LEARNING MADE EASY

4th Edition

Bridge

for dummies®

A Wiley Brand

Build a winning hand and bid with confidence

Strategize with your bridge partner

Play online and in clubs and tournaments

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Grand Master in the World Bridge Federation

Introduction

Bridge, quite simply, is the best card game ever. No other game even comes close. Of course, I may be a little biased. I've been playing since I was 11 years old, when my best friend's father asked our gambling group, "Why don't you guys find a good game to play?" What I found was a great game, and I've never looked back.

What exactly is it about bridge that fascinates countless millions, has fascinated countless millions, and will continue to fascinate countless millions? Let me count the ways:

- **Bridge is a social game.** You play with a partner and two opponents. Right off the bat, you have four people together. Inevitably, you meet a host of new friends with a strong common bond, the game of bridge. Bridge is not an "I" game — bridge is a "we" game.
- **Bridge is a challenging game.** Each hand is an adventure; each hand presents a unique set of conditions that you react to and solve. You have to do a little thinking. Studies have proven that playing bridge keeps the brain cells active, which is helpful when you get a bit older.
- **Bridge is a game of psychology.** If you fancy yourself a keen observer of human behavior, look no further. You have found your niche. Players aren't supposed to show any emotion during the play, but the dam always has a few leaks.
- **Bridge is fun.** Hours become minutes! Playing bridge can mean endless hours of pleasure, a host of new friends, and many laughs.

About This Book

If you're an absolute beginner, this is the book for you. I take you on a hand-held tour explaining the fundamentals in terms you can understand. I walk you through the different aspects of the game, showing you real-life examples so you can feel comfortable with the basics before you start to play.

If you have played (or tried to play) bridge before, this book still has much to offer you. I condense my years of experience with the game into tips and hints that can make you a better player. And you don't have to read the book from start to finish if you don't want to; just flip it open and find the chapter or part on the topic that you want to know more about.

If you're a bridge novice, eventually you'll have to play a few hands to feel like a real bridge player. This book offers an easy-to-follow path that will increase your comfort zone when you actually have to play on your own!

This edition includes an appendix that covers the bidding system most commonly used in the United Kingdom, called *Acol.* This appendix is a big help to up-and-coming players throughout the United Kingdom. The play of the hand sections in the main part of the book are standard fare throughout the world, and the section on defensive carding is also played by the majority of players worldwide as well.

Conventions Used in This Book

No, not bridge “conventions” yet! The conventions in this section are the ones I use to help you navigate this book with maximum ease.

For example, I use a few symbols when referring to cards and bids. In a deck of cards, you have four suits: spades (♠), hearts (♥), diamonds (♦), and clubs (♣). When I refer to a particular card, I use abbreviations. For example, the six of spades becomes ♠6, and the jack of hearts transforms into ♥J. However, when discussing a bid or contract, I use 6♠, not ♠6.

I talk a lot about cards in this book. Sometimes I want to show you all the cards in your hand, and sometimes I want to show you the cards in every player’s hand (that’s 52 cards). Instead of listing those cards in the text, I set them aside in figures so you can more easily see who has which cards. The cards in a hand are separated by suit, making it even easier to see each player’s holdings.

In these figures, you may notice that each of the four players has a designated direction: You see a North, a South, an East, and a West. These directions make it easier for you to follow the play as it goes around the table. For most of the book, you are South. If I want you to see something from a different perspective, I tell you where you’re seated.

When I talk about bidding (especially in Parts 3 and 4), I use a table like the following to show you how a bidding sequence progresses.

South	***West***	***North***	***East***
1♣	1NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Don’t worry about what this bidding means. For now, I just want you to understand that you read these tables starting at the upper-left corner, continuing to the right until the fourth player, and then going to the next line, the first player’s second bid. For example, for the preceding sequence, the bidding starts with the first player, South (who bids 1♣) and continues to the right until the fourth player, East (who passes). Then the sequence goes back to South, the first player, who passes.

