



# The Tethered World

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“Normal” means different things to different people. For sixteen-year-old Sadie Larcen, family dynamics look a little different than most. Parents with oddball occupations? Normal. Five homeschooled siblings—one with autism? Normal.

Police knocking on the door and parents gone missing? Definitely not normal!

When Sadie uncovers the reasons behind her parents’ disappearance and the truth about her heritage, she despairs of ever feeling normal again. Especially when she learns that her mother’s interest in Bigfoot, Dwarves, and other lore extends beyond her popular blog. Sadie’s family has been entrusted with keeping the secrets of the Tethered World—home to creatures that once roamed the Garden of Eden.

Sadie and her siblings must venture into this land to rescue their parents. Stepping out of reality and into a world she never knew existed is a journey Sadie fears and resents. But she chooses to risk all to save her family.

She’s just not sure she will survive in the process.

Young Adult Christian Fantasy

## The Tethered World Details

Date : Published February 1st 2016 by Mountain Brook INK

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Author : Heather L.L. FitzGerald

Format : Kindle Edition 319 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Christian Fiction, Young Adult, Christian

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## From Reader Review The Tethered World for online ebook

### Ashley says

Let's get one thing straight: I am not a fantasy fan. This has been proven by my inability to muster any interest whatsoever in Harry Potter. (I know. This is akin to blasphemy in some reading circles. Let's move on.)

The fact that my bent is not toward fantasy fiction makes my review of *The Tethered World* by Heather L.L. FitzGerald all the more meaningful. Do you know why? Because I loved this book! Not only it is family-friendly—Heather prefers the term "family fantasy" to "young adult fantasy"—but the setting is well-constructed and the characters come to life on the pages.

Accepting a surprising family history that leads to the adventure of a lifetime, the main character is forced to take the reins as the oldest in her homeschooled family. As can happen when one is forced into a role she doesn't want, she resents this life change and pushes against it. *The Tethered World*, told from the perspective of Sadie Larcen, is a whimsical (yet gripping) tale of sacrifice, growth, and, ultimately, love.

What makes *The Tethered World* so fun for adults is the trip to a land where the mythological creatures from our childhood have come to life! Plus, it is fun to consider (in a fictional sense) what happened to the creatures from the Garden of Eden.

I think this would be a fun family read-aloud. The book is written from a distinctly Christian worldview. There is plenty of fodder for discussion; the children in the book deal with a few weighty issues, as they attempt to rescue their parents. Also, this is the first book in a trilogy, so there is more adventure to be had down the road!

So, now that you're finished reading this post, go get your copy!

\*Note: I received a ARC in exchange for my honest opinion.

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### Judy Vandiver says

Excellent book. I don't normally read fantasy or young adult books, but this book grabbed and held my attention. Author Heather L. L. FitzGerald writes with wit and humor, giving her characters unique personalities. This plot was interesting and well written, giving the reader a satisfying ending. (Note: I was a pre-reader for this book.)

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### Sarah says

As a lover of YA and fantasy novels, I am pretty picky and find it difficult to stay interested in most of them these days as they all seem like copies of each other. That said, I truly enjoyed *The Tethered World*. The characters were original and funny, as well as authentic sounding, and the pace was engaging and moved along very well. There was no point at which I felt like it was slowing down. I found the story original and

interesting, and I really enjoyed all the little details peppered throughout that made the characters seem more realistic - something that not all authors take care to do. Also, the language was clean and the writing was free from explicit scenarios, which is always a plus in my book. I can't wait to let my kids read it too!

\*I was given an advanced copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Abby Jones says**

(I received an ARC in exchange for my honest opinion.)

This book was an absolute delight to read. It has a little bit of everything: adventure, battles, political intrigue, betrayal, friendships, danger, legendary creatures, dragons, fairies, gnomes and so much more!

I loved that it centers around an eccentric home school family, and, no, not a denim skirt wearing family, just a normal home school family. (NO offense if you wear jean skirts.) The Larcens are fun, relatable, and just a little crazy.

Describing this book is hard because it has so many elements that would normally turn me off from a book: it's safe, it's Christian fantasy, it's safe. LOL. I don't need to put any sort of warning on it. There is no language. The kids are smart and not rebellious. The romance is sweet, mild, and not acted upon by either party. It has a family that trust the Lord and loves each other. There is nothing here that isn't good and wholesome. Most books that I can say this about are also boring, badly written, preachy, and trite.

