

## Virtually true – By Paul Stewart

### Textual Questions

1. **According to the newspaper, what had happened to Sebastian Shultz?**

Sebastian Shultz was badly injured in a car accident. His condition was described by doctors as critical but stable. In spite of doctors' efforts Sebastian could not regain consciousness. He went into coma.

2. **'Dad's nutty about computers.' What evidence is there to support this statement?**

Michael's dad was crazy about computers. He had bought the latest computer which could do anything: paint, play music, create displays. He also bought many latest psycho-drive games and a virtual reality visor and glove. In fact, he was so obsessed that he couldn't resist buying any new gadgets and gizmos that came on the market.

3. **In what way did the second game seem very real?**

There are various instances in the chapter to describe that the second game seemed very real, such as *"As I lowered myself down I felt the dragon's fiery breath"*, *"And the whole time I could hear and feel and even smell the evil dragon following in close pursuit"*, etc.

4. **The last game has tanks, jeeps, helicopters, guns and headings would you put this and the other games under?**

*Warzone* can be categorised under simulation games. *Wildwest* is a strategy game. *Dragonquest* is a fantasy role-playing game and *Jailbreak* is an action game.

5. **What was Michael's theory about how Sebastian had entered the games?**

According to Michael, Sebastian was probably playing those games when he banged his head in the accident. The computer had saved his memory into its own. Michael bought a lot of games at the fair. Some of them were the stolen ones of Sebastian. When Michael was playing those games, the computer was trying to retrieve Sebastian's memory.

**'That was my idea' said Sebastian excitedly. 'If only it would go a big faster'.**

i. **Where was Sebastian when he spoke these words?**

Sebastian had just broken a jail with help of Michael and was on the rooftop.

ii. **What was his idea, and what was he referring to?**

Sebastian was referring to be rescued by a helicopter from the jail, before the guards catch up on him.

iii. **Was the idea a good one and did it eventually succeed? How?**

The idea was a good one, yet did not succeed because the jail guards and their dogs catch up on them, while Sebastian slips and falls down.

1. **Why did the news of the 'miracle recovery' shock Michael?**

The news article mentioned that a fourteen-year-old boy called Sebastian Shultz, who had gone into a coma following the accident, had miraculously recovered. Michael was shocked to read this. When he saw the picture of Sebastian, he realised that he was the same person whom he

had met in the virtual world and was trying to rescue him. Michael couldn't understand that how he could meet Sebastian if he was in coma.

2. **Michael's meeting with Sebastian Shultz had been a chance meeting. Where had it taken place and how?**

Michael's chance meeting with Sebastian had taken place in the virtual world. He had met Sebastian for the first time in a game called *Wildwest*.

3. **What kind of computers fascinated Michael and his dad? Why?**

Michael and his dad had recently bought a Pentium 150 MHz processor, with 256 of RAM, a 1.2 GB hard disk drive and 16 speed CD ROM, complete with speakers, printer, modem and scanner. This computer could do anything: paint, play music, create displays and even make rubbish homework look fantastic.

4. **Describe the first place where Michael was virtually transported.**

The first place Michael was transported was the time period between the American Civil war and end of the 19th century. (mid 1830's-1920). Geographically, it was west America. Michael was playing a game called *Wildwest* where he was a Sheriff caught in a gun fight in a saloon.

5. **What help did Sebastian Shultz ask Michael for? How did he convey this message?**

Sebastian Shultz was in the virtual world when his accident took place. As a result he got stuck there. He encountered Michael in this virtual world. He wanted Michael to rescue him. He sent a message to Michael which appeared on his printer.

6. **Why did Michael fail in rescuing Sebastian Shultz the first time?**

Michael couldn't rescue Sebastian the first time because before he could save him, he was shot by gunmen.

7. **The second attempt to rescue Sebastian Shultz too was disastrous. Give reasons.**

Sebastian chopped the princess's long plaits and tied them together to form a rope and managed to flee from the tower. He and Michael headed towards the dungeons. However, the dragon followed them. As they were going down the steps, the dragon appeared and caught Sebastian. Michael tried to kill the dragon but he had already taken Sebastian. Thus, the second attempt to save Sebastian failed as well.

8. **Narrate the accident that injured Sebastian Shultz.**

Sebastian Shultz was badly injured in a car accident. He had banged his head. When he was brought to the hospital, the doctors described his condition critical but stable. Despite doctors' efforts Sebastian could not regain consciousness. He had gone into coma.

9. **How had Sebastian Shultz entered the games?**

At the time of the accident, Sebastian was using his laptop to play one of the psycho-drive games. He was plugged on to the computer when his head banged in the accident. The computer had saved his memory in its own. Thus, Sebastian had entered the games but could not come out of it.

10. **How was Sebastian Shultz's memory stored on Michael's disk? Did Michael discover that?**

At the time of the accident, Sebastian was plugged on to the computer. The computer had saved his memory in its own. When Sebastian's family was in the hospital, somebody stole their whole lot of games. Some of them ended up at Computer Fair, where they were bought by Michael. Michael discovered this when he read an article on the internet about Sebastian's miraculous discovery.

**Sebastian Shultz had a close brush with death. After he recovers, he returns to school and narrates his experience to his classmates. As Sebastian Shultz, narrate your experience.**

Hi friends, great to see you all. I had almost lost hope to meet you all again ever. Six weeks ago, I was on my way out of town with some friends for a weekend. I had my laptop with me. It was a four-hour journey to our destination. So, to engage myself, I logged on to one of my psycho-drive games. After an hour of driving on the highway, the car suddenly screeched to a halt. Since we were driving at a great speed, the driver lost control of the car and car somersaulted before falling into a ditch. As the car fell into the ditch, my head hit against the roof of the car and everything blacked out. I don't remember what happened to me after that.

I was told that I had slipped into coma and only a miracle had brought me back. Another miraculous thing happened to me. At the time of the accident, I was in the midst of a game. Although, I entered it I couldn't come out of it. Somebody stole my lot of games while I was in the hospital. Some of those were bought by a person called Michael, who rescued me and got me out. So, indirectly he is my saviour. I am planning to meet him soon. It is great to be back friends! I have had a harrowing time, VIRTUALLY!!

**Write an article entitled 'Virtual games are a reality.'**

Virtual world or cyberspace is an environment using computer technology to create a simulated, three-dimensional world that a user can manipulate and explore while feeling as if he were in that world. In a virtual reality environment, the user experiences the feeling of being inside and a part of that world. He is also able to **interact** with his environment in meaningful ways. Virtually real environment has benefited the health care industry. The doctors use virtual reality products to treat phobias, addictions and other mental health needs.

However, some psychologists are concerned that virtual reality games could psychologically affect a player. They suggest that these games place a player in violent situations, particularly as the perpetrator of violence and could result in the user becoming desensitised. Some psychologists also believe that these games can lead to cyber addiction. There have been several news stories of gamers neglecting their real lives for their online, in-game presence.

Another rising concern is about criminal acts. In a virtual game, defining a criminal act has been problematic. At what point can authorities charge a person with a real crime for actions within a virtual game? Studies indicate that people can have real physical and emotional reactions to stimuli within a virtual game. Thus, it's quite possible that a victim of a virtual attack could feel real emotional trauma. Can the attacker be punished for causing real-life distress? We don't have answers to these questions yet.