

the totoro bag



A SEWING PATTERN BY



the totoro bag

SEWING TUTORIAL

the totoro bag

This bag was inspired by the character Totoro from the movie *My Neighbor Totoro*. It features an inner pocket, raw edge applique, a leaf snap closure, and straps shaped like Totoro ears.

DIFFICULTY: 

The details take some time, but overall the process is straightforward.

MAKES:

one 11" x 14" x 3" bag

MATERIALS & TOOLS

- 2/3 yd. of 60" wide or 3/4 yd. of 45" wide medium to heavyweight gray fabric for body and straps (denim or canvas would be good, I used twill)
- 6" x 6" scrap of green medium weight fabric for leaf (twill or light canvas is good, I used interfaced linen)
- 2/3 yd. of lightweight fabric for lining (I used quilting cotton)
- 3/8" Metal snap (sew-in variety would be good, I used the hammer-installing variety)
- Appliqué supplies:
 - 12" x 12" scrap of white fabric for belly, smile, & eyes (I used more twill, but cotton or felt is also fine)
 - 5" x 5" scrap of black fabric for whiskers, nose, & pupils (I used more twill, but cotton or felt is also fine)
 - 5" x 5" scrap of gray fabric for stomach markings (I used the same twill as from the main bag, but cotton or felt is also fine)
 - Fusible web (optional)
- Matching sewing thread
- Basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Print out the project pattern, pages 9-17
2. Assemble the printed pattern pieces
3. Lay out the pattern pieces on your fabric and cut them out
4. Mark the fabric pieces with the guidelines from the pattern



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1

Appliqué your face and body pieces to the bag front. Arrange them according to the guidelines on the pattern piece. You can iron them on with fusible web if you desire, then sew them to the bag with a zigzag or straight stitch. I personally used a straight stitch around the perimeter of the appliqué pieces, then left the edges raw. I thought this added to the organic feeling of the character that I always get with the Miyazaki films. Also don't forget to stitch along the teeth lines - I used a straight stitch here as well.



2

Take one of your leaf pieces and straight stitch along the guidelines from the pattern to give it the decorative lines.

3

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Install your metal snaps on the bag pieces. The socket should be on the bag front where the pattern indicates, right above Totoro's face. The prong should be on your other leaf piece, the one without the decorative stitching you've just done. I had to apply some interfacing because my linen wasn't very thick and resilient, so I recommend the same if you have thin fabric. I also recommend using a smaller sew-in variety of snap, which will make step 4 much easier for you.

3



Layer your leaf pieces together with right sides facing, and sew around the perimeter. Leave the tip of the leaf stem open for you to turn the leaf right side out. Clip and trim the seam allowances, turn the leaf right side out, and press.

4



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5

Now to make the straps! Layer two of your strap pieces together with right sides facing and sew down each side. Leave the ends free for turning it right side out. Clip and trim your seam allowances and turn it right side out with a safety pin. Be sure to use a chopstick or something similar to poke out the corners of the ears afterwards to get the right definition, then press the straps flat.



6

Now baste the straps to the top of your bag pieces. Follow the pattern guidelines to attach them at an angle. This is so that when they're flipped upward they're perfectly vertical. Repeat this with the back of your bag as well.



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Also on the back of your bag, baste your leaf in place towards the middle following your pattern guidelines.

7



Now to attach the bottom of the bag, or the gusset. Start by lining up the short edge of one side of your gusset with the square marking on the bag front. Start lining it up towards the bottom, where the notches should match up. Finally as you keep wrapping it around, the other edge of your gusset should match up with the other square marking. Sew along this curve, clipping the seam allowances in the gusset by about 1/2" or so to make the curving easier. Repeat this with the other side of the gusset and the back of your bag.

8



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9

Now we're making the inner pocket! Place your two pocket pieces together, aligning all the edges and putting right sides together. Sew along the bottom curved edge, and leave the top straight edge open for turning the pocket right side out. Notch and trim the seam allowances, turn the pocket right side out, and press it flat.



10

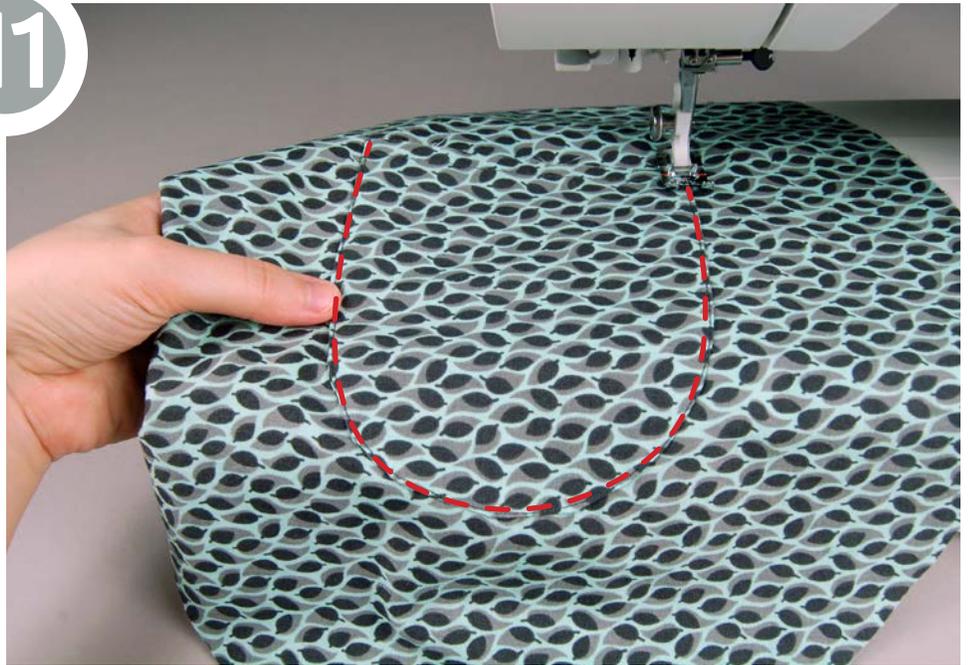
To go with the raw-edge look I already had, I just hemmed the top of the pocket without turning under the raw edge. You could turn yours under, but this way is easy (^--^) and cute.

the toloro bag

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Line up your pocket with one of your lining pieces according to the pattern guidelines. Sew along the bottom curved edge and leave the top straight edge open so you can put stuff in it! Your pocket is now complete :B! Now you'll need to go back to step 8, and repeat the same procedure of sewing in the gusset with your lining pieces, but be sure to leave an opening in the bottom as the pattern indicates so you can turn the whole bag right side out later.

11



Nestle your main bag into your lining with right sides facing, and line up the top edges. This includes the curved edge and both the front of the bag and the back, and also the little spots on the side. Sew along this entire perimeter. Clip and trim your seam allowances, especially in that corner area with the gusset, and turn the bag right side out from the opening in the lining. Iron the top seam of your bag really nicely, then sew the opening in the lining closed. Either way, rejoice, because you are DONE!

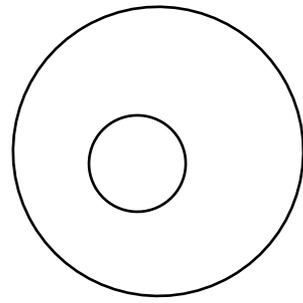
12



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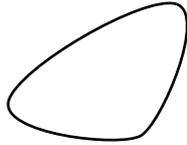
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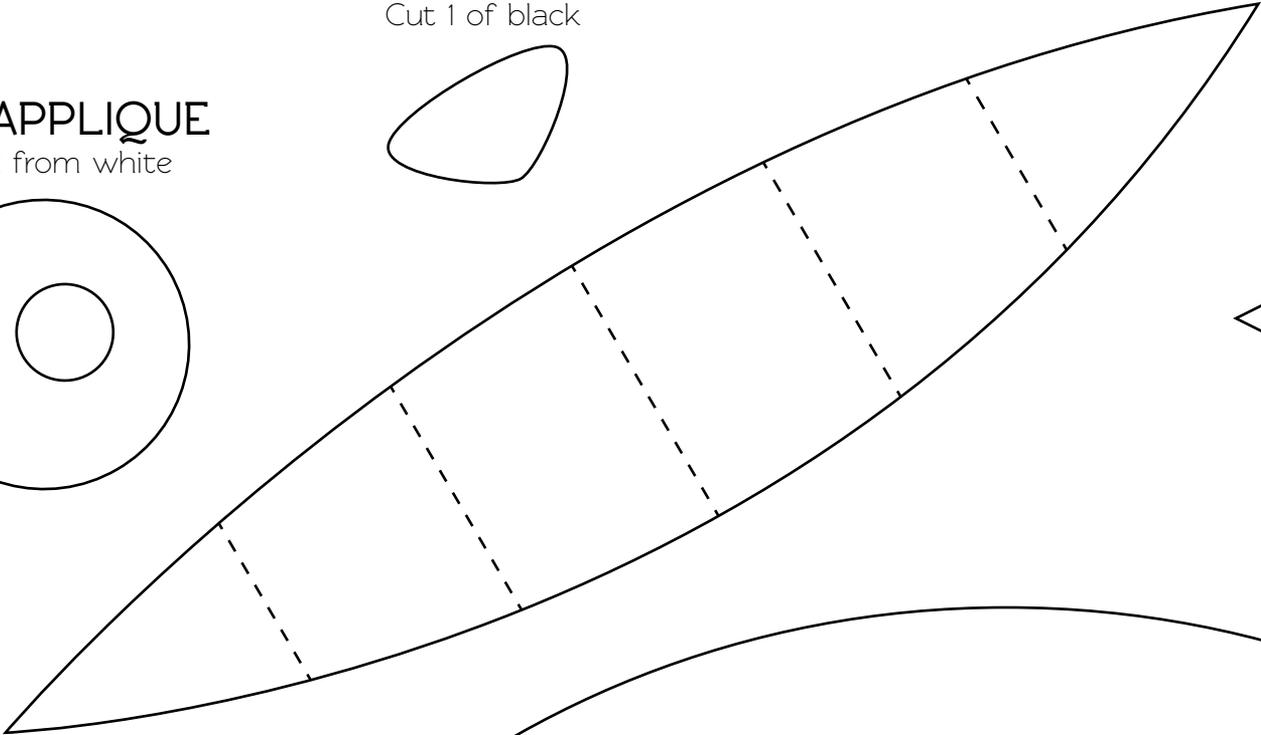
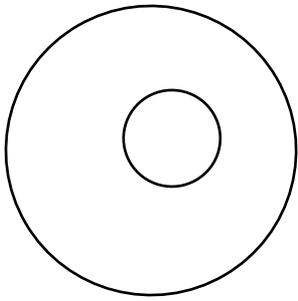
NOSE APPLIQUE

Cut 1 of black



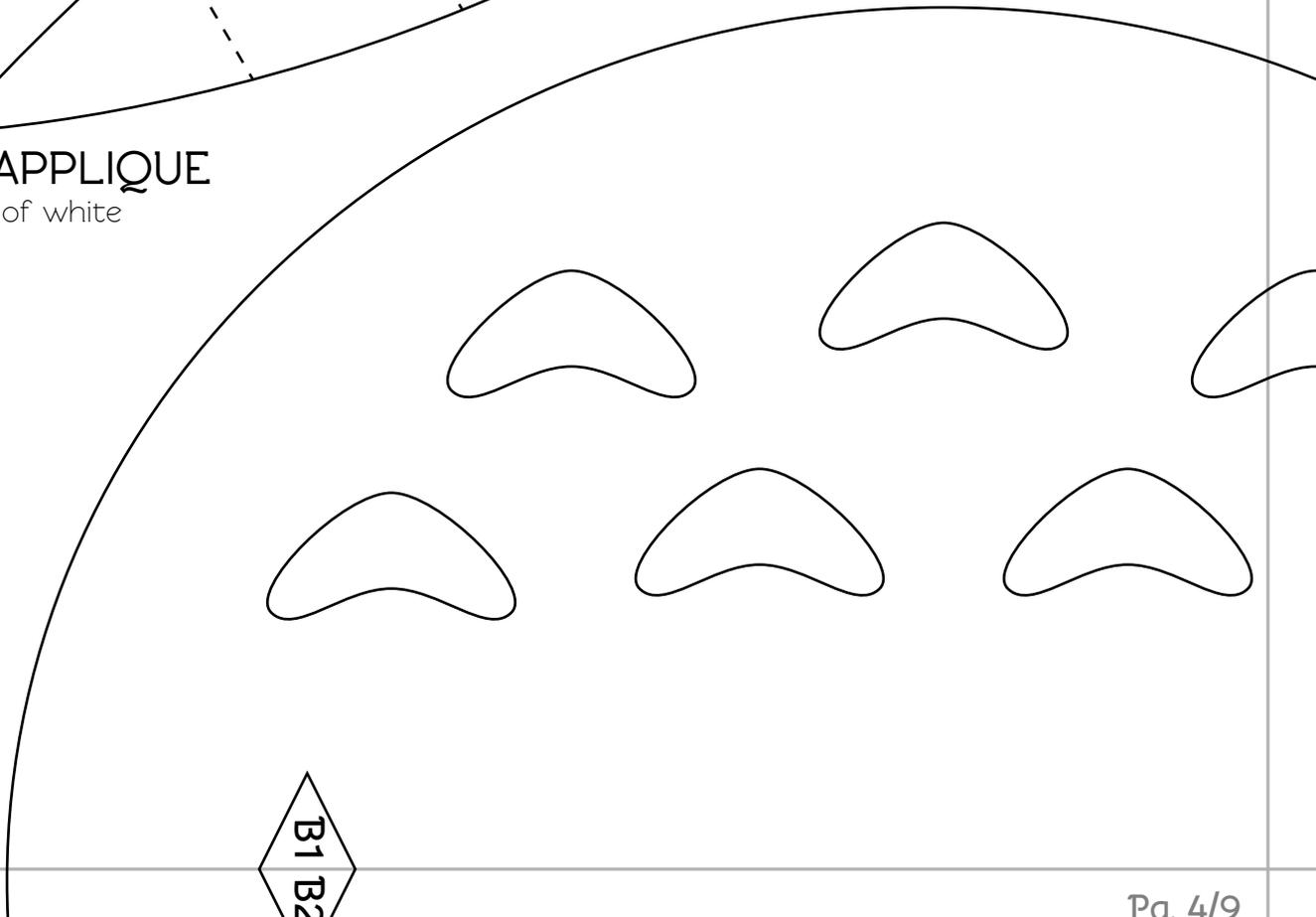
EYE APPLIQUE

Cut 2 from white



SMILE APPLIQUE

Cut 1 of white





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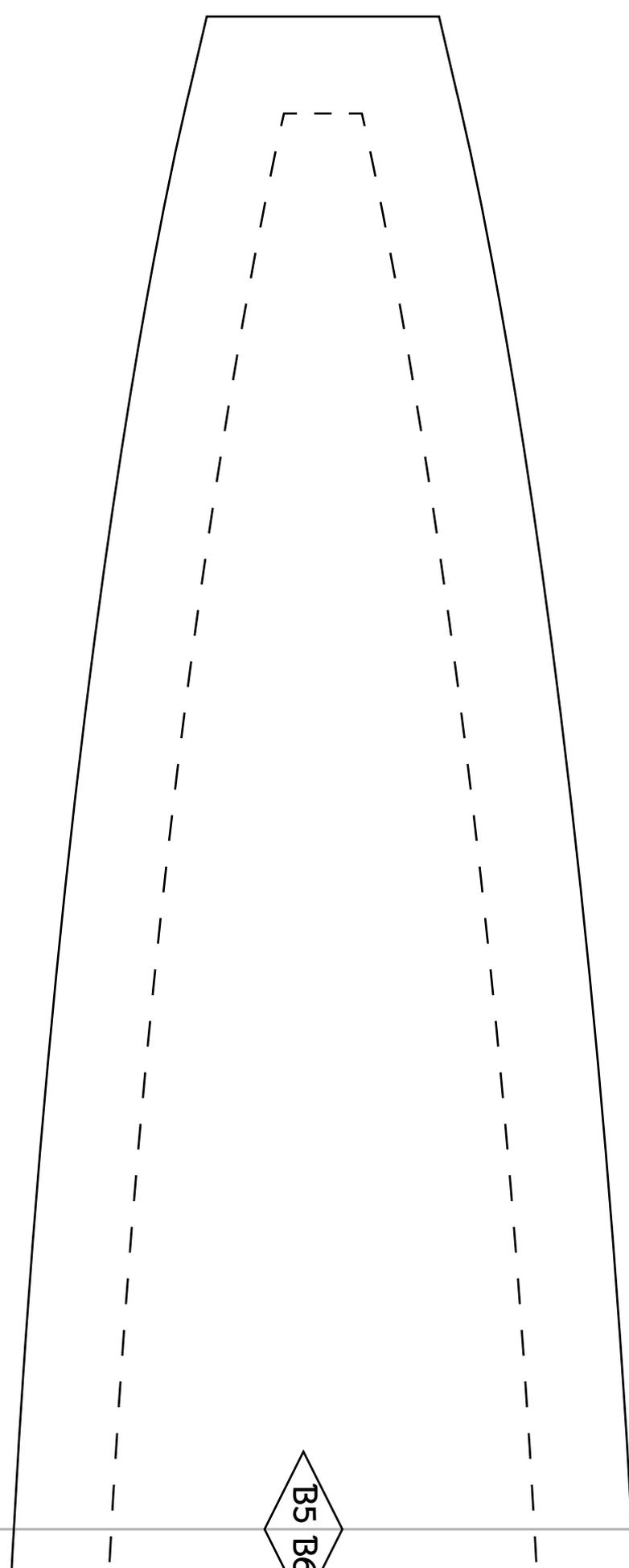
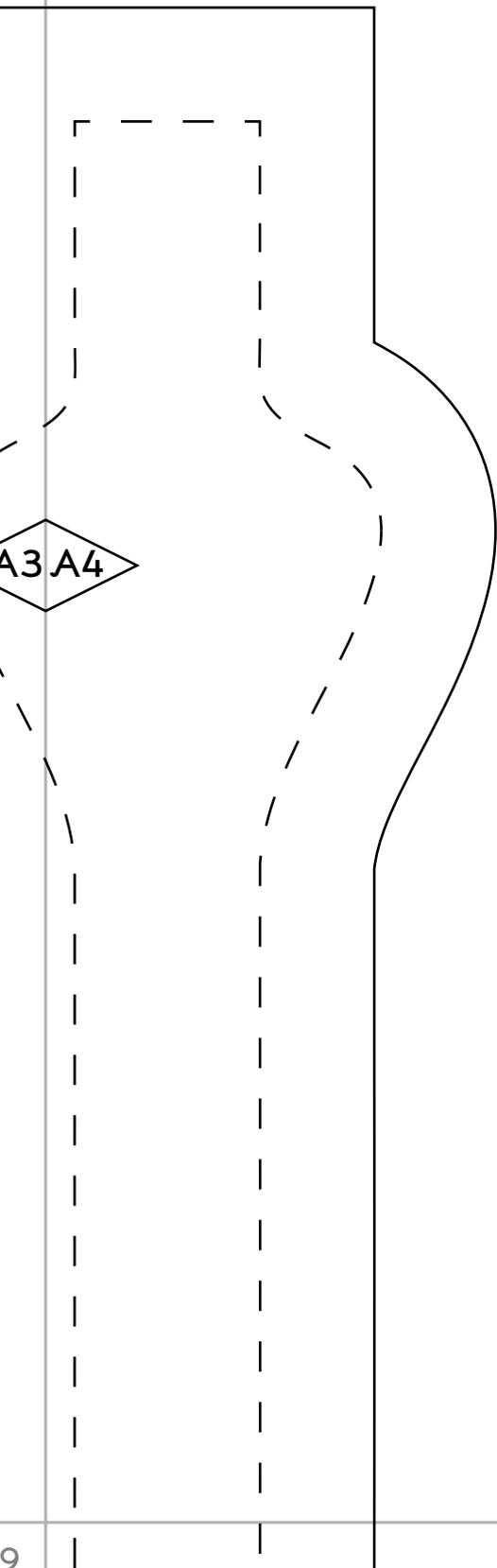
POCKET

Cut 2 from lining
3/8" seam allowance

A1 A2

A3 A4

B3 B4





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STOMACH APPLIQUE

Cut 1 from white

B1 B2

C1 C2

leaf placement

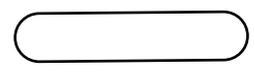
strap placement

snap placement

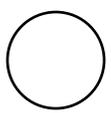
applique placement

D1 D2

B3 B4

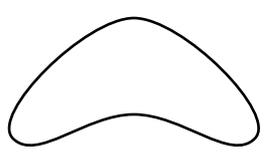


WHISKER APPLIQUE
Cut 6 of black



PUPIL APPLIQUE
Cut 2 of black

C3 C4



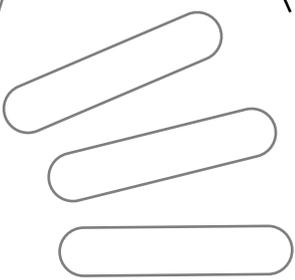
MARKING APPLIQUE
Cut 7 of gray

C1 C2

ment

strap
placement

p
ment



D3 D4

C3 C4

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HANDLES

Cut 4 from main fabric
5/8" seam allowance

B5 B6



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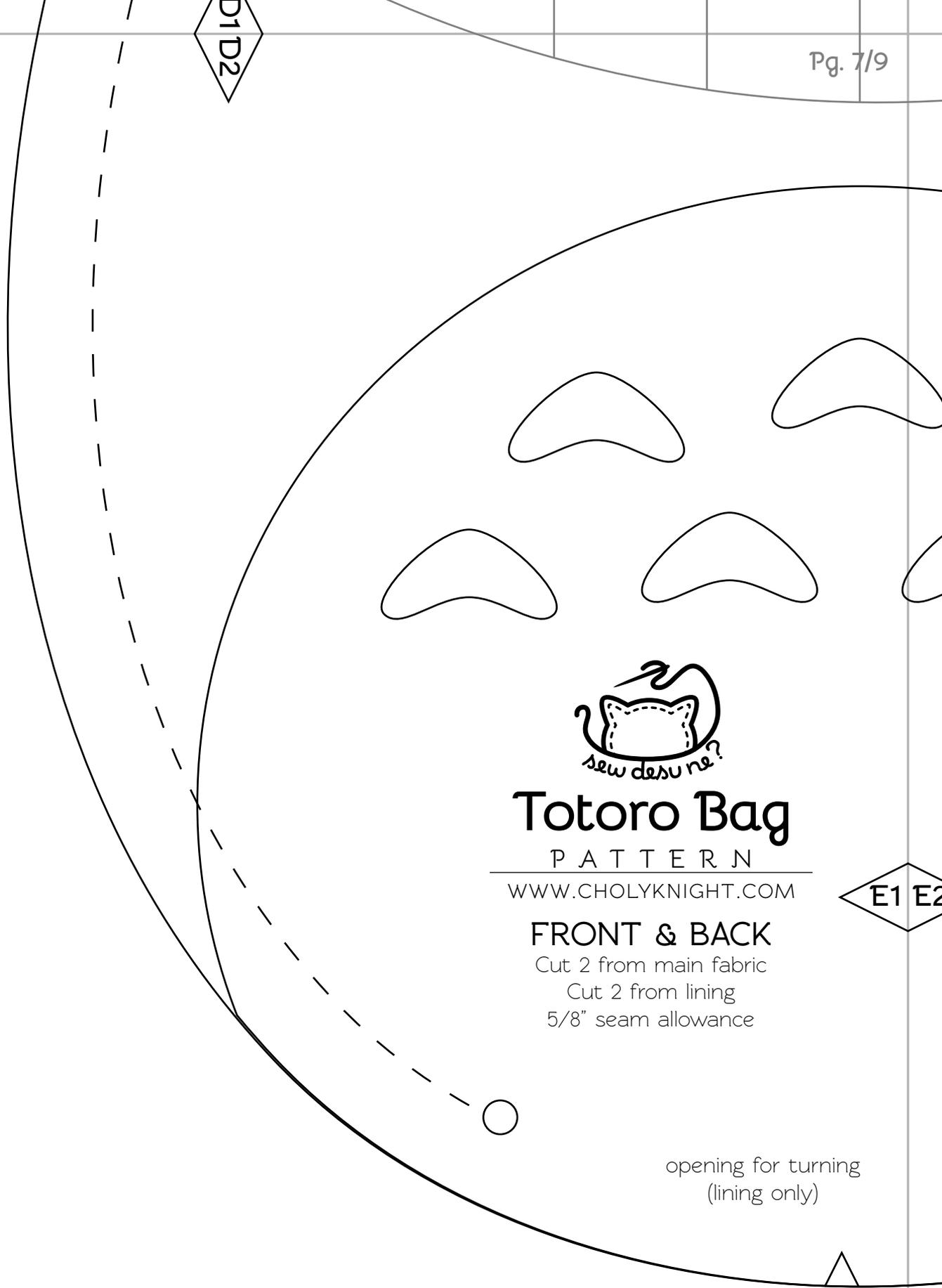
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GUSSET

Cut 1 from main fabric
Cut 1 from lining
5/8" seam allowance

D5 D6

D1 D2



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FRONT & BACK

- Cut 2 from main fabric
- Cut 2 from lining
- 5/8" seam allowance

E1 E2

opening for turning
(lining only)



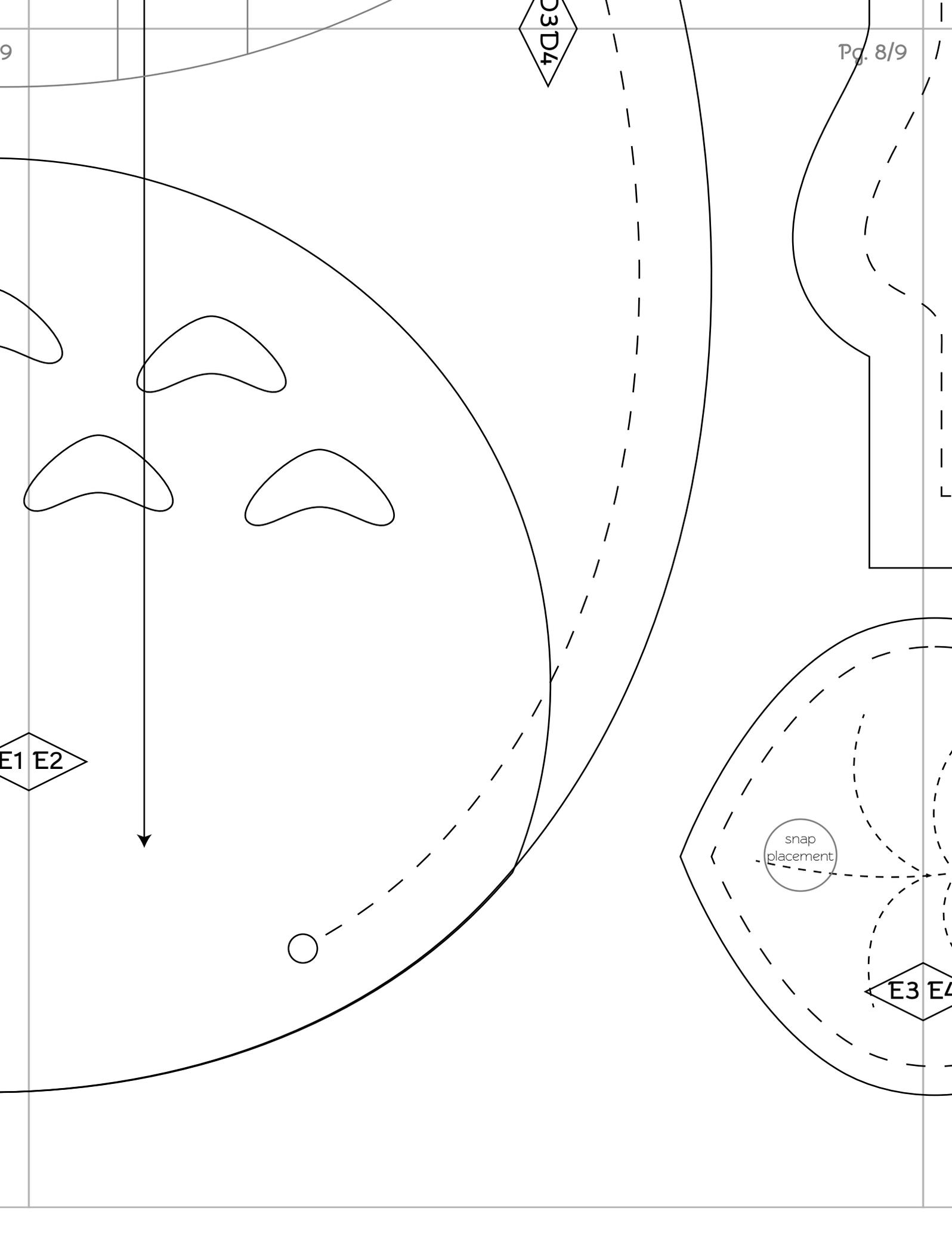
D3 D4

9

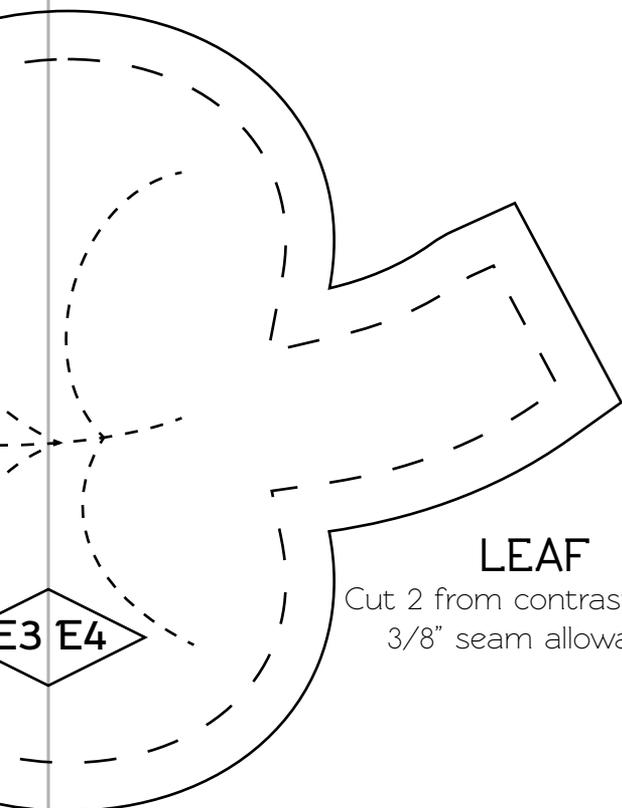
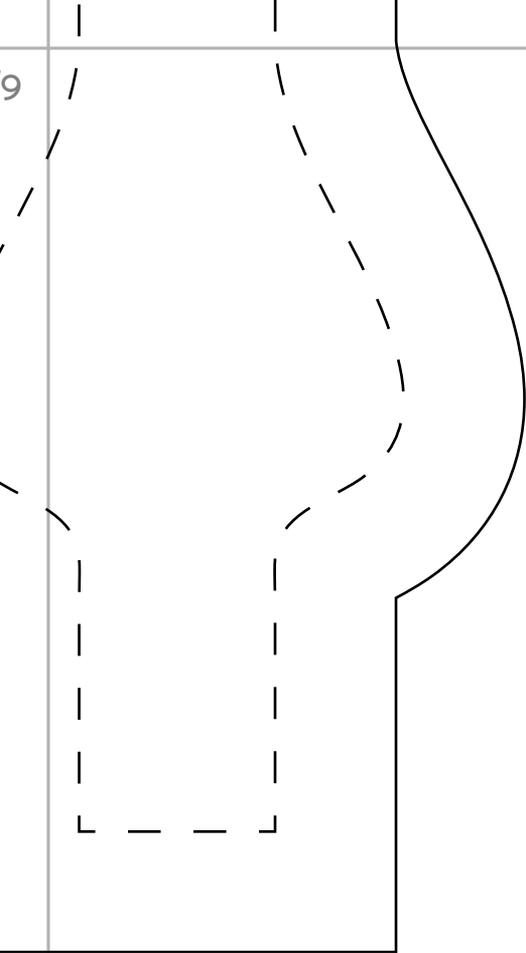
E1 E2

E3 E4

snap placement



D5 D6



LEAF

Cut 2 from contrast fabric
3/8" seam allowance

