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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch 11th September 2010

Both vulnerable. South deals.

	NORTH ♠ 10 5 2 ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ K 9 6 ♣ 7 3 2	
WEST ♠ K J 9 7 3 ♥ 7 4 ♦ Q 5 ♣ J 9 8 5		EAST ♠ Q 8 6 ♥ K 6 5 3 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ Q 10 6
	SOUTH ♠ A 4 ♥ Q 10 8 ♦ A J 8 4 3 ♣ A K 4	

South	West	North	East
1 Diamond	Pass	1 Heart	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♠

Every simple finesse has exactly the same chance of success — 50 percent. That does not mean that, given a choice, it makes no difference which you take! To illustrate the point, consider this deal.

Even playing a 16-18 point one no trump opening, the fifth diamond makes this hand a whit too strong for such action. South showed a balanced 19-20 points with his rebid, and North had an easy raise to game.

West led a low spade, and declarer allowed East's queen to win just in case West had led from a six-card suit. After winning the eight of spades with the ace, declarer realized that letting the opponents gain the lead again would be fatal, since the opponents had enough spade tricks to defeat the contract. To get home, declarer would need a red-suit finesse to succeed. Which suit should South tackle?

The answer is both suits, but only one with a finesse! The other offers a significant extra chance, which must not be overlooked. The heart finesse is the one that South intended taking, but first declarer should cash the ace and king of diamonds, his longer combined holding. When her majesty appears on the scene, declarer has nine tricks without any finesse — one spade, one heart, five diamonds and two clubs.

Had the queen of diamonds not been singly guarded, declarer would switch to the heart finesse and still make his contract if that finesse were successful. It's like having your cake and eating it too.

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