It was 1954. The world was suffering from unrequited love, a big post-war baby boom and an insatiable craving for sweet solace.

In the heart of Little Italy, sharing a cold water flat with crooners, crawlers and things that go bump in the night lived Serendipity 3. Princes under their frog suits, they waited, lips pursed for the kiss that would reveal their true selves. But it took a magic word to open the palace door.

Eyes, they bounded producers' offices. Nights they built skyscrapers of ice cream at Howard Johnson's. One of them became a lead dancer in "Catch a Star," and Mike Lembo said he might have reached Nipponian heights, had destiny not called him to the kitchen.

He was Calvin Fish out of the saucy ass and inscrutable ways. Fresh from the cornfields of Arkansas. Full of beans and aunt Bubba's sand tarts. Unstirred by grey flannel suits. Lilac with a crazy electricity that outshone Broadway.

Fast at his heels came Stephen Bruce. Two black, slanty, Slavic eyes in league with the devil. Sly and shy. Saucy and sweet-talking. A widely mistrusted enigma, he could be a son of a B or Pola Negri's love child.

Mixing fantasy and innuendo, he dressed windows at Macy's and dreamed of draping the stars.

It was Patch Candeline who found The Word that would turn their fortunes. Composing salacious song lyrics and comedy routines for tiny Village hotels. Trailing around a vocabulary that wandered from obscure to obscene. Able to do the whole Times crossword puzzle weekly, the London Times on off days. One day he uncrossed a word that rang a bell. A word that you could find in the dictionary of common usage back in '44.

The Word was Serendipity. The art of finding the pleasantly unexpected by chance or sagacity. Invented by eighteenth-century wordsmith Sir Horace Walpole, it evoked the ancient legend of the three princes of the island no longer known as Serendip.

"Hey," said the boys, "that's a good name for a place of our own." The rest reads like A Thousand and One Nights. Serendipity 3 pooled its entire fortune of three hundred dollars and staked a claim to a tiny principality in the basement of a tenement on East Fifty-Eighth Street.

It was New York's first coffee house boutique. The first Tiffany lampshaded meeting place since the days of Diamond Jim Brady. Serendipity had come into the world four tables, sixteen chairs and a sowing express machine using. In no time, patrons outnumbered the facilities. Nightly the line formed, stretching around the block and under the old Third Avenue El.

Before he was anyone. Andy Warhol declared it his favorite sweet shop, and paid his chits in drawings. Photographers discovered the charms of Tiffany glass set against whitewashed walls. New York's avant-garde caught on that nineteenth-century junk was suddenly twentieth-century chic.

The Serendipity 3 lost no time learning how to cook, design, whip and turn on the frozen hot. They rolled in the loot and rolled around the corner to the cozy brownstone on Serendipity Street. The entire Silk Stocking community squirmed into its tightest jeans and queued up.

The kitchen buzzed all hours producing never-before extravaganzas. The general store and boutique grew trendy with every passing Hebrew Frenchie dishwrench and Little Red Riding Hood's Jimjams puzzle. (65 pieces, all of them red). Twirled hipped waters balanced trays overflowing with calories. Everything was for sale, including the waiters. Frozen like Chocoloholics were nuttery and Apricot Smackhunks were sated. Palace pampered caviar developed a lust for Hard Times fare like Lemon Ice Box Pie and Texas Chili.

James Beard disembodied his holst tasting and testing in the Serendipity kitchen. Vogue editors planned their issues at old-fashioned kitchen tables, deciding tomorrow's ins and outs. Hundred-dollar-an-hour models nibbled on watermelon while movie stars left footprints in whipped cream mountains. Before she was First Lady, Jackie O.
Sweets

- Big Apple Pie ~ 4.50
- Chocolate Blackout Cake ~ 5.00
- Aunt Buba's Sand Tarts ~ 4.55
- Pecan Pie ~ 4.95
- Lemon Ice Box Pie ~ 4.95
- Dark Double Devil Mousse ~ 5.95
- Cream Cheese Cake ~ 5.00
- Celestial Carrot Cake ~ 5.50
- Ice Cream ~ 4.95
- Strawberries and Cream ~ 4.95
- Cheese Cake Vesuvius ~ 10.95
- Fruit Cup ~ 4.95
- Ice Cream Debbie ~ 4.95
- Oreo Express ~ 4.95

Drug Store Sundaes

- Pineapple ~ 5.00
- Maple Walnut ~ 5.00
- Raspberry ~ 5.00
- Strawberry ~ 5.00
- Marshmallow Caramel ~ 5.00
- Hot Fudge ~ 5.00
- Butterscotch ~ 5.00

Outrageous

- Banana Split ~ 10.95
- Coward's Portion ~ 7.95
- Fresh Fruit Sundae ~ 6.95
- Fruit & Fudge ~ 7.95
- Forbidden Broadway Sundae ~ 8.95
- Sand Tart Sundae ~ 7.95

Toasts

- St. Louis Toast ~ 6.95
- Cinnamon Toast ~ 2.95
- Irish Soda Bread ~ 2.95

Teas

- 2.00
- Earl Grey
- Chamomile Rosebud
- Orange & Sweet Spice
- Jasmine
- Ceylon
- Earl Grey Decaf
- Tea served with Cinnamon Stick

- Iced Tea

Mochaccino

- our own brew of rich chocolate and aromatic espresso, with a topping
- whipped cream

Decaf Mocha ~ 2.00
DecafExpresso ~ 3.00
Decaf Mochaccino ~ 3.00
Decaf Expresso ~ 2.00