

STEP BY STEP DECLARER PLAY

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OPTICAL ILLUSION



TEAMS. (DEALER SOUTH. E/W VUL.).

Sitting South, you discover the following hand:

♠ QJ10982
♥ 1043
♦ AQ
♣ K3

You open 1♠ and West doubles for take-out. Now your partner bids 3NT, an artificial raise which shows 13–15 points and at least four-card support in Spades. With this information, you sign off in the Spade game.

The full auction:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
Dble	3NT(*)	Pass	4♠

(*) "Super Truscott".

Now it is up to you to make your contract on the lead of the Diamond 4, keeping in mind that West holds opening strength and Spade shortness.

	♠ AK76 ♥ J97 ♦ 98 ♣ QJ104	
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ QJ10982 ♥ 1043 ♦ AQ ♣ K3	

Contract: 4 Spades.

Lead: ♦4 to the 8 and 10.

How many winners do you have at the moment?

Thanks to West's Diamond lead from under his King, you can already claim

eight with six high Spades and two Diamonds.

Where do you plan to establish the two missing tricks?

It's child play to set up three more by kicking out West's Ace of Clubs.

So can you claim already?

No, unfortunately not because, in reality, you are not in a desirable situation.

For what reason?

You are facing the loss of three Hearts in addition to the Club Ace. True, West hasn't led that suit. But you must expect him to change his weapon of choice at the first opportunity and switch to a Heart.

But how can you be convinced of that?

For not having led a Heart, West certainly holds Ace-Queen there.

What will he base his thoughts on?

He'll count your tricks and he'll have no trouble finding out that you already have ten (five Spades, three Clubs and two Diamonds).

So what will he do?

With no other possibility of beating your contract, he'll seize his only chance to set 4 Spades and switch to a Heart.

And how can you avoid becoming a victim of this sword of Damocles?

Your only chance of survival is to put West on the wrong track.

But how?

By winning East's Diamond 10 with the Ace and not with the Queen!

What's West gonna think?

He'll make the logical inference that his partner holds Queen-Jack-10 of

Diamonds and he'll play another Diamond from his King so that his partner can play a Heart from his side through your King.

What is actually going to happen?

You win the trick with your Queen of Diamonds. And, after two rounds of trumps, you can claim eleven tricks with six Spades, two Diamonds and three Clubs.

Finally, when is the best moment to play trumps?

Not yet, after all you don't want to give the defense the possibility to signal. Just put the Club King on the table, thus putting West to the test immediately.

	♠ AK76 ♥ J97 ♦ 98 ♣ QJ104	
♠ 54 ♥ AQ82 ♦ K543 ♣ A76	N W E S	♠ 3 ♥ K65 ♦ J10762 ♣ 9852
	♠ QJ10982 ♥ 1043 ♦ AQ ♣ K3	

THE PRINCIPLE

When you see that good defenders would be capable of bringing down your contract and double dummy there is no remedy, don't panic. To start with, put yourself in their shoes and then think of a ruse that one of them will have to fall for. On the occasion of our deal, this undetectable trap is based on an optical illusion resulting from the fact that a trick is won "higher than necessary", namely with the Ace rather than the Queen.