

2026 Stitch Along

By Debbie Rowley

The start of the new year is the perfect time to begin a new project! There's nothing like staring at a blank canvas and envisioning the magic about to happen, when colorful threads and interesting stitches are applied!

For this Stitch Along, I decided to choose threads as I go. This is a somewhat scary departure from the way I usually do things, so bear with me! I have designed the first few elements, and picked the first threads, but I haven't gotten beyond that.

If you're like me, you have a LOT of stash threads: threads left over from other projects, threads you picked up along the way because you liked the feel or color, or even entire lines of threads (raising my hand here but it's kind of essential that my stash is deep). I challenge you to stitch from stash for this project if you like, but I'm also a master enabler - go shopping if you want!

As we move along, I'll suggest a thread type, but feel to change these, and the specific thread I used for the project. For the first stitches, I selected a Gloriana silk floss, so let's dive in!

I am using white 18 ct. Mono deluxe canvas, 12" x 12", mounted on two pairs of 12" stretcher bars. I don't know what the finished size will be yet, but it will not exceed 6" square.

Braided Heart

Length	Thread Type	As Shown	Your Choice
36"-40"	Stranded floss	Gloriana 12 Strand Silk Floss 083 Blossoms (2)	

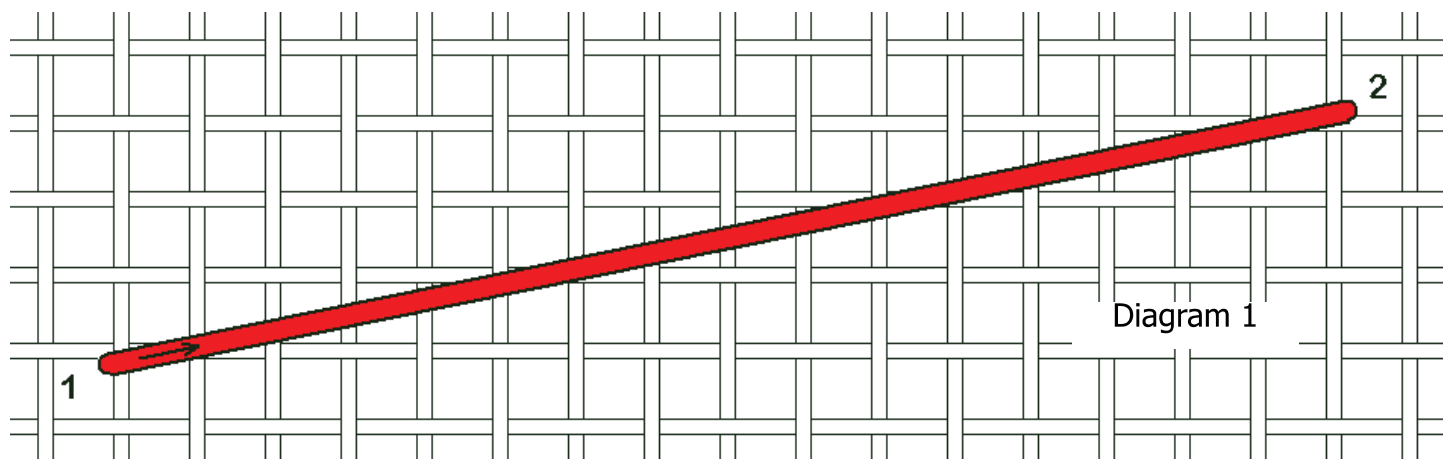
A bit of info about the thread first. I had ordered in the entire line of Gloriana Silk Floss, but haven't had much chance to stitch with it. The colors are so yummy! And it feels divine to stitch with. It's a 12 strand floss, and generally you don't stitch with all 12 strands as it comes. For the first stitches, I'm using 2 strands. To separate the strands, tap the cut end until the strands separate, then grasp one strand with one hand and slide the rest of the skein down with the other hand. Do this for the number of strands you want to use, then recombine before threading the needle. With an overdyed thread like this one, keep the color changes going the same way. For solid colors you can flip the ends, which seems to keep the strands separated a bit better.

About the stitch: I have so many volumes of stitch reference books and refer to them frequently. I like apps that I can keep on my phone and look things up quickly. One of my phone apps is Shapes of Stitches by Sandra Arthur. Two of the volumes were released as apps, and I do have all four of the books. They are excellent references. I came across this braided heart diagram, and it's not a heart shape I've used before, so I started with this one.

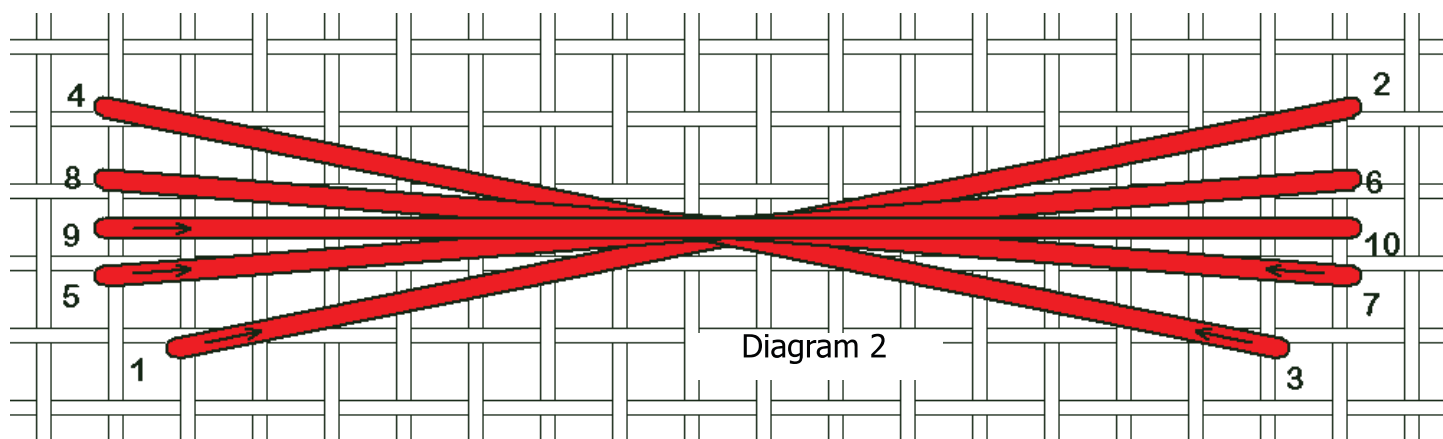
Anchor your thread with a pin stitch or an away knot. If you choose to use a pin stitch (which I almost always do), find the center of the canvas, then count up about 9 canvas threads, and make the pin stitch there. It should be nicely covered by the stitches when completed. I also end with a pin stitch usually, and in this case it's the best way to end since it's more secure than weaving into the backs of the stitches - these are long stitches on the front and back, and weaving in will not be secure. To end with a pin stitch, from the front gently move the stitches aside, close to the center of the heart. Make the pin stitch from the front, then snip off the thread and move the stitches back over the pin stitch.

