

ERIC

"Larf of the Dance"

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EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

ERIC, 14, and DIMMEY, 14, wear T-shirts and jeans, similar to most middle school students. They walk, talk, and bounce their basketball. ARNOLD, 14, wears a sweater vest, shirt, tie, and khakis. He advances toward the two boys.

ARNOLD

Up to your deviant activities
again, Eric?

ERIC

Buzz off.

ARNOLD

You guys spend too much time on the
court. You'll never experience the
finer things in life.

DIMMEY

And you know all about that, right?

ARNOLD

Of course...

He puts his hand to his ear.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

...like listening to a nice song...

He spreads his arms and twirls around.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

...enjoying a beautiful day like
this, and...

He shakes his head in a double-take fashion.

SFX: BOING, BOING!

MAGGIE, 13, wears an orange dress, and her long, brown hair
blows in the wind.

SFX: ANGELS SING.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

...dating lovely girls. Excuse me.

He strolls over to Maggie.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Hey, Maggie, mind if I take you
somewhere nice this weekend?

MAGGIE
Sure. Is Saturday night good?

ARNOLD
Whatever you want.

MAGGIE
Around seven-ish?

ARNOLD
Whatever you want.

MAGGIE
Then you can take me to the Spring
Dance Saturday night at seven.

SFX: TRAIN BRAKES.

ARNOLD
Uh, excuse me?

MAGGIE
It'll be fun. Let me go find
something cute to wear.

She sashays away. Arnold calls out to her.

ARNOLD
All right, get your dancing shoes
ready. See you at six-thirty. I
can't wait. Heh, heh, heh.

He mopes down the playground.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
Gotta learn how to dance, gotta
learn how to dance.

DIMMEY (O.S.)
For the win!

Dimmey scores a basket over Eric. He imitates a buzzer sound.

DIMMEY (CONT'D)
Yes. Game!

ARNOLD
Look at that foolishness.

Dimmey moon-walks around Eric, raises the roof, and break-
dances on the ground.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
He does know how to move, though.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Arnold and Dimmey walk and carry their books, but Dimmey walks ahead of Arnold.

DIMMEY

Uh-uh. No way.

ARNOLD

Come on. I don't like it any more than you do.

DIMMEY

Good. Stick with that feeling.

Arnold grabs his arm, and both stand still.

ARNOLD

Look, Dimmey. You don't like me, and I don't like you.

LONG PAUSE.

DIMMEY

And?

ARNOLD

And what?

Dimmey frowns, sighs and walks. Arnold walks in front of him.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Just help me out, and I'll give you twenty bucks.

DIMMEY

Not even for a million, Arnold.

ARNOLD

But you can use that money to take your girlfriend out. And I can give you some pointers on what to say.

Dimmey stands still.

DIMMEY

Oh, man, I'm gonna hate myself for doing this.

ARNOLD

More than you hate me?

DIMMEY

That's not possible.

INT. SCHOOL DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Dimmey puts a CD into the boombox. A hip-hop instrumental plays. He approaches Arnold in the center of the room.

DIMMEY

Okay, let's see what you know how to do first.

Arnold waves his arms in a squiggly fashion. He also marches his feet at the same time. Dimmey lifts one eyebrow.

DIMMEY (CONT'D)

You're dancing to the beat, right?

Arnold stops, sprints to the boombox, and pauses the CD.

ARNOLD

This was a bad idea. Forget it.

He walks away. Dimmey calls out to him.

DIMMEY

Wait, come back. Let's start with some basics. How about a simple one-two step?

Arnold returns. Dimmey plays the CD and moves to the beat.

ARNOLD

But isn't that more than two steps?

Dimmey rolls his eyes.

DIMMEY

Oh, boy.

MONTAGE - DIMMEY TEACHES ARNOLD HOW TO DANCE

-- Dimmey continues to two-step. Arnold steps on one of his feet and bumps into Dimmey. Dimmey grinds his teeth.

ARNOLD

Sorry about that.

-- Dimmey puts his hands on Arnold's shoulders and tries to guide him through the rhythm.

DIMMEY

Loosen up, man!

ARNOLD

I am. Stop yelling.

-- Eric looks at both of them through the window of the studio, eats popcorn and spits some it out as he laughs.

ERIC

Ha, ha, ha, this is great.

-- Dimmey places a mannequin in the center of the floor. He sticks the mannequin's arms out. Arnold sways the arms until they fall out and fly through the mirror.

-- Arnold sits on the floor and reads a book titled, "Dancing for Idiots."

-- Dimmey plays a slow jam. He places one hand on Arnold's side and holds his other. He leads Arnold in a slow dance. Arnold steps on his feet. After each step, Dimmey YELPS.

DIMMEY

Ouch. Ow. Ouch.

-- Dimmey dances hand-in-hand with Arnold to an uptempo, jazzy tune. Arnold trips over his feet and TWIRLS around. Dimmey twirls with him until Arnold lets go of his hands.

SFX: TWIRLING AND SPINNING SOUNDS.

-- Dimmey SPINS like a cyclone and CRASHES into a mirror o.s.

SFX: CRASH!

-- Dimmey lays in a costume foot locker and reappears in an Abraham Lincoln costume.

ARNOLD

All of this money for lessons, and you're playing dress-up.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

Dimmey lays foot patterns on the floor.

