



0. Roberto is Discovered - Story Preface

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**3. Roberto is Discovered**

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At the age of 17, Roberto was asked to play on an all-star softball team in Puerto Rico. He was the youngest player on the team. It was here he was seen by a scout for the Brooklyn Dodger who many years later stated:

**“He was the greatest natural athlete I had ever seen”**

Roberto hit home runs one after another, he could throw from deep center field to the catcher’s mitt, his 60-yard dash time was 6.4 seconds (just a mere .3 seconds off the world’s record). Roberto wanted to pay baseball now—all the time. No one was successful at telling Roberto what to do. If he had been less talented, many coaches would have given up—but Roberto was a hard worker and when he did make a mistake he never repeated it.

When Roberto was 19, the Dodgers offered Roberto a contract with their Triple-A club in Montreal, Canada. They offered him \$5000 per year, and a \$10,000 signing bonus. Roberto had never seen that much money in his life. He agreed and the deal was settled with a handshake. Within days, he received more offers from other clubs—the Milwaukee Braves offered him \$28,000 to sign with them. Roberto asked his mother what he should do.

His mother asked him one question: “Did you give this Dodger man your word?” Roberto said he had. He honored his verbal agreement to the Dodgers.

Roberto’s mother reminded him of three great lessons:

- The dignity of hard, honest work
- The value of respecting your accomplishments
- The importance of being true to your word—for it is who you are

Roberto went to Montreal, but was not happy there. It was cold and he did not speak French. The Dodgers wanted to keep his skills under wraps until they needed him for the major league team. They knew if other teams knew his abilities, they could draft him away from the Dodgers. So they didn’t give him much playing time—thinking if he did not play, other teams wouldn’t see how good he was.

But the Pittsburgh Pirates knew he was good and drafted him. Roberto was thrilled to go to a team where he could actually play baseball.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Roberto-is-Discovered-Roberto-Clemente-A-Hero-Beyond-the-Baseball-Diamond>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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## Baseball League in Puerto Rico

Zimbio, Nelson Gigueroa

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