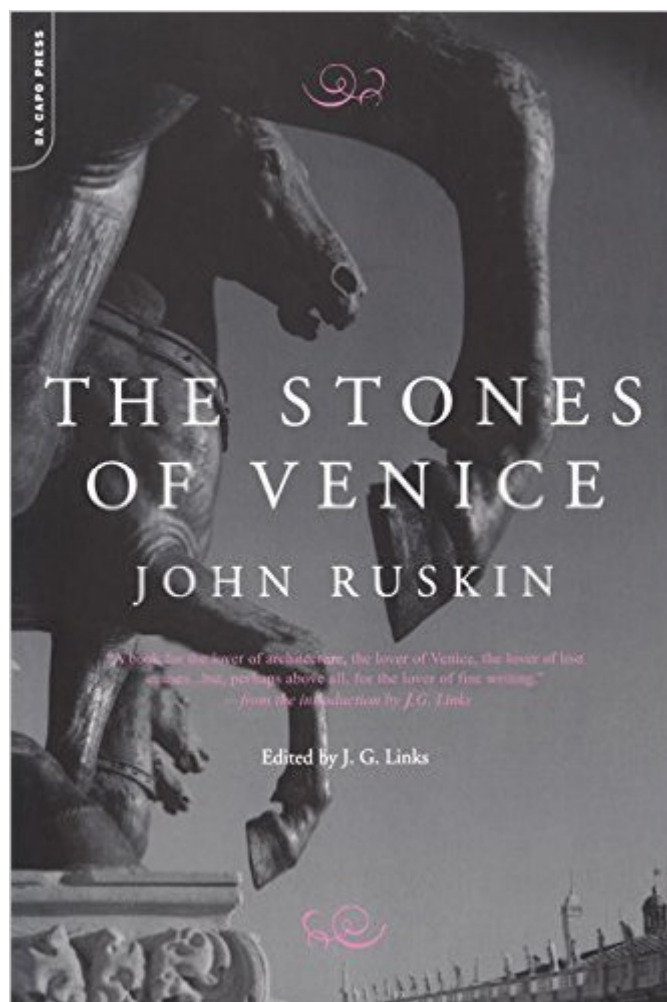


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The Stones Of Venice



Synopsis

John Ruskin, Victorian England's greatest writer on art and literature, believed himself an adopted son of Venice, and his feelings for this city are exquisitely expressed in *The Stones of Venice*. This edition contains Ruskin's famous essay "The Nature of Gothic," a marvelously descriptive tour of Venice before its postwar restoration. As Ruskin wrote in 1851, "Thank God I am here, it is a Paradise of Cities."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This edition of *STONES OF VENICE* is a lamentably shortened version of the original. Yet it still contains enough of that to provide a clear clue why Socialism has as powerful an attraction as it does for the upper class elite as it did back in Ruskin's day. In *The Stones of Venice*, John Ruskin creates a parallel between the Gothic style of architecture and the often tangled mixture of various pairs of discrete elements: the architect's mind and the social milieu, the worker's skill and the worker's trade guild, and the need for precision in stone cutting and a need not to overly focus on that precision. "The Nature of Gothic" is a chapter from that book in which he considers the current state of Gothic architecture: "I shall endeavor to give the reader in this chapter an idea...of the true nature of Gothic architecture, properly so-called; not of that of Venice only, but of universal Gothic." He intends to inform the reader just how "far Venetian architecture reached the universal or perfect type of Gothic, and how far it either fell short of it or assumed foreign and independent forms." All buildings that are termed Gothic have an essence that Ruskin terms Gothicness, a concept whose

abstractness renders a precise definition difficult. When people refer to this essence they often mention traits like gargoyles, pointed arches, and vaulted roofs. Ruskin is quick to add that it is misleading to consider them in isolation. It is further misleading when, even lumping them together, one fails to account for the spirit in which they were both planned and built.

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