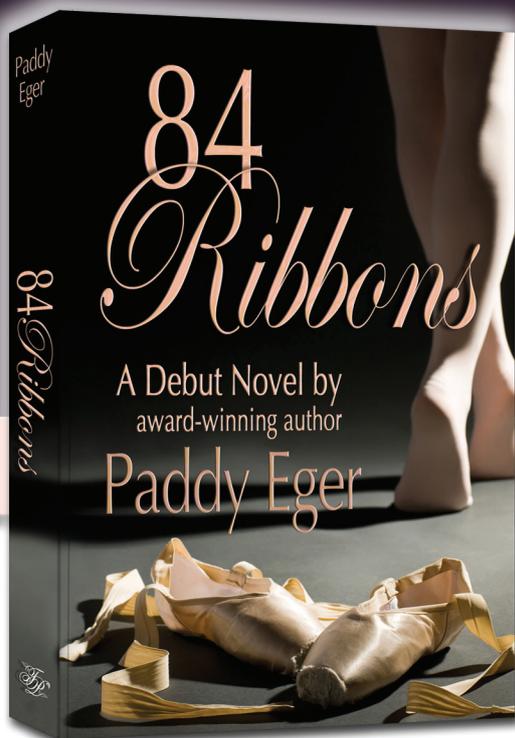


Tendrill Press

ISBN 978-0-9858933-2-3



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

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

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

—Newbery Honor author Kirby Larson (*Hattie Big Sky*)

Refreshingly Different.

The First in a New Ballet Trilogy

from multiple award-winning author Paddy Eger

Publication Date, March 2014
Tendrill Press, LLC

Fiction/Young Adult

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newspapers, and websites

Extensive Online Promotion

Prominent Display
at National Conventions

Author Tour and Appearances

Co op Advertising Available

84 Ribbons follows Marta Selbryth, a young ballet dancer, as she realizes her dream: to become a professional dancer. We walk beside her as she approaches each twist and turn in her new life: the exhaustion of long hours of practices and rehearsals, mounting health issues and the need to compete for roles, all challenges she hadn't fully anticipated.

"Stories come to me like an itch; they refuse to leave until I promise to scratch around for their meaning and write them down." Like many writers, Paddy's novels arise from her background. She grew up in a small town near Seattle, WA. where dancing was her first love. At the age of three she began lessons in tap, character, jazz and ballet. Over the next seventeen years she performed in local recitals, area functions, musicals and a World's Fair. Those years of dance, her life experiences, my travels and my ongoing involvement in supporting ballet and the arts inspired me to satisfy my story itch. *84 Ribbons* became the first book in what is now a ballet trilogy.

Dancers are excellent examples of physical, mental and emotional tenacity. They are strong yet agile, dedicated and driven while attempting to keep open the doors to a normal life. Since writing *84 Ribbons*, I've been told Marta's character is strong and resilient; 'I couldn't do what she did'. That's not true. Every time we face challenges and disappointments, we discover more about our inner strength and our resiliency. I hope people who read *84 Ribbons*, *When the Music Stops* as well as *Letters to Follow*, will come away saying, 'if Marta can do it, so can I.'

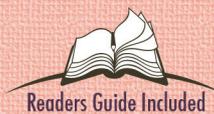
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Paddy Eger has been a writer since 2000. Her publishing credits include dozens of newspaper and magazine articles, a hundred web and education blog articles, and three book awards for her nonfiction book *Educating America*. She writes with a unique 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.

Paddy graduated from the University of Washington and taught elementary school for more than twenty years and fostered student creativity through original dances, songs and free movement activities. She established a volunteer training program which became the foundation for her *Educating America* books.

After Paddy retired from teaching, she discovered her enthusiasm for writing. Her debut novel, *84 Ribbons*, the first in a trilogy, exposes life off stage in the fiercely competitive world of ballet. These YA novels sprang from years of dance lessons, her love of being raised a small-town girl, and a desire to create realistic stories where skill and steady persistence open doors for dancers.

Paddy's soon to be released *Tasman*, is a YA adventure novel inspired by a trip to the brutal penal colony in Port Arthur, Tasmania. Intrigued by the true story of a documented inmate imprisoned for stealing a handkerchief, the story of Ean emerged.

Her books are available at select bookstores, libraries and online booksellers. Chat, Comment and Connect with Paddy at PaddyEger.com

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.

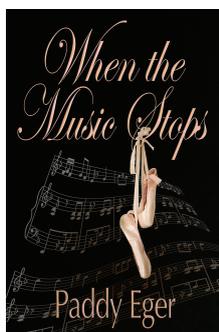
...*84 Ribbons* brings Marta into womanhood and onto center stage. We feel the music swell and the moment arrive—for Marta, and ballerinas everywhere..

—**Emily Hill** Author of *The Ghost Chaser's Daughter*

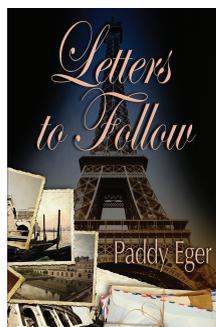
I'm a high school junior and I've danced competitively since elementary school. I enjoyed *84 Ribbons* because it's about an ordinary girl from a small town who has the talent and the passion to pursue her goal to dance! The heroine, Marta, gave me hope for any challenge I might face.

