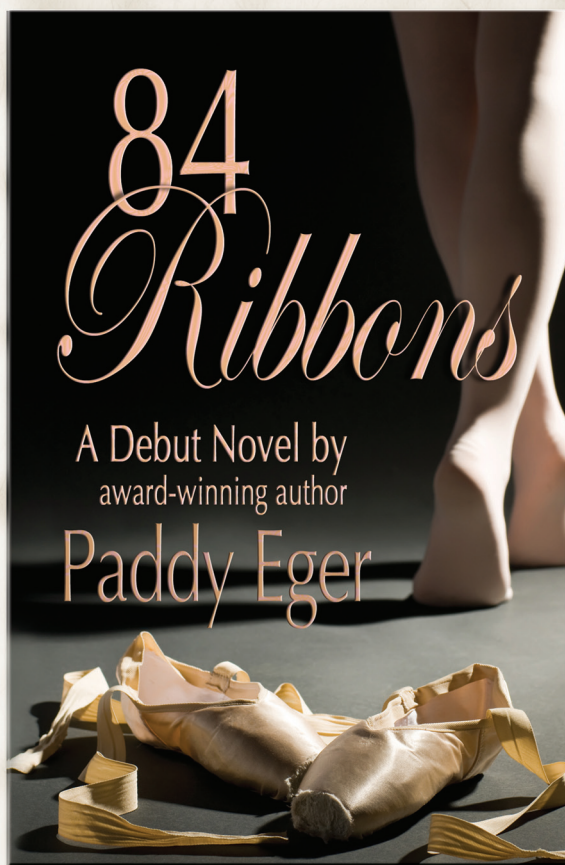


*Tendrill Press*  
PRESENTS



## Praises for *84 Ribbons*

***....believable characters who tell an engaging story, 84 Ribbons is sure to please YA readers, giving them a true heroine, who dares and strives to dream big.***

—Lauraine Snelling Author of the *Red River of the North* series,  
*Wild West Wind* series, *Wake the Dawn*,  
*S.A.V.E. Squad* series and more.

***Any young dancer will find herself in Marta's story.***

—Newbery Honor author Kirby Larson  
*Hattie Big Sky*

***A compelling coming-of-age novel, Eger's look inside the world of ballet offers both inspiration and heartbreak.***

—Miriam Wenger-Landis,  
former ballerina with the Miami City Ballet  
and author of *Girl in Motion* and *Breaking Pointe*

***As a mother of a teenage dancer, I read the story and thought about how my daughter would handle herself if she faced the obstacles Marta experienced. The story gave me hope that with a little guidance, she'd find her way much like Marta did.***

—Eileen S.

***I'm a high school junior and I've danced competitively since elementary school. I enjoyed 84 Ribbons because it's about an ordinary girl from a small town who has the talent and the passion to pursue her goal to dance! The heroine, Marta, gave me hope for any challenge I might face.***

—Riley H.  
Student and dancer





## *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.

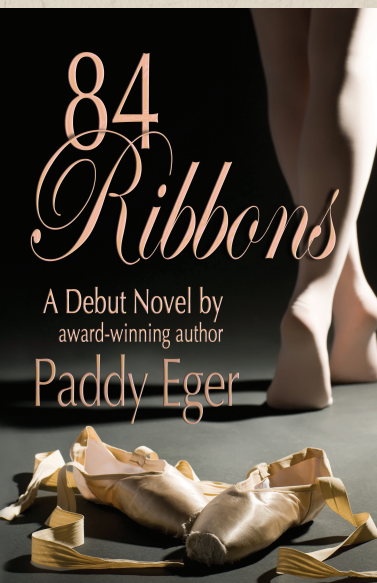
Marta spends her free time practicing when she's not spending time with her new friends Lynne and Bartley, her fellow corps dancers. Their time together becomes an important lifeline through their first year.

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.





## An Excerpt from Chapter 4, *84 Ribbons*

***Marta has arrived in Billings and found a place to live. Today she's ridden a bike to her first day at the Intermountain Ballet Company. She's just entered the building for the first time.***

As she approached the women's dressing room, she adjusted her ponytail, exhaled, and stepped through the doorway. Two long rows of locker bays with benches in between filled the space. More than a dozen young women stood partially dressed. The room hushed when they spotted her.

Madame Cospers thumped into the dressing room. "All right, girls. Let's get started. New girls continue to use the back row."

Marta blinked in surprise. *Continue* to use the back row? Had they arrived earlier? What's going on? Marta tried to think of what to say as Madame stopped beside her.

Madame Cospers's make-up caked around her hairline, and her blue eye shadow trailed off onto her cheeks. She leaned forward on her cane. "Where have you been? Practices started days ago."

"I, ah...My letter said to arrive today. I, the greeter didn't meet me."

"That's the old letter. We don't have greeters this year. You should have called and checked. No matter now. Get changed."

Madame's verbal slap startled Marta. This wasn't starting out as she had hoped. "I have no dance clothes."

"Why not?"

"The bus company lost them."

Twitters circled the dressing room.

Madame struck her cane against a nearby bench. Marta jumped. "Borrow clothes or go home. Come early tomorrow and buy what you need from the dance mistress. You *must* dress professionally even if you are only in the corps."

"Yes, Madame." Marta dipped her head like a scolded child. No welcome, no we're glad you're here, nothing but a chastising in front of the other dancers.

Madame exited the room with her chin high, like a dancer exiting the performance stage.

"Borrow my extras," said a voice next to Marta.

Marta turned.

"I've extra clothes and ballet slippers, but no extra pointe shoes."

