

‘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.

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| | ♠ 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.