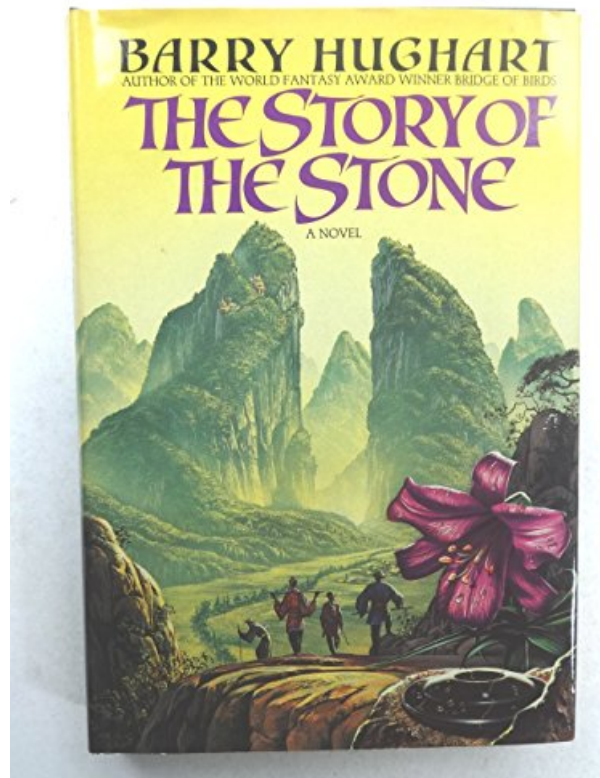
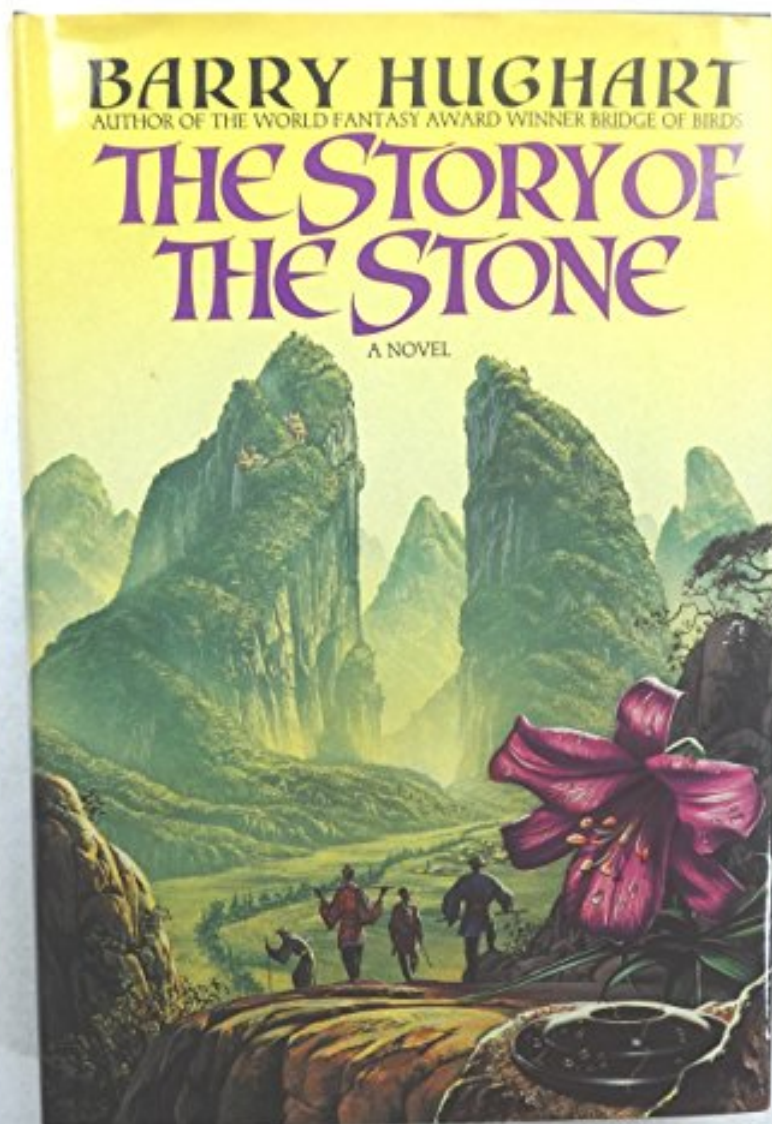


