



Hall, Paul L.
**PLACES THE DEAD CALL
HOME**
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Four unlikely travel companions head to Mesa Verde National Park in New Mexico, unaware that a hired Native-American killer is tracking them.

Josh is comfortable with his anonymous life as a Phoenix bartender. But out of nowhere, his cousin Frankie, a former Detroit police officer, wants to visit. Frankie has found Josh's dead mother's journal, and the contents allude to spiritual and ancestral secrets at Mesa Verde. Though Josh's parents were killed in an apparently senseless gas-station robbery, and he has grown up uninterested in the curious road trip that culminated in their deaths, he's happy to see Frankie. Meanwhile, a reporter, Jeffrey, is investigating the mysterious and apocryphal suicide of his father, a successful military officer. Jeffrey thinks Josh, who was a military policeman on the base when the suicide took place, might have insights, and he also heads to Phoenix.

Along the way, Jeffrey picks up beautiful hitchhiker Jeanette, who has several ever-changing reasons why she's on the run. When the foursome joins forces they unintentionally antagonize local sociopath Tommy Three Hands, who in turn meets a powerful army general with plenty of reason to stop Jeffrey. Hall doesn't always succeed in convincing the reader that the four protagonists and the bad guys would actually work and travel together—in terms of chemistry, logistics and realistic behavior. But he writes with fluid economy, skillfully develops each character and uses sneaky and often spectacular wit to propel the action. Despite seemingly disparate threads, he manages to tie it all together.

Clever and funny enough, and quirkily structured, to pull off the tale.

