

THE BRIDGE PLAYER'S

Bedside Book



TONY FORRESTER



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Websites: <http://www.masterpointpress.com>
<http://www.masteringbridge.com>
<http://www.ebooksbridge.com>
<http://www.bridgeblogging.com>

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Distributed in the U.S.A. by Barricade Books
150 Fifth Avenue, Suite 700
New York, NY 10011
(800) 59-BOOKS

The Bridge Player's Bedside Book

First Published in Great Britain by Colt Books in 1997

This edition published by Master Point Press 1998

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The acknowledgements on page vii constitute an extension of this copyright page.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

The bridge player's bedside book

ISBN 978-1-55494-064-6

1. Contract bridge. I. Forrester, Tony, 1953-

GV1282.3.B74 1998

795.41'5

C98-930834-0

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Printed in Canada

98 99 00 01 02 03 04 05

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TONY FORRESTER

THE BRIDGE PLAYER'S

Bedside Book

MASTER POINT PRESS

Toronto

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Bedside Book



“What on earth do you mean, it’s only a game?”

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE author and publishers would like to express their thanks to the following for use of previously published material that appears in this book: Dr. Tony Sowter for all the articles, stories and pictures that previously appeared in *International Popular Bridge Monthly*; the editorial board of *English Bridge* for “The Masters at Play” by Giorgio Belladonna and Howard Schenken, “The Pick of the Tournaments; W.D. & H.O. Wills British Team vs. The Rest of the World (1966)”, “Salute to the Blue Team”, and “Defensive Signalling” by Brian Senior; the editor of *Bridge Magazine* for “Tony Forrester’s Hand”, “The Duke of Cumberland’s Hand”, “A Dramatic Recovery (1982 Gold Cup)”, “The Bennett Saga” and “Kings, Queens and Playing Cards” to Faber and Faber Ltd. for the extract from *Bridge Unlimited* by Victor Mollo; the executors of the estate of the late Cyril Kenneth Bird for permission to use the illustrations by Fougasse on pp i, 4, 17, 22, 38, 45, 60, 84, 97, 117, 136, 181, 215, and 220.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders of material contained in this book and the publishers apologise for any they have been unable to reach.

In addition, the publishers would like to thank the following for their help in the preparation and production of this book: John Turner, Fingertips Secretarial Services and Dr. Tony Sowter of Apsbridge Services Ltd., Lin Treadwell, and most particularly to Diana Forrester for all her help.

This book is dedicated
to
Ted, Pat, and “JF”
My most loyal supporters

FOREWORD

IT was time to put together a bridge book which is fun to read. Over the years, so few publications could be described as that.

I searched high and low to find those articles which had appealed to me when I read them. The outstanding were memorable, because well-written and amusing bridge anecdotes are rare.

Using my wife, Diana, as a guinea pig — she plays very little bridge as such but does know a good story when she sees one — I sifted through thirty years of highly variable material.

The result? In my view the best collection of entertaining and informative one-off pieces ever written. Not just fictional, but also many of the key hands and decisions that have shaped bridge history.

For example, when did the Aces finally take the World Championship away from the Italians, and how did they do it? Or who were the greatest teams ever put together?

Plus, for your own game, many tips and quizzes that will sharpen your edge.

In short, a jolly good read!

Have fun...

Tony

THE GREAT RUBBER BRIDGE TOURNAMENT AT BAINS-SUR-MER

*A further excerpt from the hitherto unpublished memoirs
of the late Dr. John H. Watson, M.D.*

FROM time to time the mood comes upon me to browse through the notes I have kept of the many cases in which my friend Sherlock Holmes has been concerned. I have laid the facts of a few of these cases before the public who have been kind enough to show appreciation of my humble attempts to record the achievements of my friend; but in other cases the public interest, or the necessity to avoid embarrassment to eminent personages, has prevented the publication of the facts.

It is an episode of this kind which I now beg leave to relate. The passage of time has dulled the passions then aroused, and I therefore feel that, in order to illuminate yet another facet of my friend's character, the story of the strange occurrence at Bains-sur-Mer should now be told.

It was in the days when Holmes and I shared a set of rooms in Baker Street. I had for a while been sorely perturbed by my friend's manner: lackadaisical and enervated, he appeared to exhibit a marked reaction to the strenuous efforts which had gone into the solving of the Sylvius affair and certain other difficult cases.

However, my intimate knowledge of Holmes' curious metabolism told me that what his mighty intellect required to refresh it was not rest but still greater exertion, for Holmes' mind, I knew, deteriorated when allowed to lie fallow. I also suspected a contributory cause of Holmes' malaise: his arch-enemy, Professor Moriarty, against whose cunning Holmes was wont to exercise his wits, had for some time been missing from his usual haunts.

On that fresh spring morning as I lingered over Mrs. Hudson's excellent toast and marmalade, I observed Holmes, in his favorite armchair, leafing irritably through his copy of *The*

Times. Suddenly his gaze became alert and his hawk-like nose became more deeply immersed in the pages. After a moment or two he laid down the newspaper and gazed fixedly into space. Then, suddenly leaping to his feet, he cried with all his old enthusiasm: "Come Watson, how do you fancy a trip to the Continent? I have always had a desire to sample the delights of Bains-sur-Mer. The boat train leaves Victoria Station in half-an-hour. Have Mrs. Hudson pack my valise and summon a cab!"

