

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretzky

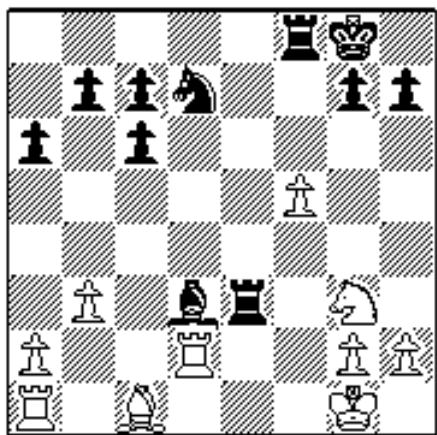
## Candidate Moves

In the Nov. 1999 issue of *Europe Echecs*, a fragment of a game Adams -Shirov appears, which I used as a classroom exercise during my visit to France last autumn. Later, back home in Moscow, I went over my analyses again. The position turned out to be a lot deeper, more complex, than I had at first realized - although the overall conclusion remained unchanged: White did not choose the strongest continuation. Allow me to offer you a new and considerably expanded version of my commentaries.

First, let me explain why I think this analysis might interest my readers. It seems to me that we are all occasionally guilty of underestimating the richness of ideas which lie beneath the surface of even the simplest, quietest-looking positions. And it is not just the lowly amateur who is guilty; sometimes it can even be a very strong grandmaster. The result is that our game becomes the poorer for it, we examine only a fraction of the possibilities at our disposal and/or at our opponent's, and miss hidden resources, both for attack and for defense.

One of the most important means of conducting analysis - and one which is tailor-made for the elimination of the aforementioned shortcoming - is the principle of "candidate moves". I will not go into detail here on this; those who wish to may read more in my books, as well as those of Kotov, Nunn, Tisdall and others. I shall only say that the following analysis is, in my view, a pretty decent illustration of this principle. (See Diagram)

### Adams-Shirov Linares 1997



Black's minor pieces on the d-file are vulnerable, and the rook at e3 is tied to the defense of the bishop. So all forcing moves which carry a direct threat must be examined. These are: 20. Kf2, 20. Rd1, 20. Bb2 (threatening 21. Rad1), 20. Ba3, and 20. Nf1.

1) **20. Kf2.** Adams, in *Informant* #69, gives the following variation: 20... Rfe8 21. Rd1 Re2+ 22. Nxe2 Rxe2+ 23. Kg1 Bxf5 24. Bf4+/. His final position is, in fact, about equal: 24... Nf6 25. Rd2 (25. Bxc7? Be4) Rxd2 26. Bxd2 Nd5. But Black has an alternative right at the start (candidate moves must also be found for the opponent!) 20...Rxc3?! 21. Kxc3 Nc5 (threatening 22...Ne4+) After 22. Ba3!Ne4+ 23. Kf4 (23. Kh4?! g5+! 24. Kh5 Nxd2 25. Bxf8 Kxf8) 23... Rxf5+! 24. Kxf5 Nxd2+ 25. Ke6 Nb1! gives rise to a most unusual situation, difficult to evaluate.

2) **20. Rd1 Rxc3 21. hg Bxf5+/=** (Adams). After 22. Bf4 Rc8!, White cannot prevent the maneuver Nf6(b6)-d5, which will equalize completely.

3) **20. Bb2 Rxc3** (20...Nb6 21. f6!? gf 22. Bd4 Rxc3 23. hg Bg6 24. Bxb6 cb

25. Re1 is worse) 21. hg Bxf5 22. Re1. Now 22...h6? is bad, in view of 23. Rf2!Rf7 24. Re8+ Kh7 25. g4+-; but 22...h5! appears to maintain rough equality.

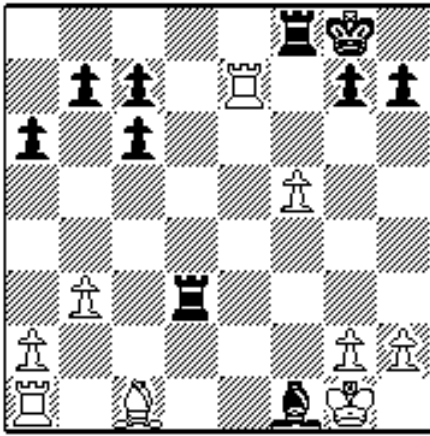
4) **20. Ba3!? Rf7.** This was the game continuation. After 21. Rad1?! Rxc3 22. hg Bxf5 (almost the same position as in the 20. Rd1 variation, except that the bishop stands worse on a3 than it did on f4) 23. Rf2?! (Adams thinks 23. Re1+/- is stronger - although it's hard to understand why he considers White's position preferable.) 23... Bg4 24. Re1 Rxf2 25. Kxf2 Nf6! 26. Re7 Nd5 27. Re8+ Kf7=/. Now it was Black who was trying to win, although at the end he blundered and lost.

Instead of 21 Rad1, **21 Kf2!** was much stronger (White avoids the doubled pawns). **21.. Rxc3 22 Kxc3 Bxf5 23 Rf1(+/- or +/-)** (White threatens 24 Rxf5) **23.. g6** is forced, and now Black's game looks suspect

5) **20. Nf1!?** Adams evidently did not consider either this move or 20. Bb2, since neither move was mentioned in the Informant. **20... Bxf1.** 20...Re1 21. Rxd3 Rxf5 22. Rf3 gives White excellent winning chances; for instance, 22...Rxf3 23. gf Ne5 24. Bb2 Nxf3+ 25. Kf2 Rxa1 26. Bxa1, when the extra piece outweighs the three pawns.

**21. Rxd7 Rd3!** Black will lose the rook endgame after 21...Re1 22. Bb2 (22. Rxc7+ Kxc7 23. Bb2+ Kf7 24. Rxe1 Bd3 is weaker) 22... Rfe8 (22...Rxa1? 23. Rxc7+) 23. Rxc7+ Kf8 24. Rxe1 Rxe1 25. Kf2 Re2+ 26. Kxf1 Rxb2 27. Rxh7 Rxa2 28. Rxc7.

**22. Re7!** It's important to control the e2 square. The game is a draw after 22. Rxc7 Be2 23. Bb2 Rf7 24. Rc8+ Rf8. (See Diagram)



Black's situation is desperate: the bishop is attacked and has no retreat; in addition, White threatens 23. Bb2. But the resources of the defense are not yet exhausted.

**5A) 22... Be2?** 23. Bb2!+- (but not 23. Rxe2? Rd1+ 24. Kf2 Rxf5+ 25. Kg3 Rff1, when the rook must go to c2, and White will never get out. One important point is that 26. Rf2 Rfe1 27. Ba3? fails to 27...Rd3+!, and the pawn check gets Black's king out of the mating net.)

**5B) 22... Rxf5!?** 23. Ba3 (23. Bb2? Rd2)

Bxg2; and now, White has two possibilities, both based on the same tactical resource:

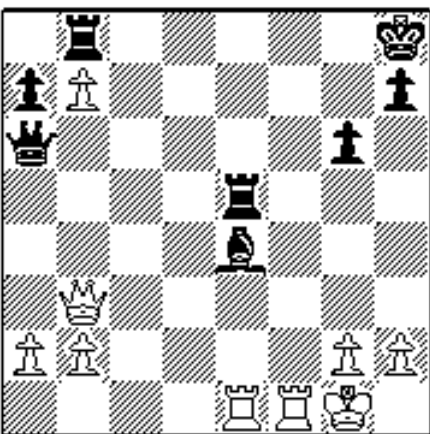
**5Ba)** 24. Re8+ Kf7 25. Rf8+ Kg6 26. Kxg2! (26. Rxf5 Kxf5 27. Kxg2 Rd2+ = is inferior) 26...Rd2+ 27. Kh1. Clearly, 27...Rh5? does not work now, in view of 28. Rg1+ Kh6 29. Rf6+! gf 30. Bf8#. Nor is Black's position particularly pleasant after 27...Rxf8 28. Bxf8. Best is 27...Rg5!, for instance: 28. Bb4 Rc2, or 28. Rff1 (intending 29. Bc1) 28...Rgg2 29. Rg1 Rxc1+ 30. Rxc1+ Kf7+/=.

**5Bb)** 24. Kxg2!? Rd2+ 25. Kh1! (not 25. Kg3 h5! -unclear) Again, not 25...Rh5? 26. Re8+ Kf7 27. Rf8+ Kg6 (27..Ke6 28. Re1+) 28. Rg1+ Kh6 29.Rf6+!. Nor are Black's problems solved by 25...h6 26. Bb4! Rc2 27. Rxc7 Rff2 28. Bd6. But 25...c5! 26. Rg1 Rxa2! is possible, and if 27. Rxxg7+ Kf8 28. Bc1, then 28... Rxh2+! 29. Kxh2 Rh5+.

**5C) 22... Rd1!? 23. Rxc7+!? Here 23. Bb2 is not convincing: 23... Rfd8 24. Rxc7+ Kf8 25. Rxd1 Rxd1 26. Kf2 Bd3!? - unclear.**

**23... Kxg7 24. Bb2+ Kg8! 25. Rxd1 Be2 26. Re1.** 26. Rd7 is useless, in view of 26... Rxf5 threatening 27...Rf1# or 27...Rf7. And 26. Rd2 runs into 26...Bg4 27. Rd7 Rf7! 28. Rd8+ Rf8=, or 27. f6 Kf7+/-.

**26... Bg4** (26...Bd3? 27. g4+/-) **27. f6** (27. Re7 Rf7) **27...Rd8+/-.**



For those readers interested in this kind of training in calculation, I offer another, somewhat simpler, example on the same theme. (*See Diagram*)

### *Tseshkovsky-Gufeld Vilnius Zonal, 1975*

## What's the best way to exploit White's great advantage?

In the game, Vitaly Tseshkovsky incautiously played **35. Rf8+?? Rxf8 36. b8Q**, either overlooking or underestimating the powerful reply **36...Qf6!**, after which the evaluation of the position changed a hundred and eighty degrees. After **37. Qxa7** (37. Qxf8+ Qxf8 38. Qc3 Qf5!, followed by 39...Kg8 doesn't help White) **37... Bd3! 38. Qd1 Rxe1+**, White resigned.



Also mistaken is 35. Qg3? Qb6+ 36. Kh1 - Black can force the draw with 36...Bxg2+ 37. Qxg2 (37. Kxg2 Qxb7+) Rxe1; or he can try for the win by 36...Qd4!? 37. Rd1 Qxb2 38. Rf2 Qb5.

Eduard Gufeld suggested 35. Qc3!? Qb6+ (on 35...Qa5, 36. Qd4! is strong) 36. Rf2 Qc5 37. Qxc5 Rxc5 38. Rxe4. White does have an extra pawn; although after 38...Rxb7, it is unclear whether he will be able to convert it into a point. So before putting the queen at c3, it should be established that White has no other hopeful tries.

**35. Qb4! Q** 35...Bxb7 (hoping against hope for 36. Rxe5? Qxf1+! 37. Kxf1 Bxg2+ 38. Kxg2 Rxb4=) loses flatly to 36. Qc3, 36. Qd4 or 36. Rf8+ Kg7 37. Rxb8.

On 35...Kg8 36. Rxe4 Rxe4 37. Qxe4 Qxb7 38. Qe6+ Kh8 39. Qe5+ Kg8 40. b3, we have almost the same situation as in the 35. Qc3 variation, with an extra pawn for White - but with queens still on the board. The presence of queens is obviously in White's favor, since his king still has pawn cover, while Black's doesn't.

### **36. Qxb6 ab 37. Rf4 Rxb7 38. R**

In comparison with the 35. Qc3 variation, here the Black pawn has gone from a7 to b6, which must favor White. Here, his position is almost certainly won.

Translated by Jim Marfia

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# Battle of the Heavy Pieces

Schlechter-Lasker  
5th Match Game  
Vienna/Berlin 1910

The classic game we now present for your inspection has already been reprinted many times. I would like to compare the annotators' opinions (some quite radically different), and add some analysis of my own.

But the point is not just the correction of errors in analysis. What I value most of all, in examining other people's analysis, is that they are able to present an overall picture of the struggle, and to describe the problems (some purely chess-related, others psychological) facing the players. Variations are chiefly required in order to demonstrate or to illustrate the author's point of view.

This was precisely the approach used by the famous Russian player and trainer, Pyotr Romanovsky, when commenting on this game for his book, "Middlegame - Positional Play" - a work which, although it has indeed been translated into English, has somehow escaped the notice of the entire English-speaking world. So it will be mostly Romanovsky's conclusions I shall cite here - even though I may have to disagree with some of them.

The game's opening stage is not very interesting, so we'll hurry past it:

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 d6 5. d4 Bd7 6. Nc3 Be7 7. Bg5 0-0 8. de**

8. Bxc6 Bxc6 9. de de (9... Nxe4 10. Nxe4 Bxe4 11. Bxe7 Qxe7 12. ed Qxd6 13. Qxd6 cd 14. Nd4+/- - Schlechter) 10. Qxd8 Bxd8 11. Nxe5 Bxe4 12. Bxf6?! Bxf6 13. Nd7 Bxc3 14. Nxf8 Bxb2 15. Rab1 Ba3 (unclear - Keres) 16. Nd7 f6!/-+.

**8. ... Nxe5**

8. ... de 9. Re1 intending Bxc6 (Schlechter)

**9. Bxd7**

9. Nxe5 Bxb5 10. Nxf7? Qd7 (Schlechter)

**9. ... Nfxd7 10. Bxe7 Nxf3+**

10... Qxe7 11. Nd4 intending f4 (Schlechter)

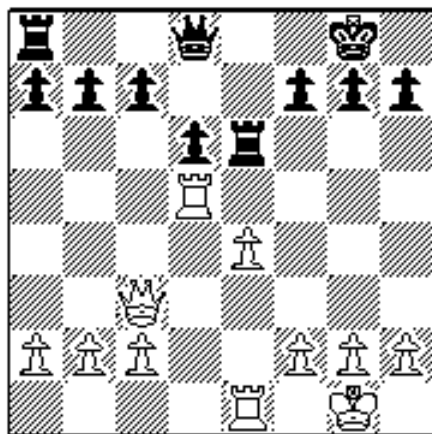
**11. Qxf3 Qxe7 12. Nd5 Qd8 13. Rad1**

Better 13. Qc3 - Schlechter

**13. ... Re8 14. Rfe1 Nb6 15. Qc3 Nxd5 16. Rxd5**

16. ed leads to too much simplification (Schlechter)

**16. ... Re6 = (See Diagram)**



**17. Rd3 Qe7 18. Rg3 Rg6**

18... f5? 19. Qb3 - Schlechter

**19. R1e3 Re8 20. h3 Kf8 21. Rxd6 hg**

"Can we aver that either side has any advantage here? Of course not. In fact, many players would be willing to shake hands and take a draw at this point.

The position teeters on the verge of an endgame - and this line remains uncrossed for many moves." (Romanovsky)

Here it should be noted that, in the above-cited book, Romanovsky spends a great deal of time examining positions with only rooks and queens on the board, even going so far as to label these positions "the fourth stage of a chess game". These positions feature both endgame and middlegame tendencies; their chief difficulty lies in deciding which features are currently the more significant. Should one centralize the king (as in an endgame), or shelter it (as in the middlegame); should one create pawn weaknesses for an attack that may never happen, and so on.

The game under discussion is an excellent illustration of this problem. Lasker treated the position as an endgame, gradually outplaying his opponent; but at the very end, he briefly lost his concentration, and fell under a mating attack.

**22. Qb4 c6**

"22... b6 would have led to a serious queenside weakening after 23. Qa4 a5 24. Qc6." (Tarrasch)

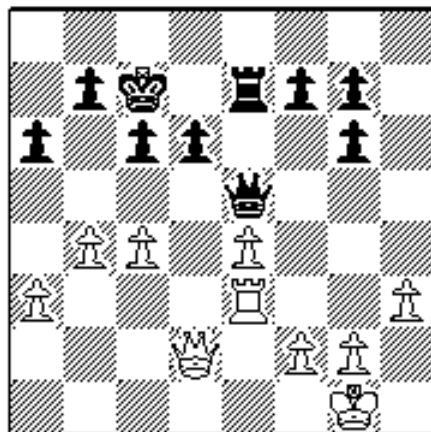
**23. Qa3 a6 24. Qb3 Rd8 25. c4**

"From an endgame standpoint, the c-pawn would have been better left at c2. The weakness of Black's d6-pawn proves illusory." (Romanovsky)

**25. ... Rd7 26. Qd1 Qe5 27. Qg4 Ke8**

"Using rear lines of communication, Lasker carefully moves his king closer to the center and the queenside. In the endgame, of course, the king is better placed near the main group of his pawns, which is the only spot from which an attack may be launched. Meanwhile, Black also undertakes a plan of stirring up queenside play. This also resolves another issue: giving the king the responsibility for the defense of the pawn at d6 frees the queen from this task. On g8 or f8, of course, the king stands more securely than it does at c7 - although here, too, it is hard to get at him. There aren't a lot of pieces remaining on the board, and Black's queenside pawn chain is quite sturdy." (Romanovsky)

**28. Qe2 Kd8 29. Qd2 Kc7 30. a3 Re7 31. b4** (See Diagram)



**31. ... b5!**

"Very boldly and energetically played - as one should expect from a great master. Although this move does open up the king's position, at the same time, the White a-pawn is rendered backward. And Black hopes, at some point, to create a passed pawn of his own, by advancing the c-pawn." (Tarrasch)

"Black aims for a position in which the trade of queens will favor him. This allows him greater freedom of action, since White

will have to avoid an endgame. The bad side of this move is that the king's pawn cover will be somewhat loosened. But it's still a long way to the endgame - that is, if Black can reach one." (Romanovsky)

Before defining the pawn structure on the queenside, it would have been advisable to have first improved his position on the kingside, by ..g6-g5, ..f7-f6, and perhaps ..Re8. However, White would have responded to 31..g5 with 32. Qd1, followed by 33. a4.

**32. cb**

Evidently, Schlechter has decided to show his powerful opponent that there is still a middlegame on the board. However, White must be careful as well. In view of the weak pawn at a3 and the possibility of ..c6-c5, the rook endgame is quite unacceptable for him." (Romanovsky)

32. Qd3? Qa1+ 33 Kh2 Qa2! (33..Qc1? 34 cb ab 35. Qd4 - Dvoretsky) 34. c5 dc 35. bc Rd7 36. Qc3 Qd2! 37. Qe5+ Kb7-/+ (Romanovsky).

But this evaluation is wrong. White continues 38. Qxg7 (taking the pawn without playing Qe5+ first is even more exact) 38... Qxf2 39. Rf3 Qxc5 (39..Qa2 40. Qc3!? or 40. Rf6!?) 40. Rxf7 Rxf7 41. Qxf7+ Kb6 42. Qf6!?, and White at least stands no worse. Instead of 32...Qa1+, a stronger move is 32... f6=/+.

**32. ... ab 33. g3 g5! 34. Kg2 Re8 35. Qd1!**

(Intending 36. a4) 35. Qa2?! Qe6 Romanovsky.

**35. ... f6!**

35... Ra8 36. Qh5, with counterplay (Tarrasch).

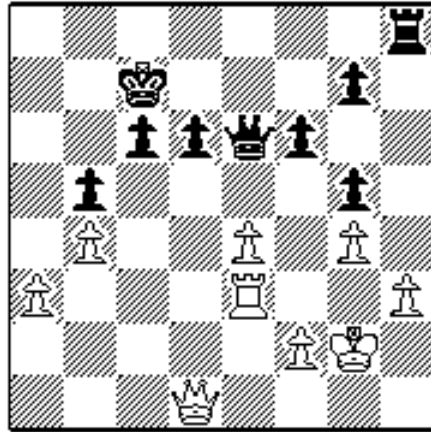
**36. Qb3?**

White could not bring himself to play 36. a4!?, in view of 36... ba 37. Qxa4 Kb7, when 38. Ra3 results in a hard rook endgame for him after 38... Qxe4+ 39. Kh2 Qd4! 40. Qa6+ Kc7 41. Qa7+ Qxa7 42. Rxa7+ Kb6 43. Rxg7 Re4 (Romanovsky). This variation shows the point of the fine prophylactic move 35... f6! However, the sacrifice of the e4-pawn was hardly necessary; with

something like, say, 38. Qc2!?, White maintains good counterchances.

The text has no point, and only loses time for White. Viorel Bologan's suggested 36. Qh5! was stronger, preventing Black's plan of Qe6 and Rh8, and preparing to exchange the h-pawn if the occasion presents itself.

**36. ... Qe6 37. Qd1 Rh8 38. g4** (See Diagram)



"White again weakens his position, refusing - quite rightly - to play 38. Qg4. Anything but an endgame!" (Romanovsky)

**38. ... Qc4**

A self-confident queen invasion. Black should undoubtedly have preferred 38...Ra8, to quash forever White's chief - in fact, probably only - counterchance: the advance of the a-pawn. But perhaps Lasker, seeing no clear way to strengthen his own position, decided to provoke Schlechter into this bayonet attack, banking on the fact that it

requires a pawn sacrifice." (Romanovsky)

And indeed, after 38...Ra8 39. Qc2, how is Black to strengthen his position? I think that Lasker played the best move.

**39. a4!?**

"White might never get another chance. Black will soon discover that defending an exposed king, even against a comparatively small number of pieces, is no easy task." (Romanovsky)

"A pawn sacrifice rich with opportunity: after 39. Qf3 Re8 40. Qf5 Re5 (40... Qf7 - Dvoretsky) 41. Qh7 Qf7 or 41. Qg6 Qg8, White has a difficult game." (Schlechter)

Tarrasch maintained the opposite opinion:

"White begins to panic at the implacable improvement of his opponent's position, and bets everything on one card, sacrificing a pawn for attacking chances. This continuation should have cost him the game, even if it did give him some chances. There were as yet no grounds for despair: all his weak spots (at a3, e4 and h3) were quite sufficiently defended by the rook; and as long as he avoided the exchange of queens, he might have continued play with a clear conscience."

Tarrasch is quite obviously right: a strategy of passive defense was quite appropriate in these circumstances. Continue: 39. Qe1 Re8 40. Kg1, and I can find no clear way to strengthen Black's position. Any further pawn advance will lead to the creation of weaknesses in his own camp.

In any event, if White had to play a3-a4, then it should have been done earlier, on move 36, when it would not have required a pawn sacrifice.

**39. ... Qxb4?**



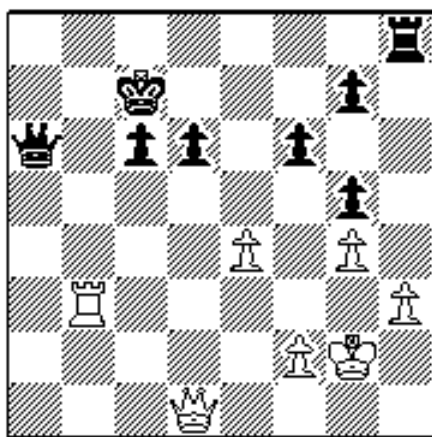
"No worse is 39...Ra8 40. ab Qxb5 41. Qb3 Ra1! 42. Rd3 Kb6, and if 43. Rxd6 (43. Qc3 Qe5! 44. Rd4 Rd1, or 44. Qxe5 de 45. Rd7 Ra7! - Dvoretsky), then 43... Qf1+ 44. Kg3 Qg1+, and wins. Lasker, however, hastens to win material, since there is no immediately visible threat to his king." (Romanovsky)

41. Qb3? in Romanovsky's line is a bad choice, allowing counterthreats to the White king. One might suggest 41. Rc3! instead, for example, preparing 42. Qd5 or 42. Qb3 (41... Qxb4 42. Rxc6+).

The strongest move, however, was one that went unnoticed by the commentators: 39... Rb8!-/+, bringing the rook in with an attack on the weak pawn at b4.

Taking the pawn at once allows White to create dangerous counterthreats.

**40. ab Qxb5 41. Rb3 Qa6** (*See Diagram*)



**42. Qd4?**

Intending Qb4 and Ra3.

But Schlechter missed the strongest line, again pointed out by Bologan: 42. Rb4!, with the plan of 43. Qb3 or 43. Ra4 (43. Rb1 or b2 are apparently equivalent). For instance, on 42... c5 43. Ra4 Qb7 44. Qa1 Kb8 42. Qa2! Re8 46. f3, White has the extremely unpleasant threat 47. Ra3. Black would apparently have to repeat moves with 42... Qa3 43. Rb3 Qa6 44. Rb4.

**42. ... Re8!**

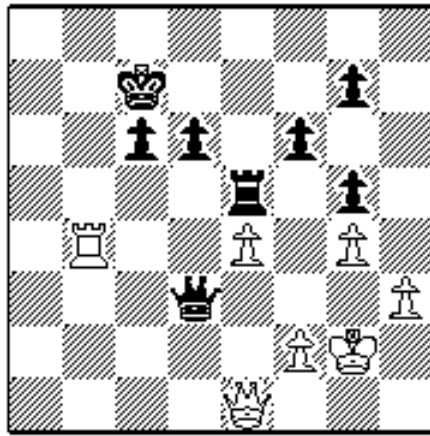
An excellent maneuver which Schlechter apparently underestimated. From e5, the rook will assist with the defense and simultaneously create counterthreats against the e-pawn.

**43. Rb1 Re5 44. Qb4 Qb5**

44... Rb5 45. Qc4

**45. Qe1 Qd3 46. Rb4**

Intending 47. Qa1 (*See Diagram*)



#### 46. ... c5?!

46... Rb5 (Capablanca) 47. Ra4 Rb1 48. Qa5+ Kd7 49. Qf5+ (Romanovsky).

46... Ra5! (intending Ra3) 47. Rb3 Qxb3 48. Qxa5+ Kb7 (48..Qb6 - Schlechter) 49. Qd8 Qe6 50. f3 d5 51. ed cd 52. Qa5 Qd7 53. Qb4+ Kc7 54. Qd4. "The queen endgame is certainly not simple, and it is not clear whether Black could win it. Lasker was unsure of this; and since he quite underestimated White's chances, he decided that he was within his rights to try for

more." (Romanovsky)

#### 47. Ra4 c4 48. Qa1 Qxe4+ 49. Kh2

Black has won a second pawn, but the open position of his king assures his opponent sufficient counterplay.

49. ... Rb5 (intending Qe5+) 50. Qa2 (intending Rxc4+ or Ra7+) 50. ... Qe5+ 50... Rb3?? 51. Qxb3 Qf4+ 52. Qg3+- (Schlechter).

#### 51. Kg1 Qe1+ 52. Kh2?!

Better 52. Kg2 - Romanovsky.

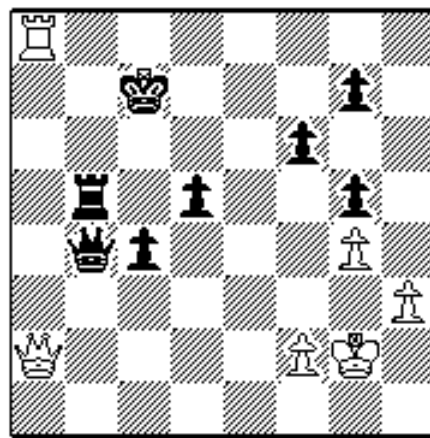
#### 52. ... d5 53. Ra8

Intending 54. Qa7+; if 53. Ra7+ Rb7.

#### 53. ... Qb4

Black only gets a repetition of moves after 53... Qe5+ 54. Kg1 (54 Kg2 Qe4+ 55. f3? Qd4+- - Capablanca).

#### 54. Kg2 (54. Qa6? Qd6+) (See Diagram)



#### 54. ... Qc5?

On Lasker's suggested 54... Rb8 there follows 55. Qa7+ Rb7 56. Qe3 Qd6, and now not 57. Qe8 (hoping for 57..Qd7? 58 Qf8! threatening 59. Qc5+), in view of 57... d4!, threatening to exchange queens (Dvoretsky), but 57. Rg8 (or 57 Re8) 57... d4 58 Qe4, maintaining a dangerous attack (Schlechter).

Schlechter suggested 54... Rb7!?

Vadim Zvjagintsev offered the most solid solution: 54... c3!? - White must reckon with the possible queen check at e4. The most likely outcome here would be a draw after, for instance, 55. Re8 Rb8 56. Qa7+ Rb7 57. Qa8 Rb8 58. Qa7+.

### **55. Qa6 Rb8?**

Another bad line is 55... Rb7 56. Qe6 Rb8 57. Qf7+ (Schlechter). The only saving chances lay in sacrificing the queen for the rook by 55... Qb6!? 56. Qc8+ Kd6 57. Ra6 Qxa6 58. Qxa6+ Kc5 (Capablanca), or 55... c3!? 56. Rc8+ Kd7 57. Rxc5 Rxc5 (Lasker).

### **56. Ra7+ Kd8 57. Rxg7 Qb6 58. Qa3 Kc8**

And Black resigned, in view of 59. Qf8+ Qd8 60. Qc5+; nor was 58... Qb4 59. Qa7 any improvement.

"The whole endgame can serve as an instructive example of underestimating the force of middlegame ideas in a battle of the heavy pieces. Strictly speaking, Lasker made only one error - but a highly significant one: he let himself get carried away by the ideas of the endgame." (Romanovsky)

Translated by Jim Marfia

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COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky



## Dvoretsky on Berliner

1999 saw the publication of a book by the American chessplayer and programmer Hans Berliner, titled *The System*, in which the author lays out his approach to chess, and more particularly his opening strategy with the White pieces.

Among others, Russia has a grandmaster, Yevgeny Sveshnikov, who espouses a similar opening philosophy (although he comes to absolutely different conclusions). I believe the principal difference between the two may be brought down to the following: Berliner worked out his opening system, based on a system of general principles which he believes in; whereas Sveshnikov took the opposite approach: at an early age, he chose a small set of opening variations (which almost nobody else used at the time), has never wavered from them throughout his chess career, analyzed them in detail, and only then began to formulate the principles underlying the correctness of his choices, and his understanding of the openings.

I share neither Berliner's nor Sveshnikov's philosophies - indeed, I probably stand on diametrically opposed positions from theirs. I do not believe that any one opening move is stronger than all the rest, nor do I believe that there exists only one right way to treat the opening. Chess is too complex and multi-faceted for this - that's not a phrase, but a conclusion, drawn from many years as a player, a trainer, and an analyst.

But even if the opposite were true, I doubt this would have much effect on practical players. Even now, it is common for us to select an opening variant which we clearly know is not the strongest; we select it because it fits our style (or because it's uncomfortable for our opponent), and consequently offers us the best chance of success.

The advantage of this pragmatic approach is even more apparent when we have to make our decision, not at home during preparation, but right there at the board, with limited time for consideration. Or, as John Nunn so aptly put it (analyzing the reasons for falling into time-pressure) in his book *Secrets of Practical Chess*:

*There is no point thinking for half an hour about a possible advantage or disadvantage of what the computer calls "0.1 of a pawn". This almost certainly is not going to cost you a half-point. The piece you hang later during time-trouble probably is.*

Comparing Berliner's recommendations with the opening handbooks, it's not difficult to see that, in spite of some interesting analytical discoveries, he has not succeeded in refuting or even seriously altering the conclusions of contemporary opening theory, and thereby demonstrating the validity of his

views.

At the same time, Berliner's concrete analyses are meaty indeed (he is an outstanding analyst; it's no accident that he won the V World Correspondence Championship by an overwhelming score). And his strategic conceptions are indubitably based on rock-solid foundations - practical players would do well to study them. Just don't "absolutize" them: *look at them as possible, and only sometimes the strongest, ways of treating the position.*

Berliner successfully employed one of his strategic conceptions in the following game.

**Berliner - Ratner 1969 Eastern Open**

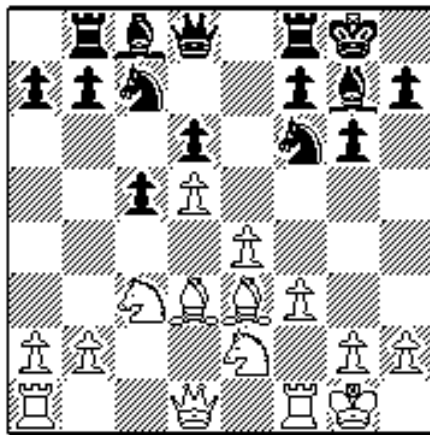
**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. Nc3 ed 5. cd d6 6. e4 g6 7. Bd3 Bg7 8. Nge2**

Typical for Berliner, he does not develop the knight on f3, in order to leave the way clear for the f-pawn's advance.

**8...0-0 9. 0-0 Na6 (9...a6 10. a4 Nbd7) 10. f3!?**

The usual theoretical continuation is 10. h3 Nc7 11. Ng3

**10...Nc7?! (10...Bd7; 10...Rb8) 11. Be3 Rb8 (See Diagram)**



**12. Rab1!**

*This is the star move of this game. During the 1960s I had been analyzing many of the System formations arising in various defenses to 1. d4...The conclusion that I came to is that in many of these openings, when Black has created no direct object for attack, White should make a space-grab on the queenside with the move b4. This frequently has to be prepared, almost always by Rb1, and never by a3 unless Black prevents b4 with ...a5. So this is a rook move with a purpose. Openings such as the Dutch Defense, Old Indian and King's Indian fall into this category.*

White plays b2-b4 in the hopes of eliminating the black pawn at c5, and thereby gaining access to the vital square d4.

**12...b5 13. b4! cb 14. Rxb4 a5 15. Rb1 Bd7 16. Nd4**

White's goal is achieved; he now holds a positional advantage.

**16...Qe8 17. Qd2 b4?**



An unfortunate plan: exchanging pieces on b5. After the d7-bishop disappears, the square c6 becomes hopelessly weak.

**18. Nce2 Nb5 19. Nxb5 Bxb5 20. Bxb5 Qxb5 21. Nd4 Qa4 22. Nc6 Rb7 23. Bd4 Rd7?**

This costs a pawn, but Black's game is difficult after 23...Ra8 24. Rfc1 also.

**24. Bb6! Ra8 25. Bxa5! Nxe4**

25...Rxa5 26. Rxb4 Qxa2 27. Rb8+ Bf8 28. Qh6+-.

**26. fe Bc3 27. Rxb4! Bxb4 28. Bxb4 Qxa2 29. Qd4 Ra4 30. Qf6 Rxb4 31. Nxb4**

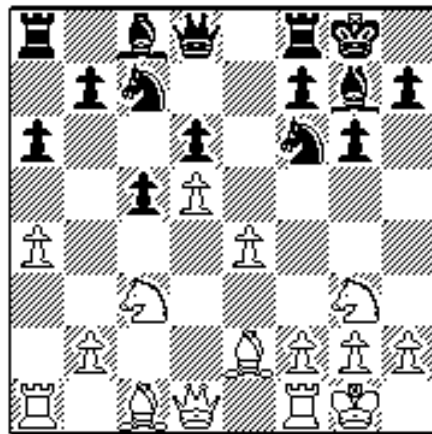
Black's a piece down, and could have resigned with a clear conscience.

**31...Qc4 32. Ra1! Qc8 33. Nc6 Qb7 34. h4 h5 35. Kh2 Kh7 36. Ra7 Qc8 37. Ne7**, and Black resigned. **1-0**

The plan discovered by Berliner later became standard play in such positions. Here are a couple of examples.

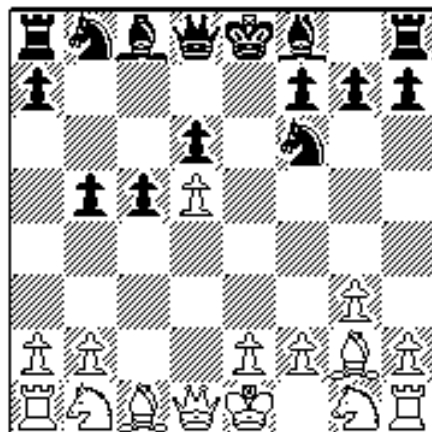
**G. Giorgadze - L. Yurtaev Simferopol 1988**

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nge2 0-0 6. Ng3 c5 7. d5 e6 8. Be2 ed 9. cd Na6 10. 0-0 Nc7 11. a4 a6** (See Diagram)



**12. Rb1! Nd7** (Black stops b2-b4 temporarily) **13. Bf4 Ne5 14. Qd2 h5 15. Bg5 f6 16. Bh6 h4 17. Nh1 Bd7 18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. f4 Nf7 20. Nf2 b5 21. ab ab 22. b4 c4 23. Qd4 Qe7 24. Bg4 Bxg4** (24...Ra3!?) **25. Nxg4 Ra3 26. Rf3 Nh6?! (26...Rh8) 27. Nxh6 Kxh6 28. Qf2 f5 29. e5 de 30. fe Qxe5 31. Qxh4+ (31 Re1!? intending 32 Ne4) 31...Kg7 32. Re1 Qf6 33. Qxf6+ Rxf6 34. d6 Rxd6 35. Re7+ Kg8 36. Rxc7 Rd2 37. h4**, and Black resigned **1-0**

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 c5 4. d5 ed 5. cd b5 6. Bg2 d6** (See Diagram)



In this position, White usually continued 7. Nf3 or 7. e4. But in the early 80's, White found the dangerous pawn sacrifice **7. b4!?**, with the same strategic point as in the Berliner game: the occupation of d4.

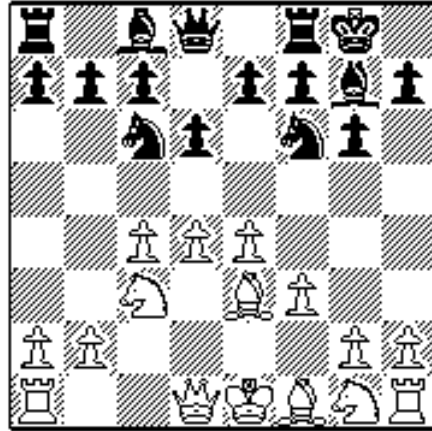
**7...cb** is met by **8. a3 ba** (8...b3 9. Qxb3 a6 10. a4 ba 11. Qxa4+ Nbd7 12. Nf3 Be7 13. Nd4 0-0 14. Nc6 Qe8 15. Be3+/- Albur - I. Ivanov, New York 1983) **9. Nxa3**, with good compensation. For instance: 9...Qd7 (9...Bd7!? Zaichik - Vladimirov, 1981) 10. Qb3 Na6 11. Qxb5 Rb8 12. Qxd7+ Bxd7

13. Nc2! Nc5 14. Rxa7 Be7 15. Nf3 Nxd5 16. Nfd4 Nc3 17. Nc6 Rc8 18. Nxe7 Kxe7 19. Nd4+/- (Sosonko - Adorjan, Wijk aan Zee 1984).

Or **7...Na6** 8. **bc Nxc5** 9. **Nf3 g6** 10. **0-0** (10 Nd4!?) 10...**Bg7** 11. **Nd4 0-0?! (11...Bb7)** 12. **Nc3! a6** (12...b4 13. Nc6 Qd7 [13..Qb6 14. Rb1] 14. Nb5!, with advantage to White) 13. **Nc6 Qc7** 14. **Be3 Bb7** 15. **Bd4 Rfe8** 16. **a4!+/-** (Kasparov - Korchnoi, 11th match game, London 1983).

The following attempt to employ the same approach is somewhat less trivial: Berliner proposes a whole new way of playing a popular opening system.

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. Be3 Nc6** (See Diagram)



Theory examines only 7. Nge2 or 7. Qd2. Berliner thinks the strongest move is one that isn't even mentioned in the opening books!

**7. Rb1** (!! - Berliner)

*The move b2-b4 is imminent and will sweep aside all of Black's hopes on the queenside once it is played. White need only be careful about his timing, as there may be tactical counterchances starting with ...e5 and if d5, then ...Nd4. So we have.*

*a) On 7...Bd7 (7...a6 leads to similar play) White plays 8. b4. Now, in order to avoid being swept away, Black is practically forced to play 8...e5 9. d5 Nd4 10. Nge2 Nh5! 11. Qd2! (11. Nxd4 ed 12. Bxd4 Qh4+ is too strong; however, now Bf2 becomes possible as the c3-knight is defended.) Now Black can no longer maintain the d4-knight without sacrificing a pawn in a rather unproductive way. If 11...Qf6, then 12. Bg5. Or if 11...Qh4+ 12. Bf2 Qf6 13. Nxd4 ed 14. Ne2. And 11...c5 12. dc is hardly to be considered. So Black must play 11...Nxe2 12. Bxe2, when White has an excellent position, several tempi ahead of similar positions that occur in this variation. 12...f5 can be met by 13. 0-0, when 13...Nf4 14 Bd1 Qg5?! 15. Kh1 Qh5 16. Bc2 gives White a formidable queenside initiative, while Black's attack still has a long way to go before it becomes dangerous. Nor does 13...f4 14. Bf2 Bf6 15. Qe1 g5 16. c5 offer Black much as White is again well ahead compared to usual positions in this variation.*

*b) Nor does 7...a5 8. a3! change anything. White will still advance b4, and not worry about the a-file, which will belong to White in the not-too-distant future.*

*c) On the immediate 7...e5 8. d5 Nd4 (8...Ne7 9 b4 and the queenside*

*attack is underway) 9. Nge2 c5 (if 9...Nxe2 10. Bxe2, and White is several tempi ahead of the standard variations in which White attacks on the queenside and Black on the kingside) 10. dc Nxc6 and White has a large positional advantage.*

Let's take a critical look at Berliner's analysis. What is the drawback of his proposed move, 7. Rb1? First of all, the fact that instead of developing his kingside pieces, White begins a rather abstract assault on the other side; he thus risks falling behind in development.

For example, we could try 7...a5 8. a3 Bd7. Berliner thinks that, after playing b2-b4, White will soon wrest the a-file away from his opponent (obviously, as a result of his preponderance on the queenside). And so it would be, if White had the time. But this will not happen if Black succeeds in opening the center quickly.

9. b4 ab 10. ab e5 11. d5 Nd4 12. Nge2 Nh5 13. Qd2 (all so far as analyzed by Berliner, except with the inclusion of the a-pawn moves) 13...f5! 14. Nxd4 ed 15. Bxd4 Bxd4 16. Qxd4 Qh4+ 17. Qf2 Qf6. Black obviously has more than enough for a pawn, and the opening of the a-file was clearly good for him.

White should probably not follow his intended plan in this instance. 7...a5 is better met by the usual plan of 8. Nge2 or 8. Qd2. It's not so easy to determine, in that case, who is favored by the inclusion of the moves 7. Rab1 a5; most probably White. Yes, he has lost the right to castle queenside, which he sometimes does in this system; on the other hand, Black no longer has his standard plan of ...Rb8, ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5.

But Black is within his rights to try this pawn sacrifice even without the preliminary opening of the a-file.

**7...Bd7 8. b4 e5 9. d5 Nd4 10. Nge2 Nh5 11. Qd2 f5!?**

11...a5!? deserves close scrutiny as well. We already know the consequences of 12. a3 ab 13. ab f5! On 12. b5, the queenside assault is stopped in its tracks, while winning a pawn by 12. ba or 12. Nxd4 ed 13. Bxd4 looks too risky.

**12. Nxd4 ed 13. Bxd4 Bxd4 14. Qxd4 Qh4+ 15. Qf2**

15. Kd1 is met by 15...Ng3 (15...fe 16. Nxe4 Bf5 isn't bad, either) 16. Qf2 Qf6 17. hg Qxc3, threatening not only 18...fe, but also 18...Ba4+.

**15...Qf6**, and Black has compensation.

With White's king stranded in the center, and his dark squares weak, Black obviously has fully sufficient counterplay.

Translated by Jim Marfia

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Mark Dvoretsky



## Irrational Complications

### Quinteros - Fischer Buenos Aires 1970

This game was commented upon (quite superficially) by Herman Pilnik (in 64) and by Petar Trifunovic (in *Informant* #10). A few years later, Adrian Mikhalchisin published a more serious analysis of its short critical stage (in *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 12/77); but this, too, was far from perfect - which should be no surprise, since the game was clearly out of control of both players; the outcome had become totally unpredictable. In the end, as they say, the stronger player won; but objectively speaking, the outcome could also have been reversed.

**1. c4 g6 2. Nc3 Bg7 3. Nf3 c5 4. d4?! cd 5. Nxd4 Nc6 6. Nc2 Bxc3+! 7. bc Nf6 8. f3 d6?!**

8...Qa5! was more exact, in order to force 9. Bd2.

**9. e4 Be6**

9...Nd7 10. Be2 Nc5 11. Bh6 f6 12. 0-0 Be6 13. Nb4 Qd7 14. Nd5+/- was Quinteros-Hartston, London 1977.

**10. Be2** (10 Bh6!+/-) **10...Rc8 11. Ne3 Qa5 12. Bd2 Ne5 13. Qb3 Nfd7! 14. f4** (14. Qxb7? Rb8-+) **14...Nc5 15. Qc2** (15. Qb5+ Nc6!-/+) **15...Nc6 16. 0-0 Qa4! 17. Qb1**

17. Qxa4 Nxa4 18. Rab1 Na5 (18...Nc5!?) 19. f5! (19. Rb4 Nb6!-+ Trifunovic) 19...Bd7=/+.

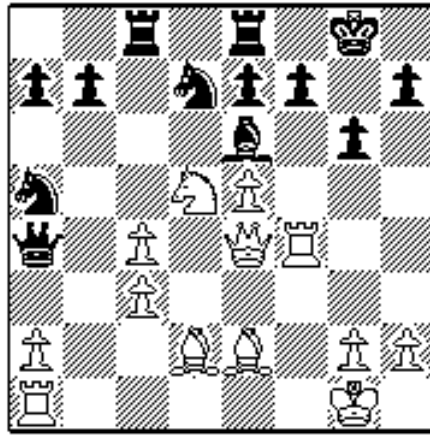
**17...Na5 18. e5 de 19. fe 0-0**

19...Nxc4 20. Nxc4 Bxc4 21. Rf4 b5 22. Bxc4 bc 23. Qf1! 0-0 24. Rxc4 Qd7 25. Bh6 - Trifunovic.

**20. Rf4 Nd7?!**

20...Qd7!, intending ..Qc7 - Trifunovic.

**21. Nd5! Rfe8 22. Qe4** (*See Diagram*)



**22...b5?!**

Fischer either overlooks or underestimates the rook sacrifice that follows.

22...Nf8 23. Rh4 b5 24. Bg5! Bxd5 25. cd Qxe4 26. Rxe4 a6+/- (Mikhalcisin)

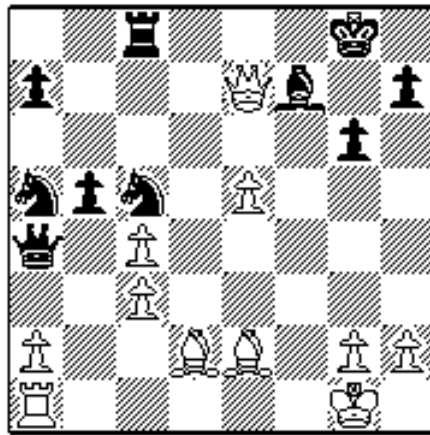
22...Nb3!? 23. Bd1 (23. Qc2 Nbc5-/+; 23. Rd1 Qxa2) 23...Nxd2 24. Bxa4 Nxe4 25. Rxe4 Bxd5 26. cd Red8=/+.

**23. Rxf7!!**

What choice does Black have here?

Taking the rook with the Bishop is bad: 23...Bxf7? 24. e6 Nf6 25. Nxf6+ ef 26. ef+ Kxf7 27. Qd5+ Kg7 28. Qd7+ Kh8 29. Bh6 Rg8 30. Bg7+ (30. Qf7 Rc6 31. Bf3+- [Dvoretsky]) 30...Rxc7 31. Qxc8+ Rg8 32. Qe6+- (Trifunovic).

Fischer's actual choice was to recapture with the King. However, another line deserving serious consideration was 23...Nc5! 24. Qh4 Bxf7 25. Nxe7+ Rxe7 26. Qxe7 (See Diagram)



Here, 26...Bxc4? is hopeless: 27. Bh6 Bf7 28. Rf1+- (Mikhalcisin).

And 26...Nxc4?! 27. Rf1 Nxe5 (forced) 28. Qxe5 Qe4 29. Qf6+/- is dubious also.

Mikhalcisin considers Black's best (in fact, his only correct) continuation to be 26...bc, with the idea of returning the Queen to the defense by way of the a4-e8 diagonal.

Let's consider White's alternatives here.

A) 27. Bh6 Qe8!?

(27...Qd7? is a mistake: after 28. Qxd7 Nxd7 29. Bg4! Nb6, White wins either by 30. e6 Be8 31. Rf1 Bc6 32. e7+- [Mikhalcisin], or with 30. Bxc8 Nxc8 31. Rf1, with 32. e6 to follow. Worth serious consideration, however, is 27...Qc6!? 28. Rf1 [28. Bg4 Re8 29. Qxa7 Nab7] 28...Qe6 29. Qxa7 Nab7-/+.)

28. Qf6 Ne6 29. Bg4 Qd8! (29...Rc7? 30 Rf1+- intending Bxe6) 30. Qxe6! Bxe6 31. Bxe6+ Kh8 32. Bxc8 Qxc8 (32...Qh4? 33. Be3 Nc6 34. Bb7+/-) 33. Rf1 Kg8 34. e6! Qc5+! 35. Kh1 Nc6 36. Rf7. Mikhalchishin. who found this pretty variation, called it a draw, in view of 36...Ne5 37. Rg7+ Kh8 38. Rf7!=. In fact, Black has every reason to fight on with 36...Qd6!? 37. h3 a5 38. Rg7+ (38. Kg1 a4 39. Kh1 Qd8 40. Rg7+ Kh8 41. Rf7 Qd1+ 42. Kh2



Qd6+ 43. Kh1 Ne7-/+) 38...Kh8 39. Rf7 Ne7 40. Bg5 Nf5 41. e7 Qd1+ 42. Kh2 Nxe7-/+.

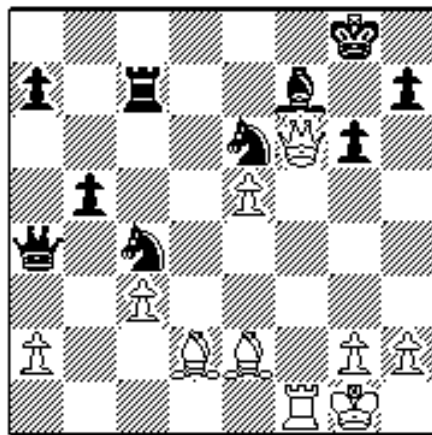
B) 27. Be3. 27...Ne6 leads to an unclear game after 28. Qxa7 Qb5 29. Rf1 Nb7!? (intending Nbd8) 30. a4 (30. Bg4 Re8 31. a4 Qxe5!? 32. Rxf7 Kxf7 33. Qxb7+ Kg8-/+) 30...Qb2 31. Bg4 Re8 (31..Nbd8? 32. Bxe6! Bxe6 33. Qe7+-) 32. Bh6 -unclear.

Black uses tactical means to secure an advantage: 27...Re8! 28. Qxc5 Nb3, or 28. Qxa7 Nd7-/+.

C) 27. Bg4!? Mikhalchishin believes that this is how White refutes his opponent's idea, beginning with 23...Nc5. His variation runs: 27...Qe8 28. Qxa7 Ra8 29. Qxc5 Nb3 30. Qd6 Nxa1 (30..Rd8 31. Qf6) 31. e6! Rd8 32. ef+ Kxf7 33. Bxe6+ ( 33. Qc7+!? Kf6 34. h4+/- is also strong [Dvoretsky]) 33...Qxe6 34. Qxd8+/-.

Here, Black should exploit the idea we already discovered in the 27. Be3 variation: 27...Re8! 28. Qxc5 (28. Qxa7 Rxe5) 28...Nb3 29. Qd6 Nxa1 30. e6 Qb5! 31. ef+ Kxf7 32. Bd7! Qb1+ (the minor-piece endgame after 32...Qb6+? is hopeless: 33. Qxb6 ab 34. Bxe8+ Kxe8 35. Be3!? b5 36. Kf2 Nc2 37. Bc5 Kd7 38. Ke2 Kc6 38. Bf8+-) 33. Kf2 Re7 33...Rf8 34. Bh6 Qc2+ 35. Kf3) 34. Qf4+ Kg7 35. Qd4+ Kg8 36. Qxc4+ Kh8! (36...Kg7? 37.Bh6+!; 36..Rf7+? 37. Kg3) 37. Qd4+ Kg8. Black's position looks suspect; but I see no direct route to victory for White.

We have not examined one other possibility for Black, namely: 26...Ne6! White should not continue 27. cb Nc4 28. Rf1 Rc7 29. Qh4 Qxb5-+, but play 27. Rf1 instead. Mikhalchishin continued this line 27...Rf8? 28. Bh6 Nc6 29. Qxe6+-, but Black has better: 27...Rc7! 28. Qf6 Nxc4 (*See Diagram*)



And now, we must evaluate the consequences of 29. Bg4.

The combination beginning with 29. Bg4 leads - by force - to a pawn endgame!

29...Nxd2 (29..Qa6? 30. Bh6+-) 30. Bxe6 Nxf1 31. Qd8+ Kg7 32. Qxc7 (32. Qf6+? Kh6) Qf4 33. Qxf7+ Qxf7 34. Bxf7 Kxf7 35. Kxf1 Ke6 36. Ke2 Kxe5. White's queenside pawns are vulnerable, and Black has the more active king. These factors appear to be enough to win, for instance: 37. Ke3 g5! 38. Kd3 Kd5; and

now White has two equally dismal choices:

The waiting 39. Ke3 Kc4 40. Kd2 b4 41. cb Kxb4 42. Kc2 Ka3 43. Kb1 h5 44. Ka1 h4 45. h3 Kb4 46. Kb2 Kc4 47. Kc2 Kd4 48. Kd2 a5! (White's in zugzwang); and

The more active 39. g4 Kc5 40. Kd2 Kc4 41. Kc2 b4 42. cb Kxb4 43. h3 (with the pawn on h2, the race beginning with 43. Kb2 Kc4 44. Ka3 ends in Black's favor after 44...Kd4 45. Kb4 Ke4 46. Kb5 Kf4 47. Ka6 Kxg4 48.

Kxa7 Kh3 49. a4 Kxh2 50. a5 g4 51. a6 g3, and the king has no good way to leave a7) 43...Kc4 44. Kd2 (44. Kb2 Kd3, when White starts the race a tempo behind where he was in the last note) 44...Kd4, and the zugzwang is decisive.

Instead of 29. Bg4?, White must play 29. Bh6! Qa3! 30. Bg4 Qc5+ 31. Kh1 (or 31. Rf2 Rd7!? 32. h3 Qxe5 33. Qxe5 Nxe5 34. Bxe6) 31...Qxe5 32. Qxe6 Qxe6 33. Bxe6=.

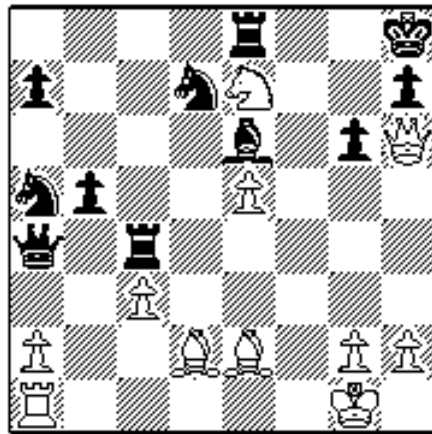
Conclusion: 26...Ne6! is the safest move. 23...Nc5! is also possible. Later on, we shall also discover why it was the best.

### 23...Kxf7?! 24. Qh4 Kg7

Of course not 24...Bxd5? 25. Qxh7+ Ke6 26. Qxg6+ Kxe5 (26..Nf6 27. ef+-) 27. Bf4+! Kxf4 28. Rf1+ Ke5 29. Qg3+ Ke6 30. Bg4#.

### 25. Nxe7

Here, Black loses after 25...Nc6 26. Bh6+ Kh8 27. Nxc8 Rxc8 28. Rd1! g5 29. Qf2 (simpler is 29. Bxg5! Ncxe5 30. Bf6+ +-) 29...Ncxe5 (no better, though tougher, is 29...Ncb8 30. Rd6 Rc6 31. Bxg5+-) 30. Rxd7 Nxd7 31. Qd4+ +- (Mikhalchishin). However, worth consideration is Pilnik's try, 25...Rxc4!? 26. Qh6+ Kh8 (*See Diagram*)



### 27. Nxg6+

As Mikhalchishin notes, 27. Bxc4? is bad, because of Qxc4 intending 28...Qc5+; or 27. Rf1? Rxe7! 28. Rf8+ Bg8)

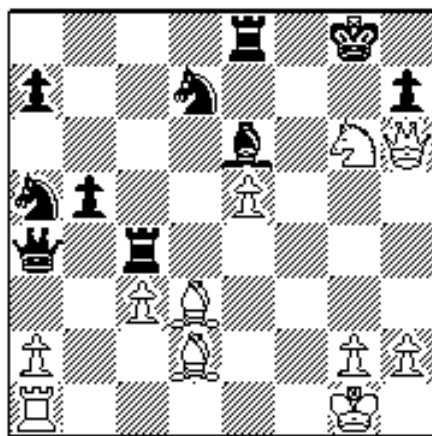
### 27...Kg8

Here Pilnik only looks at 28. Qg5 Rg4 29. Ne7+ Kh8-+.

But 28. Qg5? is the culprit. 28. Bd1?! isn't much better, owing to 28...Qa3 29.

Qg5 Bf7! (Mikhalchishin's 29...Qc5+ 30. Be3 Qxe3+ 31. Qxe3 hg is unconvincing) 30. e6 Rxe6 31. Nf4+ Rg6 32. Nxg6 hg-/+.

Stronger is 28. Bd3! (*See Diagram*)



How does Black defend?

A) 28...Nc6? 29. Nf4 Nf8 30. Nh5 Re7 31. Rf1+- (Mikhalchishin);

B) 28...Rc6?! 29. Nf4 (29. Rf1) 29...Re7 (29...Bf5 30. e6 Bxd3 31. ed+-) 30. Rf1, with attack;

C) 28...Rg4?! 29. Nf4 Nf8 (29..Rg7 30. Nxe6 Rxe6 31. Bxh7+ Kh8? 32. Qxf8+ Kxh7 33. Qf7+ +-, but Black can defend better: 31...Nxe6 32. Qxe6+ Kh8 is unclear.

Instead of 30. Nxe6, White should play 30. Nh5! Rxe6 31. Kxe6 Qg4+ 32. Kf2 Qh4+ 33. Kg1 Qg4+ 34. Ng3 Nc4 35. Rf1+/-.

D) 28...Rc7 29. Rf1! Nc6 (29...Bc4 30. Ne7+! Rxe7 31. Qg5+ Kh8 32. Qxe7+- [Dvoretsky]; 29...Nc4 30. Ne7+! Rxe7 31. Bxh7+ Rxh7 32. Qxe6+ Kh8 33. Qe8+-; 29...Qg4 30. h3! Qg3 31. Rf3+-) 30. Nf4 Nf8 31. Nxe6 Nxe6 32. Bxh7+! Rxh7 33. Qg6+ Ng7 34. Qf7+ Kh8 35. Qf8+! Rxf8 36. Rxf8# (Mikhalchisin).

One might get the impression that Black's in a bad way here. However, there is one more defensive try, which was discovered by Zvjagintsev.

E) 28...Rd4!! 29. Nf4! (29. Bxb5 Qxb5 30. cd Qd3+-) 29...Rxd3 30. Qg5+ Kh8 31. Ng6+! =

Now it's White's turn to strengthen the attack, and we can do so by avoiding the obvious 27. Nxe6+?! in favor of 27. Bg5! (intending Bf6+).

A) 27...Rxc3 28. Rd1! (but not 28. Bf6+? Nxf6 29. ef Qd4+). Mikhalchisin believes, correctly, that Black has no good defense to the threatened 29. Rxd7. For instance, 28...Rxe7 29. Rxd7 (also strong is 29. Bxe7 Qe4 30. Rxd7 Rc1+ 31. Qxc1 Bxd7 32. Bf6+ Kg8 33. Qd2+-) 29...Rc1+ 30. Kf2+-; or 28...Qb4 29. Bf6+ (29. Rxd7? Rc1+ 30. Bxc1 Bxd7=) 29...Nxf6 30. ef+-.

B) 27...Rc7 28. Rd1!, with the same deadly threat of 29. Rxd7.

C) 27...Rxe7 28. Bxe7 Rf4!? (28...Kg8? 29. Bd1!+-; 28...Qc2? 29. Bf8!+-; 28...Rc8 29. Rd1 b4 30. Bf6+ Nxf6 31. ef Rc7 32. Rd8+ Bg8 33. Qf8 Qxa2 34. c4!+-) 29. Bxb5! Qxb5 (29...Qe4 30. Bxd7 Qe3+ 31. Kh1 Rf1+ 32. Rxf1 Qxh6 33. Bxe6+-) 30. Qxf4+/- (analysis by Mikhalchisin).

## 25...Qc2

This is the critical moment of the game. How does White continue the attack?

Trifunovic suggested 26. Nxc8 Qxd2 (26...Rxc8 27. Qe7+ Kh8 28. Bh6 Rg8 29. Qxe6 Qxe2 30. Qxd7+-) 27. Nd6, stating that White has the advantage.

As Mikhalcisin points out, this is wrong: 27...Rf8 28. Qe7+ Kh8 29. Qxe6 Qe3+ 30. Kh1 Qxe2-+.

A stronger line is 26. Bh6+ Kh8, and now let us look at the complications once again.

A) After 27. Bd1, Mikhalchishin has two replies, 27...Qd3 and 27...Rxc4. But, first of all, it's too early to stop analyzing here - the consequences are far from clear; and second, Black has a third try, 27...Qxc3.

27...Qd3 28. Nxc8 Rxc8 29. Qe7 Rg8 30. Qxe6 Qxc3 (Mikhalchishin stops here) 31. h3 Qxa1 32. Qxd7 Qxe5 33. cb is unclear;

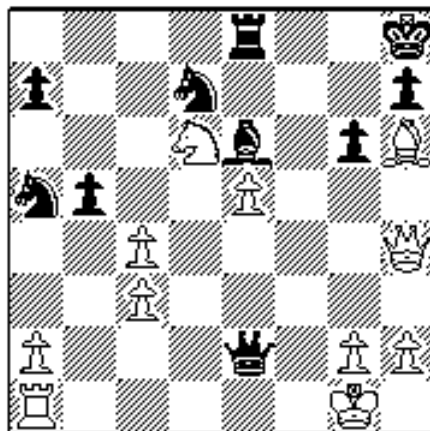
27...Qxc3!? 28. Nxg6+ (28. Rc1 Qd3 29. Nxc8 Rxc8 30. Qe7 Qd4+ 31. Kh1 Qxe5-+) 28...Kg8 29. Rc1 Qxc1 (29...Qa3? 30. Qg5+-; 29...Qd3!? 30. Ne7+ Rxe7 31. Qxe7 Qg6 32. cb Nc4 [32...Rxc1 33. Bxc1 is unclear] 33. Qh4 Ndx5 34. Rc3 is unclear) 30. Ne7+! (30. Bxc1 hg 31. Qg5 Bf7-+) 30...Rxe7 31. Bxc1 Rce8 (31...Rf7 32. Bh5; 31...Rg7 32. Bh6 Rg6 33. Bc2) 32. Bh5 Nxc4 33. Bh6 Nxe5 34. Qg5+ Ng6 35. Bxg6 hg 36. Qxg6+ Kh8 37. Bg7+ Rxg7 38. Qxe8+ Bg8 39. Qh5+ Rh7 40. Qxb5 - unclear; 27...Rxc4!? 28. Qf6+! Nxf6 29. ef Rxe7 30. fe Qxc3 31. e8Q+ Bg8=+.

B) After 27. Rd1, Black also faces a difficult choice:

27...Qxe2 28. Rxd7 Rxe7 29. Rxe7 (29. Qf6+ Kg8 30. Rxe7 Qe1+ 31. Qf1 Qxf1+ 32. Kxf1 Bxc4+ 33. Kf2 Nc6 34. Rg7+ Kh8 35. Rb7 Re8-+) 29...Qd1+ 30. Kf2 Qc2+ 31. Kg1 Qb1+ 33. Kf2 Qf5+ 33. Bf4= Bg8?! 34. Qf6+ Qxf6 35. ef+/-;

27...Rxc4!? 28. Qf2 Qxd1+! 29. Bxd1 Rxe7 30. Qxa7 Nc6 31. Qa8+ - this is somewhere between unclear and -/+.

C) 27. Nxc8! Qxe2 (27...Rxc8 28. Qe7!) 28. Nd6! (*See Diagram*)

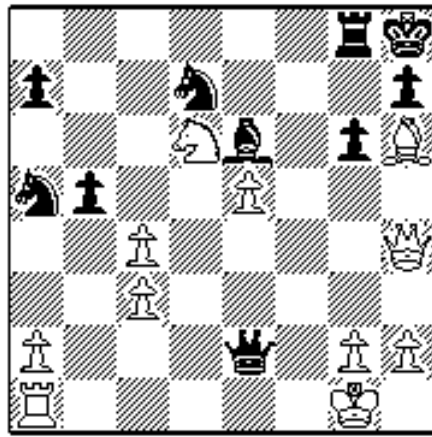


These moves were given by Pilnik, who said that White was winning after 28...g5 29. Bxg5 Rg8 30. Bf6+ Nxf6 31. Qxf6+ Rg7 32. g3 Bg8? 33. Nf5+-.

Mikhalchishin correctly demonstrated that firstly, Black gets a draw in this line by replacing his unfortunate 32nd move with 32...Nxc4 33. Qxe6 Qe3+ 34. Kg2 Qe2+, - perpetual check. (The incautious 35. Kh3?? runs into the deadly 35...Ne3!-+).

And secondly, instead of 29. Bxg5?, 29. Bg7+! is much stronger: 29...Kxg7 (29...Kg8 30. Qxg5+-) 30. Qxg5+ Kh8 (30...Kf8 31. Rf1+ Qxf1+ 32. Kxf1+/-) 31. Nxe8 Qxe5 32. Qxe5+ Nxe5 33. cb+/-.

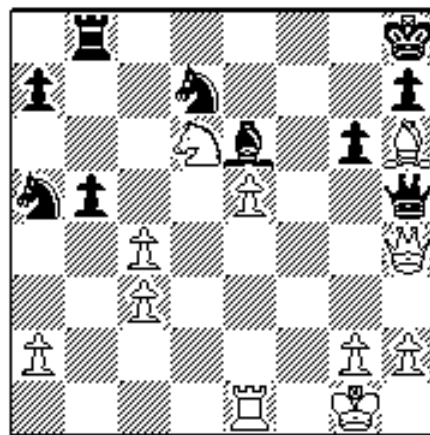
And on 28...Rg8, White has two good ways to continue the attack. (*See Diagram*)



29. Qe7!? Qxe5 30. Qxd7 Qxc3 31. Rf1 Bxc4 (31...Nxc4 32. Kh1!+-), and now the simplest is 32. Bg5+-, although Mikhalcisin's suggested 32. Nf7+ Bxf7 33. Qxf7 (intending Qxg8+) is also sufficient, e.g.: 33...Qd4+ 34. Kh1 Qd8 35. Re1!+- . Instead of 30...Qxc3, Black can also try 30...Nxc4!?, but here too, his prospects are not good: 31. Nf7+ Bxf7 32. Qxf7 Qxc3 33. Rf1 (intending Qxg8+) Qd4+ 34. Kh1 Qd8 (34...Qd6 35. Bg5+-) 35. Qxa7 Qh4 36. Bf8! (intending 37. Be7+-).

29. Re1!? Qh5 30. Qe7 Qxh6 31. Qxe6 Qd2 32. Rf1 Qe3+ 33. Kh1 Qd3 34. Rg1 Nxc4 35. Qxd7 (35. Nf7+ Kg7 36. Qe7+-) Nxd6 36. ed+-.

Mikhalcisin believes Black's best line is 28...Rb8 29. Re1! (29. Qe7? Qxe5 30. Qxd7 Qc5+) 29...Qh5 (29...Qg4 30. Qe7 Rg8 31.Qxd7+-) (*See Diagram*)



Here, the simplest solution was one Mikhalcisin didn't find: 30. Bg7+! Kxg7 31. Qe7+ Kh8 32. Qxe6+. But his line is also strong: 30. Qe7 Qxh6 31. Qxe6 Qg7 (31...Qd2 32. Rf1 Qe3+ 33. Kh1 Qe2 34. Rg1 Nf8 [34...Rf8 35. Qxd7+-] 35. Qf6+ Kg8 36. Qf7+ Kh8 37. Qc7+-) 32. cb!+/- / +-.

Quinteros failed to find the right path, and lost the game practically in one move, which allowed his opponent to give up his queen for rook and bishop, with a decisive

advantage.

**26. Qh6+? Kh8 27. Rc1 Qxc1+! 28. Bxc1 Rxe7+- 29. cb Nc4 30. Qh4 Rf7 31. Qd4 Kg8! 32. Bf4 Rc5 33. Bf3 Rxb5 34. h3 Nxe5 35. Ba8 Rf8 36. Bxe5 Nxe5 37. Qxa7 Bd5 38. Bxd5+ Rxd5 39. Qe3 Ra5 40. Qe2 Rfa8 41. a4 Nf7 42. h4 Rxa4, and White resigned.**

Translated by Jim Marfia

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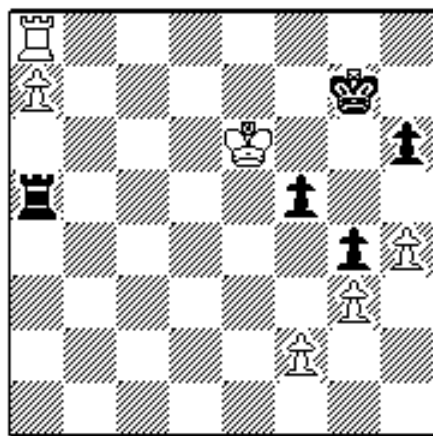
COLUMNISTS

## Averbakh

**I AM IN THE PROCESS** of writing an instructional endgame book. In the course of my work on this book, besides the rather extensive materials I had already accumulated, I of course made use of works by other authors, including the multi-volumed endgame set by Yuri Averbakh. Upon testing this material I found that an amazing number of endgames, including some well-known ones which have migrated from book to book, have been poorly analyzed and incorrectly evaluated.

The following example must set some sort of record.

Yuri Averbakh, *Chess Endings* (Rook) Page 299, Position No. 734 (See Diagram)



Black to move

First, I will give Averbakh's commentaries.

**1... Ra2!**

"The only move! 1...h5 is a mistake, because of 2. Kd6! (2. Re8 Ra6+! 3. Kxf5 Rxa7 4. Kg5 Ra5+ 5. Kf4 Ra2 is only a draw) 2... Kh7 3. Ke7 Kg7 4. Ke6 Ra2 5. Kxf5 Rxf2+ (5...Ra5+ 6. Kf4 Kh7 7. Rf8! Rxa7 8. Kg5 Ra5+ 9. Rf5 and wins) 6. Kg5 Ra2 7. Kxh5 Ra4 8. Re8 Rxa7 9. Kxg4, and White wins."

**2. Kxf5 Rxf2+ 3. Kxg4 Ra2 Draw**

Before reading what follows, I propose that the reader perform the following exercise (in the style of the outstanding John Nunn's *Chess Puzzle Book*): How many of the moves that Averbakh gives as best - or at least normal - are really mistakes that change the outcome of the game?

And now, let us begin our analysis.

After 1...Ra2, White wins: instead of 2. Kxf5? [1 mistake], he plays 2. Re8! Rxa7 [2...Ra6+ 3. Kxf5 Rxa7 4. Kxg4] 3. Re7+ Rxe7 4. Kxe7 Kg6 5. Ke6 Kh5 (the last hope - stalemate) 6. Kf6! (zugzwang) 6...f4 7. gf Kxh4 8. Kg6+-, or 8. f5+-. This error, by the way, was pointed out in the August 2000 issue of *Chess Life* by reader Chuck Adelman.

The other defensive try is 1... h5!? This position was examined in *Rook Endings*, by Levenfish and Smyslov. The authors demonstrate convincingly that the outcome hinges on whose turn it is to move.

Mark Dvoretsky



If it were Black to move, he would draw by 2... Ra6+! 3. Kxf5 Ra5+ 4. Kf4 Ra4+, or 3. Ke5 Ra2! (3... Ra3? unfortunately loses to 4. Kf4 Ra5 5. Re8! Rxa7 6. Kg5 Ra2?! 7. Re7+!; but 3... Ra4!= is playable) 4. Kf4 Rxf2+ 5. Kg5 Ra2 6. Kxh5 f4!=.

But White to move wins by 2. Re8! Ra6+ (2... Rxa7 3. Re7+) 3. Kxf5 Rxa7 4. Re5! Kh6 (otherwise 5. Kg5) 5. Re6+ Kg7 6. Rg6+ Kh7 7. Rf6! (threatening 8. Kg5) 7... Ra5+ (7... Rg7 8. Rf8, with zugzwang) 8. Kf4 Ra2 (8... Kg7 9. Rf5) 9. Kg5 Ra5+ 10. Rf5+-.

Averbakh came to the opposite conclusion: White should lose a move here! As a consequence, nearly all of his moves are wrong! Let's return to his analysis once again, indicating his errors in boldface, accompanied by question marks where necessary, and showing the correct moves in brackets.

**2. Kd6? [2]** (2. Re8 Ra6+! 3. Kxf5 Rxa7 **4. Kg5? [3]** [4. Re5!+-] 4... Ra5+ 5. Kf4 Ra2=)

**2... Kh7? [4]** [2... Ra6+!=]

**3. Ke7? [5]** [Both 3. Kc6! Ra2 4. Rd8! Rxa7 5. Rd7+ Rxd7 6. Kxd7, and 3. Ke6! Ra5 4. Re8!, or 3... Ra6+ 4. Ke5! Kg7 5. Kf4! win]

3... Kg7 4. Ke6 **Ra2? [6]** [4... Ra6+!=]

**5. Kxf5? [7]** [5. Re8!+-]

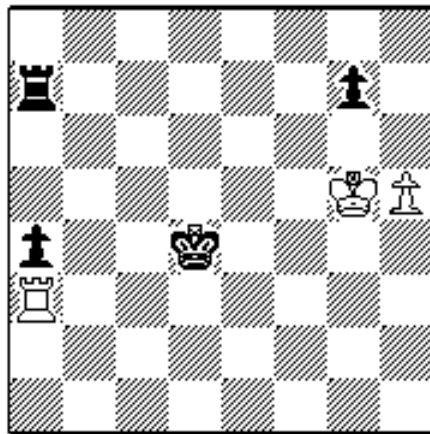
5... Rxf2+ (5... Ra5+ 6. Kf4 **Kh7? [8]** [Black gets a draw with 6... Ra4+] 7. Rf8! Rxa7 8. Kg5 Ra5+ 9. Rf5+-)

6. Kg5 Ra2 7. Kxh5 Ra4 8. Re8 Rxa7 9. Kxg4+-.

An amazing score: 8 (!) errors, in the analysis of a fairly simple position.

Analyzing the following endgame which he played himself, Averbakh opined that both sides erred more than once. Well, there's one pretty substantial error - one that changes the whole evaluation of the position - in his own analysis.

*Taimanov – Averbakh* Leningrad 1947 (See Diagram)



At the board, Black examined the natural 1...Kc4!?, but decided that it would lead only to a draw after 2. Kg6 Kb4 3. Rg3 a3 4. Rg2 a2 5. Rxa2 Rxa2 6. Kxg7.

Later, Averbakh found the improvement: 4... Rc7! (instead of 4... a2?) 5. Kh7 (5. Rg4+ Kb3 6. Rg3+ Kb2) 5... Rc5! 6. Kg6 (6. Rh2 Rg5 7. Rh4+ Kb5) 6... Kb3 7. Rg3+ Kb2 8. Rg2+ Rc2 (this is why the zwischenzug 5...Rc5! was needed - the king's placement means the rook cannot take the g-pawn) 9. Rg1 Rh2! (from here,

the rook not only defends the g7-pawn indirectly, but also shelters the king from both horizontal and vertical checks) 10. Rg5 a2 11. Rb5+ Kc1 12. Ra5

Rg2+ 13. Kh7 Kb1 14. Rb5+ Rb2 15. Ra5 Rb7-+.

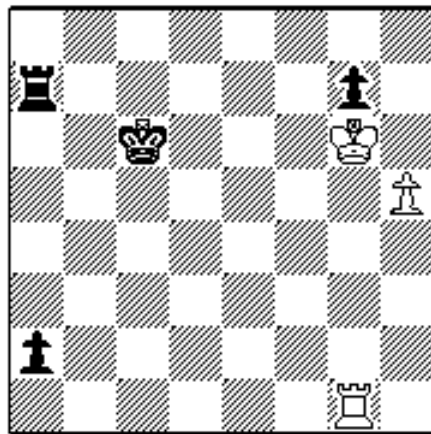
Unfortunately, the grandmaster did not consider all White's defensive resources in his analysis: 4. Rg2? is not the best move.

Nor does 4. Rg1? a2 5. Ra1 Kb3 6. Rg1 help White. Amusingly, commenting on a similar endgame for the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endgames* - the game Marshall - Duras, San Sebastian 1912 - Minev calls this position drawn, although 6... Rc7! wins easily.

**The Rook is a long-range piece, able to check and drive the enemy king far from the center of the action.** White must play 4. Rg4+!.

4... Kc3 leads to an immediate draw: 5. Rg3+ Kd4 6. Rxa3! Rxa3 7. Kxg7 Ke5 (7... Rg3+ 8. Kf7 Rh3 9. Kg6 Ke5 10. h6 Ke6 11. Kg7!=) 8. h6 Kf5 (8... Ra7+ 9. Kg6!) 9. h7 Ra7+ 10. Kh6!=.

And if 4... Kb5, then 5. Rg5+! (5. Rg1 Rc7! is bad) 5... Kc6 6. Rg1 a2 (*See Diagram*)



7. Ra1 (7. Rc1+ is also possible) 7... Kc5. Two bad lines here are: 7. Rc1+? Kb4 8. Rg1 Rc7, and 7. Rxa2? Rxa2 8. Kxg7 Rg2+! (a typical tempo-winning zwischenzug) 9. Kf6 (White is also too late after 9. Kh7) 9... Rh2! 10. Kg6 Kd6 11. h6 Ke7 12. h7 Kf8.

There remains only 7. Kh7! - and now what is Black to do?

After 7... Kc4 8. Rxa2 Rxa2 9. Kxg7, White saves himself (as we have seen, this works even with the king on d4). And 7... g5+ 8.

Kg6 g4 9. h6 g3 10. h7 Rxh7 11. Kxh7 g2 is not dangerous, since the Black pawns are too distant from each other (this position would be winnable, if the pawn were on e2).

Let's try 7... Kd5 8. Kg6. If now 8... Kd6, the king has to return to h7, since White will lose after 9. Rd1+? Ke7! 10. Ra1 (10. Kxg7 a1Q-+) 10... Kf8, followed by Ra6+. But after 8... Ke5, 9. Kh7? is bad because of 9... Kf5; however, we now have 9. Re1+! Kd4 10. Ra1! and 11. Rxa2 - the king cannot reach his pawn in time.

So Black has no win, although 1... Kc4!? was undoubtedly the best chance.

### 1... Ra6?!

The attempt to cut the king off from g7 doesn't work out.

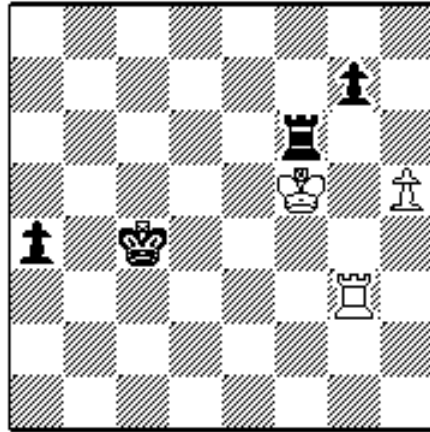
### 2. Kf5 Kc4 3. Rg3!

Here's the problem! 3... a3 4. Rxg7 a2 5. Rg1 is drawn.

### 3... Rf6+

Or 3... Ra7 4. Kg6 Kb4 5. Rg4+ Kc5 6. Rg5+ (6. Rxa4? Rxa4 7. Kxg7 Rg4+!)

6... Kb6 7. Rg1 a3 (with the pawn on the 4th rank, moving the rook to the c-file is useless, since White can even trade rooks); and now, not 8. Rb1+? Ka5 9. Rg1 Rc7!, but instead the waiting move 8.Rf1!=. 8...Kb5 is met by 9. Rf5+!; 8... Rc7 by 9. Ra1; and 8...a2 leads to the position in the previous diagram. (See Diagram)



#### 4. Ke5?

The king gets too far away from the g-pawn. 4. Kg5! draws, for example: 4... Kb4 5. Rg4+ Kb3 6. Rg3+ Kc2 7. Rg2+ Kc1 8. Rg3 Ra6 9. Kf5 Ra7 10. Kg6 Kb2 11. Rg2+ Kb3 12. Rg3+ Kb4 13. Rg4+ Kc5 14. Rg5+, etc.

#### 4... Rh6?

It is well known that victory goes to the one who makes the next-to-last mistake (White's decisive error is still ahead of us)!

The proper continuation was 4... Rf7! 5. Rg4+ Kb5 6. Rg3 Ra7 7. Kf5 a3 8. Kg6 a2 9. Rg1 Kc4! 10. Ra1 (10. Rg4+ Kd5 11. Rg1 a1Q 12. Rxa1 Rxa1 13. Kxg7 Rg1+! 14. Kf6 Rh1-+) 10... Kb3 11. Rg1 Rc7!-+.

#### 5. Rg4+ Kb3 6. Rg3+ Kc2 7. Rg2+ Kd3 8. Rg3+ Kc4 9. Rg4+ Kb5 10. Rxc7??

The elementary 10. Kd4! would have secured the draw. The text is much weaker, since Black retains the possibility of covering the 6th rank with his rook.

#### 10... a3! 11. Ra7

11. Rg1 Rxc5+ 12. Kd4 Kb4 13. Rb1+ Ka4 14. Kc3 a2 15. Rg1 Ka3-+

#### 11... Ra6 12. Rb7+

No help is 12. Rg7 a2 13. Rg1 Rh6! 14. Ra1 (14. Kd4 Kb4) 14... Rxc5+ 15. Kd4 Rh2 16. Kc3 Ka4-+.

#### 12... Ka4 13. Rg7 Ra5+ 14. Kf6 a2 15. Rg4+ Kb3

15... Kb5?? 26. Rg1=.

**16. Rg3+ Kc4! 17. Rg4+ Kd3 18. Rg3+ Ke4 19. Rg4+ Ke3 (19...Kf3) 20. Rg1 Rxc5 21. Rg3+ Kd4 22. Ra3 Rh2 23. Kf5 Rf2+ 24. Kg4 Kc4**, and White soon resigned.

Translated by Jim Marfia

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## COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky

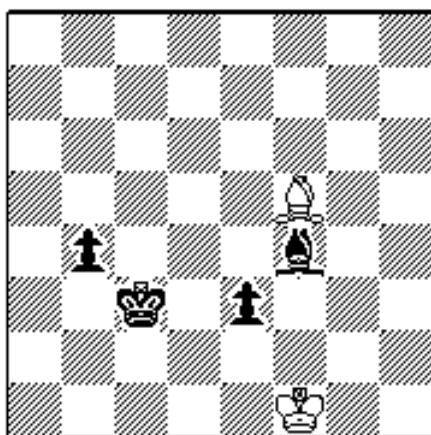


## The Value of "Elementary" Endgame Knowledge

If you want to work on your endgame theory, it is vitally important to lay a solid foundation - to focus on the most important theoretical positions, ideas and technical tools. As a rule, this fundamental knowledge consists of a small number of fairly simple positions; but these positions must be understood completely and securely memorized.

Unfortunately, most players - even some very strong ones - have not done the proper homework, and as a result, their endgame understanding is chaotic and insecure. The consequences are sometimes tragic - as I propose to illustrate here.

First, let us examine one simple position, which is quite important, and should be counted as part of our basic endgame knowledge. (*See Diagram*)



**Berger – Kotlerman Arkhangelsk 1948**

**1. Ke2 b3 2. Kd1 Kb4 3. Bh7 Ka3 4. Bg6**

Now if 4... b2 (threatening 5...Ka2), then 5. Bb1! Kb3 6. Ke2.

**4.... Kb2 5. Bf7!**

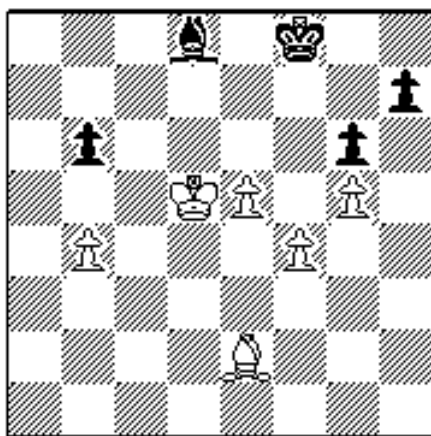
Black threatened 5..Ka1 and 6..b2. By attacking the pawn at b3, White stymies this plan.

**5. ... Ka2 6.. Be6 Ka3**

Now threatening 7...b2 8. Bf5 Ka2.

**7. Bf5! Drawn.**

And now, for a recent example from tournament play. (*See Diagram*)



### **Marin - Slovinianu Rumania 1999**

The game concluded as follows: 1. Kc4?! Be7 2. Kb5 Kg7 3. Bd3 h6, Drawn.

Commenting on this endgame in Informant #75 (No. 6 in the "Endgame" section) GM Marin awarded his move, 1. Kc4, two question marks, suggesting instead the following plan, which he believes would lead to the win.

**1. Kc6 Be7 2. b5 Bc5 3. Kd7 Bb4 4. e6 Bc5 5. Bd3 Be7 6. Be4 Bc5 7. f5 gf 8.**

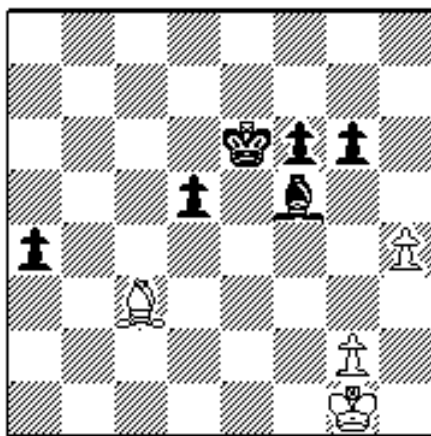
**Bxf5 Be7 9. Kc6!** (D. Rogozenko).

Evidently, at the board Marin failed to notice that he could attack the b6-pawn here, and Rogozenko showed him the "winning" move in the post-mortem.

**9. ... Bxg5** (9...Bd8 10. Bxh7) **10. Kxb6 Ke7 11. Kc6 Bf4 12. b6 h5 13. Kb7 Be3 14. Kc7+-.**

However, if Black plays 12... Kd8! (instead of 12...h5??), we get the Berger - Kotlerman position, which is a draw - and which was obviously unknown to both Marin and Rogozenko. In fact, if Black wants to hold onto the h-pawn, he can do that too: 11... h5 12. b6 Kd8! 13. Kb7 Be3!, or 13. b7 Bf4 14. Kb6 Bb8!.

At Wijk aan Zee 1999, I had a conversation with Alexei Shirov, one of the strongest grandmasters in the world. At one point, we fell to discussing the following brilliant endgame, won by him the previous year. (*See Diagram*)



### **Topalov - Shirov Linares 1998**

**1. ... Bh3!!**

This bishop sacrifice gains Black a vital tempo to break into the queenside with his king.

**2. gh**

2. Kf2 Kf5 3. Kf3 doesn't help, in view of 3... Bxg2+! 4. Kxg2 Ke4+-.

**2. ... Kf5 3. Kf2 Ke4! 4. Bxf6**

After 4. Ke2 f5, Black has just too many passed pawns.

**4. ... d4** (intending 5...a3-+) **5. Be7 Kd3** (now intending 6...Kc2 and 7...d3-+) **6. Bc5 Kc4!** (6... Kc3? 7. Ke2) **7. Be7 Kb3** (or 7...Kc3), and White resigned.



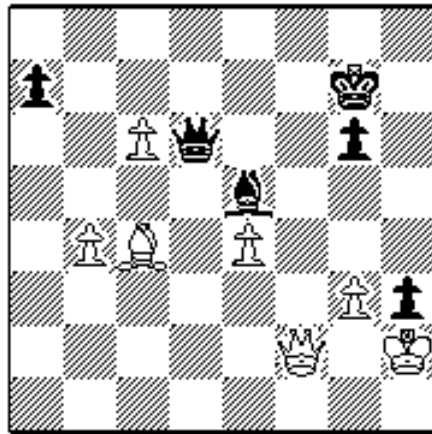
Other continuations are insufficient. For example:

1... Kd6? 2. Kf2! (2. Bxf6 Kc5 3. Kf2 d4 4. Ke2 Kc4 5. Be7 Kc3 6. Kd1 doesn't lose, either) 2... Kc5 3. Ke3=.

1... Be4? 2. Kf2 Kf5 (intending 3...Bxg2!) 3. g3 a3 4. Ke3 Kg4 5. Bxf6 Kxg3 6. Kd2 Kf4 (if 6... d4 7. Bxd4 Kxh4, White's king gets to a1: 8. Kc1 g5 9. Bc5 a2 10. Kb2, after which he can just sac the bishop for the g-pawn) 7. Be7 a2 8. Bf6 Bf5 9. Bg7 Ke4 10. Ba1 d4 11. Bb2 d3 12. Bc3 Kf4 13. Bb2 Kg4 14. Bf6 a1Q 15. Bxa1 Kxh4 - and this position, as we discovered in Berger-Kotlerman, is a draw.

I told him that the fact that this was the only solution added considerably to the combination's esthetic value. This interested Shirov - he had not known that there was only one winning line; in fact, he recalled his friend, GM Sutovsky, showing him some long winning variation in the postmortem. We set up the pieces, and it turned out that Emil had incorrectly evaluated the position resulting from the exchange of Black's a-pawn for White's h-pawn. Neither Shirov, nor Sutovsky, nor young GM Kasimdzhanov, observing our discussion, was aware of the Berger-Kotlerman endgame!

Here is a fragment from the book by Dvoretsky and Yusupov, *Technique for the Tournament Player*. (See Diagram)



#### ***Kharlov - Khenkin Copenhagen 1993***

The game ended quite rapidly: 1... a6? 2. Qa7+ Kh6 3. Qe3+ Kg7 4. Qg5! (the move Black underestimated) 4... Qd4 5. c7! Bxg3+ 6. Kxg3, and Black resigned.

Analyzing the game afterwards, I asked Khenkin: Why not remove the chief enemy, the c6-pawn, immediately?

**1. ... Qxc6! 2. Qxa7+**

Nothing is changed by 2. Qf7+ Kh6.

**2. ... Qc7!**

Attacking both the c4-bishop and the g3-pawn, thereby forcing the trade of queens:

**3. Qxc7+ Bxc7**

**Trading down into an opposite-colored bishops endgame is a valuable defensive resource, which can sometimes help save a difficult position** - so this plan, of course, deserved close scrutiny. GM Khenkin feared that the endgame would be lost, since White is two pawns ahead. But in fact, what we have here is a rather simple draw, if we just keep our famous lodestar in front of us. If White gives up the g3-pawn, then we have the drawing position from Berger - Kotlerman. And if White pushes the pawn to g4, then Black answers g6-g5, and barricades all entry into his position against the

White king.

Here's a sample variation:

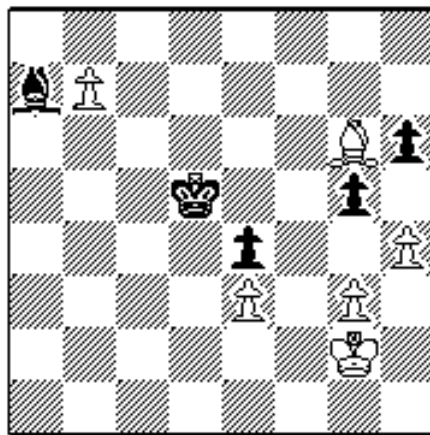
#### 4. Kxh3 Kf6 5. Kg4 Bd6

While there's time, it's important to force the opposing pawn onto the color of his bishop.

#### 6. b5 Bc7 7. Bd5 Ke7 8. Bc6 Kf6 9. Kf3 Ke7 10. g4 g5 11. Ke3 Bb6+ 12. Kd3 Kd6 13. Kc4 Ke5

And the draw is obvious - there's nowhere for White's king to get through.

Here's one more example of opposite-colored bishops with a similar pawn structure. (See Diagram)



*Cifuentes - Langeweg El Vendrell 1996*

#### 1. ... Ke5?!

Now here's a strange move! Common sense dictates that Black should have exchanged pawns on h4 (**when behind in material, it's usually a good idea to trade off as many pawns as possible**).

Cifuentes says that here too, Black's situation is bad, and provides the following variation as proof: 1... gh 2. gh Bb8 3. Kh3 Ba7 4. Kg4 Ke5 5. Kh5

(zugzwang) 5...Kd5 6. Bf5! (6. Kxh6? would be premature, in view of 6... Bxe3+ 7. Kg7 Ba7! 8. Bxe4+ Kxe4 9. h5 Kd5 10. h6 Kc6=) 6...Ke5 7. Kg6 Kd5 (7...h5 8. Bh3 Kd6 9. Bg2 Ke5 10. Kxh5 Kf5 11. Bxe4+!) 8. h5 Ke5 9. Bxe4! Kxe4 10. Kxh6 Bxe3+ 11. Kg6+.

But Cifuentes' analysis is completely unconvincing. Why should Black allow the capture of his h-pawn? He could try 3... h5!? 4. Bxh5 Kc6, for example. But it's much simpler to set up an unbreachable fortress by giving up Black's main weakness - the e4-pawn - at once.

Let's play 3... Ke5 4. Kg4 Kf6! 5. Bxe4 Bc7, The h-pawn is now invulnerable (on 6. Kh5, Black replies 6... Kg7). So White must take his king to the queenside. But the most White can achieve there is the win of the bishop for his b- and e-pawns. And then Black's king reaches h8 with an elementary draw (the enemy bishop does not control the h-pawn's queening square). This resource only becomes available to Black after he trades pawns on h4.

Even after Cifuentes' 3... Ba7 4. Kg4 Ke5 5. Kh5, it's not too late to return to the right plan: 5... Kf6!, since after 6. Kxh6 (6. Bxe4 Kg7=) 6... Bxe3+ 7. Kh7 Bf4 8. Bxe4 Bb8, White cannot queen the h-pawn: 9. Bf3 Bc7 10. h5 Kg5 11. h6 Be5 12. Be2 Bb8 13. Kg7 Be5+.

Black probably refrained from exchanging pawns because Langeweg did not



want to free the g3 square for the White king. That the king cannot use the h3 square is seen from 2. Kh3 Kd6! 3. Kg4 Kc7 (3...gh) 4. h5 (4. hg hg 5. Bxe4 Bxe3=) 4... Bxe3 (4...Kxb7 5. Bxe4+ Kc7=) 5. Bxe4 Bd2 6. Kf5 g4!=

## 2. h5!? Kd5?

This looks like the fatal error! As Bologan pointed out, Black gets a simple draw with 2...g4!, followed by ...Bb8. Black's king easily defends the kingside pawns (3. Be8 Kf5); and the g3-pawn is lost whenever White's king abandons its protection.

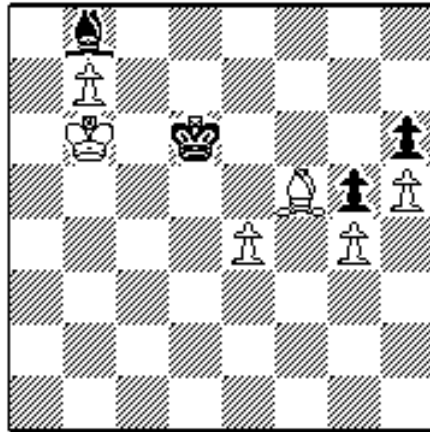
## 3. g4!

After nailing down the kingside, White sends his king across the board, ties down his opponent, and finally penetrates the center, in order to win the weak h6-pawn.

**3. ... Ke5 4. Kf2 Bb8 5. Ke2 Ba7 6. Kd2 Kd5 7. Kc3 (zugzwang) 7. ... Bb8 8. Bf7+ Kc5 9. Bg6 Kd5 10. Kb4! Bg3 11. Kb5 Bc7 12. Ka6 Bb8 13. Kb6 (and again, zugzwang) 13. .. Ke5 14. Kc6 Ke6**

In light of White's terrible threat of Kd7-c8, the e4-pawn had to be given up anyway - but now this occurs in much worse circumstances.

**15. Bxe4 Bg3 16. Bf5+ Ke7 17. Kb6 Bb8 18. e4 Kd6 (See Diagram)**



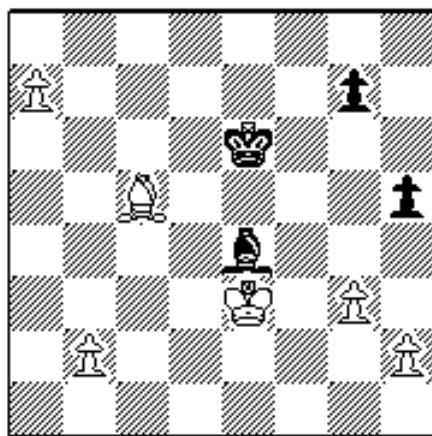
## 19. e5+! Ke7

19... Kxe5 loses to 20. Kc6; and if 19...Kd5, then 20. Bc8 Kxe5 21. Kc6 Kf6 22. Kd7 Kf7 23. Kd8+-. Now visualize the same position, except without the g-pawns - Black simply takes on e5.

**20. Bc2 Ke6 21. Bb3+ Ke7 22. Ba2 (22. Kc6?? Bxe5 23. Kd5 Kf6=) 22. ... Kd7 (Black was in zugzwang again) 23. Kc5! Bxe5 24. Kd5 Bf4 25. Ke4 Ke7 26. Kf5 Bc7 27. Kg6, and Black resigned.**

Knowledge is, of course, a two-edged sword. Most often, it helps us; but there are in fact times when it can betray and disorient us as well. It's very dangerous to act "analogously", without getting into the concrete details of the situation as it stands on the board.

To illustrate this, let's first examine yet another practical endgame, a very important one for the theory of opposite-colored bishop endgames. (*See Diagram*)



*Euwe – Yanofsky Groningen, 1946*

**1. ... Bg2?**

Here is an instructive error - the White king should not have been allowed to get near the pawns. The draw becomes inescapable after 1... Kf5! 2. Bf8 g6 3. Kd4 Bg2 4. Kc5 Ke6! 5. Kb6 Kd7 6. b4 Ba8 7. b5 Kc8!= (but not 7... Bg2? 8. a8Q! Bxa8 9. Ka7 Bf3 10. Kb8+-, with the unstoppable threat of b5-b6-b7.)

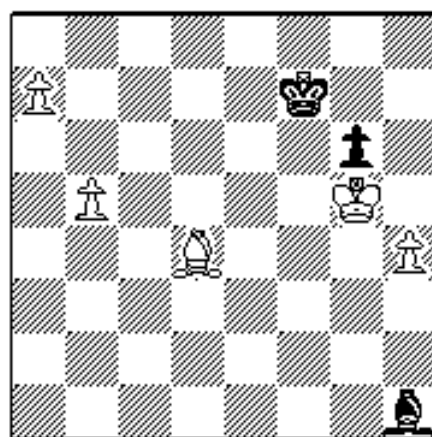
**2. Kf4!**

**In those cases where the opposite-colored bishop is blockading the passed pawn, the attacking side's plan consists of getting his king through to the pawn. But sometimes, this can only be achieved by means of a feinting attack on the other wing.**

**2. ... g6 3. g4!**

The first step to "**expanding the front**" on the kingside. "Expanding the front" is a technique used in many types of endgame. Its point is the use of pawn exchanges to clear a path for the king to get to the other side of the board.

**3. ... hg 4. Kxg4 Bh1 5. Kg5 Kf7 6. Bd4 Bg2 7. h4 Bh1 8. b4 Bg2 9. b5 Bh1** (*See Diagram*)

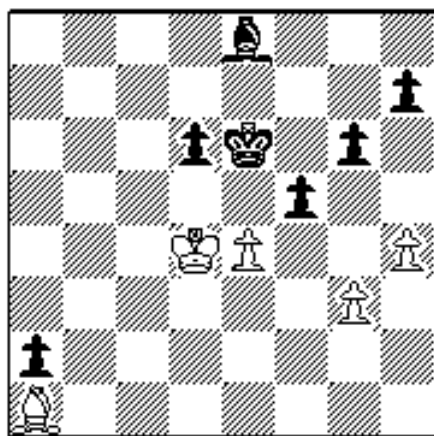


**10. Bf6! Bg2**

On 10... Be4, 11. Kf4 intending Ke5 is strong, as is 15. b6, with zugzwang.

**11. h5!** (the second, and decisive step!)  
**11. ... gh 12. Kf5**, and Black resigned.

On 12... Ke8, 13. Ke6 followed by Kd6-c7 wins. On the d8-h4 diagonal, White's bishop stops the h-pawn, while simultaneously depriving the hostile king of the e7 and d8 squares. (*See Diagram*)



## P. Wolff, 1986

After 1... fe? 2. Kxe4 Bc6+ 3. Kf4 Kd5 4. Bg7 Kc4 5. Ke3 Kb3 6. Kd2, the draw would be unavoidable - White's king successfully "defends the zone". So Black must enforce the exchange of pawns on f5.

### 1. ... Bc6! 2. ef+ gf!

On 2... Kxf5, Wolff - and later, Mednis - note only that the position is drawn after 3. Ke3 Kg4 4. Kf2. At first, this

annotation amazed me, for Black has at his disposal the standard plan of breaking through to the queenside with his king.

4... h5 5. Bg7 g5 6. hg Kxg5 7. Ba1 Kg4 8. Bg7 Be4 9. Ba1 d5 10. Bg7 Bf3! 11. Ba1 (11. Be5? Kf5 12. Bg7 Ke4+) 11... h4 12. gh Kf4.

The only difference between this game and Euwe-Yanofsky is one pawn: in that game, it was on the b-file, here, it's on the d-file. Can this make a difference?

Yes - a huge one! When Black's king marches off to win the bishop for the a-pawn, White replies by attacking the d-pawn with his king. The bishop cannot simultaneously defend it and stop the h-pawn from the same diagonal ("**the one-diagonal principle**" is most important with opposite-colored bishops). He could do it, if the pawn could be brought to d3 - but then his king could not get to b1.

13. Bb2 Ke4 (...d5-d4-d3 was threatened) 14. Ke1! Ke3 15. Bc1+! Kd3 16. Bb2 Kc2 17. Bg7 Kb1 18. Kd2 (18 Kf2) 18... a1Q 19. Bxa1 Kxa1 20. Kc3 Ka2 21. Kd4 Kb3 22. h5=; or 16... d4 17. Kf2! (17 Ba1? Ke3! 18. Bb2 d3 19. Bc1+ d2+ 20. Bxd2 Kd3+) 17... Bg4 18. Ke1 Bh5 19. Kf2 Kc4 20. Ke1 d3 21. Kd2=.

You can see that following the "known example" here will not bring us the desired result. The win is attained by another, much less obvious plan, found by Wolff. Having recaptured with the pawn on f4, Black must play ...f5-f4 at the right moment, and go after the h4-pawn with his king.

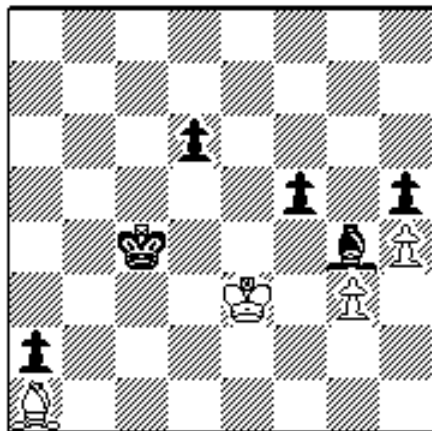
### 3. Ke3

On 3. Bb2?, Black can execute his plan at once: 3... f4! 4. gf Kf5-+. Also hopeless is 3. h5? h6! 4. Kc4 Bf3 5. Kb3 Bxh5 6. Kxa2 Bf7 7. Kb3 h5 8. Kc4 f4 9. gf h4 10. Bd4 h3 11. Bg1 Kf5+ 12. Kd3 Kg4 13. Bh2 (13. Ke2 Kg3) 13... Kf3 14. f5 d5. Here, in fact, Black's bishop can fulfill all its responsibilities along the single diagonal a2-g8.

### 3. ... h5 4. Bb2 Ba4 5. Bc3 Bd1 6. Ba1 Bg4 7. Bb2

7. Kd4 f4! 8. gf Kf5 9. Kd5 Kxf4 10. Kxd6 Ke3, and Black carries out the main plan in such positions - getting his king to b1.

**7. ... Kd5 8. Bf6** (8. Kd3 f4!!) **8. ... Kc4!** (8... f4+?? 9. Kxf4) **9. Ba1** (See Diagram)



**9. ... f4+!! 10. gf** (10. Kxf4 Kd3-+) **10... Bf5!**

A finesse pointed out by Nunn. The hasty 10... Kd5? allows White to hold the zone by pitching a pawn: 11. f5! Bxf5 12. Kf4=.

**11. Kd2 Kd5 12. Ke3**

We should also look at 12. Kc1, with the bishop at g7 (where White could have placed it on move 9). Then 12... Ke4? would be a mistake, in view of 13. Kb2 Be6 14. Bf8 d5 15. Kxa2 d4+ 16. Kb2 d3 17.

Kc1 Ke3 18. Bb4=. The winning line is 12... Ke6! 13. Kb2 Bb1 14. Bf8 d5 15. Bg7 Kf5.

**12. ... Ke6 13. Kf3 Bc2 14. Kg3 Kf5 15. Kf3 Bd1+ 16. Ke3** (16. Kg3 Ke4-+) **16. ... Kg4 17. Bf6** (17. Ke4 Bf3+ 18. Ke3 Bc6 19. Bf6 Bb7, and White's in zugzwang) **17. ... Ba4 18. Ke4 Bc6+ 19. Ke3 Bb7 20. f5 Kxf5 21. Ba1 Kg4 22. Bf6 Bc6 23. Kf2 a1Q**

The trade of pawns is enough to win; but perhaps it would have been more exact to have activated the d-pawn first: 23... Kf4!? 24. Ke2 Ke4 25. Kd2 d5 26. Ba1 d4 27. Bb2 d3 28. Ba1 Bb5 29. Bg7 Kf5 30. Ba1 Kg4 31. Bf6 a1Q 32. Bxa1 Kxh4.

**24. Bxa1 Kxh4 25. Bf6+ Kg4 26. Be7 d5 27. Bf6 h4 28. Be5 Kf5!** (28... h3?? 29. Ke3=) **29. Bd6 Ke4 30. Be7 h3 31. Bd6 d4 32. Bc5 Kd3! 33. Kg3 Bd7 34. Kf2 Kc3 35. Bd6 d3 36. Bf4 Kc2 37. Ke1 d2+ (or 37...h2) 38. Bxd2 h2-+.**

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky



## Blockading Passed Pawns

*The passed pawn is a dangerous criminal, which must be put behind bars: lesser means, such as constant observation, are insufficient!*  
- Aron Nimzovich

The following examples, which I present for your observation, illustrate not only some aspects of the blockade of enemy passed pawns, but other important points of positional play as well.

**Vukic - Davcheski Yugoslav Championship 1979**

**1. d4 e6 2. c4 f5 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 d5**

For a long time, the Stonewall Variation of the Dutch Defense had the reputation of being positionally suspect. It is true that Mikhail Botvinnik, in his youth, included the variation in his opening repertoire; but he later rejected it out of hand.

In the mid-nineties, Grandmaster Yusupov became interested in the Stonewall. He saw that Black's position had, besides the obvious positional minus of weak dark squares, a serious plus as well. Black's solid central construct prevents White from continuing e2-e4; and without this continuation, his fianchettoed Bishop at g2 will remain passive, and could very easily become just as "bad" as its counterpart on c8.

I remember the day Artur came to me and said that he was going to play the Stonewall. I was pretty skeptical, until we played a few blitz games with it. I could see that White's task was far from simple.

Where Botvinnik preferred to develop the Bishop at e7, Yusupov invariably placed it on d6. Now at first, I was winning the blitz games, thanks to a plan I remembered from the ancient game Schlechter - John (Barmen 1905). I played Bf4, then e2-e3!, and tried to enforce the exchange of Bishops on f4 (by playing c4-c5), recapturing with the e-pawn, with a very unpleasant pawn structure for Black. But Artur quickly realized that he had to trade Bishops at once, as soon as I played Bf4. The recapture g3xf4 weakens the kingside somewhat; which will tell, if Black gets a chance to play g7-g5.

Yusupov played the Stonewall successfully on several occasions. Soon, it became fashionable; its reputation improved, and its theory grew by leaps and bounds.

The game we are examining here was played prior to the "renaissance" of this opening system; many of its fine points had yet to be discovered. One of these finesses has to do with move order. It turns out that White is better off developing his Knight on h3, not on f3. So, these days, Black generally waits to

play d7-d5, temporizing with 4...c6!? Only after 5. Nf3 does he continue with 5...d5; if White plays 5. Nh3 instead, then 5...d6!?, preparing e6-e5, when the Knight will be out of play on h3..

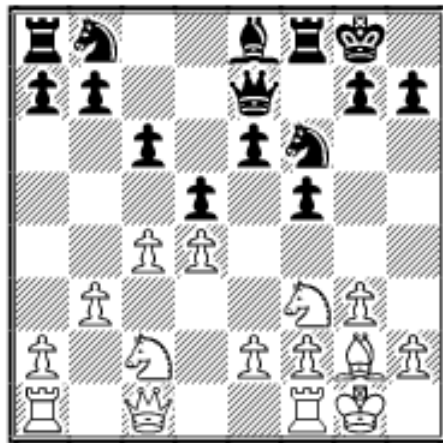
### 5. Nf3 Be7 6. 0-0 c6 7. b3 0-0

With the Bishop on d6, Black has the useful move 7...Qe7; and in order to play Ba3, White will have to spend time on a2-a4 or Bb2 and Qc1.

### 8. Ba3 Bxa3 9. Nxa3 Qe7 10. Qc1 Bd7

One serious question, which always bedevils Black in the Stonewall, is, Where does the white-squared Bishop go? In the old days, it always went via d7 and e8 to h5; nowadays, Black continues Nbd7, b7-b6 and Bb7.

### 11. Nc2 Be8



### 12. Nce1!

White's Knight will stand beautifully on d3 - from here, it takes control of the important squares e5, f4 and c5. Tigran Petrosian used to love just this placement of his Knights. He would usually develop the queen's Knight to d2, then play Nf3-e5-d3 and Nd2-f3. It used to be that one had only to know this recipe in order to get an excellent position against the Stonewall.

### 12...Nbd7 13. Nd3 Bh5 14. Re1!

A "mysterious Rook move", in Nimzovich's words. What's the point of it?



This is, first and foremost, prophylaxis against the capture on f3. After 14...Bxf3 15. ef!, Black can no longer play 15...e5

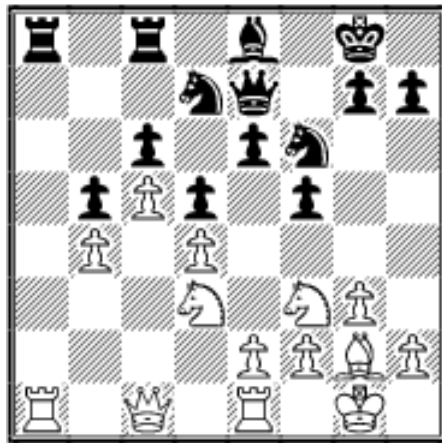
It is interesting that the same position was reached a few years earlier in Vukic - Gazic (Sarajevo 1972). In that game, White played 14. Qb2 (again directed against 14...Bxf3 15. ef e5) 14...Ne4 15. Rac1 g5 16. Nfe5 f4; and White apparently achieved not much of anything. Milan Vukic played more consequently this time, intending to meet

14...Ne4 15. Nfe5 with a quick f2-f3 and e2-e4 - here is another reason to play 14. Re1.

### 14...a5?.

**Don't move pawns on the side where you are weaker!** Black weakens the queenside, which assists White in opening lines there. As a result, he is forced to forget about active play against the King, and White retains an indisputable initiative.

15. c5! Rfc8 16. a3 Be8 17. b4 ab 18. ab b5

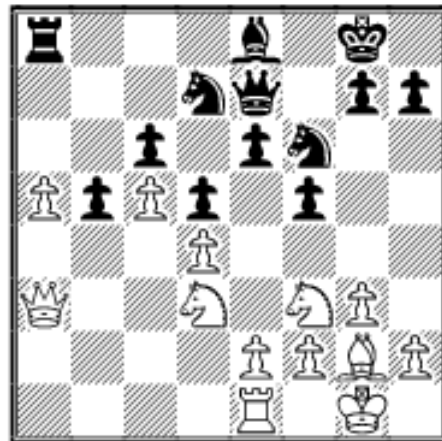


White has so many good continuations, his head is swimming. Taking en passant on b6 looks tempting. Vukic's suggestion of 19. Qb2, followed by Nd2, f2-f3 and e2-e4, is not bad either. Another move worth looking into is 19. Qf4, threatening to invade at d6 or c7, depending on circumstances. Still another sensible idea is 19. Nde5 Nxe5 20. de, in order to use the d4 square for the Knight.

**19. Ra5?**

Played according to the principle of Nimzovich: White exploits his advanced post on the open line - and, as recommended with the rook file, he uses the Rook to exploit it. However, I believe this to be a positional error. After exchanging on a5, White gains a passed pawn; but since it must be defended by both Queen and Rook, their active possibilities will be considerably reduced.

**19...Rxa5 20. ba Ra8 21. Qa3**



Before reading what follows, try to come up with a move for Black yourself.

Just when it seemed that Black must be doomed to passive defense, suddenly he finds a pretty method to gain active play. It's so hard to resist temptation sometimes...

**21...Nb6?**

Vukic awards this move two exclamation marks, while giving his own 21. Qa3 a question mark. Instead, he offers 21.

Qc3, evaluating that position as equal. Logically, this means that after 21. Qa3 Nb6, White no longer has equality.

The dazzle of spectacular moves can sometimes have a powerful effect on our perception of what is actually going on at the board. Now, let's look at the problem rationally. White will obviously reply 22. Nfe5 (although 22. a6 is also possible). Where then does the Black Knight go? If it gets exchanged off on c4, the White's Knight will go to b4, and the passed pawn on a6 it will support will become very dangerous. Whereas the move 22...Na4 has only one thing going for it - the temporary closing of the a-file. If White manages to hold on to his passed pawn, then the Knight will have nothing to do on a4.

So we see that this pretty knight move involves considerable strategic risk. Of course, the above considerations are insufficient for an objective evaluation - the variations must be calculated as well. By first, let's think about what else

Black might have tried.

White obviously wants his Knight on b4; from there, it attacks c6, blockades the b5-pawn, and helps the passed pawn at a5 take its first step forward. One obvious choice is to put the Knight on a6, blockading the a-pawn and also keeping White's Knight from establishing itself on b4. In principle, Black wants to trade off all the Knights, since the Bishop left on g2, biting on the granite mass of Black's central pawns, would pose no threat whatever.

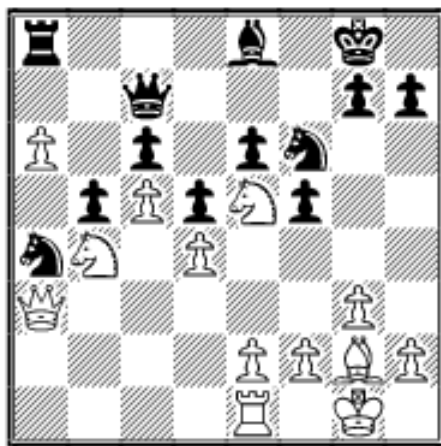
Let's see: 21...Nb8! 22. Nb4 Na6 23. Ne5 Nxb4 24. Qxb4 Qc7 25. Ra1 Nd7 26. Nd3 (after 26. Nxd7 Bxd7 27. a6? fails to 27...Bc8) 26...Nb8! (but not 26...e5? 27. de Nxe5 28. Qf4), with equality.

If 23. Nxa6 Rxa6 24. Ne5, then 24...Nd7! (24...Qc7 25. Ra1 Nd7 26. Nd3! is less accurate - although this position is defensible, too: there is the accurate 26...Nb8, as well as the more active 26...e5!? 27. Nb4 Ra7) On 25. Nd3 Black again has 25...Nb6!, and this time, compared to the actual game, the exclamation mark is fully deserved.

## 22. Nfe5 Na4

Vukic thinks 22...Nc4 23. Nxc4 dc (on 23...bc, both 24. Nb4 and 24. Ne5 are strong) 24. Nb4 Qc7 25. a6 Nd5 was preferable. But the concluding position of this variation strongly favors White! He continues with either 26. Ra1, or 26. Bxd5!? ed 27. Ra1 Ra7 28. Qe3! (note that the endgame after 28. Qa5 Qxa5 29. Rxa5 is also difficult for Black to defend)

## 23. Nb4 Qc7 24. a6



The moves leading to this position appear to be more or less forced; that means their evaluation, to a large extent, also determines the evaluation of 21...Nb6. The question is whether 24...Nxc5 works.

Black is fine after either 25. dc? Qxe5 or 25. Nexc6? Nxa6. 25. Rc1 is tempting, but then Black has 25...Nxa6! 26. Nxa6 Qb6 (26...Qc8 27. Ra1 b4) 27. Qe7 (on 27. Ra1, Black can play either 27...Qxd4, with three pawns for the piece, or 27...b4) Qxa6 28. Qxe6+ Kh8 29. Rxc6! Qa1+ 30. Bf1 Qxd4.

But the refutation of Black's idea is 25. Nbxc6!:

- a) 25...Bxc6 26. Qxc5 Rxa6 27. Rc1 Nd7 28. Qe7;
- b) 25...Nxa6 26. Ne7+! Kh8 27. Nxd5! ed 28. Qf8+ Ng8 29. Bxd5.

## 24...Bd7 25. f4

White's plan is clear: he will bring the Bishop to d1, followed by capturing on a4 (thus, even the fianchettoed Bishop has found useful work!). Black can do nothing to stop this.

Now we can finally say with confidence that 21...Nb6 deserves, not an exclamation mark, but a question mark. Black's active plan was a mistake,



leading to a very difficult, and probably lost position. Passive defense was to be preferred, involving the exchange of Knights and the blockade of the passed pawn on a6.

The question arises, whether it's right to call Black's pretty idea 21...Nb6 anti-positional, if it can only be refuted by combinative means (24...Nxc5 25. Nbxc6! Nxa6 26. Ne7+!, etc.)? After all, White might not find the refutation!

The fact that White has to resort to tactical means is quite natural. Let's recall the saying of Emanuel Lasker: **“With masters, combinative play and positional play complement one another. It is with the aid of combinations that they seek to overturn false evaluations; and it is by means of positional play that they seek to secure and exploit true evaluations.”**

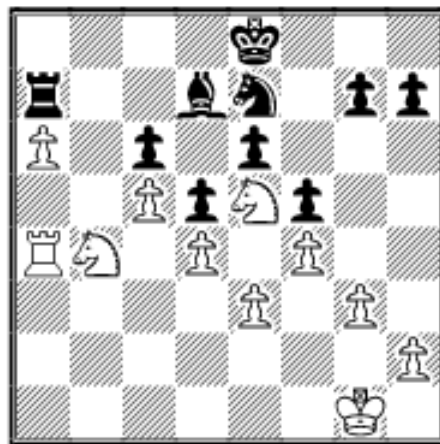
The fact that there is but one solution, does not make it accidental. It is quite fitting that the Knight on b4 plays the decisive role in the combination, since Black could and should have exchanged it off, but failed to do so.

On the other hand, with the Knight gone to a4, Black's position looks so vulnerable, that I suspect there must be still another means of maintaining the advantage. Let's say White was afraid of the counterstroke 24...Nxc5; then he could, in place of 24. a6!, try 24. Qe3!?, since the continuation 24...Qxa5 25. Nexc6 Bxc6 26. Qxe6+ Kh8 27. Qxc6 Rd8 28. Nd3 (threatening 29. Qb7 and 30. c6) retains the better chances for White.

**25...Kf8 26. Bf3 Ng8 27. e3 Ke8 28. Ra1**

Black would answer 28. Bd1 with 28...Qa5; so White puts his Rook on the a-file first. On 27...Ne7 (instead of 27...Ke8), 28. Ra1 would have been a mistake, because of 28...Bc8; on the other hand, White could then play 28. Bd1 right away, since Black's Queen would be tied to the defense of the Bishop at d7. **“Chess - a Tragedy In One Tempo!”**

**28...Ne7 29. Bd1 Qa5 30. Bxa4 ba 31. Qxa4 Qxa4 32. Rxa4 Ra7**



White has won a pawn. The conversion of his advantage is not complicated, but it is quite instructive. Making progress on the queenside will not be easy - if the Knight leaves the b4-square, the passed pawn will come under immediate attack by Black's Bishop. So White must follow the **“principle of two weaknesses”**. He must begin a second front on the kingside, open lines there and send over his Rook. In the light of this plan, White's next few moves are easily understandable.

**33. h3! Kd8 34. g4 Kc7 35. Kf2 Be8 36. Ra1 Ra8 37. Ke2**

Black may have intended to activate the Rook by continuing Ka7 and Rb8. By bringing his King to c3, White parries this threat. **The basic principle of converting one's advantage is to stifle even the tiniest counterchances.**

**37...Nc8 38. Kd2 Na7**

Black wants to free the Rook from the blockade of the a-pawn by this knight maneuver to a7. But now the kingside, which the Knight abandoned, is defenseless.

**39. gf ef 40. Rg1 g6 41. h4! Nc8**

Now the Knight must run back. Here's the principle of two weaknesses in action: the opponent's pieces are only capable of defending one part of the board, not both at once!

**42. h5 Ne7 43. hg Bxg6 44. Rh1! Rc8 45. Nxb6**

Cashing in his advantage: White exchanges off his opponent's bad Bishop in order to penetrate to the 7th rank with his Rook.

**45...hg 46. Rh7 Kd7 47. a7**

It's time for the passed pawn to have its decisive say.

**47...Ke6**

The Rook ending after 47...Ra8 48. Nxc6 Kxc6 49. Rxe7 is absolutely hopeless.

**48. Rxe7+**

Black resigned, in view of 48...Kxe7 49. Nxc6+ followed by 50. Nb8, when the pawn Queens. Positionally, a very instructive game!

In our next example, we shall again encounter the same problems: choosing the optimal pawn structure, and blockading a passed pawn. But now we add a new theme: exploiting the power of the two Bishops.



### **Orekhov - Akopian Moscow 1973**

White's advantage is quite significant, consisting of two major components:

- 1) Better pawn structure: he has a healthy extra pawn on the queenside, while Black's extra pawn on the kingside is doubled and of no particular value.
- 2) The two Bishops: in an open, or half-open position, they are considerably stronger than two Knights, which here have no points of support.

Of course, any reasonable move maintains White's advantage. The only question is, what move will make it greater. As I see it, the most technical solution was an immediate exchange of Queens: 21. Qxb6! ab 22. Bf2, followed by Bb5, Rd1, etc. The weakness of the doubled b-pawns would render the dissolution of central tension unfavorable for Black, so his forces would remain hemmed-in.

**21. Bf2 Qc7**

Here 22. dc Nxc5 23. Qc4 suggests itself. Orekhov selects another, less

fortunate plan.

**22. Bc4 Re7 23. Rd1 b6 24. d5?!**

White wants to cash in on the strength of his passed pawn. But it will be blockaded, after which the Bishops' freedom of action will be restricted. **When you have the two Bishops, you need to open the game, not close it up.**

**24...Qd6!**

Of course, the Queen makes a poor blockader. But the attempt to play "according to Nimzovich" - that is, bring the Knight to d6 - is refuted: 24...Ne8? 25. Bh4! (not 25. d6? Nxd6 26. Bg3 Ne5) 25...Re3 26. Bg5 f4 27. d6.

**25. Qb5**

25. Qa4 looks more natural. Black's reply is forced - he cannot allow the enemy Queen on c6.

**25...Ne5 26. Bf1 g5**

26...f4 was worth a look (25. Qa4 would have prevented this possibility).

**27. b4 cb 28. Qxb4!**

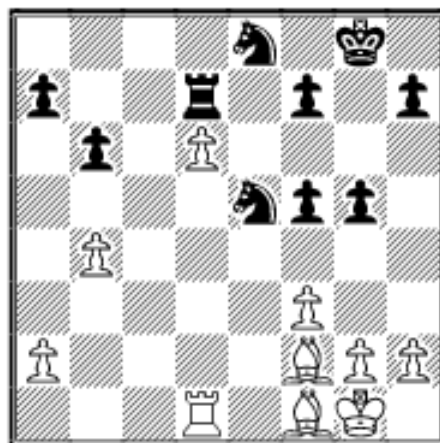
White tries to remove the blockade of his d5-pawn. On 28...Ne8, he will pull back his Queen and then play for c3-c4-c5 or a2-a4-a5.

**28...Qxb4?**

He should have played 28...Ne8! In his desire to stabilize the queenside pawn structure, Black lifts the blockade of the d-pawn for a moment - an omission that will cost him dearly. It's no surprise - remember the Nimzovich quote that appears as an epigraph to this article!

**29. cb Rd7 30. d6! Ne8**

White threatened 31. Bd4, for example: 30...Rd8 31. Bd4! Nfd7 (31...Rxd6 32. Bxe5 Rxd1 33. Bxf6) 32. Rc1, with a great advantage.



White's advantage is ready to disappear. The only way to keep it is by means of a subtle, elegant combination. It's a good illustration of Tarrasch's axiom, that one frequently must make a combination, in order to repair mistakes made earlier.

**31. Re1!**

31. Bb5? would be a mistake: 31...Rxd6 32. Rc1 Re6

**31...f6 32. f4**

The move-order must be exact: 32. Bb5? Rd8 33. f4 Nxd6.

**32...gf 33. Bb5 Rd8**

Now 34. Rxe5?! fe 35. Bxe8 (hoping for 35...Rxe8? 36 Bh4) leads to an unclear

position after 35...Rxd6!

### 34. Bh4!!

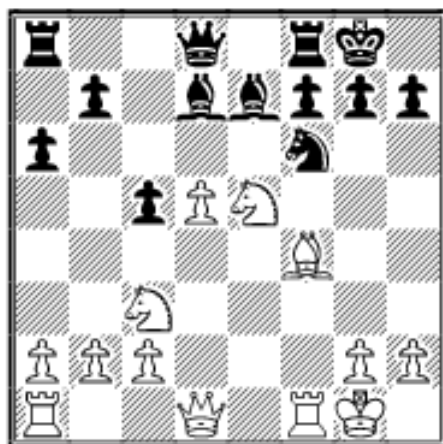
The point of the combination! Finally, the two Bishops show their power. Black has no good defense to the threat of 35. Rxe5.

### 34...Nxd6 35. Bxf6 Rc8 36. Rxe5

36. Ba6 was good, too.

**36...Rc1+ 37. Bf1! Nc4 38. Re8+ Kf7 39. Rc8 b5 40. Bg5 Rb1 41. Bxf4 Rxb4 42. Rc7+ Black resigned.**

In conclusion, I offer a pair of exercises.



**1. Belyavsky - Dvoretsky** (Vilnius Zonal 1975; Black to move)

The passed d-pawn absolutely has to be blockaded. In such positions, Nimzovich loved to use a Knight as a blockader. But here, after 12...Ne8 13. Nc4 or 13. Qf3, White would retain a strong advantage.

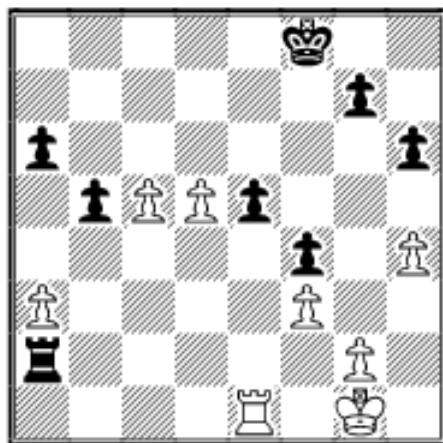
### 12...Bd6!

**In cramped positions, you must play for exchanges.** Black intends 13...Qc7

followed by 14...Rfe8. The Knight remains on f6 to prevent the activation of White's Knight. White cannot play 13. Nxf7? Rxf7 14. Bxd6 because of 14...Bg4!

### 13. Qf3 Qc7 14. Nxd7 Qxd7

Now 15. Bg5 is useless because of 15...Be5. The position is nearly equal now, and the game soon ended in a draw.



**2. Kozlovskaya - Carvajal** (Rio de Janeiro Interzonal, 1979; Black to move)

The game was adjourned at this point; its outcome hinged on what move Black had sealed. The Indian player was too greedy.

### 1...Rxa3? 2. Rc1!

Taking on e5 would result in an unclear position; this move leads to a forced win for White. She wishes to advance the c-pawn (the one furthest from the Black King); but first places her Rook in the

indicated position: behind the passed pawn, which keeps the opposing Rook from going there.

### 2...Ke8 3. c6 Kd8 4. c7+ Kc8 5. d6

Black resigned, in view of 5...Rd3 6. Rc6, followed by Rxa6 or Rb6.

Black should have thought about blockading the passed pawns, not winning material.

**1...Rc2! 2. c6 Ke7! 3. Rxe5+ Kd6**

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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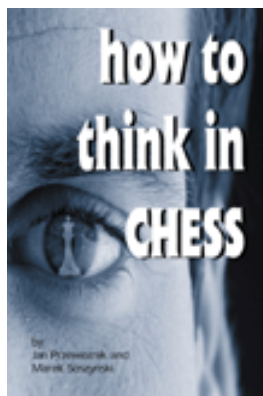
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## COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky



## Passivity in the Opening

Some players, when confronted with a more experienced opponent (with a much higher rating) play too cautiously, avoiding the main variations. As a result, they cede the initiative to their opponent, and thus in fact make his task easier. By way of examples to illustrate the sad consequences of passive opening play, I present some of my own games. These were played in the latter half of the 90's, when after a lengthy layoff I took part in a few Opens.

*Ridameya - Dvoretsky Barbero del Valdez 1996*

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. b3 e5 4. Bb5 (4. Bb2 d6 5. Bb5) 4...Nf6 (4...d6)



The Black pawn at e5 shuts in the Bishop at b2; White's position might even become inferior, unless he prepares either a center break with c2-c3 and d2-d4, or something else.

5. Nc3?! Passive: the Knight has no prospects at c3, especially after a likely exchange at c6. 5. 0-0 was more logical; Black would reply 5...d6.

5. Bxc6!? deserved serious consideration. 5...dc?! is poor: 6. Bb2 Bd6 7. Nxe5 Qe7 8. f4 [8 Nc4!?] 8...Nxe4 9. 0-0 intending

10. Re1. 5...bc?! is stronger: 6. Nxe5 Qe7 7. Bb2 d6! 8. Nxc6 (8. Nc4+/- would be simpler); and now: (A) 8...Qxe4+ 9. Qe2 Qxe2+ 10. Kxe2 a5!? (10...Bb7 11. Na5 Bxg2 12. Rg1 intending Bxf6+) 11. Bxf6 gf 12. d4 - Black probably has sufficient compensation for the pawn, although this would need to be demonstrated; (B) 8...Qc7!? 9. e5 Ng8 10. Na5! Qxa5 11. Qf3 d5!? (11...Rb8 12. ed is unclear) 12. Nc3 - unclear.

5...d6 6. h3? 6. 0-0 Be7= is better. 6...g6!

White's last move wasted valuable time. Black is now fully justified in choosing a more active developmental scheme (compared with 6...Be7). He intends to continue Bg7, 0-0, Nh5 and then f7-f5 or Nf4 - which will, among other things, demonstrate clearly the weakening effect the move h2-h3 had on the kingside.

7. Qe2?! Bg7 8. d3 0-0 9. Bxc6 (9. Bg5? Qa5) 9...bc 10. 0-0 Nh5 -/+ 11. Na4?! f5 12. Nh2?! Be6 13. Rd1 Qd7 14. c3 Rae8 15. f3 (15. Nf3 was better) 15...Nf4 16. Qf1 g5 17. Be3 h5 18. Qe1 (18 g3 fe) 18...Qf7 19. Rd2 Qg6 20. Kh1 g4 21. h4?! (21. ef Bxf5 22. fg hg 23. hg Bxd3 and ...e5-e4) 21...Bf6 22. g3?! Nh3 23. Qe2 f4+ 24. gf ef 25. Bg1 Bxh4 26. d4 Ng5 27.

dc d5 28. Bd4 gf 29. Nxf3 Nxf3 30. Qxf3 Bg4 31. Qd3 de 32. Qf1 Bf3+ 33. Rg2 Kh7 34. Qxf3 ef 35. Rxg6 Kxg6 36. Rf1 Re1 37. Rxe1 Bxe1 38. Nb2 Kf5 39. Nd3 Bg3 40. Ne5 f2 41. Kg2 h4, and White resigned.

**Lickleder - Dvoretsky German Team Tmt. 1997**

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 e6 4. Bxc6 bc 5. 0-0 Ne7 6. b3 Ng6 7. Bb2 Qc7!? (7...f6, intending Be7 and 0-0)



Black wants to execute the same plan as in the previous game - hemming in the Bishop on b2 with his pawn at e5. White has a choice of several reasonable continuations (although it is certainly true that one would be hard-pressed to say he could count on any sort of advantage): 8. Re1 f6 [8...e5!? 9. c3 d6 10. d4 Be7 11. dc dc] 9. d4 cd 10. Qxd4 Be7 11. c4 c5 12. Qe3 Bb7; 8. e5!? Be7 9. d3 0-0 10. Nbd2 f6 11. ef Bxf6 12. Bxf6 gf; 8. d4!? cd 9. Qxd4 c5 - all lines are unclear.

8. d3!? Too passive. Now Black has an easy game. 8...e5 9. Nbd2 Be7 10. Nc4 d6 11. Ne3 0-0 12. Ne1?! 12. Nf5 was preferable. 12...f5=+/+ 13. ef Bxf5 14. Nxf5 Rxf5 15. g3 Raf8 16. Ng2 Bg5 17. Bc1 Bxc1 18. Rxc1 Qf7 19. Qe2 Rf3 19...h5!? was worth examining. 20. Ne1 Rf6 21. Rd1 Ne7 22. Rd2 Nd5 23. Qe4! Qd7 23...Qb7!? was interesting: the intent is 24...Qb4, exploiting the weakness at c3. 24. f3 Now, with 24...Nc7! 25. Rdf2 Ne6 (with ideas of Ng5 or Nd4), Black would have retained the better chances. Instead, he temporized with 24...R8f7? 25. Rdf2! (intending Ng2 and f4) 25...Nc7 (Black gets nothing from 25...Nc3 26. Qc4) 26. Ng2 Ne6, and after 27. f4 ef 28. Nxf4, the position leveled out.

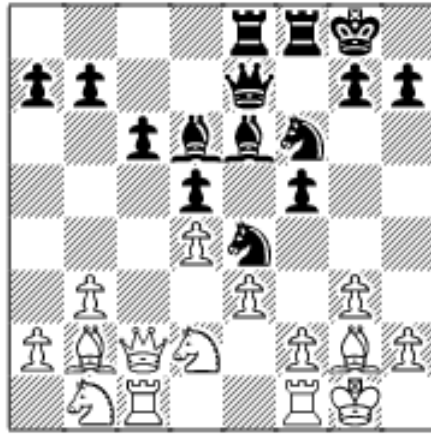
**Pascual - Dvoretsky Terrassa, 1996**

1. Nf3 f5 2. c4 Nf6 3. Nc3 e6 4. g3 d5 5. cd ed 6. d4 c6 7. Bg2 (7. Bf4!?) 7...Bd6 8. 0-0 0-0



9. b3? This development of the Bishop is too passive. 9. Bf4, or 9. Ne5, were better. 9...Ne4 10. Qc2?! Another inaccuracy. After 10. Bb2, White puts his Knight on e5, which can only be prevented by ..Nbd7, which in turn locks in the Bishop at c8. Now, Black succeeds both in developing the Bishop, and defending the e5 square. 10...Be6 11. e3 Nd7 12. Bb2 Qe7 13. Rae1 Rae8 14. Nd2 Ndf6 15. Ncb1?





Preferable was 15. f3 Nxd2 16. Qxd2=/. With the text, White hopes to prepare f2-f3 more comfortably. However, Black has a tactic which cuts across this plan.

**15...Ng4! -/+ 16. Nf3** 16. f3? is bad here, on account of 16...Nxb2! **16...Qf6 17. h3?! Weakening the kingside is a bad idea. Simplifying the position a little by 17. Ba3 is more logical. 17...Nh6** My first instinct was to continue 17...Ngxf2?!, but the position after 18.

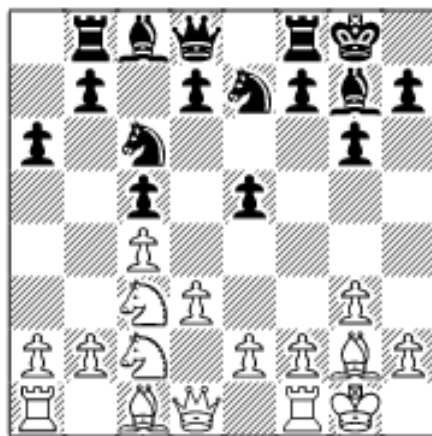
Rxf2 (or 18. Ne5 Nxb3+ 19. Bxb3 Nxb3) 18...Bxb3 19. Rff1 didn't look clear enough to me. The simple retreat of the Knight retains Black's advantage.

**18. Ne5 Nf7 19. Nd3** (19. Nxf7!?) **19...g5 20. Nd2 Qh6 21. Nf3?! g4!** (21...f4?! 22. g4) **22. hg fg 23. Nfe5 Nfg5 24. Nf4?! Bxe5 25. de Nf3+ 26. Bxf3 gf 27. Qd1 Ng5 28. Qd4 Nh3+.** White resigned.

In the games we have examined thus far, Black's game unfolded pretty much by itself, with no special accuracy or resourcefulness needed. The following example is more complex. Note the repeated occurrence of the problem of whether to exchange the light-squared Bishops. First I offered the exchange; then I declined it. And it may have been my apparently inconsistent play that ended up confusing my opponent.

### *Pascual - Dvoretsky Barbero del Valdez 1996*

**1. Nf3 c5 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 Nc6 5. Nc3 e5 6. d3 Nge7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Ne1 8. a3 8...a6 8...d6 9. Nc2 Be6 9. Nc2 Rb8**

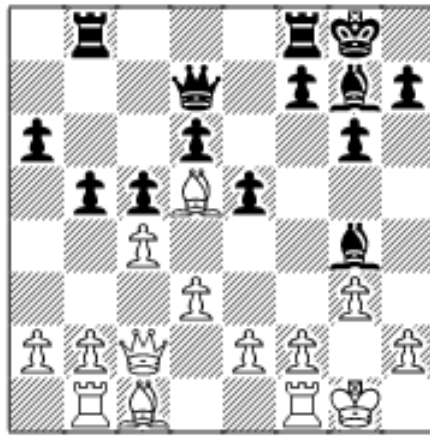


Black intends to continue 10...b5, obtaining a queenside initiative. There would be some point to either preventing it with 10. a4!?, or setting up White's own queenside play with 10. Rb1!? d6 (10...b5 11. cb ab 12. b4 cb 13. Nxb4 Nxb4 14. Rxb4 Qa5 15. a3+/-) 11. b4 Be6 12. bc dc 13. Ne3+/-.

**10. Ne3 b5 11. Ned5 d6 12. Rb1** White acted more purposefully in the game Sisniega - Karpess, Novi Sad Ol 1990: 12. b3 Bg4 13. h3 Be6 14. Bb2 Qd7 15.

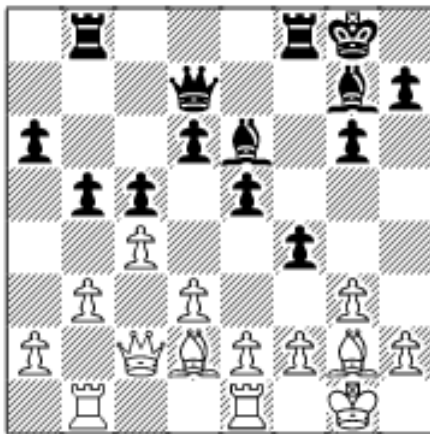
Kh2 Kh8 16. Qd2 f5 17. e3, intending f2-f4. **12...Bg4!? 13. Nxe7+?! This trade was provoked by my last move: White feared the attack on the e-pawn after 13...Nxd5 14. Nxd5 Nd4. As long as Black has not yet played ...Qd7, White should drive the Bishop from its active position with 13. h3 Be6 14. Kh2=.** **13...Nxe7 14. Qc2 Qd7 15. Nd5 Nxd5 16. Bxd5**





Obviously, Black's plan is a kingside attack: f7-f5-f4. The two ways to unpin the f-pawn are Kh8 and Be6. Since White's Bishop stands beautifully on d5, I decided to offer the trade of Bishops. First, though, it makes sense to drive the Rook at f1 to a worse square.

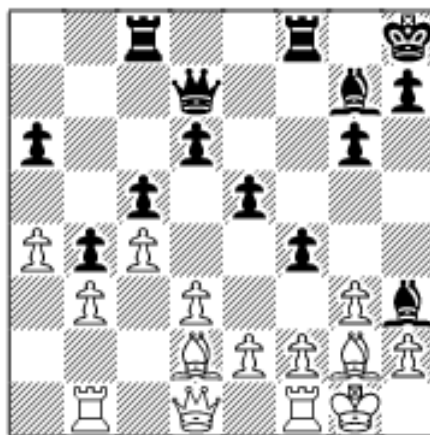
**16...Bh3! 17. Re1** 17. Bg2 is unfavorable, due to 17...Bxg2 18. Kxg2 d5. **17...Be6=/+ 18. Bg2 f5 19. b3 f4 20. Bd2**



While executing your own plan, it's important to keep an eye out for active possibilities for your opponent. On the natural 20...g5?, White continues 21. b4!, stirring up queenside counterplay.

**20...Rbc8!** An excellent prophylactic move! 20...b4?!, with the same idea, was weaker on account of 21. Qc1! g5 22. a3. **21. a4?!** A strange decision. Locking up the queenside makes it easier for Black to execute his attack on the kingside. **21...b4 22. Qd1** Apparently intending 23. e3 - which Black prevents.

**22...Qf7!?** In order to meet 23. e3 with f4-f3. **23. Rf1** Now the tempo Black gained on move 16 shows its usefulness. **23...Kh8!?** **24. Bf3** On 24. Be4 (intending Kh1, followed by Rg1 or f2-f3), Black continues the same way. **24...Bh3 25. Bg2 Qd7**



Black has no objection, in principle, to the exchange of the light-squared Bishop that defends White's kingside; but he would like it to occur in the best possible way - i.e., so that the Queen enters at h3. Perhaps White should have allowed this anyway: 26. Bxh3!? Qxh3 27. Kh1 (27. Qe1? f3 28. ef Rf5 ) 27...Rf5 28. Rg1=/+.

**26. Qe1** By overprotecting the g3-pawn, White prepares 27. Bxh3 Qxh3 28. f3. Therefore, I now decline the exchange.

**26...Be6! 27. Qc1**

Better 27. Be4, intending f2-f3. **27...g5 28. Bd5?** And again, 28. Be4 was preferable.



**28...Bh3?! Black continues to turn his opponent's head with the question of exchanging Bishops. But this was precisely the moment when the exchange leads to a decisive advantage: 28...Bxd5! 29. cd Qh3 (intending Rf6-h6) 30. Kh1 (30. Qc4 g4!) 30...g4!, and if 31. gf ef 32. Bxf4 Rxf4! 33. Qxf4 Be5 wins. 29. Bg2 Rf6 30. f3**



In order to defend against the threatened 30...Rh6, White must shut in his own Bishop; so now, Black once again has a good reason to decline the exchange. However I feared that after 30...Be6 31. g4 (31. e3!?) 31...h5 32. h3, I would have no way of breaking in. I therefore decided (and I'm not sure if I was right) to put off the exchange for one more move.

**30...h5 31. Rf2?** The decisive mistake! White had to play 31. Bxh3 Qxh3 32. Rf2!=/+ (stronger than 32. Qe1), with a defensible position. **31...Be6!** Now there will be no stopping the attack: the "bad" g2-Bishop merely interferes with its own pieces. **32. e4 Rcf8 32...Bh6!? 33. Qf1 Bh6** Threatening 34...g4. **34. gf gf 34...ef?! 35. d4** was weaker. **35. Kh1 Rg6 36. Qe2?! Intending Bf1 and Rg2. 36...h4 (36...Rfg8) 37. h3 Rfg8 38. Rbf1 Qg7 39. Be1 (39. Kh2 Rg3) 39...Bxh3** White resigned.

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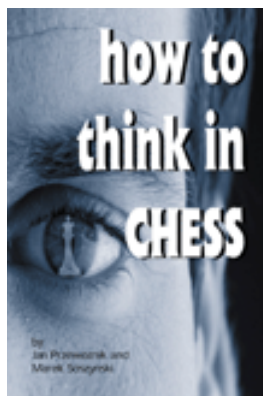
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## COLUMNISTS

## Mark Dvoretsky



## A Battle of Equals

*Imagination is worth more than knowledge.*

- Albert Einstein

The following game, though little-known, is one of my favorites. Among its attractive features are the very high level of play exhibited by both players, and the weighty arguments they made (or could have made) during the course of the game. Let me suggest that the reader attempt to make the correct decisions and find the key moments of this entertaining game for himself.

**Unzicker - Larsen Santa Monica 1966**

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cd 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bg5 Bd7 7. Qd2 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bc6**

I love commenting on old games, among other reasons because they generally leave the realm of contemporary theory quite early on, thereby obviating the necessity of preparing a detailed guide to the opening, or describing the latest breath of fashion in this variation. So it is here: 6...Bd7 is quite seldom played; but when it is, it is with the idea of continuing 8...Qa5 (instead of 8...Bc6), followed by ...Rc8.

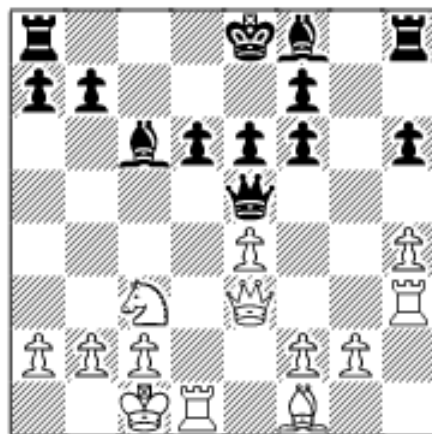
**9. 0-0-0 Qa5 10. h4!?**

ECO refers to a game Lukin - Ivanov (USSR 1974), in which White obtained a definite opening advantage with the continuation 10. f4 h6 11. Bxf6 gf 12. Bc4 Rg8 13. Qd2 Qc5 14. Bb3 e6 15. f5 Qe5 16. Qf2. It must be said that the plan of attacking e6 with f2-f4-f5 appears fundamental here: it was the plan employed, in one form or another, in a large number of games.

Wolfgang Unzicker has come up with another, less standard strategic idea: developing his Rook to the 3rd rank.

**10...h6 11. Bxf6 gf 12. Rh3! Qe5 13. Qe3 e6?!**

13...b5 would appear to have been more exact.



The obvious 14. f4 would serve no particular purpose for White after 14...Qc5 (or 14...Qa5). One might also continue with the quiet 14. Kb1 or 14. Be2; preventing the development of Black's Bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal by playing 14. h5 would also make sense. But which move should he play?

And why must it necessarily be one of these moves? Have we examined all of White's resources? In fact, ***one must first draw up a complete listing of candidate moves, before***

***making a choice among them.***

**So - find some new and promising possibilities for White.**

Failing to ask ourselves this question, we risk overlooking all the most interesting things this position has to offer. And what might those be?

First of all, the tactical shots 14. Bb5 and 14. Nb5, with the intention of meeting a capture on b5 with 15. f4. And in the second place, there is the amazing prophylactic move 14. b4!!, strengthening the threat of f2-f4 by depriving Black's Queen of the c5 and a5 squares. Unzicker, in his excellent commentary for the tournament book, considered this latter move the strongest, and we agree.

So how does Black defend himself against the threat of 15. f4 Qh5 16. Be2 Qg6 17. Rg3 or 17. g4, shutting the Queen out of the game on the kingside, and thereby granting White an enormous advantage on the rest of the board. What can he do?

14...f5!? suggests itself, trying to create counterplay on the a1-h8 diagonal, which has been weakened by b2-b4. But Black's hopes are not to be realized here: after 15. f4 Qf6, his opponent has two excellent means of continuing the attack. The main difficulty lies in deciding which is better.

1) 16. ef!? Qxf5 17. g4! Qxg4 18. b5 Bd7 19. Nd5. This was Unzicker's suggested line. Let's continue: 19...Kd8 20. Qc3 Qg7 (20...ed 21. Qxh8 is hopeless) 21. Qc7+ (not 21. Qa5+? b6 22. Nxb6 Qa1+ 23. Kd2 Qd4+) 21...Ke8 22. Qxb7. Unzicker is correct: this position favors him. Note, by the way, how well White's king Rook is placed for such complications.

2) 16. e5!? de 17. Nb5 Bxb4 18. Nc7+ Kf8 (18...Ke7 19. fe is still worse) 19. fe Qe7 20. Nxa8 Kg7 21. Qxa7 - this seems even more convincing.

Let's think for a moment: Why is it that spectacular combinations bring joy to rank amateurs and experienced grandmasters alike? The reason is that sacrificing material is contrary to routine - and against the most basic routine we learn in our first steps as chessplayers, which is: the normal ranking of the pieces. For it is the unusual and the unexpected that are among the most important esthetic criteria in any walk of life.

There are many more examples of axiomatic thinking in our consciousness - going against any one of these might prove just as unexpectedly beautiful as the

conscious disturbing of the material balance. Can you remember any other cases in which a pawn is pushed forward, away from its King, apparently creating a hopeless weakening of its pawn cover, without even attacking any piece in return? I can think of only a very few examples of this kind; thus, I consider the move 14. b4!! exceptionally beautiful. Any grandmaster would have been proud to have found it over the board.

In order to develop within yourself the ability to think outside the box, it is useful to examine games which develop along unusual lines, to work this sort of exercises. Where do we find them? That's no problem for my students at least - I have notebooks full of excellent material of this type. What advice can I offer my readers? Examine the games of chessplayers with an unusual, dynamic style of play. In the world of tactics, of course, that would be Mikhail Tal; among the younger grandmasters, Alexey Shirov. In strategy - Viktor Korchnoi, Bent Larsen, Leonid Stein, Jonathan Speelman. One might also find interesting and instructive play in the games of those a little lower in the ranks - Bukhuti Gurgenidze, for example, or Duncan Suttles, or Julian Hodgson. But remember that, first of all, one must study well-commented games; and second, that those decisions that interest you must be not just original, but also strong (such as 14. b4!!). Playing original and **weak** chess is not difficult - anybody can do that.

#### **14. Bb5!?**

This move is strong enough to set his opponent difficult problems. I think 14. Nb5 is less convincing. Black should not take the Knight, of course: after 14...Bxb5? 15. f4 Qh5 16. g4 Qxg4 17. Bxb5+ Ke7 18. Rg3 Qh5 (18...Qxh4? 19. Rh3 Qg4 20. Rg1) 19. e5 or 19. f5, he comes under a very strong attack. However, he could play 14...Rd8 or 14...Kd7, and work on the vulnerable e4-pawn.

#### **14...Rg8!**

Cold-blooded defense. f2-f4 cannot be prevented; but it will leave weaknesses in White's camp along the g-file, which Larsen wishes to exploit. Black would lose after 14...Bxb5? 15. f4 Qh5 (15...Qc5 16. Qxc5 dc 17. Nxb5 Ke7 18. Rhd3) 16. g4 Qxg4 17. Nxb5.

#### **15. f4 Qc5**

#### **What do you think: Should White exchange Queens here?**

This is not a simple question. After 16. Qxc5 dc 17. Bxc6+ bc, Black's pawn structure is ruined. If White consolidates, he will obtain a great positional advantage. But can he? The g-pawn is attacked - now we understand why 14...Rg8! was necessary. If 18. Rd2 (intending 19. Rhd3), 18...Rd8, and Black has enough counterplay. 18. g3!?, intending Ne2, Rhh1, etc., is stronger. Black apparently must answer 18...h5! (18...c4 19. Rd4 is worse) 19. Ne2 e5!?, with 20...Bh6 or 20...c4 in mind. I have analyzed this continuation, and concluded that White will have a hard time exploiting the advantages of his position. The middlegame promises him more.

#### **16. Qe2!? a6 (16...Be7 was more cautious) 17. Bxc6+ bc**



Here White had the simple and strong move 18. g4!, ridding himself of that backward pawn on the g-file. Unzicker prefers a different solution: he wants to crack the enemy defenses at once.

**18. e5**

**Evaluate the move played.**

Now there is the terrible threat of 19. Ne4. After 18...d5? 19. ef (or 19. f5!?) threatens f4-f5 or g2-g4-g5; for example, 19...Bd6 20. f5 e5 21. Ne4!? de 22. Rc3. Black has only

one move:

**18...f5!**

Had Unzicker not foreseen anything concrete here and played, let's say, 19. ed Bxd6, that would have made the move 18. e5 anti-positional, leading only to a significant worsening of his pawn structure. But the grandmaster had a spectacular shot in mind:

**19. g4!!**

**How does Black defend himself ?**

On either 19...fg? or 19..Rxc4?, 20. Ne4! decides. Nor is 19...d5? any good, after 20. gf ef 21. e6 or 21. Qd3.

**19...Qb4!**

By attacking the f4-pawn, Larsen decoys White's Queen off the e-file.

**20. Qf3!**

The sharper 20. gf Qxf4+ 21. Kb1 can hardly promise White any advantage.

**20...d5 21. gf**

**Now what does Black play?**

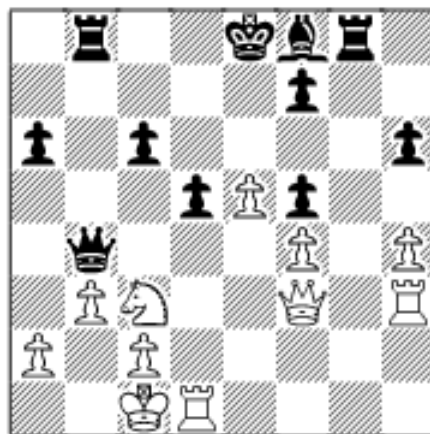
21...ef? loses at once to 22. Nxd5! cd 23. Qxd5.

**21...Rb8!**

A necessary zwischenzug. Now 22. fe Qxb2+ 23. Kd2 Bb4! is unclear.

**22. b3 ef**





Although Black has escaped an immediate catastrophe, he still stands significantly worse. We may conclude that the pretty breakthrough 18. e5! f5! 19. g4!! was justified (even though the simple 18. g4 may have been no weaker).

The sacrifice on d5 is unsound here. The most natural plan would be to maneuver the Knight to d4.

### Evaluate 23. Ne2.

If Black meets 23. Ne2 with 23...Bc5?!, then 24. c4! lands him in great difficulties (24. Rg3?! Ke7 would be far less convincing). The only right move is 23...Qe4! The endgame after 24. Qxe4 fe is quite in order for Black, while 24. Nd4? even loses to 24...Ba3+ 25. Kb1 Rg1!! 26. Rxg1 Qxd4 27. Rg8+ Ke7 28. c3 Qd2. And 24. Rd4!? Rg1+!? 25. Kb2 Qxf3 26. Rxf3 Rh1 27. Ra4 Rb6 28. Ng3 Rxh4 leads to an endgame that is hard to evaluate.

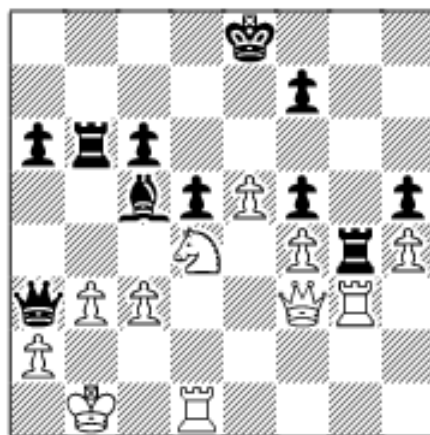
Unzicker finds a way to prepare the knight maneuver to d4.

### 23. Rg3! Rg4! 24. Ne2

### Now what does Black play?

White would like to take twice on g4. 24...Qe4?! is no longer good, in view of 25. Qxe4 de 26. Rxg4 fg 27. Ng3!? (or 27. Rd4!?), with a bad endgame for Black. So Larsen simply reinforces the Rook on g4 with a pawn, and allows White's Knight to go to d4.

### 24...h5! 25. Nd4 Rb6



Right here is where Unzicker thinks that White let his advantage slip. He believes that White should have broken through the e-file with 26. e6 Qa3+ 27. Kb1 Bg7 (an attempted counterattack on White's King) 28. Qe3.

### Calculate the consequences of his suggested variation.

Black would seem to be in a bad way: 28...c5 29. ef+ Kxf7 30. Re1, and if 30...Bxd4?, 31. Qe8+ Kf6 32. Qd8+. But the grandmaster overlooked the spectacular 30...Qb2+!! 31. Kxb2 Bxd4+ 32. Qxd4 cd, with an unclear endgame.

### Now, can we improve the play in this variation?

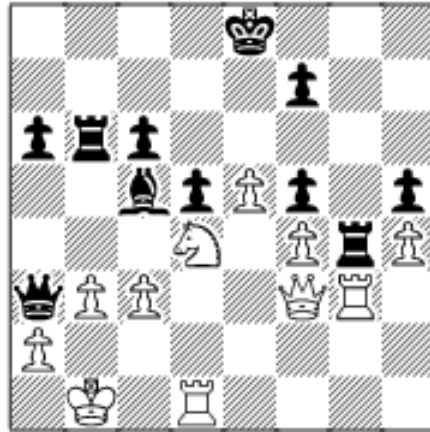
Yes, we can. Instead if 28. Qe3!?, White plays either 28. Rxg4! hg 29. ef+ Kxf7 30. Qd3! Bxd4 31. Qxd4, or 28. ef+ Kxf7 29. Rxg4! Bxd4!? 30. Rxd4 hg 31. Qd3 Kf6 32. Qc3 Kf7 33. Rd1 - in either line, he has an obvious advantage.

But it is Black who could improve earlier. He need not hurl himself into an immediate counterattack: 26...Qa3+? 27. Kb1 Bg7 is a mistake, as is the immediate 26...Bg7? 27. Nf5 Qa3+ 28. Kd2. Consolidating with 26...Qd6!, securing the position of the black King and attacking the f4-pawn, secures him sufficient counterchances. Which in turn means that the e5-e6 break was not so strong, after all.

### 26. Kb1! Bc5 27. c3

27. Nxc6? Rxc6 28. Qxd5 Qb6 is a mistake. White also gets nothing out of 27. Nxf5 Qxf4.

### 27...Qa3



### What should White play now?

As we shall soon see, capturing the f5-pawn gives White no advantage. What else could he have done?

28. e6?! Bxd4 29. ef+ Kxf7 30. cd Qe7 (or 20...Qd6) leaves Black in excellent shape.

Sacrificing the Knight at c6 is good only for a draw: 28. Nxc6?! Rxc6 29. Qxd5 Kf8 30. Qd8+ Kg7 31. Qf6+ Kh7 32. Qxf7+ Rg7 33. Qxf5+ Kg8, and White has perpetual check, with 34. Qe6+, but no more - 34. b4?

Bxb4; or 34. Rd8+ Bf8.

The only means of playing for the win was, surprisingly, the exchange of Rooks, with the idea of freeing the White Queen for active play (an idea we already saw in a previous variation). So 28. Rxc6! fg (28...hg is similar) 29. Qd3 Bxd4 30. Qxd4 (30. cd is good, too); and in the heavy piece ending White's advantage is indisputable, since his King is far better protected. The threat to open lines with e5-e6 hangs like the Damoclean sword over Black's position.

