

# **Ten Contemporary Hispanic American One-Act Dramas**

**By Mary Satchell**

Copyright © MCMXCI  
Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**All performances before an audience are subject to royalty. The first performance royalty fee for one or all of the plays in this volume is \$20.00. Repeat performances are \$10.00 each. Royalty fees are due one week prior to production, at which time performance rights are granted. On all programs and advertising this notice must appear: "Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa."**

This dramatic work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second hand from a third party. All rights including, but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, broadcast, recitation, lecturing, tabloid, publication, and reading are reserved.

**COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.** One copy for each speaking role must be purchased for production purposes. Single copies of scripts are sold for personal reading or production consideration only.

***PUBLISHED BY***

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC  
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406  
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

## Introduction

The idea for these volumes of one-act scripts came from my many years of experience as a high school English teacher of minority students and Hispanic students taking English as a second language. While teaching these students, I discovered there were few resources in drama which I felt could provide them with role-playing motivational experiences about people and events of particular interest to them. The plays included here were written to be a solution to my instructional needs to fill a void. These short dramas are based on the lives of African and Hispanic Americans who have made significant contributions to this nation, usually in spite of tremendous odds. In creating these plays, I have kept in mind that young people enjoy reading plays aloud, and the appreciation is increased if the content is meaningful to them. Enjoyment of the dramatic experience is the goal here.

I do not believe African American or Hispanic American young people have to be cast rigidly in roles of their actual ethnic heritage in these plays. I found in teaching drama that having students of one ethnic group read or perform roles from other groups adds a new dimension (sometimes humorous, but always giving a new facet). Drama transcends time, place, and condition to speak directly to the heart. In other words, the true essence of art and theatre rises above nationality, religion, politics and ethnicity, and provides an insight into the true character of people. The plays in these volumes are based on historical research, and the primary objective of each script is to enlighten, motivate, encourage, and inspire young people.

Mary Satchell

## **Jaime Escalante**

(December 31, 1930 to present)

Jaime was born in La Paz, Bolivia, the second of five children. His parents, Zenobio and Sara Escalante, were schoolteachers. Jaime had a great interest in math and physics, and he attended college to become a teacher. He graduated with a teaching degree in 1954, and married Fabiola Tapia that same year. He became a high school math and physics teacher, and taught for fourteen years in Bolivia.

His wife had relatives living in California, and she felt that Jaime's career opportunities would be better in the U.S. There was also political and economic unrest in Bolivia at the time. In 1964, Jaime moved to California in order to begin a new life. His family joined him a short time later. Jaime could not teach in the U.S. until he had a degree from an American college. He took any jobs he could find, working as a busboy, cook, and electronics technician while attending college at night. Jaime had come to the U.S. knowing only a few words of English.

Nearly ten years later, Jaime earned a teaching degree, and began teaching math at Garfield High School, located in a Hispanic neighborhood in Los Angeles. His students had little interest in math and low expectations for themselves, but Jaime's dedicated teaching turned his students into high achievers who passed the Advanced Placement calculus exam. In 1988, this true story was made into a movie, *Stand and Deliver*.

## **Characters**

JAIME ESCALANTE,	math teacher
MR. POLSKY,	coffee shop owner
TAYLOR,	busboy
OSCAR,	
JOSE,	
MARIA,	
DANIEL,	
JUANITA,	
ALVAREZ,	
CASTELLANO,	students at Garfield High School

## SCENE 1

**TIME:** Present.

**SETTING:** Sacramento, CA. A desk with a chair is set on the apron of the stage. Several books and a photograph are on the desk.

*BEFORE CURTAIN: JAIME ESCALANTE enters, stands in front of the Curtain, and begins to tell his story to the audience.*

ESCALANTE: My name is Jaime Escalante. I was born in La Paz, Bolivia on December 31, 1930. I'm proud to say that I'm a third-generation teacher. My mother and father were teachers in Bolivia, and so was my grandfather. People said that I was an excellent teacher. I taught mathematics courses in several schools for fourteen years in my native country, and I received many awards during my teaching career. In 1954, I married Fabiola Tapia, and we began to raise a family. (He walks to the desk and picks up the photograph to study it.) Life was good for me and my family, but the political unrest in Bolivia began to cause many hardships for the people. Things steadily got worse, and the day came when I had to make an important decision about the future. (He puts down the photograph and speaks again.) In 1963, I decided to come to America to start a new life. My wife Fabiola and I sold our house and everything we owned. I bought a plane ticket to Los Angeles, California, where my in-laws were living. Fabiola and our son, Jaimito, stayed in Bolivia to wait until I could find a job in our new homeland. (He pauses to think of the past.) I knew it was going to be hard, but I had no idea just how hard things would really be. (ESCALANTE exits before the Curtain opens.)

**TIME:** 1964.

**SETTING:** Van de Kamp's Coffee Shop in Los Angeles, California. A small table with two chairs is located downstage. A napkin holder with salt and pepper shakers is on the table.

*AT RISE: ESCALANTE stands beside the table. MR. POLSKY enters carrying a broom and apron.*

MR. POLSKY: Okay, Jaime. You want a job in my coffee shop?  
Well, this is the only opening I have right now. I need a janitor to keep the place clean.

ESCALANTE (He takes the apron and puts it on.): Thanks, Mr. Polsky. (He struggles with his English.) Jobs are hard to find.

MR. POLSKY: It's too bad a fellow like you, who's been a physics teacher, would have to start his life all over again—at the bottom.

ESCALANTE (He takes the broom.): A man has to do what he must do.

MR. POLSKY (He scratches his head and smiles.): I gotta say I admire your attitude. A lot of guys with professional experience wouldn't take a janitor's job in a little cafe.

ESCALANTE (He speaks firmly, looking MR. POLSKY in the eye.): A man has to do what he must do. (He begins to sweep the floor.)

