



# THE SEED

A  
TRUE  
MYTH

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by

ERIK  
GUZMAN

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“It’s rare, but sometimes one reads a book that is so absorbing that one can’t put it down, so filled with truth that one can never ‘un-see’ it, and so profound that one will never forget it. *The Seed* is that kind of book. The ‘experience’ of reading *The Seed* will haunt me the rest of my life. I don’t even have the words to describe that ‘experience.’ Experience it for yourself and then give this book to everyone you know.”

**Steve Brown**, Author; Key Life radio broadcaster

“There are not adequate words to convey the beauty of this extraordinary journey. Erik has taken the journey, and tells the Story in a way that will awaken your imagination for it and reignite your desire for union and communion with Love—for life without end in the Love Fractal. *The Seed* will grow on you and in you as you read.”

**Chuck DeGroat, PhD**, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling and Senior Fellow, Newbigin House of Studies; author of *Wholeheartedness*, *Toughest People to Love*, and *Leaving Egypt*

“Here, in this beautifully written fantasy, Erik Guzman has done what many writers try to do without success. He’s made that old story of God’s love for sinners come alive in a new, illuminating way, the way of Love. *The Seed* will both remind you of the old story and teach you new truth about the repeating ‘pattern of Love in the world’ and how we are loved, not for what we do but because we are His. Buy this book. Share it with your family.”

**Elyse M. Fitzpatrick**, Author of *Home: How Heaven and the New Earth Satisfy Our Deepest Longing*

“Erik Guzman is one of the most exciting, insightful, articulate, economic, and powerful writers on the planet. I hate reading fiction, but I LOVED this book”

**Jim Henderson**, Executive Producer of Jim Henderson Presents: William Paul Young, Author of *The Shack*



“In his ‘true myth,’ Erik Guzman brilliantly tells all of our stories. Allow yourself the disorienting and reorienting experience of going backward to find the seed and discover all the unlikely places Love has been growing in between the empty, pain-filled, and cynical places in our hearts. No other story has invited me in quite the same way to let Love find me, no matter how terrifying and startling, and then to let Love grow within and remake me.”

**Sharon Hersh**, Professional counselor; adjunct professor; speaker;  
author of *The Last Addiction: Why Self-Help Is Not Enough*

“*The Seed* captures your attention and sizzles with fun and brave theological vitality. You don’t know why yet, but it doesn’t get any better than life in the Love Fractal. This story will lead you to explore the contours of what it means to hear God say, ‘I love you because you are mine.’”

**Justin S. Holcomb**, Episcopal priest; seminary professor;  
author of *On the Grace of God* and *God Made All of Me*

“Imagine hearing a brand-new version of your favorite classic song. You recognize the familiar melody immediately, but the instrumentation is original, the phrasing fresh. You have always loved this song, and now, thanks to the artist, you love it even more. Now open this book. If you’re like me, you will find yourself smiling over and over again.”

**Nate Larkin**, Founder of the Samson Society; author of  
*Samson and the Pirate Monks: Calling Men to Authentic Brotherhood*

“Why are we in so much pain? Why do we hurt each other? How is it that we’ve become so disconnected from the divine, ourselves, nature, and each other? In vivid parabolic storytelling, Erik Guzman channels George MacDonald and J. R. R. Tolkien in *The Seed: A True Myth*. Mysterious dragons, dark forests, living trees, and love fractals greet us as Erik lures us on a path where allegory meets biography. Highly recommended!”

**Mike Morrell**, Founder of the Speakeasy network; writer

“The Inklings taught us that we need good stories and Guzman has given us one here. At each turn of this book we meet truth breathed through myth—the biblical story perceived through a vivid imagination. The geek in me loved every minute.”

**Ryan M. Reeves, MDiv, MA, PhD**, Dean & Assistant  
Professor of Historical Theology, Gordon Conwell

“I am undone. I just finished *The Seed: A True Myth* and I can’t stop weeping. What a hope-building, eternity-embracing, eye-lifting, heart-exploding book. I am so grateful for Erik’s work. Truly. I can’t remember the last time a Christian book moved me in this way. You will not be disappointed.”

