In today's deal, what do you think of the given auction, and how should the defenders play to defeat four hearts after West leads the spade queen?

Since West had overcalled one spade, North should not have bid one no-trump without a spade stopper. A support double, showing three hearts, would have been perfect. But as that weapon was not in this pair's armory, North should have passed. East might have jumped to three hearts, a mixed raise showing four spades, 7-9 high-card points and a nine-loser hand. South should have doubled over two spades. Then North would have bid three hearts, and South ought to have passed.

Against four hearts, West led the spade queen and continued with the spade jack. When that also won, West shifted to a club. South won in hand and drove out the heart ace. Moments later, she claimed for a 93.3 percent board in an online duplicate.

West should have wondered from where her side might get four tricks. She should have hoped for two spades, one heart and one diamond. But to get the diamond probably required a lead of that suit from partner. West should have led a low spade at trick two. Then East would surely have shifted to a diamond. Also, East should have overtaken at trick two and led a diamond.

Laurence J. Peter, who was a Canadian educator, said, “If you don’t know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else.” Some bridge players are like that, just pulling cards and hoping for success. But they often end up disappointed.

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