

## The Sofas

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(Replace \_at\_with @)>

Rated: PG for implied sex

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Summary: Why did Lois choose to buy such uncomfortable sofas?

My thanks to Iolanthe for her enthusiastic encouragement.

Neither Lois nor Claude belong to me. I am borrowing them from Warner Brothers and DC Comics for a little not-for-profit fun.

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Lois looked with satisfaction at her beautiful blue sofa. She had paid her apartment building's superintendent and his son to move it to where it now resided — in front of the dumpster. She never wanted to see it again...not after what she and Claude had done on it last night. She had thought their activities were going to be the beginning of a beautiful relationship; he, as she had discovered today, had seen them only as a prelude to stealing her story. She knew that she'd never be able to look at that sofa again without thinking about how Claude had duped her.

So although she had liked the sofa before yesterday, she detested it now. It was a symbol of her naïveté, her lack of ability to judge character, and her vulnerability. And such a symbol deserved what it got — being thrown out of her life both symbolically and literally. She would never let anyone take advantage of her like that again. She would not allow herself to be vulnerable. And she would celebrate the new Lois Lane by buying a new sofa.

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The bell above the furniture store's door had barely finished jingling when a small woman with red, shoulder length hair approached her. "Welcome to the Fabulous Furniture Outlet, where all our deals are fabulous. My name is Mandy. How may I help you today?"

Lois was grateful that she didn't have to say anything as corny as that in her job. "I'd like to buy a sofa."

Mandy gave her an encouraging smile. "What did you have in mind?"

Lois replied quickly and definitively. "Something that is not blue, not plush, and not large."

Any sympathy Lois had felt toward this saleslady disappeared when she saw Mandy's amusement at her answer. "NOT blue, plush, or large. Okaaaaay. That narrows things down a bit. What sort of price range did you have in mind?"

Lois hadn't really thought about that. She was making good money as a journalist, and other than her rent and her student loans, she didn't have any major expenses. She had already managed to save up some money, and if she found the right sofa, she would be willing to purchase it on installment if necessary. "I'm more concerned with getting the right sofa than I am with the specific price."

Did she see a predatory look flit across Mandy's face before she schooled it into a more appropriate expression? Perhaps it was just her imagination.

"I have some sofas over here you might like."

An hour later, they had toured the entire showroom, and Lois still hadn't found a sofa that appealed to her. She asked, "Aren't there any other sofas here at all?"

"Well, we have a few sofas in back waiting to be disposed of. They had been on the floor the maximum allotted time and no one purchased them, even after being reduced for clearance. You could look at them." Mandy's tone was doubtful.

Lois decided that she may as well check everything out before moving on to another store, and asked Mandy to show them to her.

The moment she laid eyes on the matching sofas, she knew they were just what she wanted. They were nothing like her old sofa. They were too small to lie down on, and it looked like they would be uncomfortable even to sit on.

They were the perfect symbol for the new Lois Lane: Beautiful but unyielding. No-nonsense. All business with no indulgences or soft spots. Meant to be admired from afar. So what if they would be uncomfortable? It wasn't as if she would have anyone over to her apartment ever again. Or even spend much time there herself. She was going to live for her job. She would show Claude and the others that she was the best in the business. The others might believe Claude's accusations now, but when the Pulitzer was hers, and he was a has-been, they would change their minds. And if her determination ever flagged, one look at these sofas would shore up her resolve.

Lois looked at Mandy and pointed at the off-white sofa pair. "I'll take these."

THE END