

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## DASTARDLY DECEPTION

By: Brian Gunnell

### ***N-S Vulnerable***

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

	♠ Q4 ♥ J93 ♦ AQJ5 ♣ 7643	
♠ K852 ♥ K862 ♦ 9 ♣ A985	<i>North</i>  <i>West</i> <i>East</i>  <i>Declarer</i>	♠ AT973 ♥ T75 ♦ 842 ♣ T2
	♠ J6 ♥ AQ4 ♦ KT763 ♣ KQJ	

When this was played in a team game, 3NT was reached at both tables, and both West players failed to find the lethal opening Spade lead. Instead, they led their fourth-best Heart, and we can report that one Declarer made her contract, the other didn't. Here's how.

At Table 1, the opening Heart trick went: Two, Nine, Ten, Queen. Declarer could count just seven top tricks and at Trick 2 he played the ♣K in an attempt to set up two more. It was a futile effort, of course. West took his Ace and, not wanting to give Declarer a third Heart trick, he shifted to a Spade. Down two.

At Table 2, Declarer was more resourceful. She realized that, if she took that first trick with the ♥Q, the defense would probably find the Spade shift. So, in an attempt to muddy the waters, she squandered the ♥A! Now Declarer played a Club to West's Ace. Picturing East to have started with ♥QTx and Declarer with ♥Axx, West continued with a low Heart to East's supposed Queen. But it was Declarer who produced that card, and who promptly claimed nine tricks.

That was dastardly play by Declarer, but could West have seen through the deception? To West it seemed that Declarer might well have held something like: ♠Axx, ♥Axx, ♦Kxxx, ♣KQJ. Would Declarer not hold up in Hearts with such a hand? Not necessarily, if she did she might fall prey to a deadly Spade shift, allowing West to win his King and revert to Hearts for down one.

**Postscript:** There is a signaling device that could have saved E-W. It's the Smith Echo, whereby at Trick 2 East gives his attitude to the opening lead ... he plays a high Club to say "I like the opening lead" ... and a low Club to say "I don't" Here the message will be "I don't", so East plays the Two, after which West will presumably shift to a Spade. Or maybe not as, after the play to Trick 1, he might already have lapsed into auto-pilot mode.

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