Long & Short Stitch
Lesson 5: Shading on a Curve

Objectives:

- To practice long and short stitch shading on curves, for ribbons, text, etc.

Materials:

- Project in hoop or frame, with Element Four: Swirly and Swash centered in hoop (upper right corner of design)
- #9 or #10 crewel needles
- Small, sharp embroidery scissors
- DMC stranded cotton in the following colors: 158, 159, 160, 161

NOTE: Refer to the long and short stitch videos included in Lesson Two on Needle 'n Thread (www.needlenthread.com) for basic technique.

Procedure:

- Begin with the small swash.
- Anchor your thread according to your favorite method, or use the method demonstrated in the video tutorial, part 1.
- Work a split stitch line around the small swash in 160, med-light blue. Begin long and short stitch in 160 in the center of the rounded end of the swash, working to the right, then returning to the center and working to the left (top) of the swash. See the photo below:

- When you finish with color 160, if you still have "stitching room" left on your thread, take your needle from the back of the fabric to the front, well outside your stitching area, and to the top of the design. This will hold the leftover thread out of the way, so that you can use it again without re-starting the thread.

- Switch to light blue (159), and stitch two or three more rows, to fill the main central part of the swash shape. As you stitch each row, make slight adjustments in direction in order to ease your way around the turn in the swash. See the photo below for stitch direction..
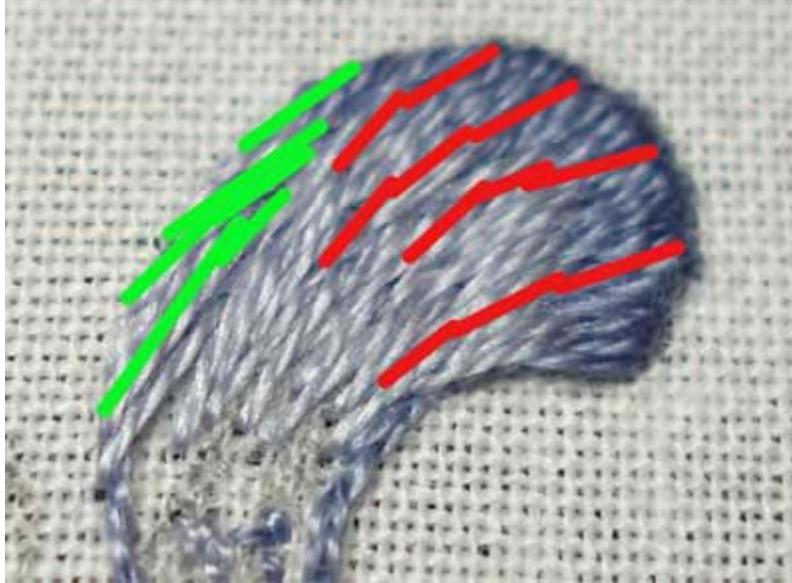
- The red slashes indicate the turning stitches. The green slashes indicate the stitches that extend to the side and over the split stitch line. As the stitches on the left approach the split stitch line, take them over the line to ensure a smooth edge. Keep gradually moving your stitches around the bend of the swash, adjusting the stitch direction as you go. Switch back to the medium light blue (160) for one row, then medium dark blue (161) for one row, then, finally, the darkest blue (158) for the tip of the swash.

- The key in getting around the curves gently is to slowly adapt your stitches to the curve. Take small stitches where need be, in order to "tweak" the stitch direction so that your stitches are working in the

direction you want them to go (which is toward the tip of the swash). Remember that, as your space gets smaller, you use fewer stitches (just as you did with the triangles).

The finished small swash

- Once you've finished the small swash, you're ready to move on to the larger ribbon shape. Begin on the lower right tail of the ribbon, right next to the swash. Outline in split stitch (159 – light blue) as indicated in the photo above. You do not need to outline the whole shape – just the top edge of the ribbon and about half way down the sides. Use a pencil to mark direction lines down the length of the

ribbon, and color-change lines across the width of the ribbon, as shown in the photo above. You want four sections of the area blocked off to mark approximately where you will change shades.

- Working in light blue (159), work the long and short stitch over the split stitch line at the top end of the ribbon.

- Begin the next row of stitching in medium-light blue (160). Remember to take your new stitches deep into the first row of stitches.

