

The Diamond Cipher

A Baseball Romance

By W. A. PHILON

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Secret Service Chief Wilkins, puzzled over the theft of the Government cipher, calls to his aid Detective Pinkwell. They find the office boy, Brockett, tells them it is "The Diamond Cipher" and starts for the ball park.

CHAPTER II—Brockett, Chula Lon Kau, a Chinese, Ramon Solano, a Cuban, together with some twenty other youngsters practice baseball playing until dark. One of Wilkins' stenographers is seen to pass a paper to mysterious stranger.

CHAPTER III—As outcome of Brockett's cipher, the call player and Solano are engaged by government for mysterious mission. Yazimoto, mysterious Jap, calls on Brockett.

"There are, of these who are competitor against me, some, whom I do not know by name definitely, who resort to means not wholly honest. I am sorry, much, that I say this of my own countrymen, but it is truth I tell you. I have reason to believe that my correspondence, both in Japanese and in English, is as you say it, held up, read by these not so honorable competitors. So I have come to you, Mr. Brockett."

"To me? Why, what can I do for you?"

"That shall now be told you, Mr. Brockett. I could now make use of some new, very different correspondence cipher. If in English, that would be very good—my firm has at home most admirable English educated clerks. Friends of mine tell me that you, Mr. Brockett, have devised such cipher. A cipher of most honorable excellence. If this cipher were to be adaptive to the use of commerce, I would pay well. I say, in fact, Mr. Brockett, I pay modestly high money. Suppose that you demonstrate for me the idea of your cipher. If it shall prove satisfactory for the commercial purpose, I pay you \$5,000. And, that I show I am a man of business, and that I do not waste the valuable time, I pay you, if satisfactory or no, \$500 that you only demonstrate for me the idea of the cipher."

"The smiling Japanese had drawn forth a thick, prosperous-looking wallet, and was fumbling with it when Brockett slowly, but emphatically shook his head."

"Mr. Yazimoto, you have been misinformed. I cannot imagine where you gained your information, but it is wrong, completely wrong. I have no cipher for sale, and am sorry that I cannot oblige you."

Mr. Yazimoto sighed as he replaced the portly pocketbook.

"I am deeply sorry, Mr. Brockett, that you should lose the opportunity for enlargement of fortunes. Perhaps you will reconsider. Maybe I call up on you another time. I will bid you the honorable good night. I passed it as I came in. Curious thing; when I called to Havana this afternoon, he was beside me at the Western Union office, and loaned me an ink-pencil."

"He did? Was there anything especially important in the message?"

"Nothing at all aside from informing my father that I would take an extra month for my vacation, beginning now. Even if he could have read it—it was in Spanish, too—that wouldn't be of much value to him."

"Hardly. I am beginning to do some extensive thinking about it. He, though. Listen to the proposition he made me ten minutes ago. And Brockett rapidly outlined the tempting offer made by Mr. Yazimoto."

"Something doing, sure," commented Solano. "I can see one thing clearly. He fancied that you would sell him a duplicate of your diamond cipher—though I cannot figure out how he could get in touch with that idea so quickly. Yes I can too. The stenographer! By the way, Harry, I forgot to tell you—I have seen that girl chatting with this same Japanese two or three times. You remember that when we saw them together I was trying to recall some place, some occasion, when I had noticed one or both of them?"

"Looks as if we would have to watch out for Mr. Yazimoto. He may try some Jiu Jitsu tricks if he really wants to get that cipher."

"Quite likely, Harry. Do you know anything about Jiu Jitsu?"

"Only what I have read. I have always believed that a good American swing to the jaw would discount all the Jiu Jitsu in the world, and if that wouldn't be enough, I learned a few wrestling tricks from an old grappler some months ago. Nevertheless, I will watch out for that Yazimoto man. He must mean trouble."

The bell rang, and Harry, eagerly responding, welcomed a sturdy, red-headed cherub of fifteen—Mike McKane, a well-liked, much-trusted department messenger, and an especial favorite with General Cole. The boy held, in a box-constrictor clutch, a thick envelope, which he surrendered to Brockett with a grunt of satisfaction.

"The old man," explained the messenger, "told me to give this to you yourself, and nobody else. You didn't tell no Japanese guy to relay the letter to you, did you?"

"Why, no—not in a hundred years. What do you mean, Mickey?"

See you just now it was, Harry. I'm just comin' up yer steps, when a Japanese guy stops me. 'Ah, boy,' says he, 'have you a message for Mr. Brockett?' He has asked me to receive it for him."

