



Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero

David Maraniss

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Pulitzer Prize winner David Maraniss's brilliant rendering of the life of one of baseball's most iconic figures captures both myth and man in daunting sweep and meticulous detail.

On New Year's Eve 1972, beloved Pittsburgh Pirate Roberto Clemente died a hero's death, killed in a plane crash while attempting to deliver food and medical supplies to Nicaragua after a devastating earthquake. His career ended with four batting titles, two World Series championships, and three thousand hits; he and the immortal Lou Gehrig are the only players in history to have the five-year waiting period waived so they could be enshrined in the Hall of Fame immediately after their deaths.

But Clemente was also that rare athlete who rose above sports to become a symbol of larger themes. Born at a time when there were no players of color in American baseball, Clemente went on to become the greatest Latino player in the major leagues. With determination, grace, and dignity, he paved the way and set the highest standard for his peers both on and off the field: his famous motto was "If you have a chance to help others and fail to do so, you are wasting your time on this earth." The end of the book reveals the corruption and negligence that led Clemente toward his untimely death as an uninspected, overloaded plane plunged into the sea.

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