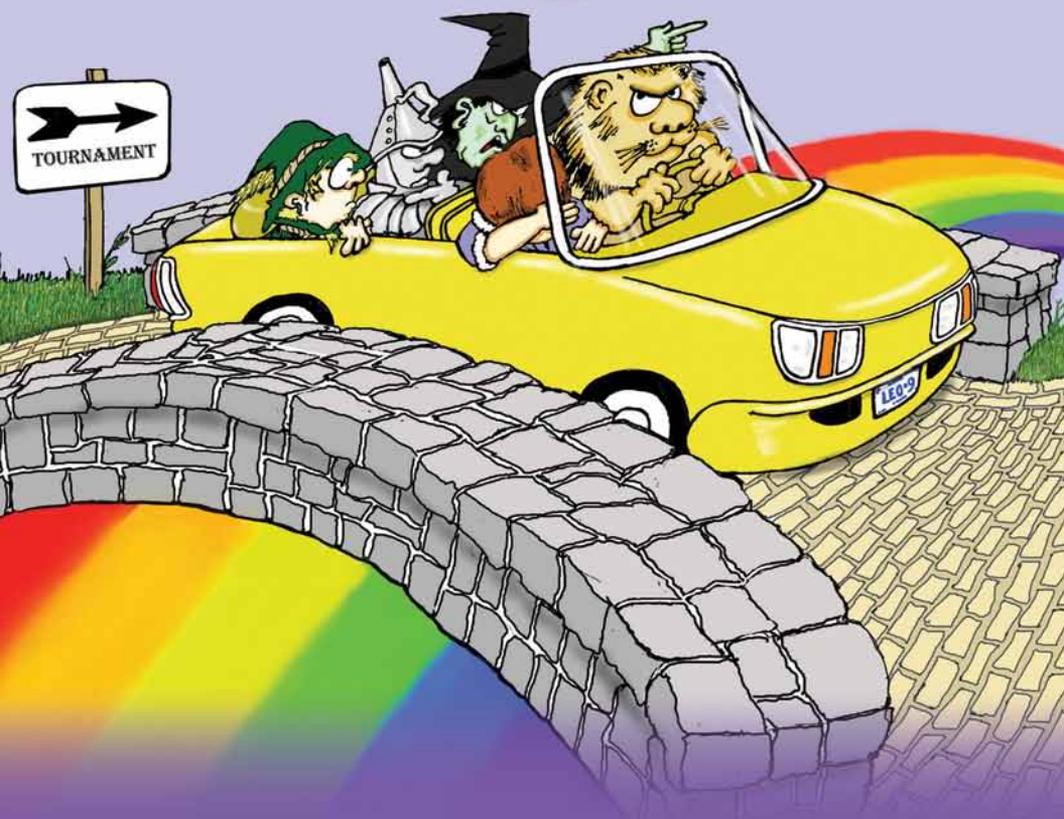


BRIDGE OVER THE RAINBOW

Sequel to 'If I only had a heart'



Alex Adamson & Harry Smith

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To our wives, Elinor and Alison, who remain patient as ever.

Preface

Harry Smith and I have known each other for over thirty years, and have been bridge partners or teammates on many occasions. Since 2013 we have been writing bridge material together. In that year Harry captained the Scottish Senior Team in the World Championships in the d'Orsi Bowl. Indeed, our first book was an account of that adventure, under the title *Scotland's Senior Moment*, published by Master Point Press.

By the time that book hit the shelves we were already making progress on a series of bridge fiction stories featuring the characters from the Wizard of Oz. We approached Mark Horton with them and were delighted when he and the editorial board of *Bridge Magazine* decided to publish them. From the middle of 2015, they were a regular feature in this journal, and have subsequently appeared monthly in *A New Bridge Magazine*. They are also being published regularly in *Australian Bridge*.

As the volume of material began to build up we showed it to Ray Lee at Master Point Press. He encouraged us to shape the stories into a book and the result was that we were able to offer to a wider audience the exploits of Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Lion, the Scarecrow and so many others as they went through a year playing bridge at the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club. It was Ray who came up with the title, *If I Only Had a Heart*.

Using the conclusion of the first book as a break point, we decided on a new set of story lines for the next set of articles. By 2018 we had written the material that you now see before you. Life in the bridge community is never dull. There are always newcomers and surprises. We hope that you will enjoy this second volume from a place that may be somewhere over the rainbow, but is filled with characters that most certainly play in a club near you.

Alex Adamson
Linlithgow, Scotland, 2019



tin man



SCARECROW



DOROTHY



LION



auntie
em



uncle
henry



almira
gulch



professor
marvel



munchkin
BOB



wicked witch
of the
west



IRRITABLE witch



unpleasant
witch



glinda



the
WIZARD



honorARY chairman
of the
LOLLIPOP GUILDS



mayOR of
munchkinland



ada

CISSY



shy the
munchkin

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Return of the Native



The Tin Man was the last to understand. Of course the human element of the club had always been of minimal interest to him. He had been vaguely aware of comments containing words or phrases like ‘her’, or ‘that woman’ and ‘back in town’, not to mention ‘Who on earth will she find to play with?’ However, he had followed his usual policy with such irrelevant noise and sent it straight from his ears to his mental spam folder.

