

the MISADVENTURES of

MICHAEL  
McMICHAELS

vol.  
4

The Double-Dog Dare

by Tony Penn  
illustrated by Brian Martin

BOYS  TOWN®  
Press

Boys Town, Nebraska

**The Misadventures of Michael McMichaels, Vol 4: The Double-Dog Dare**  
Text and Illustrations Copyright © 2018 by Father Flanagan's Boys' Home  
ISBN 978-1-944882-21-1

Published by the Boys Town Press  
14100 Crawford St.  
Boys Town, NE 68010

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Unless otherwise noted, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations or critical reviews.



For a Boys Town Press catalog, call 1-800-282-6657  
or visit our website: [BoysTownPress.org](http://BoysTownPress.org)

#### Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Penn, Tony, 1973-, author. | Martin, Brian (Brian Michael), 1978-  
illustrator.

Title: The misadventures of Michael McMichaels. Vol. 4 : the double-dog dare / by  
Tony Penn ; illustrated by Brian Martin.

Other titles: Double-dog dare.

Description: Boys Town, NE : Boys Town Press, [2018] | Audience: grades 3-6.  
| Summary: Author Tony Penn has expertly crafted this fourth volume of the  
Michael McMichaels series. This time Michael is again choosing inappropriate  
behaviors so he can win his friend back from a perceived rival.--Publisher.

Identifiers: ISBN: 978-1-944882-21-1

Subjects: LCSH: Friendship--Juvenile fiction. | Behavior--Juvenile fiction. | Peer  
pressure--Juvenile fiction. | Self-esteem--Juvenile fiction. | Interpersonal  
relations in children--Juvenile fiction. | Interpersonal communication in  
children--Juvenile fiction. | Children--Life skills guides. | CYAC: Friendship-  
Fiction. | Behavior--Fiction. | Peer pressure--Fiction. | Self-esteem-- Fiction.  
| Interpersonal communication--Fiction. | Interpersonal relations--Fiction. |  
Conduct of life. | BISAC: JUVENILE FICTION / Readers / Chapter Books. |  
JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship. | JUVENILE FICTION  
/ Social Themes / Peer Pressure. | JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes /  
Emotions & Feelings. | JUVENILE NONFICTION / Social Topics / Friendship.

Classification: LCC: PZ7.1.P456 M4724 2018 | DDC: [Fic]--dc23



Boys Town Press is the publishing division of  
Boys Town, a national organization serving  
children and families.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



# Chapter 1

## You're not going to believe **THE MESS**

**I got myself into this time.** My life stinks! It stinks worse than garbage just before you're about to walk it to the curb. Have you ever leaned in and sniffed it then? I suggest you don't, especially if there's a baby's diaper in there. In that case, I'd hold the garbage with one hand and pinch my nostrils with the other. (You'll need someone to open the front door for you if you do that, but you get the point.)

Well, I'd rather stick my face in the garbage for an hour than have to deal with the mess I got

myself into this time. It's a Double-Dog Dare contest with a really crazy rich kid, Zeke, who threatened to give me a HUGE dare! Something he said he KNEW I'd be too chicken to do. And, it's bad, REALLY bad. But I have to do it because if I don't, it means I'm not really my buddy Kenny's best friend. Before I tell you what it is, I need to let you know how all of this started.

You see, it started as kind of fun, but now it's gotten out of hand, and I don't know how to stop it. Why does this kind of thing always happen to me?

Everything was going fine and dandy until a couple of weeks ago when Kenny had his birthday party. It was a normal kind of party at his house with kids from our class and the neighborhood who went to different schools. There was also a clown, but I couldn't wait for him to finish up because I find clowns annoying.

We ate lasagna, played some fun games and were at the gift-giving part when the "incident" happened. Just to be polite, everyone was oohing and aahing at every gift, the way people do. Even the socks, Absimil, a new student in our class

from Somalia, got for Kenny impressed everyone. Absimil and his family were living with another family in our area because they were refugees. We all knew they didn't have much money but, really, who wants to get socks for a gift? There were also a couple of video-game gifts, which the kids seemed the most excited about. And, from me, a boxed set of *Encyclopedia Brown* books because I know Kenny likes to read, and I couldn't bear my best friend not knowing about my favorite series any longer.

