

PHOEBE'S EXCHANGE

FIRST TEN PAGES

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - PERFUMERY - DAY

At the service counter in the subdued atmosphere of an exclusive perfumery, PHOEBE LENAULT (30), blonde hair coiffeured, purchases a bottle of Prada eau de parfum.

SALES ASSISTANT

Credit?

Phoebe nods, delves into her bag as the ASSISTANT waits.

From a card wallet, Phoebe picks a a plastic card at random and hands it over.

The Assistant looks at it and shakes her head with a WTF look and hands it back.

It is only a Starbucks Reward Card.

Phoebe returns it to its slot in the wallet and rummages again through the other cards - more than you could shake a stick at.

The Assistant waits patiently while Phoebe, in a dither, searches for an appropriate card. She finally selects one... but hesitates yet again before handing it over.

The Assistant hovers momentarily, just in case...

SALES ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Going, going...

Satisfied the choice is final, she takes the card to complete the transaction. All done, she takes the purchase to another section of the counter.

As she waits, Phoebe takes a satisfying whiff of the inside of her wrist, looks aimlessly at the opulence about her.

A young PREGNANT WOMAN waddles to the other end of the counter. Phoebe smiles awkwardly at the mother-to-be.

The Assistant returns with the gift-wrapped package and issues a courteous COUGH to get Phoebe's attention.

Phoebe's happy smile returns as she walks off, a parting glance at the bulging belly.

EXT. BOULEVARD - CAR TRAVELING - DAY

A black Mercedes CLC200 coupé, tinted to the max against the California glare, cruises along a busy boulevard. It slows and turns down into an undercover parking lot below a medium-rise Office Building.

INT. CLAUDE'S OFFICE - DAY

RECEPTION AREA:

SHARON (late 20s), the Receptionist in the ultra-modern office, sniffs the air and acknowledges the visitor without looking up from her keyboard.

SHARON
Morning, Phoebe. He's in with --

Phoebe saunters sensuously past the reception desk toward the doorway to an office, indifferent to the salutation. Sharon looks up, savors the fragrance, unfazed.

CLAUDE'S OFFICE:

Just inside the door, CLAUDE LENAULT (suave, late 30s), a gleam in his eye, holds the hand of PAULINE, a blonde of similar age and extremely attractive in a sinister sort of way. He raises her hand to his lips.

He speaks with a hint of a French accent; whether it is genuine or not is another matter.

CLAUDE
Perhaps we should seal it wiz a --

But the door opens, pushes into the back of Pauline whose hand virtually back-slaps Claude's face.

Phoebe, at the door, smiles politely then looks at Claude.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Ma Cherie, meet Pauline Sloane. Phoebe
my --

Claude's faint accent tends to bemuse Phoebe.

The two women appraise each other as Claude dabs his neat little handkerchief on his lips. Pauline, while expensively dressed, lacks the style and class of the younger Phoebe.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Mademoiselle Sloane --

PAULINE
Pauline.

CLAUDE
Pauline runs "Aerotique". You know,
the lifestyle center... Um, with a
difference.

Pauline smiles, looking Phoebe up and down.

PAULINE
Drop over some time. You don't have to
exert yourself.

She again offers her hand in a dominant fashion hovering over
Claude's upturned palm.

CLAUDE
Mademoiselle.

As Pauline passes through the door she sniffs the air with
approval, smiles again to Phoebe who returns the smile.

EXT. RESTAURANT (ALFRESCO) - DAY

Claude and Phoebe take lunch at one of the more fashionable
restaurants in Santa Monica, overlooking the 3rd Street
Promenade.

CLAUDE
(sans accent)
She's no fool, that woman.

JOGGERS and other fitness fanatics pass by in view.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
That's where everybody's at and I'm
planning on being part of it.

PHOEBE
Better have a physical first.

CLAUDE
On the PR side!

PHOEBE
She's very attractive. For her age.

No comment from Claude as he stares at the Joggers.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
At least she noticed.

She thrusts an upturned wrist under his nose.

CLAUDE
Perfume is perfume.

PHOEBE
It's the best money can buy!

CLAUDE
No doubt!

She returns her wrist to her own nose, savors the fragrance.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
I'm just asking you to take things a
little easy for a while. If all goes
to plan --

He gazes across the Promenade thinking of more sublime things.

PHOEBE
Whose plan, Claude? Whose plan?

