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Different Versions of Myself

written by

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INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - DAY

The pole studio is small, with mirrors on two sides. METAL POLES are scattered throughout the room, mounted between the floor and ceiling.

Scanning the room...

Yoga mats rolled up and set off to the side.

The TEACHER, messing with the sound system.

A few pairs of platform heels leaning against a wall.

A sign that reads "SIGN UP FOR SHOWCASE HERE".

The DANCERS start walking in. They represent a wide variety of physical body types.

TEACHER

Hey!

MONTAGE OF POLE DANCE CLASS

-loud, energetic music.

-stretching and warm ups.

-shedding of sweats and sweatshirts to reveal sports bras and spandex shorts.

-they start dancing. Quick shots of dip turns, fan kicks, and other moves.

-focus in on LOUISE (20s). She moves with delicacy and grace, her hair tied up in a messy bun.

END MONTAGE

The Teacher turns down the music, getting everyone's attention.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Alright, today we'll be returning
to our basic invert.

The Teacher takes a stronghold grip, with the pole sitting in her armpit. She tucks her knees into her chest. At once, her head tilts back and her legs extend in sideways splits.

The Dancers begin practicing.

Louise takes a stronghold grip. She hugs her knees to her chest. She starts to tilt back...

She comes back up, setting her feet down.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

That's it!

CHEERS! from the Dancers. Louise looks over her shoulder mid move to see another Dancer. Strong and athletic, she executes the move perfectly.

Louise sprays a rag and wipes down the pole. She rubs her hands against her thighs.

INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - LATER

The class has just finished. The Dancers look tired. They drink water and wipe sweat from behind their knees.

Louise is at the cubbies, getting dressed.

TEACHER

If you haven't signed up for the showcase yet, do it now! Show off your hard work.

A few of the dancers migrate towards the signup sheet, eager.

Louise watches them, becoming lost in thought. She is snapped out of it by another dancer, DANIELLE (30s). Danielle, a mom, is a bit older than Louise.

DANIELLE

Are you gonna sign up?

LOUISE

For what?

DANIELLE

The showcase!

LOUISE

Hmmm, I don't know if I'm ready to go public with the whole pole dancing thing.

DANIELLE

You don't have to go public with it.

Louise shoots her a doubtful look.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

C'mon, I think it would be good for you! We'll do something together.

LOUISE
Oh, Ingrid! I didn't see you. Sorry
I'm late.

INGRID
Well, that's okay, we expect it by
now.

LOUISE
Sorry, it's just my dance class. It
always goes later than I expect.

GRACE (8), a girl standing nearby hears Louise and lights up.

GRACE
Are you a ballerina? I'm a
ballerina.

LOUISE
You're probably much better at
dancing than I am.

GRACE
Can you do a pirouette?

LOUISE
Nope. Can you?

GRACE
I can!

Grace stands up and demonstrates her pirouette. She totters a bit, but lands it. She looks to Louise, then Ingrid, for approval.

LOUISE
That was lovely.

INGRID
Very nice, dear.

GRACE
Thanks! Watch my plies!

Grace begins a plie routine, starting in first position.

Ingrid places a hand on Louise's arm.

INGRID
We were hoping you would lead
prayer time tonight.

LOUISE
Yeah, sure, no problem.

INGRID

Thanks, hon. We're going to be talking about Proverbs 28:13.

LOUISE

(nodding)

Okay, great.

Ingrid leaves. Louise pulls out her phone and googles Proverbs 28:13. It says--

--WHOEVER CONCEALS THEIR SINS DOES NOT PROSPER, BUT THE ONE WHO CONFESSES AND RENOUNCES THEM FINDS MERCY.

Louise chews the end of her pen. She glances at Ingrid, nervous.

GRACE

You weren't watching!

LOUISE

Oh, sorry, of course! Do it again, I'll watch.

INT. LOUISE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is cute and comfortable. The walls are adorned with posters and pictures of family and friends. There's a full bookshelf, littered with loose paper, pens, and pencils.

