

HAVE PATIENCE!

Bill Gilbert

It was the last round of the Savoy pairs, played in a posh London hotel. My partner, Art Sullivan, and I had entered the finals leading the field. Since we were having an average-plus game we figured to have a good chance to win, especially when two rather strange looking youths arrived to play the last round against us.

Sitting East was a longhaired, pallid and thin young man whose name seemed to be "Reginald;" at least that's how his partner addressed him. Reginald was decked out in a cobwebby gray velvet suit with a collar made of what looked like Spanish altar lace. He held his cards in his right hand; with his left hand he grasped a flower, either a tulip or lily, I wasn't sure which. But whatever it was, every few seconds or so he would bring it to his nose, sniff deeply and sigh. Were these signals to his partner? I determined to watch closely, but for the moment said nothing.

Reginald's partner turned out to be named Archibald. He seemed to be a quite commonplace, in fact even an "every day young man." He was dressed in an ordinary suit, but in his left hand he held an open bottle of beer which he raised to his lips periodically. More signals? I almost called the director, Dick D. "Oily" Carte (so-nicknamed for the vast quantities of pomade with which he dressed his thinning hair). However I decided just to go ahead and play it by ear, always the best thing to do when you don't know the score.

Anxious to get the round underway, I said to Archibald "You're the dealer; it's your turn to call." Archibald just looked at me dreamily and murmured, "You should have Patience, sir." Then he began the auction with a pass

K2
87
K987632
52

A86
AK32
AJ
AK74

The bidding was short and sweet; my partner, North, opened three diamonds and I put it in six notrump. Archibald led the spade queen, which I won in hand. Obviously the contract depended on the diamond break. So I led the Ace of diamonds, everybody following. Well, now I'm cold for six, at least. So I played the diamond Jack and Archibald, West, played the ten. Damn, I thought, I should have bid seven! But when I played the king of diamonds from dummy, Reginald, East, showed out! Believe it or not Archibald had played the ten of diamonds under the Jack holding Q10. I made the same six that was there all along, but with a certain feeling of irritation, since given the defense I could have made seven. I tried to figure out why Archibald had made such an idiotic play, and I finally decided that he must be a rank beginner, not stopping to ask myself how he and his partner had then made it into the finals of the Savoy Pairs.

The next hand was more interesting:

K963

**54
654
AKQJ**

**AJ4
AQ9**

AK8

5432

The bidding: (Both vul.)

N E S W

1C 2H 3H P

3S P 4H P

5C P 6NT all pass

I really didn't know how to bid my hand, and I might have bid 6C, but decided on notrump because of the matchpoint scoring. Archibald led a heart to his partner's 10 and I won the queen. Entering dummy with a club, I finessed the spade jack, which held. I now played the ace of spades and Reginald, East, followed with the 10!

Where is the queen of spades, I asked myself. If East holds it he should have played it; it's an automatic falsecard. On the other hand, East *must* have it, because the spade finesse worked. So I led to the King of spades, and Reginald showed out. So evidently Archibald, West, had for some reason failed to win the trick when given the opportunity.

At this point I had only eleven tricks, and had to look for a squeeze. There were two possibilities. Concede the spade to West and then squeeze Reginald, East, in diamonds and hearts. But this requires that he hold five diamonds which is impossible since he has already shown six hearts (implied), two spades and a club. So it looks better to play the nine of hearts out of hand and then squeeze Archibald, West, in Spades and Diamonds. I didn't even think about the possibility of a miracle in the diamond suit, namely that East held QJ109. When I went down on the hand, I discovered that I could have made it all along by squeezing East (yes, the miracle came to pass). The full hand:

K963

**54
654
AKQ**

**Q875
32
732
9876**

**102
KJ10876
QJ109**

AJ4
AQ9

AK8

5432

(East
also
has
the
singleton
10 of
clubs
but
for
some
reason
this
stupid
software
won't
let
me
type
it in.
I
guess
I
should
have
gotten
those
upgrades
they
keep
offering!)

Of course if I'd had the sense to cash a second club before rectifying, I would have had an exact count on hand and would have seen that the only hope was to find the miraculous diamond holding. Really, I was too busy trying to figure out what the opponents were doing to think straight. But full credit to Archibald for giving me a chance to make an error. If he had grabbed the spade Queen, I would have fallen into the winning line of play by default. So he ducked the spade queen hoping I'd try to squeeze him out of it.

Or did he? Maybe he didn't know what he was doing, as seemed to be the case in the first hand of the set. "Fine play you made there, Archibald, ducking the spade, I said. "Maybe I'll play against you again."

"I'm sure we *will* meet again," he replied. "Just have Patience."

At this point Oily Carte announced that Archibald and Reginald were the winners; they beat us out by one matchpoint because of the last hand. Oily was quite effusive in praising the two young men. "I'm sure most of you know that Reginald Bunthorne and Archibald Grosvenor, our winners, are patients at the Basingstoke Lunatic Asylum. On the theory that they would fit right in at a bridge tournament, they were given furlough to play in our Savoy Pairs. And now they've gone and won it! Three cheers! Hip, hip, hoorah!"

And as I cheered, I suddenly understood. Reginald and Archibald were both patients. This explained his cryptic remarks to me about my having Patience! In fact, the patients had had *me*!