

EDDIE KANTAR

A COLLECTION

OF BRIDGE

HUMOR

A portrait of Eddie Kantar, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

*Classic
Kantar*

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Foreword

by Marshall Miles

Dear Reader, you are in for a treat. I hope your spouse, if you have one, is also a bridge player — otherwise he or she may resent your putting aside all chores and remaining incommunicado for several hours while you finish the book. That's what I did, despite having seen several of the hands previously (as well as being personally involved in a few).

I played with Eddie in the days when, without modern gadgets, we never missed a slam (although the slam didn't always make). When we might bid to a game and make it while Al Roth and his partner had passed the hand out. Our specialty was getting to suit slams on a 4-3 trump fit (when lesser players, playing five-card majors, would never mention the suit we played in slam). But one time, in the Spingold, we got to 7♥. There were thirteen top tricks at notrump, but in hearts we needed a 3-3 trump split. Fortunately we got it, and I started to write plus 2210 on our score card. Eddie said, "Our captain (Ivan Erdos) is nervous about letting us play together. Let's change the contract to 7NT, plus 2220 on our scorecard. It will make no difference at IMPs, and it will avoid destroying Ivan's confidence in our bidding." But our opponents overheard our conversation and tattled on us.

Eddie's stories about teaching beginners and answering bridge questions over the phone are hilarious. And when it comes to experts, not only does he have a great sense of humor, but he is prepared to name names and write about the most terrible disasters involving players of the caliber of Bob Hamman and Paul Soloway. But no one could possibly resent being placed in an unfavorable light since Eddie is always hardest of all on himself.

But enough from me. It's time to hear from the master himself.

Acknowledgments

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For Eddie, it's not a Game, it's a Wild Adventure; Bridge at the Courthouse; My Home Game; Bridge Alfresco; Yvonne Makes her Little Diamond; Claim Jumper; A New Low; The Expert and the Rabbit; Drawing Trumps — an Idea Worth Some Thought.

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*The Bridge
Expert at
Work*



The Answering Service

When my phone rings and I answer it with an expectant ‘hello’, I am secretly wishing that a soft feminine voice will be on the other end. Second choice is a close friend (any sex) and third is good news (from anyone.) Alas, what I usually get on the other end is not a hello (from either sex) but a bride hand. And these calls can come at some very strange hours, let me assure you.

At first I was flattered that someone considered my opinion valuable enough to choose me to settle an argument. However, it soon became apparent that it wasn’t my bid that was wanted, but rather, an approval of the bid that the caller had made or more likely, a display of disgust at the bid made by the caller’s partner. Not only that, but the caller usually has a way of ‘leaning’ me towards the bid he wants to hear. For example:

Me: “Hello?”

Caller: “You hold:

♠ K J x x x ♥ x ♦ A Q x x ♣ Q x x

Me (groggy): “O.K.”

Caller: “You open one spade, partner bids two clubs, you bid two diamonds, partner two hearts, you three clubs, and partner four spades. You wouldn’t dream of passing, would you?”

Translation — either the caller held this hand, bid, and partner got very upset, or caller’s partner held the hand, passed, and a slam was missed. In any case, I know that it is right to bid on, even though I wouldn’t know for sure what to do if I actually held the hand.

Me: “What, pass at this point? Surely you must be joking. Who in the world would do that?” By now, of course, the caller loves me and is glad that he woke me up. Worse, he will call again. Then of course there are the calls that don’t come with any early clues about

what to bid. As you are thinking about the hand, the caller becomes frantic. Maybe you will actually agree with his hated partner! Little hints start filtering in.

♠ K J x x x ♥ x ♦ A Q x x ♣ Q x x

Let's say that he has given me the hand above without any intentions, and I am thinking. Just as I am about to pass I hear, "Looks like at least a small slam, maybe even a grand if partner has the right cards, right?"

"Well," I mumble. Then finding my backbone I say, "No, I can't imagine passing. I was just thinking about the best road to either a small or a grand slam."

