

Tom Slade
“Four Series in One”
or
“Not Just a Boy Scout”

by David M. Baumann

5,176 words

Published in “The Mystery and Adventure Series Review” #33, Spring 2000

For copies of this astonishingly excellent series book fanzine
and information on subscriptions (free—donation expected), contact:

Fred Woodworth
The Mystery and Adventure Series Review
P. O. Box 3012
Tucson, AZ 85702

The Tom Slade series, by Percy Keese Fitzhugh

1. Boy Scout (1915)
2. At Temple Camp (1917)
3. On the River (1917)
4. With the Colors (1918)
5. On a Transport (1918)
6. With the Boys Over There (1918)
7. Motor Cycle Dispatch Bearer (1918)
8. With the Flying Corps (1919)
9. At Black Lake (1920)
10. On Mystery Trail (1921)
11. Double Dare (1922)
12. On Overlook Mountain (1923)
13. Picks a Winner (1924)
14. At Bear Mountain (1925)
15. Forest Ranger (1926)
16. In the North Woods (1927)
17. At Shadow Isle (1928)
18. In the Haunted Cavern (1929)
19. The Parachute Jumper (1930)

Tom Slade: One of the Great Toms

“Tom” is undoubtedly the most common name in the series book world. There are Tom Swift, Tom Swift Jr., Tom Quest, Tom Corbett, and several other Toms in obscure series. Tom Slade is among the better known Toms. When the Tom Slade series was published (1915-1930), its popularity was second only to Tom Swift (1910-1941). The reputation was deserved. Those who invest a little money, effort, and time to find the books will receive a valuable return.

The series was initially intended to advertise the Boy Scouts of America and encourage boys to enter the new youth organization. The Boy Scouts had begun in 1910. In the second decade of the century, radio, as a means of information and entertainment, was not yet common; books were the primary method of capturing, challenging, and developing the imagination of young people.

The Tom Slade books probably influenced thousands of boys to join the BSA. However, if the purpose of the series was to hold up the banner of the Boy Scouts, that did not long remain central to the Slade books. Other themes grew up alongside this one, and eventually crowded it out. Today’s collector-reader will probably not be moved to rush out and join the Scouts, but can still derive much pleasure from the books.

The author was Percy Keese Fitzhugh. He was destined to become the BSA’s official, and prolific, author. His first Scouting book, *Along the Mohawk Trail*, was published by the Thomas Y. Crowell Company in 1912. Nearly 400 pages long, it is a well-written story of two boys who use scouting skills in a number of exciting adventures, including tracking a thief; saving lives; locating their troop in the mountains, from which they had become separated; encouraging a shy but gifted boy in a model airplane contest; participating in a rowing race on Lake Champlain; and building a glider. BSA liked the book, and invited Fitzhugh to write an entire series of boys books, touting the benefit of the Scouting movement. Tom Slade was the result.

Fitzhugh turned 39 in the year the first Tom Slade book hit the bookstores. This book was a spinoff from a movie which had appeared a year or so earlier, also intended to win boys to the Scouting movement. The title page of the first volume says, “Adapted and illustrated from the photo play ‘The Adventures of a Boy Scout’. Produced and Copyrighted by the Wedepict Motion Picture Corporation, Illustrations and Text by special arrangement with the Boy Scouts of America, and approved and endorsed by them.” The endpapers of Volume One are a photograph of a troop of scouts posing “in front of the Regent Theatre [in New York City], where the first performance of *The Adventures of a Boy Scout* was given.”

Slade's popularity led to three derivative series based on characters who first appeared in the Tom Slade books: eighteen Roy Blakeleys (1920-1931), thirteen Pee Wee Harrises (1922-1930), and nine Westy Martins (1924-1933). Where the Tom Slades veered off from the Scouting theme, the other series kept Scouting as the central feature.

I've only read three of the Pee Wee Harris books and one of the Roy Blakeley books. There are some good moments in them, and some fine writing, but I was not sufficiently geared up to search for more books in these series. I even sold the penultimate Blakeley book in a good deal, a rather rare book, for a paltry sum just because I thought that someone else would appreciate it more than I. I haven't read any of the Westy Martins, but guess that they would be similar. If I can judge from the four I have read, these books are strong on early twentieth century boys' humor which comes across as quaint today. By contrast, in the Slades one finds virtue, poverty, injustice, and the overcoming of great evil. These Scout stories are close to nature and realistic, and in many ways still timely.

