

MARTOR



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Second hand

Petruța Burcea

Back in 1994, during my hippie days, I would turn the city up-side-down looking for a pair of flaring blue jeans. My sis came over and said that she had found the item at the Eroilor subway station, in a second-hand clothes shop next to a pastry stand, and she also mentioned that clothes were really cheap there. I went there, stepped inside and was welcome by the smell of old clothes. It all smelled a little dusty, or at least that was my impression of the odour that was making my nose turn. But that didn't matter much because my chief goal there was to find a pair of flaring blue jeans.

After a serious dig in the heap of clothes (they had been simply piled up there), I found my first absolutely cool and really cheap flaring blues jeans. After an even deeper dive into the pile, I also discovered a leather brown jacket which looked cool too. I liked it so much that I couldn't care less that the lining was shredded, that the sleeves were a tinge too long and that the collar was a little worn out. I just bought it! When my mom saw me she almost went nuts. Fancy her daughter wearing somebody else's clothes which on top of everything were also shabby! Yeah, but there weren't any young people my age looking like me ...

After this episode I began hunting down second-hand stores where I would find countless funny and interesting clothes which were also cheap. I found a suspicious looking shop – the circumstances escape me, I think somebody must have told me about it – in the narrow passage at the first tram stop after Crângași. Back in those days, in 1994 or 1995, we used to find them in underground locations, meaning at subway stations. There was one at Unirea. Later, in 1997 and 1998 I think they had begun to surface in all sorts of little street shops or even at the ground floor of blocks of flats facing the street. It was in these places that I found my coolest skirts and dresses, and even a pullover which I adored and which disappeared together with my little back pack, both stolen in Paris. I cried then ... You know things are like that when you grow fond of only one piece of your wardrobe. You wouldn't give it to anybody. I haven't given up exploiting second-hand shops. It's even more amazing as people exclaim in amazement, "Wow, where did you get that one? How much was it? Oh, yes ..."

Translated by Alina Popescu