

Dance Companion



Logline

After losing her dance instructor job to ageism, a disillusioned Chinese American woman takes a temp job posing as a gay man's fake girlfriend for a Christmas dance party, only to become entangled in escalating anti-gay harassment that forces her to confront the passion she has suppressed since losing her job.





Setting

A conservative senior trailer park
in Orange County, California,
where holiday lights and
community dances mask an
undercurrent of anti-gay
intolerance.



Tone and Mood



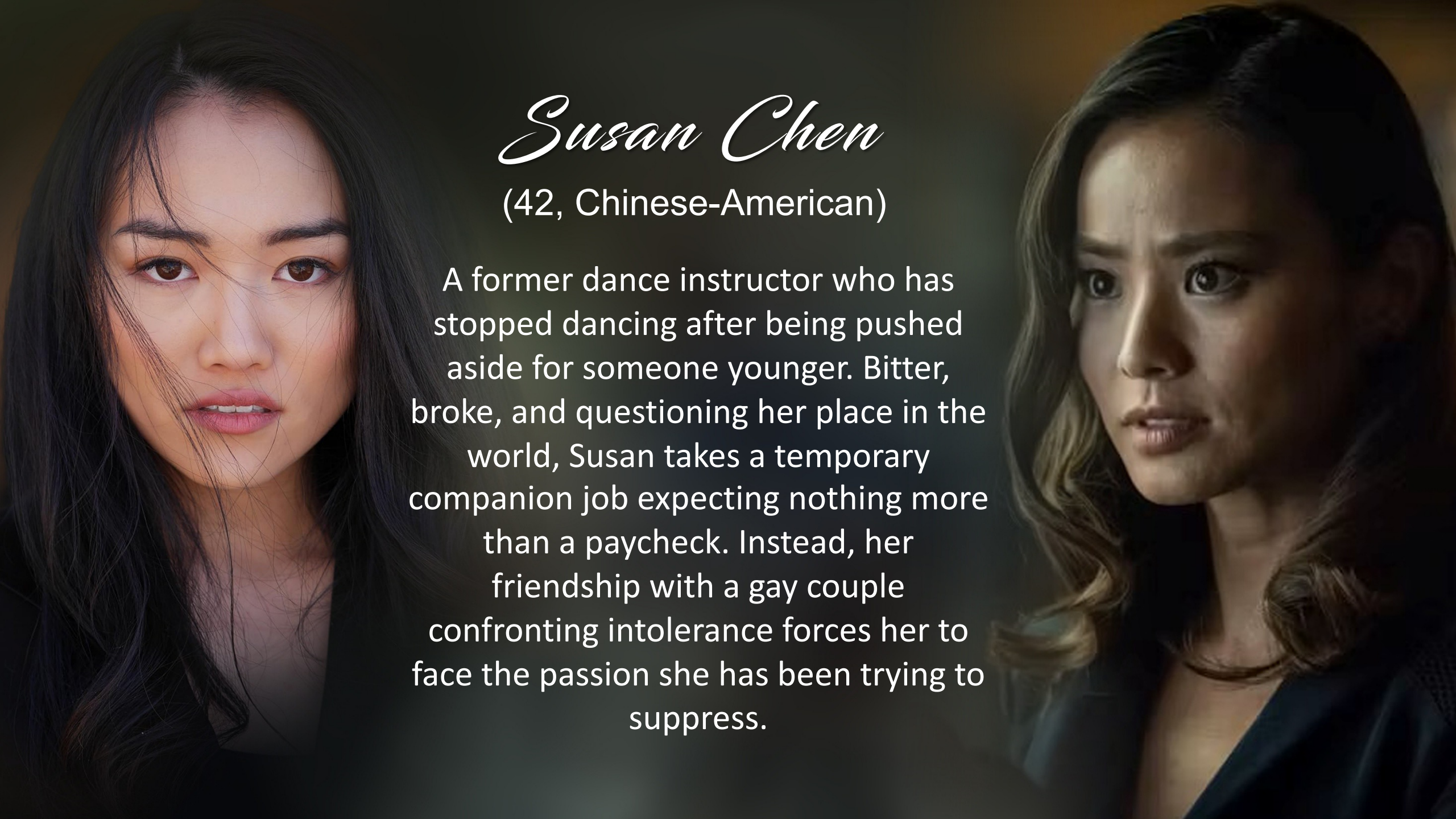
Synopsis

Susan, a middle-aged dance instructor, loses her job to ageism and withdraws from the art form that once defined her. Struggling financially and emotionally adrift, she takes a temporary companion job at a Christmas dance party in a conservative senior trailer park in Orange County.