Not The Tethered World.

When their parents disappear, the Larcen children have their lives turned upside down and the adventure begins.

The mythological creatures are handled perfectly: just different enough to be interesting and just familiar enough to tie them to other stories. The struggles faced by Sadie as she tackles a world she only wants to leave are real and relatable without being annoying. Sophie is my heart and I love her to death. She spends most of the adventure trying not to have too much fun. Brady grows into a man by fighting and sacrificing himself, and Brock finds his place. (Brock's story is one of the great joys of this book.)

If you have a kid, boy or girl, who loved Narnia this is the next book for them. It's written very much with Lewis' world in mind and has much of the same feel. Danger and struggles are there, but not so detailed or dark that they overwhelm the story.

This is a great book to read to introduce the wide world of fantasy to adults and children alike.

So, I say this story is safe in the same way I would say The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe is safe. It has moments of great darkness, but also great joy. It has moments that made me chuckle and laugh while I read, and moments that brought me to tears.

If you are tired of YA books that seem to have far more Adult and not enough Young, if you want a story about kids who aren't so worried about boyfriends and girlfriends, but about taking care of their family, if you want faith that isn't preachy, and if you want good fun adventure, check out The Tethered World.

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## **Camilla says**

"Lions and tigers and bears, Oh My!!!" Um, no... Here we have the most bountiful mishmash of characters of legend, mythology, lore, and Ancient wonder. Reminiscent of the Chronicles of Narnia, the Pilgrim's Progress, and George MacDonald's The Princess and the Goblin, The Tethered World is an enjoyable coming-of-age adventure that is great for the Whole family. It IS Family Fantasy!!! A delightful adventure that deals with insecurities to courage, immaturity to growth, and so many other little lessons along the way.

Major characters are very real in their personalities and habits and how they relate to one another. They are clearly established, and very unique; as are the story and plot. A homeschooled family and an autistic child are only some of the particular details that allow this story to be considered different from other fantasy tales. There are surprises, action and so many quirky and imagination-stretching moments, that the story flowed and kept me interested. There are certain minor characters or situations that I had a hard time imagining, but it isn't so serious that it disturbed me. It just made me long for more details, a more full perspective.

Regarding the audio: The Voice Actor had a steady speaking voice, expressive and pleasant to listen to. Having her speak from Sadie's perspective felt fitting, but I did feel she had trouble with, for example, Aunt Jules Irish accent and creating different deeper tones for male characters. Even so, my kids loved it.

I did receive the ARC (Advanced Reader's Copy) to read, in exchange for an honest review. I am so honored and pleased to have been able to do so, as it was a pleasant, intriguing journey.

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## **Misty says**

I had the pleasure of being a pre-reader for this book. I am an avid reader. With that said I tend to know within the first page of a book if I am going to read it past 4 or 5 chapters. From the first page, I was intrigued by the Tethered World. It read just like I would imagine it would be like to see into my teen daughter's view point. I love the detail in each sentence and how well each character is written, all the way down to the accent of each person. I could almost hear Aunt Jules' accent as I read her words. I love how the author weaved wit, humor and vivid description into each paragraph. There were times I felt I was sitting at the Larcen table listening in on the conversation or following Lava through the Land of Legend. I could almost see the Nepilum's wings or smell the sulfur as they prepared to enter the land of the Orges. I went in with the expectation that I was reviewing a Youth fiction book and that I would enjoy it but maybe not feel it the same as I am in my mid adult years. However, somewhere a few chapters in I became lost in a story of hope, fear, danger, love and faith. That the Ancient of Days is a unique creator and nothing is really outside his ability to create, even when we stop believing that there just might be more to this world than meets the eye. I cannot wait to read all future books of Heather LL FitzGerald.

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## **Miralee says**

I'm a lover of fantasy books, whether Christian or not, as long as they're clean I enjoy and appreciate them. I want a strong story with memorable characters in a world that isn't what I know--and The Tethered World

delivered on all levels. I was a pre-reader for the book and truly enjoyed it--especially the dashes of humor and satirical behavior on the part of some characters. There was a good level of adventure and danger which kept the pacing moving and kept me engaged. I don't remember a point where I wanted to put the book down and walk away--I wanted to see what was going to happen and how some of the challenges would be resolved. An excellent debut novel by Heather L. L. Fitzgerald.

