

Silent Dancer

A young man struggles to overcome his social anxiety at
a party.

Dalong Hu

INT. CLASSY BAR DRINKING AREA- NIGHT

EDWARD slams down an emptied glass. He wears thick, black, horn-rimmed glasses and has his hair is parted a perfect 7:3.

In the glass, some yellow droplets remain, and Edward's face is bright red as if drunk. Sounds of CONVERSATION are all around. He motions a barista over and the barista comes and pours Edward more of the drink. "Apple Juice" reads the label.

While the barista is pouring, Edward takes out a crumpled todo list from his pocket. "Go to party tomorrow. Graduate from having no friends!" is written.

He looks around the party scene while hyperventilating, before shoving the paper back into his pocket and staggering towards the bathroom. Along the way, we see blurred, flashing shots of the people gathered in groups in Edward's POV, and hear his heavy breathing. Finally, his hands push open the bathroom door.

INT. BAR BATHROOM - NIGHT

Edward clutches the bathroom sink, hyperventilating. The bathroom is noticeably dirtier than the one in his dorm. He reaches into his pocket and takes out his to-do list.

He glances at it frustrated, before angrily balling it up and chucking it at the trash. He misses and the paper ball bounces back at his feet. Edward pauses before picking it up and stuffing it roughly back into his pocket.

Quickly splashing some water on his face, he makes a strained, lopsided smile while hunched over close to the mirror. He does the superman pose while puffing his chest out. He unleashes some skillful dance moves as if to further bolster his confidence.

With his fists clenched, he strides out.

INT. CLASSY BAR - NIGHT

We see Edward scanning the crowd. He is looking for stragglers. Edward's gaze darts from group to group before finally finding someone's lone back. He looks more, only to see AFROBRO, with a massive dyed-yellow afro on his head. Edward quickly turns away. This time he focuses on a cute girl and then on her chest. Edward quickly turns away.

Finally, there is a normal looking young man sitting not far

away from where he was previously drinking apple juice. Edward takes three deep breaths before resolutely walking towards him. Before Edward arrives, a tattooed and muscled man joins the young man in conversation, and Edward abruptly changes direction, pretending to pass by them.

INT. CLASSY BAR DRINKING AREA - NIGHT

He ends up sitting where he was previously at the bar, holding a cup of apple juice and watching the crowd with sulky eyes. In the middle, people have formed a wide ring watching AfroBro finish a funky dance sequence. The song ends, and AfroBro hops off the symbolic stage.

Edward is still blankly staring before realizing that the new song is the one from his favourite playlist that he played earlier in the day. Time seems to slow down as Edward looks

at the still empty space in the ring of people. He takes three deep breaths.

INT. CLASSY BAR DANCING AREA - NIGHT

Edward suddenly dashes into the ring and begins dancing the same dance he had done in his room's bathroom earlier today. People are in a blur around him, and he makes sure to avoid eye contact. However, people actually begin cheering and applauding, and Edward gains the confidence to continue with higher energy.

Unfortunately, he trips over his own feet and falls. His glasses slide away from him. Edward just lies on the ground, staring blankly at nothing. The world is silent to his ears.

A big yellow afro appears in his vision. For the first time since coming to the party, Edward makes eye contact, and sees that the afro guy is smiling. AfroBro offers his hand, and Edward takes it to get up. Edward's glasses are extracted from the yellow afro and handed back to him. The surrounding sound resumes as Edward puts back on his glasses, and he finds that people are cheering and calling for more. Afro bro pats him on the back and grins while pushing him to the centre of the ring.

Edward shyly smiles before starting again, but noticeably more carefully and not as spasmodically.