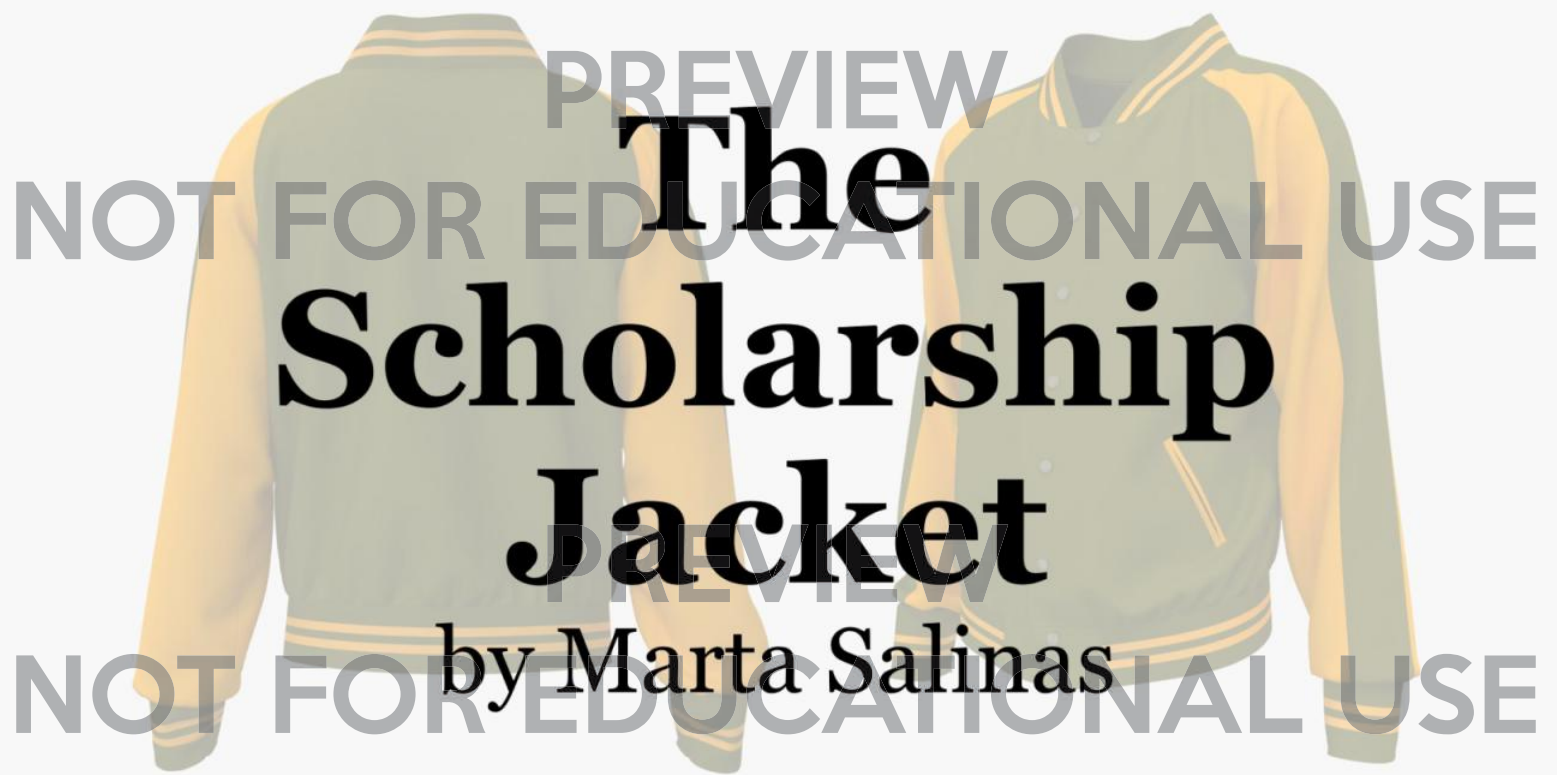


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THE SCHOLARSHIP JACKET

- “The Scholarship Jacket” is a short story written by Marta Salinas published in 1986.
- Marta Salinas is a writer and a farmworker activist who spreads awareness of the harmful effects caused by toxic chemicals commonly used on farmlands.
- The setting of “The Scholarship Jacket” is Texas, during a time where discrimination was still prominent.
- The main character of the story is an 8th grade student who is Mexican-American.
- Mexicans living in Texas are sometimes referred to as *Tejanos*.
- Today, over 7 million residents of Texas are Mexican-Americans.



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BEFORE READING

How important is money?

What problems can it solve?

What problems can it *not* solve?