There she meets Ramon, a lively Filipino caregiver, and his husband Henry, a terminally ill cancer patient who longs to spend his remaining days in peace. After becoming the target of anti-gay harassment from neighbors, Henry hires Susan to pose as Ramon's girlfriend, shielding their relationship from scrutiny while giving Ramon a chance to attend the community dance.

As Susan grows closer to Ramon, his infectious love of dance gradually reawakens the passion she has tried to bury. But when the harassment escalates into threats and violence, Susan must decide whether to retreat once again or stand beside her new friends.

At the Christmas dance, Susan and Ramon take the floor together, inspiring the community and helping Henry embrace his relationship openly. When the residents later invite Susan to teach dance lessons, she finally rediscovers her purpose and reclaims the identity she thought she had lost.



Susan Chen

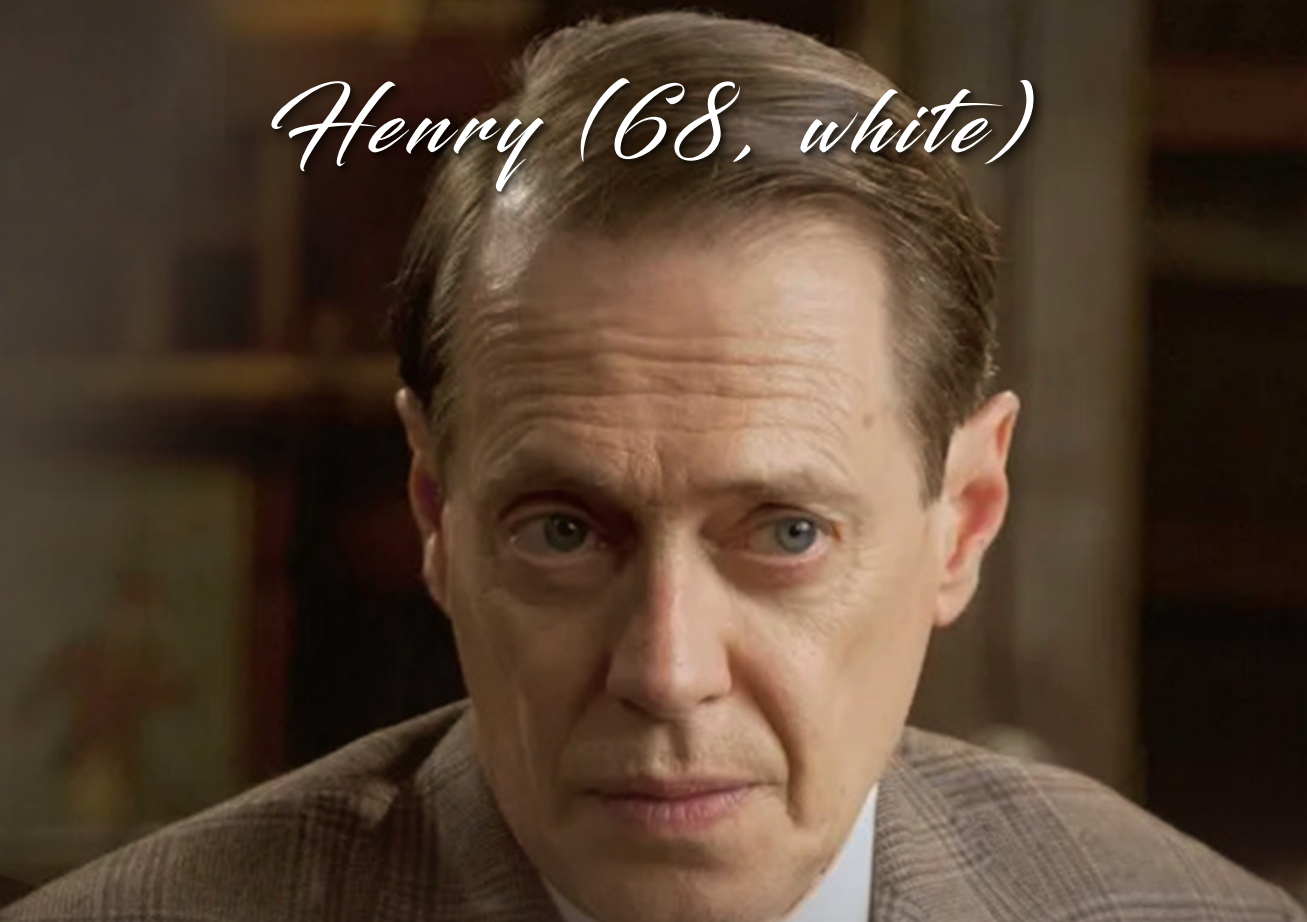
(42, Chinese-American)