### 28. Nxf5?!

### How does Black play now?

For the time being, the rook sacrifice on b3 doesn't work; but White must always keep it in mind - for example, that's how Black would answer taking twice on g4. White has no direct threats, which means Black must now employ his only means of strengthening his position - the advance of his a-pawn.

### 28...a5!

With the threat of 29...a4. Having checked the variations, Unzicker decided that he had already lost the advantage; so he agreed to the draw.

**29. Nd6+ Kf8 30. Rxc6 hg 31. Qxc6 Rxb3+ 32. ab Qxb3+ 33. Ka1 Qxc3+ 34. Kb1 Qb3+ 35. Ka1 Qa3+ 36. Kb1 Qb3+ 37. Ka1 Qa3+ 38. Kb1 - Draw**

An engrossing duel, in which both sides played mistake-free chess (or nearly



so), and proved worthy of each other!

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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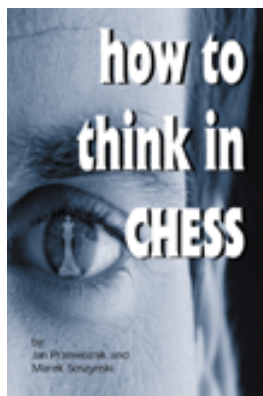
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## COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky



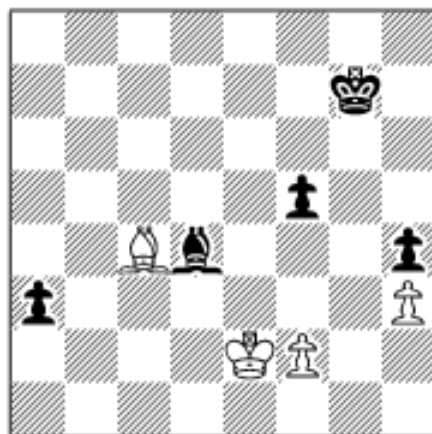
## Discoveries in Minor-piece Endgames

I recently finished work on an endgames textbook, which I hope will help chessplayers of every level - from grandmaster to amateur - quickly and easily acquire and reinforce the endgame knowledge they need.

During this work, I discovered a surprising number of endgames - several well-known examples among them - handed down from one book to the next, which have been poorly analyzed and incorrectly evaluated. Some of the annotators' errors were banal, or simply analytical - and thus, not very interesting. But at times, after diving into the secret recesses of a position, new conclusions emerge which are both instructive and beautiful. And it is with a few of these latter cases that I should like to acquaint my readers.

Analysts generally present their findings and supporting variations. But this is not enough for the trainer - in order to extract the maximum value from the endgames I will be presenting, we shall limit ourselves to those important endgame ideas and techniques that were employed, or should have been employed, in those examples.

Opposite-colored bishop endgames are one of my "hobbies". Many years ago, I did a great deal of work on the theory, which would allow one to deal effectively and securely with most such endgames (you may find this theory in Dvoretsky and Yusupov's *Technique for the Tournament Player*, and also in my first book, *Secrets of Chess Training* - a new edition of which, by the way, considerably enhanced and enlarged, and bearing a new title, will soon be issued by the publisher Olms Verlag). And here too, I begin with an "opposite-colored bishops" example.

**Tringov - Smyslov Reykjavik 1974**

White must get the pawn off the f2-square - but to where?

In the game, White chose 56. f4? Bg1! 57. Kd3 Bh2 58. Ke3 Kf6.

Black ties White down to the f4-pawn's defense, and now brings his king to b2: a simple plan, against which White has no defense. (Black put the bishop on h2, not c7, by the way, so as not to block it with his own king, even for one move - which would

happen when the king passes through d6.)

59. Ba2 Ke7 60. Bg8 Kd6 61. Bf7 Kc5 62. Ba2 (62. Be6 Kb4 63. Kd3 Bxf4 64. Kc2 Be5! 65. Bxf5 a2-+) 62...Kb4 63. Kd4 Bxf4 64. Kd5 Bg3 65. Kd4



f4, and White resigned.

In both Minev's *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings* and Smyslov's own endgame collection, this result is considered proper, and White's position, lost. But this is not true. Let's use my theory of opposite-colored bishops in an effort to find a saving line.

***Black has a passed pawn, which is blocked by the bishop. In such situations, the stronger side's plan must always be to march his king over to the passed pawn (sometimes after a diversionary attack on the opposite wing, which is not needed here).*** White's king is tied down to the kingside, and thus cannot hinder the enemy king's march.

***The fundamental, and safest, method of defense here is to blockade the enemy passed pawn with the king, while the bishop defends its own pawns.*** This is the standard setup to aim for. But with the pawn at f4 (or f2), there is no way for the king to reach the queenside.

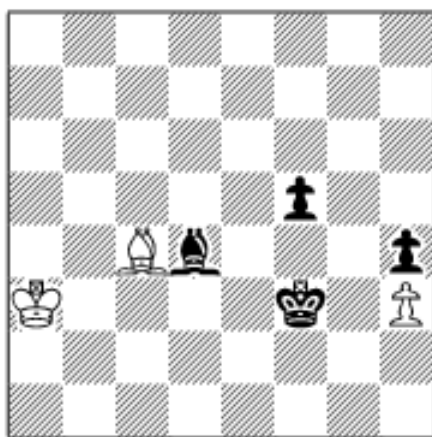
***When defending an opposite-bishops endgame, you must put your pawns on squares of the same color as your bishop.*** Therefore, the obvious move is **56. f3!**, and then attempting to reach a basic defensive position. With the king at b3, the bishop easily defends the kingside pawns (...Kf4 is met by Be6!; and if ..f5-f4, then the bishop goes to g4). The only question is whether White will have the time to set up this formation.

**56...Kf6 57. Kd3 Ke5!**

First we must make sure that we can't win the bishop: 58. f4+? Kxf4 59. Kxd4 Kg3 60. Ke3 f4+ 61. Ke2 f3+ 62. Kf1 Kxh3 63. Kf2 Kg4+.

Calculating the consequences of 58. Kc2 Kf4 isn't quite so easy. Smyslov gives only the line 59. Be6 Kxf3 60. Kb3 (obviously, not 60. Bxf5 a2) 60...f4 61. Kxa3 Kg3, and wins.

But the bishop move to e6 is a loss of tempo. The line we should examine is the immediate 59. Kb3 Kxf3 (59...Bc5? 60. Be6=) 60. Kxa3.



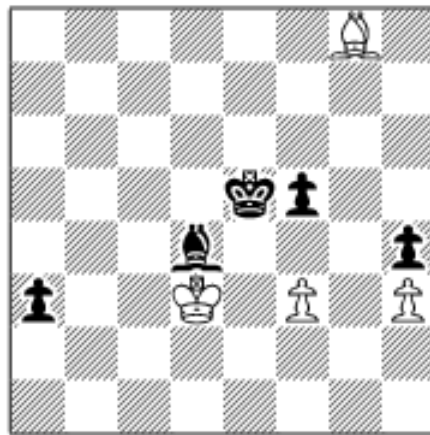
Now, after the obvious 60...f4?, the White king reaches the kingside in time: 61. Kb3 Kg3 62. Kc2 f3 (62...Kxh3 63. Kd3 intending Bd5, Ke2=) 63. Kd3 Kxh3 (63...Bb6 64. Bd5; 63...f2 64 Kxd4) 64. Kxd4 Kg3 (64...Kg2 65. Bd5) 65. Ke3 f2 (65...h3 66. Bd5 f2 67. Ke2=) 66. Bf1=.

But if Black uses a "shoulder block" (a technique most often seen in pawn and rook vs. pawn endings), he wins: 60...Ke3!! 61. Kb3 Kd2! 62. Bd5 (62. Be6 f4 63. Bg4 Ke3 64. Kc2 f3 65. Kd1 Kf2 66. Be6

Kg1+)= 62...f4 63. Bc6 Bb6 64. Bd5 Ke2! (intending f3-f2) 65. Bc4+ Kf2 66. Kc2 f3 67. Kd1 (67. Bd5 Ke2) 67...Kg1, and wins.

And yet, the position is drawn! White must play a waiting move, such as **58. Bg8!**, and Black is in zugzwang - an extremely rare case of the stronger side

being in zugzwang in a sharp endgame.

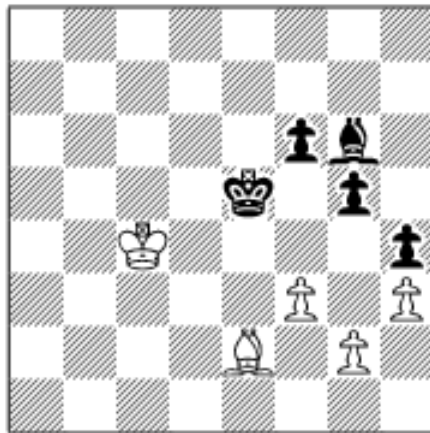


On any bishop move away from d4, White can reach the basic defensive position: 59. Kc2 Kf4 60. Be6! Kxf3 61. Bxf5, and 61...a2 is no longer dangerous. And if **58...Kf4!? 59. Kxd4 Kxf3**, the king stands worse at f3 than he did at g3 (in the 58. f4+? variation); allowing White to save himself: **60. Bd5+! Kg3 61. Ke3 f4+** (61...Kxh3 62. Kf3 locks the king onto the h-file) **62. Ke2 f3+ 63. Kf1! Kxh3 64. Kf2 Kg4 65. Bxf3+**.

Note that Minev was close to the solution - his variation runs 58. Ba2 Bg1 59. Kc3 Kf4 60. Bd5 Kg3 61. Kb3 f4+-. Of course, White draws after 60. Be6!, not 60. Bd5? "*Targeting pawns*" (with the bishop) is an important defensive technique in opposite-colored bishop endings.

At a school for young Russian talent which I recently conducted not far from Moscow, my students offered a different defensive setup for White: 56. Kf3 Kf6 57. Ba2 Ke5 58. Bg8 Bc5 59. Ba2. The king cannot go to d4 yet, because of 60. Kf4; therefore 59...Bf8 is necessary, intending 60...Bh6, and then 61...Kd4. White continues 60. Ke3! Bh6+ 61. Kd3, shutting out the Black king. But after 61...Kf4 (threatening 62...Kf3) 62. Bd5 Bf8 (the bishop wants to hit the pawn at f2 from the c5 square) 63. Kc2 Bc5 64. Kb3 Bxf2 65. Kxa3, Black wins with the familiar "shoulder block": 65...Ke3!! 66. Kb3 Kd2!

Our next example features same-colored bishops.



**Teichmann - Marshall San Sebastian 1911**  
(Black to move)

Black has an overwhelming positional advantage, based on two factors:

- (1) **Active king**: his king stands much better, able to attack the enemy pawns at will;
- (2) **"Bad bishop"**: White's pawns are on the same color squares as their bishop, which is the kind of bishop we call "bad". Just in case (although I am sure that most of my

readers know what I'm talking about), I will explain precisely why having a bad bishop is a bad thing:

First of all, pawns stuck on the same color square as the bishop reduce its range;

Secondly, the bad bishop cannot attack the enemy's pawns (which are usually located on the opposite-colored squares), which consigns it to passive defense of its own pawns;

and third: pawns and bishop control only squares of one color, leaving the

"holes" between them subject to occupation by enemy pieces.

Nevertheless, this endgame is much more complex than it would at first appear. The players made mistakes; so did the commentators - among them GM Averbakh, whose analysis I shall now employ.

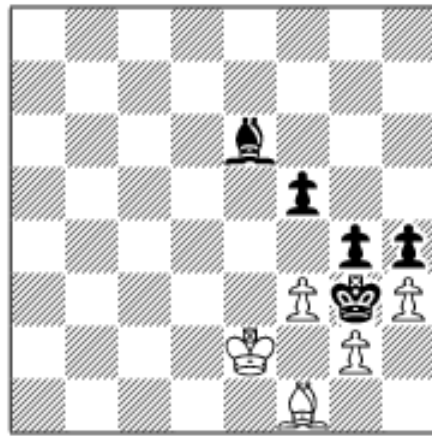
### 65...Bf7+?

A mistake, allowing the king to return to the defense of the kingside via d3. Now the position is drawn.

### 66. Kd3! Kf4 67. Bf1 Kg3 68. Ke3 Bd5 69. Ke2 f5 70. Ke3 Be6

The bishop sacrifice is insufficient: 70...f4+ 71. Ke2 Bb7 72. Ke1 Bxf3 73. gf Kxf3 74. Be2+ Kg2 (74...Kg3 75. Bg4 Kg2 76. Ke2) 75. Bf1+ Kg3 76. Ke2=. The only remaining try is g5-g4, but this trades off too many pawns.

### 71. Ke2 g4



### 72. hg

Averbakh recommends 72. fg fg 73. Ke3. An obvious draw results from 73...gh 74. gh Bd7 75. Ke2 Bb5+ 76. Ke1 Bc6 77. Ke2=. And 73...Bd7 is met by 74. hg! (but not 74. Ke2? Bb5+! 75. Ke1 Bc6 76. hg Bxg2 77. Bxg2 Kxg2, when the h-pawn queens with check) 74...Bxg4 75. Bb5! (found by Chéron), giving up the g-pawn immediately, but activating the bishop. For example, 75...Be6 76. Bc6 Bc4 77. Be4 Bf1 78. Bd5 Bxg2 79. Be6= (the

interference try leads to a drawn pawn ending), or 75...Kxg2 76. Kf4! (76. Bc6+? Kg3 intending h3-h2 and Bh3-g2) 76...Be6 77. Bc6+ Kf2 (after 77...Kh2 78. Bb7 h3 79. Be4 Kg1 80. Kg3 h2, the interference at g2 is not possible) 78. Bd5! Bd7 (78...Bxd5 79. Kg4) 79. Bc6! Bh3 80. Bd5 Bg2 81. Be6=.

Averbakh considers the text move the decisive error; but here he is wrong.

### 72...fg 73. Ke3?

Necessary was 73. fg! Bxg4+ 74. Ke1! (Averbakh only looked at 74. Ke3 Bd7+). What we have here is a curious position of mutual zugzwang. White to move loses: 75. Bb5 Kxg2 76. Bc6+ Kg1. But it is Black to move, and after 74...Bd7 (74...Bh5 75. Bb5 Kxg2 76. Bd7, or 76. Bc6+ first) 75. Ba6 Kxg2 (75...Bc6 76. Bc8 Bxg2 77. Bd7=) 76. Bb7+ Kg1, White gets his king to g3: 77. Ke2! h3 78. Kf3 h2 79. Kg3=.

### 73...Bd7?

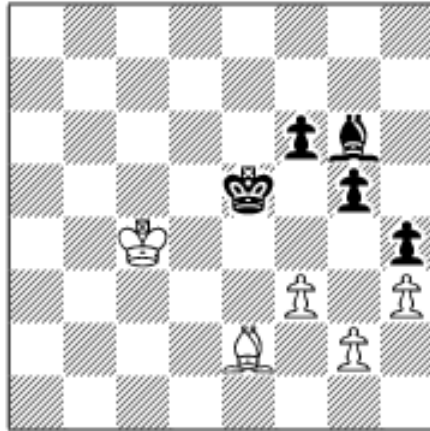
Returning the blunder, Black allows his opponent to force a draw by means of the technique pointed out in the note to move 72. The winning line was 73...gf! 74. gf Bd7 (zugzwang) 75. Ke2 (or 75. f4 Bg4! - zugzwang - 76. Ke4 Kf2+) 75...Bb5+ 76. Ke1 Bc6 77. f4 Be4! (77...Bg2? 78. f5 h3 79. f6) 78. Ke2

Bf5! 79. Ke1 Bg4 - zugzwang.

**74. fg! Bxg4 75. Ke4??**

The loser is the one who made the last mistake! As we have already seen, 75. Bb5! leads to the draw. With the bishop on f1, White is defenseless.

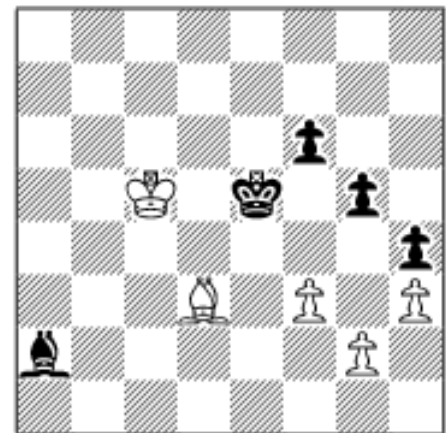
**75...Bc8 76. Ke3 Bd7!** (zugzwang) White resigned.



Let's return to the starting position of this endgame. Averbakh recommends 65...Bb1!

On 66. Bf1, Kf4 decides, e.g.: 67. Kd4 f5! (zugzwang) 68. Kd5 Ke3 69. Ke6 Kf2 70. Bc4 Kxg2; or 67. Kd5 Kg3 68. Ke6 f5 69. Kf6 Kf2 70. Bc4 Kxg2 71. Kxg5 Kxh3 72. f4 Kg3-+.

White would have greater practical chances with 66. Bd3!? Ba2+! 67. Kc5



Averbakh gives only 67...Kf4 68. Kd4 Kg3-+. But I think 67...Kf4? is a poor move, because of 68.

Kd6!

a) 68...Kg3 69. Ke7 Kxg2 (69...f5 70. Kf6!) 70. Kxf6 Kxf3 71. Kxg5 Kg3 72. Kf5! (72. Bf5? Bc4, followed by Bf1xh3) 72...Bd5 (72...Kxh3 73. Kf4=) 73. Bf1! (73. Be4? Bc4 is bad, as is 73. Ke5? Bg2 74. Kd4 Bxh3 75. Ke3 Bc8 76. Bf1 Bb7) 73...Bc6 74. Ke5 Bd7 75. Ke4 Kf2 76. Kf4 Be6 77. Bb5 Bxh3 78. Bc6 (reaching a position from Chéron's line) 78...Bc8 79. Bb7! Be6 80. Bd5!, etc.

b) 68...f5 69. Ke7 Bd5 70. Bf1! (70. Kf6? is a mistake: 70...g4 71. fg fg 72. hg Bxg2 73. g5 h3 74. g6 h2 75. g7 Bd5-+) 70...g4 (70...Ke5 71. Kd7 is not dangerous either) 71. fg fg 72. hg Kxg4 73. Kf6 Be4 (73...Kg3 74. Kg5 Bc6 75. Kh5=) 74. Ke5! Ba8 75. Kf6 Bb7 76. Kg6 Be4+ 77. Kh6! = (but not 77. Kf6? Kf4! - zugzwang).

Black's king stands excellently at e5, shouldering away its White counterpart. Before attacking the pawn at g2, Black needs to strengthen his position.

Simplest would be 67...f5!, e.g.: 68. Kc6 g4! 69. fg fg 70. hg Bd5+ 71. Kc5 Bxg2 72. g5 h3 73. g6 Kf6!; or 68. Bf1 Kf4 69. Kd6 (69. Kd4 Bb1! is zugzwang) 69...Kg3 70. Ke5 Bb1 71. Kf6 Kf2 72. Bc4 Kxg2 73. Kxg5

Kxh3-+.

Another winning line is 67...Be6! 68. Ba6 f5 69. Bf1 Bc8!?!; or 69...Bd5!?! 70. Be2 Bb7 71. Bf1 Kf4 72. Kd4 Bc8! (zugzwang)-+. But the hasty 69...g4? lets slip the win: 70. fg fg 71. hg Bxg4 72. Ba6! (72. Kc4? Bc8! 73. Kc3 Kf4 74. Kd2 Kg3 75. Ke3 Bd7!-+ or 75. Ke1 Bg4!-+ lead to zugzwangs we already know about) 72...Be6 (72...Bf5 80. Kc4) 73. Bb7! Bf5 74. Kc4 Be4 75. Bc8=.

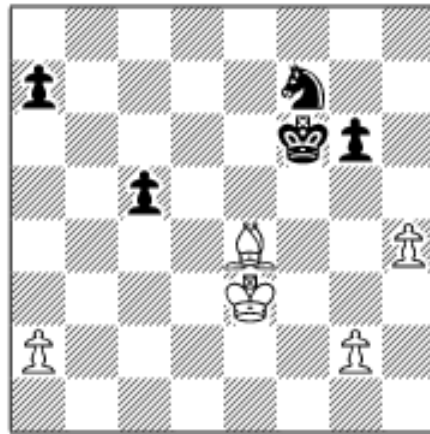
What useful lessons can we extract from this rather complicated analysis (besides the principles enunciated at the very beginning)?

**Interference and Deflection** - these are techniques which appeared in many variations. They tend to occur frequently in endings with same-colored bishops.

**Zugzwang** - played a part in the evaluation of one of the principal variations of this endgame (and it was also at the root of the analysis of the preceding example). According to Emanuel Lasker, zugzwang is, along with the altered role of the king and the relative increase in the pawns' value, the most important distinguishing feature of the endgame phase. Zugzwang (as well as mutual zugzwang) is widely employed with almost every material relationship in the endgame; it's unthinkable that you could play them well without it.

**"Don't rush!"** - is one of the principles of endgame technique. Before forcing matters and undertaking decisive action (especially when pawn exchanges are involved), you should first strengthen your position as much as possible. So it was in this endgame: see how exactly Black had to choose the right moment to send his king after the enemy pawns!

And now, let's look at a pair of examples where the bishop faces a knight.



**Spassky - Fischer Santa Monica 1966**  
Black to move

*The bishop is stronger than the knight in open positions - especially when there are passed pawns.*

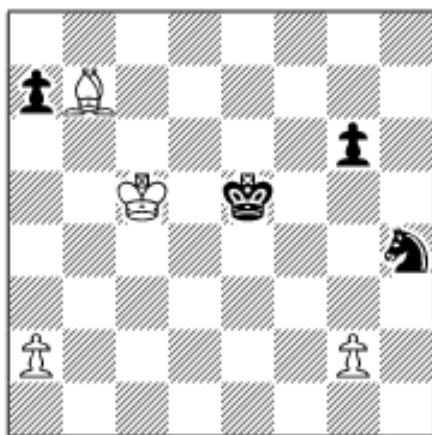
White has no passed pawn yet, but he wants to continue g2-g4 (for instance, in reply to 39...Nd6), threatening to create one at the right moment. This threat keeps one of the enemy pieces tied to the kingside, upon which White's king makes its way to the queenside, to attack the Black pawns. This

is a typical endgame strategy, based upon the "principle of two weaknesses" (which you can explore further in the above-mentioned book by Dvoretsky and Yusupov).

And yet, contrary to present opinion, I believe that Black can hold. In spite of all else, *there are very few pawns left, which increases the chances of the weaker side*. The most stubborn line was the one suggested by Gligoric: **39...Nh6!** (and if 40. Kf4 Nf7! 41. g4 g5+). Averbakh continued this variation as follows: **40. Kd3 Nf5 41. Kc4 Nxe4** (of course not 41...Nd6+? 42. Kd5 Nxe4 43. Kxe4 c4 44. g4!, and the decisive factor is White's *outside passed*



*pawn*). 42. Kxc5 Ke5 43. Bb7



43...Kf4 44. Kb5 Kg3 45. Ka6 Nxg2 46. Kxa7+- (*the knight is usually helpless against a rook pawn*).

But instead of the desperate lunge by the king after the g-pawn, GM Zvjagintsev suggests a more restrained defensive plan: **43...Nf5!**, which promises Black real saving chances. 44. Kb5 is met by 44...Kd6 45. Ka6 Kc5 46. Kxa7 Kb4= (after the king gets to a3, the knight can be given up for the g-pawn). Or **44. a4 Ne3 45. Kb5 Kd6 46. a5** (46. Ka6 Kc5 intending 47...Kb4)

**46...g5 47. Be4 g4 48. Ka6 g3 49. Kxa7 Kc7 50. Ka6 Nc4 51. Bf3 Ne3 52. Kb5 Kb8 53. Kc5** (53. Kb6 Nc4+) **53...Ka7 54. Kd4 Nxg2=.**

The move Fischer actually played made White's task much easier, since his passed pawn appeared immediately, without even having to pay the price of a pawn exchange.

**39...g5? 40. h5 Nh6 41. Kd3 Ke5 42. Ba8 Kd6 43. Kc4 g4 44. a4**

Black's king can only protect one of the two queenside pawns. Seeing that the a7-pawn is doomed, Spassky does not hurry to attack it, preferring to strengthen his position first.

**44...Ng8 45. a5 Nh6 46. Be4 g3 47. Kb5 Ng8 48. Bb1 Nh6 49. Ka6 Kc6 50. Ba2**, and Black resigned.



*Krnic - Flear Wijk aan Zee 1988* White to move

Here, the players agreed to a draw. Krnic, most likely was simply unaware that the bishop completely dominates the knight here, and that therefore he could justifiably have expected to win.

**41. Kf4 Nc8** (41...Kf7 42. Ke5, or 42. Bxb6 ab 43. Ke5 Ke7 44. a4) **42. Kg5 Kf7 43. a4! a5!?**

White's task is considerably simpler after 43...Nb6 44. a5, or 43...a6 44. Bc5 Kg7 45. a5.

**44. Bc5** (*a standard technique - the knight is cut off at the edge of the board*) **44...Kg7 45. h3!**

Wilhelm Steinitz, the first World Champion, expressed the paradoxical thought that pawns stood best on their opening squares. The explanation: *In the endgame, it's useful to have a choice between advancing a pawn one or two squares forward.* Here is where we see "Steinitz's rule" in action! After 45. h4? Kf7 46. Kh6 Kf6, it would be White in zugzwang.

**45...Kf7 46. Kh6 Kf6 47. h4** - zugzwang

The *opposition* belongs to White. The stronger side will always employ zugzwang in order to follow up with an *outflanking maneuver* (and the weaker side will use zugzwang to prevent it).

**47...Kf5**

Or 47...Kf7 48. Kh7 Kf6 49. Kg8 +- (the flanking maneuver)

**48. Kg7 Kg4** (48...g5 49. h5) **49. Kf6!**

If 49. Kxg6? Kxh4, Black's king has enough time to return to the queenside"  
50. Kf5 Kg3 51. Ke6 Kf4 52. Kd7 Ke5 53. Kxc8 Kd5 54. Bb6 Kc4=.

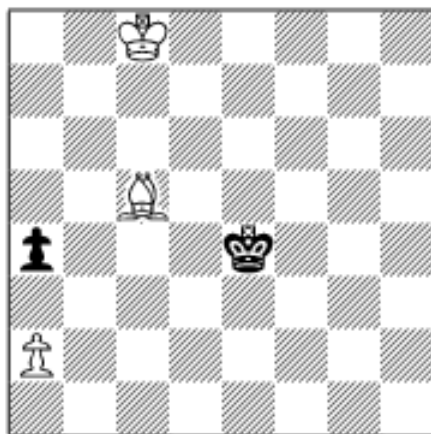
**49...Kxh4 50. Ke6 Kg4 51. Kd7 Kf5 52. Kxc8 Ke6 53. Kc7 Kd5 54. Kb6+-**

Curiously, Flear recommends 43. Kh6 (instead of 43. a4). The GM even gives his move an exclamation mark, although in fact it deserves a question mark instead. According to analysis by Zvjagintsev and Dvoretsky, it probably costs White the win.

43. Kh6? a5! (Flear only looks at 43...Nb6 and 43...a6, which are much weaker)  
44. Bc5 (44. a4 Nd6 45. Kg5 Nc4) 44...a4! 45. h3 (no better is 45. Kh7 Kf6  
46. Kg8 g5) 45...Kf6 46. h4 (zugzwang) Kf5 47. Kg7 Kg4 48. Kxg6.

To understand what follows, it is necessary to know the conclusions drawn many years ago by the well-known theoretician, Vsevolod Rauzer, in his study of the position with two rook pawns and an extra bishop which did not control the queening square. After 48. Kf6 Kxh4 49. Ke6 Kg4 50. Kd7 Kf5 51. Kxc8 Ke6, Black draws easily if White's pawn is on a3. Here, the pawn is on a2, which would give White the win (although it's pretty complicated),, if there were no Black g-pawn. That pawn, of course, changes the evaluation.

48...Kxh4 49. Kf5 Kg3! 50. Ke6 Kf4 51. Kd7 Ke4 52. Kxc8



Shouldn't White win here, though? After all, his pawn is at a2, and the Black g-pawn is gone? Not necessarily - not if Black can force the pawn to a3, and get back with his king.

52...Kd3! 53. Kd7 Kc2 (threatening  
54...a3!=) 54. a3 Kd3 55. Ke6 Ke4!

***To draw such positions, the Black king needs to be in the upper half of the board.***  
(A simplistic formula, but quite sufficient for the practical player: it is not necessary to memorize more exact boundaries for the

drawing zone - especially since those vary, depending on the placement of White's pieces.) As it turns out, White cannot prevent Black's king from returning to the drawing zone. For example, on 56. Be7 Black can play either 56...Kf4 57. Bf6 Kg4! (but not 57...Ke4? 58. Be5!, with a theoretically won position) 58. Ke5 Kh5 59. Kf5 Kh6 60. Be5 Kh7!= (not 60...Kh5? 61. Bg7+-), or 56...Kd4 57. Bd6 Kc4! (not 57...Ke4? 58. Be5+- or 58. Bh2+-). I

give only the conclusions here; those wishing to see the proof, may consult any endgame reference.

In the article that follows, I shall show you some new analyses of several rook endings.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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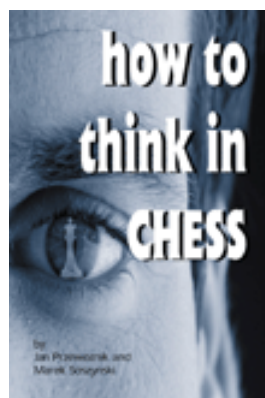
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## COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky

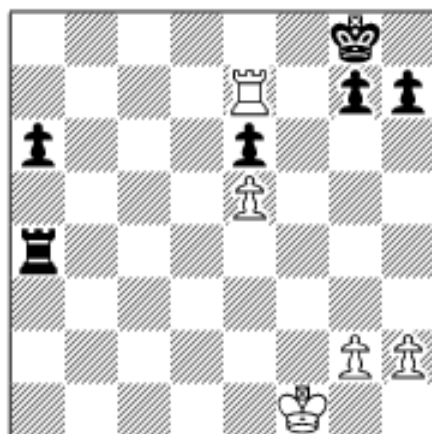


## Discoveries in Rook Endgames

In my previous article, I introduced some analyses of minor-piece endgames, taken from my forthcoming endgame textbook. We spoke of well-known positions which had been poorly annotated in other books on the endgame. The existing theory of endgames is full of misdirection; I hope I have cleared up a little bit of it. On the other hand, it's more likely that I will also have helped to create more: after all, the very process of studying a huge number of complex positions makes it extremely difficult to avoid errors, even with a most serious and attentive attitude towards the analysis. So I will be grateful for anything my readers may contribute - while the book is still unpublished, it's not too late to make corrections.

Now let's talk about rook endgames. I remind you that one of my articles, with new analyses of two rook endgames already known to theory, has already been published, in [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com), February 2001.

*Yeliseyevich - Pytel Trstenik, 1979*



## Black to move

In order to select the best approach for Black, it is useful to keep in mind the famous rule formulated by Siegbert Tarrasch: *The rook belongs behind the passed pawn - yours, or your opponent's.* This is the most active place for the rook.

After 1...a5? 2. Rxe6 Re4 (intending Kf7) 3. Re7 Kf8 4. Ra7 Rxe5 5. Kf2, the extra pawn offers Black absolutely no winning chances. The only worthwhile try is to bring the rook behind the outside passed pawn.

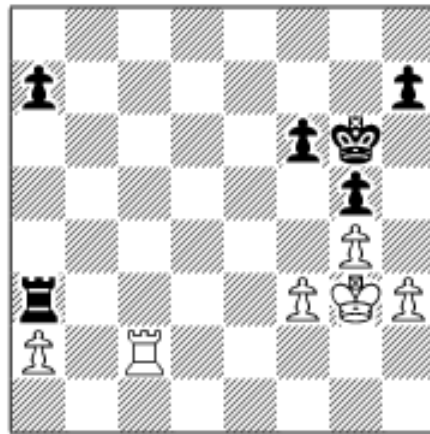
**1...Rf4+! 2. Kg1** (2. Ke2 Re4+ and 3...Rxe5) **2...Rf7!** (but not 2...Rf8 3. Ra7!=).

In the game, Black's plan was a complete success: 3. Rxe6 Ra7 4. Rd6 a5 5. e6 Kf8 6. Rd3 Ke7 7. Kf2 Kxe6 8. Ke3 a4 9. Ra3 Kd5 10. Kd3 Kc5 11. Kc3 Kb5 12. Kb2 Kc4 13. Rg3 a3+! 14. Ka2 Kd4 15. Rh3 h6 16. Rg3 g5, and White resigned. 17. h4 would be met by 17...Ra5, and if 18. Rb3, then 18...Ke4 19. Rb6 Kf4 20. Rxh6 g4, followed by 21...Kg3, and wins

According to Pytel's commentary in the Informant, his victory was fully deserved. The truth, however, is that White could have defended better. Before blockading the passed pawn with his rook, he could have first won one of the kingside pawns.

3. Re8+! Rf8 4. Rxe6 Ra8 5. Re7 (5. Rd6 Ra7!? is inferior) 5...a5 6. e6 a4 7. Rd7 Kf8 7...a3 8. e7) 8. Rf7+ Ke8 9. Rxb7 Ra5 10. Rc7 a3 11. Rc1 a2 12. Ra1 Ke7 13. Kf2 Kxe6 14. Ke3. Black still stands better; but in this case, a draw is the most likely outcome.

*Ilivitsky - Taimanov USSR Championship, Moscow 1955*



**White to move**

Many years ago, this endgame was adequately (though not exhaustively) commented upon by a well-known expert on rook endgames, GM Grigory Levenfish. Over time, this analysis has been reproduced in any number of endgame texts; but the authors at best only reprinted (more or less completely) Levenfish's variations. If they added anything of their own, it has usually been wrong.

Material is even; but Black stands better, because his rook is more active. *The rook's activity is the main criterion for the evaluation and play of rook endgames.*

It is vital to acknowledge the main problem confronting both sides in this position. Each would like to alter the kingside pawn structure in his favor by advancing the h-pawn. The difference is that Black is ready to play it, while White is not, as it would cost him the f-pawn.

As Levenfish correctly pointed out, White can sacrifice a pawn by 36. Rc6! Rxa2 (36...h5 37. gh+ Kxh5 38. Rxf6) 37. h4 gh+ 38. Kxh4, and solve both problems at once: the activation of his rook and the improvement of the kingside situation. This would have gotten him the draw without difficulty.

**36. Rh2? h5! 37. Rc2**

If 37. gh+ Kxh5 (intending f6-f5-f4+) 38. h4, then 38...g4. The logical continuation would be 37. h4; but Levenfish's analysis gives Black a great advantage after 37...hg 38. Kxg4 (38. hg f5 39. Rf2 Kxg5+) 38...f5+! (38...Ra4+? 39. Kg3 gh+ 40. Rxb4 Rxa2 is a draw) 39. Kg3 g4 40. Rf2 Kh5 41. Rf1 (41. Kf4 Ra4+ 42. Kxf5 g3+) 41...Ra4! (intending f4+) 42. fg+ Rxb4+ 43. Kf3 Kxb4! (on 43...Rxb4? 44. Rg1, the king is cut off on the edge of the board, since 44..Rg4 leads to a drawn pawn endgame) 44. Rc1 Kg5 45. a3 Ra4 46. Rc3 a5. Black has an extra pawn, his rook remains more active than its counterpart - so this position is probably won for him.

**37...h4+**

The pawn is very strong at h4, restricting the White king, and also fixing the weakness at h3. White now has a very difficult defensive task. True, Taimanov plays inaccurately later on; but his opponent fails to take advantage.

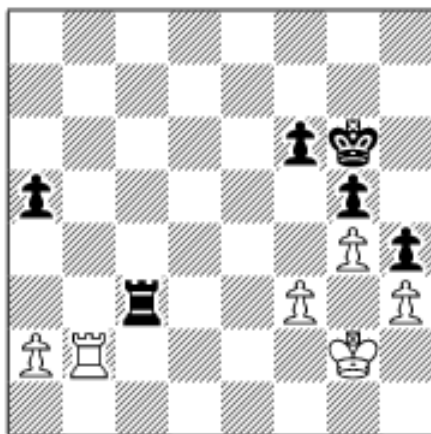
**38. Kf2 a6** (a move I do not understand) **39. Rb2 Rc3?**

The rook should have been left at a3 until Black finished advancing the a-pawn

and improving his king position.

#### 40. Kg2 a5?

Here 40...Ra3, followed by Kf7 was better.



#### 41. Rf2?

White's passive strategy continues (by the way, the errors by both sides during this phase have gone unnoticed in numerous commentaries). Once again, White had to take his chance to activate the rook: 41. Rb7! Rc2+ 42. Kg1 Rxa2 43. Ra7.

GM Krogius' comments on this game consist of a considerably edited version of Levenfish's variations (without, of course, acknowledging their source). Here, however, he decides to add something of his

own. He rates this position as lost for White, "because of the bad position of White's pawns, and especially that of his king - cut off on the first rank." Well, what about the Black king? He can no longer take part in the game - since f6-f5 can always be met by Ra6+ and g4xf5. White will keep his rook on a7, and shuttle his king between g1 and h1. Black can advance his pawn to a3 - and then what?

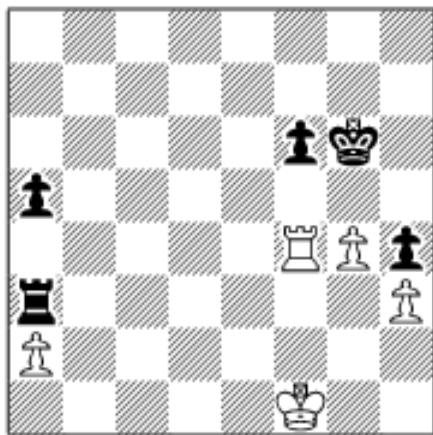
#### 41...Ra3?!

41...Rc4! is more accurate, since White could now give serious consideration to the pawn sacrifice 42. f4!? gf 43. Rxf4.

#### 42. Kf1 Kf7?

This error also escaped the commentators' attention. Black probably rejected 42...f5, fearing the reply 43. f4! But before bringing up his king, he should first have played 42...Ra4!, preventing the activation of White's kingside.

#### 43. f4! gf 44. Rxf4 (intending 45. g5) 44...Kg6



#### 45. Rf2??

After playing this passive move, White resigned, seeing that his position was completely hopeless after 45...Rxb3. 45. Rf5!, however, would have saved him. True, there's no time to win Black's h-pawn: 45...Rxa2 46. Rh5? a4 47. Rxb4 a3 48. Rh8 Rb2+; and 47. Ra5 Kf7! 48. Ra6 a3 is also hopeless.

"*Venturi's Position*" is a vital defensive method when the stronger side has a rook pawn and his rook stands in front of it. The point is to attack the rook pawn from the side, not allowing the enemy rook to abandon its protection. If the king comes over to defend the pawn, you chase it

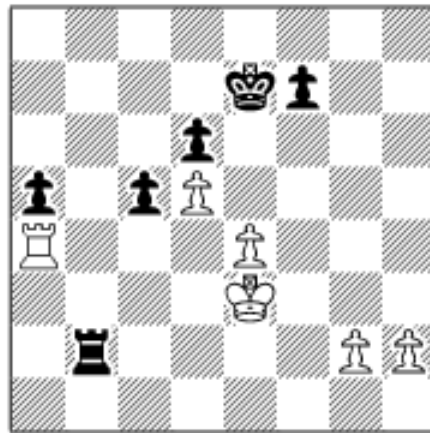
away with a series of checks (with a rook pawn, the king has no shelter from checks along the rank). Only after the pawn reaches the 2nd rank does your rook take up a position behind the pawn. The White king remains on the g2 and h2 squares; with Black's rook on the 2nd rank, it goes one rank higher or lower.

Venturi's defense is usually employed in "rook and rook-pawn vs. rook" endgames, or in endgames with both a- and h-pawns. But, as our present example shows, it may sometimes be employed with a larger number of pawns as well.

Thus, we answer 45...Rxa2 with 46. Kg1! a4 47. Rf4! Black's king may, in fact, escape the kingside by making use of zugzwang: 47...Ra3 48. Kh2! Kg7! (zugzwang - if 48...Kf7 49. g5) 49. Rb4 (49. Kg2? Rg3+ and 50...a3) 49...Kf7 50. Re4 Kf8! (zugzwang) 51. Rf4 Ke7; but that's all he can manage. The king has no shelter from checks along the rank allowing him to stay near his passed pawn; thus, his rook cannot escape the a-file.

The theme of our next endgame is: *activating the king*.

### ***Flear - Legky Le Touquet 1991***



**Black to move**

#### **1...Kf6!**

Activating the king is more important than winning material! 1...Rb5? is too passive: 2. Kf4 Kf6 3. g4; and on 1...Rxg2? 2. Rxa5 Rxh2 3. Ra7+ Kf6 4. Rd7 Ke5 5. Re7+, the game is drawn immediately.

#### **2. Rxa5?**

As Legky pointed out, White could have prevented the Black king from reaching e5 by playing 2. Kf4!! Rf2+ 3. Ke3! (3. Kg3? Rf1! and 4...Ke5) 3...Rxg2 4. Rxa5, when after 4...Ke5 4. Ra7, Black has no third-rank check. And 4...Rxh2 is met by 5. Ra7 Rh6 6. Rd7 Kg7 7. e5!? de 8. Ke4, when the activity of the White pieces compensates for his two-pawn minus.

#### **2...Ke5! 3. Ra7 Rb3+ 4. Kf2 Kxe4 5. Rxf7**

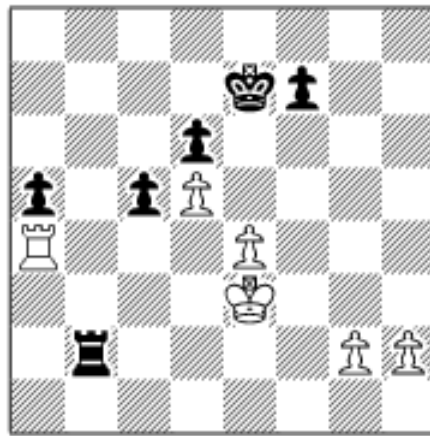
White loses after 5. h4 Rb2+ 6. Kg3 c4 7. h5 c3 8. Rc7 Kd3! 9. h6 c2 10. h7 Rb8. But 5. g4!? f6 6. Rf7 was worth considering, to keep the king from blocking its own pawn after 6...Rb2+ 7. Kg3 .

#### **5...Rb2+ 6. Kg3 c4!**

There's no sense wasting time on the d5-pawn: advancing his own pawn quickly is more important.

#### **7. Rc7**





### 7...Kd3?! 8. h4?

The decisive error: 8. Rc6! was necessary. Legky gives the continuation 8...c3 9. Rxd6 Rb5! 10. Rc6 Rxd5 11. h4 c2 12. Kh3 Rd4 13. Rxc2 Kxc2-/+ . The concluding position is, in fact, won, in view of the unfortunate placement of the White king. But if White had moved forward instead, by 12. Rxc2! Kxc2 13. Kf4 (or 13. Kg4 Kd3 14. h5 Kd4 15. h6) 13...Kd3 14. g4, Flear would have gotten a draw.

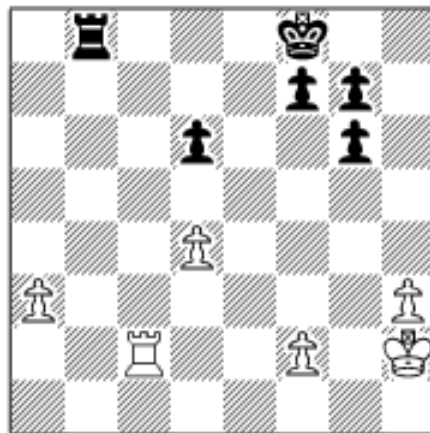
On his previous move, Black ought to have played 7...Kd4! , to secure the d6-pawn (8. Rc6? c3 9. Rxd6 c2 10. Rc6 Rb3+ and 11...Rc3). After 8. h4 c3 9. h5, the inaccurate 9...c2? allows White to save himself by immediately activating his king: 10. Kf4! Kd3 11. Kf5 Rb1 12. Ke6, or 12. g4. The accurate move-order is: 9...Kd3! 10. h6 (10. Kf4 Rxc2 11. Kf5 Re2! 12. h6 c2 13. h7 Rh2 14. Kg6 Kd2-+) 10...c2 11. Kf4 Rb1 12. g4 (12. h7 Rh1 13. g4 Rxc2) 12...c1Q 13. Rxc1 Rxc1 14. Kf5 Kd4 15. g5 Rg1! 16. Kg6 (16. Ke6 Kc5-+) 16...Ke5!-+, and Black's king arrives in the nick of time!

**8...c3-+ 9. h5 c2 10. h6 Rb1 11. Kf4 (11. h7 Rh1 12. Kg4 Rxc2-+) 11...c1Q+ 12. Rxc1 Rxc1 13. g4 Rf1+ 14. Kg5 Ke4 15. Kg6 Rg1, and White resigned.**

Tartakower once described Rubinstein as “the rook ending of a game of chess begun by the gods a thousand years ago”. I want to close this segment on rook endgames with an example from the work of the gifted Polish player. They say that after the conclusion of the game whose fragment we examine below, Rubinstein's opponent, Spielmann, was inspired to exclaim: “Akiba, if you were living in the Middle Ages, you would have been burned at the stake! What you do with rook endgames cannot be called anything but witchcraft!”

Both the rook activity and the king activity we have discussed above are basic leitmotifs of the endgame we shall examine now.

### *Spielmann - Rubinstein St. Petersburg 1909*



### Black to move

*Sometimes, the disadvantage of a position consists of having too many “pawn islands”.* White has four of them here, compared to two for his opponent; that means he has more weak pawns unable to defend one another. And that is why he stands worse here.

### 40...Ra8!

The first link in Black's plan is to attack the pawns, with the goal of tying the rook to their defense. It would have been a serious error to chase after material with 40...Rb3?, since after 41. Ra2 Rd3 42. a4 Rxd4 43. a5 Rc4 44. a6, the White rook would stand actively behind its passed pawn, while Black's rook would be

forced into a passive position on a8.

#### **41. Rc3**

Spielmann thinks that the rook would stand even worse on a2, illustrating with the following variation: 41. Ra2 Ra4 42. Kg3 Ke7 (42...Rxd4? 43. a4 is unclear) 43. Kf3 Ke6 44. Ke4 d5+ 45. Ke3 Kf5. But, for one thing, the concluding position of his variation is far from clear; and secondly, instead of 45. Ke3, White could play 45. Kd3!? Kf5 (45..Kd6 46. Kc3 Kc6 47. Kd3 Kb5 48. Rb2+) 46. Kc3 Ke4 47. Re2+. We see that the rook behind the pawn, even though passive, still has definite (though hidden) potential. Here, it restrains the enemy rook, which if it leaves the a4-square would allow the a-pawn to advance.

Levenfish and Smyslov also examine the more dangerous 44...g5!? (instead of 44...d5+). Their conclusion: here, too, White retains sufficient defensive resources. Here's their analysis: 45. Ra1 f6 42. Ra2 f5+ 47. Kd3 Kd5 48. Kc3 Rc4+ 49. Kb3 Rxd4 50. a4 Rd3+ (50...Kc6 51. a5 Kb7 52. a6+ Ka7 53. Ra5 Rf4 54. Rd5 Rxf2 55. Rxd6 Rf3+ 56. Kc4 Rxh3 57. Rg6 g4 58. Kb5 Rb3+ 59. Ka5=) 51. Kb4 Rxh3 52. a5 Rh8 53. a6 Ke4 54. a7 Ra8 55. Kb5 Kf3 56. Kb6=.

Actually, the rook on the 3rd rank has its advantages - which, however, Spielmann failed to make use of in the continuation.

#### **41...Ra4 42. Rd3 Ke7**

Stage two - centralizing the king.

#### **43. Kg3**

On 43. d5, Black plays 43...g5! (43...Kf6 44. Rf3+) 44. Kg2 Kf6 45. Rf3+ Kg6 (intending ...Rd4) 46. Rd3 f6!, followed by Kf5.

#### **43...Ke6 44. Kf3?**

To me, this looks like an obvious positional error, which for some reason has not attracted the commentators' attention. By allowing the enemy king to reach d5, White consigns himself to passive defense - which we know is hopeless in rook endgames. White had excellent drawing chances with 44. Re3+! Kd7 (44...Kd5 45. Re7), and now either 45. Rf3!? f6 46. d5 Rd4 47. Rb3, or 45. Rd3 Kc6 46. Rc3+! Kd5 47. Rc7 Rxa3+ 48. Kg2 Ke6 49. d5+ Kf6 50. Rd7 Ra6 51. h4.

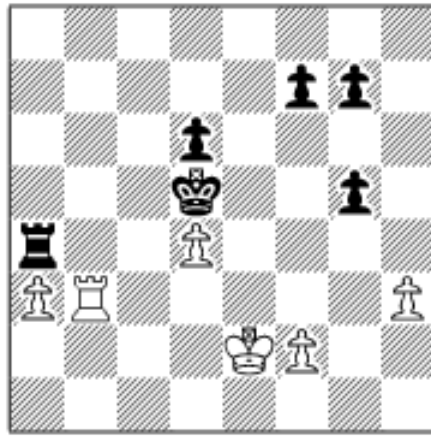
#### **44...Kd5 45. Ke2?!**

Another inaccuracy. It would have made sense to restrict the kingside pawns with 45. h4! Note that here and later, White does not fear 45...Rxd4, since after 46. Ke3, he has the outside passed pawn in the pawn endgame.

#### **45...g5!**

Stage Three: It is important to improve his pawn structure on the kingside.

#### **46. Rb3**



## 46...f6!

46...Rxd4? is met by 47. Rb5+ or 47. Rd3. After 46...Kxd4!? 47. Rb7, White trades off a number of pawns. True, Garry Kasparov thinks the ending after 47...f6! (47...Rxa3? 48. Rxf7 Rxb3 49. Rxb7=+/=) 48. Rxb7 Rxa3 49. h4! g4 50. Rg4+ Kc3 51. Rxb4 Ra2+ is drawn; but that's not clear. And Black also has to think about 47. Rg3!? (intending Rg4+) 47...Ra5 9. a4.

Rubinstein's move is safer. Now 47. Rb7 is met by 47...Rxa3 48. Rxb7 Rxb3 (48...Kxd4

leads to the variation we just looked at) 49. Rg6 (49. Rf7 Ke6! 50. Rf8 f5 51. Re8+ Kd5 52. Rf8 Ke4 intending g4 and Rf3-+) 49...Ke6 50. Rg8 Rh4 51. Ke3 Kd5. This position Kasparov also considers won for Black; and here, I agree with him. When playing for the win, it's advisable to avoid pawn exchanges. And in this line, there's one more pair of pawns left than after 46...Kxd4.

## 47. Ke3 Kc4 48. Rd3

48. Rb7 Rxa3+ 49. Ke4 d5+ 50. Kf5 Rxb3 51. Rxb7 Rf3+ is also hopeless.

## 48...d5

With king and pawn position maximally improved, now comes the rook's turn. Having completed its task on a4, the rook rightly seeks a new sphere of activity.

## 49. Kd2 Ra8 50. Kc2

50. Ke2? Rb8 51. Kd2 Rb2+ 52. Ke3 Rxf2-+ (or 52...Ra2 - zugzwang)

## 50...Ra7!

On 50...Rb8, Black had to reckon with 51. Rc3+ Kxd4 52. Rc7.

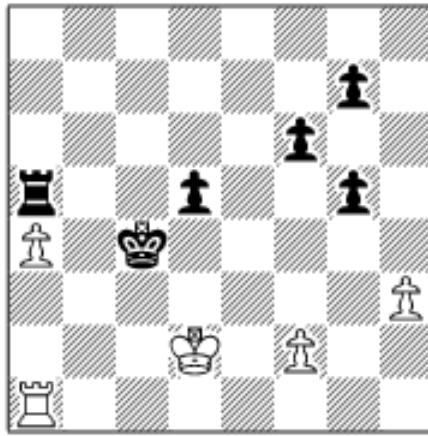
## 41. Kd2 Re7 (zugzwang) 52. Rc3+!

The last hope of activity. Continuing the waiting game would lead to an ignoble end: 52. Kc2 Re2+ 53. Rd2 Rxd2+ 54. Kxd2 Kb3!-+; or 52. Re3 Rxe3! (52...Rb7!) 53. fe (53. Kxe3 Kb3) 53...f5! 54. Kc2 g6 (zugzwang) 55. Kd2 (55. Kb2 g4) 55...Kb3-+.

## 52...Kxd4 53. a4! Ra7 54. Ra3 Ra5!

*The passed pawn must be blockaded as far back as possible.* Black intends to approach with his king, either to capture it, or to transfer the blockade, freeing the rook from its passive position.

## 55. Ra1 Kc4

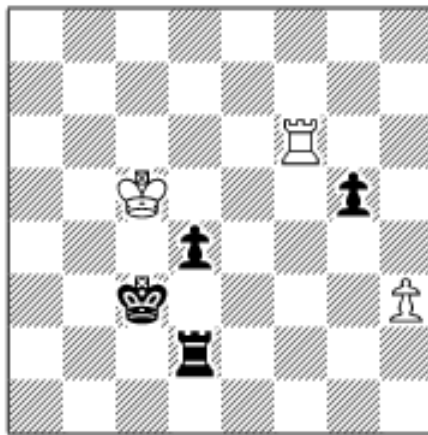


### 56. Ke3?!

White had to try 56. Rc1+! Kb4 57. Rb1+! Kxa4 58. Kd3 (58. Rb7 Rb5! is inferior). The Black king's position on the edge of the board offers definite practical chances. For example, after 58...Rb5? 59. Ra1+ Kb4 60. Kd4, it would be Black's turn to struggle for the draw.

Levenfish and Smyslov examined 58...Rc5! 59. Kd4 (59. Rb7? Rc4 60. Rxc7 Kb5) 61...Rc2 62. Rb7 Rxf2 63. Rxc7, with chances to draw for White. Kasparov

continued the line with 63...Rd2+! 64. Kc5 Kb3 65. Rg6 Kc3 66. Rxf6 d4, and called this a winning position.



Here, I believe he is wrong: White saves himself after 67. Ra6! Kd3 (67...d3 68. Ra3+ Kb2 69. Kb4 Rd1 70. Rb3+ Kc2 71. Kc4=) 68. Kd5 Ke3 69. Re6+ Kf4 70. Rf6+ Kg3 71. Rg6=. Thus it seems that, despite his earlier inaccuracies, Spielmann's position was still defensible.

### 56...d4+ 57. Kd2 Rf5!

Thanks to his accurate 54th move, Black's rook is able to leave the blockading square. On 58. a5 there follows 58...Rxf2+ 59. Ke1 Rb2! (not 59...Rh2? 60. Ra4+ Kb5 61. a6!)

60. a6 Rb8 61. a7 Ra8 62. Kd2 Kc5 63. Kd3 Kb6 64. Kxd4 Rxa7-+ (Spielmann).

### 58. Ke1 Kb4!

*A standard role-reversal: now the king will blockade the pawn, while the rook goes after the weak enemy pawns.*

### 59. Ke2 Ka5 60. Ra3

On 60. Rb1 Kxa4 61. Rb7, Kasparov suggests 61...d3+ 62. Kxd3 Rxf2 63. Rxc7 Rf3+ 64. Ke4 Rxc3-+. This variation is faulty: White can save himself by playing 64. Kc4! Ka3 (64...Rf4+ 65. Kd5 Kb3 66. Ke6) 65. Rg6 Kb2 66. Kd5 Kc3 67. Ke6. However, 61...g6!-+ is far stronger.

### 60...Rf4 61. Ra2

61. Kf1 Rh4 62. Kg2 Kb4! 63. Ra1 d3 64. a5 d2 65. a6 Rh8 66. a7 (66. Kf1 Kc3) 66...Ra8 67. Kf3 Rxa7-+ (Spielmann).

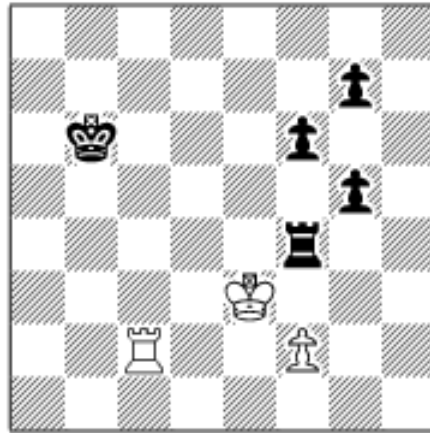
### 61...Rh4 62. Kd3 (62. Ra3 Kb4) 62...Rxc3+ 63. Kxd4 Rh4+ 64. Kd3

64. Ke3 Rxa4 65. Rd2 Kb6!, and on 66. Rd7, Black has 66...Ra7.

### 64...Rxa4 65. Re2 (intending 66. Re7) 65...Rf4!

Not 65...Kb6? 66. Re6+! and 67. Re7.

**66. Ke3 Kb6 67. Rc2**



**67...Kb7!**

Exact to the end! Black prevents the maneuver Rc8-g8, and prepares to cross the c-file with his king, after Ra4-a6-c6.

**68. Rc1 Ra4 69. Rh1 Kc6 70. Rh7 Ra7 71. Ke4 Kd6 72. Kf5 g6+! 73. Kxg6 Rxh7 74. Kxh7 Ke5 75. Kg6 g4.** White resigned.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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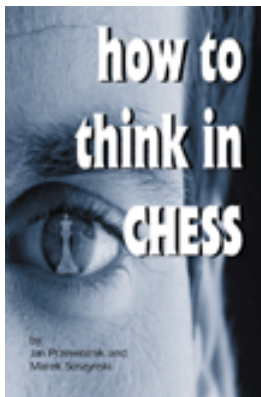
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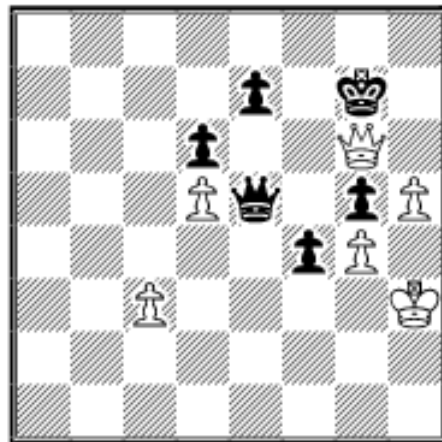
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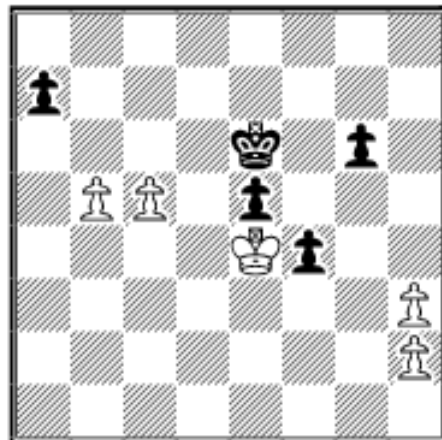
## Tragicomedies in Pawn Endgames

*“Pawn endgames are rare birds in practice. Players avoid them, because they do not like them, because they do not understand them. It’s certainly no secret that pawn endings are ‘terra incognita’ - even for many masters, right up to the level of grandmasters and world champions.” N. Grigoriev*

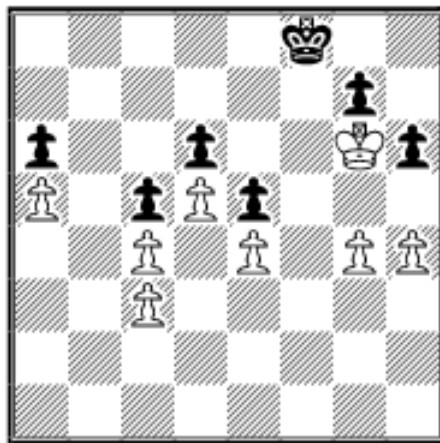
Herewith, I offer proof that these words, spoken by a famous expert on pawn endings, are true. Without commentary, I give below the final moves of some actual games, and offer the readers the chance to comment on them, to uncover all the mistakes committed by both players. The endgames you will be dealing with here are not all that difficult; but still, the players on both sides have provided you with plenty of opportunities for critical commentary.



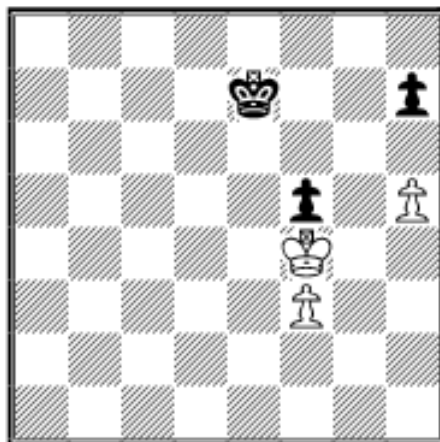
1...Kf8 2. Qf5+ Qxf5 3. gf Kg7 4. c4 f3 5. h6+ Kxh6 6. c5 dc 7. f6 Kg6  
White resigned.



1...g5 2. Kf3 Kd5 3. c6 Kd6 4. Ke4 a6 5. ba Kxc6 6. Kf3 Kb6 7. h4 gh 8. Kg4 Kxa6 9. Kxh4 Kb6 10. Kg4 Kc6 11. h4 Kd6. White resigned.

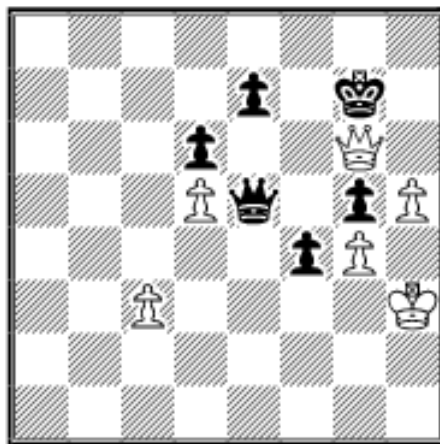


1. Kh7 Kf7 2. Kh8 Kf8 3. g5. Black resigned.



1. Kg5 Kf8 2. Kxf5 Kf7 3. Kg4 Kf6 4. Kf4 Kf7 5. Kf5 Ke7 6. Ke5 Kf7 7. Kd6 Kf6 8. Kd7 Kf7 9. h6 Kg6 10. f4 Kf7 11. f5 Kf6 Drawn

### **Gazic - Petursson European Junior Championship, Groningen 1978/79**



The draw is obvious after 1...Kh8! Black mistakenly allowed the trade of queens.

**1...Kf8?? 2. Qf5+! Qxf5 3. gf Kg7 4. c4**

White ought to win this, with a powerful *pawn break* at his disposal. Nevertheless, it was simpler to play 4. Kg4 Kh6 (4...Kf6 5. h6+-) 5. c4 f3 (or 5...Kg7 6. Kf3 - zugzwang) 6. Kxf3 Kxh5 7. f6 (7. Kg3 is also good) 7...Kg6 (7...ef 8. c5+-) 8. fe Kf7 9. Kg4 Kxe7 10.

Kxg5+-.

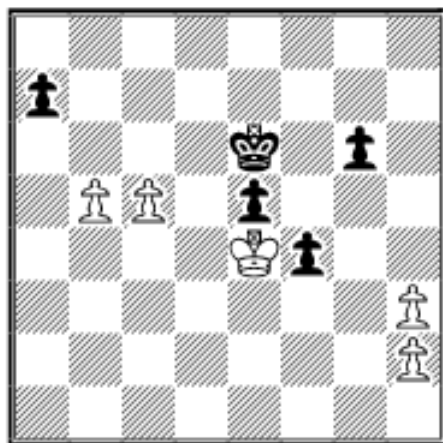
**4...f3 5. h6+??**

In response, a blunder: White's in too much of a hurry with his pawn break. He would win after 5. Kg3 g4 6. Kf2! (Black's in zugzwang) 6...Kh6 (6...Kf6 7. h6) 7. c5 (or 7. f6 ef 8. c5) 7...dc 8. f6 ef 9. d6.

**5...Kxh6 6. c5 dc 7. f6 Kg6! White resigned.**

### **2. Sulypa - Grischak Lvov, 1995**





## 1...g5??

This move does not improve, but rather significantly worsens, Black's position, by giving his opponent the opportunity to exchange a pair of kingside pawns, and to create a passed h-pawn.

Black can win by *undermining* the enemy queenside pawns.

1...Kd7! 2. Kf3 Kc7 (2...Ke7 3. Ke4 Ke6 4. Kf3 Kd5 5. c6 Kd6 6. Ke4 a6-+ is also good; or 4. h4 Kd7! 5. Kf3 Ke7

6. Ke4 Ke6, working the same triangulation maneuver again and again, until his opponent runs out of pawn moves) 3. h4 Kc8 (but not 3...Kb7 4. Ke4 a6? at once, in view of 5. ba+ Kxa6 6. c6! Kb6 7. Kxe5 f3 8. Kd6 f2 9. c7=) 4. Ke4 Kb7 5. h3 Kc8 6. Kf3 Kc7 7. Ke4 Kb7 (zugzwang) 8. Kf3 a6!-+.

## 2. Kf3??

A mistake in move order. After 2. h4! gh 3. Kf3 Kd5 4. c6 Kd6 5. Kg4 a6 6. ba Kxc6 7. Kxh4 Kb6 8. Kg4 Kxa6 9. h4, it's White who wins.

## 2...Kd5 3. c6 Kd6??

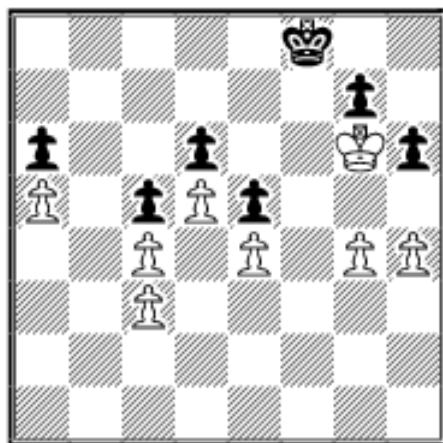
3...e4+! 4. Kg4 Kd6-+ was necessary. It is curious that both players' errors on the 2nd and 3rd moves have not been discovered in any commentaries I know of - for example, in Belyavsky and Mikhalchishin's book, *Winning Endgame Strategy*.

## 4. Ke4??

For the fourth time, the evaluation of the position changes by 180 degrees. White would win by 4. h4! gh 5. Kg4.

4...a6 5. ba Kxc6 6. Kf3 Kb6 7. h4 (too late!) 7...gh 8. Kg4 Kxa6 9. Kxh4 Kb6 10. Kg4 Kc6 11. h4 Kd6 White resigned

**Horowitz - Denker Philadelphia, 1936**



M. Zinar, the well-known pawn-endgame specialist, has shown that, from here on in, every move by both players was wrong, except the very last. His analysis follows:

1) White should not have stuck his king in the corner. The right plan for realizing his advantage was that of *expanding the base of operations*. This is what we call the technique of exchanging pawns, in order to secure a route for the king to the opposite wing.

1. g5! hg 2. Kxg5 Kf7 3. h5 Ke7 4. Kg6 Kf8 5. h6! Kg8! 6. Kh5! gh 7. Kxh6 Kf7 8. Kh7 (White has the **opposition**) 8.. Kf6 9. Kg8 (**end run**) 9...Kg5 10. Kf7 Kf4 11. Ke6 Kxe4 12. Kxd6 Kf4 13. Kxc5 e4 14. d6 e3 15. d7 e2 16. d8Q e1Q 17. Qf6+, with an easily won queen endgame.

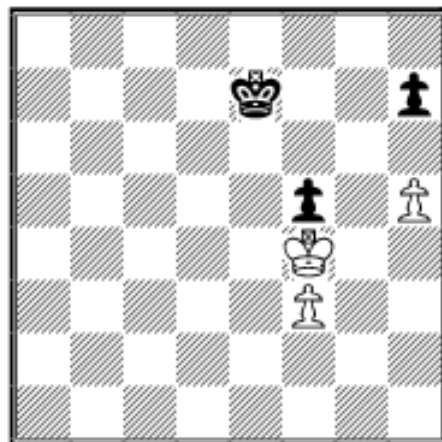
2) After **1. Kh7??**, Black attains the draw with 1...h5! (instead of **1...Kf7?**) 2. g5 Kf7 3. Kh8 Kg6! 4. Kg8 - stalemate; or 2. gh Kf7 3. h6 g6! (since Black now has the opposition, White's end-run is no longer possible) 6. Kh8 Kf8=.

3) **2. Kh8?** lets the win slip once again. Nor does 2. g5? work this time, because of 2...h5! 3. g6+ (3. Kh8 Kg6!) 3...Kf6 4. Kg8 Kxg6 5. Kf8 Kf6 6. Ke8 g5 7. hg+ Kxg5 10. Ke7 h4 11. Kxd6 h3 12. Kc7 h2 13. d6 h1Q 14. d7 Qh7 15. Kc8 Qh3=.

The proper move is 2. h5! Kf6 (we already know what happens on 2...Kf8 3. Kg6 Kg8 4. Kf5 Kf7 5. g5 hg 6. Kxg5) 3. Kg8 g6 (3...g5 4. Kh7) 4. Kf8! gh 5. gh Kg5 6. Ke7 Kxh5 7. Kxd6 Kg4 8. Kxe5+-.

4) The king's retreat by **2...Kf8??** was the final blunder. A draw results from 2...h5! 3. g5 Kg6! or 3. gh Kf8 4. h6 g6!

### ***Azmaiparashvili - Eolian USSR, 1979***



One cannot penetrate the secrets of this endgame without knowing about the position that arises after 1. Kxf5! Kf7 2. f4 Ke7 3. Ke5 (zugzwang) 3...Kf7! As Maizelis demonstrated in 1955, White wins here with an unexpected endrun: 4. Kd6!! Kf6 5. h6! (zugzwang). For example, 5...Kf5 6. Ke7 Kxf4 7. Kf6!+- (**shoulder-block**); or 5...Kg6 6. Ke6 (or e7) Kxh6 7. f5+-; or 5...Kf7 6. Kd7! Kf6 (6...Kf8 7. Ke6 Ke8 8. Kf6 Kf8 9. f5 Kg8 10. Ke7+-) 7. Ke8 Ke6 8. Kf8 Kf6 9. Kg8 Kg6 10. f5+ Kf6 11. Kxh7

Kf7 12. f6+-.

The position reached after 3. Ke5 is not just zugzwang, but a mutual zugzwang - that is, if White were on move, then there would be no win. 4. h6 Kf7 5. Kd6 Kf6! 6. Kd7 Kf7! would be useless, as Black would control the opposition. And after 4. f5, then 5...Kf7 6. f6 Ke8! (the king must choose its retreat square, depending on the position of the White h-pawn: with the pawn at h4, he must play 6...Kf8!. It is only with the pawn at h2 that this position would be won for White, since he would have the choice of advancing his h-pawn either one or two squares.) 7. Ke6 Kf8 8. f7 h6=.

Thus armed with knowledge of Maizelis' position (which in fact was seen earlier, in a 1949 study by Valles), we can proceed to examine the ending between these two young players.

**1. Kg5?? Kf8 2. Kxf5 Kf7??**

Black draws with 2...Ke7! 3. f4 Kf7, reaching the Maizelis position with White to move.

### 3. Kg4??

The comedy of errors continues! Of course, 3. f4 or 3. Ke5 was correct.

### 3...Kf6 4. Kf4 Kf7??

Once again, instead of the saving move (4...Ke6! 5. Kg5 Kf7=), Black makes a losing one.

### 5. Kf5??

And again White misses his opportunity: 5. Ke5! Ke7 6. f4, and Black is in zugzwang.

### 5...Ke7 6. Ke5 Kf7 7. Kd6 Kf6 8. Kd7 Kf7!

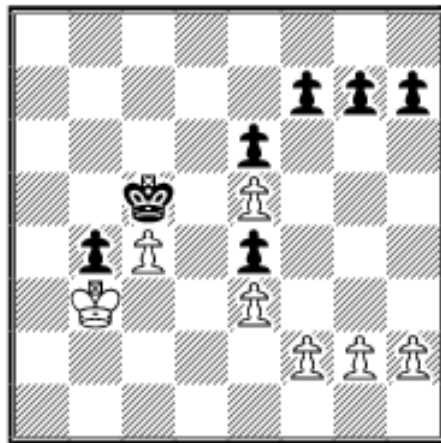
Near the finish, Black defends accurately. 8...Kg5? would be a mistake, in view of 9. Ke6+-.

**9. h6** (9. f4 Kf6 10. Ke8 Kf5 11. Kf7 Kxf4 12. Kg7 Kf5 13. Kxh7 Kf6=) **9...Kg6! 10. f4** (10. Ke6 Kxh6 11. f4 Kg7 12. Ke7 Kg6!=) **10. ...Kf7!** (of course not 10...Kxh6? 11. f5+- - but now, White's in zugzwang) **11. f5 Kf6** Draw.

This example demonstrates how both players' moves can sometimes seem senseless, when they are unacquainted with the ideas of the position.

In conclusion, I would like to show my readers a rather recently played endgame which gave me a great deal of pleasure. True, both players operated on about the same level as the players in our preceding examples; but the solution demonstrated by F. Lindgren in *Chess Informant* is instructive and quite pretty.

### *Laveryd - Wikstrom Umea, 1997*



Black to move

What should be this game's proper outcome? On the queenside, the position is one of mutual zugzwang: it looks as though whichever side runs out of pawn moves first will lose (and we would expect that to be Black). So the correct answer - that the position is drawn - appears paradoxical.

The first question is: How does Black avoid immediate loss, since 1...f6? (or 1...f5) is completely hopeless, due to 2.

ef gf 3. g4!

### 1...h5!

It turns out that the natural 2. h4? would not place Black in zugzwang, but

White, after 2...g5! 3. hg h4.

The game continuation was 1...h6?? 2. h3?? (White wins after 2. g4! g6 3. h4 or 2...f5 3. ef gf 4. h4) 2...h5!-+ 3. h4 g5! 4. g3 g4, and White resigned.

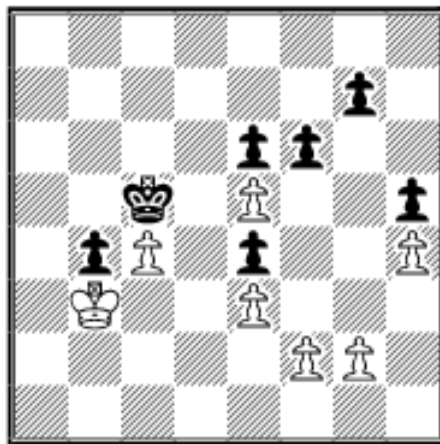
## 2. h3!

The only move! As we have already seen, 2. h4? doesn't work; 2. f4? ef 3. gf h4 4. h3 f6 (or 4...f5) is bad; and 2. g3? f6 (2...f5) also loses. But now, Black again faces a perplexing riddle.

2...g5? loses at once to 3. g3, and 2...f5? to 3. h4. No better is 2...h4 3. g3! hg (3...g5 4. g4) 4. fg f5 5. ef gf 6. h4. And 2...g6? is elegantly refuted by 3. g4! (but not 3. h4? g5!) 3...hg 4. h4! That leaves just one move:

## 2...f6! 3. h4!

Of course not 3. ef? gf, and it's easy to see that it will be White who slips into zugzwang here. But now what does Black do?



3...fe is met by 4. g4!; and if 3...f5, then 4. f4! ef 5. gf g5 (5...f4 6. ef g6 7. f5) 6. hg h4 7. g6 h3 8. g7 h2 9. g8Q h1Q 10. Qf8+ Kc6 11. Qd6+, with an easily won queen and pawn ending.

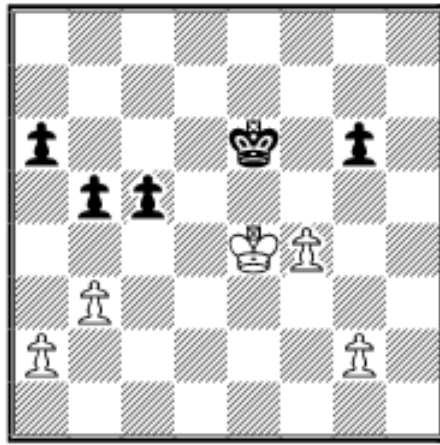
It requires an extraordinary imagination (or knowledge of several Grigoriev studies) to find the idea of a midboard stalemate haven!

**3...fe! 4. g4! g6! (4...hg? 5. h5+-) 5. g5 Kb6! (5...Kd6!) 6. Kxb4 Kc6 7. c5 Kd5! 8. Kb5 - stalemate**

## Addendum

After the preceding had been written, my attention was drawn to the ending of another of Fischer's games, as given in the aforementioned book by Belyavsky and Mikhalchishin.

## Fischer - Letelier Mar del Plata 1959

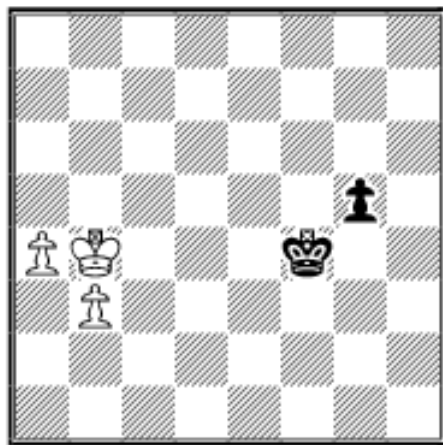


#### 47. a4?

A purposeful move (in some lines, it is useful to advance this pawn to a5), but badly timed. As Belyavsky shows, White wins after 47. g4! However, his analysis does contain one serious inaccuracy.

47...a5 (White's task would be simpler after 47...Kd6 48. f5 gf+ 49. Kxf5 c4 50. bc+ bc 51. Ke4, or 48...g5 49. a4! Kc6 50. ab+ ab 51. Ke5) 48. a4 b4 49. Kd3! Kd5 50. g5! (zugzwang) 50...Ke6 51. Kc4 Kf5 52. Kxc5 Kxf4 53. Kb5

Kxg5 54. Kxa5 Kf4 55. Kxb4 g5



Here, the grandmaster continues with 56. a5 g4, "...and White reaches a queen ending with a b-pawn - and every chance of a win." In fact, the practical winning chances in such endgames are quite high: the defensive task is a difficult one. Nevertheless, according to objective authority - the endgame "Database" - the position is drawn. Besides, White has an easy win with 56. Kc3(c4)! g4 57. Kd3! Kf3 (57...g3 58. Ke2) 58. a5, when the White pawn queens with check, after which Black cannot avoid the exchange

of queens.

**47...Kd6 48. f5?? gf+ 49. Kxf5 Kd5??**

Belyavsky and Mikhalechishin point out that 49...c4! wins immediately, and wonder - quite rightly - why Mednis' book, *How To Beat Bobby Fischer* gives Black's last move an exclamation mark.

**50. g4 Kd4! 51. g5**

Here or on the preceding move, it would have been simpler to have exchanged pawns at b5. Still, a question mark on White's last move would be unjustified, since it too leads to an elementary draw.

**51...c4 52. bc b4 53. c5??**

Of course, he had to play 53. g6 b3 54. g7 b2 55. g8Q b1Q+ 56. Kf6(e6)=.

**53...b3**, and White soon resigned.

Well, after reading the article, we shouldn't be surprised at the extremely low level of play exhibited by both sides in this pawn endgame - but this example seems a bit much to me. In fact, it turns out that half of the errors we have noted are more likely due to a misprinted text of the game.

According to a computer database, the game actually went differently:

**47. a4? Kd6 48. a5**

The logical continuation of the plan begun on the preceding move.

**48...Ke6 49. g3**

49. g4 Kd6 50. f5 suggests itself, and if 50...gf+, then 51. Kxf5 wins. However, 50...g5! would leave White in zugzwang, with a drawn position.

**49...Kd6 50. f5 gf+ 51. Kxf5 Kd5 52. g4 Kd4!** (Black's only saving move) **53. g5 c4 54. bc b4! 55. c5??**

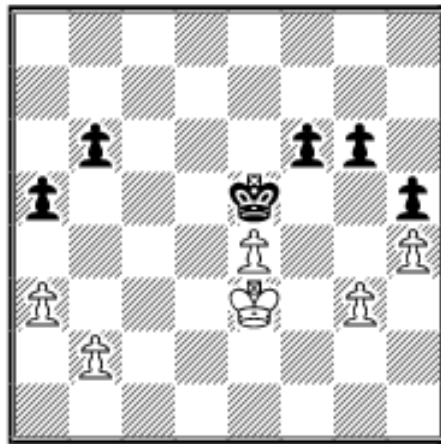
Fischer persisted so long in trying to find winning chances where they no longer exist, that he lost his sense of danger, and committed a fatal error.

**55...b3 56. c6 b2 57. c7 b1Q+ 58. Ke6 Qb7 59. Kd7 Kd5 60. g6 Qc6+ 61. Kd8 Qd6+** White resigned.

Belyavsky and Mikhalchishin evidently followed the text of the game as given in the Mednis book - which, in turn, probably was taken from the game collection of Wade and O'Connell. I am no historian, and I cannot prove which version of the text actually occurred; but the computer version of the game looks far more likely to me.

A similar story occurred in a game from Belyavsky and Mikhalchishin's previous book, *Winning Endgame Technique*.

### **Ree - Ftacnik Kiev 1978**



*"Black stands better, but with no obvious way of winning he decides to play a logical -looking move:"*

**56...g5**

*"But this was met by a terrific reply:"*

**57. g4!!**

A standard breakthrough, which has been seen in practice numerous times. The game continued: 57...hg 58. h5 Ke6 59. Kf2 Kf7 60. Kg3 Kg7 61. Kxg4 Kh6

62. Kf5 Kxh5 63. Kxf6 g4 64. e5, etc. (White trades queens and wins, since his king will be the first to reach the queenside pawns.)

Upon first glance, the diagram made me wonder: Why doesn't Black have an obvious win? The obvious move is 56...a4! 57. Kd3(f3), and only then 57...g5 - now the 58. g4 breakthrough doesn't work; and if 58. Ke3, then 58...gh 59. gh f5 60. ef Kxf5 61. Kf3 b5, and White's in zugzwang.

This would be an excellent question to pose to the book's authors. However, if I had asked it of Lubomir Ftacnik, who actually played Black, he would have replied that such a position never existed in the game. In fact, the Black pawn was already on a4. After 56...b5 57. Kd3 g5 58. Ke3! gh (58...g4 59. Kd3) 59. gh f5 60. gf Kxf5 61. Kf3, it's a draw, since Black doesn't have the vital

extra tempo he needs to secure the opposition. Which, of course, does not give him the excuse to lose the game with 56...g5??

Inasmuch as I have referred several times to Belyavsky and Mikhalechishin's endgame booklets, I think this would be a good time to give a short impression of these works. While they contain many interesting examples - some well known, some taken from recent events - unfortunately, they fall short in execution, with generally superficial commentaries. Here's an example of the authors' (and Batsford's editors) carelessness in preparation of these books: curiously, the two examples which lead off the chapter of *Winning Endgame Strategy* that deals with pawn endgames: Kuzmin - Petrosian and Cruz - Seirawan (page 19) are later presented again as exercises, on pages 30 and 33. And the version of the latter game presented here in fact differs from what happened in the actual game. The endgame Klován - Elištrátov is presented as a pawn endgame exercise twice! (Nos. 7 and 25). True, the h-pawn is in a different location in each case; but this affects neither the play in this game. nor the actual result.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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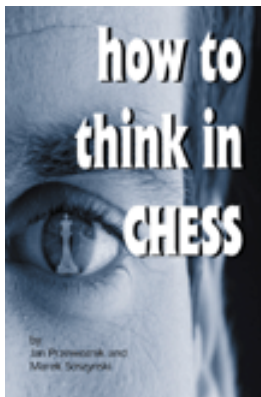
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## COLUMNISTS

Mark Dvoretsky



## A Chessplayer and How He Grows

*“Experience shows that people are most active in pursuit of a goal when the likelihood of success is about 50 percent. Any “50/50” activity requires belief that you will succeed; at the same time, it must also allow you to believe in it. When belief is not necessary (100% guaranteed success) or impossible (when there is a 100% chance of failure), work becomes soulless and repellent; and, for that reason, of little value.”* Simon Soloveychik

The first sporting goal I would usually set when beginning work with a young chessplayer was to become, within a couple of years, the strongest player in his age group, and to demonstrate this by winning the World Junior title. Of course, this is a very difficult task; but it is achievable. Many of my students in fact achieved it - there are more such Champions among them than probably from any country in the world, with the exception of the former USSR.

This distant goal always provided the stimulus for great and devoted toil towards the achievement of chess mastery. Some particulars of such work will become clear to you from the following tale of Alexey Dreev's preparation.

I met Alyosha Dreev early in 1980, when he had just turned 11. Within two years, he was already a participant in the World Cadet Championship (for boys under 16). In the qualifying tournament, Dreev shared 1st-2nd places with Zhenya Bareev, who was over two years older than he (at such a young age, that's an enormous advantage). Bareev earned the ticket to the Championship; but it was obvious that the next year would be ours.

In the Championship of Russia among boys his own age, Alyosha won every game. Then, in an adult master event, he took second place, fulfilling the master norm. That was a record for that time - no one, not Karpov, not Kasparov, had ever become master at 13. Finally, early in the following year, 1983, Dreev took the bronze medal in the USSR Schoolboys' Championship (under 18). All these great, but especially steady, victories induced the USSR Chess Federation to offer him the ticket to the next World Cadet Championship, in Colombia, without holding a selection tournament. There remained half a year before the Championship; it was up to us to prepare as best we might for this important event.

For training purposes, Dreev entered the qualifying tournament for the World Under-20 Championship. For the first time in a long while, he had a very serious lapse. Analyzing the reasons for his failure afterwards (I could not attend the tournament with him), I singled out two main factors:

- (1) terrible time-pressure; and
- (2) his extremely narrow opening repertoire.



Dreev lost an incredible six games with Black in the same opening - the Dutch Defense. We had prepared other openings, even though we had not tried them out in practice. Why didn't Alyosha see that his familiar opening wasn't working for this tournament, and switch to another opening? Evidently, the reason was psychological - he was afraid of these new openings, and did not wish to cast off into uncharted opening waters.

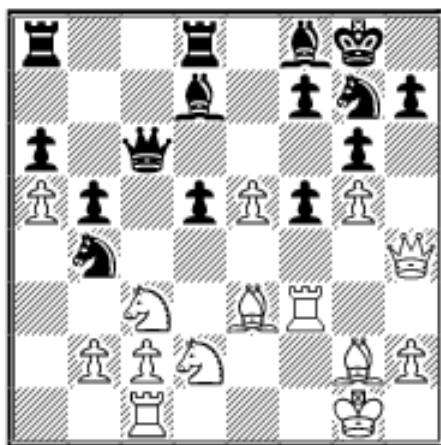
Prior to the World Championship, he was also scheduled to participate in an international youth event in Leningrad. Almost every one of his opponents would be considerably older than the 14-year-old Alyosha; among them would be such future stars as Alexander Khalifman, Julian Hodgson, Valery Salov, Vladimir Epishin, Lember Oll... I wasn't interested in his sporting result (although it turned out decently: 6th among 14 players); it was far more important to resolve the problems that now loomed before us.

Dreev was put on a strict anti-time-pressure regimen: he was obliged, in every game, to control his time expenditure so as not to allow even the shadow of time-pressure, even at cost to the quality of his play. Alyosha fulfilled his task to the letter; later, in Colombia, he experienced no clock difficulties whatsoever, despite playing under a harsher regimen than that used in our internal events (2 hours for 40 moves, instead of 2½).

In what would perhaps be the most important encounters in Leningrad, against older opponents who had an excellent knowledge of theory, I insisted that Dreev employ openings he had never played before. Thus, with Black against Zhenya Bareev, he used the sharp Botvinnik System of the Slav Defense; playing White against Sasha Shabalov, he used the open Sicilian, and won both games in good style. Here's one of those wins.

### ***Dreev - Shabalov Leningrad 1983***

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4! (certainly a "novelty" - for Dreev!) 3...cd 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. g3 Nc6 7. Bg2 Bd7 8. 0-0 a6 9. a4 Be7 10. Nb3 0-0 11. f4 b6 12. Be3 Qc7 13. g4 Rfd8 14. g5 Ne8 15. Qh5 Nb4 16. Rac1 b5 17. a5 Qc4 18. Nd2 Qc6 19. Rf3 g6 20. Qh6 Ng7 21. f5! Bf8 22. Qh4 ef 23. e5! d5 (23...de 24. Rh3)**



Immediate sight of the whole board is the mark of a great talent. Dreev appears to be attacking the king; but he achieves a decisive advantage by exploiting the unfortunate position of the knight, which has gotten lost on the queenside.

**24. Rf4! Be6 25. Rxb4 Bxb4 26. Qxb4 Rac8 27. Ne2 Rd7 28. Nf4 Qc7 29. Bd4 Qd8 30. h4 h6 31. Bb6 Qf8 32. Qxf8+ Kxf8 33. gh Ne8 34. Nb3 Kg8 35. Nc5 Re7 36. Nxa6 Rc4 37. Nd3 Bc8 38. Nab4 Nc7 39. b3 Rxh4 40. Nc6 Re6 41. Na7, and**

Black resigned, 1-0.

As a result, Dreev understood that he need not fear his opponent's opening surprises - his current level of mastery was such that he could resolve relatively

complex problems over the board. This had been clear to me for a long time already; but for Alyosha to truly believe in his own powers - and not just to say he did - it was necessary to test them in practice: he had to be successful against strong opposition in unfamiliar situations, the sort he had previously avoided.

Dreev won the World Championship going away - in eleven games, he scored nine wins and two draws. The self-confidence, calmness, and the knowhow to be able to figure out for himself the opening riddle his opponent would set before him - all this, worked out during the process of preparation, came constantly to the fore in the course of the tournament. Perhaps the most convincing demonstration of the value of the work we did was his encounter with the talented American junior, Patrick Wolff (who later went on to win the US Championship twice), which put Alyosha into the tournament lead.

### ***Dreev – Wolff World Junior Championship Bucaramanga 1983***

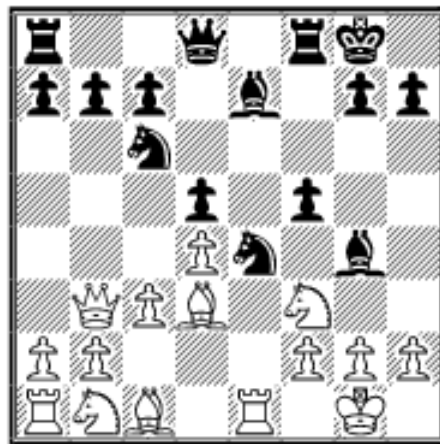
**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. d4 d5 6. Bd3 Be7 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. Re1 Bg4**

At that time, Alyosha himself sometimes played the Petroff; but he would only use the 8...Bf5 system, popular in those days; he was unacquainted with the theory behind 8...Bg4. In consequence, he found himself drawn (unbeknownst to himself) into a maze of very sharp forcing variations, which had all been studied for decades earlier, and which evidently had been well prepared by his opponent.

### **9. c3**

Play goes in a different direction after 9. c4. According to contemporary theory, White would have done better to have played this a little earlier - that is, without including 8. Re1 Bg4.

### **9...f5 10. Qb3 0-0**



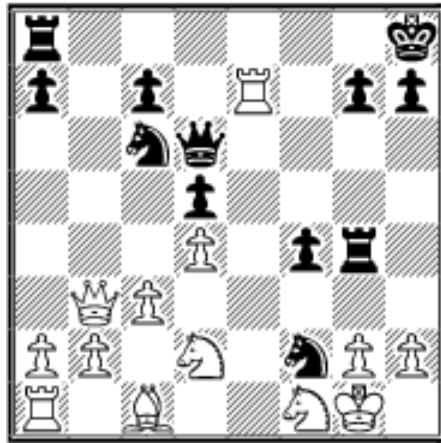
White wins the b7-pawn, but his king comes under attack. I admit my mood at that moment was somber: I knew well how dangerous White's position was, and how difficult it would be for him to neutralize his opponent's activity. All the more so, when one sees this position for the first time in one's life. Under such circumstances, even an experienced player can lose his way. For example, in the game Ljubojevic - Makarychev, Amsterdam 1975, the young master (who, by the way, made significant contributions to the theory of the Petroff)

quickly dusted off one of the world's leading grandmasters: 11. Nfd2? Nxf2! 12. Kxf2 (12. Bf1 was better) 12...Bh4+ 13. g3 f4! 14. Kg2 fg 15. Be4? (on 15. hg, Black has a choice between 15...Bxg3 16. Kxg3 Qd6+ and 15...Qd6 16. gh Rf2+!) 15...Bh3+! 16. Kg1 (16 Kxh3 Qd7+ 17. Kg2 Rf2+) 16...gh+ 17. Kxh2 Qd6+ 18. Kh1 Bxe1 19. Qxd5+ Qxd5 20. Bxd5+ Kh8 21. Nf3 Bg3 22. Ng1 Bf1 23. Nd2 Rae8 24. Ne4 Rxe4! 25. Bxe4 Rf2 26. Nf3 Bg2+ 27. Kg1 Bxf3 28. Bxf3 Rxf3 White resigned, 0-1.

## 11. Nbd2 Kh8 12. Qxb7 Rf6 13. Qb3 Rg6

Intending 14...Qd6 and 15...Rf8, after which all of Black's pieces will participate in the attack. Here's a practical example of the sort of dangers facing White.

Tukmakov - Dvoretsky, USSR 1st League, Odessa 1974: 14. Be2 Qd6 15. Nf1 f4 16. N3d2 Nxf2! (16...Bh3 17. Bf3 Ng5 18. Bh5! Rh6 19. Qd1 is unconvincing) 17. Bxg4 Rg4 (17...Nxe4) 18. Rxe7?! (after 18. Re2 Ne4, also, Black would have an excellent position, i.e.: 19. Nxe4 de 20. Rxe4 Qg6 21. Qc2 f3 22. Ng3 Rf8)



The game ended in perpetual check after 18...Nh3+ 19. Kh1 Nf2+ 20. Kg1 Nh3+. After 18...Nxe7! 19. Kxf2 Qg6 20. g3 Rf8 21. Nf3, I unfortunately failed to find a way to strengthen the attack - but it's there: 21...fg+ 22. hg Qh5! 23. Qd1 Ng6!, threatening 24...Qh3 and 24...Nh4!

In the 6th game of the 1974 Candidates' Final Karpov - Korchnoi, the future World Champion evidently took the advice of his trainer, Sergei Makarychev, and postponed the immediate capture of the b-pawn by inserting 12. h3 Bh5 (Black gets an inferior game after both 12... Bh4?! 13. Rf1! Nxd2 14. Nxd2 Bh5 15. Qxb7 [Makarychev - Shershevskiy, 1975], and 12...Bxf3?! 13. Nxf3 Rb8 14. Bf4 Bd6 15. Bxd6 Qxd6 16. Re2). There followed: 13. Qxb7 Rf6 (13...Na5 14. Qa6 c5 15. Be2 Rb8 16. Ne5 Be8 17. Qd3 cd 18. cd, as occurred in Ligterink - Dvoretsky, Wijk aan Zee 1975, is weaker: White's position deserves preference) 14. Qb3 Rg6 15. Be2



The point to the move h2-h3 is that now 15...Qd6? is not possible, owing to 16. Ne5! - and Black's lightsquare bishop is undefended. 15...Nxf2? fails to 16. Kxf2 Bh4+ 17. Kf1 Bxe1 18. Nxe1 Bxe2+ 19. Kxe2 Qe7+ 20. Kf1 Re8 21. Qd1 [M. Botvinnik]. Korchnoi's choice was bad too: 15...Bh4? 16. Rf1 Bxf3 17. Nxf3 Bxf2+ 18. Rxf2 Nxf2 19. Kxf2 Qd6 20. Ng5!, with a won position for White.

15...Rb8 looks logical, as was played in the correspondence game Steig - Mende (1976); but after 16. Qd1 Bd6 17. Nxe4! fe 18. Ne5 Nxe5 19. Bxh5 Nd3 20. Bxg6 Qf6, White's chances in this complicated game are still preferable.

Later, the proper attacking setup was worked out: 15...Bd6! If 16. Nf1 Rb8 17. Qa4(c2) Bxf3 18. Bxf3 Qh4. The main line is: 16. Ne5 Nxe5 17. Bxh5 (17. Nxe4 Nf3+!) Rxe2+! 18. Kxe2 Qg5+ 19. Kf1 (bad is 19. Bg4? fg! 20. Nxe4 gh+ 21. Kf1 Qg2+) 19...Qh4! 20. Nxe4 Qxh3+, with a draw (O'Kelly).

After our excursion into opening theory, let us now return to the meeting of

these two young chessplayers.

Since the moves 12. h3 Bh5 have not been included here, White can no longer play according to Karpov - on 14. Be2 we get the considerably less favorable position from the Tukmakov - Dvoretsky game. My pupil did not lose his composure, and found a wonderful strategic solution.



#### 14. Bb5!!

Simple and logical! e5 is the weak square in Black's camp, and Dreev attacks its sole defender - the knight at c6. All variations are in his favor, for example:

14...Rb8 15. Qa4 Qd6 16. Bxc6 Bh3 17. g3! (17. Nxe4 Rxc2+ 17. Kh1 fe 18. Ne5 Qf6! is weaker) 17...Nxc3 18. fg Rxc3+ 19. Kf2 Rg2+ 20. Ke3 f4+ 21. Kd3 Bf5+ 22. Ne4, when White repels the threats to his king, while keeping his extra material;

14...Nxd2 15. Nxd2 Bd6! (15...f4?! 16. Bd3 Rh6 17. Be2 Rb8 18. Qd1 Bxe2 19. Qxe2 Bd6 20. Nf3, with an obvious advantage to White, as in Jung - Mueller, Hamburg 1989) 16. g3! Ne7 - Black retains definite compensation for his pawn, but all the same, it's insufficient.

Since it appears there is no safe way to equality here, proponents of Petroff's Defense had to adjust their weapon, and refrain from 13...Rg6 in favor of 13...Rb8! 14. Qc2 (Qa4) Bd6!, with a double-edged game.

#### 14...f4?! 15. Qd1?

Here Alyosha was too trusting. He refrained from 15. Bxc6!, fearing the attack after 15...Bh3 16. g3 fg 17. hg Nxg3. But instead of 16. g3, White wins easily by 16. Nxe4! Bxg2 17. Ne5! And on 15...Nxd2, White, besides the simple 16. Nxd2 Rxc6 17. f3, may also choose the sharper 16. Ne5! For instance, 16...Nxb3 17. Nf7+ Kg8 18. Nxd8 Rxd8 19. ab Kf8 20. Bb5 (or Ba4), with an extra pawn in the endgame.

#### 15...Bh3 16. Bf1 Qd6?

16...Bf5 was necessary. Patrick didn't like the reply 17. Nxe4 de 18. Ne5; but the position after 18...Nxe5 19. de Qxd1 20. Rxd1 e3! 21. fe Bc5 is hardly clear, despite the two extra pawns. Stronger would be 17. Nb3 Bd6 18. Nc5.

#### 17. Nxe4 de 18. Rxe4

Now Black's in bad shape, and Dreev confidently wraps up the game.

**18...Raf8 19. Kh1 Bg4 20. b4! Qd5 21. Qe2 Rf7 22. b5 Bf5 23. Rxf4** Black resigned, 1-0.

The reader may rightly ask why the trainer, in this instance, did not show his pupil the theoretical variations he already knew so well.

What should I say? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to drill a pupil with the

latest variation of Petroff's Defense. But, as Kozma Prutkov once said, "Don't try to fathom the unfathomable." How does one guess, in other words, precisely which systems one will need at the World Championship? What would most certainly do Alyosha good, on the other hand, was optimism, the sense not to lose heart when faced with new problems over the board, but confidently to come up with a solution.

Yes, it's also true that it's "better to be rich, but healthy, than poor, but sick" - a good knowledge of the opening is also necessary for a chessplayer. Here the matter comes down to a question of time (which is always limited) and priorities. Once you get bogged down in studying openings, there will be no time left for anything else - because the information one has to acquire and rework for theory is practically limitless. Of course, we also worked on opening theory - but we spent considerably more time on what I considered then, and consider now, to be incomparably more valuable, especially for a young player. And that is, the acquisition of chess as a whole, the raising of one's cultural level in chess, developing habits of making decisions over the board, the nurturing of psychological toughness, fighting character, etc. The growth of general chess mastery has a far stronger influence on one's results than the improvement of one's opening understanding, because it will tell under the most diverse circumstances, in every stage of the battle, and not just in the opening of the game.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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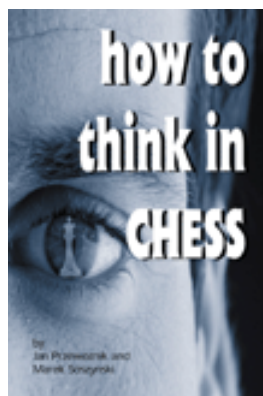




## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## The True Meaning of "Quality"

*"That's not a boy talking any longer - that's a man."*  
- Alexander Pushkin

Nearly every gifted young chessplayer has energetic attacks, crowned with spectacular combinations, to brag about. Such games bear witness to a youngster's talent; but they generally say nothing about his maturity, or the high quality of his game. For *the class of a player has everything to do with his versatility - the ability to make independent judgments in the different situations that may arise in the course of a game.*

In the preceding installment, "A Chessplayer - And How He Grows", I spoke of Alyosha Dreev's preparation, crowned in 1983 by his conquest of the title of World Cadet (Under 16) Champion. The following year, in Champigny, France, Alyosha repeated this success, becoming two-time Cadet Champion. And finally, in the World Junior Championship in Kiljava, Finland, the 15-year-old Dreev, with 10 points out of 13, outdistanced nearly all opposition - many of whom were some years older than he - to take the silver medal. (The winner, with 10½ points, was Curt Hansen.) It is worth noting that in all three of these World Championships, Dreev did not lose a single game!

Analysis of Alyosha's games from Champigny showed that he was not yet fully skilled in endgames. At the training camp prior to Kiljava, we did some serious work on the theory and technique of endgames. Our work yielded immediate results (you will notice this in the game presented below). But far more importantly, from that time forward, technique became one of the strongest points of Dreev's play, and almost never let him down.

### Thorsteins - Dreev World Junior Championship Kiljava 1984

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 a6!?

Black chooses a system suggested by the well-known Kishinev trainer, Vyacheslav Chebanenko. Today it is regularly employed by Alexey Shirov, Vladimir Epishin, Julian Hodgson and other famous grandmasters; but at that time, it had not yet become popular.

While preparing for this World Championship, Dreev and I decided to enlarge his opening repertoire by adding a few such "sideline" setups. The advantages





of this approach were obvious: while we required relatively little time to study these new systems, our opponents might be less than fully prepared to defend their flank against such modern variations.

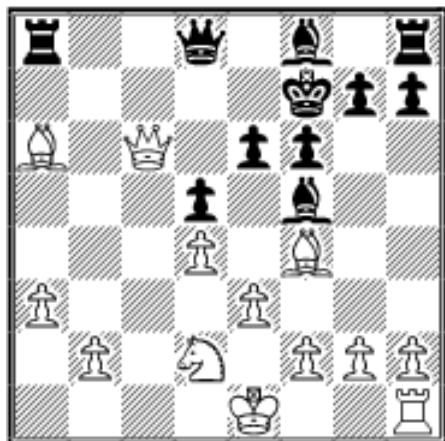
On the whole, such a means of developing an opening repertoire is debatable, and should not become one's mainstream method; but as a temporary means of preparing for specific events, it's acceptable.

The first time the 4...a6 system was played in this tournament was in the game **Wells - Dreev**, at a point when both players had 3 out of 3. The game, though it ended in a quick draw, was quite tense:

**5. cd cd 6. Bf4 Nc6 7. Rc1** (7. e3!? Bg4) **7...Ne4! 8. a3!?** The idea behind this move becomes clear in the line 8. e3 Nxc3 9. Rxc3? e5!, followed by 10...Bb4. In the game Belyavsky - Gavrikov (USSR Chp., Frunze 1981), White preferred 8.Ne5, but after 8...Nxc3 9. Rxc3 Bd7 10. Qb3 f6! 11. Nxc6 Bxc6 12. e3 e6 13. Bd3 Be7 14. 0-0 Kf7!, Black had equalized.

**8...Bf5 9. e3 e6 10. Qa4!?** f6! **11. Nxe4 Bxe4 12. Nd2 Bf5 13. Rxc6!?** After 13. Be2, the game would be about even. The young Englishman goes for complications.

**13...bc 14. Qxc6+ Kf7 15. Bxa6** What does Black play now?



One must think not only of defense, but also of the coming counterattack. So the strongest line, in that light, appears to be the pawn thrust 15...g5! White can't play 16. Bc7? because of 16...Rxa6; and on 16. Bb7?! gf 17. Bxa8 fe 18. fe Bh6, White's position grows dangerous. A possible continuation might be: 19. Bb7 Bxe3 20. Qc3 (20. Nf3!?) Bxd2+ 21. Kxd2 Qb6 22. Bc6 Rc8 (22..Rg8!?) 23. Rc1 Rxc6! 24. Qxc6 Qxd4+, etc.

The only remaining try is 16. Bg3 Ra7!. Black threatens 17...Qa5 (let's say, in answer to 17. 0-0) On 17. b4 Qa8 is strong; and if 17. Nb3, then besides 17...Qa8, another line worth consideration is 17...h5!? 18. h4 gh 19. Rxh4 Rg8, threatening 20...Rxg3 21. fg Qb8.

Unfortunately, Dreev played less actively, leaving his opponent with the initiative.

**15...Be7?! 16. Bb7 Ra7 17. 0-0** (17. Bc7? Qe8 18. Qb6 Qd7!) **17...Qa5 18. Nb3 Qa4 19. Qb6!?** Trading queens means a better endgame for White: 19.

Qxa4!? Rxa4 20. Rc1 Rc4 (20..Ra7 21. Rc7; 20...Bd3 21. Nc5) 21. Rxc4 dc 22. Na5.

**19...Bd8 20. Bc7 Bxc7 21. Qxc7+ Kg6 22. Qg3+ Kf7 23. Qc7+.** Drawn. Perhaps Peter Wells was too quick to agree to the draw - he might still have tried to win after 23...Kg6 24. Nc5! Qa5 25. Qc6! Rb8 26. b4! (but not 26. Bc8? at once: 26...Rc7 27. Qe8+ Kh6) 26...Qxa3 27. Bc8 Qxb4 28. Bxe6 Bxe6 29. Qxe6, and White's position remains preferable.

Dreev used the variation again in Round 8, this time against the eventual bronze medalist, Karl Thorsteins.

We were able to guess our opponent's choice of opening. It wasn't hard to predict that, searching for a weapon against 4...a6, the Iclander would check the most recent "Informators" (The recent article written by a Chebanenko student, GM Viktor Gavrikov, "A New System in the Slav Defense", published at the end of 1983 in "Shakhmaty v SSSR", which served as our chief source of information, was probably unknown to him.) In Informant No. 36, Vladimir Tukmakov presents a game he won with White, with his notes - it was precisely this game that Thorsteins decided to use as the basis of his arsenal.

Studying the game *Tukmakov - Bagirov (USSR 1983)* ourselves, Dreev and I came to the conclusion that Black could achieve a fully equal game. The result was an interesting opening duel.

**5. Bg5 Ne4 6. Bf4 Nxc3 7. bc dc 8. g3**

In reply to 8. e4 b5 9. Ne5, Gavrikov recommended 9...Be6, intending 10...f6.

**8...b5 9. Bg2 Bb7 10. Ne5**

A move which serves as prologue to interesting tactical complications. White goes for them, as otherwise, his opponent plays 10...Nd7, and his compensation for the pawn becomes quite problematic.

**10...f6!**

Black accepts the challenge. On 10...Qc8, Tukmakov gives the line 11. Rb1 Nd7 12. Nxc4! bc 13. Qa4 e5 14. de Nc5 15. Qxc4, and 15...Qe6? fails to 16. Qxe6 fe 17. Rxb7.

**11. Nxc4!**

What does Black play now?



In the source game Tukmakov - Bagirov, Bagirov continued 11...bc?! 12. Rb1 e5 13. Rxb7 ef; and after 14. Qa4?! Qc8 15. Rb6 Bd6 16. Qxc4 Ke7, he managed to fend off the first wave of the attack, and obtain a promising position. However, as Tukmakov pointed out, White had a stronger continuation: 14. Qb1! Be7 (14...Bd6 15. Rxc7) 15. Qe4! Qd6 16. 0-0 Nd7 (Black does no better with 16...fg 17. hg g6 18. Rfb1) 17. Qxc6 Qxc6 18. Bxc6 0-0-0 19. Rfb1 Bd6 20. Ra7, with

advantage.

And Black's position also is not easy after 11...e5?! 12. de Qxd1+ 13. Rxd1 bc 14. e6! Bc8 15. Rb1.

As it happens, just as in critical moment of the game Wells - Dreev above, the key to the position is the zwischenzug ...g7-g5!, improving Black's chances in the coming struggle.

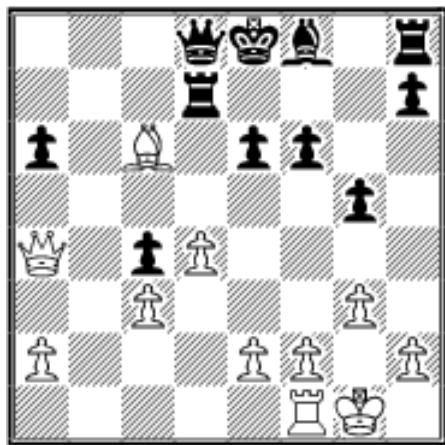
### 11...g5!! 12. Bxb8

Many years later, Vishy Anand would try 12. Be3! bc 13. Rb1 Qc7 14. h4 against Alexey Shirov, with good compensation for the sacrificed piece.

### 12...bc!

Unexpectedly, White's bishop is caught - how to sell him most dearly? Sergey Dolmatov offered the paradoxical 13. Be5!, aiming to avoid further exchanges, and also to weaken the Black's king's shelter on the kingside. A sample line: 13...fe 14. Rb1 Qc7 15. Qa4 Kf7 (or 15...Rc8 16. de) 16. Qxc4+ e6 17. d5! ed 18. Bxd5+ Kf6 19. f4! It's hard to tell whether White has better attacking chances here or in the above-cited line of Anand's: only practice can tell us the answer.

### 13. Rb1 Rxb8 14. Rxb7 Rxb7 15. Bxc6+ Rd7 16. Qa4 e6 17. 0-0



In his commentary, Tukmakov examined this line, and continued it as follows: 17...Ke7 18. Bxd7 Qxd7 19. Qxa6 Bg7 20. Qxc4 Rc8 21. Qd3. In our preparation for this game, we decided that the final position was acceptable for Black; we also noted that Black could develop his bishop on another, superior diagonal by 19...Kf7!? (instead of 19...Bg7) 20. Rb1 Be7.

At the board, however, Dreev, instead of blindly repeating the moves we had prepared, sank into thought, and came up with the most accurate scheme of development for his pieces:

### 17...Bd6!

Such decisions show not only good positional understanding, but more importantly, independence of thought and confidence in one's own powers. Having developed these qualities in himself, Dreev, at a young age, had already become a mature player of superior quality - which, of course, I take pride in as his trainer. For me, after all, the whole point of working with young players is not to stuff them full of endless opening variations, not to pursue quick victories in second-rate competitions, but to develop their individuality, character and chess thinking, which will guarantee them great sporting and creative achievements in the future.

### 18. Qxa6

Clearly, Dreev has won the opening duel: White is unable to continue his attack, and must now make a draw. And he has every right to expect one: for the absent bishop, he has the sufficient material equivalent of three pawns.

It's not easy to give a proper evaluation of what follows - the positions are quite unusual. All the more so, for the participants themselves. To calculate the variations accurately did not seem possible, so both sides had to rely on intuition. In such a battle, the higher class player should win out - and in the case of Dreev, he did so, thanks to those technical skills he had worked on at the training camp prior to the World Championship.

Instead of the text, White could also have chosen 18. Rb1 Ke7 19. Bxd7 Qxd7 20. Qxa6 Rc8 21. Rb7!? Rc7 22. Rxc7 Qxc7. Now the direct 23. a4? is a mistake, in view of 23...Bb4!! 24. cb c3 25. d5 (25 Qd3 c2 26. Qxh7+ Kd6) 25...ed 26. Qd3 c2 27. Qe3+ Kd7 28. Qc1 Qc4, and the pawn will soon queen. 23. Qb5! is necessary, and then Black should harry the enemy king by 23...h5! 24. a4 h4 (readying h4-h3 and Qb8). If 25. Kg2, then either 25...Qb8 26. Qxc4 Qb1 at once, or 25...f5 first - in either case, White will not

have an easy defense.

### 18...Kf7!

From here, the king can defend the h7-pawn, if necessary. After 18...Ke7 19. Bxd7 Qxd7 20. Qxc4 Rb8 (or 20...Rc8) 21. Qd3 Kf8 22. c4, the Black queen is the one tied to this pawn.

### 19. Bxd7 Qxd7 20. Qxc4

We have already seen the position arising after 20. Rb1 Rc8 21. Rb7 Rc7 22. Rxc7 Qxc7, but with the king at e7, where it stands a bit better. The difference appears in the line 23. a4!? Bb4?! 24. cb c3 (24...Kg7? fails to 25. b5 c3 26. b6 Qc6 27. Qa7+ Kg6 28. Qc7) 25. Qd3 Kg7 26. Qc2 Qc4 27. b5 (but not 27. Kf1? Qxb4 28. Ke1 Qb2 29. Kd1 Qa1+ 30. Qc1 Qxa4+ and 31...Qxd4) 27...Qxd4 28. Qb3, with a likely draw.

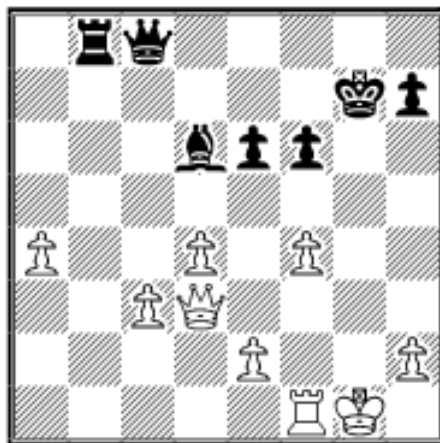
### 20...Rb8 21. a4

Another possibility is 21. Qd3 Kg7 22. c4, as occurred 9 years later, in the game Rashkovsky - Rublevsky, Kurgan 1993. Black will most likely win the a2-pawn, but it would be hard to say whether this gives him realistic winning chances, since the pawn chain h2-g3-f2-e3-d4-c5 limits the mobility of the Black bishop.

### 21...Qc8 22. Qd3 Kg7 23. f4?

Here, at last, is a positional error! White, fearing the incursion 23...Rb3, prepares to defend the pawn with his rook from f3. However, this move weakens the king's field, and gives Black an attacking opportunity. He should have stayed with his a-pawn: 23. Ra1 Rb3 24. a5; or 23. c4 Qa6 (this was the idea behind Black's move 21...Qc8) 24. Rd1 Qxa4 25. c5.

### 23...gf 24. gf



Here Black has to deal with the threats of e2-e4 or f4-f5 by immediately blockading the enemy pawns.

### 24...f5!

Now, after 25...Qc6, Black will control the entire board. So Thorsteins decides to give up some material, in order to exchange off as many pawns as possible.

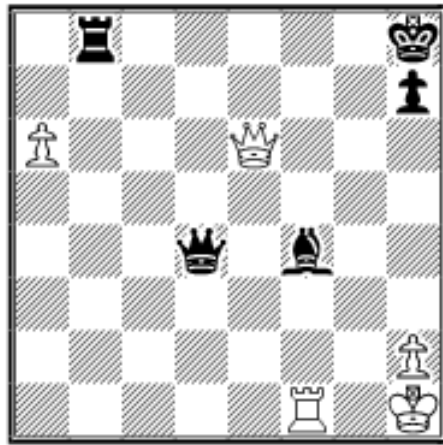
### 25. e4 fe 26. Qxe4 Qxc3 27. Qxe6

## Qxd4+ 28. Kh1

Dreev has only one rook-pawn left, and it's the wrong color for his bishop. That would assure White a draw, if he could only exchange off all the heavy pieces. Thus, Black must play for the attack, and avoid exchanges. That's easier said than done, since Black's king is also exposed, and there's the advance of the a-pawn to consider, too. In many variations, Black will have to accept the exchange of queens after all - so it's important to allow this only after achieving the optimum placement of his remaining pieces.

## 28...Rf8

Of course not 28...Bxf4?? 29. Qg4+. The most natural move appeared to be 28...Kh8, when 29. f5? allows 29...Rg8 30. f6 Bc5, forcing mate. Dreev was worried about the reply 29. a5, when 29...Rg8 30. a6 Bc5 is bad because of the exchange of queens: 31. Qe5+ Qxe5 32. fe, with a likely draw. And after 29...Bxf4 30. a6, White threatens 31. a7. How does Black continue?



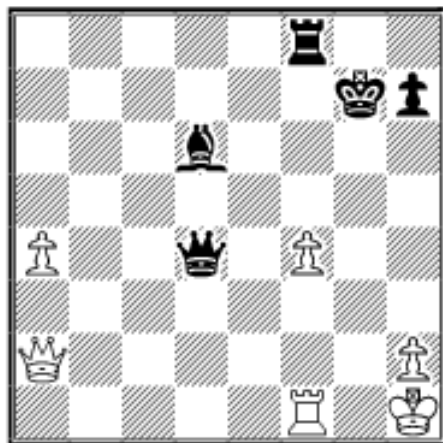
It's tempting to play 30...Be5, with its threat of 31...Qe4+. However, White answers 31. Re1!, when 31...Rb1 fails to 32. Qe8+ (32 Qc8+? Kg7 33. Rxb1 Qe4+ 34. Kg1 Bd4+ 35. Kf1 Qf3+ 36. Ke1 Bc3+) 32...Kg7 33. Qe7+ Kg6 34. Qe6+ (or 34. Qe8+) 34...Kg5 35. Qg8+!, which draws (not 35. Qe7+? Bf6, when Black wins).

The solution is 30...Qb2! 31. Qh3 (31. Rf4? Qc1+ ) 31...Be5, when White can't continue 32. a7? Qb7+. On 32. Qg2, the exchange of queens might be premature (32...Qxg2+?! 33. Kxg2 Rb2+ 34. Rf2, or 33...Ra8 34. Re1, when the a6 pawn restricts Black unduly); but 32...Qd4! is much stronger: if 33. Qf2 Qxf2 34. Rxf2 Rb1+! 35. Kg2 Ra1, and having put his rook behind the passed pawn, "according to the rules," Black must win.

Dreev's choice wasn't bad, either.

## 29. Qa2

An unexpected reply! On 29. a5!?, Black planned 29...Bc5 30. a6 (30. f5 Kh8, followed by 31...Rg8; 30. Qg4+ Kh8 threatens 31...Rg8; and 30. Re1 Rxf4 31. Qe5+ Qxe5 32. Rxe5 Bf8!? and 33...Ra4) 30...Rxf4 31. Rb1 Rf7!, and White has a hard time defending himself. And on 29. f5, then either 29...Kh8 or 29...Rf6 30. Rg1+ Kh6.



**29...Bb4!**

Excellent technique! Black prevents the passed pawn's advance: 30. a5 Qe4+ 31. Qg2 Qxg2+ 32. Kxg2 Bxa5. And 30. Qa1 Bc3 is useless, too.

**30. Qf2**

White forces the exchange of queens - but here, the a-pawn is not very far advanced.

**30...Qxf2 31. Rxf2 Ra8 32. Ra2 Ra5!**

The passed pawn must be blockaded, before White can get in 33. a5!

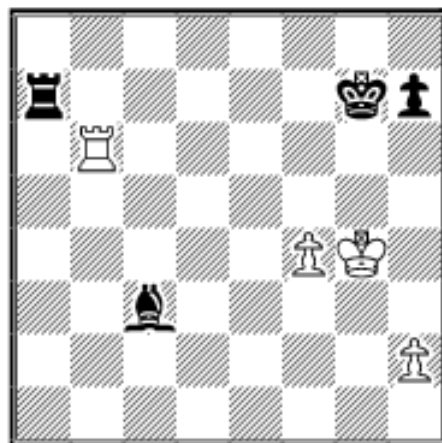
**33. Kg2 Kf6 34. Kf3 Kf5 35. Re2**

Otherwise, Black picks off the f-pawn with 35...Bd6. If I were in White's shoes, however, I'd let him have that pawn, retaining the a-pawn instead to restrict Black's rook. In any case, however, Black's win is only a matter of time.

**35...Rxa4 36. Re5+ Kf6 37. Rh5 Ra7 38. Rh6+ Kg7 39. Rb6**

39. Rc6 would hold out a little longer.

**39...Bc3 40. Kg4**



**40...Ra5!**

By holding the scary threat of 41...h5+ over him, Dreev wants to convince his opponent to advance the pawn to f5, where it will make Black's task of converting his advantage significantly easier. The tactical basis of Black's move is the variation 41. Rb7+ Kg6 42. f5+ Rxf5 43. Rxh7 Rg5+ 44. Kh4 Bf6!, and wins (but not 44...Be1+? 45. Kh3 Kxh7 - stalemate).

**41. f5 Ra4+**

Here, the game was adjourned.



## 42. Kh5?!

Right into the mating net! True, White was in a bad way anyhow. On 42. Kf3 Be5 is strong. And on 42. Kg5, our analysis convinced us not to put the pawn on h6, but to play 42...Bd2+ instead: 43. Kh5 Be3! (not 43...Be1? 44. Rb7+ Kf6 45. Rb6+ Kxf5 46. Rb5+ Kf4 47. Rb7) 44. Rc6 (44. Rb7+ Kf6 45. Rxh7 Bf2, forcing mate) 44...Bf2 45. f6+ (45. Rc7+ Kf6 46. Rc6+ Kxf5, and the c5 square isn't available) 45...Kf7, with the decisive threat of 46...Rh4+ 47. Kg5 h6+ 48. Kf5 Rh5+ and 49...Rxh2.

**42...Bf6! 43. Rb7+ Kg8 44. Rb8+ Kf7 45. Rb7+ Be7 46. f6**

The only way to stop mate.

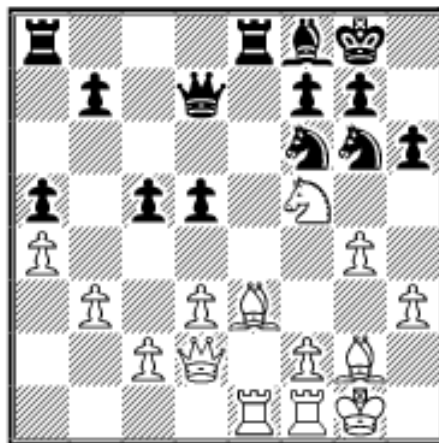
**46...Kxf6 47. Rb3 Kg7 48. Rg3+ Kh8 49. Rh3 Re4**

49...Rf4 would have ended it a move quicker.

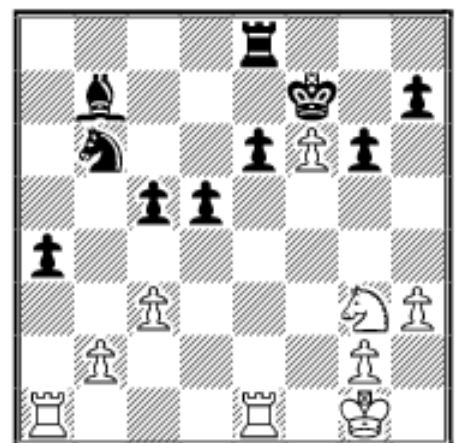
**50. Kh6 Re5 51. Rf3 Bc5**

White resigned.

I present for your consideration two more examples of Dreev's play from the same World Championship. Try to come up with Black's choice on your own first, before comparing it with what happened in the game.



(1) *Black to move*



(2) *White to move*

**(1) Oll - Dreev World Junior Championship, Kiljava 1984**

**19...d4! 20. Bf4 Rxe1 21. Rxe1 c4!**

A deadly blow. The threat of 22...Bb4 causes the immediate collapse of White's position.

**22. Qc1 cd 23. Bd2 (23. cd Rc8) 23...Rc8 24. Bf1 dc 25. Bc4 d3 26. Bxa5 Rc5 27. Bd2 Ne5.** White resigned.

**(2) Dreev - Kir. Georgiev World Junior Championship, Kiljava 1984**

For the exchange, Black has a decent amount of material: a pawn - or, more accurately, two pawns, since the f6-pawn is doomed. But the main factor is Black's positional achievement. His central pawns will soon start moving, while White's rooks are incapable, for now, of generating any activity.

White's position must be considered difficult - if it were not for the brilliant reply which Dreev had already foreseen.

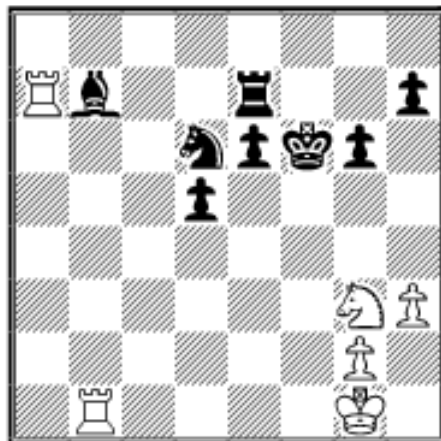
**38. c4!! Nxc4**

There's nothing better.

**39. Rxa4**

And, having opened a line for his rook, White has nearly equalized.

**39...Nd6** (White threatened 40. Ne4!) **40. b3 Kxf6 41. Ra5 c4** (41...Rc8 42. Rc1 c4 43. bc Rxc4 was a little better) **42. bc Nxc4 43. Ra7 Nd6 44. Rb1 Re7**



**45. Ne2!** (45. Rb6 Bc8 was worse)  
**45...Rd7**

Or 45...Bc6 46. Rf1+ Nf5 47. Rxe7 Kxe7 48. g4 Nd6 (..Ne3 49. Ra1) 49. Nd4 Bd7 50. Nf3, with a likely draw.

**46. Rb6 Ke7**

After 46...Ke5 47. Nc1! Black would be tied hand and foot.

**47. Nd4 e5 48. Nf3 e4** (48...Ke6 49. Ng5+ Kf5 50. Nxb7

gives White the better chances) **49. Nd4 Bc8**. Draw.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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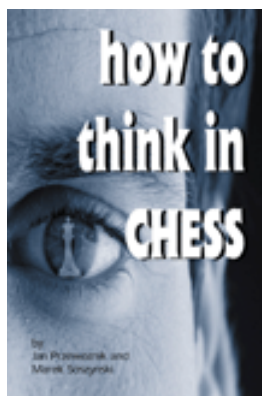


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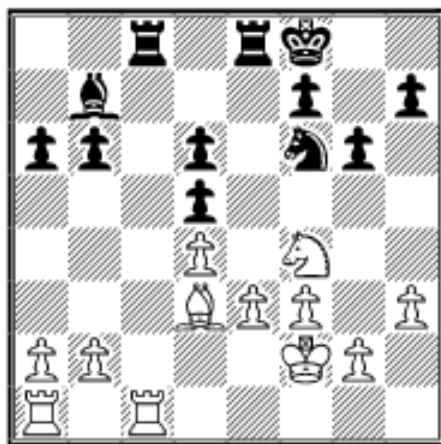


## Anthony Miles' Endgame Technique

I was not personally acquainted with Anthony Miles (even though I did meet him at various tournaments on occasion), but from an instructional standpoint, I knew him quite well. For there are many of his games and excerpts of his games included in my instructional materials and in my notebook of exercises. The examples I would like to present herewith demonstrate the first English grandmaster's topflight endgame technique.

Perhaps this characterization will surprise the reader, used to Miles' reputation as a "streetfighter" - such a term suggests desperate combat in irrational positions, hardly dry mastery of the endgame. However, one can, one must fight for victory in the most widely differing circumstances, including "boring"-looking endgames; and Miles had this skill down cold.

### *Miles - Larsen Tilburg 1978*



**22 g4!+/-**

A standard kingside space grab. 22 h4?! h5 is weaker, as White is left with fewer options for exerting pressure. Also dubious is 22 b4?! b5 (Black prepares ..Nd7-b6) 23 Rxc8 [23 a4 Rxc1 24 Rxc1 ba 25 Ra1 Bc6 26 Bxa6 Rb8 27 b5 Bxb5 28 Rb1 a3+/-] 23...Rxc8

24 a4 ba 25 Rxa4 Rc6+/-.



## **22...Ke7**

After 22...g5 23 Ne2, White is threatening both h3-h4 and Ng3-f5.

## **23 h4 b5**

With the advance of his kingside pawns, White also threatens the d5-pawn - he intends Bc2-b3 followed by g4-g5. Black parries this threat (24 Bc2 Nd7 25 Bb3 Nb6), but this forces him to weaken the queenside dark squares.

## **24 h5 Nd7 25 Rxc8 Rxc8 26 Rh1 Nf8**

26...Nb6? is impossible, owing to 27 hg hg 28 Nxc6+ fg 29 Rh7+.

## **27 hg hg 28 Ke2**

By stationing his king at d2, White not only neutralizes the enemy rook, but also renews the threat of Bc2-b3. So Larsen moves his king to g7, to cover the invasion squares on the h-file, thereby freeing his knight to defend the weak pawn at d5.

## **28...Kf6 29 Kd2 Kg7 30 Rc1!**

After the Black king wanders off to the kingside, Miles switches the focus of his activities to the opposite side of the board. After trading rooks, he intends to invade a5 - the square Black weakened by his 23rd move - with his king.

## **30...Rxc1 31 Kxc1 Kf6 32 Kd2 b4**

If 32...Bc6 (preparing a6-a5), then 33 a4!+-.

**33 Kc2 a5 34 Bb5! Ne6 35 Nxe6 fe 36 Kb3 Kg5 37 Ka4 e5 38 Kxa5 ed 39 ed Kf4 40 Bd7 Ke3 41 Kb6 Ba8 42 Ka7 Kxd4 43 f4.** Black resigned.

This endgame clearly demonstrates two important elements of the English GM's endgame mastery, which we shall see in action in most of the following examples:

(a) Skillful pawn play; and (b) Exploitation of the “two weaknesses principle”.

We probably ought to spend a little more time discussing that second element. Allow me to quote the description of the two weaknesses principle from one of my own books.

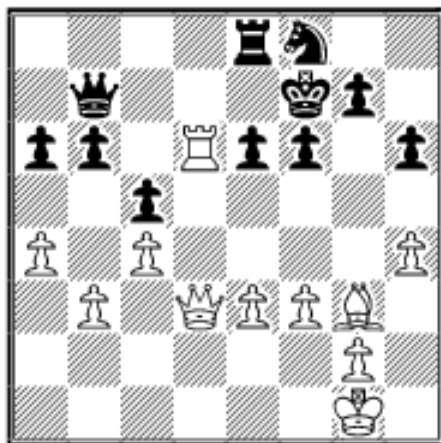
*On the defensive, your opponent will try to defend all his weaknesses securely. In the widest sense of the word, a weakness in his camp may be not only a vulnerable pawn, or a poorly placed piece, but also, for example, an invasion square, which must be defended, or an opposing passed pawn, which must be blockaded.*

*With a smartly-conducted defense, holding one weakness is not usually too difficult. So, if your opponent is condemned to passivity, don't try to win just on one point - play the whole board! The proper strategy for the stronger side consists of seeking out, or creating, a second weakness in the enemy camp. By attacking this second weakness, and then, if necessary, switching the attack back to the first one, we break down and finally defeat the enemy defense.*

*Observe how the great endgame masters exploit their advantage. You will see that nearly all of them will, at some point, open up a “second front”.*

That's how it went in the example we just looked at. It is interesting to follow how the kingside assault allowed White, first, to create a hidden threat to the d5-pawn, provoking a weakening of the enemy pawn chain; and then simplified his invasion of the queenside.

***Miles - Dzindzichashvili Tilburg 1978***



### 37...Re7?

An instructive technical error. Hastening to neutralize White's pressure on the d-file, Dzindzichashvili loses sight of another very important element of the position: the placement of the kingside pawns. 37...h5! was necessary, fixing White's pawn on

h4, the same color square as his bishop. In that event, White's advantage would probably have been insufficient for victory.

### 38 h5!

Miles immediately exploits his opponent's carelessness, seizing space on the kingside. Of course, the h5-pawn can always be traded off by playing g7-g6, but then Black will be saddled with an isolated pawn at h6.

**38...Rd7 39 Rxd7+ Qxd7 (39...Nxd7 40 Qg6+ is just bad)  
40 Qxd7+ Nxd7 41 Bc7!**

The bishop is clearly better than the knight, which is tied to the b6-pawn.

### 41...a5?!

Clearly afraid of the a4-a5 break, Black seals off the queenside, thereby relegating himself to eternal passivity. His hope, that his opponent will be unable to clear a path into his camp for the king, will be dashed.

### 42 Kf2 g5

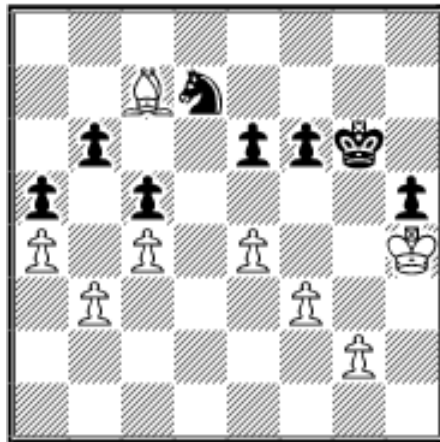
Perhaps he should have refrained from this move; but such advice is easier to give than to follow, when Black is so cramped.



**43 hg+ Kxg6 44 Kg3 Kg5 45 e4 h5 46 Kh3**

The hasty 46 f4+? would allow Black to fix this White pawn on the same color square as the bishop by 46...Kg6 and 47...f5, practically eliminating White's winning chances. Of course, Miles avoids this positional error.

**46...Kh6 47 Kh4 Kg6 48 Bd8 Kh6 49 Kg3 Kg7 50 Kh4 Kh6 51 Bc7 Kg6**



**52 g3**

Miles refrained from the immediate 52 g4 because of 52...hg 53 fg f5; however, after 54 ef+ gf 55 g5, White still wins. On the other hand, he can still play this advance anytime.

**52...Kh6 53 g4!**

Yet another typical endgame technique, which we call “enlarging the playing field.” The point is to exchange pawns, with the goal of clearing the king’s path to the opposite wing.

**53...hg 54 fg! Kg6 55 Kg3 Kg5**

On 55...f5 56 gf+ ef 57 Kf4! decides.

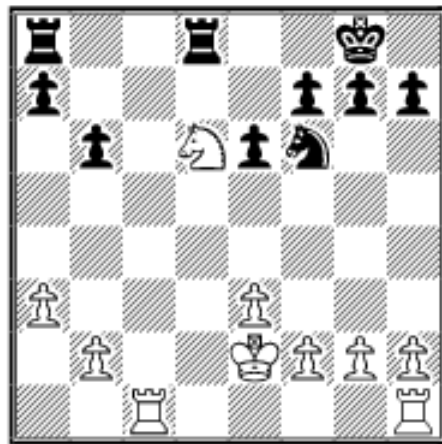
**56 Kf3 Kh6**

56...e5 does not help, in view of 57 Kg3 Kg6 58 Kh4 Kh6 59 Bd8 Kg6 60 g5! fg+ (60...f5 61 ef+ Kxf5 62 Kh5 e4 63 g6+-) 61 Bxg5 Nb8 62 Bd8 Nd7 63 Kg4+-, and zugzwang.

**57 Kf4 Kg6 58 e5! fe+ (58...f5 59 gf+ ef 60 e6) 59 Bxe5 Kf7 60 Bc7 Kf6 61 g5+ Kf7 62 Kg4 Kg6 63 Bd6**

Black resigned. He is not only in zugzwang - he will fall into zugzwang again and again, since his knight, tied as it is to the b6-pawn, cannot move from the spot. For example: 63...e5 64 Bc7 (zugzwang) e4 65 Kf4 (65 Bd8) 65...e3 66 Kxe3 Kxg5 67 Ke4+-, or 63...Kf7 64 Kh5 Kg7 65 Bc7 (zugzwang) Kh7 (65...e5 66 Kg4+-) 66 g6+ Kg7 67 Kg5 (zugzwang), and wins.

### ***Miles - Ligterink Amsterdam Zonal 1978***



#### **19 Rc6!**

Of course, the knight cannot be maintained at d6; but while it is there, White can use its protection to seize the c-file. In reply, Black doubles his rooks on the d-file, but that has less value. Not only are the invasion squares on that file covered by the White king,

but the c-file being that much further from the kings makes those invasion squares that much harder to defend.

I would recommend the interested reader study, in Nimzovich's *My System* (at the conclusion of the third chapter, devoted to the 7th and 8th ranks), the game Nimzovich - Tarrasch, Breslau 1925. The material, the pawn structure, and, most importantly, the course of the struggle in that game are amazingly similar to this endgame of Tony Miles'.

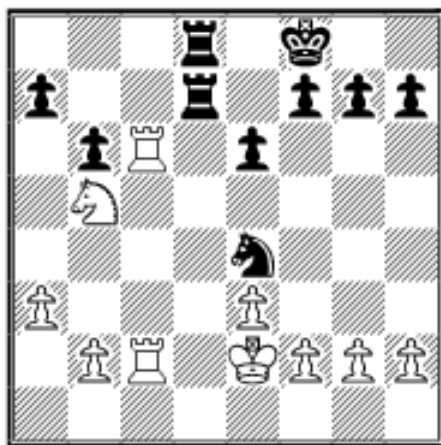
#### **19...Kf8**

Almost nothing is changed by 19...Rd7 20 Rhc1 Rad8 21 R1c2! And on 19...Nd5, Miles gives 20 Rhc1! Ne7 21 Rc7!, with advantage to White.

#### **20 Rhc1 Rd7 21 Nb5**

21 Nc8, to separate the rooks, suggests itself; but then Black continues 21...Nd5!, aiming to trade off the knights by 21...Ne7, which practically equalizes. In Miles' opinion, 21 Nc4 was also worth looking into.

**21...Rad8 22 R1c2 Ne4**



Our earlier comment about the relatively small value of Black's control of the d-file now appears mistaken: How does White meet the threatened rook invasion at d2? 23 f3? Rd2+ 24 Rxd2 Rxd2+ 25 Ke1 Rxb2 leads to Black's advantage; 23 Nd4?! is met by 23...e5=; and if 23 Rc8?! Rxc8 24 Rxc8+ Ke7=.

**23 f4!!**

A wonderful solution to the problem: White secures the f3 square for his king, and the important d4 square for his knight at the same time. Now the rook check is no longer dangerous: 23...Rd2+?! 24. Kf3+/- . And on 23...Nd6?! 24 Nxd6 Rxd6 25 Rxd6 Rxd6 26 Rc7, Black finds himself in a difficult rook endgame (here, the comment about the relative value of the two files finds convincing support).

**23...Ke7?!**

Failing to sense the strategic danger, Ligterink makes a natural, quiet move. I believe it was time for Black to take active measures on the kingside with 23...g5! On 24 g3 (24 R6c4!? is worth considering) Black does not continue 24...Rd2+?! 25 Kf3 f5 26 g4!+/-, but 24...g4! 25 Nd4 h5+/-.

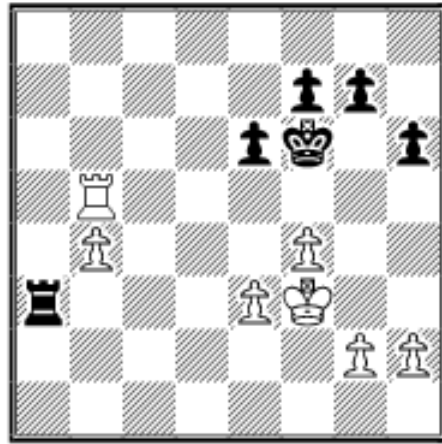
**24 Rc7 a6 25 Nd4 Kf6**

Black loses a pawn after 25...Rc7 26 Rxc7+ Rd7 27 Nc6+ Kd6 28 Rxd7+ Kxd7 29 Nb8+ and 30 Nxa6+-.

### 26 b4 h6?!

Black also has a difficult position after 26...Rxc7 27. Rxc7 Rd6 28. Nf3, intending Ne5 (Miles). Here too, as it was three moves earlier, Black's best chance was the energetic 26...g5!?

**27. Rxd7 Rxd7 28. Kf3 Nd6 29. Rc6** (Black's position is already hopeless) **29...Nb5 30. Nxb5 ab 31. Rxb6 Ra7 32. Rxb5 Rxa3**



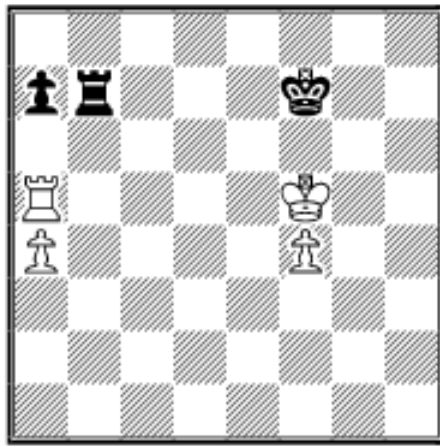
### 33 h4!

The final stroke! Miles is in no hurry to push the passed pawn, intending to pressurize the kingside first with h4-h5!, to be followed, perhaps, by the attacking g2-g4-g5. The Dutch master thought White's technique so impressive that he immediately

laid down his arms.

In an interesting, recently published book, *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins* (in the chapter entitled "Plus Equals Mode"), Jonathan Rowson presents an instructive fragment in which Miles, from a nearly equal, quiet position, completely outplays his opponent, finally winning a pawn. I have included the concluding, and relatively simple, stage of cashing in the advantage from this game in the endgame manual I am preparing for publication.

***Miles - Webb Birmingham 1975***



**49 Ra6 Rc7 50 Kg5 Kg7 51 f5 Rd7 52 a5 Rc7 53 Rd6!**

White has strengthened his position to the utmost. Now he implements the standard plan in such positions of seizing the 7th rank by a5-a6 and Rd6-d8-b8-b7.

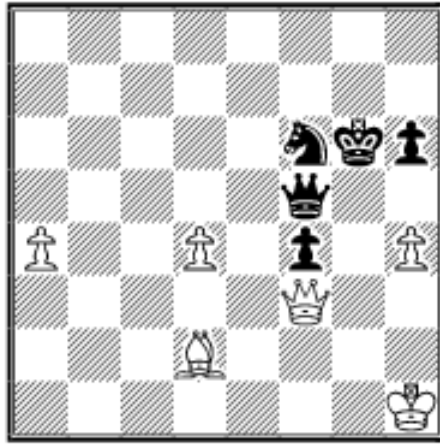
**53...Kf8 54 Rd8+ Ke7 55 Rh8 Kd6 56 Kg6 Rc1 57 Ra8**

Good technique: White combines the threat to advance the f-pawn with his attack on the a7-pawn (once again, as so often before, the two weaknesses principle!).

**57...Ke5 58 Re8+ Kf4 (58...Kd6 59 Re6+ Kd7 60 Ra6+-) 59 f6 Rg1+ 60 Kf7 Ra1 61 Kg7 Kf5 62 f7 Rg1+ 63 Kf8 Kg6 64 Re6+. Black resigned.**

Of course, there are many, many endings that are not so quiet and “strategical” in nature. Sometimes, even in the endgame, we get a sharp struggle, requiring accurate calculation of variations. Here too Miles, as a rule, was at his best, sometimes extracting more out of a position than could have been achieved by “normal” means. I shall now show an interesting example along these lines.

***Miles - Larsen London 1980***



In positions with passed pawns, the bishop is, more often than not, superior to the knight. This evaluation would probably have held true, after the exchange of queens. On the other hand, a queen and knight, in close proximity to the enemy king, generally work very well together, and can create strong threats. In

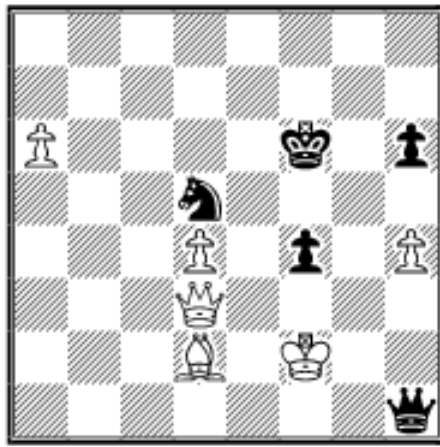
other words, White holds the strategic advantage, so Black must rely on tactics in his search for salvation.

Larsen could have saved the game here, had he found the line later pointed out by Miles, involving the sacrifice of all his remaining pawns: 47...Qb1+! 48 Kg2 Qc2 49 Qxf4 Ne4 50 h5+ Kg7 51 Qxh6+ Kf7, and the only way to save the bishop is continuous checking of the Black king.

**47...Nd5? 48 a5+/- Qb1+ 49 Kh2 Qa2 50 Qd3+ Kf6 51 Kh3?!**

A significant inaccuracy! Even in such sharp endgames, it sometimes makes sense to act strategically. The move 51 h5! (in Miles' style, by the way), securing White's queen the g6 square, would have kept a great advantage. The idea behind the move becomes clear in the variation 51...Ne3 52 Kg1 Qg8+ 53 Qg6+! Qxg6 54 hg, with a winning minor-piece endgame.

**51...Qa1 52 Qa6+ Kf5 53 Qd3+ Kf6 54 Kg2 Qd1!**  
(threatening 55...Ne3+) **55 Kf2 Qh1 56 a6**



## 56...Qxh4+?

Taking the pawn with check looks completely natural; all the same, it is the decisive mistake! White's king now escapes the checks on the queen's wing, and the passed a-pawn decides the issue.

As Miles notes, Black had to make immediate use of his passed f-pawn by 56...Qh2+! 57 Kf1 Qh1+ 58 Ke2 Qg2+ 59 Kd1 f3. White's only possible try is 60 Qe4!, but then Black continues 60...Qf1+! (stronger than 60...Qg1+ 61 Kc2 f2 62 Qe5+ Kg6 63 h5+) 61 Qe1 (61 Kc2 Qc4+) 61...Qd3! 62 Qe5+ Kg6 63 h5+ Kh7 64 Qxd5 Qb1+, with perpetual check.

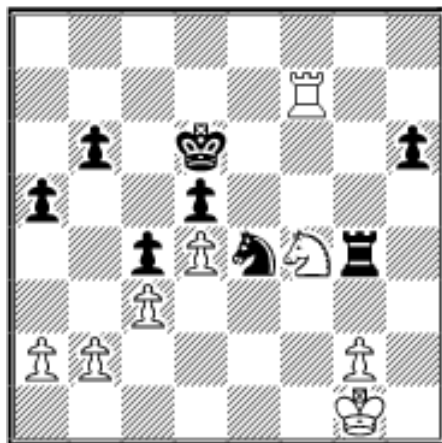
**57 Ke2 Qh2+ 58 Kd1 Qg1+ 59 Kc2+- Qg2 60 Kb3 Nc7 61 d5!**

A decisive interference. Black can't afford to exchange queens: 61...Qxd5+ 62 Qxd5 Nxd5, in view of 63 Ba5! f3 64 a7 f2 65 a8Q f1Q 66 Qf8+. (The simple 61 Bxf4!? was equally sufficient.)

**61... Nxd5 62 a7 Qg8 63 Qa6+ Nb6+ 64 Kb4! Qe6 65 Kb5 f3 (65...Na8 66 Qxe6+ Kxe6 67 Kc6+-) 66 Qxb6.** Black resigned.

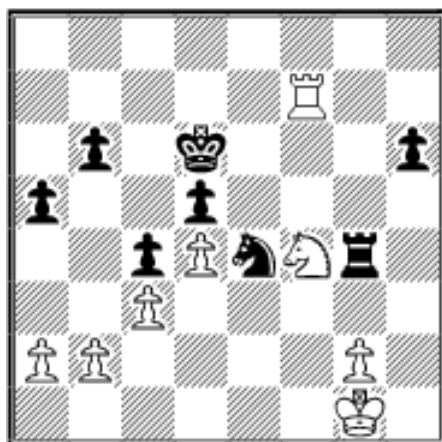
In conclusion, I present two exercises in which you will be asked to figure out for yourself what Miles played.





***Miles - Nikolac Wijk aan Zee 1979***

White to move



***Miles - Makarychev Oslo 1984***

White to move

## Solutions

### 1) *Miles - Nikolac*

White achieves nothing after 48 Rf5 Rg5.

**48 a4!+/-**

With this unhurried move, White stops Black's only rational plan of b6-b5-b4, and places him in zugzwang. Any retreat of the knight from the e4 square allows 49 Rf6+. 48...Rg5 is bad, because of 49 Rh7; and if 48...Rh4, then 49 Ng6! and 50 Ne5 (but not 49 Rf5? because of the pretty reply 49...Rh1+!)

**48...Kc6 49 Rf5!**

Now 49...Rg5 does not defend the pawn after all, in view of

50 Nxd5! Rxf5 51 Ne7+ and 52 Nxf5.

**49...Nd6 50 Rf6 Rh4 51 g3 Rg4 52 Kg2**

Black's position is now completely hopeless. Miles made short work of cashing in his advantage.

**52...h5 53 Nxb5 Kd7 54 Kf3 Rg8 55 Nf4! Rxb3+ (55...Ne4 56 Nxd5!) 56 Kxb3 Ne4+ 57 Kg4 Nxf6+ 58 Kf5 Ne4 59 Nxd5 Nd6+ 60 Ke5 Nf7+ 61 Kf6** Black resigned.

## **2) Miles - Makarychev**

White's queen would dearly love to go after the queenside pawns; but first it is necessary to prevent the enemy's counterplay on the kingside. 37 Qc6? would be premature in view of 37...Bxb3 38 Kxb3 Qg1+. And 37 Nf1? Qb2 is useless, as is 37 Ne2? Qe1!, when White cannot play 38 Qxe5+?? Bf6.

**37 Nh1!!**

Threatening 38 Qc6, with advantage, for instance: 37...Be7 38 Qc6 Bd6 39 Ng3, intending h4-h5.

The game continued: **37...Qb2 38 Qc6 Qb1?** (38...Bg5! was necessary: 39 Kf3 Qb1 40 Ng3 Qd1+ 41 Kg2 Qd8) **39 Qxc7 Qe4+ 40 Kh2 h5 41 Qc6 Qc2 42 gh Qf5 43 Qg2!? Qxb5 44 c5! bc 45 b6 Qd1 46 Qc6! Be7 47 Ng3 c4 48 b7 Bd6 49 Ne4 Bb8 50 Qc8 Qf3 51 Qxb8 Qxe4 52 Qc7 Qf3 53 Kg1! Qd1+ 54 Kg2 Qd5+ 55 Kg3** Black resigned.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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C O L U M N I S T S

## Training with Grandmasters

*“Every missed opportunity to play better - even in a drawn game, or a difficult game to win - is your loss. That is why it is necessary for you to return again and again to study your oversights, regardless of how the game turned out.” - Garry Kasparov*

### *The Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky

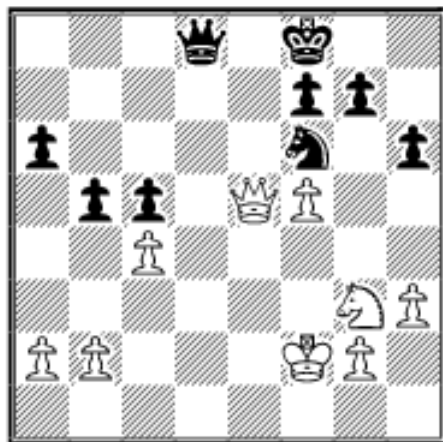
In the days of my youth, the nation's leading grandmasters frequently gave simultaneous exhibitions against young Moscow players. I always loved to participate in these, perhaps first and foremost because of the understandable urge to acquire one more famous grandmaster's scalp. But there was another reason: the games played in those exhibitions, or at least episodes from them, usually proved educational. The ideas I discovered in them, etched solidly into memory, would later prove useful to me in tournament games. This form of training is undoubtedly useful for young players.

Truth be told, I remember hardly any occasion in a simultaneous exhibition (either the normal kind, or with clocks on a small number of boards) where it was the grandmaster's decision that revealed anything to me. It was my own discoveries and omissions that I learned the most from. No surprise there. The simul-giver, after all, has no time to give serious consideration to his moves, and therefore plays superficially; while his opponent will occasionally be able to penetrate deeply into the position, and guess its secrets. And, on the whole, each of us is inclined to concentrate on his own thoughts, plans, discoveries and side tracks - absorbing others' experience is psychologically much more difficult.

I'd like to offer some examples of my participation in simultaneous displays, and, with their assistance, to show

what point of view the chessplayer must take in considering games he has played, in order to extract useful information from them. Here, perhaps, it would be useful to recall an aphorism of Kozma Prutkov: *“When you throw a stone into the water, pay attention to the ripples that spread out from it; otherwise, it’s nothing but empty entertainment.”*

### **Bronstein – Dvoretsky Moscow 1963**



**29...Qd2+ 30 Ne2 Nd7! 31 Qc7 Ke7**

Note that neither White’s nor Black’s queen can give a single check. Conclusion: **A knight placed next to the king provides secure shelter against queen checks.** This was the first game in which I

encountered this technique, which I was to employ frequently later on.

Here, White should choose either the careful 32 Qb7 Qxb2 33 Qxa6 b4, with a significantly inferior position, or sacrificing a pawn to create a passed pawn, with 32 cb!? ab 33 Qb7 Qxb2 34 a4. However, Bronstein committed the sort of awful oversight so common in simuls: **32 Kf3??**, and lost quickly after **32...Qd3+ 33 Kf2 Qxf5+ 34 Ke3 Qe6+ 35 Kf2 Qxc4**.

### **Botvinnik - Dvoretsky Moscow 1964**

**1 g3 Nf6 2 Bg2 g6 3 e4 d6 4 Ne2 Bg7 5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 c5?! 7 c3**

7 dc!?

**7...Nc6 8 h3 Qc7 9 Be3 Rd8 10 Nbd2**

White has an obvious space advantage. To avoid a positional squeeze, I resolved to undertake a central diversion, figuring that, even if it led to the loss of a pawn, I would have definite compensation in the open lines.

**10...cd 11 cd d5 12 e5 Ne4 13 Nxe4**

Another good line was 13 Nb3 f6 14 f3 Ng5 15 Bxg5 fg 16 Qd2, with advantage to White.

**13...de 14 Qc2 Bf5 15 g4 Be6 16 Bxe4**

Both players missed the strong positional move 16 Nf4!

**16...Rac8 17 Qa4!?**

17 Rac1



**17...Qd7!** (threatening ...Nxe5) **18 Qa3 h5**

The sacrifice on g4 is incorrect: 18...Bxg4? 19 Bxc6 Rxc6 20 hg Qxg4+ 21 Ng3 h5 22 Qxe7.

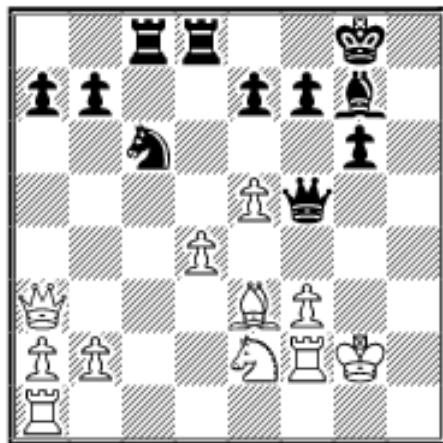
**19 f3?!**

The positional exchange sacrifice with 19 gh!? Bxh3 20 hg was worth considering.

**19...hg 20 hg Bxg4! 21 Rf2**

Botvinnik judged the position after 21. Bxc6 Rxc6 22. fg Qxg4+ 23. Kf2 Rc2 too dangerous. Simulgivers, on the whole, tend to avoid such adventures.

**21...Bf5 22 Bxf5 Qxf5 23 Kg2**



**23...f6?**

Having played an excellent opening, White, by his uncertain play thereafter, found himself in an inferior position. The text move looked completely natural to me, attacking the enemy center, and bringing the inactive darksquare

bishop into the game.

But when I showed the game to GM Simagin the following day, and got to the move f7-f6, he stopped me, and asked in surprise:

- Why are you weakening your king position, and giving White counterplay? Can't you play anything else here, but this?

- Well, what should I do instead?, I asked.

- Look at the "holes" in White's position on the light squares. Your knight dreams of reaching them - replied Simagin; and he proposed a move which, I admit, never entered my head: 23...a5!! Black's knight obtains an excellent transfer point at b4, from which he threatens to invade at c2, d3 or d5.

No further comment is needed here. Such episodes become fixed in memory for a long time, increasing a chessplayer's positional understanding.

**24 Qb3+ Kf8 25 ef Bxf6 26 Rh1 Nxd4 27 Nxd4 Rxd4!**

27...Bxd4 28 Rh7 Bxe3 29 Qxe3 is dangerous.

**28 Rh7**

On 28 Bxd4? Bxd4 29 Re2 (29 Qxb7 Qg5+ 30 Kh3 Rc4!) 29...Qg5+ 30 Kf1 (30 Kh3 Kg7) , the quickest decisive line is 30...Rc1+ 31 Re1 Qd2!

### **28...Rd5 29 Qxb7**

This complex position offers equal chances to both sides, as the further course of the game confirmed.

**29...Kg8 30 Rh3 Rc2 31 Qb8+ Kf7 32 Rh7+ Ke6 33 Qb3 Rxf2+ 34 Kxf2 g5 35 Rh5 Qg6 36 Rh Qf5?! (36...Qd3) 37 Rd1 Qe5 38 Rxd5?! (38 Kf1!) 38...Qxd5 39 Qxd5+ Kxd5 40 Bxa7 Bxb2 41 Be3 e5 42 Bxg5 e4 43 f4 Bc1 44 Ke2 Kc6 45 Kd1 Bxf4, draw.**

In my study of the classic works, I took note of how often they differed in their treatment of one and the same question of chess strategy. Thus: Aron Nimzovich generally played to exploit weak squares in the enemy position; while Richard Reti, by contrast, often mounted an attack on the most solidly defended enemy point, attempting first to weaken, and then to destroy it, thereby bringing down the enemy's entire defense. For example, after 1. Nf3 d5, Nimzovich developed his bishop to b2, in order to control the weakened dark squares (first and foremost, e5). Reti would play to break up the d5 strong point with c2-c4, and attack it again by developing his bishop to g2.

Fortunately, I already had enough sense to avoid getting into foolish arguments, such as who's right, or whose strategy is superior. I understood that, depending upon the particular circumstances, one would give preference to one strategy or the other - or that one might sometimes need to combine them. Nevertheless, Nimzovich's ideas were closer, more understandable to me, and I often used them. I first employed a Reti-style plan - that is, a logical attack on

the most highly fortified spot in the enemy camp - in a game played as part of a clock simultaneous.

**Vasiukov – Dvoretsky Moscow 1965**

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 Ne7 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bc c5 7 a4 Nbc6 8 Nf3 Qa5 9 Bd2 Bd7 10 Be2**

10 Bb5 later became popular.

**10...c4**

10...f6 was preferable, since now White has the strong knight maneuver 11 Ng5! h6 12 Nh3 0-0-0 13 Nf4 Kb8 14 0-0 Nc8 (14...g6 was better) 15 Nh5! Rhg8 16 Bg4!, when Black has no active play (Kavalek - Uhlmann, Manila Interzonal 1976).

**11 0-0 f6 12 ef!? gf 13 Re1**

Theory recommends that White play for restriction by 13 Nh4!? 0-0-0 14 Bh5, to which Black usually responds by sacrificing a pawn with 14...Ng6!?

**13...0-0-0 14 Bf1 Ng6**

Black achieved an excellent position in Suetin - Uhlmann, Berlin 1967, with 14...Nf5 15 Qc1 h5 16 Qa3 Rdg8 17 Rab1 Nd8 18 Rb4 Bc6.

