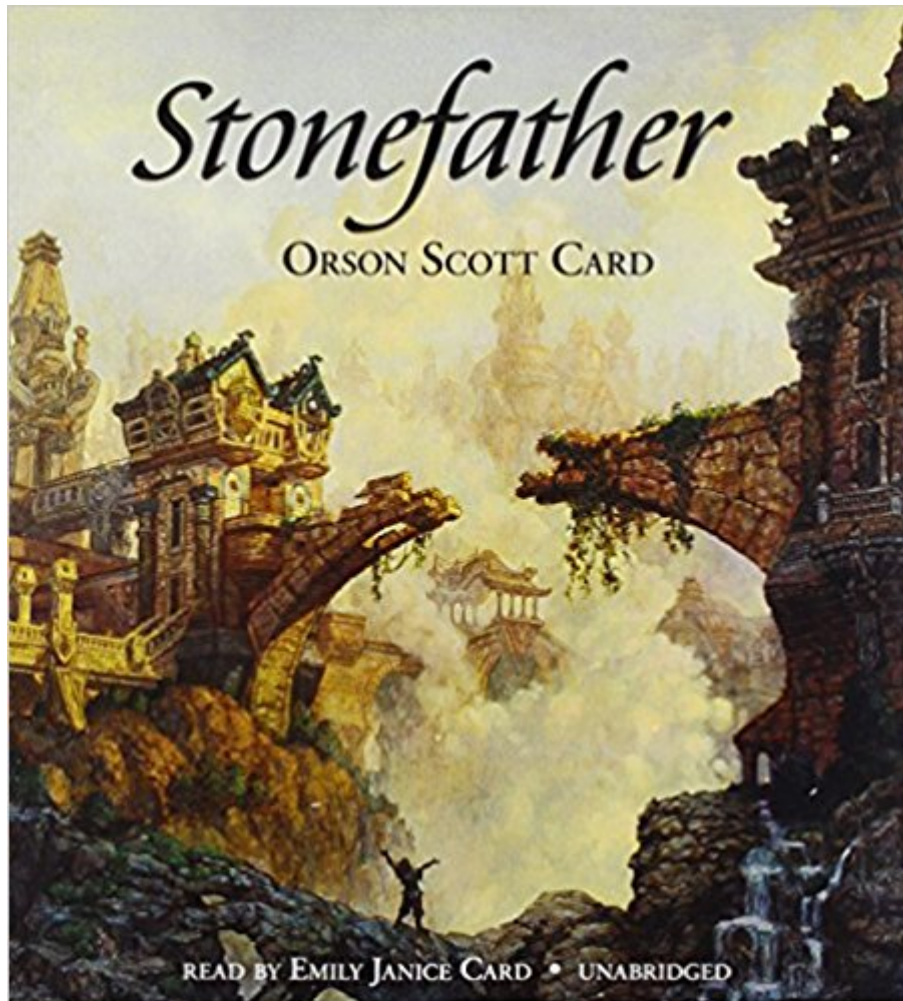




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Stonefather (Mithermages)



Synopsis

When Runnel, a friendless peasant from a village so humble that money is a new concept, leaves his mountain valley, he is completely unaware of his magical talents. Seeking his fortune, he stumbles into a centuries-old feud when he travels to Mitherhome, the city of the water mages. He accepts a servant's position in the household of the sole stone mage permitted within the city walls, and there his untapped magical talents and his fascination with his master's abilities are a predictably dangerous combination. Soon, without meaning to, he complicates and endangers the lives of everyone he has come to know and care about, for when it comes to magic, there are rules and laws, and the untrained mage-to-be must be careful not to tap into deep forces and ancient enmities. Otherwise, other people might end up paying the price for his mistakes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An overly predictable plot, a deficit of character development and a deus ex machina conclusion distract from the dreamy prose and intricate world-building of this fairy tale novella from Hugo-winner Card (Keeper of Dreams). Runnel, a friendless peasant from a village so humble that money is a new concept, stumbles into a centuries-old feud when he travels to Mitherhome, the city of the wetwizards, seeking his fortune. He accepts a servant's position in the household of the sole stonemage permitted within the city walls, where his untapped magical talents and his fascination with his master's abilities are a predictably dangerous combination. Card's obvious familiarity with

his world and its enthralling history, due to be expanded in the forthcoming Mithermages series, makes for a pleasant, if shallow, interlude. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this novella-length precursor to Card's forthcoming fantasy saga Mithermages, a young man leaves his home town for the big, mage-ridden city and learns that he has powers. Unfortunately, he hasn't learned how to wield them, a good many people want to exploit his ignorance, and his strong ethical standards make him cautious about risking harm to anybody. Absorbing tales have sprung from such plot and character mainsprings for millennia, including much modern fantasy, from Lord of the Rings to Harry Potter, and not excluding Card's own magisterial Hatrack River saga. Judging from Stonefather, it seems we're about to receive another American fantasy classic from Card. --Roland Green --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is very short. That's about the only bad thing I can say about it. It is a classic Card story, though brief in length. I enjoyed the story, and even though this is an introduction for a wider world in future books it is still entertaining and worth the read.