The diagram begins on the next page.

From the center of the canvas (this can be approximate) count up 8 canvas threads, and 8 canvas threads to the left; bring the needle up here for the first stitch. The first stitch covers 17 vertical threads and 4 horizontal threads; end the first stitch here.



Continue as shown in Diagram 2, with the long mostly horizontal stitches.



The diagram continues on the next page.

Now let's make some mostly vertical stitches. The next two stitches will begin in the same shared hole, and end in different holes. Bring the needle up in the center of the canvas (this is 8 canvas threads below position 1 and 8 canvas threads to the right of position 1 in the first diagram). This stitch will end 13 canvas above 11 and 1 to the left, the next stitch will end 13 canvas threads above 13 and 1 to the right, leaving a gap of 2 canvas threads between positions 12 and 14.

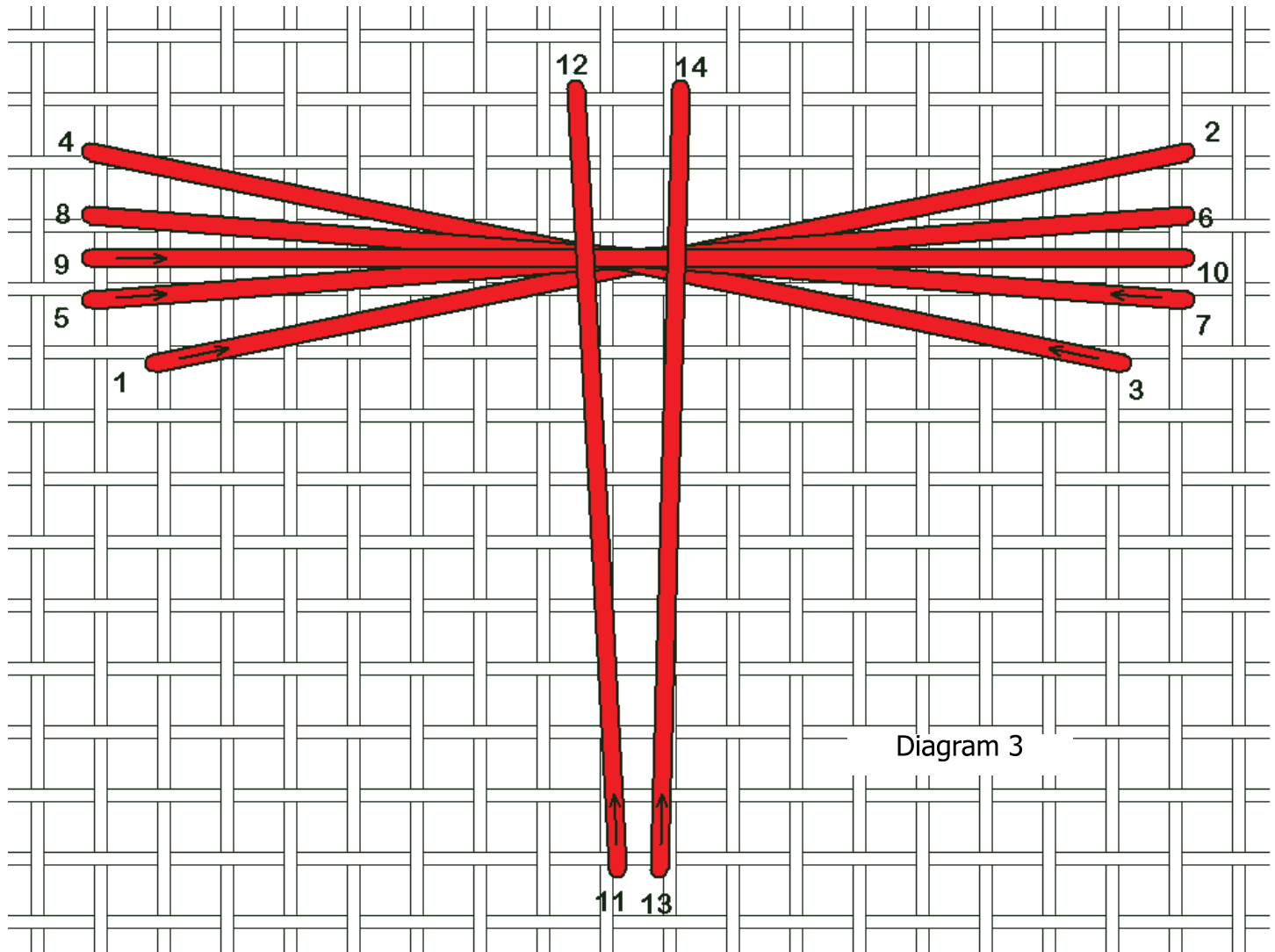
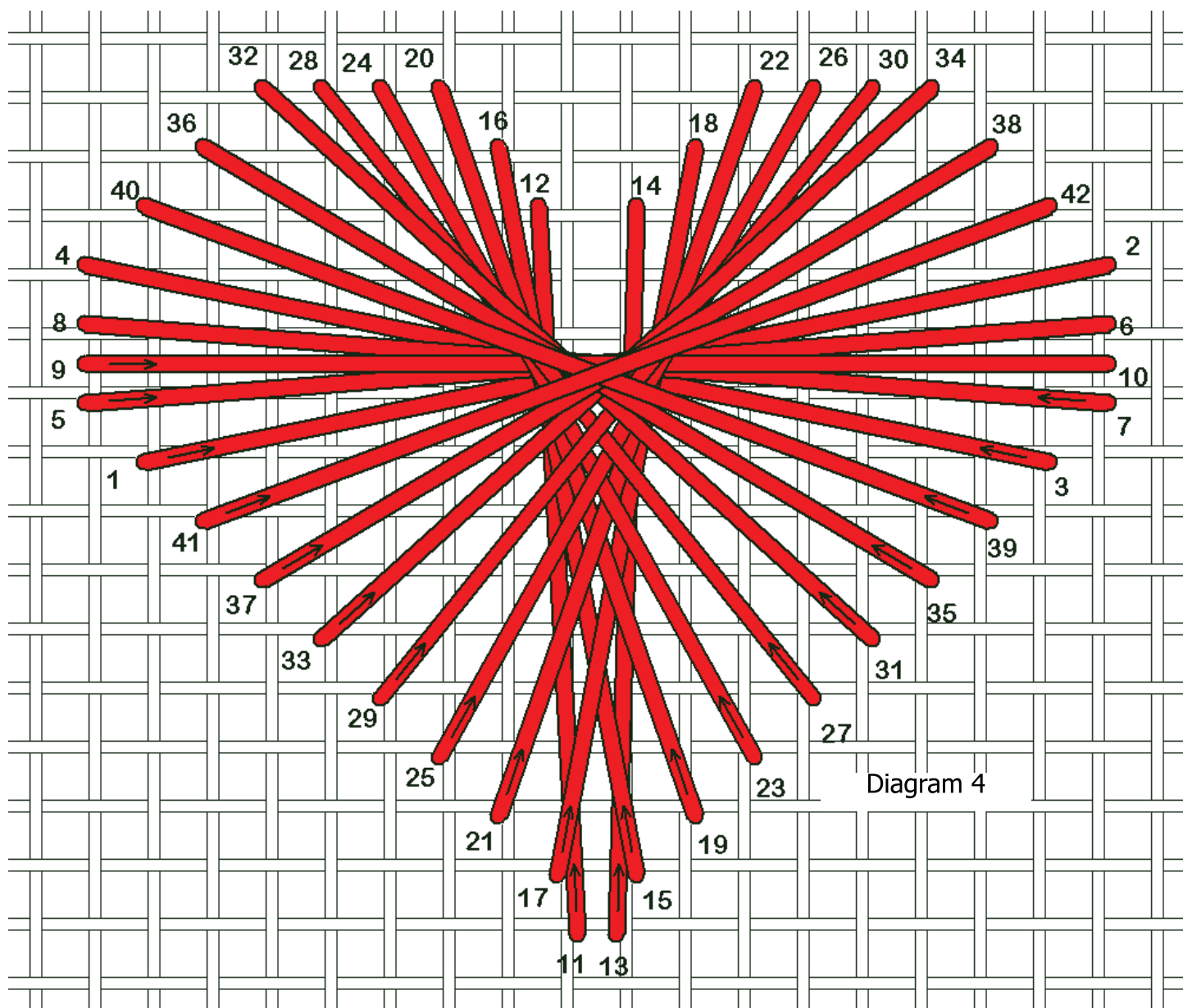


Diagram 3

The diagram continues on the next page.

Now finish the heart shown in Diagram 4. The end points follow along in adjacent diagonal holes for the most part, so no need to do a lot of heavy counting.



End off the thread, and start a new length for the remaining hearts.

Stitch three more braided hearts, sharing holes along the diagonal edges as shown in Diagram 5. You may find it helpful to turn the canvas as you stitch, so you are stitching the same orientation as before.