A former dance instructor who has stopped dancing after being pushed aside for someone younger. Bitter, broke, and questioning her place in the world, Susan takes a temporary companion job expecting nothing more than a paycheck. Instead, her friendship with a gay couple confronting intolerance forces her to face the passion she has been trying to suppress.

A portrait of a middle-aged Filipino man with dark hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a dark shirt. The background is a plain, dark grey.

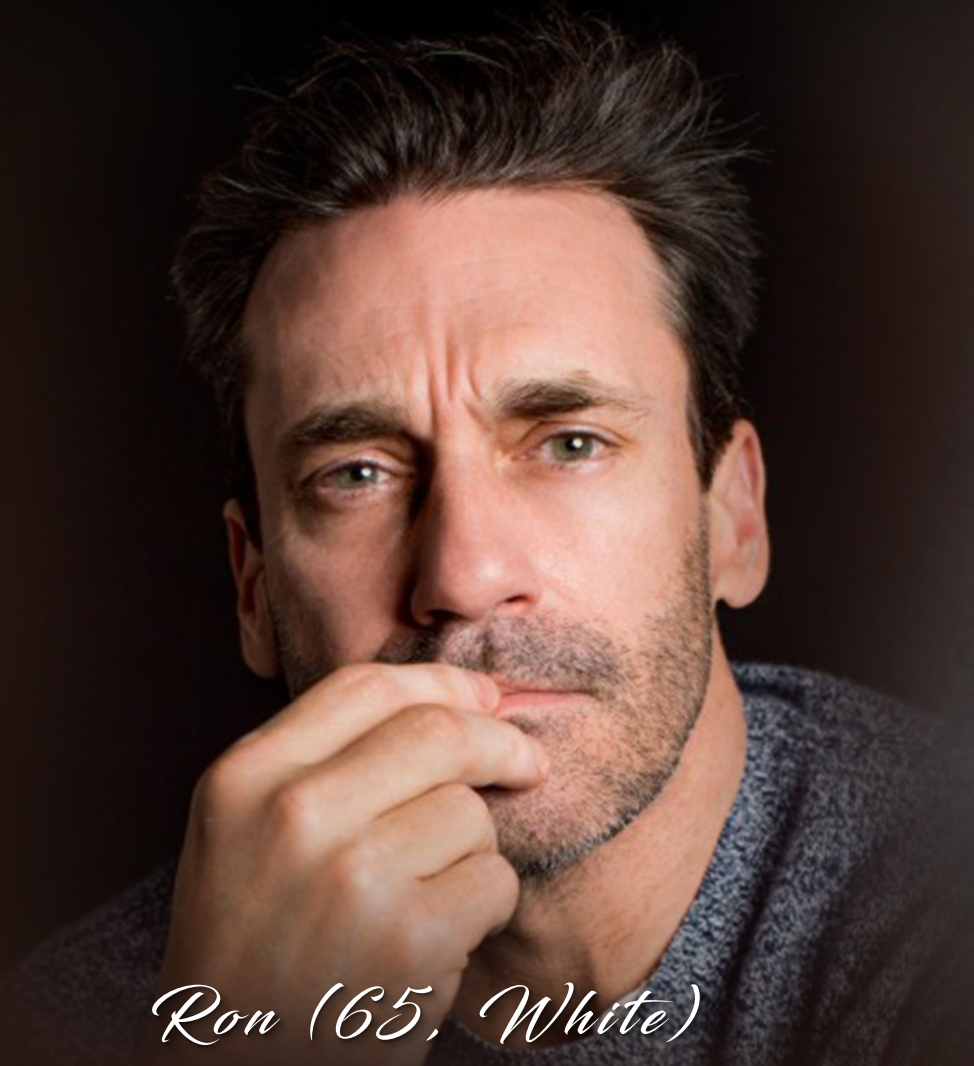
Ramon (52, Filipino)

