

Pesky Heart Raise [1]

Board 6

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 9 8 5 3
 ♥ K 4
 ♦ A 8 5 2
 ♣ K 4



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT ¹	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Dbl	Pass
?			

1. Forcing

What does that double mean? What would you do as West?

Suppose you pass. Your lead?

Pesky Heart Raise [2]

Board 6

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ J 10 4
 ♥ A 10 8 6
 ♦ J 10 9
 ♣ 7 6 3

♠ A 9 8 5 3
 ♥ K 4
 ♦ A 8 5 2
 ♣ K 4



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT ¹	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Dbl	All pass

1. Forcing
 3 ♥× by South

Often the best lead against a doubled partscore is a trump. Thinking partner has some trumps, you try the lead of the ♥ K.

Declarer wins the ♥ A on dummy and leads a diamond, 7 (upside-down count), King, and you are in with the Ace.

What now?

Board 6

Pesky Heart Raise [3]

West Deals	♠ J 10 4		
E-W Vul	♥ A 10 8 6		
	♦ J 10 9		
	♣ 7 6 3		

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

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Dbl	All pass
3 ♥× by South			

Would you be thinking, "Ouch, that lead was a disaster; looks like I have blown up the board!" as you exit with your last trump? Then declarer brings in this impossible contract by: winning in dummy, ruffing out the ♦ Q (or finessing across trump), and reentering dummy with a trump to discard a club.

EVERYBODY makes mistakes. There are still matchpoints to be won on this deal, if you keep calm and figure this out. Since partner started with at most two trumps, he must have minor suits: a responsive or a do-something-intelligent (DSI) double. Surely that includes the ♣ A or ♣ Q, so play that ♣ K - when it wins, continue to partner's ace. Partner cashes the ♠ K, and you eventually take the ♠ A for the setting trick. Your score is a sad 28%, but it's better than 0.9% for letting them make it.

In the post mortem, you discover that, had you bid 4 ♦, partner would either pass or raise, and you would bring in 11 tricks on almost automatic play.

Furthermore, had you correctly read partner's double as not being strictly penalty, and chosen to pass, you would have, perhaps by process of elimination, led the ♣ K at the get-go. Three down (+500) would then be possible.

How could you know? If the opponents have any sense at all, they have eight or more hearts, and you are looking at two. Partner could have as many as three hearts, but that's not the way to bet.

Pesky Heart Raise [4]

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT ¹	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	?	
1. Forcing			

I asked two experts what a double would mean in this abstract situation, *without giving any hands* or vulnerability. Looking at ♥ K 4 makes this problem easier; it's more difficult, if you have a void or small singleton in hearts.

Lew Gamerman: It sounds like a do the right thing partner double: just a good hand.

Adam Grossack: Not penalty when they bid and raise and we haven't found a fit. Values, no clear direction. Maybe 2245, maybe 2344 10 count.

Pete: These answers are compatible. I expect either or both might have passed at the table and led the ♣ K. I gave Adam the East hand...

Adam: Fine to double with that, although it's a slight gamble, since it doesn't have to be purely responsive. I prefer to let some of the more balanced hands double, since what else are we meant to do with a balanced 10 count? Difficult spot overall.

Might be better off to start with 1 ♠ - Pass - 3 ♣ natural and invitational if it is systemic. Hard hand for grouping into 1 NT.

Pete: Thanks! We were playing a 3 ♣ response fit-showing, and 2 ♣ forcing to game, so we had to respond 1 NT. [In this partnership, we have since changed to playing a 3 ♣ response as natural and invitational.]