

Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption

By Brandi Rarus, Gail Harris

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At just a few months old, Zoe was gradually losing her hearing. Her adoptive parents loved her—yet agonized—feeling they couldn't handle raising a Deaf child. Would Zoe go back into the welfare system and spend her childhood hoping to find parents willing to adopt her? Or, would she be the long-sought answer to a mother's prayers?

Brandi Rarus was just 6 when spinal meningitis took away her hearing. Because she spoke well and easily adjusted to lip reading, she was mainstreamed in school and socialized primarily in the hearing community. Brandi was a popular, happy teen, but being fully part of every conversation was an ongoing struggle. She felt caught between two worlds—the Deaf and the hearing.

In college, Brandi embraced Deaf Culture along with the joys of complete and effortless communication with her peers. Brandi went on to become Miss Deaf America in 1988 and served as a spokesperson for her community. It was during her tenure as Miss Deaf America that Brandi met Tim, a leader of the Gallaudet Uprising in support of selecting the university's first Deaf president. The two went on to marry and had three hearing boys—the first non-deaf children born in Tim's family in 125 years.

Brandi was incredibly grateful to have her three wonderful sons, but couldn't shake the feeling something was missing. She didn't know that Zoe, a six-month-old Deaf baby girl caught in the foster care system, was desperately in need of a family unafraid of her different needs. Brandi found the answer to her prayers when fate brought her new adopted daughter into her life.

Set against the backdrop of Deaf America, *Finding Zoe* is an uplifting story of hope, adoption, and everyday miracles.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Finding Zoe* is a heartwarming story about identity, self-acceptance, and love . . . Attending RIT/NTID after growing up as Brandi and I did, in hearing families and mainstream schools, is truly life-altering. Brandi beautifully captures the joy of finally fitting in, feeling at home and finding yourself."
—Dr. Gerard J. Buckley, President of National Technical Institute for the Deaf

"The journey in *Finding Zoe* is captivating and inspirational, and above all, a story about doing what is right for our children, as well as ourselves, no matter how difficult…and then seeing all of the pieces fall miraculously into place. *Finding Zoe* is a joy to watch unfold."
—Jill Smokler, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Confessions of a Scary Mommy* and *Motherhood Comes Naturally (And Other Vicious Lies)*

"A must-read for any adoptive parent, or anyone considering adoption. Brandi Rarus's story of *Finding Zoe* is an amazing reminder that the power of love overcomes life's most challenging obstacles and nothing can stand in the way of what's meant to be."
—Mary Donahue, Senior Vice President of Non-Fiction at Lifetime Television Network and adoptive parent

"Just as my character on *Switched at Birth* has helped to expose the Deaf community for what it really is to our mainstream TV audience, so too does *Finding Zoe* break down the barriers between the hearing and Deaf communities by showing Deaf Culture in ways never seen before . . . Bravo to *Finding Zoe*."
—Sean Berdy, actor on the ABC TV hit series *Switched at Birth* and Peabody Award Recipient

"*Finding Zoe* shines an unbiased light on teen pregnancy, adoption, and the sacrifice parents make to find the best home for their children. A must-read for teenagers and their parents, or for anyone else who may be contemplating their choices for an unintended pregnancy."
—Jan and Bob Charnecki, founders of Options Pregnancy Center

"A work of both heart and mind, driven by the authors' passions to describe our rich history as deaf people, that paved the way for deaf children like Zoe...a book that both deaf and hearing people have longed for."
—Greg Hlibok, student leader of the Deaf President Now protest at Gallaudet University

"This isn't just a book for people interested in adoption; it's an inspiring story that will touch the heart of anyone with a connection to children and families—which is to say, almost everyone."
—Adam Pertman, Executive Director of Donaldson Adoption Institute and author of *Adoption Nation*

"This really hits home… The story of a deaf baby who finds her way to a deaf family…and embraces her culture and language. A great introduction to the Deaf community."
—Chris Wagner, President of National Association of the Deaf

About the Author
Deaf since age six after contracting spinal meningitis, Brandi Rarus could speak and read lips, but felt caught between the deaf and hearing world--fitting into neither. When she realized you don't need to hear to live a

fulfilled life, she became empowered and was chosen as Miss Deaf America. From signing the National Anthem at a Chicago Cubs game to speaking at corporate conferences, Brandi traveled the country speaking out for deaf children and building awareness of what it means to be Deaf.
She married Tim Rarus, an advocate for Deaf people whose work inspired the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. Together, they have paved the way to bring new technologies that promote equal access in communication. Brandi and Tim live in Austin, Texas, with their four children: three hearing boys and the youngest, Zoe, a Deaf girl they adopted. Today, Brandi and her family are tirelessly dedicated to ensuring all children find their rightful place in our world.
Award-winning writer and teacher of the intuitive process, Gail Harris has experienced the joy of adopting a child. She brings her knowledge of the adoption process and in-vitro fertilization to this book, along with her ability to articulate from a hearing person's perspective what is fascinating about the Deaf experience. In the four years that it took to write "Finding Zoe," Gail conducted more than 75 interviews to uncover. Gail is the author of "Your Heart Knows the Answer" and a featured blogger on several popular parenting blogs. She lives with her husband and son in Framingham, MA.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephen Conway:

The particular book Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption will bring you to the new experience of reading a book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. If you try to find new book to learn, this book very suited to you. The book Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption is much recommended to you to study. You can also get the e-book from the official web site, so you can more easily to read the book.

Kenneth Roberts:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book features high quality.

Roy Rogers:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always try and and must have the extra time or they will get lots of stress from both everyday life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not really a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer will unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, often the book you have read is definitely Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption.

Mary Moore:

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