

# Who was that mystery reader anyway?

For weeks I have been excited to go to Leo's classroom as a "mystery reader" to surprise him and his classmates. Today was the day.

As I walked into the classroom, the children had their backs to me with their heads down. I could see Leo sitting in the last row. When the teacher gave them the OK, they turned around, and the children yelled out, "It's Leo's mom!"

Just as I was thinking how magical it is to be known primarily as the mother of your child—and it is—my son ran into my arms with the tightest hug he's ever given me. I got all choked up and wondered how I would read.

But my practical son brought me back to earth with, "Do I get to go home with you after this?"

Of course, I said. Then I showed him the books I had brought and he wanted to start with *The Day the Crayons Quit*.



"This is the one with the naked guy!" he said, giggling.

Oh, dear, I thought. To the teacher's credit, she let me stay—even then. And we launched into the book where a boy's crayons each write him a letter with their joys and complaints—one of which is the peach crayon's concern that his paper has been removed and he is unclothed. It really is a fun read.

Then we worked our way through *Fortune Cookies* and *Goldie Socks and the Three Libearians*. We even squeezed in *Bear Snores On*, which I read very quickly after the other three, not giving it the time it really deserves. The clock was ticking, after all, and I had been asked to read "two or three books."

I am such a rebel—reading an extra book.

The children were enthusiastic listeners, and Leo turned pages, let his classmates pull fortunes out of the *Fortune Cookies* book, and asked me—in front of his teacher—whether he could bring our Chinese dragon to school tomorrow.



Such a wonderful question obviously deserves a yes.

By tonight Leo's plan had grown to bringing our Chinese lanterns and his favorite other Chinese items from around the house.



It is going to be quite a Chinese New Year celebration in his classroom tomorrow. I hope his teacher is prepared.

As we were driving home, I thanked Leo for helping me read the books.

"Do you think you might like to be a teacher someday?" I asked.

"Maybe," he said, "but not teaching kindergarten."

"Really?" I said, thinking of how every day in kindergarten is something fun and new, and how he adores it. "Why not?"

"Because kindergarteners don't listen!"

That may be true, I thought, but they pay pretty close attention when you're the mystery reader.