

THE FORBIDDEN SCROLLS

Group Discussion Guide

based on a true-life narrative of
seduction • addiction • freedom



uncover brokenness • unlock wholeness

THE FORBIDDEN SCROLLS: GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



Book 1: The Shadow of Black Rock

Read one part each week, which will have you complete book 1 in 4 weeks. Remember that the print size is large so the pages will go by quickly. Discuss the following questions each week.

Part 1 (pages 3-58)

NOTE: The dragon in this series represents pornography, masturbation, or some form of sexual behavior. You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. What was Raef's relationship like with his parents and how did that play into his vulnerability to the dragon?
3. In what ways did your parents' relationship with you make you more vulnerable to the allure of pornography, masturbation, or sexual behavior?
4. **Honesty:** Were Raef's parents honest about the dragon to Raef? How did that affect his vulnerability to the dragon? What would you say to a parent of a seven year old who didn't think they were old enough to be told what pornography is and what to do when they see it?
5. What was Raef's relationship like with other children, both his age and older, and how did that affect his vulnerability to the dragon?
6. In what ways did your relationship with your childhood acquaintances affect your vulnerability to pornography, masturbation, or sexual behavior?
7. Zul represents God and we see him talking to another character, Erif, who is watching everything we read. Do you agree with Erif in being frustrated or even angry at a God who would not intervene as a child is progressively exposed to pornography?
8. How does reading this story and remembering things it reminds you of in your past make you feel? Try to find a feeling *under* the top row that matches your feeling, then talk about what makes you feel this way.

MAD	SAD	BAD	FEARFUL
critical	vulnerable	repelled	helpless
irritated	abandoned	appalled	frightened
frustrated	victimized	embarrassed	worried
hurt	grief	apathetic	inadequate
bitter	powerlessness	overwhelmed	inferior
betrayed	ashamed	out of control	worthless
humiliated	despair	dismayed	excluded
withdrawn	inferior	judgemental	persecuted
disrespected	disappointed	awful	exposed

9. Think back to the age you when first began feeling strongly drawn to pornography. If you could go back in time to yourself as a child the day after this happened, what would you want to say to yourself?

Part 2 (pages 61-117)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. Do you relate to Raef in feeling like the dragon (pornography) was there for you when others were not? Children use pornography for a reason—to get something they do not know how to get otherwise. Describe how this looked in your childhood or youth and what pornography helped you with that you did not know how to get otherwise.
3. Raef's father seemed larger than life to him and was something Raef felt he could never become. What was your relationship like with your father and what were your feelings toward him? What role did this play in the allure of pornography, masturbation, or sexual behavior?
4. **Personalities:** Compare and contrast the personalities of Raef and Erif. Erif seems to have some darkness in his past, but Raef has darkness in his much more recent past. How do each of them deal with their past darkness?
5. Roceccé is the second older child in Raef's life who influenced him negatively. Were there any other children/teens in your life who negatively influenced your sexuality? How did that happen?
6. Raef did not fit in with the children his age who he admired most. How did you feel compared to children or teens you admired most? Did you act outwardly different than you felt inside when interacting with peers? If so, how did this conflict play in the allure of pornography, masturbation, or sexual behavior in your life?
7. Raef did like the dragon but was challenged by Roceccé to do things he didn't want to do with the dragon. Can you remember a time when someone or something influenced you to do something sexual or look at a kind of pornography you previously did not want to? What was that experience like emotionally?
8. Raef's parents made excuses for him when they discovered evidence he had visited the dragon instead of confronting him. What was your parent's reaction when they discovered signs you were looking at pornography or doing something sexual? Remember, this could include anything between ignoring the evidence or becoming overly angry. Was their reaction helpful?
9. **When God speaks:** Zul speaks to Raef for the first time in this section (p113). What do you think Zul was wanting to get across to Raef? Do you think Raef interpreted what Zul told him correctly? Do you think the Keepers interpreted the significance of what Zul had done correctly? What might an alternative reason be for Zul to speak to Raef in this way? When you look back, can you think of any times God may have been trying to tell you something that at the time you missed? If so, explain.

