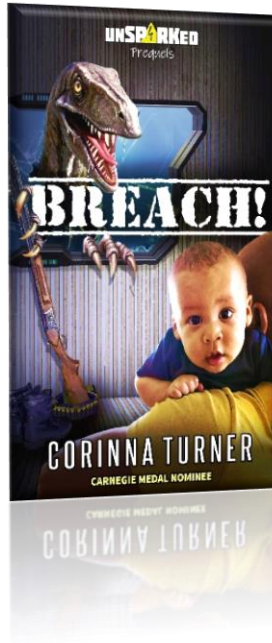




BREACH!

DISCUSSION GUIDE



CORINNA TURNER



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The **unSPARKED** series

The unSPARKed series is set in a future America where dinosaurs roam the countryside and most people live 'SPARKed' in cities, behind great electric fences. The main characters in BREACH! are two young hunters, eighteen-year-old Isaiah and his older brother Zechariah, who live in a HabVi (armoured motorhome/RV), earning their living capturing and culling dinosaurs.

The main unSPARKed series is suitable for teens and some tweens (some threat and tension, with some more mature themes later in the series).

The prequel novel, BREACH!, due to mature themes (crisis pregnancy, etc.), is PG below the age of 14.

1. *Isaiah and Zechariah agree to clear the resort of raptors, which will involve dangerous foot patrols, and they insist on being paid appropriately.*

- Do you think it fair that people who put their lives on the line to do a job (soldiers, police, workers in dangerous industries) be appropriately compensated? Why/Why not?
- Do you think it is possible to fairly compensate someone for risking their life? Why/Why not?
- Do you think the Wilson brothers (and people in real life) only do such jobs for the money? Would you? Why/Why not?

2. *Father Benedict is a resort visitor, yet he is prepared to risk his life to help deal with the breach. Trevor has voluntarily taken a job that ought to include assisting with the situation, but he is reluctant.*

- How do you think you might react in that situation?
- The truth is that no one really knows how they might react to a crisis until it happens, though good training and previous experiences in such situations increases the chances that a person will react well. Have you ever been in a situation that required you to stay calm and think or act quickly?

- Were you satisfied with the way you responded?
Why/Why not?

3. *The three conditions required for sin to be mortal are:*

1: *Grave matter (the action is serious rather than something minor)*

2: *Full knowledge (the person committing the action fully understands that it is wrong)*

3: *Deliberate consent (the person commits the action with the conscious and deliberate consent of their will)*

If the person committing an objectively wrong action, even a serious one, lacks one of these three conditions, then they are not committing a mortal sin. They have probably committed a serious venial sin which it would be spiritually beneficial to confess, but not a mortal one that breaks their relationship with God and which they must confess.

Because getting drunk intentionally means deliberately choosing to cast aside your free will (which can have very serious consequences indeed), it counts as "grave matter."

- Isaiah, having never drank alcohol before, gets drunk accidentally, without intending to become so. Has he committed a mortal sin? Why/Why not?

- Since Isaiah has never been taught the three conditions for mortal sin, he assumes he is completely to blame for his drunkenness and its consequences. Have you ever thought you were to blame for something and then discovered you weren't? How did you feel?
- Conversely, have you ever thought something wasn't a sin and then found out that it was?
- In this case, if the sin was "grave matter," would it have been mortal or venial? Why/Why not?

4. *Isaiah is troubled, even haunted, by what happened with Stacey at New Year, which wasn't something he chose or wanted to happen. He blames himself for the loss of something precious and irreplaceable. However, a person cannot give free consent to an action if they are intoxicated or otherwise under the influence, asleep, or unconscious.*

- Isaiah blames himself. Zechariah blames *himself* for not looking out for his brother. Father Benedict blames Stacey. How would you apportion the blame?
- Since Stacey is an attractive woman and Isaiah a young man, Stacey clearly considers that Isaiah simply "got lucky." What do you think about this attitude?

- What would you think about the incident if their genders were reversed?
5. *Some families holidaying at the resort have failed to read basic safety information, with catastrophic results. Many people in real life also fail to educate themselves and take basic precautions to prepare for any dangerous situations that might arise on journeys or at home. At the other extreme, some people spend so much time preparing for all possible emergencies that they aren't really living their life in the here and now.*
- Do you think there is a happy balance to be struck between minimum and maximum preparation or do you think one or other extreme is best? Why?
 - Do you have a reasonable grasp of basic safety measures in most situations you go into?
 - If not, why not? Is this something you would like to change?
6. *Because of his experience with unborn calves, when Stacey tells Isaiah she is pregnant he immediately perceives there to be a live, unborn human being inside her: his son or daughter.*
- What would you consider to be inside Stacey at that point?

