

Sweet n' Sour
Recession

By

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INT. THAI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MR BROWN (in expensive suit), sits at a table in a secluded section of an otherwise empty restaurant. A large SECURITY GUARD blocks the entrance to the section.

The table has a number of half empty bowls and plates on it.

Mr Brown is on his mobile phone.

MR BROWN

(into phone)

How much?

(pause)

Look. You can call me what you like.... I'm not spending eight pounds a head.

(pause)

I don't care if he's my son! It's too much!

(pause)

Oh, for God's sake! He's only 21!

Mr Brown snaps the phone shut, dabs his mouth with a napkin. Looks at watch.

A woman, MISS PINK (American, prim) reaches the Security Guard. He holds up his hand and shakes his head.

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry, madam. This section is closed to the public...

Miss pink holds up a small wallet. Pushes it right into the guard's face.

MISS PINK

(annoyed)

Do I look like public to you?

The Security Guard steps back, a little shocked. He nods his head as Miss Pink storms past him.

A transformation as she reaches Mr Brown's table - a huge smile now on her face. She sits opposite Mr Brown.

Mr Brown exaggerates a 2nd look at his watch, then at Miss Pink.

MR BROWN

This better be good... Miss....

Miss Pink holds up her hand and leans over to Mr Brown.

MISS PINK

Before we start I suggest that we don't use our real names.

Mr Brown nods.

MR BROWN

Agreed.

MISS PINK

I'll be Miss. Pink and you can be Mr. Brown.

MR BROWN

I think you're confusing me with my predecessor...

Miss Pink waves a dismissive hand.

MISS PINK

Whatever. Shall we get down to business?

MR BROWN

Yes. I think we should. But I should warn you now, whatever it is you're offering, the government is in no mood to spend any money.

MISS PINK

(leans back in her chair, smiles)

Let me ask you a question, Mr Brown... What do you think is the best way out of the current global financial crisis?

Mr Brown rubs his chin a little and looks thoughtful.

MR BROWN

Well. It is our current policy, despite the fact that we advocate frugal and responsible fiscal management, that in the current climate we believe that members of the public should, whenever possible express their ability to allow the high street to benefit from financial gain, resulting from the acquisition of commercial goods offered.

MISS PINK

You mean, people should get off their asses and spend more?

MR BROWN

In a nut shell, yes.

MISS PINK
(big smile)
I was hoping you were going to
say that.

Miss Pink raises her arm and clicks her fingers. A CHINESE WAITER appears at the table with a plate of food. He places it in front of Mr Brown. He bows and leaves.

MISS PINK (CONT'D)
(points to plate)
Try the dish, sweet and sour
chicken.

Mr Brown looks down at all the empty plates.

MR BROWN
I am already rather full.

Miss Pink motions towards the plate.

MISS PINK
Please. A mouthful at least.

Mr Brown takes a mouthful of the chicken and chews on it awhile, eventually swallowing it.

MISS PINK (CONT'D)
Well? What do you think to it?

Mr Brown gives a smirk. Builds himself up.

MR BROWN
Well... It's rubbery...

Mr Brown gives a small bow and puts on poor Chinese accent.

MR BROWN (CONT'D)
Thank you very much!

Mr Brown erupts with laughter.

Miss Pink raises an eyebrow with a look of what the fuck?

MISS PINK
Right... Sure...

Mr Brown starts to choke a little. He clears his throat.

MR BROWN
But besides that, it's pretty
tasty chicken.

Mr Brown puts another mouthful in.

This time it's Miss Pink's to smirk.

MISS PINK
It's not chicken.

Mr Brown coughs a little food out.

MR BROWN
What? What is it then?

MISS PINK
(big smile)
It's synthetic chicken. And it's
also the solution to all your
problems.

Mr Brown barks a laugh.

MR BROWN
I'm sorry. But your people got me
out of bed for that? Half the
chickens in the supermarket have
never even seen the inside of an
egg!

