



84 Ribbons

Paddy Eger

Tendril Press (2013)

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Reviewed by Cianna Reider for Rebecca's Reads (2/14)

I've always been fascinated with ballet. I used to watch it and be in wonder, because they looked like they were floating. When you start to look at the struggles, and misfortunes that can happen in the life of a dancer, then you really see a story. Paddy Eger's "84 Ribbons" is one of those stories.

Marta, 17, has been accepted into the Intermountain Ballet Company. It's all she's ever wanted. But, as we all know, no fairy tales happen in life, and Marta experiences that first hand, she's away from home, lonely, trying to make friends, and trying to succeed when it seems like everything is stacked against her. The ballet mistress is set against her, and causes her to struggle and make tough choices.

For a YA novel, this is an interesting option. I expected a ballet story that only teetered on the edge of unhappy, and provide us with a beautiful, happy ever after picture of life as a ballerina, but Eder doesn't choose that route. She provides real struggles, honest characters, and situations which call for a person to reevaluate what they truly want in life. I did feel it was a bit deep for a YA novel, but wonderfully well written. I don't know much about ballet, so I can't speak on the reality of this world and these situations, but to me, as a reader, I felt Marta was a good character. A bit naïve and a little fragile at times but overall, a character that can be built up and torn down through the novel to create a solid coming of age story.

I didn't really enjoy the blurb for the novel. I felt it was long, and included too much detail that wasn't necessary to hook a reader, and might actually cause a reader to pass by, but otherwise, I thought the book was quite interesting. I love seeing YA books written from people in all different stages in life, because honestly, YA is being read by more than young people.

Eger's voice is strong in this novel, and this story has a lovely flow. There were times I felt the characters actions were a little out of place, or things feel into place a little too easily, but overall, I really enjoyed this piece, and thought Eger did a great job setting the time and place up, and drawing the reader into the story, a bit slow but interesting enough. "84 Ribbons" by Paddy Eger is a very interesting read for those interested in ballet.