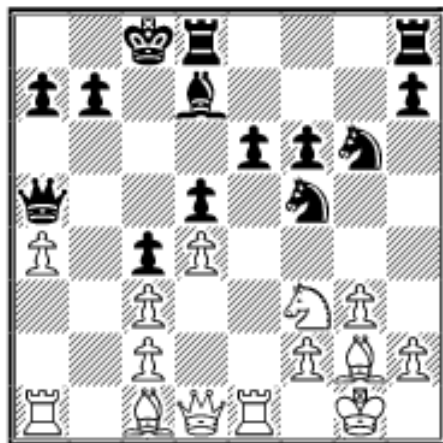
**15 g3 Nce7**

Now White must think about the maneuver ...Nf5-d6-e4.

**16 Bc1 Nf5 17 Bg2**

17 Bh3 was more logical, when, as I recall, I was considering the positional pawn sacrifice 17...Nd6!? 18 Bxe6 Ne4 19 Bxd7+ Rxd7.





**17...h5**

Black intends to hit the foundation of White's kingside defense, the pawn at g3, with everything he's got. First, he will play h7-h5-h4xg3; then comes Nf5-d6-e4 and f6-f5. The pawn at f5 supports the knight at e4, and also prepares to

attack g3, by moving one more step forward.

**18 Ba3 Qa6**

It's important to hold the d6 square for the knight.

**19 a5 h4 20 Bc5 hg 21 hg Nd6 22 Nd2 f5! 23 Bxd6**

Otherwise, the knight will turn up on e4.

**23...Qxd6 24 a6?! b6 25 Qf3?!**

A typical simul one-mover: White creates the threat of 26 Nxc4. The immediate 25 Nxc4 dc 26 Qf3 (hoping for 26...Qb8? 27 Rxe6!) is refuted by 26...Rdg8! But 25 f4 or 25 Nf3 was stronger.

**25...Qc7!**

Now the threat is neutralized, and White can no longer stop f5-f4.

**26 Reb1 f4 27 Rb4 fg 28 fg Rdf8 29 Qe3**



The g3-pawn has been turned into a serious weakness. The knight goes to f5, to attack it yet again; and if necessary, the rooks can join in the assault, too, via the g-file.

**29...Ne7!**

Black's plan - triumphant! He has a strategically won position.

**30 Rf1 Nf5 31 Qf4 Qxf4 32 Rxf4** (32 gf Rhg8 or 32...Ne3) **32...Nxg3 33 Rxf8+ Rxf8 34 Bf3 Kc7 35 Kg2 Nf5 36 Kf2 b5 37 Rb1 Kb6 38 Ra1 Bc8 39 Nf1 e5 40 de Nh4 41 Nh2 Nxf3 42 Nxf3 Bg4 43 Kg3 Bxf3 44 Rf1 Kxa6 45 Rxf3 Rxf3+ 46 Kxf3 Kb6 47 Kf4 Kc7 48 Kf5 Kd7**  
White resigned.

Probably my most memorable game was beating a World Champion in a clock simultaneous.

### ***Petrosian – Dvoretsky Moscow 1965***

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 Bb5 Nge7 5 0-0 a6 6 Be2!?**

An odd move. Why bring the bishop out to b5, then? In order to provoke the knight into developing at e7, instead of f6? I don't think the knight stands any worse here.

**6...d6 7 d3 g6 8 Bg5**

8 d4 deserved consideration. After Black has set himself on developing the bishop to g7, it would make sense for White to play on the weakness of the d6-pawn by opening the d-file.

**8...Bg7 9 Qc1 Nd4 10 Bh6 0-0**

It would make no sense to complicate the game by  
10...Bxh6 11 Qxh6 Nxc2 12 Rac1 Nd4 13 Qg7 Rg8 14  
Qxh7.

**13 Nxd4 cd 12 Bxg7 Kxg7 13 Nd1**



The standard plan in such positions is to reconfigure the pawns on dark squares: e6-e5, f7-f6, etc. But I chose a better line, by the process of “prophylactic thinking” (for, I believe, the first time in my life). What does White want to play here? Probably f2-f4; but Black should also consider

queenside pawn moves. The c2-c3 break is useless, as long as Black can easily support the d4 square. But c2-c4 has a point: White rids himself of the backward pawn at c2, thereby strengthening the queenside, which is where I would like to develop my own attack.

**13...b5! 14 c4?! (I guessed right!) 14...bc 15 Qxc4 e5**

Black has opened the b- and c-files, and will soon occupy them with his rooks.

**16 f4 Be6 17 Qb4 Rc8 18 Nf2 Nc6 19 Qd2**

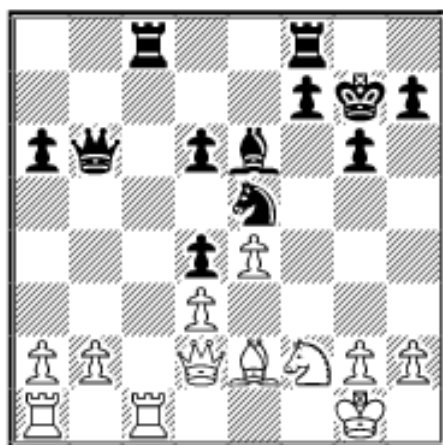
Again, we employ prophylactic thinking. White would probably love to get rid of his bad bishop by playing 20 Bg4 - the reply ..f7-f5, in the absence of a bishop at g7, weakens the kingside. For example, 19...Qa5?! 20 Qxa5 Nxa5 21 fe de 22 Bg4!? (22 Rfc1!?) 22...f5 23 ef gf 24 Bf3, with mutual chances.

**19...ef! 20 Qxf4 Ne5**

Black has effected a favorable transformation of the position. By somewhat weakening his pawn structure, he obtains the excellent square e5 for his knight. His opponent now has no time for 21 Bg4, since he must parry the threatened rook incursion at c2.

**21 Rfc1 Qb6 22 Qd2**

I shall comment on the final stage of this game, first, as I then understood it.



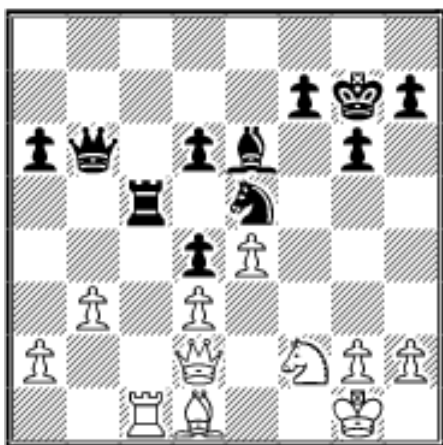
**22...Rxc1**

Black exploits the fact that the enemy rook is tied to the defense of the a-pawn.

**23 Qxc1 Rc8 24 Qd2 Rc5 25 Bd1 Rb5!**

It's important to induce the move b2-b3, weakening the dark squares and reducing the White bishop's activity still further. My opponent has no choice, since the pawn sacrifice 26 Bb3 Bxb3 27 ab Rxb3 does nothing to alleviate his position.

**26 b3 Rc5 27 Rc1?**



Seeking simplification, Tigran Petrosian overlooks a tactical nicety.

**27...Rxc1 28 Qxc1 Qa5!**

The decisive fork! This wins a pawn, and with it, the game.

**29 Kf1 Qxa2 30 b4?**

A standard “simul blunder” in a lost position.

**30...Qxf2+!**

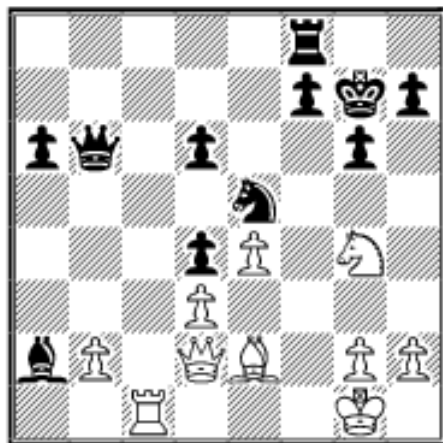
White resigned. A good positional game!

About two decades later, searching for suitable lesson material, I returned to this encounter with Petrosian. As a trainer, my interest at that time was in the problem of defending a difficult position and exploiting the advantage achieved. Looking at the concluding moves from this point of view, I saw that my actions were hardly above reproach, for they offered my opponent the chance to obtain counterplay.

Return to the second-last diagram. From a positional standpoint, the move a6-a5 is good for Black. The fact that he never found the time to play it does not speak well of the technical mastery of the Black player. True, as the game went, the absence of a pawn from a5 was in my favor, since it allowed me the decisive move 28...Qa5!; but that was almost accidental.

Instead of exchanging rooks, Black could have played 22...a5!?!; and if 23 b3, then either 23...Qb4 or 23...Rc5 (the immediate 22...Rc5 would be met by 23 b4). 23 a3 is strongly met by 23...Rb8 or 23...Rc5, followed by 24...Rb8 (24 b4 ab 25 ab Rb5).

But why is 22...Rxc1 bad, when White has to recapture with the queen? That's just it: he doesn't. Instead, he should have given serious consideration to 23 Rxc1!? Bxa2, except that instead of 24 b3? Bxb3 25 Rb1 a5, he should continue 24 Ng4!



Mate is threatened, which Black cannot prevent by 24...f6? in view of 25 Qh6+ Kg8 26 Nxf6+! Rxf6 27 Rc8+. After 24...Nxc4 25 Bxc4, the disappearance of the e5-knight, which had cemented Black's position, allows White chances to exploit the weakness of the doubled d-pawns. 25...Rb8 is met by 26 b4!; and if 25...Bb3, 26 Ra1, intending 27 Qa5. After 25...Be6 26 Bxe6 fe 27 h3, the Black king is too exposed.

I believe the only real way to try for the win would have been to refuse the exchange of knights by 24...Nd7!, followed by 25...Be6. Would that have been an easy decision?

But if 22...Rxc1!? and 22...a5!? are nevertheless of roughly equal value, then the next move, 23...Rc8?! is a serious inaccuracy. If it's a good idea to induce the weakening move b2-b3, then better to do so at once by 23..Rb8! A possible continuation was 24 b3 Rc8 25 Qd2 a5 26 Rc1 Qb4! Black would have to lose time later on the maneuver Rc8-c5-b5-c5, and this delay would have given his opponent some counterchances.

After 23...Rc8?! 24 Qd2 the move 24...Rc5 looks right. On 24...a5 25 Bd1 (intending 26 Bb3) 25...Rc5, Black must consider 26 h3! Rb5 27 Bb3!? Bxb3 (a more dangerous path was 27...a4! 28 Bxe6 Rxb2) 28 ab Rxb3 29 Qxa5 Qxa5 (29...Rxb2 30 Qxb6 Rxb6 31 Ra4) 30 Rxa5 Nxd3 (30...Rxb2 31 Rd5 draws) 31 Nxd3 (31 Ra3!?) 31...Rxd3 32 Rd5.

Back to the game: instead of the losing 27. Rc1?, White had to try 27 b4!? (here's where the absence of a black pawn on a5 matters) 27...Rc3 28 Rb1, intending 29 a4. 28...a5 29 b5 Ra3 30 Rb2 poses no threat to him. After 28...Ra3 White has a choice between 29 Rb2 and 29 Bb3; the latter move involves a small trap: 29...Bxb3 30 ab Nc6? 31 Ng4! If Black tries the prophylactic 30...h5, White could consider the maneuver 31 Nh3!? Although White's position remains shaky, he could still fight on.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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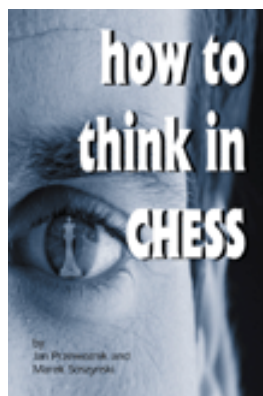
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## COLUMNISTS

### *The* *Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



## The Positional Exchange Sacrifice

The following game, in which White executed a problematical, positional exchange sacrifice, was first commented upon by the winner, Grandmaster Alexander Kotov - but quite superficially. In 1988, GM Igor Platonov published an article in the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, where the game was subjected to a deeper and more substantive review. I have used Platonov's article as a training exercise for strong players. First, we would play out the game position; then we compared notes, and analyzed the resulting complications. This eventually led to a considerable expansion and improvement of the existing analysis of this game, and a number of new ideas.

You will note that all these training games ended in my favor. This is no accident - and it wasn't just because I relied on the earlier analyses, since each of the games quickly swerved into a new channel. Rather, it was because positions with unusual material imbalances are not that frequent in most players' practice. As a result of this training, my students were enabled to enrich their experience in this kind of struggle, which undoubtedly will help them in future tournament battles.

**Bondarevsky – Kotov USSR Championship, Moscow 1948**  
 1. d2-d4 d7-d5 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 c7-c6 4. e2-e3 Ng8-f6 5. Bf1-d3 d5xc4 6. Bd3xc4 Nb8-d7 7. Nb1c3 b7-b5 8. Bc4-e2 a7-a6 8...Bb7!? 9. e3-e4 b5-b4 10. e4-e5 b4xc3 11. e5xf6 Bf8-b4?!

*“An invitation to a duel. Of course, Black might have avoided*



the conflict with the simple 11...Nxf6 12. bc Bd6, with c6-c5 to follow" (Platonov). According to theory, White's position after 13. 0-0 0-0 14. Bg5 would be preferable.

Another possibility was: 11...cb 12. fg Bxg7 (12...baQ 13. ghQ is bad for Black) 13. Bxb2∞.

**12. 0-0 Nxf6 13. bc Bb4xc3**

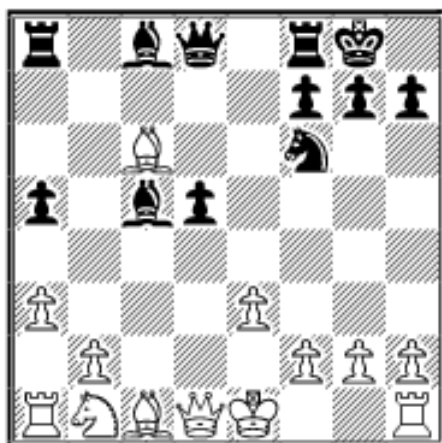


**14. Bc1-a3!?**

A courageous exchange sacrifice, although hardly forced. ECO recommends 14. Rb1!? 0-0 15. Qc2 (15. Bg5!?∞) 15...Bxd4 (15...Ba5 16. Ne5±) 16. Rd1 c5 17. Ba3 Qa5 18. Nxd4 Qxa3 19. Rd3 Qa5 20. Nc6 Qc7 21. Qxc5 Re8 22. Rd8 Rxd8 23. Ne7+ Qxe7 24. Qxe7±.

Nearly a century earlier, the game **Mayet - Anderssen** (Berlin 1855) saw a similar exchange sacrifice - this time with the intent of preventing the opponent from castling.

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. a3 c5 4. dc Bxc5 5. Nf3 a5 6. e3 Nc6 7. cd ed 8. Bb5 Nf6 9. Ne5? 0-0 10. Nxc6 bc 11. Bxc6**



**11...Ba6! 12. Bxa8 Qxa8** (threatening 13...d4) **13. Qf3 Nd7! 14. Nc3** (14 Qg3) **14...Ne5 15. Qxd5 Nd3+ 16 Kd1?** (16. Kd2 was better) **16...Qc8?!** (romantic: for the sake of his attack, Black rejected the simple win by 16...Nxf2+) **17. Kc2 Rd8 18.**

**Qh5?** (18. Qf3) **18...Nf4?! (again, 18...Nxf2 was an easy win), and White resigned, although he should first have made sure that Black would find the decisive continuation of his attack after 19. Qg5! Bd3+ 20. Kd1.**

**14...Bc3xa1 15. Qd1xa1**

A different, and promising, continuation of the attack - **15. Qc2!? Nd5 16. Rxa1** (16. Ne5? Bc3 17. Bf3 Qc7-- does not work - Platonov) - was tried out in the training game **Inarkiev - Dvoretsky** (12-21-2001, Game/90).

**16...f6 17. Bd3!? (17. Nd2!?) 17...Nf4 18. Bxh7 Kf7 19. Qe4** (19. Bc1 Ne2+!; 19. Be4 Bb7 20. Rb1 Qd7 ΔRab8)



**19...Qd5?!**

19...Qc7! was better: 20. Bc1!? Ne2+ 21. Kh1 Nxc1 22. Rxc1 Bd7 23. Bg6+ Kf8

**20. Qxf4 Rxh7 21. Ne5+ Kg8 22. Rc1**

Another good line was 22.

Ng6!? Qh5 23. Ne7+ Kh8 24. Qd6 (or 24. Qc7) 24...Bd7 (24...Qe8 25. Ng6+ Kg8 26. Ne7+ Kh8 =) 25. Qxd7 (25. h3 Qe8) 25...Qxh2+ 26. Kf1 Qh1+ 27. Ke2 Qxg2 28. Qxe6 Re8 29. Re1±, intending Kd3.

**22...Bb7 23. Ng6 Qxa2**

If 23...Qd8 24. Nf8; but 23...Qd7 was safer.

**24. Ne7+ Kf7 25. Bc5**

25. Qg3 g5 26. Qd3 Rh6 27. Rb1 Bc8 28. Rb2 =

**25...g5 26. Qc7 Qb3 27. h4?**

Weakening his own king position was not to be recommended. 27. Qd7 Rah8 28. Re1 would retain a dangerous attack. However, at this moment, we were both in fairly severe time-pressure.

**27...gh (27...Rah8 28. g4!?) 28. Re1 h3! (28...Ke8? 29. d5) 29. Nd5+ Kg6 30. Nf4+ Kh6 31. Qd6 Rg8 32. Re3?**

32. Rxe6? Qd1+ 33. Kh2 hg+; 32. d5!? Rhg7±.

**32...Qb1+ 33. Kh2 hg 34. Rh3+ Kg5 35. Nxe6+ Kf5 36. Qf4+ Kxe6 37. d5+ cd** White resigned.

**15...Nf6-d5!**

Black is planning f7-f6 followed by Kf7. He has much better chances of a successful defense than in the Mayet - Anderssen game, since Black has an excellent central outpost at d5.

**16. Qa1-c1?**

Too slow! **16. Ne5** was more energetic, intending Anderssen's maneuver: Nc4-d6. The attempt to prepare castling by 16...Ne7? then runs into Platonov's central break 17. d5!:

17...ed 18. Nxc6; 17...cd 18. Nc6! Nxc6 19. Qxg7 Kd7 20. Qxf7+ Ne7 21. Bg4+-; 17...Nxd5 18. Bh5! Rf8 19. Nxf7! (even stronger than Platonov's 19. Qc1) 19...Qf6□ 20. Qc1, when White retains a powerful attack;

17...0-0 18. Nxc6 Nxc6 19. Bxf8 Nd4! (Platonov considered 19...Qxf8 20. dco) 20. Qxd4 Qxf8±/±.

So Black would have had to continue **16...f6 17. Nc4 Kf7**. Platonov thinks that here (and also in other, similar

positions) White should trade his light-square bishop for the powerful knight at d5. For example: 18. Bf3 g6 (18...Kg8 19. Bxd5) 19. Nd6+ Kg7 20. Bxd5 cd 21. Qc3 h5 22. h4♖. Despite his material advantage, Black will not find it easy to defend, given the threatening position of the knight at d6 and the presence of opposite-color bishops, which strengthens the attack.

In the training game **Zvjagintsev - Dvoretsky** (11/12/1997, Game/90), White gave check at once: **18. Nd6+!? Kg8**. With this move order, the g7-g6 and Kg7 setup is less attractive, since it would take the king two moves to get to g7.

### **19. Qb2!?**

Aimed against 19...Rb8 and 19...Qa5.

### **19...a5!?**

Intending 20...Nb4.

### **20. Bc5 h5**

On 20...h6, Black has to consider 21. Bh5.

### **21. Re1?!**

21. h4!♖ was considerably stronger. Vadim was afraid of the response 21...Ba6?!, when White would play 22. Bxa6 Rxa6 23. Qb7 Nc7 24. Rb1♖, or 24. Nc4♖.

### **21...h4 22. Bd3 (Δ 23. Bg6) 22...Rh6 23. h3 Bd7**

The position probably favors Black already.

### **24. Qd2 Rb8**

If 24...a4!? (intending 25...Qa5), then 25. Nc4)

**25. f4? f5!** (intending Rg6-g3) **26. Be2 Rg6**

Bringing the rook to g3 may be objectively strong, but it allows White to complicate. 26...a4!? was simpler.

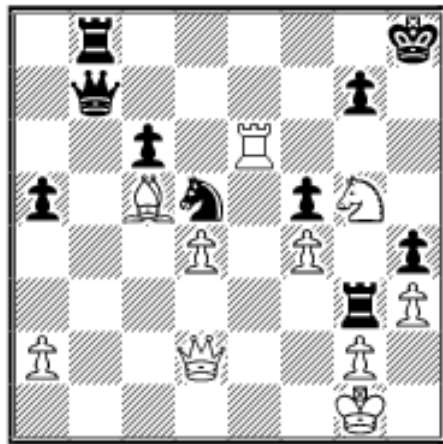
**27. Bh5 Rg3 28. Nf7 Qc8!** (28...Qf6 29. Bd6) **29. Ng5 Qb7!?**

29...Qc7! was more exact, with no fear of 30. Bf7+ Kh8 31. Bxe6 Qxf4 32. Nf7+, because of 32...Kg8-+)

**30. Bf7+ Kh8 31. Bxe6 Bxe6**

31...Qb2? 32. Qxb2 Rxb2 33. Bxd7 =.

**32. Rxe6**



**32...Nf6!**

32...Qb1+!? would have led to some interesting tactical complexities. On 33. Kh2 Qf1 34. Bd6, Black has a winning combination: 34...Nxf4! 35. Bxf4 Rxb2+! 36. Qxb2 Qxf4+. And after 33. Re1!, the tempting 33...Ne3 (hoping for 34. Rxb1 Rxb1+ 35. Kf2 Nc4 36. Qc2 Rb2-+) is met by 34. Nf3!, when 34...Nxb2 35. Rxb1 Nxf4+ 36. Kf2 Rg2+ 37. Ke3 Rxb1 38. Kxf4 Rxd2 39. Nxd2 Rh1 leads to an unclear endgame. Apparently, Black's best would have been 33...Nxf4! 34. Rxb1 Rxb1+ 35. Kh2 Rxb2+ 36. Qxb2 Nxb2 37. Kxb2 Rb2+ 38. Kf3 Rxa2+.

**33. d5**

33. Qe2 is beautifully refuted by 33...Qb1+ (33...Qb2?? 34. Re8+! +-) 34. Kh2 Rxb2+!! (34...Rxb2+? 35. Qxb2 Rb2

36. Re2) 35. gh Rb2-+.

**33...Qb2 34. Qxb2 Rxb2 35. Bf2**

35. dc Rgxc2+ 36. Kf1 Rgc2-+.

**35...cd-+ 36. Bxc3**

36. Ra6 Rc3!? (threatening 37...Rc1+) 37. Ra8+ Ng8 38. Bxc4 Rc1+ 39. Kh2 Rcc2-+

**36...hg 37. Kf1 Rf2+ 38. Ke1 Rxc2 39. Ra6 Rxa2 40. Ra8+ Ng8 41. Kf1**

41. Nf7+ Kh7 42. Ng5+ Kg6 43. Rxc8 Ra1+ (43...g2 44. Nf3 a4) 44. Ke2 g2-+.

**41...a4**

41...Rf2+ 42. Kg1 Rxf4 43. Ra6!? g6 44. Ra7 Rh4! 45. Kg2 f4R.

**42. Ra6!? g6! 43. Rxc6 Rf2+ 44. Kg1 a3 45. Nf7+ Kh7 46. Rxc3 a2 47. Ng5+ Kg6 48. Nf3+ Kf7 49. Ne5+ Kf8**  
White resigned.

**16...f7-f6! 17. Nf3-d2**

17. Qxc6+ Bd7 18. Qd6 Qc7

**17...Nd5-e7?**

An unfortunate retreat. In order to set up the easily-prevented threat of 18...0-0, the knight quits its excellent central post. More logical was 17...Kf7 18. Nc4, and now either 18...g5!? 19. Nd6+ Kg7, or 18...Kg8 19. Nd6 Bd7 (Δ18...Qa5) - *“Black’s position would have been more comfortable than the one in the note to White’s 16th move”* (Platonov).

## 18. Qc1-c5! Ke8-f7 19. Nd2-c4 Ne7-d5

Acknowledging the error.

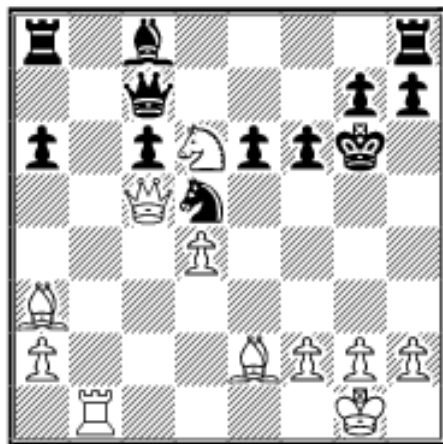
## 20. Rf1-b1

*“A calm and powerful move, in the spirit of the classic examples of attacking chess. By securing the b-file, White provides even more strength to the invading knight on d6, and in some lines threatens Rb1-b3 (using the open file as a trampoline, à la Nimzowitsch), transferring the rook to the kingside” (Platonov).*

20. Bf3!?, intending Re1, Nd6+ and Bxd5, was also worthy of consideration.

## 20...Qd8-c7 21. Nc4-d6+ Kf7-g6

21...Kg8? 22. Ne8 Qf7 23. Qxc6+- was bad (Platonov)



## 22. Rb1-b3!?

Threatening 23. Rg3+. White had other ways to continue the attack as well:

Kotov suggested 22. Qc2+!? f5 23. g4. Platonov's recommended answer was 23...h6, with the continuation

24. Bd3 Rf8 25. Nxf5 Rxf5. However, White simply continues 24. gf+ ef 25. Bd3 Rf8 26. Nxc8 Raxc8 27. Bxa6±. And 23...Rd8 is met by 24. gf+ ef 25. Qd3 Kf6 26. Rb7 Qxb7 27. Nxb7 Bxb7 28. Qh3±.

Platonov considered 23...Nf4!? a poor move, because of the breakthrough 24. d5, for example: 24...Nxe2+ 25. Qxe2 cd 26. gf+ ef 27. Nxc8+-; 24...Nxd5 25. Kh1 (intending

Rg1); 24...c5 25. de Nxe2+ 26. Qxe2 Qxd6 27. gf+ with an attack. But after 24...Qa5! 25. Nc4, he only examined 25...Nxe2+ 26. Qxe2 Qxd5 27. Ne5+ Kf6 28. g5+ +- and 25...Qxd5 26. Bf3 - but here, he missed 25...Qc3!-+.

White must therefore give up the spectacular, but unsound breakthrough in favor of 24. Bf3 h6 25. Qc1!, with mutual chances. Interestingly, Kotov suggests replacing White's last move with 25. gf+ ef 26. Rb7. Platonov extended the variation as follows: 26...Qd8 27. Nf7 Bxb7 28. Nxd8 Rhxd8+. The evaluation of this last position is disputable, since White has 29. Be4!∞; on the other hand, rather than play 27...Bxb7?, Black could end matters with 27...Re8!

Platonov thinks White's strongest plan here is to trade his bishop on d5, by 22. Bf3!? His opinion is that this plan, although it doesn't win, still gives Black difficult problems to solve. Here is his analysis (with several corrections):

22...Rb8 23. Re1 Qb6?! 24. Qc2+ f5 25. Nxc8 Rhxc8 26. Rxe6+ Nf6 (26...Kf7 27. Bxd5 Qb1+ 28. Re1+ +- ) 27. Bh5+! Kxh5 28. Qxf5+ g5 29. Bc1 +-;

22...h6 23. Bxd5 (23. Qc2+ f5 24. Nxf5 ef 25. Bxd5 Bd7+ - Dvoretsky) 23...ed 24. Rb7 Qd8! (24...Qxb7 25. Qc2+ f5 26. Nxb7 Bxb7 27. g4+- ) 25. Qxc6!∞ (but not Platonov's line: 25. Qc2+ f5 26. Nf7, in view of 26...Re8!-+);

22...Rd8 23. Bxd5 (23. Qc2+) 23...ed 24. Qc2+ Kh6! (24...f5 25. Rb7 Qxb7 26. Nxb7 Bxb7 27. g4 Kf7 28. Qxf5+ Kg8 - Dvoretsky) 25. Nf5+ (25. Rb7 Bxb7 26. Nf5+ Kg6 27. Nd6+ = Dvoretsky) 25...Kg6!, and White has only a perpetual check (Platonov). Certainly, it is not easy to leave one's king exposed to discovered check, but 25...Bxf5?! doesn't solve Black's problems: 26. Qxf5 (Δ 27. Bc1+) 26..Rf8 (forced) 27. Qh3+ (27. Re1 Rf7! =, intending 28...g6) 27...Kg6 28. Bxf8 Rxf8 29. Qd3+ f5



30. Qxa6M - (Dvoretsky).

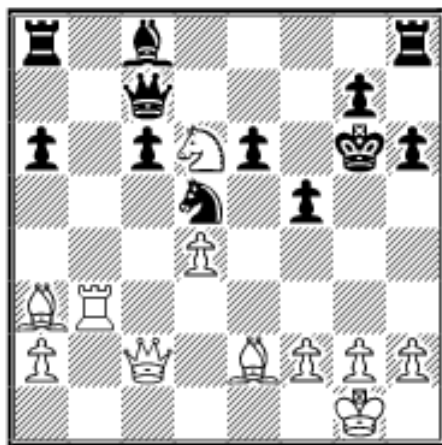
### 22...h7-h6 23. Qc5-c2+

Here too, Platonov recommends 23. Bf3. This move is justified after 23...Rd8 24. Bxd5 ed (24...Rxd6? 25. Be4+ f5 26. Qe5 [Platonov] 26...Rxd4 27. Qxd4 e5 28. Qc4 fe 29. Qxe4+ +-) 25. Qc2+ f5 26. Rb7! Qxb7 (26...Qxd6 27. Bxd6 Bxb7 28. g4+-) 27. Nxb7 Bxb7 28. g4±.

Stronger is 23...Kh7 24. Qc2+ f5 (24...g6) 25. Bxd5 ed 26. Re3 (26. Rc3!? Qe7! 27. h3 Qf6 28. Rxc6 Bd7-+ - Dvoretsky) 26...Rd8 27. Nxf5 (27. Ne8? Qf7! [27...Qa5? 28. Nxg7! Kxg7 29. Re7+ +-] 28. Nxg7 [28. Re7 Rxe8!-+] 28...Ra7!-+ - Platonov) 27...Bxf5 28. Qxf5+ Kh8!P, and 29. Re7 Re8-+ doesn't work (Dvoretsky).

Less exact would be 28...g6?! (instead of 28...Kh8!) 29. Qf6 Rd7 - White does not continue 30. h4 Rf7 31. Re7 (which Platonov gives as a draw after 31...Rxe7 32. Bxe7 Rg8 33. h5), because of 31...Qxe7!-+, but with 30. Re6 Rg8 31. Bc1 Qd8 32. Qf4 Qf8 33. Qd2, followed by h4-h5, with an unclear position.

### 23... f6-f5



### 24. Nd6-c4?

A mistaken repositioning of this knight - it stood better at d6 than it will at e5.

On 24. Bf3!?, Black could retreat the knight by 24...Ne7!? (24...Nf6 25. g4∞), and if 25. d5!? (Platonov), then 25...Rd8!

(25...Nxd5 26. Bxd5 ed 27. Re3 Kh7 28. Nxf5 Bxf5 29. Qxf5+ g6 30. Qf6+-; 25...ed 26.Re3 Kh7 27. Nxc8∞) 26. Nxc8 (Platonov's suggested 26. Ne8 is refuted by

26...Qe5-+) 26...Raxc8 27. de (27. d6 Rxd6 28. Bxd6 Qxd6-+) 27...c5±.

After **24. g4!? Kh7**, the training game **Zvjagintsev - Dvoretsky** (11/12/1997. Game/60, beginning with Move 22) saw the unfortunate continuation **25. Bc4? Rd8! 26. Nxc8** (26. gf Rxd6±; 26. Bxd5 ed 27. Nxf5±) **26...Raxc8 27. gf ef 28. Bxa6 Rb8 29. Rg3?! Kh8! 30. Qxf5 Qf4 31. Qg6 Qf6?! (31...Qxd4!-+ 32. Bd3 Qa1+ 33. Kg2 Nf4+) 32. Qxf6 Nxf6 33. Rc3±** (we stopped the game here).

White had a stronger line: 25. gf ef 26. Bf3 (26. Nxf5? Bxf5 27. Qxf5+ g6-+) 26...Be6 27. Rb7 Qa5 28. Nxf5 Qe1+ 29. Kg2∞.

**24...Kg6-h7 25. Nc4-e5 Ra8-b8 26. Rb3-g3 Nd5-f4! 27. Be2-f1 Rh8-d8 28. Rg3-c3**

28. Qc1!? c5! (28...Rxd4 29. Nxc6) 29. Bxc5 (29. Rc3 Rxd4 30. Rxc5 Qd6 31. Nf7 Qd7 32. Rc7 Qa4-+) 29...Nd5±.

**28...Bc8-b7 29. Ba3-c5 Nf4-g6 30. Ne5xg6?**

*“Black’s stouthearted defense threw Bondarevsky off his stride. Had he kept his knight, retreating it to c4, White could still have retained some small attacking chances. The exchange of knights sharply reduces his attacking firepower.” (Kotov)*

**30...Kh7xg6-+ 31. g2-g4 Bb7-c8**

31...Qf4

**32. Rc3-g3 Kg6-h7 33. Bf1-d3 Qc7-f4 34. g4xf5 e6xf5 35. Qc2-e2 Rb8-b7 36. h2-h3 Qf4-h4 37. Qe2-e5 Qh4-f6 38. Qe5-f4**

White's flag fell.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## Should He Have Sacrificed?

Some years ago, Jonathan Tisdall published an outstanding book called, "Improve Your Chess Now". In it, readers will find a lot of interesting recommendations concerning many of the problems involved in completing the development of one's game - above all, the improvement of calculating technique, and of over the board decision-making.

The game we are about to examine was annotated minutely by Tisdall. The grandmaster explains in detail why, having obtained a tremendous position in this important game, he still managed to lose in just a few moves. I have also added earlier comments by Tisdall (and by Ftacnik), which I found in a computer database.

The way Tisdall paints a psychological picture of the struggle is based on his own analysis; however, I think it had even more to do with the unfortunate result of a game that was so important to him. Having analyzed the game's decisive stage together with my students, I have come to a different set of conclusions, both in the chess sense and (as a direct result) in the psychological; and I have reached a different perspective on the events of this game. The readers will no doubt find it interesting to compare the two differing points of view.

***Nikolic – Tisdall Reykjavik 1996***

**JT:** This game was played in the penultimate round, and I was leading a very strong field by half a point. I give the prelude to the instructive moment with light notes, concentrating instead on the subjective factors, nerves and psychology, that affected the game.

**1 d2-d4 d7-d5 2 c2-c4 c7-c6 3 Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4 Ng1-f3 e7-e6 5 e2-e3 Nb8-d7 6 Bf1-e2**

**JT:** A rather uncommon move and not Nikolic's usual choice. I had some vague memories that one idea was to answer ...dc with a4, but then ...c5 steers play into the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Since this is in Nikolic's repertoire, this might have been a satisfactory transposition for him.

### **6...Bf8-d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 b2-b3**

**JT:** By leaving out Qc2 White puts less pressure on Black, who does not have to watch out for e4 yet.

### **8...Qd8-e7**

**JT:** 8...b6 was maybe the most flexible.

### **9 Bc1-b2 b7-b6 10 Qd1-c2 Bc8-b7 11 e3-e4 Nf6xe4 12 Nc3xe4 d5xe4 13 Qc2xe4 f7-f5!**

**JT:** This seems to be very strong here - the e4 square gives Black active play and White has surprising difficulty in keeping e5 profitably under control.

### **14 Qe4-e3**

**JT:** 14 Qh4 is more prudent. I intended 14...c5! [14...Qxh4 15 Nxh4 c5 is less accurate since it allows White the favorable exchange 16 Bf3 (**MD:** Black is also worse after 15...e5 16 de Bxe5 17 Bxe5 Nxe5 18 f4, with a slight edge for White )] 15 Qxe7 Bxe7 16 dc Nxc5 17 Rfd1 Rad8, with comfortable play for Black.

**MD:** An earlier game, Huebner - Wolff, Biel izt 1993, went as follows:  
14 Qh4 c5 15 Rad1 Rad8 16 dc Qxh4 17 Nxh4 Nxc5 18 Nf3 Be7 19 Ne5 Rfe8 20 Rxd8 Rxd8 21 Rd1 Rxd1+ 22. Bxd1 Kf8 23. b4 Ne4 24. f3 Nd2 25. Bc3 Bd6 26. c5 Bxe5 27. Bxe5 Nc4 28. Bb8, Draw.

### **14...c6-c5**

**JT:** This position seems better for Black - his pieces are more actively placed and there are many ways to liberate the center.

### **15 Ra1-d1**

**JT:** Not 15 Ne5?? cd 16 Bxd4 f4 17 Qc3 Bxe5 18 Bxe5 Qg5 and Black wins.

### **15...Ra8-d8 16 d4xc5**

**JT:** 16 Ng5 Rde8 [16...Rfe8!? Nikolic] and White will waste more time with the knight than Black with his rook.

### **16...Bd6xc5**

**MD:** 16...Nxc5?! is weaker in view of 17. Be5 (but not 17. Ne5 f4 - Ftacnik) 17...f4 18. Bxd6 Rxd6 19. Qe5, with a slight edge to White.

### **17 Qe3-g5**

**JT:** Now White is eager to trade to relieve the pressure, but Black does not cooperate yet.

### **17...Nd7-f6**

**MD:** After 17...Qxg5 18 Nxg5 Rfe8 19 Rd3, White would stand a little better, in Ftacnik's opinion. The position looks unclear to me: 19...e5 20. Rfd1 Bc6.

### **18 Rd1xd8 Rf8xd8 19 Nf3-e5**

**JT:** Nikolic later admitted that he disliked his position so much here that he considered a full grovel with 19 Bxf6 Qxf6 20 Qxf6 gf 21 Rd1; but not only is this distinctly unpalatable, it would also remove any hope of Black developing a disorder of the nerves. This line would give Black a comfortable and utterly safe advantage.

**MD:** Sometimes, in tough positions, one has to resort to such undesirable measures as this exchange on f6. (Alekhine used to call such things a "testimonium paupertatis" - that's Latin for "a testament to poverty"). But Nikolic, who knows very well how to defend difficult positions, feels that his affairs are not quite that bad yet, and there is still no reason for a psychological capitulation.

### **19...h7-h6**

**JT:** At this stage there were two sets of dominant psychological factors. First, I was growing intoxicated with what was clearly a charmed event for me. Riding a wave of success, I found myself playing quickly and easily and at this stage my opponent had just over half an hour for the rest of the game, while I had about an hour and a quarter. Not only could I feel the accumulated confidence of the earlier rounds, but I could also see that I stood better here in every possible way. Added to this was the sight of my esteemed opponent, who was using vast amounts of time and was visibly depressed as his chance to move into first place had transformed into prospects of disaster. These elements now combine to create a kind of imbalance which Kotov aptly called "Dizziness due to success."

### **20 Qg5-c1 Nf6-e4**

**JT:** Everything goes forward smoothly. Black eyes the squares d2 and f2,

and e5 is soon to come under control as well.

## 21 Ne5-d3



**MD:** The decisive moment of this game has arrived. I invite the readers to stop and consider what they themselves would have played here. It's impossible to proceed without some long-range calculations; but nevertheless, you won't be able to calculate the variations completely. You will have to rely on intuition.

**21...Rd8xd3??**

**JT:** I subsequently nominated this move for an "Elmer Fudd award", in honour of the huntsman eternally outwitted by Bugs Bunny. The explanation for this is that the whole process behind this move reminds me of the classic cartoon routine: I am seized by an irresistible desire to blow my opponent's head off. I then proceed to use most of my time calculating and recalculating the variations associated with the sacrifice. I cannot make it work, but keep trying... Finally, after listening to the frustrating clicks of the weapon refusing to fire, I perform the chess equivalent of pointing it at my face, looking down the barrel, and pulling the trigger one more time - with the usual result.

The reflex reaction here was to set the center in motion by 21...Bd6 and this captured my attention for a brief span. While this is tempting, it has the disadvantage of making Black's dark-squared bishop inferior to White's. (That is, when the black pawn advances to e5 pressure will be mounted with the aid of the b2-bishop, while the d6-bishop will, at least temporarily, be assigned a defensive role.) This is in fact the key strategic theme here, and if I had had the composure to think as rationally as in previous rounds it would almost certainly have struck me. Instead, I was playing my strategic moves solely on the basis of what I felt was my inspired feel for the game, and spicing this up with the occasional tactical calculation. There was absolutely no sense of detachment or calm reflection.

While I was sitting around wasting my time, Nikolic noticed that **21...Bd4!** simply gives Black a gigantic edge. Black removes White's best piece, and takes even firmer control of the d-file and center. I don't know exactly how to weigh Black's advantage here, but I would wager that Nikolic would beat himself with Black here fairly regularly. One sample variation we looked at is 22 Bxd4 Rxd4 23 f3 Rxd3 (**MD:** 23...Nc5 24 Qe3 Qd6 25 Rd1, with a small advantage to Black) 24 Bxd3

(**MD:** 24.fe Qc5+ 25.Kh1 Re3 with great advantage to Black) 24...Qc5+ 25 Kh1 Nf2+ 26 Rxf2 Qxf2 27 Bb1 Kf7 and White's position is excruciatingly passive.

Meanwhile, I have noticed how dangerous the text-move was, and now my "intuition" convinced me that the sacrifice had to be justified. My opponent is in full retreat, obviously dispirited, and everything is going my way. The fact that I could not successfully extract a single convincing variation during this internal struggle between desire and reason was insufficient to curb my obsession with not only winning, but winning in style.

**MD:** I suggest that Tisdall overestimates his advantage. In his variation, White can defend by 27 Bc2 (instead of the passive 27 Bb1), for example: 27...Kf7 28 Qd1 Ke7 29 b4! g5 30 Ba4 g4 (30...Bc8 31 Qa1!) 31 Qd7+ Kf6 32 Qd8+, with a perpetual check (on 32...Ke5, there follows 33 Qh8+).

Nor is 23 f3 obligatory: 23 Rd1 is quite playable, for instance: 23...e5 24 f3 Nc5 (24...Rxd3? 25 Rxd3 Qc5+ 26 Qe3) 25 Qe3 Nxd3 26 Rxd3, with a slight advantage to Black.

On 21...Bd6!?, White should not play 22 Ne5?! Bxe5 23 Bxe5 Rd2 24 Bf3 Rxa2, when Black has a great advantage; nor 22 Rd1? , which loses to 22...Qh4 23 g3 (23 h3 Nxf2! 24 Nxf2 Qg3) 23...Nxb3! However, after 22. Qe3, although he has some edge, Black has a hard time increasing his pressure.

Thus, in the first instance, it is not clear which of two quiet moves (21...Bd4 or 21...Bd6) was stronger; and secondly, neither one of these moves guarantees Black any considerable advantage.

As will become clear later, the exchange sacrifice which Black played after lengthy hesitation, although it involves some definite risks, nevertheless does not deserve even one question mark, to say nothing of two. If Black had followed up correctly, he should not have lost - in fact, his opponent would have had to find an exact series of moves, so as not to be steamrollered.

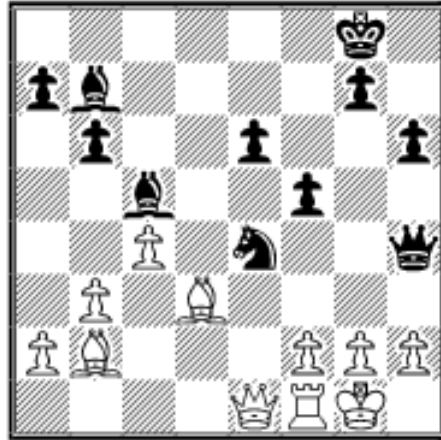
Perhaps the only thing Black deserves to be criticized for his "overmuch" thinking at this critical juncture. Such intuitive sacrifices cannot be exactly calculated. As Mikhail Tal advised, one must either decide on them fairly quickly (saving time and energy for the tasks to come later), or just as decisively to avoid them (all of this is not only depending on the position, but also on your own style of play, your opponent's personality, the amount of time you have left, your place in the tournament, etc.). Later on, according to Nimzovich's "principle of the



overriding decision”, it is important, to the very end of the game, not to think back and berate oneself for a decision already taken. Of course, all this is much more easily given as advice than undertaken for oneself.

## 22 Be2xd3 Qe7-h4 23 Qc1-e1!

23 g3?? Qh3 (23...Nxg3 24 Qc3 Nh5 wins) 24 Qe3 Ng5, and wins (Ftacnik).



## 23...Qg5??

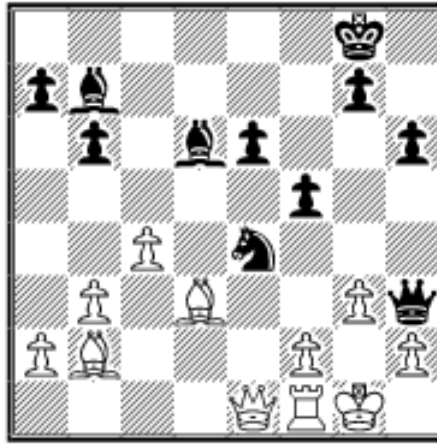
**JT:** And this is also feeble, but now reality had set in, with profoundly depressing effect. A better attempt is 23...Bd6!? though White wins with accurate play. 24 g3 (24 h3? Qf4 25 g3 Qf3 26 Be2 Ng5 and wins) 24...Ng5 [24...Qh3 25 Bxe4 (25 f3 Bc5+ 26 Kh1 Ng5 27 Be2) 25...Bxe4 26 f3] 25 Qxe6+! Nxe6 26 gh Nf4 28 Rd1 Bf3 28 c5! (even stronger than

28 Bc2) and White wins the ending easily. If 23...Ng5, then 24 Qe5 and the white queen hits g7 and prepares to drop back to g3 if needed.

**MD:** GM Zvjagintsev found a spectacular combination for Black:

23...Qg4!? 24 Kh1 (24 Be2 Qg6 25 Kh1 [25 Bf3? Nxf2! 26 Rxf2 Bxf3 with great advantage to Black] 25...Nd2 26 f3 [26 Rg1 Ne4 =] 26...Nxf1 =; 24 Qe2 Nxf2! 25 Qxe6+ Kh8! [25...Kf8 26 Qxf5+ Qxf5 27 Bxf5 Ng4+ 28 Kh1 with great advantage to White] 26 Qxh6+ Kg8 27 Qe6+ Kh8 =) 24...Bxf2! 25 Rxf2 Qd1!! 26 Qxd1 (26 Re2 Qxd3, with compensation) 26...Nxf2+ 27 Kg1 Nxd1 28 Bd4 f4, with an approximately equal endgame.

Nevertheless, the existence of such a “studylike” route to a draw does not justify the sacrifice (which Black, you will remember, undertook from a slightly superior position) - after all, it’s not easy to find a combination like this over the board. What is more important is that the analysis of the move **23...Bd6!?** is wrong: Black’s play can be strengthened considerably. Let’s look at the position that arises after **24. g3 Qh3!**



Tisdall thinks White can play either 25 f3 or 25 Bxe4. In fact, the first of these moves is just bad.

After 25 f3? Bc5+? 26 Kh1 Ng5? 27 Be2 (or 27 Qc3 Bf8 28 Be2), Black does in fact lose. 26...Bb4! (instead of 26...Ng5?) 27 Qxb4 Nxb3+ 28 Kg1 Nxf1 is more stubborn, although after 29 Qe7! White keeps the upper hand. We might continue this variation (given by Ftacnik) as follows:

29...Qxh2+ 30 Kxf1 Qh1+! (30...Qxb2 31 Qxe6+ Kf8 32 Qd6+ Kf7 33 Qc7+ Kf6 34 Qxb7, and wins) 31 Ke2 Qxf3+ 32 Kd2 Qf4+ 33 Kc2 Qh2+ 34 Kb1 Qh1+ 35 Bc1 Qc6. White has the advantage, but the struggle continues.

The mistake is the bishop check at c5. 25...Ng5! is far stronger: 26 Be2 f4 27 Qc3 e5 (here's why the bishop should stay at d6) 28 gf (29 Qe1 Bb4! wins) 28...Bc5+ (or the immediate 28...Nxf3+! 29 Qxf3 (forced) Bxf3 30 Rxf3 Qg4+) 29 Kh1 Nxf3! 30 Qxf3 (30 Rxf3 Qg4 wins) 30...Bxf3+ 31 Rxf3 Qg4, and Black wins.

The only correct line is **25 Bxe4 Bxe4 26 f3**. Tisdall cuts it short here, considering White's position won. He is wrong: **26...Bd3! 27 Qxe6+ Kh7 28 Rf2** (28 Re1 Bxg3 =) **28...Bc5 29 Qe1 f4! 30 Be5 Qh5! 31 Bxf4 Qxf3 32 h4!** (the only palatable defense) This variation ends with the initiative clearly in Black's hands, even though he would probably have to settle for a draw: 32...Bxf2+ 33 Qxf2 Qd1+ 34 Kh2 Be4 35 g4 =, or 32...Be4 33 Kf1 =.

Such a denouement would have been the logical outcome of this game: White, having played the opening poorly, defended accurately thereafter and was able to neutralize his opponent's activity. Unfortunately, at the decisive moment Tisdall did not have the energy and accuracy needed to complete his attack (probably as a consequence of his irrational expenditure of time on the 21st move).

## 24 Kg1-h1!

**JT:** Most efficient. **MD:** As Ftacnik notes, 24 Bxe4 Bxe4 25 g3 e5 [25...Qg4 26 Qc3] 26 Qe2, with a large advantage, wasn't bad either.

## 24...Ne4-d2?!

24...Bd6 25 f3 Qh5 was tougher, forcing 26 f4. The game might continue 26...g5!? 27 Bxe4 Bxe4 28 Qc3 Qg6 29 Qh8+ Kf7 30 Qd8!? gf 31. Rf2,

when White is much better.

**25 Qe1xe6+ Kg8-f8**

25...Kh8 26 Rg1 wins.

**26 Rf1-g1 Nd2-e4 27 Bd3xe4 Bb7xe4 28 Bb2-d4!**

**JT:** As Porky Pig says, “Th-that’s all folks.”

Black resigned. (28...Bxd4 29 Qd6+ and 30 Qxd4).

The moral of this sad tale could hardly be clearer.

**MD:** Well, as we have seen, the moral to this tale is somewhat different from the one Tisdall had in mind. And that’s OK too: both versions have their interesting and instructive points.

In chess, there is no such thing as absolute truth. Diametrically opposing styles and approaches to problem-solving each have a full and complete right to existence - as here, with Black’s problematic exchange sacrifice. It all depends upon the concrete circumstances.

Let me conclude with a story involving the famous theoretical physicist, Dr. J. Fraenkel. One day, he was shown a statistical curve, resulting from an experiment, and was asked to provide the theoretical basis for it - which he did, without much trouble. Later, it was discovered that he had been shown the graph upside down. The mistake was corrected: after brief consideration, Fraenkel gave an explanation for this new view of the curve.

Experienced annotators are in no way inferior to their scientific colleagues: they can just as easily give a theoretical explanation (or condemnation) of any move, sometimes regardless of whether it is correct or not.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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Mark Dvoretsky

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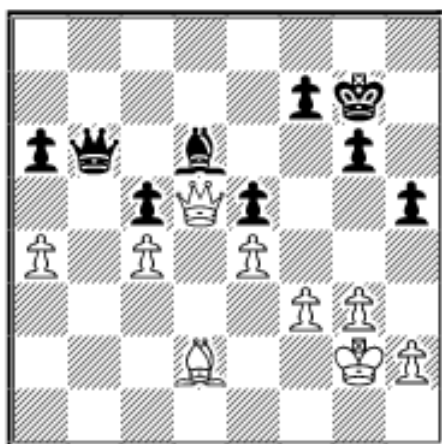
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## Active Defense!

*There's no such thing as a premature counterattack* - Savielly Tartakower

The problem of defending difficult positions was dealt with in detail in my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2 - Tactical Play*, with special attention devoted to the art of altering an unfavorable course of events by distracting the opponent from the realization of his advantage. Such active strategy can be justified not only in the middlegame, but also when there are only a few pieces left on the board.

### Gabdrakhmanov – Yusupov USSR Schoolchildren's Championship, Riga 1977



Black has an awful position, thanks to his *very* bad bishop. But even positions like this may be defended successfully.

**46...Bd6-c7!**

The queen must be set free for active play. For example,

after 47 Be3 Qb2+ 48 Bf2 Ba5! 49 Qxc5 Bc3, Black obtains sufficient counterplay.

**47 Bd2-c3**



Now what should Black do? Passive defense promises him nothing: 47...f6 48 Qd7+ Kg8 49 Bd2 Qd6 50 Qe8+ Kg7 51 Bh6+!; or 47...Qd6 48 f4, with great advantage to White. So Artur decides to sacrifice some material.

**47...Qb6-b3!! 48 Bc3xe5+ Bc7xe5 49 Qd5xe5+ Kg7-g8 50 Qe5xc5 Qb3-c2+ 51 Qc5-f2**

White gives back one of his two extra pawns, since he cannot see how he will quash his opponent's counterplay after 52 Kh3 Qe2!

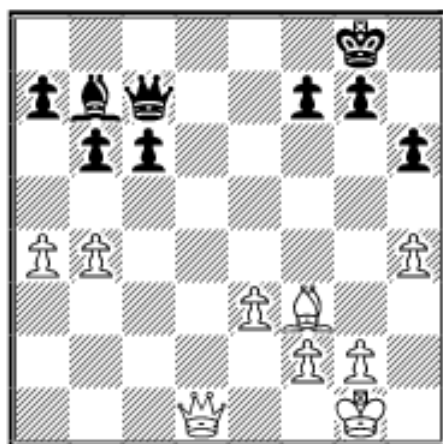
**51...Qc2xc4 52 a4-a5 Qc4-b4!**

It's important to keep the enemy queen off d2.

**53 Qf2-a2 Qb4-e1**

White's forces are restricted; his extra pawn is meaningless. The game eventually ended in a draw.

### ***Portisch – Timman Candidates' Matches, 1st Match Game, Antwerp 1989***



As in the preceding example, White's advantage flows from the active position of his bishop and queen. But whereas in that game Black's bishop was chronically "bad", here it has realistic chances of getting back into play after c6-c5 or Bb7-c8-e6 - which makes it immediately clear what White should be preventing.

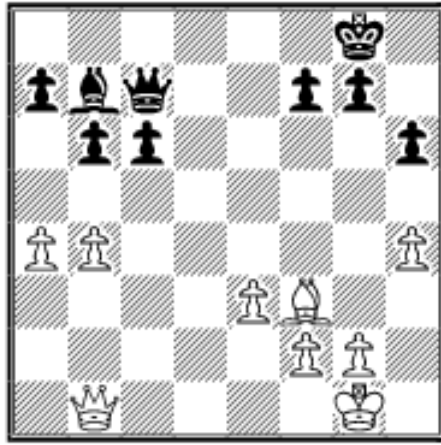
Before examining various prophylactic moves, let's see what happens if we go straight into the queen endgame

with 26 b5. On 26...cb 27 Bxb7 Qxb7 28 Qd8+!? Kh7 29 Qd3+ and 30 ab, one White pawn restrains two of Black's, which assures White a definite positional advantage. 26...c5 27 Bxb7 Qxb7 would be stronger. After 28 Qd6, Black would have some problems, since he cannot activate his pieces: neither 28...c4 29 Qc6, nor 28...Qe4 29 Qb8+ Kh7 30 Qxa7 is good for him; and meanwhile, White wants to strengthen his position by f2-f3 and e3-e4. But the queen is too mobile a piece to be kept out of play for long. 28...Qc8 is possible (29 Qc6 Qd8; 29 h5 Qg4), or the temporizing 28...h5, followed by g7-g6. Here, Black hardly risks losing.

Now, for the prophylactic moves. Remember: White must simultaneously prevent two different tries to activate the bishop. If he plays 26 Qb3?! to prevent 26...c5, Black replies 26...Bc8. Portisch's choice, **26 Qc2?!**, was also unfortunate, since it did nothing to prevent c6-c5. After **26...c5! 27 Bxb7 Qxb7 28 bc Qc6! 29 Qd3?! (29 h5!? or 29 f3, intending e3-e4 and Kf2-e3, were preferable) 29...bc 30 Qd8+ Kh7 31 Qd3+ Kg8 32 Qd8+ Kh7 33 Qd3+ g6 34 Qc4 Kg7 35 Kf1 Qb6**, and the Hungarian GM was forced to defend an inferior queen endgame for another 70 moves.

White had only one means of keeping the initiative in his grip:

**26 Qd1-b1!**



Now 26...c5? is bad: 27 Bxb7 Qxb7 28 bc; and White plans to continue 27 Qe4 with the threats of 28 b5 and 28 Qe8+. How does Black defend?

After 26...Bc8?! 27 Qe4, two possible variations are:

27...Bd7 28 Qe7 Qc8 29 a5! c5 (29..Qe8 30 Qd6) 30 bc bc 31 Bd5, or 31 a6 c4 32 Bb7 Qe8 33 Qc5, with a winning position;

27...c5 28 Qe8+ Kh7 29 Be4+ (weaker is 29 h5 Qd7!, when 30 Be4+ now allows 30...f5) 29...g6 (29...f5? 30 Bd5) 30 bc bc 31 h5 Bf5 32 Bd5 Kg7 33 e4, and Black is in serious trouble.

In his comments for the magazine New In Chess, Luc Winants offered the following as a better defense: 26...a5 27 ba ba 28 Qc2 Qd6, followed by 29...Kf8. I don't like his recommendation, since instead of 28 Qc2?, White can play the much stronger 28 Qf5 Bc8 29 Qc5, or 28 Qe4 Qd7 29 Qe5. In addition, the exchange of pawns on a5 is not forced: the direct attack with 27 Qe4! (threatening 28 b5) is tempting - one line is 27...ab 28 Qe8+ Kh7 29 Be4+ g6 30 h5 c5 31 hg+ fg 32 Qxg6+ Kh8 33 Qxh6+ Kg8 34 Qg6+ Kf8 35 Qf6+ Kg8 36 Bd3.

The above variations give us a feeling for the dangers inherent in Black's position after an accurate prophylactic move from White. The solution to his problem lies in thinking prophylactically also, but from the other side - Black must choose active defense, even if it involves sacrificing a pawn.

**26...Qc7-e7!**

White's queen wanted to occupy the important e4 square, so Black takes it under control. True, White could play 27 Qe4 here too - after 27...Qxe4 28 Bxe4, there is no stopping 29 b5, with the win of a pawn. No problem - in the bishop endgame Black's king will come rapidly into play: 28...Kf8 29 b5 Ke7 30 bc Ba6, followed by Kd6, and Black, in any event, does not stand worse.

The sortie 27 Qf5 is totally harmless. The simplest reply is 27...Qxb4! 28 Qd7 Qe1+ 29 Kh2 Qxf2, with a perpetual check.

### **27 h4-h5**

In the Informant, Timman examines 26 Qb1!, suggesting that Black defend by 26...Qe7 27 h5 Kf8. His first move is correct, but his second is wrong: Black loses after 27...Kf8? 28 Qh7 Qxb4 (28...Qe5 29 b5) 29 Qh8+ Ke7 30 Qb8!

So what should Black do? To the rescue comes a simple but elegant bit of tactics.

### **27...Bb7-c8! 28 Bf3xc6 Bc8-g4**

Black wins back the pawn, and equalizes.

And so, White's attempts to force matters lead to nothing. Therefore, he should be patient: **27 g3!**, intending a4-a5, Bg2 (or Kg2); and later, depending on circumstances, he can play on the kingside, try to exploit the pin on the h1-a8 diagonal, or invade at a7 with his queen after opening the a-file. Although this all looks somewhat abstract, there appears to be no easy way for his opponent to free himself; so the pressure on his position remains, which means White retains practical winning chances.



We can see a most convincing demonstration of high-class technique when the opponent does not show strong resistance. This is the picture we see in the following game. The exchange of queens led to an approximately equal position; then, however, Black was gradually outplayed, due to his unjustified passivity, which White exploited in model fashion.

### ***Nesis – Franzen Correspondence 1979-83***

**1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 e7-e6 3 Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4 g2-g3 Bc8-b7 5 Bf1-g2 Bf8-e7 6 Nb1-c3 Nf6-e4 7 Bc1-d2 Be7-f6 8 Qd1-c2**

Another frequently played line is 8 0-0 0-0 9 Rc1. Most likely, Black will exchange on d2 - then, by refraining from Qc2, White will have saved a tempo. On the other hand, the tempo saved doesn't mean too much here - in fact, this whole opening variation has the reputation of being rather toothless, almost a drawing line. Anatoly Karpov would no doubt disagree with this evaluation: he has scored many victories with it. He loves to maneuver back and forth in quiet positions with a tiny edge for himself, provoking and then expertly capitalizing on the tiniest inaccuracy from his opponent.

**8...Ne4xd2 9 Qc2xd2 d7-d6 10 Ra1-d1**

More frequently seen are 10 d5, or 10 0-0 0-0 11 e4.

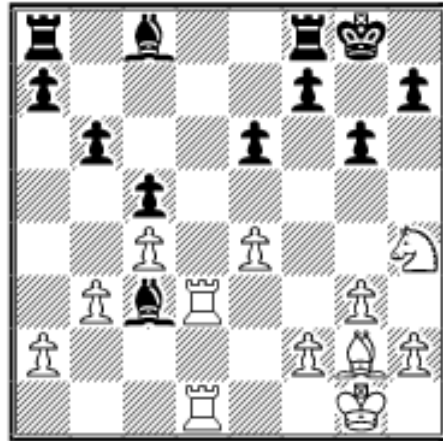
**10...Nb8-d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 e2-e4 g7-g6 13 Rf1-e1 Bf6-g7 14 b2-b3 Qd8-e7 15 Nf3-h4**

Up to this point, White has played nothing but developing moves, with no definite plan in mind (in such positions, one could expect d4-d5, or h2-h4-h5). But now he has finally come up with something concrete: f2-f4. His opponent hastens to deliver a counterblow in the center before it is completely overrun by White pawns.

**15...c7-c5! 16 d4xc5 d6xc5 17 Qd2xd7 Qe7xd7 18 Rd1xd7 Bg7xc3 19 Re1-d1 Bb7-c8**

This craven retreat was not necessary. The more natural 19...Bc6 was quite playable - Black has nothing to fear from either 20 R7d6 Rac8 or 20 Rc7 Rac8!? 21 Rxa7 Rfd8.

### 15 Rd7-d3



What should Black do now? If White gets in e4-e5, he will have a positional advantage. For instance, 20...Bd4? 21 e5! Rb8 22 Nf3, or 20...Bg7? 21 e5 Rb8 22 f4.

### 20...Bc3-e5!

Now White can no longer seize kingside space without paying a price for it: on 21 f4, Bd4+ and 22...e5 follows; while 21 Nf3 is met by 21...Bc7 (21...Bg7 isn't bad either) 22 e5 Bb7 23 Rd7 Rad8, preparing 24...Bc6 or 24...Bxf3 25 Bxf3 Rxd7 26 Rxd7 Bxe5.

### 21 Kg1-f1!?

By first getting his king out of the check, White restores the positional threat of 22 f4. For example, 21...Bb7? 22 f4 Bd4 (22...Bf6 23 e5 Bxh4 24 Bxb7) 23 e5 Bxg2+ 24 Kxg2, followed by 25 Nf3.

Another good idea was to move the king into the corner, with the same check avoidance plan, but also keeping clear the f1-a6 diagonal, which his opponent will soon attempt to open.

### 21...Ra8-b8

21...b5 22 cb a6 would be premature, in view of 23 b6 or

23 Nf3.

## 22 f2-f4 Be5-c7

Now 23 e5 would be the natural continuation; however, Black then develops dangerous queenside counterplay by continuing either 23...a6 24 Nf3 b5 25 Nd2 Ba5, or 23...b5 24 cb Rxb5, followed by Rb4 and Ba6.

Therefore, Nesis begins taking prophylactic measures aimed at shoring up the c4 square. The knight cannot be used for this purpose - for the moment, it is needed on the kingside to prevent the opening of lines there (23 Nf3 a6 24 Nd2 e5!)

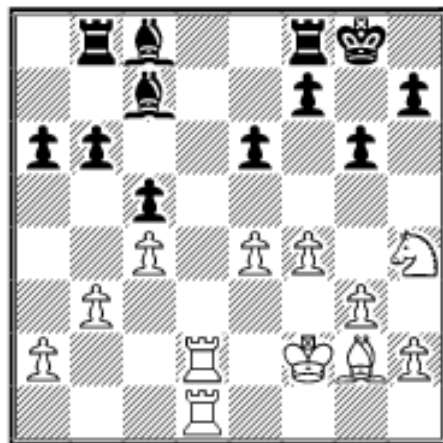
## 23 Rd3-d2!?

I think 23 Bf3 would have been a bit more accurate.

## 23...a7-a6

Black would hardly do better with 23...f6 24 Bf3 g5 25 Ng2, or 23...b5 24 cb Rxb5 25 Bf3.

## 24 Kf1-f2



White is ready to reinforce c4 with Bf1. Still, Black could have generated counterplay with 24...e5 25 f5 b5 26 Bf1 Ba5! 27 Rc2 (White cannot allow the bishop to get via c3 to d4, and if 27 Rd3, then 23...bc) 27...Bd8!

And why must Black play actively? Here, the question is not purely psychological, with Black attempting to distract White from his straightforward strengthening of the position. There is an

objective factor as well: Black has the two bishops. He will derive little benefit from them, so long as the position remains closed and static - in order to exploit them, Black must sharpen the game and open lines.

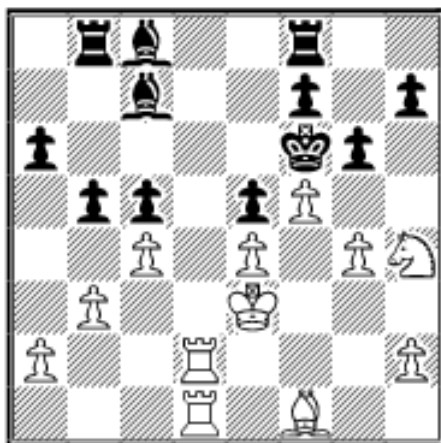
**24...Kg8-g7?! 25 Kf2-e3**

25 Nf3 was worth looking into.

**25...e6-e5 26 f4-f5 b6-b5 27 Bg2-f1 Kg7-f6**

Again, 27...Ba5 28 Rc2 Bd8 suggests itself.

**28 g3-g4**



Black has not played with sufficient energy; but now comes a serious strategic error.

**28...g6xf5?**

This exchange produces a static position, with a clear advantage to White. Active

counterplay was still possible here. True, the 28...h5?! break is dubious, in view of 29 gh Kg5 (29...gf 30 Nxf5 Bxf5 31 Rf2) 30 fg! Kxh4 31 g7 Rg8 32 h6, and White's pawns are too powerful. For example, 32...Bg4 33 Be2 Bxe2 34 Kxe2! Kh5 35 Rg1 Kxh6 36 Rd3, and mates by force.

Black had to steel himself and march his king into the enemy camp to gobble the g4-pawns: 28...Kg5! 29 Nf3+ Kxg4. It is of course impossible to say positively that the king would be safe here; but there's no mate yet, so the outcome of the game remains uncertain.

**29 g4xf5**

A questionable move, since the knight must now spend some further time at the board's edge. 29 Nxf5! was very strong. If 29...Bxf5 30 gf Rfd8, then either 31 Rd7, with the threat of Be2-h5, or 31 Rxd8 Rxd8 32 Rxd8 Bxd8 33 cb ab 34 Bxb5, with a winning bishop endgame.

### **29...Kf6-e7 30 Ke3-f3!**

Black has no counterplay: his two bishops remain passive. Now White can unhurriedly improve the placement of his pieces. First, he clears the e3 square for the maneuver Ng2-e3-d5.

### **30...Rf8-d8 31 Rd2xd8 Bc7xd8 32 Nh4-g2**

Chasing after the pawn would be wrong here: 32 Rd5? Bb7! 33 Rxe5+ Kd7! 34 Ng2 Bf6 35 Rxc5 Bd4.

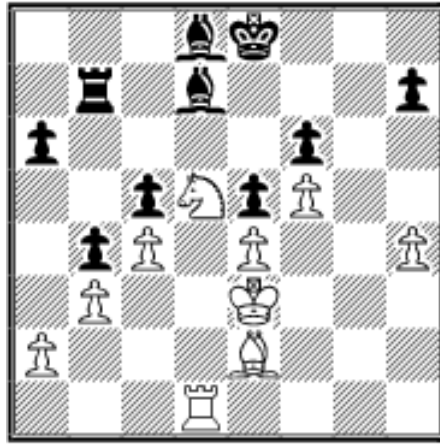
### **32...f7-f6 33 Ng2-e3 Bc8-d7 34 Ne3-d5+ Ke7-e8 35 Bf1-e2 b5-b4**

After 35...Bc6 (intending 36...Bxd5), White can choose between the quiet 36 Kg4!? Bxd5 37 Rxd5 Be7 38 Kh5, and the more forcing 36 cb!? ab 37 Nxf6+! Bxf6 38 Rd6 Rb6 (38...Bxe4+ 39 Kxe4 is no better) 39 Rxc6 Rxc6 40 Bxb5 Kd7 41 Kg4 Kd6 42 Bxc6 Kxc6 43 Kh5.

### **36 h2-h4!**

White's rook has two files, the d- and the g-, but invading down either of them is no simple matter. Now, if the pawn could be pushed as far as h6, White would get a forward base at g7, which would considerably increase the effectiveness of the g-file invasion threat.

### **36...Rb8-b7 37 Kf3-e3**



How can Black defend?  
 37...Bc6? would be a mistake, in view of 38 Bh5+ Kf8 39 Nxb4. The only move to hinder White from realizing his plan was 37...Kf8!, and if 38 h5, then 38...h6! 39 Rg1 Be8, covering all the invasion squares.

### **37...a6-a5?**

Opening the a-file gives Black nothing; now, his opponent's plan goes through unhindered.

### **38 h4-h5 Kg8-f8**

Perhaps he should still have tried 38...h6 39 Rg1 Kf8 here, but after 40 Rg6 Be8 41 Rxh6 Kg7 42 Rg6+ Bxg6 43 fg, Black has a hard time defending against the threat of knight to f5.

### **39 h5-h6 a5-a4 40 Be2-h5**

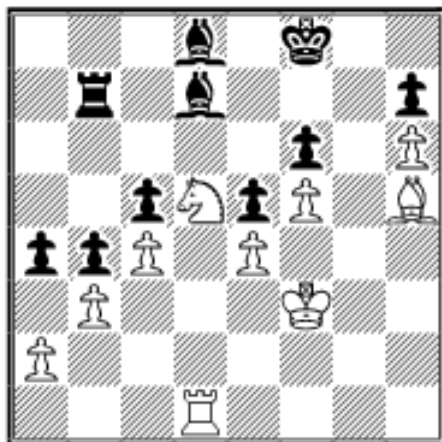
40 Rg1 Be8 is premature.

### **40...Rb7-a7 41 Ke3-f3!**

An economical way of parrying Black's only hope of counterplay: 41...ab 42 ab Ra3, which can now be met by 43 Ne3! Ke7 44 Rg1 Rxb3 45 Rg7+ Kd6 46 Rxh7, and the h-pawn queens.

### **41...Ra7-b7**

How does White continue?



“An open line is frequently like an open wound.” (S. Tartakower) White has to invade by one of the open files, but for now, he can’t. 42 Rg1 Bc6 is useless. 42 Ne3 is tempting, with its threat of 43 Rd6, and if 42...Ke7? 43 Bg6! But Black replies 42...Be7! 43 Rg1 Bd8

44 Rg7 Bc6.

Noting that this defense works only with the White rook at b7, White plays for zugzwang.

**42 Rd1-d2! a4-a3 43 Rd2-d1!**

And there it is.

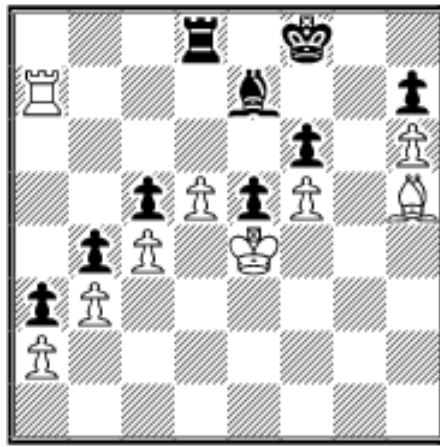
**43...Rb7-a7 44 Nd5-e3**

Zugzwang again. With the rook at a7, 45 Rd6 Ke7 leads nowhere; but now what should Black play? After 44...Rb7(c7) 45 Rd6 or 44...Be7 45 Rg1, the rook invades.

**44...Ra7-c7 45 Rd2-d6 Bd8-e7 46 Rd6-b6 Rc7-c8 47 Ne3-d5 Bd7-c6 48 Rb6-a6**

Threatening 49 Ra7.

**48...Bc6xd5 49 e4xd5 Rc8-d8 50 Ra6-a7 Rd8-d6 51 Kf3-e4 Rd6-d8**



**52 Bh5-g6!**

Having strengthened his position to the utmost, White finally delivers the conclusive blow, which has for so long been hanging in the air.

**52...h7xg6 53 f5xg6 Rd8-e8**

**54 d5-d6**

Black resigned

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## COLUMNISTS

### *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## In Search of Chess Truth

In the games which I prepare as exercises for my students, the published notes more often than not seem unconvincing to me. So I have to analyze them myself, modifying and in some cases totally rethinking the course of play in the game under consideration. But however attentively and seriously the trainer might prepare, during class time my students usually suggest some new and interesting ideas.

I invite my readers to try their strength in a creative attempt to find chess truth. You have before you three impressive episodes from the games of Rudolf Spielmann, which he analyzed in his famous book, *Richtig Opfern!*. You must modify, or in some cases even refute, some of the grandmaster's conclusions. The exercises are very difficult, not intended so much for solving, as for independent analysis (that is, you may move the pieces).



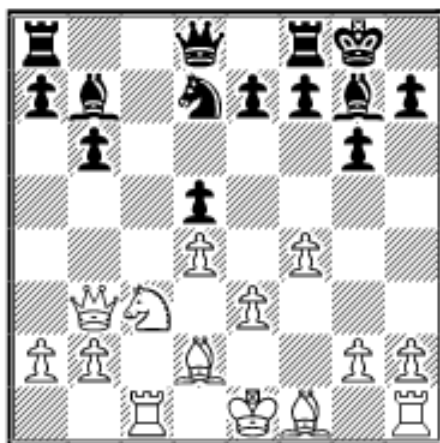
1. Black stands actively, but he must consider the threatened Rxd6. On 23...Qc2, White has a good reply in 24 Rd2; therefore, Spielmann played **23...a5!?**, deflecting White's queen from b4. If 24 Qd2, then 24...Qc5, intending a rook invasion



at f2. White must choose between 24 Qxa5 and 24 Qc3 Qc5 (after protecting the d6-pawn, Black wishes to fix the queen's wing by 25...a4) 25 b4. Which would you prefer?



2. Black to move. Evaluate the consequences of the spectacular center break 17...d5.



3. Black to move. Much as in the previous game, Spielmann decided to break in the center with 12...e5. What do you think of it?

## Solutions

### 1. *Rubinstein - Spielmann* (San Sebastian, 1912)

The right choice turns out to be the coldblooded pawn snatch.

### 24 Qb4xa5! Qf2-c2

The move Spielmann intended, as 24...Qxb2 would allow White a more favorable queen exchange by 25 Rd2 Qb3 26 Qb4.

### 25 Rd3-d2!

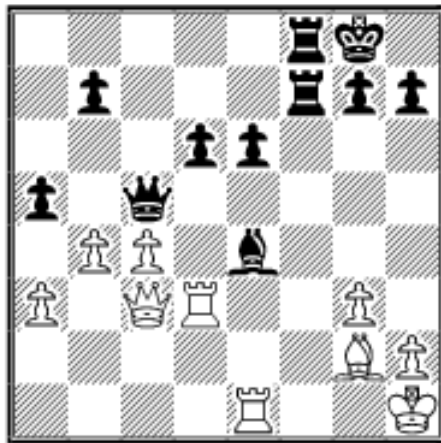
25 Qc3? would be a mistake (as would 25 Rxd6?) because of 25...Bxe4! After 25 Qd2 Qxc4, Black has the unpleasant threat of 26...Rf2.

### **25...Qc2xc4 26 Rd2xd6!**

Right! White loses after 26 Qc3? Rf1+! 27 Bxf1 Rxf1+ 28 Kg2 Qxc3 29 bc Rxe1. But now Black can play neither 26...Rf1+? 27 Bxf1 Rxf1+ 28 Kg2, nor 26...Bxe4? 27 Bxe4 Rf1+ 28 Kg2. White has an extra pawn, and is ready to simplify the position with 27 Rd8.

In the game, Akiba Rubinstein made an unfortunate choice, allowing his opponent to execute a brilliant combination.

### **24 Qc3?! Qc5 25 b4 Bxe4!!**



The queen is of course untouchable, in view of 26...Rf1+ and mates. On 26 Bxe4!?, Spielman gives 26...Rf1+ 27 Rxf1 Rxf1+ 28 Kg2 Rg1+ 29 Kf3 Qh5+ 30 Ke3 Qxh2. "The analysis of this position would make a wholly satisfying study.

From the practical point of view, which is our only guide when examining real sacrifices, only a general assessment of the position is possible; and that assessment, in my opinion, must favor Black. He who would not play Black to win in such a position, can hardly expect to go far in the area of sacrifices." (Spielmann)

Young Sasha Ryazantsev has shown that with 30 Kf4! (instead of 30 Ke3), White can save himself. 30...Qh6+

31 Kg4 is useless to Black; and in the variations 30...g5+ 31 Ke3 Qxh2 32 Qf6! Re1+ 33 Kd4 Qb2+ 34 Rc3 Qd2+ 35 Rd3; 30...e5+ 31 Ke3 Qh6+ 32 Kf3 Qxh2 33 Bd5+ Kf8 34 Ke4 Qe2+ 35 Re3 (35 Kf5? Ke7!) 35...Qg4+ 36 Kd3 Qd1+ 37 Ke4!, or 30...Rc1 31 Qd2! (31 Qxc1 Qh6+; 31 Qb3 Re1!) 31...Rxc4 32 Ke3! Qe5 33 Rd4 Qg5+ 34 Kf3 Qf6+ 35 Ke3, Black must accept a perpetual check.

White also had at his disposal the clever defense 26 Rf3!? (intending to answer 26...Rxf3 with 27 Qxf3!). According to Spielmann's analysis, play might then proceed as follows: 26...ab 27 ab Qc6 28 b5 (28 Rxe4? Qxe4 29 Rxf7 Qb1+) 28...Rxf3 29 Qxf3! Bxf3 30 bc Bxg2+ 31 Kxg2 bc 32 Rxe6 Rf6 33 Re7. Black has an extra pawn in a rook endgame, but White retains drawing chances.

We have now established that, objectively speaking, Black's combination should not have led to a win. But it did set White some very complicated problems, which Rubinstein was not able to cope with.

**26 Rxe4? Rf1+ 27 Bxf1 Rxf1+ 28 Kg2 Qf2+ 29 Kh3 Rh1!**

29...Qf5+ 30 Kg2 would have been pointless. Now, however, Black threatens that check, since the king can no longer retreat to g2, because then the queen mates at f1. White is lost, in spite of his extra rook.

**30 Rf3 Qxh2+ 31 Kg4 Qh5+ 32 Kf4 Qh6+ 33 Kg4 g5! 34 Rxe6** (there is no other defense against 34...Qh5#) **34...Qxe6+ 35 Rf5** (35 Kxg5 h6+ 36 Kf4 Re1! doesn't help) **35...h6** (intending Kh7-g6; another way to win was 35...Qe4+ 36 Kxg5 h6+ 37 Kf6 Re1!) **36 Qd3 Kg7 37 Kf3** (37 Qd5 h5+ 38 Kf3 Rf1+) **37...Rf1+ 38 Qxf1 Qxf5+ 39 Kg2 Qxf1+ 40 Kxf1 ab 41 ab Kf6 42 Kf2 h5**

White resigned.

## **2. Mieses - Spielmann (3rd Match Game, Regensburg 1910)**

In the game, after **17...d5**, White resolved to accept all the material his opponent was sacrificing: **18 ed Bxd5!! 19 cd Qxd5**. Commenting on this situation, Spielmann wrote:

“Now we can assess the results of the sacrifice: Black is a piece down (the doubled pawn can hardly be taken into account!); however, thanks to the two open central files, he has considerably outstripped his opponent in development; his threats against the d3 bishop and the g2 pawn prevent White from castling; indeed, White must lose yet another tempo, unless he wishes to play 20 Bxh7+ and 21 0-0, settling for complete equality. It is most improbable that White would not try to refute the sacrifice; consequently, Black can count on a powerful attack against the stranded enemy king in the center. Such, approximately, were the considerations, based upon which I decided to sacrifice. Only an incontrovertible belief in the strength of my position and the irrefutable principles of development drove me to this sacrifice, since I know of no similar example, even today, of such a breakthrough. I believed that, despite his extra piece, White would find it very difficult to defend against a preponderance of force, even a preponderance in only a limited area of the board, and that this circumstance would at the very least lead to the loss of several of White’s pawns. The game’s further course shows - at least from a practical standpoint - that my suppositions were entirely correct.”

**20 Qg3 Rfe8+ 21 Be2 Rbd8 22 Nc3 (22 Kf1 Rxe2+! 23 Kxe2 Qc4+! 24 Ke1 Re8+) 22...Qd2+ 23 Kf1 Nd5**

“Stronger than 23...Qxb2. In such positions, pawns should only be taken if one is going to that square anyway. All one’s thoughts must be concentrated on the attack.” (Spielmann)

**24 Re1 Nxf4 25 Qf2 Rd4 26 g3 Nh3 27 Qf5 Qxb2 28 Qxh3?**

According to Spielmann, the main line was 28 Nd1! Qd2! 29 Qxh3 Rde4 30 Nf2! Rxe2 31 Rxe2 Qxe2+ 32 Kg2 h5!, giving rise to an unclear position, with mutual chances.

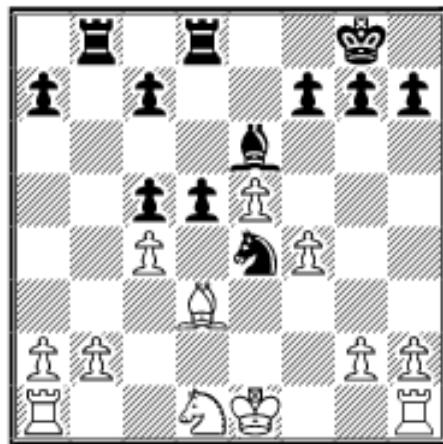
**28.. Qxc3 29 Qf5 Rde4! 30 Qf2 Qd2 31 Rg1 R4e6 32 Rg2 Rf6 33 Bf3 Rxe1+. White resigned.**

Thus we see that the sacrifice objectively did not promise Black any advantage. In fact, it’s not too hard to demonstrate that it should have left him with the worse position.

**17 ...d6-d5?! 18 e4-e5! Nf6-e4**

18...dc 19 Bc2 is bad too.

**19 Qh4xd8 Rf8xd8**



Spielmann considers this position to be in his favor, due to his opponent’s lag in development. This is not true - the most important factors in this position are the gaping holes in Black’s pawn structure.

**20 b2-b3 f7-f5 21 c4xd5 Be6xd5 22 Nd1-e3 Bd5-e6 23 Bd3xe4 f5xe4 24 Ra1-c1**

And here, Black clearly faces an uphill struggle to draw.

Instead of the spectacular, but objectively not quite correct sacrifice, Spielmann could have begun a straightforward plan of exerting pressure on the enemy center by **17...Re8! 18 0-0 Bd7**, for example: 19 Nc3 (19 e5 de 20 fe Rxe5 21 Rxf6 Qxf6 22 Qxh7+ Kf8 does not work) 19...Rxb2 20 e5 Bc6! 21 Nd5 Bxd5 22 cd de 23 fe Qxd5, and Black wins.

White could defend by **19 Re1 Bc6 20 Nf2** (when 20...Rxb2? fails to 21 e5); but in that case, Black would obviously have an outstanding position.

### **3. Grünfeld - Spielmann (Sopron 1934)**

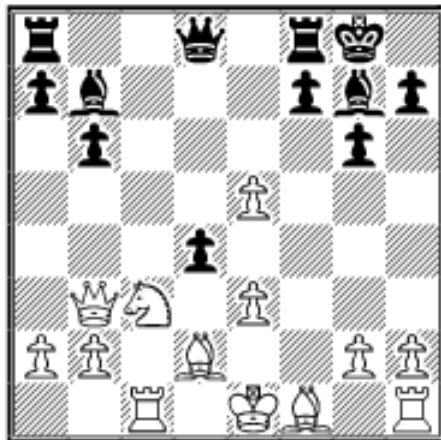
Black has a lead in development; hence, his desire to open the game as quickly as possible, in order to create an attack on the enemy king, stranded in the center, is strategically wholly justified. But it should have been brought to life by somewhat different means. A very strong idea, not mentioned in any of the commentaries, is **12...g5!** What does White do now? On 13 g3 gf 14 gf e5! - this blow is now much stronger than it was in the game. On 13 fg, Black also plays 13...e5! And finally, on 13 Bd3 gf 14 0-0, Black does best, not to accept the pawn sacrifice, but once again, to play the now universal reply 14...e5! In all these rather simple variations, the destruction of White's pawn structure is achieved free of charge, without a piece being sacrificed, in contrast to the game.

Let's see what the immediate central break leads to.

**12...e7-e5!? 13 f4xe5 Nd7xe5! 14 d4xe5**

If the piece is not accepted, 14 Be2 Nc4 gives Black an obvious advantage.

## 14...d5-d4!



“The opening of lines must be carried through right to the end.

In commenting on this game for a chess magazine, I made the following note to this position: ‘The correctness of the knight sacrifice cannot be shown analytically; and in a

correspondence game, the sacrifice might have been refuted. But in an over-the-board contest, with a time limit of 18 moves per hour, it would nearly always end successfully.’

This underscores the point of view of a chess pragmatist, which I have emphasized repeatedly in this book.

If every sacrifice is required to show unquestionable, analytically provable correctness, then we would have to erase from the game of chess every element of risk. This, however, would lead to the rejection of all real sacrifices, leaving only the pseudo-variety, which, strictly speaking, cannot be considered sacrifices at all.” (Spielmann)

The thoughts of a grandmaster on the theme of acceptable risk in practical play are instructive and interesting. However, we should not accept them unquestioningly. In the first place, times have changed, and the technique of defense has grown considerably. Many decisions which, just a few decades ago, could have been considered correct from a practical standpoint, would be labeled dubious by modern grandmasters. And in the second place, sometimes it really does make sense to go into irrational complications when there exists no



good and safe alternative; but in this instance, as we have seen, such an alternative did in fact exist.

### **15 e3xd4!**

It is strange that this natural move was not the one played. Grunfeld was afraid of the intermediate check 15...Qh4+. “However, the queen check is not the strongest continuation, since after Kd1 and Kc2 White threatens to escape with his king.” (Spielmann)

### **15...Qd8xd4 16 Nc3-e2!**

16...Qxe5 is now met by 17 Bc3; 16...Qh4+ 17 Qg3 is also useless. In my view, Black does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece, and his attack will be beaten off.

Now let's see how the game went.

### **15 Nd1? Bxe5 16 e4 Bxe4**

White has avoided the opening of the d-file, but at a steep price. The attack continues anyway, and now his opponent has two pawns for the piece. Thus, the amount of risk he is subjected to is commensurately less.

### **17 Nf2 Bd5 18 Qh3 Qe7** (for now, it makes no sense to lose time capturing the a-pawn) **19 Be2?**

This appears to be the decisive oversight. White hopes to castle, but he never gets the chance. 19 Kd1 was better, meeting 19...Bxa2 with 20 Bc4.

### **19...d3!! 20 Nxd3 Rfe8 21 Kf1** (21 0-0 Bd4+) **21...Bxb2!**

Spielmann believes that he could have recovered the piece here by 21...Bc3 22 Bxc3 Qxe2+ 23 Kg1 Re3 (he

didn't like the position after 24 Re1 Rxh3 25 Rxe2 Rxd3 26 a3), but this would have been a mistake, in view of 24 Nf4!

**22 Re1 Qf6+ 23 Nf2** (23 Bf3 Bc4! is bad) **23...Bd4 24 Qg3 Re4!**

This is more exact than 24...Re5 25 Bd3! Now on 25 Bd3 Rg4! decides; on 25 Qf3 Rxe2! is sufficient - if then 26 Qxe2 Bc4! And finally, after 25 Bf3 Bc4+ 26 Kg1 Rxe1+ 27 Bxe1 Re8, any retreat from e1 by the bishop allows 28...Bf2+.

**25 h4 Rae8** (threatening 26...Rxe2) **26 Bb5 Rxe1+ 27 Bxe1 Re3!** (27...Rxe1+ 28 Kxe1 Bxf2+ 29 Qxf2 Qa1+ also wins) **28 Qg5** (28 Qb8+ Kg7 29 Bb4 Bc5! 30 Bxc5 Qa1+) **28...Rxe1+ 29 Kxe1 Qxf2+ 30 Kd1 Bxg2 31 Re1 Bf3+ 32 Be2 Bc3! 33 Bxf3 Qxf3+ 34 Kc2 Bxe1** White resigned

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COLUMNISTS

## *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## Non-Standard Combinations

Tactical mastery, in a chessplayer, is put together from several parts. The basics are:

- 1) tactical alertness, resourcefulness, an eye for combinations;
- 2) the ability to anticipate unexpected possibilities from one's opponent;
- 3) lengthy and accurate calculation of variations; and
- 4) self-assurance, courage, and a readiness for risk.

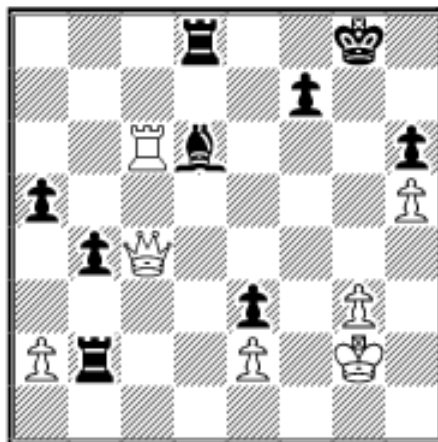
It hardly needs demonstrating that training for tactical mastery begins precisely with our first point: the growth of fantasy and resourcefulness. It's no accident that so many problem-books are published, for beginners as well as for midrank players. Solving the combinations in these collections acquaints you with the most important tactics, things like forks, interference, decoying, etc. After this, finding typical combinations won't cause you the slightest difficulty.

But suppose we have a chessplayer who has gained experience, and has already reached a high level of mastery. His tactical training nevertheless can and should continue - just in a somewhat different way. What we train for then is not the mastery of the basic tactics, but the capability of quickly finding unexpected solutions - solutions that are not obvious at first glance. And we do not just look for combinations (recall Botvinnik's definition: "A combination is a forcing variation involving sacrifices"), but also for concrete moves which do not involve sacrificing material.

In one of the tests given in a recent session of my school



in Russia, I included the following example:



***Korchnoi – Savon USSR Championship, Riga 1970***

White to move

White has a great advantage. Wouldn't 38 Kf3, or exchanging rooks by 38 Rc8, seem like the simple, safe route? Those

answers were given by almost all solvers (grandmasters and strong masters among them). In both cases, however, Black could have dragged out resistance for quite some time; after the move Korchnoi makes, the battle is over at once.

### **38 Qh4!**

The rook is en prise, and 38..Rd7 is met by the forking 39 Qg4+. After **38...Rxe2+ 39 Kf3** (39 Kh3) **39...Be7 40 Qxe7**, Black resigned.

White's solution was tactical - but not combinative, since nothing was sacrificed (of course, we don't count the e2-pawn). Such exercises in real-world tactics are not to be found in any books of combinations; yet they are most effective in developing tactical alertness.

Of course, in order to train one's combinative alertness, it is useful to get training in finding combinations - non-standard combinations, whose difficulty lies in their unexpectedness and subtlety. Such as the following:



***Kujala – Zagorovsky***  
**Correspondence 1992/96**

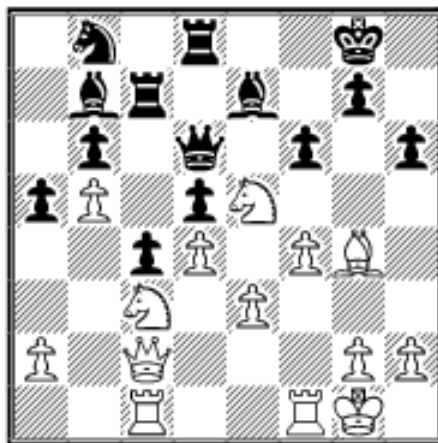
White to move

1 Nxg5? Rg7 is a mistake;  
 nor does White get  
 anything out of 1 Qxg5+?!  
 Qxg5 2 Nxg5 Nc4 3 Rc3  
 Rxa3 4 Rxa3 Nxa3

(unclear).

**1 Nd4!!+-** (attacking the b5-pawn). Black resigned in view of **1...ed 2 Bxd4 Rb7 3 Rxb6! Rxb6 4 Rc8!! Qxc8** (4...Qe7 5 Rxe8 Qxe8 6 Qxg5+ and 7 Bxb6) **5 Qxg5+ Kh7** (5...Kf7 6 Qf6+) **6 Qh5+ Bh6 7 Qf7+.** In order to give mate here, White had to find a combinative means to open his dark-squared bishop's diagonal, and draw off all the enemy pieces defending the king.

And now, watch how habits and knowledge, developed by this kind of training, help achieve success in tournaments against very strong opposition. You have before you several sharp examples of the work of my student, Vadim Zvjagintsev, at the recently completed round-robin grandmaster tournament in Essen (Germany), where he secured first prize, winning six games while drawing only three.



*Zvjagintsev –  
Kasimzhanov Round 1*

White to move

Black has just played f7-f6, to drive back the strong knight and thereby reduce the pressure on his position. After the

unexpected reply **24 Qg6!!**, he had to resign at once, since 24...fe 25 Be6+ Kh8 26 fe leads to a quick mate.



*Fridman – Zvjagintsev  
Round 2*

Black to move

Black has the extra pawn on c4, but it will be recovered soon, leaving White with a good position. What can be done

here? Vadim finds a surprising solution.

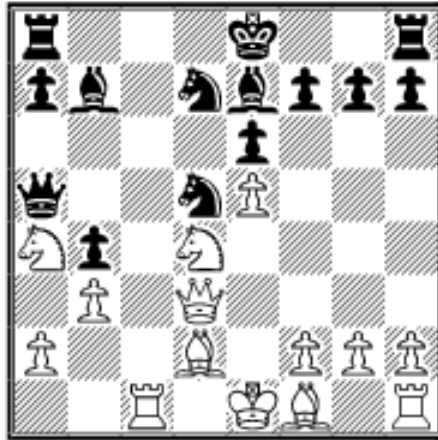
**12...Bb4! 13 Nxc4** On 13 e4 Bxc3 14 bc Bd7! is unpleasant, as the pawn is taboo; whereas now, 13...Nxd5? would be bad because of 14 0-0-0.

**13...Bh3!!**

The weakness of the d5-pawn tells, nevertheless: after 14 Bxh3 Bxc3+ 15 bc Qxd5 -/+, the forking attack on rook and knight allows Black to recover the piece.

**14 Bf3 0-0 15 e4 c6!** With the White king stranded in the middle of the board, Black opens the game up

right away. Now he has an obvious advantage, which he successfully converted.



### *Korchnoi – Zvjagintsev* **Round 4**

Korchnoi had introduced an opening novelty, and obtained a promising position. Here, he could continue 15 Qb5! Qxb5 16 Bxb5+/, but decides he wants more.

**15 Qg3?!** His calculus is understandable: 15...0-0 leads to the loss of the exchange after 16 Bh6; on 15...g6, Black must consider both 16 Bh6 and 16 Bb5!?!; and other ways of defending the g7-pawn have their drawbacks too. Zvjagintsev considered his next move for only a couple of minutes.

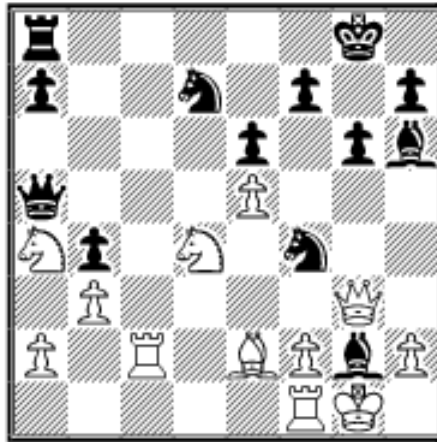
**15...0-0!! 16 Bh6 g6 17 Bxf8 Bxf8** Unlike the preceding examples, this isn't a combination, but rather a positional sacrifice. Finding it required not so much tactical as strategic resourcefulness: the ability to evaluate properly the coming non-standard position.

For the time being, Black doesn't have even one pawn for the exchange sacrificed. However, the e5-pawn is vulnerable, and he also threatens 18...Bh6, followed by Bf4 or Nf4. White should probably have played either 18 Bb5 Bh6! 19 Rc2, or 18 Nc6 Bxc6 19 Rxc6, leading to a complex position with mutual chances. Korchnoi, however, went into a long think, and found a deep and beautiful combination with a queen sacrifice.

**18 Be2?! Bh6 19 Rc2** (19 Nc6 Bxc6 20 Rxc6 Nf4

21 Rc2 Qxe5 22 Qf3 Qa1+ 23 Bd1 Rd8 is bad)  
**19...Nf4 20 0-0** The g2 square is indefensible: 20 Bf3 Qxe5+, or 20 Nf3 Qd5 21 0-0 Qe4 22 Bd1 Qxc2! 23 Bxc2 Ne2+ 24 Kh1 Nxc3+ 25 hg Rc8-+.

### 20...Bxg2



**21 Qxg2!? Nxc2 22 Nc6**

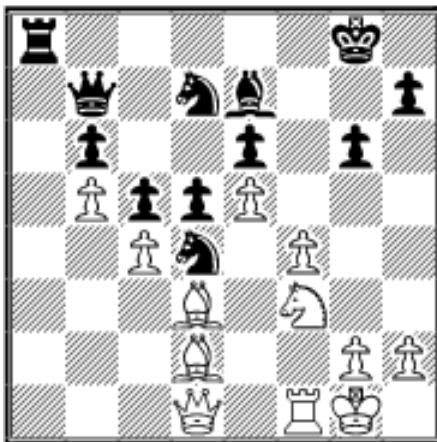
This was Viktor Lvovich's idea. The queen has nowhere to go; 22...Rc8 is met by 23 Nxa5 Rxc2 24 Bd1, with two Black pieces en prise. However, Vadim demonstrates a spectacular refutation.

**22...Ne3!! 23 fe** Black

also has the advantage after

23 Nxa5 Nxc2 24 Nc6 (24 f4? Ne3 25 Rf3 Nd5; 24 Bf3 Rc8 25 Nc6 Rc7) 24...Bf4.

**23...Bxe3+ 24 Kg2 Qd5+** (thanks to this check, White does not get the Ne7+ fork) **25 Bf3 Qd3 26 Rb2** (26 Nxb4 Qb5 27 Bxa8 Qxb4-+) **26...Qb5! 27 Re1** (27 Ne7+ Kf8-+) **27...Bg5 28 Rd1 Nb6 29 Nd4 Qe8 30 Nxb6 ab 31 Bxa8 Qxa8+ 32 Nf3 Bf4**, and Black soon converted his advantage.



### Zvjagintsev – Dautov Round 5

In the first part of the game, Zvjagintsev played to restrict the Black pieces: in fixing the Black pawn at c5, he blocked both the bishop at e7 and the knight at d7. But now, feeling that

there are too few defenders near the Black king, he



begins an assault, without worrying that, at the same time, he is opening the floodgates to the enemy pieces as well.

**24 Nxd4! cd 25 Qg4 Kg7** After 25...Nf8 26 f5 ef 27 Bxf5, White has a strong attack.

25...Nc5!? leads to interesting complications. It's likely that Dautov did not play this, because of the tempting bishop sacrifice 26 Bxg6 hg 27 Qxg6+ Kh8. But how does White continue the onslaught? 28 Rf3 is met by 28...Ra1+ 29 Kf2 Bh4+!, and the Black bishop comes to h4 with tempo, cutting off the White rook's path to his king. 28 f5 Bf8 isn't convincing, either. Let's look at 28 Qh5+!? Kg8 29 Qg4+ Kh8 30 f5



Here 30...Bf8 leads to a difficult position for Black after 31 cd ed 32 Qh4+ Kg8 (32...Qh7 33 Qxd4 is bad for Black - this is why the queen moved to the 4th rank) 33 f6. It looks as though his king also cannot be saved after 30...ef 31 Rxf5. But you must verify this - that is, continue the analysis. Here again, a sharp combinative eye will come in extremely handy.

Black has to expend all his checks: 31...Ra1+ 32 Kf2 Ne4+ 33 Ke2 d3+ 34 Kxd3 dc+ - and now where does the king go? If 35 Kc2 Ra2+ 36 Kc1 Ra1+ 37 Kb2, then 37...Ra2+!!, and 38 Kxa2? Qa8+ 39 Kb1 Nxd2+ is bad. On 35 Ke2, Black has the brilliant counterstroke 35...Ng3+!! 36 hg (36 Qxg3? Qe4+) 36...Qxg2+ 37 Rf2 Qh1!, when White has no more than a perpetual check.

So - does 25...Nc5 only give us a draw? No: as Zvjagintsev notes, he would have sacrificed the bishop a different way: 26 f5! (instead of 26 Bxg6) 26...Nxd3 (26...ef 27 Bxf5 dc 28 Bxg6 hg 29 Qxg6+ Kh8 30 Qh5+ Kg8 31 Bh6+-) 27 fg, and White's attack is very strong.

### 26 Qxe6 Nc5 27 Qh3 Ra2

Black also stands poorly after 27...Nxd3 28 Qxd3 Ra3 29 Qe2. The text allows Vadim to play a decisive combination, sacrificing two pieces.



**28 f5! Rxd2 29 f6+ Kg8  
30 Bxg6!**

There was a second way to win - but only a computer would find it: the non-standard 30 Qh4!, after which there is no satisfactory defense against 31 fe.

**30...hg 31 Qh6 Bf8 32 Qxg6+ Bg7 33 f7+ Black resigned.**

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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Mark Dvoretsky

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## Pawns Arranged against the Rules: On the Same Color Squares as the Bishop

or

### "Lawless Pawns"

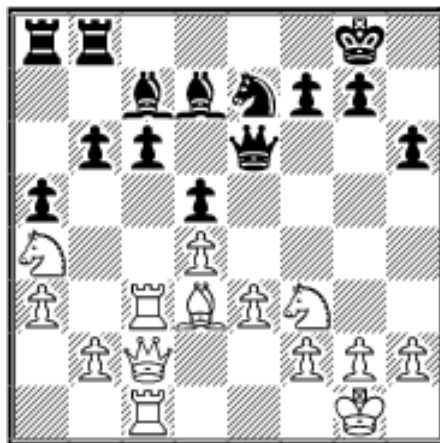
Both the reading of chess literature and our own tournament practice enrich us with knowledge of many rules and regulations, helping us orient ourselves on the limitless sea of chess positions. Nurturing our chess culture plays a most important part in the making of a complete chessplayer - but there is danger here, too. Trouble comes when a chessplayer believes so implicitly in the rules he has learned, that he begins to employ them unquestioningly - for there is no rule that has no exception. Routine, mechanical observance of book wisdom is just as likely to lead to the loss of vital points as the ignorance of basic knowledge.

One ought generally to arrange one's pawns on the color opposite that of one's own bishop. This is one of the most basic chess principles, fully applicable to both same color bishop vs. bishop as well as in bishop vs. knight endings. There are exceptions here as well, however; and not that rare, either. Some of these exceptions can even lead to generalizations of their own.

1) Suppose that, with bishops of the same color, we have achieved a clear positional advantage, by fixing the opponent's pawns on the same color



squares as his bishop (and consequently, placing our pawns “lawfully”, on the opposite-colored squares). While doing this, it can be important at times to leave some pawns on the same colored squares as the bishop, to help break down the enemy defenses.



***Taimanov – Kotov***  
**Candidates' Tournament,**  
**Zurich 1953**

White stands better, but how to take advantage of this? Taimanov outplays his opponent instructively.

**24. Re1!?**

In order to increase his pressure on the queenside, White must play b2-b4 - which doesn't work right away, in view of 24. b4? ab 25. ab c5! (25...Bd6!?) 26. Nb2 (or 26. b5) 26...c4 with advantage. Therefore, White “spooks” his opponent with the threat of a central break, hoping to provoke him into weakening his own position.

**24...f5?**

The threat of 25. e4 was not that strong; Black should have ignored it, continuing either 24...Re8 or 24...Qf6.

**25. b4!** (now this move is possible) **25...ab 26. ab Bd6**

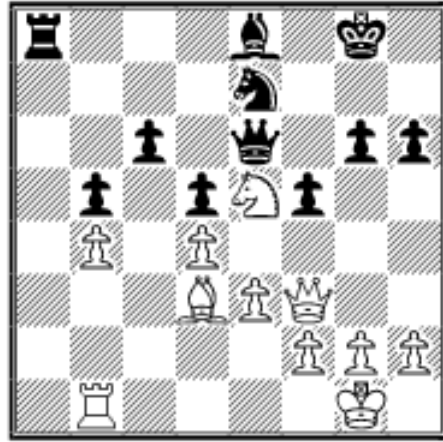
Now 26... c5 would be bad, in view of 27. Nb2 c4 28. Nxc4 dc 29. Bxc4 Nd5 30. Bxd5 intending 31. Rxc7.

**27. Rb1** (intending 28. b5) **27...b5?!**

On 27...c5, White has a choice between 28. Nxb6 cb 29. Nxa8 bc 30. Rxb8 Bxb8 31. Qxc3 with a big advantage and 28. b5!? c4? (28...cd with advantage to White) 29. Rxc4! dc 30. Bxc4 Nd5 31. Qb3 with a winning

advantage. However, the text signals a grave positional concession from Black.

**28. Nc5 Bxc5 29. Rxc5 Ra4 30. Ne5 Rba8 31. Qe2 Be8 32. Qf3 Ra1 33. Rcc1 Rxb1 34. Rxb1 g6**



The comments which follow are excerpted from the famous book of the 1953 Candidates' Tournament:

“And so, White has obtained all that a positional player could dream of. With light-squared bishops on the board, five of Black's pawns stand

on light squares; his knight occupies an ideal position in the center of the board, and cannot be driven off; and Black's pieces are tied to the defense of his weak pawns at g6 and c6, which are on open files. Now, if only White's rook could seize the a-file!”

How should White choose his plan of attack? Since his opponent's weaknesses are all fixed on light squares, White should attack on the light squares, according to the following rough strategy (taking into account, of course, the responses of his opponent): h3, Kh2, Rg1 and g4. Another possibility would be to retreat the queen, followed by f3 and e4. With his moves h4 and f4, however, Taimanov deprives himself of any possibility of a break on the light squares, and thereby kills three-quarters of his chances.” (D. Bronstein)

**35. h4? Kg7 36. Qg3 Qd6 37. f4? h5 38. Be2 Ra4?**

A terrible mistake which results in a catastrophe. After 38... Kh7, White has no visible means of making progress.

**39. Bd1! Rxb4** (if the rook retreats, then 40. Bxh5) **40.**

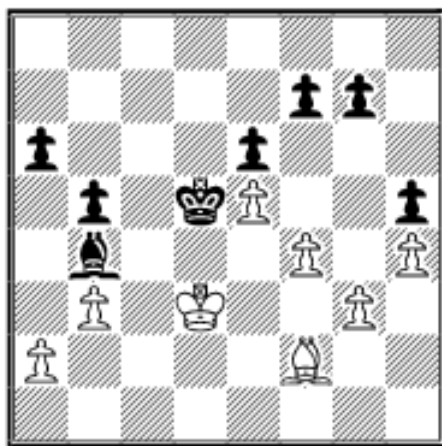
**Ra1** (with a winning advantage)

The rook penetrates decisively on the a-file.

**40...Nc8**

40...Kh7 41. Ra7! Rb1 42. Qg5 Rxd1+ 43. Kh2 winning.

**41. Ra8** (41. Bxh5? Ra4) **40...Qe6 42. Bxh5 Kf8 43. Bxg6 Bxg6 44. Nxg6+ Ke8 45. Ne5 Kd8 46. Qg7 Ra4 47. Rb8 c5 48. Rb7** Black resigned.



*Sveshnikov - Kasparov*  
USSR Championship,  
Minsk 1979

Black has the more active king and the better pawn structure: all the enemy pawns on the king side are fixed on the color of the bishop.

**33...g6?**

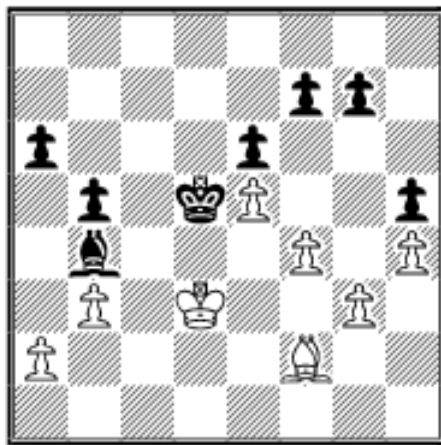
This looks logical at first sight, since Black's last pawn is removed from the same color square as his bishop. It also puts his opponent in zugzwang, since the bishop cannot retreat in view of 34...Be1. However, this is in fact a serious positional error, which should have cost Black the win.

**34. Ke2 Bc5 35. Bxc5?**

And White errs in turn! After the exchange of bishops, Black's king goes to a3, and then he can execute the standard procedure of exchanging pawns to clear the way for his king to go to the other side.

**35...Kxc5 36. Kd3 Kb4 37. Kc2 Ka3 38. Kb1 a5 39. Ka1 a4! 40. ba Kxa4 41. Kb1 (41. Kb2 b4) 41...Ka3 42. Ka1 b4 43. Kb1 b3. White resigned.**

Sveshnikov had to avoid the exchange of bishops. After 35. Be1! Ke4 36. Ba5, Black appears to have no way of strengthening his position. And if 35...b4 (hoping for 36. Bd2? Ke4 37. Be1 a5 38. Bd2 Bd4 39. Be1 Be3 with zugzwang; or 39. Bc1 Bc3 40. Be3 Be1!), White simply plays 36. Kf3!, with a draw.



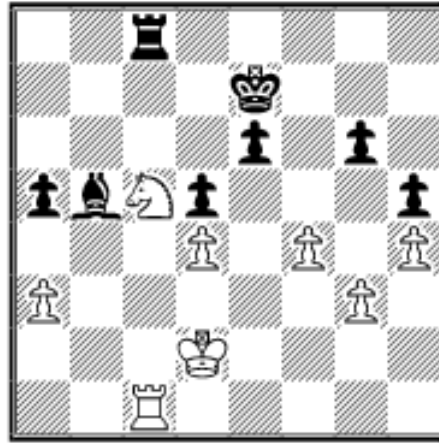
Let's go back to the diagram. Why was the natural move 33...g6 wrong? Because Black needs that pawn to be on g7, to help break up the enemy pawn chain. Kasparov should have played a waiting move with his bishop, in order to pass the move back to his opponent.

**33...Ba5! 34. Ke2**

Worth a look is 34. a3!?, followed by b3-b4; but then too, Black can play for the win by combining the possible breaks f7-f6 and a6-a5.

**34...Ke4 35. Bc5 f6! (the break!) 36.ef gf.** Black continues by putting his bishop at c7 (or if White plays 37. Bd6, then on b6), his king at f5, and then playing e6-e5 with a great (and probably decisive) advantage.

**2) If your opponent is confined to passive defense on account of his “bad” bishop, but a pawn of his is “properly” placed (on the opposite-colored square), then it is this pawn that will sometimes become a weakness, and the chief target of your attack.**



## *Arnason – Dolmatov Sochi 1988*

Black's position is difficult - nearly all of his pawns stand on the same color squares as the bishop.

How should he defend? In order to answer this question, it is necessary first of all to understand what your opponent's intentions are.

### **49...a4!**

The last Black pawn moves onto the same color square as the bishop. Does this violate of a well-known positional principle? Yes; but at the same time, it marks the observance of another, less well known one, which had just been formulated.

If White had been given the opportunity to play a3-a4, there would have been no saving the a5-pawn. Thus, Black's move was forced. "Whoso loseth his head will never complain again about baldness."

### **50. Rb1 Bc6 51. Rb6 Kf6**

White's rook has no invasion squares, either on the b- or the a-files (after 52. Ra6 Rc7). The only way to win the a4-pawn now is by exchanging the minor pieces, but then the rook ending is a draw.

### **52. Ke3 Kf5 53. Kf3 Kf6 54. gf hg+ 55. Kxg4 Rc7**

Black, in zugzwang, must allow the enemy rook to enter. But after the pawn exchange, this isn't so bad anymore.



## **56. Na6**

Before getting his rook in, Arnason wants to ask his opponent a few preliminary questions.

## **56...Rc8 57. Nb4 Ba8**

He cannot give up the center pawn: after 57...Bd7? 58. Nxd5+ Kf7, both 59. Nb4 and 59. Rb7 are strong.

## **58. Nd3**

58. Ra6 is met by 58...Bb7 59. Rxa4 Rc3, intending 60...Bc8!

## **58...Bc6!**

Of course Black can't allow White to shut the bishop in by 59. Ne5.

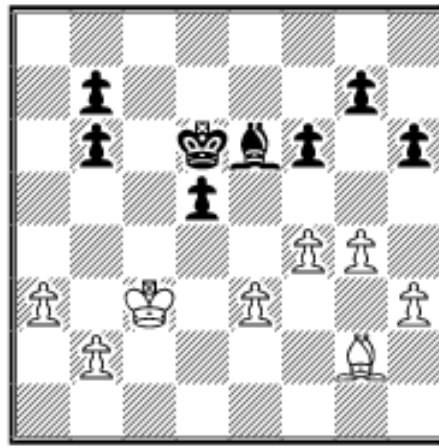
## **59.Nb4 Ba8 60.Nd3 Bc6 61.Nc5 Rc7 62.Rb8 Re7 63.Rf8+ Rf7!**

63...Kg7? would lose after 64. Rc8 and Kg5. But after the exchange of rooks - 64. Rxf7+ Kxf7 65. Kg5 Bb5 - the king invasion is no longer decisive.

## **64.Rd8 Bb5 65.Rd6 Re7 66.Rb6 Be2+ 67.Kg3 Bd1**

The game continued for quite a while longer. Dolmatov continued to defend accurately, and in the end, obtained a well-earned draw.

**3) The stronger side will sometimes place his pawns on the same color squares as his own bishop, in order to restrict the opponent's bishop.**



## **Wojtkiewicz – Khalifman Rakvere 1993**

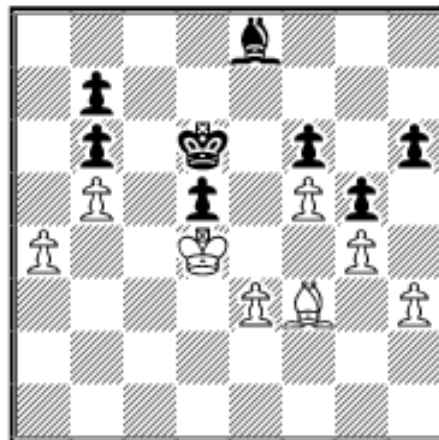
The routine 30. Kd4? would allow Black to set up an impenetrable position with 30...b5!, followed by b7-b6. For example: 31. Bf1 Bd7 32. Kc3 Kc5! (not allowing the enemy king on b4) 33.

b4+ Kd6. Here, White cannot create a zugzwang, because the bishop is unable to attack two pawns simultaneously.

### **30. a4! g5**

30...Bd7! was more stubborn. On 31. Kd4? Bxa4 32. Bxd5 Bc6 33. e4 g5 34. e5+ fe+ 35. fe+ Ke7, Black should draw. Correct would be 31. b3 Kc5 (31...b5 32. a5 Kc5 33. b4+ Kd6 34. Kd4 is hopeless: after the unstoppable e3-e4, the b7-pawn is too weak) 32. Bf3! (32. b4+? Kd6 would be premature) 32...g5 33. b4+ Kd6 34. Bd1!, with 35. Kd4 to follow. This leads to roughly the same position as in the game.

### **31. Kd4 Bf7 32. Bf3 Be6 33. f5! Bf7 34. b4 Be8 35. b5!**

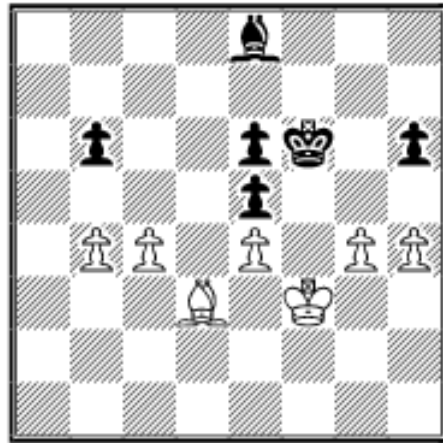


White has utilized his pawns for maximum restriction of the enemy bishop. Now he brings his bishop to b3, and then plays e3-e4. In formulating his plan, Wojtkiewicz had to calculate accurately the forced pawn ending that arises.

**35...Bf7 36. Bd1 Bg8 37. Bb3 Bf7 38. e4 Bg8 39. Ba2 Bf7 40. Bxd5 Bxd5 41. ed Kc7 42. Kc3!** (followed by 43. Kb4, 44. a5) **42...Kd6 43. Kc4 Ke5**

43...Kd7 also loses: 44. Kb4 Kd6 45. a5 Kxd5 (45...ba+ 46. Kxa5 Kxd5 47. Kb6 Kc4 48. Kxb7 Kxb5 49. Kc7 and wins) 46. a6 ba 47. ba Kc6 48. Ka4 b5+ 49. Ka5.

**44. a5! ba 45. Kc5 a4 46. d6 b6+ 47. Kc6 a3 48. d7 a2 49. d8Q a1Q 50. Qd6+ Ke4 51. Kxb6 Kf3 52. Kb7 Kg2 53. Qd3 Qc1 54. b6 Qc5 55. Qb3 Kh2 56. Qf3 Qd4 57. Qc6! Kxh3 58. Kc8 Qb4 59. b7 Qf8+ 60. Kd7 Kxg4 (60...Qf7+ 61. Kd6 Qf8+ 62. Ke6) 61. Kc8.** Black resigned.



***Shulskis – Shlekis***  
**Lithuanian Championship**  
**1994**

The obvious move is 1. c5, for instance: 1...bc 2. bc Ke7 3. Ba6 Bc6 4. Bc8 Kf6 5. h5! Ke7 6. g5 hg 7. h6 g4+ 8. Ke3 Kf6 9. Bxe6 g3 10. Bd5 Bd7 11. Bb7 and

wins. But instead of 1...bc?, Black replies 1...b5!, and there is no win in sight: 2. Bc2 Bd7 3. Bb3 Kg6 4. Ba2 Kg7 5. h5 (or 5. g5 h5! 6. Bd5 ed 7. ed Bf5! =) 5...Kf6 6. Kg3 Bc6 7. g5+ hg 8. h6 Bxe4 9. Bb3 Kg6 10. Bxe6 Bc6! =.

**1. b5! Ke7**

1...Bd7 2. c5 bc 3. b6 Bc8 4. Bc4 Bb7 5. g5+ hg 6. hg+ Kxg5 7. Bxe6 intending 8. Bd5 and wins.

**2. h5!**

White employs the same strategy on the kingside as he

did on the queenside (2. g5? is a mistake in view of 2...h5! =). Now White can open the position on either wing, or even both at once, which guarantees him a simple win. For example: 2...Kf6 3. c5! bc 4. b6 Bc6 5. Ba6 winning; or 2...Kd6 3. Kg3 Kc5 4. g5 winning.

**2...Bd7 3. c5 bc 4. b6 Bc8 5. g5! hg 6. h6 Kf6 7. Bc4 Kg6 8. Bxe6 Bb7**

The bishop is taboo: 8...Bxe6 9. b7. However, he could have held out a little longer with 8...Ba6 - which still wouldn't have saved him after 9. Bd5 (9. Bc4 Bc8) 9...Kxh6 (9...c4 10. Bxc4) 10. b7 Bxb7 11. Bxb7 c4 12. Bd5 c3 13. Bb3 Kh5 14. Kg3 Kg6 (14...g4 15. Bc2 Kg5 16. Bd1 zugzwang - White wins) 15.Kg4 Kh6 16. Bc2 Kg6 17. Bd1 Kh6 18. Kf5 (zugzwang - White wins again).

**9. Bd5 Bc8 10. b7 Bxb7 11. Bxb7 c4 12. Bc8 Kxh6 13. Bg4** (intending Ke3-d2-c3).

Black resigned.

**4) Here White stationed his pawns on the same color squares as the bishop to prevent his opponent from closing up the position, while keeping in hand an unstoppable pawn break.**

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## An "Easy" Win

*The esthetic impression made by a game of chess must stem from its content, not its appearance... In the final analysis, the only thing that is beautiful in chess is the world of ideas.*

- Aron Nimzovich

Sometimes, a grandmaster game can be like an iceberg: nothing special to look at, everything simple and understandable. But looking at the part that's underwater makes a far different impression. And this you cannot do without an annotator's help. I especially love to read annotations which talk about the hidden forces motivating the struggle, the motives for selecting one move instead of another, the player's psychological sufferings at the board. All this is what one usually sees when a game is demonstrated by one of its participants.

The semifinal Candidates' Match of 1992 between Yusupov and Timman started off with a quick, sure win by Yusupov. The spectators present, as well as the specialists in attendance at the press-center, noticed no hidden finesses at all. But Artur came out of the game worn to a frazzle. The reason for this became clear to me when he described the problems he had had to solve.

***Yusupov - Timman 1st Candidates' Match Game, Linares 1992***



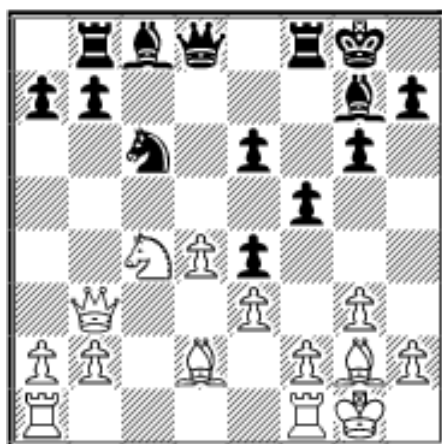
**1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 g7-g6 3 Ng1-f3 Bf8-g7 4 g2-g3 0-0 5 Bf1-g2 c7-c6 6 0-0 d7-d5 7 c4xd5 c6xd5 8 Nb1-c3 Nf6-e4**

*In this opening system, one (and sometimes both) of the knights must invade a central square.* For example, on 8...Nc6 White plays 9 Ne5! Anatoly Karpov likes to get the knight to e5 even earlier, instead of playing 8 Nc3.

**9 Nc3xe4 d5xe4 10 Nf3-e5 f7-f6**

The game follows a different course after 10...Qd5!? 11 b3!? Nc6 12 Bb2.

**11 Qd1-b3+ e7-e6 12 Ne5-c4 Nb8-c6 13 e2-e3 f6-f5 14 Bc1-d2 Ra8-b8**



**15 a2-a4!?**

This variation had occurred a year earlier, in the 4th Candidates' Match Game **Yusupov - Dolmatov** (Wijk aan Zee 1991); there, however, White chose a different continuation:

**15 Rac1 Bd7 16 Rfd1 b5!** This begins an interesting plan, aimed at restricting the bishop on d2. A weaker line is 16...Qe7 17 Ne5! Nxe5 18 de Rfd8 19 Ba5 b6 20 Bc3, when White has the better chances (Andersson - Nunn, Skelleftea 1989).

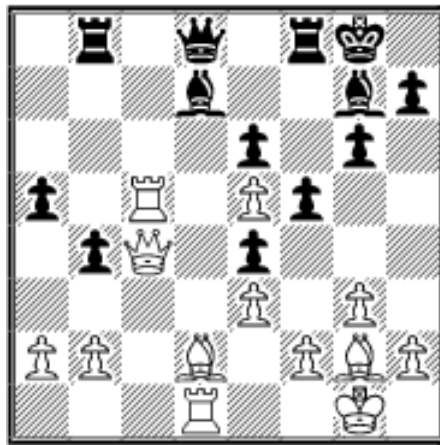
**17 Ne5 Nxe5 18 de b4!** Of course not 18...Bxe5?! 19 Bc3 Bxc3 20 Qxc3, when White has an obvious advantage.

**19 Rc5.** The queen sacrifice, 19 Bxb4 a5 20 Bxf8

Rxb3 21 Bxg7, leads only to an equal position after 21...Rd3! 22 Bf6 Qb6.

**19...a5!** 19...Qb6 20 Bxb4! (20 Qxb4 Ba4! 21 b3 Bxb3 22 ab Qxb4) 20...Rfd8 21 Ba3 Qxb3 22 ab Rxb3 23 Bf1 is inferior.

**20 Qc4!** On 20 a3, Black can now play 20...Qb6 21 Rdc1 (21 ab?? Qxc5) 21...Rfc8 22 Rxc8+ Rxc8 23 Rxc8+ Bxc8 24 ab ab, with equality



Now how does Black continue? 20...Qb6?! is dangerous, in view of 21 Bxb4! Qxb4 22 Qxb4 Rxb4 23 Rxd7 Rxb2 24 Bf1! Rxa2 25 Bc4 Ra1+ 26 Kg2, when the initiative is firmly in White's hands. Dolmatov replied 20...Rc8?!; the continuation 21 Qd4! Rxc5

22 Qxc5 Bc8 23 Bf1 left White with the better chances - although after some entertaining adventures, the game still ended in a draw.

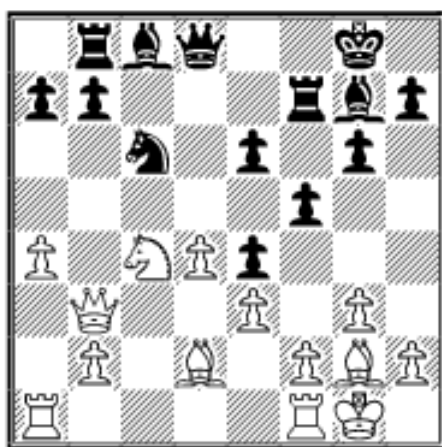
Sergey later found the strongest defensive plan, involving the reinforcement of his weak points at d7 and b4.

**20...Rf7! 21 Rc1.** If 21 Be1 Bf8 22 Rc7, then either 22...Rc8 with equality, or 22...Qe8!?, with 23..Bb5 to follow.

**21...Bf8 22 Rc7 Rb5!** Now problems have unexpectedly cropped up for White - the Black rook wants either to take on e5 or to occupy the strong square d5. In this variation, Black's chief strategic idea stands out: the exclusion of the d2 bishop from play.

Playing Timman, Yusupov noted that 15 Rac1 could be met, not only with 15...Bd7, but also with the immediate 15...b5. This is why Artur decided to cut off his opponent's queenside activity at once. On the other hand, 15 a4 is not a new move. It was played in a game Ribli - Andersson (Clermont-Ferrand 1989). After 15...Bd7 16 Qa3 Re8 17 a5 Bf8 18 Qa2 Qe7 19 Rfc1 Rec8 20 Bf1 Qd8 21 Rab1 Be8 22 b4, White retained some pressure.

### 15... Rf8-f7



Question: What is White's most accurate reaction to his opponent's novelty?

After half an hour's thought, the grandmaster played 16 Rac1!! I suspect that this news will leave you at least surprised, if not upset. Why the two exclamation marks

for the most natural of moves, one which any chessplayer would make, even in a blitz game?

But the move itself is only the tip of the iceberg. Once you see what lies beneath, you will understand why this moment became the critical point of the whole game, and largely decided the outcome.

***It is useful to begin the solution of any positional task with this question: "What is my opponent up to - what was the point of his last move?"*** It turns out that Black was preparing the central break 16...e5! 17 de (17 Nxe5 Bxe5 18 de Qxd2) 17...Be6.

How does White parry the threatened e6-e5? 16 Rfd1 would seem to be the simplest solution - after all, this move is part of White's plan, preparing the programmed



thrust Ne5 (as we saw in the games Yusupov - Dolmatov and Andersson - Nunn). However, at this point, moving the rook from f1 would be a positional error, allowing the Black queen to occupy the wonderful central square d5 free of charge. Black did not play Qd5 earlier, because he feared the break f2-f3! After the exchange of pawns at f3, he would have to lose time retreating the queen. But after 16 Rfd1? Qd5!, the break is no longer playable, and Black stands excellently.

The other easy choice, 16 Bc3, is not bad; but it's a shame to close off the c-file that White's rook wants to operate on. White could play this way - if there weren't a stronger continuation.

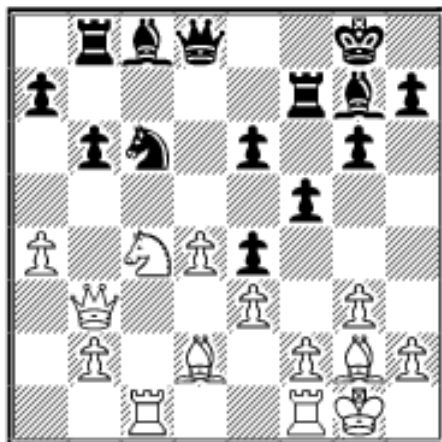
There is a well-known expression: "Tactics serve strategy." Yusupov saw that after the planned developing move he played in the game, the break with e6-e5 would run into a tactical refutation.

### **16 Ra1-c1!!**

Here Timman sank into thought, seeing that on 16...e5 his opponent had prepared 17 Nxe5! Bxe5 (17...Nxe5 18 de Qxd2 19 Rc7) 18 de Qxd2 19 Rxc6, or 18...Nxe5 19 Rc5! Nd3 20 Rd5. So he had to give up his intended plan, and seek out another - always an unpleasant and difficult task. In such situations, errors are quite likely.

We already know that 16...Qd5 is strongly met by 17 f3! On 16...Bd7, the rook looks pretty stupid on f7. Perhaps relatively best was 16...Rc7, with Bd7 to follow. Timman preferred a different way of developing his pieces.

### **16... b7-b6**



And now how does White play? Black wants to develop the bishop on b7, and then establish control over the d5 square. The shortcoming of this plan is the weakening of e6, which Yusupov ably exploits.

**17 f2-f3!**

When such moves do not involve the win of a tempo, they are usually not too good for White. Artur plays it here anyway, having a concrete tactical operation in mind.

**17... e4xf3 18 Bg2xf3 Bc8-b7**

Other moves are hardly any better: 18...Ne7 19 Bb4, or 18...Rc7 19 Na3.

**19 Bf3xc6!**

This unexpected exchange is the whole point.

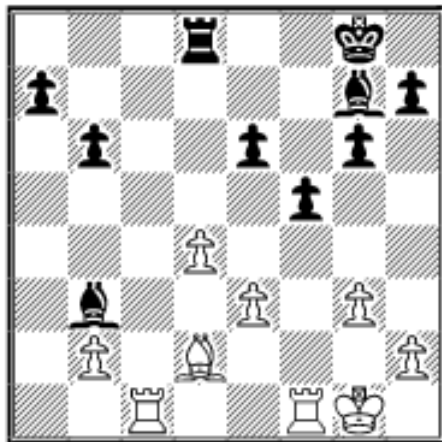
**19... Bb7xc6 20 Nc4-e5 Bc6xa4!**

The only chance. Completely hopeless was 20...Bxe5 21 Rxc6, when e6 is indefensible. Nor does it help to attempt to confuse matters by 20...Bd5 21 Nxf7 Kxf7, even though it could work out after 22 Qc3?! Rb7 23 Qc8 Qd6 24 Rc3 Re7 25 Rfc1 Bb7 (threatening 26...Qd5) 26 Qc4 h5!?, when Black has decent positional compensation for the exchange. But there is a simple refutation: 22 Qc2! Rb7 (otherwise 23 Qc7+) 23 e4! Bxd4+ 24 Kg2.

**21 Ne5xf7 Ba4xb3?**

Equivalent to capitulation. Black could have set his opponent far more complex problems after 21...Qd7! (We shall return to this later.)

## 22 Nf7xd8 Rb8xd8



The concluding phase of the game is an example of the technical realization of a material advantage. Black's only saving chances must come from either a counterattack on the enemy center with e6-e5, or consolidating his position after bringing his king to the

center. However, matters never get that far.

## 23 Rc1-c3!

Aiming to force matters, White refrains from the natural 23 Rc7. He intends to play 24 Rfc1 and 25 Rc8 instead.

*The exchange of one pair of rooks to facilitate the invasion of the remaining rook on the open file is a typical technique for the exploitation of the advantage of the exchange.*

## 23... Bb3-d5 24 Rf1-c1 Bg7-f6 25 Rc1-c8 Bd5-b7 26 Rc8-c7!

On 27 Rxd8+ Bxd8, all the c-file squares would have been covered. So Yusupov drops the idea of the exchange, instead occupying the 7th rank with tempo.

## 26... Bb7-e4 27 Bd2-b4!

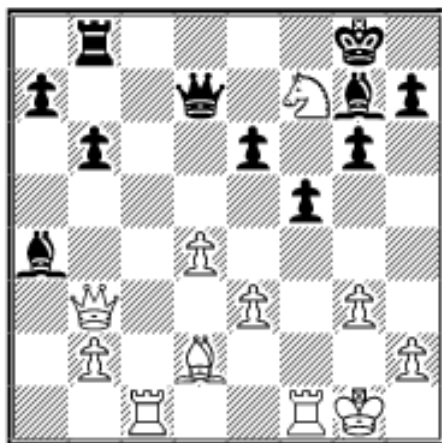
The a7-pawn isn't going anywhere. It's much more important to trade off the bishops, depriving the

opponent of his last hope for counterplay.

**27... g6-g5 28 Bb4-e7 Bf6xe7 29 Rc7xe7 f5-f4 30 g3xf4 g5xf4 31 e3xf4 a7-a5 32 Kg1-f2 Be4-f5 33 Re7-b7 b6-b5 34 Rc1-c7** Black resigned.

Let's go back a little, and see what could have happened if Black had played a stronger 21st move:

**21... Qd8-d7!**



How would you go about exploiting your advantage here?

If you had little time left on your clock, or if you were just too lazy to calculate complex variation, then without any particular thought you might simplify

the position with 22 Qc4 Kxf7 23 Qc7 Rb7 24 Qxd7+ Rxd7 (24...Bxd7 25 Bb4 would be weaker). But this version of the endgame is rather better for Black than what he obtained in the game. After, let's say, 25 Bb4 a5 or 25 Rc8 e5, he retains decent saving chances.

More principled would be **22 Qa2!? Kxf7**. Now White gets nothing out of the primitive 23 Ra1 Bb5 24 Qxa7? Rb7 or 23 Rc3 Bb5 24 Rfc1 Rb7. Sharper play is needed. I see two methods of starting an attack against the Black king: 23 g4 and 23 d5 ed 24 e4. Of course, neither line can be played without lengthy, accurate calculation.

First let's examine 23 g4!? White's idea becomes clear in the variation 23...Bb5? 24 gf! Bxf1 25 fe+ Qxe6 26 Rxf1+ Bf6 27 Qxa7+, and wins.

On 23...Kg8!? 24 gf gf 25 Rxf5, White gains the upper hand, for example: 25...Bc6 26 Rxc6!? (26 Rg5) 26...Qxc6 27 Qxa7 Ra8 28 Qf7+ Kh8 29 Rg5, or 25...Kh8 26 Rg5 Rg8 (26...Bxd4 27 Qc4, intending 28 Bc3) 27 Qc4.

Black could try a gambit sort of defense: 23...Bc6 24 gf Bd5. After 25 fe+ Kxe6 26 Qb1 Ke7!, the position is double-edged. But 25 fg+ Kg8 26 gh+ Kxh7 27 Qb1+ and 28 Qg6 is stronger.

In my view, however, Black's most promising line is a different way of sacrificing a pawn : 23...Ke8!? 24 Ra1 Bc6 (24...Bb5 25 Qxa7 Rb7 26 Qa8+ Kf7 27 Rfc1 Bxd4 28 Rc8, and White is the one doing the attacking) 25 Qxa7 Rb7 26 Qa8+ Kf7 27 Rfc1 (threatening 28 Rxc6 Qxc6 29 Ra7) 27...Rc7, with unclear play.

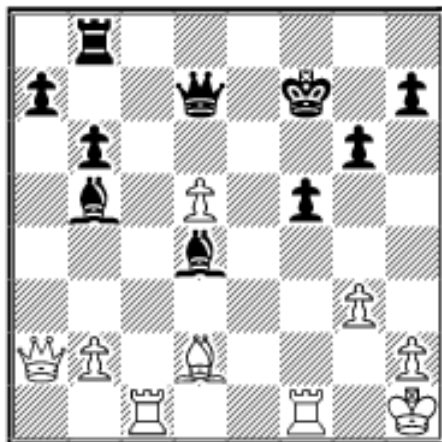
So the consequences of 23 g4 are unclear. The other possibility is a spectacular central break.

**23 d5!?** **ed** **24 e4!** The cautious 24...Bc6?! leads to a difficult position for Black after 25 ef gf 26 Bc3. He must find something more aggressive.

**24...Bb5** Now White gets nothing from 25 Bf4 Rb7 26 Rfd1 fe 27 Rxd5 Qe6; however, the exchange sacrifice, **25 ed!?**, deserves attention. The variations which follow were analyzed by me in conjunction with Grandmasters Joel Lautier, Matthew Sadler and Viswanathan Anand.

**25...Bd4+** The immediate 25...Bxf1 makes White's job easier: 26 d6+ Kf8 27 Rc7.

**26 Kh1**



**26...Bxf1 27 d6+ Kf6 28 Qd5!** The tempting **28 Rc7?** (counting on **28...Bd3?** **29 h4!** or **28...Qe6?** **29 Bg5+ Ke5 30 Re7**) is a mistake, because of **28...Qe8!**

**28...Be5 29 Rc7 Bd3! 30 Bg5+! Kxg5 31 Qxe5 Be4+**

On **31...Qe8** there follows **32 Qf4+ Kf6 33 Qd4+ Qe5 (33...Ke6 34 Qxd3, but not 34 Re7+? Qxe7 35 de Be4+ 36 Kg1 Re8) 34 Qh4+ (34 Rf7+ Kxf7 35 Qxe5 is strong too) 34...Ke6 35 Re7+.**

**32 Kg1 Qa4 33 Qe7+! Kg4 34 Qh4+ Kf3 35 Qf4+ Ke2 36 Qf2+ Kd1 37 Rc3!** (threatening **38 Qf1+ Kd2 39 Qc1+ Ke2 40 Re3#**) **37...Bc2**, and now the simplest way to win is **38 Ra3! Qe4 39 Re3.**

A pretty story, yes? But alas - it's only a story! When I told it to Vadim Zvjagintsev, he didn't believe it. In the position in the last diagram, he suggested that, instead of taking the rook, Black should play the cold-blooded **26...Rd8!** Now **27 d6+** can be met by either **27...Qe6** (when **28 Rc7+?! meets 28...Rd7**), or by Ken Neat's suggestion of **27...Kg7 28 Qd5 (28 Rc7? Bc6+) 28...Bc5.** I tried to find a path to advantage for White here, but nothing came of it.

Later, still another defense was discovered. I assessed the sharp variation **28...Qb7!** (instead of **28...Be5**) **29 Rc6 Bb5!! (29...Qxc6 30 Qxc6 Bd3 31 d7+ Kg7 32 d8Q! Rxd8 33 Qc7+ does not work) 30 Qxb5 Bc5! 31 b4 (31 d7+ Kg7 32 Bg5 a6! 33 Qa4 b5! 34 Qxa6 Qxd7 35 Rxc5 Qd1+, and perpetual check) 31...a6 32 d7+ Kg7 33 Qa4 Bd4 34 Bg5** in White's favor, because I failed to see the elegant drawing line **34...Kh8!! 35 d8Q Rxd8 36 Bxd8 Qd7.**

So where has White's apparently obvious advantage disappeared to? Is it possible that our treatment of the events of this game was wrong?

No; in fact, the error was committed by me only at the moment of choosing the plan to exploit the advantage. I was too quickly distracted by the analysis of spectacular variations. *Before plunging into the debris, one must first of all establish whether White has other promising possibilities. The "candidate-moves" principle is a most important technique, allowing you to organize your search and make your decision rationally, both during a tournament game and in analysis!*

GM Christopher Lutz suggested a comparatively simple and quite convincing means of retaining White's advantage.

**22 Qb3-b4! Kg8xf7**

22...a5? 23 Qd6 or 22..Bf8? 23 Ne5 Bxb4 24 Nxd7 are both bad.

**23 d4-d5! e6xd5 24 Bd2-c3**

Black may have two pawns for the exchange, but his position is hard. The dark squares are weak, the bishop at a4 has no future, and White's queen may quickly switch to the king's wing to whip up an attack (Qh4 or Qf4).

Many solutions seem simple after they have been discovered. But to make the correct choice at the board, with a speeding clock ticking at your elbow - that's very, very difficult. Had Timman played 21...Qd7!, who knows how the game would have ended?

What caused the Dutch Grandmaster's fatal error ? I think the explanation lies in the fact that, right from the

opening, Yusupov had a tight grip on the psychological initiative. Black allowed himself two slips (15...Rf7?! and 16...b6?!), which might actually have been good for him, if not for Artur's accurate responses. First, by means of his "elementary" 16th move, he prevented the e6-e5 break, and forced his opponent to seek a new plan. Then, by means of an unexpected exchange, he achieved a material advantage. Imagine Timman's psychological state! In such a situation, it's easy to lose faith in a favorable outcome. And when optimism wanes, your will to win is weakened, and the probability of errors grows apace.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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Mark Dvoretsky

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## Some Réti Studies

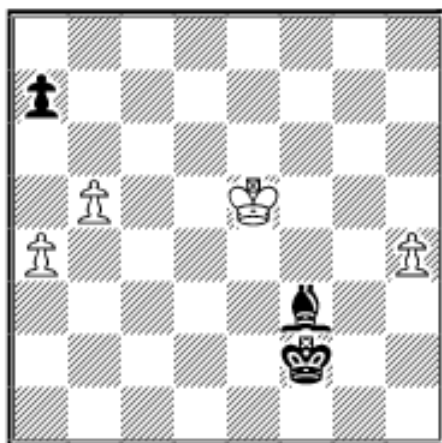
One of the first grandmasters to successfully combine practical play with endgame composition was Richard Réti. Many of his outstanding compositions are in my notebook.

The great majority of Réti's studies have successfully withstood the test of time. Years ago, I found a second solution to one of them, and presented it in my first book. Later, in a Spanish magazine, analysis appeared showing that I was wrong and the study was correct.

Quite recently, however (while working on an endgame manual), I still had to exclude from my notebook of exercises two of Réti's studies. In each case, the refutations were sufficiently subtle and interesting that I should like to present them here.

First, let's examine two quite similar positions.

### R. Réti, 1922



Black's bishop is fighting passed pawns on two separate diagonals. In such situations (to which M. Botvinnik gave the picturesque name of "*pants*"), the bishop is helpless without the aid of its king. The question becomes whether or not the Black king can reach the square of one of the passed pawns.

The task is easily solved if White plays the



straightforward 1 a5? Kg3=. Nor does he accomplish anything by marching his king after the a-pawn: 1 Kd6? Kg3 2 Kc7 Kxh4 3 Kb8 Bd1 4 a5 Be2=. And finally, on 1 Kf4? Be2! White finds himself in zugzwang. The pawns are immobilized; and if White's king goes to support them on one wing, Black's king is in time to get to the other wing: 2 Kg5 Ke3=, or 2 Ke4 Kg3 3 Ke3 Bg4! 4 a5 Kxh4 5 b6 ab 6 ab Bc8=.

Seeing that the zugzwang we spoke of is actually mutual brings us to the solution of this study. White has to "lose" a tempo.

### 1 Ke5-f5!! Bf3-e2

1...Kg3 2 Kg5 Be2 3 h5 Bd3 4 h6 Kf3 5 a5 is very bad. On 1...Ke3 2 a5 Kd4 3 b6 ab 4 ab Kc5 5 Kf4! Bd5 6 Ke5! Bf3 7 h5 is decisive. In these variations, we see put into action the *first method of exploiting the bishop "torn" between two diagonals: distraction*. One pawn moves forward, but it cannot be taken, or else the other pawn will queen.

### 2 Kf5-f4!

And here White uses the *second method: zugzwang*. From e2, the bishop freezes the advance of all the pawns; but any move it makes will allow one of them to advance. King moves will worsen Black's position also.

(I shall note parenthetically here the *third method of exploiting the "torn" bishop: the king can "bump" it from the point where the two diagonals intersect*.)

### 2...Kf2-g2

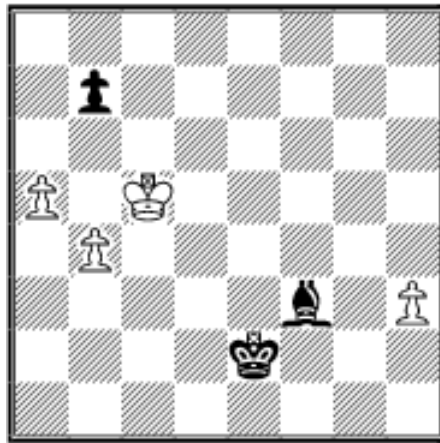
2...Ke1 3 Kg5 is no better.

### 3 Kf4-g5 Kg2-f3 4 h4-h5 Be2-d3 5 h5-h6Q

Black's king must go to e4 in order to neutralize 6 a5; but then it blocks the bishop, allowing the h-pawn to advance.

In this study, all was in order - the same, unfortunately, could not be said of the following study.

### R. Réti, 1922

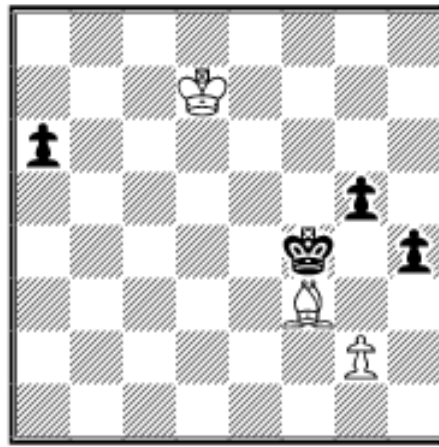


1 b5? or 1 h4? are met by 1...Ke3=. The author's solution was: **1 Kd4! Kf2 2 h4 Kg3 3 Ke3! Bg4 4 b5 Kxh4 5 b6!** (threatening 6 a6) **5...Bc8 6 Kf4(d4)**, when the king goes to c7.

Instead of 2...Kg3? Black could play 2...Be2! In Réti's opinion, this move changes nothing, in light of 3 Ke4 Kg3 4 Ke3 Bg4 5 b5, and so on - just as in the main variation.

The error of this assessment was apparently first discovered by the author of the following deep and difficult production, which combines ideas from both of Réti's studies.

### A. Chéron, 1955



**1 Bf3-c6!**

1 Kc6? h3! 2 Bd5 h2 would lose.

**1... Kf4-e5!**

1...a5? 2 Kd6=; 1...g4? 2 Kd6=.

**2 Kd7-c7 a6-a5 3 Bc6-d7! Ke5-d5!**

Nothing comes of 3...Kf4 4 Kd6! (a typical “pursuit of two rabbits”: the king wants to get inside the square of the a-pawn, while simultaneously getting closer to the kingside pawns) 4...Kg3 5 Bc6 a4 (5...g4 6 Kc5) 6 Bxa4 Kxg2 7 Bd7 h3 8 Ke5=.

**4 Kc7-b7!!**

Only this subtle move saves White!

The variation 4 Kb6? Kd6! 5 Bb5 g4 6 Kxa5 g3! 7 Bf1 Kc5(e5) 8 Ka4 Kd4 -+ is already familiar to us.

And after 4 Bc6+? Black wins, by employing the “tempo loss” we saw in the first study: 4...Kc4!! (but not 4...Kc5? 5 Bd7, and Black is in zugzwang) 5 Bd7 Kc5! (but now it’s White in zugzwang) 6 Kb7 Kb4 7 Kc6 a4 8 Be6 a3 -+.

Less obvious is the refutation of 4 Kd8? If Black’s king heads for one wing or the other, then the White king arrives just in time on the opposite wing. It’s important to determine first the direction White’s king is heading, and then to employ the “*shoulder block*”. And so: 4...Kd4!! 5 Ke7 (5 Kc7 Kc5! with the familiar zugzwang) 5..Ke5! (and again, White is in zugzwang, whereas the overhasty 5...Ke3? would allow him to save

himself after 6 Kd6! Kf2 7 Bc6 a4 8 Bxa4 Kxg2 9 Bd7=) 6 Kf7 Kf4 7 Ke6 (7 Kg6 g4 8 Kh5 h3 9 gh g3 -+. Thanks to the fact that the king had to go to f7, he is now in the path of his bishop.

**4...Kd5-d6 5 Kb7-c8! Kd6-c5**

5...Ke7 6 Kc7=; 5...Kd5 6 Kb7!!=.

**6 Kc8-c7**

And still, White has managed to obtain the key position of mutual zugzwang, with his opponent on the move. He offers Black the choice of which way to move his king, in order then to send his own king on an **end-run** to the opposite wing. For example: 6...Kb4 7 Kd6! =; or 6...Kd4 7 Kb6 =. But his opponent has one more try left.

**6...Kc5-c4!?** [The author's solution was two moves shorter; he considered 4...Kc4 at once.] **7 Kc7-c6!!**

The only way! The variation 7 Kb6? Kb4 8 Kc6 a4 9 Be6 a3 with a winning advantage is already quite well known to us. Another mistaken line would be 7 Kd6? Kd4! (zugzwang) 8 Ke7 (8 Kc6 a4R; 8 Ke6 g4 -+) 8...Ke5!, and once again, White is in zugzwang (cf. the variation 4 Kd8? Kd4!).

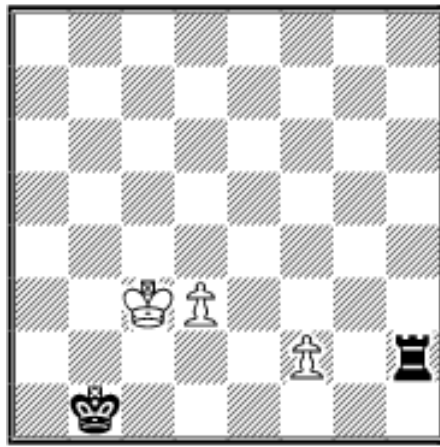
**7...a5-a4 8 Kc6-d6 a4-a3 9 Kd6-e5! Kc4-d3**

9...a2 10 Be6+

**10 Bd7-e6 Kd3-e3 11 Ke5-f5=**

The following study has an interesting history.

**R. Réti, 1929**



The king is unable to advance alongside the d-pawn: 1 d4?! Rxf2 2 Kc4 (2 d5 Rf4! with a winning advantage - a typical case of *cutting the king off from the pawn*) 2...Kc2 3 d5 Rd2! 4 Kc5 Kd3! (Black's king starts an *end-run*) 5 d6 Ke4 6 Kc6 Ke5 7 d7 Ke6 -+.

1 f4?! is met by 1...Rf2, and if 2 d4, then 2...Rxf4 3 Kc4 Kc2 4 Kc5 Kd3 -+ (another end-run, just as in the previous variation). 2 Kd4 Rxf4+ 3 Ke5 Rf8 4 d4 Re8+! is no help either (*an intermediary check to win a tempo* - Black's rook goes to d8 without loss of time) 5 Kf6 Rd8! 6 Ke5 Kc2 7 d5 Kd3 8 d6 Kc4 9 Ke6 Kc5 10 d7 Kc6 -+.

**1 f2-f3! Rh2-f2 2 d3-d4 Rf2xf3+ 3 Kc3-c4 Kb1-c2 4 d4-d5 Rf3-d3 5 Kc4-c5 Kc2-c3**

Now the point of White's fine first move becomes clear: by enticing Black's rook to the d3 square, he has rendered the end-run (with 5...Kd3) impossible.

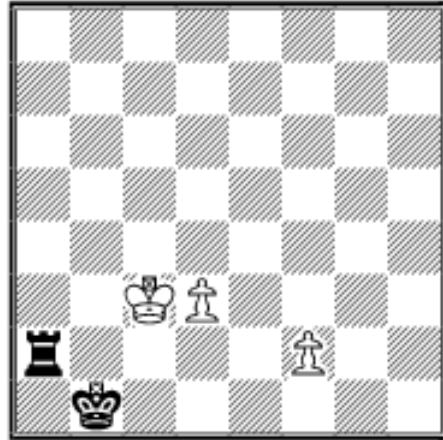
**6 d5-d6 =**

In 1950, the well-known endgame expert Igor Maizejlis discovered that the study has no solution. After **1 f3!** Black wins by sending his king on an immediate end-run down the a-file.

**1...Ka2!! 2 d4 Ka3 3 Kc4** On 3 d5 Black can win with 3...Ka4 as well as with 3...Rh4 4 d6 Rh6 5 Kd4 Rxd6+ 6 Ke5 Rd1 7 f4 Kb4 8 f5 Kc5 9 Ke6 Kc6 10 f6 Re1+.

**3...Ka4**, and, as is easy to see, the Black king returns in time to fight successfully against the enemy pawns.

A clever correction of the study has been proposed: if the Black rook is moved to a2 in the starting position, then the Black king's end-run becomes impossible. It was exactly this version of the study that saw many years' employment in my notebook of exercises.



Alas, I have recently discovered that this position also contains a winning line for Black. Instead of the end-run along the a-file, he can successfully carry out a far more paradoxical one: along the first rank and the h-file! Unbelievable, but true.

**1 f2-f3! Kb1-c1!! 2 Kc3-d4**

2 d4 is met by 2...Ra3+ 3 Kb4 (3 Kc4 Kd2 4 d5 Ke3 5 d6 Rd3! 6 Kc5 Kf4R) 3...Rd3! 4 Kc5 Kd2 5 d5 (5 f4 Ke3 6 f5 Rxd4) 5...Ke3 (our familiar end-run) 6 d6 Kf4 7 Kc6 Ke5 8 f4+ Ke6 9 f5+ Kxf5 -+. It is worth pointing out that in Réti's original study (with the rook at h2), the move 1...Kc1 would not have worked, since after 2 d4, Black has no check along the third rank.

**2... Kc1-d2 3 f3-f4**

The most stubborn. On 3 Ke4, Black's king goes on a queenside end-run: 3...Kc3 4 f4 Kb4 5 Kd5 Rf2 6 Ke5 Kc5 -+.

**4...Kd2-e2!**

3...Ra4+? is a mistake: 4 Ke5 Kxd3 5 f5=.

**4 Kd4-e4**

White tries to prevent the enemy king's advance (the "*shoulder block*"). On 4 Ke5 Kf3 5 d4 Re2+! 6 Kf5 Rd2 is decisive (the rook moves behind the passed pawn with gain of tempo): 7 Ke5 Kg4 8 d5 Kh5! (here's the promised king march along the h-file) 9 f5 Kh6! 10 d6 Kg7.

#### **4...Ke2-f2!! 5 d3-d4 Ra2-e2+!**

White's king now stands at a crossroads. Wherever he goes, the enemy king will go the opposite way and arrive just in the nick of time. For example: 6 Kd5 Kf3 7 f5 Kf4 8 f6 Kg5 9 f7 Rf2 10 Ke6 Kg6 11 d5 Re2+.

#### **6 Ke4-f5 Kf2-e3! 7 Kf5-e5**

Or 7 d5 Kd4 8 d6 Kc5 9 d7 Rd2 etc. (the same as in the preceding variation, except in mirror-image).

#### **7...Ke3-f3+**

7...Kd3+ 8 Kd5 Rf2! comes to the same thing.

#### **8 Ke5-f5 Re2-d2! 9 Kf5-e5 Kf3-g4 10 d4-d5 Kg4-h5! 11 f4-f5 Kh5-h6! 12 d5-d6 Kh6-g7**

Réti's study (the one in the next-to-last diagram) might easily be corrected by another means, which was also suggested many years ago: simply shift the entire position one file to the left. In this case, the edge of the board itself prevents the king's end-run.

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## The Usefulness of the "Bad" Bishop

In my July column at [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com), I examined some situations in which, contrary to accepted practice, one should place one's pawns on the same color squares as his own bishop. Now we shall acquaint ourselves with some more exceptions to the "bad bishop" rule.

Normally, a "bad bishop" is a serious drawback in one's position - but not always:

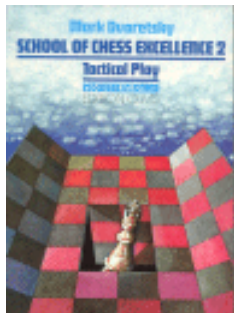
*Possession of the initiative sometimes can outweigh the presence of a bad bishop - in fact, this bishop can sometimes take an active part in an attack.*

*And on the defense, as GM M. Suba once noted, sometimes "a bad bishop defends good pawns" (although it would be more accurate to say "important" or "necessary" pawns), and thus becomes a valuable piece, which the stronger side is forced to exchange in order to break through the defense.*

**Kimelfeld – Dvoretsky Moscow Team Championship 1972**

1. e4 e6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. d4 c5 6. dc Nc6 7. Bf4 Bxc5 8. Bd3 f6 9. ef Qxf6!? 9...Nxf6 10. Bg3 10. Bg5!? 10...0-0 11. 0-0 Nd4

Black must trade off the active enemy pieces: the bishop



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on d3 and the knight on f3. However, the straightforward 11..Nde5? fails against 12. Nxe5 Nxe5 13. Bxh7+!

## 12. Nxd4 Bxd4 13. Qe2

In Lein - Dvoretsky, Moscow Championship 1973, White continued 13. Qd2 Nc5=. White's move here aims at the occupation of the e5 square.

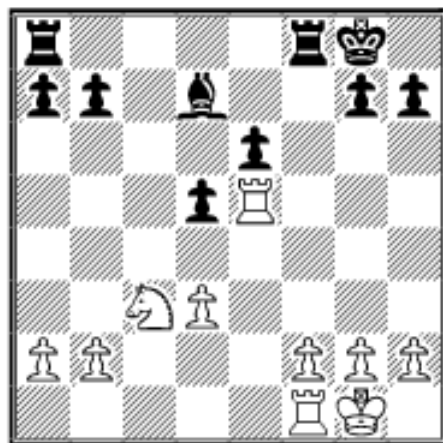
## 13...Nc5 14. Rae1

White obtains nothing from 14. Nb5 Bxb2 15. Rab1 Bd7.

## 14...Nxd3 15. cd Bd7

Of course, Black is not even going to look at the win of a pawn by 15...Bxc3? 16. bc Qxc3 - after 17. Be5, White develops a powerful initiative. The "opposite-colored" bishop can do little for the defense.

## 16. Be5 Bxe5 17. Qxe5 Qxe5 18. Rxe5



## 18...Ra8-c8=/+

Formally speaking, Black's bishop is bad; and if White could manage to get his knight to d4 (with a pawn at f4 too), Black's position would become strategically hopeless. But matters never get that far, since it is Black who has the initiative now. The threat of a rook invasion at c2 after either d5-d4 or b7-b5-b4 is not easily prevented.

## 19. f2-f4

The following variation is curious, although hardly

forced: 19. d4 Rc4 (the immediate 19...b5!-/+ is stronger) 20. Rd1 b5 21. Rd2 b4 22. Ne2 Rfc8 23. Kf1 Rc2 24. Ke1 Kf7 (intending Bb5) 25. Kd1? (25. Nf4 is better) 25...Ba4! 26. b3?! (26. Rxc2 is forced: 26...Bxc2+ 27. Ke1 Bf5, and Black has the initiative) 26...Rxa2! The “bad” bishop has a decisive hand in the final combination.

