



Crush: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Love

By Gary Paulsen

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8—Once again, Kevin Spencer (*Liar, Liar* and *Flat Broke*) tackles the problems of his world, this time with careful, scientific logic, and no lies. Kevin still has a crush on Tina Zabinski. He's sure that he is her perfect match, but he won't approach her until he's 100 percent positive that he can win her heart. This doesn't seem likely, since he becomes more awkward and tongue-tied whenever she's around. When handsome and smooth-talking Cash Devine starts moving in on his target, Kevin has to move quickly. Since love is based on chemistry, Kevin decides to set up a series of scientific experiments to help him discover the meaning of love and the way to a girl's heart. While a candlelit dinner for his parents is a disaster and his version of the Cake Walk at the Carnival doesn't quite work out as planned, some seemingly impossible matches do work. Even his jock of a brother and the hockey team members are paired off with lovely figure skaters. Through it all, Kevin is never discouraged, no matter how badly his romantic setups backfire. Joshua Swanson brings Kevin to life with his witty and animated expression, sounding just like an enthusiastic eighth grader in love. Both boys and girls will enjoy Paulsen's novel "study" of young love (*Wendy Lamb Bks.*, 2012), which is totally hilarious and not the least bit mushy.—MaryAnn Karre, West Middle School, Binghamton, NY
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About the Author

GARY PAULSEN is the distinguished author of many critically acclaimed books for young people. His most recent books are *Flat Broke*, *Liar, Liar*, *Lawn Boy Returns*, *Woods Runner*, *Masters of Disaster*, *Notes from the Dog*, *Mudshark*, *Lawn Boy*, *Molly McGinty Has a Really Good Day*, *The Time Hackers*, and *The Amazing Life of Birds (The Twenty Day Puberty Journal of Duane Homer Leech)*.

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The Scientific Mind Knows That Science Is the Search for Truth in the Natural World

Although I'd realized six or eight weeks ago that I was crazy about Tina Zabinski and I wanted to go on a date with her the same way I want to keep converting oxygen into carbon dioxide, I'd been playing it cool, taking it slow. I was waiting for the exact right moment to present itself before making my move.

That's better than saying that I couldn't remember how to speak when she came near and I tended to fall down when she noticed me.

I'd planned to ask her out recently; I had the perfect first date in mind, one that would show her how lucky she was to be with a guy like me. The school dance. But I didn't actually ask her. Thought about it, sure; planned to do it, absolutely; came right out and asked, not a chance.

I'd thought I had all the time in the world to work on connecting the mind-mouth function when I was near her. Until I walked into the school cafeteria on Monday and saw some male-model wannabe sitting next to Tina at a lunch table. He was leaning in as he talked to her—close enough to smell her hair—and she laughed at something he said. I knew in an instant that I was in deep trouble. And that I'd run out of time.

I went straight to my best buddy, JonPaul, who was sprinkling extra wheat germ on his organic peanut butter and raw honey sandwich. JonPaul is a health nut.

“Who’s that?” I tilted my head toward Tina’s table.

“The new kid.”

“What new kid?”

“Cash Devine.”

“That’s his actual name?”

“Yup.”

“You’re kidding.”

“Nope.”

“That’s the fakest thing I ever heard.”

JonPaul shrugged and swallowed a handful of vitamins with his soy milk.

“How do you know him?” I asked.

“He’s in my math class.”

“What’s he doing at Tina’s table?”

“She was assigned to show him around school, help get him familiar with everything.”

“Since when did a welcome guide become standard operating procedure around here?”

“I dunno. Are those organic grapes in your lunch? And if they are, can I have them? I haven’t been getting enough fiber lately and the skins would really help me out.”

“Yeah.” I shoved what I knew to be run-of-the-mill produce reeking of pesticides toward him as fast as I could, trying to avoid a conversation about what happens to JonPaul’s digestive tract when he’s fiber-deprived. Been there, done that, have the horrible mental images.

He lined up the grapes next to his baby carrots, Greek yogurt, hardboiled eggs and stone-ground gluten-free crackers. I ate a handful of chocolate-covered potato chips while I studied Tina and the Threat.

Cash caught me looking at him when Tina turned to talk to the girl on her other side, and he headed toward me, a big cheesy grin on his face.

“Cash. Cash Devine. Good to know you.”

He sounded like the politicians at the Labor Day parade who hand out mini-flags and ask for your support on

Election Day.

“Hey,” I grunted back. “Name’s Kevin.”

“JonPaul,” he said, slapping my best friend on the back, “math is gonna be rough, buddy; hope I can count on you for some help.”

“Sure.”

“Do you know if my guide, Tina, has a boyfriend? She’s really hot.”

I didn’t hear JonPaul’s reply; I saw his lips moving, but the pressure in my ears from my brain freak-out deafened me.

No.

No way.

No flipping way.

That plastic-looking, fake-named, phony- friendly doofus wasn’t going to waltz into my school and take my girlfriend away from me. Especially when I hadn’t had the chance to make her my girlfriend yet.

I had to get away from Cash before I did something embarrassing, like slug him or watch my head explode all over JonPaul’s surgeon general–approved lunch. I mumbled some excuse about getting a homework assignment and bailed.

I saw my friends Katie and Connie and made a beeline for their table. Okay, I’m stretching things a bit calling them friends. I think Connie likes me just fine, but I’m not sure she trusts me. I am positive Katie neither likes nor trusts me. We have a history. It’s a long story and I look bad at the end. But that didn’t stop me.

“Hey, mind if I sit with you two?” I said with what I was sure was the furthest thing from the phony smile Cash had given me. I’d practiced in the mirror. Smiles that are both big and genuine take effort, and I’d wanted to make sure that when I finally got around to talking to Tina, I had the right look on my face. Friendly, but not frantic. Confident, but not smug. It takes work to hit that perfect balance.

“Sure.” Connie moved her books so I could sit across from them. Katie said nothing, but at least she didn’t dump her enchilada on my lap. I took that as progress.

“I need a woman’s point of view,” I told them.

Connie blushed. Katie glared at me.

“Have you met the new guy?” I rolled my eyes in Cash’s direction. Connie blushed deeper and Katie nodded. “What do you think of him, guy-wise? I mean, is he the kind of guy who rocks your world?”

“Why?” Katie asked, suspicion oozing from every pore of her body.

“I’m interested in learning what girls find attractive. Especially girls like you.” Flattery is a good technique for getting information from someone.

“Oh.” Katie looked confused. She hasn’t been uncertain about anything since before potty training, so I felt a tiny thrill at bamboozling her.

Connie looked thoughtful. “He’s very good- looking.”

“Girls like that?”

“Sure, but it’s not everything.”

“What else do you look for?”

“Personality.” Katie was staring at me with an odd expression that I couldn’t understand, but I liked her answer; I am Mr. Personality.

“Cool. What—” The bell rang before I could ask any more questions, and everyone started hurrying out of the cafeteria. I watched Tina and Cash walk down the hall together as I headed toward my next class.

Clearly, I’d been panicking in the clutch just because I didn’t have enough information about romance. Once I collected enough data, I’d make Tina forget all about that guy and his straight teeth and perfect hair and big shoulders.

I just had to figure out how to figure out girls.

Guys have been getting girls to fall in love with them for millions of years. My only problem was that I’d never applied myself before. But that was about to change. Big-time.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jason Urso:

The book *Crush: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Love* make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can for being your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make studying a book *Crush: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Love* to become your habit, you can get a lot more advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about many or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like wide open and read a book *Crush: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Love*. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this e-book?

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