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The Sorrow of Archaeology: A Novel

Russell Martin

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"This child and I are siblings surely, sisters of stone and bone and the curious accident of birth."--from *The Sorrow of Archaeology*

One hot Colorado afternoon, physician-turned-archaeologist Sarah MacLeish unearths the skeleton of an Ancestral Puebloan girl with a deformed leg. Her efforts to understand something of the long-ago life of that girl confront her with the flaws in her own body, and in her marriage. Sarah struggles with multiple sclerosis, and she is increasingly persuaded that her husband, archaeologist Harry MacLeish, is profoundly discontented in their childless marriage.

Sarah must contend too with the question of where she comes from, what she remains capable of accomplishing in her life, how she can live up to the values of her grandmother--whose long life is drawing to its inevitable close--and whether she has either the power or the will to shape the days that remain to her.

Employing archaeology as both subject and metaphor, this is a provocative and always lyrical book whose characters grapple with the deepest human questions: How can we know who we really are? What is best for us? How do we construct satisfying narratives of our lives out of the broken materials fate hands us? Set near Mesa Verde in southwestern Colorado, where the author grew up and lived for many years, it is a novel rich with archaeological, cultural, medical, and emotional truths.

"Russell Martin has shaped a beautiful novel filled with grace, love and wisdom. Digging metaphorically through ruins to create understanding, *The Sorrow of Archaeology* is a tale that powerfully examines cruelty, decency, dignity, and courage--with emotion that gathers like thunderclouds holding the promise of rain."--David Lee, author of *Legacy of Shadows*, *My Town*, and *So Quietly the Earth*

"Russell Martin's *The Sorrow of Archaeology* is filled with characters you'll not only recognize but come to care for deeply. It's a lovely and always thoughtful novel that refuses to settle for easy answers to life's dilemmas, both large and small. It's what Martin's readers expect from him: a patient and thorough digging beneath the surface of things that's sometimes painful but consistently revelatory."--Lisa Lenard-Cook, author of *Dissonance* and *Coyote Morning*

"Russell Martin's work is a good Southwestern weave with threads that one is compelled to follow."--Kate Horsley, author of *Careless Love* (UNM Press)

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