

To Cover or Not to  
Cover?  
The World Wants to  
Know.

# An Old Bridge Adage

- “Cover an honor with an honor.”
- When I was learning bridge, I heard this over and over from my more experienced partners.
- Like most bits of conventional wisdom, They are often right, but not always right

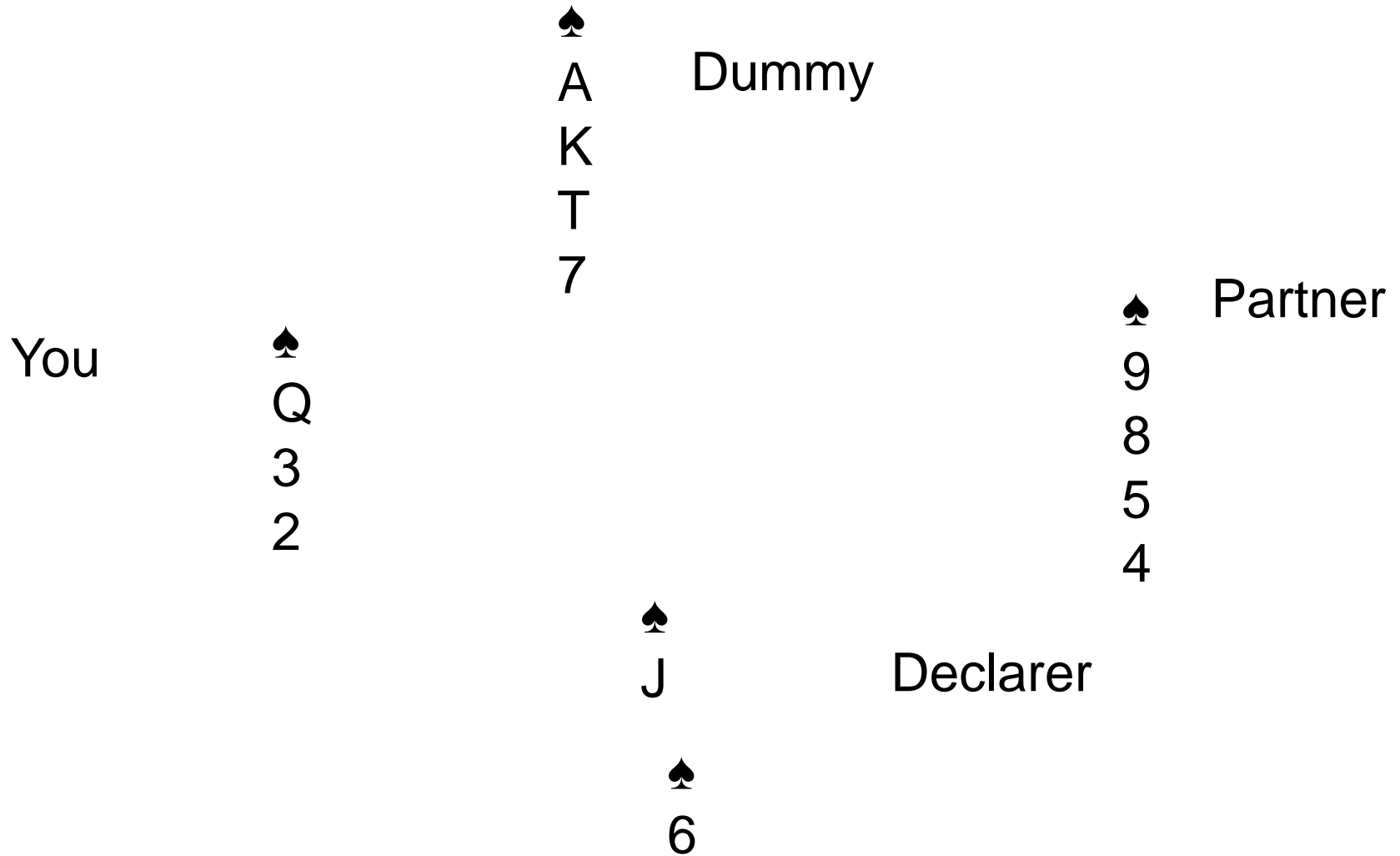
# What do We Mean When We Say Cover?