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### **Roberto says**

I was a pre-reader for this book in exchange for my honest feedback. First, I would like to say I love fantasy novels. This book has everything in it that you could want: action, adventure, suspense, betrayal, love and heroism. I thought the title was very fitting for the novel as well. When I flipped to the first page I saw a map of the tethered world and that immediately peaked my interest. I didn't want to put the book down even from the beginning. Heather did a wonderful job captivating her audience with superb imagery, satire and glimpses of Christianity. There were many times that I could just imagine the events going on in the book and how they were played out; however, the plot twists would always leave me wanting to read more. I love a book that constantly causes you to question what is going to happen next. I would have never imagined the fictional characters portrayed in the tethered world in a way that Heather depicted them. For instance, when I think of a dwarf I think of cute cuddly little creatures that wouldn't harm a fly, but in the book they are portrayed as mischievous, vigilant, brave, strong and protective over their community and the overall good of the "tethered world." This book is a 5 star on my list. I truly can not wait for the next novel to come next. Thank you for writing such a wonderful book!

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### **Lydia Thomas says**

I give The Tethered World by Heather L. L. Fitzgerald 4 out of 5 stars.

In her debut novel, Fitzgerald has created a vivid world, diverse cast of characters, and an adventure on par with The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lord of the Rings, and Redwall.

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What you see on the cover is just a small glimpse of the world Fitzgerald has brought to life in The Tethered World: giant mushrooms, dark tunnels, snake branches, and many, many others occupy the pages of the story. What intrigued me most, though, was the concept: a world within our own, linked to our own since the Fall. Because of its connection, the Tethered World groans along with ours without needing to resort to allegory. Whether intended on the author's part or not, I was reminded that human sin created total bondage for all creation, that sin does not occur in a vacuum.

When I say the characters are diverse, I don't just mean that there is a variety of creatures in The Tethered

World, though that's certainly true. There are leprechauns, gnomes, dwarves, Nephilim, yetis, ogres, and fairies, but beyond that, the human characters were unique. Being a former homeschooler, I loved that Sadie and her siblings were homeschooled and had that special brand of homeschool humor (there was a joke about chain male that had me laughing longer than was probably reasonable). One of Sadie's brothers has autism, and her great-aunt is afflicted with dementia, and those with loved ones in either condition will find the characters beautifully and relatably written. I would love to see more diversity like this in speculative fiction.

Sadie is not your typical brave heroine, and spends most of the adventure wishing she was back home. I didn't particularly identify with her, but I liked this aspect about her - it made her authentic and gave opportunity for character growth.

Sophie, though - Sophie is my soul sister. There was a moment when a character quipped, "Hay is for houses," I thought, I think the saying is 'Hay is for horses.' Maybe it's a typo? Sophie echoed my sentiments just moments later, minus the part about the typo. I am known as the know-it-all in my family, too. I've gotten so much better over the years, but I mean, sometimes a girl just can't help it, so I adored Sophie.

The story is packed with action throughout, and it makes for an exciting read. There were many moments when I caught myself holding my breath, wondering how the Larcens were going to make it out of this scrape or that. It's not all serious, though: there is plenty of comic relief to offset the tense moments.

That being said, this is a bit of a journey story, and action girl that I am, I had a bit of trouble with the traveling portions. I know they're necessary - unless you're J. K. Rowling and then, disappearance - but even in my favorite stories - The Lord of the Rings, for example - I have a hard time with them.

I also want to thank Fitzgerald for not ending on a cliffhanger - that is my pet peeve in serial fiction, and I loved that it was resolved, and yet, you know there's going to be more.

I highly recommend The Tethered World for fans of Tolkien, Lewis, and Jacques. It's a fun, clean adventure that will appeal to families everywhere.

