any help to you. Goodbye.” He hung up.

She relayed his response to Harry.

He stroked his chin and pointed to the list. “Put a big asterisk next to Goodman’s name. His characterization of ‘only a casual acquaintance’ doesn’t jibe with the number of times Jimmy had appointments with him in the past eight months. I think we’ve uncovered something significant. Let’s go on to the next name on the lists.”

She chose Marge Crestwood. After several rings, she got another answering machine and another polite request to leave a message. This time she decided to leave one out of frustration. “Hello, Ms Crestwood, this is Pat Marshall calling, Jimmy Marshall’s sister, I’m...” Before she said more she was cut off.

“Hi, this is Marge Crestwood. Sorry for the confusion. I always let my machine pick up incoming calls so I can screen them. I never answer cold calls trying to sell me something. Well, this *is* a surprise! Jimmy’s sister—or should I say his mysterious sister. We know of you, but Jimmy doesn’t share

you with us. Are you here to see Jimmy? He's on vacation if you didn't know, but we expect him back on Monday."

Before Crestwood caught her breath and said another word, Pat knew she had to take control. "Yes, I know, Ms. Crestwood. In fact, my call to you is directly related to his vacation. Let me explain." She went through her story for the third time without giving Crestwood an opening. When she was done with the routine, she dove right into her first question. "What I need to know from you, Ms. Crestwood, is whether or not you've heard from my brother since he left on his vacation?"

Marge Crestwood charged breathlessly into the opening. "Yes, he called me the day he arrived in Grand Canyon National Park. We had a long chat. He told me all about the flight and the lovely young lady he sat next to. They shared a common interest in art and talked art the whole flight. He didn't care for the food served. He liked his room in the Thunderbird Lodge and the view of the canyon. He looked forward to some hiking on the trails the next day. I was happy for him. He really needed to get away and have some fun doing things he enjoys. He wanted new inspiration for his artistic activities and believed the national parks were the best way to do that."

When Crestwood pause to catch her breath, Pat jumped back in. "Have you heard from him after that first day—any postcards, calls, letters?"

"No. You know, that's not like Jimmy. I was sure he'd call again, and he knows I enjoy postcards from friends when they travel to interesting places. I never thought he could be in any trouble. I assumed he got so involved in touring, he didn't have time to call or write. Do you really think he could be in some kind of trouble?"

Pat finally found a cooperative person. Now, if she was only useful. "Ms Crestwood..." That's as far as she got.

THE CANYON CAPER

“Oh, Pat, call me Marge. Jimmy and I have been good friends for almost six years. I feel like I should know you better. I’d love to meet you sometime.”

She smiled. “I’d like that, Marge. How was Jimmy before he left for the West. Did you notice any changes in his attitude or behavior?”

Crestwood delayed responding. “Now that you mention it, he seemed a bit more nervous and, well, not really frightened, more like, you know, anxious. I assumed it was the pressure of his job. He is under a lot of stress working undercover for the State Department.”

Pat gulped. She could not believe what she heard. *Undercover! If it’s true, how did this... airhead... know about it and blurt it out as if it were common knowledge?* She was unsure which way to go in the interview. She decided to act as if Jimmy had shared that fact with her. “Yes, I know. I, too, hope his vacation will help him relax and recover his composure. Did he reveal anything about the cases he was working on that might explain his mental state?”

Crestwood was strident. “There was nothing wrong with his mental state. Everyone gets a little nervous and anxious at times. I do, and I bet you do too.”

She appreciated Crestwood’s quick defense of Jimmy and decided to rephrase. “You’re right, of course. What I meant was, did he discuss any cases that might explain his nervousness or anxiety?”

Crestwood delayed again. “I have to say no. He has never really discussed his cases with me. I’m sure he’s not supposed to since his work is all hush-hush, you know.”

She agreed. “Yes, I assumed so, but I thought he might have said something you remembered that indicated the effect his work had on his, uh...” She checked herself, *Don’t say mental state.* “You know, comfort.”

