

*Barbie*

**YOU CAN BE  
A FASHION  
DESIGNER**



# Barbie™

**YOU CAN BE  
A FASHION  
DESIGNER**



*Written by Becky Matheson*

One beautiful spring day, Barbie and Nikki attended Naomi Hill's fashion show.

"All of the clothes Naomi Hill designs are so creative and fun!" said Barbie.

"I know!" said Nikki. "And I am so excited we're here together!"

"Me too!" said Barbie.

The two friends took their seats in the audience. The lights dimmed and the music started playing. All the clothes sparkled and shimmered as they moved down the runway.

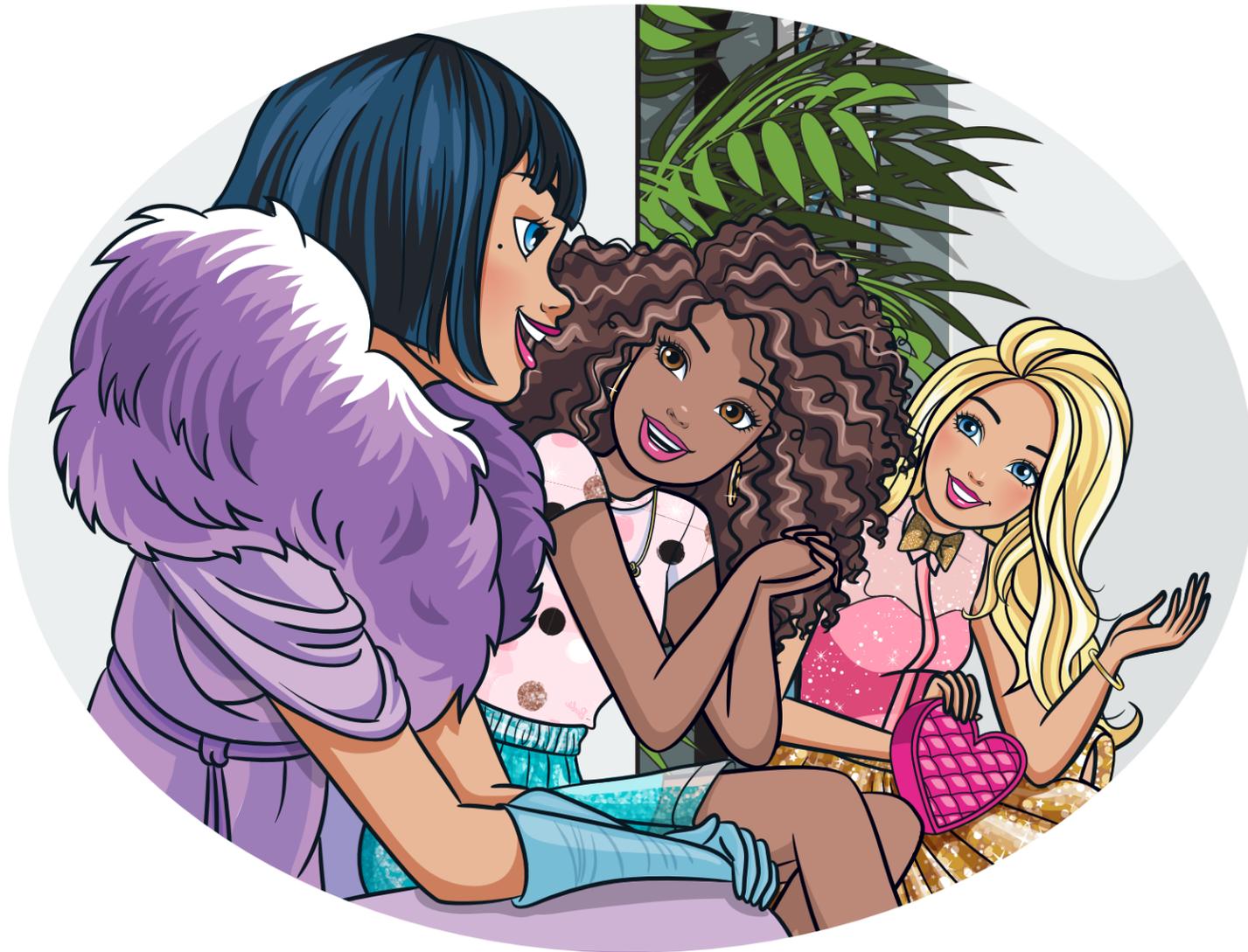
"It's hard to pick a favorite design," said Barbie.

"Seriously, all of these clothes are amazing. I really love that green shift dress," Nikki said.



"Do you want to take a closer look?" asked a woman sitting next to them. "You two seem like big fans."

