

# The Pursuit of Pleasure

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Rated: PG

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Summary: Lex Luthor spends a quiet evening at home with his favorite comforts. Well, he tries to.

This story was written for the 2008 Holiday Ficathon. It was written for Gr8shadesofElvis, and her request is as follows:

Three things I want in my fic:

1. Lex Luthor
2. A bottle of Brandy
3. A good book

Preferred season(s)/holiday [if applicable]: 1 or 2

Three things I do not want in my fic:

1. Kryptonite
2. Jonathan and Martha
3. Superman

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Lex Luthor settled himself into his large leather armchair in front of a roaring fire. On the side table next to him sat a bottle of brandy and a good book, both just waiting to be cracked open.

Of course, it wasn't just any bottle of brandy and any good book. That would be too plebeian for someone with Lex Luthor's tastes. The brandy was an hors d'age grade cognac distilled and aged by French monks and shipped to Metropolis specifically for him. The book was a first edition signed by the author and expertly preserved. Like the brandy, it was exclusively for his enjoyment.

It was for this reason that he did it all. The pursuit of pleasure. Throwing hundred dollar bills into the fire and having staring contests with cobras were all very good fun, but at the end of the day, he was ultimately after the delights of fine alcohol and good literature.

"Sir?" a voice interrupted his musings.

Lex sighed. "Yes, Asabi, what is it?"

"The tailor is here, sir," Asabi informed the billionaire respectfully. "He would like to go over the new designs with you."

Lex sighed again. It appeared that his pleasure would have to be delayed for the moment.

"Very well, Asabi. I will see him."

Lex stepped out of his study and followed Asabi to his office, where the tailor was waiting. Striding through the halls of his abode always gave him a sense of satisfaction. He had built all of this. This splendour was all because of him. He was God within this world of LexCorp.

"Let's make this quick," Lex announced as he walked into his office. "I have a good book and a bottle of brandy to get back to."

"Yes, sir," the tailor replied. "As you can see, I made a few slight modifications to your usual design." He flicked an imaginary lint ball off the mannequin.

"Yes, I can see that," Lex agreed, inspecting the garment. "Where is the pocket for my stiletto blade?"

"Hidden underneath the lining," the tailor replied, displaying the hiding space. "It is more discreet this way."

"Hmm, yes," Lex agreed. With the blade hidden there, it was virtually invisible even if he were to take off the jacket.

"I also made a slight modification to the buttons," the tailor continued. "If you open them up ..."

"Strychnine powder," Lex commented with pleasure. "Excellent. One never knows when one will need it, and the rings that my jeweller designed are so gaudy at times." Lex ran a critical eye over the garment once more. The cut was elegant, and the fabric was of a fine quality. "Yes, I approve of this," he nodded. "You may make two more of them in each fabric that we previously discussed."

"Yes, sir," the tailor nodded. "I'll have them to you by the end of the week."

Lex nodded his approval, and exited the office. He was very impressed with this tailor's work. He would have to order a few more as a Christmas present to himself.

"You know, Asabi, I quite like this new tailor," Lex commented idly as he strolled back to his study.

"Yes, sir," Asabi nodded. "It is unfortunate that we will have to kill him."

"Well, we can't have him knowing where I wear all my defences, can we?"

"Of course not, sir," Asabi deferred. He stopped at the entrance of the study. "I'll leave you to yourself now, sir."

"Thank you, Asabi," Lex nodded.

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He reached for the bottle, and opened it with a decisive twist of the corkscrew. A small amount was poured into the snifter, and he held it in the palm of his hand, warming it up just a touch. He sniffed the drink expertly, and picked out the oaky flavors within the alcohol. This was a fine bottle indeed.

"Sir?"

"What is it, Nigel?" Lex asked, reluctantly placing the glass back on the table.

"The forgers, sir. They want instructions for Christmas."

"Already?" Lex frowned.

"You how they like to get a head start," Nigel shrugged. "I wouldn't have told you, but they're getting restless. Christmas is a busy season for them."

"Yes, I know," Lex sighed. "Very well, I suppose I might as well deal with it now." He stood up from his armchair.

"Will you be traveling to see them in person?" Nigel asked solicitously.

"No, Nigel. That will take too long." He would need to put together a disguise, which would take a while. And he always disliked riding in the front seat. It seemed too middle class.

"You will send them a message instead?" Nigel inquired.

"Yes. I trust you can deliver it to them in time?"

"Of course, sir."

"Very well, let's get this over with." Lex pulled the frame of his original Picasso away from the wall, and punched in a code on the keypad he exposed. A door slide open, and Lex led Nigel into the small room with not much more than a video camera and a chair. "Make sure to turn the lights off, Nigel," Lex instructed as he settled himself into the chair.

