



**MISBID**  
these hands  
**WITH ME**

Mark Horton

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
1. Innovation .....	9
2. A Single Step .....	12
3. Over the Limit .....	15
4. Brief Encounter .....	17
5. The Phantom Menace .....	20
6. Contracted Out .....	23
7. Double Fault .....	25
8. Into the Frying Pan .....	27
9. Following the Law .....	29
10. Snookered .....	31
11. Germ Warfare .....	35
12. Dangerous Ground .....	38
13. Two Bites of the Cherry .....	40
14. Minor Tragedy .....	42
15. The Blackwood Menace .....	44
16. Flight of Fancy .....	46
17. Out of Shape .....	48
18. Opportunity Knocks .....	51
19. Judgment Day .....	53
20. The Waiting Game .....	56
21. The Silent Enemy .....	58
22. No Alternative .....	60
23. The Rule of Thirty .....	63
24. The Golden Rule .....	65
25. Evaluation .....	67
26. Aggressive Approach .....	70
27. No Double, no Trouble .....	72
28. The Law of Flaws .....	74
29. Guessing Game .....	76
30. Fast Arrival .....	78
31. No Ambition .....	80
32. Pessimistic Approach .....	83

33. No Response . . . . .	86
34. Last Train . . . . .	89
35. Dubious Double . . . . .	92
36. One for the Road . . . . .	94
37. Balanced Action . . . . .	97
38. Convention Missed . . . . .	100
39. Sound Principle . . . . .	102
40. Vaulting Ambition . . . . .	105
41. Lady Luck . . . . .	107
42. Hornet's Nest . . . . .	110
43. Cautionary Tale . . . . .	112
44. Right on Cue . . . . .	114
45. Falling Short . . . . .	116
46. Judgment Day . . . . .	119
47. The Fifth Dimension . . . . .	121
48. Major Error . . . . .	123
49. Shapeless . . . . .	126
50. Grand Designs . . . . .	129
51. Over-optimistic . . . . .	132
52. Undervalued . . . . .	134
53. Champagne Moment . . . . .	137
54. Well-Suited . . . . .	140
55. Aceless Wonder . . . . .	142
56. Sad Singleton . . . . .	144
57. Fatal Attraction . . . . .	147
58. Conventional Affair . . . . .	149
59. Missing the Cue . . . . .	152
60. Spoilt for Choice . . . . .	154
61. Lucky Escape . . . . .	157
62. Law Breaker . . . . .	160
63. The Chameleon Principle . . . . .	162
64. Hamman's Law . . . . .	165
65. Silence is Golden . . . . .	167

<b>66.</b>	Careless Talk . . . . .	170
<b>67.</b>	Culbertson's Rule . . . . .	173
<b>68.</b>	The Acid Test . . . . .	176
<b>69.</b>	No Accounting for Shape . . . . .	179
<b>70.</b>	Preemptive Strike . . . . .	181
<b>71.</b>	Last Action Hero . . . . .	183
<b>72.</b>	Missing His Cue . . . . .	186
<b>73.</b>	Conventional Affair . . . . .	189
<b>74.</b>	Elope to Victory . . . . .	192
<b>75.</b>	Meckstroth's Second Law . . . . .	194
<b>76.</b>	As Rare as a Hen's Tooth. . . . .	196

# INTRODUCTION

This book completes the planned trilogy based on the ‘over the shoulder’ style of describing a bridge deal created by Terence Reese. Its main thrust surrounds the initial phase of the game, the bidding, which might be best described in the words of Sir Winston Churchill: ‘It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma’. It goes on to examine what happens after the initial phase of the game has been completed. Choosing the ‘right’ bid on any given hand may not be straightforward, but there are many situations where a degree of knowledge will help. Good bidding may sometimes go unrewarded; conversely, a poor auction can lead to a contract that makes as a result of outstanding play or less than accurate defense. You will find them all in the pages that follow. The discerning reader might also detect the odd dash of Reese.





Ever since the introduction of contract bridge around 100 years ago, players have been trying to find the perfect bidding system. Like the Philosopher's Stone, it has proved to be somewhat elusive. During the same period, hundreds of ideas relating to the best use of particular bids have been developed, and although many of them have fallen by the wayside, a significant number have survived the test of time. One of the best-known is a method of discovering a major-suit fit after an opening bid of 1NT. During one of the many online events that came into being with the advent of Covid-19, I have agreed with my partner, a noted theoretician, to adopt a less well-known application of the convention. As we approach the end of the qualifying rounds, I pick up these cards as South, with neither side vulnerable:

