

# Inspiring Baseball Stories for Young Readers 8-12

A Fun Kid's Guide Book to Legendary GOAT  
Players, Cool Trivia, and Iconic Cards

InspirePlay Books

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# Before You Start Reading...

Hey there, future All-Star!

Before you jump into this book, we have a little secret to share...

Every baseball legend you're about to meet—yes, even the greatest of all time—started out just like YOU. They were kids who loved to play, made mistakes, got messy, and dreamed big. Some used sticks instead of bats, played barefoot in the streets, or stayed up late just imagining the roar of the crowd. They weren't perfect—but they never gave up.

Inside these pages, you'll find short, exciting, not-at-all-boring stories that begin in childhood—just like yours—and show how each legend grew into someone unforgettable. You'll discover fun facts, surprising moments, and unbelievable true stories that prove that anything is possible when you work hard, play with heart, and believe in yourself.

*So here's your challenge:*

As you read, pay close attention to what made each player special.

- What did they never give up on?
- How did they bounce back when things got tough?
- What can you learn from their journey?

This book isn't just about baseball. It's about dreams, courage, and becoming your best self—on and off the field.



# Part 1: Legends of the Game

## Chapter 1

# Babe Ruth

## THE POWER OF DREAMS



**B**efore he became the most famous baseball player of all time, Babe Ruth was just a wild kid from the streets of Baltimore, Maryland. His real name? George Herman Ruth Jr. But not even his teachers called him that—he was known for something else: causing chaos!

He skipped school, played pranks, and even stole pies off windowsills (yep, just like in the cartoons). His parents didn't know how to handle his wild energy, so when he was just 7 years old, they sent him to St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, which was part school, part orphanage, and part reform school.

Sounds like the end of the road, right? Nope. It was actually the beginning of a legend.

At St. Mary's, George met a kind man named Brother Matthias, who introduced him to baseball. He taught George how to hit, how to throw, and how to channel all that wild energy into something positive. And George—well, he was a natural. He could hit the ball harder and farther than anyone at the school. And when he pitched? Whew! That ball flew so fast, it might as well have been on fire!

Everyone started calling him “Babe” because he was so young when he joined his first professional team, the Baltimore Orioles. They said he looked like a baby compared to the older players. But don't let the nickname fool you—Babe played like a giant.

Soon, Babe was traded to the Boston Red Sox. At first, he was mostly a pitcher—and a good one! He even helped the Red Sox win three World Series titles. But it wasn't long before the coaches realized something incredible: he could hit better than almost anyone in baseball.

So they let him swing the bat more. And what happened next? BOOM!

Babe Ruth became the king of the home run.

He crushed baseballs like they owed him money. People had never seen anything like it before. In 1920, he hit 54 home runs—more than most entire teams! That year, he was traded to the New York Yankees, and from there, the legend grew even bigger.

## Did You Know?



- Babe Ruth once hit a baseball so far, it traveled nearly 600 feet. That's longer than a football field and almost as long as a blue whale!
- He ate hot dogs and drank soda during games. (Not exactly what coaches recommend today!)
- He once promised a sick boy in the hospital that he'd hit a home run for him—and then went out and hit three in one game!
- In one season, Babe hit more home runs than all the other teams in the league. Not just players—teams!

- Babe didn't just play baseball. He changed it. Before him, baseball was mostly about bunts and slow, careful plays. But Babe made it exciting. Every time he came up to bat, people held their breath—because something amazing might happen.
- And the best part? Babe always played with a smile. He laughed. He joked. He once raced a horse before a game (and no, he didn't win). He didn't take himself too seriously—but he took the game seriously.
- He ended his career with 714 home runs, a record that stood for 39 years. He helped the Yankees win four World Series championships. And he became a hero to kids across the country who dreamed of becoming like him.

## What Can We Learn from Babe Ruth?



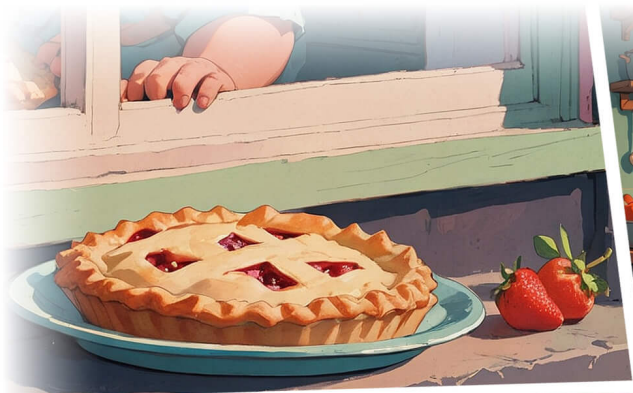
- Your beginning doesn't decide your ending. Babe was a troubled kid, but he turned his life around.
- Believe in your talents. Babe knew he had a gift and worked hard to use it.
- Be bold! He swung for the fences—literally and figuratively.
- Have fun while doing your best. Babe reminded the world that sports should be joyful.

### Final Word to Young Readers:

*You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to be the tallest or the fastest. But if you believe in your dreams, work hard, and keep swinging, you can do incredible things—just like Babe.*

*So go grab your bat, step up to the plate, and swing for the stars!*





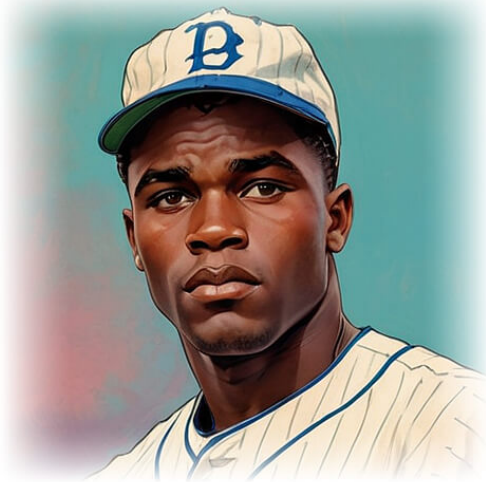
**WHAT'S BASEBALL?**



## Chapter 2

# Jackie Robinson

## BREAKING BARRIERS



Once upon a time in a little house in Georgia, a boy named Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born. He had big eyes, big dreams, and a really fast pair of feet. He could run so fast, people used to joke that even his shadow couldn't keep up with him!

Jackie grew up with his mom and four siblings, and life wasn't always easy. They didn't have much money, and not everyone treated them kindly—just because of the color of their skin. But Jackie's mom was tough. She taught him to stand tall, speak up, and never, ever back down when something wasn't fair.

And guess what? Jackie didn't just become good at one sport—he became amazing at every sport.

**Football? Star player.**

**Basketball? MVP.****Track and field? Fastest on the team.****And baseball? Oh, just wait...**

When Jackie played baseball, something magical happened. He could hit, run, field, steal bases like a ninja—and do it all with confidence. But in those days, there was a huge problem: Black players weren't allowed to play in Major League Baseball. The league was only for white players. It was unfair. It was wrong. And someone needed to change it.

Enter a man named Branch Rickey, the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers. He wanted to change the game—and he believed Jackie was the one to do it.

But it wouldn't be easy. "Jackie," he said, "you're going to face hate, insults, and unfairness. People will yell at you. Some won't want you on the field. Can you handle it without fighting back?"

Jackie thought hard. He was strong. He was fast. But most importantly, he had courage in his heart.

So he said: "Yes. I can do it."

In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first Black player in Major League Baseball. The stadium was packed. Some people cheered. Some people booed. But Jackie just stepped up to the plate and played like the champion he was.

**And boy, did he play!**

- He hit line drives.
- He stole bases like lightning.
- He made diving catches that left crowds gasping.

Some of his own teammates didn't want him there at first—but Jackie didn't quit. He let his actions speak louder than their words. And slowly, people began to see what was really important: his heart, his skill, and his bravery.

He was named Rookie of the Year, then Most Valuable Player, and helped the Dodgers win a World Series. But Jackie's biggest win? He opened the door for thousands of players who came after him.

## What Can We Learn from Jackie Robinson?



- Stand up for what's right—even if it's hard.
- Let your actions do the talking.
- Believe in yourself, even when others doubt you.
- Change starts with one brave person. Why not you?

## Fun Facts!



- Jackie was the first athlete at UCLA to letter in four different sports!
- He once stole home plate 19 times in his MLB career—one of the hardest plays in baseball.
- His jersey number, 42, is retired by every MLB team. No one else will ever wear it again—because Jackie was one of a kind.

**Message for Young Dreamers:**

*Sometimes, doing the right thing takes courage, patience, and strength. Jackie Robinson didn't just break records—he broke barriers. So if someone ever tells you, "You can't," just smile, stand tall, and show them you can.*



**NEVER, EVER BACK  
DOWN WHEN SOMETHING  
ISN'T FAIR**





## Chapter 3

# Lou Gehrig

## THE IRON HORSE'S STRENGTH



**B**efore he became a baseball legend, Lou Gehrig was just a shy, soft-spoken boy from New York City who loved two things more than anything: his family and baseball. His parents were hardworking immigrants, and they dreamed of giving Lou a better life. Lou took that dream and ran with it—right onto the baseball field.

