

The domovoi of Russia were elf-like helpers whose specialty was domestic affairs. Every home and farm had a domovoi who was sometimes called “well-wisher.” Domovoi were almost always invisible because they did not like to be noticed but went about their work quietly, protecting the home and helping the residents with their chores. Domovoi liked order and were especially helpful to the good housekeeper, sometimes even spinning or finishing the odd knitting project. Pity, however, the knitter who was slack in her housekeeping or who took to foul language, which the domovi deplored. An angry domovoi would roam the house at night, banging pots, swinging brooms, tangling yarn,

and even poking the offender with her own knitting needles.

During a knitting class I was teaching, a woman came in with what looked like a silky cloud sticking out of her bag. In fact it was a handspun, handknitted shawl she’d just received from her daughter in Russia. While it was much simpler than an Orenburg lace shawl, it had an appeal of its own, and it was the inspiration for this design, a rectangular shawl with a simple pattern and a knitted-on lace border. The shawl is very long and can be wrapped around the head and shoulders. If you want a shorter shawl, work thirty pattern repeats instead of forty and pick up 270 sts instead of 360 sts on each long side for the border.