Nigel flicked the lights off, and Lex smiled in satisfaction.

Whoever viewed the tape would only see a shadow where his face was supposed to be. Lowering his voice slightly to disguise it, he began to speak.

“Good evening, forgers of Metropolis. It has come to my attention that you are waiting to find out what the Boss wants for Christmas.” He smiled smugly. “Fear no more. I have your instructions.

“There is an art show taking place at the Metropolis Museum of Fine Art. I need copies of three of the pieces on display there. My assistant will inform you which ones. In addition to that, keep in mind that Christmas is a time where money circulation is high and stores are busy. Therefore, forgeries are less likely to be detected. Also, I will need twice my usual money order, delivered in the standard fashion and ...”

There was one thing that Lex was forgetting ... Oh, yes.

“And anyone that can bring me Superman *alive* will get a reward of ten million dollars in addition to an early retirement.” Compliments of a bullet to the head. “That is all.”

Nigel stopped the camera and turned the lights back on. “I’ll see that this gets out as soon as possible,” he told Lex.

“Very good, Nigel. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I must return to my bottle of brandy and my good book.”

Lex Luthor settled himself into his large leather armchair in front of a roaring fire. On the side table next to him sat a bottle of brandy and a good book.

Unfortunately, the brandy had already been opened, and the fire was starting to dim.

With disgust, Lex threw the already poured brandy into the fire, watching with satisfaction as it roared with the addition of alcohol. He would have to start with a fresh glass to get the full effect.

But he had just picked up the bottle when he was interrupted yet again.

“Mr. Luthor?”

“What is it, Asabi?” he demanded snappishly.

Asabi didn’t flinch at Lex’s mood, and instead coolly stepped further into the room.

“We found your son, sir,” he told Lex.

“Good God, *another* one?!” Lex asked incredulously.

“The DNA test confirms it,” Asabi nodded.

“How old is he?”

“Sixteen.”

Lex massaged his temples. This was not the kind of stress he wanted to deal with right now.

“How about the mother?” he asked with trepidation.

“She’s threatening to go public,” Asabi informed Lex, handing him the file. “The usual diamond earring bribe hasn’t budged her.”

“Well, Marie always did have more expensive tastes,” Lex muttered, looking at the picture of his former lover.

“Sir? What do you want me to do?”

“Give her a company,” Lex sighed.

“A company?” Asabi blinked in shock.

“Yes. It’s the only thing that’ll keep her quiet. Luthor Industrial is standing on its last legs as it is. It will keep Marie busy for a year or so, and when it goes under she’ll blame herself.”

“Very well, sir.”

“Close the door on your way out, Asabi.”

“Yes, sir.”

Lex Luthor settled himself into his large leather armchair in front of a dying fire. On the side table next to him sat a bottle of brandy and a good book. He reached-

“Sir?”

“What is it now?!”

“The statue of the Venus de Milo has arrived.”

“Well, that statue doesn’t do me very much good now that

I’ve lost the arms!” Lex snapped furiously. “I’m sure you recall *that* unfortunate incident, Nigel.”

“Yes, sir.”

Lex took a deep breath. He shouldn’t lose his temper like this in front of his staff. It didn’t set a good example.

“Put the statue in the basement for now,” Lex instructed Nigel. “I’ll worry about getting the arms back from that damned Tim and Amber Lake tomorrow.”

“Very well, sir.”

Lex Luthor resettled himself in his large leather armchair in front of the fire. On the side table next to him sat a bottle of brandy and a good book.

He took a deep breath. Finally, he would be able to-

“Mr. Luthor, I have an update for you on Project-”

“Mrs. Cox, does it *look* like I want to hear an update on that project?!”

“Um ... No, sir.”

“That is correct. Now leave me immediately and let me get back to my leisure in peace.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Wait, Mrs. Cox.” Lex held up a hand.

“Yes, sir?”

“Would you place another log on the fire for me?”

“Of course, sir.”

Lex Luthor settled himself into his large leather armchair in front of a roaring fire. On the side table next to him sat a bottle of brandy and a good book.

He took a moment to relax himself. He was Lex Luthor. Always in control. Always able to do whatever he wanted whenever he wanted. The most powerful man in Metropolis.

Feeling much calmer, he reached over and poured himself a fresh glass of brandy into the snifter. Swirling it in his hand, he admired the warm amber colour. He sniffed it, and relished the rich aroma. Finally taking a sip, Lex let the flavours roll over his tongue.

It really was a supreme bottle.

Sighing with contentment, Lex reach over to grab the book off the side table. He took another sip of brandy, and opening the book to the first page, he began to read.

THE END