

Chinese?

By

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INT. DULL OFFICE - DAY

A MAN sits behind a desk writing: TONY HEADLING (57).

There is a KNOCK at the door.

The man looks up.

HEADLING

Enter.

ROB HARDIMAN (45) walks in. Smart casual dress, normal looking middle-aged male. Nothing untoward.

HEADLING

Hi. Rob. Come in take a seat.

ROB

Cheers.

INT. CRAMPED LOUNGE - FLAT ABOVE LAO'S CHINESE - EVENING

MIN LAO (54) sits on his sofa. A coffee table in front of him is littered with papers. Lao is stressed, over-worked, and not getting enough sleep.

Hand across his face, finger and thumb on his temples, he gives a good rub. He needs to get to bed.

Behind him, MIN YI (49), with middle-aged spread shuffles into the room.

YI

Are you okay?

LAO

Tired. There's so much work to do here.

YI

And is everything okay?

Lao gives a small laugh.

LAO

It's not good. Business is not so good at all.

YI

These are hard times. But we are breaking even?

LAO

We are. Just. But, we have have a number of loans that are ending this year.

YI

Of course. So that will be a huge help, it must be?

LAO

If we can hang on until they are complete, then we are on a good footing. There's three of them, one in three months, and another two are done two months after that.

Lao looks toward Yi.

LAO (CONT'D)

Once they are cleared, then, basically, we are in the clear. We just have to make sure we make it to that point. There is no more money in the bank, nothing available on the credit cards.

YI

Believe me. If we have to scrape and scrounge, we will make it through. We have worked too hard to let this place go.

Yi smiles and places a hand on the shoulder of Lao.

INT. DULL OFFICE - DAY

Tony Headling is relaxed in his seat.

TONY

Of course you understand that these are very difficult economic times.

Rob nods, he understands.

TONY

And...

Tony looks around the desk, as if for the words; inspiration.

TONY (CONT'D)
...redundancy is something that we
take very seriously. We never go
into it lightly.

Rob is blank, offering no assistance or clues.

TONY (CONT'D)
Of course, if things improve...
then we would be more than
willing... to consider...

Tony looks around for further inspiration.

ROB
(brightly)
I'm hoping to open my own business.

TONY
(relieved)
Ah. So. Another competitor in the
small scale plastic coverings
field.

ROB
A restaurant.

TONY
(surprised)
Food. Oh. A la Carte?

ROB
Chinese.

TONY
(deflated)
A take-away...

ROB
With an English theme.

TONY
An English Chinese?

ROB
No bean-sprouts. Don't like bean
sprouts.

Tony prepares to continue writing.

TONY
(weak smile)
I wish you all the best, then.

INT. FLAT ABOVE LAO'S CHINESE - NEXT DAY - EARLY MORNING

Lao makes his way downstairs. The flat is in need of modernization. Paraphernalia lies around. The kitchen light is on. As Lao reaches the bottom of the stairs he sees his son MIN CHI coming out of the kitchen.

LAO

Oh. Alright. Morning. how are you?

CHI

Hi Dad. You okay.

LAO

Early start today?

CHI

Yeah.

LAO

We got a lot to do.

EXT. OUTSIDE LAO'S CHINESE - SAME

Lao open's the shutter on the takeaway. He checks the quiet street around him: litter strewn, devoid of people.

He turns around to see the Philippine restaurant opposite: the windows boarded, graffiti and posters adorn it.

LAO

(to himself)

You could make that into something.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A MALLET slams into a piece of wood. And again.

MAN

You're pretty much done there,
mate.

A 'For Sale' sign has been sunk into the ground.

Rob looks at the sign and turns to look at the property behind it. Hands on hip, he looks down and thinks: not too sure.

INT. LAO'S KITCHEN - DAY

There is action. Lao is dressed in cooking white's as is his son. His wife chops on a chopping board. Large bags and bowls are moved and shifted.

To the left, a door. In walks MIN PO (18) female, looking tired, not had enough sleep.

YI

(to Po)

Meats are defrosted, all ready, go on, you're late.

PO

I'm too tired.

LAO

Po, do as your Mother tells you, be quick now, we have to be ready.

CHI

She'll be late for her wedding.

YI

Nobody asked for your opinion, get on with yours.

INT. ESTATE AGENT - DAY

Rob and ESTATE AGENT (34) share a SCREEN.

ESTATE AGENT

Well, I'll give them a ring back. Sure you're happy with that?

ROB

Yeah. More than happy with it.

ESTATE AGENT

I mean, you could get a lot more than that for it, if you hung on for another couple of weeks. A lot more money.

ROB

Cash in the bank, so I'm pretty chuffed.

ESTATE AGENT

You're saying goodbye to a hefty chunk of cash of course, you're happy with that?

ROB

Yeah. Get rid of her. Quick's good for me.

INT. LAO'S KITCHEN - DAY

All quiet. The family stand around, leaning against work surfaces. They have done what they can. The food is prepared and ready. They are awaiting patrons.

Chi turns around, looks at the ceiling, studies the floor. He's done more exciting things than this.

Lao furrows his brows gently.

INT. BUSINESS ESTATE AGENTS - NEXT DAY

An open plan office.

Rob sits in front of a desk. A suited BUSINESS AGENT (40s) behind it, tapping away at a computer, checking out the screen.

BUSINESS AGENT

Yeah, business is quiet at the moment. A good time to buy of course, a choice of the market, prices are pretty low. Just difficult surviving afterward.

Business agent looks at his customer.

BUSINESS AGENT

Don't want to put you off or anything.

ROB

So what have you got for me?

BUSINESS AGENT

Value wise, there's a nice property that has been on the market for some time. Has flats above it.

ROB

Okay, accommodation is good.

BUSINESS AGENT

Mmm. Used to be a foodie. Pretty sure it still has some fixtures and fittings. So just some surface

(MORE)

BUSINESS AGENT (cont'd)
 adjustments and you'd be fairly
 good to go. Philippine, I think.

ROB
 Okay. Can you get me a viewing
 arranged? Soon as.

BUSINESS AGENT
 Certainly can.

INT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - NEXT DAY

MAN (50's) saunters in to the restaurant, and up to the
 serving counter. Lao turns to greet him.

LAO
 Hey. Are you well today?

The man ponders the menu.

MAN
 Oh it's not bad. How's business
 here?

Lao turns his nose up.

LAO
 There's just not much money around
 now, you know. Nobody is spending.

MAN
 Just a special fried, mate.

Lao scribbles down the order, and hands it over to Yi. Lao
 turns back and notices something over the shoulder of his
 customer and sees...

...the Philippine TAKE-AWAY SIGN is being removed.

LAO
 Yi.

