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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

19th April 2011

Dealer : East Vul : Neither	NORTH ♠ J 10 8 7 2 ♥ 10 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ K Q J 7	
WEST ♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ K 5 3 2 ♦ K 8 5 3 ♣ 2		EAST ♠ 9 6 ♥ 7 6 4 ♦ J 10 6 4 2 ♣ 9 8 5
	SOUTH ♠ K 3 ♥ A Q J 9 8 ♦ 7 ♣ A 10 6 4 3	

East	South	West	North
Pass	1 Heart	Pass	1 Spade
Pass	2 Club	Pass	3 NT
Pass	4 Club	Pass	4 Diamond
Pass	4 Spade	Pass	6 Club
All Pass			

Opening lead: Two of ♣

The Great Detective and his amanuensis Dr. Watson had returned to 221B Baker St. after an evening of bridge at the club. They lit their pipes and sat down in their wing chairs, reflecting on some of the evening's hands.

"I liked your four-spade cue-bid on the last deal," remarked Watson. "It made it easy for me to contract for the small slam. But, my dear fellow, I cannot for the life of me understand why you elected to play West for both red kings and the ace queen of spades. Surely it was against the odds for one defender to have all the missing wealth."

For a moment a hint of a smile might have been observed on Holmes' lips. "Yes, it is unlikely to find one defender with so much stuff, but by trick two the whole hand was an open book!

"If you remember, West led a low trump. I won in dummy and continued with a trump to my ace, on which West discarded a diamond. That was all I needed to know. Consider for a moment. To lead a singleton trump against a slam is a very risky proposition – it could very easily surrender a key trick and the slam. The only reason a defender might have for such a risky maneuver was that everything else looked worse!

"With that to guide me, I proceeded to take the diamond finesse, then discarded a spade on the ace of diamonds. After drawing the remaining trump, I overtook the ten of hearts with the ace and promptly took the ruffing finesse for the king. Six clubs bid and made. Really, quite elementary!"

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