

♠♥♦♣ THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer. This is your hand:

S	South
♠	A7
♥	AQ8653
♦	
♣	AKQ109

You have only 19 HCP, but at the same time, you have only a 2 Loser Trick Count hand. You could open the strong 2♣, but say you decide to open 1♥, planning to rebid clubs.

West overcalls 3♠ and North doubles. This is agreed to be a negative double. You should now bid 4♣. Your partner raises you to 5♣. You would be much too conservative not to rebid 6♣.

N	North
♠	K962
♥	J10
♦	J1092
♣	J42

West's Lead ♠Q

S	South
♠	A7
♥	AQ8653
♦	
♣	AKQ109

What is your plan?

Even if the heart finesse loses, you have 12 tricks: 2 spades, 5 hearts and 5 clubs. What could go wrong?

When things look too easy, they probably aren't. Bad suit breaks and entry problems often trip the declarer up when they are not anticipated.

You will win the spade lead and you want to set up the hearts. But leaving the trump outstanding, you could easily be ruffed. If you also lose the heart finesse, you will be down 1 before you start.

Say, you win the first spade in your hand. You begin to pull trump, but, unfortunately, they break 4-1. When you go to the dummy with the ♠K to take the heart finesse, West wins his ♥K and leads a diamond, forcing you to ruff with your last trump.

The hearts also break 4-1 and you must play the dummy's last heart before the rest of the hearts in your hand set up. But you have no way to return to your hand. You used the "key" card on the first trick. The key to making this hand is winning the opening lead with the ♠K in the dummy, saving the Key to the Kingdom – the ♠A – in your hand to access the rest of the winning hearts. You won't be able to take a heart finesse, so you lead a low heart to the dummy. West's ♥K wins and he leads a diamond, forcing you to ruff with your last trump. Then you lead another low heart to the dummy and come back with the "key" ♠A to run the rest of the hearts.

This is the entire deal:

		N North	W	N	E	S
		♠ K962	3♠	X	P	1♥
		♥ J10	P	5♣	P	4♣
		♦ J1092	P	P	P	6♣
		♣ J42				
W West			E East			
♠ QJ10854			♠ 3			
♥ K			♥ 9742			
♦ K8543			♦ AQ76			
♣ 7			♣ 8653			
		S South				
		♠ A7				
		♥ AQ8653				
		♦				
		♣ AKQ109				
			6♣ S	NS: 0 EW: 0		

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/yg4rzyqq>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.