

# STITCHING BOOK CLUB



April 2024

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## What's In the Hoop?

A new Literary Mystery SAL is in the works!

I've been enjoying working on the model for our next project. I thought that it has been a while since we have had a nice, easy stitch. That's why I created a design that—other than a small section of backstitched lettering—consists of nothing but full stitches. I also thought it was time that we take a break from colored fabric which I know can be problematic for those of you overseas and unable to purchase my kits. So, our next project will be stitched on a lovely off-white Ivory, meaning that you can use whatever neutral fabric you have available to you, including white!

I do not yet have a date for this project. Make sure to keep up with the Stitching Book Club newsletter to get updates!

## Contents

- Stitching On Colored Fabric
- The House Behind the Cedars Book Review
- “Hopping Into Spring” Freebie
- “Little Moments” Monthly SAL

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## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOST

First of all, I would like to welcome all of the new members! I have had such a flood of new signups since the launch of the website, that my heart has been aflutter with excitement. Thank you! I hope that you'll find a place of peace, comfort, and beauty here.

While I was hoping to find the budding warmth and freshness of Spring upon my arrival in Arizona where I will be spending the summer, I have instead been met with the last remnants of a winter that refuse to bid itself adieu. In fact, I am currently listening to the light tap, tap, tap of graupel falling onto my roof. But even though Spring is not quite ready to make her appearance, it's the perfect time to lighten our spirits with some joyful Spring stitching!

I couldn't help but smile as I watched this month's freebie, "Hopping Into Spring", come to life. I thought that this was going to be a very time-consuming design, but it stitched up with surprising speed and I absolutely adore this little bunny.

The April square for our "Little Moments" SAL also features a bunny. This may or may not be due to the fact that I completely failed to realize that Easter was in March this year until both of these designs had already been finalized. But I figured, worry not! Bunnies are the perfect Spring companion.

I'm still working on getting myself settled here in Arizona for the summer, so I'm a bit disorganized at the moment. But I'm starting to work back into my daily routine and should be comfortably adjusted to my new settings soon. I also wanted to make note that because I am in such a secluded area, I will only be making it to the post office once or twice a week, meaning that shipping may take a little longer than usual.

I hope that you all have a lovely month full of peaceful stitching and joyous reading, and that I will see you join in on our next mystery SAL when it is ready!



Happy stitching! Love, Kristin Ashley

I have been looking forward to using DMC 20, “Shrimp”, since I first laid eyes on it, and it did not disappoint!

I love this color because it is much more vibrant than other shades of peach within the DMC family, making it a perfect color for Spring designs. You can really see the difference between “Shrimp” and another peachy floss, 758, in this month’s freebie “Hopping Into Spring”. I paired “Shrimp” with DMC 352, “Light Coral”, to help bring out that lovely peach tone even more and I think it’s such a pleasant combination.

# Color of the Month

## “Shrimp”

DMC 20



**HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT THE NEW  
WEBSITE YET?**

You can read all past editions of the Newsletter under  
the Periodicals tab!

[STITCHINGBOOKCLUB.COM](http://STITCHINGBOOKCLUB.COM)

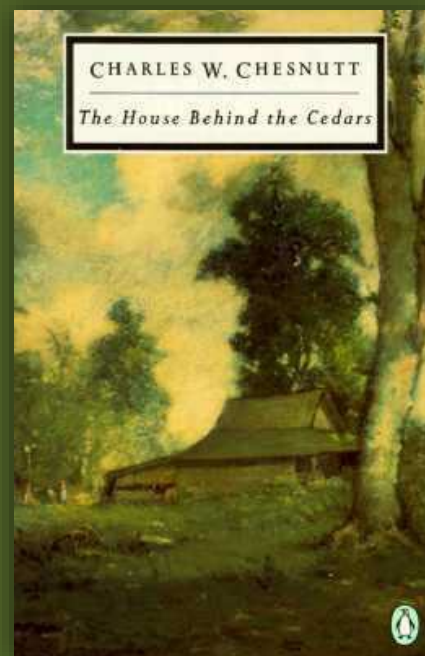
## BOOK REVIEW

Wow. This novel was powerful, heartbreaking, and eye-opening on so many levels. The writing itself was absolutely beautiful and flowed with such ease, but the content was the sort that sticks with you and leaves you feeling a bit lost for a while afterwards.

When reading this novel, you must go into it knowing that this was written by a black man who spent his entire life fighting against racial injustice following the Civil War. Knowing the perspective that this was written from is vital. There is a lot of language, behavior, and spoken beliefs within this novel that are extremely difficult for our modern sensibilities to consume. Even with the knowledge of the author's intent, it is a challenge to read some passages without feeling great unease. But that is the purpose and precisely why I would recommend this book.

I believe that literature is one of the best ways that we can immerse ourselves into the worlds of our collective ancestors and gain a greater understanding of their lives. It may not always be easy or comfortable, in fact it can often be quite painful, but it is also necessary if we want to truly understand their experiences.

I encourage you to read this novel, however, please go into it with proper awareness of what you will find there and prepare yourself for it. As it is, some of what is written in this novel may simply be too much for some to bare and that is perfectly understandable. If you would like more information about this novel, please feel free to contact me and I would be happy to fill you in more fully.



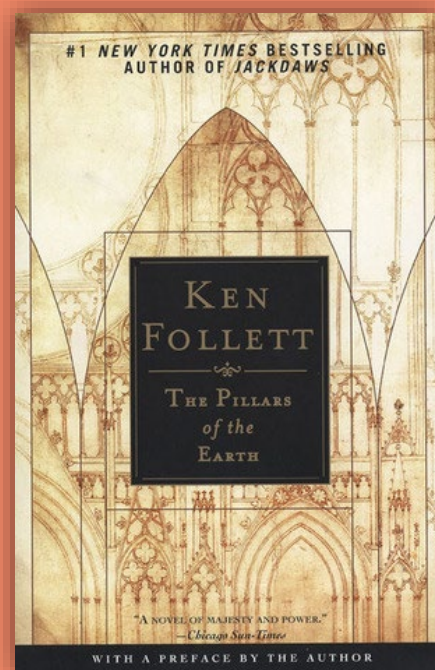
## WHAT I'M READING IN APRIL

For my April selection I chose *The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follett. The provided synopsis for this novel is as follows:

“Set in 12<sup>th</sup>-century England, the narrative concerns the building of a cathedral in the fictional town of Kingsbridge. The ambitions of three men merge, conflict and collide through 40 years of social and political upheaval as internal church politics affect the progress of the cathedral and the fortunes of the protagonists.”

