

“A Second Grade Boy”

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By Rebecca Enney

“Ahhh” thought Barabas. “Saturday morning! No school, no church, no homework! Uncle Floyd and I are going to play Parcheesi! And I can ask Sam to come over this afternoon!”

Barabas laid there in bed, with his trusty dog Jeter at his side. He could hear Jeter breathing. He could hear Uncle Floyd downstairs in the kitchen getting breakfast. He heard the phone ring and then Uncle Floyd’s voice. Barabas rolled over in bed, enjoying being warm and next to his dog, enjoying being a boy in second grade.

“Life is good!” thought Barabas to himself as he drifted into a dream where he was playing baseball for the New York Yankees. He hit a home run and the crowds were cheering.

“I reckon it’s time to get up!” said Uncle Floyd, interrupting Barabas’s dream. “Something has come up at the church and I must be there by 9:30.”

“Is Mrs. Potato Head coming over while you are at work?” asked Barabas sleepily. “She couldn’t.” answered Uncle Floyd. “It will be Ken, the Babysitter.”

“KEN!” Barabas thought to himself! He winced. Jeter stirred and gave a low, quiet growl. KEN!

Ken has not been Barabas’s sitter since that day last spring when there was a fire across the street from the playground and Jeter ran away and was lost for many days. Ken was no help at all. Maybe Ken used to be a good sitter, but now Ken is hanging with a bunch of guys that are a bad influence on him.

“So, now” fumed Barabas to himself, “Not only is my Saturday ruined, Ken is my sitter! Life stinks!” Barabas buried himself down under the blankets.

“Barabas, I reckon you need to get up.” said Uncle Floyd in a stern voice as he left the room. Sometimes when children get upset, they cry, like Polly Potato. Sometimes they get excited and talk a lot, like Running Chairs and sometimes, when children get upset they become very quiet and kind of go someplace inside.

That is where Barabas is right now. He is someplace inside himself thinking about how unfair it is that grownups change the plans without asking the children about it first! KEN!

What can a second grade boy say to change the mind of a grownup? Jeter stirred against Barabas and Barabas kicked him off the bed. Barabas was angry. How could he change Uncle Floyd’s mind?

Barabas jumped out of bed. He tried and tried to figure a way to make things better. Maybe he should run away from home! He could go live with Mrs. Potato Head. Or maybe he should just march down to Uncle Floyd and shout “NO, I WON’T STAY WITH KEN! I DON’T LIKE KEN! HE IS A BAD BABYSITTER!”

Barabas put on his orange shirt and then went over and looked out the bedroom window. He could see Uncle Floyd getting stuff out of the back of the truck down in the garage. And an odd thing happened. Barabas thought about how much he loves Uncle Floyd. Just seeing him down there, with that old winter coat on, the one with the rip on the sleeve, in some inexplicable way, made Barabas know he was not angry at Uncle Floyd..

And this is what happened. It was as if Jesus was helping. Words began to form in Barabas’s mind. Words, not of anger, but of love. Maybe God could help a second grade boy talk to a grown up in a way that would be heard. Certainly it would be worth a try. It would be better than being angry.



So Barabas made a plan. He would calmly explain to Uncle Floyd that Ken is not such a good sitter anymore. And he would have an alternative plan, since he could not go to Mrs. Potato Head's, he would offer to go to the church with Uncle Floyd and help him there this morning. Maybe a second grade boy, with love and with Jesus, can say important things that will be heard and understood.

Barabas put on his batting helmet and headed down the stairs to talk to Uncle Floyd. THE END