

Style & Arts

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When book publicist Emily Miles Terry set out to buy a new sofa, she had little idea she was about to embark on a multiyear odyssey. The Brookline resident and coauthor of “Nesting: It’s a Chick Thing,” initially thought she’d made the right call, purchasing a comfy, oversized couch.

“But as soon as it arrived, our family began calling it the ‘green monster,’” she said, “because it was big and shapeless and seemed to have this strange ability to creep forward across our tight living-room space.”

The couch is the most ulcer-inducing of furniture purchases. Get it right, and you’ve found the linchpin to your living room. Muck it up, and you’re looking at a decade of buyer’s remorse, slipcover experiments, room rearrangements, and an ever-evolving speech about why a purple chaise lounge *does so* go with everything.

“People tend to fall in love with a sofa as an object without considering if it will work in concert with the other objects in their space,” said Melissa Mizell, an interior designer at architecture firm Gensler and a senior lecturer at the California College of the Arts.

But with patience and planning, the perfect sofa can be found. So without further ado — but with profuse apologies to Miles Davis — we present the . . .

Seven Steps to Sofa Heaven.

BY MEAGHAN AGNEW | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