Please note that, like all novels on my entire 2024 Reading List, I have never read this novel, but I have seen several warnings that there is some very graphic content in this novel. If you are interested in reading this book but concerned it may not be to your taste, I encourage you to look up trigger warnings before beginning.

This novel is LONG! It tops out at a whopping 976 pages. I do not expect to finish this book within the month of April. I purposely chose what I think will be a quick read for May so that I can finish this book up at the beginning of next month if necessary.



## STITCHING ON COLORED FABRIC

You may have noticed that I enjoy stitching on colored fabric. I feel that there's something about having a colored base that adds so much more character and dimension to designs. It is not, however, always easy to stitch on colored fabric because it presents some unique problems when selecting the colors for a design. So, let's take a look at some of these challenges and how to successfully stitch on colored fabric.

One of the most challenging parts of cross stitch design is selecting the flosses. The amount of floss I have had to frog and change out when working on models for my designs is a bit shocking. Selecting flosses becomes remarkably more difficult when working with a colored fabric because now I am not only trying to get the flosses to work cohesively together, but also with the base fabric color. This may not seem like it would present much more of a challenge, but it does due to one simple fact. Colored fabric can change the color of your floss.

Now, of course, colored fabric is not actually changing the color of your floss. It's not as though the dye is seeping from the fabric into the floss and physically changing it. However, when placing different colors together, whether it be floss, paint, fabric, flowers, etc...our brains create a perception of color based on the whole image rather than the individual pieces within it. And this can cause colors to take on a different appearance depending on what other colors surround it.

Have you ever been shopping for a say a blue shirt and been happy with one you have found until you come across a different blue shirt that when held together makes the first one you found look more purple than blue?



This same concept applies to working with different colored flosses. Not only is it about finding the right shade of blue, it's about finding the right shade of blue that gives the appearance you want when placed next to a particular green, and that works to bring out the right tones of the pink floss that has been selected. It's a bit like a puzzle and you must continually switch pieces out until the whole thing snaps together. I have often selected a particular floss only to realize that its color is manipulated by the other colors in a design making it appear far from its appearance as a

singular color. This is something that, while I think I am becoming much more skilled at as I continue to grow as a designer, will surely frustrate me until the end of time.

As you can see already, color manipulation is a very prevalent problem when selecting floss colors with just the floss itself having an impact upon the flosses around it. Now, add in the addition of colored fabric and it becomes twice as challenging because fabric color has an even stronger impact on the presentation of floss color.

Using a colored piece of fabric as your base is a bit like trying to paint a wall a new color. Imagine you have a wall that is bright red, and you want to paint it pale yellow. Setting aside the realistic process of painting in which you prime a wall and all of that, let's say you go right in and put that first coat of pale-yellow paint on the red wall. If you've ever painted a room before, you know that the first coat never fully covers the old paint color, so your yellow paint will probably look quite orange due to the red under-paint that is still showing through the topcoat of yellow.

This is similar to how colored fabric works because our floss never fully covers our fabric. There is always going to be a little bit of fabric that shows through even our plumpest stitches. So, just like our paint, the under-color of our fabric is showing through our stitches and affecting how our eye perceives the floss color. This has a stronger impact than how the other flosses of a design affect floss color because the fabric color resides under and throughout the entire stitched area giving a truly blended appearance rather than just seeing two colors side by side. This can cause certain colors to appear differently.

Take white floss on black fabric, for example. The white floss will appear a bit dingy or even grey in tone because you are seeing that black fabric come through the floss. Stitching black floss next to white floss on a neutral fabric will not cause the white floss to appear grey, but having black fabric spread out under the entirety of your white floss will cause that blending to happen.

Now, the real chaos begins when we stitch on bright colored fabrics because while it's easy to understand that very light-colored flosses will have a hard time being seen on white fabric and very dark flosses will have a hard time being seen on black fabric, bright colored fabrics have the added complication of blending similarly toned floss colors into them which is a less easy concept to put into practice.

This is confusing but I will do my best to explain.

Take my Musketeer Blue fabric, for example. It is a bright teal color. I originally meant to have this month's freebie pattern, "Hopping Into Spring", stitched on this fabric. But try as I might, every shade of pale green that I tried out for the leaves, blended into the teal fabric so that it

became difficult to see what shape the floss was even making. Even though the green floss and the teal fabric are two completely different colors, they were of the same brightness or depth of color, which meant that they sort of swallowed each other. It wasn't until I went to a much darker green that it could be seen clearly on the fabric, and as that wasn't the vibe I was going for with this design, I decided to switch to white fabric instead.

You might think, shouldn't I have known that these colors wouldn't work together? But in the design program these colors looked perfect because taken as just computerized blocks of color, they were so dissimilar that there was no blending occurring. The difference is, the design program doesn't account for the color manipulation that happens in real life. So, while in theory, two colors should be different enough that they will look good and not blend together, the reality within cross stitch is that color manipulation and blending is going to happen.

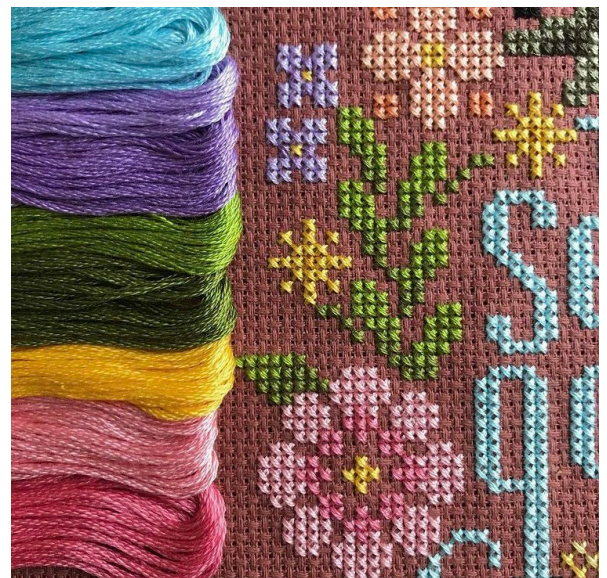
So, in summation, flosses that have a similar depth of color as the fabric can blend into the fabric regardless of what color they are. They may be completely different colors, but because the depth of their color is on the same plane, it has the effect of blending the two colors together in a way that makes them difficult to distinguish. You will notice that the floss is there, but it will be difficult to see the detail within the design.

