A Carpet Weaver

This photograph shows a carpet weaver in Xi’an, China. Carpet weavers make a variety of silk carpets and tapestries. The carpets and tapestries have different traditional designs. Some are Persian, some are Turkish, and others are Chinese.

Some of the carpets are small but tightly woven. These carpets are usually hung on the wall and are called tapestries. If the design is very detailed, the weaver will change the color of the thread thousands of times to make one tapestry. It might take a year to make one of the smallest, most tightly woven tapestries. Other carpets cover the floor. They are large and woven more loosely than the smaller tapestries. A worker can a large carpet in a few months.

This carpet weaver is just starting to make a new carpet. Before she starts weaving, she will choose a pattern to follow. When the pattern shows a change in color, she will change to a new shuttle with different color silk thread. She will change the shuttle many times every day. As soon as she finishes one row, she will start another. She will do this again and again, so she must be patient. After a few weeks, she will be able to see the emerging pattern clearly in the carpet.

Please answer these questions:
1. What is this woman making?
2. What will she do if the design is very detailed?
3. What skills do you think are important for a carpet weaver?
4. Would you like to be a carpet weaver? Why or why not?