BRIDGE PROBLEMS
FOR A NEW
MILLENNIUM

JULIAN POTTAGE

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FOREWORD

When I met Julian Pottage fifteen years ago (can it really have been that many?), he was a young man on a journey. He was making his way, by air and on foot, across the United States and had reached Tennessee, where I was working at the offices of the American Contract Bridge League in Memphis. My colleagues and I welcomed him, but we couldn't imagine that only a couple of years later this pleasant Britisher would embark on another equally exciting trek: writing about the greatest of all card games and making many fine contributions to its literature.

Some of the quiz books Julian has written, both on his own and in collaboration, will give any player a workout. The problems in his latest offering, as he says himself, may be a trifle easier. Nevertheless, studying them is sure to give you hours of pleasure and make you a better player.

I get many books for review, and some of them I have to acknowledge with a cautious note: "Thanks for sending me. . . I'll certainly waste no time reading it." The book you're holding does not fall into that category. *Bridge Problems for a New Millennium* is yet another outstanding Pottage piece of work. I enjoyed it, and I feel honored that Julian asked me to write its foreword.

Frank Stewart

INTRODUCTION

In the early eighties I started to collect and construct bridge problems. At first these helped me to coach partners for the England junior team. Thereafter they progressed to making copy for a series of books co-written with Terence Reese.

If you have seen examples from those earlier works then you may notice two things different this time around. Firstly, the bidding methods used by each side reflect what many regard as standard today. Secondly, the hands chosen now are easier to solve, thus putting them within the reach of far more players. Please study the bidding and card play system summary given on page 160. It acts like a convention card for both sides. Although you will find most alerts explained as you go along, this should deal with any 'what if' queries you may have.

In the defensive problems you can hope that partner gives you signals when you need them. Throughout you may expect the enemy to turn up with roughly what they say they have.

The problems take a fairly logical order. Their grouping goes with your position at the table and whether there are trumps. Within each set, the problems get a bit harder towards the end.

For the most part, hitting upon the correct answer requires no great knowledge or special skill. You simply need to apply a touch of common sense and search for all the clues on offer. Of course, you will come across the odd endplay and squeeze — but a book of this nature would not be complete without them.

You may like to lay out the hands with playing cards. Doing so should help you to test a line or picture a possible ending. You will derive most benefit if you spend several minutes trying to spot the winning line before turning to the answer. In many cases the title given to a problem hints at the correct solution. However you may deem one or two of these to be slightly cryptic!

Julian Pottage
January 2001

SECTION 1

PROBLEMS

1. ROUNDED RACE

♠ A Q 4
♥ Q 8
♦ K J
♣ Q J 8 6 4 2

```
      N
  W       E
      S
```

♠ K 6 5
♥ A 10 4 2
♦ A 5 4
♣ 10 9 3

Neither Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
		pass	pass
pass	1♣	1♥	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the nine of hearts. How do you plan the play?

2. WRONG CONTRACT

♠ 2
♥ A K 7 4
♦ A 8
♣ A 8 7 6 5 4

```
      N
  W       E
      S
```

♠ A 8 5 4
♥ 10
♦ K Q 6 4 3
♣ K 3 2

Neither Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	1♣	pass	1♦
pass	1♥	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the queen of spades, on which East plays the seven and you the four. West continues with the jack of spades, overtaken by the king. What are your thoughts on this hand?

3. ONE-WAY GUESS

♠ 7 2
♥ Q 10 8 7
♦ 7 6 4
♣ A K Q 7

Neither Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
			1NT
pass	2♣	pass	2♠
pass	3NT	all pass	

♠ A K Q 6
♥ A 6 4
♦ Q 8 2
♣ J 9 3

West leads the two of clubs. What plan do you form here?

4. EXTRA CHANCE

♠ J
♥ A J 10 8 3
♦ Q 9 5
♣ A K 10 9

E-W Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	1♥	1♠	2NT
pass	3♣	pass	3NT
all pass			

♠ A 8 3 2
♥ 9 5
♦ A K 7 2
♣ J 5 4

West leads the five of spades, East beating North's jack with the queen as you duck. East continues with the king of spades. How do you aim to make nine tricks?

