

The Misadventures of Michael McMichaels: The Angry Alligator
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Summary: Michael McMichaels is a precocious and adventurous third-grader, whose active imagination and flare for the dramatic turns his adventures into MISadventures. In this story, Michael misbehaves on a school field trip. The web of lies he spins to get out of trouble only pulls him further in, and entangles his friends and parents as well. This comical yet educational tale shows the importance of owning up to your mistakes, being honest, and making apologies.--Publisher.

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Chapter 1

I'm Michael McMichaels, third-grader. The only thing you need to know about me is that sometimes MY LIFE STINKS! It can stink even worse than my Dad's feet. When we watch TV, Dad will stick his smelly feet in my face and laugh. Then Mom rolls her eyes and sighs, "Sweetie, stop that already?"

Parents can be so weird!

Anyway, back to me and my sometimes stinky life. You see, the thing is, I really thought I was going to get eaten by an alligator in my sleep. That's when I decided I wasn't going to sleep again—ever!

It all started during a school trip to the zoo. I was standing with my classmates in front of the

alligator pond. Our teacher, Miss Mitchell, was blabbing to a couple of really serious kids. While they were going on and on about where alligators live, what they eat, and all that, I had an idea—an idea I had to share with my best friend!

“Hey, Kenny,” I whispered. “How much money will you give me if I throw this rock at that ugly alligator?”

“I don’t have any money, Mikey, and I don’t think you should. What if you hurt the alligator or it gets mad? Besides, you’ll be in so much trouble if someone sees you,” he whispered back.

Kenny’s one of those nervous Nellies who never wants to do anything fun. So, I shrugged him off.

I had a nice little rock in my hand, waiting for just the right moment to strike. That ugly old alligator won’t mind if I toss this tiny rock at him, I thought. Still, I felt a bit nervous.

Miss Mitchell was still blabbing to those serious kids. It’s incredible how they’re always asking questions and making serious faces.

Anyway, when no one (except Kenny) was looking, I hurled the rock at the gator. I thought

my aim was off, and I'd miss by a mile. Guess what? The rock smacked right into that big snout of his!

Boy, did that make the ugly gator mad! He charged at me, running and growling all the way up to the fence. Who knew alligators were so fast! Or loud!

He made such a ruckus, the whole class and Miss Mitchell turned and looked at him. Everybody got a little scared.

It was a good thing that fence was there, or the gator could have chomped us to bits! I bet he could have eaten us all in one bite like we were mozzarella sticks or tater tots.

“Who did that? Who threw that stone?!” shouted Miss Mitchell.

I couldn't believe she saw the rock, but I was glad she didn't see who tossed it. My heart pounded in my chest. I was so nervous!

“Michael, was it you?” she asked me, demanding an answer. Her hands were on her hips, and her face was all scrunched up. “It looked like it came from your direction.”



Ugh! What was I to do? I was shaking and had to come up with an answer.

“Um, no, um, it wasn’t me,” I sputtered. “It was one of the fifth-graders over there.”

“Really?” she asked. “Which one?”

I looked at Mr. Miller’s fifth-grade class and pointed at the first boy I saw.

“It was him,” I told Miss Mitchell and pointed at the boy whose hair was as red as a fire hydrant. Right away, I felt bad.

“Thank you, Michael, for being so honest. I’ll tell Mr. Miller right away. What a terrible thing to do, throwing a rock at a poor, defenseless animal. I hope that young man doesn’t make things worse by lying about it.”

Uh-oh! That's what I just did! I threw a rock at a defenseless creature, and I made it worse by lying. How would I get out of this mess? Please let there be a remote control or an app that can erase what I did!







Chapter 2

On the bus ride back from the zoo, Kenny and I sat up front by the teachers and parent chaperones. Man, it was a good thing there were adults on the bus. Seriously, I think they saved my life!

You see, Mr. Miller's fifth-grade class was on the bus, too. Those kids looked like giants. I kept my eye on the "big redhead," the one I blamed for throwing the rock. I was scared he would try to get back at me for blaming him.

The whole ride, the redhead glared at me. He had a mean, gator-like grin on his face.

I made it back to school with no problems and was trudging into the building when I was tapped on the shoulder. I turned around, and there he was.



MICHAEL McMICHAELS

did a very bad thing and then, in a
fit of panic, lied. And lied. And lied.

*Now there was no way out. I was doomed.
I suppose I could have confessed right then, but
I know Mom would have gotten so mad at me.
I don't need that. I really, really wish
I could go back in time and....*



What was supposed to be a fun, educational field trip to the local zoo turned into a living nightmare for the young third-grader. One stupid prank, quickly followed by one big lie, leaves Michael scrambling to save himself from a hotheaded redhead bent on revenge and a sharp-toothed alligator ready to chomp.

Will Michael escape his web of lies by owning up to his mistakes and apologizing? Or will he keep hiding the truth by spinning wilder and wilder tales?



A native New Yorker, TONY PENN teaches French at a New York City arts high school. He received a B.A. from New York University, and also holds an M.A. in education. Tony is currently pursuing another graduate degree – a master of fine arts in creative writing. He has also taught reading and English at the elementary and middle school levels.

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