

**Phoebe's Exchange**  
By Jeff McMahon

**Synopsis**

*Phoebe is thirty and frustrated. Denied what she thinks she wants, she gets just what she needs.*

Phoebe, wife of failed Santa Monica lawyer turned ambitious PR consultant, Claude, is a yet-to-be-published writer. Her lack of success is compensated by her success in spending on things that make a girl feel... well...worth something. But she's convinced a woman deserves more; but what she wants is not in Claude's vocabulary. His interests lie elsewhere. So she keeps company with her faithful German Shepherd dog 'Baby', and when not undergoing retail therapy, toys with the computer keyboard, hoping for the elusive story to appear.

Claude finalises a PR deal for a fitness center franchise (of dubious ethos), and at a dinner to celebrate, Phoebe is shocked to see the CEO, Pauline, wearing a diamond-studded gold bracelet that, she had assumed, was meant for her. This is the last straw, particularly since she has had her spending ability curtailed by her heartless, philandering husband. Following advice offered unwittingly by Pauline herself, Phoebe determines to take possession, by fair means or foul, legal or otherwise, of what she considers to be rightfully hers.

Unfortunately, during the heist, Phoebe loses the keys to her beloved Mercedes CLC200 coupé. No big deal except that they could prove incriminating in the wrong hands. And in the wrong hands they surely are. Bruce, the 'boss' of a low-dive bar, had his fingers burnt by Pauline back in Miami. Now based in Santa Monica, he was on the same mission as Phoebe that eventful night when their paths crossed. His plans to share some of the spoils of Pauline's dubious past deeds were foiled by Phoebe. Now she has the jewelry; he has her keys. He devises a way to contact her and demands an exchange – after all, fair exchange is no robbery.

With her marriage virtually defunct, Phoebe discovers a latent independence and, with new-found courage, sets out on a mission to confront Bruce, secure her keys and embark on a new life.

But it's not as simple as that. Pity Pauline was assaulted during the heist; for Robbery Homicide at Santa Monica PD are also involved in this cat'n'mouse escapade. In a farcical turn of events, culminating in an 'arrest' atop the Big Pacific Wheel on the Santa Monica pier, the past deeds of Pauline and her brother/husband David are revealed, Claude is exposed for the dolt he is and Bruce is back where he started, with nothing.

All wonderful material for that elusive story which Phoebe needs.