

"Esther Again Teaches the 'Squeeze Play' This Time Using a 'BBO Bridge Master' Lesson"

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 **"Esther Again Teaches the 'Squeeze Play' Using a 'BBO Bridge Master' Lesson"**. 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?

Bruce: Well, yes, sorry again, Esther! I do understand that young girls can indeed be quite vicious to each other. Well, in any case, Esther, would you begin today's excellent lesson by first briefly defining what a **"Simple Squeeze Play"** is?

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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**.

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. A "**Simple Squeeze Play**" is bridge play, often by Declarer, in which during play various cards held by Opponents are "stripped" such that toward the end of play an Opponent has no choice except playing a "busy" card that otherwise would be a "winner". The "**Simple Squeeze Play**" endplay results in the player executing the "squeeze endplay" earning an "extra" Trick he would not have "won" had he not successfully executed the "squeeze".

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther, who originated the idea of the bridge "squeeze" endplay?

Esther: Well, Bruce, first, Declarer SOUTH should count his "winners". As noted in the "Esther Bridge Lesson" posting, "**Happy 100th Birthday, Duplicate Bridge!**", https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/br_hist.pdf which is a brief history of duplicate bridge, the "squeeze play" was popularized by **George Coffin**. In 1932 **George Sturgis Coffin** (1903 - 1994) published the first of numerous editions of his hugely influential bridge book, Endplays: Eliminations, Squeezes, Coups, and one of the endplays he explained in the book was the "squeeze play", as you can surmise by the title of his book.

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther, well, I am wondering. Didn't you previously post an "**Esther Bridge Lesson**" about the "**Simple Squeeze Play**"?

Esther: Well, Bruce, yes indeed, I have posted a lesson on the "squeeze" play. You have a very good memory. My "Esther Bridge Dialog Lesson #67", "**How as Declarer to Execute an Endplay 'Squeeze'**": <https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/squeeze.pdf> was about the "squeeze".

Bruce: Well, Esther, so what's different about your lesson here on the "squeeze"?

Esther: Well, Bruce, in this lesson I am going to use as an illustration of how to execute a "squeeze" an example bridge Board from one of the "BBO Bridge Master" website's interactive bridge lesson.

I have previously on my "Esther Bridge Lessons" enthusiastically 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 Boards and announces the bidding and the final contract, each of which you then actually 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. And you can replay any given Board as many times as you wish!

The present "Esther Bridge Lesson" example is drawn from "BBO Bridge Master" Level-3 **Lesson C-23**. Note that across repeated play "BBO Bridge Master" may change some Hands in given lessons. And Esther may have altered some cards in some Hands in this example.

BBO Bridge Master Level 3 Lesson C-23

Dealer: **SOUTH**

		NORTH (12)	
		S: 6 5 4	
		H: K Q J T	
		D: K 4 3 2	
		C: K 2	
	WEST (11)		EAST (0)
	S: K Q J T 9 8		S: 7
	H: A		H: 9 8 7 6 5
	D: J T 9 8		D: 7 6
	C: 9 8		C: 7 6 5 4 3
		SOUTH (17)	
		S: A 3 2	
		H: 4 3 2	
		D: A Q 5	
		C: A Q J T	

Bidding

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	2S	DBL*	PASS
3NT	PASS	PASS	

*Esther has changed this bid by NORTH.

On Trick #1 WEST leads the Spade King from the "top" of his "touching" Honors in his "longest and strongest" Suit.

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther, what should Declarer SOUTH surmise from the auction once the NORTH Dummy has been exposed?

Esther: Well, Bruce, Declarer SOUTH expects that WEST holds (1) 6 Spades to the Spade King and (2) the Heart Ace. And

Declarer SOUTH expects that EAST's Hand is extraordinarily "weak" because all 3 other players have considerable HCPs. Because WEST's Hand is so strong Declarer SOUTH will be able at a propitious moment be able to "force" WEST into the lead.

Declarer SOUTH also sees that N/S together hold **1st** Round "control" in Spades, **1st**, **2nd**, and **3rd** Round "control" in both Clubs and Diamonds, **2nd**, **3rd**, **4th**, and **5th** Round control in Hearts. So, SOUTH clearly has a lot of "control"!

