

## Tales of Akarana - Hope Springs Eternal



The emotions one can through during the 7 or so minutes you play a hand of bridge can be quite contrasting. You can start off with dreams of gold, a nicely shapely hand with an almost solid suit...and just for once, your partner did not open your void suit. Full steam ahead towards some form of slam.

You hold

♠ -  
♥ KT3  
♦ 843  
♣ AKQ7532

You hear partner open 1♦. After righty's pass, you bid 2♣ and then notice your left hand opponent is about to bid. No stop card produced....no jump in spades...indeed, no spade bid at all! "2♥."

That was not just a surprise but a bit of party pooper. Your hand started to get worse. Your partner had nothing to say with the bidding back round to you. No slam to be bid yet..if at all. You force the auction a little with 3♥, with the only good news coming from partner's 3♠ response being that when you subside in 3NT, you know that partner has four spade cards... ♠Jxxx? No partner would be that mean. Anyway, you can produce nearly 9 tricks in your own hand. So, no cause to be despondent yet. East leads the ♥Q and it does not look that you will be that hard-pressed to make 9 tricks....unless...

### Board 23

South Deals  
Both Vul

♠ —  
♥ K 10 3  
♦ 8 4 3  
♣ A K Q 7 5 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

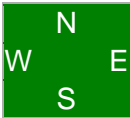
♠ A Q J 7  
♥ 7 5 2  
♦ A K 10 5  
♣ 6 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1♦
Pass	2♣	2♥	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All pass	

those clubs broke 4-0. You win with your king and try a top club. East plays a small diamond. So much for slam. So much for your strong suit. At least you can make three club tricks! How's game looking? Chances seem bleak. So, a diamond to the 10 and to your surprise, that wins the trick. Back to your high club with East now discarding a spade. You will not be in your hand again...so cash the ♣Q and to your surprise, East discards a heart.

Do you think they would allow you to put a low club on the table and call it a low spade to enable you to take a finesse? Doubtful! Anyway, if you can bring home the diamond suit for 4 tricks, you are home now. So a diamond to dummy with West discarding a spade. (They could have tortured you by throwing their club!). There was nothing left but to cash the other high diamond and exit your last diamond to East... and await thy fate. Finally, the gloom that had descended since East's 2♥ call started to clear:

**Board 23**  
 South Deals  
 Both Vul

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

West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	2 ♣	2 ♥	Pass
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

East could cash their three remaining hearts but in the two card ending, both East and South had two spades left...and East did what you could not do yourself...enabled you to take a spade finesse. 9 tricks. No grand slam, no small slam....but game bid and made.

Say East discarded a diamond and two spades on the top clubs? Then, declarer's only hope is to cash the ♠A when in dummy as declarer knows East is 3550 shape. Either East's remaining spade is the king...or it is not!

Never ever give up when playing this game. It is not as though "the fat lady was singing". I thought I had learnt that lesson by now.

*Richard Solomon*