At first, Lou wasn't the loudest kid. He wasn't the flashiest, either. But boy, when he picked up a bat? Watch out! He could launch baseballs into the sky like they were headed to the moon. One time in college, Lou hit a ball so far, it smashed a window in the library! (Oops.)

People soon noticed Lou's strength—not just in his muscles, but in his heart. He played with quiet confidence, kindness, and a determination that earned him a nickname that would follow him forever:

**“The Iron Horse.”**

Why that name? Because Lou showed up. Every. Single. Game.

## **The Streak That Never Quit**

In 1925, Lou joined the New York Yankees, playing alongside Babe Ruth (yep, that Babe). And from the moment he stepped onto the field, he never stopped.

Game after game, year after year, Lou Gehrig played through injuries, sickness, and pain. He once played with broken toes (and didn't even tell anyone). He played with fevers. He even played after getting hit in the head with a pitch!

He didn't just show up—he excelled. He hit over 490 home runs, won 6 World Series, and had more RBIs (runs batted in) than anyone could keep up with. But his most legendary record?

Lou played in 2,130 consecutive games.

That's like playing baseball every day for over 13 years without missing a single one. Not even for a birthday. Not even for the flu. Not even for a rainy day excuse!

## **The Hardest Battle**

In 1939, Lou started feeling tired. Not just “I stayed up too late” tired—but “something's wrong” tired. He was slowing down. His hands were weaker. He couldn't swing like he used to. Doctors discovered he had a rare disease—ALS—a sickness that affects muscles and movement.

Lou did something incredibly brave: he retired. He knew he couldn't keep playing, but instead of being sad in silence, he gave a speech that made history. At home plate in Yankee Stadium, Lou stood in front of thousands of fans and said:

“Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.”

Even in the toughest moment of his life, Lou showed gratitude, grace, and unbreakable strength.

### **What Can We Learn from Lou Gehrig?**



- Show up. Every day matters. Small efforts add up to big success.
- Be humble. Lou was a superstar but never acted like one.
- Face challenges with courage. Even when life got hard, Lou stayed strong.
- Be thankful. He reminded us that even on tough days, we can still feel lucky.

### **Fun Facts!**



- Lou once hit 23 grand slams—still a record today!
- His teammates said he was the nicest guy in the league.
- After his famous speech, teams from across the country honored him—because everyone respected the Iron Horse.

**Message for Young Athletes:**

*You don't need to be the loudest. You don't need to be the flashiest. Just show up, work hard, and lead with kindness. Like Lou Gehrig, your quiet strength can leave the loudest legacy.*







# THE IRON HORSE



## Chapter 4

# Hank Aaron

## CHASING HISTORY



In a small house in Mobile, Alabama, a little boy named Henry Louis Aaron grew up with big dreams—and even bigger hands. He didn’t have much, but he had a stick, a bottle cap, and a wild imagination. And that was enough to play baseball all day long.

- He didn’t have a real bat.
- He didn’t have a real glove.
- But he had something even more powerful: a dream.

People used to say,

“Baseball’s not for everyone.”

But Hank thought,

“Why not me?”

Even when others doubted him, he practiced every day.

Hitting bottle caps with broomsticks.

Chasing down every fly ball.

Running so fast, he looked like a blur on the dirt.

## The Young Slugger

As a teenager, Hank joined a team in the Negro Leagues—a league for Black players who weren't allowed in the Major Leagues at the time. But Hank didn't let that stop him. In fact, he was so good, people started calling him “Hammerin' Hank.”

Why? Because when Hank hit the ball—it looked like he'd hammered it with a sledgehammer.

**WHAM!**

**BOOM!**

**GONE!**

By the time he made it to the Milwaukee Braves in 1954, he wasn't just chasing his dreams—he was chasing history.

## Breaking the Big Record

In those days, the greatest record in baseball belonged to Babe Ruth:

- **714 career home runs.**

No one thought it could ever be broken. But Hank Aaron was getting closer... and closer... and closer.

But not everyone was cheering for him.

Hank faced racism, hate mail, and threats just because he was a Black man chasing a white legend's record. Some people didn't want him to break it. They said awful things. They sent terrible letters. It was scary. But Hank didn't stop. He stayed calm, focused, and brave. He let his bat do the talking.

Then came April 8, 1974.

Hank stepped up to the plate. The pitcher threw the ball—**CRACK!**

The ball soared into the night sky, past the outfield fence, and into history.

### **Home run #715.**

Hank Aaron had done it. He broke Babe Ruth's record. The crowd went wild. Two kids even ran onto the field to celebrate with him!

But Hank's story didn't stop there.

He kept playing. He kept hitting. He ended his career with:

- 755 home runs
- 3,771 hits
- Over 2,000 RBIs

And more than that, he opened the door for future generations. He became a role model, a leader, and a hero—not just for what he did on the field, but for how he handled every challenge off it.

### **What Can We Learn from Hank Aaron?**



- Chase your dreams—even when others try to stop you.
- Let your work speak louder than words.
- Stay calm, stay kind, stay strong.
- History is made by those who keep swinging.

## Fun Facts!



- Hank started his baseball career holding the bat cross-handed—which coaches say not to do!
- He was so fast, he once stole 31 bases in one season!
- Even after retiring, Hank worked to support young athletes and fight for fairness in sports.

## Message for Young Dreamers:

*No matter where you come from, no matter what anyone says—you can chase your dreams. Hank Aaron chased his with courage, kindness, and a powerful swing. And guess what?*

*So can you.*

“My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling bad or having trouble off the field... the only thing to do was keep swinging.”

Hank Aaron

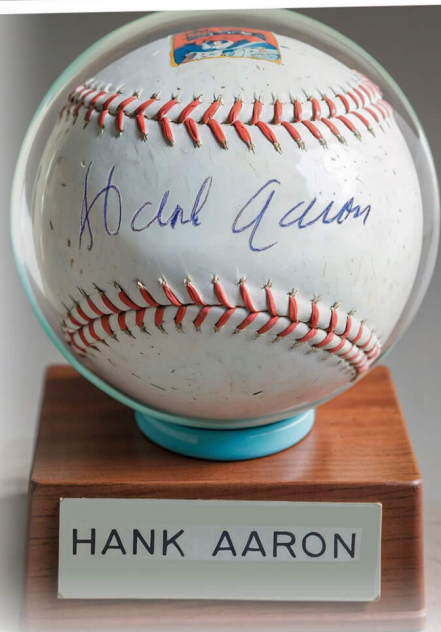


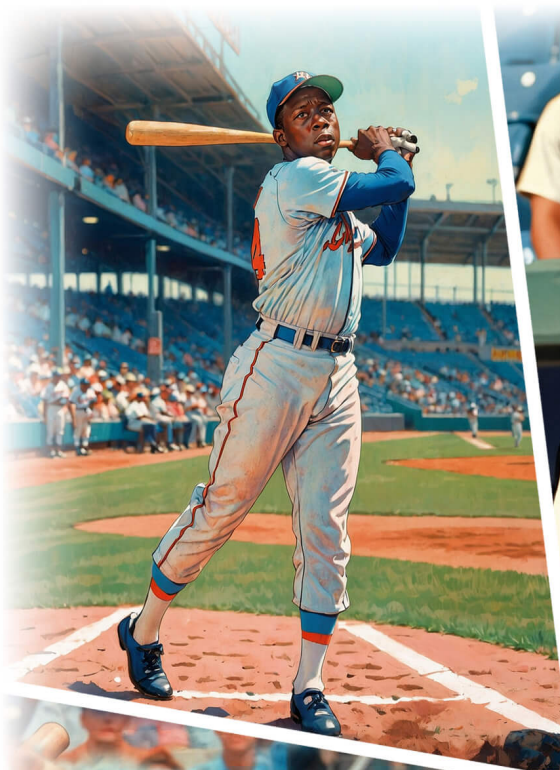


BASEBALL'S NOT  
FOR EVERYONE



WHY NOT ME?





## Chapter 5

# Derek Jeter

## THE CAPTAIN'S LEADERSHIP



**W**hen Derek Jeter was just a little kid in Kalamazoo, Michigan, he already knew exactly what he wanted to be when he grew up:

**A New York Yankee.**

Not just any baseball player. Not just any team. Derek dreamed big from the very start.

He told everyone—his parents, his teachers, even the lunch lady at school—“I’m going to play shortstop for the Yankees one day.” Some people laughed. Others said, “That’s impossible.” But Derek? He smiled and said, “Just watch.”

And oh boy... they watched!

## **The Boy Who Wouldn't Quit**

Derek worked harder than anyone else.

He practiced his swing in the garage.

He threw ground balls to himself in the backyard.

He even signed his name over and over on a notepad, practicing for the day he'd give autographs!

(That's right—he was really ready.)

But it wasn't always easy. Derek faced tough times. In high school, he struck out. He made mistakes. But instead of quitting, he said something amazing:

“There may be people who have more talent than you, but there's no excuse for anyone to work harder than you do.”

And that's exactly what he did.

## **The Captain Arrives**

In 1995, Derek's dream came true—he became a New York Yankee!

