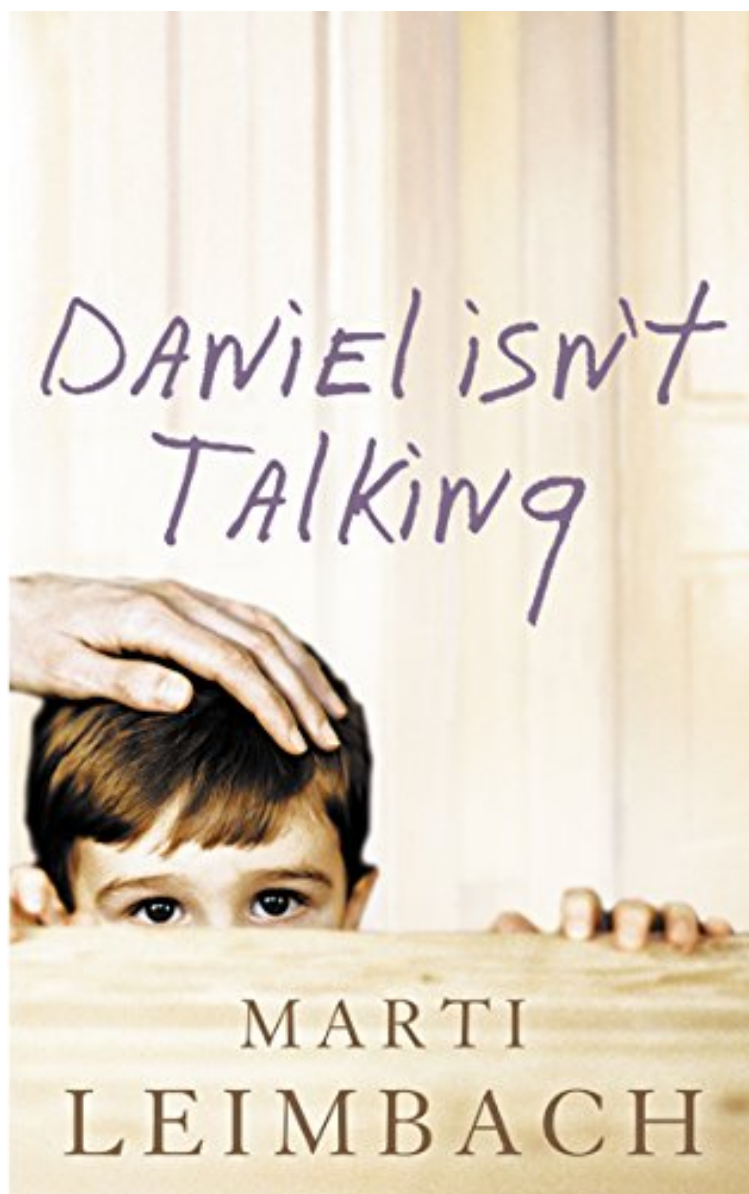


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# Daniel Isn't Talking



*Par Marti Leimbach*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA powerful novel exploring the effects of autism on a young family from Marti Leimbach, author of the international bestseller *Dying Young*, who has experienced and dealt with the condition within her immediate family. My husband saw me at a party and decided he wanted to marry me. Melanie Marsh is an American living in London married to Stephen, the perfect Englishman, who knew the minute he saw her that she was to be his future. But when their youngest child is diagnosed with autism their marriage starts to unravel at great speed. Stephen runs back into the arms of his previous girlfriend while Melanie does everything in her power to help her son and keep her family together. And then one day

Melanie hears about a man named Andy O'Connor, who calls himself a play therapist and has a client list so long she can barely get him on the phone. Some say he's a maverick and a con artist of the first degree, but when he walks into the house and starts playing with her child, Melanie knows she's found the key to her son's success, and possibly to her own happiness.

*Daniel Isn't Talking* is a passionate and darkly humorous novel that explores a mother's determination to help her child. A love story for grown ups, it somehow extends its wisdom far beyond the parameters of disability and into the substance of human nature itself. A tense, moving novel that will make you laugh out loud even as it breaks your heart.

