♦ ♥ ♦ ♣ THE MAGIC OF VOIDS ♦ ♥ ♦ ♣

North dealt and opened $1 \clubsuit$. East overcalled $1 \diamondsuit$, and this is your hand:



It's hard to believe that your RHO holds 5 spades and you have him beat – with 6 spades. You'd like to double, but your partner would surely take you out, if LHO didn't beat him to it.

You have only 7 HCP, of which the \blacklozenge J will certainly be useless. Should you pass, double or bid? A negative double would imply 4 Hearts. But since you have five Hearts, you can just bid 2 \heartsuit .

Wests passes and your partner raise you to $3 \clubsuit$. That makes your hand a whole lot better. Now that you have a fit, you can use Losing Trick Count. Your LTC is 6; 2 in each of your 3 suits. Your partner's opening hand usually has an LTC of 7 or 8. Your combined LTC is 13 or 14. Subtracting from 24, you are left with 10 or 11 winners. Certainly enough for a $4 \clubsuit$ contract.

How could a hand with only 7 HCP have a LTC of 6? That's better than a normal opening hand. The answer is the void in Clubs. Voids are magic to bridge hands.

The opponents remain silent and West leads the $\blacklozenge 10$ against your 4 \heartsuit contract. How do you plan to make your contract?

♠ J7	
V A74	
♦ 862	
📥 AK643	
ad: •Q	
S South	
♠ K109842	
💙 K8652	
◆ J3	
*	

West's Lead: •Q

How many losers do you have? Almost too many to count. If Hearts break in the expected 3-2, you have a Heart loser; 2 diamond losers; and some number of Spade losers. Maybe there is a better way of looking at this hand.

You were fortunate to get a non-Diamond lead. You can immediately discard the 2 losing Diamonds on the AK. Also, you know that West is void in Spades, since East overcalled Spades and your side has 8 of them. And you know exactly which Spades East holds, the AQ653.

The order of play is to first discard the two Diamonds. Next take four of the opponents 5 trump, leaving the master trump outstanding. First play the \clubsuit K and then the \clubsuit A. While in the dummy lead a Spade toward your hand. East will rise with the \clubsuit A and seeing West disgard, will return a Spade for his partner to ruff.

West will lead a Diamond back, which you will ruff. You'll cash your \clubsuit K and give up a Spade to East. However, the rest of your spades are higher than East's and you end up losing only 2 Spades a 1 Heart.

Could East have found the killing initial lead of a Diamond? It's not obvious. His Club suit was headed by the AQJ, which appears much safer than leading away from the K.

This is the entire deal:

D	 N North ▲ J7 ♥ A74 ♦ 862 ♣ AK643 	W P P	N 1♣ 3♥ P	E 1≜ P P	S 2♥ 4♥
 W West ▲ ✓ 1093 ♦ K109754 ♣ QJ92 		♦ ♦ ♥ (0 ♦ ₽			
	S South ♠ K109842 ♥ K8652 ♦ J3 ♣	4 ▼ S		NS: 0) EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <u>https://tinyurl.com/yffmj2gh</u>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.

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