Crestwood delayed again before she responded. “Now that you mention it, he did say something along that line. Let me see, what was it? Oh, yes, I remember; he said, ‘I can’t wait until this mess in the Middle East is behind us’.”

Pat was surprised, but thought many people felt that way. “I have another question, Marge. Do the symbols, seven p d three M, mean anything to you?”

“No, should they?”

“Well, they appeared on some papers I have from Jimmy, and I can’t figure out what they mean. I thought, perhaps, you recognized them.”

Crestwood didn’t respond. Pat assumed she was trying to come up with something helpful. After many seconds, she prompted Crestwood for an answer.

Finally, Crestwood offered an explanation. “Well, my best guess is seven p is seven at night and d three is day three, the third day, or something like that. That’s typical Jimmy shorthand. What M means I’m not sure; it’s probably a name of someone. Jimmy was always disguising names by using a letter or two, and they weren’t always first initials. Does that help?”

She couldn’t believe her ears. Crestwood surely had intimate knowledge of her brother. He may not appreciate it, but she had to ask. “I hope you don’t think me impertinent, Marge, but are you and Jimmy *really* close friends, if you know what I mean?”

Crestwood laughed. “I’m confined to a wheelchair, Pat. Jimmy and I are good friends, but that’s all. We met at State and got along. He’ll take me out for dinner and a show and take me home afterward. I only wish I wasn’t in this wheelchair. I really love the guy.”

Pat, now, had a wholly different understanding of her little brother. She knew she had missed a wonderful opportunity to know him for who he really was. She felt tears well up, but held on to finish this first visit with Marge Crestwood. “Thanks,

THE CANYON CAPER

Marge, I'll be in touch. I'd really like to know you better. Goodbye for now, and thanks again."

She hung up and turned to Harry to recount the conversation with Crestwood. She ended with, "I never realized how little I know Jimmy. I'm still trying to revise my mental picture of who he really is. All of a sudden, my concern about him has multiplied—undercover agent—anxious about the Middle East mess. I don't know; where do we go from here?"

"I've some ideas for a follow-up if Jimmy doesn't show up for work Monday, but we can discuss that later. Let's finish the calls. We might learn more that will answer your questions and give us direction, okay?"

She nodded. "I guess so." She returned to the lists and noted the only person not called was a Roger Whitcomb. She dialed his number and received a pickup after one ring.

"Hello."

She introduced herself and began her well-rehearsed explanation for the call. Before she finished, Whitcomb interjected. "I know all about your concern for your brother, Ms. Marshall. Mr. Oberg filled me in. I work with your brother. I agree with Mr. Oberg. You should wait until Monday before you launch any inquiry into Jim's situation. I'm confident he'll show up for work Monday morning. He's one of the more reliable professionals we have."

"Are you his supervisor, or a higher superior, for whom he works?"

"Let me just say we work together."

She was determined to not let Whitcomb off the hook. "If Jimmy doesn't show up on Monday, may I have your business number so I can talk to you about Jimmy? I'd rather not wait until you're home Monday night."

"I'll be away from tomorrow night until next Saturday on an assignment. Mr. Oberg will be your contact."

She got desperate. “One last question; is my brother working on an undercover case for the State Department?”

He gave the answer she expected, but she had to try. “Ms. Marshall, you know better than to ask that of me. We never confirm or deny whether someone works in a specific capacity in the State Department. I have nothing else I can help you with. Please call Mr. Oberg for further information. Goodbye and good luck.”

She hung up, her head drooped, and she shook it, caught up in morose bewilderment.

Harry put his hand on her shoulder. “I think I know what was said from your comments on the phone. Why don’t we take a break, go for a walk, visit some of the sites you never had a chance to see, and grab some lunch. After lunch, we can try Sheila Morgan again.”

She felt exhausted, but did not want to lie down after she received so much information about her brother, all of which had her head spinning. “Perhaps a walk and some distractions will help. Okay, but don’t pay any attention to me if I drift off.”