Accustomed as I was to Holmes' volatile changes of mood, I nevertheless could not account for this sudden whim. Rather than travel abroad Holmes, as a rule, preferred to remain at home like a spider at the center of its web. Indeed, he had on more than one occasion remarked scornfully on the modern tendency to stage bridge tournaments at places where the exotic nature of the surroundings could, in his view, serve only to distract players from the noble game itself.

However, I signified my agreement, thinking it essential for Holmes to have a medical adviser close at hand. While he retired to prepare for the journey, I picked up the discarded page of *The Times* from where Holmes had carelessly dropped it, hoping to find the item of intelligence which had caused so abrupt a change in his plans. The page contained numerous small items of foreign news and, tucked away at the foot of a column, I read the following:

"From our Riviera correspondent: Centennial celebrations are taking place at the municipality of Bains-sur-Mer. These include a grand Rubber Bridge Tournament which is to be conducted according to the newly-popular 'Chicago' method of scoring. A cash prize derived from the profits of the casino, rumored to be of enormous size, is to be awarded to the winners."

Our journey to the salubrious resort of Bains-sur-Mer passed without incident, Holmes remaining characteristically indifferent to the charms alike of the countryside and of several of our fair fellow-travellers.

On arrival at the principal hotel of the town, where a telegram dispatched before our departure had procured us accommodation, Holmes showed unusual eagerness to sign the register, a

task which he usually deputed to me. Under cover of entering our own particulars, he carefully scrutinized the signatures of guests who had already arrived. A slight smile for a moment illuminated his austere features.

As we were about to go up to our rooms I became aware of a heavily bearded man clad in a long, tightly-buttoned black coat watching us closely, almost concealed by the fronds of one of the large potted palms with which the vestibule was lavishly provided. Holmes had apparently failed to notice this stranger and, not wishing to disturb his peace of mind, I remained silent as we ascended to our chambers. In due time we proceeded to the ball-room of the hotel, where the tournament was about to begin.

The scene as we entered was one of extreme splendor. Six great crystal chandeliers hung from a magnificently ornamented ceiling, illuminating the rich folds of crimson velvet curtain trimmed with gold tassels, which contrasted sharply with the stark simplicity of the range of green baize covered tables filling the great hall. Many people had already assembled and a low murmur of polite conversation could be heard. Suddenly from a group nearby there rang a peal of silvery feminine laughter. All eyes turned towards the origin of that delightful sound and I beheld the same tall, bearded stranger whom I had previously seen, bowing low over the hand of a most beautiful young woman.

Holmes, to my consternation, seemed to stagger as he observed this pleasing scene. I hastily assisted him to a seat in an alcove, a ministration which appeared to cause him some annoyance.

“I deduce, Watson,” he said, “that you have failed to penetrate the somewhat amateurish disguise of our hirsute friend whom we saw earlier in the foyer. He is, of course, Professor Moriarty, whose presence here I foresaw when I read of the magnificent cash prize being offered. What I did not anticipate was that he would succeed in embroiling, as an unwitting partner in his nefarious scheme, a member of the reigning house of a nearby Principality, Princess...” Here Holmes mentioned a name which even now I am not at liberty to divulge.

“It is now out of the question openly to expose Moriarty, as I had previously intended. The ensuing scandal would rock

Europe. I must devise a more subtle means of preventing him from attaining his ends.”

Nevertheless, as the tournament got under way, Moriarty soon took the lead, the rules of the competition being ideally suited to the rascally methods employed by that vile scourge on Society. With Chicago scoring, there was always one deal in four in which Moriarty, as dealer, could exert his devilish skill in manipulating the pack and on these occasions he would almost invariably bid and successfully make a slam. However, Holmes and I were also in excellent form, and at the end of the first day were in second place.

Matters proceeded in much the same fashion on the second and final day of the tournament. Holmes and I were due to meet Moriarty and the Princess in the very last chukker and it seemed that everything would depend on the encounter. And so it proved, for as we sat down to play the fateful deals it was announced that Moriarty, with a score of 33,010, and ourselves with 30,220 were far ahead of the other competitors.

With an affectation of gallantry which Holmes and I knew to be insincere, Moriarty dealt the first hand on behalf of his partner. Holmes and I exchanged bitter glances as we listened to the tell-tale clicking of the cards which, as Holmes had often explained to me, betrayed that the dealer was manipulating the deck. When I picked up my cards, however, my fingers trembled as I gazed upon the following hand and realized that the infamous Professor had committed one of his rare blunders:



“You do realize it’s the Duchess you’re doubling?”

♠ AKQJ10
 ♥ AKQJ109
 ♦ —
 ♣ AK

East	South	West	North
<i>Princess</i>	<i>Holmes</i>	<i>Moriarty</i>	<i>Watson</i>
pass	pass	pass	2♥
pass	2NT	3♦	3♠
pass	4♥	pass	6♥
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

I confess that I was quite bewildered by Moriarty's double of six hearts. A less cautious player, I felt certain, would have bid a grand slam on my cards. My partner had shown preference for hearts, and thus could not be void of the suit. At worst the opening lead might be ruffed, but even then it seemed utterly improbable that six hearts would be defeated. Yet, knowing Moriarty so well, I refrained from redoubling.

It was well that I did, for this was the full deal.

Love All. Dealer East.

