

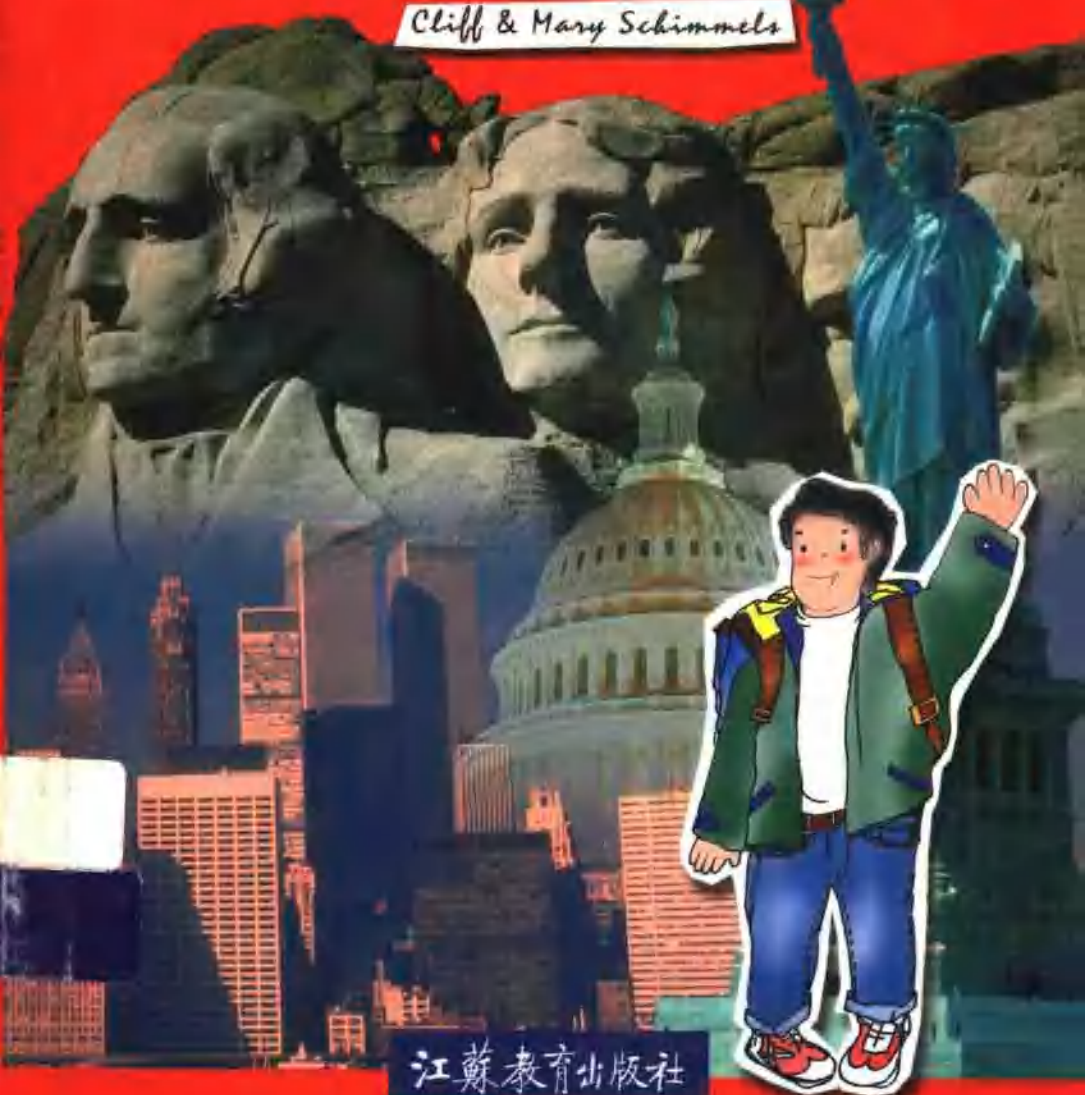
美国站

XU LING'S AMERICAN ADVENTURE

徐灵游学记

—在美国读高中的日子

Cliff & Mary Schimmels



江苏教育出版社



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小说简介

徐灵在中国是一名品学兼优的中学生。因为父亲要去美国芝加哥接受为期一年的培训，徐灵和母亲便随同前往。徐灵进了当地的艾森豪威尔高中读书。初来乍到，他听不懂老师和同学的话，找不到教室，甚至认不准同学。他感到尴尬、困惑、担忧和孤单。每一天，他都有很多的惊奇和冒险。在 Tyndal 等同学和老师的帮助之下，他开始有信心去面对这些惊奇，并逐步融入到美国中学生活的方方面面。他参加学校组织的各种文体娱乐活动，感受美国的中学和美国中学生的学习、生活、爱好和心理。在同学和老师的鼓励和他自己的努力之下，他的化学成绩进入全班前四名，他还赢得了中学生州际羽毛球冠军杯，成了艾森豪威尔高中的英雄和骄傲……全书共21章，每章都反映了徐灵在美国学习和生活的一个侧面。读者通过该书可以深切地感受一名中国中学生在美国上学的生活体验和心理历程，亦能了解到美国中学素质教育状况。全书语言浅显，行文生动，情趣盎然。



作者简介

克里夫·希梅尔斯 (Cliff Schimmels) 是美国田纳西州李大学的教育学教授，也是一位深受人们爱戴和尊敬的作家和演说家。他先后出版了28本有关教育问题的专著和小说，在全美作过几百场演讲。他曾在乌克兰、中国等国家教授英语及教育课程。他于2001年5月9日不幸去世。

玛丽·希梅尔斯 (Mary Schimmels) 是克里夫·希梅尔斯的妻子。她专为在李大学读书的外国学生开设英语课，并曾先后执教于乌克兰和中国。她与丈夫合作出版了28部著作。

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前 言

希梅尔斯特夫妇对全世界的中学生情有独钟。为了了解中学生的心理、学习和生活,克里夫·希梅尔斯在47岁那年还专门在美国一所中学注册入学,当了一个学期的中学生。他的《世界上最老的中学生》一书就是那段生活的真实体验和感受的记录。希梅尔斯特夫妇热爱中国和中国人民,曾多次来中国访问和工作。1998-1999学年中,夫妇俩受聘到浙江师范大学任教。期间,他们应邀到浙江的许多中学作报告。每次他们都要花很多的时间与中学师生聊天,帮他们解决外语教学中的实际问题与困难。正是通过这种接触与对话,他俩萌生了为中国中学生写一部可资消遣和英语学习之用的小说的念头。回国后,夫妇俩根据自己对中国中学生的了解,用中国中学生最基本的1200个词汇,写成了《徐灵游学记——在美国读高中的日子》(*Xu Ling's American Adventure*)一书。不幸的是,克里夫·希梅尔斯于2001年5月9日因病去逝。本书成了他出版的29部教育题材的小说中的最后一部,其意义还在于该小说是他为自己钟爱的中国中学生朋友而写,且是在中国出版。本书承浙江师范大学顾建新副教授审阅。

这部小说的全部文字稿另外配有录音磁带。读者可在阅读的同时训练英语听力。



XU LING'S AMERICAN ADVENTURE

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Eisenhower High School

Even the letters across the brownstone wall of the large one-floor building seemed strange to Xu Ling. This was unusual for him. He did not often put himself into strange situations.

He was not that kind of person. He did not like surprises, not even on his birthday. Unlike other people of his age, he carefully prepared for each new experience in life. He read books; he asked others; and he thought about what he would do even before he needed to do it.

He believed in being prepared so that he could be in control to stop the risk of losing face; but the changes of the last fortnight came too quickly for any preparation, for any thought, for any planned control.

One night Papa came home from the plant where he was manager and announced that the family was moving to America. "Cultural exchange" Papa called it, and his eyes burned with joy as he explained it. They would live in Chicago for one year. Papa would work at a plant, learning the American methods of business.



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Mama would work at home, learning the American methods of shopping and keeping house. Xu Ling would study as a second year student in senior middle school, learning the American methods of learning.

As Papa explained it, the whole year would be an exciting adventure for them all, an experience they would never forget — an experience that would educate them — that would help them understand themselves; and even more, what it means to be Chinese. As Papa explained it, although their blood was filled with several generations of Chinese traditions and culture, they wouldn't fully know how all that historical blood made any difference in them day by day until they experienced some other culture for comparison.

Papa's explanation was reasonable, and Xu Ling might have actually liked the idea of going to America for a year, except for the **urgency**. They would leave in two weeks, and that did not give him enough time to prepare himself for all the changes.