5. DIAMOND MINE

♠ Q
♥ K Q 9
♦ Q 7 6 4 3 2
♣ J 10 4

```
       N
  W         E
       S
```

♠ A 9 2
♥ A 6 5 3
♦ K 9 8
♣ A 7 5

Both Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
			1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the six of spades and, sadly for you, East produces the king. After you withhold your stopper, East returns the ten of spades. Can you see the best line?

6. SMOOTH TRENCH

♠ A K J 5 2
♥ 10
♦ J 8 5
♣ 10 9 5 3

```
       N
  W         E
       S
```

♠ 6 3
♥ A Q 6 3
♦ A K Q
♣ J 7 6 2

N-S Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	pass	pass	1NT
pass	2♥[1]	pass	2♠
pass	3NT	all pass	
1.	Transfer.		

West leads the two of hearts, and your queen captures East's jack. How should you try for your contract?

7. MINOR INSURANCE

♠ K 6 5
♥ A K
♦ A 10 5 4 2
♣ A 8 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A J 4
♥ J 2
♦ J 7 3
♣ 9 6 5 4 3

Both Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	1♦	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West starts off with the three of spades, thus giving you three tricks in the suit. What looks to be the safest line here? To Solution

8. ALMOST LAYDOWN

♠ Q
♥ A K J 6 3
♦ A 8 2
♣ 7 6 4 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A K 4
♥ 9 5
♦ K Q 5
♣ K 9 8 5 2

N-S Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	1♥	pass	2♣
pass	3♣	pass	3NT
all pass			

West leads the five of spades, which dummy surely wins. How should you aim to secure nine tricks? To Solution

9. DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION

♠ K Q J 9
♥ A 10
♦ K 7 6 3 2
♣ K 4

```
      N
  W       E
      S
```

♠ 10 8 5
♥ K 8 4
♦ Q 4
♣ A Q 8 7 5

Neither Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
	1♦	pass	2♣
pass	2♠	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the six of hearts to the ten, jack and four. Back comes the heart three to the eight, five and ace. What plan do you form on this hand?

10. SAMUEL SNUBBED

♠ J 5 2
♥ A J 6 5
♦ 10 7 5
♣ K Q 7

```
      N
  W       E
      S
```

♠ A K 10 7
♥ K Q 4 2
♦ A 2
♣ J 8 6

N-S Vulnerable			
W	**N**	**E**	**S**
			1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the four of diamonds, which goes five, queen, deuce. You win East's ♦8 return with your ace while West follows with the three. How do you hope to make nine tricks?

SECTION 2

SOLUTIONS

1. ROUNDED RACE

```
              ♠ A Q 4
              ♥ Q 8
              ♦ K J
              ♣ Q J 8 6 4 2
♠ J 9 8 7 3   ┌─────────┐   ♠ 10 2
♥ 9 5         │    N    │   ♥ K J 7 6 3
♦ 10 8 7 3    │  W   E  │   ♦ Q 9 6 2
♣ A 5         │    S    │   ♣ K 7
              └─────────┘
              ♠ K 6 5
              ♥ A 10 4 2
              ♦ A 5 4
              ♣ 10 9 3
```

West attacks your notrump game by leading the nine of hearts — the suit East bid. Dummy awaits your call of what to play.

Looking at the North-South cards, you can count five certain winners between spades and diamonds. Hearts will surely yield another two and, once the ace-king of clubs have gone, you will have more than enough tricks for your contract.

As you will need to drive out two control cards in clubs, you will have to lose the lead twice. Since you possess only a double stopper in hearts, the defenders threaten to win the race to set up and run their suit first. What can you do about this?

If East has both top clubs, the defense will prevail no matter what you do. Happily though, you strongly expect one of them to lie on your left — remember, East passed as dealer. To take advantage of this, you must arrange not to win the first trick. West will then have to lead something other than hearts after getting in with the club ace. So, what is the best way to hold off at Trick 1?

You could duck the nine all around, but then a diamond switch through dummy's king-jack could turn nasty. Therefore, you rise with dummy's queen. East must cover now (otherwise you will have hearts triple-stopped) and you withhold your ace. Whatever East returns you will have time to develop dummy's clubs and make an overtrick.

