

# **SIMPLE BRIDGE STORIES**

## ***Introduction***

Hi Everybody. You may remember us from an earlier introduction when Simon told you about how we learnt to play Simple Bridge. We're the Simple twins, Simon and Vera. We've now been playing for over a year, and in that year have met some interesting people and made new friends.

The following stories are a collection of manuscripts that we have written about our own adventures in the first year of bridge in C-Grade, and also those written by two of our best newly found bridge friends and prospective partners, Dolly Barton and Wally Watts. If you can forgive the inarticulate style and possibly shallow analysis of some of the hands, we hope you'll join in our adventures and learn something from them.

### **Simon and Vera Simple**

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## CHAPTER 1

Simon and Vera Simple have just learnt to play bridge, the SIMPLE way. This series follows their progress at the club, in the C-Grade.

Tonight, Simon is sitting North and Vera South.

### BOARD 1 DLR N NIL VUL

	♠ 7 2	
	♥ A J 7	
	♦ A 6 3	
	♣ A J 9 4 2	
♠ K J 9 3		♠ Q 4
♥ 9 5 2		♥ K Q 10 8 6 4 3
♦ J 10 8 5 4		♦ Q 7
♣ 5		♣ 10 3
	♠ A 10 8 6 5	
	♥	
	♦ K 9 2	
	♣ K Q 8 7 6	

Simon opens 1C but East, unhelpfully, jumps to 3H. Vera, with 12 high card points ("HCP") and a five card spade suit, bids 3S.

Any voluntary bid in a new suit, unless you have PASSED as opener, is FORCING (known as a 'free bid'). Simon has no spade support but a perfect hand to bid 3NT. Vera considers whether to PASS or not. She decides that with a void in hearts and so many clubs, it may be better to play in clubs. She considers looking for a slam, even, but Simon clearly has the points in the wrong place (at least some must be in hearts). She decides to bid Five Clubs.

East leads the king of hearts. Look what can happen if the 'fourth highest' heart is led from that sort of holding. Not that it matters this time since the jack of hearts is a superfluous trick. Simon discards the two of diamonds, draws two rounds of trumps, and then ruffs two hearts and one diamond in dummy, losing a spade at the end.

Some others somehow manage to lose another trick, maybe losing count of the trumps and leading one too many?

Others allow East to play in hearts, not even doubled!

5C making 6 is worth 15/16 match points. What a great start to our bridge career.

## BOARD 2 DLR E NS VUL

	♠ K 7 4 3	
	♥ Q 4 3	
	♦ 9 8 5	
	♣ K 9 7	
♠ A J 9		♠ 10 8 6
♥ J 6 5		♥ A 9 8 7 2
♦ Q 7 4		♦ A J 3
♣ A Q 10 2		♣ 6 4
	♠ Q 5 2	
	♥ K 10	
	♦ K 10 6 2	
	♣ J 8 5 3	

East passes, Vera passes, and West opens 1NT. EW are playing Acol, and the 1NT opening shows a balanced hand of 12-14 HCP. Simon passes and East bids 2H. This is to play, but Vera hopes that West might not know that. West does, and passes.

Vera looks for her best lead and decides on the two of diamonds. Fourth highest from a high honour is meant to be not a bad lead as a rule.

On this hand, it does not work out too well, as declarer can now take a finesse of the ten of clubs and later discard the other losing diamond on the queen of clubs. But declarer doesn't do that, winning the jack of diamonds and finessing the queen of clubs. Simon wins and returns partner's suit, normally considered a good idea.

Declarer, more in hope than anything else, plays low but Vera wins the king and returns another one and everyone follows.

Later, declarer finesses the spades twice, first to the nine losing to Simon's king, then to the jack winning.

**Finessing against two honours through the same hand is a 75% chance of one out of two finesses working, since one finesse is 50%.**

All the time declarer hasn't even touched trumps. Maybe it's because of the quality of the trumps, or maybe she has just forgotten, but drawing trumps is normally the first thing you do as declarer in a trump contract.

Not that it's always correct to do so. Neither Simon nor Vera know whether that is the case or not on this hand, but eventually declarer has to play them, and altogether loses two trump tricks and one trick in each of the other suits, for 8 tricks and +110.

Unfortunately for Simon and Vera, only one of the other declarers makes three, and others still are left in 1NT making +90. The SIMPLES have to settle for 6/16 match points through no fault of their own.

## BOARD 6 DLR E EW VUL

	♠ A 2	
	♥ A K J 7	
	♦ A Q 9 5	
	♣ J 5 4	
♠ K 6 5		♠ Q J 10 8 4
♥ 8 2		♥ 5 3
♦ K 8 4		♦ 10 7 6 3 2
♣ K 9 6 3 2		♣ 7
	♠ 9 7 3	
	♥ Q 10 9 6 4	
	♦ J	
	♣ A Q 10 8	

There are three Passes and Simon opens 1D. Vera bids 1H, West passes. Simon knows they have the fit and the points to be in game, so he bids 4H without further ado.

West leads the three of clubs, normally a good enough lead, but it works to Simon and Vera's benefit: Vera wins the eight in hand, draws trumps and persists with clubs, later discarding dummy's spade loser on the fourth club, and ruffing two spades in dummy. Making Six! Only two others have made Six, with some Norths playing in 4H and only making Five on the lead of the queen of spades, and others making only Five on the singleton club lead from East by letting the club run to West's king for a club return and ruff.

Letting the club run may be OK against random leads but not against good players who lead their 'fourth highest'. Why? Because the "Rule Of Eleven" tells declarer that the lead of the seven can't be fourth highest; even without the 'rule' declarer can see that only the king and nine are higher than the seven. So, declarer should win the ace of clubs if the seven is led, clear trumps and then play on clubs for a spade discard. That would make six also.

The lead of the queen of spades is much more sensible because it is from a solid sequence of honour cards and much more constructive. The 'fourth highest' lead with such a run of honour cards is wrong, though on this hand West has the king, but imagine letting declarer make a trick with the nine if you lead the eight and partner does not have the king.

Making Six is worth 14/16 match points for Simon and Vera.

## BOARD 7 DLR S ALL VUL

	♠ 10 9 7	
	♥ J 4	
	♦ A Q 8 5	
	♣ A K J 5	
♠ A 8 3		♠ Q J 5
♥ K 8 7 3		♥ Q 5 2
♦ 9 7 3		♦ 10 4 2
♣ 9 8 2		♣ 7 6 4 3
	♠ K 6 4 2	
	♥ A 10 9 6	
	♦ K J 6	
	♣ Q 10	

Vera opens 1H, the lower of her four card suits. Simon has a balanced hand with 15 HCP. The spades are a bit of a worry so he contemplates bidding 2C, but since 3NT describes his hand pretty well, and since he does think he can play the hands better than Vera (he may be in for a shock), he 'hogs' the contract with a bid of 3NT.

This works out quite well, since East has nothing of any great value and opts for what looks to be the best lead: the queen of spades, since Simon has denied more than three of them. When dummy appears, East is quite satisfied with her lead, and even more so when Simon covers in dummy with the king and West wins the ace. West returns the eight to Simon's nine and East's jack but East's face drops when the next lead produces the seven from Simon and not West.

Simon is well aware that the six of spades is now a trick and claims the rest: making Five for yet another great score: +660 and 14/16 match points.

## BOARD 9 DLR N EW VUL

	♠ Q 3 2	
	♥ A K Q	
	♦ K 10 6 2	
	♣ Q 8 6	
♠ 9 7 4		♠ A J 8 5
♥ 8 7 2		♥ 6 5 4 3
♦ 7 5 3		♦ Q 4
♣ K 10 9 2		♣ 5 4 3
	♠ K 10 6	
	♥ J 10 9	
	♦ A J 9 8	
	♣ A J 7	

Simon opens 1D and this time it's Vera's turn to bid 3NT. Her hand is even more suited than Simon's was. Simon has more than he might have had, but not quite enough to bid slam: on balanced hands, 33 HCP are required to make 6NT as a rule, and Vera has promised 14-16 with a jump to 3NT opposite partner's opening of One of a suit.

West leads the two of clubs against Vera's 3NT, and Vera shows her skills: winning in hand with the seven, she decides to finesse diamonds into West's hand; West may continue clubs (unlikely) or switch to spades (which would be quite helpful).

So, a diamond to the king, followed by the ten. East plays the queen perforce and shows out on the third round. Vera cashes her last diamond and notes that East appears to have the major suits. She now crosses to the queen of hearts and leads a spade, inserting the ten, not worried if West gains the lead. West doesn't. East has both the ace and jack and Vera can now make another spade for a total of 11 tricks and +460, a score obtained by only one other pair, and 15/16 match points.

## BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL

	♠ A 8 6	
	♥ K 7 4 3	
	♦ K Q 8	
	♣ A 8 5	
♠ 3		♠ K 4 2
♥ 9 8 6		♥ Q J 10 5
♦ A 7 5 3		♦ 10 6 4 2
♣ Q J 10 7 6		♣ 3 2
	♠ Q J 10 9 7 5	
	♥ A 2	
	♦ J 9	
	♣ K 9 4	

Vera has a lovely spade suit despite missing the ace and king. She opens 1S and, would you believe it, Simon bids 3NT.

This sort of bidding doesn't normally occur in a month of Sundays, much less three times in one session. Well, at least Simon and Vera know what it means. Vera's hand, with six spades and a good run of them, is not suitable for play in No Trumps, so she bids 4S. Simon would not respond 3NT immediately if he did not have at least two spades, she hopes.

West leads the queen of clubs. This is a good example of why you don't lead 'fourth highest' from such a holding. Vera wins in hand with the king and lays down the queen of trumps. She knows how to finesse. As long as West has the king, it won't make a trick unless West has all four. West plays the three and Vera plays low from dummy, but East wins the king. He now returns his second club, dummy winning with the ace. Now trumps are drawn and Vera plays her jack of diamonds. West wins and cashes the jack of clubs.

Making Four, for 420 and half the match points.

Some others have made Five, including a seven of clubs lead, but also with the queen led. "I couldn't have made five with that lead, could I?" asks Vera.

Simon isn't shy about answering such questions. "You did miss something. Why not play on your diamonds first? As long as one of your opponents doesn't hold fewer than three, you can discard your losing club on a top diamond and only then finesse the spades."

Vera's not so sure; drawing trumps is the first thing a good declarer should do, after all. But Simon has a point.

The people who work out such odds will tell you that the finesse working is 50%, but one of the opponents having fewer than three diamonds is much less than that.

**Drawing trumps may be the first rule for declarer play, but the second one is the addendum: "Only when you have nothing better to do".**



## BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

	♠ 9 7 3	
	♥ A 7	
	♦ K Q 10 8 7	
	♣ 10 7 2	
♠ 5 4		♠ K Q 8 6
♥ J 10 6 3		♥ K Q 5 4
♦ J 6 5 2		♦ 4
♣ A J 8		♣ K Q 9 5
	♠ A J 10 2	
	♥ 9 8 2	
	♦ A 9 3	
	♣ 6 4 3	

After two passes, East opens 1C, and West responds 1D; East now bids 1H and West raises to Two. East thinks for a while and passes.

Vera has to make a lead. She knows that leading off your aces is not a good idea, and that underleading them is even worse. East has bid clubs so a club is also not a good lead. Vera has also listened to the bidding and knows that opponents have, almost certainly, a 4-4 fit in hearts, with a possible misfit in clubs and diamonds.