It was only as he approached the club one evening in October that it clicked into place when he saw, neatly chained in the usually empty bike racks, a cast-iron contraption with a small basket on the front which would have been considered somewhat dated fifty years earlier. Even for the Tin Man the meaning was clear. Even he understood that club nights would not be the same. Yes, even the Tin Man understood the significance of the return of Almira Gulch.

He shuddered, but that was nothing compared to the effect of her return on all the other members of at least three years standing. As usual, Dorothy tried to calm things down and appear unconcerned, but in truth there were issues between the two of them that went back many years, indeed into her childhood. Miss Gulch had been pitiless in her treatment of any dogs found on her grounds. This had led to altercations that might be best forgotten, but were all too well remembered by Dorothy, Uncle Henry and Auntie Em.

As with other things in life, Almira had firm ideas about how the bridge club should be run, and saw little point in complicating matters by allowing other people's points of view to be given consideration. She had run out of partners some time ago, and had in fact been absent from Munchkinland for over two years, traveling abroad. Most people claimed a lack of interest in her travels, but many were remarkably well informed. No one would ever have suggested that they wished her harm, but when she had announced her plans for a world tour, several members had spent some time telling her of the wonders of a few must-see sites that just happened to be in Iraq, Afghanistan and a few other less stable parts of the world.

Most immediately impacted by Almira's return was the Honorary President of the Lullaby League. The President had the unenviable role of being the club's partnership secretary. Charged with helping new arrivals, and finding new victims for the survivors of broken-down partnerships, she had an unrivaled knowledge of the foibles, abilities, and intolerances of the membership. Yet even for her, finding someone willing to play so much as one game with Almira Gulch seemed close to impossible. Fortune, however, looked favorably on her. The very day after Almira had phoned to announce her return and demand that a partner be ready and waiting, the Honorary President was contacted by a newcomer who came across as both patient and tough-skinned enough to be placed opposite Miss Gulch. With a sense of guilt that she might be losing the club a potential new member, the President arranged for the two of them to play the following week.

The Tin Man entered the club to find Miss Gulch sitting primly at a table in the lounge. Her outfit, right down to her trademark hat, would have been the epitome of polite fashion for ladies of a certain age in Emerald City half a century earlier.

What a contrast was the man sitting opposite her! His white beard and moustache were the least remarkable things about his appearance. He had a single earring in the shape of an electric guitar, his thinning hair rested on his shoulders, and he wore a loose, purple shirt under a rainbow-patterned jacket.

There was a look of uncontrolled disgust on Miss Gulch's face, which registered even with the Tin Man.

Dorothy was having a coffee at another table.

'I see she's back,' said the Tin Man, as he took the seat opposite her, 'but who is that aging hippie she's talking to?'

'Have you seen the shop that opened three weeks ago in the High Street selling New Age crystals, dream catchers and the like?' The Tin Man looked blank so she went on. 'Well, he's the owner. Goes by the name of Professor Marvel.' The Tin Man snorted derisively. 'The weird thing is that apparently he really is a professor — he used to teach at a university in California — and his surname really is Marvel.'

The Tin Man snorted again with even more feeling. 'All seems rather far-fetched. Anyway, I doubt we shall see him again after tonight.'

Professor Marvel was doing his best to charm Almira, though without obvious success. He had agreed without question to play her methods, and praised her wisdom in sticking to systems that had proved their worth over many decades. The compliments were almost certainly wasted. Almira Gulch had not the slightest doubt that her methods were best. 'Weak opening bids at the two-level,' she had often stated, 'are legalized gambling.'

As they went in to the playing area to take their seats, she turned on her partner. 'When I lead a suit, you had better have a very good reason if you don't return it. When I bid a suit, if you have any support, I expect it to be shown. It's vital to have the contract played by the right hand.'

'Of course, Miss Gulch,' her hippie-like partner responded. 'I can see just how experienced and capable a player you are.' Almira's features moved, and there was much discussion in the bar later as to whether she had actually smiled, a previously unobserved event if it had happened.

The new partnership had a gentle introduction, facing nothing more testing than the Lion and the Scarecrow.

'I see we are all wearing our hair long nowadays,' Almira sniffed, by way of welcome. The Lion stiffened slightly. He was rather proud of his mane and this sounded suspiciously more

like censure than praise for his crowning glory. The Scarecrow looked bemused and continued to wrestle his suits down to at most five. Professor Marvel chuckled. ‘These boys are blessed with fine locks. You’ve got me, though, Miss Gulch. Mine’s been long since Woodstock, even though I know I’m now a foolish old man who should know better. I beg your indulgence.’

If Almira’s face was an indicator of her feelings, indulgence had not been granted.

Dealer East. E/W vul.

