

Into the Game

I hit pause and put down my controller. The family room rug felt thick and cushiony as I leaned back and took a deep breath. I wriggled my fingers to loosen them up. It was time to face the boss level, and I wanted to be ready.

I needed to beat Zule, King of the Space Squids. If he was anything like his crab sister Zalla, from the previous level of UnderSpace, beating him would not be easy. That's what made it fun.

"Carlos!" Mom called. "Dinner in five minutes!"

Ugh. How could I possibly beat Zule in five minutes? I only had twenty harpoons and three asteroid pearls. My life force was dangerously low. Still, I had to try. I picked up the controller and pushed "X" to resume. Zule appeared on the screen. There were tentacles. A *lot* of tentacles.

I pushed "Z" so fast my finger started to cramp. Harpoons were launching everywhere. Zule hardly seemed to notice. I hit "A" to fire an asteroid pearl from my blaster. Whoosh! Direct hit.

"Carlos, dinner time!" I thought I heard Mom calling again.

"Just a minute, Mom!" I started to yell. But before I could get the words out, everything went black.

I blinked. Still black. I felt like I couldn't breathe. I lifted my hands up to touch my face and hit something hard. Like a helmet. A SeaSpace helmet. What was happening? Whatever it was, it was scary. Scary and awesome.

I felt around on the side of the helmet until my fingers hit a switch. Suddenly my vision cleared and I could take a breath. Phew.

Actually *not* phew. Because what I saw was definitely not a relief. It was a tentacle. I reached my hand around to the back of my SeaSpace suit. Only one harpoon left. I decided to use my two remaining asteroid pearls first, to try to do the most damage.

I lifted my blaster and fired the pearls. Whoosh! Whoosh! They flew out so fast they knocked me over. But Zule looked weak. I could see his squid eye staring at me. Then I could see his tentacle raise up to strike.

Now was the moment. I had to launch my last harpoon straight to his eye. No second chances. I hoped that would defeat him. And I *really* hoped that defeating him would send me back to the family room. If not, I'd have to come up with another plan. I hoped Mom wouldn't mind if I was late for dinner.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What boss is Carlos trying to beat in his UnderSpace game?
 - a. Zalla
 - b. The Squid Crab
 - c. Zule
 - d. His mom

2. Which button launches the harpoons?
 - a. X
 - b. Z
 - c. A
 - d. B

3. How do you think Carlos feels about being sucked into the game?
 - a. Grumpy
 - b. Bored
 - c. Worried
 - d. Excited

4. How do you think his mom will feel if he's late for dinner?
 - a. Annoyed
 - b. Happy
 - c. Sad
 - d. Bored

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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