- You are defending a contract.
- Declarer plays an honor card (10 or higher) either from the closed hand or from dummy.
- You are next to play and you hold a card higher than the one played by declarer, but your card is not high enough to win the trick.
- Should you play the higher card or “duck” the trick by playing a lower card?

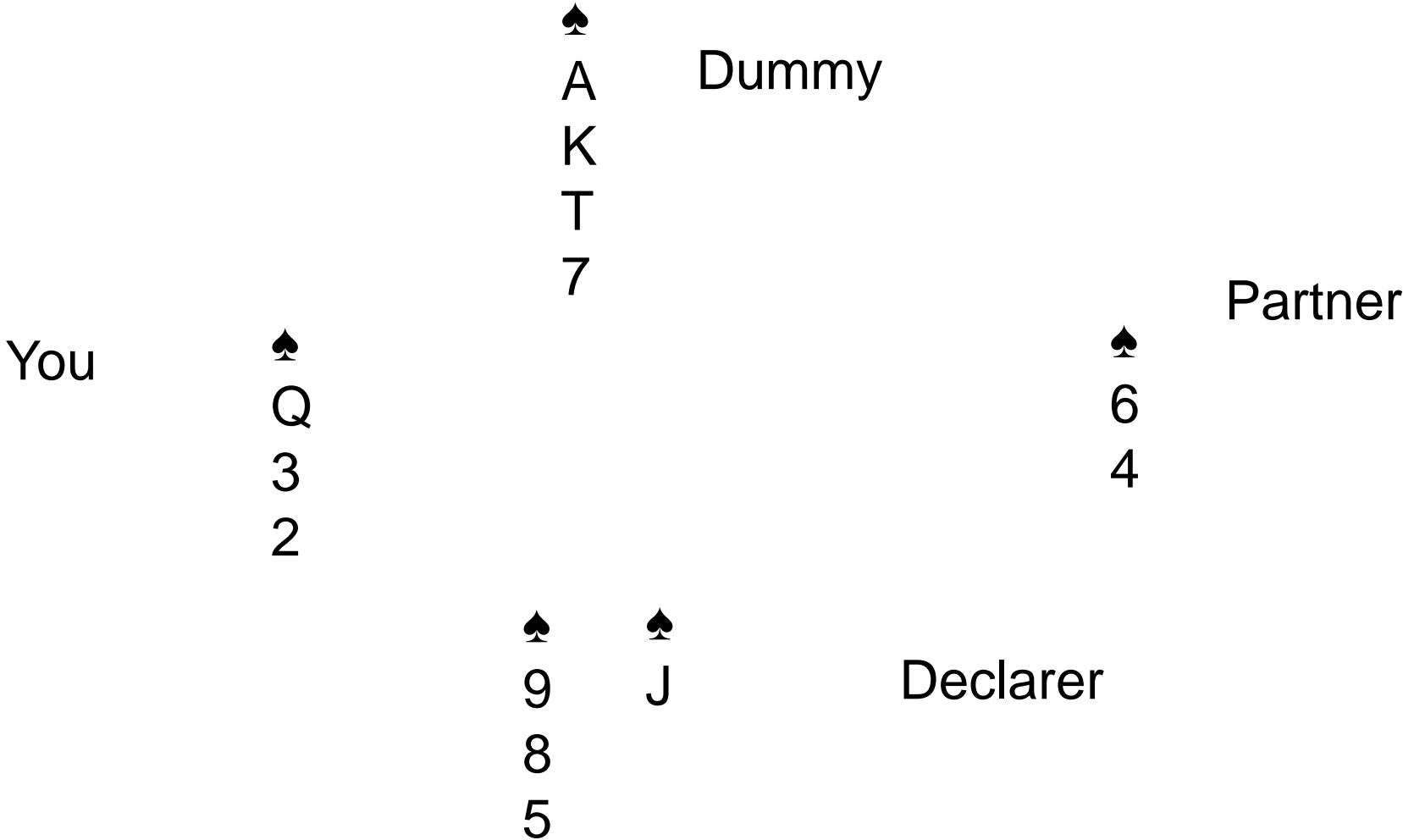
# Does it Make Sense to Cover, if You Cannot Win the Trick?

- The answer is “Yes,” if by covering declarer card you can promote a lower card in your hand or your partner’s hand.
- If there is no chance of promoting a winner, in your hand or partner’s hand, then there is no point in covering.

