

Step By Step
A Ladies in Love Romance
by Magda McKune

Chapter 1

Maggie Malone steered her black Toyota Prius into the parking lot of the Del-Mar Apartment complex and pulled into a spot under a shady elm tree. It was Tuesday evening, and as with every Tuesday she and her sister Molly got together at Molly's place for a glass of wine, some snacks, and get caught up on the past weeks' news. Maggie was a real estate agent and a good one, which meant she spent nearly every evening and weekend showing houses. Maggie didn't mind. She loved her job and couldn't imagine doing anything else. It was the perfect occupation for a single gal in her late twenties with no obligations or romantic interests. Maggie and Molly agreed several years ago to set aside Tuesday evenings lest Maggie become totally consumed with her work.

Del-Mar Apartments were located just north of Blue Mound Road and a quarter mile away from Brookfield Square shopping mall. Not too far from where Maggie lived in Waukesha, Wisconsin. It was a fairly quiet town for the most part, offering plenty of real estate business for Miss Malone. Of course she could always hop on the freeway and make the half hour drive into Milwaukee if a client preferred to live closer to the city.

Maggie shut off the engine and grabbed the bottle of wine from the passenger seat. It was her turn to buy and she opted for an Australian Shiraz recommended by Bert at the liquor store. Bert knew full well of Miss Malone's regular visits with her sister and tried to suggest a different wine each time. The ladies were rarely disappointed and quiet often delighted by his recommendation.

Molly opened the door and gave her sister a wide bright smile. "Right on time!" she lilted cheerfully.

"Naturally," Maggie replied. She gave her sister a quick hug and a peck on the cheek. "This is my favorite time of the week."

"You're so sweet."

Maggie and Molly were both redheaded Irish girls and could easily pass for twins. Maggie was four years older than Molly, but retained a youthful quality in her face that belied her true age of 29. Molly had a bigger bust than her older sister, which was perfectly fine with Maggie. In the world of real estate sales, having big boobs was not an asset. Maggie rationalized that large breasts gave the overall impression of unprofessionalism and male clients tended to spend more time checking out the lady's bust than the houses they were evaluating. Maggie was glad she had a fairly unimpressive figure and chose to dress as a professional businesswoman in matching jacket and slacks. Not the most flattering of apparel, but Maggie was in the business to sell houses, not pick up dates.

They poured the wine, uncovered the tray of snacks, and retired to the living room. Maggie sat on the sofa and Molly sat across from her in the wing back arm chair. "So," Maggie began, "what's new with you?"

Molly sighed and crossed her legs at the knees. "Nothing much," she mused dramatically. She rested her hand on her knee and wagged her fingers at her sister. "I did manage to pick up a nice piece of jewelry over the weekend."

Maggie's eyes grew wide. There was a diamond ring on the fourth finger of Molly's left hand. "Oh my God!" Maggie exclaimed in shock. "Is that what I think it is?"

"Yes!" Molly squealed with delight. "I'm engaged!"

"To Jeff Brandeberry?"

Molly scowled with irritation. "Of course to Jeff Brandeberry! Who else?"

"Just making sure. You two had been seeing each other for over a year. I was wondering if he would ever pop the question."

"Well he did and I said yes."

Maggie rose to her feet to give her sister a warm hug. "I'm so happy for you, Molly. I really am."

“Thanks, Mags. That means a lot.”

“You should have told me,” Maggie frowned playfully. “I would have brought champagne instead.”

“What? And miss that look on your face when I told you? Priceless!”

They returned to their seats and Maggie asked, “So are you planning a big wedding or a small one?”

“Medium size. We both agreed on a church wedding, but nothing too extravagant or ridiculous. Too many times a bride tries for fancy and elegant and it turns out to be a circus.”

“Or a nightmare.”

“Exactly.”

Maggie grinned and asked, “Remember our cousin Heather’s wedding?”

Molly let out a loud guffaw. “When they released those doves?” She threw her head back and laughed.

“One of them pooped on the Groom’s mother!”

Maggie giggled. “So much for a classy event.”

“My wedding is not going to have anything outlandish. Small and simple. Jeff will have his brother James as best man and I will have my sister as Maid of Honor.”

“Awww,” Maggie mewed. “I’d be happy to stand up for you, Molly.”

“Of course you know you have to wear a gown for the occasion.”

Maggie grinned and refilled both of their glasses from the bottle. “I suppose I can make an allowance this one time.”

“Traditionally it’s the oldest sister that gets married off first,” Molly remarked casually.

“Too late for that to happen. Besides, I think you have to be a couple before you tie the knot. Last time I checked I was still a single.”

Molly grinned mischievously. “I can help with that.”

“Thanks but no thanks. Having my little sister hook me up with a blind date is not my idea of a good time.”

Her sister shrugged with indifference. “You would think a real estate agent would meet enough men on your own. A good looking eligible bachelor might be looking for a house in the area . . . you two get to talking . . . one thing leads to another . . .”

“No such luck there either, sis. Whenever I meet a client – regardless of his attractiveness or marital status – my mind automatically shifts into business mode. I become more focused on satisfying his needs than satisfying my own.” Maggie drew in and released a long deep breath. “It doesn’t matter. I like my life and I love my job. I don’t even mind the term ‘spinster’ now that I’m on the fast track to thirty. I don’t need a man in my life to be happy.”

“I have a challenge for you,” Molly said. “Bring a date to my wedding.”

“A date?”

“Yes. I don’t want my own sister to come stag to my wedding, plus you’ll need to have a partner to dance with at the reception.”

“I’m sure there will be plenty of guys at the reception who will want to dance with me.”

“That isn’t the point. Look, Jeff and I settled on a date four months from now. Surely you can find someone to go with you by then.”

Maggie conceded with a huff of exasperation. “All right. I’ll do it, if only to make my sister happy on her wedding day.”

Chapter 2

Maggie climbed into her car and thought about Molly's wedding. Of course she was happy and excited for the couple, but was more concerned about her dancing skills. More precisely, her lack thereof. Having two left feet was an understatement. Maggie doubted she could maneuver a single dance step without tripping over her own two feet. Not to mention she'd be wearing a formal gown and high heel shoes. That was a guaranteed disaster waiting to happen. The sister of the bride takes a spill into the string quartet. Cousin Heather's dove poop fiasco would pale by comparison.