To top it off, I use a few other general conventions:

- *Italics* highlight defined terms.
- **Boldface** text highlights keywords in bulleted lists and the action part of numbered steps.
- `Monofont` is used for web addresses.
- If you’re short on time, you can skip the information in sidebars (the shaded boxes). Those bits are interesting but nonessential.

At times, you may think I overrun you with rules, but I’m just giving you guidelines, something to get you started. When you begin to play, you’ll see occasional exceptions to these guidelines. In bridge, “always” and “never” don’t apply. Just remember that bridge is based most of all on common sense. After reading this book, you’ll have a good idea of the basics and what to do when you encounter new situations.

Foolish Assumptions

I’m assuming that you’re not going to understand everything you read the first time around. Nobody does.

Think of bridge as a foreign language. Patience, patience, patience.

I'm also assuming that you will go out and find three other people who want to play bridge so you can practice. This is the ultimate bliss for a beginner.

And I'm assuming you're either someone who wants to understand the basics of bridge or a seasoned player who wants to pick up a few new techniques. I hope I'm not foolishly assuming that I can help both groups.

Icons Used in This Book

The icons used in this book highlight important topics and help you pick out those that interest you.

REMEMBER If you can't remember everything you read in this book, don't worry; you're not alone. But do try to keep these items in mind.

TIP This icon flags helpful hints that make you a smarter player, faster.

WARNING Watch out! You could lose many tricks or something equally disastrous if you ignore items marked with this icon.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this product also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that gives you a rundown of the four phases of a bridge hand, bidding tips, bridge etiquette, and a chart of the points scored when you make your contract. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for "Bridge Cheat Sheet" in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

You can start anywhere you like and read the chapters in any order. If you are completely new to bridge, your best bet is to head straight to Chapter 1 so you can get a feel for the game.

I describe many plays and sample hands throughout this book. To get a real feel for the game, try reading the book with a deck of cards nearby. In fact, you can save yourself weeks or months of time if you lay out the cards that you see in the example diagrams and play the cards as I suggest.

Better yet, try to find three other players who want to play this exciting game. You can read the book together and actually practice playing the hands as you read. Experience is the best teacher, and if you're not ready for a real hand, you can use the material in this book as a kind of dry run.

If, during the course of reading this book, you feel like you just have to get in on the action, feel free to jump into any game you can find. Play as often as you can. It's the best way to learn. You can find information about bridge clubs and tournaments in Chapter 21.

Finally, log on to the Net for more bridge info or even online play. Yes, you can play online! Check out Chapter 22 for more on this topic.

Part 1

Getting Started with Basic Notrump Play

IN THIS PART ...

Get an idea of what you need to play bridge plus an overview of how the game should be played.

Become familiar with the concept of sure tricks and how they can help you in the play of the hand.

Discover how to establish winning tricks at notrump play.

Pick up additional techniques to refine your notrump play.

Chapter 1

Going to Bridge Boot Camp

IN THIS CHAPTER

- **Gathering what you need to play bridge**
- **Taking a quick look at the basic points of the game**
- **Building your bridge skills with available resources**

You made a good choice, a very good choice, about learning to play bridge. Perhaps I'm biased, but bridge is the best card game ever. You can play bridge all over the world, and wherever you go, you can make new friends automatically by starting up a game of bridge. Bridge can be more than a game — it can be a common bond.

In this chapter, I talk about some basic concepts that you need to have under your belt to get started playing bridge. Consider this chapter your first step into the game. If you read this whole chapter, you'll graduate from Bridge Boot Camp. Sorry — you don't get a diploma. But you do get the thrill of knowing what you need to know to start playing bridge.

