IMAGINATIVE CARDPLAY

PART III: SNARES AND SWINDLES

TERENCE REESE & ROGER TRÉZEL

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INTRODUCTION

The play of the cards at bridge is a big subject, capable of filling many large books. In the 1970s, Roger Trézel, the great French player and writer, had the idea of breaking up the game into several small books, each dealing with one of the standard forms of technique. He judged, quite rightly as it turned out, that this scheme would appeal both to comparative beginners, who would be able to learn the game by stages, and to experienced players wishing to extend their knowledge of a particular branch of play.

The English version was prepared in collaboration with Terence Reese, and appeared in eight small volumes. This new edition, updated and revised for the modern player, presents the eight original booklets as two larger compendiums, entitled *Accurate Cardplay* and *Imaginative Cardplay*.

PART III

SNARES AND SWINDLES

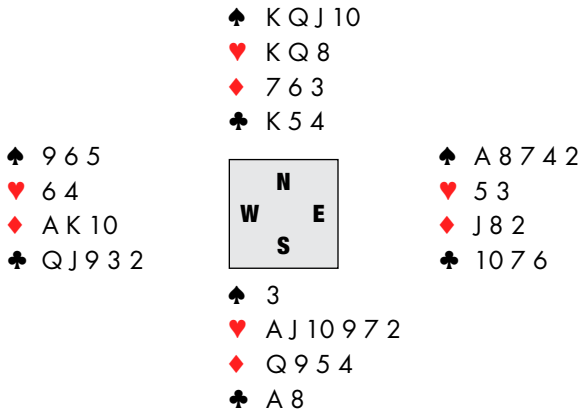
Deceptive plays belong to a class of their own, because of the personal and psychological element. A perfect elimination or squeeze play will be as effective against a world champion as against the opponent in your next rubber, but the success of a deceptive play may seem to depend on a variety of circumstances, such as the smoothness with which it is performed and the quality of the player whom you seek to deceive. To some extent that is true, but there is, nevertheless, a technique to be learned. Your opponent, if an experienced player, may *suspect* that you are using one of the standard forms of deception; but he may not be sure, for the essence of a good deceptive play is that the card might be genuine, or it might be a trap. Moreover, as will appear from the examples that follow, there are numerous situations where a particular card *must* be played to give the opponent a guess.

To be adept in this form of play, therefore, it is not necessary to be a master of psychology or to play against 'simple' opponents. Many plays are more effective against a strong opponent than a weak one, who will not even see the trap. If you possess a good repertoire of snares and swindles, they will win you a great number of tricks, and one day you may have the satisfaction of bringing off a deceptive play that is not even 'in the book'.

Part I: Deception in attack

EXAMPLE 1

Are you ready to plunge in at the deep end? Then here is an attractive play that is quite easy to perform but which would scarcely occur to a player who had not seen something like it before.



After a pass by West, North opens 1♣ and rebids 1NT over South's 1♥ response. South bids 4♥, the final contract.

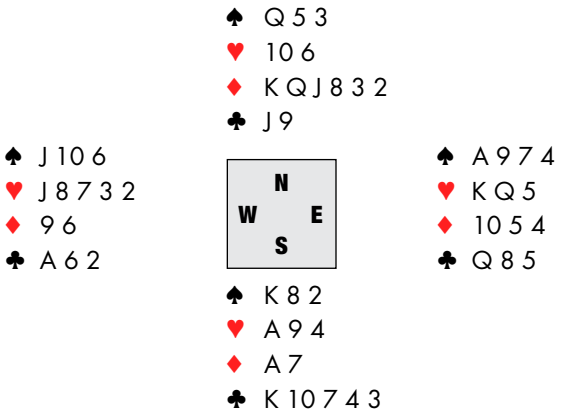
West leads the ace of diamonds, on which his partner plays the two. West switches to the queen of clubs. Having taken this trick, how do you avoid the loss of a spade and two more diamonds?

You can do nothing! You have missed your chance. As West had passed originally and was already marked with the ace-king of diamonds and, probably, queen-jack of clubs, you could be sure that East would hold the ace of spades and would fire a diamond through the queen as soon as he gained the lead. It was essential, therefore, to lay a trap for West.

On the queen of clubs you play low from both hands. Unless West is extremely smart (and knows that you are, too), he will continue with another club. Now you win with the ace, draw two rounds of trumps; finishing in dummy, and discard the three of spades on the king of clubs. Then you ruff out the ace of spades, return to dummy with a third round of trumps, and discard your diamond losers on the established spades.

EXAMPLE 2

The deception illustrated below has been around for many years. Indeed, you may find something like it in Culbertson's *Contract Bridge Red Book on Play*, published in the early 1930s. Judging by the standards of modern defense, it is possible to pick holes in the play. But that does not affect the value of the example. In less obvious form the deception is still capable of winning many contracts.



South opens 1♣, North responds 1♦, and South bids 1NT. North would be wise simply to bid 2♦ perhaps, but instead he advances to 2NT, and South goes to 3NT.

