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## Elizabeth

1957

My name is Elizabeth Foxx. I am twenty years old, and free as a bird as I stroll leisurely down University Place toward Washington Square. It is an unseasonably warm October evening, and the Village natives, quick to respond to the change of temperature, are all over the Square half-naked in shorts and cut t-shirts. Not me, however. I'm wearing a long gypsy skirt and a loose cotton blouse that modestly conceals my breasts. It's not that I'm especially priggish, but when I came to New York last month, I didn't expect the weather to become this balmy, and I don't feel like writing my parents to ask them to send me my summer clothes. Anyway, I was never one to walk around in public with so little clothes on. Greenwich Village isn't exactly the same as the beaches on Martha's Vineyard where my family would spend their summers at our vacation home.

To be honest, that *free as a bird* stuff is a lot of baloney. I am, in fact, a repressed, melancholy, out-of-towner (I think that's what they call people who aren't native New Yorkers), who has hardly spoken a word to anyone aside from Miss Kim, my Korean roommate, who converses in broken English, the registrar at the NYU College of Arts and Science, with whom I signed up for my first semester courses, and Sonya Rosenberg, my New York shrink, whom I find alternately pretty interesting and painfully boring.

You'd expect that I would meet some people in my classes at school. But I always sit in the back by myself and never participate in class discussions, even when I'm

confident I wouldn't embarrass myself by saying something stupid.

Most of the courses I'm taking are pretty dumb, but as a freshman without a major, they're all required. After class my seating arrangement allows me to be the first one out the door, though I admit that I sometimes linger in the hope that someone might be inclined to introduce herself/himself. In truth, I'm a hopeless social misfit. Sonya says that has something to do with my fear of rejection. Sonya is very big on that sort of analysis, especially when there's no possibility of disagreement.

One of the reasons I came to New York was so I wouldn't have to go to one of the local colleges like Mt. Holyoke, where a lot of people I knew would be attending, and my parents, particularly my mother, wouldn't be checking on me every other day. You have to understand that though I'm twenty years old, my mother still considers me pretty immature, especially since I spent two years in a mental institution after I tried to kill myself when I was fourteen. Although the doctors have all agreed for years now that I am no longer suicidal, my mother still worries that anytime something upsetting happens to me, I'm liable to be back in that bathtub with one of my father's double-edged razor blades mutilating my left wrist. I guess you can't blame her for being such a "Nervous Nellie" since she was the one who found me all bloody and hysterical. What my mother never fully realized was that I was certain that she was around when I went into my little Ophelia act. There were a few clean cuts, but I was careful that none were deep enough to cause a fatal hemorrhage. Hey, if I were serious about killing myself, why didn't I do it when nobody was around, and why did I scream like a banshee after the first slice? The doctors at Green Haven had it right: it was all theatrics, an adolescent attention-getting device, a crying out that I was pretty miserable living in

Sutton Rock, the most nothing town in Massachusetts, with parents who thought that I didn't possess hormones and that their stupid way of life was the only way people were supposed to live.

It was my own idea to hang around Green Haven for almost two years. Now and then to make sure they didn't send me home, I'd do something screwy, like the time I started screaming that I was being attacked by bedbugs. Once I stood by an open window half-naked with my arms spread like a giant bird and began howling like a wolf, until one of the orderlies came running in and strapped me down on my bed. If I thought they were *seriously* thinking of sending me home, I'd pull my catatonic act, just sit on the edge of my bed and stare at the wall and refuse to eat for a couple of days. You see, strange as it seems, I loved Green Haven. Great food, a nice pleasant room, all the books I could read, plenty of art materials to work with, nobody to bother you if you wanted a little privacy. You could even make close friendships with some of the other wackos. The best part about staying at Green Haven was that I was turning my penny-pinching father into a raving maniac because of all the money he had to spend to keep me in an institution that selected only the most privileged adolescent loony tunes in the state, maybe in the world.

Another reason I wanted to come to New York, probably the most important one, was because while I was in Green Haven, I decided that one day I would become a professional artist. I know that sounds a bit pretentious, especially when you consider that no one has ever come close to buying one of my drawings or watercolors. But I know I'm good. The problem is that I need to learn more about the craft, to take art courses with real professionals. And I need to associate with other artists. It's not enough that a few friends and relatives tell me how good I am. I need to feel like an artist. I have to learn to discard my

inhibitions and find out for myself who I am and if I really have a talent. I'm told that there are only two places in the world where one can discover such an atmosphere: one is Montmartre in Paris and the other is Greenwich Village in New York.

