

# Chapter Seven



## HOW TO ORDER

PAPER BAGS MUST BE USED (not plastic) and marked with your NAME, YEAR LEVEL and HOW MUCH MONEY is enclosed. A separate bag for DRINKS is preferred, marked in the same fashion as the lunch bag. Any CHANGE will be TAPED to the OUTSIDE OF THE BAG.

CAPITALS ARE USED FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION BECAUSE SEVEN OUT OF TEN PEOPLE ONLY READ IMPORTANT INFORMATION. Here is a test to see if you are one of those people:

YOU ARE A GREAT big, crazy PERSON and I LOVE messin' with YOU!

**THE TUCKSHOP KID**

Detention means that I have to order my lunch, as I don't have time to line up for tuckshop and make it to the detention room before 1 pm. I hate ordering, because it means I have to decide in the morning, and no one really knows what they feel like for lunch until lunchtime. It's like trying to guess the future.

As I'm writing on the bag, Marcus Wright comes over. Marcus is like some world champion tennis player for his age, and all the girls love him because he's going to be rich and famous for hitting a fluffy, yellow ball over a net. (Big deal.) He's also a nice bloke, but why wouldn't you be if you're going to be rich and famous and all the girls love you?

'Hey, Matt,' he says.

'Hey, Marcus.'

'I was wondering if you could do me a favour?'

I tend to lose concentration when popular kids talk to me. My brain seems to have a mind of its own. *What can I do for you?* I think. *Teach you how to hit a tennis ball into your opponent's eye?*

Marcus says, 'Kayla told me ...'

*Stay away from her, you underhanded player! The score between you two will never be love!*

'... that you always win free chocolate milks. She said you're gifted or something. My dietician says I need a double dose of calcium before my three-hour training session after school, so if I give you money would you be able to order me a carton for lunch?'

*Pat Flynn*

The request catches me by surprise. Because it has led to some bad experiences, I wasn't planning on buying a chocolate milk today.

'Sure,' I say. 'But I can't promise it'll win.'

'Kayla says it will.'

I shrug.

At lunch I pick up my bagful of food - a cheese and salad sandwich, a small tub of fruit salad and a chocolate milk. The chocolate milk is the only half-decent thing in there, and it occurs to me that I really want it. I've got twenty minutes of looking up words in the dictionary and copying down their meanings to look forward to, so something sweet to drink would go down a treat. But before I get a chance to skol and tell Marcus I forgot, he shows up.

'Thanks, Matt'

He rips the carton open and drinks it in two tilts of the head, and although I can do it in one it's still an impressive performance. He peers into the container and gets mad. 'Matt! I thought you always won!'

'I didn't promise anything.'

He steps in front of me and I get ready to defend myself in case he tries a forehand volley to the gut or a backhand smash to the kidney. Instead, he shows me the carton, and I'm confused because it says 'WINNER!'

Marcus smiles. 'I was just pulling ya leg, mate. You aced it! You're in the zone!'

*In the zone? Cool.*

**THE TUCKSHOP KID**

I look at my watch. I may be in the zone but I'm supposed to be in detention. 'Fallacious', 'antilogous' and 'subreptitious' all mean 'illogical'. In other words, something doesn't add up, it's bogus, there's like no possible way, man. After four days of detentions I know such words. I also know that winning free chocolate milks five lunchtimes in a row is fallacious, antilogous *and* subreptitious, but that's what has happened. When it comes to winning chocolate milks, I'm still in the zone.

After he won, Marcus told Jasmine - the second prettiest girl in our school (behind Kayla) - and she had me win a free one for her and her best friend, Nina. When I got out of detention, Jasmine and Nina were waiting and they both gave me a hug. (I was actually scared to squeeze in case I snapped them in half. They're about size 2.)

Then Eric, the toughest kid in our grade, heard about it, and you don't say no to Eric. When he won, he said I could have one favour, kind of like the Tim Tam genie. Except Eric is more of a mafia genie. I thought about having him beat up Withers and the new kid, but instead I asked him to punch me in the gut if he ever saw me eating fried food. He said it'd be his pleasure.

Somehow Mrs Spencer caught wind of my luck

*Pat Flynn*

(better than catching wind of my wind), and today she offers me a deal. If I can win a free chocolate milk for her son (that's what she says - she probably wants it for herself) she'll pull some strings and get me out of the fifth and final detention tomorrow. She gives me the money, I hand over the milk, and she sucks it through a straw while we do a maths worksheet after lunch. The whole class is quiet, waiting to see whether or not she wins. I think most hope she will, but seeing a teacher lose and me get another detention is an attractive prospect to some kids. When it's empty, she takes the carton outside to wash it, leaving me in charge. If any students misbehave while I'm gone, Matt, write their names on the board and they will join you in detention tomorrow. Well, if you *are* in detention, that is.'

Some kids are silly but I can't be bothered scribbling down their names. The last thing a chubby kid needs is more enemies.

When Mrs Spencer comes back, kids are eager to know how she went. 'Did ya win, Miss? Did ya, did ya? Did ya win?'

'When you're quiet, I'll tell you.'

You can hear a pen drop.

She gives me a serious look. I'm afraid, Matthew, that tomorrow at lunchtime you have... no detention.' I won!

The class cheers and a few kids rush over and slap me on the back. It stings, especially when Eric does it.

'Okay, that's enough,' says Mrs Spencer. 'Sit down now.'

*Pat Flynn*

Kids don't, of course, and in the commotion Kayla lobs a folded-up piece of paper onto my desk. 'Hurry up!' says Mrs Spencer, louder. As the class settles down, I unfold the note.

*Dear Matt*

*You're the best!*

*Love Kayla*

*xxxxxx*

When I look over she gives me a huge smile. I feel like I've just died and ate a Heaven.