

"The Stranger Is Introduced into the Community"

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Community is when people gather together because they have something in common, like in school because you are in the same classroom, or on a sports team where you all play soccer with other teams or in a church because you all love Jesus.

Community happens in families too. Uncle Floyd and Barabas and Gator are a family community. And each of them has a job to do. Barabas is setting the table and Gator is pouring the water in the glasses.

"Hey, who is coming to dinner?" asked Barabas. "There are four dishes here."

Uncle Floyd finished stirring the chili, whipped his hands on his apron and came over to the table.

"I reckon I have put off this conversation too long. I apologize for that." Barabas and Gator listened closely. Uncle Floyd explained about his family. You probably already know that Uncle Floyd has a brother whose name is Frank. Frank is Barabas's birth father. He is a janitor at Disney Internet Group on Lenkershim Boulevard in North Hollywood, California.

Well, it turns out that Uncle Floyd and Frank have a much younger brother named Francis. Francis is the guy who looks like Barabas, but is not Barabas. Uncle Floyd explained to Barabas and Gator that Francis has had a hard life.

"Why didn't I see him before?" asked Barabas.

"Well, I reckon he has been in California most of your life."

"Did he live with my father?"

"Well, probably not."

"Why does he look so mean?" asked Gator.

"Partly because he has a mental disorder and when he does not take his medicine he can have very unexpected behavior."



And then a knock on the back door startled them and in walked Francis.

"I reckon you are welcome to eat with us brother" said Uncle Floyd as he shook hands with Francis.

Francis turned to Barabas and said "I've hardly seen you since you were a babe in your mother's arms. Shame about what happened to her. She was a beautiful woman."

Barabas does not often hear someone say anything about his mother, who died when he was just a baby.

"How did you get here from California?" asked Gator.

"I hitchhiked," laughed Francis.

"That sounds dangerous." said Barabas.

"It was exciting!" said Francis.

"It is dangerous!" said Uncle Floyd sternly.

This supper was just the beginning of a long and difficult journey for Francis into this new family community.

To Be Continued