

## I'll Never Forget

**Elsa N. Kibowa**

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*Kibowa's creative flair for comparisons clearly suggests that she possesses the talent to continue to grow and mature as a writer.*

Elsa N. Kibowa, the twelve-year-old author of *I'll Never Forget*, deserves commendation for publishing her first manuscript at such a young age. Two young women around the age of eighteen named Joe and Leslie have the best two weeks of their lives when they impulsively decide to go on an adventure with a biker gang made up of five young guys—Calvin, Chuck, David, Randy, and Matt. This premise provides the stage for a potentially exciting story.

The author excels at physical description of both major and minor characters. The clerk at a tattoo shop “had long black hair, a pierced lip, a tattoo on his neck, and he looked like a total rock star, which was weird because this was the twenty-first century.” Additionally, the author peppers her writing with inventive and vivid comparisons that manage to convey exactly what she means without seeming too bizarre—for example, “laughing like a hyena at a clown show” and “Twenty minutes passed faster than an Olympic runner.”

The relationship between Leslie and Calvin is dynamic, growing from initial attraction to love in the course of a fortnight. The pair represents the most dynamic characters in the story. However, an intriguing premise, inspired word play, and the foundations for a passionate summer fling cannot mask the book's many problems, one of which is the inclusion of too many secondary players. To name one example, the sudden appearance of Calvin's girlfriend near the end of the book creates a needless complication and taints the burgeoning love.

At only fifty-six pages, the volume brings up many intriguing plot threads only to drop them without adequate exploration. The plot reveals that two characters possess close relatives who have died in the past. The revelations of these deaths are made quickly without adequate discussion of the effect grief has on people. Indeed, the book's treatment of death typifies the narrative's larger issue: the book rushes through events too fast, not allowing them to be savored.

Additionally, it becomes difficult to distinguish the characters from one another because they have no outstanding personality traits. The book tells salient characteristics instead of showing them. People will change on a dime for the sake of the plot. To be fair, the author is only twelve and just beginning her published writing career. Her creative flair for comparisons clearly suggests that she possesses the talent to continue to grow and mature as a writer.

JILL ALLEN (May 27, 2015)

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