

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 ok?

LAO

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

YI

And is everything ok?

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?

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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

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 philipino 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), 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?

(CONTINUED)

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, looks at the floor. He's done more exciting things than this.

Lao furrows his brows gently.

INT. BUSINESS ESTATE AGENTS - NEXT DAY

Open plan office.

Rob sits in front of a desk. A business agent 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 adjustments and you'd be fairly good to go. Philippine, I think.

(CONTINUED)

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) walks in to the restaurant, and 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 Philipino 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:

...CHIN (19), 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.

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 dust or mail-shots. Looks around.

BUSINESS AGENT
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.

(CONTINUED)

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 weeks. 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.

(CONTINUED)

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 together 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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 flyers 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

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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 her 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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)
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.

(CONTINUED)

CHI
Is she working here too?

ROB
No mate. She's and 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.
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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CHI
Are you ok?

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

Loa is in his kitchen. He munches on toast gases 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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, 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 REFRECTORY - 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.

(CONTINUED)

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 dont 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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 Robs 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.

(CONTINUED)

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?

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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

(CONTINUED)

A FEMALE on the other side of the road is going his way. He soon catches up 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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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?

(CONTINUED)

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 beansprout 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.

(CONTINUED)

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