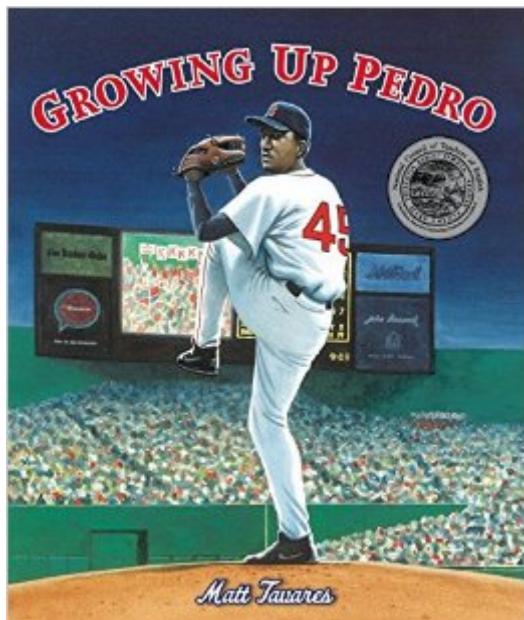


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# Growing Up Pedro: How The Martinez Brothers Made It From The Dominican Republic All The Way To The Major Leagues



## Synopsis

The love between brothers is key to Matt Tavares' tale of Dominican pitcher Pedro Martínez, from his days of throwing rocks at mangoes to his years as a major-league star. Before Pedro Martínez pitched the Red Sox to a World Series championship, before he was named to the All-Star team eight times, before he won the Cy Young three times, he was a kid from a place called Manoguayabo in the Dominican Republic. Pedro loved baseball more than anything, and his older brother Ramon was the best pitcher he'd ever seen. He'd dream of the day he and his brother could play together in the major leagues—and here, Matt Tavares tells the story of how that dream came true. In a fitting homage to a modern day baseball star, the acclaimed author-illustrator examines both Pedro Martínez's improbable rise to the top of his game and the power that comes from the deep bond between brothers.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Summary: Before the story begins, there is a 1998 quote from Pedro Martinez: "Ramon is the biggest reason I have gotten where I am. He is the great one in this family. I am still Ramon's little brother." Tavares then tells the story not only of pitching great Pedro Martinez, but of his older brother Ramon, also an MLB player, who inspired Pedro to work as hard

as he did. Growing up in poverty in the Dominican Republic, the boys dreamed of playing professional baseball. When Pedro was 12, his brother began his pro career training at the Los Angeles Dodgers' Dominican academy. Pedro tagged along and learned alongside Ramon. Eight years later, the brothers were on the Dodgers together. Pedro went on a legendary career in baseball, including leading the Red Sox to a World Series victory in 2004, but his ties to his brother and his home in the Dominican Republic remain strong. Pros: Add this to Matt Tavares' list of great baseball biographies, along with Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, and Ted Williams. Sports fans will be inspired by the brothers' rags-to-riches story and will enjoy the large, vivid illustrations. Cons: It would be interesting to know more about what Pedro and Ramon are doing now via the Author's Note.

Pedro Martinez once was the highest paid player in baseball. *GROWING UP PEDRO* is a children's biography that tells how Pedro came from his humble beginnings in the Dominican Republic, following in the shadow of his brother Ramon to become the most valued and highest baseball player in the game. Growing up Ramon was the better baseball player and pitcher and Pedro wanted to be just like his brother. While the brothers were close, *GROWING UP PEDRO* is the story of Pedro and only discusses Ramon in how he influenced his brother's life and career. It's nice reading a story about someone who became a massive success, but didn't forget about where they came from. The end of the book includes a short note from the author. Overall, *GROWING UP PEDRO* is another great baseball biography from the talented Matt Tavares.

This book is incredible! The best review I could give is post I just sent to the author, Matt Tavares. This is what I wrote...Hi Matt, I finally got your book, "Growing Up Pedro" It is unbelievable! Your illustrations and the story are awesome. I asked my wife to come look at it with me, and, always frugal, she said, "Oh my god this is a great book... How much did you pay for it?" I told her, and she was shocked that I could get such a high quality book for the price. I can't wait to read this to my Grandson, this is one of his birthday presents. This will be an heirloom in our family for sure. Your other books will be ordered immediately. Wow, Thanks again.

