FAIR EXCHANGE

By Shirley McNichols

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Julie Fair is one of the brightest girls in high school but is too plain to be noticed by any guys. Her mother is an attractive woman but isn't smart enough to run her husband's import business since he vanished a year ago on an expedition. Mother and daughter are as different as two people can be, so you can imagine the impact when a strange African artifact causes them to switch bodies!

They decide to keep their secret to themselves while trying to figure out how to get things back to normal, but it's not that easy. "Mother" is being blackmailed by a man into annulling her marriage to marry him, while "daughter" has to tutor the cutest boy at school and convince a committee to grant her a college scholarship. It looks like only a special tribal ceremony in the Fair home will save the day.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I
Scene 1: Mid-morning, early in the week.

ACT II
Scene 1: Early the next morning.
Scene 2: Afternoon the same day.
Scene 3: Later that day.

Act III
Scene 1: Friday, late afternoon.
Scene 2: About 90 minutes later.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(10 M, 13 W, 3 Flexible)

LINDA FAIR: The attractive Mom.
JULIE FAIR: 16, the bright daughter.
JODY FAIR: 10-12, younger daughter/son.
ADELE ADELBRAN: President of the Society.
JEREMY: Adele's assistant.
HOWARD LANGTREE: An old family "friend."
DR. JUSTICE: Jake Fair disguised.
WALLY: Socially inept young man enamored of Julie.
BRENDA BILLINGS: Julie's best friend/neighbor.
ALISON BILLINGS: Brenda's mother, Linda's good friend/neighbor.
ALEX: A student, Brenda's boyfriend.
KEVIN McKAY: Most popular boy at school, a snob.
DOLORES WARBUCKS: Pretty student on newspaper staff, not too smart.
WENDY: A student on newspaper staff.
CLAIRE: Another.
ANNETTE: Another.
DONALD: Another.
RICHARD: Another.
POLLY: Another.
DOUG: A friend of Kevin's from the football team.
JIM: Another.
MADAM LARUE: An eccentric elderly lady.
MADAM LAMAR: Another.
MADAM LABAMBA: Another.
MR. (MRS.) PETERMAN: The journalism teacher.
DELIVERY MAN: A delivery person, can be doubled with Peterman.
TOURISTS: Non-speaking, can be doubled by newspaper students.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: LINDA FAIR is seated at desk SR. There is a phone and several stacks of papers on the desk. She is a nicely dressed, very attractive woman in her late 30s. The PHONE is ringing.)

LINDA: *(Answering.)* Fair Exchange. Linda Fair speaking. Oh, hello Mr. Jones. *(Pause.)* Just a minute. *(Looking through a stack of papers.)* When did you order the East Indian coasters? *(Becoming flustered.)* I'm sure I must have it here somewhere. Let me look into it. I'll call you back. You're welcome. *(Hangs up.)*

(ADELE ADELBRAN and her assistant, JEREMY, enter from USR followed by several TOURISTS dressed in Bermuda shorts and flowered shirts and carrying cameras. ADELE is fiftyish, overly dressed and made up for the afternoon. She is lavish in her gestures and speech. Jeremy is the soft and whiny type. He carries a date book.)

ADELE: And this of course, is where we began. I hope you enjoyed the tour.
JEREMY: Tell your friends! *(TOURISTS exit USL.)*
ADELE: And thank you for your donations to the Society for the Preservation of Antiquities!
JEREMY: *(After the TOURISTS have gone.)* What a bunch of morons!
ADELE: *(Crosses to desk and lays a small stack of dollar bills on it.)* Here's your half for the tour. It's not much, I'm afraid.
LINDA: Oh, Mrs. Adelbran, you know I appreciate any contribution the society can make to help me keep Fair Manor.
ADELE: My dear Mrs. Fair, perhaps you should consider my offer to buy this place for the society? After all, we would treat Fair Manor with the same love and respect Dr. Fair's family has for all these generations.
JEREMY: *(Crossing SR.)* Oh, you're so right, Adele! You really ought to consider it, Mrs. Fair.

