



# The Ruin

*Kenneth Fenter*

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## **The Ruin** Kenneth Fenter

The Ruin takes place in rural Southwestern Colorado in the summer and winter of 1954-55. It is a time when corporal punishment is common at school and at home. boys faced with school yard bulleys are expected to "man up". The contemporary portion is set in the year 2000 after successive years of school shootings caused in part by disturbed boys who have been persistently bullied.

The Ruin is a story about bullying, damaged lives, and the tragic consequences that too often end in suicide or even the ultimate tragedy: school shootings.

The Ruin begins with retiring English teacher Clifton Kelley caring for his class during a school lock down, because across town a boy is shooting classmates in the school cafeteria. Kelley flashes back 40 years to himself as a 14 year old boy, who after years of school-yard bullying, is driven to make the decision whether to aim his rifle at the boys who have bullied and beaten him or seek refuge from his rage by fleeing to the wilderness.

The Ruin then becomes the story of his survival using the knowledge he has gained from his parents and the Museum at Mesa Verde National Park. For the next year he takes shelter in a cliff dwelling in the foothill canyons of Mesa Verde. He finds the strength to overcome fear of the dark, hunger and the severe climate on the 7,000-foot foothill plateau. There he gathers food, learns to hunt using a primitive weapon, stores food for the winter, and devises clothing to protect himself from the harsh mountain climate.

The boy connects with the spirits of the long departed Ancient Puebloans whose dwelling he finds home. Spare time in his long days of solitude become a time of introspection, communing with nature, and creativity.

Nearing the anniversary of his disappearance the lessons of the experience are put to the test.

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