

Name:	Class:	

Most Valuable Player

By Sarah Van Arsdale 1988

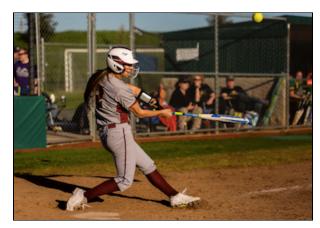
Sarah Van Arsdale is an author, poet, and professor. In this poem, a speaker describes her goals. As you read, make note of the speaker's goals and aspirations.

- [1] If I had a trophy
 I'd put it on the middle shelf
 of my bookcase. I'd dust
 it every day
- [5] and polish it once a week.
 - It would have a statue of a woman holding a bat, her golden arm cocked up¹ a little waiting for the pitch.
- [10] When my friends came over
 I'd stand next to the bookcase casual-like
 till they said, "Is that a trophy?"
 I'd read the inscription² every morning.
 I'd ask someone to take my picture
- [15] with my trophy.

My trophy would say "Softball Player" on the bottom, and everyone would know that in summer I tie on my cleats

- [20] run onto the field,
 slapping high fives.
 They'd know I take third base,
 put my glove to the dry dirt,
 scatter dust in the air.
- [25] They'd hear the fans shout,

"Hey, some catch!"



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- 1. tilted up
- 2. **Inscription** (noun) written or carved words on an object



when the white ball comes slamming into my glove, and, "Watch out, she'll steal home,"

[30] as my cleats dig and dig.

They'd feel the weight of the little statue
And think, "I bet she's going out
With her team tonight,"

"I bet she could teach me how to throw,"

[35] "I bet she plays softball," and I do,

I do.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

- 1. PART A: Which of the following identifies the theme of the poem?
 - A. People want to be recognized.
 - B. Sometimes people don't mind when their skills go unrewarded.
 - C. The support of friends and family is important to succeed.
 - D. Rewards and trophies do not determine an individual's skill or success.
- 2. PART B: Which detail from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "I'd dust / it every day / and polish it once a week." (Lines 3-5)
 - B. "It would have a statue of a woman/ holding a bat'" (Lines 6-7)
 - C. "I'd read the inscription every morning." (Line 13)
 - D. "They'd hear the fans shout / 'Hey, some catch!" (Lines 25-26)
- 3. What does having a trophy mean to the speaker?
 - A. It's proof that she is the best softball player.
 - B. It shows that she's just as athletic as the boys.
 - C. It's an item to show off to her friends.
 - D. It represents being great at softball.

4.	How does the 'If,I would' structure in the poem develop the speaker's perspective towards her goals?	



Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1.	What kinds of rewards have you hoped to earn? How have you imagined your hard work leading up to the moment you win an award, like the speaker of the poem?
2.	How would the speaker of the poem answer the question 'Where does happiness come from?' What is your response to the same question?
3.	Do you think the speaker of the poem really deserves a trophy? Why or why not?