The title would give it away!

The following deal is from the Round Robin of the 2000 Olympiad in Maastricht. It illustrates the flaw with so-called "problem-hands." Without the "alarm bell" to warn you, you might go wrong (as did many world class players that faced this problem without knowing it was a "problem-hand.")

Vulnerable against not, your partner opens 1♣, and RHO overcalls 1♥.

What do you do with :

♠Q 5
♥Q J 9 8
♦K J 5 2
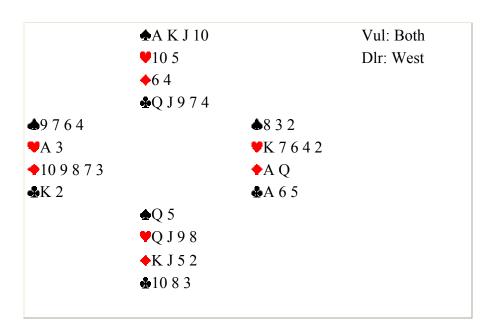♣10 8 3   ?

Let's say you bid 1NT, and everyone passes.

The ♦10 is led and this is what you see:

♠A K J 10
♥10 5
♦6 4
♣Q J 9 7 4

♠Q 5
♥Q J 9 8
♦K J 5 2
♣10 8 3

RHO wins the ♦A and returns the ♦Q .

Any thoughts?

This is nothing more than a hold-up lesson. If you duck the ♦Q you can't be defeated. If you win trick 2 with your ♦K you can no longer make your contract. This was the full deal.

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                    ♠A K J 10              Vul: Both
                    ♥10 5                  Dlr: West
                    ♦6 4
                    ♣Q J 9 7 4
  ♠9 7 6 4                        ♠8 3 2
  ♥A 3                            ♥K 7 6 4 2
  ♦10 9 8 7 3                     ♦A Q
  ♣K 2                            ♣A 6 5
                    ♠Q 5
                    ♥Q J 9 8
                    ♦K J 5 2
                    ♣10 8 3
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If you win Trick 2 (as did many Maastricht masters), you would take 4 spades and 2 diamonds for sure. You'd have to set up a club or heart trick. No matter which suit you played next, West would win and clear diamonds. The defense would get their ace-kings in hearts/clubs and *THREE* diamond tricks. By ducking trick 2 you guarantee your contract. If East happens to have more diamonds, then the suit is 4-3 and you will lose only 2 diamond tricks. If East shifts to clubs or hearts, that sets up your 7th trick. If East shifts to spades you can play on clubs to easily make your contract.   It's easy once you are warned!! (That is always my argument against books/articles on card play -- the reader is ready for the problem. In real life, no alarm bells sound -- that's what is so good about using every day deals.