

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

STUFF THAT *DOESN'T* HAPPEN

By: Brian Gunnell

Last week, 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. This week's deal is a bit more difficult, as Declarer must be alert to something which did *not* happen!

	♠ 9542 ♥ QT32 ♦ K43 ♣ A4	
♠ 86 ♥ K986 ♦ J952 ♣ JT8	North West East Declarer	♠ AK7 ♥ J4 ♦ T76 ♣ Q6532
	♠ QJT3 ♥ A75 ♦ AQ8 ♣ K97	

E-W Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	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 Queen. 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 Queen and it's 10 tricks for the good guys!

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