He calls to her over his shoulder, not wanting to miss what
 he is seeing.

LAO (CONT'D)
 ...what's happening over there?

YI
 They must have sold. Obvious. It
 was going cheap.

LAO
Who's going to try and start a
business now? In this climate? They
must be barking.

INT. ROOM DRAB - DAY.

MONTAGE:

SONG CHIN (19), male, is holding a paper. His hair is a mess, and the curtains are closed, he has only recently got up.

He slumps back on the bed and scours the paper in front of him.

CHIN
Kitchen... delivery.

He holds the phone.

CHIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, I'd like to speak to...

Chin, back against the wall, newspaper held intently in front of him.

In the kitchen, and on the 'phone.

CHIN (CONT'D)
...it's about the advert you had...

EXT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - DAY

Rob and the Business Agent arrive outside the take-away.

The Agent unlocks the door and gestures Rob inside.

INT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - SAME

Rob and the Business Agent step inside and take in the scene. The place is not in a bad condition, bits of mail lie around the floor - it needs a clean but not much else.

BUSINESS AGENT
So. Here you go. This is it.

Rob kicks aside some mail-shots; they've got some dust. He looks around.

BUSINESS AGENT (CONT'D)
Needs a bit of a clean, of course,
but most of the fittings are in
good order, you just need to get
connected to the utilities, and
Bob's your uncle.

ROB
So what happened here? Why did it
close?

BUSINESS AGENT
The usual. Especially now. Not
enough trade. Turnover was okay,
but not enough profit. They decided
to hang up their hats. An older
couple.

ROB
And it's been on the market for...

BUSINESS AGENT
Just over three months. There's
some stock if you're interested.

ROB
I like it. It works for me. I can
do things here. I think that I can
a lot of things here.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - EVENING

Lao is sat at an desk - over-crowded with papers, opened
envelopes, documents. He is fretting.

Yi wanders up to him and sits near to him.

YI
And how is it looking?

Lao scratches his head.

LAO
We took about £150 today. It's
pretty crap. Of course we will take
more at the weekend. Most of the
time we can afford to buy the stock
and pay the bills, but there's
almost nothing left for us. It's
too tough.

YI

And not even a small loan from the bank, just to tide us over?

LAO

They won't. We're in no position to pay it back. I've asked them to extend the overdraft, but we have to pay interest on it.

YI

But two months. That's when there's some let up. We can survive until then? That's right isn't it?

LAO

Oh yes. Then it makes a difference. And one month after that... more let up. Even in this climate, we'll have the wind in our sails.

Yi places her hand on Lao's shoulder.

YI

Lao. We've been through some tough times together. And if I know anything we'll most probably face more tough times in our journey.

Lao looks at Yi.

YI (CONT'D)

We're going to get through this. It's not long. Two. Three months. We'll see this out. Okay?

Lao shakes his head and gives a small laugh.

LAO

As usual you are right. We'll see this through.

EXT. CHIN'S FLAT - DAY

Chin exits his flat. Walks along the street. He checks the shops around him.

EXT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - DAY

A van is parked outside of the take-away. An over-weight chap removes himself from the vehicle. Rob opens the door of the take-away and greets the workman.

They both move inside.

WORKMAN

Give it about two, maybe three days. I'll get a quote over to you. Doesn't look like it'll cost too much.

ROB

Yeah. A lot of it is in place.

WORKMAN

Mainly cosmetic to be honest. Shouldn't take too long either, once we start the work.

ROB

A couple of weeks?

WORKMAN

Oh, if that. I'm quite quite at the moment, and I've got men looking out for work. I should have it done in, what, four days best.

ROB

Job done in a week? That'd be tops.

WORKMAN

Wish you the best with your business though. A lot of people would say that you're a crew loose to start a business now though. No-one's got any money to spend.

ROB

Ah. I've got an idea. And I'm willing to take a risk. Got to take a risk in this game.

The men exit.

EXT. ANY CAFE - DAY

Chin sits at a table. Cup of tea in front of him. Head in hands. A newspaper open, classifieds spread out.

Chin jabs a number in his MOBILE.

Slumps back in his chair, listening to the ring tone.

Sits up, opens his mouth.

CHIN

Hi. About the advert...

(pause)

...gone? Yeah. Thanks.

He exhales. It's pointless.

Pulls himself over the newspaper, an effort to start again.

EXT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - DAY

There is activity: men with ladders, jobs to do. Inside and outside they busy themselves. Moving stuff, stepping over things, sawing, smoothing, sanding. To-ing and fro-ing.

Rob looks. Here, there. He steps out of the way, guides and tidies. He is both integral and surplus, and in his element.

INT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - SAME

The wife and kids are in the background, busy looking busy.

Lao is in front of the counter. He moves forward. Something has caught his eye.

EXT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - SAME

Lao moves closer to the large window to the outside.

INT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - SAME

Lao's POV

A workman is on a ladder outside Rob's take-away. He is putting the final touches to a sign: ROB'S CHINESE.

Lao moves closer to the window, concern, confusion creep across his face.

EXT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - FURTHER DOWN THE STREET - NIGHT

Chin walks down the street. Downcast and down trodden.

He passes by Rob's Take-away, and notices a sign in the window. He looks a little closer, leans forward. Finds a pen in his jacket, some paper. Scribbles something down.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - DAY

Lao is looking out of his living room window. His wife sits comfortably busying herself.

LAO
They're ready.

Yi looks up. Then down.

YI
Ready for what, dear?

Lao glances towards her and looks back to his scene.

LAO
To open. Ready for business. It's started.

EXT. PHILIPPINE TAKE-AWAY - SAME

The Take-away looks clean, it look ready for business.

Rob exits from inside, and take a couple of steps so that he is well positioned in front of the property. He takes a good look.

A BIG SIGN above the property: ROB'S CHINESE.

INT. CHIN'S FLAT - EVENING

Chin looks at un-scrunched piece of paper, concentrating.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - DAY

Lao, Yi, Chi and Po are all sat around a table, sharing a meal together.

PO
So, Dad, what are we going to do about that new place?

CHI

Nothing we can do? What are we supposed to do?

PO

I was asking Dad, not you.

(pause)

So what can we do?

LAO

I don't know. But maybe we have to do something. Maybe we have to have a plan.

CHI

Blow it. Put a bomb underneath it. That'll sort out the problem.

PO

Why do you have to be so stupid? How about having a special on? We could dress up in traditional themes?

CHI

Dress up? I ain't dressing up.

YI

Both of you now. Let's hear something constructive from the two of you.

PO

Well what do you think? What's your idea?

YI

I think he is going to create some interest, and maybe we have to compete with that.

CHI

Tell him that there's a Chinese mafia out there or something.