Emily has a mop of blond curls billowing around her face, smiling eyes, aquamarine. Her baby teeth, spread wide in her mouth, remind me of a jack-o-lantern, and when she laughs it is as though there are bubbles inside her, a sea of contentment. She carries Mickey Mouse by his neck, and wears a length of cord pinned to her trousers so that she, too, has a tail. Kneeling on a chair beside the dining table, she instructs me on the various ways one can paint Dumbos relatives, who wear decorated blankets which require much precision. Unlike most children, who only paint on paper, Emily enjoys painting three-dimensional objects and so, for this reason, we own nine gray rubber elephants, some with trunks up and some with trunks down, that she has decorated many times. She has yet to find an elephant she thinks is a suitable Dumbo, and so we just have the nine so far.

Daniel has one toy he likes and hundreds he ignores. The one toy he likes is a wooden Brio model of Thomas the Tank Engine. It has a face like a clock, framed in black, with a chimney that serves almost as a kind of hat. The train must go with him everywhere and must either be in his hand or in his mouth. Never in Emily's hand and never washed in the sink, as I am now doing. No amount of reassurance from me, no promise that this will take only one minute, less than a minute, does anything to soothe Daniel, who pounds at my thighs with his small hands, screams like a monkey, opening his mouth so wide I can see down his throat.

Daniel, please don't cry. I give him back the train but it is too late. He's so upset now that he cannot stop. His eyes are screwed shut, his chin tucked as though trying to ward off a blow to the face. I am on my knees in front of him, putting my arms around his shoulders, but this causes him to wrench away, falling with a thud onto the carpet just as Stephen walks through the door from work. I could hear him from the street, Stephen says. He's holding his mail in one hand, his cell phone in the other. Standing at the door, his tie knotted crisply, his jacket folded over one arm, he looks as though he has entered the house from another world, one that is ordered and logical, one that is calm. He steps around Daniel and goes to the back door, waving to Emily who is making towers of blocks on our small patio. She runs to him and I hear the clap of her arms around his waist, her happy chatter as she tells him she made a tower as tall as herself. Stephen brings her over to where I am with Daniel, holding her on his hip. Why is Daniel crying? Emily asks. Because I washed his train. I try to smile, to make a funny face. He'll be okay, I tell her. Daniel, shhhhh! she says to him, but he pays no attention. Do you think he's allergic to something? Stephen asks. I think... I don't want to tell Stephen what I think. I only had that train for half a minute. It seems to me Daniel cries more and more with each passing day for all sorts of bizarre and inexplicable reasons. And I have no idea why. What do you think? Stephen asks. His voice sounds sharp, but it might just be because he is trying to be heard over the noise. That it isn't normal. Stephen puts Emily down, telling her to get her Mickey Mouse. I want a word with that mouse, he says mock-seriously, which sends Emily into fits of giggles. Then he squats next to me on the floor, putting his arms out for Daniel, who ignores him. It's the terrible twos, he says in a manner that tells me this is not a suggestion but a declaration of fact. He's almost three. Stephen sighs. He is so used to my worries about Daniel that they must feel a burden to him now. I can tell this is the case, but I can't make myself react any differently. He gets up and goes back to the mail, sifting through envelopes. After a moment or two he says, Young children cry. Isn't that what you always tell me? But not like this. I spend every day with young children. I see them at toddler groups. I see them at playgrounds. None of them are like Daniel. That's not why, I say.

From Publishers Weekly: Leimbach (*Dying Young*) notes on the back of the galley that she has modeled her title character on her own autistic son; the result is moving, frequently funny and never mawkish. The novel is narrated by Melanie Marsh, an American woman living in England who seems to have it all: Stephen, a rich if somewhat starchy husband; Emily, a vivacious daughter; and an adorable son named Daniel. But after a normal infancy, Daniel is beginning to behave strangely, throwing tantrums, walking on his toes, still seeking his mother's breast and refusing to talk. As Melanie unravels, Stephen remains in denial, until the dreaded diagnosis of autism is delivered. The marriage falls apart, but Melanie does not. She embarks on a frustrating, heroic mission to get the best treatment for her son, eventually entrusting his care to Andy O'Connor, a behaviorist with a dubious reputation. But his unorthodox methods get results, and soon, a bit too predictably, a romance blossoms between Andy and

Melanie. While the novel lacks the literary ambition of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Leimbach does succeed in making us care about Daniel and his progress. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.