



The Sunday Night QUESTION

THIS SUNDAY EVENING, WHEN SHE GAVE ME THE DETAILS OF A TRAINING SESSION, ISABELLE TOLD ME HOW HER TEAMMATE STELLA, A LITTLE NEWBIE, MISDEFENDED A HAND. THE LATTER IS SIXTEEN YEARS YOUNG AND STILL LACKS EXPERIENCE.

♠ AQ4	♠ J103		
♥ K10872	♥ 65		
♦ K752	♦ J86		
♣ 4	♣ AQJ75		
		N	
		W	E
			S

W	N	E	S
			INT
2♥	Dble	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT		

Isabelle: "Stella led the Heart 7 for East's Jack and declarer's Queen. It wasn't too hard to know that South had Ace and Queen of Hearts, right? If East held the Ace, she would have played high in third position. She cannot play the Jack and let declarer win the first trick with the Queen when the defense could take the first five tricks in Hearts."

Me: "Yes, you're right. But I think Stella did realize that."

Isabelle: "So she probably didn't count declarer's tricks. Because we know that declarer is going to take two Hearts, five Clubs and at least two Diamonds."

Me: "How do we know declarer is going to take five Clubs?"

Her: "After the first trick, she played a small Club to the Queen and it held the trick. I admit it's true that Elise could have ducked the King. But it would

be weird not to win the trick immediately to help her partner set up her suit. Especially since West could have Ace-10 fifth in Hearts and the defense would then immediately take four Heart tricks and the King of Clubs... without even counting the Ace of Spades."

Me: "Yes, you are certainly right again. It seems like the correct play is to win the first round and help West establish her Hearts or simply cash them. But let's now look at Diamonds, why do you say that South must have at least two tricks there?"

Isabelle: "East played small when declarer called for the Jack of Diamonds. Now, I think East doesn't have a lot of Diamonds since West has four. If she is short in Diamonds, she must cover the Jack if she has the Queen – honor on honor. I therefore imagine that declarer has the Ace and Queen."

Me: "Yes, you are right again. With short honors, we almost always have to cover an honor with an honor. O.K, all this reasoning fits. So what do you suggest?"

Her: "Well, since declarer has at least nine possible tricks in Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs, you have to play on Spades and hope to find partner with the King and at least four spades. Besides, that's what happened. We could have taken five Spade tricks."

Me: "Yes, and we know by the way for a fact that partner has the King of Spades if everything you said before is true. South has Ace-Queen of Hearts and Ace-Queen of Diamonds as well as the King of Clubs, which makes 15HCP. She can't also have the King of Spades. So you're right, Stella should

have found it. But you also made a mistake on this deal, even if it was more difficult."

She: "Oh yes? But how so? I played exactly like her opponent!"

Me: "Put yourself in West's shoes if you had won the Jack of Hearts with the Ace. What would she have thought?"

Isabelle: "Oh yes! West would have thought that her partner had the Queen because otherwise I would have used it to win the trick cheaply. And of course, for East, it is normal to insert the Jack with Queen-Jack since in third position we have to play the highest card necessary, therefore the Jack. And then, after she got in with the King of Diamonds, she'd have confidently played another Heart from her King and I would have scored the Queen under the amazed gaze of all. Ah, ah! That's ingenious!"

Me: "Be careful though when you do this kind of thing." If you exchange the 10 and Jack in the East-West hands, then if you take the 10 with the Ace, West with King-Jack will not be fooled. He'll think that with Queen-Ten, his partner would have played the Queen."

	♠ J103		
	♥ 65		
	♦ J86		
	♣ AQJ75		
♠ AQ4		N	♠ K9862
♥ K10872		W	♥ J94
♦ K752			♦ 43
♣ 4		S	♣ 1032
	♠ 75		
	♥ AQ3		
	♦ AQ109		
	♣ K986		