Wall Street

At the Wall Street stop a man got on the train. He had on black pants, a black jacket, a crisp white shirt, and a red necktie. He was holding a black case. He looked sharp.

Kurt jabbed Kim with his elbow and whispered, “What do you think his job is?”

“I don’t know,” Kim said. “He might be a banker who has a job in a bank on Wall Street.”

“What’s a bank?”

“A bank is a place where you can keep your cash so it is safe. The bank keeps your cash until you need it and they pay you a bit for saving your cash with them. Since not everyone needs their cash at the same time, the bank has extra cash that they can use to make loans to people who need cash.”

“What’s a loan?”

“When you get a loan from a bank, the bank lets you borrow some of the cash that it has, and you make a deal to pay the cash back later, plus some fees that the bank adds in.”
“You mean you have to pay back more cash than the cash you borrow?”

“That’s right.”

“Why not just use the cash you’ve got?” Kurt asked.

“Well, if you have a lot of cash, you might not need to get a loan. But let’s say you plan to open your own store. You would need a lot of cash before you even opened the store! You might not have all of this cash on your own, so you might need a loan to get started.”

Kurt dreamed of a store he might like to open and of a banker handing him a big bag of cash. Then he dreamed that he might even like to be a banker himself.

“Do bankers get paid a lot?” Kurt asked.

“Some of them do.”

“So why don’t you get a job at a bank?”

“Most banks won’t hire you unless you have finished two or three years of college. I have just finished one year.”

“So it’s a hard job to get?”

Kim nodded.