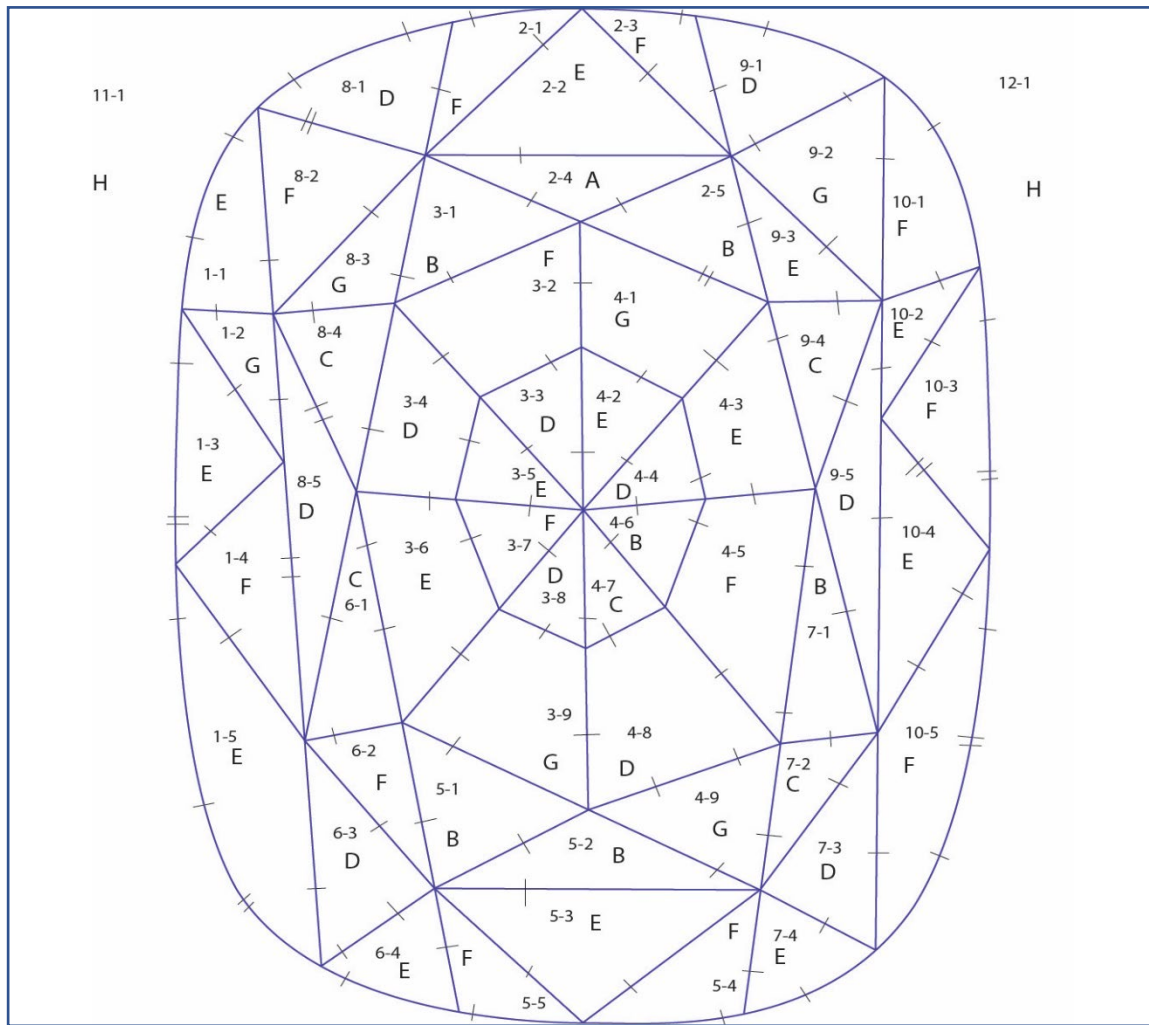


THE COUNTESS: DIAMOND & DRAMA QUEENS 18" PATTERN



Our *Diamonds & Drama Queens* pattern for is inspired by the **Bismarck Sapphire**, a 98.57-carat Burmese sapphire. It is exceptional for its outstanding clarity, rich blue color, and the fact that it is one of the largest and finest sapphires of its kind.

Historical records suggest that it was acquired by the Countess von Bismarck (nee Frances “Mona” Strader of Lexington, Kentucky) in India likely during her 1926 honeymoon cruise. She’d just married Harrison Williams, 24 years her senior and the richest man in America, and had embarked on a year-long honeymoon on his yacht, *Warrior*, the largest in the world at the time.

The Countess von Bismarck donated the sapphire (set in its Cartier necklace) to the Smithsonian in 1967. It is now part of the National Gem Collection and is housed in the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems & Minerals at the National Museum of Natural History.