In such situations leading a trump to prevent a possible cross ruff is quite a good idea, so Vera decides on a trump lead and leads the two. Who knows, the nine may be needed later.

Dummy's clubs are a disappointment, but the spade shortage is good news. Even better news when Simon produces the ace (he would not have been happy if he'd had the queen or king) and returns another one.

Declarer wins in dummy and leads a spade to the queen, but Vera wins and leads her third trump. Declarer can still ruff one diamond in his own hand and one spade in dummy, which comes to a total of nine tricks and +140 to EW.

Disappointingly, this is worth only 7/16 match points to the Simples; yes, some declarers have made Four when South has made the atrocious lead of the spade ace, but others still have bid to Four and not made, or played the hand in clubs, of all things.

Yes, sometimes good play can be totally unrewarded.

## BOARD 17 DLR N NIL VUL

	♠ K 7 6 5	
	♥ A	
	♦ 6 5 3	
	♣ K 10 6 5 4	
♠ J 9		♠ A 8 4 3
♥ 9 7 5		♥ 10 6 3 2
♦ J 10 7 4		♦ 9 8
♣ A 7 3 2		♣ J 9 8
	♠ Q 10 2	
	♥ K Q J 8 4	
	♦ A K Q 2	
	♣ Q	

Simon opens with 1C and Vera nearly falls out of her chair. She bids a quiet 1H, after all Simon has to bid again. He does, and bids 1S.

Vera now has to find a forcing bid and bids 3D. Such a jump may be made on a three card suit, and more often than not simply looks for three card heart support.

Simon has no option but to bid 3NT. Vera, still carried away with her hand, wants to keep going, since if they can bid and make a small slam (12 tricks) there is a bonus of 500 going. But, she doesn't know how to go on and decides, wisely, to give in.

East has a lead problem: every suit has been bid by opponents. She decides to lead dummy's second bid suit. Normally, this is most likely to be weaker and shorter than the first, and if not, no harm done in leading 'through strength'.

The diamond lead meets with AKQ in dummy, but that is of no advantage to Simon, who leads a heart to the ace and tries a spade to the ten.

West wins the jack and returns another diamond, won in dummy. The queen of spades is won by East, who now exits with a heart.

When East keeps his 8 4 of spades and West her ace of clubs and fourth diamond, Simon ends up with just the nine tricks required to make 3NT, thinking to himself: "boy, this pair is up with the play".

How right he is. Everyone has made more tricks, but thanks to one pair not getting to game and one bidding to the impossible slam, he scrambles 4/16 match points.

## BOARD 22 DLR E EW VUL

	♠ K 8 7 6 5	
	♥ Q J 9	
	♦ Q J 10	
	♣ 7 2	
♠ J 9		♠ 10 4 2
♥ 6 3		♥ 10 8 5 2
♦ K 7 5 2		♦ 9 8 6 3
♣ K Q 9 4 3		♣ 10 5
	♠ A Q 3	
	♥ A K 7 4	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ A J 8 6	

Vera has a very big hand. With a balanced hand and an HCP count of 22, her opening bid is 2NT. Simon has more than enough to be in game, but spades may be a better contract, so he bids 3S. This shows a five card suit and asks partner to bid 4S with three (or more) card support, and 3NT if she only has two spades. Vera raises Simon to 4S.

East leads the ten of clubs but Simon has no trouble making twelve tricks, rising with dummy's ace, drawing trumps, and discarding his losing club on the fourth heart. He notes with satisfaction that only one enterprising pair has bid to 6S, but...East has led a tricky three of diamonds and somehow (he doesn't know how) lulled, or more likely panicked, declarer into losing two tricks.

His satisfaction, however, turns to dismay when he sees that many others have bid to 3NT and also made Six when West has underled the KQ of clubs, whereas the lead of the king would have kept declarer to eleven tricks in all probability.

Simon notes something very interesting, though: on the king of clubs lead there is in fact a way to make 12 tricks: declarer wins the ace, and now runs off five spades and four hearts, which leaves three cards.

West has to come down to the bare king of clubs to keep a second card with his king of diamonds, but declarer can now lead a club to put West in, and he now has to lead away from his king of diamonds through dummy's QJ to declarer's A4.

Simon doesn't expect that this would have happened in actual play, and also notes that the simple diamond finesse is just as good, and even if it loses will ensure that West is on lead, thus protecting the jack of clubs. But he is thrilled with the fact that he has seen, 'double dummy', a play that he'll be able to use at a future date, when it really is necessary.

Finally, he notes with much less satisfaction, that their score of 480 for 4S making Six is worth exactly 8/16 match points.

This week, Simon and Vera Simple have scored 62.3% on the hands reviewed above, with an overall score of 52%, so they haven't done quite so well on the other hands. But... not bad for starters. They can only improve, we hope.

## CHAPTER 2

This week, Simon and Vera have lost the cut and are moving, Vera sitting West and Simon East.

### BOARD 5 DLR N NS VUL

	♠ 6 2	
	♥ K J 7 6	
	♦ 10 6 4 2	
	♣ K 7 6	
♠ A Q 10 9 7		♠ 8 5 4
♥ Q		♥ 4 2
♦ J 9 8 7		♦ A Q 5 3
♣ Q J 5		♣ 9 8 3 2
	♠ K J 3	
	♥ A 10 9 8 5 3	
	♦ K	
	♣ A 10 4	

After two passes, South opens 1H. Vera overcalls 1S. She has plenty in reserve for the overcall since she might do it with as few as seven or eight points at this vulnerability. She does not see any point in making a Take Out Double, since it's better to show the five card spade suit. An overcall should normally guarantee at least a five card suit, and overcalling rather than doubling makes partner's bidding easier. North raises to 2H and Simon competes with 2S. He can do so because he trusts Vera to have five spades. He knows they have an eight card fit and it seems sensible to tell Vera that he does have some support. South is not put off by this bidding and bids 3H. With 15 HCP she is even considering bidding more strongly, but the spade overcall on her left does not make her spade honours look too healthy. Vera thinks about bidding 3S, but Simon has only given a 'courtesy raise' and there's no guarantee that bidding 3S will not push NS into game in hearts or that 3S won't come a cropper if the cards are sitting wrong. Vera passes, without thinking for too long since too much hesitation can make things awkward from an ethical viewpoint for partner.

Everyone passes and Vera considers her lead. Leading aces unsupported by kings, she has learnt, is not normally a good idea, even if partner has supported her suit, though that does sometimes make the lead more attractive. Underleading aces, especially from your own suit, is definitely not recommended unless you are quite desperate, and Vera isn't. Leading a trump in a situation where both sides have bid one suit only is a definite 'no no', especially leading a singleton trump, and even more so when you have the singleton queen! That leaves one of the minor suits. The queen from a holding of QJ and other(s) is considered a good lead, underleading them from a three card suit not so good, but with four or more, acceptable. The lead of 'fourth highest' from a broken suit headed by an honour is also a 'standard' lead but some experts don't like leading from a jack, preferring to lead from a king or queen. Vera decides to follow their advice, and chooses the queen of clubs. Declarer plays low from dummy and Simon plays the three, the correct card to play from such a holding: hopefully, Vera will work out that he holds four clubs but not the ten, since he would have signalled with a higher club. Winning the ace in hand, declarer lays down the ace of hearts and then leads a low one to dummy's jack, Vera signalling with the ten of spades. This is the highest spade she can afford, and tells Simon she wants a spade led through. Declarer now tries a diamond, but Simon isn't silly enough to follow the 'second hand low' rule without thinking. Holding the queen as well, he knows there is no point playing low, and goes up with the ace. Bingo! Declarer's king drops and Simon is on lead. Should he switch to a spade, like Vera has asked, or return her original lead, or even lead another diamond to make declarer ruff and lead from her own hand? Leading the spade through declarer seems best in view of Vera's signal, so Simon switches to a spade, the eight. Such a high 'spot' card denies holding an honour, and when declarer plays the jack and Vera wins, she's not fooled into cashing her ace and setting up a trick for declarer. She can't lead a club, as that will run round to declarer's ten, but the fall of declarer's king of diamonds means declarer either has no more left or the queen only. Either way Vera sees that it is safe to lead a diamond.

Declarer ruffs Simon's queen and next crosses to dummy to try another spade, more in hope than expectation. But Vera wins and then leads her third top spade forcing declarer to ruff in dummy. Declarer now runs her trumps but has to concede a trick to Vera's jack of spades at the end: making Three.

When they look at the score sheet, this Simple yet effective defence has turned out to be somewhat of an overkill, since nearly every NS pair is in game, making 4H, some even with an overtrick when West has led the ace of spades and continued spades.

Just look at those atrocious leads against 4H, Simon and Vera both think to themselves: ace of spades, ten of spades, five of clubs. They are both thankful that they took the trouble to learn the Simple facts about sensible leads!

There is one better EW score than -140: an intrepid pair in 4S going down one! The twins can see that everything is lying right in spades, but even then declarer has to be virtually clairvoyant to escape for one down: a heart lead and continuation, ruffed. A diamond to the ace, dropping South's singleton king; a spade to the queen, ace of spades followed by the marked finesse against the diamond ten in North's hand, plus a fortunate end game in the club suit. But... fortune favoured the brave here, though the Simple's thinking defence should have been worth all the match points. They also suspect that the 4S down one was more the result of some atrocious defence rather than clever declarer play.

### BOARD 6 DLR E EW VUL

<p>♠ 9 3 ♥ Q J 7 3 ♦ Q 4 3 2 ♣ 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ A Q 6 2 ♥ 8 4 ♦ K J 8 6 ♣ J 7 4</p>	<p>♠ J 8 7 ♥ K 9 2 ♦ A 10 9 7 5 ♣ K 9</p>
	<p>♠ K 10 5 4 ♥ A 10 6 5 ♦ ♣ A Q 8 3 2</p>	

Simon is tempted to open this hand 1D, but despite the fact that he has good 'controls' (aces and kings) he does have a balanced hand with only one suit and only 11 HCP and is also Vulnerable against Not. All things considered, an 11 HCP opening in those circumstances is not a good idea. So he decides to pass. South opens 1C and North responds 1D. Simon is glad he didn't open the bidding. South now bids 1H and North 1S. South bids 2S. Finally, they have found a fit. North bids 3S and South goes on to game. Simon has a difficult lead problem. NS have struggled their way into game, but that's not so surprising since Simon has close to an opening bid. What am I to lead, Simon asks himself. The bidding has been very illuminating, if it is to be believed. Clearly NS have one only fit and that is in spades, and South almost certainly a singleton or void in diamonds. In such cases a trump lead is often best. Furthermore, with South opening 1C, the club lead does not seem right; with South having also bid hearts, a heart does not seem right either, and with North having bid diamonds, a diamond is out of the question. Yes, Simon is finally convinced that he has only one choice, a trump. This may not work out too well if Vera has e.g. Qx or Ax but.... he leads the seven. Declarer draws three rounds of trumps and plays the jack of clubs. Simon covers with the king, declarer winning and continuing with the queen and finally with a third, Vera winning. This sequence of play is quite pleasing to both Vera and Simon since they realise that declarer has played against the odds, the correct play being a low club to the queen followed by the ace, which wins when East has any doubleton king whereas running the jack only wins when West has exactly a doubleton 10 9 (assuming Simon is smart enough to cover the jack as in fact he did).

Vera exits with the queen of hearts, and declarer can not establish any more than a total of ten tricks. Yes, some declarers have been lucky with more atrocious leads: ace of diamonds, nine of clubs, ten of diamonds, five of diamonds.

