

Antillia Conversation Guide

12 Questions

Based on the novel *Antillia*
by Eric David Stanford

1. At the beginning of the book, Trick is estranged from his dad, losing friends, and failing in his first attempts at dating. Underlying these problems are self-doubt, the fear of rejection, and anxiety over not being “good enough.”

Teens in general are sometimes accused of being too sensitive to slights and insults. Fair criticism, in your opinion? Or not?

2. Trick perceives his greatest problem to be the way his father ignores him. But rather than being the book’s “issue,” parental neglect is really just an example of the many ways in which girls and guys can reach their teen years feeling irreparably damaged.

What are some other hardships, disappointments, or traumas that you’ve seen lead teens to the brink of hopelessness?

3. At the end of chapter 1 we learn that Trick sketches pictures of islands because it’s soothing. Plainly, islands represent escape to him, as they do to many people. And soon he will, in a sense, enter into his fantasy environment.

Do you ever daydream about going to an island? Have you ever taken a tropical vacation? How was it?

4. Trick takes two tours of the island—once on his own in chapter 4, and once with Nikki in chapter 6. What do you see in the first tour that reveals how Trick starts with a shallow, tourist’s view of the island? What do you see in the second tour that shows how he’s starting to see Antillia as a real place, not just an exotic playground?

5. What quality that Trick possesses does Nikki need? (Hint: page 152.) What quality that Nikki possesses does Trick need? (Hint: page 179.) Is this the kind of thing people mean when they say that “opposites attract”?

6. Back home in Fremont, “new kid” Trick had failed to find his way into any of the existing friend groups. But on Antillia he is gradually welcomed into the squad.

For you, what’s the best thing about having a close, trustworthy friend?

7. Prince is a deeply conflicted and ambiguous character. His life has been hard through no fault of his own (loss of family, poverty, ethnic prejudice), yet he has also done serious harm to Nikki and hates Trick. Are you more sorry for Prince or more critical of him, and why?

8. Eddie Robinson is driven by envy of his brother and feelings of being treated as inferior, making him morally “rotten” (as Robinson says). A. B. Teacher is greedy and amoral. Which one of the two men is worse, in your opinion?

9. If you think about it, Trick’s story is largely a string of failures. His attempt to get revenge on his father falls flat. As self-appointed protector of the kingdom of Robinson, he fails to keep Prince out. When he takes matter into his own hands to deliver Teach and Eddie to the police, it only makes matters worse.

The final victory over Eddie and Teach comes only because the squad and the adults trust each other and work together to overcome their common peril.

In the end, is Trick a winner or a loser in your eyes? Why?

10. How would this story have been different if it took place in the present day and everybody had a cell phone? Do you think possessing today’s technology would have made Trick’s summer better or worse?

11. At first, what Trick *thinks* he needs is either to get back at his dad or to get his dad back. By the middle of the book, he’s achieved both revenge and reconciliation—but neither brings the change he was hoping for. So in the second half he painfully learns a new lesson: to open himself up to the world, start trusting himself and others again, and renew his faith in the future.

But Trick isn’t alone in making a fresh start. How does Robinson “start over”? Cat? Kit? Miss Bird? Richard? Sharon? Even, maybe, Prince?

In what way would *you* like to begin anew?

12. Apart from all the stuff about overcoming the past and heading into the future with confidence, *Antillia* could be read as just the story of a teenage boy having an exciting summer, with adventure, first love, and new friends. There’s nothing wrong with that!

What opportunity to better your life or have a new experience lies in front of you right now?