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COLOR PLAY CHART

A - Lightest Light (or White)

E – Medium Dark

B – Light

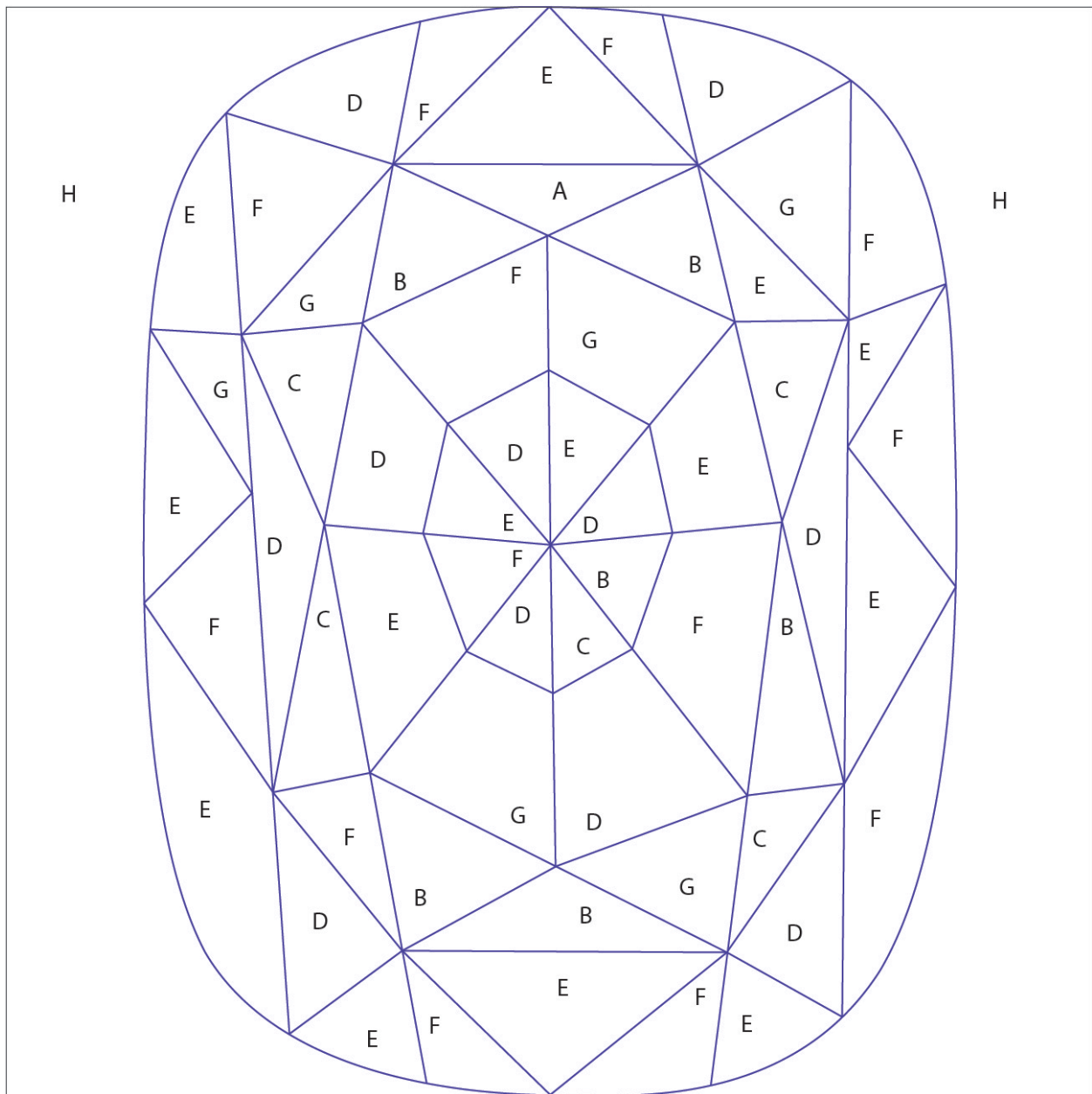
F - Dark

C –Medium-Light

G – Darkest Dark

D – Medium

H – Background



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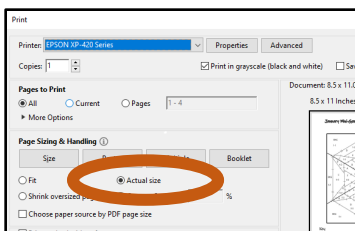
SUPPLIES

- Freezer paper – You can purchase a roll of freezer paper from the grocery store (Reynold's Freeze Paper). Be sure that you're not purchasing wax paper or parchment paper. Neither of these products will work with this project. You can also purchase pre-cut sheets that are commercially available. One product is Quilter's Freezer Paper by C&T Publishing, available on Amazon.com.
- Highlighter pen (if you're going to join your pattern sections together with double-sided roller tape, you'll need a 2nd highlighter of a different color)
- Double-sided tape roller or Washi tape (depending on how you wish to assemble the freezer paper pattern prior to cutting it apart)
- Fabric marking chalk or pen
- 18" or 24" ruler with a 1/4" measurement
- Small ruler (12") with a 1/4" measurement
- 12 envelopes or plastic baggies to store your facets
- Domestic sewing machine and thread assortment (neutrals or colors that match your fabrics)
- Scissors and rotary cutting tools (cutters and mat) – We'll be cutting both paper and fabric, so if you prefer to use 2 rotary cutters (one with an old blade and one new one) that would be ideal.
- Iron and ironing pad (or board)
- Pins, clips, or fabric glue
- 8 Fabrics according to the colorway chart

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation

1. Print pages 11-16 of this document with the "Actual Size" print option selected onto a piece of 8.5" x 11" freezer paper. Printing "Actual Size" will ensure that your segments will print out so that your block will be exactly 18" square. This is the chart you will cut up.



