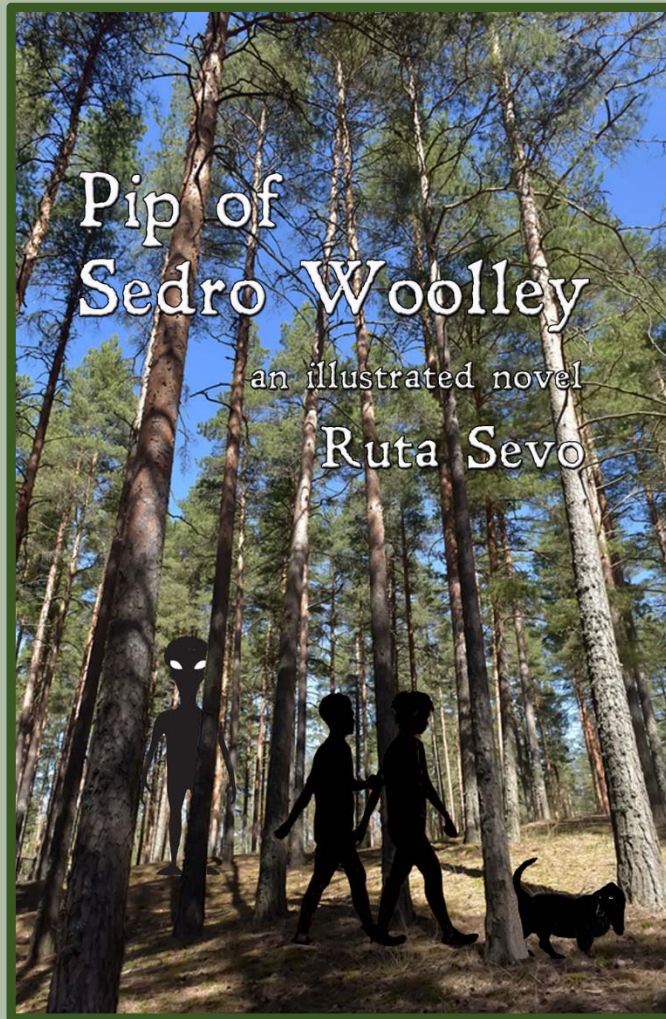




PIP OF SEDRO WOOLLEY

an illustrated novel

Ruta Sevo

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"See us cuddle and hug," say the Pleiades,

"All six in a ring: it keeps us warm:

We huddle together like birds in a storm:

It's bitter weather tonight."

Robert Graves (1895–1985) *Star Talk*

"What we think is impossible is in fact possible."

Mary Rodwell, *Awakening*, p. 271

"The Universe is entirely mental. ... The Universe is immaterial--mental and spiritual. ... Nothing exists but observations."

Richard Conn Henry, "The mental universe" in *NATURE*, vol 436/7, July 2005

"The very strength of our resistance to the evidence on UFOs suggests to me that there is clearly a phenomenon of surpassing importance here."

Dr. Robert L. Hall, Professor of Sociology,
University of Illinois (paper presented to the American Association for the
Advancement of Science, 1969)

"Reality is merely an illusion. ... The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion."

Albert Einstein

PART ONE: NEED TO RISE

A Departure

ESME CAME DOWN FOR BREAKFAST and saw her mother crumpled over the dining table, crying her eyes out. "Caroline's dead! I don't believe it!"

Now tears flooded her eyes too. "What happened?" Caroline was her godmother and practically a member of the family.

"Somebody called the police and said to go check her house." Molly was still in her dark-green terry-cloth robe, her shoulder-length blond hair disheveled from sleep. The phone was face down on the table. She didn't look like she could move.

"So, they're on their way there?" asked Esme.

"Yes. I assume."

Esme ran to the stairs and called up: "Simon! Simon! Come on!" There was no time to lose. She knew there was something at Caroline's house that couldn't stay there. Caroline had another role in Esme's life: she was the leader of their secret group, and, most important right now, the guardian of a precious object.

They grabbed their summer jackets.

"We'll go over there, Mom," said Esme.

"Don't get in the way, my dears. I'll call the police and whoever, too, and try to help them sort things out." Molly sounded like she didn't believe there was a crime involved. Something had made Caroline go. She was healthy two days ago. "We can't bring her back. Her things are nothing. Even her body. You know her heart is with us." She choked.

"I'm sorry, Mom." Esme dumped her cereal bowl in the sink. She went over to Molly and hugged her. "You just chill. One day at a time." Esme was only twelve, but she'd been around Caroline and Molly so long that she sounded like them when she was nurturing.

They pedaled their bikes as hard as they could to beat the police to Caroline's house, only a mile away, but they were too late. There were four police cars clustered in front of her godmother's house, willy-nilly, as if there'd been a shoot-out.

When they saw the police, they got off and walked their bikes down the middle of the gravel road, slowly, as if they were just passing through.

Esme kept her voice low. "Remember we've got to stay invisible," she said to Simon. "That's the most important thing. Off the radar."

Then, as if talking to herself: "We have to play a long game. We could be set back centuries. We do NOT want them to 'get to know us.' Quite the opposite."

