

The First Class Adventures Of Emerald and Jade
by Mr. Francis Zuccarello

The personal philosophy of Doctor Eben Douglass is, a good man has a good hobby. Eben's good hobby is philately--stamp collecting. The exotically beautiful postage stamps in his vast collection inspire adventures of the imagination for his twelve year old grand-daughter, Jade. Her thirteen year old sister Emerald likes to think she has put away childish things as she looks forward to her first formal dance, although she doesn't have a date.

A real adventure begins after a large, manila envelope arrives that contains a photo of Eben and his wife Esmée with President Bill Clinton, who recognizes the doctor for his service in World War II. But it is the two cancelled twenty-nine cent stamps, "The Buffalo Soldiers" and "The Ledo Road Commemorative," that launch this African-American family on a courageous quest.

By the spring of 1995, the nation of Tompoc, on the Asian plateau, enjoys true independence after decades as a satellite of the Soviet Union. Esmée, Eben and the girls watch the live telecast of a dazzling ceremony as the people return the elderly Huan to The Yeti Throne as ruler of Tompoc. Fifty years before, whilst on assignment as a medic along the Ledo Road in the China-Burma-India theatre, Eben risks his own life and gives an arm-to-arm blood transfusion to Huan. He saves the king's life. As a reward, Huan gives Eben an imprint of The Grand Royal Seal, cobalt blue calligraphy on pressed bamboo.

As the only American Huan might trust, President Clinton sends Eben and his family to Tompoc. The two elderly men reunite in the palace, although once agleam with precious stones and metals, is dark and bare. Huan shows Eben the only royal treasure that remains: his twin teenage grandsons, Heelun and Heejun, each a crown prince. The family also meets Nikolasa, the boys' Russian tutor, and secret agent. Emerald and Jade become fast friends with Heelun and Heejun. The girls teach the boys the trick to remember how to spell dessert. There are two S's because you always want two desserts.

Eben returns the now rare and supremely valuable Grand Royal to Huan, that he might sell it for the money. Nikolasa learns this and takes the boys hostage to force the king into a new vassalage with Russia.

Emerald and Jade advise Huan to give a long speech to his parliament, which the family attends. Whilst the king speaks, the family races back in the royal limousine, and speeds through the palace halls to surprise Nikolasa and her minions. They rescue Heelun, Heejun and guarantee the freedom of Tompoc.

Back home, Emerald and Jade will each girls will attend the formal dance, and each will have a crown prince escort.