

the MISADVENTURES of

MICHAEL McMICHAELS

vol.
5

The Case of the Escaping Elephants

by Tony Penn

illustrated by Brian Martin

BOYS TOWN
Press



Boys Town, Nebraska

The Misadventures of Michael McMichaels Vol 5:

The Case of the Escaping Elephants

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ISBN 978-1-944882-32-7

Published by the Boys Town Press
13603 Flanagan Blvd., Boys Town, NE 68010

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or visit our website: BoysTownPress.org

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

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

Title: The case of the escaping elephants / by Tony Penn ; illustrated by Brian Martin.

Description: Boys Town, NE : Boys Town Press, [2018] | Series: The misadventures of Michael McMichaels ; vol. 5. | Audience: grades 2-6. | Summary: Michael McMichaels' obsession with video games leads to rampaging elephants and a guilty conscience. Will this messy misadventure cure his addiction to electronics and scare him into limiting his screen time? It's a humorous tale about the importance of moderation.--Publisher.

Identifiers: ISBN: 978-1-944882-32-7

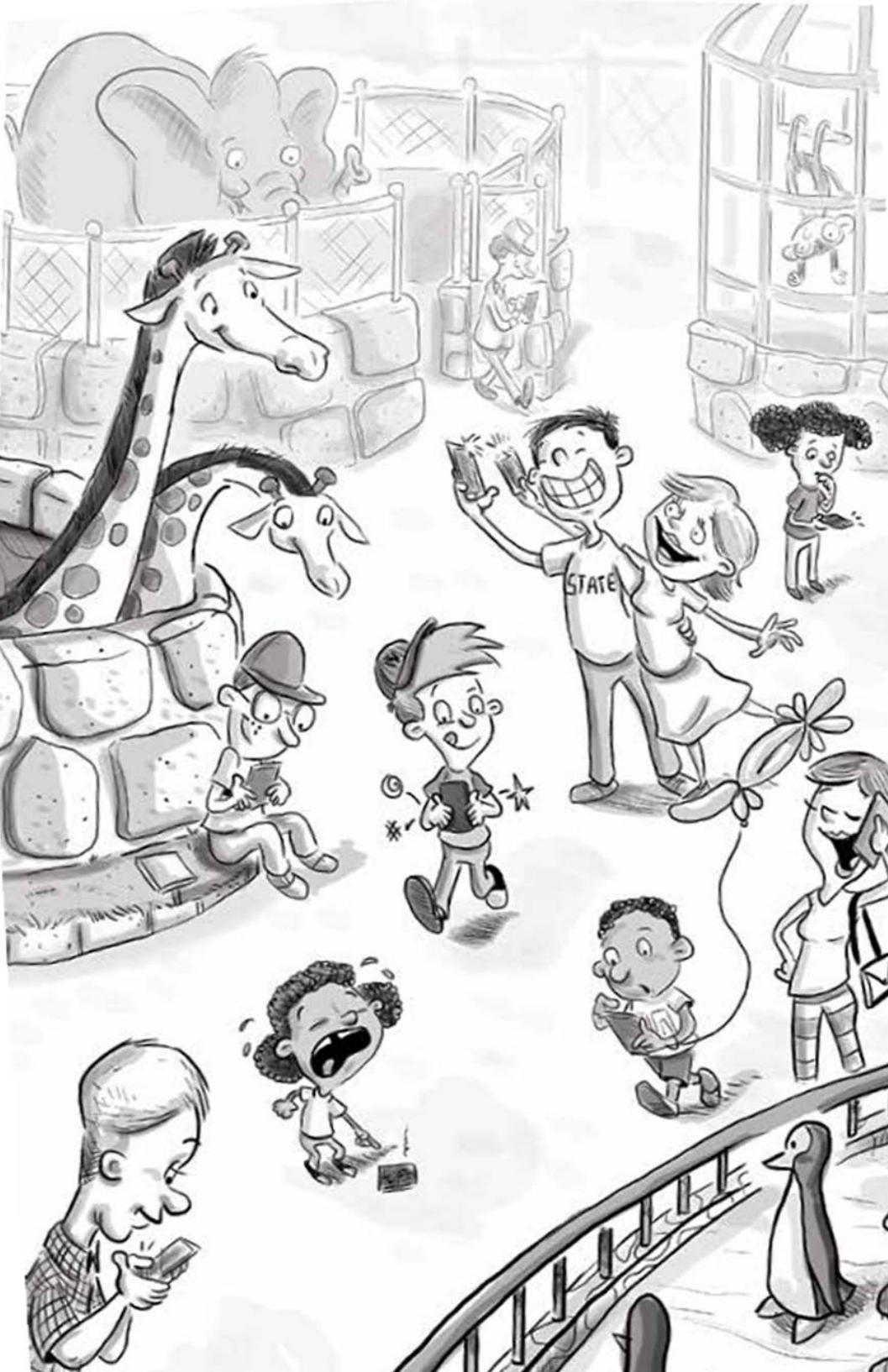
Subjects: LCSH: Video game addiction--Juvenile fiction. | Video games and children--Juvenile fiction. | Internet addiction--Juvenile fiction. | Electronic apparatus and appliances--Psychological aspects--Juvenile fiction. | Compulsive behavior--Juvenile fiction. | Moderation--Juvenile fiction. | Friendship--Juvenile fiction. | Behavior--Juvenile fiction. | Interpersonal relations in children--Juvenile fiction. | Children--Life skills guides. | CYAC: Video games--Fiction. | Internet addiction--Fiction. | Electronic apparatus and appliances--Fiction. | Compulsive behavior--Fiction. | Moderation--Fiction. | Friendship--Fiction. | Behavior--Fiction. | Interpersonal relations--Fiction. | Conduct of life. | BISAC: JUVENILE FICTION / Readers / Chapter Books. | JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Manners & Etiquette. | JUVENILE FICTION / Comics & Graphic Novels / Humorous. | JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship. | JUVENILE NONFICTION / Readers / Chapter Books. | JUVENILE NONFICTION / Social Topics / Manners & Etiquette.