They have made at least Five, but that is small consolation to Simon and Vera when they find that some others have lost track and gone down in 4S and others still ended up in the wrong contract.

Just 8/16 match points for more good defence!

### BOARD 8 DLR W NIL VUL

	♠ 8 6	
	♥ Q J 8 6	
	♦ Q 4	
	♣ Q J 7 4 3	
♠ J 4		♠ A Q 10 7 3 2
♥ K 7 4 3 2		♥ 5
♦ A J 5		♦ K 10 8
♣ 9 8 5		♣ A K 6
	♠ K 9 5	
	♥ A 10 9	
	♦ 9 7 6 3 2	
	♣ 10 2	

After two passes, Simon opens 1S. South passes and Vera bids 1NT. Her hand isn't quite good enough to bid 2H. Simon, with a good six card suit and 16 HCP now bids 3S. Such a jump rebid in the same suit is inviting game and shows 15-17 HCP and a good 6+ card suit, exactly what Simon has. Vera has a much better hand than she might have had, and quite good trump support in the circumstances.

The balanced nature of her hand does not sway her towards bidding No Trumps again. She raises Simon to 4S. South leads the club ten. Simon can see that on the next round of clubs the defence will set up a club trick for their side and Simon will have nowhere to dispose of it. Unless.....

He also wants to be in dummy so he can take the spade finesse, and sees that if South has the ace of hearts, he might not play it when Simon leads towards the king. He decides to lead his heart immediately, and is in luck when South in fact does have the ace and hops up with it and continues with another club. Simon notes that as long as South had the ace of hearts, it did not matter whether he played it or not: now he has a discard on the king.

He has to get to dummy, though, and the only sure way is the ace of diamonds. Trying to get there with the JD is far too risky: North could win and cash a club and there would be no loser to park on the king of hearts! That would not impress Vera at all.

So Simon crosses to the ace of diamonds and throws the losing club on the king of hearts. He now leads the jack of spades so that he can run it and repeat the finesse if North has three to the king. Alas, South wins the king, but Simon is lucky later when quite unexpectedly, North's queen of diamonds drops and Simon makes five, losing just the ace of hearts and king of spades.

Both Simon and Vera note with satisfaction that those playing in No Trumps have made no more than ten tricks, and for their good bidding and play they have 14/16 match points.

## BOARD 15 DLR S NS VUL

	♠ A 7	
	♥ A K 7 6 2	
	♦ Q 8 6	
	♣ Q 6 2	
♠ J 8 5 3		♠ K 10 6 2
♥ J 4		♥ 10
♦ J 7 5 4 2		♦ A 10 3
♣ 7 3		♣ A K 10 5 4
	♠ Q 9 4	
	♥ Q 9 8 5 3	
	♦ K 9	
	♣ J 9 8	

After two passes, North opens 1H. Simon doubles. This is a much better bid than an overcall in clubs because the Takeout Double tells Vera that, unless Simon has extra strength, he will have exactly four spades and probable shortage in hearts. South bids 3H. With five cards in partner's suit, it pays to bid as high as you dare, and a bid all the way to Four is often appropriate. South, however, has too balanced a hand, with scattered points, so he decides to be more restrained. North gives this some consideration, but he knows that partner's 3H bid is not, over the Double, as strong as it would be normally.

This is a convention known as 'Truscott' and has been adopted by many players since its first appearance, and is a part of SIMPLE bidding as well. Simon considers making a second Takeout Double. He knows Vera will realise he wants her to bid, or to leave the Double in with suitable defence. He knows that when partner has passed after your Takeout Double and opponents have competed in their suit to the Three level, a further Double is still for takeout but showing extra strength and the ability to defend if partner has a suitable hand to leave the Double in and correct it to 'Penalties'. North, however, has given the distinct impression that he is thinking about going further, so Simon decides to pass. If he forces Vera to bid, they could be in quite some trouble.

He leads the ace of clubs. The twins' leading convention is that they lead the top card from all touching honours; some people prefer to lead the king from AKx(x) as well as from KQx(x). Vera follows with the seven and declarer the two. Simon and Vera play 'standard' signals: high to encourage, low to discourage. With the two of clubs still missing, Simon reads Vera's seven as being encouraging. He continues with the king, and Vera follows with her three while declarer drops the queen!

This is a clever play but doesn't take Simon in. Why would Vera have encouraged with a holding of 7 6 3? Simon looks knowingly at North and continues with the ten of clubs which Vera ruffs. The twins also play 'standard' suit preference signals. Vera is sure Simon has another club(s) and the ten is the highest of the cards left. The highest card led in such a situation asks for a switch to the higher side suit, i.e. spades. Vera leads the three of spades and declarer plays low but Simon makes his king and later the ace of diamonds as well.

One down is +100 for the twins, and quite surprisingly a good score of 12/16 match points. Yes, other NS pairs have bid to 4H which should go down two, but more atrocious defence has allowed them to make. Not leading one of the top clubs is inexcusable, and there is no need to open the defence with a low spade which some defenders have done. Others still, having got off to the best start, a top club, have merely cashed their two top clubs and then tried spades.

Simon and Vera do know better, and as well as realising that there aren't 50 points in the pack, would not switch to a spade even if there wasn't a club ruff to be got. There can be no point in East looking for West to hold a card they can't have. Thank goodness for signals and other defenders' ineptitude, thinks Vera.

## BOARD 18 DLR E NS VUL

	♠ J 3 2	
	♥ 5 2	
	♦ K Q 6 3	
	♣ A Q 8 7	
♠ 8		♠ K 10 9 6 5
♥ Q 10 8 6		♥ K J 9 7 4 2
♦ J 10 4		♦ 2
♣ 9 6 5 4 2		♣ K
	♠ A Q 7 4	
	♥ A	
	♦ A 9 8 7 5	
	♣ J 10 3	

Simon sorts his hand and looks at the great shape but only 10 HCP, and that including a singleton king. Not a hand he would normally open, but a legitimate opener nevertheless. He considers going against the rules by opening 1S and treating this hand as a 5/5 and hiding one of his hearts with the diamonds. This would make future bidding easier since he can't possibly bid spades later if he opens 1H, as this would be a Reverse and show a strong hand. After all that, Simon decides to open the bidding in his longest suit as per the guru's instructions. South doubles. South in fact has almost the perfect classical Takeout Double: a good point count, four spades, singleton heart, and lots of controls. You don't get better Takeout Doubles than that. Vera bids Three Hearts! North is clearly perplexed, and asks the typical question of "how many points does that show". Simon says he doesn't know the exact point count but that the raise is more or less equivalent to a raise to 2H without an intervening Takeout Double. In other words, the Truscott convention, which the twins also play. Eventually North passes. Simon hopes that this doesn't cause later embarrassment if South makes a bid based on North's questions rather than his pass. Simon realises that apart from their heart fit, the twins are heavily outnumbered, but bids 4H nevertheless. He is sure that NS can make game in one of the minors, but this may not be easy for them if he bids 4H. Sure enough, South is fixed and does the best he can under the circumstances: he doubles.

The play is easier than the bidding, and Simon inevitably goes down two, 300 to NS. On the surface, this should be a huge success for Simon and Vera, but not so in practice: some Easts have got to play in Three Hearts, some NS pairs are only in part score, and only a few in game. Simon and Vera score 6/16 match points despite the fact that NS can make SIX diamonds if declarer drops East's singleton king of clubs, against the odds normally but not if East has opened the bidding and you count the points: if East has opened the bidding and would not do so with fewer than just ten HCP; if West has raised hearts; if East has led a low heart (suggesting they don't have both king and queen); then East must have the king of clubs and the only chance is for declarer to play the ace and drop it singleton. It pays to count the points sometimes, even after you've learnt to finesse.



## BOARD 23 DLR S ALL VUL

	♠ K J 7 6 2	
	♥ 6	
	♦ J 9 5	
	♣ Q J 7 5	
♠ 10		♠ 8 5 4
♥ A Q J 9 8 2		♥ K 7 5 4 3
♦ K 10 8 7		♦ 6 2
♣ 10 9		♣ A 8 4
	♠ A Q 9 3	
	♥ 10	
	♦ A Q 4 3	
	♣ K 6 3 2	

South opens 1C and Vera jumps to 2H. With SIMPLE jumps this shows a good 6+ card suit and 6 or 7 tricks if played in hearts, a pretty fair description of the hand. North bids 2S. Simon is a great fan of the "TNT" theory which tells him that, with eleven hearts between him and Vera, they should make about 11 tricks, perhaps 10 given that opponents may have a few more HCP than them. Confidently, he bids 4H but South bids 4S. North's overbid of 2S, which is a 'free bid' and should show at least 10 HCP, prompted by Vera's jump, followed by Simon's further jump, has worked in NS's favour. Passed to Simon, who has little defence against 4S but a lot of playing strength in a heart contract, he perseveres with 5H. South thinks for a while and then doubles, certainly a better decision than pushing on with 5S which may not (and in fact doesn't) make.

Once more, the play is easier than the bidding. With trumps galore, and the ace of diamonds in the South hand, all Simon has to do is lead up to the king of diamonds and he loses three tricks in total: -200. This time his aggression has paid off handsomely, since only one other pair has sacrificed in 5H for the same result. 12/16 Match Points. Thank you TNT, they both think to themselves, it pays to learn some things!

Simon and Vera scored 67% on the hands reviewed; their overall percentage for the session was 57.8%. An improved effort which could have been even better. According to the guru, their result on Board 18 would certainly have been much better in B-Grade and even better still in an A-Grade session, but that's the way it goes sometimes!

## CHAPTER 3

This is the continuing Saga of the Simple twins. This is Week 3 of their first excursion into club bridge, beginning where one always does, in the lowest grade. Simon and Vera have been quite pleased with their results in the first two weeks. Normally one does not expect to go along and immediately score well but their grounding in a SIMPLE system plus some attention to basic declarer play and defence has certainly helped. They are quite fired up tonight and anticipating a 60+% session. They cut, and lose the cut. Vera sits West and Simon East, the same as last week.

### BOARD 1 DLR N NIL VUL

	♠ A J 7 5	
	♥ K	
	♦ A 6 4 3	
	♣ A Q 10 6	
♠ 10 9 8 2		♠ K 6 4
♥ Q 7 3		♥ 9 6 2
♦ K J 5		♦ Q 10 2
♣ K 8 7		♣ J 5 4 2
	♠ Q 3	
	♥ A J 10 8 5 4	
	♦ 9 8 7	
	♣ 9 3	

The very first board of the night turns out to be a disaster for the twins. North opens 1C and the quite haughty lady sitting South bids 1H. North bids 1S and South bids 2H. North now bids 3NT!! Haughty lady South squirms and sighs in a very pointed manner and bids 4H. Clearly she is annoyed with partner (on the very first board!) and clearly haughty lady herself wanted to play the hand. Nothing is going to stop her now. All pass, and Vera contemplates her lead. It's an awful hand to have to lead from, and if she is to believe the bidding and ignoring South's carry on, opening either minor suit could be costly, and a trump lead is out of the question. She hopes she will definitely make her queen. So she decides on the only possible lead, the safe one of the ten of spades. The sight of dummy is quite pleasing and she's glad she didn't try a diamond. Unfortunately, South has the queen of spades and Simon is in a cleft stick when the haughty lady plays low from dummy. If Simon wins the king, declarer will later make the queen, the ace and the jack. If Simon plays low, declarer will win the queen and may then have no spade losers at all.