In Washington Square Park, I find myself an empty bench on the fringe of the park and begin to sketch on my pad looking east toward the arch that guards Fifth Avenue. While I am engrossed in my drawing, a young man with big, black horn-rimmed glasses flops down on the bench and begins to read a book. I'm not too happy sharing my bench with these horn-rimmed glasses, but after looking around I realize that there are no other empty benches on this side of the park, and not being considered clinically nuts anymore, I repress my annoyance and get on with my sketching. I am a doing a bit of shading, when a young woman approaches the bench. Bad enough the horn-rimmed glasses, now I've got a big, fat ass shoving up against me, which in turn knocks me against the horn-rimmed glasses, who is now tottering on the edge of the bench. One more shove by fat ass and he goes over.

"I saw you giving me the once over," Fat Ass says.

"Pardon?" In Sutton Rock, we are trained to lift our noses and say "Pardon" when a dialogue that you'd rather not get into is being forced on you.

"Don't give me any of your "Pardon" shit, baby. I saw you giving me the once-over."

I glance at my sketch. Sure enough, in the foreground of the drawing is the outline of a woman. It must have appeared that I was staring at her.

"Sorry about that. I meant no disrespect," I say in all sincerity to this strange woman whose breasts are half-hanging out of her shirt. She is wearing no brassiere and if one were to judge her behavior according to the usual

standards of propriety, you'd have to wonder if she isn't crazier than I am.

"So?" she asks. She inches a little closer to me. Our butts are now almost fused together. If I inch any farther away from her, horn-rimmed glasses will definitely be knocked off the bench. I ask myself why he doesn't look for another bench.

"So what," I respond. I have to admit, her demeanor is shaking me up a bit. I begin to look around and consider an escape plan. I wonder if I should politely excuse myself, or just get up and make tracks.

Before I make a decision, she says, "I like your looks, too, honey."

She offers me a cigarette, which I decline, then lights one up herself. Her lips are thin and pale and with the cigarette hanging from her mouth seem almost cruel. "Never seen you around here before," she says. "Just move down to this part of New York?"

"Yes," I say. I relax a bit. The woman's voice has lost its sharp edge. I decide that while she's not exactly normal, she doesn't appear especially dangerous. I'm starting to become curious about her, and remain rooted to the bench.

"How do you like living down here? Nobody gives you a hard time. You can do any damn thing you please. No lousy hypocrites spying through keyholes. You live like you goddamn well feel like living."

"I really haven't given it much thought," I say, though ironically she is expressing ideas that I now and then dwell upon. To be honest, I've spent a lot of time wandering around this city this past month hoping that I might meet up with someone whom I could have an honest conversation with. Fat Ass isn't exactly the sort I had in mind, but when you're as lonely as I am, you can't be too choosy.

“Don’t be so nervous,” the woman says. “I ain’t gonna bite you. I just want to be a little friendly. Hell, baby, you look like you could use a friend.”

“I’m not nervous,” I say defensively. Somehow I feel as if I am chained to the bench, unable to run away from this woman, who seems to be breathing hard, as if she’s becoming emotionally charged by being so close to me.

“See here, honey, don’t get me wrong. I’m not gonna bother you if you ain’t interested. Believe me, I can tell another lonely person. I’ve spent many a goddamn night by myself. This is a stinking city to be in by yourself. I just thought you might need a friend. I mean a real friend, not some cruddy pickup. You know what I mean. I could show you around, introduce you to the right people.”

The park is starting to thin out as daylight fades. The guitar players begin to pack up their instruments; the chess players on the far side of the small park abandon their corner. A general exodus is under way. Benches are vacated. Curiously enough, the one I’m sitting on is still crowded with three people, none of whom are moving.

I feel the woman’s warm, sticky hand resting on my bare forearm. I want to swipe it off as an unwelcome intruder. The woman senses my discomfort and withdraws the hand. “Come on,” she says. “Hell, it’s no damn good sitting out in this creepy spot all night. My place is just a few blocks from here. We could be there in a minute. You like jazz? I got them all: Brubeck, Kenton, Mulligan, Thelonious Monk.” She throws away her cigarette and once again puts a hand on my arm. This time she gives it a little squeeze. “Come on, honey.”