So, how do we pick colors for working on colored fabric?

One of the most popular means of picking floss colors for working on a colored fabric is the "floss toss". This is the practice of laying skeins of floss on your fabric to see how they interact together. And this is an excellent starting point. The problem with a floss toss is that it presents us with the same problem that my design program presented me with in that floss appears differently in a skein than it does once stitched. So, just because a floss toss looks correct, it does not mean that once you start stitching, the colors will appear the same.

Why doesn't a floss toss accurately depict how the fabric and flosses will work together or account for the color manipulation?

This is because when observing floss in a skein, you are viewing it in a very saturated form. Once you start stitching with only two strands, the floss has become diluted because it doesn't have the support of the entire skein to truly showcase its color and is instead being engulfed by the fabric color. Like Bilbo Baggins said, it's like "butter scraped over too much bread." You're taking such a small amount of



floss and expecting it to show as vibrantly as an entire bundle and in many cases, especially with lighter colors, it's simply not going to be up to the task. This, of course, is less of a problem with very vibrant or dark colored flosses but it can still be an issue depending on the particular circumstances.

This is why picking the right fabric for the right project is so important and why I actually avoid stitching on mottled fabrics that have very strong mottling or multiple colors in the mottling. While those fabrics are absolutely gorgeous and if paired with the right pattern can create stunning pieces of needlework, the fact is many patterns get lost on them. There are simply too many color variances to account for. If you pick out your flosses to accommodate the darkest parts of the fabric, then the flosses may disappear on the lighter parts of the fabric. If you pick out your flosses to match the purples within the fabric, they may clash with the greens in the fabric. And so on and so forth...

So, after all of that talk about the trouble you may find stitching on colored fabric, what can you do to ensure that your stitching will look its best?

It's all about selecting fabric and flosses that have a difference in depth of color. This does not mean you have to use contrasting colors, but rather colors that are not on the same plane of brightness. Think of it as if all of your materials are the same color. Let's once again imagine my Musketeer Blue fabric. It is what I would call a medium shade of teal. If I stitch with a floss that is the same shade of teal, it will disappear on the fabric. But if I stitch with a teal floss that is much lighter or much darker than the fabric, it will show just fine. They are all the same color, but the differing shades allow for the flosses to be seen.



Now, it doesn't matter if they are completely different colors, if they are the same shade (or depth of color, as I've called it), they will blend together making your design difficult to make out in any sort of clarity. In fact, it's amazing how many flosses will blend into a basic oatmeal fabric. It doesn't matter if they are pink, purple, or orange flosses, if they have the same depth of color as the beige fabric, they will blend out and become difficult to see.

So, a few principles to work by...



If you are stitching with light flosses on light fabrics, you will likely need to go darker than assumed when selecting your flosses because the fabric will wash them out even farther.

When stitching on dark fabrics know that they have the ability to dull colors so you may need to brighten up your flosses. Think about our white floss that turns grey on black fabric.

When stitching on brightly colored fabrics you must select floss that has several degrees of difference from your fabric color. That is in reference to depth of color, not the color itself.

While it may seem like a pain, it can be very beneficial to take a small piece of your fabric and stitch a small sample square of each floss color to see not only how they interact with the fabric, but also how they interact with each other on the fabric once stitched. This can save you from starting a project, only to realize that one or more of the colors aren't working as you get farther into the design.

As a final note, I will say that as a designer, I often get asked if a certain floss color is a good substitute for another in my designs, and my answer is always, "I cannot say if that floss will work or not." This is not because I am trying to be unhelpful, but because unless I work the substitute floss myself, I have no way of knowing how it will translate. It is sometimes shocking how different floss can appear once stitched, so the unfortunate truth is that the only way to know for sure is to stitch it and find out. This is why I always encourage stitchers to use the called-for colors. It's not because I have a complex about my designs being stitched exactly how I say. It's because I can only make assurances for the colors that I have stitched into the model and no others. Of course, many of you are so good at this process on your own that I am often thrilled to see how beautifully you have made color substitutions. But this is certainly a skill that takes a lot of practice to master.



# Hopping Into Spring



## Materials:

**Fabric:** 8 inch X 8 inch for 14 count or 28 count 2 over 2. Model is stitched on 14 count white Aida. The design area for this design is 58 X 58 stitches.

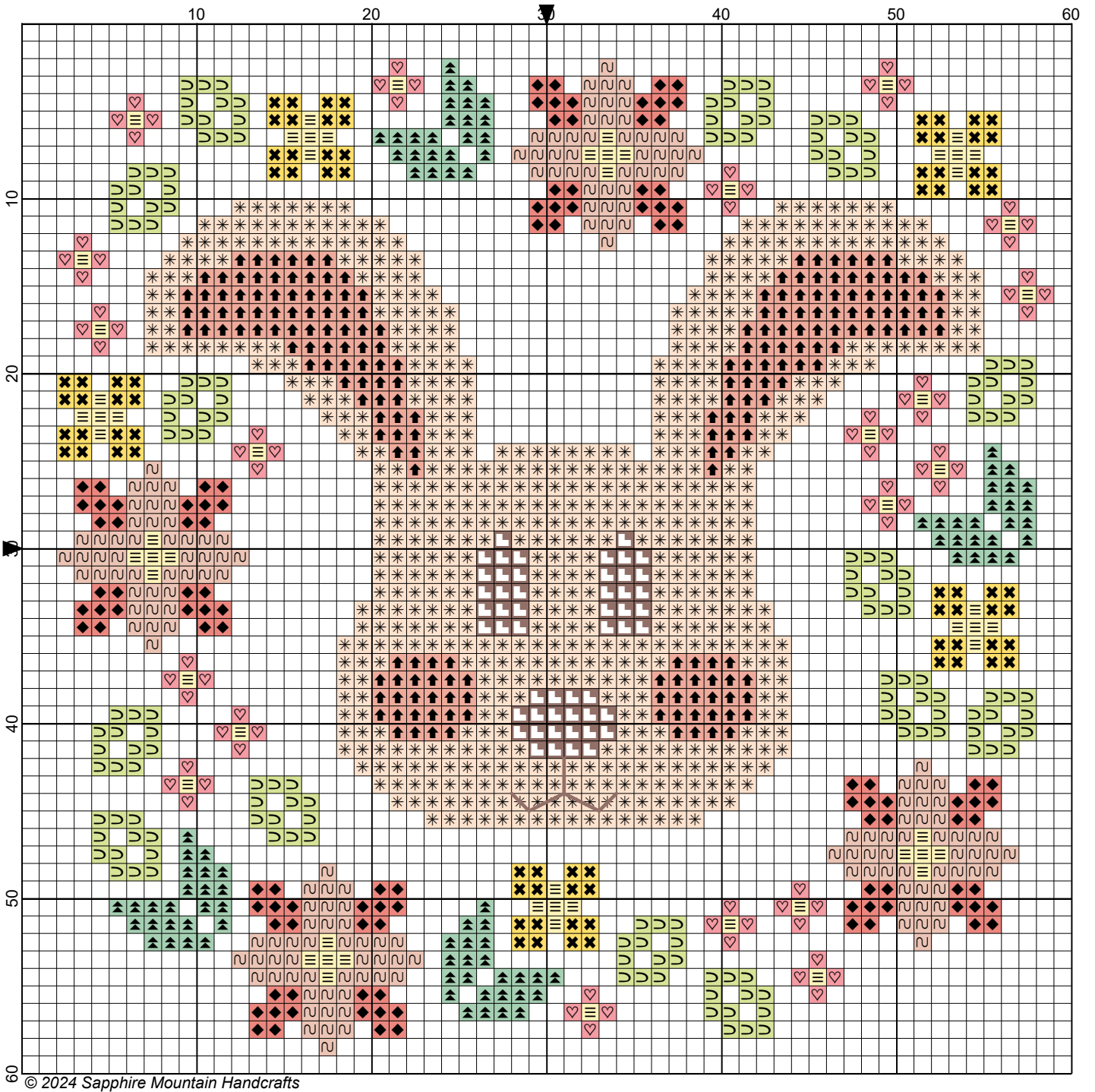
### Legend (2 strands of floss):

