Name: _____

Date: _____

Defending the AI Fortress

[par.1] "Initiating lockdown sequence," the house announced as the metallic shutters cascaded down the windows. Alex spun around, wide-eyed and out of breath. The comms unit displayed his parents' faces, pixelated and grainy from the weak connection in deep space.

[par.2] "Sorry, honey, work emergency!" his mom said, lines of worry etched on her holographic face. "The defense system will handle everything until we're back."

[par.3] "But you'll be back before dinner tomorrow, right?" Alex inquired, shifting his weight from one foot to the other.

[par.4] "Of course, champ. Just follow protocol!" his dad chimed in, as their images flickered and the screen dimmed.

[par.5] Alex exhaled slowly, trying to calm the flutter in his stomach as he surveyed their high-tech fortress. The house stood shining amidst a sea of stars, orbiting Earth in isolation—a true marvel of interplanetary architecture with its sleek metallic curves and solar panels glinting against the nebulae backdrop.

[par.6] Later, an unsettling noise reverberated through the hallway. Like a thud, but more ominous—a sound that the AI had not accounted for. "House, status report," Alex commanded.

[par.7] "Unidentified lifeforms detected on the perimeter," the AI replied with its usual mechanical calm.

[par.8] "Aliens? Here?" Alex whispered to himself, his mind leaping to the tales of celestial explorers who had encountered the bullying lyrians.

[par.9] He darted to the command console, fingers flying over the touch-sensitive surface, triggering external cameras. An array of misshapen figures lurked in the faint glow of the security lights, their chitinous bodies bristling with curiosity at the human architecture.

[par.10] "Time to play," Alex muttered, scanning the defensive options. "Activate security drones!"

[par.11] Humanoid drones buzzed into action, whirring to life like mechanical bees. Through the cameras, Alex watched as the drones encircled the intruders, attempting to corral them back toward the infinite vastness of space.

[par.12] "Recalibrate protocol, prioritize non-lethal deterrents!" he urged, mindful of his parents' policy on non-aggressive defense.

[par.13] The drones shifted tactics, projecting walls of light to steer the aliens away from critical entry points. But the intruders seemed to possess a strange cunning, weaving and dodging with dexterity.

[par.14] "House, increase DBF," Alex instructed.

[par.15] "Deploying Decibel Barrier Field," the AI confirmed.

[par.16] Muffled roars rumbled through the walls as the sonic deterrent activated. For a tense moment, the hallway fell silent, save for the hum of machinery.

[par.17] "Get off my spaceship!" Alex shouted into the intercom, buoyed by an unexpected rush of bravery.

[par.18] Sustained by sound waves, the shield held, and slowly, the aliens began retreating into the dark void, their figures becoming silhouettes against the starry background.

[par.19] "House, disable superfluous protocols," Alex commanded, a triumphant grin spreading across his face as silence reclaimed the room.

[par.20] "Threat eliminated. Returning to standby status," the AI droned, the house's system seamlessly shifting back into its pre-alert state.

[par.21] "Well," Alex mused to himself, sinking onto the plush sofa. "I guess next time, I'll let the AI handle the cooking too."

[par.22] The weight of the galaxy felt a little more manageable as he sat there, watching the cosmos spin by, wondering whether his parents would believe any of it when they returned.

Multiple-choice Questions:

1. What is the main theme of the passage?

    A. Family responsibilities and independence
    B. Technological advancements and their impact
    C. Space exploration and risk
    D. Friendship in unlikely places

2. What role does the AI play in the narrative?

    A. It causes more problems than it solves.
    B. It assists Alex in safeguarding the house.
    C. It manages Alex's daily tasks.
    D. It communicates with Alex's parents when they're away.

3. How does Alex feel at the beginning of the passage when his parents leave?

    A. Excited about being alone
    B. Calm and confident
    C. Nervous but determined
    D. Indifferent to their absence

4. Which phrase best describes the tone of the story when the aliens arrive?

    A. Calm and serene
    B. Tense and suspenseful
    C. Joyful and triumphant
    D. Nostalgic and reflective

5. Why does Alex decide to change the drone's strategy to non-lethal deterrents?

    A. He follows his parents' non-aggressive defense policy.
    B. He believes the aliens are not a threat.
    C. The AI system suggested it.
    D. He wanted to test a new strategy.

Open-ended Questions:

1. Describe how Alex's perception of responsibility is depicted in the narrative.

2. Identify the textual techniques used to convey suspense during the alien encounter.

3. What message might the author be sending about technology and its role in human interaction?

True-False Questions:

1. The house AI system failed to protect Alex from the aliens.

    True
    False

2. Alex's parents trust him to handle emergencies in their absence.

    True
    False

3. The aliens in the story are portrayed as vicious and aggressive.

    True
    False

4. Alex shows bravery during the alien encounter.

    True
    False

5. The narrative's setting is on Earth.

    True
    False

Answer Key

Multiple-choice Questions:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. A

True-False Questions:

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. False