



## **Louder Than Words**

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**The debut novel of an American original, Laurie Plissner is both medical thriller and lyric love story in the tradition of magical realism**

Since the snowy night when her family's car slammed into a tree, killing her parents and little sister, Sasha has been unable to speak except through a computer with a robotic voice. Nothing is wrong with her body; that's healed. But, after four years, Sasha's memory, and her spirit, are still broken. Then one day, she's silently cussing out the heavy book she dropped at the library when a gorgeous, dark-haired boy, the kind of boy who considers Sasha a freak or at least invisible, "answers" Sasha's hidden thoughts -- out loud. Yes, Ben can read minds; it's no big deal. He's part of a family with a host of unusual, almost-but-not-quite-supernatural talents. Through Ben's love, Sasha makes greater progress than she has with a host of therapists and a prominent psychiatrist. With him to defend her, bullies keep the world from ever understanding Sasha, he pulls away. Determined to win him and prove her courage by facing her past, Sasha confronts her past -- only to learn that her family's death was no accident and that a similar fate may wait for her, in the unlikeliest of disguises.

## Louder Than Words Details

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Author : Laurie Plissner

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## From Reader Review Louder Than Words for online ebook

### C.G. Worrell says

I devoured this book in two days on my Kindle.

Seventeen-year-old Sasha is still mute four years after the tragic death of her family in an auto accident. She has one friend and can only communicate via a voice synthesizer. As you can imagine, high school is a living hell for this girl. When she's saved from gang rape by a mysterious boy named Ben, Sasha is surprised to learn that he can actually read her mind...and what a witty sarcastic mind it is! I enjoyed going along for the ride as Sasha develops a relationship with Ben and revels in her first romance. When Ben eventually decides they must separate for Sasha to recover her voice, the stage is set for Sasha to unravel the truth behind the accident that claimed the lives of her family.

Laurie Plissner's debut novel is a fast-paced medical-thriller/teen romance that will keep you turning pages. The premise, writing style, internal dialogue, and sexual tension are great. I notice that the story has been criticized for the degree of sexuality, however no lines are actually crossed. I think it's an honest representation of what many high school teens discuss and think about.

My only criticism is a perceived plot hole: I wanted to see the four bullies get their just desserts. I can understand Sasha's reasons for keeping quiet about the attempted rape, but I wanted to see the jocks get nailed for drug trafficking, versus Ben just alluding to it.

On the whole, "Louder Than Words" is an explosive debut novel with a strong voice (no pun intended). I look forward to reading future YA works by Ms. Plissner. Kudos!

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### Abbie says

#### Actual rating - 3.5

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### jv poore says

What a cool, and very sneaky book! It begins with our main character, Sasha, reliving a terrible accident that ripped her from a normal life; leaving her a shell of a person, with no parents or siblings, no childhood memories, and no voice. As if the perils of adolescent aren't challenging enough, Sasha uses a "speak box" to communicate.

Before too much sympathy can be evoked, we learn that Sasha chooses to use the robot-voice on her voice box, rather than trying out the human-esque voice choices. Despite being an adorable teenager, she balks at fashion, existing in sweats and tees.

Like it or not, she attracts attention. As she walks home from the library one evening, four male classmates surround her. It can't be good. Enter our amazingly dreamy male lead, Ben. Well, technically, he entered at the library about an hour ago, but this is more dramatic. Not only is he hot, but he happens to be on his way

to martial arts class. Through a few well-placed punches and kicks, he convinces the boys to move on.

Oh, okay, it is going to be a romance....I'm down with that. Of course Sasha and Ben are immediately attracted to each other, when it becomes clear that Ben has an extra ability, above and beyond his black belt. Ah, intrigue.....this is going to be more than a romance!

As Sasha finally begins to live again, memories begin to surface. Was the car wreck really an accident? Of course, slick roads, going too fast, it made sense; but didn't feel right. Sasha risks a visit to the crash site to find white tulips and very bad poetry. The remnants of older bouquets are there, as are more cryptic notes. No. Not an accident. Someone tried to kill her entire family. But, why? Now that Sasha knows, won't she be targeted?