There was still time, Maggie realized. She could take dance lessons and avoid making a fool of herself. Maggie checked her cell phone for a dance studio near by. She found one less than two miles away. Maggie pulled up the map and started her car. She needed to sign up for lessons before the wine buzz wore off and she chickened out.

Right Step dance studio was located on one end of a strip mall located at the corner of Elm and Jefferson. It was a red brick building that also accommodated a barber supply outlet, pet grooming salon, custom jewelry and repair, and a liquor store on the end. Most of the cars in the parking lot were by the liquor store.

Maggie entered the door into the foyer of the studio. On her right were four chairs along the windows facing the parking lot and a desk on the far wall, supposedly for making reservations. The opposite wall displayed several large photographs of extreme close ups of human legs and torsos in various dance movements. Maggie determined the loud rock music was coming from a room on the other side of the wall. A dance class, no doubt. She thought she'd take a sneak peek and see what the dance studio had to offer.

The room was immense with a light pine wood floor and a wall of mirrors on the opposite side. A stereo unit on her left blared the song "What a Feeling" while a slender brunette danced by herself about the room. She was a willowy woman with short black hair, slim arms and legs and small bust. Maggie guessed her to be in her early thirties. The gal wore snug black leotards and fit them perfectly. In fact, everything about the woman was absolutely exquisite.

Maggie stood by the door and watched in rapt attention as the lady executed a perfectly choreographed rendition of the scene from the movie *Flashdance*. Maggie thought she was observing a replay of the movie before her very eyes, however this gal was far sexier than Jennifer Beals.

Maggie was surprised she considered the lady to be sexy. She never felt that way about any woman before. However, she couldn't ignore or deny the stirrings she felt inside her chest at the exhibition this dancer was giving her. Maggie realized she had been holding her breath since the moment she entered the room.

The song ended and the lady moved her arms in a flourish and struck a pose. Maggie couldn't help applauding her performance. The dancer smiled and crossed to the table holding the stereo unit. "I didn't know I had an audience," she laughed.

"Sorry about that," Maggie winced. "I heard the music and couldn't help myself. Curiosity got the best of me."

"What did you think?"

"I thought it was the sexiest thing I had ever seen."

The woman chuckled and wiped her face with a towel. "I'm glad I can still get a rise out of an audience." She dabbed the perspiration from her arms and offered her hand. "Sally Right."

"Maggie Malone." She accepted her host's shake. "I hope I wasn't interrupting anything."

"No, of course not. Whenever I have some down time between students I like to give myself a good workout." She patted her flat tummy. "Keeps this old body in shape."

"You look incredible."

"Thanks."

"Speaking of students, I was wondering if I could hire you to teach me how to dance."

Sally nodded soberly. "That's what I'm here for."

“My sister is getting married and she wants me to dance at her wedding. Only I’m terrible at it. I don’t want to be a complete embarrassment.”

Sally nodded once again. “How much time do we have?”

“A few months.”

“Good. At least we don’t have to subject you to a crash course.”

Maggie smiled and said, “Don’t be so sure. It may take all that time to whip me into shape.”

Miss Right chuckled and gestured to the door. “Let’s go sit down, shall we?” They moved into the front room and took up chairs next to each other by the window. Maggie liked the fact that Sally sat with her and not behind the desk. It instantly made her feel at ease and comfortable in the instructor’s presence. Sally relaxed and crossed her slender legs at the knee. “Tell me about this wedding.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Is it going to be big and fancy, or small and casual?”

“Molly told me that the wedding will be small, but knowing my little sister as I do, over time it will grow to be huge. Molly’s always talked about having a fairy tale wedding and a ridiculously huge reception. Neither of us had been married before, so I’m sure she’ll want to do it up big. No doubt the reception will be gigantic. We Irish love nothing better than a big party. I’m sure every relative in the country will want to attend. Thus the reason for me needing to learn how to dance. ”

Sally nodded with understanding. “Will you be wearing formal gowns?”

“Undoubtedly.”

“And dance traditional ballroom dances?”

“Unfortunately.”

“No big deal. We can start off with the basic steps of the waltz, foxtrot and rumba. That way you’ll feel more comfortable no matter what music they play. Then we’ll polish your moves and have you ready for social dancing.”

“Social dancing?”

“Where you have a partner.”

“I see.”

“Of course, I’ll be the man and you’ll be the woman.”

Maggie laughed. “Great! I like being the woman.”

“So when do you want to start?”

“Well, my schedule is kind of hectic. Why don’t you tell me when you want to be here and I’ll arrange everything to accommodate you?”

Sally smiled and nodded. “Sounds good to me. Tomorrow okay?”

“That will be perfect. The sooner the better, otherwise I may change my mind and chicken out.”

Maggie began her dance lessons with Miss Right. Sally was an amazing teacher and very easy to follow. Maggie found out that she liked dancing much more than she expected. Maggie started out with her first lesson lasting a half hour, then immediately scheduled two more lessons for the following week.

Maggie soon discovered she enjoyed Sally’s company more than she liked learning how to dance. Maggie looked forward to her dance instruction with eager enthusiasm. What she liked even more was holding the woman in her arms. Maggie never touched a lady in that way before. Maggie also came to realize that she found Miss Right very attractive. She enjoyed Sally’s personality and wit, her sense of humor, and her easy relaxed manner. Not to mention those gorgeous eyes . . . and those beautiful full lips . . . and that sinewy sensuous body. Maggie never really noticed women’s figures before, other than evaluating how a certain outfit looked on a lady’s body or if a skirt matches her blouse. However with Sally it was different. Maggie couldn’t stop thinking about how sexy the lady was. More over, Maggie wanted to spend more time with Sally, particularly away from the dance studio. She wanted the two of them to be friends. Perhaps more than friends . . . gals who hung out together and enjoyed each other’s company. Maggie never had a friend like that before. She resolved to ask Sally out for a drink after the next lesson in order to get to know the lady better.

