

It Rained All Day that Night: Autographs Rhymes & Inscription

Lillian Morrison

Christy Hale, Illustrator

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It was midnight on the ocean. / Not a streetcar was in sight. / The sun was shining brightly, / For it rained all day that night.

Nonsense and playfulness prevail, as the title poem suggests, in this witty compilation of autographs, rhymes, and inscriptions. Scattered across the pages in a unique layout style, these classic verses will appeal to both the young and the young at heart.

The editor, who also compiled the cherished *Yours Till Niagara Falls*, is a verse enthusiast who has a passion for collecting quirky sayings and memorable album verses. The energy behind her interest moves beyond the surface wit to a level of historical relevance. After careful study, she acknowledges a shift through the years from a more literary form to a “style [that] tends to be direct, down-to-earth, often mocking, humorous ... sometimes sweet, sometimes nonsensical.” Morrison also points out that autograph collecting, an activity once popular among older teens, now appeals to the pre-teen set.

The Table of Contents divides the book into themed sections, with commentary reserved for the author’s Afterword. The text, arranged in various angled placements, is reminiscent of the jottings found in school yearbooks and souvenir books. The computer savvy reader will enjoy the featured blocks of verses with clever graphics and keyboard symbols. Some entries duplicate the preschooler’s rebus style; others align words, numbers, and symbols in mathematical equations; still others are printed backwards and upside down.

In the Inspiration segment, the rhymes lean toward the hopeful “May your life...” and “May you be...” The Friendship selections espouse noteworthy virtues like trustworthiness and loyalty, while the Insults category distort the sentiment of “Roses are red, / Violets are blue...” Since Morrison approaches this compilation from a historical standpoint, some of her choices appear outdated and stale, with much of the humor lost in the changing times, but the importance of each verse to the collection as a whole is obvious and easily appreciated.

The illustrator previously provided artwork for the critically acclaimed *Elizabeti’s Doll*, named Best Book of 1998 by School Library Journal, and winner of the Charlotte Zolotow Award and the Ezra Jack Keats Award. Her lighthearted illustrations move freely throughout the book’s eye-catching design and directly interact with each individual verse.

It Rained All Day that Night, published for mid-graders, is a compilation of sincere and not-so-sincere verses and notations for readers of all ages, including adults. The historic value alone makes this work a one-of-a-kind collection.

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