Then of course, there is the call from the friendly player who has just made a master bid so subtle that not even Garozzo, Belladonna and Forquet all lumped together would have thought of it. If the 'master bid' hasn't worked because partner simply couldn't cope with such a brilliancy, you are given a subtle push towards the bid, coaxing you into the same horrible quagmire. Worse, if the bid has worked, there is absolute silence on the other end as the caller is hoping (praying) you don't make the same bid so that he can describe it in all its glory. Example:

Me: "Hello?"

Caller: "You have:

♠ x x x ♥ x x ♦ A J x x x x ♣ x x

Me (groggy): "Huh?"

Caller: "Wake up! Your right hand opponent opens one club, you pass, LHO says two clubs, partner overcalls two hearts, 2NT on your right, passed around to partner who doubles. This is passed around to your LHO who retreats to three clubs and this is passed around to you. What do you do?"

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	pass
2♣	2♥	2NT	pass
pass	dbl	pass	pass
3♣	pass	pass	?

Silently I wait for some help. What does she want from me now? Let me review the conversation. Do the words ‘retreats to three clubs’ have any special significance? Is this the time for an inference double? Even I am smart enough to know that bidding diamonds (the obvious move) can’t be right, or else why the call in the middle of the night? I have a few moves of my own when I need to stall for time and perhaps get an extra clue or two.

Me: “What’s vulnerability?” (A very good stall!)

Caller: “Both vulnerable, what do you bid?” (I can see this is the ‘brilliancy’ bid and I am not going to get any further help. Nevertheless...)

Me: “Who am I playing with?”

Caller: “A very good player.” (This is to let me know that they play with good partners, which is another roundabout way of telling me that they too are pretty darn good.)

Me: “Duplicate or IMPs?” (Desperation setting in.)

Caller: “Duplicate, come on.”

Me: “Do we have any agreements I should know about?” (Clearly, I’m in big trouble now.)

Caller: “No, you must work it all out for yourself.”

Me: “Did I play in this event? The hands look familiar.” (Obviously, it’s all over for me. They are going to begin the count any second.)

Caller: “No. It happened tonight.”

Me: “Oh.”

Caller: “So what did you bid?”

Me: “What do I bid?”

Caller: “Yes.”

Me (end of my rope): “I bid 3♦.”

Caller: Silence

Me (speaking faster): “What am I supposed to do, double? Does my partner have a singleton diamond or something? If he has six hearts he can correct.” (Foaming.) “Don’t tell me I am supposed to bid three hearts. Maybe I should just pass.”

Caller: Silence.

Me (frantic): “What did you do?”

Eddie Kantar

is not only one of today's best bridge writers, he's also one of the funniest. His two previous collections, *Bridge Humor* and *The Best of Eddie Kantar*, have been out of print for some years, and are still much sought after. For *Classic Kantar*, Eddie has selected the very best stories from the two previous books, and added many new ones. As always, he pokes fun at the top experts, and chronicles some of the bids and plays they hoped would never come to light (typically, though, there are more of his own disasters in here than anyone else's). His misadventures as a 'world traveler' are legendary. And appearing here for the first time in book form are all the stories from Eddie's notorious and hilarious Home Game.

'I guarantee you will enjoy this book'

- Marshall Miles.



EDDIE KANTAR is a professional bridge player, writer, and teacher. He has been elected to the Bridge Hall of Fame, has been World Champion twice, and has won thirteen North American Championship titles. Among his many books are *Modern Bridge Defense* and *Advanced Bridge Defense* (winners of the American Bridge Teachers Association Book of the Year award in 1999), *Test Your Bridge Play*, *Introduction to Defender's Play*, and *Bridge for Dummies* (ABTA Book of the Year in 1997).

Eddie writes regularly for numerous bridge magazines around the world, and is a frequent host on bridge cruises. He lives in Santa Monica, CA.

