



## Canyon

By Brenda Jackson

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"...a wonderful take on how people overcomplicate their own lives and often have trouble backing away from that once they've begun. Brenda Jackson delivers on the romance, but she takes her books a step further. Canyon is no exception..." Tales to Tide You Over  
<http://margaretmcgaffeyfisk.com/canyon-by-brenda-jackson/>

#### About the Author

Brenda Jackson is a *New York Times* bestselling author of more than one hundred romance titles. Brenda lives in Jacksonville, Florida, and divides her time between family, writing and traveling. Email Brenda at [authorbrendajackson@gmail.com](mailto:authorbrendajackson@gmail.com) or visit her on her website at [brendajackson.net](http://brendajackson.net).

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Canyon Westmoreland was tempted to get out of the parked car and stretch his legs, but decided against it. The one thing he'd learned from watching cop shows was that when you were on a stakeout, you did nothing to give yourself away. You remained as inconspicuous as possible. And as far as he was concerned, he was on a stakeout, determined to find out once and for all why Keisha Ashford refused to give him the time of day.

He was very much aware that she hated his guts because she believed he had betrayed her with another woman. And he knew that assumption was the reason she'd left town three years ago, cutting all ties with him, and was also the reason why she felt that, upon returning to Denver, she had every right to act as if he didn't exist.

However, he had put up with it long enough.

They were both corporate attorneys, a profession which had brought them together initially, and a profession that still placed them together on a number of occasions. Since she'd returned to Denver ten months ago, they'd sat across from each other at the negotiating table for more than one business deal. And it bothered him when she acted as if they didn't share a past.

A number of times he had approached her about straightening things out between them, if for no other reason than so they could have closure, but she always turned him down.

Well, he'd had enough. He refused to allow another day to go by with her thinking he had betrayed her.

So here he was, parked outside the law firm where she worked. Canyon planned to follow her home and confront her. They would finally have that discussion she'd been refusing to give him.

His brothers Stern and Riley had warned him that she had the right to call the police if she felt harassed. But he hoped she wouldn't feel that way. He wasn't trying to harass her. He only wanted to talk to her.

He glanced at his watch. Since he wasn't sure what time she got off work, he'd been parked here for more than an hour now, leaving early from his job at his family's company—Blue Ridge Land Management—to make sure he didn't miss her.

He'd moved to switch channels on the radio when his cell phone rang. He pulled it out of his pocket and frowned when he saw it was his brother. He clicked the phone on.

"What do you want, Stern?"

"Just calling to see if you've been arrested yet."

Canyon rolled his eyes. "I won't be getting arrested."

"Don't be too sure of that. No woman likes being stalked."

Canyon's hand tightened on the steering wheel. "I'm not stalking her."

Stern chuckled. "So what do you call your plan of waiting in front of her office with the intention of following her home?"

Canyon adjusted his tall frame in the seat to find a more comfortable position. "I wouldn't have to follow her if she'd told me where she lives."

"There's a chance the reason she didn't tell you is because she doesn't want you to know," Stern said. "Her house is her territory, and you're forcing yourself into her space. She might not like that."

Canyon was about to tell his brother that at this point he couldn't care less about what she liked when he saw Keisha and another woman walk out of the building together. They were conversing and smiling, headed to their cars. Both were nice-looking women, but his gaze was focused solely on Keisha. He thought the same thing now that he'd thought the first time he'd met her. She was an incredibly beautiful woman.

She still had creamy brown skin that highlighted dark brown eyes, a perky nose and high cheekbones. And she still wore her silky black hair straight and parted in the center. It brushed against her shoulders. Just looking at her full lips made him remember how they tasted, which in turn made him hungry for them. He wished he didn't recall the many times he'd spent devouring her mouth.

But there was something different about her shapely body in that navy A-line skirt and pretty blue blouse. Was it his imagination, or did her hips really appear curvier and her breasts slightly larger than what he remembered?

Regardless of whether his memory was playing tricks on him or not, Keisha Ashford looked good.

He shifted in his seat again, thinking some things didn't change, even his desire for a woman who couldn't stand him.

But he had no problem remembering a time when she *could* stand him. Those had been the best times of his life. He'd never thought he would be ready to settle down with a woman before his thirty-fifth birthday, but he had fallen for Keisha quickly and had been ready to pop the question—before a lie had torn them apart.

He released a deep sigh as his gaze continued to soak her in, every single detail, especially those legs, which could wrap so firmly around a man's waist—

"Canyon, are you still there?"

He blinked upon remembering he still had Stern on the phone. "Yes, I'm here. But I have to go. Keisha just walked out and I need to follow her."