Part 3 (pages 121-173)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. **Truth:** Both the Keepers and Raef's parents said things about the dragon that Raef had experienced were not true. Did you have any experiences with sex or pornography early on that at the time did not seem to equate with what you had been told by church, school, or parents? Do you think the adults were naive about the dragon or did they not want to say what they really knew? Adults today rarely speak to kids about pornography. Do you think adults today are naive about pornography or are they not comfortable talking about what they know is true? What is something true about pornography and sex that we may feel uncomfortable admitting to our children or grandchildren? What does this teach us about being a good parent or grandparent?
3. Raef daydreams about the dragon sometimes when he is only ten years old. He never mentions this to anyone or asks for help with that, even though he is an apprentice Keeper. How young were you when you began to fantasize about pornography or sex? What could have been different if a father or other safe adult talked to you about the reality of fantasy and ways to help that stop when it starts?
4. Raef tells himself he wants to stop seeing the dragon, yet he keeps a dragon hair under his bed. Do you have any parallels as a child, such as keeping pornography or access to it hidden while also telling yourself you wanted to quit? Are there any ways that, if you were honest, you may still be doing the same today?
5. **Relationship with God:** Raef seems to do some really good things as an apprentice Keeper but also some very selfish things. He seems to truly connect with Zul at times but also blatantly disregard the Great Spirit other times. What are times in your life that you did the same? What were some good connections you had with God, even during times you may have been using pornography? What does this teach us about the process of developing a relationship with God?
6. At the end of this section Raef rationalizes his continued excursions with the dragon by deciding it is okay as long as he is still a kid (a youngling). What excuses or rationalizations did you tell yourself about your own porn use or sexual conduct?
7. Do you think Raef is a good person? What do you think Zul thinks of him? When you look back on your childhood self, do you see a good person who was deceived or an evil child? How do you think God felt about you as He watched what you were going through as a child?
8. What does this story challenge us to do a better job when teaching our children, grandchildren, nephews & nieces, or even little brothers and sisters? What specific things would be most helpful for us to share with them; things that are fully true, not half-hidden truths, and honest rather than religiously-proper?
9. How does this story change your view of and feelings about yourself during times in your childhood or youth when you were using pornography and masturbating most often?

Part 4 (pages 177-234)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. Several of the character's names in this book have hidden meanings. Have you discovered what Raef, Erif, and Rail's names really mean?
3. Erif is being punished for something that has not been revealed to us, yet Zul spends more time with him and actively provides him more comfort than he does for anyone else in the story so far. What does this teach us about the nature of God that may be different than what we have learned in religious settings?
4. In one chapter we see that Raef was embarrassed of himself for being so bony and skinny. Was there anything about yourself that you were embarrassed about as a kid? Maybe how you looked or possibly something about the way you acted or talked. Did this play into your own pornography use, masturbation, or sexual behavior at all?
5. **Influential sin:** Raef introduces a younger boy to the dragon, just as an older boy introduced him to the dragon when Raef was young. Raef had also introduced his friend Domik to the dragon. Keeping in mind how Zul has reacted to Raef so far, what do you imagine Zul thought watching those scenes? Did you ever introduce or suggest looking at pornography to another young person? Did you ever tell sexual jokes or introduce the idea about masturbation to a peer? What do you imagine God felt when this happened? Was He angry or sad? How might a grown man work through forgiving his childhood self for times he influenced other kids to do sinful behaviors?
6. What situations did Raef experience in this section that do not seem fair or just? Were you ever put in situations as a youth that you do not think were fair or just? Did anyone ever apologize for those situations? Did those situations have any effect on your pornography use, masturbation, or sexualized behavior?
7. The dragon tells Raef he was born to be a Dragon Child. Were there ever times as a child, youth, or young adult when you feared you were destined to be forever ensnared in pornography or shameful sexual behavior? Did you ever feel as if your life was defined by your sexualized behavior? If so, what times did you feel that way and what events caused you to think this?
8. Thinking back over the entire book, why would it have *not* helped Raef if he had been more severely punished for the times he was caught with evidence of seeing the dragon? Imagine living in a world where dragons existed. Would you not want to see one? Pornography is no different, is there any wonder that a child or teen would want to see it? Wanting to see something this powerful is absolutely understandable, even if we are told it will hurt us. With that in mind, what might have helped young Raef be better at resisting the dragon?
9. Book 1 in this series is an illustration or analogy of a boy becoming a sex or porn addict. The dragon taking him away symbolizes Raef reaching the point where he is utterly unable to resist the dragon. The process of becoming a sex addict. He is barely thirteen. If you were to guess, at what age had you crossed over into being unable to resist pornography and masturbation, at least for any length of time?



