

Andrew's Journey to a New Life in America
Modified Version
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Chapter 1

Andrew was working hard. He was a busboy in a Chinese restaurant in Denver. He served the food, filled the water glasses, and cleaned the tables.

When he finished work, he went back to his apartment. He had two roommates, Charley and Wei. Charley worked at the Chinese restaurant. Wei was a computer programmer.

"Charley, do you want to go to English class with me tomorrow?" Andrew asked.

Charley looked up from the book he was reading. *"No. I have to work. I'm improving my English by reading. Jimmy promised me I'll be the next waiter because my English is improving so much."*

Andrew didn't think that Jimmy, the owner of the Chinese restaurant, was telling the truth. He first met Jimmy in Hong Kong. He promised Andrew a good job in the U.S., with good wages, but he lied. Andrew worked very hard six days a week. He didn't make good wages. He didn't have very much time to learn English. Andrew didn't tell Charley what he was thinking.

Wei gave Andrew two pieces of mail. Andrew smiled. One letter was from his fiancée in Hong Kong. The other was his credit card statement. He opened it first. The total was \$450.35.

"What is this?" he asked. *"I didn't spend this money!"*

"Did someone steal your credit card?" asked Wei.

“No, it’s right here.” Andrew showed him his card.

Wei took the bill and the card and looked at them carefully. *“Call this phone number and say, ‘There is a problem with my credit statement. I was billed for a charge I didn’t make,’”* he said.

Andrew repeated the phrases. Then he called. An automated voice answered. He didn’t understand the first sentence. He hung up.

“It’s too hard,” he said. *“It’s easier to explain in person.”*

Wei sighed. *“Do you want me to call for you?”*

Andrew felt embarrassed. This was his problem. But \$450 was a lot of money. He wanted Wei’s help. *“Yes, thank you,”* said Andrew.

Wei talked to someone from the credit card company. When he was done, he said, *“You only have to pay \$50, and the company cancelled your card. But the person who used your card must have the card number and some personal information about you. He may be using your identity to open new accounts or borrow money. It’s called identity theft. You should order your credit report.”*

Charley spoke up. *“Andrew, ask Jimmy for help with that!”*

Andrew didn’t like to ask Jimmy for help. Jimmy never did anything for anyone for free. But he answered, *“Okay, I’ll talk to him tomorrow.”*

Andrew went to his bedroom. He was tired and confused. He opened the letter from YaoLin. There was a photograph of her inside. She was so pretty. The letter said:

With this letter I send my sincere wishes that you are well and happy. I have very good news! I am coming to Colorado to visit you! I will arrive in Denver at 3:06 PM on January 21. We can celebrate Chinese New Year together.

Andrew remembered when he won the diversity lottery. The lottery allowed him to emigrate to the U.S. He was the luckiest man in Hong Kong! He and YaoLin decided to wait to get married until he was settled in the U.S.

“I talk to Jimmy tomorrow,” he said out loud in English. “He help me with credit card. I ask him give me time off. I plan great visit for YaoLin.”