Family Discussion Guide for "Battle for the Park"
Conversation starters for parents and children

Getting Started
What This Book Is About

"Battle for the Park" is set in the year 2048 and follows Cameron, who lives with his parents in Futureland—an amazing traveling theme park that hovers above cities. When the park settles over Atlanta with plans to stay, Cameron gets his first chance to attend regular middle school and make friends outside the park. But just as he's adapting to this new life, the AI robots called 'revs' that run the park start acting strangely, and Cameron begins to suspect something might be wrong with his parents too. With the help of his new friends, Cameron must solve the mystery before Futureland—and everyone in it—is in serious danger.

Key Themes Your Child Will Encounter:

- **Technology and trust**: What happens when the technology we depend on starts malfunctioning, and how much should we rely on AI?
- **Finding home and belonging**: Whether home is a place, the people you're with, or something deeper
- **The power of friendship**: How new friendships can help us solve problems and face challenges we couldn't handle alone
- **Growing up and trusting yourself**: Learning to trust your instincts even when adults might not believe you
- **Mystery and problem-solving**: Working with others to piece together clues and solve complex problems
- **Community vs. isolation**: The differences between growing up in a unique environment versus joining a traditional community

Tip for Parents: This book offers great opportunities to discuss both current technology and future possibilities. Let your child's curiosity about the futuristic setting lead to conversations about how technology affects our daily lives.

Character Connection Questions
About Cameron

- How do you think Cameron feels about finally getting to attend regular school?
- What would it be like to grow up in a traveling theme park instead of a regular home?

- Why do you think Cameron starts suspecting his parents? How would that feel?
- What makes Cameron brave enough to investigate the strange happenings?

About Friendship and Community

- How do Cameron's new school friends help him in ways his park life couldn't?
- What makes Cameron's new friendships special or different?
- How do the friends work together to solve the mystery?
- What would you do if your friend told you something unbelievable was happening?

Big Ideas to Explore

Technology in Our Lives

- What are the 'revs' supposed to do, and what goes wrong with them?
- How is the technology in 2048 similar to or different from technology we use today?
- When is it good to rely on technology? When might it be dangerous?
- If you could design an AI robot helper, what would you want it to do?

Home and Belonging

- Cameron has lived his whole life in Futureland. What would it be like to call a theme park "home"?
- How is attending middle school in Atlanta different from Cameron's previous life?
- What makes a place feel like home to you?
- Can you have more than one home? How?

Mystery and Problem-Solving

- What clues does Cameron notice that adults might miss?
- How do Cameron and his friends work together to solve the mystery?
- What would you do if you noticed something strange that adults didn't believe?
- How does teamwork help solve problems that seem too big for one person?

Fun Conversation Starters

Future World Imagining

- Would you want to live in a hovering theme park? What would be the best and worst parts?
- What do you think the world will be like in 2048?
- If you could design a futuristic theme park, what would it include?
- How might schools be different in the future?

Technology Questions

- What current technology do we rely on that might cause problems if it stopped working?

- How do you think AI will be part of our lives in the future?
- What would you want AI robots to help with? What should only humans do?
- How can we make sure technology helps rather than hurts people?

Adventure and Friendship

- What's the most exciting part of Cameron's adventure?
- How do the friends prove they can trust each other?
- What would you do if you discovered a mystery that could affect lots of people?
- How do Cameron's new friendships change him?