PO

We could put fliers under people's doors, tell them we have a special offer on.

CHI

Superglue his door?

PO

We could take samples round to the local businesses.

CHI

Let's start a protection racket on him. He pays up or we wreck his joint.

PO

Mum. Why does he have the mind of a three year old? He's supposed to be my older brother.

YI

Finish. Come on. Finish your meal.

BATHROOM

Lao is brushing his teeth, but his mind is elsewhere.

LAO

(to himself)

A mafia. Chinese mafia.

Lao pauses from his brushing and considers the thought.

LAO (CONT'D)

What does he know?

EXT. ROB'S CHINESE - DAY

A SIGN outside the take-away: OPEN SOON.

INSIDE

There is a gathering, eight or nine people mill around the counter area. Dressed in casuals, they drink, eat, and chat. Rob is in good spirits. He and two others are behind the counter, serving up food, people are happy.

One of the GUESTS leans over the counter toward Rob.

GUEST #1

Give me a shout if you need a hand Rob.

ROB

Just you enjoy yourself, and leave the skilled bits to me.

Rob comes round to the front of the counter, holding two trays of food with him. He offers them to a MALE and FEMALE guest. They both happily take food.

FEMALE GUEST

Rob, I never even knew you could cook, never mind cooking such good Chinese food.

ROB

Just one of my hobbies. I've been doing it on and off for a few years, really no more than just dabbling.

MALE GUEST

This is more than just a dabble, mate.

ROB

Yeah, I did go to some classes, a while back, Chinese teacher and all. She was quite impressed, thought I had a natural touch.

From behind Rob, a hand is waving, beckoning him over.

ROB

My apologies guys.

Rob joins two other guests.

GUEST #2

Rob. This is top dollar. When are you due to open?

ROB

Cheers. Glad you like it. First day is the day after tomorrow, thought it would be good to start on a Friday, should get some good trade.

GUEST #3

Have you got any staff together?

ROB

Yeah, I've got a young guy who's at college starting tomorrow, he came in yesterday, really seems to know his stuff. He's Chinese.

GUEST #2

And you're really not going to use
bean sprouts?

ROB

Nope. And he's happy to go with
that. So it will be authentic
Chinese, just with an English
touch.

GUEST #3

Well. All I can do is wish you the
best of luck.

ROB

Yeah. And get your backsides back
in here sharp on Friday.

EXT. ANY STREET - NEXT DAY

Po has a large sport bag across her shoulder. She turns into
the path of one of the houses and delivers an item through
the letter box. Turns, back down the path and repeats in the
next house.

INT. CHIN'S FLAT - MORNING

MONTAGE

BEDROOM

The curtains are drawn, the light is low.

An alarm clock rings, and a hand searches to cease the din.

Chin rises from his bed, squints, and and is up.

KITCHEN

Coffee is made, the kettle barely boils. Rushed sips,
followed by quick gulps.

BATHROOM

In the bath, Chin scrubs all of him that is scrubable.

He shaves, he brushes his teeth, he combs his hair.

BEDSIT AREA

An ironing board is out, and Chin, full of vigour, smooths
what should be smoothed, and crease what should be creased.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - DAY

FRONT ROOM

There is quite. Lao checks that he cannot be seen, and dials a number into the phone. He clutches the handset to him.

LAO

Bo. Yes. How are you doing. Fine, yes. And Mother? Is she well?

(he smiles)

Look. I need a favour from you.

He waits for a response.

LAO (CONT'D)

It's something... unusual. You might even call it a little odd.

(pause)

Is Lin around at the moment?

Lao's face lights up a little.

LAO (CONT'D)

Good, good. Here's what I need...

INT. LAO'S FLAT BEDROOM - DAY

Po and Chi are in Po's bedroom.

PO

Does Dad know? What would he say?

CHI

Does Dad know about you? Have you told him what you are doing?

PO

I ain't doing anything wrong. You are.

CHI

Wrong? There nothing wrong in what I'm doing. How can you that? It's perfectly legitimate.

PO

You don't even know the meaning of the word legitimate.

CHI

But I do know exactly what you're doing. You think I don't know don't you?

PO

Do you want to get out of my room?

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH TAKE-AWAY -DAY

Rob is working in the cooking area. He is holding a mobile to his hear.

ROB

Hey. Lynne. How's tricks?

INT. VAN - DAY

LYNNE HEMMING, 34, inside a scruffy van, is holding a mobile phone to hear ear.

LYNNE

Yeah, I good Rob. Look, you know yesterday evening you mentioned your take-away had some spare room upstairs?

ROB

Yeah, I've three bedrooms here.

LYNNE

Well, do you fancy making a bit of money out of one of them.

ROB

Why? Have you got someone in mind?

LYNNE

Yeah. Me and Elliott had one of our do's last night, and I'm heading down the high street with all my stuff in the back of my van.

ROB

Well you're welcome to have a look, but I've got my chef coming today, and we have to go through the ropes in time for tomorrow, so if you're happy to sort yourself out, I can give you a key.

LYNNE

Rob, you're what friends are made of.

The sound of a BELL in the background of the take-away.

ROB

In fact that's him now. I best get off, see you down here soon.

Rob turns to the sound of the bell.

ROB

Hi there mate. Glad you could make it. Bang on time too, just what I like to see. You didn't have too far to come did you?

Chi is stood in the door way.

CHI

Hi. It wasn't too bad. About twenty minutes or so. I like to be on time.

ROB

Great. Let's get in the back then and get on with things, shall we?

INT. LAO'S FLAT - SAME

Lao is still on the phone.

LAO

Okay. Okay. Great. Here from you soon.

He places the phone down, and is startled to see Yi looking in on him.

LAO (CONT'D)

Oh. Yi. I didn't see you there. How are you.

YI

Fine of course. So who were you speaking too? Anyone I know?

LAO

No. Nobody. Nothing at all. A supplier. Damn people. Small problem with an order.

YI
You sounded happy enough.

LAO
(stumped for a moment)
Yes. But I got it sorted out. That was why I was happy. An they promised it wouldn't happen again. So I was pleased with that.

Yi looks at Lao.

YI
So, are you going to tell me what they did.

LAO
Oh, it was nothing. Got the rice mixed up. With... bean sprouts. And they called here.

YI
They called here?

LAO
Just to check. They thought the order was odd, so I put them right. And they apologised. So, it's all fine.

Lao leaves the room.

Yi moves over to the window to look out onto Rob's English Chinese.

Yi looks back into the room, over her shoulder. Coast clear, she raises her MOBILE PHONE into sight and jabs in a number.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SAME

Rob and Chi are in the cooking area.

ROB
The fridges are over there too your left. We're fully stocked.

