

Dear Reader,

Before you throw this clue into the middle, lose all of your senses, and walk away empty handed, you should probably understand why. This particular clue is the only one known to put solvers on "tilt", a word here which means "frustrated beyond all sensible reasoning," making it one of the most enraging in the series. But you are not on tilt yet, and may still reasonably set this clue aside for good.

There are many ways to avoid tilting and blundering, but this clue has none of them. Contained within are hair-tearing details such as an unlucky runout, a massive overbet, wasted time, hearts that betray their lovers, and an undercover reference to spies that belie. You should want to avoid such things.

I have sworn to research this story and write it down as best I can, so I would know better than anyone that with this clue you should fold, stand up, and walk away from it.

With all due respect,

Lemony Snicket

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* A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS *

Count Olaf and his associates, holed up in the offices of Heimlich Hospital awaiting the results of Esmee Squalor's search for the Baudelaire orphans, decided to pass the time by playing a less-than-friendly game of poker.

"Texas Hold-em is the game, comrades", said Count Olaf, "Now give me your money".

"Say, Olaf," said the hook-handed man, "why is it you seem to win every hand when we play cards?".

"Oh," Count Olaf chuckled, "let's just say I have my secrets."

The bald man with the long nose frowned.

"Hey, Olaf - where are we taking these nagging orphans once we catch 'em anyway?", he asked.

Count Olaf glared at the man, then curled his face into an evil smile.

"I'll use whatever strategy the cards spell out", he replied.



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