Classification: LCC: PZ7.1.P44718 M4725 2018 | DDC: [Fic]--dc23

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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





Chapter 1

You're not going to believe the mess I got myself into this time. My life stinks! It stinks worse than the zoo in July. Why doesn't someone invent a toilet for those animals, or maybe a giant air freshener so we all don't have to pinch our noses and say, 'Eww, gross!' so many times? And why doesn't someone else invent clothes for those animals, too? At least underwear. I get embarrassed when everyone is staring at a buffalo's butt or a tiger's tush.

Anyway, like I was saying, my life stinks and this time it's bad. I mean really bad. It's kind of a complicated story, but it all started on a Sunday at the zoo with my family. It was a beautiful day and

lots of people were there. I was getting hungry so I asked my father where we were going to eat. He said he didn't know where the food stand was, so he handed me his cell phone and told me to look it up on the zoo's website. I looked around and noticed almost every adult was looking down at a phone more than at the animals.

I can't say I blame them. **I LOVE cell phones and borrow my parents' phones whenever I get a chance. They are so much fun!**

The games are great and you can just keep playing and playing. I wish I had my own phone, but I'm too young. My parents said I can get one when I finish fifth grade, which is in a million years. Ok, more like two years, but you know what I mean.



After I found out where the food stand was, I started playing a game on my dad's phone called CASTLES! You have to build castles using blocks and you're always racing someone. It's fun. I logged in under my account and saw my mom's friend's son, Jimmy, who's in college, was online and I began to play him. I won, and right after the match he sent me a message and said he liked the Yankees cap I was wearing. I screamed because I thought he could see through the phone.

Could he see that I just picked my nose, too?

It turned out he was working at the elephant sanctuary and he saw me and my family as we were walking around. He sent another message saying he really should get back to work, but I begged him to play a few more rounds with me. He said no, but I really wanted him to keep playing.

I got an idea and sent him a message: "Hey, Jimmy, how does it feel losing to a third grader? If I lost to someone so young, I would be

SO EMBARRASSED."

He still said no.

Then I got another idea.

“You know my cousin, Mary, the really pretty one, who goes to college?” I texted. “Well, I’ll tell her you were nice enough to keep playing with me, even though I’m just a kid, and you were super busy. She is always talking about liking nice guys. I’m sure she’ll be impressed by THAT!”

He agreed to keep playing. **YES!!!**

We played and played and played, even though my mother kept telling me to focus on the animals and to stop distracting Jimmy while he was at work. Finally, it must have been too much, because Dad took his phone back and did not seem very pleased. But that was fine because we found that food stand and I was really hungry! We went home not long after that. Sounds good, right?