"The biggest!" said Barbie and Nikki at the same time. The woman smiled. "Follow me," she said.



The woman led Barbie and Nikki backstage to an area full of clothing racks.

Barbie held up a dress. It had a shimmering blue bodice and a blue tulle skirt. She swirled it in the air. "I think this is my favorite outfit!" said Barbie.

"It's gorgeous!" said Nikki. "And it would go perfectly with these shoes."

"Good choice!" said a woman standing next to them. "I really hoped someone would love that dress when I designed it."

"Naomi Hill?! We love your clothes!"

"We really do!" said Nikki. "Your work is flawless and so inspired!"

"Well, you picked one of my favorite outfits," said Naomi, "and those shoes match it perfectly. Have you two ever considered taking a design class?"

The friends shook their heads no.

"I'm teaching one that starts tomorrow," she said. "Stop by my studio in the morning if you're interested."



Barbie and Nikki couldn't believe their luck. They promised Naomi that they would attend her class the next day. They were so inspired by her designs that they couldn't wait to start learning!

Barbie and Nikki arrived early to the design class. Barbie felt nervous and excited. She loved the idea of learning how to sew and create clothes. She just hoped she would do a good job.

"Hi, Barbie! Hi, Nikki!" said Naomi, smiling. "The other students are over here."

Barbie and Nikki joined the small group of students in the center of Naomi's studio.

"Welcome to the Basics of Fashion Design!" said Naomi. "It takes creativity, practice, and patience to be a good designer. Take your time learning each step, and it will pay off later."





Naomi led the students to a table full of supplies. "It takes many different tools to create a piece of clothing," said Naomi. "Some items like scissors and pins are sharp, so please remember that the first rule of sewing is to be safe."

Barbie nodded. Then she studied the rest of the materials on the table: a sketchbook, tracing paper, sewing patterns, a ruler, a tape measure, chalk, fabric, and a sewing machine.

"Look at all the different scissors!" said Nikki.

"How do we know which ones to use?" asked Barbie.

"That's a good question!" Naomi replied. "Each pair of fabric scissors has a different use. For example, pinking shears are used to cut zigzags onto fabric!"



Naomi also explained that fabric is the material used to make a piece of clothing, like cotton, wool, or silk, while a pattern shows how the material has to be cut and sewn to make the fabric into a piece of clothing.

"Got it," said Barbie. "The only problem now is picking my favorite fabric."

"Tell me about it," said Nikki, "but I think I have to go with tulle."

"Good choice!" said Barbie.



Naomi handed Barbie and Nikki tape measures. "Designers take measurements to make sure each piece of clothing is the correct size. Math is very important in fashion!"

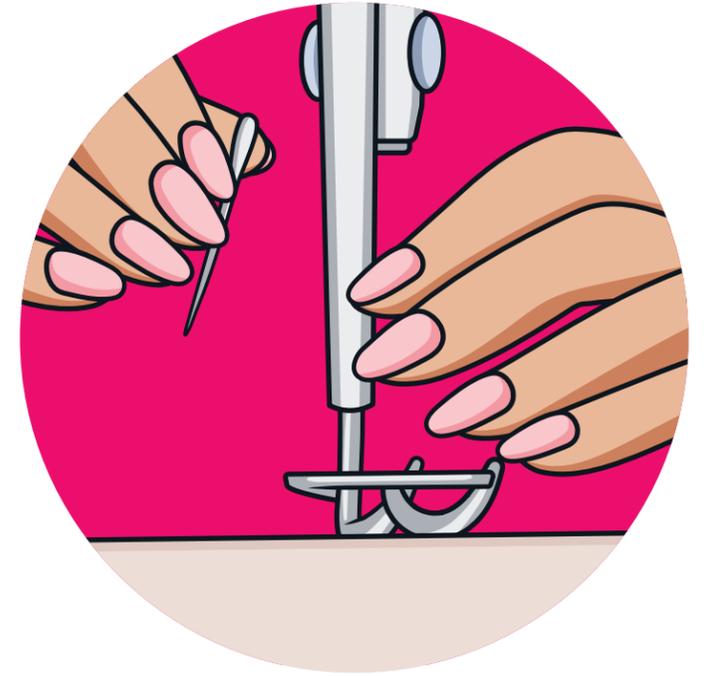
Barbie and Nikki practiced taking each other's measurements. Barbie made sure to write down all the correct numbers. She knew she would need them later.

“Now the fun part,” said Naomi. “I’m going to teach you how to use a sewing machine! Everyone please take a seat.”

Barbie sat down and looked at the machine in front of her. It had so many different parts!



The first step was to put a needle in the machine. Naomi reminded the class that the flat part should be toward the back.



Then they had to wind the bobbin. The thread spun quickly!

