

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THE ONLY CHANCE

By: Brian Gunnell

N-S Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
1♠	2♣	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

	♠ QJ76 ♥ 872 ♦ 964 ♣ K32	
♠ A ♥ J3 ♦ AKJT5 ♣ T8754	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ 42 ♥ QT964 ♦ Q87 ♣ QJ9
	♠ KT9853 ♥ AK5 ♦ 32 ♣ A6	

The defense starts with Diamonds and Declarer ruffs the third round. Declarer has lost two tricks already, must later lose the ♠A, and appears to have an inescapable Heart loser. Down one? Or perhaps there is a way to escape that Heart loser after all?

Declarer makes her contract by “stripping the hand”. After ruffing the Diamond, she cashes the ♣A, then the ♠K, and ruffs a Club. Then she cashes the ♥A and ♥K and plays a trump. Her hope is that West started with the singleton Ace of trumps in which case there will be no safe exit. Whichever minor suit West chooses to lead, Declarer will be able to ruff in one hand and pitch the “inescapable” Heart loser from the other hand.

A bouquet for Declarer, who did well to grab the only chance she had to make her contract. But a brickbat to West who apparently was fast asleep during the entire proceedings. He walked straight into that end-play and could have avoided it by cashing the trump Ace at Trick 2, before persisting with Diamonds. After that defense there really would be no way to avoid a Heart loser.

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