Though I don’t need to be saved, the horn-rimmed glasses on the other side of me lays down his book on his seat and stands up. “Why don’t you leave this girl alone?” he says to the woman.

He does not present a formidable appearance. He is, in fact, a little on the frail side. I doubt if he's much taller than I am. However, when he removes his glasses, he exhibits a certain toughness in his expression that seems to command the attention of my fat-assed intruder.

"Why don't you mind your own business, buster." The woman rises from the bench, puts her hands on her hips and with one eye on my hero, says to me, "I don't get it, kid. You gives me the eye, so I sits down with you. So what's the goddamn hard time for? I hate a goddamn tease."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't play dumb with me, baby. I know your type: sweet, innocent, pretend you don't know your way around." She throws away her burning cigarette, then adds, "Can the crap already. How much you want?"

Then my young man takes a long, aggressive step toward the woman. "You want another cigarette?" he asks her. He pulls a pack from his pocket and shoves a cigarette in the woman's mouth, then flashes a lighter and flames it. The woman begins to back away, the lighted cigarette dangling from her lips like an unwanted appendage.

"You got a lot of fuckin' nerve," she blurts out. I'm not sure to which one of us she is speaking. Then she turns and moves quickly away, swinging her rear end with a lot of zest, as if to let both of us to know that while she is retreating, her character remains intact.

The young man continues to hover in front of me. Then he sits down again, assuming, I guess, that his heroics have at least entitled him to half the bench. I'm glad he doesn't put those awful glasses back on, though he seems to have developed a minor squint without them.

"Thanks," I say.

He nods and returns to reading his book. I don't understand why he doesn't put his glasses back on.

As is my habit, I immediately begin to sketch in my mind the young man's face. He's so engrossed in what he's reading, he doesn't notice. What amazing concentration, I think. On a more careful analysis, I would say that he has a nice face, though perhaps a bit too nondescript for my taste. Still I like his long, thin nose that seems to descend out of a high, metallic forehead, almost like a Rodin sculpture. His lips are pale and a little on the delicate side. I think I might have to fatten them up a bit. Not a bad chin, square, almost tough. I think his most interesting features are his eyes: striking hazel marbles that seemed to dart around their sockets as they take you in. I am waiting for him to smile. I think he might have a couple of retarded dimples as charmers. His wavy brown hair is cut short, unlike most of the Elvis types that parade around the Village with their grotesque pompadours that seem to rise from their foreheads like miniature tidal waves.

I'm waiting for him to say something, anything, and then finally I decide to give him a second "thank you."

He puts down the book and gives me the once-over before he says, "You've got to watch out for aggressive dykes. They're all over and they can be dangerous."

"I didn't think she was dangerous. Anyway, what's a dyke?"

"You can't be that dumb," he says rather rudely.

"I can be as dumb as I want. It's a free country. I like being dumb." While I'm basically a repressed personality, even Sonya admits that I have a little spunk when aroused.

"Hey, don't get mad. I didn't mean to offend you. I will explain it to you." Now he puts his glasses back on, which strikes me as a bad sign. When someone needs to see more clearly, he is liable to become officious, and a little condescending. "A dyke is a female homosexual."

"Don't they use dikes to hold back the ocean in the Low Countries?" I smile. I've turned into a wit, an un-



characteristic trait that now and then asserts itself without warning. However, I don't think my newly acquired friend thinks I'm very funny. Like who cares? I go on: "Some of my best friends are dykes." A major fabrication.

The only lesbian I had ever known was one of the girls at Mona Hall, the all girls prep school located near Boston, where my parents sent me after I had been released from Green Haven. Shirley Clifford, who lived across the hall from me, was a bit of a loner like myself. Now and then we'd shoot the breeze, nothing special. She was thrown out of school because her roommate accused her of being a lesbian. I was astonished. She had never made a pass at me so I really didn't understand what was going on. I was sorry to see Shirley get the boot that way. It must have been pretty humiliating. There was something nice about Shirley. She was the sort of person who always had a smile to hand out when you passed her in the hallway. Later on, one of the girls she used to hang out with told me that she had received a letter from her written from San Francisco. Apparently she had run away from home, which she had once told me wasn't much of a home since she had been living with her grandparents. After her parents had broken up, neither parent wanted her. She claimed that her grandparents were so arthritic that she had to spend half her life helping them to clean the house and the other half shopping for them. They had plenty of money, but were too cheap to hire someone to help them out.