—**Riley H.**
Student and dancer

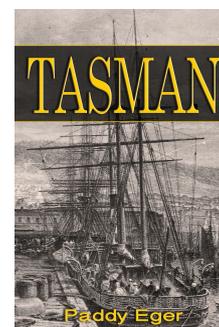
COMING SOON FROM PADDY EGER



Marta struggles to regain her ability to dance. As she finds a job to support herself, her personal life takes several unexpected, harrowing turns. Will she dance again? Will she find the inner strength she needs to meet these challenges head-on?



Marta's best friend Lynne, begins an adventure to Paris on a dancer exchange and lives in a wacky boarding house. When not performing, she travels Europe with her uncle and sends Marta postcards, promising *letters to follow*.



In 1850, Irish lad, Ean McCloud, steps off the ship, his legs in shackles. Falsely convicted, he steps into serving his sentence in Tasmania's Port Arthur Penal Colony. Follow Ean's adventures as he not only seeks to survive but to escape!

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www.PaddyEger.com

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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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. To her surprise, her life on and off stage is overrun with problems she never imagine possible.

Madame Cospier, the artistic director, is a demanding woman who once danced as a prima ballerina. Marta begins their association poorly when she mimics Madame, is caught and faces possible expulsion. She's given a second chance in the form of dancing the unpopular character roles during fall and winter performances. Marta determines to do the roles with confidence in hopes of proving to Madame that she's up for every challenge.

Marta chooses to live a boarding house close to the ballet company. The owner, Mrs. B., allows her to use the basement to practice. The two male boarders are supportive and friendly. Carol, the young college student who shares a bathroom with Marta, ignores her. Mrs. B. lowers Marta's rent after Marta offers to help in the kitchen and bake for the boarders.

Marta and two of the new corps de ballet dancers, Lynne and Bartley, build a support system calling themselves the three dancing musketeers. Their weekends and free time spent together becomes an important lifeline through their first year.

When a young reporter, Steve Mason, visits the ballet company to write a piece for the local paper, he's attracted to Marta and pursues her. He becomes her tour guide and a love interest. During an autumn trip to the mountains, Marta falls; her injury isn't severe but Madame is furious saying Marta acted carelessly.

Marta dates Steve but refuses his suggestion that they become a couple: her focus on dancing takes first place for her time and commitment. Steve attends every performance in hopes of impressing her with his sincerity and to change her mind about being half of a couple. He finds he enjoys watching her dance.

The company tours the region during Nutcracker season. Bartley introduces Marta to diet pills to help her survive the rigors of living out of a suitcase and dancing in their tour towns. Marta continues taking the diet pills to control her weight and to boost her energy during their arduous schedule even after the tour ends.

Marta is pleasantly surprised when her mom arrives for the holidays to see her dance. They enjoy their week together until she overhears her mom and Mrs. B. wanting 'to fatten her up'.

After Christmas, Steve plans a New Year's weekend at his family's mountain cabin with their friends. Marta and Lynne arrive early to prepare for the party but, minutes later Marta falls from the icy porch and breaks her ankle. Her career is instantly placed on hold since the recovery takes four months and includes recasting her ankle when it doesn't heal properly the first time. Marta needs to pay her bills so she takes on sewing tasks from the ballet company and secures two part-time jobs in town.

During this same time, Steve takes an internship in San Francisco and Bartley joins a ballet company there. Marta rejects Steve's promise bracelet that makes them a couple so he leaves without saying good bye. Marta experiences her first signs of jealousy over Steve's and Bartley's chances for success, imagining them dating and enjoying time together in San Francisco while she struggles to regain her normal life. Depression creeps in as loneliness and her inability to dance or exercise properly drags on.

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Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Lynne's aunt arranges for Marta and Lynne to teach four young girls the basics of ballet. They use the basement in Marta's boarding house as their dance studio. Seeing the young girls dance eases her self-pity.

After Marta's second cast is removed she begins exercising and retraining herself in hopes of rejoining the dance company. She's excited when Steve returns to Billings and they renew their relationship. An urgent call from Bartley's mother takes Marta to Pennsylvania where she's shocked to see Bartley's condition and thinness. Surely the diet pills both girls take are not the cause.

Within a few weeks, Bartley dies. Depression overpowers Marta again. Diet pills, eating next-to-nothing and watching her friends go about their daily lives leads Marta into a downward spiral. Mrs. B. confronts her, encouraging her to seek help to overcome her problems suggesting counseling sessions with Ms. Wilson a psychiatrist Mrs. B. knows. Their sessions help Marta handle her problems.

Re-tryout for the dance company brings Marta back to practice with the other dancers and to work with Damien Black, the dance master. The corps dancers ignore her presence. The night before her audition as Marta is practicing she feels her strong ankle pop. She's told to stay off it but she's determined to dance through the pain and new injury.