LYNNE (O.S.)
Hi Rob.

ROB
(turning round)

(MORE)

ROB (cont'd)
 Hey, Lynne. Come through. Stairs
 are up here on the left. This is
 Chi.

CHI
 Hi.

LYNNE
 Hi there.

ROB
 Just make your way up and get
 settled in. You can get the van in
 round the back if you want.

LYNNE
 Cheers, Rob. I really appreciate
 what you're doing.

Lynne goes up the stairs.

CHI
 Is she working here too?

ROB
 No mate. She's an old friend of
 mine. Just broke up with her bloke.
 Always having arguments those two.

CHI
 You like her?

ROB
 Do I like her? Well, yes. But not
 like that. We're friends. Have been
 for a while.

CHI
 You like her then.

ROB
 We're opening tomorrow. Let's get
 on.

INT. FLAT ABOVE ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - LATER

Lynne dumps her stuff down. Looks around the room, opens a
 draw here and there. Sits on the bed. A bit glum.

FRONT ROOM

She looks around.

KITCHEN

Kettle on, she looks for a cup.

ROB (O.S.)

So things really not good between
you two then?

LYNNE

(surprised)

Rob. Oh, sorry, I didn't see you
there.

ROB

So, do you think that this is
temporary, or something longer
term.

LYNNE

Oh, Rob.

Lynne sits down by the kitchen table.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

I really think that I just have to
end it. I can't go on like this,
off and on, and on and off again.
It's more like a merry-go-round.
We're just not doing each other any
good.

ROB

Look. You can stay here for as long
as you want. Did I tell you that I
sold the house?

LYNNE

Really?

ROB

Yes. But there is good deal of room
here. And I'm not short of cash, so
it's no real strain.

LYNNE

I can help out if you want, Rob.
During the evening. I don't do much
with myself. Never did with
Malcolm. Have to work during the
day of course.

ROB
 Well, yeah, I'd be happy to help.
 And I guess it would take your mind
 off things a bit eh?

Rob wraps a comforting arm around Lynne; she smiles and leans her head against him.

EXT. TAKE-AWAY STREET NEXT DAY - MORNING

A bright sunny day. The two take-aways on either side of the road.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SAME

Rob is busy cleaning and wiping. Chi knocks on the door. Rob unlocks and lets me in. Rob lock the door behind him.

CHI
 Hey Rob.

ROB
 Hi Chi. Got a lot to do today.

CHI
 You all ready for it, ready to roll?

ROB
 Ready as I'll ever be.

CHI
 Do you want me to get on with some prep? I can do the vegetables if you want.

ROB
 Yeah. That'd be great.

Outside, two MEN of Chinese appearance are by the door. There is a gentle knock.

ROB
 (animated)
 Not open yet guys.

One of the men knock again.

Rob stops cleaning and moves closer to the door.

ROB (CONT'D)
 (animated)
 We're not open. Another couple of
 hours.

The man knocks again and indicates that he wishes to speak to Rob.

Rob, exacerbated, opens the door.

ROB (CONT'D)
 Sorry guys, we're not open just
 yet, you'll have to come back in an
 hour or so.

The first man makes his way in to the take-away, gently moving Rob out of the way.

Rob moves back somewhat surprised by the action.

ROB (CONT'D)
 Is there a problem?

MAN #1
 This is a nice place.

ROB
 Yeah. It's mine. What the hell do
 you two want?

Both men have now walked into the property. They are relaxed, but menacing, up to no good.

MAN #1
 Unusual. English man opening a
 Chinese restaurant.

ROB
 It's a take-away. And it's not
 entirely Chinese. It has an English
 twist.

MAN #1
 Still. You don't find many English
 opening Chinese. Good reason too.

ROB
 Good reason. What good reason? What
 on earth are you talking about?

MAN #1
 Chinese. That's what we're talking
 about. Chinese run by the Chinese.

(MORE)

MAN #1 (cont'd)
Good money. Like to keep control of
the business. Only open with
permission.

ROB
Permission. Just what on earth are
you going on about?

MAN #2 is in repose. He steps up in support.

MAN #2
Permission. To open. And once we
give you permission... then you
have to pay your dues. Like all the
good people who run these things.

Rob eyes the man with suspicion, thinks about his response.

ROB
Are you trying to tell me...

MAN #2
Except you pay a little more.
You're not Chinese, and that costs
a little.

ROB
You don't expect me to believe that
you're both some kind of Chinese
mafia, do you.

MAN #1
Believe what you want. If you don't
trust us then you are welcome to
come with us.

ROB
With you? Where?

MAN #2
Come see the boss. He'll put you at
ease about the necessary
arrangements.

ROB
I'm not paying any of you. Not a
penny.

Both Chinese men laugh, almost politely.

Man #1 looks around the decor, admiring.

MAN #1

You've done a nice job here, made some nice touches, personalised it well. It has... character.

(pause)

I have to say that I approve. I hope that we can do...

(pause)

...good business.

ROB

Now leave. And don't bother returning. You won't find a welcome.

Rob turns and see Chi staring.

CHI

Are you okay?

ROB

Mafia? Chinese mafia? Ever heard of anything like this before?

Chi grabs a knife and begins to chop up vegetables.

CHI

Yes. I heard of them. My father used to run a take-away back in my home town before I moved here to go to college.

Rob moves a little closer to Chi.

ROB

Go on.

CHI

He had problems with them. They are hardly a mafia. It is just a protection racket. But they have got their fingers in almost every Chinese in the country.

ROB

I've never heard of anything like this.

CHI

Chinese are proud. They don't go boasting to the wider community when they are being threatened. They rather just pay up and work hard. It's in the culture.

ROB

Well they'll get nothing from me, I can tell you that.

CHI

But just be careful with them. They have a reputation. They can be nasty... very nasty when they get upset.

The doorbell rings. A slim Chinese male walks in.

ROB

Hi. Chin is it?

Chin nods.

CHIN

Hi.

ROB

Welcome in, get your jacket off and I'll take you through everything. Chi. Meet Chin. Chin. Chi.

EXT. ANY STREET - SAME - DAY

Po is pounding the streets. Delivery bag is slung across her shoulder, and in a garden path, slipping another leaflet into a letter box. Turning, she keeps her eyes peeled.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - DAY

Lao is in his kitchen. He munches on toast gazes vaguely out of the window.

LAO'S POV

Po is returning from her rounds. She opens up the back gate to the take-away. There is a shed near to the rear of the garden. She checks around that she is not being watched. Opens the shed, and dumps the bag inside.

End POV

Lao is intrigued, confused.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SHORT TIME LATER.

Rob cleans and wipes from behind the counter. In the rear, Chi chops, and Chin washes and mops.

The BELL rings on the door.