"How long have you been living in New York?" the boy asks me.

"A month. I started school in September."

"Yes, I thought you were probably a student."

How did he figure that one out, I wondered, since very few of my female classmates wore gypsy skirts? The young women in New York, especially students, seem inclined to wear clothes that showed off their legs, even when they

were fat and ugly. Though I've got nice legs, I've always felt funny about showing them off. Sonya claims that's because I'm sexually repressed (after "anxiety," "repressed" is Sonya's favorite word). But Sonya doesn't know everything about me. For example, I never told her that one of the great days in my life will be when I lose my virginity, which is another reason why I came to New York.

"Actually, I'm a little old to be a freshman. I took a few courses back home at the community college."

Here's a little personal history, chronologically speaking. I was fourteen when I did my little bathroom scene and wound up in Green Haven. Two years later, after I was certified as sane, I wound up at Mona Hall, one of your better prep schools for girls whose parents were either divorced or wealthy, or possibly both. The doctors assured me that a girl with my IQ would have no problems integrating herself into a well structured environment and could be expected to succeed academically. I had no objections once I realized that I wouldn't have to return to Sutton Rock and live with my parents, something I dreaded daily when the shrinks at Green Haven decided I was cured. You couldn't fault Mona Hall for my being miserable most of the time, since it was a classy place with lots of opportunities to get a decent education. No retards in this student body. Most of the girls (it was an all, female school) were on the high IQ side. The tuition was as much as the tuition at Harvard or Yale, a fact that my father didn't appreciate, especially after he had just finished shelling out the big bucks for Green Haven the previous two years. But he had no way of getting around my mother, who always had the last word when it came to her only daughter's well being.

I was pretty miserable at Mona Hall during my first year. I missed Green Haven something awful. At mental institutions all you have to worry about is being sane, so you spend most of your time concentrating on yourself

without the pressures of academics and friendships getting in the way, which is what goes on at Mona Hall. At Green Haven there are no penalties for misbehavior, no concerns about being more normal than the *crazy* who lives in the next room down the hall. The friendships you make at mental institutions have a lot of the elements of compassion, unlike the ego conflicts that routinely transpire at a fancy prep school like Mona Hall.

Another thing I didn't like about Mona Hall was that *there were no boys around*. The argument that co-ed schools cause a lot of distractions is pretty stupid. When you get to be sixteen, your hormones begin to take over a good portion of the way you think and feel on a daily basis. Things bother you and you don't always know why. What you do know is that you're in love with every male teacher at the school as well as the maintenance man and the boy who comes to clean the outdoor pool. If you happen to spot some teen riding his bicycle outside the gate, you feel like hurtling over the fence and having a go at him. In the school brochure there's a lot of stuff about "self-development." I don't see how they figure to make you a whole person if they don't give you a chance to speak to a boy, maybe touch him, maybe *god forbid* even kiss him.

"Are you in college?" I ask the boy who saved me from the "dyke."

"I'm a medical student," he announces rather modestly.

"What would have happened if I had gone off with that girl?" I ask. I'm actually not that stupid, but I thought that would make an interesting conversation starter.

"I don't know. I'm not a lesbian."

I answer my own question. "When we got to her apartment, she would have wanted me to take off my clothes and then she would have played around with me. Right?"

“No different, I guess, than if a man had picked you up and you had gone with him.”

“A lot different, I think. I wouldn’t have minded a man playing around with me.” How much fun am I having with my hero with the horn-rimmed glasses? In a million years I wouldn’t have gone off with a man I didn’t know and then taken off my clothes. Speaking so uninhibitedly to someone other than a psychiatrist has to be a new high point in my life.

“Any man?”

“I think I’d like to know his name first and be sure he isn’t diseased.”

“My name is Howard Levy, and I can assure you that I’m very healthy.”

“How can I be sure? Nobody tells you if they’re all diseased and everything.”

“Tomorrow I’ll get a blood test and then I’ll meet you back here with the results.” He hesitates then asks, “What about yourself? How do I know that you aren’t infected with some hideous disease? In ten years I could wind up with a fatal heart condition and be completely insane.” He offers me a wry grin. We both know that neither of us believes a word that the other one is saying. Our dialogue has become a stupid little game that we are both enjoying.