Barbie and Nikki laughed. This step was really fun. They inserted the bobbin into the machine.



The last step was to insert the thread into the needle.

Naomi showed the class how to do different stitches. She explained that the two main stitches in sewing were straight and zigzag.

A straight stitch was the most basic stitch. It could be used to sew a seam together or to attach one piece of fabric to another. A zigzag stitch could be used to keep fabric from fraying.



Barbie and Nikki spent the rest of the afternoon practicing different stitches and sewing different fabrics together.



At the end of the design class, Naomi made an exciting announcement. For the rest of the week, each student would focus on creating one piece of clothing to be featured in Naomi's spring fashion show!

Barbie left the class feeling excited and inspired. She knew exactly what she was going to make for the fashion show: a dress for Nikki!



Barbie spent all night looking through different patterns of dresses. Then suddenly she remembered how much Nikki loved the shift dress from Naomi's show. She decided to make Nikki a shift dress. She even found the perfect pattern!

Barbie went to class the next day ready to work! She needed to pick a fabric. One of the design students pointed out a beautiful green fabric. Barbie thought it would be perfect for Nikki's dress! She thanked the student. It was really helpful to work with other people!



First, Barbie traced the pattern onto the fabric with chalk. Next, Barbie made sure to cut the fabric with the correct scissors. Then she sewed the dress together using the different stitches that she had learned on the sewing machine. Finally, she carried the finished dress over to a mannequin.



Barbie swooped the dress over the mannequin's head and pulled it down. Then she backed up to take a look at her finished piece.

"Oh no!" exclaimed Barbie.

"What happened?" asked Naomi.

"I don't think my dress looks right," said Barbie.

Naomi looked at the dress. Then she looked at Barbie's pattern.

"The sleeves are a little too long," said Naomi. "And the stitching on the bottom is a little uneven. But this is a good start, Barbie!"



Barbie felt discouraged. She thought she was finished with the dress, but now she was back at the beginning.

The rest of the students left the studio when the class was done, but Barbie decided to stay late to fix her design.



Barbie walked herself through every step again. She still couldn't fix the dress. A few hours later, Naomi walked back into the studio.

"Hi, Naomi!" said Barbie. "Are you here because you forgot something?"

"I'm here to work, just like you," said Naomi.

"But you're so good at designing clothes!" said Barbie.

"I'm only good because I spend so much time practicing," explained Naomi, "and because I know there is value in making mistakes."

"What do you mean?" asked Barbie.

"I mean that sometimes you have to get something wrong in order to get it right. You're a lot closer to finishing this dress because you made mistakes. Now, let me help you learn from them."

Naomi walked Barbie through each step again. The two worked on the dress for the rest of the day.



A few days later, Barbie walked into class smiling. She ran up to Nikki.  
"I have a surprise for you," said Barbie. "It took a lot of practice, and I made a lot of mistakes, but I think I finally got it right."

Barbie handed Nikki the finished shift dress. "It's for you! I wanted to design something you could wear in the fashion show."

"Barbie, it's perfect!" Nikki beamed. "It's also a little funny."

"Why is it funny?" asked Barbie.



Nikki smiled and handed Barbie a bag. Barbie opened it and pulled out a gorgeous pink dress with a bow.

"You made me a dress, too!" Barbie said.

"Yes." Nikki grinned. "I made a lot of mistakes, too, but they were worth it. The hardest part was keeping this a surprise!"

"I was so busy working on your dress that I didn't even notice you making mine," said Barbie.

"Now that's what I call friendship," said Naomi. "I can't wait to see you two wear these outfits down the runway! Let's just make sure they fit."

Barbie and Nikki tried on the outfits. Barbie hoped her dress would look great on Nikki. She had worked hard to make it perfect, but now she understood that it was okay to make mistakes.

When Barbie and Nikki came out of the dressing rooms, everyone in the class clapped. The two dresses looked amazing!



On the day of Naomi's spring fashion show, Barbie and Nikki were ready to walk down the runway together. They were just about to start when suddenly Naomi appeared on the stage in front of them.



"The following designs were done by students in my class," said Naomi to the audience. "They worked very hard. They displayed creativity, practice, and patience. But more than anything, they displayed a great deal of friendship."

Barbie smiled at Nikki. "It really did make this experience more meaningful to share it together. I am so lucky to have you as a friend."

"I couldn't have said it any better myself," said Nikki.

The audience cheered as the two friends walked down the runway.





Dear Naomi,

Thank you so much for inviting Nikki and me to your design class! I learned so much about fashion design and sewing, and I am still practicing every day. I'm really glad that you taught me that making mistakes can be a good thing. I'll always remember that it takes getting it wrong a few times to finally get it right.

Your friend,  
Barbie

