

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

STRANGER THAN FICTION

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ A ♥ KQ42 ♦ AJ3 ♣ AJT32	
♠ KQT954 ♥ J5 ♦ 765 ♣ KQ	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ 32 ♥ 9873 ♦ T ♣ 987654
	♠ J876 ♥ AT6 ♦ KQ9842 ♣	

Both Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
	1♠	Dbl	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Yes, it is true, some newspaper hands are works of fiction, and never actually happened. Others are factual re-enactments. Which is this? It has to have happened in real life, we really couldn't make this stuff up.

The N-S auction went off the rails, thanks to conflicting views as to the meaning of the 3♠ and 4♥ bids. So, while the other N-S pairs were luxuriating in their comfy Diamond slam and its 9-card fit, our South was laboring in the 4-3 Heart slam. West led the ♠K, won in Dummy. Declarer reasoned that, with Spade length on her left, East might well have four Hearts. With unerring inaccuracy, she finessed the Heart Ten, losing to West's Jack, after which West could have beaten the contract by leading the ♠Q, setting up a trump trick for East. But West did not know that Declarer started with only three Hearts (though Declarer's Heart play might have made him suspicious). So, after winning the ♥J, West got out with a trump.

Now what? Declarer could have prayed for 3-3 Hearts, hoping to scoot home with the aid of a Club ruff. But where was the fun in that, especially when there was the chance for a delicious swindle? Instead of taking the Club ruff, Declarer drew trumps and, leaving the ♣A an orphan in Dummy, she rattled off her Diamonds. Grimly holding on to the ♣KQ, West pitched away all his Spades, hoping that East held the ♠J. Thus was Declarer's foolish contract fulfilled, with the Spade Jack and Eight taking the last two tricks and Dummy's ♣A acting as no more than a decoy. Stranger than fiction, indeed.

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