

# The Carnegies



## The Carnegie Longlist 2026 Shadowing Resources



# Birdie

## Carnegie Medal for Writing

**Author: J.P. Rose**

**Age range: 9+**

### Description:

Set in Yorkshire during the 1950s, Birdie Bagshaw has spent much of her short life being looked after in a care home. Everything changes when she is summoned to live with her great-aunt in a rural, mining community. Birdie is treated with suspicion by many of the locals, but develops a deep bond of friendship with pit pony, Mr Duke. A thoughtful novel which offers profound comments on change and identity and reads as a beautiful love letter to living up North.

Themes:

- Identity
- Children's home
- Looked after children
- Belonging
- History (1950s)
- Adapting to change
- Racism – a mixed-race post-war experience
- Animals
- Respect
- Empathy

### Shadowing Ideas:

1. Have you ever been on the Yorkshire Dales? They are a very different environment compared to other rural counties in the UK. Try to locate a recent photo of the Yorkshire Dales using travel guides and online sources. Use this image to help you write a poem from Birdie's point of view as she escapes the school. What do you feel? What do you see? What do you smell?
2. At which point in history were ponies first used in the mines? When did it stop? Where else in the UK were/are there mining communities? Share your findings with the group. If you are local to one of these areas, see if you can visit a local history centre or museum to find out more.
3. Birdie grew up in a children's home for mixed race children. Read the author's historical note at the end of the book for more information about this and the attitudes of the time. The book begins in 1952, yet the 1948 Nationality Act encouraged Black people from the Caribbean (later known as the Windrush Generation) to settle in the UK. Research more about this and segregation in the USA and share your findings with your group. What other fiction books that navigate these issues might you recommend?