♠ AK 10 6   ♥ A 8 6   ♦ 10 6 5 4   ♣ 9 3

When the player on my right passes, I follow the modern trend and open 1♦. When West overcalls 1NT, my partner bids 2♣, which I am delighted to alert. Upon enquiry, I advise my right-hand opponent that it asks about my major-suit holdings. When he passes I bid 2♠ and that sees West come again with 3♣, which my partner doubles. What should I make of that? Until recently I would have assumed it showed interest in taking a penalty, but that type of double has fallen out of favor. I am inclined to construe it as a try for game. I could decline the invitation with 3♠, but my ♥A is potentially a good card, so in an effort to deliver more information to partner I bid 3♥. To my surprise, that becomes the final contract:

West	North	East	South
		pass	1♦
1NT	2♣ <sup>1</sup>	pass	2♠
3♣	dbl	pass	3♥
all pass			

1. Takeout for majors.

West leads the ♣Q and I see that we are in a strange contract.

♠ 9 7 4 3  
 ♥ Q 9 7 2  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ A K 6 5

▬

♠ A K 10 6  
 ♥ A 8 6  
 ♦ 10 6 5 4  
 ♣ 9 3

I win with dummy's ♣A and play a diamond, on which East plays the jack, which holds the trick. He switches to the ♥4 and I win with the ace and lay down the ♠K. When West follows with the jack I play a club to the king, but East ruffs and returns the ♠5. When I play the ace, West follows with the queen and I try a third spade. West gives that a look but eventually discards a club, so I win with dummy's nine and play a club, ruffing when East discards a diamond. I don't think it matters much what I do now, but I try to tempt West once more by playing the ♠10. After a short pause, he pitches a club. East ruffs with the ♥J and exits with the ♥10, West winning with the king and claiming another trick with the ♣J, which leaves me one down. This was the full deal:

	♠ 9 7 4 3 ♥ Q 9 7 2 ♦ 9 ♣ A K 6 5	
♠ Q J ♥ K 3 ♦ A K 2 ♣ Q J 10 7 4 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           N            W     E            S         </div>	♠ 8 5 2 ♥ J 10 5 4 ♦ Q J 8 7 3 ♣ 8
	♠ A K 10 6 ♥ A 8 6 ♦ 10 6 5 4 ♣ 9 3	

Although I fail to understand partner's failure to go back to 3♠, my interpretation of his double was flawed. He knew I held a minimum hand, so his double must have been a suggestion that playing for a penalty was a possibility. It was a classic case of a pair failing to clarify what they would do if they encountered intervention over their innovation. On a diamond lead, 3♣ would have been a massacre, especially if declarer fails to win in dummy and take the right view in hearts.

In the other room my hand opened 1♣, and when West overcalled 1NT, North's 2♣ was again asking about the majors. East bid 2♦ and when my hand bid 2♠, West tried 3♦ and North's 3♠ ended the auction. Declarer took nine tricks (with careful play you can secure ten, East eventually being squeezed in the red suits), so we lost 5 IMPs.

ALSO AVAILABLE  
BY MARK HORTON



[Misplay These Hands with Me](#)  
[Misplay More Hands with Me](#)

In this tongue-in-cheek homage to Reese's classic, and its sequel, Horton leads the reader through a plausibly logical line of play on each instructive deal, but one that ends in failure. In each post-mortem, the 'expert' realizes how he could have improved on his play, and (usually) have made his contract. The deals are all from top-class events, which prove to be a remarkably fertile source of such material. A book filled with subtle humor and great bridge.



## Misdefend These Hands with Me

In 2007, Horton wrote *Misplay These Hands with Me*, a deliberate tribute to Reese's classic, *Play These Hands with Me*. The difference was that the declarer in Horton's book always made an error, sometimes obvious, sometimes not so much. This successful book was the basis of a long-running column in the ACBL's *Bridge Bulletin*, and a sequel appeared in 2019. Now the same author turns to the topic of defense, and once again gives the reader a chance to learn from someone else's mistakes. All the deals are taken from top-level play.

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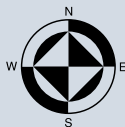
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## INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

In 2007, Horton wrote *Misplay These Hands with Me*, a deliberate homage to Reese's classic, *Play These Hands with Me*. The difference was that the declarer in Horton's book always made an error, sometimes obvious, sometimes not so much. This successful book was the basis of a long-running column in the ACBL's *Bridge Bulletin*, a sequel in 2019, and earlier this year, *Misdefend These Hands with Me*. Now the same author turns to the topic of bidding, and once again gives the reader a chance to learn from someone else's mistakes. All the deals are taken from top-level play.



**MARK HORTON** (UK) travels the world writing about bridge. Editor of *BeBridge* magazine and of the Daily Bulletins at World and European Championships, he is also the author of eight previous MPP titles.



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