Starting a Game with the Right Stuff

Before you can begin to play bridge, you need to outfit yourself with some basic supplies. Actually, you may already have some of these items around the house, just begging for you to use them in your bridge game. What do you need? Here's your bottom-line list:

- Four warm bodies, including yours. Just find three friends who are interested in playing. Don't worry that no one knows what he's doing. Everyone begins knowing nothing; some of us even end up that way.
- A table — a square one is best. In a pinch, you can play on a blanket, on a bed, indoors, outdoors, or even on a computer if you can't find a game.
- One deck of playing cards (remove the jokers).
- A pencil and a piece of paper to keep score on. You can use any old piece of paper — a legal pad, the back of a grocery list, or even an ancient piece of papyrus will do.

TIP I've been playing bridge for a long time now, so let me offer you a few hints on how you can make getting started with the game a little easier:

- Watch a real bridge game to observe the mechanics of the game.
- Follow the sample hands in this book by laying out the cards to correspond with the cards in the figures. Doing so gives you a feel for the cards and makes the explanations easier to follow.

Ranking the Cards

A deck has 52 cards divided into four suits: spades (♠), hearts (♥), diamonds (♦), and clubs (♣).

REMEMBER Each suit has 13 cards: the AKQJ10 (which are called the *honor cards*) and the 98765432 (the *spot cards*).

The 13 cards in a suit all have a rank — that is, they have a pecking order. The ace is the highest-ranking card, followed by the king, the queen, the jack, and the 10, on down to the lowly 2 (also called the *deuce*).

REMEMBER The more high-ranking cards you have in your hand, the better. The more honor cards you have, the stronger your hand. You can never have too many honor cards.

Knowing Your Directions

In bridge, the players are nameless souls — they are known by directions. When you sit down at a table with three pals to play bridge, imagine that the table is a compass. You're sitting at due South, your partner sits across from you in the North seat, and your opponents sit East and West.

REMEMBER In Parts 1 and 2 of this book, you're South for every hand, and your partner is North. Just as in the opera, where the tenor always gets the girl, in a bridge diagram, you're represented as South — you

are called the *declarer,* and you always get to play the hand. Your partner, North, is always the *dummy* (no slur intended!). Don't worry about what these terms mean just yet — the idea is that you play every hand from the South position. Keep in mind that in real life, South doesn't play every hand — just in this book, every newspaper column, and most bridge books!

Figure 1-1 diagrams the playing table. Get acquainted with this diagram: You see some form of it throughout this book, not to mention in newspaper columns and magazines. For me, this diagram was a blessing in disguise — I never could get my directions straight until I started playing bridge.

