

THIRD WORLD CAFÉ

FOREWORD

The *Third World Café* is a quaint coffee shop that specializes in coffee and tea from around the world. The Café has twenty-five tables for seating approximately one hundred patrons and in addition to the special teas and coffees, they also serve various desserts – muffins, from plain to sesame-seed and blueberry; and cakes – from cheesecakes to various chocolate-covered delicacies. All of these can be purchased by the slice with your favorite coffee or tea.

Eight waiters and waitresses dutifully try to satisfy the needs of the patrons. Like every business establishment, their goal is to sell as much tea and coffee as possible – the more exotic, the better and the more expensive. And don't forget the desserts.

The Café is located in the corner of a busy mall near downtown Toronto, Canada. An entrance to the mall as well as to the parking lot allows easy access for the evening crowd when the mall is closed. The serene atmosphere in the Café is in stark contrast to the bustling activity in the mall.

Once inside the Café, the walls are painted with a continuous mural reflecting life-styles in various Third World countries. Depending on your assigned sitting area, you could be engulfed by a sprawling beach; an outdoor café in France; Pike Market in Seattle; a long wooden bridge; a mangrove of coconut trees with an ocean backdrop; a forest of various fauna; or even a gondola in Venice. All of the individual murals blend seamlessly to create a single mural that the casual onlooker would have to carefully inspect, to identify where one mural ends and the other begins.

A specially designed lighting scheme adds an additional unique effect to each mural. The minimal overhead lighting is subdued enough to create an open ambiance while still providing each table with privacy.

For his final touch, the owner placed a six-CD compilation of music from various Third World countries in his jukebox. The music is subtly piped through twelve carefully placed black Bose speakers that are hung from the ceiling and discreetly hidden from the customer's view.

The customers at the *Third World Café* come from various *walks of life* but increasingly over the years the clientele have become more ethnic-Canadian. Some come for the tea, coffee and desserts; others make it a casual place for a regular rendezvous; some like the non-alcoholic nature of the establishment; some like the maturity level of the clientele; and others come to enjoy the quiet atmosphere with its lavish murals. Most of them return because of the *take me away* atmosphere that the owner worked so hard to create. His success is proven by his return business.

This Friday evening, we join some of the patrons of the *Third World Café* as we meander from table to table eavesdropping on their conversations. We choose to identify the patrons by name only, thus allowing each conversation to provide a different insight into the person, their lives and their heritage.

Welcome inside the *Third World Café*.