2. WRONG CONTRACT

```
              ♠ 2
              ♥ A K 7 4
              ♦ A 8
              ♣ A 8 7 6 5 4
♠ Q J 3          ┌─────────┐         ♠ K 10 9 7 6
♥ Q 8 6 5 2      │    N    │         ♥ J 9 3
♦ J 10 7 5       │ W     E │         ♦ 9 2
♣ 10             │    S    │         ♣ Q J 9
                 └─────────┘
              ♠ A 8 5 4
              ♥ 10
              ♦ K Q 6 4 3
              ♣ K 3 2
```

Although you would prefer to spread your hand as dummy in 6♣, you have to declare 3NT. West leads the ♠Q, which you duck. Then West plays the ♠J, East overtaking with the ♠K.

You have eight top winners and chances galore for more. If either minor divides evenly, you will make a heap of tricks. On normal breaks (4-2 in diamonds and 3-1 in clubs) you still expect to get home. In that case, you can establish the long card(s) in one of the minors after conceding a trick.

If the spades split 4-4, that suit holds no fears for you — you can afford to lose three spades and one other. However, a 5-3 spade division could well occur, which means you must hold up your ♠A again. Now if you need to lose the lead, only one defender can harm you. The problem is that you cannot yet identify which: West might have led either from ♠Q-J-10-x-x or from ♠Q-J-x. After all, your side bid the other three suits.

To ascertain how the spades lie, save your ace until the fourth round. You then find out that West has no more. Next you should test diamonds since you may want the ♣K as a late entry to hand (the ♥A affords access to dummy if required). When West turns up with four diamonds, you give up the fourth round of the suit, setting up your ninth trick.

Note that if you wrongly assume the lead comes from length, you will probably abandon diamonds and let East score a club. This will result in your contract being defeated. To Question

3. ONE-WAY GUESS

```
                    ♠ 7 2
                    ♥ Q 10 8 7
                    ♦ 7 6 4
                    ♣ A K Q 7
  ♠ 10 8 4        ┌─────────┐      ♠ J 9 5 3
  ♥ K 9 2         │    N    │      ♥ J 5 3
  ♦ A 10 5        │  W   E  │      ♦ K J 9 3
  ♣ 10 8 4 2      │    S    │      ♣ 6 5
                  └─────────┘
                    ♠ A K Q 6
                    ♥ A 6 4
                    ♦ Q 8 2
                    ♣ J 9 3
```

West leads a passive ♣2 against your notrump game.

You can again reckon on eight fast winners, which leaves you fishing for one extra. Hearts are clearly your best prospect, and the heart suit offers a choice of plays. If West has the jack, you want to finesse the ten. When, as here, West holds king to three, you must lead up to the queen. It may look like a guess, but in fact the diamond position makes the right play stand out.

If West holds both top diamonds, any lead from your left will give you a sure stopper. Likewise, with an attack from that side, the enemy can never run the suit if honor doubleton diamond lies over your queen. In addition, when West has honor third in diamonds, you have a chance as long as East does not lead the suit first. All this says that you should play West for the king of hearts — by doing so, you aim to keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

You should probably start by cashing the ♥A, which may drop a bare king. Furthermore, knowing you want West to duck the next round, you are happy to announce your ace. As the cards lie, West can get in with the ♥K and lead the ♦5 to East's king. When East then fires back the ♦3, you reason that with ♦A-x-x left, East might have tried to drop your queen, or at least thought about cashing the ace next. You also know that East would have returned the jack from an original holding of ♦K-J-x. So you withhold your queen to block the suit. In all, you lose three diamonds and one heart, thus fulfilling your contract. To Question

4. EXTRA CHANCE

```
                    ♠ J
                    ♥ A J 10 8 3
                    ♦ Q 9 5
                    ♣ A K 10 9
  ♠ 6 5 4           ┌─────────┐          ♠ K Q 10 9 7
  ♥ Q 6 2           │    N    │          ♥ K 7 4
  ♦ 8 6 4           │  W   E  │          ♦ J 10 3
  ♣ 8 7 3 2         │    S    │          ♣ Q 6
                    └─────────┘
                    ♠ A 8 3 2
                    ♥ 9 5
                    ♦ A K 7 2
                    ♣ J 5 4
```

In response to East's overcall, West leads the five of spades against your 3NT. You allow the ♠Q to hold and the ♠K is returned.