Discussion Activities
Creative Thinking

- Design your own futuristic theme park—what attractions would it have?
- Create a timeline showing how technology might develop between now and 2048
- Draw or describe what you think the 'revs' look like and what they do

Real-World Connections

- Research current AI technology and compare it to the 'revs' in the story
- Discuss how theme parks today use technology to create experiences
- Talk about times when technology has helped or hindered your family
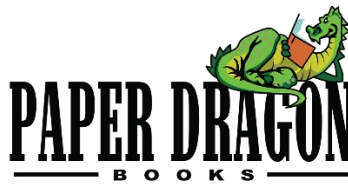- Explore what makes communities strong and supportive

Conversation Tips for Parents
Creating Safe Spaces

- **Encourage curiosity about technology** while discussing both benefits and potential concerns
- **Validate feelings about change** - Cameron's experience of joining a new community can resonate with many children
- **Support critical thinking** - ask "what do you think?" rather than immediately providing answers
- **Connect to current events** - relate the story's themes to discussions about AI and technology in the news

Encouraging Deep Thinking

- **Ask about motivations**: "Why do you think the 'revs' are malfunctioning?"
- **Explore connections**: "How is this like technology we use today?"
- **Wonder together**: "What do you think will happen next?" or "How would you solve this problem?"

- **Discuss consequences**: "What might happen if Cameron is wrong? What if he's right?"

Making It Personal

- **Share your own experiences** with new technology, moving to new places, or making new friends
- **Connect to family values**: "This reminds me of why our family believes in..."
- **Plan related activities**: visit science museums, try coding together, discuss family emergency plans
- **Celebrate problem-solving**: praise your child's critical thinking and collaborative spirit

Questions by Age Group

For Younger Readers (Ages 8-10)

Focus on adventure, friendship, and basic technology concepts:

- What's the coolest thing about Futureland?
- How do Cameron's friends help him feel less alone?
- What would you do if robots started acting weird?
- What makes Cameron and his friends good at solving mysteries?

For Older Readers (Ages 11-14)

Explore deeper themes of technology ethics, independence, and community:

- What does the story suggest about our dependence on technology?
- How does Cameron's isolation in Futureland affect his ability to make friends?
- What responsibilities do we have when we discover something dangerous?
- How do different communities (Futureland vs. Atlanta) shape the people in them?
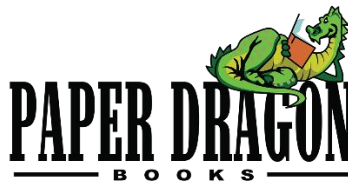
Handling Complex Themes

Technology and AI Concerns

- Acknowledge that AI is becoming more common in our world
- Discuss both the helpful aspects of technology and the importance of human oversight
- Emphasize that technology is created by people and should serve human needs
- Connect to age-appropriate discussions about screen time, online safety, and digital citizenship

Trusting Your Instincts vs. Respecting Adults

- Discuss how Cameron learns to trust his observations while still respecting authority
- Talk about when it's important to speak up, even if adults might not initially believe you
- Emphasize the importance of finding trustworthy adults when facing big problems
- Connect to real-world situations like bullying, safety concerns, or ethical dilemmas

Community and Belonging

- Explore different types of communities and what makes them work
- Discuss how people can feel like outsiders and what helps them belong
- Talk about the balance between unique family situations and fitting into larger communities
- Address how moving or changing schools can be both challenging and exciting

Future Thinking Discussion Prompts

Technology Ethics

- "Should AI robots be able to make decisions without human approval?"
- "What jobs should always be done by humans, even if robots could do them?"
- "How can we make sure new technology helps everyone, not just some people?"

Community Building

- "What makes a community welcoming to newcomers?"
- "How can people with different backgrounds work together to solve problems?"
- "What's the difference between being alone and choosing to be independent?"

Remember

"Battle for the Park" provides wonderful opportunities to discuss technology, friendship, and finding your place in the world. The futuristic setting makes these conversations feel like exploration rather than lectures, while the mystery elements keep children engaged with the deeper themes.

Use Cameron's story as a starting point to discuss your child's own experiences with technology, friendship, and belonging. The book's emphasis on young people solving problems through teamwork and critical thinking can inspire conversations about how your child can make a positive difference in their own community.

Most importantly, let the story's celebration of curiosity, friendship, and courage spark discussions about the kind of future your child wants to help create and their role in making sure technology serves humanity's best interests.