West leads the three of hearts, and East plays the queen. Technically, South should hold up the ace until the third round, for if hearts are 5-3 and East holds both black aces, there are genuine chances to make the contract. However, South may reasonably decide that his best chance lies in deceptive play. Not wanting to make it obvious to both defenders that he is wide open in hearts, he captures the first trick, lays down the ace of diamonds, and then leads the king of spades.

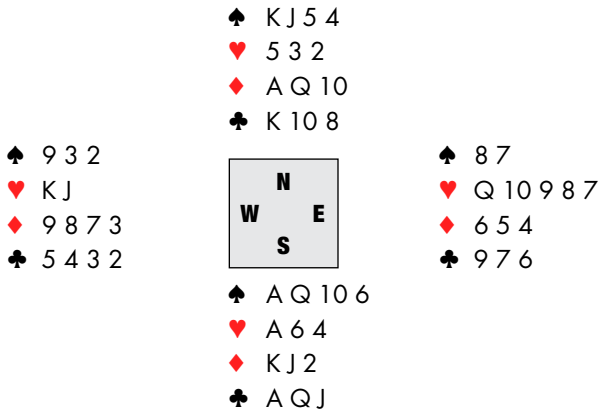
Thinking that declarer is seeking to establish an entry to the table, East lets the king of spades hold. With eight tricks in the bag, South next leads the king of clubs. West, falling into the same trap as his partner, declines to part with the ace lest this establish the jack of clubs as an entry card for the diamonds. South then runs for home.

As we said, it is easy to criticize the defense. Good players are careful to signal when declarer plays on a long suit held by dummy. Thus, West had a chance to show an even number of diamonds by dropping the nine on the first round, and East's play of the four should have indicated an odd number. Furthermore, West should have realized that South could not hold the king of spades, ace-king of hearts, the ace of diamonds, and king-queen of clubs for this auction.

Nevertheless, there are many occasions when this type of play by declarer is less easy to read. Note, in particular, the lead of the king of clubs. When dummy has a suit such as Jxxxx and declarer holds Kxx or Kx, it is surprising how often the king will be allowed to hold.

EXAMPLE 3

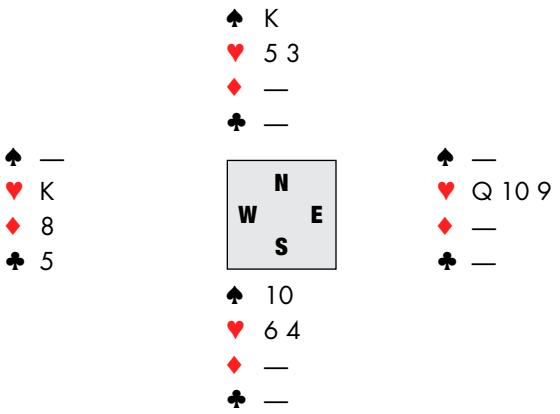
Many deceptive plays depend for success on the timing and manner of their execution. Do not misunderstand this remark. We are not suggesting that the critical card should be played with unusual speed or emphasis or any other form of legerdemain: simply that its role should not be apparent.



South plays in 6♠, and West leads the nine of diamonds.

Even if you have not studied elimination play (covered in *Accurate Cardplay*), you will probably realize that declarer's only chance to avoid the loss of two heart tricks is to create a situation

in which a defender is forced to concede a ruff-and-discard. In short, South must aim at this end position:

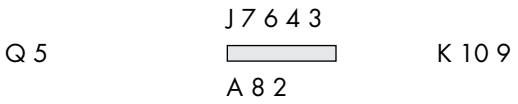


The next round of hearts is won by West, who is obliged to lead one of the minor suits, permitting South to dispose of his second loser in hearts.

But this plan has an obvious weakness: if declarer draws trumps, cashes the winning diamonds and clubs, then lays down the ace of hearts, West, if not completely asleep, will drop his king of hearts under the ace.

To make this defense as difficult as possible South should play a heart to the ace at Trick 2. A first-class player in West's position might still drop the king — but at least you will have made it more difficult for him.

This type of play is made with many, less obvious combinations. For example, a side suit is divided in this way:



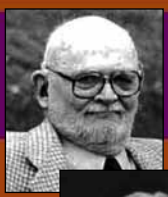
If South plays off the ace towards the end of the play, having eliminated the other suits, West may realize that to win two tricks in the suit he must unblock the queen; but if declarer lays down the ace at an early stage, the defense is not easy to find.

INTERMEDIATE

Learn from the Masters

In the 1970s, two of the best bridge writers of all time collaborated on a series of eight small books on a number of aspects of cardplay at bridge. These books have long been out of print, and are republished now in two combined volumes, edited and updated by BRIDGE magazine editor Mark Horton.

Imaginative Cardplay is the second of these two books, and comprises the following titles from the original series: *Those Extra Chances in Bridge*; *Master the Odds in Bridge*; *Snares and Swindles in Bridge*; and *The Art of Defense in Bridge*.



TERENCE REESE (1913-1996, UK) was a world champion and one of the best-ever writers on the game. His *Reese on Play* and *The Expert Game* are classics of bridge literature.

ROGER TRÉZEL (1918-1986, France) was a multiple world champion. His partnership with Pierre Jaïs is regarded as one of the greatest in the history of the game.

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