She looked straight at Simon to make sure he was listening. He was only ten. You couldn't always count on him to listen. Sage Sherman had taught her, and now she needed to coach Simon. One way to coach him was to think out loud.

It was mid-afternoon, and overcast. You could feel the perpetual Mist of the Northwest in the air, letting a few drops form now and then, carrying the smell of wet evergreen. Greenery everywhere was dewy but not dripping.

They stopped just as Officer Kameron waved them to stay away. He was tying police tape across the chain link fence in front of the house, because any minute, reporters might arrive, from Seattle or Bellingham.

"You kids don't need to stop here," he said, with forced modulation. His belly looked swollen under his shirt. The sloppy bulge was inconsistent with the authority of the uniform; he was not in control of that bulge. His shirt tails were uncomfortably shoved into his pants, also too tight. It wasn't often a group of police were called for, in this neck of the world. Their team had shown up "all out."

"Okay, Sir," said Esme, remembering Sherman's advice. Low profile. It wasn't every day that Kameron was called "sir." She knew that.

"Stay over on the other side of the road. There'll be cars pulling up any minute. Watch out." He smiled, putting on the gentle face he used around kids in school. He seemed to be trying not to come on strong.

"We will, Mr. Kameron." Esme knew him from his visits at school, talking about safety.

She was light-brown, with painter's hat, untucked plaid seen a wash in many muddy cute, but she preferred



sloppy reddish-black hair, a dirty shirt, jeans, and sneakers that hadn't months. Kind people would call her unremarkable.

Simon on the other hand as a boy with a will. Only ten, he but his body was moving with muscular assertion. Rock climbing had trained him to move with deliberate, precise movements, unafraid. The balance of his lean body was, yes, remarkable.

was tall and heading toward worry had the tousled hair of a little boy,

Nothing had happened, yet, to make them aware of being biracial.



Many eons in the past and many eons in the future, and well, really in the no-time and no-space of the universe, and in the now, a soul group of Pleiadians chose to reincarnate on Earth, and come to live in Sedro Woolley, as part of their soul-healing mission. Their bodies are light energy but in Earthly form they take the shape of star-seeds: humans and animals with slightly modified DNA. In this way they are like missionaries who "go native" but have an additional agenda, which is to help humans evolve to a higher dimension and to prevent the destruction of the Earth.

Thus, Simon was born into Esme's family two years after her, and they recognized each other, and started to recognize other Pleiadians, especially when Caroline found them and various animals in Sedro Woolley.

Although Esme treated Simon like an apprentice, they both knew that they'd go into the future as peers, eventually. They'd been allies from the git-go. As a big sister on Earth, Esme appreciated the playmate, and the trainee in him, as soon as he'd arrived. He appreciated that he was allowed to do a lot of things because Esme was there to help him and protect him. She didn't pull power plays on him, like a typical older sibling, making him do humiliating things to remind him that he was the second kid. In fact, she'd been possessive and protective of him since she was two years old. Their parents trusted her with him. For Simon, she was adventurous, fun to follow, and a natural body guard, which, it turns out, he needed.

His windbreaker said "Windhill Horse Rescue" in white letters on navy pseudo-satin. His mom had picked it up used. He wore shabby, high-end canvas climbing shoes. Their family thrived on the fringes of richer people and their stuff.

The kids watched an old, blue, dirty Honda civic pull up and deliver two people, a girl and a guy in their early twenties. If they were reporters, they were as junior as you could be. It was an hour's drive from Seattle, or half an hour from Bellingham, a gloomy day in August. The two barely glanced at the kids, heading for the Officer.

"Hey there," the guy said to Kameron, "Seattle Times. We're here for the story."

"Fine. Expecting you. We're roped off in case we get a crowd. You're the first."

"Super," said the guy. He pulled out a smart phone and spoke into it. "Sedro Woolley. August 15th. Dead person in a farm house."

He turned to Kameron. "What happened?"

"Well," said Officer Kameron, seeming reluctant to give a long speech to just two people. "We got a call that the resident lady, Caroline Milarep, needed to be checked on. When the first officer got here, he found that she was gone, probably deceased."

"What do you mean 'probably?'" asked the girl.

"There were remains in one of the rooms."

"Remains? You mean her body?"

"No, ma'am. I mean remains. A pile of ashes, with a few bits indicating it had been a body."

"Wow. Wait." The two looked quite alert, now. "What bits are we talking about?"

"Nails. Teeth. What might be left in a cremation situation."

Esme had never actually seen cremation remains, and had no frame of reference for what he said. She looked at Simon, hoping that he wasn't tempted to jump in with his own questions.

Kameron continued, "Something like the finest gray dust you might empty from a barbecue grill, only inside the dust were clearly human parts. The small amount of dust wasn't even hot. One breath would disturb most of it."

"There was a fire?"

"No. No fire."

"How do you explain that?"

"Well," Kameron took a step back, defensively. "We don't yet. Never seen it before. Our people are taking photos and samples now."

"And who called you?"

"We don't know. Anonymous phone call. Last night. Could've been a neighbor. They weren't upset. Just matter of fact. Like we shouldn't leave the house empty, as it seemed to be."

