

Cats in Shades Illusion Scarf

These three illusion scarves were made as gifts. The Alien Scarf was designed by Shetha Nolke; the pattern can be found in the fabulous *Stitch N Bitch: The Knitter's Handbook* by Debbie Stoller. After starting the Aliens, I was so tickled with them that I had to try my hand at making my own charts and so we have Robots and Cats in Shades.

If you've never done illusion knitting before, it really isn't hard. The WOW factor far surpasses the difficulty factor: If you can knit and purl, you can do it. If you've never followed a chart before, this is a good place to start—you only have to remember two symbols.

The Basics: Illusion knitting uses two colors, one for the background and one for the hidden image. Each stripe is two rows. The right side (odd numbered) rows are always knitted. For the wrong side (even numbered rows) some stitches are knitted, some are purled (this is where the charts come in). The knitted stitches make a Garter Stitch rib on the right side, the purled stitches make a smooth Stockinette Stitch valley. When viewed straight on, these scarves appear striped. When viewed at an angle, you only see the Garter Stitch ribs and the hidden image appears. Sorta like magic! For more info, see the Alien Illusion Scarf pattern in *Stitch N Bitch*, visit http://www.diynetwork.com/diy/shows_dkng/episode/0,2046,DIY_18180_32904,00.html, or Google "illusion knitting."

Materials:

As pictured:

2 skeins Patons Classic Merino Wool (3.5 oz/100 gm; 223 yds/205 m) in contrasting colors. The colors used here are Winter White and Black.

US 6 (4.0 mm) needles.

Crochet hook for attaching fringe.

Yarn Substitutions: The SnB Aliens call for 2 skeins of Brown Sheep Nature Spun Worsted and US 7 (4.5 mm) needles. This would also work. In general, if you use a heavier yarn than the Patons Classic, you will need a bit more yardage.

Size: Using the Patons Merino and US6 needles, about 8 in. x 60 in., after blocking and excluding fringe.

Gauge: To be honest, I never checked it. I always check for Things That Need To Fit, but I get lazy on scarves.

The Charts: Charts are read from right to left on the odd numbered (RS) rows and left to right on the even numbered (WS) rows. Since all of the RS rows are knitted and you will be following the chart for the WS rows, I only numbered the even rows and ran the numbers up the left side. It made my life easier. Well, at least this part of it.

There are two charts. Note the special instructions for row 2 of Cat 1—they make the blocks of alternating background colors a little more even. If you would like the cats in a single color on a solid background (like the Aliens scarf), repeat the Cat 1 chart six times (ignoring Cat 2) and always Purl row 2.

The cats are slightly asymmetrical. That was intentional.

Directions:

With the Color A, cast on 40 stitches. Follow the Cat 1 chart. (Note: If you use a Long Tail Cast on, which essentially knits your first row while casting on, start with row 2 for this chart only. Otherwise, start with row 1.) When you finish this chart, move on to the Cat 2, then alternate the two charts until you have six cats. After completing the sixth cat, add one stripe in Color A (Knit one row, then purl one row). Bind off in Color A.

About changing colors: Do not cut the yarn when you change colors. Because each stripe is only two rows, you can carry the yarn up the edge by simply dropping the old color and picking up the new one. Always picking up the new yarn from below the old yarn makes a nice even twist up the edge. After about 3 stitches with the new color, give the dropped strand of the old color a *gentle* tug to tighten the last stitch you made with it.

Finishing:

I wet blocked these scarves before adding the fringe. (Much easier than dealing with wet fringe.) I did steam block another Alien Scarf (because it was mine and I couldn't wait to wear it), but the wet blocking worked much better and got rid of all the edge curling.

Fringe: Cut 33 strands of each color yarn about 15 in. long. I wrapped the yarn around a DVD case (the long way). Take three strands of one color and fold them in half. Use a crochet hook pull the folded end through one corner of the scarf, on the short edge. Bring the cut ends through the loop and pull tight. Make 11 fringe "tassels," evenly spaced and in alternating colors, across each end of the scarf.

Weave in or hide in the fringe any yarn ends (probably only at the beginning and end of your scarf). Wear and enjoy.

**Thanks to Shetha Nolke, Debbie Stoller, and *Stitch N Bitch* for the inspiration for this scarf.
Charts are set in Knitter's Symbols Fonts by David Xenakis, XRX, Inc.**

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For more information contact patricia@slaphappyart.com.