ROB
Morning. Afternoon. Whichever.

Lao walks in, offers Rob a big smile.

In the rear, Chi ducks. Lynne walks in from the flat and notices Chi, looks bemused. Lynne moves towards the counter.

LAO
Hi, hello. New restaurant.

ROB
Yes. First day today, opening today.

LYNNE
Hi Rob.

ROB
Hi Lynne. We've got our first customer.

LYNNE
(to Lao)
Hi. Welcome.

LAO
Hello. Thank-you. Duck Chow Mein, please.

ROB
Certainly.

Rob scribbles down the order. Turning, he slaps the order behind him.

ROB
(loud)
Duck Chow Mein. Where's...

CHIN
(quickly)
Bathroom. Back in two seconds. I can make a start on this. It's okay, I know what I'm doing.

COOKING AREA

Chin gives Chi a small kick as Chi remains ducked behind the counter.

Chi stands with his back to the counter obscuring his face, and furiously begins work on the order.

COUNTER AREA

LAO

So, I'm your very first customer. A great honour, I have to say.

Lynne laughs.

ROB

No. The honours all mine.

LAO

I have to say, and I hope you'll forgive me, but it's quite unusual to see a white British man with a Chinese food shop.

ROB

Well...

LAO

I can see from the front it is in fact an English Chinese, but non-the-less...

ROB

It's Chinese with a hint of English, and English angle to it, dare I say.

A PHONE rings in the background.

LYNNE

Chill. I'll get it.

Rob watches Lynne go, turns back to Lao.

Lao thumbs at the window behind him.

LAO

That's my place behind.

ROB

Ah. You own that. So you're the healthy competition.

LAO
Not so competitive at the moment.

ROB
Business not so good?

LAO
Business is okay. It's not so bad
at all. But we are getting bled
dry. You know. By them.

Rob's confused.

ROB
Sorry? By who.

LAO
By them. You know. They run things
round here. Demanding money. If you
don't pay. Then there's trouble.

ROB
I haven't got a clue what you are
talking about. You mean like a
protection racket.

LAO
Call it what you want. But they run
things round here. And they get
very nasty if they don't get their
own way. You have to be careful
with them.

ROB
I think maybe you have been
watching too many gangster movies.

LAO
No. Honestly. It's very organised.
They run things round here.

CHI (O.S)
Duck Chow Mein!

EXT. ROB'S CHINESE - REAR - DAY

Chi and Chin are on a break.

CHIN
Are you going to tell me what that
was all about.

CHI
About? It was about nothing.

CHIN
Don't lie to me. You hit the deck
like you'd been shot. You knew that
man.

CHI
Okay. I knew him a while back.
Basically I worked at his place.
Across the road. He sacked me. I
messed some food up. I was scared
that he'd tell Rob.

CHIN
What did you mess up?

CHI
Just some stuff. It was a while
back. I don't remember. Does it
matter? I'm just trying to do my
job here.

Chi goes back into the take-away. Chin follows him, and see
Rob counting by the till. Sidles up to him.

CHIN
Hey, Rob. Can I get a drink?

ROB
You can have one.

Chin grabs himself a can, takes a slurp.

CHIN
So who was that guy who came in
earlier? You were chatting to him.

ROB
Why the interest?

Chin smiles.

CHIN
I'm the suspicious type.

ROB
Where did Chi disappear to?

CHIN
That's why I'm asking. I'm trying
to put two and two together here,
(MORE)

CHIN (cont'd)
and my maths isn't working out so well.

Rob stands and faces Chin. Takes a quick look around.

ROB
You said you'd worked in Chinese restaurants and take-aways before, yes?

Chin nods.

CHIN
Of course.

ROB
So what do you know about Chinese mafia. Protection racketeers?

CHIN
That guy was playing at being the mob?

ROB
How do you now he was only playing? He could have been the real thing.

CHIN
Then what was he doing here? And on his own?

ROB
But they run the take-away scene, right. The Chinese mafia? They pull all the strings?

CHIN
What? Take-aways? Do you really think that take-aways are the prime target for these guys? They're into the drug scene, people trafficking...

ROB
I thought as much. Look. Can I trust you.

CHIN
Everyday.

ROB

He sent a couple of boys in earlier. Pushing for cash. Saying that they ran things round here. Then, suddenly in he comes, pretending he's the victim of the same job.

CHIN

He's trying to pull one on you mate. He's probably sent a couple of his mates round to keep his own place safe.

INT. COLLEGE REFECTORY - DAY

Chin has a tray of food. He is looking for a table. Sits down. Opposite him is Po, reading.

CHIN

Hi. How are you.

Po looks up.

PO

Chin. I'm cool. How's classes?

CHIN

They're good. Listen. I got myself a job.

PO

Okay. What are you doing?

CHIN

Fast food. Chinese.

PO

Like my Dad's place.

CHIN

Maybe. It's owned by a Brit. He's cool though, does a good meal.

PO

You come to my place one day. Then you'll have a good meal - proper Chinese.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - DAY

Yi is on the phone. She looks behind her shoulder checking that no-one is listening.

Nods her head.

YI

Try again. See what you get. I want you to tell me about the reaction. Body language, you know?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Lynne and Rob walk by a pond in a park.

ROB

You could work for me if you wanted. I'd pay a good salary.

Lynne laughs.

LYNNE

Do you honestly think I could be your employee? We've been mates for so long, it'd just be weird.

ROB

I'm just helping you out really. I'm not giving you a job.

LYNNE

I need somewhere just to chill at the moment, and being at your place is everything that I could want. I'll help you out with cooking and cleaning with the business. And then I'll just eat all your food and use all your gas in lieu of wages.

Lynne gives Rob a gentle jab in the side.

EXT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - DAY

A refrigerated delivery van arrives outside Lao's shop. A man steps out, Chinese origin, stocky, YAN LEE (30s), goes to the rear of the van, opens up the doors, jumps in and drags a collection of good out.

He takes them over to the shop, goes in.

INSIDE

Lao is behind the counter, and see Lee.

LEE
Hi, mate.

LAO
Hi Lee. Welcome. Straight in the
back eh?

Lee takes the goods through to the store area.

INT. OFFICE - LAO'S SHOP - DAY

Lao is in his box-cupboard office. A tiny desk, filing cabinets tall and short all crammed in. He moves papers, shuffles things.

LEE (O.S.)
All done.

Lee walks in.

LEE (CONT'D) (O.S.)
Finished mate.

Lee sits down on a decrepit chair opposite Lao.

LAO
So, Lee. How's things going.

LEE
Slow mate. You how it is nowadays.
You need to order more stock from
me, help me out some.

Lao laughs.