	♠ 8							
	♥ A K J 7 6 3							
	♦ 10 3							
	♣ A K Q 5							
♠ Q 6 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N		E	W	S		♠ K J 5
N		E						
W	S							
♥ 2		♥ Q 10 8 5 4						
♦ 9 7 5		♦ 8 6 4 2						
♣ 10 9 8 3 2		♣ 6						
	♠ A 10 9 7 4							
	♥ 9							
	♦ A K Q J							
	♣ J 7 4							

After a pass from the Scarecrow in the East seat, Professor Marvel opened One Spade, to which Miss Gulch responded Two Hearts. The Scarecrow had slipped into a daydream. Miss Gulch turned her disapproval on him. ‘Do you think we have all evening to wait for you? You don’t even look as though you’re thinking.’

Never was a truer word spoken. Jumping into action, the Scarecrow reached into his bidding box to raise hearts, but then realized that they had been bid by an opponent rather than his partner. Quickly redirecting his hand to the front of the box he pulled out two pass cards. ‘Well, I suppose two bidding cards are better than none,’ carped Miss Gulch.

The Scarecrow’s action was not lost on Professor Marvel, who had instinctively come to a very accurate view of his right-hand opponent’s mental capacity. He bid Three Diamonds, and

when Miss Gulch repeated her hearts he noted that the Scarecrow's pass shot out at great speed. The Professor was faced with something of a problem.

He was only too aware from the earlier monologue that his partner could well regard a singleton as adequate support for her six-card suit. However, he had seen the Scarecrow's hand reaching for the Three Hearts bidding card and then his later rapid pass, and reckoned the 6-1 heart fit looked to be under threat from a bad break. He had no indication of a club stopper for notrump, nor any good way to ask about it, so he decided to emphasize the solidity of the diamonds by rebidding them, well aware that doing this on a four-card suit might be regarded as unorthodox.

Miss Gulch looked less than happy with this development, but if they were going to play in a minor then it might as well be in slam. She jumped to Six Diamonds. The full auction had been:

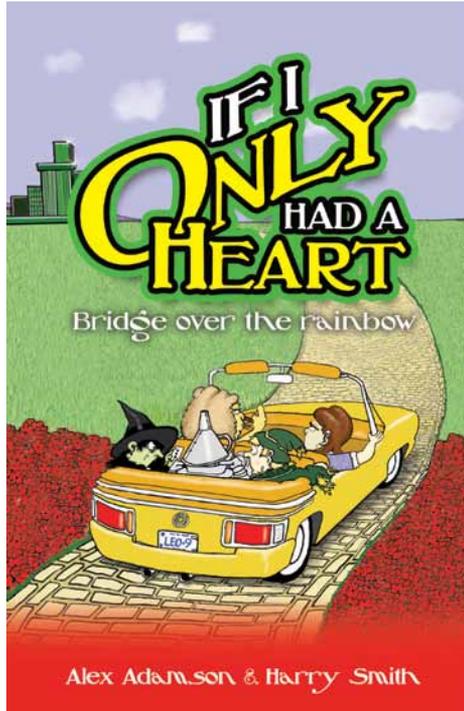
West	North	East	South
<i>Lion</i>	<i>Miss Gulch</i>	<i>Scarecrow</i>	<i>Prof Marvel</i>
		pass	1♠
pass	2♥	pass	3♦
pass	3♥	pass	4♦
pass	6♦	all pass	

The Lion led the ♣10 and the Professor eyed the dummy with some pleasure. He won in hand, cashed the ♠A and ruffed one in the dummy, high, just in case. He played the ♦3 back to hand and drew trumps in four rounds. When the suit split 4-3, he claimed twelve tricks by way of four diamonds, four clubs, two top hearts, the top spade and the spade ruff. They might be the first to play the board, but as the score was entered he had a strong sense that this was going to be a top.

'They had more trumps than we had!' Almira's shrill tones echoed across the room. She felt that proprieties had to be upheld and she did not want to be seen as gaining a good score through unconventional means.

Don't Miss...

The first installment of entertaining bridge hands from the Land of Oz.



If I Only Had a Heart

It's not a surprising to find that everyone in Oz is a keen bridge player, even the Scarecrow and the Tin Man. The Lion is as cowardly a player as you would expect, and the witches of all flavors are deliciously wicked. The Wizard himself, of course, is a visitor from Down Under...

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SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

A sequel to *If I Only Had a Heart*, once again featuring Dorothy, the Tin Man and the rest of the gang at the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club. Some of these stories have appeared in *BRIDGE* magazine, and in *Australian Bridge*, but all are collected here in book form for the first time. Bill Buttle's illustrations add to the fun.



ALEX ADAMSON (Linlithgow, Scotland) is a Scotland Open Team player. He has captained the Scottish Open, Junior and Women's teams. After a successful European Championships in 2018, he will captain the Women in the Venice Cup in 2019.



HARRY SMITH (Scone, Scotland) has represented Scotland in both the Open and Senior Teams. As NPC, he captained the Senior Team to a European Bronze Medal in Dublin in 2012, and to the quarter-final of the World Championships in Bali the following year, the story of which is told in *Scotland's Senior Moment*.



BILL BUTTLE (Ontario, Canada) has had work syndicated in newspapers across Canada. He is the illustrator for the acclaimed new collections of Victor Mollo's 'Menagerie' stories, published by Master Point Press.