- Work the third row of stitches in medium-dark blue (161). Begin shifting your stitch direction more dramatically in order to accommodate the curve.

- When it becomes necessary to cover the split stitch line, bring your needle up outside the line so that you can cover the line.

- You'll probably work at least two rows in medium-dark blue (161). These rows will require the most dramatic change in stitch direction. Try to follow the curve of the ribbon, using relatively short stitches and adjusting their direction as you work around the curve.

- Finally, switch to the darkest blue (158), and continue working in short stitches, easing around the curve and to the point of the ribbon curl, and decreasing the number of stitches in order to fit into the design area.

- Continue to add subsequent rows of dark blue (158), until you reach the tip, as shown below:

- At this point, you can mark in your stitch direction lines and your color lines on the main section of the ribbon. Divide the ribbon across its width as indicated above. In the widest part of the ribbon here, the center will be light, and it will gradually get darker towards the tips. The stitch direction will work around the curve of the ribbon.

- Now that you've finished the lower tail of the ribbon and marked your stitch direction, turn your work over so that the element is upside-down. The next section of the ribbon is easier to work upside-down. First, using 158 (dark blue), stem stitch the thin line between the curl you just finished and the main section of the ribbon (The area circled in red in the photo above). When your stem stitch reaches the point where the lines divide to form the mid-section of the ribbon, you can switch to split stitch for outlining the area. Outline only a little ways up into the main curve on the ribbon (also shown in the photo above).

- Then, in the darkest blue (still 158), work long and short stitches to fill the tip of the ribbon, working from the narrow point to the wider center.
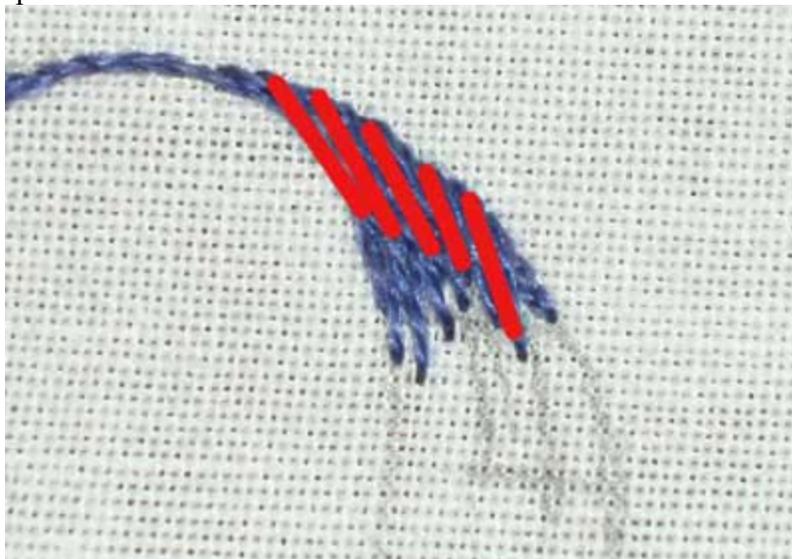
- Your stitch direction will basically follow the direction indicated in the red lines. Notice that I'm not stitching from the tip of the ribbon and fanning out, but rather starting on the side, and working almost vertically.

- Switch to the medium-dark blue (161) and then medium blue (160) and continue to work long and short stitch to fill the ribbon shape.

- As you switch colors, anchor your working threads in the fabric so that you can keep using them when you return to those colors.

- In the widest part of the ribbon, center, switch to light blue (159), and stitch two or three rows (depending on the size of your stitches). Alter the direction of your stitches to gradually move them towards the tip where the lines of the design converge.

- Keep adjusting your stitches as you round the curve, and then switch back to medium blue (160).