After the third lesson was over, Sally checked her watch and said, "Time to call it a day."

"Do you have any more students tonight?" Maggie asked.

"No. You're the last."

"Care to join me for a drink?" Maggie couldn't believe her boldness. She had never asked a lady out on a date before. Then again, it wasn't a real date, merely two friends going out for a drink. She half expected the woman to turn her down. After all, Sally probably had more of a social life than Maggie did.

Sally considered a moment, then nodded her head in acceptance. "Sure. I'd like that."

"You would?" Maggie was actually surprised.

Her companion returned a wry smile. "Why not? I think it would be nice for us to get to know each other better."

Maggie brightened. "My sentiments exactly!"

There was a small bar two blocks away and the ladies decided to hike it. Maggie said, "I'm so glad you wanted to go out tonight. I'm an admitted workaholic and don't spend a lot of time socializing."

Sally nodded soberly. "I hear ya'. Sometimes the day goes by so fast I forget to eat."

"Maybe that's how you keep your amazing figure," Maggie stated honestly.

"Thank you. Anyway, I sometimes get so caught up in my busy schedule I forget what day it is. I've blown off more dinner dates than I can count. It's downright embarrassing."

"Don't talk to me about being pathetic. If it wasn't for your dance lessons, I'd have no social life at all."

Sally laughed. "You're right . . . that is pathetic."

Maggie gave her a playful scowl. "I wasn't expecting you to agree with me!"

They went to a quaint little tavern called the Keg and Cork. They found a nice quiet booth in the back where they could chat. There were only about a half dozen patrons in the place and soft ethereal music drifted in from hidden speakers. It was the perfect surroundings for a cozy conversation between friends.

Sally took a sip of her wine and said, "All right, let's each give a recap of our life's story in 90 seconds or less."

Maggie chuckled. "That would just about do it for me."

"I'll even go first," Sally said. "I graduated from high school with average grades. Not a whole lot of ambition there. Got a job as a waitress at a local diner and immediately got married to a gypsy truck driver named Phil. He would be gone most of the week, which was fine with me. We'd get together on the weekends. Not too bad an arrangement. That lasted about six years. One day I found out he was having an affair with an exotic dancer in Omaha. I found out about it because Phil came home after a week on the road and said, 'I'm leaving you for a girl in Omaha.' Just like that. 'Sell everything and take half.' The bum. Six years of my life wasted with nothing to show for it. I decided then and there to demonstrate some initiative and ambition for once in my life. I started this dance studio. Looking back, getting a divorce from Phil was the luckiest thing to ever happen to me. Sometimes you need a swift kick in the butt to get moving."

"I imagine so."

"Your turn."

"Okay. As you know I have a sister, Molly, who is getting married in a few months. No other siblings. Our parents died in a car accident when we were teens, so we had to fend for ourselves. I was eighteen and Molly was fifteen so we were old enough to live on our own. We had an estate sale and sold the house and all the furniture and used the money to get an apartment together. I took care of her like a mother all through high school and continued on until Molly got out of college. By then she was old enough to live on her own. I had to skip college because I had to work to support us. After Molly graduated I got my realtor's license and went into selling real estate. I like my job and am very good at it. Molly is now the branch manager at a bank here in town. We get together every Tuesday religiously. With our busy schedules it's too hard to catch each other on the phone." Maggie took a drink of wine. "I think my time is up."

"You left out the most important information."

"I did?"

"Any relationships?"

“No. None at all. I had to work right out of high school to support me and Molly. No time for dating, I’m afraid.”

“Sounds to me like both our personal lives have been fairly lacking up until now.”

Maggie regarded the woman thoughtfully. “Would be interested in going out with me?”

Sally smiled with amusement. “Go out with you?”

“Yes. I mean to movies and to dinner and things like that. I miss out on so much because of my work schedule and because I don’t have anyone to pal around with.”

Miss Right tilted her head thoughtfully. “I’d like that. I haven’t been to a movie in years. Or had anyone over for dinner. I’m actually a fairly decent cook. Maybe I can cook dinner for us sometime.”

“I’d like that.” Maggie smiled and sipped her wine. She had invited Miss Right to go on a date after all, and it felt really good.

Chapter 3

Maggie and Sally practiced the waltz with the simple box step. The stereo unit played the theme from *Around the World in 80 Days*.

Sally said, "Next time I want you to bring high heel shoes. Since you'll be dancing at a wedding, you have to practice the moves in the shoes you'll be wearing at the reception." They executed a turn perfectly. "Believe me, dancing in heels is an entirely different experience."

Maggie grinned at her partner. "Plus it will make us closer to the same height, seeing you are a couple inches taller than me." Her face took on a thoughtful expression. "That won't work. You'll be in heels too."
"I will?"

They performed another turn. "Of course. I want you to come as my date."

Sally was slightly taken aback. "Your date?"

"Yes. Seeing as I've grown accustomed and comfortable having you as my dance partner, it's only natural that you come along as my date." Maggie belied a wry smile. "Besides, I'll bet you look stunning in a formal dress."

Sally gave her companion a puzzled look. "If I didn't know better, I'd say you were making a pass at me."

"I suppose I am." Maggie giggled under her breath. "This is so unlike me. I've never been attracted to anyone like this before. I must admit I find you very sexy and arousing. It's downright wicked to entertain these thoughts I have whenever I'm with you. I can't help myself. I'm interested in you, Sally. I want to see more of you. I want us to be more than good friends." Maggie was taken aback by her bold frankness. "God, I can't believe I'm saying this. I can't believe I have these feelings for you, but I can't deny them either. This is all new to me and kind of scary too."

They stopped dancing and stood staring at each other. The music continued to play. Sally asked, "You're attracted to me?"

"Yes. Dear God help me, I am."

Sally smiled. "In that case, I suggest we go all the way."

Maggie frowned. "All the way?"

"How can you be interested in me unless I give you have a little sample." Sally leaned closer and met Maggie's lips in a tender kiss. Sally smiled coyly. "Well?"