Well, you’re never going to believe what happened next, but it’s true. I swear on a whole pie of pepperoni pizza. My friend, Kenny, came over to my house later that day. He ate dinner with us and then we went outside to play hide-and-seek. I was

hiding behind a tree when I heard a loud stomping noise. It sounded like thunder or something, but I looked up and the sky was clear. It was getting dark, but there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The noise got louder. I heard police sirens and saw a helicopter flying up above. I started to get nervous, then Kenny crept around the tree I was hiding behind.

“Ha, found you!” he said.

“Ok, now you hide,” I said.

Kenny's eyes bugged out and he screamed,

**“UGH,
Mikey,
look!”**

I turned around to face the street and then I saw it... a giant elephant charging down the street and trumpeting like crazy.

“I need my inhaler, Mikey!” Kenny said.

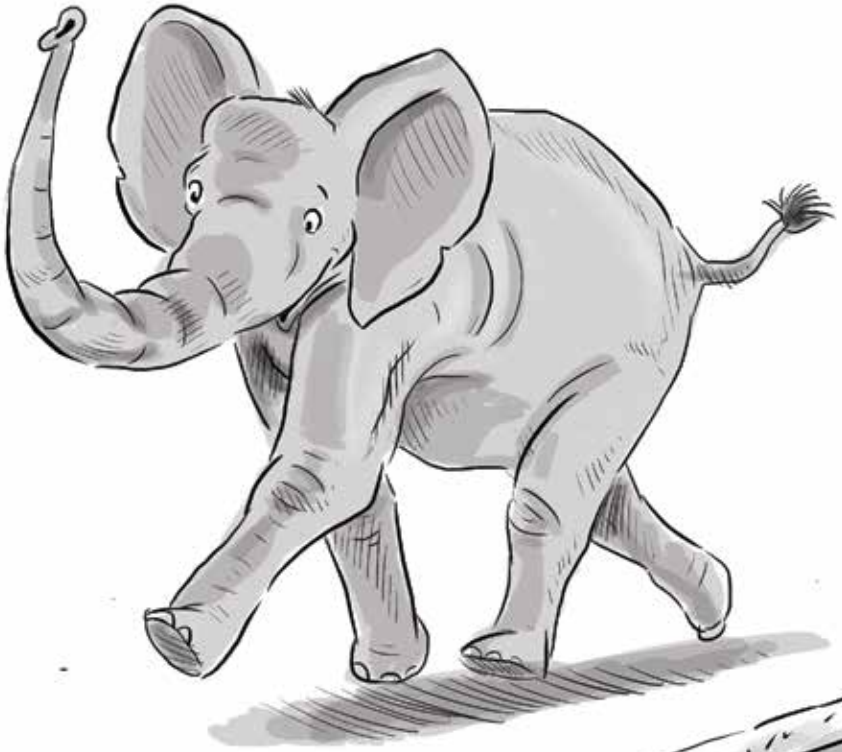
“Call 911! Call the FBI! Call Ellen – she loves animals!”