Many years later, the same variation occurred in a blitz game I played with GM Raul Becerra (Miami 2000). My opponent chose the cautious 19. Re2, which also failed to quench Black’s initiative: 19...b5 20. Rfe1 b4 21. Nd1 Rc1 22. f3 (White hopes to find an appropriate moment to bring the knight via f2 or e3 to g4, and thence to e5) 22...Rfc8 23. Ne3?! Bb5 24. Ng4 Bxd3 (also strong was 24...Rxe1+ 25. Rxe1 Rc2, or still more accurately 25...h5!, with 26...Rc2 to follow) 25. Rxe6 Bf5 26. Re8+ Rxe8 27. Rxc1 Bxg4 (27...Re2) 28. fg Re2 (either -/+ or -+) 29. Rc7 a5 30. Ra7 d4 31. h4 (31. Rxa5 Rxb2 32. Rd5 Rxa2 33. Rxd4 b3-+) 31...Rxb2 32. Rxa5 d3 33. Rd5 d2 34. Kf1 Rxa2, and White resigned.

**19...d5-d4! 20. Nc3-e2 Rc8-c2 21. f4-f5?!**

Better was 21. Nxd4 Rxb2 22. Nxe6 Bxe6 (22...Bc6 23. Rf2=; 22...Rc8 23. Nc5 intending Rf2=) 23. Rxe6=/+.

**21...e6xf5 22. Ne2xd4 Rc2xb2 23. Rf1-c1**

Black also has the advantage after 23. Re7 Rf7 24. Nxf5 Bxf5 (24...Kf8!? 25. Rxf7+ Kxf7 -/+) 25. Re8+ Rf8 26. Rxf8+ Kxf8 27. Rxf5+ Ke7-/+.

**23...g7-g6! 24. Rc1-c7**

24. Rd5 Rf7 (24...Bc6!?)

**24...Rf8-e8! 25. Nd4-f3**

25. Rxe8+ Bxe8 26. Ne6 Bc6 27. Rg7+ Kh8 28. Rc7 h5  
29 Nf4 Kg8-+.

**25...Re8xe5 26. Nf3xe5 Bd7-e6-/+**

### *Sznapik – Bukal Zagreb 1979*



Black not only has to trade off the strong knight on d6, but also get his light-squared bishop into play. And for this, he will not shrink even from a pawn sacrifice.

**19...Nb6-c4! 20. Nd6xc4?!**

White should not have taken the dare. After 20. Nxb7 Rfb8, he cannot continue 21. b3? Rxb7 (21...Bb5!-+) 22. bc dc-+; and 21. Nc5 Rxb2-/++ leaves him in a difficult position also. But 21. Nd6! retains definite counterchances, whether after 21...Nxd6 22. ed Qxd6 (the e5 square), or after 21...Rxb2 22. Nxc4 dc 23. Qxc4 Rc8 24. Qa6 Rcc2 25. Qd6, with mutual chances.

**20...d5xc4 21. Qd3xc4 Bd7-c6-/++ 22. Qc4-d3 Rf8-d8  
23. Rf1-d1 Rd8-d7 24. Qd3-e3 Ra8-d8 25. g2-g3 Qe7-f7 26. Rd1-d3?!**

26. Ne1 was better.

**26...Qf7-h5 27. Qe3-f4**

On 27. Rad1 f4! 28. gf Qg4+, intending Rf8, is strong.

**27...Bc6-e4 28. Ra1-d1**

The formerly “bad” light-squared bishop is now so

terrifying, that White is prepared to give up a rook for it. On 28. Re3 g5! 29. hg Rxd4 30. Rae1 Bc6-+ is decisive.

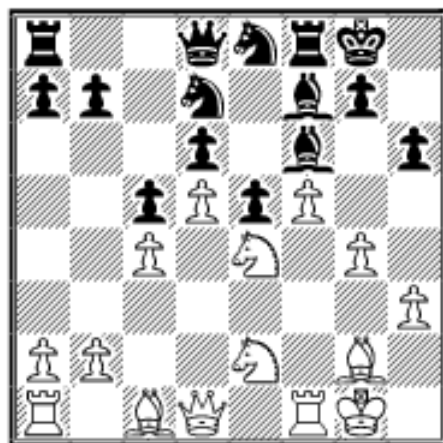
**28...Be4xd3 29. Rd1xd3 Qh5-g4 30. Rd3-c3**

30. Qe3 was more stubborn.

**30...Qg4xf4 31. g3xf4 Rd7-d5 32. Kg1-f1 Rd5-b5-+**

**33. Rc2 Kf7 34. h5 Ke7 35. Ke2 Kd7 36. Kd1 Ra8! 37. Nd2 Rb4 38. Nf3 a3 39. b3 Rxb3 40. Nd2 Rb4** White resigned.

*Saigin – Timofeev USSR 1948*



White's positional advantage is obvious. The most natural plan would involve a kingside pawn advance. However, if Black gets in 16...Bh4!, it will be very difficult to break up the dark-square blockade. This is why White decided to exchange off his proud knight at e4 for

Black's "bad" bishop.

**16. Ne4xf6+!! Nd7xf6 17. Ne2-c3+/- Nf6-h7**

Now Black's queen is ready to occupy h4, but White will not allow it.

**18. Qd1-e1! Ne8-c7 19. h2-h4 Bf7-e8**

Black expects to get counterplay with 20...b5 - but he won't get that, either!

**20. a2-a4! Be8-d7 21. Bg2-h3!**

It's important to shore up f5 - both as a means of restraining the break h6-h5, and with the aim of promoting g4-g5. Black hasn't even the shadow of counterplay.

**21...Nc7-e8 22. Qe1-g3 Ne8-f6 23. g4-g5**

And this move could have been put off. White decides that he can afford to let the enemy knight occupy h5.

**23...h6xg5 24. h4xg5 Nf6-h5 25. Qg3-g2 Qd8-b6**

25...Nf4!? 26. Bxf4 ef was more stubborn; but after 27. g6 Ng5 28. Rxf4, Black's position remains difficult.

**26. Nc3-e4 Ra8-d8 27. Bh3-g4 Nh5-f4 28. Bc1xf4 e5xf4 29. Rf1xf4 Rf8-e8 30. g5-g6 Nh7-f8 31. f5-f6 g7xf6 32. Ne4xf6+ Black resigned.**

### ***Ivanchuk – Anand Linares 1992, 1st match game***

(Comments are based on those of Anand, from his book, "My Best Games of Chess")

**1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3. d2-d4 c5xd4 4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5. Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6 6. Bc1-g5 e7-e6 7. Qd1-d2 a7-a6 8. 0-0-0 h7-h6 9. Bg5-e3 Nc6xd4 10. Be3xd4 b7-b5 11. f2-f3**

11. Kb1!?

**11...Qd8-a5 12. a2-a3**

An immediate draw was available by 12. Qf2 b4 13. Bb6 Qg5+ 14. Be3 Qa5=.

After 12. Kb1 b4 13. Ne2? e5 14. Be3 Be6 15. Nc1 d5!-/+ is unfavorable to White (Anand - Dlugy, Philadelphia 1986). He must play 13. Bxf6! gf 14. Ne2. (The same

position can also be reached by the transposition 12. Bxf6 gf 13. Kb1 b4 14. Ne2.)

The game Kir. Georgiev - Gulko, Manila izt 1990 continued: 14...Qc5 (14...Bb7!?) 15. Qd4! Qxd4 16. Nxd4 Bb7 17. Bc4+/- (intending f4-f5).

### **12...e6-e5 13. Bd4-e3**

Later, Patrick Wolff strengthened White's play with 13. Bf2! Be6 (13...Be7 14. Bh4, and 14...Nxe4? is bad because of 15. fe Bxh4 16. Qxd6+-) 14. Bh4 g5 (14...Be7 15. Bxf6 Bxf6 [15...gf 16. Kb1+/-] 16. Kb1!? [intending Nd5] or 16. Qxd6+/-] 15. Be1! Rc8 (15...b4 16. Nd5 Bxd5 17. ed Rb8 18. Kb1+-) 16. Kb1+/- (Wolff - Fedorowicz, USA ch 1993).

### **13...Bc8-e6 14. Kc1-b1 Bf8-e7**

14...Rb8 15. Nd5.

### **15. g2-g4?!**

*Playing Nd5 is an option which is available to White at virtually every move. However, without any knights White can hardly expect to do anything against Black's slightly weakened queenside, so playing Nd5 is an admission that White can no longer gain the advantage.*

*The problem with Ivanchuk's move is that he is soon forced to play Nd5 in any case, when the move g4 not only fails to benefit White, but can even prove a weakening of his kingside. (Anand)*

15. Nd5= leads to an approximately equal position; things are also okay for Black after 15. h4 Rb8 16. Nd5 Qxd2 17. Nxf6+ gf 18. Rxd2 f5 (unclear).

### **15...Ra8-b8**

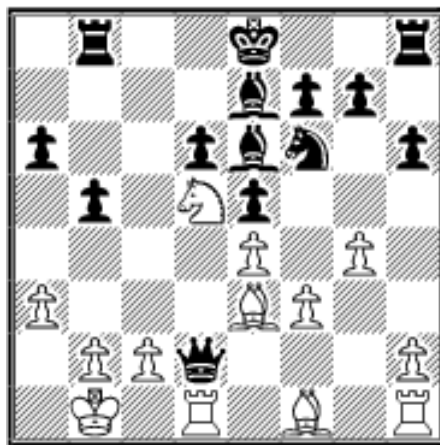
Black prepares b5-b4. An immediate 15...b4!? was also possible:

16.ab Qxb4 17. Nd5 Nxd5 18. ed Qxd2 19. Rxd2 Bd7=;

16. Nd5 Bxd5 17. ed Rb8 (unclear);

16. Na2 d5 17. ab Qc7, with compensation.

### 16. Nc3-d5 Qa5xd2



### 17. Nd5xf6+?

A serious error! Ivanchuk expected only 17...Bxf6 18. Rxd2 Ke7 19. h4+/-,, underestimating his opponent's magnificent reply. Necessary was 17. Rxd2! Nxd5 18. ed Bd7 19. h4 (unclear) - here, Black

would be playing for f7-f5.

### 17...g7xf6!!

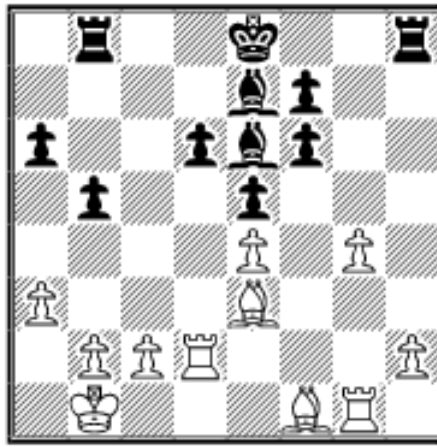
This original recapture assures Black the chance to break up his opponent's kingside pawns.

### 18. Rd1xd2 h6-h5! 19. Rh1-g1

19. gh Rxh5 intending 20...f5; or 19. Be2 hg 20. fg Rh3.

### 19...h5xg4 20 f3xg4





## 20...Be6-c4!!

The unexpected trade of his “good” bishop for his enemy’s “bad” bishop is completely justified here. 20...Kd7?! was much less exact, in view of 21. h3 (White intends Rg3 or Bg2).

*Just in time to stop White setting up some sort of fortress on the kingside by h3 and Rg3. Black’s bad e7-bishop will protect his pawns while he forces pawn exchanges eventually leading to connected central passed pawns. (Anand)*

## 21. b2-b3

On 21. Bxc4 bc (intending 22...c3) 22. Rd5, Anand indicates 22...Rb5!?!; but 22...Rxb2 23. Ra5 Re2 24. Rg3 Kd7 25. Rxa6 Rh8-/+ appears to be still stronger (Dvoretsky).

## 21...Bc4xf1 22. Rg1xf1 Rh8-h3!

22...Kd7?! would be justified after 23. Rf3? Rh4 24. h3 Rbh8-+. However, White continues instead with 23. g5! Ke6 (23...fg 24. Rxf7) 24. gf Bxf6 25. Rxd6+! Kxd6 26. Rxf6+ Ke7 27. Bg5, with counterchances (he intends 28. h4).

*Black appears to have committed a whole list of positional sins: allowing doubled f-pawns, giving White an outside passed h-pawn, and exchanging his good bishop with ...Bc4; yet he is better.*

*Paradoxical? Yes, but this does not mean that the old positional rules have been suspended for the course of*

*this game. Black's play depends on two things.*

*First of all, his long-term aim is to exchange his d-pawn for White's e-pawn by ...d5 and to exchange his f-pawn for White's g-pawn either by ...f5 or by forcing White to play g5. Then he will be left with two connected central pawns, supported by his king, whereas White will have pawns on c2 and h2 that aren't going anywhere.*

*Secondly, he can only put his plan into action because he has the initiative, and especially as the rook on h3 disrupts White's whole position and leaves both g- and h-pawns vulnerable to attack. Had Black wasted even one move, White would have fortified his kingside and the old positional values would have reasserted themselves.*  
(Anand)

It makes sense to compare Anand's pithy commentary with the methodical conclusions reached by the deep-thinking researcher and master Isaac Lipnitsky in his day, in his notable book, *Questions of Modern Chess Theory* (Kiev 1956):

*"It would be wrong to say that a creatively concrete approach to the position lessens the influence of the rules of chess or contradicts them. The whole point is that in any given position, the contradiction of any rules (or generalities) occurs only at the price of the reaffirmation and victory of other (rules)...Chess dogmatism does not occur only when: 1) established rules are followed without regard for circumstances, without consideration of all the concrete peculiarities of the position; it also occurs when: 2) the evaluation of a particular position is made primarily on the basis of only the obvious, the already known and established rules and generalizations."*

In our day too, there are some authors who assert that the

dynamic approach characteristic of modern chess has in effect made general rules and principles useless for the purpose of making decisions in the majority of concrete positions.

This point of view has probably arisen at least partly from the realization that, when we are playing the game, we are in fact occupied with concrete analysis of the position, and almost never recall those abstract principles. So why do we need them at all?

***A thorough acquaintance with the general principles, techniques and methods enriches and sharpens our intuition.*** In the course of play, our feelings suggest moves which correspond to the principles (which we examined earlier) which are active in the position; the analysis of these possibilities or those ideas helps us to guess the proper line to take, to find the concrete solution. And the more “learned” the player, other things being equal, the more successfully and surely his intuition will operate.

### **23. Rd2-e2**

Ljubojevic offered 23. Bg1 Kd7 24. Rd3; but this defensive plan would not have changed the evaluation of the position. Black retains the better chances, even if rooks are exchanged: 24...Rxd3 25. cd Rh8 26. Rf3 d5! (Anand) 27. Kb2 d4 28. h3 Ke6 (intending Bf8-h6, with the initiative). However, 24...Rh4! is stronger still. Here are some possible lines:

25. h3 Rbh8 26. Rff3 f5! 27. Rxf5 Rxh3 28. Rxh3 (28. Rxf7 Rxd3 29. cd Rh1 30. Rf1 Bg5-+) 28...Rxh3 29. Bf2 Ke6-/+;

25. Rg3 Rg8 26. h3 Rgh8 27. Rff3 f5! 28. Rxf5 (28. gf Rxe4-/+; 28. ef e4 29. Re3 [29. Rc3? Bf6] 29...d5

[Anand] 30. g5!? [30. c4!? Bg5! 31. Rc3 Bd2-/+] 30...Rf4!-/+ [Dvoretsky] 28...Rxb3 29. Rxb3 Rxb3 30. Bf2 [30. Rxf7? Rg1 - or 30...Rg3-+ - 31. Rf1 Bg5 32. Re1 Bd2-+ is bad] 30...Ke6-/+ - *White's pawns on e4 and g4 are so weak that he might easily lose both of them.* (Anand)

### **23...Ke8-d7**

Threatening 24...Rbh8.

### **24. g4-g5 Kd7-e6 25. g5xf6 Be7xf6**

The point to Black's 22nd move is now obvious: the enemy rook stands passively, and cannot be sacrificed on d6. 26. Ref2?! Be7 is also useless.

### **26. Be3-d2 Bf6-e7!**

Less convincing is 26...Bh4 27. Bb4, or 26...Rg8 27. Ref2 Be7 28. Rxf7 Rg4 (Black wants to trade the e4-pawn for his d-pawn, not his f-pawn).

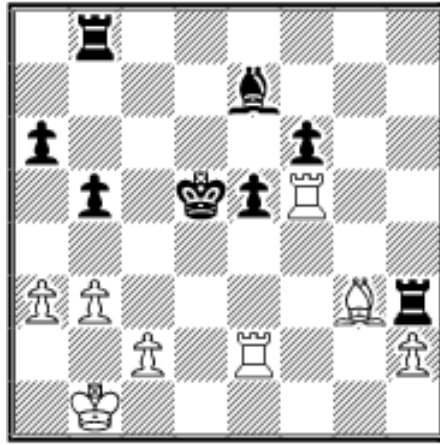
### **27. Bd2-e1 f7-f6 28. Be1-g3 d6-d5!**

28...Rd8 is less exact, because of 29. c4!

### **29. e4xd5+ Ke6xd5**

Black has executed the planned pawn exchanges. All that remains is to bring his king back to e6, and his position will be strategically won. Ivanchuk finds a way to cause his opponent significant problems.

### **30. Rf1-f5!**



Now 30...Ke6? is out because of 31. Bxe5! Re8 32. Rxf6+. 30...Rb7? is also a mistake, in view of 31. Bxe5! Ke6 (31...fe? 32. Rfxe5+ Kd6 33. Re6+ Kd5 34. R2e5+! Kd4 35. Rxe7+/-) 32. Bxf6+ Kxf5 33. Bxe7=.

And on 30...Bd8?! White whips up counterplay by 31. Rf3! Rh6 32. Rd2+ Ke6 33. Rc3 (Dvoretsky).

The only remaining move is

**30...Kd5-c6! 31. Re2-f2?**

The threat of 32. Rxf6+ is easily parried, after which the flame of White's initiative is snuffed out. Much more stubborn was 31. Rf3! (intending 32. Bxe5) 31...Rh7 32. Rc3+, and the Black king must trek still further away from the square of his desire - e6 - since he cannot play 32...Kd7? 33. Rd2+ Bd6 34. Rcd3 Rb6 35. Bf2 Rc6 36. Bc5+/- 32...Kb7-/+ is necessary, when Black will still have technical difficulties to overcome.

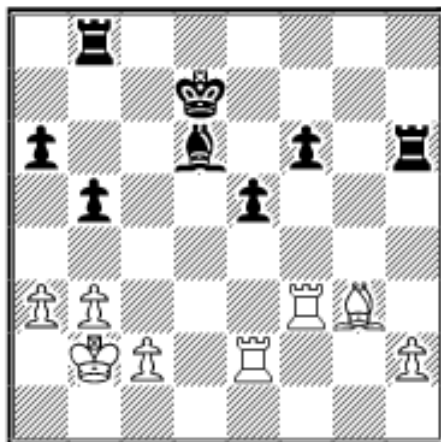
**31...Rh3-h6!**

Of course not 31...Kd5? 32. Rxf6 Bxf6 33. Rxf6.

**32. Kb1-b2 Kc6-d7! 33. Rf2-e2 Be7-d6!**

Parrying the threatened sacrifice on e5.

**34. Rf5-f3**



### 34...Rb8-c8!

Excellent technique! The rook finds the right moment to take control of the c-file. Anand rejected 34...Ke6, because of 35. Rc3 (intending counterplay with Rc6), when White apparently has hopes once again. On the

other hand, there was a tactical means to eliminate them: 35...Bxa3+! 36. Ka2 (36. Kxa3 b4+) 36...Rb6, and if 37. Bf2?!, then 37...Bb4-+ (Dvoretsky).

### 35. Bg3-e1 Kd7-e6

*Mission accomplished. (Anand)*

### 36. Rf3-d3 Rh6-h7 37. Rd3-g3 Bd6-c5

*Black doesn't even have to push the pawns immediately. He can play to improve the position of his pieces, or try to exchange a pair of rooks to reduce the chances of a blockade. (Anand)*

### 38. Kb2-a2 Rh7-d7

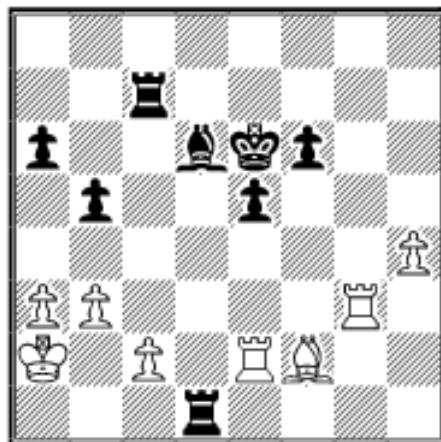
Threatening 39...Rd1 followed by 40...Bd4.

### 39. Rg3-c3 Rc8-c7!

39...Rd1? fails to 40. Bf2! (but not 40. b4? Bd4-+) 40...Bxf2 41..Rxc8 Bd4 42. c3+/-.

### 40. h2-h4 Rd7-d1 41. Be1-f2 Bc5-d6 42. Rc3-g3

42. Rxc7 Bxc7 and 43...f5-+ is also completely hopeless.



**42...e5-e4!**

Anand finishes elegantly. He threatens 43...Bxg3 or 43...Be5; and 43. Rg1 Rxd1 44. Bxg1 f5-+ is no help.

**43. Re2xe4+ Bd6-e5 44. Re4xe5+**

Forced (44. c3 Rd2+ 45. Kb1 Rxf2-+).

**44...f6xe5 45. Ka2-b2 Rd1-d2**

White resigned

In the second issue of the *American Chess Journal* (1993), an article by Boris Gulko was published, entitled, "The Mystery of Bad Bishops". After examining a number of interesting games (in some of which, the bishop was indeed "bad", whereas in others, it played an important role in the attack), the grandmaster came to a surprising conclusion:

*What can we conclude from these games? There appears to be only one common thread: Perhaps the solution to the mystery of bad bishops is that bishops retain the qualities of their owners, so stronger players have better bishops than weaker players. But even this cannot always be true.*

*In 1989 I gave a lecture at the Harvard Chess Club, where I discussed the game I won against Bent Larsen at Hastings 1988/89 (see Informant 47, game 609). In that game, my bad bishop played an important role in the attack. One listener told me afterwards, "Before your lecture I thought I understood one element of chess strategy - good and bad bishops. Now I realize that I*

*don't understand anything." I was proud to have raised at least one player's understanding of chess strategy to a higher level.*

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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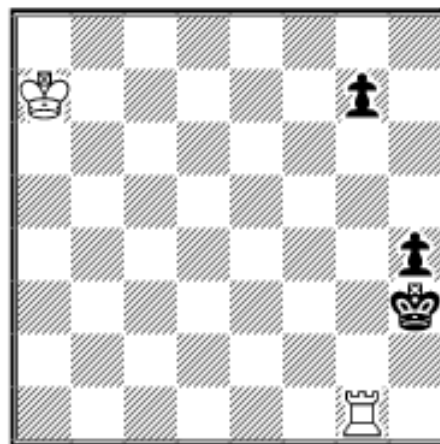
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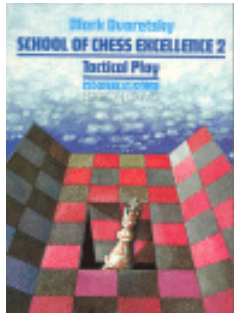
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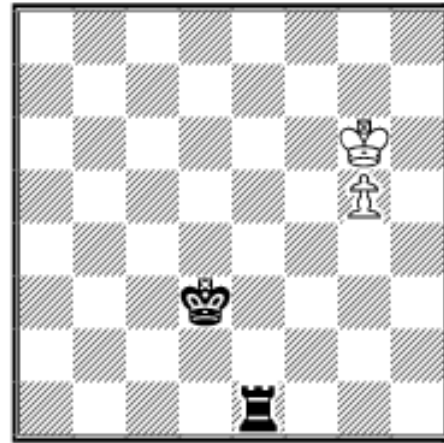
**Diagram 1**

*White to move*

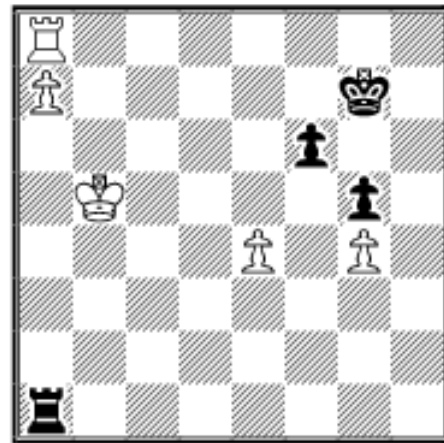
How should White continue?



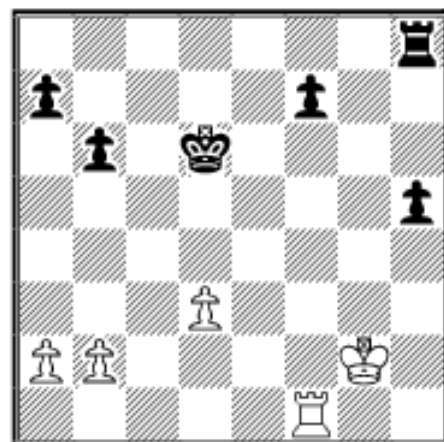
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**Diagram 2**  
*Black to move*  
How should Black play?

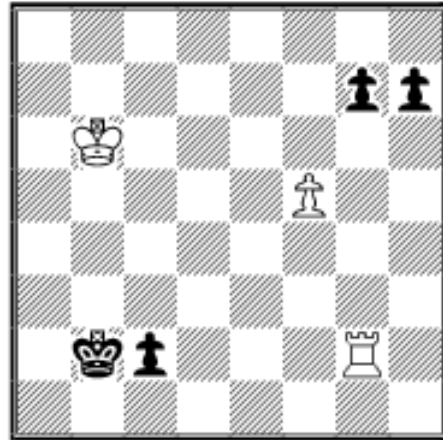


**Diagram 3**  
White to move  
Can White win?



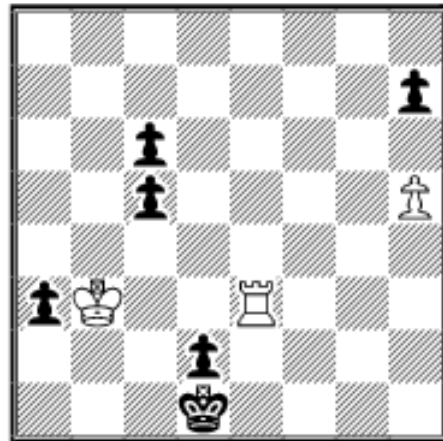
**Diagram 4**

*Black to move*  
How can Black exploit his advantage?



**Diagram 5**

*White to move*  
How should White continue?



**Diagram 6**

*White to move*  
How should White continue?

---

## **Solutions**

**1. G. Nadareishvili, 1961**

**1 Rg5!!**

Black is playing for stalemate. In order to gain time for the king to approach, White must prevent the g-pawn from advancing two squares. That is why 1 Kb6? g5!= is inaccurate.

**1...Kh2 2 Kb6 h3 3 Kc5 Kh1 4 Kd4 h2 5 Ke3 g6 6 Rg3 g5 7 Kf2 g4 8 Ra3 g3+ 9 Kxg3 Kg1 10 Ra1#**

## **2. Nunn - Smejkal, Lucerne Olympiad 1982**

Black only draws with 111...Ke4? 112 Kf6(f7) Rf1+ 113 Ke6 Ra1 (113...Rg1 114 Kf6 Kd5 115 g6 Kd6 116 g7=) 114 g6 Ra6+ 115 Kf7 Kf5 116 g7 Ra7+ 117 Kf8 (117 Kg8! Kg6 118 Kh8=) 117...Kf6 118 g8N+.

**111... Rf1!!**

Now White's king is unable to "shoulder-block" its Black colleague. For this purpose, even a tempo is not too great a sacrifice!

**112 Kh7 Ke4 113 g6 Kf5 114 g7 Rh1+ 115 Kg8 Kg6 116 Kf8 Rf1+ 117 Kg8 Ra1 118 Kh8 Rh1+ White resigned.**

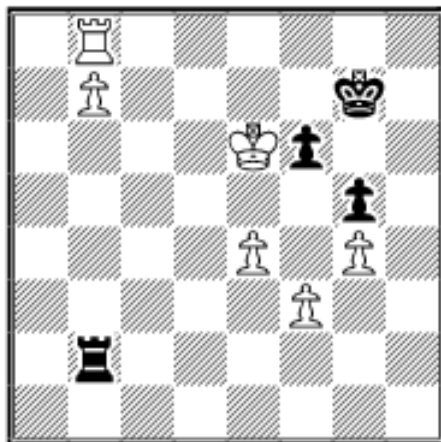
## **3. Benko - Gereben, Budapest 1951**

With accurate defense, the position is drawn.

**1 Kb6 Rb1+ 2 Kc6 Rc1+ 3 Kd6 Rd1+!**

In the game, Black erred with 3...Ra1?, and after 4 Rc8! (but not 4 Re8? Ra6+! =) 4...Ra6+ 5 Rc6 Rxa7 6 Rc7+ Rxc7 7 Kxc7, White controlled the distant opposition, which was then easily converted to the close opposition: 7...Kh7 8 Kd7! Kg6 9 Ke6 Kg7 10 Ke7 Kg6 11 Kf8, and Black resigned.

**4 Ke6 Ra1 5 Rd8 (5 Re8 Ra6+! 6 Kf5 Rxa7 =) 5...Rxa7 6 Rd7+ Rxd7 7 Kxd7 Kh7!=.** Black is saved only by the distant opposition - and not by the close opposition: 7...Kf7? 8 Kd6 is zugzwang, and it is White who takes the opposition.



Let's take a look at an ending recently played between two women grandmasters.

***Petz-Kosteniuk, Mainz 2000, 5th match game, White to move.***

Almost the same situation, except White has an extra pawn on f3. As a result, the pawn ending that arises after 77 Rd8! Rb6+ 78.Rd6 Rxb7 79 Rd7+ is an elementary win.

In the game there followed **77 Re8?? Rb6+! 78 Kf5 Rxb7 79 e5 fe 80 Rxe5 Rf7+ 81 Kxg5 Rxf3 82 Re7+ Kf8 83.Ra7 Rc3??** 83...Rg3! will maintain the draw, but even simpler is 83...Kg8!, intending 84...Rf8. With knight pawns (and no bishop or central pawns) a passive defense with the Rook on the 8th rank draws.

**84 Kh5??** After 84 Kg6! Rc6+ 85 Kh7 Rc5 86 Rg7 the g-pawn would advance, leading to the Lucena position, which is won for White.

**84...Kg8 85 Rd7 Rc6** Black sets up the Philidor position, which assures the draw; as they say - "No comment."

#### **4. Estrin - Berliner, Wch-corr. 1965**

The Black rook stands behind the passed h-pawn; but since White's king has already arrived to blockade it, the pawn can only be employed as a distracting force. Black must initiate active operations on the opposite wing.

31...Ke6?! is useless after 32 Re1+ (Black cannot allow the White rook to reach the 7th). And after 31...Rh7?! 32 Kh3, it's not easy to make further progress.

**31..Rc8! 32 Rxf7 Rc7! 33 Rf2**

The pawn ending is lost: 33 Rxc7 Kxc7 34 Kg3 Kd6 35 Kh4 Kd5 36 Kxh5 Kd4, and wins. If 33 Rf8, then 33...Rc2+.

### 33...Ke5!

Black is now winning: the king goes to d3, preparing Rc2. Berliner gives the following analysis: 34 Kg3 Kd4 35 Kh4 Kxd3 36 Kxh5 Rc2:

A) 37 Rf7 Rc5+ 38 Kg4 Ra5 39 Rf3+! Kd2!! 40 a3 (40 b3 Ra3!) 40...Kc2 41 Rf2+ Kb3 42 Kf4 Rb5! 43 Ke4 Ka2! 44 Rf7 a6! 45 Ra7 Ra5 46 Rb7 b5, and wins;

B) 37 Rf3+ Kd2 38 b3!? (38 b4 Rc3! 39 Rf2+ Ke1 40 Rh2 Ra3 41 Kg5 Ra4 42 Rb2 Kd1 and wins; 38 Ra3 a5 39 Rb3 Rc5+ 40 Kg4 b5 41 Kf4 Kc2 42 Ke4 Kb1 43 Kd4 Rh5 44 Ra3 a4! 45 Kc3 Rh4! and wins) 38...Kc1 39 a4 Rb2! (intending 40...a5 and 41...Kc2) 40 a5 b5 41 a6 b4 42 Kg4 Kc2 43 Rf7 Rxb3 44 Rxa7 Ra3 45 Rb7 b3 46 a7 b2, and wins.

The game actually concluded: **34 a4?! (this move, weakening the queenside pawns, actually makes Black's job easier) 34...Kd4 35 a5 Kxd3 36 Rf3+ Kc2 37 b4 b5! 38 a6 Rc4 39 Rf7 Rxb4 40 Rb7 Rg4+ 41 Kf3 b4 42 Rxa7 b3** White resigned.

### 5. J. Timman, 1988

The straightforward king march to the kingside pawns comes too late:

1 Kc5? h5! 2 Kd4 (intending 3 Kd3) 2...Kb1 3 Rg1+ c1Q 4 Rxc1+ Kxc1 5 Ke3 (with the king on d5 or d6, White could go after the g7-pawn; but from d4, the road is much too long) 5...Kc2 6 Kf4 Kd3 7 Kg5 Ke4, and wins;

1 Kc6? h5! 2 Kd6 h4! 3 Ke6 h3 (Black has won a vital tempo) 4 Rh2 Kb1 5 Rh1+ c1Q 6 Rxc1+ Kxc1 7 Kf7 h2 8 Kxg7 h1Q, and wins.

**1 Kc7!!**

The “strategic double attack!” This move not only brings the king closer to the g7-pawn (as may be seen in the variant 1...Kb1 2 Rg1+ c1Q+ 3 Rxc1+ Kxc1 4 Kd7 h5 5 Ke7 h4 6 Kf7 h3 7 Kxg7 h2 8 f6 h1Q 9 f7 =), but at the same time prepares a completely different idea.

**1...h5! 2 Kb8!! Kb1** (the same reply comes after 2...h4)  
**3 Rxc7! c1Q 4 Rb7+ =.**

**6. J. Afek, 1970**

On 1 Rh3? c4+! 2 Kxc4 a2, White’s in zugzwang. For example: 3 h6 (or 3 Kb4 c5+ 4 Kc4 h6!) 3...c5! (both sides have used up their extra pawn moves at the same time) 4 Rg3 (4 Kd3 Kc1 wins) 4...Ke2 5 Rg2+ Kf1 and wins (on the g-file, the rook is too close to the pawn - only two files between them!)

So White must lose a move!

**1 Rg3!! c4+!**

1...a2? 2 Rg1+ Ke2 3 Kc2 would be a mistake - White wins; and Black gets nothing out of 1...Kc1 2 Rc3+ Kb1 3 Rd3.

**2 Kxc4 a2**

2...Ke2 3 Rg2+ Ke3 4 Rg1 Kf2 5 Rh1=.

**3 Rh3!! c5** (3...h6 4 Kb4! c5+ 5 Kc4 is zugzwang) **4 h6!** (and now it’s Black who’s in zugzwang) **4...Kc2 5 Rc3+ Kb2 5 Rb3+ Kc1 7 Rc3+ Kd1 8 Rh3! Ke2 9 Rh2+ Ke1 10 Rh1+ Ke2 11 Rh2+ Kd1 12 Rh3! =**

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Mark Dvoretsky

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## Opening Catastrophes

“How does a strong player come to lose in just 18 moves? I should know, because I have lost several games just as quickly. If you want to lose a miniature, then here are three helpful tips. First of all, it is a big help if you are Black. Losing in under 20 moves with White requires a special talent which few possess. Secondly, choose a provocative opening in which you try to realise strategic ambitions, but at the cost of backward development and delayed castling. Thirdly, if something goes slightly wrong, don't reconcile yourself to defending a bad position - seek a tactical solution instead! Don't worry about the fact that tactics are bound to favour the better developed side; just go ahead anyway. Follow this advice and at least you will get home early.” *John Nunn's Best Games*

In the games we shall now examine, Black was the winner; so Doctor Nunn's first recipe was not exploited here. However, the other two recipes were carried out in exemplary fashion.

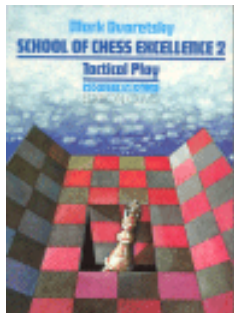
### *Makarychev – Dvoretsky Training Game, Moscow 1970*

**1. e2-e4 g7-g6 2. d2-d4 Bf8-g7 3. Nb1-c3 c7-c6 4. Ng1-e2?! d7-d5**

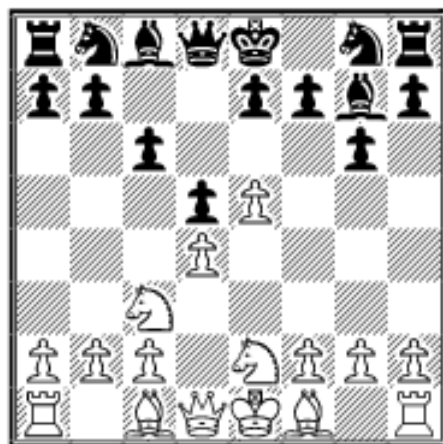
On 4...d6 5 g3, with Bg2 and 0-0 to follow, White develops his pieces harmoniously.

**5. e4-e5**





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Why did Sergei Makarychev develop his knight to e2? With this pawn structure, sooner or later Black will have to play e7-e6. But first, he must bring out the bishop at c8 - this piece has no future otherwise. If White's knight stood on f3, Black would continue 5...Bg4! On 4

f4 d5 5 e5, Black has a choice between 5...h5 6 Be3 Nh6 7 Nf3 Bg4 8 Be2 e6 and 5...Nh6 6 Be2 f6 7 Nf3 Bg4 8 Be3 e6. In either case, he successfully resolves the problem of his light-squared bishop (which of course does not mean he solves all of his opening problems - White still maintains an impressive space advantage).

But with the knight on e2, the bishop has nowhere to go - it will not feel comfortable on f5, nor on g4.

Nevertheless, all of this is achieved at too high a price (in the spirit of Nunn's second bit of "advice"! ) In order to frustrate his opponent's plan, White has simultaneously violated **two of the basic opening principles (quick development and fighting for the center)**. His knight stands in the way of his bishop, and it also fails to control the central square e5. That is the place where Black immediately takes aim.

### 5...f7-f6! 6. Bc1-f4?

White is consistent: he does not want to play f2-f4, which would give the enemy bishop access to g4 and f5. But he still should have supported e5 with a pawn, because there are no longer enough pieces to do the job - one result of the knight's unfortunate development to e2.

### 6...Nb8-d7

Since White can neither defend his e-pawn nor advance it (7 e6? Nf8), it must be exchanged at f6, giving up the center and aiding the development of Black's pieces.

### 7. e5xf6

Note that the e-pawn made three moves and then disappeared from the board - this means that the tempi used to advance it have been wasted. Nimzovich used to call such pawns (and pieces) "tempo-devourers".

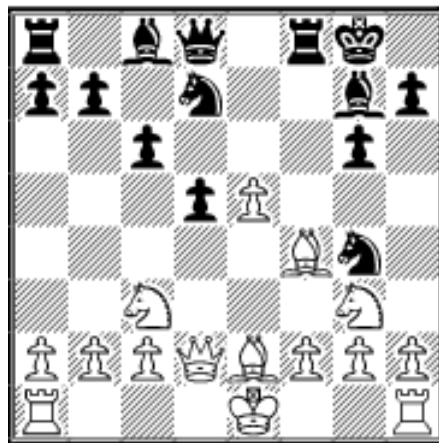
### 7...Ng8xf6 8. Qd1-d2 0-0 9. Ne2-g3

One can understand Makarychev's desire to develop his kingside pieces as quickly as he can. But still, he should have waited a little longer - 9 f3!? first was better, in order to cover the important squares g4 and e4.

### 9...e7-e5!

*With a lead in development, one must open the game energetically.*

### 10. d4xe5 Nf6-g4 11. Bf1-e2



How does Black continue? The tempting 11...Nxf2? fails to 12 0-0! (or 12 Rf1!). The most natural move would be 11...Ndx e5, when White cannot castle either way (12 0-0? Nxh2!). Of course, Black must reckon with 12 f3, after which his knight has no comfortable retreat. But

Black's position is so strong, that he has every right to proceed with material sacrifices .

**11...Nd7xe5! 12. f2-f3?!**

And now Makarychev follows Nunn's third "recommendation: bravely marching forward, into the tactical melee. On the other hand, by now it's hard to recommend anything. On 12 h3, the simplest way of maintaining Black's advantage is 12...Qf6!? Nor is the sharper 12...Nxf2 bad, considering lines like 13 Rf1 d4!? or 13 0-0 Nxf3+!? 14 g4 Bxf3 15 Rf2 Qh4.

Perhaps White's best course was to give a "testimonium paupertatis" (testament of poverty), in Alekhine's trenchant phrase, with 12 Nd1. But here too, White's position is not to be envied.

**12...Rf8xf4! 13. Qd2xf4 Bg7-h6**

13...Qb6 would have been much weaker, in view of 14 Nd1!

**14. Qf4-a4**

It seemed to me that 14 Qd4 Be3 15 Qa4 (the bishop is a threat on e3, but the knight would be still worse) would have been a little harder to deal with. Black would have continued his attack by 15...Bf2+ 16 Kf1 Qh4 17 fg Bxg3. Later it was discovered that even with the queen on d4, Black could play 14...Ne3!!, and if 15 Qxe5, then 15...Bf4! and the queen has no retreat.

**14...Ng4-e3 15. Nc3-d1**

Also hopeless was 15 Kf2 Qb6. Now, before taking the g2-pawn, it's important to secure the b6 square for the queen.

**15...b7-b5! 16. Qa4-b3 Ne3xg2+ 17. Ke1-f2 Bc8-h3**

White resigned, as he is defenseless against the threat of 18...Qb6+. If 18 Nf1, then 18...Qh4+.

**Csom – Dolmatov Frunze, 1983**

**1. c2-c4 c7-c6 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d5 3. b2-b3 Ng8-f6 4. Qd1-c2 e7-e6 5. Bc1-b2 Nb8-d7**

**6. d2-d4?!**

Why does Istvan Csom postpone the development of his light-squared bishop? First he wants to see where the enemy bishop will be developed. In reply to 6...Be7 there would follow 7 e3 and 8 Bd3. But if 6...Bd6 (with the idea of quickly preparing for e6-e5: 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Re8), White would fianchetto his bishop, and after 7 g3 0-0 8 Bg2 Re8 9 0-0, the move e6-e5 loses much of its force.

Having guessed his opponent's strategic plan, Sergei Dolmatov changes the course of the battle.

**6...Nf6-e4!**

*Every chessplayer must have an understanding of the basic ideas of every opening - not just the ones included in his own opening repertoire - because sometimes, positions occur which are not at all typical of the opening he started out playing.* That's what happens here: after 7 e3 f5, we get a version of the "Stonewall Dutch" that favors Black. The Hungarian GM, not wanting to play that sort of position, fianchettoes his bishop.

**7. g2-g3?! Bf8-b4+ 8. Nb1-d2?**

White does not yet sense the danger. Of course, 8 Nc3? Qa5 9 Rc1 Qxa2 was bad; but he had to reply 8 Nfd2.



Dolmatov's next strong move sets his opponent insoluble problems. It's amazing how quickly White's apparently solid position goes critical.

**8...Qd8-f6!**

The threat is 9...Bxd2+ 10 Nxd2 Qxf2 mate.

## 9. Ra1-d1

Csom gives up the exchange. The alternative was the pitiful 9 Bc1, which would be met by 9...e5 10 Bg2 ed 11 0-0 Ndc5.

## 9...Bb4xd2+ 10. Rd1xd2 Ne4xd2 11. Qc2xd2 0-0

White managed to make use of some inaccuracies from his opponent later on to drag out the game, but he could not save it.

In the games we have looked at so far, White's unfortunate opening play was refuted by comparatively simple means. In the next game, played recently, Black had to resort to a series of spectacular sacrifices.

## *Macieja – Ivanchuk Moscow wch 2001 (rapid)*

**1. e2-e4 e7-e6 2. d2-d4 d7-d5 3. Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4. e4-e5 Nf6-d7 5. Nc3-e2 c7-c5 6. f2-f4 Nb8-c6 7. c2-c3 Bf8-e7 8. Ng1-f3 0-0 9. a2-a3**

Here's an entertaining game (Berkvens - Hummel, Hoogoven 2000): 9 h4 f6 10 a3 a5 11 Ng3 b6 12 Bd3 Ba6 13 Bxh7+ Kxh7 14 Ng5+ Kg8 (14...fg? 15 hg+ Kg8 16 Rh8+! Kxh8 17 Qh5+ Kg8 18 g6 and wins) 15 Nxe6 Qe8 16 Qg4 Qf7 17 Nf5 Kh8 18 Nxf8 Bxf8 19 h5 fe 20 Qg6 Qe8!? 21 de Bd3 22 Qxc6 Bxf5 23 Qxd5 Nf6 24

Qf3 Rd8 25 Be3 Rd3 26 Rh4? (26 Qe2 Nd5, with initiative) 26...Nd5. White resigned.

### 9...a7-a5 10. h2-h4

The earlier move was 10 Ng3.

### 10...f7-f6 11. Ne2-g1?!

11 Ng3 would have led to a position from the above-cited game. By going to g1, the knight forestalls the typical idea of the exchange sacrifice at f3; however, this puts White far behind in development, which is energetically exploited by Ivanchuk.

### 11...c5xd4 12. c3xd4 Qd8-b6 13. Bf1-d3 f6xe5 14. f4xe5



An instructive evaluation of a similar position from this same variation of the French Defense was given by the master A. Kosikov in Dvoretsky and Yusupov's book, *Opening Preparation*:

*"Black has a strange clump of pieces on the queenside (Qb6, Nd7, Bc8, Ra8), which get in the way of each other's development. One could, of course, continue 11...Qc7, intending Nb6 and Bd7; but in that time, White could also complete his development; and then his advantage in space would have a major influence on the rest of the game.*

*But let's look at this situation from a different point of view. Well or ill, but Black has now gotten four of his pieces developed; meanwhile, his opponent has only*

*developed his bishop and his knight - and that piece takes away the best square f3 from the other knight. Plus, it's Black's move. Black's sizable lead in development is obvious. It's well known that this is not a very important factor in closed positions. So Black must open the game by clearing away the pawn barricades.*

**14...Nd7xe5! 15. d4xe5 Nc6xe5 16. Bd3-c2**

Black is also better after 16 Bb1 Bd7 17 Qc2 Ng6 18 h5 Rac8.

**16...Bc8-d7 17. Qd1-e2 Ra8-c8!**

The most energetic. After 18 Nxe5 Bxh4+, we have the following pretty variations:

19 Rxh4 Rxc2!, and wins; 19 Kd1 Bxa4! (19...Qd4+ 20 Nd3 is inferior) 20 Bxa4 Qd4+ 21 Nd3 Qxa4+ wins; 19 Kd2 Qd4+ 20 Qd3 (20 Bd3 Ba4! wins) 20...Rf2+ 21 Ne2 Rxe2+! 22 Kxe2 Bb5! wins.

**18. Bc2xh7+ Kg8xh7 19. Qe2xe5**

19 Nxe5 Bb5 wins.

**19...Be7-d6 20. Bc1-e3?**

White overlooks his opponent's powerful 21st move. But even after 20 Qh5+ Kg8 21 Ne2 e5, Black's initiative more than compensates for the sacrificed material.

**20...Qb6-b3 21. Nf3-d2**



21...Rf8-f1+!! 22. Ke1xf1  
Qb3-d3+ 23. Kf1-f2  
Bd6xe5 24. Ng1xf3  
Be5xb2 25. Ra1-b1 Rc8-  
c2 26. Rh1-d1 e6-e5 27.  
g2-g3 Bd7-g4 White  
resigned.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## Supreme Technique

*If I have ever made any valuable discoveries, it has been owing more to patient attention, than to any other talent.*

Isaac Newton

In the game we shall now examine, three stages may be easily distinguished:

- 1) A lengthy theoretical variation. Here, we might well give no commentary at all - or, as I have chosen to do, we may survey the alternative possibilities, starting at a given moment, which will give an idea of the structure of this particular opening variation.
- 2) An opening novelty, sprung by Black. It did not confuse his opponent, who reacted strongly, energetically, and obtained the advantage. I will try to show that the novelty was nevertheless correct, just that Black immediately went astray.
- 3) The realization of the advantage. In my view, this is the most interesting and instructive phase of the game, so we shall devote special attention to it.

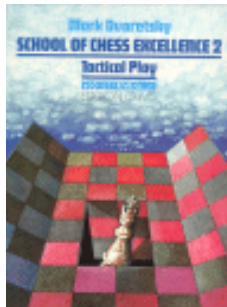
**Bareev – Shirov Linares 1994**

**1. d2-d4 d7-d5 2. c2-c4 c7-c6 3. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 4. Nb1-c3 e7-e6 5. e2-e3 Nb8-d7 6. Bf1-d3 d5xc4 7. Bd3xc4 b7-b5 8. Bc4-d3 Bc8-b7 9. e3-e4 b5-b4 10. Nc3-a4 c6-c5 11. e4-e5 Nf6-d5 12. d4xc5**

One of the most popular lines of the Meran Variation. White frequently plays 12. 0-0 cd 13. Re1 (or 13. Nxd4) instead of the game continuation; and if he does take on c5, he generally does so with the knight, not with the pawn. The reason is that here, Black has a decent alternative in 12...Qa5!? 13. 0-0 Bxc5, whereas after 12. Nxc5 Nxc5 (or 12...Bxc5) 13. dc, the reply 13...Qa5 is no longer so good, because of 14. Qe2, with the idea of 15. Bb5+ (the queen doesn't have to defend the knight on a4 now).

**12...Nd7xc5 13. Na4xc5**

13. Bb5+!? Nd7 14. Bg5 deserves serious attention.



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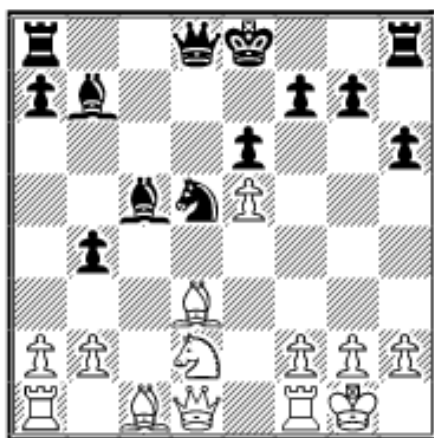
### 13...Bf8xc5 14. 0-0

Here the check no longer accomplishes anything: 14. Bb5+ Ke7 15. 0-0 (15. Bg5+ f6 16. Bh4 Qa5) 15... Qb6 gives Black a good game, as in the 6th Candidates' Match Game Uhlmann - Larsen (Las Palmas 1971). And on 14. Ng5, Black has the strong reply 14...Qc7!

### 14...h7-h6

At the moment, castling is impossible, owing to the standard bishop sacrifice on h7.

### 15. Nf3-d2



It is with this transfer of the knight to e4 that White generally hopes to seize the initiative in this line. As we shall see, he actually cannot gain any advantage like this. But 15. Qe2 Qb6 16. Bd2, as tried in Karpov - Polugaevsky (USSR Championship, Moscow 1973), also offers White nothing significant. Evidently, a strengthening of White's play will have to be found somewhere earlier.

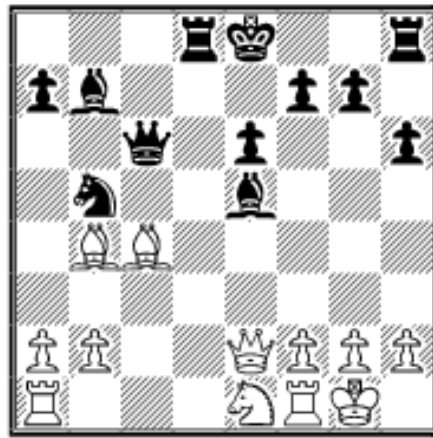
### 15...0-0

In the mid-Seventies, the theoretical discussion revolved around **15...Nc3**. Let's examine the resulting complications!

**16. Qc2! Qd5 17. Nf3 Rd8 18. Ne1! Bd4! 19. Bd2** (19. bc? is bad because of 19..Bxc3, threatening both 20...Bxe1 and 20...Bxa1) **19...Nb5** (19...Ne4 20. Bxb4 Bxe5 21. Qa4+ Bc6 22. Qxa7 Rd7 23. Qa3 is worse) **20. Bxb4 Bxe5** After the mistaken 20...Bb6? 21. Qc4 Nd4 22. Qxd5 Rxd5 23. Bd6, White's advantage was indisputable (Polugaevsky - Mecking, Manila 1975).

**21. Bc4** In the game Magerramov - Bagirov (Baku 1976), the continuation 21. Rc1 a6 22. Qa4 Bd6 23. Bxd6 Rxd6 24. Qb4 0-0 led to equality; however, 21. Rd1!? is worth testing.

### 21...Qc6 22. Qe2



**22... Ba6!?** Vladimir Bagirov indicates the variation 22...Nd4 23. Qxe5 Qxc4 24. Qxg7 Qxb4 25. Qxh8+ Ke7 26. Qxh6 Ba6, rating this position as somewhat better for White. After 27. b3, Black is hardly likely to find sufficient counterplay to offset his two-pawn deficit.

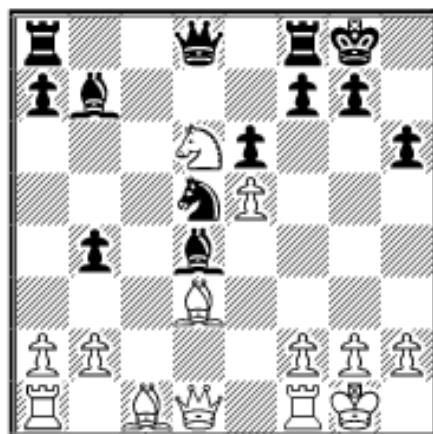
**23. Nf3** 23. Qxe5 Qxc4 24. Qxg7 is a mistake, giving Black the upper hand after 24...Qd4!

**23...Nd4 24. Qxe5 Nxf3+ 25. gf Qxc4 26. Qxg7 Qxb4 27. Qxh8+ Ke7 28. Qxh6 Bxf1 29. Qg5+ Ke8 30. Rxf1 Qxb2**, and White's position is preferable.

These last moves are taken from ECO. Unfortunately, the analysis contains a hole - in fact, more than one. 28...Rg8+! (instead of 28...Bxf1?) 29. Kh1 Bb7! 30. Qe3 Qg4! wins for Black. An even earlier win is 26...Qd4! So, instead of taking the g7-pawn, White must play 26. Bc5!?, with roughly even chances.

So the sally 15...Nc3!? turns out to be quite playable. Nevertheless, when after twenty years this variant once again began making frequent tournament appearances (the laws of fashion are unchanging!), Black would only castle. And in the game Epishin - Dreev (Tilburg 1994), Black demonstrated yet a third way (and not a bad one either, apparently): 15...Qc7!? 16. Re1 (after 16. Ne4 Be7, the e-pawn hangs; and on 16. Nc4, as Alexey Dreev showed, Black plays 16...Rd8 17.Qe2 Ne7!?) 16... Rd8 17. Ne4 Be7 18. Ng3 g6 19. Bd2 Kf8 20. Rc1 Qb6 21. Qe2 Kg7, with an even game.

### 16. Nd2-e4 Bc5-d4 17. Ne4-d6



### 17...Bd4xe5!?

A clever novelty, which Alexei Shirov had apparently prepared. He sacrifices the bishop, in the expectation that he will soon restore the material balance, since the knight has no retreat from b7.

The usual continuation has been 17...Bc6. Viktor Korchnoi gained the advantage against Mikhail Gurevich (Antwerp 1993) with the continuation

18. Qe2 f5 19. Rd1 Qe7?! 20. Ba6! Bc5?! (20...Bb6) 21. Bd2! (intending

22. Rac1), when 21...Bxd6? 22. ed Qxd6 is bad, because of 23. Bxb4! Qxb4 24. Qxe6+ Kh8 25. Qxc6. But it's not clear whether White would have achieved anything of value against a more exact defense. And in Gagarin - Stripunsky (Russia 1995), Black obtained a good position with 18...Qh4!? (instead of 18...f5).

Matters are less tense after 18. Bh7+!? Kxh7 19. Qxd4. A possible continuation is 19...f6 20. Bd2 fe 21. Qxe5 Qd7 (Gagarin - Muhametov, Potsdam 1994); and here, according to Vassily Gagarin's analysis, 22. Nc4!? Rf5 23. Qg3 Raf8 24. Ne5 Qe8 25. Rfc1 Bb5 26. f3 retains somewhat better chances for White.

### 18. Nd6xb7 Qd8-b6

18...Qc7 19. Ba6! is unconvincing.

### 19. Qd1-h5!

Grandmaster Evgeny Bareev finds over the board the most energetic response to his opponent's novelty. White can expect nothing from 19. Qe2 Bf6 20. Qe4 Rfc8! for instance: 21. Bf4! Nxf4 (21...Qxb7? 22. Qh7+ Kf8 23. Bd6+ Ke8 24. Qg8+ Kd7 25. Qxf7+) 22. Qxf4 Qxb7 23. Be4 Qb8! 24. Qd2 (24. Qf3 Bxb2, with two pawns for the exchange) 24... Rd8 25. Qc1 (25. Qe2? Qe5; 25. Qc2? Qc8) 25... Rc8 26. Qb1 (26. Qd2 Rd8) 26... Qe5 27. Bxa8 Rxa8, and the b2-pawn falls.



The first critical point in the game - now how does Black continue?

With his last move, White not only threatens to take on e5, but also prepares to sacrifice his bishop at h6. For example: 19...Bf6?! 20. Bxh6! Rfc8 (20...gh 21 Qxh6 would be entirely bad) 21. Be3! Qxb7 (or 21...Nxe3 22. Qh7+ Kf8 23. fe Qxb7 24. Be4) 22. Qh7+ Kf8 23. Be4, with advantage to White (Bareev).

Since Black's choice, 19..Bf4, also failed to resolve his defensive problem, it might seem that his novelty is unsound, and leads to a difficult position. In any case, that's how the game was evaluated in the chess press and in the "Informant". But in fact, Shirov's idea was correct; he only needed to prepare it better at home, to analyze it deeper.

The correct continuation was found by GM Uwe Boensch: 19...Bd4! Now the bishop sacrifice is not dangerous: 20. Bxh6?! gh 21. Qxh6 f5, and White will be hard pressed even to draw. For instance: 22. Rae1 Rf6! 23.

Qg5+ Kf7 24. Qh4 Rg6! (Yusupov), and Black wins, since 25. Nd6+ Qxd6 26. Qxd4 Rxd2+! is bad, and meanwhile Black threatens 25...Rh8. Or 22. Nc5!? Qxc5! (22...Bxc5 leads to perpetual check) 23. Qxe6+ Kg7 24. Rc1 Nf4! 25. Qd7+ Rf7, and White must settle for the hard endgame after 26. Qxf7+ Kxf7 27. Rxc5 Bxc5 28. Bxf5.

20. Qg4 is stronger than 20. Bxh6?! 20...Nf6? would be a poor reply: 21. Qh4 (with the threat of 22. Na5) 21...e5 allows 22. Bxh6. 20...Bf6 21. Bxh6 Qxb7 leads to a complex position, with mutual chances. The riskier 20...f5 is also worth looking into, although after 21. Qe2 (21. Qg3 Qxb7 22. Bxh6 Bxb2) 21...Rf6 (21...Rae8?! 22. Rd1 Qxb7 23. Bb5) 22. Bc4 (22. Ba6 Nc7) 22... Qxb7 23. Rd1 Bb6 (23...Qb6? 24. Qd2) 24. Qf3 Rd8 25. Bf4, White gets good positional compensation for his lost (or was it sacrificed?) pawn.

### 19...Be5-f4?! 20. Nb7-c5!

Thus, White wins the exchange. The other tempting move, 20. Na5? is a mistake in view of 20...Bxc1 21. Nc4 Qd4 22. Rd1 Bxb2 23. Bh7+ Kxh7 24. Rxd4 Bxd4, with a won position for Black (Bareev).

### 20...Qb6xc5 21. Bc1xf4 Qc5-d4 22. Bf4-d6 Qd4xd3

22... Rfd8? 23. Rad1, threatening 24. Bh7+

### 23. Bd6xf8 Ra8xf8



Here, before he does anything else, White must neutralize his opponent's active possibilities, such as 24...Qd4 or 24...Nf4. In answer to 24. Qd1?! there would follow 24...Qc4!, when White would once again have to deal with the sally Nf4. Bareev chooses the best possible square for his queen.

### 24. Qh5-e5!

From this square, the queen defends the b2 pawn and takes control of the f4 and d4 squares. Here is how a grandmaster evaluates the resulting position:

*“Formally, White’s advantage amounts to only half a pawn; one might get the impression that the unassailable knight on d5 guarantees Black a quiet life. But the centralized queen on e5 (a favorite technique of Capablanca) shows that this is not quite true. The position contains an open file; and considering that an exchange of rooks is not good for Black, White can proceed to develop an initiative.”*

Bareev's commentary is instructive, for a number of reasons:

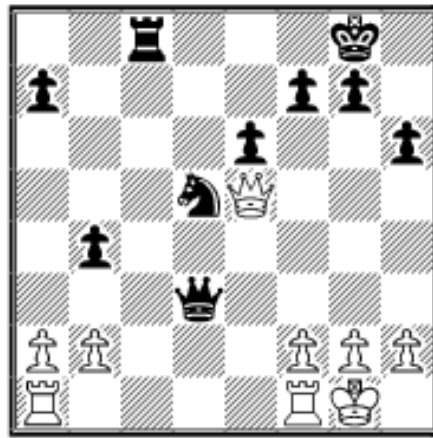
- 1) It is clear that he must have made a careful study of the chess classics, since he could, out of the whole range of Capablanca's work, note so specific a technique as the centralized queen;
- 2) The exchange of a pair of rooks (followed by the other rook's invasion via the open file) is a standard technique in positions with an exchange plus; and
- 3) Bareev does not give a conclusive assessment of the position. There's a reason for that. It was evidently clear to him that this position stands somewhere on the line between a win and a draw: White has realistic winning chances, but Black has no less of a reason to expect that he can draw this. That means the result of the game is not predictable - everything depends on the players' skill in the struggle which follows. Any little detail could tip the balance one way or the other; so the players will need exceptional accuracy and maximal resourcefulness.

When I first examined this game, reading Bareev's notes, I was powerfully impressed by the high level of technique displayed by the Muscovite grandmaster. This impression was, on the whole, not mistaken - Bareev did, indeed, play excellently. Yet still, the analysis which follows could cast doubt on a couple of his choices.

Immersing yourself in the variations and deductions given below, you will, I trust, see that I have included, under "supreme level of technical mastery" the level of difficulty of attaining it.

## **24...Rf8-c8**

Shirov's move looks somewhat strange - White will now bring his rook to c1, when the exchange of rooks, according to the general evaluation given above, will be good for White. But it's not all as clear as it might seem at first glance. In fact, we are up against a deep and subtle technical task, with a simple formulation: which rook should go to c1?



A difficult, a most difficult exercise: List the reasons “pro” and “con” for each of the two possibilities, 25. Rac1 and 25. Rfc1; and then try to make a choice.

Here, the first question to be asked is also the most important: for if you have not seen the source of the difficulties to come, it will be impossible to make a well-reasoned choice.

So - let's decide. If the rooks are traded on c1, there's no difference between the two moves: the position after 25. Rc1 Rxc1 26. Rxc1 a5 27. g3!? a4 28. Kg2 is lost for Black. White threatens 29. Rc8+ Kh7 30. Ra8; and 28...a3 29. ba Qxa3 30. Rc8+ Kh7 31. Qe4+ is bad for him.

And if the Black rook retreats from the c-file, either one of the rook moves looks OK, although 25. Rac1 appears more natural.

So let's restrict our search to Black's active possibilities. Although in principle, the exchange of rooks is in White's favor, that assessment become less clear if the Black queen prevents the remaining rook from occupying the c-file. So therefore we must examine the replies 25...Rc4 and 25...Rc2.

Bareev only considered the first possibility, which is why he rewarded his actual choice in the game, 25. Rfc1!, with an exclamation mark. Now 25...Rc4? would be useless, in view of 26. Rxc4 Qxc4 27. Qb8+ Kh7 28. Qxa7, and Black obtains no compensation for the lost pawn (28...Nf4 is met by 29. Qe3).

But for some reason, the GM did not examine the other reply: 25...Rc2! I suggest that this was exactly what Black should have played. If 26. Qb8+ Kh7 27. Qxa7, then 27...Rxc1+ 28. Rxc1 Nf4 (with the primary threat being 29...Ne2+) 29. Kh1 Qd5, with counterplay. And after 26. Rxc2 Qxc2, Black's queen controls the c-file; White's rook does not get into play; and after 27. Qb8+ Kh7 28. Qxa7 there follows 28...Qxb2, with tempo.

It's easy to see that, in the analogous position, but with the rook on f1, which occurs after 25. Rac1 Rc2 26. Rxc2 Qxc2, then 27. Qb8+ Kh7 28. Qxa7 Qxb2 29. Qxf7 (threatening 30. Qxe6) is now strong: White must win. So after 25. Rac1, the reply 25...Rc2? fails.

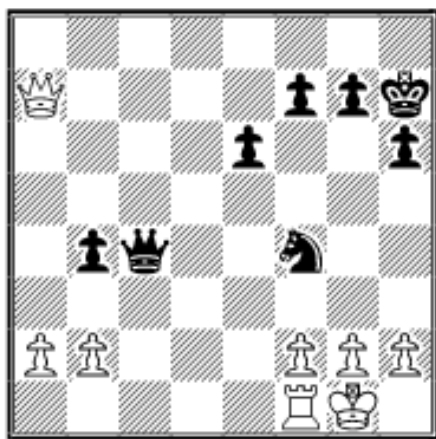
But then there's 25...Rc4!?, the move which bothered Bareev. On 26. Rfd1 Black has the excellent counterstroke 26...Nf4! (but not 26...Qd2? in view of 27. Qe1!). Another attractive line is 26. Qb8+ Kh7 27. Qb5 Ne3! If 26. g3, then 26...Re4! (26...a5? would be weak: 27. Rfd1 Rxc1 28. Rxc1 27.

Qb8+ Kh7 28. Qxa7 (28. Rfe1 Re2!? or 28...Qd2!?) 28...Nf4! (also possible is 28...Qf3!, intending Nf4) 29. gf Qf3, and the perpetual check is unavoidable.

White must go in for 26. Rxc4 Qxc4 27. Qb8+ Kh7 28. Qxa7, but after 28...Nf4!, Black has the direct threat of 29...Ne2+ 30. Kh1 Ng3+; White would also have to consider 29...Qe4 and 29...Qd5. On the whole, the combination of queen + knight, in close quarters with the king, is known to give the opponent considerable discomfort.

So now we see that each of the two candidate moves for White's rook has its drawbacks. Which one do we prefer? Since there is no answer yet, we must continue our analysis.

Most likely, we should confine ourselves to the latter variation - after all, White has won a pawn there. If he can only find a way to parry the immediate threats, everything will become clear. Of course, accomplishing that won't be so easy.



First, let's look at 29. Qxf7. From f7, the queen unexpectedly defends the rook, as can be seen from the variation 29...Ne2+ 30. Kh1 Ng3+? 31.fg! Black should reply 29...Qe4 30. f3 Qe3+ 31. Kh1 Qd2 (31...Nd3 32. h3 Nxb2 is weaker) 32. Rg1 Ne2 33. Qxe6 Nxe1 34. Qe4+ Kh8 35. Kxg1 Qxb2, with good saving chances in the pawn-down queen ending.

A decent line is 29. Re1!? Qd5 30. f3 Qg5 (the pawn ending after 30...Qd2 31. Qf2 Qxf2+ 32. Kxf2 Nd3+ 33. Ke2 Nxe1 34. Kxe1 is undoubtedly lost, since White must create an outside passed pawn on the queen's wing) 31. g3 Nh3+ 32. Kh1 Qd2 33. Qe3 Qxb2 34. Re2 or 34. Qe2. Here the unfortunate placement of the knight on h3 must tell - the threat of f3-f4, for example, is most unpleasant. Still, this variation is too complex - its consequences may be reckoned in analysis, but hardly over the board, with limited thinking time available. We should like to find something more convincing. The formula is well-known: ***Before delving deeply into such variations, it's important first of all to restrict yourself to the examination of all the candidate moves.***

For example, retreating the rook to a1, instead of e1, makes sense! But there is also the more efficient solution suggested by GM Patrick Wolff: 29. g3! One may easily verify that Black's attack is immediately snuffed out.

And if that is so, then there is no reason to object to the natural move, 25. Rac1!



## 25. Rf1-c1?! Rc8-d8?!

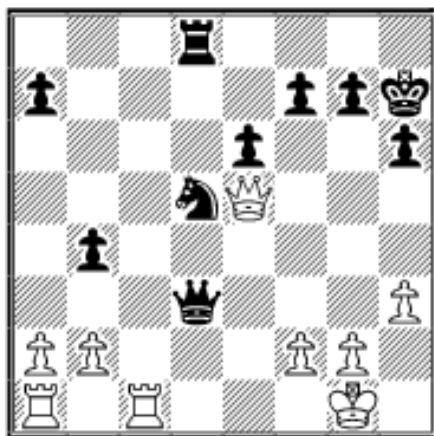
White's inaccuracy goes unpunished: Shirov does not play his best chance: 25...Rc2! On the whole, in fact, you will see that he defended poorly this entire game, demonstrating neither inspiration nor stubbornness. Evidently, the unfortunate outcome of the opening duel left too great a mark on the emotional, impressionable grandmaster's psyche.

## 26. h2-h3!

Obviously the king needs "air"; but why did Bareev choose this pawn to advance? After 26. g3, the f3 square is weakened, which could in some instances be exploited by the Black queen (the knight isn't likely to get there, considering the lengthy route from the d5 square). But this conclusion doesn't appear convincing. More importantly: It's impossible to tell yet whether White will succeed with piece maneuvers alone. If not (which is most likely the case), then he will have to crack his opponent's defenses in the center by means of f2-f4-f5. And there's where we see the shortcoming of g2-g3, compared to the text: the White king will be too exposed, giving Black chances to counterattack.

## 26...Kg8-h7

26...a5!? was preferable.



Clearly, now is the time to bring the queen's rook into the game - but how? Bareev decided against 27.a3?! because of 27...ba! 28. Rxa3 Qd2, when Black can hope for counterplay.

## 27. Rc1-e1?!

Bareev rewarded this move with an exclamation mark, because after 27. Rd1? Qc4! 28. Rac1 Qxa2 29. Ra1 Qb3, White doesn't have time to take the a-pawn, since the rook on d1 is en prise to the queen; therefore, White must first move it to e1, before playing 28. Rac1.

What I find objectionable in this line of reasoning is White's willingness to swap a-pawns. The rook's invasion of the 7th rank is not yet decisive - Black has sufficient resources left to defend his kingside. *In such cases, the usual technique is to stretch the opponent's defenses by creating another weakness on the other wing.* But the only thing left on the queenside will be the b4-pawn, which is securely protected by the knight. This is why it is important to keep the rook pawns on the board!

For this reason (among others), I would not have paid serious attention to the move 27. a3?! - not merely because of 27...ba!?, but even in the event of 27...a5!? 28. ab ab.

How should White have played, then? Very simple: 27. Rc5!, or 27. Rc6!, clearing the square for the queen's rook, while at the same time not giving up White's important control of the c-file (by the way, this is a standard technique for bringing a rook into play - one which I have seen used in many similar situations). For example, 27. Rc5 Rd7 28. Re1!, intending 29. Qe4+ (28. Rac1?! is less accurate, in view of 28...f6!, when White cannot play 29. Qxe6? Nf4).

### 27...Qd3-c4!

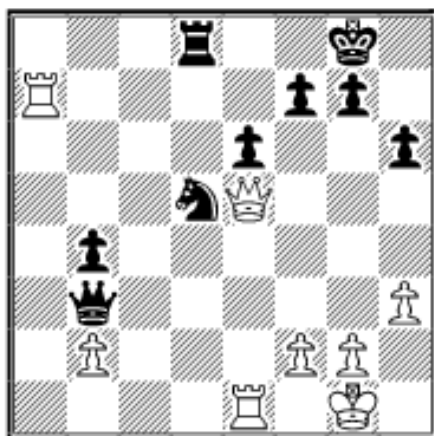
Black does not fear the trade of queens, since then he will seize the important c-file: 28. Qe4+? Qxe4 29. Rxe4 Rc8, threatening 30...Rc2.

### 28. Ra1-c1 Qc4xa2 29. Rc1-a1 Qa2-b3?

The decisive error: Bareev now reels off a string of accurate moves, which bring the game to victory. 29...Qc4! 30. Rxa7 Kg8 was necessary, when breaking down Black's defense will not be simple. Shirov probably did not want to give White a tempo for the transfer of his rook to the kingside with 31. Re4. But the endgame after 31...Qc1+ 32. Kh2 Qg5 33. Qxg5 hg may not be lost. For instance: 34. Re5?! is met by 34...Rc8!, with counterplay.

More likely, Bareev would have played 31. Rea1, aiming to trade rooks. But, first of all, this could be prevented by 31...Qc6!?, and secondly, even if this exchange is allowed, the outcome is still unclear. And all because Black's camp contains only one weakness - at f7, since White already traded off the other (the a7-pawn).

### 30. Ra1xa7 Kh7-g8



Here Bareev found the strongest plan (one in the style of Karpov!) - playing for domination. The two outstanding moves which follow take away every square from the enemy queen.

### 31. Qe5-d4!! Rd8-e8

The threat was 32. Rxe6!

### 32. Re1-e2!

An amazing position! Black's queen has nowhere to go; any rook move

loses the e6-pawn; and if the knight moves, he loses the b4-pawn (32...Nf6 33. Re3 Qc2 34. Qxb4 Nd5 35. Qb5). And if he makes waiting moves with his king (Kg8-f8-g8), White plays 33. Kh2 and then executes the decisive plan we spoke of earlier: f2-f4-f5. So Shirov gives up a pawn at once.

### **32...Re8-c8 33. Re2xe6 Nd5-c3!**

Forking the rook and the b2-pawn. However, this shouldn't help him: after the fall of the vital pawn at e6, there must be a winning line - perhaps more than one.

34. Rxf7 immediately suggests itself. Bareev declined it, and not without reason: here he would have had long variations to calculate, requiring more accuracy from White. Black would have replied 34...Ne2+! 35. Rxe2 Rc1+ 36. Kh2 Qxf7 37. Qxb4 Qc7+ 38. g3 (38. f4? Rc4 39. Qb3 Qxf4+ 40. g3 Qf7, and Black can expect to draw) 38...Qc6. Now 39. Qe4? Qxe4 40. Rxe4 Rc2 would be a mistake; White must choose between 39. Qb3+!? Kh8 40. f3 and 39. Re1!? Qc2!? 40. Re8+! Kh7 41. Qf8. This is pretty complicated for a practical game - we should find a clearer path to our goal.

The simple 34. Re3!? is strong; or 34. Re5!? Qxb2 35. Qe3. But I like Bareev's way better. The grandmaster had calculated it to the finish.

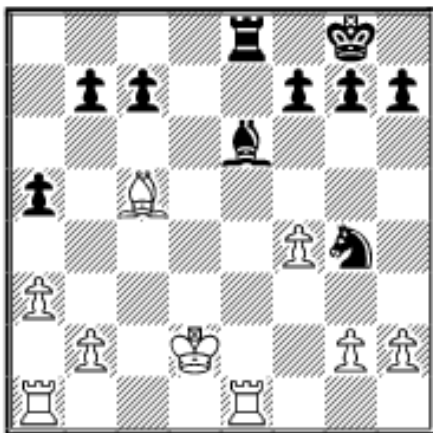
### **34. Ra7-e7! Qb3xb2 35. Re7-e8+ Rc8xe8 36. Re6xe8+ Kg8-h7 37. Qd4-d3+ g7-g6 38. Qd3-c4! Qb2-b1+**

Of course, 38...Qa2 39. Qxb4 is also hopeless.

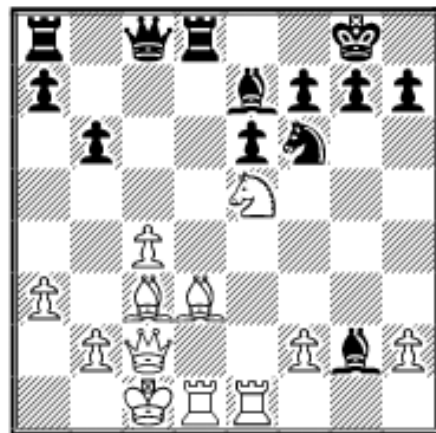
### **39. Kg1-h2 Qb1-f5 40. Qc4-d4**

Black resigned

And now, I offer you two not-so-simple exercises: to solve them, you will need some of the techniques we talked about while examining the preceding game.



(1) White to move



(2) White to move

## Answers

### (1) *Ivkov - Korchnoi* Baden-Baden 1981

Ivkov played inaccurately, allowing his opponent to fortify his position.

**22. Kc3? g6 23. Bg1 Nf6 24. Rad1 Ra8! 25. Re5 c6 26. Rd4 Nd5+ 27. Kd2 a4**

The knight has reached an excellent central point, and White's rooks have nowhere to go, because all the lines are covered by Black's pieces. This game should end in a draw - which it did, though only after tremendous complications, brought on by mistakes from both sides.

The attempt to keep the knight from getting to the center by 22. Bd4!? Rd8 23. Kc3 is interesting. On 23...Nxh2, White plays 24. Rad1 or 24. Re5, when Black's position appears shaky. But this is probably what he should have played.

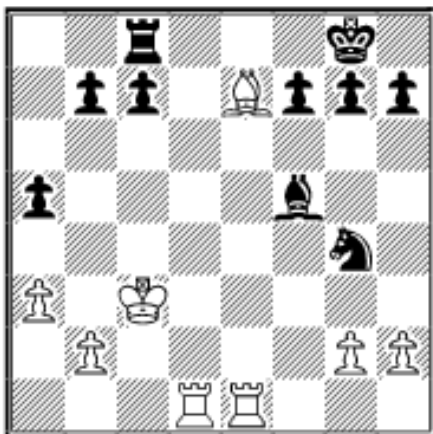
Instead of taking the pawn, we could try 23...c5?! On 24. Bxc5 Rc8 25. Kd4 Rd8+, the activity of Black's pieces allows him to hope for a draw: 26. Ke4 Bd5+ (26...f5+ is probably weaker: 27. Kf3 Rd3+ 28. Ke2 Bc4, and now not 29. Rac1?! Rd4+ with perpetual check, but 29. Rec1 Rd4+ 30. Ke1 Rxf4 31. Bb6, with the better chances for White) 27. Kf5 (27. Kd3!? Bxg2+) 27...Nh6+ 28. Kg5 Bxg2 (28...f6+ 29. Kh4 Bxg2 is possible too) 29. f5 (29. Be7? Rd5+; 29. Rad1 f6+ 30. Kh4 Rxd1 31. Rxd1 Nf5+ 32. Kg4 g6 33. Rd8+ Kf7 34. Rd7+ Kg8) 29..f6+ 30. Kf4 Nxf5!

White doesn't have to take on c5 - the simple 24. Bg1! gives him a won position. The point is that the c-pawn has now gone past the d5 square, which it was supposed to be defending; and now the knight will no longer be able to maintain itself in the center. For example: 24...Nf6 25. Rad1

Nd5+ 26. Kc2 Rc8 27. g3 or 27. Re5.

The most efficient route to victory is a positional pawn sacrifice, demonstrated after the game by Viktor Korchnoi. Its point is to force the exchange of rooks (as you will recall, this is a typical technique for realizing the advantage of the exchange).

**22. f4-f5!! Re8-d8+ 23. Kd2-c3 Be6xf5 24. Ra1-d1 Rd8-c8 25. Bc5-e7!**



26. Rd8+ Rxd8 27. Bxd8 follows, and Black's queenside is defenseless.

## 2) Gelfand - Delchev European Junior Championship, Arnhem 1988/89

White should attack along the open g-file, exploiting the enemy bishop's recent capture of the g2-pawn to gain time. But what's the best way?

18. f3?! Bh3 is unconvincing, since 19. Rg1 is well met by 19...Bf5.

It should be noted that Boris Gelfand first saw this position six months earlier, when he was unable to find the correct solution. Look at the continuation of the game **Gelfand - Dimitrov**, which was played at the Junior World Championship of 1988 in Adelaide.

**18. Rg1?! Qb7 19. f3.** 19. f4?! Be4 is useless. On 19. Rde1, there follows 19...Bc5!, for instance: 20. b4?! Bd4 21. Bxd4 Rxd4 22. Re3 Be4 23. Ng4 Bg6 24. Nxf6+ gf. Stronger would be 20. Nxf7! Kxf7! 21. Bxf6 gf 22. Bf1! Be4! 23. Rxe4 f5 24. Rh4 Qf3! 25. Rxh7+ Kf6, with great complications.

**19...Bxf3 20. Rdf1 Rxd3!**

White had expected 20...Bh5? 21. Bxh7+! Nxh7 22. Nxf7. By sacrificing the exchange, Black neutralizes his opponent's attack.

**21. Qxd3** (21. Nxd3 Rd8) **21...Be4 22. Qh3** (22. Qg3 Bg6) **22...Bf5 23. Rxf5?! (23. Qh6) 23...ef 24. Qxf5 g6!** (24...Rc8 25. Ng4 Nxf4 26. Rxg4! is weaker) **25. Nxf6 hg 26. Bxf6** Here, a draw was agreed, for

which the only possible explanation is that Vladimir Dimitrov did not fully trust his own abilities. With 26...Bxf6 27. Qxf6 Qe4!, he could have played on for the win, at no risk whatsoever.

Analyzing this game later, Gelfand worked out the proper way of prosecuting the attack. And soon he had the chance to confirm his analysis over the board.

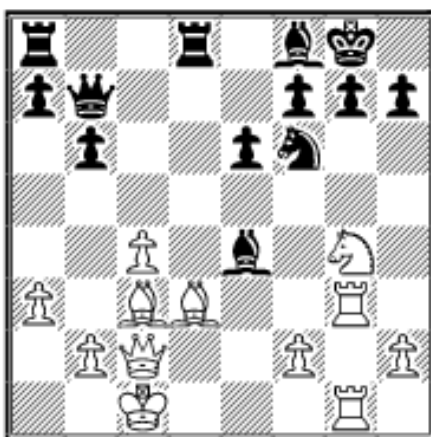
### 18. Re1-e3!!

Recall the comments to White's 27th move in the Bareev - Shirov game. There, as here, one rook must clear a path for the other along the first rank, moving - not sideways, but forward, maintaining control over the file it stands on (and most of all, over the important square e4). White prepares 19. Rg1, followed by 20. Reg3.

### 18...Qc8-b7 19. Re1-g1

Now 20. Rg3 is threatened; 19...g6 is met by the decisive 20. Bxg6! fg 21. Nxg6. Black's only chance was probably to play 19...Rxd3!?, but here the exchange sacrifice is considerably less effective, in comparison with the similar sacrifice in the Gelfand - Dimitrov game.

### 19...Be7-f8 20. Re3-g3 Bg2-e4 21. Ne5-g4!



As you may easily see, Black is defenseless.

21... Bg6 22. Bxg6 hg 23. Bxf6 Rdc8 (23...gf 24. Nxf6+ Kg7 25. Rxg6+, or 24...Kh8 25. Rh3+ Kg7 26. Qc3) 24. Kb1 b5 25. Nh6+ gh 26. Rxg6+ fg 27. Qxg6+ Bg7 28. Bxg7 Qf7 29. Qxh6 Qf5+ 30. Ka1 Kf7 31. Bc3 Rf8 32. Rg5 Qe4 33. Rg7+ Ke8 34. Qh5+ Kd8 35. Ba5+. Black resigned.

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*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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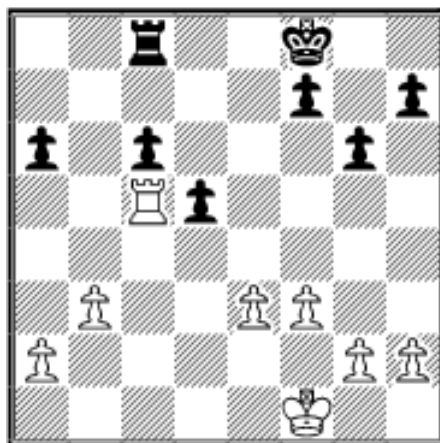
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## Active Rooks

***Rook activity is the cornerstone in the evaluation and play of rook endgames.*** This activity may take diverse forms: from attacking the enemy pawns, to the support of one's own passed pawns, to the interdiction or pursuit of the enemy king.

There are indeed times when the rook must remain passive, and implement purely defensive functions. But even then, ***one must stubbornly seek out any possibility of activating the rook, not even stopping at sacrificing pawns, or making your own king's position worse.***

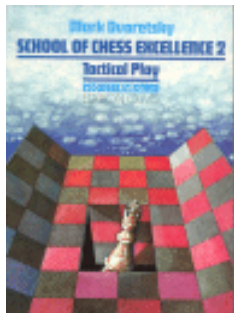
The following classic endgame serves as an excellent illustration.

**Flohr – Vidmar Nottingham 1936****32. Kf1-e2**

King centralization is paramount. A mistake would be 32. Ra5?! c5! 33. Rxa6 c4 (Black sacrifices a pawn, activates his forces, and draws without trouble); or 32. b4?! Ke7 33. Ke2 Kd6 34. Kd3 Rb8!? (34...Kc7!?)

35. a3 Rb5.

**32...Kf8-e7 33. Ke2-d3 Ke7-d6 34. Rc5-a5!**



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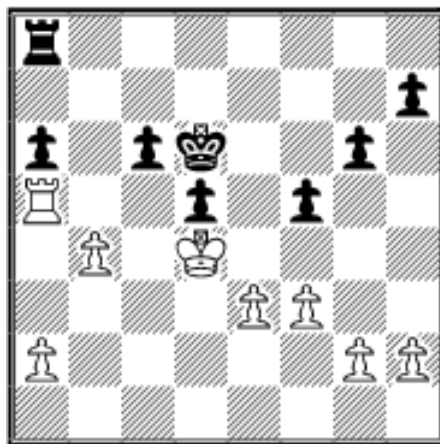


But not 34. Kd4?, in view of 34...Rb8 35. Ra5 c5+! 36. Kd3 Rb6.

**34...Rc8-a8 35. Kd3-d4**

Now Black must think about e3-e4.

**35...f7-f5!? 36. b3-b4**



White improves his position, strengthening his control of the queenside dark squares. Now Black must choose a defensive plan.

**36...Ra8-b8?**

Too passive! On the next move, Black's rook will have to return to the unenviable role of defender of the a6-pawn.

The pawn had to be defended by the king: **36...Kc7!** (intending to continue ..Kb6). True, this would distance the king from the center, whereas the White king, could advance; but as compensation, the rook would be freed. And the activity of the rook in rook endgames - is paramount!

White would probably have replied **37. Kc5 Kb7 38. Kd6 Re8 39. Ra3** (intending Rc3). In response, Black should clear the road for his rook along the second rank.

A) 39...f4? is completely wrong, because of 40. ef Re2 41. g4, with f4-f5 to follow. Black cannot defend against the passed f-pawn, because the pawn at f3 shields it from the rear.



B) Levenfish and Smyslov recommend 39..d4!? 40. ed Re2 41. Rc3 Rxg2 (41...Rd2 42. Rc4) 42. Rxc6 Rxh2 43. a4 g5. Black prepares Rh6+ or g5-g4. However, by bringing his rook around behind the g-pawn - 44. Rc7+! Kb6 45. Rg7! - White retains the advantage, since his passed d-pawn is quite dangerous.

C) **39...g5!** This simple move has, for some reason, been overlooked in the endgame books.

40. Rc3 f4 41. ef gf, and Black keeps sufficient counterplay; for example: 42. Rxc6 Rd8+ 43. Kc5 d4 44. Re6 d3 45. Re1 Rg8, with a probable draw.

40. g3 g4! (here too, 40...d4?! 41. ed Re2 is dubious, in view of 42. Ra5! [ after 42. Rc3 Rxh2, the c6 pawn is taboo] 42...h6! 43. a4! [43. Rxf5 Rxa2 44. Rf7+ Kb6 45. Rc7 Rxh2 46. Rxc6+ Kb5] 43...Rb2 44. Rxf5 Rxb4 45. Kc5 Rxa4 46. Rf7+, and White has a great advantage] 41. f4 Re4 42. Rc3 Rc4, or 41. fg fg 42. Rc3 Rf8, and Black's position is not worse.

### **37. a2-a3 Rb8-a8**

On b6, the rook might even stand worse than it does on a8.

### **38. e3-e4!**

White has strengthened his queenside as much as he can; he can achieve no more here (38. a4? Rb8). Therefore, he executes a **standard technique: enlarging the battlefield!**

After exchanging the central pawns, White's king will attack the kingside, while the rook obtains complete control of the 5th rank.

### **38...f5xe4 39. f3xe4 d5xe4 40. Kd4xe4 Ra8-a7?**

Black continues to wait and see. Here again, it was necessary to free the rook from the defense of the pawn, by sending the king over to b6: 40...Kc7!. In reply, White should not continue 41. Kf4? Rf8+! 42. Kg3 Kb6=. Levenfish and Smyslov give this continuation: 41. Re5!? Kb6 42. Re7 a5! 43. Rxh7 ab 44. ab Ra4 45. Rg7 Rxb4+ 46. Kf3 Rh4! 47. h3 Rh6 48. Kg4 c5 49. Kg5 Rh8 50. Rxg6+ Kb5 51. Rg7 c4, followed by ..Rc8.

Perhaps White should try the more restrained 41. h4!? Kb6 42. g4 (42. Kf4!?) 42...Rf8 43. h5, maintaining his advantage.

### **41. Ke4-f4 h7-h6**

Otherwise, the king enters decisively at h6: 41...Ra8 42. Kg5 Ra7 43. Kh6 Ke6 44. g4 and 45. h5 (Levenfish and Smyslov).

### **42. h2-h4! Kd6-e6 43. Kf4-g4 Ra7-a8 44. h4-h5! g6-g5**

44...gh+ 45. Kxh5 Rg8 46. g4 (Alekhine)

### **45. g2-g3!**

White has created and fixed a new weakness - the h6 pawn. After returning his king to the center, he has taken the f4-square under control. 45. Kf3 would have been less accurate, considering 45...Rf8+ 46. Ke4 Rf4+.

### **45...Ra8-a7 46. Kg4-f3! Ra7-a8 47. Kf3-e4 Ra8-a7 48. Ke4-d4 Ke6-d6 49. Kd4-e4 Kd6-e6 50. Ra5-e5+! Ke6-d6**

If 50...Kf6, then 51. Rc5 Rc7 52. Ra5 Ra7 53. Kd4 Ke6 54. Kc5 Rd7 55. Rxa6 Rd3 56. Rxc6+ Kf7 57. a4 Rxg3 58. Rxh6 and wins (Levenfish and Smyslov).

## 51. Re5-e8 c6-c5

The pawn endgame after 51...Re7+ 52. Rxe7 Kxe7 53. Ke5 is completely hopeless.

## 52. Re8-d8+!

Leads to a technical win. White had calculated the continuation 52...Kc7 53. Rh8 cb 54. Rh7+ (of course, 54. ab wins too) 54...Kb8 55. Rxa7 Kxa7 56. ab Kb6 57. Kf5 Kb5 58. Kg6 Kxb4 59. Kxh6 a5 60. Kxg5 a4 61. h6, winning. And other king retreats lose the c5 pawn.

## 52...Kd6-c6 53. Rd8-c8+ Kc6-b6 54. Rc8xc5 Ra7-h7

Black's rook exchanges one post for another; but this one is no less pathetic than the first.

## 55. Rc5-e5 Kb6-c6 56. Re5-e6+ Kc6-b5 57. Ke4-f5 Rh7-f7+ 58. Re6-f6

Black resigned.

A few years ago, a similar pawn structure occurred in a game played by one of my former students, Alexey Dreev.

### *Dreev – Chandler Hastings 1999/2000*

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bf4 0-0 6. e3 c5 7. dc Bxc5 8. a3 Nc6 9. cd Nxd5 10. Nxd5 ed 11. Bd3 Bb6 12. 0-0 Bg4 13. h3 Bh5 14. b4 a6**

Black loses a pawn after 14...Qf6? 15. g4 Bg6 16. Bxg6 and 17. Qxd5; but 14...Re8!? was worth considering.

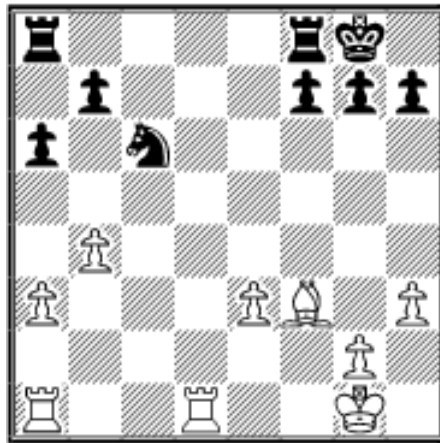
## 15. Be2!

After the older moves 15. Rc1 or 15. Ra2, Black would reply 15...d4.

**15...d4**

If 15...Re8, then 16. Ra2!, and Black no longer has 16...d4? because of 17. Nxd4.

**16. ed (16. Nxd4? Bxd4) 16...Bxf3 (16...Qd5!?) 17. Bxf3 Qxd4 18. Be3! Qxd1 19. Rfxd1 Bxe3 20. fe**

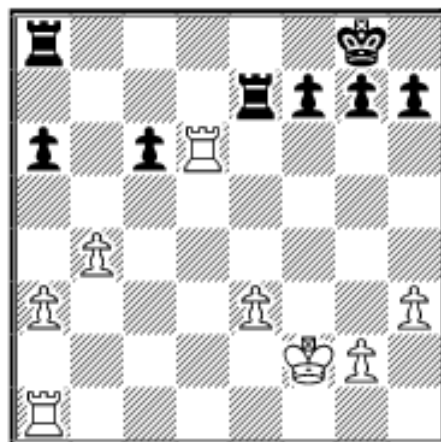
**20...Rfe8?**

*“This first serious inaccuracy leads to serious consequences,” wrote Dreev. Instead, he recommends 20..Rfd8 21. Bxc6 (21. Kf2 Rxd1 22. Rxd1 Rd8) 21...bc 22. Rxd8+ Rxd8 23. Rc1 Rc8,*

*with slightly better chances for White (23...Rd6 is weaker, because of 24. Rc5 and 25. Ra5).*

**21. Kf2 Re7**

*“Again he should have put his rook on the d-file - 21...Rad8, regardless of the tempo loss.” (Dreev)*

**22. Bxc6 bc 23. Rd6 (23. Rac1? Re6)****23...Rc8?!**

*“After the game, Murray acknowledged that he had intended 23...a5, and only saw here that he remains a pawn down after 24. Rxc6 ab 25. ab!*

*The best chance was 23...Rae8!: as M. Dvoretsky taught me, passivity in rook*

*endgames leads to no good.”*

Dreev explains his thinking with the following variations:

24. Re1 Re6 25. Rxe6 Rxe6 26. Rc1 Kf8 27. Rc5 Rf6+  
28. Ke2 Rg6 29. g4 Rh6; and

24. Rxc6 Rxe3 25. Rxa6 Re2+ 26. Kf1 Rb2! (26...h5 27.  
Ra8!) 27. Re1 Rc8 28. Re2 Rb1+ 29. Kf2 h5.

*“In either case, White would have definite problems converting his advantage.”*

Now, White’s play could be strengthened in the second line with 28. Rc6! Ra8 29. Rec1, forcing the exchange of one pair of rooks, which leads to an easy win. Thus, Dreev’s recommendation would not save Black But still, it remains instructive: it shows what direction a top-class player follows to find the best defense.

**24. Rc1 Rec7 25. Rc5 Kf8 26. e4 Ke7 27. e5 f6 28. Rd3 fe 29. Ke3 Kf6?**

29...Rd7 30. Rxe5+ Kd8 holds out longer.

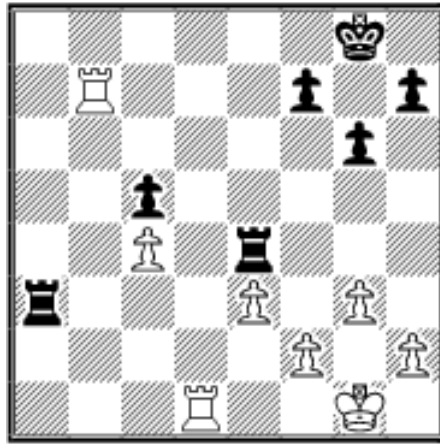
**30. Ke4 g6 31. Rdc3!**

*“The game is practically decided, since Black’s king is now cut off from his weak pawns.” (Dreev)*

**31...Ke6 32. Rxe5+ Kf6 33. Rf3+ Kg7 34. Kd4 Rd7+ 35. Kc4 Rb8 36. Rc5 Rb6 37. Kb3 Rd6 38. Ka4 h5 39 h4 Rd7 40. Ka5 Rb8 41. Rxc6,** and White soon won.

The same principle of “rook activity” operates not just in pure rook endings, but also in those cases where there are other pieces on the board.

***Petrosian – Balashov USSR Championship,  
Leningrad 1977***



**26...Ra8?**

Of course not 26...Rxc4? 27. Rdd7; but the text is also a mistake. The rook should have been more actively placed: 26...Ra6! 27. Rdd7 Rf6, when Black draws without any particular difficulty.

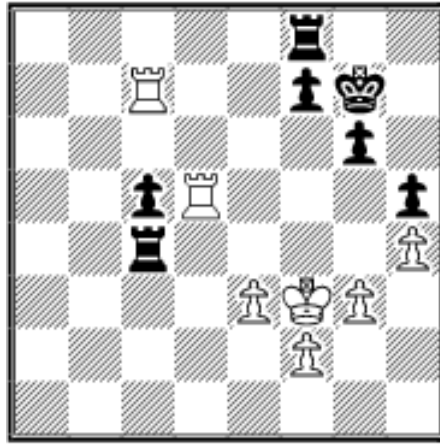
**27. Rdd7 Rf8 28. Rbc7 Rxc4 29. Kg2 h5 30. h3 (30. h4!?) 30...Kg7**

It would have made sense to play 30...Ra4!? 31. Rxc5 Raa8 (intending Rad8). The “four pawns to three on the same side” single-rook ending is drawish; four rooks makes Black’s task considerably more difficult. Of course, the exchange of rooks is not hard to forestall: White simply puts both rooks on the same file. But then the defense is also made easier: White no longer threatens to double rooks on the 7th.

**31. Kf3 Kf6**

31...g5!? deserved consideration.

**32. h4! Kg7 33. Rd5?!**



### 33...Re8?

Balashov once again fails to seize his chance to sacrifice the c-pawn in order to ease the pressure on his kingside. He might even have been able to exchange one pair of rooks, which would have guaranteed Black the draw he

was seeking: 33...Ra4!, and if 34. Rdx5?!, then 34...Rfa8!

### 34. Rdd7!

Of course not 34. Rdx5? Rxc5 35. Rxc5 Ra8=.

### 34...Rf8 35. Re7

35. e4 Rd4 36. Re7 c4 would have been inexact.

### 35...Kf6 36. e4 Rd4

36...Rc2 37. Ke3 c4 38. f3 Rc1 39. Kf4 Kg7 40. e5 would not have helped.

**37. e5+ Kf5 38. Rxc5 Rd3+ 39. Kg2 Ra3 40. Rc6 Ke4 41. Rf6 Raa8 42. e6 (White is winning) 42...Ke5 43. Rfxf7 Rg8 44. Rb7?!**

White cannot do without the advance of his f-pawn. The shortest route was 44.f4+ Kd6 45. Rd7+ Kxe6 46. Rde7+ Kd6 47. Re5 Rae8 (47...Raf8 48. Ra7) 48. Rf6+ Kd7 49. Rg5 Re6 50. Rxe6 Kxe6 51. f5+, and wins. Instead of which, Petrosian unhurriedly, in complete accord with his style (which we also saw in an earlier stage of this endgame), plays a waiting game, hoping to provoke an error by his opponent, which will allow him to garner the

point by easier means than plunging into tense calculations. And he gets it!

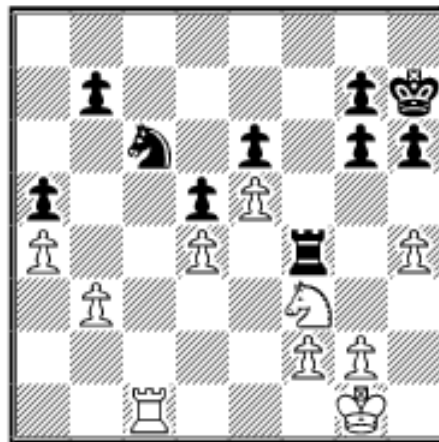
**44...Kxe6 45. Rbe7+ Kd6 46. Re2 Raf8**

46...g5!? is no help: 47. hg Rxc5 48. Rf6+ (also possible is 48. f4 Rgg8 49. Rf6+ Kd7 50. Kh3 Ra3 51. Rg2) 48...Kd7 49. Rb2! (threatening Rb7+) 49...Ke7?! (49...Kc7) 50. Rh6 and wins.

**47. Ra7 Ra8 48. Rae7 Rac8 49. R2e6+ Kd5 50. Kh3**

(apparently, White has understood that he can't do without f2-f4, and now prepares that advance) **50...Rc7? 51. Rxc6!** Black resigned.

***Riazantsev - Ksenofontov Moscow 1997***



**28. Rd1?**

This looks like a completely natural move - a central pawn is under attack, and White protects it. But the rook will now remain forever passive. This is a very serious positional minus, as his opponent demonstrates

convincingly.

**28...Rg4! 29. Kf1?**

White loses without a struggle. The prophylactic 29. Kh2! was necessary, preventing Black's intended g6-g5. In that case, Black would probably have transferred his king to e7.

**29...g5 (wins) 30. hg hg 31. g3 Kg6 32. Ke2 Re4+ 33. Kd3 g4 34. Nh4+ Kg5 35. Kc3 Re2 36. Kd3 (36. Rf1**

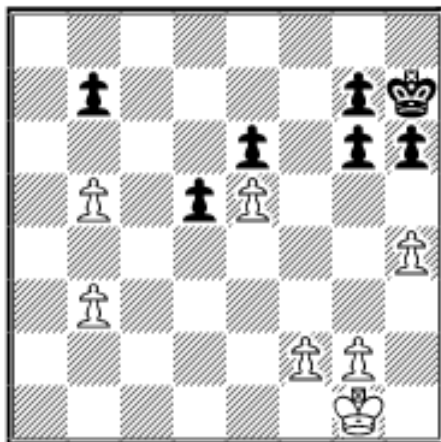


Nb4 threatens mate on c2; 36. f4+ gf 37. Nxf3+ Kg4) **36...Rxf2**, and Black won.

White should have sacrificed the pawn with 28. Rc5! Nxd4 29. Nxd4 Rxd4 30. Rxa5 (threatening 31. Rb5) 30...Rb4 31. Ra8, followed by 32. Re8. White's rook is very active, and he retains excellent drawing chances.

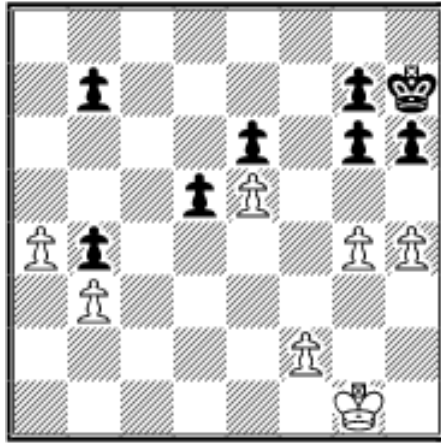
After 28. Rc5! Nxd4 29. Nxd4 Rxd4, White could also enter a pawn endgame, and attempt to set up a fortress there. Unfortunately, this plan fails, as Black can break the fortress down.

A) 30. Rxa5 Rb4 31. Rb5? (instead of 31. Ra8) 31...Rxb5 32. ab



White intends g2-g4!, ensuring the closing of the kingside. And the queenside can always be kept closed with b5-b6 and b3-b4-b5. Unfortunately, he lacks a single tempo: 32...g5 (32...h5!? 33. f4 g5! wins, too) 33. hg (33. h5 g4! 34. f3 g3!, with 35...g6 to follow, wins - but not 34...gf? 35. g4!=) 33...Kg6! (33...hg? 34. g4! Kg6 35. b6 Kf7 36. b4 Ke7 37. b5=; 33...h5! and Black wins) 34. gh gh 35. f4 Kf5 36. g3 h5 and wins.

B) 30. Rb5? (instead of 30. Rxa5) 30...Rb4 31. Rxb4 ab 32. g4



Now Black will never get through on the kingside; on the other hand, it's no longer possible to close up the queenside. Of course, Black must play accurately: before transferring his king, it's important to make the greatest possible improvement in the strategic

situation on the kingside:

32...g5! 33. h5 g6! (the immediate king march doesn't work: 33...Kg8 34. Kf1 Kf7 35. Ke2 Ke7 36. Ke3 Kd7 37. Kd4 Kc6 38. Kd3 Kc5 39. Ke3 d4+ 40. Ke4 b6 41. f3 d3 42. Kxd3 Kxe5 43. Ke3 Kd5 44. Kd3=)

34. f3 gh 35. gh Kg7 36. Kf2 Kf7 37. Ke3 Ke7 38. Kd4  
b6 39. Kd3 (insufficient is 39. a5 ba 40. Kc5 Kd7 41.  
Kb5 d4 42. Kc4 Kc6 43. Kxd4 Kb5) 39...Kd7 40. Ke3  
Kc6 41. Kd4 Kb7 42. Kd3 Ka6 43. Ke3 b5 44. ab+ Kxb5  
45. Kd4 Kc6 46. Ke3 Kc5 47. Kd3 d4 48. Ke4 d3 49.  
Kxd3 Kd5, and wins.

A positional error which would be quite normal in a 12-year-old candidate master, is unforgivable when committed by an experienced grandmaster.

*Romanishin* – Benjamin Groningen 1993



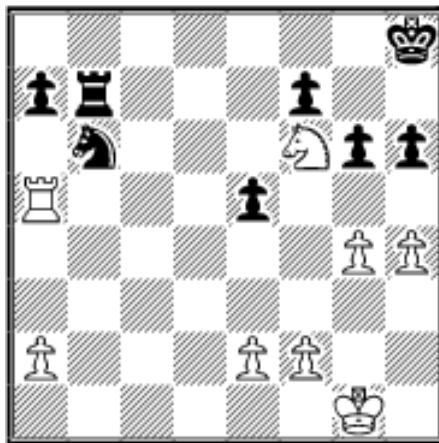
White's rook is active; therefore, it must be exchanged. Black has a simple draw with 28...Rc4! 29. f3 (White gets nothing from either 29. Nc3 a5 or 29. Nf6+ Kg7 30. Ne8+ Kf8) 29...Ra4.

**28...Rc7?** (another mistake would have been 28...Rc1+?  
29. Kg2 Nc8 30. g4!, with advantage to White) **29.**

**Nf6+! Kh8 30. g4! h6 31. h4**

Black's rook is passive, and his king poorly placed; his situation is quite dangerous.

**31...Rb7** (31...Nd7 32. Ne8 Rb7 33. Nd6 would be bad here) **32. Ra5!?**



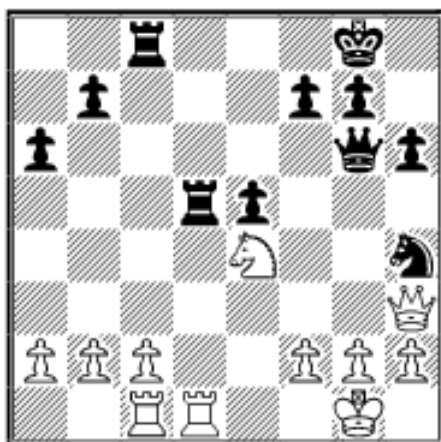
**32...Re7?**

It appears there was still a chance to get out relatively lightly from this difficult position, with 32...Nd7! 33. Ne8 (33. Nxd7 Rxd7 34. Rxe5 Rd4, followed by 35...Ra4=) 33...Kg8 34. Nd6 Rc7. Benjamin, however, continues his passive strategy.

**33. g5 hg 34. hg Kg7 35.**

**Rc5 e4 36. a4** (White plays for mate - 37. a5 is threatened) **36...Rb7** (36...Nxa4 37. Rc8) **37. Rb5 a6 38. Rb4 a5 39. Rb5 Rb8 40. e3** (zugzwang). Black overstepped the time limit.

*Evans – Rossolimo* USA Ch, New York 1965/66



Here Rossolimo executed an elegant combination, winning a pawn and reaching a favorable endgame.

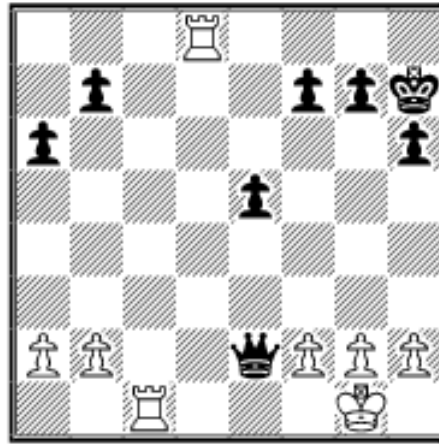
**23...Rxc2!! 24. Qxh4 Rd4!**

But not 24...Rxc1? 25. Rxc1 Rd4, in view of 26. f3! f5 27. Qg3!

**25. Qd8+!**

25. f3? here allows 25...Qxg2#.

**25...Rxd8 26. Rxd8+ Kh7 27. Rxc2 Qxe4 28. Rc1 Qe2!**



Here, not wanting to lose a pawn, Evans chose a passive strategy.

### 29. Rb1?!

The side with the two rooks should strive to have them attack the king or enemy pawns together. After the

text, the only place White can double rooks will be on the first rank.

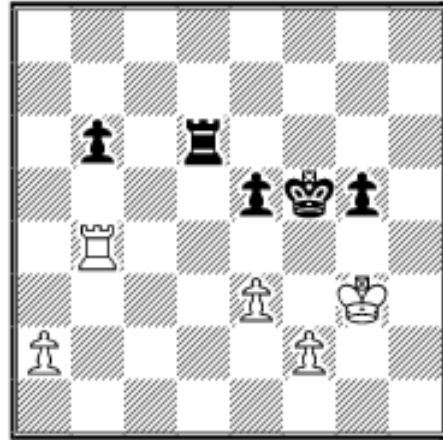
Where the rooks are separated or confined to passivity, either because they must hold enemy passed pawns or because they must protect their own, the queen is stronger than the two rooks. In the continuation, Rossolimo skillfully combines the strengthening of his own position with preventing the enemy rooks from activating, resulting in a well-earned win.

I have been unable to find any significant improvement in White's play from this point; therefore I believe that his decisive error (at least, from a practical standpoint) came right here. He should have tried his luck with active counterplay: 29. g3! Qxb2 30. Rc7 b5 (on 30...Qxa2 31. Rxb7, White easily stops the a-pawn by doubling rooks) 31. Rxf7 Qxa2 32. Rdd7 Qa1+ 33. Kg2 e4 34. Rb7 or 34. h4!?, and in some cases, White can even attack on the 8th rank, after playing h4-h5.

**29...f5! 30. Rdd1 e4 31. Re1 Qc4 32. a3 Qa2!** (keeping the White rooks pinned down) **33. g3 Kg6 34. Kg2 Qb3 35. Kg1 Qa2** (otherwise 36. Re2) **36. Kg2 Kf6 37. f3 Ke5 38. fe fe 39. h4 Qb3 40. Kh3 Qc2 41. Rec1 Qf2 42. Rf1 Qb6 43. Kg2 g6 44. Rf8 Qb5! 45. Rf2 e3 46. Re1 Ke4 47. a4 Qc5 48. Kh3 b5! 49. ab ab 50. Rf6 Qe5 51.**

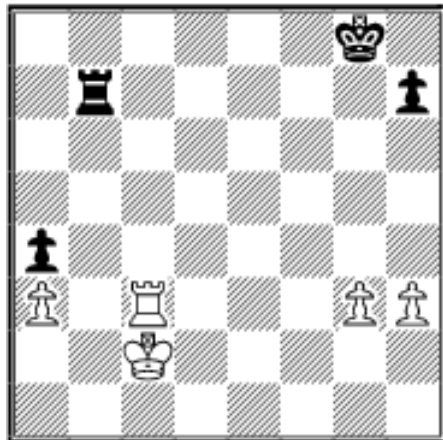
**Rf8 Qe7 52. Rf4+ Kd3 53. Rf3 Kd2 54. Rfxe3 Qxe3  
55. Rxe3 Kxe3 56. Kg4 Ke4 57. b4 Ke5! 58. Kf3 Kd5  
59. Kf4 Kc4 60. g4 Kxb4 61. g5 h5 62. Ke5 Kc5 63.  
Kf6 b4 64. Kxg6 b3 65. Kh6 b2 66. g6 b1Q 67. g7 Qb3  
68. Kh7 Kd6 69. g8Q Qxg8+ 70. Kxg8 Ke5 71. Kf7  
Kf5! White resigned.**

In conclusion - three exercises.



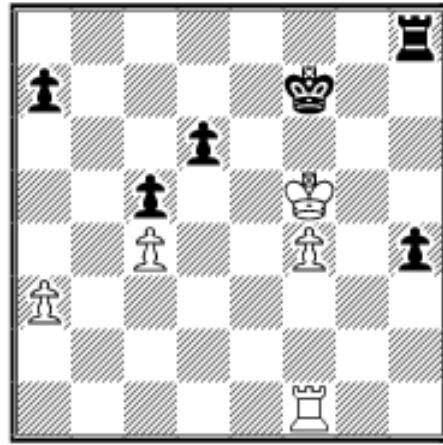
**1 Black to move**

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**2 White to move**

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**3 Black to move**

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## Answers

### 1) *Taimanov - Chekhov, Kishinev 1976*

White wants to play e3-e4+, and then gradually strengthen his position by a2-a4, f2-f3, Kg4, Rb5 etc. I don't know if his advantage would have been enough to win with, but passive defense of such a position is both difficult and unpleasant.

1...g4?! does not appear to lose: 2. Rxg4 (2. a4 Rg6 3. e4+ Kg5 4. Rb5 Re6) 2...e4 3. f3 ef 4. Kxf3 Rd3! 5. Rb4 Ra3 6. Rb5+ Ke6 7. Rxb6+ Ke5 8. Rb2 Kf5, and I don't see how White can capitalize on his two extra pawns.

Black found a simpler solution:

### **1...Rd3! 2. Rxb6**

White could have tried putting his opponent in zugzwang with 2. a4!? Ra3 3. Kf3. However, after 3...g4+! 4. Rxg4 b5! 5. ab Rb3, we will have reached a drawn endgame with two pawns to one.

## 2...Ra3

Now it's the White rook that must take up a passive position. After **3. Rb2 Ra4**, the draw was agreed.

I was Valery Chekhov's trainer from 1973 to 1975, and our work together was crowned by his victory in the World Junior Championship. All my students were solidly grounded in the most important principles of endgame play; thus, Chekhov's use of a pawn sacrifice for his rook's activity was, for him, merely a simple piece of technique.

### 2) *Larsen - Kavalek, Solingen 1970, 7th match game*

White intends to continue 40. Rc4. Since Black cannot reply 40...Rb3 41. Rxa4 Rxc3 42. Rg4+, he will have to settle for 40...Ra7. With his rook so passive, Black's in a bad way - White will simply advance his king (Kc3-b4-b5).

Which is precisely what happened in the game:

**39...Kg7?? 40. Rc4 Ra7 41. Kc3 h5 42. Kb4 Kg6 43. Rc6+ Kg7 44. Rc5 Kh6 45. Kb5** (threatening 46. Rc4) **45...Re7 46. Kxa4 Re3 47. g4 hg 48. hg Re4+ 49. Kb5 Rxg4 50. a4 Rg1 51. a5 Rb1+ 52. Kc6 Ra1 53. Kb6 Rb1+ 54. Rb5 Rf1 55. a6 Rf6+ 56. Ka5 Rf7 57. Rb6+ Kg5 58. Rb7 Rf1 59. a7 Kh6 60. Rb6+ Kg7 61. Ra6**  
Black resigned.

Black had to keep his rook in an active position, meeting 40. Rc4 with the counterattacking 40...Rb3!; for this purpose, Black must make some provision against the rook check at g4.

39...Kf7 suggests itself; it also brings the king closer to the center. White would reply 40. g4!, aiming to continue

with 41. h4 and 42. Rc4. If 40...Ke6 41. h4 Kd5, then 42. g5!, followed by 43. Rg3. He might continue with either 44. Rg4 (attacking the a4 pawn) or 44. h5 (when the White rook would be behind its passed pawn).

### **39...h5!!**

The only defense, but sufficient. Now 40. Rc4 Rb3! 41. Rxa4 Rxg3= is useless. On 40. h4, there follows 40...Rg7! and then Rg4 - from g4, the rook attacks the g3 pawn, defends the a4 pawn, and prevents the White king from getting in via the 4th rank.

On 40. g4 the simplest answer is 40...h4!, fixing a target for counterattack on the 3rd rank - the pawn at h3 (41. Rc4 Rb3). But Black also will not lose after 40...hg 41. hg Kg7 42. Rc4 Rb3! (activity at any price!) 43. Rxa4 Rg3 44. Kb2 Rg2+ 45. Kc3 Rg3+.

Conclusion: after 39...h5! Black's rook remains active in all lines, which should allow him to avoid defeat.

### **3) Obukhov - Ibragimov, USSR 1991**

The passive 1. Rh1? led to rapid defeat: 1...h3 2. Rh2 a6 3. Kg4 (if 3. Kg5, then either 3...Rg8+ 4. Kf5 Rg3, or 3...d5!) 3...Kf6 4. Rxh3 Rxh3 5. Kxh3 d5! White resigned.

The only salvation is to activate the rook!

#### **1. Rb1! h3 2. Rb7+ Kf8 (the only move)**

White undoubtedly looked at this variation, but couldn't find the continuation. In fact, 3. Rb8+? Kg7 4. Rb7+ Kh6 fails, as does 3. Kf6? Rh6+ 4. Kg5 h2; and on 3. Kg6? Rh4! 4. f5 h2 5. Rb8+ (5. f6 Rg4+) 5...Ke7 6. f6+ Kd7 7. f7 h1Q decides.

There is, however, another possibility.



**3. Kg5!! h2** (3...Rg8+?? 4. Kf6 wins) **4. Rb8+ Kg7 5. Rb7+**, with perpetual check.

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## Attack Training

We shall now study an interesting game, played 20 years ago, which was chosen the best of the tournament. White indeed played well - but as the following analysis will show, his play was far from perfect. The way he chose to prosecute his attack was not the strongest; his opponent might have warded it off. This is not surprising, for Anatoly Karpov has never been an attacking player; his enormous talent has shown itself chiefly in other spheres.

I recommend you use this game for your own training. Before familiarizing yourself with the analysis, try to answer the questions put to you - you will then be better able to appreciate objectively the complexity of the problems the two players had to resolve. Give yourself extra time - a minimum two to three hours for the game. In fact, nearly all the tasks are difficult ones, requiring both accurate calculation of variations, and a nuanced appraisal of the resulting dynamic positions. But even if your answers differ significantly from my conclusions - don't fret. Such work is exceptionally worthwhile, in any event.

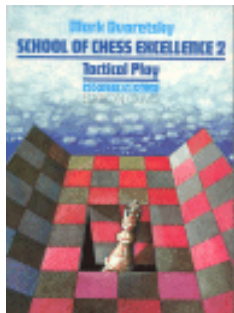
The main theme of the entire game (and consequently, of the greater part of the questions as well) is: "candidate-moves". After this training is completed, I hope that you will have a better feel for how important it is, at an early stage, to include in your examination of variations every likely possibility (both for you and for your opponent); this approach makes your play that much more accurate, deep and interesting.

### Karpov - Sax Linares 1983

(Karpov's notes are given in italics.)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 e7-e6 3. d2-d4 c5xd4 4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5. Nb1-c3 d7-d6 6. g2-g4 h7-h6 7. Rh1-g1 Bf8-e7 8. Bc1-e3 Nb8-c6 9. Qd1-e2!?

*"The idea behind this somewhat unusual move is to*



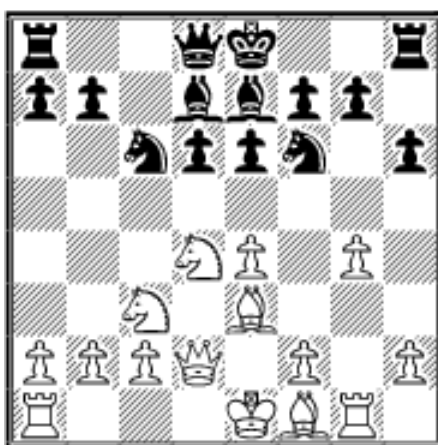
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*castle queenside, and then to make the quickest possible use of the White rook and Black queen's opposition along the d-file."*

### 9...Bc8-d7

Also worth considering was 9...Nxd4!? 10. Bxd4 e5 11. Be3 Be6 12. 0-0-0 Nd7 13. Kb1 (13. Nb5 Nb6!=) 13...a6 14. f4 ef 15. Bxf4 Bf6!, when the position is either unclear, or slightly favorable to White (Karpov-Andersson, Turin 1982).



1) What are White's choices here? What are the comparative pluses and minuses of each?

**10. h2-h4 Nc6xd4 11. Be3xd4 e6-e5 12. Bd4-e3 Bd7-c6**



2) What are White's choices here?

**13. Qe2-d3**

3) What continuations should Black be looking at?

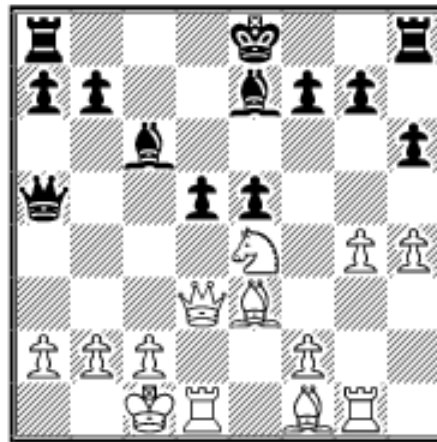
**13...Qd8-a5 14. 0-0-0**

Black could answer this by playing 14...0-0-0 as well.



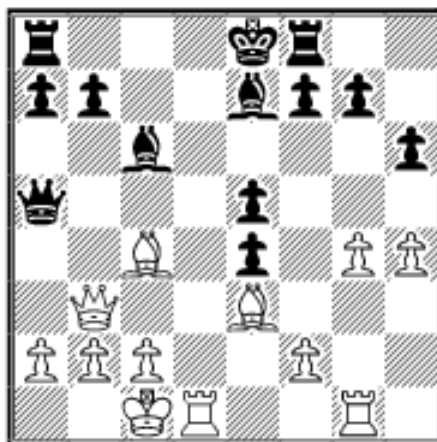
4) How then should White reply?

**14...Nf6xe4 15. Nc3xe4 d6-d5**



5) Select White's strongest continuation.

**16. Qd3-b3 d5xe4 17. Bf1-c4 Rh8-f8**

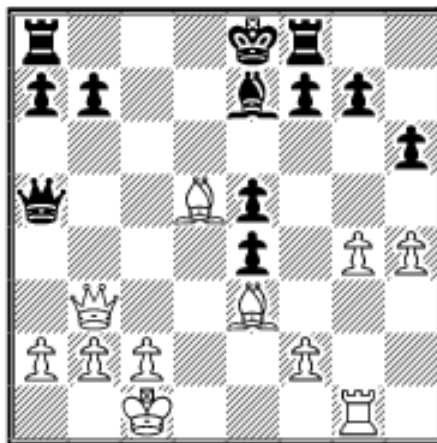


6) What means does White have to continue his attack?

**18. Rd1-d5 Bc6xd5**

**18...Qc7 19. Bb5 Bxh4 20. Rgd1 (or 20. Bc5)**

**19. Bc4xd5**



7) What defense should Black prefer?

**19...Ra8-d8**

8) How should White play?

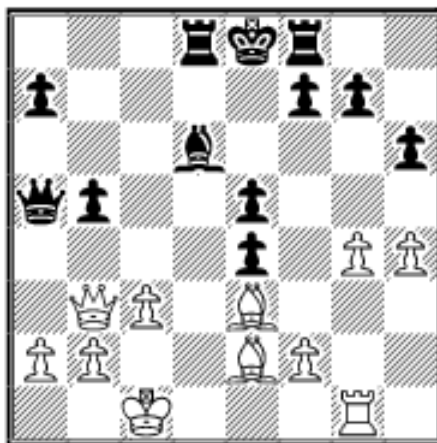
**20. Bd5-c4 Be7-b4 21. c2-c3 b7-b5!**

On 21...Bd6 22. Qxb7 Qc7, White could choose between the overwhelming endgame after 23. Qxc7 Bxc7 24. Bxa7, or continuing his attack with 23. Qxe4. And 22. g5!? hg 23. Rxg5 was very strong, also.

**22. Bc4-e2!**

22. cb bc (or 22...Qc7 23. Bc5 bc) 23. Qxc4 Qd5 works to Black's advantage.

**22...Bb4-d6**



9) What attacking resources does White have?

**23. Qb3-d5**

10) What defensive resources does Black have?

**23...Ke8-e7 24. Be3-c5**

**Bd6xc5**

Both 24...Qc7 25. Qxe5+ Kd7 26. Bxd6 Qxd6 27. Rd1, and 24...f6 25. Bc4! would be bad.

**25. Qd5xe5+ Ke7-d7 26. Qe5xc5 Qa5-c7 27. Qc5-f5+ Kd7-e7?!**

Much harder was 27...Kc6 28. Qxb5+ Kd6 29. Qb4+, and now Black has a choice:

A) 29...Ke5 30. f4+ Kxf4 31. Rf1+ Ke3. Karpov cuts this variation short after 32. Bb5, but he shouldn't have: Black has a successful defense in 32...Qd6 33. Re1+ Kf2=. 32. c4! would have been stronger, when Black's only defense was 32...Qg3! 33. Qc3+ Kxe2 34. Qxg3 Kxf1. White undoubtedly holds the advantage; but it's unclear whether it will be enough to win.

B) 29...Qc5!? 30. Qb7 Ke5 31. Re1 (31. f4+?, expecting 31...Kxf4? 32. Rf1+ Ke3 33. Rf3+!!, does not work after 31...ef!) 31...Qxf2? 32. Qe7+ Kd5 33. Rd1+ Kc6 34. Qxe4+ Kc7 35. Qe7+ Kc6 36. Rf1 wins (Karpov). Unfortunately, by preparing a retreat for his king - 31...g6! - Black fends off the immediate threats.

**28. Qf5xe4+ Ke7-d7 29. Qe4-f5+ Kd7-e7 30. Rg1-e1!**

*“After long thought, I was able to find the best means of keeping the tension, even after the Black king secures itself at d8.”*

On 30. Bxb5 Rd6 (30...Rd4 31. Kb1 Rd2 32. Qe4+ Kd8 33. Re1 wins) 31. Qe5+ Kd8 32. Qxg7 Qe7, with 33...Kc7 to follow, White now has three pawns for the exchange; the battle, however, continues.

**30...Rd8-d6 31. Be2-c4+!**

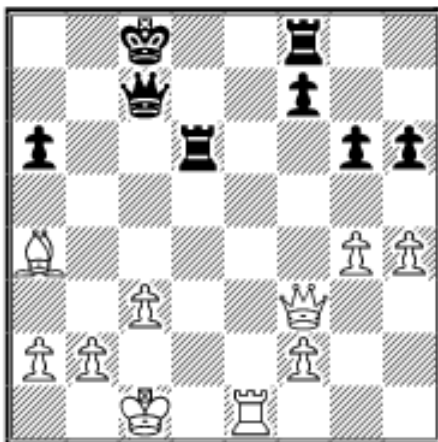
*“It's important not to allow Black's rook to get to e6.”*

**31...Ke7-d8 32. Bc4xb5 a7-a6**

After 32...Rf6 33. Qd5+ Kc8, White wins with the

same combination he plays in the game.

**33. Bb5-a4 g7-g6 34. Qf5-f3 Kd8-c8**



11) How does White continue the attack?

**35. Re1-e7 Rd6-d1+ 36. Kc1xd1 Qc7xe7**

On 36...Rd8+, White would have simply entered the won endgame after 37. Rd7!, since after 37. Kc1

Qxe7 38. Qa8+ Kc7 39. Qa7+ Kd6, there appears to be no mate: 40. Qb6+ Ke5, and the d4 square is under the control of Black's rook.

**37. Qf3-a8+ Kc8-c7 38. Qa8-a7+ Kc7-d6 39. Qa7-b6+**

Black resigned, in view of 39...Ke5 40. Qd4+ Ke6 41. Bb3 mate.

## Answers

1) 10. 0-0-0 suggests itself; but then Black replies 10...Nxd4 11. Bxd4 e5 12. Be3 Rc8, threatening such things as Qa5 or Rxc3 and Nxe4.

On 10. h4 Nxd4 11. Bxd4 e5 12. Be3, 12...Rc8 is no longer effective, because of 13. g5; however, 12...Bc6 attacking the e-pawn is stronger now. White would also have to consider the move Nh7, attacking the h4-pawn. There is one more possible idea for Black: 10...h5!? 11. g5 Ng4 12. Nxc6 (12. 0-0-0!?) 12...Bxc6 (12...bc!?). On 13. Bd2?! Qb6! is unpleasant; therefore, 13. 0-0-0!, with a small White edge, would be correct.

On 10. f4, both 10...Nxd4 11. Bxd4 Qa5, preparing 12...e5 (even in response to 12. g5), and 10...g5!? (11. fg hg 12. Nxc6?! Bxc6 13. Bxg5 Nxe4) deserve consideration.

The attempt to avoid the exchange of knights by 10. Nb3!? is met by the blockading 10...g5! (unclear).

White's choice is not simple - every solution has its drawbacks. But still, **10. h4!** appears to have the greatest prospects.

2) The sacrifice of two pawns by 13. 0-0-0?! Nxe4 14. Nd5 Bxh4 is clearly dubious.

On 13. f3 Nh7 is an unpleasant reply, for example: 14. 0-0-0 Bxh4 15. Nb5 Be7 (unclear).

And White does not want to make his pieces worse by either 13. Bg2 or 13. Bd2 - although the latter move is actually acceptable. One possible continuation might be: 13. Bd2!? Nh7 (13...d5 14 ed Nxd5 15. 0-0-0 is weaker) 14. g5!? (14 h5 Bg5=) 14...hg 15. 0-0-0 Bf6!? with compensation.

A decent try is **13. Qd3!?**, retaining the possibility of attacking the d6 pawn, if Black continues 13...Nh7.

The consistent and strong continuation is **13. Qf3!**, after which Black would have to consider not only 14. g5 and 14. 0-0-0, but also 14. Bc4.

On 13...d5!? 14. ed?! Nxd5, Black equalizes, for example: 15. Bb5!? (15. 0-0-0? Nxc3!) 15...Nxe3! (15...Nb4 16. Qe4, or 15...Bxb5 16. 0-0-0 Bc6 17. Nxd5 Qa5 18. Kb1 Rd8 19. c4, with the better chances for White) 16. Bxc6+ bc 17. Qxe3 Bxh4 (17...Qd4!?) 18. Qxe5+ Qe7=.



The consequences of the line 14. 0-0-0 d4 15. g5 hg 16. hg Nd7 17. Bc4 Rf8 18. g6 fg 19. Qg4 are hard to assess. More than likely, the chances are about equal.

The most unpleasant reply is 14. Nxd5!, when both 14...Nxd5 15. 0-0-0 (great advantage for White) and 14...Nxe4 15. 0-0-0 Bxd5 (15...Nd6 16. Qg3 - great advantage) 16. Bb5+ Kf8 17. Bc4 (great advantage) lead to dire consequences for Black. 14...Bxd5! would be necessary. If now 15. 0-0-0 Qa5 16. ed Qxa2, with mutual chances. The most solid continuation would be simply 15. ed Qxd5 16. Bg2 (slight advantage).

On 13...Qa5, an interesting line is 14. 0-0-0 Nxe4! 15. Nxe4 Qxa2 (15...d5?! 16. Qf5 de 17. Bc4 Rf8 18. Qh7!? leads to a great advantage) 16. Nc3 Qa1+ (16...Bxf3 17. Nxa2 Bxd1 18. Bb5+! Kf8 19. Rxd1 Rd8 gives White some advantage) 17. Kd2 Qxb2 18. Qg3! is equal, or perhaps slightly better for White (but not 18. Nd5 Qa2!). A different try is 14. Bd2!?, renewing all the threats. The continuation 14...Qb4 15. Bd3 Qxb2 16. Rb1 Qa3 17. g5 looks promising for White, although objectively the consequences of 17...hg 18. hg Nd7 are not entirely clear.

**3)** The threat is 14. g5 hg 15. hg followed by 16. g6. The center break **13...d5?!** is misguided, in view of 14. ed Nxd5 15. 0-0-0! (15. Nxd5 Qxd5 16. Qxd5 Bxd5 17. Bb5+ Bc6 18. Bxc6+ bc 19. h5 gives White the more pleasant endgame) 15...Nxe3 16. Qxe3 Qa5 17. Bb5 0-0 (17...Bxb5 18. Qxe5, with a great advantage) 18. g5, when Black's position grows shaky.

The most natural move is **13...Nh7!** Then the tempting pawn sacrifice 14. g5!? hg 15. Nd5 is not clearly correct: 15...gh 16. Rxg7 Nf6 (threatening 17...Nxd5 18. ed Qa5+) 18. 0-0-0 h3.

And finally, **13...Qa5?! is possible**, when 14. 0-0-0 can be met by either 14...0-0-0 or 14...Nxe4 15. Nxe4 d5.

**4)** After the obvious 15. g5, White must consider the piece sacrifice 15...hg 16. hg Nxe4 17. Nxe4 d5, with 18...Qxa2 to follow.

The prophylactic 15. a3!? makes sense; White retains all his threats. Black would have to respond with 15...d5 16. ed e4 (16...Nxd5 17. Qf5+) 17. Qc4 Nxd5 18. Nxd5 Rxd5; but after 19. Bg2, White would have a tangible advantage. And by the way, if White played 15. Kb1?! instead of 15. a3, then in the concluding position of the previous variation 19. Bg2 would no longer be effective, since after 19...Rhd8, White can no longer take with the bishop on e4.

**15. Qc4! Nxe4 16 Nd5!** is much more energetic - White is winning here. The piece sacrifice would give Black nothing here: 16...Bxh4 17. Qxe4 Qxa2 18. Bc4, etc.

**5)** White has a number of tempting continuations here, selecting the right one is quite difficult.

16. Qd2? is bad: 16...Qxa2 17. Nc3 Qa1+ 18. Nb1 d4, with great advantage to Black.

On 16. Qc3? Qxc3 leads to interesting complications: 17. Nxc3 d4 18. Nb5 Bxh4! (18...de?! is weaker: 19. Nc7+ Kf8 20. Nxa8 ef 21. Rg3; or 18...0-0 19. Bd2 Bxh4 20. Bc4, with great advantage in either case) 19. Nc7+?! Ke7 20. Nxa8 de 21. Nc7 ef, with complications. But the simplest and strongest is 16...Qxa2! 17. Qxe5 de, with great advantage.

On 16. Nc3 d4 17. Bxd4 ed (but not Karpov's 17...Rd8? in view of 18. Qf5!, winning) 18. Qxd4 0-0 19. Bc4 Bxh4 20. Nd5 Bxd5 21. Bxd5 Bf6 or 19. g5 Rad8, Black

holds the balance.

Black must meet 16. Ng3!? with 16...Qxa2! (much weaker is 16...d4 hoping for 17. Bd2? Qxa2 with great advantage; White plays 18. Bxd4! ed 19. Nf5 Qxa2 20. Qxd4, with a powerful attack) 17. Nf5 Qa1+ 18. Kd2 Qxb2. The resulting position is not easy to evaluate, but it appears to favor White, e.g.: 19. Nxe7! Qb4+ 20. Kc1 Qxe7 21. Re1!? (preventing d5-d4), or 21. Bg2.

Viorel Bologan suggests the surprising and beautiful **16. Nd2!! d4 17. Nb3 Qxa2 18. Qf5!! de 19. Bc4 0-0 20. g5**, when White has a decisive attack. And 16...Qxa2 (hoping for 17. Nb3? a5! 18. Qc3 a4 19. Qxe5 ab, with great advantage) is met by 17. Qf5! also, when there's no good advice for Black.

Karpov's decision is also strong enough, although less convincing.

**16. Qb3!? de 17. Bc4.** White returns the piece in order to hold the enemy king in the center (17...0-0 18. g5 hg 19. Bxg5! Bxg5+ 20. hg g6 21. Qh3 wins), and then develops a dangerous attack.

**6) 18. Bd5?** would not be good, in view of 18...Qb4!, exchanging queens.

And 18. a3? is too slow, even though it takes away the b4 square from Black's queen. Black would continue 18...Bxh4.

The positional exchange sacrifice **18. Rd5!?**, as played in the game, has merit.

And finally, the natural kingside attacking move, **18. g5!** should be examined. After 18...hg 19. hg Qb4? is bad: 20. g6! Qxb3 21. gf+ Rxf7 22. Bxb3, or 20...fg 21. Qxb4

Bxb4 22. Rxc6 - in both lines, the g7 pawn is lost.  
*“Black’s only hope is 19...g6; and it was not clear to me whether I ought to induce Black to make this move.”*

One would think that the inclusion of pawn moves on the kingside (considering their usefulness in other plans) could not possibly hurt White’s position, and would more than likely come in handy somewhere. For example, 20. Bd5!? becomes stronger, since after 20...Qb4?! 21. Bxc6+ bc 22. Qxb4 Bxb4 we now have 23. Rg4!, with great advantage to White. And there is now another interesting possibility (pointed out by Motylev) - 20. Rh1!, and if 20...Qb4? (20...Rd8 is better, with only a large plus to White), then 21. Bxf7+! Rxf7 22. Qe6 wins.

Instead of 19...g6, Black probably would have to prefer 19...Rd8!?, for example: 20. Rxd8+ Bxd8 21. c3 Be7, with some advantage to White (21...Bb6 22. Bxb6 Qxb6 23. Bxf7+!).

7) 19...Bc5? is bad: 20. Qxb7 intends Bc6+.

Black is in for an inferior endgame after 19...Qb4 - although White must still choose the most exact means of entering the endgame.

After 20. Bxb7 Qxb3 21. ab Rb8 22. Bxe4! (on 22. Bc6+ Kd8 23. Bxa7, Black has two unclear continuations: 23...Rb4!, and 23...Kc7!? 24. Bxb8+ Rxb8 25. Bxe4 Bxh4) 22...Bxh4 23. Bxa7, White’s advantage is indisputable. However, Black could return the exchange at once by 21...Kd7! (instead of 21...Rb8) 22. Rd1+ Ke6! (22...Kc7 23. Bxa8 Rxa8 24. Rd5 is good for White: only the amount is in dispute) 23. Bd5+ Kf6 24. g5+ Kf5, and the outcome remains unclear.

This makes it sensible to avoid the doubled pawns by

playing 20. Qxb4! Bxb4 21. Bxb7 Rb8 (21...Rd8 22. c3 Bd6 23. Bxa7) 22. Bc6+ Ke7 23. Bxa7 Ra8 (23...Rbc8 24. Bxe4, with great advantage) 24. Bxa8 Rxa8 25. Be3 Rxa2 26. Kb1, when White's advantage is great, and may already be winning.

After the text, **19...Rd8!**, the game becomes more double-edged, and Black can rightly hope to ward off the attack, either by returning the extra material, or by keeping it.

**8)** Of course, White would like to take the pawn. But Black could answer this by exchanging off the dark-squared bishops (thereby securing the e7 square for his king), which drastically reduces White's chances of a successful attack:

20. Bxe4?! Bc5! (20...Bxh4 21. Qxb7 Rh8! isn't easy to refute, either) 21. Qxb7 Bxe3+ 22. Kb1 (22. fe?? Qd2+) 22...Rd2 23. fe Qb6;

20. Bxb7?! Bxh4! (here 20...Bc5!? leads to a draw after 21. Bc6+ Ke7 22. Qb7+ Ke6 23. Qb3+ Ke7=) 21. Bc6+ Ke7 (aiming for 22...Bxf2! or 22...Bg5) 22. Qb7+ Kf6, with great advantage to Black.

This is why Karpov preferred **20. Bc4!**, which prevents 20...Bc5 because of 21. Bb5+, and threatens 21. Qxb7.

And you will note that many of the variations examined above lend added credence to our earlier suggestion (obvious though it may be) that inserting the moves 18. g5! hg 19. hg g6 prior to the sacrifice would have been good for White.

**9)** 23. g5!? is an interesting try - on 23...hg? 24. Bxg5!?, or 24. Bxb5+ Ke7 25. Bxg5+ f6 26. Be3 Rf7 27. Bc4 Rb8 28. Qc2, Black's position looks shaky. But he could seize the initiative by 23...b4! 24. gh gh 25. Bxh6 bc.

*“There is no point in playing 23. Bxb5+, since the reply 23...Ke7 gives the Black rooks freedom to maneuver.”*  
 Indeed, 24. Qd5 is met by either 24...Rc8 (intending 25...Rfd8 or 25...a6), or by the immediate 24...a6!? 25. Bc5 Qxb5 26. Qxe5+ Kd7 (but not 24...Qxc3+?! 25. Kb1).

What happens after **23. Qd5!?**, as Karpov played? See the next task.

**10)** In playing 23...Ke7?!, Sax evidently overlooked the powerful reply 24. Bc5!

The shot 23...Qxc3+?! leads to a difficult ending for Black after 24. Kb1! Qxb2+ 25. Kxb2 Ba3+ 26. Kxa3 Rxd5 27. Bxa7 Kd7 28. Be3.

Karpov recommends 23...Qc7!?, when the outcome remains unclear. For example, 24. Bxb5+ (24. Qxb5+ Ke7 25. g5 Rb8 26. Qa6 Qb7 27. Qxb7+ Rxb7 is unclear; 24. g5!?) 24...Ke7 25. Kc2!? (25. Qxe4 Rb8, intending 26...Qb7) 25...Rb8 (25...Ba3?! is inferior, in view of 26. Qc4! Qxc4 27. Bxc4 Bd6 28. Bxa7, with great advantage to White) 26. Rd1 Rfd8 27. Bc4 Kf8, or 26. g5 Qb7.

For some reason, the World Champion did not examine the natural **23...a6!?**, protecting the pawn and limiting the mobility of White's lightsquare bishop. (Here again, the inclusion of the moves 18. g5 hg 19. hg g6 would have been good for White: his bishop could now get out via g4). The continuation 24. Rd1 Qc7 25. Qxe4 leaves White enough compensation for the exchange, but apparently no more than that.

By comparing the conclusions reached in this and the preceding question, we may deduce that, with accurate defense, White's assault would have been snuffed out,

which in turn means that Karpov's positional exchange sacrifice was objectively not the strongest continuation of the attack.

**11) The spectacular exchange sacrifice 35. Re7!!**  
decides: if 35...Qxe7, then 36. Qa8+ Kc7 37. Qa7+ Kd8  
38. Qb8 mate.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## Mate on the Back Rank

Combinations on our title theme may be found in any manual or collection of exercises; so I'm not discovering any Americas here. Nor have I set myself the task of collecting a fresh set of positions, probably ones unknown to the reader - what would be the point? If you need to assimilate the typical middlegame combination, one or two dozen examples (three dozen, at most) are quite sufficient; there is no need to pile on more and more. It's far more important to deal with high-quality material, which will illustrate our theme solidly and give esthetic satisfaction as well - thus, it will be securely etched in the memory. I hope that my examples, culled from various sources, meet this criterion.

A most important part of effective work on chess consists of practical training - solving exercises on a study theme. Under each diagram, you will find indicated who is on move; and if the position works as an exercise (which the majority of them do), then there will be a question mark as well. Try solving these yourself, and only afterwards, consult the following text.

**I** The first and largest part of this collection consists of examples and exercises assisting in the development of fantasy and combinative alertness.

Let's begin with a classic game, known to most players from their earliest youth.

***Bernstein – Capablanca***

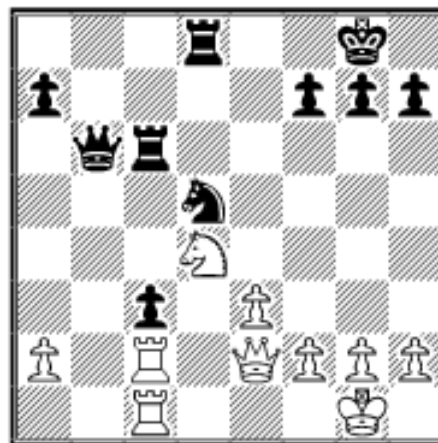




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## Moscow 1914



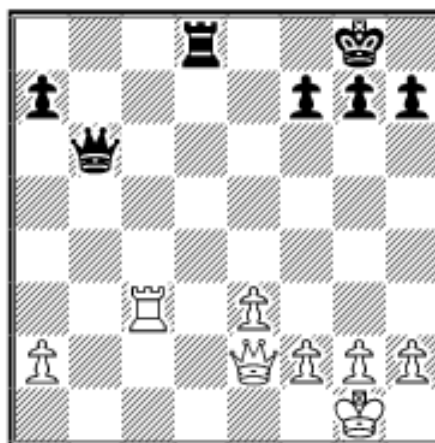
Black to move

Black could have played 25...Rc5 26. Nb3 Rc7 here. Capablanca preferred to set a trap, provoking his opponent to attack the c3-pawn.

**25...Rc7!? 26. Nb5 Rc5 27. Nxc3?**

White had to bring his knight back to d4; but after 27...Rdc8 (threatening 28...Nb4), Black retains the upper hand, thanks to his dangerous passed pawn at c3.

**27...Nxc3 28. Rxc3 Rxc3 29. Rxc3**



Black to move

?

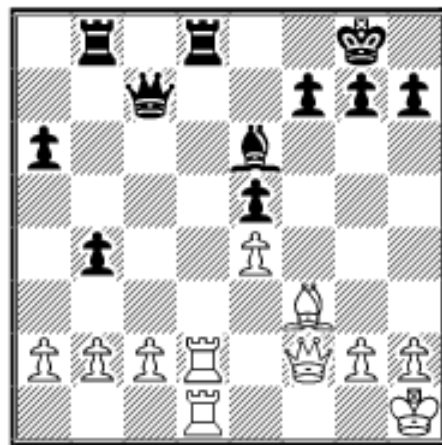
Evidently, Bernstein expected only 29...Qb1+? 30.Qf1 Qxa2, with a likely draw.

**29...Qb2!** White resigned.

A most instructive fragment - later on, we shall see the ideas contained in it again and again.

The first thing to note is the deflecting queen sacrifice - a standard technique to exploit the weakness of the back rank. Sometimes, the queen has to be sacrificed repeatedly.

***Rovner – Kamyshev***  
**Moscow 1946**

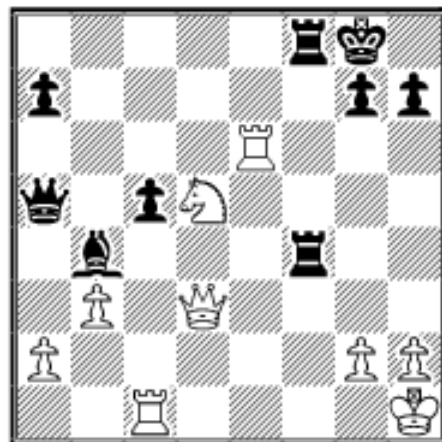


White to move

?

**1. Qa7! Qa5 2. Qxa6! Qc7 3. Qa7!** Black resigned.

***Vogt - Alexander***  
**Berlin 1962**



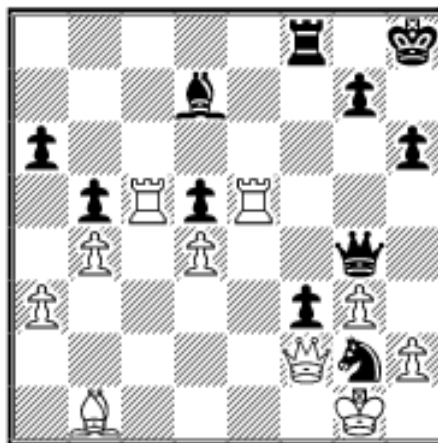
Black to move

?

Can White's queen be decoyed away from the defense of the f1-square? The solution is a bit unexpected.

**1...c4! 2. bc (2. Qxc4 Qxd5!) 2...Qa3! 3. Qd1 Qxc1!**  
White resigned.

*Wolf - Spielmann*  
**Moravska Ostrava 1923**



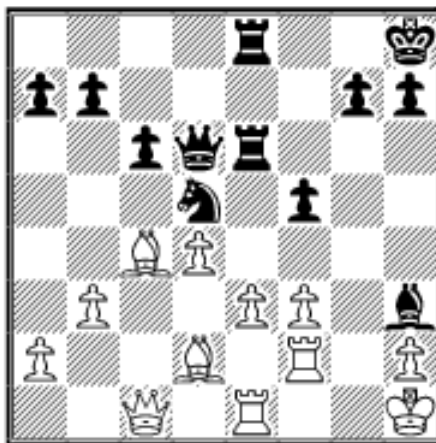
White to move

?

Here, several enemy pieces are decoyed: first, the queen - from the protection of the f3-pawn; then, the rook - from the 8th rank; and finally, the bishop - from the e8 square.

**36. h3! Qxh3 37. Qxf3!** Black resigned, in view of  
37...Rxf3 38. Rc8!+ Bxc8 39.Re8+.

*Krause - Capelan*  
**Solingen 1961**



White to move  
?

It's important to get the center pawns moving, but Black has concentrated sufficient firepower against the e4 square. Nevertheless, the pawn break is still possible - thanks to the 8th-rank weakness.

**1. e4! fe 2. fe Rxe4?**

2...b5 was necessary. White would have had to content himself with a rather better position after 3. Bxd5 cd 4. Qc3 Bg4 5. e5, or 3. e5 Qd7 4. Bd3, since the immediate 3. Bd3?! Nf6 leaves his center too shaky. For instance, 4. Qc3 Ng4 5. Rf4 (5. Rfe2? Qf8!) 5...b4! (5...Rf8 is inferior because of 6. e5, when 6...Qd5+? fails to 7.Be4 Rxf4 8. Bxd5 Nf2+ 9. Kg1 Rg6+ 10. Qg3 Rxc3+ 11. hg Rxd4 12. e6!) 6. Qc4 (6. Qxb4? Qxf4! 7. Bxf4 Nf2+ 8. Kg1 Nxd3 - such cases are referred to as "family forks") 6...g5! 7. Rxc4 (forced) 7...Bxc4, and White's compensation for the exchange is problematic.

**3. Rxe4 Rxe4 4. Bxd5 cd 5. Qc7!**

This was the blow (analogous to the one Capablanca delivered in our first example) that Black overlooked.

**5...Bg2+ 6. Kg1** Black resigned.

In this case, the solution found by White objectively should not have led to a win. In essence, what we have here is a successful trap based on the 8th-rank weakness (just as in the Bernstein - Capablanca game).

Here's another example of a successful trap.

***Ganchev - Pipkov***  
**Albena 1966**

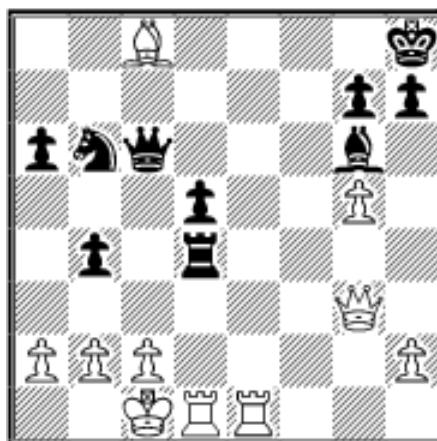
**1. Nc5! Rxa3 2. Rxa3** (of course not 2. Nxe6?? Ra1+)  
**2...Rxc5?**

**3. Ra8!+ Bc8 4. Ra7! Qb6**

**5. Qd7!!** Black resigned.

And now, we will examine two episodes from Alexander Khalifman's games. In the first, the grandmaster found a forced win; while in the second, the decisive combination went undiscovered.

file:///C:/Cafe/Dvoretsky/dvoretsky.htm (6 of 27) [04/06/2003 7:15:22 PM]



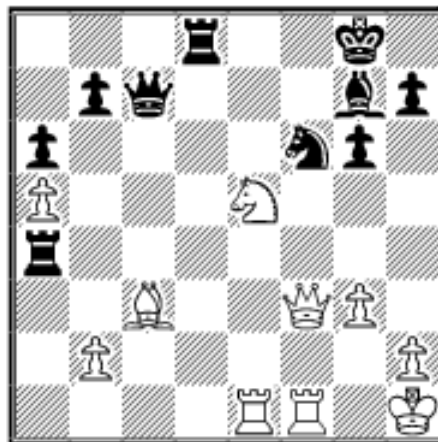
White to move  
?

**30. Bf5!** (decoying the bishop away from the square e8)  
**30...Bxf5 31. Qc7!!** (and here, a standard deflection of the queen)  
**31...Rxd1+ 32. Kxd1**

Black might have ended his resistance here. Ehlvest probably neglected to do so, only out of extreme disappointment. His last move, leading to the diagram, had been 29...Qd6-c6?? Had he exchanged rooks on d1 first, everything would have been fine.

**32...Bxc2+ 33. Kc1** (33. Kd2 Nc4+ 34. Kc1 would have been good, too) **33...Ba4+ 34. Qxc6 Bxc6 35. Re6 Bb5 36. Rxb6 Kg8 37. Rb7 d4 38. Kd2 Kf8 39. h4 d3 40. b3 h6 41. gh gh 42. Rh7** Black resigned.

*Khalifman - Hjartarson*  
 Reykjavik 1991



White to move  
?

The goal would have been attained after 31. Ng4!! Nxg4 (31...Rxg4 32. Bxf6) 32. Qd5+! Kh8 (32...Rxd5 33. Re8+) 33. Rf7! (threatening, above all, 34. Bxg7+) 33...Bxc3 34. Rxc7.

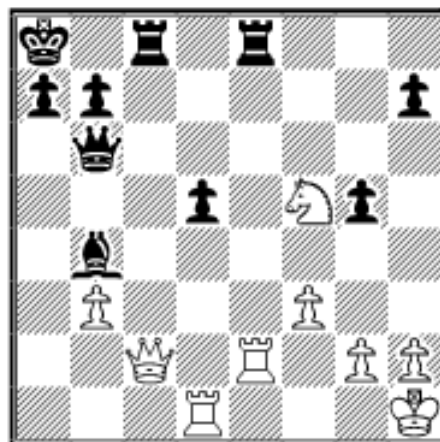
The game actually continued **31. Nxg6? hg 32. Bxf6 Rf8 33. Qd5+ Qf7 34. Qd1** (34. Qxf7+ Rxf7=) **34...Ra1!** (an excellent counterstroke!) **35. Qxa1 Qd5+ 36. Kg1 Bxf6**

In such a position, the exchange advantage is worth little, in view of the open situation of the White king and the queen's unfortunate position.

**37. h4 Qd4+! 38. Kg2 Qd2+ 39. Kh3** (39. Rf2 Qxf2+! 40. Kxf2 Bxb2) **39...Qd7+ 40. Kg2** (40 g4 Qd3+) **40...Qd2+ 41. Kh3 Qd7+ 42. Kh2 Qd2+ 43. Kh3 Draw.**

And here's another case in which a strong grandmaster missed a standard combination.

***Teschner - Portisch***  
**Monte Carlo 1969**



White to move  
?

White's position is difficult - on 29. Rc1!? there is the powerful reply 29...Kb8!. He decided to snatch a pawn

with **29. Rxd5?!**, which could have been beautifully refuted by **29...Qf2!! 30. Ng3 Qe1+!**.

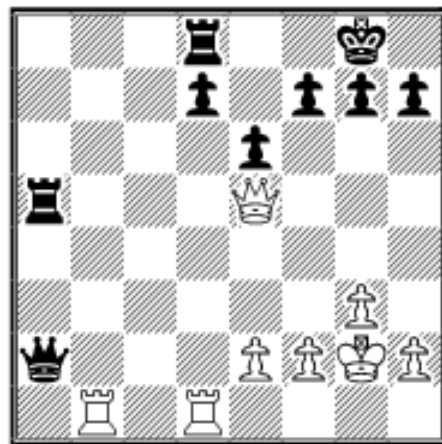
Portisch chose **29...Qa6? 30. Ng3! Red8 31. Rxd8 Rxd8** instead, and the game ended in a draw ten moves later.

Note that here (as in our first example, Bernstein - Capablanca), both sides were speculating on the weakness of the back rank. Such situations, which we shall see more than once, require special attention and farsightedness from both players.

Let me point out one more particular of the position we just looked at. The move Portisch played was also aimed at exploiting the back-rank weakness; but it proved relatively ineffective - the opponent turned out to have a defense. This can certainly happen to any chessplayer (to some - more often than others): we see a tempting line, and quickly bash it out, without checking the variations, and without seeing if there might be other, perhaps stronger, possibilities.

The examples that follow illustrate precisely this situation.

*Crouch - Speelman*  
Hastings 1992



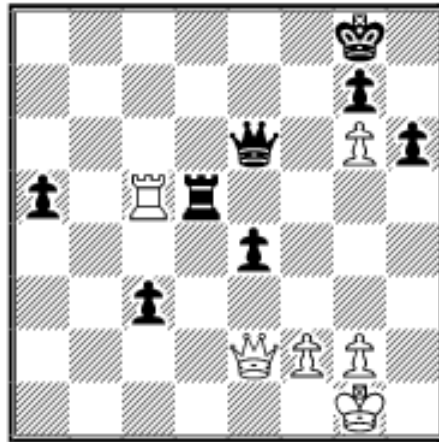
White to move  
?



The continuation was **26. Rxd7?! Rf8! 27. Rb2 Rxe5**, when a draw was agreed.

White had a far more effective means of exploiting the back-rank weakness: **26. Rb8! Ra8 27. Ra1!! Qxa1 28. Rxd8+ Rxd8 29. Qxa1**.

*Leonhardt - Fahrni*  
Carlsbad 1911

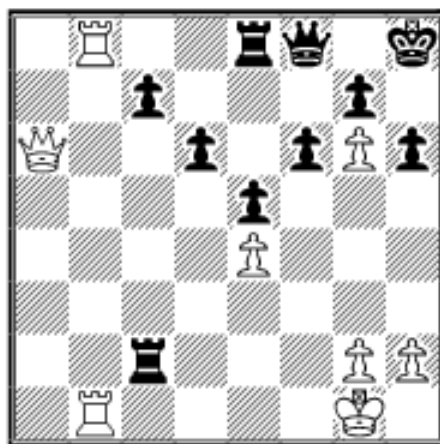


White to move  
?

**42. Qa2! Rd1+ (42...c2 43. Qxd5!) 43. Kh2 Qxa2 44. Rc8+** would have won immediately.

White actually played something much weaker: **42. Qxe4? Rd1+ 43. Kh2 Qd6+** (this check would not have existed after 42. Qa2!, since the queen would have been pinned) **44. f4 Qf8 45. Rxc3** (White gets nothing from 45. Qe6+ Kh8 46. Rc8 Rd8). He still stands better, but Black can defend. True, the game ended quickly all the same: **45...Rd8 46. Rc6 Ra8 47. f5 Qb8+ 48. g3 Qa7?? 49. Rc7!** Black resigned.

*Capablanca - Thomas*  
Hastings 1919



White to move  
?

The "conclusive blow" **29. Qa8?** had the effect of causing Thomas to resign; he failed to notice the uncomplicated defense 29...Ra2!, liquidating all threats.

Commentators to this game have suggested 29. Rxe8!? Qxe8 30. Qa4! (a typical queen deflection, coupled with a double threat), when Black either gets mated or loses his rook - on 30...Rc1+, there follows, naturally, 31. Kf2.