"Too soon to tell," Maggie stated unemotionally. "This calls for further research." She hooked her hand behind Sally's neck and pulled the woman's mouth onto hers in a deep fiery kiss. Maggie couldn't believe how much she relished the sensation of Sally's lips on hers. Maggie needed it. She craved it. It was as if years of pent-up passion had finally been released in an explosion of emotion. After Maggie let the woman up for air she said, "How do you feel about going out on a real date with me?"

"A real date?"

"Yes. You know; dinner and a movie perhaps?"

Sally smiled knowingly. "Then back to your place for a nightcap?"

"If you like."

"How about Saturday night?"

Maggie smiled. "Saturday night sounds perfect. I normally don't book any clients after seven o'clock."

"Then it's a date." Sally moved closer to Maggie and rested her hand on the woman's arm. "Why don't we skip the movie and dinner and dine in? We can rent a video from Red Box and I can bring Chinese takeout."

Maggie furrowed her brow with a puzzled expression. "Okay, if you want to."

Sally kissed Maggie softly on the mouth. "Call me selfish, but I want to be alone with you, Maggie Malone."

Maggie smiled. "I want to be alone with you too."

Saturday evening Maggie heard the doorbell ring promptly at seven o'clock. She opened the door to find Sally Right on the landing. The woman wore a form-fitting red knit sweater and black calf length chino pants. Maggie smiled brightly. "Right on time!"

Sally smiled at her host. Maggie wore a light rose blouse and knee length gray pleated skirt. Quite a change from her typical real estate agent jacket and slacks. "I tried not to be late. I was so looking forward to seeing you!"

Maggie opened the door wider for her guest. They exchanged cordial kisses on the cheek in the doorway. Sally stepped inside and Maggie closed the door behind her. Sally set the bag of Chinese carryout aside and nodded with approval to her surroundings. "This is a very nice place you have here."

"Thanks." Maggie stepped around the woman to stand in front of her. "I can give you the ten cent tour if you like."

She smiled demurely and said, "What I really want is to see the bedroom."

"You would?"

"Yes." She slipped her arms around Maggie's waist and kissed her softly on the lips. "I want to have sex with you, Maggie Malone."

"You do?"

"Yes. I hadn't gotten any in a long time and I suspect you haven't either. You say you find me attractive. I found you attractive as well. After we kissed the other day I knew there was chemistry between us. Not just on the physical level either. It was as though there was a deep need, an empty void inside us that we needed to fill with one another. I find you intriguing and arousing, Maggie Malone. I'm no longer content with merely kissing you. I was hoping we could go further."

Maggie hesitated and tentatively chewed her lower lip. "I've never had sex with a woman before."

Sally grinned and shifted her hands lower to grope Maggie's rear. "I take it your answer is yes?"

"Yes. It's a yes. Only I don't know what to do. I mean, I think you are the sexiest, most desirable woman I have ever seen. I want to make love to you, but I don't know how."

Miss Right smiled and kissed Maggie on the lips. "I'm sure we can figure it out." She kissed Maggie and leaned back with a demure pout. "You were about to show me the bedroom?"

Maggie took Sally's hand and led her from the foyer to the hallway. Her heart was pounding loudly in her chest. She was going to have sex with a woman! Maggie had to steel her nerves and not lose her nerve. This was what she had dreamed of, what she fantasized about. She wanted to hold Sally and kiss her and feel her naked flesh against hers. It was so exciting and terrifying as well.

Maggie led Sally by the hand into the bedroom and stopped beside the bed. She turned to Sally and said, "I've never done anything like this before."

Sally gave her a wry smile. "I'm not exactly an expert myself."

"That's not what I meant," Maggie hedged. "I've never done this . . . with anyone."

A glimmer of realization crept into Sally's eyes. "Are you saying you're a virgin?"

"Yes. As I said, I was left to raise Molly and didn't have time for any relationships. I hadn't dated anyone until you."

Sally rested her hands on Maggie's upper arms. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"More than anything. I want you to be my first lover. I can't imagine a sexier or more patient partner than you."

Sally leaned closer and lightly kissed Maggie on the lips. "I'll try to make it magical for both of us."

Maggie stared evenly into Sally's eyes. She raised her hands to touch the woman's breasts in the tight sweater. "My God," Maggie breathed reverently. "You are so beautiful."

"So are you." Sally slowly unbuttoned Maggie's blouse. "Let me look at you." She eased Maggie's top off her shoulders and let it fall silently to the floor. Sally reached around Maggie's back and unclasped her brassiere. Sally removed Maggie's bra and dropped it to join her blouse. Sally gently caressed Maggie's bare chest. "You are a lovely woman, Maggie."

Maggie trembled to her touch. It was so tender and caring and sweet. "Let me see you." Sally smiled and dropped her arms to her side. "Undress me."

Maggie peeled the sweater up over Sally's head and tossed it aside. The lady was not wearing a bra underneath. She didn't need one. Her breasts were high and firm and perfect. Maggie eased the waistband of Sally's pants over her hips and down her legs. Sally wasn't wearing panties either. Apparently the woman had every intention of having sex that evening. Maggie was glad. She had fantasized this moment many times before and now here it was becoming a reality. Maggie had no intention of stopping now. This was what she wanted, what she longed for . . . and it was going to be magical.

Maggie removed Sally's garments and stood staring at the woman in wonder. Sally Right was magnificent. She was the most incredible creature Maggie had ever set eyes on. "Oh my," Maggie breathed softly. "You are absolutely perfect."

Sally smiled and moved closer. She slipped her arms around Maggie's back and pressed her bare chest to Maggie's breasts. "I want to be a perfect lover for you." They kissed. Maggie felt all the tension and anxiety ebb away from her body. It was if she had entered a dream. Everything was exactly as it should be. This was the moment she had waited her entire life for, the partner she had always wanted. This night would be everything she ever dreamed of.

Maggie brought her hands around Sally to feel her partner's bare back. She exhaled her breath into Sally's mouth as their kiss grew in intensity. "You are so sexy," Maggie rasped breathlessly.

Sally eased Maggie onto the bed and shifted her body on top of her. "Let me make love to you."

"Oh God yes," Maggie panted as her hands roamed over Sally's back and down to her rear. "Make love to me."

