

# Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities

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## The Irish Jig

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# The Irish Jig

**By: Laurel Straka**

*You can do this, Laurel!* I was in line, along with many other novice Irish dancers. The judge was a woman, with brown hair about five inches past her shoulders. I was dancing the light jig, and I honestly didn't expect to move up in levels since I was dancing in novice, and I usually only dance in beginner level two. I should have expected different.

There are five levels in Irish step dancing. Beginner One, Beginner Two, Novice, Prizewinner, and Champion. I am mostly in Beginner Two, but I have some dances in Novice too. In addition, there is adult dancing, but I usually don't count that. Two days before, I had been driving up to San Francisco in a stuffy, hot car with my friends Siri and Gemma, and of course, their mom. We were staying at their friend's house in a town about twenty or thirty minutes away from San Francisco, and sometimes getting to the church where Siri and I had our competition was a struggle due to traffic.

After we had curled our hair, eaten breakfast, gotten dressed, and piled ourselves into the tiny car, we arrived at our destination. Before I knew it, we were all lined up in front of the judge. My heart was like a drum, beating so loudly it was making my whole body tremble. My clenched fists were sweaty, as if I had just washed my hands and forgotten to dry them off. I could almost taste the judge's coffee, making my mouth water. I was seventh in line, which means I would dance third because you

dance three at a time. Before I knew it, it was my time to dance. I moved up to the stage, feeling like a mouse cornered by multiple cats, far away from my comfy home in which I dwell. Once the music started playing, I could barely keep my feet still.

I danced the best I could, but I still didn't think I'd move up since I was in a higher level. After that, I was done with my dances, so I decided to sit and watch Siri dance until the results of my dances were posted. Then, after I had watched almost all of Siri's dances, I asked Gemma if she thought the results were posted yet.

"I don't think so.....," she responded.

"But we could go look in case they have!" exclaimed Gemma.

"Okay, sounds good!" I replied.

"Let's go ask your mom first though and make sure it's okay with her."

"Alright!" sang Gemma.

Then, we happily skipped to find Wendy, to ask her if it was a good time to see if the results were posted.

"Okay," she replied, "but don't be gone too long, Siri has a dance soon and I don't want you guys to miss it!" she hastily added, before we could bound away.

"We won't!" we cheerfully sang in unison.

Finally, we flew out of the room, racing each other to the dark, musty room where they posted the results on the plain, gray wall. Once we reached our destination, we hurried to the wall where we saw a group of people huddled around multiple pieces of paper.

"I hope I move up!" I whispered.

"I hope you do too!" Gemma happily whispered back.

I walked up to the group of people, not expecting anything special. Next, something truly special did happen, and I was very glad of it. My heart was beating so loudly, I swear everyone else could hear it. But if they could, they weren't paying any attention to it. I shifted my eyes to the paper that said "Novice". Under that, there were many papers with words scribbled on them. I pushed through the crowd, so I could get a closer look at the blurs on the paper. I struggled in the crowd, each one of them as anxious as I to see their results.

Then, I saw it. The paper said **Novice Light Jig** in **bold** so it was easily seen by eager eyes sweeping the wall for results. I zoomed in on my vision, my eyes getting pushed to their limit. I looked to first place. Not me. Not this time. My heart dropped down to my toes, and my back drooped. I was disappointed, even though I had known deep down in my heart that I wouldn't move up to Prizewinner. Then, I realized I could still move up. There was still a chance I could get second, or even third! Though a slight chance, I decided I would risk being defeated and overrun. I slowly uncurled from my disappointed stance, and took a second look. It was as if my body was teasing me, making me wait. My eyes were a fox, waiting to pounce on the words that would announce clearly for all to see, either my victory, or my defeat.

My head was slowly moving upward by an invisible force, either pure motivation, or my impatience to see if I would be allowed a victory for once. Either one, I could not tell; but I think the second thought would be more like me. As I looked to the paper, I thought there was a mistake, maybe a typo. Maybe Lauren Starka was the true prize winner champ, and they had

mistaken her for me. But there it was, clear as day. I had moved up to prizewinner! I read it again and again, still not believing my eyes.

Was I truly prizewinner? Was that actually my name? Were my eyes just playing tricks on me? I called Gemma over, who I do admit I had completely forgotten about during those few seconds, or was it hours? It surely felt like hours to me. She gasped in excitement and, unbelieving her eyes to, asked me if I saw what she did.

"I think I do, if you see my name up there on the wall in second place!"

We hi-fived each other, and ran as fast as we could to break the news. I was so dizzy with excitement though, I had to stop a few times to catch my breath and stop the world from spinning. *Prizewinner here we come!* I thought. *Watch out ladies and gentlemen, because you're about to eat my dust!*

I will never forget the extraordinary day I had on February 17th, 2018. I also learned a valuable lesson, along with my victory. I learned to never doubt yourself, and to always try your best. I also learned never to give up, even in the most difficult situations. And even if I didn't move up, I would have learned a good lesson. Of course, this story would be quite different, and I wouldn't have that nice medal hanging on my wall. I am almost certain I would have tried my best, and that's all that really matters; to try your best, and enjoy the process. That's really the only reason that I continue to do feises (fesh-is), because I enjoy them! I also hope that you learned a valuable lesson, and always try your best, no matter the circumstance you are in.