If you were given a million dollars today, under the condition that you couldn't spend any of the money on yourself, what would you do with it and why?

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VOCABULARY

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agile (adjective)

Describes someone or something able to move quickly and effortlessly

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VOCABULARY

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vengeance (adjective)

“With a vengeance” describes doing something with great force, energy, or power

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VOCABULARY

despaired (verb)

to feel that everything is wrong and that nothing will improve

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PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

VOCABULARY

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eavesdrop (verb)

to overhear and secretly listen to what someone else is saying

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PREVIEW
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VOCABULARY

falsify (verb)
To fake

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PREVIEW
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VOCABULARY

resign (verb)
to leave a position and quit permanently

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PREVIEW

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VOCABULARY

crucel (adjective)

describes something painful or harsh

PREVIEW

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4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

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VOCABULARY

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dismay (noun)

a strong feeling of fear, worry, or sadness
that is caused by something unpleasant
and unexpected

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PREVIEW

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VOCABULARY

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dignity (noun)

a sense of importance and value; pride;
self-respect

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VOCABULARY

withdrawn (adjective)
not wanting to interact or talk to others

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PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

VOCABULARY

gaunt (adjective)

describes a person who is thin and bony

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

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VOCABULARY

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

vile (adjective)

describes something unpleasant or
repulsive

PREVIEW

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4 3 2 1 0

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“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas — Suggested Lesson Procedure

Day 1:

- Show powerpoint presentation to provide students with background information about the story.
- Have students answer the journal prompt before reading.
- Review vocabulary using the Powerpoint presentation. Have students copy down the definitions on their graphic organizers.
- Begin reading the story “The Scholarship Jacket” (it takes 12 minutes without stopping). I recommend completing the reading comprehension questions during reading (which extends the reading time to ~40 minutes). Review the correct answers as you go with students, asking for volunteers first. This is a really important step for students while practicing literary analysis because it enhances students’ understanding of the literature and models techniques they will use in the future.

Day 2:

- Finish reading the story and answering the reading comprehension questions with students.
- Have students work in pairs or groups to complete the discussion questions. Give them 15 minutes to work in their groups, then bring the class together to share answers.

Day 3:

- Have students work independently or in pairs to complete the plot diagram analysis chart. Review answers with students when everyone is done.
- Direct students to work independently on the after reading 3-2-1 activity.

Day 4:

- Administer quiz (optional).

Note to teachers: Due to copyright law, I am unable to offer a full text version of the story. This short story is located in the 7th Grade Holt McDougal Literature Textbook, and also can be found online easily. Just type “The Scholarship Jacket by Marta Salinas Full Text” into any search engine, and you will find a copy of the story available for you to print and use in class. Here is the link I used: [The Scholarship Jacket Full Text](#)

Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Before Reading Prompt

How important is money? What problems can it solve? What problems can it not solve? If you were given a million dollars today, under the condition that you couldn’t spend any of the money on yourself, what would you do with it and why?

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Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Vocabulary

agile		
vengeance		
despaired		
eavesdrop		
falsify		
resign		
cruel		
dismay		
dignity		
withdrawn		
gaunt		
vile		

Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Reading Comprehension

1. What tradition takes place in the narrator’s small Texas school?

PREVIEW

2. Why is winning the jacket so important to the narrator?

3. Why can't Martha participate in sports at school?

PREVIEW

4. What do Mr. Boone and Mr. Schmidt argue about?

5. What change in policy does the principal implement? What can you infer is the real intention behind this change?

6. What important question does Martha’s grandfather ask her? What is the significance of this question?

PREVIEW

7. Why does the grandfather refuse to pay for the jacket?

8. What does Martha mean when she says, "Those were the days of belief and innocence"?

PREVIEW

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9. Why can't the principal look Martha in the eyes?

PREVIEW

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10. At the end of the story, Martha is "not fooled" when Grandpa sends her into the house. What does this mean?

PREVIEW

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11. What is one major theme from the story? Provide textual evidence to support your response.

