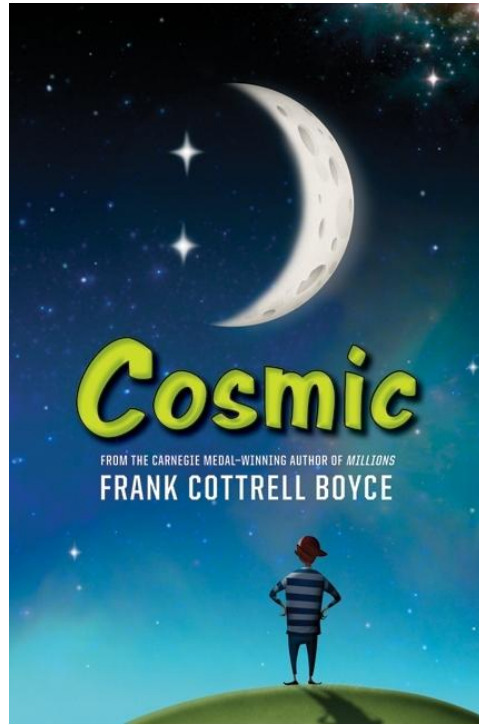


**Cosmic by Frank Cottrell Boyce
(HarperCollins, 2008)**

Liam has always felt a bit like he's stuck between two worlds because he's a twelve year old kid who looks like he is about 30. Then Liam cons his way onto the first spaceship to take civilians into space, a special flight for a group of kids, and an adult chaperone, and he's the adult chaperone.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you learn in the book's opening paragraph? Why do you think the book begins this way?



2. In the beginning of the book Liam has two experiences where is mistaken for an adult. Once in school when he is mistaken for Mr. Middleton, the new head of media studies, and another when he almost gets to drive a Porsche. On p. 23 he says: “Part of me was thinking I really should think more about the consequences of my actions. Then this wouldn't happen to me, but another part of me was thinking. This is good.” Why did it make Liam feel good?

When his Dad rescues him from the car dealership, and Liam asks him how did you know where I was, his Dad says: P.38 “I'm your dad. It's what dad's do.” What did his dad mean by this?

3. Did you notice that each chapter has a different name – what do the chapter headings tell you about what is going to happen?

Why do you think the author chose the title *Cosmic* for this book? (*many uses for cosmic--the name of the bungee cord ride, means enormous/stupendous as an adjective, also refers to the immenseness of time and space (as in the cosmos).*)

4. Why do you think Liam's Dad had a copy of *Talk to Your Teen* on his bedside table? Why is the book important to Liam?

5. The advertisement for the competition to travel to Infinity Park said – p. 48 “Don't miss this chance to become the Greatest Dad Ever.” What makes a good dad? Thinking of all the fathers in this book, what were some of their good and bad traits?

Samson I and II--very smart, intelligence is most important

Mr. Martinet (and Max)--strict/discipline, doing what you are told is the most important

Eddie Xanadu (and Hasan)-- very wealthy, money most important

6. p 114-- How does Liam feel when he finds out the kids are the ones going into space? What do you think is the hardest part of being a parent?

7. The children get to vote for the best father to travel into space with them. What are some of the reasons they vote for different fathers? (*flag challenge--Xanadu gives kids ice cream; The vortex-- Liam rides with all of them; one vote for Liam b/c un-dadlike; voted against b/c he'd hog the video games*)

8. How is Florida different from the other children? (*knows pop culture, wants to be famous, doesn't have a father*). P. 223 Liam says: "I realized that I was all the dad Florida had. It was time to do the right thing, the dadly thing, and give her exactly what she wanted – what we both wanted." What was this thing?

9. On earth Liam finds playing monopoly with his father boring, he would rather play Warcraft, but when he is in China and on the rocket he plays old fashioned games such as dune diving, tag, musical statues, grandmother's footsteps, fish - why does he play these games?

10. Do you think sending to children to space is a good idea? Why or why not? (*talk about the dangers of inexperience and maturity--like the button pushing and the children not appreciating the view, etc... but also about their enthusiasm, thirst for learning and adventure, etc.*)

11. Do you think Dr. Drac is using the kids as test guinea pigs? What has she to gain? Why did Dr. Drec not send up her own daughter?

12. Why does Liam like video games so much? What skills does he transfer from the video games to surviving in the rocket? (Docking the command module with Dandelion) What skills do the other kids have that helped them get back to earth?

13. What does Liam pack in his PIP? (*Talk to Your Teen book and St. Christopher medal*) How did they come in handy? What do you think would have happened if Liam or Florida had told all the children that he was really a child during their emergency in space?

14. P. 289 Why does Liam make the decision to let the children land on the moon?

15. P. 286 Why do the children not want to return to earth?

16. What does Liam mean when he says: P. 308 "Maybe everyone's got their own special gravity that lets you go far away, really, really far away sometimes, but which always brings you back in the end?"

17. What is the surprise spelled out across the lunar surface? Why is this important for Liam, for Florida, for Liam's dad?

18. *Cosmic* is considered Science Fiction, but it also contains lots of true facts about space. What did you learn about space travel that you might not have heard about

before? Access the Discussion Guide to *Cosmic* prepared by Walden Pond Press to learn more about the true facts in *Cosmic*.

http://www.walden.com/images/uploads/resource/Cosmic_-_Final_Curriculum_Guide.pdf

Other Resources:

NASA Kids Club

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>

What is Your Weight on Other Planets?

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/ronh/weight/index.html>

Mythbusters Flag Waving on Moon Hoax Debunk

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMBCfuKs9i8>

How Solar Sails Work:

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/solar-sail.htm>

Harper Collins Cosmic Reading Guide:

<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ReadingGuides/0061836834.pdf>

Mother-Daughter Book Club Interview with Frank Boyce:

<http://motherdaughterbookclub.com/2010/02/interview-with-frank-cottrell-boyce-author-of-millions-framed-and-cosmic/>

Some of the above questions were adapted from:

The *Cosmic* Reading Group guide prepared by Walden Pond Media

<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ReadingGuides/0061836834.pdf>

<http://k8talksbooks.blogspot.com/2011/03/cosmic-by-frank-cottrell-boyce.html>

Caroline Ward, Youth Services Coordinator,
The Ferguson Library