

Couchophilia

(or "The Loveseat")

by Mike Mariano

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(Lights up slowly and softly on a living room scene. Some smooth R&B plays faintly. A couch, plush with pillows, is center. After a moment, TONY comes in, dressed to kill, with a sly smile on his face.)

TONY:

Hello there.

(TONY saunters up to the couch and throws himself down upon it. He lays his entire body in sensuous positions on the couch. Squeezing its pillows. Stroking its arms. Running his legs up and down the sides of the cushions. His pelvis – well, you get the picture. TONY is genuinely loving this couch. After an extended caress, TONY straightens himself, props his head up with his arm, and says:)

I missed you...

(TONY buries his face into the cushion, pushing himself more deeply upon it than before. After a moment goes by, his hand slowly makes its way down to in between the couch cushions, massaging the inside intensely. TONY slowly breaks away again, and begins to unbutton his shirt. He breathes heavily and smiles. Then MOLLY enters. The music stops abruptly and the lights come up full.)

MOLLY:

Tony?

TONY:

(Startled:)
Molly!

MOLLY:

Tony, what are you doing?

TONY:

(Buttoning his shirt:)
Can't you see I'm getting dressed?

MOLLY:

Getting dressed?

TONY:

Yeah!

MOLLY:

In the living room?

TONY:

It's a good a place as any!

MOLLY:

Uh huh...

TONY:

(Getting up, zipping his fly.)

So, uh... What do you want, anyway?

MOLLY:

(Taking out a catalog:)

I'm just here to return your Ikea catalog.

(TONY's eyes go wide and he looks from the couch back to MOLLY.)

TONY:

That's not mine.

MOLLY:

Yeah, it is.

TONY:

No way.

MOLLY:

Well, it's got your name on the address label...

(She shoves the catalog into TONY's hands. TONY looks at it, then at the couch.)

TONY:

(To the couch:)

I only read it for the articles, I swear!

MOLLY:

Tony!

(TONY's head jerks up.)

Get a grip.

(TONY stops for a beat, then shakes his head.)

TONY:

No, you're right, you're right. I've got to- I'm going to...

(His gaze stops on the catalog.)

I'm going to run to the bathroom for a second...

(TONY runs his hand along the couch and begins to exit.)

Later...

(TONY exits. MOLLY, perplexed, sits down on the couch. She sighs, glances around the room, and pats the couch. She slowly begins to run her hand up and down the cushion, almost absentmindedly. The R&B returns. MOLLY lets out another sigh and looks down at the couch.)

MOLLY:

Goddamn you; you're still irresistible...

(With that, she falls over and begins to deeply kiss the couch. MOLLY's tryst is just as intense as was TONY's, pushing herself deeper and deeper into the couch. She lifts, herself up, her hair tousled, and gasps for air.)

We've got to stop meeting like this...

(She throws herself back to the couch. After a few moments, she reverses her position on the couch, smiles, and begins to lick the cushion rhythmically. MOLLY begins to moan. Offstage, a toilet flushes. The music stops. MOLLY freezes, looks up, then looks back at the couch.)

To be continued...

(She kisses the palm of her hand and places it on the couch, then jumps off. She straightens her hair and clothing, then turns to the couch and puts its pillows back in order. TONY walks in, adjusting his belt.)

TONY:

What are you doing?

MOLLY:

(Stepping back, holding a pillow:)
Just fluffing the pillows...

TONY:

Yeah, I'll bet.

(He throws the catalog on the couch, grabs the pillow from MOLLY and tosses it back on the couch.)

Now why don't you just run along now?

MOLLY:

Alright, Tony...

(She traces her fingers along the arm of the couch as she begins to exit.)

I'll see you later...

TONY:

(Frowns:)
I'll walk you out.

(The two exit. After a moment, two REPAIRMEN enter. One takes off his sunglasses, the other throws his jacket on the ground, and they approach the couch.)

REPAIRMAN 1:

So this is it?

REPAIRMAN 2:

Yeah; guy says there's a spring that's poking him.

REPAIRMAN 1:

Right.

(REPAIRMAN 2 takes the Ikea catalog off of the couch and opens it.)

REPAIRMAN 1: (cont.)

That an Ikea catalog? My old man's got a stack of those in the basement.

REPAIRMAN 2:

(Examining the catalog:)
Is that glue?

(REPAIRMAN 2 throws the catalog on the ground. REPAIRMAN 1 runs his hand between the back of the couch and the cushions.)

REPAIRMAN 1:

The spring's too deep. We're going to have to get it from underneath.

REPAIRMAN 2:

(Adjusting his belt:)
Alright; let's do this...

(Seventies porn music begins playing. REPAIRMAN 2 gets down on the ground while REPAIRMAN 1 comes around to the back of the couch. REPAIRMAN 2 is nearly on his back, reaching underneath.)

Nah, I'm going to have to get deeper than that. Lift her up a little, will ya?

REPAIRMAN 1:

Up we go...

(REPAIRMAN 1 squats and lifts the corner of the couch, grunting. REPAIRMAN 2 slides underneath, positioning himself.)

REPAIRMAN 2:

Ah, here we go...

REPAIRMAN 1:

(Struggling:)
Mmmph...

REPAIRMAN 2:

I think I got it... Almost there...

REPAIRMAN 1:

You sure?

REPAIRMAN 2:

Man, it's pretty deep...

REPAIRMAN 1:

You're telling me...

(REPAIRMAN 2 goes in further.)

You got it in yet?

REPAIRMAN 2:

Almost...

REPAIRMAN 1:

Hurry up; I can't hold it much longer...

(REPAIRMAN 1 struggles, the couch bobbing up and down as he grunts. REPAIRMAN 2 groans in frustration, looking for the spring.)

REPAIRMAN 2:

No, I got it... I got it...

