Mind Games

I’m chasing Ayanokouji-kun with light steps pondering on where to take a break. And then when I arrived at that corner I had seen him disappear from, I met him. He was facing me.

«Wha!?»

I let out my surprised voice at this unexpected development.

Why. That was obvious, he had noticed that I was tailing him.

«Do you need something from me?»

«Me, what do you mean? …is something I want to say, but it seems like you’ve seen through me already.»

He was inviting me so I can’t feign ignorance as that would just feel like I’m conceding more goals. I’d better just acknowledge it.

«Yes, well you see, I was chasing after you.»

I may have sucked at this, but do people usually notice someone tailing them? Was I seen by him somewhere?

Just as I expected, Ayanokouji-kun in front of me is may not be normal. I became more wary of him.

Now that it has come to this, it’s either sink or swim, let’s make sure. As long as it’s mind games, I don’t think I will lose.

«Why do you think I followed after you?»

I’ll try to lead him with questions to make him tell me to what degree he has noticed me.

«Who knows, I don’t know where to start. More importantly, when did you begin tailing me?»

I wanted to pry some information from him, but he had managed to hand the ball over to me.

«It was just now maybe. So—»

«Just now?»

Ah, dang, he only throws such ambiguous questions. But I have to stay calm. Stay calm. If I let my rhythm get disturbed and say something incoherent, it will be my loss. I wonder if I should just say that I thought him and the chairman meeting as unusual and therefore followed after him? If I say I started to tail him at the cafe, he would most likely ask why.

«Who was it again… right, from when you talked to that new chairman I think?»

Since I’ve managed to keep some space between him and me, I will take the initiative and come back at you.

«So did something happen? You talked with the chairman, right?»

«It seems like ‘e’s planning to remodel Keyaki mall and saw me and asked for opinions. What facilities would make me happy etc. He asked me a few questions about that.»

«Ohhh, so that’s what it was…»

Certainly, there were other adults there when they started conversing so it might just be a coincidence. It seems like there are no links between his true abilities and the Chairman after all.

«So, what about it?»

«It’s not really related to that, you see. There is just something I found interesting.»

The thing with the Chairman wasn’t important to me. It was whether Ayanokouji-kun was being serious or not, only that.

«You know, during the final special exam last semester… wasn’t you the leader, right?»

Since I ended up meeting him like this, I’ll throw every single information I know at him.

«During that flash arithmetic event, the answer you and Kouenji gave was the same.»

It wasn’t a math problem that could be solved by chance.

«I did flash arithmetics during middle school so I’m relatively good at it.»

«I’m the same but, that level of yours can’t explained as being relatively good at it, right? That’s probably at the national level, is what I think.»

«That was just because it was an event I’m good at. In fact, I’ve also participated in national competitions.»

Ayanokouji-kun easily admitted to it.

«…really?»

«Yeah. Since it was an event I’m good at, you may have misunderstood me I think.

It seems plausible that there are persons who are only good at flash arithmetics. But unless you are pretty smart, you won’t be able to solve problems just like that one. And the fact that he didn’t reveal that he was good at it is a problem in itself.

«But you know, why didn’t you just tell us that a bit earlier?»

«That’s true. But, you know my personality, right? I’m not at the position where I can just take the initiative and tell the class about it. I became the leader since I had the protection point after all. What’s more, our opponent was Sakayanagi from class A. Even if I said I was good at it, I was worried since I didn’t know whether they would have believed me or not.»

…I had planned to corner him, but I can’t get a grasp of him. He easily answered my questions like it was the natural thing to do. He didn’t try to excuse himself in some flustered manner either. The are a lot of people that don’t have confidence in themselves. They are unable to declare something since they are can’t say what they want to. There is nothing in our conversation that is weird when comparing it to how he has been until now.

«That… Well, that may be so.»

Oh, no no! I can’t seem to say what I was thinking in my head. Was it because he didn’t lie? No, even if that was the case, there is still something suspicious thing going on. It may change if brought up the cases regarding Hirata-kun and Karuizawa-san. My pace may have been thrown into disorder, but I promised again from the bottom of my heart, yet again, that I would regain my strength for what to come next.