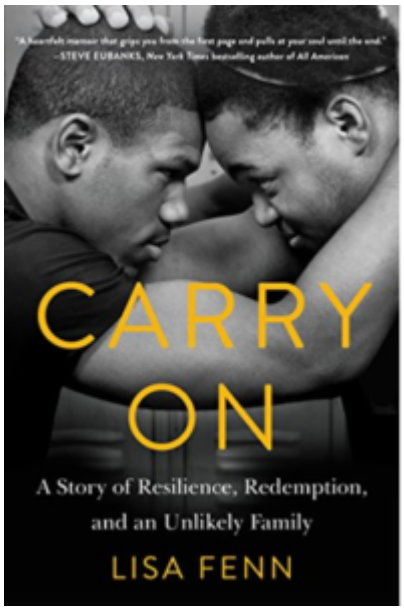
‘Carry On’ – a story of friendship, hardship

By Kathryn Reed

High school is hard enough for the average teen. Throw in poverty, neglect and physical disabilities and the outcome is likely to be less than positive.

Ultimately that wasn’t the case for two boys living and going to school in inner Cleveland. If it weren’t for Lisa Fenn, a producer for ESPN, Leroy and Dartanyon’s lives would likely have been remarkably different, and not in a good way.



“Carry On” is Fenn’s memoir of the time she spent with these two boys who eventually came to be like family.

It’s one of those feel good and gritty books all wrapped in one. At times I wanted to shake each boy to knock some sense into them. Fenn wanted to, too. She learned that their upbringing didn’t prepare them for things she took for granted. And while she didn’t come from money, her background was white, middle class – a far cry from what these boys knew.

I also wanted to shake Fenn. She broke a cardinal rule of being a journalist. You don’t become the story. She got too involved, crossed the line too many times. In the book she

admits it. Eventually she moved on from ESPN.

Beyond life’s struggles, what binds Dartanyon and Leroy is wrestling and the fact each has a disability. One is blind, the other has no legs. Their friendship helps the other to succeed.

While there are a lot of books in this genre – athlete with a disadvantaged background succeeds – this has a twist with the role of Fenn. It proves how one person can make a such a dramatic difference in a person’s (this case people’s) life.

My book club read this for January. We all liked it more than we didn’t, and would definitely recommend it more for the story than the writing.

HarperCollins published “Carry On” in 2016.