

Synopsis for **BALLROOM DANCE ROMANCE** by Chris Buono

Most of us are born with some rhythm in our step, but not everyone can dance. That is the case with ABAGAIL “ABBY” SWANSON. A bookworm beauty at twenty-six, she is a disaster on the dance floor—ever since grade school when kids tagged her “Lead Foot.”

Born with two left dancing feet, a librarian’s brain, and now working and living within an earshot of the magnificent Palace Hotel and Casino—Las Vegas’s home of the World-Famous Ballroom Blast Competition, that will award a \$50,000 First Prize in two weeks—Abby is the most misplaced, beau-less citizen in her dance-fixated community.

Because she refuses to dance with her brother, KEN, he gives up on saving Abby’s Rare Book Nook store.

Abby then needs to sell fifty thousand dollars’ worth of books within two weeks—the only way to raise money to pay off her bank loan; otherwise, she’ll lose her business.

Focusing on this impossible task, Abby swears off ever finding a happily-ever-after in her life.

Hotel Magnate BRENTON “BRENT” MORGAN’s disguise is complete. Waiting in his mansion, he is ready for his boss undercover work in the Palace Hotel and Casino.

The fit, five-foot-ten-inch tall, square-chinned, light-eyed, dark-haired billionaire bachelor—now wearing a rubber body-shaping suit and an altering facial skin, shaggy, blond-colored wig, headband, dark eye contacts, handlebar mustache, earring, temporary tattoos, and maintenance outfit, with the name “Chester” stitched on the breast pocket—is unrecognizable.

Brent’s newly purchased limousine picks him up to take him to the Palace Hotel. But his maiden ride is cut short, because of a flat tire.

WINSTON, Brent's chauffeur, steers the car to in front of Abby's Rare Book Nook store. Brent tells him to call for help. Then Brent spies a hodgepodge of fifteen flyers on the bookstore's door. The scenario piques his interest and he exits the limo for a closer look.

With the temperature at 100 degrees, and Brent in disguise, he feels the heat. He enters the bookshop to buy cold drinks, and to question the merchant about the abundant flyers.

However, the quaint place doesn't have a café. It is also stifling inside, because of the broken air conditioner over the doorway. Brent turns to leave, but Abby rushes from her air-conditioned back bedroom and stops him.

As Abby reprimands "Chester"—whom she believes is the tardy air-conditioner repairman—the otherwise recognizable hotel mogul, is both silenced and mesmerized by her angelic features and schoolmarm appearance; Abby, in turn, is thankful that such a competent "Chester" is there to fix her a/c.

Brent wants to know about Abby. She reminds him of a happier, simpler time in his youth—when he would spy on the KILDARE MANSION on the hill—that he presently owns—where ballroom dancing had always taken place.

Abby wants to know about "Chester," too. There's something innocent about him that makes her feel safe and turns her on.

Not until this moment, has Brent thought of going against his unaccomplished father's edict. That is, for Brent to remain single and not to ballroom dance—all because Brent's mother left his father for a ballroom dancer.

As the owner of the Palace Hotel and Casino, Brent can't compete in the "Blast Competition"...as himself. But as "Chester," no one will ever know. So, he postpones his undercover boss operation in the hotel, with hopes to live out his dancing dream with Abby.

Abby refuses to dance with "Chester." Still, the closer they get, the more Abby wants to sleep with him. But "Chester" always has somewhere else to be—as Brent—and leaves.

Abby confides in Ken, who calms his sister by telling her that "Chester" probably doesn't believe in pre-marital sex. In actuality, "Chester" doesn't want to risk it, because he fears Abby will leave him, if she sees his phony body suit.

After one week together, Abby presses "Chester" for marriage—going so far as bringing him to a drive-thru Elvis wedding line. But Winston, the best man, loses Abby's one-of-a-kind wedding ring in a Poker game, to a club owner who's short a showgirl, and the only way to get the ring back is if the bride-to-be can dance in place of the absent girl.

Then the Police raid the club and arrest Abby for having two left dancing feet. Appearing before the judge, Abby's sentenced to a lifetime of dancing school instruction at the Palace Hotel, and she and Brent live happily ever after.

Editor's Critique:

I like the idea of a hero who loves to dance and a heroine with two left feet. The setting—Las Vegas—is promising, too. The challenge now is building a strong romantic obstacle. What's keeping Abby from loving Brent and vice versa? Abby may have sworn off finding a happily-ever-after, but she proposes to Brent only a week after they meet. Brent is worried about revealing his true identity, but this type of obstacle—a misunderstanding—isn't the strongest romantic conflict. Would Abby really be disappointed to find out that Brent is a millionaire who can save her store?

The story also relies on a couple of coincidences: Abby needs \$50,000 to save her book store...and the dance competition is offering a \$50,000 prize. And Chester goes into Abby's store dressed as a repairman...just as she's waiting for someone to fix her air conditioning.

This synopsis also left me with a few questions: Does Abby lose her store? Why is Brent going undercover? Is he appearing on a TV show? Or is he worried that his employees are unhappy? What about the flyers piques his interest? Why does Brent's father want him to remain single? When Abby is arrested for having two left feet—are the police playing a joke on her at Brent or her brother's request?

This synopsis has a lot of appealing elements to work with, and the author's energy and enthusiasm really came through in the writing. Best of luck in this year's SYTYCW contest!