

## **Crunch**

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In the book “Crunch” by Leslie Connor, 14-year-old Dewey got a call from his parents, as they said that they would be stuck in the coast of New England for longer due to the lack of oil pumps across the country (a.k.a the crunch). That means that Dewey and his four siblings- Lil, Vince, Angus, and Eva- would have to do their parents’ work at home, which means helping customers at the Bike Barn (their family business) and other work. Luckily, they do have Mr. Spivey to help them with their work. However, Lil is planning on going to Elm City College the next day, and with Angus and Eva going to Sea Camp, Dewey, Mr. Spivey, and Vince will have to do the work themselves. However, this is changed when Lil tells Dewey when he returns from Sea Camp that her summer session at Elm City College has been flattened due to the lack of oil pumps across the country. In fact, the lack of oil pumps has been affecting everything nowadays- Mattie (owner of Sea Camp) just found out that her father (Pop Chilly), an ice cream truck driver, can’t do his job anymore as well. While riding to Elm City College the next day, he meets a rider named Robert Deal, who wants to help Dewey and his siblings out with their Bike Barn business. Meanwhile, Dewey gets more customers at the Bike Barn who need bike repairs, such as Mrs. Bertalli and her sons. As Dewey continues his job at the Bike Barn, he notices that the bike parts that he needs to repair bikes has gone up in price. This will be a problem for him since it will be harder to repair the bikes with all of these prices going up. However, new members have been recruited- Officer Runks and Officer Macey, so work will definitely be completed faster.

Unfortunately, even though things are going good so far for the siblings and the family business so far, bad things start rolling in. First, Angus and Eva’s bikes get stolen. Next, bikes from the Bike Barn get stolen as well. After that, the family’s dogs, Goodness and Greatness, disappear into the darkness. After a while, they notice a large pile of bikes in one area. They soon realize that the people responsible for this are Officer Macey and Mr. Spivey, who had been working with them for a while now. Later, Dewey gets interviewed by a local news station about the stealing of the bikes; however, the news station fabricates about what Dewey said. This makes Lil mad, and things only get worse when Angus gets injured. Luckily, his injury gets better, and Dewey manages to make a lot of sales due to the tips his dad gave him when fixing the customers’ bikes. Things are back on track so far- until Dewey’s dad gets in an accident and gets a concussion. This upsets the entire family, and it seems like it is the end of the road for everyone in the family. Lil sends Robert away, and she even shuts down the Bike Barn. Dewey thinks that Lil is out of her mind when she does this. At this point, everything seems out of control- until Dewey hatches another plan (to reopen the Bike Barn), but due to his dad’s accident, they aren’t planning on charging any cost. It ends up going very well, and Officer Macey comes back with Angus and Eva’s bikes later, followed by the siblings’ parents coming back later after being stuck on the coast of New England for a while.

There were a lot of things that I liked about this book. One thing I liked was how it showed a lot of personality traits. One personality trait shown was responsibility, as how Dewey and his siblings had to take care of their house and manage the Bike Barn while their parents were away. Another trait shown was courage, as near the end of the story, Dewey had the courage to get things back on track for the Bike Barn, even though they were greatly affected by his dad's accident. Also, hard work was shown when Lil mentioned that Dewey wouldn't stop fixing bikes for the customers no matter how many orders there were. These are some of the traits that were described in the book. However, I didn't like the way some of the characters acted in the book. For example, I didn't see the reason for why Lil decided to close the Bike Barn due to her dad being injured. I would recommend this book for all ages, and I would also recommend this to someone else as well.

**Recommended Titles:**

Touch Blue by Cynthia Lord

We the Children (Benjamin Pratt & the Keepers of the School, #1) by Andrew Clements

Cosmic by Frank Cottrell Boyce