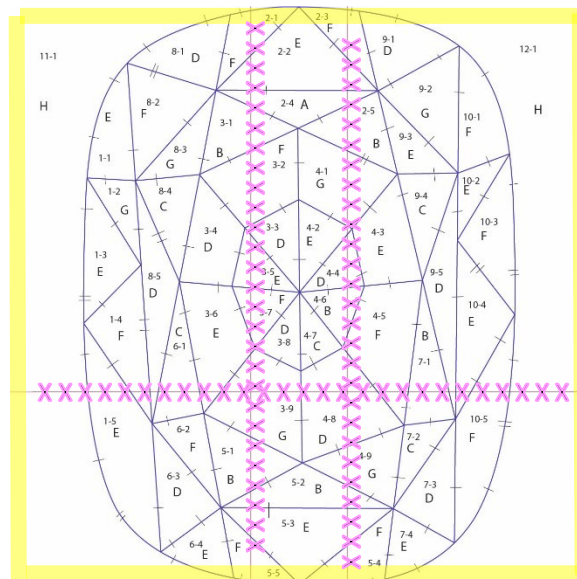
2. Print pages 11-16 of this document onto regular paper using the "Actual Size" setting. This will be the copy you will pin or tape to your quilt room wall. It will be your KEY to help you put your block back together.

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3. Identify 8 fabrics in a range of values to use in your block. On page 2, you'll find a pattern with just the color codes in place. You can use this to experiment with colorways. I've also provided a Colorway diagram featuring the pattern in four colorways with both black and white "H" codes (background codes).
4. Attach a snippet of fabric next to each code of the corresponding value (i.e., light, medium, dark) OR label your fabric by writing the code on the selvedge edge or corner of the corresponding fabric.
5. Gather 8 business size envelopes or plastic baggies in which you'll store your facets once cut apart. Label them with the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H to correspond to your fabric codes.

Cutting Your Facets

6. Join the halves of your pattern with either double-sided tape (by placing the tape on the tab provided and overlaying the adjacent half over it, aligning the facet lines) OR with Washi tape. You can place Washi tape directly on top of the pattern since it won't melt under an iron.
7. Once your freezer paper pattern is assembled with tape, trace the inside edge of the block. This is the visual clue that will remind you to place the edges of these pieces on the grain lines when you're ironing on the facets to the fabric. **Note:** Because I'm going to encourage you to place all the long, straight edges of the facets on the straight-of-grain *rather* than the edges that make up the section edge, you won't need to trace on both sides of the section lines with the highlighter.
8. If you are joining your pattern sections with the double-sided tape, be sure to mark the horizontal join line with X's in your second highlighter color. This will be your visual clue to NOT cut apart the facets on this line. Your chart may look like this:



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9. With a ruler and rotary cutter, you reserve for cutting paper, cut apart the freezer paper template and sort facets into the envelopes or baggies by letter code. Be sure NOT to cut apart facets on the horizontal join line.

Note: If your ruler slips off the line a little bit, no problem! Just don't trim it up. Just be sure that you can still see any hashmarks on either side of the cut.

10. Arrange facets on the RIGHT SIDE of the fabric that corresponds to their color code, allowing $\frac{3}{4}$ " of space between each facet. Remember to lay the edges of your background facets along the grain lines. Then lay the long edges of all the other facets on the straight of grain. Press with a hot iron, no steam.

If the freezer paper isn't adhering very well to the fabric, try heating the fabric first and then laying the freezer paper piece on top of it and press it down. (If you have lots of sizing or dye in your fabric, you may want to pre-wash your fabric. Extra chemicals sometimes prevent freezer paper from sticking to fabric.)

11. Once all your facets are ironed to the RIGHT SIDE of the fabric, relabel 12 of your envelopes or baggies with the numbers 1 through 12, corresponding to the 12 sections of the block.
12. Using a rotary cutter and small ruler, cut out each facet with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Take care to make these $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances as accurate and consistent as possible. Place the fabric facets in your envelopes or baggies by section number (i.e., 1 through 12).
13. Once all your facets are cut out and stored in their respective envelopes, remove the facets from the envelopes one by one and lay them out in numerical order to make sure that one hasn't accidentally wandered away.

Piecing Your Gem

14. Arrange facets into their piecing order using the chart you put up on your quilt room wall as your guide.

NOTE: I have created a "Piece Plan" that provides a step-by-step process to assemble the block. You'll find it at the end of this document.

15. To piece your facets, place RIGHT SIDES together (freezer paper will be inside the fabric sandwich).
16. Peek inside the seam allowance and line up the hash marks on each side of the two pieces. Ensure that the corners of each facet line up together.

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17. Pin carefully along the seam OR use a clip OR use a glue product to secure the 2 pieces together.
18. Identify the 1/4" seam guide on your machine's plate.
19. Position the pair of pinned facets under the presser foot so that the edge of your fabric sandwich is just a needle-width to the left of the 1/4" seam guide. This will prevent you from sewing into the freezer paper on the inside.
20. Stitch the seam line using a regular stitch length (i.e., 2.5). I backstitch at the beginning and the end only because it's been my habit to do so for 20 years. Some have said that's not a necessary step for them. Habits die hard!
21. Open the facets with both seams to one side. (Press to the darkest side OR the side that has the fewest intersecting seams.)
 - a. If there is a gap between the edges of your freezer paper, you can either re sew a little bit closer to the 1/4" seam guide OR you can pick up one of the templates and iron it next to the seam. Just be sure to trim the seam allowance down to 1/4".
 - b. If you have sewn into the freezer paper, give the two pieces a little tug to see if this frees the freezer paper. If you've really munched the freezer paper, consider ripping that section and re sewing. Gaps and tucks change the position of the hashmarks along the sides of the 2 facets, which makes it a bit confusing when trying to match it up to its adjoining unit. In the end, though, perfection is NOT a priority and, once you've removed all the paper from your gem, no one will know the difference!
22. Continue to stitch the facets together, retaining the freezer paper on the front of each piece.
23. If facets come loose, simply iron back on.

