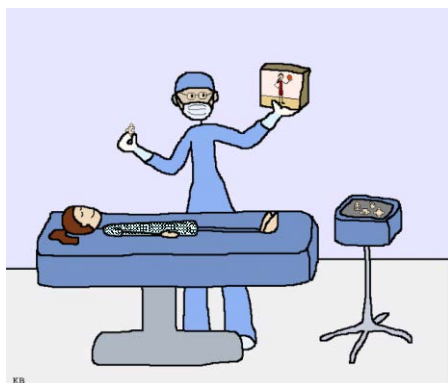


## TALES OF AKARANA

### “A Very Successful Operation....”



And you know what happened to the patient! Why? The preparation (the bidding) had gone perfectly. On a part-score deal, the opposition were heading for either -200 or -500, certain imps in. Let the tale begin:

When one makes a risky bid, one must sometimes pay. I have worked for years on a theory that with roughly my share of the 40 hcp and 9 cards in the majors, that it is worth disturbing a weak 1NT opening. Would it be a crime to show your 2 suits thus with:

♠ AJ853 ♥ A863 ♦9 ♣932

With a 4 card major opposite, you should be fine, happy to turn down any invitation, relying on partner's skill or good fortune if he bids to a dubious game. Even a 3 card major opposite should be playable. There were only two problems at Akarana this week. One was the vulnerability, adverse, and the other was that the above was not quite the hand held which looked like:

♠ AJ853 ♥ 9863 ♦9 ♣ A32.

You, or I, was not in the pass-out seat. The fight for a part-score soon became a battle for survival!

West	North	East	South
2♣ <sup>1</sup>	x	2♥	1NT
All Pass			X

<sup>1</sup> both majors

The first double showed values and the second where opener's values were...hearts! Caught. Operation Successful. Yet, the patient (East-West) in true mixed metaphor style "lived to tell the tale". Why?

<b>Board 3</b>	♠ K Q 4	
South Deals	♥ 10 2	
E-W Vul	♦ K J 5 4 3	
	♣ Q 10 6	
♠ A J 8 5 3		♠ 9 7
♥ 9 8 6 3		♥ A J 7
♦ 9		♦ Q 10 8 6 2
♣ A 3 2		♣ J 9 8
	♠ 10 6 2	
	♥ K Q 5 4	
	♦ A 7	
	♣ K 7 5 4	

The club suit on the above deal is one North-South can afford to touch once and once only. South started with the ♦A and switched to a low club. So far so so but nothing really bad. North won with their queen and returned the suit.

I feel "the card dealer" rarely rewards wrong play or defence...and this was a classic example. Not only did North-South get diverted from what they should be doing but East was able to play clubs for just one loser. Declarer gave up a spade trick and a third club was played. A diamond ruff was followed by a spade ruff and a second attempted diamond ruff. South ruffed high and played a trump but it was too late. The defence managed a trick in each side suit and two in trumps. Not enough...-670.

Lead a trump..any trump..and if you do not lead a trump switch to a trump, any trump, quickly. The above auction cries out for a trump lead whether doubled or not. The lead of the ♦A was wrong in that that was South's entry to play a third round of trumps should East cut trump communications successfully by ducking the ♥K lead at trick one.

Yes, you can lead that aggressive card and still beat the contract by a minimum one trick, maybe two. The heart trick you sacrifice comes back in the shape of a second spade trick. Meanwhile, while declarer tries to set up spades, a couple of rounds of diamonds could reduce West's trump length or cost declarer a second diamond trick. There are numerous possibilities but they all point to the contract being defeated, even an initial low trump lead from South.

I feel a little regretful in writing the above as I will have to be more circumspect in future about bidding on this hand at this vulnerability again. I promised partner I would.....or at least, I think I did. Maybe I did not? Selective memory? 😊