On this occasion there are seven obvious winners — three diamonds, two clubs and the major-suit aces. Given time, you could build at least two more heart winners. Sadly, East almost certainly has five spades and at least one of the top heart honors. As a result, you have to dismiss the heart suit.

As a 3-3 diamond break can give only one more trick, you will need to attack clubs. If you do so now and the club finesse works then you will obtain the two extra winners you require. Can you do better than this?

By testing diamonds first you can discover whether just one extra trick in clubs will suffice. Then you do not mind losing a club, provided that whoever gets in has no spades left. In that case, you will be able to cater for queen doubleton of clubs offside.

So hold up your ♠A a second time and win the third round. Next cash the ♣A (in case the queen is bare) and after that, three top diamonds ending in hand. When everyone follows, you table the thirteenth diamond and lead the jack of clubs to dummy's ace. As it happens, East's queen drops, which means you can claim an overtrick. If the queen of clubs did not appear, you would play a third round of the suit hoping West had her. Needless to say, if someone shows out on one of the first three diamonds then you fall back on the club finesse, running the jack.

5. DIAMOND MINE

```
                    ♠ Q
                    ♥ K Q 9
                    ♦ Q 7 6 4 3 2
                    ♣ J 10 4
  ♠ J 8 7 6 4 3      ┌─────────┐      ♠ K 10 5
  ♥ J 8              │    N    │      ♥ 10 7 4 2
  ♦ J                │ W     E │      ♦ A 10 5
  ♣ K 9 8 2          │    S    │      ♣ Q 6 3
                     └─────────┘
                    ♠ A 9 2
                    ♥ A 6 5 3
                    ♦ K 9 8
                    ♣ A 7 5
```

At Trick 1 in 3NT West leads the ♠6, won by East's ♠K. The ten of spades now comes back.
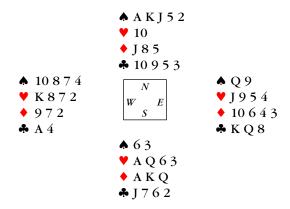
Scanning for quick winners, you locate a paltry five — three in hearts and the two black aces. Happily for you, diamonds offer a source of up to five tricks once the ace has gone.

Assuming that East would return the fourth-highest card from four or more, you can picture the spades as ♠J-8-7-6-x-x with West and ♠K-10-x on your right. This means that by taking your ace on the third round you can exhaust your right-hand opponent's spades. Provided that the ace of diamonds also lies with East, you are in with a chance.

On the second spade you must preserve North's rounded suits (for otherwise a switch to the one weakened may prove fatal), so you pitch a diamond from dummy. On the third round though, dummy must release a club. Having got in with your ♠A, you now want to pick up the diamonds for one loser.

You must place East with the ♦A. Moreover, with that same player having only three spades, you figure that if anyone holds a singleton diamond it will be West. So you lead the ♦8 to the queen and ace, noting West's jack with interest. You rise with your ace on East's club return and cross to dummy with the ♥K. Then you finesse the ♦9, cash the king and re-enter dummy with the ♥Q to enjoy the diamonds. Yes, you go down this way if West has ♦J-10 bare, but you cannot help that and the Principle of Restricted Choice makes you a 2:1 favorite. To Question

6. SMOOTH TRENCH

♠ A K J 5 2
♥ 10
♦ J 8 5
♣ 10 9 5 3

```
      N
  W       E
      S
```

♠ 10 8 7 4   ♠ Q 9
♥ K 8 7 2   ♥ J 9 5 4
♦ 9 7 2   ♦ 10 6 4 3
♣ A 4   ♣ K Q 8
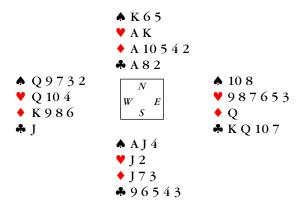
♠ 6 3
♥ A Q 6 3
♦ A K Q
♣ J 7 6 2

Against your 3NT contract West kicks off with the ♥2, and your queen captures East's jack. You see seven ready winners (a pair in each major plus three diamonds), which leaves you searching for two more.