"Be careful, bro. It's been a long time since a Westmoreland was put in jail. I'm sure you remember those days."

He drew in a deep breath. How could he forget? There was only one Westmoreland with a jail record. As a teen, his baby brother Brisbane—known around Denver as *Badass Bane*—had gotten into enough trouble for all of them. Now Bane was serving his country as a kicking-theenemy-ass navy SEAL.

"It won't get that far, Stern. I'm no threat to Keisha. I just want to talk to her."

"You weren't a threat to her before, but that didn't stop her from almost slapping a restraining order on you. Look, Canyon, it's your business but—"

"I know, I know, Stern. You don't want me to do anything to bring shame on the family."

Keisha and the woman had parted ways, and Keisha was now walking alone toward her car. She still had that walk that he thought was as sexy as hell. Although she moved like a model, she had the look of a cool professional in her four-inch pumps with her briefcase in hand.

"Canyon!"

He jumped. "Look, Stern. I'll call you later."

Without giving his brother a chance to say anything else, Canyon clicked off the phone. He watched as Keisha sized up her surroundings before opening her car and getting inside. Although she had glanced in his direction she hadn't seen him. He was parked behind a couple of cars.

He gave her time to start her car and pull out of her parking spot. Then, just as he was about to pull out of his own parking spot, a car darted out in front of him.

"What the hell," Canyon muttered, hitting his brakes. "What damn fire is he rushing off to?"

Not wanting to lose Keisha, he pulled in behind the black sedan, keeping her vehicle within his vision. After tailing her for a few blocks, he became uneasy. It seemed the car in front of him—the black sedan—was tailing her, as well.

As an attorney, Canyon was aware there were times when clients of the opposing council didn't like a court's decision and wanted to make that dislike known. That could be what was happening here. He didn't want to think of other possibilities, like a carjacking. They'd had a number of those lately around the city.

Canyon's protective instincts kicked in when Keisha turned a corner to head away from town and the driver of the black sedan did, too. He couldn't tell if the person driving the car in front of him was male or female

because the windows were tinted. But he *could* make out the license plate number.

He pushed the phone button on his steering wheel. "Yes, Mr. Westmoreland, may I help you?"

"Yes, Samuel. Please connect me with Pete Higgins."

Pete was best friends with his cousin Derringer and was a deputy with Denver's police department.

"Please hold on for the connection."

It didn't take long for Pete to come on the line. "Deputy Higgins."

"Pete. This is Canyon. I need you to check out a license plate number."

"Why?"

Although Canyon knew Pete had every right to ask that question, he couldn't keep his irritation from escalating. "A woman is being followed."

"And you know this how?"

Canyon bit his lip to keep from cursing. His patience was stretched to the limit. "I know because I'm following her, as well."

"Oh. And why are *you* following her?"

Canyon had always admired Pete's easy, laid-back manner. Until now. "Now look, Pete."

"No, you look, Canyon. No one should be following a woman, not you or anybody else. That's harassment and I can bring you both in for stalking. What's the license plate number?"

A mad-as-hell Canyon rattled off the number while wondering why Keisha hadn't noticed she was being followed by not one, but two vehicles.

"Um, this is interesting," Pete said.

"What?" Canyon asked, annoyed.

"That license plate was stolen."

"Stolen?"

The driver in the sedan was smart enough not to follow behind Keisha too closely. But evidently he wasn't smart enough to pick up on the fact that he or she was being followed by Canyon. Maybe the driver was so busy keeping up with Keisha that he hadn't noticed what was going on behind him.

"Yes. According to our system, that license plate was reported stolen earlier today. Where are you?"

"Right now I'm going through the intersection of Firestone Road and Tinsel, and heading toward Purcell

Park Road."

"You're way on the other side of town," Pete noted.

"Yeah." Canyon wondered if Keisha had deliberately chosen to live on the opposite side of Denver from where the Westmorelands lived.

"Is she driving a nice car?" Pete asked.

"Yes, looks like a pretty new Bimmer. Why?"

"I'm thinking that you might be looking at a possible carjacking. I'm on my way. Don't do anything stupid until I get there."

Canyon rolled his eyes. Did that mean he could do something stupid *after* Pete got there?

The thought of someone stalking Keisha angered him, and he quickly pushed to the back of his mind the thought that he was doing basically the same thing. The big difference was that Canyon didn't intend to hurt one single hair on Keisha's head. He couldn't say the same for the bozo in front of him.

