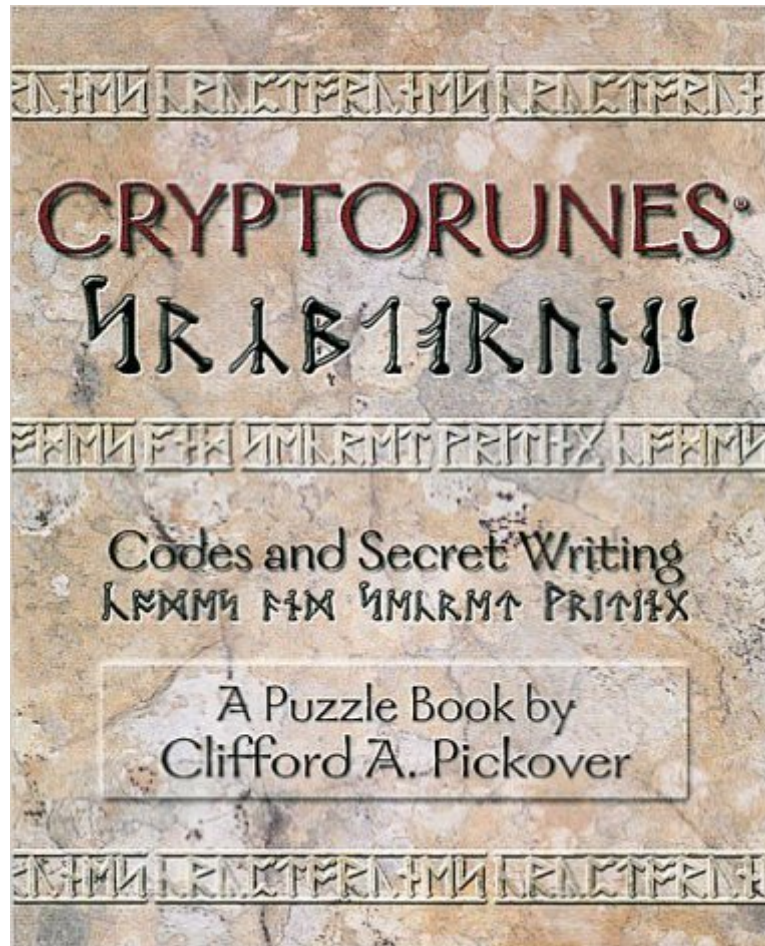


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# Cryptorunes: Codes And Secret Writing



## Synopsis

This book is for thinkers of all ages who want to enter new mental worlds, stretch their intellect and imagination, and solve fascinating mysteries. Its one hundred language puzzles are rendered in an assortment of runicalphabets--some in the traditional Norse runes used as long ago as the first century A.D., and many in unique and beautiful new runic characters. Some puzzles are simple, others very difficult, and their encrypted messages swing from silly to curious to profound. But Cryptorunes is much more than a book of puzzles. You'll also find knowledgeable and highly engaging notes on runic alphabets and the ancient cultures from which they arose; a brief, brilliant history of cryptography; guidelines for creating and solving many kinds of codes; and a wildly imaginative (but disturbingly plausible) story about the first extraterrestrial message to reach Earth. Just before the chapter giving answers to the puzzles, a Clues section offers a little assistance to those who are almost able to solve a given cryptogram.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you have time to spare and a desire to exercise your mind in an entertaining way, then take a look at this book. It is not \*just\* a puzzle book, there is plenty of fact and anecdote to interest you as well. The main theme of the book is simple cryptography, as described in the works of Conan Doyle and Edgar Allen Poe. Obviously you cannot decipher relatively modern cryptograms such as those produced by the Germans in the last world war without a lot of time and a computer, but in previous times when the average person was a lot less well educated many simple codes were baffling to most readers and could maintain secrecy. Understanding how these simple cyphers work and may

be "broken" is the first step to understanding modern cryptography.

I purchased this book after I had first gotten interested in Cryptograms. I found the puzzles to be a lot more fun than the standard Cryptograms just involving english characters because there are a number of twists in the codes which add a unique challenge. For example, some of the cyphers involve symbols that stand for more than one letter. This adds additional challenge to the cyphers because the same symbol may stand for M or D and a different symbol for I or Y. Hence, you have to try to determine in each instance which letter the symbol represents. As someone who is still improving at cryptograms, I have not solved all of the puzzles in this book. Nevertheless, that means that there are challenges that I can come back to solve at later times as I get better. Also, the history of different cryptograms and some of the stories that he shares are fun in satisfying some of my intellectual curiosity about the history of cryptograms.

Clifford Pickover truly seems to be a Renaissance man. His previous forays into conundrums and puzzles have ranged from time travel to hyperspace to infinity. This time, it's cryptography. While some of the aspects of these puzzles might be hard for some novices, and I could wish for room and space to more easily work on the puzzles, the puzzles themselves are a joy to play with. If you like cryptographic analysis, enjoyed Neal Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon*, or want to try a brain teaser of a different sort, then you might want to delve into *Cryptorunes*.

Cliff Pickover is making me stay up late with his new book *Cryptorunes*. This book is a wonderful and remarkable collection of puzzles, stories of cryptography and a history of Runes. This is not an average puzzle book of cryptograms. Cliff goes many steps further and brings the reader an added level of difficulty and an added dimension of enjoyment. The variety of puzzles that the reader can solve range from the simple one symbol equals one letter to much the much tougher where more than one symbol can equal a letter or one symbol can equal more than one letter. Cliff also offers the reader very challenging puzzles with no solution in the back of the book. Be the first to crack those codes!

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