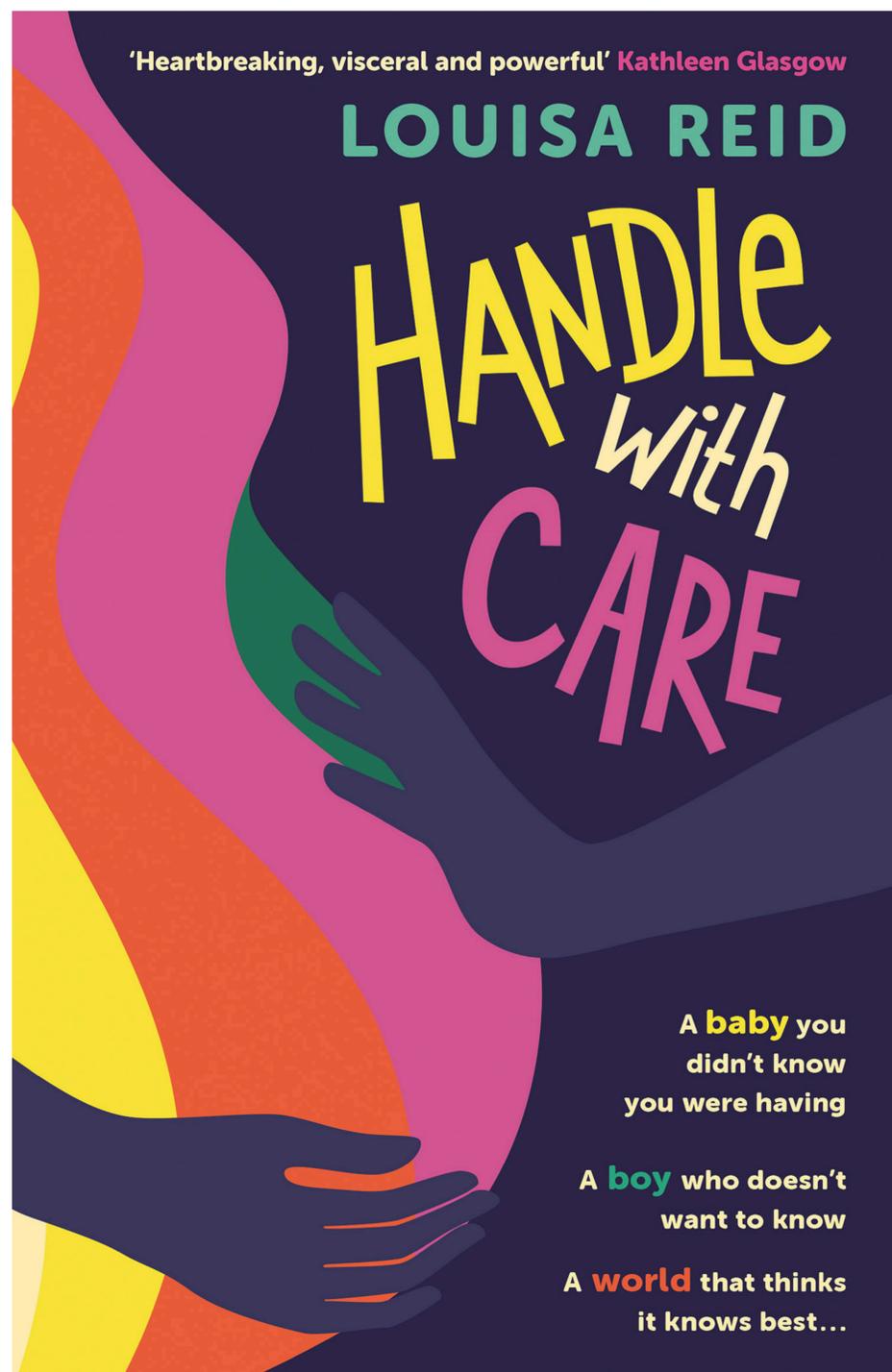


The Carnegies



The Carnegie Longlist 2026 Shadowing Resources



Handle With Care

Carnegie Medal for Writing

Author: Louisa Reid

Age range: 14+

Description:

Friendship and complex decision-making lie at the heart of this visceral, rites-of-passage novel where Ruby and Ashley are coming to terms with Ruby's unexpected pregnancy. Multiply narrated in prose and verse, this is an unusual and hard-hitting novel that invites thought and discussion while promoting empathy.

Themes:

- Religion
- Pregnancy
- Postpartum depression
- Friendship
- School
- Coming-of-age
- Emotion
- Social class

Shadowing Ideas:

1. In *Handle with Care*, we see the stark reality that often lies behind the idyllic Instagram posts. Often, social media content projects an idealised view of what our lives could or should be, whilst ignoring the complexities of individual circumstances. Create a photo gallery of 3-5 images from your social media platform of choice. These might belong to you, to friends or family, to your favourite influencer or a celebrity that you follow. What story is each image telling? Do you think the image is a true snapshot of that person's life? What might be going on in the background? For each image, create an alternative shot that tells the whole truth. You could photograph these and display them alongside the originals, create a moving tableau or even write a collection of micro stories to accompany your images. Photograph your work and share it with us, using the hashtag #Carnegies2026
2. Ash and Ruby's friendship sits at the heart of the story. Imagine you are Ruby, reaching out to Ash for support by writing a letter. Now, switch roles and imagine you are Ash, writing her response. Adapt your letters into free verse, paying particular attention to rhythm and flow. In pairs, perform your letters aloud - when are they most impactful? How does the verse format impact the text?
3. *Handle with Care* deals with a range of intersecting themes including mental health, identity, teen pregnancy, trauma, friendship, grief, postpartum depression, PTSD and family relationships. Build a booklist of readalikes that you could recommend to someone who enjoyed this book.