

**"When Both Opponents Were Silent
Throughout the Auction But 1 Opponent
During Play Shows a Trump Void Thus Showing That
His Partner Holds a 'Trump Stack' ..."**

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

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Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through **"When Both Opponents Were Silent Throughout the Auction But 1 Opponent During Play Shows a Trump Void Thus Showing That His Partner Holds a 'Trump Stack' ..."**. Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking the time to be with us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther, because I am so "warm and caring"!

Bruce: Errr, well, sorry again about that, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther.

Esther: Well, Bruce. Please try to exercise at least a modicum of empathy, assuming you have at least the limited capacity to do so. Can you imagine how relentlessly all the other girls in grades K through 4 of my elementary school years relentlessly, endlessly tormented me about my last name, Klinktoast-Houstonhousen?

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¹ As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by **Bruce Thompson**.

Bruce: Well, yes, sorry again, Esther! Well, Esther, could you use a bridge Board to illustrate the bidding and play in this situation involving 1 Opponent being void in Trump and his Partner holding a "Trump Stack" against your Suit contract?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. Well, Bruce, on my "Esther Bridge Lessons" website I have previously recommended the "BBO Bridge Master" website: <https://www.bridgebase.com/v3/anon/bridgemaster>

The "BBO Bridge Master" website allows you to declare your skill level, then shows a series of Hands and announces the final contract, each of which you then play as Declarer. At the end of play you can then request a solution in which the optimal "Line of Play" is discussed step by step. Here as an illustration I will use the free "BBO Bridge Master" Level-5 **Lesson B-13** which gives you the opportunity to see and repeatedly practice playing a given bridge Board.

BBO Bridge Master Level 5 Lesson B-13

Dealer: **SOUTH**

	NORTH (11)	
	S: J 7 5	
	H: 4 3 2	
	D: A K T 9	
	C: Q J T	
WEST (4)		EAST (5)
S: --		S: Q T 9 8
H: Q J T 9 8 6		H: K 7 5
D: J 3		D: 8 7 6 4
C: 9 8 7 6 5		C: 4 2
	SOUTH (20)	
	S: A K 6 4 3 2	
	H: A	
	D: Q 5 2	
	C: A K 3	

Bidding

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1S	PASS	2D	PASS
3S	PASS	4S	PASS
6S	PASS	PASS	PASS

On Trick #1 WEST leads his Heart Queen as the "top" of his "touching Honors" in his "longest" Suit. Declarer SOUTH "wins" Trick #1 with his Heart Ace singleton. On Trick #2 SOUTH leads his Trump Spade Ace and SOUTH discovers that

(1) WEST is void in Trump Spades while (2) EAST holds the Trump Spade Q,T,9,8.

Bruce: Well, Esther, on this Board should Declarer SOUTH on Trick #3 then "draw" a 2nd Round of Trump?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will try to help you. No, you should not "draw" another Round of Trump Spades. As Richard Pavlicek emphasizes in his "Trump Endings" article posted on his "For Bridge Players" website:

<http://www.rpbridge.net/6f00.htm>

"If the enemy trumps are stacked against you, stop leading [T]rumps and go after ruffs" [emphasis added].

Richard Pavlicek (1945-) has won **11** North American Bridge Championships, including a record-setting **3** straight wins in the Reisinger Board-a-Match Teams, 1982-84, and again in 1990. He won the 1973 inaugural Grand National Teams tournament and repeated a win there in 1997. He has written or co-authored several bridge books, including with co-author William S. Root their 1981 book, Modern Bridge Conventions. From 1984 until 1990 Pavlicek was the Bridge Columnist for the Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel.

Bruce: Well, Esther, then what bridge strategy should Declarer SOUTH try to play?

Esther: Well, Bruce, N/S have lots of "top" "winners" in both Minors and in his own "closed" Hand a Heart void. This layout begs for a "**Trump Elimination Endplay**" executed against EAST. This "endplay" has been discussed in several "Esther Bridge Lessons" including "Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson #154: "**Playing a Suit Contract as Declarer When One Opponent Holds a Trump 'Stack': The 'Trump Endplay' May Save You!**":

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/TrumpEnd.pdf>

Bruce: Well, OK, Esther, would you now talk us through Declarer SOUTH's "Line of Play" on this Board?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will try to help you. On Trick #3 Declarer SOUTH leads a "low" Diamond to the NORTH Dummy's Diamond King. On Trick #4 following Pavlicek's counsel Declarer SOUTH leads the NORTH Dummy's Heart 3 for a ruff from his "closed" Hand.

