

## Dance Development

I sat in the audience as I watched my sister do a tour jeté across the dance floor. I was at my big sister, Greta's dance recital. I leaned over to my mom, who was sitting on the other side of my little sister and whispered, "Can I do this next year?"

"I was thinking you'd want to," she responded. So about one year later I found myself waiting in the wings of the stage, about to get on and perform my dance with my best friend who I met in dance and my younger sister, Natalie, who also wanted to take dance classes. I finished my three dances and before I knew it, I was on stage with everyone else doing the finale.

"This year I am in the advanced dance level," I thought to myself as I did step-digs with everyone (a part of the finale), "But next year, I'm going to be in the elite level. I'm even skipping one level!" I continued as I did a three step turn. Then in the summer, I came back and did the three week lesson. After that, it was the next dance season.

Once the season started, my sister Natlie had class first that week. My mom and I sat in the car waiting to pick her up. Finally it hit me. I wasn't in my sister's class anymore! I wouldn't know anyone in my new class. The friends I made are all in Natalie's class, and everyone in my class is going to be older than me!

"Mom," I blurted out, "can I switch to Natalie's class?"

"Why?" she annoyingly responded.

I hate it when adults make you give an answer, "I just don't want to do elite!" I said, holding back tears.

"That's not a reason," she said, "You can't *just not want to do something*." she quoted from me.

"I won't have the preparation of being in junior elite," I said, almost letting my tears go away. Finally I broke. "I won't know anyone, everyone is going to be older than me, and I'm not ready!"

"Well I'm sure if Mrs. Breanna recommended you take the elite class, then you're ready for the elite class." she said, not helping the subject at all. "I think you should try out a class and see if you like it."

I know I won't!" I interrupted.

"Just try one class," she said.

"Okay, fine" I responded, not confident at all.

The next day was my first class. I walked into the lobby, terrified. Although my scaredness quickly turned into relief as I noticed other girls in the class, who looked my age. I had never met them before, but they looked nice. I slipped on my ballet shoes and went to the barre to join the warmup.

"I think this might be okay," I thought to myself as we completed the warm up and moved on to the next combination. I was keeping up and it wasn't too hard. Maybe it

was the right level. Maybe my mom was right about that. After I finished the three classes I had that night, I felt so much better. The classes were challenging, but I kept up and learned some new things. I put on my shoes and I went outside to meet my mom. She immediately asked me how it was. Ashamed of being wrong, I quietly said, "Good."

After a lot of "I told you so's" and "Aren't you glad I made you do it?!" and some, "I'm proud of you's!" I finally went home.

It took me about two weeks to really connect with my new dance friends. I liked being challenged and learned new things in the higher level class. If my mom would have let me stay in the lower level with my younger sister and old dance friends, I would have missed the chance to learn new skills and make new friends and I am glad that I was brave and tried the elite classes. Before I knew it, the dance season was almost over and it was time for the recital. Once again, I found myself waiting in the wings of the stage, but this time it was with new friends and more skills. I had to memorize seven dances! I was so excited. I can't wait to do it again next year!