Aha! We have a mystery. This story keeps giving. The tumultuous journey to unravel the mysteries is absolutely riveting. Now, you won't be able to put the book down. It's okay, it's totally worth it. Skip your chores and finish the book right now.

While, I (clearly) enjoyed this book, there is one thing I feel I would be remiss if I left out. Sasha and her best friend speak rather frankly about sex—not actually having sex, just the stuff a typical teen would find in a Cosmo; however, it is enough (in my humble opinion) to leave out a younger audience. Without the sex-talk, I would easily recommend this to young teens. I would even suggest it for Middle School, Jr. High and High School libraries; but with the sexual language, I feel that I can really only recommend it to high-school students. This makes me sad, because it is such an amazing story, and I really didn't feel that those conversations added anything.

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### **Kristy Sartain- Whispering Pretty Stories Reviews says**

<http://whisperingprettystories.weebly...>

Wow! I haven't cried so much while reading a book since Nights in Rodanthe by Nicholas Sparks.

Sasha is the only survivor of a car crash that killed her parents and older sister. It happened when she was 13. She is now 17, lives with her aunt (her mother's sister) and uncle, and hasn't been able to speak since the wreck. She uses an electronic talking device where she types in what she wants to say and it speaks for her. Sasha has successfully alienated almost everyone she goes to school with except her best friend, Jules.

Sasha has gone to therapy with Dr. O since the wreck and still hasn't regained memories of her life before, the accident, or her voice.

Then Ben walked into her life. Wow. Ben. \*dreamy sigh\* I kept waiting for him to be a figment of Sasha's imagination or a ghost from another era. He is so perfect in every way.

The only complaint I have about this book, and it's a big one, is that Sasha didn't report the incident that brought Ben into her life. I'm very upset about that. Okay, maybe one more. What is up with Ben's parents? Is there a sequel coming soon that explains them? Ben told Sasha they had special gifts like he did, but their gifts never materialized in this story.

Overall, I really liked this book. I can't wait for it to be published so I can try to get it for my library. I'm not

usually a fan of contemporary books, but this one had \*just\* enough paranormal for me to be able to get into it.

I will recommend this book to students who devour Nicholas Sparks novels.

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### **Kath McStay says**

Louder Than Words by Laurie Plissner is a fun and fast paced read. To call Sasha, the main character in this story a sassy young girl would seem somewhat unusual, considering that she is unable to speak. We begin the story when she turns thirteen, and wakes in a hospital with her Aunt Charlotte at her side. Sasha has no idea where she is or why, because as hard as she tries, she can't remember why she is in the hospital. Her main concern in those first moments are for her family. She senses something has happened, but can't remember what. To find her mother's sister at her bedside instead of her mother is somehow not right. Sasha wants answers, and she wants them fast. This is when she finds that she is unable to speak. She opens her mouth to question Charlotte and nothing comes out. The inability to speak is a shock to Charlotte as well, and as she hurries to find paper and pencils for Sasha, a doctor comes in and things begin to happen in a hurry. There is no time for Charlotte to explain to her niece what has happened. Sasha doesn't know that she is the only survivor of a car crash that took the lives of both of her parents and her slightly older sister. No idea, until one of the doctors investigating her muteness inadvertently lets it slip.

The news is almost unbearable. But there is no way to turn back the clock and make the accident not happen. The only choice is to move forward. Since she suffered no apparent physical injuries, and there was no physical injury to her throat, vocal chords or larynx, Sasha's inability to speak at all was diagnosed as Hysterical Mutism. This disorder is most commonly found in children and adolescents after a traumatic event. In some cases, like Sasha's, the young person is unable to speak at all. In other cases, it is possible for the affected person to speak to specific and well trusted person within their circle of friends or family. Sasha learns to communicate with a voice synthesizing device, which she calls her Hawkie Talkie, as it is the same sort of device that the famous physicist Stephen Hawking uses.

