

# POST MORTEM

## Part 1

### Story by Simon Simple

The Simple twins have started a new series at the club, each with a new partner. Simon has teamed up with Dolly, and Vera with Wally. They have decided that they will start at the same table, not only so they can see the hands from a different perspective when they discuss them afterwards, but also because both pairs intend to come top, one North-South, the other East-West. Talk about optimists!

Simon and Dolly have decided to play SIMPLE. It really all started when Simon suggested they play 'KISS' and Dolly misunderstood until Simon explained that it was a very old British System invented even before Acol and that it stood for "Keep It Simple, Stupid". Simon thought he detected a look of disappointment on Dolly's face when he explained it, but maybe that was wishful thinking.

Vera, having brushed up on her Acol (the SIMPLER version), has gone along with Wally's wishes and they are playing very basic Acol.

In this session, Simon and Dolly won the cut and Simon played South and Dolly North. Vera sat West and Wally was East. Here is a brief transcript of the 'Post Mortem'.

### BOARD 3 DLR S EW VUL

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

"What did you do on Board 3?" Vera asks Simon. "The one West had the singleton queen of diamonds and East six to the AKJ?"

"Oh, we had what should have been a great score but wasn't! I defended it really well to take 3NT one down to find all these mickey mouse pairs in hearts or in spades two down, as well as two down in 3NT! Apart from someone who had made SIX No Trumps! Quite ridiculous!"

When he has stopped and taken a breath, he continues: "I led a club which declarer ran to dummy but when she unblocked her queen of diamonds and tried to force an entry to dummy by playing her ten of spades and then the queen, I DUCKED both times and even though she made all her four spade tricks, she had to forget about the diamonds. I thought I was quite brilliant. And what do I get? A few match points thanks to one person who managed to make twelve tricks. That must have been the most abominable defence!"

"It, er, wasn't quite that bad," Wally joins in, "it was actually I who made the twelve tricks. When I got the club lead I merely thought about how I could make sure of making my contract. I went up with dummy's ACE at the first trick. That ensured that I had a certain entry with a club. I then unblocked the queen of diamonds and led a club to the QJ. South of course won the king but switched to a spade. He must have been following the rule of 'through strength' without thinking, but you can see that a heart switch would only have produced three tricks anyway, and South wasn't to know that I had such good diamonds. I guess all the other Easts must have automatically played low from dummy at trick one, without thinking. They weren't ever going to make more than two club tricks anyway, were they? And I guess the ones to go two down tried a spade to the jack, a 50-50 shot, albeit unsuccessful. At least your declarer made all her spade tricks!"

### BOARD 8 DLR W NIL VUL

<p>♠ Q 7 ♥ J ♦ K Q J 9 6 2 ♣ 9 5 4 2</p> <p>♠ A J 9 3 ♥ Q 10 7 6 5 ♦ A 8 5 ♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ 6 5 4 ♥ 9 8 4 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ K Q 10 3</p> <p>♠ K 10 8 2 ♥ A K 2 ♦ 10 7 ♣ A J 7 6</p>
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Vera can't wait to tell the others about her stroke of luck on this hand. "I opened 1H, North overcalled 2D, Wally gave me a courtesy raise to 2H, and South jumped all the way to 3NT without further ado. Now, I thought I could hardly lead anything other than a heart, but South had bid 3NT without even a second's thought. But, surely, Wally must have something in hearts also. Nevertheless, I decided to lead my other suit, and you know the hands, don't you? You'd think it would be absolutely disastrous, running the lead round to the K 10 8. Well, what the effect was, was that dummy could no longer be entered with the queen of spades, and after ducking the first diamond, Wally giving me a count with the four, I won the second diamond and had no trouble leading the QUEEN of hearts after seeing the singleton jack in dummy. The correct OPENING lead, from that holding, of course is the fourth highest heart and that would have been won by the singleton jack, so not leading one at all was a huge stroke of luck, and finding the spade lead was a double dose of it. Mind you, some of the people round here would lead the queen anyway, I can't imagine why, but it certainly works on this hand!"

"So, how many down did it go?" Simon is curious.

"Three! But it needed to, because someone had made three hearts our way for 140!"

"I've been thinking," Dolly muses, "NORMALLY the queen of hearts is a STUPID lead from that holding, but if partner has supported AND declarer jumped to 3NT, maybe the only possible danger IS a singleton jack in dummy, so if you decide to lead a heart anyway, in THIS case the queen is a GREAT lead. But I do agree with your choice of a spade, Vera. Partner clearly had points in ONE of the black suits, and the other possibility was that you may attack one of dummy's entries. Holding the master card in dummy's long suit, the spade lead seems an excellent choice."

### BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL

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

"What about Board 13?" Wally bursts out, "it was certainly unlucky for the EW pair at one table. South bid and made 6D! I wonder how on earth that happened?"

"I can tell you," volunteers Simon, "my partner took a rosy view of her hand and responded 2S instead of a negative 2NT opposite my 2D opener. Despite my void in spades I got carried away and bid 6D. Unfortunately for the opponents, West led the five of clubs, in fact a sensible enough lead, but East had to play the king and this gave me an entry to dummy with the jack. When I led the queen of hearts, East forgot to cover and I was able to repeat the finesse and ruff the eight before drawing trumps and claiming the rest. Completely lucky and undeserved but then if East won't cover in a situation like that, they probably deserved a bottom more than we did. What did you do on the hand?"

"North played in 3NT. I suspect that the two 'dears' didn't know what they were doing but they landed in 3NT by North. We managed to keep it to three but half the field weren't even in game and one in 5D going down. Clearly 5D is easier to defeat than Six." Wally can be quite sarcastic at times, a shame that the culprit East hasn't been listening!