	<i>Watson</i>	
	♠ AKQJ10	
	♥ AKQJ109	
	♦ —	
	♣ AK	
<i>Moriarty</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	<i>Princess</i>
♠ —		♠ 9865432
♥ 876432		♥ —
♦ AKQJ1054		♦ 7
♣ —		♣ J9863
	<i>Holmes</i>	
	♠ 7	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 98632	
	♣ Q107542	

A diamond was led and I was forced to ruff. A round of trumps revealed the appalling division of that suit and I found I was doomed to go down no fewer than six tricks on the hand, as I had lost control and could only make my trump tricks. I felt utterly dejected, for I now realized that I had fallen into Moriarty's trap precisely as he had intended.

As we entered 1,100* upon the scoreboard, putting Moriarty 3,890 points ahead, the infamous Professor smiled mockingly. "Well, Mr. Holmes, I think that even your skills will this time be insufficient to snatch the prize from my grasp."

"We shall see," replied Holmes laconically, at the same time, to my surprise, placing a somewhat vulgar chromium cigarette case on the table in place of his usual pipe. "I hope, Madam, you will permit me to smoke," he said courteously to the Princess. Upon receiving a gracious smile of assent, Holmes lit up and puffed with apparent relish at one of the execrable local brands of cigarette.

I have had the good fortune to stand at Holmes' side through many a dark hour but never have I admired that extraordinary man more fervently than on this occasion. Refusing even now to admit defeat, and forbearing to offer the smallest criticism of my foolishness on the previous deal, he summoned up his last reserves of nervous energy and stared fixedly at the table as he dealt the second hand:

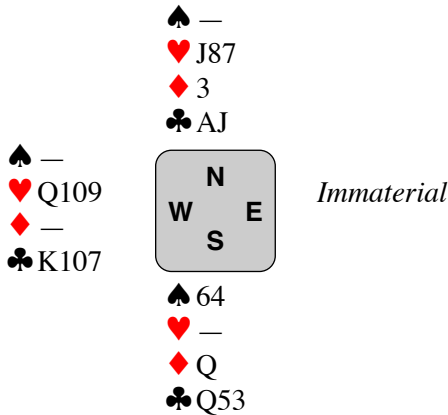
North/South Game. Dealer South.

	♠ K85										
	♥ J8732										
	♦ AJ3										
	♣ AJ										
♠ —	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10973
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ KQ109		♥ 654									
♦ K108		♦ 9754									
♣ K107642		♣ 98									
	♠ AQJ642										
	♥ A										
	♦ Q62										
	♣ Q53										

* In modern scoring this would be 1,400.

South	West	North	East
<i>Holmes</i>	<i>Moriarty</i>	<i>Watson</i>	<i>Princess</i>
1♠	pass	2♥	pass
3♠	pass	4NT	pass
5♥	pass	5NT	pass
6♣	pass	6♠	pass
7♠	all pass		

Against Holmes' ambitious contract of seven spades, the king of hearts was led. It appeared at first that declarer could make no more than eleven tricks, even with the aid of successful finesses in both clubs and diamonds. However, on winning the first trick Holmes immediately played three rounds of trumps, Moriarty discarding three clubs. A fourth trump then squeezed Moriarty in three suits. After some thought he discarded a diamond, whereupon Holmes finessed the jack of diamonds and cashed the ace, producing this position:



The three of diamonds was led from dummy and this time Moriarty let go a heart. Holmes promptly returned a trump, bringing forth another heart discard, and it was now a simple matter to finesse the jack of clubs, ruff a heart — establishing the jack — and claim the contract.

“Bravo,” I cried, as our fair opponent graciously added her own congratulations. Moriarty, for his part, scowled viciously and proceeded to deal the next hand. It came as no surprise when he bid swiftly to a slam despite an attempt by Holmes to obstruct the exchanges with a psychic overcall:

East/West Game. Dealer West.

	<i>Watson</i>											
	♠ —											
	♥ J987632											
	♦ 3											
	♣ J6532											
<i>Moriarty</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 100%;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		<i>Princess</i>	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ AQJ754		♠ 963										
♥ AKQ		♥ 1054										
♦ A		♦ QJ108										
♣ 1097		♣ AKQ										
	<i>Holmes</i>											
	♠ K1082											
	♥ —											
	♦ K976542											
	♣ 84											

West	North	East	South
<i>Moriarty</i>	<i>Watson</i>	<i>Princess</i>	<i>Holmes</i>
1♠	pass	2♣	2♥(!)
3♥	dbl	3♠	pass
6♠	all pass		

It was I to lead against six spades. In view of the nature of my own hand it was not to be expected that Holmes could take many defensive tricks in hearts, but I have found over the years that it is advantageous to lead Holmes' suit and I did so here. What followed was quite extraordinary: Holmes showed out of the suit and, instead of ruffing, discarded a club! Moriarty won, entered dummy with a club, took a successful finesse in

trumps, and tried to re-enter dummy with a second club. Holmes ruffed and exited with a diamond. As declarer was unable to repeat the trump finesse, he could not avoid letting Holmes make a trick with the king of trumps for down one.

“Gad, Holmes,” I remarked with some asperity. “You gave me a fright when you allowed your concentration to falter and failed to ruff the opening heart lead. Fortunately, declarer was unable to draw trumps and thus you came to your two trump tricks despite your somewhat uncharacteristic lapse.”

