

“I DARE

They were exceedingly valiant for courage, and . . . were true at all times (Alma 53:20).

FICTION

By Teresa Bateman

It was a dare!” Brett said, avoiding his father’s eyes. “I mean, I *had* to do it, or everyone would think I was a wimp, especially Alan.”

His father sighed. “Do you care so much what other people think?”

Brett blinked. “Of *course* I care what people think. I mean, a guy has a reputation to keep up.”

“But what sort of reputation do you want to have?” his father asked. He waited, but Brett was silent, so he laid down the law. “I don’t care *who* dares you. You are not to go out on the roof again, and certainly *not* wearing flippers.”

“Aw, Dad . . .” Brett knew from the look on his father’s face that it was pointless to argue. He quickly changed his tactics, smiling sweetly. “OK. I promise not to go out on the roof in flippers again.”

His dad gave him a close look and raised an eyebrow but said no more.

Brett was relieved. He hadn’t promised that he wouldn’t take any more dares.

He’d just promised not to dance on the roof with flippers. Who’d dare him to do *that* again?



YOU!”

Still, Brett felt a little guilty for giving his dad the wrong impression. It was almost like lying. The thing was that all of his friends liked to do dares. It was easy to say you shouldn't accept a dare when you were talking to your dad, but it was a lot harder when you were with a friend.

The next day, Brett dared his best friend, Alan, to run through the school office wearing his gym shorts on his head. Then Alan dared Brett to do a handstand in the cafeteria during lunch.

Then they both spent an hour after school in detention. Brett didn't mind. After all, he'd proved how brave he was.

That night when his family was reading the scriptures, they read about the sons of Helaman.

“Now there's an example of courage,” his mother pointed out. “They were willing to fight for what they believed in, and they even risked death for it. They trusted in the Lord.”

Brett frowned. Sure, that was courageous, but had any of them ever put a silly hat on the neighbor's cat, then sent it back home and watched the fun?

“This has always been one of my favorite stories,” his father said. “I also like the story of Nephi, when he stood up for what was right even when his brothers disagreed.”

Brett had the impression that his parents were trying to tell him something. Still, the next day, when Alan bet him that he couldn't climb the flagpole at school, Brett took the dare. He remembered his father's words, but the dare was just too tempting. Climbing it was easy. Climbing it without a teacher seeing



him do it was the hard part.

That was the part that he messed up on. That and getting down again. He slipped. Fortunately the custodian managed to get underneath him, or he might have been seriously injured.

His father came to pick him up from the principal's office. Brett expected his dad to yell at him or lecture him. Instead, they walked to the car in silence. Brett got in and watched his dad. His dad didn't slam the door. He just quietly slipped into the driver's seat, rested his hands on the steering wheel, and closed his eyes.

Was his dad napping? Was he gathering his energy for a really big yell that would shake the car to its rubber tires? Brett was prepared for a good bawling out. It would clear the air, and everything would be all right again.

Then he realized that his father was praying. It wasn't a quick prayer, either. It went on and on and on. Brett grew more and more nervous. Yelling was something he could cope with—but praying?

His father opened his eyes and silently drove home. As they pulled into the driveway, he stopped the car, then turned to look Brett in the eyes. “You could have been seriously hurt today. You could have been killed. Your mother and I love you, but you are showing poor judgment.”



“Dad, it was a dare,” Brett tried to explain. “I didn’t have a choice.”

His father opened his mouth to say something, then closed it. For a moment it seemed like he was listening to something. Then he turned to Brett. “You think that kind of a dare is hard—that it proves you’re a brave person?”

Brett nodded. “Yeah. Why else would I take it?”

“Could you handle a harder dare? One that *really* takes courage?”