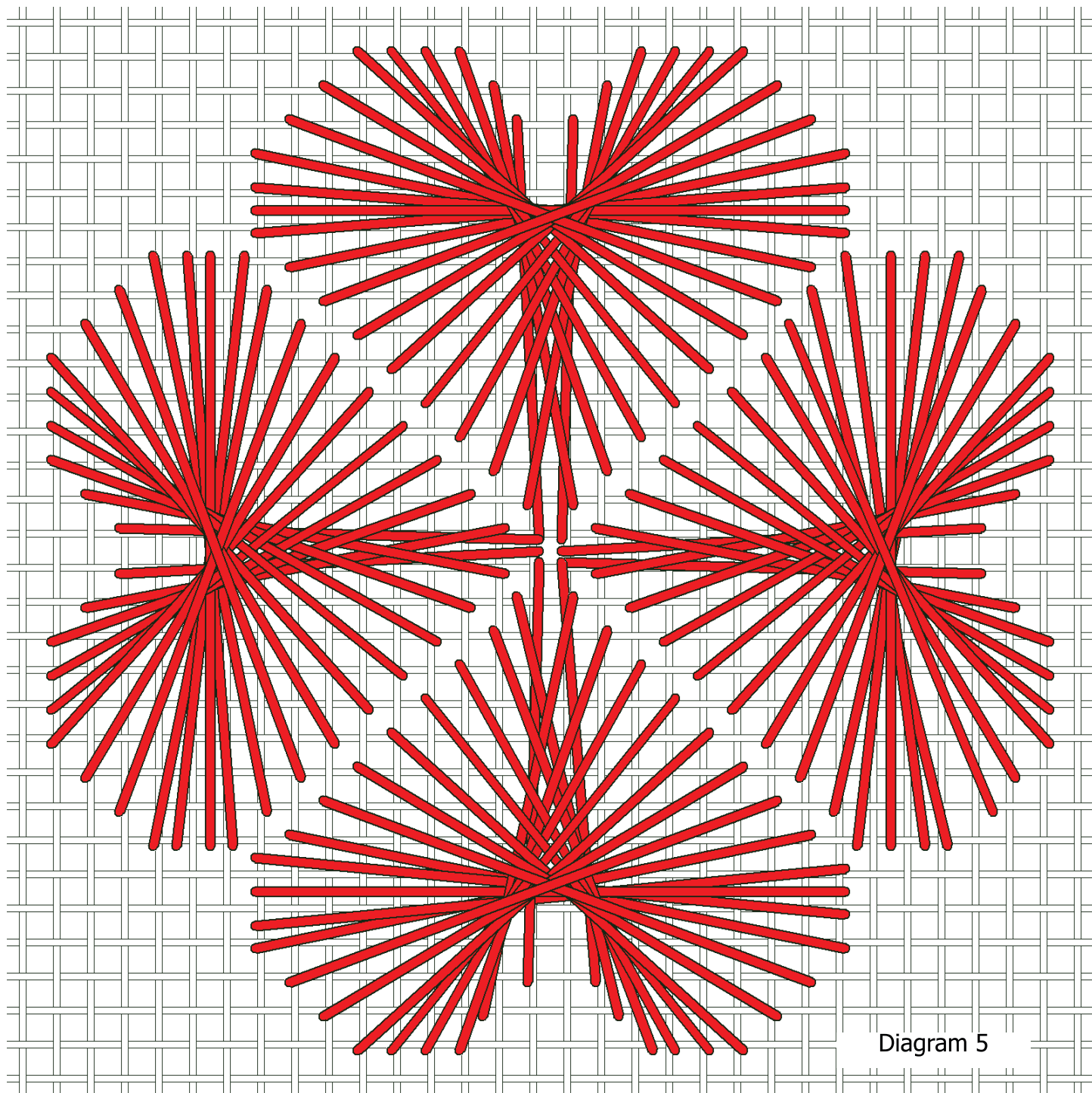


Diagram 5

We're off to a good start!

Amadeus

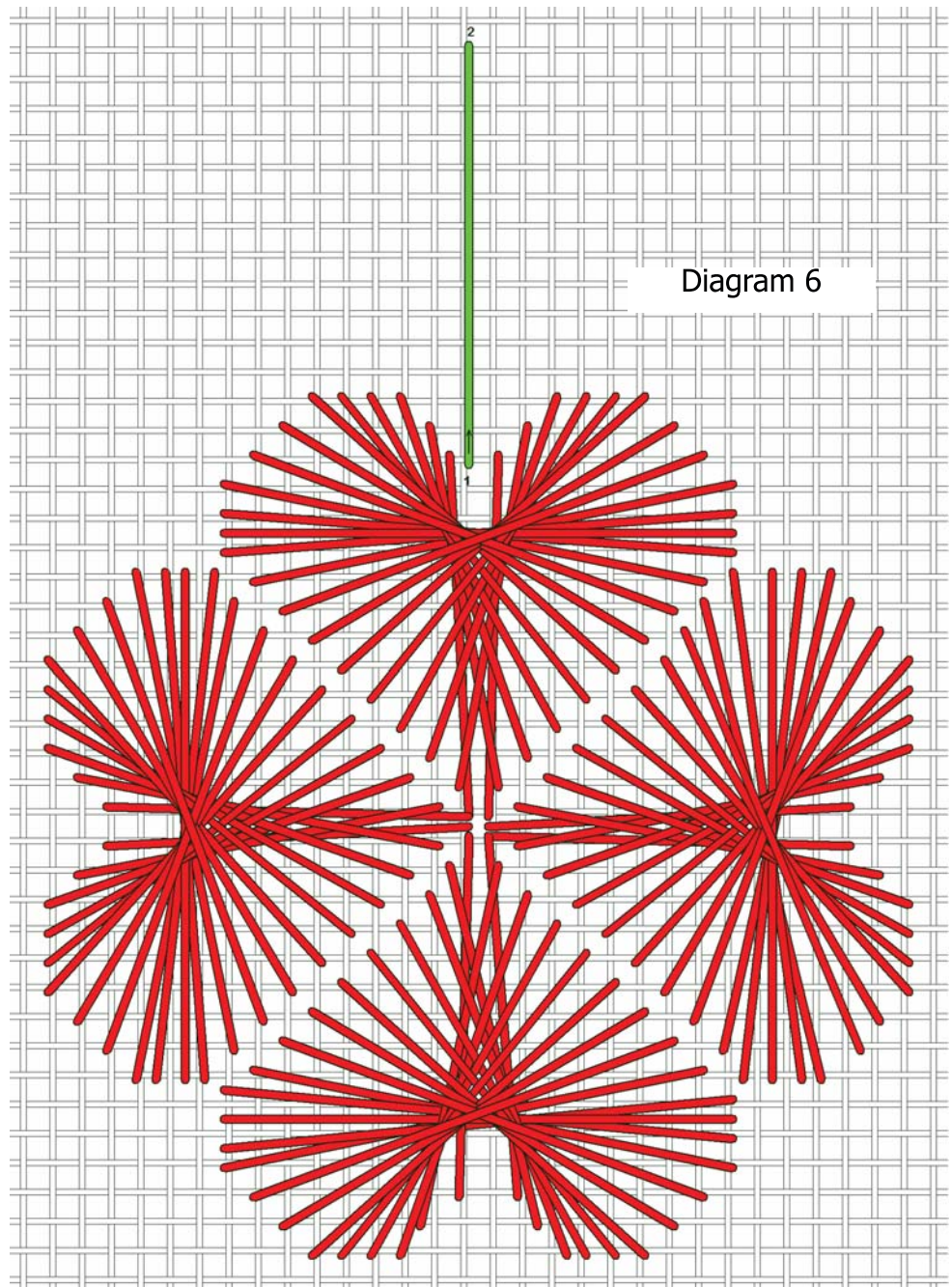
Length	Thread Type	As Shown	Your Choice
36"-40"	Stranded floss	Gloriana 12 Strand Silk Floss 014 Jewel Green (2)	