“My dear fellow,” replied Holmes, “I see that you have overlooked the advantage of my method of defending the hand. Had I ruffed the opening heart lead, as you suggest, Moriarty would assuredly have made the contract. My trump holding would have been reduced to king to three and I would still have had two clubs in my hand. It would therefore have been a simple matter for declarer to enter dummy twice in clubs and pick up my remaining trumps. No, my dear Watson, you may take it from me that the heart opening lead, combined with the club discard, is the only way to beat the slam. Hence the necessity for my somewhat irregular overcall of two hearts. I knew that I could rely on you to lead my ‘suit’, Watson, and you did not fail me.” The Princess was kind enough to congratulate us on our joint endeavours while Moriarty, for his part, restrained himself with obvious difficulty.

“And now, Watson,” said my partner, “pray relax while I deal the last hand on your behalf.” Oblivious to my protestation that such a procedure was entirely unnecessary, he turned to the Princess and explained that I was afflicted with an old war wound, acquired on the North-Western frontier of India.

By now our table was surrounded by a throng of spectators and the tension became almost unbearable as Holmes, staring fixedly at the table as if to summon the last ounce of concentration, meted out these cards with opponents 1,580 points ahead of us:

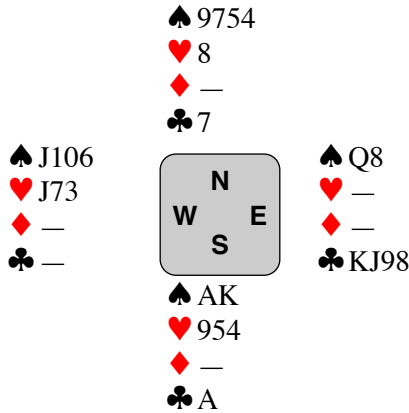
Game All. Dealer North.

	<i>Watson</i>										
	♠ 9754										
	♥ A86										
	♦ A1032										
	♣ 74										
<i>Moriarty</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		<i>Princess</i>
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ J1063		♠ Q8									
♥ QJ1073		♥ —									
♦ J4		♦ 9765									
♣ 106		♣ KJ98532									
	<i>Holmes</i>										
	♠ AK2										
	♥ K9542										
	♦ KQ8										
	♣ AQ										

North	East	South	West
<i>Watson</i>	<i>Princess</i>	<i>Holmes</i>	<i>Moriarty</i>
pass	pass	3NT	pass
4NT	pass	6NT	all pass

Against six no-trumps Moriarty led the queen of hearts with a vindictive sneer. “I fancy that my partner and I may congratulate ourselves,” he remarked, “for even if this contract is made, which is extremely unlikely, we shall win the tournament by a margin of 140 points.”

But Holmes was apparently still unwilling to concede defeat. He won Moriarty’s queen of hearts with the king and played off four rounds of diamonds, discarding a spade from his hand as Moriarty threw a club and a spade. Then he successfully finessed the queen of clubs. A low heart from the closed hand came next and Moriarty was forced to play the ten to prevent dummy’s eight from winning the trick. This was the position with dummy on lead:



Holmes came off the table with a club to the ace, and Moriarty was forced to unguard one of the major suits, which appeared to occasion him no discomfort. “You seem to have forgotten, Mr. Holmes,” he sneered, “that a squeeze cannot operate when there is no entry in the hand opposite the squeeze card. Thus, I fancy that on this occasion I can well afford to part with a spade, as dummy is entryless.”

But when Holmes, with a quiet smile, now cashed the ace and king of spades, there was no defense to prevent him making twelve tricks. His next lead was a low heart on which Moriarty was obliged to play the jack to prevent dummy from winning the trick. Holmes then took the two remaining tricks with the nine and five of hearts as Moriarty was obliged to lead away from the 7-3. “I am afraid,” said Holmes, as he savored the end position, “that we have neglected to score the 150 honors that Professor Moriarty was kind enough to deal my partner on the first hand of the chukker, which incidentally bore a marked resemblance to the notorious Mississippi Heart hand. I fancy that Doctor Watson and I have won this tournament by a margin of ten aggregate points.”

As the final card was played Moriarty, whose mounting wrath had been for some time obvious in his flushed and furious face, leapt to his feet and, with a strangled scream of rage, kicked the table over and rushed at Holmes with murder in his eyes. I had

taken the precaution of slipping my old service revolver into my pocket before leaving my room and I was lucky enough to interpose my not inconsiderable bulk between Holmes and Moriarty and stick the barrel in the latter's ribs.

"I think, Professor Moriarty," remarked Holmes coolly, "that you would do well to make your exit as speedily and inconspicuously as possible. I have alerted the local constabulary to the possibility of trouble and I am sure you are aware of the somewhat primitive conditions at the local jail."

The look Moriarty hurled at Holmes dripped with venom, and then, with a vile curse, he turned and left the ballroom.

"It seems, Watson, that I am once more in your debt. That scoundrel would have had me without your quickwitted action. Thank you, my dear fellow."

I felt myself redden and to cover my confusion remarked hastily, "I cannot for the life of me understand how you managed it, Holmes. I have never seen you play better. It was almost as though you knew every card in his hand."

"Ah, Watson," he replied, "you see, I *did* know every card in his hand."

"But, but Holmes..." I stammered.

"I remember you remarking on the singular vulgarity of this cigarette case which I placed on the table when we played Moriarty. I agree that aesthetically it has nothing to commend it, but do you not see, Watson, that its highly polished surface, placed at just the right angle on the table could..."

"Could be used as a mirror," I burst in, unable to conceal my excitement.