A couple of lamps illuminate the dim room. Sexy lo-fi music plays in the background. The dress Louise wore earlier is crumpled on the floor.

In the bed, we see Louise with a man, CHARLES (20s). Charles is handsome and caring. They're making out.

Charles kisses Louise on the cheek, he moves down to her neck and chest.

She looks at the ceiling, distracted. Charles comes back up, about to kiss her on the lips again, but stops.

CHARLES

What's up?

LOUISE

(shaking her head)

Nothing, I'm fine.

She pulls Charles in for another kiss. He stops her.

CHARLES

Are you sure? You don't seem fine.

Louise shrugs.

We don't have to do anything
tonight if you don't want to.

LOUISE

I want to! It's just... weird.

CHARLES

What do you mean weird?

LOUISE

Well I was at church like, an hour
ago.

Charles adjusts so that he's laying beside Louise. He pats his shoulder, and she rests her head on it. He strokes her hair.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

We read this verse about not hiding
your sins.

(beat)

It just feels like... I'm supposed
to feel guilty.

CHARLES

You shouldn't feel guilty about the
things you like.

LOUISE

But that's the thing, I should feel
guilty but I don't. I just feel
guilty about not feeling guilty! I
feel like I'm two different
versions of myself. And the longer
it goes on the harder it is to be
both of them at the same time.

CHARLES

Well, I like every version of you.

He kisses her on the forehead. She snuggles into him.

INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - DAY

The studio is bright with light and filled with music. The Teacher is in front. The Dancers are at various spots, stretching, warming up, and wiping down their poles.

Louise and Danielle are next to each other. Louise is sitting on the floor, inspecting her legs.

TEACHER

Hey, everyone, let me know if you want to use the studio to practice for the showcase.

DANIELLE

Oooh, we should practice tomorrow.

LOUISE

Sure. I'm still not one hundred percent committed though.

DANIELLE

Whatever you say.

Louise points at a dark, splotchy bruise on her thigh.

LOUISE

Check out this bruise.

DANIELLE

Nasty. I've got a better one though.

Danielle pulls up her leggings to reveal an even larger, darker bruise across her shin.

LOUISE

Oh, God. You win.

DANIELLE

If you think this is bad, you should see my kids. No one told me how much being a mom would mean dealing with injuries. My entire bathroom is basically one big first aid kit!

LOUISE

Wow. I don't remember getting that many bruises when I was a kid, but I didn't play soccer like your kids.

DANIELLE

Honestly, I don't really get the whole sports thing. My kids love it though, so I try to be encouraging.

LOUISE
 That's cool. Your kids are really
 lucky to have a mom who supports
 them like that.

INT. DINER - DAY

The diner is bustling with the after church crowd. Louise is eating with her MOM, DAD, and teenage SISTER.

They're holding hands with their heads bowed, praying.

 DAD
 Amen.

 ALL
 Amen.

They start eating.

 DAD
 So, Louise, I heard you were late
 again on Wednesday.

 LOUISE
 I have a dance class, I told you
 that.

 DAD
 Dancing is for children, honey.

 LOUISE
 Not this class. There's even women
 mom's age there.

 MOM
 I can't imagine how they have the
 time! Don't they have their own
 kids to take care of?

Louise looks as though she might say something to refute this. She puts a forkful of food into her mouth instead.

 SISTER
 I enjoyed the sermon today.

 MOM
 Me too! What did you think Louise?

 LOUISE
 Hm? Oh, yeah, it was nice. Romans
 is always good.

Her family nods in agreement.

MOM
How is Charles doing?

LOUISE
Charles is great! He's been getting some extra work recently, so he's been a bit busier than usual.

DAD
Well, he's welcome to come to church with us any week. He knows that right?

LOUISE
Yeah dad, he knows.

Dad grunts. Louise wants to divert attention from herself.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
(to Sister)
How come Franklin wasn't at church today?

SISTER
He's volunteering with a housing project in Rwanda. He left last Wednesday.

LOUISE
Wow! Good for him.

