

KRZYSZTOF MARTENS

IMAGINATION

GARSŲ PASAULIS

Vilnius - 2007

Copyright ©
Krzysztof MARTENS

Translated by:
Irena CHODOROWSKA

Editors:
David BIRD and Jan CHODOROWSKI

Cover design by:
Aleksandra BERKOWSKA

Garsų Pasaulis – Vilnius

ISBN ?

CONTENTS

Chapter 1. BRIDGE UNIVERSITY.....	6
A clever one gets his own way.....	6
Champions confusion.....	9
The house shows the owner.....	11
Wrong track.....	13
Player of the 21 st century?.....	16
Unusual technique.....	19
Diamond cuts a diamond.....	21
Never rest while playing.....	23
Wake up partner.....	25
Serves you right.....	27
Pulled with the wool over his eyes.....	29
I thought that he would think that i had thought....	32
Profound knowledge makes a modest man.....	34
Beauty is a riddle.....	36
Mysterious manoeuvre.....	38
Illusions will lead you astray.....	41
Trick thief.....	44
Subtle protection.....	47
Imagination makes reality more beautiful.....	50
Triple loop.....	54
Chapter 2. OUTER SPACE.....	58
In the spaceship.....	58
On the moon.....	61
Do not trust edenians bearing gifts.....	62
Question marks.....	64
Never trust a woman.....	67
Aliens invade the earth.....	69
Do not twinkle, my love, do not twinkle.....	70
Matax or crocodile?.....	72
Sadder but wiser.....	74
You can judge the horse by its teeth.....	77

Not everybody realises what the weak sex can do..	79
Phobos, moon of Mars.....	82
Not wealthy but wise.....	84
Wise guy insured guy.....	87
Planet earth.....	88
Kindness means gracefulness and profit.....	89
Simple is beautiful.....	91
Lethal weapon.....	93
Breath of youth.....	95
Young people usually want to live it up.....	97
Men execute squeezes, women eliminate them.....	99
Pearl of defence.....	101
The battle of minds.....	103
Imagination, the key for success.....	105

Chapter 3. BRIDGE IN THE LAND OF THE RINGS.....	107
Trivial ducking?.....	108
Fruits of cooperation - defence of the year.....	109
Do not trust those from Mordor bearing gifts.....	111
Dulled reflex.....	112
Dream squeeze.....	113
Hunting extra chances.....	115
Match in Rivendell.....	116
Problems 1-6.....	116
Answers 1-6.....	119
Tournament in Lothorien.....	129
Problems 1-8.....	129
Answers 1-8.....	133

Imagination

A deeply rooted conviction that imagination is not necessary to play bridge lingers among some bridge players. Imagination is something beautiful but totally useless. Literature, poetry, art – these are the regions where imagination reigns. I definitely do not agree with such an approach. Imagination is full of colours, fragrances and soft lines. Imagination is like a woman. Conquered by force, she is initially submissive and obedient but, sooner or later, her charm and ability to develop vanish if she is not taken care of. If we define imagination as active ability to project different shapes of bridge problems then without this true and creative ability we cannot become outstanding players. Imagination allows us to construct or model more or less possible solutions in our minds in an abstract way.

Chapter 1

BRIDGE UNIVERSITY

The corridor in an old university building gradually emptied. Students were disappearing inside the lecture rooms. Professor Martens was beginning his lecture in a computer room. The Bridge University was furnished with computer equipment and training could be carried out at a level worthy of the 21st century.

A clever one gets his own way

Professor started with a defensive problem:

♠	K 5	
♥	7	
♦	K Q 10 9 2	
♣	A Q J 6 3	
		♠ Q J 4 3 2
		♥ J 4 3
		♦ 6 5 3
		♣ 7 5

W	N	E	S
—	1 ♦	pass	pass
2 ♦*	pass	2 ♠	pass
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	pass. . .

* - game forcing with unknown shape

You lead the king of diamonds, your partner plays the eight (reverse count, odd number of diamonds), declarer ducks. Plan your defence.

In total silence young people analysed the problem on their own monitors. After three minutes nobody presented a solution.

The declarer play problem soon appeared on the monitors.

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

After the bidding is finished North leads the ♦K.

Ania was first to speak:

'I duck the diamond and after any return I draw two rounds of trumps, play a spade to the queen, ace of spades and a spade (the jack of hearts will be used as an entry).'

Robert: 'If South holds three trumps he will ruff the third spade and play through your club holding.'

Tomek: 'The discards show that diamonds are 5-3, which will permit a throw-in. I duck the diamond, win the next one and draw two rounds of trumps. They are 3-1 with South holding three. Now a spade to the queen, ruff a diamond and run all my hearts. A throw-in squeeze is there.'

Professor: 'Excellent, if we know the play plan then let's go back to our defensive problem.'

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

Ania: 'It is essential to duck the spade, holding the king of spades doubleton, without any hesitation and we have to be prepared for that. The declarer will meticulously follow with his work to produce this ending:

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

On the nine of hearts North will discard the queen of clubs and declarer, hoping for a throw-in squeeze, will play a small club.'

Professor: 'Can we do anything against such excellent opponents' defence?'

Tomek: 'More often than not, South will give a proper count in the spade suit in such a situation. To believe the signal, one has to appreciate the opponent's level and his ducking with the king of spades doubleton and take it into consideration while designing the plan.'

Champions confusion

Kibitzers watching the play on a vugraph could not stop sneering.

♠ A 10 9 8 5		♠ K Q J									
♥ 9 3		♥ J 10 8 7									
♦ Q J 8		♦ 10 9									
♣ J 7 5		♣ 10 9 3 2									
♠ 7 6 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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 Q J
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 5 4 2		♥ J 10 8 7									
♦ A 5		♦ 10 9									
♣ A K 4		♣ 10 9 3 2									
	♠ 4 3										
	♥ Q 6										
	♦ K 7 6 4 3 2										
	♣ Q 8 6										

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♦
4 ♥	pass. . .		

Lead ♦Q.

'A recognised bridge champion was the only player in the room to go down in this simple game. Tell me, how is it possible that the champion was one down?' – The Professor set the task for the students.

Janek: 'The champion ducked the queen of diamonds and North continued the suit. The declarer played the ace of hearts and a spade. I want to point out good play by North – he ducked although it is hard to explain why. After winning the trick with the jack of spades it was time to play the ♣10. When South followed with a small one the champion rose with the king and cashed the ace of clubs. North unblocked the jack, not really knowing why. Now, our champ played a spade again. A surprised opponent played a spade for partner to ruff.'

Ania: 'Imagination presented somewhat a different picture of the South hand, a 6-4 shape. Bidding at a level of 3♦ invites a partner to sacrifice at the level of five so it has to be a responsible bid.'

The entire hand should look as follows:

	♠ A 10 9 8 5										
	♥ Q 9 3										
	♦ Q J 8										
	♣ J 5										
♠ 7 6 2	<table style="margin: 0 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		♠ K Q J
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 5 4 2		♥ J 10 8 7									
♦ A 5		♦ 10 9									
♣ A K 4		♣ 10 9 3 2									
	♠ 4 3										
	♥ 6										
	♦ K 7 6 4 3 2										
	♣ Q 8 7 6										

Tomek: 'From time to time, a truly outstanding expert must pay a high price for many brilliant and admired declarer plays. Was the South hand fit to bid at the level of three? Definitely not. 3♦ bid has sense only with 6-4 shape.'

Professor: 'What was the expert's plan?'

Robert: 'After eliminating the spade suit and cashing two top clubs North would be endplayed with the queen of hearts and would have to lead for ruff and discard. You cannot draw the ace and king of hearts because the throw-in would not be possible then.'

The house shows the owner

Professor: 'Let's start with a play problem:

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

W

N

E

S

1 NT

2 ♥

3 NT

pass...

Lead ♥6, South follows with the jack.'

Tomek: 'I shall run five diamonds, maybe something will come up.'

Professor: 'Let's see the four hands'

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

Janek: 'Nothing we can do, North made a very aggressive bid.'

Professor: 'Use your imagination.'

Silence.

Professor: 'Imagine a slightly different shape'

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

'The declarer plays the king and queen of diamonds and a heart. What should the opponent do?'

Karol: 'He should rise with the ten to remove the second entry.'

Professor: 'Well done, so now we know how to play in the first example.'

Ania: 'The king and queen of diamonds and a heart. I would like to see the expert's face that with a teasing smile rises with the ten and collides with partner's queen.'

Wrong track

Professor: 'Here is one more defensive problem'

♠ A Q 3										
♥ K J 10 8 7 2										
♦ 3										
♣ Q J 10										
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ Q 9 5 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♣ A 2
	N									
W		E								
	S									

W	N	E	S
1 NT	2 ♥	2 NT*	pass
3 ♣**	pass	3 NT*	pass
4 ♠	pass...		

* - one version of Lebensohl

** - waiting

*** - four spades with a stopper in hearts

'You lead the queen of clubs. Declarer wins with the ace, your partner signalling an odd number of clubs, followed by the jack of spades from the dummy. How will you plan your defence?'

Tomek: 'Partner has small cards only. I cannot see the way to beat the contract.'

Professor: 'Look at the four hands'

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

Agata: 'It is even worse'.

Professor: 'Let's change the defender's hand slightly'.

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

'You lead the queen of clubs. Declarer wins with the ace, your partner signalling an odd number of clubs, followed by the jack of spades from the dummy. How will you plan your defence?'

Janek: 'This is a piece of cake. Play the king of hearts, the declarer wins with the ace and plays a trump again. North wins the trick and plays the jack of hearts, queen from the dummy ruffed by partner. You have to find the ten of diamonds with partner'.

Professor: 'Look at the full deal'.

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

Tomek: 'Excellent defence but the declarer may be still protected thanks to the nine of diamonds. Win the king with the ace, eliminate the clubs, play the king and queen of diamonds followed by the second round of spades.'

This is the final position:

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

North will play the jack of hearts after winning the trick with the ace of spades. South after ruffing will be endplayed.

Agata: 'So now you have found a solution to your initial defensive problem. After winning the trick with the queen of spades by playing the king of hearts we should pretend that we want to give partner a ruff. The declarer will cash the king and queen of diamonds and will give the ruff himself.'

Player of the 21st century?

A heated discussion was provoked by an interesting declarer problem.

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

W	N	E	S
–	–	–	1 ♠
dbl	pass	2 ♠	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Professor: 'Lead ♠Q.'

Jacek: 'South holds all key honours: ♥K, ♣K, and ♦A. The declarer has two spade tricks, four diamond tricks and two aces. A throw-in will produce the ninth trick. A 4-1 diamond shape with the single ace with South is a threat. I shall cross to the dummy with the ♥A and play a diamond. South wins the trick and plays a spade back. After cashing diamond tricks I shall throw in my RHO with the ♣K or ♥K, depending on the cards he will keep.'

Professor: 'This is exactly the solution proposed by our favourite author of bridge books dating back to the 20th century, H. W. Kelsey.'

Ania: 'I have another idea. What worries me a bit in Jacek's answer is the word 'depending', which implies that we shall have to guess which king South has bared. How does this 50% doubt compare with a 4-1 diamond shape with the imaginary ace with South? After winning a spade trick I shall play the ♦K. South will win the ace and play a spade. North will follow with the suit. I play the ♦J and a diamond to the queen and then I shall endplay South with a spade. After cashing three spade tricks first, and return will produce the ninth trick.'

Robert: 'That is the right way if South holds five spades and \spadesuit A doubleton. Holding three diamonds to the ace, the player will duck two diamonds, win the diamond continuation and play a spade...'

Agata: 'After a second diamond trick I shall cash the \spadesuit K and play a diamond...'

Tomek: 'But I hold 6 spades....'

Ania: 'We have to come back to the starting point, arriving at this final position'

\spadesuit –	N W E S	\spadesuit 6 5
\heartsuit 8 6 5		\heartsuit A Q 3
\diamondsuit 7 3		\diamondsuit –
\clubsuit A 7 4		\clubsuit Q 8 2

'Cash two diamond tricks, pitching two spades from the dummy. If you keep three established spade tricks, I shall cash both aces – one of the kings must be single by now, so it will fall. So you will keep two spades and four cards in hearts and clubs. I shall throw you in with the suit you have discarded.'

Robert: 'After cashing two spade tricks the dummy will be squeezed again and you will lose if I have one of the following hands:'

S1: \spadesuit J 10 9 x x \heartsuit K J x x \diamondsuit A x x \clubsuit K
S2: \spadesuit J 10 9 x x \heartsuit K \diamondsuit A x x \clubsuit K J x x

Jacek: 'I shall throw South in with the suit, which North discarded on a third diamond trick. North will discard his longest suit; with **N1** shape he will discard a club, with **N2** he will throw a heart.'

N1: \spadesuit Q x \heartsuit 10 x x \diamondsuit x x \clubsuit J 10 9 x x x
N2: \spadesuit Q x \heartsuit J 10 9 x x x \diamondsuit x x \clubsuit 10 x x

Professor: 'Good job, Jacek! Can you call a declarer who takes into consideration all conditions, and makes such profound analysis at the table in no time, the player of the 21st century?'

Jacek: 'Why, for me a player of the 21st century would be such a player that, holding small cards only, he would be able to follow

such declarer's analysis. Being fully aware of what he is doing, holding the **N1** hand he would play a heart; with the **N2** hand - a club, anticipating that such discard would bear fruit on the eight trick and would put the declarer on the wrong track.'

Unusual technique

Professor: 'A defensive problem.'

♠ J 8 6 2										
♥ 9 8										
♦ Q 7 6										
♣ A Q 9 4										
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 6 4 ♥ K 10 2 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ K 10 2
	N									
W		E								
	S									

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 NT*	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

* - invitational with fit.

Lead ♥9.

Silence.

Tomek: 'I cannot really see how I could make four tricks.'

Professor: 'Have a look at the full deal.'

♠ J 8 6 2										
♥ 9 8										
♦ Q 7 6										
♣ A Q 9 4										
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 6 4 ♥ K 10 2 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ K 10 2
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠ K 10										
♥ A Q J 7 5 3										
♦ K 10 5 2										
♣ J										
♠ A Q 7 5 3										
♥ 4										
♦ J 8										
♣ 8 7 6 5 3										

Robert: 'You will win a club, a spade and in a moment you will be squeezed in diamonds and clubs. Result - eleven tricks.'