Claude glances ever so briefly at her then returns his gaze to
the activity in the Promenade.

EXT. LENAULT HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

The roll-up door of the garage is activated. Phoebe drives in
to the sound of an enthusiastic BARKING in the background.

INT. LENAULT KITCHEN - DAY

Phoebe is greeted by BABY, a huge, lovable German Shepherd a
little on the flabby side.

PHOEBE
Hello my little baby.

Cuddling the dog they walk together from the kitchen

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

and down a Hallway where they pass a door to a

UTILITY ROOM:

Phoebe's cleaning woman, DORIS (early 60s), irons shirts.

THE HALLWAY:

There is no acknowledgement from Phoebe as she and Baby continue along the Hallway. Doris calls after them.

DORIS (O.S.)
This any good?

Doris emerges from the Utility Room holding a scrap of paper.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Word of advice. One of these days,
this habit of his will cost him
dearly.

Getting no response, Doris puts the slip of paper into her pinafore.

INT. LENAULT BEDROOM - DAY

Phoebe's clothes are strewn on the voluptuous queen-size bed.

Phoebe, near naked, gives herself a 'pinch test' - a little bit of excess but she's a reasonable physical specimen. She gathers her clothes and enters the

WALK-IN CLOSET:

Phoebe hangs up her clothes and in the process chips one of her finger nails. Cursing, she goes to one of two sets of drawers. She rummages through one. No luck.

She rummages through the other set of drawers, disturbing men's underwear, socks etc. and locates a manicure set. But a jewel box catches her eye. She opens it, removes a diamond studded gold bracelet. A rush of adrenalin.

There is an inscription: "*Ma Cherie*"

Phoebe fixes it to her right wrist just as Doris enters with a collection of Claude's freshly ironed shirts.

PHOEBE
Maybe he loves me after all.

She is transfixed by the bracelet.

DORIS
 (sotto voce)
 Or someone.

Doris hangs up Claude's shirts, goes to Phoebe, breaks her reverie, hands her the scrap of paper - A receipt for \$6,000.00 For said Bracelet.

INT. LENAULT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Phoebe is seated on a stool at a breakfast bar. She plays vacantly with her re-shaped finger nail as she stares at her open laptop computer, Baby lying patiently at her feet.

PHOEBE
 I must say, he has good taste.

Then she sniffs the air disapprovingly.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
 That's not very nice. Deep down he loves you too, I'm sure --

The SOUND of a car pulling up into the garage adjacent to the kitchen area prompts Phoebe to go to the 'fridge and remove a prepared meal of lasagne. She places it in a microwave and sets the timer.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
 But for the time being we'd better not upset him, so come on.

She goes to the back door, gives a soft but stern WHISTLE to the reluctant dog. The muffled sound of a CAR DOOR SLAMMING SHUT is stimulus enough and Baby reluctantly leaves.

Phoebe closes the door on the dog.

The door from the garage opens and Claude enters the kitchen. She greets him lovingly, much to his surprise.

He sniffs the air.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
 Too much parmesan?

CLAUDE
 Nothing a vet couldn't fix!

PHOEBE
 She's company. And being alone, she's also protection.

CLAUDE

But not inside! Besides, you could get out and get a --

PHOEBE

I know, I know, but at the moment I'm freelancing. It's what I need to do.

Claude's scoff is masked by the RING of the microwave. Phoebe removes a plate of pasta well beyond *al dente*, places it on the counter. Claude smiles reluctantly.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

I never know when you'll be home.

CLAUDE

(feigned sincerity)
Pressure of work.

PHOEBE

Poor darling. You need an early night.

Claude looks at his unpalatable dinner.

Phoebe runs her hand sensuously up and down Claude's arm.

INT. LENAULT BEDROOM - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Claude, naked under the bed covers as Phoebe, in most sensuous, revealing underwear, moves into the en-suite.

PHOEBE (O.S.)

Where's her husband?

He leans over and searches through the drawer of his bedside cabinet.

CLAUDE

She's not married.

PHOEBE (O.S.)

An attractive woman like that?

He finds a small sachet.

EN SUITE:

Phoebe, completes a final few brush strokes through her hair in front of the vanity mirror.

CLAUDE (O.S.)
 She's a business woman. No time for
 that.

PHOEBE
 No special man in her life?

THE BEDROOM:

Claude is a little uneasy at this questioning as he manipulates his hands under the bed covers.

