Winter's Tale

Rikard Greenberg, House Cat

Winter. Brrrrr. Not my favorite season, as you might easily guess. However, winter is also the time when I am most grateful to Hana: I look outside through the windows hammered by the torrential rain and I think about all the cats less fortunate than myself who have to endure these awful conditions. Instead I live in a nice warm house, where I am properly cared for. Yes, I have a lot to be thankful for.

Winter. What I love most in the winter are those lovely vents on the walls: the very ones which during the summer spewed horribly cold air, now purr happily sending streams of heat around the house. Seeking out the best spots where their action combines to create a cocoon of warmth becomes a treasure hunt; much more fun than heading in the summer for the obvious sunny areas.

Winter. Winter is a time for quiet and lonely thoughts. I miss my Prissy. I tried to venture out a few times but her food provider is so scared that she might catch something in this weather that she never lets her out of her sight. All I have to keep me company is the wonderful memories of our times together. Sometimes I just lie on the couch, close my eyes and dream about her while I let myself be enveloped by the warmth all around me.

Winter. This year's winter brought me a very special treat: Hana loves skiing and usually goes away for a week or two just after Christmas to indulge her passion; this time, however, she had a nasty fall and had to return early carrying with her a wonderful gift, my very own scratching post. Yes, you guessed it, she had a nice big cast on her leg which provides me with endless hours of scratching fun!!

All of her friends came to visit her and that marked the start of a lot of bridge sessions organized to keep her company. Funnily enough these bridge marathons and the lack of other activities seemed to help Hana to get her game up a notch or two.

See what she did in this hand and try to match her result.

South Dealer – All NV

West	North	East	South
Aviva	Liora	Dorit	Hana
			4♠
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

Aviva led the ♣K and switched to the ♦Q.

♠ A987
♥ 98
♦ A6543
♣ Q9

N
W E
S

♠ KQJ10654
♥ K73
♦ 97
♣ 6

Things do not look too good. Unless the ♥A is with Dorit, a very unlikely event given the bidding, we are in danger of losing a diamond and two hearts in addition to the club we already conceded. The only chance to pitch our hearts lies in setting up dummy's diamonds, but it seems inevitable that Dorit will do her utmost to take the second round of the suit in order to play a heart across and scuttle our contract.

Can you see how Hana made her contract?

Brilliant ideas anyone?

Try and see what happens if you take the ♦A and play the ♣Q pitching your second diamond in hand. Easier if we see all four hands:

♠ A987
♥ 98
♦ A6543
♣ Q9

♠ 3
♥ AJ64
♦ QJ10
♣ AK1084

N
W E
S

♠ 2
♥ Q1052
♦ K92
♣ J7532

♠ KQJ10654
♥ K73
♦ 97
♣ 6

Aviva has no choice but to take the ♣Q with her ♣A and send back a trump. We now have the time to set up the diamonds and if we find them splitting 3-3, we can pitch on them two heart losers from hand. Et voila'!

A simple and yet beautiful loser on loser play but also one that many players will overlook. The girls were so excited by Hana's brilliant line that they decided to record it for posterity by inscribing the deal on her cast!!