### BOARD 14 DLR E NIL VUL

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

"Did they bid to 3D on Board 14, or were you allowed to play in 1S like some Norths?" Vera asks Dolly.

"Neither, actually. I overcalled 1S and Simon very sensibly raised to Two. This put paid to any more EW bidding and I played in 2S. I actually made Four: East led a diamond and West tried to stop me ruffing in dummy by playing ace and another trump. I kept the ten of trumps in dummy and tried the jack of clubs. This particular East also forgot to cover, though I had decided to play them from the top to set them up anyway and West's ten would have dropped. Then I would have drawn the last trump and been able to stay in dummy," Dolly babbles somewhat incoherently, "I know that normally I should play a club to the queen and then the ace, or play the jack first and when covered, finesse the next time to preserve my entries, but at the time it seemed a good idea to do it the way I did."

"Absolutely quite right, Dolly," Simon beams. "You played the hand perfectly". He's not really sure, but a bit of P.R. never hurt anybody. "So what did you do?" He turns to Wally.

"Played in 3D and made quite comfortably, despite both aces being off side. After North overcalled, South passed, unlike you, Simon. Vera doubled for takeout, 2D from me, now 2S from South, 3D from Vera, a great bid, and that was that. At least the king of trumps was on side. I took my club ruff before drawing any more trumps and making Three was a pretty good board. I really don't know why so many people have so little appreciation of the need to compete, and compete early, not leave it until it is too late. Why let opponents talk to each other at low levels? Glad to see you up with the play, Simon!"

Seems like tonight is a mutual admiration society gathering. Can that last?

### BOARD 18 DLR E NS VUL

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

"Did you bid that EW slam?" Simon wants to know. "They managed to struggle into game against us."

"Yes, we did," replies Wally, "with little difficulty, despite the fact that your lovely sister underbid her hand for once. I opened 1H and she raised to 3H. She must have been playing SIMPLE because in Acoll that shows 10-11 H.C.P."

He got no further before Vera interrupted. "I know that part of Acoll very well, but with your light openings AND light declarer play, I chose to devalue my response just a little. Anyway, that didn't stop you bashing away, did it? I could easily have had the wrong values in spades and diamonds!"

Wally was beginning to regret his earlier dig, but managed to recover quite well. "No Vera, you could never have the wrong values, judging by your performance tonight. And despite my declarer play, I must have blundered into the correct line. I really can't understand why so few people made all the tricks. After all, the club queen drops in three rounds and surely playing to ruff the clubs is much better than finessing?"

Despite Simon's first impression of Wally, he is admitting to himself that he's really not such a bad bloke, and that he really does have potential as a bridge player. He might even team up with him at a later stage.

"Yes, it's a funny thing with new players," adds Simon, "they take so long to learn the simple finesse that when it comes to not finessing, they can't resist doing it, can they?"

## BOARD 21 DLR N NS VUL

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

"That hand with the eight spades in the East hand was an interesting one, wasn't it? What did you two bid on it?" Simon asks, turning to Wally.

"We bid to 4S and made five. Should have been a flat board, but the contracts and scores were all over the place. Nearly half the field were in part score and people were making from Four to Seven, both of which seem quite impossible. What did they do against you?"

"Bid Four, made Five," replies Simon, "I did have a problem though, and you can see how some made Six. East opened a strong 2S, West responded a negative 2NT and East rebid 3S. West had the one trick needed and bid game. Personally, I'd have bid game on my own on East's hand, with nine tricks plus the king of diamonds, but East was a bit more conservative. I had an awful lead problem: singleton trump leads are a 'no-no' in my book, and I was afraid to lead away from either of the kings because of East's strong bidding. I hate underleading aces, so the only option was to lead the ace of diamonds. When Dolly discouraged by playing her three and declarer played the ten, I really had to give the matter a great deal of thought. Declarer seemed to have started with K 10 doubleton and would therefore have a parking place for any loser on the queen of diamonds, if they could unblock the king first and get to dummy later. So I switched to the KING of hearts and that worked a treat. Others, on the ace of diamonds lead were making six, because clearly they continued diamonds, and I noticed one person had underled their ace and must have later ducked also, is all I can think of how someone could have made Seven. On top of that, both North and South must have discarded hearts at the end. Amazing how many partnerships in this grade both discard the same suit and both keep the same other one. You'd think that the moment one throws a suit the other will hang on to it. As for those in part score, even if East opens One Spade, West will respond 1NT and if that response cannot produce just one trick, there's something wrong. East should then of course bid all the way to 4S. Hand evaluation is not about counting points as much as looking at your tricks and losers and working out how many of your losers can be covered by partner's possible holding and how many tricks are likely to be developed in the light of partner's bidding."

The others, spellbound, nod mutely. What can they say? Mercifully, Simon's lecture comes to an end.

"Drink, anyone? Let's relax and wait for the scores to come out." That's one of Dolly's better suggestions and they all retire to the bar.

The scores are out soon enough, and both pairs have a good result: 62.4% and a top for Simon and Dolly and 59.7% and a second for Vera and Wally. All of them look forward to the next session with great anticipation.

# POST MORTEM

## Part 2

Simon and Dolly have won the cut - again - and Simon is South and Dolly North. Vera is West and Wally East.

Both pairs feel they've had a good session, and settle down for a drink and 'Post Mortem' after the play has ended.

### BOARD 3 DLR S EW VUL

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

"Did you two get to 3NT on Board 3?" Vera wants to know.

"Without difficulty, though one might think that those playing Acol would have had even less trouble. When Dolly opened 1S as North and I responded 2D, she had a bit of a problem: should she take the conservative view and bid 2NT or bid game? Assuming that I had at least a nine count and more likely 10+ for my Two level response, she quite correctly bid 3NT. And she made four for what I would expect would be an equal top."

