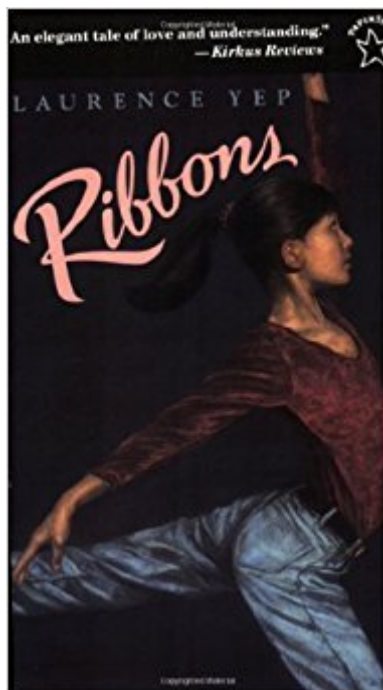


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# Ribbons



## Synopsis

If you asked her, Robin would say that ballet means everything to her. But no one's asking Robin. Not her parents, who can no longer afford ballet lessons because all of their money is going toward bringing Robin's Chinese grandmother to America. Not her grandmother, a demanding woman who can barely walk. And now, Robin is even losing touch with her ballet friends, who are moving on without her. It's hard for Robin to hide her resentment of this foreign grandmother who's changed her whole life. Then Robin uncovers a secret that leads to a new understanding of the many ways in which she and her tough old grandmother are alike. "An appealing story that draws readers into the world of ballet, while offering an authentic and sometimes amusing look at the dynamics of Chinese-American family life." —School Library Journal "Kids who appreciate a story about fighting for one's dream will enjoy Robin's saga." —The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Yep fumbles with this strained tale about an 11-year-old girl who yearns to dance. The star of her ballet class, Robin Lee has to give up her lessons at Madame Oblamov's academy when her mother imposes a draconian budget on the household, in order to save enough money to bring Robin's grandmother from China to the Lees' home in San Francisco. Robin gamely practices on her own, stuffing her feet into outgrown toe shoes and dreaming of her return to ballet school, but tuition money isn't available, even after her grandmother finally moves in. To make matters worse, Grandmother blatantly favors Robin's younger brother. In a forced parallel, Robin damages her feet

(those too-small toe shoes), and only Grandmother can understand her determination to dance anyway: Grandmother's feet were bound in childhood and, despite immense pain, she unbound them in adulthood as a way of embracing modern values. A lot of the characterizations here verge on stereotypes: the indomitable Chinese matriarch, the unstoppable young artist with a dream, the impoverished but noble-hearted Russian ballet mistress. Combine this with the adults' extremist stances (Mom won't even let Robin keep the \$20 her other grandmother sends for Christmas), and the novel reads as a lengthy contrivance. Ages 10-14. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 5<sup>^</sup>-7. Robin, 11, is a gifted dancer, and she bitterly resents having to give up her ballet classes to help her parents pay for her lame grandmother to come from Hong Kong to live with them in San Francisco. To make things worse, Grandmother treats Robin with contempt. But when Robin discovers Grandmother's terrible secret--her grotesquely mangled broken feet--their relationship suddenly changes. Chinese foot-binding is dramatic social history, but the contemporary fiction is contrived, with purposive dialogue and coincidences and heavy metaphors. Robin's feet begin to hurt because she practices ballet on concrete floors with too-tight shoes; and, in case we still don't get the parallel, she reads the story of the brave little mermaid who wanted to walk even though it hurt. Yep has written novels with considerable depth and subtlety about the Chinese American experience, but here we get only glimpses of Robin's interracial family and her neighborhood friends; they never quite come together as people in a story. As in Yep's *Hiroshima* (1995), it's the fact that's compelling. Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I absolutely love this book.

Growing up different was very difficult for me. Seeing how David Mixner managed to be on the national political scene was interesting. And the insights into the political decisions, compromises, and powerplays gave me insight into a process that is easy to criticize. I still do criticize it, but I understand the reasons behind the decisions better. Sometimes the authors just goes into a recount of events and happenings without offering enough personal feelings. I didn't always feel the familiar uncomfortable feeling of being a "stranger among friends".

David and his historical recollections are a treasure. "Stranger" brings to life an era of activism that

defined the 60s and 70s: messy, painful, exciting and necessary. His stories expose the frustrating political wheeling and dealing that only an insider could explain. This book is deeply personal and often heartbreaking, yet somehow after reading it I have renewed faith in the political process and the belief that society can change for the good! Thanks David!

Love it! Wonderful book of poems about love

A very good book, with a good story. And very a very realistic story at that! Laurence Yep writes wonderful books and I can't wait to buy more.

good interesting collection but very old contemporary poetry should be included in such collection overall is good book for literature lovers

Not sure why but many of the reviews here are for different books.

Ribbons is a really good book. The only problem I had was that it ended really quickly. I mean out of nowhere it just ended. The book left me wondering "Is that all?" I think that Laurence Yep should write a sequel to Ribbons because the readers should know what happened to Robin after the story ended. Ribbons is about a Chinese ballerina, Robin, whose family is poor. Her family is poor because Robin's mother paid for her two brothers to come to America and go through college. Now Robin's mother feels like she has to pay for Robin's grandmother to come to the United States by herself. Robin's family doesn't have enough money to pay for her grandmother and her ballet lessons, so they make her quit ballet lessons. When her grandmother arrives in the United States she comes to live with Robin and her family. The problem is that her grandmother favors her little annoying brother and acts like she hates Robin. The book was good because Robin had family and friends and you could tell they were doing everything they could do to help her through the hard time she was going through. I thought it was neat that she kept on doing ballet even though she had a problem with her feet. She loved ballet and couldn't give it up. I'd probably give this book about four and a half stars if I were to rate it.

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