



Son of Stone: A Stone Barrington Novel

By *Stuart Woods*

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Stone Barrington knows everything there is to know about the city he loves, but he's about to learn something new about himself...

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Stuart Woods is the author of fifty novels, including the New York Times???bestselling Stone Barrington and Holly Barker series. He is a native of Georgia and began his writing career in the advertising industry. *Chiefs*, his debut in 1981, won the Edgar Award. An avid sailor and pilot, Woods lives in New York City, Florida, and Maine.

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1

Elaine's, late.

Stone Barrington and Dino Bacchetti sat, sipping what each of them usually sipped, gazing desultorily at the menu. Elaine came and sat down.

"Having problems deciding?" she asked.

"Always," Dino said.

"Are you being a smart-ass?" she asked.

"I'm torn between the pasta special and the osso buco," Dino said.

"Yeah," Stone said, "Dino is always torn."

"Are you being a smart-ass?" Dino asked.

"I'm just backing you up, pal," Stone said.

"Oh."

"Have the pasta," Elaine said. "It's terrific."

"How can I pass that up?" Dino asked, closing his menu.

"Dino," Stone said, "you're veering toward the ironic again. Watch yourself."

Elaine looked at Dino. "You're lucky there isn't a steak knife on the table." She flagged down a passing waiter. "Two pasta specials," she said, her finger wagging between Stone and Dino.

"I'll have the osso buco," Stone said.

"I just sold the last one," the waiter replied.

"Tell you what," Stone said, "I'll have the pasta special, with a chopped spinach salad to start."

"Me, too, on the salad," Dino said.

"And a bottle of the Mondavi Napa Cabernet," Stone added.

"Good," Elaine said, then she got up and wandered a couple of tables away and sat down there.

"That was close," Stone said. "You could have gotten a fork in the chest."

"I didn't want the pasta," Dino replied.

"Then why didn't you order the osso buco to begin with?"

"They were out."

"You didn't know that."

"Does it matter? They wouldn't have had it anyway."

They sat in silence for a moment, Stone sipping his Knob Creek, Dino sipping his Johnnie Walker Black.

"When does Ben get home for the holidays?" Stone asked. Benito was Dino's teenaged son.

"Tomorrow," Dino replied. "I get him first. Mary Ann will have him for Christmas dinner at her father's."

"Could you bring him to dinner tomorrow night?"

Dino looked at him oddly. "Since when did you especially want to have dinner with Benito?"

"Since Arrington decided to come to New York for Christmas and bring Peter."

"You didn't tell me."

"I didn't know until tonight. I was just leaving the house when she called. They're due in early tomorrow afternoon." Stone showed Dino the photo of the boy that Arrington had given him. "This was over a year ago," he said. "I guess he's bigger now."

Dino gazed at the photograph. "Amazingly like your father," he said.

"How would you know? You never met my father."

"I've met the photograph of him in your study about a thousand times," Dino replied.

"Oh, yeah."

"Does he know?"

"Who?"

"Peter."

"Don't start that again," Stone said.

"I didn't start it, you did; some years back."

Stone's shoulders sagged. "All right, all right."

"When exactly was it? I know you know."

Stone cast his thoughts back. "Right before we were going to the islands for the holidays, to St. Marks. The night before, actually. I had bought her a ring."

"You never told me that. You were really going to ask her?"

"Yes, I was. That morning it started snowing. I got to the airport and got a call from her saying that she was stuck in a meeting at the New Yorker. She had written a piece for them, and she was working with the editor. She said she'd get the same flight the next day. I was pissed off, but my bags were already on the airplane, and I didn't want to go through that a day later, so I left. As it turned out, while she was at the New Yorker they assigned her to write a profile of Vance Calder."

"Uh-oh."

"Exactly. Turns out I got the last flight out of the airport before they closed it because of the snowstorm. She was stuck in the city for another day. Then Vance arrived in town and they had dinner. I met the flight the following day, and she wasn't on it, and I couldn't get her on the phone. Finally, a few days later, I got a fax at my hotel."

"A Dear Stone letter?"

"Right. She was marrying Vance."

"And when did she find out she was pregnant?"

"I'm not sure. I was out in L.A. four or five months later, and . . ."