"They had no trouble against us either," sighs Vera, "North opened 1S and over South's 2D bid, rebid 2NT. In Acol that of course shows 15-16 HCP and South had no problem raising to 3NT. But at least they only made Three when we cleared hearts and gave nothing away in the discards. But I can't help wondering whether there was a way to actually defeat it."

"Not the way the cards lie," Wally joins in, "though I did notice that two people had gone down, on a spade lead. Seems like declarer did not realise the spades would break and finessed a club into the West hand, but even that is hard to believe. Maybe they squeezed themselves when they ran dummy's diamonds? Normally it's a good idea to run a long suit as this puts pressure on the defence. I do see how declarer might discard the wrong cards from hand, though. And it is interesting that so few pairs managed to bid and make 3NT on the hand."

## BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL

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

Wally has been patiently waiting to tell everyone how well he played Board 11. He starts unassumingly and quite deviously: "Did you find the 5D sacrifice against the 4S by East?" he turns to Simon and Dolly.

"No, but we didn't need to. I played the hand in 4D, we must have frightened poor East!" Simon is pleased with their effort on the hand. "I opened 1D and when Dolly raised to 3D and East doubled, I used my knowledge of TNT and bid FOUR Diamonds."

"What's TNT?" Dolly is puzzled, "some sort of explosive?"

"Oh, don't you know about that, Dolly? It stands for 'Total Number of Tricks'. You see, we have half the points in the pack and TEN diamonds between us, so we can expect to make TEN tricks. As it happens EW have half the points and ten spades and they can make ten tricks in spades. I wasn't going to let them get there without getting in the way. Mind you, I saw the perplexed look on West's face. Maybe she would have passed East's double. No, she could hardly do that. Surely the double when both opponents have bid only ONE suit only just has to be for takeout, whether at the two, three, or four level."

"Yes, of course," Wally finally gets his chance, "but 4S isn't any certainty to make, especially if you play with the odds, unless you can engineer a 100% line."

Dolly looks at him with even more puzzlement. "What do you mean, Wally?"

Wally has a good memory and writes out the EW hands. "As you can see, East has two losers when the club finesse does not work. Therefore I had to limit my heart losers to one. If I lay down the ace and lead towards my Q-10, unless North is kind enough to pop up with the jack or king, I have to guess which one to play. In effect, a 50-50 shot. But if I can finesse through the same hand twice, that is now a 75% chance, wouldn't you agree?" They all nod in agreement.

"So, I should lead the queen from my hand, and if it loses to North's king, I should later lead from hand again and finesse the nine. Of course you remember that North had both the king and jack, don't you?"

"So, you went down. Bad luck Wally. You'll make the next three times, according to your theory, then," Simon is being facetious, but the coup de grace comes from Wally.

"Yes, I did run the queen of hearts, but I did not fail in my contract. You see, I knew that if either opponent opened up hearts I would not have to guess at all, so I cashed up the clubs and ruffed the diamonds, thereby eliminating both clubs and diamonds from both dummy and my hand, and when I led the queen of hearts, this was the end position,"

Wally carefully rings the cards left at that stage:

♠ 8 4	♠ J
♥ A 9 2	♥ Q 10 6 3

"I led the queen of hearts and and it didn't matter whether South covered, or North won with the king. In the latter case, North has no exit and has to either lead a heart THROUGH my 1063 to dummy's A9, or another suit, allowing me to discard the losing two of hearts while ruffing with the jack of trumps in my hand. Amazing how often the defenders concede a 'ruff and slough' even when they don't need to. This time they couldn't help giving me an extra trick either way. Of course I needed a diamond lead and for South to continue them when in with the king of clubs to get the timing right, but remember, South couldn't open up the hearts anyway and had a singleton spade, so seemingly 'forcing' me by continuing diamonds is a natural defence. I wonder if I would have taken the 75% line on the ace of spades lead, followed by a club? But it pays to look for extra chances all the time doesn't it?"

Vera looks at him admiringly. "It sure does. I take it you didn't make 4D, Simon."

*(Hands repeated for convenience)*

**BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL**

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

"As a matter of fact I did. I too looked for the 'extra chance', as did Wally with the East cards. I won the spade lead and crossed to the queen of diamonds and led a club immediately. East won and led another spade and I was able to clear the clubs and East could not help but win the third club. Poor East had to either lead a heart round to my king, or lead another spade and give ME a 'ruff and slough' solving MY heart problem as well. In any case I had already figured that East might have done more than she did, with all those spades, the AQJ of clubs and four hearts to the ace, so would have played West for about all they could have, and gone up with the king had West won the club and led a LOW heart. You'll note that they have to lead hearts early to stop me making four and that is not an obvious play for either of them is it? Interesting hand, a potential elimination play to make ten tricks for BOTH NS and EW!

Poor Vera, she feels quite left out of it. Those boys are so clever, she thinks to herself.



## BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL

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

This had proved to be a 'trap for young players' for quite a few of the pairs, both NS and EW. After North opened 1D, Wally as East had Doubled, for takeout. With nineteen high card points, he had been too strong to merely overcall 1NT which shows 15-18 HCP. Wally had intended to REBID 1NT which would then show 19-21 after a Takeout Double. Few new players seem to understand that if you force your partner to bid, they may have to bid with nothing, so you have to allow for that possibility. Vera had bid 1H but North had bid his diamonds again.