Charlotte and her husband Stuart welcome Sasha into their family, they love and cherish her and do everything in their power to help her to find her voice again. According to all the experts, it is simply a matter of getting past the traumatic moment in whatever way it is possible to do so. But for Sasha, with no real memories of the accident, and not feeling the need to seek those memories, four years pass with no success. She is a studious and mostly quiet girl with a best friend called Jules, who has stood strong by her side from the days they were toddlers, through the accident and beyond. Sasha does have a difficult side, and this emerges through inappropriate behavior in school which often lands her in the midst of what you might call a bad crowd, as she is often sitting in detention. Unfortunately, it is there that she comes to the attention of some unruly jocks who learn her after school routine. Despite her school time behaviors, Sasha's favorite place to spend her time out of school is the library. One day she is joined in her little corner of the library by a good looking boy, and that moment has a momentous affect on the next part of her life.

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### **A. Bookzilla. says**

The premise of this book sounded promising. I was really excited to read it. But I have to say that in the end I

just didn't like it as much as I thought I would - or maybe I should say that I liked parts of it, and other parts of it - not so much.

The heroine is not very likable. From the beginning she just seems like this self-centered spoiled little girl, and while I tried to be understanding of her situation, she lost her family and her memories and it's a tragedy, the author laid the story out in a way that evokes no sympathy (maybe on purpose? I'm not sure) from the reader. To me, Sasha was just a brat and I couldn't get over it. Often times she would belittle Charlotte's efforts to do her best with this situation they were given, and I kind of resented her for it. Eventually she does get it together and even though she continues to act like a brat, I did warm up to her in the end.

Ben was a sweetie, and I liked the whole special bond thing they had. But both of them were constantly playing hot and cold with each other. Also, I felt kind of cheated, we never saw them get to know each other, it was more like: they meet BAM they kiss and date BAM they break up BAM...the whole first half of the book had weird pacing.

But it improved in the second half, and it's only then that I started to get into the story more, after the whole mystery about her family's death started to unravel. Even though I had it figured out pretty fast, because it was heavily hinted at, I still thought it was interesting.

Things that bothered me about this, and beware, there are spoilers:  
(view spoiler)

Laurie Plissner's writing style is simple and straight-to-the-point, and I did enjoy that aspect of it. This being her debut I have to say I was pretty satisfied, good supporting characters (Jules, Ben, Stuart, Ben's mom), great chemistry between Ben and Sasha (at least what we got to see of them - the library scene was so promising).

I want to give this a five star rating, because the idea was really good, but I can't overlook the things that bothered me about it. Sometimes a book is just mindless fun, and that's how I look at it, (view spoiler) So yeah, I would recommend this because it has a bit of everything: a love story, a mystery, a little thrill towards the ending and just a touch of paranormal, but don't expect it to blow you away.

\*\*Free copy of this book provided by the publisher via NetGalley.

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**Alana says**

**Riveting**

I loved this book! It was a relatively short read, which I completed in a morning. I think most teens could relate to the dynamic between Sasha and Ben. This book was a true page-turner.

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### **Nicole says**

Well articulated in teen-style writing; underdeveloped themes and overlying message.

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### **Sidney says**

I've never read a book quite like this one.  
This will be going on my bookshelf:)

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### **Wendy Hines says**

First, I found the premise to be totally unique and I loved reading everything from Sasha's perspective. She does have spunk, which comes through in her own mind, and occasionally through her voice box. The voice box basically works like this: she has a keyboard that she types what she wants to say and then a microphone thing speaks it. The only thing is, her's is set to the voice of a male renowned scientist. It's a bit off-putting.

Anyways, she doesn't remember anything of her life before the accident, and even though there is nothing wrong with her physically, she can't speak. She goes to a therapist to work on different issues but after four years, nothing has worked. When a handsome boy helps save her from being accosted, she is stunned when he can read her mind. She finally feels like someone can hear HER and not just her words. Although she and Ben fall head over heels together, he decides she needs to find herself and her voice, he breaks up with her, but he's always waiting and watching.