With our center firmly established, let's branch out a bit. In my head I had a kind of abstract flower motif, so with that in mind I decided to a stitch that can mimic the calyx and stem of a flower. An Amadeus stitch is a beautiful stitch principle more than a specific stitch - there are hundreds of variations of Amadeus stitches. This is just one.

Amadeus stitches are characterized by an establishing stitch, then all remaining stitches made over that stitch. It is generally not a woven stitch; all of the stitches lay one after the other. In this example the Amadeus is sharing holes with the braided heart stitches.

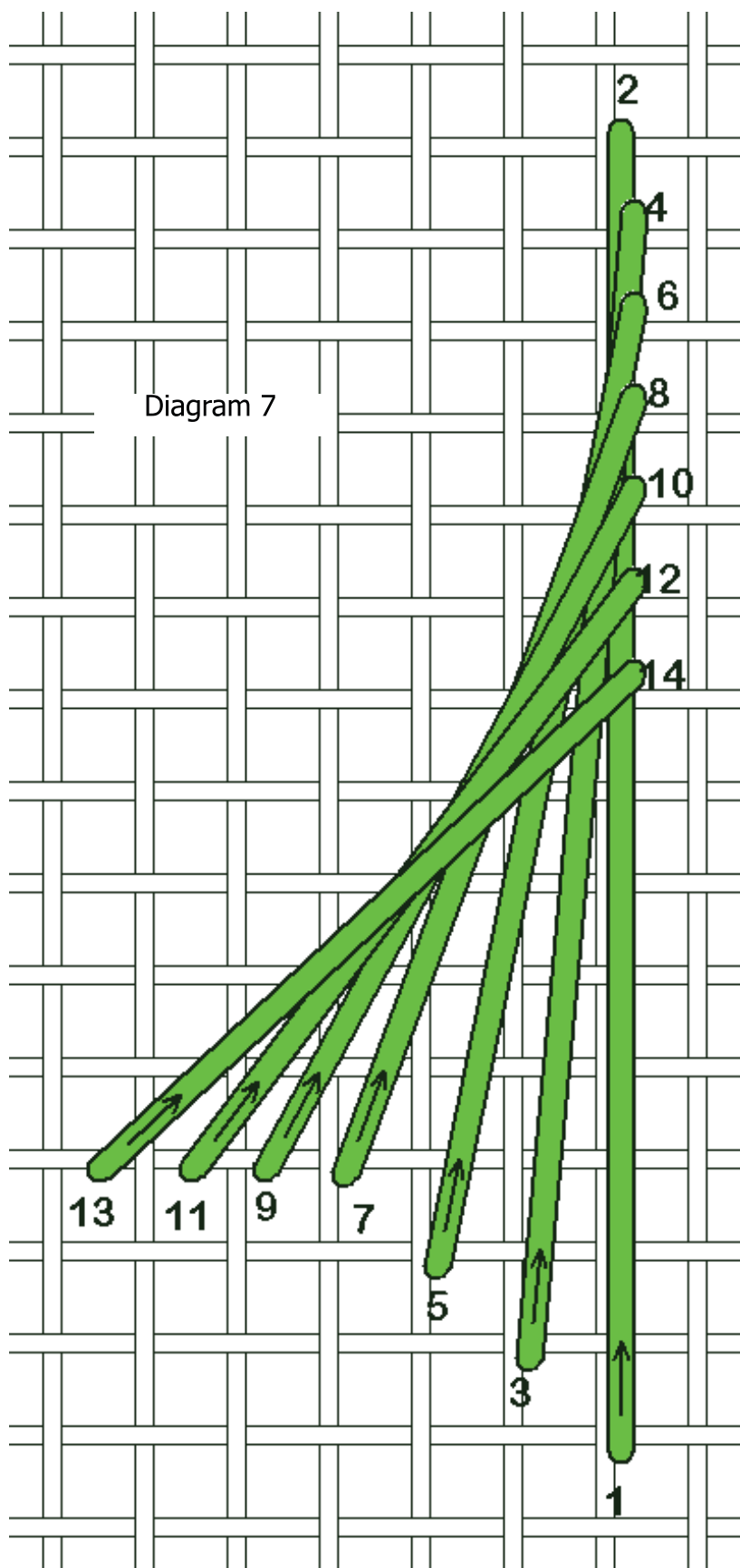
Anchor with a pin stitch, placed where it will not be in the stitching channel and will be covered by the stitches. I end off the same way, moving the threads aside until I can see the canvas underneath, then making my pin stitch from the front, and snipping off the excess thread. After snipping I smooth the stitches back in place, making a virtually invisible anchor.

Begin as shown in Diagram 6. The first stitch covers 15 horizontal canvas threads. For the next stitches I won't show the braided hearts so I can enlarge the Amadeus diagrams.