REPAIRMAN 1:

Come on...

REPAIRMAN 2:

I got it!

(He moans in relief and drops his arms. The music fades. REPAIRMAN 2 slides out from underneath the couch. REPAIRMAN 1 drops the couch corner and sighs.)

REPAIRMAN 1:

Oh yeah...

REPAIRMAN 2:

She's a tough one...

REPAIRMAN 1:

You said it...

(He takes out a pack of cigarettes and lights one.)

REPAIRMAN 2:

So, where to next?

REPAIRMAN 1:

Around the block. There's a guy with a twin bed that needs some hands-on work real bad...

REPAIRMAN 2:

I think we can handle that...

(They laugh as TONY comes back in. They stop. They stare at each other in silence. After a beat, the REPAIRMEN shuffle out silently. REPAIRMAN 2 turns and addresses TONY.)

Hey, about your couch. It's alright. We took care of her.

(THEY exit. TONY watches them go. He then turns to the couch. He sits and clutches its arm.)

TONY:

Well... I guess they are professionals... I'd rather have them around than Molly. I don't like that Molly. She's trying to come between us...

(Sighs:)

I don't want anything to change...

(With his other hand, TONY supportively rubs the cushion, as he finishes, he lifts his hand, stops, then looks at it.)

What's this?

(He holds up an earring.)

Oh my- Oh my God!

(He looks at the couch.)

You've been cheating on me!

(Shocked, he looks around, then recoils and stands up.)

Don't touch me! I can't believe this! This is-

(TONY bites his hand.)

I'm going to be sick...

(He staggers for a bit, then looks back at the couch.)

TONY: (cont.)

Was it worth it?

(Beat.)

No, I really want to know, was she worth it? Worth all the pain? The deceit? I can't believe you; I really can't-

(Angrily, he takes a pillow.)

Baby, I treated you good. I played sugar daddy, I know. I'm the one who got you, got you all these...

(He shakes the pillow for emphasis, then throws it to the ground.)

All of these, and it's all gone to waste!

(He lifts one of the cushions.)

Who do you think paid for your upholstery? You think I did this just so you could go have a fling, go off and have fun without me? Uh uh; no way!

(He tosses the cushion aside, then knocks the other cushion to the ground.)

I did this for us. I did this for us! That's all I wanted. I wanted us. Oh God...

(TONY notices a slip of paper, fallen with one of the pillows. He picks it up.)

What's this a receipt for?

(He reads. Uh oh.)

Oh.

(With nervous laughter:)

Oh... Honey, I can explain. This was from a very low period in my life. I'm ashamed, but it has nothing to do with us...

(He looks at the couch.)

TONY: (cont.)

Oh, don't look at me like that... Look, it's dated a few months before we even met; I haven't touched it since. Honest! It's not important to me at all. But if it is to you, then fine. It's gone. Let me get it.

(TONY heads offstage left. He returns with a piece of inflatable furniture, which is slightly saggy. He looks at the couch.)

I know, I know. I hit rock bottom. But I've almost never used it since— I've never used it in our time together. Ain't nothing like the real thing, baby. But if it makes a difference, if you want it gone, it's gone.

(He squeezes it, deflating it somewhat, and kicks it off stage right.)

There. I've come clean. I'm ready to start over. Are you?

(No response.)

Oh, and don't even think that my piece of plastic over there compares with what you and Molly have been doing for God knows how long. If this was some revenge thing. If that made you so upset, then you should have said something. You shouldn't have...

(He starts to break down.)

I thought we really had something here, you know? I really did. I thought it was you and me. I wanted it to be you and me! But no, you just couldn't have it that way; now you've gone and...

(He sniffs.)

It's too much. It's just too much...

(TONY sighs and looks at the couch.)

I guess this is it, then. We're done. You just go along with Molly and continue your unnatural relationship...

(He turns his back to the couch.)

TONY: (cont.)

Go ahead; we're done. You've made your decision, now stick to it.

(He stands, arms folded. After a moment, he looks back at the couch.)

Having second thoughts now, huh? Life without Tony's not looking so good...

(He shakes his head.)

You can't have it both ways, honey. If you stay, you've got to stay true...

(He sighs and kneels down next to the couch.)

And I'll be true, too. I'm for real, baby...

(Beat.)

I still remember when we first met. Best goddamn Presidents Day weekend of my life...

(TONY smiles.)

And to think, I went in there thinking about picking up a breakfast table or something, setting my standards real low. A friend of mine told me to go check out the patio furniture, but I didn't know how I felt experimenting with wicker...

(Pause.)

And then I saw you.

(He looks at the couch.)

Love at first sight, honey, and there was no way I was going back. Right then and there in Aisle Six and I swore I had to have you. I'm still paying for that decision today. But baby, you're worth every interest payment...

(He sighs.)

TONY: (cont.)

We've had some great times... The Super Bowl party... The nights we've spent falling asleep watching TV together... The time I lost my keys, and you had them the whole time...

(TONY smirks at the couch.)

You're everything to me, you know that?

(He puts a hand on the couch.)

Everything...

(TONY gets up and hugs the side of the couch. He holds this embrace. Finally he breaks away and looks at the couch.)

Let's never fight again...

(He embraces the couch again, then kisses it softly. The soft kiss becomes deeper. And deeper. TONY puts his leg up over the couch's arm. His body moves up and down the side of the couch. This is slower and more gentle than his previous rendezvous. He slowly breaks away and looks at the couch.)

I love you.

(The lights dim and a powerful love ballad begins to play as TONY moves around to the front of the couch. Very gently, he runs his hands along the couch and reaches into it. He unfolds the bed portion of the sleeper couch. With the bed fully extended, TONY begins to unbutton his shirt as the music comes up and the lights fade.)

THE END