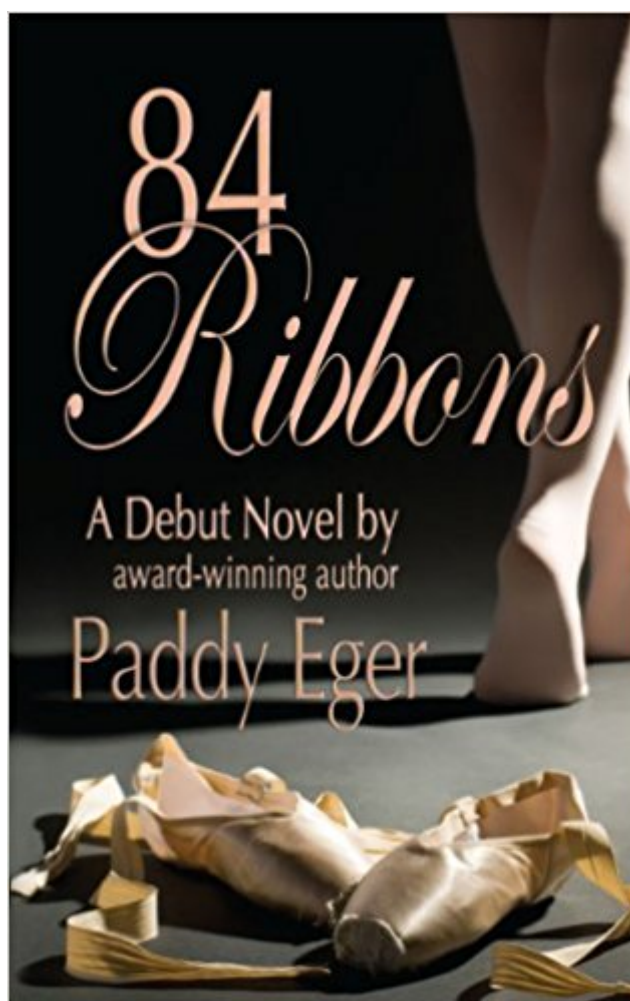


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84 Ribbons: A Dancer's Journey (Ballet Trilogy-Book 1)



Synopsis

The Debut novel by award-winning author Paddy Eger 84Ribbons-FrontCover-WebMed A young dancer's realizes her life long dream, if only for a while. Seventeen year old Marta Selbryth realizes her dream of becoming a professional dancer when the Intermountain Ballet Company in Billings, Montana invites her to join their 1957 season. As Marta's new life unfolds, she must learn to face not only the successes of dancing in the corps de ballet, but the challenges and setbacks that might crush the dream she's had for so long. After a couple of mishaps, Marta settles into life in a boarding house located near the ballet company. Her landlady, Mrs. B., is friendly, reduces her rent when Marta's offers to bake for the boarder and later allows her to use the basement as a practice studio. The two male boarders are supportive; Carol, a fellow boarder, ignores her. Marta spends her free time practicing when she's not spending time with her new friends Lynne and Bartley, her fellow corps dancers. Their time together becomes an important lifeline through their first year. Madame Cosper, the artistic director, is a demanding woman. Marta begins their association poorly when she makes a disastrous choice. Expecting expulsion, Marta receives a second chance in the form of dancing the unpopular character roles during the fall and winter performances. Marta determines to dance every role with confidence in hopes of proving to Madame that she's up for every challenge. Steve, a young college man and a reporter, spots Marta when he's assigned to write an article about ballet for the local paper. He's attracted to her and begins his pursuit. Over the months ahead, he becomes her tour guide of the area and attempts to convince Marta to be his girl. But her steadfast focus is ballet and some of her adventures with him lead to problems with Madame Cosper. Shortly after Christmas, everything changes for Marta, Bartley and Steve. Significant events permanently influence their lives. Each must deal with exhilaration and heartbreak as well as frustration and changes that test their ability to cope.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this riveting ballet story set in 1950s America, Paddy Eger reminds us that not every ballerina gets her fairy-tale ending. Seventeen-year old Marta Selbryth always dreamed of being a professional ballet dancer. When she secures a position in an esteemed dance company, she discovers that the world of professional dancing is no warm and fuzzy haven. A mean-spirited Madam, a skeptical choreographer, a nasty neighbor, and a series of injuries plunges her into anorexia, heartache, and self-doubt---moments that are gently written and always believable. Eger, a former dancer herself, brilliantly details the day-to-day life of this world. If she wasn't dealing with her tiredness and almost losing her position, she'd be exhilarated by the fragile strength that blossomed inside her, allowing her to dance even though she should collapse from lack of sleep and food. Maybe this was how it felt to be an adult, thinks Marta. In such moments of interiority, the author's passion for the subject is restrained; she does not overstate the character's sacrifices and successes. One of the novel's themes is an unusual one for YA: the recognition that one is not entirely in control of destiny. For example, Marta wonders, What do you say to someone like Madam who dislikes you, someone who controls your future? Indeed, it becomes unclear not only whether Marta will maintain her position in the company, but whether she will survive it. A pure coming-of-age tale with moments of quiet drama, *84 Ribbons* is about thriving despite the imperfections of life. This YA novel is an appropriate read for all ages and has global appeal for dancers and nondancers alike. --ForeSight: Young Adult Fiction (Spring Edition March, April, May)