The audition is not successful. When she asks Madame to allow her to audition again next year, the answer is no; she won't be ready by next fall. Marta tells her friends she'll be returning home to Bremerton to rebuild her strength and figure out her next step.

Saying good bye is difficult but Marta knows she must leave. She shares a good-bye dinner with Lynne promising to stay in touch. She mends her relationship with Steve by accepting the promise bracelet and telling him that she loves him and will keep a place for him in her heart. She boards the train then laughs and cries when she sees the banner Lynne and Steve hold up outside the train.

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Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Chapter 1

Marta Selbryth, age seventeen, travels alone to Seattle to audition for the Intermountain Ballet Company and dances for the directors Madame Cosper and Damien Black.

Chapter 2

The following week she receives an invitation to join the company. Her excitement fills the house with energy. Days later, her bus trip to Billings, Montana ends in disaster: her luggage and the promised greeter are no-shows. The inn clerk befriends her and helps her find a place to live.

Chapter 3

Marta meets Mrs. Belvern and selects her boarding house as her new 'home'. The other boarders, except Carol are friendly. When Marta offers to help Mrs. B. with dishes and baking, Mrs. B. reduces her rent.

Chapter 4

Marta borrows a bike from Mrs. B., arrives at the ballet company with no dance clothes and discovers she's days late. When frustration overcomes Marta. She mimics Madame's mannerisms. When Marta realizes Madame is watching, she assumes she'll be dismissed.

Chapter 5

Marta apologizes. Madame berates her but gives her a second chance. The lost luggage and boxes from home arrive providing Marta a distraction as well as a chance to settle in.

Chapter 6

Mrs. B. offers Marta the basement as a practice studio. On Sunday Marta and her new corps dancer friends, Lynne and Bartley, drive out to tour the area. On her return, she happily discovers the two male boarders made repairs in the practice space.

Chapter 7

Lynne and Marta work on their turns after hours and overhear Madame speaking with a mystery man. They sneak out, pretending they hadn't listened in. Bartley invites Lynne and Marta to her home, offered to her by rich friends of her parents. The girls' friendship grows stronger.

Chapter 8

A local college student and newspaper reporter, Steve Mason, arrives at the ballet company to gather information for an article. He sees Marta and a spark ignites, he asks her to show him around, hoping to begin dating her. His forwardness sends her dashing into the boarding house. Steve brings flowers the next morning to repair their budding relationship then he drives her to morning practice.

Chapter 9

Madame confronts Marta falsely assuming Marta and Steve spent the night together. Over the following weeks Steve and Marta get acquainted and begin touring the area during their free time. Steve asks for her help in writing a series of articles about the ballet company.

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D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Chapter 10

Madame selects Marta to play the dreaded role of Caraboose, the evil fairy in Sleeping Beauty as punishment for her earlier mimicking. She performs well despite the quick changes. Steve attends the ballet to impress Marta but becomes intrigued by the dancing he sees. That evening, instead of flowers, Steve gives Marta a tattered ballet book he's found. Her opinion of Steve softens.

Chapter 11

Steve and Marta write a second article just before Marta is given a second dreaded role: Mother Ginger in the Nutcracker. During this same time Carol, her fellow boarder, begins creating problems for Marta.

Chapter 12

Steve drives Marta to his family's mountain cabin for a day in the forest. She injures herself when she falls into the stream. Marta's mad and frightened about what Madame will do and demands to be taken home.

Chapter 13

Madame sees Marta bruises and rants about her irresponsibility. Steve meets up with Marta and begs forgiveness since she hasn't returned his calls; Carol didn't pass on the messages he left for Marta.

Chapter 14

The Company begins a regional tour with the Nutcracker. Bartley introduces Marta to diet pills to help handle her exhaustion. Marta discovers that they help her stay trim and continues to use them beyond the tour's end.

Chapter 15

While talking at Lake Josephine, Marta and Steve reconcile from the stream disaster. He buys her a 'Montana winter coat' and asks for tickets to every performance. Meanwhile, Marta prepares for her first Christmas away from home.

Chapter 16

Mom surprises her by coming for Christmas and the Nutcracker. They spend the holiday week together with Lynne and Steve joining the celebration. Marta over reacts when she hears her mom talk with Mrs. B. about needing to 'fatten up Marta'.

Chapter 17

Lynne and Marta drive to Steve's family cabin to prepare for a holiday weekend. Marta falls off the icy porch and breaks her ankle. Lynne drives Marta back to Billings where a doctor casts her leg telling her to expect a 15 to 20-week recovery. Marta is devastated and waits for her Mom to arrive. Eventually they argue over Marta's eating habits.

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www.PaddyEger.com

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Chapter 18

Marta quizzes her mom about her father's fatal fall. She expresses worry over her own hospital bills. The doctor releases Marta but warns her to follow his orders. She moves into the depressing downstairs boarding house room to avoid the stairs up to her room.

Chapter 19

Marta misses her mom as soon as she leaves. Lynne helps Marta exercise and work on a new ballet article for Steve. Bartley returns and announces that she's joined the San Francisco Ballet Company. Lynne and Marta feel happy for her success but sad about her leaving. Bartley visits with Marta before she leaves town.