LAO
Honestly. If I could shift the
stock, I'd be ordering it from you
in droves.

LEE
So no change then?

Lao shakes his head.

LAO
It's hard right now. I tell you.
Very hard.

LEE

I noticed that shop across the way?

LAO

You did. He's been open a week or so. New. Not doing so well. I don't see so many people in there. Probably not even breaking even.

LEE

Is he hurting you. Harming trade.

LAO

Well, it's impacting.

LEE

Is there anything you can do?

Lao looks away, shrugs his shoulders.

LEE (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Anything I can do?

Lao looks at Lee, his interest captured.

LAO

Anything you want to do?

LEE

(softly)

Look... you know...

LAO

Of course. We're family. We should help each other out.

LEE

What have you been thinking of?

LAO

I really don't know, so many things, but...

LEE

We don't have to... you know. At the end of the day, this is about survival. You don't owe him anything. You've got a family to look after.

LAO

Who supplies him, then? Can you find out?

LEE

I can do that easy, mate. Easy and quicker than you think.

EXT. ANY STREET - SAME - DAY

Rob and Lynne are walking down a street.

ROB

The boys are opening up, but I best get back, make sure they're not destroying everything.

LYNNE

They're a good couple of lads aren't they. Both seem to work hard.

A MOBILE phone rings.

Rob digs the device out of his pocket.

ROB

Yes?

Rob looks to Lynne.

ROB

(to Lynne)

Maintenance engineer.

(to maintenance engineer)

Yes, mate. I'm going to be back there in about five, so I'll see you then.

Rob puts his phone away.

ROB

One of the ovens' gone already.

LYNNE

Oh. That was quick. Did you you have them in new?

ROB

No. They were already there. But I had them checked over, and they were fine.

Lynne BUMPS into someone coming out of a garden path.

LYNNE

Oh! Sorry. I didn't see you there.

PO

It's fine don't worry.

Po bends down to pick up some leaflets she has dropped on the floor.

Lynne and Rob bend down to help.

PO

No! No. I've got them. Really, it's nothing.

Rob and Lynne hand Po the leaflets they have given to Po.

Po scampers off.

LYNNE

She's in a hurry.

Rob looks to the ground. He can see another leaflet on the floor. He bends down and picks it up. Looks at it.

ROB

She was handing these out wasn't she?

Lynne looks at the leaflet in Rob's hand.

ROB (CONT'D)

She was delivering these to the houses here.

Lynne and Rob study the leaflet.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SHORT TIME LATER

Chi is bent over around the side of an oven.

CHIN

What are you doing?

Chi starts at the voice behind him.

CHI

Nothing, mate. Why? What are asking for?

CHIN

There's nothing wrong with that oven. It's the other one that's got the problem.

CHI

I know. So I was just checking that this one didn't have the same problem.

CHIN

Why? What was the problem? I thought Rob had sent for an engineer.

Chi laughs a nervous laugh and moves away from the oven.

CHI

I was just looking, mate. To see what I could find, just trying to help out.

EXT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - SAME

Lee walks out of the take-away and steps into the street. He takes a good look at Rob's take-away and moves slowly toward his van. He moves round to the front of the van and stands near the bonnet.

On the other side of the road, another van arrives and parks opposite Rob's take-away. The driver, carrying a large work-bag, exits, checks some details on a board and begins to make his way to Rob's.

He stops and turns just before reaching the door.

Rob and Lynne are approaching. They shake hands and enter the shop.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SAME

Rob, Lynne, and the engineer are all in the shop.

ROB

It's the middle oven. Fine the other day, then just stated to play up. Right over there.

ENGINEER

Okay. I'll go and have a look.

The engineer moves over toward the oven and puts his bag down, opens it up.

Behind Rob, there is the sound of the BELL as the door opens.

Rob turns around.

LEE

Hello mate.

ROB

Hi. Can I help?

LEE

Maybe. I deliver to the Chinese across the road. Have done for a while now. Quite a few years.

ROB

Okay. And...

Lee moves a little closer.

LEE

You know as well as I do. These are difficult times. I could offer a decent discount if you took up trade with me. Look, I'm here already every week.

ROB

But could you supply me the same stuff as my guy.

LEE

You know that we get all this stuff from the same place, the wholesale game. You know that I'm good as well. The guy across the road will tell you. I've been keeping him happy for years.

Rob moves a little closer to Lee.

ROB

What about the... you know. The guys in charge.

Lee looks blank.

LEE
What do you mean?

ROB
The mafia people.

LEE
Mafia? What, here?

ROB
Look.

Rob hands over a small card.

ROB (CONT'D)
Here's my card. Send me over your
prices, and I'll see what I can do.

LEE
Cheers, my friend. You won't regret
it, I can assure you.

KITCHEN COOKING AREA

Lynne walks into the cooking area, and approaches the
engineer.

LYNNE
Seen anything?

ENGINEER
Replaced the pipe. They don't often
go. Little piece of rubber. Looks
like it was cut. There you go, you
keep it.

The engineer packs his tools away, and turns to leave.

Rob is moving toward him.

ROB
All done then?

ENGINEER
Yes. Simple job. I'll just invoice
you.

Engineer moves toward the exit.

LYNNE
Rob? Give a minute round the back.

REAR OF SHOP

LYNNE

Engineer bloke said he thought this rubber pipe had been cut. He said it was unusual.

Rob takes a look at the piece of rubber.

ROB

And that guy looked blank when I asked him about heavies demanding money.

LYNNE

And with those leaflets...

ROB

Only one conclusion really isn't there?

LYNNE

Someone's got it in for you. And you think that it's Lao, right. He's scared of the competition.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - NEXT DAY

KITCHEN

Lynne wear a cotton night-shirt, eats cereal. Sun shines through the window.

STAIRS

Rob, half-asleep, climbs down the stairs. As he enters the kitchen area, he sees Chin.

Chin is working at a pace, putting stuff into a fridge, wiping a top.

CHIN

Rob. Glad to see you. Veg is chopped, all in the fridge. Meat's done, all you need to go.

Chin whips his jacket on and grabs a BAG from the floor.

CHIN (CONT'D)

I've got classes at nine, but I'll be back at six for the evening, okay?

ROB
 (big grin)
 Cheers Chin, you're a saviour.

EXT. ROB'S CHINESE - SAME

Chin exits the shop and hurries down the road, adjusting his bag, checking the time.

CHIN'S POV

A FEMALE on the other side of the road is going his way. He soon catches up with. Looks across the road. Recognises who she is.

CHIN
 Po!

She turns to look. A smile breaks out, and she stops.

Chin crosses the road.

PO
 Hi Chin, what are you doing here?

CHIN
 Off to college. How come you go this way too?

