

\*FREE\* The Corsican Caper: A novel [EPUB complete]

## **\*FREE\* The Corsican Caper: A novel by Par Peter Mayle [EPUB complete]**

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*Présentation de l'éditeur* Here is Peter Mayle at his effervescent best—his master sleuth, Sam Levitt, eating, drinking, and romancing his way through the South of France even as he investigates a case of deadly intrigue among the Riviera's jet set. Billionaire Francis Reboul is taking in the view at his coastal estate, awaiting the arrival of vacationing friends Sam Levitt and Elena Morales, when he spies a massive yacht whose passengers seem a little too interested in his property. The yacht belongs to rapacious Russian tycoon Oleg Vronsky, who, for his own purposes, will stop at nothing to obtain Reboul's villa. When Reboul refuses to sell, Vronsky's methods quickly turn unsavory. Now it's up to Sam—he's saved Reboul's neck before—to negotiate with an underworld of mercenaries and hit men, not to mention the Corsican mafia, to prevent his friend from becoming a victim of Vronsky's "Russian diplomacy." The dire situation doesn't stop Sam and Elena from attending glamorous fêtes where the wines and starlets alike sparkle, and enjoying sumptuous meals—from multicourse revelations to understated delights like the first asparagus of the season, on which one must make a wish. But as Sam's sleuthing draws him closer to the truth of Vronsky's schemes, he realizes Reboul might not be the only one unable to enjoy the good life for long. Brimming with entertaining twists, sparkling scenery, and mouthwatering gustatory interludes as only Peter Mayle can write them, *The Corsican Caper* is a one-way ticket to pleasure, Provençal style. This eBook edition includes a Reading Group Guide.

*Extrait* Chapter One Francis Reboul sat in the sunshine, contemplating his breakfast: a shot glass of extra--virgin olive oil, which the French insist is so beneficial for le transit intestinal, followed by a large bowl of café crème and a croissant of such exquisite lightness that it threatened to float off the plate. He was sitting on his terrace, the shimmering sweep of the early morning Mediterranean stretching away to the horizon. Life was good. Sam Levitt and Elena Morales, Reboul's close friends and partners in past adventures, were arriving from California later in the day for an extended vacation. They had planned to sail around Corsica and perhaps down to Saint--Tropez then to spend some time at Reboul's horse farm in the Camargue and to revisit some of Marseille's excellent restaurants. It had been a year since they had seen one another—a busy year for them all—and there was a lot to catch up on. Reboul put down his newspaper, squinting against the glare that bounced off the water. A couple of small sail-boats were tacking their way toward the islands of Frioul. While he was watching them, Reboul's attention was caught by something that was beginning to appear from behind the headland. It gradually became more visible, and bigger. Much bigger. It was, as he would later tell Sam, the mother of all yachts—three hundred feet if it was an inch, sleek and dark blue, with four decks, radar, the obligatory helicopter squatting on its pad in the stern, and not one but two Riva speedboats in tow. It was now in front of Reboul, no more than three or four hundred yards offshore. It slowed, and drifted to a stop. A row of tiny figures appeared on the top deck, all gazing, it seemed to Reboul, directly at him. Over the years, he had become quite used to this kind of scrutiny from the sea. His house, Le Palais du Pharo, originally built for Napoleon III, was the biggest private residence in Marseille, and the most glamorous. Everything from one--man sailboats to the crowded local ferries had stopped, at one time or another, for a long, if distant, inspection of Chez Reboul. Telescopes, binoculars, cameras—he was used to them by now. He shrugged, and hid behind his newspaper. On board the yacht, Oleg Vronsky—Oli to his friends and numerous hangers--on, and "The Barracuda" to the international business press—turned to Natasha, the statuesque young woman whom he had appointed his personal first mate for the voyage. "This is more like it," he said. "Yes. This is more like it." He smiled, making the deep, livid scar on his cheek pucker. Apart from that, he would have been a good-looking man. Although a little on the short side, he was slim, his thick gray hair was cut en brosse, and his eyes were that shade of icy blue often found in people from the frozen north. He had spent the past week cruising along the Riviera coast, stopping off to look at properties on Cap Ferrat, Cap d'Antibes, Cannes, and Saint--Tropez. And he had been disappointed. He was prepared to spend serious money, fifty million euros or more, but he had seen nothing that made him want to reach for his wallet. There were some fine