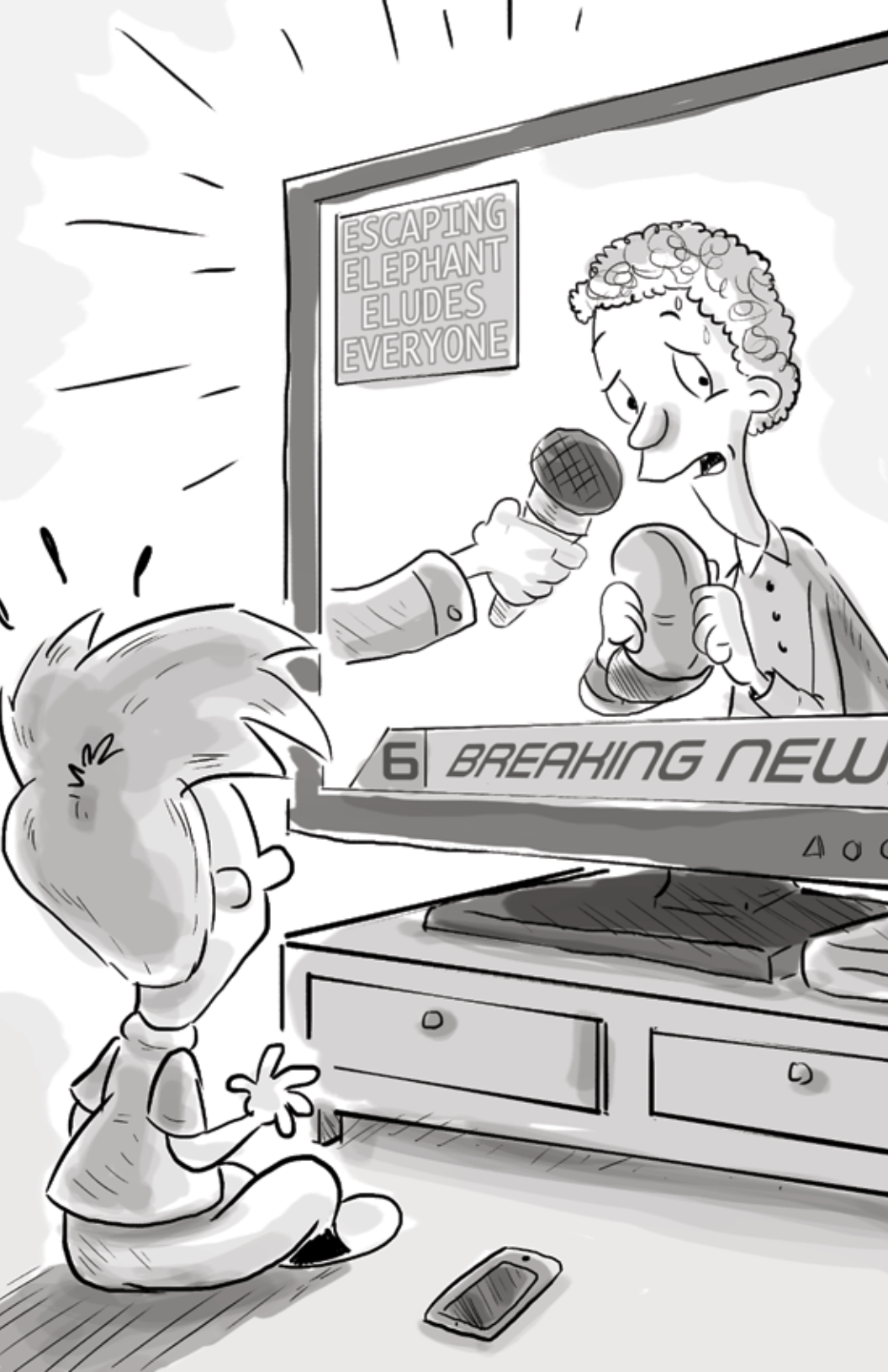
I screamed, as the elephant charged past us. Kenny fainted on the grass, but by then my whole family and everyone else on the block were outside on their front lawns.



Nobody seemed to know how
to stop a charging elephant.

Do you?





ESCAPING
ELEPHANT
ELUDES
EVERYONE

6 BREAKING NEWS

400



Chapter 2

“Wake up, Kenny, wake up!”

I yelled, then smacked him in the face to see if that would work. People do that on TV, so I figured it was acceptable.

“Don’t hurt him!” my mother said, “I have an idea.” Then she leaned over Kenny and turned her water bottle upside down right onto his face.

That woke him up really fast.

“There’s a flood! Call the navy! Get my goggles!” he cried.

“There’s no flood,” I said. “You just fainted, that’s all.”

“Oh, what a relief, phew,” he said, standing up. “I had the craziest dream that an elephant charged down the street. Then the next thing I knew,

someone was beating me up. Then it rained.” He looked very confused.

“Ah, yeah, terrible dream,” I said. “Except there actually WAS an elephant charging down our block. But the other stuff, yeah, it sounds like you really were dreaming.”

“THERE WAS AN ELEPHANT CHARGING DOWN THE BLOCK?” Kenny screamed.

“Yes, he’s on his way back to the zoo now. They were able to catch him a few minutes ago and put him in a special van,” my father said. “Everyone, let’s go inside now and watch the local news to see what really happened. It’s funny that we were just at the zoo looking at the elephants a few hours ago.”

The reporter said four elephants escaped from the zoo, but only three had been found. The fourth, a young female, was still on the loose!

“How in the world can they not find an elephant?” my mother said. “That’s crazy!”

“Listen up!” my father said. “She’s explaining now.” He turned up the volume on the TV.

“The town did not have enough fire trucks, police cars, and helicopters to chase four elephants

at once,” the reporter said. “Now that three have been found, all of the town’s resources are currently being devoted to finding the last escaped elephant. If anyone in the community spots her, please call 911 right away. It seems as though the gate of the elephant sanctuary was left unlocked by accident. Here to comment on that is zoo intern, Jimmy Gorton.”

Then my game-playing buddy Jimmy came on and looked really upset. He said he was distracted using his cell phone and forgot to lock up. He apologized and looked really sad.

