

Welcome to my world

By Rikard Greenberg, House-Cat



Cats are strange animals.

Do you happen to know how many times I have heard this ridiculous sentence in the three years I have been on this earth?

Well, more than you have had hot dinners.

First of all please qualify "strange" for me: here I am, in the pride of my life, a fully developed 3 year old intelligent and rather attractive (so they say) cat and Hana, my human food-provider (I think the word "owner" is so passé don't you?), spends most of her waking hours playing some weird card game with her friends.

Now that is strange!

What is even stranger is that simply by listening in here and there I can safely say that I have learnt a lot more about this "bridge" game, as they call it, than she or her friends ever will.

Yet we are the "strange" animals. Go figure.

Take yesterday for instance. I was doing my usual dance around the table where Hana and her friends were sitting, just to remind the ladies that it would be nice to share those tasty cakes with the resident cat, when I noticed that nobody, I mean nobody, was paying me any attention.

I am sure you would agree that it is quite insulting to be totally ignored in my own home, so I jumped on the sideboard to see what was all that about and noticed that the all the ladies were completely absorbed in this auction thing that precedes the real fun, when the cards get to be played.

I try to smirk at Liora, Hana's partner and my personal favorite because of her nice

long nails and the wonderful feeling I get when she pets me, but I get no reaction whatsoever.

Nothing left for me to do but to look at what they are playing, is there?

Here are the cards that Hana held:

♠ 1086
♥ KQ964
♦ Q94
♣ 97

This is how the auction developed with N/S vulnerable:

West	North	East	South
Hana	Sonia	Liora	Aviva
		Pass	1♣
1♥	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The lead was the ♥K and this dummy hit the table:

♠ AQ9
♥ 1083
♦ K3
♣ QJ1086

Declarer played small from dummy and took the ♥K with the ♥A, Liora playing the ♥2.

Next came the ♠J which ran to Liora's ♠K, who quickly tabled the ♥7, covered by declarer's ♥J.

This is the position we reached with Hana to play:

♠ 108	♠ AQ
♥ Q964	♥ 108
♦ Q94	♦ K3
♣ 97	♣ QJ1086
	N
	W E
	S

Now I saw Hana getting into one of her deep trances, I could guess what she was thinking: without any side-entries the only chances for her to cash her suit might lie in ducking this trick hoping that partner held the last heart.

Nice reasoning but, wait, why would

declarer play on spades instead of setting up her long club suit?

Hmmm... it does not make sense unless the clubs are already running.

It looks to me like she knew that she was going to get a second heart and that she was hurrying to develop a ninth trick to make her game.

What could she have in her hand? She bid 2NT only over 2♥ that means that together with ♥A, the ♠J, the ♥J and the top clubs she could not have any more points, she certainly would have bid 3NT with 14 points. Hana was still thinking and I could see now that the only chance to beat the contract was to take the ♥J with the ♥Q and to play a diamond across dummy's ♦K.

The moment of decision had come, Hana slowly moved her finger towards the small heart, obviously meaning to duck the ♥J; quick as lightning, I jumped in her lap and I started biting lovingly at her finger. She stopped in surprise, moved her hand away and then again attempted to reach for the small heart.

I should have guessed: humans are probably the most stupid species on this earth, just about smart enough to open a tin of tuna for us.

What could I do? Again I held her finger in my mouth and this time I slowly nudged it towards the small diamond. Would the silly woman get the hint?

Mercifully, she looked up and then suddenly as if inspired (guess by whom?) she played the ♦4, declarer after a moment thought, played the ♦K and quickly conceded 2 down after Liora showed her AJ1086 in the suit.

Hana was congratulated on her brilliant switch and, admittedly after a few more nudges, she lovingly placed a marzipan cake for me to feast on, which I slowly savored while enjoying some delightful chin-scratching by Liora's pointy nails.

Life as a cat is not all that bad.