SISTER
Yeah, he already found a church there too. He knows how important it is.

Louise looks down at her plate. There's a long pause.

Dad wipes his mustache with his fingers and pats his stomach.

DAD
Whelp, I'm gonna hit the little boy's room before we leave.

He gets up. A WAITER comes by to drop off the check. Mom moves it to Dad's spot on the table.

She leans in to Louise.

MOM

(quiet)

Honey, when was the last time you shaved your armpits?

LOUISE

I think it was a few weeks ago.

SISTER

Gross.

LOUISE

Why?

MOM

Is this some kind of feminist thing?

LOUISE

No, I just didn't feel like shaving them.

MOM

Is Charles okay with that?

LOUISE

I don't think Charles really cares.

SISTER

Please don't stop shaving your armpits, Lou. It's seriously gross.

LOUISE

It's not like I'm never going to shave them again, I just don't feel like it right now.

Dad comes back. He notices the check.

DAD

Ah, what's the damage?

He sees the cost, grunts, and pulls out his wallet. The waiter comes by again to collect the payment.

Everyone starts gathering their belongings.

MOM

Are you coming to the barbecue on Saturday? You can bring Charles.

LOUISE

Saturday? No, sorry, I'm going to be busy.

MOM

They can't be making you work, can they? The whole church is coming. What are you doing instead?

LOUISE

I'm... doing a workshop.

MOM

Oh, fun! A workshop on what?

LOUISE

Knitting.

MOM

Well, that's nice. You'll have to let me know if you learn anything interesting!

LOUISE

Of course.

The waiter comes back with the receipt. The family starts migrating out of the restaurant. Louise hugs each of her family members.

MOM

Love you.

LOUISE

Love you guys, goodbye!

INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Louise and Danielle are on the floor doing push ups.

LOUISE

Do you know anything about knitting?

DANIELLE

Knitting? No, why?

LOUISE

I told my family I was going to a knitting workshop this weekend...

DANIELLE

Why not just tell them the truth?

LOUISE

I can't.

They switch to high-knee running in place.

DANIELLE
You're an adult, they can handle
it.

LOUISE
I don't think they can.

Louise stops running.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
This is exhausting.

DANIELLE
Ugh, I know, I hate high knees.

LOUISE
No, I mean the whole, 'double life
keeping everything from my parents'
thing.

They start doing squats.

DANIELLE
Of course it's exhausting! You need
more balance. Just tell your
parents already!

LOUISE
But, I can't! I could lose my job.

DANIELLE
Over pole dancing?

LOUISE
Maybe!

DANIELLE
That's so weird. Everyone in my
life knows about it, even my kids.
They're coming to the showcase!

LOUISE
Oh, really?

DANIELLE
Yeah, they're old enough.

They sit down on the floor and start doing stretches. For a
moment, they're silent.

LOUISE
Maybe I should just quit.

DANIELLE
Your job?

LOUISE
Not my job.

It takes a moment, but then Danielle realizes what she means.

DANIELLE
What? No. No way! You can't.

LOUISE
Well, I might.

DANIELLE
Are you going to break up with
Charles too?

LOUISE
No. Well, maybe. Maybe I should!

DANIELLE
That's a terrible idea.

LOUISE
I'm not happy with my life right
now. Maybe I just need to make some
changes.

DANIELLE
Well, you're a grown ass woman. You
can do what you want.

They stand up. Louise wipes the pole down, and takes a sip of water. Danielle is looking at her cell phone.

Louise wraps her right hand around the pole and starts warming it up. She walks around it, then slides into a dip turn.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
Wait, before you start, come here.
Take a selfie with me.

LOUISE
Mmmm, my hair looks terrible right
now.

DANIELLE
Whatever, you look fine. Come on!
If you're going to leave me at
least let me have this.

LOUISE
 Okay, I guess so.

Louise and Danielle pose for a selfie.

 LOUISE (CONT'D)
 Alright, let's get going, I've got
 work in an hour.

 DANIELLE
 Okay, I'm working on it.

