

JiNA JEONG

Project Neighbor



BY CAROL KIM

ILLUSTRATED BY AHYA KIM

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For Review Only



Chapter 1



BUILDING HOUSES

“Will people be hammering in nails and stuff like that?” Jina asked her parents.

Tomorrow they were going to volunteer with a group called Together We Build. Dad explained that the group built houses for people who needed a home but didn’t have enough money to buy one.

Dad laughed. “Oh yes, there’s a lot of building that needs to be done.”

Jina clapped her hands. “Do you need to wear a hard hat?”

Mom nodded. “Safety is important. Hard hats are needed and gloves and safety glasses.”

Jina started drawing a picture of herself. She added all the safety gear Mom had mentioned. “And a tool belt!” she said, drawing a belt around her waist.

“What are those things that make holes?” Jina asked.

“You mean a power drill?” Dad asked.

Jina nodded. “That’s it!” She drew the power drill so it looked like she was holding it. Jina grinned. Tomorrow was going to be so fun! She’d never even held a power tool before.



The next morning, Jina dressed carefully. She needed to wear long pants and shoes that would protect her from any nails or screws on the ground. She found her hiking boots at the back of the closet. “Perfect!” she said.

“I’m ready for the construction site!” Jina said, walking into the kitchen.

Mom looked at Jina and smiled, placing a bowl of oatmeal on the table. “Better eat up, you’re going to need all your energy today.”

When they arrived at the building site, lots of people were already working. A group was standing around a table, looking at a large drawing of the house.

Jina followed her parents to the table. “Is Monica here?” Mom asked.

A tall woman with dark curly hair looked up. "I'm Monica." She smiled at them. "You must be the new volunteers," she said.

Then she looked at Jina. "Hello there! Did you come to work today too?"

Jina nodded. "Yes! Do I get to wear a hard hat?"

Monica smiled. "I don't see why not," she said.

"I'll take you over to Joe," Monica said to Jina's parents. "He can get you started."

Monica turned to Jina. "And I'll introduce you to Addie. She has a project for all the kids here today."

Jina bounced on her feet in excitement. Maybe she could help with building the roof!

Monica introduced her parents to a man wearing a “I Build Things” T-shirt. Grabbing a hard hat, she handed it to Jina. “Here you go,” she said.

Jina followed Monica to a woman who was covering a table with a plastic tablecloth.

“Hi, Addie,” Monica said. “This is Jina. She’s here with her parents today.”

“Hi, Jina,” Addie said. She turned to the three kids standing next to her. “This is Abdul, Rowan, and Jessie. They’re here to help as well.”

Jina waved shyly at the other kids. No one else was wearing a hard hat.



Addie reached under the table and began placing boxes of materials on the tabletop. There were small pieces of wood, glue, paintbrushes, and paint.

“Every time a house is ready for its new owners, we like to give them a housewarming gift,” Addie said. “Our most popular gifts are homemade birdhouses. You all can help us build some more.”

Addie started passing out materials to each of the children.

Jina looked at the other kids. Abdul was already reaching for one of the kits. Rowan and Jessie were looking at Addie, as if waiting for instructions.

“Um, excuse me?” Jina said, raising her hand. “What if we want to help with building the big house—the one people are going to live in?”

“You have to be at least sixteen to work on a building site,” Abdul said. “That’s what my brother told me.” Abdul pointed to a tall, skinny boy busy hammering nails.

“*Sixteen?*” It was going to be ages before Jina was sixteen!

Jina thought about the picture she had drawn of herself last night. Except for the hard hat, it was all wrong.

Jina sighed and picked up one of the birdhouse kits. “It’s like building a gingerbread house,” she said.

“Except there’s no candy,” Jessie said with a giggle.

Jina smiled at her. Maybe this project wouldn’t be so bad after all.