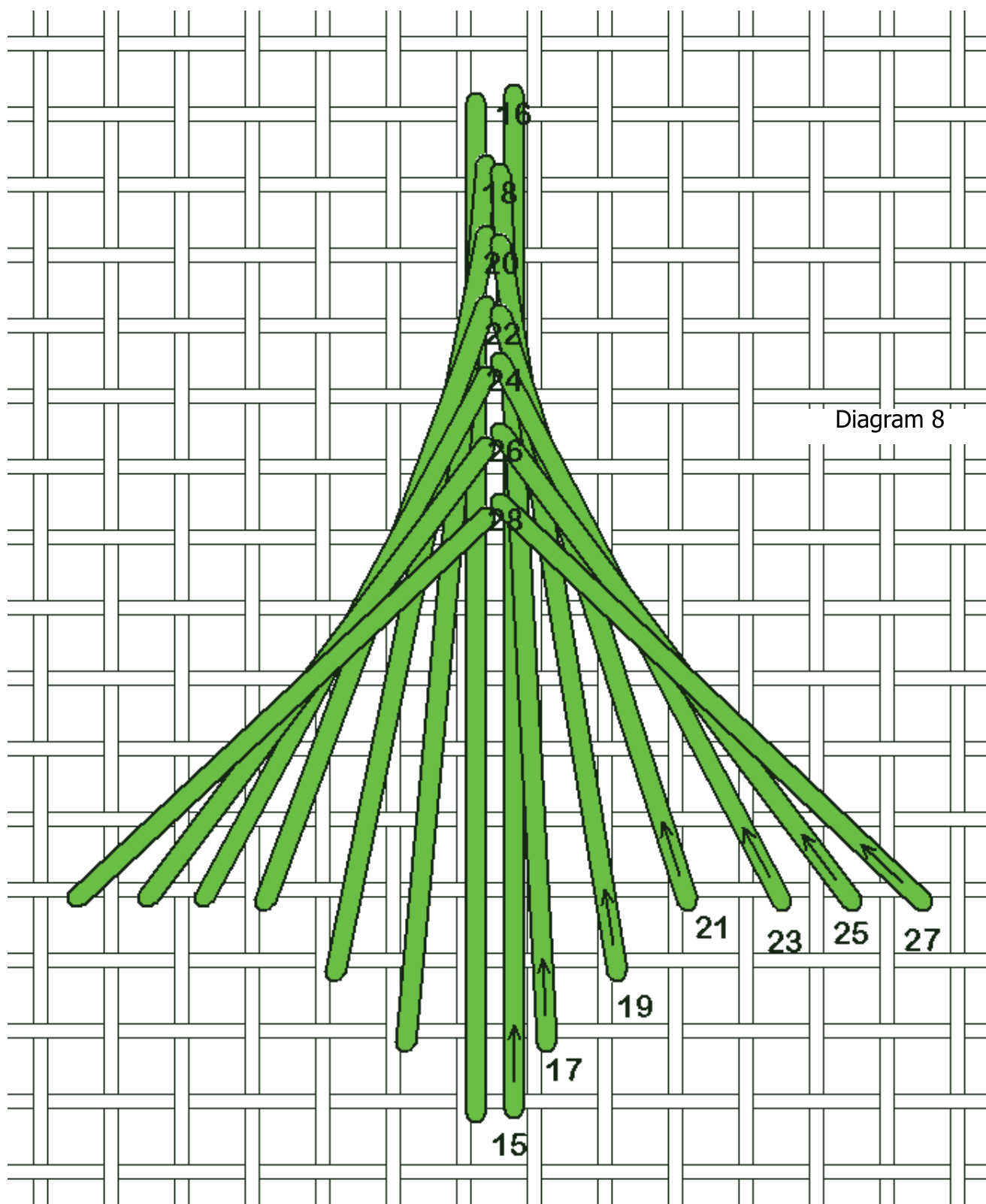


Continue as shown in Diagram 7, with the stitches ending over the first stitch in adjacent holes.

