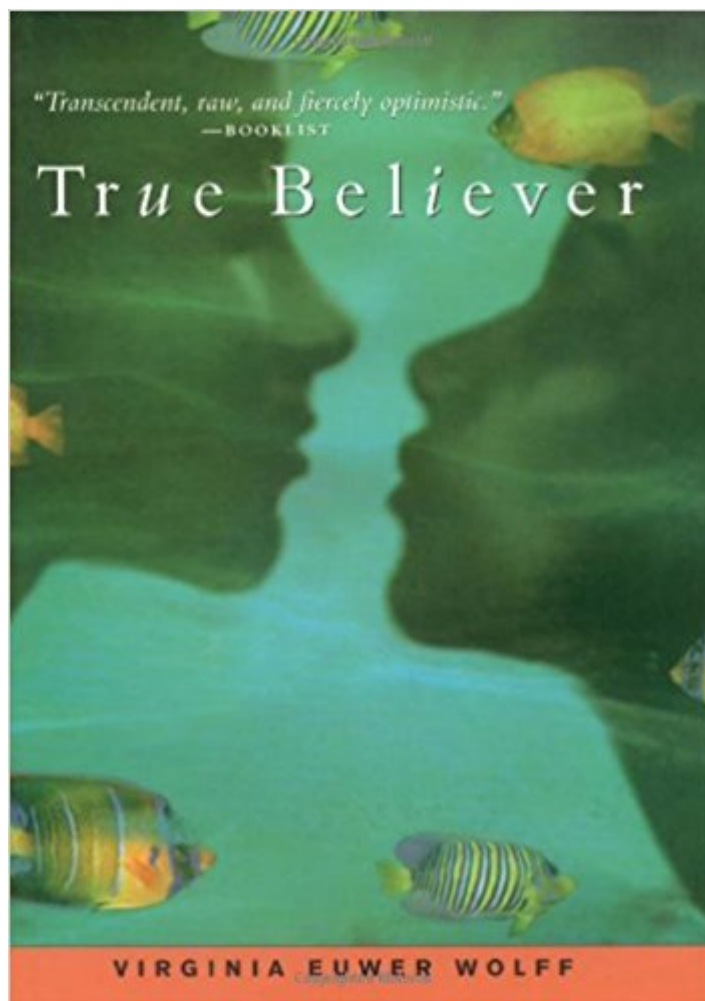


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# True Believer (Make Lemonade Trilogy (Hardcover))



## Synopsis

We have a multitude of obstacles to overcome here. We'll begin. When LaVaughn was little, the obstacles in her life didn't seem so bad. If she had a fight with Myrtle or Annie, it would never last long. If she was mad at her mother, they made up by bedtime. School was simple. Boys were buddies. Everything made sense. But LaVaughn is fifteen and the obstacles aren't going away anymore. Big questions separate her from her friends. Her mother is distracted by a new man. School could slip away from her so easily. And the boy who's a miracle in her life acts just as if he's in love with her. Only he's not in love with her. Returning to the characters and language she explored so profoundly in *Make Lemonade*, Virginia Euwer Wolff rises to the occasion in this astonishing second of three novels about LaVaughn, her family, and her community.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 820L (What's this?)

Series: *Make Lemonade Trilogy* (Hardcover)

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers; 1st edition (February 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689828276

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 58 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,156,400 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #113 in Books > Teens >

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Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Violence #264 in Books >

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

At 15, LaVaughn already knows that life is hard and that getting ahead takes a strong mind and an even stronger will. Surrounded by poverty and violence, she strives every day not to be just another inner-city statistic: "My hope is strong like an athlete. Every morning when we walk through the metal detectors to get into school ... it is an important day of dues-paying so I can go to college and

be out of here." Last year when she babysat for Jolly, a young unwed mother, she saw firsthand how an unplanned pregnancy can diminish options. So she ignores the boys, studies hard, and hopes it will all be enough to get her into college. Then Jody moves back into the neighborhood. Once LaVaughn's childhood friend, Jody is now "suddenly beautiful... He could be in movies the way the parts of his face go together." If LaVaughn's choices were difficult before Jody, now they're almost impossible. What LaVaughn doesn't know is that Jody has difficult decisions of his own to make--decisions that could turn her carefully ordered world upside down. The second novel in a proposed trilogy, *True Believer* picks up where the acclaimed *Make Lemonade* left off. Virginia Euwer Wolff's verse-prose is as sumptuous as ever, and her descriptions of LaVaughn's day-to-day life and feelings are sympathetic and achingly real. Readers will be eager to see where LaVaughn's choices take her in Wolff's next installment. (Ages 13 and older) --Jennifer Hubert

