


# Stuff that *Doesn't* Happen

by [Brian Gunnell](#)

The last two days, our astute declarer remembered that his opponent had opened the bidding, sensibly deduced that said opponent must have the missing high cards, and then played the hand accordingly. Today's deal is a bit more difficult, as declarer must be alert to something which did *not* happen!

**Board 16**  
West Deals  
E-W Vul

<p>♠ 8 6 ♥ K 9 8 6 ♦ J 9 5 2 ♣ J 10 8</p>	<p>♠ 9 5 4 2 ♥ Q 10 3 2 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ A 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 7 ♥ J 4 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ Q 6 5 3 2</p>	
			
	<p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ K 9 7</p>		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

N-S stumble into 4♠ after a Stayman auction and West leads the ♣J. It looks like a simple enough hand, and so it is. Declarer loses two trumps and must avoid also losing two heart tricks. How would you play the hand?

You win the first trick with the ♣K and lead the ♠Q. East wins that, then cashes his second high spade, and exits a spade. You can cash some minor suit winners if you like but you already have all the information that you need to make the contract a virtual certainty.

What was it which “did not happen”? That’s right, East did not open the bidding. He has already shown up with the ♠AK... and West’s lead of the ♣J denied the ♣Q. That gives East 9 HCP, so surely he cannot also hold the ♥K, that would be 12 HCP, and enough to open. So, you cash the ♥A and lead low towards the board. West is an expert and nonchalantly plays low, perhaps while stifling a yawn. But you are having none of that malarkey! You confidently call for the ♥Q and it’s ten tricks for the good guys!