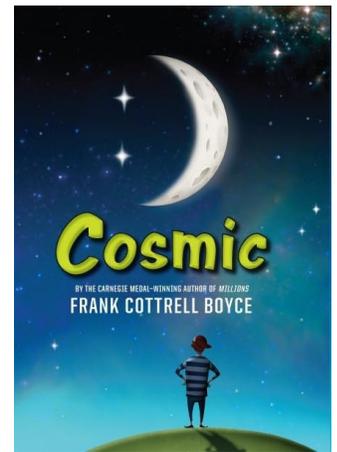


# COSMIC READING GROUP GUIDE



Cosmic by Frank Cottrell Boyce  
Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-06-183683-1

Dear Reader,

In partnering with the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), we feel it is important to highlight the themes in COSMIC that are important to fathers. The NFI makes it their mission to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers. Therefore, questions with a  may be of particular interest for discussion between fathers and their kids.

Sincerely,  
Walden Pond Press Education Team.

**NOTE:** Each chapter of COSMIC is titled after some important event or passage within that chapter. Readers may enjoy finding the significance within each chapter of its title.

## OPENING ARTICLE

1. What has disappeared? What two countries have denied that it was theirs? Why do you think this little article opens the book?

## I AM NOT EXACTLY IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

1. Who is the narrator of this chapter? What important things does the narrator tell us about himself?

## MY FAVORITE GRAVITY

1. How old is the narrator? Why is that important to this story? Why don't people believe this?
2. What is Premature Facial Hair? Why is it written in capital letters? What does this tell you about Liam?



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## I NEARLY SHAVED MYSELF TO DEATH



1. On page 17, the specialist at the hospital tells Mrs. Digby that the important thing to remember about Liam is "that he is still a child. Even though he looks like a grown-up. Just because he can't shop in the children's section anymore, that doesn't mean his childhood is over..." Why does the specialist tell her this?
-  2. But on page 18, Mr. Digby says, "Seven inches is not a spurt. Seven inches is a mutation." What does Mr. Digby mean by this? What does this tell you about how Mr. Digby sees Liam?
3. Liam tells us, "Truly, grown-upness is wasted on grown-ups." Another old saying goes like this, "Youth is wasted on the young." Who might make this statement? And how are these two statements alike?
4. What does "Mr. Middleton" talk about in his speech to the students? What happens when he is finished giving the speech?



## MY VISIBLE FRIEND

1. Who is the important character we meet in this chapter? What fact does she and Liam discover when they are together in public?
2. What happens at the Porsche showroom? Who arrives just in time to make sure that things don't get out of hand?
-  3. What do you think Mr. Digby means when he says, "I'm your dad. It's what dads do."?

## MY PLANET PANDA POP



1. Why is Liam so interested in "all the Waterloos of the world"? What does this tell us about Liam?
-  2. The "friendly voice" from Drax Communications asks Liam, "As a dad, how would you summarize your philosophy of child rearing?" Liam replies, "I want my children to think of the whole world as their thrill ride." What does Liam mean by this?
-  3. What happens when Mr. Digby asks Liam to play the game MONOPOLY®? What happens when Liam tries to explain the game "Warcraft" to his dad?
4. What is a "quest"? What does it mean to "engage"?
5. What does Liam say is the difference between "in-game" and "in-life"?



## FATHERS HAVE CHILDREN

1. According to Liam, what is the book *Talk to Your Teen* about? Why does Liam think finding this book is so important?
-  2. Liam discovers that conversations with his dad could be broken down into five headings. What are they? Why is this an important discovery for Liam?



## COMPETITIVE DADLINESS



-  1. On page 90, Liam says, "I'm Florida's father." Why is this an important moment for both Florida and Liam? What then happens when Liam asks "the most dadly thing" he could think of to the other dads? (Also on page 90)
-  2. What do you think the book *Talk to Your Teen* means when it says, "The more you listen, the more you'll understand."? Why is this of interest to Liam?

## THRILL RIDE OF THE CENTURY

1. What does the word "possibility" mean?
2. Why does Dr. Drax say she needs "a young crew"?
3. What does Liam mean by, "What's the point in forfeiting your childhood if all you get for it is filling out forms."?

## THE ICE-CREAM MAN OF THE GOBI DESERT

1. How do Liam's "in-game" skills help him in this chapter that is "in-life"?



## I CAN'T WORK MY TROUSERS

1. What important discovery does Liam make about Florida when she tells him on page 156, "Space suits aren't clothes, idiot. Space suits are equipment."?

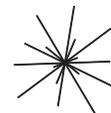
## THE VOMIT COMET

1. Who does Dr. Drax introduce all the dads and kids to? How old is this character? What skill does this character possess?

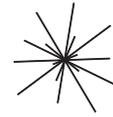


## GRAVITY IS NOT A TRIVIAL MONSTER

1. Dr. Drax tells everyone they are about to experience "15g. That's fifteen times your normal gravity." Can you explain, in your own words, what's meant by a "g force"? Why is it important to COSMIC? What does Liam think of this?
2. Why does Liam finally get six votes by the end of this chapter?



## IF ANTHING GOES WRONG...



1. Why does Liam think Eddie Xanadu is the wrong dad to go with the children into space? Is he right? What reasons does Liam give for his judgment of Mr. Xanadu?

## YOU DON'T GET EXTRA LIVES IN SPACE



1. What do the huge black Chinese letters up the side of the Possibility Building spell out? Where does this slogan come from? What does this slogan tell us about Dr. Drax's decision regarding which dad should go into space with the children?

## THE REAL THING

1. Why does Florida want to be famous? Why does she want to go on the rocket?
2. What does Liam realize is "the dadly thing to do" concerning Florida's birthday party?

## LAUNCH MINUS 48

1. What was the "test of Dadness"? Why does Liam put *Talk to Your Teen* in his PiP?



## I WANT MY DADDY

1. Look up the legend of St. Christopher. How does knowing this legend help you understand why Liam wedged the statue of St. Christopher into the instrument panel? What does this tell us about Liam? What does this tell us about Liam's relationship with his father?

## THEMOONYOUIDOT



1. On page 250, why is it important that Liam declares, "I am Engaged."? What does he mean by this at this moment in the story?

## AN UNSCHEDULED DIVERSION

1. Describe the two scenes in this chapter when Liam turns to the book *Talk to Your Teen*. What are the two problems at hand? How does the book help Liam figure out what to do?



## LOGIC SAYS...

-  1. On page 295, why does Liam's father ask Liam if he found the St. Christopher statue? Why is this important to Mr. Digby?
-  2. Why does Mr. Digby ask Liam if he knows the story of St. Christopher? What does Liam mean when he says the story of St. Christopher "is really a story about gravity"?

## THIS IS NOT A SIMULATION

1. How does Liam explain what the children "did when they were down there"? Why does he explain it in this manner? What does this tell us about Liam at this point in the story?

## SPECIAL GRAVITY

1. What does Liam mean when he says, on page 308, "Maybe everyone's got their own special gravity that lets you go far away, really far away sometimes, but which always brings you back in the end"?
-  2. What is the surprise spelled out across the lunar surface? Why is this an important moment for Florida? For Liam? For Liam's dad?