



MISPLAY
these hands
WITH ME

Mark Horton



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INTRODUCTION

When Terence Reese's book *Play Bridge with Reese* was published in 1960 it presented for the first time the 'over the shoulder' style of describing the play of a deal that has subsequently been copied by many authors. *Bridge* magazine originally published a series of articles written in this style by Reese, which formed the basis for that book and the sequel, *Play These Hands With Me*. It is an attractive style to lampoon, and it was perhaps inevitable that in February, 1975, the Editor, Eric Milnes, should publish this article in the same journal:

PLAY THIS HAND FOR ME

Greg Maczek

Terence Reese's highly popular series Play These Hands With Me has evoked several efforts at parody but none, I think, more successful than this. Even Mr. Reese will scarce forbear to smile.

My partner at rubber bridge is the club expert, a gruff and dour man who does not lightly tolerate ineptitude in either bidding or play. We stand at game all and I ponder the best way to place the declaration in his hand as I pick up as dealer:

♠ A K 8 3
♥ 6
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ A Q 5

The opening bid poses no problem. The natural One Diamond call leaves many roads open — to a game declaration by partner in spades, notrump, or maybe even clubs. The only awkward response he could make would be in hearts, as my spade rebid may then attract unwelcome support.

Sure enough, partner calls One Heart. Well, I hope he doesn't raise me as I bid One Spade. Partner now gives me preference to Two Diamonds. Perhaps I can get him to call notrump. I bid Three Clubs. Worse! Partner raises this to Four Clubs. I am getting desperate — maybe I can still get him to bid notrump; I bid Four Spades. But no, partner brings me back to Five Clubs. I resignedly correct to Five Diamonds. Maybe I shall get an emergency telephone call, and someone will have to play this hand for me.

The sad story of the bidding has been:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
pass	1♥	pass	1♠
pass	2♦	pass	3♣
pass	4♣	pass	4♠
pass	5♣	pass	5♦
all pass			

West leads the three of hearts and partner puts down:

♠ J
 ♥ AJ 10 9 4
 ♦ 7 5 3
 ♣ 10 7 4 2

 ♠ AK 8 3
 ♥ 6
 ♦ AJ 8 4 2
 ♣ A Q 5

Partner is glaring at me from across the table and I have absolutely no idea of what to do. No doubt partner would breeze through this hand, dropping a few singleton honors and executing a double winkle squeeze with a trump coup double endplay thrown in for good measure. I can see nothing better than trying the club

finesse. After winning the ace of hearts, things brighten a little when the queen of clubs holds — perhaps we can get out of this for only two down! While pondering my next move, I cash the ace of clubs and ace of spades. I always think so much better with a couple of tricks neatly stacked in front of me.

I am almost out of aces and I still need a lot of tricks. Suddenly something strikes me — I can probably make some tricks by ruffing! Without further ado I ruff a spade in dummy, ruff a heart, ruff another spade, another heart and another spade. No one has overruffed, but it now occurs to me that the last spade that I ruffed was a winner, the king. I hope that blunder won't cost the contract. The position now is:

♠	—
♥	J 10
♦	—
♣	10 7
♠	—
♥	—
♦	A J 8
♣	5

When I lead a heart from dummy, East goes into committee with himself. Finally, he ruffs with the queen of diamonds.

What a strange play — I'm fairly sure that heart wasn't even good. Well, I don't feel like wasting my ace of trumps just yet, so I instead discard the five of clubs, which I *am* sure is not a winner. East, looking aggrieved, now leads the nine of diamonds. My last three cards are the ace, knave and eight of diamonds and I need two of the last three tricks. I think I can guess the reasons for East's discomfort. He had forgotten that my knave of hearts on the last trick was not a winner when he ruffed; and since he ruffed with the queen, he probably has the king as well. This suspicious nine of diamonds is a crafty attempt to talk me out of the finesse. I confidently play the knave of diamonds.