You can dismiss clubs as a viable option: even if you keep plugging away at the suit, you will develop only one trick. Besides, you will surely lose three clubs and two hearts in the process. Dummy's spades look like a much better bet. Indeed they offer scope for five tricks if you take a winning finesse and the suit breaks 3-3. So should you lead up to the jack of spades? If you score North's jack on the first round, you still require a 3-3 split to make more than three spade tricks (there is no outside entry to dummy). Then again, on an even spade split you can make four tricks by ducking the first round. Think for a moment now: does this play offer any other chances?

Yes — if you give up the first spade, you also succeed whenever the ♠Q falls doubleton. The remaining spades will then fall under the ace-king-jack.

Observe that if you choose to finesse on the second round, you can pick up ♠Q-x-x-x on your left (about a 16% chance). However, doing that loses out when East has either ♠Q-x-x or ♠Q-x (about 26% combined). You should thus completely reject the finesse, playing a simple first-round duck and then the two top cards. In effect, you approach the spades in the same way you would if North held only ♠A-K-x-x-x. To Question

7. MINOR INSURANCE

```
                    ♠ K 6 5
                    ♥ A K
                    ♦ A 10 5 4 2
                    ♣ A 8 2
  ♠ Q 9 7 3 2      ┌─────────┐      ♠ 10 8
  ♥ Q 10 4         │    N    │      ♥ 9 8 7 6 5 3
  ♦ K 9 8 6        │ W     E │      ♦ Q
  ♣ J              │    S    │      ♣ K Q 10 7
                   └─────────┘
                    ♠ A J 4
                    ♥ J 2
                    ♦ J 7 3
                    ♣ 9 6 5 4 3
```

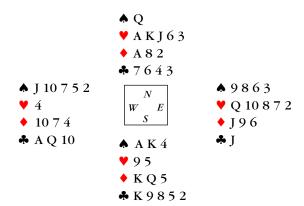West leads the ♠3 against your three notrump contract.

After the friendly lead you have seven easy tricks. Both minors offer potential for yielding the further two winners you require. Indeed the diamond suit might supply more. Although your side possesses eight cards in each minor, the jack and ten of diamonds make that suit more appealing. On the other hand, maybe you can combine your chances…

You could elect to duck the first club and, when you get back in, cash the ♣A. If someone turns up with four clubs, you play that defender for honor doubleton diamond: either finesse the ten (hoping for ♦K-x or ♦Q-x on your left), or else start low to the jack.

In fact, you do better to focus on scoring three diamond tricks with either a 3-2 or 4-1 split. How should you go about this? If you start the diamonds low to the ten, you will succeed unless East has a bare honor (or the suit breaks 5-0, a case we shall ignore). Likewise, playing up to the jack works except when West holds a lone picture card. Given that West appears long in spades, perhaps finessing the ten looks best…?

No, you should cash the ♦A; this caters for a stiff honor on either side. If all follow low, you can play to the jack and later back to the ten, so you pick up any ♦K-Q-x-x holdings. Only a 5-0 break really threatens you, and then you can still play for clubs to be 3-2. A club switch will rarely harm you — even when they are 4-1, your nine is likely to block the suit after you duck, and the defender with four clubs would need to get in twice. To Question

8. ALMOST LAYDOWN

```
                    ♠ Q
                    ♥ A K J 6 3
                    ♦ A 8 2
                    ♣ 7 6 4 3
  ♠ J 10 7 5 2    ┌─────────┐   ♠ 9 8 6 3
  ♥ 4            │    N    │   ♥ Q 10 8 7 2
  ♦ 10 7 4       │ W     E │   ♦ J 9 6
  ♣ A Q 10       │    S    │   ♣ J
                 └─────────┘
                    ♠ A K 4
                    ♥ 9 5
                    ♦ K Q 5
                    ♣ K 9 8 5 2
```

West leads the five of spades, the unbid major, against your notrump game. You will have to play North's queen.