Chapter 20

Steve receives an internship in San Francisco and asks Marta to accept an expensive promise bracelet to seal their commitment. She refuses causing him to leave without saying good-by. Later, they reconcile during a long distance phone call.

Chapter 21

Out of frustration bed head and searching for something to do, Marta cuts her hair super short. Lynne is shocked but arrives with news: her aunt suggests they teach ballet basics to four young girls. Planning and sewing for them boosts Marta's mood.

Chapter 22

On Valentines' Day Steve surprises Marta by flying home and taking her to the cabin for a snow break. They stay over night which allows time for their relationship to deepen.

Chapter 23

Marta's bone has not healed properly; her leg is recast. Now she must find a way to earn money and pay her bills. When Marta secures two part time jobs she worries about all the sitting and lack of exercise. She's afraid she'll gain weight so she increases her dose of diet pills.

Chapter 24

Time moves slowly as Marta trudges from one job to the next. Depression pulls at Marta. Mrs. B notices and confronts her suggesting she speak with a professional.

Chapter 25

Marta reluctantly meets with Miss Wilson, a psychiatrist, and finds it eases her depression. Anger returns when she discovers Carol is spying on private discussions with Mrs. B. Luckily, the little girls begin ballet lessons taking Marta's thoughts off herself.

Chapter 26

The cast on Marta's ankle comes off. Marta exercises to excess, sleeps through her the-atre job and is fired.

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www.PaddyEger.com

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Chapter 27

Steve returns and reunites with Marta. She learns her anticipated June audition will be the weeks earlier in mid-May. The little girls recital will take place in June.

Chapter 28

Marta is concerned about not hearing from Bartley so she calls San Francisco and leaves a message with a closed-lip butler. She waits to hear back from Bartley.

Chapter 29

Bartley's mom calls Marta and asks her to come to Philadelphia. Bartley is in a private clinic until she recovers from the affects of too many diet pills. Marta visits with her only to be shoved to the floor for not bringing diet pills. Marta returns to Billings, conflicted about her promise to tell no one about the trip or about Bartley's condition.

Chapter 30

Marta's exhausted the next morning but begins rehearsing the audition selection with the corps dancers who ignore her return. Shocking news arrives: Bartley is dead. Lynne confronts Marta about her use of diet pills as they plan and host a memorial for Bartley.

Chapter 31

The night before the audition, Marta practices her dance and injures her strong ankle. She's determined to audition anyway. In her gut she knows if she doesn't, she'll be cut from the company. Her worst fear is released; her dancing isn't strong enough. She's released from the company.

Chapter 32

Marta exits the audition and tells Steve and Lynne she's been dismissed. She walks away to be alone to think. The next morning Steve waits outside her window in case she wants to talk. They drive to The Rims and to breakfast where Marta tells him she's returning home to recover and decide her next step.

Chapter 33

The little girls arrive at the boarding house with cards and cake to say good-bye. Later that week, Marta has dinner at Lynne's. Steve shows up. They drive to The Rims and he asks her to reconsider accepting the promise bracelet. This time she agrees and tells an overjoyed Steve that she loves him.

Chapter 34

Marta returns alone to The Rims before leaving Billings. She says her good-byes at the boarding house then leaves for the train. As the train pulls out, she sees Lynne and Steve holding a surprising banner. Marta's train moves west.

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www.PaddyEger.com

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Young adult readers are often fascinated by the competitive world of ballet. They also love to read about romance. Whether readers are dancers or not, they'll embrace a story when a young dancer struggles with her identity against the backdrop of grueling rehearsals and intense competitions while trying to embrace friendship, romance, and daily life away from the tights and pointe shoes.

When an author adds to this mix, dynamic issues such as a possible career-ending injury or an eating disorder, it makes for an exciting and worthwhile read. If the book is well-written, it provides positive take-aways for the young readers to apply to their own lives. *84Ribbons* by Paddy Eger is such a novel.

Two current ballet books on the market for young adult readers are: *Bun Heads* by Sophie Flack and *Audition* by Stasia Ward Kehoe. Both books are set in contemporary times with heroines who dance in prestigious ballet companies, one set in Manhattan and the other in Jersey City. Nineteen-year-old Hannah in *Bun Heads* and sixteen-year-old Sara in *Audition* are trying to achieve perfection in their ballet careers (although Sarah is miserably failing) while struggling in the pursuit of their romantic lives. *Audition* is more sexually explicit than *Bun Heads*.

Although *Bun Heads* and *Audition* are descriptive in bringing to light the emotional and physical drains on a dancer, they shy away from the more dynamic issues such as eating disorders and possible career-ending injuries—they only touch on these issues. *Bun Heads* has been described as “sweet and understated”, which can work for and against a book in this market. The romantic interest, Jacob, is lackluster and leaves the reader wanting more in his character development.

Two authors expanded their debut novels into second books. Miriam Wenger-Landis, author of *Girl in Motion* by Miriam has a follow-up story in *Breaking Pointe*. She follows Anna into her dance future. Paddy carries Marta's story forward into *When the Music Stops* as Marta works to rebuild her dance career. Both authors create realistic journeys for their heroines.