Book 2: The Other Side of Black Rock

The Prologue is not necessary to read unless it has been a long time since you read book 1. It only summarizes the first book. All but one chapter in this book are shorter than the chapters in book 1. Two are quite short. You should read at least one part per week but if you only read one part each week it will take seven weeks to get through the book, which may be too long for your group. So decide together if you want to read more than one part some weeks. Remember, this is a novel and should be a lot easier to read than a factual book. Think of it as watching a movie.

The Other Side of Black Rock is an analogy to being a sex addict, or living in bondage to sex or pornography. In this case, being in bondage to the dragon who seduced Raef in Book 1: *The Shadow of Black Rock*.

Part 1 (pages 3-49)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. DeAlsím was the first person to introduce Raef to the dragon in the previous book. Knowing what you discovered about hidden meanings of names in these books last week, what does DeAlsím mean? With this in mind, what is the significance of Raef meeting him again here?
3. What are some things that Raef discovers about the dragon and the Dragon Children that he did not know before? What are the parallels to this knowledge to your own story? What did you not know when you first started looking at porn that you came to the sad realization of later on?
4. What are some of the things that Raef is repulsed by when he first arrives at Black Rock? How long did that repulsion last? Where there things that repulsed you, made you uneasy, or that you didn't really like early on in your addiction that later seemed normal to you?
5. Some readers have commented that the dragon and Black Rock don't seem that bad. In what ways do addiction to pornography and masturbation sometimes not seem so bad in the moment? What is Raef missing out on at Black Rock? What are things that sex addicts miss out on in real life?
6. What were some exciting things Raef discovered at Black Rock? Were there ever any new exciting things you discovered in your addiction? How long did they remain exciting?
7. Recall how Raef never liked the smell of the dragon's breath, how he was disgusted being inside the dragon's mouth in book 1, and how he avoided the dragon licking him early on. Yet at the end of this section he doesn't seem to mind at all. What parallels can you see between this and the progression of addiction? Were there ever things you told yourself you would not do, lines you promised not to cross, that you crossed at some point? Were there things that as a child you thought were gross that you enjoyed as part of your addiction when you were a little older?

Part 2 (pages 53-94)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. At the beginning of this section Erif is angry that Zul is making him watch what Raef is doing. What do you think makes it hard for Erif to watch? Are there parts of your story that you really do not like to remember? Would there be any reason you can think of that God, like Zul with Erif, would have you review those times in your past?
3. Raef is surprised to discover on one of his expeditions in the caves that people have been living in Black Rock for hundreds of years. Back in the villages, however, no one ever talks about Black Rock, much less that people might live there. Do you see any similarity between this story and how society today is toward sexual addiction?
4. Raef and Zul eventually begin to talk at Black Rock. Who first starts the conversation between them? Has God ever tried to talk to you when you felt like you didn't deserve his attention?
5. Zul materializes in front of Raef for the first time while at Black Rock. Zul never did this back in the village when Raef was an apprentice Keeper. During your addiction, what were the times God spoke the most clearly to you? Why do you think God takes so long to speak into our lives in the most powerful ways? What might be God's reasons? There are no right answers, just discuss this a while.
6. The dragon whispers, "It's no use, why even try," into the minds of both Raef and Erif, trying to make them think these are their own thoughts. How were their reactions different? Why do you think they each reacted so differently? Do you think that perhaps Satan sometimes whispers lies into your mind? If so, what kind of lies does he usually whisper to you? What is Satan trying to get you to do?
7. Raef asks Zul why the Great Spirit did not help him escape and fears Zul does not love him. Have there been times you felt God abandoned you, did not help you like you asked Him to, or feared He didn't love you? If it is true that God truly loves us, why does it sometimes seem He is not helping us? There are no right answers, just discuss your ideas.