7. *Isaiah immediately agrees to pay the child support he thinks Stacey is asking for. Stacey's revelation that the money is for an abortion takes him completely by surprise.*

- If you were Isaiah, do you think the suggestion would take you by surprise? Why/Why not?

8. *Isaiah then offers to pay all medical expenses and even a living allowance so that Stacey can have the baby, and promises to take the child away and raise it himself, without troubling her for anything more.*

- What do you think about his offer? Do you think it is: Reasonable? Generous? Unrealistic? Over and above? Unreasonable?
- Why?

9. *Isaiah recognizes that he is powerless to save his baby from the abortion because he has no legal say in the matter. He is tormented by this fact because he feels a father's first duty is to protect his child.*

- Do you think the law treats fathers fairly? Why/Why not?
- Do you think that Isaiah is right to feel the way he does? Why/Why not?

10. *Isaiah finds it humiliating to ask Zech to come back and take over from him covering the breach, but he puts his responsibility for the safety of others before his feelings and does it anyway.*

- Do you think you would have done the same or would you have been tempted to try to tough it out? Why/Why not?
- Do you think that the world Isaiah lives in might make him particularly ready to place duty and necessity over personal feelings? Why/Why not?

11. *Zech suggests that maybe it's "for the best" that Stacey is insisting on the abortion.*

- Why do you think he is able to make this suggestion about his own niece/nephew?
- Did you agree/sympathize with him or did his words anger or upset you? Why?

12. *Rather than give up, Isaiah raises the stakes by offering Stacey half his savings to have the baby.*

- How did this make you feel?
- Do you think he did the right thing? Why/Why not?

13. *Isaiah pictures his unborn child as curled up, translucent, and bald, anatomically correct for that stage of the human life cycle. He also compares the embryo to a “tiny stooped old person.”*

- How many stages of the human life cycle can you name?
- At what stage does the human life cycle begin?
- At what stage does an uninterrupted human life cycle naturally end?
- Do you think there is ever a stage or a reason at which/for which it is okay to interrupt the natural life cycle by intentionally killing the human being? Why/Why not?

14. *When Stacey refuses his offer of \$10,000, Isaiah offers her all his savings.*

- How did this make you feel?
- Do you think offering everything was the right thing to do? Why/Why not?

15. *When Zech suggests adoption, Isaiah dismisses it because he feels adoption would only be appropriate if he actually could not raise his child himself. He considers*

that since they have shelter, weapons, employment, and mod cons, they have all they need to raise a baby.

- How does this make you feel? Why?
- Do you agree with him? Why/Why not?
- What circumstances would you consider to be so uncondusive to raising a child that adoption would be the more responsible option or do you think this is something that will vary from mother to mother (or father to father)?

16. *One change in his life Isaiah immediately makes is to start eating more healthily “‘cause I wanna live long enough to see my kid grow up.”*

- What other changes can you think of that people sometimes make in their lives when they become parents?
- Do you think it good that people make such changes? Why/Why not?

17. *Isaiah puts his child's safety above his relationship with his big brother by not telling Zech the entire truth until after the paperwork is signed.*

- How does this make you feel? Why?
- Do you think Isaiah does the right thing? Why/Why not?

18. *Zech and Isaiah employ blackmail by refusing to allow the maintenance team to enter the resort, but they only do so in order to insist that the resort owners fulfil the conditions of the contract by paying them immediately.*

- How do you feel about this?
- Do you think their actions were: Reasonable? Unjustified? Harmless but technically wrong? Illegal but harmless? Justified? Unreasonable? Why/Why not?

19. *Zech made a big effort to be understanding when Isaiah offered Stacey half his savings, but loses his temper badly when he finds out that Isaiah has promised Stacey everything. They have a nasty argument about it.*

- Do you sympathize more with Zech or Isaiah at this point?
- Why?

20. *Isaiah occasionally suffers flashbacks to when he still lived with his father, who was a mentally ill alcoholic who mistreated his sons until they managed to run away.*

- Have you heard of PTSD? What is it?
- Do you think it likely that Isaiah suffers from it? Why/Why not?