TIP: If you want to remove the freezer paper after piecing major sections together, be sure to draw the hash marks onto the seam allowance before removing the freezer paper.

24. The background pieces are the last to be sewn to the section. It's hard to piece curves with the freezer paper on the fabric, so you'll want to remove the freezer paper before easing the curved background piece to the curved edge of the gem.

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However, before you do so, be sure to draw the hash marks onto the seam allowance **before removing the freezer paper**. Those hashmarks will be extremely helpful as you ease the two curves together.

25. If little bits of freezer paper are stuck in the seam line, use a pair of tweezers to remove. If they are stubborn, try using seam ripper to remove them by pushing the bit of paper from the front to the back side of the fabric. Use tweezers to pull from between the seams.

CONGRATULATIONS!

PIECE PLAN FOR "THE COUNTESS"

For this month's block, I suggest you sew the facets of each section together and then set the section aside. Once you have all the sections pieced, you'll then be able to sew the sections together as per the guidance at the end of the Piece Plan.

Section 1

- Sew together 1-1 and 1-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 1-3 to Unit 1: 2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 1-4 to Unit 1: 3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 1-5 to Unit 1: 4 (to complete Section 1)

Section 2

- Sew together 2-1 and 2-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 2-3 to Unit 1: 2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 2-4 to Unit 1: 3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 2-5 to Unit 1: 4 (to Complete Section 2)

Section 3

- Sew together 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 3-4 and 3-5 (to create Unit 4:5)
- Sew together 3-6 and 3-7(to create Unit 6:7)
- Sew together 3-8 and 3-9 (to create Unit 8:9)
- Sew together Unit 1:3 and Unit 4:5 (to create Unit 1:5)
- Sew together Unit 1:5 and Unit 6:7 (to create Unit 1:7)
- Sew together Unit 1:7 and Unit 8:9 (to complete Section 3)

Section 4

- Sew together 4-1 and 4-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 4-3 and 4-4 (to create Unit 3:4)
- Sew together 4-5 and 4-6 (t create Unit 5:6)
- Sew together 4-7, 4-8 and 4-9 (to create Unit 7:9)
- Sew together Unit 1:2, Unit 3:4, Unit 5:6 and Unit 7:9 (to complete Section 4)

Section 5

- Sew together 5-1 and 5-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 5-3 to Unit 1: 2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 5-4 to Unit 1: 3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 5-5 to Unit 1: 4 (to complete Section 5)

Section 6

- Sew together 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 and 6-4 (to complete Section 6)

Section 7

- Sew together 7-1, 7-2, 7-3 and 7-4 (to complete Section 7)

Section 8

- Sew together 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-4 and 8-5 (to complete Section 8)

Section 9

- Sew together 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, 9-4 and 9-5 (to complete Section 9)

Section 10

- Sew together 10-1 and 10-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 10-3 to Unit 1: 2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 10-4 to Unit 1: 3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 10-5 to Unit 1: 4 (to complete Section 10)

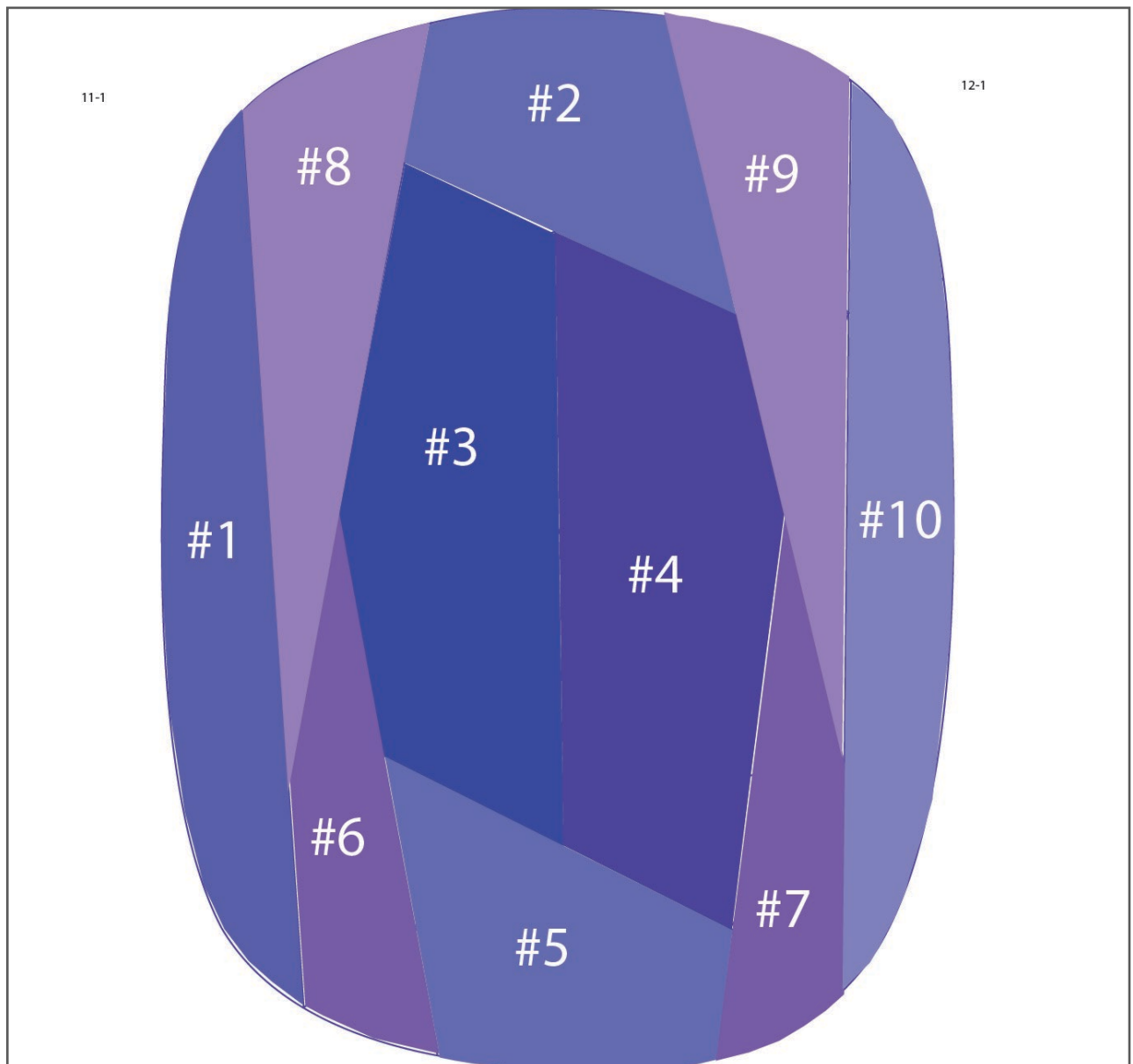
Piece the Gem Together Before Attaching Sections 11 and 12

