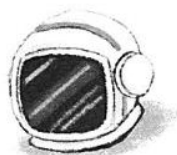


Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

GRAVITY IS NOT A TRIVIAL MONSTER



In the middle of Infinity Park is this dome, the 'Infinity Dome'. The outside is all mirrors, so that when you walk towards it, you see yourself walking towards you. The entrance is just a narrow door, with the mirrors bending inwards. As you get closer, you just melt into your own reflection, like entering a portal to another dimension or something. Inside it's completely cosmic. The dome is where all the best rides are. These are not rides like you've seen before. Their names are all to do with the history of space exploration: the Giant Leap, Lake of Fear, Sea of Storms. The biggest one – the Vortex – looks like a kitchen blender from the Land of Giants. When we arrived that morning, it was whirling round so fast on its spindle it looked like it might come loose and take off. There was an old man named Mr Bean

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in charge of it. I mean, he looked old but he also looked young – his eyes were bright and shiny and he walked like he was weightless. He gave us this big hello when we arrived, pressed some buttons and the Vortex slowed right down.

'You'll never guess what's in here.' Dr Drax smiled.

No one had any idea of what could possibly be inside a twenty-foot blender. Dr Drax nodded at Mr Bean. He winked at us, then pressed some more buttons. The door opened, a ramp appeared and down the ramp came . . . Shenjian.

Everyone gasped. 'You were in there?!' said Florida. 'How could you be in there? If they spun me round like that, I'd turn to soup.'

Shenjian bowed and then stood up straight to show she wasn't soup.

'The Vortex,' said Dr Drax, 'is really just a big washing machine. When you're ready, we're going to pop you inside and spin you round until you feel like old knickers. How does that sound?'

'Uncomfortable,' said Florida.

'It certainly will be. At first. But soon you will be able to cope with it, just like Shenjian. Look, she's not even dizzy.'

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Retrieval

1. How are the rides named in Infinity Park ?
2. What does Dr Drax say the Vortex is like ?

Words in context

3. Find and copy a word which means 'a rod on which something turns'.
4. Why does the author use the word cosmic to describe things that Liam thinks are amazing ?

Inference

5. Why does Mr Bean wink at them ?