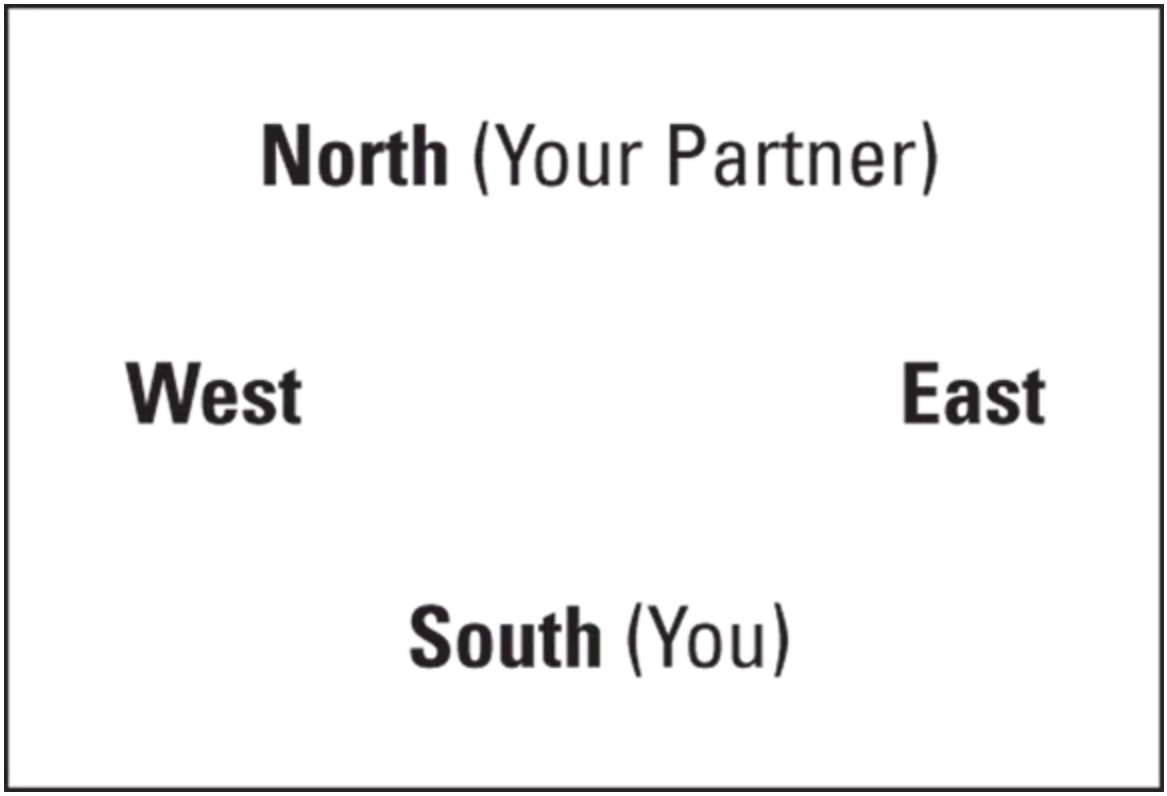

FIGURE 1-1: You're South, your partner is North, and your opponents are East and West.

Playing the Game in Four Acts

First and foremost, bridge is a partnership game; you swim together and you sink together. Your opponents are in the same boat. In bridge, you don't score points individually — you score points as a team. (I cover scoring in Chapter 20, and I suggest you just ignore keeping score until you have a handle on the ins and outs of the game.)

REMEMBER Each hand of bridge is divided into four acts, which occur in the same order:

Act 1. Dealing

Act 2. Bidding

Act 3. Playing

Act 4. Scoring

Act 1: Dealing

The game starts with each player seated facing his or her partner. The cards are shuffled and placed on the table face down. Each player selects a card, and whoever picks the highest card deals the first hand. The four cards on the table are returned to the deck, the deck is reshuffled, and the player to the dealer's right cuts the cards and returns them to the dealer. (After each hand, the deal rotates to the left so one person doesn't get stuck doing all the dealing.)

The cards are dealt one at a time, starting with the player to the dealer's left and moving in a clockwise

rotation until each player has 13 cards.

TIP Wait until the dealer distributes all the cards before you pick up your hand. That's bridge etiquette lesson number one. When each player has 13 cards, pick up and sort your hand using the following tips:

- You can sort the cards in any number of ways, but I recommend sorting your cards into the four suits.
- Alternate your black suits (clubs and spades) with your red suits (diamonds and hearts) so you don't confuse a black spade for a black club or a red diamond for a red heart. It's a bit disconcerting to think you're playing a heart, only to see a diamond come floating out of your hand.
- Hold your cards back, way back, so only you can see them. Think vertically. Winning at bridge is difficult when your opponents can see your hand.

Act 2: Bidding for tricks

Bidding in bridge can be compared to an auction. The auctioneer tells you what the minimum bid is, and the first bid starts from that point or higher. Each successive bid must be higher than the last, until someone bids so high that everyone else wants out. When you want out of the bidding in bridge, you say "Pass." After three consecutive players say "Pass," the bidding is over. However, if you pass and someone else makes a bid, just as at an auction, you can reenter the bidding. If nobody makes an opening bid and all four players pass consecutively, the bidding is over, the hand is reshuffled and redealt, and a new auction begins.

In real-life auctions, people often bid for silly things, such as John F. Kennedy's golf clubs or Andy Warhol's cookie jars. In bridge, you bid for something really valuable — tricks. The whole game revolves around *tricks.*

Some of you may remember the card game of War from when you were a kid. (If you don't remember, just pretend that you do and follow along.) In War, two players divide the deck between them. Each player takes a turn placing a card face up on the table. The player with the higher card takes the *trick.*

In bridge, four people each place a card face up on the table, and the highest card in the suit that has been led takes the trick. The player who takes the trick collects the four cards, puts them face down in a neat pile, and leads to the next trick. Because each player has 13 cards, 13 tricks are fought over and won or lost on each hand.