They lay naked in the tangled sheets savoring the afterglow of incredibly satisfying sex. "That was amazing," Maggie sighed dreamily.

Sally giggled. "It was, wasn't it?"

Maggie rolled onto her side to face her lover. "You are much more talented and imaginative than I expected."

Sally took Maggie's hands in hers. "I was married to Phil for six years. He wasn't a great husband, but he taught me a thing or two in the bedroom. I figure if they felt good with a man doing them to me, it would feel even better with a woman."

Maggie smiled. "I for one would like to thank Phil for his contribution to tonight's activities."

Sally laughed. "Thanks, Phil!"

Maggie stared intently into Sally's eyes. "Thank you, Sally Right. You made my first experience wonderful."

"It was my pleasure." Sally shifted over to lie on top of Maggie's chest. "Let's have dinner. I'm starving."

Maggie smiled and stroked her hands over Sally's bare sides to her rear. "How can I possibly let you out of this bed looking so sexy and desirable?"

Sally lowered her lips to meet Maggie's. "We can come back later and pick up where we left off."

"It's a deal!"

The ladies sat on the sofa in bath robes watching a sappy chick flick and eating Chinese food out of white cardboard cartons. "You know," Sally mused as she picked at her dinner with a pair of chopsticks, "we should make this a regular thing."

Maggie looked at her. "What? Dinner and a movie?"

"And sex."

Maggie nodded in agreement. "Definitely sex."

Sally shook her head in wonder. "God, I can't remember the last time I was this satisfied. Years. Hell, never. Phil was a good lover in his own right, but you beat him by a mile."

Maggie smiled happily. "I'm glad I was good for you."

"You were amazing!" Sally leaned over to meet Maggie's lips in a quick kiss. "That's why we should make this a regular event. You made me a wanton woman, Maggie Malone. I need to have sex with you on a regular basis."

Maggie looked at the woman thoughtfully. "I'm not sure I can wait a whole week. I'll need another Sally Right fix before then."

Sally smiled. "I wholeheartedly concur."

Maggie went back to eating her dinner. "I want you to stay the night," she said.

Sally nodded to her meal as she picked at it with her chopsticks. "I'd like that."

Maggie was silent a moment. "I could clear out a space in the closet," she mused. "Just in case you want to bring some clothes over. In the event you happen to stay over during the week."

Sally looked at her. "I'd like that very much."

Maggie smiled. "Forgive me, but after I've had a taste of what I've been missing, I don't want to go back to living completely alone. I miss having another person in the house. The place seems so empty after Molly left. I guess that's partly why I work such long hours. I rue having to come home to the quiet."

"I understand." Sally looked at Maggie. "I think it would be nice to share a bed with someone again. I miss cuddling and snuggling at night."

Maggie smiled at her friend. "I feel so comfortable with you, Sally. It seems like we've known each other for years."

"I feel the same way." Sally noticed the bright sparkle in Maggie's eyes. "You're getting that amorous look again."

"I can't help it. You are so wonderful and adorable. I really love spending time with you. You're so much fun to be with. I admit I'm looking forward to having you over for dinner, watching movies, pleasant conversation . . ."

"Incredible sex . . ."

"Incredible sex," Maggie nodded in agreement. "I want to be with you, Sally. It seems I can never get enough of you."

Sally went back to eating her dinner. "Careful Miss Malone," she mused. "You may end up falling in love with me."

Maggie regarded her companion thoughtfully and believed she was already there.

Chapter 4

Monday afternoon Maggie made a quick stop at the dance studio. Sally glanced up from her appointment book and smiled. "Missed me already?"

"Terribly!" She crossed to Sally and gave her a kiss on the mouth. "I had a key made of the apartment for you. I thought I'd swing by and drop it off."

Sally accepted the key and smiled. "You really want me to drop some clothes off and stay over now and then?"

"More than ever!" Maggie rested her rear on the edge of the desk. "How about you?"

"You know I can never get enough of you, Maggie Malone."

"Same here. I feel so comfortable around you. We're like Laverne and Shirley, but with incredible mind-blowing sex."

Sally laughed. "How do we know those girls didn't get it on from time to time?"

Maggie chuckled. "Could be!" She hopped off the desk. "Gotta run. Are you stopping over tonight? Not that I'm getting pushy or anything. Merely curious."

Sally smiled. "I may drop off a blouse or two."

"And have a glass of wine and unwind?"

"That would be nice."

"See you then!" Maggie gave Sally a smooch on the lips. "You don't mind me kissing you all the time, do you?"

"I like it. I love the way your face lights up when you look at me. It makes me feel like I'm someone special."

"You are very special to me. Don't ever forget that."

"Yes ma'am!"

Maggie kissed the tips of her fingers and waved them at Sally as she turned for the door. "Later!"

Sally chuckled as she watched Maggie stroll to the door. Damn, that lady had a nice butt. Sally shook her head and returned her attention to her schedule book. If she wasn't careful she just might find herself becoming permanently attached to that woman.

Sally grinned with delight. Spending the rest of her life with Maggie Malone would be a wonderful thing indeed.

Maggie was in her office checking the figures of a house offer in Sheboygan when her phone rang. It was Molly. Maggie answered it with a cheerful, "Hey, Molls! What's up?"

"I was making out the seating arrangement for the reception and I need to know about where to sit you."

"I thought the maid of honor sits next to the bride?"

"Of course," Molly said. "However, if you plan to bring a date, I need to know soon so I can arrange accordingly."

"Well, actually, I do plan to bring a date."

"You do?" Molly could not contain the excitement as well as surprise in her voice. "What's his name?"

Maggie audibly cleared her throat and said, "Sally."

"Sally? What kind of name is that?"

"It's a girl's name. Sally Right. She's my dance instructor."

"You're bringing your dance instructor to my wedding?"

"Yes."

There was a long awkward silence on the phone. "As your *date*?"

"Yes."

"Oh my GOD!" Maggie moaned wretchedly. "I can't believe it! My sister picks my wedding day to come out of the closet!"

"I'm sorry. You asked me to bring someone I could dance with. I invited Sally. I didn't realize it would bother you that much."

