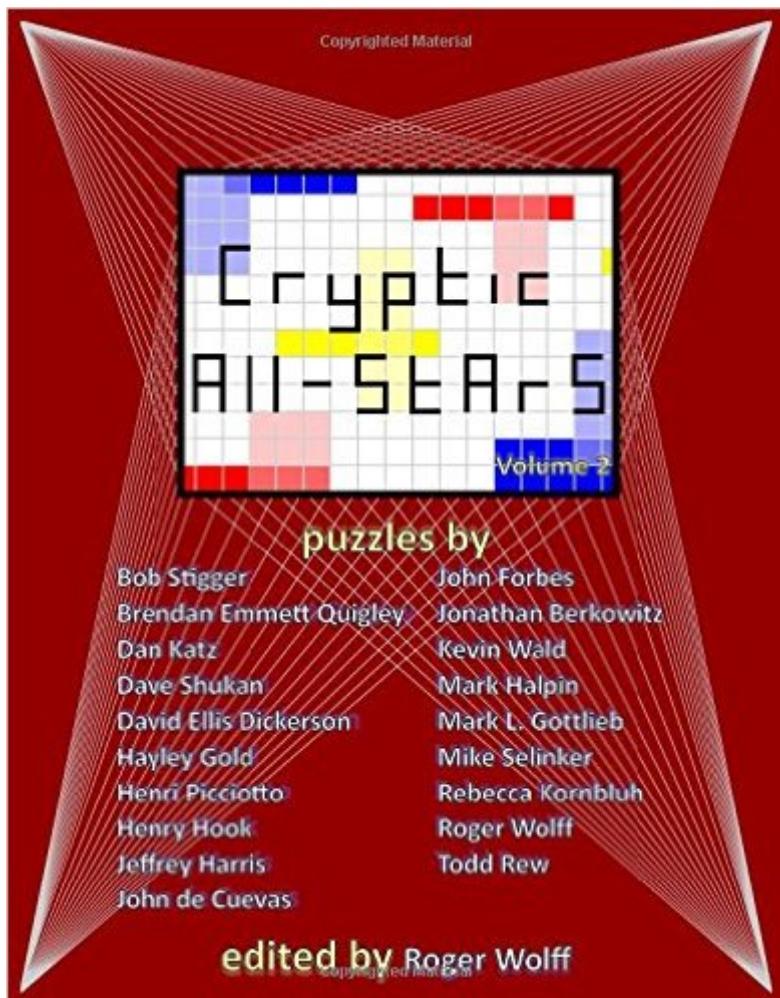


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Cryptic All-Stars, Volume 2 By Henry Hook (2015-08-02)



Synopsis

If you thought Volume 1 was mind-blowingly awesome, then you'll think Volume 2 is mind-blowingly awesome as well. 45 more variety cryptic crosswords from Bob Stigger, Brendan Emmett Quigley, Dan Katz, Dave Shukan, David Ellis Dickerson, Hayley Gold, Henri Picciotto, Henry Hook, Jeffrey Harris, John de Cuevas, John Forbes, Jonathan Berkowitz, Kevin Wald, Mark Halpin, Mark L. Gottlieb, Mike Selinker, Rebecca Kornbluh, Roger Wolff, and Todd Rew. What more could you possibly ask for? Besides a third volume....

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I thought I'd wait to review until I'd solved a few. "The book looks nice--It's spiral bound," just doesn't seem like an adequate review. I finished my last puzzle today, so here we go. Be warned: These are variety cryptics. None of those 15x15 lattice-style grids here. Also be warned: Except for a very few, these are variety cryptics of the highest caliber. There are a couple that you'll finish in just a few minutes, but then you'll come to Kevin Wald's "Trafficking Report", where it takes half an hour just to understand the instructions. This was the last puzzle I solved in this collection, and it also gave me the most satisfaction. The first volume had a few editorial hiccups, but this volume was almost perfect. A spoiler regarding John de Cuevas' "Wrap Session", though. There are 5 different solutions that work with the given instructions. Instead of working toward one of those solutions logically, save yourself the tedium and just notice how the longest entries fit together. With this particular collection (and volume 1 as well), I find myself coveting the brains of the constructors. How smart do you have to be to conceive one of these beauties? If you love variety cryptics, you

absolutely have to own this collection. Absolutely!

This is a review that applies to *both* vols 1 & 2. These are very difficult puzzles! A number of well-known and not-so-well-known people contributed, and the diversity shows. I recommend this book if you are comfortable with the whole idea of puzzle-within-a-puzzle. I think the second volume is bit better than the first, but I think those of us who like these types of puzzle should buy both, because they are being released as an independent labor of love by the makers, rather than a large publishing house. That said, there are a few issues - an occasional typo, or a clue that is so opaque or unfair as to make you want to shake the author by the ears. Some of the puzzles have instructions that are so long and complex that we glazed over before even starting the puzzle. Also, the solutions leave a lot to be desired - they do explain the basic clues and the final diagram, but they do not do much to explain the final goal which you have to discern after completion - ie., some phrase, quote, or unifying theme. That said, if you know something about how to do these things and are ready for a challenge. by all means buy both these books, so that the authors will keep them coming!

Just getting started on this edition. First three puzzles were excellent. Challenging, but fair (as Cryptics go, that is) with each providing the payoff at the end that is so satisfying in a well-designed variety cryptic. So far, as good as Volume 1! Completed the book today. Like reading a good novel, you rush to finish it and then feel sad that it's over. Puzzles are consistently strong and challenging. These types of Cryptics (variety) are my favorites, as both fans and detractors note, they are puzzles within puzzles. The payoffs can be immensely satisfying and though most reveal themselves towards the end of the clue solving process, they can be very helpful in "backing into" those answers to cryptic clues that seem to be evading you. Also, though grid construction varies widely, as a general rule I would say that these cryptics leave fewer "unchecked" letters than the crossword-style cryptics which improves the odds of 100% completion (and total satisfaction).

Another great collection of themed cryptics--I'm so glad Roger Wolff has managed to get all these constructors together and revive variety cryptics in North America! I'm about halfway through now. I'm particularly enjoying the puzzles by Roger himself as well as Kevin Wald, which are tending to be the more challenging ones. I will eagerly buy a volume 3 as soon as it's available.

My friend loves cryptic crosswords and likes it difficult - you have to go some to please him - both

volume one & two live up to his need for challenge - which isn't an easy task.

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