PO
 I live down here. I thought you said that you lived round the Garston area?

They begin to walk.

CHIN
 I do. Got myself a part-time job. Except it's turning into a full-time job.

PO
 Okay. What is it doing?

CHIN
 Chinese place. I do everything there. Cooking, cleaning prep.

PO
 Really? My Dad's got a Chinese. Take-away.

CHIN
Okay. What's it called?

PO
Lao's. Not far from here.

Chin's brow furrows.

CHIN
So how's that assignment of yours
coming a long?

EXT. LAO'S TAKE-AWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

Lao is looking out of the window onto the street in the
serving area of the take-away.

Lao's POV

A DELIVERY VAN arrives outside Rob take-away.

Lee steps out and sees Lao looking. Lee gives Lao a quick
wave, and continues to Rob's.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SAME

Lee enters the shop. Rob greets him with a short wave.

ROB
Hi there Lee. Do you want to bring
it all straight in?

LEE
No problem. Where do you want it.

ROB
Store room just to your left
through the kitchen.

Rob climbs the stairs up to the flat, and goes into the
kitchen. Lynne is sat at the table, sorting through various
PAPERS.

Lynne looks at Rob as he comes through the door.

LYNNE
Rob. you okay?

ROB
Lee's here. He's brought that stock
that we ordered.

LYNNE

So, what do you propose we do? Are you going to check through it?

ROB

Not now. I'll ask Chin to go through it all. He can check the sell-by dates, see if it's all kosher.

LYNNE

Kosher Chinese?

ROB

Funny.

INT. COLLEGE REFECTORY - DAY

Chin is at the counter getting some food. He looks behind him and see Po. She is in conversation with Chi. Chi leaves and Po finds a table.

Chin moves over to join her.

She looks up as he seats himself.

PO

Hey Chin.

CHIN

Okay Po. A friend of yours?

PO

That guy? My brother. I told you about him. Pain in the backside. But brother none-the-less.

CHIN

And what's he studying?

PO

Catering. He wants to take over the family business. He's doing catering with business studies. Only part-time. Because he works. Not all that hard, like, but he does work.

Chin laughs. He looks over to where Chi exited some time earlier.

CHIN

Look, I've got to go. Got to back at work. I'm doing some extra shifts now.

PO

Okay, that's good. Some extra money.

CHIN

You're doing design, aren't you?

PO

...yeah. Why?

CHIN

I was just thinking. This place I work for, do you think you might be able to come up with something. For the menus, posters, things like that.

Po looks disappointed.

PO

Look. I'd love to. But I have to work in the shop as well, and with all the college work. I really can't take anything extra on. I'd love to, but I can't, really.

CHIN

No it's fine. Not a problem at all. I'll call you later.

Chin grabs a mouthful of food and leaves.

INT. ROB'S ENGLISH CHINESE - SHORT TIME LATER

Chi walks in. Rob is in the cooking area.

CHI

Hey Rob.

ROB

Hi Chi. How are you doing? Prep's all done. Need to get going soon.

Behind him, Chin walks in out of breath.

CHIN
Sorry I'm late. Got caught up.

ROB
Got a little job for you Chin. Had
some stock delivered today.

Rob and Chin move through the kitchen and into the store
room.

Rob speaks to Chin in hushed tones.

ROB (CONT'D)
I got a delivery today, from that
guy that I told you about.

CHIN
Okay.

ROB
It's all down here. I want you to
check through it all. Check the
sell-by's and everything, okay?

CHIN
I've got something to tell you.
About Chi.

ROB
What's that.

CHIN
He's Lao's son. I've figured it
out.

ROB
Lao? He's Lao's boy. How do you
know that.

CHIN
I know his sister. She's studying
design at the same college as me.

ROB
Design? What sort of design?

CHIN
Graphic design.

ROB
That wouldn't be for publications
would it?

CHIN

Yeah, I guess, any sort of publication.

ROB

And that might include leaflets, by any chance.

CHIN

Yeah. I kind of asked her if she wanted to do something for us, but she said that she was too busy.

ROB

Yeah, I bet she was.

(pause)

And that oven then. You now what I'm thinking?

CHIN

I saw him bending over the other oven the other day.

ROB

What is this. The entire family involved? Check that lot, I'll be upstairs.

Chin begins to open up some of the boxes.

SITTING-ROOM

Lynne is sat reading.

Rob comes in and sits near to her.

She smiles at him.

LYNNE

You okay, mate?

ROB

Chin's just checking those stocks.

LYNNE

I think you're worrying about nothing.

ROB

Oh? Chin's just told me that Chi is Lao's son?

LYNNE
 (disbelieving)
 Are you winding me up.

ROB
 Not in the least. Chin says that
 he's at college with his sister.
 And guess what?

LYNNE
 Tell me.

ROB
 She's training to be a graphic
 designer. Remember the leaflets?

LYNNE
 This is really a family effort
 isn't it? They've come up with a
 co-ordinated attack. What on earth
 are you going to do?

CHIN (O.S.)
 Rob!

ROB
 That's Chin. I'd better go down and
 see what he's found.

Rob and Lynne go down to the store.

STORE ROOM

ROB
 What have you found?

There are opened boxes around Chin.

CHIN
 Beansprouts.

ROB
 Beansprouts?

CHIN
 Yeah. In that box.
 (points)
 And that one.

Rob look into the box.

Chin points other boxes.

CHIN

Yeah. And in that one as well. And that one, and that one.

ROB

What have got here?

LYNNE

A years' supply of beansprouts it looks like to me.

ROB

They're taking the mickey.

LYNNE

How did they know?

ROB

I told him. That day when He came in. Lao. I told him about the English twist. No bean sprouts.

Chin snorts.

Rob eyes him.

LYNNE

You've got to do something about this Rob, this is getting out of hand.

ROB

Yeah. And I know exactly what I'm going to do.

Rob exits the store room, going into the main kitchen area, heading for the outside door.

LYNNE

Rob? Rob!

CHIN

We better go after him.

The chase after Rob, passing Chi in the kitchen.

CHIN

(to Chi)

You better get home mate, I think you're in the crap.

Chin follows.

EXT. OUTSIDE LAO'S CHINESE - SAME

Rob enters into Lao's. Po is walking along the road, and inquisitive look draw across her face. She enters Lao's, in her wake Lynne, Chin, and Chi.

INT. LAO - SAME

Rob is in side, Po looking inquisitively at him as she snails past him.

ROB

Lao!

Lynne, Chin, and Chi walk in.

PO

Is there something wrong?

ROB

Go and get your Dad. Tell him I want to see him, right now.

Hands on hips, Rob means business.

LAO (O.S.)

What's the problem?

ROB

The problem, my slimy friend, is that you and your family have been everything you possibly can to totally undermine my new business.

