



## 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:**

#### **June Whitaker:**

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or read a book titled Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have other opinion?

#### **Aaron Ryan:**

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book specifically book entitled Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a e-book then become one web form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get just before. The Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption giving you another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful data for your better life with this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

#### **Edward White:**

Do you have something that you enjoy such as book? The e-book lovers usually prefer to decide on book like comic, quick story and the biggest one is novel. Now, why not striving Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied by means of reading this book. Reading behavior all over the world can be said as the method for people to know world better then how they react towards the world. It can't be claimed constantly that reading practice only for the geeky

particular person but for all of you who wants to become success person. So , for all you who want to start reading as your good habit, you could pick Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption become your own starter.

**Lillian Kea:**

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