Simon does his best by winning and shifting to a diamond, but declarer wins the ace, cashes the king of trumps, spade to the queen and now ace of trumps. When the queen doesn't drop, she takes another one of her deep breaths and leads a club, putting in the queen. When this holds she discards one diamond on the ace of spades and continues with the jack. This is a good play since the hand that can ruff this may only have the queen of trumps left; but Simon ruffs with the nine and declarer overruffs. She later loses a diamond plus the trump queen but her contract is made. Clearly she had every justification for playing in 4H.

As Simon and Vera study the hand record at the end of the evening's play, their suspicions are confirmed: they see that the haughty lady is the only one in 4H and that 3NT has invariably been the contract and gone down through lack of entries to the heart suit. They grudgingly admit that South's decision to play 4H was the correct one because the heart suit is a good one but potentially difficult to set up in No Trumps.

Simon thinks to himself that there are a lot of ways to make 3NT without setting the hearts up, but only as the cards lie. One lucky declarer in the North seat has got the nine of hearts lead and poor West has fallen for the 'sucker punch' and been enticed to cover dummy's ten. But 4H by South making is worth only 2/16 match points for the twins.

### BOARD 3 DLR S EW VUL

	♠ J 7 6	
	♥ K 8 7 5	
	♦ K J 9	
	♣ Q 10 9	
♠ Q 8		♠ K 5
♥ A Q J 4 2		♥ 6
♦ Q 6 3		♦ 10 8 5 2
♣ K J 4		♣ A 8 7 6 5 2
	♠ A 10 9 4 3 2	
	♥ 10 9 3	
	♦ A 7 4	
	♣ 3	

South passes, Vera opens 1H and Simon responds 1NT. He does not have sufficient points to bid his clubs. Now South makes a nuisance of himself and bids 2S. Vera doesn't know what to do, and eventually doubles. The twins play Takeout Doubles up to 2S and so that they don't have any misunderstandings with these doubles, this applies in any bidding situation at all. Over a bid of a suit, that is, never a No Trump bid. Those Doubles are for penalties.

The Takeout Double here is not ideal but Vera wants to do something with her 15 count; bidding 3H is a unilateral decision and the Takeout Double is better in her view. Simon is happy to bid 3C. In fact he would have done so anyway had Vera rebid her hearts without any interference from a meddling South: the sequence of a bid at the Three level after a 1NT response is one which shows a weak hand with a long suit and no tolerance for opener's suit(s). Simon and Vera both know this. Yes, a new suit at the Three level is forcing, but in NORMAL sequences where the responder has not limited his or her hand with a No Trump response.

After two Passes, it is North this time who chimes in, raising partner's spades. Simon and Vera are both enraged by this turn of events, but neither can double and they pass the hand out. This time, Vera decides that a lead from KJx is reasonable (what a pity it was not on Board 1, she recalls), and she leads the four. Simon wins the ace and immediately switches to a heart. He sees that his king of trumps won't make a trick so hopes for a heart ruff, or even two. Vera wins the ace and continues with the queen. Declarer covers, and Simon ruffs. He now tries a diamond hoping Vera has the ace, but all that achieves is to help declarer take the diamond finesse they would no doubt have taken anyway. Vera does make her heart jack later, fortunately, and 3S goes one down. This doesn't look like a great result but turns out OK. The cards aren't kind for EW and some Wests have unilaterally gone to 3H and paid the price. +50 is worth 12/16 match points for the twins.

## BOARD 7 DLR S ALL VUL

	♠ A 4	
	♥ Q 8 2	
	♦ 9 6 4	
	♣ A J 8 7 4	
♠ 8 7 5		♠ J 9 3 2
♥ J 3		♥ K 9 6 5 4
♦ K J 5 2		♦ 10
♣ 9 6 5 3		♣ K Q 10
	♠ K Q 10 6	
	♥ A 10 7	
	♦ A Q 8 7 3	
	♣ 2	

South opens 1D, North bids 2C, South 2S and North 3NT. Simon sees no reason to lead anything other than his five of hearts, 'fourth highest of your longest and strongest'. When dummy goes down, both Simon and Vera wonder whether South intended the 2S bid as a Reverse and whether North understood it that way.

Declarer ponders for a while and calls for dummy's ten. This is a bad mistake since Vera would have had to go up with her jack anyway and declarer would have had three heart tricks. It is very seldom correct to do other than play 'second hand low' in such situations, and in this case most important, as the seven would have been high enough to force the jack. Just as well declarer does not seem to know the 'Rule of Eleven', thinks Simon.

Declarer now leads a diamond and finesses the queen. Vera wins and returns her three of hearts which allows Simon to set the hearts up. Declarer has little choice, and perseveres with the diamonds: ace, followed by the three which Vera wins. She now switches to the six of clubs but declarer wins the ace and cashes the three top spades and two more diamonds to make nine tricks.

Both Simon and Vera are horrified to see that, despite declarer's awful play at trick one, all other declarers have managed to fail in 3NT. They can't work out how, but they have, that's all that counts. Maybe the other declarers did not look to develop their only sensible source of extra tricks, the diamond suit, and took their available tricks immediately.

Look at what happens if declarer runs off the spades: nothing. Playing the ace then finessing the ten gives you a better chance of four tricks than playing them from the top hoping the jack will drop, but even so, look what happens if declarer plays on the longest suit, the one with the most cards and the most potential tricks. Not only does East have discard problems when the diamonds are run, they provide the necessary tricks to make 3NT. Yes, Vera could have let dummy win the diamond nine instead of winning her jack, but by the same token declarer could have unblocked the nine and forced Vera's jack out anyway.

The mystery of how 3NT was lost at all other tables is still with Simon and Vera, but all they have to show for it is zero match points out of 16.

## BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL

	♠ 9 3	
	♥ A K 6 5 4	
	♦ 10 7 5	
	♣ K 9 2	
♠ K Q 8 6 4		♠ J 7 2
♥ 10 2		♥ 9 3
♦ K 6		♦ J 8 3 2
♣ J 10 6 5		♣ A Q 8 7
	♠ A 10 4	
	♥ Q J 8 7	
	♦ A Q 9 4	
	♣ 4 3	

South, the dealer, opens the bidding with 1NT. This shows a balanced hand of 12-14 HCP. Vera, fed up with some of the earlier disasters, decides to compete with 2S. North bids 3H, which is not forcing. Simon, also fed up, bids 3S. South, by now also fed up with Simon and Vera's interference, bids 4H.

The twins have pushed their luck far enough, as well as the opponents into game, but there's nothing they can do now other than hope to defeat the contract. Simon leads a low spade, won by declarer who draws trumps and plays a diamond to the queen, losing to Vera's king. She now cashes her spade and leads the jack of clubs through declarer, who covers but Simon wins two club tricks for down one. At last, the twins think, a good board. But...

Somehow, others have also either pushed NS overboard or more likely the NS pairs have not known how to stop even without any interference: over 1NT by South, North should 'sign off' in 2H despite their 10 points, after all, ten plus a maximum of 14 is still not equal to the 25 required for game. That's the SIMPLE answer, thinks Vera.

Unfortunately, just 9/16 match points for their adventuresome bidding. The twins note that EW can in fact make 3S despite their paucity of points, thanks to the eight card fit and favourable lie of some cards. But then, if these cards were lying unfavourably for them, NS would probably have made 4H. They also note that had this particular NS pair not allowed themselves to get pushed to 4H, making 3S and +140 would have been a near top for the twins. Many other C-Graders would definitely have given up in the face of such strong opposition bidding, but not this NS pair.

## BOARD 14 DLR E NIL VUL

	♠ A Q 10 2	
	♥ A 8 6 5 3	
	♦ 10 6 3 2	
	♣	
♠ 8 7 3		♠ K 6 5
♥ Q 9 7		♥ J 4
♦ Q J 9		♦ K 8 7 5
♣ K 10 9 4		♣ Q 8 6 2
	♠ J 9 4	
	♥ K 10 2	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ A J 7 5 3	

Simon has another non descript hand and passes. South opens 1NT. North bids 2C which is "Stayman" and asks South to bid their four card major(s) if they have any. The Simple twins play the SIMPLE system and don't open 1NT at all, so they have no need for Stayman, but they do know what it is and how it works and why it is a very necessary convention if you do open 1NT, as virtually all other systems do. South bids 2D which denies four hearts or spades.

Both the 2C bid and 2D response are artificial, and as such often present a switched on opposition with the chance to make what are known as 'lead directional' doubles, but neither Simon nor Vera can double 2C or 2D for a lead. Over South's 2D bid, North decides to give in and bids 2H. South is trying to work this sequence out, but decides to pass.

Simon doesn't have any attractive lead from that collection. In view of North's Stayman, a spade lead doesn't look right, and a trump lead is out of the question with that holding. If the defenders hold e.g. Jx opposite Qxx as indeed they do on this hand, they will always make one trick as long as declarer has to open the suit and not the defence.

That leaves clubs or diamonds. Simon decides on a diamond.

Leading from kings against suit contracts is slightly more preferable to leading from queens because even if the first trick is given away cheaply the king stands more chance of making later than the queen, Simon has been told, so he leads the five of diamonds.

Declarer ducks this and Vera wins her jack. She can see that dummy's clubs won't be much use but that the only source of tricks for the defence is in spades. She shifts to a spade but all they make is a spade, and one heart: declarer does not make the mistake of leading more than two rounds of trumps, takes one diamond ruff in dummy and discards the last diamond on the ace of clubs.

Some pairs have reached game but others have blundered into quite silly contracts, and 170 to NS is worth only 7/16 match points to Simon and Vera.

## BOARD 22 DLR E EW VUL

	♠ Q J	
	♥ 10 7 6	
	♦ Q 8 5 2	
	♣ Q 9 6 5	
♠ 6 5		♠ K 10 9 8 3 2
♥ K 8 5 2		♥ A 9 3
♦ A K 9 7		♦ J 6 4
♣ A K 4		♣ 10
	♠ A 7 4	
	♥ Q J 4	
	♦ 10 3	
	♣ J 8 7 3 2	

After two Passes, Vera opens 1D. Simon bids 1S and Vera jumps to 2NT. Simon has enough points for game and with a reasonable six card spade suit decides to bid 4S. He remembers the very first hand of the night when the haughty lady bid 4H, for much the same reasons. Vera still needs good spades if she's in No Trumps, and if she doesn't have good spades the suit will take too long to develop and to get to, with only one entry in the East hand.

South leads the three of clubs. Simon is tempted to play low from dummy despite seeing the ace and king there and a singleton in his own hand. After all, his singleton is the ten, and people underlead the queen-jack all the time in C-Grade, he's noticed. Also, he has a certain heart loser and a near certain diamond loser so he can always throw them on the top clubs later.

After what seems like eternity, he decides to try a different approach. Winning the king on table, Simon leads a spade and covers North's jack with the king. South wins the ace and continues with another club, North having signalled encouragement with the nine on the first lead. Simon wins the ace and discards a low heart since there is still a chance that the jack of diamonds may take a trick but the heart nine certainly won't. Simon now leads another trump and North wins the queen and continues with yet another club. This is of no concern to Simon, who ruffs with the ten (just in case) and then draws South's last trump. Now Simon plays ace of hearts, heart to the king and ruffs one. When North and South both follow, dummy's fourth heart is good, and Simon discards his losing diamond on it.