Between the two hands you see eight certain winners and great prospects in hearts and clubs to score more. You have time to duck a round of clubs (in case West has the bare ace) and later lead up to your king. This way you can establish the suit unless West has at least three clubs including the ace; even then you can fall back on the heart finesse.
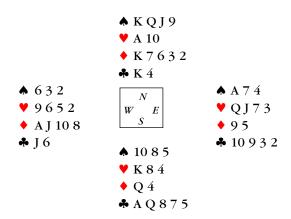
Another option is to go after the hearts, finessing the jack. Whenever you find the queen onside, or they break 3-3, you will make lots of hearts. You will also be able to set up a long card on the occasions when East holds ♥Q-x-x-x. As a last resort you can lead up to the king of clubs.

Both the above lines offer good odds, but a little known safety play makes the contract almost laydown. You have to try all-out for three heart tricks. Can you spot the answer now?

At Trick 2 lead a low heart off dummy towards your nine. If this loses to West's ten, you will finesse the jack after regaining the lead. Unless a singleton ten has captured your nine, you will prevail. In that worst case, West will show out on the second round and you can lead up to the ♣K.

As the cards lie, East goes up with the ♥10 and returns a spade. Upon winning your ace, you run the heart nine. If your opponent takes this with the ♥Q, you win the third spade, cross to the ace of diamonds and make three heart tricks. Ducking the ♥Q works no better for the defense because then the ♥9 provides your ninth winner.
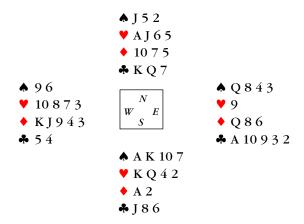
9. DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION

```
                    ♠ K Q J 9
                    ♥ A 10
                    ♦ K 7 6 3 2
                    ♣ K 4
   ♠ 6 3 2        ┌─────────┐      ♠ A 7 4
   ♥ 9 6 5 2      │    N    │      ♥ Q J 7 3
   ♦ A J 10 8     │  W   E  │      ♦ 9 5
   ♣ J 6          │    S    │      ♣ 10 9 3 2
                  └─────────┘
                    ♠ 10 8 5
                    ♥ K 8 4
                    ♦ Q 4
                    ♣ A Q 8 7 5
```

Playing in 3NT, the first trick goes heart six, ten, jack and four. Then come the ♥3, ♥8, ♥5 and ♥A, putting you in dummy.

On this deal you have five cashable winners. Although each suit apart from hearts may yield further tricks, none can supply four extra winners. So you need to build tricks in two suits.

For a couple of reasons you should attack spades rather than diamonds. Even if the clubs break 3-3, you need two tricks from the pointed suits, and besides, opening up diamonds might create three losers in the suit. Suppose then that you drive out East's ♠A and win the third heart with the king. You must now decide whether to knock out the ♦A or to try three rounds of clubs. The former works unless someone began with five hearts and the ♦A; the latter succeeds except when clubs are 4-2 and the player with four can get in with a fourth heart or the ♦A.

You might assume from the first two tricks that West has led from ♥Q-9-7-6-5 (giving East ♥J-3-2), in which case the main danger is that West has the ♦A. However, you should also consider that the lead might be from ♥9-6-5-(2) or ♥7-6-5-(2). To find out, you need to scrutinize the heart pips on the third round. If, as seems likely here, you see the seven on your right and the two on your left, you can read hearts as 4-4. If West conceals the two, you will be less sure. Happily, you believe that East would have overcalled 1♥ with ♥Q-J-x-x-x and two aces. So either way you know to leave clubs alone and play a diamond. To Question

10. SAMUEL SNUBBED

```
                    ♠ J 5 2
                    ♥ A J 6 5
                    ♦ 10 7 5
                    ♣ K Q 7
   ♠ 9 6                              ♠ Q 8 4 3
   ♥ 10 8 7 3      ┌─────────┐        ♥ 9
   ♦ K J 9 4 3     │    N    │        ♦ Q 8 6
   ♣ 5 4           │ W     E │        ♣ A 10 9 3 2
                   │    S    │
                   └─────────┘
                    ♠ A K 10 7
                    ♥ K Q 4 2
                    ♦ A 2
                    ♣ J 8 6
```

Should you look for a 4-4 fit via a 2♣ enquiry when you have a sterile 4333 hand? The debate about this is ongoing. Anyway West leads the ♦4 to East's queen against your notrump game. Next you see the ♦8 on your right and the ♦3 on your left. You have seven fast winners, and this time you can figure out the diamond position. West's echo and East's high return mark the suit as 5-3 (on the ♦4 lead with the ♦2 in your hand, they cannot be 6-2). So, if you ever lose the lead, West will be able to run the diamonds. Therefore you rule out playing on clubs.