REMEMBER Think of bidding as an estimation of how many of those 13 tricks your side (or their side) thinks it can take. The bidding starts with the dealer and moves to his left in a clockwise rotation. Each player gets a chance to bid, and a player can either bid or pass when his turn rolls around. The least you can bid is for seven tricks, and the maximum you can bid is for all 13. The bidding goes around and around the table, with each player either bidding or passing until three players in a row say "Pass." (See Chapter 9 for bidding basics.)

The last bid (the one followed by three passes) is called the *final contract.* No, that's not something the mafia

puts out on you. It's simply the number of tricks that the bidding team must take to score points (see Parts 3 and 4 for more about bidding and Chapter 20 for more about scoring).

Act 3: Playing the hand

After the bidding for tricks is over, the play begins. Either your team or the other team makes the final bid. Because you are the star of this book, assume that your team makes the final bid for nine tricks. Therefore, your goal is to win at least nine of the 13 possible tricks.

If you take nine (or more) tricks, your team scores points. If you take fewer than nine tricks, you're penalized, and your opponents score points. In the following sections, I describe a few important aspects of playing a hand of bridge.

The opening lead and the dummy

After the bidding determines who the declarer is (the one who plays the hand), that person's partner becomes the dummy. The players to the declarer's left and right are considered the *defenders.* The West player (assuming that you're South) *leads,* or puts down the first card face up in the middle of the table. That first card is called the *opening lead,* and it can be any card of West's choosing.

When the opening lead lands on the table, the game really begins to roll. The next person to play is the dummy — but instead of playing a card, the dummy puts her 13 cards face up on the table in four neat vertical columns starting with the highest card, one column for each suit, and then bows out of the action entirely. After she puts down her cards (also called the *dummy*), she says and does nothing, leaving the other three people to play the rest of the hand. The dummy always puts down the dummy. What a game!

Because the dummy is no longer involved in the action, each time it's the dummy's turn to play, you, the declarer, must physically take a card from the dummy and put it in the middle of the table. In addition, you must play a card from your own hand when it's your turn.

The fact that the declarer gets stuck with playing both hands while the dummy is off munching on snacks may seem a bit unfair. But you do have an advantage over the defenders: You get to see your partner's cards before you play, which allows you to plan a strategy of how to win those nine tricks (or however many tricks you need to make the final contract).

Following suit

The opening lead determines which suit the other three players must play. Each of the players must *follow suit,* meaning that they must play a card in the suit that was led if they have one. For example, pretend that the opening lead from West is a heart. Down comes the dummy, and you (and everyone else at the table) can see the dummy's hearts as well as your own hearts. Because you must play the same suit that is led if you have a card in that suit, you have to play a heart, any heart that you want, from the dummy. You place the heart of your choice face up on the table and wait for your right-hand opponent (East, assuming that the dummy is North) to play a heart. After she plays a heart, you play a heart from your hand. Voilà: Four hearts now sit on the table. The first trick of the game! Whoever has played the highest heart takes the trick. One trick down and only 12 to go — you're on a roll!

What if a player doesn't have a card in the suit that has been led? Then, and only then, can a player choose a card, any card, from another suit and play it. This move

is called a *discard.* When you discard, you're literally throwing away a card from another suit. A discard can never win a trick.

In general, you discard worthless cards that can't take tricks, saving good-looking cards that may take tricks later. Sometimes, however, the bidding designates a *trump suit* (think wild cards). In that case, when a suit is led and you don't have it, you can either discard from another suit or take the trick by playing a card from the trump suit. For more info, see "Understanding Notrump and Trump Play" later in this chapter.