- Sew together Section 3 and Section 4 (to create Unit 3:4)
- Sew together Section 2 to Unit 3:4 (to create Unit 2:4)
- Sew together Section 5 to Unit 2:4 (to create Unit 2:5)
- Sew together Section 6 to Unit 2:5 (to create Unit 2:6)
- Sew together Section 7 to Unit 2:6 (to create Unit 2:7)
- Sew together Section 8 to Unit 2:7 (to create Unit 2:8)

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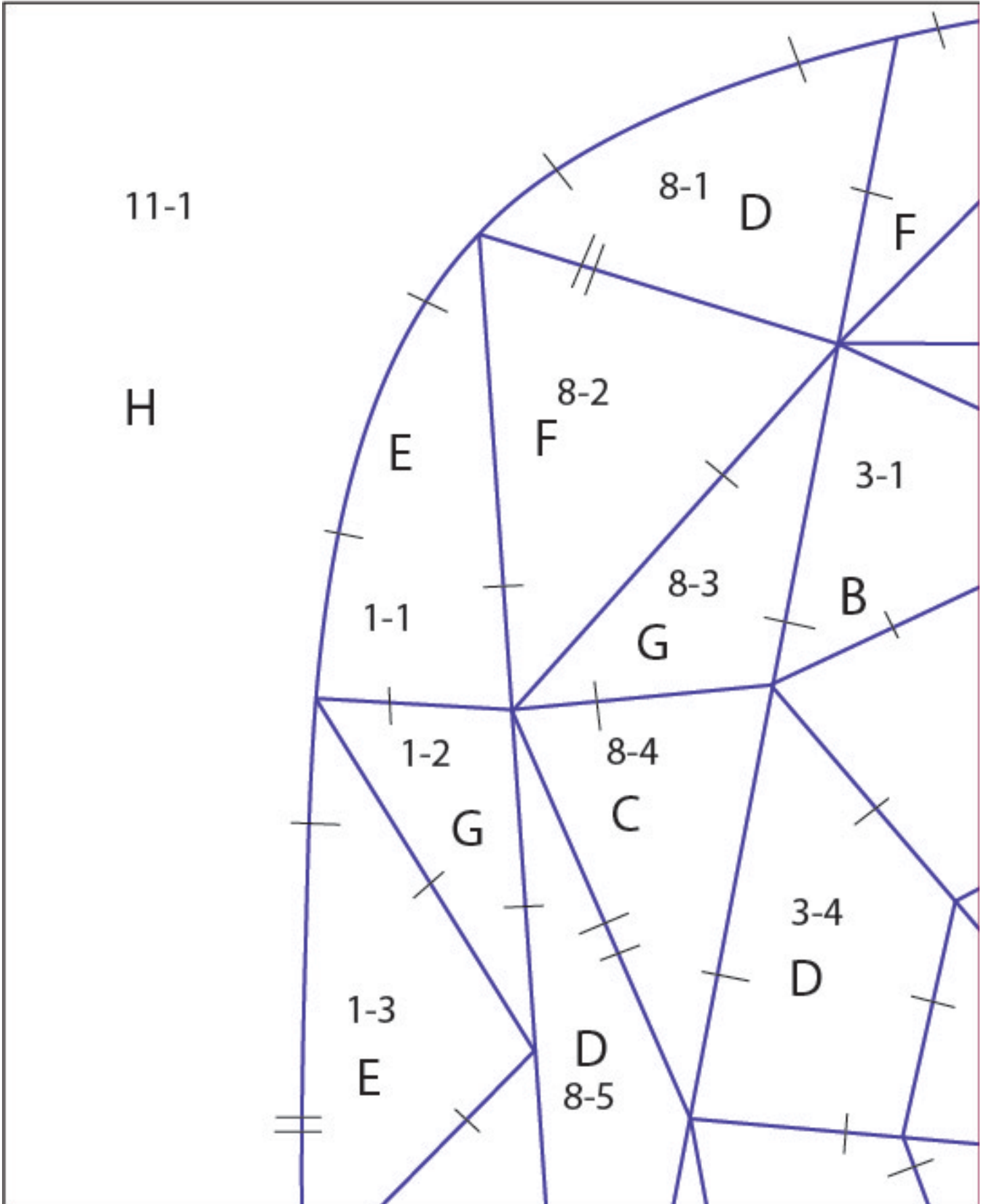
- Sew together Section 9 to Unit 2:8 (to create Unit 2:9)
- Sew together Section 1 to Unit 2:9 (to create Unit 1:9)
- Sew together Section 10 to Unit 1:9 (to complete your gem)