A lively and flamboyant Filipino caregiver whose love of dancing remains undiminished by the prejudice he faces. Beneath his humor and confidence lies a vulnerable man determined to protect the life he has built with Henry. His unwavering joy becomes the catalyst for Susan's transformation.

A portrait of an older white man with light brown hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a light-colored, patterned suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. The background is a blurred interior with bookshelves.

Henry (68, white)

A retired journalist and closeted gay man who has spent more than twenty years in a conservative senior trailer park. Facing terminal cancer, Henry wants nothing more than to spend his remaining days in peace with Ramon. But escalating anti-gay harassment forces him to confront the life he has spent decades hiding.

A portrait of a man with dark hair and a beard, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is resting his chin on his hand.

Ron (65, White)

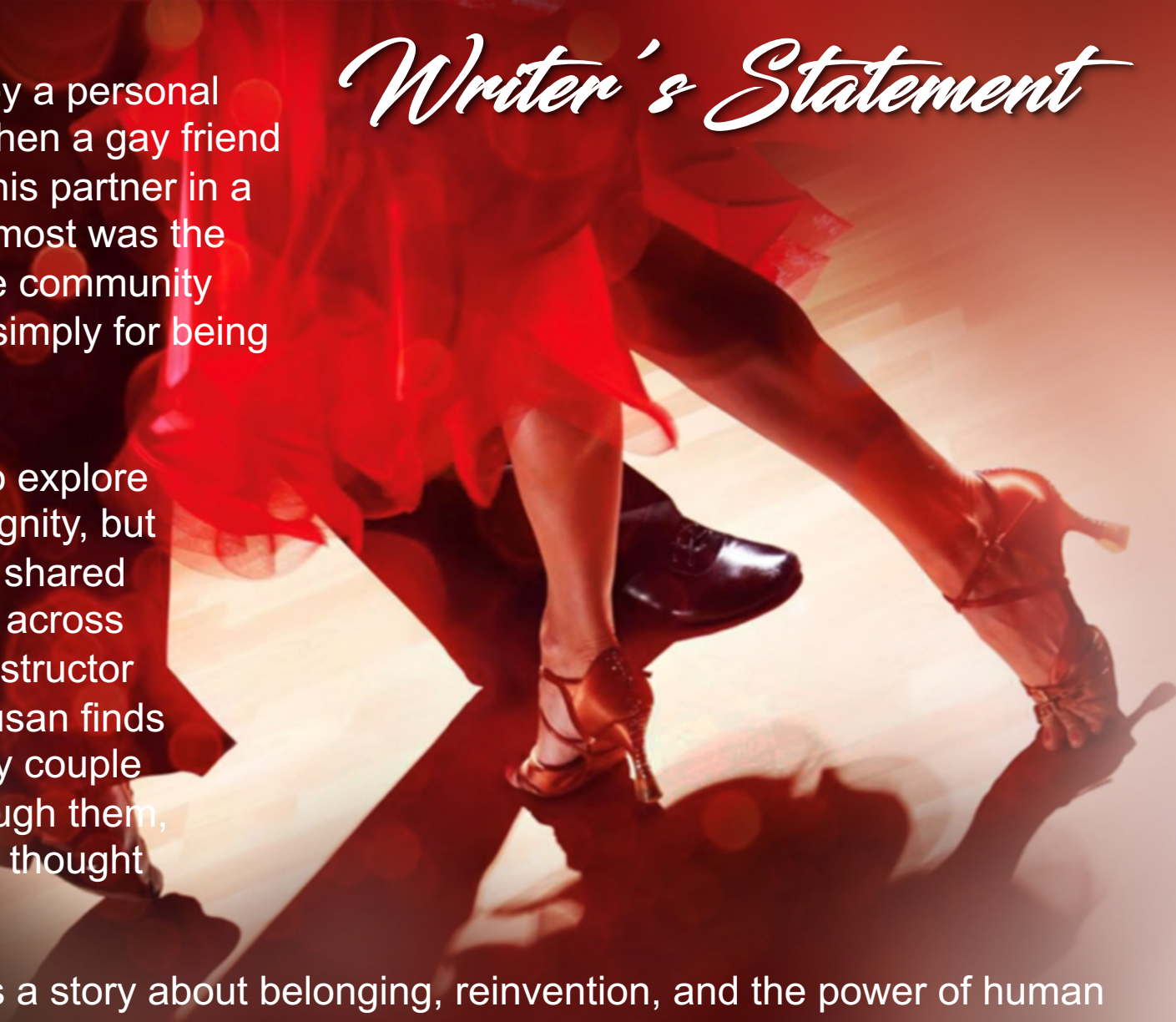
A belligerent trailer park resident whose hostility toward his gay neighbors escalates into harassment and intimidation, revealing a deeper conflict within himself.

