

‘Twas the night before Christmas  
 Two guests in our house  
 Had started to play bridge  
 With me and my spouse.

“Please tell me” she shouted  
 “Why didn’t you double?  
 ‘Twas plain from the start  
 That we had them in trouble”.

“Tis futile, my dear”,  
 Said I, taking no stand,  
 “To discuss it with you –  
 Let us play the next hand”.

“Remember next time,”  
 Said she, icing a frown,  
 “To double a contract  
 That’s sure to go down.”

So I picked up my cards  
 In a downtrodden state,  
 Then I opened One Spade  
 And awaited my fate.

	N	
	♠ 9876	
	♥ 65432	
	♦ 8765	
	♣ ---	
W	DLR: E VUL: N/S	E
♠ ---		♠ AKQJT
♥ QJT9		♥ AK87
♦ KQJT9		♦ ---
♣ KQJT		♣ A987
	S	
	♠ 5432	
	♥ ---	
	♦ A432	
	♣ 65432	

The guy sitting South  
 Was like many I’ve known  
 He played and he bid  
 In a world all his own.

“Two diamonds” he countered  
 With scarcely a care,  
 The Ace in his hand  
 Gave him courage to spare.

My wife she smiled faintly  
 And tossing her head  
 Leaned over the table  
 “I double” she said.

And North for some reason  
I cannot determine  
Bid Two Hearts as though  
He was preaching a sermon.

I grinned as I doubled,  
Enjoying the fun  
And turned round to South  
To see where he would run.

But South, undisturbed  
Not at loss for a word  
Came forth with Two Spades –  
Did I hear what I heard?

The other two passed  
And in sheer disbelief  
I said “Double, my friend  
That’ll bring you to grief”.

South passed with a nod  
His composure serene;  
My wife with a flourish  
Led out the Heart Queen.

I sat there and chuckled  
Inside o’er their fix –  
But South very calmly  
Ran off eight straight tricks!

He ruffed the first Heart  
In his hand right away  
And then trumped a Club  
On the very next play.

He crossruffed the hand  
At a breathtaking pace  
Till I was left holding  
Five Spades to the Ace.

In anguish my wife cried  
“Your mind’s growing old  
Don’t you see Six NoTrump  
In this hand is ice cold?”

By doubling this time  
I’d committed a sin.  
It just goes to prove  
That you never can win.

From the files of Jack T. Murphy with his note: “This story was published many years ago by B.J. Becker of New York. I found it in my father’s desk after he died in 1968”. Jack sent it to the then Kibitzer where it may have been reprinted years ago.