Simon is very pleased with himself, and Vera ecstatic. "Oh well played Simon!" she gushes. "That was a very clever way to create an extra trick. Making five must be a top, surely?" But no, some clowns have allowed one West to make twelve tricks in No Trumps, quite impossible, but nevertheless achieved by some abominable defence. Surely NS must have revoked and paid the penalty.

Revokes are not uncommon in C-Grade, and cost the guilty party either one or two tricks depending on the circumstances. Whatever the case, still 14/16 match points for Simon's excellent effort, with most pairs down in 3NT or making Four Spades only.

This has been a nightmare session for the twins. Despite having done very little wrong on the hands reviewed, Simon and Vera scored just 44% on them; the rest of the boards were better but their final result was 49.8%. This, despite the fact that they played what they felt was better than either of the first two nights. Just as well they were warned that it can happen from time to time. Next week, they resolve, they will top the results.

## CHAPTER 4

This is the fourth evening of the Simple twins in the C-Grade. Tonight they have won the cut and Simon is sitting South and Vera North.

### BOARD 1 DLR N NIL VUL

	♠ A 10 8 4	
	♥ K Q 4	
	♦ 4 3	
	♣ A Q 9 2	
♠ J 6		♠ K Q 9 7
♥ 9 5 3		♥ J 8
♦ J 10 8 7 5		♦ A Q 9 2
♣ K 10 8		♣ J 5 4
	♠ 5 3 2	
	♥ A 10 9 6 2	
	♦ K 6	
	♣ 7 6 3	

Simon and Vera get off to a good start. Vera opens 1C and East doubles. This is not an ideal Takeout Double but East doesn't know what else to do. Simon bids 1H.

Simon and Vera have a simple agreement about what they do if an opponent doubles their One level opening bid: with 6-9 HCP and no immediate fit they bid normally, as though there had been no Double at all. With 10+ points they Redouble. With a long suit of their own, they bid anything from the Two level onwards, as high as they want to play the contract in their own suit. With an immediate fit, of course, they use the 'Truscott' convention, which has been described earlier in this story. This method, the twins have found simple yet effective.

West passes and it is Vera's turn to make her rebid. Simon hasn't bid his heart suit at the Two level, so Vera has no choice but to make another bid. While Simon's bid of 1H does not guarantee more than four of them, she does have three good hearts and also a 'ruffing value' in the diamond suit. She decides to raise Simon to 2H and not to bother bidding her spades.

A more aggressive West might have bid 2D, and a more aggressive East might make another Takeout Double but C-Graders are conservative, and 2H becomes the final contract. West leads the jack of diamonds, and Simon is very pleased with this even before dummy appears. East contemplates for a while and plays the ace. This is almost always the correct play since South is marked with the king from West's lead, and might have it on its own. He doesn't, and wins the king when East lamely returns a second diamond.

Simon draws trumps, ending in hand and, not expecting the king of clubs to be with West, leads a club to West's eight and dummy's nine. Who knows, East may do something silly. But East returns a low spade to West's jack and dummy's ace, and only too late Simon realises that he is stuck on table. He tries a spade but East takes two spade tricks and follows with another which Simon ruffs. He now plays a club to the queen and it holds. He makes Three. Vera is not impressed.

"Did you not realise that you could get stuck in the wrong hand, Simon," she says, "if you had finessed the queen of clubs immediately and then played the ace and another one, you would have developed the extra club trick while the ace of spades was still an entry, and made Four".

Fortunately, other Wests have led a spade or other Souths have had the same problem in the play, and making Three is still worth 13/16 match points.



## BOARD 4 DLR W ALL VUL

♠ A 10	
♥ A K 10 5	
♦ A J 10 9 7 2	
♣ K	
♠ Q J 6 5 3	♠ 9 8 7
♥ J 7 3	♥ 9 8 4 2
♦ K 6 5	♦
♣ 6 3	♣ A Q J 9 8 7
♠ K 4 2	
♥ Q 6	
♦ Q 8 5 3	
♣ 10 5 4 2	

This turns out to be another lucky board for Simon and Vera. After West passes, Vera opens 1D and Simon bids 1NT. While having learnt that they should look for a fit, the twins have also learnt that when they are playing in a Match Point contest it often pays to play in No Trumps and not in a minor. Simon has the right point count, and the shape and smattering of honour cards in all suits, so decides to bid 1NT. He would never bypass a Major suit if he could bid it, and Vera knows this, so with her 19 HCP raises Simon to game in No Trumps.

West has no reason not to lead his fourth highest spade and when dummy's ten holds, Simon comes to hand with the queen of hearts and leads the queen of diamonds, deciding to finesse rather than try to drop the singleton king. He has no more entries so must lead the queen in case West has Kxx, unlikely as it may be. The queen holds, while East gives partner a filthy look and discards the nine of clubs, clearly a signal for clubs. Simon wraps up all thirteen tricks, and notes with satisfaction that no one has bid the 6D slam, and that even on a club lead from a very clairvoyant West, 3NT would have made Four for a better result than 5D making Six.

Both Simon and Vera are happy that they have cultivated the No Trump syndrome, within the bounds of common sense of course. 16/16 match points, their first ever clear top.

**BOARD 8 DLR W NIL VUL**

♠ K 7	
♥ Q 8 6 3	
♦ A 10 9 7 6	
♣ 4 2	
♠ A 10 8 2	♠ Q J 5 3
♥ 10 4	♥ A K 9 7
♦ Q 4 3 2	♦ 5
♣ 10 6 3	♣ A J 8 7
♠ 9 6 4	
♥ J 5 2	
♦ K J 8	
♣ K Q 9 5	

After two passes, East opens 1C. West bids 1D, East 1H and West 1S. East thinks about bidding Three Spades, but a singleton in partner's first suit puts her off and she just raises to Two. This is a relief for West who, with an absolute minimum, cannot pass quickly enough. Vera knows that this bidding calls for a trump lead, but, quite reasonably, cannot bring herself to lead one from that holding. She has a choice between one of dummy's suits and, because she doesn't particularly want a ruff, decides on a heart. She leads the three. Declarer thinks for a while and plays low from dummy. People do some of the time underlead the QJ, and declarer also sees that she may run out of tricks despite the fact that she has few top losers. Simon wins the jack and returns his four of trumps. Declarer plays low and Vera wins the king, returning her second trump.

This declarer is up with the play: winning in hand, she plays the ten of hearts and lets it run when Vera does not cover. She then plays a club to the ace and cashes her ace and king of hearts, discarding first one club and then a diamond when Simon ruffs the fourth heart, with a quiet 'oops' when she sees that Simon has ruffed. She had forgotten that a trump was out (or had she?) but... the effect of Simon's ruff has been that declarer loses just one diamond and can cross ruff the last four tricks and make Three, for +140 and just 3/16 match points for the twins. Sometimes allowing opponents a ruff is not such a bad idea, thinks Simon, would I have been clever enough, had I not ruffed, to play my king of diamonds when declarer led the five from dummy, and then shoot back my trump, or would I have blithely played 'second hand low' and allowed Vera, who had no trumps, to win the first diamond lead and let declarer get her cross ruffs? He'll certainly know next time!

## BOARD 9 DLR N NS VUL

♠ A 10 9 7 4 3	
♥ 9	
♦ K J 10	
♣ 7 6 4	
♠ K Q 8	♠ J 5
♥ Q J 10 7 2	♥ 8 5 4
♦ 8	♦ Q 6 5 3 2
♣ K 8 3 2	♣ Q J 9
♠ 6 2	
♥ A K 6 3	
♦ A 9 7 4	
♣ A 10 5	

Vera, as dealer, passes, as does East. Simon opens 1D, West overcalls 1H and Vera bids 1S. East passes. Simon wonders whether he should bid more, but decides that 1NT pretty well describes his hand: up to 15 HCP and a good hold in opponents' suit. In any case, he's not overly enthusiastic about Vera's spade bid. But Vera, with her good spades and singleton heart, has no wish to have the contract played in 1NT and rebids her spades. 2S thus becomes the final contract. East leads the five of hearts. Vera inquires whether EW have any particular lead agreements and West tells her that apart from 'standard' leads they also play MUD (middle-up-down). Clearly this pair are a wee bit more advanced than some of the others in C-Grade.

Vera wins dummy's king and plays trumps from the top. West wins the second trump and persists with hearts, Vera ruffing the second heart lead and keeping the ace in dummy. When West wins the third round of spades and leads yet another heart, Vera discards a club from hand while winning dummy's ace of hearts. Vera still has to decide which way to play the diamonds. She hopes opponents might open that suit up for her, and plays ace and another club. But the opponents' defence is as up to the minute as their lead agreement. East wins the second club and continues with a third, West playing the king which Vera ruffs. She tries to work it out: West has turned up with three spades, five hearts, and three clubs, presuming he had to play the king on the third round. That doesn't leave him with more than two diamonds. So East has more diamonds for sure. But the solemn faced young man surely has exactly two diamonds since he overtook partner's queen of clubs with the king. He couldn't have had any more.....Vera decides to play the king and then the jack to see if East covers. East, an attractive young lady, plays low without a moment's thought and since Vera doesn't want to lose to a doubleton queen she rises with the ace, quite expecting the young round man to drop the queen. Instead, he shows out discards a club!

Vera makes Three and mentally congratulates the opponents on a very clever defence. Nevertheless she hopes for a reasonable score, but nearly all the other pairs have either overbid, or blundered, into game in No Trumps by South, and nearly all the Wests on lead have led the seven or the two of hearts! And to make matters worse, EW have continued hearts and allowed the declarers to make Four No Trumps, even when they have played in 1NT. The correct lead from such a solid suit is the top card and not the fourth, or fifth, highest. The twins know this, but it's no consolation when they score 6/16 match points for the sensible contract and sensible play. They also wonder whether the declarers in No Trumps knew to duck one round of spades first, or needed to finesse the jack of diamonds to look for the extra entry needed if you play the spades from the top in No Trumps.

**BOARD 12 DLR W NS VUL**

♠ K 10	
♥ A 10 9 4	
♦ Q 9 4 2	
♣ K 10 2	
♠ 9 7 3	♠ Q J 8 4
♥ 5 3 2	♥ K Q 6
♦ J 10 7	♦ A 8 6
♣ 8 4 2	♣ A J 5
♠ A 6 5	
♥ J 8 7	
♦ K 5 3	
♣ Q 9 7 6	

West passes and Vera opens 1D. East doubles. Simon is not sure what to do but decides to redouble. This tells Vera that he has 10+ HCP. Maybe he should just have bid 1NT on his flat ten points, he thinks. West is looking quite edgy and bids 1S. What else can he do? Vera doubles, which is for Takeout. Playing Takeout doubles in all situations over a suit bid (up to 2S) by either opponent makes their bidding much more simple. Simon has a minimum hand, and with his spade stop, bids 1NT. He could have passed Vera's takeout double, of course, if he'd had a suitable hand with good spades, but trying to penalise a One level contract without a big 'stack' in trumps is normally a complete waste of time. So, 1NT becomes the final contract and West leads the two of spades. This doesn't give anything away and despite the fact that Simon does his best, all he can make is seven tricks.

Making one, for 90, is worth just 6/16 match points. Why? Because most pairs playing Acol have opened the North hand 1NT and East has doubled. West has passed, not having anywhere to go, and 1NT Doubled has made easily. Some Wests have 'run' to 2S and been doubled. That's the value of opening an Acol weak No Trump, thinks Vera. There are advantages in every system.

## BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

♠ A K J 9 8 4	
♥	
♦ Q 10 8 4	
♣ 8 6 5	
♠ Q 3 2	♠ 10 6
♥ 10 9 5 3 2	♥ A K J 7 6
♦ J 7 2	♦ 9 3
♣ J 4	♣ Q 10 9 2
♠ 7 5	
♥ Q 8 4	
♦ A K 6 5	
♣ A K 7 3	

West passes and Vera opens 1S. With six good spades and a void in hearts, a ten count is more than good enough to open the bidding. East overcalls 2H. Despite the fact that EW are Vulnerable, this is a reasonable overcall, with a good suit and a second suit, albeit one that's not so great. Simon has a huge hand and can't figure out a) how come Vera can open the bidding and b) East can overcall a Vulnerable 2H. He eventually doubles, which is for takeout. He is certain that Vera will bid something, since she can't possibly have good enough hearts to leave the Double in. West passes and Vera, as anticipated, bids 2S. She's not keen to bid any higher at this stage, even though her heart void opposite East's overcall and Simon's Takeout Double, is a great asset. Simon is still not sure what to do. He does have this huge hand after all. He thinks about bidding 3NT but with a bare stop in the heart suit decides not to make that decision on his own. He bids 3H which is a 'Cue Bid' and asks Vera to bid 3NT if she has at least a partial stop in hearts (Qx, Jxx e.g.). It is also particularly important for the lead to come from EAST should Vera have precisely Kx of hearts. Vera of course has a void, but knows Simon's bidding is very strong. To tell him how good her spades are, she bids Four Spades. Simon considers looking for a slam but decides he can't find out enough, and passes.

East leads the ace of hearts and Vera is ecstatic with dummy. She ruffs in hand and leads off her ace of trumps. She's tempted to play the king next but remembers the saying 'eight ever, nine never'. She doesn't believe in following rules as such, or old sayings, but it often does make sense to finesse against the queen with eight trumps between you and dummy. East's overcall also suggests that he may be short in spades, and playing the king might leave West with two spade tricks. Accordingly, she leads a club to dummy and then a trump towards her hand, inserting the jack. It holds and the king now drops West's queen. When the diamond jack also drops, Vera makes twelve tricks.

Not having bid the slam, there's no extra bonus, but when they look at the score card the twins are pleasantly shocked to see they have scored a clear top! Others have played in No Trumps and made no more than Five, and those in spades have failed to think about the hand and made only five by playing the trumps from the top. Amazing how things turn out the way you don't expect them to.

## BOARD 20 DLR W ALL VUL

♠ A K Q 7 2	
♥ 4	
♦ 10 9 7 4	
♣ K 5 4	
♠ 6	♠ J 9 3
♥ A Q 10 8 6 5 3 2	♥ J 7
♦ J	♦ K Q 6 5
♣ 9 8 6	♣ A J 7 3
♠ 10 8 5 4	
♥ K 9	
♦ A 8 3 2	
♣ Q 10 2	

West is dealer and opens Four Hearts. That's a bit steep for Vera, and East and Simon also pass. Vera starts off with a top spade, and continues with the king. This is not such a good idea. Declarer ruffs and immediately lays down the jack of diamonds. Simon wins and can see nothing better to do than persist with another spade, but declarer ruffs yet again and now leads a club to the ace in dummy. She then discards two clubs on the king and queen of diamonds and leads the jack of hearts. Simon's king is thus picked up and declarer makes her contract with an overtrick. Great reward for her bold bidding and accurate declarer play. Clearly she knows about preempts and the value of opening at the Four level with a good eight card suit.

Simon is not very happy. "Vera, you should perhaps have switched to a club rather than persist with spades. We really must learn to signal count. If you could have known that I had four spades you would have realised that you should switch." Yes, a club switch would have given the twins four defensive tricks, but declarer really did deserve a top board not only for her bidding but also her play. Simon could also have saved a trick by not taking the jack of diamonds, thus exchanging declarer's only diamond loser for two club losers: declarer would not be able to get any discards on the king or queen of diamonds because there is only one entry to dummy. Declarer would in fact have had to use the club entry to finesse the hearts in order to make the contract. But all that is immaterial now. Only one other West has been brave enough to bid Four and others have let North play in 4S. Maybe over West's preempt Vera should have taken the risk? In any case, the end result: No Match Points for Simon and Vera on this board.

Simon and Vera scored 54% on the boards reviewed, but did much better on the others, playing steadily throughout, ending up with a score of 59.8%. Maybe next time they will break through the 60% barrier!

## CHAPTER 5

The Simple twins have been enjoying their first weeks in C-Grade at the bridge club. This is probably due to the fact that they have taken the trouble to learn a SIMPLE way of bidding, as well as familiarised themselves with other systems that their opponents play, which is mostly Acol, the standard system taught in their club. They are also avid readers and even if they don't understand some of the things they read, they figure that every bit will help them learn in the long run, as long as they read the same thing!

This week they have lost the cut, and Vera is sitting West and Simon East.

### BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL

	♠ Q 3	
	♥ A Q 8 6 2	
	♦ A K Q 4	
	♣ 10 7	
♠ A K 7 6		♠ J 10 8 2
♥ K 7 4		♥ J 10 5
♦ J 6		♦ 9 7 3
♣ Q J 4 3		♣ 9 5 2
	♠ 9 5 4	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ 10 8 5 2	
	♣ A K 8 6	

South passes and Vera opens 1C. The twins always open their lowest four card suit. North overcalls 1H and Simon and South both pass. Vera is undeterred and bids 1S. She knows Simon has very little but she's not willing to sell out at the One level. North persists with 2H and there the bidding ends, though Simon does play with the idea of 2S. Simon leads the jack of spades. Declarer is pleased with dummy. He is a very polite young man, with very thick glasses and a round, happy face. They recall having played against him in an earlier session. "Why thank you, partner," the young man exclaims, "very nice indeed." Bet your play won't be, Simon murmurs to himself. He doesn't know why, but he's taken a bit of a dislike to the young man. Maybe he sees him as a bridge rival, who knows.

The young man, having gotten over the excitement of the sight of dummy, plays low from dummy. Vera knows that Simon can't have the queen, so she plays her king and follows with the ace. Declarer's queen drops, and Vera continues spades. Shortening declarer's trumps whenever possible is often a good idea, though this time she doesn't expect it to trouble declarer because of her own holding in the suit. She can see that they are breaking favourably. The young man ruffs and leads a club to the king; then he does a very strange thing: he calls for the nine of hearts from dummy and when Vera plays low, lets it run to Simon, who wins with his ten. Simon now continues with a club, which seems safest, but declarer wins the ace and now leads another trump, this time finessing the queen and then felling the outstanding trumps with the ace. A lucky break, but he makes Four, which is not a happy sight for Simon. Apart from one pair in 1NT by West doubled (six down!) and another pair doubled two down, other Norths playing in hearts are only making Two or Three.

Simon decides he wants to pick on the young man, and says: "We weren't playing the Weak No Trump like everyone else was, so avoided the pitfall of getting doubled; why are all the others not in 1NT doubled? As for your heart bids, why on earth didn't you rebid diamonds?" The young man meekly replies: "I thought of that, but doesn't hearts score more than diamonds? And I did have a good hand."

**BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL** *(repeated for convenience)*

	♠ Q 3	
	♥ A Q 8 6 2	
	♦ A K Q 4	
	♣ 10 7	
♠ A K 7 6		♠ J 10 8 2
♥ K 7 4		♥ J 10 5
♦ J 6		♦ 9 7 3
♣ Q J 4 3		♣ 9 5 2
	♠ 9 5 4	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ 10 8 5 2	
	♣ A K 8 6	

Simon isn't satisfied: "And what a strange way to play the trumps. Fancy letting me make a cheap trick with the ten." This time the young man is a little more animated. "I had good reason for that. While I was reasonably sure that your partner had the king of hearts for her bidding, I did not want to lose control if you had four of them. Had I finessed the queen and then tried to clear trumps by playing ace and another, either of you would have been able to lead a fourth spade to force me to ruff with my last trump. By losing the first trump trick, I stopped you leading a spade since I still had a trump left in dummy, even if it was the three. As it was, everything broke and it made no difference, but you never know."

Much to Simon's disgust, Vera seems very interested. "Yes, Simon, he, er..." Vera hesitates, turning to the young man, "my name is Vera and this is Simon. Yes, Simon, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?"

"Er, thank you, Vera," the young man can hardly contain himself, "I remember reading something about keeping control that way. And my name is Wallace, but just call me Wally. You're not looking for a partner for the next event by any chance are you?"

While Simon is quietly seething, Vera fishes out her programme and delightedly replies that yes indeed as a matter of fact she is.

"Simon, you don't have a partner for the next event either, do you," Vera adds, "you don't have a sister who plays bridge here do you, Wally?"

"No, afraid not," answers Wally, "but my mum plays, she's that lady over there," he points to the haughty lady who gave Simon his last comeuppance the previous week, "I'm sure she hasn't got a partner for the next event either."

"Well what a shame I'm already committed," says Simon, "but nice to meet you both."

As they go to the next table, Vera asks: "Who are you playing the next event with, Simon?" Simon's reply is short and sweet: "Anybody but her!!"



## BOARD 15 DLR S NS VUL

	♠ A 5 3	
	♥ 9 6 4	
	♦ A 8 3	
	♣ A Q 8 5	
♠ K J 8 2		♠ 7 6 4
♥ J 10 3 2		♥ A K 8 7
♦ J 9 7		♦ K 3 2
♣ K J		♣ 9 6 3
	♠ Q 10 9	
	♥ Q 5	
	♦ Q 10 6 4	
	♣ 10 7 4 2	

South passes, Vera passes, and North opens 1NT. NS are playing Acol, so the 1NT opening shows a balanced hand with 12-14 HCP. Simon passes, South passes, but Vera bids 2D. The twins have decided that they will not let opponents play in 1NT if they, themselves, can bid over it. To make bidding less risky, they play a system which allows them to show two suits rather than one. There are a lot of different systems over a 1NT opening by opponents, but the twins play 'Extended Landy': 2C shows the Minor suits, and 2D shows the Major suits. This really is a very marginal hand to do that with, but Vera is persuaded by the fact that they are Not Vulnerable. Simon circles her 2D bid in order to alert opponents. 'Alerts' are required for all such bids but North has no reason to ask, and Simon bids 2H.

All pass, and South, on lead, finally asks what the meaning of West's 2D bid was. It is sensible not to ask unless you really need to know, as this may alert opponents to your possible holding, and worse still, may alert your partner to your holding, which is definitely not very ethical. South has every reason to want to know since it is his lead, and when Simon explains, leads the four of diamonds. Simon plays low, North wins and returns a diamond. Simon has no choice and plays low but South wins the queen and returns the six. Simon wins in hand and tries a club, inserting the jack. This loses to North's queen, and North now cashes the ace and continues with a third club which Simon has to ruff in dummy. Simon is pretty sure that North must have the queen of hearts for the 1NT opening, so he plays the jack of hearts and lets it run. Disaster! South makes his doubleton queen, and Simon still loses two more spade tricks for down TWO. Normally -100 is no disaster, but this time it is a total disaster, since the only scores for NS are +90 for 1NT making 1, and EW have a number of scores for defeating 1NT.

