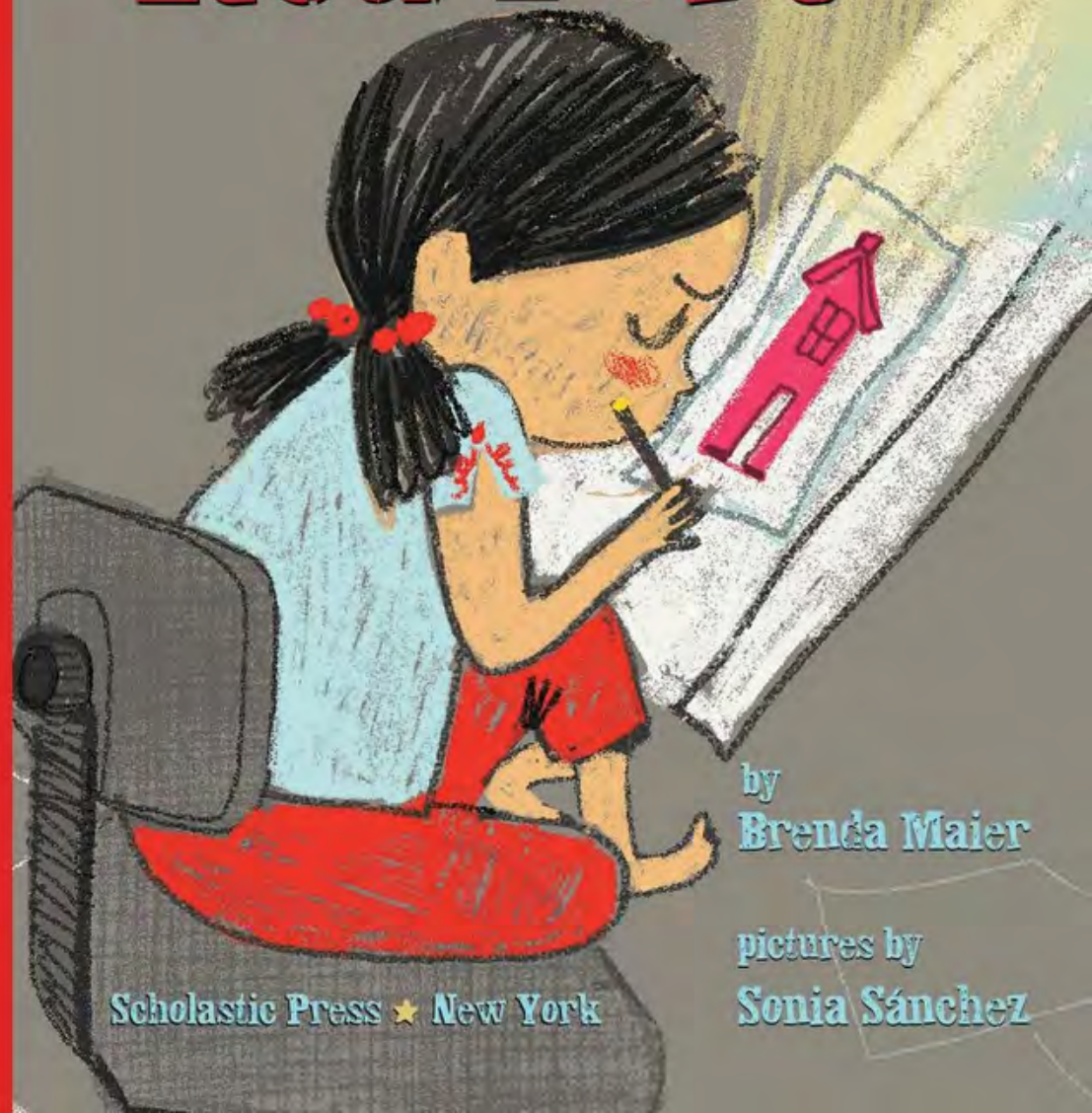


The Little Red Fort



by
Brenda Maier

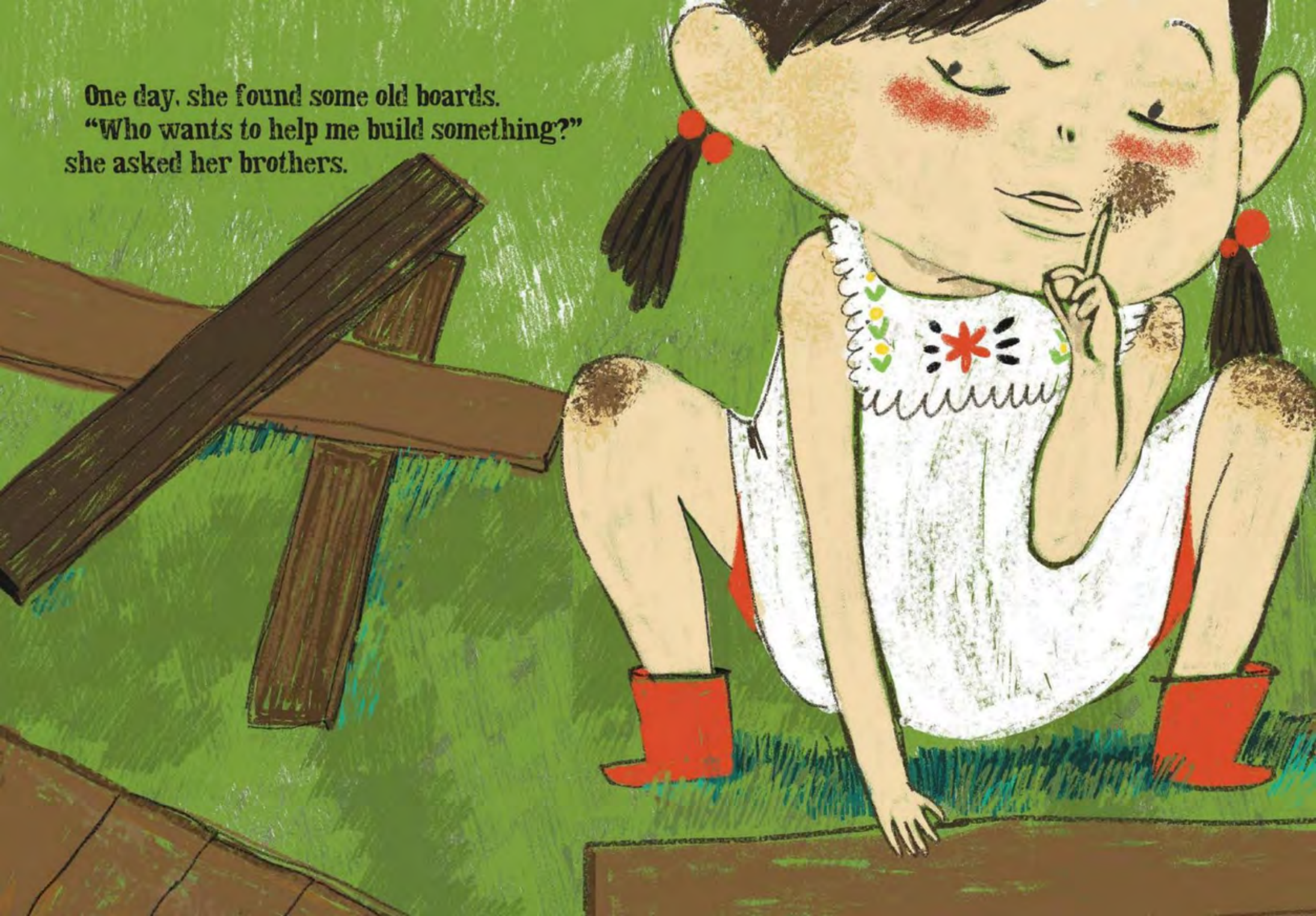
pictures by
Sonia Sánchez

Scholastic Press ★ New York

**Ruby's mind
was always
full of ideas.**



One day, she found some old boards.
“Who wants to help me build something?”
she asked her brothers.



Oscar Lee pretended not to hear her.
Rodrigo gave her a look that could
melt Popsicles.
José almost fell off the fence.
“You don’t know *how* to build anything,”
they said.



Ruby shrugged.

**And
she
did.**



“Who wants to help me draw the plans?” Ruby asked.

The boys clutched their sides and howled with laughter.

“Not me.” said Oscar Lee.

**“I don’t think so.”
said Rodrigo.**

“No way.” said José.

“I’m too busy.”

**“Fine.” said Ruby.
“I’ll draw them myself.”**



**And
she
did.**





Satisfied with her plans, Ruby asked, "Who wants to help me gather the supplies?"

"Not me," said Oscar Lee.
"I don't think so,"
said Rodrigo.
"No way," said José.
"I'm too busy."

"Fine," said Ruby.
"I'll gather them
myself."



**And
she
did.**



When all the supplies
were gathered, Ruby asked,
“Who wants to help me cut
the boards?”

“Not me.” said Oscar Lee.
“I don’t think so.”
said Rodrigo.
“No way.”
said José.
“I’m too busy.”