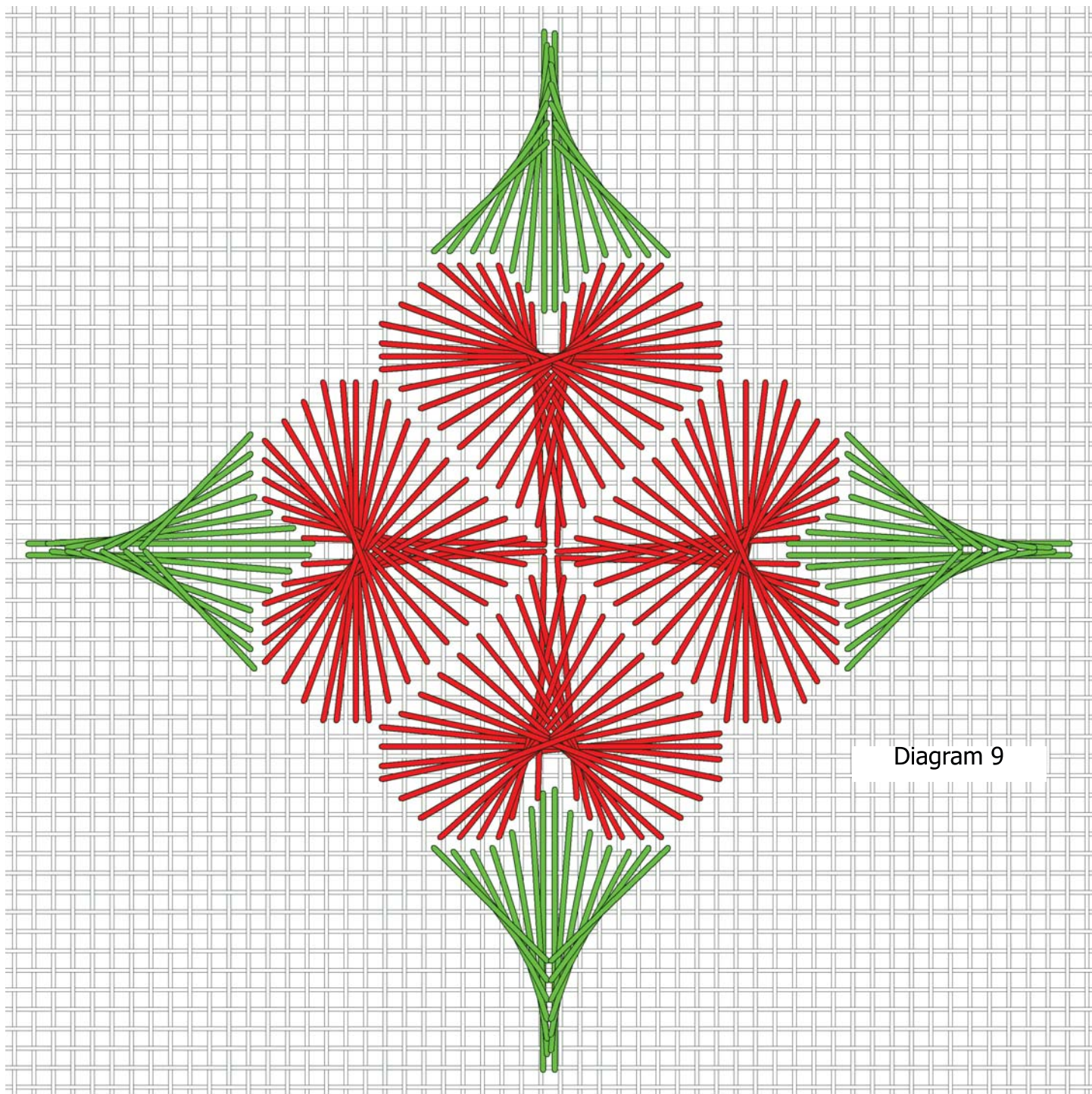
Don't end off the thread yet! This is a complete Amadeus, but we're going to add a second half, a mirror of what we have so far.



Stitch the second half as shown. The needle will come up along the top edge, and end in shared holes with the first half.



Stitch Amadeus around the braided hearts, shown in Diagram 9. You may find it easier to stitch, especially if this is a new stitch for you, by turning the canvas so you are always stitching the same orientation.



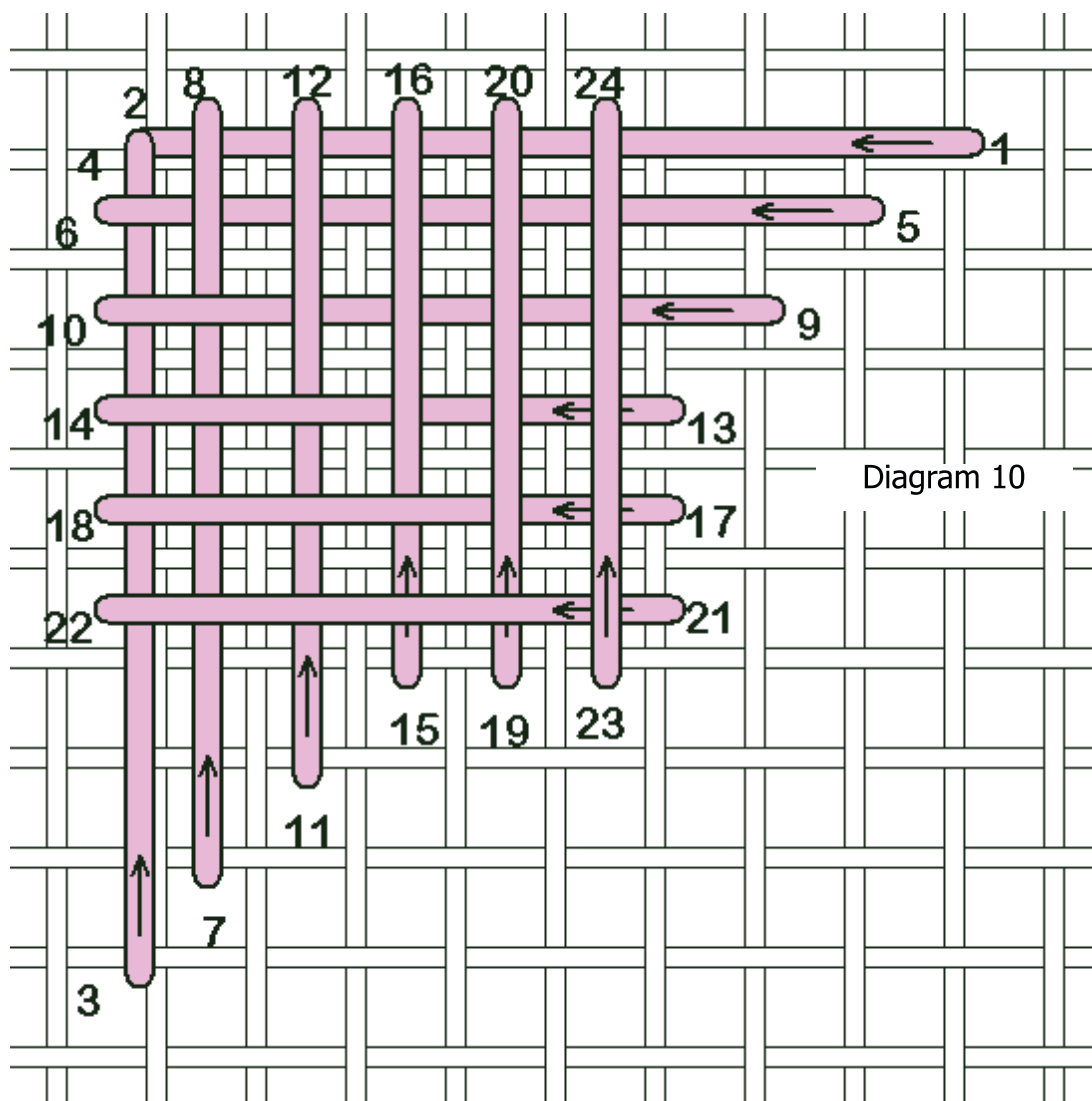
Right Angle Sprat's

Length	Thread Type	As Shown	Your Choice
18"-22"	Stranded floss	Gloriana 12 Strand Silk Floss 196 Sweet Lavender (2)	

