

DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE



More from the
Over the Rainbow Bridge Club

Alex Adamson & Harry Smith

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To our wives, Elinor and Alison, with thanks for their support during our many journeys to Munchkinland.

Preface

It seems like yesterday, but it was actually five years ago in May 2015, that the first article on the exploits of the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club was published in *Bridge Magazine*. Since then, through 61 articles in total, the Club has seen successes and failures, developments and setbacks, drama and dénouement. These articles have been brought together under the two previous titles *If I Only Had A Heart* and *Bridge Over The Rainbow*, and now reach a finale in *Double, Double, Toil and Trouble*.

Sadly, we no longer have our third partner, our illustrator, Bill Buttle. Bill died earlier this year, but his work lives on. This book continues, as in the last two books, to be illustrated with his wonderful representations of our numerous characters. We will have to leave the newer characters, Toto, Munchkin Meg, Mr & Mrs Yoop and others, to your imagination!

We really appreciate the help we have had from so many people over these years. We have had encouragement from Mark Horton, who decided to publish the articles in *Bridge Magazine* and then in *A New Bridge Magazine*, and Brad Coles who publishes them in *Australian Bridge*. Ray Lee and Sally Sparrow of Master Point Press have both, as with the previous two books, been very positive and helpful.

But we would also like to thank our many friends in Scotland for some of the deals we have used. In all three books, we have never created a hand. All our deals have occurred at the table. In a small number of them we have altered a few spot cards to ensure the accuracy of the analysis, but all are real and, on quite a number of occasions, the story has been inspired by actual events. It would be wrong for us to name just a few, as so many have helped, either by supplying the deals,

or sometimes the storyline. In the latter case, not giving names will protect the guilty! Suffice it to say that, at one time or another, each and every one of us has displayed the attributes of all of the main characters, including the Scarecrow.

In this third volume we bring a number of story lines to a conclusion. We have enjoyed writing every single episode and will miss these characters we have adopted from L Frank Baum. But bridge clubs, like life, don't have clear cut endings. Who knows? Some further adventures might come to light, and we might feel obliged to record them. But for the present we leave the Club in good heart and its members, with all their features and foibles, enjoying the game that they and we love.

Alex Adamson
Linlithgow, Scotland

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June 2020



tin man



SCARECROW



DOROTHY



LION



auntie
em



uncle
henry



wicked witch
of the
west



IRRITABLE WITCH



unpleasant
witch



ALMIRA
GULCH



PROFESSOR
MARVEL



MUNCHKIN
BOB



GLINDA



THE
WIZARD



HONORARY CHAIRMAN
OF THE
LOLLIPOP GUILD



MAYOR OF
MUNCHKINLAND



ADA



CISSIE



SHY THE
MUNCHKIN

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The Sting



There were few national bridge events in the Land of Oz in the summer months. He was desperate to get back on the national scene. Now he had won the Ozian National Pairs, he would be known. He would be rated. He would be feared, and not just by his partners and teammates.

Three weeks had passed since he and Dorothy had triumphed in the Emerald City, and the taste was still bitter in his mouth. After all that effort, the national rankings still only had him as the second top player from Munchkinland. He should have realized. Of course Dorothy had played in more national events than he had. And she was quite a good player. Indeed, she was probably the second-best in the club. He was willing to partner her, which any astute observer would know was all the accolade that she could possibly need.

But after all the effort of their glorious win, he, the Tin Man, was still second to her in terms of these blue national points.

It was only in the last year that he had come to appreciate their importance, when he had found that Almira Gulch was the club's highest ranked player — an affront to his dignity and a wrong he had been determined to right. He had entered comparatively few national events before that point, but had made a supreme effort over the season just finished. Now he found that he was spending hours scouring the Ozian Bridge Union web site.

Finally, something had caught his eye. It would be on the last Saturday in August. He had to plan it carefully. A one-day Swiss Pairs was being held at Poppyfield, and blue points were being awarded. He must find a suitable partner, and ideally Dorothy shouldn't even be aware of the event. Her work kept her very busy over the summer months, so with a bit of luck she would only be looking for games on club nights.

Dorothy had already gone home. An early start for work the next morning, she had told him. That evening, they had won the Thursday evening pairs with a score of 62%. 'Acceptable,' he thought, 'but should have been better, if that brainless Scarecrow hadn't accidentally found a killing defense by pulling cards from his hand in what seemed like a random order. Or if the cowardly Lion had gone beyond partscore with fourteen points opposite the Scarecrow's One Spade opening. The 27-count game had been bid at every other table, but was destined to fail.'

He looked again at the results. Just behind them in second place was the pairing of Almira Gulch and Professor Marvel. 'Yes,' he thought, 'that Professor is a pretty fair dummy player. He must be quite good if he can consistently score well playing with Miss Gulch. His bidding lacks discipline, but maybe he could be knocked into shape by a superior partner.'

He knew without looking that Miss Gulch's bike had already departed. He had heard the distinctive sound of the chain and padlock clanking as they were put in the bag above her rear wheel. On top of that, the irritating sound of her constant haranguing of her partner had stopped which could only mean that she was no longer on the premises. But Professor Marvel was still here, glass of elderflower wine in hand, listen-

ing attentively to several elderly ladies who were clearly in need of sympathy and affirmation that they had done the right thing, or possibly reassurance that whatever had gone wrong was undoubtedly their partner's fault.

