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Picture Books

Guess Again! Riddle Poems
Lillian Morrison
Christy Hale, illustrator
August House
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Riddles are the oldest guessing game in the world. They have been used as entertainment and as tests. In this book, the witty riddles are both. The author includes a note to the readers at the beginning, explaining that it is up to them to solve the riddles before turning the page to discover the answer. She writes, “If you listen carefully to the words and pay close attention to the pictures, this should not be too hard.”

Now retired and living in New York City, Morrison first published some collections of folk rhymes. She worked as a young people’s librarian in The New York Public Library and served as Coordinator of Young Adult Services there. Her anthologies *Sprints and Distances* and *Rhythm Road* were both ALA Notable Children’s Books. In 1987 she received ALA’s Grolier Award for outstanding contributions to the stimulation of reading by young people.

In this book, she stimulates minds with challenging riddles. One of the more difficult puzzles reads, “Shaped like a walnut, doesn’t weigh much, yet gives birth to worlds. Can you imagine such? Dreams ride there. Poems hide there.” The next page offers the answer: “the brain.” Some riddles are somewhat easier; for instance: “I chewed and I blew. It was the thing to do. Now I can’t get it off my nose and I can’t get it off my shoe.” No need to turn the page to discover the answer to this riddle; it is, of course, “bubble gum.”

The frolicsome, bright illustrations invite the reader to explore for the answers. The illustrator uses vivid blues, yellows, purples, and reds to take the same little girl and boy through the pages of riddles. She illustrates the bubble gum riddle with the boy on a city street wearing bright red high-top sneakers, one of which is stuck inexplicably to the ground. The answer page shows the blonde, blue-eyed little girl blowing a huge pink bubble. Hale worked many years as a designer and art director in children’s book publishing. She now works as a freelancer to pursue illustration and writing. She holds a B.A. in fine arts and M.A.T. in education from

Lewis & Clark College, as well as a B.F.A. in illustration and Graphic Design from Pratt Institute.

A few of the riddles are a bit ambiguous for the age of reader this book aims to reach. However, the majority are amusing and appropriately difficult, and flow with a fun rhythm. Hale's illustrations give life to these brain teasers. Morrison gives the oldest guessing game in the world a playful modern twist. Children will embrace the challenge and be rewarded with a bonus of humor.

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