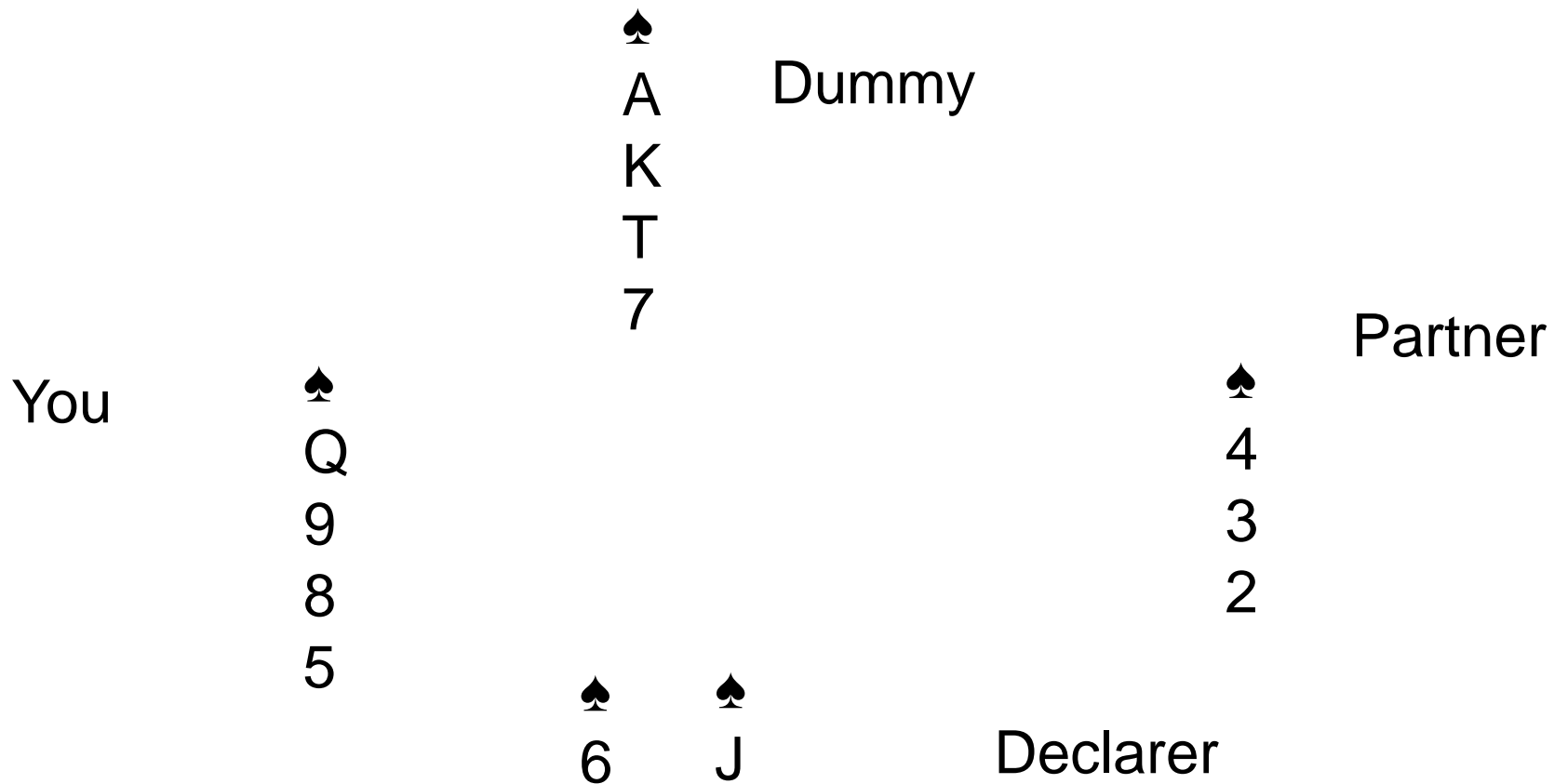
# Consider This Holding (a)



