

## About the Author

Holly Briscoe learned to knit in 1980, but she didn't start knitting regularly until 1990. She earned a bachelor's in aerospace engineering; studied French, Russian, and Spanish; programmed computers in FORTRAN; created relational databases; and, by the sheer grace of God, spent thirteen years as a proofreader and copyeditor, being paid to do two of her favorite things: reading and nitpicking.

Trying to work her first textured project from written-out instructions nearly drove her mad. The charting symbols used in some of her knitting books were so abstract or so similar to one another that they were as hard to work from as written-out "knitting gibberish." The knitting fonts available on the internet were either incomplete or just mapped oddly. So she decided to create her own font, keeping the various symbols as simple as possible while also making them resemble what their corresponding stitches looked like in yarn as they hung off the needles.

Her experience learning Russian, where the first huge hurdle is learning the alphabet and the sound each letter represents, showed her that the explanation for reading charts in most knitting books, typically just one page, was simply inadequate. Trying to knit from a full-page chart without learning the process step by step is as pointless as trying to read a full page of Russian without knowing the Cyrillic alphabet.

She set out to create a small handout for her local knit night, writing a first draft of twenty-five pages. But the more she explained, the more she realized she needed to drill down *all* the way to the bottom of *every* detail, taking absolutely nothing for granted. The key was starting with a single symbol and building up each row of the chart one additional symbol at a time, exactly the same way we all learn to knit in the first place: working the first stitch, then the next stitch, then the next.

The "handout" continued to grow, taking on a life of its own and expanding in scope until it became, well, *this*.