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Sommario/riassunto	One of the most colorful and controversial figures in American intelligence, Herbert O. Yardley (1889-1958) gave America its best form of information, but his fame rests more on his indiscretions than on his achievements. In this highly readable biography, a premier historian of military intelligence tells Yardley's story and evaluates his impact on the American intelligence community. Yardley established the nation's first codebreaking agency in 1917, and his solutions

helped the United States win a major diplomatic victory at the 1921 disarmament conference. But when his unit was closed in 1929 because "gentlemen do not read each other's mail," Yardley wrote a best-selling memoir that introduced-and disclosed-codemaking and codebreaking to the public. David Kahn de-scribes the vicissitudes of Yardley's career, including his work in China and Canada, offers a capsule history of American intelligence up to World War I, and gives a short course in classical codes and ciphers. He debunks the accusations that the publication of Yardley's book caused Japan to change its codes and ciphers and that Yardley traitorously sold his solutions to Japan. And he asserts that Yardley's disclosures not only did not hurt but actually helped American codebreaking during World War II.