A portrait of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight, friendly smile. She is wearing a black choker.

Mary (68, White)

A nosy, bigoted trailer park resident who disguises her prejudice behind a friendly smile.

Writer's Statement

A woman in a vibrant red dress and high heels is captured in a dynamic dance pose on a white floor. Her legs are spread wide, and her arms are raised, creating a sense of movement and energy. The background is a soft, warm glow, and the overall image has a red-tinted aesthetic.

"Dance Companion" was inspired by a personal experience more than a decade ago when a gay friend invited me to a Christmas party with his partner in a senior trailer park. What struck me most was the contrast between the warmth of the community gathering and the hostility they faced simply for being who they were.

Through Susan's journey, I wanted to explore how prejudice can diminish human dignity, but also how friendship, resilience, and shared passions can bring people together across differences. As a displaced dance instructor struggling with loss and self-doubt, Susan finds an unexpected connection with a gay couple navigating their own challenges. Through them, she rediscovers a part of herself she thought she had lost.

At its heart, "Dance Companion" is a story about belonging, reinvention, and the power of human connection. By bringing together characters from different backgrounds, generations, and life experiences, the film celebrates how people can find common ground—and even joy—in the most unlikely places.

A portrait of Kyung-ja (Kj) Lee, a woman with short, curly brown hair, wearing a dark turtleneck and a green and black checkered jacket. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a gentle expression.

Kyung-ja (Kj) Lee

Writer/Director

Lee is a Korean American filmmaker who believed thunder was caused by a giant serpent, a childhood tale her mother told. After immigrating to the U.S., her sense of mysticism deepened in her new multicultural environment.