"So, I doubled again, still for takeout. Vera bid 2H and I now gave up," Wally continues the story. "She played it very well, too. North led the ace of clubs, not a good lead of course. The king of diamonds is more sensible. He now continued with another club but Vera went up with the king, played the ace of hearts and successfully ran the nine. Another club and South was in, switching to a diamond but too late. Vera discarded one of her diamonds on a club, then played two rounds of spades and ruffed one, exiting with a diamond and catching South in a "trump coup": North won the diamond but Vera's last two cards were the KJ of hearts and South's were Q7 and North was on lead. Great, huh? She made Four, which should have been a top, but wasn't because of all the loony Norths bidding to 3D and going two down Vulnerable! But still, there were lots of EW pairs overboard in any number of No Trumps as well. I can also assure you that if North had bid to Three Diamonds, I would have doubled yet once more, and then it would have been a Penalty double and we'd have got at least 500!"

"Yes," agreed Simon, "we actually defended against Two No Trumps. "Dolly passed when West bid 1H in response to East's double of my 1D opening, and East bid 2NT. Having forced poor West to bid in the first place, that was about one level too high. Different if West had reponed 1H in a 'free' situation. But having forced the issue, so to speak, East could have shown his 19 count by bidding ONE No Trump. Personally, as the bidding went, I'd have raised East's 2NT bid to 3NT or at least bid 3H, but West passed. Nevertheless, East got what he deserved when I dutifully led Dolly's suit and Joe whatsisname managed to scrape five tricks. I must say you two bid the hand very well. Presumably you would have rebid 1NT, Wally, if North had passed as did Dolly, and you, Vera, would have bid 2H which would have still been the final contract. And you really did play it superbly, Vera. Twins do think the same way, don't they?"

## BOARD 15 DLR S NS VUL

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

"Simon, how would you play A 7 5 3 opposite Q 10 9 8 4?" Wally turns to Simon.

Simon of course won't commit himself before finding out any other information that might help. "In normal circumstances, with only EIGHT cards between the hands, you would have a double finesse position, missing the king and jack. So you'd run the queen then finesse again. But doing that with NINE between you and dummy, you'd look silly if you lost two tricks to the doubleton king jack offside. So I guess the thing to do is to plonk down the ace first, which only loses if both the king and jack are still left sitting over the Q 10. But how had the bidding gone, and what was the lead?"

"No adverse bidding. You have, as declarer, the Q 10 9 8 4 and South, on lead, leads what looks like a singleton," continues Wally.

"Yes, that does make a difference, and I remember the hand now. The best thing to do is no doubt to lead the queen of trumps, which picks up the king with South. PLUS a singleton jack in the North hand for NO losers. And of course if NORTH wins, a diamond return from North does no harm even if South ruffs, since a losing diamond can't be avoided. Is that what you did, Wally?"

"Precisely. But of course I played three rounds of spades first and discarded dummy's two clubs. It seemed safe enough, and as it happens it was. I could even have led the queen of hearts first since South did have the king, but discarding your losers where possible is the FIRST priority, or so I have been taught."

"Yes, that's true you know," Dolly chimes in. "The guy who taught me just said to draw trumps first, and that's not at all what you should do first automatically is it?"

Vera has to have the last word here. "Actually, my teacher gave me an even better priority. He said that before doing anything, the first priority for declarer should be to switch on brain and think out how to play the hand. That's the best advice I've had."

## BOARD 23 DLR S ALL VUL

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

"Talking about priorities, I would have thought that getting to the correct contract would be one. I was absolutely astounded how awful the bidding was on Board 23. We played it last, and West opened 1NT and East raised to 3NT. That was bad enough, since East didn't even bother to find out if they had a heart fit, but at least they ended up in the right spot. Would you believe only one other pair was in 3NT?"

Dolly was absolutely livid. "The other North had led the seven of hearts whereas I knew to lead the king from a holding including the queen and ten as well. Fat lot of good it did us when people are playing in ONE No Trump, TWO No Trumps, Diamond part scores, and Heart and Spade contracts by North South! What is the problem with being able to bid those EW hands to 3NT?"

"Well, we didn't have any problem, and I was the one who made Five when that silly old Agatha Cornbuckle led her fourth best heart. You know, she's been playing for 20 years! No wonder she's still in this grade. Of course playing Acol, I have a perfectly good 1NT opener but I suspect most of the people here would automatically open 1D, in which case North might overcall 1H. East may now have a problem, though 3NT seems an obvious enough bid."

Vera also can't work out how the other pairs failed to get to the obvious contract. "Mind you, I did notice that one East bid and played perfectly: they were in 1NT and made exactly that!" Not like Vera to be facetious.

Wally adds his words of wisdom. "You can see that it's absolutely no use bidding less than you should, just because you have no faith in your play. That score of 90 was still a stone cold zero for that poor East. People should at least learn to bid the easy games like this one. Playing in the correct contract would also improve their play more, in my opinion; you tend to learn more by failing in a difficult contract than just managing to make an easy one."

## BOARD 24 DLR W NIL VUL

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

"Actually, the very next board was also an example of bad bidding as well as play, it seems." Vera had opened the West hand 1S and very quickly landed up in Four. Not only that, she had made Six quite comfortably and been very surprised when it hadn't been a 'flat' board.

She continues her story: "Nothing could have been any easier. North led the king of diamonds, I drew trumps, and led a club towards my king. Later, I played ace, king of hearts and ruffed a third heart. When they broke and dummy's last two hearts were good, I could hardly help but make twelve tricks. I can't understand how others couldn't make Six."