So would this have forced his resignation? Not necessarily - he could still have tried 30...Rxc2+! 31. Kxc2 Qxc2+ 32. Kh1 Qh5!? Black would have had four pawns for the rook; and although objectively, his opponent would retain good winning chances, there would still have been a long fight ahead.

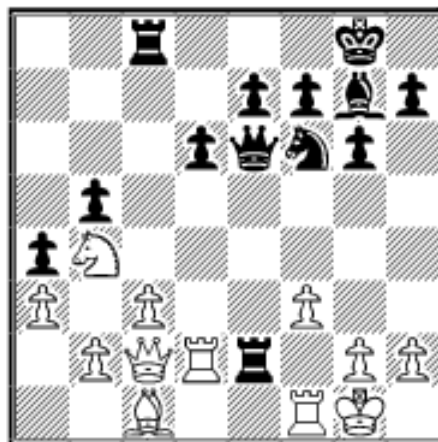
So, before executing his "conclusive combination", it would make sense for White to find a different, shorter, and more certain means to his end (following the "candidate-moves" principle). And there is such a means: after 29. Qb5!, a quick capitulation would indeed have been unavoidable. On 29...Rc1+ 30. Kf2 Rxb1 31. Rxe8! is decisive; 29...c6 30. Rxe8 Qxe8 31. Qb8 Rc1+ 32. Kf2 is hopeless too; and if 29...Rxb8 30. Qxb8 Kg8, then either 31. Qb3+ or 31. Qa7.

And here, I must confess to a small falsification. The diagrammed position differs somewhat from the actual game: there White also had a pawn at a2, while Black did not have a pawn at e5. Now the example becomes uninteresting, since the book solution (29. Rxe8 Qxe8 30. Qa4) also leads to an easy win. In my version, White's task becomes more difficult, the exercise is qualitatively improved, and becomes useful even to players at higher rating levels. I believe that, in pursuit of his training goals, a trainer is justified in the occasional introduction of such alterations in his examples. For the demonstration of old games is not an end in itself. The fundamental principle of materials selection must always be: Maximum benefit to the students from learning/training exercises.

To conclude this first chapter - a combination I like very much.

***Schwager - Ackerman***

**Riga 1978**



Black to move

?

**1...Qe3+ 2. Kh1 Qf2! 3. Rg1**

Black's first moves, of course, were obvious - but what now? He certainly didn't invade the enemy position with his queen so that he could exchange everything on d2.

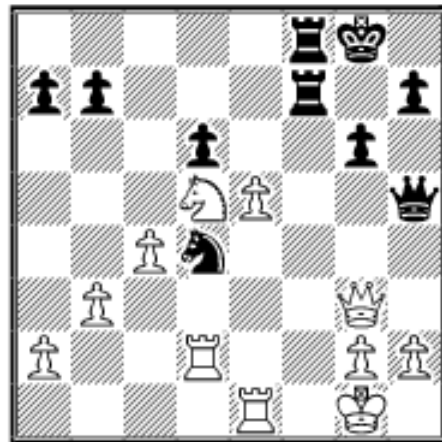
**3... Nh5!! 4. Rxe2 Ng3+! 5. hg Rc5!**

White resigned, as mate is forced - this time, not on the rank, but on the file.

**II** Our next cycle of exercises is aimed at developing attention to the opponent's counterchances. This is a very important habit for any chessplayer to develop: the ability to see tactics not only for ourselves, but for our opponent as well, the habit of accurately checking our intentions, to avoid unpleasant surprises. You would already have been well served by such an ability in some of our previous exercises (such as Capablanca - Thomas); now this ability will be placed at the forefront.

In some of the examples which follow, you will be required to foresee and account for the enemy tactic of exploiting your weak back rank in your plans; in others, you will have to examine your own combination critically for this theme.

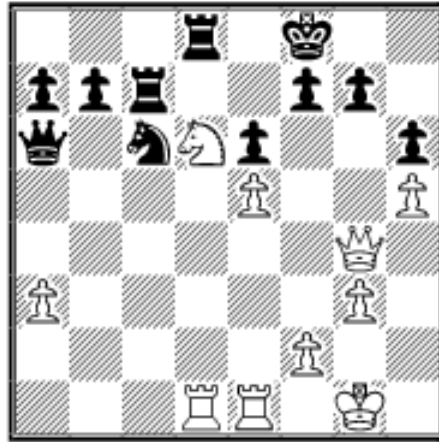
*Panno - Bravo*  
**Fortaleza 1975**



Black to move  
?

The tempting 28...Ne2+? 29. Rdx2 Qxe2 is a mistake, in view of 30. Nf6+! Rxf6 31. ef, when White wins. Black actually played **28...Qe2!!**, and White resigned.

*Short - Bareev*  
Tilburg 1991

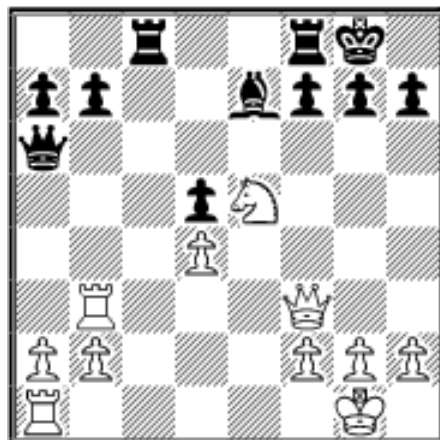


Black to move  
?

Having outplayed his dangerous opponent, the Muscovite grandmaster slackened his attention for a moment, and was severely punished: **27...Nxe5?? 28. Nf5!** Black resigned.

"Make haste slowly", said the ancients. The simple 27...Rcd7! (now 28...Nxe5 is threatened) would have led to the win of a second pawn, without any unpleasant consequences.

*Fernandez - Marino*  
Zamora 1996



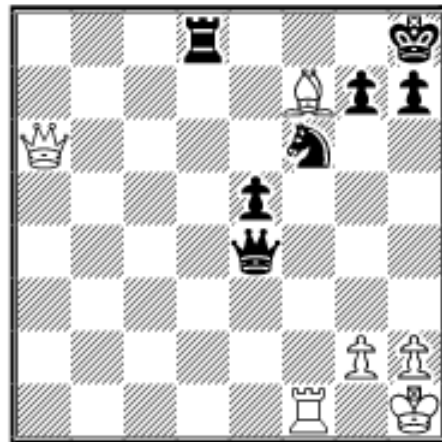
Black to move  
?

"The back rank is weak - now's the perfect time for a decoying blow" - is what Black must have thought.

**20... Qxa2?? 21. Qd1!** Black resigned.

The right move was 20...Bd6!, endeavoring to exchange White's powerful knight. On 21. Qxd5, Qxa2! is now good.

*Alden - Nilsson*  
Sweden 1972



White to move  
?

White could have played simply 1. h3, preparing for a lengthy defense a pawn down. However, 1. Rxf6 looks tempting. Which should he choose?

Long-suffering would have been correct in this case, since the sharp move is immediately refutable.

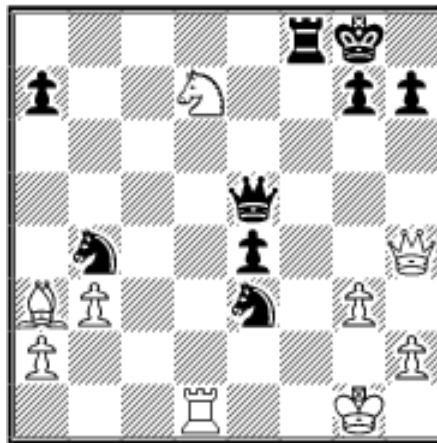
**1. Rxf6? Qb7??**

Black wins with the spectacular 1...Qc6!! (double decoying, coupled with a double attack); whereas the text move leads to the opposite result.

**2. Qf1** (2. h3 works equally well).

*Bradford - Byrne*

## USA 1980



Black to move

?

**1...Qd4??** (the consequences of 1...Qd5?? would be the same) **2. Qxh7+!**, and White wins, since after 2...Kxh7 he picks up the rook with check, and only then recaptures the queen.

After the more accurate 1...Qd6!, Black would have won instead - it's important that the queen protects the rook from d6. Another strong continuation was 1...Qf5! 2. Nxf8 Nxd1.

*Mikenas - Bronstein*  
Tallinn 1965



White to move

?

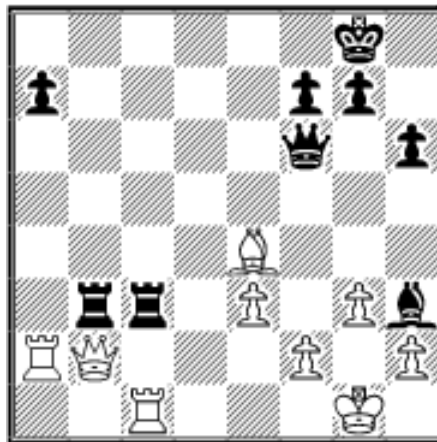
Above all, Black threatens 24...Qxb2 or 24...Qe1+ 25. Qf1 Qxh4. There is also another, hidden threat - and it

was this that Mikenas overlooked.

**24. Rb4? Rxa3!!** White resigned.

The same blow (24...Rxa3!!) would have been the reply to 24. Qd2? or 24. Qc3? There were two ways of warding off Black's pressure: 24. Qd4! Qe1+ 25. Rxe1 Rxe1+ 26. Qg1; and 24. Rd4! Qe1+ (24...Ra4 25. Rxa4 Qxb2? 26. Qd4; 24...Bb5 25. Qd2) 25. Qf1 - in both cases, White obtains about even chances.

***Seirawan - Lobron***  
**Arnhem/Amsterdam 1983**



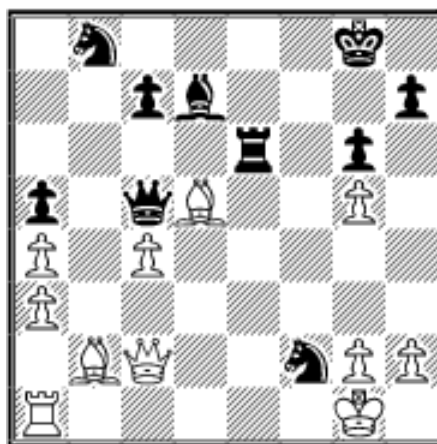
White to move  
?

On 22. Qa1! Rxc1+ 23. Qxc1 Qb6 or 22. Qd2! Rxc1+ 23. Qxc1 Qb6, the game should end in a draw - Black is only a little bit better. But couldn't White just get rid of that passed pawn, by exploiting the back-rank weakness?

**22. Rxa7? Qxf2+!! 23. Kxf2** (23. Qxf2 Rxc1+)  
**23...Rxb2+ 24. Kf3 Rxc1** White resigned. Black is a rook ahead, and there is no mate (25. Ra8+ Rc8).

***Ballona - Aristazabal***  
**Colombia 1993**





Black to move  
?

1...Nd3+ 2. Kh1 Qe3? is no good: after 3. Rf1 (with the threat of 4. Qc3) 3...Nxb2 4. Qxb2, it's White who wins. 1...Ne4+ 2. Kh1 Qe3? is equally useless: 3. Rf1, and Black must consider both 4. Bc1 Qd4 5. Bb2=, as well as 4. Ba1 (preparing 5. Qb2).

Black executed a pretty combination:

**1... Nd1+ 2. Kh1 Qxd5!? 3. Rxd1!** (of course, not 3. cd?? Re1#) **3...Bxa4!!**

Black had to have foreseen this blow, as otherwise, he would even lose: on 3...Qxg5 or 3...Qe4 there follows 4. Qc3; if 3...Qd6, then 4. c5! (but not 4. h3? Qg3, and not 4. Qc1? Bxa4! 5. Rxd6 Rxd6) 4...Qd5 5. h3.

**4. Qxa4 Qd2!** White resigned, since he remains a piece down, in view of the threatened 5...Re1+.

It's a well-known truism that it is never too late to resign. It would have been interesting to see how Black would have demonstrated his advantage after 5. h3 Qxb2 6. Qxa5. 6...Qb6?! doesn't promise anything: 7. Rd8+ Kf7 8. Qd2! (threatening 9. c5); also unconvincing are 6...Re7 7. Qc5!, or 6...Nc6 7. Qxc7. Black would probably have had to continue 6...Rd6!? (7. Rxd6 Qc1+

8. Kh2 Qf4+ 9. Kh1 Qxd6; 7. Re1 Qf2), but here too, the outcome remains unclear: 7. Qe1 Rxd1 8. Qxd1 is only "=/+".

In a recent training session, I offered this exercise to three young grandmasters: Alexander Motylev, Vladimir Potkin, and Ernesto Inarkiev. None of the three was taken in by the spectacular-looking, but spectacularly ineffective combination; all three preferred the simpler and sounder plan 1...Ng4+! 2. Kh1 Qd6! 3. Bxe6+ (3. g3 Bc6) 3...Bxe6 4. g3 Qc6+ 5. Qg2 Nf2+!? 6. Kg1 Nh3+ 7. Kh1 Bxc4 (or 7...Qb6!?), and wins.

**III** The third and last cycle of examples are what we call "playing exercises". This is a form of training that I worked out, and began using successfully, many years ago. These are the kinds of positions in which it is not necessary, and in some cases not possible, to foresee everything from beginning to end. So a player must make not just one decision (deep and difficult though it may be), but a whole series of them.

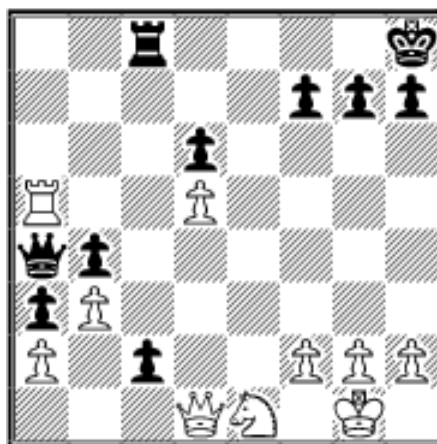
A significant part of the skill of calculating variations is the ability to come to a decision with maximum economy - that is, without calculating any more than necessary. In a practical game, choosing the first move of the right plan doesn't necessarily require us to foresee a refinement on the fourth move - which in turn means that, in an analogous situation, a trainer also does not need to require this ability in his training. Otherwise, the student becomes enmeshed in an irrational algorithm in order to come up with a move, which must inevitably result in the time-pressure disease. You can read more about this form of training in the first and second books of my series, "School of Chess Excellence".

The following examples are very well suited for playing out. Trainers may play them against students (setting the

time-control in accordance with the complexity of the position and the strength of the opponent). If you are training yourself, then cover the text of the "game" with a piece of paper, and then find one move after the other, after which you can move the paper just enough to uncover the "opponent's" move. One good idea is to establish the amount of time used, and then analyze how rationally you worked at this or that moment of the "game".

Our first example is probably the simplest. It lies on the border between the solving and the playing kind of exercises - if desired, you may calculate it at once to the end.

### I. Hoch 1973



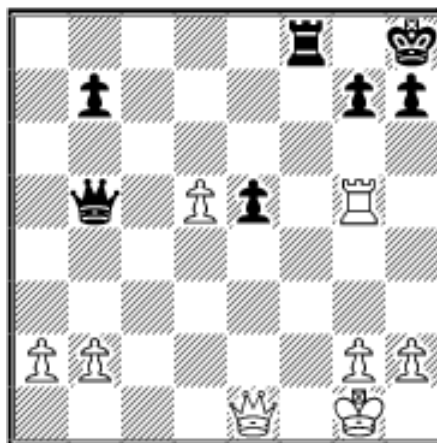
White to move  
?

**1. Qxc2! Re8!** Both sides are working with back-rank mate threats. The question becomes, who will prevail in this sharp duel.

**2. Qc8!! Qd7!!** (2...Rxc8 3. Rxa4) **3. Qc1!** 3. Qa8? would be a mistake, owing to 3...h6 (or 3...g6).

**3...Qc7! 4. Ra8!!** (but not 4. Qe3? Qd8!).

*Lowtzky - Tartakower*  
**Jurata 1937**



Black to move  
 ?

White's downfall is not only that his first rank is weak (as far as this circumstance goes, both players are similarly placed), but that his rook also stands badly at g5. The experienced player will have no difficulty in predicting that the game must be decided by a double attack: the threat to mate (or to the queen, decoying her away from the first rank), and simultaneously to the rook. But accuracy is required, so as not to overlook the opponent's resources. For example, 1...Qb6+ 2. Kh1 Qf6? would be a mistake, in view of 3. h4.

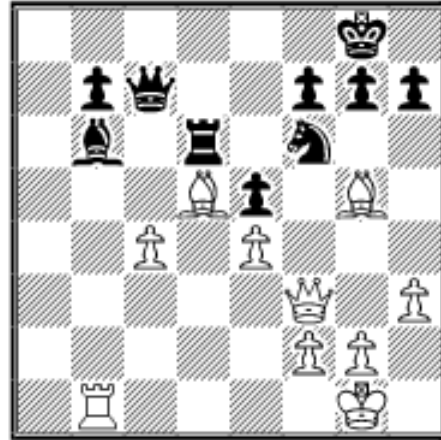
**1...Qc5+ 2. Kh1 Qc4! 3. Kg1 Qd4+ 4. Kh1 Qe4!** Just so - it's important to drive the queen away from its best square: e1. Black gets nothing from 4...Qd2? 5. Rxe5 or 4...Qf4? 5. h4; and 4...Qd3 5. Kg1 is also useless.

**5. Qc1.** The most stubborn defense. 5. Qd1 Qf4 loses at once (here's the fatal double attack, now that White no longer has h2-h4), as does 5. Qg1 Qe2. With the text, White sets a small trap: the tempting 5...Qe2? would let slip the win, because of 6. Rf5!.

**5...Qd3! 6. Kg1 Qd4+ 7. Kh1 Qd2!** White resigned.

The following is an example of the difficulties facing a trainer searching for quality exercises for playing purposes.

*Lilienthal - Aronin*  
Moscow 1948



White to move  
?

**25. c5!** Thanks to this pawn sacrifice, White's rook gets through to the 7th or 8th rank, which Nimzovich called the goal of any operation on an open file.

**25... Qxc5** As K.-D. Maier has pointed out, Black could have offered stiff resistance - perhaps even saved the game - by giving up his queen for rook and minor piece: **25...Bxc5!** **26. Rxb7 Nxd5!** **27. Rxc7 Nxc7.** This circumstance may lessen the impression of the exercise; but it does not negate its value entirely, since there seems to be no equivalent alternative to the move **25. c5!**

**26. Rc1 Qa5 27. Bxf6 Rxf6 28. Rc8+ Bd8.** White's last two moves could be transposed, but that's an insignificant demerit in this exercise. What's much worse is that, by rejecting the standard text blow in favor of **29. Qd1!**, White could have won instantly, thanks to his irresistible threats on the d-file (**29...Kf8 30. Bc6!;** **29...Rd6 30. Bxf7+ Kxf7 31. Qxd6**), and all his refinements in the game would have been rendered

unnecessary. Which means that this position isn't a very good one for training play - finding the first moves (including 29. Qd1!) is rather simple.

**29. Qc3?! Qb6 30. Qb2! Qd6 30...Qa5** is met decisively by **31. Qd2!**

**31. f4!** A excellent stroke! The inviting **31. Qxe5** would have been much less energetic - after **31...Kf8** or **31...Qd7**, Black could still defend. The same evaluation is true after **31. Qxb7 Kf8**.

Such would have been my comments - before I read Maier's analysis. The German analyst has shown that after **31. Qxb7! Kf8** (on **31...Qf8**, **32. f4!** becomes still stronger) **32. Rb8 Ke8 33 Bb3!** or **32...g6 33. Qc8 Ke8 34. Bc4**, the unbreakable pin on the 8th rank must decide the game.

**31...ef** If **31...Rxf4**, then **32. Qxe5** (a double - no, more exactly, a **triple** attack: Black's queen and rook no longer defend one another). **31...Qf8** (threatening **32...Bb6+**) is also hopeless after **32. Qxb7 Rd6 33. Kh2!?** However, according to Maier's analysis, Black can put up stiff resistance with **31...Qd7!?** Which means that the spectacular move **31. f4!?** was not the strongest.

**32. e5 Qd7 33. Qxb7! Qe8 34. Qb8 Rd6 35. Qxd6 Bb6+ 36. Qxb6 Qxc8 37. e6 g5 38. e7 Kg7 39. Bc6**  
Black resigned.

*P. Rakolta, E. Janoczy*  
**1978**



White to move  
?

Both kings are in trouble, so White must act with great energy. Black's queen is taboo, because of the first-rank mate.

**1. b4+! Kb6!** The pawn cannot be taken either with the rook or with the queen, in view of 2. Qxf2. And 1...cb is refuted by 2. Re5+. On 1...Ka4, the winning path is only slightly longer: 2. Qa6+ Kxb4 3. a3+ Kb3 4. Qb5+ Kc2 (4...Rb4 5. Qd3+) 5. Re2+.

**2. bc+ Kb7** 2...Kc6 doesn't help: 3. Qa6+ Kd7 (3...Kd5 4. Qe6+ Kxc5 5. Re5+ Kb4 6. Qb3 is mate) 4. Qe6+ Kd8 5. Qg8+! Kd7 6. Qg4+ and 7. Rxd4 - the check is no longer a threat, as White interposes on d1.

**3. c6+! Ka8!** Here (as opposed to the starting position), the back rank is vulnerable on both sides. There follows a hot finishing duel.

**4. Rg4! Rd8 5. Rg8! Qd4** (5...Rxg8 6. Qxf2) **6. Qg4! Qd2 7. Qc8+! Rxc8 8. Rxc8 mate.**

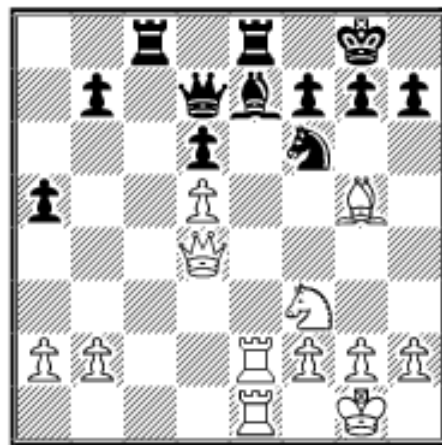
We conclude with two short games, ending with spectacular thematic attacks (these may also be used for play-action training, beginning in each case with the diagrammed positions). It should be noted that the first

and most widely known game was probably never actually played - according to many sources, it was made up. But this should not prevent us from enjoying this brilliant combination - or better still, finding it ourselves, step by step.

*Adams - Torre*  
New Orleans 1920

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 ed 4. Qxd4 Nc6 5. Bb5 Bd7 6. Bxc6 Bxc6 7. Nc3 Nf6 8.**

**0-0 Be7 9. Nd5 Bxd5 10. ed 0-0 11. Bg5 c6 12. c4 cd 13. cd Re8 14. Rfe1 a5?! 15. Re2 Rc8? (15...h6) 16. Rae1 Qd7**



White to move  
?

**17. Bxf6! Bxf6** 17...gf was objectively better, when 18. Rxe7? fails to 18...Qxe7! (18...Rxe7? 19. Rxe7 Qxe7 20. Qg4+) 19. Rxe7 Rc1+. However, after the simple 18. h3, Black's position is not to be envied.

**18. Qg4! Qb5 19. Qc4!! Qd7 20. Qc7!! Qb5** Now the direct 21. Qxb7? is refuted by 21...Qxe2! 22. Rxe2 Rc1+. Nor is 21. Qxa5? good: 21...Qxe2! 22. Rxe2 Rxe2.

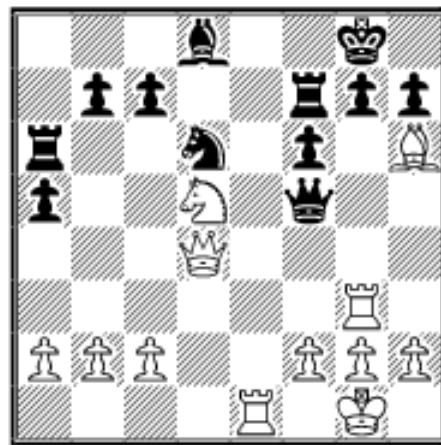
White has an elegant way of getting his rook off the e2 square with tempo.



**21. a4! Qxa4 22. Re4!** (threatening 23. Qxc8!) **22... Qb5**  
**23. Qxb7!** Black resigned.

*Korchmar - Polyak*  
 Ukrainian Championship 1937

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bb5 d6 5. d4 ed 6.**  
**Nxd4 Bd7 7. 0-0 Nxd4?! 8. Bxd7+ Qxd7 9. Qxd4 Be7**  
**10. Rd1! 0-0 11. e5 Ne8 12. Bf4 a5 13. Rd3 Ra6 14.**  
**Re1 Qf5 15. Nd5 Bd8 16. ed Nxd6 17. Rg3 f6 18. Bh6**  
**Rf7**



White to move  
 ?

**19. Nb4!** The start of the decisive combination. White gets nothing out of 19. Qc5?! Rd7.

**19...ab 20. Qxd6! Qd7! 21. Qd5!!** The key move in White's attack, creating the threat of 22. Rxg7+. On 21...g6, there would follow 22. Rge3.

**21...Kf8 22. Rxg7! Qxd5 23. Rg8+! Kxg8 24. Re8+ Rf8**  
**25. Rxf8 - mate.**

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Mark Dvoretsky

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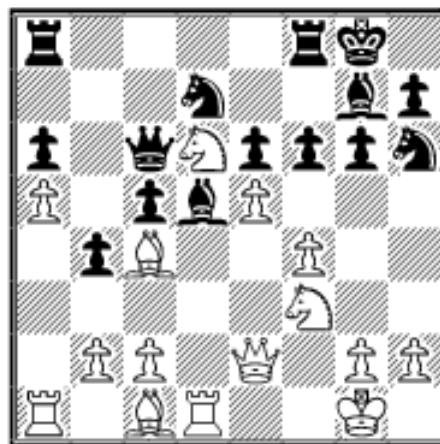
## Standard and Non-Standard Combinations

My previous column dealt with one of the most widely-known combinations: exploiting a back-rank weakness. Now we move on to a rarer, but still typical combinative idea: the double pin. Such combinations are sometimes dubbed "the Maltese cross."

The pin can be on a file and a rank, or on two diagonals. I offer for the readers' consideration a small selection of pretty examples.

*Renet - Seret*

French Championship 1991



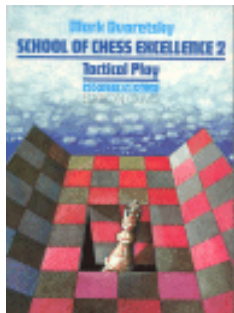
1. Rxd5! exd5 2. Qe4!

Two White pieces are *en prise*, yet neither can be taken, because of a pin! Black cannot escape material losses.

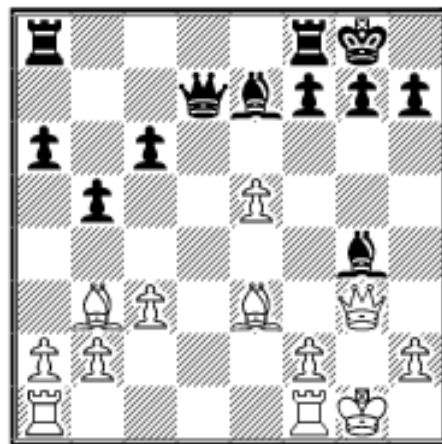
2...Kh8 3. Bxd5 Qc7 4. Bxa8 fe 5. fe Nxe5 6. Nxe5 Qxd6 7. Bxh6 Black resigned.

*Dahl - Schultz*

Berlin 1956



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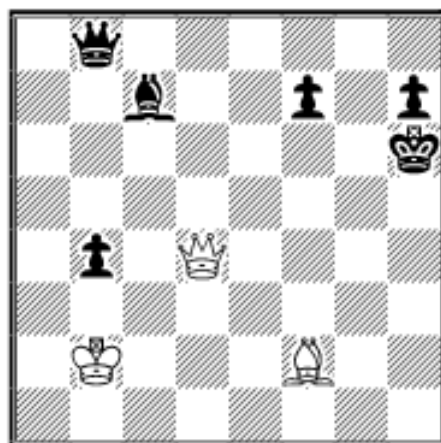
**1. e6! Bxe6 2. Bd4 f6**

2...g6 3. Qe5

**3. Qg4!!**

Black resigned, in view of 3...Kf7 4. Rfe1.

**A. Troitsky, 1930**



**1. Qf6+ Kh5 2. Qf5+ Kh6 3. Be3+ Kg7 4. Qg5+ Kf8**

4...Kh8 5. Bd4+

**5. Bc5+ Bd6 6. Qe5!!**

Black loses his bishop - but the battle is not yet over.

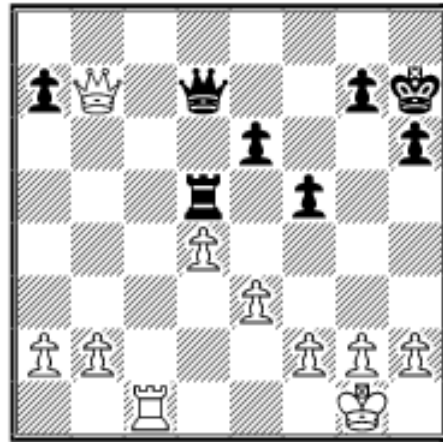
**6...Qd8! 7. Bxd6+ Kg8 8. Qg3+ Kh8 9. Be5+ f6 10. Qg5!!+-**

Once again, the Maltese cross!

Now, let's move from diagonal pins to simultaneous pins on rank and file.

**NN - NN**

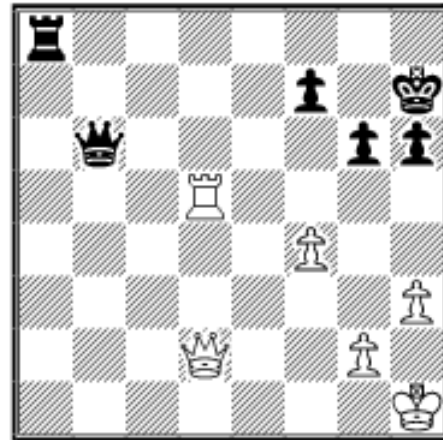
**Yugoslavia, 1949**



**1. Rc7?? Rc5!!**

Haste in a completely winning position here led to the opposite result. This sort of thing has, unfortunately, happened to all of us.

***Bogatyrev - Zagoryansky***  
**Moscow 1947**



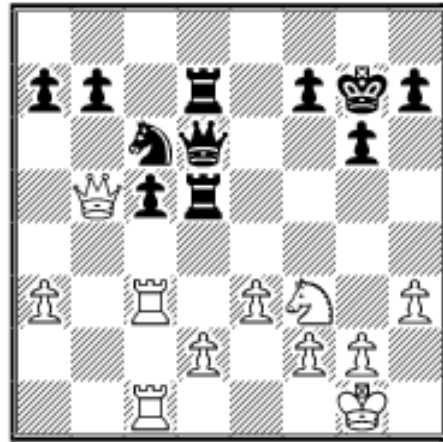
**1...Ra1+ 2. Kh2 Qg1+ 3. Kg3 Ra3+ 4. Rd3**

4. Kh4 or g4 is bad because of 4...Qb6 followed by 5...Qf6+ or 5...Qb3.

**4...Qd4!!**

This spectacular finishing blow remained, in fact, unplayed: Black actually continued 4...Ra7?, with equality.

***Kagan - Shmuter***  
**Israel 1995**



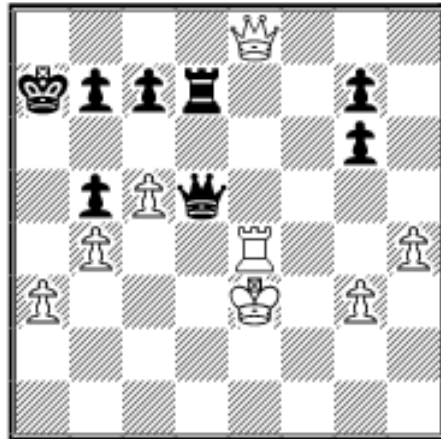
**1...Nd4!! 2. ed**

2. Nxd4 cd 3. Rc5 Rc7!! 4. ed b6

**2...cd 3. Rc5 Rc7!! 4. Rxc7 Rxb5**

and Black won.

***NN - Kokshal***  
**Prague 1928**



Black has an overwhelming advantage: his king is secure, which is certainly more than one can say for his opponent. But the attack must be executed accurately: on 1...Qd3+? (or 1...Qb3+?) 2. Kf2, with Re2 to follow, White pulls together a defense, and the outcome becomes problematical.

**1...Qd2+! 2. Kf3 Rd3+ 3. Re3**

On 3. Kg4 Qf2 [3...Qd1+!?) 4. Qe5 Rxc3+! 5. Qxc3 Qf5 is mate.

**3...Qe1!!**

But not 3...Qd1+? 4. Kf2 Rd2+ 5. Re2.

**4. Qe5**

4. Qe6 Qf1+ 5. Kg4 (5. Ke4 Rxe3+ 6. Kxe3 Qe1+) 5...Rxe3 6. Qxe3 Qf5 is mate again. And on 4. g4 Qf1+ 5. Kg3, Black can employ the Maltese cross once more: 5...Qe2! 6. Kf4 Qf2+, although 5...Rd2! 6. Rf3 Qg2+ 7.

Kf4 Rd4+ is no worse.

**4...Qf1+ 5. Ke4**

On 5. Kg4 Rxe3.

**5...Rd4+!!**

A spectacular conclusion! Either recapture of the rook leads to mate: 6. Qxd4 Qf5, or 6. Kxd4 Qc4.

The chessplayer is obliged to study typical combinations, for he must make frequent use of them in his own games. But I must acknowledge that I place even greater value upon unusual combinations, which do not resemble the typical, and which I enthusiastically offer my students during our training sessions. Solving the non-standard, and therefore more difficult, problems aids in the development of the combinative sense, fantasy and resourcefulness. Besides which, any idea - even the most unusual one - may at some point repeat itself.

In Reuben Fine's 1945 book, *Chess Marches On!*, I found a pretty, though little-known game.

***Santasiere - Levy***  
**New York 1942**

**1. Nf3 d5 2. b4 f6!? 3. d4 e5! 4. a3 (4. de Bxb4+ 5. c3 Bc5; 4. e4!? de 5. Nxe5!) 4...e4 5. Nfd2 Bd6 6. e3 f5 7. c4 c6 8. Nc3 Nf6 9. Qb3 Be6 10. cd cd 11. Be2 Nbd7 12. a4 Rc8 13. a5**



Here, Black played the spectacular **13...Bxh2!!** The tactical basis for this is simple: 14. Rxh2 Qc7, with a double attack on c3 and h2, leaves Black a pawn up. Such an idea, as non-standard as it is, may be easily overlooked in an over-the-board game. In any event, I was unable to recall any other example where the bishop took on h2, in front of the rook (and not in front of the king, of which there are thousands of examples).

Computers, by contrast, find such little combinations almost instantly. Nevertheless, when I started up the ChessBase analytical module, Fritz5, it did not suggest the h2 capture.

Here, we are clearly dealing, not with calculation, but with evaluation. White could avoid the loss of a pawn by 14. Ncxe4 fe 15. Rxh2. How should we evaluate this position? To any experienced player, it would be clear that, after 15...0-0, White would stand worse, since his king has no safe haven. But a computer program might reach a different conclusion, since White has technically traded a wing pawn for a center pawn, which is generally good for him; also, he has opened the h-file for the rook (although, unfortunately, there is nothing with which to support its activity on this file).

Both humans and computers would have a tougher time evaluating the consequences of **14. g3 Bxg3 15. fg Qc7** (also worth considering was the in-between move **14.a6!?**) Here, as Fine points out, White would have to play 16. Bb2 Qxg3+ 17. Kd1, offering yet a fourth pawn for the piece. However, Black should not take the e-pawn, since after 17...Qxe3?! 18. Nb5! Qf4 (18...Qxb3+ 19. Nxb3 Ke7 20. Nxa7 Ra8 21. Nb5) 19. Rf1!? (19. Nxa7) 19...Qb8 20. a6! b6 21. Qe3 0-0 22. Qf4, the initiative passes to White.

More solid would be 17...a6, 17...0-0 or 17...Ng4 18. Bxg4 Qxg4+ 19. Ne2 g5.

In the game, White played too passively: **16. Nd1?! Qxg3+ 17. Nf2**, and after **17...Ng4! 18. Bxg4 fg**, his position was difficult indeed. On 19. Nf1, Fine gives the following pretty variation: 19...Qg2 20. Rh2 Qf3 21. Nh1 h5 22. Nfg3 h4! 23. Rf2 hg! 24. Rxf3 Rxh1+ 25. Rf1 g2, and Black wins.

**19. Ndx e4 Qg2** (threatening 20...g3) **20. Nd6+ Kd8 21. e4** (21. Nxc8 g3 22. Rf1 Rf8! 23. Ra2 Bh3) **21...g3 22. Bg5+ Nf6 23. Bxf6+ gf 24. Rf1 gf+ 25. Rxf2 Qh1+ 26. Rf1 Qh4+ 27. Rf2** (27. Kd2 Qh2+) **27...Rg8! 28. Ke2 Bg4+ 29. Ke1 Be6 30. Ke2 Rg3 31. Qa4 Bg4+ 32. Kd2 Qh6+** White resigned.

When I showed this game to GM Vadim Zvjagintsev, he shocked me by saying that he had already seen this sort of tactic; then he showed me the following opening line:

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. c3 Nf6 4. e5 Nd5 5. d4 cd 6. cd d6 7. a3 Bd7 8. Bd3 Bc6**

**9. 0-0 Nd7 10. b4!? b6?!**

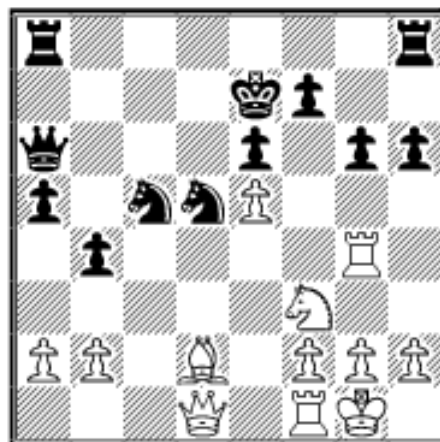


Our familiar 11. Bxh7 capture is possible here; but White should probably not play it. When behind in development, it's too risky to lose time capturing a pawn, especially when it opens the h-file for the enemy rook. (Here, in contrast to the preceding example, the rook **does** have something to help him!) In any event, in all three games I found in my database, White refrained from the pawn capture (or perhaps he just didn't see the possibility), preferring 11. Re1 or 11. Bd2.

In conclusion, a somewhat distantly related cousin of the "little combination" we have been studying.

***Cvitan - Arakhamia***  
**Moscow 1989**

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e3 e6 5. Nf3 Nbd7 6. Bd3 dc 7. Bxc4 b5 8. Bd3 Bb7 9. e4 b4 10. Na4 c5 11. e5 Nd5 12. Nxc5 Bxc5 13. dc Nxc5 14. Bb5+ Kf8 15. 0-0 h6 16. Bd2 Qb6 17. Be2 Ke7 18. Rc1 a5 19. Rc4 Ba6 20. Rg4 g6? (20...Nd3!?) 21. Bxa6 Qxa6 (21...Rxa6 22. Rh4, with advantage to White)



22. Bxh6! Rxh6 23. Qc1 Rhh8 24. Qxc5+ Kd7 25. Rd1 Rac8 26. Qd4 Rc7 27. Ng5 Qe2 28. Re4 Qh5 29. Nf3 Qh6 30. Qd3 Rc1 31. Rh4 Rxd1+ 32. Qxd1 Qf8 33. Qa4+ Ke7 34. Qxa5 Black resigned





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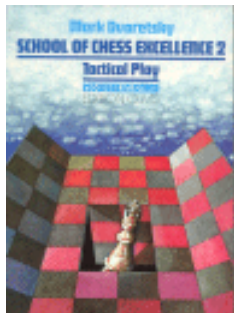
In my February 2001 column, we examined an instructional position, composed by Yuri Averbakh and published in 1983 in the Russian edition of his five-volume *Chess Endings*. The commentary to this position in the book contains numerous errors. Afterwards, my article containing analysis of this example was published in the Russian magazine *Chess Weekly*.

The grandmaster wrote the magazine's editors a wrathful letter, the main point of which was that the errors were all due to a misprint: the White pawn should have been printed on h2, and not on h4. This is where, according to Averbakh, the pawn was placed in the earlier German edition, published in 1973.

So, it's a misprint, is it?

In 1973, the German edition had it right, while the later Russian edition had it wrong. And not just there: in the English edition too, which saw the light of day in 1987. That was the edition quoted by the American Chuck Adelman, when he sent a critical letter to the editor on the same subject in the August 2000 issue of the magazine *Chess Life*. Generally speaking, errors and misprints are usually corrected between older editions and the newer ones; here, for some reason, the reverse occurred. Well, it happens...

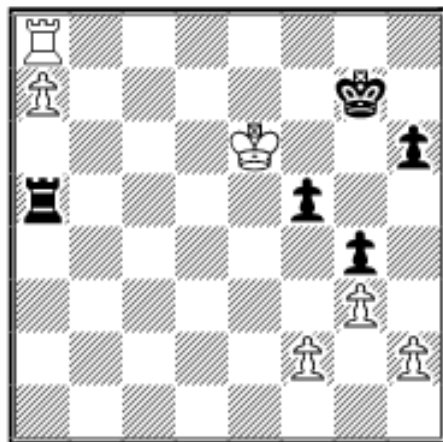
So - let's have a look at the position "as intended" - with



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the White pawn at h2.



This is a draw after **1...Ra2 2. Kxf5 Rxf2+ 3. Kxg4 Ra2.**

White can only create a second passed pawn on the knight or rook file, which is not enough to win.

So why does the position of White's pawn make a difference? Because, with the

pawn at h4, the pawn endgame after 2. Re8! Rxa7 3. Re7+ is won; with the pawn at h2, it's drawn.

Averbakh's explanation would pass without question, were it not for his commentary in the book to Black's 1...Ra2:

*The only move! Mistaken is 1...h5 2. Kd6! (2. Re8 Ra6+! 3. Kxf5 Rxa7 4. Kg5 Ra5+ 5. Kf4 Ra2 only leads to a draw) 2...Kh7 3. Ke7 Kg7 4. Ke6 Ra2 5. Kxf5 Rxf2+ (5...Ra5+ 6. Kf4 Kh7 7. Rf8! Rxa7 8. Kg5 Ra5+ 9. Rf5 wins) 6. Kg5 Ra2 7. Kxh5 Ra4 8. Re8 Rxa7 9. Kxg4, and White wins.*

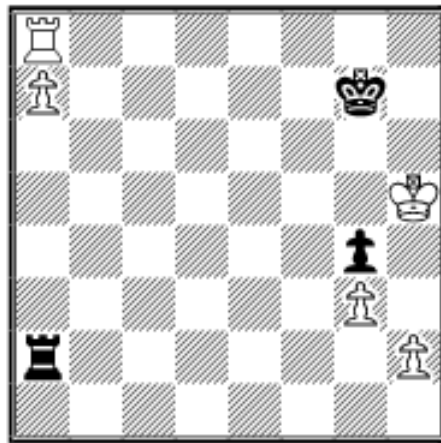
With the pawn at h4, as my article demonstrated, this piece of analysis contains seven (!) wrong moves. But with the pawn at h2, all is still not right.

The first question is why, in the variation 1...h5 2. Re8, the move 2...Ra6+ receives an exclamation mark? As we already know, after 2...Rxa7, the exchange of rooks by 3. Re7+ Rxe7 4. Kxe7 leads only to a draw. With the pawn at h4, the exclamation would be easier to understand (Black avoids the lost pawn endgame), although still not really justified, since it's not enough to save the game: 2...Ra6+

3. Kxf5 Rxa7 4. Re5! Kh6 5. Re6+ Kg7 6. Rg6+ Kh7 7. Rf6 Ra5+ 8. Kf4, with the unstoppable threat 9. Rf5.

And now, let's run through Averbakh's variation, almost to the end:

**1...h5 2. Kd6 Kh7** (as will soon become clear, 2...Ra2 3. Ke5 Re2+ is not a bit worse) **3. Ke7 Kg7 4. Ke6 Ra2 5. Kxf5 Rxf2+ 6. Kg5 Ra2 7. Kxh5** (7. Rb8 Rxa7 8. Kxh5 Ra2=)



And now, how do we explain the "cooperative" 7...Ra4?? given by Averbakh - since **7...Rxb2+ 8. Kxg4 Ra2** leads to an obvious draw? Which in turn means that 1...Ra2, contrary to his opinion, is hardly forced.

Of course, with that pawn on h2, the grandmaster's analysis contains, not 8 errors, but only 1 (that is, if we ignore things like the sprinkling of exclams). But on the other hand - what an error it is! In the first place, it's a horrible blunder; and in the second place, it's thematic. After all, the whole idea of Averbakh's instructive example was precisely to show that, with the pawn at a7, even a second passed pawn on the g- (or h-) file is not enough to win.

We note that, with the pawn at h4, the position in the last diagram would of course be a win, and the 7...Ra4 move in the book would be quite understandable. So it's a possible hypothesis (whether it was right or not, is another question) that Averbakh originally intended to put the pawn on h2; but then, spotting the hole in his analysis, decided to fix it by moving the pawn up to h4, without noticing that this might affect the evaluation of

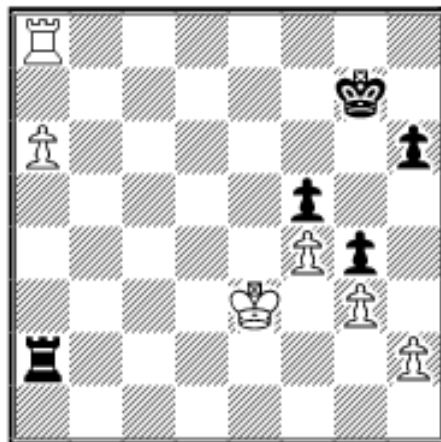
other variations (which a quick glance at the position, without reopening the analysis, would not reveal).

This is one possible answer to Averbakh's quite reasonable objection: how could he be suspected of being able to commit so many errors? Such cases occasionally happen to all of us. In fact, Pal Benko, when publishing the above-cited letter of Chuck Adelman in his monthly column, added his own comment, as follows: *He [Averbakh] told me that about 10% of the endings in his books are erroneous, even though he worked with a team. No one is perfect."*

But Averbakh doesn't agree even with this - he avers that Benko misunderstood him; that he was not talking about the percentage of errors in his own books, but in endgame books in general. Here too, though, as in the episode with the misprint, I am not about to rely without discussion on his memory and his words. It's very rare that someone can remember exactly after many years what he said to someone else. Whereas Benko quite likely would have remembered a statement that surprised and impressed him.

Now let's examine a few more endgames of the same type - beginning with a position similar to the first diagram, but with White's pawn at f4.

**M. Dvoretsky, 2003**



**1. a7!**

The plan is clear: White's king aims for the f5-pawn; after its almost unavoidable capture, the f4-pawn can advance.

After 1. Kd4? Rxh2 2. Ke5, Black saves himself by playing for stalemate:

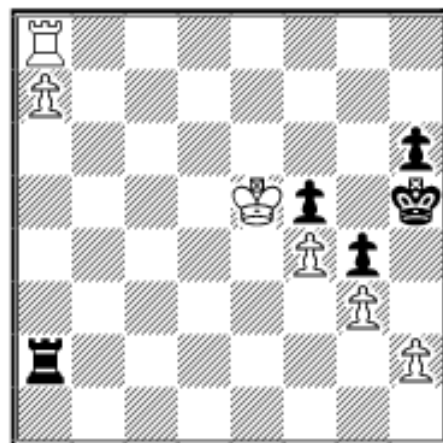
2...Kg6! 3. a7 Ra2 4. Rg8+ Kh5 5. a8Q Ra5(or e2)+ - the rook is now a "desperado"; or 3. Rg8+ Kh5 4. Rf8 Re2+! 5. Kxf5 (5. Kd6 Ra2=) 5...Re8!=.

**1...Ra4 2. Kd3 Kh7 3. Kc3 Kg7**

The clever try 3...Kg6!?, suggested by A. Gansauer, a reader of the German edition of my work *Die Endspiel Universität*, is refuted by 4. h3!! gh 5. Rg8+ Kh5 6. a8Q Rxa8 7. Rxa8 Kg4 8. Kd4 h2 9. Ra1 Kxg3 10. Ke5, and wins.

**4. Kb3 Ra6 5. Kc4!**

Mistaken is 5. Kb4? Kg6!, when 6. h3 no longer works - White's king is too far away from the f5-pawn. There are curious variations after 6. Kc5 Kh5! (6...Ra1 7. h3! wins) 7. Kd5 Ra2 8. Ke5



Now 8...Ra5+? is bad: 9. Ke6 Ra6+ (9...Kg6 10. h3! Ra6+ 11. Ke7 gh 12. Rg8+) 10. Kxf5 Rxa7 11. h3! Rf7+ (the only move to meet the mate threat) 12. Ke6 Rb7 13. hg+ (13. Ra5+ Kg6 14. hg Rb3 is less convincing) 13...Kxg4 14. Rg8+ Kh5 15. g4+ Kh4

16. f5.

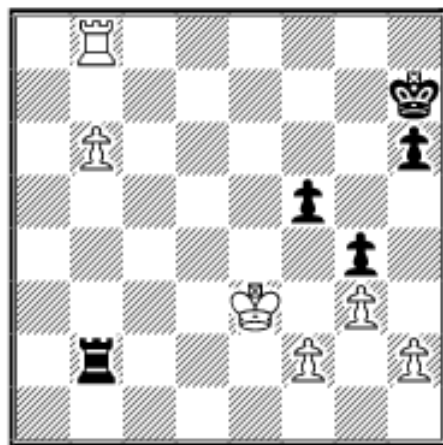
8...Re2+! is much harder to crack: 9. Kxf5 Re7! (but not 9...Re8? 10. h3!, winning; the text leads to a mutual zugzwang) 10. Rd8 (10. Kf6? Re8!=) 10...Rxa7, putting White's win in doubt. For example: 11. Ke6 Kg6 12. f5+? Kg5 13. Rg8+ Kh5=; or 11. Rd5 Ra6.

**5...Ra5 6. Kb4 Ra1 7. Kc5 Ra6 8. Kd5 Ra1 9. Ke5 Ra5+ 10. Ke6** (the decisive zugzwang!) **10...Kh7** (10...Kg6!? 11. h3! wins) **11. Kf6**, and the f5-pawn falls.

It should be noted that the inaccurate 9. Ke6? Ra5 puts White in zugzwang; however, he can easily give up the move to his opponent: 10. Kd6 Kh7 11. Ke7 Kg7 (11...Ra6 12. Kf7) 12. Ke6, or 11. Kc6 (threatening 12. Kb6) 11...Ra1 12. Kd5 Ra5+ 13. Kd6! Kg7 14. Ke6. Another possible line is 10. Rd8 Rxa7 11. Kxf5 Ra2 12. Rd7+ Kf8 13. Kg6!? Rxh2 14. f5, and wins. However, going into the pawn endgame after 11.Rd7+? Rxd7 12. Kxd7 is a mistake: Black has a saving stalemate by 12...Kg6 13. Ke6 Kh5!

Following is an interesting endgame, which Averbakh tells us served as his starting point for the composition of the instructive study in the first diagram.

*Rovner – Schipunov Kiev 1938*



White was not able to handle the problem set before him. **1. b7?** allowed the forcible win of the f5-pawn; but, as we now know, this is not enough to win. After **1...Kg7 2. Kd4 Rb5 3. Kc4 Rb2 4. Kd5 Rd2+ 5. Ke5 Re2+ 6. Kxf5 Rxf2+ 7. Kxg4 Rb2**, the game ended in a draw.

As Kopayev pointed out, sharper play was needed: **1. Kd4! Rxf2 2. Rc8** is sufficient for the win in this case.

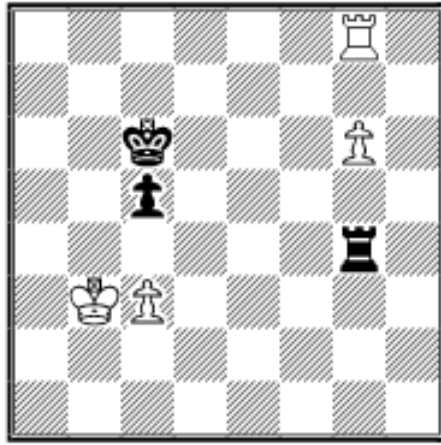
Here what matters is the difficulty Black has in creating a kingside passed pawn, as well as the fact that White's passed pawn is on the b-file - closer to his king (there might possibly be no win, if it were on the a-file).

I should like to emphasize one significant fact: *no matter how thoroughly we understand all the most important ideas, we have no right to employ them automatically, since any change - no matter how insignificant - in the position usually brings with it new elements, sometimes even important enough to alter our assessment.* This is the case here: it is far from unimportant, for example, which file the passed pawn stands on, a- or b-. And with the pawn on h4, the variations are completely unlike those with the pawn at h2, etc.

It's not enough to memorize the basic theoretical conclusions, in order to become a wise "endgamer". It's also important to train oneself in their practical use in new situations. With the aid of specially selected exercises, you will learn to determine whether this or that well-known technique or evaluation works or not, and what sort of new ideas are contained in the position. I have conducted such training sessions more than once; and have repeatedly found them to be difficult (perhaps due to unfamiliarity), even for grandmasters.

I offer two such exercises for you to solve: think about the following positions, and determine in each whether White to move can win.

***Ljubojevic – Gligoric Belgrade 1979, 9th Match Game***



The game continuation was:  
**1. g7 Kb7?? 2. c4! Rg2 3. Kc3**, and Black resigned. The king moves through the center to attack the c5-pawn, which will be lost due to zugzwang.

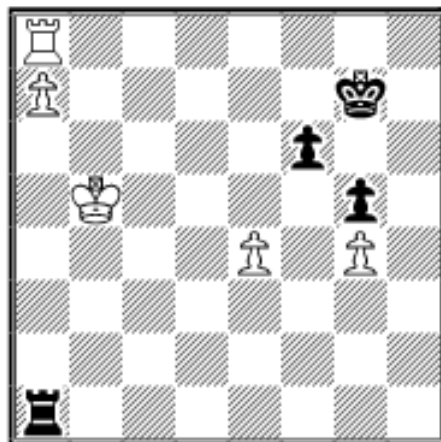
So far, nothing new. But look at the situation after 1...c4+!

2. Kb4 Kb7 3. Kb5 Ka7. Here, zugzwang can no longer occur. White cannot run both the enemy rook and king out of moves simultaneously: after 4. Kc6, the rook is freed from the defense of the c4-pawn, so the draw becomes inevitable.

In the opinion of Milic and Bozic, who commented on this endgame in the 27th volume of *Chess Informant*, White should have played 1 c4 Rg3+ 2. Kc2, winning. This would be correct, if the kingside pieces stood along the h-file. But in this instance, Black finds another defensive resource: the king marches over to the g-pawn. After 2...Kd6 3. g7 Ke6 (or e7), it's a drawn pawn endgame. And if 2. Ka4, then 2...Kb6 3. g7 Kb7 4. Kb5 Rg5 5. Ka4 Rg3! White can neither create a zugzwang, nor break into the queenside with his king.

***Benko – Gereben Budapest 1951***





With proper defense, the position is drawn.

**1. Kb6 Rb1+ 2. Kc6 Rc1+ 3. Kd6 Rd1+!**

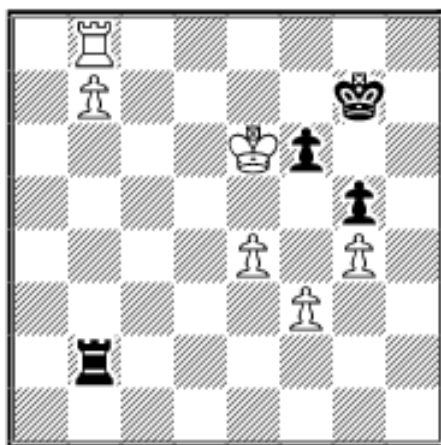
In the actual game, Black erred with 3...Ra1?, and after 4. Rc8! (but not 4. Re8? Ra6+!=) 4...Ra6+ 5. Rc6 Rxa7 6. Rc7+ Rxc7 7. Kxc7, White had the distant opposition, which is easily

transformed into close opposition. After 7...Kh7 8. Kd7! Kg6 9. Ke6 Kg7 10. Ke7 Kg6 11. Kf8, Black resigned.

**4. Ke6 Ra1 5. Rd8** (5. Re8 Ra6+! 6. Kf5 Rxa7=) **5...Rxa7 6. Rd7+ Rxd7 7. Kxd7 Kh7!=** Black is saved **only** by taking the distant opposition, **not** the close: 7...Kf7? 8. Kd6, and White takes the opposition away.

Half a century later, an encounter between two young women grandmasters led to the following endgame:

***Pietzsch - Kosteniuk Mainz 2002, 5th match game***

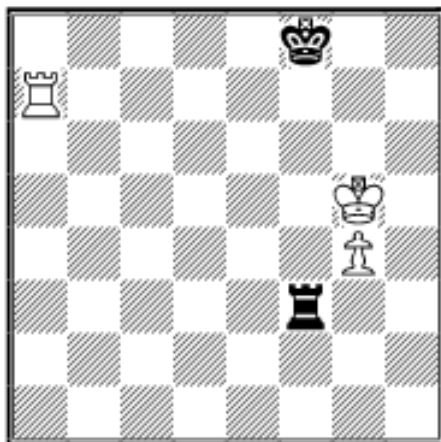


Compared with the previous example, White has an extra pawn at f3 - therefore, any pawn endgame is won. The elementary way to reach this was: 1. Rd8! Rb6+ 2. Rd6 Rxb7 3. Rd7+ Rxd7 4. Kxd7.

**1. Re8?? Rb6+! 2. Kf5 Rxb7**

The position is now drawn - but the adventure continues...

**3. e5 fe 4. Rxe5 Rf7+ 5. Kxg5 Rxf3 6. Re7+ Kf8 7. Ra7**



**7...Rc3??**

7...Kg8! 8. Kg6 Rf8= was necessary. With a knight's pawn, passive defense by the rook along the 8th rank is the way to guarantee a draw.

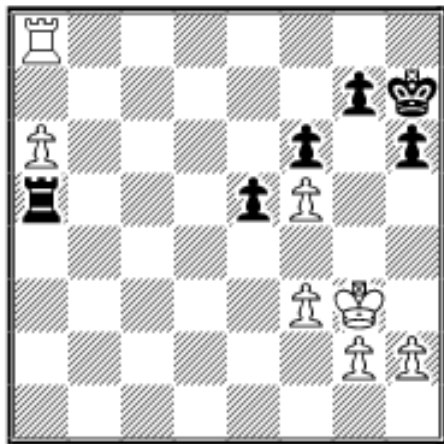
**8. Kh5??**

8. Kg6! leads by force to the winning "Lucena Position", for example: 8...Rc6+ 9. Kh7 Rc5 10. Rg7.

**8...Kg8 9. Rd7 Rc6.** And now we have reached "Philidor's position". The game was soon drawn.

Now, let's examine a much more complicated and instructive example of the same type.

### ***Zurakhov – Vaisman USSR 1966***



First question: *Should White push the pawn to a7? This makes sense in any of the following cases:*

*a) When it may be exchanged for enemy pawns, thereby obtaining a won endgame with all the pawns on one side. (An example:*

*our first position, with the pawn on h4, the variation 1...h5 2. Re8!);*

*b) When you can win the enemy rook for it. This can be done, for example, by creating a passed f-pawn on the other wing, which will knock the enemy king from its safe square. (Example: the situation examined above, with the black f5-pawn and the white f4-pawn);*

***c) And finally, when giving up the passed pawn forces a trade of rooks (by means of a 7th-rank check), and transposition into a won pawn endgame.*** (In Averbakh's position, with the pawn at h4, the pawn endgame is won; with the pawn at h2, it's drawn. But if we place the White pawns at f4 and h2, then the rook exchange also leads to a draw, since Black's king has a stalemate haven at h5).

In the present instance, the first possibility is clearly out of the question; and it's very hard to say whether either of the other two possibilities can be executed. Here, we would probably have to make an intuitive decision.

### **1. a7?!**

Contrary to the opinion of V. Zurakhov, who commented on this game for the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, the move made by him does not let slip the win.

Nevertheless, leaving the pawn at a6 would have been simpler. After playing h2-h4-h5 and Ra7, White would then march his king over to the queenside, giving up the g2-pawn (or the f3-pawn, if he cannot do without g2-g4). The win would be achieved without much difficulty, since the enemy king remains forever locked in to h7.

With the text, White intended to continue h2-h4 and g2-g4-g5, and after the forced double exchange on g5, to eliminate the g5- and e5-pawns with his king, in preparation for f5-f6.

### **1...Ra2**

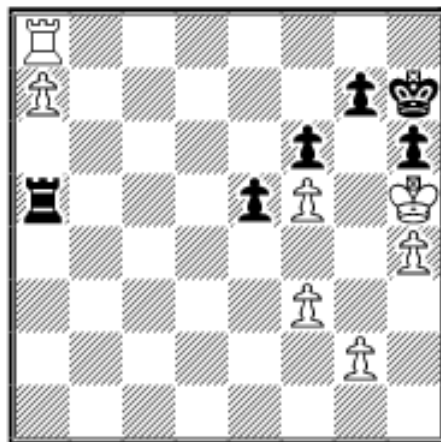
On 1...Ra3!? (threatening 2...e4!=), both 2. Kg4 and 2. Kf2 are good - the advance of the kingside pawns can only be delayed a little, but not prevented.

### **2. h4 Ra3**

Black loses immediately after 2...h5? 3. Kh3, when there is no defense to g2-g4-g5-g6+.

### 3. Kh2

Right: it's simpler to keep the king behind the pawns. 3. Kg4 Ra4+ 4. Kh5 was possible too, but that would require more attentiveness and accuracy from White. Black would have responded 4...Ra5!?



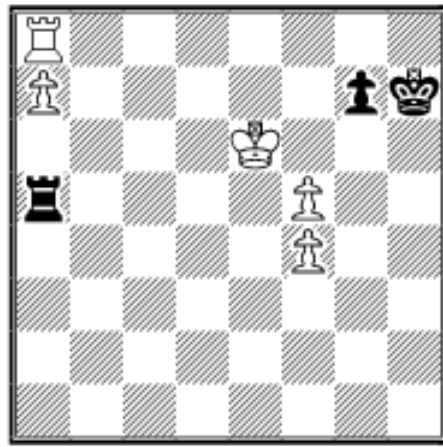
Now, after the indecisive 5. g3? Black saves himself by 5...e4! 6. fe g6+ 7. Kg4 gf+ (but not 7...h5+? 8. Kf4 gf 9. Rf8! Rxa7 10. Kxf5 Rg7 11. Rxf6 Rxc3 12. e5) 8. ef Kg7 9. Kf4 h5=.

But on 5. g4!, Black loses after both 5...g6+? 6. fg+

Kg7 7. g5 hg 8. hg fg (8...e4 9. Re8!) 9. Kg4!

(zugzwang); and 5...e4? 6. g5 (6. fe?? g6#) 6...hg 7. hg g6+ 8. fg+ Kg7 9. Re8! (or 9. f4!? f5 10. Re8 Rxa7 11. Re5, and wins). Black would have to play 5...Ra1 6. g5 hg 7. hg fg, transposing back into the game.

**3...Ra2 4. Kh3 Ra3 5. g3 Ra2 6. g4 Ra3 7. Kg2 Ra2+ 8. Kg3 Ra4 9. g5 hg 10. hg fg 11. Kh3 Rh4+ 12. Kg2 Ra4 13. Kg3 Ra1 14. Kg4 Rg1+ 15. Kh5 Ra1 16. Kxg5 Ra6 17. Kg4 Ra3 18. Kh4 Ra4+ 19. Kh3 Ra2 20. Kg3 Ra5 21. Kf2 Ra3 22. Ke2 Ra5 23. Kd3 Ra4 24. Kc3 Ra1 25. Kb4 Ra2 26. Kc5 Ra1 27. Kd6 Ra5 28. Ke6 Ra1 29. Kxe5 Ra6 30. f4 Ra5+ 31. Ke6**



Now, try to find a system of defense for Black.

### **31...Ra1!**

31...Ra6+? loses to 32. Ke7! (zugzwang) 32...Ra4 33. f6! gf 34. Kf7! Ra6 (34...f5 35. Ke6 Ra5 36. Kf6 and wins) 35. f5. The same zugzwang

position, with Black to move, occurs after 31...Ra4? 32. Kf7! Ra6 33. Ke7.

On the other hand, 32. f6 does not bring quick success, in view of 32...Ra6+ 33. Ke7 (33. Kf7 Rf6+) 33...gf 34. Kf7 (34. f5 Kg7) 34...Ra4! 35. f5 Ra6, when it is White who is in zugzwang.

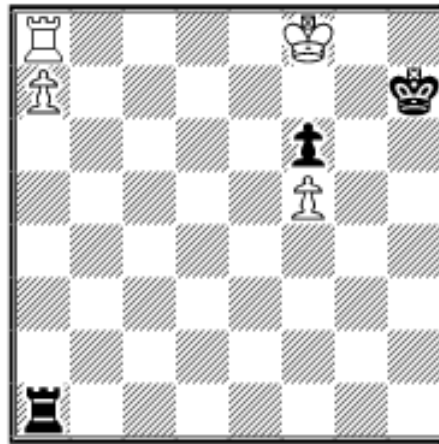
### **32. Ke7 Ra6!**

The only defense against the threatened f5-f6. 32...Ra4? is a mistake, because of 33. f6 gf 34. Kf7, when the zugzwang is decisive. We may properly call the corresponding squares f7-a4 and e7-a6 squares of mutual zugzwang. With accurate defense, Black will not fall into zugzwang.

### **33. Kf7 Ra4!**

On 33...Rf6+? White gives his opponent the move by triangulating with his king: 34. Ke8! Ra6 35. Ke7, and wins.

**34. Kf8** (34. f6 gf 35. f5 Ra6) **34...Ra5** (34...Ra6? 35. Ke7 wins) **35. f6** (there's really nothing else) **35...gf** **36. f5 Ra1** (36...Ra6? 37. Kf7 wins)



The culmination of this endgame: how does White continue?

**37. Re8?**

This natural move (White wants to get a winning pawn endgame) is in fact a mistake - Black has a stalemate

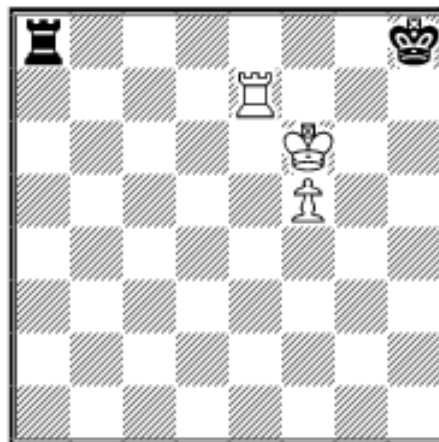
defense! The correct line was pointed out by Sergey Dolmatov.

37. Kf7! (it's important to lure the rook to a6) 37...Ra6  
 38. Ke7! (by the way, the immediate 37. Ke7? Kg7 throws away the win) 38...Kg7 (of course, this position could also have come about earlier) 39. Kd8! (39. Ke8?! Kg8!) 39...Ra1 (both 39...Kg8 40. Kc7+ Kg7 41. Kb7, and 39...Kh6 40. Kc7 Kg5 41. Rg8+ Kxf5 42. a8Q Rxa8 43. Rxa8 are hopeless for Black) 40. Rc8! Rxa7 41. Rc7+ Rxc7 42. Kxc7 Kh6 43. Kd7 Kh5 44. Ke7! Kg5 45. Ke6, and wins.

**37...Rxa7 38. Re7+ Kh8! 39. Kf7**

Taking the rook is stalemate, so White must go after the f6-pawn.

**39...Ra6** (39...Ra1 is good too) **40. Kg6 Ra8 41. Kxf6**



## 41...Kg8??

A horrible blunder, one step away from his goal.

41...Ra6+ secures the draw (as does 41...Ra1): 42. Re6 (42. Kf7 Kh7 43. f6 Ra8 or 43...Ra1, as long as Black doesn't fall for 43...Rb6?? 44. Kf8+ Kg6 45. f7 Kf6 46.

Kg8!, winning) 42...Ra1! 43. Kg6 Rg1+ 44. Kf7 Kh7 (44...Rg7+) 45. f6 Rg7+! 46. Ke8 (46. fg is stalemate) 46...Rg8+, and the rook gets back to the "long side".

**42. Kg6**, and Black resigned.

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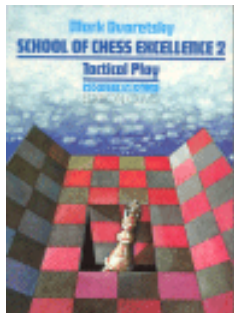
## Studies for Grandmasters

Many years ago, I worked out and began implementing an effective training method - playing out specially selected positions. I'm talking about positions in which it is not necessary, and occasionally not even possible, to foresee everything from beginning to end. Thus the player will find himself making, not just one decision (however deep and difficult it may be), but a series of consecutive decisions. You may read further on this training method in the 1st and 2nd books of my series, *The School of Chess Excellence*.

The student will, as a rule, play against his trainer, who is familiar with the analysis of the position. There are also some examples in which both sides stand equally (or almost equally), and in which both sides will have to resolve difficult and interesting tasks; these positions are suitable for "two-sided play", in which two players play against each other.

There are a number of studies suited for play-training. But two-sided play of these positions is really impossible - because here there is no equality: Black, try as he might, is nevertheless doomed. This may be taken as axiomatic - although there are exceptions. Also suitable for two-sided play are those difficult studies which feature lengthy and double-edged play (these are the difficult studies, but not analytical ones, which are too





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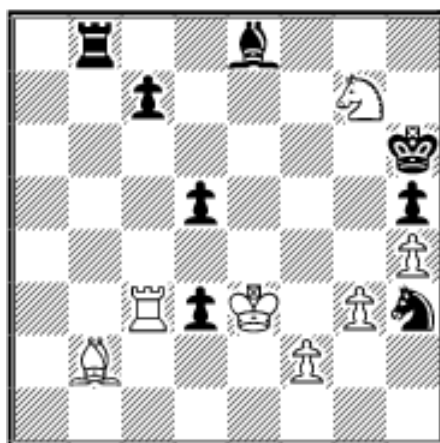


difficult to be assigned as exercises). There are relatively few such studies, but they do exist. And in the second place, there are some incorrect studies. It is this second set of exceptions I wish to discuss here.

I offer three complex studies, which have been successfully cooked. Regardless of the fact that, as far as the study world is concerned, these studies have ceased to exist - despite that (or perhaps we should say, even because of it), they remain useful for the trainer.

To those wishing to test their skill I would recommend playing these studies out against friends, and then comparing the "game" continuations with your analysis. I warn you: all these examples were pretty difficult, even for players of the highest qualification. So, allow both yourself and your opponents extra time - a minimum of an hour each.

I will not call these exercises. First of all, because training must resemble a real-world fight over the board; and during a tournament game, no one ever tells you whether you should be playing for a win or a draw/ And second, because the tasks set in these studies are, in all likelihood, impossible. Just try to play them as strongly as possible, and set your opponent the most complex problems you can.



**J. Timman, 1990**

The first two moves are relatively easy, for both sides:

**1. Ng7xe8!**

1. Rxd3? Bg6 2. Rd2 Rb3+,  
 or 1. Nf5+? Kg6 2. Ne7+ Kf7

are both hopeless.

### 1...d5-d4+!

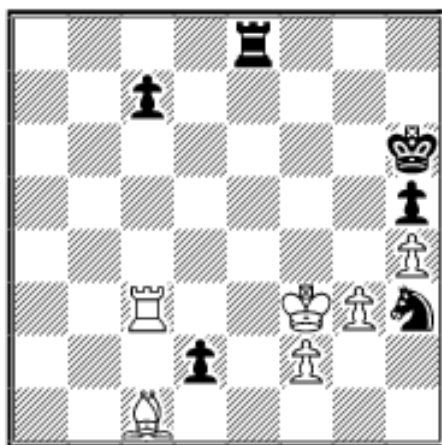
1...Rxe8+? 2. Kxd3 leads to equality.

### 2. Ke3xd4

Of course not 2. Kxd3? dc 3. Bc1+ Kg6 4. Nxc7 Nxf2+ 5. Kxc3 Ne4+.

### 2...d3-d2 3. Rc3-c6+!?

The try 3. Bc1? Rd8+ 4. Ke4 Rxe8+ 5.Kf3 must be rejected.



**5...Rf8+! 6. Kg2** (6. Ke2 Rxf2+ 7. Kd1 dcQ+)

**6...Nf4+! 7. gf d1Q**, and Black wins easily (pointed out by V. Zvjagintsev).

Timman's main line was:

**5...Re3+?! (it's a draw after 5...dcQ? 6. Rxc1 Rf8+ 7.**

**Kg2 Nxf2 8. Rc6+)** **6. Kg2!**

**Nf4+!** (6...d1Q? 7. Bxe3+ Kg6 8. Rc1=) **7. Kh2!** (7. gf Rxc3) **7...Rxc3 8. Bxd2 Rc2.**

The pawn endgame after 8...Rc4 9. Bxf4+ Rxf4? 10. gf is drawish: 10...Kg6 11. Kg3 Kf5 (11...Kf6 12. Kf3 Kf5 13. Ke3 c6 14. Kf3! - but not 14. f3? c5, and White's in zugzwang) 12. Kf3 c6 13. Ke3 c5 [13...Kg4 14. Ke4] 14. f3 [and now it's Black who's in zugzwang] 14...c4 15. Kd4 Kxf4 16. Kxc4.

**9. Bxf4+ Kg6 10. Kg2** (followed by Kf3-e3). Timman considered the final position drawn; however, as R. Huebner pointed out, after **10...Kf5 11. Kf3 c5**, Black

retains good winning chances.

### **3...Kh6-h7 4. Rc6xc7+ Kh7-g6**

Of course not 4...Kh8? 5. Ke4(e3)+ Rxb2 6. Nf6, with unavoidable mate.

### **5. Rc7-c6+**

The only continuation given by Timman here is 5...Kf7 6. Nd6+ Kg8, and Black wins. As a matter of fact, things are much more complicated than that.

### **5...Kg6-f7!**

5...Kf5? 6. Nd6+! (6. Rc5+? Ke6; 6. Rf6+? Kg4 7. Ke3 d1Q 8. Rg6+ Ng5) 6...Kg4 7. f3+! Kxf3 8. Rc3+ with a draw.

### **6. Ne8-d6+ Kf7-g8!**

Black can't leave his king on the f-file: 6...Kf8? 7. Rc1! Nxf2 8. Rf1 d1Q+ (forced - White threatened to take the knight with check) 9. Rxd1 Nxd1 10. Bc1=.

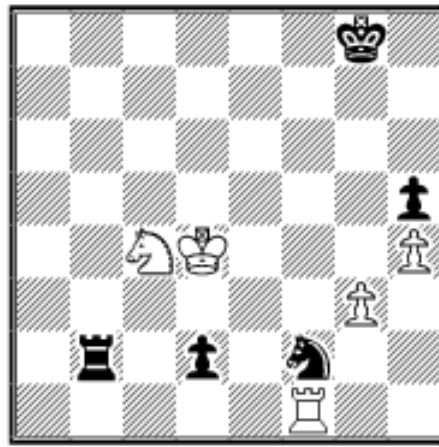
### **7. Rc6-c1! Rb8xb2**

7...Nxf2 8. Rf1 Rxb2! leads to a transposition of moves (but not 8...d1Q+? 9. Rxd1 Nxd1 10. Bc1=).

### **8. Rc1-f1! Nh3xf2!**

After 8...Rc2? 9. Ne4!, Black does not have 9...Rc1? in view of 10. Nxd2.

### **9. Nd6-c4!**



### 9...Rb2-b4!

9...Rc2? 10. Nxd2 Rxd2+ 11. Ke3 leads to a draw.

It's not easy to calculate and assess the consequences of 9...Rb3!? 10. Nxd2 Rd3+ 11. Ke5 Rxd2. The continuation might be 12. Kf4 (12. Kf6?! Kh7 is weaker) 12...Ra2 (12...Ng4 13. Kg5 Kg7 14.Rf5! [but not 14. Kxh5? Ne3] 14...Rd4 15. Ra5=) 13. Rb1

(White intends 14. Rb5 or 14. Kg5 Ra5+ 15. Kg6; the direct 13. Kg5? Kg7! would be a mistake, as the pawn capture leads to mate) 13...Ra5 14. Rb8+ Kf7 15. Rb7+ Ke6 16. Rb6+, when it's doubtful whether Black can capitalize on his extra piece.

### 10. Kd4-c3 d2-d1Q!!

Black does not win with 10...Rxc4+? 11. Kxd2! Ne4+ (11...Ng4 12. Rf5=) 12 Ke3! (threatening 13. Rf4 or 13. Rf5) 12...Nd6 (12...Nxg3 13. Rg1 Rg4 14. Kf3=), and now the simplest is 13. Rf4 Rc3+ 14. Kf2 followed by 15. g4=, but White could also play 13. Rf6 Ne8 14. Rf5 Ng7 15. Rg5 Kh7 16. Kf3 and 17. g4=.

### 11. Rf1xd1 Rb4xc4+ 12. Kc3xc4 Nf2xd1 13. Kc4-d3 Kg8-g7(h7)!

13...Nf2+? is a mistake: 14. Ke3 Ng4+ 15. Kf4 Kg7 16. Kg5 Nf6 17. Kf5 Kf7 18. Kg5, and Black can't win with his extra knight.

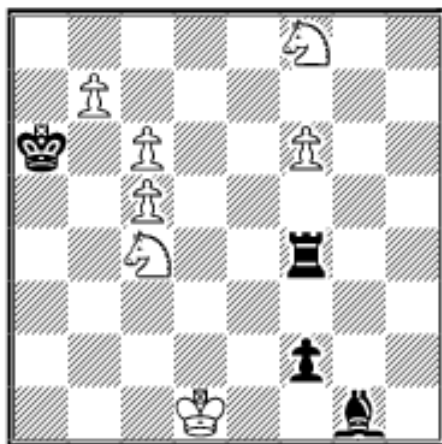
### 14. Kd3-e2 Nd1-b2! 15. Ke2-f3 Nb2-d3 16. Kf3-e4

16. g4 Ne5+

## 16...Nd3-f2+ 17. Ke4-f5 Kg7-h6!

Black wins, because he has succeeded both in preventing g3-g4 and controlling the g5 square.

As you can see, the move 3. Rc6+!? allows Black to put up rather stubborn resistance. By the way, when Vadim Zvjagintsev played the White side of this study in 1994 against Joel Lautier, this was the line he played, because he had calculated the forced refutation of the 3. Bc1? line. The new main line can hardly be called studylike; but it does just fine for practical training - both players must display constant alertness and accuracy.



**T. Gorgiev, G. Preuyt, 1959**

I found this position in John Nunn's excellent, recently-published *Endgame Challenge* - a collection of what, in one grandmaster's opinion, are the best studies of all time.

In the foreword, Nunn says that he subjected the 2,500 studies he originally selected to computer analysis; as a result, he rejected over 1,000 of them, after finding either refutations or additional solutions. I consulted with a few well-known chess composers, and came away with the impression that they were less interested in the studies Nunn included in his book than in which ones he rejected. This is understandable - everyone would like to know if his own favorite creations are among them.

Nunn's professionalism regarding chess as well as computers is well known. But even today's powerful computers are still not flawless: their farseeing vision was nevertheless insufficient to spot the insolubility of

this study - something discovered during the course of a training exercise by the young grandmaster Vladimir Potkin (and he was blindfold!).

### **1. Nc4-e3**

1. Nd2? Rd4 2. Kc2 Rxd2+ 3. Kxd2 f1Q 4. b8Q Qf2+ guarantees Black a perpetual.

### **1...f2-f1Q+**

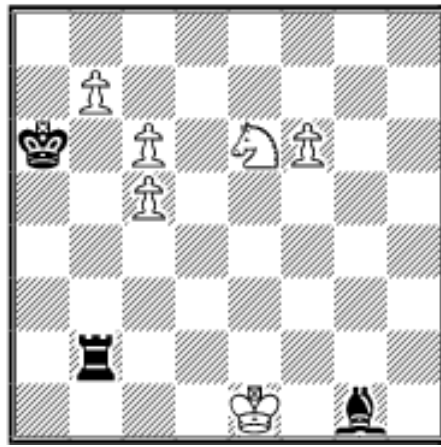
Of course not 1...Rb4? 2. f7 (or 2. Nd7).

### **2. Ne3xf1 Rf4xf1+ 3. Kd1-e2**

White must attack the rook, or else Black gets time for 3...Bh2.

### **3...Rf1-f2+ 4. Ke2-e1 Rf2-b2 5. Nf8-e6!?**

Nothing comes of 5. f7? Bxc5 6. Nd7 Bd6! 7. b8Q Rxb8 8. Nxb8+ Kb6 9. Ke2 Kc7=. After 5. Nd7 Bh2, Nunn gives the variation 6. f7 Bg3+ 7. Kd1 Rf2 8. f8Q Rxf8 9. Nxf8 Kb5=. It's also good to look at 6. Kf1 Bg3 7. b8Q Bxb8 8. f7 - the saving line for Black here is 8...Rb4! 9. Ke2 Rf4 10. Nxb8+ Ka7 11. Nd7 Rxf7, when the draw becomes obvious (the simplest response to 12. Kd3 is 12...Rf4!?!; or if 12. Ke3 Ka6 13. Ke4 Kb5 14. Kd5 Rh7=).



**5...Bg1-f2+!!**

This is how it has to be:  
 5...Bh2? 6. f7 Bg3+ 7. Kd1  
 transposes into a lost position  
 from the authors' solution.

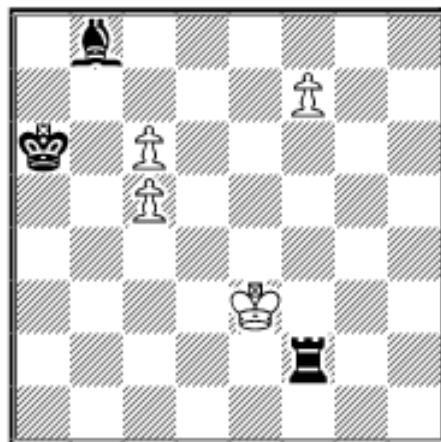
**6. Ke1-d1**

6. Kf1? Bg3 7. Kg1 Bh2+ 8.  
 Kh1 Rf2 9. f7 Bb8 10. f8Q Rxf8 11. Nxf8 Kb5= is not  
 dangerous for Black.

**6...Bf2-e3!**

This defensive resource found by Potkin refutes the  
 study.

The authors' solution was **6...Bg3? 7. f7 Rf2 8. Nf4!** (8.  
 f8Q? Rxf8 9. Nxf8 Kb5=) **8...Rxf4 9. b8Q Rf1+ 10. Ke2**  
**Rf2+ 11. Ke3 Bxb8**



Now the naive 12. Kxf2?  
 boots the win: 12...Ba7! 13.  
 f8B! (13. f8Q Bxc5+! 14.  
 Qxc5 is stalemate) 13...Bb6!  
 (threatening 14...Kb5;  
 13...Bb8? 14. Bd6 would be  
 bad) 14. Bd6 Ba5! 15. c7 (15.  
 Ke3 Kb5 16. c7 Bxc7=) 15...  
 Kb7=. The right way is **12.**  
**c7!! Bxc7 13. Kxf2**, and

wins.

**7. f6-f7**

**Be3-h6**

I must point out that if Black had aimed for this position,

but without the in-between check - 5...Be3? 6. f7 Bh6, he would have lost after 7. Nd8! (with the unstoppable threat of 8. c7). Here, this move is no longer dangerous: 8. Nd8 Rd2+ 9. Ke1 Rxd8 10. c7 Rd1+! 11. Kxd1 Kxb7=.

**8. f7-f8Q Bh6xf8 9. Ne6-d8!?**

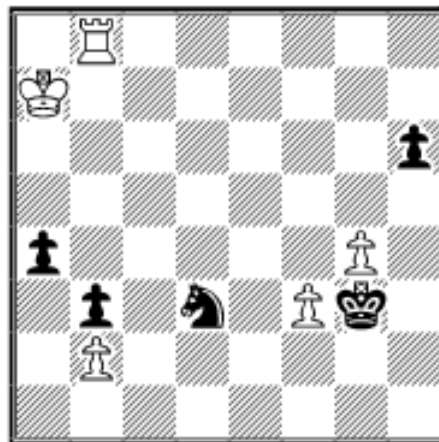
If 9. Nxf8 Rxb7! 10. cb Kxb7 11. Kc2 Kc6 12. Ne6 Kd5  
13. Kc3 Kxe6 14. Kc4 Kd7 15. Kb5 Kc7=. Black arrives  
just in time!

**9...Rb2xb7!**

There appears to be no other defense to 10.c7. Black is prepared to give up all his pieces for the dangerous enemy pawns, for example: 10. Nxb7 Bxc5!=.

**10. c6xb7 Ka6-a7 11. c5-c6 Bf8-d6 12. Kd1-e2 Ka7-b6 13. Ke2-f3 Kb6-c7 14. Nd8-f7 Bd6-h2 15. Kf3-g2 Bh2-f4** Black's bishop has five squares available on the b8-h2 diagonal, of which White's knight and king between them can interdict only four.

These are tough positions, aren't they? But our last one is harder still!



**P. Benko, 1979**

## 1. Ka7-b6!

On 1. Ka6? Black wins by  
1...Nxb2 2. Ka5 (2. Rb4 Nd3;  
2. f4 Kxg4!) 2...a3! 3. Kb4  
(3. Rxb3 a2 4. Ra3 Nc4+)  
3...a2 4. Ra8 Na4! 5. Rxa4  
b2. Now, with the king on

b6, taking the pawn no longer accomplishes anything:



1...Nxb2? 2. Kc5! Nd1 3. Kb4 b2 4. Ka3! Kxf3 5. Ka2 Ke2 (5...Kxg4 6. Rd8=) 6. Kb1 a3 7. Rb3=. So Black must come up with a combination, and carry out an effective pawn breakthrough.

First, let's examine some other White tries on the first move, to prevent the enemy combination.

Ernesto Inarkiev offered the clever idea **1. g5?! hg 2. Kb6**. Here Black's pawn breakthrough loses its force: 2...a3? 3. ba Nb4 4. Rg8! b2 5. Rxg5+ Kf2 6. ab b1Q 7. b5 - this "rook and pawn vs. queen" endgame is drawn. However, analysis showed that Black wins by **2...Kxf3!**

**1. f4?! Kxg4! 2. Kb6** is difficult to refute:

2...a3? 3. ba b2 (3...Nb4?? 4. ab b2 5. Rg8+) 4. Kc6 h5 5. f5! Kxf5 6. Kd5 h4 7. Kd4 h3 8. Kxd3 h2 9. Rf8+ Kg4 10. Rf1, and White wins;

2...Nxb2?! 3. Kc5 Nd1 (3...Kxf4 4. Kd4! Nd1 5. Rf8+ Kg3 6. Rf1 Nf2 7. Kc3 Ne4+ 8. Kb2 Nd2 9. Rh1=; or 8...h5 9. Rg1+!?) 4. Kb4 b2 5. Ka3 Kxf4 6. Ka2 (threatening 7. Rd8=) 6...Ke3 7. Kb1 a3 (otherwise, 8. Kc2=) 8. Rb3+, and draws.

Black must run his king immediately over to the queenside: **2...Kxf4! 3. Kb5 Nxb2 4. Kb4 Ke3!**, and here, there is no saving White:

5. Kc3 Nd1+ 6. Kb4 b2 7. Ka3 Kd2;

5. Rd8 (intending 6. Kc3=) 5...Ke2!;

5. Ka3 Nc4+ 6. Kxa4 (6. Kb4 Kd3) 6...b2 7. Rb3+ Kd4!, and White is helpless - Black simply pushes his h-pawn.

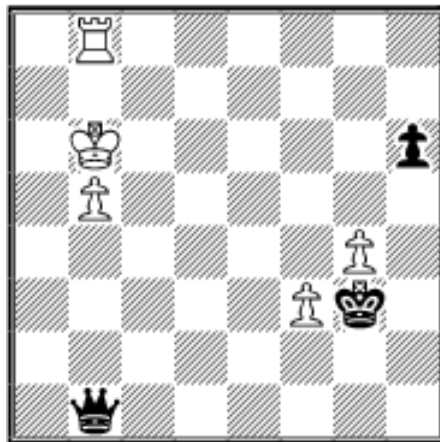
This rather complex analysis shows that we cannot cook this study on the first move. Very well, then: let's follow

the main variation.

**1...a4-a3! 2. b2xa3 Nd3-b4!! 3. Rb8-d8**

The rook heads for the 1st rank. White loses immediately on 3. Kc5(c7)? Na6+ or 3. Ka5(a7) Nc6+; no better is 3. Rc8? b2. Unfortunately, we have a small dual here: White's task may also be resolved by **3. Re8!?** - after **3...b2** (3...Nc2? 4. Kc5 followed by 5. Rb8; 3...Kf2?! 4. Rd8 Ke2 5. Re8+ Kd2 6. Rd8+ =) **4. Re1 Na2** (4...Nc2 5. Rg1+! Kxf3 [5...Kf2 6. Rb1 Nxa3 7. Rxb2+] 6. a4= ) **5. Rb1**, we reach the main variation again.

What is considerably more unpleasant is the fact that the assessment of the "queen vs. rook" endgame which arises after **3. ab!?** **b2 4. b5 b1Q** is far from clear:



As Benko tells us (in his book, *Chess Endgame Lessons*), many years ago Robert Fischer voiced the opinion that after **5. Rf8!?** (intending to build a fortress by 6. Rf5), White can save himself. In order to prevent the fortress, Benko offered **5...Qg1+ 6. Kb7** (6. Ka6

Qa1+ 7. Kb6 Qd4+) **6...h5!?** **7. gh Qc5**, and considered this position won. I acquainted myself with Benko's book only recently, and then reopened my own old notes. I discovered that I too had looked into this variation once; however, I had continued the analysis as follows: **8. Rg8+ Kxf3 9. Ka6 Qa3+ 10. Kb6!** (10. Kb7? loses the rook: 10...Qe7+ 11. Ka8 Qe4+ 12. Ka7 Qh7+) **10...Qe3+ 11. Ka5! Qa7+ 12. Kb4**. Black has made considerable progress, but still cannot win the rook; if White can hold on to the rook, he must consolidate and gain the draw.

I think White could also save himself with 5. Rc8!? Kxf3 6. Rc6 Qb3!? (Benko gives 6...Qh7, but then the same reply becomes even stronger) 7. Ka6 Qa4+ 8. Kb6 Qf4 9. Ka6 Qxg4 (how else is Black to make progress?) 10. b6 Qa4+ 11. Kb7 h5 12. Kc7 Qa5 13. Kc8 Qd5 14. Kc7.

It's too bad this study turned out to be cooked. In contrast to our preceding examples, here the secondary variant is not necessary for the trainer. As you will soon see, the main line is exceptionally instructive. It amounts to a full-fledged game of chess in itself, with chances for both sides.

**3...b3-b2 4. Rd8-d1 Nb4-a2!**

Threatening to shut out the rook by 5...Nc1.

**5. Rd1-b1 Na2-c3**

The pawn is untouchable, owing to the knight fork: 6. Rxb2? Na4+ 7. Kb5 Nxb2.

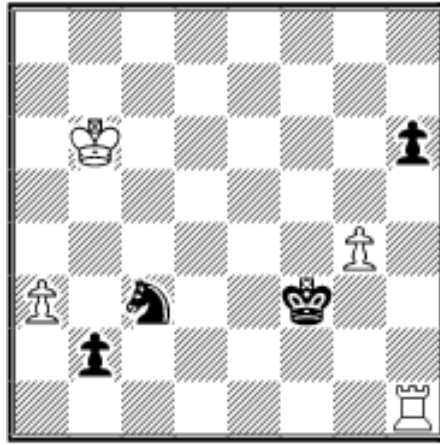
**6. Rb1-h1**

6. Rg1+ Kf2 7. Rh1 amounts to the same thing.

**6...Kg3-g2! 7. Rh1-e1 Kg2-f2 8. Re1-h1 Kf2-e2**

Again threatening to cut White off by 9...Nd1 10. Rh2+ Nf2. And 9. Rg1? Nd1 10. Rg2+ Kxf3 11. Rxb2 Nxb2 is no help.

**9. Rh1-h2+! Ke2xf3 10. Rh2-h1**



Maneuvering carefully, Black has captured the f3-pawn without loss of time. But this is still not enough to win.

**10...b2-b1Q+!**

10...Ke2 11. Rh2+ is useless.

**10...Kxg4**, on the other hand,

is not so simple. White continues **11. Kc5! b1Q** (11...h5 12. a4!) **12. Rxb1 Nxb1 13. a4 Nd2 14. Kb4! Ne4 15. a5 Nd6 16. a6 Nc8 17. Kc5 h5 18. Kc6 h4 19. Kc7!** (but not 19. Kb7? Nd6+ 20. Kc6 h3!) **19...Na7 20. Kb6!** (20 Kb7? Nb5) **20...Nc8+ 21. Kc7! h3 22. Kxc8 h2 23. a7 h1Q 24. Kb8=.**

Note that I have given Benko's study many times for play-training - for young players (allowing them first to spend an hour or two analyzing the starting position themselves) as well as grandmasters. Even the most successful of them only reached move 10 at best, and there Black invariably played 10...Kxg4. Here, for example, is the continuation of Chernin - Dolmatov, played in 1984:

**10...Kxg4?! 11. Kc5! Kf3!?** **12. Kc4?** A fatal mistake! Also fatal is 12. Kb4? b1Q 13. Rxb1 Nxb1 14. a4 Ke4! 15. a5 Kd5. The draw is available by 12. a4!? Ke2 13. Rh2+! (13. Rg1? Nd1 14. Rg2+ Nf2 15. Rg1 Nd3+ and 16...Ne1) 13...Kd3 14. Rh1! (14. Rxb2? Nxa4+ 15. Kd5 Nxb2 16. Ke5 Nc4+ 17. Kf5 Nd6 18. Kg6 Nf7) 14...Nxa4+ 15. Kd5! Nc3+ 16. Ke5=, as well as after the simpler 12. Kd4! =.

**12...b1Q 13. Rxb1 Nxb1 14. a4 Nd2+ 15. Kc3** All else loses: 15. Kd5 Nb3 16. Kc4 Na5+ 17. Kb5 h5; 15. Kb4 Ke4 16. a5 Kd5 17. Kb5 Kd6; 15. Kb5 Nb3 16. Kd4

Nd4.

**15...Ne4+ 16. Kd4 h5 17. a5 Nd6 18. a6 h4 19. Kc5 Nc8 20. Kc6 h3**

Compared to the variation examined above, White is a tempo down - there, the Black pawn had only reached h4 by this point.

**21. Kb7** (21. Kc7 Na7 22. Kb6 h2) **21...Nd6+ 22. Kc6 h2 23. a7 h1Q** White resigned.

So you see that White has some ways to go wrong after 10...Kxg4; winning the rook immediately, however, sets him far more difficult problems.

**11. Rh1xb1 Nc3xb1 12. a3-a4 Nb1-d2**

In this endgame, White must maneuver his king with great precision.

**13. Kb6-b5!**

13. a5?? is completely wrong, owing to 13...Nc4+ and 14...Nxa5. 13. Kc5? is also a mistake; Black would then reply, not 13...Kxg4? 14. Kb4, with the same draw as given above, but 13...Ke4! 14. Kb5 (14. a5 Nb3+; 14. Kb4 Kd5) 14...Kd5 15. a5 Kd6, winning.

**13...Nd2-b3 14. Kb5-b4!**

Wrong is 14. Kc4? Na5+ 15. Kb5 Kxg4! 16. Kxa5 h5.

**14...Nb3-d4 15. Kb4-c5!**

White is losing after 15. Kc4? Nc6 16. Kb5 Nb8 17. a5 Kxg4 18. Kb6 h5 19. Kb7 (19. Kc7 Na6+ 20. Kb6 h4 or 20...Nb4) 19...Nd7 20. Kc6 (20. Kc7 Nc5 21. Kb6 h4) 20...h4! 21. Kxd7 h3.

**15...Kf3-e4! 16. Kc5-c4!**

16. Kb6? Nb3 17. Kb5 Kd5 is bad.

**16...Nd4-c6 17. Kc4-c5!**

White cannot allow the Black king onto the d-file: 17. Kb5? Kd5 18. Kb6 Kd6 (18...Ne5!) 19. Kb5 (19. a5 Nxa5 20. Kxa5 Ke5 21. Kb4 Kf4 22. Kc3 Kxg4 23. Kd2 Kf3 24. Ke1 Kg2; 19. Kb7 Kc5 20. Kc7 Ne5) 19...Kc7 20. Kc5 Ne5 21. Kd5 Nxg4 22. Ke6 h5 23. Kf5 Kb6 24. Kg5 Nf6.

**17...Nc6-a5**

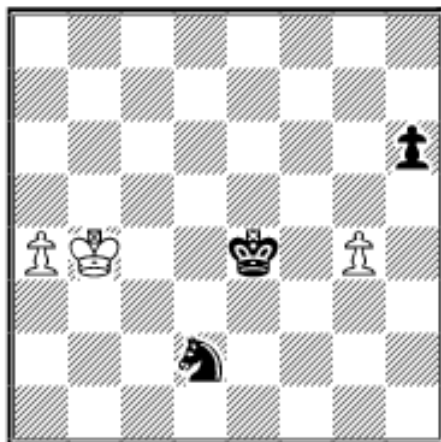
On 17...Nb8, Benko gives the variation 18. a5 Ke5 19. Kb6 Kd6 20. Kb7 Nd7 21. Kc8! Nc5 22. Kd8! Nd3 (22...Ke5 23. Kc7 Kd5 24. Kd8=) 23. a6! Kc6 24. Ke7 Ne5 25. Kf6 Nxg4+ 26. Kg6 Kb6 26. Kh5=. Simpler, however, is 18. Kd6! Na6 19. a5=.

**18. Kc5-b5!**

This is the only way! 18. Kb6? Nb3 or 18. Kb4? Nb7! 19. Kb5 Kd5 don't work.

**18...Na5-b3 19. Kb5-b4(c4) Nb3-d2!**

19...Nd4 20. Kc4 Nc6 21. Kc5! repeats the position.

**20. Kb4-c3!!**

It looks as though the king is chasing the knight, when his real task is still keeping Black's king off the d-file.

White loses after 20. a5? Kd5 21. Kb5 (21. a6 Kc6 22. Kc3 Ne4+ 23. Kd4 Nf6!)

21...Kd6! 22. a6 (22. Kb6

Nc4+ 23. Kb5 Nxa5) 22...Kc7 23. Kc5 Ne4+ 24. Kd4 Nf6! 25. Ke5 Nxc4+ 26. Kf5 h5 27. Kg5 Nf6! And 20. Kc5? Ke5 21. Kc6 Nb3 22. Kb5 Kd5 is no better.

**20...Nd2-f3 21. Kc3-c4!**

21. a5? Kd5

**21...Ke4-e5!**

21...Ne5+ 22. Kc5! (but not 22. Kb5? Kd5! 23. a5 Kd6!), and 22...Nxc4? allows 23. a5.

**22. a4-a5!**

22. Kc5? Nd2! doesn't work. However, once again, at the end, there is a small dual in this study. A second drawing line is **22. Kd3!? Nh2** (22...Kd5 23. Ke3=; 22...Kf4 23. a5 [23. Kc4!?] 23...Ne5+ 24. Kc3 Kxc4 25. a6 Nc6 26. Kc4 h5 27. Kc5 h4 28. Kxc6 h3 29. a7 h2 30. Kb7 h1Q+ 31. Kb8=) **23. a5 Kd5** (23...Nxc4? 24. a6) **24. a6 Kc6 25. g5! hg 26. Ke4=.**

**22...Ke5-d6 23. a5-a6! Kd6-c6 24. a6-a7! Kc6-b7 25. Kc4-d5! Nf3-h2 26. g4-g5!=**

The knight can no longer defend the pawn: 26...hg 27. Ke4 Kxa7 28. Kf5 g4 29. Kf4 Kb6 30. Kg3.

Despite the flaws that have been uncovered, I must confess that this is one of my favorite studies (too bad it is as yet so little known). I find myself charmed by the naturalness of the initial position, the extreme tenseness of the struggle, with an unpredictable outcome, and the beauty and variety of the ideas this study contains. Any one of the tasks set before the players may be resolved; but solving every one of them, over the course of three dozen moves, is something of which very few are capable.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## Classical Immersion

In the interview he gave to mark the release of Volume One of his new book, *Garry Kasparov on My Great Predecessors*, Kasparov named several classic games that he rated especially highly. Understandably, Kasparov would have given these games special scrutiny. We now submit one of these games for your consideration.

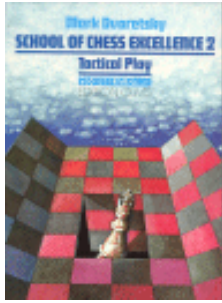
Of course, this game has already been subjected to rather detailed commentary - by J. Neishtadt, in his book, *First World Champion*. Many years ago, I too studied this game, and used the material I had prepared to give lessons to my students; however, this material has never before been published. Of course, after Kasparov's book came out, I compared conclusions, and established that his analyses needed correction or extension in several instances (as, of course, did mine). I would hope that my readers will find the revised version of my commentaries interesting.

***Lasker – Steinitz New York 1894 - Match Game 7***

This enormously tense game had a decisive influence on the outcome of this match for the World Championship. Before this game, the score was even. Having achieved a winning position, Steinitz nevertheless managed to lose; and he was so upset by this, that he managed to lose four more games in a row.

**1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3. Bf1-b5 d7-d6 4. d2-d4 Bc8-d7 5. Nb1-c3 Ng8-e7 6. Bc1-e3**

In his three previous games with White in this match, Lasker had tried 6. Bc4 - which puts me in mind of an episode from Ilf and Petrov's comic novel, *The Twelve Chairs*. The chesslovers of the city of Vasiuky, bewitched by Ostap Bender's oratory, dream in exquisite detail of the coming



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chess renaissance that would take place in their hometown. Among other things, they picture the meeting between Emmanuel Lasker and Jose-Raul Capablanca there, in Vasiuky:

*The monocled one took Lasker by his waistcoat, brought him to the Champion, and said:*

*- Let us reconcile! I beseech you, in the name of the great masses of Vasiuky! Let us reconcile!*

*And Jose-Raul heaved a great sigh, and shaking the old veteran's hand, replied:*

*- I have always had the highest respect for your idea of moving the Ruy Lopez bishop from b5 to c4.*

*- Hurrah! - exclaimed the monocled one - Simple and convincing, in the true style of a champion!*

**6...Ne7-g6 7. Qd1-d2 Bf8-e7 8. 0-0-0**

ECO recommends 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Rad1, but then 9...Bg4! is uncomfortable for White.

**8...a7-a6 9. Bb5-e2 e5xd4!**

9...0-0?! would be inaccurate, in view of 10. de, and if 10...Ngxe5 11. Nxe5 Nxe5, then 12. f4, with advantage.

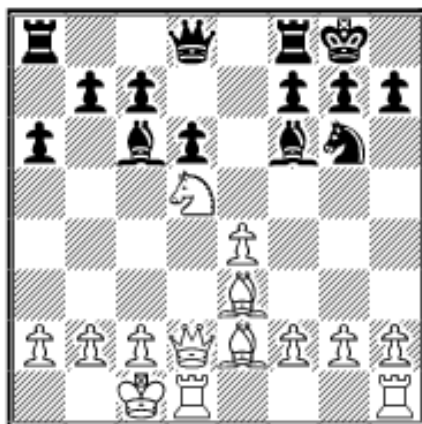
**10. Nf3xd4 Nc6xd4 11. Qd2xd4**

Lasker avoids the simplification that would follow 11. Bxd4 Bg5!? (V. Zak) - although, in Kasparov's opinion, White's position would be preferable after 12. Be3 Bxe3 13. Qxe3.

**11...Be7-f6 12. Qd4-d2 Bd7-c6**

12...0-0 13. f3 Re8 14. Nd5, with a slight advantage (Kasparov).

### 13. Nc3-d5 0-0



White has a good position. For example, 14. g3 (with the idea of h2-h4-h5) is possible, and if 14...Re8, then 15. f3 (just not Neishtadt's recommendation 15. Bf3?, in view of 15...Bxd5! 16. Qxd5 Bxb2+! 17. Kxb2 Qf6+). Lasker preferred the immediate 14. f3, while Kasparov prefers 14. Nxf6+ Qxf6 15. f3 Bb5 16.

c4 Ba4 17. Rde1 - in all cases, White has a small positional advantage.

### 14. g2-g4?

This plan is a mistake. With the center open, a flank attack has no real chance of success. Steinitz refutes it the way one is supposed to in such cases - by active operations in the center.

### 14...Rf8-e8 15. g4-g5

15. f3 Bxd5 16. Qxd5 Be5 would have handed Black control of the important f4 square (Neishtadt). And after 15. Nxf6+ Qxf6 16. f3 Qe6, Neishtadt examines 17. c4 b5 and 17. Kb1 d5, although in both lines 17...Bxe4! 18. fe Qxe4 is stronger.

### 15...Bc6xd5 16. Qd2xd5?!

Now Black will come out of the tactical complications with the advantage. On the other hand, the alternatives didn't promise White much either.

Kasparov examines **16. gf** Bxe4 17. f3 Bf5 18. Bd4 c5 19. Bc3 d5 (19...b5!?) 20. Qxd5 Nf4 21. Qxf5 Nxe2+ 22. Kb1 Nxc3+ 23. bc Qb6+ 24. Ka1, and continues 24...Qxf6 25. Qxf6 gf 26. Rd5 Re3. But, in the final position of his line, White has every right to expect to draw: 27. Rg1+ Kh8 28.

Rxc5 Rxf3 29. Rc7 is only slightly better for Black. And some of these moves are not forced (26...Re5!?!; 26. Rd7!?!). Black also has no reason to seek the exchange of queens - 24...g6!?! 25. Qf4 Re6 looks stronger, and gives him more of an advantage.

Steinitz would most likely have answered **16. ed** with the exchange sacrifice 16...Rxe3! 17. fe (17. gf Re5 18. fg Qf6 - Kasparov) 17...Bxg5, with Qe7 to follow (Neishtadt).

### **16...Re8-e5 17. Qd5-d2**

*"17. Qxb7! Bxg5 [17...Rb8 18. Qxb8!?! Qxb8 19. gf Rxe4 20. fg is unclear - Dvoretsky) 18. Bxg5 Rxg5 19. Rhg1 was far better, even though 19...Rc5! then gives Black an easy game: a6-a5, Rb8, followed either by an attack on the kingside pawns with Qh4, or an attack on the king down the b- and c-files (Kasparov). Besides 19...Rc5, Black had another very strong continuation: 19...Rxg1! 20. Rxg1 Rb8 21. Qa7 (21. Qxa6? Qf6 wins) 21...Rb6 (planning Qf6), when White's position is bad, in view of his dark-square weaknesses and his queen being out of play. So the move 17. Qxb7 hardly deserves an exclamation mark.*

### **17...Bf6xg5!**

Lasker evidently overlooked this resource, expecting only 17...Rxg5? 18. f4 Rg2, when White continues either 19. Qe1 (according to Neishtadt) or 19. Qd3!?, with excellent compensation for the pawn, thanks to the misplaced Black rook (Bf3 is threatened).

### **18. f2-f4!**

18. Kb1 Bxe3 19. Qxe3 Qg5!?! or 18. h4 Bxe3 19. Qxe3 Qf6 would grant Black an easy game and a healthy extra pawn.

### **18...Re5xe4! 19. f4xg5 Qd8-e7 20. Rd1-f1?!**

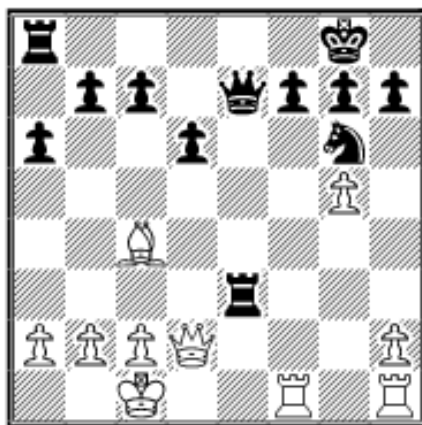
Lasker chooses to continue the struggle in a position where

he will be two pawns down. In Kasparov's opinion, he should nevertheless have won back one of them by **20. Bf3 Rxe3 21. Bxb7**. The grandmaster gives the following variations:

21...Re2 22. Rhe1 Rxd2 23. Rxe7 Rxd1+ 24. Kxd1 Nxe7 25. Bxa8 a5 with an unclear endgame, despite White's being a pawn down; and

21...Rb8 22. Rhe1 Rxe1 (22...Re5 23. Bxa6 Qxg5 24. Qxg5 Rxg5 25. Bc4 Ne5 26. Bd5, with only a small edge for Black) 23. Rxe1 Qd7 24. Bd5 (24. Bxa6?! Qa4) 24...Ne5 *"with only a small advantage for Black."*

**20...Re4xe3 21. Be2-c4**



**21...Ng6-h8!?**

*"A move in accordance with the Steinitzian principle of economy of force. While defending the f7-square, the knight will also not be subject to the pawn assault with h2-h4-h5; the queen's rook, in the meantime, goes to the open file.*

*Nevertheless, the knight is too passively placed at h8" (Neishtadt).*

*"Typical Steinitz! The commentators have gone into raptures over this outlandish move, even though it appears not to have been strongest" (Kasparov).*

Neishtadt's suggested move, **21...Qxg5**, leads to completely unnecessary complications. White has a choice between 22. Rxf7 and 22. Rhg1 (22. Rf3? Re5 would be a mistake).

22. Rhg1 Qh6 (Neishtadt) 23. Bxf7+ Kh8 24. Bxg6 hg 25. Rxg6 Qxg6 26. Qxe3 Re8, with an edge to Black (Kasparov).

22. Rxf7 Kh8 23. Rxc7 Rae8 (Neishtadt) 24. Rd1 (24. Kb1 is only slightly better for Black - Dvoretsky) 24...Ne5 25. h4

Qf4 26. Bd5 b5 with a slight edge to Black (Kasparov).

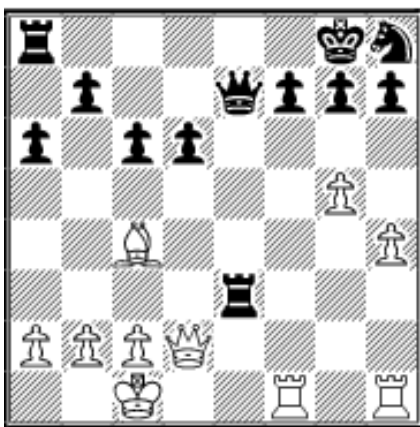
How about **21...Rf8! 22. h4 Re4 23. h5?**

A) 23...Rxc4 24. hg hg. Now White loses after 25. Qh2? Qxg5+ 26. Kb1 f5. Zak examined 25. Re1?! Qd8? 26. Reg1, with the terrible threat of 27. Qh2. However, instead of retreating his queen, Black must continue 25...Re4! 26. Rxe4 Qxe4 27. Qh2 f5, with a great advantage (Neishtadt).

*"There is no joy for Black either in 25. Kb1 Re4"* (Kasparov). Let's continue: 26. Qh2 f5 (forced) 27. gf Rxf6 28. Qh8+ Kf7 29. Qc8 - this is not so clear: White still has counterplay.

B) Neishtadt's alternative, **23...Ne5!**, is stronger, for instance: 24. Bd5 Rg4 25. g6 hg 26. hg Nxg6 27. Bxb7 Qg5 and wins (Kasparov).

## 22. h2-h4 c7-c6



*"One more move, and the bishop on c4 will have its vital diagonal closed off, so White cannot wait. On 23. Rfg1 d5 24. Bd3 Ng6 25. h5 Nf4, White will have no compensation whatsoever for his material"*(Neishtadt).

23. Bd3? Re8 24. Rhg1 Qe6 25. Kb1 b5 26. h5 c5 is bad too

(Kasparov).

## 23. g5-g6!

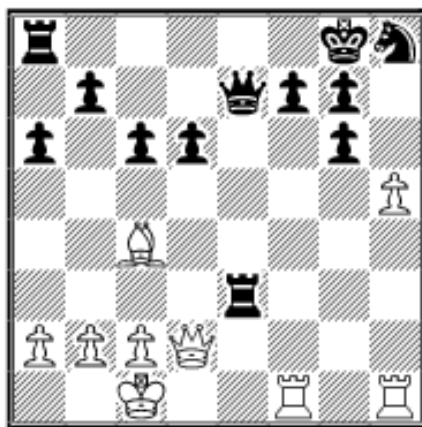
*"This sets Black the most difficult tasks. In this situation, the pawn sacrifice is, practically speaking, White's only chance to complicate the game - that is, to make the balance shift back and forth more strongly. Then his opponent will find it easier to make a mistake. This tactic was later to become a characteristic of Lasker's style"* (Neishtadt).

*"Now the game becomes irrational; and Lasker, as will become clear, was better at this than his opponent. The problem of this position is that in almost every line, Black stands to win; but in every line also, White still has some sort of counter-chances. Evaluating in what line they are greater, in what line they are less, is no easy task; and Steinitz would have to spend the next dozen moves or so solving the very tricky question of how to keep his decisive advantage from slipping away" (Kasparov).*

From the analyses which follow, it will become clear that Black may have let his decisive advantage slip right here: demonstrating it later becomes exceptionally difficult, if at all possible.

### 23...d6-d5?

The pawn had to be taken: **23...hg!** The only question is, how best to react to **24. h5**.



I. V. Vukovic suggested **24...g5?!** , and his suggestion was considered strongest by Zak, by Neishtadt, and by Kasparov. On **25. h6**, Black does not reply with **25...g6?!**  26. h7+ Kg7 (26...Kf8 27. Bxf7!) 27. Qh2! f5 28. Qh6+ Kf6 29. Bg8! (unclear - Kasparov), but with **25...gh**. For example: 26. Rxh6 Re8 27. Kd1 (27. Rhh1 Qe5 wins) 27...Qe4 28. Bd3 Qg4+ 29. Kc1 Qg3 30. Kd1 R8e6 and wins (Neishtadt), or 28. Rfh1 Ng6 29. Bd3 Qg4+ 30. Kc1 Qg3 31. Kd1 Nh4 and wins.

The move 26. Rxh6?, however, is not forced: **26. Qh2!** is far stronger. Neishtadt, and Kasparov after him, give the reply **26...Qf8 27. Rfg1?**  Re5, winning; but they overlook the powerful resource **27. Rf6!** The only defense is 27...Qe7; but after 28. Rff1 Black must either take the draw by repetition

(with 28...Qf8), or enter into the sharp line 28...Qe5 29. Qxh6 Qg7 30. Qxd6, where the enormous activity of all the White pieces probably compensates for his two pawns minus.

**II. 24...gh! 25. Rxh5 Re8 26. Rhh1 Qe5!** is quite solid (Kasparov). White's queen will have a difficult time reaching the h-file, which gives Black reason to hope that, with careful play, he might eventually realize his three extra pawns.

**III.** Another strong line is **24...d5!? 25. hg Nxg6** (but not 25...dc?? 26. Rxh8+!). On 26. Qh2? Black parries the mate threat with gain of time by 26...Qg5!, and wins. **26. Bd3** makes it more difficult for Black to make the optimal choice. 26...Qe5?? loses to 27. Bxg6 fg 28. Qf2; and 26...Nf8?! 27. Qh2 f6 28. Bf5 is also dubious (Kasparov calls it unclear). Neishtadt recommends that Black sacrifice the exchange by 26...Rxd3, but the position after 27. Qxd3 Re8 28. Kb1 appears unclear.

I believe **26...Qg5!** was Black's best continuation. Generally speaking, the best square for the queen is e5, where it controls the important h2 square; but first it is useful to provoke the retreat of one of White's rooks, from either the f- or the h-file. For instance: 27. Rfg1 Qe5; or 27. Rhg1 Qe5 28. Bxg6 fg 29. Qf2 Qe7; or 27. Bxg6 fg 28. Kb1 Qg3!? 29. Rfg1 Qe5, , with a great advantage to Black in all cases.

**24. g6xh7+ Kg8xh7 25. Bc4-d3+ Kh7-g8 26. h4-h5**

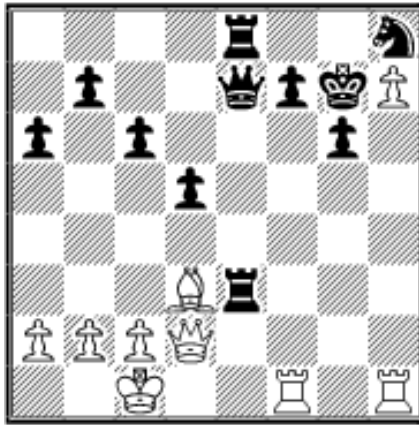
Here, Black has, not three extra pawns (as in the lines examined above), but only two. Additionally, the White h-pawn (a "desperado", to use Lasker's term) will terrorize the enemy.

**26...Ra8-e8 27. h5-h6**

As Neishtadt pointed out, 27. Rfg1!? was worth considering also,. The threat of h5-h6 proves stronger than its immediate execution.



**27...g7-g6 28. h6-h7+ Kg8-g7**



**29. Kc1-b1!**

One of Lasker's characteristic "changes of rhythm". As long as his opponent has not yet created any direct threats, White has a little time, allowing him to make the useful moves Kb1 and a2-a3. In the ensuing complications, Black will no longer have access

to tactical resources involving the enemy king's vulnerability. Such play requires both a healthy evaluating capacity and tremendous cold-bloodedness.

*"In this game, there is a certain 'Tal-like' element: White's attack is to a large extent undefined - but it never lets up: threats keep popping up all the time! This is what we mean by 'chronic compensation', which also exists after 29. Qh2!? Qg5 30. Kb1 c5 31. Rfg1 Qe5 32. Qh6+ Kf6" (Kasparov).*

After 33. Qh4+ Ke6, the advantage remains with Black. So instead of 31. Rfg1, White might still consider 31. a3!? In the line 31...c4 (31...Rg3!?) 32. Rfg1 Qe5 33. Qh6+ Kf6 34. Qh4+ Ke6 35. Bf1, White appears to have somewhat greater possibilities than in Kasparov's line; additionally, one might consider 35. Bxc4!? dc 36. Qxc4+ Qd5 37. Qh4, although this sacrifice can hardly be correct.

**29...Qe7-e5 30. a2-a3 c6-c5**

Neishtadt's recommended 30...Re6 (with the idea of 31. Qf2? Rf6) is dubious, because of 31. Qb4! b5 32. Qh4, with counterplay.

**31. Qd2-f2**

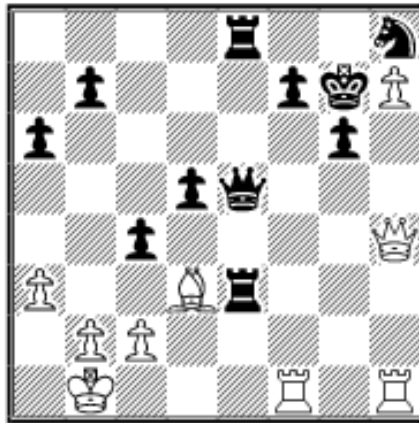
*"White's queen now reaches h4" (Neishtadt)*

On 31. c3, Kasparov gives 31...c4 32. Bc2 Re2! and wins - overlooking the mate in one by 33. Qh6. Black should probably reply 31...b5!? instead.

In reply to 31. Be2, Kasparov offers another line with a hole in it: 31...Qe4 32. Bd3 Qd4 33. Qh2 f5 34. Rd1 Qe5 35. Qh6+ Kf7 and wins. Instead of 34. Rd1? White continues 34. Bxf5! gf 35. Qh6+ Kf7 36. Rxf5+ Ke7 37. Qb6, with a dangerous attack. 31...c4!? is much better, and gives Black a great advantage.

### 31...c5-c4 32. Qf2-h4

32. Bxg6 loses to 32...fg 33. Qh4 Nf7.



**34. Rhg1 Kg7** (defending against 35. Bxg6) **35. Rh1 Kf8=.**

### 33. Bd3-f5

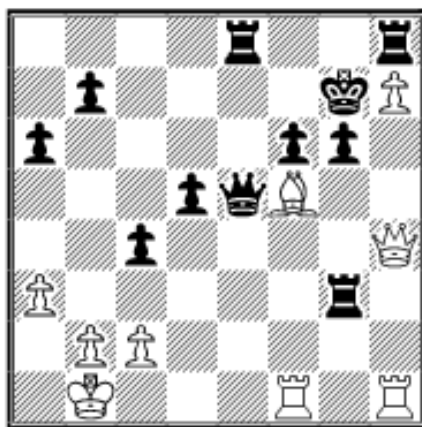
White's bishop is a "desperado" too - like the h-pawn before it. By leaving itself open to capture (which would open the g-file), depending upon circumstances, the bishop can either take on g6 or go to d7.

### 33...Kg7-f7?!

33...gf 34. Rhg1+ Kf7 would transpose into the game continuation. This position is very dangerous for Black. Both Neishtadt and Kasparov offer the improvement 35. Qh5+ Ke7 first, and then 36. Rxf5. This is amusing, since the game continuation was 36. Rg8, when Neishtadt offers no comment, while Kasparov even explains why this move was better than 36. Rxf5.

Could Steinitz have found a safer line? Neishtadt suggests that Black could win by both 33...Rg3 and 33...Qg3. Let's see -

### A) 33...Rg3?!



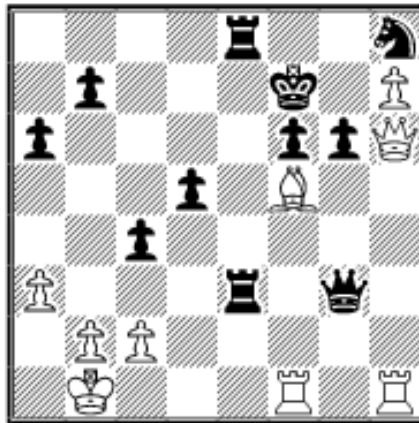
34. Re1? Qxe1+ 35. Rxe1 Rxe1+ 36. Ka2 Rgg1, and Black wins (Neishtadt). "34. Bg4! is stronger, and the game is still uncertain" (Kasparov).

In my view, **34. Ka2!** (preparing 35. Re1) is stronger still, since the reply 34...Qd6? (Neishtadt, and Kasparov after him, give this

move an exclamation mark) loses to 35. Rfg1! Ree3 (35...Rxf1 36. Qh6+ Kf7 37. Rxf1 wins) 36. Rxf3. For instance: 36...Qxg3 37. Qh6+ Kf7 38. Rh3!? (38. Bxg6+ Nxf6 39. h8Q Nxf8 40. Qxf8 also wins) 38...Qg5 39. Bxg6+ Nxf6 40. Qxg5 f6 41. Rxe3, winning; or 36...Rxf3 37. Re1

Rg5 38. Re8 (threatening 39. Rg8+) 38...Rh5 39. Qxh5! gh 40. Rg8+ Kh6 41. Rxh8, winning. 34...Rg5 is only slightly better: 35. Bg4 Nf7 36. Re1 Qxe1 37. Rxe1 Rxg4 38. Qxg4 Rxe1 39. Qd7 Rh1 40. Qxd5 Rxh7 41. Qxb7; or 34...gf 35. Re1 Rg6! 36. Rxe5 fe 37. Qf2! - in both cases, the queen in an open position is clearly stronger than rook and knight, and White will most likely win.

### B) 33...Qg3!? 34. Qh6+ Kf7



a) 35. Rhg1? Re1+ 36. Ka2 Qxg1! wins (Neishtadt);

b) 35. Ka2!? (threatening 36. Rhg1) 35...Re2! (35...Re1 36. Bd7 R8e7 37. Rxf6+!, and White is guaranteed perpetual check) 36. Rhg1 Rh2! (36...Rg2? 37. Bd7! Rd8 38. Be6+! Kxe6 39. Qg7 wins) 37. Bd7! Rxh6 38.

Bxe8+ Kxe8 39. Rxg3 Kf7 40. Rd1 is unclear - the endgame of knight and two pawns versus rook is hard to assess;

c) 35. Bd7!? - and now Black has a choice:

c1) 35...R8e7 36. Rxf6+ Kxf6 37. Qf8+ Kg5 38. Qh6+, with perpetual check;

c2) 35...Rd8 36. Rh3 Qe1+! (Huebner looked at 36...Re1+ 37. Ka2 Qe5 38. Rxe1 Qxe1 39. Re3 Qxe3 40. Qxe3 Rxd7 41. Qc5 winning) 37. Rxe1 Rxe1+ 38. Ka2 Rxd7 - unclear (Kasparov);

c3) 35...Re1+ 36. Ka2 R8e7 (but not Huebner's 36...R8e5? 37. Rxf6+ Kxf6 38. Qf8+ Kg5, in view of 39. Rxe1! Rxe1 40. Qxh8 and wins) 37. Rxf6+ Kxf6 38. Qf8+ Kg5, and White has to give perpetual check by 39. Qh6+, since the attempt to get more by 39. Rxe1? Qxe1 40. Qxh8 would come to grief after 40...Kh6, when the spectacular 41. Be6!? comes to nothing because of 41...Qf2! (but not 41...Qxe6?)

42.Qg8 winning).

We may conclude that 35...Qg3!? (instead of 35...Rg3?!) would have been a decent, though hardly winning, alternative to the text.

### 34. Rh1-g1



### 34...g6xf5

Steinitz finally decides to accept the bishop sacrifice - and apparently, he was right.

34...g5? would have lost quickly to 35. Qh6 (threatening 37. Bg4) 35...Rg3 36. Bd7 (Huebner) or 36. Rxg3 Qxg3 37. Be4, winning.

Neishtadt gives an interesting, but unfortunately erroneous treatment of the situation:

*"For the time being, nothing threatens Black. Let us say that it's White's turn to move here. What can he do? Attacking g6 again with 35. Qh6 is easily parried by 35...Rg3. The sacrifice at g6 does not work: 35. Bxg6+ (instead of 35. Qh6) 35...Nxb6 36. Rxb6 Re1+ 37. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 38. Qxe1 Rxe1+ 39. Ka2 Rh1, and in the rook endgame, Black has too many extra pawns.*

*Thus, Black has no reason to defend himself. And this means that he can unsettle the enemy king, say, by 34...b5 or 34...c3, and on 35. b3 a5."*

In fact, the sacrifice on g6 is a real threat. After **34...b5?** (34...c3? hardly changes anything) **35. Bxg6+! Nxb6**, in the variation 36. Rxb6 Re1+, White does not have to take on e1, but can try 37. Ka2 Rxf1 38. Qh6; this ends, however, in a Queen endgame where he will be two pawns down: 38...Qe1 39. Rg7+ Ke6 40. Qh3+ Ke5 41. Qh2+ Kd4 42. c3+ Kd3 43.

Rg3+ Re3 44. Rxe3+ Kxe3 45. Qh3+ Kd2 46. Qxf1 Qxf1 47. h8Q.

But **36. Qg4!** (instead of 36. Rxc6?) is a real improvement: **36...Nh8 37. Qg7+!** (37. Qd7+ Re7 38. Qc8 Re8 39. Qd7+ secures the draw, but White wants more) **37...Ke6 38. Qb7**, and the attack can hardly be warded off. Kasparov gives the following analysis: 38...f5 39. Rg8 Kd6 40. Rxe8 (40. Rg7!? is also unpleasant enough, in my view) 40...Qxe8 41. Rxf5 Re5 42. Qxa6+ Kc5 43. Qa7+ Kd6 44. Qb6+ Kd7 45. Qxb5+ Kd6 46. Qb4+ Kc6 47. Rf8, and wins.

### 35. Qh4-h5+ Kf7-e7



### 36. Rg1-g8

*"Worse is 36. Rxf5?! Qe6 37. Rg7+ Kd8 38. Rxd5+ Kc8 39. Qh2 Re5 and wins"* (Kasparov). This variation contains a few errors.

Instead of the unpersuasive 39. Qh2?, White gets a draw by 39.

Rc5+ Kb8 40. Rcc7 Re1+ 41. Ka2 c3+ 42. b3 Qe4 43. Rxb7+ Qxb7 44. Rxb7+ Kxb7 45. Qd5+. But a move earlier, he could even win by playing 38. Rxf6! Qe4 (38...Qxf6 39. Qxd5+), and then executing an unusual queen dance along the h-file: 39. Qh2 Qe5 40. Qh4 Re4 (40...Kc8 41. Qg4+ Kb8 42. Qd7 wins) 41. Qh3, winning.

Black's mistake lay in retreating his king to the edge of the board. 37...Kd6! 38. Qh2+ Re5 was stronger, although here White saves himself by a rook sacrifice: 39. Qf2! Rxf5 40. Qb6+ Ke5 41. Qe3+.

### 36...Ke7-d6?

*"But this looks an awful lot like a mistake. 36...Kd7 37. Rxf5 Qe6 (or 37...Qe4 38. Rxd5+ Kc6 39. Rf5 - unclear:*

Dvoretsky) 38. *Rxd5+ Kc6 is safer, with an unclear game (Neishtadt's line). On the other hand, this conclusion can only be arrived at after the most thorough analysis of the later course of the game"* (Kasparov).

I believe this was not just an error, but the decisive one; unlike the other commentators, I fail to see where Black could have saved himself after this.

**37. Rf1xf5 Qe5-e6 38. Rg8xe8**

38. *Qh2+?! Re5* (Kasparov).

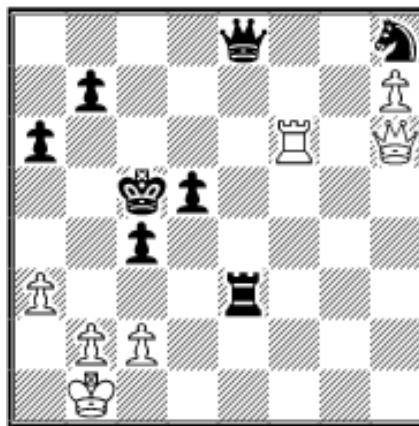
**38...Qe6xe8 39. Rf5xf6+**

39. *Rxd5+ Kc7* (Kasparov)

**39...Kd6-c5**

On 39...Kc7? both 40. *Qxd5* (Kasparov) and 40. *Qh6* (intending 41. *Rf8*) would be strong.

**40. Qh5-h6**



**40...Re3-e7?!**

Black forestalls 41. *Rf8?* (in view of 41...*Rxh7!*, winning), but trouble comes from the other side. Let's look at the possible alternatives.

**I.** *"How difficult Steinitz's defense was! Chigorin recommended*

*40...Qe7 (and if 41. Qf8?, then 41...Qxf8 42. Rxf8 Ng6 43. Rg8 Rh3); but after 41. Rf8 I could not find a draw for Black, however long I spent looking at this position on my computer. All in all, it appears White's attack is unstoppable"* (Kasparov).

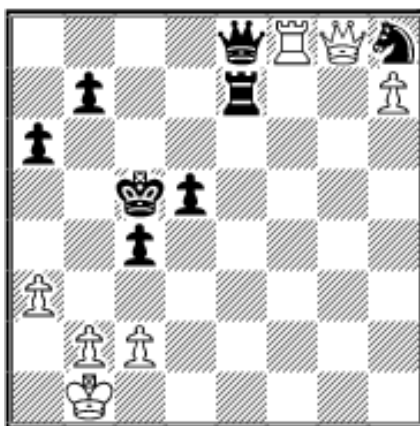
Black plays **41...Re6** (41...*Re1+ 42. Ka2 Re6* hardly changes

anything), and now:

A) On 42. Rc8+?! Chigorin gives 42...Rc6?, but this is an error, refuted by 43. Qd2! Qxh7 44. Rxh8 Qxh8 45. Qb4+ Kd4 46. Qc3+. So the right move is 42...Kb6 43. Qh5, with an unclear position (Neishtadt).

B) The immediate **42. Qd2!** is much more dangerous. Kasparov's analysis runs: 42...Qxh7 43. Rc8+ Rc6 44. Rxh8 Qf7 45. Rf8 Qd7 46. Qb4+ Kd4 47. Rf1 Qd8 48. Rd1+ Ke5 49. Re1+ Kf6 50. Qc3+ Kf7 51. Qh3 Kg7 52. Rh1, and wins.

**II.** Kasparov believes that Black could have saved himself by **40...Re2!? 41. Qg7 Re7 42. Qg1+ Re3** (42...d4?! 43. Qg5+ Re5 44. Qg8 d3?! 45. cd cd 46. Qb3! and wins) **43. Qg8 Re7 44. Rf8**



**44...Qg6** (to which I would add that 44...Qh5 loses to 45. Qg1+! Kc6 [45...Kb5 46. Rf6! wins] 46. Rf6+ Kd7 47. Qa7!, winning) **45. Rc8+ Kd6** "with unstable equality."

From my viewpoint, there is no equality here - even something as simple as 46. Qxh8 Qxh7 47.

Qd8+ Ke5 48. Qb6 retains a dangerous attack for White. In addition, he might "bargain" for a more profitable moment to take the knight: 46. Qd8+ Ke6 (46...Rd7 47. Qf8+ Re7 48. Rd8+ Ke6 49. Qf4 wins) 47. Qb6+ Ke5 (47...Kf7 48. Qf2+ Ke6 49. Rxh8 Rxh7 50. Rd8 wins) 48. Qe3+ Qe4 49. Qg5+ Kd6 50. Qf6+ Qe6 51. Qxh8 Rxh7 52. Qd8+ Ke5 (52...Rd7 53. Qb6+ Ke5 54. Qe3+ Kd6 55. Qc5+ Ke5 56. Re8! wins) 53. Qg5+, and the king has to go to e4, whence he can hardly come back alive.

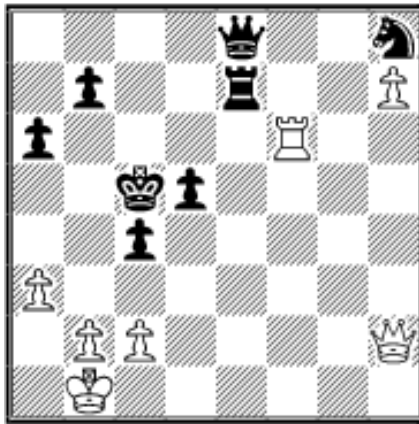
**41. Qh6-h2!**

*"A move of absolute brilliance; if 41. Rf8?, then 42...Rxh7;*



and 41. Qd2!? Qd8 will not win, either" (Kasparov).

One must take issue with this last comment: after **41. Qd2! Qd8 42. Qb4+ Kd4** then move **43. Rd6!?** is very strong - in fact, it wins. There is also another solution, although not one that springs immediately to mind: **43. a4!!** (threatening 44. Qc3+ Kc5 45. b4 mate) 43...Ke5 44. Qc3+ d4 45. Qf3, and wins.



**41...Qe8-d7?!**

This makes White's job easier, but there was no longer any salvation.

A) After **41...Qd8 42. Qf2+ Kb5**, Neishtadt's 43. Rf8?! doesn't do much after 43...Re8 and the same goes for 43. a4+?! Kxa4 44. Qc5 Re1+ 45. Ka2 Ra1+! (45...Qxf6?? 46. b3+) 46. Kxa1 Qxf6 47. Ka2 Qf3 48. Qb6 (48. c3 a5 49. Qb6 Qd1=) 48...Qe2! 49. Qxb7 (49. c3?! Qe7) 49...Qxc2= (Huebner).

But **43. b3!** hits the mark: 43...Re1+ 44. Kb2 Re3 45. bc+ Ka4 46. cd Re4 47. d6, and wins (Kasparov); or 43...Re4 44. a4+ Kb4 45. Rb6+ Kc3 46. Qg3+ Kd2 47. Rh6! and wins.

B) On **41...Rd7**, Kasparov recommends **42. Qg1+! d4 43. Qg5+ Rd5 44. Qd2**, winning. Another possibility is **42. Qf2+ d4 43. Qd2!** (although of course not 43. Rf8 Qe4 44. Rxh8 [Neishtadt], because of 44...Rxh7=) 43...Qd8 (White was threatening 44. Qa5+; if 43...c3, then 44. b4+ Kd5 45. Qg2+ is decisive) 44. Rf8! Qe7 (44...c3 45. Qh6 wins) 45. Qa5+ Kc6 46. Rxh8 wins.

C) **41...Re6 42. Qg1+** (Huebner only examines 42. Qf2+ Kb5 43. Rf8 Re1+ 44. Ka2 Qe3=) **42...Kb5 43. Qg8 Re5 44. Ka2!**, with a powerful attack.

D) **41...Re1+ 42. Ka2 Qe5 43. Qh6!** (43. Qf2+ Qe3

[Huebner] is unclear, for example: 44. Qf5 Qg1 45. Qc8+ Kd4 46. c3+ Kd3 47. Qf5+ Kd2 48. Qxd5+ Kc1 49. Qxc4 Qh2!) **43...Qe7** (44. Qf8+ was threatened) **44. Rf8 Re6** (44...c3 45. Rxh8 cb 46. Rc8+ Kb5 47. Kxb2 Qe5+ 48. Rc3 and wins) **45. Qd2!** wins.

**42. Qh2-g1+ d5-d4 43. Qg1-g5+ Qd7-d5 44. Rf6-f5 Qd5xf5 45. Qg5xf5+ Kc5-d6 46. Qf5-f6+**

Black resigned.

*"Although the Champion accepted the loss manfully, mobilizing fully once again for the next game, the psychological loss affected him deeply. The systemic links between his defensive methods and rules had broken down somewhere. Steinitz lost the next four games in a row!" (B. Vainshtein).*

*"In this game, balancing on the brink of defeat, the young Lasker demonstrated those qualities which would allow him to maintain himself as World Champion for so long . In a difficult position, he succeeded in setting his opponent the sort of complex problems, of a sort that chess would not see again until the latter half of the 20th century (much like those that Tal or, say, Shirov, would set before the strongest opposition). Lasker was far ahead of his time, and it is hard to blame Steinitz for his mistake: he fought with all his strength while under relentless, powerful assault. It is precisely because this exceptionally tense game was so far ahead of its time that it went under a cloud, remaining unappreciated: its contemporaries were simply unable to fathom what was going on here" (Kasparov).*

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## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## An Historical Serial

## Part 1

*This was probably the most unbelievable, most paradoxical draw ever scored in an international tournament - so wrote B. Vainshtein, in his book devoted to the creative output of the second World Champion, about the game between Emanuel and Edward Lasker, played 80 years ago at New York. That game, presented here for your consideration, incorporates such a wide variety of different events, that from my point of view it becomes a sort of multi-part serial, much like those presented to us daily on TV [Tr. note - Russian TV is, like its American counterpart, much given to the showing of "soap operas".] - except this one is a lot more substantial. And it is this historical serial that you are about to acquaint yourselves with.*

Before beginning our examination, however, let's first consider why we study the classic games at all. In fact, it's not an easy question to answer - if, that is, you are not to be content with routine and most unimpressive conclusions, such as the one expressed by Lermontov's old veteran: "In our days, we had real men, not like this generation." You may find some interesting thoughts on this subject in a lecture by M. Shereshevsky in Dvoretsky and Yusupov's collection, *Training for the Tournament Player* - the first book in the "school" series written by Artur and myself.

Let's perform a thought experiment. Imagine, if you will, that every chess book has disappeared, as though it had never been written. The only thing left would be the factual record of chess history (names, dates, and crosstables), plus the huge computer database of every game ever played - some of



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those, perhaps, with fairly light annotations. Would we, under such circumstances, become seriously interested in events from decades ago? I would hardly think so, except out of simple curiosity (and of course, I am not talking about such exceptional people as chess historians, or the rare researcher like Robert Fischer). More likely, we would restrict ourselves to the more current games: there, the quality of play on the whole is higher, and the openings are more current.

And if that's the case, then the seditious thought I am about to express becomes more understandable, and that is: That the value of our classic legacy is not just in, and perhaps not so much in, the texts of the games themselves, as in their interpretation. The authors of articles and books have spent years selecting the most interesting and instructive games, out of the many that have been played; they have analyzed them, and corrected the analysis of their predecessors; they have interpreted the results of these analyses, and described for their readership the chess techniques and ideas which underlie the moves, and the motifs which induced the players to come to this or a different decision; they have drawn conclusions about the players' style, the general problems and methods of chessplay, etc., etc.

Such researches might not, perhaps, be so necessary for chessplayers of the highest level, who are themselves capable of interpreting the players' actions. But for all the rest (meaning the 99 and many hundredths' percent), without good commentary it is difficult to gain a proper idea of the game under discussion, which in turn makes it hard to get any significant benefit out of it. More than that - it's hard even to choose which game might be worth studying.

Let me give you one more example to illustrate my thinking. Many of you remember the 1953 Candidates' Tournament (won by Smyslov), and are familiar with the excellent games played therein. Now I can assure you that the 1959 Candidates' Tournament (marked by the triumph of Tal) was not one bit less combative and interesting (indeed, it was

considerably more so). Nevertheless, we remember much less of it - and why? Because the tournament book devoted to it is far less widely known, and was considerably less well written than the first book in the series.

Awhile back, I used a none-too-fortunate expression, "the proper conception of a game". Does such a thing even exist? Commentators may interest themselves in different aspects of the struggle; sometimes, they may hold diametrically opposing viewpoints on different phases. And finally, analytical errors are by no means uncommon - sometimes, these errors may powerfully affect the annotator's treatment of the game. This is how myths are created which can sometimes survive for decades. New analysis can occasionally dispel those myths - but not always. Sometimes, commentators are unaware of the conclusions drawn by their predecessors; and sometimes, authors merely copy other people's variations uncritically, occasionally without even citing the reference. In a word - we have problems enough in this department.

In my own books and articles, I am fond of comparing differing points of view, while adding the results of my own analyses and the findings of my students. As a result, one succeeds in obtaining a more universal impression of the material under study, while simultaneously dispelling, in the course of the work, a lot of established myths. (I do understand that my analyses are also not error-free; therefore, I am always grateful to my readership for any analytical corrections and additions.)

This is precisely the format we shall use to examine, in detail and without haste, the following entertaining encounter, which forms the theme of this article. The best-known commentaries to it come from A. Alekhine (from his tournament book). And there are some interesting ideas in the notes of one of the players, Edward Lasker.

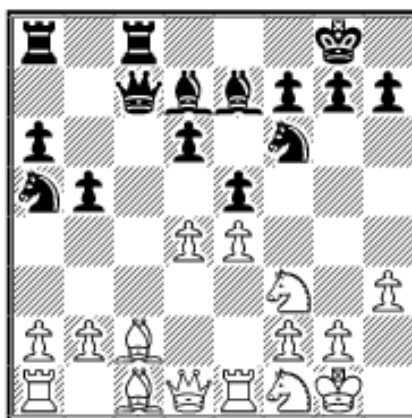
***Em. Lasker - Ed. Lasker***  
**New York, 1924**

### **Serial 1: The Opening**

**1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3. Bf1-b5 a7-a6 4. Bb5-a4 Ng8-f6 5. 0-0 Bf8-e7 6. Rf1-e1 b7-b5 7. Ba4-b3 0-0 8. c2-c3 d7-d6 9. h2-h3 Nc6-a5 10. Bb3-c2 c7-c5 11. d2-d4 Qd8-c7**

## 12. Nb1-d2 c5xd4 13. c3xd4 Bc8-d7 14. Nd2-f1 Rf8-c8

According to the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*, the main line here is 14...Rac8.

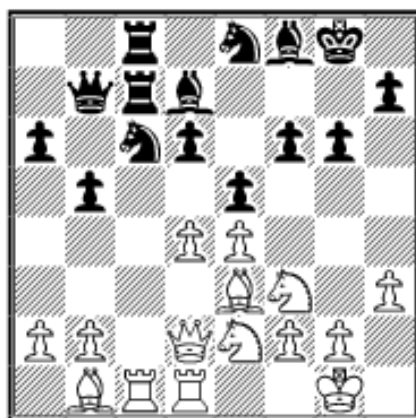


### 15. Re1-e2

Here White has also tried 15. Bd3 and 15. Ne3.

15. Bd3!? Nc6 16. Be3 Qb7 17. Ng3 Rc7 18. Rc1 Rac8 19. Bb1 Ne8 (Black wants to strengthen his center by ..f7-f6) 20. Qd2 g6 21. Red1 f6 22. Ne2 Bf8

(Maroczy -Reti, New York 1924).



On 23. a3 (intending Ba2+), Black has 23...b4! In Alekhine's opinion, White retains somewhat better chances after 23. Ne1!, intending to continue either with f2-f4 or with Bc2-b3+. Maroczy played the overhasty 23. Bc2?!, allowing the powerful reply 23...Na5!

The game continued: 24. Ng3 (24. b3 d5!, threatening 25...Ba3) 24...Nc4 25. Bb3 Kh8 26. Qe2 Nxe3 (26...Be6, followed by ...Bf7, was simpler) 27. Rxc7 Nxc7 28. Qxe3 Ne6 29. Ne2 b4? (White planned Nc3-d5, but the cure here is worse than the disease: Black weakens the queenside pawns and the important square c4) 30. Rc1 Rxc1+ 31. Nxc1 Qb6 32. Ne2 Bg7 33. Qd2 (threatening 34. de fe 35. Ng5) 33...Nf8 34. Qd3 h6 35. Bc4! a5 36. de de. The game continuation was 37. Nd2?! f5! =. Instead, Alekhine recommends 37. Nh4 (threatening 38. Qd5) 37...Kh7 38. g4, followed by Ng2-e3-d5, with great advantage.

15. Ne3!? Nc6 16. a3 a5 17. d5 Nd8 18. Bd2 a4 19. Bb4 Bf8 20. Bd3 Nb7 21. Qe2 Qb6 22. Nd2 Nc5 23. Kh2 g6 24.

Rac1, with a small advantage. (Fischer - Bisguier, US Championship 1958/59).

### 15...Nf6-h5!?

With this move, Black sacrifices a pawn - but is it correct? This is what we shall learn (or perhaps we shall not!) in the following chapter.

Quieter alternatives were: 15...b4 16. Bd3 Qb8, intending Bb5 (Alekhine), and 15...Nc6 - in both cases, White would stand a little better.

### Serial 2: Was the pawn sacrifice correct?



Black has just played 15...Nf6-h5.

*"This move involves a very clever and interesting pawn sacrifice - which, unfortunately, turns out not to be correct."* (Alekhine)

Here and later as well, Alekhine underestimated the dynamic resources hidden in Black's position. In Ed. Lasker's opinion, the pawn sacrifice was correct, in that the game's future course was riskier for White than for Black; indeed, at one point, he should even have lost. It appears to me that the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

### 16. d4xe5

Zvjagintsev had an interesting suggestion: the unexpected prophylactic move 16. Kh1!? (White meets his opponent's plan by strategic, rather than tactical means). The reply 16...Nf4 is unfavorable, in view of 17. Bxf4 ef 18. Qd2 g5 19. e5; and the neutral 16...g6 runs into 17. Ne3! Nf4 18. Nd5 (now the point of the king move becomes clear: the rook cannot be taken with check) 18...Nxd5 19. ed Bf6 20. de de 21. d6, with advantage to White. Perhaps Black should play

16...Be6!? 17. d5 Bd7 18. Bd3 instead, but here too, White's position is preferable.

### 16...d6xe5 17. Nf3xe5!

*"Dr. Lasker does not allow himself to be frightened by the approaching complications and quietly accepts the proffered gift. The following intricate combinations are splendidly handled by him until a winning position is reached."*  
(Alekhine)

### 17...Bd7xh3

Yusupov is of the opinion that Black retains decent compensation for the pawn after 17...Be6!?, for instance: 18. Nd3 Rd8 19. b3 Rac8.

### 18. Ne5xf7 Bh3-e6

19. Qd5 was threatened. 18...Kxf7? is bad: 19. Qd5+ Be6 20. Qxh5+.

### 19. Nf7-g5



### 19...Be6-c4

As Ed. Lasker indicated, 19...Bxg5!? 20. Bxg5 Qe5 also deserved serious consideration, for example: 21. Bd2 Nc4 22. Bc3 Qg5, with the unpleasant threat of 23...Nf4.

White would do better not to remove his bishop from the c1-h6 diagonal: 21. Be3 Nc4 (21...Qxb2? 22. e5!) 22. Bb3 Rd8 23. Qe1 (or 23. Qc2), followed by 24. Rd1, and White's position is preferable (Yusupov).

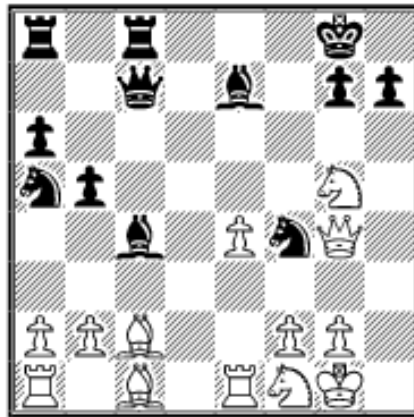
The game continuation is more natural.



## 20. Bc2-d3

Em. Lasker is aiming for a tense position with countervailing pins. Let us examine the alternatives.

If 20. Re1, then 20...Nf4 21. Bxf4 Qxf4, when Black obtains the initiative (Ed. Lasker). Instead of exchanging at f4, White could try 21. Qg4!?



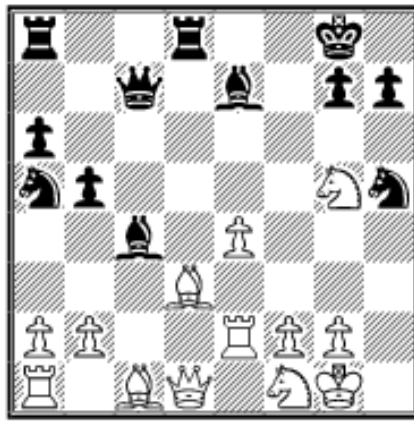
In reply, Black would appear to have only one way to exploit the hanging bishop at c2: 21...Bxg5 22. Qxg5 Nxg2! (22...Ne6 23. Qg4 Nd4 24. Bd1, with great advantage; 22...Ne2+ 23. Kh1 Nd4 24. Bd1, with great advantage) 23. Kxg2 Bxf1+ 24. Rxf1 Qxc2 25. Qd5+ Kh8 26. Rh1 Rc6!, with chances for both

sides.

But after 21. Nf3!?, the exchanging combination would not work: 21...Nxg2? 22. Kxg2 Bxf1+ 23. Rxf1 Qxc2 24. Qd5+ Kh8 25. Ne5 wins. If 21...Rd8, then 22. Bxf4 Qxf4 23. Qc1, with great advantage. A stronger reply is 21...Ne2+! 22. Kh1 Nxc1 23. Rxc1 Rd8, with counterplay.

Along with 20. Bd3 and 20. Re1, another move deserving consideration is 20. Rd2!? (hoping for 20...Bxg5?! 21. Rd7, with great advantage). Black replies 20...Nf4 21. Rd7 Ne2+ 22. Kh1 Qe5 23. Nf3 Qh5+ 24. N1h2 (or 24. N3h2) 24...Bf6, retaining compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

## 20...Rc8-d8

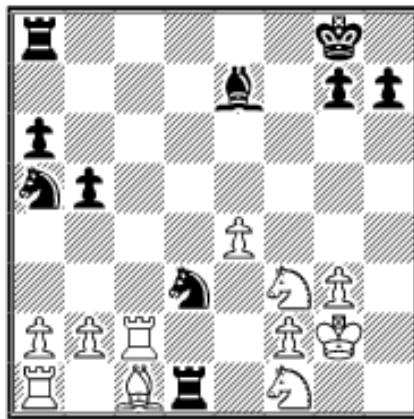


## 21. Re2-c2!

In answer to 21. Bxc4+ Alekhine recommends 21...Nxc4 22. Qb3 Nf4 23. Bxf4 Qxf4 24. Nh3 (24. Ne6 Qg4 25. Nxd8 Qxe2) 24...Qe5, "with drawing chances as in the actual game."

The variation 21...Qxc4! 22. Qc2 Qxc2 23. Rxc2 Rd1 24. Nf3 (24. Nh3 Rad8, with the threat of 25...Re1 and 26...Rdd1; 24. Ne6 Kf7 - Dvoretsky), in his opinion, is "less satisfactory" for Black. Alekhine is incorrect - the first-rank pin is extremely unpleasant.

Let's check it out: 24...Nf4! 25. g3 (25. b3 Nd3; 25. Rd2 Rd8) 25...Nd3 26. Kg2 (threatening 27. Ne3)



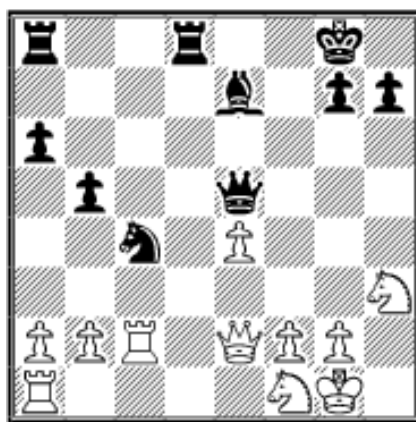
Ed. Lasker, analyzing this variation, continues 26...Rf8 27. N1d2? Bg5!! (the less spectacular 27...Bb4 is not inferior) 28. Nxc5? Rxf2+, and Black wins. He apparently overlooked that after 27. Ne3, Black cannot reply 27...Rxf3? because of 28. Rc8+ (or 28. Kxf3 Ne1+ 29. Ke2 Nxc2 30. Nxc2).

Instead of 26...Rf8?, Black has a stronger move, 26...Nc4!? 27. b3, and now either 27...Bf6 28. Rb1 Na3 (28...Nce5 29. Ne3 Nxf3 30. Kxf3 Re1! is another possible line) 29. Ne3 Ne1+ 30. Nxe1 Rxe1 31. Bxa3 Rxb1, with an unclear position; or 27...Nce5 28. Rd2! Rxd2! 29. N1xd2 (29. N3xd2? Rc8 wins; 28. Bxd2 Nxf3 29. Kxf3 Rf8+) 29...Ng4, with the initiative for Black (analysis by Zvjagintsev and Dvoretsky).

Still more convincing, however, is 26...Bg5!!, which leads to the immediate win of the exchange.

**21...Nh5-f4 22. Bc1xf4**

22. Bxc4+? is strongly met by 22...Qxc4!, for example: 23. Qxd8+?! (23. Bd2 Qd3) 23...Rxd8 24. Rxc4 Ne2+ 25. Kh2 Nxc4 and wins (Dvoretsky).

**22...Qc7xf4 23. Ng5-h3 Qf4-e5 24. Bd3xc4+ Na5xc4 25. Qd1-e2**

*"Now White has a substantial pawn to the good and it is merely necessary to drive away the black Knight from his commanding post which in the long run cannot be prevented. The temporary control of the black squares does not compensate Black for the pawn." (Alekhine) I believe that, in fact, Black's positional*

compensation for the pawn is quite sufficient.

**25...Rd8-d4 26. f2-f3**

Not a weakening White would like to make, but how was he to avoid it? On 26. Ng3 there is 26...Bh4! Yusupov's interesting suggestion 26. Re1!? Bb4 27. Rd1 Rxe4 28. Qd3 (intending 29. Ng5 or 29. b3) leads, after 28...Re8 29. b3 Nd6 or 29. Ng3 Re1+ 30. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 31. Kh2 Ne5, to a double-edged position.

**26...Ra8-d8**

Otherwise White would simplify by 27. Rd1.

**27. Ra1-c1**

Now Black must take some action against 28. b3.

**27...Be7-c5 28. Kg1-h1**

Worth considering was 28. Nf2!?, for example: 28...Qg5 29.

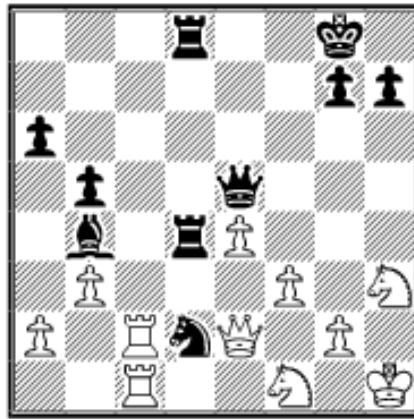
b3 Ba3 30. Rd1 Rxd1 31. Nxd1, with some advantage.

### 28...Bc5-b4 29. b2-b3 Nc4-d2

Inferior is 29...Nb6 30. Rc6 Ba3 31. R1c2 (Alekhine).

On 29...Nd6 Alekhine indicates 30. Ne3; but as we shall soon see, Black has the counterblow 30...Nxe4! If 30. Qe3, then 30...Ba3. The sensible course for White would be 30. Rc6!? a5 (30...Ba3 31. R1c2) 31. Qe3 Ba3 32. Re1, preparing f3-f4.

### Serial 3: The combinative crisis of the middlegame, and an exchange of errors.



#### 30. Nf1-e3?!

Alekhine awards this move an exclamation point. He writes: *"Now the threat is 31.Rd1, followed by driving the Bishop off the a5-e1 diagonal, with the gain of a piece, while the counter-combination of 30...Nxe4 31. fe Rxe4 would be neutralized by*

*means of 32.Rc8."*

But as a matter of fact, Ed. Lasker has pointed out that the counter-combination is not refuted, but actually leads to a win for Black: 32...Re8!! (but not 32...Rxc8? 33. Rxc8+ Kf7 34. Qf3+) 33. Rxe8+ Qxe8 34. Qd3 Rxe3 35. Qd5+ Kh8 (35...Qe6 36. Nf4! is inferior). *[In the 1961 Dover edition of the tournament book, Ed. Lasker notes that at the time, the flag on his clock was about to fall and, forced to move immediately, he dared not risk the sacrifice. - Tr.]*

Instead of taking the knight, White would have been forced to "take back his move" by 31. Nf1!, accepting a slightly inferior position after 31...Ng3+ 32. Nxg3 Qxg3 33. Qe6+ (33. Rc8!? Bf8 is slightly better for Black) 33...Kh8 34. Rc8 Bf8! (34...h6? 35. Qxa6) 35. Rxd8 Rxd8, with a slight advantage to Black; or 31...Ba3!? 32. Re1 (32. fe Rxe4 33.

Qf3 Bxc1 34. Rxc1 Rf8 35. Qd3, with a slight edge to Black) 32...Ng3+ 33. Nxc3 Qxc3 35. Qe6+ Kh8, and Black stands slightly better.

Let's examine the alternatives to the tempting, though objectively unsound 30. Ne3.

30. Nh2!? is possible, intending to meet 30...h5 with 31. Rc8, with a great advantage; or 30...h6 31. Ng4 Qg3 32. Rc8, also with a great advantage. Black should forestall the exchange of rooks by 30...Ba3! 31.Rg1 (31. Ng4? Qg3; 31. Re1 Bb4) 31...h5 - the active placement of his pieces assures him good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. White threatens nothing; while Black, besides pressure on the kingside, can also contemplate activity on the opposite wing by a6-a5-a4.

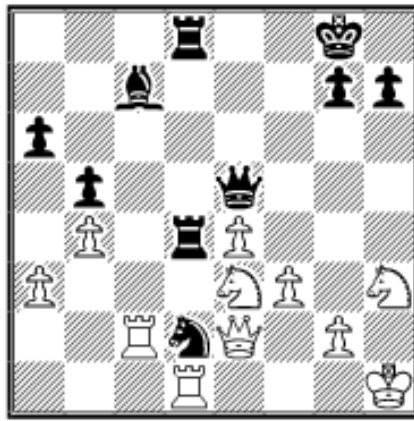
### **30...Bb4-a3?**

A time pressure error. The time-control was at move 30; and with his flag hanging, Ed. Lasker made the first move he could think of. Now the situation changes completely.

