

## Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

sure whether he was greeting me or trying to initiate unarmed combat. 'I'm the father of Max. Max! Greet the gentleman.'

At the far end of the plane a boy with exactly the same haircut as Mr Martinet jumped up and gave me exactly the same nod. 'Max is short for Maximum,' said his dad, 'which is what Maximum is. He's the Maximum Martinet.'

'My name's Liam Digby,' I said. 'Please call me Liam.'

He said, 'Please call me Monsieur Martinet.'

'OK.'

I said, 'I'm Florida's father.' That was the first time I'd ever said it out loud. I could feel everyone looking at me. Any minute now, I thought, one of them is going to say, 'No, you're not. You're twelve.' So I said the most convincingly dadly thing I could think of. I said, 'Anyone watch the game last night?' They all answered at once.

'They need to buy a big defender,' said Eddie Xanadu.

'The back four lack discipline,' said Please-Call-Me-Monsieur Martinet.

'The laws of probability say that you can't win the Champions League just on goals. Preventing

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opposition goals is equally important,' said Samson One.

So easy. I hadn't even seen the match!

I didn't even know if there WAS a match!

I just seemed to have a natural talent for being a grown-up.

'Well,' said Dr Drax, smiling, 'I must fly! That's my little joke, by the way. I do fly the plane myself. I find it's the best way to keep our destination top secret. I'm not much of a pilot, but I'm sure I'll pick it up as we go along.'

Everyone stared at her.

'Another of my little jokes!' she laughed. 'Caught you all again! In fact, Daddy gave me my first flying lesson when I was still small enough to sit on his knee. I'm really rather a good pilot.'

And off she went to the cockpit. I'm not sure if it's normal for pilots to be jokey like that, but if it is, it's not a good idea. I grabbed hold of the arms of the seat, closed my eyes and tried to think of the plane as just another ride.

As rides go, the flight to China was a bit lengthy – twelve hours, I think. And once you got used to the idea that you were thirty thousand feet in the air, it wasn't that much of a thrill. But the view was pretty

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### Retrieval

1. What does Liam think he has a natural talent for ?
2. How high in the air were they flying ?

### Words in context

3. Find and copy a word which means 'saying something in a way that makes people believe that it is true.'

### Inference

4. Why does Dr Drax fly the plane herself ?
5. How do you think Liam felt about the flight ? Use the text to explain your answer.