LINDA: *(Rising and coming around in front of the desk.)* I appreciate the offer, Mrs. Adelbran, but I could never sell Fair Manor. Jake's always loved this place so. It was built by his great-great-grandfather, Hiram Fair. He was the first Fair to become an archeologist!

ADELE: Yes, of course. Trouble is my dear, if you don't sell to me it's just a matter of time before you lose the house to taxes. There's no telling what will become of it then. Not everyone has our appreciation for old things.

LINDA: I know you're right. But I've just got to try to hold on a little longer in case ...

ADELE: In case Dr. Fair comes back? *(LINDA nods.)* Mrs. Fair, he's been gone an awfully long time.

JEREMY: Nearly a year!

ADELE: And in all this time have you heard one word from him?

LINDA: No.

ADELE: *(Putting HER hand on LINDA'S shoulder.)* I know it's hard. But please don't wait until it's too late. I would hate to think what could happen to Fair Manor should it fall into the wrong hands.

JEREMY: *(Looking at the date book.)* Adele, we really must be going. We still need to swing by Madam LaMar's and have your aura adjusted before lunch.

ADELE: You're so right, Jeremy. *(To LINDA.)* I'll see you this weekend at the society meeting. I can hardly wait to hear our guest speaker, Dr. Justice. You're a dear to host it under the circumstances!

LINDA: I'm sure my husband wouldn't have it any other way.

JEREMY: Yes. Dr. Fair was very supportive of the society.

ADELE: Good-bye, Mrs. Fair. Come, Jeremy. *(THEY cross SL.)* I want you to have the limo washed while I'm having my aura adjusted. *(ADELE and JEREMY exit SL as ALISON enters SL.)*

ALISON: Knock, knock! Busy?

LINDA: No. Come in, Alison. Did you get the invitations finished for Julie's surprise party?

ALISON: *(Crossing to CS.)* Yesterday afternoon! And I didn't have to say a thing to Brenda, so she still doesn't know. I decided it would be best to tell her at the last minute. That way she won't let it slip.

LINDA: I haven't told Jody either. But how'd you manage to get the addresses of all Julie's friends without asking Brenda?

ALISON: Easy. I went through her desk and found her address book. I sent an invitation to everyone in it.

LINDA: Aren't we mothers clever! Julie will be so surprised!

ALISON: *(Doubtful.)* I just hope you haven't taken on too much. I know how busy you are getting ready for the annual Society for the ... whatever meeting.

LINDA: That's the Society for the Preservation of Antiquities. Jake and I have hosted it for years. I'm not going to stop now. Anyway the surprise party's Friday and the Society meeting's Saturday so it will work out fine.

ALISON: But what about all the preparations?

LINDA: Mrs. Adelbran, the society president, is taking care of everything. I'll just be fixing a few snacks.

ALISON: Even still, Julie has never been the impetuous type. I'm not sure she'll appreciate a surprise party.

LINDA: Don't be silly! She'll love it!

ALISON: But Linda, this won't be cheap you know. I addressed nearly twenty invitations, and a lot of them were for boys. You know how much boys that age eat? And considering your present situation ...

LINDA: It's all right, Alison. I'll manage. It's been a hard year for our family. I think the girls need some cheering up. This surprise sixteenth birthday party will be just the ticket. It's what Jake would want me to do.

ALISON: I wasn't going to mention this, but since you brought it up, wasn't it right around this time last year that Jake disappeared?

LINDA: Yes, but Alison, nothing I do or don't do will keep Julie or Jody from thinking about their father. Maybe this party will help them feel a little better.

ALISON: And what about you, Linda? When are you going to face the fact that Jake is gone? It's time to make a new life for yourself and the girls. Maybe you should consider selling the house and the business. At least you should consider selling the Jeep! It just sits in the garage all the time.

LINDA: Alison, I'm just not ready yet. Selling off things, Jake's things ... it just seems so final.

End of Freeview

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