"I can," Dolly has the answer. "By doing what appears to be the obvious. Jerry played it against us in Two, would you believe that dimwitted partner of his raised him to just TWO? Jerry ruffed out the hearts BEFORE playing on clubs. He could either lead clubs from his OWN hand or enter dummy and waste a trump from each hand by so doing, leaving him with a diamond loser. Your play, Vera, was not at all straightforward. Jerry is a good natural player, but had not thought it through. There was no way that the heart suit could provide more than three club discards, so a club needed to be led towards the king anyway. To give yourself the best chance of setting up hearts or clubs, you had to get the timing right. I presume you thought your hand out after putting your brain into gear like your teacher taught you, Vera?"

"Actually, no. I guess I just got lucky, or was it feminine intuition? As for the others' bidding, how did they bid it against you?"

"West opened 1S and I overcalled 2D. East bid 2H and Simon of course should have bid any number of diamonds, but he passed. West did not know what to do and also passed. Boy, East was absolutely livid because his bid was 100% forcing. He was still explaining after the next hand that 2H was what's known as a 'free bid' and opener must bid again no matter how difficult it may be, and what was wrong with bidding her spades again, anyway? When I think about it, my overcall was quite stupid really and we could have ended up in 5D doubled. And that comes to -500 with normal defence. Would you believe I saw someone in 5D NOT doubled, minus 100? They deserved a zero and got a top simply because the opponents did not double what must have been clearly a sacrifice, nor did they defend too well either of course. Bidding 5D may have worked for NS this time but certainly won't when they play in a higher grade. Better to play sensibly from the beginning I would think. Another thought has occurred to me: West might have opened One Club in some cases. That is in fact the correct opening bid if you're playing old fashioned Acol, because opening 1S and rebidding 3C would be equivalent to a Reverse. Now North would have quite a reasonable overcall of 1D and after East's 1H South just might jump to 4D which would be too high for West to introduce the spade suit. But surely that sort of thing is unlikely at our level of play?"

"Well, whatever the case, both these last two boards seem to have been quite badly mishandled, both in the bidding and play," Simon has the final word, "we got lucky because the opponents did not know what a 'free bid' was or that it was forcing, you got lucky because of Vera's great play. Let's have a drink to our respective 70% sessions."

He wasn't quite correct there. Vera and Wally ended up with 61.4% but he and Dolly only managed 57.3%, such are the vagaries of C-Grade bridge. Nevertheless both pairs were in great shape for the final two sessions of the event.

# POST MORTEM

## Part 3

The third session of a four session event in 'C' grade at the club, with Simon and Dolly, and Vera and Wally. Yet again, Simon and Dolly won the cut and played NS and Vera and Wally EW.

With exactly eleven tables, our pairs played two boards against each other. This one was a contest between Vera's good defence and Simon's aggressive bidding.

### BOARD 4 DLR W ALL VUL

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

After three Passes, Simon opened 1S. Vera doubled, for takeout, with her nice shape (Wally thinks so anyway!) but Dolly bid Two No Trumps. Simon and Dolly play 'Truscott' over an intervening double: a single raise is very weak, a double raise is equivalent to a single raise without a double, and a bid of 2NT shows a normal raise to Three of the suit. Dolly upvalued her hand slightly because of her trump support, controls (aces and kings) and doubleton heart. Simon only had 11 HCP but with HIS shape and controls, enough to expect game to make so he bid 4S without further ado. Vera led a club and when Simon led a trump to the ace and tried a diamond, she smartly stepped up with her ace and cashed her club. Making Four and that seemed a fair result. Would the others bid game? After the session they quickly grabbed the board to find that not only had quite a few others bid to 4S but they were the only ones to make only Four. Some Wests had led a diamond, either low, which allowed the king to score, or the ace which allowed a club discard on the king. Vera had hit on the best lead, and Simon and Dolly had to be satisfied with 10/18 match points.

"What a shame we couldn't have played it against one of the other pairs," Simon grumbled, "but at least we got more than 50% on the board despite your defence, Vera."

The Post Mortem now continues, Simon narrating the after play Post Mortem.

## BOARD 10 DLR E ALL VUL

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

"What did you do on Board 10, Wally?" asks Simon.

"Two Hearts making Two, on the most abominable defence you could imagine. South took two top clubs and switched to the jack of diamonds!"

"You're kidding!" Simon can't believe it, "I started the same way but with four trumps in my hand it seemed obvious to keep on with clubs and force declarer to ruff. Declarer tried to get to dummy with the queen of diamonds but Dolly won her king and returned another diamond to my jack. I now led the queen of spades which declarer won in dummy and finally managed to get to take the heart finesse by running the jack. It worked - the first time, but unfortunately for declarer not the second time! I won the queen and continued clubs since all I had left were clubs and hearts, and declarer didn't even make the ace of diamonds! And if you wonder why I enjoyed taking her three down, it was that crabby old Dora Dingleby."

Simon really could be quite a supercilious little sod himself, muses Vera.

"People just don't seem to realise the damage they can do by forcing declarer to ruff in the long hand, especially when they themselves have a few trumps," she chimes in. "On this hand it seems quite obvious, though your duck of the first heart lead was quite brilliant, Simon. A shame more people weren't in hearts. I noticed quite a few people played in 2S by North, making 2 or 3, so if you chose to defend 2H you needed to take it at least two down."

## BOARD 12 DLR W NS VUL

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

"Simon, did you play a hand in 3NT where everyone seemed to be going down even on a spade lead from the K J?" asks Wally.

"Yes, but West didn't lead a spade, yet I made Four!"

"What???" Vera is incredulous, "how on earth?!?"

"Quite simple, really. West led a club to East's ace and East won and returned a spade. I put in the eight and West won and continued clubs. That suit was already an open book anyway, and after finessing clubs as often as necessary, I ran them, and then the diamonds. Since West was showing signs of discomfort and throwing spades away, I played ace and another spade and he had to lead a heart from his king at the end. I could also have thrown him in with a heart to make him lead spades round to my AQ. I can't imagine how declarer can go wrong, on any lead and any defence, as long as they don't go cashing up their diamonds, where the entries are needed to finesse clubs."