Determined to get Ben back, Sasha immediately gets to work, even as she nurtures a broken heart. With the help of her best friend Jules, they try to go back to that fateful winter day of the accident, only what they find out isn't what they expected at all. It wasn't an accident at all, but can Sasha remember what happened before she's next?

I loved this book but I did have a few concerns with it. It's geared toward young adults, but there is a lot of heavy petting and sex talk in this book. I would suggest a mature teen audience, like seventeen and up! Also, there is quite a bit of swearing and two scenes of bullies trying to have forced sexual favors. I definitely wouldn't want my teenager to read this, and she's sixteen. The other concern I had was the font. Silly, I know. But when Sasha is speaking through her voicebox, all the words are capitalized, which is very off-putting. When she's writing, it's all bold and cursive and when she's talking to Ben in her head, it's italicized. It's really hard to get used to all of the fonts and figuring out what's going on with the who and the what. All in all, though, I enjoyed the premise and although I figured out who the killer was, I was surprised with the why.

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### **Viviane Crystal says**

Sasha's world came to a screeching halt on the night when a devastating accident killed her parents and younger sister. Sasha can't remember a thing that happened that night. All she knows is that she's been

unable to speak since that awful night!

A famous psychiatrist who has practiced around the world seems unable to make any progress with Sasha. But now her attention is distracted by a young fellow student she meets. Ben has the uncanny ability to read the minds of people he is close to in physical space. It's unnerving to say the least and yet Ben's gentle revelations of Sasha's thoughts begin to make her face what a private hell she's created for herself by constantly focusing on her inability to communicate.

The challenge Ben springs on Sasha is quite startling, especially considering that she has totally fallen for him and wants to be treated like a girlfriend. To Ben, however, Sasha needs to overcome her disability, to totally heal as much as one can in her experience. Her anger over this ultimatum and the help of Ben's mother, a woman with her own unique alternative therapy skills, pushes Sasha to a new level.

The clues and memories that return are gradual and then absolutely stunning when it all comes together. While the end might be considered too neatly tied up, it is very, very real to Sasha and is worth reading to see what finally frees her from her own self-imprisonment and a very real danger!

*Louder Than Words* is a fast-paced, young adult novel that will rivet readers' attention to the very last page. Nicely done, Laurie Plissner!

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### **Stuti (Turmeric isn't your friend. It will fly your ship says**

Review also appears on my blog At the End of the Story

So the book starts with our protagonist reliving(sort of), in her sleep, the accident that decimated her entire family and lost her the use of her voice. I had no particular reason to, but I felt like this book was going to be a mish-mash of *If I Stay*, *Where She Went* and *Forgotten*. And it was, to a certain extent.

Now, Sasha employs an electronic "voice-box" to do the talking for her. For this, she becomes the victim of much ridicule at her school. But I felt like that was partially her fault. She herself never came to grips with that fact, but she expects other teenagers(who are obviously immature, Yours Truly excluded). Even though it's been years since the accident and Sasha insists on telling everyone that she's giving up, it doesn't seem like she even tried to recover the use of her voice in the first place. Reason? She insists on using the default monotonous(Stephen Hawking wannabe much?), robot-voice instead of the various, more explicit and expressive options available to her, which would probably make it easier for others to accept her. But that's her decision and she clearly doesn't want to be part of the mainstream, so I respect her for it and also, I understood her incentives somewhat.

**Act One, Scene One: Sasha walks out of the library. Enter four goons from High School who try to rape her. Enter hunk, sweeping in and saving her virtue with his killer ninja skills and Nun-Chuck.**

A bit too fairy-tale-like and not up my alley. Not that I'm saying I've anything against fairytale.

**Act One, Scene Two: Hunk tells her "I can read minds, as one does." Sasha gets doe-eyed, with not the appropriate response to the trauma she experienced. Worries about him knowing her deep, dark secrets.**

It takes people months of therapy to deal with almost getting raped by people they know. Rather, almost getting raped, period. Whereas Sasha only feels a slight headache and nausea and later on, after a good scrubbing, the chapter is all over.