By 1996, he was the team's starting shortstop—and guess what? He won Rookie of the Year and helped his team win the World Series!

And he didn't stop there.

Derek led the Yankees to 5 World Series championships and made so many amazing plays that fans started calling him “Captain Clutch.” Why? Because when the pressure was high, Derek always came through.

He made diving catches.

He smashed game-winning hits.

He stole bases when no one expected it.

And he always stayed cool, calm, and focused—like a true leader.

## **The Captain Everyone Respected**

In 2003, Derek was officially named Captain of the Yankees—the first in 8 years. But being captain wasn't about yelling or showing off. Derek led by example.

- He was respectful to everyone.

- He played fair.
- He lifted up his teammates.
- He stayed humble—even when the whole world cheered his name.
- He wasn't the loudest. He wasn't the flashiest.
- But he was always the most reliable.

**When Derek retired in 2014, he had:**

1. Over 3,400 hits
2. 14 All-Star selections
3. 5 Gold Gloves

A career full of clutch moments and unforgettable plays  
But the thing people remember most?

**His class, his leadership, and his love for the game.**

**What Can We Learn from Derek Jeter?**



- Dream big—and tell the world.
- Work hard, even when no one's watching.
- Lead with kindness, not just talent.

- Be the teammate everyone looks up to.

### Fun Facts!



- Derek never got ejected from a game—not once in 20 years!
- He wore the same lucky number his whole career: #2.
- He was so respected that even rival fans cheered for him during his final game!

### Message for Young Leaders:

*Being a great athlete is awesome—but being a great person is even better. Derek Jeter showed us that true leaders stay humble, work hard, and never forget to lift others up.*

*So whether you're on a baseball team, in school, or just playing with your friends—lead like Derek. Be the kid who makes everyone better.*

“There’s always someone out there working harder than you. I want to be that someone.”

Derek Jeter



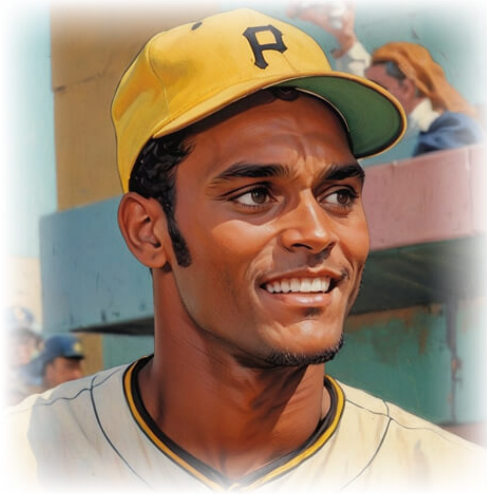




## Chapter 6

# Roberto Clemente

## A HERO ON AND OFF THE FIELD



**B**efore Roberto Clemente became a baseball legend, he was just a boy from Carolina, Puerto Rico, who loved three things:

1. Baseball
2. His family
3. Helping others

He didn't have fancy equipment or a perfect baseball field. He practiced with sticks and bottle caps, just like Hank Aaron. But even with simple tools, Roberto's talent shined like the sun.

He was fast—really fast—and had a rocket for an arm. Some kids said he could throw a baseball all the way to the ocean! (Okay, maybe not that far—but close!)

*But the real secret behind Roberto's greatness?*

He cared—about the game, about his people, and about doing what was right.

## Climbing to the Big Leagues

Roberto worked hard and never gave up, even when people told him he wouldn't make it. In the 1950s, few Latino players were in Major League Baseball—and many didn't believe a young Puerto Rican kid would succeed.

But Roberto believed in himself. And in 1955, he made it to the big leagues with the Pittsburgh Pirates!

Fans were amazed. Roberto ran like the wind, made superhero throws from the outfield, and smashed balls into the stands. But not everyone treated him kindly.

Because Roberto spoke Spanish and had darker skin, he often faced racism and rude reporters. Some even made fun of his accent.

But Roberto didn't let it stop him.

"I am proud to be Puerto Rican," he said.

"I will speak how I speak. I will play how I play. And I will never stop helping people."

## A Baseball Legend

Roberto played 18 seasons with the Pirates and became one of the greatest right fielders of all time. His accomplishments?

- 3,000 hits
- 12 Gold Gloves (that's a lot of golden hands!)
- 15 All-Star Games
- 2 World Series titles

He was the kind of player who dove for every ball, slid into every base, and gave his best every single inning. His teammates said it best:

"Roberto played with his heart on fire."

## A True Hero Off the Field

But here's what made Roberto a real legend—what he did when he wasn't playing.

Roberto never forgot where he came from. He donated money, gave away food, and helped build schools and clinics for people in need. Whenever disaster struck—like earthquakes or hurricanes—he rushed in to help.

In 1972, when a terrible earthquake hit Nicaragua, Roberto packed a plane full of supplies and flew in to deliver them himself. That plane crashed shortly after takeoff. Roberto was gone, but his kindness, bravery, and spirit live on forever.

He wasn't just a baseball player.

He was a hero.

## What Can We Learn from Roberto Clemente?



- Stand up for yourself and others.
- Be proud of who you are.
- Use your talents to help people.
- Greatness isn't just about winning—it's about caring.

## Fun Facts!



- Roberto would sometimes play catch with kids before his games!
- He was the first Latin American player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.
- MLB gives out the Roberto Clemente Award each year to the player who shows the most character and helps their community.

## Message for Young Champions:

*You don't have to be the loudest or the biggest to make a difference. Just like Roberto Clemente, you can be a hero by working hard, standing up for what's right, and helping others—on and off the field.*

“Any time you have an opportunity to make things better and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth.”

Roberto Clemente







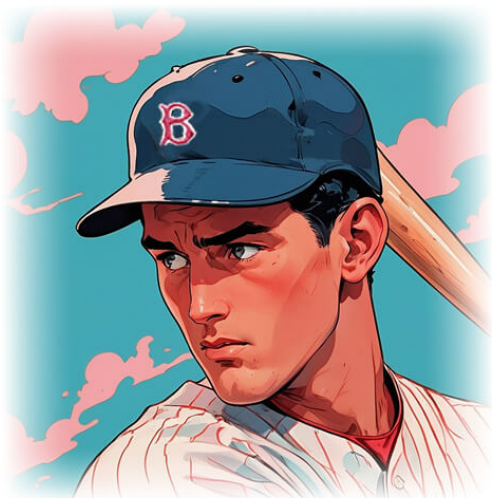
**I WILL SPEAK HOW I SPEAK.  
I WILL PLAY HOW I PLAY.  
AND I WILL NEVER STOP  
HELPING PEOPLE**



## Chapter 7

# Ted Williams

## THE SCIENCE OF HITTING



**L**ong before he became a baseball legend, Ted Williams was just a skinny kid from San Diego, California, with one big obsession:

**Hitting a baseball better than anyone else in the world.**

While other kids were out riding bikes or swimming at the beach, Ted was at the park—swinging and swinging and swinging. Some neighbors said he was part robot. Others thought his bat had superpowers.

But the truth was simple:

Ted practiced more than anyone—because he wanted to be the best.

## **A Baseball Brainiac**

Ted wasn't just swinging for fun—he was studying hitting like it was science class. He'd watch how the ball spun. He'd figure out where the “sweet spot” on the bat was. He even stood in front of a mirror, practicing his swing over and over again.

He believed that hitting wasn't just talent—it was a skill you could learn, measure, and master.

“The hardest thing to do in sports is hit a baseball.”

And Ted made it look easy.

## **The Hitting Machine**

Ted joined the Boston Red Sox in 1939, and soon, fans were calling him:

- “The Kid”
- “Teddy Ballgame”
- “The Splendid Splinter” (because of his thin build and sharp swing!)

But no matter what they called him, he was the most dangerous hitter in the game.

In 1941, Ted did something no one has done since:

He finished the season with a .406 batting average.

That means he got a hit over 40% of the time—an impossible number! Even today, players dream of hitting that well.

## **A Hero in the Sky**

Ted's story isn't just about baseball. When his country needed him, Ted paused his career to serve in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. He became a fighter pilot in World War II and later flew missions in the Korean War.

That's right—he gave up five years of baseball to fly planes and protect others.

He didn't just hit home runs—he flew fighter jets!

After the war, he came right back to baseball and started hitting again like he never left. The crowd cheered louder than ever.

## The Science of Greatness

Ted Williams studied hitting his whole life. He even wrote a book called “The Science of Hitting” to teach others how to do it. In it, he showed:

- How to see the ball better
- Where to swing for maximum power
- Why even small mistakes matter

He wanted kids and future players to know:

*Great hitters aren't born—they're built, with hard work and smart thinking.*

## What Can We Learn from Ted Williams?



- Be curious about your craft—study it!
- Practice with purpose, not just repetition.
- Serve others when they need you.
- Perfection comes from passion and patience.

## Fun Facts!



- Ted Williams once hit a ball so hard, it broke a seat at Fenway Park!

- He was the last MLB player to hit over 400 in a season.
- He loved fishing almost as much as baseball—and was just as good at it!