The girl who spoke had long, thick brown hair and hazel eyes. "I'm Lynne Meadows," she said.

"Hi. I'm Marta."

The girls nodded and smiled to each other. The other dancers closed their lockers and trailed out of the room.





"Too bad about not getting the correct information and about your bags. Keep these as long as you need them."

"Thanks."

Marta's hands trembled as she changed into Lynne's donations. "The last thing I need is Madame mad at me from the first day."

"Yeah, She's a piece of work, all right." Lynne checked the wall clock. "Hurry. Only two minutes until practice resumes."

Marta followed Lynne into the rehearsal hall. At the doorway she paused to evaluate the space. The spartan room had a long wall of mirrors, a tall stool, an upright piano, and high, narrow windows where hot sunlight streamed in. Wooden *barres* lined two walls. The wooden floors gleamed, polished to a high luster. Miss Holland would have loved this huge space instead of her smaller room with a cement floor covered with linoleum.

Dancer whispers continued until Damien Black, the man from her audition, entered. Dancers straightened and gave him their complete attention.

"Good afternoon, boys and girls. Let's get started, shall we?" He nodded toward Marta. "I see everyone has arrived. Good."

Marta felt heat move up her face as dancers focused on her before moving to a *barre* and standing in first position. Marta waited to see where Lynne stood. No sense standing at the wrong *barre* and being sent elsewhere. Dancers were picky about their spaces. Someday she'd have a space reserved by her position, just not soon.

A cane-wielding Madame Cospers entered and moved with an irregular gait toward the stool and leaned against the seat. Silence filled the room floor to ceiling and wall to wall. "Ready, begin," she said.

The pianist kept his eyes on Madame Cospers, following her clapped tempo, playing the exercise music from memory. Another surprise. Back home Miss Holland used records; she didn't have the luxury of a pianist.

"One, two, three, and four, backs straight, arms soft. Pull your *derrières* under... tight-er, tight-er. Keep the beat, two, three, four."

Marta felt a tap on her leg. She stopped and turned. Madame pointed to her left foot. "Your ankle is rolling over. Fix it."

Marta nodded and adjusted. From the corner of her eye, she watched Madame circle the room and use her cane to tap offending arms, legs, backs, and heads. The thought of that cane tapping her again made Marta shudder. Criticism meant you were noticed; better than being ignored, maybe.





## Get the most from *84 Ribbons* with these reading group discussion questions.

### **Most of us lead complex and multi-faceted lives.**

What are Marta's strengths? Her shortcomings?

What factors contribute to Marta's reluctance to begin a personal life?

What advice would you have given her during her recovery?

### **Marta is seventeen when the story begins and eighteen when it ends.**

What growth do you see in her over the ten months she dances with the Intermountain Ballet Company?

What do you imagine happens over the next ten months?

### **The world of ballet and American society have made major changes since the late 1950s.**

What changes have you noticed or heard mentioned?

How have those changes affected your life?

Check out additional information on [paddyeger.com/84 Ribbons](http://paddyeger.com/84Ribbons). You will find articles, information on ballets, Marta's blog, contests to name future characters, and much more as this ballet trilogy continues.

## School Reader's Guide

For an extensive guide that follows the Common Core State Standards for ELA 6-12, download the guide file from [paddyeger.com/84Ribbons](http://paddyeger.com/84Ribbons).

The guide covers:

Key Discussion Questions

Post Reading

Creative Writing Prompt

Internet Resources

Related Readings

Select Interdisciplinary Activities





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 bring 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.

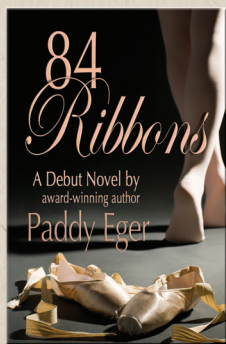
Paddy's love of international travel led to her soon to be released YA adventure novel, *Tazman*. Inspired by her visit to the historic site of the brutal penal colony of Port Arthur in Tasmania and uncovered the true story of a documented inmate imprisoned for stealing a handkerchief. The story of Ean 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.

County. Chat, Comment and Connect with Paddy at [PaddyEger.com](http://PaddyEger.com)







# 84 Ribbons

## Chat, Comment, and Connect with Paddy

**Chat:** Join a discussion;

Invite Paddy to your group  
via the web or phone.

**Comment:** Ask questions or give feedback.

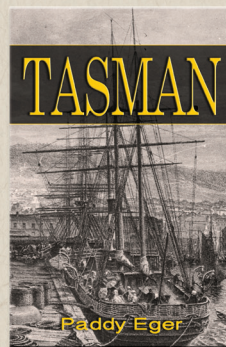
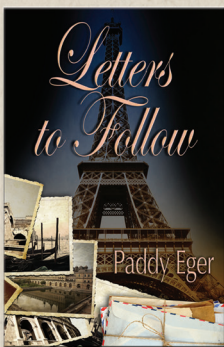
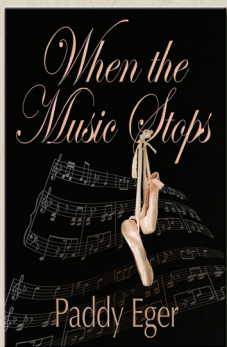
**Connect:** Blog with Paddy and visit her website to

find her at a local book talk or meet & greet;

find excerpts, backstory chapters not in the book,  
author interviews, free books, new releases and more.

Book clubs and schools participate in FREE virtual discussions.

## Coming Soon from Paddy Eger



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