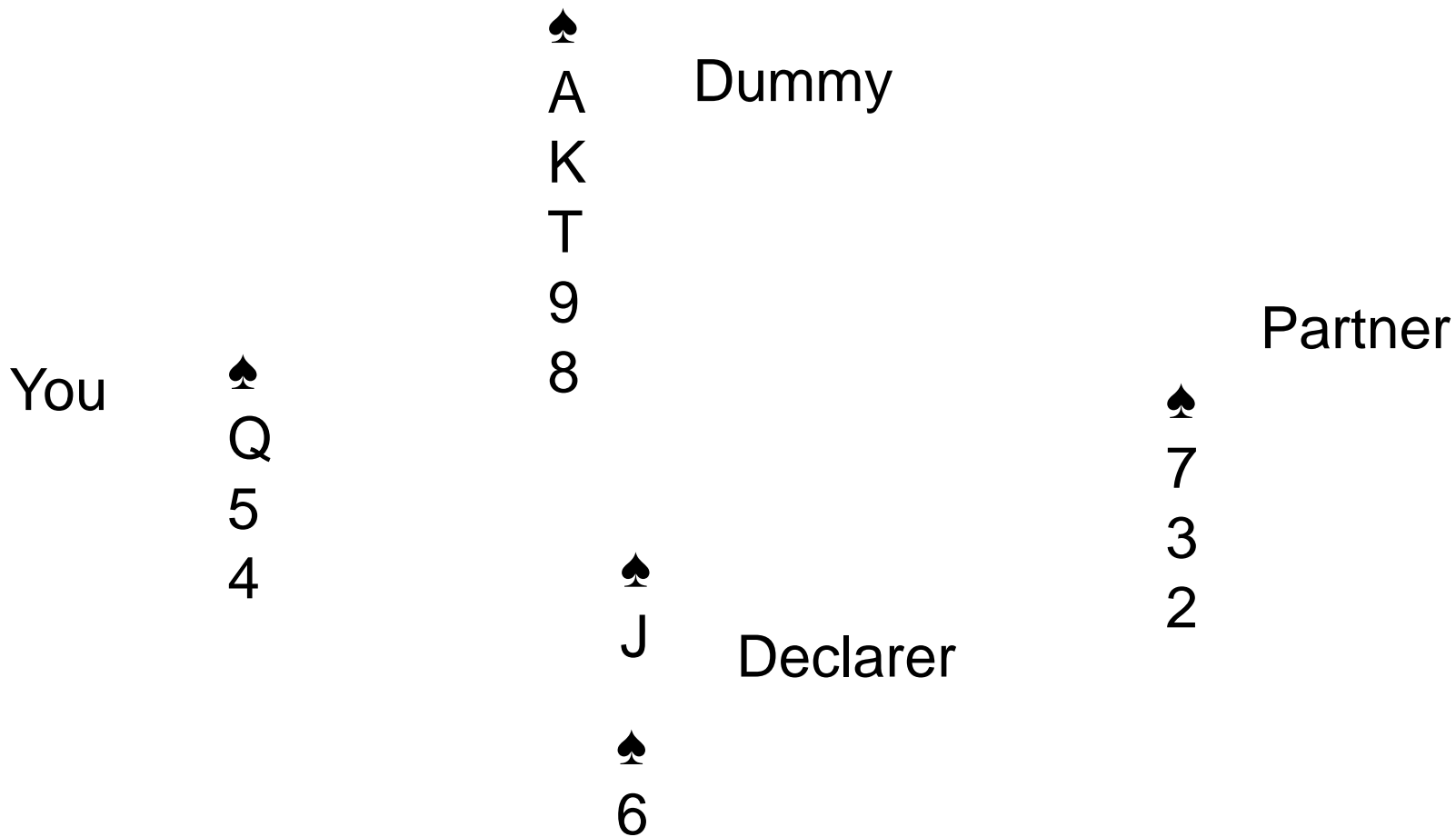
# Consider This Holding (b)