“Fine.” said Ruby.
“I’ll cut them myself.”

**And
she
did.**





When all the boards were neatly cut, Ruby sang, "Who wants to help me hammer in the nails?"

"Not me," said Oscar Lee.

"I don't think so," said Rodrigo.

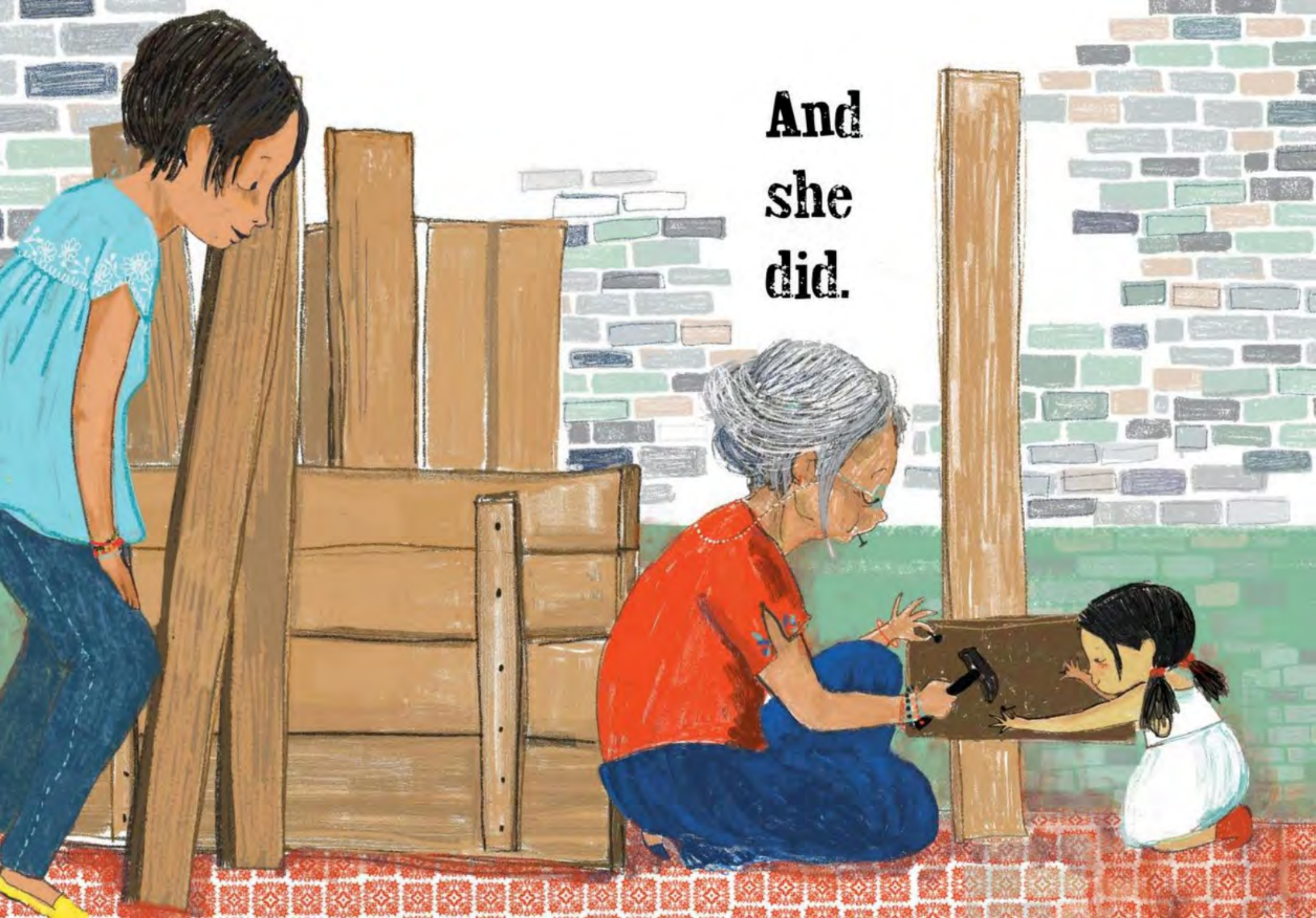
"No way," said José.

"I'm too busy."



"Fine," said Ruby.
"I'll hammer them myself."

**And
she
did.**





Soon Ruby's creation was complete. "Who wants to play in my fort?" she called.

"Me. me!"
said Oscar Lee.
"Let's go!"
said Rodrigo.
"I'll play!"
said José.
"I'm not busy
anymore."

