



## ***BAND 3. Pirates!***

Time Factor: 3 plain/

4 voided

Released on 14 September 2021

134 stitches wide x 20 stitches tall. 2 blank rows left between this and the following strip.

It doesn't matter if the pirates are from Never-Never Land, Penzance or the Caribbean – it's always good to be a Pirate King. Or Queen. Or Monarch.

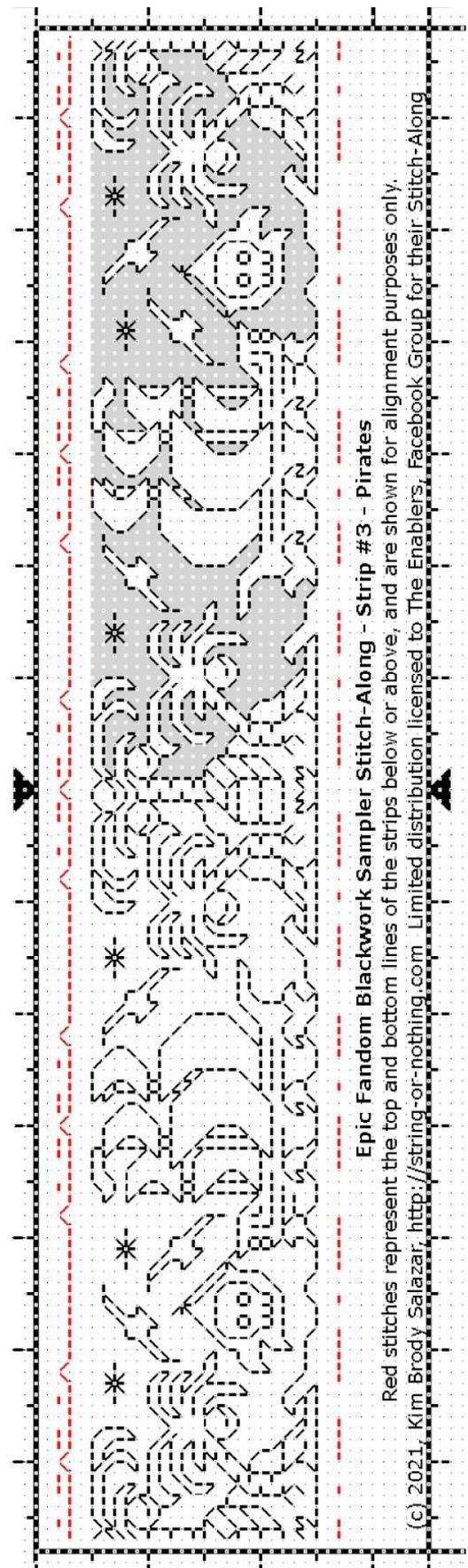
If worked as a stand-alone continuous band, one half-repeat in 67 stitches (one ship between two palm tree islands). This strip is suitable for voided work, in which the outlines are stitched first, and the shaded area is filled in using long-armed cross stitch (LACS), plain old cross stitch, or another treatment. The voiding may be worked in a contrasting color, if desired. I've only shaded in one side of the strip, to make the graph as easy to read as possible, but if I were to work it voided, I'd fill in the background on both sides.

There is a caution for people who might want to use this as a continuous strip, with repeats left and right of the section shown here. Because the island is asymmetrical and the island is NOT a simple mirror point, I suggest centering the piece around one island. All of the ships to the left of that central island will be sailing in the same direction – towards it. Ditto for all of the ships on the right of the island. That will allow you to make all of the islands to the left identical with each other, and a mirror image of all of the islands to the right.

Time Factor 3 for width if you chose not to do the background. Time Factor 4 if you work the voiding. I've included a run-down on voiding at the end of this download.

Warning: Pay attention to that asymmetrical center island!

In order to give the enough time to do the voiding, Band #4 will be released on 12 October 2021.

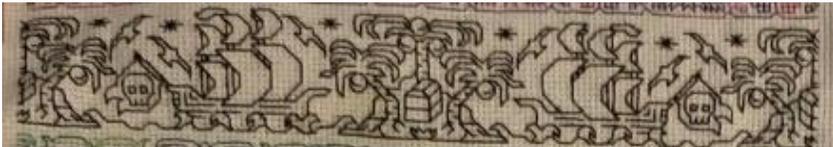


**Epic Fandom Blackwork Sampler Stitch-Along - Strip #3 - Pirates**

Red stitches represent the top and bottom lines of the strips below or above, and are shown for alignment purposes only.

