

Don't Be Fooled

In a problem-solving mood? Then cover up South-East and look only at the North-West hands. As West, you lead the ♠J and the defense must somehow conjure up four tricks. But be warned! Declarer is a tricky fellow, and some flim-flam is not entirely out of the question.

The ♠J opening lead is covered by the queen, king, ace. Declarer leads a club to dummy's ♣A, and then takes the losing heart finesse. After winning the ♥K it is time for West to ponder a while. Where will the defense find three more tricks?

Can the defense cash three diamonds? Probably not, declarer is favorite to hold the ♦K and, anyway, there's no rush, those diamonds aren't going anywhere. It looks like there is a spade to cash (based on the play of the ♠Q at trick one), but that also can wait. So you exit safely with a heart and await developments. Declarer wins that in dummy and leads a diamond to his king and your ace. Now what?

At this point it might seem obvious for West to cash the ♠10 and the ♦Q for down one. But by now you should be getting suspicious. Why hasn't declarer led a spade to the board, setting up dummy's nine for a diamond pitch? The reason is that declarer doesn't have a second spade! That squandering of the queen at trick one was a clever ruse, designed to fool you. The only way to beat the contract now is to lead a casual *low* diamond, hoping that declarer will misguess and finesse the diamond nine. He probably will, and that will be down one! A fiendishly deceptive play is foiled by sound logic.

Board 19

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			
	4 ♥ by South		
	Lead: ♠ J		