

Soles, in the *Short and Sweet Goes Fourth* compilation
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In the arid heart of Mexico, Daisy watched her church's crew who built homes for the poor. They ate their lunch and drank cold water under the hot sun—some even poured it over their heads.

Daisy moved into the shade of a bent tree. Under it lay piles of trash, large twigs, and sticks. She spied a dirty shoe on its side in the sandy dirt and tufts of weeds.

A dust cloud blew past Daisy. The sole of the shoe seemed to inch away from her and out of view under the sticks.

Did that shoe move? She blinked hard and snuck after the shoe. *There...* Daisy's feet crunched in the dirt as the shoe slid again. *Is that a man's foot?*

Heaps of trash hid a tiny shack made of scrap wood. Its roof was a torn sheet. Ropes tied the hut to the dry, slumped tree next to her.

Daisy poked her head into the shack. She caught her breath.

A white-haired man sat curled up on a crate and stared wide-eyed at Daisy. Soles of old shoes were tied to each of his feet with string.

"What's your name?" Daisy asked in Spanish. "Do you live here?"

"Juan." He told her he lost his job long ago. His adult son lived next door with five kids, but his wife had left them all due to drug use. "I look...um, men make...home..." Juan waved at the crew.

Elena, Daisy's friend, joined them. "I heard you talk..." Elena scanned the shack, her mouth open, and gripped Daisy's arm. "Daisy...this man lives here?"

The two girls spoke about what to do in low tones. They found the head of the crew, Beck, and told him about Juan.

Beck wiped his face with his shirt. “Wow. You mean he’s watched us build homes here and never asked for one?”

“Juan told me he’s prayed for twenty-five years for a roof. He thought since God was near him with our church group, that maybe his turn was next.”

Beck shook his head. “And he just hid back there with his hope and watched us.”

“What can be done?” Daisy glanced at Elena—who bit her lip.

“I don’t know.” Beck frowned. “It’s our final day. We’ve used up most of our wood and nails...I’ll see what I can do.”

Daisy asked to meet Juan’s son.

Six faces peered through the door frame. A few were shy. Juan led Daisy and Elena in to view one small room and no floor.

Beck peeked through the door and made some calls on his cell phone. Later, he shared with Daisy and Elena, “All five crews agreed to build Juan’s home. They’ll haul over any extra items to use. It’ll work out well.”

After two days, Juan, his son, and kids moved into a four room, one bath home with water, a fan, and a floor. He had a roof over his head! Juan stood in his new home with tears in his eyes, “You made...for us?”

Daisy hugged him. “You’re right, God was near, and you got more than a roof.”

“He saw you and heard you.” Beck grinned, “It was your turn, buddy.”