I received a free eARC in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Stephanie Florentino says**

This book is an absolute delight! It is clean, fun, thought-provoking, and gripping. I was on the edge of my seat, cheering on Sadie and her siblings the whole time, or holding my breath when things got really intense. It's perfect for the whole family, but not cheesy or boring at all. By far, my favorite part of this book is the incredible development that each of the characters undergoes. In addition, it's not often that you come across a homeschooled heroine or an autistic character who plays a major and important role. These and other unique details add to the richness of the story, and provide plenty of talking points.

You will be transported into an incredible, mystical world filled with intriguing, lovable characters--including a whole cast of mythological creatures that are so well written that they feel quite real. Even though it is a fantasy story, Heather's writing brilliantly intermingles the real with the fantasy, so that you will be left thinking, "Hey, this could actually happen."

It will satisfy the serious fantasy reader, and even those who aren't as big fans of the genre. I highly recommend this book! You won't be disappointed.

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### **Edward Arrington says**

This is not my normal genre but I thought I would give it a try. I was pleasantly surprised to find it entertaining and captivating. The story is being told by the oldest Larcen daughter who is a teenager. The descriptions of the Tethered World made it easy to envision the countryside, the cities, the characters, and the animals. It was as if I was right there with the Larcen kids although I kept reminding myself that this was a fantasy, not the real world. The story raised questions in my mind that I'm not sure how I would answer. How would you respond if you were awakened by the police at 3:00 AM to discover that your parents' van has been found at an unexplained location and they are nowhere around? All you can find is a note on their pillow telling you your aunt is coming to spend a few days. What would you do if your aunt told you that you have family ties to the Tethered World, a place you didn't know existed below the surface of the earth? And how can you possibly believe that you and three of your siblings are going to have to take a journey to this place you've never heard of? Oh, by the way, what about those Gnomes, Dwarves, Leprechauns, Trolls, Ogres, and Faeries that you have only heard about in fairy tales but are suddenly meeting live and in the flesh? I think it would all be a bit much to swallow but it was interesting reading. I recommend you read it for the fun of it no matter what your age. I was given an advanced copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Melissa J. Troutman says**

Warning: This book may be for you if you  
homeschool  
were homeschooled  
know someone with autism  
are a Christian  
love fantasy.

I fit in most of those categories, and I loved *The Tethered World*, a unique, ingenious adventure following seventeen-year-old Sadie Larcen as she leads her siblings underground to rescue their kidnapped parents.

Heather FitzGerald promises great contributions to the world of literature, writing with a daring imagination that puts many writers to shame. She isn't afraid to wonder what happened to the creatures in the Garden of Eden. She isn't afraid to ask what if they still existed today in a secret world, what if a family were charged with the safekeeping of that world. I have never read such a fascinating premise.

Along with those "what if" questions comes the confident voice of "been there done that." As a fantasy-loving Christian homeschooler with an autistic son, FitzGerald is fully qualified to write the themes that she



does—themes centering around homeschool life, Christian morals, and autistic characters. Such variety in the story guarantees it a place on the bookshelves of a wide audience.

As for the story, I very much enjoyed it. FitzGerald's main characters are the most human, most relatable characters I've ever read—they cry, scream, argue, and drool in their sleep just like the rest of us. (I wanted to cheer when I read that the Sadie and her siblings brought toilet paper in their backpacks. Hoorah for normal characters!)

I appreciated Sadie's character the most. Unlike most literature protagonists, she doesn't choose an adventure that life has coincidentally prepared her for. The adventure chooses her, and she is not at all prepared. She leads because she has to, and she struggles through an entire book's worth of fears, doubts, and failures. Because of this—because of her humanity—I identify with her better than I have with many other literary characters.

Also as a human, she grows. She learns. She changes. By the end of the book, she decides to join the action where once she would have played it safe. We get to watch as her fifteen-year-old brother becomes a man beside her. Other characters (human and non-human) show encouraging, positive change. Well done to the author for writing excellent character journeys.

And then there's the writing itself. FitzGerald writes with a more informal style, which took me a bit to get used to. But once I told myself to relax and just enjoy the ride, I did. Her characters—including the narrator—employ a wit and sarcasm that had me laughing out loud, a lot. And that doesn't include the comparisons. It can be hard to picture mythological creatures when their appearances vary as widely as their authors. Not so with Heather FitzGerald when she compares an armored gnome to "a toy-sized R2D2 from Star Wars." The book is full of such great descriptions.