# Consider This Holding (c)

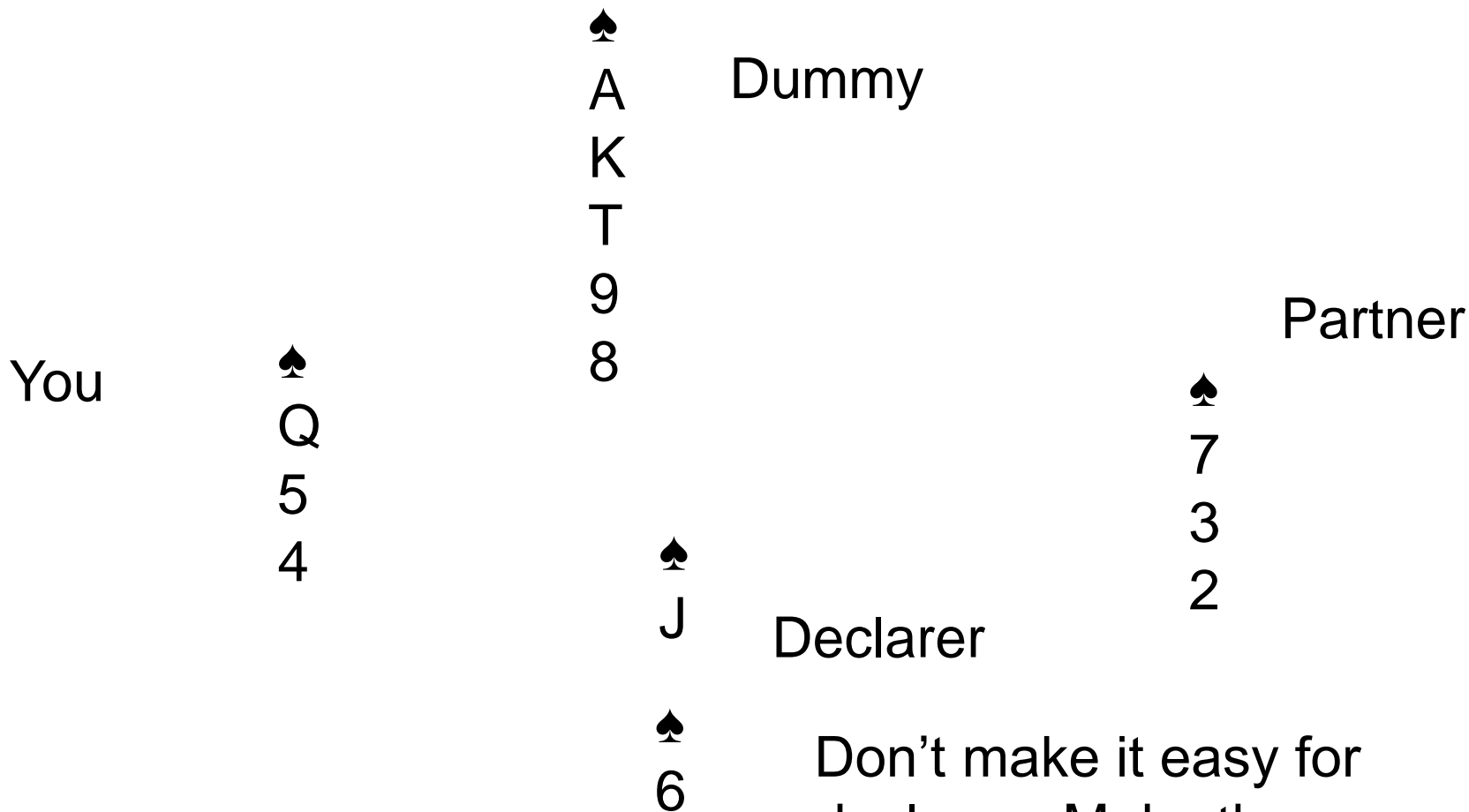


# Don't Cover When it Cannot Help Your Side





# Don't Cover When it Cannot Help Your Side



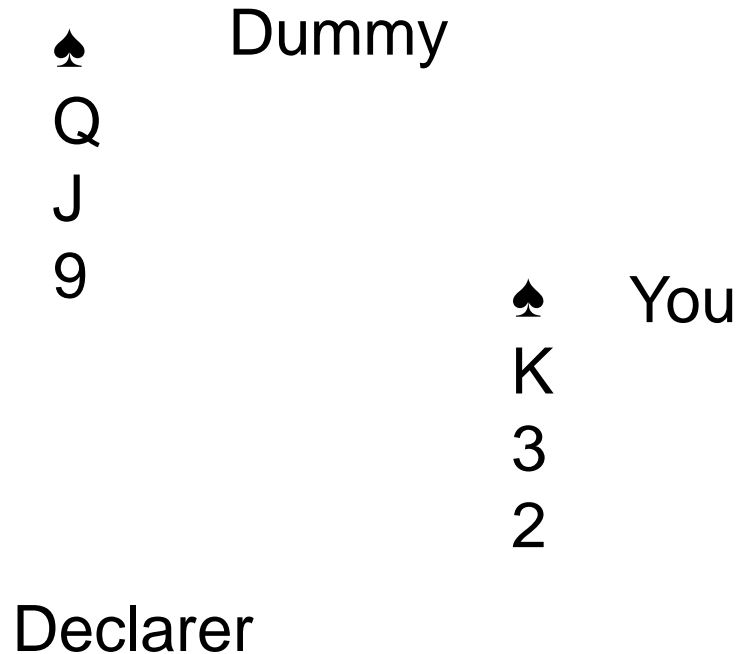
Don't make it easy for declarer. Make them guess.

