

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0231:  
"When Playing a 3NT Contract as Declarer,  
Invoking the '*Principle of Restricted Choice*':  
An Opportunity to Practice Repeatedly Using  
The BBO Bridge Master Website"**

**Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen<sup>1</sup>**

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>

**The "Principle of Restricted Choice"<sup>2</sup>**

Esther has previously discussed the "Principle of Restricted Choice" in "Esther Bridge Dialog Lesson #112: '*The 'Principle of Restricted Choice': Another Exception to the '8 Ever, 9 Never Bridge Rule for Declarer Play'*":

[https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8 ever 2.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8%20ever%20.pdf)

Therein Esther explains that:

The "Principle of Restricted Choice" was first propounded by British World Champion Terence Reese (1913-1996) in his 1958 book, The Expert Game. Let's say that as Declarer your Partnership is missing 2 "touching Honors" in a Suit (e.g., both the Queen and the Jack). If you are leading high and the next Opponent to play follows Suit and plays the Queen, you should assume that this Opponent had a "restricted choice" and was forced to play the Queen on your higher card when sitting 2<sup>nd</sup>, because holding

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf), Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, the purported ACBL Double Triple Emerald Gold Platinum LifeMaster with 20+ million ACBL MasterPoints, in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So, this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

<sup>2</sup> You can also find out more about the "Principle of Restricted Choice" by reading Larry Cohen's article, "Restricted Choice", on his excellent bridge website: <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/restricted-choice>

Q,J that Opponent would have instead played the Jack. Or, if an Opponent plays the Queen of the led Suit on one of your Partnership's higher cards played earlier in the Round again you should assume that this Opponent likely had a "restricted choice."

Therefore, you should then assume that the *other Opponent* holds the missing Jack. Of course, the same "**Principle of Restricted Choice**" applies if you are missing different "touching Honors" such as the King, Queen.

The present "**Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz**" used a "**BBO Bridge Master**" example Board to illustrate the use of the "**Principle of Restricted Choice**". Esther on her "**Esther Bridge Lessons**" website has 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. The present "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quiz" question is drawn from "**BBO Bridge Master**" Level-3 **Lesson B-18**. Note that across repeated play "**BBO Bridge Master**" may change some Hands in given lessons. Esther may have altered some cards in some Hands.

**BBO Bridge Master Level 3 Lesson B-18**

Dealer: **SOUTH**

NORTH (6)

**S:** 5 3 2

**H:** J T 9

**D:** K Q 3

**C:** 6 5 4 2

WEST (6)

**S:** K J T 9

**H:** 4 3 2

**D:** T 4

**C:** Q T 9 8

EAST (6)

**S:** A 8 7

**H:** 8 7 6 5

**D:** J 7 5 2

**C:** J 7

SOUTH (22)

**S:** Q 6 4

**H:** A K Q

**D:** A 9 8 6

**C:** A K 3

**Bidding**

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2C	PASS	2D*	PASS
2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS
PASS	PASS		

\*N/S are playing the "2D Waiting" 2C response system. There are numerous alternatives, as explained by Esther:

[https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/2C\\_resp.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/2C_resp.pdf)

On Trick #1 WEST leads the Spade Jack, the "top" of a "touching" card sequence in a "long" Suit. E/W "cash" 4 Spade Tricks "off the top".

After 4 Tricks the 9 cards now held in each of the 4 Hands were:

NORTH (6)

**S:**

**H:** J T 9

**D:** K Q 3

**C:** 6 5 4

WEST (6)

**S:**

**H:** 4 3 2

**D:** T 4

**C:** Q T 9 8

EAST (6)

**S:**

**H:** 8 7 6

**D:** J 7 5 2

**C:** J 7

SOUTH (17)

**S:**

**H:** A K Q

**D:** A 9 8 6

**C:** A K

1. What "winning" Tricks can Declarer SOUTH see?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:

[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0231\\_a1.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0231_a1.pdf)