He tried. He looked up Chicago and learned about the great **gangster**, Al Capone; the great mayor, Daley; and the famous cow which kicked over the lamp and started the fire which burned the city; but that was all long ago. The only present fact he could find was that the Sears Tower of Chicago was the tallest building in America, and he was surprised by that fact because his book had told them that the tallest building was the Empire State Building in New York. He was now confused because he was taught the book is always correct, especially when it prepares one for the exam.

Xu Ling knew that he did not have enough information to pre-

Urgency—very soon

Gangster—the leader of thieves



pare himself well for the new experience of America, but that was the best he could do in the short time he had.

As he discovered later, it didn't matter. They didn't even move to Chicago. They only landed at the airport. They actually lived in Rolling Hills, a suburb, a city near the city, and he would attend Eisenhower High School, which was only a short walk from his house.

It was all too new, too different for him when after only three short days, there he was, all by himself, walking toward the strange building with the strange name filled with strange people all performing strange acts and activities. He wanted to shout out telling it all to stop — to stand still long enough for him to see it, to hear it, to smell it, to taste it so that his mind could make a photo of it which he could study later when he had time alone; but it didn't stop; it didn't stand still. The world of Eisenhower High School hurried busily along that morning, and Xu Ling had to take a part in it whether he was ready or not.

The building itself was different. It was pretty and well kept, but it was only one floor — one huge building occupying far more earth than it needed to.

Xu Ling noticed no bicycles. He would notice that before others would because his bicycle had been such a part of him for several years — his freedom, his tool of research, the bridge that helped him cross into the world of being adult. Here, there were no bicycles — no students riding to school — no places to park a bicycle, and Xu Ling wondered how they all had arrived. Could they have all walked? He saw no one on the streets when he came, so how did all these people get here? It was a mystery he would have to solve later.

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In all the strange sights and sounds, Xu Ling gained confidence from one fact. He knew the language. His English was good. He had been a diligent student from the time he first began to study English four years ago, and he made progress. Last year he was the first in his class in English — not only on the exam but in conversation as well. He was so good that even Papa and Mama said that they would need him to help them with the more difficult words.

This thought gave him the confidence to walk through the door into that strange and frightening building named Eisenhower High School, and at that point, he met his first lesson in the real language.

"Freshman, **sophomore**, junior, or senior?" The man who greeted him with the sentence was obviously a teacher. He was dressed like a teacher, wearing a short-sleeved white shirt and a necktie decorated with faces of smiling children. He was larger and older than the others around, but not too much older — just old enough to be a young teacher.

Xu Ling could tell that the speaker was a teacher because of his manner and attitude. He was polite, but not because he wanted to be. He was polite because it was his duty to be polite. He smiled, but the look behind the smile told everyone that his question was important and should have an immediate answer.

When Xu Ling paused to gather his thoughts, the teacher repeated, "Freshman, **sophomore**, junior, or senior?"

Although he did not understand a word, Xu Ling knew it was a question because the voice went up at the end. "Pardon?" he answered.



"What is your classification?" the official-looking teacher asked.

"Pardon?" Xu Ling answered softly and simply although he wanted to say so much more. "What is the meaning of the word classification?" "Why are you calling me your son when I have never met you?" He wanted to say all that, but he didn't. He just stood silently with his one word.

Just then, a girl walked up. "Freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior?" the man asked her as he waited for Xu Ling's answer.

"Junior," she said with an air of confidence that was almost boasting.

"Take this envelope and go to the blue hall," the teacher said to her speaking pleasantly officially.

"Junior," Xu Ling spoke quickly before the man could ask again. He then grabbed the envelope from the man's hand and followed the girl. He still didn't know what it meant or where he was going, but he knew he would make progress if he would just follow the girl.

Soon they entered a hall with classrooms on both sides. Although the hall was decorated with rows and rows of doors which opened into small closets called lockers, the walls above the doors were painted light blue, the color of the sky, and Xu Ling understood what the man meant when he spoke of the blue hall.

Junior — As in China, secondary education in America is six years; but unlike China, only two years of it is at the middle school (junior middle school) and with four years at high school. Thus, a second year student in America is only a sophomore, but in the Chinese system a second year student would be a junior. Although he did not understand why, Xu Ling made the right choice.

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"Welcome Juniors" read the sign at the gate of the hall. Another teacher-looking person, this time a lady, sat at a desk.

"Name please?" she asked in the manner of official politeness.

