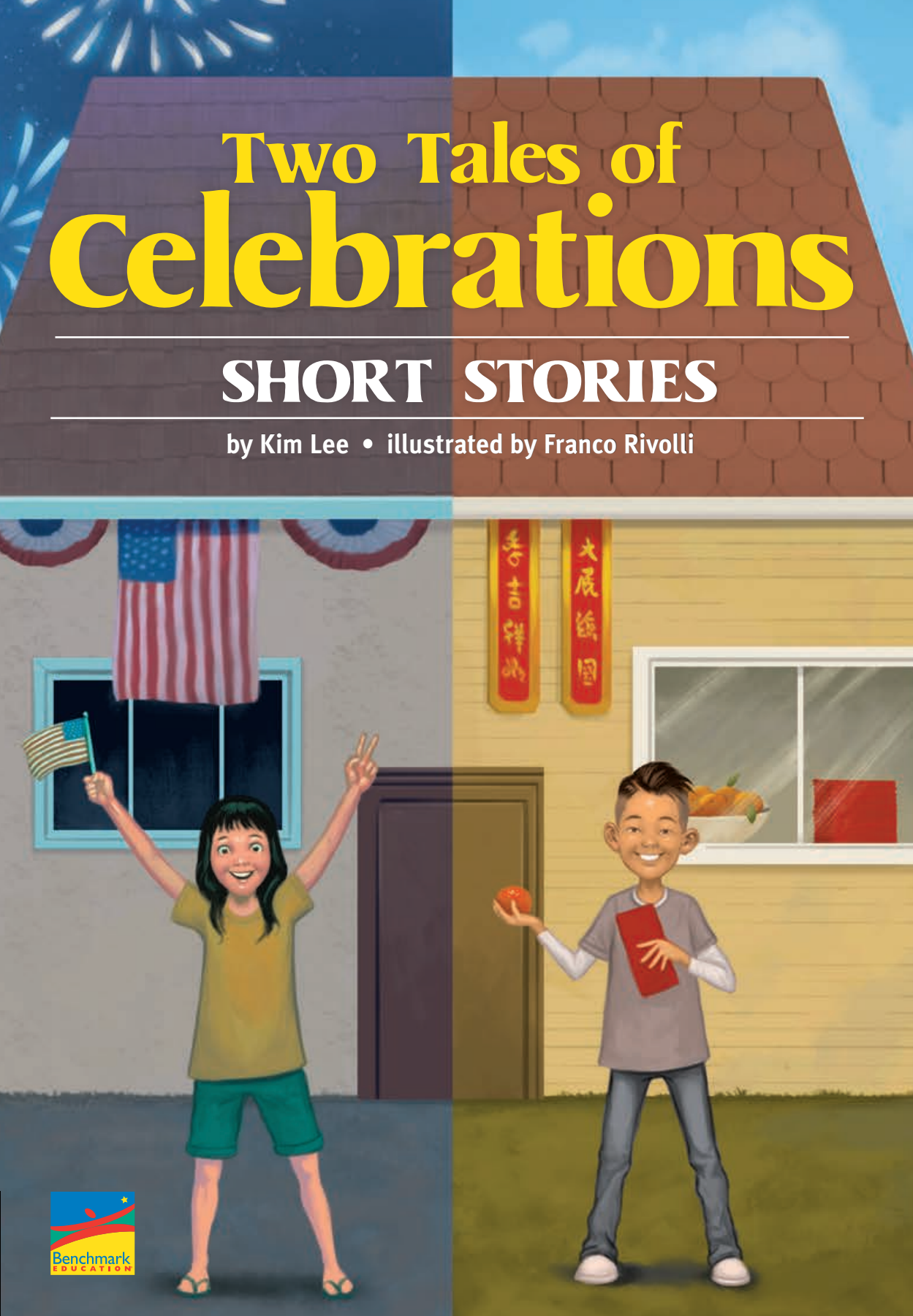
Two Tales of Celebrations

SHORT STORIES

by Kim Lee • illustrated by Franco Rivolli



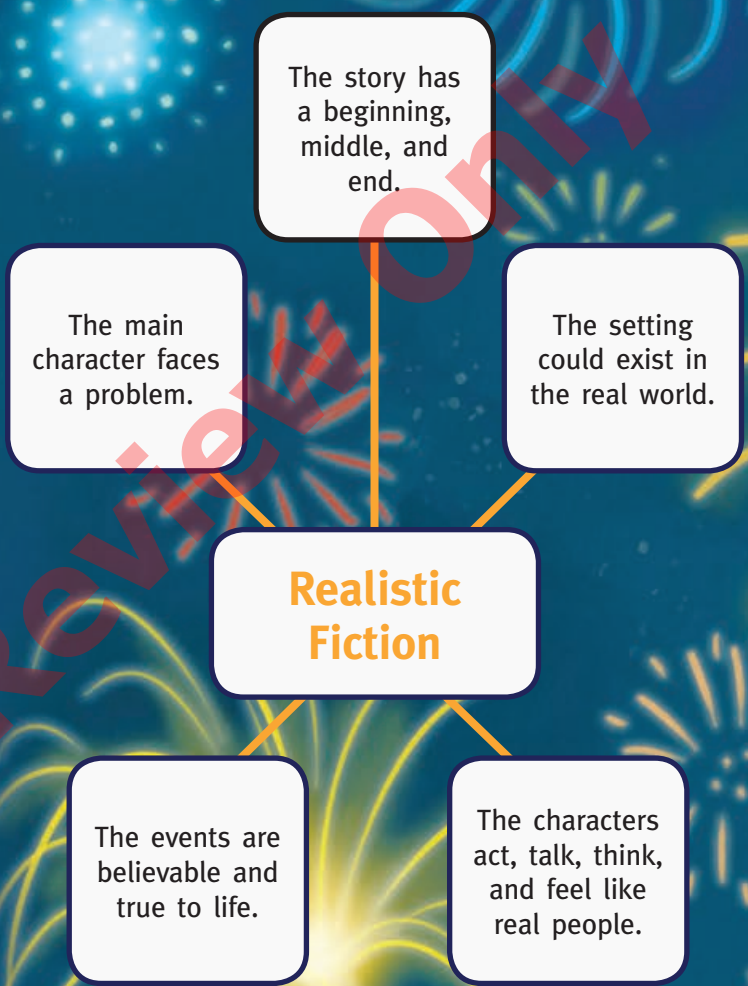
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Chinese New Year



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The Red Envelope

Ana was at her friend Cody's house. Ana saw red lanterns and **banners**. She saw red envelopes and a bowl of oranges.

"Why is your house decorated like this?" she asked, curious.

"To celebrate the start of the new year!" Cody said.

"But January first was weeks ago!" Ana said.

"We are not celebrating that new year. We are celebrating the Chinese New Year!" Cody said. "In **ancient** China, people followed a different calendar from today's. That new year began just before spring started. Some people call it Lunar New Year."

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Just then, Cody's little brother snuck into the room. He snatched the red envelope Cody was holding and one of the banners. Then he ran out.

"Daniel!" Cody yelled. "Give that back!"

"What is in the red envelope?" Ana asked.

"The red envelope is also a part of Chinese New Year," Cody said. "The envelope contains money. My parents gave me one and they gave Daniel one, too. Giving a red envelope with money in it is a way of wishing others good luck in the new year."

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"Well, let's get your envelope back," Ana said.

Cody and Ana ran into the hall. Cody pointed to a banner twisted across the bottom of the steps. "He must have gone upstairs!"



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The Legend of Nian

