

“Here it is,” she said. “Always look at the shape. It is easy.”

We were piecing the Puppy and Kitty jigsaw puzzle. She is a nine-year-old whiz kid at assembling the 300-piece cute animal faces. She looks at shapes. the grandma looks at color. “No,” she directs. “The shape is wrong. Remember: Look at the shape.”

Quilters can pattern themselves from a third grader. She teaches us how to make a peanut butter sandwich, how to put chocolate chips in cookie dough (by eating chip pieces) before dumping in the measured two cups. And she explains how to start up the IPAD and retrieve the games from Cloud she expects to play. All this without reading any instructions.

Piecing a quilt is not one of her specialties, yet. She is on the right path, though. This tween spends hours sitting alone in the quilt room assembling quilt pins into a design in each of the ten or more pin cushions.

When this Girl Scout comes to visit grandparents, she is ready to climb rocks in the park next to the house, walk near water’s edge adjacent to the Farmers’ Market finding flat pebbles to skip them across the inlet.

Pretending is a huge activity. Cotton nesting dolls become story fabrications. Names are assigned to each one of the eight homemade dolls. The problem is that there are three sets of nests. “Look at each doll and see what her name should be,” she demands. “See the flowers on this one? What do you think should be her name? (Is this how grownups sound to her?) Well, her name is Flora,” says the grownup with great trepidation. Correct. There are lots of names to remember, just like making 100 flying geese for a quilt. Daunting.

“Now,” she asks, “Where are the boys?”

There are no boys in the nesting dolls. So, we make one. A bag of colorful wool is dumped onto the floor. She searches through the yellows, blues, reds. “Where are the calming colors?” she demands. “We need two colors in one piece. Do you have tie-dye?”

Whoa! A quilter is born! She does not feel the transition. She has turned from a sweet little grandchild into a force to be dodged. Guidance is quickly given. “Use this blue and cream piece along with the soft yellow,” suggests the grandma attempting to become the grownup.

“No,” she snaps. “I will use the red and the dark blue.” She cuts out a facsimile of trousers, uses a red piece to resemble a shirt and then a bright yellow for sleeves. All are glued onto the already cut out five-inch boy doll form. She checks her four carefully sketched designed dolls. “This one is the size of number two,” she mutters like a quilter at a retreat.

Her nesting doll needs a shirt design. She takes an intense ten minutes cutting out her shirt design. “Oh, I messed up,” she confesses. So, she then cuts out a second face. The first set is on the face. The second face is glued onto his chest. Now she has a boy doll with two faces.

Puzzling! Lana Russ