*	*	DMC Cotton 948	peach - vy lt
↑	↑	DMC Cotton 758	terra cotta - vy lt
⌒	⌒	DMC Cotton 3860	cocoa
∞	∞	DMC Cotton 20	shrimp
◆	◆	DMC Cotton 352	coral -lt
≡	≡	DMC Cotton 745	yellow - lt pl
✕	✕	DMC Cotton 743	yellow - md
⊂	⊂	DMC Cotton 472	avocado green - ul lt
▲	▲	DMC Cotton 13	nile green - md lt
♡	♡	DMC Cotton 776	pink - md

### Long Stitches (2 strands of floss):

— DMC 3860

# Hopping Into Spring by Sapphire Mountain Handcrafts



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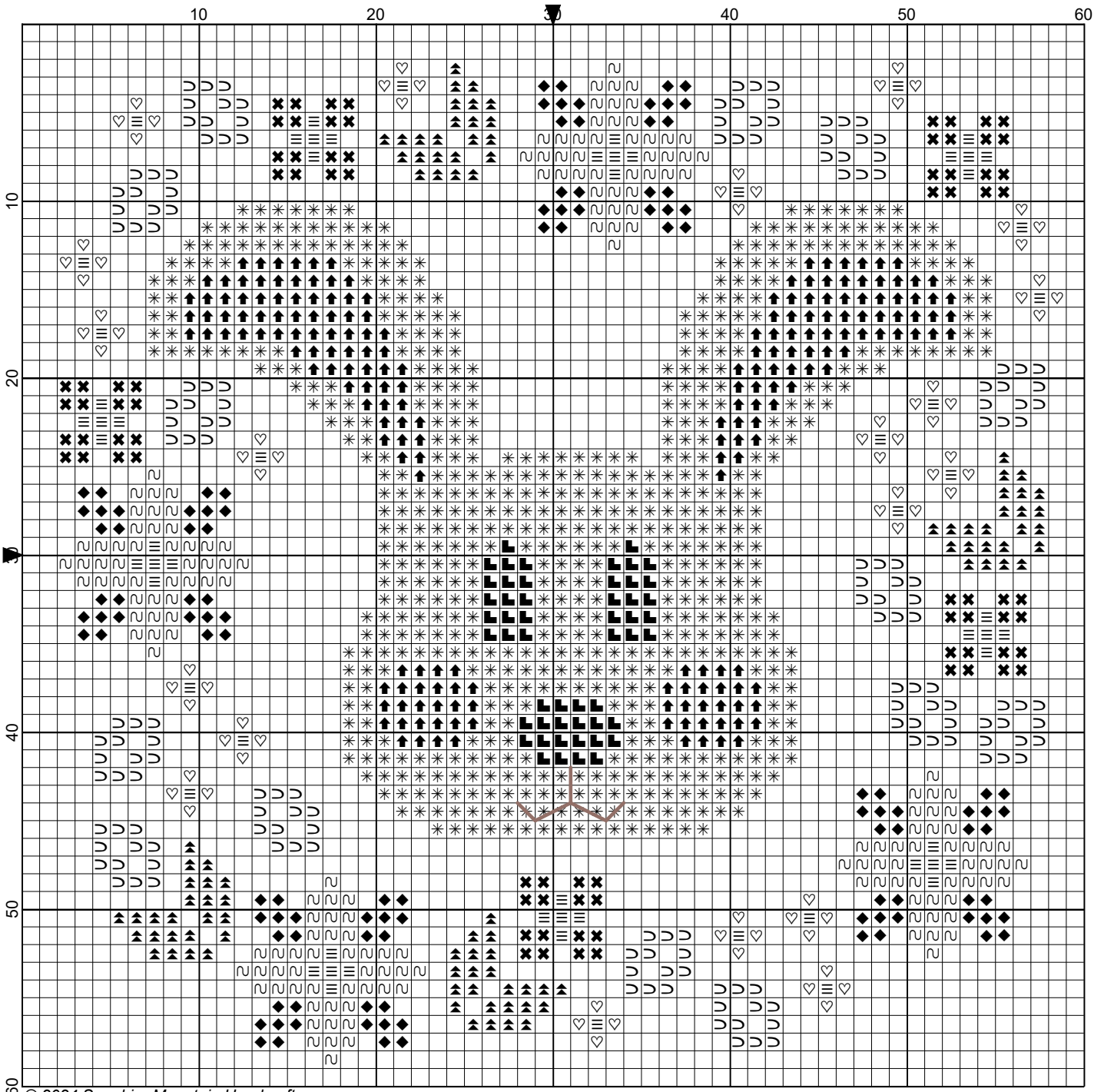
**Legend:**

- |         |         |         |         |          |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| DMC-20  | DMC-472 | DMC-745 | DMC-13  | DMC-758  |
| DMC-743 | DMC-352 | DMC-776 | DMC-948 | DMC-3860 |

**Backstitches:**

— DMC-3860

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**Legend:**

- |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Backstitches:  
 DMC-3860

# Monthly Stitch-A-Long

## Join me for a year-long freebie stitch-a-long!

Want to participate in a year-long stitch-a-long but worried about committing to such a large project? I have the perfect SAL for you! While this SAL will extend for the entire length of the year, the monthly stitching requirement is minimal. This means that you will be able to fit it into your stitching schedule with ease. What's even better is that it is a **stitch-from-stash** SAL. While I will be providing the floss colors that I am using each month, I encourage you to use what you have on hand to make this piece entirely your own!