MR. POLSKY: You do a good job for me, Jaime, and I'll give you a promotion—maybe let you wash dishes for better pay. (He exits and TAYLOR, the busboy, enters with a tray, which he sets on the table.)

TAYLOR: So the old man gave you a job, Jaime. That's good. I know you got a wife and kid in Bolivia. Guess you miss them a lot. It's too bad you can't speak much English. (TAYLOR points to the broom.) Good job, Jaime?

ESCALANTE (He nods as he sweeps.): Yes.

TAYLOR (He laughs and sits at the table.): And I bet you'll save every penny so you can bring your family here. (He leans back proudly in the chair.) Take my advice, and stick with this place. Old man Polsky does pretty good business, and you can work up to become a busboy like me. I've been a busboy for fifteen years. (ESCALANTE stops sweeping and stares at TAYLOR.) Yeah, that's right, Jaime. I started out sweeping floors, and now I'm making twice as much money as a busboy. (MR. POLSKY enters, and TAYLOR rises quickly.)

MR. POLSKY: The lunch crowd will be here any minute, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Okay, boss. (He picks up the tray and speaks to ESCALANTE as he exits.) Don't forget what I said, Jaime. Play your cards right, and you'll end up a busboy like me. (He exits behind MR. POLSKY.)

ESCALANTE (He stops sweeping and frowns deeply.): *I will be a teacher!* (He starts sweeping the floor again.)

**End SCENE 1**

## **SCENE 2**

**TIME:** A few months later.

**SETTING:** The admissions office at Pasadena City College. The ADMISSIONS OFFICER's desk and chair are center stage. A table with stacks of pamphlets, test booklets, answer sheets, and pencils is beside the desk. Large clock is on the wall. A sign on the wall above the desk in bold letters reads: "PASADENA CITY COLLEGE—ADMISSIONS OFFICE."

*AT RISE: OFFICER sits and reads a book at the desk. JAIME and TAPIA, his brother-in-law, enter and walk to the desk. The OFFICER looks up from his book.*

OFFICER (He speaks brusquely.): What can I do for you?

TAPIA (He points to JAIME as he speaks.): This is my brother-in-law, Jaime Escalante. He wants to become a student in your college. Do you have night classes?

OFFICER: Yes. We have day and night classes.

TAPIA: How can Jaime become a student in your college?

OFFICER: Well, he has to take a test in a major area of study. (He picks up a pamphlet.) The test can be in English, math, history, or science. If the applicant passes the test, he will be admitted as a student.

TAPIA (He turns to JAIME and gives him the pamphlet.): Do you want to take the math test now? (ESCALANTE frowns as if he does not understand.) Math test today? (TAPIA points to test booklets on the table and JAIME nods eagerly.)

OFFICER (He speaks to TAPIA.) Can't he talk?

TAPIA: Sure, Jaime can talk. He just doesn't speak much English. And he will not speak anything but English so he can learn English faster.

OFFICER (He sounds very doubtful, shaking his head.): It'll probably be a waste of time for him to take any of these tests. If he can't read English, there's no chance he can pass.

TAPIA (He glances at the table and picks up a booklet.): Jaime can ace anybody's math test. I'd stake my life on it.

OFFICER: This I've got to see. (He picks up a test booklet and answer sheet, and gives them to JAIME.) Tell him to sit at that table. (He points, and JAIME goes to sit at the table.)

TAPIA: I'd like to wait for him, if that's okay with you.

OFFICER: This is a two-hour test. You'll be waiting for a long time.

TAPIA (He speaks with confidence.): Don't worry. We won't be here *that* long.

OFFICER (He shrugs and points to the chair near his desk.): Sit there. You won't be able to talk to your brother-in-law while he's taking the test. (TAPIA sits and lights fade to blackout. Spotlight appears on large clock. Hands of the clock begin to race and loud ticking is heard. Moments later, the lights come up again and JAIME rises, takes test booklet and answer sheet to the OFFICER.)

JAIME: Okay.

OFFICER (He looks at JAIME in surprise and disbelief.): You can't be finished already! That's a two-hour test, and you've only been working for half an hour. (TAPIA rises and moves to the desk.)

TAPIA: If Jaime says he's finished, you can believe him.

OFFICER: It's one thing to finish the test, but it's quite another to pass it. (He takes the answer sheet from the desk drawer and begins to check JAIME's answers. JAIME and TAPIA stand at the desk to watch.)

TAPIA (He speaks after a short while.): How's he doing?

OFFICER (He looks up in amazement.): I don't believe it! All of the answers are correct, so far. (He quickly corrects the rest of the test and rises.) Good heavens, he got all the answers right! I've never seen this happen before in all the years I've worked in admissions.

TAPIA (He slaps JAIME on the back and smiles.): Excellent, Jaime. Excellent! (JAIME smiles with pride.)

OFFICER: You're right. He's done an excellent job. You won't have any trouble getting into this college—not after making this high score. You blew this math test out of the water! (He shakes JAIME's hand.)

TAPIA (He puts his hand on JAIME's shoulder.): I guess you're on your way to getting that teaching certificate, Jaime, but you've got a long way to go.

OFFICER (He looks at JAIME's test again and speaks with sincere admiration.): This guy will go wherever he wants to go. And I'll stake my life on *that*. (He and TAPIA laugh heartily as JAIME puts on his cap. Curtain)

**End SCENE 2**

### **SCENE 3**

**TIME:** The present.

**SETTING:** Teacher's desk with roll book, writing chalk, and yardstick is opposite rows of students' desks. A stack of math textbooks is on the floor near desk. Chalkboard with basic math problems is upstage; rolled-up projection screen hangs above chalkboard. Exit is right.