**Jessica Thompson**, Speaker; author of *Everyday Grace: Infusing All of Your Relationships with the Love of Jesus*

“Along with Brennan Manning, Henri Nouwen, and C. S. Lewis, Erik Guzman has managed to write in such a way that the unconditional love of God is experienced through man’s words. I have been profoundly affected by this True Myth.”

**Zach Van Dyke**, Teaching Minister at Summit Church,  
Orlando, FL

“A colorful, right-brained feast that satisfies the soul and stimulates the imagination.”

**Frank Viola**, Author; speaker; blogger at [frankviola.org](http://frankviola.org)

“In a religious tradition frequently marked by walls, divisions, and differences, *The Seed* provides a grand story of spiritual journey—one that is interwoven with all times, places, and beings, and where every action is completed with redemption. A beautiful and compelling book.”

**David Wimbish**, Vocalist in the Collection

“You’ve never read anything like Erik Guzman’s *The Seed*—an ambitious, beautifully written yarn that skirts the line between allegory, fantasy, and myth in extremely inventive fashion. He has somehow managed to capture a great deal of the wonder and weirdness, urgency and beauty, of the biblical material that inspired it—a major breath of fresh air, in other words. No matter how well you think you know the ‘old, old story,’ no matter how high or labyrinthine your inner walls have grown, this is truly a tale that will ‘take you by the tail’ and not let go! You’ve been warned.”

**David Zahl**, Editor of The Mockingbird Blog; author of *A Mess of Help: From the Crucified Soul of Rock n Roll*

“Erik Guzman’s retelling of the Bible’s story of creation and redemption bears fascinating elements of Carl Jung, C. S. Lewis, and the Brothers Grimm. If you don’t blink you can even spot Ayn Rand and Jack Kerouac. It’s a wild ride from start to finish, and you’ll never be bored. Here’s to the Love Fractal!”

**Paul Zahl**, Episcopal minister; theologian

# The Seed

A TRUE MYTH



Erik Guzman



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This book is dedicated with Love to my wife Paisley and my  
three children: Hannah, Madeline, and Ezra.

Here's to life in the Love Fractal!



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## Author's Note about Fractals

I was a teenager the first time I saw a fractal. Well, that's not entirely true because fractals are everywhere. I just didn't have a name for them yet. I was walking through the mall and one glance at the screen displaying the fractal had me mesmerized. The video went on and on delving ever deeper into colorful, seemingly chaotic shapes. However, as the magnification of the images continued, clear patterns emerged and kept repeating. It was like staring into infinity. The particular fractal I saw that day was a computer-generated visualization of the Mandelbrot set. (Search for Mandelbrot fractal videos online and you'll see what I mean.)

Years later I was blown away when I found out that all of nature is formed by these self-similar repeating patterns called fractals—the universe, galaxies, planets, mountains, clouds, waves, plants, and even the human body.

Given my fascination with fractals, I couldn't help but let them make their way into this book. Still, I realize that not everyone geeks out on the stuff that I do, so here's a simple example of a fractal that helps to understand what exactly they are and how they work.

Picture a tree. The branches are smaller versions of the trunk, each bearing ever smaller branches with leaves and seeds that each contains another tree. A tree is a pattern made of repeating versions of itself, and that's the very definition of a fractal.

So, tuck that bit of knowledge away, and as you read I hope it will be helpful when you encounter the word *fractal*. More than that, I hope you'll realize that this entire story is a fractal with you and me and all the world as a part of it.

“In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world erupted into this transitory one . . . everything else has lost importance by comparison.”

– Carl Gustav Jung

# 1

## Shadows



Any true father would lay down his life to protect his children, but death took the hunter's family without giving him the chance.

He raced through the woods, his spear tight in his fist. Towering trees looked down on him as he dodged branches and leapt over jagged red rocks in pursuit of his prey. The hounds barked ahead. They picked up the scent after breakfast and pulled the hunter from a morning haze of self-pity out into the hot summer afternoon. The barking moved toward the edge of the forest. His feet ached in his boots. Sweat soaked his threadbare clothes and ran from his graying hair into his beard.