She throws her phone on top of her stuff.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - LATER

The door to Louise's office has a cork board adorned with drawings from kids and notes from friends. A plaque on the door sports her name.

Inside the office there's a desk holding a family picture, several stacks of books and papers, and a desktop computer.

Louise is snacking on pretzels. She types something. The search bar says, "CHRISTIANS AND POLE DANCING".

A number of hits pop up. She clicks on the top article.

"IS POLE DANCE OKAY FOR CHRISTIANS?"

She scans the article. She shifts in her chair, chewing the end of her fountain pen.

Louise hears something. The office door! She hurries to exit the page and opens a spreadsheet just before the door opens.

It's Ingrid.

 LOUISE
 Ingrid, hi! How are you today?

 INGRID
 Hello, Louise.

Ingrid's smile is strained.

 LOUISE
 Is there something I can help you
 with?

Ingrid gives Louise a pitying look.

INGRID

Louise, it has recently come to light that you are engaged in certain... activities... that may be inappropriate for a church employee.

LOUISE

Sorry?

INGRID

There was a photograph of you online. I'm sure you know the one to which I'm referring.

LOUISE

(genuine)

No! I don't!

Ingrid pulls something up on her smart phone. She shows it to Louise.

It's the selfie that she took with Danielle earlier. Danielle posted it on her Instagram account.

The caption reads: "PRACTICING POLE FOR THE SHOWCASE! COME WATCH US ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON!"

LOUISE (CONT'D)

But... Look, let me explain.

INGRID

I think it's best if we continue this conversation in Pastor Bradley's office.

Ingrid holds the door open while Louise stands and puts away the pretzels. She takes a sip of water and a deep breath. She sets the fountain pen on the desk and leaves the office.

The fountain pen rolls, dropping to the floor.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

The sky is dark and cloudy.

Louise storms towards her car. She is carrying a box full of stuff. The family picture is sitting on top.

She shifts the box to one hip, and pulls out her phone. She stands still while it rings.

DANIELLE
(on phone)
Hello?

LOUISE
Hey.

DANIELLE
Hey, what's up?

LOUISE
You got what you wanted.

DANIELLE
What?

LOUISE
I lost my job so there's no reason
to quit pole dancing now!

DANIELLE
Wait, what? What happened?

Louise unlocks her car. She throws open the back door and
shoves the box in.

LOUISE
I lost my job over your stupid
picture.

Louise slams the car door.

It starts raining.

DANIELLE
Oh my God, I'm so sorry! Are you
okay?

LOUISE
Yeah, sure, I'm fine.

DANIELLE
Let me know if there's anything I
can do.

LOUISE
Yep. I need to go. It's raining.

Louise hangs up the phone. She takes a deep breath. She
starts to cry.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Soft lighting gives the coffee shop a comforting atmosphere. Smooth jazz plays in the background.

Louise and her Mom sit across from one another, each sipping at their coffee. They avoid eye contact.

LOUISE

So... I wanted to talk to you about...well, I'm pretty sure you already know.

MOM

You lost your job.

LOUISE

Look...I...

MOM

I don't know what to tell you, Louise. Leading a double life, working as a stripper? I knew something suspicious was going on with you, but I just can't believe you would--

LOUISE

(interrupting)

No, mom, look--what? You think I'm working as a stripper? I'm not stripping. I'm taking a pole dance class. It's totally different.

MOM

I don't see how it's that different.

LOUISE

Well, for one thing I'm actually losing money on it...Mom, it's a class. It's a dance class. I know Ingrid was upset when she found that picture and that's why I didn't say anything before. But it's a class. It's exercise. I don't think I've ever been in such good shape, and--

MOM

(angry)

I just don't understand why.

LOUISE

What do you mean?

MOM

Why you're doing something that's so clearly against the values that we raised you with. Why you're rejecting your faith, and your purity, and your--.

LOUISE

What? Mom, I'm not rejecting anything.

MOM

I just don't understand why you need to do something like this. Is it for attention? I should've spent more time listening to you.