Part 3 (pages 97-134)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. In the beginning of chapter 14 Zul explains why he is not doing more for Raef. What do you think about what the spirit says? If God is all powerful, all seeing, all knowing, and beyond time, does this viewpoint potentially make sense to you? If this does not make sense to you as how God might think, what are other explanations for why God does not act in ways that make sense to us?
3. Early in this section we see Raef is emotionally numb as the exciting aspects to Black Rock have worn off. Talk about the time when you reached the point where most of the curiosity, novelty, and excitement of seeking sexual stimulation started to wear off in your life.
4. When Raef does return home he expects to face condemnation but instead is received back almost as if nothing has happened, even though everyone saw him taken by the dragon. Raef is confused as to why no one seems to realize it was his fault he was taken. Can you think of

examples where a church seems to actively overlook obvious signs that someone is likely engaged in pornography or some other problematic sexual behavior? In your experience, is it more common for a church to actively speak into a person's life who is engaged in sexual misconduct (including porn use) or turn a blind eye and overlook it? If your behavior was discovered, how did your church, community, and family react?

5. Raef finds himself leading a double life almost immediately upon returning home. Talk about what your double life looked like during your most addictive past.
6. We normally think of religious people as being more emotionally aware. However, Raef's friend, Chaz, is a warrior, yet he seems more emotionally aware than any of the Keepers or Intercessors, who are the religious class. Why might this be true? Do you know any people who are not "religious" in traditional ways but who seem to have a great understanding of people and emotions? Do you know any religious people who are oblivious to their own and others emotions? What do you make of this discrepancy?
7. Raef's religious life becomes harder to keep separate from his life with the dragon. Talk about times it was hard to keep your life of faith and life engaged in problematic sexual behaviors separate. What made it hard to keep these separate? How did you feel as you struggled to keep these two worlds from colliding?

Part 4 (pages 137-244)

NOTE: This section is twice as long as any other. You should not try to read this along with another section, although it would be wise to try to read the entire section in one week. If it is any consolation, the next section is very short. You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. We learn that no one dates or marries in Black Rock. Why do you think in this story people do not become romantically involved while in captivity of the dragon? Even though the same is not true in our world, what does this illustrate to us about the emotional and relational state of a person who is deeply enslaved to sex or pornography? If pornography use continues to escalate in our world, what do you think might happen to customs like dating and marriage in the future? Do you see any evidence of this anywhere in the world already?
3. Erif gets in a battle with a large cat, similar to a Puma in our world. Afterward he asks Zul if he can help with the pain, but the Great Spirit replies, "Sorry, but the pain will do you good." What was Zul talking about? What was the lesson the Great Spirit was teaching the warrior? Have there been times when you realized you needed to not run from pain of some kind?
4. Raef actually does several good things in his role as Keeper, even though he is often not honest about his past. In spite of his good deeds Raef finds he can no longer connect with Zul. What do you think is the cause of his inability to connect? Has there been times when you seemed to be doing mostly okay but felt you could not connect with God? What do you think may have caused that?
5. When Raef confronts the dragon over the massacre at Moss Rock, the dragon has some very convincing arguments about why it was in the right and the warriors of Fir Hollow were in the wrong. Discuss how easy it is to come up with very convincing arguments why it is okay to slip just a little here and there in our sexual integrity. What are some common ways people (not necessarily people in support groups) rationalize that it is okay to do things with our sexuality we are asked not to do?

6. The Provincial Overseers do not believe the dragon exists. How have you seen parts of society refuse to believe that pornography, or promiscuous sexual behavior, is a real problem?
7. Raef eventually returns to his most destructive behaviors, even though he knows more truth about the dragon's deceptions than anyone else in his village. He becomes sloppy, allowing the woman he loves to realize something is very wrong. The section ends with Raef vowing to stay true to his faith and give up the dragon. Have you ever been in this place? What happened afterward? What do you think Raef will end up doing?