"Precisely, Watson," replied Holmes frowning slightly. "The technical term is, I believe, a 'shiner'. I have no compunction about using such methods against a villain like Professor Moriarty. Men such as he must be fought with their own weapons or not fought at all."

"And now, Madam," he continued, turning to our fair companion who throughout the foregoing events had remained pale but composed, "I trust that this experience has not been too alarming. I think you can be in no doubt now as to the true

character of that person whose real name is Professor Moriarty, whatever alias he may have used to you.”

She smiled sweetly. “Mr. Holmes, I am indeed grateful to you for the unobtrusive way in which you have disposed of this affair. As you know, my position is such that any breath of scandal attaching to me would have the gravest personal and international repercussions. Please accept my thanks.” As Holmes bent in the Continental manner over the soft white beringed hand which peeped from the rich lace sleeve I am certain that, upon the austere countenance of that ascetic man, I beheld a blush.

ALBERT DORMER



After the Bridge Party

THE ladies can imagine the scene. Having spent all afternoon preparing the refreshments and making sure that you avoided repeating last time’s menu. After jumping up and down all evening looking after the guests. After trying to maintain the smile while the other half criticized your performance (he hadn’t noticed you were distracted)...you wander into the kitchen that now resembles a battlefield and brace yourself to restore order rather than face it in the morning.

Wonder of wonders — a voice from behind you says, “Can I give you a hand, darling?”

Eagerly you reply, “Yes — Please.”

The voice continues — “you hold ace, jack to five — king to four.”

A HELPING HAND

HAVE you ever wondered what an expert thinks about when he gazes at his dummy, before playing to the first trick? Have you ever wondered what you should be thinking about when you first take a look at those thirteen cards your partner has put down for you?

If the truth were to be told, it would be discovered that many players don't think too much about anything; others are thinking the wrong things; and some are so mad at their partners for putting down such a hideous sight that they can't focus their concentration on the hand.

The expert, however, can almost always forgive any dummy he finds because he is more interested in the problem at hand, namely, making his contract. For the moment his very being is concerned with that one problem — other matters can be left until later.

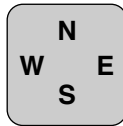
Now if the average player was told what the expert was thinking, maybe he could learn the same way. My objective is to check up on your thought habits as you look at some more or less unrelated declarer play problems. If you want to do this right, you should either remember or jot down your thoughts upon seeing the dummy and then check them against the experts.

Let's see how you do with the following problems. The first one — Count Your Losers — is the easiest of the bunch:

COUNT YOUR LOSERS

North/South Game. Dealer North.

♠ 943
 ♥ K102
 ♦ KQJ104
 ♣ A6



♠ A65
 ♥ QJ9874
 ♦ 2
 ♣ KJ3


Opening lead: ♠Q. Contract: 4♥

East plays the eight of spades at trick one. What are your thoughts? What is your plan?

An expert South would first count his losers and find that he had four: two spades and two red aces. Furthermore, he would realize that spades are probably breaking 4-3 judging from East's signal. If East had Kx he would have surely overtaken.

An expert would also realize that there is not enough time to set up the diamonds. The defenders would win the first diamond and cash their spades, so that plan is out. Drawing trumps is equally hopeless because of the spade situation. Obviously the only play available is to play East for the queen of clubs. South should duck the first spade (maybe West will have an aberration and not play a second one), win the second spade, lead a club to the ace and finesse the jack of clubs. Assuming this holds, a spade is discarded on the king of clubs and declarer can lose no more than one spade and two red aces.


A simple enough hand but one which at least 80% of all bridge players would muff simply because they wouldn't give it enough thought. The East/West cards were:

♠ QJ102 ♥ A3 ♦ 9863 ♣ 1087		♠ K87 ♥ 65 ♦ A75 ♣ Q9542
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COUNT THEIR CARDS

Love All. Dealer South.

♠ K765
 ♥ J10
 ♦ A865
 ♣ K87



♠ A10843
 ♥ KQ95
 ♦ J
 ♣ AQ6

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	4 ♦	4 ♠	pass
4NT	pass	5 ♦	pass
6 ♠	all pass		

Opening lead: ♦K

You win dummy's ace, East following; you play the king of spades and West drops the queen. What should you be thinking?

When the play of the hand revolves around whether to play for the drop or whether to take a finesse the expert must either rely on straight percentages (if there has been no bidding) or try to assess the most likely distribution from the bidding and lead.

In this case both trains of thought will lead to the same conclusion.

As far as percentages go, when declarer is missing two cards of equal value (the queen and the jack of spades) and one of them falls, straight percentages favor a finesse against the other honor. However, that train of thought is used when there have been no clues in the bidding. Here we have some enormous clues.

West has overcalled at the four level showing a seven card suit and has not led a singleton, something he would be apt to do. Well, if West has neither a singleton heart nor a singleton club he must have at least two cards in each of those suits. If that queen of spades is from QJ doubleton it means his original distribution was 2-2-7-2, which would hardly induce him to pre-empt at the four level. Certainly West must have a singleton somewhere and it appears to be in spades. All indications lead to the spade finesse. The East/West cards were:

♠ Q	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W S E </div>	♠ J92
♥ 76		♥ A8432
♦ KQ109432		♦ 7
♣ J95		♣ 10432

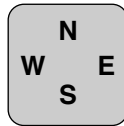


“I’m amazed you condescend to follow suit at all!”

TAKE CARE, PLAY SAFE

Game All. Dealer North.

