

Introduction

Sky News The Canadian Magazine of Astronomy & Stargazing May/June 2004 issue:

“Though the definition of a planet—and the status of Pluto—has become a tense topic in astronomy over the past decade, nothing has energized the debate more than the discovery of Sedna. Some astronomers say if Pluto is a planet, Sedna is clearly a planet too.”

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Chapter One

JULE OPENED HIS eyes blinking rapidly trying to focus on his surroundings. A small maroon light shone brilliantly in an otherwise black and white environment.

He tried to move forward in the seat but was quickly pulled back. The calmness his sleep to Sedna had provided dissolved quickly into anxiety as beads of sweat began forming on his forehead though the air was cool and fresh. His mind raced to connect the dots. *Went fishing this morning. Met Albert. Caught steelhead. Released steelhead. Spacecraft appeared. Touched Albert's hand. Inside spacecraft. Take-off. Saw family standing beside the river looking skyward. Watched Albert fly spacecraft. Fell asleep.*

Jule took a deep breath to clear his head as he ran his hand across his damp forehead trying to figure out exactly where he was. *I'm still in the spacecraft. Does this mean I'm on Sedna? Where's Albert?* He was hoping this was just a dream as he tried to unbuckle the seatbelt but couldn't find the release. He searched frantically up and down the strap but still couldn't find the release button. Frustrated, he began tugging and yelling.

Suddenly, the lights in the spacecraft switched on filling it with the brilliant colours he remembered when he first sat in his seat.

“What are you doing in that seat?”

Jule looked toward the entrance of the spacecraft. “Dad?” Jule watched as his father walked over to the control area and lightly tapped the maroon button releasing him instantly. Though the seatbelt had retreated, Jule sat very still in his seat.

“I'll ask you again, Son. Why are you sitting in that seat? And why didn't you hit the button yourself?”

He wasn't sure how to answer the last question. “I was trying to see what it's like from this perspective.”

His father found this unusual but didn't comment any further. “Well now you're free, we had better get home. Our meal is probably on the table.”

Jule got up from his seat trying to figure out how he could have hit the maroon button three metres away from where he had been strapped in. He stood quietly beside his father.

“Are you okay, Son?”

He continued staring at his father.

“Jule, why are you looking at me so strangely? Are you sure you are alright?”

He hesitated before answering. “Yes, I’m fine Dad.”

“Let’s go then,” Dad said leading the way. They were just about to disembark when Jule stopped, frozen in place.

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Chapter Two

KRISTEN TURNED AND watched Dad try to console her mother. She had sat on the rock gazing skyward for so long her butt was killing her, not to mention the kink in her neck.

She stood up and did some neck circles to ease the pain as she walked over to where the spaceship once stood and studied the mark of Sedna stamped in the damp sand. She fell to her knees and began digging with her bare hands into the sand surrounding the mark, trying furiously to cover it. But each time she thought it was covered, the mark of Sedna would reappear. Again and again she tried but each time her effort was in vain. “Jule where are you? Where are you?” she cried grabbing handfuls of sand and throwing them on the mark. “Where are you? Where are you?”

Dad sat down and cradled his hysterical daughter in his arms. “It’s okay. It’s okay,” he said as convincingly as possible.

Kristen was having no part of that. “It’s not okay! Jule’s gone and we don’t have any idea where. We can’t even go to the police to report him missing,” she sobbed.

Dad gently stroked her head. It was true. There was no one to go to for help. Who would believe their story? *Our son, Jule, has been taken away by his twin, Albert, from Sedna and we have no idea when or if he will be back.*

Mom walked over and stood beside them. “We have to go home and contact the police. Our son is missing.”

Dad helped Kristen to her feet. “What do we say to them? They will think we are all nuts.”

“I don’t care who thinks we are nuts,” Mom said tersely. “We have to do something!” She too was on the verge of hysterics, once again. She had to keep some sort of perspective or she would completely lose it. “Let’s go!”

They re-traced their footsteps back to the woods to locate Jule’s backpack; each silently hoping he would be sitting there feeding the chickadees.

When they reached the area, Mom gasped. “It’s gone!”

“Are we sure this is the area where it was?” Dad said moving around the area like a misplaced ant looking for its colony.

“Yes!” Kristen said. “Here’s the empty bag the sunflower seeds were in.”

Unconsciously she began waving the plastic bag in front of her. “You don’t suppose

that Jule was here then went home...” before she could finish her thought, the three were bolting through the woods and down the road toward the house.