

# 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

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

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.