This is one of my workhorse stitches, and I use it in some variation pretty frequently! I thought I'd want to use 3 strands of floss, but 2 looked better so I took out what I had done and used the 2 strands.

Anchor with an away knot, or a pin stitch (T) placed where it will be under the sprat's head. End off the same way. I did not carry the thread from one sprat's to the next although you could do that if you prefer.

Stitch the sprat's head as shown in Diagram 10. The first two stitches share a hole at the ends of the stitches, and the remaining stitches are made over these first two stitches. This is not the usual way to stitch a sprat's head, but I prefer to stitch in this order and direction of the stitches because it makes for a neater back in my opinion. Of course the back doesn't matter so long as it doesn't affect the front! But in this case, the usual stitching order and direction of a sprat's head leaves a buildup of thread along the diagonal edge, and stitching in this order does not. Placement is shown on the next page.



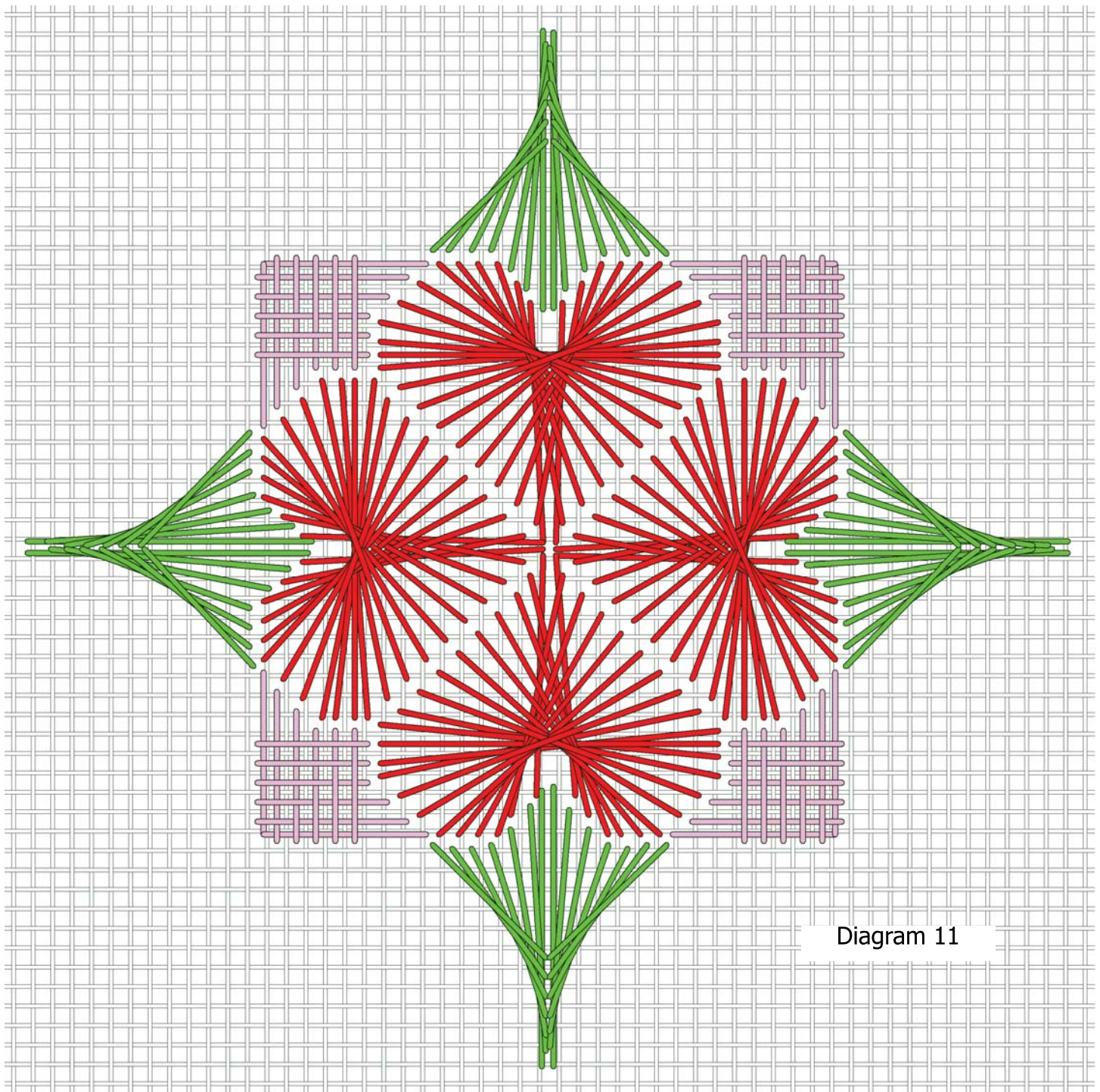


Diagram 11

You can see that the end points of the sprat's head don't take the usual diagonal line, but were designed to fit with the previous stitches.

You will notice that the first two stitches will look curved on the canvas - this is normal so don't be concerned about it. The first two stitches get pulled a bit by the subsequent stitches ending over them.