

## Satisfying Stitches: Learn Simple Embroidery Techniques and Embrace the Joys of Stitching by Hand

**Hope Brasfield**

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Hand embroidery can be a means of learning about oneself according to Hope Brasfield's *Satisfying Stitches*, a crafting book with cute, accessible patterns for people new to the practice.

Herein, embroidery is a "corrective emotional experience" through which practitioners learn that imperfection is okay, that they are competent, and that it's acceptable to abandon projects even after spending time and resources on them. Indeed, the book encourages stitchers to start where they are and with what they have (Brasfield's own early efforts were stitched with "friendship bracelet" thread on fabric salvaged from a shower curtain liner).

Clear step-by-step photographs and descriptions outline the basics of skills like putting fabric in a hoop, threading a needle, and simple embroidery stitches. Each section explains stitching down to how many strands of what color thread were used. This makes it easy to recreate the projects as shown or choose different colors.

The patterns are arranged by theme: florals, houseplants, fruit, skies, animals, and mushrooms. The first designs are straightforward and ideal for beginners, and the patterns increase in size and detail as chapters progress, allowing stitchers to build their skills or jump into more detailed patterns. All are within the grasp of new stitchers who are willing to take it a stitch at a time. The projects include a line-art flower using three colors and three stitches, a trio of potted cacti, a dense strawberry, a sunset landscape involving color blending, a goldfish embellished with French knots, and a boho mushroom sampler that uses nearly a dozen techniques.

A mix of crafting and self-help, *Satisfying Stitches* is a call to make lovely embroidery projects and to craft an experience that is meaningful to the stitcher.

SARAH WHITE (January / February 2023)

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