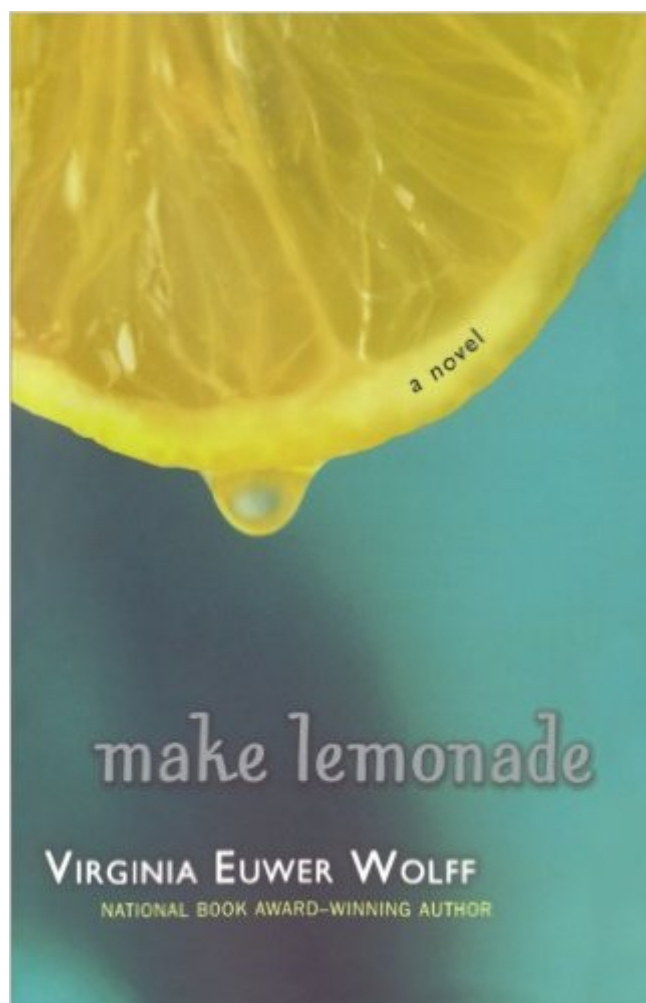


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# Make Lemonade (Make Lemonade, Book 1)



## Synopsis

An award-winning novel about growing up and making choices Virginia Euwer Wolff's groundbreaking novel, written in free verse, tells the story of fourteen-year-old LaVaughn, who is determined to go to college—she just needs the money to get there. When she answers a babysitting ad, LaVaughn meets Jolly, a seventeen-year-old single mother with two kids by different fathers. As she helps Jolly make lemonade out of the lemons her life has given her, LaVaughn learns some lessons outside the classroom.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (116 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

The novel *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwer Wolff is about a fourteen girl named LaVaughn who baby-sits for a sixteen-year old girl named Jolly. The book tells about what happens while she baby-sits, about the family and their hardships, and about how the job affects her whole life. The story takes place in LaVaughn's home city, a place where many of the people can barely afford the roof over their heads. The people living here are not in good shape; there are many gangs, drugs, crowded high schools, and low security. Most of the residents are poverty-stricken, single parents, pregnant teens, criminals, or unemployed. The main characters fit some of these descriptions. LaVaughn lives in tiny apartment with her single mother. She attends a crowded high school where there are many gangs, drugs, etc. LaVaughn's father died when he got in between a gang fight that he wasn't even a part of. Jolly a sixteen-year old, single mother of two also has her share of problems; she was left by the men who gave those babies to her, and she can't get a job that pays well enough to support her growing children. She hires LaVaughn to baby-sit after school for her

daily. Though sometimes LaVaughn doesn't get her full pay, she gets the love and admiration of the two children Jilly and Jeremy, and the friendship of Jolly. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, because it was not "sugar coated," or glamorized. LaVaughn's life mirrors the plight of many of the people living in this country. I also liked the way that LaVaughn helps Jolly in her time of need, most people would make her pay right away, or they would leave. LaVaughn and her mother share a common relationship that many teens experience with their own parents, no matter if they are rich or poor.

In the novel *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwe Wolff, is a terrific book that tells about a fourteen year old girl named LaVaughn who helps a teen mom get back on her feet. LaVaughn is a hardworking and an A student who is determined to get into a scholarship to a good college so she can get as far away as she can from this town and get a respectable job. Jolly is a teenage mother with two children who is barely making the money for her rent and is in desperate need of a baby sitter. LaVaughn, deciding she needs all the money she can get if not to receive a scholarship to college willingly takes the sitting job. Soon after Jolly gets laid off from her job and can't pay LaVaughn anymore. Read on and see how LaVaughn helps Jolly take control of her life once again. Some aspects of the book that I enjoyed reading was how descriptive the writer was about Jolly's house. The author would go on about the cockroaches crawling all over the walls and the gunk stuck in between the floor panels that no one would dare touch and try to clean up. This was told in such great detail that while I was reading this book I had a complete picture of Jolly's house. Another aspect that I liked about the book was LaVaughn's perseverance. LaVaughn keeps above average grades, baby-sits, and on top of that helps her mother around the house. All while she is doing this she keeps a strong hold of things and never gives up. I, personally think she is a very good role model. I also liked how real the hardships of Jolly and LaVaughn had to face. The author mentioned things like Jolly not having enough money for diapers anymore and how vermins were living in her house like there were suppose to be there. I liked this because if they didn't have problems to face then there would be no point to this book at all.

**PLOT SUMMARY:** LaVaughn, a high school student gets a job babysitting after school to earn money for her college savings fund. She ends up babysitting for Jolly, a 17 year-old single mother of two, who has problems supporting herself and her two children. With no family to speak of, Jolly takes the advice of 14 year-old LaVaughn and enrolls in a class at her high school that provides daycare for single mothers while helping them to earn a high school diploma. Because Jolly refuses

to get financial help from the government, LaVaughn often babysits and cleans house for free and basically finds herself being a mother to both Jolly and her children. JOLLY: Jolly is a 17 year-old mom who is, for the most part, illiterate. Having been fired from her last job for refusing her boss's sexual advances, she is having a hard time finding another job she is qualified to do. Helpless and alone, she meets 14 year-old LaVaughn, who is her lifeline. With the help of LaVaughn, Jolly struggles to get back on her feet. LAVAUGHN: LaVaughn is the 14 year-old daughter of a single mother and is struggling to earn money for college. She takes a job babysitting for Jolly but is so compelled by Jolly's situation that she continues to help even when the money runs out and even spends part of her own money to clothe the children. She becomes so involved in the lives of Jolly and her two children that she almost loses sight of her own goals. INFORMATION TO ENGLISH TEACHERS: This novel is a wonderful novel for the lower-level or average student. It is written on a level young adults can understand, and sadly enough, many students are able to relate to the problems Jolly faces as a teenage mother. A very short and easy read, students are not likely to lose interest.

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