The Books

The books themselves are a very attractive forest green. The dust jackets and endpapers are photographs of activities relating to the story between the boards. The words, "Approved by the Boy Scouts of America" appear unobtrusively at the bottom of most of the covers. In the first volume the frontispiece is also a photograph, probably from the "photo play," but in all others it is a drawing.

The artist for books 2-3 was the ubiquitous but elusive Walter S. Rogers. Thomas Clarity provided the artwork for volumes 4-5. Volumes 6-8 and 10-11 feature the sketching of R. Emmett Owen. The remaining volumes but one were graced by the artwork of Howard L. Hastings. The artist for the last book was E. N. Townsend, and is the only volume with blank endpapers. The artwork is not bad, but not overly eye-grabbing. The figure of Tom Slade is consistent throughout—a well-built blond fellow with somewhat longish hair, parted in the middle and flying free. The medium looks like pencil in most cases.

Curiously, the hardest volume to find, and the last I secured for my collection, was not the final one, but the seventh, *Motor Cycle Dispatch Bearer*. In my search I learned that there are book fans who collect only books with motor cycles in them. Apparently there are many such fans, which makes this volume rather scarce. Other than that, none of them but the last two was particularly elusive, and the entire series was assembled on my shelf in only about five weeks, half in dust jacket, most costing less than a dinner for four at McDonald's.

The series falls into four distinct sections, an unprecedented phenomenon in my experience with series books. One can almost make a case that the nineteen books actually comprise four different series featuring the same character, though there are transitions between and features common to the four sections. The four stages also provide some laudable verisimilitude as Tom grows from about age 15 into his mid-twenties. At a deeper level, one may opine that the author himself was going through some changes as he wrote, as will be hypothesized at the end of this article.

The First Series: Poor Boy Makes Good

1. Boy Scout (1915)
2. At Temple Camp (1917)
3. On the River (1917)

Tom Slade, Boy Scout introduces us to Tom Slade, a hoodlum in Barrel Alley, the slum area of Bridgeboro, New Jersey. The standard PKF Boy Scout characters are also first seen here—those who, due to the popularity of these early Tom Slade books, became stars in their own series five to nine years later, as mentioned above.

The entry on Fitzhugh in *Something About the Author* suggests that Tom was “like Huck Finn.” It is a good description. Yet in the first book joining the Boy Scouts brings out his innate goodness. With right tutelage and opportunity, Tom turns into a fine young man and even hero. He becomes completely committed to Scouting and the virtues Scouting inspires. It is no wonder that the BSA was pleased with this opening story.

Tom Slade was born poor, the son of the town drunkard, raised motherless in slums, and when the series begins had become the juvenile delinquent always in trouble. The first line in the first book is,

It happened in Barrel Alley, and it was Tom Slade, as usual, who did it.

The paragraph continues with a description of hoodlum-style naughtiness.

In the inaugural story, we learn that Tom just needed someone to believe in him and expect good things from him. Given a moral choice, made particularly critical by his contact with the scouts of Bridgeboro, Tom chooses the good course at great cost to himself. John Temple, a wealthy and good-hearted citizen of Bridgeboro, is himself changed by his encounter with Tom. Although this story line may sound saccharine and formulaic, it is really rather well told.

Although the account of Tom's redemption is rehearsed in one form or another in most of the books, one of the briefest and most to the point is given on pages 56-57 of the last book, *The Parachute Jumper*. As Tom and a companion are tracking a lynx which has been decimating their hen house, the companion asks,

"And you're an orphan too, huh Slady?"

"Very much," Tom admitted. "I dragged myself up out of Barrel Alley in Bridgeboro and that's the truth. Barrel Alley is no more, though, thank goodness for that! It was one awful slum."

"Gee, you wouldn't think it," said Billy. "To look at you, it's hard to believe it. But that just shows a feller can live down things—I mean if he's really honest he can be something in the world no matter what people say about where he came from or what he did before, huh?"

"I'll say so," Tom agreed. "I was some kid in those days. Didn't know what honesty meant hardly. How's a kid to know unless someone tells him? I've proved that in my own life because once I knew the difference I never had any desire to go back."