21. *Stowing away in a stranger's HabVi was a very dangerous thing for two young boys to do, but so was remaining on their father's farm.*

- Do you think Zech did the right thing by hiding himself and Isaiah in the Wilson HabVi? Why/Why not?
- Would you think differently if things had not turned out so well for the brothers? Why/Why not?

22. *Isaiah loves animals and nature, enjoying spending time with an allosaur and being prepared to look after even a sick piranha'saur. For Zech, their hunting lifestyle is more about making a living, though he enjoys their way of life.*

- Whose attitude do you identify with most? Why/Why not?
- How important do you think job satisfaction is, compared to other factors such as wages and perks? Why?

23. *Isaiah is so determined to reach his son before Stacey can give him away that he places himself and Zech in danger and sustains damage to the HabVi by going head to head with a T. rex.*

- Do you think Isaiah's actions were justified or did he take an unreasonable risk? Why/Why not?
- What would you have done? Why?

24. *Isaiah begins to worry whether he is really doing the right thing seeking to raise his son in a HabVi, but then he reflects on the fact that sudden disasters strike many families, whether they live in city or out and becomes comfortable with his decision again.*

- Do you agree with his reasoning and his decision? Why/Why not?

25. *Isaiah dreams about a woman holding a baby. He is unsure whether the woman was his mum or Mother Mary and whether the child was baby Jesus or his own child having been named Joshua.*

- Did you get the slight joke here? If not, research either the name "Joshua" or the name "Jesus."

26. *Zech won't even enter the baby supply store and Isaiah would rather enter a raptor nesting ground, feeling like a total fish out of water while he's inside.*

- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt completely out of place?
- Did you find it easy to enter that situation or did it take courage?
- How did it turn out?

27. *Isaiah chose not to have a paternity test, since by the time he thought about it he felt too responsible for the child to risk being tempted to back out of saving it.*

- How does this make you feel? Why?
- Do you think you would have done the same thing? Why/Why not?

28. *Isaiah takes a risk when he calls Stacey out for what she did to him, and it gets him into trouble when she tells the health visitor about the HabVi.*

- Do you think he did the right thing by speaking up? Why/Why not?
- Would you have done the same thing? Why/Why not?

29. *Zech knows that there was an important Joshua in the Bible and suggests he might have led some people out of slavery or something else.*

- Is Zech correct? Do you know what Joshua's role was in the Bible? (Read the book of *Joshua* if you're interested. Joshua also plays a role in *Exodus* and *Numbers*.)

30. *Zech has purchased a reinforced, padded, soundproofed box to keep baby Josh safe when large predators are nearby.*

- How do you feel about putting a baby in a "cradle" of that nature?
- Would you put your own baby into one? Why/Why not?

31. *Zech and Isaiah resort to force to escape from Ms Strickland at the Vi'park.*

- Do you think ramming Ms Strickland's car was: Acceptable? Uncalled for? Reasonable? Disproportionate? Appropriate? Reprehensible? Praiseworthy?
- Would you have done the same? Why/Why not?

32. *This gets them into trouble at the gate, where they aren't prepared to risk Joshua's safety against the cop's assault rifle and have to pull over.*

- Do you think they were right to surrender? Why/Why not?
- How do you feel about the cop's decision to "accidentally" let them get away?
- Why do you think the cop made that decision?

33. *At the end of the book Isaiah clearly feels like his world and his purpose in life have totally shifted to center on Joshua and he doesn't mind. In fact, he knows he will never regret giving up his life savings to save his son.*

- How does this make you feel? Why?
- Do you think you would feel the same way or do you hope that you would? Why/Why not?

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* Awarded the Catholic Writers Guild *Seal of Approval*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Corinna Turner has been writing since she was fourteen and likes strong protagonists with plenty of integrity. Although she spends as much time as possible writing, she cannot keep up with the flow of ideas, for which she offers thanks—and occasional grumbles!—to the Holy Spirit. She is the author of over twenty-five books, including the Carnegie Medal Nominated I Am Margaret series, and her work has been translated into four languages. She was awarded the St. Katherine Drexel award in 2022.

She is a Lay Dominican with an MA in English from Oxford University and lives in the UK. She is a member of a number of organizations, including the Society of Authors, Catholic Teen Books, Catholic Reads, the Angelic Warfare Confraternity, and the Sodality of the Blessed Sacrament. She used to have a Giant African Land Snail, Peter, with a 6½" long shell, but now makes do with a cactus and a campervan.

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