I would have liked to see more of the book from Sadie's point of view. For a first-person adventure, I often felt as if I were watching events through Sadie as opposed to experiencing them with her. Sometimes the writing also got choppy—a chunk of action followed by a chunk of reaction. Granted, not all moments lend themselves to introspection, especially when you're running for your life, but I would have liked to see more of the reactions woven throughout the action.

But I still give *The Tethered World* five stars—five stars for a unique (and clean) story, five stars for great humor, five stars for outstanding characters, and five stars for creative ideas that, I'm sure, will go far in this Topside world.

(I received an advance copy in exchange for an honest review.)

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## **Raechel says**

This was quite an adventure! Truly, that is a great word to describe this book. It pulls you in and doesn't let go till the end. And even then you're left wanting more (do we really have to wait so long for the next book?! ;))

I was exceedingly delighted and impressed by the author's writing skill. Her style is so captivating - the entire thing was just written so marvelously! And the story itself was enthralling.

To be honest, I wasn't sure what I'd think at first. And while I'm still not certain how it compares to reality, as a fantasy fiction piece, it blew me away. I love the characters, every one of them were so well written, well

rounded, and easy to love (except the Trolls. I didn't like them. Okay, one I loved, but that was it). Favourite character? Hard choice...I really like Sadie, and can I say how much I absolutely adored Xander??? I really, really hope that he's in the future books :D the dragon, Odyssey was also a favourite :) And Brock and Brady, and even Sophie grew on me, though at first she was irritating. :)

I have a couple reserves for this book, the main thing being the fairies and elves and the magic they used. It didn't come across menacingly but I do not agree with magic and fairies/elves or feel comfortable with them, so that is the only reserve I had for this book.

Otherwise, I really fell in love with it. This is a book I will remember for a good, long time. :) So clever and just fantastic!

I think it will do very well out there in the book world!

I found this one better than LotR, in my opinion. :) And I really appreciate how often the Lord was woven into this book - no hiding or disguising Him which again, I appreciated!

I am very thankful I had the opportunity to read this book, and am delighted to be one of Heather's Avengers! :)

\*I received a complimentary ecopy of this book from the author in exchange for my honest review which I have given.

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## **J.L. Mbewe says**

It's a bit like Donita K. Paul's Dragonkeeper Chronicles meets Artemis Fowl meets Narnia.

In Tethered World, we follow Sadie and her siblings into a world beneath earth's surface filled with mythical creatures said to have been placed there by God after Adam and Eve's fall. Sometimes these creatures and beings come to the topside and we know them as bigfoot, leprechauns, and such.

The author's voice caught my attention and made me volunteer for an advanced reader copy. Told in first person, the main protagonist, Sadie, has a bit of dry humor. The characters popped with personality and quirks, and I especially thought it interesting that one of the siblings was a boy with Autism.

Although the novel is categorized as a young adult novel, I think the story is suitable for middle grade readers as well. The story read like a stand-alone, but future adventures are promised with the inclusion of a sneak peek at book two in The Tethered World Chronicles.

Overall I enjoyed the story, and I think young readers (and those young at heart!) who enjoy stories like Donita K. Paul's Dragonspell would enjoy it as well.

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## **Erika says**

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Finally. A Young Adult fantasy book that is full of adventure, amazing creatures, lovable characters, and absolutely NO smut.

I read a lot of YA. And I can't actually pass much of it on to the young adult in my house.

The Tethered World without a doubt will be shared in our home, and with many friends.

Heather L. L. FitzGerald weaves a delightful story featuring a homeschooling family with a few eccentric members. One of which has autism. As a mother to a child on the spectrum, I am thrilled to find literature that focuses on the strengths and amazing abilities of a spectrum kid. Also, as a homeschooling mom, finding characters my kids could possibly relate to is exciting.

The Tethered World is overflowing with my favorite fantastical creatures. Bigfoot, gnomes, trolls (but not the neon haired, jeweled bellybutton trolls), and dragons. The world entered by the Larcen kids is beautifully described and I found myself wanting to visit and hang out with the dwarves and gnomes of the Tethered World.

The story held my attention and I nearly finished in one sitting. I love books that pull me in like that. I am looking forward to the next book so I can again visit The Tethered World and its mythical inhabitants.

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