WARNING If you can follow suit, you must. If you have a card in the suit that's been led but you play a card in another suit by mistake, you *revoke.* Not good. If you're detected, penalties may be involved. Don't worry, though — everybody revokes once in a while. I once lost a National Championship by revoking on the last hand of the tournament.

Playing defense

Approximately 25 percent of the time, you'll be the declarer; 25 percent of the time, you'll be the dummy; and the remaining 50 percent of the time, you'll be on defense! You need to have a good idea of which card to lead to the first trick and how to continue after you see the dummy. You want to be able to take all the tricks your side has coming, trying to defeat the contract. For example, if your opponents bid for nine tricks, you need at least five tricks to defeat the contract. Think of taking five tricks as your goal. Remember, defenders can't see each other's hands, so they have to use signals (legal ones) to tell their partner what they have. They do this by making informative leads and discards that announce

to the partner (and the declarer) what they have in the suit they are playing.

I show you winning defensive techniques in Part 5.

Winning and stacking tricks

The player who plays the highest card in the suit that has been led wins the trick. That player sweeps up the four cards and puts them in a neat stack, face down, a little off to the side. The declarer "keeps house" for his team by stacking tricks into piles so everyone can see how many tricks that team has won. The defender (your opponent) who wins the first trick does the same for his or her side.

REMEMBER The player who takes the first trick *leads first,* or plays the first card, to the second trick. That person can lead any card in any suit desired, and the other three players must follow suit if they can.

The play continues until all 13 tricks have been played. After you play to the last trick, each team counts up the number of tricks it has won.

Act 4: Scoring, and then continuing

After the smoke clears and the tricks are counted, you know soon enough whether the declarer's team made its contract (that is, took at least the number of tricks they have contracted for). The score is then registered — see Chapter 20 for more about scoring.

After the hand has been scored, the deal moves one player to the left. So if South dealt the first hand, West is now the dealer. Then North deals the next hand, then East, and then the deal reverts back to South.

Understanding Notrump and Trump Play

Have you ever played a card game that has wild cards? When you play with wild cards, playing a wild card automatically wins the trick for you. Sometimes wild cards can be jokers, deuces, or aces. It doesn't matter what the card is; if you have one, you know that you have a sure winner. In bridge, you have wild cards, too, called *trump cards.* However, in bridge, the trump cards are *really* wild, because they change from hand to hand, depending on the bidding.

The bidding determines whether a hand will be played with trump cards or in a *notrump contract* (a hand with no trump cards). If the final bid happens to end in some suit as opposed to notrump, that suit becomes the trump suit for the hand. For example, suppose that the final bid is 4♠. This bid determines that spades are trump (or wild) for the entire hand. For more about playing a hand at a trump contract, see Part 2.

More contracts are played at notrump than in any of the four suits. When the final bid ends in notrump, the highest card played in the suit that has been led wins the trick. All the hands that you play in Part 1 are played at notrump.

Building Your Skills with Clubs, Tournaments, and the Internet

You know, you're not in this bridge thing alone. You'll find help around every corner. You won't believe how much is available for interested beginners.

- **Bridge clubs:** Most bridge clubs offer beginning bridge lessons and/or supervised play. They also hold games that are restricted to novices, in addition to open games.
- **Tournaments:** Many tournaments offer free lectures for novice players as well as novice tournament events and supervised play. Watching experts (or anyone else) play is free.
- **The Internet:** After you get the knack, you can play bridge 24 hours a day online … free! The Internet is also an excellent venue to watch people play and learn the mechanics and techniques of the game (both what to do and what not to do!).

To find out more about expanding your bridge experiences, head for Part 6.

SO WHAT'S THE FASCINATION WITH BRIDGE?

You may have met a few unfortunates who are totally hooked on playing bridge. They just can't get enough of it. Being a charter member of that club, I can offer a few words on why people can get so wrapped up in the game.