Miss Pink bends down, reaches under the table, eventually
pulls out a small microscope. She places it on the table.

MISS PINK
Here. Take a look at it.

Miss Pink takes out a scalpel from her pocket and slices
off a wafer thin piece of chicken. She places it onto a
slide and puts it under the microscope.

Mr Brown looks into the eye piece and after a few small
adjustments jumps back in shock.

MR BROWN
What the hell are they?

MISS PINK
They are what we call, nanobots.

MR BROWN
And I've just eaten them?

Miss Pink nods and smiles.

MISS PINK
Yes. But they're harmless...

Mr Brown sighs relief.

MISS PINK (CONT'D)
Mostly.

MR BROWN
(shock)
Mostly harmless?

MISS PINK

How would you like to control every single voter in the United Kingdom?

MR BROWN

I thought that's why we had Television?

MISS PINK

It was, but it's all got a little too confusing recently. Did you ever see Lost? Besides... this is far superior.

MR BROWN

And that's where these nano-thingys come in?

MISS PINK

Nanobots. Yes. We call it, suggestive programming. We can program them to suggest anything we like to the host.

MR BROWN

The host?

Miss Pink points to Mr Brown.

MISS PINK

Yes. The person that eats them.

Mr Brown frowns deeply.

MR BROWN

And you're telling me that you can program them to suggest things? Anything at all?

Miss Pink nods.

MISS PINK

Yes. Anything at all.

(beat)

Right now, we have them programmed to suggest just one word...

The waiter walks past the table.

MR BROWN

Waiter!

(to Miss Pink)

Excuse me a moment...

CHINESE WAITER

Yes, sir?

MR BROWN

Can we get some more drinks here?
And perhaps a few deserts?

CHINESE WAITER

Certainly, sir. Which would you
like?

MR BROWN

(waves him away)
Bring a selection, will you? I
don't care about the price.

CHINESE WAITER

Certainly sir.

The waiter bows and hurries away. Miss Pink is smiling
broadly.

MR BROWN

I'm sorry, you were telling me
about the programming? What have
you programmed them to say?

MISS PINK

Spend, Mr Brown. We've told them
to say spend.

Mr Brown raises an eyebrow.

MR BROWN

Interesting.

Miss Pink takes the microscope and puts it back under the
table.

MR BROWN (CONT'D)

So, how do we do this?

MISS PINK

I can have the chicken into every
McDonalds and KFC by the end of
the week. Supermarkets the week
after.

MR BROWN

What about Burger King?

MISS PINK

Nobody goes to Burger King...
Just think, Mr Brown. You could
spend your way out of this
recession by Easter.

The waiter returns with several deserts and two drinks,
which he places on the table.

MR BROWN
(to Waiter)
Thank you.
(reaches into his
pocket)
And here. Take this.

Mr Brown offers the waiter three twenty pound notes. The waiter bows and walks away.

MR BROWN (CONT'D)
(to Miss Pink)
So.... How much is this going to
cost?

MISS PINK
(beat)
One Billion pounds.

After deep thought and then a nod of the head, Mr Brown offers his hand to Miss Pink.

MR BROWN
I think that seems fair. You have
a deal, Miss Pink.

Miss Pink shakes his hand and stands.

MISS PINK
Very good. I'll be in touch. A
pleasure to meet you, Prime
Min... Mr Brown.

Miss Pink starts to leave.

MR BROWN
One last thing before you go...
Do you know if any of the shops
around are open at this time of
night?

MISS PINK
And why's that, Mr Brown?

MR BROWN
Because my dear, I want to spend
some money.

MISS PINK
(chuckles)
Of course you do, Mr Brown... Of
course you do.

Miss Pink leaves the restaurant, chuckling to herself.

Mr Brown picks up his phone. Dials a number.

MR BROWN

(to phone)

It's me... Now, about this party... How much do you think it would cost to hire U2?

FADE OUT.