PREVIEW

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Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Discussion Questions

1. When was a time you were angry with someone even though you knew they were right?

PREVIEW

2. What do you think of the school principal in the story? Is he a good person?

3. Would this or could this ever happen where you live? Why or why not?

PREVIEW

4. Where does prejudice and discrimination come from?

5. If Martha never overheard the conversation between Mr. Boone and Mr. Schmidt, how would this story be different?

PREVIEW

6. Do you believe it's ever okay for teachers to change a student's grade if they have a good reason?

PREVIEW

7. Is doing the right thing ever easy? Give an example of a time where doing the right thing was difficult.

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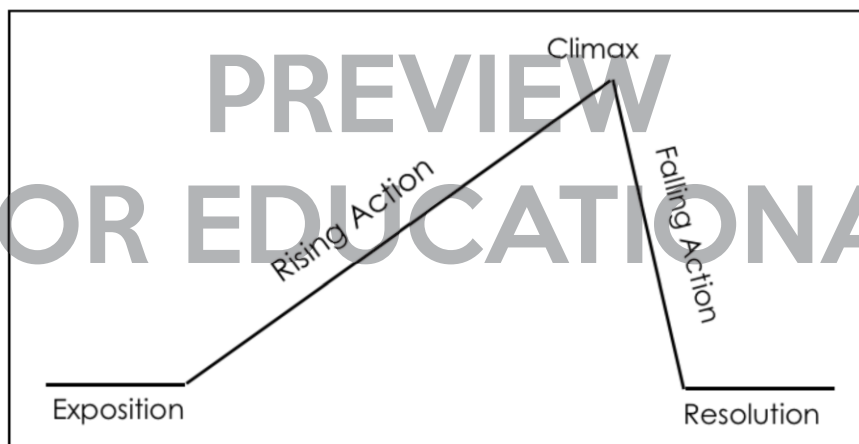
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Name:

Class:

Plot Diagram
“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas



Exposition

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Rising Actions

Climax

PREVIEW
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Falling Actions

PREVIEW

Resolution

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Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
After Reading Activity

3-2-1

PREVIEW

How do Martha's feelings change over the course of the story? Give at least three examples.

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PREVIEW

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Find two examples of figurative language from the text to cite and explain.
Examples can be: similes, metaphors, personification, imagery, hyperbole, or idioms.

PREVIEW

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Pick one character from the story and discuss what lesson they learned.
Explain what was learned and how they learned it.

PREVIEW

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Name:

Date:

“The Scholarship Jacket” Quiz

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What is the point of view of this story?

- a. First person b. Second person c. Third person

2. Who does Martha live with?

- a. Her parents b. Her aunt c. Her grandparents

3. The letter jacket is given to the student who...

- Has perfect attendance
- Has the best grades
- Is the most athletic

4. How does the scholarship jacket tradition change?

- There are two students who are tied to win.
- The Board decides everyone should get a jacket.
- The Board implements a new policy which requires a fee.

5. What words best describe the end of this story?

- a. Justice and happiness b. Compromise and disappointment c. Greed and deceit

6. What words best describe the narrator Martha?

- a. quiet and selfish
- b. hardworking and intelligent
- c. angry and disrespectful

Part 2: Open-Ended Questions

7. Why does Martha's grandfather refuse to give into the new policy?

8. Who does Mr. Boone want to award the jacket and why?

9. What final decision does the Principal make regarding who wins the jacket?

10. What lesson does Martha's grandfather teach her?

Part 3: Vocabulary Fill in the Blank

vile

dismay

eavesdrop

agile

resign

11. I had to leave the room because of the _____ smell coming from the expired milk.

12. Julie will _____ on her sister's conversation with her friends when she wants to find out her secrets.

13. To the children's _____, there was not enough snow on the ground to cancel school.

14. The mayor was forced to _____ after he was caught stealing money from the town.

15. To play tennis, one should be _____ and able to move quickly around the court.

ANSWER KEYS

"The Scholarship Jacket" by Marta Salinas Vocabulary

agile	adj	Describes someone or something able to move quickly and effortlessly
vengeance	adj	"With a vengeance" describes doing something with great force, energy, or power
despaired	verb	to feel that everything is wrong and that nothing will improve
eavesdrop	verb	to overhear and listen secretly to what someone else is saying
falsify	verb	To fake
resign	verb	To leave a position and quit permanently
cruel	adj	Describes something painful or harsh
dismay	noun	a strong feeling of fear, worry, or sadness that is caused by something unpleasant and unexpected
dignity	noun	a sense of importance and value; pride; self-respect
withdrawn	adj	not wanting to interact or talk to others
gaunt	adj	Describes a person who is thin and bony
vile	adj	Describes something unpleasant or repulsive

Answer Key
“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What tradition takes place in the narrator’s small Texas school?

During the eighth grade graduation, a beautiful gold and green jacket is awarded to the class valedictorian, the student who maintained the highest grades for eight years.

2. Why is winning the jacket so important to the narrator?

Martha expected to win the scholarship jacket as she earned straight As since first grade. The jacket was important for several reasons:

- Martha worked really hard to get good grades
- Her sister previously won the jacket
- Her family can't afford much, including nice jackets
- This was Martha’s only chance to ever earn a letterman jacket because she can’t afford to play sports

3. Why can't Martha participate in sports at school?

Martha belongs to a poor family. Sports come with all sorts of fees like registration fees, uniform costs, and trips out of town. Martha could not afford these things.