**Message for Young Thinkers:**

*Whatever you love—whether it’s baseball, math, music, or magic tricks—learn everything about it. Get curious, ask questions, and practice smart. Like Ted Williams, you can turn your passion into something amazing.*

“A man has to have goals—for a day, for a lifetime—and that was mine: to have people say, ‘There goes Ted Williams, the greatest hitter who ever lived.’”

Ted Williams







## Chapter 8

# Willie Mays

## THE MAGIC OF THE FIVE-TOOL PLAYER



**I** magine a baseball player who could do everything:

*Run like a racehorse*

*Catch anything that came his way*

*Throw with laser accuracy*

*Hit for power*

*Hit for average*

Now imagine he did it all with a smile so big, fans called him “The Say Hey Kid.”

That’s Willie Mays—the most magical, all-around player baseball has ever seen!

## **From Stickball to Stardom**

Willie grew up in Alabama, and before he ever stepped onto a Major League field, he was already a baseball star—playing stickball in the streets, sprinting across fields barefoot, and learning every part of the game from his dad and grandfather.

He didn't just play ball—he lived it.

“I didn't have fancy gear,” Willie said,

“but I had heart, and I had fun.”

## **The Five Tools That Made Him a Legend**

Willie had a gift—a mix of natural talent, fearless confidence, and hard work. He became what coaches call a five-tool player. That means he could:

1. Run like lightning
2. Field anything—diving, leaping, flipping through the air
3. Throw rockets from the outfield
4. Hit for average (lots of base hits!)
5. Hit for power (home runs, baby!)

Fans didn't just watch him play—they watched in awe.

## **The Catch Heard 'Round the World**

In the 1954 World Series, Willie made one of the greatest catches in baseball history.

A towering fly ball soared deep into center field. Most outfielders wouldn't even try.

But Willie?

He sprinted full-speed, back turned to the ball, glove stretched high.

## **SNAG!**

He caught it over his shoulder—without even looking!

Then turned and fired the ball back to stop the runner from scoring.

The crowd gasped.

The announcers shouted.  
 And baseball history was made.  
 “That’s just what I do,” Willie said with a grin.  
 “If you can do something great, why not do it?”

## Power + Style + Joy

Willie played with more than just skill—he played with joy.

He danced around the bases.

He joked with umpires.

He made baseball look like the most fun game on Earth (which, to him, it was!).

And while he was dazzling fans, he was stacking up some serious numbers:

- 660 career home runs
- Over 3,200 hits
- 24 All-Star Games
- 12 Gold Gloves

And don’t forget—he missed two seasons to serve in the military!

## What Can We Learn from Willie Mays?



- Smile while you play. Joy makes you better.
- Master every part of your game. Be well-rounded!
- Never stop hustling. Even the impossible can become a highlight.
- Have fun—but take your work seriously.

## Fun Facts!



- Willie’s nickname “The Say Hey Kid” came from how he greeted people: “Say hey!”
- He once hit a home run in 16 different stadiums—in the same season!
- He wore his baseball cap so tight, it flew off every time he sprinted to catch a ball!

## Message for Young All-Around Athletes:

*You don’t have to choose just one strength—you can build them all. Like Willie Mays, learn to do it all with heart, hustle, and happiness.*

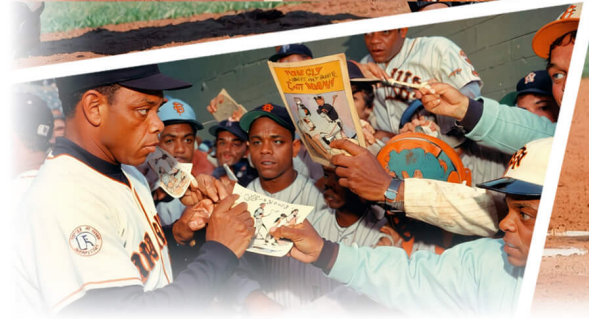
*If you’re playing a sport, drawing a picture, or chasing a dream—do it with skill and a smile.*

“I played the game the way it was supposed to be played—with heart, hustle, and a whole lot of fun.”

Willie Mays







## Chapter 9

# Nolan Ryan

## THE POWER PITCHER



**H**ave you ever seen someone throw a baseball so fast, it sounded like a rocket blasting off?

That was Nolan Ryan.

He didn't just throw fastballs—he threw lightning bolts.

Fans say his pitches came with their own whoosh sound. Batters say they could hear the ball—but not see it!

Nolan Ryan wasn't just a pitcher... he was a **flamethrower**.

## **The Boy with the Golden Arm**

Nolan grew up in a small Texas town called Alvin. As a kid, he loved throwing things—baseballs, rocks, even oranges! His mom said he had a special arm, and she was right.

By the time he was in high school, his pitches were so fast, catchers needed extra padding just to handle them!

## **Breaking Into the Big Leagues**

Nolan was drafted by the New York Mets when he was just 19. At first, he struggled to control his blazing fastballs—they'd zip past the catcher or zoom into the dirt.

But Nolan never gave up. He trained hard, focused, and kept believing in himself.

“I might walk some guys,” he said,

“but I’ll strike out a whole lot more.”

And he did.

## **Strikeouts, No-Hitters, and Records Galore!**

Nolan Ryan didn't just pitch—he dominated. He played an incredible 27 seasons in the Major Leagues, longer than almost anyone!

Here are just a few of his jaw-dropping stats:

- 5,714 career strikeouts – the most in baseball history!
- 7 no-hitters – also the most in history!
- Pitched over 100 miles per hour—even when he was 40 years old!
- Played for 4 teams: Mets, Angels, Astros, and Rangers

He wasn't afraid of any batter. Some said he scared them just by stepping on the mound.

## Pitching Through Pain

Nolan wasn't just strong—he was tough.

One time, he got hit in the mouth by a line drive. Blood poured out—but he wiped it away and kept pitching.

Another time, he got into a fight on the mound with a younger player who rushed him. Nolan calmly put him in a headlock—and still pitched that game!

Even when his arm hurt, he never gave up. He believed in finishing what he started.

## What Can We Learn from Nolan Ryan?



- Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.
- Control comes with patience and practice.
- Toughness is about getting back up.
- Age is just a number—keep going!

## Fun Facts!



- Nolan once threw 235 pitches in one game!
- He never won a Cy Young Award—but batters feared him more than anyone!
- He was still pitching heat at age 46—older than many of the coaches!

**Message for Young Athletes:**

*You don't need to be perfect—you just need to be fearless and focused. Nolan Ryan threw wild at first, but he worked through it and became a legend.*

*So if you've got a big dream and a strong spirit, go for it—with all the power you've got.*

“Enjoy the journey. It’s not about how fast you start. It’s about how strong you finish.”

Nolan Ryan



PSA

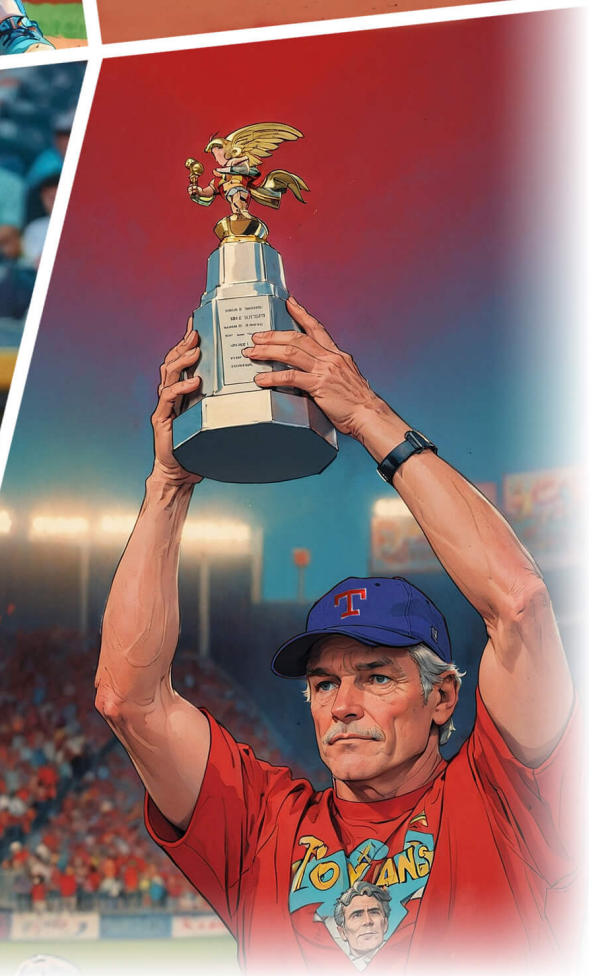
1990 MOTHER'S COOKIES  
NOLAN RYAN  
SITTING ON DUGOUT STEP

#4  
GEM MT  
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## Chapter 10

# Ichiro Suzuki

## HARD WORK AND NO BORDERS



**W**hen Ichiro Suzuki was a little boy growing up in Japan, he had a dream that seemed far, far away:

**To play Major League Baseball in America.**

People told him,

“It’s too hard.”

“It’s never been done like that.”

“You’re too small.”

But Ichiro didn't listen to the doubters.

Instead, he listened to his heart.

And every single day, he practiced with laser focus.