"I was there, too, remember?"

"Yes, I remember. And when I saw her there she was obviously pregnant."

"Did she say whose it was?"

"No, because she didn't know."

"The two . . . events were too close together, huh?"

"Right."

"When did she know?"

"Not until after Vance's death, I think."

They were quiet again. "Had she seen the photograph of your father?"

"Sure, she was in the house a lot when we first met."

"So she knew sooner than Vance's death?"

"I don't know; she may have been in denial."

"Did Vance know?"

Stone shook his head. "She told me the subject never came up."

"When did she finally admit it to you?"

"When we were in Maine a few years back, remember? Then, when you and I were staying at her house in Bel-Air last year, we had a frank talk about it. She said she had had a brush with ovarian cancer and had surgery, and that seemed to get her thinking about Peter's future. She wanted me to spend some time with

Peter, but it hasn't happened until now. He's been in boarding school in Virginia for more than a year."

"So, we're looking at a family reunion, huh?"

Stone grinned ruefully. "I never thought of it that way. Arrington and I have spent so little time together over the years."

"So, how are you feeling about this?" Dino asked.

"Scared stiff," Stone said.

2

Arrington Calder awoke in her rented house in Virginia and immediately smelled the man lying next to her. It was odd how he had this consistent personal odor—not unpleasant, but certainly distinctive. He even had it immediately after showering. It was strange.

She carefully lifted his arm from across her body, because she didn't want to wake him yet. Today, she had to have a conversation with him that she didn't want to have and that he wouldn't want to hear, and she was putting it off until the last minute. He was extraordinarily jealous, something she had found a little attractive when she had first started seeing, then sleeping with, him, after she had hired him to design her new house. He was prominent among Virginia architects and was a professor of architecture at the University of Virginia in nearby Charlottesville. His name was Timothy Rutledge.

She managed to slip out of bed without waking him and tiptoed across the bedroom, through the dressing room, where her packed bags, still open, awaited her departure, then into the bathroom, where she closed the door to shut out the sound of the shower. She washed her face, having not had time to do that the night before, because of his persistence.

She got into the shower and began to feel better. In a couple of hours she would be away from here for a while, and that would give him time for his ardor to cool.

She was washing her hair, her eyes closed against the shampoo, when he let himself into the shower. She tried to drive her elbow into his belly, but his arms were around her from behind, pinning hers to her body. He fumbled around, trying to enter her from behind, but she struggled free. "Get out!" she said, pushing him out the swinging glass door.

He stood on the bath mat, fuming. "What's the matter with you?" he demanded.

"Go down and start breakfast," she said. "I'll be there in half an hour."

"Why are your bags packed?" he asked.

"I'll talk to you downstairs. Now go!"

Reluctantly, he went.

She rinsed her hair thoroughly, then shut off the water and felt for the bath sheet on the hook outside the door. She dried herself, then picked up the hair dryer and dried her blond hair, helping it into place with a brush. That done, she applied her makeup, then got into her traveling clothes, a pants suit. She picked up the phone in her dressing room and pressed a button for her son's room. "Peter," she said, "time to get up."

He picked up the phone. "I'm way ahead of you," he said. "I'm packing."

"Good boy." She hung up and went downstairs. Tim had prepared eggs, bacon, and toast, and she sat down and began to eat.

"Where are you going?" Tim asked. He seemed calmer now.

"To New York."

"Why?"

"Family business."

"You don't want to tell me?"

"Not really. It's none of your business. Eat your breakfast; I want you gone before Peter comes down."

He made a stab at the food. "How long will you be gone?"

"Through Christmas," she said.

"We'll have to talk about the finishing touches on the house."

"You can reach me on my cell phone," she said.

“I had hoped we could spend Christmas together,” he said. “The three of us.”

“Tim, there isn’t going to be any three of us. Peter is visiting his father in New York.”

“I thought his father was dead.”

“That was his stepfather.”

He looked puzzled. “Vance Calder wasn’t Peter’s father?”

“He was not.”

“Then who is?”

“Please don’t concern yourself with my private life,” Arrington said. She stood up and put her dishes in the sink. “I have to finish packing now. We’ll be leaving soon.” She heard Peter coming down the stairs.