LOUISE

Mom, please stop, this really isn't about you. It's about me, and connecting with my body and doing something that makes me feel strong and confident.

The conversation lulls. Mom's cheeks are flushed. She stirs her coffee with a spoon, a bit too vigorous so some of it splashes out onto her lap. She uses a napkin to dab it up.

Louise, however, sits up taller now, looking her mom in the eye.

Mom takes another sip of coffee.

MOM

Does this have something to do with Charles?

LOUISE

No, it doesn't. I told you this is about me, no one and nothing else. Charles has nothing to do with this.

MOM

I feel like I don't even know you. I thought you were a good, Christian girl.

LOUISE

I am, mom! That's still part of who
I am, it's just not all of who I
am.

MOM

I need to go home.

Mom starts gathering her stuff, taking one last sip of her coffee.

LOUISE

Please don't leave yet. I'm sorry.
I don't want you to be mad at me.
Please?

MOM

I'm not mad at you, I just... need
time to process this.

Louise stands up. She and her mom hug, they squeeze each other tight for a long time.

LOUISE

I love you.

MOM

I love you too.

Mom walks out. Louise is left alone, head hanging over a half drunk latte.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Louise gets out of her car and runs towards the front door of the church.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The kids are working on a Noah's Arc coloring page.

Louise takes a deep breath, collecting herself. Before she can even sit down, Ingrid is there.

INGRID

Miss Louise, I'm surprised to see
you here.

LOUISE

I wouldn't miss it.

INGRID

And we appreciate your devotion,
however...

LOUISE

It's not like the kids know what
pole dancing is.

Ingrid cringes at the mention of pole dancing. She signals
for Louise to quiet down.

INGRID

But their parents do. It looks bad
for the church.

LOUISE

This is ridiculous.

INGRID

I'm sorry, Louise, but we have to
uphold a certain standard for the
people who hold leadership
positions in our church. I can't
force you to leave but please,
think of the children.

LOUISE

But... I've been volunteering here
for years! I've shown up every
single week since before some of
these kids were born.

Grace spots Louise from across the room. She runs over and
gives Louise a hug.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Hi, Grace.

GRACE

Watch my leap!

Grace backs up in preparation. She runs, she leaps! Throwing
her limbs out in the air.

LOUISE

Wow! That's so good!

GRACE

I want to sit next to you!

INGRID

Miss Louise has to go. Come on,
hon, let's go back to your table.

Ingrid steers Grace by the shoulders. Louise stands there, dumbfounded. Ingrid notices that she hasn't left yet and storms back across the room.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Perhaps I was not clear enough. You need to leave.

LOUISE

Fine, I'll go. Just give me a minute.

Louise looks around the room, watching the kids work on their coloring pages. Grace looks up and waves to her. Louise waves back.

She turns away, hiding tears, and leaves.

INT. LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The living room is small, a bit cluttered. There's a TV and a coffee table.

Charles and Louise are sitting on the couch. She's eating ice cream from the carton.

LOUISE

I don't know what to do. My mom hates me, I don't have a job, everyone thinks I'm a slut.

CHARLES

Hey, maybe this is a good thing! I mean, that job was a total dead end.

LOUISE

Yeah, I guess.

She hands the ice cream to Charles so he can take a few bites.

CHARLES

Now you get to just be yourself. Isn't that what you wanted?

LOUISE

Not like this!

CHARLES

But you don't have to lie anymore! You finally get to live your life however you want.

Charles sets the ice cream on the coffee table and wraps both of his arms around Louise. She lays her head on his chest.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You can get a job somewhere else where they're cool with the pole dancing thing.

LOUISE

Yeah, I guess...

CHARLES

Hey, I have an idea!

LOUISE

What?

Charles gently pushes Louise away from him and gets up.

CHARLES

We'll make a list of all the things you like.

He picks up a notebook.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Where's your fountain pen?

LOUISE

I lost it. I think it's at the church somewhere.

CHARLES

Are you gonna go look for it tomorrow?

LOUISE

No, I don't think so.

CHARLES

Are you sure? You love that pen.