- One fascination is the bidding. Bidding involves a lot of partner-to-partner communication skills. Cleverly exchanging information between you and your partner in the special language of the game is a great challenge. Your opponents also pass information back and forth during the bidding, so figuring out what they're telling each other is another challenge. However, no secrets! They are entitled to know what your bids mean and vice versa. Bidding is such an art that some bridge books deal entirely with bidding. (I cover bidding in Parts 3 and 4.)

- Another hook for the game is taking tricks. You get to root out all kinds of devious ways to take tricks, both as a declarer and as a defender.
- And don’t forget the human element. Bridge is much more than a game of putting down and picking up cards. Emotions enter into the picture — sooner or later, every emotion or personality trait that you see in life emerges at the bridge table.

Chapter 2
Counting and Taking Sure Tricks

IN THIS CHAPTER

Identifying sure tricks in your hand and the dummy's hand

Adding sure tricks to your trick pile

If you're sitting at a blackjack table in Las Vegas and someone catches you counting cards, you're a goner. However, if you're at a bridge table and you don't count cards, you're also a goner, but in a different way.

When you play a bridge hand, you need to count several things; most importantly, you need to count your tricks. The game of bridge revolves around tricks. You bid for tricks, you take as many tricks as you can in the play of the hand, and your opponents try to take as many tricks as they can on defense. Tricks, tricks, tricks.

In this chapter, I show you how to spot a sure trick in its natural habitat — in your hand or in the dummy. I also show you how to take those sure tricks to your best advantage. (See Chapter 1 for an introduction to tricks and the dummy.)

REMEMBER Before the play of the hand begins, the bidding determines the final contract. However, I have purposely omitted the bidding process in this

discussion. For the purpose of this chapter, just pretend the bidding is over and the dummy has come down. In Parts 1 and 2, I want you to concentrate on how to count and take tricks to your best advantage. After you discover the trick-taking capabilities of honor cards and long suits, the bidding makes much more sense. If you can't wait, turn to Part 3 to discover the wonders of bidding for tricks. (I even include advanced bidding techniques in Part 4.)

Counting Sure Tricks After the Dummy Comes Down

The old phrase "You need to know where you are to know where you're going" comes to mind when you're playing bridge. After you know your *final contract* (how many tricks you need to take), you then need to figure out how to win all the tricks necessary to make your contract.

Depending on which cards you and your partner hold, your side may hold some definite winners, called *sure tricks* — tricks you can take at any time right from the get-go. You should be very happy to see sure tricks either in your hand or in the dummy. You can never have too many sure tricks.

Sure tricks depend on whether your team has the ace in a particular suit. Because you get to see the dummy after the opening lead, you can see quite clearly whether any aces are lurking in the dummy. If you notice an ace, the highest ranking card in the suit, why not get greedy and look for a king, the second-highest ranking card in the same suit? Two sure tricks are better than one!

REMEMBER Counting sure tricks boils down to the following points:

- If you or the dummy has the ace in a suit (but no king), count one sure trick.
- If you have both the ace and the king in the same suit (between the two hands), count two sure tricks.
- If you have the ace, king, and queen in the same suit (between the two hands), count three sure tricks. Happiness!

In Figure 2-1, your final contract is for nine tricks. After you settle on the final contract, the play begins. West makes the opening lead and decides to lead the ♠Q. Down comes the dummy, and you swing into action, but first you need to do a little planning. You need to count your sure tricks. What follows in this section is a sample hand and diagrams where I demonstrate how to count sure tricks.

North (Dummy)

♠ 7 6 5

♥ J 10 9

♦ A 2

♣ J 10 9 6 5

South (You)

♠ A K 8

♥ A K Q

♦ K Q J 5

♣ 4 3 2

FIGURE 2-1: Looking for nine sure tricks is your goal.

MIND YOUR MANNERS: BEING A DUMMY WITH CLASS

The dummy doesn't do much to help you count and take sure tricks except lay down her cards. After her cards are on the table, the dummy shouldn't contribute anything else to the hand — except good dummy etiquette.

