

Always Will

Lalae Mozie

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This sweet story of love lost and love found makes for delightful reading.

Lalae Mozie's novel about first love and true family, *Always Will*, is a lovely story. Fun and interesting characters, an always-developing plot, and good organization keep the momentum pushing ahead.

Kennedy Shaver is thirty years old and is a nanny to a family of girls she has dubbed "the Five." These girls are the family she never had, since she grew up rich with mostly absent parents, attended to by servants and, at best, disrespected by her younger sister. One night, after talking in her sleep about her ninth-grade boyfriend Theo, the Five convince her to tell them the story about her first love, and how she lost him.

Fourteen-year-old Mozie enjoys reading and writing, and this is her second published book. She has created amazingly likable characters: Kennedy stands out as a confident woman who wasn't always that way, and the book shows (doesn't tell) the circumstances that made her so. Each of the Five, though secondary characters, has a distinct personality: Stephanie is the baby at seven years old, Kameron is a know-it-all, Ali is impatient, Lauren is a bookworm, and Kelsey is "the best behaved child. Being the middle child, she kind of had to be to keep the family from falling apart, and she did it perfectly."

The author does an excellent job of communicating through dialogue. She also does it with humor. The scenes play like a movie:

"Omigosh. Sorry." I stood up then helped him up. "Wait, you freaked out?"

"Yeah," he said, blushing as red as a tomato.

"That's actually kinda cute," I replied.

The book is well organized, with Kennedy telling the story of her first love in parts, interrupted by meals, sleep, and the Five. Doing so propels the plot forward, usually leaving the end of each part on a bit of a cliffhanger. When Kennedy leaves the family, one wonders what has become of her first love, the family, and Shannon, the man she fell in love with but left in pursuit of becoming a bestselling author.

At times the characters' emotions turn quickly, and more explanation or development as to why their feelings have changed would be useful. Also, when Kennedy is telling her story, she talks of her fourteen-year-old self using an iPad mini and texting, technology that wouldn't have been around sixteen years ago, when the story Kennedy's telling takes place. Is the book set in the future? The temporal setting is slightly confusing, only for this reason.

An amazing story of first love lost and first love found, *Always Will* delights the senses without overpowering them. Scene after genuine scene plays out, creating a truly delightful book.

BETH VANHOUTEN (April 17, 2015)

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