Of course, why didn't she know that? And obviously, she accepts it without batting an eyelid. But perhaps, she's read too many books and is very familiar with the idea of mind-reading. I am; I probably would have had that same response.

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Geez, that's tiresome- rehashing everything that happened in Acts and Scenes. I'm gonna stop or it'll get very spoiler-y.

I did NOT care for Sasha at least for the first part, where she only worries "why isn't he responding to my signal when he can read my mind? why?" However, in the next portion (view spoiler) she develops so much as a character and is way more likable.

The premise of the book is interesting and the author's writing flows smoothly. And I would like to check out her next book. Also, there is too much sexual content but it's dealt with realistically, I suppose. Her friend, Jules, is pleasant enough. But both Ben Fisher and Jules didn't feel that real; they had no real qualms with her and felt like they were just along for the ride.

The last bit that aggravated me was when she says:

**ISN'T IT LOGICAL? WHAT GUY WOULD WANT ME IF HE HAD TO LISTEN TO THIS ROBOT-VOICE ALL DAY?**

And Ben, or Jules, doesn't contradict her. Do they accept that? So now all the mute persons have to look for a mind-reader for themselves to be happy. And that robot-voice missy, is your own damn stubbornness. Also, I would have loved if we didn't receive such closure at the end and that last thread(regarding her larynx) shouldn't have been tied so neatly.

All that said, I enjoyed this book and I would recommend it to anyone looking for an entertaining read to pass these unbelievably cold and foggy days, snuggled in a HP comforter and sipping chocolate, trying not to count the days until the next installments of Daughter of Smoke and Bone and Unspoken come out. Oh why didn't I *think* of that for myself?

*Many, many thanks to NetGalley for providing an ARC.*

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**Tara Chevrestt says**

I was drawn to this book due to the fact it features a disabled heroine: a young girl with hysterical (selective) muteness. Due to a car crash in which she lost her parents and sister, PTSD has rendered her speechless.

Wanting to keep people at bay, she uses a robotic voice, drawing lots of backlash and Stephen Hawking's jokes--even from teachers. She's an outcast, a misfit. I understood and sympathized with her.

And she has an incredibly LOL sarcastic humor and wit. I loved it and was all set to give this book a five 'til the hero really entered the picture.

At first I was perturbed by the "I can read your mind" thing. It was just too convenient. Personally, I would have preferred he love her, ROBOT VOICE AND ALL, than be able to talk to her without it. How do we know he really cares for her? After all, she can just telepath her thoughts. Would he love her so much if she was using her hawkie talkie every ten minutes?

Then, he did the inexcusable in my eyes. He told her he wouldn't be with her until she talks again. I don't care if it's selective muteness, she has a disability, and you must accept her for how she is. That would be like my husband telling me "I don't want to be with you until you can hear." I'm deaf. Hello? How rude.

I enjoyed the coming of age tale, the heroine's wit, the mystery of her the car crash, but I did not enjoy or like the boyfriend. Yea, yea, he claims he didn't want to hinder her healing, but I never bought it.

So I both liked and didn't like this. I think a YA book should tell teenagers it's okay to be different. It's okay to be mute, deaf, crippled, whatever. Don't try to change yourself for anyone else. But this book to me sent the other and the wrong message: change so you can have a boyfriend!

I still enjoyed it overall, though.

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### **missy Weeks says**

#### **Promising but not quite**

This book started out so great, but got so weird at the end. It was almost like the author spent a great deal of time developing the beginning of the story and then ran out of time or has at the end and rushed through it. I'm bummed that I paid for this book. Ah well..

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### **Lavender Darcangelo says**

Although Ben was just a character in the book, I almost started to fall in love with him too. Her boyfriend was very grown-up for his age and he understood her on a higher level than most. If it wasn't for him saving her all the time, where would Sasha be?

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