

Extension Activities

- 1. Volunteer Work.** LaVaughn volunteers at a children's hospital, and the experience not only is very rewarding but also confirms her chosen career path in the medical profession. Find a children's hospital or other worthy organization and volunteer there. How do others benefit from the donation of your time and attention? How do you benefit from the experience?
- 2. Memorable Mottos.** *This Full House* overflows with memorable quotations and sayings, many of them inspirational in nature, and some of which are referenced in this guide's discussion questions. Select your favorite quotations from the novel and design a poster, bookmark, and T-shirt featuring the slogan.
- 3. Museum Trip.** Jody takes LaVaughn to visit an art museum, which he explains to her is a haven for him when he needs time to think. Visit an art museum for yourself and see whether it has a peaceful, Zen-like effect on you. What places other than museums might be good for sorting out your thoughts? Try visiting several locations until you find your own haven.
- 4. Double Helix.** LaVaughn describes DNA on several occasions during the course of the story. Research DNA more thoroughly and build your own double helix model using household materials, such as clay, wire, straws, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, gumdrops, marshmallows, or Ping-Pong balls.
- 5. Women Scientists.** Each of the girls in the after-school program must do a report on a famous female scientist. Research the accomplishments of one of the notable female scientists listed below and report back to your discussion group about what you learn:
 - Virginia Apgar
 - Elizabeth Blackwell
 - Rachel Carson
 - Jewel Plumber Cobb
 - Marie Curie
 - Gertrude B. Elion
 - Dian Fossey
 - Rosalind Franklin
 - Alessandra Giliani
 - Maria Goeppert-Mayer
 - Winifred Goldring
 - Jane Goodall
 - Caroline Herschel
 - Hypatia of Alexandria
 - Ada Lovelace
 - Maria Mitchell
 - Florence Nightingale
 - Mary Somerville
 - Trotula of Salerno
 - Fanny Bullock Workman



Photo by Juliet Wolff

About the Author

Virginia Euwer Wolff won the National Book Award and a Michael L. Printz Honor for *True Believer*, the second *Make Lemonade* book, and she received the Golden Kite Award for *Make Lemonade*, the first book in the trilogy. After graduating from Smith College, Ms. Wolff attended graduate schools in four states, worked as an English teacher, and raised two children before becoming a full-time writer. An accomplished violinist and proud grandmother, she lives in her native Oregon in a house in the woods outside Portland.



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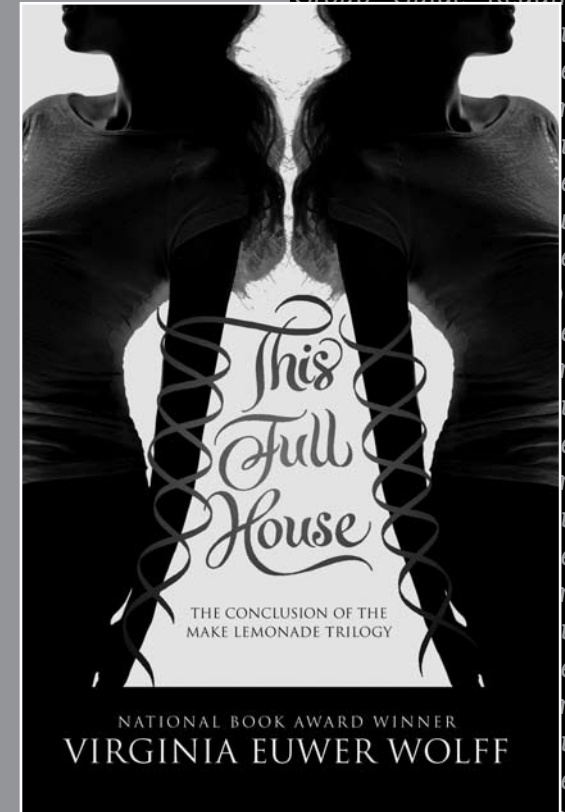
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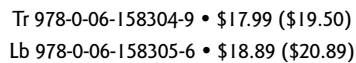
Reading Group Guide