- After stitching a row of medium blue, switch to medium dark (161) and continue towards the tip of the ribbon.
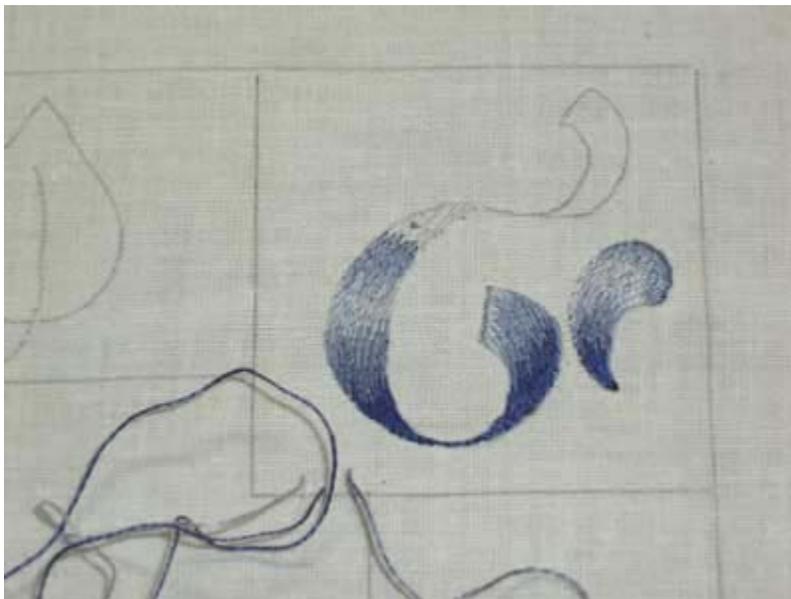
- If you turn your work right-side-up at this point, it should look basically like this. You can outline the tip in split stitch, using dark blue (158) if you wish. I did not outline at this point – I just continued filling to the tip where the lines of the design converge.

- Working upside-down again, continue filling with the darkest blue, to the tip of the large ribbon curve, easing your stitches around the curve by changing their direction little by little.

- The tip should look like this.
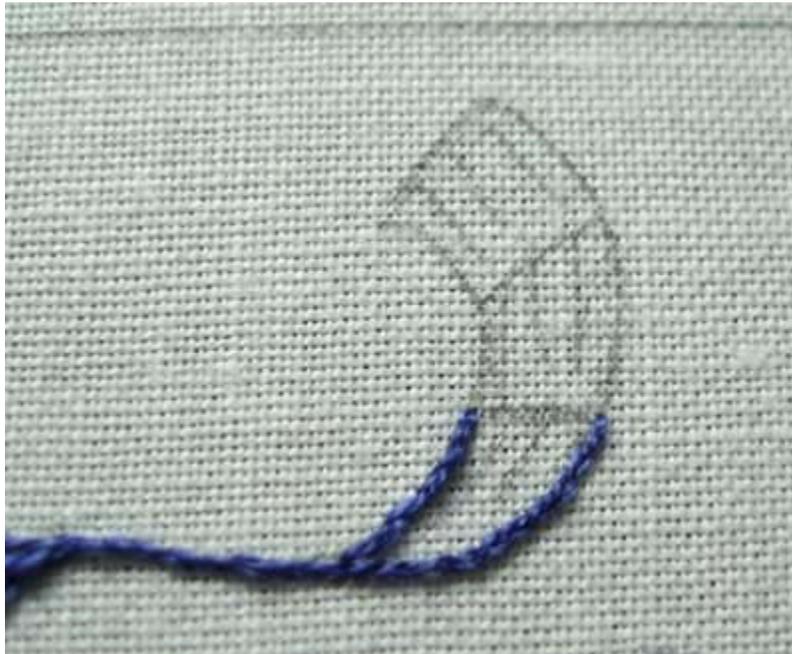
- Continuing with the dark blue (158), stem stitch the line between the main part of the ribbon and the top curl. Again, where the lines separate to form the top curl of the ribbon, switch to split stitch and outline the lower third of the curl.

- Mark in your stitch direction lines and lines to indicate changes in shade, if you wish. Split stitch the very edge of the ribbon (hidden here by long and short stitch) in medium-light blue (160), and then work one row of medium-light (160) in long and short stitch. If it is easier for you, turn your work upside-down again.

- Following the same sequence as in the lower curl on the ribbon, work a row or two of light blue (159) in long and short stitch, tweaking your stitch direction as you work around the curve. Then switch to medium-light blue (160), then medium dark blue (161) – one row of each – then to dark blue (158), which will fill the tip.

Congratulations! You have finished the fourth element in the Long and Short Stitch Shading Sampler – the most difficult element so far! If you're still with me, you'll find the next element (the center leaf on the top of the sampler) a BREEZE! I promise! See you in Lesson Six!