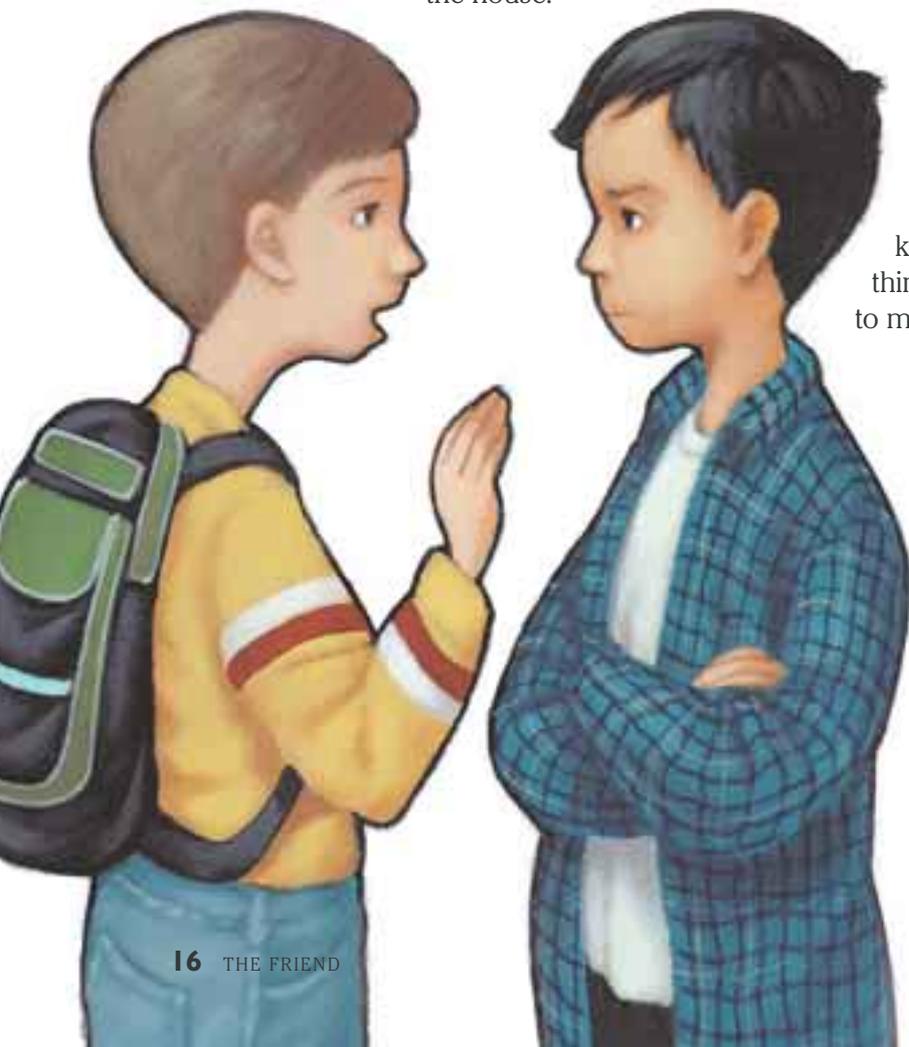
Now Brett was on familiar ground. “I can handle any dare,” he announced proudly. “I haven’t missed one yet.”

“Then I dare you to do the right thing.”

“Ah, Dad,” Brett replied, “that’s just a ‘parent dare.’ ”

“What’s the matter? You can take the easy dares, but you can’t take the hard ones? That doesn’t sound all that brave to me.”

Brett got out of the car without saying a word and marched into the house.



That Sunday in Primary, they sang “Dare to Do Right.”*

Brett squirmed in his seat.

“Dare to do right! Dare to be true!” The words echoed in his head. What was this, a conspiracy?

On Monday, Alan met him walking to school.

“So, what’s it going to be today?” Brett asked him.

Alan grinned. “Today’s easy. I dare you to sneak into Mr. Suther’s desk during recess and get a copy of tomorrow’s math test.”

Brett swallowed. “But that would be cheating,” he said.

“Cheating, schmeating! We don’t have to *use* the test. I just dare you to steal it. Hey—not even steal. Borrow. I dare you to borrow the math test.”

Brett suddenly heard the words to the Primary song go through his head again. He turned to Alan. “No.”

“No? But I *dared* you.”

“Sorry.” It was hard, but Brett held his ground. “I have another dare to do, instead.” He swallowed again, then offered hopefully, “I’d be happy to help you study for the test.”

Alan stomped off in disgust. Brett didn’t know what to think. He’d done the right thing. Doing the right thing wasn’t supposed to make you feel lousy, right?

Later that day, Brett saw Mr. Suther walking Alan to the principal’s office. His teacher looked at him as they passed. He could tell that his teacher was surprised to not be marching two kids to the principal. Suddenly Brett realized what sort of a reputation he had made for himself. It wasn’t one he wanted.

The words to the Primary song rang through his head again—“Dare to do right! Dare to be true!” He promised himself that he would keep only the dare his father had given him.

* *Children’s Songbook*, page 158.