On Trick #5 SOUTH leads another "low" Diamond from his "closed" Hand. WEST discards the Diamond Jack thus (1)

"promoting" the NORTH Dummy's Diamond T, 9 and (2) suggesting that WEST holds "long" Clubs and initially held a 2-Suited Hand. N/S "win" Trick #5 with the Dummy's Diamond Ace. On Trick #6 following Pavlicek's advice Declarer SOUTH leads the last Dummy Heart for another ruff from his own "closed" Hand.

After Trick #6 Declarer SOUTH has "rectified the count" such that EAST and SOUTH both now hold 3 Trump Spades. On Trick #7 Declarer SOUTH "cashes" his own Diamond Queen "winner". WEST discards a Heart thus confirming that EAST holds another Diamond. It appears that EAST initially held a 4-3-4-2 distribution which was necessary for SOUTH to be able to make his 6S contract.

Bruce: Well, Esther, after 7 Tricks N/S have "won" 7 Tricks and E/W have "won" 0 Tricks. The 6 cards now held in the 4 Hands are:

	NORTH (11)	
	S: J 7	
	H:	
	D: T	
	C: Q J T	
WEST (4)		EAST (5)
S: --		S: Q T 9
H: J		H:
D:		D: 8
C: 9 8 7 6 5		C: 4 2
	SOUTH (20)	
	S: K 6 4	
	H:	
	D:	
	C: A K 3	

Esther: Yes, that is correct. Now on Trick #8 Declarer SOUTH "cashes" his Club Ace. On Trick #9 SOUTH "crosses" to the NORTH Dummy by leading a "low" Club to the Dummy's Club Jack.

On Trick #10 Declarer SOUTH "cashes" the Dummy's "promoted" Diamond Ten and discards his own Club King that is redundant to the Dummy's Club Queen.

Bruce: Well, Esther, after Trick #10 the 3 cards remaining in the 4 Hands are:

		NORTH (11)	
		S: J 7	
		H:	
		D:	
		C: Q	
	WEST (4)		EAST (5)
S: --			S: Q T 9
H:			H:
D:			D:
C: 9 8 7			C:
		SOUTH (20)	
		S: K 6 4	
		H:	
		D:	
		C:	

Esther: Well, Bruce, at this point Declarer SOUTH knows that EAST now holds only the Trump Spade Q,T,9. On Trick #11 SOUTH will lead the Dummy's Club Queen. EAST must ruff and will ruff "low" with his Trump Spade 9. Declarer SOUTH in order to "endplay" EAST must *underruff* on Trick #11.

		NORTH (11)	
		S: J 7	
		H:	
		D:	
		C:	
	WEST (4)		EAST (5)
S: --			S: Q T
H:			H:
D:			D:
C: 9 8			C:
		SOUTH (20)	
		S: K 6	
		H:	
		D:	
		C:	

After Trick #11 N/S have "won" 10 Tricks and E/W have "won" 1 Trick. If on Trick #12 EAST leads his Trump Spade Ten Declarer SOUTH will "win" with the NORTH Dummy Spade Jack and on Trick #13 will "win" with his own Trump Spade King. If instead on Trick #12 EAST leads his Trump Spade Queen Declarer SOUTH will "win" with his own Trump Spade King and on Trick #13 will "win" with the NORTH Dummy Spade Jack. SOUTH "makes" his 6S contract even against a "Trump Stack" thanks to a "Trump Elimination Endplay".



Esther says...

“Why not proceed *immediately* to ‘**Bridge Base Online Bridge Master**’ Level-5 Lesson #**B-13** to practice playing a “**Elimination Endplay**” on this Board? Search ‘BBO’, then Click ‘Bridge Master’, then Click ‘Play’, then Click ‘Level 5’, then Click ‘B-13’. You can play this Board *repeatedly* in Bridge Master for *free!*”

Esther also says...

“I have now prepared a ‘Map’ of all the ‘**Esther Bridge ‘Pop’ Quizzes**’ that use ‘BBO Bridge Master’ lessons to teach the ‘*Squeeze Play*’, the ‘*Elimination Endplay*’, the ‘*Loser-on-Loser Play*’, the ‘*Unblocking Play*’, the ‘**Distribution Safety Play**’, and the ‘*Dummy Reversal Play*’”:

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/MAP.pdf>