His dad would throw him 50 pitches, and Ichiro would bow in respect before swinging. Then another 50. And another. Rain or shine.

He was training to be the best hitter in the world—and he wasn't going to let anything stop him.

### **Precision, Patience, Power**

Ichiro didn't hit towering home runs or throw thunderbolts like Nolan Ryan.

His superpower was precision.

- He could place a baseball exactly where he wanted—like a ninja with a sword.
- He could run like the wind, beating out grounders with a flash of speed.
- He threw from the outfield like he had a laser in his arm—one of the best arms in

baseball!

“I may not look big,” Ichiro once said,

“but my heart is as strong as anyone's.”

### **A Star Across the Ocean**

Ichiro became a superstar in Japan, playing for the Orix BlueWave. He won seven straight batting titles and became a national hero.

But Ichiro wasn't done dreaming.

In 2001, he joined the Seattle Mariners in the U.S. and made history.

Some said he wouldn't succeed. He was the first Japanese position player in the Major Leagues. The language was different. The food, the culture, the fans—everything.

But Ichiro answered with his bat.

**CRACK! Hit after hit.**

**ZOOM! Stealing bases.**

**WHOOSH! Making wild catches look easy.**

He didn't just “do well.”

He became one of the best players in the world—again.

## **A Record-Setting Legend**

Ichiro’s career in MLB was full of jaw-dropping numbers:

- 10 straight 200-hit seasons – a record!
- 3,089 MLB hits + 1,278 hits in Japan = the most hits ever by a pro player!
- 10 Gold Gloves
- American League MVP and Rookie of the Year – in the same season!

And he did it all with humility, respect, and hard work.

## **What Can We Learn from Ichiro Suzuki?**



- Discipline beats doubt.
- You don’t need to be the biggest—just the most focused.
- Dreams don’t have borders.
- Kindness, effort, and respect can take you anywhere.

## Fun Facts!



- Ichiro had a lucky stretching routine he did before every game.
- He used the same glove for 10 years, taking care of it like a best friend.
- He once threw out a runner at third base—from the right-field wall!
- His bat had his name burned in Japanese characters.

## Message for Young Dreamers:

*Don't let anything stop you—not your size, your accent, or where you're from.*

*If you love something, give it your all.*

*Like Ichiro, practice with passion, play with pride, and believe in your dream—even if it takes you across the world.*

“If you dream something, chase it. That’s how great stories begin.”

Ichiro Suzuki







## Chapter 11

# Cal Ripken Jr.

## THE STREAK OF DEDICATION



**I**magine showing up every single day, giving it your best—even when you're tired, sore, or it's raining outside.

That's what Cal Ripken Jr. did.

He didn't have flashy moves or wild celebrations.

He had something even stronger:

**Unstoppable dedication.**

And that's how he became the man known as "The Iron Man of Baseball."

## **A Baseball Life from the Beginning**

Cal Ripken Jr. grew up in Maryland, where baseball ran in his blood. His dad was a coach, and little Cal was always at the field—watching, learning, and dreaming.

He wasn't the fastest runner or the biggest hitter.

But he had a superpower:

**He never gave up.**

## **Breaking In with the Orioles**

Cal joined the Baltimore Orioles in 1981. At first, some coaches thought he was too big to play shortstop—he looked more like a third baseman.

But Cal proved them wrong.

He had great instincts, soft hands, and a rocket throw.

Soon, he was a fan favorite.

And then... he started The Streak.

### 2,632 Games in a Row

Most players miss games here and there. They get tired. They need rest. They get injured.

Not Cal.

For 2,632 games in a row—over 16 seasons—Cal Ripken Jr. showed up to play.

## **Every. Single. Game.**

He played through bruises, aches, and even fevers. Why?

Because he believed in showing up, in being reliable, and in doing his job right.

“You don't have to be the best every day,” Cal once said,

“but you do have to give your best.”

He broke a record that everyone said was unbreakable—Lou Gehrig’s streak of 2,130 games.

And when he did, the crowd gave him a standing ovation that lasted 22 minutes.

## **A Career of Consistency**

Cal wasn’t just “the guy who played every day.” He was really, really good, too:

- Over 3,000 hits
- 431 home runs
- 2-time MVP
- 19-time All-Star
- And he played 21 seasons—all with the Orioles

## **What Can We Learn from Cal Ripken Jr.?**



- Hard work and consistency matter more than flash.
- Being dependable is a superpower.
- Greatness is built one day at a time.
- Don’t skip the small stuff—keep showing up.

## Fun Facts!



- He played shortstop for 14 years, then switched to third base—and still kept the streak going!
- His teammates called him “Iron Man” because he never broke.
- He once hit an All-Star Game home run the same year he broke the streak!

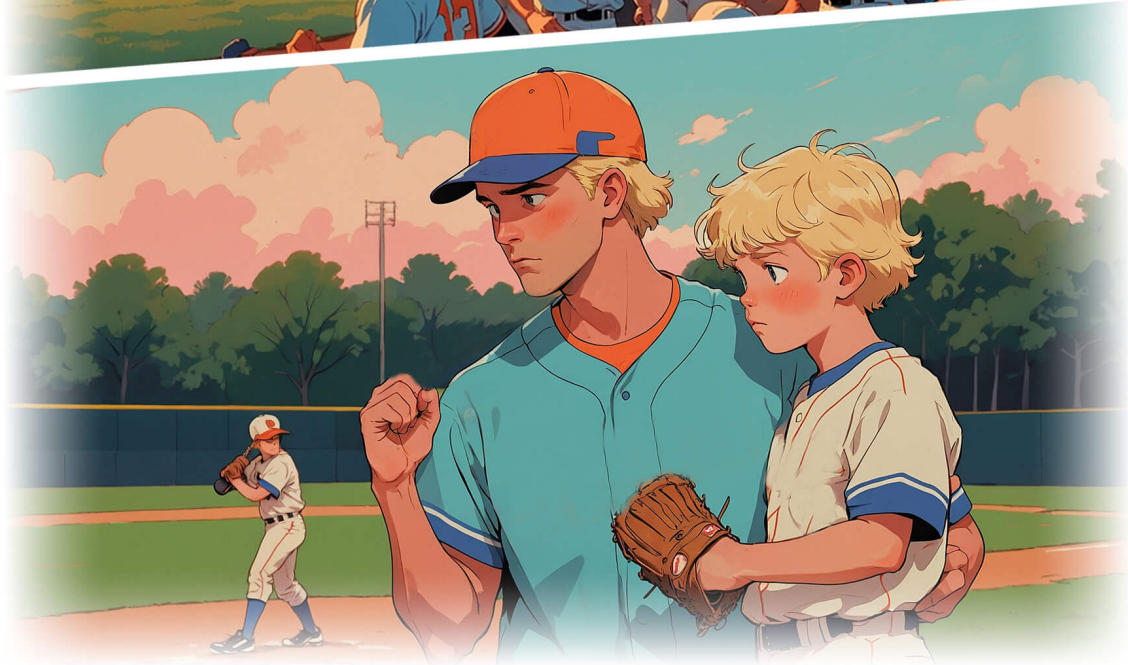
## Message for Young Hustlers:

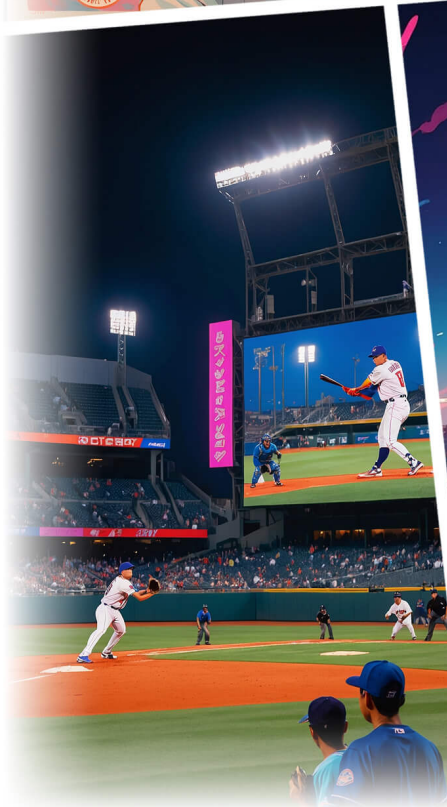
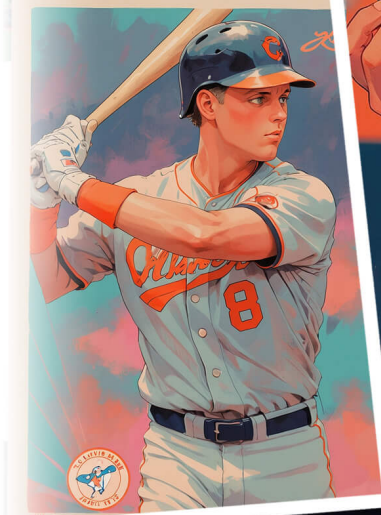
*You don't have to be the loudest or flashiest.  
You just have to show up, work hard, and keep going.  
Whether it's sports, school, music, or anything else—be like Cal:  
**Steady. Strong. Unshakable.***

“Success is built on consistency. And consistency comes from love—loving what you do every day.”