So far, so good, right? Well, up until another new kid in the school, Zeke, handed Kenny his gift, everything was fine. Zeke had moved to the area a few weeks ago, into the biggest and most expensive house that an old doctor and his wife had lived in since before I was born. Zeke's parents work for some fancy company, and not only are they rich, they want everyone to know it. They already added an extra floor and a pool to the house they bought. Zeke's dad's car is red, foreign, and shiny. His mother wears sparkly jewelry and fancy clothes like ladies at a wedding. Zeke is also in Ms. Mitchell's class with Kenny and me, and

lots of kids find him annoying because he's always asking how much everyone's sneakers cost and where they went on their last vacation, etc., to try to find out how much money they have.

Kenny recently started talking to Zeke about basketball, which I don't know much about because it just seems like a bunch of guys running back and forth and making squeaking noises with their sneakers. Since Kenny's parents drive an expensive car, I guess Zeke found him fancy enough to be friends with because Kenny invited him to the party. Right after Kenny opened my gift, he opened Zeke's. It was a tower of video games, and when I say tower, **I mean a TOWER!** It was at least as high as Kenny himself, and the other kids in the room started freaking out when they saw it. Everyone looked at Zeke like he was in a movie or knew Ellen DeGeneres personally or something. I felt like such an idiot for getting Kenny a measly set of five paperback books, but you know what? Looking around the room, I could tell that everyone else felt the same way about their gifts. Who could compete with a tower of video games?

That's when I decided to take matters into my

own hands. After the fuss of the fancy gift died down, and Kenny's mother brought out the cupcakes (which always make you happy for a few minutes, let's face it), I sprang into action. Zeke was in the corner by himself texting his parents. He was my height, had wavy blond hair, skinny legs like a frog, and one of those butt chins that



give me funny feelings. I reached out and covered the screen of his phone with my hand, then screwed up my eyes like actors on TV do when they are mad.

“Hey, what’s going on?” Zeke asked.

“What’s going on,” I said, “is that you made us all look cheap and stupid with that crazy gift of yours.”

“Oh, really? You asked everyone? You’re speaking for them?” he said, looking all rich and confident.

“I can just tell. I don’t need to talk to them,” I answered.

“Listen, kid, just because you gave him a cheap set of books, doesn’t mean it’s my fault,” Zeke said. “Who cares about books anymore, really?”

“Smart people do, that’s who,” I said. “And what do you think that tower of junk proves anyway? Do you think it means you’re a better friend to Kenny than I am?”

He didn’t even hesitate to reply.

“Yes, I know it does,” he said. “Because Kenny just told me I’m his new best friend.”



“He told you WHAT?” I asked.

“You heard me,” Zeke said confidently.

“I did, you’re right. I’m standing really close to you and I have perfect hearing,” I said. “But I’m not going to accept it. Kenny and I have been friends since you and your family lived in that bank, or wherever you’re originally from, and it’s going to take more than a stack of video games to change that.”

“A tower. It’s a **TOWER**, not a stack,” Zeke bragged.

“Fine, tower, whatever,” I said.

“So, hotshot, if you think you’re really Kenny’s best friend, I dare you to stand on that table and cluck like a chicken,” Zeke said, like he’d been planning that all afternoon or something.

I was really nervous at that point, but I didn’t want moneybags to know it, so I played it cool. “Sure, no big deal. Watch and weep...” I said, walking over to the table and whistling as if what I was about to do was normal.

And then I did it. I hopped on Kenny’s dining room table and began to cluck like a chicken.

“Bawk, bawk, bawk, bawk, bawk...” I flapped

my arms and moved my head back and forth. I have to admit I felt very chickeny.

The kids began to gather around the table and laugh and so did Kenny's parents. But they also told me to get down because they didn't want me to fall.

Kenny's father reached out for me, and as I was in mid-air, heading toward the floor, I stuck out my tongue at Zeke, who looked worried. He knew I'd dare him to do something next.

"So, big deal, you can hop on a table and cluck like a chicken," he said nervously.

