

Love at first purrr

By Rikard Greenberg, House-Cat



I was tinkering a long time with the idea of sharing my newly discovered bridge talent with my less skilled fellow cats, I just needed to find the right occasion. So when the lovely Prissy started crying on my shoulder about the mishap occurred to her usual pairs partner, a silly angora who caught a chill after she got herself locked up in her food provider's fridge during a little hunting foray, I could not help but volunteering my services: drum roll and trumpets please: "Here comes the brave Sir Rikard to the rescue of his damsel in distress!"

After a few afternoons spent languidly on the sofa, reveling in her soft white fur...ahemm I mean agreeing a system, the day of the tournament finally arrived.

The first few rounds passed by without incidents, moreover the opponents seemed very keen to welcome my entry into Tournament Bridge with a steady supply of generous gifts which was nicely boosting our scores.

Then Felix happened.

Out of nowhere, the tallest cat that I had ever seen sat down on my left to partner Tiny, a fat and scruffy old American Curly. I was later to find out that Felix was known as the local club bully as well as a bit of an expert, who hired himself off to the weakest players in exchange for the odd food treats.

In the first of the three boards, Felix proceeded to make an impossible 3NT contract playing virtually double dummy, making three tricks from A109x facing Jxx after cashing quickly the ace and playing small from hand finding the stiff KQ offside.

My suspicions were further aroused, when I noticed how he was rolling his ridiculously tall frame back and forth like

a gigantic pendulum, obviously trying to snatch a glance at our cards.

The second board saw me declare a normal 3NT, after 1NT-2♣-2♦-3NT, and go one down when Felix "miraculously" picked the lead of the ♦K from J1086-976-K10-J854 finding her partner with AQxxx in the suit.

By now I was totally incensed, I glared at him with intense dislike but he simply looked back at me and winked!! The cheek of it!

I tried to calm myself down and I collected the cards from the third board, nv vs vul:

♠ AJ9542
♥ AK865
♦ 7
♣ 6

Not a bad collection you will agree, so I was rather surprised when my sweet Prissy opened a strong NT. What to do, what to do This hand required a bidding plan to get the right information in order to decide in which strain to play.

What would you do in my place?

After some thought I bid 2♥, which was a transfer to spades of course, and over Prissy's obedient 2♣ bid I continued with 3♥ to which she quickly replied 3NT.

Now I knew everything I needed to know: Prissy must have two spades and three hearts, since with two doubletons she would never have opened 1NT (I wish I were so reliable with my 1NT openings!).

The other good thing about my Prissy is that she has not yet got herself confused by quantitative 4NT, roman keycard or other fancy conventions: to her 4NT is Blackwood nice and simple.

This was absolutely peachy for me since I could now reply to her 3NT with 4NT and after I found out that she had 2 aces, I put the 6♥ card firmly on the table.

Here was the complete hand:

		♠ 87	
		♥ QJ7	
		♦ AQ109	
		♣ AK54	
♠ Q10	N	♠ K63	
♥ 954	W	♥ 32	
♦ 865	E	♦ KJ432	
♣ QJ1098	S	♣ 732	
		♠ AJ9542	
		♥ AK865	
		♦ 7	
		♣ 6	

After the heart lead, I played ♠A and a spade and quickly claimed 12 tricks after the heart return, since my spades could be made good ruffing the third round with the ♥Q in dummy.

The scorecard showed that we were one of the few pairs to have found the right strain, all of the others languishing in the unmakeable 6♠.

This managed somehow to redress a bit the balance of my first encounter with Felix, who left moaning about beginners and their luck while Prissy rewarded my efforts with an adoring smile.

We finished second in the heat with 65%, behind Felix of course!

However I finished very much first in the following week "FIZO" charity ball when I strutted along to the dance floor accompanied by Prissy, the most ravishing creature I ever had the fortune of setting eyes on.

Purrrrrrrrr