Simon is still grumpy from the hand against Wally. "What a gross bid, Vera. Bidding Landy with that rubbish." Vera bites back. "Normally such a bid would pay off, and would even have done so this time, had you bothered to try to find out whether you should take the heart finesse or not. Had you led a spade to my jack you would have known that North had three aces and a queen APART from the queen of hearts and that is already 14 points. I'm sure Wally would have got it right. Mind you," she turns to North, "you certainly did give everyone the impression that you had the queen of hearts didn't you? That's very good defence, isn't it Simon?" Simon, who's still seething from the Wally experience, and has been oblivious to all else, finally looks up at North and is greeted by the loveliest pair of green eyes he has ever seen. Dumbstruck, he stutters: "Oh, gug-gug good defence, y-yes, the q-q-queen of huh-hearts! Yes, queen of hearts, um of course. Really good."

Vera is aware of Simon's difficulty and helps out. "Don't mind him, he's a bit challenged at times. My name's Vera, and that is Simon my twin brother." The young lady with the lovely green eyes turns to Simon and huskily lilt in a voice to match her eyes: "This is George," nodding her head towards South, "and I'm Dolly."

Simon, still thinking of his queen of hearts, manages to stammer out: "Why, HUH-HUH-HELLO, Dolly", before staggering off to the next table.

Funnily enough, Simon is suddenly in a good mood, but his bridge just doesn't seem to be quite with it. Oh well, thinks Vera, we'll just have to settle for 40% for the night!

## BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

	♠ A K J 5 4 2	
	♥ 5 3	
	♦ 3	
	♣ J 8 7 6	
♠ 7		♠ 10 9 8 6 3
♥ A 10 8 2		♥ Q 6 4
♦ K 8 4 2		♦ Q 10
♣ Q 9 5 3		♠ A 4 2
	♠ Q	
	♥ K J 9 7	
	♦ A J 9 7 6 5	
	♣ K 10	

After three Passes, South opens 1D. Vera passes and North now bids Two Spades. Simon nearly falls out of his chair and is even more surprised when South passes.

This can not be bad, he thinks, opponents playing in my five card suit as trumps. He asks about the meaning of the 2S bid, and is told that it shows a good spade suit with at least six cards and close to an opening bid, something like a good 'Weak Two'. "Except that we don't play Weak Twos", adds South. A likely story, thinks Simon, more likely North meant to bid Two Diamonds or One Spade. That seems to happen all the time in C-Grade, but Simon's quite happy of course. He decides to prove his theory and leads the three of spades.

Declarer wins in dummy, plays ace of diamonds and ruffs one; then ace of trumps. Vera shows out and North does have exactly what he's shown with his bid. Undeterred by the fact that Simon has all those spades, declarer plays a heart to the jack which Vera wins with the ace. She returns a heart, to Simon's queen and dummy's king. Declarer next ruffs a heart in hand, leads a club and goes up with the king when Simon plays low. He has guessed well but this guess is of no real consequence since he still has club losers anyway and eventually makes just eight tricks.

Simon is finally ready to believe, and applaud, the opponents' bidding. North's bid did show exactly what he had: a passed hand that jumps the next time they get a chance has to have a good suit and be close to an opening bid; South, in turn, was not overly enthused by partner's jump in her singleton, and realised that 2S was the most sensible place to play, unlike the other pairs who have blundered overboard (a number of them are even in No Trumps). 2S making 2 for +110 to NS is worth just 4/14 Match Points to the twins. Add that to their 4/14 on Board 11 and 0/14 on Board 15 and the session is not going to be a great one. But...Vera is looking forward to her event with Wally, and Simon is still walking on air dreaming about his queen of hearts.

## BOARD 17 DLR N NIL VUL

♠ Q 7	
♥ A K J 4	
♦ 7 6 4 2	
♣ A 7 2	
♠ K 4	♠ A J 9 8 5 3
♥ Q 8	♥ 10 7 5 3 2
♦ A K Q 9	♦ J 3
♣ Q 10 8 5 3	♣
	♠ 10 6 2
	♥ 9 6
	♦ 10 8 5
	♣ K J 9 6 4

North, as dealer, opens 1NT. Simon bids 2D. He may not have the points, but he has the shape. And furthermore, he is still in reverie about shapes and all sorts of things other than bridge when Vera bids 3NT. That's not what he wanted to hear, but what can he do? This is not a No Trump hand, and Simon bids 4H. Vera has been given a clear choice of playing in either major, and bids 4S.

Vera, having alerted Simon's 2D bid, explains that it asked for the Majors, and that clearly Simon has a lot of cards in both majors to have insisted on a Major suit contract. South is about to lead when Vera stops him. Simon may have the spade suit, but Vera is the one who'll have to play the contract. After all, Simon only implied the spades, and Vera bid them when given a choice. North leads the ace of hearts, and no doubt South was going to lead the nine from their doubleton. North continues with the king and when Vera and South both follow, decides to lead the four of hearts rather than the jack, keeping that card as a hold over dummy's ten.

South ruffs, but doesn't make the mistake of ruffing with the two. Why send a boy on a man's errand, is the old bridge saying. South ruffs with the ten. Vera, however, overruffs with the king and then leads the four towards dummy and inserts the jack. She is pretty sure North will have the queen because of his 1NT opening, which promises 12-14 HCP. In any case, she really has no other option despite South having ruffed with the ten which might just indicate a doubleton queen-ten.

All ends well, though, when the jack holds, the ace drops North's queen, and dummy's jack of diamonds proves to be a golden card which allows Vera to make the rest of the tricks, disposing of both of dummy's hearts on her own top diamonds.

Vera facetiously congratulates Simon on his brilliant bidding and hand evaluation, while Simon congratulates Vera, more sincerely, on her declarer play.

The eleven tricks in 4S scores the twins +450 and a clear top. Yes, one other declarer has made the same number of tricks in spades, but Simon and Vera are the only ones in game and making; two others have somehow managed to lose their way and go down in 4S. Or were they up against some brilliant defence from the tables that Wally and Dolly were at, they wonder, quite independently.

## BOARD 20 DLR W ALL VUL

	♠ Q 3 2	
	♥ Q 6	
	♦ K Q 3	
	♣ K J 9 3 2	
♠ K 10 9		♠ A 6 5
♥ A 5 4 3		♥ J 9 8 2
♦ 8 2		♦ A 10 5
♣ A Q 10 5		♣ 7 6 4
	♠ J 8 7 4	
	♥ K 10 7	
	♦ J 9 7 6 4	
	♣ 8	

Vera, as dealer, opens 1C. This effectively silences North, and Simon responds 1H. Vera raises to 2H. South leads the eight of clubs. Simon finesses the ten. He does not expect it to win but people do make some strange leads and South might have both the king and jack. North wins the jack and tries the king of diamonds. Simon plays low and South glares at North and plays the four, a discouraging signal.

Simon does not approve of such 'table talk' mannerisms, but is in fact hoping that North gets the message. North does, and with a very audible sigh, returns a club which South emphatically ruffs. He has just ruffed a loser, Simon calling for the five from dummy.

South tries another diamond, hoping to get to North's hand for another club lead, but Simon wins, ruffs a diamond and plays ace and another heart. The heart honours crash, thanks to South's earlier greed-induced sign language, and the said South wins the king. And to add insult to injury, or perhaps to teach South a good lesson, if he's capable of learning one, he now only has diamonds and spades left.

South knows what a 'ruff and slough' is: if he leads a diamond, declarer can ruff in either hand and discard a side suit loser from the other. So, he tries the four of spades but Simon plays the nine from dummy and wins North's queen with his ace and leads one back towards dummy, finessing, and winning, the ten.

Greedy, and unethical, South has got his ruff all right, but managed to ruff a loser, reduce the defensive trump tricks to one, and get himself end-played as well. Great play, thinks Simon, I can certainly do with more of that sort of cheating from opponents!

Since nearly all EW pairs have played in 1NT, 2H making Three is worth 10/14 match points; pity about the declarer who made nine tricks in No Trumps (Lord knows how) and the injudicious North who made a single suit overcall in 2C and got doubled for -800.

## BOARD 22 DLR E EW VUL

♠ 10 9 6	
♥ J 7 5 2	
♦ K 9 6 3	
♣ 6 3	
♠ K 8 7	♠ A Q J 5 3 2
♥ Q 9 8	♥ K 3
♦ 7 4	♦ J 5 2
♣ A Q J 8 5	♣ 10 9
	♠ 4
	♥ A 10 6 4
	♦ A Q 10 8
	♣ K 7 4 2

Simon has a good six card suit and 11 HCP so he opens the bidding with 1S. South doubles, for takeout. South in fact has the ideal shape for a Takeout Double, but that is not something that happens very often, which is why the twins simply play 'Major Oriented' Takeout Doubles. Vera has enough points to be in game, but at this stage she just redoubles, which shows 10+ HCP and normally no great fit in partner's suit. North bids 2D, preferring that to 2H with such a weak hand. North has no expectation of playing the hand, but wants to get a diamond rather than a heart lead if South decides to lead one or the other. This is extremely forward thinking for C-Grade, but North is aware of the fact that all C-Graders seem to think they must lead partner's suit, even when they have forced partner to bid a suit whether they like to or not.

Simon bids 2S. He does not have to bid over North's 2D, and in most circumstances would not do so in case Vera wanted to extract a penalty out of opponents in 2D or 2H. But, with a weakish single suited hand, he gets his message across by bidding. Vera, having got that message, bids game in spades. South, true to form for many C-Graders, leads the ace of diamonds, a terrible lead, but so is a heart, and a club is not much better, and singleton trump leads are not normally recommended, and the thoughtful North had, after all, bid diamonds. North signals with the nine and South continues with the eight, won by North who now switches to a heart, low from Simon, ten from South and queen from dummy. Simon, still somewhat in cloud cuckoo land, is quite sure that the club finesse will work, and draws trumps ending in hand. He leads the ten of clubs, and all play low. Only then does he realise that, if North is holding off, the next club will lose and he will have a diamond and heart loser as well, and even if he runs the nine of clubs, he has no more entries to dummy. He does the best under the circumstances and overtakes the nine with dummy's jack and cashes the ace, discarding the king of hearts. When the king of clubs does not drop, he ruffs the next club and runs his spades, but South keeps the queen of diamonds and throws the ace of hearts. Simon makes just Four.

"I'm sorry, Vera. I wasn't with it. When the queen of hearts was allowed to hold I should have made Five. All I had to do was ruff my third diamond before drawing all the trumps." Vera is quite content. "That would have been too risky, and you would still have had trouble returning to hand unless you drew only one round of trumps and ruffed the diamond with the king. Yes it would work, but your best line in fact was to lead a spade to your jack, finesse the clubs twice, overtaking the second as you did, but then ruff a low club, overruffing North if necessary. Now the king of spades would be the last entry in dummy and the ace of clubs would drop South's king and set up the fifth club." That is all far too much for Simon to understand and he makes a mental note to think about it later. Meanwhile, South is writing up the score and they find that there's only one other 620 in the EW column, and lots of 100's in the NS columns, all in 4S. Surely all that is required is a club finesse and the second round overtaken by the queen in dummy and there are ten tricks there for the taking, they all say in unison. Who knows what the other declarers must have been thinking, but 13/14 match points for the twins gives them 54% for the boards reviewed here, though their final score for the session is just 52.7%. But... they have learnt a lot and, even more importantly, met some interesting people as well. P.S. Simon summed up the courage to ask Dolly if she had a partner for the next full event, after the one night of the 'C-Grade Pairs' that Dolly would be playing with Wally. And, surprise surprise, in three weeks time, after the final session of the current event and the one night of C-Grade pairs, the twins will be parting their bridge ways, at least for the time being.