- Sew together Section 11 to Unit 1:10 (to create Unit 1:11)
- Sew together Section 12 to Unit 1:11 (to complete your block)



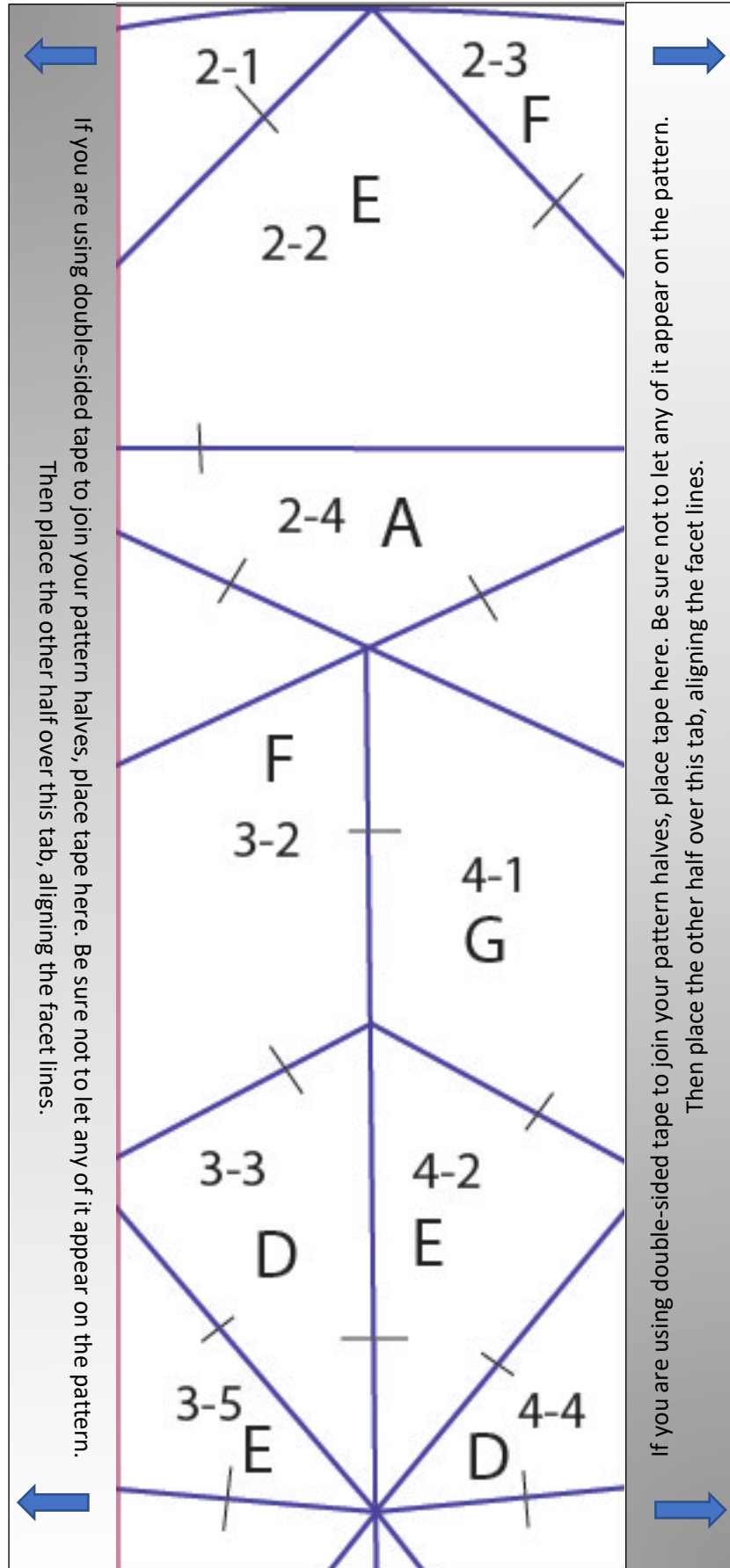
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SECTION 1



