

THE SEARCH FOR THE KINGS

In this hand you are South and West is the dealer. You hear three passes and you open 1♠. West doubles and your partner responds 2NT. East passes and its back to you.

South
 ♠QJ1087
 ♥1054
 ♦AK6
 ♣Q2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2NT	Pass	??

You have the bearest of openings but if you pass out the hand you know you will get a bad score. Most others would open this and at least make a part score in spades. After all, spades is the master suit and it is easy to top the opponents without going to the next level.

West doubled even though he failed to open. So, you know he has less than 12 points, as well as shortness in spades and tolerance for the other three suits.

Partner's 2NT is a conventional raise in spades. The convention is called Jordan. When the responder bids 2NT over a double of one of a suit, he is showing 9-11 points and support for his partner's suit. He is inviting to game. Without support he would re-double with this strength.

So it's your turn and you can either rebid 3♠, thereby refusing the invitation or raise to 4♠. If there ever was a hand that rate a game refusal, this is it. You don't know where the two top spades are and you have 3 little hearts in a suit that West has "bid" with his double. You should re-bid 3♠ and pray that partner passes.

North does pass your 3♠ and that becomes the final contract. West leads the ♥A and dummy comes down:

	North	
	♠A954	
	♥J93	
	♦Q4	
	♣A1064	
West		East
♥A		
	South	
	♠QJ1087	
	♥1054	
	♦AK6	
	♣Q2	

Your dummy is no better than you expected. The contract will be tricky, but if you think it through, you can solve its several pitfalls.

West follows the ♥A with the ♥KQ. Everyone follows suit. For his fourth trick, he lays down the ♦J. How will you make this contract?

It's always a good idea to count the two hands when the opponents have bid. You have 12 HCP and partner has 11. That's 23 and West doubled after passing initially. That means he cannot have over 11 HCP and he has already shown 10 by his first four leads. That means that the ♠K and the ♣K must be in the East and therefore, not able to be finessed.

You've already lost 3 hearts. Losing to the spade and club kings will result in down 1. Time for an endplay. If you can manage to put East in the lead, he will have to either lead away from his other king or give you a ruff and sluff. How can you do it?

This is the complete board. See if you can engineer an endplay.

♠ 8	N North	♠ A954	W	N	E	S
		♥ J93	P	P	P	1♠
W West	S South	♦ Q4	X	2NT	P	3♠
		♣ A1064	P	P	P	
♠ 62	E East	♥ AKQ7	♠ K3	♥ 862		
		♦ J1087	♥ 862	♦ 9532		
♦ J75	S South	♣ J75	♣ K983			
		♠ QJ1087				
		♥ 1054				
		♦ AK6				
		♣ Q2				
			3♠ S	NS: 0 EW: 0		

Win the fourth trick with dummy's ♦Q and play the ♠A. A spade finesse against West is futile. When both follow, assume that both hold one more spade; East holding the ♠K. Now take the ♦AK, discarding a club on the third diamond. It's now time to put East in by leading the ♠Q. East is endplayed. He can only lead a club or a diamond. If he leads a club, you will win the ♣Q and take the rest of the tricks with the spades. If he decides to lead his remaining diamond, you will discard a club from your hand and trump in the dummy. You still have all the remaining tricks.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/l83vu85> . Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.