

# Review: First volume in new Hamelin Stoop series

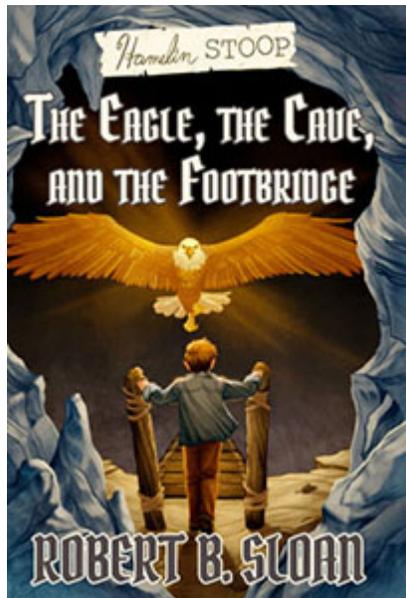
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*Hamelin Stoop—The Eagle, the Cave, and the Footbridge*

**By Robert B. Sloan (12 Gates Publishing)**

Robert Sloan’s resume includes experience as a preacher, professor, seminary dean and university president. Add one more role—young-adult fantasy novelist.

Sloan, president of Houston Baptist University, has published the first volume in a projected series of novels about Hamelin Stoop—a boy abandoned as a baby in a tomato box on the porch of a children’s home. The only legible word on the damaged note his mother left was “Hamelin,” and since he was left on the steps of the orphanage, the staff named him Hamelin Stoop. But Hamelin grew up wanting to discover true identity and his parents who, unknown to him, left him to escape capture by otherworldly trackers. Along the way, Hamelin encounters the



Great Eagle, who leads him through a mysterious cave, where he must conquer his fears and cross a dangerous footbridge to before he can begin a journey into the Atrium of the Worlds.

The “familiar world” portions of this engaging book are firmly grounded in Texas soil, with references to places like Alpine, San Angelo and the Concho River. Hamelin’s two best friends—a brother and sister several years older than he is—eventually leave the orphans’ home to attend

Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene.

Some reviewers have compared Hamelin Stoop to fiction by C.S. Lewis, but don't expect to find a simple children's story or clearly identifiable Christian allegory along the lines of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The fantasy fiction of George MacDonald—who is referenced in the story itself—may offer closer kinship. This book is written for adolescents, and the connections to Christian principles are found in underlying themes about good and evil, courage and fear, choices and consequences, destiny and free will.

Readers looking for a self-contained story may finish this book feeling a bit unsatisfied. Sloan introduces multiple plot threads that remain dangling, and he raises more questions than he answers—left open to explore in future volumes in the series. However, young readers who want to meet fascinating and engaging characters whom they will want to know better will feel rewarded. No doubt, they will find themselves eagerly anticipating the next volume in the series, *Hamelin Stoop—The Lost Princess and the Jewel of Periluna*.

*Ken Camp, managing editor*

*Baptist Standard*

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