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## FitzGerald's "The Flaming sword" (Book Review)

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# Book Reviews

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FitzGerald, H. L. L. *The flaming sword*. Tethered World Chronicles Book 2. White Salmon, WA: Mountain Brook Ink, 2016. 334 pp. \$11.99. ISBN 9781943959037

When Terry Brooks wrote his *Sword of Shannara*, it was a total Tolkien rip-off. But he did it well, with great stories and characters and it became a decent series in its own right. After all, Tolkien does not own trolls, ogres and dwarves. FitzGerald does a good job in the genre as well.

This sequel to the *Tethered World* (which gives the series its name) is viable fantasy writing. FitzGerald uses great vocabulary that rolls ideas and descriptions along in good story. The writing engages you and makes you feel like part of the family sitting at the table discussing problems.

The main character Sadie is a homeschooled junior with a cosmetology college-running father and a Bigfoot blogger (former nurse) mother. She has younger twin brothers, one of whom is autistic, a younger sister and an adopted Ethiopian baby brother.

In the previous book both parents went missing and were tortured by trolls. Once again a parent goes missing. Where is Dad now? Will they again have to make the transition across to the hidden world inside the earth? Is war brewing between darkness (trolls, Stygians and gargoyles) and light (gnomes, dwarves and Nephilim)? Are the Nephilim really allies? Will the flaming sword be captured or protected? These are the questions that haunt Sadie as she is sucked into the maelstrom of tethered-world cultures.

The reading reminds me of an Anne McCaffrey *bildungsroman* or coming of age story, where the character must make tough decisions to test their morality, character, and the very fiber of their beings. I am gratified that there is still good new writing that is safe to recommend for young adults and is enjoyable for older people as well. The author pays unusual attention to wounds and disease description not found in other fantasy writing, making consequences and concerns very real. This drives home that adventure is serious and life-threatening, but they choose to honor God

and do the tougher things in His service. The characters are well-cast, and the reader follows multiple story lines that interweave with amazing, but credible plot twists. Definitely a roller-coaster, nail-biter in parts, the story pulls you in and entertains well. FitzGerald is an excellent world builder.

In FitzGerald's stories, the good creatures believe in the Maker, who turns bad things to good, which is definitely an allusion to Yahweh. Jesus is never mentioned, but the references are definitely Biblical in nature and there is a Christian texture to the writing.

Recommended for Christian fiction collections, this fantasy genre series bodes well for the future of entertaining and edifying literature.

**Reviewer**

John E. Palmer, Southwestern Assemblies of God University