

Vanishing Trump Trick

None of the North-South bids was completely terrible, but the auction worked out badly, leaving South to labor in a poor three spades contract. But careful timing and accurate card reading will win the day.

West leads a low diamond to East's ace, a diamond is returned to West's king, and the ♦J is ruffed by declarer. Things are looking pretty bleak! For starters, declarer will need the club finesse to work. And then there is the small matter of the trump suit, where declarer can afford only two losers. Doesn't that require the suit to be 3-3? Not necessarily!

After ruffing the diamond, declarer cashes the ♠A and exits a low spade,

West following with the jack and then winning the second round with the king. West exits with a heart won by dummy's ace, then the ♥J is overtaken by the king. Declarer could now exit with a spade, making his contract if spades are three-three. Is that a good idea? No, West has shown up with ♦KJ and ♠KJ and needs to have the ♣K if the contract is to make. That's 11 HCP, so West cannot also have the ♠Q, that would give him an opening bid. To have a chance, declarer must assume that West started with ♠KJ doubleton and East with ♠Q983. But if that is the case, doesn't East have two trump tricks coming? Not necessarily!

Leaving East's ♠Q9 at large, declarer finesses the ♣Q, ruffs a diamond, cashes a third heart (playing East to be 4-3-4-2), and crosses to the ♣A (no need to repeat the club finesse). Declarer has carefully arranged to get the lead in dummy with just two cards left. East has ♠Q9, and declarer has the ♠10 and a heart. Dummy leads a club and, whether East ruffs high or ruffs low, one of his two spade "winners" vanishes! It's called a *coup en passant*.

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K J
♥ 9 6 4 2
♦ K J 5
♣ K 7 5 3

♠ 5 2
♥ A J
♦ 9 8 7 2
♣ A Q J 10 9



♠ Q 9 8 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ A 10 4 3
♣ 8 6

♠ A 10 7 6 4
♥ K Q 10 3
♦ Q 6
♣ 4 2

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

All pass

3 ♠ by South

Lead: ♦ 5