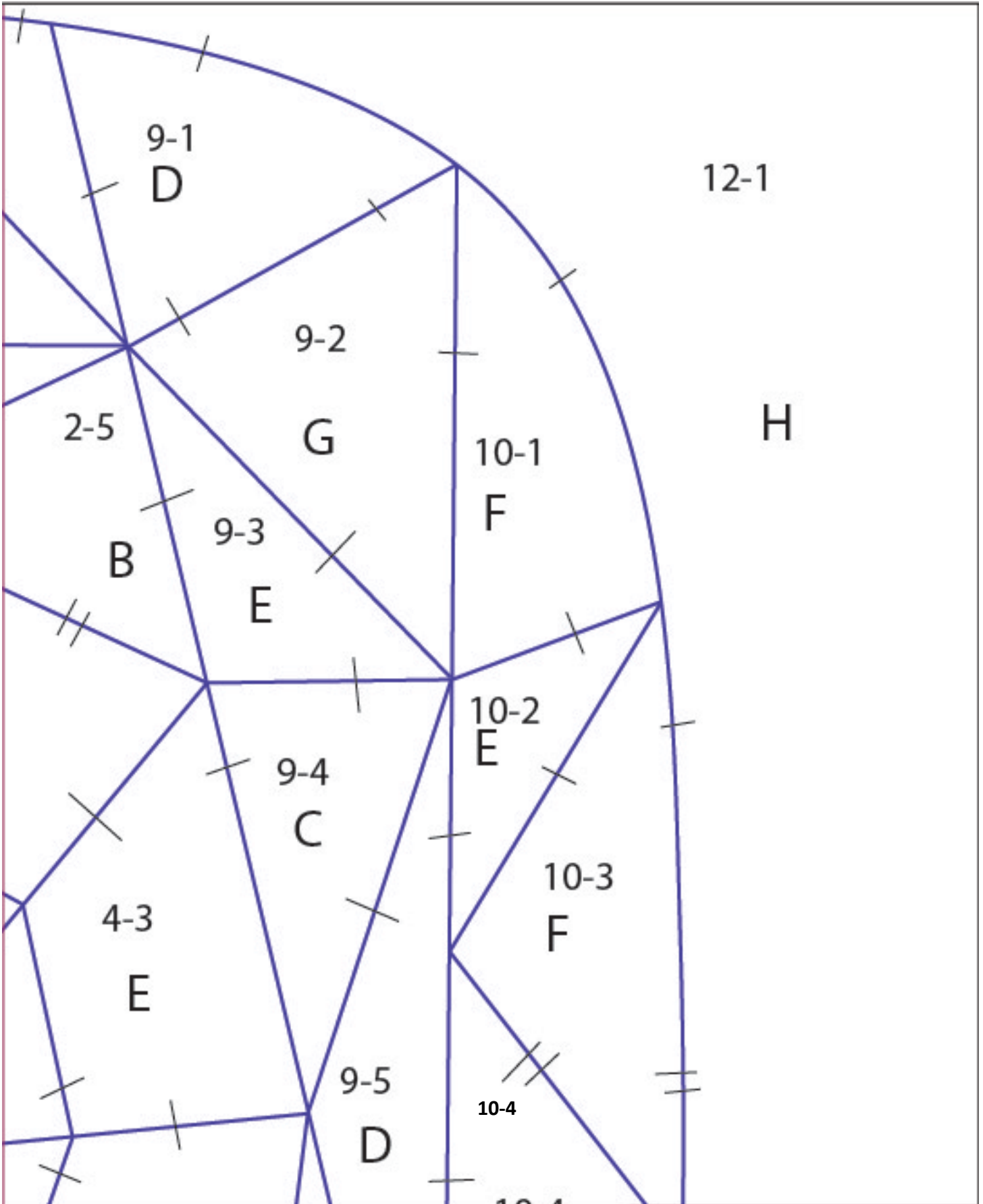
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SECTION 2



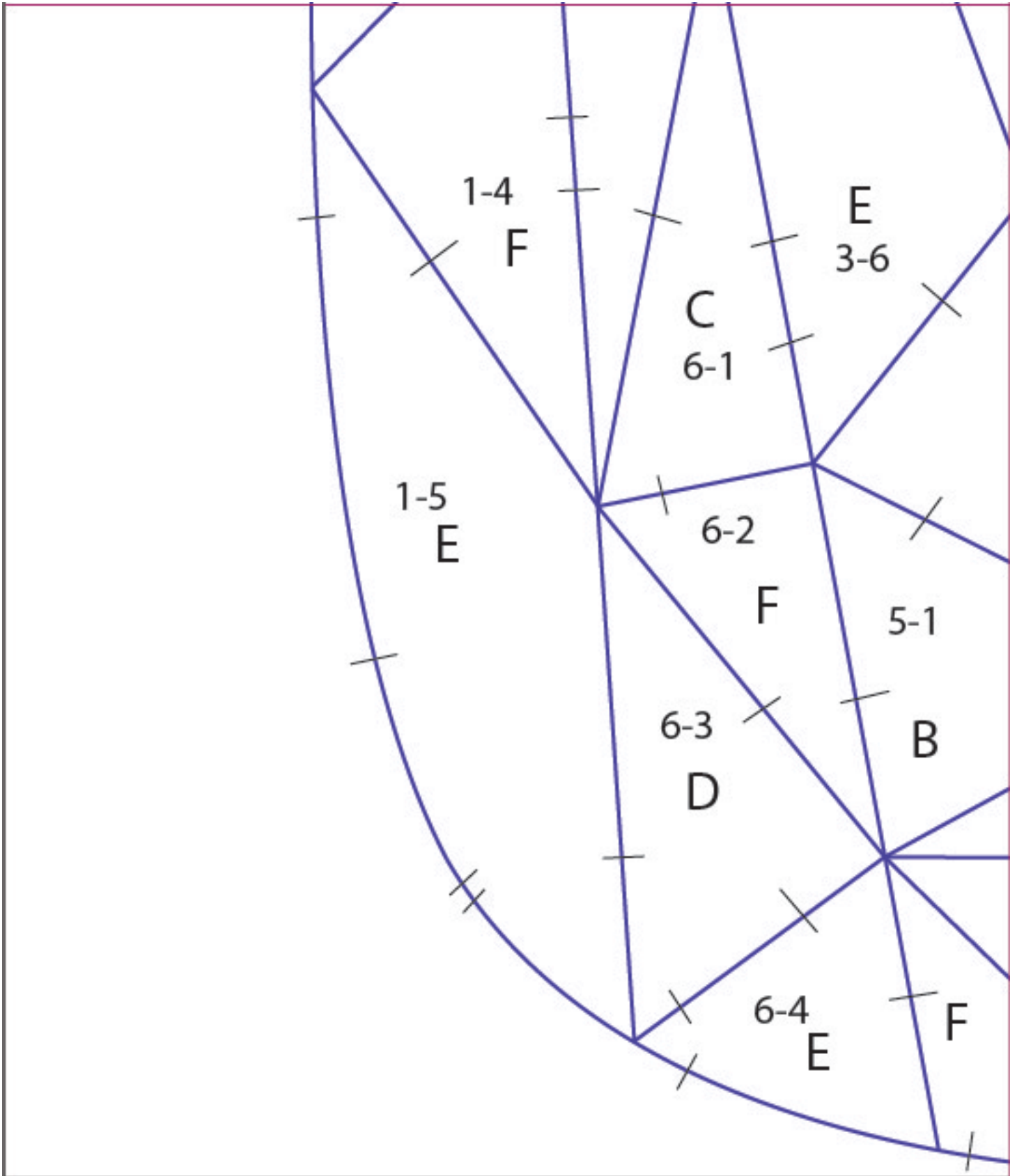
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SECTION 3