Simon took a brief breath and continued. "On the expected spade lead, for instance, the logical play is to run the ten of clubs immediately. This loses to East and East returns a spade which declarer wins, finesses clubs, coming back to hand with a diamond if West covers, then runs off all the tricks that I did, and this time West can be thrown in with a spade for a heart lead round to the queen. Exactly the same result. Did you also notice all the NINE of spades leads? That is not the time to lead your 'fourth highest', surely? The jack is the normal lead from an 'interior sequence', or the ten if you and partner have a specific agreement, but the nine? Awful, surely it will confuse partner?"

"Vera led the jack, and declarer did exactly what you thought. Cashed the diamond suit and got herself terribly tangled up," Wally explains, "just as well for us, if you managed to make Four, Simon, and I can see how it can be done on any lead. It is worth noting that you should not finesse the queen of spades with a suit that can wait, and when East has no higher card to lead through, South should play the eight to give themselves some time. But it's all far too tempting for these people who have just learnt to finesse, isn't it?"

You'd think Wally was an old hand, wouldn't you?

## BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

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

"Have you ever come across the SOS redouble?" Dolly asks no one in particular.

"The what?!?" both Vera and Wally exclaim in unison.

"SOS as in help, rescue," Simon takes up the story. "Dolly and I were browsing through an old bridge book and came across the SOS redouble. It can be a good way to get out of a tight spot if your partner gets doubled in a suit that you have nothing in. Say your partner overcalls and you have a void in that suit and 544 in the others. The opposition double, and you redouble. Since you would normally be quite happy with making a doubled low level contract, the redouble has to be screaming for partner to run. The most common situation I suppose is when partner has overcalled a 1NT opening. Of course the overcaller can also scream for help if it looks ominous. Too bad if the hand that's being asked to bid something else has only one suit. They used to have quite a lot of fun in the old days, with redoubled contracts going down three, or doubled 4-2 fits going down five. And it actually happened to us tonight! Dolly opened this hand 1D, East doubled, I bid 1H and Dolly chose to rebid 2D, having five of them. Personally, I'd have rebid 1NT but then the story wouldn't have been so good. East doubled Dolly's 2D bid and both I and West passed. Dolly looked at her putrid diamonds and REDOUBLED! I was delighted to run to 2S, and that wasn't even doubled. Actually, I wish it had been, as I managed to make Two, which was an OK board but not wonderful since 2NT was making, as well as EW going two or more down Vulnerable. But 2D would certainly not have made. Good bid, eh?"

"Actually, I must say that does appeal to me," Wally is looking quite excited, "they should have done that against us, shouldn't they, Vera? Remember, North opened 1NT playing Acol, and I doubled. They played it there, going down one, but if they had wanted to run, both of them had the opportunity. South could have tried 2C, then if doubled they could try 2D and if doubled, REDOUBLE for rescue! That would have asked North to bid their better MAJOR. And, if after I doubled the 1NT and the hand was passed to North, she could have bid 2D to run from the double, and after my double of 2D, South could have redoubled, knowing full well that North must have at least one three card major to escape in! That sounds like fun, doesn't it. Shall we play the SOS Redouble, Vera?"

"I'll tell you when I can work out what you have been gibbering on about."



### BOARD 18 DLR E NS VUL

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

"Remember the second board you played against us?" Vera asks Simon, "the one you happily bid to game on your excellent fit? There was another one very much like that one later on as well."

"Yes," Simon remembers all the hands he played in game (or so he'd like to think), "but this time there's no way to stop me making five, is there?"

"No, though some declarers managed to hold themselves to nine or ten tricks. There's only one way to play the hearts: run the ten, since West needs to have the queen to avoid two losers in the suit, and two diamond ruffs in dummy should make 11 tricks quite easily. I can't even imagine how declarer could make less. They had no trouble against us, despite Vera's immaculate defence as per usual," Wally can only imagine that the other declarers had merrily kept leading out their trumps before realising that they needed to ruff diamonds.

### BOARD 19 DLR S EW VUL

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

"We had a minor triumph on one board, thanks to the SIMPLE system we play," Dolly is quite chuffed. "I had a perfectly normal Acol 1NT opening but had to open 1D and Simon responded 1H so we ended up in 2H. The NS hands were a complete mirror image, remember? Again there seems to be only one way to play the hand, and Simon made Four easily enough, but the only others to play in hearts made only Three. Simon drew trumps and made sure he could lead up to my K J 10 2 of diamonds twice. The queen needed to be with West and it was. How one declarer made Four No Trumps, and on a club lead to boot, is a total mystery to me, though."

"That wasn't against us, but the result for us was not much worse," moans Wally, "I led a club and declarer finessed the hearts by first leading the queen which I covered, and then led diamonds twice from dummy, finessing the ten first. All we could make were three clubs and a diamond. You wouldn't believe the terrible play there must have been to make fewer than nine tricks in No Trumps, in fact there are ten on any lead but a club!"

## BOARD 21 DLR N NS VUL

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

"We actually had another success with the SIMPLE system on the hand where I had 4-4 in the majors and a 14 count, and most Acol players would open 1NT," Dolly continues. "I opened 1H and Simon responded 1S which I raised to Two. Simon, with 10 HCP and good controls, invited game with 3S and I had no problem going to game. Only one other pair were in game and they went two down. Not Simon, though. He made sure he got two club ruffs BEFORE drawing trumps. Admittedly we were lucky when the hearts broke 3-3 but his careful play deserved a top, don't you think?"