Argggh, thought Esme. If they'd just held off. Was it somebody just trying to be helpful? Or, a grumpy neighbor. Somebody who watched Caroline, looking for something to report. Something that might make them feel that they just had to do something about her. Sound the alarm.

Or, a new client. Some unsuspecting lady, blundering into a shocking discovery. Maybe not finding her home when they were scheduled to see her.

Caroline had visitors coming to her house from all over, for psychic consultations and healing. Services that anybody in Seattle wouldn't blink at, but in Sedro Woolley, they used the word "witch." Might be. Not your usual down-and-out old lady with a colorful past that probably involved a drunken husband, lost jobs, scrapping by with minimum-wage jobs into her old age, barely still on her feet.

In fact, if she had just been the usual drunk and poor, they would have found her boring. Like a lot of other people. That kind of person was understandable. Although among them, in Sedro Woolley, were other colorful types. Early on, homesteaders looking for work with the lumber yards and railway. Mental hospital staff and "graduated" patients, many who were first- and second-generation immigrants. Hippies who'd migrated North from Haight-Ashbury fifty years ago, to Oregon and Western Washington, and then they had children, and who knows what those kids turned into. Caroline was very New Age, with flowing shirts and skirts, and quite presentable, not scruffy. She made it hard for busy-bodies to label her dangerous.

Officer Kameron continued to brief the reporters. It was a poor media turnout. Seattle folks probably scratched their heads when they got the lead. People died in Sedro Woolley all the time, and it was rarely newsworthy. It was another rural area off everyone's radar. Sleepy. Woody. Many working class, poor people. Old mountaineers settling into the foothills of Mt. Baker. Drop-outs who didn't want a nine-to-five job, just piece work. People who lived on disability and unemployment benefits, or a green harvest from Las Vegas. You could get by, in Sedro Woolley, with an RV and a truck. Silly stereotypes stuck, while the population was shifting to people who were building million-dollar homes and using the place as a bedroom community, commuting to Seattle for work.

Esme knew Caroline's house as if it were her own. She recoiled at the thought of curious strangers traipsing through its back rooms. A violation, really.

"I sure hope she's gone," she said to Simon. "This is like an autopsy. These people are looking for crazy, strange. She would've opened her door for them, and now they can just walk in."

"Esme," Simon adjusted his grip on the handlebars, as if a thought had woken his body, "She's invited them in, in any case. You know she wouldn't mind."

"You're right. Another way to make'em think, I guess."

The house was small but pretty. It had a Swedish look, wood painted dark red and tidy windows. Caroline wasn't poor, and she took care of it. The trim around windows and doors had been painted a clean white. The windows were washed. The porch swept. No broken banisters or rails. The yard was wild grass but tamed to provide a pretty soft carpet up to the fence. It was not a psychic's haven with wind chimes, Tibetan flags, and butterfly lawn ornaments. In fact, Caroline's life was fairly austere: she'd said she preferred a rich inner life to a flashy, cluttered space.



The reporters turned to the kids with their bikes.

"Did you know Mrs. Milarep?" one asked.

"Not really," said Simon with a straight, know-nothing face.

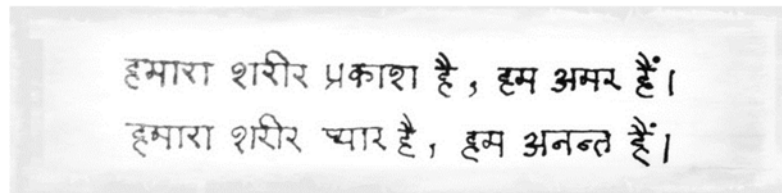
The reporters were quick to give up. Just kids. Gawking.

They turned to walk away.

"Drat. We have a problem," Esme said under her breath.



A little article in the Seattle Times used the word "mystery" in the title. It said the police did not suspect foul play, because they found a note, blatantly left on the kitchen table. It said, "Hello, to whom it may concern. Welcome to my house. I am indeed gone. Please be gentle with my property." Also, on the note was something that no one could decipher, so the newspaper printed it and asked for help:



According to the article, the handling of Caroline's property was turned over to the Office of Social Services, who would look for the next of kin, and a will.

RELATED BOOKS

Sedro-Woolley Historical Museum (2003). *Images of America: Sedro-Woolley Washington*

McGoffin, M.J. (2011). *Under the Red Roof: One Hundred Years at Northern State Hospital*

Winters, Randolph (1944). *The Pleiadian Mission: A Time of Awareness*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Novels (available on amazon.com, ebook and paperback):



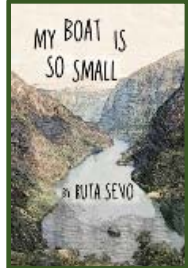
Vilnius Diary (2011)

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White Bird (2014)

An accidental death launches a brother into strange, foreign adventures



My Boat Is So Small (2017)

Hazards of sex and marriage

Website and blog: <https://momox.org>

BIO:

Sevo is a boomer, a woman of the sixties. Her fiction probably involves foreign travel, spirituality, the conventions of love, and finding yourself.

See author pages:

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