houses, certainly, but too close to one another. The Riviera had become crowded, that was the problem, and Vronsky was looking for plenty of space and maximum privacy—and no Russian neighbors. There were so many of them on Cap Ferrat nowadays that the more enterprising locals were taking Russian lessons and learning to like vodka. Vronsky took a cell phone from his pocket and pressed the single button that connected him to Katya, his personal assistant. She had been with him before the billions, when he was no more than a lowly millionaire, and she was one of the very few people who had his absolute trust. “Tell Johnny to come and see me on the top deck, would you? And tell him to get ready for a quick trip. Oh, have we heard back from London yet?” Vronsky was negotiating to buy an English football team from an Arab consortium, not the easiest group of people to deal with, and he was becoming impatient. Somewhat encouraged by Katya’s reply, he turned back to resume his inspection of Reboul’s property, pushing his sunglasses up onto his head and adjusting the focus of his binoculars. No doubt about it, the setting was superb, and it seemed, from what he could see, that there were ample grounds around the house, undoubtedly enough for a discreet helicopter pad. Vronsky felt the first stirrings of what would quickly develop into a full-scale lust to acquire. “Where to, boss?” Johnny from Jamaica gave Vronsky the benefit of his wide white smile, a gleaming gash across his ebony face. During his time as a mercenary in Libya, he had learned to fly helicopters, a useful addition to his other skills with weapons and the finer points of unarmed combat. A good man to have on your side. “A short hop, Johnny. A little reconnaissance. You’ll need a camera and someone who can use it.” Vronsky took the Jamaican’s arm and led him to a less crowded part of the deck. Reboul dipped the final bite of his croissant into his coffee and looked up from his paper. The yacht was still there. He could see two figures in the stern busying themselves around the helicopter’s landing gear before climbing in, and then the rotor blades began to turn. He wondered idly where they were off to, and returned to the news of the day as reported in *La Provence*. Why was it that, even with the season long since over, journalists devoted so much space to football players and their antics? He sighed, put aside the paper, and picked up the *Financial Times*. The noise was sudden and shocking. Flying low, the helicopter was heading directly toward him. It slowed, then hovered above the terrace before making a couple of circuits around the house and its gardens. As it tilted to make a turn, Reboul could see the long lens of a camera poking out of the side window. This was unacceptable. Reboul took out his phone and tapped in the number of the chief of police in Marseille, a friend. “Hervé, it’s Francis. Sorry to bother you, but I’m being buzzed by some lunatic in a helicopter. He’s flying low and he’s taking photographs. Any chance of sending a Mirage jet over to discourage him?” Hervé laughed. “How about an official helicopter? I can send one of the boys out now.” But the intruding helicopter, with one final swoop over the terrace, was now on its way back to the yacht. “Don’t bother,” said Reboul. “He’s gone.” “Did you see any of his registration markings?” “No—I was too busy ducking. But he’s going back to a yacht that’s opposite the *Pointe du Pharo*, maybe heading for the *Vieux Port*. It’s a huge, dark-blue thing the size of a *paquebot*.” “That won’t be too hard to find. I’ll look into it and get back to you.” “Thanks, Hervé. Lunch next time is on me.” Vronsky leaned over Katya as she connected the camera to her computer and brought up the first of the photographs. Like many rich and powerful men, his grasp of the details of modern technology was sketchy. “There,” said Katya, “just press this key to change the images.” Vronsky peered at the screen in silence, his shoulders hunched in concentration. As one image followed another—the perfectly proportioned architecture, the immaculate gardens, the absence of close neighbors—he started nodding. Finally he sat back and smiled at Katya. “Find out who owns that house. I want it.” *Revue de presse* “A light frolic of suspense.... I... enjoyed every moment of an escape into the world of champagne for lunch and a snack of escargot and caviar.” —*Suspense Magazine* “What floats in this novel are the bubbles from the champagne that always seems to be chilled and waiting, along with Mayle’s usual airy descriptions of French wines and meals.” —*Booklist* “Readers who want to engage by proxy in the lives of Europe’s mega-wealthy will... appreciate this frothy bit of fun from bestseller Mayle.” —*Publishers Weekly* “Richly descriptive... smooth as the most decadent dessert.” —*Kirkus* “A delightful confection.” —*I Love a Mystery* “Cracking open *The Corsican Capers*... is the next best thing to being there.... Bon

*appétit!” —Examiner.com From the Hardcover edition.*

*Par Peter Mayle*

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