4. What do Mr. Boone and Mr. Schmidt argue about?

Mr. Schmidt is arguing with Mr. Boone about the changes in the policy regarding the scholarship jacket. Mr. Schmidt is angry that someone besides Martha might get the scholarship jacket because Martha is the one who deserves it. Mr. Boone wants Mr. Schmidt to help falsify records so another girl, Joann, can win the scholarship jacket. Mr. Boone wants Joann to win because her father owns the only store in town and he mentions that Martha is Mexican.

5. What change in policy does the principal implement? What can you infer is the real intention behind this change?

The Board decides to charge fifteen dollars to the winner of the jacket in order for them to actually receive it. The school Board thinks that if Martha can't pay for the jacket, they will then be able to give it to Joann instead, and it won't seem like they are being biased.

6. What important question does Martha’s grandfather ask her? What is the significance of this question?

Her grandfather asks her, "What does a scholarship jacket *mean*?" This question is significant because the word "scholarship" entails an award based on a high achievement. Martha *earned* the jacket and her paying for it changes its meaning: it no longer is a scholarship jacket because it costs something. It is significant because he knows that this question will highlight the paradox of Martha's statement. Martha realizes that her grandfather has the money, but it's about principle.

7. Why does the grandfather refuse to pay for the jacket?

Martha's grandfather is a strict and wise person; he thinks that paying for the jacket defeats the purpose of winning it and that rewards don't have prices.

8. What does Martha mean when she says, "Those were the days of belief and innocence"?

The Board didn't actually change any rules and the jacket didn't really cost fifteen dollars. That was simply the cover story Martha was given to hide the conspiracy against her. It's not until later in life does she realize what the principal was trying to do.

9. Why can't the principal look Martha in the eyes?

This moment reveals that the principal knows what he is doing is wrong, and he is ashamed.

10. At the end of the story, Martha is "not fooled" when Grandpa sends her into the house. What does this mean?

Grandpa gives Martha a pat on the shoulder and pulls out his handkerchief to wipe sweat off his face. Although her grandfather is a man of few words and it may seem like this small achievement isn't a big deal, her grandfather is very proud of her. He probably used the handkerchief to wipe his tears because he was so happy for his granddaughter and proud of her.

11. What is one major theme from the story? Provide textual evidence to support your response.

1) It is difficult but important to stand up for what is fair and right. — "I looked at him, forcing my eyes to stay dry. 'I know, sir, but he said if I had to pay for it, then it wouldn't be a scholarship jacket.' I stood up to leave. 'I guess you'll just have to give it to Joann.'"

Martha stood up to the principal even though she was nervous and scared.

2) Be a good person, and good things will come your way. — "Okay. We'll make an exception in your case. I'll tell the Board, you'll get your jacket."

The principal was too ashamed to steal the jacket from Martha because she is a good student.

3) Life isn't always fair, but you can only control how you respond. — "I was angry with Grandfather even though I knew he was right, and I was angry with the Board, whoever they were."

Martha was devastated that the Board would be so cruel, but she responds with maturity and grace which in turn makes them feel ashamed.

Answer Key
“The Scholarship Jacket” by Marta Salinas
Discussion Questions

1. When was a time you were angry with someone even though you knew they were right?

Answers will vary.

2. What do you think of the school principal in the story? Is he a good person?

Answers will vary. The principal of the school might be a good person in nature but he is weak because he is compelled by the Board to deprive Martha of her right. He lied to Martha's face about the fake policy change in order to give the jacket to someone else. He might be good deep down because he felt guilt for what he did and ultimately changed his decision.

3. Would this or could this ever happen where you live? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

4. Where does prejudice and discrimination come from?

Answers will vary.

5. If Martha never overheard the conversation between Mr. Boone and Mr. Schmidt, how would this story be different?

Answers will vary. Martha may never have said to the principal “I guess you’ll just have to give it to Joann” which prompted the principal to change his mind. Martha probably would have been deprived of the jacket.

6. Do you believe it's ever okay for teachers to change a student's grade if they have a good reason? Explain.

Answers will vary.

7. Is doing the right thing ever easy? Give an example of a time where doing the right thing was difficult.

Answers will vary.

Plot Diagram Answer Key

Exposition

Martha is a Mexican-American 8th-grade student who lives with her grandparents. They own a farm in Texas and do not have a lot of money.

Rising Actions

Martha is excited about winning the scholarship jacket which she worked hard for since the first grade.

