

## Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

When they were done, Hasan looked at me and said, 'Everyone else went on with you. I want to go on with you.'

'I'm a bit tired.'

'That's so unfair. Everyone else got to go with you. Why shouldn't I?'

Dr Drax said she really thought I had made my contribution already today.

Hasan said, 'Daddy, tell him he has to go on with me.'

'I'm afraid your daddy can't tell him that,' said Dr Drax, 'because it isn't true.'

Eddie Xanadu sidled up to me and said, 'How much to make it worth your while, Digby? A watch? A car perhaps?'

'A car? No, thanks.'

'I don't think you'll be able to bribe Mr Digby, Mr Xanadu,' said Dr Drax.

Then Hasan said to me, very quietly, 'Come on with me and I'll vote for you.'

And I realized that though Mr Xanadu couldn't bribe me, his son really could.

Knowing that the lifetime at 15g was only a minute made the fourth time easier. I was just starting to get

218

my happy thoughts ready when Hasan said, 'There was a war in my country.'

'Oh yeah?'

'Soldiers came to our village. They wanted to take away all the children. But my father paid the most important soldier some money so that he wouldn't take me away.'

You could hear the engine warming up outside. Hasan started to talk more quickly. 'That's why he loves money. Because it can help.'

'Well, fair enough.'

'And the reason he always wants more money. I watched all my friends being taken away, all the children from my school. I watched our house burning down.'

He told me this. And then the engine started. And in my head I saw Glenarm Close, Bootle, all in flames, and Mum and Dad and Florida all being taken away by soldiers. That's what I was thinking when I got to the Forever bit.

I was still thinking about it when the ride was over. But Hasan was grinning. He said, 'That was FANTASTIC. I could do that again.' I suppose anything is fantastic compared to having your house burned down and your mates led away. He bounced

219

### Retrieval

- 1) How long did they actually spend at 15g ?
- 2) Where does Liam live ?

### Words in context

- 3) Find and copy a word which describes 'a part someone plays to get a result'.

### Inference

- 4) Why couldn't Mr Xanadu bribe Liam but Hasan could ?
- 5) Why does Hasan's father think money is so important ? Use the text to explain your answer.