

Teaser No. 29

♠ Q J 10

♥ A 9 8

♦ K 4 3

♣ K 8 7 6

Game ALL, Dealer: South

Contract: 6♣ by South

Lead: 7♥

E/W Silent.

♠ A 2

♥ K Q J 10

♦ Q 2

♣ A Q J 10 9

All follow to first round of trumps.

Plan the play – its duplicate pairs.

## Solution Teaser No. 29

The contract will always make if East was dealt the king of spades. With good timing, it also makes if West was dealt the king of spades AND the ace of diamonds. The first move is to draw trumps. All follow to the first round so it will be possible to draw the remaining clubs and still have a trump in dummy. Then comes the key move of leading a low diamond from hand. If West holds the ace they must play low or else they gift you a second trick in the suit. If the king wins the trick you cash the remaining hearts and throw a diamond on the last round. You now get off lead with a diamond and West be will left with two losing options: a spade into your split tenace, or a diamond which allows you to ruff in dummy and throw the spade loser from hand.

If it turns out that East was dealt the ace of diamonds you fall back on the spade finesse. The contract makes all of the time when the spade finesse is winning and half of the time when it isn't, so given that trumps are not split 4-0 it's a healthy 75% slam.

The tactic is to lead a low diamond through the hand that you hope holds the ace. This is West because spades cannot be led safely from that side of the table. The play of a low diamond from hand is an example of the aptly named

'Dilemma coup', a variant of 'Morton's Fork coup'. The victim is well and truly skewered! (Cardinal John Morton was Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Henry VII. He saw both frugal and extravagant lifestyles as evidence of wealth, arguing that those living modestly were obviously stashing it away. As a consequence, nobody escaped paying taxes to the King.)

Some pairs are bound to play this hand in either game or a slam in no-trumps. They can also succeed if West holds both of the key cards. They start with the same play in diamonds, forcing a duck, and then run all of the clubs and hearts, squeezing West down to three cards. They then need to guess whether West has come down to a singleton honour in spades or diamonds. The flaw in this plan is that East may hold the king of spades and now twelve tricks cannot be made even though the finesse was winning all along. Consequently, the no-trump declarers will probably just run the queen of spades and hope it wins (if in 6NT) or loses (if in game).

Making 6C should score reasonably well even if the spade finesse is winning and some pairs bid and make 6NT. It will score very well indeed if the spade finesse

is losing. As in the previous 6C contract (teaser No. 28) playing in a sound trump fit gives declarer a better play for twelve tricks.