Part 5 (pages 247-269) & Part 6 (273-312)

NOTE: Part 5 is half as long as any section so far, so we recommend you read it and Part 6 the same week. The questions below are of the combined content of both parts. You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. After the wedding a lightning storm nearly kills Raef and Naan on their way home. We learn that it is Zul who saved them. Zul supernaturally saves Raef even after he continuously betrays the Great Spirit. Zul saves Raef even though Raef is in no way turning his behavior around. If Zul represents God, why would God save someone at a time in their life such as this, rather than at a time when they were doing good? Does this conflict with your view of God and us?
3. **Doing good.** Raef enjoys his role as Keeper. What about that role do you think he likes the most? Is this what someone devoted to God should like most about their work? Recovering addicts sometimes want to earn their recovery by doing good, as if to make up for all the bad they've done. Has there been a time in your life when you tried to do good to make up for bad things you've done? While serving God is in general a good thing, when might be a time or what might be a situation when a recovering addict should *refrain* from taking a role in ministry or service?
4. Raef finds himself daydreaming a lot and thinking of the dragon. So much so that he misses appointments and forgets what he was supposed to be doing. He also becomes angry when his wife calls him out for daydreaming when he is thinking of the dragon. Share if you have ever experienced finding yourself fantasizing or being so preoccupied with planning a pornographic or sexual binge that you failed at your responsibilities.
5. What is Raef using memories of the dragon and Black Rock for? What is he getting from those thoughts? Have you ever used sexual fantasy or erotic memories for similar reasons?
6. Raef is the one who introduced Daz to the dragon and took him there many times. It would be unusual for an adult to show pornography to a child or youth in our culture. However, what are other ways that perhaps adults today do corrupt children and youth? Can you think of things that an adult, even a parent, may do that unintentionally has a similar effect on a child or teenager?
7. You may notice that Raef has become quite emotionally distant from his behavior. He talks with Nilo and Daz about the dragon with apparently no shame, even in public places. He is even proud that he knows more about the dragon than others do. He seems to want to know that other people visit the dragon as if that will make him feel better. He is not good at being emotionally present with his wife. Even though he no longer lives in the Great Basin he is as enslaved by the dragon as ever. Can you think of times in your life where you were fooling yourself in a similar way as if to try to convince yourself that everything was fine when it was clearly not to anyone paying attention?

Part 7 (pages 315-336)

You may not have time to discuss each question, so have members take turns selecting a questions for everyone to answer and then letting people respond before selecting another question.

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your childhood?
2. Raef's wife discovers his visits to the dragon. How does his wife react that is different from anyone else to this point in Raef's life? Why is this important? What brought you into recovery; the discovery by someone else of your behavior, or you own choice to seek help?
3. Do you think Naan's reaction is reasonable? Can you understand why a wife would react this way? Was her ultimatum that Raef come with her to find a Soul Healer or leave her a reasonable request? Try to put yourself in Naan's shoes. What would the best thing be to do if you were in her position?
4. How do you feel realizing that Raef's parents knew all along that he had been sneaking out to visit the dragon since he was small? This is a common story; parents often suspect or even know their children are using pornography or doing something sexual and say or do nothing. Why do you think parents do this? When have you been afraid to speak openly to your child, relative, or friend when you suspect or wonder if they are engaged in problematic sexual behavior?
5. We learn the Prime Keeper knew that Raef had seen the dragon but dismissed it as normal curiosity. How does that make you feel? How often do you think this kind of thing happens today in religious circles? What would be a more caring policy in religious circles?
6. What would be the modern day equivalent of seeking out a Soul Healer? Have you ever sought out such help? What kinds of things in your life could you use a Soul Healer for?
7. Erif expects the history of Raef to be forbidden to read. At times in our history that has been true and may be again. What parts of the story so far, if put in modern times with the dragon being pornography, might people in our world not want to hear about or discuss? What kind of person do you suspect would least want to discuss such things?