*BEFORE CURTAIN: ESCALANTE enters as narrator and speaks to the audience.*

ESCALANTE: I went to work for the Burroughs Corporation in 1966. At Burroughs, we worked with electronics or computer parts. My heart really wasn't in this job; I wanted to be a teacher. I had earned a two-year degree at Pasadena City College, but I needed a four-year degree to start teaching in the United States. I had to study part-time for ten years while holding down fulltime jobs, in order to earn a college degree, and even after I got my degree, I couldn't find a teaching job. (Curtain opens on an empty classroom; ESCALANTE continues talking to the audience.) In 1974, I became a teacher at Garfield High. (ESCALANTE turns toward the classroom. STUDENTS enter noisily; they yell at each other, throw paper, sit and put their feet on tops of the desks. ESCALANTE walks upstage into the classroom. The

STUDENTS ignore him and continue talking. ESCALANTE moves to the screen mounted on the wall and unrolls it all the way. He lets the screen snap loudly in place. The STUDENTS are startled by the noise; they stare at the new TEACHER.)

OSCAR (He speaks rudely to ESCALANTE.): Who're you?

ESCALANTE: My name is Escalante. I'm the math teacher. (He writes his name on the chalkboard.)

OSCAR (He pretends to be surprised.): Math teacher? You should go back where you came from. We don't want any math here. (Other STUDENTS laugh at the joke.)

JOSE (He points to ESCALANTE.): The guy's a loser; it shows all over him. He's just like all the rest. (Other STUDENTS nod and agree loudly. They turn to each other and talk as if ESCALANTE is not worth their time.)

ESCALANTE (He picks up the roll book from his desk, and shouts.): Okay, it's time for class to begin! Everybody, take your seats!

JOSE (He is sitting on top of a desk): This is where I always sit. (A few STUDENTS laugh.)

ESCALANTE (He points his yardstick to a chair.): If you're going to stay in my class, put your seat *there*. (OSCAR hesitates, but obeys. The door opens and MARIA saunters into the room. She moves toward a seat, but ESCALANTE stops her.) Do you have an excuse for being late?

MARIA (She speaks flippantly.): Excuse? What's that?

ESCALANTE: School rules require you to bring a tardy slip from the office. (He shakes his head.) I can't let you stay in class without a slip.

MARIA (She speaks in disbelief.): You must be kidding.

ESCALANTE: No, I'm serious. You can't stay here without that tardy slip. (MARIA tosses her head and goes out the door.)

DANIEL: Hey, you can't put anybody out for being late.

ESCALANTE: I just did. (He returns to his desk.) It's time for the roll call.

JUANITA: You can't put a student out of class like that. It's breaking the law!

OSCAR: Yeah. You ought to be reported. (Other students agree loudly. Ad lib: "We'll get him for this."; "Wait till they hear about this.")

ESCALANTE: You can report me as soon as you get home today. I'll be calling your parents tonight to introduce myself, and get acquainted.

OSCAR: Hey, man! I don't want you to call my house. Teachers are bad news!

ESCALANTE: My first call can be good news if you cooperate. It's the second call you should be worried about. (He glances around the class.) Now, let's get down to business. (He calls the first name in his roll book.) Alvarez. Where are you? (ALVAREZ raises his hand.) Please get one of those books from the stack on the floor and bring it here.

DANIEL (He speaks in protest.): You're gonna give us textbooks on the first day of school?

ESCALANTE: You're right. I shouldn't give these books to high school kids like you. Basic math is too easy, but I'm afraid they're all we've got. (ALVAREZ brings a book to ESCALANTE.)

ALVAREZ: Since when is math easy?

ESCALANTE: Basic math is for babies. (He turns to the class.) When I get through with you guys, you'll be learning *real* math: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus. (STUDENTS laugh.)

JUANITA: You're out of your head.

ESCALANTE (He speaks firmly with confidence.): Listen to me.

Before some of you graduate from Garfield High, I'll be teaching higher math like trig and calculus. And my students will be top students in math!

ALVAREZ: Are you going to wave a wand or something like magic?

ESCALANTE: I'm going to teach you to use your heads and like it. (He points to the chalkboard.) Copy these math problems while I pass out books. (STUDENTS open their notebooks and begin to write. ESCALANTE writes a book number and gives the book to ALVAREZ, who sits. ESCALANTE calls the next STUDENT, who rises.) Castellano. (He looks up as if

surprised.) Hey, Castellano, you've got the head of a mathematician.

JOSE: Aw, he has to use his fingers to add two and two. (Others laugh.)

ESCALANTE: Don't listen to them, Castellano. These guys don't know a math wizard when they see one. They may be laughing now, but you stick with me.

CASTELLANO: I'm gonna have the last laugh. (He flexes his muscles in front of the class, smiles at ESCALANTE, and gets a book.)

ESCALANTE: You can bet your life on it. We're going to have the last laugh! (Curtain closes and ESCALANTE enters BEFORE CURTAIN as narrator.) I *did* have the last laugh. In 1978—four years after I started teaching at Garfield—I taught my first Advanced Placement calculus course. In 1982, eighteen of my students passed the national A. P. calculus exam, and fourteen were accused of cheating. People didn't believe that Hispanic kids from an inner-city school could do such a thing. Twelve students took the exam again, and all of them passed—*again*. The movie *Stand and Deliver*, first shown in 1988, was based on this experience. *Stand and Deliver* portrayed the achievements of my students. They always had the ability to excel, but, first, they had to *believe* in themselves. (He pauses and smiles at the audience.) Yes, I'm still teaching math to high school students. Maybe some of you will follow in my footsteps. I hope so. (He puts his hands in his pockets and exits.)

**END**

## EVELYN CISNEROS

(November 18, 1958 to present)

Evelyn was born in Long Beach, California. She was a shy little girl, and her mother enrolled her in a dance class when she was very young. Evelyn's mother hoped that dancing might help Evelyn to overcome her shyness. Mrs. Cisneros' decision was the best thing that could have happened to Evelyn. She changed from a shy girl with low self-esteem to a self-confident and determined achiever. Evelyn took her dancing lessons very seriously, studying tap, jazz, and flamenco as well as ballet.

