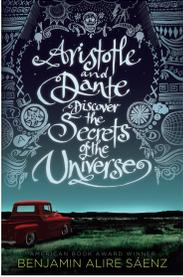


Books by the Stack



Aristotle & Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Sáenz

Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be.

Why you'll like it: Award-Winning. Intriguing. Thought-provoking.

About the Author: His 2012 novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (Simon and Schuster) is an Honor Book for the Printz Award, and the winner of the Pura Belpré and the Stonewall Awards. He is the author of numerous novels, books for children and young adults. His beloved young adult novel *Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood*, a staple in many high school curricula, was a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize, a Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, and winner of the Américas Award. His bestselling bilingual children's books include: *A Gift from Papá Diego*, *Grandma Fina and Her Wonderful Umbrellas* and *A Perfect Season for Dreaming*. Sáenz is the author of a previous book of poetry, *Calendar of Dust*, which won an American Book Award. Cinco Puntos published two of his other books of poetry called *Elegies in Blue* and the now out of print, *Dark and Perfect Angels*.

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the beginning of the story, Ari doesn't understand his father. He describes him as a "mystery." As Ari matures he says, "I came to understand that my father was a careful man." Explain Ari's acceptance and understanding of his father.
2. Dante is a well-developed, unique character. What characteristics and behaviors does the author give Dante that contribute to this uniqueness?
3. Both Ari and Dante have distinctive voices. How does the author use dialogue to develop character voice? Cite examples.
4. At Dante's suggestion, Ari reads Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and agrees with Conrad that the world is a dark place. Why does Ari have this viewpoint? Does this belief alter by story's end?
5. The author uses a storm as a metaphor for pain. He writes, "Sometimes pain was like a storm that came out of nowhere. The clearest summer morning could end in a downpour. Could end in lightning and thunder." How is this a fitting metaphor for Ari's life? For his father's?
6. Both Ari and his father have dreams in the story. Describe their dreams. What do the dreams mean to each of them?

7. Ari is depicted throughout the story as being lonely. What factors account for his loneliness and confusion? What role do his parents play in helping him accept his identity?
8. The novel is written from Ari's point of view. How might the story be different were it written from Dante's perspective?
9. Both Ari and Dante are intelligent teens. How does the author use vocabulary to convey this characteristic? Cite examples.
10. Ari feels self-contempt in the beginning of the story. What accounts for this feeling and how does it change as the story progresses?

(Questions issued by publisher)