Yi follows Lao, as he gingerly moves into the reception area.

LAO

Look. I really don't know what you are talking about. But if there is something wrong. Then please. Just talk to me and I will see what I can do to help.

ROB

Help? Help? You've all been in this together haven't you? The lot of you, got together and planned this all.

Lao, Yi, Po, and Chi wear sheepish expressions.

LAO
Look, look.

ROB
These leaflets for example. What
are they all about?

Rob takes a leaflet out of his pocket and shows it to Lao.

Lao looks surprised.

LAO
Leaflets? What leaflets?

ROB
These leaflets. Here, read them.

Lao takes a leaflet and looks over it.

LAO
Well. That's not very nice is it?
It's not I assumes? Can't be?

Rob snatches the leaflet back.

ROB
Of course it's not true.

Chin sniggers.

LAO
But I've never seen these before in
my life, I'm quite sure.

ROB
You may not have seen them, but I'm
pretty sure that she has.

Rob shoots an accusatory glance toward Po. Po averts her
eyes.

LAO
So, Po. Is this anything to do with
you?

PO
To be honest, I'd... prefer...

YI
Po. Is this anything to do with
you?

ROB
Chin says that you're doing a
design course.

Po whips a glaze toward Chin

CHIN
No... that's not what I said.

ROB
Chin, it was exactly what you said.

Chin looks toward Po and gives a small shrug of his
shoulders, apologetically.

ROB (CONT'D)
And what's he doing in my kitchen?

Rob turns round to face Chi.

Lao, Yi, and Po all look toward Chi.

LAO
Chi? You're working for him?

PO
(quietly)
Traitor and a knob.

YI
Chi. What are you doing. We need
you here?

CHI
(struggling)
Look, it's not that simple...

ROB
no it isn't. He's been screwing
with my ovens. That's right isn't
it? A little bit of sabotage.

CHI
The oven? That was a accident, mate
honest. I was just trying to..
alter it, fix it. I don't know.

LAO
Look. I think...

ROB
And then there's the mafia boys...

LAO
...what? Mafia boys?

ROB
Yeah. Those two boys you sent
round.

LAO
Sent round? I never sent two round
to you. What are you talking about?

YI
Look. I think...

LAO
You?

YI
I was just...

ROB
And then there's the beansprouts.
Now, tell me you don't know
anything about that?

Lao looks further embarrassed.

LAO
Ah. Now, that was, just... more
like a joke. Sense of humour, like.
Just a little private... leg-pull.

ROB
A leg-pull? I've a year's supply of
beansprouts, when I don't even
serve beansprouts. And what about
all the food that I did order?
What's happened to that? Are you
going to pay for it?

LAO
Look, Rob. Honestly, I didn't know
about any of these other things. We
didn't co-ordinate anything.

ROB
So how come all of these things are
happening and all at the same time?
Just a mad co-incidence.

CHI
We all wanted to do something.

Rob and the gathered people all turn to look at Chi.

CHI

We had that meal, remember? And we all came up with ideas. That's when I decided to do something. I never realised that everyone else was going to do something.

PO

Yeah. Same here. I didn't know that Dad and Mum were going to do anything.

ROB

So none of you knew anything about what anyone else was doing and you all live together?

CHI

I found out what Po was up to, but it was too late then. She had already started, and so had I.

Rob thinks.

ROB

Well. There's only one thing for it then.

LAO

What are you going to do?

ROB

I'm going to call the Police. You've all left me with no option.

LAO

Rob, no. Come on. That will ruin us. We'll have to shut down, we're struggling as it is. What happens if it gets into the local press? They'll have a field day; you know nothing ever happens around here.

Lynne sparks at the thought.

LYNNE

Hold on a minute. Rob, there's another way round this, I think. Something that help all of us.

ROB

Like what?

LYNNE

Think about it. Forget the Police.
Let's get the press involved.

LAO

And how are we going to do that?

LYNNE

We let them know what happened.
It's a bit of a mad state of
affairs. And we could always
embroider it. We then get in the
local press, people come and have
look, see what's happening, and
then we get our trade up. All of us
could win if we played this right.

ROB

Lynne, I'm not too sure I'm
convinced about this idea...

LAO

Come on Rob, it's a good idea. If
it works, I promise I'll repay you
with the bean sprout food order.

ROB

You're repaying that anyway, Lao, I
can assure you.

LYNNE

So. You're happy to give it a go,
then...

INT. ANY OFFICE - DAY

A SECRETARY is on a PHONE. Concentrated look on her face.

SECRETARY

Okay. And these men...
(nods and listens)
Leaflets... round the local area...
(listens)
...and beansprouts...
(a little incredulous)
...a years supply...

AN OFFICE DOOR. SIGN: EDITOR

The Secretary walks through the door. Goes to the EDITOR,
sitting behind his desk.

SECRETARY

Hi, Jack. I've had a odd little story that you may be interested in. I've got a contact number, but it involved a couple of take-aways, what appears to have happened is...

EXT. OUTSIDE LAO'S CHINESE - DAY

Lao is stood outside his Take-away talking to a casually dressed REPORTER, who scribbles down NOTES.

REPORTER

...And what was your reaction to that? How did you feel?

LAO

Well, I was shocked... absolutely stunned, I couldn't believe what was happening.

Lao looks across to Rob's shop. He can see Rob also talking to a Reporter. Rob glances over.

INT. LAO'S FLAT - EVENING

KITCHEN

Yi is in the kitchen cooking. Lao is with her, gathering dishes of food together. Lao carried food into the

DINNING ROOM

A table is laid out, and people chat. Sat around is Rob, Lynne, Chin, Chi and Po.

Lao places the food on the table, and sits.

LAO

Yi. Come. The food is not going to wait for you.

(to everyone)

Dig in. Help yourselves.

Yi enters, and sits. Everyone begins to take food.

LYNNE

Wow, Lao. This looks so good.

ROB
(to Lao)
I have to hand it to you, you know
a good Chinese.

LAO
(laughs)
I've been in the business for a
long time, now Rob. If I still
can't cook a decent one, then I
never will.

YI
So, Lynne, a toast to you clever
little idea, I thing.

Glasses and beer bottles are raised.

LYNNE
Well, it wasn't a rousing success,
but...

ROB
No, not at all, I think it may well
have done the trick. Lao?

LAO
Well, I have to be honest, not all
is rosy in the garden, but, yes,
trade is better. It is definitely
better.

(to Lynne)
And we have you to thank for that.

ROB
Yes, and, I do think that we should
work together, I think that we can
help each other.

LAO
And now Rob. Take some Chow Mein,
it's proper Chow Mein, beansprouts
and all.

END