

## Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

rockets, and Ballistic Blue has a nice alliterative quality.'

'Very nice,' smiled Dr Drax. 'Next question?'

Hasan said, 'That's a lot of paint. Did the supplier offer you a good discount for placing such a large order?'

'Does anyone have any questions that are not about the paintwork?' said Dr Drax.

No one did. 'In that case, one of our engineers will now show the children around the rocket while we grown-ups get down to the paperwork. Rather a lot of forms to fill in for this trip, I'm afraid. Surprisingly difficult to get insured for a flight into space. Even though this one is extremely safe. Completely safe. Almost.'

You could see that Dr Drax was disappointed, that she thought the children had sort of missed the point, going on about the paint like that. But that's what kids do when big things come up. We focus on the little things. Like the kids sleeping in this rocket now. They're not dreaming about Planet Earth. They're dreaming about their own little bedrooms.

I had a different reaction to the rocket. I wasn't interested in the paint. I had one thought. One big, damp thought. Namely:

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I AM NOT GOING TO SPACE.

The children are having the thrill ride of the century. And we – the grown-ups – are going to sit around and watch and maybe video them or something.

'Come along, children,' smiled Dr Drax as the kids all climbed on to the escalator platform at the side of the rocket.

I said, 'But we can see round the rocket too, can't we?'

'I'm afraid not,' Dr Drax smiled. 'I want the children to get used to being together without their daddies. After all, they won't have their daddies in space.'

That's right.

Because . . .

I am not going to space.

Florida Kirby IS going to space.

That is exactly the wrong way round. It's supposed to be MORE fun being a grown-up. That's why I swapped being a kid for being a dad. What's the POINT in forfeiting your childhood if all you get for it is filling in forms?

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### Retrieval

- 1) What were the children dreaming about in the rocket ?
- 2) What are the grown-ups going to do whilst the children look around the rocket ?

### Words in context

- 3) Find and copy a word which means 'a reduction in the cost of something'.

### Inference

- 4) How safe do you think the flight is going to be ? Use the text to explain your answer.
- 5)
  - a) Why has Liam pretending to be a grown up not helped him this time?
  - b) How is he feeling about this ?