

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0372:  
"When Playing Slam Contracts as Declarer  
Formulating Your 'Line of Play' by Incorporating  
a Bridge '*Distribution Safety Play*':  
Trading a Trick for Greater Safety"**

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

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Today's bridge bidding questions and examples are drawn from Marc Smith's excellent article, "Play These Hands with Marc", in the April, 2026 issue of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin (p. 52). Esther may have altered some of the cards in some of the Hands. The bidding here is by Esther.

Dealer: **SOUTH**

Vul: **BOTH**

	<i>NORTH (5)</i>	
	<b>S:</b> J 5 3	
	<b>H:</b> 5	
	<b>D:</b> 7 3 2	
	<b>C:</b> A T 7 5 3 2	
<i>WEST (11)</i>		<i>EAST (3)</i>
<b>S:</b> 8 6 2		<b>S:</b> 7
<b>H:</b> K Q J 6		<b>H:</b> T 9 7 4 3 2
<b>D:</b> Q 4		<b>D:</b> T 9 8 5
<b>C:</b> Q J 9 6		<b>C:</b> K 8
	<i>SOUTH (21)</i>	
	<b>S:</b> A K Q T 9 4	
	<b>H:</b> A 8	
	<b>D:</b> A K J 6	
	<b>C:</b> 4	

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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.

### Bidding

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2C	PASS	2D	PASS
2S	PASS	3C	PASS
3D	PASS	3S	PASS
4NT	PASS	5C*	PASS
6S	PASS	PASS	PASS

\*N/S are playing the "Roman Key Card (RKC) 1430 Convention" and NORTH's response bid says, "Partner, among the 5 "key" cards (i.e., the 4 Aces and the Trump Spade King) I hold either 1 or 4 "key" cards."

WEST leads his Heart King thus "promising" the Heart Queen and "long" Hearts. Declarer SOUTH "wins" Trick #1 with his Heart Ace.

1. After the NORTH Dummy is exposed what "losers" can Declarer SOUTH see?
2. N/S will "win" 6 Trump Spade Tricks, 2 Heart Tricks, the Heart Ace and 1 more Heart Trick by ruffing Declarer SOUTH's 2<sup>nd</sup> Heart in the NORTH Dummy, 2 Diamond Tricks, the Diamond A,K, and 1 Club, the Club King, for a total of  $6 + 2 + 2 + 1 = 11$  Tricks. Where can Declarer SOUTH "win" a 12<sup>th</sup> Trick?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0372\\_a1.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0372_a1.pdf)