

## An Interview with Frank Cottrell-Boyce

### 1. Where did you get the idea for *Cosmic*?

When he was about ten, my son had a friend who went away for the summer and came back looking like a man. It happened so fast it was like a magic spell. I think it's often quite hard for children who are tall for their age, because people expect a lot of them. And this boy seemed really unhappy about what had happened. I just flipped that situation on its head and thought what it would be like if someone really enjoyed being tall, instead of finding it hard.

The idea of doing a book about space came because – like nearly every man my age – I'm a frustrated astronaut.

### 2. Are there any plans for a film version of *Cosmic*?

Yes, indeed. But it's going to be really hard to make the characters look weightless. And it's going to be really, really, really hard to find a grown-up actor who could be a child. Or a child actor who could pass for a grown-up.

### 3. In your book, Liam uses the guidebook *How to Talk to Your Teen*. What would your tips for parents be?

Don't use guidebooks and don't take any notice of other people's tips! Everyone is different after all.

### 4. In order to win a place on the trip to Infinity Park, the fathers must provide their philosophy of child rearing. Do you have a philosophy for parenting?

I'm not any kind of authority on parenting! I guess the one thing I would say is take the time to enjoy each other's company. Advertisers are always selling parents and children time away from each other – 'me time', 'personal space', 'get a TV in your bedroom' and so on. I would say, chuck the telly out of your bedroom window, come downstairs and have a game of cards, or Risk, or hide-and-seek, or cook together, or, best of all, read to each other. Especially my books!

### 5. *Cosmic* is your third novel for young people. Do you have plans to write more?

I'm writing one now. In fact I should be doing it right this very second.

### 6. What advice would you give to aspiring writers?

Keep a diary. I don't mean a great big journal full of thoughts and ideas. Keep a diary in which you write just one sentence a day. But that sentence should be not about you or what you're doing. It should be about something you've noticed – something funny or sad that you heard someone say, something peculiar that happened. By the end of the year you should have more than three hundred great sentences. It's like a packet of seeds in which each sentence is a seed. Some of them won't grow at all. Some of them might flower for a day and then wilt. But maybe one of them will produce bags and bags of fruit.

### Retrieval

- 1) Give two reasons why it would be hard to make a film of *Cosmic* ?
- 2) What does the author say an aspiring writer should keep ?

### Words in context

- 3) Find and copy a word which means 'having hopes or ambitions to become a particular thing'.
- 4) What does the author compare a diary to ?

### Inference

- 5) Why are men of the author's age 'frustrated astronauts' ?
- 6) What does the author mean when he says 'But maybe one of them will produce bags and bags of fruit' ?

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