

## 60. Sic transit gloria mundi

By Ron Klinger

North dealer : North-South vulnerable

North

♠ J102

♥ KQJ743

♦ J10

♣ 63

East

♠ K9

♥ A62

♦ 87642

♣ 1085

West

North

East

South

Pass

Pass

1NT (15-17)

Pass

3♥

Pass

3NT

Pass

Pass

Pass

North might have transferred to hearts and North might have insisted on hearts over 3NT, but the contract of 3NT is what happened. West leads the ♠5: ten from dummy . . . which spade would you play as East?

Being in isolation during the quarantine, it seemed appropriate to dust off some of the old bridge books, especially those with play or defence quizzes, and tackle them yet again. One of the excellent ones is [Defence at Bridge](#), by Victor Mollo and Aksel J. Nielsen. The above was Problem #23 in that book. Here is the full deal:

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ J102

♥ KQJ743

♦ J10

♣ 63

West

♠ Q8753

♥ 98

♦ AQ3

♣ 942

East

♠ K9

♥ A62

♦ 87642

♣ 1085

South

♠ A64

♥ 105

♦ K95

♣ AKQJ7

This was the answer:

‘Dick Frey (USA) knew all about the ‘third-hand-high’ rule, but on dummy’s ♠10, he calmly played the ♠9. It didn’t even cost a trick, but saved the contract, for declarer could no longer get at dummy’s hearts and without them, he couldn’t muster nine tricks. It was another of those occasions when it was right to play the ‘wrong’ card.

I can imagine what might happen should this situation arise again. After the same or nearly equivalent auction, West leads the ♠10 and a now worldly East plays the ♠9 with pride and confidence. Alas, the whole deal looks like this:

	North	
	♠ J102	
	♥ KQJ743	
	♦ J10	
	♣ 63	
West		East
♠ AQ753		♠ K9
♥ 98		♥ A62
♦ Q93		♦ 87642
♣ 942		♣ 1085
	South	
	♠ 864	
	♥ 105	
	♦ AK5	
	♣ AKQJ7	

When the ♠J holds, declarer recognizes that East is an expert and so South plays the ♥K next. East knowingly ducks to cut out the heart suit. Declarer then plays ♣A, ♣K and claims five more tricks, making 3NT and +600. Meanwhile the defenders could have taken the first six tricks. If you did duck and this was the layout, chances are that your name will appear in dispatches.

This was the very next problem:

South dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 5	
	♥ AKJ963	
	♦ 65	
	♣ J753	
	East	
	♠ 83	
	♥ 52	
	♦ AK1083	
	♣ K1096	

	West	North	East	South
				1♠
	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♠
	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ♦Q: five – three (low-like) – two, followed by the ♦J: six – king – four. What do you play at trick 3?

*See next page for solution:*

South dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 5	
	♥ AKJ963	
	♦ 65	
	♣ J753	
West		East
♠ 9742		♠ 83
♥ Q1074		♥ 52
♦ QJ97		♦ AK1083
♣ Q		♣ K1096
	South	
	♠ AKQJ106	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 42	
	♣ A842	

This was the answer:

‘As happens so often, the bidding pointed the way to the best defence. It was clear (to East) that South couldn’t have more than one heart. So, to cut declarer’s communications with dummy, (East) overtook the ♦J and returned the ♥5.

Making the most of this Greek gift, declarer discarded a club on a second heart and tried to get rid of a third club. (East) ruffed and declarer had to be content with nine tricks. If there is no heart switch, declarer draws trumps and brings home his contract by taking the heart finesse.’

Very pretty, indeed, but can you imagine partner’s comments, those of your team-mates and the joy of readers when the deal is reported in various bridge magazines and the whole deal happened to be like this:

	North	
	♠ 5	
	♥ AKJ963	
	♦ 65	
	♣ J753	
West		East
♠ 974		♠ 83
♥ Q10874		♥ 52
♦ QJ7		♦ AK1083
♣ Q2		♣ K1096
	South	
	♠ AKQJ1062	
	♥ --	
	♦ 942	
	♣ A84	

East overtakes the ♦J and, expecting fame and glory, switches to the ♥5. Declarer discards two clubs on dummy’s heart winners. East ruffs the next top heart from dummy. South over-ruffs and ruffs the third diamond in dummy. South then claims 11 tricks and +650. Even if partner is gracious enough not to say a word, you know that partner is thinking, “Duh . . . a trump switch takes 4♠ down two”.

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A9  
♥ K  
♦ QJ1098  
♣ J10732

2. East dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♣	Dble <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	?

(1) Takeout, 6+ points, 4+ hearts

What would you do as South with:

♠ A76542  
♥ AQ  
♦ J  
♣ J1053

**Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?**

*2020: A solution to a troubling dilemma: "Why did the chicken cross the road? She didn't, as it was deemed non-essential travel."*