Ania: 'Even you, Professor, cannot do anything about it.'

Professor: 'Imagination is essential.'

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

'Lead ♥9. You win in your hand and play the jack of clubs, North covers with the queen.'

A moment of hesitation.

Janek: 'I duck. South is a dangerous opponent. If South overtakes with the ace I shall have two discards!'

Professor: 'The entire hand might look as follows:'

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

♠ A J 8
♥ 9 6
♦ Q 7 6
♣ Q 9 8 4 3

♠ Q 7 5 3 2
♥ 8 4
♦ J 8
♣ A 7 6 5

Agata: 'This is incredible. In our first example we cover the jack with the queen of clubs, declarer ducks. We play a heart. The declarer plays the king of clubs and discards a spade. We win the ace, cash the ace of spades and wait for a diamond trick.'

'On the next flat board we get nine tricks instead of eleven.'

Diamond cuts a diamond

North takes advantage of his partner's hesitation on the first round of diamonds.

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

W	N	E	S
1 NT	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	3 NT	pass...

Lead ♥4, jack from the dummy, South shows an odd number of cards in the suit.

'The declarer plays a diamond from the dummy, your partner, after a slight hesitation, ducks.'

Leszek: 'Partner has the ace of diamonds; other key cards are with the declarer.'

I play a diamond back. We are fighting for overtricks.'

Professor: 'Let's see the full deal.'

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

'I suggest that you hold up your queen of diamonds.

Agata: 'After winning a trick with the ♦10 he will play a diamond from his hand to the king. After a heart return and establishing two tricks in this suit, the declarer will confidently play a diamond for the third time and there will be a nasty surprise for him.'

Tomek: 'If declarer notices my partner's hesitation and is able to correctly explain it, nothing will help.'

Professor: 'True, this is the level of bridge analysis to come in a few decades time.'

Tomek: 'In my opinion, in a dozen or so.'

Never rest while playing

Concentration is necessary even if you think that there is nothing you can do.

♠	10 9 7 3	♠	A 8 6
♥	Q 10 7	♥	A K 2
♦	7	♦	K Q 6 5
♣	K 8 5 4 3	♣	Q 10 2

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;"></td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"></td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N									
W		E								
	S									

W	N	E	S
—	—	1 ♣	1 ♠
dbl	4 ♠	dbl	pass
6 ♦	pass...		

Professor: 'Lead ♠10. The play goes fast; the ace of spades and a spade ruffed, the ace of diamonds and a diamond to the king. You pitch a club and partner follows suit twice. A spade ruff and then the ace and king of hearts. What now?'

Agata: 'The declarer has 1-4-6-2 shape. I must unblock the queen.'

Jacek: 'Let's think for a while. If partner has the jack of hearts then unblocking will work. If he holds the jack of clubs then you cannot unblock the queen. You may only hope for declarer to misguess in clubs.'

Robert: 'If you hesitate then an intelligent player cannot misguess the club honours.'

Unblocking means that you hold the king of clubs.'

Tomek: 'It is not you but your partner, who must have enough imagination to anticipate the entire situation and pass important information which jack he has. If he holds both jacks, then he should signal the jack of hearts.'

Here is the full deal.

♠ 5	♠ 10 9 7 3	♠ A 8 6									
♥ J 8 6 4	♥ Q 10 7	♥ A K 2									
♦ A J 10 9 3 2	♦ 7	♦ K Q 6 5									
♣ A 6	♣ K 8 5 4 3	♣ Q 10 2									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K Q J 4 2										
	♥ 9 5 3										
	♦ 8 4										
	♣ J 9 7										

South should play spades, starting with the lowest card, which denies the jack of hearts and implies a club value.

Wake up partner

Professor: 'A funny thing is that the entire intellectual work must be done by South.'

A huge majority of players sitting in this position will think there is nothing they can do on this deal and that it is a good opportunity to take a rest.'

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N			W		E			S			♠ A 8 6 ♥ K Q 9 2 ♦ 8 7 5 ♣ A K Q
	N												
W		E											
	S												
	♠ J 9 7 4 3 2 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ K J ♣ 7 3												

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 NT*	pass
3 ♥**	pass	6 ♥	pass...

* - forcing with fit

** - no shortage

Professor: 'Lead ♣J.'

'The declarer draws trumps in three rounds. Your partner follows suit once and discards the two and the four of clubs. Then the declarer cashes two club honours. How will you plan your defence?'

Agata: 'The declarer will most likely discard a spade or a diamond and ruff a spade.'

The diamond suit is decisive for the contract. I shall throw the king of diamonds on the club queen. This will make my partner's life easier.'

Robert: 'This move looks attractive by appearance only. After ruffing a spade, the declarer will play a diamond from his hand. Partner must rise with the queen, which will not be easy. Additionally, he must hold Q-10-9 in diamonds. Without the nine he will be endplayed.'

Tomek: 'I shall concentrate on the spade suit. I shall throw the seven on the king of spades and the jack on the ace. This is meant to be a signal for partner - do not play the standard way. I shall unblock the king of diamonds on the ace and hope for partner to wake up.'

Jacek: 'Note please, that with such defence it is enough if partner holds Q-10-x in diamonds, he does not need the nine.'

Professor: 'Here is the full deal. Making partner's life easier, only by appearances on this deal, cannot affect the quality of the defence.'

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

Serves you right

Professor: 'A defensive problem from an IMPs match:'

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

N		E
W		S

W	N	E	S
—	1 ♥	1 ♠	pass
3 NT	pass...		

'You lead the ♥7 and dummy's jack wins the trick. The declarer plays a club to the ten, you win with the queen and play the king of hearts. The declarer wins with the ace, your partner showing an even number of hearts. The jack of spades is overtaken with the queen and back comes a club to the nine. East's hand is more suitable for a 2♣ jump than for a 1♠ call but this is not our problem now.'

Robert: 'I cash the king of hearts. You can make easy 10 tricks in a spade contract. Sometimes one imp is worth a fortune.'

Ania: 'Six spade tricks, two hearts, probably three diamonds are more than you need. The declarer confused the games trying not to win tricks.'

Janek: 'He does not know that the king of spades is onside and tries to spot an additional chance.'

Agata: 'From the point of view of the declarer the entire deal may look as follows:'

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

‘Win the second club trick with the ace and play a spade. Poor thing, he was looking for an extra chance, let him think he has found one.’

Professor: ‘Actually, this was the whole deal’

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

Tomek: ‘I would like to see the declarer’s face when he wins the second spade with the ace and finesses ‘for sure’ against the jack of clubs. By cashing the king of spades you will squeeze the declarer. If he discards a diamond honour you will throw him in with a diamond.’

‘Two off will be a world record,’ said Tomek happily.

Pulled with the wool over his eyes

Professor: I often come across interpretation of unusual discards meaning wake up, partner!

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

W	N	E	S
—	—	1 ♦*	1 ♠
2 ♣	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 ♦	pass	3 ♠	pass
4 ♥	pass	4 ♠	pass
4 NT	pass	5 ♦	pass
6 ♣	pass...		

* - Precision

Lead ♠8.

Agata: 'A reconnaissance play may allow us to determine which of the defenders may have a doubleton ace.'

Robert: 'Forget the squeeze. Is there a real chance to make the contract?'

Professor: 'Yes. This is the full deal'

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

Ania: 'I cannot see how I can make it.'

Professor: 'Let's modify the whole deal'

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

Jacek: 'There are two play lines. The bidding shows that the king of diamonds is with South.'

Line 1 - Assuming that South holds six spades, after eliminating clubs and hearts, you will throw him in with a spade and he will have to underlead his king of diamonds.

Line 2 - Draw trumps, eliminate major suits and play a diamond to the nine.

Robert: 'In the last variant North will rise with the ten or the jack.'

Jacek: 'I have to guess whether he holds one honour or two.'

Ania: 'Holding the jack and the ten North will play without thinking. In the case of a single honour such an operation will require some intellectual effort. I shall be able to read the position if I concentrate hard enough.'

Tomek: 'So we have a solution to our initial problem. Play a diamond underleading your king, North will rise with the jack to protect his partner from an endplay and then you overtake the jack with the queen and South, holding the ace and the ten, to his surprise, will now be endplayed.'

Agata: 'An outstanding expert sitting South should anticipate this manoeuvre and by unusual discards will make his partner alert so that he could avoid being fooled.'

Professor: 'An interesting thing is that rising with the jack of diamonds is considered as a technical standard and therefore unusual discards are meaningful - do not play the standard way. I often come across a different interpretation of unusual discards - wake up, partner!'

Ania: 'What kinds of discards do you consider unusual?'

Jacek: 'For example, the jack of spades on the first trick and a small one on the second and the queen on the third.'

I thought that he would think that i had thought

Even a simple problem may be a battlefield of minds:

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

* - sound raise to four spades

Lead ♣J.

Professor: 'This is a problem sort of 'I thought that he would think that I had thought'.

Ania: 'If we eliminate hearts then we should play spades from the top, ruff a club and concede a spade. Singleton king of spades is an extra chance.'

Robert: 'What if trumps are 3-0?'

Ania: 'You will have to guess the queen of diamonds.'

Janek: 'The defence may easily frustrate the plan. South will rise with a heart honour and play a spade.'

Professor: 'We shall draw conclusions based on the defenders' moves: if a clever defender sees through our plan and wants to thwart it that means that the king of spades is offside, maybe single.'

Agata: 'Does it mean that if South rises with an honour and plays a club, then he holds ♠K-x-x onside and is trying to facilitate the execution of a plan that is unfavourable to us?'

Professor: 'In my career it was not very frequent to come across such entangled analyses. For instance in this case: 'I hold king third of spades, I rise with the queen of hearts because I have king and queen and play a trump so that declarer will think:

'This scoundrel wants to frustrate my elaborate plan. This means that I have to play spades from the top.' 'Usually, the defenders' plans are less entangled.'

Agata: 'Does this reasoning confirm my conclusions?'

Professor: 'Yes. This is the real hand'

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

The defender, after a long hesitation, rose with the king and played a spade. The declarer won the ace, without giving a second thought, and finessed the queen of diamonds correctly, scoring an overtrick. When inquired why he played it this way he admitted frankly: 'My opponent figured out what I was driving at and this move gave him away.'

Profound knowledge makes a modest man

It is time for a very difficult defensive problem.

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J 10 9 2
N				
W E				
S				
	♥ 4 2			
	♦ Q J 10			
	♣ A K Q 9			
	♠ K Q 4			
	♥ A 6 3			
	♦ 8 4 3			
	♣ 10 8 5 2			

W	N	E	S
—	2 ♥	dbl	3 ♥
4 ♠	pass...		

Professor: 'Lead ♥K and the five of hearts. You win the heart continuation with the ace. What do you do next and why?'

Robert: 'I play a diamond, this is what my natural instinct tells me.'

Ania: 'My partner played ♥5 in the second trick so I play a club.'

Professor: 'Let's switch places; now we are in the declarer's position.'

♠ A 6 5 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J 10 9 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ 10 9		♥ 4 2			
♦ A K 6 2		♦ Q J 10			
♣ 6 4 3		♣ A K Q 9			

Lead ♥K and ♥5, South wins with the ace and plays a third round of hearts.

Imagine the full deal, which looks a bit different:

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

Tomek: 'If I finesse a spade then North will play yet another heart, executing a trump promotion.'

Professor: 'Can we do something about it?'

After a longer hesitation:

Leszek: 'I ruff in hand and underlead the ace of trumps. This will allow me to avoid the promotion.'

Robert: 'You suggest, Professor, that in this defensive problem we should play a third heart and the declarer will play for the trump honour doubleton offside?'

Professor: 'Only if partner holds the eight of spades you have a chance to put the opponent on a wrong track. I do not have to tell you that it must be a very good player. Note how much an imaginative defender can meddle with a seemingly flat board.'

Beauty is a riddle

Professor: 'Time to play a contract.'

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

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	2 ♠
3 ♥	pass	4 NT	pass
5 ♣	pass	7 ♥	pass...

'Lead ♠10. You win with the ace and draw trumps. North discards a club on the second trump.'

Ania: 'Spade and diamond squeeze against South.'

Robert: 'You are giving him six spades, two hearts, four diamonds and one club, meaning that North, holding nine good clubs, did not make any call at all in course of the bidding.'

Agata: 'South may hold three diamonds Q J 10'.

Professor: 'Instead of developing complicated concepts an ounce of subtlety will do.'

Leszek observed ironically: '...and imagination.'

Tomek: 'And imagination. I stay in the dummy with the second trump and play to the nine of spades. Will anybody expect such nerve?'

Professor: 'There is a certain intellectual factor that suggests rising with the queen.'

Ania: 'Only a scary look from your partner.'

Professor: 'North had a chance to discard the nine of spades to the second round of trumps. How many players in the world would anticipate such a move by declarer and try to make partner's life easier?'

Agata: 'Not many.'

Professor: 'This was the full deal'

	♠ 10										
	♥ 8										
	♦ Q 10 7 3										
	♣ K J 9 8 7 3 2										
♠ 9 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ A K J 2
N		E									
W											
	S										
♥ A K 10 9 7 5		♥ Q J 4 2									
♦ A 6 2		♦ K 9 8 5									
♣ 6 4		♣ A									
	♠ Q 8 7 6 5 4										
	♥ 6 3										
	♦ J 4										
	♣ Q 10 5										

There is no chance for a squeeze. Only the imaginative play towards the nine of spades gives you a real chance of making the contract.

Mysterious manoeuvre

Hugh Kelsey is the author of this problem

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J 10 ♥ 6 5 ♦ K 8 6 3 2 ♣ A Q J 6
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ 3 2 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ Q 9 7 4 ♣ K 10 7 4			

W	N	E	S
1 ♠	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 ♥	pass	2 NT	pass
3 ♠	pass	4 ♠	pass
5 ♦	pass	6 ♠	pass...

Professor: 'I used it in a slightly changed form due to the huge role that imagination plays in it. Lead ♣3. Declarer played quickly: club ace, diamond ace, ace and king of hearts and a heart ruffed. He pitched a club on the king of diamonds and ruffed a club to produce this final position'

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J ♥ — ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ Q J
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ 3 2 ♥ — ♦ Q 9 ♣ K 10			

Declarer ruffed another heart.