The ballet story market includes biographical books such as *Dancing on My Grave* by Gelsey Kirkland, which is among the first books to examine the dark side of the ballet world. Even though her story shares her teen years, it is aimed at a mature reader who wishes to delve into sexual and drug-related adult situations.

Two books, *A Dance of Sisters*, by Tracey Porter and *Melting Season* by Celeste Conway focus on a young dancer's loss of a parent and how it affects their lives as dancers. *84 Ribbons* heroine, Marta shares their sadness when she speaks of missing her father and their shared love of classical music.

There is one humorous ballet novel on the market—*Dancing in Red Shoes* by Dorian Ciccone, but it's limited in its scope. Lynne Meadows, as Marta's best dancer friend provides a lightness in *84 Ribbons* as well as a steadfast friendship.

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Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Most ballet stories on the market share common themes of competition and varied intensities of disappointment and success, health issues and single friendships. Marta is fortunate to have a calm, supportive mother and cadre of friends within and outside the world of ballet. She relies on their caring to see her through her disappointments and her successes.

Media beyond books also share ballet stories. The movies *Black Swan* and *Turning Point* shared frantic dancers and overly involved parents. Readers' interests are turning toward stories that share day-to-day dancer routines, personal relationships and dance performances. The popularity of the television series *Breaking Pointe* and *So You Think You Can Dance* are examples of that shift. Like *84 Ribbons*, they follow their central character's life beyond their performances.

84 Ribbons is set in the 1950's, which brings to light the world gone-by of traditional ballet, but the issues it presents are timeless. Marta is an ordinary girl with extraordinary talent. She is accepted into a ballet company that every girl can dream about dancing with—it's not unrealistic nor is it prestigious.

The young reader will find herself rooting for Marta as she must decide if dance is a strong enough motivator in her life to pull her away from romance and the normalcy of living a balanced life. She also opens up and develops a friendship with a fellow dancer while enduring intense competition and she faces tragedy when another dancer fights a serious eating disorder. The reader will also appreciate Marta's quiet determination in coping with a possible career-ending injury.

84 Ribbons has a strong plot that pulls in the young adult reader, but it does not shy away going deep through a variety of characters. And although the author avoids including a psychotic ballerina or a highly strung stage mother, she doesn't pull away from gritty issues that exist in the competitive world of ballet. As a former dancer, Paddy is able to bring to life the all-consuming world of dance without fudging on any of the details!

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Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
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About Paddy Eger



Paddy Eger has been a writer since 2000. Her publishing credits include dozens of newspaper and magazine articles, a hundred web and education blog articles, three book awards for her nonfiction book *Educating America: 101 Strategies for Adult Assistants in K-8 Classrooms* and praise for *Educating America Desktop Flipbook*. Paddy's debut novel, *84 Ribbons*, the first in a trilogy, focuses on the fiercely competitive world of ballet. Her books are available at select bookstores, libraries and online booksellers. For more information on Paddy's publishing credits and her writing blog visit PaddyEger.com

Paddy graduated from the University of Washington and taught elementary school for more than twenty years. Paddy produced original poems, dances and songs for her classroom students to encourage free movement activities that foster student creativity. She often organized classroom and school-wide talent shows. When Paddy taught in the PCEP, a co-op public school, she established a training program for classroom volunteers that became the foundation for her *Educating America* books.

After Paddy retired from teaching she discovered her enthusiasm for writing. Her first love, at the age of three, was dancing. She took lessons in tap, character, jazz and ballet until she was twenty. Her performing in local recitals, area functions, musicals and for a World's Fair inspired her first writings to focus on dance. Her love of being raised as a small-town girl and a desire to create realistic stories where skill and steady persistence open doors for dancers became the foundation for *84 Ribbons* and ultimately it became a trilogy. These YA novels follow two young women through their first year of professional dancing as they balance day-to-day life with the complex world of ballet. Paddy believes writing and dancing share several traits. Both require practice and perseverance as well as a good sense of movement and a desire to share self-expression.

In addition to the ballet trilogy, Paddy's soon to be released *Tasman*, is a YA adventure novel inspired by a trip to the brutal penal colony in Port Arthur, Tasmania. Intrigued by the true story of a documented inmate imprisoned for stealing a handkerchief, the story of Ean emerged. It began as a poem, grew to a short story and evolved into the novel, *Tasman*. The young Irishman travels from England to the prison, wondering if he'll survive the brutality during his three-year sentence or attempt a daring escape. Paddy says, "Stories come to me like an itch; they refuse to leave until I promise to scratch around for their meaning and write them down."

To foster and train her inner writer Paddy attends numerous writing classes and writing conferences, including Write on the Sound, a conference in her hometown of Edmonds, Washington—a creative, artistic and writing community along Puget Sound. She participates in two writing groups and attends area writing functions where she meets with other talented writers.

Paddy volunteers in four elementary classrooms and assists the United Way of Snohomish County, Washington training reading volunteers. She's frequently invited to share her ideas on volunteerism with community groups and teachers.

