

## Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

that now. But I didn't notice any of this at the time. I didn't notice it because I was too busy looking at Infinity Park's main attraction, the World's Biggest Thrill Ride, the ride I'd been waiting to see all this time: the Rocket. In front of me. And above me. Way, way, way above me. Because the Rocket goes all the way, past the interior clouds, to the roof.

And the reason this ride is called the Rocket is that it is a rocket.

A real rocket.

A blue rocket.

A massive rocket.

Of the going-to-space kind.

It was so massive that at first we couldn't tell it was a rocket. It looked like a wall of metal pipes and panels. We couldn't take it in. We all looked up and then looked down, as though we were a bunch of scanners trying to upload an image. Samson Two seemed to have the fastest processor. 'It's a rocket,' he said.

'Yes.' Dr Drax smiled. 'It's my rocket.'

How good is that sentence? '*It's my rocket*,' like 'It's my lunch box,' or something.

'Of course we have been making rockets here in China since Feng Jishen invented gunpowder in the

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year 970. At first they were used to fire arrows. They had names like Swarm of Bees or Five Leaping Tigers. But my rocket has a different purpose. It's called the Infinite Possibility. And . . .' she said, turning to the kids, 'I'm giving it to you. I'd like you children to think of it as a present. From my generation to yours. I'm not going to ride in it. But you are.'

'When you say ride in it,' said Samson One, 'do you mean, ride in it . . . to space?'

'Yes. The biggest thrill ride of all time is a ride to space. I'm sorry to have been so secretive about this. It was only because . . . it's a secret. And we want to keep it that way. Any questions?'

Monsieur Martinet said, 'You want to send our children to space?'

'For just a few hours. The rocket will pop up to space, do a simple little job and then pop down again.' She made it sound like an elevator. 'As thrill rides go, it's the ultimate.'

Everyone agreed.

Dr Drax went on, 'Most thrill rides have a height requirement. This one will need a bit more – you'll have to pass some medicals and you'll need to train.'

'We're going to be astronauts,' said Samson Two.

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### Retrieval

- 1) When was gunpowder invented in China ?
- 2) Dr Drax made the rocket sound like something you would go in on an ordinary day. What does she compare it to ?

### Words in context

- 3) Why is '*It's my rocket*' on p128 in italics ?
- 4) The rocket is called Infinite Possibility. Why do you think Dr Drax has chosen this name?
- 5) Why do you think the author uses rocket so many times on page 128 ?

### Inference

- 6) The text says the rocket was massive. Give two other examples from the text which show the rocket was big.