“You say you’re a medical student, maybe you could examine me.”

“We don’t do gynecology until later in the year and definitely not in the park.”

Although I’m twenty, I’ve never had a proper gynecological examination, though it has been recommended on several occasions during routine checkups, I’ve always refused to allow anyone to go poking inside my privates. This has been a source of great consternation to my father, a physician, who claims to be one of the world’s great orthopedic surgeons. He doesn’t understand a young

woman's refusal to be properly examined and has let me know more than once what a fool he thinks I am. My response is to remind him that I'm crazy and cannot be expected to think rationally, which is a response I often use when I say dumb things. In reality, I'm strong as an ox and except for an occasional headache cannot remember ever being really sick, physically at least.

"Do you live around here?" I ask, deciding that the conversation about infectious diseases is no longer interesting.

"I share an apartment on East 24<sup>th</sup> with another medical student."

"What are you doing around here?"

"When I have a chance I enjoy walking down to the Square. Sometimes you hear good folk music and I like to watch the chess games. Later I'll treat myself to lasagna and a glass of wine at a little Italian Restaurant on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Where do you live?"

"On 9th near University Place."

"Do you live by yourself?"

"I also have a roommate."

A little more background music: My roommate's name is Kim, Chun Cha. I've only been living with Miss Kim for three weeks and so far it's been okay, though she's a bit of an oddball. Maybe it's because she's thirty and is Korean, so she looks at life differently than I do. During the day she works as a cashier at Macy's in the Ladies Dress Department. She complains that the job insults her intelligence. Nevertheless, she is always telling me to buy my clothes at Macy's since she can get me a ten percent discount. She states that her real purpose in life is to write a novel in English, though it is not her native language. She points out to me that Joseph Conrad was a Pole who wrote great novels in English, though she read that his Polish accent was so thick as to be almost unintelligible. After

dinner, she retreats to an old beat-up pull-down desk and begins to scribble away with a pencil until she goes to bed around midnight. Why not learn to use a typewriter, I once suggested. She informs me that Ernest Hemingway wrote with a pencil every morning for five hours. She has already piled up hundreds of pages of manuscript. I haven't the faintest idea what she is writing about, and she refuses to allow me to read anything she's written. She offers no reasons and I can only assume that she's afraid I might comment unfavorably. Which is something I would never do. I mean, you have to admire the woman's creative energy and you would never want to monkey around with it by any critical remarks. I remember while at Mona Hall I had worked for days on a large oil painting, trying to find a new way to express myself by getting away from representational art. One of my classmates, who considered herself a great art critic, dismissed it with a shrug and the comment that it was "a lot of nothing." I must have cried for two days nonstop.

At first, NYU had insisted that I live in one of the few available student dormitories since I was an entering freshman. After three days I called my parents and told them that if they didn't arrange for me to move out of the dormitory, I was going to climb up to the roof and jump. My roommate was such a slob, you can't imagine. Her clothes were all over the place. I don't believe that in the three days I lived with her she even realized that there were two bureaus in the room, one for each of us. She dropped her dirty bras and panties all over the floor and in the morning would indiscriminately pick up what underwear she needed when she dressed. But even worse was how she would play her radio day and night: horrible rock and roll music that was driving me nuts. She couldn't understand why I didn't enjoy all the noise and claimed that she couldn't study without her music. My parents panicked

when I told them about the roof thing, and agreed to talk to the Dean of Students. My father, not one to trifle with when aroused, had little trouble in persuading the Dean to allow me to move out of the freshman dorm and rent a room near the campus. I found Miss Kim's ad posted on the bulletin board at the Student Resource Center and though the apartment was on a fifth floor walk-up, my monthly rent was only thirty-five dollars, five dollars less than the dormitory room, which made my father happy. The only problem was that my bedroom wasn't much larger than a bathroom, but it was still a lot better than living with some dimwit from Montana who thought that Bill Haley and the Comets were the greatest musical group ever invented.

"What's your roommate like?" asks Howard Levy.

"She's Korean and I can tell you for a fact that Koreans like their food hot."

"She must have been eating *kimchi*. It's fermented cabbage seasoned with garlic, red pepper, and ginger. It's the national dish of Korea."