Evelyn was also a good athlete. In junior high school, she held the long distance track record for her school district. When she was forced to decide between school activities and dancing, her commitment to dancing won out. Evelyn's decision brought her many awards, both national and international. She has danced for many years as prima ballerina with the San Francisco Ballet Company. Evelyn has danced on live television, at the White House, and in Mexico, Spain, and Cuba. One of her most important activities, in addition to dancing, is speaking to groups of young people in order to inspire them to do what she did—*follow their dreams*.

### Characters

EVELYN CISNEROS,	a shy girl whose determination helps her to become a famous ballerina
MRS. CISNEROS,	her mother
NARRATOR	
SALLY,	
ALICE,	
MARJORY,	girls at school
VICKY,	
PAM,	track team members
COACH	
TEACHER,	ballet instructor
LUCY,	friend at ballet school

**TIME:** Present.

*BEFORE CURTAIN: A ballerina dances in spotlight briefly.*

*NARRATOR enters and watches the ballerina for a few moments.*

*The ballerina runs offstage and the spotlight disappears. The*

*NARRATOR faces the audience to speak.*

NARRATOR: Becoming a prima ballerina isn't easy. It requires a lot of dedication and hard work. Our play is about a young girl named Evelyn Cisneros, who began her life as a shy little girl with no confidence in herself. But Evelyn discovered something wonderful which helped her to gain the confidence she needed. Evelyn learned to dance. She became a ballerina, and her life was never again the same. (NARRATOR exits.)

## **SCENE 1**

**TIME:** Mid-1960's.

**SETTING:** An elementary school in Huntington Beach, California.

A row of lockers is up center.

*AT RISE: EVELYN stands at her locker, getting ready for morning classes to begin. SALLY and ALICE enter, carrying books, and pause when they see EVELYN.*

SALLY (She speaks behind her hand so EVELYN can't hear.):

Look, Alice. There's Evelyn standing all by herself again.

ALICE: She's so shy and timid, Sally. I wonder why Evelyn never says a word in class.

SALLY: Maybe it's because she looks so different from everybody else in school. She's got such dark skin and hair.

ALICE: I sure wouldn't want to look different from all of my classmates. I think I'd feel very lonely, too.

SALLY: Come on, Alice. Let's make friends with Evelyn. Then, she won't have to be alone anymore. (They walk over to EVELYN as she is closing her locker.)

ALICE & SALLY (They speak cheerfully together.): Hi, Evelyn.

EVELYN (She turns and smiles.): Hello.

ALICE: Would you like to walk to class with us?

SALLY: You always get to school earlier than we do.

EVELYN (She speaks shyly.): My father brings me to school before he goes to work everyday.

ALICE: You must get up very early, Evelyn. We're in the same class, but we've never had a chance to talk with you.

SALLY: You're always so quiet. Where are you from, Evelyn?

ALICE: Were you born in California?

EVELYN: Yes. I'm from Long Beach, but my family moved to Huntington Beach several years ago.

ALICE: Your hair's very pretty, Evelyn. It makes you look different from— (SALLY pushes her elbow against ALICE's arm, and ALICE stops talking.)

EVELYN: Everyone tells me how different I look from the rest of the students.

SALLY: Are your parents from California?

EVELYN: They're from Mexico. (There is a brief silence.)

MARJORY enters, also carrying schoolbooks.)

ALICE: Hi, Marjory!

MARJORY: Hi, Sally. Hello, Alice.

SALLY: That's a pretty dress you're wearing, Marjory.

MARJORY: It's a birthday present from my mom.

SALLY: When's your birthday?

MARJORY: Next Saturday. I'm having a birthday party at my house on Saturday afternoon, and you're both invited.

ALICE (She turns to EVELYN.): Marjory, this is Evelyn. She's in our class.

EVELYN (She gives MARJORY a friendly smile.): Hello, Marjory.

MARJORY (She speaks brusquely, then turns away from EVELYN.): Hi. Look, I've got to hurry to meet the gang in the cafeteria. I want to tell them about my party. Why don't you both come with me?

SALLY: Maybe Evelyn might like to come with us, Marjory.

MARJORY (She speaks without looking at EVELYN.): It's getting late. The school bell will be ringing in ten minutes. Come on, Sally. You and Alice should go with me to the cafeteria. I need your help to plan the refreshments for my party.

ALICE: We'd love to go with you, but we were talking to Evelyn.

MARJORY (She pouts.): I thought you two were my friends. Can't I count on my friends to help me when I need them? (ALICE and SALLY are at a loss about what to do.)

EVELYN: That's all right. Please don't stay because of me. We can talk later. (SALLY and ALICE seem relieved.)

SALLY: Okay. We'll see you later, Evelyn. (She and ALICE rush to exit behind MARJORY, who speaks in a loud voice just before the three girls disappear.)

MARJORY: I can't believe you'd try to be friends with her. Everybody says she looks so different—(MARJORY's voice trails off. EVELYN, who has heard MARJORY's remarks, looks away, and she slowly exits in the opposite direction.)

## End SCENE 1

## SCENE 2

**TIME:** A short while later.

**SETTING:** Kitchen in EVELYN's home in Huntington Beach. A kitchen table with four chairs is at center stage. Pots, pans, and other cooking utensils are on the table. EVELYN's mother, wearing an apron, brings a bowl to the table as she prepares to cook dinner. EVELYN enters carrying her school books. MRS. CISNEROS looks worried when she sees that EVELYN has been crying.

MRS. CISNEROS: Evelyn, what's the matter? Why are you crying?

EVELYN (She rushes into her mother's arms.): Mama, why am I different from everybody else at school?

MRS. CISNEROS (She looks puzzled as EVELYN clings to her and sobs.): Different? I don't understand. (MRS. CISNEROS gently makes EVELYN look at her.) What are you talking about?

