

Alyssa Bresnahan

▶ Quick, what do you call a closet that contains clothes and a microphone? A recording booth, of course, says Alyssa Bresnahan. Makeshift but soundproof, it belonged to an independent producer without a studio, and it was one of the places you could find her in 2002.

Bresnahan began her career in audiobook performance just after college in the early 1990s when a friend at Recorded Books suggested that she call Executive Producer Claudia Howard. Soon after auditioning, Bresnahan received her first book to record, Helen Keller's *The Story of My Life*. "After that, it just kept going," she says, attributing her steady success to her young voice and a lack of competition. "There weren't a lot of people recording then."

Reviews for Bresnahan's work point less modestly to a talent for characterization, pacing, and a chameleon-like ability to match emotion to plot. "Why thank you," she says when complimented, and adds, "Finding audiobooks so early enabled me not to have to waitress. Right from the beginning, I was working full-time as a performer. How lucky is that?"

In addition to young adult books, which she still records—"they're some of the best literature out there"—Bresnahan performs a range of literary and popular adult fiction, mysteries, romance, and fantasy. "Reading is a gift of this job,"

she says. "I just finished Rene Denfeld's beautiful book *The Child Finder*, which soulfully brought home the point that abuse and cruelty can take on a life of their own if not stopped and healed. I'm also exposed to writing that I wouldn't otherwise encounter, such as fantasy. Now it's a whole world that has opened up to me." She laughs. "When I drop my daughter off at school, other parents will ask, 'You going to work?' I'll say, 'Yeah, I'm going to read!'"

Bresnahan has chosen not to have her own recording booth. "Everywhere I go, there always seems to be somebody with a book and a microphone," she jokes. "Actually, I enjoy the social contact of going into a studio and getting feedback from the producer and sound engineer. You see, when you record a book, it's gone. You don't know who's listening."

Occasionally, though, she has a hint. At Lincoln Center a few years ago, she found fans waiting at the stage door. "They'd say, 'I loved you tonight, and I love your books!' That means a lot.

"Audiobooks have been such a large part of my life," says Bresnahan. "They've been my bread and butter, and still are. In many instances, I don't know what I would have done without them. But it's more than that. They've been a very good partner throughout my acting career and have helped define who I am as a performer."—*Aurelia C. Scott*





THE CHILD FINDER

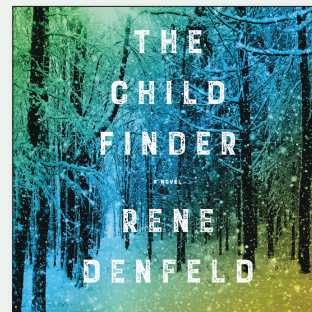
Rene Denfeld

Read by Alyssa Bresnahan

Naomi is a private investigator with a passion for finding missing children. In her current case she sets out to find Madison Culver, "The Snow Child," who disappeared three years earlier while her family was picking out a Christmas tree. Narrator Alyssa Bresnahan uses a fittingly solemn tone for a bleak and disturbing story. When Denfeld's story changes its point of view, Bresnahan's delivery makes the shifts clear. She poetically delivers Denfeld's prose with meaning and a tone of vulnerability and recounts the pasts of both Naomi and Madison hauntingly. The suspense of the story is magnified by her impressive narration. The story line, the connections between characters, and the compelling ending will not disappoint. *D.Z.*

Harper Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged

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*Bresnahan poetically delivers
Denfeld's prose.*

