

Section 2 The Scholarship Jacket

Answer the following

1. What was the school tradition that Marta longed to follow? Why?

The school tradition that Martha longed to follow was of winning the gold and green jacket that was awarded to the class valedictorian. Martha's older sister had won the jacket a few years before, and Martha herself, who was a straight A student since the first grade, was also expected to win it.

2. Where was Martha brought up and why?

Martha was brought up in Texas by her grandparents. Her father was a poor farm labourer with eight children. So, Martha had been given to her grandparents to be raised.

3. This one, the scholarship jacket, was our only chance.

i. Who does 'our' refer to in this line?

'Our' refers to Martha and her siblings.

ii. What was the only chance?

The 'only chance' was the opportunity for Martha and her siblings to win the scholarship jacket as the class valedictorian.

iii. Why was that the only chance?

It was their only chance because though the siblings were quite athletic and agile, they were unable to participate in school sports because they didn't have the money to pay for registration fees, uniform costs and trips out of town. Academic excellence was the only way for them to distinguish themselves at school.

4. What were the two teachers arguing about? Why did the two disagree?

The two teachers were arguing about who that year's scholarship jacket should go to. Mr Boone wanted it to go to a girl called Joann whose father was on the school board and was quite an influential person in the town. Mr Schmidt, on the other hand, refused to lie or falsify records as he felt that Martha undoubtedly deserved the award.

5. How did Martha react to the argument that she heard? Why did it seem like a cruel coincidence to have overheard that conversation?

Martha was shocked, disheartened and sad after overhearing the conversation. She cried all night. It seemed to her like a 'cruel coincidence' because it revealed to her that her hopes and dreams of winning the scholarship jacket, something she had worked hard for, were being snatched away from her just when they were within reach.

6. How did Grandpa respond to the idea of paying for the scholarship jacket?

Grandpa said that if they had to pay for it, it was not really a scholarship jacket. He told Martha to tell her principal that he refused to pay for the jacket.

7. What was the principal's reaction?

When Martha told the principal that her grandfather refused to pay, he first questioned why, telling her that her grandfather could afford it. When she explained to him what her grandfather had said, and accidentally let slip that he should give the jacket to Joann, the principal perhaps realized that she knew what was really going on. Perhaps he felt ashamed, because he then changed his mind and said Martha would get the jacket without having to pay for it.