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**Band 3 – Pirates! – Inspiration:**

Samples	Fabric used	Stitch	Thread consumption
	28 count evenweave	Back stitch 2 plies	
	18 count Aida	Back stitch 1 ply	About 3 yards of floss, including three major froggings
	28 count evenweave	Back stitch 1 ply Voiding in LACS, 2 ply	About 2 yards for outlines; about 3.5 yards for voiding
	28 count evenweave	Double running 2 plies Voiding in LACS, 1 ply	Less than ½ yard of green, less than ½ yard of blue, less than ¼ yard of yellow, remnants of red.  VOIDING NOT YET COMPLETE but estimate 2 yards of light blue

Top to bottom: Renditions by Beta Testers Heather, Danielle; Callie, plus Kim

**Hints:**

- Note that the center of this design runs right down the middle of the two-unit-wide trunk of the centermost tree. The coconut in the foliage is NOT centered. If you start this at the center (which I recommend) use the red stitches at the top of the graph that show the final two rows of Band 2 to align yourself.
- The birds and stars are “islands” unto themselves. There is no shame in skipping over from the nearest larger bits to work them, leaving a strand on the back. Or if you wish (or if your color choices so declare), start a new thread and end it off for them, as you see fit. There are no embroidery police – your back is as private as your underwear. No need to let others see it up close and personal, without your specific invitation and clearly expressed consent. 😊
- VOIDING IS HIGHLY OPTIONAL, and as you can see, this strip is dramatic both with and without it. There is no mandate to do it, in any method.

## Voiding

Voiding or reserve work is a family of techniques used to create a piece that has a background that's solidly (or evenly but not solidly) stitched, and foreground images that are left either totally unworked, or sometimes slightly embellished or detailed. It was wildly popular during the Renaissance, and experienced a big revival in the late 1800s. Modern Assisi work is the descendent of the simplified forms and techniques used in that revival. There are many ways to do a filled in background. Here are some.

**Plain old cross stitch.** Yes, the cross-stitcher's friend. This is the stitch that is used in Assisi work. I have never seen it in a sample of voided stitching produced before the 1800s, but I will stop short of saying it was never done. Just that after extensive research, I have not turned up any evidence that it was. That being said, it's one of the easiest to do. For this particular design it is probably best to work it in a contrasting color to the foreground outlines, otherwise the stars and slender birds will be lost against the background. I apologize for not having a sample of plain cross stitch ground to show off. I don't use it myself.

**Long arm cross stitch (LACS).** Common in Renaissance era works, LACS is a denser form of cross stitch. When worked back and forth across a piece it produces a distinctive almost plaited appearance. Or if all rows are worked in the same direction, it looks like a procession of bands. Because it is heavier than plain cross stitch it does have an even greater tendency to overwhelm details like the stars. Again, a contrasting color is suggested. Samples from my work (in monochrome):



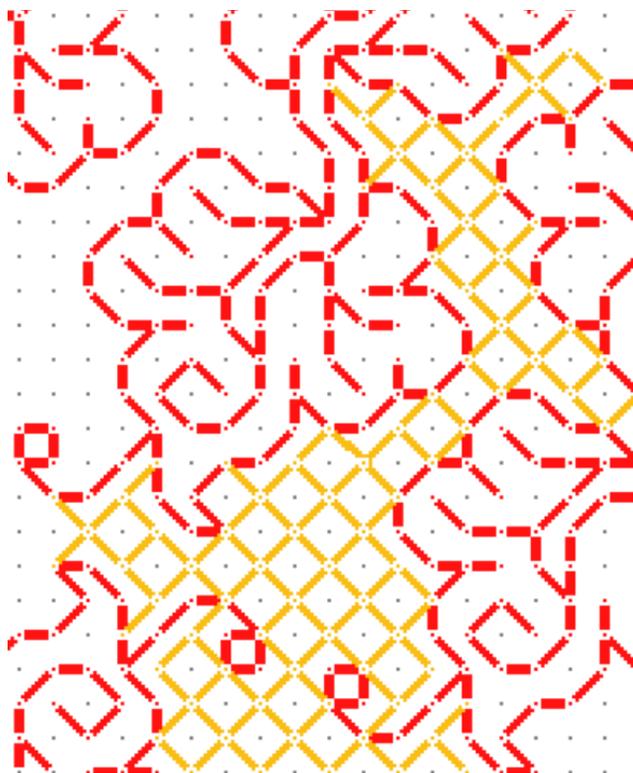
## Other easy to work fills

Diagonal fill	Zig-zag fill.	Diamond fill	Grid fill	Straight line fill.

**Meshy fill.** Included here only for sake of completeness, this is a pulled thread technique that produces a totally overstitched net-like background, and is extremely common in surviving museum pieces. I do not advise it for this project. It's unsuitable for Aida and for cotton floss. It requires the tensile strength of silk thread and a 100% linen ground, preferably at 38 threads per inch or finer. Another sample from my prior work:



Whichever you chose, note that if you run the fill all the way up to the outlines and want to leave no ground showing at all you will have to fudge with partial stitches where the fills meet diagonal lines. One way around this problem is to NOT work the partials, but to leave a “halo” around the foreground motifs. Here’s an example, charted out so you can see what I mean. The red is the foreground outlining stitches. The yellow is the partially worked background voiding:



If you are interested in learning more about voided grounds and finding links to museum examples of it, here are two web articles I’ve written about it:

<https://string-or-nothing.com/2020/01/06/voided-grounds/>

<https://string-or-nothing.com/2021/04/06/voided-pieces-and-outlines/>

All general project information can be found in download that includes Band #1 – Giant Robot and Kaiju