I am not aware of any evidence that there was a falling-out between Fitzhugh and the Boy Scouts of America, but it is interesting to note that, in this last book, Tom appears to claim the credit for himself and does not mention the influence of the Scouts in his reformation. Although this was the central, even vital, theme in the first volumes, it gradually disappears over the course of the series. In the related series, however, Fitzhugh keeps the Scouting theme central.

In the second book, *At Temple Camp*, John Temple's grateful response to Tom's good works leads him to found Temple Camp for scouts. The camp is set in the Adirondacks in lower New York state. Each summer, it is jammed with scouts from all over the country, who come in for a season of fun, to learn scouting skills and earn merit badges, etc. In this volume, Tom builds his good side into actual heroism.

In *On the River*, Tom makes a great effort to help a poor, disadvantaged lad to become part of the Scouts. Unfortunately, a few boys who don't know Tom well cause him intense suffering for his upbringing in the slums. Tom's humility and innate reserve prevent him from defending himself. The characterization of Tom and his companions, well sketched in the first two volumes, is thoroughly developed in this book. Throughout the rest of the series, although he matures Tom's personality doesn't change. Tom's nature is one of the best-defined personalities in series bookdom.

The Second Series: Scout Becomes War Hero

4. With the Colors (1918)
5. On a Transport (1918)
6. With the Boys Over There (1918)
7. Motor Cycle Dispatch Bearer (1918)
8. With the Flying Corps (1919)

These five books comprise one continuous narrative of the World War and Tom's place in it. Scouting isn't mentioned much in these books, but the timeliness of the war probably didn't cause the BSA to complain any. These were the last books I sought, since I thought they would hold little attraction for me. I assumed they would be filled with the fervent patriotism characteristic of wartime, and I only looked for them, almost reluctantly, to complete my collection. To my surprise, I found that they are well-written, balanced adventure stories that easily kept my attention. They really make up a single, impressive historical novel in five volumes.

Through over a thousand pages, we track the story of Tom's entire involvement with the armed forces during the Great War. In *With the Colors*, underage Tom is unable to enlist, but, in an ingenious and interesting plot, uses his scouting skills to help an older hometown boy overcome his own jitters about joining up. *On a Transport* tells how Tom gets a job on a ship taking supplies across the Atlantic to American troops in France, and sails through dangerous waters dogged by German warships. Apparently having come of enlistment age, in *With the Boys Over There* we follow Tom's heroic exploits in the Alsace-Lorraine area. This beautifully-narrated story tells of Tom's capture, interment, escape, and travel through the spectacular forest of the French-German border, across enemy lines to safety. This story and the next two are told with meticulous attention to geographical detail, and scouting skills play their part in Tom's successes.

Returned to his company, Tom takes on new duties as a *Motor Cycle Dispatch Bearer*, entrusted with a vital assignment which he must carry a long way through war-disrupted lands to a specific place in a very short time. Tom's race against the clock through unknown territory is a truly thrilling adventure.

In the last book of this subseries, Tom exchanges the tame motorcycle for an airplane, and becomes a top pilot *With the Flying Corps*. The tale of his European exploits is capped with a superbly-told, exciting story and a surprise ending.

The Third Series: Misunderstood Boy Heroes

9. At Black Lake (1920)
10. On Mystery Trail (1921)
11. Double Dare (1922)
12. On Overlook Mountain (1923)
13. Picks a Winner (1924)

The next five volumes deal with Tom's return to Bridgeboro after the war. He is too old now to be a scout, but becomes responsible for administering Temple Camp—the Scout camp in the Adirondacks founded in the second volume. Pee Wee Harris, et al, are now very minor characters and quickly disappear for good; it is about this time that their own series take off. But new personalities arise in the Tom Slades, some appearing for one book only, and one or two seen in several volumes, the most prominent being the moderately eccentric and therefore interesting Hervey Willits.

The theme of these books is “the misunderstood boy hero”—sometimes Tom but usually another. In each story, a set of misunderstandings, complicated by miscommunications and exacerbated by the inability or unwillingness of “those in the know” to speak up, someone is treated with egregious injustice throughout the book until gloriously exonerated at the end. These are good stories, but sometimes a little contrived.