“Please leave quickly by the back door,” she said, taking his half-eaten breakfast and scraping it into the garbage disposal.

“We’ll talk tomorrow,” he said, getting into his coat.

“Not unless it’s something about the house,” she replied.

He gave her an angry look, then he walked out the kitchen door.

Peter came into the kitchen. “What’s for breakfast?” he asked. He was fifteen now, big and mature for his age.

“What would you like?”

“Oh, I’ll just toast myself a muffin,” he said, opening the fridge.

“Will you be ready to go in half an hour?” she asked.

“I’m ready to go now, but my muffin isn’t.”

“The crew has the airplane ready. Thirty minutes.”

“I’m with you,” he said.

“Peter, I’m sending you ahead alone,” she said. “I have an appointment in Charlottesville, and it’s going to take the whole day. The airplane will come back for me.”

Peter shrugged. “Okay, I guess.”

Arrington went back upstairs to close her cases. Everything was so good right now, except for this thing with Tim Rutledge. She would put an end to that over Christmas.

3

Stone spent the morning actually working. Since his elevation to full partnership at Woodman & Weld, and since his appointment to the boards of Strategic Services and Centurion Studios, he had been required to read—and even understand—every bit of financial paper sent to him by the law firm and by both companies, so that he could intelligently discuss them at meetings. Today, he and Mike Freeman, chairman and CEO of Strategic Services, who also served on the Centurion board, would be meeting Leo Goldman, Jr., the CEO of the studio appointed a year before, when Rick Barron, longtime head of the studio, retired and became merely chairman.

Stone had taken only one accounting course in college, and he thanked God that he had not slept through it. Soon he could read a balance sheet with the best of them.

He had a sandwich at his desk, anticipating the arrival of Arrington Calder and her son, Peter. He buzzed his secretary, Joan Robertson.

“Yes, master?”

“I’m going to have this little boy on my hands for the better part of two weeks,” Stone said. “What the hell am I going to do with him? Children’s theater? Museum of Natural History? Boats on the pond in Central Park?”

“How old is the boy?” she asked.

“Twelve, I think.”

“Well, that lets out girls; he’ll still hate them. How about South Street Seaport? Boys love sailing vessels.”

“Good one,” Stone said, making a note. “More.”

“Ummm . . . Central Park Zoo?”

“Another good one. More.”

“The Lion King?”

“Oh, God, I’ve been avoiding that for years.”

“You’ll love it, believe me. And that’s enough for three or four days. I’ll do some research. What are you doing for dinner tonight? Not Elaine’s, I hope.”

“Why not Elaine’s? He might see a movie star, or something. Anyway, Dino is bringing Ben, who’s just home from school for Christmas.”

“Well, I wouldn’t worry too much about what to do with him. After all, Arrington will be here, too, and she, at least, is accustomed to acting as a parent.”

“Don’t say ‘parent,’ ” he said. “Hearing it gives me the willies. I’ll be his host.”

“You’ll survive,” she said, then hung up.

Stone finished his sandwich, frequently checking his watch. Arrington’s Gulfstream III was due into Teterboro at noon, or so, and he had hired a driver and sent his car to meet them. So, he reckoned, they should be here about ... the upstairs doorbell rang . . . now. He took a deep breath, got into his jacket, and ran up the stairs to the front hall. One more deep breath, a big smile slapped on his face, and he opened the door.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terry Grissom:

Reading a book tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire all their reader with their story or their experience. Not only the story that share in the publications. But also they write about the ability about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some study before they write with their book. One of them is this Son of Stone: A Stone Barrington Novel.

Gloria Lockwood:

Can you one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt if you are in the book store? Attempt to pick one book that you find out the inside because don’t judge book by its handle may doesn’t work at this point is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not because fantastic as in the outside look likes. Maybe you answer is usually Son of Stone: A Stone Barrington Novel why because the amazing cover that make you consider regarding the content will not disappoint anyone. The inside or content is definitely fantastic as the outside or cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly show you to pick up this book.

John Stewart:

The book untitled Son of Stone: A Stone Barrington Novel contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains the woman idea with easy means. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was authored by famous author. The author will bring you in

the new era of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can start their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice examine.

John Hill:

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