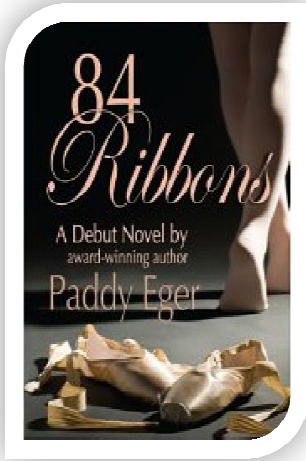


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- November 2013



November will be nearly gone before you read this, so I really should be reviewing children's books, which is always a treat.

Since this is a year of pattern breaking, I'll do those reviews in December, with the hopes you might buy your young readers books anyway. I'll have some wonderful Christmas selections to recommend, too.

This month I have a little story for you. Years ago, I was one of a four-girl dynamic group at our church. We did everything together and promised we would always stay in touch.

College came and we headed off in different directions, yet we sort of kept track of each other. Then marriages occurred, and the keeping track narrowed to Christmas letters and a "we've got to get together" now and then. But we were in different states or parts of Washington, and the close bonds of friendship eventually faded away.

Our group became two school teachers, a social worker, and me, a stay-at-home mom who started writing books. One day, years later, I received a phone call from Paddy, one of the girls in our group. She had gotten my number from a cousin of mine and we had a marvelous catch-up kind of talk.

She and her husband even came to visit us. I'm not sure how it happened, but Paddy and I talked about my writing classes and she said she'd always dreamed of writing, too.

She attended one of my week-long fiction writing class, held here in Tehachapi a few years ago, and I am proud to say that this month I have the honor of reviewing Paddy Eger's first novel.

Written for young adults, *84 Ribbons* stars a young woman, who dreams and strives to become a professional ballerina. I remember attending some of the productions Paddy performed in, for you see, she was a dancer from childhood. A very good dancer, as far as I and many others were concerned.

In *84 Ribbons*, all Marta Selbryth ever wanted was to dance. At seventeen, she is auditioning for a professional troupe that travels for performances. Making the cut is her first victory, but as she adjusts to life in the troupe, she finds that keeping her place, let alone growing into more prominent roles, is more difficult than she ever imagined.

Life as a dancer is not only hard work, but struggles with dance masters, trying to make friends, and overcoming health issues only add to her difficulties. Will dancing cost her more than she can or is willing to pay? As I read *84 Ribbons*, I was totally involved in Marta's story and cheering for her all the way, almost chewing my nails when she hit struggle after struggle.

Add to that the joy of being able to say, "Ah, I knew this author before she became published in nonfiction and now with her debut novel." The first of many, I am sure.

Good news for *Red River of the North* lovers, or the "Blessing books", as so many readers refer to my historical series set in Blessing, ND. I am writing *To Everything a Season*, the first book in a new series titled *Song of Blessing*. I am now back in North

Dakota with Ingeborg and my long-time friends, along with some new ones. The year is 1906, and I am so enjoying finding out what happens next.

Books always make good gifts and I have books for all ages. So blessings on your preparations for the upcoming holidays and maybe you might find yourself dreaming of creating some characters yourself. Tell someone a story.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine