

SEW CHIBI DESIGNS

Criminal

a chibi Lee Tae Min cosplay



BACKSTORY

It's no surprise that we surround ourselves almost entirely of Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese entertainment in our home. I find it much more enticing, interesting, and soothing to immerse myself in these cultures than it is to focus on what's going on in the world around me. The escape into their way of life, in some aspects, is much more exciting to me. It's entrenched in so much history that I only know a little about, and it makes me want to learn so much more about it!

What's started out as an anime addiction eventually evolved into an Asian drama addiction. I've been a huge fan of Taiwanese idols like Aaron Yan and Bii for a *really* long time now. Lately, it seems I have less and less new content to watch or listen to from them so, I started branching out more-so into Korean dramas. Despite having many actors and idols that I treasure, I still really take my

PATTERNS

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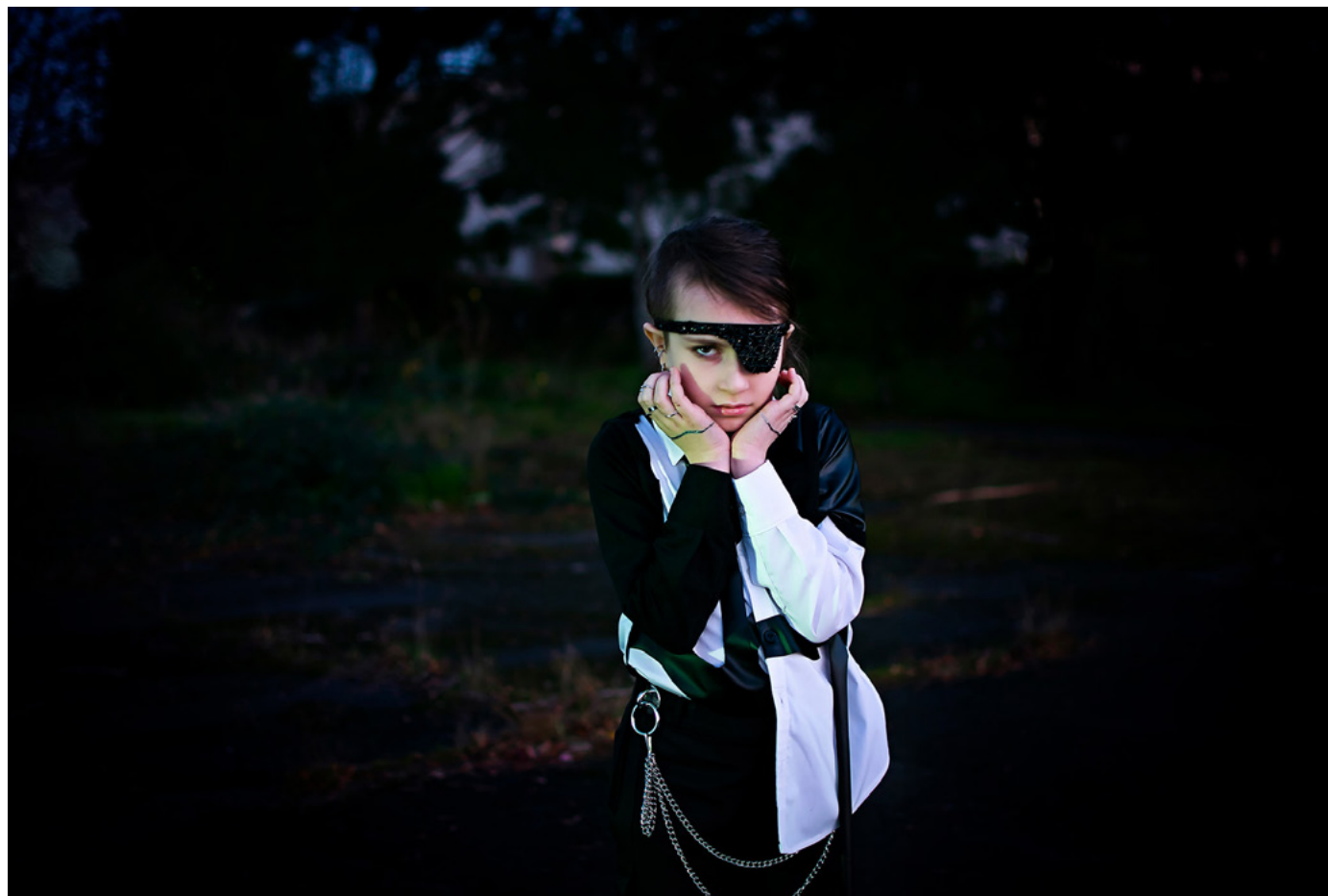
LARAMIE SHIRT
BY HEY JUNE PATTERNS

MOROCCO PANTS
BY PETIT A PETIT PATTERNS

BEADED EYEPATCH
BY SEW CHIBI DESIGNS

time getting to the point where I full-blown fangirl over someone new. Kpop came after finding out a lot of my favorite actors were singers or were from Kpop groups originally. Somewhere along the line, I found myself getting to know more and more about certain artists and becoming more and more fond of them! The choreography and story behind some music videos are so compelling. Every aspect is so thoughtfully planned out, especially the outfits they wear. Enter in the never-ending flood of Kpop fashion that I'm endlessly inspired to recreate!

I don't just fangirl alone in our family. My amazing husband is always there with me, watching shows, staying up at 2am for new video releases, and being a fan just like me! There hasn't been a Sunday in *years* that we've miss an episode of "Running Man" which is just the best variety show ever. If you're into watching shows that are hilarious and exciting and have *hundreds* of episodes (and, no, you don't need to watch them in order to enjoy...



...the show), I highly recommend it. I think that there are very few things that I have laughed at harder than some “Running Man” moments. I’ve literally cried and slapped the floor laughing so hard. We’re not the only fans in the house! My youngest is a die-hard fan of Kpop. And then there’s my little Kpop muse, my middle girl, Sephira. She prides herself on her knowledge of anything SHINee, Super M, or ENHYPEN and tests herself repeatedly as to matching names with voices and people with groups and songs on a regular basis. (If you think I’m kidding, her Roblox profile name is SHINee related, I’m not even kidding!) She loves each of the members of SHINee as the rest of us do. Her ultimate bias used to be Tawainese/Korean singer Bii but then became Choi Min Ho after watching a “Knowing Bros” episode featuring the SHINee boys.

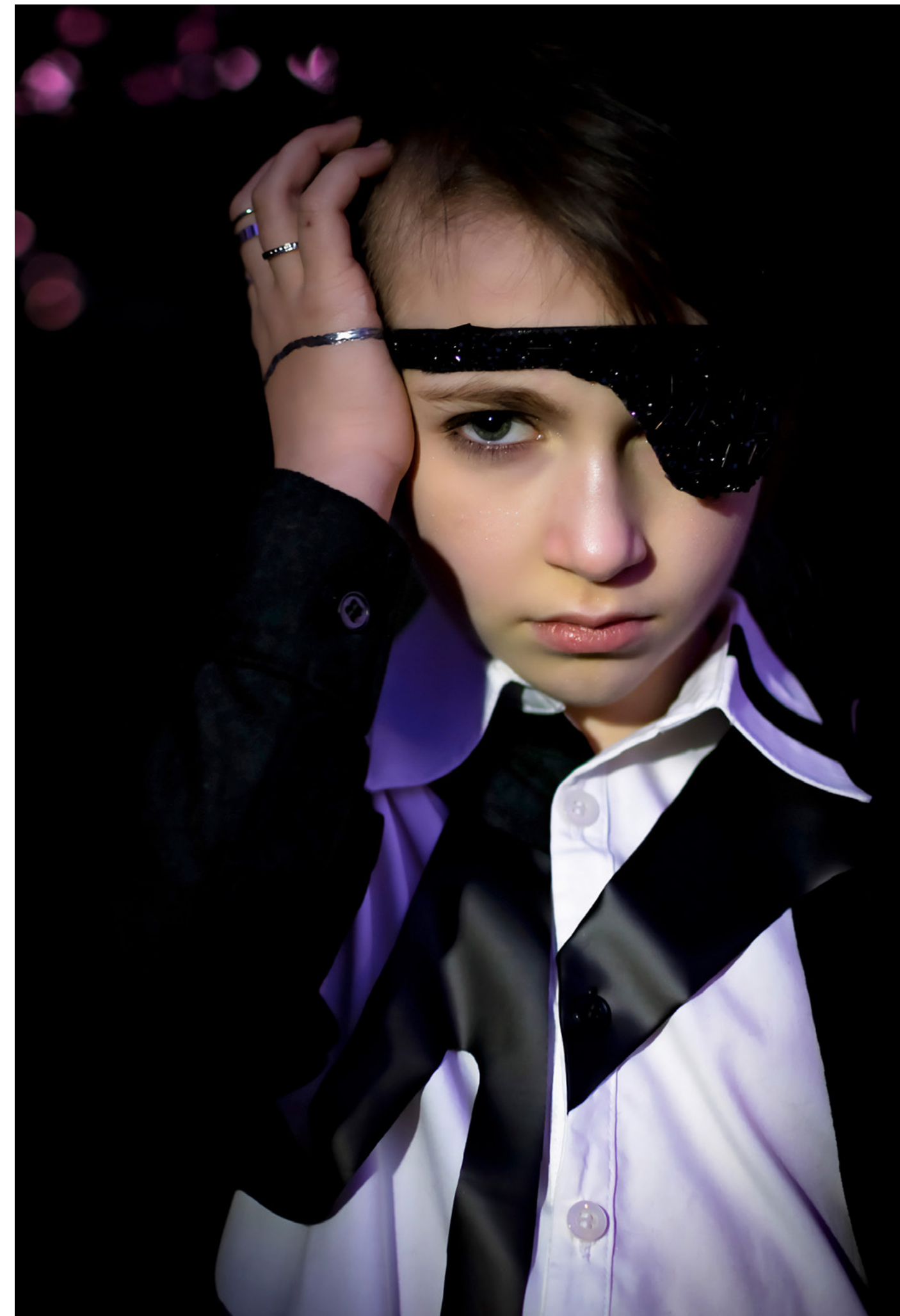
I can’t really pinpoint when I realized how obsessed we became with SHINee, but the closeness of the group, the way the compliment each other and how funny and comfortable they are with each other compounded with the kind of jaw-dropping talent they all have probably had something to do with it. They have done some pretty amusing comedy skits for things like SNL Korea to contagious characters like Kibum in

“Drinking Solo”. I have such a huge heart for all 5 of them!

Lee Tae Min, the youngest member and main dancer always wows with his solo projects. I mean, he brings a type of artistry to the genre unlike anyone else in the kpop industry. It’s fluid, masterful, evocative, dramatic and the clothes... oh the things he wears are just perfection every time. We all look forward to anything new from him and, there aren’t many things that I will set an alarm for 2am to wake up for but I will do it to watch a newly released video of Lee Tae Min. This year, in the past three months, he has released 2 new videos “2 Kids” and “Criminal” as part of his latest full-length album, Never Gonna Dance Again Act:1. But more than that, he also is a part of the Marvel-dubbed “Avengers of K-pop” group called Super M which released three videos recently as well! And if that’s not enough, he is about to release Act: 2 of “Never Gonna Dance Again” in less than a week! Endlessly busy and talented he is! It’s all really fantastic stuff; We can’t get enough of it!

When “Criminal” came out I was (and still am) ...

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THE PROCESS

I sat down and paused and sketched and paused and sketched for over an hour (*I'd share the picture but my sketching is terrible! Hahahaha. I merely do it to work through my thoughts on how to plan things but I'm far from being an artist like my father*) and started what would end up being a massive mood-board on OneNote. There was so much that isn't seen properly in the video so I researched every photo-shoot he had wearing this outfit and analyzed it from every angle. I *reallllllly* didn't want to mess it up, since I was trying to go for a very accurate replica of his outfit. Most times, I just take elements of something I'm inspired by and put my own interpretation on it, but since this was a Halloween costume, I wanted it to be as close to identical as I could make it.

Fabric shopping proved to be surprisingly difficult considering I already had the black pleather and faux suede fabrics I used for the shirt. Finding plain white shirting (not quilting or Kona cotton but *real* shirting fabric) and medium-weight,



black poly suiting for the pants proved to be impossible to find locally. I had to order on Amazon which I cringe to do but because of this virus, I haven't stepped foot inside of a store since March so I had to take a risk and buy online. Man did I luck out with the fabrics I found!

Also, let it be known that both the pants and the shirt had their fair share of difficulties when it came to drafting/sewing! The shirt's elements were mostly more straight-forward but the pants were surprisingly more difficult than I originally thought they would be.

The Pants.

I needed a pattern that had the basic silhouette of a pair of straight-legged, zip-fly pants with the option for single welt back pockets and inseam pockets... I had nothing exactly like that in my arsenal of sewing patterns so I had to redraft from something as close to that as possible. I started by working off of the Morocco Pants pattern by Petit a Petit. The details in Taemin's pants are really a head-scratcher: at the top, they are flat, but then a little further down, they reveal a very subtle inverted pleat of some kind and it crosses almost diagonally all the way down

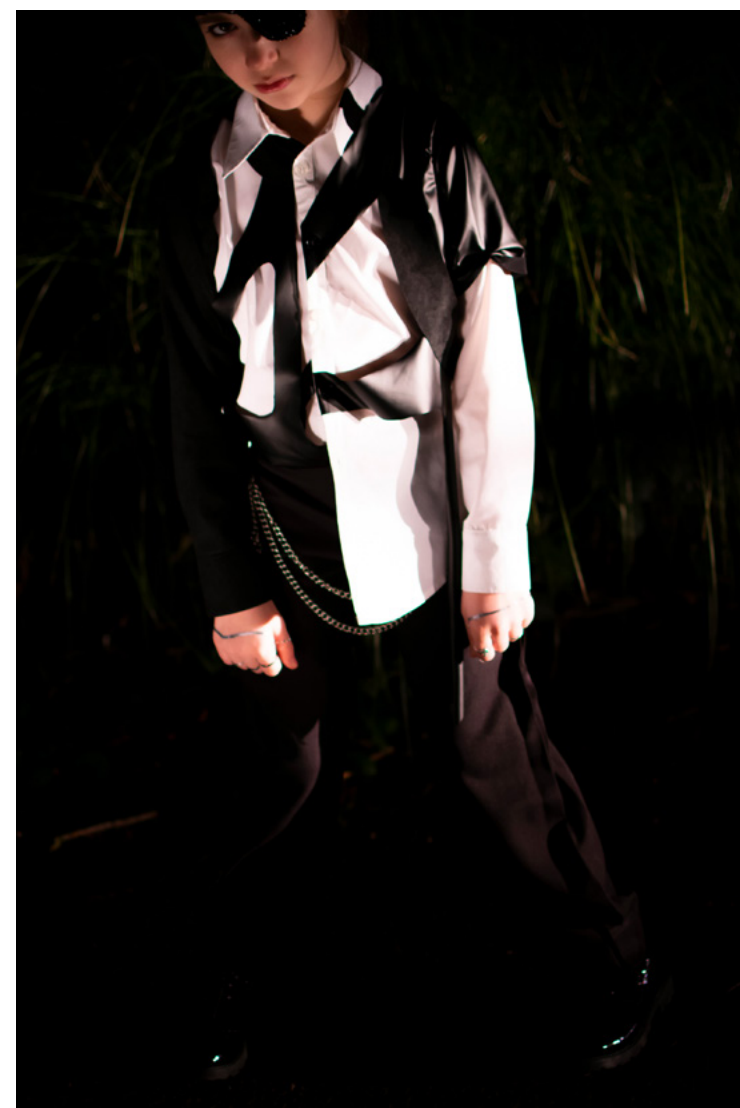
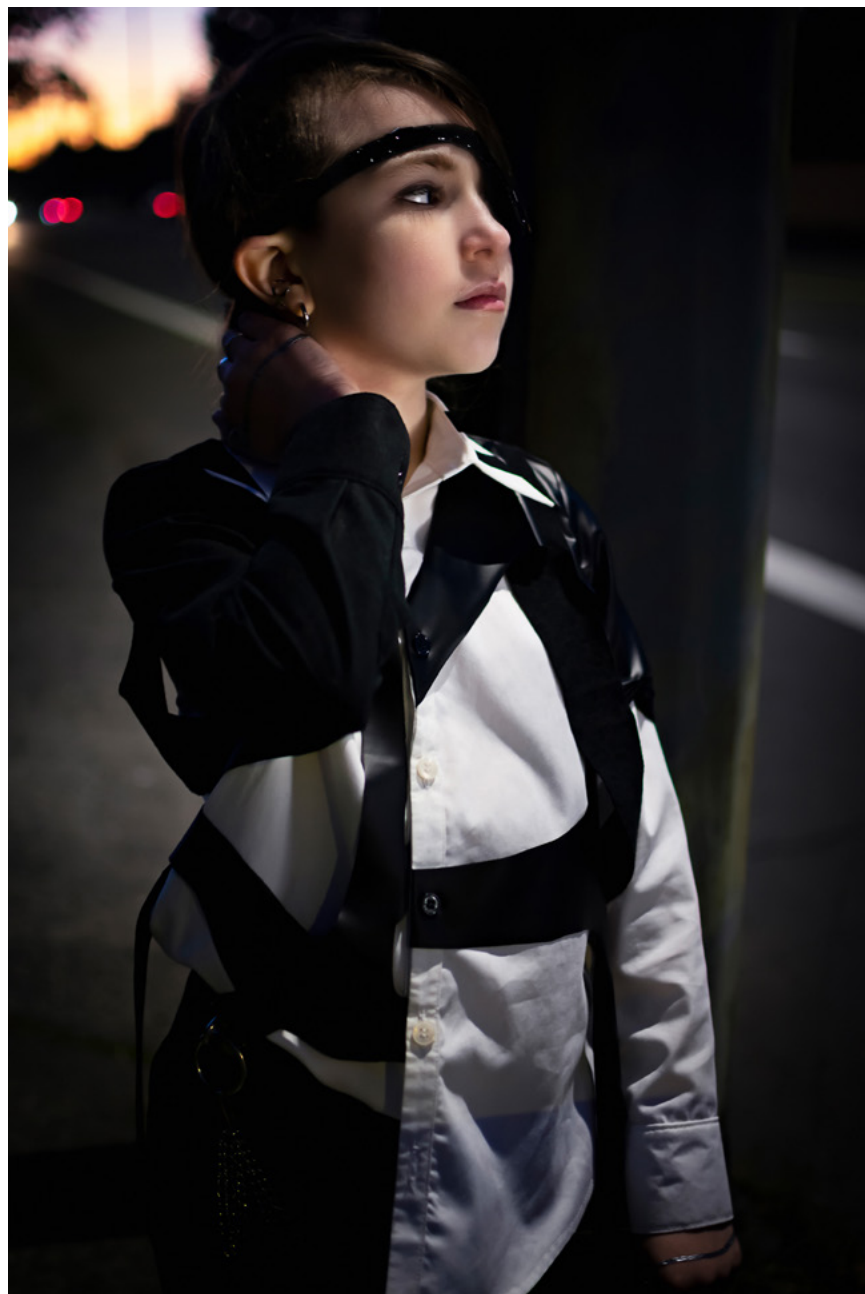
the pants where they are then secured with what looked to me like a cartridge pleat. Figuring out the math and then actually folding and sewing it to look like his was mind-numbing at times, lol. It was so tricky! I sewed the pleats inverted about 6" down and then let the pleats loose (as it were), carefully maintaining the double pleat look his pants had.