# When You Don't Know, It's Not a Guess

- The Basic Rule is:
- Always cover, unless you know it won't help.
- Now we'll take a look at some more reasons not to cover.

# When You can See a Sequence of Honors, Cover the Last

Declarer plays the queen from dummy. You do not cover until he plays the jack



# When Declarer Plays an Honor

|     |   |   |          |
|-----|---|---|----------|
|     |   | ♠ | Dummy    |
|     |   | A |          |
|     |   | 5 |          |
|     |   | 3 |          |
| You | ♠ |   |          |
|     | K |   |          |
|     | 3 |   |          |
|     | 2 |   |          |
|     |   |   | Declarer |
|     |   | ♠ |          |
|     |   | Q |          |

When declarer plays an honor in this situation, you should assume she has a touching honor below it.

# Don't Cover

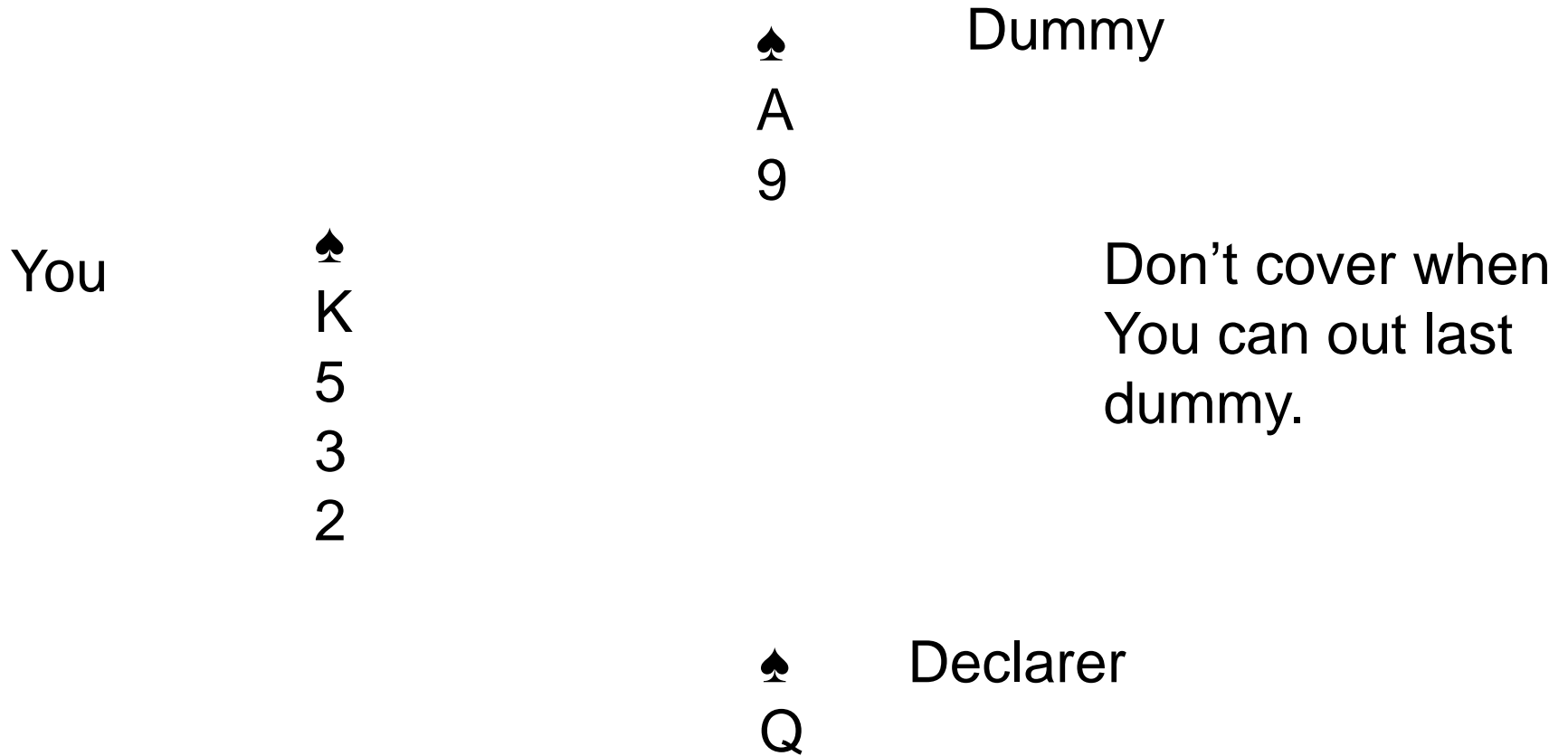
Don't cover when  
your holding is  
longer than you  
can see.

