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# Chess Secrets I Learned from the Masters

*Edward Lasker*

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**Edward Lasker : Chess Secrets I Learned from the Masters** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chess Secrets I Learned from the Masters:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining Chess ClassicBy Knight HawkNo need for me to hold forth at length, as others have reviewed the book with obvious care. I'll just cast my vote, as it were. Ed Lasker's love for chess is clearly evident throughout this, his finest book. Read it for the wonderful stories of his real-life chess experiences, told in a warm and intimate style. The story of his game with namesake, Emanuel Lasker, is exciting and lucid. This book provides light reading suitable for your nightstand, and the several games are nicely annotated. Not to be missed!4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Terrific, warm, human storyBy J. UrenI agree with my fellow reviewers and give this a 5.A couple of quick notes: It is an older book, and is in descriptive notation, not algebraic. You may have to learn a new "language" in order to follow game scores and annotations. No less a connoisseur than Han Ree (columnist for New In Chess magazine) singles this out as his top book. Not only chess but a way of life is on display. Growing up in Germany, caught in England at the outbreak of WWI, moving to America...Mr Lasker has much to say about the world outside of chess. And though he never ascended to the top of the chess rankings, he has his own niche of achievement: as I recall he won the City Championships of Berlin, London and New York. This is a record which, afaik, stands today.31 of 31 people found the following review helpful. Edward Lasker's greatest book!By KnightstalkerIn this, his magnum opus, Edward Lasker (1885-1981) allows us to experience a bygone era. "I must admit," he confesses, "that chess has been directly or indirectly the source of much happiness to

me, and I should probably be grateful for this to my great namesake, Emanuel Lasker. Had he not won the World Championship when I was a little boy of five, my father would hardly have thought of teaching me the game." Later on, the two Laskers would become close friends. How does one review a book like this? I can tell you that it is a thick book (428 pages). I can tell you that it was published in 1951. I can tell you that it has 32 drawings of the great and not so great masters (Pillsbury, von Bardeleben, Tarrasch, Bernstein, Nimzovich, just to name a few) by Kenneth Stubbs. I can tell you that there are 77 annotated games in descriptive notation. I can tell you it is a fascinating autobiography, but how do I convey the essence of this book? Certainly not by sterile statistics! What follows is meant to whet your appetite. Hopefully, I will succeed. These excerpts are suggestive, by no means are they complete. Let's begin with Kurt von Bardeleben: "One master on whose presence at the Cafe Bauer I could unfailingly count any evening, was Kurt von Bardeleben. He was an easy-going person, in his fifties. When he had any money at all, you could tell it by the bottle of Bordeaux on his table; he sipped one glass after another in the leisurely manner of the connoisseur." What was extraordinary about the shape of von Bardeleben's forehead? Why did his aristocratic family cast him off? These questions and more are answered by Lasker. Of his namesake, Emanuel Lasker, Edward makes the following observation: "The striking difference between him and the other masters was that he hardly ever spent any time at the chessboard...He seemed always preoccupied with problems of mathematics or philosophy." Which chess principle did Lasker claim was his "guide at every stage" of the game (p. 30) and which principle did he claim was "frequently violated in chess games..." (p. 144)? Why, Edward asks, did Emanuel Lasker draw up a document in which he confirmed that "[Ossip] Bernstein had irrefutably proved his status as chess idiot" (p. 79)? On a more personal note, Edward Lasker informs us that his "friends...no longer called [him] the 'chess player' but the 'chest player.'" How did he earn this dubious appellation (p. 250)? Finally, let's conclude with Edward Lasker's comments on Aaron Nimzovich: "There was a bizarre streak in Nimzovich's make-up, which manifested itself not only in his exotic behavior but in his writings as well. In the last analysis, this probably explains why he was unable to keep up with Alekhine and Capablanca, both of whom coupled a strong practical sense with their fine positional understanding. This practical sense Nimzovich lacked. He also lacked physical endurance." During the Hamburg Hauptturnier tournament, 1910, Lasker discussed his forthcoming book, "Principles of Chess Strategy" (published in English under the title Chess Strategy), with Nimzovich. "Though he complimented me on all I had done towards systematizing the knowledge every chess student needed...Nimzovich explained with good-natured irony that a master had to understand much more. And after he had shown me some of his new ideas which he proposed to publish in book form under the title My System, I thoroughly appreciated the gap which still separated me from his class. Among the bizarre things he said..." Well, you really need to read this book to find out what Nimzovich had to say! How strong a player was Edward Lasker? Good enough to score 8 1/2 to 9 1/2 in a match with Frank Marshall for the U.S. Championship in 1923. The annotated games are an integral part of Lasker's autobiography; in particular, I would draw your attention to his famous game against Emanuel Lasker from the New York Tournament of 1924 (pp. 309-315). If you are looking for a pedantic presentation, then I would suggest you look elsewhere.\* The lessons are there to be learned, but they are scattered throughout Lasker's game commentaries and personal reminiscences. For fifty years, and some seven hundred chess books later, this sensitive, insightful book has remained one of my favorites. If chess nostalgia is your cup-of-tea, then you will love this book. \_\_\_\_\_\* Edward Lasker's Modern Chess Strategy is a noticeably more structured and methodical approach to chess instruction. This book will appeal to the pragmatist in you; "Chess Secrets" will appeal to the humanist in you.

Chess Secrets I Learned from the Masters Very good condition, solid, sturdy