EVELYN (She wipes the tears from her face.): The other girls said that I look different from everybody else because my skin, eyes, and hair are dark. Nobody else looks like me.

MRS. CISNEROS: There's nothing wrong with the way you look, Evelyn. Your father and I are Mexican Americans, and we're very proud of our heritage. You should be proud, too.

EVELYN (She puts her school books in a chair.): My teacher called me to her desk today, and asked me why I never raise my hand or say anything in class.

MRS. CISNEROS: What did you tell her?

EVELYN: I said that I'm afraid to raise my hand. I always know the answers to her questions, but I still won't say anything. (EVELYN sits at the table.) I'm always afraid whenever the other children look at me.

MRS. CISNEROS (She speaks thoughtfully to herself.): There must be some way to help you get over your shyness. (She picks up a large fork and spoon, and tosses salad in the bowl while she thinks. EVELYN watches her mother until she finishes tossing the salad.) Evelyn, perhaps dancing lessons might help to build your confidence.

EVELYN (Her face shows her surprise.): Dancing lessons? (EVELYN's face becomes doubtful at once.) Mama, I don't think I'd like dancing in front of other people. Everybody would look at me, and they'd laugh whenever I made a mistake.

MRS. CISNEROS (She speaks firmly.): Evelyn, you have a natural grace and beauty, but you won't be able to appreciate your gifts until you learn to use them. (EVELYN is still unsure, and her face begins to show fear.)

EVELYN (A frown spreads over her brow.): No, Mama. I don't want to take—(But MRS. CISNEROS does not hear. She has already left the table, and is quickly walking toward the door.)

MRS. CISNEROS: I'm going to call a few dancing schools right away. It certainly won't hurt to enroll in some dancing classes just to see what they're like. You may be very pleasantly surprised.

EVELYN (She calls after her mother.): But, Mama, I—please... (MRS. CISNEROS has already disappeared out the door. EVELYN, looking doubtful and afraid, turns back to the table and sits.) Mama's idea may not be such a good one. (She sighs.) I don't know how this is going to turn out, but I'll do my best to make Mama proud of me. (Curtain)

**End SCENE 2**

### SCENE 3

**TIME:** 1972.

**SETTING:** Outside EVELYN's junior high school gymnasium. EVELYN, her track COACH, and other members of the GIRLS' track team are standing in the parking lot in front of the gym. The GIRLS have just won first place in a district track meet. Everyone is laughing, hugging each other, and making a lot of noise.

VICKY (She shouts above the noise.): I'm so happy! This is the greatest day of my life!

PAM: Our team is Number One! Can you believe it?

COACH: / can believe it. You girls have worked hard and deserve to be called champs. In all my years of coaching, you kids are the best! (COACH puts a hand on EVELYN's shoulder.) And we're especially proud of Evelyn for setting a long distance track record for our school district. (COACH holds EVELYN's hand high in the air.) Let's hear it for Evelyn, team! (The GIRLS clap and cheer as EVELYN's face beams happily.)

EVELYN: It's easy to be a winner on a team like ours. Coach is right. We're the best team in the state! (The TEAM applauds louder than before; a horn blares offstage, and the GIRLS begin gathering up their gear.)

COACH: Okay, it's time to call it a day. The bus is here to take you kids home.

EVELYN: My parents are coming to pick me up because I have a dance class this evening. (Other GIRLS exit to get on the bus. They say goodbye to EVELYN and COACH as they are leaving.)

COACH: Evelyn, your parents will be very proud of you when they see your first place medal. We'll have to schedule more time for track practice.

EVELYN: Coach, my schedule is already full with school, sports, and dance classes.

COACH: I know, Evelyn. But it's not too soon to begin thinking about the future. You have the talent to be a star runner.

EVELYN: I enjoy running and competing in sports, but I also love to dance.

COACH: Both sports and dance require a great deal of dedication and practice, Evelyn. You're going to have to decide which one you'll choose as a career.

EVELYN (She speaks quietly.): I knew I'd have to make a decision—sometime, but I didn't want it to be this soon. The track team is such fun, Coach. I'd miss being with the girls everyday.

COACH: This is a big decision for a fourteen-year-old to make, Evelyn. Maybe you need time to think about it. (EVELYN is silent for a few moments.)

EVELYN: I already know which choice to make. (She pauses.) I can't live without dancing, Coach. I want to dance for the rest of my life.

COACH: Are you sure? (EVELYN nods.) Well, I wish you the best even though I think you should have chosen track instead of dancing. (COACH puts a hand on EVELYN's shoulder.) You've made your choice, Evelyn. Now give it all you've got! (EVELYN looks up at COACH, nods her head, and smiles. Curtain)

### End SCENE 3

**TIME:** A year later.

**SETTING:** A series of spotlight scenes at the New York School of American Ballet and at EVELYN's home in California.

*AT RISE: In the first spotlight, EVELYN talks to her TEACHER at the New York School of American Ballet. EVELYN's afternoon class has just ended, and EVELYN walks slowly toward the TEACHER, who turns when the girl comes near.*

EVELYN: Excuse me. May I speak with you for a moment?

TEACHER: Of course, Evelyn.

EVELYN (She hesitates before speaking.): When I first enrolled in ballet school this summer, I was placed in a very slow class. (She pauses.) I've worked hard all summer to improve my dance.

TEACHER: Yes, Evelyn. You have shown a great deal of improvement since you came here to New York.

EVELYN: Is there any chance that I may be promoted to a higher class?

TEACHER (She shakes her head.): No, Evelyn. I don't believe you're ready for a higher level class yet. Perhaps after a few more years of studying—(She shrugs.) Who knows? I'm sorry, Evelyn. (The TEACHER exits from the spotlight, and EVELYN bows her head in disappointment. Blackout. Spotlight appears again; EVELYN is packing her suitcase to return home to California. LUCY, who is also a ballet student, enters spotlight, and EVELYN looks up sadly.)