LOUISE

It's just a pen.

CHARLES

No, it's your favorite pen. You've been through a lot with that thing. Are you sure you want to just give it up?

LOUISE

Maybe I'll find a new pen.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The church is quiet during the day. About half of the lights are on, casting shadows.

Charles is trying to navigate his way through the hallways.

INGRID
Can I help you?

Charles jumps.

CHARLES
Hi! I was just looking for Louise's office.

Ingrid scans him up and down, suspicious.

INGRID
She doesn't work here anymore. Who are you?

CHARLES
Charles, Louise's boyfriend.

INGRID
Ingrid.

They shake hands.

CHARLES
Louise lost her fountain pen, she thinks it might be in her old office.

INGRID
Follow me. I've never seen you at church.

CHARLES
(shrugs)
I'm not really the church type.

INGRID
Hmph. Why not?

CHARLES
It's just not really a part of my life.

They reach the right doorway. Louise's name plaque is still on the front door. The cork board is sad, a few leftover tacks stuck to nothing. There's only one paper left.

Ingrid opens the door to let Charles in. She stands in the doorway. He looks for the pen, scanning the desk and opening drawers.

INGRID

Obviously Louise isn't quite the person we all thought she was.

CHARLES

What do you mean by that?

INGRID

She used to be such a nice girl. Always volunteering to help out with the kids...

CHARLES

She likes kids.

INGRID

It's just so sad to see her going down the wrong path.

Ingrid waits for a response.

Charles starts searching on the floor.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Hmph. I don't want to gossip. But I think you know what I'm referring to.

His jaw tightens, but he holds himself back once again.

INGRID (CONT'D)

I don't know what changed! She used to be such a good girl. Well, the flesh is weak. I suppose you know all about that.

CHARLES

I found the pen.

Charles pulls himself to his feet, holding the pen. Ingrid moves out of the doorway.

INGRID

Charles, you know, sometimes letting go is the kindest thing to do.

CHARLES

Are you implying that I should
break up with Louise?

INGRID

I never said that! I just want to
make sure that you're considering
what's best for both of you.

CHARLES

Would you shut up already?

INGRID

Excuse me?

CHARLES

Look, you're making my girlfriend
feel miserable and shitty about
herself, and she doesn't deserve
that. You think you know Louise,
but clearly you don't because
otherwise you would know that she
is one of the kindest, gentlest
people in the world. Yeah, she
likes pole dancing. But she also
likes going to church, okay? She
loves her family, she loves kids.
And you had to go and mess it all
up over a dance class. Does that
make you feel good about yourself?

INGRID

I'm helping her!

CHARLES

You may think that in your own
weird, twisted way, but it's not
true. Trust me.

Charles starts to leave. He does a double take at the door.
He notices the lone drawing on the cork board.

A ballerina drawn in pink crayon. Written across the
bottom...

TO: LOUISE, FROM: GRACE.

Charles takes it off the cork board.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I'm leaving. Have a nice day.

Ingrid is left alone. She stares at the spot where the
drawing was pinned.

Her hand flies to her heart almost reflexively. She takes a couple of deep breaths, steadying herself.

INT. CHARLES' CAR - DAY

Louise and Charles are sitting in the parked car. Louise's hair is curled and pulled into a half-up style. She has on elaborate glittery eye makeup and bright pink lipstick.

 LOUISE
 (nervous)
I can do this. I've got this.

 CHARLES
Yeah, you do!

Louise opens the vanity mirror, checking her makeup and hair.

 LOUISE
Maybe I should've gone with the red
lipstick.

 CHARLES
You look fantastic, and you know
it. Also, I brought you something
for good luck.

Charles pulls the fountain pen out of his pocket. Louise grabs it, excited.

 LOUISE
My pen!

 CHARLES
I went by the church today.

 LOUISE
You're the best. Seriously, thank
you.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

 CHARLES
Of course. Oh, one more thing.

He reaches into the backseat and grabs a folder. He opens the folder and pulls out Grace's drawing, handing it over with care. Louise looks over at Charles and smiles, looking as though she might cry.

