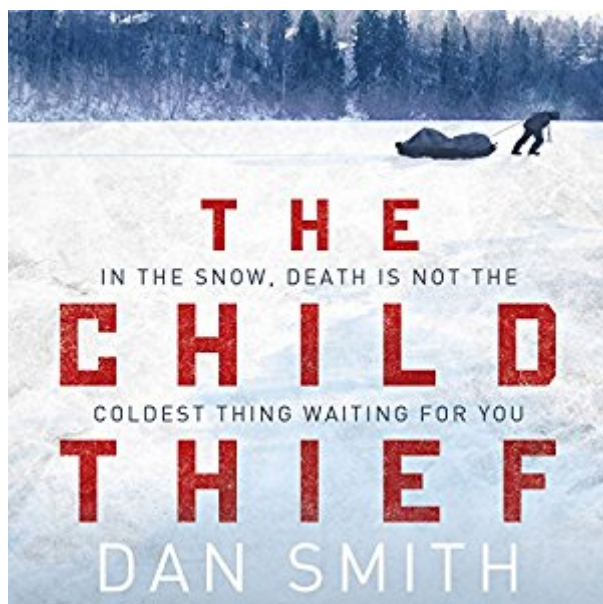


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# The Child Thief: A Novel



## Synopsis

In the tradition of *City of Thieves* and *Child 44*, a troubled World War I veteran races across the frozen steppe of 1930's Ukraine to save a child from a shadowy killer with unthinkable plans. Luka is a war veteran who now wants nothing more than to have a quiet life with his family. His village has, so far, remained hidden from the advancing Soviet brutality. But everything changes the day a stranger arrives, pulling a sled bearing a terrible cargo. When the villagers' fear turns deadly, they think they have saved themselves. But their anger has cursed them. In the chaos, a little girl has vanished, and Luka is the only man with the skills to find the stolen child and her kidnapper in these frozen lands. Besides, the missing girl is the best friend of Luka's daughter, and he swears he will find her. Together, with his sons, Luka sets out across lands ravaged by war and gripped by treachery. Soon they realize that the man they are tracking is no ordinary criminal, but a skillful hunter using the child as bait in his twisted game. It will take all of Luka's strength to battle the harshest of conditions and all of his wit to stay a step ahead of Soviet authorities. And though his toughest enemy is the man he tracks, his strongest bond is a promise to his family back home.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 15 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: September 24, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00ESILAPY

Best Sellers Rank: #52 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Espionage  
#441 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Military #470 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Spies & Politics > Espionage

## Customer Reviews

If you want to capture someone's attention, don't shout - whisper. In the midst of so many thrillers that shout - with fast action, chases, violence and gore - *The Child Thief* is all the more riveting because it is so quiet. Even Bronson Pinchot's narration is hushed, compelling you to hang onto every word. The search for the kidnapper is quiet in a landscape muffled with deep snow that

silences footsteps, but captures footprints, and the chase is a dangerous chess game of "come and get me if you dare". While the landscape is vast, the viewpoint is small and detailed, as if even a person's soul can be seen through the sniper's scope on Luka's rifle. A study of good and evil and of individuals struggling to save what is human in themselves through the search to save someone else. To me Luka is heroic in the best sense - someone who stays true to himself and his family in the face of mob madness, danger from the Red Army, and unthinkable evil from the child thief. One of the strongest characters I have read in a very long time. (This says Kindle Edition, but I actually listened to the Audible version. Did not see where to change that designation. For Audible members - the narration is top notch and adds much to the atmosphere.)

It is 1930 and the remote village of Vyriv waits in tense fear for the arrival of the Red Army. But it isn't one of Stalin's soldiers who breaks apart their town. It's a sick and dying man trudging through the snow. Luka and his son find the man, barely able to stand, dragging a leaden down sled. Upon examination, Luka discovers the man has been dragging the bodies of two children, one of which shows signs of unthinkable mutilation. The man is in such bad shape that there's no way for him to tell his own tale or come to his own defense so Luka, a parent and a former soldier, sets aside his suspicions for the meantime and takes the man into his own home to recover. The people of the village are not so willing to wait. When they get word of the man and the dead children, they demand immediate justice. In the wake of their actions it is discovered that one of their own has disappeared. For Luka and the people of Vyriv, the nightmare has just begun. There's a lot going on in THE CHILD THIEF. First and foremost is the cat and mouse game between the child thief and Luka. Then you have the town's fear of the Red Army who have been seeking out small villages like theirs and enacting punishment - whether deserved or not - for crimes against the country (crimes like providing food and shelter for your family before the collective). The setting is harsh both in terms of time and locale, which adds immensely to the tension of THE CHILD THIEF. If you enjoy fast-paced and well-plotted thrillers (historical or not), I highly recommend adding Dan Smith to your to try lists.

Awesome book!! A true cat and mouse thriller . I recommend this book to anyone who likes mysteries and thrillers. Not your usual James Patterson junk. Set in the Ukraine during the civil wars. This gives the book a totally different genre than your usual thriller. Highly recommended.

Absolutely thrilling book from the beginning to finish. I enjoyed the writer's style and also the

story telling. It was hard to put that book down. I have seen the book in the library window one day and decided to buy it on Kindle. It took me some time to get to reading this book as I had other books to read but man oh man, what a ride it is!! will definitely try other books by this author and a note to author from me is to not be discouraged by mediocre reviews, your writing is really great and I challenge the reviewers who left reviews like this to try to write something a bit good like this themselves one day. I say great job and keep these books coming. I am one of your fans now.

During Stalin's reign, Luka, a former soldier in WWI, lives with his family in the Ukraine. He hopes their village is tiny enough to escape the notice of Stalin's soldiers searching the countryside for labor to send to Siberia. Luka's fears come to life when he spies a dark form in the snowy distance. But instead of soldiers, he finds a nearly dead man pulling a sled that contains the bodies of two children who have been abused. The little girl has a big chunk cut out of her leg, reminding the Luka of rumored flesh eaters. When the villagers discover what was done to the children, they turn into a mob led by Luka's wife's brother-in-law, and brutally kill the man. Even though the villagers quickly regain their sanity and seem ashamed, Luka is furious. But a little girl, his sister's niece, has gone missing during the hanging. At first everyone thinks she has gotten lost but they soon realize the child thief who tortured the dead children has taken her. The brother-in-law pleads with Luka to help him find his daughter; and Luka, unforgiving of the man who turned the villagers into a killing mob, knows no one else has his soldier's skills. With his eighteen-year-old twin sons and the brother-in-law, he sets out on a complicated and terrifying journey to get his niece back. The first chapter or so were bland, but after that, I hated to put the story down. Good book.

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