### **31. Rc1-d1 Ba3-b4**

Practically speaking, Black has just given his opponent two tempi. But he had no choice, as all other moves lose quickly. For example: 31...Bd6? 32. Ng4 (Alekhine), or 31...Qd6? 32. Nf5, or 31...Nxe4? 32. fe Bd6 33. Ng4! (stronger than 33. Nf1 Rxe4 34. Qd3 [34. Rxd6!? Rxe2 35. Rxd8+ Kf7 36. Rcc8, with a great advantage] 34...Bc7 35. Qxd8+! [35. Qf3? Rxd1 36/ Qxd1 Re1 and wins] 35...Bxd8 36. Rxd8+ Kf7 37. Ra8, with a great advantage) 33...Rxd1+ 34. Qxd1, and White wins.

### **32. a2-a3 Bb4-a5 33. b3-b4 Ba5-c7**



Now White must select the most exact and clearest winning method. Not an easy task, when there are so many tempting choices at his disposal.

**34. f3-f4!**

34. Ng4? fails against 34...Nxe4!

35. Rxd4 Ng3+ 36. Kh2 Nxe2+

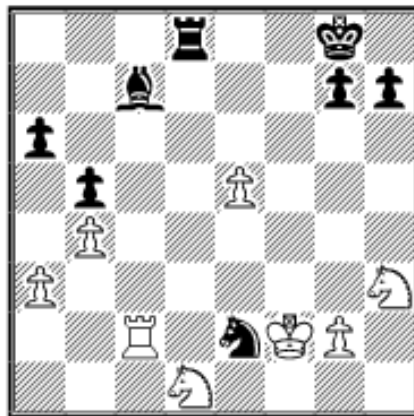
37. Nxe5 Bxe5+.

**34...Nd2xe4! 35. Kh1-h2!!**

Not as convincing is 35. fe Ng3+ 36. Kh2 Nxe2 37. Rxc7 (37. Rxd4? Bxe5+) 37...Rxd1 38. Nxd1 Rxd1 39. Ng5 Rd8 40. Ra7. Ed. Lasker gives the continuation 40...h6 41. Ne6 Re8, but this would be bad, in view of 42. Rxg7+ Kh8 43. Rg6 Kh7 44. Rf6. 40...Re8 41. Rxa6 Nd4 would be tougher, although here too, Black's position remains difficult.

Zvjagintsev suggested 36. Kg1!? (instead of 36. Kh2)

36...Nxe2+ 37. Kf2 Rxd1 38. Nxd1



After 38...Rxd1 39. Rxc7, Black's position looks hopeless, but he has an excellent counterstroke: 38...Nf4!! 39. Rxc7 (38. Nxf4? Bxe5, with great advantage to Black) 39...Nxb3+ 40. gh Rxd1. If now 41. Ke3, then 41...Rh1 42. Ke4 Rxh3 43. Kd5 Rd3+ 44. Ke6 h5, with a sharp endgame. An interesting sideline is 41. e6 Kf8

(41...Rd8? 42. Ke3 Re8 43. Rc6 wins) 42. Rf7+ Ke8 43. Rxg7. Now 43...Rd3? 44. Rxh7 Rxa3 45. h4 a5 loses to 46. h5! (46. ba? Rxa5 47. h5 b4 48. h6 Rh5 49. Ke3 Re5+ or 49. Rh8+ Ke7 50. h7 b3 51. Rb8 b2! 52. Rxb2 Kxe6=) 46...ab 47. h6 Rh3 48. Ke2! The right line would be 43...h5! 44. Rd7!? (44. Rh7 Rd3=) 44...Rc1! 45. Rd6 (45. Rd3 Ke7 46.

Re3 Rc4) 45...Rc3 46. Rxa6 Rxh3, when Black should draw.

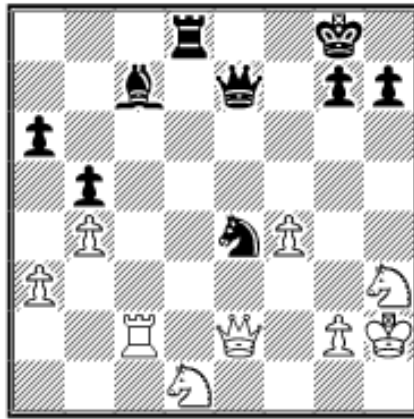
### 35...Rd4xd1!

Hopeless are 35...Qe7 36. Nf5 or 35...Qd6 36. Rxd4 Qxd4 37. Rxc7. And 35...Qxf4+ 36. Nxf4 Bxf4+ 37. g3 Nxg3 fails against 38. Qg4, winning.

### 36. Ne3xd1!

But not 36. fe? Bxe5+ 37. g3 R1d2.

### 36...Qe5-e7



### 37. Rc2xc7?

*"With this move, White loses the fruits of his solid position play."* (Alekhine) He could win by 37. Ndf2! Rd4 38. Qe3 Bb6 39. Rc8+ (39. Re2 is also sufficient) 39...Kf7 40. Nxe4 Rxe4 41. Qxe4 Qxe4 42. Ng5+.

### 37...Qe7xc7 38. Qe2xe4

The advantage remains with White, but it's not a win anymore - the position remains in play.

At this point, we have seen only half of this absorbing struggle (that is, by move count; going by the number of "serials" we have covered, it's less than half). We shall continue next month.

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## C O L U M N I S T S

*The*  
*Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky

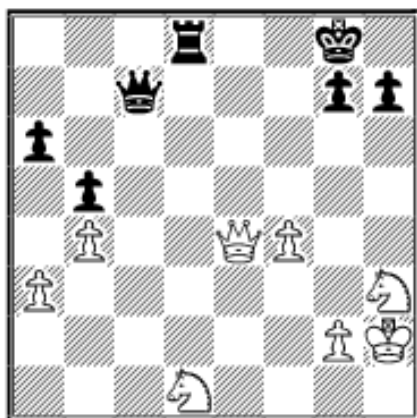


## An Historical Serial Continues

## Part 2

We continue now to explore the many-part spectacular that is the famous game between Emanuel Lasker (playing White) and Edward Lasker (Black), from the powerful New York Tournament of 1924. You saw the first parts of the serial, including the opening and middlegame, in last month's column. Now we direct your attention to the analysis of a so-called "simple position" (meaning the phase of the game with reduced material, coming between the middlegame and the endgame), and then - to the endgame itself.

## Serial 4: Rook vs. two knights



Two knights are of course stronger than a rook - but will this advantage be enough to win? And there is another question, a very important one from a practical standpoint, in the play of all such situations: who is favored by a particular exchange of pieces or pawns?

**38...Qc7-c4**

Of course not 38...Rxd1?? 39. Qe8 mate.

**39. Qe4-e7**

*"Neither here nor later can White win if he exchanges the Queens, because Black would spread himself in the endgame over the Queen's side of the board by capturing the a3-pawn, in addition*



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*to exchanging the b-pawn, whereupon the remaining pawns on the King's side would not suffice to bring about a win. Through the avoidance of the exchange, however, he presently reaches a defensive position in which he is not entitled to expect a legitimate win. Nevertheless, he persists in trying to win - and in that lies the explanation of the sacrifice on the 51st move" (Alekhine).*

Well, there's the future World Champion's answer to both of my questions. However, I cannot say that I agree with him 100%. I believe that White's advantage was still sufficiently large, and that he only squandered it as the result of some later inaccuracies, which have been overlooked by the commentators.

### 39...Qc4-c8 40. Nd1-f2

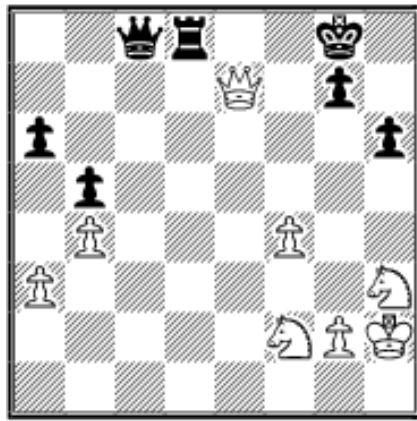
It's vital for White to bring one of his knights up to aid the queen, but how is he to accomplish this?

Worthy of serious consideration was 40. Ne3!?, in combination with the following little trap: 40...Re8? 41. Nf5!, winning. Black would have replied either 40...Qd7 or 40...h6 41. Nf5 Qd7, and White retains his great advantage.

40. Ng5!? Rxd1 41. Qf7+ Kh8 42. Qh5 h6 would lead to a queen endgame with an extra pawn for White. Alekhine continues with 43. Qxd1 hg 44. Qh5+ Kg8 45. Qxg5 Qc1, and considers that Black has every right to expect a draw. This is arguable: after 46. Qd5+ Kf8 47. Qf3, Black's defense is very difficult. Besides, White could obtain a more favorable pawn structure after 43. Nf7+!? Kg8 44. Nxh6+ gh 45. Qxd1 Qf5.

### 40...h7-h6





### 41. Qe7-a7

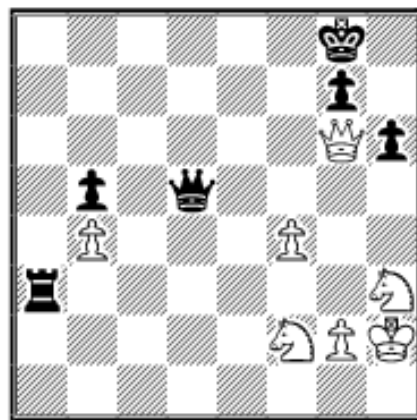
White could have continued 41. Ne4 Re8 42. Qc5, since after 42...Qxc5 (Alekhine was of the opinion that 42...Qe6 would have been better; but if he is right, then White should have seized the opportunity to improve the position of his knight) 43. Nxc5 Re3 44. Nxa6 Rxa3 45. Nc5 (with the idea of Nf2-d3), White would have saved his b4-pawn from being exchanged off. On the other hand, after 45...Kf7 or 45...Ra2!?, with Kf7 to follow, the inevitable king march to the center would have secured Black against losing.

### 41...Qc8-e6

Of course Black does not allow the knight to go to e4.

### 42. Qa7-b7 Qe6-d5!? 43. Qb7-b6?!

Emanuel Lasker decided against 43. Qxa6 Ra8, fearing that after the inevitable 44...Rxa3 the b4-pawn would turn out weak. But this would have given White an important tempo for the attack on the king; meanwhile, the b5-pawn could also be attacked. Thus: 44. Qg6! Rxa3, and now -



45. Ne4 Qf7 46. Qc6 (46. Qxf7+? Kxf7 47. Nd6+ Kf8 48. Nxb5 Rb3=) 46...Rb3 47. Nd6 (47. Qxb5 Rxh3+! 48. Kxh3 Qe6+ 49. Kg3 Qxe4, and White has only a small edge) 47...Qe6 48. Qc5 Rb2 49. Qd4 Qa2 50. Qe4 Re2, and Black can defend;

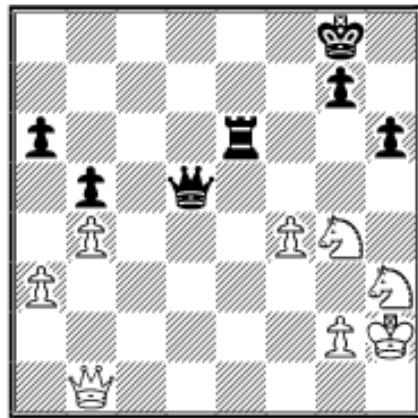
45, Ng4! Kf8 46. Ne5 Ra2 47. Ng1 and Ngf3. Here Black may not be able to save himself, since his king is endangered and the White knights are successfully coming into play.

### 43...Rd8-d6 44. Qb6-e3 Rd6-e6 45. Qe3-c3 Qd5-c4 46. Qc3-f3

**Qc4-c6 47. Qf3-d3 Re6-d6 48. Qd3-b3+ Qc6-d5 49. Qb3-b1 Rd6-e6**

As before, Black prevents Ne4, and already plans to show some activity of his own, by playing 50...Re3. On 50. Nd3? there would follow 50...Re2 51. Nhf2 Ra2 52. Qc1 Qc4 (Ed. Lasker).

**50. Nf2-g4**



**50...Re6-e2!**

*"Black has correctly weighed the futility of the sacrifice contemplated by the opponent and quietly allows it, the more so as, by some other continuation, the posting of the Knight on e5 might have brought White slight winning chances" (Alekhine).*

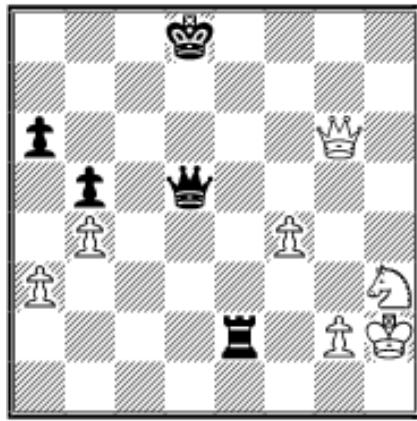
On the other hand, as Ed. Lasker himself pointed out, 50...Re4!?, and if 51. Ne5, then 51...Re2 (52. Qg6 Ra2 or 52...Qe4) would have been good, too.

**51. Ng4xh6+**

*"The hopes of victory bound up with this combination are shattered by the circumstance that the Knight, because of the unsafe position of the King, cannot co-operate at the right time. Moreover, through persistent avoidance of drawing possibilities, White, in consequence of his weak a-pawn, actually drifts into the shallows of defeat" (Alekhine).*

**51...g7xh6 52. Qb1-g6+ Kg8-f8 53. Qg6xh6+ Kf8-e8 54. Qh6-g6+ Ke8-d8**

**Serial 5: Rook vs. knight, with queens**



Aiming for the tournament lead, Emanuel Lasker did not wish to settle for a draw, and stubbornly continued to search for ways to continue the fight, apparently hoping for errors from his less experienced opponent. But since the latter played so excellently, this playing for the win - as so often happens - nearly turned into playing for a loss.

As Alekhine noted, it was high time for White to force the draw, using the line 55. Qb6+ Ke8 56. Qb8+ Ke7 57. Qa7+ Kf8 58. Qb8+ Re8 59. Qa7 Re2. On the other hand, even after the text, he still retained analogous drawing possibilities for a while.

### **55. Qg6-g3?! Re2-e8!**

An excellent maneuver. The rook aims for g8, where it will once again attack the pawn at g2; and, more importantly, it will hinder the knight from getting to g5 and supporting a possible h-file check.

### **56. Qg3-f2 Re8-g8 57. Qf2-b2**

Here too, White could have forced the draw by 57. Qb6+ (Alekhine).

### **57...Qd5-d6! 58. Qb2-c3 Kd8-d7 59. Qc3-f3 Kd7-c7 60. Qf3-e4**

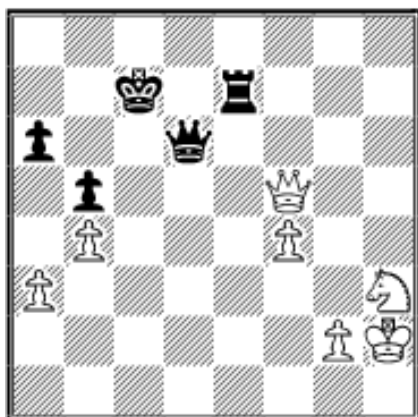
The adventurous 60. g4!? was worth considering.

### **60...Rg8-g7 61. Qe4-f5**

*"White has carried through his plan fully and, by means of fine Queen maneuvering, assured the co-operation of the Knight. It seems, however, that this last is at this stage of minor importance, and does not in any way prevent the fall of the a3-pawn"* (Alekhine).

### **61...Rg7-e7!**

Having fulfilled its role on the g-file (inducing the enemy queen to advance), the rook now returns to the e-file.



### 62. Nh3-g5

*"There was still time to make the Queen's side safe by means of 62. Qc2+ Kd8 63. Qc3, etc. The tempting move of the Knight, on the contrary, should cost the game" (Alekhine).*

**62...Re7-e3 63. Ng5-e4 Qd6-e7!**

Threatening 64...Qh4+.

### 64. Ne4-f6 Kc7-b8!

*"Whereby the fate of the a-pawn is sealed. Black, since his 38th move, has defended himself quite faultlessly and has now attained a winning position" (Alekhine).*

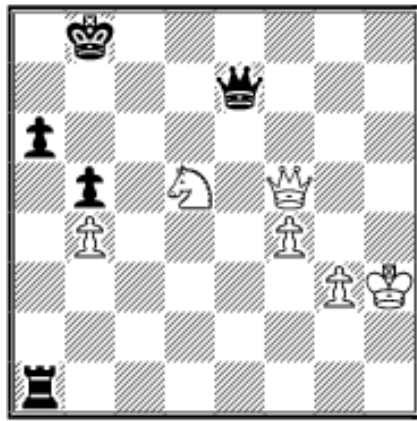
### 65. g2-g3

As V. Zak pointed out, Black would have met 65. Nd7+, not with 65...Kc7 (on account of 66. Nf6), but with 65...Ka7.

### 65...Re3xa3 66. Kh2-h3 Ra3-a1

White gets a perpetual check after 66...Qxb4? 67. Qe5+ Kb7 68. Qd5+.

### 67. Nf6-d5



### 67...Ra1-h1+!?

*"By means of this move and the following Black forces the exchange of Queens and a winning, albeit difficult ending. More compelling, however, would have been 67...Qd6, thereafter driving the Knight from d5 by means of 68...Rd1, and to play for the capture of the b4-pawn in conjunction*

*with a direct attack upon the king" (Alekhine).*

And if Black insists on the queen exchange, then he should do so just as in the game. After the "spectacular" 67...Qh7+? 68. Qxh7 Rh1+ 69. Kg4 Rxh7 White's king reaches g4, instead of the more distant g2 square, as in the game.

### 68. Kh3-g2

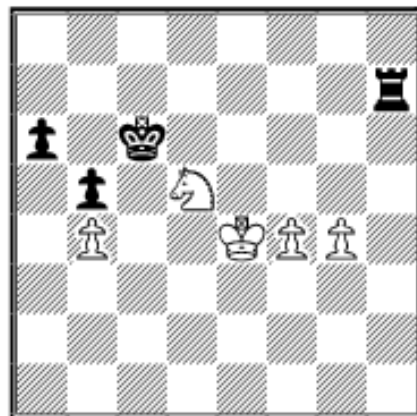
68. Kg4?? Qe2+

### 68...Qe7-h7 69. Qf5xh7

Forced, as 69. Qf8+? Kb7 would lose rapidly.

### 69...Rh1xh7 70. Kg2-f3 Kb8-b7 71. g3-g4 Kb7-c6 72. Kf3-e4

## Serial 6: Rook vs. Knight Without Queens



A few general comments: Queens were exchanged three moves ago, but we begin the sixth installment in our serial precisely at this point. There were several critical, watershed situations in this game, and the position in this diagram marks one of the most vital.

There is another reason, also, to choose this as the starting point for our next serial, and that is the inclusion, at this precise moment, of yet another powerful

specialist - G. Kasparov (in his recently published work, *My Great Predecessors*). Alas, his inclusion is of a most unfortunate nature. In order to forestall the creation of any more myths, we shall examine all of his suggestions most attentively.

### **72...Rh7-h8?!**

A tempting move, carrying with it the threat of 73...Re8+; however, after it, White manages to save himself. It was almost impossible to foresee that the rook would stand better on the 7th rank than on the 8th! The winning move was 72...Rd7!.

73. g5 Rxd5 74. g6 Rd1 and wins (Ed. Lasker);

73. Nf6 Rd8! 74. g5 a5 75. ba b4 76. g6 b3 and wins (Alekhine), or 76. Ng4 b3 77. Ne5+ Kb5 78. Nd3 Kc4! 79. Nb2+ Kc3 80. Na4+ Kb4 81. Nb2 Rd2 and wins. Ed. Lasker's variation 73...Rd1 74. g5 a5 75. ba b4 76. g6 b3 77. g7 b2 78. g8Q b1Q+ is less convincing, since instead of 76. g6?, Black must be prepared for 76. Ng4! b3 77. Ne5+ (after 77...Kb5 78. Nd3, the king cannot get to the c4 square, in view of the fork Nb2+);

73. Ne3 a5! 74. ba b4 75. Nc4 (75. g5 Kc5! 76. Nc2 b3 77. Na3 Kb4 78. Nb1 Rd1 and wins - Ed. Lasker) 75...Kb5 76. Ne5 b3 77. Nd3 Kc4 78. Nb2+ (78. Ne5+ Kc3 79. Nxd7 b2) 78...Kc3 79. Na4+ Kb4 80. Nb2 Rd2 81. Nd3+ Kc3 and wins (Averbakh).

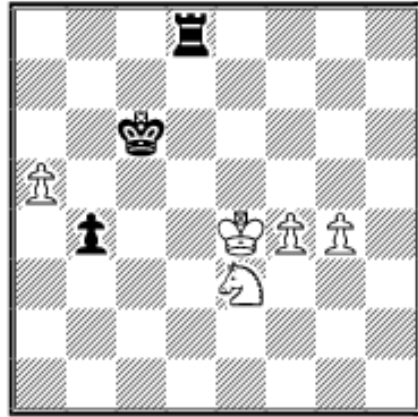
### **73. Nd5-e3**

73. Nf6? Rd8, followed by a6-a5 is hopeless (Alekhine).

### **73...Rh8-e8+ 74. Ke4-d4 Re8-d8+ 75. Kd4-e4**

On 75. Kc3!? Alekhine gives 75...Rd6 76. g5 Kd7, but is not sure about the objective assessment of the position. Ed. Lasker offers a more energetic approach: 75...a5!? 76. ba Kc5! 77. g5 b4+ 78. Kc2 b3+ 79. Kb2 Rd2+. True, White has a stronger defense: 79. Kc3! (instead of 79. Kb2?), when Black's only (but barely sufficient) winning chance is 79...Rh8!

### **75...a6-a5! 76. b4xa5 b5-b4**



### 77. a5-a6!

A deep move indeed! The a-pawn will deflect one of Black's pieces, allowing White to win valuable time to battle the b-pawn. As Alekhine noted, 77. g5 b3 78. Nc4 Kc5 79. Nb2 Rd2 80. Nd3+ Kc4 81. Ne5+ Kc3 would lose for White.

Another attempt is 77. Nc4. Kasparov gives the line 77...b3 78. Ke3 Kb5 79. Nb2 Kxa5 80. g5 Kb4 81. g6 Kc3 82. Na4+ Kc2 83. f5 Re8+ 84. Kd4 Ra8 and wins. However, White can save himself by playing 84. Kf3! (instead of 84. Kd4?) 84...Rf8 85. g7! Rxf5+ 86. Kg4 Rf1 87. Kg5. So Black must first destabilize the knight with 77...Kb5 (instead of 77...b3?) 78. Nb2 Rd2! 79. Nd3 b3 (79...Kc4? 80. Nxb4=) 80. a6 Kc4! 81. a7 Re2+ 82. Kf5 Ra2 and wins; or 80. Ke3 b2! 81. Nxb2 Rxb2 82. g5 Kc6! and wins.

### 77...Kc6-c5!

White would have a difficult task to resolve after 77...b3!? 78. Nc4 Kb5 79. Nb2 Kxa6. The threat of 80...Rd2 is met simply by 80. Ke3, and after 80...Kb5 81. g5 leads us back to the same drawing line we've already examined: 81...Kb4 82. g6 Kc3 83. Na4+ Kc2 84. f5 Re8+ 85. Kf3! Rf8 86. g7! Rxf5+ 87. Kg4 Rf1 88. Kg5.

However, Black can walk a fine line to victory, by transferring his king to the kingside.

80...Kb7!! 81. g5 (81. f5 would change nothing) 81...Kc8! 82. g6 Rd7!

But not 82...Kd7? 83. Kd3= - it's important for White's king to remain cut off on the d-file. And if Black were to play 81...Kc7? 82. g6! Rd7, then 83. g7! Rxg7 84. Kd3 would lead to a draw.

83. f5 (83. g7 Rxg7 84. Kd3 Rc7 and wins) 83...Kd8 84. f6 Ke8 85. Nd3 Rd6, and White is defenseless. For instance: 86. g7 Kf7



87. Ne5+ Kg8 88. Ng4 Kh7 89. Nh6 Rd8 90. g8+ Rxg8 91. Nxb2.

The variation just examined leads us to an important conclusion, one which will repeatedly prove useful to us: Black wins, if his king can stop the kingside pawns while White's king is cut off on the d-file.

To save time, White must, in the position of the preceding diagram, push his kingside pawns at once, and allow 80...Rd2. But which pawn? It turns out that in the variation 80. g5? Rd2 81. Nd3 (81. Nc4 Rc2) 81...Kb5! 82. g6 Kc4 he loses; but that 80. f5!! Rd2 81. Nd3 Kb5 (81...b2 82. Nxb2) 82. f6 is enough to draw, since after 82...Kc4? 83. f7 the knight controls f2.

### **78. a6-a7!**

Here is the consequence of Black's inaccurate 72nd move: were his rook still on d7, the pawn could not be advanced to a7; and after 78. Nc2 (this would actually have been the 76th move) 78...b3 79. Na3 Kb4 80. Nb1 Ra7, Black would have won.

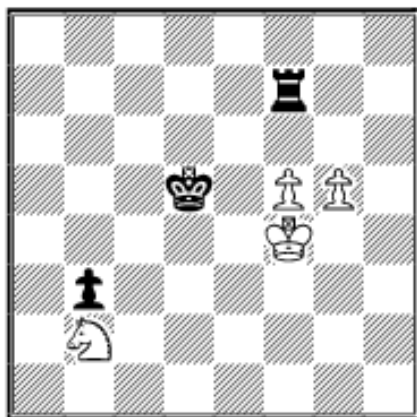
### **78...b4-b3**

Kasparov believes that here, and for a number of moves hereafter, Black still had a won position. The idea behind his variations is to bring the king over to blockade the connected passed pawns, while the rook cuts the enemy king off from the b-pawn, and in some lines assists the pawn to queen or forces White to give up his knight for it.

Unfortunately, the grandmaster repeatedly looks only at the second-best defensive method for White, which is: supporting the pawns with the king. The correct idea - the one employed in the game by Emanuel Lasker - is to sacrifice the kingside pawns in order to get the king closer to the b-pawn, and to set up a fortress of knight vs. rook and pawn.

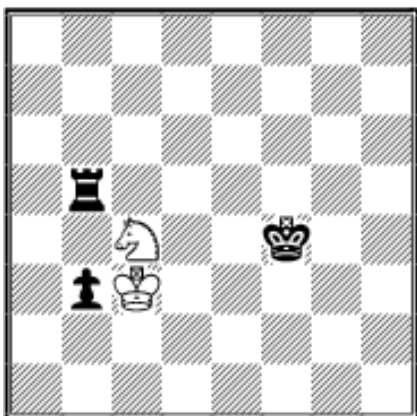
This strategic oversight carried with it grave consequences: all of Kasparov's suggested variations are wrong!

For example: instead of the text, he offers 78...Ra8!? 79. f5 Rxa7 80. Nd1 Re7+ 81. Kf3 Rf7 82. Nb2 Kd5 83. Kf4 b3.



None of these moves are forced; but the main problem is that the concluding position of the variation is still a draw.

84. Ke3!! Rc7 85. Kd3 Ke5 86. Na4 Kf6 (86...Rc2 87. Nc3 Rg2 88. Kc4 b2 89. Kb3=) 87. Nb2 Kg5 (87...Rc2 88. Na4) 88. Na4 Kxg4 (or 88...Rc8 89. Nb2 Kxg4 90. f6 Kf5 91. f7 Ke6 92. f8Q Rxf8 93. Kc3 Rf3+ 94. Kb4= - roughly the same position occurs later in the game) 89. f6 Kf5 90. f7 Rxf7 91. Kc3 Rb7 92. Nb2 Kf4!? 93. Nc4 Rb5!?



An instructive situation. White can't afford to win the pawn by 94. Kb2? Kf3! 95. Nd2+ Ke3 96. Nxb3 Kd3 97. Ka2 Kc3 - here the knight will inescapably be lost. Waiting tactics don't work, either: 94. Nb2? Ke3 95. Nc4+ Ke2 96. Nb2 Rb8 (zugzwang) 97. Nc4 Kd2 98. Kb2 (Black threatened 98...Kc1) 98...Rb5 99. Na3 Rb4, and Black's king reaches the c4 square.

Instead, White must go to the same defensive system, but with the pawn on the 2nd: 94. Nd2! b2 95. Kc2. Here White would be out of danger, since Black no longer has the flanking maneuver with his king along the 1st rank.

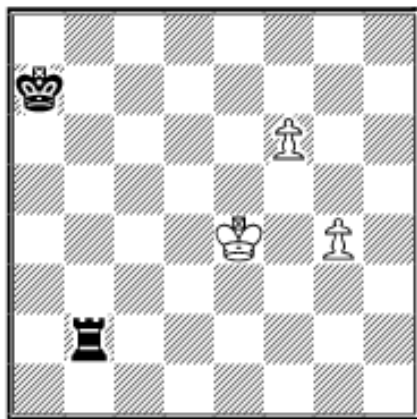
It should be noted that if, instead of 89...Kf5, Black plays 89...Kf3 (or 89...Kf4), White can no longer continue 90. f7? Rxf7 91. Kc3 Rb7 92. Nb2 (92. Kb2 Ke2 93. Nc5 Rb5! 94. Nxb3 Kd3 and wins) 92...Ke2 93. Nc4 Kd1 94. Kb2 Rb5 and wins. But White has no need to hurry with the pawn sacrifice: 90. Nb2! Kf2 91. Nc4 Ke1 92. Nb2=. We may rightly reach a vital conclusion: that

in such situations (two connected passed pawns, blockaded by the king), cutting White's king off on the c-file gives Black nothing.

On the other hand, cutting the king off on the d-file, as we have already seen, is fatal to White. This is precisely the reason why the natural move 84. g5? (instead of 84. Ke3!) would be wrong: Black replies 84...Rd7!! (84...Rc7? 85. g6 Rc2 86. g7 Rg2 87. f6 Ke6 88. Kf3! Rg1 89. Ke3 Kf7 90. Kd3 Rc1 91. Na4=; or 84...Kd6? 85. Ke4! - but not 85. g6? Rd7!! winning - 85...Rc7 86. g6 Ke7 87. Kd3 Kf6 88. Na4=) 85. g6 Kd6 86. f6 Ke6 87. g7 Rd8 88. Ke3 (88. Kg5 Kf7 wins) 88...Kxf6 78. g8Q Rxd8 90. Kd3 Rc8 wins.

### 79. Ne3-d1! Rd8-a8

White's task is simpler after 79...Kb6 80. Nb2 Kxa7 81. f5 (but not 81. Ke3? Kb7! 82. g5 Kc8! 83. g6 Rd7! - see the note to Black's 77th move) 81...Rd2 82. Nd3, and in the event of the careless 82...b2?! 83. Nxb2 Rxb2 84. f6, it is now Black who must, by dint of "only" moves, try to obtain the draw.

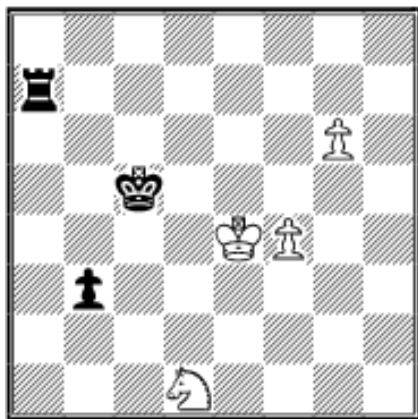


The chief danger lies in the advance of the g-pawn - it is this which must be prevented at all costs.

84...Re2+!! 85. Kf5 Rf2+ 86. Ke6 Re2+! or 86. Kg6 Kb6 87. f7 Kc6 88. Kg7 Kd6 89. f8Q+ Rxf8 90. Kxf8 Ke5=.

### 80. g4-g5

Here 80. Kd3!? was worth considering. Black would have to reply 80...Kb4, putting his king further away from the kingside (after 80...Rxa7 81. Kc3 the draw is self-evident). The continuation might be 81. f5 (81. g5 is also playable) 81...Rxa7 82. f6 Rd7+ 83. Ke2 Kc5 (83...Ka3 84. g5 Rxd1 85. f7 Rd8 86. g6=), and now either 94. Nb2 Kd4!? 85. Kd2 Rc7 86. Nd1! (but not 86. Na4? Rc2+ 87. Kd1 Kd3! 88. f7 b2 89. Nxb2+ Rxb2 90. Ke1 Ke3 and wins) 86...Rc2+ 87. Ke1 b2 88. f7 b1Q 89. f8Q=, or 84. g5 Kd6 85. Kd2! (85. g6? Ke6 wins) 85...Ke6+ 86. Kc1, and draws.

**80...Ra8xa7 81. g5-g6****81...Ra7-d7!**

*"Many commentators after Alekhine ignore this moment, but the computer tells us that White is not to be envied after 81...Kd6! 82. Kf5 Ke7 83. Kg5 Ra2" (Kasparov).*

But if you send the king in the other direction - 82. Kd3 Ke6 (if 82...Rc7, then White at least has 83. g7) 83. Kc3 - the self-same computer says it's a draw. The text sets White more difficult problems.

**82. Nd1-b2 Rd7-d2**

*"82...Kd6!? 83. f5 Rc7 84. Kf4 Rc2 is tempting, too" (Kasparov). This short variation contains three (3) major errors: 83. f5? (83. Kd4 or Kd3 draws); 83...Rc7? (83...Ke7! wins); and 84. Kf4? (84. Kd3 or 84. f6 is correct).*

**83. Ke4-f3!**

*"The point of the whole defense: the Knight, of course, cannot be captured on account of 84. g7, and Black, therefore, in case he desires to continue playing for a win, must permit the approach of the hostile King to his passed Pawn" (Alekhine).*

**83...Rd2-d8 84. Kf3-e4!**

*"84. f5!? Kd6 85. Kf4 Rc8 86. Nd1 might perhaps have been better, although after 86...Rc4+ 87. Kg5 Rc1 88. Nb2 Rc2 89. Nd1 Ke5, the draw is still not in sight" (Kasparov). Armed with our examination of the previous variations, we can easily establish that 84. f5? is a mistake: after 84...Kd6 85. Kf4 Black wins by 85...Ke7! On 85...Rc8? White should not respond with 86. Nd1?, but with 86. Ke4! Rc2 87. g7 Rg2 88. f6 Ke6 89. Kd3. After the mistaken rook check (86...Ke7!, winning, is correct), White saves himself by 87. Ke3! Interestingly, even the last move*

of Kasparov's analysis is inaccurate (89...Ke7 is far stronger): in his concluding position, after 90. Ne3! the outcome is still not fully clear, for instance: 90...b2? 91. g7 Rc8 92. Nc4+! or 91...b1Q 92. Ng4+!, drawing. We shall have to study the consequences of 90...Ke4 91. f6 Kxe3 92. f7 Rg2+ 93. Kh6 b2 94. f8Q b1Q.

### **84...Rd8-d2**

*"It appears that it is only here, and not on move 72, that Black misses the win: 84...Kb4 85. f5 Kc3 86. Na4+ Kc2 87. f6 Ra8 and wins"* (Kasparov). This line is especially odd, given the fact that, first of all, its concluding position is drawn: 88. f7 Rxa4+ 89. Ke3! b2 90. f8Q b1Q 91. Qf5+ Kc1 92. Qf1+, and if the king goes to b2, then the check at b5 will win the rook back. And secondly, if White answers 86...Kc2? with 87. g7! Ra8 88. Ke3, it appears he even wins.

### **85. Ke4-f3! Rd2-d8 86. Kf3-e4! Kc5-d6 87. Ke4-d4**

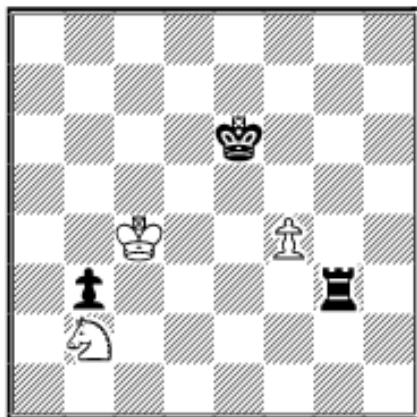
*"87. f5?! Rc8 88. Nd3 Rc4+ would be dangerous"* (Kasparov). 87. f5? is bad, because of 87...Ke7!; after 87...Rc8?, on the other hand, White can save himself by 88. g7 Ke7 89. Kd3.

### **87...Rd8-c8 88. g6-g7**

Of course this is the most accurate - although, contrary to Kasparov's opinion, White would not lose after 88. f5 Ke7 89. Kd3, either.

### **88...Kd6-e6 89. g7-g8Q+ Rc8xg8 90. Kd4-c4 Rg8-g3!**

## **Serial 7: Knight Draws Against Rook Plus Pawn!**



*"This is the move I had calculated would win the game after all. The other contestants also believed I had now a fairly easy win as White could not capture my Pawn. I remember I left the room at this stage to stretch a little and was congratulated upon my victory by Bogoljubov and others who were in the Press room and told me the story of the game was already to be released. However, when I returned to the table, a rude shock awaited me" (Ed. Lasker).*

**91. Nb2-a4 Ke6-f5 92. Kc4-b4 Kf5xf4 93. Na4-b2**

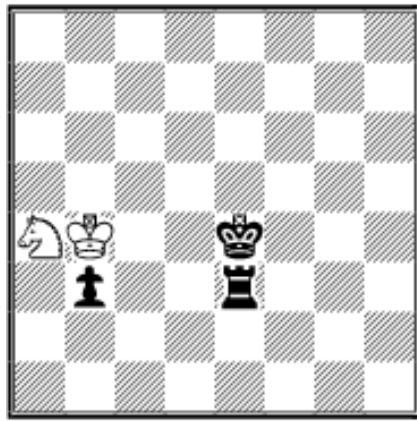
93. Ka3 is a mistake: 93...Ke4 94. Nc5+? Kd4 95. Nxb3 Kc4 and Black wins.

*"It never occurred to me that White need not capture the pawn at all and could still draw the game. Emanuel Lasker actually discovered a new endgame position in which a Rook and a Pawn cannot win against the Knight, and this position has since become a classic" (Ed. Lasker).*

**93...Kf4-e4 94. Nb2-a4**

White could also have prevented the king from reaching the d4 square by playing 94. Kc4, but this is of no importance.

**94...Ke4-d4 95. Na4-b2 Rg3-f3 96. Nb2-a4 Rf3-e3 97. Na4-b2 Kd4-e4 98. Nb2-a4**



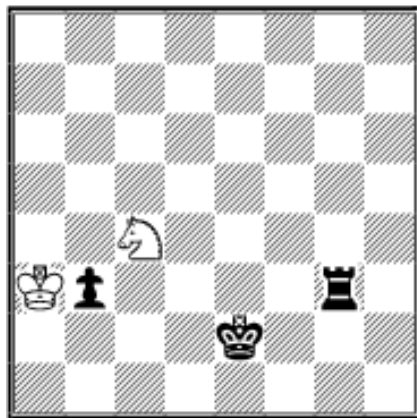
**98...Ke4-f3**

Threatening Ke2-d2-c2 and wins.  
White can't wait any more.

**99. Kb4-a3!**

In Averbakh's opinion (in his five-volume *Chess Endings*), White could also have played 99. Nb2 Ke2 100.

Nc4 (100. Ka3 Kd2! 101. Nc4+ Kc1 wins) 100...Rg3 101. Ka3, followed by 102. Kb2.



But he can't: Black wins here by 101..Rc3! 102. Na5 (102. Nd6 Kd3 103. Kb2 Rc6!; 102. Ne5 Ke3 103. Kb2 Kd4) 102...Kd3! 103. Kb2 Rc5! 104. Nxb3 Rb5 105. Ka2 Kc3.

**99...Kf3-e4**

99...Ke2 100. Nc5 Kd2 101. Kb2=.

**100. Ka3-b4 Ke4-d4 101. Na4-b2 Re3-h3 102. Nb2-a4 Kd4-d3 103. Kb4xb3 Kd3-d4+**

Draw.

Once again, let me repeat the words of B. Vainshtein: *"This was probably the most unbelievable, the most paradoxical draw ever recorded in international play"*. And I would imagine that you would agree with him?!

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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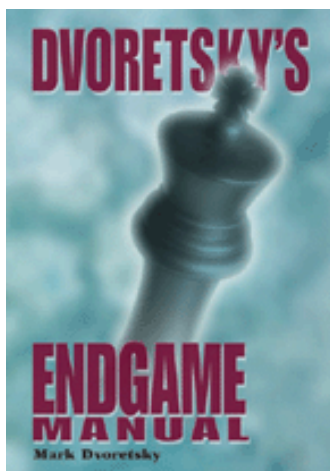
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C O L U M N I S T S

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Theoretical Discoveries

### Part 1

Many players probably see endgame theory as something almost impervious to change, a frozen block of ice, forever fixed in such endgame manuals as the Yugoslav *Encyclopedia of Endgames*, or Averbakh's five-volume work.

But in fact, endgame theory is constantly developing - although not so furiously, nor so noticeably, as the opening. And I am not referring here to new items in the endless pile of endgames from practice, analyses and studies, but rather to actual theory: restricted in scope, and available for acquisition, something that would do a practical player good to study, absorb and utilize. It was precisely this theory that I laid out in my most recent book, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* - which has already gone through two editions in the past year in Germany (there it's titled, *Die Endspiel Universität*), and which was published in the USA in October 2003.

In my manual, I managed to give newer, clearer, and more understandable presentations of many kinds of endgames (because rethinking the experience of the ages is also a way of developing theory), and to demonstrate, along with classic examples, the clearest and most instructive endgames played in recent years, to offer new analyses, and to correct many errors that had occurred in previous publications.

After the book's publication in German, some readers sent me analytical notes, which were incorporated in the preparation of the American edition. The majority of these inaccuracies and errors pointed out by readers were of a non-essential nature, having practically no influence on the concept of the respective



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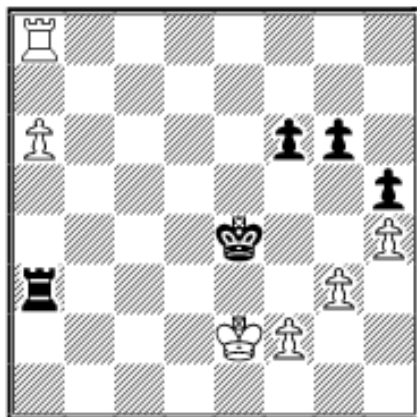


divisions of the manual. But here, in the theory of rook endgames with an extra pawn on the opposite wing, revolutionary changes have recently occurred. Very few players know about this as yet; it is to them that I dedicate this [two-part] article, which I now present to my readers.

So: The position before us is one in which the kingside pawns are equal (three vs. three), with White having an extra pawn on the a-file. Let's restrict ourselves to those situations in which the stronger side's rook is in front of the pawn, while the other rook is behind it.

- *The advance of the pawn to the 7th rank maximally restricts the enemy pieces. However, if the enemy pawns have no weak spots, then the game is drawn, since it makes no sense to bring the king up to support the pawn, when he has no shelter against checks on the file.*
- *The stronger side wins in one of the following three cases:*
  - *a) When the pawn at a7 may be traded for enemy pawns, and a winning pawns-on-one-side endgame results;*
  - *b) If he can win the enemy rook for the pawn. This usually requires the creation of a passed pawn on the other side, which may be used to drive the enemy king from its safe square. This goal can be achieved with the advance of the f-pawn; passed g- or h-pawns are usually of no value;*
  - *c) When the passed pawn may be given up to exchange rooks with a 7th-rank check, creating a winning pawn endgame.*

You will find plenty of instructive examples illustrating these rules in my Manual, and also in my **ChessCafe** articles from February 2001 and June 2003. However, I am going to present one classic endgame (illustrating Point (a) ) here, because it is very important from a practical standpoint, and because we shall have many occasions to refer to it later.

**Unzicker - Lundin**

Amsterdam Olympiad 1954

White to move

**48. f3+!** (of course, not 48. a7? Ra2+ and 49...Kf3) **48...Kf5 49. a7!**

If Black's pawn were still at f7, the Black king could return to f6 or g7, and the position would be absolutely drawn. But now White's plan is to get his king to h6, and then to exchange his passed pawn at a7 for Black's kingside pawns by Rb8-b5+. Black cannot prevent this.

In principle, all you need to know about this position is that it is won, and the winning plan. The variations presented below (fleshing out and correcting earlier analyses here and there) demonstrate some tactical refinements and show Black's helplessness. They are useful to examine, but of course they need not be memorized.

In the study of endgame theory, it is necessary to separate the important facts - the most important positions, variations and ideas (which are all, as a rule, rather simple and easy to memorize) from the other information, which is not so valuable in and of itself, and only helps you to assimilate the main ideas. Such a division of labor, which eases the task of the reader to assimilate the theory of endgames, is used in my book; it is, however, unfortunately missing from all other guides to the endgame.

**49...Ra2+**

49...Ra6 would change nothing: 50. Kd3 Rd6+ 51. Kc4 Rd7 52. Kc5 Re7 53. Kd6! Re6+ (Black gets mated after 53...Rb7 54. Rb8! Rxa7 55. Rb5) 54. Kd7 Ra6 55. Ke7.

**50. Kd3 Ra1 51. Kd4**

Note the following tactical trick: 51. g4+ hg 52. fg+ Kxg4 53.

h5! At this point, however, it doesn't work, because 51. g4+? can be met by 51...Kf4!

### **51...Ra5 52. Kc4 Ra3 53. Kc5 Ra1**

On 53...Rxf3 54. Rf8 Ra3 55. a8Q Rxa8 56. Rxa8 Kg4, the simplest win is 57. Ra3 g5 58. hg fg 59. Kd4 h4 6. gh gh 61. Ke3 Kg3 62. Ra8.

### **54. Kd6 Ra3?! (54...Ra6+) 55. Ke7?!**

White pursues his plan, missing a chance to end the game at once by 55. Rc8!, threatening 56. Rc5#.

### **55...Ra6**

A bit cleverer was 55...Ra2, having in mind the variation 56. Kf7?! Ra6! 57. Kg7 g5 58. hg Kxg5 59. Kf7 Kf5 60. g4+? hg 61. fg+ Kf4 - it's important here to have the pawn at f6 defended by the rook. The squares a6 and f7 are in correspondence. White's simplest path is to avoid the mined square by continuing 56. Kf8! Ra6 57. Kf7! (zugzwang) 57...Ra3 58. Kg7, and here 58...g5 would be completely hopeless.

**56. Kf7 Ra3 57. Kg7 Ra1 58. Kh6! Ra6 59. Rb8 Rxa7 60. Rb5+ Ke6 61. Kxg6 Ra8 62. Kxh5 Rg8 63. g4 Rh8+ 64. Kg6**, and Black resigned.

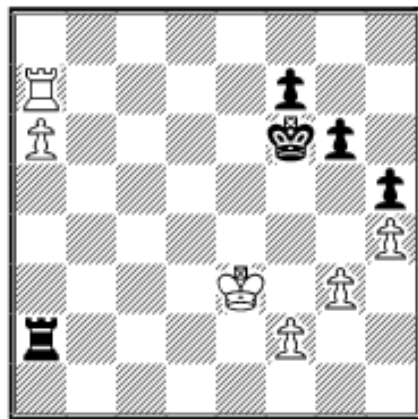
Now let's look at those situations in which advancing the pawn to a7 would be counterproductive. In such positions, *White usually advances the pawn to a6, and marches his king over to the queenside, where he finds shelter against checks on the file. However, the road there is lengthy; and in that time, the Black rook can gobble up a pawn or two. Then, it will give itself up for the a-pawn; and the resulting "rook vs. pawns" endgame is drawn, more often than not.*

The impetus for a new examination of this position was probably provided by the corresponding section in the German edition of my *Manual*, and by Karsten Müller's articles in

**ChessCafe.** At the time, I - and probably Karsten, as well - held to the traditional view of this kind of endgame: with correct play on both sides, the draw is reached almost always, and almost automatically, with plenty of leeway.

One of my readers, the Swiss player Johannes Steckner, has found a powerful improvement for White in one of the supporting theoretical positions. Later on, we were joined in our study of this ending by the German grandmaster, Rustem Dautov. The summer of 2003 saw a lively e-mail correspondence: Karsten with Steckner and Dautov, I with Karsten (and later on, with the Moscow trainer and expert on these endgames, Vladimir Vulfson). We exchanged the results of our researches, correcting and extending the analyses of our colleagues. As a result, this section of endgame theory acquired (in our eyes, at least) a whole new look, becoming considerably deeper and more complex. Herewith, I should like to bring together and organize our findings.

The following endgame will be an important guidepost for us.



**V. Kantorovich, 1988**

**J. Steckner, 2003**

White to move

In Issue No. 8 of the Moscow publication *Shakhmatny Byulleten* for 1989, a weighty article appeared by the Muscovite Vadim Kantorovich, entitled "The Outside

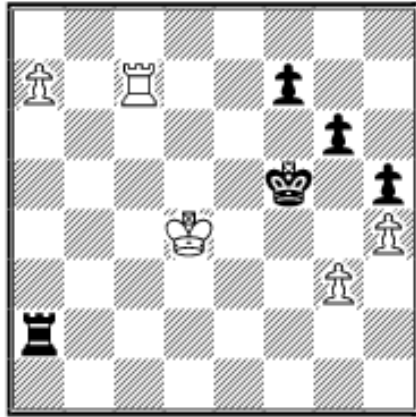
Passed Pawn"; and it began with the analysis of this diagrammed position. The main conclusion which followed from that analysis (and which I reproduced in the German edition of *Die Endspiel Universität*) was that Black draws, and with a couple of tempi in reserve.

But in fact, Black has a lost position!

**1. Kd4! Rxf2 2. Rc7! Ra2 3. a7**

On 3. Rc6+? Kf5 4. Kc5 Kg4 5. Kb5 Kxg3 6. Rc4 f6! 7. Ra4 Rb2+ 8. Kc6 Rb8 9. a7 Ra8 (Kantorovich), Black does indeed draw, and with two tempi to spare.

### 3...Kf5

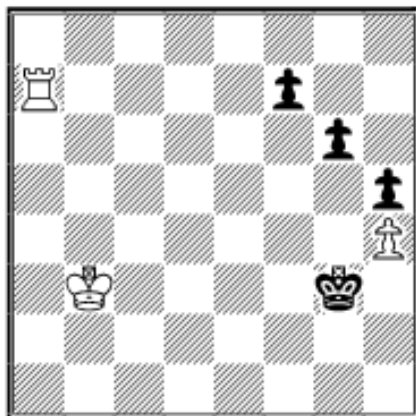


Here Kantorovich continued 4. Rxf7+ Kg4 5. Kc5 Kxg3 6. Kb5! Rb2+! 7. Kc6 Ra2 8. Kb7 Kxh4 9. Rf6 Rxa7+ - and here too, the draw is completely obvious.

For a long time, neither the position nor its associated analyses were doubted by anyone; only in the summer of 2003 did Steckner propose his powerful improvement for White: **4. Kc4!!**

The idea becomes clear in the variation **4...Kg4 5. Kb3! Ra6 6. Rc4+ Kxg3 7. Ra4**: White forces the rook sacrifice without having to waste time on the long king march to the a7-pawn, and now wins by one tempo ("Chess is the tragedy of a single tempo!").

### 7...Rxa7 8. Rxa7



### 8...Kxh4 9. Kc3

It's not time to take the pawn yet: 9. Rxf7?? Kg3=.

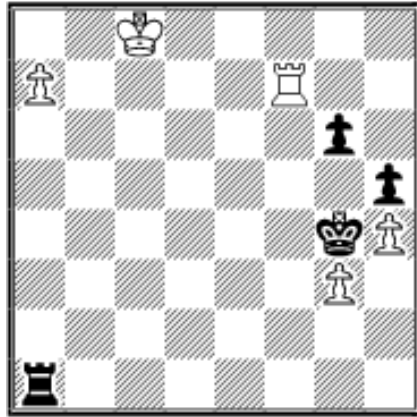
### 9...Kg3

9...f5 10. Kd3 g5 is no help - the rook will be able to deal with the three pawns.

**10. Kd2 h4** (10...g5 11. Rxf7 wins) **11. Ke2 Kg2** (11...h3 12. Kf1) **12. Rxf7 h3 13. Rf2+! Kg3 14. Rf6** and wins.

Let's try another defense. How about 4...Ra1, removing the

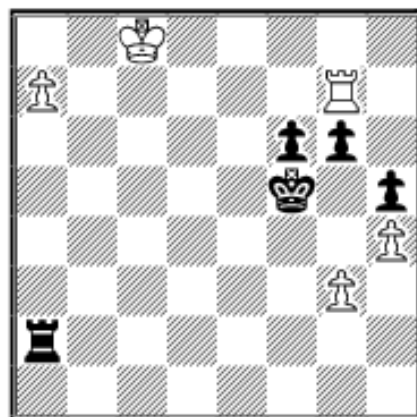
rook from the range of the tempo-gaining Kb3? But after 5. Kb5 the threat of White's rook interference can only be neutralized by a series of checks, which will in turn drive the White king forward: 5...Rb1+ 6. Kc6 Ra1 7. Kb7 Rb1+ 8. Kc8 Ra1 9. Rxf7+ Kg4



Now 10. Kb7 Rb1+ is useless; and White has only a draw after 10. Kb8? Kxg3 11. Rf6 Kxh4 12. Rxg6 Kh3 13. Kb7 Rxa7+. White gains the necessary tempo by 10. Rg7! Kxg3 11. Rxg6+ Kxh4 12. Kb7 Rxa7+ (White threatened 13. Ra6) 13. Kxa7 Kh3 14. Kb6 h4 15. Kc5 Kh2 16. Kd4 h3 17. Ke3 Kh1 18. Kf3, winning.

The only thing left to try is 4...f6. Now 5. Kb4? Kg4 6. Kb3 Ra6 7. Rc4+ Kxg3 8. Ra4 Rxa7 is a mistake - by comparison with the 4...Kg4 variation, Black here has already played the useful move f7-f6, which changes the evaluation of the position (9. Rxa7 g5=). The next few moves are forced: 5. Kb5 Rb2+ 6. Kc6 Ra2 7. Kb7 Rb2+ 8. Kc8 Ra2.

Unfortunately, White wins here too, by continuing 9. Rg7!



a) 9...g5 10. Kb8 Kg4 11. a8Q (but not 11. hg? fg 12. a8Q Rxa8+ 13. Kxa8 h4 14. gh Kxh4 15. Kb7 g4 16. Kc6 Kg3! 17. Kd5 Kf3=) 11...Rxa8+ 12. Kxa8 Kxg3 13. hg fg 14. Rxg5+ Kh4 15. Rg8 Kh3 16. Kb7, and the king reaches f3 in time.

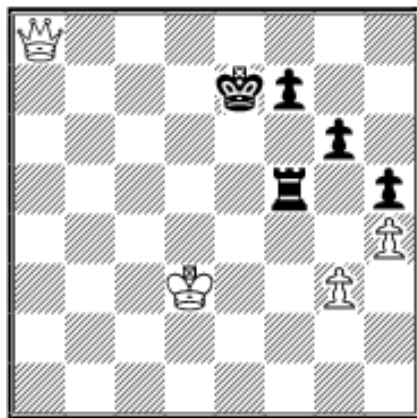
b) 9...Kg4 10. Rxg6+ Kh3 11. Rg7 Ra3 12. Kb8 Rb3+ 13. Rb7 Rxg3 14. Kc7!? (14. Rb4 is also strong) 14...Ra3 (14...Rg8 15. Rb8 Rg7+ 16. Kb6 Rxa7 17. Kxa7 wins) 15. Rb3+! Rxb3 16. a8Q.

My earlier formulation of the typical course of play in such endings was as general as could be. Now, we really should give a more exact description of White's most dangerous plan. *The pawn goes to a6; the rook is on a7, and at the first favorable opportunity, relocates to c7, clearing the way for the pawn. White's king chooses his route so that he can execute the idea of interference - moving the rook to the a-file with tempo - as quickly as possible.*

The question arises: If it's Black to move in the Kantorovich/Steckner position, can he save himself? It turns out that the draw in such situations is not at all simple to achieve.

I began my examination with the obvious move **1...Ke5**, and soon found the line **2. Kd3! Rxf2 3. Re7+!** (the immediate **3. Rc7** is also worth looking into) **3...Kf6 4. a7 Ra2 5. Rc7 Kf5 6. Kc4!**, leading to a position we have already seen, where Steckner demonstrated a win for White.

Well, what if Black played **4...Kxe7 5. a8Q Rf5**, hoping to set up a queen-vs.-rook fortress?



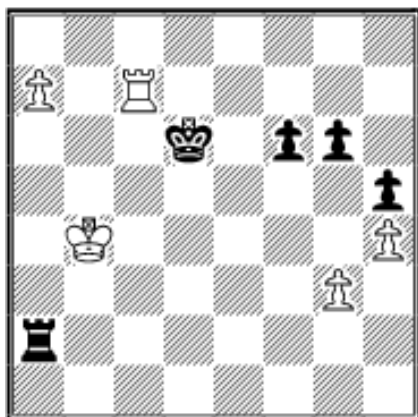
In such cases, it's very difficult to make a proper evaluation by yourself - you really have to look at the theory. Many years ago, Viktor Khenkin made a detailed analysis of the endgame of Belyavsky-Dorfman (Lvov 1978), which gave rise to a similar situation (except that there, Belyavsky had the queen). According to Khenkin's analysis, Black could expect to draw, but his king should stay at g7. With the king stuck in the center, Black loses.

Once again, Herr Steckner undertook to analyze this position, attempting to demonstrate that even if Black is on the move, he still loses. I shall introduce you both to his conclusions and to my own, with the variations illustrating them. These take up

considerable space; the full analysis would undoubtedly require a full extra page of this magazine.

In the line we just looked at: 1...Ke5 2. Kd3 Rxf2 3. Re7+, Black might leave his king in the center, by 3...Kd5 (or 3...Kd6) 4. a7 Ra2. White would continue 5. Rxf7 (with the king on d5, perhaps he could play 5. Kc3!?), and at the right moment, win by attacking the kingside pawns with his rook. Let's examine this characteristic and rather important variation. It was found by Steckner; I have added a few explanations and corrections.

2...Kd5 (instead of 2...Rxf2) 3. Kc3 Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 f6 6. Kb4 Kd6

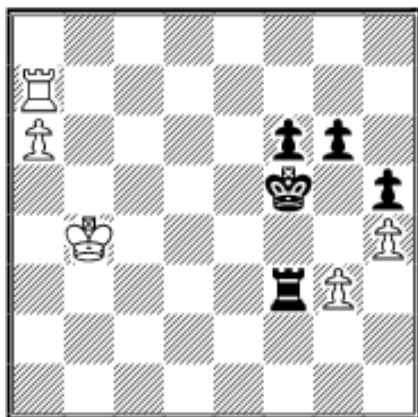


a) It's only a draw after 7. Rf7 Ke6 8. Rg7? (8. Rc7) 8...Kf5 9. Kb5 g5 (Black's last two moves could be transposed) 10. Kb6 Kg4. Now the continuation 11. hg fg 12. Kb7 h4 (12...Rb2+!?) 13. gh Kxh4 14. Rg6 Rxa7+ 15. Kxa7 g4 16. Kb6 Kg3! 17. Kc5 Kf3= is harmless for Black. If 11. Kb7, the immediate capture on g3 loses: Black has to drive away the White king first, by 11...Rb2+! 12. Kc8 Ra2 13. Kb8. Only now does Black continue 13...Kxg3 14. hg fg 15. Rxg5+ Kh4=. The most dangerous try is 11. Rg8!?, when 11...Kxg3?? 12. hg fg 13. Rxg5+ and 14. Ra5 is bad for Black, and 11...Rb2+? 12. Kc5 Ra2 13. a8Q Rxa8 14. Rxa8 Kxg3 15. Kd4! Kxh4 16. Ke3(e4) leads to a position where the rook will most likely beat the three pawns. The waiting move 11...Ra1! secures the draw, for example: 12. Kb7 Rb1+ 13. Kc6 Ra1 14. a8Q Rxa8 15. Rxa8 Kxg3 16. Kd5 gh=.

b) The strongest line is 7. Rg7! Kc6 (7...Ke6 8. Kb5 Kf5 9. Kb6 g5 10. Kb7 wins) 8. Rf7! (but not 8. Rxg6? Rxa7 9. Rxf6+ Kd5 10. Rf5+ Ke4 11. Rxh5 Rg7=) 8...f5 9. Rg7 Kb6 10. Kc4, and White must win.



On 1...Ke6 2. Kd4! f6 (2...Rxf2 3. Rc7 Ra2 4. a7), Steckner shows a win for Black after 3. Kc5 Kf5 4. f3! Ra3 5. Kb4 Rxf3



I think this is a good time to turn our attention to a problem we often have to resolve, namely: which square is better for the rook, b7 or c7 (with the rook on a8, it would be: b8 or c8)? Sometimes the choice is made on purely tactical considerations: for example, with White's king at c5 and the rook at a8, Rc8 would be unplayable,

because of Rc2+. And if the rook is on a7, and the Black rook takes the 8th rank, then it would be a good idea to play Rb7 and a6-a7, creating the threat of Rb8. But, *it seems to me that most often, the best retreat for the rook is to the c-file*. In that case, the White king, which usually ends up on the b-file, will not interfere with the rook - that is, the threat of checks along the rank by White's rook, followed by setting up the a-file interference, will be strengthened. Of course, I can't demonstrate my assertion, only illustrate it.

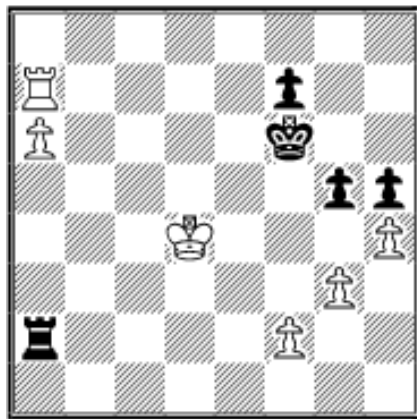
Back to the previous diagram. On 6. Rb7? Black, as G. Mileto pointed out, draws by 6...Rf1! 7. a7 (7. Rb5+ Kg4 8. a7 Rb1+ 9. Kc5 Ra1 10. Kb6 Rxa7) 7...Rb1+! 8. Kc5 Ra1 9. Rg7 g5 10. Kb6 Kg4 - we have already looked at this drawn position: see variation a) under the diagram preceding this one.

But on 6. Rc7! White wins: 6...Rf1 7. Rc4! Ra1 8. Kb5 g5 9. Ra4 Rb1+ 10. Ka5 Rb8 11. a7 Re8 12. Kb6 gh 13. gh. And 6...Re3 is no better: 7. Rc4 Re7 (7...g5 8. a7 Re8 9. Kb5; 7...Re8 8. Kb5) 8. Kb5 g5 9. Ra4 gh 10. gh Ra7 11. Kb6, and wins.

However, after 1...Ke6 2. Kd4 f6, there is a considerably simpler win, by 3. Ra8! Kf5 (3...Kf7 4. Kc5 is hopeless) 4. f3 and 5. a7, transposing to an endgame we know from Unzicker-Lundin, where marching the king to h6 brought victory.

**1...g5!?** is a lot harder to refute. The "un-theoretical" push of the g-pawn should be the right plan in principle. But there's a more accurate way of executing it; so the very complex analysis which follows has no particular theoretical value, but is in itself interesting, and is presented by way of illustrating the uncommon complexity of the problems which analysts and practical players sometimes encounter in these kinds of situations.

White responds 2. Kd4! (later on we shall examine 2. hg+?! Kxg5, and see that this makes Black's task considerably easier)

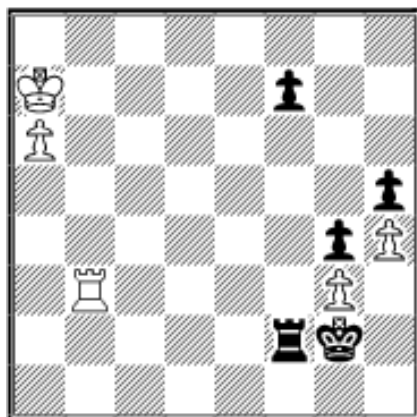


I. 2...g4? The idea behind this move is to take the f2-pawn at the right moment, and then to rely on the power of the far-advanced passed g4-pawn. Play might develop as follows:

3. Kd5 Rd2+ (3...Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 is hopeless) 4. Kc4! I also tested the immediate advance of

White's king; but there, White appears to fall short of success. White has to play Ra8 first, freeing the a7 square for the king.

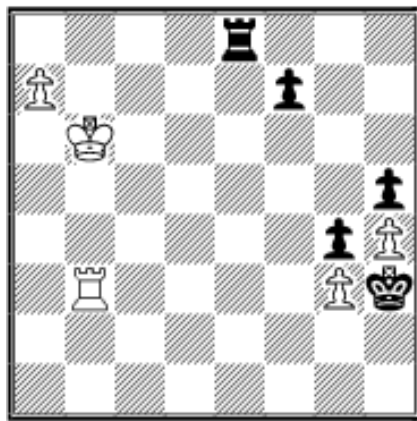
4...Ra2 (4...Rxf2 5. Rb7 Ra2 6. a7 wins) 5. Ra8 Kf5 6. Kb5 Rb2+ 7. Kc6 Rc2+ 8. Kb7 Rb2+ 9. Ka7 Rxf2 10. Rb8 Ke4 (of course, not 10...Rf3? 11. Rb5+ Ke4 12. Kb6, and wins) 11. Rb4+ Kf3 12. Rb3+ Kg2



13. Kb8! (just so - in combination with White's next move) 13...Rf3 14. Rxf3! gf 15. a7 f2 16. a8Q+ Kg1 17. Qa7 (after 13. Kb6, White would not have had this move) 17...Kg2 18. Qb7+ Kg1 19. Qb6 Kg2 20. Qc6+ Kg1 21. Qc5 Kg2 22. Qd5+ Kg1 23. Qd4 Kg2 24. Qe4+ Kg1 25. Qe3 Kg2 26. Qe2 f5 (26...Kg1 27. g4! wins) 27. Kc7

Kg1 28. Kd6 f1Q 29. Qxf1+ Kxf1 30. Ke5 Kf2 31. Kxf5 Kxg3 32. Kg5 wins. Or 21...f5!? 22. Kc7! (the queen endgame after 22. Qe3 Kg2 23. Qe2 Kg1 24. Qxh5 f1Q 25. Qg5 is probably won, too) 22...Kg2 23. Qd5+ Kg1 24. Qd4 Kg2 25. Qd2 Kxg3 (25...Kg1 26. Qe3 Kg2 27. Qe2 Kg1 28. Kd6) 26. Qe2 Kg2 27. Kd6 f4 28. Ke5 f3 29. Qd2 Kg1 30. Qg5+ Kh2 31. Qc1 Kg2 32. Kf4, winning (the last moves of this line were given to me by Müller).

White also does not let the win slip by 13. Kb6 Rf3 14. Rb5 Re3! (14...Ra3? is hopeless: 15. a7 Rxa7 16. Kxa7 Kxg3 17. Rxh5 f5 18. Rh8) 15. a7 Re8 16. Rb3 Kh3 - it's just that he has to choose the right plan here:



The tempting 17. Kb7 Re7+ 18. Ka6 allows Black to defend successfully by 18...Re8 (18...Re6+) 19. Rb8 Re3 20. a8Q Ra3+ 21. Kb5 Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kxg3 23. Kc4 Kxh4, with a draw likely. White achieves his goal by 17. Ra3! f5 18. Kc6 Rd8 19. Kc7 Re8 20. Kd6! (but not 20. Kd7? Ra8 21. Ke6 f4) 20...Kh2 (2...Ra8 21. Ke5)

21. a8Q Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kxg3, and now either 23. Ra3+ Kxh4 24. Ke5 Kg5 25. Ra8, or 23. Ke5 f4 24. Kf5 f3 25. Kg5, winning in either case.

I certainly would not have spent so much time on the analysis of 2...g4, if I had known that in the other line - the one in which Steckner had shown a win - Black could in fact draw; this was established two days later.

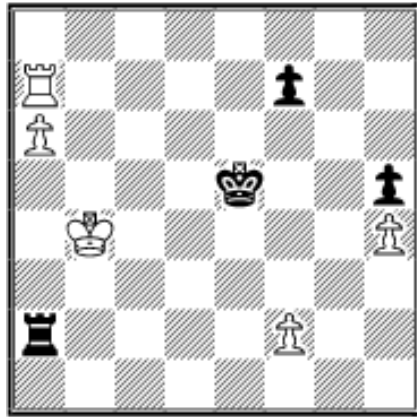
II. 2...gh 3. gh Ra5! Everything else is bad:

a) 3...Ra4+ 4. Kc5 Rxh4 5. Rb7 Ra4 6. a7 Kg5 (6...h4 7. Kb5 Ra1 8. Rb6+ and 9. Ra6 wins; 6...Ra1 7. Kb6 wins) 7. Rb5!, winning;

b) 3...Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 Kf5 6. Kc5! (but not 6. Rxf7+?)

Kg4=) 6...Kg4 7. Kb5 (7. Kc4!?) 7...Rb2+ 8. Kc4 Ra2 9. Kb3 and wins;

4. Kc4 Ke5!? 5. Kb4 Ra2



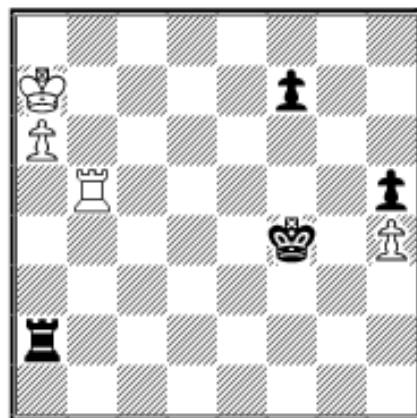
Here nothing comes of 6. Kb5? Rb2+ 7. Kc6 Rc2+ 8. Kb6 Rb2+ 9. Kc7 Ra2 10. Ra8 (10. Kb8 f5 11. Re7+ Kf6) 10...Kf4 11. Kb7 Rb2+ 12. Ka7 f5=.

6. f4+!! Ke6 (6...Kxf4+!? 7. Rxf7+; 6...Ke4? 7. Re7+) 7. Kb5 Rb2+ 8. Kc6 Rc2+ 9. Kb6 Rb2+ 10. Kc7 Ra2 11. Ra8 Kf5 12. Kb7 Rb2+ 13.

Ka7 Kxf4 14. Rb8 Ra2.

The attempt at a flank attack by 14...Re2? doesn't work. White first cuts off the enemy king from the h-pawn by 15. Rg8!?, and then outraces Black: 15...f5 16. Ka8 Kf3 17. a7 Rb2 18. Rb8 Ra2 19. Kb7 Kg3 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8 Kxh4 (21...f4 22. Kc6 f3 23. Kd5 f2 24. Rf8 Kg2 25. Ke4 wins) 22. Kc6 Kg3 23. Kd5 h4 24. Kd4 h3 25. Ke3 wins (analysis by Vulfson and Dvoretsky).

15. Rb5



Here Steckner continued with 15...f5 16. Kb6 Kg4 17. Ra5! (but not 17. a7? Rxa7 18. Kxa7 Kxh4=) 17...Rb2+ 18. Kc7, and after winning the rook for the a-pawn by 18...Re2 19. a7 Re8 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8, White's king has enough time to get back to the kingside.

As Vulfson correctly pointed out, 15...Kg4! was a more logical try. After the h4-pawn is captured, either the f-pawn or the h-pawn may advance; in the latter case, the move f7-f5 could turn out to be a loss of tempo. I tested the variations, and concluded that by making "only"

moves, Black could achieve a draw.

16. Kb6 (16. Rb4+ Kg3 17. Kb7 f5=) 16...Kxh4!

The immediate rook sacrifice is a mistake: 16...Rxa6+? 17. Kxa6 Kxh4 - in view of 18. Rb8! (only move!) 18...Kg3 19. Rg8+ (or 19. Kb5 h4 20. Rg8+!) 19...Kf3 20. Kb5! (but not the 20. Rh8? move which would be normal in such situations, because of 20...f5=) 2...h4 21. Rh8! (but here, this move is necessary) 21...f5 (21...Kg3 22. Kc4 h3 23. Kd3 h2 24. Ke2 wins) 22. Kc4 Ke3 23. Re8+!, winning.

17. Ra5 Rb2+! (you may see for yourselves that on 17...Rg2? 18. a7 Rg8 19. a8Q Rxa8 20. Rxa8, the White king gets back to the kingside in time) 18. Kc7

If Black gives one more check by 18...Rc2+?, then after 19. Kd7 he let slip the draw: 19...Rg2 20. a7 Rg8 21. a8Q Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kg3 23. Rg8+! Kf3 24. Rh8! (here, the standard technique of "inserting a check to win a tempo" works just fine: 24...Kg4 25. Kd6 h4 26. Ke5 h3 27. Ke4 Kg3 28. Ke3 wins) 24...f5 25. Ke6 Ke4 (25...f4 26. Kf5 wins) 26. Kf6 f4 27. Kg5 f3 28. Kh4. Understandably, with the king on c7, these ideas do not work anymore.

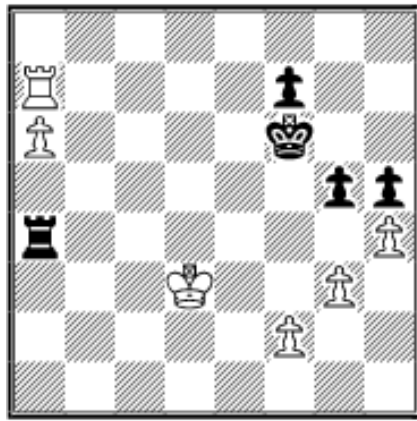
18...Rg2! 19. a7 Rg8 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8 Kg3 22. Rg8+ Kf3 23. Rh8 f5 24. Kd6 f4 (or 24...Ke4) 25. Ke5 Ke3=.

Grandmaster Dautov found a simpler and safer means to a draw, based on the same g6-g5 idea; as it turns out, Black first needs to restrict the activity of the White king.

**1...Ra4!! 2. Kd3**

2. Ra8 is met the same way. And if 2. f4, then the simplest is 2...Ke6! 3. Kd3 f6 4. Kc3 Kf5 5. Kb3 Ra1 6. Kb4 Kg4.

**2...g5!**



If White allows 3...gh, then the rook takes the h4-pawn, and White's king is less active than after the immediate 1...g5!? 2. Kd4! - here is the point to cutting White's king off on the 4th rank. For example: 3. Kc3 gh 4. gh Rxh4 5. Rb7 (5. Kb3 Rh1) 5...Ra4 6. a7 h4=.

And exchanging pawns on g5 allows Black to begin his kingside counterplay immediately.

**3. hg+ Kxg5 4. Kc3 Kg4 5. Kb3 Ra1 6. Kb4 Ra2**

6...f5 6. Rg7+ Kf3 8. a7 Kxf2 is also possible.

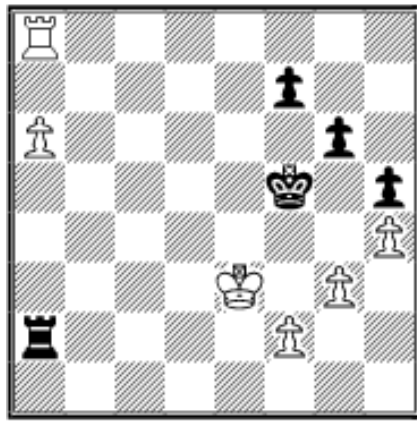
**7. Kb5** (7. Rxf7 Rxa6=) **7...Rxf2 8. Ra8** (8. Rb7 Kxg3 9. a7 Ra2) **8...Rb2+**

But not 8...Kxg3? 9. Rg8+ Kf3 10. a7 Ra2 11. a8Q+ Rxa8 12. Rxa8 h4 13. Rh8 Kg3 14. Kc4 and wins.

**9. Kc4 Ra2 10. Rg8+ Kf3 11. Kb5 Rb2+ 12. Kc6 Ra2 13. Kb7 Rb2+ 14. Ka8 f5** (or 14...Rb6 15. a7 f5 16. Rg5 Rb5 17. Rg7 f4=) **15. Rg5 f4 16. gf h4 17. f5 Kf4 18. Rh5 Kg4 19. Rh8 Kxf5 20. Rxh4 Ke6**, resulting in a known theoretical draw - if White's rook tries going to b8 to free the king, Black's king reaches c7.

The analyses I have been showing you are brand-new and as yet insufficiently checked - it's quite likely that they will also be improved and expanded. But the main conclusion is clear: ***These kinds of positions are dangerous for Black, and sometimes completely lost; in any event, they require exceptionally accurate defense.***

With a small change in the position of White's rook and Black's king, we obtain still another "well known" theoretical position.



**N. Kopayev, 1958**  
**M. Dvoretsky, 2003**

White to move

Notice *the optimal position of Black's pieces: the rook keeps the f-pawn under attack, while the king occupies the most active square available to it.*

Someone familiar with Nikolai Kopayev's endgame would show the variations 1. Kd4 Rxf2 2. Rf8 Ra2 3. Rxf7+ Kg4= and 1. f3 Ra3+ 2. Kd4 Rxf3 3. Rf8 Ra3 4. Rxf7+ Kg4 5. Rf6 Kxg3 6. Rxc6+ Kxh4 7. Kc5 Kh3 8. Kb6 h4=, achieving the draw without difficulty in both lines. However, White has a more dangerous try at his disposal:

### 1. Ra7!?

How now does Black defend? 1...Kf6? leads to the lost position of Kantorovich/Steckner; while 1...Ke6? leads to the same position with Black to move, and his poor first move - we have already looked at these lines. 1...Kg4?! 2. Rxf7 Rxa6 looks suspect - White will most likely win, by organizing an attack on g6. There's only one try left.

### 1...f6!

Black begins active counterplay without loss of time. On 2. Kf3 there follows 2...g5! 3. hg fg 4. Ra8 g4+ 5. Ke3 Kg6, and the king gets back to g7 in time.

### 2. Ra8

Threatening to reach the won position with the pawn on the 7th, which we know from the Unzicker-Lundin game, by 3. f3 Ra3+ 4. Ke2 Ra2+ 5. Kd1 Ra3 6. a7.

### 2...Kg4 3. a7 f5!

Now 4. Kd4 Kf3 is useless. White has to go for a position with pawns on one side only, but he cannot win it.

**4. Rg8 f4+! 5. gf (5. Ke4 Ra4+! 6. Ke5 Ra5+) 5...Ra3+ 6. Ke4**

White gets nothing from 6. Ke2 Rxa7 (or 6...Ra2+ first) 7. Rxg6+ Kxf4=.

**6...Ra4+ 7. Ke5 Ra5+ 8. Ke6 Ra6+ 9. Kf7 Rxa7+ 10. Kxg6 Ra6+ 11. Kf7+ Kxf4=.**

(End of Part One)

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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## COLUMNISTS

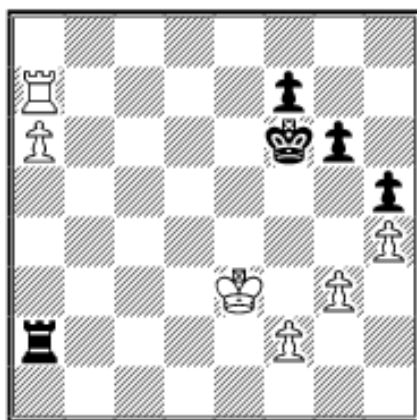
*The  
Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky



## Theoretical Discoveries

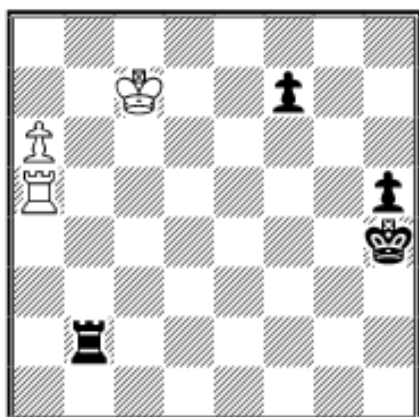
## Part 2

After the publication of my November column, in which the highly complex analysis of the important theoretical position of Kantorovich/Steckner occupied center stage, I had another exchange of letters with Johannes Steckner, leading to the correction of some variations.



The assessment of **1...g5!?** hinges on the outcome of a lengthy and almost forced variation:

**2. Kd4! gh 3. gh Ra5 4. Kc4 Ke5!? 5. Kb4 Ra2 6. f4+!! Ke6 7. Kb5 Rb2+ 8. Kc6 Rc2+ 9. Kb6 Rb2+ 10. Kc7 Ra2 11. Ra8 Kf5 12. Kb7 Rb2+ 13. Ka7 Kxf4 14. Rb8 Ra2 15. Rb5 Kg4! (on 15...f5 16. Kb6 Kg4 17. Ra5! Rb4+ 18. Kc7, White wins) 16. Kb6 Kxh4! 17. Ra5 Rb2+! 18. Kc7**



I thought Black could save himself by **18...Rg2 19. a7 Rg8 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8 Kg3 22. Rg8+ Kf3 23. Rh8 f5**. The concluding position of this variation is indeed drawn; however, White has better. Steckner found **19. Ra1!**, making it harder for the rook to return to g8. After **19...Kh3 (19...Rg8 20. Rh1+) 20. a7 Rg8 21. Rh1+! Kg2 22.**

**Rxh5, White wins.**

In search of a saving line for Black, I turned once again to the in-between check **18...Rc2+!**, which I considered a mistake, since in the variation 19. Kd7 (19. Kd8 is useless, because of 19...Rg2 and 20...Rg8+) 19...Rg2 20. a7 Rg8 21. a8Q Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kg3 23. Rg8+! Kf3 24. Rh8! f5 (24...Kg4 25. Kd6 is bad, too) 25. Ke6, White wins (with the king at c7, this move is impossible, and there is no win).

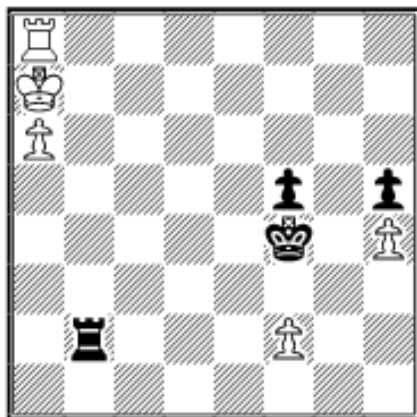
But Black must answer **19. Kd7**, not with 19...Rg2?, but with **19...Rb2!!** The point is that after **20. a7** (there's nothing better) **20...Rb7+ 21. Kd6 Rxa7 22. Rxa7 Kg3**, White's rook is on the 7th rank, instead of the 8th, where the Black pawn at f7 interferes with him. This small difference becomes decisive - Black is saved.

Along with 19...Rc2+!, Black also gets a draw after 19...Re2! 20. Kd7 Rb2!., or 20. a7 Re7+ 21. Kb6 Rxa7. But after 19...Rg2? 21. Ra1!, Black can no longer fall back on the same defensive idea: 20...Re2 is not met by 21. a7? Re8 =, or by 21. Kd7?! Rb2!, but by 21. Kd8!! Rg2 (now Black can't play Rb2) 22. Ke7! and wins, since the rook, once again, is unable to reach the g8-square.

Vishwanathan Anand and Rustem Dautov have found a simpler way to draw. They examined **1...g5!? 2. Kd4! gh 3. gh**, and now, not 3...Ra5, but **3...Ke6! 4. Kc4 Ke5**. The point is, that with the rook at a5, White wins a tempo with 5. Kb4, and after 5...Ra2 6. f4+!! Kxf4? 7. Rxf7+ Kg4 8. a7 Kxh4 9. Rd7(c7)!, the terrible threat of a horizontal check by the rook, followed by moving to the a-file and cutting off Black's rook, would decide the outcome.

But with the rook at a2, the king could not attack it, and in the line 5. f4+ Kxf4! 6. Rxf7+ Kg4 7. a7 Kxh4 8. Kb4 Kg3(g4), the draw becomes inevitable.

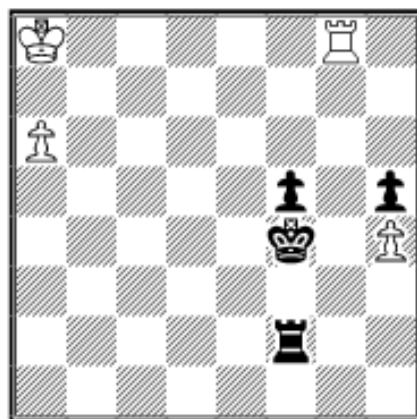
Therefore, White plays **5. Ra8 Kf4 6. Kb6 Rb2+ 7. Ka7 f5!**



**8. Rg8!?** (White gets nothing out of 8. Rb8 Rxf2 9. Rb4+ Kg3 10. Kb7 Ra2 =) **8...Kf3!** The best continuation, pointed out by Steckner.

**9. Rb8** (9. Rg5 f4 10. Rxh5 Kxf2 =) **9...Rxf2 10. Rb5 Re2!** (but not 10...Kg4? 11. Kb6 Ra2 12. Ra5 Rb2+ 13. Kc7, with a winning position) **11. Kb6** (11. Rxf5+ Kg4 =) **11...Re6+**, etc.

Black's task is much more complicated after 8...Rxf2? 9. Ka8.



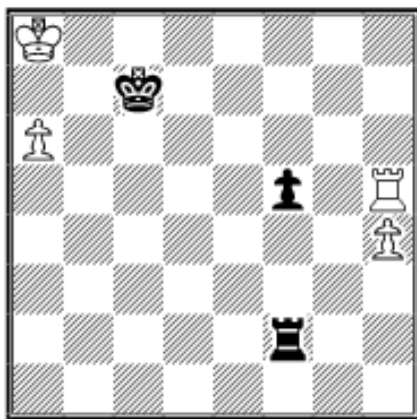
For example: 9...Rb2 10. a7 Ke3 11. Rb8 Ra2 12. Re8+! (a typical in-between check to win a tempo - the direct 12. Kb7? f4 costs the win) 12...Kf3 (12...Kd3 13. Rf8! Ke4 14. Kb7 f4 15. a8Q with a win, because the Black king has been driven from e3 to e4 - Steckner) 13. Kb7 Kg3 14. a8Q Rxa8 15. Rxa8 Kxh4 (15...f4 16. Kc6 f3 17. Kd5 f2 18.

Rf8 Kg2 19. Ke4 is hopeless) 16. Kc6 Kg3 17. Kd5 h4 18. Kd4! f4 (18...h3 19. Ke3) 19. Kd3! h3 20. Ke2 h2 21. Rg8+ Kh4 22. Rg7! (zugzwang) 22...Kh3 23. Kf2 h1N+ 24. Kf3 Kh2 25. Kxf4, and the knight is soon lost.

I also examined another, less standard defensive plan, beginning with 9...Ke5!?. The king heads over to the queenside, in order to impede the White king's escape from a8. He can't be prevented from this: 10. Rd8? Rh2 11. a7 Rxh4 =. And on 10. a7 there follows 10...Kd6! 11. Rg5 (11. Kb7 Rb2+ 12. Ka6 Ra2+ 13. Kb6 Rb2+; 11. Rg7 Rb2! 12. Rb7 Rg2 =) 11...Kc7 12. Rxh5 Re2 13. Rh7+ Kb6, with a draw. So White has to attack the g5-pawn immediately.

10. Rg5! Kd6!?. (Steckner gives the interesting variation 10...Rb2 11. Rxh5 Ke4 12. a7 f4 13. Rh7! - but not 13. Rh8? f3

14. h5 Rb5 15. Re8+ Re5 = - 13...f3 14. h5 Rb5 15. Re7+ Re5  
16. Kb8! Rxe7 17. a8Q+) 11. Rxh5 Kc7



I thought that Black could get a draw in the variation 12. Rh7+ Kb6 13. Rh6+ Kc7 14. h5 f4! 15. Ka7!?! (15. Rf6 Rh2 16. h6 f3 =) 15...Rd2 16. Rf6 (16. Rh7+ Rd7!?!; 16. Rb6 f3 17. h6 Rh2 =) 16...Rd7! 17. h6 f3 =. However, Steckner rightly points out that White can win a vital tempo by playing 12. Ka7! at once. I shall give his main

variations: 12...Rh2 (12...f4 13. Rf5! f3 14. h5, or 13...Kd6 14. Kb7 Rb2+ 15. Ka8 Rb4 16. a7 Kc7 17. Rc5+ Kb6 18. Rc8 f3 19. Rb8+ Ka5 20. Rf8) 13. Rh7+ Kc6 14. h5 f4 (14...Rd2 15. Rh6+ Kc7 16. Rf6 Rd7 17. Rb6) 15. Kb8! (15. h6? f3 16. Kb8 Re2 17. Rf7 f2 = is a mistake) 15...Re2 (15...Rb2+ changes nothing: 16. Kc8 Ra2 17. a7, or 15...f3 16. a7 Rb2+ 17. Kc8) 16. Rh6+! Kc5 (16...Kb5 17. Rf6!) 17. a7! Rb2+ 18. Kc8 Ra2 19. Rh7 f3 20. Rc7+ Kd5 21. h6 f2 22. h7 f1Q 23. h8Q Qa6+ 24. Kb8 Qb6+ 25. Rb7 Qd6+ 26. Ka8, and White must win.

Our detailed analysis of the positions in the two preceding diagrams was done more on "sporting considerations", since it has no effect on the assessment of this endgame. Let me remind you once again of our main conclusion: the move 1...g5!? is sufficient to draw. After 2. Kd4! gh 3. gh, Black gets a very complicated draw by 3...Ra5 4. Kc4 Ke5; far simpler is 3...Ke6! 4. Kc5 Ke5, and after 5. Ra8, the important thing is not to take the f2-pawn with the rook too soon.

However, Dautov has put forward the most secure defense, which is: **1...Ra4!**; if then 2. Kd3 g5! Now, 3. Kc3 gh 4. gh Rxh4 leads to an easy draw (as opposed to the analogous situation with the king at c5, after 1...g5!? 2. Kd4! gh 3. gh Ra4+? 4. Kc5 Rxh4 5. Rb7 Ra4 6. a7, and wins).

In the November column, I mentioned that **2. Ra8** is also met by **2...g5**. Steckner correctly pointed out that Black obtains a

much simpler draw by 2...Kf5!, for example: 3. Kd3 (3. f3 Ra3+) 3...Kg4 4. Rf8 Rxa6 5. Rxf7 Kh3 =. This was published in the August edition of Karsten Müller's column, "Endgame Corner". There, too, we saw Steckner's demonstration that 2...g5 loses. And it is with this that I disagree.

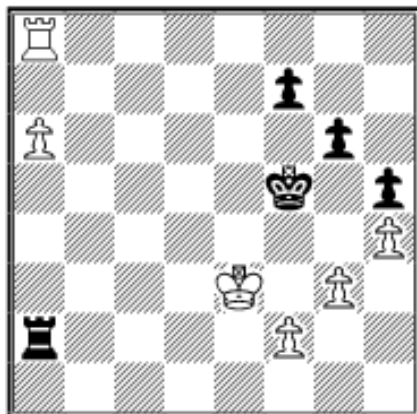
**3. hg+ Kxg5 4. f3** (4. a7 Kf6 = Dautov) **4...Kf5 5. Kd3 Ra3+**. Steckner examined 5...Ke5 6. Kc3 Kd6 7. Kb3 Ra1, stating that after 8. Kb4? Kc7 9. Ra7+ Kb6 1. Rxf7 Kxa6, the position is drawn; yet after 8. Kc4! White's king stands, at the end of this line, a bit closer to the king's wing, which is enough to secure him the win.

**6. Kc4 Rxf3 7. Kb4.** Nor is 7. Rf8 Ra3 8. Rxf7+ Kg6 9. Ra7 Rxd3 10. Ra8 Ra3 11. Kb5 h4 dangerous, nor 10. Rc7 Ra3 11. a7 Ra1 12. Kb5 Rb1+.

**7...Rf1 8. Rf8.** 8. Rh8 runs into the same reply; and if 8. Rg8, then 8...Ra1 9. Kb5 Ra3! 10. Kb6 Rb3+ 11. Kc6 Ra3 12. Kb7 Rb3+ 13. Ka8 Ke4 =.

**8...Rb1+! 9. Kc5 Rc1+ 10. Kb6 Rb1+ 11. Kc6 Rc1+ 12. Kb7 Rb1+ 13. Ka8 Kg4 14. Rg8+ Kf3** (14...Kh3) **15. Rb8 Ra1 16. Rb3+ Kg4 17. a7 f5 =.**

One final note: I was somewhat disappointed in my last example in the November column - the Kopayev/Dvoretsky position; I shall probably not be including it in the next edition of my book.



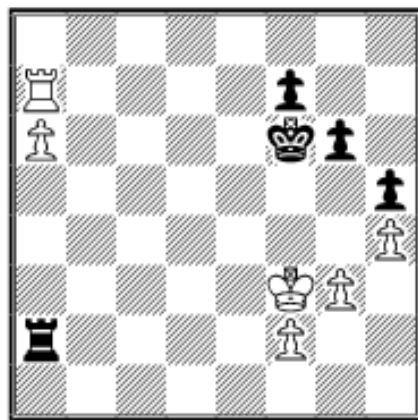
The problem is that, in reply to **1. Ra7!?**, Black, it turns out, cannot only play 1...f6!?, but also **1...Kg4!? 2. Rxf7 Rxa6** I thought, for some reason (without analyzing it) that the resulting position was difficult for Black; but now, after actually moving the pieces about, I cannot find any winning chances after 3. Ke4 Kh3!? (or 3...Re6+!?)

4. Kd5 Re2 5. Rf6 Kh3) 4. Ke5 (4. Kf4 Ra5 5. Rf6 Kg2 6. Rxg6 Kxf2) 4...Kg2 5. Rf6 Ra5+ 6. Ke6 g5.

In fact, after **1...f6!? 2. Ra8 Kg4 3. a7**, Black can get a draw either with the **3...f5!? 4. Rg8 f4+!** I examined, or with **3...Ra3+ 4. Ke4 f5+ 5. Ke5 Kf3**.

Examples in which alternative means of achieving the goal are uncovered, become less interesting, and fail to leave a lasting impression. For this reason, I like to replace them with examples of higher quality.

Now let's look at some practical endgames, where very strong players suffered misfortune, although they could have saved themselves with correct defense. Knowledge of theory will help us make critical evaluations of their play; on the other hand, it probably will also allow us to find new ideas to enrich our current theoretical viewpoints. But for this, we cannot escape repeated immersions in piles of analysis.



***Svidler - Akopian***  
**European Cup, Kallithea 2002**

Black to move

This is the Kantorovich/Steckner position, the only difference being that the White king is not so well placed at f3. This means that in some variations, Black has an extra

tempo, which must increase the number of drawing possibilities at his disposal.

**51...Ke5**

With White's king at e3, this move would lose; here, I believe, it's not bad. Black could also follow the "Dautov recipe":

51...Ra4!? 52. Ke3 g5, for example: 53. hg+ Kxg5 54. Ra8 Kg4 55. a7 Ra3+ 56. Ke4 Ra4+ 57. Ke5(d5) Kf3=. And the immediate 51...g5 works too (the only reply we have to worry about is 52. Kd4!, but here that isn't possible).

## 52. Ke3 Ra3+

In Informant No. 85, Peter Svidler recommends 52...f6 53. Kd3 Rxf2 54. Rb7 Ra2 55. a7 Kf5 56. Kc4 Kg4 57. Kb3 Ra6 58. Rb4+ Kxg3 59. Ra4 Rxa7. The sharp-eyed among you may perhaps recall that we have already seen this situation (in the November column): when we studied the Kantorovich/Steckner position; we reached it in the variation 4. Kc4!! f6 5. Kb4? Kg4 6. Kb3, and noted that it would be won with Black's pawn on f7, but drawn if it was on f6.

The move 52...f6 still appears dubious to me, in view of 53. Ra8 Ra3+ 54. Ke2, when Black would find it hard to avoid transposition to the won position from Unzicker - Lundin (after f2-f3 and a6-a7) without losing something.

## 53. Kd2 Ra2+?

The decisive mistake! Black had to use the same defensive plan as in the Kopayev/Dvoretsky position: the advance of his f-pawn. Here's a rough plan: 53...f5! 54. Kc2 (54. f3 f4 55. g4 hg 56. fg Ra2+ and 57...f3=; 54. Ra8 Ke4 55. Re8+ Kd5!=) 54...f4 (just not 54...Ke4? in view of 55. Re7+!, when the king cannot go to f3 because of 56. Re3+) 55. Kb2 Ra5 56. Kb3 (56. Ra8 fg 57. fg Kf5 and 58...Kg4=) 56...fg 57. fg Kf5 58. Kb4 (58. Rf7+ Ke6!=, but not 58...Kg4? 59. Rf4+ Kxg3 60. Ra4 Rb5+ 61. Kc4 Rb8 62. a7 Ra8 63. Kd5 and wins) 58...Ra1 59. Kb5 Kg4 or 59...Rb1+, with a draw.

## 54. Kc3

54. Kd3 would lead to the won position we have already analyzed. But of course, moving the king to c3 is more natural.

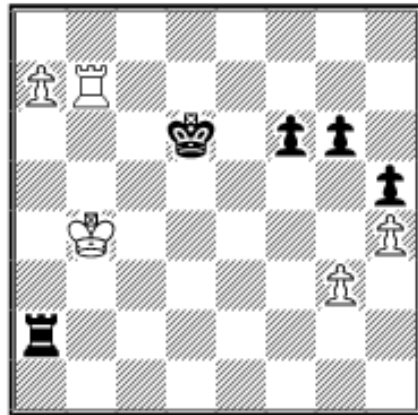
## 54...Rxf2 55. Rb7

The rook could also have gone to c7. Whereas the rook check we recommended with White's king on d3 is poor here: 55. Re7+?! Kd6! (55...Kf6 56. Rc7 and wins) 56. a7 Rf3+! (here's the difference: this check was not available in that line, because the king could attack the rook) 57. Kb4 (or anywhere else) 57...Kxe7 58. a8Q Rxd3. The rook is not lost, and Black

probably draws.

### 55...Ra2 56. a7 Kf6

In Svidler's opinion, Black could still have drawn by 56...f6 57. Kb4 Kd6 (57...Rb2+ 58. Kc5 Rxb7 59. a8Q and 57...Kf5 58. Rb5+ are both hopeless)

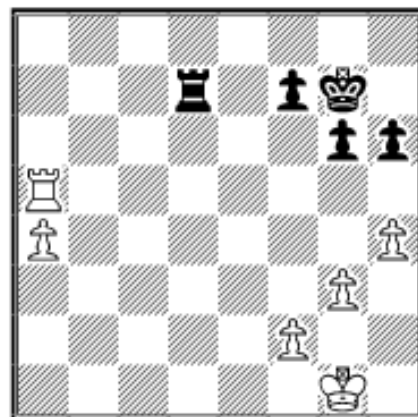


Steckner also analyzed this position (with White's rook at c7), but he came to the opposite conclusion. All that remained for me to do was to compare analyses. There's no difference in evaluation for the line 58. Rf7 Ke6 59. Rg7 g5 60. Kc5 Kf5 (Black's last two moves could be transposed) 61. Kb6 Kg4 - this is drawn.

But after 58. Rg7! Kc6, Svidler only looks at 59. Rxg6 Rxa7 60. Rxf6+ Kd5 61. Rf5+ Ke4 62. Rxh5 Rg7=; Steckner gives 59. Rf7! f5 60. Rg7 Kb6 61. Kc4, and White must win.

The concluding moves of the game are given without comment, since I cannot see where Black could have avoided his sad fate.

**57. Kc4 Ra1 58. Kb5 Rb1+ 59. Kc6 Rc1+ 60. Kb6 Rb1+ 61. Kc7 Ra1 62. Kb8 Kf5 63. Rb4**, and Black resigned.



***Leko - Anand***  
**Linares 2003**

Black to move

Vishwanathan Anand undoubtedly knew that such positions, as a rule, are drawn. So it's not easy to understand why he avoided the standard pawn structure after

38...h5! After 39. Kg2 Rd3! and 40...Ra3, his rook is behind



the passed pawn, while simultaneously restricting the enemy king, and Black would draw without any special difficulty.

There was no need to fear 39. Rc5 and 40. a5 (or 40. Rc4).

***Flank defense of the pawn by the rook makes sense only in one of two situations (neither of which applies here):***

- ***a) when the pawn is far advanced (to the 6th or 7th rank); or***
- ***b) when the rook defending the pawn simultaneously protects all the kingside pawns. Generally, this occurs when the a-pawn is on the 2nd or 3rd rank.***

**38...Rd1+?! 39. Kg2 Ra1?**

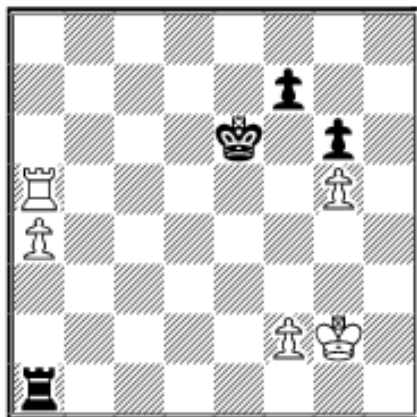
"When the engineer seeks new roads, the train goes off the rails." It still wasn't too late to play 39...h5, although this would be somewhat weaker here than on the previous move - White's king now has access to f3.

**40. g4!**

Of course! With this kind of structure, Black will find it much harder to create kingside counterplay. Also, in this new situation the standard schemes for counterplay are no longer applicable; Black will have to come up with a new defensive plan.

**40...Kf6**

At the end of November, I visited Denmark. There, IM Jacob Aagard presented me with the new book by GM Mihai Marin, *Secrets of Chess Defence*, in which he examines the endgame Leko-Anand. Marin's opinion was that "this is a good moment to play 41. g5+, when White should win without problems." I checked out this statement - I must admit that it was a rather superficial operation, due to lack of time - and was unable to find any win after 41...hg 42. hg+ Ke6.



43. f4 Ra3 44. Kf2 f5!? (44...Kd6)  
 45. Ke2 Kd6 46. Kd2 Kc6  
 (threatening 47...Kb6) 47. Ra6+  
 Kd5 48. Kc2 Ke4 49. Kb2 Rd3 50.  
 Rxc6 Kxf4 51. a5 Kg4 52. Rg7  
 (52. a6 Rd7 53. Kc3 Kh5 =; 52.  
 Rg8 Rd5 53. a6 Ra5 =) 52...Rd6!  
 53. Kc3 f4 54. g6 f3 55. Rg8 Kg3  
 56. g7 Rd7 =.

43. Kg3 Ra2 44. f3 Ra1 45. Kf4 Kd6 46. Ra7 (46. Ke4 Re1+)  
 46...Ke6 47. a5 (47. Ke4 Re1+ 48. Kd4 Rd1+ 49. Kc4 Rc1+  
 50. Kb5 Rb1+ 51. Ka6 Rf1) 47...Ra4 48. Ke3 Kf5 49. Rxf7+  
 Kxg5 50. Ra7 Kh4 51. a6 Kg3 52. Ra8 Ra3+ (52...g5 53. a7  
 Kg2 doesn't lose, either) 53. Ke4 Ra4+ 54. Ke5 Kxf3 55. Kf6  
 Kg4 56. Kxg6 Ra1 57. Kf6 Kf4 58. Ke6 Ke4 59. Kd6 Kd4 60.  
 Kc6 (60. a7 Ra6+! 61. Kc7 Kc5 62. Kb7 Rb6+, but not  
 60...Ra2? 61. Kc6 Kc4 62. Rc8+! and wins) 60...Rc1+! 61.  
 Rb7 Rb1+ 62. Ka7 Kc5 63. Rb8 Rh1, and draws.

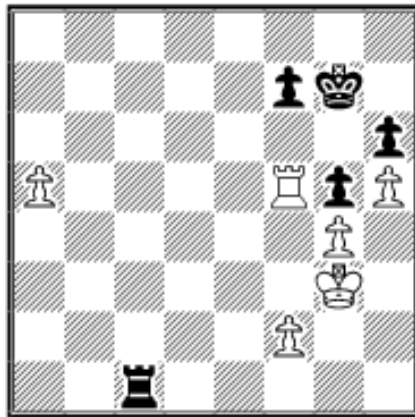
Of course I cannot swear to the correctness of these rough variation; I invite interested parties to find an improvement for White.

### 41. Kg3

Now if 41...Ra2, White continues 42. Kf3 Ke6 43. Ke3, followed by f2-f3 and Ke4. But the incautious 42. f3? would have led to a draw in view of 42...g5! 43. Rf5+ Kg6 44. h5+ Kg7 45. a5 Kg8. This pawn configuration is ideal for White: his rook defends everything, and he need only approach the a-pawn with his king. Unfortunately, however, the king is permanently shut in on the kingside.

### 41...Rc1

Anand changes his defensive plan. He will station his rook on the 4th rank, attacking the enemy pawn and restricting the movements of his rook and king. So Leko immediately removes his rook from the a-file.

**42. Rb5 g5?! 43. Rf5+ Kg6 44. h5+ Kg7 45. a5**

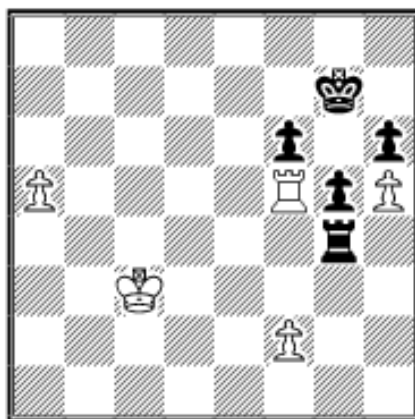
**45...Ra1?** This is inconsistent. He should have continued his intended defensive plan by 45...Rc4!

As Leko showed, 46. f3?! allows Black to save himself by 46...Rc2 47. f4 (otherwise 47...Ra2, and the king will never get out of g3) 47...Rc3+! 48. Kf2 gf 49. Rxf4 Ra3 50. Rf5 f6 51. Rb5 (51. Ke2 Kf7

52. Kd2 Ke6 53. Kc2 Rg3, with equality) 51...Kf7 52. Rb7+ Ke6 53. Rb6+ Ke5 54. a6 Kf4! 55. Rxf6+ Kxg4 56. Rxh6 Kg5 57. Rb6 Kxh5 58. Ke2 Kg5 59. Kd2 Kf5 60. Kc2 Ke5 61. Kb2 Ra5 62. Rh6 (62. Kb3 Kd5 63. Kb4 Ra1 64. Rh6 Rb1+ 65. Ka5 Kc5=) 62...Kd4 63. Rh4+ (63. Kb3 Ra1=) 63...Kd3 64. Rh3+ Kc4 65. Ra3 Rb5+ 66. Kc2 Rb8=.

White would have to sacrifice the g-pawn by 46. Kf3 Ra4 47. Ke3 Rxg4 48. Kd3, and here Leko ended his analysis, rightly concluding that Black would have a hard time drawing this. Which is true; because even though he has regained his pawn, he still has not created any real kingside counterplay. Nevertheless, can we give a one-sided appraisal of this position, and properly conclude that White wins by force?

48...f6 49. Kc3



Jan Timman (writing in *New In Chess* 2003 No. 3) says yes. His line is 49...Ra4 50. Kb3 Ra1 51. Kb4 Kf7 52. Kb5 Ke6 53. Rc5 Ra2 54. a6 Rxf2 55. a7 Ra2 56. Rc6+ and 57. Ra6, winning.

Karsten Müller holds the opposite opinion. Instead of 49...Ra4?! he looked at 49...Kf7 50. Kb3 Ke6.

Here's his analysis:

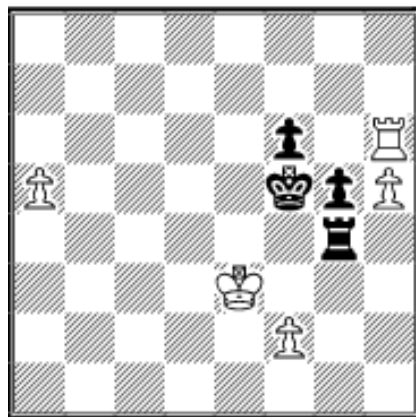
51. Rc5 Rg1 52. a6 Ra1 53. Rc6+ Kf5 54. Kb4 Kg4 55. Rxf6 Kxh5 56. f3 Ra2 57. Kb5 Ra3 58. Kb6 Rb3+ 59. Kc7 Ra3 60. Kb7 Rb3+ 61. Rb6 Rxf3=;

51. a6 Kxf5 52. a7 Rf4 53. a8Q Kg4 54. Qe8 Rxf2 55. Qg6 f5 56. Qxh6 Rh2 57. Qe6 Kxh5 58. Qxf5 Rh4=.

Now, there are many players (including the author of several endgame manuals, grandmaster Nikolai Krogius) who believe that in the "queen vs. rook plus pawn" ending, if the Black pawn (other than the rook pawn) moves off the 7th rank, his position is lost. But in fact, this evaluation does not hold with a knight's pawn, and the final position of Mueller's variation is in fact drawn.

Instead of 47. Ke3, Marin offered 47. Rd5 Kf6 48. Ke3 Ke6! (48...Rxg4? is bad because of 49. Rd4 and 50. Ra4) 49. Rb5 Rxg4 (49...f6? 50. f3) 50. Rb6+ Ke5 51. Rxh6 Ra4 52. Ra6, "and the white pawns look dangerous".

It would be more logical for Black to play 50...Kf5 51. Rxh6 f6



Here also, I do not see the win for White.

52. Rh8 Re4+! (or 52...Ra4 53. Ra8 Re4+!, but not 53...g4? 54. a6 Kg5 57. a7, winning) 53. Kd3 Ra4 54. Ra8 Rh4 55. a6 Rxh5 56. Rc8 Rh3+ 57. Kc4 Ra3 58. Rc6 Ke5 59. Kb4 Ra1 60. Rc5+ Kd4! - putting his king directly in front of its opponent, Black wards off the threat of blocking the a-file by 61. Ra5.

52. Rh7 Re4+! 53. Kd3 Ra4 54. Ra7 Rh4 55. a6 Rxh5 56. Rc7 Rh3+ (56...Kf4 57. a7 Rh8 was also worth looking at; this resource would not be available after 56. Rb7, but then the White rook is less well placed after 56...Rh3+) 57. Kc4 Ra3 58. a7 Ra1 59. Kb5 Rb1+ 60. Kc6 Ra1 61. Kb7 Rb1+ 62. Kc8 Ra1 63. Kb8

Kf4 64. a8Q (64. Rc3 Rb1+) 64...Rxa8+ 65. Kxa8 Kf3 66. Rc2 g4 67. Kb7 f5 68. Kc6 f4, with an obvious draw.

Now, let's return to Leko - Anand.

**46. Kg2!** (of course not 46..f3?? Ra2=) **46...Re1**

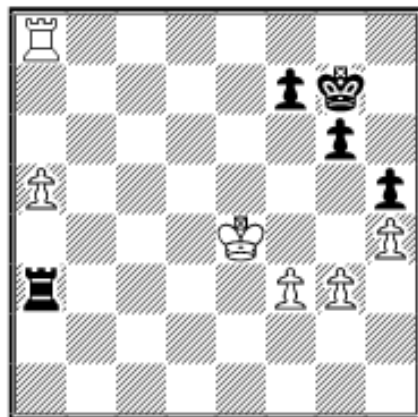
Another change in plans - Black tries to restrict the mobility of the White king by cutting him off on the e-file. In this situation, such a defensive method is as hopeless as waiting tactics: 46...Ra4 47. f3 Ra2+ 48. Kf1 Kf8 49. Ke1 Ke7 50. Kd1 Ke6 51. Kc1, etc.

**47. f3 Re6 48. Kf2 Kf8 49. Rb5 Kg7**

On 49...Ke7, 50. Rb7+ and 51. Rb6 decides. Here, Leko could have brought his rook around behind the passed pawn by 50. Rb3 Ra6 51. Ra3, with an easy win. He preferred to do some maneuvering first, hoping the Black king would go to a worse position.

**50. Rf5 Kf8 51. Rc5 Kg7 52. Rb5 Kf8 53. Rb6 Re5 54. a6 Kg7 55. a7 Ra5 56. Rb7 Ra3 57. Ke2 Kf6 58. Kd2 Ke6 59. Kc2 f6 60. Kb2 Ra4 61. Kb3 Ra1 62. Kb4 Kd6 63. Rh7 Ke5 64. Kb5 Ra2 65. Kb6 Kd5**, and Black resigned.

The following examples will enhance our understanding of the methods of attack and defense in such endgames.



**Lerner - Dorfman**  
**USSR Championship, 1st**  
**League, Tashkent 1980**

Black to move

**58...Ra4+?**

The rook is in an ideal position (keeping the White pawns under fire); it was the king that needed to be activated. After 58...Kf6! 59. a6 Ke6 60. Kd4 Kf5!, Black saves himself. For

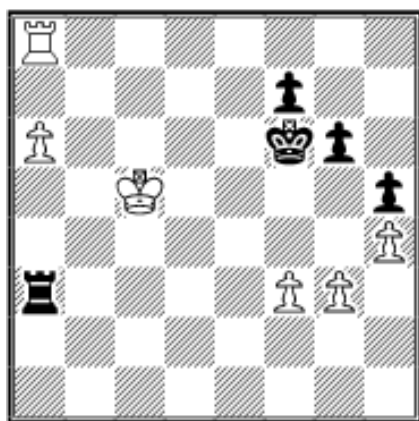
example, 61. Kc4 Rxf3 62. Rd8 (62. Kb4 Rf1 63. Rc8 Rb1+ ) 62...Ra3 63. Kb5 Kg4 64. Rd4+ Kxg3 65. Ra4 Rb3+ 66. Kc6 Rb8 67. a7 Ra8 68. Kb7 Rxa7+ (68...Re8!?) 69. Kxa7 f6 70. Kb6 g5=.

White could also try 59. Ra6+ Kg7 60. Kd5 Rxf3 61. Rb6 Rxc3 62. a6, leading to a position which occurred in the game, but with White to move. With a tempo less, he could hardly have expected to win.

### 59. Kd5 Ra3 60. a6 Rxf3?!

Now Black's king is cut off on the 6th rank. 60...Kf6 suggests itself, for example: 61. Kc6 Rxf3 62. Rb8 Ra3 63. Rb6 Kf5 64. Kb7 Kg4 65. a7 Rxa7+ 66. Kxa7 Kxg3 67. Rb4 f6 and 68...g5, with a draw.

This variation is taken from the endgame manuals (including mine - I didn't correct it in time). However, White has a more dangerous plan at his disposal, proposed by Vladimir Vulfson: 61. Kc5!



After 61...Rxf3 62. Rd8 Ra3 63. Kb5 (intending 64. Rd4) 63...Ke5 64. Rd7 f6 65. a7, I don't see what Black can undertake against the threat of 66. Rc7 followed by the interference maneuver 67. Rc5+, 68. Rc4(c6)+ and 69. Ra4(a6).

I tried to defend Black's position by not capturing the pawn, and playing 61...Kf5!? instead.

And Black does save himself in the lines 62. Ra7 f6 63. Kb4 Rxf3 64. Rb7 Rf1 65. Rb5+ (65 a7 Rb1+ 66. Kc5 Ra1 67. Rg7 g5 68. Kb6 Kg4=) 65...Kg4 66. Ra5 Rb1+ 67. Kc5 Rb8 68. a7 Ra8 69. Ra3 g5=, and 62. Kb5 Rxf3 63. Rc8 Rb3+ 64. Ka4 Rb1 65. Rc3 Rb8 66. Ka5 Kg4! (66...Ra8 67. Rc4!) 67. a7 Re8! (the loss of tempo after 67...Ra8? 68. Kb6 f6 69. Kb7 would be fatal: 69...Rxa7+ 70. Kxa7 g5 71. Kb6 and wins, or

69...Re8 70. Rc8! Re7+ 71. Kb6 Rxa7 72. Kxa7 Kxg3 73. Rg8 Kxh4 74. Rxg6, winning) 68. Kb6 f6 69. Kb7 g5 70. Rc8 Re7+, with a draw.

But White has one more possibility: 62. Kb4! Ra1 63. Kb5 Rb1+ 64. Kc6. If Black plays 64...Rc1+ now, then White should not continue 65. Kb7? Rb1+ 66. Ka7 Rb3 67. Rb8 Rxf3, but instead 65. Kd7! Ra1 66. Ke7, winning. On 64...Ra1, the decisive line is 65. Ra7! (but not 65. Kd7? Ra3) 65...f6 (65...Kf6 66. Kd7! followed by 67. Ke8, winning; 65...Ke6 66. Kb6 Rb1+ 67. Kc7 Ra1 68. Kd8 wins) 66. Ra8 and 67. a7, reaching our well known winning position from Unzicker - Lundin.

After the "theoretical" 61. Kc6 Rxf3?!, White could also successfully employ 62. Rd8! But if Black replies 61...Kf5!, White can no longer hit at the Black rook from b4 - this is why Vulfson's 61. Kc5! is the most accurate.

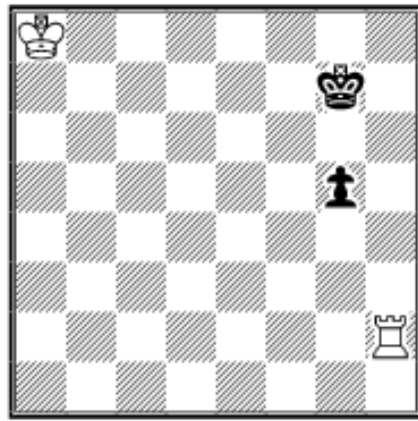
### **61. Rb8 Ra3 62. Rb6**

With the king cut off, Black's position is lost.

### **62...Rxg3 63. Kc6 Ra3 64. Kb7 g5**

64...f6 is no help: 65. a7 Rxa7+ 66. Kxa7 g5 67. Rb4!? Kg6 68. Kb6 Kf5 (68...gh 69. Rxh4 Kg5 70. Rh1 h4 71. Kc5 Kg4 72. Kd4 h3 73. Ke3 Kg3 74. Rg1+ - Y, Anikaev) 69. Kc5 g4 70. Kd4 (70. Rb1 g3 71. Rf1+ Kg4 72. Rxf6+ wins) 70...Kf4 71. Kd3+.

### **65. hg h4 66. a7 h3 67. a8Q (67. Ra6? h2) 67...Rxa8 68. Kxa8 h2 69. Rh6 f6 70. Rxh2 fg**



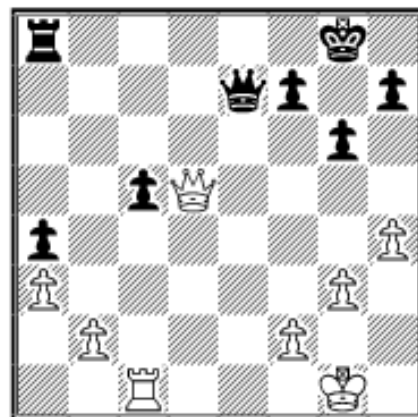
**71. Rf2!!**

Excellent! The rook prevents the Black king from "shoulder-blocking" its colleague, as in the line 71. Kb7? Kf6 72. Kc6 Ke5!=. One should not begrudge a valuable tempo in order to restrict the enemy king.

**71...Kg6 72. Kb7 g4 73. Kc6 Kg5 74. Kd5 g3 75. Rf8! Kg4 76. Ke4, and Black resigned.**

The 1999 World Championships in Las Vegas were an opportunity to fight for great prizes and the highest title in chess - and not just for all the leading players, but also for grandmasters of the second rank. A sharp contrast to today's sad state of affairs, with the unsporting and undemocratic politics practiced by FIDE in recent years!

It's well known, that in a mixed field, surprises are not just possible - in my view, they're even desirable! Such surprises as, for instance, what occurred this summer in Dortmund, where Viorel Bologan scored a brilliant victory. One of the surprises at Las Vegas was the silver medal earned by Vladimir Akopian. But who knows what his result would have been, if his opponent had put up a better defense in this endgame, which decided which of the two would qualify to the next stage.



***Akopian - Kir. Georgiev***  
**World Championship, Las Vegas, 1999**

Black to move

Not liking passive defense (26...Rc8, with a small edge to White), Kirill Georgiev sacrificed a pawn to force a drawn rook

endgame.



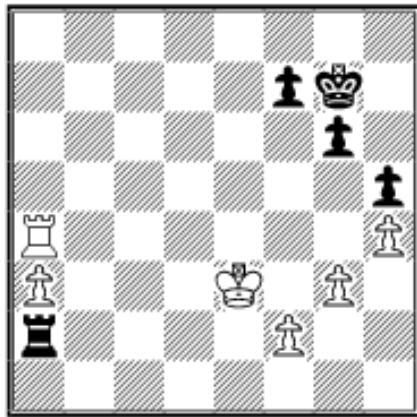
**26...Rd8!? 27. Qxc5 Rd1+! 28. Kh2** (White loses after 28. Kg2? Qe4+ 29. f3 Qe2+ 30. Kh3 Qf1+) **28...Qxc5 29. Rxc5 Rd2 30. Kg2 Rxb2 31. Rc4 h5!**

Unlike Anand, Georgiev sets up the standard pawn structure immediately.

**32. Rxa4 Ra2**

32...Rb3!? was worth consideration, restricting the mobility of the White king.

**33. Kf3 Kg7 34. Ke3**



**34...Ra1?!**

Just as in our earlier example, Lerner - Dorfman, Black fails to tend to the activity of his king. Perhaps Georgiev rejected 34...Kf6! because of 35. Rf4+ Ke6 36. a4, but then 36...f6! followed by g6-g5 drives White's rook from its comfortable position on f4,

where it defends all its pawns.

**35. Ra6! Ra2** (35...Re1+!?) **36. Ra4?! Ra1?! 37. Ra6! Ra2 38. a4 Ra3+?**

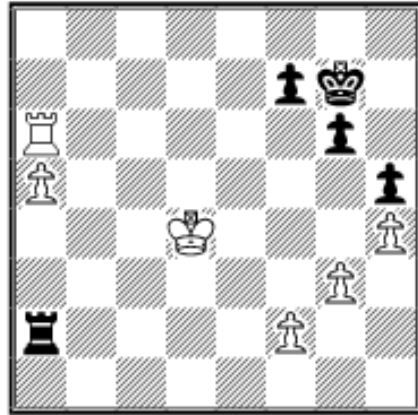
The same fatal strategy that betrayed Dorfman. True, here the a-pawn still has two more moves to make to get to a6; but on the other hand, in contrast to that game, White doesn't have to lose time bringing his rook from the 8th to the 6th rank.

After making the useful moves 38...f6! followed by 39...g5 on the kingside, Black should have obtained a fairly uncomplicated draw.

**39. Kd4 f6?!**

In this case, the mark "?!" indicates amazement. Black decides on the above-cited plan after all; but in that case, why chase the king closer to the queenside, and lift his attack on the f2-pawn? The rook check logically should have been combined with 39...Rf3 or 39...Ra2.

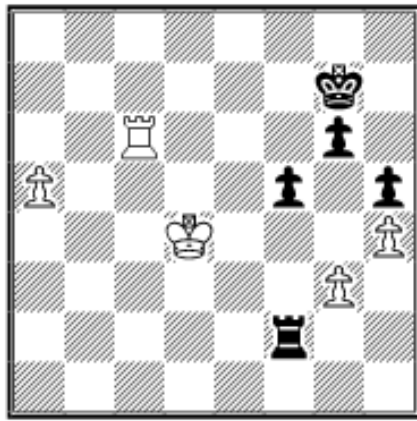
The position after 39...Ra2 40. a5 occurred, with colors reversed, in a game Krakops - Dautov, European Teams Championship, Batumi 1999.



Krakops declined to take the pawn; however, after 40...f6 41. f4! Ra3 42. Ra7+ Kh6 43. a6 g5 44. f5!, he had a lost position. The game concluded as follows: 44...gh (44...Rxg3 45. Ra8 Ra3 46. a7 Kg7 47. hg fg 48. f6+ Kf7 49. Rh8) 45. gh Ra4+ 46. Kc5 Rxh4 (on 46...Rc4+ 47. Kd6, the king easily escapes the "berserk" rook) 47. Ra8 Ra4 49. a7 Kg5 (48...Kg7 49. Kb6 Rb4+ 50. Ka5) 49. Rg8+ Kxf5 50. a8Q Rxa8 51. Rxa8 h4 42. Kd4 Kf4 53. Rh8 Kg3 54. Ke3 f5 55. Rg8+ Kh2, and Black resigned.

Let's look at the consistent 40...Rxf2 41. Rc6!

In the summer of 2003, Artur Yusupov gave a seminar with some young German players. During his demonstration of the Akopian - Georgiev endgame, one of his students, David Baramidze, suggested an interesting plan of counterplay: 41...f5!?



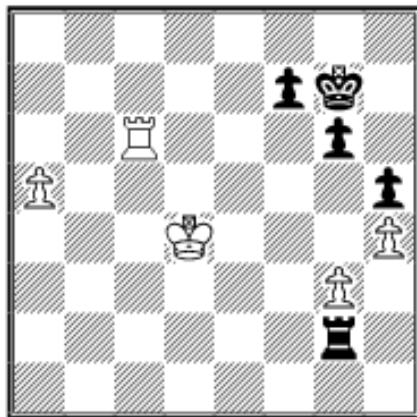
Black hurries to force matters on the kingside. 42. Ke5 Rf3 or 42. Kc5 f4 43. gf Rxf4, with 44...Rhx4 to follow, are not dangerous to Black - he can give up his rook for the passed pawn here, and draw.

Therefore, White plays 42. a6 f4 43. a7 Ra2 44. Rc7+ Kf6 45. gf Kf5 46. Kc5. On 46...Kxf4 47. Kb5

Black can only avert the a-file interference by 47...Kg3 48. Rc3+ Kh2, but then deflection wins: 49. Rc2+! Rxc2 50. a8Q - the position after 50...Rg2 is lost.

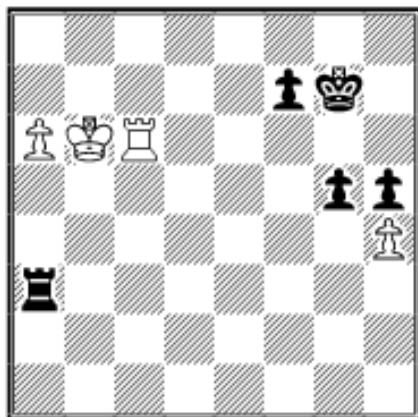
It would seem as though 46...Kg4 47. Kb5! Rb2+ (47...Kxh4 48. f5!) is stronger: on 48. Kc6 Ra2 49. Kb7 Rb2+ (49...Kxh4) 50. Kc8 Ra2 51. Kb8 Kxh4, Black is saved. However, Müller points out that White can play the interference card here: 48. Kc4! Ra2 49. f5! Kxf5 (49...gf 50. Kb3 Ra6 51. Rc4+ f4 52. Ra4 wins) 50. Kb4 Kg4 (50...Kf6 51. Kb5 wins) 51. Rc4+ Kg3 52. Rc3+ Kxh4 53. Ra3 and wins.

The main variation, of course, is 41...Rg2



After 42. a6 Rgx3 43. Kc5, the draw is still very difficult. For example: 43...f6 44. a7 Ra3 45. Kb6 g5 46. Rc8! Rxa7 47. Kxa7 Kg6 48. Kb6 Kf5 49. Kc5 gh 50. Kd4 Kf4 51. Rc3! (51. Kd3? h3 52. Ke2 h2 53. Kc1 Kg3; 51. Rh8? h3 52. Rxh5 Kg3=) 51...f5 52. Ra3 (zugzwang) 52...Kg4 53. Ke3 Kg3 54. Ke2+ Kg2 55. Ra8 wins.

Black can still save himself by playing either 43...g5! or 43...Ra3 44. Kb6 g5!, and now:



(a) 45. Rc5 gh 46. Rxh5 (46. a7 Rxa7 47. Kxa7 Kg6 48. Kb6 h3) 46...h3 47. a7 Ra1! 48. Rxh3 (48. Ra5 Rb1+ 49. Kc7 h2 5. a8Q h1Q) 48...Rb1+ 49. Kc7 Rc1+ 50. Kb7 Rb1+ 51. Ka8 f5 52. Rc3 Kf6 53. Rc8 Ke5 54. Rb8 Ra1=.

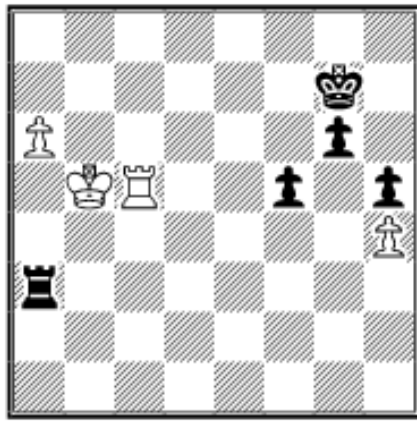
b) 45. hg h4 46. a7 h3 47. Rc3! (47. Rh6 Rb3+ 48. Kc7 Rc3+ 49. Kb7

Rb3+ 50. Rb6 h2) 47...Rxc3! (Black loses after either 47...Ra1 48. Rxh3 Rb1+ 49. Kc7 Ra1 50. Kb7 Rb1+ 51. Ka8 Kg6 52. Rh8 Kxg5 53. Rb8 Ra1 54. Kb7 f5 55. a8Q Rxa8 56. Rxa8 f4 57. Kc6, or after 47...h2 48. Rxa3 h1Q 49. a8Q, when White's king escapes the checks at h2) 48. a8Q Rg3=. White will have to give up his g5-pawn in order to eliminate the passed h-pawn, after which Black's rook goes to g6 with an easy draw.

For a while, I believed these complex variations demonstrated that the position with the capture of the f2-pawn was a draw. Grandmaster Dautov refuted this assessment by rather paradoxical means. Who would think that in the next-to-last diagram, White must avoid the absolutely natural move 42. a6?!, and instead bring his rook from the 6th to the 5th rank!

42. Rc3!! Ra2 43. Rc5 Ra3 (43...Kf6 44. Kc4 Ke6 45. Kb5 Kd6 46. Kb6 followed by 47. Rb5, and 43...f6 44. Kc4 g5 45. hg fg 46. Rxg5+ Kh6 47. Rc5 Ra3 48. Rb5 are of no help to Black - of course, the assessment of the final position in the second variation is not yet obvious; perhaps the reader would care to demonstrate it for himself) 44. Kc4 Rxg3 45. a6 Ra3 46. Kb5.

At first, Dautov only looked at 46...f6 47. Kb6 Kh6 48. Ra5 Rb3+ 49. Kc7 Rc3+ 50. Kd7 Rd3+ 51. Ke7 Re3+ 52. Kf7, winning. But then 46...f5! gave White much more difficult problems.



Nothing comes of 47. Kb6? f4 48. a7 f3 49. Rc7+ Kh6 50. Rc3 Ra1 51. Rxf3 Rb1+ 52. Kc7 Rc1+ 53. Kb7 Rb1+ 54. Ka8 g5 55. Rf6+ Kg7 56. hg h4 57. Rh6 Rb4=. In the line 47. Rc4?! g5 48. Ra4 Rb3+ 49. Kc6, Black does not play 49...Rb8? 50. a7 Ra8 51. Kb7 and White wins, but 49...Rc3+! (driving the king away from b7) 50. Kd7

Rd3+ 51. Ke6 Rd8 52. a7 Ra8 53. Kxf5 gh=.

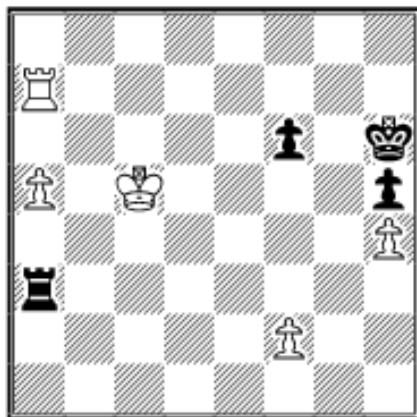
Dautov found a clever in-between check: 47. Rc7+!! Kh6, and only now does White continue 48. Rc4 g5 49. Ra4 Rb3+ 50. Kc6. Here 50...Rc3+ 51. Kd7 would be useless, as the king can hide from the checks at f7. After 50...Rb8 51. a7 Ra8, 52. Kb7?, which would win with the Black king at g7, now leads only to a draw: 52...Rxa7+ and 53...gh. But now there's 52. Ra6! Rxa7 (52...gh 53. Kb7+) 53. hg+ (or 53. Rxa7 gh 54. Kd5) 53...Kxg5 54. Rxa7 h4 55. Kd5 Kf4 56. Kd4 h3 57. Rh7 Kg3 58. Ke3, and wins.

This most complicated analysis leads to a simple conclusion: attacking the f2-pawn will not save Black. He committed his fatal error on move 38.

**40. Ra7+ Kh6 41. a5 g5**

41...Rf3 42. a6 Rxf2 43. Rc7 Ra2 44. a7 g5 45. Kc5 is hopeless.

**42. Kc5 gh 43. gh**

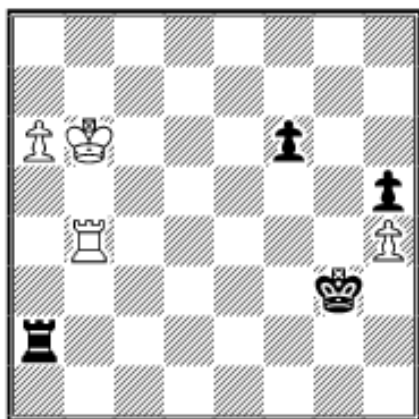


### 43...Ra4?

Yet another totally illogical move. It makes sense only in conjunction with capturing on h4; but Black cannot take that pawn. Of course, 43...Kg6 or 43...Ra2 were better. On the other hand, even then Black probably would not be able to save himself, despite the tempo saved. I

present herewith (with a few corrections) the main variation suggested by Steckner.

43...Kg6 44. a6 Ra2 (44...Kf5 45. Kb5 followed by Rc7) 45. Ra8 Kf5 46. Kb6 Rb2+ 47. Ka7 Rxf2 48. Rb8 Kg4 (48...Rf4 49. Rb5+ Kg4 50. Kb6 wins; 48...Re2 49. Rb4 Re7+ 50. Kb6 Re6+ 51. Ka5 Re7 52. Rb7 Re8 53. a7 Ra8 54. Ka6 wins) 49. Rb4+ Kg3 50. Kb6 Ra2



51. Kb5!! (both 51. a7? f5 and 51. Rb5? Kxh4 52. Ra5 Rb2+ 53. Kc7 Rg2 would let slip the win)

This last note was written a long time ago. But now, a few days before publication, I suddenly saw that after 53. Kc7, we get almost the same position that we examined at the very beginning (see our

second diagram): the only difference is in the position of the Black f-pawn. With that pawn on f7, 53...Rg2 is refuted by 54. Ra1!; here, with the pawn at f6, it's refuted the same way (54...Rg7+ 55. Kb6 doesn't help Black). And the saving idea 53...Rc2+ 54. Kd7 Rb2 is useless here, since after 55. a7 Rb7+ 56. Kd6 Rxa7 57. Rxa7, the rook has the run of the 7th rank - there's no pawn on f7 to interfere with the check he will give at g7. So 51. Rb5 does not let go of the win.

And knowing the outcome of the analyses made at the beginning of this article, we can also add that 47...Kf4 (instead

of 47...Rxf2) does not save Black: in the drawn position we studied, Black has an extra tempo, since his pawn is already on f5.

51...f5 52. Ra4 Rb2+ 53. Kc6 Rb8 54. a7 Ra8 55. Kb7 Rxa7+ 56. Rxa7! (56. Kxa7? f4 57. Kb6 Kxh4=) 56...Kxh4 (56...f4 57. Kc6 f3 58. Kd5 wins) 57. Kc6 Kg3 58. Kd5 h4 59. Kd4! h3 (59...f4 60. Kd3!) 60. Ke3 Kg2 61. Ke2 h2 62. Rg7+ (Black's own pawn at f5 kills him: if it were off the board, he could save himself here by 62...Kh1!) 62...Kh3 63. Kf2 h1N+ 64. Kf3 Kh2 65. Rf7!? (another way is 65. Rg2+ Kh3 66. Rg5 Kh4 67. Rg1, or 66...Kh2 67. Rxf5 Ng3 68. Rf8 Nf1 69. Kf2) 65...Kg1 66. Rxf5 Nf2 67. Rd5, and wins.

#### **44. a6 Ra2**

44...Rhx4 45. Ra8 Ra4 46. a7 Kg7 47. Kb6 Rb4+ 48. Ka5 loses immediately for Black.

**45. Ra8 Kg6 46. Kb6 Rb2+ 47. Ka7 Rxf2 48. Rb8 Rf4 49. Rb5 Rxh4 50. Kb6 Re4 51. a7 Re8 52. Ra5 h4 53. a8Q Rxa8 54. Rxa8 Kg5 55. Kc5 h3 56. Rh8 Kg4 57. Kd4 Kg3 58. Ke3 Kg2 59. Ke2 h2 60. Rg8+ Kh3 61. Kf2 h1N+ 62. Kf3 Kh2 63. Rg2+ Kh3 64. Rg6 Kh2 65. Rxf6 Kg1 66. Rg6+ Black resigned.**

The last example (along with the Lerner - Dorfman ending) brings us to the following useful conclusions:

*The quickest possible activation of the king is an important priority for the defender.*

*With a standard pawn structure, the rook's placement at a6, in order to lock the king in at g7, can sometimes, from a practical standpoint, be no less dangerous than the advance of the pawn to a6.*

*The defender has a decent counterplan in f7-f6 followed by g6-g5.*

My article has familiarized you with contemporary thinking in one of the most important facets of the rook endgame. As you can see, the theory grows rapidly these days, and I challenge my readers to take an active part in the process. Bring us new ideas, and correct the errors which undoubtedly exist in the highly complex analyses I have presented for you to study.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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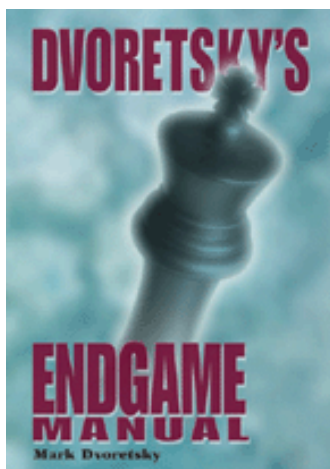
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## C O L U M N I S T S

*The*  
*Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky



## Ripples in the Water

## Part 1: Playing the Symmetrical Position

One of my favorite sayings of Kozma Prutkov is: *"When you throw rocks in the water, study the ripples they make, as otherwise, it's just a pointless time-waster."* This bit of homegrown Russian philosophy still holds true, if you substitute the study of chess games for the tossing of stones. I offer my readers the opportunity to examine the ripples from the stones I shall now throw in.

I begin with a brilliant classic, which my readers are probably already familiar with.

*Rotlewi - Rubinstein*  
Lodz 1907/08

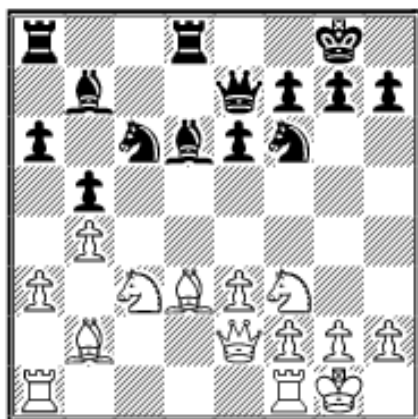
**1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 e6 3. e3 c5 4. c4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Nf6 6. dc Bxc5 7. a3 a6 8. b4 Bd6 9. Bb2 0-0 10. Qd2?!**

The queen stands poorly here. Playing against the "isolani" with 10. cd ed 11. Be2 was correct.

**10...Qe7!**

Here the queen occupies its best square - out of reach of the rooks which will be aiming to occupy the c- and d-files.

**11. Bd3? (11. cd) 11...dc 12. Bxc4 b5 13. Bd3 Rd8 14. Qe2 Bb7 15. 0-0**



White's poorly thought-out opening strategy has cost him two tempi. It's a symmetrical position, with Black to move; he has also managed to bring his king's rook to the center, while White has not.

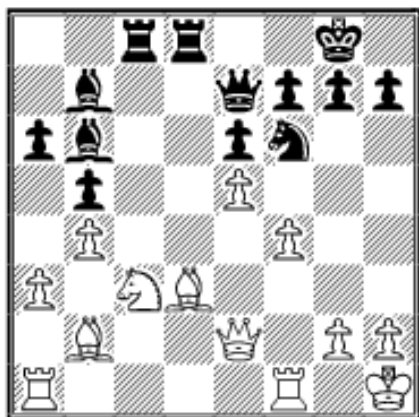
**15...Ne5! 16. Nxe5 Bxe5 17. f4 Bc7 18. e4**

Black threatened 18...e5, which White can now meet by 19. f5.

**18...Rac8 19. e5?**

19. Rac1 or 19. Rad1 would have held out longer.

**19...Bb6+ 20. Kh1**



**20...Ng4! 21. Be4**

The exchange of minor pieces by 21. Qxg4 Rxd3 obviously favors Black. And 21. Bxh7+ Kxh7 22. Qxg4 Rd2 would be still worse .

**21...Qh4**

Beginning a spectacular winning combination. As Nunn points out, 21...Nxh2! would have done the job, too.

**22. g3 Rxc3!! 23. gh Rd2! 24. Qxd2 Bxe4+ 25. Qg2 Rh3!**  
White resigned.

Undoubtedly, this game we just examined left you with the impression that the White player, Herz Rotlewi, (who was, by the way, a student of Rubinstein's) was weak. Not at all - and here, I would like to divert myself from our main topic for a bit, in order to acquaint you with a little-known episode of chess history, as described by GM Grigory Levenfish in his book, *Selected Games and Memories*. He was describing the

powerful international tournament of Carlsbad 1911, won by R. Teichmann, which included as participants all the world's strongest players, with the exception of Emmanuel Lasker and J.-R. Capablanca.

*A notable performance was given by young Rotlewi, who defeated powerful opposition, including Schlechter, Nimzovich, Marshall and Spielmann, in grand style. After the 17th round, Rotlewi shared the lead with Teichmann and Schlechter, a point and a half ahead of their nearest rival, Rubinstein. Whispers began to be heard among the representatives of the chess press, and an interview appeared with this new rising "star".*

*Rotlewi's family was very poor; his clothes were clear testimony to this unfortunate fact. City Councilman Tietz was upset. Imagine - a prizewinner of the Carlsbad tournament, appearing in pants which were quite evidently those of a younger brother! Tietz gave Rotlewi an advance against his prize, and suggested he buy some new clothes. The next day, Rotlewi arrived in a new suit and patent-leather shoes. With the jingle of kroner in his pocket, he was unrecognizable.*

*But Tietz had done Rotlewi no favor. Having become a dandy, the latter now partook of the pleasures of spa life, and grew unfit for serious chess. In the latter part of the tournament, Rotlewi suffered several losses, ending up in fourth place.*

*Soon after the tournament ended, Rotlewi fell prey to depression. Thus ended the chess career of a most talented master.*

Now, let's look at another example of a quick smash, in a position bearing a similar strategic design.

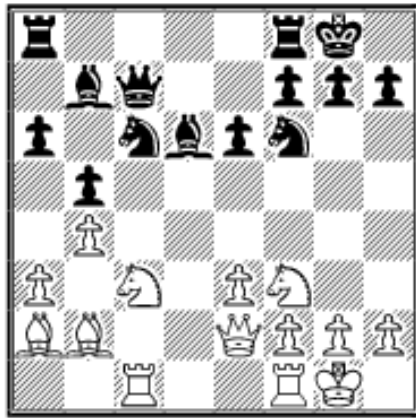
### ***Marshall - Wolf***

## Nürnberg, 1906

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 dc 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 a6 5. e3 e6 6. Bxc4 c5 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. a3 Qc7**

A dubious move, since a White rook must sooner or later appear on c1, when the queen will not be comfortable. 8...b5 was more logical.

**9. Qe2 b5 10. Ba2 Bb7 11. dc Bxc5 12. b4 Bd6 13. Bb2 0-0 14. Rac1**



**14...Rad8? 15. Bb1 Ba8?**

Where Black's previous move might still have been understandable (as preparation for the retreat of the queen to b8), this bishop move makes no sense at all, and signifying only the loss of an important tempo. Marshall replies with a kingside storm.

**16. Ne4! Nd5 17. Neg5 g6**

Now it's time to find the decisive combination.



**18. Nxh7! Kxh7 19. Ng5+ Kg8 20. Qh5!!**

The queen is untouchable, because of mate, and Black's defense collapses.

**20...f6 21. Bxg6 Rd7 22. Nxe6 Rh7 23. Bxh7+ Qxh7 24. Qxh7+ Kxh7 25. Nxf8+ Bxf8 26. Rfd1 Nce7 27. e4 Nb6 28. Rc7 Kg8 29. Bxf6 Ng6 30. Rd8. Black resigned.**

We shall examine the following encounter in much greater

detail, using the experience we have gained thus far.

### ***Marshall - Schlechter*** **Ostende 1907**

**1. d2-d4 d7-d5 2. c2-c4 d5xc4 3. e2-e3 Ng8-f6 4. Bf1xc4 e7-e6 5. Ng1-f3 a7-a6 6. 0-0 c7-c5 7. Nb1-c3 Qd8-c7?! 8. Qd1-e2 Nb8-c6 9. a2-a3**

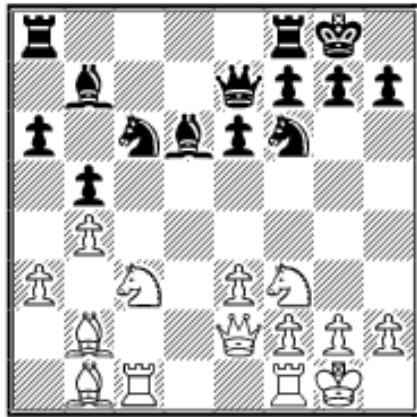
By transposition of moves, we have reached the same position as in the previous game.

**9...b7-b5 10. Bc4-a2 Bc8-b7 11. d4xc5 Bf8xc5 12. b2-b4 Bc5-d6 13. Bc1-b2 0-0 14. Ra1-c1 Qc7-e7!**

Schlechter finds an improvement on Wolf's play, getting the queen immediately away from the influence of the enemy rook.

### **15. Ba2-b1**

Now how does Black continue? You will find the answer easily, if you have drawn the proper conclusions from our previous games.



*In such symmetrical positions, it is most important to be the first to offer the exchange of a pair of knights.* Marshall was all ready to play 16. Ne4! - after the exchange, Black loses a valuable defender of his kingside, and diagonals are opened for the White bishops. But it is Black's move now, and he can beat his opponent to the punch.

The strongest continuation would be **15...Ne5!** Why didn't Karl Schlechter, a fine positional player, make that move? Most likely, because of **16. Nxe5 Bxe5 17. Nxb5!?** This is a situation well known to us all: not wishing to strain ourselves calculating complex variations, we often select the "safer"

path. Sometimes such an approach is justified, but certainly not always. *Sometimes critical moments arise, when our decision will determine the entire future course of the game.*

If your study of the previous games has led you to a proper assessment of the importance of exchanging knights in such positions, then this observation will help you to understand that now in fact such a critical moment has arrived. Before rejecting the move 15...Ne5,

we should give it at least a bit closer examination.

Black has the counter-stroke 17...Bxg2?!, and if 18. Kxg2, then 18...Bxb2. However, White replies 18. Bxe5! Bxf1 19. Qc2!, with advantage.

Let's try **17...Bxb2 18. Rc7 Qe8!** (but not 18...Qd8? Rxb7). Now 19. Rxb7? ab 20. Qxb2 Qc6 21. Re7 allows Black not merely to force the draw - after 21...Qd6 22. Rb7 Qc6 - but even to win, by 20...Rfc8! 22. Qd4 Kf8 23. Ra7 e5.

Also after **19. Nd6 Qd8 20. Rxb7 Qxd6 21. Qxb2 Qc6** (21...Ng4? 22. g3 Qc6 would be a mistake, because of 23. Qc2!, and White wins) **22. Re7 Rfc8!?** (22...Nd5? 23. Be4 or 22...Rfd8?! 23. Qc1! are bad for Black; however, 22...Qd6 23. Rb7 Qc6 gives an immediate draw), White has problems with his rook, lost in the enemy camp. However, the rook can be saved by **23. Qd4 Kf8 24. b5!=**.

Now, let's return to the game. Black hesitated, and allowed his opponent to offer the knight exchange first.

**15...Ra8-c8?! 16. Nc3-e4! Nf6xe4 17. Bb1xe4 f7-f5**

Schlechter enters upon the same natural but rocky road as did Rotlewi in his game with Rubinstein. *Advancing pawns in such situations only weakens the Black king position.* As V. Bologan notes, it would make sense here to exchange the white-squared bishops by 17...Na5!? 18. Bxb7 (on 18. Bxh7+ Kxh7 19. ba Kg8, the two bishops assure Black sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn) 18...Nxb7, with an

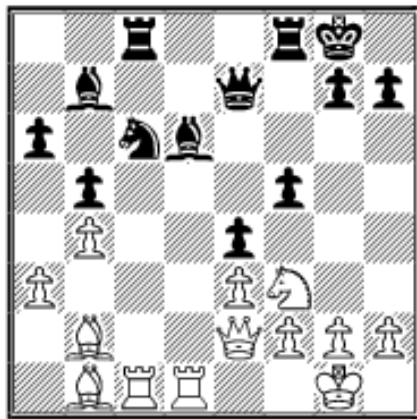
acceptable position.

### 18. Be4-b1 e6-e5?

In the present case, having said "a", Black should **not** have said "b". After V. Potkin's suggestion, 18...a5!, White finds it hard to demonstrate any advantage.

### 19. Rf1-d1 e5-e4?!

On 19...Bb8, Black feared the reply 20. e4!, but now matters grow worse for him, because of the following standard knight maneuver, which we already saw in the Rubinstein game.



### 20. Bb1-a2+ Kg8-h8 21. Nf3-g5!

And White has a raft of threats: 22. Qh5; 22. Nf7+; 22. Nxh7.

### 21...Qe7xg5

On 21...Be5? 22. Nxh7! decides - the blow John Nunn pointed out for us in the Rotlewi - Rubinstein

game.

### 22. Rd1xd6 Rf8-d8 23. h2-h4!

Deflection! 23...Qxh4 is bad in view of 24. Bxg7+! Kxg7 25. Qb2+, with a decisive attack. If 23...Qe7, then 24. Re6!

### 23...Qg5-g4 24. Qe2-d2 Rd8xd6

The threat was 25. Rcx6.

### 25. Qd2xd6 Rc8-d8 26. Qd6-c7 Bb7-a8 27. Ba2-b3

By covering the d1 square with the bishop, White sets up the unstoppable threat of 28. Rxc6.

### 27...f5-f4 28. Rc1xc6 Rd8-f8 29. Qc7-e7. Black resigned.

The finish looks clear and convincing. Nevertheless, I suggest you return to the position in the last diagram, and think about two questions:

1) Should White have given the bishop check? (After all, he could also have played the immediate 20. Ng5); and

2) Did Black have a better defense?

The answer to the first question can be easily given at once, by using the process of "*comparison*" - a technique which can sometimes simplify to a considerable extent the choice between two roughly equal-appearing continuations. The move 20. Ng5! is the more direct, since it holds the bishop check in reserve for the moment. In other words, by refraining from the immediate check, White loses nothing, while depending on circumstances he may continue with the bishop either on a2 or on b1.

Yes, the bishop on a2 occupies an open diagonal, and at first glance (or even at second), it's hard to understand why it should stay on b1, where it runs up against the pawn on e4. Nevertheless, for strictly formalistic reasons, it should, since Black is unable to prevent the bishop check, even if we temporarily refrain from playing it.

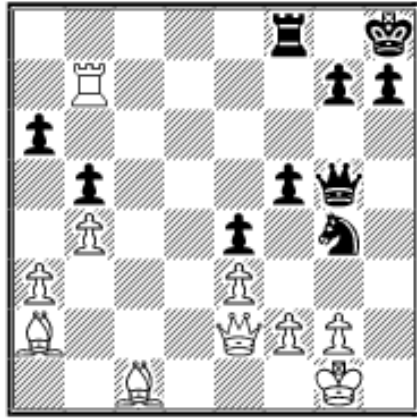
My reasoning will probably seem abstract to you, and of no practical value in the present instance - after all, the bishop check at a2 allowed White a fairly convincing win. Well, OK - let's leave this topic for now, and move on to the second question.

In strategically difficult situations, it makes sense to create a sharp change in the character of the game, even should it involve risk. Here, even the most desperate-looking attempts should be investigated. Black decided against **21...Bxh2+!** **22. Kxh2 Qxg5** because of **23. Rd7**. Both players and later analysts stopped their analysis here, failing to notice the tactical resource **23...Ne5!**

White continues **24. Rxb7 Rxc1** **25. Bxc1**. The attempt to



recover the sacrificed piece by 25...Qh6+ 26. Kg1 Qc6 leads to a difficult position after 27. Bb2 Qxb7 (27...Nf3+ 28. Qxf3!) 28. Bxe5. Which means that Black has to go after the king: **25...Ng4+ 26. Kg1**



Which square on the h-file should the queen go to? It appears that once again we cannot do without comparison - this time, it's going to be a lot more complex.

White's queen will have to retreat either to b2 (keeping an eye on g7) or to e1 (defending the f-pawn). If the strongest continuation in either

case is the check on h2, then it's completely inconsequential where the queen moves from to deliver that check, which in turn means we have nothing to compare. But is that the case?

A) 26...Qh4(h6) 27. Qb2 Qh2+ (with the queen at h6, 27...Rd8 isn't bad, either) 28. Kf1 Nf6 (28...Ne5!?). In my opinion, Black has sufficient counterplay here. White's pieces stand poorly, and White must consider both 29...Rd8 and 29...Qh1+ 30. Ke2 Qxg2 (30...Qh5+).

B) 26...Qh4(h6) 27. Qe1!? Qh2+ 28. Kf1 Qh1+ 29. Ke2 Qxg2 30. Bb2 - here, Black is in a bad way.

How can we strengthen his play in this latter variation? Let's include the resource f5-f4! It is true that after 26...Qh4 27. Qe1 f4 is no help in view of 28. Bb2 with a mate threat; but if we play **26...Qh6! 27. Qe1 f4! 28. Bb2** (28. ef Qh2+ 29. Kf1 Qh1+ 30. Ke2 Qxg2+= - and the way is cleared for the black Queen to reach d3 via f3) **28...fe** (now the g7-square is defended by the queen) **29. Bxg7+ Qxg7 30.Rxg7 ef+ 31. Qxf2 Nxf2**, and the position is unclear. So it turns out that 26...Qh6! is more accurate than 26...Qh4.

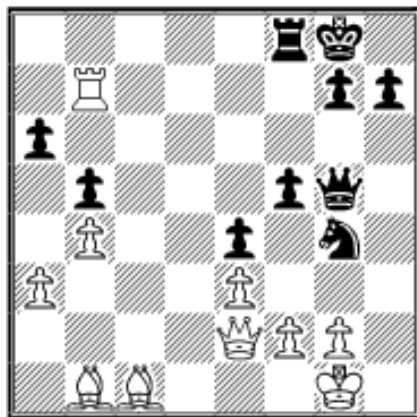
On the other hand, even after 26...Qh4 27. Qe1 Qh2+ 28. Kf1, Black gets enough counterplay, if he refrains temporarily from

taking the g2-pawn in favor of 28..Ne5! For example: 29. Qc3 Rd8 30. Bd5 Qh1+ 31. Ke2 Qh5+ with a draw, or 29. Bb2!? Qh1+ 30. Ke2 Qxe1+ 31. Kxe1 Nd3+ 32. Ke2 Nxb2 with roughly equal chances (Black will continue with 33...Rc8).

Which makes this the perfect time to return to the first question: **20. Ng5! Bxh2+!**

20...Qxg5 21. Ba2+ Kh8 22. Rxd6 is the same as the game; and 20...Be5 21. Ba2+ Kh8 22. Nxh7! is just as bad. On 20...Ne5 there follows 21. Rxc8 Bxc8 (21...Rxc8 22. Bxe5) 22. Ba2+ Nc4 (22...Kh8 23. Nxh7) 23. Bxc4+ bc 24. Qxc4+ Kh8 25. h4!?, with a winning position.

**21.Kxh2 Qxg5 22. Rd7 Ne5! 23. Rxb7 Rxc1 24. Bxc1 Ng4+ 25. Kg1**



A) 25...Qh4 26. Qe1! Qh2+ 27. Kf1 Qh1+ (27...Ne5 28. Bb2 is now useless - the d3 square is protected by the bishop) 28. Ke2 Qxg2 29. Bb2 (or 28. Ba2+ Kh8 29. Bb2) and wins;

B) **25...Qh6 26. Qa2+!** (this check, made possible by White not taking the bishop check, allows him a far more favorable development of his pieces than after 26. Qb2?!; remember too, that on 26. Qe1?! there is the reply 26...f4!) **26...Kh8 27. Bb2 Qh2+ (27...Rd8 28. Bd4) 28. Kf1 Nf6 29. Bxf6 gf 30. Bc2** (getting the bishop off the first rank, White frees the queen for active duty) **30...Qh1+ 31. Ke2 Qxg2** (31...Qh5+ 32. Kd2 Rd8+ 33. Kc1) **32. Qe6**, with an obvious advantage for White.

As you can see, our meditations on the reply to the first question weren't empty blasts after all - the "comparison" technique really did demonstrate White's most accurate continuation.

Thus, from consideration of a symmetrical pawn structure

characteristic of some variations of the Queen's Gambit, we end up in a quite different theme: the method of comparison. We shall take a more detailed look at this theme next month.

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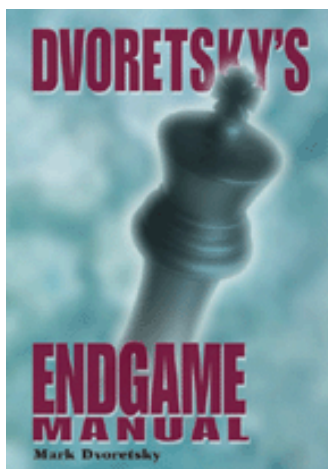
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## C O L U M N I S T S

*The**Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Ripples in the Water

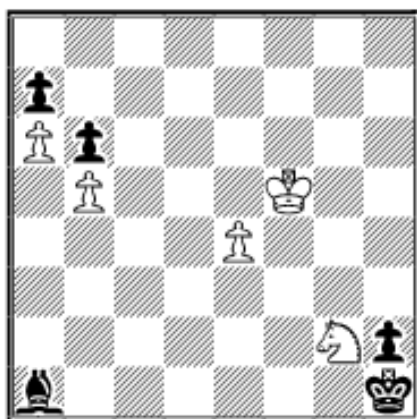
## Part 2: "Comparison" while Calculating Variations

In the previous article, we had already seen a case illustrating the way in which a player may select the right move quickly, and without sinking deep into the calculation of complex variations, by using the comparison method. This rather refined technique for making decisions shows up in various forms.

*Sometimes, we can choose a move quickly based on simple logic: because we can see that the move brings about a situation that's not a bit worse, and in some respects better, than the one we get after the other possible continuations.*

This was precisely the situation we found ourselves in when considering White's 20th move in the Marshall - Schlechter game, examined in the previous article.

Here's another example along these lines, one I presented in my lecture on the Dvoretsky and Yusupov book, *Attack and Defence*.



**F Bondarenko, M Liburkin  
1950**

White has two moves here: 1. Nh4 and 1. Ne1. If Black replies 1... Kg1 2. Nf3+ Kg2 3. Nxh2, there is no difference between them. However, on 1. Ne1 Bc3! 2. Nf3 Kg2, we reach the same position, except with Black's bishop on c3.

We don't need to determine whether or not this makes any



serious difference: why give our opponent an additional defensive resource?

### **1. Ng2-h4!**

In an actual game, you would compare the two possibilities, quickly move the knight to h4, and let your opponent try to find the saving line. While he was doing that, you would have time yourself to delve a little deeper into the variations.

### **1...Kh1-g1 2. Nh4-f3+ Kg1-g2 3. Nf3xh2 Kg2xh2**

Now if White's king goes after the a7 pawn, Black will box him in by putting his own king on c7. How to prevent this?

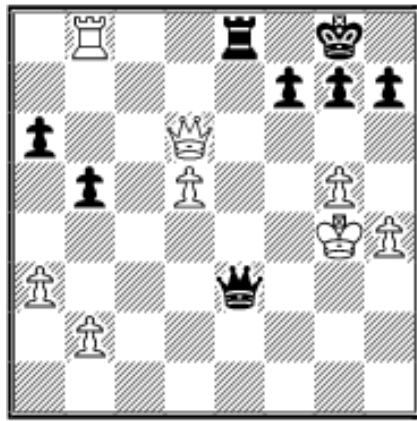
### **4. e4-e5! Ba1xe5 5. Kf5-e6!! Kh2-g3 6. Ke6-d7 Kg3-f4 7. Kd7-c8**

And the bishop is in the way of its own king.