♠ Dummy  
Q  
9

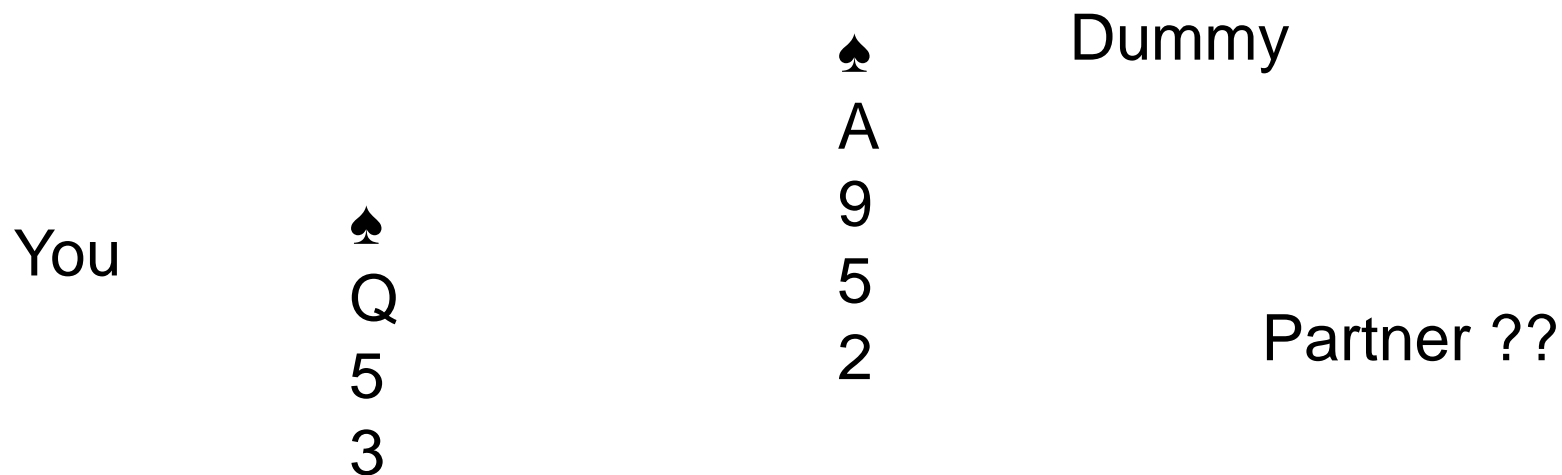
♠ You  
K  
5  
3  
2

Declarer

# Don't Cover



# Don't Cover



Don't cover when there is a higher honor you cannot see. Where's the king?



