

Beauty is in the eye of the cat



By Rikard Greenberg, House Cat

I don't mind admitting that I like the way I look, there again most cats do: it is part of that healthy narcissism which we are born with. So where is the problem? Well, hmmm..actually you are. Most food providers have this peculiar notion of feline beauty which compels them to try and improve what cannot really be improved. Some of them even dare to provoke the ultimate confrontation between our two species: they try to bathe us.

Our objections to submitting ourselves to such indignity are soundly based on the fact that, unlike you, we do wash ourselves many, many times every day and therefore we do not need this brute manipulation of our carefully groomed selves.

Nevertheless there you go with your pathetically stealthy attempts to lure us into the bath where you can have your evil way with us. Shame on you!

Do I jump on you in the morning to get you to comb that overgrown jungle that you call your hair?

Do I wake you up at 6am and force you to do an early morning run around the block to shed some of those excess pounds?

I do not. Live and let live is my motto, I look great and you don't, but still I allow you to share my house and let you prepare my food. Do you want to spend some time grooming me? Buy a nice brush and get to work and don't forget the tickly spot under my chin!

Luckily Hana has been quickly house-trained and several first-aid kits later she has reconsidered the wisdom of having me, her and a tub of water in the same closed environment.

I wish I had the same luck in getting her bridge game up to par!

Yesterday she was hosting one of her usual afternoon bridge & tea sessions when an interesting hand came up.

♠ Q
♥ AQ863
♦ AK10
♣ J1098

N
W E
S

♠ AKJ87
♥ 102
♦ 97
♣ AQ54

Hana opened 1♠ in South and when Liora replied 2♥ she settled upon a somewhat light 3♣ rebid, that seemed to excite Liora who immediately leaped to Blackwood and then closed the auction with a bid of 6♣ or at least that is what she thought until Aviva sitting West in the pass out seat bellowed a clear ringing "Double!" which could only mean trumps, and lots of them!

Both Hana and Liora could not easily see if 6NT would provide a safer haven and decided to stick with the evil they knew.

The lead was the ♦6 taken by dummy's king. It seemed even more obvious after looking at dummy that Aviva had to have all the remaining trumps, was there a way to make the hand despite that?

Hana unblocked her spades by cashing the ♠Q and then continued with ♦A and diamond ruff with the ♣Q. If this had been overruffed, the hand would have been over, but Aviva thought for a while and then correctly pitched a heart. Hana cashed her three top spades, pitching hearts from dummy while Aviva followed suit and East unsurprisingly threw a diamond on the last one. Hana was now ready to take the heart finesse by leading the ♥10 but when West followed perforce with the ♥K, things did not look so good anymore: there was no way that Hana could now avoid conceding the ♣K and the fifth trump.

Can you see where she went wrong?

This was the full layout.

♠ Q			
♥ AQ863			
♦ AK10			
♣ J1098			
♠ 9654	N		♠ 1032
♥ K4	W	E	♥ J975
♦ 62			♦ QJ8543
♣ K7632	S		♣ -
			♠ AKJ87
			♥ 102
			♦ 97
			♣ AQ54

It is strange that when you ask a reasonable player like Hana how to set up a crossruff, she will correctly answer that the first thing to do is to cash all the top tricks in the side suits and yet when she was faced with a hand that essentially could only be made on crossruff lines she mistimed the play, ruffing the diamond too early, because she did not think of the hand that way.

The correct order of play should have been: take the lead with the ♦K, cash the ♠Q, come back to hand with the ♣A. Now we cash the top three spades, take the heart finesse, cash the ♥A and finally play ♦A and diamond ruff with the ♣Q! What can Aviva do now? Overruffing won't help because afterwards she can only send back a club and dummy's trumps will deal with the rest, underruffing is even more undignified, best to concede with a smile and congratulate the opponents on their skillful play.

Had Hana dedicated more of her time to scratching my chin, she would have been able to listen to my free "Crossruff Tips for dummies" lecture and made the hand without a problem. Got the hint?