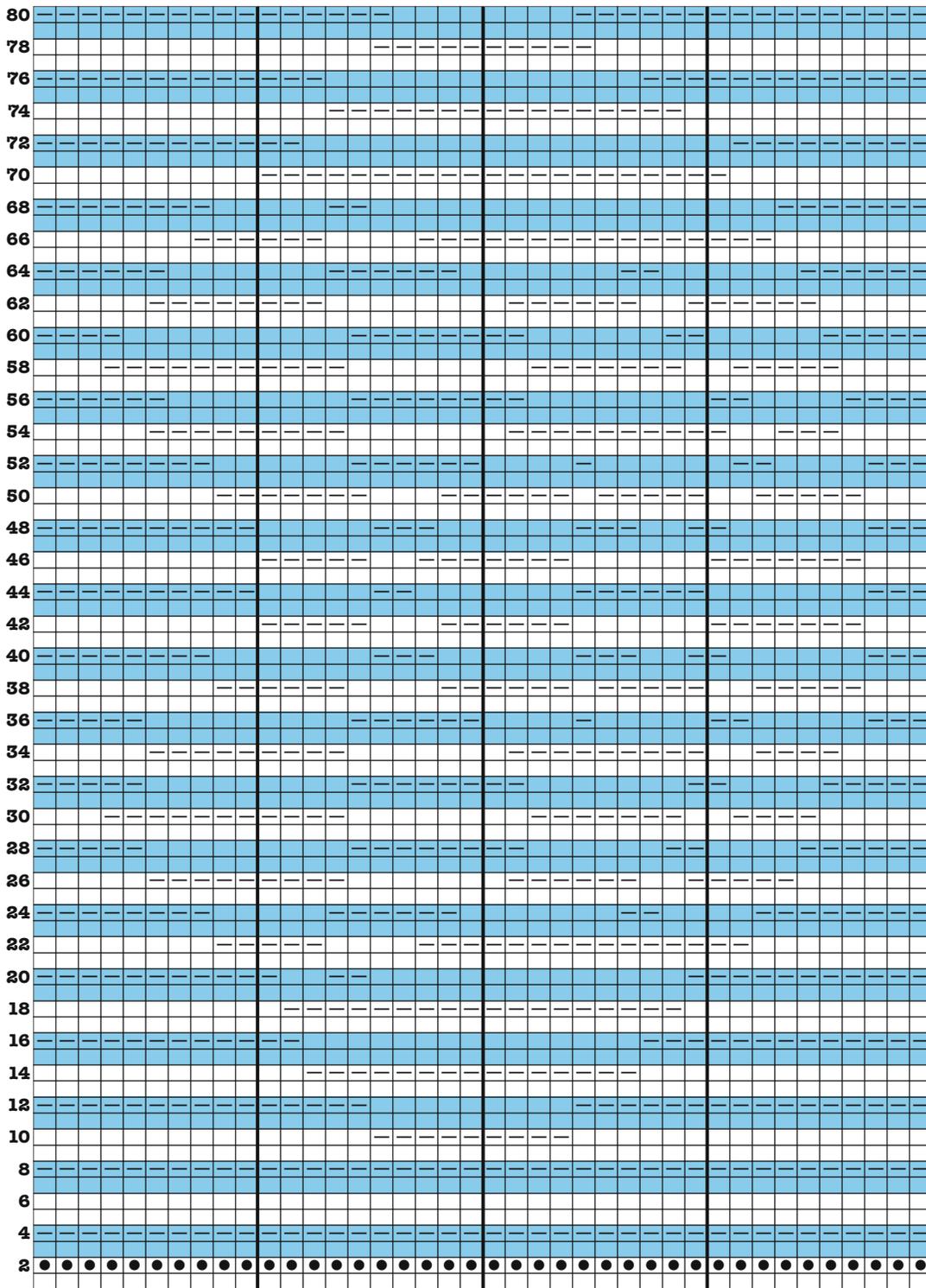
**Okay, you may print it out and give it to a friend (or a few) as long as this notice appears. But you can't make multiple copies and sell them.
You know what I'm getting at here. Be sensible about it. If in doubt, ask.*



Cat 1

Use for Cats 1, 3, & 5.
Cat will appear in Color A;
background in Color B.

Hint: Because each stripe equals 2 rows, it's easy to count rows to figure out where you are on the chart—but as your scarf grows, you don't want to have to count back to the beginning. After completing row 40, place a row marker (I used a safety pin) on that stripe. After row 80, move the marker to that stripe. This way you never have to count more than 20 stripes to find your place on the chart.