Cal Ripken Jr.







## Chapter 12

# Satchel Paige

## DEFYING THE ODDS



**L**ong before Satchel Paige stood on a Major League mound, he was a kid in Mobile, Alabama, with a big grin, a wild imagination, and a slingshot arm.

As a boy, Satchel didn't have much—not even a real glove or ball. So he got creative.

He practiced by throwing rocks at tin cans and hitting tree stumps from far away. He didn't just learn to pitch—he learned to aim with magical precision.

“How do you learn to pitch like that?”

someone once asked.

“You grow up with nothin'... and make it somethin'.” – Satchel Paige

## **The Man With the Fastball That Sizzled**

As Satchel grew older, so did his legend.

He was tall, skinny, and had arms like whips of lightning. His fastball was so fast that:

- Batters swung before the ball even arrived.
- Catchers flinched.
- Fans gasped.

Some said it made a sound like a steak hitting a hot pan—sizzle!

But Satchel didn't just throw fast—he threw smart.

He named his pitches things like:

- "Bee Ball" – because it buzzed.
- "Hesitator" – because it danced in the air.
- "Bat Dodger" – because it seemed to dodge the bat on purpose!

## **A Legend Before the Major Leagues**

Back then, baseball had an unfair rule: black players weren't allowed in Major League Baseball.

So Satchel played in the Negro Leagues and all over the world—in Cuba, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and more.

Wherever he went, he filled stadiums with fans who just wanted to witness the magic.

He once pitched in two games in one day, won both, and then danced off the field smiling.

People said he was part pitcher, part performer, and all heart.

## **Old? Not Even Close!**

When Major League Baseball finally opened its doors to Black players, Satchel was already in his 40s.

People said he was too old.

But Satchel just smiled and said:

“Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”

And then he stepped onto the mound and threw shutout innings like a wizard with a glove.

He became the oldest rookie in MLB history and pitched until he was nearly 60 years old—proving that passion doesn’t age.

### What Can We Learn from Satchel Paige?



- Never let limits stop you—not age, not rules, not doubters.
- Creativity is just as powerful as talent.
- Be bold. Be funny. Be unforgettable.
- When life gives you less, make magic with it.

### Fun Facts!



- Satchel once told his outfielders to sit down during a game—then struck out the side all by himself!
- He had more nicknames than a superhero—“Satch,” “The Whip,” “Ol’ Satch,” and more.

- No one knows exactly how many games he pitched—but it might have been over 2,000!

**Message for Young Dreamers:**

*You don't have to come from riches or be handed a golden glove.*

*You just need heart, creativity, and the courage to believe you're meant for greatness—even when the world says "no."*

*Satchel Paige pitched through barriers, over doubt, and straight into the history books.*

“Never look back—something might be gaining on you.”

Satchel Paige



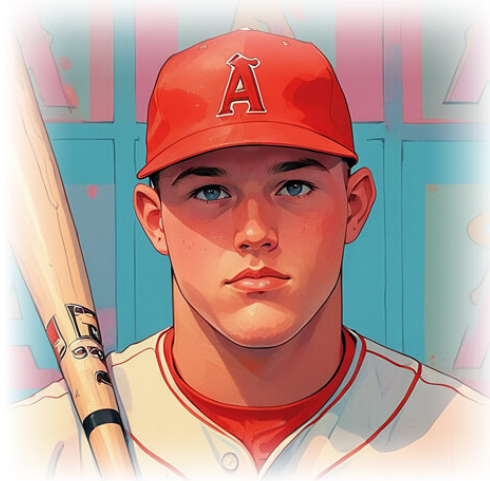




## Chapter 13

# Mike Trout

## THE MODERN DAY SUPERSTAR



**B**efore Mike Trout was launching home runs into the sky, he was just a small-town kid from Millville, New Jersey, with a dream as big as the ballparks he'd one day play in.

He wasn't the loudest kid on the field.

He wasn't the tallest either.

But from the moment he picked up a bat, he had one mission:

Play the game the right way—and give it everything he had.

## Born to Play

Mike's love for baseball started early.

As a little kid, he'd watch games with his dad, then rush outside to practice swinging in the backyard, again and again.

Neighbors say he used to hit baseballs over fences so often they'd just leave extra balls in their yards, waiting for him.

He also ran—fast. Like, whoosh! Fast.

If the ball dropped anywhere near the outfield, Mike was already under it, glove ready and eyes locked in.

## The Total Package

By the time he reached the Major Leagues, Mike wasn't just good—he was unreal.

- He could hit for power
- He could steal bases like a ninja
- He could make diving catches that left fans speechless

People started calling him:

- “The Millville Meteor”
- “The Next Big Thing”
- Or simply... “Trout.”

But even with all the attention, Mike stayed humble, focused, and team-first.

“I just want to help the team win,” he always says.

And he means it.

## An All-Star Again and Again

Since his rookie season, Mike Trout has been one of the most dominant players in baseball:

- Multiple MVP awards
- 10-time All-Star
- Over 350 home runs and counting!
- And still going strong...

But what makes Mike special isn't just the stats—it's how he carries himself. No bragging. No trash talk. Just a true love for the game.

### What Can We Learn from Mike Trout?



- Stay grounded—even when you're soaring.
- Let your work speak louder than your words.
- Love the process, not just the spotlight.
- Be a teammate, not just a star.

### Fun Facts!



- Mike once robbed a home run by leaping so high, fans said it looked like he had wings!
- He wears number 27—a nod to his favorite player growing up, Derek Jeter.
- He loves weather and even dreams of becoming a meteorologist someday!

**Message for Young Athletes:**

*You don't need to be loud to be a leader.*

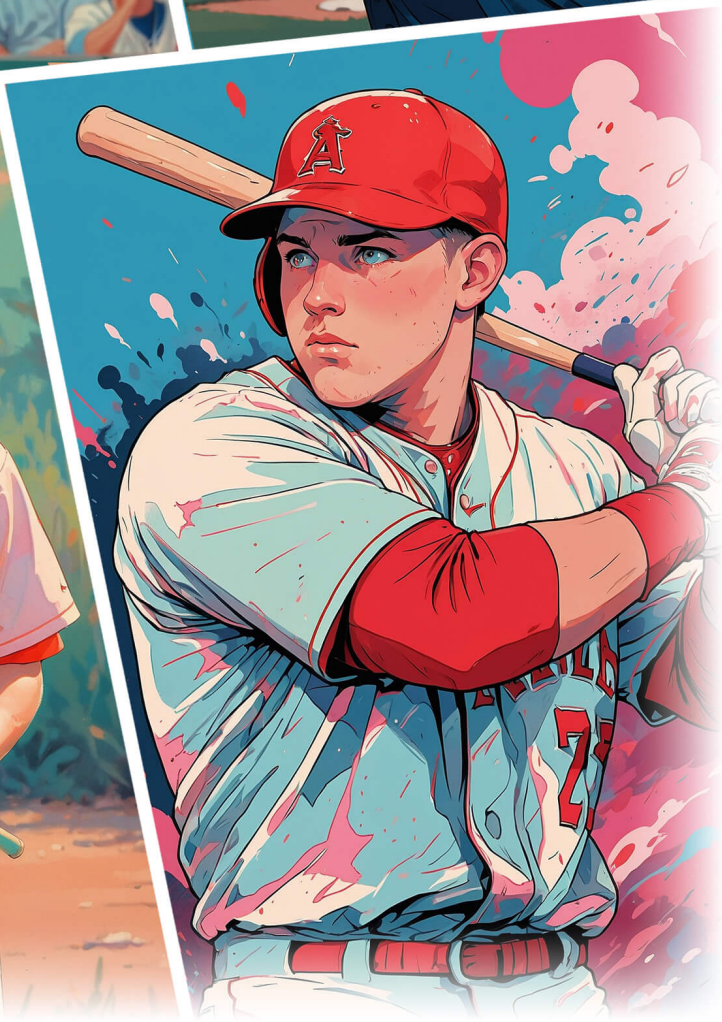
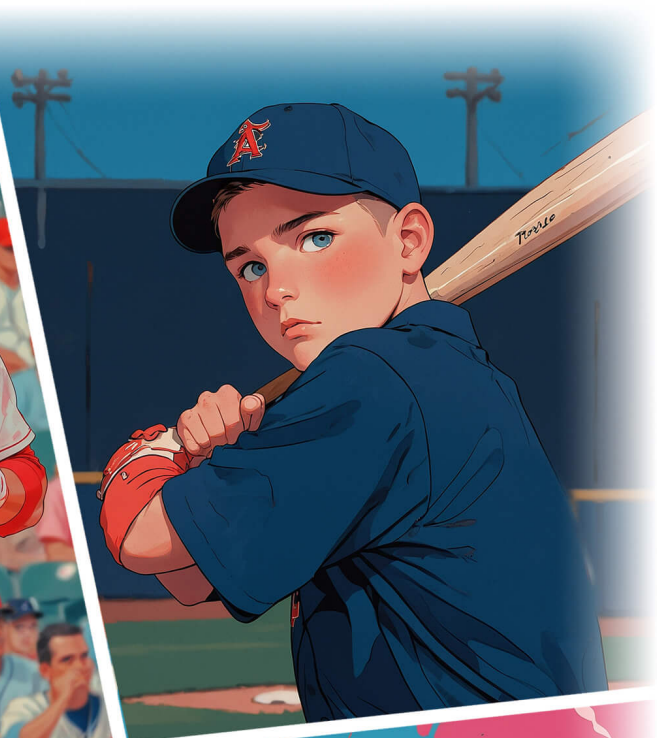
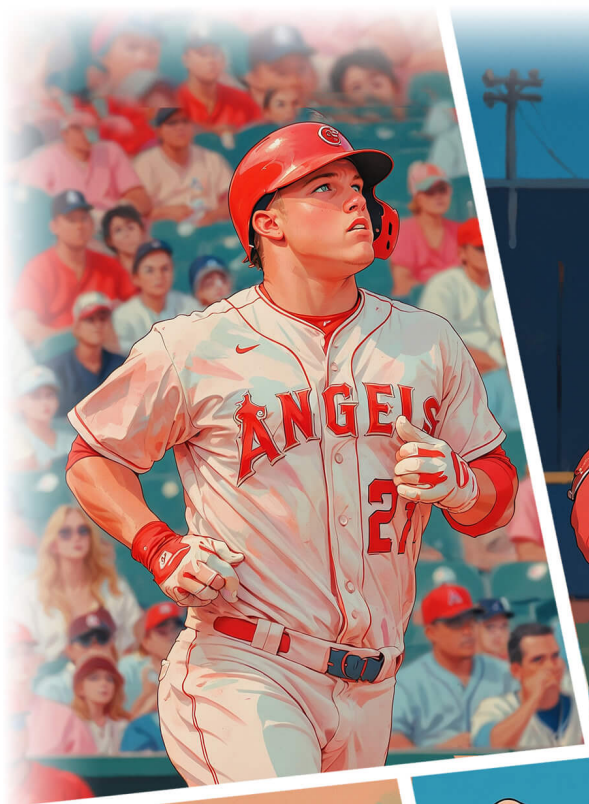
*You don't need to be flashy to be great.*

