

# Winsome & Loathsome

## Tales of the Trail



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### Beautiful Vienna

The Vienna coup is believed to have been discovered in — you guessed it — beautiful Vienna during the pre-bridge whist era. It is an unblocking play made in preparation for a squeeze. Declarer cashes a high card, teasingly establishing a winner for an opponent, but now the lower cards in the suit provide for convenient discards on the run of another suit. The following comes from a whist deal writeup by Carl Dickel.

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

  

|  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
|  | ♠ J 10 3    |  |
|  | ♥ A K Q J 4 |  |
|  | ♦ 6 4       |  |
|  | ♣ 9 7 6     |  |

Clubs are trumps and North is to lead (whist rules). North starts off by cashing the ♠A, which allows for the discard of the ♠Q later, with the result that the ♠J becomes a menace to East.

Four rounds of clubs, on which South can conveniently shed a diamond, give East a discard problem. He has to keep a diamond

to stop the whole diamond suit running on a finesse, so he lets go a heart or a spade. If he gives up the ♠K, the queen is cashed and declarer has three spades, four hearts, four clubs and two diamonds on a finesse. If East discards a heart, South runs five hearts, discarding the ♠Q from North, and East has to give up the ♠K, in which case the South hand is high. The diamond finesse is no longer required.

My favorite Vienna coup occurred some years ago while playing with Sharon in the days when she was still impressed. It came up against our chief contenders in the event and it assured us the win. I don't have room to describe the hand (which I think I've done in the past) because I want to tell you about the payback.

I was playing in a knockout teams in Florida against a strong Russ Ekeblad team that included Michael Seamon. We had a razor-thin edge at the half, and we might have expanded it had it not been for the auction on one slam hand followed by Michael's outstanding declarer play. Michael, who is genetically disposed to outstanding declarer play, sat South with the following layout:

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

  

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| ♠ 10 9 3      |  |
| ♥ 8 7 4       |  |
| ♦ A K Q 8 7 2 |  |
| ♣ J           |  |

Michael was declarer in 6♦. I led the ♠8, taken in dummy. Two rounds of diamonds revealed the bad

split (I pitched a club), so Michael surrendered a diamond. Dummy and I pitched a spade. The ♠Q was returned, forcing Mike to play the Vienna coup card from dummy while I followed. Then he played the ♣A, ♣K and ruffed a club, leaving:

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| ♠ —        |  |  |
| ♥ J 10 6 5 |  |  |
| ♦ —        |  |  |
| ♣ Q        |  |  |

  

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ♠ 5     |  |
| ♥ A K 2 |  |
| ♦ —     |  |
| ♣ 6     |  |

  

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | N | E |
|  | W | S |

  

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ♠ Q     |  |
| ♥ Q 9 3 |  |
| ♦ J     |  |
| ♣ —     |  |

  

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ♠ 10  |  |
| ♥ 8 7 |  |
| ♦ Q 8 |  |
| ♣ —   |  |

He cashed the ♦Q, pitching dummy's last spade. I was forced to discard a heart on the ♦Q and another heart on the last diamond to keep the high club. On the last diamond, he threw dummy's ♣6. Partner followed to the ♦Q but was forced to surrender a heart in order to keep the high spade. Michael then played hearts from the top, claiming his 12th trick with the ♥2, waltzing Vienna-style to victory!

That was the match. Our teammates played a reasonable 6NT, but it wouldn't fetch when the diamonds didn't break. Another beautiful Vienna had determined an outcome. I guess it was payback. The bridge gods do that. They let you win some — and lose some.