Ania with a smile says: 'I follow with a spade. I do not know why but since it is a problem I have to invent something.'

Robert: 'The declarer had 6-4-1-2 shape, if my partner has two trump tricks he will get them, our discard is irrelevant.'

Professor: 'I am deeply convinced that 99.99% of bridge players would defend in a mindless way, thinking that there was nothing they can do in this board. Let's get back to shape in Kelsey's problem.'

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J ♥ — ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ Q J
N				
W E				
S				
♠ A 2				
♥ —				
♦ Q 9				
♣ K 10				

Tomek: 'Holding the ace of spades will create a possibility for a trump promotion. If partner has ♠9, then we can play whatever we like. The situation is different if partner has the eight of spades. Nothing you can do without promotion.'

Agata: 'Promotion but in which suit? Declarer will ruff the suit we shall discard.'

Janek: 'Therefore we have to play the two of trumps. In the following final position

	♠ 8 6 3 ♥ — ♦ J ♣ 9				
♠ K Q 9 7 5 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ —	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ — ♥ — ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ Q J
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ A ♥ — ♦ Q 9 ♣ K 10				

the declarer will ruff, for instance, a club and play the king of spades. After winning the trick, we shall return the fourth club and a delight

the our partner's eyes will compensate for the hard work we have done performing this difficult analysis.'

Agata: 'And what has our initial plan to do with the board?'

Professor: 'Put yourself in declarer's position.'

Jacek: 'Preparing a promotion, the defender revealed his intentions. In a five-card ending he had to keep two cards in both the minor suits, so ruffing with a small trump he bared the ace of spades. Instead of the king we should play the seven of spades and avoid the promotion.'

Professor: 'Correct. Playing ♠7 is the result of careful analysis of the defenders' play. Now and then we shall come across a different position. For instance:

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

South will underruff the fourth heart with the two of spades, not knowing why, but this should not discourage us from drawing conclusions from opponents' moves.'

Ania: 'I have never encountered such well thought-out classy play like underruffing, holding the two and three in trumps.'

Professor: 'The average level of play goes up regularly and the techniques of declarer play and defence are not a problem any more, even for an average player. However, there are still huge reserves in concentration, motivation and bridge imagination.'

Illusions will lead you astray

Professor: 'Another defensive problem'

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A 8 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K Q 9 8 5 ♣ J 6 5 3
N				
W E				
S				

♠ K 5
 ♥ A K 10 6 3
 ♦ J 10 4
 ♣ K 8 5

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1 ♥
1 ♠	3 ♥*	Dbl	pass
4 ♠	pass...		

* - preemptive

Partner leads ♥Q.

Robert: 'I do not see where we can get the fourth trick, except clubs.'

Ania: 'Provided we get two heart tricks.'

Agata: 'Cash two rounds of hearts and play a club.'

Janek: 'What cards must West hold to make a jump to 4♠? He must have the queen of clubs.'

Ania: 'If he holds the queen of clubs he is going to make it, whatever.'

Professor: 'Let's look at a play problem'

♠ Q J 10 9 6 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ A Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A 8 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K Q 9 8 5 ♣ J 6 5 3
N					
W E					
S					

Lead ♥Q. South wins the king and returns ♦10.

Tomek: 'Imagination again. This is a typical book play problem at the level of a secondary school. Win the diamond in the dummy, finesse the king of clubs, cash the ace of clubs, cross to the dummy with the ace of spades and discard a heart to the club jack. You will get a well deserved reward. This is the whole deal'

♠ QJ10962	N	♠ A8
♥ 75	W	♥ 42
♦ A62	E	♦ KQ985
♣ A Q	S	♣ J653
	♠ K53	
	♥ AK1063	
	♦ 10	
	♣ K852	

Ania: 'In our case, we shall be punished for good technique.'

♠ QJ10962	N	♠ A8
♥ 75	W	♥ 42
♦ A62	E	♦ KQ985
♣ A Q	S	♣ J653
	♠ 743	
	♥ QJ98	
	♦ 73	
	♣ 10972	
	♠ K5	
	♥ AK1063	
	♦ J104	
	♣ K85	

After the king of clubs we shall play a diamond again and after winning the trick with the king of spades we shall play a diamond for partner to ruff.

Agata: 'Professor, can we really lead the declarer astray on many seemingly banal hands?'

Professor: 'In many cases nobody makes any analysis of flat boards, however one basic condition must be met - our opponent must be a very good player. Only a good bridge player will spot all the risks and be able to devise a more sophisticated plan. A poor player will win the ♦10 with the ace and finesse the spade so the whole subtlety of the move will be pointless.'

Trick thief

Professor: – Pairs tournament.

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">N</td> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">W</td> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">S</td> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ Q J 4 3 ♥ Q 7 4 2 ♦ Q J 5 3 ♣ A</p>
	N									
W		E								
	S									
	<p>♠ 9 5 ♥ K 9 ♦ 9 8 7 6 ♣ K J 9 8 4</p>									

W	N	E	S
1 ♠	pass	2 NT*	pass
3 ♦**	pass	4 ♠	pass...

* – game forcing with fit

** – shortness

Lead ♥J.

Robert: ‘There is nothing I can do in this hand.’

Ania: ‘My imagination will not be much of a help this time.’

Professor: ‘Still another very difficult university level board. The jack of hearts lead, declarer plays small from the dummy and South, to the kibitzers’ surprise, plays the king. This is not the end of it – the declarer ducks! South nods his head understandingly, plays a heart and soon after, he gets a ruff. Two excellent players made moves totally incomprehensible for the kibitzer.’

My question is: ‘Who will tell me what declarer’s hand is? Imagination, as usual, is the key.’

Silence fell. After two minutes:

Janek: ‘To make the task easier here is the full deal’

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

Ania: 'What sense does it make to duck the king of hearts?'

Janek: 'From the point of view of the declarer the whole deal may look as follows'

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

Agata: 'Ducking the heart king will drive the contract home, winning the trick with the ace will kill the game. We shall concede three heart tricks and a spade.'

Tomek: 'South had only a few seconds to think the move over. I do not believe that he would be able to perform such complicated analysis that quickly.'

Professor: 'I admit that playing the king of hearts was merely an act of helplessness. Partner did not try to cash the ace of diamonds so the ace of diamonds singleton is with the declarer.'

Ania: 'Why the singleton ace and not the king?'

Professor: 'Nobody shows a single king as shortness. Many players do not recognise even the singleton ace as shortness. The player who opened the bidding has the ace of hearts and a spade honour. Practically, we cannot lose a heart trick, maybe only if the opener's shape 5-2-1-5 or 6-2-1-4, but then West would rather show his two-suited shape in course of the bidding.'

Subtle protection

Professor: 'I shall tell you a story.

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♣	1 ♠	dbl	1 NT*
2 ♣**	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 NT	pass...		

* - 7-9PC with support in ♠

** - natural +16 HCP

Lead ♠J. The queen of spades wins the trick.

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

The final of the world championships is underway. An outstanding analyst is commentating on vugraph. In his opinion the deal is trivial – the correct declarer play consists of utilizing a club chance and playing the two of clubs to the jack so that we keep the eight in the dummy to finesse a club honour after entering the dummy with the ace of hearts, even if clubs are 4-1 with South holding four. However, the champion declarer plays the ♣8 on the second round.'

'A surprising inaccuracy' criticises the commentator.

After the match the kibitzers asked the champion why he had missed this subtle technical chance.

It is difficult to answer the question because it requires a lot of imagination.

Professor addressed his students: 'Try to find an answer to the kibitzers' question.'

Robert: 'He simply went down in a cold game and tries to excuse himself.'

Ania: 'But if the board arouses the Professor's interest there must be something in it.'

Professor: 'Thank you for your confidence.'

Agata: 'You have to anticipate clever moves by the defenders.'

Janek: 'I know!!! Clubs may be 3-2 and we shall go down if we play as the analyst suggests.'

Ania: 'Why?'

Janek: 'Imagine a trivial North hand'

	♠ A J 10 9 2										
	♥ 8 5 4 3										
	♦ 10 9										
	♣ Q 5										
♠ K 8 7	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 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		♠ Q 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 7 6		♥ A Q J 10									
♦ A K Q		♦ 8 7 5 3									
♣ A J 10 9 3		♣ 8 4 2									
	♠ 6 5 3										
	♥ K 9 2										
	♦ J 6 4 2										
	♣ K 7 6										

'You lead the jack of spades, queen from the dummy and a count signal from partner indicating odd number of cards in the suit. The declarer plays the two of clubs to the jack. A killing, though difficult,

defence would be ducking by North! Declarer will be powerless. The champion recognised the class of his opponents and that is why he tried to protect himself from the 4-1 club shape. Playing a small club from the dummy would put the contract at risk if the suit broke 3-2.

Imagination makes reality more beautiful

Problem is exceptionally difficult.

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

W

N

E

S

—
3♠

pass
pass

1♣
6♠

pass
pass...

Lead ♥K.

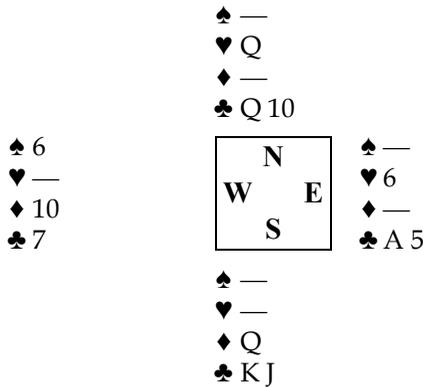
Professor: 'Pairs. The bidding 6♠ was poor – you have the same tricks in a 6NT contract. So the overtrick is very precious, it may turn a shared bottom into a top score.'

Robert: 'North must hold five hearts and four diamonds (or Q-J-x) to produce the following ending.'

	♠ —	
	♥ Q	
	♦ Q J	
	♣ —	
♠ 6	N	♠ —
♥ —	W E	♥ 6
♦ 10 4	S	♦ K 7
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ 5	
	♣ K J	

The last spade will catch North in a heart-diamond squeeze.

Agata: 'The odds are for five hearts with North and four diamonds with South (or Q-J-x). This is the ending we shall arrive at.'



‘And in this final position we shall execute a double squeeze.’

Professor: ‘These were the answers at the level of a secondary bridge school.’

Ania: ‘Such a line of play does not have much sense if South shows an even number of cards in hearts.’

Robert: ‘He might hold two cards.’

Janek: ‘Did not you see that North had passed? This excludes a holding of

K-Q-J-x-x-x. However, I cannot see any other chance to make the contract.’

Professor: ‘With 5-3 heart distribution and North holding five of them we can manage. I admire the beauty of the problem with 4-4 heart shape!’

‘Let’s see the four hands.’

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

After five minutes of silence a group of students cried in unison:

'No squeeze' - the students shouted all at the same time.

Ania: 'If no squeeze, then we will need a mistake by an opponent.'

Professor: 'In a way, yes.'

Tomek: 'Now we shall be told that imagination is what we really need.'

Professor: 'True, but the problem is exceptionally difficult. Imagine switching two cards only - the king of spades to ♠5 and ♦10 to the eight.'

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

Such declarer's play is called le coup du diable.

Ace of hearts, heart ruff and spade finesse. We have succeeded but only to a slight extent; the king of spades is onside but third. Ruff a heart, we know from the discards that the suit breaks 4-4. Cross to dummy with the king of diamonds and the last heart is ruffed. Now is the time for the club suit.

We ruff both small clubs to produce this ending.

	♠ K 4										
	♥ —										
	♦ 10										
	♣ —										
♠ J 10	<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		♠ A
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ —		♥ —									
♦ 8		♦ 7 2									
♣ —		♣ —									
	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ Q										
	♣ K J										

Now we throw South in with a diamond and we have executed the coup du diable.

Agata: 'If South unblocks the queen and jack of diamonds then North will win the diamond trick and even the devil himself will not help.'

Tomek: 'You suggest, Professor, that in our initial example we should simulate the coup du diable to make South unblock the queen and jack of diamonds?'

Professor: 'With 4-4 heart break this is the only chance I can see.'

Ania: 'How can North persuade his partner that the declarer only pretends he is playing for le coup du diable?'

Professor laughed wholeheartedly: 'Your children or maybe your grandchildren will perform the analysis at the level you suggest, Ania'.

Triple loop

Professor: 'One of the Italian champions played this hand a few years ago.'

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♦	4 ♥	pass	pass
Dbl	pass	5 ♦	pass...

Lead ♥A. After doing some thinking, North played the ♠10. Declarer crossed to the dummy with a diamond and ruffed a heart with the king of diamonds. He then reached dummy again with a trump. To his surprise, it was South who showed out, discarding the queen of clubs. He then ruffed a heart with the ace of diamonds, South getting rid of another club. What next?

It was Tomek's semester work assignment for a credit.

Professor: 'What did you prepare?'

Tomek: 'On a heart continuation the declarer play would be trivial. Concede a club and a spade-club squeeze is obvious. Playing a spade prevented the easy manoeuvre before partial trump drawing. There is a risk of ruffing and drawing all trumps will obstruct the communication that is necessary to execute this simple squeeze. The only hope comes from the queen of clubs discard by South, who signals a ♣ Q J 10 sequence. I imagined North hand like this'

♠ 10
♥ A K Q 10 9 8 2
♦ 9 6 3
♣ K 6

Cash the club ace:

North does not unblock the king – concede a club and in no time you will execute the squeeze.

North unblocks the king – enter the dummy with a trump and this is the final position:

♠ —	♠ —
♥ K Q 10 9	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 8
♣ 6	♣ 5 3
♠ A K 3	♠ 7 6
♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ 8
♣ 8 4	♣ 5 3
	♠ J 9 8
	♥ —
	♦ —
	♣ J 10

Play the ♦8 and South is squeezed.

Let's look at the full deal.

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

Professor: 'You promised different variants of the deal.'

Tomek: 'The entire deal may look a bit different'

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

‘We arrive at this ending (South got rid of a spade some time before).

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

On the eight of diamonds South cleverly discards ♣10. The declarer discards a spade and triumphantly concedes a club. And now – surprise.’

‘Well done!’ – Professor praised Tomek. ‘The collaboration in defence was impeccable but didn’t the declarer wonder where the nine of clubs was?’