Martha overhears two teachers discussing the scholarship jacket. The one teacher wants the other to falsify records to make it seem like Joann won the jacket because Joann's father is on the Board and he owns the only store in town.

Martha is devastated when she finds out that Joann will win the jacket because of politics and because Martha is Mexican.

Martha is told by the principal that there will now be a \$15 fee to win the jacket.

Martha asks her grandfather for the money to win the jacket and he says no.

Climax

Martha is in the principal's office and he inquires about the money. Martha is nervous, but she must tell him she will not pay the fifteen dollars. She stands up for herself and explains that it's based on principle.

Falling Actions

The principal decides to revoke the policy and make an "exception" after realizing that Martha is right.

Resolution

Martha is so excited to hear she will win the jacket after all and tells her grandfather the good news.

Answer Key (Possible Answers)

3-2-1

How do Marta's feelings change over the course of the story? Give at least three examples.

ANSWERS WILL VARY.

Insecure— "I despaired every time I looked in the mirror. Pencil thin, not a curve anywhere. I was called "beanpole" and "string bean," and I knew that's what I looked like. A flat chest, no hips, and a brain; that's what I had." Martha feels bad about her appearance.

Devastation and shock— "I went home very sad and cried into my pillow that night so Grandmother wouldn't hear me. It seemed a cruel coincidence that I had overheard that conversation." Martha feels surprised her teachers made the racial comments they did as well as the fact that she might not earn the jacket after all.

Nervous and nauseous— "I could feel my heart pounding loudly in my chest and see my blouse fluttering where my breasts should have been. Something bitter and vile¹⁶ tasting was coming up in my mouth; I was afraid I was going to be sick. I didn't need any sympathy speeches." When the principal spoke to her the second time, he stopped her from leaving the room. Martha was worried about what he would say next; she thought she might get in trouble.

Find two example of figurative language from the text to cite and explain.
Examples can be: simile, metaphors, personification, imagery, hyperbole, or idiom.

ANSWERS WILL VARY.

imagery: "A beautiful gold and green jacket (the school colors) was awarded to the class valedictorian, the student who had maintained the highest grades for eight years."

idiom: "In May, close to graduation, spring fever had struck as usual with a vengeance."

metaphor: "Coach Thompson was a real bear if someone wasn't dressed for P.E."

simile: "His face looked as happy and innocent as a baby's, but I knew better."

Pick one character from the story and discuss what lesson they learned.
In a minimum of three sentences, explain what was learned and how they learned it.

ANSWERS WILL VARY.

Martha learns to stand up for herself and trust her grandfather's advice because he is wise.

The principal learns that changing a simple rule is not harmless and he should treat all his students fairly.

Martha's grandfather learns that Martha is a strong, young woman who he is proud of.

Answer Key
“The Scholarship Jacket” Quiz

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What is the point of view of this story?

- a. First person** b. Second person c. Third person

2. Who does Martha live with?

- a. Her parents b. Her aunt **c. Her grandparents**

3. The letter jacket is given to the student who...

- a. Has perfect attendance
b. Has the best grades
c. Is the most athletic

4. How does the scholarship jacket tradition change?

- a. There are two students who are tied to win.
b. The Board decides everyone should get a jacket.
c. The Board implements a new policy which requires a fee.

5. What words best describe the end of this story?

- a. Justice and happiness** b. Compromise and disappointment c. Greed and deceit

6. What words best describe the narrator Martha?

- a. quiet and selfish
b. hardworking and intelligent
c. angry and disrespectful

Part 2: Open-Ended Questions

7. Why does Martha’s grandfather refuse to give into the new policy?

He thought if Martha had earned the jacket by getting the highest grades, she shouldn't have to pay for it.

8. Who does Mr. Boone want to award the jacket and why?

Mr. Boone wants Joann to win because her father owns the only store in town and is on the Board.

9. What final decision does the Principal make regarding who wins the jacket?

He tells Martha not to worry about the money, and that she rightfully won the jacket, so she does not have to pay.

10. What lesson does Martha's grandfather teach her?

He teaches her to stand up for herself even if it's hard, and that if the jacket is a reward then she shouldn't have to pay.

Part 3: Vocabulary Fill in the Blank

dismay

vile

eavesdrop

agile

resign

11. I had to leave the room because of the vile smell coming from the expired milk.

12. Julie will eavesdrop on her sister's conversation with her friends when she wants to find out her secrets.

13. To the children's dismay, there was not enough snow on the ground to cancel school.

14. The mayor was forced to resign after he was caught stealing money from the town.

15. To play tennis, one should be agile and able to move quickly around the court.