



THE PLAYS THE THING

by Mark Horton

As I am sure you are all aware this year marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare. References to cards and card play a significant role in the Bard's writings and I can unreservedly state that he would have revelled in the outstanding play that took place on this deal from the match between Poland and France in Round 7 of the Women's Championship.

Board 32. Dealer West. EW Vul.

	♠	9 5 2	
	♥	K J 9 3	
	♦	Q 8 7	
	♣	A J 9	
♠ 7 ♥ Q 10 6 5 4 ♦ A K 6 5 3 ♣ 10 5	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K Q 8 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 10 9 4 ♣ Q 7 6 4 2	
	♠	A J 10 6 4 3	
	♥	A 2	
	♦	J 2	
	♣	K 8 3	



Bénédicte Cronier
FRANCE

France led 16-14, and in the Open Room Croatia had played in 4♠, recording ten tricks for +620.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Sarniak	Cronier	Baldysz	Willard
2♥*	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

2♥ Hearts and a minor

With a flat hand North's decision to bid 3NT was totally understandable, but theoretically it was the wrong action and gave Poland a chance to secure a last gasp victory.

East led the nine of diamonds and when West made the understandable error of winning with the king before returning a diamond declarer was handed the thinnest of lifelines.

Even so, it was apparent that only a seemingly miraculous series of plays could deliver nine tricks and it was hard to imagine that they might be found.

Declarer won the diamond return with dummy's jack, cashed the ace of hearts and played a heart to the nine. When that passed off peacefully, she played the jack of clubs from her hand, running it when East followed impassively with the two. A club to the king was followed by the ace of spades and declarer returned to hand with the ace of clubs and exited with the queen of diamonds. West could win and cash two more diamonds but then had to lead into declarer's heart tenace.

We were following the play as it happened and each winning view was accompanied by an ever increasing sense of incredulity and delight.

France lost an IMP, but had won the match 16-15.

To quote the Bard it was 'A dish fit for the gods'.
(Julius Caesar)

VIDEOS FROM THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Readers who are interested in more detailed view of the Championships whether it is news, interviews or simply looking at the surroundings can find it on youtube on the EBL channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN6ZMmC9FxsgBVn9PermDuw>