

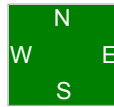
It's Elementary

by [Brian Gunnell](#)

Crime in London appeared to be taking a vacation, and Sherlock Holmes found himself on opening lead at the Baker Street Bridge Club:

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul



♠ A 6 5
♥ 9 2
♦ 10 9 5
♣ Q 9 6 5 4

West	North	East	South
	<i>Watson</i>		<i>Holmes</i>
	Pass	1 ♣	Pass
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	All pass		

Let's eavesdrop on the post-mortem in Holmes' 221B bachelor quarters.

Watson: Dash it, Holmes. Why not lead the unbid suit? I must have hearts.

Holmes: Indeed, dear chap, you had four, but so did declarer.

Watson: We know that now.

Holmes: And I knew it before I made my lead.

Watson: An Englishman doesn't peek.

Holmes: No, it was the curious matter of your bidding.

Watson: But I didn't bid.

Holmes: Yes, that was most curious. My six-count and the opponents' bidding told me that you had a decent hand. And yet you did not overcall 1♥. Clearly you had less than five hearts. The auction also told me that West had less than four hearts and East less than five. Thus, the hearts were 2-3-4-4 around the table.

Watson: Very clever. I suppose you also knew that West had three clubs.

Holmes: Yes, Watson.

Watson: You *did* know?

Holmes: It seemed most likely. I had five and East had at least two.

Watson: He did?

Holmes: If he was 3-4-5-1 he would raise spades. With 2-4-6-1 he would rebid diamonds. Ergo, he had at least two clubs.

Watson: So, if East had two clubs and West had four then I would have had just two. With that I would no doubt make a takeout double of 1♣.


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Holmes: By George, I think he's got it!

The full deal:

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



Yes, of course, Holmes did not lead the unbid hearts; he led through West's club suit. But how on earth did he know to lead the *queen*, the only card in his hand which beats the contract? That's a story for another day.