'And on Board 22 she put me into Four Spades with only a nine-count,' he heard one lady saying. 'It's an impossible contract. I think one person made it, but whoever it was must have faced very poor defense.'

The Professor smiled comfortingly. 'Indeed I am ashamed to say I was in that contract, but I did receive a very lucky lead.'

The Tin Man's brain was ticking over, absorbing all this. The corners of his lips twitched infinitesimally. He had his answer. He didn't usually stay on at the club for long after the end of play. He would normally just tell a select few about some of his more instructional brilliancies that evening, but was not inclined to squander his time listening to what others had done. This evening, however, was different. He just stood quietly at the notice board and waited until the Professor and his coterie rose to depart.

'Excuse me a moment, Professor,' he said, standing directly between Professor Marvel and the door. 'I wonder if I might have a word with you.'

'Of course, young man,' the Professor smiled, 'is there a hand you wanted to discuss?'

The Tin Man wavered for a second. The very idea that he might need advice on any hand from anyone! 'No, of course not,' he responded curtly. 'I was wondering if you might be able to play in the Poppyfield Swiss Pairs with me.'

The Professor pulled out his diary from one of several inside pockets in his jacket. 'I know the event,' he said, 'but hadn't planned to play as Miss Gulch will be away that weekend. Is your partner also on holiday?'

'I'm sure she wouldn't be interested.' The Tin Man's face turned a rusty red as he spoke. 'I thought you might enjoy a game with a national champion.'

‘I’ll be delighted,’ the Professor responded. He dug into yet another pocket. ‘You must try some of these camomile pills. They’re very good for the hot flushes.’

* * * * *

By the end of the train journey, the Professor had yet again offered him some camomile pills. He hadn’t mentioned the event to Dorothy, and yet here she was on the same train, going to the same place, for the same purpose, but partnering her Auntie Em.

‘I had thought you weren’t playing in this Swiss Pairs, Dorothy,’ the Professor smiled, with a wink at Auntie Em. ‘It was good of you to allow me to play with your regular partner. I am so looking forward to a game with him.’

Dorothy suppressed a smile. It had come out in conversation a week earlier, and the reason hadn’t taken them long to work out. It was Auntie Em who had suggested that she play with Dorothy, and that she shouldn’t mention it to the Tin Man beforehand. ‘If he wants secrets, he can have secrets,’ she asserted.

By mid-afternoon the players were ambling around the room looking for their seats for the fourth round. The Tin Man snorted. ‘What is it that makes bridge players so incompetent? The director told us the arrangement of the tables before we started, and for those too important to bother listening, there are numbers on the walls. To look at this lot you would think that the table numbers were being randomly shuffled after each round!’ For him, this was a good-natured observation: the Tin Man was in a generous mood. He had to admit that this Professor was good. Well at least in the card play. Though having seen some of his partner’s bids, he thought he could most charitably describe them as intuitive. They seemed to work out well, but would certainly not feature in any textbook.

They had won their first three matches. Even better, Dorothy and Auntie Em had suffered a small loss in their first match. He had focused on his own results after that, and so it was a surprise to him, as he fought his way past the ed-

dying masses to Table 2, to find Auntie Em making herself comfortable in the North seat. ‘Are you sure you’re at the correct table?’ he gurgled, clearly hoping that she had suffered a senior moment.

‘Quite sure,’ she put on her sweetest smile. ‘It took us a match to get into our stride, but after two 20-0 wins, we did expect to be up at the top of the room. You must be doing fairly well also, to be up here. Well done you!’

‘Good steady play, as you would expect.’ He lowered himself carefully into the West seat.

The first two boards of the eight-board set had passed quietly. Both had been routine Three Notrump contracts, played by the Tin Man and Auntie Em respectively, with ten tricks each time easily available to declarer and no prospect of an eleventh. All four of them at the table were aware that some weaker declarers would manage to hold themselves to nine tricks. Dorothy, knowing her normal partner well, could see his spirits fall when his advantage after the first board was negated by the second.

They extracted their hands for the third board:

Dealer South. Neither vul.

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

After Dorothy opened the South hand with a Weak Notrump, the Tin Man came in with Two Hearts showing that suit and another. Auntie Em forced with Three Hearts and when Dor-

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

The Land of Oz is full of characters, each unique and yet also familiar to bridge players everywhere. In this third installment, the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club is threatened by dark forces led by the Wicked Witch of the West. Can Dorothy and her friends come to the rescue?

Following *If I Only had a Heart* and *Bridge Over the Rainbow*, this book completes the trilogy with humor and great bridge.



ALEX ADAMSON (Linlithgow, Scotland) is a Scotland Open Team player. Additionally, he has captained the Scottish Open, Junior and Women's teams. After a successful European Championships in 2018, he captained the women in the Venice Cup in Wuhan in 2019.



HARRY SMITH (Scone, Scotland) has represented Scotland in both the Open and Senior Teams. As NPC, he captained the Senior Team to a European Bronze Medal in Dublin in 2012, and to the quarter-final of the World Championships in Bali the following year, the story of which is told in *Scotland's Senior Moment*.



BILL BUTTLE, Illustrator (d. 2020) had work syndicated in newspapers across Canada and his cartoons continue to appear in the *Bridge Bulletin*. He was the illustrator for the acclaimed new collections of Victor Mollo's 'Menagerie' stories, and had two books of cartoons published by Master Point Press.

