
KRZYSZTOF
MARTENS

OWL,
FOX
&
SPIDER

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Part 1:

OWL

UNIVERSITY OF DEFENSE

*You are the wise owl already,
If you are alert as a fly
Strong as a tiger
Sly as a spider
Cunning as a fox
You'll have to go and see your vet
'Cause you might have turned calf at this point.*

In the fifth year of the bridge university, lectures and classes focused on the most difficult element of the art of bridge: defense.

The Professor began the seminar with two interesting deals.

“The same auction occurred at four tables. The North players held a distributional hand close to an opening bid; nevertheless, they passed because of the vulnerability.”

NS Vulnerable

Pairs

W	N	E	S
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Dbl	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

♠ K 9 8 2
 ♥ J 3
 ♦ A Q 10 9 6 2
 ♣ 9

N	♠ Q
W	♥ K Q 4 2
E	♦ K J 5
S	♣ K 7 6 4 3

Lead ♣9. The play began the same way at all four tables. South played the ♣2, (Suit Preference) discouraging the spade shift. Declarer won the club in hand and advanced a low diamond. North put up the ace, partner signaling an odd number of diamonds. Declarer could now make a guess at reconstructing North's hand as 4=2=6=1, and North's initial pass made the location of the remaining honors equally apparent.

Part 1: the Owl

Here is the full deal:

♠ A J 10 4	N W E S	♠ Q
♥ 9 8 6 5		♥ K Q 4 2
♦ 4		♦ K J 5
♣ A Q J 8		♣ K 7 6 4 3
	♠ 7 6 5 3	
	♥ A 10 7	
	♦ 8 7 3	
	♣ 10 5 2	

Upon winning the ♦A, the four North defenders embarked on four different routes. Considering the features of their characters, we shall call our heroes the calf, the fox, the tiger and the owl.

The calf gave the matter little thought and played the ♥J. To his delight, the jack held the trick. But his joy did not last long – only until declarer claimed ten tricks.

The fox saw the danger of declarer’s ducking the jack, so he selected the ♥3 instead. “This is the way to suggest the club ruff,” he reasoned. It was indeed: but when dummy played low, South took the ace and returned a club.

The tiger did well to foresee this eventuality. Having won the ace of diamonds, he switched to the ♠2, attempting to force declarer to play trumps himself. Giving declarer an additional spade trick wouldn’t cost anything, he calculated. True; but when West started trumps by playing low from dummy, South hopped up with the ace and gave partner a club ruff.

To warn partner against this play, the owl continued with the ♦Q; not suit preference but an alarm clock. South was puzzled, but when declarer led away from dummy's ♥KQ, he nodded with understanding and put up the ten. He led a club for partner to ruff, and later scored the ♥A as the setting trick.

“I recommend that you attempt to follow in the footsteps of the wise owl,” concluded the Professor.

“We meet the four animals in yet another uncommon defensive problem,” resumed the Professor.

The bidding was again standard.

W	N	E	S
2♠	Pass	4♠	1♥ All Pass

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

The opening lead was the ♥10 at all tables – hardly surprising.

Each of the four declarers rose with the ace, drew trumps (discarding two clubs from dummy) and led the ♥J.

Part 1: the Owl

The calf took the king of hearts and played off the club tops. This defense did not interfere too much with declarer's plans.

The fox discarded one card from each suit when declarer pulled trumps. He took the heart king, cashed the ♣A and... at that point he realized what was going on, but could do nothing without that carelessly disposed-of diamond spot.

The tiger threw a heart and two clubs on the spades. He won the heart king, cashed the ♣K (closely watching partner's count signal), and switched to a small diamond.

This was the end position:

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

The lead was in dummy. Declarer returned to hand via a club ruff and cashed the last trump, discarding a small diamond from dummy. South found himself in a stepping-stone squeeze. He had to keep two hearts and so come down to the singleton ace of diamonds. Declarer cashed the ♥9 and threw the tiger in with a diamond.

The owl, just like the tiger, parted with two clubs and a heart. She took the heart jack with the king and, without cashing a club, switched to a diamond.

Here was the ending:

	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ J 9 4										
	♣ Q 4 3										
♠ 6 4	<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></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		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9		♥ Q 4									
♦ 10 7		♦ K 2									
♣ 10		♣ J 8									
	♠ —										
	♥ 8 7										
	♦ A 8										
	♣ A K										

After taking the trick with dummy's queen, declarer had no choice but to play clubs. The owl took the ace and exited with a heart. By destroying declarer's communications, she left declarer with no chance to make the contract.