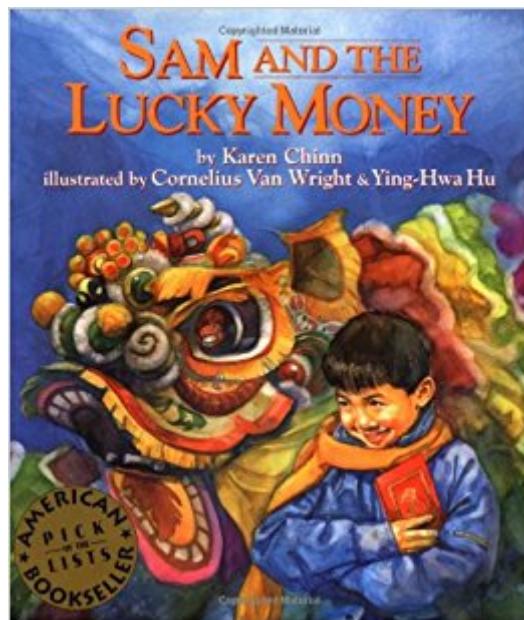


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# Sam And The Lucky Money



## Synopsis

Sam can hardly wait to go shopping with his mom. It's Chinese New Year's day and his grandparents have given him the traditional gift of lucky money-red envelopes called leisees (lay-sees). This year Sam is finally old enough to spend it any way he chooses. Best of all, he gets to spend his lucky money in his favorite place -- Chinatown! But when Sam realizes that his grandparents' gift is not enough to get the things he wants, his excitement turns to disappointment. Even though his mother reminds him that he should appreciate the gift, Sam is not convinced -- until a surprise encounter with a stranger. With vivid watercolor paintings, artists Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu celebrate the sights and sounds of festive Chinatown streets. In her picture book debut, author Karen Chinn tells the affecting story of a child who discovers that sometimes the best gifts come from the heart. Sam can hardly wait to go shopping with his mom. It's Chinese New Year's day and his grandparents have given him the traditional gift of lucky money-red envelopes called leisees (lay-sees). This year Sam is finally old enough to spend it any way he chooses. Best of all, he gets to spend his lucky money in his favorite place -- Chinatown! But when Sam realizes that his grandparents' gift is not enough to get the things he wants, his excitement turns to disappointment. Even though his mother reminds him that he should appreciate the gift, Sam is not convinced -- until a surprise encounter with a stranger. With vivid watercolor paintings, artists Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu celebrate the sights and sounds of festive Chinatown streets. In her picture book debut, author Karen Chinn tells the affecting story of a child who discovers that sometimes the best gifts come from the heart.

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## Customer Reviews

It's Chinese New Year in Chinatown, and young Sam has four dollars of New Year money burning a hole in his pocket. As he and his mother are milling through the crowded streets--alive with firecrackers, lion dances, and shoppers--Sam accidentally steps on the foot of a homeless man who is buried in a pile of red paper. Flustered, Sam hurries back to his mother, and is soon distracted by the char siu bao and other sweets he might buy with his gift money. When he sees fish-tail cookies that remind him of toes, he remembers the old man again, and Sam starts to think of his "lucky money" in a new light. Karen Chinn's winning story is perfectly complemented by the vibrant watercolors of Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu, creators of the award-winning *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* and *A House by the River*. Voted "Pick of the Lists" by American Bookseller, Sam and the Lucky Money succeeds at telling a simple story, while allowing young readers to explore the sights and sounds of an American urban Chinatown during the Chinese New Year. (Ages 4 to 8)

PreSchool-Grade 2-Sam receives four bright red envelopes decorated with shiny gold emblems as part of the traditional Chinese New Year celebration, each containing a dollar. As he accompanies his mother through Chinatown, his anticipation of how to spend it diminishes when he realizes that the "lucky money" won't buy as much as he had hoped. His mood is further sobered after an encounter with a man he stumbles upon in the street. He nobly, though not surprisingly, concludes that his four dollars would be best spent on the barefoot stranger. Though the traditional message that it is better to give than to receive will be apparent to adults immediately, it is handled in a genuine, thoughtful manner that will be realistic to children. Detailed descriptions of the sights and sounds of the New Year celebration build in contrast to Sam's growing introspection, becoming even more dramatic and adding to the depth of the story. The illustrators masterfully combine Chinatown's exotic setting with the universal emotions of childhood through expressive portraits of the characters.

Starr LaTronica, Four County Library System, Vestal, NY  
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I bought this on a whim as a Chinese New Year gift for my 5.5 year old son and I'm so glad that I did. He and I both enjoyed reading this book immensely, and it has such a wonderful moral to the story. The illustrations are so colorful and beautiful and inspired us to do several drawings and paintings of our own for a new year craft project. I will be purchasing several more to give away as gifts to family members' children for next lunar new year. I highly recommend this to any teacher or parent interested in expanding their multicultural library.

Sam receives "lucky money" from his grandparents. They tell him he can spend it any way he likes. Sam discovers the amount of his gift is not enough to buy the treats he considers but is too much to waste foolishly. When he notices that a homeless man he knows has bare feet he uses the money to buy the man a pair of socks. It is a touching story. I bought it for my grandson whose name is Sam and included some lucky money for him to spend as he wished.

As an elementary school teacher, I love this book and I always try to read this to my students around the Chinese New Year. It is a wonderful story of a boy who receives a special monetary gift for the holiday. As he shops around, he learns a valuable lesson and gives of himself in an unselfish way to help a stranger in need. A great read aloud with excellent social studies connections.

A great story about kindness and gratitude.

I use this book to help teach my third graders about Chinese New Year. It is very helpful.

Great book for Chinese New Year-very good story and illustrations

This book has a nice message about appreciation, and thinking of others as well as the excitement of Chinese New Year celebrations. I have read this primarily to younger students, k - 3 . And use it to help students understand Chinese New Year.

Everyone loves this book; mothers, teachers and of course, children. Many books about Chinese New Year are non-fiction books that describe the customs of the holiday. What makes this different is that this is a piece of fiction that gives you all the flavors of what it's like in an urban Chinatown during Chinese New Years while at the same time sending a wonderful message of giving. My 3 and 5 year old love this book. My 5 year old's kindergarten teacher loved the book for the same

reasons plus it fostered discussions about the story and the holiday. A class of 18 children sat quietly; listening attentively. The children found the illustrations fascinating. The teacher even loaned our book to another kindergarten teacher. I'm online because I'm getting them their own copy.

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