“Are you lovers?”

“What!”

“Are you two sleeping together?”

“Not only is that none of your business, but it has nothing to do with what we are discussing.”

“It has everything to do with it. It’s my wedding day. The one day where everything is all about me. This day is all about the bride. I don’t want attention taken away from me by having folks giggle and joke about my sister and her lesbian lover. Oh my God! I’d never live down the shame and embarrassment.”

“I’m sorry my inviting a guest is causing you so much distress.”

“Don’t you see?” Molly implored. “This changes everything.”

“How?”

“If I have you seated next to me and this Sally woman sits next to you, people will ask who she is. We’d have to tell them she’s your date. There’d be laughter and innuendo and snide comments. My wedding would become one big joke. People won’t remember anything about my wedding day except the jokes about my sister and her dyke girlfriend.”

“I said Sally was my dance partner, not my sex partner.”

“People won’t know the difference.”

“That’s their problem.”

There was a long stretch of silent tension across the line. At last Molly asked tentatively, “Do you think she would mind sitting at a table by herself?”

“That seems rather rude; inviting a lady to a reception and leaving her to be all by herself with a bunch of strangers.”

“Maybe you can politely uninvite her?”

“That’s even worse. I asked the woman to be my guest. Now you want me to take it back because my sister doesn’t want her there?”

“I’m sorry, but I don’t see any other way around this.”

“I do. Find yourself another Maid of Honor.”

“What?”

“If having your sister bring a lady friend to your wedding causes you this much anguish, then maybe you better look for my replacement.”

“You don’t mean that!”

“I do. I care for this woman a great deal and will not hurt her pride by telling her she’s not wanted at my sister’s wedding. I like her, Molly. I like her a lot. But if it comes down to choosing between her and you, I’m afraid it will have to be her. I love you, little sister, but I wouldn’t want your wedding day ruined on my account.”

There was a long silence on the line. Molly asked, “Does she really mean that much to you?”

Maggie smiled to herself. “Yes, darling, she does. But it wasn’t until this very minute that I realized just how much.”

Sally Right looked up from her appointment book and smiled as Maggie entered the front door of the dance studio. “You’re early,” Sally chirped merrily. “I wasn’t expecting you for another half hour.”

“Sorry, sweetheart,” Maggie responded hesitantly. “I guess the dance lessons are off.”

Sally frowned with a puzzled expression. “What? Why?”

“We’re not going to the wedding after all.”

“Oh? What happened? Did the bride get cold feet?”

“No. I did. I decided not to go.”

Miss Right rose and moved around the desk to Maggie. “Why?”

“Because I told her I wanted to bring you as a guest and she got all huffy and hot under the collar. She said it would mess up her seating arrangements.”

Sally sat in a chair beside Maggie. “You certainly can’t miss your sister’s wedding on my account. I don’t have to go, you know.”

“It isn’t just that,” Maggie hedged. “I don’t want to go without you.” Maggie reached over and took Sally’s hand in hers. “Ever since I asked you to be my date, I’ve been fantasizing what that night would be like. I imagined you and me showing our dance moves to the crowd. I saw my sister smiling and clapping with joy at seeing her sister dance at her wedding and not tripping over my own feet like a klutz.” Maggie lowered her eyes to her friend’s hand in hers. “I imagined seeing you in a beautiful gown and holding you in my arms.” She swallowed hard. “I told my sister about us and she said it would be too embarrassing. That was when I told her that I wasn’t going if you weren’t.”

“Oh honey,” Sally mewed. “You didn’t have to do that for me.”

Maggie raised her eyes to meet Sally’s. “I did it for me. I knew I would never have a good time without you. I realized when I was talking to my sister that I was in love with you. I never want to do anything to hurt you, Sally. I love you, Sally Right. I guess I always have been.”

Sally smiled warmly and cupped Maggie’s cheek with her free hand. “Silly girl.” She leaned closer and met Maggie’s lips with hers in a gentle tender kiss. Maggie felt all the tension and anxiety drain from her body.

Maggie gazed deeply into Sally’s eyes. “I hope this doesn’t change things between us. Me being in love with you I mean. I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable about it.”

“It’s okay,” Sally chuckled under her breath. “I suspected as much for quite a while now.”

“Oh?”

“Yes. The first day you came in and caught me dancing. You said I was the sexiest thing you ever saw.”

Maggie grinned. “You still are.”

“You’re sweet. Then when we danced the waltz, you were afraid to hold me in your arms. I’ve seen that hesitation before with men. They weren’t afraid of doing it wrong. They were afraid I’ll realize how much they wanted to hold me and how hard it was for them to hold back. You had that same look of terror, like I would discover how much you wanted to take me into your arms.”

“I still do. More than ever.” Maggie looked at Sally with concern. “Does it bother you that a student has a tremendous crush on you?”

“Not in the least.” Sally’s eyes twinkled with playfulness. “In fact, I think it’s quite marvelous.”

“Me too!” Maggie grinned.

Sally stood with Maggie’s hand in hers. “Let’s get out of here and go for a drink somewhere.”

Maggie rose to her feet and apprehensively chewed her lower lip. “Or we could go to my place.”

“Oh?”

Maggie gazed deeply into Sally’s eyes. “I have a few moves of my own I want to practice, and I don’t mean dancing.”

Sally giggled and moved to take Maggie into her arms. “Oh, you do, do you?”

“Yes. But you have to be patient with me. I’ve never practiced some of these moves before.”

Her friend nodded soberly. “Then maybe we can take turns leading.”

Maggie smiled and leaned closer to meet Sally’s lips with hers. “I’d like that very much.”

Maggie didn’t talk to Molly for the rest of the week. For the first time in years she skipped their regular Tuesday night meeting. Maggie didn’t want to face her sister just yet. She wanted to give Molly some time to think it over. Maggie hated putting her sister on the spot like she did. It wasn’t fair to issue an ultimatum, especially when it came to the most important day in the girl’s life. But this was important too. Maggie wanted Molly to understand how much Sally Right meant to her. Of course Maggie would eventually back down and go as Molly’s Maid of Honor. She certainly couldn’t miss her little sister’s wedding. Maggie simply wanted to drive home the point that she had finally found someone who meant a lot to her and Molly needed to understand that.