*All you need is heart, effort, and a promise to yourself:*

***"I'm going to show up every day, work hard, and never take this game for granted."***

*Just like Mike Trout.*







## Chapter 14

# Shohei Ohtani

## THE TWO-WAY PHENOMENON



**I**n Japan, when Shohei Ohtani was just a kid, he didn't dream small. He dreamed of doing something that hadn't been done in nearly 100 years:

**Be a superstar pitcher AND a powerful hitter—both!**

Most people said it wasn't possible.

“You have to choose,” they told him.

“You can’t do both.”

But Shohei just smiled and said:

“Why not?”

## The Boy With Two Talents

Growing up in the town of Ōshū, Japan, Shohei practiced constantly.

- He threw baseballs into nets until his arm ached.
- He hit so many balls, his hands were covered in blisters.
- He studied how his favorite players moved, trained, and focused.

His friends called him a baseball robot—because he never stopped.

But he wasn’t just hardworking—he was excited.

He loved the game so much that he’d bow to the field before playing to show respect.

## Pitcher or Slugger? Why Not Both!

As he grew up, Shohei got scary good—with both the bat and the ball.

- As a pitcher, he could throw a fastball over 100 mph—like a rocket!
- As a hitter, he crushed towering home runs that looked like they were headed for space!

When he came to the Major Leagues, fans didn’t know what to expect.

Could someone really do it all?

The answer was YES. And his name is Shohei Ohtani.

## The Unstoppable Superstar

Shohei quickly became one of the most exciting players in the world.

- In one game, he hit a home run and struck out 10 batters as a pitcher.

- He made All-Star history by being selected as both a pitcher and a hitter—in the same year!
- Kids started calling him “The Baseball Unicorn,” because he was one of a kind. But here’s what makes Shohei even more amazing: He’s still humble, always smiling, and often the first to cheer on his teammates.

### What Can We Learn from Shohei Ohtani?



- Don’t let others decide your limits.
- Hard work can turn impossible into possible.
- Respect the game—and it will respect you.
- Be fearless. Be kind. Be legendary.

### Fun Facts!



- Shohei is ambidextrous—he can use both hands for different things!
- He wrote a “dream board” as a teen, listing his goals, and nearly all of them came true.
- He once hit a home run so far, even the announcers went silent for a moment—jaw dropped!

**Message for Young Dreamers:**

*You don't have to pick just one dream.*

*You can build your own path—even if no one's done it before.*

*So grab your glove, swing for the stars, and if anyone says,*

*"You can't do that,"*

*just smile like Shobei and ask:*

*"Why not?"*







## Chapter 15

# Mariano Rivera

## THE GREATEST CLOSER



**B**efore Mariano Rivera became the greatest closer baseball has ever seen, he was just a skinny kid from a small fishing village in Panama, playing baseball with a cardboard glove and balls made of tape and socks.

- He didn't have a fancy field.
- He didn't have perfect equipment.
- But he had something even better:
- A calm heart and a dream that never gave up.

## **A Humble Start by the Sea**

Mariano grew up helping his father repair fishing boats.

During breaks, he'd run to the sandlots and play baseball with his friends.

They didn't have bases, so they used rocks.

No real bats? Sticks worked just fine.

“We didn't have much,” he once said,

“but we had love for the game.”

Even then, he had a quiet fire—a calm determination that burned stronger than any storm.

## **The Cutter That Changed Everything**

Mariano didn't become a pitcher until later.

In fact, he didn't even know how to throw a special pitch—until one day, something magical happened...

While practicing in the minors, his ball suddenly started to cut—moving sharply at the last second.

No one could hit it!

That pitch became known as the “cutter,” and it turned Mariano into a baseball legend.

Hitters knew it was coming.

They still couldn't hit it.

## **Cool as Ice Under Pressure**

As a closer, Mariano came into the game when it mattered most—

Ninth inning. Game on the line. Stadium roaring.

But he never looked scared.

He didn't shout. He didn't show off.

He just stepped on the mound, nodded to his catcher, and threw strike after strike.

They called him:

- The Sandman – because he put teams to sleep.
- Mr. Automatic – because he was that reliable.
- The Greatest Closer of All Time – because... well, he earned it.

## **A Career Like No Other**

- 652 career saves – the most in baseball history.
    - 5 World Series rings with the New York Yankees.
    - Elected to the Hall of Fame—unanimously! (The first player ever!)
- But even with all that glory, Mariano stayed humble, grateful, and faithful to who he was.

## **What Can We Learn from Mariano Rivera?**



- Calmness can be your superpower.
- Greatness doesn't need to be loud.
- Work with what you have—make it shine.
- Let your actions speak louder than your words.

## Fun Facts!



- Mariano used to fix nets and boats before becoming a pro.
- He wore number 42, the same number Jackie Robinson made famous.
- His entrance song, “Enter Sandman,” gave chills to batters and fans.

## Message for Young Athletes:

*You don't need to be the biggest.*

*You don't need to be the fastest.*

*You just need to believe, stay calm, and give your best when it matters most.*

*Like Mariano Rivera, you can close out doubt, shut down fear, and walk off the field as a champion.*







Part 2:  
Unbelievable  
Baseball Moments

## **1. The Called Shot – Babe Ruth’s Legendary Gesture**

In the middle of a loud, tense World Series game in 1932, Babe Ruth did something wild. He stepped up to bat, pointed his finger toward the outfield fence... and BOOM! He hit the next pitch exactly where he pointed.

Some say it really happened, others say it’s just a legend—but either way, it’s the most famous “I got this” moment in baseball history!



## **2. The Shot Heard ‘Round the World – A Home Run for the Ages**

It was 1951. The Giants were losing. The crowd was biting their nails. Then, Bobby Thomson swung hard—and crushed a home run that sent the Giants to the World Series!

The crowd went bonkers, radios blared across the country, and people shouted, “Did you hear it?! That was the shot heard ’round the world!”



## **3. The Perfect Game in the World Series – Don Larsen’s Big Day**

Pitching a perfect game is hard. Doing it in the World Series? Almost impossible. But in 1956, Don Larsen did it!

Not one batter reached base. Not one mistake. Just 27 up, 27 down.

It was baseball perfection on the biggest stage—like hitting every note in a symphony... blindfolded!

#### **4. The 2004 Red Sox Comeback – Never Give Up**

The Red Sox were down 3 games to 0. Everyone said they were done. But they didn't quit. They clawed back—one game at a time—and shocked the world by winning four in a row and then the World Series!

It was baseball's greatest comeback and a reminder: never say never



#### **5. Rickey Henderson's Record-Breaking Stolen Base**

Speedster Rickey Henderson didn't just steal bases—he made it an art. In 1991, he stole his 939th base, the most ever! Then he held up the base like a trophy and said, “I am the greatest of all time!”

Rickey ran so fast, it looked like his legs were made of lightning bolts!



#### **6. The Longest Baseball Game Ever Played**

Imagine playing baseball for two whole days! In 1981, the Pawtucket Red Sox and the Rochester Red Wings played a 33-inning game that lasted over 8 hours!