They left the hotel, visited the memorials to dead presidents and dead heroes, had a late lunch at an outdoor café, and went to her room in the hotel. She plopped down in a cushioned chair, propped her feet on a coffee table, and expelled a rush of air from her lungs.

He looked at her with a concerned expression. “Are you all right?”

She barely smiled. “I’m fine, a bit exhausted and confused.”

“Are you ready to try Morgan again?”

She nodded. “Okay, might as well. There’s nothing much else we can do until Monday.” She got up, walked laboriously to the desk, and picked up the phone before she realized something was missing. “Uh, Harry, I think it will help if I had the lists. Can you go to your room and get them for me?”

THE CANYON CAPER

He chuckled. "Yeah, that will help. I'll be right back."

For the few minutes he was gone, she made an effort to link her long-held image of her brother with this new person sharing his name. She wondered if the secrecy about his personal life was to protect her, not that she needed it. She was still engrossed in her new view of Jimmy and their past relationship when Harry returned.

"Here you go." He handed her the lists.

She smiled. "Thanks, Harry." She went to the telephone and dialed Sheila Morgan's number.

After two rings, she heard a somewhat sultry, "Hello."

She introduced herself and went through the routine for the fifth time. After several seconds of dead silence, Sheila Morgan reintroduced Pat to her brother as no other person had.

"Well, Pat, he's not here; at least not now. Do you know he's on vacation and won't be back until Sunday night? I expect him around eight. Would you like me to have him call you?"

Pat couldn't respond immediately as she absorbed what Morgan had said. *She's expecting Jimmy!* "Yes, that will be nice," was all she came up with. "I'll give you the number of the hotel where I'm staying here in DC. Let me see, I know the number's here somewhere.... Oh, here it is." She gave Morgan the number. By now she had regained her composure and returned to the reason for the call. "Ms. Morgan, have you heard from my brother since he left on vacation?"

Morgan laughed. "No. What I want from Jimmy, and what he wants from me, does not travel well, especially over phone lines or through mail boxes."

Pat couldn't believe what she heard. *Sheila's a hooker!* "Uh... did you and Jimmy spend any time together shortly before he left for the West? If you did, did you notice if he was, you know, okay... uh, feeling well?"

She received an answer she had steeled herself for. “Jimmy was in tiptop form, Pat. I never saw him in better shape, if you know what I mean?”

She was too embarrassed to follow up on that remark. She changed the subject. “Jimmy called me his first night in the Grand Canyon and promised to call again in a couple of days, but he never did. Also, his supposed departure from the Grand Canyon was suspicious. That’s why I’m trying to locate him.”

“Well, I wouldn’t know anything about that. All I know is he said he’d see me when he got back on Sunday—that’s tomorrow.”

Pat couldn’t think of anything more to say regarding Jimmy’s trip out west, but her curiosity got the better of her. “Ms. Morgan, please forgive me for my ignorance, but is Jimmy one of your regular clients?”

Morgan’s voice rose several octaves from her sultry level. “What! Clients! Hey, are you saying you think I’m a prostitute?”

Pat was taken aback. “Well, I assumed from what you said you were a... uh... a business woman.”

Morgan voiced indignation. “Pat, let’s set things straight. I’m not a prostitute. Your brother and I are lovers. We enjoy each other’s bodies and each other’s company from time to time. Neither of us is interested in marriage and the baggage that goes with it. Now, if that bothers you, I’m sorry.”

“I’m the one who’s sorry, Ms Morgan. I always jump to conclusions and put my foot in my mouth. Please forgive me, and don’t tell Jimmy what his stupid sister said.”

Morgan laughed. “Okay, Pat, it’ll be our little secret. I’ll have Jimmy call when he gets in tomorrow night.” She hung up.

Pat turned to Harry. “I heard you snicker the whole time I was on the phone. You think you’re so clever. My little brother... the lover! Boy, do I have to rethink our whole life

THE CANYON CAPER

together. I always thought he was a shy bookworm with no interest in girls.”

