

To finish reading a novel is like to finish piecing together a quilt. A good feeling, but now what? There is nowhere to go, no reason to get up in the morning, no umph to the Get Up and Go.

Usually, this feeling lasts a moment or two. But with a holiday to plan, that feeling is put on hold. There is a full month of being on task at the workplace, and to finish the queen size quilt so that there is time to purchase gifts, wrap them before putting them underneath the tree which is not in place yet and planning the menu, or the flight plans, or even what to wear on Christmas Day, the new PJ's or the Christmas sweater, or the fancy dress.

Now that the Holiday Season is gathered up and put back underneath bed, put up into closets and in storage bin hidden in the garage the tension is released like the snap of a rubber band. We can resume to focus on the next quilt. Ahhh, ready or not out comes the sewing machine. For some of us the dining room table which tripled as a card table, a game table plus an eating table, is again a four-legged, six-chaired flat surface sewing table. This item alone turns the dining room into a sewing studio. Magical as it seems, the process is what the room looks forward to each year. Turning a dining room into a quilting studio is magical for young eyes to behold. Even for 80-year-old yes blink in wonder.

"Leave the extra table leaf in this year," says the owner of those blue eyes. "You will have more room to quilt, then you can make an even bigger quilt this time," he snickers as he skips out of the now studio. (Skipping is a word in the dictionary, not a word usually used to define his exit. Did he even skip as a child?)

So now the studio is set, the quilting is the task. Choosing the project may take some time, though. Quilt patterns can stretch from wall to wall in the quilting room (sometimes a bedroom). And the fabric stash can reach to the quilt guild meeting room and back, perhaps a 10-mile stretch. It is not to the moon and back, though. However, I have never really calculated it.

Finding a quilt pattern to match the kind of stash in the wardrobe, the dresser drawer, inside the closet is a challenge. We all know that challenges can be fun and so can searching for fabric at all quilt shops.

Years ago, a friend told me that when she buys new clothes for herself, she puts them underneath the bed and brings them out one at a time. When her husband asks if she bought new clothes, she truthfully answers: "No, I have had them for months." Even with fabric, I have not had to play that game. But you can go right ahead and give it a go.

Looking for a new project to immerse ourselves in is part of the process of creating a quilt. Some quilters have the ability of building a quilt from zero. They use graph paper (gasp) to draw up a design. They then choose the size that fits the occasion the quilt is to be given. Deciding on the whole shebang can be invigorating, too. The fabric size, the colors, where each piece would look the best and of course the designers pluck the perfect name out of the air to put on the final touch. These gifted quilters wrinkle my nose. How can they do that? Sister Mary Monica would have hugged me when I was in her second-grade class if I showed aptitude for graph paper.

I could finish the second-grade reader, though. That deserves a hug, or a gold star, or a cup of coffee.

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