

Gary Brahl

## POLING PLACES

“Oh god, Jeremy, please let’s not start again.”

Margo and Jeremy sat propped up in their pillow cocoons, each on his and her side of the bed. David Letterman was counting down his Top Ten List on the TV in the corner, while the couple launched into a discussion that had become a nightly ritual.

“Baby, it’s a simple request. What’s the big deal?”

“I will not, read my lips, not have a stripper pole in our bedroom.”

Jeremy sulked. Margo stared icicles at her husband.

“But Sweet Pea...”

“No. I said no.”

“But...”

“What is wrong with you, Jeremy? Don’t you love me? Is there something missing in our relationship?”

“Of course I love you. And no, there is nothing missing...unless its...”

“Will you get your tiny filthy mind out of the gutter. I swear...”

Jeremy trotted out his “everybody’s doing it” argument:

“You realize they’re building new homes now with poles in the bedrooms as options, don’t you?”

“That’s nonsense. Where did you hear that?”

“Oprah.”

“I have yet to see a stripper pole in any bedroom in any *Better Homes & Gardens*,” Margo declared, cutting off Jeremy’s gambit at the knees and returning her attention to Dave.

Jeremy pouted.

“Saturday’s my birthday,” he said, trying another tack. Margo ignored him.

“I said, my birthday is Saturday,” he tried louder.

“I heard you. I know it’s your birthday.”

“Well...”

“I also know most men would be happy with a new set of golf clubs or a tool box. But not my Larry Libido. Noooo, you are obsessed...”

“I am not obsessed. I just think it would be fun.”

“Fun?” Margo turned on her husband. “Fun? Fun for whom? Not for me, I can tell you that. Sliding around on some obscene galvanized dildo. You call that fun? I’d probably break something. Is that what you want? Is it?”

Jeremy fumed, well aware that he was falling badly behind on points. But Margo, even though decidedly in the lead, wasn’t through.

“What do you think the children would say about a giant sex toy looming in our bedroom, Mr. Sexy Pants?”

“How do I know...”

“What would our grandchildren think? Have you considered that?”

“They’d think it was a new jungle gym just for them,” Jeremy shot back.

“They’d love it.”

Margo glowered at her spouse. “You’ve been into the Viagra again, haven’t you.”

These conversations generally ended this way, with Jeremy on the losing end of the pole. He sighed, accepting defeat for this round, retrieving the Grissom novel from his bed stand.

Softening slightly, Margo patted her husband’s hand affectionately.

“I just think its time you started acting your age, that’s all, dear.”

This was the wrong thing to say, setting Jeremy off on a defensive counterattack.

“Now hold on there, Methuselah. Just because I still find you desirable and want to add a little spice to our life you think I’m not acting my age? Is that what you’re saying?”

“Jeremy Wayne Lipshitz, you are about to turn 83.”

“And you’re a hot 81,” Jeremy snapped back. “So? So?”

Margo tried her best to hold it in, but lost the battle to a tiny smile, becoming unstoppable giggles, turning to hysterical whoops of laughter. Mystified at first,

Jeremy slowly caught the bug and joined his wife, both of them laughing until tears came to their eyes.

Finally exhausted, the couple settled back into their pillow nests.

“We’ll talk more about this tomorrow,” Jeremy tried for the last word.

“No, we won’t,” Margo laughed.

“I suppose the French Maid’s outfit is out of the question?” he muttered.

“Go to sleep, dirty old man.”