Book 3: Under the Burning Sun

If you are getting tired of this story take heart: it is nearly unanimously agreed that the third and final book of the trilogy is the best. It will also be the most relevant to your life today as opposed to the past. As before, you can skip the prologue unless you want to read it.

Under the Burning Sun is about recovery. It is time to start turning this story around for the better. This book takes a very realistic look at the timeline and obstacles along the way to recovery.

None of the parts are long and most are shorter than average. You may choose to read two parts a week.

Part 1 (pages 3-39)

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your own recovery process?
2. While this story is mainly about Raef, Erif has grown as well. In what ways have you seen Erif grow? Are any of these areas of growth in Erif similar to growth in recovery?
3. Raef no longer considers himself an Intercessor—of the religious class. What do you think about his decision to think this way? Is it healthy, unhealthy, or neither?
4. Raef is feeling very discouraged as the book begins. It is actually very normal for people to feel quite discouraged for a while as they enter recovery on purpose for the first time. Why do you think that is? Did you experience feeling discouraged or encouraged when you first started seeking help for real?
5. Unlike other villages, the people in Promise seem to have no trouble at all talking openly about the dragon. Is this health or unhealthy? What would that look like if your friends could be this open? How open are people in your church talking about pornography use?
6. Raef is upset to see the people of Promise do not keep all the religious traditions he has. What do you think about this? Is it good, bad, or indifferent? Are there religious traditions you are used to that are, perhaps, not as important as you have come to believe?
7. **Counselors:** Raef is very upset to see the Soul Healer is a wizard. In this story the wizard, or Soul Healer, represents a counselor trained in psychology and sexuality. There are some Christians who have a dim view of therapists. Why would some people view such a person as potentially harmful? Have you seen a counselor before? Did you gain anything useful from that experience?

Part 2 (pages 43-80)

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your own recovery process?
2. Tup tells Raef that the dragon had soaked him in its essence. The essence put a kind of spell over Raef. Can you relate to pornography seeming to put a spell over you? Does it ever feel like all your past secrets hold some power over you, or have in the past?
3. Tup tells Raef and Naan that it will take many seasons (years) for him to be rid of the influence of the dragon. Raef does not want to hear this. Why does it take so long for recovery to take a lasting hold? How willing are you to stay in recovery as long as it takes?
4. What do you think of the analogy of Raef needing to bare his back before other men and allow the sunlight to burn away dragon essence? In what ways is this a little like the process of a support group?

5. Raef possesses no skill that is particularly useful in Promise. This actually turns out to be an important part of recovery. Explain how this could be important for a person like Raef.
6. Tup reinterprets Raef's childhood in a very different light than Raef had remembered it. What are some things that Tup pointed out that Raef was not aware of? What are things you are now aware of your own childhood that played a role in you becoming a compulsive user of pornography?
7. What is the significance of the lesson Tup teaches with the blue stone inside the clod of dirt? Have you ever thought about who the core of you is, inside all the dirt that was stuck to you? Share with each other what you think to good parts of the core of who God made you is.

Part 3 (pages 83-126)

There is a lot of content worth discussing in this part. Everyone read through the questions then take turns picking ones to discuss that feel most relevant to your story.