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D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Paddy actively looks for ways to encourage all citizens to step-up and step-in to our schools to support teachers and students.

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.

Chat, Comment and Connect with paddy at PaddyEger.com

Interview Introduction

Paddy Eger has been a writer since 2000. Her publishing credits include dozens of newspaper and magazine articles, a hundred web and education blog articles, three book awards for her nonfiction book *Educating America: 101 Strategies for Adult Assistants in K-8 Classrooms* and praise for *Educating America Desktop Flipbook*.

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Brief Introduction

Since 2000, Paddy Eger has dozens of newspaper and magazine articles, over a hundred blog articles, and three book awards for her two nonfiction books *Educating America*.

Her debut novel, *84 Ribbons*, the first in a trilogy, about the fiercely competitive world of ballet. Paddy's soon to be released YA adventure novel *Tasman*, was inspired by a trip to the brutal penal colony in Port Arthur, Tasmania.

Paddy's books are available at select bookstores, libraries and online booksellers. Chat, Comment and Connect with Paddy at PaddyEger.com

300 DPI 8 x 10 Photo file available from Paddy's website

Tendril Press

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Scan this Code to
Connect with the Author Online
www.PaddyEger.com

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161
Paddy@PaddyEger.com

Find me on

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Author Interview 1 — *84 Ribbons*

Q: *Why did you become a writer?*

A: I've always loved to read and write. As a teacher I enjoyed writing poems, plays, and songs for my students. I had always valued the volunteers in our school that I had trained. When I retired from teaching in 2000, I realized the wider need for training volunteers. I wanted to preserve and share what I created for my school. That desire inspired my first books, *Educating America*. It was then I realized my enthusiasm for writing remained strong.

Q: *Paddy, you've won several awards for your nonfiction books Educating America. What inspired you to jump into fiction and write 84 Ribbons, the first book in your trilogy about the competitive world of ballet?*

A: Stories come to me like an itch; they refuse to leave until I promise to scratch around for their meaning and write them down. Like many writers, our novels arise from our backgrounds. I grew up in a small town near Seattle, WA. where dancing was my first love. At the age of three I began lessons in tap, character, jazz and ballet. Over the next seventeen years I performed in local recitals, area functions, musicals and a World's Fair. Those years of dance, my life experiences, my travels and my ongoing involvement in supporting ballet and the arts inspired me to satisfy my story itch.

Q: *Why did you select the late 1950s as the setting for your story?*

A: The mid-century felt right. I grew up shortly after my heroine, Marta. I could discuss the time period and share the similarities of competition, worries about injuries and finding time for a personal life that still exist today in world of dance. I wanted young readers to realize that even though the world has changed, many life situations and conditions remain unchanged.

Q: *What's surprised you most as you wrote this story about Marta and her friends.*

A: I think it was when I discovered that writing and dancing share several traits. Both require practice and perseverance as well as a good sense of movement and a desire to share a deep yearning for self-expression. Both challenge our views of reality.

Marta and her ballet friend Lynne are small town girls competing with dancers' of privilege for coveted positions with a professional ballet company. Marta is a strong dancer but shy and unsure of herself away from dancing. I was surprised when Lynne stepped in, became my alter ego and provided balance for Marta's seriousness.

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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www.PaddyEger.com



Q: *What events in 84 Ribbons do you think will surprise readers most?*

A: *84 Ribbons* shares ballet issues like competition, injury and health problems head-on. I believe readers will be surprised that I don't shy away from those challenges and that I keep the doors open for readers to feel a sense of hope. Unlike many ballet stories, I've given Marta a life outside the world of ballet. That life allows interactions with non-dancers and a chance for her to learn that people in all careers face challenges.

Readers may be surprised to learn that story characters grow and change the longer an author works with them. Some act like petulant children; they have their own voices and often demand to be heard.

Q: *Paddy, I know you're retired from teaching but you still volunteer in K-8 classrooms regularly. How did becoming an author change your life*

A: After I became a writer it widened my circle of friends to include other writers across a variety of genres. We share the commonality of searching for the best techniques and working to uncover the most effective language for our stories.

When I became a published author it changed how I think and act and my awareness to the world around me. My choice of activities has shifted. I attend more events that provide inspiration for my current book interests: author talks, historical talks and ballet performances. Ideas for stories pop up when I travel, watch the news or a movie and attend conferences where I have the opportunity to speak with other writers.

My reading interests have also changed. Through reading I meet authors. I find myself scrutinizing such things as their word selection and use of imagery. I uncover ideas and techniques that improve my skills. That said, it's challenging to follow the suggestion to read more hours than you write. Even if my fingers get itchy to sit down and write, it's important to read, read, read.

Q: *How do you balance research, writing, volunteering and still have time for the retirement?*

A: During the school year I'm always busy. I'm an early riser so I write for several hours before I work in classrooms, lead volunteer training sessions or go to my writing groups. By late-afternoon I'm ready for other activities like my book club, hobbies and cleaning the house. My husband and I plan one or two trips a year around my writing and marketing schedule. Those trips refresh me and provide opportunities to uncover new story concepts.