To make two extra spade tricks, you certainly require East to hold the queen (unless she is bare). What else do you need?

You can lead a small spade off dummy to your ten on the second round (having cashed the ace). This way you handle 3-3 breaks with the finesse working and also ♠Q-x on your right.

Instead, you can select the jack for the second spade lead (unless the eight or nine came down on your right the first time). If East covers, and the eight or nine falls on your left, that will create a finesse position. You can later lead towards your remaining ♠10-7, playing the seven if East follows low. Although attempting to pin the eight or nine (the second line) will backfire if West started life with ♠9-8-x-(x) (six cases), it gains in several other layouts. In fact, you win four spade tricks whenever West was dealt ♠9-(x) or ♠8-(x) (eight cases). You also have the extra chance that East may forget to cover the jack. To Question

STANDARD SYSTEM SUMMARY

Standard American style with 5-card majors and a prepared club

Over minors: splinters and inverted raises apply, 2NT is 11-12
Over majors: 1NT not forcing, limit raises, splinters, 2NT = game raise
All two-over-one responses are forcing to 2NT
1NT opening: 15-17 throughout.
　　In response: 2♣ Stayman, 2♦,2♥,2♠,2NT, 4♦, 4♥ transfers,
　　Lebensohl 2NT, to show weaker hand or interest in other major in
　　competition
2♣ opening: strong (9+ tricks or 22+ HCP) with 2♦ negative
2♦, 2♥, 2♠ openings: weak — 6-card suit & 5-9/6-10 points, 2NT
　　response to these asks for range and suit quality
2NT opening: 20-22 with 3♣ Stayman, 3♦, 3♥ transfers
3NT opening: Gambling
Opener's rebid of 1NT: 12-14 with unbid minor as checkback
Fourth-suit forcing sequences must reach game
Cuebids: first-round controls shown first (or king in partner's suit)
4NT: Roman Key Card Blackwood, 0314
In competition after opening/overcall: cuebid shows value raise and
　　jump raises are preemptive; fit-showing jumps apply in new suits
Jump overcalls: weak at all vulnerabilities with 6+ card suit
2NT overcall: lowest two unbid suits
Cuebid overcall: over 1♣/1♦= 5/5 majors either weak or strong;
　　over 1♥/1♠ shows 5/5 other major plus one minor weak or strong
Defense to 1NT: 2♣= hearts & a minor, 2♦= spades & another, double is
　　for penalties over opponent's 1NT opening
Defense to weak twos: takeout double with 2NT Lebensohl
Negative and competitive doubles apply through 4♦

Leads and carding

Top of sequence or interior sequence (except A-K alone)
4th highest from suits with an honor, 2nd highest from poor suits
On partner's lead: standard attitude (count if obvious)
Following suit: standard count if given (i.e. echo = even number)
Discards are standard count, tend to be in suits not wanted led
Suit-preference signals (high card for high suit, etc.) widely used

Bridge Problems for a New Millennium

*J*ulian Pottage has been collecting and writing about bridge problems for many years, and this book consists of a collection of some of his favorites, some involving declarer play and some defense. For the most part, hitting upon the correct answer requires no great knowledge or special skill. You simply need to apply a touch of common sense and search for all the clues on offer. Of course, you will come across the odd endplay and squeeze — but a book of this nature would not be complete without them. It shouldn't take you a thousand years to come up with the solutions — but you will spend some pleasant hours doing it as the new millennium gets under way.

JULIAN POTTAGE writes a monthly column for BRIDGE magazine in Britain. He is a qualified bridge teacher and an expert bidding forum panelist. His contributions to bridge theory include discovering two classes of squeeze and co-inventing a popular defense to 1NT. His books include *Positive Defence* (with Terence Reese) and the new *Golden Rules* series. As a player he has won three English national titles and represented the England Youth team. He lives in a village in Hampshire, England.

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