1. Raef becomes very agitated when he has to let someone else help him free his door of snow to get out. He gets more angry when he finds the door to the tool shed drifted in snow he will have to remove. Then he loses it when he can't split a log for fire. We typically become more sensitive as we leave behind our sexual coping mechanism. What are times in early recovery you got really angry over something that was not so big now that you look back?
2. Not everything Raef does is wrong. He gets Tren to go purge in snow when he could have easily gotten away with not going out in the freezing weather. What positive trait related to recovery does this demonstrate? When have you done something in recovery you needed to do that you didn't want to, but you did it anyway?
3. They have a rule in Promise to not go into the woods alone. What might this serve as an analogy to in your own recovery? Does this give you any new ideas of things you could put in place in your recovery?
4. Raef is not perfect in his progress. He daydreams about Rail now and then when stress is too high. He goes out alone in the woods, finds the dragon, and stays with it once. In spite of this, how do you see Raef moving forward? How have you moved forward, even if you are far from perfect?
5. **Rebuilding trust:** Raef tries to take care of the baby and have a meal ready when Naan returns from her long trip to see Tup. Tup is counseling her as well. Instead of being grateful as Raef expects she blows up at him and unloads her feelings on pages 105-107. She is angry that he put her in this situation, she is angry that he thinks he has taken care of the house when he left a lot of things undone that she will have to do, and she is mad that he expects her to trust him when there has not been enough time for him to regain her trust. This is a very normal experience for a husband and wife going through recovery. We can understand Raef's feelings but we also need to understand Naan's feelings. In this case, Naan is correct. Raef is getting better but he still is very self-centered and cannot understand his wife's pain or what she needs from him. This is a difficult question, but how have you acted similarly to Raef in your recovery? Even if you are not married you will have similar selfish traits toward friends and family. What are areas you can improve on?
6. Siro tells the story of his parents ignoring him as a child when they all were taken to Black Rock. Talk about your childhood. What were needs you had that your parents ignored or did not help you with?
7. The other men of Promise tell their stories to Raef. How is this powerful? How does this help Raef? Talk about how hearing the stories of others in your group affected you.

8. Raef ruins Evot's hut and is so anxious about his failure that he brings it up in his session with Tup. Instead of helping Raef do better next time the wizard explains that failure is normal and okay. Raef had a hard time accepting this. Has accepting failure in yourself been easy to learn? How do you feel when you fail at something? What could you do to process your failures more easily? When would be the best time and way to do this when you fail?
9. Raef responds with, "I don't know," when Zul asks him if Raef trusts him. Zul then says, "The first honest thing you have said since you came to Promise." Do you think Raef has shown he trusts Zul? What does trusting God look like? In what ways do you sometimes show you don't completely trust God?

Part 4 (pages 129-162)

1. Below are several quotes from this part. Take turns selecting one you resonate and talk about how it is relatable. Tell stories that illustrate this in you if you can.
 - I am a failure and utter disappointment
 - Raef, "It does not feel like you have me." Zul, "It does not matter what you feel."
 - Raef, "You are here." Zul, "I was never gone."
 - Raef, "Rail was the only one who made me feel acceptable." Zul, "You are acceptable to me."
 - Zul, "And why do you fear me?" Raef, "I do not believe you really want anything to do with me."
 - Zul, "I have pursued you in spite of what you call failure."
 - Raef, "I went to Rail when I should have come to you."
 - Raef, "...to leave Rail I must have someone else to run to. I never understood that before."
 - Raef, "I am flawed." Zul, "Raef, everyone is flawed. Yes, you have flaws, quite a number. But hear me, you are a courageous, loving, and good man. That is what I see, when I look upon you."
2. How did it make you feel to read this part of the story?
3. Is this how you have always imagined God to be? What are some ways that seem different than how God is usually described?
4. Naan cannot say she loves Raef even after a year in Promise. Raef can feel the change inside him but his wife is too afraid to believe it. This is normal. Have you experienced this? Talk about your experiences that relate to this.
5. Zul tells Raef, "Right now you can not trust your feelings. They are still too polluted by the essence of Rail." Can you relate to not trusting your feelings early in recovery?
6. Tup tells Raef that as his mind clears of the dragon he will think more clearly and even be more creative. Do you think that could be possible for you as well? If you dare to hope, what might your future hold?
7. Raef learns that Tren has been in Promise for ten years, but he still sneaks out to see the dragon now and then, which Raef does not understand. What kinds of things make recovery harder for some people than others, in your opinion?