"Can't East stop him by leading a trump at trick one?"

"No, Wally, even ace and another spade allows two club ruffs and because the hearts break, declarer can eventually ruff a diamond back to hand to draw the last trump and then take the thirteenth heart."

This time, Dolly has all the answers.

With all those answers, Dolly and Simon have had an excellent session, 64.4%, but Vera and Wally have faded a little, with 54.7%. Next week's final session will certainly be very interesting indeed.

# POST MORTEM

## Part 4

The final week of the event and as usual our two pairs have decided to start at the same table. This week, finally, Vera and Wally have won the cut and Vera is South and Wally North, with Simon West and Dolly East. Our Post Mortem starts with the 'head to head' clash between the two pairs. They both have every chance of doing well against the other pairs but sometimes when both pairs are in the running, a top board to either pair against the other can make a difference overall of 8%. As both are in the running, the two hands played against each other can be decisive.

The first board they play is quite boring and likely to be flat; an easy 4H to bid and make for NS. Both pairs breathe a sigh of relief, though Vera and Wally need to make up a bit of ground. This is the second hand:

### BOARD 10 DLR E ALL VUL

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

After two passes, Simon opens 2NT. This shows 20-22 points and a balanced hand. Dolly bids 3C and Simon alerts this. Vera doesn't ask, since she neither needs to know at this stage, nor does she want Dolly to hear what Simon's explanation is. Simon bids 3H and Dolly raises to 4H.

Wally, on lead, now asks the question and Simon explains that 3C is 'Baron' and asks him to bid his four card suits 'up the line'. This allows them to find a fit if they have one. Despite Dolly's awful hearts (Wally is quite hopeful!) she decides to play game in their 4-4 major fit. That is what she has learnt and she sees no reason to do otherwise.

Wally considers his lead options and decides on the nine of spades. While some people like to lead 'MUD' (Middle-Up-Down) with such a holding, Wally does not want Vera to be confused so prefers the nine, 'top of nothing'. This works out very well: Simon covers in dummy with the jack, but Vera produces the king and Simon has to win the ace. The hand hasn't started well for him. He would like to be able to lead up towards his KQ in trumps but entries to dummy are few. He also knows that whoever wins the next trick will persist with spades and he will have a spade loser as well as probably two hearts and a diamond. He decides to try his best anyway, and leads the three of diamonds immediately. Wally realises that if he wins the ace, Simon will be able to discard a spade on the king after cashing the queen, so he has to let the queen win and provide Simon with an entry. Wally smiles to himself as he knows the AJ of trumps are badly placed for Simon, who plays a heart to his king and Wally's ace. A further spade now sets up a spade trick for the defence, but after cashing his top trump, Simon plays on clubs and when they break 3-3, he sighs with relief and leads the fourth, discarding his losing spade. Wally can ruff with his top trump or not, he only makes his jack once and Simon is able to come to ten tricks with a diamond ruff in dummy and spade ruff in hand.

At the end of the session, that is the first hand the two pairs look at. Vera is quite sure that despite Wally's great lead the board will be a bad one for them.

Simon takes up the story.

"Just as I thought!" Vera is not impressed, "a second to top for you guys. I just knew that the other pairs would neither bid 4H nor make it if they did, and that those in 3NT would probably go down or be kept to Three. 3NT could of course either go down on a spade lead or just make, but I can't understand why people went down on a diamond lead. There's absolutely no point in 'second hand low' since the only chance of a second possible stop is by going up with the queen and playing North for the ace. When the queen holds, declarer also is able to lead hearts towards the honours, and with North having all the vital cards, South can't get in to lead another diamond. But why can't they find their 4-4 fit?"

"Maybe they haven't learnt about finding it after a 2NT opener. Most people know to play Stayman after One No Trump, but when partner opens 2NT they don't know what to do. We of course don't play Stayman at all since we play SIMPLE and open a suit and never 1NT, but over 2NT, Baron is a very simple convention to allow one to find a fit in any suit. Much better our way don't you think? But then I suppose you had all top boards apart from that one anyway, Vera?"

"Of course!" Wally butts in, "didn't you?"

### BOARD 12 DLR W NS VUL

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

"As a matter of fact, we had some absolutely awful things happen to us," replies Simon, "like Board 12. I couldn't believe how someone could play a hand so badly and get such a good result. Not to mention the bidding! South opened 1C in fourth seat, I bid 1S, North bid 2H, Dolly bid 2S and South bid 2NT!! North raised to 3NT! It was all too much for me, but I led my king of spades anyway, with great hopes of course."

"Surely 3NT is impossible, so how could you have got a bad board?" Wally sounds puzzled.

"Not to that dithery old goat it wasn't impossible," Simon sounds really peeved. "He ducked twice and won the third spade and led a diamond and played the seven from dummy. Dolly won the jack and had no choice but to lead another. Mr. Dithery won the ace in dummy and then led the jack of hearts! His only real chance with that holding is to lead low to the queen and then play the ace to drop a doubleton king, but Dithery doesn't know any better. Dolly of course had to cover. Winning the ace, he now led a club to the king and led yet another silly high card from dummy, the nine of hearts. Look what happens if Dolly covers. My eight drops and declarer runs the hearts. So Dolly didn't cover. Had the old goat now cleared hearts, he would have had to return with the king of clubs and end up leading a diamond from dummy to me, but he cashed the king of clubs first and then played the jack which he allowed to run! Now a heart to hand and he played on clubs. Neither he nor Dolly had any other suit left, so he had to make four club tricks no matter how he played them! But would you believe that someone else actually made Five on the same lead??"