♠ AK765
 ♥ A763
 ♦ J4
 ♣ A2



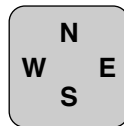
♠ 103
 ♥ K52
 ♦ K109
 ♣ KQ987

Opening lead: ♦6. Contract: 3NT

You play dummy's jack and East contributes the eight. What should you be thinking and how would you continue?

This time you should be counting your top tricks to see how many you have and how many you need. You have two spades, two hearts, three clubs and a diamond for a total of eight. You must set up one additional trick in either clubs, spades or hearts. That in itself is not so difficult if it were not for the precarious diamond position. West obviously has the ace-queen of diamonds and you must not let East get the lead come what may. Therefore you must establish your ninth trick in a suit that can be directed away from East. That suit is clubs. Play the ace of clubs and lead a small club to the nine. Assuming this loses to West, South will have established his ninth trick in clubs without letting East, the danger hand, get the lead. The East/West cards were:

♠ 42
 ♥ 984
 ♦ AQ7632
 ♣ 106



♠ QJ98
 ♥ QJ10
 ♦ 85
 ♣ J543

LEAVE THE GUESS TILL LAST

Game All. Dealer South.

♠	A76
♥	A52
♦	K108
♣	Q1043
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; width: 100%; justify-content: space-between;"> WE </div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">S</div> </div>	
♠	KQJ
♥	KQ43
♦	QJ9
♣	AK2

Opening lead: ♠10. Contract: 6NT

What is your general overall plan and in what order do you attack each suit?

First of all, you have nine top tricks with an easy two more by knocking out the ace of diamonds, the first order of business. After the ace of diamonds is knocked out (usually someone will take the first or second round of the suit) you have all the tricks but one. Whenever this happens there is a definite order in which you should cash your tricks.

First cash the suits from which you cannot possibly get any extra tricks — spades and diamonds. (The opponents may make faulty discards in suits that are more important to you — clubs and hearts.) Then cash tricks in the suit that has no alternative line of play — hearts; either hearts break 3-3 or they don't. Then, at the very end, play the suit that has various possibilities — clubs. For example, if on this hand West has turned up with five spades, two diamonds and two hearts you would know that you would have to finesse the ten of clubs to make your twelfth trick. On the other hand, if the count tells you that clubs are 3-3 you

can play the suit straight up. In any case clubs must be left to last because you have more than one way to play the suit. The East/West cards were:

♠ 109854	N W E S	♠ 32
♥ 97		♥ J1086
♦ A6		♦ 75432
♣ J987		♣ 65

RISK ALL FOR YOUR CONTRACT

East/West Game. Dealer South.

♠ AQ103	
♥ KQ87	
♦ Q65	
♣ 98	
N W E S	
♠ 62	
♥ AJ10932	
♦ J43	
♣ AJ	


South	West	North	East
1♥	dbl	rdbl	2♣
2♥	pass	4♥	all pass

Opening lead: ♦K

East signals with the ten and West continues with the ace and a diamond which East ruffs. East exits with the six of clubs. How do you plan the play from here?


Obviously you are in trouble, and whenever you are in trou-

ble desperate measures are called for. In this case you have to find a way to dispose of both your club and spade losers. A simple spade finesse will eliminate your spade loser but you must take the double spade finesse (low to the ten) in order to develop the spade suit for a club discard. This play requires both the king and jack of spades with West, not too unlikely in view of the takeout double. In any event, it is your only real shot on the hand. The East/West cards were:

♠ KJ97 ♥ 4 ♦ AK982 ♣ K54		♠ 854 ♥ 65 ♦ 107 ♣ Q107632
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LET THE OPPONENTS FIND THE CARDS FOR YOU

East/West Game. Dealer North.

♠ 10962 ♥ K753 ♦ K4 ♣ A76		♠ AKQJ4 ♥ A642 ♦ J10 ♣ J3
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Opening lead: ♣10. Contract: 4♠

What should you be thinking and what is your overall plan?

Again start with losers. You have a club loser, at least one heart loser and, assuming hearts are 3-2 (otherwise the hand is

impossible), you may be forced to guess the diamond position. In any event you would rather the opponents lead diamonds, particularly East.

Whenever you have a suit, such as hearts here, which has an inevitable loser, you can very often time the play so as to throw an opponent in with that suit in order to force a favorable return.

First, duck the club. If East has both the king and queen he cannot know that your jack of clubs is doubleton and will be forced to shift. If he leads away from his queen of diamonds towards dummy's king your troubles are over. Give your opponents every chance in the world to do what you want them to do.

East wins the queen of clubs and shifts to a trump. Now what? Draw trumps and play the ace of clubs and ruff a club. Now three rounds of hearts. If East wins the third heart you are home free. If West wins the third heart and leads a low diamond you are forced to guess the diamond position. The East/West cards were:

♠ 873	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W S E </div>	♠ 5
♥ Q8		♥ J109
♦ Q732		♦ A9865
♣ 10985		♣ KQ42

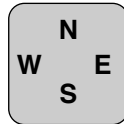


“The rest are *whose?*”

ESTABLISH DUMMY'S SUIT

East/West Game. Dealer East.

♠ AJ976
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ A76
 ♣ 84



♠ 4
 ♥ AQ109842
 ♦ J85
 ♣ J6

South	West	North	East
3♥	pass	4♥	1♣ all pass

Opening lead: ♣2

East cashes the queen and ace of clubs and shifts to the king of diamonds, West playing the four. What are your thoughts and how do you continue?

