



Core of Stone

R.L. King

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Core of Stone R.L. King UNACCEPTABLE LOSSES

Alastair Stone knew it would take a big sacrifice to end the Evil's hold over our world. He was ready to make that sacrifice—but he expected it to be his life.

Never in his worst nightmares did he think it would be his magic.

Despairing and grief-stricken at the loss of the abilities that defined his existence, he's on the fast track to self-destruction when a dear friend convinces him to take a desperate last chance. He heads to Las Vegas to find the only man who might be able to help him, but instead finds some old allies in dire need of his own help with a deadly—and very magical—threat.

Stone's answer to nearly every problem has always been magic—but that's off the table now. All he's got are his wits and his courage to keep himself and his friends alive. Can he put aside his pride and bitterness long enough to prove there's more to him than magic?

Core of Stone Details

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From Reader Review Core of Stone for online ebook

Lybo Buchanan says

Loved it. He loses his magic, which has always defined who he is. He does not know if this loss is temporary or permanent, & must learn how to move forward. He also must learn how to rely on other talents, such as his brain, to resolve problems that if he cannot get a handle on, could cost lives.

Kat Lebo says

Core of Stone (Alastair Stone Chronicles, Book 5)

by R. L. King

If you've followed my reviews of this series, you know Stone was left in a bit of a magical limbo at the end of "The Source," Book 4 in the series. After his herculean efforts to banish the summoned demon and close the portal at Burning Man, Alastair found himself bereft of magical skills. "Core" opens with his return home to Palo Alto after his stay in the Reno hospital, still showing no signs of recovering his magical powers. Reluctantly, he visits his magical supplier friend, Madame Huan, to see if she has any ideas as to a treatment to help him regain his powers, she does not. While he is there he confides in her that he may take a trip to Vegas to see if he can find Harrison, the mage from whom he learned the magic he used at Burning Man, and asks that, if he doesn't return, she will help Jason and Verity tie up his loose ends. At this point, he hasn't revealed his loss of magic to either Jason or Verity, so he simply hops on a flight to Vegas without telling anyone where he is going.

Once there, he finds that finding Harrison isn't an easy task. He rooms at The Obsidian, a hotel/casino that he knows to be associated with Harrison. However, all of his inquiries lead nowhere. He finally contacts Nakamura, who is just as sure as Stone that Harrison survived the shutting down of the Las Vegas portal, but who has no more idea of how to find him than does Stone himself. Despondent, he sets out on a night of gambling and drinking that leads him to the seediest areas of Vegas. There, having gotten so hammered that the bartender cuts him off, he stumbles into the night and is set upon by Evil-possessed gang members. He is saved he discovers that the Vegas Forgotten, who live in the sewer tunnels under Vegas, as The Evil (sigh) are still a major force in the area, are under attack by a "monster" who has killed some of their members, as well as members of other groups living in other areas of the tunnels. Alastair believes the monster to be an illusion, which means there is a mage working the tunnels, using the illusion as a way of getting close enough to his victims to drain them for power. Unfortunately, when he and Luke go searching for the mage, Luke is unable to suspend his belief that the monster is real, rather than illusion, and is soon reduced to nothing but a pile of ashes. Alastair barely escapes with his life, but becomes lost in the maze. When he is found, it is Verity who finds him, having come to Vegas after receiving a phone call from Madame Huan, who had become concerned when she didn't hear from Stone. Of course, Verity now knows that Stone has lost his magical abilities. They return to The Obsidian to rest before returning to California.

However, the two of them hatch a plan to help the Vegas Forgotten, and once again, combining Verity's abilities with his own knowledge of magic, Stone is off and running to save the Forgotten and find the mage wreaking havoc in the sewers of Las Vegas.

Will his powers ever return?

Another well-crafted story from R.L. King. No "p'raps" to be found, so that made me happy. There was one

editing/proofing error at 2217 on my Kindle; just a left out word, so nothing big there, but at 1594, the last sentence of chapter 15, was this mistake: "And than something impossibly huge was upon him." Unfortunate, as it was obviously in a high action portion of the novel, and yes, the mistaken use of "than" for "then" did stop me cold in the action.

Again, although with no magical powers for the most part of the book, the depiction of Alastair Stone in this book was more in keeping with the Stone we first met back in Book 1 -- while certainly a psychological mess, he was still able to exhibit a strength and confidence as he came to terms with his loss of ability. I continue to mourn for the Stone that entranced me in that first book, "Stone and a Hard Place," and in the novella, "Shadows and Stone." As the novella bears a copyright of 2015, I believed it was written perhaps after the publication of the 4th book in the series. However, the Stone of the first book and novella are distinctly different from Stone of Books 2-5. I like Verity and Jason, but their inclusion has seemed to drain some of the humanity from Stone. He no longer has on-going relationships, either of the romantic variety or of just the friends-from-work variety. He does little on his own, always in tandem with his two sidekicks. In these latter books, he seems more a figurehead, the mastermind who doesn't have a life of his own. Too bad.

Will I continue with the series when the 6th book is released later this year. I'm not sure. We'll see how I feel about Stone and his group, with a few months absence. The excerpt of novel 6, included with this 5th novel, did nothing to dispel the notion that the current take on Stone will continue.

Linda says

I could not put this book down. I did not get anything done on my day off! I was so upset and grieving along with Dr. Stone.

Michelle says

On to book 6. Enjoyed this book. Glad things are looking up for Stone.

Lani says

This book broke my heart. I really felt for the main character! It was an excellent story!

David J says

Best book in an increasingly good series

Stephanie says

Love this series.

Jenniferk says

Very good book. It was entertaining as ever.

I will recommend it. I have yet to read one of this series that I would not. Each successive book is as good if not better than the previous.