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Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Q: *What's the most important message readers will get from 84 Ribbons?*

A: All careers have struggles as well as successes. It's important for us to meet those challenges, honor our definition of successes and work to change what's holding us back.

Since writing *84 Ribbons*, I've been told Marta's character is strong and resilient; 'I couldn't do what she did'. That's nonsense. When our commitment to our passion is strong, most everyone can dig deep and find their inner strength like Marta. We discover more about our inner strength and our resiliency every time we solve a problem. My hope for those who read the trilogy, *84 Ribbons*, *When the Music Stops*, and *Letters to Follow*, is that they will come away with confidence believing in them selves, saying, 'if Marta can do it, so can I'.

Q: *84 Ribbons shares with readers that ballet is a demanding career. What external or internal qualities must a dancer strive for to succeed as a professional?*

A: Successful dancers possess three important qualities: physical, mental and emotional tenacity.

Physical tenacity includes a strong body and stamina to work long, grueling hours. Ballet demands agility and gracefulness and the ability to finish one movement before starting the next. A strong sense of musicality is beneficial.

Mental tenacity includes dedication to the art of ballet. It's the boldness to dance thru minor injuries, drive oneself to keep up with new choreography and prepare audition pieces for solo considerations, knowing that many attempts may fall short of the goal.

Emotional tenacity may be the most difficult attribute to develop and maintain. A strong support system is vital. Dancers need validation from family and friends who recognize and encourage their dreams. Often personal lives are shoved to one side while dancers strive for greatness and accept the reality of ballet's extreme competition. The intense commitment to succeed often takes over a dancer's life to the exclusion of everything and everyone.

Marta, Lynne and Bartley strive to own physical, mental and emotional tenacity. They audition, join the dance company and give over their lives to reach for perfection. They laugh and cry together, share confidences and celebrate their performances in the glow of stage lights. All the while, Marta collects her 84 dance ribbons.

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Q: *What are you working on now?*

A: I mentioned, my husband I love to travel and those trips often lead to story ideas. During a trip to Australia we visited the historical remains of the brutal Port Arthur penal colony in Tasmania. The images and deafening silence of the site spurred a poem that grew to a short story and evolved into a novel. I am in the final draft of *Tasman*, a YA adventure novel of a young Irish lad in the 1850s who's falsely accused of a crime. The main character, Ean McClaud, struggles with his three-year imprisonment wondering if he'll survive the brutality or if he should attempt a daring escape. It should be on shelves at your local bookstore sometime in 2015. If readers go to paddyeger.com and sign-up for my notifications I'll notify them when the early copies are available.

Q: *How can our audience learn more about you?*

A: My website and blogs at PaddyEger.com share information about all my articles, writing and events. And—if you attend one of my events and mention this interview, I'll have a special gift waiting for you. I encourage readers to sign-up for my blogs, download free information, join a book discussion and find sneak peaks at new titles and more. I'll enjoy the opportunity to Chat, Comment and Connect.

Closing Suggestions

Interviewer—

Thank you Paddy for sharing your debut novel *84 Ribbons*. You have truly created an exciting look behind the curtain into the world of ballet and revealed the lives of young, aspiring professional dancers. Our listeners will surely want to get this book for the ballet enthusiasts in their lives. Ask for it at a your favorite local or online bookstore. And visit PaddyEger.com for reader guides, book discussions and book club discounts.

**For a selection of additional Questions and Answers
visit paddy's web site paddyeger.com/presskit**

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Ballet Warm-ups for Non-Dancers

Exercise becomes enjoyable when you take hints from dancer warm-ups. Consider these six ideas to create a relaxing, yet beneficial workout.

1. Ballet warm-ups provide exercise without strains or the need for heavy equipment.

Dancers use their bodies as their tools. Their exercises warm muscle groups slowly when they stand at the barre (French spelling for the bar attached to the wall that you hold for balance while exercising).

Some resources at the end of the article suggest you add two or three-pound weights for a more robust workout. When you do their modifications, these added weights are possible since many move the exercises from standing at a barre to lying on your side on the floor. The bottom line is you don't need heavy equipment or to leave home to create a thorough workout.

2. Ballet warm-ups require only a small area with room for a chair and space to stretch your leg forward, to the side and to the back.

When you step up to your straight-backed chair or your ballet barre, you join the world of ballet dancers across hundreds years who perform those same warm ups every day they dance.

Dancers wear body-fitting clothes to make it easier to see the changes needed to perfect their movements. If you use the opportunity to exercise in front of a mirror, you will see your body positions and will be able to correct small errors.

3. Barre exercises offer increased flexibility, fluidity and improved posture.

Dancers stand at the barre with their heels together and their toes opened out as far as possible without allowing their knees to bend. They tuck under their backsides and pull their bodies tall and taut. Ballet arm movements trail as though your arms are moving through water.

Exercises begin by flexing the knees and following the prescribed arms for the basic foot positions: first, second, fourth and fifth. Dancers take turns using the left hand and the right hand on the barre so the side stretches loosen muscles on both sides of the body equally.