Although it looks likely that East has both diamond honors there is no need to put all your eggs in one basket. The spade suit can be established if spades are 4-3 and hearts are 2-1. Failing this you can always lead up to your jack of diamonds.

Your plan should be to win the ace of diamonds and play the ace and ruff a spade (but not with the deuce of trumps!), back to dummy with a trump (but not with the deuce), ruff a spade high, back to dummy using a middle trump and ruff a third spade high. Assuming spades have divided, enter dummy with the deuce of trumps to dummy's three and discard a diamond on dummy's long spade.

Of course if spades turn out to be 5-2 or trumps 3-0 you fall back on the alternative line of play discussed previously. The East/West cards were:

♠ K108	N W E S	♠ Q532
♥ 76		♥ 5
♦ Q10432		♦ K9
♣ 1072		♣ AKQ953

CROSS-RUFFS

Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 4	
♥ QJ2	
♦ Q954	
♣ AQ876	
N W E S	
♠ A9732	
♥ AK1094	
♦ 72	
♣ 3	

Contract: 4♥

How should South play on a trump lead?

Hands that have singletons in the dummy or singletons in both hands lend themselves to either ruffing losers in the dummy or cross-ruffing. In either case declarer is well advised to count tricks.

In the case of a trump lead, declarer can ruff only two cards in dummy along with his own five high trumps for a total of seven trump tricks. In addition there are two black aces for a total of nine tricks, which means that with a trump lead, declarer-

er must take the club finesse. Assuming this works the ace of clubs is cashed and declarer alternately ruffs spades and clubs until he runs out of trumps in the dummy. The East/West cards were:

♠ KJ85	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q106
♥ 53		♥ 876
♦ K86		♦ AJ103
♣ KJ54		♣ 1092

DEALING WITH SIDE SUITS

East/West Game. Dealer South.

♠ 1032
♥ K65
♦ A4
♣ 76543
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>
♠ KQJ98
♥ A832
♦ 82
♣ AK

Opening lead: ♦K. Contract: 4♠

What are your thoughts? What is your plan?

You should first see that you must lose a diamond and a spade and that you have two hearts to concern yourself with. Not one but two.

Whenever declarer has a four-card suit he must think in terms of that fourth card as well. Whenever dummy has three cards in declarer's four-card side suit there is always the possibility of ruffing the fourth round in dummy if dummy has a high trump.

The alternative is to work with the clubs, establishing that suit for heart discards. However, for that line to work, due to the acute entry situation, a 3-3 club break is a must, so the plan of ruffing the fourth heart with dummy's ten stands out a mile.

Win the ace of diamonds, cash the two top clubs and play three rounds of hearts. No matter who wins or what they play you can still ruff the fourth heart with the ten of spades losing one heart, one diamond and one spade. The East/West cards were:

♠ A765	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> N W S E </div>	♠ 4
♥ J9		♥ Q1074
♦ KQ753		♦ J1096
♣ 108		♣ QJ92

SAFETY PLAYS

Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 53
♥ AKQ64
♦ 753
♣ 964
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> N W S E </div>
♠ AKQJ108
♥ 73
♦ AQ6
♣ AQ

Opening lead: ♠4. Contract: 6♠

Organize your thoughts and decide upon your line of play.

On this hand you have loads to work with, which means you try to give yourself the best chance without taking any desperate measures.

When the dummy has a long suit that cannot be established by ruffing for lack of entries, and there is no ruffing to be done in dummy, for practical purposes you are dealing with a no trump hand and top tricks should be counted. Here you have six spades, three hearts and two aces. You have possible finesses in both minor suits, neither of them necessary if the hearts divide 3-3 for that will give you thirteen top tricks. Which is the point of the hand. You don't need thirteen tricks, you only need twelve!

Five heart tricks are not necessary, four will do. Draw the trumps and duck a heart around the table. Assuming East wins and plays a minor suit you must win the ace, run the trumps and test the hearts. If the hearts were not 4-2 (unlikely) you can fall back on your other minor suit finesse. The East/West cards were:

♠ 942	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	♠ 76
♥ J1052		♥ 98
♦ KJ8		♦ 10942
♣ K103		♣ J8752

BEWARE OF OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

Love All. Dealer South.

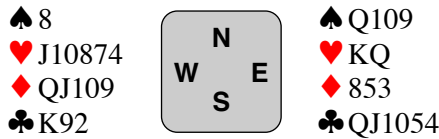
♠ J765	
♥ 93	
♦ AK42	
♣ 876	
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	
♠ AK432	
♥ A652	
♦ 76	
♣ A3	

Opening lead: ♦ Q. Contract: 4♠

This is the type of hand that presents an optical illusion to many players. If trumps are 2-2 the hand is absolutely cold for five spades losing but one heart and one club. So it seems that if trumps are 3-1 declarer should make four. That's right, he should, but not if he is not permitted to ruff two hearts in dummy.

Assume that declarer wins the diamond opening and plays two trumps, only to find one opponent with Qxx. Now when he gives up a heart in order to ruff two hearts in dummy the player with the Qxx of spades may arrange to win the heart, cash the queen of spades and bingo, South is down one!