Easy Key:
On RS: Knit all rows.
On WS:
 □ & ■ = Purl
 — & — = Knit

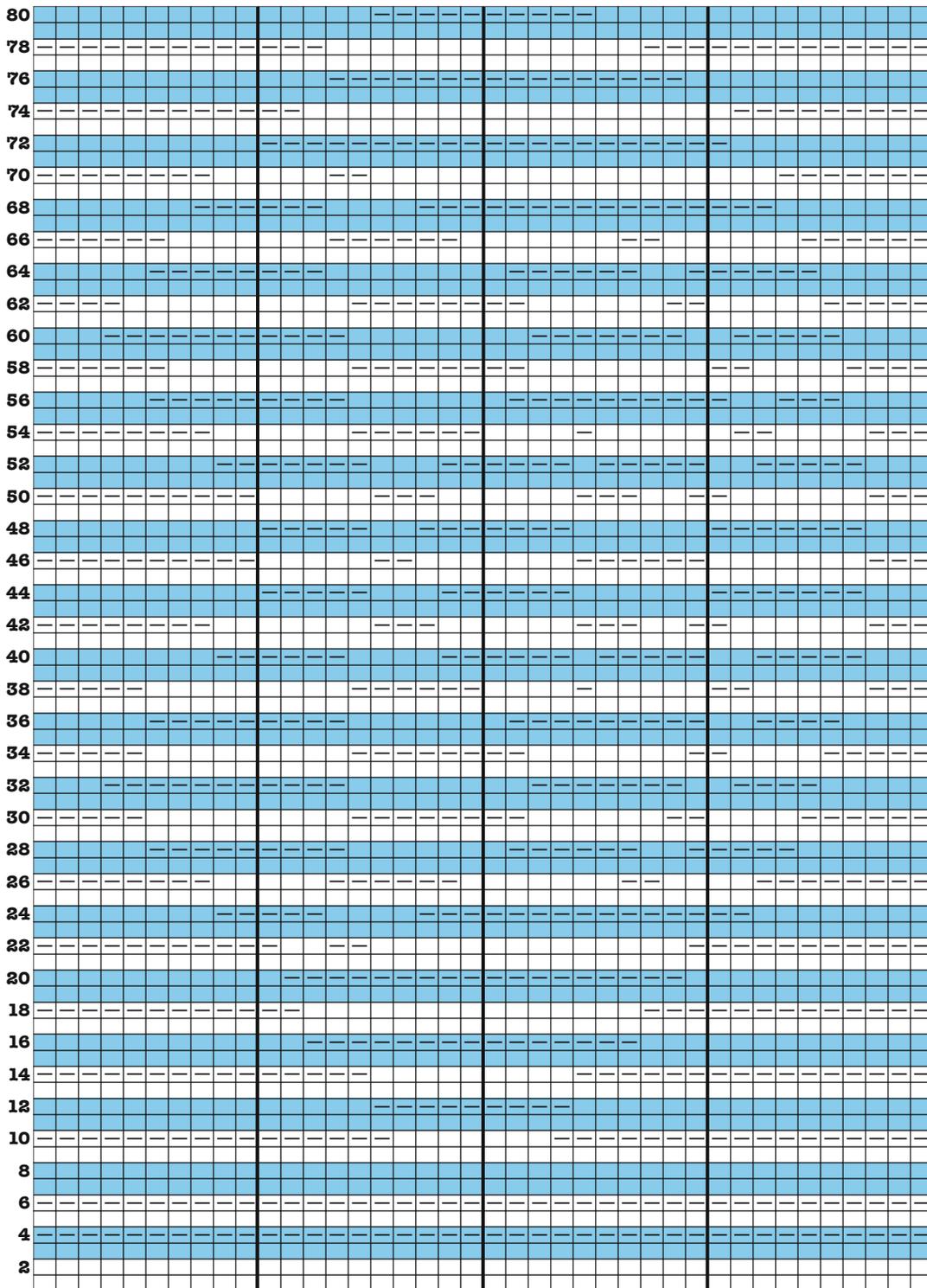
Color A:
 □ Knit on RS; Purl on WS
 — Knit on WS; Purl on RS
 ● Purl on Cat 1, Knit on 3 & 5

Color B:
 ■ Knit on RS; Purl on WS
 — Knit on WS; Purl on RS

RS = Right Side
 WS = Wrong Side

Cat 2

Use for Cats 2, 4, & 6.
Cat will appear in Color B;
background in Color A.



Easy Key:
On RS: Knit all rows.
On WS:
 & = Purl
 & = Knit

Color A:
 Knit on RS; Purl on WS
 Knit on WS; Purl on RS

Color B:
 Knit on RS; Purl on WS
 Knit on WS; Purl on RS

RS = Right Side
 WS = Wrong Side