The design features a small motif that represents each month. For example, January is a snowflake. February is geared towards Valentine's Day. I think you get the idea...

## What you will need:

### Fabric:

One piece of fabric measuring 11 X 13 inches for 14 or 28 count (2 over 2). It will be stitched in portrait orientation (taller than it is wider) and allows for a 2 inch margin on all sides.

I chose to work with my hand-dyed fabric Garden Gate. I think this design will look particularly fabulous on dark fabrics, especially when paired with bright flosses. However, I also love the appearance of white fabric with more muted colors. But the choice is entirely up to you!

### Floss:

The only color of floss that requires a significant amount will be the border color. You will need 2 skeins of whatever color you choose.

The rest of the floss colors are minimal and change each month but will feature a full rainbow of colors including blues, pinks, greens, purples, and oranges.

While I have provided the entire border, do not feel required to stitch the entire border as we begin. I will be stitching the border as I go along each month. If you would like to stitch the entire border as we get started, please make sure to triple count all those stitches so that the boxes are the proper size. I don't want the frog visiting you all later in the year!

# Little Moments

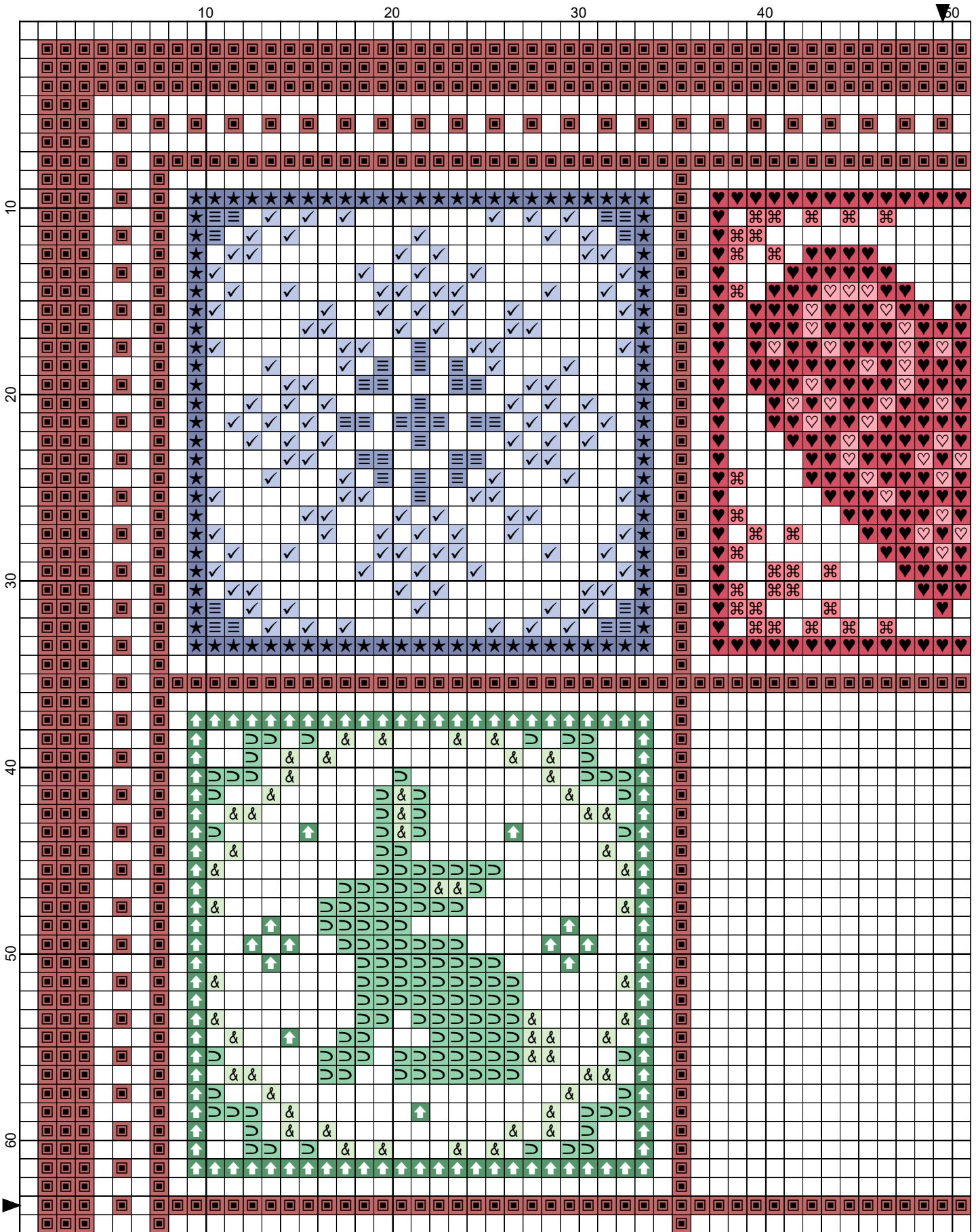
This is a stitch-from-stash SAL, please feel free to choose your own materials for this design. Listed below are the colors I am using.



