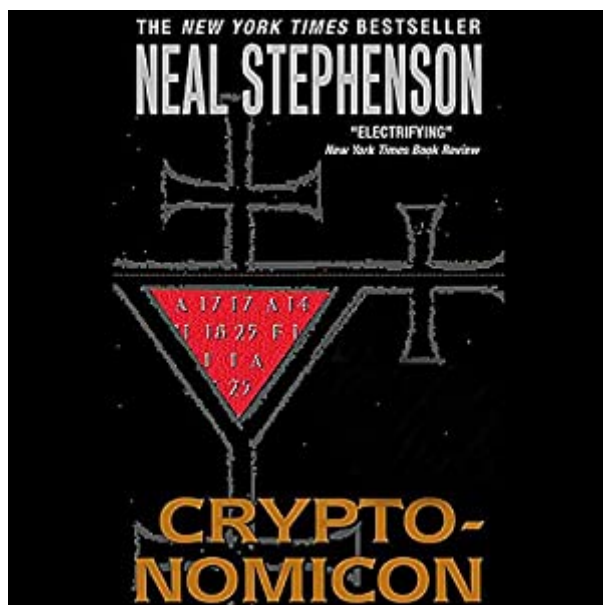


The book was found

Cryptonomicon



Synopsis

With this extraordinary first volume in what promises to be an epoch-making masterpiece, Neal Stephenson hacks into the secret histories of nations and the private obsessions of men, decrypting with dazzling virtuosity the forces that shaped this century. In 1942, Lawrence Pritchard Waterhouse—mathematical genius and young Captain in the U.S. Navy—is assigned to detachment 2702. It is an outfit so secret that only a handful of people know it exists, and some of those people have names like Churchill and Roosevelt. The mission of Waterhouse and Detachment 2702—commanded by Marine Raider Bobby Shaftoe—is to keep the Nazis ignorant of the fact that Allied Intelligence has cracked the enemy's fabled Enigma code. It is a game, a cryptographic chess match between Waterhouse and his German counterpart, translated into action by the gung-ho Shaftoe and his forces. Fast-forward to the present, where Waterhouse's crypto-hacker grandson, Randy, is attempting to create a "data haven" in Southeast Asia—a place where encrypted data can be stored and exchanged free of repression and scrutiny. As governments and multinationals attack the endeavor, Randy joins forces with Shaftoe's tough-as-nails granddaughter, Amy, to secretly salvage a sunken Nazi submarine that holds the key to keeping the dream of a data haven afloat. But soon their scheme brings to light a massive conspiracy with its roots in Detachment 2702 linked to an unbreakable Nazi code called Arethusa. And it will represent the path to unimaginable riches and a future of personal and digital liberty...or to universal totalitarianism reborn. A breathtaking tour de force, and Neal Stephenson's most accomplished and affecting work to date, *Cryptonomicon* is profound and prophetic, hypnotic and hyper-driven, as it leaps forward and back between World War II and the World Wide Web, hinting all the while at a dark day-after-tomorrow. It is a work of great art, thought and creative daring; the product of a truly iconoclastic imagination working with white-hot intensity. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Loved this! Fascinating, well-written novel. Anyone who can make me interested in math that's over my head, which this novel has done, has performed a great service for me. (Wish I had had math teachers who could do this way back when.) Characters are attractive and well-developed. The reader cannot but be interested in what they do and what happens to them. Dual-time history narrative works well and informs. Filled with pungent humor as well. What more can one ask for? Still a bit lost in the Appendix about the history of global wiring and the shorter one on Solitaire, the latter likely to remain beyond my math grasp, sadly, but I suspect I'll go back to them, especially the long wiring one, and learn more than I have soaked up to date. Very glad to have encountered this exceptionally talented author and now have begun his second trilogy.

Don't be discouraged, The this book took me a while to get in the groove.....BUT The parallel past and present and descendants who are in the dark about what roles their fathers played in WWII is plausibly and skillfully crafted. THIS IS A GOOD BOOK I RATE IT solid overall 4. I am NOT a mathlete, by any stretch of the imagination, but I found the cryptology fun to follow and for the most part could follow, except when two of the main characters would go off on brain tangents and even for instance, break down the random mathematics of their McDonald's order. There are only a few of these sections in the book, but some of them go on for pages. As for the OVERALL story, plot, characterizations, I give this book a 4.5. It was worth the 900+ pages. You truly get to know each and every character, except one, the enigmatic Enoch Root, which I desperately wish there had been more explanation about, and his organization. Having read a lot about WWII, and seen a bunch of documentaries on the topic as well as interviewed surviving vets myself, I find his characterization of the war -- on both fronts to be highly realistic and in tune with what was actually happening as well as the state of mind of the soldier/sailors/grunts on all sides. I rate this a 5. Bravo.

When "Cryptonomicon" came out in 1999, this sloppy masterpiece opened writers' and readers' minds as to the possibilities of time-jumps and maximum parallel plot lines in contemporary

(non-science) fiction. I've read the book twice now, most recently earlier this year. The first time I was swept away by the triple-plus plot and three-books-in-one approach. So much so, I loosely patterned my first novel along similar kitchen-sink lines though, crucially (mercifully?), "Sea of Lies" takes place over eight days and not fifty years. Stephenson can really tell a story, and builds tension with those cuts among complementary plot lines from WWII through to the present. He's one of the very best at doing so, and his firsthand research lends additional credibility. My major criticism is that Neal's editor was on vacation when he submitted this manuscript. It's about 1000 pages instead of being an 800 page gorilla. But what's there is so good that the reader plunges on regardless to find out what happens next to the Waterhouses and Shaftoes (e.g.). I particularly enjoyed reading Stephenson's take on the breaking of the Enigma codes at Bletchley Park and the fate of the Philippines gold. Stephenson went on to write many other books, but I think his three strongest were "Snowcrash", "Diamond Age" and this giant semi-polished gem.

There's no point trying to describe it. More erudite than me have called it Gravity's Rainbow for the digital age or some such worthy accolade. I just love a great story packed with humour action intelligence and interesting facts, shot through with a lexicon that occasionally requires resort to the dictionary (lot more convenient with Kindle than dead tree version) but leaves one with the satisfied feeling of having cracked a new nut in the code of language philology whatever and a toothsome morsel resides ever within. Have squirrelled away many of his other works including the brilliant Seveneves since and whether re-reading them from cover to cover every few years or occasionally dipping in and finding a well loved passage chapter exposition or whatever it's well worth it. Once or twice only have I felt he might have gotten busy with the blue pencil but sure that's only envy on my part. As GB Shaw said once apologising for the prolixity of his writing "I hadn't time to be more concise" and with his output prodigious neither clearly has Neal Stephenson and we're all the better for it.

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Cryptonomicon

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