It's a nice little book, VERY sturdy feeling and the cover is cool looking. The actual story was really short, but it was good for a prequel. Kinda "stiff" writing in my opinion, but I'm still glad I bought it.

I read this novella when it was published in hardcover in 2008. At the time, I thought it was OK but not great. It is set in the same universe as the 1987 short story Sandmagic, and it expands that milieu, expounding and explaining a complex system of water magic, stone magic, and blood magic. I decided to listen to this audiobook these many years later before starting Card's latest trilogy of novels (The Lost Gate, The Gate Thief, Gatefather) also set in this Mither Mage universe. The story is still slow and gets bogged down in world-building rather than being driven by interesting characters. The bright spot is the narrator of the audiobook edition. She has a pleasant, expressive voice, and she simply reads the story without trying to overperform it with multiple voices.

Runnel isn't appreciated by his family or his little village. His father abuses him, his siblings taunt him, and even his mother doesn't seem overly fond. So one day he walks to the edge of his village

and just keeps going. He's never been outside of his village before, so everything is new. Eventually he comes to a city whose walls and bridges are crumbling. He's told that this is the city of the water mages, the magicians who cast out the stone mages that built the beautiful city. After the mage war, the victorious water mages will only allow one stone mage in the town. He lives in a grand house and is treated with respect, but he is spied upon and mistrusted because if he ever brings his colleagues back into the city, the water mages fear that they'll lose their ruling positions. After meeting a friendly girl at the city's well, Runnel follows her home and finds employment in the home of the stone mage. There he learns about the history and politics of this strange city, and he learns a lot about himself, too. It seems that Runnel may have an affinity for stone.

Stonefather is a novella that introduces Orson Scott Card's MITHER MAGES series, which is aimed at young adults. As I've come to expect from Card, this story is beautifully written and contains deep and likable characters, a well-developed world with interesting magic, and an intriguing setting. This is a simpler, lighter and more relaxed read, though, than Card's ENDER series, which was full of drama, tension and, best of all, lots of ideas. Stonefather doesn't reach that level -- it's mostly a pleasant coming-of-age story -- but it did occur to me that the mage war may be an allegory for the Christian and Muslim conflict in Jerusalem. I have no idea if this is Orson Scott Card's intention, though.

As far as YA fiction goes, this is a good choice for a reader looking for a lovely low-stress read. In many ways it's similar to the YA fantasy of Ursula K. Le Guin and Shannon Hale. I think Stonefather bodes well for the MITHER MAGES series and I will likely give the first novel, The Lost Gate, a try.

Stonefather has been published by Subterranean Press. The cover art, by Tom Kidd (one of my favorites) is stunning. I read the book in audio format (published by Blackstone Audio). It's narrated by Janice Card, Orson Scott Card's daughter. She does a terrific job with Stonefather. The gorgeous cover art is viewable when you download the audio version with an Audible app.

Originally posted at Fantasy Literature.

Orson Scott Card's books are always an excellent read. Stonefather was a short story to begin with, and it grew into the The Lost Gate, and followed by The Gate Thief, and I'm waiting on the next book in that series.

As I've said, Orson Scott Card's writing is beyond the norm and provides a fun read. There is nothing drab or shabby with Card's works. I plan on expanding his works in my library. He's worth it.

Orson Scott Card is a great author, one of my favorites. I think Stonefather is one of his better stories, which is saying something. It's a long short story (novella I guess) rather than a book, but I felt the story was the right length for what it is.

Like many of his stories - and indeed, many fantasy

stories - it follows a young protagonist (Runnel) as he grows from being a young boy who's just different enough to be miserable, to finding his strength and coming into his own. While there are no huge surprises, there was enough variety and action to keep me entertained. Stonefather is a small, self-contained fantasy, but some of the concepts introduced were some of my very favorites from another book of his, *Â Treason*. I was elated to get to see more of them. When you've read both, you'll know what I mean. Different worlds, but some similar underlying concepts. I listened to the audio book, well read by Emily Janice Card, who proved a good narrator and enjoyable to listen to. If you don't mind the length of a novella rather than a novel, this is a great way to spend a few hours, and a story which will make you smile. I certainly enjoyed it!

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