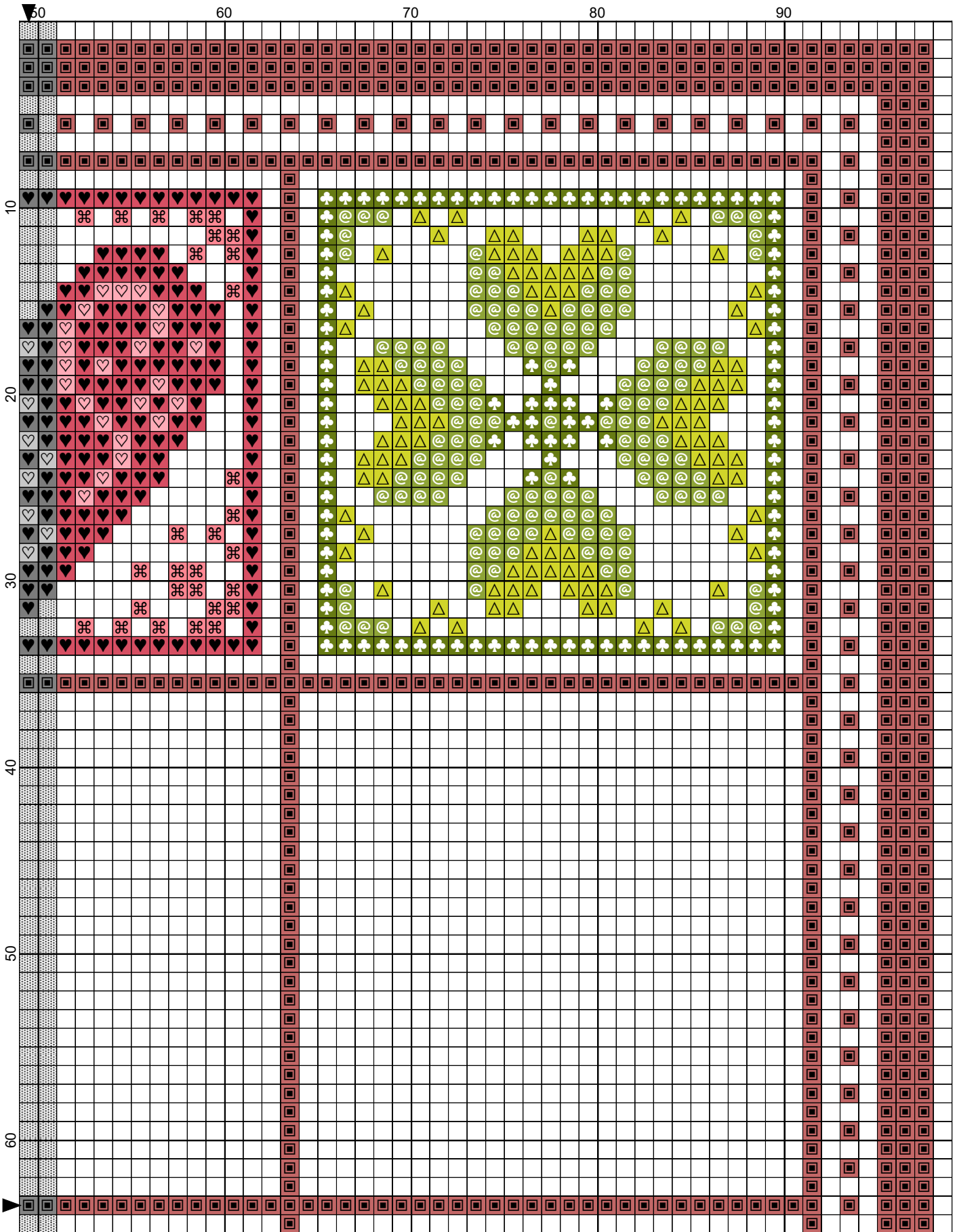
## Legend (2 strands of floss):

▣	DMC Cotton 3722	shell pink - md
★	DMC Cotton 793	cornflower blue - md
≡	DMC Cotton 794	cornflower blue - lt
✓	DMC Cotton 157	cornflower blue - vy lt
♥	DMC Cotton 335	rose
⌘	DMC Cotton 3706	melon - md
♡	DMC Cotton 3708	melon - lt
♣	DMC Cotton 580	moss green - dk
⊙	DMC Cotton 581	moss green
△	DMC Cotton 166	moss green - md lt
↑	DMC Cotton 562	jade - md
⤴	DMC Cotton 563	jade - lt
&	DMC Cotton 369	pistachio green - vy lt