In *At Black Lake*, we see Tom back in Bridgeboro after his war exploits, administering Temple Camp. Confused from having suffered shell-shock, he inadvertently allows an out-of-state troop to reserve the cabins at the Camp which his own patrol had had from the Camp's opening day. Since those who weren't “over there” don't understand what it means to be shell-shocked, they assume he did it on purpose. Tom's emotional vulnerability in this story gives even more credibility to his heroism, but his name is worse than mud until he solves the problem of “double booking” in a way no one else would have thought of, or considered possible if they *had* thought of it, or actually carried out had they considered it possible.

Honor and sacrifice are foremost in *On Mystery Trail*, the volume in which Hervey Willits becomes a primary character—and incidentally helps Tom solve a kidnapping. This is the first book in which the theme of Mystery appears in conjunction with Scouting.

Willits, who was misunderstood in the previous volume, is more than doubly misunderstood in *Double Dare*. With Tom's assistance, he comes out on top once again. As in the previous book, there is a mystery to be solved in this tale as well.

This book is unique for an imaginative scene in which a young fellow is pulled through a suction pipe being used to dredge a lake.

Tom takes a summer off from Temple Camp in *On Overlook Mountain*, and decides to work with a crew responsible for renovating an old hotel on a high mountain. While there, he learns about an unsolved murder from fourteen years previously. When one of his new friends turns out to be the accused, long-sought fugitive, Tom gets personally involved. This is the first book in which Scouting takes a distant second seat to Mystery.

The dust jacket flap on *Picks a Winner* says, “This is the story of a boy who lives under a cloud because he has the courage to keep a promise in the face of scorn and misjudgment.” I couldn’t have said it better myself. The story tells how Tom picks a poor boy, the son of a widowed mother, to go to Temple Camp on a scholarship. Only Tom knows the secret of the boy’s diffidence. Of course, the lad’s sterling character is revealed at the end, under stunning, even heroic, circumstances. A twist ending doesn’t hurt the story, either.

The Fourth Series: The Exhilaration of Mystery

14. At Bear Mountain (1925)
15. Forest Ranger (1926)
16. In the North Woods (1927)
17. At Shadow Isle (1928)
18. In the Haunted Cavern (1929)
19. The Parachute Jumper (1930)

As the Tom Slade series shifts into fourth gear, we enter upon the very best writing of the series, overall. These volumes leave the Boy Scouts almost entirely behind, and are actually mystery stories in the style of Capwell Wyckoff. Like many of the Wyckoff mysteries, each takes place in an impossibly remote setting of spectacular natural beauty; involves the setting right of a long-unsolved mystery or gross injustice; and emphasizes the virtues of humility, logic versus prejudice, determination, and good hard work. Roughly contemporary with the stories by the great Cap, most of the latter Tom Slades resemble him at his best, and in some places, I think, exceed him. The first three of these last six stories are the best of the lot.

Nearly all previous characters but Tom disappear in these volumes, and a new character, Brent Gaylong, comes to the fore. Brent eventually eclipses even Tom, almost like Gulliver in the Tom Quest series, who exhibits far more color than Tom Quest. Tom Slade is always the spirit of humility, courage, and adventure,

but Brent, under the guise of a lazy exterior, solves the mystery through the use of his brains.

In *At Bear Mountain*, Tom and Brent decide to spend some time in a nearly-inaccessible cabin. Before too long they are involved in solving an old mystery and setting right an old wrong. Although there are still scouts in the story, including a misunderstood boy who becomes a hero, Mystery moves to the center and remains there for the duration of the series, while Scouting moves from peripheral to non-existent.

Obviously one to enjoy remote places thoroughly, Tom takes a job in a lookout tower in *Forest Ranger*. The tower is on the outskirts of a town so small it barely shows up on the maps. It becomes abundantly clear that the townfolks' minds are even smaller than their town, and this tale makes an uncompromising critical commentary on their narrow mentality. At one point, Brent launches a full frontal, brass-knuckled attack on narrow-mindedness, which some people will need asbestos to handle. The biggest mystery in this volume is why neither Grosset & Dunlap nor the Boy Scouts canceled the series in outrage when this passage appeared in print:

"These poor people,"—Brent raised his arm in the direction of the Bend and dropped it again in an attitude of dejection, "they feed on their morbidity like a culture does on microbes. And what is more to be wondered at, they seem to thrive upon it. Instead of letting the sunshine into their souls, in this open space where they have the chance to expand and grow both mentally and spiritually, they close their nostrils to the warm winds and their eyes to the beauty around them.