Ania: ‘It might have been with the king.’

Tomek: ‘A partnership executing a defence like that should not have problems with signalling the nine of clubs.’

The final position was as follows:

	♠ —										
	♥ K Q 10 9										
	♦ —										
	♣ 9										
♠ A K 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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		♠ 7 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ —		♥ —									
♦ —		♦ 8									
♣ 8 4		♣ 5 3									
	♠ J 9 8										
	♥ —										
	♦ —										
	♣ J 7										

South discards the jack of clubs on the last diamond. Declarer plays a club and goes three off.

Ania: 'A true champion sitting West would have spotted the opponents' signals and would have played a club and not the ♦8 in this ending. North wins the trick and plays a heart, ruffed in the dummy, and South is squeezed.'

Professor: 'My dear students, I am proud of you. The analysis of this board is a good example of the progress you have made in the past year.'

Chapter 2

OUTER SPACE

The bridge stories will be loosely linked by the same characters. Everything will happen in a distant future in outer space and on Planet Earth.

In the spaceship.

They were approaching planet D-7. A vast area spread between the spaceship and the target. Charming Ragazza, pilot Pirc and Commander April were in a perfectly screened cabin shell. They were watching the constellation system for a moment but the view was so familiar that their feelings revolted against it. Misty gleams pierced outer space. Commander April turned towards Pirc and Ragazza to make direct eye contact. He pressed the button "bridge". Card layouts were displayed on the players' personal computers. The automatic pilot took over.

You may ask: 'Who was the fourth in the game?' Of course an on-board computer AII - Artificial Integrated Intellect.

Here is the most interesting board in this game of bridge.

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

Bidding:			
W	N	E	S
All	April	Pirx	Ragazza
—	3 ♦	dbl	pass
5 ♠	pass	6 ♠	pass...

The king of diamonds was led. All won with the ace. Almost a minute of hesitation surprised everybody. The computer usually played in a split second. Then the play went fast. He played four rounds of spades, then three rounds of hearts, ruffing the third round, and continued accurately with the eight of clubs to the ace.

This was the final position:

	♠ —		
	♥ J		
	♦ Q J 10		
	♣ —		
♠ 10	N W E S	♠ —	
♥ —		♥ 9	
♦ 9 4		♦ —	
♣ 4		♣ K 10 3	
	♠ —		
	♥ —		
	♦ —		
	♣ Q 9 7 2		

Now All played the ♥9 from the dummy, hoping for the jack to be with the beautiful astronaut. Ragazza, with a strange glint in her eyes, discarded the ♣9. All was prepared for that. He ruffed the heart with his last trump and exited with the four of clubs. When the two and three of clubs were turned off simultaneously on the monitors the picture shimmered.

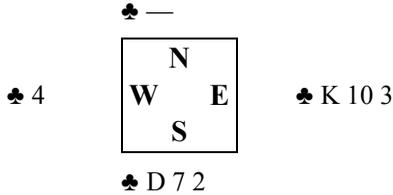
‘I thought you were devoid of all emotions and now look, even Artificial Intellect flipped its lid,’ – Ragazza teased him.

‘My compliments to you, on your fantastic ducking. How did you figure out that you should keep the two of clubs?’ – the computer praised the lovely astronaut.

‘It was your hesitation, All, that put me on alert,’ – admitted the girl.

Pilot Pirx shook his head in disbelief: 'All, you better admit it, you did not remember whether the two of clubs was played on the first trick. It could have happened to me but should not happen to you.'

'Would it have changed anything?' - asked Commander April. 'You should have covered the ♣4 with the ten of clubs.'



'After winning the trick with the queen, Ragazza holding the seven and the two would have to lead to the king and three.'

On the moon

In the armoured dome of Ciołkowski Space Station, lit by the slanting moon rays, an unusually interesting bridge match was in progress. A team from the planet Earth arrived for a bridge match with a team from Eden, a planet thousands of light years from our constellation. Their journey lasted a couple of hours due to the state-of-the-art teleportation facilities.

The line-up of the teams was as follows:

Eden:

Loop - Kerr, Auron - Met

The Earth:

Ragazza - Beautiful Astronaut

Bolo - Platinum Ace

Manollo - Earth Analyst

Colonel - Commander-in-chief of the Long-range Military Troops

Do not trust edenians bearing gifts

The score was changing from board to board.

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

The bidding in the open cabin was as follows:

W	N	E	S
Ragazza	Met	Bolo	Auron
—	—	1 NT	2 ♠
pass	2 NT	pass	3 ♦
pass	3 NT	pass	4 ♠
pass...			

Ragazza started with the ♦7 and Auron, the Edenian, without giving much thought, ducked in the dummy. Bolo, after winning the queen, played the ace and a third diamond for his partner to ruff. The lovely astronaut dropped the two of trumps on the table. She tried to grab it but to no avail. Auron overruffed with a triumphant smile and... could not make the contract any more. He crossed to his hand with a ruff and played the ace and queen of spades.

Bolo – Platinum Ace, after winning the trick with the king, played another diamond and now the ruff by West produced a setting trick.

The bidding in the closed cabin was slightly different but the contract was the same:

W Kerr	N Colonel	E Loop	S Manollo
— pass	— 4 ♠	1 NT pass...	3 ♠

Kerr led the ♦7, Loop won with the queen, played ace and a small diamond for his partner to ruff. When Kerr was lost in thoughts, Manollo did not initially know what the problem was. After three minutes of analysis, the Edenian ruffed with the two of spades. The Earth Analyst does not trust the comer from Eden when he offers a gift, especially after long considerations. Manollo did not overruff with the three of trumps. He simply pitched a heart. A bit later he finessed the spade and drew the outstanding trumps.

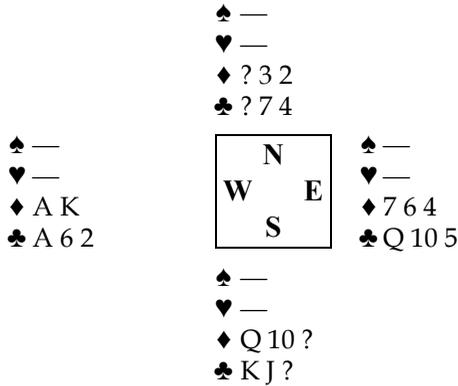
After the match, the guests from Eden split into two groups; Auron and Met criticised Ragazza for pretending absentmindedness, while Loop and Kerr admired the lightning analysis and reflexes of the beautiful astronaut.

Question marks

On the next board Platinum Ace demonstrated his excellent skills as declarer, drawing conclusions from the bidding. Table presence was essential on this deal.

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

Lead ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q - South pitches a club and a diamond. Both declarers ruffed and played the ace of spades, North discarding a heart. They played four more rounds of trumps, arriving at this end position:



Bolo and Loop had to guess the layout. There were two options for the declarers. The bidding showed that South held the king of clubs:

- a) South keeps three diamonds and two clubs – concede a club,
- b) South keeps two diamonds and three clubs – cash the ace and king of diamonds and play a club to the ten.

The Colonel’s defence was perfect. First he discarded two clubs and the nine of diamonds. Manollo got rid of all his hearts and pitched a diamond on the last spade. Loop cashed the ace and king of diamonds and went down. Met defended in the same way as the Colonel. All commentators stated that it would be very difficult for the declarer to read the actual layout.

Bolo played the ace of diamonds, South following with the ten. All expected that there would be no swing on the board. However, the declarer cashed the ace of clubs and Met followed with the jack discontentedly.

After the match, bridge journalists asked Bolo to comment.

‘The secret lies in “table presence” – said Platinum Ace. ‘Auron opened 3♥ without giving it a second thought. I presumed that his shape was 0-7-3-3. In my opinion with the cards suggested by the discards:

♠ —
 ♥ A K Q 10 8 4 2
 ♦ J 8 3 2
 ♣ 9 4

Auron should have considered another option – a 4♥ opening. At this level it is difficult to guess the distribution from the way the opponents play. You don't always win the battle of minds.'

'The problem is interesting from another point of view. The declarer's hand could be slightly different.'

♠ A K Q J 9 6
 ♥ 9 7
 ♦ A K 2
 ♣ A 6

'With this layout one of the defence options will be baring the king of clubs. The defence should look different. Edenians frequently use replacement count signals' – explained Auron. North holding plenty of hearts may, using them properly, inform his partner about the number of cards in diamonds (in the higher of the two key suits). This way South will know the declarer's hand, which will give him time to react properly in course of events.

Bolo: 'In this case the defender baring the king will not help. The declarer must find at least five diamonds with South. If the suit breaks 4-3 North will hold the trick and will have a heart to play back. It is enough to count diamonds carefully.

Never trust a woman

Ragazza performed very well in the second half of the match. This is an interesting board from this part of the match.

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

W	N	E	S
Auron Ragazza	Manollo Loop	Met Colonel	Bolo Kerr
— 3 NT	3 ♥ pass...	pass	pass

Lead ♦9.

Auron plays the jack of clubs and Bolo ducks. The declarer continues the suit. South wins with the king and plays the ♥8. The declarer covers with the 10 and Manollo wins with the king and plays a diamond back. The Edenian cleverly plays the jack of hearts. Manollo decides to duck. Now the declarer tests the distribution of diamonds and spades. Auron went down one and praised both opponents for ducking the first round of clubs and a heart at a later stage.

A lovely blond was a declarer at the other table.

The lead and declarer play were the same but in the ending

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

Instead of the jack of hearts she played the ♥6 and was very confused. 'Concentrate' - hissed her partner, although children, fish and the dummy should be seen but not heard. Keer (South) watched the course of events with horror on his face. Loop won the trick and played a spade back, ducked the queen of hearts but it did not help - his partner was squeezed.

Spectators have been arguing until now whether Ragazza was fully aware what she was doing or played the ♥6 absentmindedly, which permitted her to rectify the count and set up the three-suit squeeze against Kerr.

Aliens invade the earth

How to Rescue the Earth?

On June 16, 2068, the head of the Institute for Contacts with Extraterrestrial Civilisations, called into being at a specially convened Internet conference, announced that bridge players rescued the Earth. How did it happen?

Hardly a few days have passed from the first observations made by the Royal Greenwich Observatory and the landing of the ALIENS has become a fact. Nobody has any doubts that we are encountering much higher civilisation than the terrestrial. A spaceship has not responded to desperate attempts of NASA to establish contact. And one day the ALIENS appeared in the form of balls, moving freely in the air. They ignored the earthlings but showed great interest in a game of bridge played in a nearby delightful house owned by a galaxy grandmaster.

It turned out that bridge is one of favourite pastimes of ALIENS from distant galaxies. After a moment of watching, a ball-shaped visitor imitating the English language, proposed a match.

Do not twinkle, my love, do not twinkle

The ball-shaped bodies stretched out their tentacles and picked up the dealt cards. The game in the closed room was soon in progress.

	♠ 10 9 ♥ A Q 10 2 ♦ 8 6 ♣ J 10 7 5 2											
♠ A J 5 3 ♥ 9 5 ♦ A K Q J 10 ♣ A 8	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		♠ Q 6 2 ♥ 8 7 4 3 ♦ 5 3 2 ♣ 9 6 3	
N												
W	E											
	S											
	♠ K 8 7 4 ♥ K J 6 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ K Q 4											
W Oval	N Manollo	E Longitudinal	S Galaxy Grandmaster									
1 ♦	pass	pass	dbl									
1 ♠	2 ♥	pass	pass									
dbl	3 ♣	3 ♦	pass...									

In the open room, the Colonel played the same contract after similar bidding. The ♠10 was led. The earthling covered with the queen and ducked the king!

After spade continuation, the Colonel drew two rounds of trumps and ruffed the fourth spade.

In the meantime, the closed room saw interesting things taking place. Oval was the declarer. Manollo, sitting North, also led the ♠10. Oval, after some academic reflection, ducked the ten in both hands. Manollo, to a surprise of millions of spectators, switched to a club. The ALIEN was powerless - he had to concede two hearts, a club and two spades.

After the match, journalists asked Manollo to comment on the declarer play and defence.

'If the whole deal had been as follows' - started the Earth Analyst...

	♠ 10 9 8 4							
	♥ A Q 10							
	♦ 8 6							
	♣ J 10 7 5							
♠ A J 5 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> </tr> </table>	N		W	E		S	♠ Q 6 2
N								
W	E							
	S							
♥ 9 5		♥ 8 7 4 3						
♦ A K Q J 10		♦ 5 3 2						
♣ A 8		♣ 9 6 3						
	♠ K 7							
	♥ K J 6 2							
	♦ 9 7 4							
	♣ K Q 4 2							

Then the play by Oval would have been perfect. With the actual layout the ALIEN expected a spade continuation, which was the line followed by the Colonel. I switched to a club because Oval twinkled terribly before he ducked ♠10. This allowed me to see through his plan.'

Matax or crocodile?

On the next deal the bidding was identical at both tables.

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

W	N	E	S
Ball-Shaped Manollo	Ragazza Longitudinal	Cylindrical G. Grandmaster	Colonel Oval

1 ♥	2 ♣	3 ♣	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

This was the first poor deal for the lovely astronaut. Ragazza cashed the ace and king of clubs and switched to a spade. Ball-Shaped wasted no time in reaching this ending:

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

He played a diamond to the king and endplayed the astronaut with a club.

‘I played like a typical blonde’ – she admitted with self-criticism.

‘The defence was not so obvious’ – the Colonel tried to comfort her.

Longitudinal led ♣A followed with the ♣K and the ♣9. Oval discarded a spade on the third club. After ruffing a club, Manollo played the ♥J and a heart to the ace. Everybody followed suit. He successfully finessed the spade and crossed to his hand with a heart (North discarding a club).

Here is the analysis performed by Manollo: ‘Longitudinal’s shapes of hand’:

a) 2-2-3-6 – there is no problem in this situation; we shall establish a diamond trick easily,

b) 1-2-4-6 – in this case we have a chance to throw South in with the second diamond. In both cases we play the ace of diamonds and the ♦2 with the intention of ducking in the dummy.

Fortunately, Longitudinal saw through Manollo’s plan and remembered a manoeuvre called ‘Buy yourself a matax’.