DIMMEY

All right, here goes nothing.
Follow me.

He does a two-step on the floor. Arnold follows along.

DIMMEY (CONT'D)

Watch the patterns.

ARNOLD
Hey, I think I'm getting it.

SFX: SLIPPING SOUND.

Arnold SLIPS on one of the foot patterns. He scatters his legs and arms around and runs into Dimmey. He then spins in a circle and COLLIDES into the boombox.

SFX: BONK!

Arnold TANGLES into a floor plant. He fights through it and creates a rhythmic-like tussle. Dimmey frowns.

DIMMEY
Those are the best moves he's done
all day.

Arnold breaks free from the plant.

SFX: SLIPPING SOUND.

He SLIPS on another foot pattern and CRASHES into a table of water cups.

ARNOLD
Can't keep up, huh?

He faints to the floor. Dimmey turns red. Steam comes from his ears.

SFX: TEAPOTS BREWING.

Dimmey throws his notepad to the floor.

DIMMEY
That's it. I can't take this no
more. Class dismissed.

ARNOLD
But what about the twenty bucks?

DIMMEY
I would give twenty bucks to you,
just so I can get outta here.

Dimmey storms out of the studio.

ARNOLD
Never mind me. I'll get
up...eventually.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Eric sits on a bench and eats his lunch. Arnold approaches him and sits next to him.

ARNOLD
(in a singsong voice)
Eric, how you doing?

ERIC
I don't remember telling you to sit over here.

ARNOLD
But I just wanna...*chill*...with the coolest guy in school.

ERIC
Relax, don't hurt yourself. What do you want?

ARNOLD
Ask Dimmey to come back.

ERIC
Yeah, that ain't happening.

ARNOLD
But he's my only hope. Unless you can teach me.

Eric drinks a carton of milk but then squirts milk out of his nose.

ERIC
Sniffle. That definitely ain't happening. Sniffle.

ARNOLD
Then there's only two choices. Ask Dimmey to reconsider, or I'll keep bugging you.

ERIC
Well, since you put it so nicely, I'll see what I can do.

ARNOLD
Finally you've come to your senses. When should I get back to you guys?

ERIC
Hey, don't call us. We'll call you.

Eric walks away.

ARNOLD
How nice. They're gonna call me.

INT. ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold sits by his phone and looks at his alarm clock.

ARNOLD
You know, I don't think they're
gonna call me. Deviants.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Balloons and crepe paper drape the entire gym.

INSERT - A BANNER, WHICH READS:

"SPRING DANCE"

BACK TO SCENE

Arnold, who wears a blue suit and tie, and Maggie, who wears a sparkling pink dress, enter the dance.

MAGGIE
Everything looks so pretty.

ARNOLD
(sotto)
As long as she doesn't ask to dance
right now.

MAGGIE
Let's dance right now.

ARNOLD
Uh, not just yet. This song's a
little too fast.

MAGGIE
But it's a slow song.

ARNOLD
I like to take things really,
really slow. Why don't you go to
the floor? I'll get us some punch.

Maggie nods and joins other dancing students. Arnold heads to the punch table, where Eric grabs a cup.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I need a drink. Do you know if this punch is spiked?

ERIC

It's not.

ARNOLD

Sigh. Too bad.

Eric rolls his eyes and takes a deep breath.

ERIC

I don't know why I'm helping you, but why don't you just be honest with the girl? You can't dance.

ARNOLD

You don't know anything at all about girls.

ERIC

Like I said, I don't know why I'm helping you.

Eric walks away. A mid-tempo dance song plays. Maggie runs to Arnold and extends her hand.

MAGGIE

Arnold, this is my song. Let's go.

Arnold turns his head, slams his drink, and exhales. He turns his head back to Maggie.

ARNOLD

Look, I gotta be honest. I...sorta can't dance. And by, "sorta," I mean, "in no way whatsoever."

MAGGIE

Gasp. I can't believe it.

She turns away, walks and circles around Arnold.

ARNOLD

If you're embarrassed or hate me, I understand. Let me take you home.

Maggie stops and faces Arnold.

MAGGIE

Hee-hee-hee. You think you're the only one who can't dance? I can't dance either.

Arnold jerks his head back.

SFX: BOING!

ARNOLD

Whaaaaat? Seriously?

MAGGIE

Yeah, silly. I was hoping you could teach me how to dance.

ARNOLD

I would be a horrible teacher. I'm even a horrible student.

MAGGIE

Not as bad as me. It took my friend two days to try to teach me.

ARNOLD

A guy I don't even like, one day. You win.

MAGGIE

Ha, ha, ha. Wanna hit the floor and "not dance" together?

ARNOLD

Anything you want. Try to keep up.

The couple head to the middle of the dance floor, but Arnold trips over his feet and wiggles his arms, similar to the dance that he showed Dimmey. Maggie follows suit.

After Arnold sees Maggie follow his lead, he adds the marching steps to his routine. Maggie follows that as well.

Two STUDENTS, 13, who each wear a dress and a suit, watch Arnold and Maggie move.

MALE STUDENT

That must be the new dance, "The Squiggle," right?

FEMALE STUDENT

It has to be. C'mon.

The students do the dance with Arnold and Maggie. More kids follow suit until the entire party does the new dance. Dimmey watches Arnold, does the dance with his own date, and smiles.

DIMMEY

I taught him everything he knows.

THE END