

Cosmic

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Although Liam Digby is only 12, because of his unusual height, he is often mistaken as an adult. Because of this common misconception, he is given a chance to enter in a lottery where 4 fathers and 4 kids are selected to be the first to enjoy a new thrill park called Infinity Park in China. Once Liam miraculously wins one of the 4 places to enjoy the thrill park deal (and lies to his parents that he's really going on a week-long trip to a gifted and talented kids camp), he and his friend, Florida, who reluctantly agrees to pose as his fake daughter, pack their bags onto a private jet to China for some fun daddy-daughter vacation time. However, they soon find out the greatest amusement park in the world is actually a top-secret taikonaut operation that will send the 4 chosen kids on a rocket into space as part of Dr. Drax's mission to open the possibilities of space to the future generation. Dr. Drax, who is the multi-millionaire behind the whole secret operation, gives the 4 fathers a competition of several tasks to see which one will be most suitable as the only adult supervisor with the all-kid space crew. But soon, Liam and all the children find themselves in an even graver issue that threatens all of their safety and their so-called future possibilities. Realizing that his own dad isn't there to rescue him from the mess, Liam must take initiative to save the kids himself like the father he pretends to be, so that all of them can go back home to safety.

I really liked how this book highlights the idea of growing up and also the value of being a kid and the value of being a father. When Liam meets the other parents and their kids, all of the fathers seem to be very strict and demanding of their kids, shaping them to act like mini-adults who are concerned with money, excellent in math and successful in solving world issues. Although Liam is just a kid himself, he brings some of his own parenting wisdom to the other fathers about how to appreciate their kids a little more, as well as being patient and understanding to them. In addition, I found *Cosmic* to be quite a funny book. I listened to the whole book in an audiobook format, and I was actually hiking for several hours while listening to the story. Throughout the whole hike, I kept periodically laughing and chuckling aloud at Liam's unique antics or Florida's sassy remarks, and it made my hike a lot more enjoyable.

There wasn't really anything I disliked about the book very much. However, I was a bit confused about the setting at first because the book actually starts off right at the main conflict. Afterward, it goes back in time to retell the main bulk of events that led up to the current conflict. Then it later proceeds on about how Liam attempts to resolve the current conflict. Although confusing at first, it doesn't disrupt the story flow too much and the flashbacks and memories leading up to the main event are pretty significant for the story development.

Cosmic could make a very meaningful gift or general book recommendation for a child at least 9 years old or a father with a child at least 9 years old. If possible, I would also strongly encourage fathers to be involved and to share the reading experience with their child because I feel that that this could lead to some insightful discussions between father and child about themes like growing up. Concerning my choice for the appropriate age group, I realized that some of the vocabulary and terminology when referring to the astronomy portion is a bit advanced and specifically scientific. There are a couple references to the acceleration of gravity, financial/fiscal terminology, and more, which may not be familiar with younger audiences. There

is also very minimal suggestive or offensive themes or references in the book. The only part that I think parents might want to be aware of is one scene where Liam, ends up getting a bit drunk when another father offers him some wine. This is the only reference to substance use in the book, and the details are quite minimal and only serve to make fun of Liam's childish-like behavior while he is drunk.

In general though, I think this is a very suitable book for kids, especially those with interests in astronomy. Even if you aren't much of a sci-fi fan or know much about astronomy, I think this book also speaks a lot on a personal level, especially to those who may sometimes feel too pressured by their parents to grow up faster and become great and successful. I often felt that my parents were a bit hard on me when I was younger so I think it would have been nice if I had found a book like this when I was younger.

Recommended Titles:

- The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,
- A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle
- Space Boy series by Stephen McCranie
- Owl Moon by Jane Yolen