‘Matax is an animal from our planet resembling your crocodile’ – explained Longitudinal a bit later. Longitudinal rose with the queen and the deal was over. There was no swing due to careful play by Manollo.

Longitudinal made a mistake because he did not trust his partner. Oval should have unblocked the jack of diamonds on the ace (if he held it). Cooperation within the partnership is possible only if both players are equally involved. In this case, a routine conclusion coming from the fact that the declarer did not take a diamond finesse, so he did not have the jack, was missed.

Sadder but wiser

It was a long time since the onlookers had seen the Colonel looking so embarrassed. And this board was the reason for that:

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

♠ J 10 8 6 2
♥ J 9 6 2
♦ 6
♣ 5 3 2

Open room

W	N	E	S
Ball-Shaped	Ragazza	Cylindrical	Colonel
1 ♦	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 NT	pass	4 ♦	pass
4 ♥	pass	4 ♠	pass
4 NT	pass	5 ♦	pass
6 NT	pass...		

Lead ♣Q.

In closed room, Manollo and Galaxy Grandmaster — arrived at the correct contract of 6♦, which was easy to make.

A dramatic battle was taking place in the open room. The ALIENS, after a poor auction, arrived at 6NT. After the ♣Q lead, the Ball-Shaped played three rounds of diamonds, the Colonel discarding a spade. Ragazza, after winning the diamond trick, returned a club.

Ball-Shaped produced this ending:

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

He played the last diamond, discarding a heart and executed a squeeze against the Colonel, who also discarded a heart. Now the spade ace and a spade to the king forced Ragazza to get rid of a heart stopper.

'If I had played a heart after winning the queen of diamonds then the declarer would not have had a good discard on the fifth diamond' - said the astronaut apologetically.

Ball-Shaped tried to comfort her - 'I would have managed, anyway. The ending would be as follows:

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

You have to discard a heart on the last diamond; I shall pitch a club and so will South. On the eleventh trick a club to the ace will set up a squeeze against the Colonel'.

The Colonel, who did not spot the double squeeze risk, met harsh criticism from his colleagues. Had South retained a stopper, he would have changed the entire board. After the same beginning, Ball-Shaped will produce the same final position.

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

On the eighth trick, he will play a diamond and everybody will discard a heart.

North will discard two clubs on the ace and king of spades and a squeeze will not be possible.

'I realised that there would be a squeeze on the third trick,' apologised the Colonel. 'But to my dismay I noticed that I held the two and three of clubs. I used my precious five to give a count signal...

You can judge the horse by its teeth

Excellent and difficult moves should be made with a poker face.

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

W Ball-Shaped Manollo	N Ragazza Longitudinal	E Cylindrical Galaxy	S Colonel Oval
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	pass
1 ♠	pass	2 ♦*	pass
3 ♦**	pass	4 ♣	pass
6 ♣	pass...		

2♦* - waiting

3♦** - heart transfer - good hand 4-3-1-5

Lead ♦6.

Both declarers expertly ruffed two diamonds and crossed to the dummy with the second trump. It was time to finesse the heart. Ragazza and Longitudinal ducked the jack of hearts.

Ball-Shaped demonstrated his expertise as declarer. He played to the queen of spades.

If the king of spades is with North he will claim the rest.

If the king of spades is with South, then a spade-heart squeeze against South will create an additional chance (assuming that the king of hearts is onside).

This would be the final position:

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

Now, a club performs a spade-heart squeeze against South. 'Excellent plan but unfortunate' - observed Cylindrical.

Manollo, after winning a trick with the jack of hearts played the ace of hearts and a heart. Millions of earthlings praised his ingenious intuition. Manollo told only his grandchildren what guided him in this ingenious declarer play: 'Longitudinal went pink while ducking a heart.'

Not everybody realises what the weak sex can do

The match was coming to the end. A huge advantage to the earthlings had discouraged the Ball-Shaped. The last board was a real blow to them.

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

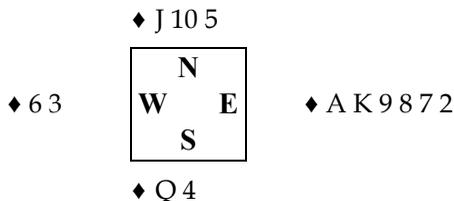
W	N	E	S
Ball-Shaped	Ragazza	Cylindrical	Colonel
—	—	—	1 ♠
2 ♣	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 NT	pass	3 NT	pass...

Lovely astronaut started with the eight of spades. The Colonel covered dummy's ten impeccably with the queen. After winning the trick with the king, Ball-Shaped slightly changed his colour. That probably meant that his intellect was looking for the best possible solution to make the contract. The ALIEN played the ace of clubs, discarding the queen of hearts from the dummy, and then a diamond.

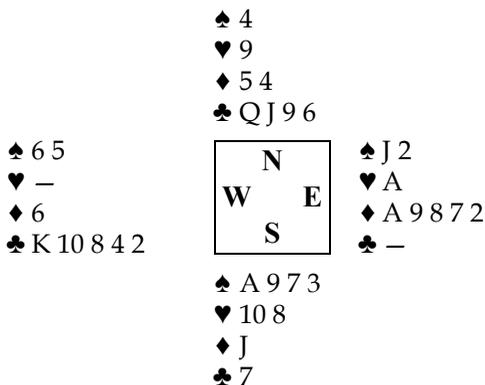
Without giving it a second thought, Ragazza played the ten covered with the king. The Colonel, with a smile on his face, followed with the queen.

The ALIEN swayed happily after envisaging such turn of events.

He now had a slightly different picture of the distribution of diamond honours.



Ball-Shaped learned the manoeuvre of unblocking some two thousand years ago. In this case, the only winning line would be to cross to his hand and finesse the jack of diamonds. Following his vision, the visitor from the distant galaxy played a heart from the dummy. Ragazza's partner rose with the king and played a heart back – the ALIEN won the trick in his hand to leave the following position:



The beautiful astronaut, with her seemingly absurd play of the ♦10, had led Ball-Shaped astray. He finessed the nine of diamonds and after a club return was two short, not having an entry to the dummy.

Manollo was in 3NT, played by East. After a spade lead, Manollo chalked up an easy game.

On the following day, the intruders set off back to their galaxy. Not until a week later, a command centre located on planet X 47 planet managed to decode information they had sent:

'We give up the conquest of Earth. The power of human mind is unlimited. It takes our top players a thousand years to achieve that level of bridge expertise (according to calculations made by our ship computer).'

Phobos, moon of Mars

It was bright and quiet. A space liner came to Phobos, one of the two potato-like Mars moons. Old rocks lit up when it started landing vertically. The Earth National Team arrived to play a match with the National Team of the Federal Colony of Mars. A couple of boards from the match spread like wildfire on the hundreds of planets inhabited by intelligent creatures. No wonder - the hands were really attention-grabbing.

The line-up of the teams was as follows:

The Federal Colony of Mars:

Arg - Grin and Org (Arg's brother) - Bran

Earth:

Ragazza - Colonel

Consigliere - Galaxy Grandmaster

The Bridge on Mars weekly complied with the requests of its readers and published two most interesting hands from the match as problems to solve.

1)

W	N	E	S
2 NT	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 NT	pass...		

N	
W	E
	S

♠ Q 7 5 3
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 10 7
♣ K 9 4 2

♠ 10 9 8 6 4 2
♥ K 10
♦ 8 5 3 2
♣ 6

Lead ♥6. You win with the king and play the ♥10 back. North wins with the ace and plays the ♥2. Only small cards remained in your hand but your play will be crucial for defence. Why?

2)

	W	N	E	S
—		1 ♠	pass	pass
dbl		3 ♣	3 ♥	pass
4 ♠		pass*	pass	pass

* - after some hesitation

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

Lead ♣K - you duck. North continues with clubs.

Not wealthy but wise

1)

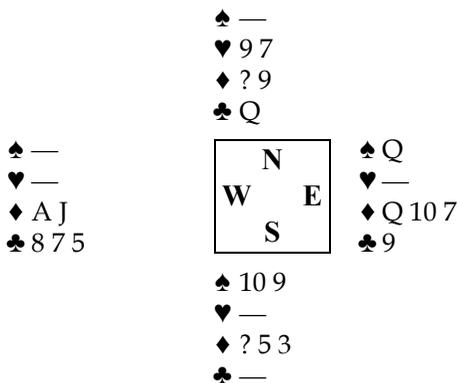
You can recognise a true champion by inconspicuous but effective moves.

♠ —											
♥ A 9 7 6 3 2											
♦ K 9 6 4											
♣ Q J 10											
♠ A K J	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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		♠ Q 7 5 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 5		♥ 8 4									
♦ A J		♦ Q 10 7									
♣ A 8 7 5 3		♣ K 9 4 2									
	♠ 10 9 8 6 4 2										
	♥ K 10										
	♦ 8 5 3 2										
	♣ 6										

W	N	E	S
Ragazza	Org	Colonel	Bran
Arg	Consigliere	Grin	G. Grandmaster
2 NT	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 NT*	pass...		

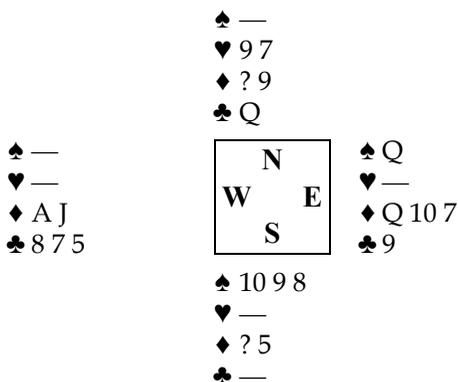
* - no majors

Lead ♥6. Bran wins with the king and plays the ♥10 back. Org wins the trick with the ace and plays the ♥2, the Edenian discarding a spade. Ragazza cashed the ace of spades, North discarding a diamond. The beautiful astronaut continued spades, and then played the ace of clubs and entered the dummy with a club, South discarding a diamond. She now knew the distribution of Org's hand down to the last card. These cards were still alive:



She now had the situation under control. If North throws a diamond on the spade queen, she will make the contract by playing the ace of diamonds and a diamond, wherever the king is located.

Why do I present this seemingly trivial board? Because it has required tremendous concentration, knowledge and imagination from the Galaxy Grandmaster, sitting South. The Grandmaster has realised that the discard on the third trick is vital. It turned out that, holding small cards only, you also have to behave in an intelligent way. The Grandmaster got rid of a diamond and not a spade, as Bran did. In the same ending:



Arg had to guess the location of the diamond king. Consigliere threw a diamond on the queen of spades but this time, if the king is

onside, playing the ace and jack of diamonds is no good. The risk of two ready spade tricks held by the Grandmaster creates a similar dilemma. To have a clean conscience, ARG played the queen of diamonds and tried to draw conclusions by watching the reaction of the Grandmaster. He decided to finesse the king and went two light.

Wise guy insured guy

Nobody is born an artist. One needs talent and hard work to become one. The true bridge artist forces his mind to thorough analysis. It allows him to foresee and prevent opponents' skilled moves.

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

W	N	E	S
Ragazza	Org	Colonel	Bran
Arg	Consigliere	Grin	G. Grandmaster

—	1 ♦	pass	pass
dbl	3 ♣	3 ♥	pass
4 ♠	pass*	pass	pass

* - after hesitation

Lead ♣K - the declarer ducked and North continued the club suit. What is the difference between an expert and a good bridge player?

Arg played the ace of spades and Consigliere, in no time at all, discarded the ace of hearts. No more to say.

Ragazza on the third trick played the jack of hearts and overtook with the king in dummy. A heart to the ten was the fourth trick. An outstanding player is able to foresee good manoeuvres of defenders. On this board, South is the dangerous opponent and cannot be allowed to win a trick. Drawing even one round of trumps will permit North to discard the ace of hearts. An expert will not do such a thing.

Planet earth

Year 2069 started with a New Year tournament in Australia. Canberra, a beautiful country capital, hosts bridge players from across the world.

Midsummer, some 40° C outside and in the playing room hardly 18° C gives an impression of coldness. We can spot some well known faces among invited guests, such as Galaxy Grandmaster and the Chief Earth Planet Analyst, Manollo. They have just approached another table and greeted two distinguished ladies. After an exchange of courtesies, in which Manollo was shining, the ladies were feeling several decades younger. And in this cordial atmosphere the players proceeded to the first board. Let's watch this exceptionally interesting hand:

Kindness means gracefulness and profit

Spectacular declarer play is often based on cooperation with opponents. It sometimes happens, that the defenders, not being aware of it, refuse to cooperate.

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

W Lady	N Galaxy	E Lady	S Manollo
—	—	2♥	dbl
pass	3♣	pass	3♠
pass	4♥	pass	4NT
pass	5♦	pass	6♠
pass...			

Delighted Mrs East opened 2♥ - weak two, Manollo doubled and the Grandmaster, according to the Lebensohl convention, bid 3♣ (7-9 HCP with clubs).

Earth Analyst bid his own suit, indicating a strong hand. This was followed by a heart cue bid, Blackwood and the 6♣ bid ended the auction.

West smiled and led the eight of hearts (natural lead). Manollo won the ten from East with the ace. He then he played a club to the ace of clubs, ruffed a club in his hand (king from East) and crossed to the dummy with a heart ruff (the two from West and the king from East showing solid heart suit).

Earth Analyst ruffed the next club (as expected, East showed out and discarded another heart). He then played spades, which luckily broke 3-2. Manollo had a clear picture of the distribution of honours. Since East had showed all the heart honours and the king of clubs, the queen of diamonds should be with West. Manollo led the jack of diamonds. The lady in the West position adjusted her spectacles and followed with the three. Earth Analyst to his despair, would win the trick and would have to concede two heart tricks, but ...

- Oh, sorry, I've made a mistake - cried out the lady in West.

- That's all right, you can change the card - said Manollo with a smile.

The lady, with obvious relief, covered the jack with the queen.

This was the end position:

	♠ —										
	♥ —										
	♦ 9 5										
	♣ J 7										
♠ —	<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 style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W	E			S		♠ —
	N										
W	E										
	S										
♥ —		♥ Q J									
♦ 10 8 3		♦ 7 6									
♣ Q		♣ —									
	♠ —										
	♥ 7 4										
	♦ A 4										
	♣ —										

Manollo led a club from the dummy, discarding a heart, and that was the end of the story...

