



# Martha Speaks

*Susan Meddaugh*

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**Martha Speaks** Susan Meddaugh

When Helen Finney feeds alphabet soup to her dog, Martha, it goes straight up to her brain, and Martha begins to speak! But having a talking dog isn't always as much fun as it seems.

## Martha Speaks Details

Date : Published March 27th 1995 by HMH Books for Young Readers (first published September 28th 1992)

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Author : Susan Meddaugh

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals, Dogs, Fiction, Humor, Fantasy, Funny, Storytime, Science Fiction Fantasy

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## **From Reader Review Martha Speaks for online ebook**

### **Ronyell says**

“Martha Speaks” is a classic children’s book from the mind of Susan Meddaugh, about a family dog named Martha who has quite a lot to say after she eats some alphabet soup. “Martha Speaks” is a wonderful story about this smart dog that children will enjoy for ages.

Susan Meddaugh has done an excellent job in creating a story about how a dog eventually begins speaking after eating some alphabet soup. Susan Meddaugh uses so much creativity in this story as she makes a dog talk after consuming alphabet soup and also brings out the moral of the story about the importance of being careful about what to say around people and how not to offend people, even when one is trying to tell the truth. Susan Meddaugh’s illustrations are hilarious especially of the image of Martha herself always having her mouth open on every page due to her talking so much.

“Martha Speaks” is probably the best children’s book about talking dogs and children will certainly love this book for its witty humor and humorous illustrations. I would recommend this book to children ages five and up since smaller children might be enticed to say the phrase “shut up.”

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### **Cheryl says**

A perfectly designed and told story, with layout, typefaces, broad humor, easy and appropriate lesson, all perfect for young children (not toddlers!). Adults have to let their inner child out to play, though, or else it may seem casual or trite.

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### **Maria says**

I discovered this book while closing the library tonight and can't believe I have to wait until tomorrow to read it to my 3yo. She is going to love it!

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### **Megan Bernhard says**

Have you ever slipped your unwanted meal under the table for your dog to make it disappear? Martha Speaks is a story about a dog named Martha who begins to talk after Helen let her eat some alphabet soup. Martha's family shared her ability with everyone, asked her questions, and even taught her how to use the phone. Martha began to talk, a lot, and it soon was too much for her family to handle. Once they told Martha to shut up and Martha's feelings were hurt, she stopped talking. It takes a big turn in the story for the family to work out their relationship with their talking dog.

This story can be very compelling to readers both in the real and fantasy world. Readers in the real world can relate to the strain on the family's relationship when Martha begins to talk too much. I think many people run into a similar relationship and Martha shows how she learns when enough is enough. The relationship

between Martha and her family can relate to the fantasy world because we all wonder sometimes what our pets are thinking and if they can really understand us. Your imagination can run wild while reading this story and you can begin to imagine how a talking dog would fit in with your family. Martha's ability to talk is introduced very quickly in the beginning of the story but is well developed through the short explanation of the alphabet going into Martha's brain. I think the fact that the food is alphabet soup and that the letters give Martha the ability to talk really make the fantasy convincing. It is also consistent because when Martha does not have the soup for a while she loses her ability to talk which adds a spin to the fantasy. Throughout the story the author maintains a sense of logic and order in the world she creates in which Martha speaks. Martha explains stories from her past, her thoughts, and really doesn't have much of a filter. This all makes sense because Martha is excited about her new ability and doesn't really think before she talks. This can also relate back to the real world but helping to understand how your words influence others.

I really enjoyed this story because my dog is one of my best friends and I find myself talking to her about a lot of things and I could picture myself in a child's shoes wondering if my dog would learn to talk, what would she have to say about all my stories. What really struck me was the relationship Martha formed with her family around her ability to speak. It is amazing what power oral language has on a relationship. I would use this story in the classroom by having students tell a story about what they would do if their pet could talk. Students could create interview questions about what they would want to find out from their talking pet. I enjoyed this story because it is a fun loving twist on the relationship that families have with their pets.

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### **Luisa Knight says**

A comical book about a dog that eats alphabet soup one day and mysteriously talks! Enjoy the read and be sure to follow it up with your own bowl of alphabet soup. \*wink

Ages: 4 - 8

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### **Rebecca says**

I read it so I would know what Marisa's Martha program is all about. Hilarious! Martha the dog eats some alphabet soup and gains the ability to talk. This has to be an advantage for Martha and her owners...right?! Wrong! Great depiction of learning the best times to speak up.

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### **Heidi-Marie says**

I've been familiar with the premise of this book for so long, that somehow I forgot to ever read it! Good thing I was considering it for storytime and "re-reading" it for practice. The story is cute, but it's all of Martha's speech bubbles that made the book for me. Will have to read in storytime one day, but not what I'm thinking with the Food & Thanksgiving theme.

12/25/15 I only had one family (with 2 kids to work with), so I let the kids pick which book to read and when. This was the second choice. The 2-year-old lost interest (which can be pretty typical), but the 4-year old enjoyed it.

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### **Mary Ward says**

Martha Speaks by Susan Meddaugh is an excellent fantasy book. Martha, is just an ordinary family dog until one day she is fed alphabet soup. She learns to speak. Her new found talent is amusing until it gets out of control. Eventually her family grows tired of her endless chatter and orders her to "shut up". Offended, Martha stops talking and stops eating her alphabet soup. Her family grows worried, and not until a burglar breaks in does Martha return to her talking habits. She uses her talents appropriately and saves the day by calling for help.

