

THE MATCHA HUNT



(AKA A SPIRALING REFLECTION ON THE EMOTIONAL
TOLL OF SEARCHING FOR ONE PERFECT CUP OF
MATCHA IN A WORLD DETERMINED TO TEST MY
PATIENCE, BUDGET, AND GRIP ON REALITY)

BY FOLAJIMI OLUTIOLA

It's 2 PM and you're a ways away from the comfort of your apartment (air conditioned, of course). There's only one thing that can save this day... an iced matcha! (Bonus points if made by a racially ambiguous barista with stick-and-pokes and a crochet top who smiles at everything you say)

You swipe the sweat from your brow, tie your shoes, and open Apple Maps. The search is ON!!!! You type in "Matcha Latte." Three locations: 0.1, 0.3, and 0.5 miles away. Perfect. 0.1 is perfect. But there are three dollar signs next to the name? Must be a mistake. Only one way to find out.

You walk not too fast, a brisk, almost-stroll. Can't afford to lose any more energy. Must save enough for drinking. You're thankful for the construction scaffolding that keeps you shaded and makes you regret, less and less, the fact that you haven't worn sunscreen since COVID.

You finally arrive at Matcha Matcha! One exclamation point is never a good sign.

You walk into their sweet, sweet air conditioning. The baristas give you a quick stare but you think nothing of it. You walk to the counter and they ask what you'd like.

You reply, "Matcha."

They say, "What kind?"

You say, "Iced."

They say, "Iced isn't a kind."

You say, "Yes it is."

They say, "No it's not."

You say, "Yes it is. No take-backs!"

They say, "You're an adult. Please tell us what you'd like, or leave."

You sigh in defeat, then ask what kind they offer. They pause for a moment

before handing you a menu. There are 50 options. Too many. Your eyes scroll wildly as you try to decide-until...

\$15.45?

The price is fifteen dollars and forty-five cents? What a scam.

Oh shit. You said that out loud.

The baristas look offended. One of them says, "Ours are made with the best quality, plus it's for a good cause."

You ask, "What cause?"

They say, "To support unhoused pigeons in NYC."

That is not a good cause.

You exit Matcha Matcha! Matchaless, frustrated, and pensive. Why would pigeons need houses? They're pigeons. They fly around and do pigeon shit. And pigeon shit doesn't call for houses.

You whip out your phone again and head to the next place: The Green Cocoon. The AC has given you a boost of energy as you quickly walk there but quickly stop in your tracks when you see the line.

You can't see the end. It wraps around the corner.

This is not what matcha is about. Matcha should not involve waiting in line. You try to justify it... until you hear that the people in the front have been waiting for an hour.

This is some bullshit. You will not be a part of it.

You open your phone. There's a problem. It was 0.5 miles in the opposite direction.

Updated time: 1.1 miles.

You look to see if there are trains. There are not. Is it worth it?

It is matcha... but is matcha worth dying for?

No. But you won't die. And now you can finally close your circle. And then when your watch tells you it's time to stand, you can tell it, "No. I closed my circles today, watch. I don't have to do that."

Before you know it, you're once again moving towards.

THE LAST OPTION.

Your calves burn. The sun is relentless. And there's more poop on the ground than in an Ice Spice song. But it is now in sight. You rush toward the door and swing it open.

There is nobody inside.

This feels... off.

But no worries you think nothing of it. You walk to the counter where there's a bell. Should you press it? No. That's rude. But there's nobody here. You may as well. That's what it's there for.

Your hand creeps toward the bell but before you can ding it, someone walks out from the back. Thank goodness. You did not want to press that thing.

They ask what you'd like.

You ask what kinds of matcha they have.

They say, "Hot and iced."

You ask, "That's it?"

They say, "That's it."

Perfect.

You order an iced matcha, which they begin to whip up for you. Now that you've finally calmed down, you begin to take in the atmosphere.

It's peaceful. It smells like lavender. They're playing Solange. This is nice. You try to sneak out Shazam to get the name without making it too obvious but before you can, the barista says your drink is ready.

You immediately take a sip. It's perfect.

The taste is amazing. The cold drink in your hands is amazing.

But before you can become too entranced, the barista reminds you that you haven't paid.

Oh shoot. You got ahead of yourself.

The screen says \$15, but whatever. At this point, it's fine. You pay and turn to walk away but the barista calls you back for one more thing.

The dreaded screen flip.

Only... this screen is not like the usual ones. Instead of tip options ranging from 10-20%, it's 100-300%.

There's no custom option. No skip.

In the bottom corner is a button.

It says: Klarna.

Klarna?!?!?!?

For f*cking matcha?!?!?

You are appalled.

You ask him what this screen is. He explains:

"The taste is \$15. Once you're satisfied, you pay the rest either 30, 45, or 60."

You stand there, in shock.

No way. You've been jipped. No wonder this place is empty.

You ask if they are at least donating to a good cause

They ask, "like what?."

You say, "I don't know maybe housing for pigeons"

They say, "that's not a cause"

You say, "I know"

You click the 100% option. And go sit down at one of their extremely comfortable seats. It has memory foam.

You are sad.

But also... happy?

I guess so.

Such is the life of a Matcha Lover.



THE

END