"Oh, they keep busy all right, those folks down there; they make good use of their mouths and ears, anyway. From the time they're born until the day they die they talk all evil and hear all evil. They refuse to hear anything else. [Whoa! Tell it like it is, Brent!]

[After a very young boy in the village was found innocent of murder,] "I could see the disappointment written all over them as the old duck [i.e., the judge at the county seat] finished. At first I thought it was the heat discoloring the faces, but it soon dawned upon me that it wasn't anything but plain downright temper."

"What were they sore about?" asked the incredulous Tom.

"What were they sore about? Just because that fundamental source, the quintessence of all that meant diversion and pleasure to them, was being snatched from under their very eyes by an alien. They felt cheated and abused after contemplating for so long and

looking forward eagerly to the time when Henny would take his last curtain call for killing old Peck.

"After that momentous occasion they could gather in the general store 'of cold nights' and wag their empty heads with a sagacious 'I told you so' air."

When we get to the next volume, we can be supremely grateful that the series was not canceled. *In the North Woods*—well, it has just got to be one of the best-written series books of all time! It is that rare jewel in which everything comes together in just the right way. Plot, characterizations, writing, atmosphere—it's all here! This is a genuine five-star story, and deserves more than a paragraph or two of attention.

Set in the far remote backwoods of the Adirondacks, Tom and a few friends are engaged at the task of turning a millionaire's lodge into a camp to train scoutmasters. The millionaire, himself recently murdered, had sold it to the Scouts after his son had been accidentally shot and killed there. Several miles from the closest habitation, itself a microscopic village, and accessible only after parking one's flivver and then walking a mile on an overgrown wagon trail, the massive stone edifice is surrounded by steep mountains on all sides, and has a small lake in front of it.

As the work progresses, bit by bit the evidence accumulates that the account of the accident was not told with complete frankness, and the principles of the story are drawn, against their will, to investigate several unusual instances. Almost imperceptibly but inexorably an oppressive atmosphere of fear lays its shroud over the site. The masterfully written descriptions of lashing rain, dense fog, easily explainable but strange nearby sounds in the night, footprints found in odd places, the howls of a lynx when the stars are bright, crevices high on the near-trackless mountainside, even sparkling new mornings and fresh mountain streams and the like, mount the tension to a high level of believability not found, not even attempted, in any series book I've ever run across. I read *The Disappearing Floor* just prior to *North Woods*, and the contrast was like that between a plastic spoon and a formal silver setting.

In the first chapter, the atmosphere is set with these words: When February gales whistle around the bay window in this cozy library, my little sanctum will seem the more secure and cheery because of our harrowing recollections of a wind-swept mountain in the north woods, where a wild voice that haunts me even now was drowned in the fury of the gale as it echoed in the ghostly fastnesses of that eery [sic] wilderness. We will live over again the chilling terrors of a night when wild eyes stared into mine, and clawing fingers groped toward my throat, and the wind moaned and was never

still. Perhaps we may even fancy that we see the poor departed spirit that is said to haunt the neighborhood of Weir Lake over which the towering Hogback casts its brooding shadow; the wandering shade that is ever searching and never finding a living soul in whom to confide the appalling truth about the tragedy of Leatherstocking Camp.

In the Tom Slades, PKF is a serious writer, and the later volumes pick up the quality, but *Tom Slade in the North Woods* tops all the books of that genre. In this book, when he writes of the fog, you want to put your coat on; when he writes of the rain, you want to put a log on the fire; when he writes of the sudden sound outside in the storm, your heart beats a little faster; when he writes of the door opening silently behind you, your palms get a little clammy. And when he writes of the next day's fresh, clean morning with acres of dewy, sparkling grass, you still keep a careful eye out for what lies just beyond the boundaries of your sight, for the charm of the morning fronts a deceptive benignity. This book is a classic. The author himself understates it this way in a line from the book: "After all's said and done," Brent remarked, "there's nothing so exhilarating as Mystery!"

At Shadow Isle is very similar to Hal Keen's *The Clue at Skeleton Rocks*, a story by the same author with the same setting, same atmosphere—a lighthouse on the coast of Maine, tense with recent and concealed serious crime. Disappointingly, it is a ten-page story stretched to over 200. But in the tale, as always Brent Gaylong is a well-drawn character, with clever dialogue like, "He's got more up his sleeves than elbows."