Simple is beautiful

A player often faces many options, both in declarer play and in defence. On complicated boards a champion tries to simplify a situation.

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

♠ 4 3
♥ J 10 7 3 2
♦ K Q J 10 9 6
♣ —
♠ 10 9 6 5
♥ Q 8 4
♦ —
♣ K Q 9 8 7 5

W	N	E	S
1 NT	2 ♦*	3 NT	pass...

* - diamonds + hearts

Lead ♦K, South discards a club, West ducks. South discards another club on the queen of diamonds and West ducks again.

After similar bidding the contract was played at three other tables by pairs considered as favourites of the tournament.

Bolo had an easy task. After two diamond tricks the defender switched to a heart. Declarer ducked again and now it was easy. After playing two rounds of hearts and four rounds of spades, the final throw-in with a club brought the contract home.

Ragazza with the Colonel managed to avoid the squeeze. On the third trick the astronaut continued diamonds and South discarded a spade. A club played to the ten and a passive spade return gave the contract away because after conceding another club, a double heart-diamond squeeze against North and a heart-club squeeze against

South would have been easily executed. The Colonel however, returned a heart and broke the communication needed to perform the squeeze.

Against the Galaxy Grandmaster the defenders, on the third trick, also continued diamonds, South discarding a spade. The declarer decided to run all his spades, arriving at this end position:

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

The Grandmaster discarded a diamond from dummy on the jack of spades and South was squeezed.

If he discards a club, the Galaxy Grandmaster will establish a club in his hand. If he discards a heart, the Grandmaster will cash the king and ace of hearts and throw him in with a club.

'Just plain craftsmanship' - observed some onlookers. So craftsmanship it was, but an exquisite piece of craftsmanship.

2.18. Lethal weapon

The beauty of the game often escapes for ever.

♠ 9 8 5		♠ 10 7 6									
♥ Q J 10 9		♥ A K 5 3									
♦ 10 9 2		♦ 7 6 4									
♣ J 7 3		♣ 10 4 2									
♠ A K Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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		♠ J 4 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 8 2		♥ 7 6 4									
♦ A K Q J		♦ 8 5 3									
♣ A Q 9 8		♣ K 6 5									

W Galaxy Grandmaster	N Ania	E Manollo	S Agata
2 ♣	pass	2 ♥*	pass
2 NT	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 ♦	pass	4 NT	pass
6 NT	pass...		

* - Ace of hearts

Lead ♥Q. At every table slams in no trump were bid and made. If some pairs stopped at three no trump, 12 tricks were there. However, one score was different – just a modest +150 for NS.

The Galaxy Grandmaster was in 6NT and went three off. His opponents were two young and slightly intimidated players representing the Bridge University, Ania and Agata. After a heart lead the declarer played a small club to the eight and the trick held. To the surprise of the onlookers, he then played the queen of clubs. Agata won the trick with the king and played a heart back. The Galaxy grandmaster subsequently finessed the 9♣ and claimed 12 tricks. You can imagine his face when Ania won the trick with the

jack of clubs after some delay. The two heart tricks that followed doomed the contract and the Galaxy grandmaster could not recover from the shock.

At a press conference, the Galaxy Grandmaster explained the reason for his play:

'I considered the possibility of ducking with the king of clubs. Due to the lack of communication I could protect the contract from such a possibility by playing the queen of clubs.

Ania was very modest in her comments: 'During our last university classes we practised the manoeuvre of ducking in defence. The Professor was quite right - this is a lethal weapon.'

Breath of youth

And this is the story of how Robert, a Bridge University student, found a beautiful duck.

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

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ 6 5
♦ 8 6
♣ K 10 9 8 3

W Ragazza	N Robert	E Colonel	S Jacek
2NT	pass	3 ♣*	pass
3 ♦**	pass	3 ♥***	pass
3 NT	pass ...		

* - Puppet Stayman

** - I have one major suit (at least one)

*** - Four spades

Lead ♦Q.

An easy contract with nine cold tricks chalked up at all tables. The beautiful astronaut ducked the queen of diamonds and Robert continued the suit. The king from the dummy won the trick and was followed by the heart finesse. Robert, sitting North, ducked twice, and cleverly followed with the nine on the second round. Ragazza did not appreciate the class of her opponent and played a third round of hearts. When Jacek showed out, the girl looked appreciatively at Robert with awoken interest.

The remaining chance in clubs did not work (a doubleton king of clubs onside, for instance) and the one-off score was one of the sensational tournament results.

Young people usually want to live it up

In this board Andrzej put the famous Consigliere alertness to sleep.

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

W	N	E	S
Andrzej	Galaxy Grandmaster	Janek	Consigliere

—	—	1 ♠	pass
2 ♦	pass	2 ♠	pass
3 NT	pass...		

More young and talented team members of the Bridge University showed their expertise. The duel evoked a lot of interest among the audience. A celebrity pair, the Galaxy Grandmaster and Consigliere, was designated to play against them.

The Galaxy Grandmaster led the ♥2. Declarer won in hand and led the queen of spades. Consigliere (South) saw no reason to duck and returned the king of diamonds. Andrzej ducked the king and won the diamond continuation with the ace. His next move was to finesse the club. South won with the king and played a heart back. Declarer won with the ace of hearts and now the picture was clear – the atmosphere slackened a bit. The Galaxy Grandmaster made a gesture with his hand as if saying the last two tricks for me.

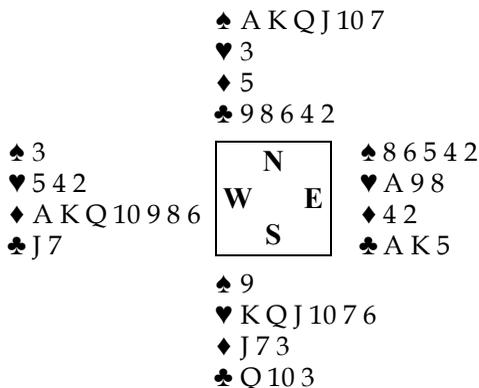
This was the final position:

♠ —	♠ J 8	♠ A 10 9			
♥ 5	♥ J 9	♥ K			
♦ 10 8 5 3	♦ Q J	♦ —			
♣ Q 8	♣ 10	♣ A 9 3			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 7 6 3				
	♥ 7				
	♦ —				
	♣ 6 5 2				

Andrzej played the ♣8 to the ace and South followed with the ♣2! The young player smiled happily. A murmur of surprise could be heard among the vugraph audience when the nine of clubs overtaken with the queen appeared on the vugraph screen. A heart to the dummy and Consigliere, endplayed with a club, had to play into dummy's spade tenace. Such a spectacular manoeuvre consisting of giving up one trick in order to gain two is very rare indeed. Commentators underlined the intelligent camouflage that caught such an outstanding player as Consigliere off guard. There was rapturous applause and only the Galaxy Grandmaster looked irritably at his partner.

Men execute squeezes, women eliminate them

This time a woman's mind outshines the man's.



W	N	E	S
—	—	—	2♥
3♦	3♠	dbl	pass
4♦	pass	5♦	pass...

An interesting course of events took place on this board at two tables of the tournament. Against five diamonds North led ♠A and switched to the ♥3.

Manollo won the second trick with the ace of hearts and ruffed a spade, just in case. In no time he arrived at this end position:

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

On the last diamond North could not discard a spade so he threw a club. This forced South to get rid of a heart. When he was thrown in with a heart, he tried the spectacular return of the queen of clubs. But the jack of clubs provided an entry to the established heart trick.

Ragazza presented a better defence. After the ace of spades she switched to a club. This was the ending:

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

There was no chance for a squeeze now.

Pearl of defence

The watchfulness and skilful chess-like analysis performed by young Agata impressed all onlookers.

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

W Bolo	N Ania	E Kulo	S Agata
—	pass	1 ♣	pass
1 ♥	2 ♠	pass	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♠*	pass
3 NT	pass...		

* - showing a stopper, concern for diamonds

Lead ♠J.

A journalist award was granted to Agata for the imagination she demonstrated in the following defence.

Bolo won the first trick with the king of spades, on which Agata unblocked the queen, and set about establishing the diamond suit.

The young student won the third round of diamonds with the ace and returned a spade.

Bolo ducked, but it was Ann who won the trick. She decided to play the queen through dummy's heart holding. Agata covered the king with the ace and playing back a spade killed the contract.

After the tournament Agata explained the reason for her defence:

'There was a risk of a throw-in at the end. I imagined that after winning a diamond trick I would play the queen of spades and win the trick. Declarer would win the spade continuation in the dummy, cash an established diamond and I would be powerless in the end:

If I discarded a heart the declarer in no time would have a clear picture of my layout up to the last card. He would realise that I had bared the ace of hearts and would underlead his king of hearts. The ace of hearts with North would not help since North would have three ready spade tricks.

If I discarded a club, I would be endplayed with a club and would have to provide the ninth trick for the king of hearts.

'I am happy Ania guessed my intentions correctly. My famous opponent made a serious mistake. He should duck the jack of spades. I do not know if Ania would take the risk of switching to a heart. Only such a return followed by the king from the declarer would have killed the contract.'

The battle of minds

Diamond cuts the diamond. The well-known old proverb well illustrates the course of events in this deal.

	♠ 6							
	♥ 10 8 6 5 3							
	♦ Q 10 3							
	♣ A J 6 2							
♠ 4 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <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		♠ A K 10 7 5 2
N		E						
W	S							
♥ K J		♥ A 4						
♦ A K 8 7 5 2		♦ J 4						
♣ K Q 5		♣ 10 9 7						
	♠ Q J 9 8							
	♥ Q 9 7 2							
	♦ 9 6							
	♣ 8 4 3							

W Manollo Grandmaster	N Janek	E Galaxy	S Andrzej
—	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♦	pass	2 ♠	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Lead ♥5, South follows with the queen.

Most of the pairs chalked up easy nine tricks in a no trump contract. The spade suit was tested and a diamond conceded. A spade game was killed by a club lead followed by ducking a club honour from the dummy. Manollo was also in 3NT. He won the king of hearts in his hand and played a spade to the ace. Andrzej followed with the jack. Happy with his prudent play, he returned to his hand and played a spade again intending to finesse the ten. When Janek showed out, the Earth Planet Analyst nodded his head appreciatively. He returned to his hand and played three rounds of diamonds pitching the ace of hearts from the dummy.

‘I like to play against opponents, who force intellectual effort on me,’ commented Manollo. ‘The way you followed with the jack of

spades, Andrzej, was not natural and I suspected that you might hold more spades. However, I had a lifesaving manoeuvre up my sleeve. I wonder, would I have relied on my table presence without the jack of hearts?

'What do you mean by relying on your table presence?' asked Janek.

'By cashing the king of spades, if spades are 4-1, I shall make the contract only if diamonds break 3-2. You have to withstand the ironic laugh of your colleagues but if the jack of spades is a singleton and diamonds are 4-1 everybody will make the contract finessing a spade and I shall be one short protecting myself from an excellent defender's move.'

Imagination, the key for success

This time the colonel demonstrated brilliant defence.

♠ 9											
♥ J 10 9 7 3											
♦ Q 8 5 2											
♣ J 7 3											
♠ A K 10 4 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="width: 10px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 8 2			♥ A K 6 5								
♦ A J			♦ 9 3 2								
♣ K 8 2			♣ A 9 5								
		♠ 8 6 5 3									
		♥ 4									
		♦ K 10 6 4									
		♣ Q 10 6 4									

W	N Ragazza	E	S Colonel
1 ♠	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 NT*	pass	4 NT	pass
6 NT	pass...		

*- good hand

Lead ♥J.

After a heart lead, a few pairs played a diamond to the jack. The defenders attempted to break the squeeze by switching to a club but this did not help. This would be the ending:

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

The last spade forced North to get rid of his club holding and declarer threw a heart from the dummy. The ace of hearts squeezed South in diamonds and hearts.

The Colonel, partnering the lovely astronaut, presented an excellent defence. On a diamond played from the dummy he rose with the king and broke the squeeze.

Chapter 3

BRIDGE IN THE LAND OF THE RINGS

On the days of prosperity and peace, hobbits from Shire were a happy people. They laughed, feasted and drank six times a day, but above all, they loved the game of bridge.

Mr. Bilbo Baggins from Bag End held bridge parties in his place that were at a very high level. The usual partaker in such parties was Frodo Baggins, Bilbo's cousin, adopted by Mr. Bilbo and brought to Bag End for good. Mr. Bilbo's partner was Gandalf, an old man with a long grey beard, famous in Shire for his tricks with fire, smoke and light.

Frodo's friend and bridge partner was Merry Brandybuck. Due to mere incident, Bilbo and Frodo celebrated their birthdays on the same day, on September 22nd. Bilbo celebrated his eleventy-first birthday, a respectable age for a hobbit, and Frodo has just reached his maturity at the age of thirty three. On this occasion, Bilbo organized a game of bridge in his lovely garden. I would like to tell you about a few interesting boards.

Trivial ducking?

Frodo was a hero on the first board:

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

♠ 9
♥ K 5 3
♦ A K 9 3
♣ A Q 9 7 4

W Gandalf	N Frodo	E Bilbo	S Merry
—	—	1 ♣*	2 ♣
4 ♥	5 ♣	pass	pass
5 ♥	pass...		

* - at least 2 cards

Frodo led ♣J, his partner's suit.

The Wizard ruffed the club lead and played a diamond. Frodo duly ducked and Merry won with the king. He then played the nine of spades back, which Gandalf covered with the ten. The hobbit followed with a small spade without a moment of hesitation. Against such a defence even the famous Wizard could not do anything. He overtook the ♠10 in the dummy and ran the queen of hearts, North showing out. When he continued with a diamond, Merry ducked. North was able to win the trick and deliver a spade ruff to beat the contract.

'You can expect a bright future. An unusual move and you acted so naturally'. Gandalf complimented Frodo.

Fruits of cooperation – defence of the year

The hobbits' defence was perfect

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

♠ 8 5 4 3
♥ 5 4
♦ Q 5 3
♣ 10 6 4 3

W Gandalf	N Frodo	E Bilbo	S Merry
2 ♣	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 NT	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Frodo's spade lead, despite providing an extra trick, has created some problems.