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Set in a mythical, medieval China where folklore and history are indistinguishable, a dead monk, an ancient and now missing manuscript, and a ghostly murderer entice the venerable Master Li and his faithful companion Number Ten Ox into the Valley of Sorrows for a deadly and uproarious confrontation with the long-dead Laughing Prince. This sequel to *Bridge of Birds* (Del Rey, 1985) reaffirms Hughart's gift for comic fantasy as well as his talent for ingenious storytelling. JC  
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1988 Foundation Book, Book Club Edition

- Sales Rank: #1007400 in Books
- Published on: 1988-05-01
- Released on: 1988-05-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover
- 249 pages

From Library Journal

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This is the second in the series starting with "the ...

By Amazon Customer

This is the second in the series starting with "the Bridge of Birds".

I first purchased / read the "Bridge ..." in 1986. I was not aware of the other books in this series until a few years ago.

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

The Second Best Book You've Never Read

By James D. DeWitt

This is Hughart's second book, and the second Master Li and Number Ten Ox adventure. And while this book doesn't have quite the sheer delight of the first, "Bridge of Birds," it is still a wonderful adventure set in the same mythical China. And this novel confirms what you suspected after "Bridge of Birds" - Hughart is no fluke.

Chinese peasant Number Ten Ox, Master Li's client in the first book, is his assistant now, and troubled because it appears ancient Master Li may drop dead before another worthwhile mystery comes along. Ox need not have worried. The Abbot of the monastery in the Valley of Sorrows arrives with a tale of murder, terror and the return of the Laughing Prince, the lunatic despot who ruled the Valley of Sorrows 750 years earlier. How can Master Li resist the temptation? How can we resist?

Once again Master Li and Number Ten Ox must solve a mystery, and once again the mystery is fringed with the supernatural, homicide and genuine, laugh out loud developments. Along the way they meet some truly memorable characters, including Grief of Dawn, a young lady with a deeply mysterious past, and Moon Boy,

a sound master and an entirely marvellous creation.

Perhaps the best invention is the characters' mind trip through the Chinese Hell, which makes the efforts of Orpheus and Dante look pretty pitiful in comparison. The ending is less of a stunner than "Bridge of Birds," but this story is a little more mature and tightly crafted than "Bridge."

The only fair criticism of "Stone" is that Hughart only wrote one more book, "Eight Skilled Gentlemen." There have to be Master Li stories not yet told; I wish Mr. Hughart would write them.

A wonderful story, amusing and moving, that exposes the reader to parts of Chinese mythology in the nicest possible way. Exceptionally well written. Highly recommended.

18 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Master Li and Number Ten Ox do it again!

By A Customer

I am Barry Hughart's number one fan.

With that said, I recommend this book without reservation. In fact, any book involving Hughart's alter-ego, Master Li, and Hughart's young hero, Number Ten Ox, would be high on my "must read" list.

I just re-read this tale of a mad prince and his array of fascinating characters and was just as enchanted and entertained as I was the first time I read it in ten years ago.

If you're looking for a wonder-filled story with character that will stay with you long after you turn the final page, read this book!

You can also do yourself a huge favor by purchasing "Bridge of Birds" and "Eight Skilled Gentlemen," the only other Master Li/Number Ten Ox adventures. "Bridge of Birds" was Hughart's first effort and the book introduces the reader to Master Li...the most interesting character is all of fiction.....

After all, how can you NOT love someone who introduces himself by saying:

"My surname is Li and my personal name is Kao, and there is a slight flaw in my character"?

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