

Board of the Week 18

By Dick Chapman

If you haven't read *Bridge in the Menagerie* or its sequels, you have missed some very entertaining bridge literature. These books are compilations of Victor Mollo articles and stories, and they feature various characters whose attributes we all know. Hideous Hog, for example, is the club's best player but absolutely insufferable. Secretary Bird is always calling the director and screaming about this law or that, but things backfire. Bird also is a point counter and has good card memory, but never scores well.

A third Mollo character appeared in a recent game at our club. Three times. This is Rueful Rabbit. Rabbit makes a mess of his bidding and play but is surely the world's luckiest player. No matter how bad his action, it always works. Check out these three slams at the club:

		♠ ♥K432 ♦A10954 ♣AK86		
♠K105432 ♥QJ95 ♦2 ♣Q3	D: W V: NS		♠J987 ♥106 ♦876 ♣10742	
		♠AQ6 ♥A87 ♦KQJ3 ♣J95		
West	North	East	South	
2♠	3♦	Pass	4NT	
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♦	
All pass				

West didn't break any "rules" by preempting with four of the other major. North could have doubled to show the heart suit but elected to bid diamonds. East could (should?) bid 3 spades but elected to pass. 4NT is unilateral. 5 hearts forced slam regardless of whether it was making. The opening lead was a spade. Declarer won, drew trump, dropped the club queen doubleton, and racked up a top. The field was in a normal 3NT contract making 6. Unfortunately, I was West and the zero went into my scoresheet instead of someone else's.

But never mind, because my side got the top on a later board (diagram in next column). I elected to open 1 diamond, not 2 clubs. Not that Larry Cohen knows anything about bridge, but he agrees. See

[https://tcgcloud.bridgefinesse.com/PHPPOSTCGS.php?options=LookupClioBoard&acblno=3010066&date=2023-03-14&board=02&gamemode=.](https://tcgcloud.bridgefinesse.com/PHPPOSTCGS.php?options=LookupClioBoard&acblno=3010066&date=2023-03-14&board=02&gamemode=)

West's 3 spade call was a splinter in support of hearts, and this is Cohen's method as well. East's 4 spade call was a system breakdown, and 6 hearts was "I hope we can make this, especially if you have the ace of spades."

		♠KQJ4 ♥874 ♦73 ♣J1072		
♠ ♥AQ62 ♦AK1086 ♣AKQ5	D: E V: NS		♠975 ♥KJ93 ♦QJ92 ♣86	
		♠A108632 ♥105 ♦54 ♣943		
East	South	West	North	
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	
1♥	Pass	3♠	Pass	
4♠	Pass	6♥	All pass	

Before opening lead, the opponents were told of the failure to alert the splinter. The spade ace was the lead, and it rolls for 13 easy tricks. The field was in 4 hearts making 7, with 2 pairs in 6 diamonds making 7. Lots of errors, yet the EW pair here brings in a top.

EW is now batting .500 on slams. The third one isn't up to Rueful's standards because there is some logic to the auction. Nevertheless:

		♠J102 ♥A2 ♦KJ42 ♣AK104		
♠A6 ♥Q9875 ♦109863 ♣9	D: N V: B		♠4 ♥KJ1063 ♦Q75 ♣Q532	
		♠KQ98753 ♥4 ♦A ♣J876		
North	East	South	West	
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass	
2♠	Pass	6♠	All pass	

I asked South if they were using the Scientific System and he laughed. It's not scientific, but here we are. The opening lead was a spade won by West. A spade back might be the killer lead (to reduce ruffs). A heart might be right if the king and ace are switched, but East might have led the ace of hearts. I led a club. Declarer wins and cashes the diamond ace. Now a trump to hand and discard a club on the diamond king. Now ruff a low diamond and voila, here is the queen falling from the East hand. Back to hand with the third

club. The fourth club in dummy disappears on the established diamond jack, and dummy is good. NS had lots of luck here, but from South's viewpoint there are squeeze possibilities and other factors that would suggest the slam is within reach. Four other pairs bid this one.

Our side got 0, 100, and 13 on the three boards, not exactly winning bridge ☹. See you at the table. May all your slams make (unless I am defending).