Gandalf played three rounds of hearts – if the jack of hearts drops, nine tricks are there. The hearts did not behave, so he decided to play a club to the ♣7 in the dummy!

The plan was excellent but Merry saw through it. Who might think that, holding so many small cards with one unimportant honour, one could get a reward in Shire for defence of the year?

Merry (South) after some hesitation ducked the seven of clubs. Happy with his plan, the Wizard played the queen of clubs to finesse the king. When the finesse failed, the contract had to go one down.

'My congratulations on your imagination. Holding up the ten is the top class move' – Frodo praised his partner. 'You also ducked with the king doubleton without batting an eyelid' – Merry reciprocated

the compliment. 'Our cooperation in defence goes up high.'

'At first sight it looks as if we have to find singleton or doubleton king of clubs' - explained the Wizard after the board was finished. 'But there is another, better chance: the ten of clubs with North and the king of clubs with South. The entire layout may be as follows:

	♠ K 9 7 6										
	♥ J 6 3 2										
	♦ K J										
	♣ 10 3 2										
♠ A Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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		♠ J 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q		♥ 10 9 8 7									
♦ A 10 9 8 6		♦ 5 4 2									
♣ A 8 5		♣ Q J 9 7									
	♠ 8 5 4 3 2										
	♥ 5 4										
	♦ Q 5 3										
	♣ K 6 4										

'Of course, South must duck the ♣7. And then we finesse the king.'

Do not trust those from Mordor bearing gifts

* Mordor – the Land of Shadow

♠ 6		♠ 5 3 2						
♥ K Q J 6 3 2		♥ A 10 8						
♦ J 8 3		♦ K Q 10 9						
♣ Q 10 2		♣ 6 4 3						
♠ A K Q J 10 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td><td></td><td style="padding: 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ 9 8 7
N		E						
W		S						
♥ 9 7 3		♥ 5						
♦ A		♦ 7 6 5 4 2						
♣ A J 5		♣ K 9 8 7						

W Bilbo	N Merry	E Gandalf	S Frodo
—	2 ♥	pass	pass
3 ♠	pass	4 ♠	pass...

Merry did not have any problems with the lead. He placed ♥K on The table.

Bilbo ducked the king of hearts without demur. Merry continued the suit but on the ace of hearts Frodo discarded a diamond with a smile. As the proverb in Shire has it: 'Do not trust Mordor bearing gifts'. 'I realised that the five of spades would provide an entry to the dummy. From Bilbo's way of playing it was pretty obvious that diamonds were blocked' – He commented.

'I tried to make up for the poor bidding with clever declarer play (3NT is easy to make)' – admitted Bilbo – 'But Frodo saw through my plan'.

Dulled reflex

Bilbo, being almost one hundred and eleven years old, looked ninety but his reflexes were slightly dimmed.

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

♠ J 9
♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ 9 7 4
♣ A J 6 5

W	N	E	S
Frodo	Bilbo	Merry	Gandalf
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♦	pass	3 ♦	pass
3 ♠	pass	4 ♥	pass...

Bilbo selected the ♣2 as his lead card.

Gandalf followed with the jack and played a low club back. The third round of clubs was ruffed by declarer. Frodo underled his ace of hearts and the jack won the trick. To the surprise of the audience, declarer played the queen of hearts to the ace on the next trick and collected 11 tricks.

'Your hand twitched before you ducked the heart' - Gandalf criticised his partner.

Bilbo got irritated - 'It is not nice to be critical of an old man's weaknesses' - He attacked Frodo. 'Finessing the heart was playing with the odds; after all, Gandalf could duck with four cards to the king'.

'That is true - admitted Frodo - but that is why I love this game because it is so much more than mathematics.'

Dream squeeze

This is a story of how Gandalf led Frodo up the garden path

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

♠ 8 7 5
♥ Q 6
♦ K 7 5 3 2
♣ 8 4 2

W Frodo	N Bilbo	E Merry	S Gandalf
2 ♣*	pass	3 ♦**	pass
4 ♣	pass	4 ♥	pass
7 ♣	pass...		

* - game forcing

** - ♦A

Frodo was known in Shire for his crazy bidding.

Bilbo decided to lead a spade.

The only chance was that the queen of hearts was doubleton or that there was a criss-cross diamond and heart squeeze.

Frodo started cashing his tricks in the black suits thinking, quite rightly, that there would be time later for testing whether the queen of hearts would fall.

This is the final position he reached:

♠ —	♠ —			
♥ 10 9 4	♥ J 8 7			
♦ Q 10	♦ A 9			
♣ —	♣ —			
♠ —	♠ —			
♥ A K	♥ J 8 7			
♦ J 4	♦ A 9			
♣ 6	♣ —			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ —			
	♥ Q 6			
	♦ K 7 5			
	♣ —			

When the last club was led, Bilbo discarded the nine of hearts and Frodo threw the nine of diamonds from dummy. Gandalf without a moment of hesitation discarded the king of diamonds.

The ending might look as follows:

♠ —	♠ —			
♥ 10	♥ J 8 7			
♦ 10 7 5	♦ A			
♣ —	♣ —			
♠ —	♠ —			
♥ A K	♥ J 8 7			
♦ J 4	♦ A			
♣ —	♣ —			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ —			
	♥ Q 6 4			
	♦ Q			
	♣ —			

Declarer cashed the ♥A, ♥10 appeared on his left, from Bilbo. All the discards made Frodo believe that a diamond-heart criss-cross squeeze was actually happening. He played a ♦4 to the ace and to his surprise the Wizard did not follow with the expected queen but a small card.

'Have you noticed, Wizard, how carefully I concealed the four of heart' - boasted Bilbo.

'We both worked very hard after a poorly-struck opening to make our talented youth go down in the cold grand slam' - admitted Gandalf.

Hunting extra chances

Old age credulous, young age merciless.

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

W Bilbo	N Merry	E Gandalf	S Frodo
1 ♠	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 ♠	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Merry made a lead with the ♥4, and South covered with the queen.

At first, Bilbo wanted to finesse the diamond king. The great analyst, however, spotted an extra chance - to find North with the king of spades singleton. This time he succeeded. He played the ace and the king dropped. Then the old hobbit, with a gleam in his eyes, crossed to the dummy with a club and finessed the jack of spades. Merry cashed his four heart tricks. 'It has nothing to do with the calculus of probability - in the long run, such moves bring more losses than profits'- Gandalf criticised Bilbo. 'Besides, such a clever player as Merry can trick you.'

Match in Rivendell

The great council was held in Rivendell at Erlond. A decision was made that the ring had to be destroyed. Frodo was nominated as a trustee of the Ring. The council also appointed eight comrades, who were to accompany Frodo on his mission.

The Fellowship consisted of the following:

Aragorn - ancestor of Isildur, the King of the Dunadain of the North.

Boromir - son of the King of Gondor.

Legolas - son of the King of the Elves of Mirkwood

Gimli, son of Gloin of the Lonely Mountain - the Dwarf.

Frodo with his servant Sam and two young cousins

Peregrin and Meriadok - the hobbits.

Gandalf the Grey - the Wizard.

Before setting off on a long journey, the entire Fellowship of the Ring decided to play a bridge match.

According to the expectations of the readers, the *Bridge World of the Elves*, a monthly magazine, published the most interesting boards from the match as problems to be solved by the readers.

Problems 1-6

1)

♠ A K 8 7 6 4 3
♥ J
♦ Q
♣ K Q 9 3



♠ J 9
♥ K 5 3
♦ A 9 6 4 2
♣ 8 6 2

W

N

E

S

—
4 ♠

—
pass...

—

3 ♥

Lead ♥7. South wins the trick with the queen and returns ♣7, you rise with an honour and North wins with the ace. After some thought, North plays the ♠2 back.

2)

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♠	dbl	2 NT*	pass
4 ♠	pass...		

* - invitational with fit

Lead ♠7.

3)

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1 ♠
dbl	pass	2 ♠	pass
2 NT	pass	3 NT	pass...

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

Lead ♠J - ducked, and the suit is continued with the ♠10 - South follows with a small spade.

4)

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

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1 ♣
1 ♠	dbl	rdble	pass
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	pass...

Lead ♣Q, South wins with the ace and plays a spade back.

5)

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♠	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	2 ♥	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♠	pass
4 ♠	pass	4 NT	pass
5 ♣	pass	6 ♠	pass...

Lead ♥Q.

On the second trick we play a club to the king, draw trumps (they break 3-2) and a club again. To our surprise the queen of clubs wins the trick.

6)

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

W	N	E	S
4 ♠	pass...		

Lead ♥A and ♦9 – the jack from the dummy covered with the queen you ruff. Now the ace of clubs and a club to the queen, South rises with the king and plays a heart.

Answers 1-6

1) The Wizard Rolls into Action

Gandalf foresaw the coming throw-in and selected the best possible defence line

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

Open room:

W Frodo	N Gimli	E Sam	S Legolas
— 4 ♠	— pass...	—	3 ♥

Gimli led ♥7. Legolas won the trick with the queen and played the ♣7, Frodo covered with an honour – Gimli won with the ace and after a longer hesitation played ♠2.

The Dwarf was afraid that the declarer might ruff the fourth club in the dummy and his partner would not be able to overruff.

Frodo won the trick with the jack of spades in the dummy and ruffed a heart. This is the final position:

♠ 6 4	♠ —	♠ —			
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —			
♦ Q	♦ K 10 7	♦ A 9 6 4			
♣ K 9 3	♣ J 10 4	♣ 8 6			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ —				
	♥ A 10 9				
	♦ J 8				
	♣ 5				

The hobbit played a penultimate trump and Gimli was powerless. He discarded a diamond. Now followed the ace of diamonds and a diamond ruff and a small club to the eight filled the cup of bitterness.

In the closed room Gandalf was sitting North. After two identical tricks, a heart to the queen and a club to the king and ace, the Wizard, trying to find an effective defensive line, decided to play the king of diamonds. Boromir won the trick with the ace and decided to ruff a club in the dummy. Gandalf won the trick with the ten of clubs, Peregrin discarding the jack of diamonds. A diamond ruffed with the ♠10 promoted a trump trick for the queen of spades.

'I realised that a throw-in squeeze was there and only ♠10 with Peregrin could kill the contract,' said Gandalf.

2) Hold your hand

Being alert bears fruit.

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

W Boromir	N Gandalf	E Aragon	S Peregrin
1 ♠	dbl	2 NT*	pass
4 ♠	pass...		

* - invitational with fit

In the open room, after similar bidding and the same spade lead, Frodo was at the helm. He played a heart to the queen on the second trick. North won with the ace and played another trump. When a club was led towards the king, North could not afford to rise with the ace or he would set up two discards. A club from the dummy was discarded on the fourth heart and North was powerless when he was endplayed with the club ace.

Gandalf was facing a difficult task in the open room. Boromir won the first trump trick in his hand and played the queen of hearts straight away. The old man hesitated for a moment but finally withheld the ace. The son of the King of Gondor played a second round of trumps and cleverly played the jack of hearts. Gandalf's plan was ready. He won the third heart and returned a heart!!! This rescued defenders from the final endplay. The declarer had to make a premature discard from the dummy.

3) Legolas trick

LEGOLAS revealed a lot of imagination in this deal.

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

W	N	E	S
Frodo Boromir	Gimli Gandalf	Sam Aragon	Legolas Peregrin
—	—	—	1 ♠
dbl	pass	2♣	pass
2 NT	pass	3 NT	pass...

Lead ♠J, ducked, and a continuation of the ♠10 – South following with a small card.

In the closed room, Peregrin won the ♠10 with the ace and played a third round of spades. North discarded a heart and Boromir got rid of a club from the dummy. Three rounds of clubs ended the declarer play, since the safe hand (North) held three clubs.

Legolas was South at the other table and defended much better. He ducked spades twice. Frodo, convinced that spades were breaking 5-3, spotted another chance, a squeeze. After winning with the king of spades, he exited with a spade. He could not believe it when Gimli did not follow suit.

4) Dwarf's lead

This is a story about excellent declarer play and a killing lead.

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

W Boromir	N Gandalf	E Aragon	S Peregrin
—	—	—	1 ♣
1 ♠	dbl	rdbl	pass
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	pass...

Gandalf led the queen of clubs. Peregrin won with the ace and played a spade.

Boromir won with the ♠10 in his hand and cashed the king of clubs. He finessed in hearts and ruffed a club. The onlookers watched these strange manoeuvres with surprise. Boromir play a heart to the ace and ruffed a heart. It was then Time to play a diamond to the 10.

South had to play a spade and this was the final position:

♠ K J	♠ —	♠ Q
♥ —	♥ K J	♥ 8
♦ J 8	♦ 6 5	♦ 4
♣ —	♣ —	♣ 8
	N W E S	
	♠ 8	
	♥ —	
	♦ A K	
	♣ 10	

A heart played from the dummy set a strange squeeze against South with a flexible entry:

- a) if Peregrin discards the king of diamonds, Boromir will ruff a heart with the jack and concede a diamond;
- b) if South discards a club, the declarer will ruff with the king of spades and the queen will provide an entry to an established club trick.

After similar bidding in the closed room, Gimli led a trump against the spade game. The lead left no chance for the declarer.

5) Ingenious Frodo's manoeuvre

Frodo's excellent idea resulted in squeeze.

♠ 6 2								
♥ Q J 7								
♦ J 10 7 4								
♣ A J 8 7								
♠ K J 10 7 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N		W	E		S	♠ A Q 9
N								
W	E							
	S							
♥ A		♥ 10 8 4						
♦ A 8 5 2		♦ K Q 3						
♣ 6 4 2		♣ K Q 5 3						
	♠ 8 5 3							
	♥ K 9 6 5 3 2							
	♦ 9 6							
	♣ 10 9							

W Frodo Boromir	N Gimli Gandalf	E Sam Aragon	S Legolas Peregrin
1 ♠	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	2 ♥	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♠	pass
4 ♠	pass	4 NT	pass
5 ♣	pass	6 ♠	pass...

Gandalf and Gimli led the diamond heart.

After winning the heart lead, both declarers played a club to the king. They drew trumps and led a second round of clubs. To their surprise the queen of clubs also held. This says a lot about the bridge level of the North defenders, Gandalf and the Dwarf.