This Full House

By Virginia Euwer Wolff

Sequel to *Make Lemonade* and *True Believer*



LaVaughn has set her sights on a career in medical science, and now that she is enrolled in a prestigious after-school program, she is determined to let nothing stand in her way. LaVaughn must stay true to herself, even as she reaches out to her friends: Jolly, the young, overwhelmed teen mother of two; Myrtle and Annie, her childhood friends; and Jody and Patrick, the boys who complicate her love life. This triumphant final volume in the *Make Lemonade* trilogy bears witness to the power of love, the necessity of forgiveness, and the resiliency of the human spirit.

1. The first book in the *Make Lemonade* trilogy debuted in 1993 with a groundbreaking feature that now seems commonplace among young adult books: prose broken into natural speaking phrases. Discuss what effect this stylistic choice has had on the trilogy and, in turn, what effects this trilogy has had on young adult literature.
2. Although the setting is clearly an urban one, the race and ethnicity of the characters are ambiguous: Are they black, white, Asian-American, or something else? Can you find evidence to support any of these assumptions? What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading a text that is open to multiple interpretations?
3. “Never assume you know all there is to know. . . . Be like Mendeleev [the inventor of the periodic table]—always leave gaps for what someone else will discover later” (pp. 16–17). What is the wisdom of this statement, and how does it apply not just to scientific knowledge but to life in general?
4. Dr. Moore welcomes the girls into the WIMS program with an inspiring speech (pp. 84–90). Reread the speech and discuss it with your peers. Can you think of a time when you were motivated by someone’s eloquent words? How did those words inspire you?
5. LaVaughn’s study group dubs itself “Never Right the First Time” after one member says, “This is the *best* way to learn—by getting it wrong. I *never* remember if I get it right the first time” (p. 95). Do you agree or disagree with this approach to learning? Justify your opinion.
6. Why do you think LaVaughn has such a hard time adequately expressing her gratitude in a thank-you letter? How do you relate to her ordeal?
7. The Guidance Man describes “character” thus: “Knowing the difference between right and wrong, you act according to your conscience, even when you don’t want to” (p. 171). Cite instances in the text that you feel reflect LaVaughn’s character.

8. If character is one of LaVaughn's qualities, tenacity is another. How is LaVaughn tenacious? What other qualities does she have that help make her successful?
9. Myrtle says, "You know what your mistake is? You think it has to be not her fault for you to forgive her. It'll always be her fault, but God forgives her anyway" (p. 392). Why is it so hard for people to forgive others who have hurt them deeply? Why is it important to forgive?
10. LaVaughn comes to realize that she must forgive, not for "gold streets" or "healthy blood pressure," but because it's "the right thing to do" (pp. 412–413). What is the relationship between an action and its motive? Which is more important?
11. Myrtle and LaVaughn are indignant about the hypocrisy of Annie's religious friends who turn their backs on her when she becomes pregnant. Why can it be difficult for people to keep their actions consistent with their beliefs?
12. Jody is the victim of a hate crime when his locker is vandalized. How do you think Jody feels about this affront? How would you respond if this incident happened at your school?
13. Life has not been kind to many of the women in this story, and yet they reach out to each other to ease their burdens. Discuss how each female character is able to lean on another (or others) for support. How does this support system create a strong matriarchal community?
14. LaVaughn's world includes several boys and men, some vividly portrayed and others who are rather shadowy figures. How do these characters contribute to the story? Do you have favorite male characters in the book? If you do, what are your reasons for these preferences?
15. Which of the three books—*Make Lemonade*, *True Believer*, or *This Full House*—is your favorite? Compare and contrast the responses in your group.
16. What do you think the future holds for each of these characters: Jolly, Jeremy, Jilly, Annie, Jody, Patrick, and LaVaughn? Where do you see them in ten years? Twenty years?

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