"Some poor East probably didn't cover the jack of hearts and when they realised they should have done so, decided to get it right next time and covered the jack of clubs," Vera has the answer, "there's always a right and a wrong time to do these things. Clearly it can do no good not to cover the jack of hearts, but to cover the jack of CLUBS is surely wrong when there are only two clubs in dummy and the finesse cannot be repeated. Yes, not covering the heart jack but covering the club jack does add up to eleven tricks. Ridiculous!"

## BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL

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

"You know, it's not just the bigger hands that you can pick up a lot of Match Points on. Or lose them as well, as it was in our case," Simon is talking about Board 13 (lucky for some but not others!). "Most people played that board in One Heart but....there were enough others muddling around in other contracts and going down one for 100 to EW since everyone was vulnerable. No big deal you say? Well, you know I don't believe in letting opponents play in a low level contract if I can bid something, so when 1H was passed to me, I bid 1S. And made it, but that was only worth 80. We actually got 8/20 match points for that."

Wally is sympathetic. "I must say that was very unfortunate. Normally any plus score would be worth lots of Match Points and your bid was very imaginative. In the old days they used to play a bid of 1NT to 'protect' with when the bidding had gone one something, pass, pass. This showed 10-12 points. These days of course people aren't subtle enough and would expect you to have about a sixteen count! I suppose you could have Doubled but you wouldn't expect a 1S overcall to come to any harm would you? And of course those others in 2H, 2NT or 3C going one down shouldn't have been there, nor should those in 2H have gone down, but such are the vagaries of bridge in the C-Grade. But don't give up Simon, the next time you'll score a top for such adventurous and imaginative bidding."

**BOARD 16 DLR N EW VUL**

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

"It's certainly easier to pretty well guarantee a decent board if you have the big hands. Remember the slam that no one bid NS?" Wally is in full flight. "I should have bid it but decided not to. Being prepared to take my chances in game, I opened 2C which we play as near enough to game forcing. Vera responded 2NT and I was about to bid 6C because I am used to a positive response guaranteeing at least an 'ace and a king' and not just 7+ HCP, but remembered that Vera had been brought up on SIMPLE bridge and may have any balanced 8 or 9 count."

Scarcely stopping for a breath, he continues: "So I did the next most sensible thing and bid 3NT, with nine running tricks almost a sure thing if Vera has a balanced hand. I knew half the field would probably be in clubs and some not even in game, and that proved to be the case. Even though West found the diamond lead Vera took ten tricks which scored an equal top with just two others. Bidding the slam of course would have been worth a clear top but who needs to, as long as you realise that ten tricks in No Trumps scores more than twelve in clubs. You have to bid to twelve tricks in a minor to do better. This hand is also a good illustration of why you should bid the slam most likely to make and not the one that scores the most. It's somewhat of a paradox, I suppose, that you should bid GAME in NO TRUMPS, but the SLAM in CLUBS! Yet it happens quite often at higher levels of play I believe. One of my mates in the A-Grade reckons that the slam bidding there is quite atrocious and a hand like this is quite likely to be played in Three No Trumps most of the time, 6C by a few good pairs, and 6NT by a number of very inept bidders who have the 6NT syndrome, as he calls it. "

**BOARD 20 DLR W ALL VUL**

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

"There was another hand that might have been played in a minor suit or in No Trumps, remember it?" Dolly had expected it to be a good board for them, because playing SIMPLE they had avoided the pitfalls of a Weak 1NT opening.

"Simon actually opened this hand 1S. Imagine what could have happened to us if he had opened 1NT and North Doubled? Mind you, had North doubled 1S and South passed, we probably would have gone for 800 anyway, but clearly there is a lot to learn about competitive bidding. Our particular North overcalled 2C and South screwed up his face and bid 2D. North now bid 2H, South 2NT and North 3NT. Simon did his best by leading the queen of clubs but our poker faced declarer managed to actually run his nine top tricks."

It was Dolly's turn to be sarcastic, but the result had clearly not been what she had expected.

"And what do you think we would have scored on that board? You'd expect 800's all over the place, plus at least a few 630's. But no, one NS pair in 3NT Doubled making Four, two Wests in 1NT UNDOUBLED down three, and the rest of them in all sorts of part scores! Now why can't they do what the books recommend when an opponent opens a weak 1NT? Double with 15+ HCP. East may or may not bid 2C to run from the potential disaster, only to run into another Double and this should also go for 800. I think we were sitting the wrong way tonight, Simon!"

Simon agrees: "Yes, Dolly, that's true, but at least we got to bid the SIMPLEST slam imaginable, didn't we?"

**BOARD 24 DLR W NIL VUL**

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

"The 6D one? With fourteen top tricks, and even more in diamonds?" Wally joins in the sarcasm, "it clearly was a very difficult hand for all but you two, since there was only one slam bid. But you only bid it in diamonds, and despite the sixteen tricks (on a squeeze) in diamonds, you still only get one overtrick. Lucky someone else didn't bid 6NT. And isn't your SIMPLE bidding sophisticated enough to find the grand?"

Simon has the last word: "Not quite. I opened 2D, Dolly responded 2H and over my 3C she bid 3D. I managed to find out from a series of very complicated relays that she held the ace and king of hearts plus three clubs to the jack, but couldn't find out about the QUEEN of clubs and wasn't willing to risk the grand slam which, without the jack of clubs also would have required no worse than a 5-2 break in hearts and/or a double squeeze."

Simon winked and subtly gestured towards the next table where the haughty old Dora Dingleby stood with eyes and mouth wide open. They burst out in side-splitting laughter in unison. They had no idea what Simon was talking about and knew that he didn't either, but Dora would be left wondering for the next week at least.