Eight years after the publication of her groundbreaking *Make Lemonade*, Wolff has surpassed herself with this sequel. LaVaughn once again narrates in blank verse, but turns from Jolly's story (the unwed mother for whom she babysat) to her own. Characters who stood on the periphery in *Make Lemonade* come to the fore here, especially LaVaughn's mother and LaVaughn's two best friends, Myrtle and Annie. Opening as the heroine embarks on 10th grade, the novel immediately introduces one of the pivotal issues of puberty: "Me and Myrtle & Annie,/ we all want to save our bodies for our right husband/ when he comes along./.../ There is several ways to do this saving." Myrtle and Annie opt for "Cross Your Legs for Jesus," a religious group with a narrowly prescribed outline for getting into heaven. With her characteristic intuition and wisdom, LaVaughn decides against this path ("It seems like a good idea at first./ But it doesn't feel right/ when I think about it"), and thus begins her solo journey to her own idea of faith. Along the way, the protagonist continues working toward college (with the support of her mother and some model teachers), falls in love, makes new friends and finds a vocation. With delicacy and sensitivity, Wolff examines the tensions that grow out of LaVaughn's decision to improve herself while leaving others behind, her choice to forgive in the face of Myrtle and Annie's intolerance, and her ability to trust despite a dangerous world. In delving into LaVaughn's life, Wolff unmask the secret thoughts adolescents hold sacred and, in so doing, lets her readers know they are not alone. Ages 12-up. (Feb.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I liked this book. I really enjoyed the first one, but I love where the writer took us in this sequel. I think Virginia Wolff has a wonderful smoothness to the way she writes and it really brings me into

her world with such ease. I'm excited to finish and read the final book in this series.

True Believer is an award winning book that many would just overlook on the library book shelves. I admit I would be one of the people to overlook this book if it were on a shelf near me. The book itself has several key points that will be great conversation starters. For those of you who have not read the book yet I'll try not to spoil it for you. The book is written in a poetic style that is easy to read and follow; so even people who do not like reading should at least try this book, it was written for you. I was not that interested till the very end of the book, but you cannot just look at your own personal preferences when you read a book. That is a very shallow understanding when it comes to reading (if you let your own personal bias or preferences get in the way of the book. The book is set in (I hate to use this word) a ghetto somewhere, and focuses on a poor mother and her daughter Verna LaVaughn. For the most part, the book is focused on the daughter and the situation at large. They live in a poor and violent neighborhood, and the two of them are struggling to get out of this situation by saving enough money for LaVaughn to go to college. Many of the parents in this neighborhood are trying desperately to send their children away from the squalor surrounding them. So if you don't consider that enough trouble already, LaVaughn has to go through the drama of high school and the life of a teenage girl (so if anybody thinks that they have it bad, think again). She has lost her father to the violence on their streets when she was just a young girl, and her mother has had to work some hard jobs just to support the both of them (while saving for LaVaughn's college fund). LaVaughn has to overcome her problems one English class at a time (for those of you who will read or have read the book you know what I mean). She is going through some very tough classes when her "potential" has been recognized by her school, and is propelled to the better classes. Verna has to deal with her extremist religious friends Myrtle and Annie throughout the story. Myrtle and Annie would probably be Verna's foil characters in this story and they are increasingly more and more hostile towards Verna because she will not conform to their religious group's standards or attend it with them. To make matters even funnier, the group is called "Cross Your Legs for Jesus", no joke! She is persecuted day in and day out by her once close childhood friends for most of the book. But since we are on such a good start of not making things worst (yes, I'm being sarcastic), LaVaughn is head over heels for this boy named Jody. I won't say how she gets a big shock, but when you find out you will be looking at the cover for some time. This book has many twists and turns with the struggles that LaVaughn faces throughout the text. It is a good read for any age, and is worth hours of discussion. It deserves the rewards that it has received (even if this book is not my normal cup of tea).

For me is a really enjoyed reading!

really enjoyed reading how the girls were trying to better themselves.

Book arrive in good condition

Adaptation. Jellyfish. Limits. Birthdays. Verna LaVaughn is a teenager trying to navigate through her emotions while she adapts to her so called life. LaVaughn has such an "organic" personality that really went well with the poetic feel of the book. LaVaughn was not consumed with all the typical teenage "vices." Her father was killed when she was younger and she and her mother had a great understanding relationship. She was going through a phase common to most teenage girls. LaVaughn has a crush, Jody. LaVaughn always kept college in view despite her low performing school and inner city environment she lived in. Her focus allowed her to be placed in advanced science classes and a grammar building project. Life was changing for LaVaughn. Myrtle and Annie, LaVaughn's long time friends, were changing since they had joined, "Cross Your Legs for Jesus." They were constantly pressuring LaVaughn to join. She was concerned about the toddlers she used to babysit, Jilly and Jeremy because their mother, Jolly was a troubled teen mom. There was her lab partner, Patrick, and his hard life in foster care. Despite all these things, LaVaughn's daily thoughts were centered around Jody. He had previously moved away for a better shot at life but now he was back and ever present in LaVaughn's life. What was meant to be a surprise gesture for Jody turns into a bigger surprise for LaVaughn. I thoroughly enjoyed True Believer. It was one of those great books that I just stumbled upon. Wolff didn't dwell on LaVaughn's situation (poor school, inner city life, single mom) nor did she allow LaVaughn's character to wallow in it. Initially, I could not determine LaVaughn's race. One just "assumed" it but the author never really pinned it down. That disguised part of the narrative really stayed with me. It was refreshing how Wolff incorporated fun science and grammar facts within the narrative. LaVaughn was a teenager trying to find her footing in life. I found it quite endearing that she sought to find her own path toward faith and developing her beliefs instead of succumbing to the peer pressure of her friends. Even though LaVaughn had a crush on Jody, she never came off as boy crazed. This was a well balanced Young Adult read.

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