LUCY (Her voice is full of worry.): Evelyn, what's the matter?

EVELYN: I had a talk with my teacher. She said that I'm not ready to be promoted to a higher level class. I'm very disappointed because I've worked so hard this summer.

LUCY: I think you're one of the best dancers in this school, Evelyn. All of the other students would give anything to be able to perform leaps and turns as easily as you do.

EVELYN: But my teacher says—

LUCY (She interrupts EVELYN quickly.): It doesn't matter what your teacher says.

EVELYN: But it *does* matter because my teacher should be the best judge of my dancing skills. (EVELYN throws up her hands.) Oh, I don't know! Right now, I'm not even sure that ballet is the right career for me.

LUCY: Evelyn, you can't mean that.

EVELYN: But I *do* mean it. (She slams the suitcase shut.) I'm ready to quit! (Blackout. Spotlight appears again; EVELYN is at home in California again. She talks with her mother about her experiences in New York.)

EVELYN (She is near tears as she speaks.): I worked hard all summer, but I couldn't get out of the lower level class. (Tears roll down EVELYN's cheeks.) Mama, I don't think I want to be a ballet dancer anymore.

MRS. CISNEROS: Oh, Evelyn, you can't give up now. You've worked too hard to get this far.

EVELYN: What can I do?

MRS. CISNEROS: Why don't you call the San Francisco Ballet School? They offered you a full scholarship to study with them for the summer. That proves you have talent.

EVELYN: The San Francisco Ballet School may not be interested in me anymore. If I call them, they may turn me down.

MRS. CISNEROS: You'll never know if you don't try, Evelyn.

EVELYN: All right, Mama. I'll give them a call right away. (MRS. CISNEROS exits from spotlight and EVELYN picks up telephone and dials numbers. The NARRATOR enters another spotlight to speak to audience as EVELYN talks into the telephone in pantomime.)

NARRATOR (NARRATOR faces the audience.): Evelyn's mother is right. We won't know what we can do if we don't try. (The NARRATOR looks at EVELYN, who is still on the phone, before turning back to the audience.) The director of the San Francisco Ballet School was happy to hear from Evelyn. She was invited to San Francisco to study during the last week of their summer school. (NARRATOR exits and MRS. CISNEROS enters spotlight with EVELYN again. EVELYN puts down the telephone receiver and turns excitedly to her mother.)

EVELYN: Mama, you were right! The director was glad to hear from me. They want me to come to San Francisco, and study for the rest of the summer!

MRS. CISNEROS (She clasps her hands in joy.): Evelyn, that's wonderful news!

EVELYN: I have to pack right away!

MRS. CISNEROS: I'll help you, Evelyn. (She puts her arm around her daughter's shoulders.)

EVELYN (She starts to leave, then turns back quickly.): Oh, I almost forgot. The director also invited me to come back next summer to study at the ballet school.

MRS. CISNEROS: Don't you see, Evelyn? The people in San Francisco believe in you. That certainly proves you have talent. You must never stop believing in yourself.

EVELYN: I'll never let that happen again, Mama. From now on, I'll *always* believe in myself. (They exit. The NARRATOR enters and stage lights come up.)

NARRATOR: Evelyn kept her promise and went after her dreams of becoming a ballerina. After years of hard work, she became prima ballerina of the San Francisco Ballet. (The NARRATOR holds up one finger.) That means she became the Number One dancer with that ballet company. Evelyn has received many honors and awards for her achievements as a world-class artist. She is truly one of the outstanding Hispanic Americans who have made great contributions to our country and to the world. (NARRATOR exits. Curtain)

**END**

## **ROBERTO CLEMENTE**

(August 18, 1934-December 31, 1972)

Roberto was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, the son of a poor sugarcane worker named Melchor Clemente. Roberto's favorite sport was baseball, but his father couldn't afford to buy one so Roberto made his own baseball from old burlap bags. Roberto's natural talent as an athlete made him the fastest runner in Carolina. When scouts came to his hometown in 1954 looking for new baseball talent, Roberto signed a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Because Roberto was a black man, he experienced much discrimination when he arrived in the U.S. Roberto was determined to work hard and be an excellent professional baseball player, no matter what problems he had to face.

Later, the Pittsburgh Pirates asked Roberto to become a player on their team. In 1960, Roberto helped the Pirates win the World Series. He went on to win four national batting championships. Roberto and Vera Zabala were married in 1964, and became the parents of three sons. At age thirty-seven, after fifteen years of Major League baseball, Roberto was named the World Series' Most Valuable Player.

In 1972, when news of an earthquake which killed thousands of people in Nicaragua reached Puerto Rico, Roberto hurried to help the survivors. He decided to fly a planeload of relief aid to Nicaragua; however, the plane crashed into the ocean before reaching its destination. A few months after Roberto's tragic death, he was made a member of baseball's Hall of Fame.

### **Characters**

ROBERTO CLEMENTE,	boy who grows up to be a Major League baseball star
VERA,	his wife
JOSE,	
FRANCISCO,	
MANUEL,	playmates
MS. CASARES,	his teacher
BOB,	his friend and teammate

WAITRESS

OFFICIAL,

chairman of the National Baseball  
Hall of Fame

Extras, four or five members of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team; also, crowd of people for the waiting room scene.

## SCENE 1

**TIME:** Early 1940's.

**SETTING:** A small town named Carolina in Puerto Rico. A wooden box is beside a small bush or tree in a vacant lot.

*AT RISE: ROBERTO sits on the box as he wraps pieces of burlap string around an old golf ball. A roll of tape is in his lap. Several boys enter and laugh at ROBERTO.*

JOSE (He points to ROBERTO.): Look at Roberto! He's trying to make another baseball.