He had to stop for water.

The hunter finally paused, panting and groping for his water-skin as the noise from the dogs echoed through the trees in the distance. He drank deeply and then gasped for air.

He checked his pack and noticed his daughter's little music block almost fell out. He stuffed the instrument deep into the bag and tied the opening shut. His hands went to his knees as he tried



to catch his breath. He closed his eyes and a memory of his wife and children overtook him.

His younger daughter and his little boy laughed as they played by the river, taking turns swinging from the rope he'd tied to one of the branches above. They leapt from the riverbank and flew through the air, their squeals disappearing in splashes of clear water. His older daughter sat in the tree and watched from above, her feet swinging with the rhythm as she plinked away on the music block he gave her—her *karimba*. He marveled at how quickly she was maturing into a young woman.

On the shore, his wife sat with him in the sun, her back to his chest and her head resting on his shoulder. He kissed her head. Her amber hair tickled his nose.

"I wish we could live in this moment forever," she said.

"What about tomorrow?" he asked, stroking her hair. "We have a tower to build."

She nestled closer. "I will love you tomorrow too."

He smiled. "You're a good woman. What would I do without you?"

"I'm sure you'd figure something out."

"Humph."

Suddenly, the children's laughter faded and a familiar darkness flooded his memory.

*The shadow.*

It took everything from him. When the hunter found his family, it was already too late. The shadow hunched over the bed, its back scraping the ceiling. His wife and children were huddled together, pale and lifeless . . . cold. The image haunted him and made his blood boil.

The hounds barked in the distance.

Forcing his eyes open, he cursed the shadow for invading his thoughts, but in reality he preferred seething rage to the pain of remembering the good days long gone. Whatever it took, he would

avenge them. He would find the shadow and kill it, or die trying. His anger required total devotion.

“God, give me strength,” he prayed. “Give me justice.”

He put his pack on his back and began running after the dogs again. His heart thumped in his chest and his legs burned, but he would never relent.

Consuming hatred drove him on.

His pace faltered when he heard the hounds’ deep barks give way to baying.

*Could they have it treed?*

Adrenaline sent the hunter into a sprint. After years of tracking the shadow, he hoped it was finally his chance for revenge. The woods became thinner and light splashed across the mossy carpet. There were fewer obstacles, but he still wasn’t close enough to see the baying hounds. “Get it! Get it!” he shouted as he raised his spear above his head.

*It’s mine now.*

A yelp of pain came from one of the dogs. Then another.

Thoughts of victory were premature.

He couldn’t run any faster. Fierce growling and barking, then a sharp cry were followed by a horrible silence. He staggered and stopped. Through eyes stinging with sweat, he could see a wide-open space ahead in the distance beyond the trees, but he couldn’t see the hounds.

*Where are you, damned monster?* He grabbed his spear with both hands and crouched, breathing so hard he feared it would give away his presence.

He inched forward, deliberately inhaling and exhaling, willing his heart to slow. Whatever happened next, he would fight the shadow until his last breath.

He ascended a short, rocky incline and stepped into a meadow beyond the edge of the woods. Squinting in the sunlight, he scanned the horizon.

Nothing.

No sound except the buzzing of insects in the tall grass.

The hunter turned around and bent down. The hounds' tracks just stopped. His dogs vanished from the earth. He looked closer at the grass surrounding him and saw red droplets sprayed in arcs on the blades, like crimson dew. He touched the blood and rubbed it between his fingers, wondering why the shadow pierced his dogs' hides, why it didn't just pull the life out of them into its nothingness the way it stole his wife and children.

While the hunter crouched, perplexed, he didn't notice the shadow approaching until it was too late. Darkness engulfed him before he could look up.



The ground sped by beneath the dragon. Trees, fields, rocks, and flowers blurred together in a rushing river of greens, browns, grays, and touches of yellow and red. It had all burned before, but life kept insisting. A stream flowed into the palette mixing in an array of blues and whites. Water filled the landscape below, adding a roar to the whistling wind passing over the dragon's wings.

