



Chief Bender's Burden: The Silent Struggle of a Baseball Star

Tom Swift

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The greatest American Indian baseball player of all time, Charles Albert Bender was, according to a contemporary, “the coolest pitcher in the game.” Using a trademark delivery, an impressive assortment of pitches that may have included the game’s first slider, and an apparently unflappable demeanor, he earned a reputation as baseball’s great clutch pitcher during tight Deadball Era pennant races and in front of boisterous World Series crowds. More remarkably yet, “Chief” Bender’s Hall of Fame career unfolded in the face of enormous prejudice. Winner of the 2009 Seymour Medal, this skillfully told and complete account of Bender’s life is also a portrait of greatness of character in the face of incredible pressure.

With a journalist’s eye for detail and a novelist’s feel for storytelling, Tom Swift takes readers on Bender’s improbable journey—from his early years on the White Earth Reservation, to his development at the Carlisle Indian School, to his big break and eventual rise to the pinnacle of baseball. The story of a paradoxical American sports hero, one who achieved a once-unfathomable celebrity while suffering the harsh injustices of a racially intolerant world, *Chief Bender’s Burden* is an eye-opening and inspiring narrative of a unique American life.

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