Part 5 (pages 168-207)

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your own recovery process?
2. **Freeing creativity:** Tup told Raef earlier that he would become more creative and energetic as he healed. What did you imagine that would end up looking like? Raef solved the village's problem of their crop dying due to draught in a creative way. How do you think Raef would have responded to the dire situation brought on by the draught if he were still a Dragon Child? Have you become more creative or energetic since starting recovery?
3. **Satan's determination:** Rail throws everything its got at Raef to stop him from unmasking what the dragon has been doing to the villages. The Neaverling even try to shame Raef into giving up. Have you ever shared your story with others outside the group? Do you think perhaps that Satan has tried to shame you into fear in order to keep you from unmasking how he traps people with pornography?
4. Raef begins to think his recovery is passing up men in Promise who have been in recovery far longer than he has. Tup agrees with that assessment. What was Tup's explanation? What little things and big things are necessary to do in order to find healing?
5. During the last journey a greenling asks Raef, "Is it necessary to purge on a journey?" perhaps assuming that when traveling or on vacation we don't need that. Raef replies, "It is more necessary than at home. The excitement of a journey can cause us to be reckless. We are far from home and Rail roams freely here. We dare not take chances." What precautions would be wise for us when we travel, whether on business or vacation?
6. Raef and his family are in a very different place emotionally by the end of Part 5. But by this time he has lived in Promise, has not stopped purging, and continued visiting Tup for five years. Emotions were quite raw for a very long time before this finally happened. What lessons does this teach us? Have you seen evidence of this in your life or in the life of others in your group?

Part 6 (pages 211-246)

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your own recovery process?
2. Raef returns to Fir Hollow and discovers many secrets. His sister has seen the dragon. His mother was born in Black Rock. They all knew he visited the dragon as a child. It is very common in families of a sex addict that most if not all other family members have some form of sexual brokenness. This is often kept secret. Do you know of any sexual brokenness in your family of origin? If you don't know, do you suspect it?
3. Raef also learns that the Keepers (preachers in our language) know a lot more about the dragon and Black Rock than they admit. They even know the dragon enslaves people but they do nothing about it. How do you think this fictional story compares to religion, churches, and church culture today when it comes to pornography and sexual brokenness?
4. Raef meets Nilo as an adult. Nilo is really angry at Raef for the state he finds himself in. What is your opinion of whose fault Nilo's current condition is? Nilo was hurt by the Keeper's effort to help him, since the Keepers didn't really know what they were doing. Now Nilo won't trust anyone to help him get free of the dragon. This happens sometimes. Do you know people who could be helped with their sexual brokenness but refuse?
5. Like Raef hurting Nilo, there are likely people you have hurt during times you were selfish. Can you think of any examples of how you hurt someone in ways you may never be able to make up for? This is a part of life and not necessarily anything we can resolve. Discuss how we can best deal with the feelings that come with this realization.

6. Raef expresses humble gratitude to Tup and the people of Promise for helping him becoming more than he every could have become without them. Who are people in your life who were instrumental in helping you get to where you are now? Is there anyone you might want to thank for their role in helping you, even if it was just encouragement?
7. Raef and Naan have to leave Promise. Sometimes we have to move on from a support group, a supportive church, or close friends in order to follow where God is leading. That does not mean we should stop the healthy patterns we have learned. Does anyone feel like God may be leading them to serve God in a new way some day? Besides just making your life better, what else might God want to use your recovery to make you ready for?

Part 7 & 8 (pages 249-278)

1. What aspects of this story remind you of your own recovery process?
2. Do you think it is odd that in this story only Raef can see and hear Zul in the Ceremonial Lodge? Why do you think Zul is so partial to Raef? Do you think God could be partial to you in the same way?
3. Raef goes from having a wonderful life, one he earned through recovery, to being jailed and banished for four years. Why do you think Zul allowed this to happen? What might this suggest about our own recovery journey?
4. What was Zul's purpose for Raef? What was Zul willing to allow to happen to Raef/Erif and what did Zul not allow to happen? If this is representative of recovery, what is God's attitude toward protecting us from pain?
5. Compulsive pornography use, fantasy, and masturbation are means of running from pain. When we enter recovery what we are looking for is a way to escape pain. However, what is recovery really about instead?
6. How do you feel about this entire story? Does it depress you or make you hopeful? Is it frightening or inspiring? Where do you see yourself in the journey these three books describe?
7. Jay Stringer, author of *Unwanted: How Sexual Brokenness Reveals Our Way to Healing*, says that the number one thing that helps a man or woman break free from compulsive sexual behaviors is to have a clear sense of purpose. At what point in the story did Raef/Erif demonstrate the clearest sense of purpose? What might your purpose be?