This is well written according to literary standards. The plot is well organized. First we introduced, and then we discover the complication of the dogs new ability. The family grows tired of Martha selfish chatter, and the conflict increases as Martha had lost the ability to talk, due to her refusal to eat alphabet soup in hopes to satisfy her family, when she truly needed it to stop the burglar.

The author made it clear that at first, the alphabet soup was an awesome discovery. They joked and showed off their dogs rare ability. They quickly grew tired of her chatter, and antics. When Martha learned to use her ability for good, the family appreciated it once again. They were grateful to have a dog with such abilities.

Despite the insanity behind a dog having the ability to talk, I found myself as a reader excited to see the dog succeed. I disregarded the madness, and found myself anxious to see how Martha would use her talent for good. I was happy she found an appropriate use for talking.

Martha Speaks is a great book to have in the classroom. It obeys all the criteria necessary for a fantasy fiction book. It is well written as far as plot, characters, and themes. Martha, a rounded character, has a clear approach to her dilemma. Although over zealous with her talents in the beginning, she learns to adjust her abilities appropriately. The plot is well written and easy to follow. Although a talking dog is unrealistic, the burglar, a common fear of everyone, ties the story back to reality. When discovering that Martha controls her talents for the good of everyone else, I felt a sense of delight and excitement to see the families reaction.

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### **Stacy says**

If you are familiar with the show, then you already know all about the book, but if not, Martha is a normal dog until one day her owner family feed her alphabet soup. Instead of the noodles going to her stomach, they went to her brain, giving her the ability to speak, and when she does, she does not want to be quiet. She talks to everyone about everything and drive her family crazy. We liked the story. : )

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### **Shaundell says**

Martha is a family dog who ate alphabet soup one day. Instead of the letters going to stomach, they went to her brain and she can talk! The first time that Martha spoke, she had a lot to tell her family and they had a lot

of questions to ask her! Martha talked and talked and talked, much to the chagrin of her family at times. One day, after getting in trouble for talking way too much, Martha decided that she wasn't going to eat her alphabet soup, that way she couldn't talk anymore. However, one night, while her family was away, a robber broke into the house. Martha dialed 911 and tried to speak, but because of the lack of soup, she was unable to speak. Barking at the robber, he offered her a pot of soup to keep her quiet. Her alphabet soup! Now she was able to finish the job with the police that she started just moments ago. She saved the day!

What an adorable book! I love the Martha series! The books are cleverly written and the illustrations are just adorable. They are simple and colorful and really add to the story. I also like the bubble thoughts and speeches that accompany the characters in the book. It makes for a fun reading with a one-on-one child, but not as a read-aloud for a teacher or a librarian, but it might get too complicated. I look forward to reading the rest of the Martha series.

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### **Cathy says**

Such a cute book! My little guy held it back from the library so I could read it with him, and boy was I glad. A great picture book for the little ones or a first reader for the slightly older. Clever, good visuals and, of course, a smart dog!

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### **James Govednik says**

A fantasy for young readers (ages 4-7), *Martha Speaks* introduces children to a world where a dog can gain the ability to talk simply by eating some alphabet soup. Martha's speaking ability allows us to see the world through her perspective as she reveals what dogs are really thinking. The humor will appeal to all ages, and it sets up the plot tension nicely. What begins as a funny and wonderful thing--"Our dog can talk!" soon turns out to have a down side. Adults will relate to their experiences of children gaining their talkative/inquisitive side, and children will relate to Martha's bold emergence on the world's stage contrasted with the sting of rejection. After a harsh rebuke, Martha withdraws to consider her options. Then, an opportunity arises for her to make the most of her abilities. It was nice to review a fantasy intended for younger readers and see that the same elements that work well in complex stories can deliver for younger readers, too.

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### **Allizabeth Collins says**

Description:

When Helen feeds alphabet soup to her dog, Martha, the letters go into her brain instead of her tummy! So instead of a "bark" or a "woof", Martha speaks words; but having a talking dog is not what Helen's family expects...

Review:

*Martha Speaks* is definitely a classic children's book, its popularity rivaling that of Clifford the Big Red Dog and Thomas the Train. Children and adults are pulled in by Susan Meddaugh's creative story-line and adorable water-color illustrations; Martha's world comes to life - especially when listening to the included

audio CD. I love the message that the book offers to children - communication is important, but you need to learn how/ where to use it - a great lesson for children of all ages, particularly first and second graders. I know that elementary schools in my area use this book, as well as the rest of the Martha series, and I see how much kids enjoy it, especially my younger nephews. Martha Speaks is full of great vocabulary, fun illustrations and narration, and is highly recommended!

Rating: On the Run (4/5)

\*\*\* I received this book from the author (Houghton Mifflin Company) in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

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### **Dolly says**

This is a fun book that is also a gentle reminder that we should not necessarily say every single thing that crosses our mind. We have seen "*Martha Speaks*" on PBS Kids, but haven't read too many of the books yet. Our youngest especially liked this one.

We borrowed this from our local library as a kit including a CD narrated by Kathy Najimy and a paperback book with ISBN-13: 9780395729526. Our girls enjoyed following along with the book while we listened to the CD in the car.

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### **Ch\_beverlyatwood says**

Martha is a family's dog that speaks and sure has a lot to say. I think readers ages 5-8 will enjoy this book and will relate to Martha's comments. The message of learning when to speak and not to speak that was learned by Martha is one that children must learn also. A snack of alphabet soup, or Alphabits cereal may be appropriate and most fun upon completion of the story. The text and the speech bubbles are a good way to point out "voice" and also to compare to graphic novel reading. I look forward to reading other Martha books.

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