Note that on **4...Bc3** (instead of 4...Bxe5) **5. e6 Bb4 6. Ke5 Kg3 7. Kd5 Kf4 8. Kc6 Ke5 9. Kb7 Kd6**, it is now the king who blocks the bishop: **10. e7!**, and wins.

This last variation makes it clear that the tempo Black wins after the mistaken **1. Ne1? Bc3!** is vitally important to him: **2. Nf3 Kg2 3. Nxh2 Kxh2 4. e5 Kg3 5. e6 Bb4 6. Ke5 Bf8** (or **6...Kg4**) **7. Kd5 Kf4 8. Kc6 Ke5 9. Kb7 Kd6 10. Kxa7 Kc7**, and draws.

In the following example, Black had to compare positions at the end of his calculated variations, not the beginning.

**Evans - Tal****Amsterdam Interzonal, 1964**

Black wins a rook here, by forcing the trade of queens with check.

There are two ways of doing so:

38...h5+ 39. gh f5+ 40. Kxf5 Qf3+ 41 Kg5 Qf6+, and 38...f5+ 39 gf h5+ 40. Kxh5 Qf3+ 41 Kg5 Qf6+.

The resulting positions are

completely identical, except that in the first case, White retains an extra pawn at h6, which does not exist in the second line. Clearly, this is the factor we must focus on. And in fact, 38...h5+? would not win: after 42. Qxf6+ gf+ 43. Kxf6 Rxb8 44. Ke7! (not 44. d6? Rb7! 45. Ke6 Kf8 46. d7 Rb6+ 47. Kf5 Rd6!) 44...Rb7+ 45. Ke8 Rb6 46. h7+! Kxh7 47. Ke7, White is saved.

**38...f7-f5+! 39. g5xf6 h7-h5+! 40. Kg4xh5**

40. Kf5 Qe4+ 41. Kg5 Qg4 mate

**40...Qe3-f3+ 41. Kh5-g5**

41. Kg6 Qg4 mate

**41...Qf3xf6+**

An alternate solution exists: 41...Qg2+!? 42. Kf5 (42. Kh5 Kh7!) 42...g6+ 43. Kf4 Qh2+ 44. Kg5 Qxd6 45. Rxe8+ Kf7 46. Re7+ Kf8, and wins.

**42. Qd6xf6 g7xf6+ 43. Kg5xf6 Re8xb8 44. d5-d6**

The main line is 44. Ke7 Rb7+! 45. Ke8 Rh7 46. d6 Rxh4 (this is where the absence of a White h6-pawn matters!) 47. d7 Re4+ 48. Kd8 Kf7 49. Kc7 Rc4+ 50. Kd6 Rd4+.

**44...Kg8-f8 45. h4-h5**

45. d7 Rb6+

**45...Rb8-b7 46. Kf6-e6 Rb7-h7 47. Ke6-d5 Kf8-e8 48. Kd5-c6 Ke8-d8** White resigned.

It gets more complicated when the comparison includes positional evaluation. Here is how Jonathan Nunn describes such situations in his book, *Secrets of Practical Chess*.

*"If, for example, you understand that move A is '0.2 pawns' better than move B, then you will certainly play move A, and not move B; and it will not matter whether it leads to a position 0.3 pawns better for you, or 0.1 pawns worse - what matters is only the comparative value of each move."*

One should be careful with such comparisons, based upon positional considerations - for such an evaluation may lead you astray. Which is exactly what happened to Nunn when he examined the following example.

**Meszaros - Zimmerman  
Balatonbereny 1994**

**1. b3 e5 2. Bb2 Nc6 3. e3 d5 4. Bb5 Bd6 5. f4**



Nunn compares two possibilities:  
5...Qe7 and 5..Qh4+ 6. g3 Qe7.

*"The only difference is that in the first case, the White pawn is on g2, while in the second, it's on g3.*

*Undoubtedly, the inclusion of g3 favors Black. If White exchanges his bishop on b5 for the knight on c6, he will lose control of the light squares, and then the weaknesses*

*created by g3 will become serious. White may, taking these circumstances into account, choose instead to retreat the bishop, but then he will have to lose time."*

The game continuation was **5...Qh4+ 6. g3 Qe7 7. fe Bxe5 8. Nc3 Nf6** (8...d4!? 9. Nd5 Qc5) **9. Nf3 Bg4**. As far as this position goes, Nunn's judgment is correct: White would be

better off if his pawn were on g2.

But he made a weak move earlier: 7. fe? instead of 7. Nf3. For example, 7...Bg4 8. h3 (8. fe Bxe5 9. Bxe5 Bxf3 10. Qxf3 Qxe5 11. Nc3 Nf6 12. 0-0 is also possible - here, the move g2-g3 doesn't degrade his position, but it probably doesn't improve it, either) 8...Bxf3 9. Qxf3 Nf6



In this situation, the move g2-g3 now favors White. It is apropos to mention that an analogous position, but without the check on h4, (5...Qe7 6. Nf3 Bg4 7. h3 Bxf3 8. Qxf3 Nf6) was examined by the famous theoretician Vsevolod Rauzer back in the mid-'30's. He showed that White should not play 9. 0-0 ef 10. ef 0-0 11. Bxc6 bc 12.

Nc3 Rfe8, and recommended 9. g3 instead, calling this position approximately equal (9. Nc3!? is also worth considering).

The bishop development to g4 is not forced - the pawn sacrifice f7-f6 is worth looking into. For example: 5...Qh4+ 6. g3 Qe7 7. Nf3 f6!? (7...e4? 8. Bxg7 Bg4 fails to 9. Be2!) 8. fe (8. Qe2!? would be safer) 8...fe 9. Bxc6+ (but not 9. Nxe5? Bxe5 10. Bxc6+, in view of 10...Kd8!) 9...bc 10. Nxe5 Nf6 11. Nxc6 Qe4, when Black, according to theory, has enough initiative to compensate for the material. Here, the weakening of the White king's position by g2-g3 appears to have played into Black's hands.

But now let's look at 5...Qe7 6. Nf3 f6!? 7. fe?! (7. 0-0) 7...fe 8. Bxc6+ bc 9. Nxe5 Qh4+! (with the pawn already at g3, Black would not have this possibility) 10. g3 Qh3 (10...Qe4? 11. 0-0!) 11. Qe2 Nf6 - Black develops a very strong attack.

We may conclude that the comparative method does not work here - evaluating the worth of the zwischenzug queen check is very difficult, using guidelines such as "for" and "against".



Now here is, perhaps, an even clearer example.

***Dvoretsky - Vainstein***  
**Wijk aan Zee, 1975**

**1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3. Bf1-b5+ Bc8-d7 4. Bb5xd7+ Qd8xd7 5. 0-0 Ng8-f6!? 6. e4-e5 d6xe5 7. Nf3xe5 Qd7-c8!**

7...Qc7 would be less exact, in view of 8. d4! e6?! 9. Bf4 Bd6 10. Na3!, when White has a clear advantage (Dvoretsky - Bunjaner, Moscow Championship Semifinal 1971), or 8...cd 9. Bf4, threatening 10. Ng6.

**8. d2-d4 e7-e6**

8...cd and 8...Nc6 are also worth considering.

**9. Bc1-g5 Bf8-e7**

After 9...Nc6, White gets nothing out of the tempting 10. Bxf6 gf 11. Ng4 f5 12. Nf6+ (or 12. d5 fg 13. dc Qxc6 14. Qxg4 0-0-0) 12...Ke7 13. d5 Kxf6 14. dc Qxc6. The more restrained 10. c3!, intending 11. Qa4, is better.

**10. Nb1-c3 0-0 11. Nc3-e4**

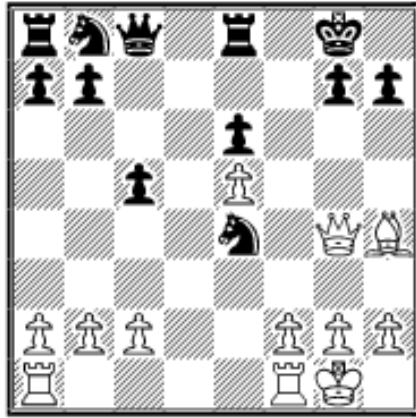
11. Ng4 Nbd7 is equal.

**11...Nf6xe4 12. Bg5xe7 Rf8-e8 13. Be7-h4**



**13...f7-f6?!**

I had intended to respond to 13...Nc6 with 14. Qf3 (or 14. Re1), which appears to retain somewhat better chances. The strongest move here was 13...Nd6! (intending Nf5), which completely resolves Black's opening problems. Now, I get a chance to sharpen play.

**14. Qd1-g4! f6xe5 15. d4xe5**

The knight has nowhere to retreat: 15..Nd2? 16 Rfd1 is just bad. The desperate 15..g5? (banking on 16. Rfe1? Kh8 or 16. Bxg5? Nxc5 17. Qxc5+ Kh8 18. Qf6+ Kg8, when White would have to settle for the perpetual) is refuted by 16. f3! or 16. f4! h5 (16...c4 17. fg Nc5 18. g6; 16...Qc7 17. Rae1!) 17. Qxh5 gh 18. Qg6+ Kh8 19. f5!

This means Black will have to give back the extra piece by taking on f2 with the knight. The only question is whether he should do it at once, or after inserting 15...Qc6 16. Rfe1 (16. Rae1? Nd2).

The second line looks more attractive, since it pulls the White rook off the newly-opened f-file, and the bishop from its active position at h4. That was my opponent's thinking. But just as in our preceding example, so it was here: the attempt to fall back on the comparative method fails, because the countervailing factors were not taken into account: by playing 16. Rfe1, White gives additional support to the important e5-pawn; and more importantly, on c6 the queen deprives Black's knight of the best square it could have developed on.

**15...Qc8-c6?!**

15...Nxf2! 16. Rxf2 Nc6 was stronger, when Black has almost equalized (17. Bf6 Qc7 was not dangerous).

**16. Rf1-e1 Ne4xf2 17. Bh4xf2 Nb8-d7**

It appears that the knight would have been better developed on a6.

**18. Ra1-d1**

White's advantage is indisputable: the drawbacks of his

opponent's choice of development have become self-evident.

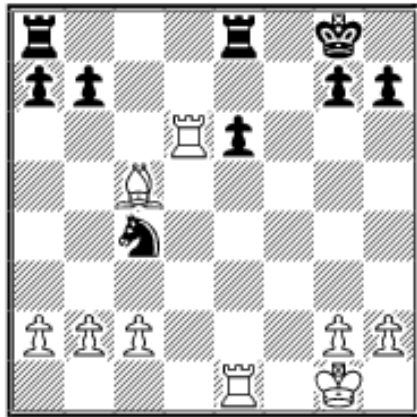
**18...Nd7-f8 19. Qg4-c4**

More accurate than 19. Rd6 Qb5. Black should now have stuck to passive defense with 19...b6. His attempt to "wriggle out" only made my job easier.

**19...Nf8-g6?! 20. Rd1-d6 Ng6xe5**

20...Qc8 21. h4

**21. Qc4xc5 Qc6xc5 22. Bf2xc5 Ne5-c4**



White must make a choice between 23. Rdx6 and 23. Rd7. In such cases, it's important to calculate accurately, in order to choose the most exact continuation, the one which will deprive one's opponent of any hope.

**23. Rd6xe6!**

23. Rd7 b6 24. Bd4 e5 25. Bc3 isn't bad, either, but the text is stronger.

**23...Re8xe6 24. Re1xe6 Ra8-c8**

This just leaves White with a healthy extra pawn. I had expected 24...Nxb2, when the tempting 25. Re7?! would allow Black to complicate the game by 25...Rc8 26. Bd4 Rxc2 27. Rxg7+ Kf8 28. Rxb7 Nd3. So I had intended 25. Bd4 Kf7 (25...Nc4 26. Re7) 26. Rd6 Ke7 27. Rd5 Nc4 28. Rc5, with a winning position.

**25. Bc5-d4 Kg8-f7 26. Re6-e2 a7-a6 27. Kg1-f2 Nc4-d6 28. g2-g4 Nd6-b5?**

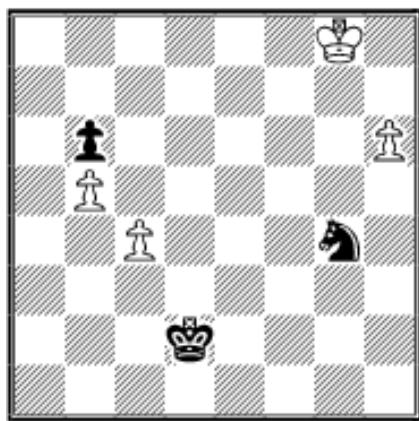
Black goes into a variation in which he hopes to trade off the minor pieces and reach a rook ending. Nothing comes of it.

**29. Bd4-e5 Rc8-c4 30. h2-h3 Nb5-d4 31. b2-b3!**

It's not the minor pieces that get traded, but the rooks - plus, the Black knight falls into a trap.

**31...Nd4xe2 32. b3xc4 Ne2-c1 33. a2-a3 b7-b5 34. c4xb5 a6xb5 35. Kf2-e3 g7-g6 36. Be5-b2 Nc1-a2 37. Ke3-d4** Black resigned.

There are times when the difficulty of comparing two similar variations is not so much the undefined nature of the evaluation, as the total absence of any sort of evaluative or logical basis on which we might base our decision. In such cases, we must extend our calculation, aiming to find the point at which the difference between the two positions will make itself felt. See if you can solve two studies on this theme.



**N. Elkies  
1987**

It's not hard to see here that 1. c5? Nxf6+ 2. Kf8 Nf5 3. cb Nd6 leads to a draw. That means we must choose between 1. Kg7 Nxf6 2. Kxf6, and 1. h7 Nf6+ 2. Kg7 Nxf7 3. Kxf7. Uh-huh, sure - what kind of difference is that, whether

White's king is on h7 or on h6? But since there is a difference, we must keep looking, to see whether the difference in the king's positions will tell. Approaching the problem in this fashion, we increase our chances of finding the right reply.

**1. h6-h7! Ng4-f6+ 2. Kg8-g7 Nf6xh7 3. Kg7xh7 Kd2-e3!**

The only move - it's important to deprive the White queen, soon to appear on the board, access to the f4 square.

**4. c4-c5 b6xc5 5. b5-b6 c5-c4 6. b6-b7 c4-c3 7. b7-b8Q c3-c2**

With White's king on h6, he could now try 8. Kg5!, but after

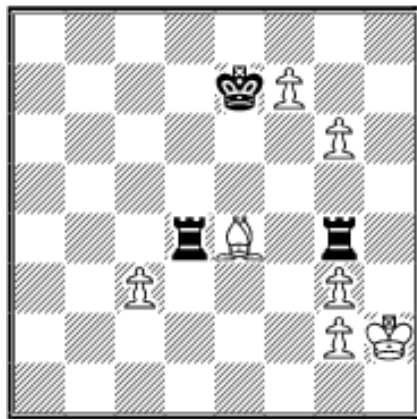
8...Kd2 (or 8...Ke2), Black is saved. But now there is a far more powerful resource available.

### 8. Qb8-h2!! c2-c1Q

8...Kd3 9. Qf4 Kc3 10. Qc1.

### 9. Qh2-h6+

That's why the king couldn't be on the h6 square!



**F. Simkhovich  
1940**

White must keep both enemy rooks under fire simultaneously, in order to prevent either one from leaving the 4th rank. But which way: 1. Bf5 or 1. Bf3? We must concentrate on finding the refutation to one of the moves (and unfortunately, we don't

know which one yet).

Close analysis reveals that 1. Bf3? loses to 1...Ra4! 2. Bd1 Kf8! (zugzwang) 3. Kh3 Ra1! 4. Bxg4 Rh1#.

### 1. Be4-f5! Rd4-c4

1...Rg5 is not dangerous, because of 2. g7! Kxf7 3. g8Q+ Kxg8 4. Be6+ Kg7 5. cd=.

**2. Bf5-e6! Ke7-f8 3. Kh2-h3 Rg4-e4 4. Be6-d5! Rc4-a4 5. Bd5-c6! Re4-c4 6. Bc6-b5! Rc4-g4 7. Bb5-d7! etc.**

In conclusion - a very complex practical example of this theme.

The obvious continuation would be to double rooks on the e-file. The question is: Which is more accurate - 41. Ra2 or 41. Re2. First, let's examine the correct approach.

Black's position is not eased by 41...Ra7 42. Rae2 Ra3 43. Nb1 Ra4 44. Rxe6 Rxb4 45. Rd6, nor by 41...Ng6 42. Rae2 Re8 43. d5!

Considerably stronger than 46. Ref1 Re8.

Threatening 48. Na5. Black has no moves.

After 41. Re2?!, in the concluding position of this variation, White's rook would have been, not on f2, but on f1, which would have allowed Black to respond 47...Re2+ 48. Kh1 Re3, obtaining counterplay.

Browne "guessed wrong", and played **41. Re2?! Nd5! 42. Nxd5 Qxd5 43. Qxd5 ed.** Here, he went over the variations after 44. fg hg 45. Rf1 Kg6 46. Re6 or 46. Ref2, saw that he would have a very hard time showing an advantage there, and played something else.

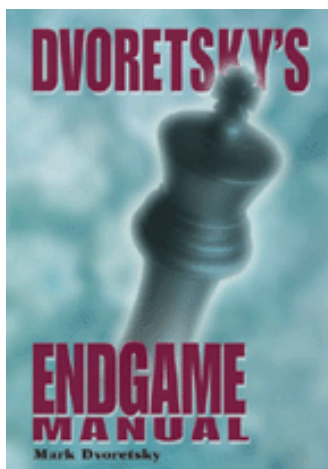
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## COLUMNISTS

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Lilienthal's Strategic Victories

In his younger days, Andrei Lilienthal played sharp attacking chess; in his most famous game, he executed a brilliant queen sacrifice against Capablanca. But there are few who know that, by the end of the 1930s, when Lilienthal shared first in the 1940 Soviet Championship with Igor Bondarevsky, and twice defeated Mikhail Botvinnik in great style, that he had achieved such creative harmony that he also played a number of classic positional games.

I am offering a few of those games for your attention. You will see not only the moves, but also the Lilienthal's comments (from his games collection), written in italics. I would hope that you will be as impressed as I was by the level, both of the play and of the commentaries of this gifted grandmaster. And although I may, in my own annotations, have indicated a few inaccuracies, don't let that bother you - after all, "to err is human," and there will never be either an error-free player or an error-free annotator.

### *Lilienthal - Botvinnik* XII USSR Championship, Moscow 1940

1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4. g2-g3 Bc8-b7 5. Bf1-g2 Bf8-e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. Nb1-c3 Nf6-e4 8. Qd1-c2 Ne4xc3 9. Qc2xc3 d7-d6

Viktor Korchnoi liked to play 9...f5, but eventually, the main theoretical line became 9...c5.

10. Qc3-c2 f7-f5

*White threatened 11. Ng5.*



11. Nf3-e1!

*11. d5 looks more energetic, the point being to answer 11...e5 (if 11...ed, then 12. Nd4) with 12. e4 (the tactical operation 12. Nxe5 de 13. d6 gives Black an excellent position after 13...Bxg2 14. de Qxe7), when 12...fe 13. Nd2 e3 14. fe Rxf1+ 15. Nxf1 Bg5 16. e4 (here, a more forceful approach would be 16. Be4! g6 17. h4) 16...Bxc1 17. Rxc1 leaves White with some positional advantage.*

*The move 12...fe would appear obvious, when in fact it is a strategic error: Black voluntarily gives up the e4-square. I would recommend 12...Bc8 instead. Now 13. Nd2? is met by 13...f4 with a kingside initiative. Bent Larsen adds that on 13. Ne1, Black can play either 13...Na6 = or 13...f4!? 14. gf ef 15. e5 Bf5, followed by 16...g5, when the position is unclear.*

*On 13. ef Bxf5 14. Qe2 Nd7 15. Nd2 Nc5 16. Ne4 Nxe4 17. Bxe4 g6, Black has equal chances. Instead of Black's last move, 17...Qd7 is a little more accurate, not giving White's bishop the h6-square.*

The Yugoslav "ECO" comes to the very same conclusion: 11. d5 is not dangerous for Black, in view of 11...e5 12. e4 Bc8! However, the authors of ECO do not cite Lilienthal's analysis, but a later game Stean - Larsen (Lone Pine 1978), in which after 13. ef Bxf5 14. Qe2 Nd7 Black continued 15...Bg5 16. Ne4 Bxc1 17. Raxc1 a5 18. Qe3 Qe8 = (the idea being either 19...Qg6 or 19...h6 and 20...Qh5).

*The move 11. Ne1, offering to exchange bishops, was taken by many as a draw offer.*

### **11...Nb8-c6?**

*Black strives to keep the game complicated. 11...Qc8 was preferable, as Keres played in a match game with Euwe from 1940. After 12. e4 Nd7, Black obtained a good position. That game continued 13. d5?! fe 14. Qxe4 Nc5 15. Qe2 Bf6 =. White would have done better to have played 13. ef ef 14. d5 (ECO recommends 14. Bh3g6 15. Bh6, with a slight advantage, but there is no need to weaken the dark squares: 14...Be4!? deserves attention). In this position, Paul Keres believed that Black should open the game up by 14...c6!?, with unclear play.*

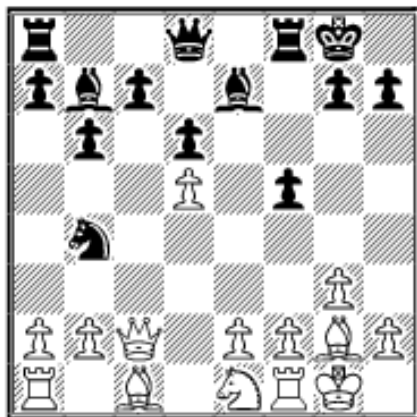
Black has also tried 11...Bxg2 12. Nxg2 Qd7 (12...c6?! is weaker: 13. e4 Na6 14. ef ef 15. Qa4± Alekhine - Keres, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939) 13. e4 fe 14. Qxe4 d5 15. Qg4 Bd6 (15...e5!? 16. Qxd7 Nxd7) 16. cd ed 17 Qxd7 Nxd7 18. Bf4, with a small advantage (Averbakh - Bilek, Palma de Mallorca 1972).

### **12. d4-d5 e6xd5 13. c4xd5**

*White has opened the c-file, and the backward pawn at c7 may come under siege. Additionally, the c6- and e6-squares are weak. If White can get his knight to d4, his advantage will be indisputable. The natural continuation for Black here would be 13...Ne5, to which I intended to reply 14. e4. If this had happened in the game, I have no doubt the grandmaster would have played a different move (14. Nd3, for example), since the e-pawn's advance would cost the exchange after 14...Ba6.*

### **13...Nc6-b4?**





*In making this move, Botvinnik believed that White had to defend the d5-pawn with 14. Qb3; in that case, after 14...a5 15. a3 Na6, he could not play b2-b4, and the resulting position could be considered even.*

#### **14. Qc2-d2!**

*A completely unexpected move, which allows White to box in his opponent on the queenside.*

Lilienthal found a pretty and very strong move. However, the same could have also been achieved by 14. Qc4!, for example: 14...a5 15. a3 Na6 (15...Ba6 16. Qf4 Bxe2 17. ab+ 16. b4 Bf6 17. Rb1 ab 18. ab Nb8 19. Nd3 and 20. Nf4+.

#### **14...a7-a5**

*Botvinnik was of the opinion that Black had to decide on 14...c5 here, even though his position remains difficult after 15. dc Nxc6 16. Nd3. By the way, after 14. Qc4 Black would not have had this possibility.*

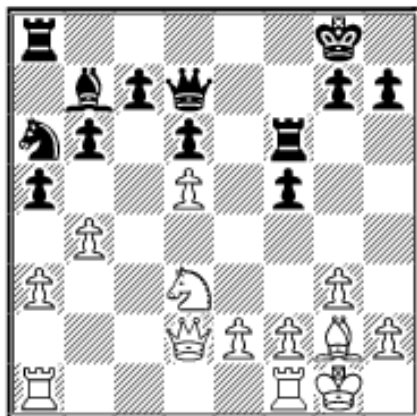
#### **15. a2-a3 Nb4-a6 16. b2-b4**

*This is the point of 14. Qd2: the knight stands poorly at a6. Until almost the very end of the game, it is unable to get into play.*

#### **16...Be7-f6 17. Bc1-b2 Qd8-d7**

*Had Black forced exchanges here by 17...Bxb2 18. Qxb2 Qf6 19. Qxf6 Rxf6, then after 20. Nd3, the resulting endgame would have been in White's favor. White retains his pressure against the pawn at c7, while the knight on a6 remains, as before, condemned to inactivity.*

#### **18. Bb2xf6 Rf8xf6**



#### **19. Ne1-d3**

*Of course not 19. ba? in view of 19...Nc5!, when the threat of 20...Nb3 gives Black excellent play.*

#### **19...a5-a4**

*But now White was threatening 20. ba, with a favorable opening of the a-file. Here's an interesting variation: 19...ab 20. ab Qb5 21. Nf4 (21. Ra3, followed by tripling on the a-file, isn't bad either) 21...Qxb4 22. Qxb4 Nxb4 23. Rxa8+ Bxa8 24. Ra1 Rf8 25.*

*Ra4! c5. Here I saw that Black could get mated most amusingly: 26. dc Nxc6 27. Bd5+ Kh8 28. Ng6+!*

*Thus, Black had to close the a-file, after which White could set about exploiting the weaknesses created in the enemy camp at c7, c6 and e6.*

**20. Ra1-c1 Qd7-f7 21. Nd3-f4**

*The knight occupies a dominating position, and Black's game is strategically lost. From this general observation to the end of the struggle is, however, a very great distance.*

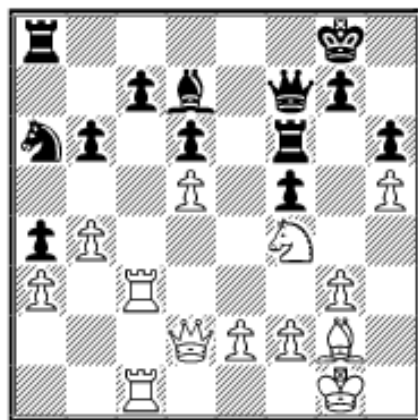
**21...Bb7-c8 22. Rc1-c3 Bc8-d7 23. Rf1-c1 h7-h6!? 24. h2-h4**

*Cutting short Black's attempt to obtain counterplay by g7-g5, which would now lose to 25. hg hg 26. Ne6.*

**24...Ra8-a7 25. h4-h5**

*As a consequence of h7-h6, there is a new hole at g6, and the knight has become unassailable at f4.*

**25...Ra7-a8**



**26. Rc3-e3!**

*26. e3, with Bg2-f1 to follow, would have been less energetic, allowing Black to respond with b6-b5.*

*Exploiting the weak squares at e6 and g6, the powerful knight at f4, and the not inconsequential circumstance that Black's knight is stranded on the queenside, White begins decisive action on the e-file and the king's wing. Classic strategy!*

**26...Kg8-h7 27. Rc1-c3**

*If Black exchanges rooks, the other rook will occupy the e-file.*

**27...Ra8-b8 28. Qd2-d3 Rb8-a8 29. Nf4-g6**

*The threat of 30. Re7 forces Black to give up the exchange.*

**29...Rf6xg6 30. h5xg6+ Kh7xg6**

*If 30...Qxg6, then 31. Re7.*

### 31. Re3-e6+

*Of course Black cannot take the rook; however, 31. g4 was simpler, forcing exchanges.*

### 31...Kg6-h7 32. g3-g4 c7-c5

*A last attempt to complicate the game somehow.*

### 33. b4-b5 Na6-c7 34. g4xf5 Nc7xb5

*34...Re8 would have been somewhat more stubborn. I had intended to reply 35. Qe4. Another good line was 35. f6+ g6 36. Rxd6 Bxb5 37. Qh3 Rxe2 38. Re3.*

### 35. f5-f6+ Kh7-g8 36. Rc3-c4

*Of course not 36. Re7?, because of 36...Qxf6, when both white rooks are attacked.*

### 36...Ra8-e8

*Otherwise 37. Re7. On 36...gf, 37. Rg4+ decides.*

### 37. Rc4-g4

*Forcing open the kingside.*

### 37...g7-g5 38. Re6xe8+ Bd7xe8 39. Rg4-e4 Kg8-f8

*On 39...Qg6, simplest is 40. Re7 Qxd3 41. Rxe8+ Kf7 42. Re7+ Kxf6 43. Re6+.*

### 40. Re4-e7 Qf7-g6 41. Bg2-e4 Qg6-h5

*Or 41...Qxf6 42. Rxe8+ and 43. Qxb5.*

### 42. Be4-f3 Qh5-g6

*If 42...g4 43. Qh7 forces mate.*

### 43. Re7xe8+

*Black resigned. On 43...Qxe8 there follows 44. Qh7 Qf7 45. Qxh6+ Kg8 46. Bh5.*

An exemplary exploitation of the unfortunate position of an enemy knight, stranded on the edge of the board. And to think that our "textbook example" was created in a game against one of the strongest chessplayers in the world. It was no accident that Tigran Petrosian, who was himself a highly skilled positional player, rated this game extremely high.

(The following appreciation of GM Lilienthal was written for the magazine "Chess Sankt-Peterburg" by Ilya Odessky, an IM and close personal friend of Lilienthal.)

### **My Good Man**

Andrei Arnoldovich Lilienthal is now 93. He is both very old, and very sweet. He is totally, totally ... different.

So different, that when I first met him, I didn't believe it. Not that I suspected any falseness, or cynicism, or slyness of him - no. I just refused to believe it. It was a sort of defensive reaction - we are so quickly callous, and so willing to convince ourselves that this is necessary, so willing to admit to ourselves that this is how it will always be...

"Lilienthal has no enemies" is a phrase so worn to transparent pointlessness, that on first reading it, I thought it meaningless. What does it mean - not to have any enemies? Have they all died? Yes, he had outlived them all; and now, like the famous wise man of China, he sits upon the riverbank, gazing at the bodies floating away below him? Or is it that they never existed? Nothingness has no enemies either, but a living public man always has some. Good men have their betrayers, the talented have the talentless, and the successful have the envious. What good is it to have no enemies? What good is it, when everybody considers your best quality to be the absence of enemies?

I do not know if Andrei Arnoldovich has (or had) enemies or not; it doesn't interest me. What amazes me is something else entirely: the man has no memory whatsoever for the bad! At our last encounter, he suddenly remembered one "very nice person," some Comrade Chesnokov, a bureaucrat in the OVIR, who spent some years preventing Lilienthal from traveling abroad. "How much he wanted to help me then!," Andrei exclaimed; and I bent closer, to see if he was joking. Not a bit: "How much he wanted to help me! He asked me to wait, while he went into the next room. He was gone a long time; then he came back, and said that there was nothing to be done. He was very downcast."

I only heard him with half an ear. The thought that occurred to me was this: What if, in Chesnokov's whole bureaucratic life (he was, I expect, some mid-ranking soul-swallower), his only positive evaluation was this heartfelt one of Lilienthal's, which was expressed in his absence, at that?

It was time for me to respond. I decided to laugh it off (and, as it turned out, not very successfully):

"Who could have prevented this bureaucrat from letting you go? Some world champion, perhaps?"

"A champion's wife," came the serious, well-considered reply. "But I will not speak her name, since she has recently passed away. But our relations were always cordial."

"How could they have been? Wasn't it she who..."

"Yes," broke in Andrei, clearly letting me know that the conversation had gone astray. And he moved the board closer, so I could see it better.

(Normally, when my chess friends hear of my close relationship with Lilienthal, out of courtesy, they ask, "How's he doing?" Which, if you like, could be taken to mean, "How are things with him?", but which really means something quite different from the usual "How is he?", and mostly is intended to mean, "And how is it that he has not yet gone bye-bye?" Medically speaking, I stand prepared to reassure you all: he has not gone bye-bye. But his world is, without question, "somewhere else"; his life is in those squares...)

At his home, I have never seen Lilienthal without a board. Analysis has become his atmosphere, his bread and wine. I only have to bring him some fresh chess news, and Andrei is visibly seized by a rising duality: on the one hand, a young colleague has come to visit, and it would be impolite not to notice him; but on the other hand - there, at the end of his arm, lies that without which life is insupportable, that which encompasses his life with thought, like cotton wrapped around a wooden toy.

He begins to look past me, and I know it is time to leave. I do not doubt that, as soon as I get home (we live almost next door to each other, by Moscow standards: 20 minutes on the metro), the telephone is bound to ring: "Ilya, you left, and I started analyzing, and found something really interesting. This won't take up much of your time - just a few moves" - just as if I had been sitting next to him the whole time, and knew just what position he's talking about, and could respond to his ideas on the fly.

And now - a word about - words. Out of all the labels chessplayers use to describe moves, the years have left Lilienthal with only three:

"Astonishing" - This is used to describe a discovery, or a combination, or in general any clever solution of a position, so it is pronounced with a low, sibilant first "s". It's a move that he has not yet shown you, but it's already pre-announced, already redolent with the scent of something found in an Eastern bazaar. And you, who a second ago were just an innocent bystander, now listen, already expectant.

"Garbage" - the opposite of the first word. Most often referring, not to any single move, but to a completely incompetent analysis. This is used only once an evening - so great is his regret that his highly-regarded brother in the search for chess truth could be, this time, so far from it. In our first encounters, I tried to approach Andrei with what seemed like a simple thought: what if, indeed, a "brother" did this dirty deed deliberately (perhaps out of an overweening need for filthy lucre, or simply because of a lack of time to get fully into the position)? What if there are some analysts who abuse the confidence of the reader - such an honored grandmaster surely need not waste his time reading such tripe? But explaining such a thing to Lilienthal is an exceedingly pointless task.

Even a garbage analysis can be corrected. Now, whether that correction should be printed ... Here you have Andrei Arnoldovich in all his glory. He is afraid - so afraid! - lest he might offend a "good person". He questions, and cannot decide for himself - should his refutation be printed, or not? Here I shall reveal a little secret: in Andrei's memory, the garbage analysis is de-personified! Only the chess mistake remains, while the name of its author is completely forgotten. More than once, our dialogues have taken on the form of a short anecdote:

- Look, Ilya, what he's written here. What a garbage move!

- Andrei Arnoldovich, this isn't Philidor we're talking about here!

- Really?! (short pause) Well, what should we do?

Or:

- Andrei Arnoldovich, that's just Fish-boy; he always writes like that.

- Really?!

- Let's not bother refuting him in print; it's not worth it.

- Of course, of course, you're right.

And then - visible relief, as if I had removed a heavy weight from his soul.

The final leg of his descriptive triad is, "El - leh - mmen - tary!" Just like that: in syllables, accented, with sonorous "l" and "m" sounds, linked, as though he were reading an exam question aloud to himself. A victorious, professorial epithet: none of you saw this, but \*I\* saw it! And although the challenge is certainly not directed at you, still, there's a little embarrassment (after all, you didn't see this elementary move, either). But immediately, with no more than a second's interval, he adds: "The old man can still find something, eh?" With a marvelous laugh - the sort of laughter that can only come from someone whose spirit rests easy; and all at once, any embarrassment is dispelled.

(This past year, I met a man who laughed a great deal - sometimes, for no reason at all - and such a juicy, rolling laugh, too: it was infectious. But when I looked more closely, I saw that, while he was laughing, his eyes were looking you up and down, from one side to the other. How different from Lilienthal's laughter! Andrei laughs as though enraptured; and, finished, once again he is open to his fellow conversant - the discussion can continue.)

Along with these three epithets, there is also one verb, used as a dividing marker: once used, the conversation ceases to be about anything else; now we get down to business. "Let's grind!" Interestingly, I have never heard him use it in the past tense: never "We ground it," but only "we did some grinding." This linguistic bit of cleverness could hardly be a conscious one: clearly, it's dictated to his unconscious by his chess experience, and also his exceptional intelligence (which in Lilienthal takes the place of academic culture) - more than any brainy books, it

convinces me that in chess, there can never be a "last word." Lilienthal says that you can "start grinding" this or that position, and you can "continue to grind;" but this work is never-ending: not when you finish your analysis, not when you finish your life.

How do our joint "searches for truth" go? (Alas, I am afraid that Andrei would never approve those quotation marks.) I cannot oppose Lilienthal, once he has shown me a new idea - and certainly not out of a sense of etiquette (what would be the point?!), but simply because a 30-year-old, barely seasoned master can hardly followed the thought of such a "senior" (as he calls himself). The best I can do is to take his analyses home and run them through the computer. For the reader to understand the amount of material I am speaking of here, I will say that the least I have ever taken home from Lilienthal's has been 10 pages, and that we usually meet 2 or 3 times a week.

So, my computer whirs away. No need to create a cult of personality: of every 10 new analyses, 5 or 6 are immediately refuted, 2 or 3 are passable - the sort one may print, or perhaps not. And 1 of every 10 or 20 analyses (that is, one per week, minimum) is a gem.

Having unearthed the pearl, I set my iron buddy to produce the detailed analysis, while I call Andrei, to share the results of my computer probing.

Now, I must tell you: Lilienthal harbors a deep suspicion of computer analysis. This is no brother-in-arms to him. Not once, in all our acquaintanceship, have I ever heard him call any set of computer moves "astonishing". I think, once again, at a subconscious level, Lilienthal's logic is not very complicated: Chess is a living thing; I am a living being. The computer is a dead thing - how can it surpass myself, in living creativity?

How do I allow myself to think up this logical train of thought for Lilienthal? Because the highest praise he has ever allowed himself to express for a computer has been: "Good boy!" And not even that - more like: "Nice going, computer!" You can praise a smart kid that way - but a machine?

So, here, I bring Lilienthal the computer's response; he takes some time (usually, the same 20 minutes it takes me to get home) - and his refutation of the computer's garbage analysis is ready. Sometimes, I don't even have time to make it home: my answering machine already has a couple of Lilienthal's calls flashing. Once again, no need to paint the picture of an otherworldly prophet (the kind we've seen so often in Soviet films about heroic types: a serious frown, a muttered "da-da-da", and bang! - problem solved): so far, it's only Round Two. How many rounds can there be? As many as you like. One rook endgame analysis started a year and a half ago, and it's still going strong, with no end in sight, and none of our little collective (Lilienthal, "Tiger", and myself as messenger-boy) any the worse for it.

Well, why bother describing it - better to show you how this all plays out in real life. I shall use one of our more recent analyses - and purposely, an "unfinished" one.

**L. McShane - E. Bacrot**  
**Lausanne, 2003**

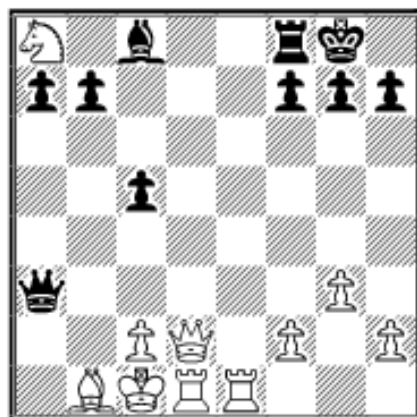


A tournament of the world's strongest junior players; the final round. Etienne Bacrot chose 20...Bg4?! 21. Nxa8 Na4 22. Nc7! Nxc3 (22...Bxc3 23. bxc3 Nxc3 24. Nd5!) 23. bxc3 Bxc7, and after the unforeseen 24. f3! Bc8 (24...Bxf3 25. Rf1 Qc6 26. Bd5 Bxd5 27. Qxd5) 25. Qe3, Luke McShane confidently converted his material advantage.

Here is Lilienthal's first analysis.

"In spite of Black's rook being attacked, 20...Na4! suggests itself, with the continuation 21. Nxa8 (21. N7d5 Qa6, when White has no clear advantage) 21...Bxc3! (but not 21...Nxc3? 22. bxc3 Bxc3 23. Qf4!? Qa5? 24. Qxf7+!, and mate next)

22. bxc3 Nxc3 23. Bb3 (23. Bxf7+ Kxf7! ; or if 23. Bb1 Black mates in three: 23...Na2+! 24. Bxa2 Qa1+ 25. Bb1 Qxa3# See diagram).



23...Na2+ 24. Kb1 Nc3+ 25. Kc1, and perpetual check. The game could have been in the running for the most beautiful game of the tournament."

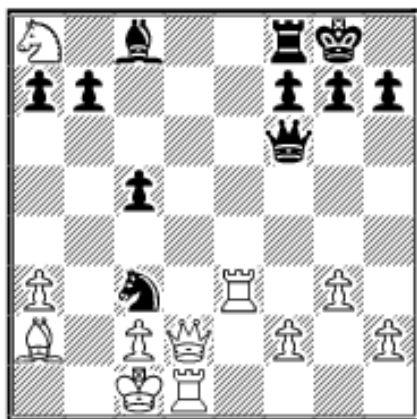
Impressive? Especially since Black has to take on c3 with the bishop - most unusual! - as well as the miraculous mating pattern, of course.

Now I will retransmit the first annotations by the computer.

First of all, Black has no need to force the perpetual check: after 20...Na4! 21. Nxa8 Bxc3! 22. bxc3 Nxc3 23. Bb3, he wins the queen by 23...Ne4!

And second, he found a stronger defense: 23. Re3!





By controlling the c3-square, White liquidates the mate threat. So, Black must reorient himself and win material instead:

23...Nxd1 24. Qxd1 Qa1+ 25. Bb1 Be6 26. Qf3 (even the obviously weaker 26. Nc7 Ba2 27. Qd6 Qxb1+ 28. Kd2 is not clear: Black must reply 28...f6 to ward off the threatened combination 29. Qxf8+ Kxf8 30. Re8#) 26...Rxa8. Nothing about the rook endgame after 26...Ba2?! 27. Qxb7 Bxb1 28. Qxb1 Qxb1+ 29. Kxb1 Rxa8 is "enlightening" for

Black: White has at least 30. Kb2 Kf8 31. Kc3, etc. And 26...Rb8!? is amusing, but nothing more: 27. Rxe6! (stronger than 27. Nc7 Ba2 28. Qxb7 Qxb1+ 29. Qxb1 Rxb1+ 30. Kd2) 27...fxe6 28. Nc7 Qe5 29. Qf4 Qe1+ 30. Kb2 Rf8 31. Qg5, and White consolidates his overwhelming material advantage.

### 27. Qxb7 Rd8 28. Qxa7 Qf6 29. f4

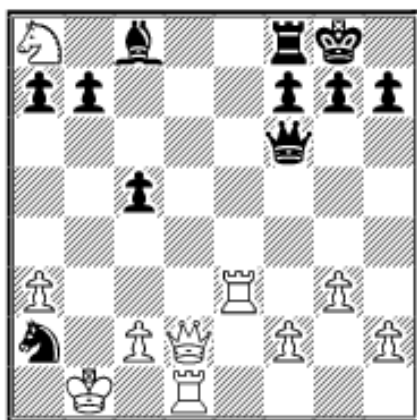
Not 29. Qxc5? Qxf2 30. Rd3 Qe1+ 31. Kb2 Rb8+. And after 29. Rd3 Rxd3 30. cxd3, Black has a guaranteed draw: 30...Qc3+ 31. Bc2 Qe1+ 32. Kb2 Qe5+.

**29...Qd4 30. Rd3 Qg1+ 31. Kb2**, and in view of the unplayability of 31...Rxd3? 32. Qb8+ the computer, after a moment's thought, evaluates the position in White's favor.

Lilienthal found all this immensely deplorable. Garbage analysis, no doubt of it. One should not count material here; one should continue the mating attack!

Lilienthal's second analysis:

Not 23...Nxd1, but **23...Nxa2+! 24. Kb1**



and now, a choice:

**24...Be6!? 25. Nc7 Bc4 26. Qd6** (26. Nd5? Bxd5 27. Qxd5 Nc3+) **26..Nc3+ 27. Kc1 Na2+**, with a draw; or

**24...Bf5!? 25. Kxa2** (25. Nc7 Qb6+ 26. Kxa2 Qxc7) **25...Rxa8 26. Qd6 Qxd6 27. Rxd6 Bxc2**

And the computer, in turn, turned the corner.

In the line **24...Be6!? 25. Nc7 Bc4**, White wins by **26. Ne8! Qb6+ 27. Ka1 Be6 28. Rxe6! Qxe6 29. Nd6 Rd8** (29...h6 30. c4) **30. Re1 Qg6** (30...Qh6 31. Qd5) **31. Nxb7!**

The line **24...Bf5!? 25. Kxa2 Rxa8 26. Qd6** (Qxd6? 27. Rxd6 Bxc2 should be

extended: 28. Re7 gives White great winning chances, although) **26...Be6+ 27. Kb1 h6 28. f4** (28. Qxc5 Qxf2) **28...b6** is stronger for Black. The Engineer of Inhuman Spirit evaluates this position as even, while I raise my shaky hand to point out that White does have an exchange plus.

I am deliberately breaking off the "grinding" at this spot. Andrei Arnoldovich has gone off to Budapest, where there might be an interesting match planned (one which may again be cancelled); besides, Christmas is coming soon, and it's always better to observe the holiday at home.

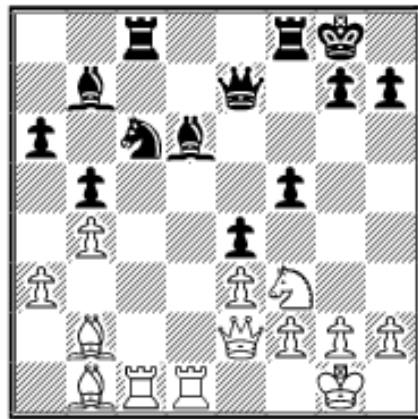
For my part, I can say that it would be even better if the final word in this analysis were to be offered by the readers of my column. Or perhaps not even a final word, just an attentive retouching. Keep in mind what Andrei Arnoldovich unobtrusively reminds us: One may "grind away", perhaps one even must "grind" away - but one can never be finished.

I remember.

*IM Ilya Odessky*

### Addendum

My January column contained an analysis of the game Marshall - Schlechter (Ostende 1907)

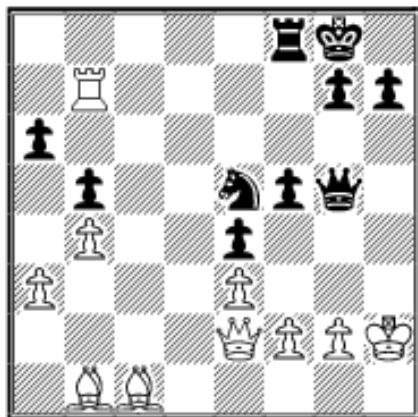


White chose 20. Ba2+ Kh8 21. Ng5!, and after 21...Qxg5 22. Rxd6 Rfd8 23. h4! Qg4 (23...Qxh4 24. Bxg7+!) 24. Qd2, quickly exploited his overwhelming positional advantage.

I suggested a tactical defense, involving a piece sacrifice: 21...Bxh2+! 22. Kxh2 Qxg5 23. Rd7 Ne5!, which would have secured Black sufficient counterplay. I also showed that this counterplay would have been much less effective, if White had refrained from the

bishop check at a2.

**20. Ng5! Bxh2+! 21. Kxh2 Qxg5 22. Rd7 Ne5! 23. Rxb7 Rxc1 24. Bxc1**



The point being that, after 24...Ng4+ 25. Kg1, White has a strong riposte to 25...Qh6 that he did not have in the game: 26. Qa2+! Kh8 27. Bb2. And on 25..Qh4, 26. Qe1! Qh2+ 27. Kf1. With the bishop on a2, Black would reply 27...Ne5! 28. Bb2 Qh1+ 29. Ke2 Qxe1+ 30. Kxe1 Nd3+; but here, the move 27...Ne5 has no point, since the d3-square is covered by the bishop.

All this looked very logical and pretty, until I received a letter out of India, from IM

Sundararajan Kidambi, pointing out that refraining from the bishop check at a2 also has its drawbacks. In the last diagrammed position, Black could continue his attack by **24...Rf6!** (which would not have been possible if the black king had first been driven into the corner). Let me give Kidambi's main variation:

**25. Kg1! Nf3+ 26. Kf1 Qh5! 27. Qa2+ Kf8 28. gf ef 29. Ke1 Rd6! 30. Qf7+** (the only way to continue the game - if White does not wish to settle for a repetition after 30. Rb8+) **30...Qxf7 31. Rxf7+ Kxf7 32. Bxf5 Rh6 33. Be4 Rh1+ 34. Kd2 Rf1 35. Bxf3 Rxf2+ 36. Be2 g5 37. Ke1 Rh2**, and the outcome remains unclear.

So despite Schlechter's inaccuracies, Black's position was still not lost, almost up to the end.

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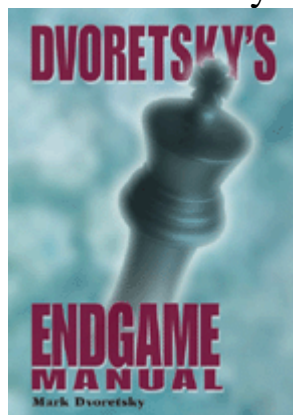
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COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Lilienthal's Strategic Victories (Part Two)

We continue making our acquaintance with examples of the strategic mastery of grandmaster Andrei Lilienthal, from his mature creative period. In our examination of the following game, we shall compare Lilienthal's notes (in italics) with those of Botvinnik, from the tournament book he authored, and those of Fine, from his book, *Chess Marches On!*. Interestingly, the chief leitmotiv of this game is the same as that in the previous game we examined against Botvinnik: exploiting the unfortunate placement of the enemy knight (from my March column, see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)).

*Lilienthal - Keres*  
Leningrad/Moscow 1941

1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4. g2-g3 Bc8-b7 5. Bf1-g2 Bf8-e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. Nb1-c3 Nf6-e4 8. Qd1-c2 Ne4xc3 9. Qc2xc3 Bb7-e4

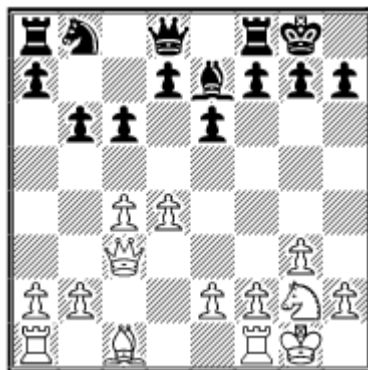
*Black forestalls the move Qc3-c2. His intent is to continue with c7-c6 and d7-d5, without walling in the bishop. The loss of tempo involved in the exchange of bishops plays no substantive role.*

10. Nf3-e1

Lilienthal suggests an idea here which does not appear in "ECO": 10. Bh3!? f5 11. Nd2 Bb7 12. Re1, preparing e2-e4. But in his opinion, as well as that of contemporary theory, the strongest move is 10. Bf4.

10...Be4xg2 1. Ne1xg2 c7-c6

Black has also tried 11...Bf6!? and 11...c5!? here.



12. d4-d5?!

*On 12. e4 Black intended 12...d5 13. cd cd. The point of the center break is to gain a space advantage while not allowing d7-d5. Among the drawbacks of the move is the fact that Black will get counterplay along the c-file.*

There was some point in playing 12. Bf4 first (after which 12...d5? is unfavorable, due to 13. cd cd 14. Rfc1 ±), and only after 12...d6, 13. d5. A game Belyavsky – Gulko (Lvov 1978) continued: 13...ed 14. cd c5 15. e4 Nd7 16. Qc2

b5 17. h4 Nf6 18. Rad1 (18. Ne3?! Nh5) 18...Re8 19. Rfe1 c4 20. e5 de 21. Bxe5 Bb4 22. Re2 Ng4 23. Bc3, with a slight edge to White.

12... c6xd5

In the 6th match game Korchnoi – Huebner (Solingen 1973), Black equalized by playing 12...Bf6 13. Qd2 ed 14. cd cd 15. Qxd5 (15. Nf4 d4) 15...Nc6 16. Rd1 Qe7 17. Ne3 Rfd8 18. Rb1 Qe6 19. b3 Ne7 20. Qf3 Rac8 21. Ba3 d6. White should probably have retreated his queen elsewhere: 13. Qf3!?, after which the double capture at d5 has less of a point, in view of 15. Nf4.

### 13. c4xd5 Nb8-a6

*13...ed is bad, of course, because of 14. Nf4, when White recovers the pawn with the better position, because of the weakness at d7. Now on 14. d6, Black does not answer 14...Bxd6? because of 15. Qd3 with a double attack, but 14...Bf6.*

### 14. Ng2-f4 Qd8-c8

*14...Rc8 was possible too, but White must retreat the queen anyway, since the endgame resulting from an exchange would not be good for him.*

### 15. Qc3-f3 Qc8-c2!

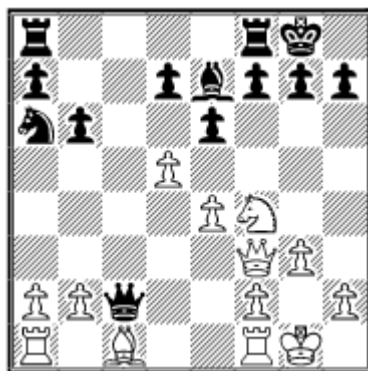
*Up to this point, our game follows the 13th Euwe - Keres Match Game (Holland, 1939/40); Keres continued 15...e5, when Euwe sacrificed a pawn by 16. d6, without obtaining compensation. Of course, the sacrifice was unnecessary: either 16. Nd3 or 16. Ng2 would have been good. Black would reply 16...d6, and if 17. e4 e5 retaining an excellent position – White has real difficulty developing his queen's bishop.*

Fine thought the pawn sacrifice correct - except that after 16. d6 Bxd6, White should not have continued 17. Nh5? Be7! 18. Be3 Qc6, with great advantage to Black, but 17. Nd5!, with outstanding compensation.

But is this true? Of course, after the passive 17...Nc7 18. Rd1 Nxd5 19. Qxd5 Bc7 (19...Bc5 20. Qxe5 Re8 21. Qh5, with some advantage) 20. Bg5!, White's initiative is dangerous enough; but Black could play something a lot more energetic: 17...Qc2! 18. Ne3 (18. e4 Nc5 is very good for Black) 18...Qg6 19. Nf5 Re8 20. e4 Bf8, when all Black's affairs are in order. All of this means he was right to play 15...e5.

*With this move, Keres hampers the development of the queen's bishop, and strengthens Black's play considerably.*

### 16. e2-e4



### 16...e6-e5?!

"Keres' positional sense abandons him here. Releasing the central tension plays into White's hands, as it grants him time to complete his maneuvers. 16...Bf6 was the obvious move." (Botvinnik)

*I had intended to meet 16...Bf6 with 17. Re1, and if 17...Bxb2, then 18. Bxb2 Qxb2 19. e5!, with an attack. It's not clear, however, just how White planned to continue the attack after 19...Nc5 20. Nh5 Qc2!*

*The correct continuation was 16...Nc5!, and if 17. e5 d6 liquidates White's pawn center. Fine adds the moves 18. ed Bxd6 19. de fe!, believing that Black would have*

the initiative. Let's extend his variation: 20. Qd1!? Qxd1 21. Rxd1 Be5! 22. Rb1 Rad8, and the endgame is about even.

We may conclude that Black obtained an excellent position from the opening, as a result of the overhasty advance 12. d5!?

### 17. Nf4-d3

*Not 17. Nh5, in view of 17...f5!, when the knight has no retreat squares.*

On 17. Ng2 (intending 18. Ne3), Black has either the same reply: 17...f5, or else 17...Nc5.

### 17...f7-f6?

*On 17...d6 18. Ne1 Qc8, White would prevent f7-f5 by means of 19. g4. However, 17...Nc5, to simplify the position was worth considering.* Fine gives the continuation 18. Nxe5 Bf6 19. Bf4! Bxe5 20. Bxe5 Rfe8 21. Bd4! (21. Rac1? Qd3!) 21...Qxe4 (the American GM also gives 21...Rxe4 22. Bxc5 bc 23. Rac1 Qe2 =, but on 23. Rfc1! Qe2 24. Qxe2 Rxe2 25. Rxc5 Rxb2 26. Rc7, Black still has an unpleasant endgame to defend) 22. Qxe4 Nxe4 23. Rac1 Rac8, when White has the preferable position.

*The natural-looking 17...f6 turns out to be the cause of Black's defeat.*

### 18. Nd3-e1!

*White's task is to drive away the queen and get his queenside pieces into the game.*

### 18...Qc2-a4 19. b2-b3

*Not only driving off the queen, but also parrying the threatened 19...Nc5. If 19...Qd4 20. Nc2.*

### 19...Qa4-a5 20. Ne1-g2

*The knight heads for f5!*

### 20...Be7-c5

*With the unmistakable aim of exchanging the knight when it gets to e3.*

Keres probably did not yet sense the strategic dangers of his position. Otherwise, he would probably have made a violent attempt to change the course of the game by 20...f5!? 21. ef Bf6 22. Qe2 e4 23. Rb1 Nb4. Of course, it's hardly possible to evaluate the consequences of such a desperate action over the board. If the variations don't work out, Black could very well wind up with a shattered position.

### 21. Bc1-e3 Ra8-c8

*21...Ba3 was worth considering.* White would have replied 22. Nh4, intending Qg4 and Nf5.



22. Be3xc5

*In his annotations, Botvinnik considered this exchange inaccurate, and recommended 22. a3. For example: 22...Bxe3 23. Nxe3 Rc3 24. Qg4. 22...Qb5 is no better, for instance: 23. b4 Bd4 24. Bxd4 ed 25. Rfd1 Rc3 26. Qg4.*

## 22...Qa5xc5

*Here Botvinnik thought Black should have played 22...bc, closing the c-file. After 23. Ne3 d6 24. Nc4 Qd8 "Black practically equalizes". But I think that 25. Qf5! would have placed Black in a difficult position. If 25...Re8, then 26. f4! And 25...Nc7 26. f4 g6 27. Qg4 favors White too.*

*Besides, instead of Botvinnik's 24. Nc4, it would be more exact to play 24. Qf5, threatening 25. Qe6+ or 25. Nc4 followed by 26. f4.*

Fine also examines 22...Nxc5 23. Ne3! Qb4 24. Nf5! Kh8 (24...Nxe4 loses to 25. Qg4 g6 26. a3!) 25. Rfe1 a5 26. Re3, when White's advantage is obvious.

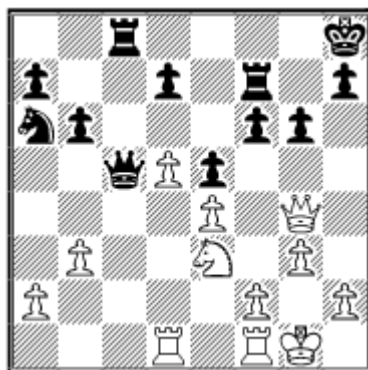
## 23. Ng2-e3 Kg8-h8

23...g6 24. h4 - Fine.

## 24. Qf3-g4 Rf8-f7

*Black loses the exchange after 24...Qe7 25. Nf5 Qf7 26. Nd6. He should have played 24...Rfd8 instead, in order to keep his rooks connected.*

## 25. Ra1-d1! g7-g6



*At first glance it seems as though Black has warded off the kingside threats, and might be able to conduct a successful defense. But in fact, White's assault has only begun!*

Active operations are temporarily transferred to the queenside – White plans to occupy the c-file by the Rd1-d2-c2 maneuver begun with his last move.

## 26. Qg4-e2! Na6-b8

*The knight is forced to retreat, since 26...Nb4 would be bad because of 27. Rd2, threatening 28. a3, or 26...Qa5 in view of 27. Nc4.*

Referring to that knight on a6, Fine comments in the well-known words of Siegbert Tarrasch:

Ein Springer am Rande  
Ist stets eine Schande.

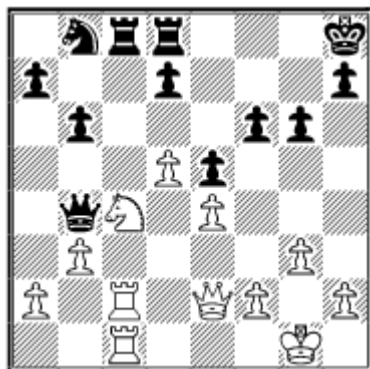
And he provides this English translation (it's inaccurate, but it keeps the meter):

A Knight on the side  
You must not abide.

## 27. Rd1-d2 Rf7-f8 28. Rd2-c2 Qc5-a3

*Attempting to prevent the doubling of rooks (29. Rfc1 would now be met by 29...Qxc1+)*

**29. Ne3-c4 Qa3-b4 30. Rf1-c1 Rf8-d8**



**31. h2-h4!**

*Reminding Black that the kingside danger has also not gone away.*

*"Play on both wings is my favorite strategy," wrote Alexander Alekhine. As in the previous game against Botvinnik, Lilienthal brilliantly demonstrates this strategic concept.*

**31...Qb4-f8**

*Black has a difficult position. His pieces stand passively, the knight on b8 in particular has no moves. In addition, his kingside is weakened.*

*White is happy to exchange rooks. As we shall see, this simplifies the task of invasion.*

**32. Nc4-e3 Rc8xc2 33. Rc1xc2 Rd8-c8 34. Rc2xc8 Qf8xc8 35. Qe2-f3 Kh8-g7**

*For all practical purposes, Black is a piece down.*

**36. Ne3-g4 Qc8-f8**

*As Fine pointed out, 36...Qd8 was a little more stubborn, but it wouldn't have changed the assessment of the position: 37. h5! d6 38. Qe3! g5 39. h6+ Kf7 40. Qf3, etc.*

**37. h4-h5!**

*Threatening 38. h6+ with the win of the f6-pawn, thus forcing Black's reply.*

**37...g6xh5**

*And now the knight enters decisively at f5.*

**38. Ng4-e3 d7-d6 39. Ne3-f5+ Kg7-g6 40. Qf3-c3!**

*This new switch from one side of the board to the other is the quickest route to victory.*

**40...Nb8-a6**

*Black's knight re-enters the game, but too late. Tearing into the enemy position, the White queen snaps up the queenside pawns.*

**41. Qc3-c6 Na6-c5 42. f2-f3**



*Even simpler than 42. Nxd6. The queen on the seventh plus the knight at f5 bind Black hand and foot.*

**42...Nc5-d3 43. Qc6-c7 b6-b5 44. Qc7xa7** Black resigned.

### ***Lilienthal - Dubinin***

XII USSR Championship, Moscow 1940

**1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4. g2-g3 Bc8-b7 5. Bf1-g2 Bf8-b4+ 6. Bc1-d2 Qd8-e7 7. 0-0 Bb4xd2**

*Otherwise White continues 8. Bg5 (or 8. Bf4).*

**8. Qd1xd2**

*More energetic than 8. Nbx2. The queen's knight will be better developed at c3.*

**8...0-0 9. Nb1-c3 d7-d5**

*A different plan would be 10...d6 followed by Nbd7. In the absence of dark-squared bishops, this seems more logical. Note that Black's attempt to simplify by exchanges with 9...Ne4 would lead, after 10. Nxe4 Bxe4 11. Qf4, to a definite advantage for White. The game Sosonko - L. Hansen (Amsterdam 1989) continued: 11...d5 12. Rac1 Na6 13. cd Bxd5 14. a3! c5 15. dc bc 16. e4 Bb7 17. Rc4 Rab8 18. Rfc1 Bc6 19. Ne5 Bb5 20. R4c3 f6 21. Nf3 e5 22. Qe3±. And by the way, Black's difficulties here have the same cause as in the two Lilienthal games examined previously: the unfortunate position of a knight at the edge of the board.*

**10. c4xd5**

Another promising continuation would be 10. Ne5.

**10...Nf6xd5**

*Black did not wish to recapture on d5 with the pawn, so as not to be left with the "bad" bishop. However, this would also have given him the half-open e-file and a strongpoint on e4, and thus sufficient counterplay.*

**11. Nc3xd5**

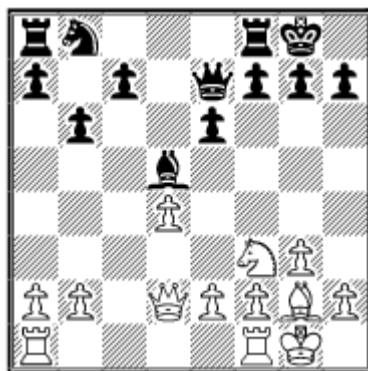
Another good idea was 11. Rac1 Na6 12. Ne5, for example:

12...Rfd8 13. Nxd5 ed 14. e3!± (14. Nc6? Bxc6 15. Rxc6 Nb4 is weaker: not only is the rook attacked, but also the a2-pawn; or 14. Nd3?! c5 15. dc bc 16. e3 d4, with a small edge to White [Sosonko - Hecht, Malta Olympiad 1980]);

12...c5 13. dc Nxc5 14. Nxd5 ed 15. Nf3 Ne6 16. e3, also with a small advantage [Tukmakov - Reshevsky, Vilnius 1978].

**11...Bb7xd5**

*Not wishing to have this bishop "butting into" the d5-pawn, Black gets himself in trouble. By now, he should have been thinking about 11...ed, followed by c7-c6 and Nb8-d7.*

**12. Nf3-e5!**

*After the bishops are traded off, the weakening of Black's queenside will tell.*

12. Rfc1 would have been less accurate, in view of 12...Nc6! (controlling the central squares), for example: 13. Ne1 Bxg2 14. Nxc2 Qd6, attacking the d4-pawn while preparing 15...Ne7.

**12...Bd5xg2 13. Kg1xg2 Rf8-c8**

*Obviously, White is going to "press" along the c-file, so the rook move looks natural. However, it would have been better to have held off on the exchanges, and even to have ceded White the open lines, in order to exchange off the c7-pawn. After 13...c5 14. dc Qxc5 15. f4 Na6, White of course has the advantage, but it will be quite difficult to realize. For example, 16. Rac1 (16. Nd7 Qc6+ and 17...Rfd8) 16...Qb4 17. Qxb4 Nxb4 18. a3 Nd5 19. Kf3 Rfc8 20. e4 Nf6, and Black can defend.*

The endgame after 21. g4 Kf8 22 g5. Ne8 23. h4 is still unpleasant for Black. Additionally, White could very well exchange queens somewhat differently: 17. Qc2!? Nc5 18. a3 Qe4+ 19. Qxe4 Nxe4 20. Rc7.

Black's defense can be strengthened by means of the intermediate move 16...Rfd8! And in light of this, White should in turn choose 16. Rfd1! (instead of 16. Rac1), when his advantage is clear.

**14. Rf1-c1**

*Now the weakness of the c-pawn will make itself felt. 14...c5 is now bad in view of 15. dc Rxc5 16. Rxc5 Qxc5 17. Rc1.*

*The intermediate move 15...f6 (instead of 15...Rxc5) is decisively refuted by 16. cb! Rxc1 17. Rxc1 fe 18. Rc8+ Kf7 19. Rc7.*

**14...f7-f6**

*A forced weakening, as otherwise White blockades the c7-pawn, entrenching himself on c6. The immediate 15. Nc6 would offer nothing, since Black could reply 15...Qd7.*

**15. Ne5-d3 c7-c6 16. Qd2-e3!**

*A move which pursues three aims at once: long-term prevention of c6-c5, creating pressure on the e6-pawn, and the possibility of exploiting the e-file pin by d4-d5.*

**16...Nb8-d7 17. Rc1-c2 Qe7-d6**

*Forced, since 17...Rc7 would be met by 18. d5, winning a pawn.*

The pawn is in fact not won here and it's not clear, therefore, whether 18. d5 is worth playing; Black actually has two defenses:



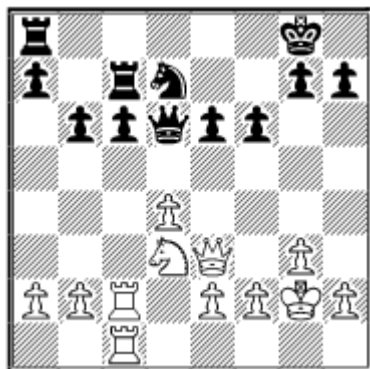
A) 18...Nc5, when 19. Nxc5? cd! does not work; the exchange sacrifice 19. Rxc5?! bc 20.

de c4 21. Nc5 Qd6 is unconvincing. On the other hand, 19. d6! Qxd6 20. Nxc5 bc 21. Rd2!? keeps White's advantage.

B) 18...Qd6!? 19. Qxe6+ (19. de Nf8 20. Nf4 Re8) 19... Qxe6 20. de Nf8 21. Nb4 (21. Rac1 c5) 21...c5 22. Nd5 Rb7, and White's advantage is small.

### 18. Ra1-c1 Rc8-c7

And now White threatened 19. Qe4, which would cost Black the c6-pawn. This too is not completely accurate: the pawn could be saved (by 19...f5, for instance), although only at the cost of serious positional concessions.



### 19. Qe3-f4!

Direct pressure along the c-file promises nothing. One weakness - the c6-pawn - Black can defend. Therefore, White must try to force a new weakening.

Black cannot trade queens, since he will lose one of the attacked pawns. And he can't retreat the queen, either. So he must accept the isolation of his e-pawn, while simultaneously opening the d-file for his opponent.

### 19...e6-e5 20. d4xe5 Nd7xe5

Black hopes to save himself in a heavy-pieces endgame. After 20...fe 21. Qe4 Rac8 22. b4! c5 23. bc bc 24. Rc4, he would be totally helpless.

### 21. Nd3xe5 f6xe5 22. Qf4-c4+

Perhaps it would have been better to withhold this check for a while, and play 22. Qe4.

I think that Lilienthal actually came to the correct decision intuitively. For on 22. Qe4?! Rac8 23. Rc3 Qd4!, it is not likely that he could then have occupied the vital d-file.

### 22...Kg8-h8 23. Rc2-c3

Securing the occupation of the d-file.

### 23...h7-h6

Now the c6-c5 advance would have played into White's hands, handing over the important d5-square for the use of his pieces. The "airhole" h7-h6 is necessary anyway, as otherwise Black will find himself hampered by the weakness of the e5- and c6-pawns.

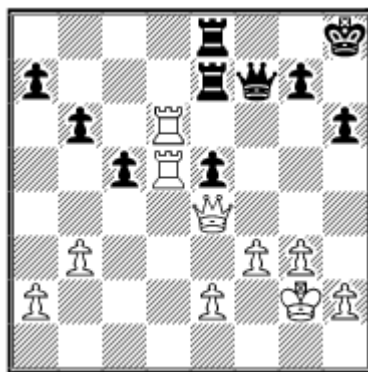
### 24. Qc4-e4 Ra8-c8 25. Rc3-d3 Qd6-e6 26. Rc1-d1 Rc7-e7 27. b2-b3

This cold-blooded continuation leaves the opponent no chances. In view of the threat to the c6-pawn (after 28. Rd6), Black must play c6-c5 (a move which until recently he was himself striving to play), and surrender the d5-square to White.

However, 27. a4!? looks more straightforward, creating the same threat; the weakening of the b3-square hardly counts here. Evidently, White still had not foreseen the next stage of the plan of strengthening his position. And this is normal: very rarely are plans created whole, from beginning to end. Usually, the player will find one stage after the other; only later, in our eyes, do his actions fall together into a unified plan.

**27...Rc8-f8 28. Rd3-d6 Qe6-f7 29. f2-f3 c6-c5 30. Rd1-d5 Rf8-e8**

*Black must defend not only the e5-pawn, but the 7th rank as well.*



**31. Rd5-d3**

*Defending the b3-pawn, White prepares the march of the a-pawn. The rook retreats, in order to avoid the premature exchange of rooks after 31...Re6.*

**31...Kh8-g8 32. a2-a4!**

*White's mastery of the d-file ensures that the plan he has chosen will succeed. He intends to push his pawn to a6, and then to accept the exchange of a pair of the heavy pieces: in either a queen or a rook endgame, the control of the b7-square will be decisive.*

**32...Re7-e6 33. Rd6-d5**

*33. Rd7 R6e7 34. Qb7 would be premature, in view of 34...e4! 35. fe Rf8 36. Rf3 Rxd7 37. Rxf7 Rfx7. With two rooks for the queen, Black should not lose.*

**33...Qf7-b7 34. Qe4-g4**

*Threatening 35. Rd7.*

**34...Qb7-f7 35. Qg4-e4 Qf7-b7**

*The last few moves were made to gain time. Black can undertake nothing, and must await developments.*

In his turn, White seeks the most favorable moment for the push a4-a5-a6.

**36. Rd3-e3 Qb7-f7 37. a4-a5 Qf7-b7**

*There is no joy in 37...ba 38. Rxc5 Rb6 39. Rxa5 Rxb3 40. Rxb3 Rxb3 41. Rxa7, when Black is a pawn down, and without a defense against White's many threats.*

**38. Qe4-c4 Qb7-f7**

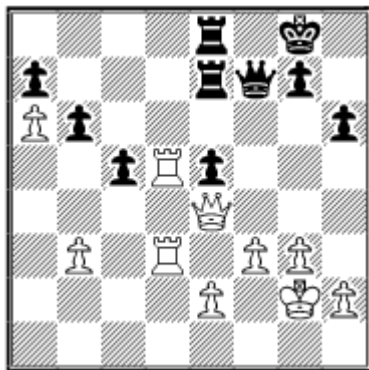
In strategically difficult situations, sometimes the best practical chance lies in a well-timed attempt to change the character of the struggle. In this case, that would be: 38...e4!? 39. Re5 (39. Rxe4 Rxe4 40. fe Kh7) 39...Qf7 40. Rxe6 Rxe6. On the other hand, this too would leave Black with a difficult position. I recommend comparing this episode with my commentary to Black's 20th move in the earlier game Lilienthal - Keres.

**39. a5-a6**

*The aim is achieved! Now there remains but to simplify.*

**39...Re6-e7 40. Qc4-e4 Re7-e6 41. Re3-d3 Re6-e7**

*White threatened 42. Rd7 Re7 43. Qb7. Debatable – if you compare it with the commentary on move 33, the pawn's advance to a6 hardly changes anything about the variation given there. On the other hand, this means little, since there is in fact no good advice for Black here: individual moves can't change anything now.*

**42. Rd5-d8 Qf7-e6**

*On 42...Rxd8 43. Rxd8+ Re8 44. Rxe8+ Qxe8 45. f4 (another good line was 45. Qb7 Qb5 46. Kf2, or 45...Qf7 46. Qb8+ Kh7 47. Qxe5 Qxb3 48. Qe4+ Kh8 49. Qa8+ Kh7 50. Qxa7) 45...Qc8 (45...Qb5 46. Qc4+ leads to a won pawn endgame for White) 46. Qb7 Qe8 47. Qd5+, Black is a pawn down in a queen endgame with a weak pawn at a7.*

**43. Rd8-d6 Qe6-f7 44. Kg2-f2**

*Since further exchanges are unavoidable, White brings up his king first. This is the principle of "Never be in a hurry, when you have an advantage to exploit!" Before changing the character of the position, first make every useful move you can – even if it's only a minimal improvement.*

**44...Re7-c7 45. Rd6-d8 Rc7-e7 46. Qe4-c4 e5-e4**

*A more normal course - 46...Rxd8 47. Rxd8+ Kh7 48. Qxf7 Rxf7 49. Rb8, followed by the approach of the king - would have been hopeless for Black. So he makes a desperate attempt to complicate. (Note that the situation is now less favorable than it would have been on move 38.)*

**47. Rd8xe8+ Re7xe8 48. Rd3-d7 Qf7xc4 49. b3xc4 e4xf3 50. Kf2xf3!**

*Much stronger than 5. ef. Marching the king over to the queenside quickly decides matters.*

**50...Re8-a8**

*Forced – but now the king's road is clear to the queenside.*

**51. Kf3-e4 Kg8-h7 52. Ke4-d5 Kh7-g6 53. Kd5-c6**

*The a6-pawn will cost Black his rook.*

**53...Ra8-e8 54. Rd7xa7 Re8xe2 55. Ra7-d7 Re2xb2 56. a6-a7 Rh2-a2 57. Kc6-b7**

According to Lilienthal's book, the game ended here. The computer database, however, gives a few more completely unnecessary moves: **57...Kf6 58. a8Q Rxa8 59. Kxa8 h5 60. Kb7 g5 61. Kxb6 Kf5 62. Kxc5 Kg4 63. Rg7**, and Black resigned.



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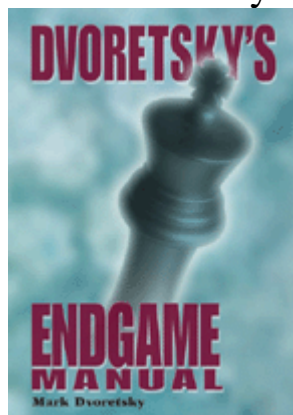
## Lessons from Lilienthal

In two of the three games of Andrei Lilienthal, examined in the preceding article (see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)), the leitmotiv of White's play was the exploitation of his opponent's "bad" knight. I would like to show you two more examples of this theme. In both, the winner's strategy was also based upon the unfortunate placement of the enemy knight; and as you will see, sometimes the knight doesn't have to be at the board's edge to be out of play.

### COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



*Umansky - Penrose*

**World Correspondence Championship, 1995**

(Based on the original commentary by Mikhail Umansky)

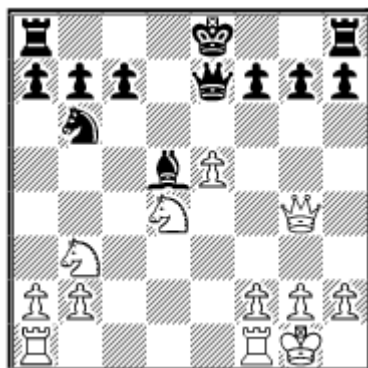
1. d2-d4 d7-d5 2. c2-c4 d5xc4 3. e2-e4 e7-e5 4. Ng1-f3 e5xd4 5. Bf1xc4 Bf8-b4+ 6. Nb1-d2 Nb8-c6 7. 0-0 Ng8-f6 8. e4-e5 Nf6-d5 9. Nd2-b3 Nd5-b6 10. Bc1-g5 Bb4-e7 11. Bg5xe7 Qd8xe7

11...Nxe7 is an alternative.

**12. Bc4-b5 0-0?!**

Hardly a wise decision: for the sake of rapid development, Black allows the breakup of his queenside pawns. His dynamic resources may soon run out, while his weaknesses remain.

The line previously played was **12...Bd7 13. Bxc6 Bxc6 14. Nfxd4 Bd5** (as Robert Hübner pointed out, White gains the upper hand after 14...Bd7 15. Rc1 c6 16. Nc5) **15. Qg4**



In Kasparov - Hübner, Skelleftea 1989 (48/511), White obtained the advantage after 15...g6?! 16. Rfe1 0-0 (Hübner says Black also has a difficult position after 16...Be6 17. Nxe6 Qxe6 18. Qxe6+ fe 19. Nc5 0-0-0 20. Nxe6 Rd2 21. b3, or 17...fe 18. Rac1 Nd5 19. Nc5 Kf7 20. Nxb7 Rab8 21. Nc5 Rxb2 22. Qa4) 17. Nf5.

Later, Hübner found an improvement for the defense: **15...0-0**. According to his analysis, 16. Qxg7+ Kxg7 17. Nf5+ Kh8 18. Nxe7 Bxb3 19. ab Rfe8 results in an even endgame. And 16. Rfe1 Be6 17. Nxe6 fe 18. Rac1 Nd5 (18...c6

19. Nc5 Rae8 20. Ne4 is weaker) 19. Nc5 Rfe8 (19...Nf4 20. Re4) 20. Nxb7 Rab8 21. Nc5 (21. Na5 Rxb2 22. Nc6 Qa3) leads to unclear consequences after 21...Rxb2.

**16. f4 g6!? 17. Nf5 Qd7 18. Nh6+ Kg7 19. Qg5** (19. f5? Kxh6 20. e6 [20. Rf4 f6] 20...Bxe6!) **19...Bxb3** (19...f6? 20. ef+ Rxf6 21. Nd4!) **20. ab** (20. Ng4 Nd5 21. ab

f5! is unclear) **20...Qd8 21. Nf5+ Kh8 22. Ne7 Nd5** (only move) **23. Nxd5** (23. Rad1 Qxe7 24. Rxd5 f6 =) **23...Qxd5**, with chances for both sides (I. Sokolov - Hübner, Haifa 1989 [48/512]; the variations are by Ivan Sokolov).

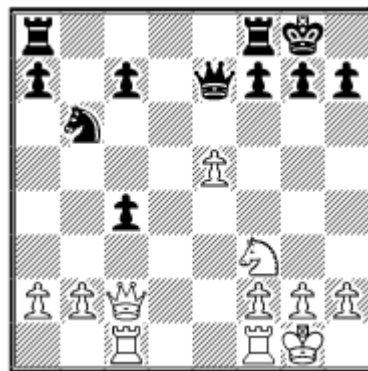
### 13. Bb5xc6 b7xc6 14. Ra1-c1!

After 14. Nbx d4 c5!, Black equalizes; so White delays the advance of the c-pawn. He would have the advantage after 14...Ba6 15. Re1 d3 16. Nfd4, or 14...Rd8 15. Nbx d4 (since 15...c5? is bad after 16. Nc6).

### 14...Bc8-g4 15. Nb3xd4 Bg4xf3

15...c5 could be met by 16. Nc6 Qe6 17. Rxc5 Nd7 (17...Qxa2 18. Qd4) 18. Rc3 Bxf3 19. Qxf3 Nxe5 20. Qe4 Rae8 (20...Nxc6 21. Qxe6 fe 22. Rxc6) 21. Re1 Qxa2 22. Rce3 (22. Nxe5 f6) 22...f6 23. b3, with advantage to White.

### 16. Nd4xf3 c6-c5 17. Qd1-c2 c5-c4



White's further strategy is a model of exact logic. He will gain the upper hand, if he can take the c4-pawn without conceding anything in return, because of the weakness of Black's remaining queenside pawns. In light of this, Black's knight is tied to the b6-square, which keeps it far from the kingside. This in turn means that White has what amounts to an extra kingside piece, and can thus prepare an attack involving the line opening e5-e6. This will be his basic plan, although he will continue to remind us that he might take the c4-pawn, if given the opportunity.

### 18. Rf1-e1

Intending Re4, Rce1 and e6, with an attack. 18. Rfd1 Rad8 or 18. Qe4 Rad8 19. Nd4 Rd5 20. Rfe1 g6 would be much weaker.

### 18...Ra8-d8 19. Re1-e4

On 19. Nd2, Black has the strong reply 19...Qb4!

### 19...Rf8-e8 20. Rc1-e1 Rd8-d5 21. h2-h3

Here, too, chasing after material is not justified: 21. Nd2?! Qb4 22. Nxc4 Rc5! 23. b3 Nxc4 24. bc Rxe5 (25. Rxe5?? Qxe1+). But if Black plays 21...h6 or 21...c5, then White could very well go after the pawn with 22. Nd2.

### 21...Qe7-d8

On 21...Qd7, Black did not like 22. Ng5!? g6 (22...Rd2 23. e6! Rxc2 24. ed Rf8 25. Rd1 and wins; 22...Qf5 23. f4 is good for White) 23. e6 fe 24. Nxe6 Rd2 25. Qc3. Now, however, White executes the long-planned line opening on the kingside.



**22. e5-e6! f7xe6 23. Re4xe6 Re8xe6**

No better is 23...Rf8 24. Qe4 Rdf5 25. Re7 Qd6 26. Qg4 Qg6 27. Qxg6 hg 28. Rxc7 R5f7 29. Rxf7 Rxf7 30. Ng5.

#### 24. Re1xe6 Rd5-d6

After 24...Rd1+ 25. Kh2, 25...Qd3? 26. Re8+ Kf7 27. Ne5+ doesn't work; and on 25...Rd6, White plays 26. Re4, just as in the game.

#### 25. Re6-e4 h7-h6 26. Qc2-e2

Not only does Black have one less piece available on the kingside; his king's pawn cover is also considerably more vulnerable than his opponent's. So White's attack quickly grows irresistible.

#### 26...Rd6-d1+ 27. Kg1-h2 Qd8-d6+

27...Qd3? 28. Re8+ Kh7 29. Ng5+

#### 28. g2-g3 Rd1-d5 29. Re4-e6!

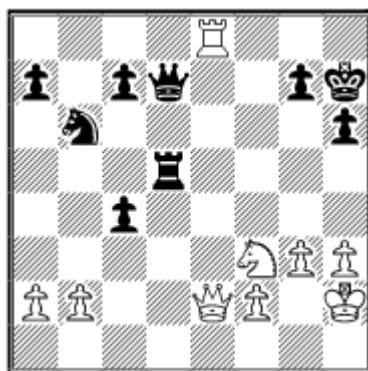
29. Re8+? Kf7! would have been premature. First, the enemy queen is forced to an inferior square.

#### 29... Qd6-d7

29...Qc5 loses to 30. Re8+ Kh7 31. Qe4+ Rf5 32. Nd4.

#### 30. Re6-e8+ Kg8-h7

Black can no longer play 30...Kf7, because of 31. Ne5+.



#### 31. g3-g4!

Black meets the immediate check on e4 by interposing his queen at f5, which is why White takes control of that square first. 31. Nh4?, with the same idea, would be weaker on account of 31...Rd4 32. Qh5 Rd6.

#### 31...Qd7-d6+ 32. Kh2-g2 Qd6-g6 33. Nf3-h4 Qg6-f6

On 33...Qd3, 34. Qe6 is decisive.

#### 34. Qe2-e4+ g7-g6 35. Nh4xg6 Kh7-g7 36. Re8-e7+ Kg7-g8

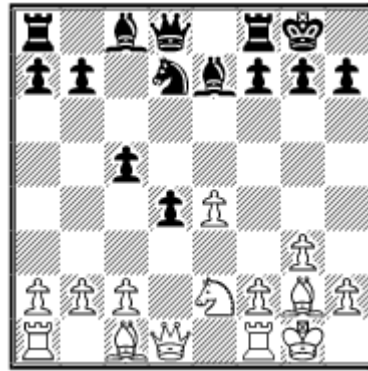
And Black resigned. His knight is completely unable to come to the king's aid, having been forced to play the pitiful role of guard for the c4-pawn.

*Gulko - Kremenetsky*  
Moscow 1983 (35/196)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Nb1-c3 e7-e6 3. g2-g3 d7-d5 4. e4xd5 e6xd5 5. Bf1-g2 Ng8-f6 6. d2-d3 d5-d4 7. Nc3-e4 Nf6xe4 8. d3xe4!? Bf8-e7 9. Ng1-e2 0-0 10. 0-0 Nb8-d7?!



A positional error: the knight should have been posted to c6.



### 11. c2-c3!

Exploiting the unfortunate position of the knight at d7, White rids himself of the strong pawn at d4.

### 11...d4xc3 12. Ne2xc3 Be7-f6

Now Black can meet the tempting 13. Nd5!? with 13...Bd4, and if 14. Rb1, then 14...Nb6, successfully completing his development. Instead of 14. Rb1, however, 14. Be3! would be more energetic, as in: 14...Bxb2 15. Rb1

Bd4 (15...Be5 16. f4 or 15...Bf6 16. Qc2 would leave White with tremendous compensation for the pawn) 16. Bxd4 cd 17. Qxd4 Nb6 18. Qb4 Nxd5 19. ed, when White's advantage is obvious. Black would probably have preferred 14...Bxe3 15. Nxe3 instead, when his position would be only a little worse.

### 13. Bc1-e3!

White develops a piece, takes away the d4-square from the bishop, and ties the knight down to the c5-pawn's defense. Could you ask any more from one move?

### 13...Bf6xc3

On 13...Qa5, Black would have had to reckon with 14. Nd5 Bxb2 15. Ne7+ Kh8 16. Nxc8, which leads to a position with an unusual material constellation, favoring White: 16...Bxa1 17. Qxd7 Qxa2 18. Nd6 Rad8 (18...b6 19. e5) 19. Nxf7+ Qxf7 20. Qxf7 Rxf7 21. Rxa1 b6 22. Kf1.

### 14. b2xc3 Qd8-a5 15. Qd1-d5!?

15. Qc2 was weaker: Black replies 15...Ne5, to be followed by Be6, and Nc4 or Ng4. 15. Qd6!? looks tempting, though.

On the other hand, White has no need to sacrifice a pawn here. He could play simply 15. Qd3!? Nb6 (15...Ne5? 16. Qd5) 16. Rfb1! Be6 17. Qb5!, keeping the advantage.

### 15...Rf8-e8 16. Rf1-d1 Qa5xc3 17. Ra1-c1 Qc3-a5

17...Qa3 would probably have met the same response.

If 17...Qb2!? 18. f4 Nb6 19. Qxc5 Qxa2 20. Bd4!? (intending 21. Qg5), White has enough compensation for the pawn. 20. e5 was evidently less exact, in view of 20...Bg4 21. Rd2 Qb3 22. Bxb7!? Na4 23. Qd4 Qxb7 24. Qxa4, with equality.



### 18. e4-e5!

Recovering the pawn makes no sense: 18. Bxc5?! Nxc5 19. Rxc5 Qa3!? 20. Rc7 Be6 21. Qxb7 Qxa2 =. White must hold on to the advantage of the two bishops.

18. f4!? was a decent idea - more than likely, it would lead to the same position we got after 17...Qb2: 18...Nb6 19. Qxc5 Qxa2 20. Bd4!?

### 18...Re8xe5

Not 18...Nxe5? 19. Rxc5 Qa4 20. Rd4, and wins.

And 18...Rb8 allows 19. Bf4! b5 20. Qc6 (threatening both 21. Rxd7 and 20. e6) 20...Re6 (20...Rb7 21. Rxc5; 20...Rb6 21. Qc7) 21. Rd6.

If 18...Nb6, 19. Qxc5 Qxa2; and now instead of 20. f4 Bg4, as previously given, with unclear play, there is the stronger 20. Qc7!.

### 19. Qd5xe5! Nd7xe5 20. Rc1xc5 Qa5xc5

20...Qb6? loses at once to 21. Rxe5.

### 21. Be3xc5 Bc8-g4! 22. Bg2xb7 Bg4xd1

22...Rb8? is quite bad, in view of 23. Bxa7; however, 22...Re8!? deserved consideration, when White would reply 23. Rb1!, holding his advantage.

### 23. Bb7xa8

Two bishops in this endgame guarantee White a great advantage - most likely, enough to win. Gulko demonstrates outstanding technique in the concluding phase. I would ask my readers to test their own technical mastery by answering the questions that follow on your own (that is, before reading the following text). Thus you will see if those "easy, obvious" grandmaster moves come quite so easily to yourselves.

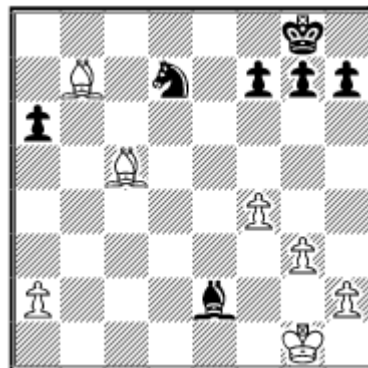
### 23...a7-a6

23...Bf3 is hopeless: 24. Bxf3 Nxf3+ 25. Kg2 (the a7-pawn is hanging) 25...Ne1+ 26. Kf1 Nf3, and now the most exact continuation is probably 27. Ke2! Nxe2 28. f3.

### 24. Ba8-b7!

The inaccurate 24. f4?! would have allowed the exchange of bishops by 24...Bf3!

### 24...Bd1-e2 25. f2-f4 Ne5-d7



How should White continue?

The tempting 26. Bb4? (so as to keep Black's king out of the center) is a mistake: Black responds 26...Bc4 27. a3 Nb6 28. Kf2?! Nd5 29. Bd2 f5! erecting a barrier the White king will find hard to penetrate. This line would most likely result in a drawn game.

The bishop must retreat to d4, keeping Black's knight on the unpromising d7-square.

### 26. Bc5-d4! Kg8-f8 27. Bb7-d5 g7-g6

The bishop endgame after 27...Nf6 28. Bxf6 gf 29. Kf2 (followed by Ke3-d4) is hopeless for Black.

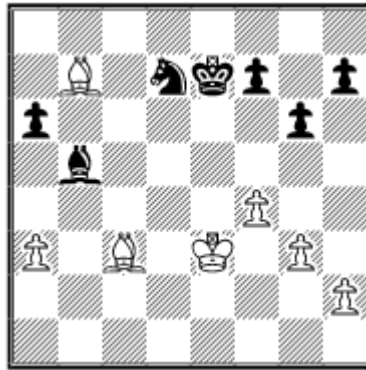
### 28. Kg1-f2

The time has come to bring the king to the center.

### 28...Be2-g4 29. Bd5-b7

29. a3 or 29. a4 are equivalent moves. But 29. Ke3? is inaccurate, allowing Black to trade off a pair of bishops by 29...Be6.

### 29...Bg4-e6 30. a2-a3 Be6-c4 31. Kf2-e3 Kf8-e7 32. Bd4-c3 Bc4-b5



#### How does White continue?

Before beginning any decisive action, it's a good idea to improve your position as much as possible. Among other things, it would be useful here to advance the g-pawn, in order to restrict the activity of the enemy knight, as well as the kingside pawns.

Of course, 33. Kd4 is a good move, too. This isn't one of those tempo-counting positions, so White could put off the pawn advance; but then, White would have to consider both

33...Be2!? and 33...h5!?

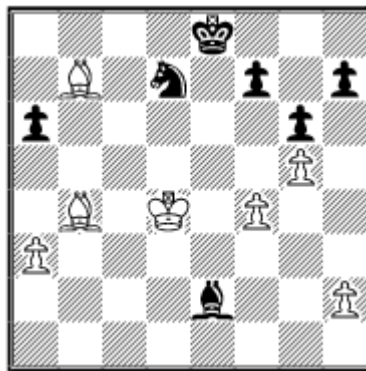
### 33. g3-g4! Ke7-e8

33...h6 or 33...Nf6 were more stubborn.

### 34. Ke3-d4 Bb5-e2 35. g4-g5!

Now the f6-square is forever closed to Black's knight, and the backward h7-pawn is also fixed.

### 35...Ke8-e7 36. Bc3-b4+ Ke7-e8



#### How does White play?

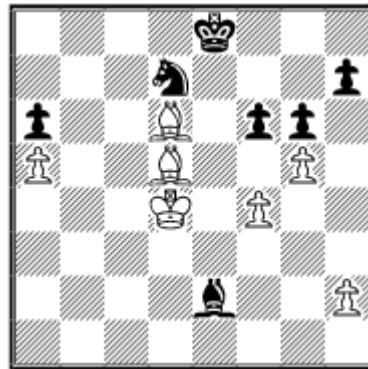
It makes sense to strengthen his position still further, by advancing the a-pawn to a5 - this fixes the weak a6-pawn, and takes away the b6-square from the knight, as well.

### 37. a3-a4! Be2-d1 38. a4-a5 Bd1-e2 39. Bb7-c6 Ke8-d8 40. Bc6-d5 Kd8-e8 41. Bd5-c6 Ke8-d8

Sometimes, even in a won position, it's no sin to repeat moves. In this case, it allows White to adjourn the game, and find the most exact winning line in home analysis.

**42. Bb4-d6 Kd8-e8 43. Bc6-d5 f7-f6**

After 43...Bf1, White could continue just as he did in the game.



What would be the simplest way for White to finish things off?

There would be no point in going after the h7-pawn: after 44. Bg8 fg 45. fg, capturing on h7 would be met by Kf7.

It is a known fact that when you have the two bishops, one of them can always be exchanged. Here the exchange of bishops is the simplest winning method. The knight on d7 that is left on the board is devoid of useful moves (thanks to the pawns at a5 and g5), which places Black

immediately in zugzwang.

**44. Bd5-c4! Be2xc4 45. Kd4xc4 f6xg5 46. f4xg5**

And Black resigned, in view of 46...Kf7 47. Kd5 - zugzwang.

Black's knight, which took up the unfortunate post at d7 in the opening, ended up staying there the entire game, becoming the chief negative factor in Black's position, and eventually the major cause of his defeat.

In the endgame, White demonstrated the typical techniques for converting his advantage and capitalizing on the power of his two bishops. To be precise: he centralized his king; he restricted the enemy knight with pawns; he forestalled his opponent's plans - first and foremost, his plan to exchange bishops prematurely; and he prepared the same exchange at the most favorable moment possible for himself.

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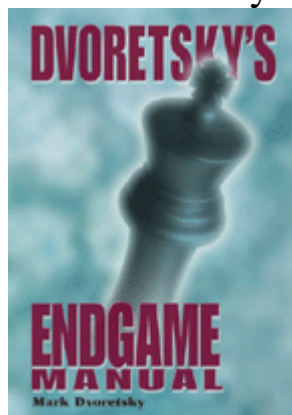
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COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Going for the Throat

One day, I was watching a group of English GMs (Jonathan Speelman, Daniel King, and someone else) analyzing a game one of them had just played. Black had an obvious endgame advantage; the problem was – how to do the most efficient job of converting it. Some very involved variations were examined; but at some point, Speelman would announce that the game was "out of control", and the GMs would return to their starting position. And in fact, when you have a great advantage, you should never let events on the board get out of your control – that is, enter complications where any result is possible.

Yet striving to keep everything under control from the very beginning of the game, although psychologically quite understandable (because, after all, it decreases the risk of losing), often leads, when two strong players are involved, to a rapid cooling of the struggle, and a lot of short draws – as happens, for example, in Linares, one of today's most boring tournaments. I believe that referring to today's tremendous opening preparation, which leaves nothing to independent creativity, can only partly explain what's going on. After all, Alexander Morozevich is one player who regularly succeeds in stirring up the most complicated struggles, even when playing the world's leading grandmasters.

The game I am now bringing to your attention involved a well-known opening variation, even though it might not have been the "latest word in theory", and led to a rather standard position. Yet it was enough for each player to find one moment, move 17 to be exact, to play forthrightly, consciously letting the game "get out of control" – when immediately there began an engrossing battle, whose outcome could not be predicted until deep in the endgame.

Robert J. Fischer has a well-deserved reputation as an outstanding annotator, forthright and exceptionally honest. Still there is no such thing as mistake-free annotation; and his notes from *My 60 Memorable Games*, on which I shall rely, will have to be added to or corrected in several places.

### Reshevsky - Fischer

5th Match Game, Los Angeles 1961  
(Fischer's notes appear *in italic*)

1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Nb1-c3 d7-d5 4. c4xd5 Nf6xd5 5. Ng1-f3 c7-c5 6. e2-e3 Nb8-c6 7. Bf1-d3 Bf8-e7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. a2-a3 c5xd4 10. e3xd4 Nd5-f6 11. Bd3-c2 b7-b6 12. Qd1-d3 Bc8-b7 13. Bc1-g5

13. Re1 was more accurate, the point being that Black will still have to play 13...g6 (13...Rc8? is met very strongly by 14. d5! ed 15. Bg5), when White could develop the bishop, not just to g5, but to h6 or f4 also; he might even leave it at home on c1, and play 14. h4!? instead.

13...g7-g6 14. Rf1-e1 Rf8-e8 15. h2-h4!?

*Evans criticized this "blatant aggression", while Barden praised it to the skies. I*

*don't see any other way for White to make progress. He has to create some threats on the kingside, before Black consolidates and puts pressure on the d4-pawn.*  
Fischer's right – the advance of the h-pawn in this position has become one of the standard attacking plans.

### 15...Ra8-c8 16. Ra1-c1

This move is arguable – in such positions, the queen's rook usually goes to d1.

### 16...Nf6-d5



### 17. Nc3-e4!?

Obviously, Black would prefer simplification after 17. Qd2 Bxg5 18. hg Nxc3 19. bc Na5, or 17. Bxe7 Ncxe7, followed by Nf5. Fischer doesn't even comment on the text; but it, along with Black's reply, is in fact the move that sets the stage for the battle that follows.

In May, I held a training session for a group of young GMs in Dagomys, where the diagrammed position was replayed several times. In two games, the really combative players with White chose **17. Nxd5!?** And not by accident, either. White's further play is pretty understandable: he opens the center by d4-d5, retaining some positional advantage. There's no risk in this line, and it's comparatively simple to control what follows; therefore, I am sure, the majority of today's grandmasters would have played the same. Let's examine some sample variations:

**A) 17...Bxg5** 18. hg Qxd5 19. Bb3 (19. Qe3 Ne7 20. Qf4 Nf5 21. Be4 Qd6 = is inaccurate) 19... Qd6 20. Rcd1 (here too, nothing comes of 20. Qe3 Na5 21. Ba4 Red8) 20... Red8 21. Qe3 Na5 22. Ne5, and White's position is preferable, since the threat to bring the knight to f6 is rather unpleasant.

**B) 17...Qxd5** 18. Bb3 Qd7! 19. d5 (19. Ba4 Qd5) 19... Bf8! 20. Red1 (20. Ba4 ed 21. Rxe8 Qxe8 22. Qxd5 Ne7 23. Qxb7 Rxc1+ 24. Bxc1 Qxa4 is not dangerous for Black) 20... ed 21. Bxd5 (perhaps the endgame after 21. Qxd5!? Qxd5 22. Bxd5 offers White more here) 21... Bg7, followed by 22...Ne5 or 22...Na5, when Black will most likely hold the balance.

The text is more principled: in view of his forthcoming attack, Samuel Reshevsky wanted to keep as many pieces on the board as possible.

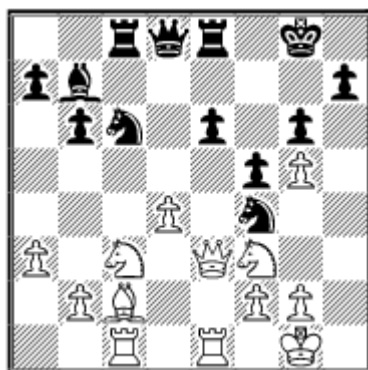
### 17...f7-f5!?

This is the principled answer. Black makes weaknesses in his own camp (the dark squares and the backward e6-pawn), but in return, gets interesting dynamic possibilities. Of course, Fischer was taking a risk – after all, the dynamics could fade out, when the weaknesses would remain.

*I knew this was a "terrible positional mistake"; but I had only figured on 18. Nc3 Bxg5 19. hg Nxc3 20. bc (20. Qxc3? Ne5) 20...Na5!, threatening 21...Bxf3 and 22...Qxg5. One might add two more moves: 21. Ba4 Re7 22. Ne5 Rec7, and Black stands excellently.*

The position after **18. Nc3 Bxg5 19. hg!?** occurred in one of those training games in Dagomys. Alexander Motylev, playing Black against Vladimir Potkin, of course understood that 19...Nxc3 would give him good play. Yet his attention was drawn to a brave combination, whose consequences could not be calculated. So the grandmaster allowed events to spin out of control. Look what happened:

**19...Nf4!? 20. Qe3**



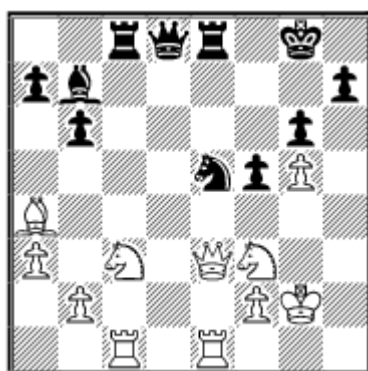
**20...e5!**

The immediate 20...Nxc3? 21. Kxg2 Nxd4 would fail to 22. Be4! Nxf3 23. Bxf3 f4 24. Qe2 Qxg5+ 25. Kf1 Bxf3 26. Qxf3±.

**21. de Nxc2! 22. Kxg2 Nxe5 23. Ba4!?**

A worthy response. White stops both 23...Nxf3? (because of 24. Qxe8+) and 23...Bxf3+? (because of 24. Qxf3 Nxf3 25. Rxe8+ Qxe8 26. Bxe8, and wins); and 23...Re7? would lose to 24. Rcd1.

23. Red1 was tempting, but after 23...Bxf3+ 24. Qxf3 Nxf3 25. Rxd8 Nh4+ 26. Kg3 Rxd8! (26...Rcxd8 was less exact, in view of 27. Bb3+ Kg7 28. Bd5!) 27. Rd1!? Kg7 28. Kxh4 Rc4+ 29. Kh3 Rcd4, we reach an ending in which Black's rook and pawn are no weaker than the two minor pieces.



**23...Rc4!!**

A brilliant response. There was even the weird move 23...Kf8!?, intending to meet 24. Bxe8 with 24...Nxf3, or 24. Qf4 with 24...Rc4! But after 24. Rcd1! Nxf3, both 25. Qxe8+ Qxe8 26. Rxe8+ Rxe8 27. Bxe8 Kxe8 28. Kg3 Nxc5 and 25. Rxd8 Nxe1+ 26. Kf1 Rxd8 27. Bxe8 Rxe8 28. Qf4 Nf3 29. Qd6+ Re7 are good for White.

**24. Bb3!?**

The attempt to untangle by 24. Kf1? is refuted by the terrible blow 24...f4! For example: 25. Qe2? Qc8! 26. Ng1 f3, with a mating attack; or 25. Qd2 Nxf3 26. Qxd8 Rxd8; or 25. Nxe5 fe 26. Nxc4 Rf8 27. Rxe3 Qxg5 – in every case, with a clear advantage to Black.

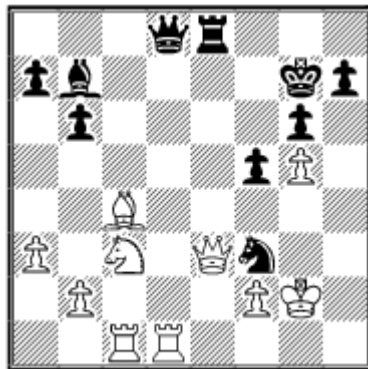
With the text, White neutralizes the active rook on c4. He might have removed the other rook, which is no less dangerous, by 24. Bxe8. After 24...Bxf3+ (just not 24...Nxf3? 25. Red1 and wins), White gets into an unclear situation after 25. Kh3 Qa8! (threatening 26...Bg2+ or 26...Bg4+) 26. Ne4!! Rxe4 27. Qb3+ Kf8 28. Bc6! Nxc6 29. Qxf3. And there are also interesting variations after 25. Kf1 Rh4 26. Ne2. 26...Qd5 is not a good choice: after 27. Ng3 f4 (expecting 28. Qxe5?! Be2+! 29. Nxe2 Qxe5) 28. Bc6! Bg2+ 29. Kg1 fe 30. Bxd5+ Bxd5 31. Rxe3 Nf3+ 32. Kf1 Bc4+ 33. Kg2 Nxc5 34. Re7, Black will most likely lose. But there is 26...Ng4! 27. Qb3+ Bd5 28. Red1! Rh1+ 29. Ng1 Nh2+ 30. Ke2 Qxe8+ 31. Qe3 Be4!, and the chaos continues.

**24...Kg7!**

Removing the king from the 8th rank, Black prepares to take the knight at f3.

**25. Bxc4 Nxf3 26. Red1!**

Of course not 26. Qxe8?? Nxe1 - double check!



Here, Motylev saw that he could force the draw by 26...Nd2+ 27. Ne4! Rxe4 28. Qc3+ Rd4+ 29. Kh3 Bg2+! 30. Kxg2 (30. Kh2 Nf3+ 31. Kxg2 Qxg5+ 32. Kf1 Nh2+ 33. Ke1 Qg1+ 34. Ke2 Qg4+ 35. Ke1 is also perpetual check) 30...Qxg5+ 31. Kh1! Qh4+; but, despite his shortage of time, decided to keep playing for the win.

**26...Nd4+ 27. Kf1 Rxe3**

The game ends in a draw after 27...Bg2+!? 28. Kxg2 Rxe3 29. fe Qxg5+ 30. Kf1 (or 30. Kf2 Qh4+) 30...Qxe3 31. Ne2 Qh3+. In the concluding phase of the game, marked by mutual time-pressure, Potkin succeeded in wresting the initiative.

**28. fe Qxg5 29. Rxd4! Qxe3**

29...Qg2+ 30. Ke1 Qxb2 was better.

**30. Ne2 Qh3+ 31. Ke1 Bf3 32. Rc3! h5 33. Kd2 Qg2 34. Re3 Kh6 35. Rd6 f4?**

On 35...h4 36. Bf7 Bh5 37. Bxg6 decides; however, 35...Bxe2 would have held out longer.

**36. Ree6 Be4 37. Bd3 Bxd3 38. Kxd3 Kh7 39. Rxb6 Qf3+ 40. Kd2 Qe3+ 41. Ke1**

Black resigned. Too bad we didn't see any games like this in Linares!

And now it's time to return to Reshevsky - Fischer.

**18. Ne4-c3!**

The knight would not stand very well on g3. For example: 18. Ng3?! Bxg5 19. hg Nf4 (19...Qd6!?) 20. Qe3 Nxb2! (20...Qd6! is simpler) 21. Kxg2 Nxd4 22. Be4! Nxf3 23. Bxf3 Rxc1 24. Rxc1 (24. Qxc1 Bxf3+ 25. Kxf3 Qd5+ 26. Ke2 Qb5+ leads to perpetual check) 24...f4! 25. Qxf4 Rf8 26. Bxb7 Rxf4 27. Rc8 Qxc8 28. Bxc8 Kf7, with an unclear ending.

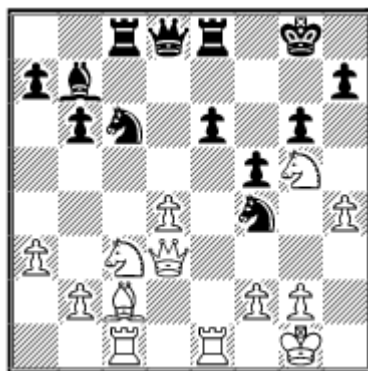
And 18. Ned2 could have ended in a draw: 18...Bxg5 19. hg Nf4 20. Qe3 Nd5 21. Qb3 Nf4 22. Qe3, etc.

**18...Be7xg5 19. Nf3xg5!**

The knight capture is considerably stronger than the 19. hg!? we have already looked at.

**19...Nd5-f4**



**20. Qd3-e3**

As Fischer pointed out, 20. Qg3? Nh5 21. Qe3 Nxd4 leads to an advantage for Black.

But **20. Qf3!**, which Fischer did not mention, appears to be strongest. White attacks the knight on f4, just as in the game; but this way, he pins the other knight, so that it can't take on d4. Capturing the pawn with the queen can be refuted; after 20...Qd6, the long-diagonal pin is still operative, and White has time to reinforce his center pawn by 21. Rcd1!; and finally,

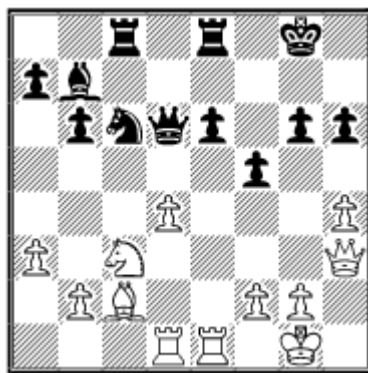
20...Qc7 is met by 21. Qe3!, which is an improvement over the game, in that the black queen no longer attacks d4. As a result, White successfully consolidates, with prospects of exploiting the weaknesses created by Black's ...f7-f5. This is the logical explanation of the point behind moving the queen to f3; now, let's look at some concrete variations.

**I. 20...Qxd4 21. Rcd1 Qc4 22. Rd7 Ba8 23. Nce4!**, and White's advantage is obvious, I will not bore the reader with further analysis demonstrating this conclusion;

**II. 20...h6 21. Qxf4 hg 22. hg Qxd4 (22...Nxd4 23. Rcd1) 23. Qg3, or 23. Qh2 Qg4 24. Rcd1 Qxg5 25. Bb3 Kg7 26. Bxe6 Rcd8 27. Nd5** – in both cases, with advantage to White;

**III. 20...Qd6 21. Rcd1** Less convincing is 21. g3 Nd5 22. Nxd5 ed! (but not 22...Qxd5? 23. Bb3 Qxf3 24. Nxf3, with great advantage), and although structurally speaking, Black's position is bad, the weakness of the d4-pawn affords him considerable counterplay. For example, 23. Rxe8+ Rxe8 24. Rd1 Ba6 or 24. Qc3 f4!

**21...h6** (if 21...Re7, then 22. g3, with great advantage) **22. Nh3 Nxh3+ 23. Qxh3**

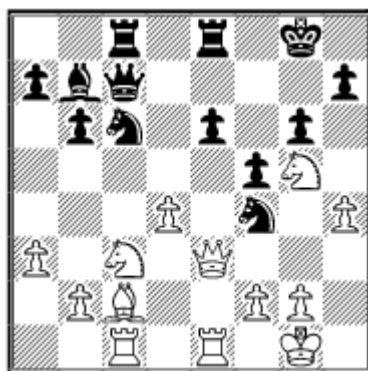


This was the position reached in the training game Inarkiev - Najer. Black has a difficult defensive task. 23...Nxd4? is bad, because of 24. Nb5. The attempt to prepare the capture on d4 by 23...a6 is met by 24. Qe3! (but not by 24. h5?! Nxd4 25. hg Kg7 26. Ne2 Nxe2+ 27. Rxe2 Bd5, with unclear play) 24...Kg7 25. Bb3. A possible continuation might be 25...Na5 26. Bxe6 Nc4 27. Qe2 Nxb2 28. Qxb2 Rxe6 29. Rxe6 Qxe6 30. d5 Qf6 31. d6 b5 32. d7 (32. a4!? would also be strong) 32...Rd8 33. Rd6! Qe5 34. Qd2 Kh7 35. h5! g5 36. Rb6 Qc7 37. Qd4 Rxd7 38. Qf6, with a powerful attack.

Evgeny Najer played **23...Rcd8 24. h5! Nxd4** (on 24...g5, the standard central break 25. d5! would be decisive) **25. Ba4! Rf8 26. Nb5** (26. Bb3!? isn't bad) **26...Qf4 27. Nxd4 Rxd4**, and now **28. Rxe6! Rxd1+ 29. Bxd1** would have won. Ernesto Inarkiev was distracted by the line 28. Rxd4? Qxd4 29. hg Qxa4? 30. Qxh6 Qd7 31. Rxe6, with the decisive threat 32. g7. However, his opponent coolly replied 29...Bd5!, and after 30. Qxh6 Qg7 31. Qh5 Qh8!, it was clear that White's advantage was not enough to win: 32. Qe2 Qf6, or 32. Qg5 Qxb2 33. Bd7 Qf6 34. Qh6 Qg7 35. Bxe6+ Bxe6 36. Qxg7+ Kxg7 37. Rxe6 Rc8 (37...Rf6).

Not a bad game, either! Inarkiev improved on Reshevsky's play, continued excellently and stumbled only just before achieving his goal.

**IV. 20...Qc7** At first, I thought that this was the move to neutralize the try 20. Qf3!; the continuation I had in mind was 21. g3?! (White also gets an inferior position after 21. d5?! Nd4 22. Qe3 Nxc2 23. Rxc2 Qb8!, with a slight edge to Black) 21...Nh3+! (21...Nxd4 is weaker: 22. Qxf4 Qxf4 23. gf h6) 22. Nxh3 Nxd4 23. Qe3 Qc6! (23...Nf3+ 24. Kf1 is enough to draw) 24. Be4! fe 25. Qxd4 e3 26. Ne4 Qxe4 27. Qxe4 Bxe4 28. fe, with a small endgame advantage for Black. But then the consolidating move **21. Qe3!**

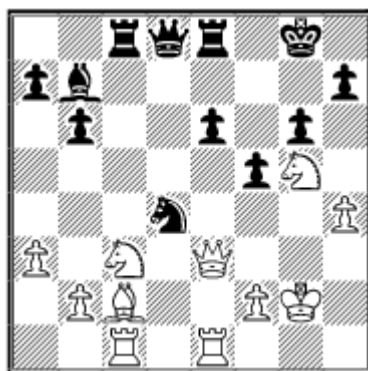


was discovered. The main line runs: **21...Na5** **22. Be4! fe** (21...Ba6 is refuted by 22. Nd5! Ne2+ 23. Kh1 Qxc1 24. Rxc1 Rxc1+ 25. Kh2, winning; and 21...Nc4 by 22. Nb5! Nxe3 23. Nxc7, with great advantage) **23. Nxe4 Qb8** **24. Nf6+ Kg7** (24...Kh8 loses to 25. Nf7+! Kg7 26. Nd7) **25. Nxe8+ Rxe8** **26. g3 Nd5** **27. Nxe6+ Kg8** **28. Qh6 Re7** **29. Ng5 Qf8** (29...Rg7 30. Re6 and 31. Rce1) **30. Qxf8+ Kxf8** **31. Rxe7 Kxe7** **32. Nxh7**, and the rook and three pawns outweigh the two minor pieces.

And once again, after another long digression, we return to our stem game.

#### 20...Qd8xd4

Worth examining is **20...Nxg2?! 21. Kxg2 Nxd4+**



**A) 22. f3? h6** 23. Ba4 (23. Red1 Nxc2) 23...hg 24. Bxe8 Nxf3 25. Qxe6+ Kh8 26. Kf1 Nh2+! 27. Kg1 Qd4+ 28. Re3 (the only defense) 28...Qg4+ 29. Kf2 Qf4+! 30. Ke2 Ng4, when Black has a winning attack;

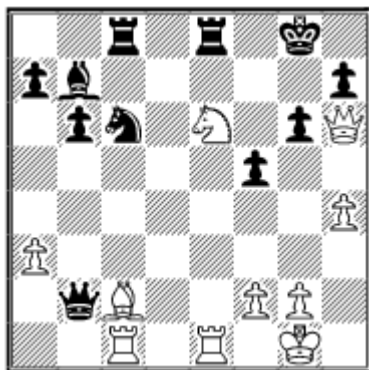
**B) 22. Kh3 e5** (but not 22...h6? 23. Nxe6! Nxe6 [or 23...Rxe6] 24. Bb3 and wins) - in this complex position, Black's activity may compensate for his missing piece;

**C) 22. Kg1 h6** (but not 22...e5 23. Ba4) 23. Red1 (both 23. Nxe6? Qxh4 and 23. Ba4? hg 24. Red1 e5 25. Bxe8 Qxe8 are bad) 23...e5! 24. Bb3+!? (24. Rxd4 ed 25. Bb3+ Kg7 26. Ne6+ Rxe6 27. Qxe6 Qxh4! 28. Qf7+ Kh8 29. Qxb7 Qg5+ 30. Kh2 is a perpetual check) 24...Nxb3! (24...Kg7? is a mistake, in view of 25. Ne6+! Rxe6 26. Bxe6 Qxh4 27. Qxe5+ Kh7 28. Bd5 and wins, or 26...Rc5 27. Qh3, with great advantage) 25. Rxd8 Rxd8, with chances for both sides.

**D) 22. Kf1! Nxc2** (on 22...h6, the bishop maneuver 23. Ba4! is unpleasant; on 22...e5, White also plays 23. Ba4! Re7 24. Rcd1) **23. Rxc2 h6** **24. Rd1!** (stronger than 24. Rd2 Qc7 25. Nh3 Qc4+ and 26...Qxh4, or 24. Nf3 Bxf3 [24...e5 is worse: 25. Rd2 Qf6 26. Nd5! Bxd5 27. Rxd5 e4 28. Rd7, with great advantage] 25. Qxf3 Qxh4 26. Rce2 Qc4, with an edge for White) **24...Qxd1+** (Black loses after 24...Qc7? 25. Nd5! Qxc2 26. Nf6+ Kh8 27. Rd7) **25. Nxd1 Rxc2** **26. Nh3**, and White keeps the upper hand.

**21. Nc3-b5! Qd4xe3?!**

Fischer considers the move he made to be the best. After the game, he and his opponent analyzed **21...Qd5 22. Qxf4 Qxb5** (22...Nd4? 23. Be4! Rxc1 24. Qxc1! fe 25. Qc7 and wins) **23. Nxe6 Qxb2** (Black's position remains dangerous after 23...Qd5 24. Nc7 Rxe1+ 25. Rxe1 Qf7 26. Ne6 or 25...Qd4 26. Bb3+ Kh8 27. Qg5) **24. Qh6!** (threatening 25. Bb3), continuing:

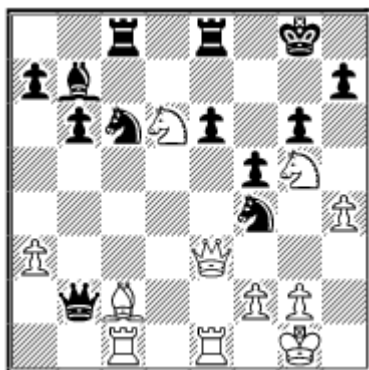


24...Rxe6? 25. Rxe6 Nd4 26. Re7, and wins;

24...Na5 25. Bxf5! gf (25...Rxc1 26. Rxc1 gf? 27. Rc7 wins; 25...Qf6 26. Ng5! [Fischer] 26...Rxc1 27. Rxc1 Re7 28. Be6+ Rxe6 29. Qxh7+ Kf8 30. Nxe6+ Qxe6 31. Qh8+, and White's advantage is decisive [Dvoretsky]) 26. Rb1! Qh8 (26...Qc3 27. Re3 wins) 27. Qg5+ Kf7 28. Qxf5+ Kg8 (28...Qf6? 29. Qxh7+ wins) 29. Re3 Rc3 30. Ng5! Rf8 31. Re8, and wins.

Note, however, that Fischer ignores the sturdier defense **24...Ne7!?** Now 25. Bb3 is no longer dangerous, in view of 25...Rxc1! 26. Ng5+ (27. Rxc1 Bd5) 26...Qxb3 27. Qxh7+ Kf8 28. Rxc1 Rd8 29. Re1 Be4! with equal chances. And after 25. Ng5 Qg7 26. Bb3+ Nd5 27. Rxe8+ Rxe8 28. Bxd5+ Bxd5 29. Qxg7+ Kxg7 30. Rc7+ Kf6 31. Nxh7+ Ke5 32. Rxa7, White's extra pawn in the endgame is no guarantor of victory.

More important still, however, is that Black had, in addition to the move he played in the game, and 21...Qd5?!, the courageous capture of the pawn at b2, which does not seem to be refutable.

**21...Qxb2! 22. Nd6**

**22...Nxc2!** 22...Nd4? (threatening 23...Nfe2+ and 24...Nxc1) does not work, in view of 23. Qxf4 Rxc2 24. Rxc2 Nxc2 25. Nxe8 Nxe1 26. Qc7, winning.

**23. Kxc2 Nd4+!** 23...Nb4+ is much weaker: after 24. Be4! Bxe4+ 25. Ngxe4 Nd5 26. Qh6 Rxc1 27. Rxc1 Rd8 28. Ng5 Nf4+ 29. Kg3! Nh5+ 30. Kf3! Nf6 (30...Qxa3+ 31. Kg2 Nf4+ 32. Kh2 wins) 31. Rc7! Qxf2+! 32. Kxf2 Ng4+ 33. Ke2 Nxh6 34. Nc8, White has a decisive endgame advantage.

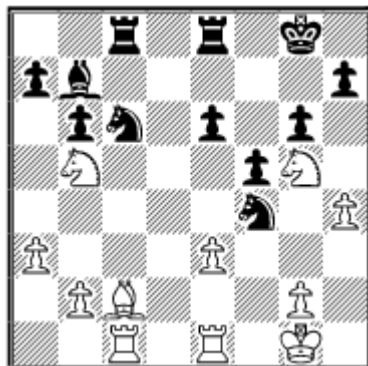
**24. Be4! fe!** Inserting the rook trade 24...Rxc1? 25. Rxc1 fe first is a mistake (or 25...Bxe4+ 26. Ngxe4 Rf8!? 27. Nf6+! Rxf6 28. Rc8+ Rf8 29. Rc7): 26. Rc7! wins.

**a) 25. Rxc8** Rxc8 26. Nxb7 Nc2 27. Qxe4 Nxe1+ 28. Qxe1 Qb3 gives Black a slight edge;

**b) 25. Nxb7** Nf5 26. Qf4 e3 (26...Rxc1 27. Qxc1 Qe5 is also possible) 27. Rxc8 Rxc8 28. Rxe3 Nxe3+ 29. Qxe3 Qa2 30. Nd6 Qd5+ 31. Nge4 Rf8, with mutual chances.

Whereas the text lands Black by force in a difficult endgame.

**22. f2xe3**



**22...Nf4xg2! 23. Kg1xg2 Nc6-d4+**

23...Nb4+ is no better: 24. Be4! Nd3 25. Bxb7 Rxc1 26. Rxc1 Nxc1 27. Nxe6!± (Dvoretsky).

**24. Bc2-e4!**

*This game was played in the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles; and I will never forget the reaction of the spectators, who all thought that we had both blundered in turn. You could hear them in the hall, whispering: "Fischer's winning!" "No, Reshevsky's winning!" The true*

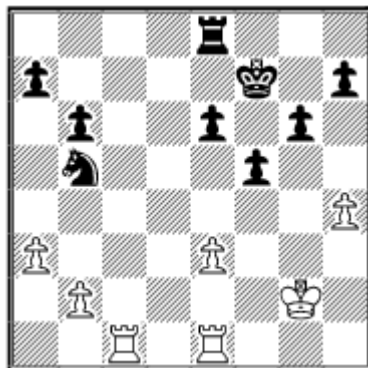
*state of affairs would become evident in a few moves.*

According to the American grandmaster's commentary, although Black stands worse here, he ought to be able to draw, but the truth is that White has excellent winning chances.

**24...Bb7xe4+**

24...Rxc1 25. Rxc1 Bxe4+ offered no prospects at all: 26. Nxe4 Nxb5 27. Nf6+ Kf7 28. Nxe8 Kxe8 29. Rc8+ Ke7 (29...Kd7 30. Rh8) 30. a4 Nd6 31. Rc7+.

**25. Ng5xe4 Nd4xb5 26. Ne4xf6+ Kg8-f7 27. Nf6xe8 Rc8xe8**



**28. a3-a4!**

*28. Red1?! would have been inaccurate, owing to 28...Re7!, when the Black knight once again comes into play by Nb6-c7-d5.*

White must play this endgame most alertly: the tiniest inaccuracy will give his opponent time to co-ordinate his forces and equalize, or even to seize the initiative.

**28...Nb5-d6 29. Rc1-c7+**

After 29. Red1!? Ne4 30. Rd7+ Kf6 31. Rxa7 (31. Rxh7?! is less accurate: 31...Rd8 32. Rc2 a5 33. Rb7 Rd6) 31...h6 (31...Rd8!?), we reach the same position as in the game.

**29...Kf7-f6!**

*29...Re7 30. Rec1 was no good for Black. The rook must help Black advance his kingside pawns.*

**30. Re1-c1!**

*30. Rxa7 (or 30. Rxh7) would not work, because of 30...Rc8. One line is 31. Re2*

Rc4, with counterplay.

### 30...h7-h6

30...Ne4!? 31. Rxa7 Rd8 was worth considering.

### 31. Rc7xa7

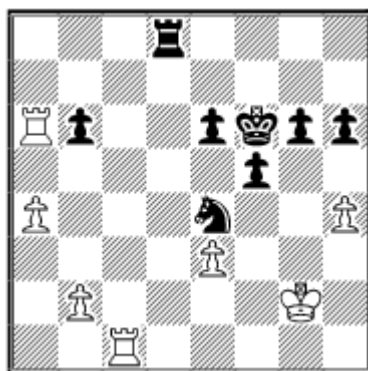
An interesting plan, starting with **31. b4!?**, was found by Artur Yusupov. White is in no hurry to grab pawns, preferring instead to strengthen his position as much as possible first, in order to limit his opponent's counterplay. Black loses after 31...Ne4 32. Rc8 Re7 33. R1c7, trading a pair of rooks – which is usually good for the side that is the exchange ahead. And 31...Rd8 32. Rd1 Nb5 33. Rcd7 Rxd7 34. Rxd7 is bad for Black, too. If 31...b5, then White has either 32. Rxa7 or 32. ab!? Nxb5 (32...Rb8 33. R1c6!? Nxb5 34. Rd7±) 33. Rd7± - domination! And finally, White meets 31...g5 with 32. h5! g4 33. b5 Ra8 34. Rh7 a6 35. a5! ab 36. ab Nc4 37. b7 Rb8 38. Rb1 Nxe3+ (38...Nd6 39. Rxh6+) 38. Kf2 Nc4 (39...f4 40. Rxb5) 40. Rxh6+ Kg5 41. Rh7 Nd6 42. Rg7+ Kh6 43. Rd7, with a winning position.

### 31...Nd6-e4 32. Ra7-a6

32. Rb7 is the same thing.

### 32...Re8-d8!

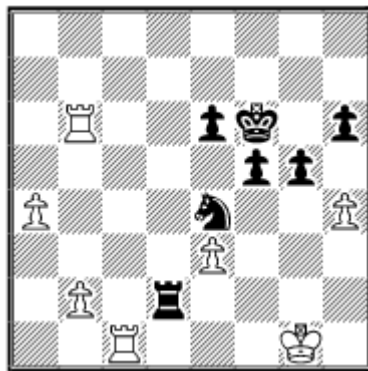
32...Rb8? would have been hopeless, in view of 33. Rc6.



### 33. Rc1-c2

In Fischer's opinion, this was *the only way to retain winning chances*. This is not true: taking the pawn would not only have won, there were different ways to do so. Fischer's variations contain inaccuracies.

**33. Rxb6!? Rd2+ 34. Kg1 g5** (see next diagram)



Now, A) **35. a5?** gh 36. a6? fails to 36...h3 37. a7 h2+ 38. Kh1 Ng3 mate.

B) **35. Rcc6!** (this may even be a simpler winning method than the exchange of pawns on g5) **35...gh 36. Rxe6+ Kg5 37. Rg6+ Kh5**, and Fischer only continues 38. Rxh6+ Kg4, with counterplay, while after **38. a5!**, the draw has disappeared. Nor does 35...Rd1+ save Black: 36. Kg2 Rd2+ 37. Kf1 Ng3+ 38. Ke1 Re2+ 39. Kd1 Rxe3 40. hg+ hg 41. a5 f4 42. a6 f3 43. Rxe6+! Rxe6 44. Rxe6+ Kxe6 45. Ke1, and Black loses by a tempo.

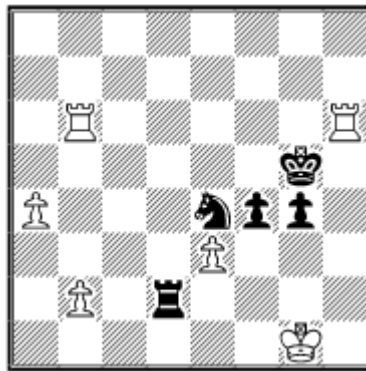
C) **35. hg+** (Fischer's main line) **35...hg**. Black does no better with 35...Nxg5 36. Rf1 Nh3+ (36...Ke5 37. a5 Ke4 38. Rb4+!) 37. Kh1 Nf2+ 38. Rxf2!? Rxf2 39. a5, when he'll have a hard time saving the rook endgame. Besides, he doesn't have to give

back the exchange. I also examined 38. Kg2 Ng4+ 39. Kg3 Nxe3 40. Rh1 (40. Re1 f4+! 41. Kf3 Kf5) 40...Ng4 41. a5 Kg5! 42. Rxe6 h5, with plenty of counterplay for Black. However, as Dmitry Plisetsky told me, in the 3rd volume of *My Great Predecessors*, now going to the printers, Garry Kasparov demonstrates that White keeps his won position by retreating his king to g1. For example: 39. Kg1! Nxe3 40. Re1 f4 41. a5 Rg2+ 42. Kh1 Rg5 43. a6 Ra5 44. b4 Ra3 45. b5 f3 46. Kg1 Ng4 47. Rf1 f2+ 48. Rxf2 Nxf2 49. Kxf2, and wins.

**36. Rcc6** (of course not 36. a5? g4 37. a6? Ng5 38. a7 Nf3+ 39. Kf1 g3, and wins)  
**36...g4** Not the most obvious move.

In the sharp variation we are already familiar with, 36...Rd1+ 37. Kg2 Rd2+ 38. Kf1 Ng3+ 39. Ke1 Re2+ 40. Kd1 Rxe3, Black loses: 41. a5 f4 42. a6 f3 43. Rxe6+! Rxe6 44. Rxe6+ Kxe6 45. Ke1. Yet the following continuation of Inarkiev's is interesting: 36...f4!? 37. Rxe6+ Kf5. The trade of pawns by 38. ef? gf only leads to a draw: 39. Re8 Rd1+ 40. Kg2 Rd2+ 41. Kf1 f3 =, or 39. a5 f3 40. Rxe4 Kxe4 41. a6 Rd1+ 42. Kf2 Ra1 43. b4 Ra2+ 44. Kg3 Rg2+ 45. Kh3 Rg1 46. Rf6 Ke3 (46...Rb1 is weaker: 47. Kg3 Rg1+ 48. Kf2 Rg2+ 49. Kf1 Rb2 50. Rf8!) 47. b5 Ra1 48. b6 Rxa6 49. b7 Rxf6 50. b8Q Rh6+ 51. Kg3 Rg6+ 52. Kh4 f2 =. But after the immediate 38. Re8!, there seems to be no salvation: 38...f3 39. Rb5+; or 38...fe 39. Rb5+ Kf4 40. Rb4 Kg3 41. Kf1; or 38...Rd1+ 39. Kg2 Rd2+ 40. Kf1 Ng3+ 41. Ke1 Re2+ 42. Kd1 fe 43. Rd6!? (or 43. a5 Rd2+ 44. Kc1 Ne2+ 45. Kb1).

**37. Rxe6+ Kg5 38. Rh6** (Kasparov claims 38. Rb5! wins) **38...f4!**



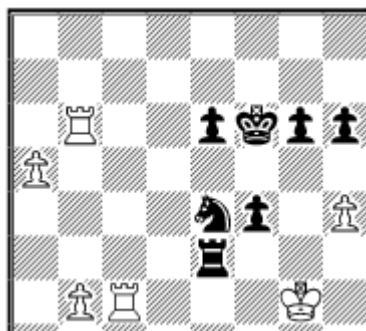
Fischer erroneously claims that *Black holds on*. Let's continue: 39. Rhg6+ (39. ef+ Kxf4 40. Kf1 Rd1+ 41. Ke2 Rd2+ 42. Ke1 Rd3 43 Rh2!? is probably also enough to win) 39...Kf5 (39...Kh4 40. ef Kg3 41. Rb3+ Kxf4 42. Rg8 changes nothing) 40. ef Kxf4, and now White wins either by 41. Rg8 Ng5 42. Rb4+ Kf3 (42...Kg3 43. Kf1) 43. Rb3+ Kf4 44. Rf8+ Ke4 45. Kf1 Nf3 46. Rb4+, or by 41. a5 Ng5 42. Rbf6+! (but not 42. Rb4+ Kf5 43. Rxg5+ Kxg5 44. Rb3 Rd6! =, or 44. a6 Rd1+ 45. Kf2 Ra1 46. Rb6 Kf4 =) 42...Ke5 43. a6 Nf3+ 44. Kf1.

On the other hand, the move in the game doesn't throw away the win, either.

**33...Rd8-d3 34. Ra6xb6**

*If 34. Kf3 Rb3, and Black has a great game.*

**34...Rd3xe3 35. a4-a5 f5-f4**



**36. Rc2-f2?**

*In time-pressure, Reshevsky probably overlooked that Black's rook could get back in time to stop the a-pawn. Now, even the draw is problematic.*

Fischer thinks that White should have taken the drawing line 36. a6 f3+ 37. Kf1 (37. Kh2? Re2+) 37...Rd3! 39. Ke1 Re3+ 39. Kf1 Rd3,

and 40. Kg1 Rd1+ 41. Kh2 f2 42. Rxf2+ Nxf2 43. Rb3 (43. a7 Ra1) 43...Rd7 44. Rf3+ Kg7 45. Rxf2 Ra7 = is useless.

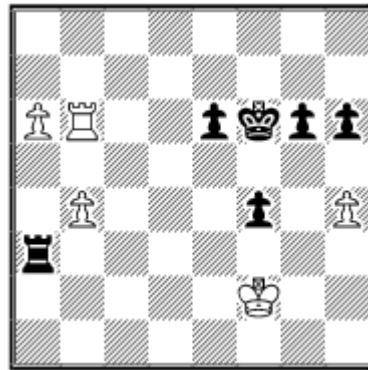
However, White was right to expect more from his position! The fine move **36. Rb4!!** wins. White targets the enemy knight, preparing to exchange it at the right moment for his rook. For example, **36...f3+** (36...g5 37. hg+ hg 38. a6 g4 39. a7 wins) **37. Kf1 Kf5** (37...f2 38. Rxf2+ Nxf2 39. Kxf2 is hopeless for Black) **38. a6 Rd3 39. Rc1 Rd2 40. Rxe4 Kxe4 41. a7 Rd8 42. b4 Ra8 43. Rc7!** (on 43. Ra1?, Black's king gets to the queenside) **43...Rd8 44. b5**, and White wins.

Fischer's notes to the remainder of the game appear error-free, so I will do very little interfering with his commentary the rest of the way.

**36...Ne4xf2 37. Kg2xf2 Re3-e5! 38. b2-b4 Re5-e3!**

*This maneuver allows the Black rook to get behind the passed pawn.*

**39. a5-a6 Re3-a3**



*Now the White pawns are stymied. In order to get them moving again, White will have to play b5, Rb7, a7, b6, etc. But a half-dozen moves is a whole lifetime in chess.*

**40. Rb6-c6?**

*The last move before the time-control loses. His best chance was 40. b5, intending Rb8 and b6 (giving up the a6-pawn), followed, in some lines, by b6-b7. In that event, the game would have ended in a draw. Here's an approximate line: 40...g5 41. hg+ hg 42. Rb8! g4 43. b6 g3+*

*44. Kg2 =.*

**40...g6-g5 41. h4xg5+ h6xg5 42. b4-b5 g5-g4 43. Rc6-c8**

As Fischer pointed out, 43. Rc1 (with the idea Rb1) isn't enough to save White after 43...g3+ 44. Kg1 (44. Kg2 Ra2+ 45. Kf3 Kf5) 44...Ra2! 45. Rb1 (if 45. b6 Rxa6 46. Rb1 Ra8 47. b7 Rb8 48. Kg2 e5 49. Kf3 Ke6, with an easy win - Dvoretsky) 45...f3 46. b6 Rg2+ 47. Kf1 Rh2! 48. Ke1 Rh1+ 49. Kd2 Rxb1 50. a7 f2 51. a8Q f1Q, and Black wins, since White has no perpetual check.

**43...Kf6-f5 44. b5-b6 g4-g3+ 45. Kf2-e1**

*Reshevsky would rather see the pawns advance than get mated after 45. Kg2 Ra2+ 46. Kg1 f3, etc.*

**45...Ra3-a1+ 46. Ke1-e2 g3-g2 47. Rc8-f8+**

*Or 47. Rg8 Rxa6 48. b7 (48. Rxc2 Rxb6) 48...Rb6, with a decisive advantage to Black.*

**47...Kf5-e4 48. Rf8xf4+ Ke4xf4 49. b6-b7**



**49...g2-g1Q**

*Hasty play, which fortunately doesn't blow the win. As Isaac Kashdan noted after the game, 49...Ke4! would have won immediately. For example, 50. b8Q Ra2+ 51. Ke1 g1Q mate. "What will the Russians say, when they see this match?" he asked, smiling ironically.*

**50. b7-b8Q+ Kf6-f5 51. Qb8-f8+ Kf5-e4 52. Qf8-a8+**

White has no perpetual. Fischer gives the variation 52. Qf3+ Ke5 53. Qc3+ (53. Qh5+ Kd6) 53...Qd4 54. Qg3+ Kd5 55. Qf3+ Qe4+.

**52...Ke4-d4 53. Qa8-d8+**

*More stubborn than 53. Qh8+ Kc4 54. Qc8+ Qc5 55. Qxe6+ Kb4 56. Qe4+ Qc4+.*

**53...Kd4-c4 54. Qd8-d3+ Kc4-c5 55. Qd3-c3+ Kc5-d6 56. Qc3-d2+ Kd6-e5 57. Qd2-b2+ Ke5-f5**

White resigned, in view of 58. Qb5+ Kf6 59. Qb2+ e5.

It is just this kind of game, in which both players "go for the throat," which becomes the sort of event that is still interesting to look at half a century later!



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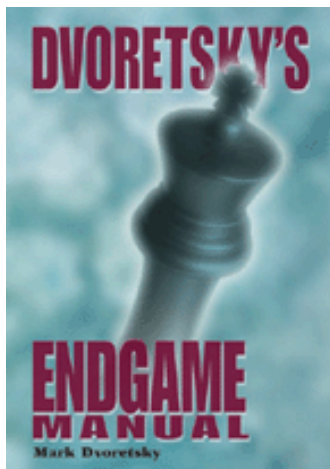


## The Two Weaknesses Principle

The "Two Weaknesses Principle" is one of the most important techniques for exploiting an advantage. You may read about it in *Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky, and *Technique for the Tournament Player* by Dvoretsky and Yusupov, or in my own *School of Chess Excellence 1 - Endgame Analysis*. In order to remind you of what we're talking about, I will cite from the latter book:

### COLUMNISTS

*The*  
*Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky



*On defense, your opponent will try to defend his weaknesses securely. In a general sense, the "weakness in his camp" might turn out to be, not merely a vulnerable pawn or an unfortunately placed piece, but also, for example, an invasion square which must be defended, or an enemy passed pawn which must be blockaded.*

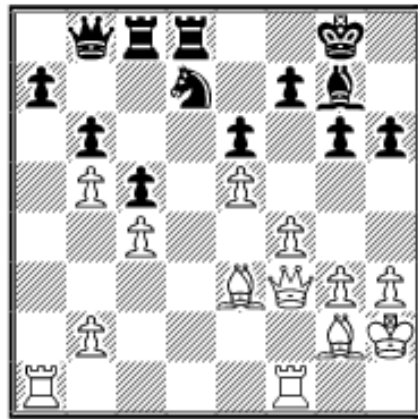
*A smartly conducted defense will usually be able to cover one weakness without too much difficulty. So, if your opponent is condemned to passivity, do not attempt to force the win at this one single point – play widely! The correct strategy for the stronger side is to find, or create, a second weakness in the enemy camp. By attacking this second weakness, and then if necessary switching back to the first, we break down, and finally destroy, the enemy's defense.*

*Observe how the great masters of the endgame exploit their advantage. You will see that, nearly always, they open up a "second front".*

Allow me to present a few instructive examples of this theme, collected from various sources (not, however, from any of the sources cited above), beginning with a rather simple episode from one of my games, examined in the Dvoretsky and Yusupov book, *Secrets of Opening Preparation*.

**Dvoretsky - Tataev**  
Bjeltsi 1972





White's positional advantage is obvious. To begin with, he restricts the opposing forces by threatening to win the a7-pawn.

**21. Rf1-d1**

Black must now meet the threat of 22. Qb7 Qxb7 23. Bxb7 Rb8 (23...Rc7 24. Bc6) 24. Rxa7.

**21...Rc8-c7**

An unnatural move; 21...Nf8 was better.

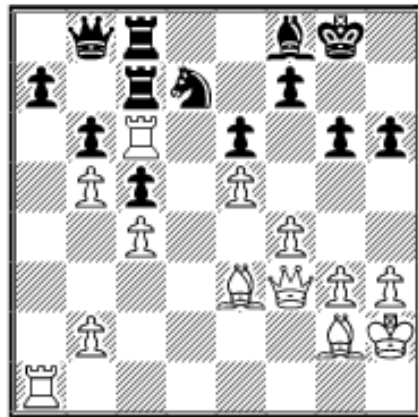
**22. Rd1-d6! Bg7-f8**

On 22...Nf8 I had intended 23. Rad1 Rcd7 24. Qc6; and on 24...Rc8, I would probably have sacrificed the queen: 25. Qxd7 Nxd7 26. Rxd7 (intending to continue 27. Rb7 and 28. Rdd7), or even 25. Rxd7 Rxc6 26. bc Nxd7 27. Rxd7.

**23. Rd6-c6**

Once again, the a7-pawn is in trouble: now White threatens 24. Rxc7 Qxc7 25. Qb7.

**23...Rd8-c8**



Black has no moves – his pieces are blocked by his own pawn at c5. Here is the perfect time to recall the "two weaknesses principle." It usually works in the endgame; but sometimes, it's also useful in those middlegames where the opponent is completely tied down and deprived of counterplay. Up to this point, White has been operating on the queenside. Black has warded off the immediate threats, but almost all of his pieces are stranded over there. In such cases, transferring the attack to the other wing turns

out to be quite effective.

**24. h3-h4! h6-h5**

24...a5 is met by 25. h5, breaking up the black king's protection.

**25. g3-g4 h5xg4 26. Qf3xg4 Bf8-g7 27. h4-h5 Nd7-f8**

White should continue Be4 and Rg1 – but in what order? When exploiting your advantage, you should always pay close attention to your opponent's

counterthreats. The natural 28. Be4? in this case is refuted tactically: 28...Rxc6 29. bc Bxe5! 30. fe? (30. hg leads to an unclear position) 30...Qxe5+, followed by either 31...Qxb2+ or 31...f5.

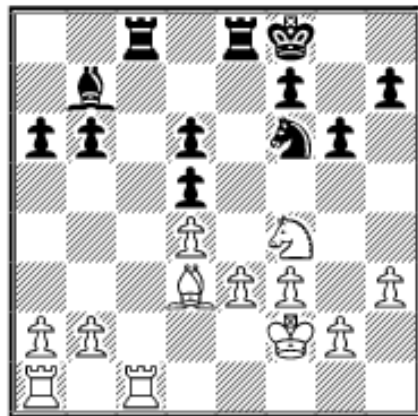
## 28. Ra1-g1!

White has a decisive advantage now, and was able to convert it into a win.

The next example is taken from my article dedicated to the endgame technique of Grandmaster Anthony Miles.

## Miles - Larsen

Tilburg 1978



## 22. g2-g4!

This is a standard space-gaining maneuver on the kingside. Weaker is 22. h4?! h5, and White has fewer ways of organizing an assault. Also dubious is 22. b4?! b5, because now White will have to take measures against the knight maneuver Nd7-b6. After 23. a4 Rxc1 24. Rxc1 ba 25. Ra1 Bc6 26. Bxa6 Rb8 27. b5 Bxb5 28. Rb1 a3 or 23. Rxc8 Rxc8 24. a4 ba 25. Rxa4 Rc6, White only has a small advantage.

## 22...Kf8-e7

On 22...g5 23. Ne2 White threatens both h3-h4 and Ng3-f5.

## 23. h3-h4 b6-b5

In advancing his kingside pawns, White concurrently threatens the d5-pawn – he intends to play Bc2-b3, followed by g4-g5. Bent Larsen wards off the threat (24. Bc2 Nd7 25. Bb3 Nb6); but in order to do this, he has to weaken the queenside dark squares.

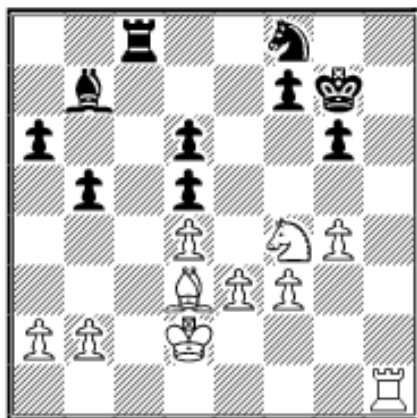
## 24. h4-h5 Nf6-d7 25. Rc1xc8 Re8xc8 26. Ra1-h1 Nd7-f8

26...Nb6? is impossible, in view of 27. hg hg 28. Nxg6+ fg 29. Rh7+

## 27. h5xg6 h7xg6 28. Kf2-e2

By moving his king to d2, White not only neutralizes the enemy rook, but also renews the threatened maneuver Bc2-b3. Larsen therefore moves his king to g7. By covering the invasion square at h7, he frees his knight to defend the weak d5-pawn.

**28...Ke7-f6 29. Ke2-d2 Kf6-g7**



**30. Rh1-c1!**

An unexpected change in White's plans! His opponent is coping, for the time being, with defending all his weaknesses: he prevented the rook's invasion on the h-file, and is prepared to defend the d5-pawn in timely fashion with his knight. However, all this has required the black king to bury himself on the kingside, so Miles is changing the active theater of operations to the other side of the board. After exchanging rooks, he wants to

bring his knight to a5, the square weakened by Black's 23rd move.

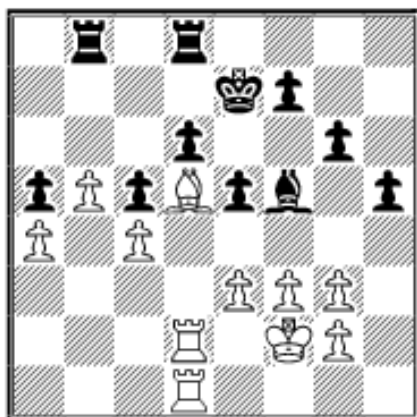
**30...Rc8xc1 31. Kd2xc1 Kg7-f6 32. Kc1-d2 b5-b4**

If 32...Bc6 (preparing a6-a5), then 33. a4!

**33. Kd2-c2 a6-a5 34. Bd3-b5! Nf8-e6 35. Nf4xe6 f7xe6 36. Kc2-b3 Kf6-g5 37. Kb3-a4 e6-e5 38. Ka4xa5 e5xd4 39. e3xd4 Kg5-f4 40. Bb5-d7 Kf4-e3 41. Ka5-b6 Bb7-a8 42. Kb6-a7 Ke3xd4 43. f3-f4** Black resigned

**I. Sokolov - Salov**

Madrid 1994



I found this endgame in a nice book by GM Christopher Lutz, *Endgame Secrets*.

At this point, White has only one real trump – his protected passed pawn at b5. In order to make progress, it is important for him to stir up play on the kingside. But the routine f3-f4 would have little effect: even with both white rooks on the f-file, Black could defend himself successfully with Rf8 and f7-f6.

The right plan is to prepare g3-g4, by doubling rooks on the f-file. The exchange on g4 would not only expose a second weakness (the pawn at f7), but also open the h-file for a white rook.

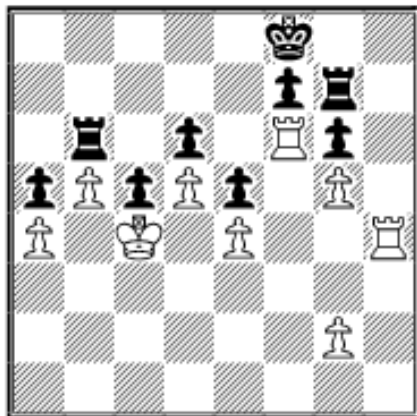
**35. Rd1-f1**

This and White's next move could hardly be considered the most accurate – it's unclear why he didn't bring his king to e3 right away, after playing 35. e4. But these moves don't hurt anything, since his opponent has no active possibilities.

**35...Rb8-b6**

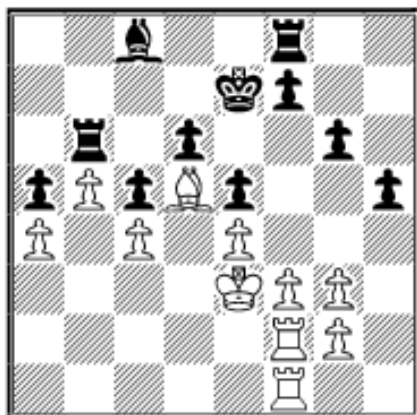
It would have made sense to bring a rook to g7 or h7, in order to cover the weak point at f7, while simultaneously making it harder for his opponent to invade on the h-file, after it is inevitably opened. However, analysis shows that here too, Black would not have been able to cover all his weaknesses. A sample line is:

35...Rg8 36. e4 Be6 37. Ke3 Rg7 38. Rdf2 Rb6 39. Rh1 (39. g4 hg 40. fg Rh7 would be inaccurate) 39...Rb8 40. Rh4 Rb6 41. g4 hg 42. fg Rb8 43. g5 Bxd5 44. cd Kf8 45. Rf6 Rb6 46. Kd3 Rg8 47. Kc4 Rg7. This is not at all forced, but it demonstrates White's resources very well.



48. Rh8+ Rg8 49. Rxc8+ Kxc8 50. Rxd6! Rxd6 51. Kxc5 Rd8 52. b6, and wins. A typical *denouement*: Black's king and rook successfully ward off the kingside threats, only to meet a rook sacrifice, securing the decisive breakthrough on the opposite wing.

**36. Kf2-e1 Rd8-f8 37. Ke1-e2 Rb6-b8 38. e3-e4 Bf5-c8 39. Ke2-e3 Rb8-b6 40. Rd2-f2!**  
(see next diagram)



**40...Bc8-d7**

If 40...f6 41. Rh1, intending 42. g4 hg 43. Rh7+ (or he could add some further preparatory moves).

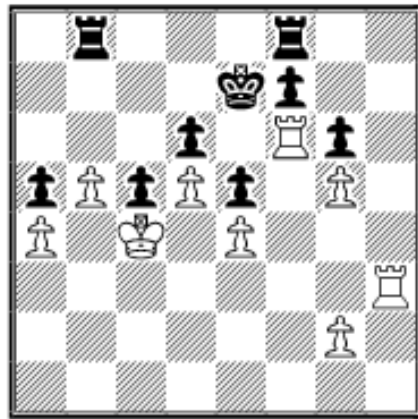
**41. g3-g4! h5xg4**

41...h4 is met by 42. g5, followed by f3-f4 or Rh1.

**42. f3xg4 Bd7-e6 43. g4-g5 Rb6-b8 44. Rf2-f6! Be6xd5 45. c4xd5 Rb8-b7 46. Ke3-d3**

Of course, the king's position should be strengthened, while he still has the time.

**46...Rb7-d7 47. Kd3-c4 Rd7-b7 48. Rf1-f3 Rb7-b8 49. Rf3-h3!**



**49...Rf8-h8**

On 49...Rb6 50. Rh7 is decisive. The threat would be 51. Rxg6, and on 50...Ke8 51. g3, Black is in zugzwang.

**50. Rh3xh8 Rb8xh8**

Black has defended his kingside weaknesses, but lifted the blockade of the passed b-pawn, which Ivan Sokolov immediately exploits.

**51. b5-b6 Rh8-h1 52. Kc4-b5 c5-c4 53. b6-b7**

Of course not 53. Kxc4?? Rb1.

**53...c4-c3 54. Kb5-a6 Rh1-b1 55. Rf6-f3 c3-c2 56. Rf3-c3** Black resigned.

### **Rozentalis - Appel**

German Bundesliga 1994

**1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. g3 d6 4. ed ed (4...cd) 5. Bg2 Nf6 6. d4 d5 7. Nf3 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Ne5 Nbd7 10. Nc3 c6 11. f4**

White has obtained a slightly better position from the opening.

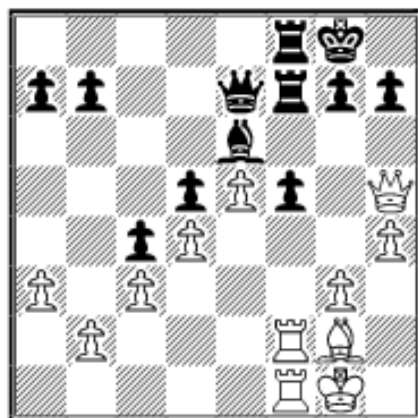
**11...Nxe5 12. fe Ne8 13. Qh5 f5?**

It doesn't pay to free the opponent's hands - 13...f6 14. Bf4 was the lesser evil.

**14. Ne2 Nc7 15. c3 Ne6 16. h4 Rf7 17. Nf4 Nxf4 18. Bxf4 Be6 19. Rf2 Qa5 20. a3 c5 21. Be3 c4**

If 21...cd 22. Bxd4 with a solid plus.

**22. Raf1 Raf8 23. Bg5 Qd8 24. Bxe7 Qxe7**



White's advantage is now beyond doubt. The only remaining question is how to break down the opponent's defense, since Black's position remains fairly solid. Eduard Rozentalis solves the problem brilliantly.

**25. a3-a4!!**

White is not going to break through on the kingside (unless, of course, his opponent voluntarily plays g7-g6), so Rozentalis "opens a second front" on the queenside,

aiming to send his queen over there.

### 25...Qe7-d7?!

Black fails to guess his opponent's intention, and defends too passively. His pieces should not have been moved from where they stood – here, they could have joined in a kingside counterattack, once the white queen moves to the queenside. For example: 25...b6!? (intending 26...a6) 26. Qd1 g6!? (with the queen on h5, this move is bad because of Qh6, giving White new chances on the kingside; but now, Black is ready to continue Kg7 and h7-h6) 27. Qa1 f4. However, 28. Qe1! fg 29. Rxf7 Rxf7 30. Rxf7 and 31. Qxg3 leaves White with the better position.

Instead of 26. Qd1, Vadim Zvjagintsev suggests an alternate plan: 26. Rf4!? a6 27. Bf3, followed by Bd1-c2.

### 26. Qh5-d1! Rf8-c8

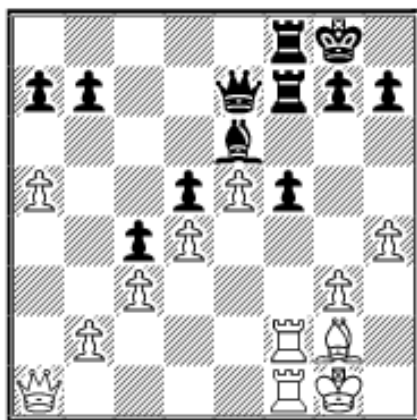
If 26...g5 27. hg Qe7, then 28. Qd2 Rg7 29. Qf4 Rxc5 30. Bf3. After lines are opened on the kingside, White once again changes over to the attack.

### 27. a4-a5! Rc8-f8

This was the move played, if we are to believe the computer database and Jonathan Rowson's book, *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, where this game is analyzed. But according to the *Informant*, it was 27...Rff8. Both versions reunite after Black's 31st move.

### 28. Qd1-a1! Qd7-e7

Rozentalis believes that Black should have tried 28...g5 here, which would have led to about the same position as that occurring in the note to Black's 26th move.



### 29. Qa1-a3!!

Certainly not a trade Black could have been expecting. White ruins his own pawns, but in return he gets the open b-file, which his rooks will now occupy. And if Black's queen leaves the diagonal, then White's queen invades at c5 or d6.

### 29...Qe7xa3?!

Rowson prefers 29...Rd8, which White would probably have met by 30. Ra1, with b2-b3 to follow.

### 30. b2xa3 Rf8-d8 31. Rf2-b2 Rf7-c7 32. Rb2-b5 Rd8-d7 33. Kg1-f2!

One result of the exchange of queens is that White can now safely activate his king.

**33...g7-g6 34. Kf2-e3 Kg8-g7 35. Rf1-b1 Kg7-f7 36. Rb5-c5!**

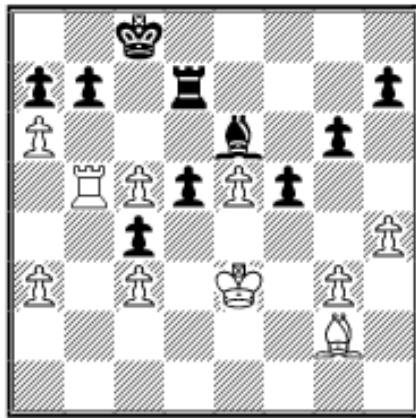
It would be pointless to play the king to f4 now, while Black can reply h7-h6. After the exchange on c5, he will occupy the central square d4.

**36...Kf7-e7 37. Rb1-b5 Rc7xc5**

Rozentalis gives the variation 37...Kd8 38. a4 Rxc5 39. dc Kc7 40. Kd4 Kc6 41. Rb4 Kc7 42. c6! bc 43. a6 Kc8 44. Kc5, winning easily.

**38. d4xc5 Ke7-d8 49. a5-a6 Kd8-c8**

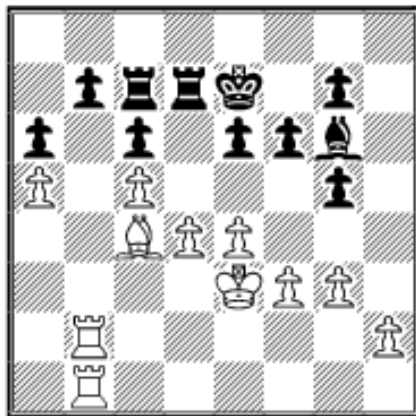
39...ba 40. Ra5 is hopeless for Black.



**40. Rb5-b6!! Be6-g8**

If 40...ab 41. a7, and the pawn queens.