Players were sleepy, fans were yawning, and even the scoreboard got tired! But they kept going—and made history.



## **7. The Pine Tar Incident – A Controversial Moment**

In 1983, George Brett smashed a go-ahead home run... but wait! The umpires said his bat had too much pine tar (a sticky grip). They took the home run away!

George stormed the field, face red, arms waving like a windmill. Later, the home run was allowed again—but the moment? Baseball chaos!



## **8. A Fan Catches a Foul Ball... While Holding a Baby!**

During a game, a foul ball zoomed toward the stands—and a dad holding a baby reached up with one hand and caught it!

The crowd gasped, then cheered. Even the baby looked impressed! Now that's what you call a super-parent!



## **9. A Pitcher and a Catcher Swap Positions Mid-Game**

In a fun and wacky moment, a pitcher and catcher swapped spots during the game—just to shake things up! The pitcher crouched behind the plate, and the catcher took the mound.

They laughed, the fans laughed, and hey... it actually worked!



## 10. The Fastest Pitch Ever Recorded

Aroldis Chapman threw a baseball so fast it practically caught fire—105.1 mph! That’s faster than most cars on a highway.

Batters could barely see the ball, let alone hit it. Zoom! It was gone before they blinked!



## 11. The Hidden Ball Trick – Outs in the Sneakiest Way

Sometimes baseball isn’t just skill—it’s sneaky. In one game, the first baseman pretended to give the ball back to the pitcher... but kept it in his glove.

The runner stepped off the base... TAG! Out! Everyone laughed (except the runner). Classic trick!



## 12. A No-Hitter With One Arm – Jim Abbott’s Incredible Story

Jim Abbott was born with only one hand—but that never stopped him. He threw a no-hitter in the major leagues in 1993!

He’d pitch, switch his glove super fast, and be ready to catch. It was like watching magic.

Jim proved that nothing is impossible when you believe in yourself.



### **13. The Time a Bird Got Hit by a Pitch**

It sounds made up—but it really happened! In 2001, Randy Johnson threw a pitch so fast, it hit a bird that flew across the field at the wrong moment.

Poof! Feathers flew everywhere. Even the umpire didn't know what to call it. Nature said: "Foul ball?"



### **14. A Walk-Off Grand Slam for the World Series Win**

The bases were loaded. The pressure was huge. Then—BOOM! A batter crushed a grand slam to win the entire World Series.

The crowd exploded. Teammates danced on the field. It was like the final level of a video game... and they beat the boss with one swing!



### **15. The Most Unbelievable Baseball Comeback**

Down by 12 runs. The game seemed over. But one team kept fighting—and little by little, they scored. Then more. And more!

In the last inning, they hit a home run and WON the game! Fans couldn't believe their eyes. It was a wild reminder that it's never over until the last out!

# Your Turn at Bat

And that's the last pitch of our final story—but it's far from the end. Because your story is just beginning.

You've read about legends who started out just like you—kids with big dreams, lots of energy, and a love for the game. They faced challenges, made mistakes, and kept going anyway. And look where it took them.

## **Now it's your turn.**

Whether you play baseball or another sport or have dreams of your own—remember what these stories showed you:

- Work hard
- Be kind
- Never give up
- Believe in yourself, even when it's tough.

Thank you for taking this journey with us. We're so proud of you for reading, learning, and dreaming big.

Who knows? Maybe one day, your name will be in a book like this—inspiring the next generation of young champions.

Keep swinging for the fences.

## **We believe in you.**

# Baseball Card Collecting Guide



Ready to discover the coolest and most legendary baseball cards ever? These cards aren't just pieces of cardboard — they're tiny pieces of baseball history!



## 1909-11 T206 HONUS WAGNER

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** KNOWN AS THE "HOLY GRAIL" OF BASEBALL CARDS.

**FACT:** HONUS WAGNER DIDN'T WANT HIS CARD DISTRIBUTED, POSSIBLY DUE TO TOBACCO PROMOTION, SO ONLY AROUND 60 EXIST TODAY.

**VALUE:** ONE OF THESE CARDS SOLD FOR \$7.25 MILLION IN AUGUST 2022, MAKING IT ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE SPORTS CARDS EVER SOLD.



## 1952 TOPPS MICKEY MANTLE

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** CONSIDERED THE MOST ICONIC POST-WAR BASEBALL CARD.

**FACT:** IT WASN'T MANTLE'S ROOKIE CARD, BUT IT SYMBOLIZED THE GOLDEN AGE OF BASEBALL CARD COLLECTING.

**VALUE:** A MINT CONDITION VERSION SOLD FOR A RECORD-BREAKING \$12.6 MILLION IN 2022.



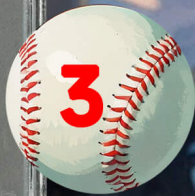


## 1914 BALTIMORE NEWS BABE RUTH

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** RUTH'S VERY FIRST CARD, SHOWING HIM AS A MINOR LEAGUER.

**FACT:** ONLY ABOUT 10 KNOWN COPIES EXIST—SUPER RARE AND HISTORICALLY POWERFUL.

**VALUE:** ONE SOLD FOR \$7.2 MILLION IN DECEMBER 2023, MAKING IT THE MOST EXPENSIVE BABE RUTH ITEM EVER SOLD.

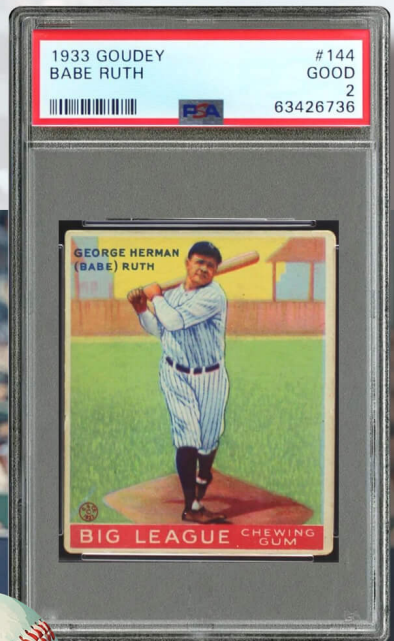


## 1933 GOUDEY BABE RUTH (#144, #149, #181, #53)

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** FOUR DIFFERENT CARDS OF RUTH IN ONE LEGENDARY SET.

**FACT:** THE #53 CARD IS THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER OF THE BUNCH DUE TO ITS BEAUTIFUL YELLOW BACKGROUND.

**VALUE:** PRICES VARY BASED ON CONDITION; FOR INSTANCE, A PSA GOOD+ 2.5 GRADED CARD SOLD FOR \$11,700 IN MARCH 2024

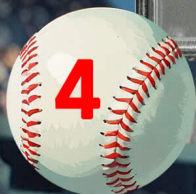
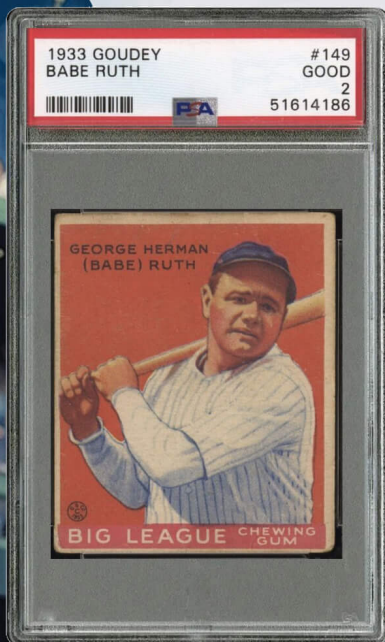


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## 1989 UPPER DECK KEN GRIFFEY JR. ROOKIE CARD (#1)

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** THE FIRST CARD IN THE FIRST UPPER DECK SET—AN INSTANT CLASSIC.

**FACT:** HELPED LAUNCH THE "MODERN ERA" OF CARD COLLECTING AND MADE GRIFFEY A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

**VALUE:** DEPENDING ON CONDITION, PRICES RANGE FROM AROUND \$50 TO OVER \$1,700 FOR A PSA 10 GRADED CARD.



## 1909-11 T206 TY COBB (RED BACKGROUND)

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** ONE OF THE RAREST CARDS OF ONE OF THE FIERCEST PLAYERS IN BASEBALL HISTORY.

**FACT:** TY COBB HAS MULTIPLE T206 CARDS, BUT THE RED BACKGROUND IS THE MOST ICONIC.

**VALUE:** DEPENDING ON CONDITION, PRICES RANGE FROM AROUND \$4,000 TO OVER \$72,000



## 1951 BOWMAN MICKEY MANTLE ROOKIE CARD

**WHY IT'S FAMOUS:** THIS IS ACTUALLY MANTLE'S TRUE ROOKIE CARD (BEFORE THE FAMOUS 1952 TOPPS).

**FACT:** BOWMAN'S HAND-PAINTED ARTWORK STYLE MAKES IT A VISUAL STANDOUT.

**VALUE:** DEPENDING ON CONDITION, PRICES RANGE FROM AROUND \$5,000 TO OVER \$750,000