"Xu Ling," he spoke softly, but he noticed that his voice sounded several tones higher than it should have.

"Are you in the computer?" she asked without really looking at him.

"Pardon?" he answered as confidently as he could.

"Is Xu your first or last name?" she asked as she began to type into the computer.

Not understanding the question completely, Xu Ling explained in as much detail as the official urgency would permit. "Xu is my family name."

"Last name is Xu. Well, you're not in the computer. I'm your counselor, so I'll just register you anyway." She spoke all the strange words without offering any explanation, and she began to type. "English first hour; Algebra II second hour; PE third hour; Chemistry fourth hour; and History fifth hour. That gives you a last hour study hall. Here, take this sheet to the I. D. station. Next."

Xu Ling didn't dare ask her to explain any of her meaning. He was too confused already, and he rushed to follow the girl who had become his leader through all of this activity.

They entered a big room full of official people each working rapidly doing many activities which all seemed so important, at least to the person doing the activity.

Counselor — the person who helps students solve problems — much like the class teacher, but she does not teach



By then Xu Ling had decided that his best plan would be not even to think about the activities. He would just follow the girl in front of him, so he did. He waited, sat in front of a camera for a photo, waited again, and received a card colored green and white. "Eisenhower High School ID" the card told him. It had his picture, his name, and the number 11 in one corner. Although he did not understand it all, he knew he was now a student.

He walked slowly toward the door looking at his new card, thinking about the officials he had met, the questions he had answered, and the activities he had completed.

There were so many other questions which had not been answered. Where was his classroom? Who would be his class teacher? The woman had said that she would be his counselor, but was that the same as class teacher? Then Xu Ling thought of the most important question of all. When would he meet his classmates?

Suddenly a thought came to his mind. He didn't want to spend time with this thought, but it was there even though he tried to lose it. It was more than a thought. It was a memory — a memory of Hangzhou and of his school and his classmates. He was popular among his classmates. He had been the monitor and the leader. He earned those positions because he knew what he was doing, and he was in control. But all that was so long ago and so far away just now. "How long two weeks can be!" he thought.

Before he let that thought go any further, he decided that he might be able to have a conversation with some of his fellow students in this new school. He might even meet a classmate. If he did, the new school wouldn't seem so strange.

He spotted some boys grouped by the wall, and he walked to-

ward them. They seemed happy and friendly, so he gained confidence with each step, until he came close enough to hear their conversation.

"Hey, **dude**, what's happening? Good summer?"

"Yeh, man. Good job. Got me a Cuda. "

"Cool, bro. Draggin?"

"Not yet. Hey, get Reynolds for history. He's rad. "

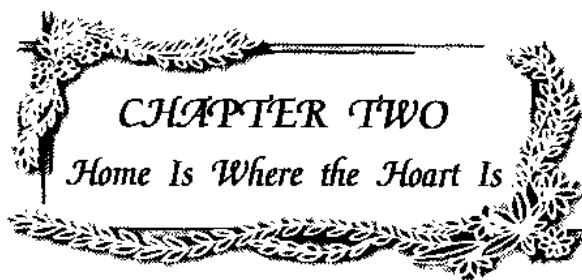
"Right on. Fifth hour. "

"Catch you later, gator. "

With that the boys in the group moved away, and Xu Ling hurried from the school and quickly turned his back on the building and the people inside so that they would never see the tears in his eyes and the hurt in his heart as he walked along the tree-lined street to his house.



Dude — This is American slang call ebonics. There is no translation.



CHAPTER TWO

Home Is Where the Heart Is

**802 Elmwood Drive
Rolling Hills, Illinois 63626**

The letters and numbers on the mailbox told Xu Ling that he was home again, but even those were strange to him. He understood Elmwood Drive as the name of the street, and he understood that the village was Rolling Hills; but the numbers that followed were a mystery. When he asked the lady, who brought them from the airport, the meaning of the numbers, she answered as if she thought she was being very helpful, "That's your **zip code**." Because he did not know what a zip code was, her answer was useless.

Zip codes were not important today. Xu Ling was happy just to be home. Even when home is a strange place, it is better to be home than somewhere else. The house was part of the arrangement of the cultural exchange, provided for them by the plant where Papa worked, and everything about it was strange. It was large, but it was all on one floor. There were many rooms, some with strange names —

Zip code — Each city has a code which tells the post office where to send the mail.