

Making Everything Easier!™

# Cracking Codes & Cryptograms

FOR  
DUMMIES®

## Learn to:

- Expose conspiracies like the characters do in Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol*
- Decipher cryptic puzzles
- Understand the role coded messages play in secret societies
- Use encrypted alphabets to unveil secrets of the past

**Denise Sutherland**

*Syndicated puzzle author*

**Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, PhD**

*M.:M.:., 32°, KT*

Foreword by Christopher Hodapp 32°

Author, *Freemasons For Dummies*



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# Cracking Codes and Cryptograms For Dummies®

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***Cracking Code & Cryptograms For  
Dummies<sup>®</sup>***

**by Denise Sutherland**

Syndicated puzzle author

**by Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, PhD**

MM, 32°, KT

**Foreword by Chris Hodapp**

Author and coauthor of

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The Templar Code For Dummies

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# About the Authors

Denise Sutherland is an Australian puzzle writer. She has studied science, music, art, and graphic design, which helps no end when it comes to writing puzzles of all kinds. She is the author of *Word Searches For Dummies*, amongst other books, and is syndicated through Auspac Media. She lives in Canberra, the Australian capital, with her husband and kids.

When not puzzling, Denise can be found knitting obsessively and reading murder mysteries.

Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, PhD, is a writer who lives with his wife Kathleen in New York City. Mark is a 32° Scottish Rite Freemason, and a Knight Templar in the York Rite of Freemasonry. He wrote *Discovering the Lost Symbol: The Mind of Dan Brown*, *The Truth About the Freemasons*, and *The Idea that We Can Become Gods*, as well as *Freemasonry: An Introduction*, and the chapter on Freemasonry in Dan Burstein's book, *Secrets of The Lost Symbol*. Mark thanks Christopher Hodapp for recommending him for this project.

# Dedication

Denise dedicates the book to the memory of Tony Newell, 1943–2009.

*Av znkx, deiirnknx, mih askx oscrib eiqon, xmpni zndsgn lrk  
xran zv onepmnarm. Ksgnov arkknh.*

Mark dedicates the book to Brittany, who likes to figure things out.

68.40.27.55.66.37 29.91.99.68.98 68.27.46 40.27.05.34.37  
30.68.03.99 34.91.60.37 29.03.66.55.55.68.27.98 60.37.03.98  
30.40.05.41

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# Foreword

---

I believe it was Sherlock Holmes who once said, “Why, look, Watson! It’s a simple English schoolboy’s code! Quick, get me a simple English schoolboy!” Okay, maybe he didn’t actually say that.

Puzzles frustrate me. They always have. I have a tendency to stare at puzzles, cryptograms, and coded writing until beads of blood form on my forehead. I would have made a lousy Batman — I would have let the Riddler flood Gotham City or rob Fort Knox of its gold, because there was no way I was about to decipher one of his riddled clues. There I would have sat in the Bat Cave, with beads of blood forming on my cowl.

Cryptograms and secret codes have existed for centuries — there is evidence of coded writing dating back to the ancient Egyptians. Everyone, from kings and generals to criminal masterminds and 8th-grade study-hall cheaters, have sought ways to secretly communicate with each other while preventing spies, eavesdroppers, and biology teachers from discovering their plans. Wars and civilizations have turned on whether codes and ciphers were cracked or remained hidden. The outcome of World War II hinged on the ability of the British intelligence service to decipher messages sent by Nazi Germany’s famed “Enigma” machine. The U.S. military used Navajo, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Comanche “code talkers” during the war to transmit coded messages that were not based on commonly known languages and were, therefore, unbreakable.

I hadn’t thought much about coded writing until I became a Freemason. Because Masons are forbidden to write down their rituals, frustrated members over the last 300 years have sought ways to create study guides so they might learn the words

without actually breaking the rules. Some have simply written single-letter ciphers (“AYAM?” would stand for “Are you a Mason?”). Others got more complex, using symbols and abbreviations cribbed from old-fashioned shorthand (which is its own kind of coded writing once known by the most powerful people on Earth, secretaries and stenographers, and is today mostly a lost art). Still others came up with a whole series of coded alphabets that look like an indecipherable collection of right-angle stick figures and dots, devised from what is known in code-writing world as a Pigpen Cipher. In fact, this type of cipher is the centerpiece of a Masonic degree ritual called the Royal Arch Degree.