Be patient with your leg turnout and the position of your arms. After you repeat these exercises a few times you will notice increased flexibility and fluidity. With your body pulled tall and taut, your posture will also improve.

4. Barre exercises increase your appreciation of what dancers work on every day to prepare for dancing.

The ritual of barre exercises appears simple, but each requires specific arm and leg placement. Once you begin a regular routine of ballet barre warm-ups, you'll appreciate how those slow, quiet movements provide a thorough workout.

5. The music used with barre warm-ups expose you the world of classical ballet music.

It's relaxing to move to instrumental classical music in 3/4 or 4/4 time. The tempo of your selections will vary according to your movements. Slow orchestral pieces accompany pliés

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com



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www.PaddyEger.com



Continued

and the early warm-up at the barre. More quick-paced music accompanies combinations of steps at the barre and standing unsupported away from the barre.

Experiment with the resources suggested at the end of the article. You'll sweat but you also enjoy the relaxation provided by world-famous classical music. It's a win-win.

6. Looking for authentic ballet warm-ups? Take a ballet class.

Enjoy learning authentic warm-ups, the mental stimulation required to execute dance combinations and the fortitude to show-what-you-know in front of a bunch of like-minded adults. It's a great way to exercise and come to appreciate a dancer's daily regimen.

Resources:

Ballet-inspired exercises:

Shape magazine articles on home ballet & ballet-based total body workouts

Prevention magazine.com/fitness (dancer's body)

You Tube: Look up ballet exercises, ballet-barre workouts

www.Danceclass.com shares exercises and ballet positions

Ballet music for exercising:

www.balletclassmusicforfree.com

<http://ballet.dancemelody.com>

Amazon: ballet class music (numerous titles to consider)

About the author

Paddy Eger is the author of recently-released *84 Ribbons*, a novel that follows the turbulent first year of a young professional ballet dancer. The first book and future books in the trilogy is available through your favorite local bookseller, online and from the author at paddyeger.com.

Character Count: 3873

Word count: 625

Line count: 55

Paragraphs: 28

More articles from Paddy Eger are available for publication. For a list of available articles and permission guidelines visit paddyeger.com.

Example Article - Available for Publication

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

Find me on   

Tandul Press

ISBN 978-0-9858933-2-3

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www.PaddyEger.com 

...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.
Parent

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

...*84 Ribbons* brings *Marta* into womanhood and onto center stage. We feel the music swell and the moment arrive—for *Marta*, and ballerinas everywhere.

—Emily Hill Author of
The Ghost Chaser's Daughter

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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Ballet Topics

Putting the STEAM in STEM

Why arts education needs a place in our schools

Storylines: 10 Best Loved Classical Ballets

Discussion of what makes a ballet memorable over time

What's a Dancer to Wear?

Taking a look at a variety of ballet clothes and footwear

Six by Six: Twelve Women and Men in Classical Ballet

A look back across three centuries to find the top influencers

Writing Topics

Facts in Fiction

Ways to seamlessly weave reality into your fiction

Finding the Bones of A Story

Cut through the clutter to uncover your story

Variations of the Writing Process

A look at a variety of ways to get your story moving

Writing 101: Seven Basic Ideas to Write Your Story

What I learned when I published my first book

Starting a Critique Group that Lasts

Tips to find and keep a circle of writers together

How to Finish a Novel in Less Than Ten Years

Ways to utilize ideas from proponents of the three-day, one-month and write-a-book-on-your-weekends methods

Writing Across Grades K-8

Suggestions to create a year-long writing program

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D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

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General Interest

Questioning, Thinking, and Listening Strategies that Work

Empower your own success through the use of higher level skills

Exploring the Ways We Learn

One size or one way doesn't work for everyone

Create Outstanding Group Leaders

Ideas and skills practiced by effective group leaders

The 9 P's: Keys to Effectively Managing a Group

Basic training to create dynamic group leaders

Topics in Education

Community Support for the Crucial Learning Years

Uncovering the community-school partnership that strengthens young learners skills

So Much to Do, So Little Time and Money To Do It

Ways to impact schools without increased spending

The ABCs of Volunteerism

Two dozen ways volunteers bring value to schools

Community Support for Crucial Early Learning Years

Inviting the community to partner with educators to strengthen young learners skills

How Volunteers and Assistants in Classroom Enhance Student Learning

Uncovering the value of extra hands in classrooms

So You Think You Want to Add Volunteers to Your Education Program?

Ten tips to build a strong assistant program

Bridge the connection Between Home and School

Ideas to keep information flowing between parents and teachers

Education's Top Three Critical Issues:

Budget, testing and classroom scrutiny

Paddy Eger

D: 425.420.5161

Paddy@PaddyEger.com

Find me on   

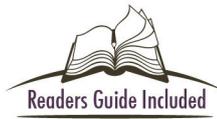
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www.PaddyEger.com





General Readers Guide

All of us lead complex and multi-faceted lives.

What are Marta's strengths? Her deficits?

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 its end.

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

The guide covers:

Key Discussion Questions

Post Reading

Creative Writing Prompt

Internet Resources

Related Readings

Select Interdisciplinary Activities