In the Haunted Cavern, the penultimate book in the series, continues the adventures of the two friends, Tom and Brent. Scouting is not mentioned in the book at all, confirming the impression that these late books of the Tom Slade series are not even pretending to be Scouting books anymore, but rather have become full mysteries. This book and the last lack the notice that they were published "with the approval of the Boy Scouts of America."

The story revolves around Tom and Brent's taking a summer to run a drawbridge over a little river which once was a heavily-frequented waterway before a flood changed the course of the river. Now no boats come that way at all. Tom discovers that a state law requires that all drawbridges be manned, however, and offers to take this useless job for the sake of the adventure of living in the bridge tender's shack in solitude under the beauty of the summer night sky. A sunken ship a short way up the old river draws the boys' interest, as it is the most obvious evidence of the sad story of the demise of a once wealthy and prominent, but now extinct, Bridgeboro family. Their abandoned mansion lies in the dense woods a short way off the river.

Haunted Cavern begins fairly well with the introduction of a long-unsolved mystery, but slowly loses momentum and comes to an uninteresting ending. The biggest mystery, which is never solved, is why this book is called *In the Haunted Cavern*, as there is no cavern, haunted or otherwise, nor anything else haunted, anywhere in the story.

The last book is *The Parachute Jumper*. With a new companion—a fellow who jumps out of planes to amuse people in county fairs and the like—Tom returns to Leatherstocking Camp, the stunningly beautiful setting introduced in *North Woods*. Four years have passed since the events of that outstanding plot, and now another mystery is unfolding. Brent Gaylong re-enters Tom's life part way through the book. It is a good story, but not a candidate for neon lights. This last book in the series ends with lines that, in later years for the fans, might be considered wistful:

Tom is ready to talk about the jinx now. He believes in it firmly. But that's another story.

But, of course, there never was another story.

Postscript: After Tom Slade

This article needs a short postscript. The Tom Slade series, which began as the primary exponent for Scouting, ended as a full-blown mystery series. This series having served its purpose and run its course, Fitzhugh turned his attention elsewhere and produced two other series in rapid succession: the ten Hal Keen mystery and adventure books (1931-1934), followed by the three Skippy Dares (1934). The fact that all thirteen books were published in less than four years suggests that at least some of them may have been written sometime before their publication.

Briefly, the Hal Keen series features a nineteen-year-old hero, a world-traveler who has a number of exciting adventures. It is a dark, at times even Gothic, finely written series, and well worth the effort to find them. The Skippy Dare series consists of only three books. The eponymous hero is only about twelve. The Skippys move beyond Hal Keen's "dark Gothic" into an even darker "surreal."

It is fascinating to see the progression through the four Tom Slade subseries into the Hal Keens and finally the Skippy Dares. In the nineteen years it took to produce these 32 volumes, PKF was evidently going through some serious changes himself, not necessarily for the better. Admittedly, this could be argued against, since at the same time, he was also producing the Pee Wee Harrises, etc., with their lighthearted humor and poignant, clean, and heartwarming adventure.

Nevertheless, the Toms, Hals, and Skippys show a disturbing progression. In the Tom Slades, there are occasional deaths, but almost always by old age, tragic accident, or (rarely) a well-deserved and off-screen demise. In the Hal Keens, the villains always die, and more than once in a spectacularly ghastly fashion (e.g., conflagration). In the Skippy Dares, not only do the villains always die, but numerous innocent bystanders and beloved secondary characters also die, some of them children, and frequently horribly (explosions, thrown off of bridges, hurled into quicksand, or fiery plane crashes). One innocent bystander is even gratuitously beaten into a lifelong vegetative state.

In spite of the consistently good writing, one can be almost thankful that PKF's books ended after Skippy Dare. Morbid curiosity asks what might have happened if he had produced another series after these. Would we have been collecting books about Sanford the Psychopath, a postal worker who murdered penurious widows and children and dissolved their bodies in sulfuric acid?

Percy Keese Fitzhugh did not publish anything in the last sixteen years of his life. He died on July 5, 1950 in Oradell, New Jersey after a long illness, toward the end of his 73rd year. Though one can raise questions about his last writing, it is indisputable that he produced some of the best quality writing and finest stories in the series book world.

#