He winked. “I wonder what Jimmy thinks about you.”

She gave him a disdainful look. “That’s enough out of you. Let’s go down to the bar and think about where we go from here. After these calls, I need something to calm me down.”

They took seats in a booth away from other customers and ordered the usual: bourbon and water for her, Johnny Walker Black Label on the rocks for him.

She spoke first. “I have *not* been able to visualize this whole situation now that I have a brother I don’t really know. Should I be concerned for his well-being or not? Should I stay out of his life or dig more deeply into it? Should I keep you on as my investigator, not knowing where this investigation will lead? If Jimmy is engaged in undercover work for the State Department, God knows what more I’ll find out if we keep digging.” She shook her head. “I don’t know what I should do.”

He reached across the table and took her two hands in his. She didn’t resist. He looked tenderly at her. “You can’t decide on these issues until we see what happens Monday, or rather, Sunday night—tomorrow night. If Sheila calls and says Jimmy didn’t show up, we’ll call the airlines that have arrivals due in from the West and find out if he’s booked on one of them. If he isn’t, we’ll call Oberg at State first thing Monday morning and take it from there. I know you’re flustered from what you’ve learned about Jimmy, but he is your brother, and he may need our help.”

Feeling calmer and grateful, she unconsciously squeezed his hands.

His face flushed and a warm glow shone in his eyes.

He looked like an innocent teenager to her—a transformation that surprised her. She withdrew her hands. “Thanks, Harry, you’re right, as usual. I don’t know what I would have done

without you. Come on, let's have another." He didn't object. She smiled. "What would you be doing if I hadn't gotten you into this mess?"

He laughed. "Probably tracking some poor sucker who thought he put a fast one over on his wife. It always amazes me how guys are so dumb to think their wives don't know when they fool around. Did any married guy ever come on to you?"

She smiled. "What do you think?"

He returned the smile. "You know what I think. Remember, I understand how a woman will pick up clues to a guy's inner feelings, whether he wants her to or not. It goes with the job."

She decided this little banter had gone far enough and branched off on another path. "Are all your cases infidelity cases? Do you ever have other kinds of investigations, like the one I've gotten you into?"

He smiled. "Yeah, strange as it might seem. I had a case that involved employee theft. Some guy was stealing his employer blind, but the employer couldn't figure out how the guy was doing it. The employer couldn't go to the police, so he came to me. I solved the case when I found the guy had set up a dummy corporation he billed for services never delivered. I made a fat fee from that one."

She raised her eyebrows in appreciation. "You really like playing the detective, don't you?"

"Yeah, better than being a flunky in some giant corporation. I guess you're like me; you want to be independent and do your own thing, right?"

She agreed, and they continued to order drinks and chat amiably until she looked at her watch. "It's after seven. I've had too many drinks already, and I need some food in my stomach."

"Me too. Let's eat here. I'm not in a mood to go out."

They walked fairly steadily and took the elevator to the Sky Terrace dining room on top of the hotel. They sat at a table for

THE CANYON CAPER

two with a view of the White House and the city at night. She ordered veal scaloppine, and he ordered Steak Diane and a bottle of Merlot. They ate, drank the wine, and continued to chat about the view from the restaurant, their lives, and their experiences. When the dinner was past complete, they rode the elevator to her floor. He followed her out of the elevator. She turned to confront him.

He had a ready answer. "Let me walk you to your room. It's late, and we don't know who's hanging around."

She gave him a wary nod of her head. When they got to her room, she opened the door, and turned around to face him. "Thank you, Harry." She kissed him on the cheek, entered her room, and closed the door.

The Grand Canyon National Park is the scene of action for a puzzling mystery that morphs into a perilous confrontation with espionage agents for Pat Marshall. She hires P.I. Harry Hamilton to locate her missing brother, duels with FBI agents and U.S. State Department officials and entices Park Ranger Scott Cantrell to reveal top secret information on the trail that leads to a death defying outcome.

The Canyon Caper

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4691.html?s=pdf>