I converted the pockets to inseam pockets and painstakingly changed the double welt pocket instructions to single welt pockets.

The hem needed to be pretty invisible so I changed to using a blind hem instead of a facing or rolled hem. Finishing touches included installing ceiling mounts by the hips with a chain detail, attached similarly to the opposite side.

The Shirt.

Talk about a puzzle! The difficulty with the shirt wasn't so much the cuff plackets (which has been a struggle for me in the past) as it was drafting *out* the back yoke and drafting *in* a ton of very carefully planned detailed pieces. Easy things were blocking the collar and the black vs white sleeves. The less than easy parts were sewing the placket in a way that I could slip the black parts in and out of the button area while keeping it looking easy, not stretched weirdly or hanging...



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speechless. I have watched it well over a hundred times since it came out (Sept. 7th), and I can tell you honestly, I have not gotten tired of it once! I still get giddy watching it even though I have freeze-framed the entire video almost second for second many times for reference. My husband has this theory that it's resemblance to Tokyo Ghoul, my all-time favorite anime/manga, might have something to do with it and he certainly is correct on that! But more than that, the slight retro vibe of the music (a little reminiscent of Michael Jackson's "Thriller") and the stunning outfits he *and* his backup dancers wear shook me! Sephira and my eldest (who isn't as into it all) were clamoring on who wanted mamma to make what for them from the video! It's all just so interesting and cool! Sephira, who asked for a [Sayonara Hitori- inspired outfit for her birthday](#), pounced on me, pleading for me to make her Taemin's "Criminal" for Halloween. I was intimidated to say the least; none of the outfits in that video are particularly easy to make or to find fabric. I am not great at suit jacket making so I held my breath as I asked her which outfit she wanted and she thought a bit before making her choice. She waited for the second half of the video to come up and then proclaimed "THAT ONE!!!"

too loosely. Making buttonholes that had to sewn in very specific ways plus just really asking myself if every single little element lined up just like his in proportion to her dimensions was a huge concern of mine. I altered the side seams to be split open like his so that her shirt could be tucked in like his. Maybe my favorite but by no means easy to figure out elements of the shirt is the black overlay on the white sleeve. Originally I thought that it was loose on the sleeve and that it was ruched but after a few closer looks, I realized it was: sewn into the sleeve a little over half way past the center, with a rolled, un-hemmed hem (? LOL I'm not sure what to call it!) and then kinda tucked/gathered in the center a little. I was pretty stoked with how well it came out! Layering all of the pieces under the right parts and inside other parts and hanging use in other parts was stressful but I think it looks pretty close!

The Eyepatch.

The most iconic part of the whole look is arguably the studded eyepatch. Oh, how I have wanted eyepatches to be more accessible in fashion because [I clearly love the look](#). I drafted this on her face, and then cleaned it up in Illustrator to make a pattern. Then I added a black gemstone trim and hand sewed beads to make it pop!



the photoshoot.

The "Criminal" video is pretty dark and may be a little creepy for some people, but that's always been something I've been drawn to as well as Sephira (who is frequently found sketching eyeballs and other oddities). She channeled her inner Taemin as we worked through very challenging nighttime photoshoots. My battery died, she was cold, but she was still really into the whole process. We tried to duplicate his makeup and, since her hair is long, we did her hair like one of the backup dancers (a twisted braid of sorts). He has this interesting silver accessory on his hand that we recreated with fabric paint and then I dolled her up with rings. We recreated lots of poses from the video and photoshoots that he did. Check out my blog for the side by side comparison plus the other girls Halloween outfits as well! She did such a stellar job! I'm so proud of her! She loves her Taemin "Criminal" outfit so much!

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OUTTAKES

