

One of baseball's finest players lends a helping hand to others.

## 4. Roberto Clemente

### Part I

- 1 One of the greatest baseball players of all time was Roberto Clemente. For 18 years, he was the star outfielder and most powerful batter of the Pittsburgh Pirates.
- 2 Roberto was born in 1934 in a small town in Puerto Rico. Of the seven children in the Clemente family, he was the youngest. None of them loved baseball as much as he did. As a boy, he had only one thing on his mind—baseball!
- 3 Hour after hour, he would throw a rubber ball against the wall of his house and then catch it. He would squeeze a hard rubber ball in his right hand to make his throwing arm strong. When he walked down the dusty streets of his hometown, he would hit a tin can with a broomstick. Roberto lived baseball.
- 4 Sometimes he was so busy playing baseball with his friends that he forgot to come home to eat. One day, this made his mother angry.
- 5 "Basta!" ("Enough!") she cried.
- 6 She grabbed his baseball bat. To Roberto's horror, she threw it into the oven to burn it up. He snatched it out just in time.
- 7 In later years, however, Roberto remembered his

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childhood as a happy one. He always spoke about his parents with pride and affection.

- 8 In high school, Roberto joined the track team. He learned to run fast and jump high. He also learned to throw the javelin, a long, pointed spear that flies through the air and sticks into the ground. Throwing the javelin helped make his right arm even stronger.
- 9 Although Roberto was shy in high school, he made one very good friend—his history teacher, Mrs. María Isabel Cáceres. He liked to visit her. At her home, he would listen to records of *danzas*, a popular form of music in Puerto Rico.
- 10 Mrs. Cáceres' husband was the coach of the high-school softball team. Roberto played outfield on this team. The coach could see that the young man was an unusually good baseball player. With the coach's help, Roberto joined a professional baseball team called the Santurce Crabbers.
- 11 The Santurce Crabbers was an important baseball team in Puerto Rico. During the winter, famous baseball stars such as Orlando Cepeda and Willie Mays played with the team. For three winters, Roberto played ball with the Santurce team. He served especially well as an outfielder, but he also became a strong batter with a high batting average.
- 12 A really good batter, one who can hit the ball three out of every 10 times at bat, is said to have a batting average of .300. During one winter with the Santurce team, Roberto batted .356!

### **Finding Details**

1. Give the number of the paragraph that tells:
  - a. when and where Roberto was born
  - b. that he made a good friend in high school