This kind of thing would have remained in the realm of a small corner of the population if it hadn’t been for Dan Brown and his novels. His fictional “symbologist” Robert Langdon took the subject out of the realm of tweedy MENSA meetings and made it both entertaining and exciting. From his “ambigrams” in *Angels & Demons* and the “cryptex” of *The Da Vinci Code* to the lost symbols of, well, *The Lost Symbol*, it’s not often that arcane, dusty, and obscure knowledge gets to collide head-first with mind-exercising fun in one package. It’s like two mutually exclusive brains shot out of opposite sides of a particle accelerator and squashed into one terrific pile of pages, if your stomach can pardon the potentially icky metaphor.

Out of two such colliding brains comes the book you now hold. My friend Mark Koltko-Rivera is well-versed in the history, philosophy, symbolism, and methods of secret (and secretive) societies. He was hot on the trail of Dan Brown’s clues from *The Lost Symbol* since the day they first appeared on the Internet in the summer of 2009, and his online blog entries about them were endlessly fascinating, exploring subjects far deeper than just the surface answers to the puzzles. Mark has a PhD in psychology and has specialized over the years in “worldviews,” which are ways in which people make assumptions about

reality and the effects of those assumptions. That makes him uniquely qualified to look at a code or cipher and see it differently than others do.

Denise Sutherland is a puzzle designer extraordinaire. Her puzzles, word searches, and designs have literally appeared all over the world, and she has an endless fascination with words. She is able to think differently about the way words can be jumbled together. Of course, she lives upside down in Australia and is married to an astrophysicist, which can only help when it comes to standing complex word combinations on their heads.

The result is a book with which I think you'll spend many happy hours engaged in frustration and surprise. As for me, I have every intention of taking this one to the beach. I'll be easy to spot. I'll be the one in a Batman suit, staring into the book with beads of blood forming on my cowl.

Chris Hodapp  
Indianapolis  
September 2, 2009

# Introduction

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You may have picked up this book for any number of reasons. Perhaps you really like trying to crack the codes in Dan Brown's novels. Maybe you liked playing with secret decoder rings pulled from boxes of cereal as a kid. Perhaps you were the kind of person who as a youngster liked to share secret, coded messages with your friends. Then again, you may be one of the many adults who likes to exercise your brain with the challenge of making and breaking encrypted messages. Or maybe you're just a professional espionage agent who's looking for tips and some recreation. (Hey, it's a tough life. Spies need fun, too.)

In *Cracking Codes & Cryptograms For Dummies* you can find fun, recreation, challenges for your brain, and information for your mind. The puzzles in this book immerse you in a world like the one in Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol* (published by Doubleday Books), where conspirators in the United States have labored for centuries to keep some secrets hidden dark and deep. (But can anything *stay* secret . . . ?)

## About This Book

*Cracking Codes & Cryptograms For Dummies* offers you the chance to use cryptography, cipher keys, symbols, and codes to reveal the narrative of three conspiracy stories, piece by piece and puzzle by puzzle. In this book, *you're* the symbologist; we give you everything you need to uncover the mysteries we set up in Chapter 3, and along the way we tell you about the use of codes and cryptograms in the world of secret societies.

The great thing is that you can solve the puzzles in this book in any order. Do them just for fun at your leisure. Tackle only the

Easy puzzles (or only the Treacherous puzzles if you dare!). Or work well into the night to decipher all the puzzles relating to The Conspiracy of West Point (see Chapter 3 for more about this conspiracy). If you get stuck at any point, check out the hints in Chapter 14. And don't forget to check your answers against Chapter 15.