CLAUDE
 Just her brother. Business partner.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
 So they're close?

He's too occupied to answer.

Phoebe enters, just in time to catch Claude, hands under the bed covers, awkwardly trying to manipulate his member.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
 I trust that's safe sex!

Sprung, Claude is totally embarrassed and flummoxed.

CLAUDE
 Yes. No, no. I was. Yes. I mean, it's
 just a precaution. I didn't want to
 get you --

PHOEBE
 No, you never do!

CLAUDE
 You know how I feel about that.

PHOEBE
 And you know how I feel!

She gets in, rolls over on her side of the bed, snubbing him.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
 May as well finish the job!

Frustrated, Claude removes the unused condom from under the bed covers, throws it into a nearby waste paper basket as the little hillock beneath the bed covers slowly wilts.

INT. LENAULT BEDROOM - DAY

Claude stands by the opening to the walk-in 'robe, adjusting his tie; he's dressed for work - very cool indeed.

A sullen Phoebe, still in dressing gown, passes him on the way out.

Satisfied that she is gone, he heads back into

WALK-IN 'ROBE:

and to a set of drawers, where he stops and takes a final check that no-one is watching.

INT. LENAULT KITCHEN - DAY

Phoebe, still in dressing gown, at the breakfast bar, toying with toast and marmalade, Baby at the foot of the stool. Her laptop is open but it's another case of writer's block.

Claude enters, stands at the breakfast bar, sips his coffee.

CLAUDE

Be a bit late again tonight. Don't worry about dinner.

Phoebe is indifferent; Claude tries to placate her.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

I've got her just about where I want her. If I can pull this off.

PHOEBE

(sotto)

You're good at that.

Claude takes a last sip of his coffee and moves past Phoebe toward the door that leads to the garage.

CLAUDE

Trust me!

No response from Phoebe.

He returns, gives her a patronising kiss on her head, moves again to the door to the garage where he turns and glares at the dog.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

And do something about that, please.

Phoebe has no appetite. She closes her laptop, wanders over to a wall calendar and strikes through three dates which have previously been circled. She looks back at Baby.

PHOEBE

Looks like it's you and me babe.

This is something of a 'eureka' moment for her and she turns to her computer and types in a Title Page:

"Looks Like It's You and Me Babe" written by Phoebe Lenault

EXT. STREET #1 - VETERINARY SURGEON - DAY

Phoebe, with Baby in tow, exits a Vet's surgery holding a bottle of medicine. They go to her black Mercedes CLC200 coupé.

PHOEBE

The nerve of her..."we could both do with a bit"!

The dog nestles into the meager back seat as Phoebe gets in and drives off with a SQUEAL of tires.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - DAY

Phoebe leads Baby along a path toward the beach. The dog, like its owner, is not the fittest of animals.

PHOEBE

Come on, doctor's orders.

Serious JOGGERS go through their paces. An Adonis athletic MALE approaches. Phoebe is now more than interested. He stops, jogs on the spot.

MALE JOGGER

Sorry ma'am. Dogs not allowed on the beach.

He jogs off.

PHOEBE

Well, that was an easy session!

INT. LENAULT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Phoebe tries to administer some of the medicine to Baby - but the dog is wary.

PHOEBE

Look, if you want to stay inside.

The dog refuses to cooperate.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

I promise it's for the best.

But still no response.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

Here, I'll show you.

She places the spoonful of medicine in her own mouth. The dog shies away and curls up in a corner of the kitchen.

Phoebe finds the medicine not all that unpleasant.

LATER:

Phoebe stares yet again at a blank screen on her laptop. Her eyes are heavy. She begins typing something incomprehensible. She deletes it all. A blank screen remains.

She nods again, eyes heavy.

INT. LENAULT LIVING - NIGHT

The TV is on softly in the background. Phoebe lies slumped on the couch asleep, Baby at her feet, asleep also.

EXT/INT. STREET #2 - CAR - NIGHT

A well-worn Ford Mustang, with Florida plates, parked in a fashionable tree-line street, stakes out a large bungalow.

EXT. PAULINE'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Pauline casually farewells a thirty-something male, DAVID, who drives off in a Mercedes SUV.

The Mustang starts and drives off after David.

From the other end of the street, a silver-grey BMW 320d sedan approaches and pulls up outside the bungalow just as the main lights in the house are extinguished.