"Not so fast," Ruby said.
"You didn't help me draw
the plans or gather the
supplies or cut the boards
or hammer the nails.
You said I didn't know
how to build.

And you laughed at me.

I'm going to play in
the fort by myself."



**And
she
did.**



**"We didn't want to play anyway,"
the boys said.**



**But
they
did.**

**So they huddled,
whispered, and got
straight to work.**

**Oscar Lee made
a mailbox.**

**Rodrigo planted
flowers.**

**José painted
the fort
fire-engine red.**

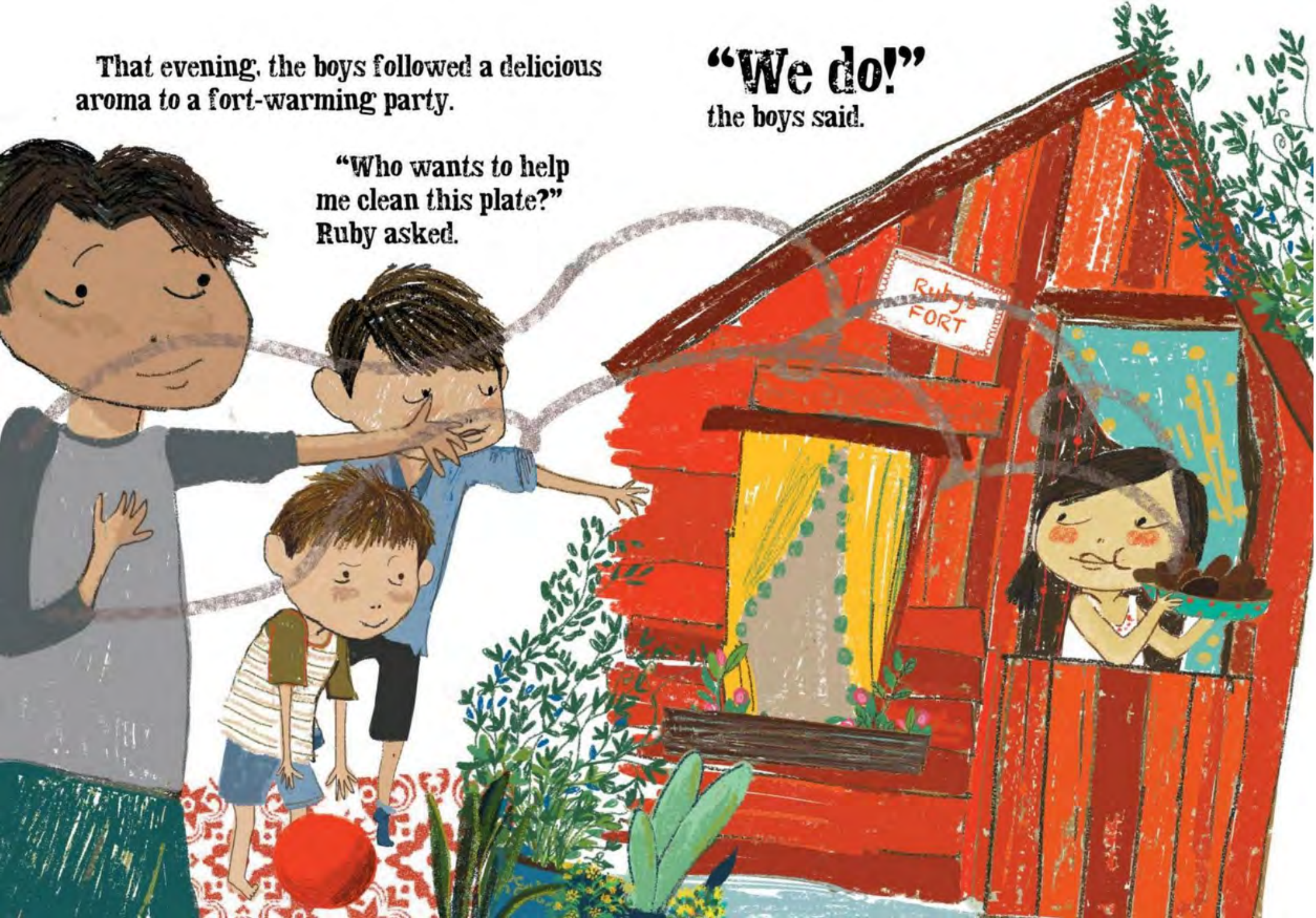


**Ruby
was
delighted.**

That evening, the boys followed a delicious
aroma to a fort-warming party.

“Who wants to help
me clean this plate?”
Ruby asked.

“We do!”
the boys said.





And
they
did.