Sally came over to Maggie’s place on Monday and spent the night. The same for Tuesday and Wednesday. They decided to skip a night and spend Thursday apart. The ladies were miserable. They both realized how much they enjoyed sharing a bed together. Not just for the sex – which was incredible – but for the intimacy, the cuddling, and the warmth of having a naked body close to you under the covers.

They went out to see a Meryl Streep film on Friday night and held hands in the dark. Afterwards they stopped for frozen custard and sat on a bench in a park looking up at the stars in the night sky. Maggie thought it was perfectly natural to feel Sally's hand in hers. It was if the woman's hand completed her in some way, like Maggie's body was not whole without Sally hand in hers. Maggie realized her feelings for Sally far surpassed mere love. It was a contentment and bliss she never knew was possible. It was as though Maggie had been saving up all of her love for this one special person. Maggie felt her heart open wide with joy and a happiness far beyond her wildest imaginings. Sally Right was the one.

They lay naked in bed after a round of thoroughly satisfying sex. Maggie laid her head on Sally's chest as her lover twirled a lock of red hair in her fingers. Sally mused quietly, "I want you to go to your sister's wedding. I could never live with myself if you missed out on her big day because of me."

Maggie nodded her head on Sally's tummy. "I know. It's so hard, you know? I don't want to hurt either of you."

"You won't, darling. I'll be happy knowing you were having a good time."

"But we're partners."

"Yes. But I believe you're good enough to dance with someone besides me."

"That's not what I meant. We're partners . . . a couple. At least we are in my mind. We should be able to go everywhere together."

Sally nodded to the dark room. "I feel the same way." She stroked her fingers over Maggie's scalp. "I love you, Maggie Malone."

"I suspected as much."

"You did?"

"Yes, from the way you shouted it out just before you climaxed."

Sally chuckled under her breath. "That was passion. This is emotion."

Maggie shifted up onto her elbows and stared down at the woman. "I'm madly in love with you, Sally Right, forever and ever."

Sally smiled and caressed Maggie's cheek with her hand. "The feeling is mutual, girlfriend."

Maggie lowered her lips to meet Sally's. It was the same as what she felt when they held hands. Miss Right completed her. Maggie moved her hand under the sheet to fondle her partner's breast. "Have sex with me again, Sally."

Sally eased Maggie onto her back and moved over her, their mouths locked in a passionate embrace. "I can do better than that," she breathed into Maggie's mouth as she slid her body on top of her. "I will love you, Maggie Malone."

Chapter 5

Molly opened the door to find Maggie standing on the front step. Maggie raised the bottle of merlot in her right hand. "Peace offering?"

"Of course," Molly smiled widely. She took Maggie into her arms and gave her a warm hug. "I never want to fight with my big sister."

"Me either." Molly opened the door wider for Maggie to enter. "I know it isn't Tuesday," Maggie said, "but I believe we have some catching up to do."

"And some important matters to discuss." Molly shut the door behind her. "You still have to be fitted for a formal gown."

Maggie smiled at her. "You still want me to be your Maid of Honor?"

"Of course. There was never anyone else. Imagine how foolish I'd look standing up there during the ceremony all by myself."

Maggie laughed and took Molly into a warm embrace. "I'm so glad!" She leaned back and smiled at her sister. "That was one of the things I wanted to discuss with you. Sally and I talked about it and she's okay with missing out on your wedding."

Molly dismissed Maggie with a wave of her hand as she led the way into the kitchen. "Nonsense. Sally has to come too. I can't have my sister going stag to my wedding." Molly took two wine glasses down from the cupboard. "I know you could never get another date in time."

"This is true."

Molly opened the bottle and poured them each a glass of wine. "You really care about this woman, don't you?"

"I'm in love with her, Molls."

Molly didn't flinch. "I suspected as much when you said you'd drop my wedding for her."

"Sorry about that."

"No worries." Molly lifted her glass in a toast. "To sisters!"

"Best friends forever!" They clinked their glasses together and took a drink.

Molly eyed her sister dubiously. "So . . . you and this Sally woman . . . you two are lovers?"

"Yes, we are."

Molly wrinkled her nose in disgust. "Eeewww!"

Maggie laughed. "Actually, it's pretty amazing. I never realized having sex with a woman could be so incredible."

Molly winced and led the way to the living room. "Please! I don't want to think about my big sister doing the nasty with another lady."

Maggie followed. "Get used to it, sweetheart. Sally and I are in love and plan to stay together for a long time."

Molly sat on the sofa and smiled at Maggie. "That part doesn't bother me. I'm happy you found someone to share your life with. I just don't want to hear all the particulars about your love life in great detail."

Maggie laughed and sat in the chair across from her. "Your fiancé Jeff might. I hear guys enjoy that sort of thing."

Molly winced in revulsion. "Double *eeewww!*"

Maggie chuckled and relaxed in her seat and took a sip of her wine. "I'm glad we got back together. I missed you terribly."

"I missed you too, big sister," Molly smiled. "Even if you are a little weird."

Chapter 6

Maggie brought Sally to the rehearsal dinner. Molly stopped chatting with an older couple and hurried over to meet them. “Hi, sis!” Molly beamed brightly, taking Maggie in a warm embrace.

“Hello, honey.” After a moment Maggie broke from her sister and gestured to her partner. “Molly, this is Sally Right.”

Molly gave the woman a wide smile and offered her hand to shake. “I’m so glad you could make it!”

Sally offered a playful scowl. “What’s this? We’re practically family.” She took Molly into her arms and gave her a warm hug.

Molly laughed. “I can see why Maggie is so enamored with you.” She broke from Sally’s embrace and grinned at her sister. “Not to mention absolutely gorgeous!”

Maggie nodded in agreement. “You’ll hear no argument from me.”

Sally chuckled and said, “All this praise is making my head spin!”

Molly held Sally’s hands and stared earnestly into the woman’s eyes. “Seriously, Miss Right, I’m sorry for the misunderstanding we had earlier. I apologize and truly am glad you could come to my wedding. It is a very important day for me and I want to be surrounded by the people that I love.” She glanced at Maggie.