As the play progresses, the dummy isn't supposed to make faces, utter strange noises, or make disjointed body movements, such as jerks or twitches. Sometimes such restraint takes superhuman willpower, particularly when her partner, the declarer, screws up big time. Good dummies learn to control themselves. If you end up as the dummy and get fidgety or anxious, you can always leave the table to calm down.

Eyeballing your sure tricks in each suit

You count your sure tricks one suit at a time. After you know how many tricks you have, you can make further plans about how to win additional tricks. I walk you through each suit in the following sections, showing you how to count sure tricks.

Recognizing the two highest spades

When the dummy comes down, you can see that your partner has three small spades (♠7, ♠6, and ♠5) and you have the ♠A and ♠K, as you see in Figure 2-2.

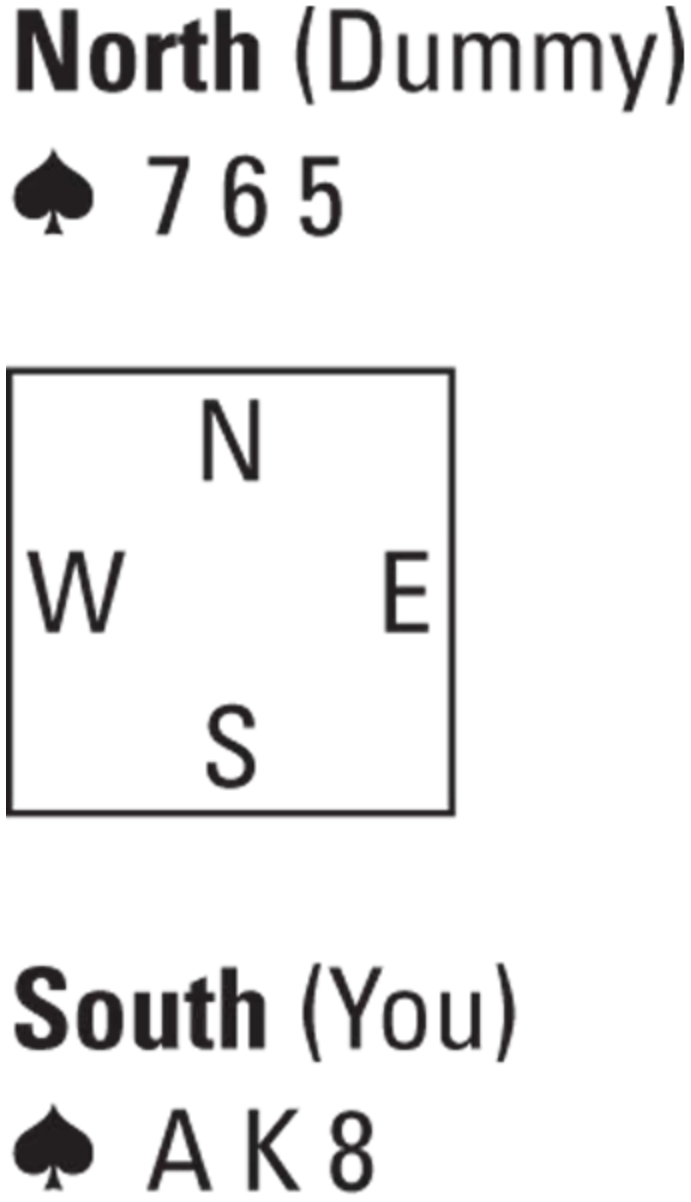

FIGURE 2-2: Digging up sure spade tricks.

Because the ♠A and the ♠K are the two highest spades in the suit, you can count two sure spade tricks. (If you or the dummy also held the ♠Q, you could count three sure spade tricks.)

TIP When you have sure tricks in a suit, you don’t have to play them right away. You can take sure tricks at any point during the play of the hand.

Counting up equally divided hearts

Figure 2-3 shows the hearts that you hold in this hand. Notice that you and the dummy have the six highest hearts in the deck: the ♥AKQJ109 (the highest five of these are known as *honor cards*).