## Conventions Used in This Book

To make working through this book a little easier for you, we set some conventions early on. (We thought about *creating* a secret society and ensuring you were initiated into it before we let you in on those conventions, but then we realized that hanging you from the ceiling by your ankles as you held burning candles in each hand could get a little messy, what with the drippy wax and all. Just kidding!) Everything you need to know is right here:

- ✓ In Chapter 3, we present you with three conspiracy stories that just happen to have large chunks of text missing. At the end of each chunk of missing text, we include a puzzle number in parentheses. Find that puzzle in Part II, solve it, and write the answer into the blanks in Chapter 3.
- ✓ All puzzles in this book have a difficulty rating of Easy, Tricky, or Treacherous. Use that rating to select your preferred level of difficulty, and don't be afraid to challenge yourself from time to time!
- ✓ If you get stuck on any puzzle, regardless of difficulty level, flip to Chapter 14. There we give you a hint to help you solve each puzzle. And don't worry, the answers are

in Chapter 15, so you won't accidentally see the solution when you're looking up the hint. (We would never ruin your fun like that!)

- ✓ Although some of the shorter puzzles in this book look like they're easy to solve (and some of the long puzzles look downright impossible), remember that length can be deceiving! If you don't have enough room to decipher a puzzle on any given page, we recommend using scrap paper.

## What You're Not to Read

You don't have to read every single part of this book. (But if you're like us, being told by the powers-that-be that you *don't* have to read something just ensures that you'll read it.)

If you're interested only in solving some fun cryptograms, feel free to ignore the fascinating bits of secret society lore in Chapter 1. If you already know how to solve all the different puzzle varieties in this book, you can skip Chapter 2. And as with all books in the For Dummies series, this one includes gray-shaded boxes of text (called sidebars) that are filled with fun information that's ultimately inessential to understanding the topic at hand.

## Foolish Assumptions

As we were writing this book, we made some assumptions about you, the reader:

- ✓ The conspiracy stories involve the fraternal group known as the Freemasons, but you don't really need to know anything about Freemasonry to enjoy the book and its puzzles. If you're curious about Freemasonry, you may want to read some of the books we suggest at the end of Chapter 1. While you're at it, check out *Conspiracy Theories & Secret Societies For Dummies* by Christopher Hodapp and Alice Von Kannon (Wiley).
- ✓ We assume you know the most basic concepts involving the American Revolutionary War and the American War between the States (the Civil War). However, if you want to discover more about these subjects — well, big surprise, we have For Dummies books for that! Consider reading *U.S. History For Dummies, 2nd Edition*, by Steve Wiegand, *U. S. Military History For Dummies* by John C. McManus, and *The Civil War For Dummies* by Keith D. Dickson (all published by Wiley).
- ✓ On the puzzle-solving front, we assume only that you're prepared to persevere with these ciphers. Many of them are easy to solve, but you may need a few tries to get some of them right.
- ✓ If you want to discover more about letter frequency analysis — a basic skill for solving cryptograms — you can delve into coauthor Denise's book *Word Searches For Dummies* (Wiley). For an academic treatise, try *Cryptanalysis: A Study of Ciphers and Their Solution* by Helen Fouché Gaines (Dover).

## **How This Book Is Organized**

This book is divided into three parts. Read on for more information about each.

## **Part I: Code and Cryptogram Strategies**

We start off by giving you some background information on codes and cryptograms, both from an historical perspective and from a practical perspective. If you want to know what sorts of secret codes were used during World War II, or if you want to know how to solve a Caesar Box Cipher, head to this part.

## **Part II: Secret Stories, Codes, and Cryptogram Puzzles**

This part makes up the majority of the book and includes the super-secret conspiracy stories as well as all the puzzles you need to solve the stories! Decipher some of the additional puzzles to discover some entertaining quotations.

## **Part III: Hints and Answers to the Cryptos and Codes**

This part is exactly what it sounds like. Here we give you hints and answers for all the puzzles in the book.

## **Icons Used in This Book**