

A Mind For Strategy

by

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Late night in an open-plan office. Ash and Eddie work at their stations, separated by takeaway food containers and empty Red Bull cans. There's tension in the air, as staff is under review following the announcement of a merger.

EDDIE

Hey: is "guru" un-PC, these days? *(Reading the response on Ash's face.)* I'm trying to think about how I describe myself at the sit-down next week.

ASH

I mean, even if it was PC, it wouldn't sound that way coming from you.

EDDIE

I have a mind for strategy. I won't be embarrassed about letting them know it.

ASH

Do you really think there's anything we can say to sway them? Any personnel decision they hadn't made before they slapped their logo on the door?

EDDIE

Ash, it's time to start strategising. Take my advice and we'll both keep our jobs. This is no time for complacency.

ASH

You'll be fine. Maybe not me ... but you? Sure thing.

Eddie stares at Ash, bristling.

EDDIE

It's not like I can't pick up on your tone. Why will they keep me on over you, Ash? I want to hear it from you because you sound so certain.

Ash takes a second to study Eddie before letting it all out:

ASH

I think they'll keep you on because you're a disaster. A walking thought experiment of the worst-case scenario. They can look at you and think "How will Eddie long-game this one?" and then visualise the delays, the uncertainty, the false starts, fuck-ups, excuses. Then, God willing, they can jog in the opposite direction—while you dive on the grenade, if needs be. You're not a guru, you're a magic eight ball of incompetence. And every shop needs one.

Silence. A puzzling expression forms on Eddie's face, which gives way to a sympathetic smile.

EDDIE

I'm going to miss you, Ash. Nobody else keeps me so grounded.