

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 up<sup>1</sup> 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 inscription<sup>2</sup> 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?

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