

Have you ever passed your partner's response to a conventional bid? This might be due to fatigue or to a momentary lack of concentration but you wouldn't expect that such an action would lead to a satisfactory result, would you?

The following hand occurred during a match in the Pall Mall clubhouse of the Royal Automobile Club. I have played there on a number of occasions and enjoyed those games enormously. The bridge is always played in a friendly, courteous manner and..... the wine and food are delicious!

	♠ K4 ♥ Q86 ♦ 8532 ♣ AJ73	
♠ 2 ♥ J1075 ♦ 764 ♣ 109862	N W            E S	♠ 10863 ♥ K9 ♦ J109 ♣ KQ54
	♠ AQJ975 ♥ A432 ♦ AKQ ♣ ---	

I sat in the West chair and my partner and I were silent during the auction. South opened an old-fashioned 2♠ and North bid 3♠. South wheeled out the "old Black" and North replied 5♦ to show one ace and, in response to 5NT he replied 6♦ to indicate one king. South went into prolonged, deep thought and I wondered if she was trying to decide whether to risk the grand slam in spades or to subside quietly in 6♠. At last, she - surprisingly - passed! The contract, then, was 6♦ by North then, a suit never having been bid naturally. This unlikely contract made easily enough, declarer wrapping four diamonds, six spades and two aces. A trifle propitious, don't you think?

At the other table, our team-mates arrived in the more logical 6♠ but regrettably didn't enjoy the same easy ride, failing by one, losing two heart tricks. We worked out later that declarer *could* have succeeded. Declarer ruffs the club lead, draws trumps and cashes the top diamonds. Then he plays the ♥A and another. East is obliged to win with the king and lead a club allowing South two diamond discards - one on the ♣A and one on the ♦8.

Difficult, though.....