The last thing the other driver needed to know was where she lived. If she was heading home, he didn't have time to wait for Pete. Pete's office was on the other side of town. There was no telling how long it would take him to get here. At that moment, Canyon made a decision.

He would handle the situation himself.

Keisha swayed her body to the music blaring out of her car radio. She loved satellite stations with continuous commercial-free music, and she especially liked this channel, which played her favorite hits nonstop. And today she needed to hear them.

It had been one of those kinds of days.

It had started at ten, in court. She'd barely had time to grab lunch before rushing back to the courthouse for another case at one. Around three, she had returned to her office only to be pulled into a meeting she'd forgotten about. She was glad to have left work to start what would be a busy weekend.

Even knowing everything she had to do over the next two days did not dampen her mood. She'd won three cases this week, and she knew her bosses, Leonard Spivey and Adam Whitlock, were pleased.

Three years ago, Leonard hadn't liked it when she'd given him only a week's notice before leaving Denver and moving back home to Texas. But because she'd been one of the firm's best attorneys, he'd been kind enough to give her a very good recommendation—and to welcome her back to the firm when she'd needed to return.

Sometimes things happened for a reason. When she'd moved to Texas, it hadn't taken her long to land another job at a law firm in Austin. And had she not returned home, she probably would not have found out about her mother's breast cancer scare.

Luckily, Keisha had been there for her mother during that difficult time. The two of them had always been

close. Lynn Ashford was a strong and independent single parent. After the man who'd fathered Keisha denied she was his, Lynn had moved away from her hometown of Austin and settled with her daughter in Baton Rouge. Then, when Keisha's grandfather had died when she was fifteen, she and her mother had returned to Austin to be there for Keisha's grandmother.

There had been many hard times while growing up. To compensate, her mother had worked two jobs, leaving Keisha in the care of her grandmother. But seeing how hard her mother had worked without the help of a man had shown Keisha that if push came to shove, she could do the same.

Her heart ached when she thought about the man who had proved that fact to her. Canyon Westmoreland.

She'd fallen in love with him the first day she'd laid eyes on him, but that love ended when she discovered he'd been unfaithful to her. She could tolerate a lot of things, but the one thing she wouldn't tolerate was infidelity. Trust was paramount and a loss of it meant an end to everything...even a relationship that had held so much promise. Or she'd thought it'd had promise. Obviously she had been wrong.

Now, after three years, she was back in Denver. The scandal that had hit the law firm where she'd worked in Austin, and the firm's eventual shutdown by the Texas Bar and the justice department, had made leaving a necessity. She'd known she would miss her mom, and that she was taking a chance with her decision to return to Denver, but Spivey and Whitlock was the one law office where she wouldn't have to start at the bottom. She needed the money because she had more than herself to think about these days. However, to assure that she didn't run into Canyon, other than for business, she'd deliberately moved clear on the other side of town from Westmoreland Country.

She knew the story of how Canyon's parents, aunt and uncle had died in a plane crash, leaving fifteen orphans. Staying together hadn't been easy, especially since several of the siblings and cousins had been under the age of sixteen. But together, the Westmoreland family had weathered hard times and was now enjoying the good times thanks to the success of the family's land management firm, Blue Ridge.

Canyon's parents had had seven sons: Dillon, Micah, Jason, Riley, Canyon, Stern and Brisbane. His aunt and uncle had had eight children: five boys—Ramsey, Zane, Derringer and the twins Aiden and Adrian; and three girls—Megan, Gemma and Bailey. From what Keisha knew, the majority of the Westmorelands were now college educated and successful in their own right, either working for the family firm or in their chosen profession. She'd met most of them when she had attended the annual Westmoreland Ball while she was dating Canyon. The ball was a huge event in the city and benefited a number of charities.

Her thoughts shifted back to one Westmoreland in particular. Canyon.

The *Grand Canyon*, as she would sometimes call him during more intimate moments.

The memories of those times hurt the most. She had loved him and had believed he loved her. She had opened her heart, and her home, to him. He had moved in with her after they'd dated for six months. She'd assumed their relationship was moving in the right direction. He had proved her wrong.

The blaring of a horn prompted her to glance in her rearview mirror. *What in the world?* she asked herself, frowning.

The drivers of the two cars behind her were engaging in some kind of road rage. It appeared that the driver of a burgundy car was trying to run the driver of a black sedan off the road.



Deciding the last thing she needed was to get involved in what was going on with those two drivers, she increased her speed and drove on ahead, leaving behind what she perceived as two hotheads vying to be king of the road.

Keisha checked the clock on the dashboard. She was eager to reach her destination and the person waiting for her there.

## **Users Review**

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