

Inside the Game

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Jason tapped his fingers quickly on the buttons of his controller. Just one more boss and he'd reach a new level! His tongue was hanging out of his mouth and his eyes were stretched wide open as he made his character jump and dodge and attack.

Ding-Dong!

"Jason, honey? Can you answer the door?"

"I'm busy, mom!" Jason shouted back at his mother. Couldn't she see how important this was? He'd spent three hours so far working to this point in the game. He *couldn't* stop now.

Ding-Dong! Mom's footsteps approached the front door.

"Jason, it's your friend Todd." Mom called from the doorway.

Todd, his best friend, stepped into the room. "Jason! Let's go shoot some hoops. I need a partner for a pick-up game down the street." He sounded excited.

Jason snorted. "No way, Todd. I'm playing a game here." Couldn't anyone see how busy he was? What was wrong with people?

Todd shook his head. "Look, you can kill that boss later. Let's go."

Jason gave his friend a dirty look, and his character almost got killed while he looked away. He quickly used another potion in his game. "I almost died because of you!"

Todd looked at Jason's mother. Jason's mother looked back at him. They both looked at Jason. "Why don't you go play some basketball with your friend?" Jason's mother suggested.

"Tomorrow, maybe..." There were more levels to beat tomorrow, though. Maybe he'd go play tomorrow. He'd have to see what mood he was in. He thought he heard footsteps walking away, but he was too busy beating the next level to care.

An hour later, Jason's father came home. It was dinner time after father washed up and sat down. Jason didn't even hear his name being called to the table. He didn't hear father walk up behind him and ask him to turn the game off, either.

When the screen suddenly went black and father's angry face loomed in front of him, Jason finally heard. "No more game for a month." Jason's father growled at him. "You don't play basketball, you don't come to dinner, and you don't do your chores. We'll make sure everything else gets done before you play anymore."

Jason nodded slowly. He knew better than to argue with his father, and when he thought about it, he had been playing quite a bit. It was fun, but he was letting down his friends, his family, and himself by playing too much.

He'd try harder in the future.



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What is Jason doing in the story?
 - A. Eating candy
 - B. Playing video games
 - C. Studying
 - D. Playing basketball

2. What does Todd ask Jason to do?
 - A. Play basketball with him
 - B. Go watch a movie with him
 - C. Eat some pizza
 - D. Go to the library

3. Why didn't Jason go with Todd?
 - A. He was tired.
 - B. He was sick.
 - C. His legs hurt.
 - D. He was too busy playing games.

4. What finally made Jason stop playing games?
 - A. Jason's father pulled the plug on the TV.
 - B. Jason beat the game.
 - C. Jason quit for dinner.
 - D. None of the above

5. What did Jason learn at the end of the story?
 - A. That he really wanted to be a fireman.
 - B. That his father was mean.
 - C. That he should have ate dinner before he started playing games.
 - D. That he couldn't spend all day playing games, because he had other responsibilities.

Inside the Game – Answer Key

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Use the information below to check the answers.

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