FRANCISCO (He slaps his knees and laughs very loud.): It's crazy to think you can make a baseball out of string and tape.

MANUEL (He takes the golf ball from ROBERTO and holds it up for all to see.): Roberto, *this* is a golf ball, and it would take a magician to turn it into a baseball. (The BOYS laugh again.)

ROBERTO (He rises and takes back the ball.): I may not be able to turn this golf ball into a baseball, but I will make it *act* like a baseball. (He stands beside the box and continues to wrap the golf ball.)

JOSE: You can't play baseball without a real ball. (He holds up the baseball he is carrying.)

ROBERTO: Jose, if I'm going to become a good baseball player, I have to practice everyday.

MANUEL: Why don't you ask your dad to buy you a baseball?

JOSE: Yes. Manuel's right. My dad bought me this baseball for a birthday gift.

ROBERTO: We don't have enough money for things like baseballs.

FRANCISCO (He raises his shoulders and spreads out both hands.): I don't have money for new baseballs either. But I don't waste my time trying to make them.

ROBERTO: I'm not wasting my time, Francisco. (He keeps on wrapping the ball with string and tape.)

JOSE: Leave Roberto alone. You know he's just going to keep trying, no matter what we say.

ROBERTO (He laughs.): You're right, Jose. I'm going to keep trying, no matter what *anybody* says. (The BOYS leave and ROBERTO sits on the box again. He continues to work patiently, making his baseball. Curtain)

## End SCENE 1

## SCENE 2

**TIME:** Ten years later. ROBERTO is in high school in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

**SETTING:** MS. CASARES' front porch. A few steps lead to the porch. A chair and small table with a basket of fresh flowers are on the porch.

*AT RISE: MS. CASARES, carrying a bag of groceries, walks up the steps to her porch. She turns in surprise as ROBERTO runs up the steps behind her.*

MS. CASARES (She puts the bag of groceries on the table beside the flowers.): Roberto, I didn't know that you were right behind me. (She smiles at ROBERTO.) I certainly didn't expect to see any of my students during summer vacation. Something very important must have brought you here.

ROBERTO (He is breathless from running fast.): My news is very important, Ms. Casares. I can hardly believe it!

MS. CASARES: What is your big news, Roberto?

ROBERTO: The owner of the Santurce baseball team wants me to play ball for him.

MS. CASARES (She is very surprised.): Isn't that a professional team?

ROBERTO (He speaks eagerly.): Yes. It's one of the top baseball teams in Puerto Rico.

MS. CASARES: Well, what was your answer?

ROBERTO: I'm not sure what I should do, Ms. Casares. You always give your students good advice, so I came here to talk with you before making a decision.

MS. CASARES: What do your parents think you should do, Roberto?

ROBERTO: They told me to make up my own mind, and they will support me—whether or not I play with the baseball team.

MS. CASARES: Your parents are very wise.

ROBERTO: Playing professional ball is a big opportunity, Ms. Casares. But I want to graduate from high school. I don't want baseball to keep me from doing well in school.

MS. CASARES (She sits in the chair.): You are right to think this over carefully.

ROBERTO (He speaks earnestly and calmly.): What should I do?

MS. CASARES: This is your chance, Roberto, but I cannot make your decision for you. You must follow your heart, and don't look back with regret. Always look forward to better opportunities ahead.

ROBERTO: Thank you for your advice, Ms. Casares. Now I know what I'm going to do. (He goes down the steps, turns back and waves goodbye; then he exits. MS. CASARES stands up, waves back to ROBERTO, and watches until he has gone. Curtain)

## End SCENE 2

### SCENE 3

**TIME:** Spring of 1955. ROBERTO is now an outfielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates, a Major League baseball team in the U.S.

**SETTING:** A small restaurant in Florida, where the Pirates are spring training. A serving counter with stools is opposite booths or tables and chairs for customers. A large banner hanging above the counter reads: "Welcome Pittsburgh Pirates!"

*AT RISE: A WAITRESS stands behind the counter and wipes the countertop with a cloth. ROBERTO and several other PIRATES enter wearing their baseball jerseys. They sit at a table and the WAITRESS quickly walks over to them.*

BOB (He looks at the WAITRESS and smiles.): I'm starved! Let's see your menu, please.

WAITRESS: Here you are. (She gives a menu to everyone except ROBERTO.)

ROBERTO (He speaks courteously.): I'd like a menu, please.

WAITRESS (She shakes her head firmly.): I can't serve you.

BOB (He speaks up quickly before ROBERTO can say anything.): Why can't you serve, Roberto? We came here to eat lunch together.

WAITRESS: You're in the South now, and you have to obey our laws. (She points to ROBERTO.) The law says we can't let him eat in this restaurant.

ROBERTO: Why can't I eat lunch in this restaurant with my friends?

WAITRESS (She becomes very upset.): Because you're a black man, and the law does not allow black people to eat in this restaurant.

ROBERTO (He stands up and points to the banner.): Your sign says the Pittsburgh Pirates are welcome here. (He speaks strongly.) I am a member of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team!

WAITRESS: It doesn't matter what team you're on. You can't eat in here.

BOB (He stands up and puts his menu on the table.): If Roberto can't eat here, we won't eat here either. (He beckons to the others.) Come on, guys. Let's get out of here. (The other team members stand up.)

ROBERTO (He holds up one hand to stop them.): No. I don't want you to leave because of me.

BOB: Are you kidding? You're one of us, Roberto—teammate *and* our friend. We'll stick together and find another place to eat. (BOB puts his hand on ROBERTO's shoulder; other team members ad lib their agreement: "Bob's right."; "They can't do this to Roberto!")

ROBERTO: It's good to have real friends like all of you. (They exit. WAITRESS gathers menus and goes back to the counter. Curtain)

## End SCENE 3

### SCENE 4

**TIME:** End of the baseball season in 1971.

**SETTING:** Waiting room of the airport in San Juan, Puerto Rico. A row of chairs is located near a door which has a sign above it stating: "Passengers Only." Another sign, near the chairs, states: "San Juan, Puerto Rico Airport. Passenger Waiting Room."