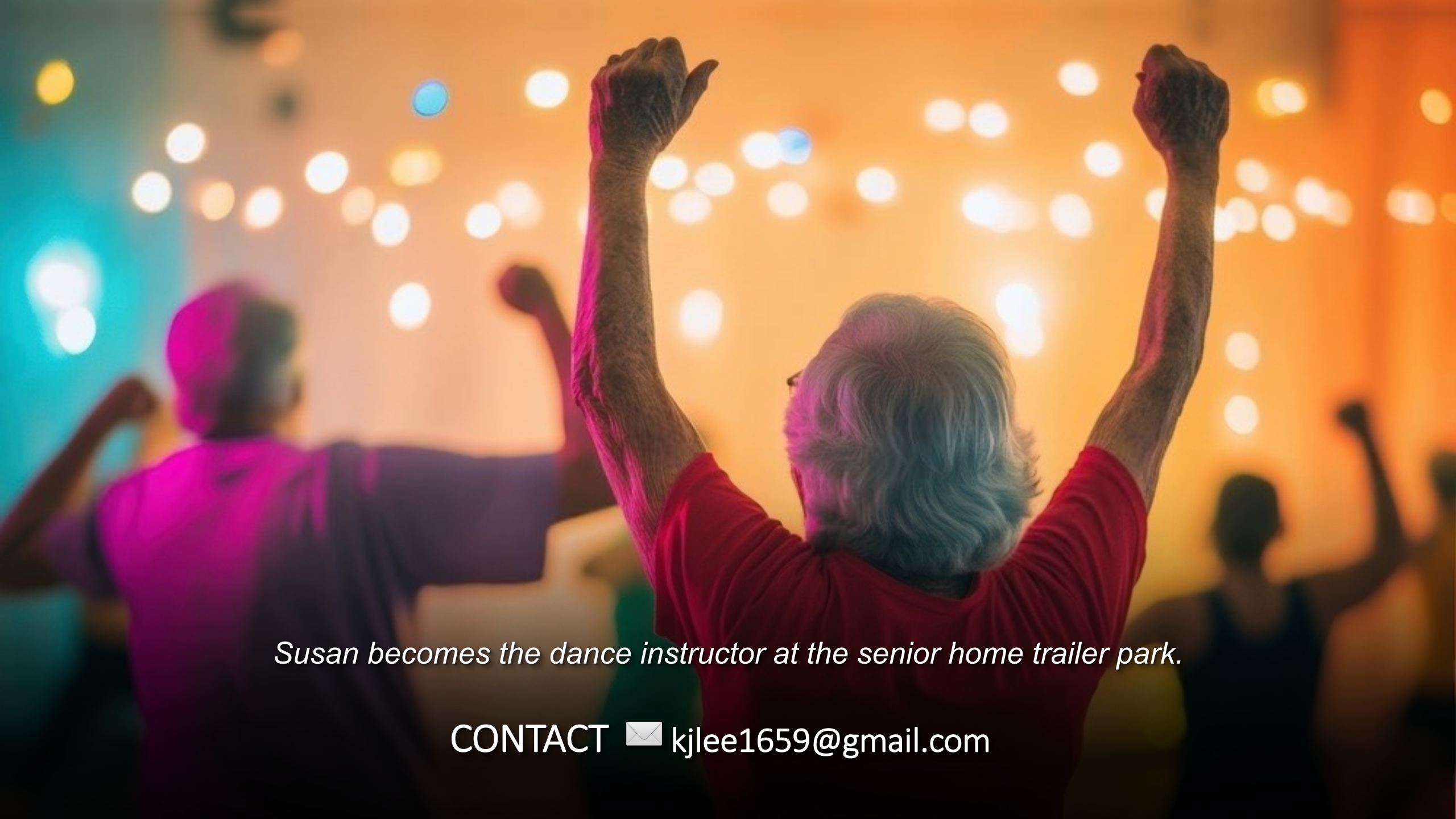
She graduated from AFI with an award-winning short film and earned several honors, including the Rockefeller Foundation Asian Artist Fellowship and a spot in the Sundance Screenwriters Lab. After years of caring for her ill mother, Lee returned to filmmaking and directed her fifth short film, "KANG BLUE," which won the "Outstanding Female Director" award at the KATRA Film Series. Lee's recent short screenplay, THE COMFORT WOMAN STATUE, has been recognized with the Slamdance, Cinequest, the Santa Barbara Short Screenplay Award, and the Outstanding Screenplay Mentorship Award.

Lee has completed two feature scripts:

"KIM'S MONEY TREE," a social drama set during the L.A. Riots, The Grand Prize winner at Emerging Screenwriters Screenplay Competition and THE CALLING, a supernatural horror thriller.

(Lee's short films and upcoming projects are at kj-film.com)

In addition, Lee helps people facing homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse at a transition home. (She also holds a master's in psychology from Columbia University.)

A group of seniors are dancing in a room with warm, bokeh-style lighting. In the foreground, a woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is seen from behind with her arms raised in a dance pose. To her left, another person in a purple shirt is also dancing. The background is filled with many out-of-focus light sources, creating a warm and festive atmosphere.

Susan becomes the dance instructor at the senior home trailer park.

CONTACT ✉ kjlee1659@gmail.com