When two cards have to be ruffed in dummy there have to be two trumps there. So win the diamond, cash one high spade and play a low heart. Win any return, cash the second spade and if spades don't break you can still ruff two hearts in dummy without a mean opponent drawing one of the dummy's trumps. The East/West cards were:



EDDIE KANTAR



THE IMPOSSIBLE TAKES A LITTLE LONGER

HOW would you recommend declarer to play AJ986432 of trumps opposite a void so as to lose no tricks? Impossible ...now watch John Collings in action:

North/South Game. Dealer South.

	♠ AKJ										
	♥ —										
	♦ AKQ10974										
	♣ A84										
♠ 54	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10972
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K		♥ Q1075									
♦ J86532		♦ —									
♣ KQJ3		♣ 109652									
	♠ Q863										
	♥ AJ986432										
	♦ —										
	♣ 7										

The bidding went:

North	East	South	West
2♣	pass	2♥	pass
4NT	pass	5♦	pass
7♦	pass	pass ¹	dbl
pass	pass	7♥ ²	dbl
all pass			

- (1) Give him benefit of the doubt this time.
- (2) Not any longer!

The king of clubs was led. John played the ace and calmly led the ace of diamonds so that he could discard his non-existent club losers. Quick as a flash East ruffed with the five and

declarer resignedly over-ruffed. A spade to the ace so that the king of diamonds could be led. East was not going to be caught, however, so again he ruffed low. Declarer over-ruffed and entered dummy with the king of spades. The queen of diamonds came next and once again East ruffed low. John over-ruffed and cashed the ace of hearts felling both the king and queen. "We were lucky the trumps broke, partner," said John.

Hard though it is to believe, this is a true story from a very high stake rubber bridge game in London.

Here is Collings in action again.

♠	A10987									
♥	—									
♦	AK42									
♣	AK105									
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 100%;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	K542									
♥	65432									
♦	J7									
♣	32									

The auction had been fast and furious starting with East who dealt and opened with one club, thereafter:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1♥	dbl	2♥	2♠(?)
pass	4♥(!)	dbl	pass
pass	5♣(!)	pass	5♠
pass	6♦(!)	pass	6♠
all pass			

Once John had emerged with his free bid of two spades there was no escape. How would you fancy your chances of landing this contract after an initial trump lead?

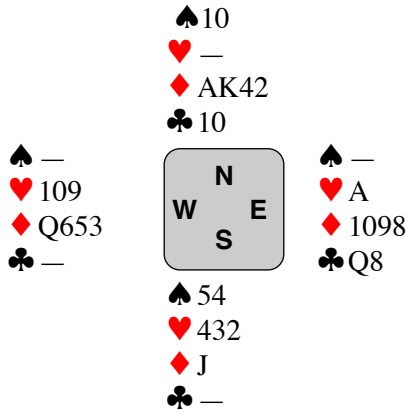
As soon as dummy appeared John wondered why West had not led either a heart or a club — his partner's suit. West was good enough to realize that if the spade suit was slightly different John would have been able to make his contract on a cross-ruff. John deduced that West did not have a spade honor and rose with dummy's ace playing for a 2-2 break.

At trick two the ace of clubs was cashed, declarer hoping to be able to see why West had not led one. East dropped the nine and West the six. At trick three South crossed to his hand with a trump and at trick four he ruffed a heart in dummy noting the fall of the queen from East.

By this time declarer was confident that East must have started with both the queen and jack of spades, three top heart honors and presumably a club honor. This didn't leave much for West and as he had freely responded to the one club opening, John considered that he must have the queen of diamonds which scotched the normal plan of leading a diamond towards the jack hoping for East to hold the queen. However, he saw that he could still make the contract provided that West had started with four diamonds and a doubleton club honor. How? Just look and see what happened!

At trick five, Collings came off dummy by playing a small club. After a little thought East played low and West was forced to take the trick with the jack. With no black cards left West had to lead a red suit and as he held the queen of diamonds he naturally elected to lead a heart.

Declarer ruffed in dummy and cashed the king of clubs on which West could safely discard a heart but when John crossed to his hand with a club ruff West found himself mercilessly squeezed. The position was:



South ruffs the ten of clubs and West has to find a discard. If West throws a diamond, declarer ruffs out the diamonds and if West throws a heart (which is what he did) South ruffs another heart and claims the rest.

Notice that if West tries to avoid the endplay by dropping the jack of clubs under the ace, East will get endplayed instead. If he hangs on to a top heart he will eventually be put on play to lead up to dummy's club tenace and if he throws his hearts and just holds clubs he can be endplayed by ducking a club through to him. Looking at the actual play we have very little doubt that John Collings would have made no mistake.

A truly magnificent example of card play par excellence.



The Anxious Bidder

VERY intense player, at the end of the bidding: “The reason I asked for a review of the auction was that I didn’t hear the first bid and didn’t believe the second.”



Tony Forrester says

“It was time to put together a bridge book which is fun to read. Over the years, so few publications could be described as that. I searched high and low to find those articles which had appealed to me when I read them. The outstanding were memorable, because well-written and amusing bridge anecdotes are rare.

Using my wife, Diana, as a guinea-pig — she plays very little bridge as such but does know a good story when she sees one — I sifted through thirty years of highly variable material.

The result? In my view the best collection of entertaining and informative one-off pieces ever written. Not just fictional, but also many of the key hands and decisions that have shaped bridge history. Plus, for your own game, many tips and quizzes that will sharpen your edge.

In short, a jolly good read!
Have fun...”

Tony

“If you can't decide what to get your bridge-playing friends for Christmas, you need look no further.”

BRIDGE magazine

