

Young Xingling faces a fierce foe in Andrea Wang’s *The Nian Monster*

The Nian Monster

By Andrea Wang
Illustrations by Alina Chau
Albert Whitman & Company, 2024
Paperback, 32 pages, \$9.99

By **Kathleen Liermann**
The Asian Reporter

Andrea Wang’s *The Nian Monster* begins in Shanghai three days prior to the Lunar New Year. A market in the city is alive with vendors, families, and vibrant colors drawn by the book’s illustrator, Alina Chau.

In the story, readers soon meet Xingling and her grandmother, who are hanging a red lantern — the last of their New Year decorations.

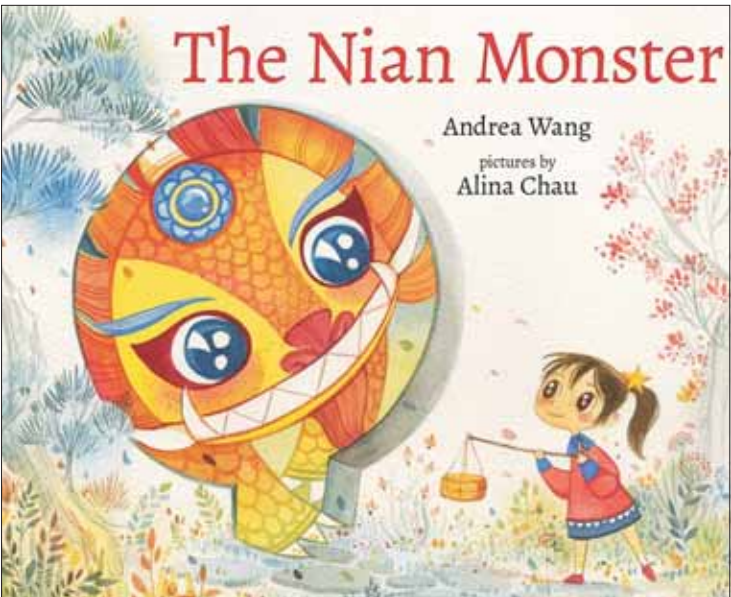
“Po Po, why are they all red,” asks Xingling.

Together with Xingling, we learn about the ancient legend of the Nian Monster.

“Long ago,” Po Po says, “the Nian Monster lived in the mountains. His jaws were as wide as caverns. His teeth were sharper than swords. And he was filled with a terrible hunger. Each new year, Nian ate whole villages.”

Xingling gasped, but was soon reassured by her smiling grandmother: “Every monster has a weakness. Nian had three — loud sounds, fire, and the color red. Our traditions have kept Nian away ever since.”

When Po Po leaves to buy more noodles, Xingling takes over in the kitchen, stirring a pot of pork and cabbage, when a horrible beast appears on the balcony.



“Ai ya,” Xingling says defiantly to Nian.

Nian roars and growls, “I have come to

devour this city!”

While all the buildings in the city shake from the sounds, Xingling tries to scare

away Nian with gongs, drums, and red lanterns and banners to no avail.

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