 LOUISE
I think I'm ready now.

CHARLES

Go kill it babe. Love you.

LOUISE

Love you.

They kiss. Louise starts to get out of the car. She stops and ducks her head back in.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Hey... Do you think I'd be a good teacher?

CHARLES

Yeah, yeah I do.

Louise nods. They smile at each other before she closes the door.

INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Louise walks in to see the pole studio is decked out in fairy lights and chiffon for the showcase. One side of the studio has chairs set up for the spectators.

Dancers are spread across the studio, stretching and running through dance moves. There are two poles mounted in the middle of the room. A couple of dancers are taking turns practicing with them.

Louise looks for a spot. She notices Danielle sitting alone, stretching. Louise and Danielle wear coordinating outfits.

Louise approaches her.

LOUISE

Hey. Can I sit down?

DANIELLE

Sure.

Louise starts stretching with too.

LOUISE

I'm really sorry. It's not your fault that I lost my job.

DANIELLE

No, I'm sorry! I shouldn't have posted that picture.

LOUISE
 Ingrid's been looking for a reason
 to fire me, she would have found
 out sooner or later.

 DANIELLE
 I'm glad you're here.

 LOUISE
 Me too.

They hug.

 TEACHER
 Alright, I'm letting the people in.
 Dancers need to move that way!

 DANIELLE
 I guess it's time. You ready?

 LOUISE
 Yes! You?

 DANIELLE
 Yeah! We've got this.

They migrate to one side of the room with everyone else. The doors open and SPECTATORS start trickling in.

A man, DANIELLE'S HUSBAND, enters and waves. Two CHILDREN, ages 9 and 11, are following behind him. Danielle and Louise both wave back.

Charles walks in, accompanied by...

...Louise's Mom.

Charles and Mom take a seat. They spot Louise, and wave. Louise forces a smile and waves back.

She turns to Danielle.

 LOUISE
 That's my mom.

Danielle looks back at Louise's Mom. Louise pulls on a sweatshirt.

 LOUISE (CONT'D)
 I'm not ready anymore. I don't
 think I can do this.

TEACHER

Hey, everyone! Thanks for coming to our showcase. Everyone's excited to show you all the super cool moves they've been perfecting over the last few months.

LOUISE

Oh God, okay. I'll be fine. I can do this. I'm a grown woman.

TEACHER

Turn off your cellphones, it's only an hour. And please, don't heckle the dancers. Alright, put your hands together for our first duo, Louise and Danielle!

A spotlight illuminates the performance area, blinding Louise. She and Danielle take their place beside the poles.

The music begins and they start the routine.

Louise goes for the inversion and lands it perfectly!

They end the routine in triumph and take a bow.

INT. POLE DANCE STUDIO - LATER

The Teacher is standing in front.

TEACHER

Thanks, everyone! Come again next year!

The dancers start mingling with the crowd, exchanging hugs. Danielle gives Louise a hug before going to meet her family.

Louise slides on her socks, then her sweatshirt. She checks her phone, and takes a sip of water. She avoids looking at the crowd.

Charles approaches and hugs her.

CHARLES

You were amazing!

LOUISE

Thanks.

Louise's mom is close behind. She looks at Louise, then at Charles, not knowing what to say.

CHARLES

Seriously, you were so great. The dance was so exciting, and that moment when you went upside down? I was nervous for a second, but you're so strong! You made it look easy.

(to Mom)

Wasn't she great?

MOM

Yes.

(beat)

It reminded me of when you were a little girl and you would spend hours on the monkey bars. You spent all day perfecting your "routine" and then you'd come try to teach it to me.

They hug for a long time.

MOM (CONT'D)

Good job, honey. I'm really proud of you.

LOUISE

Thank you. So... you want me to teach you *this* routine?

MOM

I don't think so.

LOUISE

That's okay.

MOM

You're an excellent teacher. You always have been.

Mom puts her arm around Louise, who holds hands with Charles. The three of them start walking towards the door.

THE END