His name was Wyrn. With no arms or legs, he slithered on the ground, but he preferred the sky. His body was long and slender. From his smoking snout to his shredded tail, his scales were polished ebony. Black teeth as sharp as needles filled his mouth. His eyes were bottomless pits.

All of a sudden, the churning waters dropped away and mist engulfed the soaring serpent. Droplets beaded and whisked down the length of his body as he closed his eyes and flew blind through the clouds. He shot past the falls into the warm air beyond, caught an updraft, and opened his black eyes. An expansive, grassy plain stretched out beneath him. The great height extinguished the sensation of speed. He passed over the labyrinthine town of Ai—its inhabitants about their morning routines—and off into

the distance toward a vast forest that grew far from any people or civilization.

Wyrms ruled over everything below him and everything beyond the horizon. The whole world was his kingdom, but he stayed hidden from view. Flying high and unseen, he became more than a mere dragon. His prophets spoke his words, but never spoke his name. He let his legend grow over the generations until he was worshiped as almighty God.

He governed through his blood worms. They filled anyone who would accept their influence and power. His workers tended his kilns and built his towns. His kings led the people according to his will, and the worms in his spies made sure he knew everything that happened in his kingdom. Most accepted Wyrms' rule, no matter the difficulty of his demands, in exchange for protection from the shadow.

Wyrms flew over the forest following the scent of the hunter's fire. The smell of animal flesh cooking grew thick and then dissipated, leaving a trail of greasy smoke to follow to its source. He drew his wings in close to his sleek body and spun into a dive, then unfolded his wings with a snap, pulled out of his rapid descent, and leveled off, still high above the woods. He let out a high-pitched screech that only the hounds could hear, then looked back. Trees obscured his view, but he could see the dogs chasing him, darting in and out of patches of light with the hunter behind. Wyrms had been watching the miserable man for many seasons and everything was in place to put his plan into motion. He screeched again and flew toward the edge of the forest, slow enough for the hounds to keep up, leading them on into the afternoon.

Looking back again, Wyrms noticed the hunter had stopped. He circled above, unseen. He was eager to oblige when he heard the hunter's plea for help.

Wyrms bolted toward the tree line and led the hunter's hounds out into the open. He dove, sunk his teeth into one of them, and

shook it violently before swallowing it whole. The remaining hounds barked and bayed as he circled back around and snatched them from the ground one by one. He belched flames as he ascended higher.

The hounds didn't provide the nourishment he needed, but their disappearance would draw the hunter out of the forest, leaving him vulnerable and confused. He beat the air with his wings and spun around. He gained altitude until his next target emerged from the trees. He stopped flapping and glided in to take the hunter.

Wyrms swooped down without a sound. He pulled out of his dive just above the baffled hunter, snuffing the light of the sun and engulfing the man in the shadow of his wings. The dragon cracked his tail like a whip and sent the hunter flying into the woods.

Wyrms landed on his belly and slithered toward the forest. As soon as he entered, he felt the shadow's maddening presence. He turned toward its pull. It stood like a crooked tree erased from the woods, an emptiness that warped the world around it. The shadow's branches reached out over the hunter's limp body.

"Why are you here?" Wyrms hissed. "He asked for me."

The twisted shape didn't move.

"Haven't you made him suffer enough?" Flames lit the dragon's mouth as he spoke. He lifted half his body off the ground and extended his wings. "He gave himself to me."

Suddenly, the shadow shrank and disappeared.

"Coward," the dragon growled.

He slithered toward the unconscious man and encircled him. "I will give you the strength you need," he said. "We will have justice." Wyrms looked down at his shredded tail on the ground and then sunk his fangs into it. Black blood poured from the bite. The oily substance pooled around the hunter's head and dripped from the dragon's mouth. Large drops landed on the hunter's face. The blood bubbled and black worms emerged from it like maggots from

rotting meat. They crawled into the man's mouth, nose, ears, and eyes as Wyrms hissed, "Welcome to your new home, my children."

The wound on the dragon's tail clotted with the same black worms that had just entered the hunter. He slinked through the trees and out of the forest, then took to the air.