

## "BETE NOIRE" OR "BLACK BEAST"

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Sound strange? Actually "bete noire" or "black beast" as described by Mr. Webster means "a person or thing strongly detested or avoided".

Of course, I am not going to talk about any person – beauty or beast – Lawyers cost too much, so I'll talk about a "thing", and in particular an Ace of Clubs. (This is about bridge)

Why an Ace of Clubs? Why do I call it a "black beast"? To be very honest, it was my partner's idea.

He wrote me, "it just occurred to me that the Ace of Clubs could be your 'bete noire' or 'black beast', as the French say". (hey Frank, I hope you don't mind me quoting you)

And now, the sad tale of Ace of Clubs:

Red Deer Sectional, Swiss Teams (win/loss scoring), match #7.

Our team is ahead by half a match, so we need a 'win' or a 'winning tie' to capture the championship. (no hope that the trailing team would lose or tie their final match).

Six boards, match is tied, final board I pick up:

S: xxx  
H: KJxx  
D: xx  
C: AQxx

and the bidding goes:      1D,    pass (me),    1H,    pass  
   2H,    pass (me),    4H,    pass

Partner leads SQ

dummy:            xxxx  
                      AQ9x  
                      Axx  
                      Kx

You can now guess what happened. Declarer had AK of spades, four hearts to 10, six diamonds to KQJ and a stiff club.

I won J of H at trick two and returned a spade, next, K of H at trick four and (cow flew bye?) returned yet another spade.

Curtains! Declarer claimed 11 tricks. I took my Ace of Clubs home. Luckily, our team partners also made 11 tricks in the same contract and the match was a dead tie. I cash my Ace of Clubs and we win the match by 1 IMP and the championship!

Two months later – GNT – Flight B – District Semi final – 2<sup>nd</sup>. half

It's a close match and then comes this board:

Bd. 20  
Vul. Both

	10	
	AJx	
	Q10xx	
	10xxxx	
xx		QJ98x
KQ87xxx		9
AKx		xxx

x

KQJx

AK7xx

10x

J98

Axx

Contract at our table is 2H by West.

I am South. Declarer wins a diamond lead with the Ace and plays a club to the King. Partner played low (odd number of cards). (another cow flew bye?) I, you guessed it, ducked smoothly.

2H made and we went -110 (instead of +100) and lost the match by 1 IMP.

Ok. Pard, I flubbed it, but it wasn't my fault. It was the "Black Beast".

(Ace of Clubs?)

Hash Mohamed.