"He gits it himself, an' no one else can horn in," says I, an' hurried on quick. I thought he was goin' to make a jump for me, but mebbe I was mistaken. Anyhow, here's yer letter."

Brockett and Solano exchanged glances. "This Japanese gentleman is certainly in search of trouble," exclaimed Brockett.

"You speak of perfect knowledge, Mr. Brockett. So we make you in the unconscious condition, using no force greater than essential. But before we can take what we required from your pockets, we are attacked. We are overpowered. I, myself, am expert in the Jiu Jitsu, but while I am occupied seeking for your pocket this boy, this young Samurai, for he most honorably great as a fighting man, spring upon me, seize me by the ankles, and throw me prostrate, so that the Jiu Jitsu cannot aid me."

Mike McKane gurgled gleefully. "That's one trick you overlooked, Mr. Yazzy," he chuckled. "You get a guy round the ankles, an' give him one jerk—why, say, a baby could throw Jack Johnson! One kid in New York did sling Jack Johnson that way, a little newboy—aw, say, excuse me, Harry, I'm hornin' in on yer game."

Mr. Yazimoto eyed the stocky messenger, not at all resentfully. "It was honorably so, as the boy explain. I shall remember that at-tack—some time I may make estimate use of it, if I am thrown down with this assault of the boy, Mr. Brockett, then you return to sensibleness, and I am with great speedness defeated."

"How about your friend, Mr. Yazimoto?" put in Solano. "He didn't seem to have any Jiu Jitsu ready for me. I followed Mickey through the door, your partner tried to stop me, and one good kick brought him down in a heap. Couldn't you have picked a better helper?"

Mr. Yazimoto looked rather ruefully upon his associate, who had not opened his mouth since entering the house, and was simply nursing his bruises.

"My friend," said the Japanese, "is not what you would say of expertness in personal encounter. With the bolo, possibly, he should do admirably well, but he has not sufficient skill for honorable battle."

"He's no Jap, all right," commented Mike McKane, studying the silent prisoner.

"No. Not of Nippon," exclaimed Mr. Yazimoto. "He is of long long duration my friend, however, and for many reasons he is in accompaniment with this evening."

"Filipino, I should judge," remarked Solano. "Let me talk to him." The Cuban spoke briefly but emphatically in Spanish, and the prisoner returned a short and equally emphatic answer. Solano looked somewhat crestfallen as he translated.

"I says," interpreted the Cuban young man, "that he has no information to give me; that Mr. Yazimoto can do all the talking necessary, and that I am a renegade, and a dog to be mixed up with Yankee pigs."

There was a general laugh, in which Mr. Yazimoto joined as heartily as anyone. Then the Japanese looked up at Brockett with a quizzical air.

"The explanations are honorably finished, Mr. Brockett. You have now the fullest comprehension of the complete proceedings. It is now to ask—what shall you, being victorious, do with us, being honorably defeated?"

"I suppose," responded Brockett, "that we ought to have you run in. Still, that might cause unpleasant complications. I don't care to have the morning papers and everyone who reads them—fully posted as to the reasons for your attack upon me, Mr. Yazimoto. On careful consideration of the whole affair, I am strongly tempted to let you go. Don't you think that would be best, Ramon?"

The Cuban gave an unqualified assent. "They didn't get what they were after, Harry, and they did get a trimmings that they won't forget in a hurry. Let them be on their way, and in a hurry."

Brockett conducted his prisoners to the door, and dismissed them with a ceremonious bow.

"Good-night, Mr. Yazimoto. Come again."

The Filipino limped sullenly away. But Mr. Yazimoto turned, with a smile that illuminated his scarred face for

most unfortunate error. I plan non-orbitally well, but this boy, this small fellow, disarrange plans excellently executed."

"Surest thing you know, pal," approved Mike McKane, gleefully. "I'm the disarranging kid when I get started."

"I had suppose," Mr. Yazimoto went on, "that there was excellent chance that you might step from doorway during evening. You did so, with exactitude. With the honorable assistance of my friend—we not necessitate to mention his name—I strike you, not serious, not with brutality. There was not, I honorably assure you, the desire to kill or cause most unfortunate inconvenience. I trust you will accord me the honor of frank belief."

"Why, with pleasure, Mr. Yazimoto," laughed Brockett. "Go on with your story."

Mr. Yazimoto smiled amicably again. "I take, as you say in honorable discourse, the long chance. Also I do hear your colleagues speak thus—the rough stuff that I may accomplish the honorable purpose. You understand, I have nothing of doubt, my wish. I must accomplish what I am required to do."

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Yazimoto. You wanted to get certain documents, from my pocket, and thought they would doubtless be in that pocket when I stepped out into the dark."

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