# Don't Cover-Example

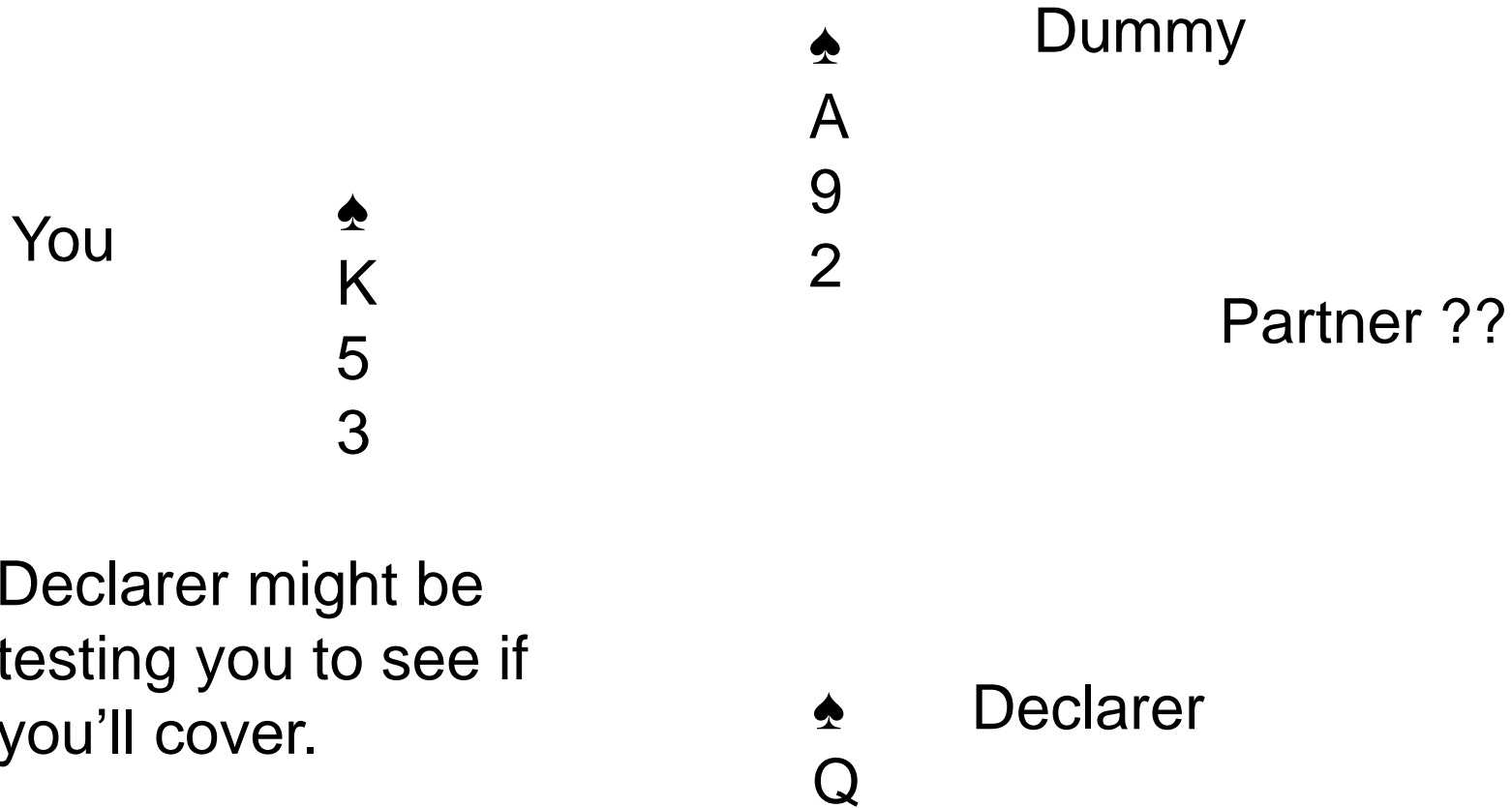
|     |   |   |            |
|-----|---|---|------------|
|     |   | ♠ | Dummy      |
|     |   | A |            |
|     |   | 9 |            |
| You | ♠ | 4 |            |
|     | Q | 2 | Partner ?? |
|     | 5 |   |            |
|     | 3 |   |            |

Declarer might be testing you to see if you'll cover.

|  |    |          |
|--|----|----------|
|  | ♠  | Declarer |
|  | K  |          |
|  | J  |          |
|  | 10 |          |



# Don't Cover in the Trump Suit



Declarer might be testing you to see if you'll cover.

# Let's Summarize

- Defense – like all aspects of bridge– is a thinking game.
- Look at dummy, think about the bidding and plan how you will play suits before you have to decide.

# Let's Summarize

- The basic rule: cover unless you have a reason not to cover.
  - Reason 1: Don't cover if you can see that there is nothing to be gained.
  - Reason 2: Don't cover the first of touching honors.
  - Reason 3: Don't cover when you have more cards than you can see.
  - Reason 4: Don't cover in the trump suit unless you can see something to be gained by covering.