

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0403:  
"As Declarer When You Are 'Missing' the Queen,  
'8 Ever, 9 Never', But What About 10?"**

**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>

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. Here we use the *free* "**BBO Bridge Master**" Level-4 **Lesson B-01** which gives you the opportunity to see and *repeatedly practice* playing a given bridge Board. Esther may have altered some of the cards in the Hands.

The "*8 Ever, 9 Never*" bridge principle suggests that if as Declarer your Partnership (1) is "missing" the Queen in a Suit (2) but holds **9** cards in the Suit you should **generally** finesse, but if as Declarer your Partnership (1) is "missing" the Queen in a Suit (2) but holds **10** cards in the Suit you should *generally* play for the "drop". But there are exceptions. For example, if one or both Opponents bid during the auction you may have more information to help "place" the "missing" Queen:

[https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8\\_ever.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8_ever.pdf)

Or if you are fairly far along in the play of the Board your Opponents card plays may yield some information about where the "missing" Queen lies:

[https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8\\_ever\\_2.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8_ever_2.pdf)

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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.

**BBO Bridge Master Level 4 Lesson B-01**

Dealer: **SOUTH**

NORTH (7)

**S:** 5 3

**H:** 5 3

**D:** 4 2

**C:** A K 6 5 4 3 2

WEST (5)

**S:** Q J T 9

**H:** 8 7 6 4

**D:** 8 6 5

**C:** Q 8

EAST (6)

**S:** 8 7 6

**H:** Q J T 9

**D:** Q J T 9 7

**C:** 7

SOUTH (22)

**S:** A K 4 2

**H:** A K 2

**D:** A K 3

**C:** J T 9

**Bidding**

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
3C	PASS	4NT	PASS
5C*	PASS	5NT	PASS
5D**	PASS	7NT	PASS
PASS	PASS		

- \*N/S are playing a convention in which SOUTH's response bid says, "Partner, I hold 1 Ace."  
\*\*N/S are playing a convention in which SOUTH's response bid says, "Partner, I hold 1 King."

On Trick #1 WEST leads his Spade Queen thus "promising" "long" Spades and "touching" Honors. Declarer SOUTH "wins" with his Spade Ace.

1. Should bridge players ever bid 7NT or a 7-level contract?
2. What pedagogical benefit is there for having a bridge lesson about playing a 7NT contract?
3. After the NORTH Dummy is exposed what "winners" can Declarer SOUTH?
4. What ways can Declarer SOUTH play his Clubs? Which way is better: (a) play for the "drop" or (b) finesse through WEST?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0403\\_a1.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0403_a1.pdf)