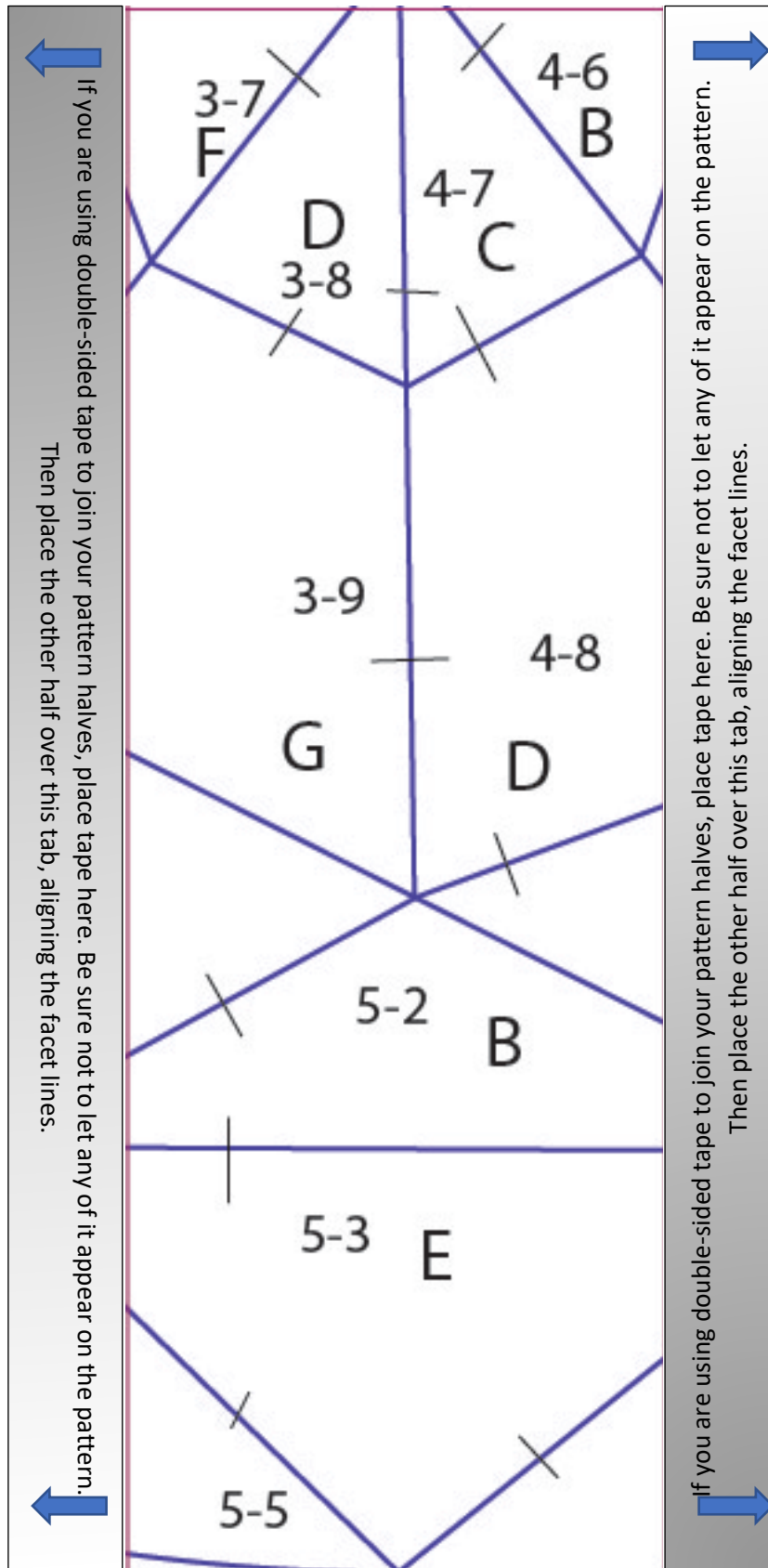
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SECTION 4



THE COUNTESS: DIAMOND & DRAMA QUEENS 18" PATTERN

SECTION 5



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SECTION 6

