Tritones

For every tritone there are four ways it can function in dominant chords. Each tritone can function as an augmented fourth OR a diminished fith in a key; the same tritone can be enharmonically re-spelled to form a tritone in a dominant a TRITONE away. And in THAT key it can function as an augmented fourth or a diminished fifth. Here's an illustration of the D-sharp / E-flat to A natural tritone: it functions in the dominant seventh chord in both B-flat (major or minor) and E (major or minor).



In B-flat, the tritone can be an augmented fourth E-flat / A; it resolves to a sixth as shown. In B-flat, the tritone can be a diminished fifth A / E-flat; it resolves to a third as shown. In E, the same tritone functions as an augmented fourth A / D-sharp; it resolves to a sixth as shown. In E, the same tritone can function as a diminished fifth D-sharp / A; it resolves to a third as shown.

So here's the deal about how this works. The tritone involves TWO tendency tones. In B-flat, the E-flat is FA and the A is TI; in E (a tritone away), the functions switch. D-sharp is TI and A is FA. That's why the tritone is such a lovely shape-shifter.