"How do you know so much about it?"

"One of the interns in the ER is Korean. He took me out once to a Korean restaurant uptown and we ordered *kimchi*. He told me it would put hair on my chest."

"I don't think I want hair on my chest."

"You're lucky to be living with someone like that. She sounds interesting."

"She's very religious. When she's not writing, she reads the Bible. One Sunday she asked me to go to church with her, but going to church is something no one can make me do. I was forced to go every Sunday with my parents when I was little. When I stopped wanting to go with them, they talked about my going to hell. I told them that I'd rather go to hell than go to church. My father became enraged at my blasphemy. I didn't care. I still wouldn't go."

“My parents are religious, especially my father. He closes down the deli every Friday night early so he can go to *shul*. Now and then when my mother doesn’t feel like it, I’d go with him. I’m not too big on God, but I would go out of respect for him.”

“You’re a Jew?” I ask.

“Check out my *schmozz*.”

Howard offers a profile. I run my fingers down his nose as if I am measuring it, thinking how I might sketch it. “It looks like an ordinary nose,” I say. “I met a few Jewish girls at Mona Hall. One of the girls had an operation to make her nose straight. They didn’t do a good job and the nose became a sort of indented miniature ski jump.”

I don’t think Janice Horowitz ever realized how stupid her nose looked. But she didn’t care. She was probably the smartest girl in the school, but she didn’t have too many friends because she was Jewish. I tried to be friends with her, but she mostly would hang out with the other Jewish girls. God, it was almost like some stupid Indian caste system. At least at Green Haven no one cared what your religion was or where you were from or if your father was some government big shot or a Wall Street banker or the Chairman of the Board of AT&T. We didn’t even differentiate ourselves depending on how nuts you were.

“It’s been great talking to you,” Howard says, “but I think I’ve got to get going.”

“Do you have to go? You know the Indians say that if you save someone’s life you have to take care of them forever.”

“I wouldn’t mind doing that, but right now I’ve got to eat and then do some studying. Maybe I’ll see you around sometime. Like I said, I come down all the time.”

“If you must know, my name is Elizabeth Foxx.”

Howard Levy throws me a quick “take it easy” glance and then he is gone, leaving me once again on this bench



alone with my sketch pad. I watch him disappear as he heads out of the gate and starts to walk up University Place. I like the way he walks, a nice easy stride, not cocky, a sort of “I’m in no rush, but don’t worry, I’m going to get there” way of walking. I think you can tell a lot about people by the way they walk. My father, for example, swings his arms and struts around like he owns the world, while my mother takes short, hesitant steps as if she’s afraid that at any moment she might miss the curb and take a flop. How about myself? I guess you’d have to say that I’m an *inbetweenner*. Like it all depends on where I’m going and how I’m feeling. There are days when my head droops and I couldn’t beat a crab in a race and other days, like today, when I’m not afraid and I want to step out and see the world.

Why didn’t I give Howard Levy my telephone number and address? I should have asked him to walk me home. He said he was a medical student and lived on 24<sup>th</sup> Street, which I think is near Bellevue, so you have to figure he must be going to NYU medical school. If I have any guts I’ll go there sometime and see what I can find out about him, maybe get his address. I could say I’m his sister, or a cousin who had just come into town and was trying to get in touch with him. Of course, I might be making a fool of myself. How do I know that he’d be glad to see me? He might have thought I was some jerky adolescent, who didn’t even realize that she was being approached by a lesbian.

It looks as if there’s nothing else to do but head back to my apartment and see what kind of horrible food Miss Kim is concocting for us to eat tonight. The Square is almost empty now except for a few guitarists on the other side of the fountain. With the weather so balmy, I imagine that later, it will fill up again. Maybe after I do some reading for my lit course, I’ll come back.

I'm in no rush to eat Miss Kim's foul smelling food and decide to do a little more walking before going back to the apartment. I wander around the Square and travel through the arch, then up Fifth Avenue until I come to 8<sup>th</sup> St. where I head east back toward University Place. As I pass in front of a basement café, I read the sign hanging in front of the café: *Dirty Rag, Best Hamburgers in Town*. Miss Kim will have to eat alone tonight. I'm going for a nice juicy hamburger. My mouth is watering as I take the plunge down the three short steps into the subterranean *Dirty Rag*.