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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

28th June 2011

Dealer : North Vul : E-W	NORTH ♠ A K 6 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 9 7 6 3 ♣ A K 8	
WEST ♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ A Q 10 6 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ J 6		EAST ♠ Q 10 3 2 ♥ K J 9 8 4 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ 5
	SOUTH ♠ 9 5 ♥ 2 ♦ A K 4 ♣ Q 10 9 7 4 3 2	

South	West	North	East
--	--	1 Diamond	Pass
2 Club	Pass	3 Club	Pass
5 Cub	All Pass		

Opening lead: Four of ♠

Ask anyone who knows bridge to name the all-time greatest woman player, and almost all will name a Broadway chorus girl, Helen Sobel Smith, who became Charles Goren's favorite partner. At one tournament, their table was surrounded by kibitzers. One turned to Helen and asked, "What does it feel like to play with one of the world's great players?" "I don't know," shot back Helen, "ask him!"

Here she is at work on a hand from a national pairs championship. The auction would probably be duplicated today except that a few pairs might stray into three no trump since it has become unfashionable to declare five of a minor suit. It might seem that declarer must lose a trick in each red suit, but Helen had other ideas. West's spade lead was ducked in dummy (!) and East won with the queen. At the very worst, declarer was simply exchanging loser for loser, since a red-suit card would be discarded from the closed hand on a high spade. However, East had no idea which red suit to attack, and declarer was banking on it being a diamond.

That was indeed East's choice. Declarer won in hand, drew trumps in two rounds and then cashed the remaining diamond honor. A spade to the king was followed by the ace of spades, declarer discarding her losing diamond. Next, a diamond was ruffed and, when the suit broke evenly, declarer's plan reaped a rich reward. There was a good diamond on the table and a trump to provide the entry. Declarer's heart loser went away on the 13th diamond, and the contract came home with an overtrick for a clear top!

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