Little Moments by Sapphire Mountain Handcrafts

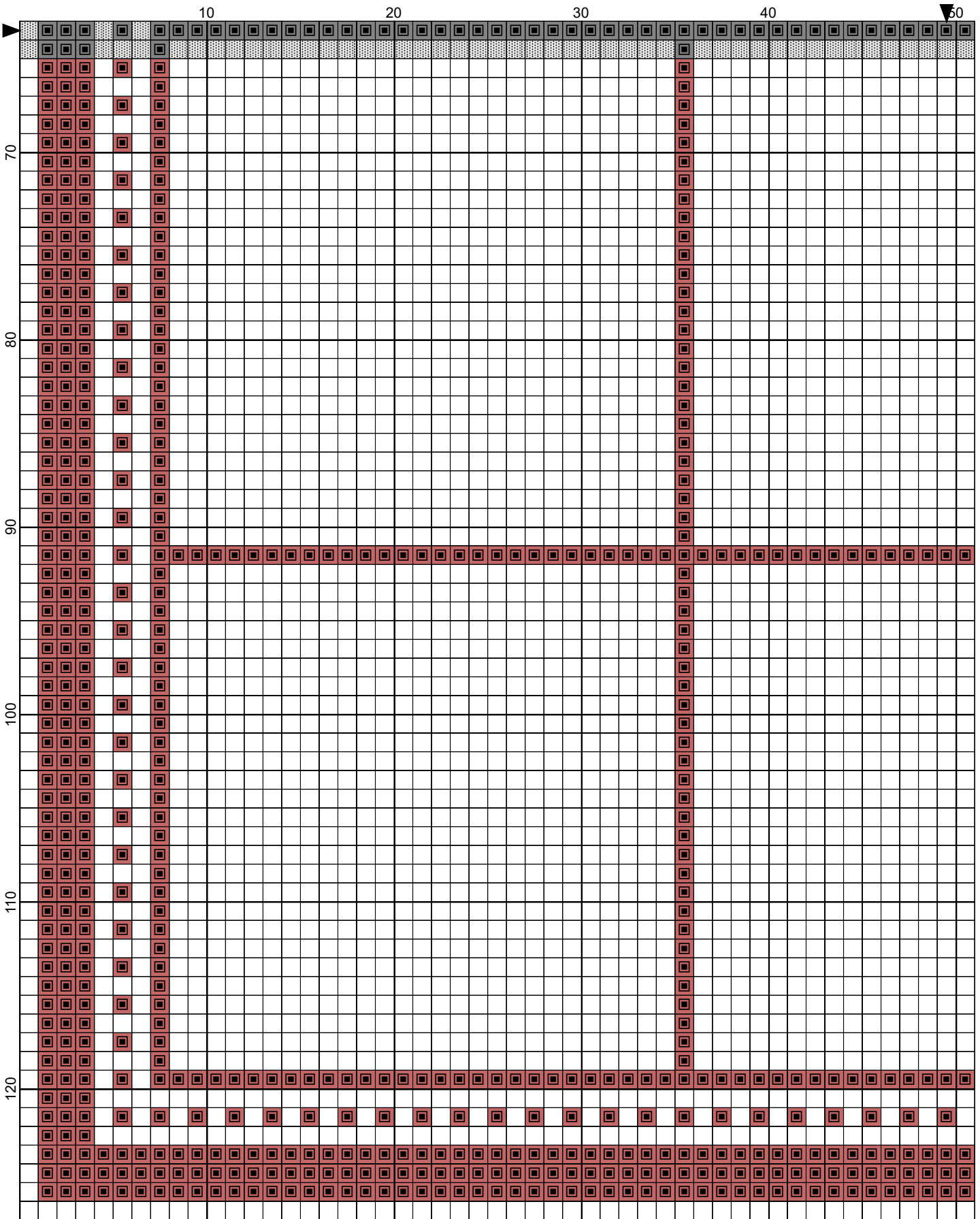


Little Moments by Sapphire Mountain Handcrafts

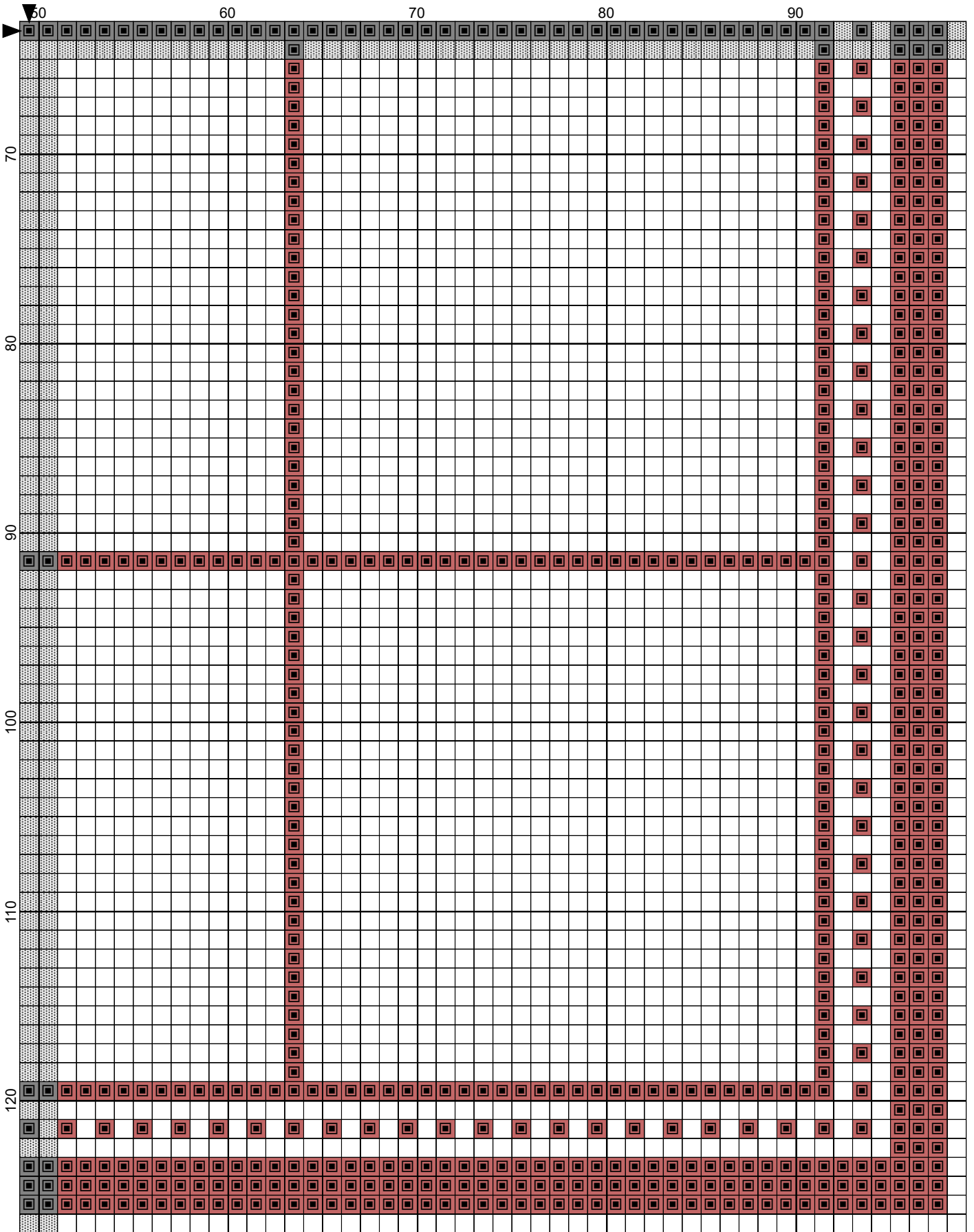




Little Moments by Sapphire Mountain Handcrafts

