**“The Red Envelope Festival”**

Ridwan took a short sigh while looking outside the window. It had been raining for the whole week. He couldn’t play ball outside with his friends. He couldn’t ride his bicycle around the neighborhood. He couldn’t chase away cats until they hid under the bushes.

“You can read books,” suggested his mother.

Ridwan didn’t like reading. He was the type that liked to move and do stuff, than just sitting down and read words.

Still looking at the rain outside, Ridwan saw his friends next door; Allen was doing something at his front veranda. Allen’s mother was carrying inside a red lantern and a plastic of small size oranges. Though the rain was falling, Allen was looking happy.

“It seems they are doing something fun,” Ridwan reported to his mother.

“Do you want to know what they’re doing? Go on and take a look,” said his mother gently.

“But”

“I’m sure Allen won’t mind you to come over,” his mother smiled. Ridwan stood still thinking either he should go or not. It didn’t take long for him to make the decision.

Ridwan almost reached Allen’s place when he suddenly stopped. He was thinking should he continue or not. That time Allen noticed Ridwan and called him over. Urged by the calling, Ridwan finally moved towards Allen.

“What are you doing?” asked Ridwan. He looked at scattering stuff on the floor: piles of red paper, red envelopes, scissors, golden thread, glue, and many red papers cutting.

“Oh these? I’m making envelopes, for Chinese New Year,” Allen showed one to Ridwan who took a look.

“Chinese New Year? What is that?” asked Ridwan still looking at the envelopes, trying to find something interesting with it.

“It’s new year in Chinese tradition. Chinese people use Lunar Calendar beside the one we use daily. Lunar Calendar sees the moving of the moon to decide days in the calendar.” explained Allen. Ridwan kept still. He assumed Allen knows that from reading books.

“Do you celebrate this New Year?”

“Of course, I’m Chinese, but, nowadays not only Chinese people celebrate it. Many people would come to the celebration at China Town, to see the dragon’s dance parade or just to enjoy the crowd,”

“And what’s the use of this red envelope?”

“Older people will fills it with money and give it to children like me,” Allen smiled widely.

“And the lantern, and the oranges?” Ridwan pointed the things he saw before.

“They’re all all for celebrating the New Year” Ridwan stunned. He was confused with all the information.

“Wanna help me making the envelopes?” asked Allen.

“Is it fun?”

“The fun comes after it”

“Too bad it’s raining; the celebration won’t be so much fun”

“For Chinese people, raining before New Year is a sign of good thing. It is said it will bring prosperity throughout the New Year, so that’s why I like it when it’s raining,” said Allen happily. Ridwan felt a bit strange seeing Allen could feel happy with the long lasting rain.

Soon the two boys were busy making red envelopes. Ridwan’s mother had to call him back when the day started to getting dark. Ridwan was saying good bye to Allen when Allen’s mother gave him a red envelope. She also gave him a plastic of small oranges.

“Thank you, and happy Chinese New Year,” said Ridwan’s mother as they were leaving. Ridwan stared the envelope he was holding. He felt something thick inside it. He looked at Allen who smiled.

“I told you the fun comes after it”

“Wanna come to the New Year celebration?” ask Allen.

“I would like to,” said Ridwan as he waved goodbye.

“Did you have fun?” asked his mother. Ridwan nodded. It was still raining but Ridwan wasn’t feeling gloomy anymore. Thanks to the rain, Ridwan now knew about fun traditions he hadn’t known before.