*AT RISE: VERA CLEMENTE and her three SONS are waiting with family members and friends for ROBERTO to arrive from Pittsburgh. They carry signs: "Welcome Home, Roberto." and "Roberto Clemente, Most Valuable Player in 1971 World Series." Everyone turns to the door when it opens and a MAN enters excitedly.*

MAN: Roberto's plane has landed! (Everyone moves to the door.

ROBERTO enters, carrying a suitcase. All cheer loudly as VERA and the boys rush to give ROBERTO a big hug.)

ROBERTO (He shouts happily above the noise.): This is the biggest homecoming I've ever had!

VERA (She laughs.): You're our hero and we love you.

FIRST MAN: Roberto, you hit one of two homeruns that helped the Pirates win the World Series.

SECOND MAN: We're having a big party this evening—just for you, Roberto!

ROBERTO: That's great! I feel like celebrating.

ROBERTO'S SON: Papa, is it true that you were named Most Valuable Player in the World Series?

ROBERTO (He nods his head and laughs.): Yes, my son. I've played Major League baseball for fifteen years, and this is the second time I've been named Most Valuable Player.

FIRST MAN: Not bad for a thirty-seven-year-old man. (He beckons.) Come on, let's take our hero home. (The crowd leaves the waiting room. ROBERTO takes VERA's hand. She pulls him back when everybody has gone.)

ROBERTO: What's the matter, Vera?

VERA (Her voice is sad.): Roberto, your old schoolteacher Ms. Casares is very ill.

ROBERTO (He speaks with worry and concern.): Are you sure?  
VERA: Yes. She is too sick to leave her house, and no one can get her to call the doctor.

ROBERTO: Ms. Casares has a mind of her own.

VERA: But what if she really needs to see a doctor, Roberto?

ROBERTO: Ms. Casares was my favorite teacher, and she gave me a lot of help when I was a boy. Now, she may need *my* help. I'm going to her house right away, Vera.

VERA: But—what about the party?

ROBERTO: I'll be late, but everyone will understand after I explain. (He picks up his suitcase.) Take the boys home, and I'll meet you at the party after I visit Ms. Casares. (They exit quickly. Lights fade, then come up again on a television talk show set. A table, two chairs and microphones are at center stage. LUIS, a well-known TV personality, and ROBERTO are sitting at the table. LUIS speaks into his mike.)

LUIS: Roberto, I'm glad that you could be with us today.

ROBERTO (He speaks into his mike.): It is my pleasure to be here, Luis.

LUIS (He looks toward the audience.): There's been a terrible earthquake in Nicaragua. Many people lost their lives in that disaster, and thousands of survivors have lost their homes. (LUIS turns to ROBERTO as he continues speaking.) I've asked Roberto to help us take food and medical supplies to Nicaragua, and Roberto has agreed to lead our mercy project.

ROBERTO (He turns to the audience.): I'm asking all the people of Puerto Rico to help us. Bring whatever you can—medicine, clothes, food, shoes, anything. As soon as we have enough to fill a plane, I will fly these supplies to the earthquake victims myself. (He speaks strongly.) We *must* help others who need our help! (LUIS and ROBERTO stand up and shake hands. Curtain)

**End SCENE 4**

## EPILOGUE

**TIME:** August 1973.

**SETTING:** Home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Rows of chairs are placed opposite a platform with chairs, a podium and microphone. A large banner hangs above the platform: "ROBERTO CLEMENTE, August 18, 1934 – December 31, 1972."

*AT RISE: VERA, her SONS, MS. CASARES, and some other people are sitting on the platform. Chairs facing the platform are filled with people. An OFFICIAL dressed in a dark suit walks to the mike.*

**OFFICIAL:** We are here today to honor a great man. Roberto Clemente had many achievements during his career in Major League baseball. (He takes out a paper and reads aloud.) Roberto was a National League all-star twelve times. Roberto also won four National League batting championships. He won the National League's Most Valuable Player award in 1966, and was named Most Valuable Player in the 1972 World Series. He had 3,000 career base hits during his career. (The OFFICIAL stops reading and looks at the audience.) But what was most important about Roberto Clemente was that he cared about people. We have with us today Ms. Maria Casares, who was Roberto's teacher. She wishes to speak about her former student. (MS. CASARES, an elderly woman, stands up and walks to the mike.)

**MS. CASARES:** I knew Roberto when he was a small boy. Even after he became a famous ball player, Roberto never forgot the people he had known in his youth. Once, when I was very sick, he made a special trip to visit me, and he took me to see the doctor. Later, when I tried to pay the doctor, I was told that Roberto had paid my bill. Roberto was like a son to me, and I believe that he must never be forgotten by the young people who will follow him. (She goes back to her chair and the OFFICIAL returns to the mike.)

OFFICIAL: We are honored to have Roberto's family and many of his friends here today. They are here to see Roberto become a member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Mrs. Vera Clemente will accept the award. (VERA and her SONS walk to the podium and she speaks into the mike.)

VERA: Roberto was very determined to help the people of Nicaragua after the terrible earthquake last year. He wanted to make sure the food and supplies donated by the people of Puerto Rico would get safely to the earthquake victims. Roberto decided that he must go on the airplane with the supplies. His plane crashed before arriving in Nicaragua. (She pauses, then speaks firmly.) My husband was a great man, not only because he was an excellent baseball player, but also because he gave his life to help others who were in need. (All applaud. Curtain)

**END**

***WE HOPE THAT THIS SAMPLE SCRIPT PROVED USEFUL. IF WE MAY BE OF FURTHER SERVICE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US AT:***

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC**

**211 FIRST AVENUE SE**

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52401**

**1-800-950-7529**