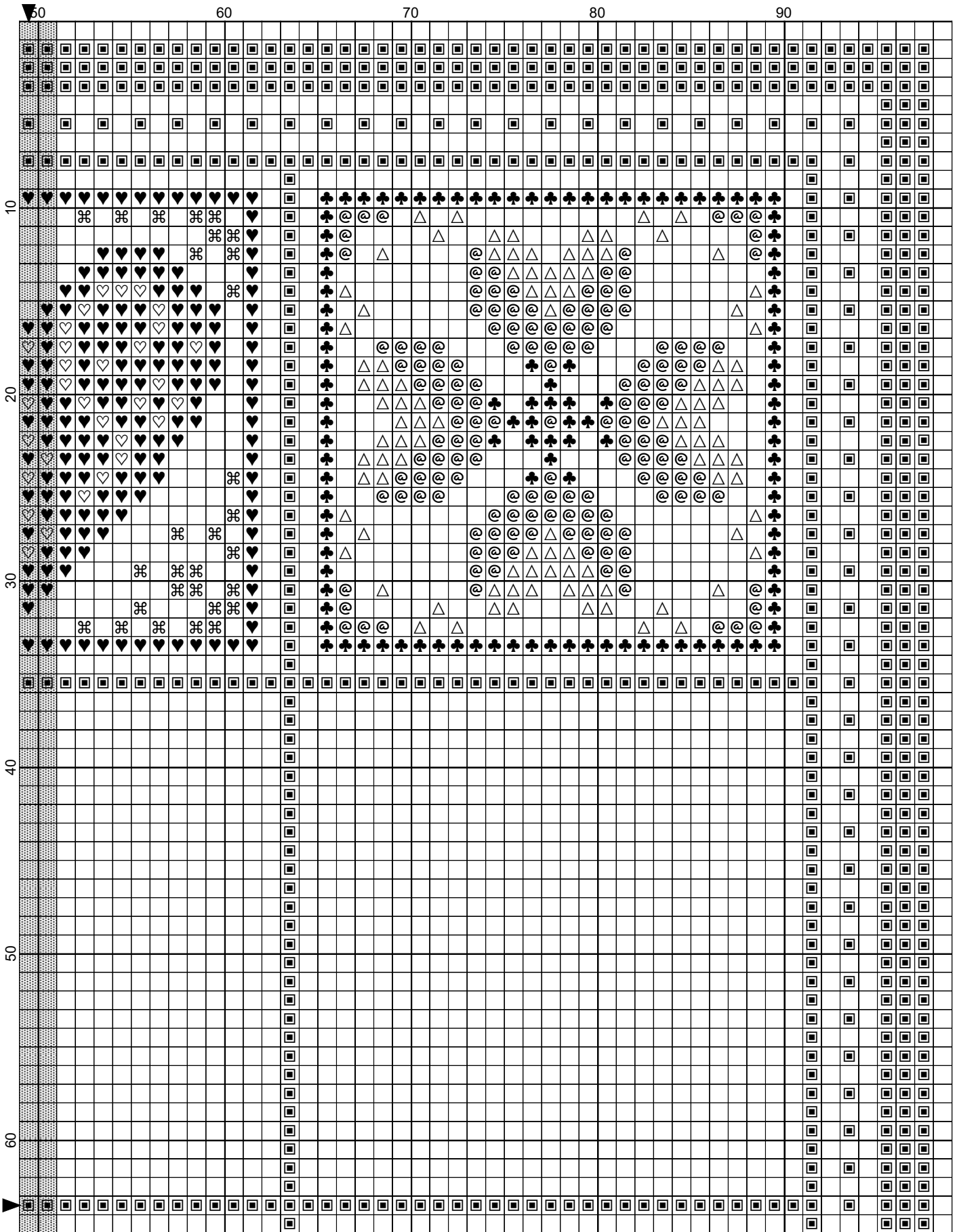


Little Moments by Sapphire Mountain Handcrafts

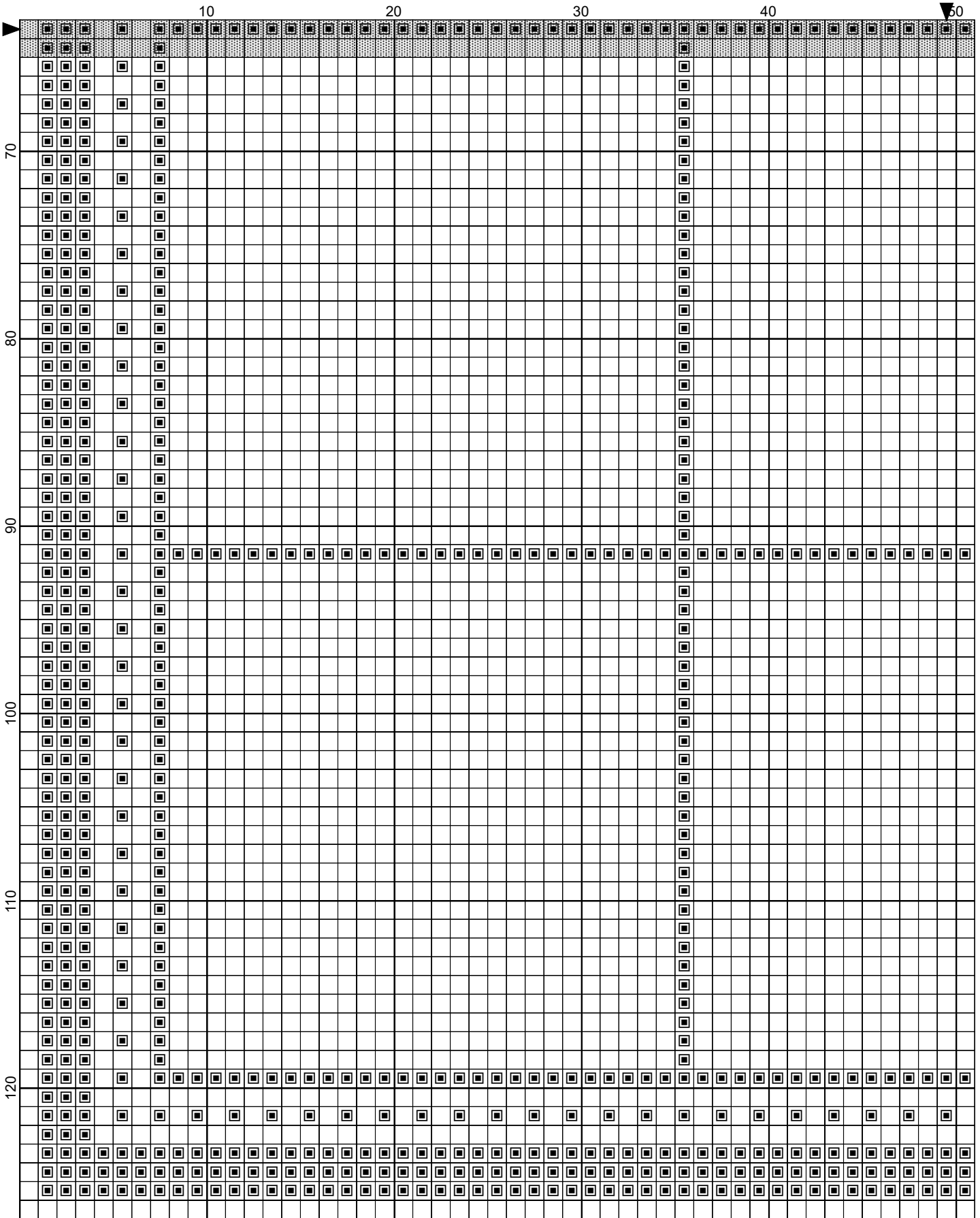




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