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther, what certain "winners" can Declarer SOUTH count?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course I will try to help you. Declarer SOUTH can see **1** Spade "winner", the Spade Ace, **3** Heart "winners", the K,Q,J, **3** Diamond "winners", the Diamond A,K,Q, and **3** Club "winners", the Club A,K,Q, for a total of $1 + 3 + 3 + 3 = \mathbf{10}$ Tricks. But SOUTH **must not** let WEST regain the lead a 2nd time or he will then cash his Heart Ace and "run" **4** Spade Tricks!

Bruce: Errr, well, hmmm... Well, then what should the Declarer SOUTH do?

Esther: Well, Bruce, the Declarer can let WEST "win" Tricks **#1** and **#2** with his Spades. On Trick **#3** Declarer SOUTH will "win" with Spade Ace.

On Tricks **#4** through **#6** Declarer SOUTH should "cash" **3** of his **4** Club Tricks. After **6** Tricks N/S will have "won" **4** Tricks and E/W will have "won" **2** Tricks.

It will be *critically important* that Declarer SOUTH does sluff any of the NORTH Dummy's Diamonds. The NORTH Dummy's 4th Diamond may be "promoted" into a "winner" if the E/W 6 Diamonds "split" 3-3.

Bruce: Errr, well, hmmm... Well, Esther, where does the "**Simple Squeeze Play**" come in?

Esther: Well, Bruce, so far WEST, who holds all or almost all of the E/W HCPs has been "stripped" of *all* his Clubs and holds 2 Spades, the Heart Ace, and 4 Diamonds, the Diamond J,T,9,8.

After 6 Tricks the 7 cards held in each of the 4 Hands are:

NORTH (12)

S:

H: K Q J

D: K 4 3 2

C:

WEST (11)

S: T 9

H: A

D: J T 9 8

C:

EAST (0)

S:

H: 9 8 7

D: 7 6

C: 7 6

SOUTH (17)

S:

H: 4 3 2

D: A Q 5

C: T

On Trick #7 when Declarer SOUTH leads his Club Ten WEST will be "squeezed" by this lead:

1. If WEST sluffs a Spade he will be discarding 1 of his 2 Spade "winners".
2. If WEST sluffs his Heart Ace he will be discarding his Heart "Winner".
3. If WEST sluffs a Diamond he will "promote" the 4th Diamond in the NORTH Dummy into a "winner".

On Trick #7 WEST will discard 1 of his 2 Spade "winners" because he knows that N/S cannot lead a Spade because everyone except WEST is now void in Spades. Once WEST plays a Spade Declarer SOUTH will sluff a Heart from the NORTH Dummy.

Bruce: Well, Esther, what card should Declarer SOUTH lead on Trick #8?

Esther: Well, Bruce, on Trick #8 Declarer SOUTH should now "force" WEST into the lead by playing his own Heart 2. After Trick #8 N/S have "won" 5 Tricks and E/S have "won" 3 Tricks. After 8 Tricks the 4 Hands now each hold 5 cards:

NORTH (12)

S:
H: K
D: K 4 3 2
C:

WEST (11)

S: T
H:
D: J T 9 8
C:

EAST (0)

S:
H: 9 8
D: 7 6
C: 7

SOUTH (17)

S:
H: 4 3
D: A Q 5
C:

On Trick #9 WEST can "cash" his Spade Ten "winner" making it 4 Tricks for E/S and 5 Tricks for N/S. But then N/S will inevitably "win" the last 4 Tricks and exactly "make" his 3NT contract no matter what WEST leads on Trick #10!



Esther says...

I, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master and holder of 20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints, *strongly* recommend that you *immediately* proceed to the "BBO Bridge Master" website. Once there click on **SKILL LEVEL 3**. Next, click on **SELECT DEAL** and then click **C-23**. Then play this Board as Declarer. Play the Board at least 1 time and preferably 4 or 10 times!

P.S. Like everything in bridge, "squeezes" are complicated. For example, there are *numerous types* of squeezes (e.g., "sinister squeeze", "ambidextrous squeeze", "splitter squeeze", "criss-cross

squeeze", "back-door squeeze"). If you have a high tolerance for pain, Marvin L. French has posted on the web a *free* roughly 90-page book about "squeeze plays", Squeeze Refresher for Good Bridge Players:

<https://lajollabridge.com/French/misc/Squeeze-Refresher.pdf>