

THE **8** OF CLUBS WAS GOOD?

COMFORT FOOD FOR THE BRIDGE PLAYER'S SOUL



ELIZABETH FLYNN

**THE 8 OF CLUBS
WAS GOOD?**

COMFORT FOOD FOR THE BRIDGE PLAYER'S SOUL

ELIZABETH FLYNN

Master Point Press • Toronto, Canada

Text © 2015 Elizabeth Flynn

Cover image © Verdina Anna/Getty Images

Illustrations © Bill Buttle pp. 16, 36, 52, 54, 68, 83, 98, 104, 138, 151

Illustrations © Jude Goodwin pp. 8, 18, 84, 100

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

214 Merton St. Suite 205 Websites: www.masterpointpress.com

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

www.teachbridge.com

M4S 1A6 (647)956-4933

www.bridgeblogging.com

www.ebooksbridge.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Flynn, Elizabeth, 1954-, author

The eight of clubs was good? : comfort food for the bridge player's soul / Elizabeth Flynn.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-77140-031-2 (paperback).--ISBN 978-1-55494-627-3 (pdf).--ISBN 978-1-55494-672-3 (html).--ISBN 978-1-77140-862-2 (mobi)

1. Flynn, Elizabeth, 1954- --Anecdotes. 2. Contract bridge--Anecdotes. I. Title.

GV1282.32.F59 2015

795.41'5

C2015-906870-3

C2015-906871-1

Editor

Ray Lee

Copy edit/Interior format

Sally Sparrow

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

To my mom, Audrey, aka Nana, who said to me,
“Learn bridge. It’ll give you something to do when
you’re old.”

BRIDGE OR FLY FISHING?

My baby has gone to college. I am standing in his empty room, contemplating my empty life. The phone rings. It's Holly.

“Bridge lessons? Why?”

But then, why not? At that point my friend could have suggested fly fishing or funnel cake baking and I would have gone. But it just so happens to be bridge, and bridge is where I follow her.

The next day we head out to a place called the Indianapolis Bridge Center, oddly enough. It's in a drab business area and while its industrial carpeting and fluorescent lighting aren't exactly warm and welcoming, I soon find out the people are.

Noel is our teacher. She is pretty and nice. She is teaching beginning bridge. And when I read the first page of the beginning text book titled *Bidding*, I feel confident. It starts out: “There are four suits in a deck of fifty-two cards.” Simple. This should be fun...

Fast forward... It's been four weeks since we began our bridge lessons. I liked Noel at first. But now she is saying things like, "The opener can open the bidding with 12 or more points. The overcaller can have 7 to 17. The responder to the opener must bid with at least 6 points and the advancer to the overcaller must remember only to count on her partner for 7 points." And if that isn't bad enough she continues with, "A strong hand is opened with an artificial bid of two clubs that has nothing to do with the club suit and, in fact, if you do have a strong hand in clubs, ignore it..."

By the end of the *Bidding* series, I'm thinking back on the phone call I received from Holly and wishing she had suggested rocket science lessons instead. I think I could have done that...

A STUDENT OF THE GAME

I continue to take lessons in Play of the Hand, Defense, Popular Conventions — you name it. And I also play two or three times a week.

I'm beginning to feel the need to go to a place where you say, "My name is Elizabeth and I am a bridge player." Am I an addict? I'm not sure. But I am definitely hooked. And this is strange because I have never been a card player and didn't know a thing about bridge until the day I walked into the Center.

The only previous experience I have with bridge is my memories of my mother's bridge group when I was little and my grandparents playing every weekend with their friends. We have old pictures of my grandparents sitting in their den in the 1940s, my grandmother in heels, a knit dress and pearls, my grandfather in a jacket. Their friends are sitting with them at a bridge table, which I now own, and four refreshing looking cocktails are perched at the corners.

But I play and struggle and thank the stars above for my new bridge partner, Cindy. Holly has abandoned me for the balmy climes of Florida. Cindy is not new to bridge but she brushes up while I learn and she has become my friend as well as fellow empty-nester.

The other day we played in a game and received 0.28 masterpoints. Our first fraction of a point! It was something to celebrate. I remembered to pass with 5 or fewer points! And when I got home from being at the Bridge Center all day, I found three messages from my son on my phone. His last one said, "Well, it looks like you've adjusted to me being out of the house. You're gone all the time."

I'm gonna make it after all...



NO SWEAT

“Let’s all move please! Finish your hands and move for the next round.”

That was not good to hear. I had just started the hand and it was time to move. It was a 3NT contract and I only saw five tricks. Where was I going to find four more?

Bridge players were beginning to move around the room. East/West pairs were moving to their next tables. The chatting, the rustling of scoresheets and the squeaking of styrofoam coffee cups was distracting. And to make matters worse, our East/West replacements were standing impatiently by our table waiting for us to finish.

...I need to set up my diamond suit...

“It’s time to move!” the director once again belated.

I was starting to sweat, the cards sticking to my hands. The pressure was building until my eyeballs felt like they were going to shoot out of my head. What did Noel say?... Take your losses early?...

“Can we please have Boards 23 and 24 so we can get started?” asked the next table. East/West replacements were now tapping their feet fretfully, one of them crunching loudly on Chex-Mix.

... I need to hurry it up.

... if I duck the ace and lose a trick the rest of my diamonds should be good... but the opponents have to lead a club for me to get back in... and... they... do! Cashing in my four tricks, I make the contract! Whew!

I was still shaking when I stumbled over to the next table with nary a moment to collect myself before the next hand started.

Driving home from the Bridge Center I thought, how can a mere *game* be so high-pressure and stressful? I am worn out, beat, exhausted... and next week I get to do it all again! I can't wait!

MASTER POINT PRESS ON THE INTERNET

www.masterpointpress.com

Our main site, with information about our books and software, reviews and more.

www.teachbridge.com

Our site for bridge teachers and students. Free downloadable support material for our books, helpful articles, interviews and more.

www.bridgeblogging.com

Read and comment on regular articles from MPP authors and other bridge notables.

www.ebooksbridge.com

Purchase downloadable electronic versions of MPP books and software.

HOW DOES ANYONE EVER LEARN THIS GAME?

Let Elizabeth Flynn take you back to the time when you too were a beginner, as she struggles with finesses, opening leads, and that #\$\$&%! 2/1 stuff (which she and her partner agree to ignore!). Through a series of heartwarming anecdotes, you'll follow her struggles to learn and improve, and understand how she comes to love the game anyway. You'll meet the characters at her local bridge club, and laugh at the funny and often touching things that happen there. There are even some recipes for snacks to take along to your next duplicate game.



ELIZABETH FLYNN (Indianapolis) is best known as the author of the popular 'Betty's Bridge Blog'. Her stories and anecdotes have appeared in *Readers' Digest* and *USA Today*. A mother of two grown sons, she and her husband live on a lake in Indiana with their dachshund.

