



Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates

By Jonah Winter

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On an island called Puerto Rico, there lived a little boy who wanted only to play baseball. Although he had no money, Roberto Clemente practiced and practiced until--eventually--he made it to the Major Leagues. America! As a right-fielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates, he fought tough opponents--and even tougher racism--but with his unreal catches and swift feet, he earned his nickname, "The Great One." He led the Pirates to two World Series, hit 3,000 hits, and was the first Latino to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. But it wasn't just baseball that made Clemente legendary--he was also a humanitarian dedicated to improving the lives of others.

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Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates By Jonah Winter Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2–4—This noteworthy picture-book biography celebrates the Hall of Famer's accomplishments, along with the character and courage that have made him a role model to so many fans. A boy describes how his father, uncle, and mother are all inspired by Clemente and what it is they admire: his record-breaking career, his rise from poverty to baseball stardom, his courage in the face of racism. Mami notes that he proved he was a good son and father by interrupting a post-World Series interview, conducted in English, to speak directly in Spanish to his family in Puerto Rico. The narrator observes that he will choose Clemente for "hero day" at school, since he knows the stats, facts, "and I can tell you *todo*, everything." Perdomo's joyful prose, a catchy mix of Spanish and English, captures the awe and warm affection fans feel toward the player: "Clemente! Clemente!/It's us, *tu gente!*/Clemente! Clemente!/Prince of the baseball *diamante!*" Borders and text fonts suggest the athlete's mythic status, while Collier's watercolor and collage illustrations teem with detail and vibrancy. One detail, an airplane, shows up repeatedly, presaging Clemente's tragic death while bringing aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. Collier uses layered images to suggest the man's athletic grace and prowess, and his artful compositions place his subject squarely in the center of things. Like Jonah Winter's *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (S & S, 2005), this winning tribute to a great humanitarian athlete will resonate with a wide audience.—*Marilyn Taniguchi, Beverly Hills Public Library, CA*

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From Booklist

Gr. 2-4, younger for reading aloud. Roberto Clemente played most of his major-league baseball career in the shadow of the slightly older Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, and Hank Aaron, emerging only in the early 1970s as the premier player in the game. Then tragedy struck. In 1972, Clemente's plane, carrying aid to earthquake victims in Central America, crashed off the shores of his native Puerto Rico. Winter tells the unabashedly inspirational story of how Clemente's passionate love of the game and unrivaled work ethic took him from poverty in Puerto Rico (his first baseball glove was made from a coffee-bean sack) to World Series triumph with the Pittsburgh Pirates and, later, after his death, to near-mythic status as a role model for young Latino ballplayers. Soaked in pastoral greens and browns, Colon's evocatively grainy, soft-focus illustrations, rendered with a mix of watercolors, colored pencils, and litho pencils, capture perfectly the worlds in which Clemente was most at home: the tropics and the baseball diamond. Baseball history brought vividly to life for a younger audience. *Bill Ott*

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Review

Growing up in Puerto Rico, Roberto Clemente dreamed of playing baseball. Too poor for regulation equipment, he hit soup cans with a tree branch. In spite of his obvious talent, throughout his career with the Pittsburgh Pirates, newspaper writers questioned his ability and used Latino stereotypes to denigrate him. The sheer brilliance of his play in 1971 and 1972 finally awakened the media to his greatness. Sadly, before he could bask in the adulation, he was killed in a plane crash while flying to aid victims of an earthquake. Winter employs straightforward, powerful language to capture the essence of the man. Each two lines of text are separated by a blank line, giving the appearance and cadence of poetry. Col-n enhances the text with a variety of techniques, including mixing black and white and color pages and repeating images from different perspectives. A well-constructed introduction to a compassionate, dignified, multi-talented sports hero.

(Picture book/biography. 6-10) (Kirkus Reviews)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Douglas Reece:

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