Paddy Eger, winner of three awards for her break-out non-fiction book, *Educating America: 101 Strategies for Adult Assistants in the K-8 Classrooms*, and its ancillary product, *Educating America Desktop Flipbook*. She has published dozens of newspaper and magazine articles and over a hundred blog articles. Her debut YA novel, *84 Ribbons* is the first book in a trilogy based on the competitive world of ballet and grew out of her experience as a ballet dancer. She writes with a unique voice that brings to light the themes of friendship, a budding romance, and learning to balance the rigors of pursuing a dream while building a balanced life. An elementary education graduate of University of Washington, Paddy spent twenty years in the classroom. She produced original poems, songs and dances for her class room students to encourage free movement and foster

student creativity. She also established a training program for classroom volunteers that became the foundation for her Educating America books. and Paddy volunteers in four elementary schools and assists the United Way of Snohomish County. After retirement in 2000, Paddy discovered an enthusiasm for writing and pursues to master the craft. Her love of growing up as a small-town girl and her desire to create realistic stories became the inspiration for 84 Ribbons and ultimately the trilogy where skill and steady persistence open doors for dancers. To foster and train her inner writer, Paddy participates in two writing groups and classes and attends conferences, including Write on the Sound, a conference in her hometown of Edmonds, Washington a creative community of artists and writers along Puget Sound. Paddy s love of international travel led to her soon to be released YA adventure novel, Tazman. Inspired by her visit to the historic site of the brutal penal colony of Port Arthur in Tasmania and uncovered the true story of a documented inmate imprisoned for stealing a handkerchief. The story of Ean emerged. Ean struggles through his three-year imprisonment wondering if he ll survive the brutality or if he should attempt a daring escape. In her free time, Paddy and her husband, Rich, enjoy travel in the United States and internationally and are avid supporters of the arts in the Greater Seattle area. They enjoy spending time with their adult children, Brent and Christine at their summer home on Hood Canal.

I just had the pleasure of reading 84 Ribbons, a delightful YA story of a young ballerina and her struggles with the tough and competitive world of ballet. The story is set in the late '50s and is full of clever references to that period. I particularly enjoyed the bits about clothes and dating - life was so much more simple then that it made me long for a time when people regularly took trains and buses, commercial flights were a thrill, and young women wore white gloves. As someone who has had dancers in the family I can recommend the book to anyone young person aspiring to be a part of the dance world, or to their parents who must provide so much support.

The dancers in a ballet make it look so easy, their movements so graceful, their bodies so thin. Seventeen-year-old Marta has danced long enough to know how much work is involved, but dancing with a professional ballet company is all she ever wanted to do. So when she joins a ballet company in Billings, Montana, it's a dream come true. But it's also even more difficult than she could have imagined. It's her first time away from home, and she's lonely. She makes friends before long, even finds a boyfriend, but she can't relax. She worries about learning the dances and keeping up her strength without gaining weight. Worst of all, the ballet mistress doesn't like her. There are more challenges to come for Marta, and we're never sure whether the scale will tip on the side of fairy

tales and hope or on the side of cold hard reality. 84 Ribbons is a beautiful coming-of-age story for anyone who has had a dream or found a "plan B."

A perfect story of how ballet is more than just the performances. Each dancer has a story, daily struggles and dreams. It is in the moment of the counting of the ribbons the heart realizes the truth.

84 Ribbons is a warm coming-of-age story about a girl who moves far from home to pursue her dream of becoming a professional ballerina. With a strong cast of characters and the realistic and nuanced world of ballet, this is a great snuggle-up-and read.

When seventeen-year-old Marta finally enters the world of professional ballet in 1957, it is not what she expects. And when she walks in late without her clothes or bags because the train lost them, Madame Cosper, from the Intermountain Ballet Company, seems to hate her from the start. Despite her many setbacks, she befriends two fellow dancers as well as gets herself into a deeply complicated yet fun relationship with a college reporter. As her friendships grow and her life becomes dramatic, can she stay on track and continue to dance safely and keep her boyfriend from leaving her? Read more in Paddy Eger's 84 Ribbons. Opinion: I found this book intriguing, but it was slow at times. There was no clear rise and fall of the plot, however, there were a number of small conflicts and confrontations that kept the story moving forward. The characters were very well developed and continued to surprise me throughout the story. There was some underlying suspense, which made up for the lack of plot. I found the amount of detail put into the story fantastic, and I gained a whole new understanding and respect for what it takes to be a dancer. Reviewed by a LitPick student book reviewer Age:13

One of the themes that I love to read about in Books is Ballet and Dance. When I saw that I had 84 Ribbons to read and I was in the mood for a ballet novel, I opened it up on my kindle and started reading. The book starts with Marta auditioning for a part in an International Ballet Troupe and finally after many rejections, she finally gets accepted and moves to the Billings, Montana where she has been given a spot at the Intermountain Ballet Company. At first, I was under the impression that this book was contemporary set but it wasn't until I saw the line-up for the ballet performances throughout the year that I discovered I was reading a historical set novel. 84 Ribbons is set during the time period of 1957-1958. Marta's dream is to earn her 84 Ribbons which represent the amount of ballet shoes she has worn out as she once read that once someone has reached 84 ribbons, you

are now considered a professional ballet dancer. During this time, Marta finds herself at odds with the Ballet teacher known as Madame Cosper and she wonders if she will ever be able to achieve her dreams as for some reason, the Madam has it in for her. This year though, will open Marta's eyes into a new world - a world where diet pills are considered an option to stay thin as no-one wants a fat dancer, a life where she will discover dating and what it's like to have someone love you no matter what and friends and foes - what its like to live with people who either love you or hate you. This book does touch on the dark side of Ballet and what some girls do in order to win. In 84 Ribbons, when tragedy strikes Marta not once but three times, she must face the hardest decision in her life - to dance or to simply move on and face reality that she may never reach her goal of becoming a famous ballerina. If you love Ballet Novels, then 84 Ribbons is the perfect book to have you "reading" in circles.

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