This was the final position that had been reached:

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

Boromir played a club and the Wizard was quick to play fourth rounds of suit, saving himself from being squeezed.

At the other table, Frodo played a heart and discarded a club. Gimli won with the heart jack and played a diamond back. The hobbit won the trick in the dummy, ruffed a club and in no time the Dwarf was squeezed in clubs and diamonds.

6) Frodo, the chess player

A chess player has to foresee a few moves in advance and this skill bears fruits in bridge also.

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

Open/closed room:

W	N	E	S
Frodo	Gimli	Sam	Legolas
Boromir	Gandalf	Aragon	Peregrin

4 ♠

pass...

In the closed room - lead ♥A and the ♦9 - the jack from dummy was covered with the queen and the declarer ruffed. Now the ace of clubs and a club to the queen, South rising with the king.

Peregrin won the trick with the king of clubs and returned a heart, taken in the dummy. Boromir played the queen of spades and Gandalf, sitting North, ducked. In this way, he prepared a club ruff. If the declarer plays trump again the Wizard will give his partner a ruff.

The declarer spotted the risk. He ruffed a diamond and tried the queen of clubs. When the Wizard followed suit, he had to ruff in the dummy and went one off after being forced in trumps.

In the Open room the beginning was similar.

Lead ♥A and the ♦9 - the jack from dummy was covered with the queen and the declarer ruffed. Now the ace of clubs and a club to the

queen, South rising with the king.

Legolas returned a spade after winning the king of clubs. The hobbit solved the problem faultlessly. He rose with the king of spades in his hand. The defenders were powerless.

Gimli ducked the king of spades (winning the trick could make the declarer's task easier). Frodo trying to avoid a ruff, also had to play the queen of clubs. Both declarers, after a similar defence, ended up in the dummy. The hobbit, however, had one trump more than Boromir. This minor difference was decisive for the contract. Frodo explained it after the deal was over.

'This was a typical chess problem. You had to count your moves until the eleventh trick.

To avoid being forced (or suffering a club ruff) it was necessary to take the first trump trick in the right hand' – commented Frodo.

Tournament in Lothlorien

The next stage of the journey was to the capital of Galadrim, the seat of the King of Lorien, Celeborn, and the Lady Galadriela. The Fellowship of the Ring spent a couple of days in Lothlorien. A bridge tournament organised by the Lady Galadriela was a great attraction for local elves. They do not often have an opportunity to play against such celebrities as Frodo or Dwarf. Some boards gave rise to heated discussions and disputes. We present them as problems to solve.

Problems 1-8

1)

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

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1 ♠
pass	pass	dbl	pass
1 NT	pass	2 NT	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Lead ♠8. You finesse a club and dummy's jack wins. You cross to your hand with the king of diamonds and play another club. North follows with the queen, South wins the king with the ace and plays a spade establishing the spade suit. What next?

2)

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥	pass
2 ♠	pass	3 ♥	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

Lead ♥7.

3)

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥*	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

* - good raise

Lead ♦Q.

4)

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

Lead ♣K. Try to find the way to collect eleven tricks.

5)

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

W	N	E	S
---	---	---	---

2 NT	pass	6 NT	pass...
------	------	------	---------

Lead ♠J.

6)

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

W	N	E	S
---	---	---	---

—	—	—	1 ♥
2 ♣	3 ♥*	4 ♣	pass
4 ♦	pass	6 ♣	pass...

* - preemptive

Lead ♥8.

7)

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

W	N	E	S
---	---	---	---

—	—	1 ♣	pass
1 ♦*	3 ♠	dbl	pass
4 ♠	pass	4 NT	pass
5 ♣	pass	5 ♦	pass...

* - negative bid

Lead ♣6.

8)

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

W	N	E	S
2 ♣	pass	2 NT*	pass
3 ♦	pass	3 NT	pass
6 ♦	pass...		

* - +8 HCP or two kings

Lead ♥Q - you win with the king in the dummy and lead a club. South follows with the ten and the jack holds. When the ace of diamonds and the queen of diamonds are played, South wins with the king and returns a heart.

Answers 1-8

1) A good hunter knows how to lay a trap

Simple defenders' manoeuvres often produce excellent results. Cooperation within the partnership is basic.

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

♠ 8 4
♥ J 10 9 3
♦ J 10 8 6
♣ Q 9 3

♠ K J 10 7 3
♥ Q 7 2
♦ Q 3
♣ A 6 5

W Celeborn	N Gimli	E The Lady Galadriela	S Legolas
—	—	—	1 ♠
pass	pass	dbl	pass
1 NT	pass	2 NT	pass
3 NT	pass...		

Lead ♠8.

Many flat boards escape analysis. After similar bidding, a no trump contract was played at all tables. Declarer had nine easy tricks but there was also a score:

3 NT – down two. How did it happen?

Celeborn won the spade lead and finessed the jack of clubs, crossed to his hand with the king of diamonds and repeated a club finesse. The Dwarf followed with the queen, Legolas won the trick with the ace and established the spade suit. Elf cashed the ace of

diamonds and the ace and king of hearts. On the second heart trick, Legolas played the queen. The hand layout of the son of the King of the Elves of Mirkwood, 5-2-2-4, was obvious to the declarer.

These cards were still alive:

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

Celeborn threw Legolas in with a spade but he already knew that he erred. The Dwarf discarded the ♣9. Celeborn had imagined a slightly different final position:

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

Did he make a mistake? The defenders did an excellent job and created a false picture of the board.

2) Work shall praise the master

A declarer is often powerless against perfect defence.

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

Bidding	W	N	E	S
1 ♥		pass	2 ♥	pass
2 ♠		pass	3 ♥	pass
4 ♥		pass...		

Lead ♥7.

Aragorn did a poor job as declarer. He won the trump lead in dummy and played the queen of spades. Peregrin, sitting North, won and continued the heart suit. Aragorn guessed the diamonds correctly and brought the contract home.

The Lady Garadriela did better than that. On the second trick she played the ♠8 to the jack and king. This gave her an extra entry to play the diamonds twice from the dummy.

The most sensational result was scored at Frodo's table. The hobbit champion was two light. How did it happen? He played the ♠8 to the jack but Éowyn, Princess of Rohan, ducked without batting her eyelid. Poor Frodo cashed the ace of spades and ruffed a spade with the three of hearts. The King of Rohan, Theoden, overruffed and played a trump.

The hobbit played a diamond to the jack and that was it – two off.

3) Woman's intuition?

Intelligence is a spice that works miracles out of ordinary things.

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

♠ K 6 2
♥ J 9 8
♦ Q J 10 9 3
♣ Q 10
♠ Q J 10 7
♥ 4 3
♦ 6
♣ K J 9 8 6 5

W Éowyn	N Gandalf	E Theoden	S Peregrin
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

Lead Q♦.

A heart game was played at all tables after the same opening lead. Declarer should ruff a diamond in the dummy. For communication reasons, declarer should duck the queen of diamonds in both hands:

a) Diamonds break 5-1 and this is good news. If on the second trick, South, holding three trumps is tempted to ruff, with declarer ducking, then the contract is cold. The declarer discards a spade on a diamond.

b) Diamonds break 4-2. We have to find four diamonds with three hearts.

c) Diamond break 3-3 - no problem.

Ducking a diamond in both hands is a good move and did not cause any problems to the majority of declarers, South ruffing the second diamond. Let's track the course of events at other tables.

Aragorn ducked the queen of spades and won the spade continuation with the ace. Two rounds of trumps and the easy manoeuvre of discarding a spade on a diamond ended the play. This defence did not promote the jack of trumps.

Frodo, sitting North, covered the queen of spades played by Sam with the king. The declarer had to win the trick. He then played two rounds of trumps and in the end crossed to hand with the third round of clubs. The setting trick was scored by the promoted jack of hearts.

An excellent duel was played at Éowyn's table. After ruffing a diamond, Peregrin returned the spade queen. The Wizard, like Frodo, won with the king and the ace won the trick. The Princess drew one round of trumps and unblocked the diamonds. She crossed to her hand with the ace of clubs, discarded a spade on the diamond and conceded a spade trick. This protected her from a trump promotion. The Wizard was filled with admiration. He praised woman's intuition to the skies.

'This is table presence and not intuition. Peregrin ruffed a diamond without any thought, which proved that he held two trumps. With three, he would have given some consideration before ducking and would not have made such a simple mistake. Ruffing from three trumps would give away the contract' – commented Éowyn.

At another table the Dwarf, after ruffing a diamond, returned a club, which doomed the contract. Why? As you can easily predict, it permitted a trump promotion.

4) Experience is a total of errors we have committed

An excess of riches is more often harmful than helpful.

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

W	N	E	S
1 ♥	pass	2 ♥	pass
4 ♥	pass...		

Lead ♣K.

The King of Rohan, Theoden, won with the ace and returned a club, cleverly following with the ten from his hand. Frodo, sitting North, trusted that South had given a correct count signal and played a third round of clubs, destroying the King's elaborate plan for an overtrick.

The point is that the declarer needs a late entry to dummy to score four spade tricks.

When North plays a third round of clubs, he removes the entry prematurely.

Aragorn also won with the ace of clubs, drew two rounds of hearts, three rounds of spades and conceded a club. There was quite fat chance that the left-hand opponent would have only two trumps, but...

Gandalf solved the problem on the first trick - he simply ducked the king of clubs.

It is enough if we forget about holding the jack and the ten of clubs and everything will become much easier. I am dead sure that if the declarer held three small cards in clubs opposite the ace doubleton no one would have gone down - remarked the Wizard.

5) Delicate discard – enormous result

This board shows that defence is a true art.

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

W	N	E	S
Gandalf	Frodo	Peregrin	Sam
2 NT	pass	6 NT	pass...

Lead ♠J.

Hobbit Pippin spotted the chance of simple spade-diamond squeeze against South if he holds five diamonds or QJ10. He ducked the jack of spades and made the contract because the king of spades was doubleton. The Lady Garadiela appreciated the value of the ♠8. This tempted her to execute a double squeeze. The entire hand might have looked as follows:

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

In this ending we play a club and defenders are powerless. Gimli, North, recklessly discarded the ♠3 and ♠4. This convinced the Queen of Lorien that spades were breaking 5-2 with the king of spades doubleton with South. She underled the queen of spades and that is it.

'My Lady, you are a great player and I am a total fool', said the Dwarf, assessing his actions critically.

Frodo, North, defended better in the ending against Gandalf.

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

He discarded another diamond on the jack of clubs played by the Wizard (a spade from the declarer) and Gandalf thought that the squeeze was there. He played the king of diamonds and a diamond to the ace.

6) You fare as you care

Focusing only on your own problems is a mistake. Helping partner is your duty.

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

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1 ♥
2 ♣	3 ♥*	4 ♣	pass
4 ♦	pass	6 ♣	pass...

* - preemptive

Lead ♥8.

The contract was played at three tables. King Theoden won the heart lead and played a diamond on the second trick. The ♦10 from the Elf appeared on the table. That was enough for the King to execute the throw-in. He drew trumps in two rounds, ruffed a heart and South, endplayed with the king of diamonds, was powerless.

The Dwarf sitting South did better than that. He unblocked the king on the ace. The declarer ruffed a heart, drew trumps in two rounds and played a diamond. Legolas followed with the eight and to his dismay, Gimli won the trick with the ten.

Gandalf was a hero on this board but it was his partner, Peregrin, who did the job. He followed with the jack on the ace of hearts. On

the second trick with the ace of diamonds he unblocked the king. The Wizard could not stop praising Peregrin's cleverness. 'My partner's move,' said the old man, 'encouraged me to perform an untypical defence and rise with the jack of diamonds. He was able to foresee the problem I would face on the sixth trick. Untypical discards encouraged an unusual defence'.

7) Sometimes a clever guy acts foolishly

Young Frodo elected routine; old Gandalf displayed truly youthful dynamic analysis.

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

♠ J 8
♥ K 10 9 2
♦ 9 2
♣ K Q 9 7 3

W	N	E	S
—	—	1 ♣	pass
1 ♦*	3 ♠	dbl	pass
4 ♠	pass	4 NT	pass
5 ♣	pass	5♦	pass...

* - negative

Lead ♣6.

The contract was played at two tables. Frodo played it in a normal way. After winning the trick with the ace of clubs he returned a club. South won with the queen and played a trump back. North, after winning the trick with the ace, duly returned a trump. Now spade finesse, ace of spades for a heart discard and a spade.

This is the final position:

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

The third round of spades caught South in a criss-cross. After a heart discard Frodo would start ruffing hearts, after a club discard, he would start with clubs. North could beat the contract by ruffing the queen of clubs and playing a heart, for instance. The declarer play obviously missed such profound analysis.

At the other table, Gandalf, after the ace of clubs played a diamond. Elf won and switched to a heart. Gandalf played the ace of hearts, a diamond to his hand and took the spade finesse. He discarded a heart on the ace of spades and ruffed a spade (just in case). In the end position the Wizard played a club and South was endplayed.

8) If the head rules

This is not magic but a small safety play.

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

Bidding

W Gimli	N Elf	E Legolas	S Elf
2 ♣	pass	2 NT*	pass
3 ♦	pass	3 NT	pass
6 ♦	pass...		

* - 8+ HCP or two kings

The Dwarf was in 6♦. Lead ♥Q.

First a club finesse and if it wins, then the ace of diamonds – Gimli was analysing the hand. There is an extra chance – the king of diamonds singleton.

After an instant analysis Elf won the trick with the king of clubs and repeated a heart. Fortunately the second king of diamonds was onside.

Gandalf played 6NT. He won the ♥Q lead with the king in the dummy and finessed a club.

Theoden covered with the ten and Éowyn ducked without demur. Gandalf played the ace and the queen of diamonds. The King of Rohan won the trick with the king and returned a heart. To surprise of the onlookers, the Wizard played the ace of clubs and Princess

followed with the king.

'This is magic and you have promised, Gandalf, to leave aside your secret knowledge at a bridge table' – barked indignant Theoden.

'Éowyn, you played the queen of hearts without much thought. This made me sure that you hold Q-J-10. This information is enough to execute double squeeze if the king of clubs is onside. This it he ending I shall arrive at':

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

'Now after playing the last diamond you are powerless. Ducking with the second king of clubs was an excellent move but the diamond cut the diamond.