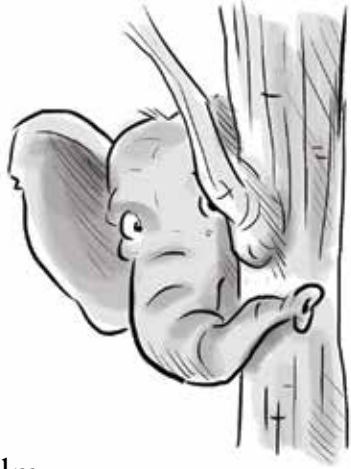
“Oh, that’s Camille’s son!” my mother said. “I’d better go call her. He must feel terrible.”

OH NO! Jimmy was playing CASTLES! on his phone with ME when this happened! He wanted to stop to focus on his work with the elephants, but I begged him and even involved my cousin, Mary, to keep him playing. We even played after I came home. That’s when he was supposed to be locking up, so it was my fault, too! My heart was racing so fast I couldn’t believe it. What if they found out I was the reason he was distracted on his cell phone?

I grabbed Kenny by the wrist, dragged him down to my basement and told him everything.

“Mikey, you did it again! Why can’t you stay out of trouble for like one whole month?” Kenny asked.

“Don’t ask me things like that right now!” I said. “I’m getting nervous. I can barely breathe! They’re going to arrest me now. It’s my fault...”



“Mikey, you need to calm down. I’m the one with anxiety, not you,” Kenny said.

“Yeah, well, you’re not the one who is responsible for those elephants escaping from the zoo. That’s my fault,” I said.

“Good point. It IS your fault,” Kenny agreed.

“STOP THAT!” I said. “You’re my friend. You’re supposed to comfort me.”

“Well, it’s Jimmy’s fault, too,” Kenny said. “But you told him you would tell your cousin, Mary, he was nice to little kids. I’m sure that was

a big reason he kept playing.”

“Ok, you’re not helping!” I cried.

Kenny went home a little while later. I watched some TV with my family then went to bed. Only I couldn’t sleep because that elephant was still missing, even at the end of the night, and it was

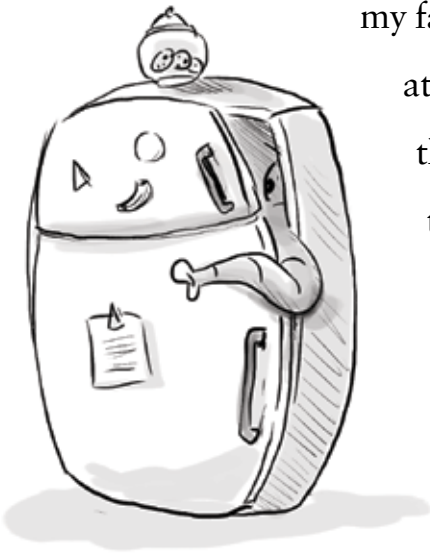
my fault. What would the people at the zoo do to me now that this was the SECOND bad thing I’d done there, including the *Angry Alligator* incident? But, really, I didn’t mean to.

“Where could an elephant hide?”

I thought. I stared at my ceiling and tried to go to sleep.

Behind a tree? **No.**

In someone’s fridge? **No.**



Pages 14-87 are not included in this excerpt.



Back for more misadventures, Michael has really done it this time!

When Michael convinces a family friend to join in some video game fun (instead of focusing on his important job at the local zoo), distractions lead to poor decision making and the domino effect is nearly disastrous as elephants escape and explore a neighborhood.

Fortunately, most of the elephants are recovered promptly and peacefully. But one elephant remains elusive!

Convinced that his addiction to technological devices was the cause of the chaos, Michael goes to extremes in his commitment to solving the case of the escaping elephant – even if that means working with frenemy Harriet!

A series of misadventures plague Michael and his posse as they search for the missing elephant, and Michael is reminded time and time again of the importance of moderation.

Tony Penn delivers another engaging chapter book for students in grades 1 through 5, who are sure to laugh and enjoy Michael's misadventures as they learn about moderation, honesty, and recognizing the talents and goodness of others.



“I would like to thank Tony Penn for being the author who created me. Tony teaches French at an arts high school in New York City. He likes: reading, writing, restaurants, vacations, and Saturday mornings. Tony has an MA in Education, an MFA in Creative Writing, and an LMNOP in nothing—I just love saying those letters really fast!”

– Michael McMichaels