"I think my brother put the banner there to try to slow us down," Cody said. Cody moved the banner out of the way. "Have you heard of the legend of Nian, the monster?" he asked Ana.

"No," Ana said, wide eyed.



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"Nian lived in the mountains of China," Cody said. "Each new year, he came down. He went into the village. He chased everyone. He ate their food."

"But one year, a villager was wearing a red **tunic**," Cody continued. "The color red scared Nian. He ran back into the mountains and never came down again. Now we hang red banners to scare off bad luck from the new year."

"That's a great legend," Ana said. "So is your brother trying to scare you away with the color red?"

"I think so," Cody chuckled. "But I'm not Nian. I'm not scared of the color red."

"Me neither," said Ana.

Then the two ran upstairs.

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Orange Peels and Long Noodles

At the top of the stairs, Cody pointed to orange peels on the floor.

"In China, oranges **symbolize** wealth," he said. "So we put out oranges as a way to bring wealth in the new year. Daniel loves oranges. But he's messy. He always drops his peels."

"Well, it looks as if he left us a trail," Ana laughed. "Let's follow those peels and get your envelope back!"

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Cody and Ana followed the peels to a closet in the hallway. Cody quickly opened the door.

"Gotcha," they shouted.

Daniel giggled and gave the red envelope back.

Suddenly, Cody's mom yelled, "Kids, come down. I have a snack for you."



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