

Article 13 Sherlock and the Case of the Anguished Leader

If you want to challenge yourself just write down the N and S hands and plan your play in 3NT by S after W thinks and leads the ♥ 3 before you read the article.

Dr Watson continued to be amazed by Sherlock. How did you manage to make that contract?

“Too often declarers first thoughts when dummy goes down is to analyse partner’s bidding. What a wasted effort, the contract requires your complete attention.”

“The first thing you need to do is analyse the lead, not only the suit and the card, but whether it was an anguished lead or an easy lead. If it takes time to make the lead that is valuable information”.

“Take the hand

	♠ 98		
	♥ A76		
	♦ K953		
	♣ AJ105		
♠ A10532		♠ 76	
♥ Q83		♥ J10542	
♦ J87		♦ Q106	
♣ 62		♣ Q43	
	♠ KQJ4		
	♥ K9		
	♦ A42		
	♣ K987		
	Sherlock		
N	E	S	W
		1♠	p
2♣	p	2NT	p
3NT	All Pass		

“West thinks for a little while before leading the ♥3. East plays the ♥10 which I allowed to win. He takes the return with the ♥K and West’s ♥8. I now was asking myself why West took so long to lead the ♥3.”

“My problem is if one defender has 5 hearts. Why did West take so long to lead? Surely he was contemplating because his natural lead would have been one of our long suits. He would have found it easy to lead from a 5-card ♥ suit, so I thought he may even have had a 5-card ♠ suit, indeed there was a slight clue in the play of the spot cards in ♥s.

I then led the ♠K to West’s ♠A, took his ♥Q return with your ♥A. I could now take the ♣ finesse either way. But I don’t want east to get in then lead having established that he must have had the 5-card ♥ suit. So I led your ♣J through East and claimed my 10 tricks.

“When you have eliminated the impossible, my dear Watson, the possible becomes obvious”