



## Talk to Me

*Sonia Ellis , Evanleigh Davis (Illustrations)*

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## **Talk to Me** Sonia Ellis , Evanleigh Davis (Illustrations)

Seven-year-old Maddie Reyes can talk to Mom, Dad, and 14-year-old Sadina, her sister and protector. But with the rest of the world — except for Bella, her robotic cat — she's too terrified to speak a word. Maddie wakes one night to find an intruder in the house, and now she's the only one who can identify him and save Mom from being arrested. Sadina suspects her best friend, Rio — especially now that Rio has started paying attention to another girl. With Mom in trouble and Rio acting like a stranger, Sadina's world is collapsing. And that's when her friends join together to help transform Bella into Chattercat, a talking robot that just might get some answers from Maddie.

Filled with beautiful watercolor illustrations, this captivating mystery, geared toward readers in grades 4 to 8, covers a range of important issues: friendship, teamwork, trust, making hard choices, and continuing to pursue goals, even in the face of overwhelming odds. With its key plot device involving artificial intelligence, the story contributes to student interest in STEM fields.

## **Talk to Me Details**

Date : Published December 2nd 2014 by FastPencil Wavecrest

ISBN : 9781619338821

Author : Sonia Ellis , Evanleigh Davis (Illustrations)

Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Mystery, Childrens, Middle Grade, Young Adult

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## From Reader Review Talk to Me for online ebook

### LL says

Had me on the edge of my seat!

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### Dana says

This is an intriguing mystery story for elementary and middle grade children. Fourteen year old Sadina's seven year old sister Maddie, has selective mutism and won't speak to anyone other than her immediate family and Bella, her electronic cat. When Maddie witnesses an intruder in her home, she is unable to speak to even her own family, and without her explanation of what she saw, her mother could go to jail. The story has some interesting issues and I think that young readers will enjoy it. I received this book free to review from Netgalley.

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### Roger Royer says

This is simply one of the most adorable books I have ever read. It never talks down to anyone and it manages to come across as a sophisticated and complicated read for everyone not just the younger readers it is meant for. The characters are very well rounded and explained well enough that they can be explained more in the other books and online material.

I have only one slight complaint and it is a slight. I really wish that the books were more affordable for younger aged people. The list price can be a bit out of reach for pre-teens and younger on their allowances.

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### Kelly Buffum says

I don't normally read young adult, but I thoroughly enjoyed tagging along for Sadina and her friends adventure. A nice read which wraps science into a story of love, friendship, and family, with some action to boot, all while highlighting the importance of how our decisions impact others and what it means to do the right thing.

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### April says

Talk to Me by Sonia Ellis is a book about a young teen girl, Sadina, trying desperately to help her 7-year-old sister speak. Maddie speaks just fine at home to her mom, dad and older sister, but as soon as anyone else is around, she is absolutely silent. Maddie has selective mutism and it isn't something she can simply overcome. Sadina worries for her sister and is determined to find a way to help her.

This book was short and moved quickly. It would likely be a good read for a pre-teen. Honestly, I didn't really enjoy it that much. I was briefly engaged, but the storyline took an unlikely turn that seemed forced. There is an element of STEM in this book and so I appreciate that it is attempting to promote those skills, especially among girls. Perhaps you will like this book better than I did. It is the beginning of a series that could be cute.

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### **Sawyer Lovett says**

Not perfect, but very readable short novel about a girl whose mother is facing prison after being framed for embezzlement. Tied up within that, she also suspects her best friend of software theft and her sister (who has select mutism) of letting her imagination get carried away with her concerning her mechanical cat.

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### **Heather Lawson says**

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley. Originally posted here:  
[https://heatherreviews.wordpress.com/...](https://heatherreviews.wordpress.com/)

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This story really piqued my interest when I learned that it had a character with selective mutism. Although this is a secondary aspect to the main plot - which is the prospect that the children's mother might go to jail for something she didn't do - it was nice to see it included in the story.

Maddie can't talk outside of the company of her immediate family - her sister Sadina, her mom, and her dad. The story is told through alternating first person from Sadina's perspective and third person from Maddie's. It's an interesting back and forth, but gives an important glimpse into Maddie's world that we wouldn't have gotten if the story had been told exclusively from Sadina's perspective.

I liked the portrayal of friendship between the kids. The girls were strong characters and it was great to see that the girls were equally as interested in the engineering of Maddie's robotic cat as the boys were!

This is a great story and a quick read, perfect for young children.

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### **Connie says**

FTC Disclosure: I received this book free from Goodreads hoping I would review it.

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### **Carrie says**

Great mystery fiction for elementary to middle grade readers. The heroes of this story are the children who use their wits, collaboration, and sensitivity to solve a crime.

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## **Bill says**

### **4.0 STARS**

A delightful read from a home town author!

Children's books are not a regular part of my literary repertoire but my personal albeit tangential connection with Sonia inspired me to take this one for a spin. I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Sadina is just fourteen but she's already facing some very tough adult issues. Her seven year old sister Maddie suffers from selective mutism, an extreme case of extraordinary shyness. She can speak freely around her sister and parents but shuts down around strangers. But even around family Maddie has gone quiet, hiding herself away in the attic. What happened?