Here's another excellent book about a major league baseball player by Matt Tavares. We always start the new baseball season with Matt's latest biography. This one, on Pedro Martinez, is just as good as the picture books that have gone before it. Thanks for another solid hit Matt...now it is time to play ball! Book provided by publisher

The author-illustrator Matt Tavares makes beautiful picture books, many of which explore stories from baseball. His sports biographies for young readers include *Henry Aaron*’s Dream, *There Goes Ted Williams*, and *Becoming Babe Ruth*. In *Growing Up Pedro*, Dominican major league pitcher Pedro Martinez takes a turn in the spotlight. At the peak of Martinez’s brilliant career, he pitched for the Boston Red Sox. In 2004, his performance in Game 3 helped the team capture a long-sought World Series championship. Martinez’s story abounds with tall achievements, but there are other, smaller points of inspiration in his journey, and this combination makes him an ideal hero for kid readers. Just as the title implies, *Growing Up Pedro* traces Martinez’s rise to baseball glory back to childhood years. As the story begins, young Martinez sits on the sidelines, riveted by his older brother Ramón’s ability to fire fastballs. Ramón is good—“really good”—but even as he pursues his own baseball dreams, Ramón takes the time to teach Pedro everything he knows about pitching. Sometimes they practice their aim on mangos, still clinging to the branches. When Ramón is drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers, Pedro continues honing his skills on his own and ultimately captures the attention of U.S. talent scouts. After he joins his brother in Los Angeles, Pedro faces new challenges. He must work hard to prove himself to critics who consider him too small-framed to succeed as a major-leaguer. Before it’s all over, Martinez perfects a 97-mph fastball, wins the prestigious Cy Young Award multiple times, captures a World Series title, and lands a spot in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. *Growing Up Pedro* succeeds on multiple levels. First, it’s a story of dreaming big and achieving bigger. The narrative emphasizes that talent plus hard work make it possible for this young boy to rise out of obscurity and poverty. In one illustration, Pedro is shown alone, practicing outdoors at sunset. With Ramón already in the United States, Pedro’s internal drive to excel is what keeps him going, throwing pitch after pitch in the dying light. As already noted, this picture book offers a warm portrayal of the family bonds that carry both brothers into the ranks of professional sports. One vignette shows them dreaming aloud: “At night, they lie awake, two to a mattress, and talk about what they will do when they are millionaires.” *Growing Up Pedro* also gives satisfying glimpses of rural Caribbean life, and it drives home the importance of baseball in the Dominican culture. At Campo Las Palmas, a Dodgers’ facility in the Dominican Republic, dozens of boys go through the thirty-day tryout alongside Pedro. Matt Tavares’s illustrations command attention. The soft colors of his landscapes suggest sunshine diffused by tropical humidity. Mountains draped in lush vegetation fill the backdrops of the Dominican scenes. In the second part of the story, Pedro’s world

switches to baseball stadiums packed with cheering fans, dressed in Red Sox team colors. One powerful illustration zooms in on Martinez's face as he stands at the pitcher's mound. His eyes contain supreme focus and reflect years of devotion to his sport. The accompanying text reads: "when it is his turn to pitch, Pedro is very serious. All day, he is quiet and focused. When he takes the mound, he imagines he is a lion fighting for his food." Toward the end of the book, the narrative circles back around to the Dominican Republic. When an injured Pedro nevertheless pitches and sends the Red Sox into the American League Championship Series, Tavares's paintbrush fills in scenes of celebration on the home front, where fans gather in front of television sets to watch Pedro. Following his success, people dance in the streets. Kids tie scraps of metal to their bikes and ride through the darkness. Sparks light up the night like fireworks. This is a transcendent moment that extends the hero's journey into something bigger than himself, into a victory for all his people and for other dreamers, near and far.

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