## CHAPTER 6

This is the final night of the Simple twins' second series of bridge at the club as partners in the 'C' grade. The twins have only just learnt to play bridge and have been thoroughly enjoying their club evenings, as well as learning a lot. They hope to continue to learn a lot and improve, even when partnering others in events in the C-Grade.

Tonight, the twins have once more lost the cut and will be playing East/West, with Vera sitting West and Simon East.

### BOARD 4 DLR W ALL VUL

	♠ A Q	
	♥ A 10 4	
	♦ Q 8 5	
	♣ A J 10 6 2	
♠ 6 5		♠ K J 10 7 2
♥ J 8 5 3 2		♥ 9 7
♦ 9 3		♦ A 10 7 6 4
♣ K Q 8 5		♣ 4
	♠ 9 8 4 3	
	♥ K Q 6	
	♦ K J 2	
	♣ 9 7 3	

Vera passes and North opens 1C. Simon overcalls 1S. He may have only 8 HCP but he has two potential suits to play in and a good spade suit. South does not know what to do. He knows that a 1NT bid in response to an opening bid from partner shows 6-9 HCP, but after an overcall, he should have the upper range of this response as well as a stop in the overcalled suit. A Double would be for takeout and pretty well guarantee a four card heart suit. He doesn't have that either. South, after some thought but not too much, passes. Simon's 1S is passed round to North, who now bids 1NT. The way most people play it, a 1NT bid in such a situation is stronger than the normal 15-16 point rebid, because it is an opponent and not your partner who has bid: partner has passed and may have nothing. South also knows this, and since North has shown at least 17 HCP plus a good hold in spades, raises to 3NT.

Simon, on lead, is reluctant to lead a spade round to declarer's more than likely double stop. With his cunningly hidden diamond suit, the lead is obvious. He leads the six: fourth highest. Declarer plays the jack from dummy and calls for the nine of clubs. Vera covers and declarer wins the ace and follows with the jack. Simon shows out, signalling for a spade shift with the seven, as high as he can afford. Vera wins her king of clubs and shifts to the six of spades, her higher one. Declarer hopefully inserts the queen but Simon wins and now leads the two, picking declarer to have started with AQ doubleton. It helps when partners lead the correct card: had Vera played her five, Simon would have known that she had no more as it would have been the lowest, and they lead the top card from two.

However, all this clever business does the twins no good, as declarer has kept track of the clubs and can enter dummy with the queen of hearts to finesse against Vera's eight. With four club tricks and three hearts, plus a spade and diamond, declarer makes his contract.

The twins think this should be a good board for THEM, since declarer could have got a spade lead, or made one more trick had he guessed to play one more round of diamonds earlier, or had Vera returned a diamond and not a spade. But....only one declarer has made 3NT, with most contracts having been played by South going down on a spade lead from West (a good reason why South should not bid No Trumps without a stop in the overcalled suit). 1/12 match points for the twins.

**BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL**

♠ A J 8 7 3 2 ♥ A Q ♦ K 9 3 ♣ K 3	♠ 10 5 ♥ K J 9 5 4 ♦ Q J 10 6 4 ♣ J
♠ Q 4 ♥ 8 7 3 2 ♦ A 8 5 2 ♣ 8 7 6	♠ K 9 6 ♥ 10 6 ♦ 7 ♣ A Q 10 9 5 4 2

South looks at her hand and opens 3C. North looks at his and bids 3S and South raises this to game. Simon does consider leading his singleton club, but in view of South's preempt and support for North's spades, decides on the more orthodox queen of diamonds. Vera knows from the lead that declarer has the king, so she steps up with her ace and smartly switches to the eight of hearts. Declarer can of course win the ace and discard the heart loser from dummy on his king of diamonds, but he's only just learned to finesse, and like so many proud learners, is caught out when finessing needlessly: he plays the queen and Simon wins the king. No more tricks for the Simples but they think surely this time they'll score a top. No.... one South is in Five Clubs, one North making only Four Spades, and one other also making Five. But 8/12 match points nevertheless. Both Simon and Vera agree that they would not open the South hand with a preempt at the given vulnerability. A 6-7 trick hand is just a little bit too strong when neither side is vulnerable. They wonder how the other NS pairs have bid to 4S.

**BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL**

♠ 6 4 ♥ 8 6 ♦ 8 6 5 4 2 ♣ K Q 10 4	♠ A Q 9 3 ♥ Q J 3 ♦ Q 9 7 3 ♣ 3 2
♠ K J 10 5 2 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ A 10 ♣ J 5	♠ 8 7 ♥ A K 5 2 ♦ K J ♣ A 9 8 7 6

After two passes, South opens 1C and Vera overcalls 1S. 2C from North, 3S from Simon. He does not believe in messing around and bids the limit of his hand. He expects that Vera will more than likely make the contract, and if not, 3C will probably make for NS. After all pass, North leads the king of clubs and Vera is quite happy with dummy. But, the best laid schemes o' mice an' men, as Robbie Burns put it so well, 'gang aft a-gley' or however you write it in Gaelic. South follows with her lowest, the six, and North switches, to the eight of hearts. After king, then ace of hearts and a third round ruff, then a club to South's ace, NS have taken the first five tricks. South doesn't intend to let their diamond trick get away either, and leads their fourth heart which North ruffs and dummy overruffs, but the king of diamonds eventually defeats the contract by two tricks.

Fortunately, other EW pairs have got even higher, with the same defence for three down, and one South has bought a double in 2C, clearly a partnership misunderstanding between East and West about the difference between Penalty and Takeout doubles. Minus 200 is actually worth half the match points for Simon and Vera. A bit of luck this time.

**BOARD 14 DLR E NIL VUL**

	♠ A Q 5	
	♥ Q 8 6	
	♦ 10 8 5 4	
	♣ K 10 9	
♠ 10 6		♠ K J 8 3
♥ A J 9 7 4 3		♥ 5
♦ A 6		♦ K Q 7 3
♣ Q 5 2		♣ A 8 7 3
	♠ 9 7 4 2	
	♥ K 10 2	
	♦ J 9 2	
	♣ J 6 4	

Simon hates 4441 hands. However, in keeping with their bidding principles, he opens his lowest four card suit. Almost inevitably, Vera bids 1H, his singleton. He bids 1S and Vera now jumps to Three Hearts, just what Simon does not want to hear. A Jump Rebid in the opener's suit or in responder's suit, they always play as 'Invitational'. With Simon's 13 count and a singleton in partner's suit, there is no question this time, he passes.

North leads the four of diamonds, the best choice of lead in view of the bidding. Vera runs this to East's jack and her ace. Not keen to try trumps just yet, she lays down the ten of spades. North wins the ace and persists with yet another diamond. Winning in dummy, Vera now leads the singleton trump and inserts the nine when South follows low. North wins and leads yet another diamond. North's play has convinced Vera that he probably has a hand he does not want to lead away from, so Vera discards a club on the third diamond and leads the fourth diamond. South isn't taken in, and discards a spade. Ruffing the diamond would allow declarer to overruff and South would not make the king. He's not to know that North's eight would be promoted to a trick as a result. Better to make sure of scoring the king of trumps. Vera ruffs, finesses the spade to the jack and when this works, discards another club on the king. Now, ace followed by a club ruff leaves her with nothing but hearts, and when she plays ace and another, both opponents kindly follow and she makes Four.

This time there is some justice: their good bidding and play is rewarded, when only one pair have bid and made 3NT whereas the others have gone down in 3NT, having overbid to it in the first place. Even though the heart suit breaks, there is no entry to make use of it once it is established, as long as the defence is careful. Simon and Vera note that there may be a way to make 3NT even without the hearts, but they are both satisfied that they, at least, know to stop in part score with marginal values for game and a misfit. 10/12 match points and they are quite content.



## BOARD 23 DLR S ALL VUL

	♠ A K J 3	
	♥ Q	
	♦ K J 9 5 2	
	♣ J 7 4	
♠ 7		♠ Q 10 9 8 4 2
♥ J 7 4 3		♥ 9 2
♦ Q 10 4		♦ A 7
♣ K Q 9 5 3		♣ A 8 6
	♠ 8 6	
	♥ A K 10 8 6 5	
	♦ 8 6 3	
	♣ 10 2	

After two Passes, North opens 1D. Simon and Vera play 'variable' jump overcalls, so Simon jumps to 2S. He counts his hand as 5-6 tricks which is perfect for the Vulnerable vs Vulnerable jump.

This serves to propel NS overboard: South bids 3H without even a thought as to whether the hand is good enough for the bid. True, South is a passed hand but she still cannot expect North to know that he should pass. As it happens, North has a perfectly good bid of 3NT and it is due only to South's better judgement that they don't stay in the quite hopeless 3NT.

South bids 4H and Vera has to restrain herself from doubling, though she has difficulty in seeing how 4H could possibly make if Simon has his bid and North has his (with Simon having spade length and North having shown spade strength, Simon is surely marked with outside high cards). It turns out that she should have doubled, because declarer does extremely well. She wins Vera's spade lead with the king, cashes the queen of trumps and, warned by Simon's jump, leads a club. Simon sees that it is pointless to give Vera a spade ruff and isn't even sure that Vera doesn't have the six also (declarer very cunningly having played the eight of spades from hand at trick one), so declarer eventually gets to had to draw trumps, leaving Vera with her jack, and then leads diamonds, firstly to the nine and then to the jack, losing, all in all, just one heart, one diamond and two clubs. Others are two or even three down and one hapless North is four down in 3NT. Doubling 4H would have gained quite a few extra Match Points, but without the double, the twins salvage a mere 4/12.

**BOARD 25 DLR N EW VUL**

♠ 5 3 2 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ A 10 9 2 ♣ 6 5 3	♠ J 9 7 4 ♥ 10 8 7 5 ♦ 7 3 ♣ Q 9 2
♠ A K Q 10 6 ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A 4	♠ 8 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K J 8 6 4 ♣ K J 10 8 7

After two Passes, South opens 2S. Playing Acol, with strong Two bids, this should show an 8+ playing trick hand. North bids Four. She has very little, but with four card support and an outside queen and a doubleton, the bid is quite justified. 2NT would be a negative response, and 3S would show a better hand, guaranteeing trump support plus at least an outside ace.

Vera does not like leading unsupported aces, or leading away from them, but this time she decides, in view of the bidding, to go for as many quick tricks as they can get. She starts with the ace of diamonds and is surprised to get a signal, the eight, from Simon. She continues with the two to give Simon an idea of how many she started with, and Simon wins the king, dropping declarer's queen. He now switches to a heart ('through strength round to weakness') and when declarer plays low Vera wins her queen. From Simon's six of hearts, she deduces that she should not lead another heart. A club may embarrass Simon (she can't see his hand) so she exits safely with a trump. Later, when she wins her king of hearts and Simon inevitably his king of clubs, this pin point accurate defence gains them a clear top for two down.

South proceeds to abuse North for having made such an atrocious raise to game, but it is South who is entirely at fault. These 20 points don't equate to eight playing tricks, and South would have been better off to open 1S and play there. Ironically, the twins note, three declarers in 1S have made Four. Vera looks at poor North and decides that North will certainly be looking for another partner for the next event. Vera might even ask her whether she has anything free later in the year.

In this session, the twins had a great night. On the hands reviewed, they scored 57% but the rest of the session was even better and they ended with a top score of 64.67%. A great way to end their series, and they are both looking forward to their new found partnerships with Dolly and Wally.