While Sadina worries about Maddie and works to get her to speak, she's full of stress about her Mom who has been wrongly accused of embezzlement at the research lab where she works as an engineer on a new cell phone prototype. The thought of her Mom arrested and taken away by the police has her mind ping ponging in so many different directions.

And if that wasn't enough, her best friend Rio has been acting really, really strange. The missing software from school is bad enough but Catalina's involvement is even more bothersome. Why are they holding hands?

With her world turned upside down, Sadina, along with her friends, leverages math, science and computer skills to program Bella, Maddie's robotic "Chattercat", to get Maddie to open up. Deep inside Maddie are so many answers!

"Hi Bella," she says as softly as she can. "Talk to me."

More than a great book, Talk To me is a STEM teaching tool!

Sonia received her bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in chemical engineering from Princeton University and seamlessly incorporates math, science, technology, engineering design cycle, engineering ethics, and artificial intelligence into the story, all geared towards grades 4 to 6 readers. In addition to STEM applications, Ellis explores social skills like honesty, integrity, the perils of acting on assumptions and doing the right thing!

The related website, [throughmywindow.org](http://throughmywindow.org), allows readers to continue the narrative online by participating in learning adventures with colorful graphics, games, journaling, videos and other interactive elements. The website also includes information especially designed to help teachers and parents support students' interests in STEM.

The book has been used in classrooms in Deerfield, MA, as an all-school summer read in Stamford, CT., and in after-school programs throughout Bridgeport, CT.

This book was wonderful ... I highly recommend it, for young readers and adults!

Great job Sonia :)

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## **Wayne McCoy says**

'Talk to Me' by Sonia Ellis is a pretty decent young person novel. I liked it enough if I don't think too hard about it.

Sadina has a younger sister named Maddie who is selective with who she talks to. Maddie will talk with her parents, her older sister, and her robotic cat, Bella. Maddie discovers an intruder in her house one night and now she won't even talk to her family. The intruder stole an invention that Bella and Sadina's mom is working on, and now mom is about to be arrested by her company. Sadina decides to turn to her smart friends to see if they can find a way to get Bella to talk. The problem is one of her friends has a secret that is causing Sadina trust issues. So, with her family in turmoil and a friend acting suspicious, can Sadina find a solution?

Some of the elements of the story seem a little science fictional (talking cat, cell phone battery technology), but the story seems to take place in the present. Maddie's condition is a real one, and I like how it's presented in the story. Sadina tells the story, but Maddie has a few chapters, so we get a glimpse into how she sees the world. The book included some illustrations that were a bit hard to view on an e-reader, and I wasn't crazy about them. They detracted from the story for me, but I can see how they might be necessary in a story for younger readers. I'd say the age range for the book is pre-teen readers probably in the 10-12 age range.

I received a review copy of this ebook from FastPencil, Wavecrest, and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this ebook.

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## **Michelle Heegaard says**

I received this as an E-arc from Netgalley in return of an honest review;

A very decent childrens book. A great storyline with great character. Nothing to it. The only reason why I will not give it 5 stars is due to a few 'hiccups' in the writing. There were a few things just either made no sense or was a little too.. much.

F.x. all of the 14 year old children knew dangerously a lot about software and voice recognition. Without them even knowing what AI is. That makes no sense. How can 14 year old children know this much about computer science? What type of school are they even attending?

That and the fact that the mother was working on a battery that can live forever gave the book a hint of sci-fi. Which didn't match up with the rest of the storyline.

And then I believe the authors messed up the ending a bit. The concluded the story line with the message that you can always make other choices than the one you did. That seemed way out of the blue. The storyline had not led up to that and it was only mentioned in the very last few pages. That didn't work. They either had to make another storyline or another ending.

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## **Kate says**

Enjoyed greatly by 9 year old daughter. A strong main character who's relatable, especially in her relationships. A fantastic plot that kept her glued to the e-reader, in fact she found it very hard to put down.

A good sign is that she's asked me to buy a physical copy to read again and again.

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### **Susan says**

Sadina has a sister with selected mutism, Maddie. Maddie will only talk to her sister and parents besides her robotic cat named Bella. Sadina is enjoying her life except when Maddie disappears on her. She thinks life would be perfect if she had a normal sister. Much to Sabrina's surprise, she finds Maddie is the least of her concerns. Her mother is under suspicion for embezzlement and may be arrested if the evidence points to it. Will Sabrina be able to prove her mother's innocence? Meanwhile her best friend, Rio, has been accused of stealing software from his class at school. Did he? Why doesn't Rio talk to her?

This is an excellent story that is well paced with mysteries and relationships. It also deals with making choices. How does one know what is the best choice to make? It is not always easy to decide or is it?

Disclaimer: I received an arc of this book free from the author/publisher from Netgalley. I was not obliged to write a favorable review, or even any review at all. The opinions expressed are strictly my own.

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