**"You dared me to, and I did it! Now it's my turn," I said. "If you think you're really Kenny's best friend,  
I double-dog dare you to... to..."**

## **I couldn't think of anything. Really. Not a thing.**

“Ha! Loser. You can't even think of a good dare. They come so easily to me,” Zeke said.

“Yeah, because you're EVIL. Wait a second. I've got it!” I said, rubbing my chin.

“So, ah, what is it?” Zeke asked, beginning to shake. “Remember, Double-Dog Dare rules are it can't hurt anyone, and no matter how many dares there are, it's always called a double-dog dare because triple-dog dare and quadruple-dog dare don't sound as good, ok?”

The kid had a point.

“Sure, fine. I don't want to see blood,” I said. “I just want you to admit that I'm Kenny's best friend.”

“Only if I can't do the dare or refuse to try,” Zeke said. “That's how it works, so spit it out. I'm ready.”

“Take it easy. I'll tell you in school tomorrow,” I said.

“Fine,” Zeke said. And we both headed home.



## Chapter 2

**On the bus to school the next day I sat next to Kenny, as usual.**

“Kenny,” I said while he was yawning, “let’s say you were going to dare a kid in our class to do something, what would it be?”

“Why would I do that?” Kenny said.

“Let’s just say you’re playing a game, ok?” I replied.

“Mikey, I don’t like the sound of this,” Kenny said, looking concerned. “I feel like you’re going to get us in trouble again with another one of your crazy ideas.”

“Who said anything about crazy ideas? I just need a good idea for a dare,” I explained.

“Well, you never call them crazy ideas, but in

the end, that's what they turn out to be," Kenny said. "You're going to make me need an inhaler or a paper bag to breathe into or something. I get anxiety when you get these ideas of yours."

"Trust me," I said, looking into his eyes, "as your **BEST FRIEND**, trust me." I was waiting to see if he corrected me and said that Zeke was his new best friend, but he didn't flinch or say anything.

"Ok then, my idea for a double-dog dare would be to tell the kid to repeat everything Harriet says all day today," Kenny said. "It's really annoying when people do that."

"Thanks! You're a genius," I said. "You can go back to sleep now. I'll wake you up when we're at school."

I loved the idea.

In class, before we began our first activity of the day, I walked up to Zeke and whispered in his ear: "Hey, so here's my double-dog dare."

"It better be good," he said, "took you long enough."

"Oh, it's good," I said.

**“I double-dog dare you to repeat everything Harriet says all day today.”**

“Big deal! I can handle that,” he said.

“We’ll see about that,” I said, and returned to my seat.

An hour or so went by without Harriet raising her hand or being called on, so I started to get nervous that my dare wasn’t that good. But then Ms. Mitchell asked the class if anyone knew what the word “dissuade” meant. Harriet’s arm shot straight up.

“It means to discourage someone from doing something, Ms. Mitchell.”

“Can you use it in a sentence, Harriet?” Ms. Mitchell asked.

“Yes, I can,” she said, standing up and smiling as she always does when she gives an answer. She can be so annoying! “I tried to dissuade my little brother from eating the rest of the cake, but he did it anyway.”

“Excellent example, Harriet,” Ms. Mitchell said.

I looked over at Zeke and thought I had won the dare because I couldn't hear anything coming from his mouth, but then I saw his lips moving.

**DARN IT!** He was repeating everything Harriet was saying, only in a whisper. I never said he had to say it out loud. **UGH!** He's a clever one, that kid.

I got really depressed that I would lose the bet and that would mean Kenny is not my best friend anymore, so I sighed and glanced down at the floor. I could see that my sneakers were pretty old and weren't a fancy brand. They were just sneakers, and I was fine with them until I looked over at Zeke's and saw his were new, perfect, and expensive. Until recently, I didn't spend much time thinking about fancy things and who is rich and who is not, but Zeke, with all of his family's money, and Absimil, whose family is very poor, have made me wonder about it a lot. I don't know why some people have so much and some people have so little. I'm glad I have a house and food and a family, but Zeke is really making me jealous. Come to think of it, my house seems smaller to