“You make my sister happy, so that makes me happy. I hope we can be friends from now on.”

“I would like that too.” Sally took Molly into a fond hug. “This is your special time. I feel honored that I could be a part of it.”

Molly’s fiancé Jeff appeared at her side. “Maggie! I’m happy you could come.”

Maggie smiled and gave him a peck on the cheek. “I wouldn’t miss it.” She gestured to Sally. “Allow me to introduce my partner, Sally Right.”

Jeff smiled and shook Sally’s hand. “Pleased to meet you.” He glanced at Maggie. “Business partner?”

Molly laughed and patted his arm. “Such an innocent boy you are sometimes!”

The man wrinkled his brow with a puzzled expression. “What did I say?”

Molly giggled and slipped her arm through her boyfriend’s elbow. “I’ll explain it to you on our honeymoon.” She gave Maggie a grin and a knowing wink. “I’m told that guys like that sort of thing.”

Molly stood and clinked her champagne glass with her fork. “Can I have your attention, everyone?” she announced. It took a few moments for the murmuring voices among the guests to subside. “Typically it is the responsibility of the Best Man to make the first toast,” she continued. “However, since I am the bride and this day is all about *me* . . .” She had to pause a few seconds for the laughter and muttered jokes. “Today I make the rules, and I am going to make a speech of my own.” Silence fell over the room in anticipation of her announcement. “While preparing for this day, we ran into a few obstacles we had to overcome . . . a few road bumps we had to endure. These things happen, and every bride has to roll with the punches and take these difficulties in stride.” Molly glanced down at Maggie sitting next to her. “However, there was one challenge I didn’t want to face. My sister . . . my very own sister . . . wanted to bring a guest with her and nearly dropped out of the ceremony because I was too blind to see how important this was to her. She wanted to bring a lady friend as her date and all I could see was how embarrassing it might be to me.” Molly smiled down at Maggie. She reached down and took Maggie’s hand in hers. “My sister taught me a very important lesson. This day isn’t all about me. It isn’t all about the bride. It’s about love. It’s a celebration of love, regardless what form it takes. It’s a promise to love someone for the rest of your life, no matter what challenges you face, no matter what the world hurls at you. To be not afraid of what people think and say about you, even if they are your sister.” Molly smiled and gave Maggie’s fingers a squeeze. “My sister Maggie taught me about love and commitment and to follow your heart no matter what the consequences, to keep that promise you made to hold that one special someone above all others.” Molly raised her glass in a toast. “To my big sister, Maggie

Malone, who taught her little sister what true love really is. May the love I have for my partner be as strong and enduring as the love you have for yours.”

The entire room rose to their feet and lifted their glass in toast to the Maid of Honor. Maggie stood and took her sister into a fond embrace. “Darn you, Molly,” Maggie wept with joy. “You made my mess up my mascara.”

Molly picked up the phone on the second ring. “Molly Brandeberry.”

Maggie chuckled into the phone. “I’m not sure I’ll ever get used to the sound of that.”

Molly laughed. “Hey, big sister! How are you doing?”

“I just called to catch up with you and find out how married life is treating you.”

“Great!”

“How was your honeymoon?”

“Cancun was fabulous! I worked on my tan. Jeff and I went snorkeling along the shore and even tried scuba diving along a coral reef.”

“Sounds wonderful,” Maggie sighed happily. “By the way, I was wondering if you would be able to help me with a project.”

“Oh? What kind of project?”

“Something you have experience in. As you know, Wisconsin is a state that allows same sex marriages. Last night Sally popped the question and I said yes.”

There was a length of silence on the line. At last Molly responded. “You didn’t.”

“Yes!” Maggie squealed with delight. “I’m getting married!”

Molly laughed into the phone. “Oh my GOD! I don’t believe it!”

“Are you happy for me?”

“What? Are you kidding? Of course I’m happy. I’m ecstatic! Sally is a terrific gal and I know how much you two love each other.”

“I’m so glad. Naturally I want you to be my Maid of Honor.”

“I’d be offended if I wasn’t.”

“Good. Plus since you have experience with this kind of soiree, I need to recruit you as my wedding planner.”

“Oh my God!” Molly laughed. “This will be so much fun!”

Maggie stated soberly, “Seriously . . . you don’t think I’ve totally lost my mind or anything?”

“Of course not. You’re my big sister. I’ve always looked up to you for guidance and support. In retrospect, maybe that was why I balked when you wanted to invite Sally to my wedding. I’ve always valued your opinion and tried to follow your example. When I considered you being in that kind of relationship, it threw me for a loop. It made me question everything you ever taught me . . . like you were a flawed role model or something. It was later that I realized you were still the perfect role model. You taught me to be true to myself and stand up for what I believe in, no matter how painful it may be to myself or others.”

“I hope I didn’t hurt you too much by it.”

“Nah. I heard a few snickers about you two at the reception. There was one girl who shall remain nameless who confronted me in the bathroom about it. She said how could I condone such a relationship? In a church and as my Maid of Honor no less? I gave her a withering stare and said, ‘Honey, you can believe anything you want. This is my party and I can invite whomever I please.’”

Maggie laughed. “You go girl!”

“*And another thing*, I said,” Molly continued. “You may not approve of her lifestyle, but unlike *you*, I guarantee my sister’s gonna get some tonight.”

Maggie guffawed. “You didn’t!”

“Hell yes, I did. We Malone girls got to stick together.”

Maggie chuckled and said, “What a firebrand you turned out to be!”

“I must get that from my big sister. She’s not one to follow the status quo.”

“I guess not.”

“So this wedding of yours . . . is it mixed couples or ladies only?”

“You nut!” Maggie laughed. “Mixed of course. I couldn’t have my sister come without allowing her to bring a date of her own choosing.”

Molly chuckled into the phone. “Fair enough.”

“One other thing,” Maggie added. “There’s going to be plenty of dancing at this soiree, so you better sign up for some lessons.”

Molly laughed and exclaimed, “Oh my God! Here we go again!”