**41. Rb6-f6 Rd7-d8 42. Ke3-d4 b7xa6 43. Rf6-d6** Black resigned.



**Shirov - Kinsman**  
Paris 1990

White's advantage is obvious. What's the best way to convert it? Alexei Shirov writes:

*One weakness – the b7-pawn – is securely nailed down. The fact that the black rooks are tied down is also of considerable importance. From my earliest days, however, I have been taught that in order to win you need at least one more weakness. And here this turns out to be the g7-pawn.*

**30. h2-h4!**

31. f4!?, with the same idea, isn't bad either.

**30...g5xh4**



On 30...Bf7 31. hg fg (31...e5 32. gf+ gf 33. Bxf7 ed+ 34. Kd3 Kxf7 35. Rb4), White plays f3-f4 – although not right away, because of 32. f4? gf+ 33. gf e5! He should prepare it by 32. Be2 or 32. e5.

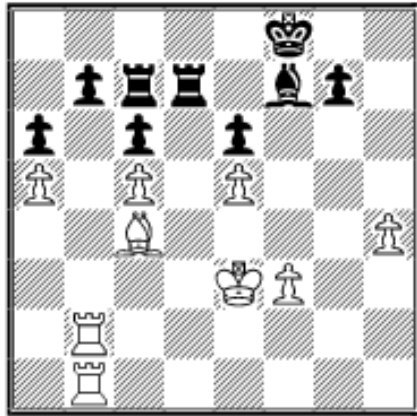
### 31. g3xh4 Bg6-f7 32. e4-e5!

*The basis of White's idea. Once he begins his attack on the g7-pawn, the b7-pawn will no longer require defending – which means that the second weakness will have to be the pawn at e6. (Shirov)*

32. Bd3 (intending 33. Rg2 Kg8 34. Rbg1) is less convincing, in view of 32...e5 33. de fe.

### 32...f6-f5?

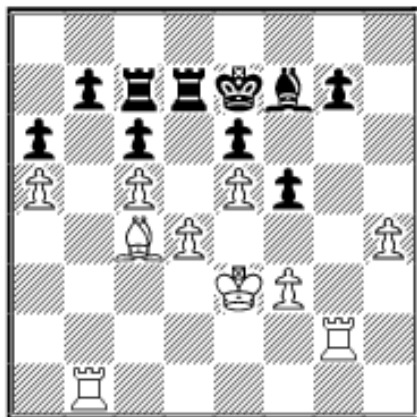
This makes White's job easier. 32...fe 33. de Kf8 was more stubborn (but 33...Bh5 34. Rg2 g6 35. Rbg1 Rd8 36. f4 Rcd7 37. Rxd6 Bxd6 38. Rxd6 was hopeless).



34. f4?! would be inaccurate here, in view of 34...Bg6! (intending 35...Bf5) 35. Bxe6 Re7 36. f5 Rxe6 37. fe Bxb1 38. Rxb1 Ke7; however, after 34. Rg2 Black's position looks difficult. For example: 34...Re7 35. Rd1! Rcd7 36. Rd6 Bg8 37. Rgd2 Ke8 38. Kf4, followed by Kg5 and f3-f4-f5 (as soon as Black defends his weaknesses at g7 and e6 in this variation, White finds new ones: the d-file and the forward outpost on d6).

As often happens in such situations, Black's best chance lies in a search for active counterplay. He must play 34...Bg8 (or 34...Rd8) 35. Rbg1 (threatening h4-h5-h6) 35...Rd8 36. h5 Bh7! 37. f4! (37. Bxe6 Re7) 37...Rcd7! (37...Bf5 is bad after 38. h6 g6 39. Rxd6 Bxd6 40. Rxd6, or 37...Re7 38. h6! gh 39. f5!) 38. Bxe6 Rd3+ 39. Kf2 Rc3, when the position unexpectedly becomes sharp. White can probably play more exactly, but at least this way Black could keep fighting.

### 33. Rb2-g2



**33...g7-g6?**

Again, too passive! The only line that left some chances to wrinkle his opponent's brow was 33...Rc8! 34. Rxcg7 Rh8 35. Rh1 Rhd8.

**34. Rb1-g1**

The threat to sacrifice the exchange on g6 is unstoppable.

**34...Rc7-c8 35. Rg2xg6! f5-f4+ 36. Ke3-d3 Rc8-d8 37. Rg6-f6! Rd7xd4+ 38. Kd3-c3 Rd4-d1 39. Rg1-g7 Rd1-c1+ 40. Kc3-b3 Rc1-b1+ 41. Kb3-c2, and Black resigned.**

We shall examine our last game in greater detail, from beginning to end. When I first saw it, the game interested me, and I prepared annotations for myself and, of course, for my students. Later, I found Joel Lautier's comments, and included them within my own material. As it happened, our analyses and conclusions, instead of contradicting one another, were closer to being complementary.

The two-weaknesses principle was employed quite convincingly in the latter part of the game. But I also found myself interested in the problem faced by the players at the conclusion of the opening phase, as well as in the analysis of the reason why Black spoiled his good position in a couple of moves.

**Lautier - Ponomarev**  
Enghien les Bains 1999

**1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. Ng1-f3 c7-c5 3. d4-d5 d7-d6 4. Nb1-c3 g7-g6 5. e2-e4 Bf8-g7 6. Bf1-e2 0-0 7. 0-0 Nb8-a6**

*My only knowledge of this position was a vague recollection of an old Smyslov game against Schmid himself, the inventor of Black's system. I remembered White applied the standard Nd2-c4 manoeuvre, to which Black replied ...Nc7, followed by ...b6 and ...Ba6. The only thing that was carved in my memory was the move b2-b3 for White, together with the fact that Smyslov had won a beautiful game, or hadn't he? (Lautier)*

**8. Nf3-d2 Na6-c7 9. a2-a4 b7-b6**

An alternative possibility is 9...a6!?

**10. Nd2-c4 Bc8-a6 11. Bc1-g5?!**



In the Smyslov - Schmid game (Helsinki Olympics 1952) the continuation was **11. Bf4! Rb8?! 12. b3!!** (this is the brilliant prophylactic move that was carved into Lautier's memory: now on Bxc4, White always has the reply bc!, stopping Black's queenside counterplay) **12...Nd7** (12...Nh5 13. Bd2) **13. Qd2 f5 14. Rad1 fe** (14...Bxc3 15. Qxc3 fe 16. Bh6 Rf7 17. Bg4) **15. Nxe4 Rf5** (15...Bb7 16. Bg5 Qe8 17. Bg4! Bxd5 18. Nxd6! ed 19. Nxd6 Qe5 20. Nb5, with advantage) 16. Bg4! Rxd5 17. Be6+ Nxe6 18.

Qxd5, and White won.

It would make sense not to wait for b2-b3, and play 11...Bxc4 at once (or 11...Nd7! 12. Qd2 Bxc4): 12. Bxc4 a6. However, after something like 13. Re1 (13. Qe2!?) 13...Nd7 14. Qd2 Rb8 15. Bh6 b5 16. Bxg7 Kxg7 17. Bf1, Black would still stand worse. For example: 17...Ne5?! 18. f4 Nc4 (Bukic - Janosevic, Kraljevo 1967) 19. Qc1!, or 17...c4 18. Ne2! (18. f4 Nc5 18. e5?! f6! = is weaker – D. Janosevic).

After 11. Bg5, Black could aim for the same positions as after 11. Bf4: 11...Bxc4 12. Bxc4 a6 13. Re1 (Lautier thinks 13. Qe2 is stronger, controlling the b5-square and forestalling Rb8) 13...Nd7 14. Qd2 Rb8, leading to the Bukic - Janosevic game cited above. And here's one more practical example on this theme: 14...Re8?! 15. Bf1 Rb8 16. f4 b5 (Black is much worse after 16...f6 17. Bh4 b5 18. ab ab 19. b4! ab 20. Na2 - I. Belov) 17. ab ab 18. e5!, with advantage to White (Popa - I. Belov, USSR 1987).

### 11...Qd8-d7!

Ruslan Ponomarev quickly finds his footing in this situation, and with this accurate move, underscores the almost unnoticed drawback of the bishop's development at g5.

*It now dawned on me that I must have pushed my bishop one square too far, as it would have been much handier to have it on f4 in order to stop ...e7-e6, the next move on Black's agenda. (Lautier)*

### 12. b2-b3?!

*Yes, such is my faith in the great Vasily Vasilievich. Almost any other move would have been stronger. (Lautier)*

Ponomarev may not have been familiar with the technique found once upon a time by Smyslov; whereas Lautier not only knew of it, but used it. Unfortunately, the position has shifted a little; and as a result, the vaunted strategy comes a cropper. For it was aimed against the plan with Bxc4, a7-a6 and b6-b5, whereas here, Black now has another good plan: that of opening lines in the center by e7-e6.

**12...e7-e6! 13. Qd1-d2**

White would not like 13. de? Qxe6! 14. Qxd6 Bxc4 15. Qxc7 Bxe2 16. Nxe2 Nxe4 or 14. Qd3 Nxe4 15. Nxe4 d5 very much (Lautier).

**13...e6xd5**

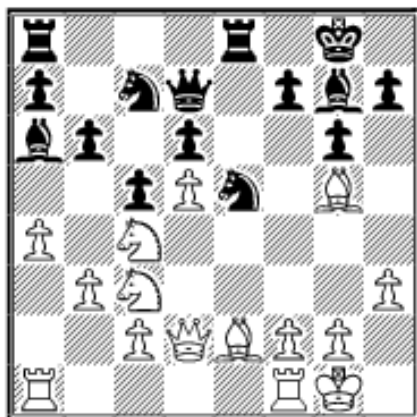
13...Nxe4!? 14. Nxe4 ed was worth a look. Of course, after 15. Nf6+ Bxf6 16. Bxf6 dc, the dark-square bishop looks terrifying; but there appears no direct way of whipping up an attack, and Black's extra pawn may compensate him for his sufferings.

**14. e4xd5 Rf8-e8**

Threatening 15...Ne4.

**15. Be2-f3 Nf6-g4 16. h2-h3**

White probably didn't like 16. Rae1 because of 16...Bxc4 17. bc Be5!

**16...Ng4-e5 17. Bf3-e2**

Too passive! Black must choose either 18...Bb7 (intending a7-a6 and b6-b5), or 18...Qf5!? (threatening 19...Bxc3) 19. Be3 (19. Bh6 Bxh6 20. Qxh6 Qxc2) 19...Bxc3 20. Qxc3 Nxd5 21. Bxd5 Qxd5, and White appears to have sufficient compensation for the lost pawn, but no more than that.

### 19. b3xc4

Now Black must constantly reckon with the threat of a4-a5, as well as Nb5. And on 19...Qf5, White now has the easy reply 20. Ra3.

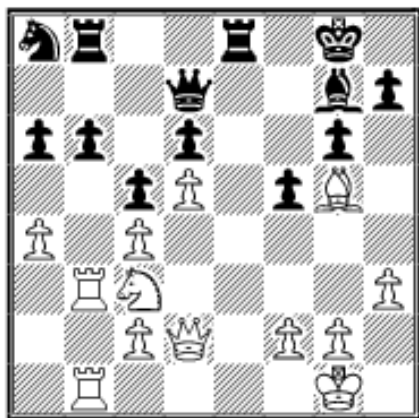
### 19...a7-a6?! 20. Ra1-b1 Ra8-b8 21. Rb1-b3 f7-f5?!

There was no reason to create additional weaknesses for himself. 21...Rb7 22. Rfb1 Reb8 was preferable, although then too, 23. Qd3 intending 24. Ne4 leaves Black in a difficult position.

On 21...b5 White comes out a pawn up: 22. ab ab 23. Nxb5 Nxb5 24. Rfb1! Nc3 25. Rxb8 Nxb1 26. Rxb1 Qa4 27. Qd3 (Lautier).

### 22. Rf1-b1 Nc7-a8

*Black's position, and this move in particular, bear a strong resemblance to some women's portraits by Picasso. (Lautier)*



### 23. h3-h4!

*According to the well-known "principle of two weaknesses". Having already achieved maximum pressure on the queenside (no further increase is possible, since 23. a5 Qc7 would be useless – Dvoretsky), White needs to open a second front on the kingside in order to stretch Black's defenses to breaking point. The g6-pawn is particularly vulnerable, since White can attack it easily with Ne2-f4 and Rb3-g3.*

*23...Bxc3 is hardly worth considering: 24. Qxc3 Qxa4 25. Ra3 Qd7 26. Rxa6. (Lautier)*

### 23...h7-h5

Now g6 is weakened, and White switches to the attack, after first distracting Black's pieces by a break on the queenside.

### 24. a4-a5! Qd7-c7

24...b5? would lose to 25. cb Bxc3 26. Qxc3 ab 27. Qf6.

**25. Nc3-e2! b6xa5 26. Ne2-f4 Rb8-b4**

On 26...a4, both 27. Ne6 Qa7 28. Rxb8 Rxb8 29. Rxb8+ Qxb8 30. Nxg7 Kxg7 31. Qc3+ Kh7 32. Qf6 Qe8 33. Qxd6 a3 34. Qxa6 (Lautier) and the immediate 27. Rxb8 are strong (this prevents the queen sacrifice that Black could play after 27. Ne6) 27...Rxb8 28. Rxb8+ Qxb8 29. Nxg6 (29. Qa5?! Qb1+ 30. Kh2 Nb6!; 29. Qe1!?) 29...a3 30. Ne7+ Kf8 31. Qa5.

If 26...Rxb3 27. cb Kh7, White decides by 28. Ne6 Qb7 (28...Qb6 29. Nxg7 Kxg7 30. Qc3+ Kh7 31. Qf6 Qc7 32. Bf4) 29. Bf4 (Lautier).

**27. Rb1-e1!**

As soon as Black's rook leaves the 8th rank, White promptly creates a threat of invading along the e-file.

*Timing is important in the attack: threats should come with tempo whenever possible. (Lautier)*

**27...Qc7-f7?!**

27...Be5 28. Nxg6

27...Rxe1+!? 28. Qxe1 Qf7 29. Re3 Be5 30. Nd3 Rxc4 31. Nxe5 de 32. Rxe5 Re4 33. Rxe4 fe 34. Qxe4 Nb6 35. d6, with a great advantage (Lautier).

**28. Re1-e6!**

28. Rxe8+ Qxe8 29. Re3 is inferior, in view of 29...Be5.

**28...Rb4xc4**

Black defends against 29. Rxg6, at the cost of once again allowing White to use the queenside to strengthen his kingside attack. On 28...Nb6!? it would have been a mistake to continue 29. Qe2 Be5! (but not 29...Rxe6? 30. de Qe8 31. e7 Be5 32. Ne6) 30. Rxg6? Qxg6 31. Nxg6 Bh2+. White would have continued 29. Rxg6 Nxc4 30. Qd1, for example: 30...Ne5 31. Rxd6 a4 32. Rxb4 cb 33. Nxh5, with a winning position (Lautier).

**29. Rb3-b7! Qf7xb7 30. Re6xe8+ Kg8-h7 31. Re8-e7 Qb7-b1+**

31...Nc7 32. Bf6 Qb1+ 33. Kh2 Ne8 34. Ne6 is just as hopeless.

**32. Kg1-h2 Rc4xc2 33. Qd2-e3 Qb1-b2 34. Qe3-e6, and Black resigned.**



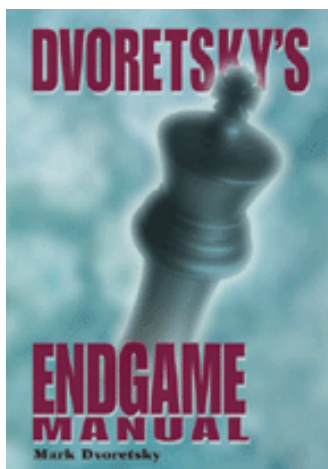
## Bavarian Impressions

It's now going on ten years since I was invited to Munich for a few sessions with the members of Team "Bavaria" – in those days, the leading club in Germany. The team was stocked with high-class grandmasters, such as Artur Yusupov and Robert Hübner; and with young masters like Michael Bezold, Christian Gabriel, and Markus Stangl, who would soon become grandmasters.

### COLUMNISTS

## *The Instructor*

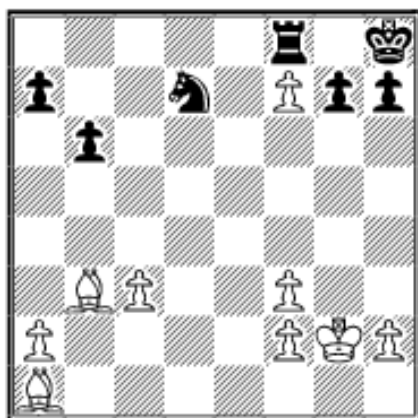
Mark Dvoretsky



Working with highly qualified players is usually a mutually beneficial experience. Through discussions with strong opponents, the trainer sharpens and enriches the perceptions they offer, while correcting his own instructional examples and exercises. When analyzing students' games, sometimes curious situations appear, which the trainer may employ later on; and sometimes, the students themselves show the trainer some fragments of clarity they have played.

GM Stefan Kindermann showed me two episodes taken from his own games – wholly different in nature, both equally interesting and instructive.

*Lyrberg - Kindermann*  
Gausdal 1994



It's Black's move, and he has a tough decision to make.

Black's position is dangerous; the f7-pawn is a serious hindrance, and the two white bishops can become very powerful. Careless play will inevitably lead to catastrophe, for example: 22...Rd8? 23. f4! Nf6 24. Be6 g6 25. c4 Kg7 26. Bb2 Rd6 27. Ba3 (but not 27. Bxf6+? Kf8, nor 27. Bd5? Rxd5) 27...Rd8 28. Be7 Rb8 29. Kf3, when Black is helpless.

This was the course of a later training game, played between two strong grandmasters.

Instead of 26...Rd6, Black could have tried 26...Rf8 27. Kf3 Rxf7 28. Bxf7 Kxf7 29. Bxf6 Kxf6. I am not sure that the pawn ending is necessarily lost and suggest that readers check this for themselves. But the position after 27. f5! gf 28. Kf3 Kg6 (here 28...Rxf7 is altogether bad: 29. Kf4! Rf8 30. Kxf5, and zugzwang will soon cost Black his knight) 29. Kf4 Nh5+ 30. Ke5 is most probably lost.

Black would like to remove the f7-pawn as quickly as possible, but how?



22...Ne5? 23. Bb2 Nxf7 leads to a lost minor-piece ending after 24. Ba3 Kg8 25. Bxf8 Kxf8 26. Kg3. And 23...Rxf7 24. Bxf7 Nxf7 25. Kg3 Kg8 26. Kf4 Nd6 27. Bc1 and 28. Ke5 is no better for him.

As I recall, when Stefan offered me this position to consider, I found the strongest move – and the one he actually chose in the game – rather quickly.

### **22...Nd7-c5!!**

And now – turn the board around, and play White. Of course, your task is easier, as long as you have guessed the point of Black's move; but even then, making the optimal decision for White is not all that easy.

In the game, White continued **23. Bd5 Nd3** (threatening 24...Nf4+, and suddenly Kindermann's opponent saw that the natural 24. Kg3? is met by 24...Ne5 25. Bb2 Nxf7 26. Ba3 Nd6! 27. Bxd6 Rd8, and now it's Black who's winning. The "tempo-losing" Nd7-c5-d3-e5 decoyed the enemy bishop to d5, which in turn allowed Black to snatch the f7-pawn with impunity.

Having figured out what his opponent was up to, White replied **24. Bb3! Nc5** (24...b5? is a mistake, in view of 25. f4! Nxf4+ 26. Kg3 Nd3 27. f4, with advantage to White) **25. Bd5 Nd3 26. Bb3 Nc5 27. Bd5** Draw.

So, was the draw that occurred in the game the proper answer to your second task? No. As it happens, White can still try for the win.

### **23. Bb3-c4!**

Or 23. Bd5 Nd3 24. Bb3! Nc5 25. Bc4!

### **23...b6-b5**

After 23...g5 24. Bd5 Kg7 25. c4+ Kg6 26. Be5 or 26. f4!?, Black's position is difficult.

### **24. Bc4-d5 Nc5-d3 25. Kg2-g3! Nd3-e5 26. c3-c4!**

Here's the point: thanks to the insertion of his 23rd move, White attacks, not only the knight, but also the b5-pawn.

### **26...Ne5xf7**

26...Nxc4 27. Bd4 Nd6 28. Bc5 Rxf7 29. Bxf7 Nxf7 30. Bxa7 is hopeless.

### **27. c4xb5 Nf7-d6 28. a2-a4**

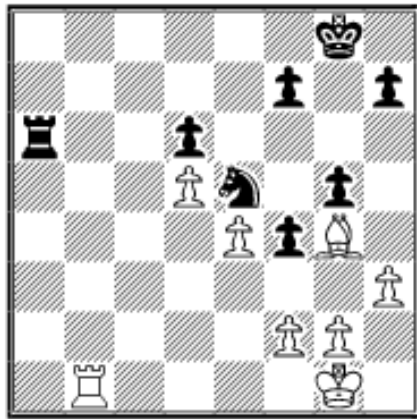
Or 28. Bc6. White follows up with f3-f4 and Be5, etc. White's position isn't necessarily won; but with two pawns for the exchange plus the powerful pair of bishops, he risks nothing, and has solid winning chances.



Among the themes of our work in Germany were the development of prophylactic thinking, and the perfecting of our technique in converting the advantage. Later, Stefan showed me how he had used the valuable lessons he had learned in practice.

### ***Hirndl - Kindermann***

Austrian League, 1996



Black's positional advantage is indisputable: his powerful knight clearly outclasses White's "bad" bishop. White has no counterplay, so one would expect 28...Kg7, improving the king's position – in strict accordance with the chief principle of endgame play.

Kindermann took a deeper look at the position. He used prophylactic thinking, asking himself: "How is my opponent going to defend?" He decided that White was going

to put his bishop back on e2, his king on f1, and probably push his pawn to f3. Of course, Black would still enjoy a pleasant and trouble-free life then as well; but breaking down the enemy defenses would be very difficult: the bishop, after all, impedes the knight's mobility, and prevents it from participating in the attack. And the White rook can, in some lines, attack the pawns at d6 or f7.

So Black's first priority is to keep the bishop from retreating to e2.

### **28...Ra6-a4!**

28...Ra2, with the same idea, is weaker because of 29. Kf1 (preparing 30. Be2 after all) 29...Nc4?! (29...Ra4!) 30. Rb4!?, or 30. Ke1!? Kg7 31. Be2 Nd2 32. Rb4 Kf6 33. f3.

### **29. Bg4-f5**

Of course, Black had to consider that White could attack the d6-pawn; it's the only weak link in Black's position. But in that case, the White king would come under fire. Here's a sample line: 29. Rb6 Nc4 30. Rc6?! Ra1+ 31. Kh2 Nd2 32. g3 f3 33. Rxd6 h5! 34. Bxh5 Nf1+ 35. Kg1 Nxg3+ 36. Kh2 Nxf5, and wins.

### **29...h7-h5 30. f2-f3 Kg8-g7**

As the game went, White could probably have defended better, but his position would have been hopeless, nonetheless. His problem is that now Black's knight can always join in an attack on the kingside by way of d3 or c4; and it's scarcely possible for him to withstand the concerted assault of all Black's pieces.

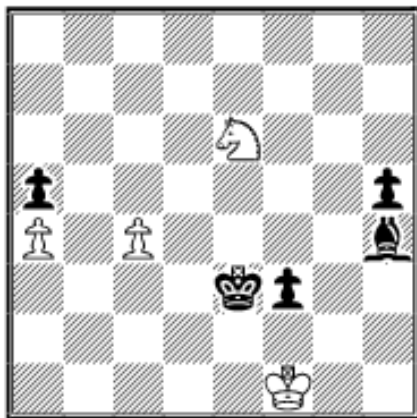
### **31. Rc1 Kf6 32. Rc3 Nc4 33. Bd7 Ra1+ 34. Kf2 Ra2+ 35. Kg1 Ne3 36. g4 h4!**

**37. Rc7 Rg2+ 38. Kh1 Rg3 39. Be8 Rxh3+ 40. Kg1 Rxf3 41. Rxf7+ Ke5 42. Re7+ Kd4 43. e5 Rg3+ 44. Kh1 f3** White resigned.

Now I'll show you one more episode, which went into my notebook after our joint analysis of one of Markus Stangl's games. Later, this example would be included in *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*.

***Stangl - Schneider***

Berlin 1992



White must choose between 58. Ng7, snapping up the h5-pawn, or winning the bishop for his c-pawn with 58. c5.

Markus gave the second plan practically no consideration. And in fact, pushing the pawn looks terribly risky; it's quite likely that it would lose quickly. But the alternative is quite joyless; so I suggested looking at winning the bishop anyway, to see where it might lead. In desperate situations, it's too late to be afraid. You must examine every

chance, explore every hope – forcing variations first among them, as they can sharply alter the course of the game.

Let's see what kind of absorbing line I managed to find.

**58. c4-c5! Bh4-g3 59. c5-c6 h5-h4 60. c6-c7 Bg3xc7 61. Ne6xc7 h4-h3 62. Nc7-d5+**

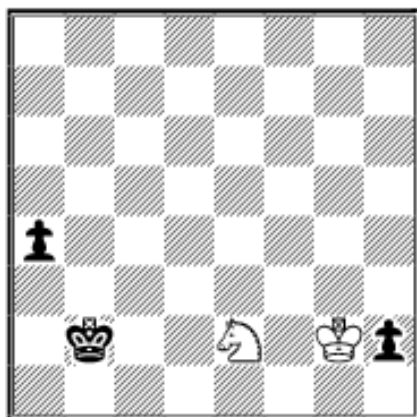
Good news: the h-pawn apparently won't queen after all. On 62...Ke4, White plays 63. Nf6+ Kf5 64. Nh5, with equality; and if 62...Kd4, then we find 63. Ne7! But what if Black's king heads for the queenside, aiming to make the a5-pawn passed?

**62...Ke3-d4 63. Nd5-e7! h3-h2**

63...Ke4 is useless, in view of 64. Kg1! =.

**64. Ne7-f5+ Kd4-c4 65. Nf5-g3 Kc4-b4 66. Kf1-f2 Kb4xa4 67. Kf2xf3 Ka4-b3 68. Kf3-g2 a5-a4 69. Ng3-e2 Kb3-b2**

If 69...a3 70 Nc1+. But now, we have reached a position which forms the closing tableau of one of Nikolai Dmitriyevich Grigoriev's lovely miniatures (WK: a6, N: a2; BK: e3, p: h6; 1. Nb4! h5 2. Nc6! Ke4! 3. Na5!! h4 4. Nc4, etc.):



**70. Ne2-f4! Kb2-c3!? 71. Nf4-d5+!**

But not 71. Ne2+? Kd2! 72. Nd4 a3, and the pawn gets to a2. Now the knight wants to go to b4, in order to stop the pawn, and to meet 71...Kc4 with the forking 72. Nb6+.

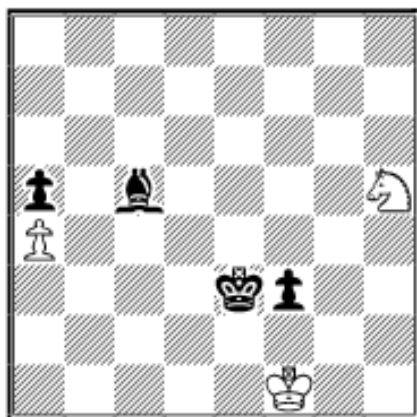
**71...Kc3-b3 72. Nd5-f4! a4-a3 73. Nf4-d3**

And the knight stops the pawn from c1.

The game continuation was **58. Ng7? Bf6 59.**

**Nxh5**, when **59...Bd4!** stopped the c-pawn and took away the f2-square from White's king. Now there appears to be no way to prevent Black's king from getting to the queenside pawns.

**60. c5 Bxc5**



**61. Nf6?!**

White could have held out longer with 61. Ng7!? Kd3 62. Ne6. White saves himself by 62...Be3 63. Nd8 Kc4 64. Nc6, or 62...Kc4 63. Ng5 Kb4 (63...f2 64. Ne4) 64. Nxf3 Kxa4 65. Nd2 Kb4 66. Ke2. As Karsten Müller pointed out, Black gets what he wants after 62...Be7! 63. Kf2 Ke4 64. Nc7 Bh4+ 65. Kg1 Kd4 66. Nb5+ Kc4 67. Nd6+ Kb4 68. Nf5 Bf6 69. Kf2 Kxa4 70. Kxf3 Kb3.

**61...Kd4 62. Nd7 Kd5 63. Ke1 Bd4 64. Kd2 Kc4 65. Nb8 Kc5 66. Nd7+ Kb4 67. Nb8 Kxa4 68. Nc6 Bb6 69. Ne5 f2 70. Ke2 Kb3 71. Nf3 a4 72. Nd2+ Kb4**  
White resigned.

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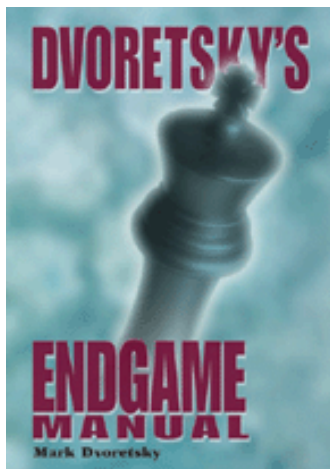


## The Effects of Replaying

I have frequently mentioned, in books and articles, an effective training method: replaying specially selected positions – positions which cannot be “resolved” from beginning to end, so there is really no sense in trying. Instead, players must find, in succession, a series of correct decisions independently (or nearly independently) of each other.

### COLUMNISTS

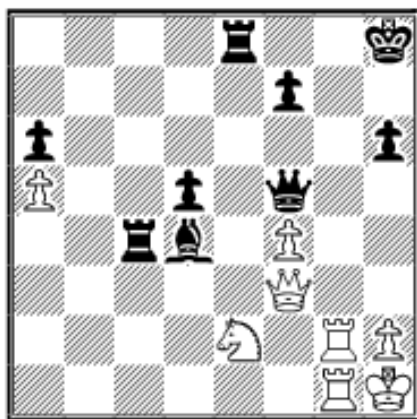
## *The* *Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



In the majority of such exercises, play continues for a minimum of ten moves, although sometimes longer. After all, a shorter variant could in fact be calculated from beginning to end, which would then abolish it as a playing exercise. But there are sometimes exceptions.

The brilliant attack from the following game, which remained hidden in the annotations, and which is now offered for your consideration, has for some reason never become widely known, although its basic ideas were demonstrated in Mikhail Botvinnik's annotations from his book *1941 Match-Tournament*. But even those who are familiar with Botvinnik's analysis will be none the worse for it – for they too will see sharp new variations.

**Botvinnik - Bondarevsky**  
Leningrad/Moscow 1941



So – you have White. Try to find each move in turn, taking Black's replies from the following text. Or you might play out this fragment against a friend: he will also find it a problem requiring deep insight into the position.

**39.Ne2xd4!**

In combination with White's next move, this is a rather obvious exchange: in this way, White gets the opportunity to speculate on the

pin along the a1-h8 diagonal. In the game, Botvinnik played the much weaker 39.Ng3?, and after 39...Qe6! 40.Re2 Be3, he ought to have been dead lost: White has neither his pawn, nor any sort of compensation for it. Igor Bondarevsky, however, erred in turn: 39...Qh7? 40.Qxd5 Bxg1 41.Qxc4 Ba7 42.Nf1 Qf5 43.Qc3+ f6 44.Qc7 Qh7 45.Qc6 Qf7 46.Qxa6 Bd4 47.Qd3 Re1, leading to a roughly equal position. In the end, however, Black won.

**39...Rc4xd4 40.Qf3-c3**

After 40.Qg3? Qf6, there is no g-file breakthrough.

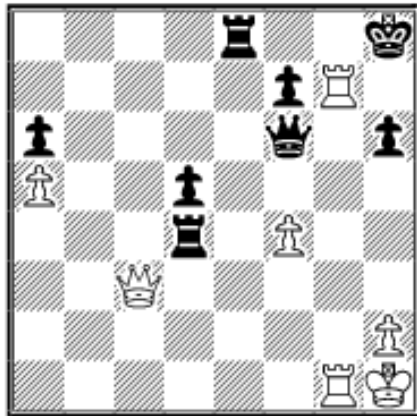
**40...Qf5-f6!**

Black's move is easily found through the method of exclusion: 40...Qe4? 41.Rd1; 40...Qd3? 41.Qc6; and 40...Qxf4? 41.Rg4 (or 41.Rd1) all lose for him.

But how does White continue the attack now? There's only a draw after 41.f5? Qe5 42.Qc6 Rh4 43.Re2 Rxf2+!, with perpetual check; or 42.Qh3 Qf6 (42...Qxf4? 43.Rg4+- is bad; but 42...Kh7!? is possible) 43.Rg6 Rh4! 44.Rxf6 Rxf3 = (since 45...Re2 will follow).

**41.Rg2-g7!!**

A powerful quiet move. White certainly does not threaten 42.Rxf7 Qxf7 43.Qxd4+ Kh7 – there's no win here – but 42.Qg3!, followed by 43.Rg8+. By the way, this is just how you should always place your heavy pieces on an open file: with the rook (or both rooks) ahead of the queen.



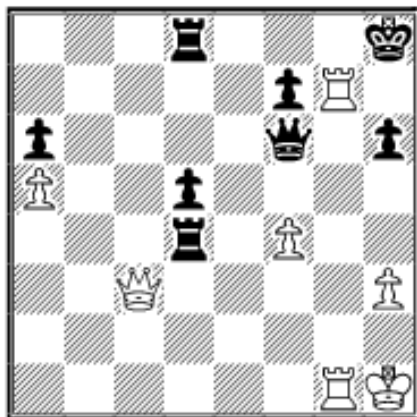
And now Black's position appears totally hopeless. He can't play 41...Qxf4? 42.R7g4; nor 41...h5? 42.R7g5 – White wins in either case. And on 41...Rxf4, 42.Qg3 Rf1 (42...Rfe4 43.Rg8+ Kh7 44.Qg7+ Qxg7 51.R1xg7 mate) 43.Rg8+ Kh7 44.Qd3+ (or 44.Rxe8 Rxf1+ 45.Kxf1) wins also. Nevertheless, Black has a defense (unusual and difficult to find though it may be), as pointed out by the Leningrader P. Ulanov.

**41...Re8-d8!!**

Very elegant; the rook moves to a defended square, which comes in handy in the line 42.Qg3? Rd1! 43.Rg8+ Kh7 =. And White also gets nothing out of 42.Rxf7? Qxf7 43.Qxd4+ Kh7 44.Qd3+ Kh8 45.Qxa6 Qxf4 =.

Nevertheless, White still wins – in fact he has three ways to do so, each in turn interesting and pretty in its own way. The first is:

**42.h2-h3!!**



The shortest win, suggested by Botvinnik. Paradoxically, Black appears to be in zugzwang! Once again, 42...Qxf4 loses to 43.R7g4, and 42...h5 to 43.R7g5. The rook on the 8th rank has only one safe square – d8; once it leaves that square, the rook is lost: 42...Re8 43.Qg3 Rd1 44.Rg8+ Kh7 45.Rxe8.

#### 42...Rd4xf4

And by moving to the f-file, this rook abandons its control of d3.

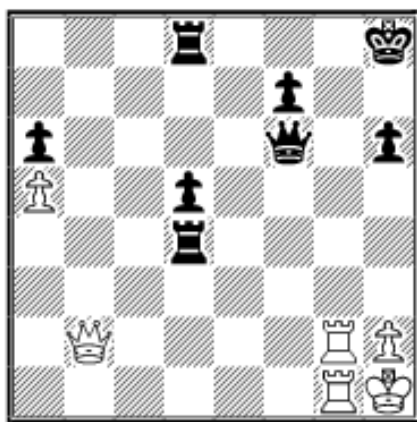
**43.Qc3-g3! Rf4-f1 44.Rg7-g8+ Kh8-h7 45.Qg3-d3+!**

## II.

#### 42.Qb2!?

This, too, is a try at zugzwang (42...Rxf4 loses to 43.Qg2). Its drawback is that after **42...Qxf4**, Black's queen now has the f3-square. Here's what I found:

**43.R7g4 Qf3+ 44.R4g2 Qf6**



At first glance, White has simply lost his f4-pawn for nothing. On 45.Rf2?, Black has either 45...Qe5 46.Qb6 Qe4+ 47.Rfg2 Qh4 =, or 45...Qh4 =, when 46.Rd1?? fails against 46...Qxf2! -+.

Once again, a quiet move decides!

#### 45.Rg3!!

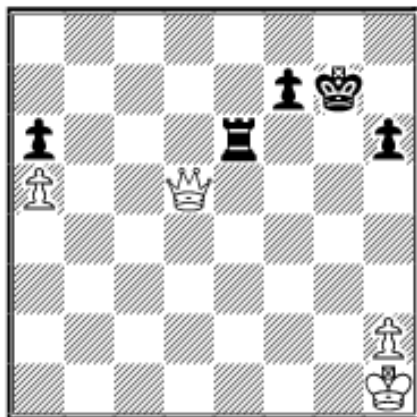
Threatening 46.Qg2.

**45...Qe5 46.Rg4! Re4 47.Qb6! Kh7 48.Rg7+ Qxg7 49.Rxg7+ Kxg7 50.Qxd8.**

It's amusing that what was formerly the only safe square for the rook – on d8 – now turns out to be the most vulnerable.

#### 50...Re6 51.Qxd5

The final position of this variation deserves a diagram.



Without the two h-pawns, this would be a draw: the rook shuttles between the e6- and g6-squares, keeping the white king from crossing the 5th rank.

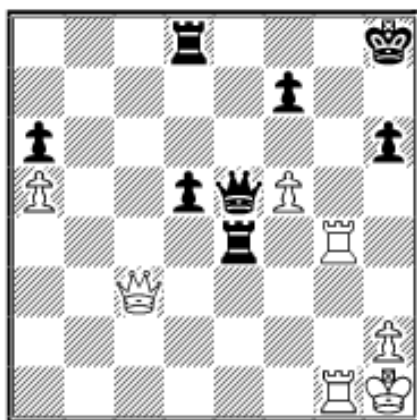
There would also be no win if you took the a-pawns off the board; however, this requires some explanation. If White succeeds in playing h2-h4-h5, depriving the black rook of a vital support point at g6, then – as Nikolai Grigoriev established in 1917 – he wins.

Therefore, Black must answer h2-h4 with h6-h5!, sacrificing a pawn, but in return obtaining a new support point at h6 for the rook. As Grigoriev (and independently some 30 years later, also Genrikh Kasparian) showed, this position is drawn.

One can understand why, with a-pawns still on the board, the pawn sacrifice with h6-h5 (in response to h2-h4) does not save Black – White gets the chance to take the rook at e6 at the right moment, with a winning pawn endgame.

### III.

**42.f5!? Qe5 43.R7g4 Re4**



Here, 44.Qc6? Kh7 would be useless. The way to win is the spectacular blow **44.Rh4!!**, found by Igor Zaitsev. But the game's not over yet – White still needs to display considerable accuracy (the remaining analysis is mine):

**44...Rd6** (44...Kh7 45.Rxh6+!) **45.Qc7!**  
(White threatens both 46.Qb8+ and 46.Qf7)  
**45...Re1** (45...Rf6 46.Qd8+; 45...Qe7  
46.Qb8+; 45...Re2 46.Qb8+ or 46.Qd8+)  
**46.Qc8+!** (The more spectacular 46.Qd8+?

would let slip the win: 46...Qe8! 47.Qxd6 Rxf1+ 48.Kxg1 Qe1+ 49.Kg2 Qe2+!  
(49...Qxh4 is weaker: 50.Qf8+ Kh7 51.Qxf7+ Kh8 52.Qxd5) 50.Kg3 Qe3+  
51.Kg4 Qe2+!, with a perpetual check. And 46.Qb8+? would also be a mistake:  
46...Qe8 47.Qb2+ Qe5 = (or even 47...d4!? 48.Qxd4+ Re5, with the terrible  
counter-threat 49...Qa8+).

**46...Qe8 47.Qc3+ Re5** (forced – the rook was *en prise* at e1, which rules out  
either 47...Qe5 or 47...d4) **48.Qg3!+-**, and the queen reaches the g-file anyway,  
with decisive effect.

The position which arose in the following game after White's 11th move can also be played out. Your task is to take the black pieces at that point, and to find the six strongest moves in about half an hour. Vadim Zvjagintsev once solved this task in only 5 minutes; but the great majority of solvers – several strong

grandmasters among them – failed.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dc 3.e4 Nf6 4.Nc3** (4.e5 is more common) **4...e5 5.Nf3 ed 6.Qxd4**



The first instructive point. Trading queens leads to a somewhat better endgame for White. Black finds a stronger continuation.

**6...Bd6!**

By avoiding the exchange, Black seeks to win a tempo later, using his knight to hit the enemy queen, which has come to the center too early. It's a logical strategy – once you're sure that 7.e5? doesn't win a piece after 7...Nc6 8.Qe3 0-0 (8...Ng4 9.Qe4 Bc5 is also

strong) 9.ef Re8 10.Ne4 Bf5 11.Nfd2 Bxe4 12.Nxe4 Bb4+ – in fact, it's Black who wins.

The game Goldin - Balashov (Irkutsk 1986) continued: 7.Bg5 Nc6 8.Qxc4 h6 9.Bh4 Be6 10.Qa4 (10.Qe2 g5 11.Bg3 g4) 10...0-0 11.Be2 Ne5 12.Nd4 Bd7 13.Qc2 Ng6 14.Bg3 Qe7 15.0-0 Bxg3 16.hg Rfe8, with about equal chances.

**7.Bxc4 0-0**

More accurate than 7...Nc6 8.Bb5, when Black doesn't win a tempo on the queen after all. Here again, 8.e5? Nc6 is useless.

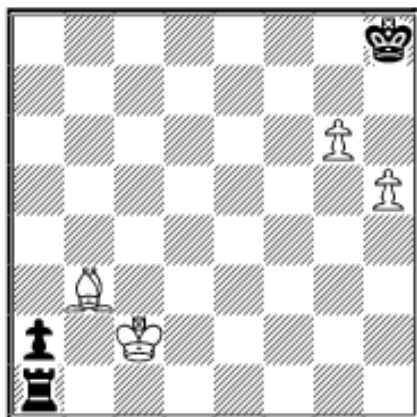
**8.Bg5 Nc6 9.Qd2** (9.Qe3!?) **9...h6 10.Bh4 Bg4 11.0-0-0**

Our replaying exercise would begin here; we shall return to our game, however, only later, after another diagram. Instead, we offer here a lengthy “lyrical” (or actually “instructional”) digression, which could amount to a rather significant hint. Strong players who would rather use this exercise as training should probably leave this section until after their replay is over. While for those who feel less secure about their own abilities – read the following text, and then see if you can employ the idea presented when calculating your variations.

Many years ago, Emanuel Lasker introduced the “desperado” concept, which translated from the Spanish means: a desperate person, despairing, a “kamikaze”. In the course of the game, several pieces – both ours, and our opponent's – will turn “desperado” – that is, they will display an inner wish to self-destruct. Or, to use Lasker's expression, a “*berserk desire to attack*.” This will happen in one of the following situations:

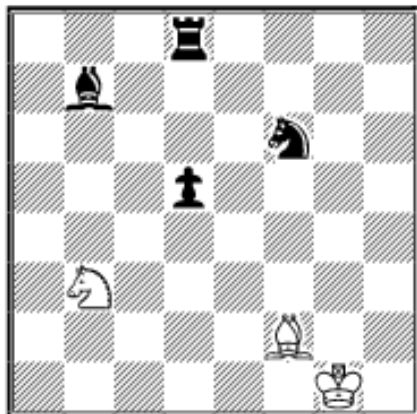
1) “*Sometimes, a piece involuntarily aids the enemy, for example: when it hinders the mobility of its own pieces.*” Lasker illustrated this with the following setup:





Here, Black's rook hinders the a2-pawn from queening, so it turns "desperado," by **1...Rc1+!**

Another instructive setup, based upon the need to blockade the passed pawn, comes from Aron Nimzovich. (see next diagram)



*"After 1...d4 2.Nxd4 or 2.Bxd4, all Black's pieces, which were standing behind the pawn, suddenly spring to life: the b7-bishop gains a diagonal pointing at the enemy king, the d8-rook gains an open file, and the knight on f6 obtains another central square."* The d5-pawn is a typical "desperado."

While we're here, we should also mention one other situation of practical importance which fits under the same heading: the "mad

*piece*" (which is most commonly a "mad rook.") A piece becomes "mad," inviting its own capture, when the capture results in stalemate.

2) Sometimes, a piece will either be doomed to capture, or unfortunately placed – a chronic weakness in the position: such pieces are often prone to offer themselves as sacrifices.

As an example, Lasker offered a famous example of a premature resignation.

**Popiel - Marco**  
Monte Carlo 1902



Black resigned, failing to see the winning withdrawal of the pinned bishop: **36...Bg1!**

The preceding is also well illustrated by the games Tarrasch - Lasker and Levitina - Alexandria, examined in the chapter, "Form Your Own Opinion," from my book *School of Chess Excellence 2: Combinative Play*.

3) It sometimes happens that one side will undertake an exchanging operation or combination, during the course of which

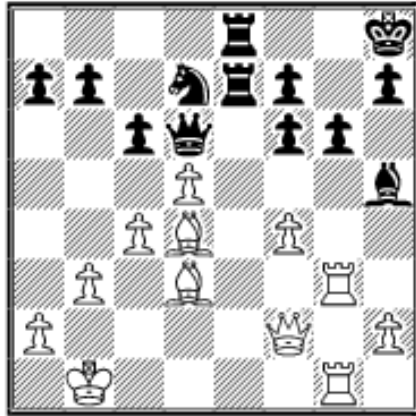
several pieces on both sides are simultaneously under attack. The attacked pieces, striving to sell themselves as dearly as possible, become "desperadoes," capable

of any sort of ridiculous-looking move.

Once again, here is an example from Lasker's *Manual*, to which I have added one preliminary move apiece for both sides.

### ***Forgacs - Duras***

Peterburg 1909



**25...Re2! 26.Be5**

On 26.Bxe2 Rxe2 27.Qf1, ...Qa3 decides.

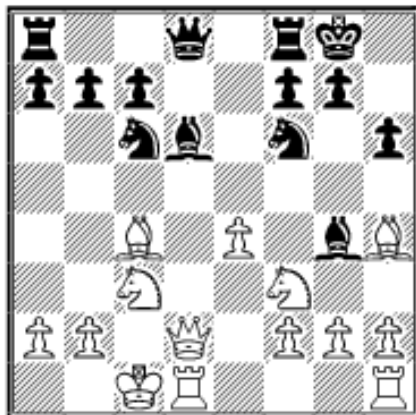
**26...Qxe5!**

And White resigned. “*In this case, it is the queen who takes the desperate step, since Re2xf2 does not work, and the rook at e2 is en prise. Here, it removes the most powerful, and most aggressive enemy piece available to it.*” (And let me add a footnote of

modification, that after 26...Rxf2?! 27.Bxd6 Rxh2, Black would have “only” two extra pawns, instead of the extra piece he obtains after 26...Qxe5! And in fact, 26...fe!? 27.Bxe2 ef would, like the text, also have led to a decisive gain of material.)

From the preceding, we draw a simple conclusion: *that we must always be ready to recognize “desperado” situations, and to examine any moves, even the most unbelievable, of such pieces, which under normal circumstances would never enter our heads.*

And now, finally, it is time to return to our game.



Black begins a favorable exchanging combination.

**11...Bg4xf3! 12.g2xf3 Nf6xe4 13.Bh4xd8?!**

Playing White, grandmaster Anthony Miles makes the most natural move, taking the enemy queen. He correctly rejected the line 13.Nxe4?! Qxh4 14.Nxd6 cd (or 14...Rad8!?), as leading to a difficult position.

But notice that both sides now have a number of pieces simultaneously *en prise*. These pieces – the white queen among them – are now “desperadoes”, capable of any sort of action. Sergei Dolmatov suggested an excellent strengthening of White's play: 13.Qxh6!! gh 14.Bxd8. Here are some possible continuations:

A) 14...Nxc3 15.Rhg1+ Kh7 16.Bf6 Nxa2+!? 17.Bxa2 (17.Kb1?! Rg8 18.Bd3+ Rg6 would be weaker) 17...Bf4+ 18.Kb1 Be5 19.Bxe5 Nxe5 20.f4, followed by 21.Rd7, when White seizes the initiative;

B) 14...Raxd8 15.fe, when Black's position is a little better, but he has no real chance of winning;

C) 14...Bf4+!? 15.Kc2 Nxf2 (Black loses after 15...Nxc3?! 16.Rhg1+ Bg5? 17.Bxg5; and he gets little out of 15...Rfxd8 16.fe Nd4+ 17.Kb1) 16.Rhg1+ Kh7 17.Bf6, and now:

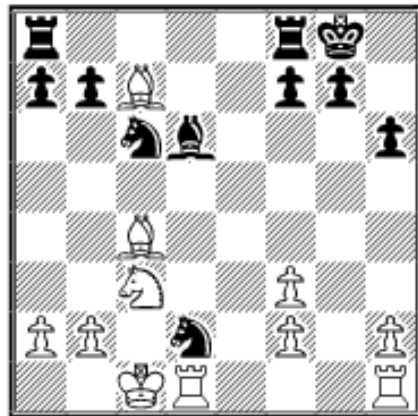
a) 17...Bg5 18.Nd5! Nxd1 19.Bd3+ Kg8 20.Bxg5 hg 21.Rxg5+ Kh8 22.Rh5+ Kg8 (22...Kg7?? 23.Rh7+ Kg8 24.Nf6 mate) 23.Rg5+ is perpetual check;

b) 17...Rg8 18.Rxg8 Rxg8 19.Rd7 gives both sides chances;

c) 17...Be5 18.Nd5! Rg8 19.f4!, and once again, we reach a double-edged endgame where it's nearly impossible to predict the outcome.

### 13...Ne4xd2 14.Bd8xc7!

Otherwise, White remains a pawn down; so, the bishop turns "desperado."



Now Black, it appears, must choose between 14...Nxc4 15.Bxd6 Nxd6 16.Rxd6, or 14...Bxc7 15.Kxd2. In either case, he stands better; but his opponent, who has been able to maintain the material balance, has hopes of saving himself.

On the other hand, several pieces are still *en prise*, so they're "desperadoes," capable of anything. Black found a completely unexpected blow, guaranteeing him a healthy extra pawn.

### 14...Bd6xh2!! 15.Bc7xh2

15.Rxd2 Bxc7 could hardly be called better. And one more "desperado" – 15.Bxf7+ Rxf7 16.Bxh2 – doesn't help: after 16...Nxf3, White is a pawn down again.

### 15...Nd2xc4 16.Rd1-d7 b7-b6

And Black eventually converted the extra pawn.

Oh – and I nearly forgot to tell you who was Black. It was the computer, Deep Thought (the predecessor to Deep Blue, which beat Garry Kasparov in a match). You can understand that, for a computer, with no human habits or prejudices to

shake off, finding a move like 14...Bxh2!! would not be difficult. I hope, after reading this piece, that making similar imaginative decisions will become easier for you, as well.



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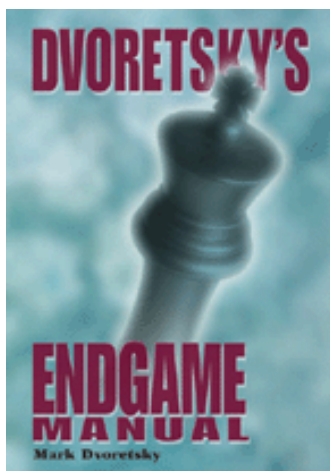
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## C O L U M N I S T S

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



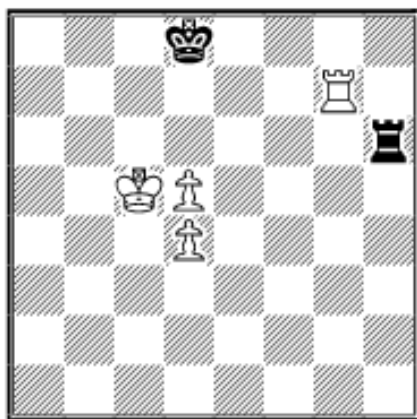
## Working on your Mistakes

My books are not set in stone. I am always offering my publishers corrections to all of my errors that have been uncovered; some of which are identified by my readers, for which I am genuinely grateful.

New ideas are generally uncovered during training work with my students, who are, as a rule, rather strong players, to whom I offer particular examples from my books, either for evaluation or for independent solutions. Plus, there are a number of inaccuracies and errors that I have been able to uncover on my own.

Analytical computer programs, such as Fritz, Junior, etc., have now come into common use; there are also endgame tablebases, offering precise evaluations of all positions of five pieces or less – and recently, some six-piece endgames have also been conquered. I have decided to put the games and fragments from my books through at least a cursory computer examination; and as a result, some of them (thankfully, not too many) have been re-evaluated. Herewith, I bring to your attention the most interesting and instructive episodes from my recent examinations.

Let's begin with a simple example out of *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, showing how to defend against two doubled enemy extra pawns.



With the defender's king in front of the pawns, he can usually draw without too much trouble. The only important point is that you must know how to play the analogous position with a single pawn (the "Philidor position").

Here, Black uses the main defensive method of the Philidor position – shuttling his rook back and forth along the 6th rank, preventing the enemy king from getting there. When his opponent plays d5-d6, then the rook drops

down to give checks from the rear – the king no longer has the d6-square to shelter from vertical checks, that being occupied by the pawn.

White has only one try at strengthening his position – occupying the 6th rank with his rook.

**1.Rb7 Rg6 (1...Kc8!?) 2.Rb6 Rg4!**

On 3.Kc6, Black can now answer 3...Rxd4 4.Rb8+ Ke7 =. This technique – putting the rook behind the enemy pawn – is in fact the second method of defending Philidor's position, something Philidor himself was unaware of. This method is no less important than the first one – sometimes it is the only way in which the game may be saved, because there are times when the rook is unable to occupy the 6th rank.

**3.d6 Rg1! 4.Kc6 Rc1+ 5.Kd5 Rh1 6.Rb8+ Kd7 7.Rb7+ Kd8 8.d7 Rh5+**

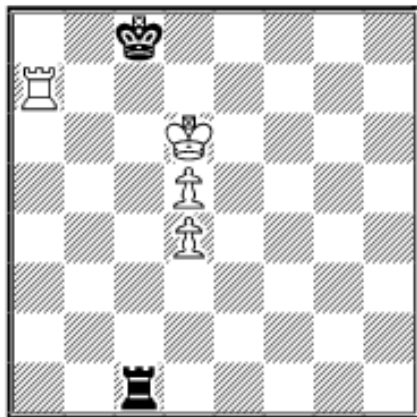
Black could also have restricted the white king's attacking possibilities by 8...Ke7!

**9.Kc6 Rh6+ 10.Kc5 Rh5+ 11.d5 Rh6! =**

Black returns, once again, to the defensive method suggested by Philidor.

On the whole, everything in the book is correct, except for one detail. I thought that 2...Rg4! was the only saving move, when in fact, it isn't.

2...Rg7?! 3.Rb8+! Kc7 4.Ra8 Rg1! (4...Rg6? 5.d6+ Kd7 6.Ra7+ Kd8 7.Kc6 loses) 5.Ra7+ Kc8! 6.Kc6 Rc1+ 7.Kd6

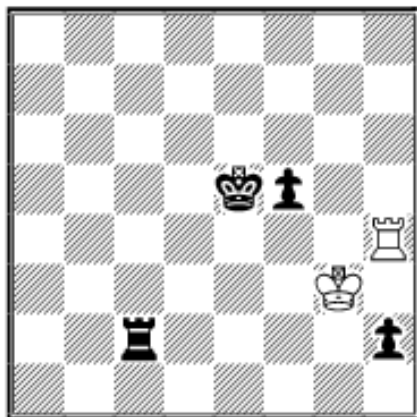


7...Rc4! After 8.Ra8+ Kb7, White has to spend a tempo retreating the rook, when Black can still employ the second line of defense in Philidor's position by putting his rook behind the pawn: 9.Rh8 Rxd4 10.Ke6 Kc7!, etc. But after 7...Rd1? 8.Rc7+! Kd8 9.Rh7 White gets his rook away from the enemy king with tempo, and after 9...Kc8 (or 9...Ke8 10.Rh8+ Kf7 11.Kc6) 10.Rh8+ Kb7 11.Ke6 Rxd4 12.d6 he wins easily.

2...Rg1?! 3.Kc6 Kc8! (3...Rc1+? 4.Kd6) 4.Ra6 Rc1+ 5.Kd6. Now we have the same position as in the diagram, only with White's rook at a6. Here, Black can't play 5...Rc4?, in view of 6.Rc6+; however, 5...Rd1! 6.Rc6+ (6.Ra8+ Kb7 7.Rh8 Rxd4 8.Ke6 Kc7!) 6...Kd8 prevents White's rook from escaping to the king's wing with tempo. Nor can White make progress after 6.Ra4 Rd2(or d3)!

The following position was examined both in *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* (during the analysis of the Gligoric - Smyslov endgame), and in the earlier book by Dvoretsky and Yusupov, *Technique for the Tournament Player*.

**M.Dvoretsky, B.Gulko, 1976**



The tempting 1...f4+? doesn't lead to a win: 2.Kf3 Rc3+ 3.Kg2 Ke4 4.Kxh2 (4.Rh8! is still more exact) 4...Rc2+ 5.Kh3! (5.Kg1? would be mistaken: 5...Ke3 6.Rh8 Rc1+ 7.Kh2 f3 8.Re8+ Kf2 9.Ra8 Kf1) 5...Kf3 6.Rh8 Rc7 7.Rh6 (but not 7.Kh2? Kf2 as Lev Polugaevsky once played in an analogous position against Hans Ree) 7...Re7 8.Rh8 Kf2 9.Ra8! f3 10.Ra2+ Re2 11.Ra1 (or 11.Ra8 Kf1 12.Kg3 f2 13.Kf3! Kg1 14.Rg8+) and draws.

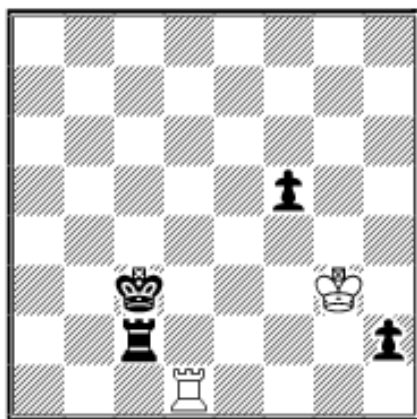
Let's pretend that it's White to move here. He would have to play 1.Rh8 (he can't play 1.Kf3 because of 1...Rc1! 2.Rxh2 Rc3+), when Black's king could move up and around its own rook, so as to approach the h-pawn on the first rank. Note that Black's rook must occupy the c2-square. If it goes to d2 or e2, then the white rook no longer has to leave the 4th rank (now he has the move Kf3!). And with the rook at b2, the king's march to the queenside, past his own rook, becomes too lengthy.

In other words, what we have now on the board is a mutual zugzwang position. So Black must lose a move.

**1...Rd2 2.Kf3 Ra2** (2...Rd1? 3.Rxh2 Rd3+ 4.Ke2) **3.Kg3 Rc2!! 4.Rh8** (4.Kf3 Rc1!) **4...Ke4 5.Re8+ Kd3 6.Rd8+** (6.Rh8 Re2! intending 7...Kd2) **6...Kc3 7.Rh8** (7.Rc8+ Kd2 or 7...Kb2) **7...Re2!** (after 7...Kb2? 8.Kf4 Kc1 9.Kxf5 Kd1 10.Kg4 the Black king returns too late) **8.Kf4 Kd2 9.Kxf5 Ke1 10.Kg4 Kf1 11.Kg3 Kg1** – the king arrives in the nick of time!

As in the preceding example, the main line (which was discovered in 1976!) is completely correct.

Thirty years later, however, while preparing *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, I uncovered a more stubborn defense. Instead of 7.Rh8, it makes sense to play **7.Rd1!?**



I examined a lot of complicated lines, and could not find the win; so in the "Manual," I gave this position as drawn. Now I see that assessment was mistaken.

Sometimes, in order to fight your way out of a thicket of variations, it's important to examine the position logically, in order to find some overall ideas and considerations.

For example, in this position, one useful fact is that Black can win if he gets his king over to the f-pawn while the white rook is tied down to the first rank. Now the only question becomes how this can be achieved.

On **7...Kc4**, White replies **8.Ra1** (8.Rf1 Rd2, or 8.Kf4 Rf2+ 9.Kg3 Rd2 are both weaker), with the idea of meeting the enemy king's march to the kingside by returning the rook to the h-file and relying on the first defensive method. For example: 8...Kd5 9.Ra5+ Ke6 (9...Ke4 10.Ra4+ Ke5 11.Rh4) 10.Ra6+ Ke5 11.Rh6 (intending 12.Rh4) 11...Ke4 12.Re6+ Kd3 13.Rd6+ Kc3 14.Rd1! etc.

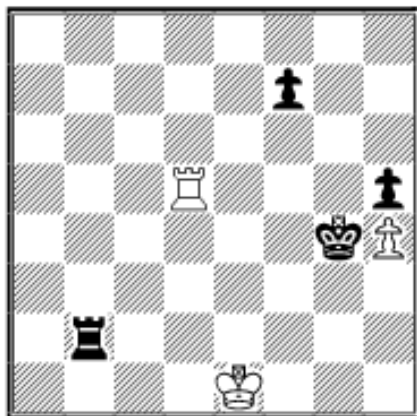
I took the first two logical steps; but for some reason, I couldn't find the third one. It turns out that, before bringing the king back, it's important to have the rook on d2 first. Then the transfer of White's rook to h6 (as in the variation we just examined) loses its force: Black advances his king again, and White's rook can no longer reach d1.

The most exact line is: **8...Ra2!** (not 8...Rd2 at once, because of 9.Ra4+ Kd5?! 10.Rh4 and Black has to start all over again) **9.Rb1 Rd2 10.Kf3** (10.Ra1 Kd5) **10...Kd5** (Ke5-f6-g5 was threatened) **11.Rb5+ Ke6 12.Rb6+ Ke5 13.Rh6 Kd4 14.Rd6+ Kc3 15.Rc6+ Kb2 16.Rh6 Kc1 17.Kf4 Kd1** and Black wins.

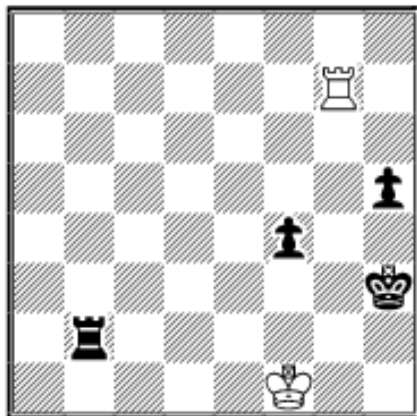
In the 1976 USSR Championship, I helped GM Boris Gulko prepare to play out his adjournment against Mark Taimanov; in the course of our analysis, we studied the previous endgame. The course of the adjourned session gave rise to the following curious situation:

### Taimanov - Gulko

Moscow 1976



Our home analysis had established that the natural move 47...f5? led to a draw. For example: 48.Kf1 f4 (48...Rh2 49.Kg1 Rxh4 50.Kg2 f4 51.Rd3! leads to the usual drawn position with f- and h-pawns, and with a poorly-placed black rook to boot) 49.Rg5+ Kxh4 (49...Kf3 is not dangerous: 50.Kg1 Rb1+ 51.Kh2 Kf2 52.Rxh5 f3 53.Ra5 Kf1 54.Kg3 f2 55.Ra2 Rb3+ 56.Kg4 and White gives up his rook for the f-pawn) 50.Rg7 Kh3 (see next diagram)



An important basic position; Black to move would win: 51...Kh2! 52.Rg8 (after 52.Rf7 or 52.Rh7, Kg3 decides) 52...h4 53.Rg7 (53.Rg4 h3 54.Rxf4 Kg3 55.Rf8 Rb1+ 56.Ke2 h2) 53...h3 54.Rg8 f3 (or 54...Rg2 at once).

But it's White to move here, and he has time to occupy the vital g1-square with his king.

51.Kg1! h4 52.Rg8 f3 (threatening 53...Rg2+) 53.Rf8 (only now, when the black king no longer has a shelter on f3, does the rook leave the g-file) 53...Kg3 (or 53...Rg2+

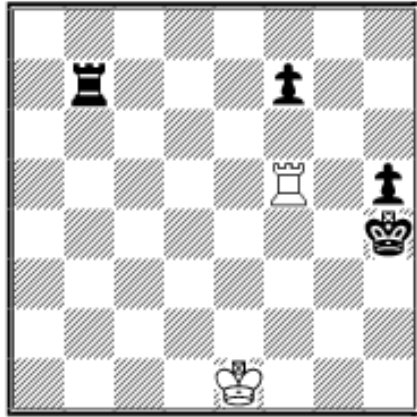


54.Kf1 Kg3 55.Rg8+ Kh2 56.Rf8) 54.Rg8+ Kf4 55.Rf8+ Ke3 56.Re8+ Kd3 57.Rd8+ Ke2 58.Re8+ Kd1 59.Rf8 (or e3) with a draw.

So Gulko took the h4-pawn immediately.

**47...Kxh4! 48.Rd7?**

Only now have I added the question mark to White's reply. At the time, we thought that 48.Rf5 Rb7 would not help him.



49.Kf1 (49.Kf2 Kg4 50.Rf6 h4) 49...Kg4 50.Rf2 Rb1+! 51.Kg2 f5. In order to prevent his king being driven back to the first rank, with fatal effect, White's rook must loiter passively on the 2nd rank. Black would win easily by advancing his pawns.

Unfortunately, our analysis had a hole in it. By continuing 49.Ra5! (instead of the losing king move), White could utilize the rook's long-range striking power to save himself, by driving the opposing king off to a poor

position: 49...Kg4 50.Ra4+! Kg3 51.Ra3+ Kg2 52.Ra2+ Kg1 53.Ke2! (in a number of variations, Black can now cut off the king in the corner by bringing his rook to the g-file) 53...Kg2 54.Ke1+!

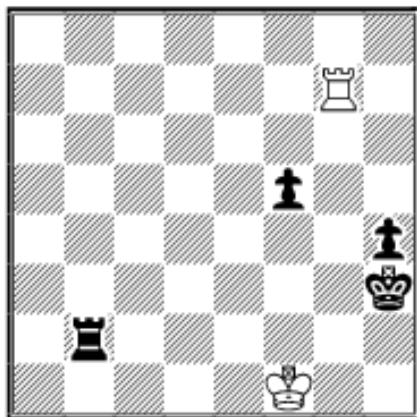
**48...f6!**

Black's idea here is to parry 49.Rg7 by bringing his own rook to the 5th: 49...Rb5! 50.Kf2 Rf5+ 51.Ke3 (51.Kg2 Rg5+) 51...Kh3. Afterwards, he simply brings his king and h-pawn forward, and then covers the g-file with his rook, when the enemy king will be too far away from the h-pawn.

After **49.Kf1 Kg4** White's position became hopeless: his king was cut off on the 1st rank, while his counterpart could not be pinned to the h-file. Black won easily.

The move 48...f5 looked like a mistake to us, because of 49.Rg7 Kh3 50.Kf1 when White's king reaches g1 (50...Kh2 fails to 51.Rg5).

But here again, we were wrong! Black plays 50...h4!

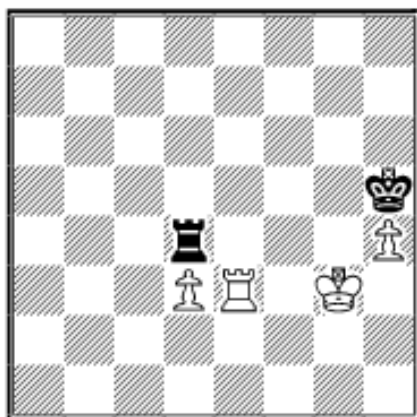


On 51.Kg1, Black has the powerful resource 51...Rb4!, which he did not have in the above-cited basic position, since the pawn stood on f4 there. We already know that 51.Rg8 Kh2! is hopeless; while on 51.Rg5 f4 52.Kg1 f3 52.Rf5 Kg4 decides (the rook is too close to the king, and cannot check).

A fine illustration of how attentively and carefully one must use one's theoretical knowledge: the slightest change in the position, and well-known techniques and

evaluations can fall by the wayside.

The following curious endgame, with the same material, occurred during my examination of the game **Akopian - Orekhov** (Moscow, 1973). The analysis was published in my book *School of Chess Excellence I - Endgame Analysis*.



It's clear that, at some point, White will have to jettison the h4-pawn in order to queen the other. Black employs the defensive method we call "frontal attack" (or the "butting heads defense"). You may acquaint yourself with the theory of these endgames with the aid of *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*.

No direct winning route for White is evident, as the following variations demonstrate:

A) 47.Rf3 Rxh4 48.Kf2 Kg4! (but not 48...Rd4? 49.Ke3 Rd8 50.d4, or 48...Kg5? 49.Ke3 Rh8 50.d4 – with the pawn on the 4th rank, and the king cut off by at least two files, White normally wins, although there are such exceptions as the g- and b-pawns) 49.Ke3 (White gets nothing either from 49.Rf8 Rh7 50.Ke3 Re7+ 51.Kd2 Rd7, or from 49.d4 Rh8 50.Rf7 Re8! or 50...Rh3!) 49...Rh8 50.Rf4+ (50.Rf1 Re8+ 51.Kd2 Rd8 =) 50...Kg5 51.d4 (White would win if his rook were on f1 now) 51...Re8+! 52.Re4 Rd8 (threatening 53...Kf6 or 53...Kf5, drawing) 53.Re6! (an important technique: the enemy king is cut off on a rank) 53...Kf5 54.Rc6 (with the king on d3, Black's position would be hopeless; here, however, he finds a defense) 54...Re8+! 55.Kd3 Re6! and the black king gets through via the e-file.

B) 47.Kf3 Rxh4! (47...Kxh4? 48.Re4+) 48.Re8 (48.Re6 Kg5 49.Ke3 Kf5 50.Re8 Rh7 51.d4 Rh3+! 52.Kd2 Kf6) 48...Kg6 49.Ke3 (49.Rf8 Kg7 50.Rf5 Kg6, or 50.Rf4 Rxf4+ 51.Kxf4 Kf6) 49...Kf7 50.Re5 (50.Re4 Rxe4+!) 50...Kf6 51.d4 Rh8 52.Ke4 Ra8 and again it's a draw.

C) 47.Kf2 Kxh4! (47...Rxh4? 48.Rg3) 48.Re4+ (48.Rf3 Kg4 or 48...Rd8 49.Ke3 Kg4) 48...Rxe4 49.de Kg5 50.Ke3 Kf6 51.Kd4 Ke6.

Grandmaster Alexander Beliavsky found a paradoxical solution: it turns out that

this is a mutual zugzwang position, which in turn means that White must lose a move.

**47.Re5+!! Kg6 48.Re6+ Kh5 49.Re3**

Now what's Black to do? He can't play 49...Rxb4 50.Re5+; 49...Kg6 is bad too: 50.Rf3 Kh5 51.Kf2, followed by Ke3 and d4. And 49...Rg4+ 50.Kf2 Rxb4 is also hopeless: 51.Rg3! (cutting off the king on a file that is far too distant from the pawn), or 50...Kxb4 51.Re5! (cutting him off on the rank).

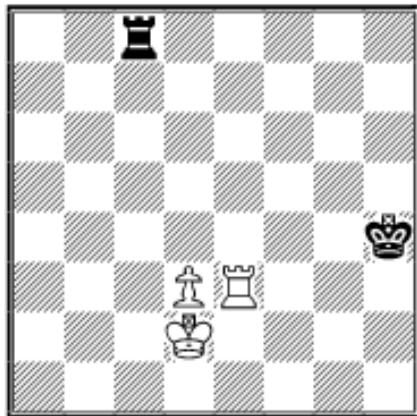
**49...Rd8 50.Kf4! Rf8+**

If 50...Kxb4 51.Re6! (mate is threatened) 51...Rd4+ 52.Ke3 Rd8 53.d4 Kg5 54.Ke4.

**51.Ke5 Re8+**

51...Kxb4 52.d4 Re8+ 53.Kf4 Rf8+ 54.Ke4 Re8+ (54...Kg5 55.Rg3+) 55.Kd3 Rd8 56.Rf3 or 56.Re5.

**52.Kd4 Rd8+ 53.Kc3 Rc8+ 54.Kd2 Kxb4**



**55.Re5!**

John Nunn showed that 55.d4?, which at first sight appears equivalent, actually costs the win: 55...Kg5! 56.Kd3 Kf6! 57.d5 Kf7 58.Kd4 Re8 when Black's king gets through across the e-file. Or 56.Rf3 (which looks fine at first: with the pawn on d4, Black's king is cut off two files away) 56...Ra8! 57.Rf7 (57.Kd3 Ra3+ 58.Ke4 Rxf3) 57...Ra3! separating White's king from his pawn.

**55...Kg4 56.Ke3!** (the most exact) and White wins easily.

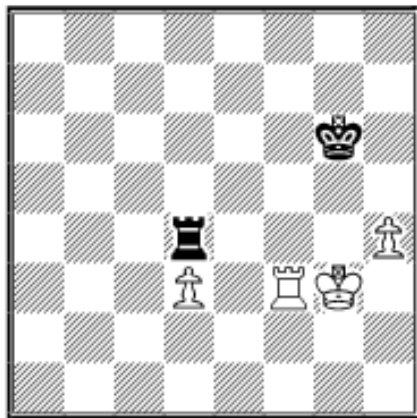
The analysis looks quite convincing, and yet the starting position is a draw! Black is not obliged to return his king to h5.

**47.Re5+!! Kg6 48.Re6+ Kf7!**

48...Kf5! is equivalent: 49.Re3 Kf6! (but not 49...Rg4+ 50.Kh3 Rg1 51.Rf3+ Ke5 52.h5).

**49.Re3 Kf6!**

49...Kg7! is also possible. But after 49...Kg6? 50.Rf3 Black is in zugzwang and must lose: 50...Kh5 51.Kf2 etc.

**50.Rf3+ Kg6!**

As paradoxical as it seems, this is another mutual zugzwang position, which Black has reached with his opponent to move.

**51.Kf2 Rxb4 52.Ke3 Ra4 (or b4)!**

52...Rh7? would be a mistake: 53.Ke4 Re7+ 54.Kd5 Rd7+ 55.Kc5. White wins because his pawn is protected by the rook.

**53.Rf1**

There is no other way to make progress: on 53.d4 Black trades off the rooks. And moving the king to the queenside doesn't help either: 53.Kd2 Ra3 54.Kc2 Kg5 55.Kb2 Ra8 56.d4 Ra4!

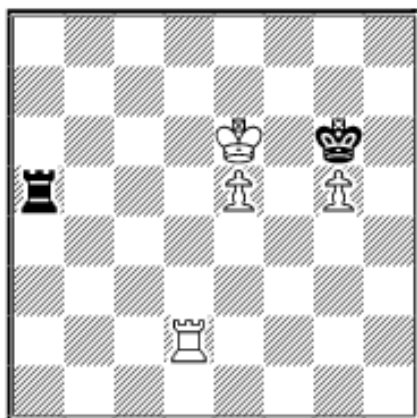
**53...Ra7 (or b7)! 54.d4**

54.Ke4 Re7+ 55.Kd5 Rd7+ and the king has to retreat: the pawn is undefended.

**54...Rf7!**

Here's why the black king had to be on the g6-square! The pawn endgame is drawn, and otherwise, the black king can approach the pawn.

My last example was created as I worked on one of the variations of the endgame **Dvoretsky - Filipowicz** (Polanica Zdroj, 1953), from the same book, *School of Chess Excellence I - Endgame Analysis*.

**M.Dvoretsky, 2004**

This is a rather difficult exercise: try to find the winning plan with White to move.

The primary consideration is how to ward off the threat to take the pawn: 1...Kxg5 2.Rg2+ Kf4, and 3.Kf6 fails against 3...Rxe5 4.Rf2+ Ke3(g3). This makes the accurate first move understandable.

**1.Rd1!!**

Now 1...Kxg5 would be bad, owing to 2.Rg1+ Kf4 3.Kf6. And 1...Ra6+ 2.Ke7 Kf5 (2...Kxg5 3.e6) loses quickly to 3.Re1! Ra7+ 4.Kf8 Ra8+ 5.Kg7 when the king reaches the g-pawn.

**1...Ra7!?**

Black keeps the enemy king away from e7, hoping for 2.Kd6? Kxg5 3.e6 Kf6 4.Rf1+ Kg7, or 2.Rd8? (2.Rd7? leads to the same thing) 2...Ra6+ 3.Ke7 (on 3.Rd6 Black has the saving 3...Ra8!) 3...Kxg5 4.e6 Kg6! (but not 4...Kf5? 5.Rd6! Ra7+ 6.Kf8) 5.Rd6 (5.Rd1 Ra7+; 5.Rg8+ Kf5) 5...Ra8! with a well-known book draw.

## **2.Re1!!**

The only way! White frees his king from the need to defend the pawn, while also ratcheting up the threat to advance it.

## **2...Ra6+ 3.Kd5**

Or 3.Ke7 Ra7+ 4.Kd6 when the king uses the 6th rank to reach the c5-square.

## **3...Ra5+ 4.Kd6 Ra6+ 5.Kc5 Kf7**

Thanks to the rook's position at e1, 5...Ra5+ is useless to Black; nor can he play 5...Kxg5 6.e6 Ra8 7.e7. If 5...Kf5 then 6.Kd5 Ra5+ 7.Kd6 Ra6+ 8.Ke7 Ra7+ 9.Kf8 Ra8+ 10.Kg7 decides.

## **6.Rf1+! Kg7**

Black can't go back to g6, because of 7.Rf6+ – this is why White needed to entice Black's rook to the 6th rank. And on 6...Ke7 7.Kd5 Ra2 8.g6 (8.Ke4 also wins easily) 8...Rg2 9.Rf6 wins.

## **7.Rd1!**

On 7...Kf7 White replies 8.Rd7+ when Black can't go to the 6th rank because of 9.Rd6+. On 7...Kf8 the simplest win is 8.Rd7 Rg6 9.Ra7 Rxd5 10.Kd6.



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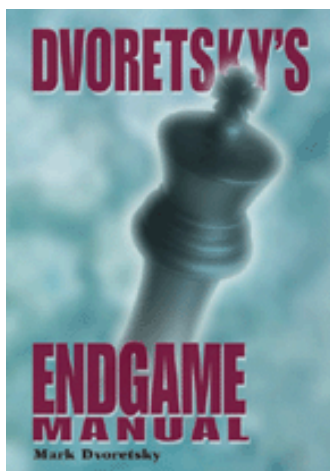
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C O L U M N I S T S

## *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



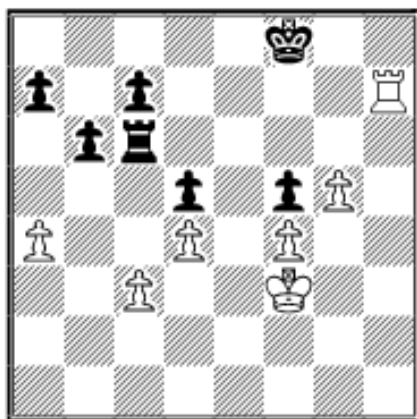
## Going Deep Into Analysis

I was moved to write these lines by an analytical piece, written by GM Igor Zaitsev, published in the Russian chess magazine *64 - Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye* (*Chess Review*) #5/2004.

Next to each diagram, you will find an indication of whose turn it is to move; in a number of cases, you will also find a question mark. This indicates that, if you like, you may use the position as an exercise: try to find the strongest continuation by calculating the necessary variations.

The classic game Capablanca - Tartakower is given in almost every book on endgame theory, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* among them.

**Capablanca - Tartakower**  
New York, 1924



W?

The only way to exploit the unfortunate placement of Black's king is to follow Aron Nimzovich's motto: "All forces - advance!"

**35.Kg3!**

White's king joins in the attack; and for this, he will jettison pawns. The primitive 35. Rd7? Rxc3+ 36. Ke2 Ra3 37. Rxd5 Rxa4 38. Rxf5+ Kg7 would lead only to an unclear position.

**35...Rxc3+ 36.Kh4 Rf3 37.g6 Rxf4+ 38.Kg5 Re4**

38...Rxd4 39. Kf6 is also hopeless.

**39.Kf6!**

For the time being, the f5-pawn is handy as an “umbrella” against checks on the file.

**39...Kg8 40.Rg7+!**

Good technique: before gobbling the pawn, it's useful to make Black's king position a little worse.

**40...Kh8 41.Rxc7 Re8 42.Kxf5!**

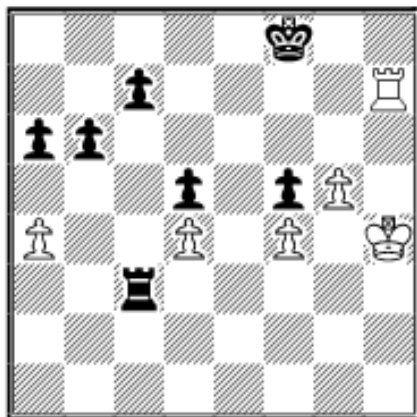
Now it's time to take the f5-pawn, which otherwise could advance (42. Kf7 Rd8, with f5-f4 to follow). With the rook defending passively from the 8th rank, it's impossible to force a knight pawn to queen (as opposed to a bishop pawn).

**42...Re4 43.Kf6 Rf4+ 44.Ke5 Rg4 45.g7+!**

Here's the point of the check inserted at the 40th move: White brings the pawn under the rook's protection with tempo (45...Rxg7 46. Rxg7 Kxg7 47. Kxd5 would be hopeless).

**45...Kg8 46.Rxa7 Rg1 47.Kxd5 Rc1 48.Kd6 Rc2 49.d5 Rc1 50.Rc7 Ra1 51.Kc6 Rxa4 52.d6** and Black resigned.

Savielly Tartakower lost without a fight when, in fact, he might have made his opponent's job much more difficult. Master Vladimir Goldin suggested that, instead of 36...Rf3!?, Black could have played **36...a6!**, leaving the pawn at c7 for the time being, where the rook protects it, and getting the other pawn off the 7th rank.



W

In the mid-90s, a lively theoretical discussion appeared on this theme in the pages of the Russian chess press. Recently, even Garry Kasparov joined in the analysis – while preparing a new edition of the 1st volume of his monumental *My Great Predecessors*.

On 37. Rd7?! Rf3 38. g6 Rxf4+ 39. Kg5 Re4, or 37. g6?! b5 38. ab ab 39. Kg5 b4 40. Rf7+! Kg8!, no win could be demonstrated. Nor could anyone find a win after 37. Kh5 b5 38. a5 Rc6 39. g6 b4 40. Kh6 b3 41. Rh8+ Ke7 42. Rb8 Rc2!, or 38. ab ab 39. Kg6 Kg8! (intending Rc6+) 40. Rh1 b4 41. Kxf5 Kg7!

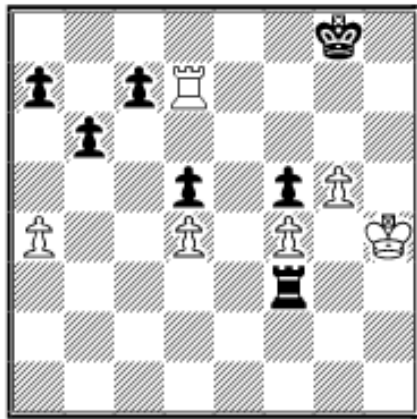
It was GM Zaitsev who found the key to this position: **37.Kh5! b5 38.Kg6!! Kg8**

(38...b4 39. Kxf5 a3 40. Rh6 doesn't save him) **39.Rg7+! Kf8 40.Rf7+ Kg8 41.Rf6!**, with the unstoppable threat 42. Rxa6. If White had exchanged pawns on b5 first, then Black could have met the threat by 42...b4 43. Ra6 Ra3! 44. Rc6 Rc3 =.

The variations presented offer only a small digest of the results of many players' analytical efforts. For those who prefer greater detail, I recommend looking into Kasparov's 2nd volume: at the very end, you will find corrections and additions to some examples from the 1st volume, including this endgame.

In 2004, Master Goldin made a fresh attempt to defend Black's position, suggesting the logical, healthy move **35...Kg8!?**, forcing the rook to retreat: **36.Rd7** (after 35...Rxc3+ 36. Kh4 Kg8? would be senseless, in view of 37. g6.)

**36...Rxc3+ 37.Kh4 Rf3**



W

On 38. g6?! Rxf4+ 39. Kg5 Re4, Goldin's analysis shows no win. White therefore plays **38.Kh5! Rxf4 39.Kg6 Kf8 40.Kf6 Re4 41.Rf7+! Kg8 42.Rxc7 Re8** (42...f4?? 43. Rc8+ Kh7 44. g6+ Kh6 45 Rh8#) **43.Kxf5 Re4 44.Kf6! Rf4+ 45.Ke5 Rg4 46.Rxa7**

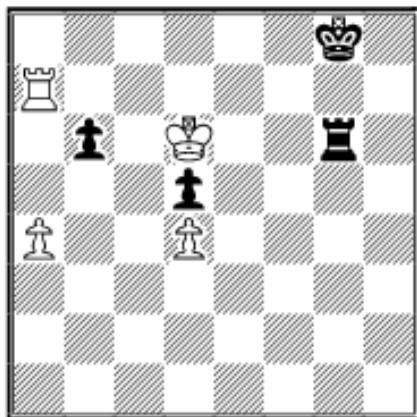
46. Kxd5 Rxc5+ 47. Ke6 Rg6+ 48. Kf5 Rh6 49. Rxa7 Kf8 is weaker — here, a draw is the likely result (Goldin); or if 48. Ke7!? Rg7+!

49. Kd8 Rg4! 50. d5 Rd4 51. Rd7 Rxa4 52. d6 Rd4, and Black should draw (Zaitsev). Now, let's extend this last line a bit, to confirm Zaitsev's assessment: 53. Kc7 Rd1 (53...b5 54. Kc6 is weaker) 54. Rd8+ (54. Kc6 is now useless, in view of 54...Rc1+ 55. Kb7 Rd1) 54...Kf7 55. Rc8 Ke6! 56. Re8+ Kd5 57. d7 Kc4 =.

**46...Rxc5+ 47.Kd6 Rg6+**

Zaitsev also examines 47...Rg4 48. Kxd5!, and 47...Kf8!? 48. Ra6! — in both lines, he demonstrates a win for White.



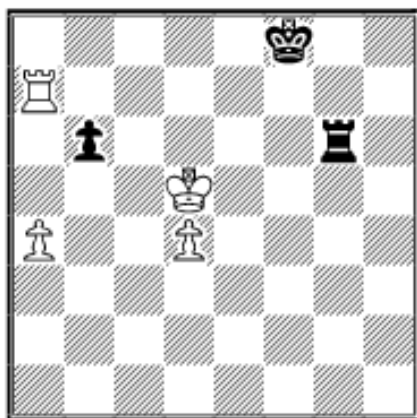


W

Goldin thought Black could draw after 48. Kxd5 Kf8. Zaitsev suggested 48. Kc7!?, and showed that this move led to a win. Here's his main line: 48...Rg4 (48...Kf8 49. Rb7!) 49. Kxb6 Rxd4 50. a5 Rb4+ 51. Kc5 Rc4+! 52. Kb5! (if 52. Kxd5? Rf4? 53. Ke6!+- is a mistake; however, Black has 52...Rg4!! 53. Re7 Ra4 =) 52...Rc1 53. Rd7 Rb1+ 54. Kc6 Rc1+ 55. Kb6 Rb1+ 56. Kc7! Rc1+ 57. Kd8! Ra1 58. Rxd5 Kf7 59. Kd7 Ra2 60. Rf5+ Kg6

61. Rb5, followed by Kc7-b7.

When Goldin's analysis was printed, I fed it into my computer (which has the "full version" of this endgame in ChessBase format); as a matter of course, I gave the commentator's main conclusions a quick once-over. I was struck by doubt that the concluding position of his analysis, with an extra pawn for White, could be drawn. Let's play **48.Kxd5!? Kf8**



W?

Black brings his king to the center, aiming to defend as in the basic Philidor position. He will keep his rook on the 6th until the White pawn reaches that rank; then, when the king no longer has any shelter from checks on the file, he will send his rook to the last rank. Of course, this carries the risk of losing the b6-pawn and being two pawns down; but not all such positions are lost.

For example: 49. Ke5 Ke8 50. d5 Kd8 51. d6 Rg1 (51...Kc8 52. Kd5 Rg1 53. Kc6 Rc1+ 54. Kxb6 Rb1+ 55. Ka6 Rd1 56. Rc7+ Kd8 57. Rc6 Kd7 58. Rb6 Rd5 59. a5 Kc8 also draws) 52. Ke6 Re1+ 53. Kd5 Rc1 54. Rb7 Kc8 55. Rxb6 Rd1+ 56. Kc6 Rc1+ 57. Kb5 Rb1+ 58. Ka6 Rd1 59. a5 Rd5.

However, **49.Rc7!** wins rather simply. On 49...Ke8, 50. Rc6 Rg5+ 51. Kd6 decides. After **49...Rg5+ 50.Kc6 Rg6+**, White continues, not with 51. Kb5? Rd6 52. d5 Ke8 (52...Rxd5+? 53. Kxb6+-) 53. Kc4 (53. Rc6 Rxd5+ 54. Kxb6 Kd7 =) 53...Rd8 =, but **51.Kb7! Rd6** (51...Ke8 52. Rc6) **52.Rc4 Ke7 53.Kc7**. It's not even zugzwang here: White to move would win also by 54. d5.

The entire preceding portion of this article is merely a wide-ranging introduction

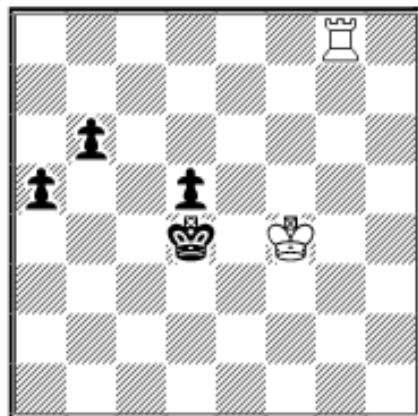
to our main theme: endgames where a rook faces two connected passed pawns. The most important ideas in such endgames are laid out in “How to Study Endgames”, from *Technique for the Tournament Player*, by Dvoretsky and Yusupov (Volume 3 in our *School of Future Champions* series). The theme gets a little more detailed treatment in *Dvoretsky’s Endgame Manual*, mentioned at the beginning of this article. Here, I don’t intend to reproduce the basics of the theory, but to offer you analysis of some complex examples, which you may use, if you wish, as training in the technique of the lengthy and accurate calculation of variations.

— But what does this have to do with the Capablanca endgame? — you ask. Soon, this will be made clear.

In the Goldin variation we examined earlier, **35...Kg8!? 36.Rd7 Rxc3+ 37.Kh4 Rf3 38.Kh5! Rxf4 39.Kg6 Kf8**, Zaitsev found a way to win the rook by **40.Rf7+!? (instead of 40. Kf6!?) 40...Ke8 (40...Kg8? 41. Rxc7+-) 41.Kf6 Rxd4 42.g6 Rxa4 43.g7 Rg4 44.Rxc7 a5 45.g8Q+ Rxg8 46.Rc8+ Kd7 47.Rxg8.**

The GM considered this endgame drawn, continuing as follows:

**47...Kd6! 48.Kxf5 Kc5 49.Kf4 Kd4**



W?

**50. Rb8 a4 51. Rxb6 Kc3 52. Ke3 a3 53. Ra6 (53. Rc6+ Kb2 54. Kd2 a2 55. Rb6+ Ka3 56. Kc2 a1N+ 57. Kc3 d4+, and the knight gets out of the corner - Dvoretsky) 53...Kb3 54. Kd2 a2 55. Rb6+ Kc4!, and draws.**

A tremendous boon in the analysis of such positions is the computer, equipped with Thompson’s analytical base (in the easy-to-use form known as “Nalimov”). This base contains all positions containing a total of five pieces (and quite recently, some positions with six pieces were added, as well).

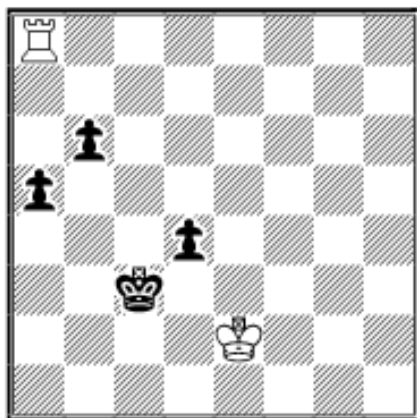
In the last diagram, there are six pieces; however, the “rook vs. three pawns” endgame has not yet been added to the base. On the other hand, in most lines, one pawn is quickly lost, after which the computer immediately comes up with the correct assessment of the resulting situation. Without this assistance, we would have to run down each variation one at a time, which would make our job a lot more complicated, and increase the likelihood of errors.

Analytical programs are a major support for the commentator. But practical players should limit their use of them because, once he accepts the computer's analysis, today's chessplayer (as opposed to one from a previous generation) doesn't train himself in the calculation of variations and the search for the strongest moves. As a result, he will sometimes find himself insufficiently prepared to resolve complex tasks in the course of tournament play, where computer assistance is, of course prohibited (except for so-called "advanced chess", or the attempts of a few hoodlums to get secret help from their machines).

Back to the diagrammed position. I believe it to be lost in any case, after the strong move **50.Ra8!**, freezing the Black pawns — in accordance, by the way, with one of the rules put forth in the above-mentioned chapter in *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, which reads: ***"The best position for the rook is behind the most advanced pawn."***

Both 50...b5 51. Rxa5 b4 52. Kf3 b3 53. Ke2+-, and 50...Kd3 51. Ra6! Kc4 52. Ke3 (just not 52. Rxb6? a4 =) 52...d4+ 53. Kd2 Kb5 54. Ra8+- fail.

**50...Kc3 51.Ke3 d4+** (51...Kb3 52. Rb8+-; 51...Kb4 52. Kd3 a4 53. Rd8 a3 54. Kc2+-) **52.Ke2**



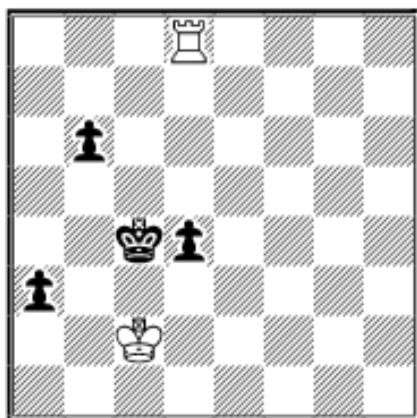
B

Here, 52...d3+ 53. Ke3 is hopeless. Play breaks down into two interesting variations:

A) 52...Kb3 53. Rb8 Kc2 54. Rxb6 d3+ 55. Ke3 a4 56. Rc6+ (56. Ra6 d2 57. Rc6+ might be simpler) 56...Kb2 57. Kd2! a3 58. Rb6+ Ka1 59. Kc3! d2 60. Rd6+-;

**B) 52...Kb4!? 53.Kd3 a4 54.Rd8 a3 55.Kc2!**

**Kc4** (see next diagram)



W?

There appears to be no direct way to win. But even in such sharp, move-on-move endgames, sometimes it pays to remember that most important endgame technique: playing for zugzwang.

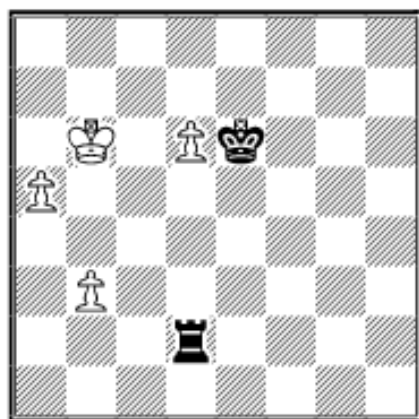
**56.Rd7 b5 57.Rd8! (zugzwang!) 57...b4 58.Rc8+ Kd5 59.Kb3 d3 60.Kxb4 a2 61.Rc1 +-**

And so, Zaitsev's plan of winning the rook is, contrary to his opinion, enough to win after all. Of course, I can't guarantee that my own analysis is error-free; if it isn't, I ask you not to judge too harshly. This article is being written during the course of a training session with French players, and I had no time to check my variations for accuracy.

I would direct those who want to study endgames of "rook vs. two or more pawns" in more detail, first, to one of my books mentioned above, in order to gain an understanding of the basics of the theory. And then, you may "employ" the knowledge you have gained to examine some new endgames, such as the ones to which I now direct your attention.

In *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, the explanation of nearly every theme ends with exercises for independent study, as well as the "Tragicomedies." Here are placed examples from practical games, where players — some of them quite strong — erred in situations which have just been studied. If the following two examples had been included in my book, I would certainly have included them under "Tragicomedies."

***Tukmakov - A.Schneider***  
Donetsk Zonal, 1998



Of course, Black needs to take on d6. But which way — king or rook?

**55...Kxd6?**

55...Rxd6+! 56. Kb7 Rd7+! would have won:

A) 57. Kc6 Ke7! 58. a6 (58. b4 Kd8 59. b5 Kc8+- is no better) 58...Kd8 59. Kb6

Kc8 60. a7 Rd6+, and next move, the a-pawn will be stopped.

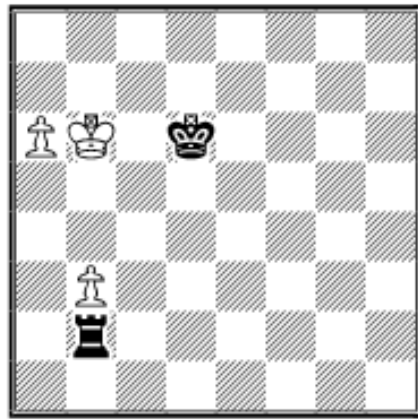
B) 57. Kc8 Kd6 58. b4 Rh7 59. b5 Kc5 60. b6 Kc6 61. Kb8 Rg7 (zugzwang) 62. Ka8 Rg5-+.

C) 57. Kb6 Rd3! 58. a6 (58. b4 Kd7 59. Kb7 Rb3-+) 58...Kd7! (greed is misplaced here: Black gets only a draw after 58...Rxb3+? 59. Kc7 Ra3 60. Kb7 Kd7 61. a7 Rb3+ 62. Ka8!) 59. a7 Rxb3+ 60. Ka6 Kc7-+. The mate threat forces White to promote to a knight; but in the corner, the knight, as is well known, is immediately lost.

### 56.a6

56. b4? Kd7 57. b5 Kc8-+ or 57. Kb7 Rb2-+ would be a mistake.

### 56...Rb2



W?

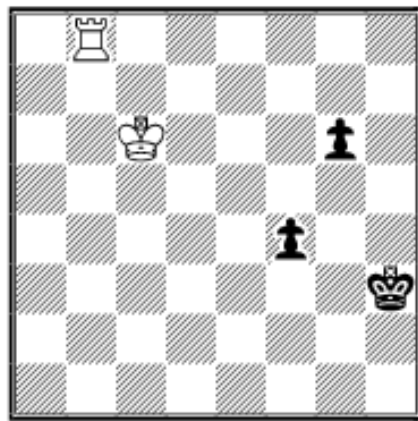
### 57.a7??

A terrible blunder in a standard position, important for the theory of the “rook vs. pawn” endgames. 57. Kb7! Rxb3+ 58. Kc8 =, or 57...Kd7 58. a7 Rxb3+ 59. Ka8! = was necessary.

**57...Rxb3+ 58.Ka6 Kc7 59.a8N+ Kc6 60.Ka7 Rb1** White resigned.

*Ovetchkin - Selin*

Tula, 1999



W?

In principle, this exercise should not be for solving, but for playing out. Try to find White's moves, while covering up Black's replies, one after another.

**63.Rf8!**

The exact move order: the rook must go immediately to the rear of the most advanced pawn. On 63. Kd5? f3 64. Rf8, Black's king gets to g2, with a draw.

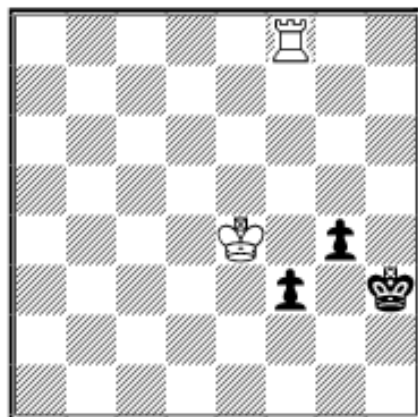
**63...g5**

On 63...Kg3, White is just in time to stop the f-pawn: 64. Kd5 f3 65. Ke4 f2 66. Ke3.

**64.Kd5 g4** (64...Kg3 65. Ke4) **65.Ke4!**

Of course not 65. Rxf4? g3 =.

**65...f3**



W?

**66.Ke3?**

A rather subtle error, allowing Black to escape. The key to this position is the need to prevent Black's king from getting to g2. The way to do that is by the fine prophylactic move 66. Rf4!!, and the rest is not too complicated: 66...f2 (on

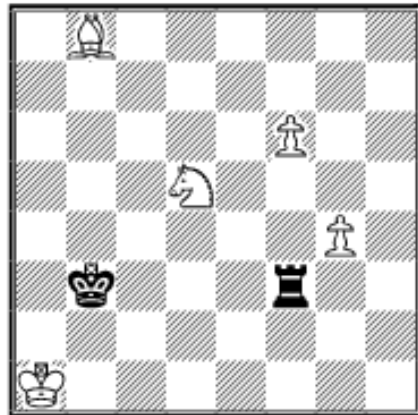
66...Kg3 or 66...Kh4, 67. Ke3 decides) 67. Rxf2 g3 68. Rf8 g2 69. Kf3 g1N+ 70. Kf2 Kh2 71. Rh8+ Nh3+ 72. Kf3+-.

### 66...Kg2! 67.Rf4 Kg3?

Just as in our previous example, the opponent returns the favor and loses a drawn position. After 67...g3! 68. Rxf3 Kh2 69. Rf8 g2 70. Rh8+ Kg1! 71. Kf3 Kf1 72. Ra8 g1N+, there is no win, since the knight does not appear on the corner square.

**68.Ra4** Black resigned.

### *P.Benko, 1988*



W

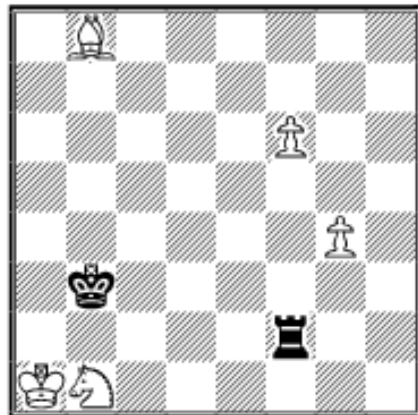
For the rook White has, not just two pawns, but two minor pieces as well. His king is, however, so dangerously situated in the corner of the board that he will have to give up both his pieces to avoid mate.

**1.Nc3! Rf1+**

Other moves are harmless. For example:

1...Rxc3 2. Kb1; 1...Kxc3 2. Ka2 (or 2. Kb1); 1...Rxf6 2. Be5.

**2.Nb1 Rf2!** (see next diagram)



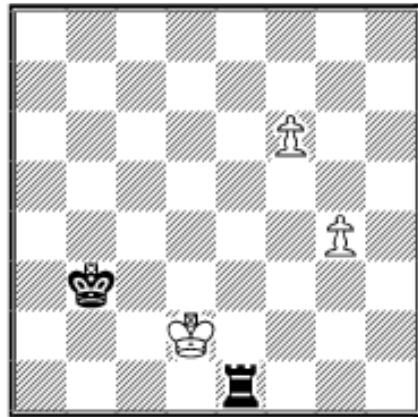
W?

The first two moves went without much thought, being forced. But now, it's time to stop and calculate carefully, because we have a choice between returning the knight to c3 or playing 3. Na3. Try to find the right solution yourself.

First, let's look at 3. Nc3?! (psychologically, it's understandable that you would want to return to a move that has already proved successful). But after Black has improved his rook's position to f2, he can go ahead and take the knight: 3...Kxc3. He's threatening 4...Kb3; White can't play 4. Kb1, because of 4...Rb2+ and

5...Rxb8. On 4. Ba7 Re2 5. Kb1 Rb2+ 6. Ka1 (6. Kc1 Ra2+) 6...Rb5 is decisive, threatening not only a check at a5, but also 7...Kc2.

The only other move to try is 4. Bg3 Rf3 (4...Rg2 is just as good) 5. Be1+ Kb3 6. Kb1 Rf1 7. Kc1 Rxe1+ 8. Kd2



B

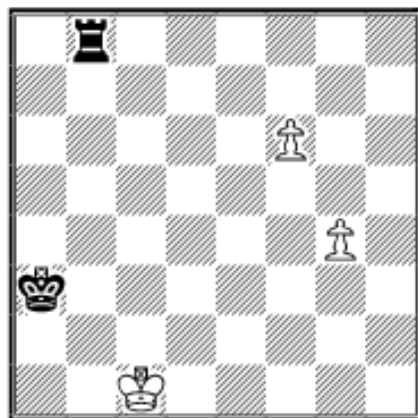
8...Rf1! (as usual, the rook goes behind the farthest-advanced pawn) 9. Kd3!?

“Shouldering aside” the Black king. The primitive 9. g5 Kc4 10. Ke3 Kd5 loses without a struggle. Now Black must resist temptation, as taking the pawn leads only to a draw: 9...Rxf6? 10. Ke4 Kc4 11. g5 Rf1 12. Ke5 Rg1 13. Kf6 Kd5 14. g6 =.

So instead he plays 9...Kb4! If 10. Kd4, now he can go ahead and take the pawn: 10...Rxf6 11. Ke5 Rg6 (11...Ra6 12. g5 Kc5 13. Kf5 Kd6 wins, too) 12. Kf5 Rg8 13. g5 Kc5 14. g6 Kd6 15. Kf6 Rf8+.

10. Ke4 is no help either: 10...Kc5! 11. Ke5 Re1+ 12. Kf5 Kd6 13. g5 Rf1+ (or 13...Kd7 right away) 14. Kg6 Rg1! (14...Ke6? would be a mistake: 15. Kg7 Rf2 16. g6! Rxf6 17. Kh7 Rf1 18. g7 Rh1+ 19. Kg8 =) 15. Kf5 Kd7 16. g6 Ke8, and the pawns are stopped.

**3.Na3!! Kxa3 (3...Rxf6 4. Be5 =) 4.Kb1 Rb2+ 5.Kc1 Rxb8**



W

**6.g5 Rf8 (7. g6 was the threat) 7.Kd2! Kb4 8.Ke3 Kc5 9.Kf4 Kd6**

Once again, things look bad for White. After 10. Kf5 Ra8, he loses after either 11. g6 Ra5+ 12. Kg4 Ke6, or 11. Kg6 Ke6 12. Kg7 Ra7+ 13. Kg6 Rb7 (or 13...Ra5 14. Kh6 Kf7) 14. Kh6 Kf5. Unexpectedly, however, he has a pawn sacrifice.

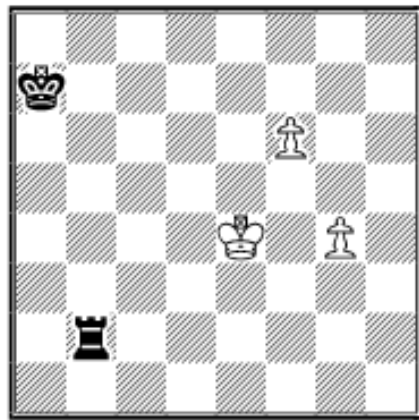
**10.g6!! Ke6**

On 10...Rxf6+ 11. Kg5 Rf1 12. g7 Ke7 13. g8N+! the draw is obvious.

**11.Kg5 Ra8 12.f7 Ke7 13.Kh6 Kf6 (13...Kf8 14. Kh7 Rb8 15. Kh8! also leads nowhere) 14.Kh7 Rb8 15.f8Q+! Rxf8 16.g7 Rf7 17.Kh8 Rxf7**, when this engrossing struggle ends in stalemate.



In all the examples we have looked at, the rook was stronger than the pawns, and the side with the material advantage was playing to win. But the opposite situation also happens frequently. If the pawns are far advanced, and the enemy king stands far away, the side with the rook is the one that has to work to save itself. Sometimes, achieving the draw requires unremitting accuracy and resourcefulness; even then, sometimes, the draw is unattainable.



B?

This position came up during my analysis of one of the episodes of that grandiose struggle, Em. Lasker - Ed. Lasker, written up in the long article *Historical Serial*, which is still available in the [ChessCafe Archives](#).

Black's chief worry is the advance of the g-pawn. For example: 84...Kb6? 85. g5 Rf2 86. Ke5 Kc7 87. g6+-, or 84...Rg2? 85. g5! Rxf2 86. f7 Rg4+ 87. Ke3 Rg3+ 88. Kf2+-. So how is he to meet this threat?

**84...Re2+!!**

A paradoxical move: Black drives the king forward, where one would have thought him most willing to go.

**85.Kf5**

On 85. Kf3 Black continues 85...Re1 86. g5 Kb6.

**85...Rf2+ 86.Kg6**

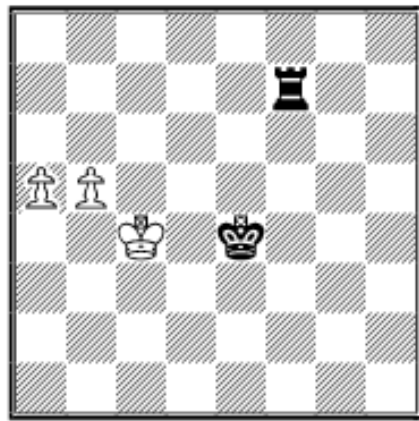
If 86. Ke6 Re2+!, and White can't continue 87. Kf7, because of 87...Rg2.

**86...Kb6**

Only now, when the White king is under the feet of the g-pawn, is it the right moment to bring up the king.

**87.f7 Kc6 88.Kg7 Kd6 89.f8Q+ Rxf8 90.Kxf8 Ke5 =**

*H.Keidanz, 1915*



W?

An old study, but still just as instructive as ever. Play it out (just as with the Ovetchkin - Selin endgame) for the White side.

### 1.b6!

1. a6? Rc7+ 2. Kb4 Kd5! 3. b6 Kc6 leads to a draw. And 1. Kc5? runs into 1...Rf5+.

### 1...Rf1!

The standard defensive plan: the rook goes behind the White pawns.

### 2.a6!

2. b7? Rc1+! 3. Kb5 Kd5 4. Kb6 Rb1+ 5. Kc7 Rc1+ 6. Kd7 (6. Kd8 Rb1 7. a6 Kc6 8. Kc8 Rh1 =) 6...Rb1 7. a6 Rb6! 8. Kc7 Rc6+ forfeits the win. By the way, the same endgame also occurred in the game Smagin - Bronstein, replayed in my book, *School of Chess Excellence I - Endgame Analysis*.

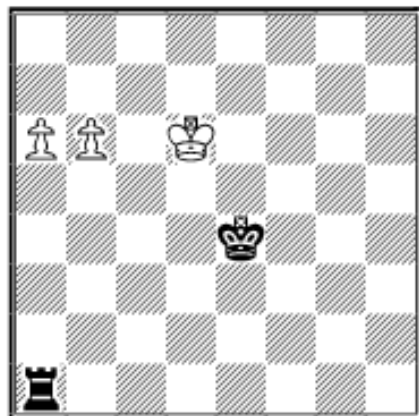
### 2...Rc1+ 3.Kb4!

The risk of error dogs White at every turn. On 3. Kb5? Black replies 3...Kd5! 4. a7 (4. b7? would even lose: 4...Rb1+ 5. Ka5 Kc6) 4...Rb1+ 5. Ka6 Kc5 (or 5...Ra1+ 6. Kb7 Kc5). Black's king successfully "grabs onto the tail" – attaches itself to the rear White pawn, while the rook restrains the forward one; this strategy guarantees the draw in such cases.

### 3...Rb1+

On 3...Kd4, White has to choose which pawn to push. The right one is 4. a7! Rb1+ 5. Ka3! Kc3 6. Ka2 Rb2+ 7. Ka1+-. But 4. b7? would let Black draw: 4...Rb1+ 5. Ka3 Kc3 6. Ka2 Rb6! 7. a7 Ra6+ 8. Kb1 Rb6+ 9. Kc1 Rh6! (typical pursuit of a king stuck at the edge of the board) 10. Kd1 Kd3 11. Ke1 Ke3 12. Kf1 Kf3 13. Kg1 Rg6+.

### 4.Kc5 Rc1+ 5.Kd6 Ra1



W?

**6.a7**

6. b7? Rxa6+ 7. Kc5, in hopes of “riding the escalator” to c3 and b2 — as in: 84...Rg2? 85. g5! in our previous example, would be a mistake: after 7...Ra5+ 8. Kc4, Black has the strong reply 8...Ra1!

**6...Kd4 7.Ke6!**

White’s task is to prepare b6-b7. Right now, this move fails: 7. b7? Ra6+. And 7. Kc7? Kc5 also leads to a draw — once again, the king “grabs onto the tail” of the White pawns. And on 7. Kc6?! Kc4, the best White can do is to return to the previous position: 8. Kd6! Kd4.

**7...Ke4 (7...Ra6 8. Kf5!; 7...Re1+ 8. Kd7) 8.Kd7**

Now it’s possible to make headway — although, in my opinion, it wouldn’t hurt to temporize a little while longer: 8. Kf6!? Kf4 9. Ke7 Ke5 10. Kd8.

**8...Kd5 9.Kc8! Kc6 10.b7 Rh1 10.b8N+! Kd6 12.a8Q**

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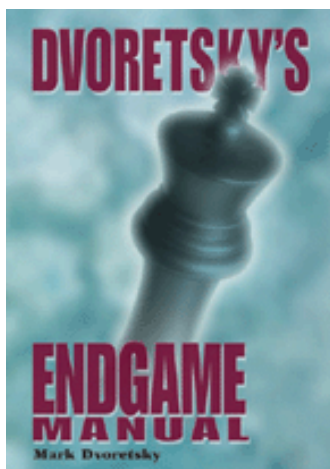
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## COLUMNISTS

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



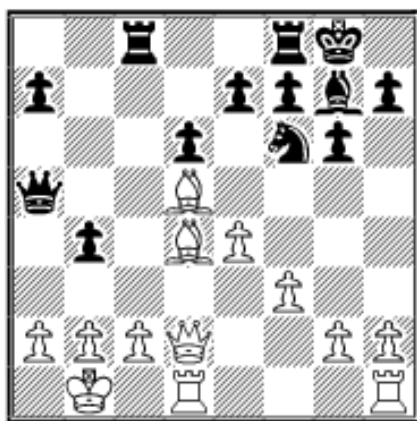
## The Advance of the Rook Pawns

There are many cases in which the advance of a rook pawn is unquestionably the obvious plan to choose. I shall quote only a couple of standard situations.

### *Fischer – Larsen*

Portoroz izt 1958

(Notes by Robert Fischer *in italics*)



**16. Bd5-b3!**

*He won't get a second chance to snap off the bishop! Now I felt the game was in the bag if I didn't botch it. I'd won dozens of skittles games in analogous positions and had it down to a science: pry open the KR-file, sac, sac...mate!*

**16...Rc8-c7**

Black has to lose a tempo: 16...Qb5? 17.

Bxa7.

**17. h2-h4 Qa5-b5**

17...h5 18. g4! hg 19. h5! gh 20. fg Nxe4 21. Qe3 continues the attack.

**18. h4-h5! Rf8-c8**

18...gh 19. g4! hg 20. fg Nxe4 21. Qh2 Ng5 22. Bxg7 Kxg7 23. Rd5 wins.

**19. h5xg6 h7xg6 20. g2-g4 a7-a5 21. g4-g5 Nf6-h5**

21...a4 22. gf ab 23. fg bc+ 24. Qxc2! e5 25. Qh2 wins.

21...Ne8 22. Bxg7 Nxg7 23. Rh6! wins.

**22. Rh1xh5!**

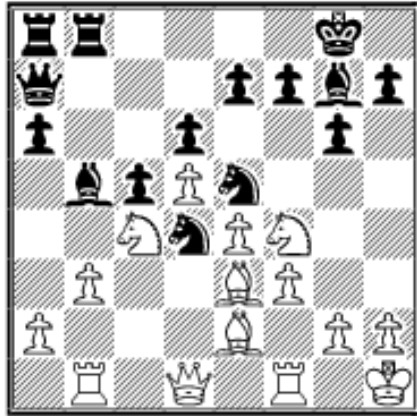
*Fine wrote: "In such positions, combinations are as natural as a baby's smile."*

**22...g6xh5 23. g5-g6**

And Black was soon mated.

***Sliwa – Petrosian***

Goteborg izt 1955



Black should not permit simplification by 23. Bxd4 cd 24. Nxe5.

Exchanging on c4 – 22...Bxc4? costs Black the greater part of his advantage: 23. Bxc4 Nxc4 24. bc Rxb1 25. Qxb1 Rb8 26. Qc1 and 27. Nd3, with only a slight edge to Black.

**22...Nd4xe2! 23. Qd1xe2 a6-a5!**

The a5-a4 plan, weakening the enemy's pawn structure, is standard in this setup. Besides,

Black's last move also created a still more dangerous threat: 24...Qa6, when White will have a hard time holding c4.

**24. Rf1-c1 Qa7-a6 25. Qe2-c2 Bb5xc4 26. b3xc4 Rb8xb1 (26...Rb4!?) 27. Rf1xb1 Ne5xc4 28. Be3-c1 a5-a4**

This typical push of the pawn to a3 restricts the opponent, fixes the weakness at a2, and prepares for the invasion of one of Black's pieces at b2.

**29. h2-h3 a4-a3 30. Nf4-d3 h7-h5!**

A timely pawn move, this one on the opposite flank. The hasty 30...Nb2?! 31. Nxb2 would have forced Black to sacrifice queen for rook, bishop and pawn in one of two ways: 31...ab 32. Bxb2 Qxa2 33. Ra1 Qxa1+, or 31...Qf1+ 32. Kh2 Be5+ 33. f4 ab 34. Be3! Bxf4+ 35. g3 Qxb1 36. Qxb1 Bxe3 37. Qxb2 Bd4 – neither of which is sufficiently convincing.

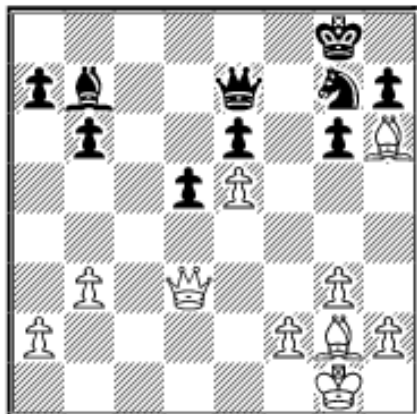
**31. Rb1-b3 Nc4-b2 32. Nd3xb2 Qa6-f1+ 33. Kh1-h2 a3xb2 34. Bc1xb2 Ra8xa2 35. Rb3-b8+ Kg8-h7 36. e4-e5 Ra2xb2** White resigned. Of course not 36...Bxe5?? 37. Bxe5 and wins.

One may find excellent examples of less obvious solutions involving rook-pawn advances in the games of Bent Larsen. The analysis of the next few examples is based on his comments (*in italics*).

*Polugaevsky has written that I like to push my rook pawns, Gligoric has stated that there are more flank attacks in my games than in those of other contemporary masters. There is probably some truth in this. One charming characteristic of many flank attacks I could mention is that they do not very often lead to simplification: if the attack is parried, there usually are still opportunities*

*left for initiating action in another sector.*

**Larsen – Stahlberg**  
Copenhagen 1958



**28. h2-h4!**

*Almost certainly the best move. The king gets a flight square, and against 28...Nf5 the answer Bg5 is made possible. Later this pawn may be used as a battering ram. It was tempting to play 28. g4 to take the black knight's only good square, but the reply 28...Qh4 is strong.*

**28...Qe7-c7?**

*This was a move I had looked at before playing 28. h4, and I had a strong reply ready. Black ought to have tried 28...Nf5, when his position would not have been absolutely hopeless, although the weak black squares around his king might cause him a lot of trouble.*

**29. Qd3-b5! d5-d4**

*After more than a quarter of an hour a desperate move; now each of us had seven minutes for eleven moves.*

*Two nice variations with a small but important difference: 29...Qc6 30. Qb4 Qc5 31. Qa4, or 29...a6 30. Qb4 Qc5 31. Qxc5! bc 32. Be3!, winning a pawn, because the black a6-pawn falls after 32...d4 33. Bxb7. If the white queen cannot be driven away from the diagonals a4-e8 and a3-f8 Black will be completely paralyzed and White can quietly prepare decisive operations.*

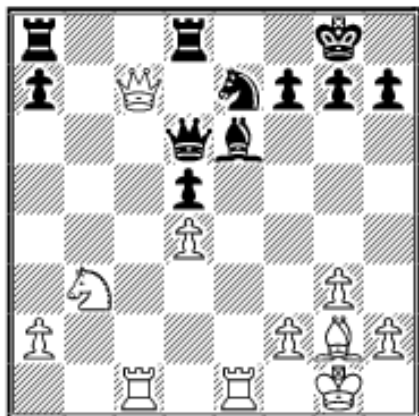
**30. Bg2xb7 Qc7xb7 31. Qb5-b4 Qb7-e4**

*Here Stahlberg consumed a good deal of the time left on his clock, for now he discovered what he had overlooked two moves earlier: 31...Qd7 is answered by 32. Qd6!*

*The queen ending after 31...Qc8 32. Bxg7 is a difficult one for White to win; but 32. g4! is a killer, for instance: 32...Qc5 33. Qxc5 bc 34. Bc1!, winning the black c5-pawn.*

**32. Qd6 Qe1+ 33. Kg2 Qe4+ 34. Kh2 Qf5 35. Qd8+ Qf8 36. Qxf8+ Kxf8 37. Kg2 Kf7 38. Bxg7 Kxg7 39. Kf3 g5 40. hg Kg6 41. Ke4 Kxg5**, and Black resigned.

**Larsen – Donner**  
Zurich 1959

**25. h2-h4!**

*A useful move. See, for instance, the variation 25...Qxc7 26. Rxc7 Nf5 27. Bh3 Nxd4 28. Nxd4 Bxh3 29. Ree7. Here it is important that the White king has the h2-square, otherwise 29...Re8 will probably draw. As it is, White gets very good winning chances after 29...Rf8 30. Rxa7 or 30. Kh2 Bc8 31. Rxa7.*

**25...Kg8-f8 26. Qc7-c3**

*Suddenly White does not want to exchange queens. Instead, he wants to play N c5, with the threat of Nb7, and he thinks that the black king is exposed on f8.*

**26...Be6-f5 27. Nb3-c5 Rd8-b8**

*On 27...Rdc8, White's reply would have been the same, only stronger. 27...Rab8 deserved attention, and if 28. Qa3, then 28...Nc6. White would have continued 28. Qf3, or 28. Re5 f6 29. Re3. In either case, Black's position remains difficult.*

**28. Qc3-f3!**

Here, Larsen examines the following variations:

28...Bd7 29. Qh5 h6 30. Qe5! Rb6 31. Nxd7+ Qxd7 32. Rc7 wins;  
 28...Bc8 29. Qh5 h6 (29...Kg8 30. Qe5) 30. Rxe7 Qxe7 31. Bxd5 wins;  
 28...Bg6 29. h5 wins; or 29. Ne6+ Kg8 30. Nc7 wins (there is also 29. Re6! Qd8 30. Rxg6, winning);

*The best defense, or at least the defense that conserves the equilibrium for some time, is 28...g6!?!; but after 29. g4 Bc8 30. Re5, the doubling of rooks on the e-file is a powerful threat, for instance: 30...a5 31. Rce1 Ra7 32. Qe3 (32. Qf4!? Kg7 33. Qe3 wins) 32...Bxg4 33. Qh6+ Kg8 34. Bxd5, with a winning attack.*

*Less clear is 29. Qe3? because of 29...Nc6! – but not 29...Re8 30. Qh6+ Kg8 31. Re5, as given in the tournament book: then White wins rather easily, for instance, 31...f6 32. Re3 Nc6 33. Qf4.*

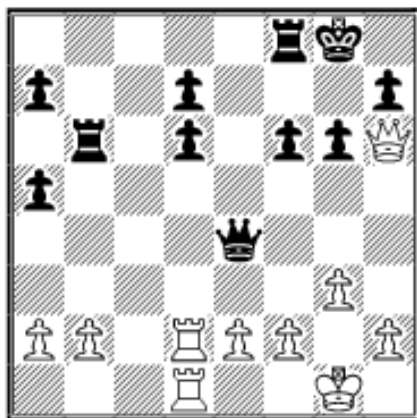
But in fact, this variation needs to be extended: 33...Qxf4 34. Bxd5+ Kf8 35. gf Nxd4 36. Bxa8 Rxe3 37. fe Ne2+ 38. Kf2 Nxc1 39. e4 Bg4. White has the advantage – more active pieces, and the knight on c1 is in trouble – but it's not clear if it's enough to win: material is still even.

*However, Donner succumbs to the pressure at once.*

**28...Rb8-b4? 29. Re1xe7 Qd6xe7 30. Qf3xf5 Kf8-g8 31. Nc5-b3** Black resigned.

**Larsen – Gheorghiu**

Monaco 1968

**23. h2-h4!**

*The threats on the d-file are combined with some stirring on the kingside. Moreover, in case there should be more simplification it is important for the king to have the h2-square available so that the black queen cannot give perpetual checks on b1 and e4.*

*My opponent was already in time-trouble.*

**23...Qe4-e5**

23...Rfb8 would not have eased Black's position after 24. b3 (24. h5 Rxb2 25. hg Qxg6 26. Qf4 Rxd2 is weaker: if now 27. Rxd2, then 27...Rb1+ 28. Kg2 Qh5) 24...a4 25. Rxd6 Rxd6 26. Rxd6 Qb1+ 27. Kh2 Qf5 28. Qe3± (Dvoretsky).

**24. b2-b3 Rf8-c8**

*Afterwards Gheorghiu was not satisfied with this move. As he had to move rather quickly, he probably overlooked the white attack which follows. As an improvement he gave 24...Rc6. Then White does not get the opportunity to start a direct attack but must play for the ending.*

*On 25. e3 Rfc8 26. Qf4 (26. Rd5 Rc1 27. Rxe5 Rxd1+ 28. Kg2 fe 29. h5 probably only draws) 26...Qxf4 27. gf Kf7 28. Rxd6 Rxd6 29. Rxd6 Ke7 30. Ra6 White wins easily, but Black can make it more difficult with 25...a4 26. ba (26. Rd5 Rc1!) 26...Rfc8 27. Qf4 Qxf4 28. gf Kf7 29. Rxd6 Rxd6 30. Rxd6 Ke7 31. Ra6. If Black now passively plays 31...Rc7, 32. Ra5 follows, and sooner or later White plays h4-h5. If Black takes on h5, he is left with a sad collection of weak pawns, and, of course, White can use the threat h5-h6 and rook maneuver Rh8. If Black plays h7-h5 himself, White smashes his pawns with f4-f5.*

*I consider this a won ending but it requires exact play.*

*Instead of 31...Rc7, Black may play 31...Rc2; but the position after 32. Rxa7 Rxa2 33. a5 is won for White. The a-pawn goes to the seventh, and if the black king stays on the kingside to protect the pawns, the white monarch goes to the queenside...*

**25. Rd2-d5!**

*If White takes time to play 25. e3 Black answers 25...Rc5!, after which it is not easy for White to break through anywhere. Among other things Black is ready to play ...Qe6 followed by ...Rh5, answering Qf4 by ...Re5. Later his king may go to e7.*

*The position is now critical in this sense, that Black gets good drawing chances if*



*White cannot strike at once. But he can!*

**25...Qe5xe2 26. h4-h5 Rc8-c2 27. Rd1-f1 Qe2-e4?**

*In time pressure and in a lost position mistakes come easily, of course, but even the stronger 27...Qe8 would be rather hopeless. After, for instance, 28. Rxa5 a6 29. hg Qxg6 30. Qh3 Rc7 31. Re1, or 29...hg 30. Ra4 (threatening Rh4, Rg4 or Kg2!), nothing can save the Black position.*

In the 29...Qxg6 30. Qh3 line, the defense may be strengthened by 30...Rbc6! 31. Qxd7 Qf7 (preparing to exchange rooks by Rc1) – here, Black has saving chances.

**28. Rd5xa5 a7-a6 29. Ra5-a4 Qe4-e8**

29...Qf5 was more stubborn (keeping the rook from g4); but after 30. Qe3! Rb8 (forced) 31. hg (31. h6!?) 31...hg 32. Rxa6, Black's in bad shape.

**30. Ra4-g4 Qe8-f8 31. Qh6-e3**

*Decisive.* However, 31. Rxg6+! hg 32. Qxg6+ Kh8 33. Qxc2 might have decided more simply.

**31...Rbc6 32. hg hg 33. Rxg6+ Kf7 34. Rg4 R2c5 35. Qd3 Re5 36. f4 Re8 37. Qd5+**

*37. Qh7+ Ke6 38. Re1+ (38. f5+! Kd5 39. Qxd7+) 38...Kd5 39. Qh5+ also wins, of course, but there is no quick mate, so I preferred to win the queen.*

**37...Ke7 38. Re1+** Black resigned, in view of 38...Kd8 39. Rxe8+ Qxe8 40. Rg8.

***Larsen – Gligoric***

Vinkovci 1970

**1. g3 g6 2. Bg2 Bg7 3. e4 c5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. 0-0 Nf6 6. d3 0-0 7. Re1 d6 8. Nbd2 Rb8 9. a4**

*Two other plans are also worth looking at here – preparing b2-b4 and preparing d3-d4. The knight's position on c4 has only esthetic value.*

**9...b6 10. Nc4 Bb7=**



*“I am going to write an article about this tournament, which will have only one diagram,” said Petrosian. Now comes the most unbelievable move of the tournament – even though it’s not a bad move!*

**11. h2-h4!?**

*A difficult decision, but quite a successful one. The point is seen in the variation 11...d5 12. ed Nxd5 13. h5. The natural move, generally speaking, would have been 11. e5,*

*with a great danger of exchanges and a draw.*

11. Bf4!?, with Qd2 to follow, was also worth consideration.

**11...Qd8-c7 12. Bc1-d2 Rb8-d8 (12...h6!?) 13. Qd1-c1 d6-d5**

And here it would have made sense to neutralize White’s planned exchange of dark-squared bishops either by 13...Nd4 13. Nxd4 cd or by 13...Nb4!?

**14. Bd2-f4! Qc7-c8 15. e4xd5 Nf6xd5 16. Bf4-h6 Rf8-e8**

*After the game, 16...f6!?* was suggested, when I would have replied 17. h5!?

**17.Bh6xg7 Kg7g7 18. h4-h5 Nd5-f6 19. h5-h6+ Kg7-g8 20. Qc1-f4 Nf6-h5**

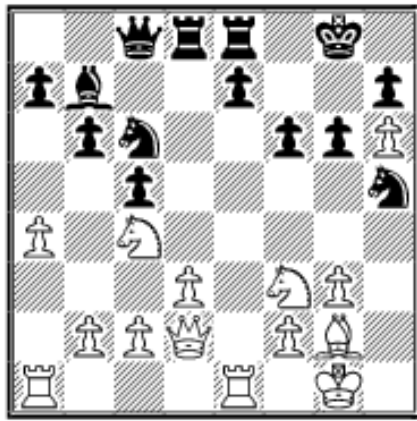
20...Nd4? is met, not by 21. Rxe7? Rxe7 22. Qxf6 Nf5 (Larsen), but by 21. Nxd4 Bxg2 22. Ne6! fe 23. Kxg2, and wins.

*20...Qg4? leads to the loss of a pawn, at least, after 21. Rxe7!*

*20...Qf5? is bad for Black, because of 21. Qxf5 gf 22. Ng5!*

Here, Larsen’s conclusion is not obvious, so we must extend the variation: 22...Ng4! 23. a5! b5. Now White gets nothing out of 24. Ne3 Nxe3 (but not 24...Nxb6? 25. Nd5) 25. fe Rd6 =. The proper line is 24. Bxc6 Bxc6 25. Ne5 Nxe5 (25...Bd5 26. c4) 26. Rxe5 Rd6 27. Rxf5 Rxh6 28. f3 Rg6 29. Rxc5±. And besides 22. Ng5, White could also gain the advantage by 22. a5!? b5 23. Nce5.

**21. Qf4-d2 f7-f6?**

**22. a4-a5!**

*At the exact moment that Black's knight occupies an unfortunate position on h5, and the setup with e7-e5 and Nc6-d4 is not yet dangerous to White, this delicate little move is especially effective.*

**22...b6-b5**

After 22...Qc7 23. ab ab, as Larsen points out, White's simplest is 24. Qc3!±. In his opinion,

24. Re6 Bc8 would be less convincing, although the continuation 25. Rxc6! Qxc6 26. Nd4 Qc7 27. Nc6 Bb7 28. Ra7 Ra8 29. Nxe7+ Qxe7 30. Rxb7 (with compensation: Dvoretsky) would grant White a most promising position.

**23. a5-a6! Bb7-a8?**

*Gligoric spent over 20 minutes on his 21st move, and then began to play quickly. I think Black's best chance would have been 23...Bxa6. After 24. Na5 Nb4 25. Nb3!, White recovers the pawn advantageously, but Black could play 24...Nb8. After 25. Qc3 e5 26. Nd2, however, Black's pieces would be badly placed, and White would have tremendous play for the pawn.*

**24. Nc4-a5 e7-e5 25. Qd2-c3! Nc6-d4 26. Na5-b7! Ba8xb7 27. a6xb7 Qc8xb7 28. Nf3xd4 c5xd4 29. Bg2xb7 d4xc3 30. b2xc3 Re8-e7 31. Ra1xa7 Kg8-f8 32. Re1-b1**

And White comes out two pawns ahead.

**32...f5 33. Rxb5 Nf6 34. Ra8 Rxa8 35. Bxa8 Ng4 36. Rb8+ Kf7**

36...Re8 37. Rxe8+ Kxe8 38. Bd5 Nxe6 39. f3 g5 40. Kf2 g4 41. f4 wins.

**37. Bd5+ Kf6 38. c4 e4!? 39. Rf8+! Ke5**

39...Kg5 40. de fe 41. c5 e3 42. fe Rxe3 43. c4 wins.

**40. de fe 41. Bxe4 Nxe6 42. Bd3 Nf7 43. Rg8 Nd6 44. Ra8 Nb7**

44...Rc7 45. Ra5+ Kf6 46. Ra6 Ke7 47. Ra4 Kf6 48. f3 Rc6 49. Kf2 h6 50. c5! Rxc5 (50...Nf7 51. Be4 Rxc5 52. Ra6+) 51. Ra6 Rd5?! 52. Be4 Rd4 53. c3 wins.

**45. Ra7 Kd6 46. f3 Nc5 47. Rxe7 Kxe7 48. Kf2 Kf6 49. Ke3 h5 50. Kd4 Ne6+ 51. Kd5 g5 52. Kd6 h4 53. gh gh 54. Bf1 Ng5 55. c5 Nf7+ 56. Kd5 Ke7 57. f4 Nh6 58. Bh3 Ng8 59. c6 Nf6+ 60. Ke5 Ne8 61. f5** Black resigned.

*Kasparov – Portisch*  
Brussels 1986

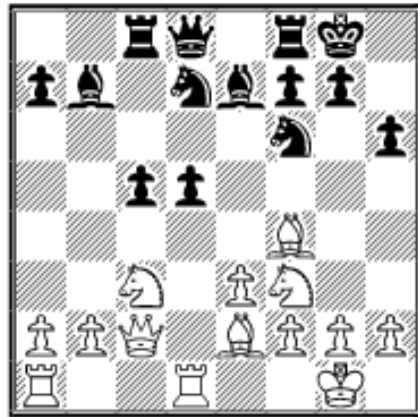
**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bg5 0-0 6. e3 Nbd7 7. Qc2 h6 8. cd!?**

The usual continuations have been 8. h4 and 8. Bh4. Now Black could have accepted the sacrificed piece; but in Lajos Portisch's opinion, that would have been too dangerous. He gives the following analysis: 8...hg 9. de fe 10. Nxc5 Nb6 11. h4! (with compensation: not 11. 0-0-0?! Nbd5, with an unclear game) 11...c5 12. h5 cd 13. h6! dc 14. Rd1 Qe8 (forced) 15. hg Kxg7 16. Rh7+ Kg8 17. Rd4! with an attack (18. Rdh4 is threatened). Of course, his line is certainly not forced; and the assessment of the concluding position is not quite clear.

**8...ed 9. Bf4!**

9. Bh4 is weaker: after 9...c6, Black will continue with Re8 and Ne4; whereas now 9..c6 would be unpleasantly met by 10. 0-0-0, followed by h2-h3 and g2-g4.

**9...c5 10. Be2 b6 11. 0-0 Bb7 12. Rfd1 Rc8 13. dc bc (13...Nxc5 14. Qf5+)**



**14. a2-a4!!**

A non-traditional way of treating the hanging-pawns position. White plans to push this pawn to a5, depriving the enemy knight and queen of the important b6 square. On 14...a5!?, he obtains the b5 square for all eternity.

**14...Qd8-a5?**

On the surface, a completely logical attempt to block White's stratagem; but it holds one little hidden flaw: for just a moment, the bishop on e7 is left unprotected. Garri Kasparov immediately exploits this circumstance, opening active operations on the opposite side of the board.

**15. Nf3-h4!**

A move earlier, this move was not playable, because of the reply g7-g5. But now, Black can't play 15...g5? because of 16. Nf5. So the knight moves unstoppably into the threatening f5-square.

**15...Rf8-d8 16. Nh4-f5 Be7-f8 17. Nc3-b5**

Another weakness, the d6-square – and this one in the very center of the board. How does Black defend against the threatened knight incursion? On 17...Ba8, the reply 18. Qc3!, underscoring the vulnerability of the a7-pawn, is very unpleasant.

**17...Nf6-e8 18. Bf4-d6! Ne8xd6**

This leads to the loss of a pawn, but a satisfactory defense is no longer to be

found:

18...Nef6 19. Ne7+ Bxe7 20. Bxe7 Re8 21. Bxf6 Nxf6 22. Nd6, when White wins the exchange;

18...Ndf6 19. Ne7+ Bxe7 20. Bxe7 Rd7 21. Bxc5 a6 22. b4! Qxb4 23. Bxb4 Rxc2 24. Nd4, with an overwhelming advantage in position.

**19. Nf5xd6 Rc8-b8 20. Nd6xb7 Rb8xb7 21. Rd1xd5 Rd8-b8**

It looks as though Black has stirred up some counterplay on the b-file, with his threat of 21...a6; however, the exchange of queens which follows dispels all illusions.

**22. Qc2-d2! Qa5xd2 23. Rd5xd2**

Now after 23...a6 24. Nc3 (or a3), the pawn at a6 is hanging.

**23...Nf6 24. Ra2 Ne4 25. Rc2 Rd7 26. g3 a5**

On 26...Rbd8 White plays 27. a5, intending to continue 28. a6, without fear of 27...Rd2 28. b3.

**27. Kg2 g6 28. Bf3 Nf6 29. Na3 Bd6**

Otherwise after 30. Nc4 the a5-pawn would have to be defended by a rook.

**30. Bc6 Rdd8 31. Ra1 Be5 32. Bb5 Nd5 33. Rb1 Bd6 34. Rd2**

It's tempting to insert 34. Nc4 Bc7 (as otherwise, Black plays 34..Nb6, taking c4 under control). However, White would then always have to be considering Nb6, meeting Nxa5 with Nxa4; additionally, the White knight's position on c4 keeps the White rook from attacking the c5-pawn. Kasparov selects a different plan of attacking the weak pawn.

**34...Nb6 35. Rc1!**

35. Rbd1?! Be7 was very much inferior – considering the opposite-colored bishops, White should avoid simplification on principle.

**35...Be7 36. Re2! Rbc8 37. Nb1 Kg7 38. Nd2 Ra8 39. Nb3 Rdc8 40. Rec2 c4** (40...Ra7 41. Nxc5 Rac7 42. Ne6+) **41. Nd2**

Now a second pawn drops by force. The rest is a matter of uncomplicated technique.

**41...Ra7 42. Nxc4 Nxc4 43. Rxc4 Rxc4 44. Rxc4** (threatening a pawn roller by e3-e4, f2-f4 and e4-e5) **44...f5 45. h3! h5 46. g4 hg 47. hg fg 48. Kg3 Bd6+ 49. Kxg4 Rc7 50. Bc6 Rf7** (50...Kf6 51. f4 intending e4-e5 and Kf3-e4-d5) **51. f4**

**Kh6 52. Bd5 Rf6 53. Rc1 Kg7 54. b3 Rf8 55. Rd1 Bc5 56. Rd3 Ba3 57. Bc4 Bc1 58. Rd7+ Kh6 59. Re7 Bd2 60. Kf3 Bb4 (60...g5 61. Re6+ Kg7 62. Ke2) 61. Rb7 (threatening 62. Rxb4 ab 63. a5) 61...Bc3 62. Bd3 Rf6 63. Kg4 Bd2 64. f5!** Black resigned, in view of 64...Bxe3 65. fg Rf4+ 66. Kg3, followed by 67. Rh7+ and 68. g7.

### *Lopez Martinez – Khenkin*

Andorra 2001

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c6 4. Bg5 f6 5. Bd2 Bd6**

After 5...dc 6. e4 (or 6. Qc2) White has excellent compensation for the pawn.

**6. Qb3 Qe7 7. g3 Nd7**

Worth considering was 7...dc!? 8. Qxc4 e5!? 9. de fe 10. Bg2 Nf6 11. 0-0 Be6. For an isolated e-pawn, Black obtains rapid development.

**8. Nc3** (threatening 9. e4) **8...f5 9. Bf4 Bxf4 10. gf Ngf6 11. e3 Ne4**



**12. h2-h4!**

A good plan. White will push this pawn to h5 (or even h6), to restrict the enemy kingside.

**12...0-0 13. h4-h5 Rf8-f6**

Igor Khenkin decided against 13...b6, fearing that after 14. h6 g6 15. Nxe4 fe 16. Ng5 the e6-pawn would be weak.

**14. Bf1-e2 Ra8-b8 15. Nf3-e5 Nd7xe5 16. f4xe5 Rf6-f7 17. f2-f4! Ne4-g3**

On 17...b6, 18. Nxe4 fe 19. Rc1± is strong.

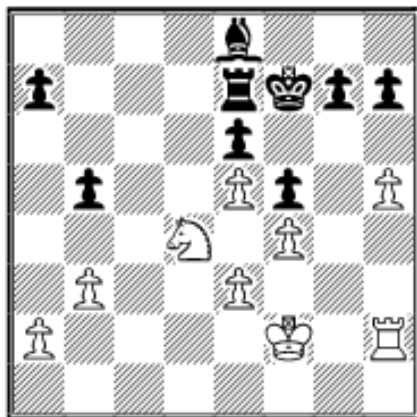
**18. Rh1-h2 Ng3xe2 19. Nc3xe2 d5xc4?!**

19...b6 20. Qa4! was better, keeping White's advantage to a minimum.

**20. Qb3xc4 Bc8-d7 21. Qc4-c5! Qe7xc5 22. d4xc5**

In the endgame, White has the advantage, because in a closed position, the knight is stronger than the bishop.

**22...b7-b6 23. Ra1-c1 b6xc5 24. b2-b3 Bd7-e8 25. Rc1xc5 Rb8-b5 26. Rc5xb5 c6xb5 27. Ne2-d4 Rf7-e7 28. Ke1-f2 Kg8-f7**



### 29. Rh2-g2?

A serious technical error; White wanted to prevent 29...Rc7 (by the threat of 30. Rxg7+!); but he had a number of more pressing problems. He had to place the h-pawn on a dark square – and the b3-pawn as well, at the first opportunity. He would have had a decisive superiority after 29. h6! g6 30. Kg3 Rc7 31. Nf3! Kg8 32. Ng5 Bd7 (32...b4 33. Nxe6 Rc3 34. Rd2! Rxe3+ 35. Kf2 Rc3 36. Rd8 Kf7 37. Ng5+ Ke7 38. Rb8 wins) 33.

b4!, followed by 34. Rd2, winning.

### 29...h7-h6!

Now, one of White's pieces will always have to defend the h5-pawn.

### 30. Rg2-g6 b5-b4!

Black has now managed to improve the queenside pawn structure as well.

### 31. Kf2-g3

This completely kicks away his advantage. He had to try to create a central passed pawn by 31. e4! fe 32. Ke3, followed by 33. Kxe4 and 34. f5.

### 31...Be8-d7 32. Kg3-h4 Re7-e8 33. Rg6-g2 Re8-c8 34. Rg2-d2 Kf7-e7

Black's position has improved to such a degree that White no longer has anything to work with.

**35. Rg2 Kf7 36. Rd2 Ke7 37. Rg2 Kf7 38. Rd2 Be8 39. Ne2 Ke7 40. Rd6 Rc6 41. Rd2 a5 42. Rb2 Rc7 43. Rd2 Bd7 44. Kg3 Rc5 45. Kh4 Be8 46. Rd6 Bc6**  
Drawn.

*Anand – Sadler*

Tilburg 1998

(Based on the notes of Matthew Sadler, *in italics*)

**1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3. d2-d4 c5xd4 4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5. Nb1-c3 a7-a6 6. Bc1-e3 e7-e5 7. Nd4-b3 Bc8-e6 8. f2-f3 Bf8-e7 9. Qd1-d2**



### 9...h7-h5!

*A fantastic move! I believe that Sakaev was the first to try this idea, though I should also mention that a young English IM named Richard Bates is claiming authorship of this move. After a lifetime of trying to make ...h6 work after g4, I can't tell you what a relief it is just to stop the g-pawn from moving there!*

At the moment when Sadler was writing his commentary, the move 9...h5!? was just

beginning to come into fashion. Since that time a lot of games have now been played with the move. Not being an openings expert (still less in the Sicilian), I am unfamiliar with the details of the verdict contemporary theory offers on this variation. Judging from the information I get from one of my students – a strong grandmaster – it's still playable.

### 10. 0-0-0 Nb8-d7 11. g2-g3

*This flexible move is a novelty in this position. As well as supporting a future f3-f4, it also opens a path to the h3 square for the light-squared bishop.*

### 11...Ra8-c8 (11...b5!?) 12. Nc3-d5



### 12...Be6xd5!?

*Against Leko in Round 3 in a similar position, I had continued with the other plan 12...Nxd5 13. ed Bf5. However, the point of Anand's move order is that after 14. Bd3 Bxd3 15. Qxd3 Bg5 can be met simply by 16. f4! Therefore, I opted for Svidler's plan.*

### 13. e4xd5 Nd7-b6 14. Be3xb6 Qd8xb6 15. Bf1-h3 Rc8-c7!

*In his game against Shirov at Linares 1998, Svidler had opted for a plan with ...Ra8 and ...a5. Though Shirov had decorated this idea with an exclamation mark in his annotations, I didn't really feel that it made the most of Black's position. I liked the rook on c7: while defending the bishop on e7, it is ready to activate itself via c4 when required.*

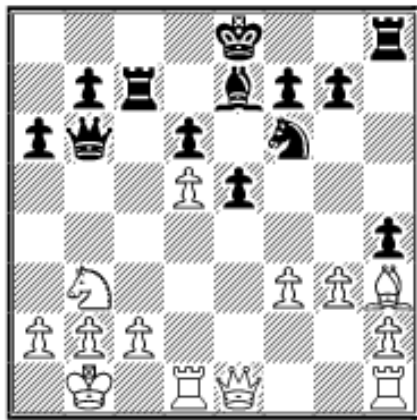
### 16. Kc1-b1 h5-h4!

*This point of contact is surprisingly annoying for White who cannot move his rook from h1.*

### 17. Qd2-e1



17. f4? Ne4 18. Qe1 Nf2 19. Qg1 e4! and 20...e3 wins.



*Here I started to spend oceans of time; but this time, I really got into the position. White's only clear goal is to play f4 and clear the black pawn from e5. This will allow him to activate his knight on b3 via d4 when Black's kingside light squares will become rather sensitive. Whilst considering the ways to prevent f4 altogether, it suddenly struck me how weak White's pawns would become after f4 ef; gf, and how badly developed White was to defend his weak pawns on d5 and f4: his bishop should be on g2, not h3; and his queen has no role on e1. I therefore came up with a quite precise method of exploiting White's positional play. It took me so long to play because I knew that if it all went wrong, I would look like a complete idiot!*

*has no role on e1. I therefore came up with a quite precise method of exploiting White's positional play. It took me so long to play because I knew that if it all went wrong, I would look like a complete idiot!*

**17...Ke8-f8! 18. f3-f4 e5xf4 19. g3xf4 Rh8-h5! 20. Bh3-g2 Rc7-c4! 21. Rh1-f1 Rh5-f5 22. Qe1xh4 Nf6-h5 23. Qh4-h3 g7-g6**

*The f4 pawn is lost, and Black has a gorgeous position that is almost completely invulnerable.*

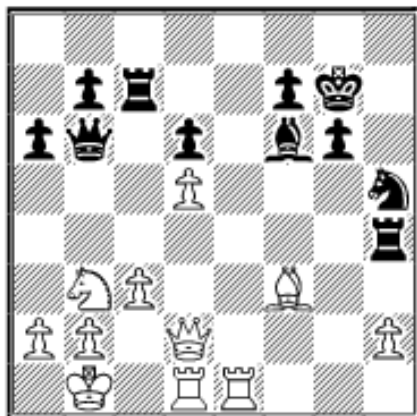
**24. Rf1-e1 Be7-f6**

Here White must be thinking about a6-a5-a4.

**25. Bg2-e4 Rf5xf4 26. Qh3-d3 Rc4-c7 27. Be4-f3**

27. Bxg6 fg 28. Qxg6 Ng7 wins.

**27...Rf4-h4 28. Qd3-d2 Kf8-g7 29. c2-c3**



**29...Bf6-e5??**

*I didn't have much time left, but this is so careless. I wasn't thinking of any danger whatsoever. 29...Rcc4! would have left Black in complete control.*

**30. Re1xe5!**

*Vishy played this almost before the bishop had left my hand!*

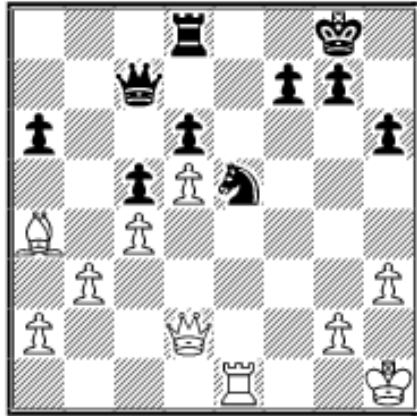
**30...d6xe5 31. d5-d6 Rc7-d7 32. Qd2-e1! (32. Qg5 Qf2!) 32...e5-e4 33. Qe1xh4 e4xf3 34. Qh4-d4+ Qb6xd4 35. Nb3xd4 f3-f2**

35...Rxd6 36. Nf5+! gf 37. Rxd6 f2 38. Rd1.

**36. Rd1-f1** = Drawn.

**Shirov – Anand**

Wijk aan Zee 1999



Black stands better. However, Viswanathan Anand overlooks a simple exchange sacrifice, completely analogous to the one he had himself played a few months earlier against Sadler.

**32...Rd8-f8? 33. Re1xe5! d6xe5 34. d5-d6 Qc7-d8 35. Qd2-d5 Qd8-g5 36. Qd5xc5 Qg5-c1+ 37. Kh1-h2 Qc1-f4+** Drawn.

Sadler played another game on the same theme, right at the end of his professional career – following this game, he moved to Holland to work for a computer company.

**Morozevich – Sadler**

Reykjavik tt 1999

(Based on notes by Sadler *in italic*)

*I felt strangely confident. “Come on Matthew,” I told myself. “You’re not as solid as you used to be, but you must have one more good game inside you.” And, amazingly enough...*

**1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3. d2-d4 c5xd4 4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5. Nb1-c3 a7-a6 6. Bc1-e3 e7-e5 7. Nd4-b3 Bc8-e6 8. f2-f3 Bf8-e7 9. Qd1-d2 h7-h5!**

*This idea of Sakaev’s is a move I’ve really grown to love...*

*By playing 8. f3, White aims to follow up with g4 and g5 forcing the knight from f6 and thus its protection of the d5 square. Once this happens, after a future Nd5, Black will not be able to force White to recapture on d5 with a pawn.*

*Some years ago, I spent a great deal of time with Joel Lautier analysing systems where Black answers g4 with ...h6, preventing g5. We were both quite successful with this, but after a bad experience against Shirov, I decided that the whole line was slightly better for White. It was then that I became attracted to Sakaev’s move. All that analysis I had done, all that suffering I had endured when White played g4: it could all have been avoided by playing ...h5!*

**10. Bf1-e2**

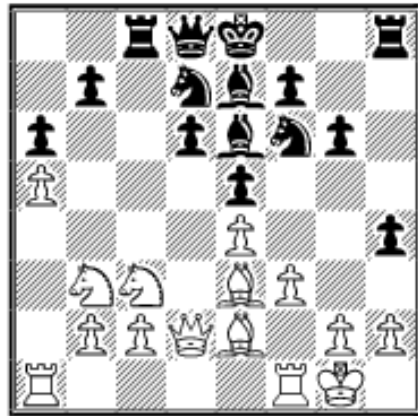
*A very sensible approach to the position. White’s quiet play leads to a set-up*

*reminiscent of the Karpov system of the 6. Be2 Najdorf – 6. Be2 e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Be3 – where Black, instead of castling, has played the rather strange ...h5.*

**10...Nb8-d7 11. 0-0 Ra8-c8 12. a2-a4 g7-g6**

Black covers the weak square f5 and prepares to walk his king to g7, leaving the rook at h8. On the other hand, 12...0-0 is also possible.

**13. a4-a5 h5-h4!**



**14. Nb3-c1!?**

*The first new move of the game. 14. Nd5 was played against me by Nijboer in Arnhem 1999. The continuation there was 14...Bxd5 15. ed Kf8 16. c4 Kg7 17. Rfd1 Nh5 18. c5!? dc 19. d6 Bf6 20. Rac1 Nf4 – unclear.*

*At the moment, there is a strange balance in the position. White has pinned down Black's queenside pawns with a4-a5, and Black has done the same with White's kingside pawns.*

*You usually try to initiate action with a pawn break, but neither side has a desirable one available.*

It appears that 14. f4!? was worth considering anyway.

*Consequently both sides must jockey for position by shuffling their pieces. With 14. Nc1, White prepares to transfer this knight to the d5 square via a2-b4-d5 or d3-b4-d5. In the immediate term, the knight cannot go via a2 due to ...Qxa5, while the ...d5 break would follow on Nd3; but if White does achieve it eventually, then Black is in big trouble.*

**14...Qd8-c7 (14...Kf8) 15. Rf1-d1**

*Aiming more firepower at the d5 square.*

**15...Ke8-f8**

*My favourite plan in this system. The rook on h8 is very handily placed, supporting the pawn on h4.*

**16. Be2-f1**

*16. Nd3 is what White wants to play, but after 16...d5! 17. ed Nxd5 18. Nxd5 Bxd5, then 19. Nxe5 fails: 19...Qxe5 leaves both White bishops hanging on the e-file (20. Bd4 Bc5). 19. Nb4 Be6 20. Nd5 Bxd5 21. Qxd5 Nf6 22. Qb3 Bc5 is very pleasant for Black. So White manoeuvres a little more and puts his bishops to*

safety.

There is an interesting pawn sacrifice here: 16. Bh6+!? Kg8 17. N1a2!? (if White transposes moves, by 16. N1a2 Qxa5 17. Bh6+, Black replies 17...Ke8!), and if 17...Qxa5, then 18. Nd5 Qd8 19. Nxe7+ Qxe7 20. Nc3, with compensation.

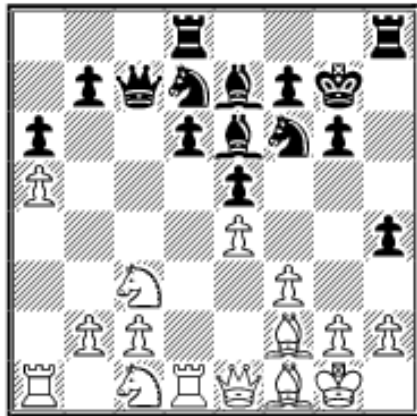
### 16...Kf8-g7 17. Be3-f2 Rc8-d8!?

In many situations it makes sense to put the rook on the same file as the enemy queen: it can neutralize, and sometimes even threaten her.

### 18. Qd2-e1

18. Nd5 Bxd5 19. ed e4 20. Re1 h3 leads to double-edged play.

*18. Nd3 d5 19. ed Nxd5 20. Nxd5 Bxd5 21. Nxe5?? can now be met by 21...Nxe5, when the bishop on d5 is protected by the rook on d8. In order to achieve Nd3 without allowing ...d5, White decided to increase his pressure on the d5 square by swapping round his queen and rook. This manoeuvre is also commonly seen in the Karpov system.*



### 18...Rd8-e8!?

The same strategy as on the previous move.

*I took quite a long time over this phase of the game. I was already starting to weigh up in my head the kind of ideas that occurred in the game. Nothing specific in terms of variations, but just in general where I thought my pieces should be when the explosion occurred. This explains my rather mysterious moves at this point.*

*It is still not yet possible for Black to force the pace: 18...Qc6 supporting the ...d5 break allows 19. N1a2! d5 20. ed Nxd5 21. Nxd5 Bxd5 22. c4! Be6 23. Nb4 Qc7 (23...Bxb4 24. Qxb4 h3 25. Rd6 Qc7 26. Rxe6!) 24. Nd5, with advantage to White.*

18...h3!? was worth considering.

### 19. Rd1-d2

*19. Bxh4 is met by 19...Nxe4! 20. Bxe7? Qc5+ 21. Kh1 Nf2+.*

### 19...Rh8-h7 (19...Rh5!?) 20. Qe1-d1 Kg7-g8!? 21. Nc1-d3

*Yet another idea borrowed from the Karpov system, but this time for Black. I first came across this idea in the game Barbulescu – DeFirmian, Dubai Olympiad 1986. Black's idea is first to free d6 so that he can point his bishop against White's king in combination with the queen on c7, and then to break with ...e4 to open the b8-h2 diagonal. White's pieces are very awkwardly placed, which adds to the strength of the idea. In my game,*

## 23. Ra1-a4

## 23...e5-e4!

## 24. Nc3xe4?!

In the Informant, Sadler analyzes this variation in greater detail: 25. e5 Ndx5 (25...Nxf2 26. Nxf2 Qxe5? 27. d6! Bg5 28. Re2 Be3 29. Nd5 wins; 25...Bg5!?) 26. Nxe5 (26. Bb6 Nxd3!) 26...Nxf2. In his opinion, Black has the initiative in the concluding position. But after 27. Rxf2 Qxe5 28. Re2, it's hardly possible to demonstrate this. An example would be: 28...Bc5+ (or 28...Qd6 29. Ne4) 29. Kh1 Qb8 30. Ne4 Bxe4 31. Rxe4 Rxe4 32. Rxe4+ (Black is hurting, not so much from being a pawn down, as from the unfortunate position of his rook on h7).

**24...Bf5xe4 25. f3xe4 Be7-d6!**

*Attacking h2 and threatening ...Nxe4.*

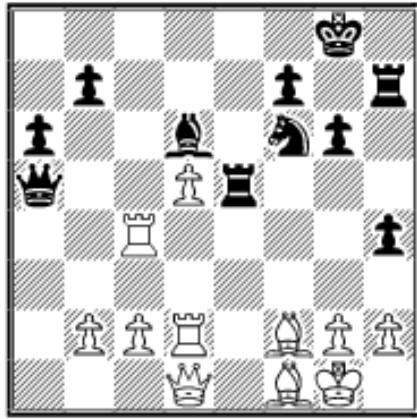
## 26. e4-e5

26. Qf3 Bxh2+ 27. Kh1 Nh5, and the rook on h7 will come in rather handy after a future ...Ng3+, Bxg3 and ...hg!

**26...Nd7xe5 27. Nd3xe5 Re8xe5 28. Ra4-c4**

*Not 28. Rxh4 Reh5! 29. Rxh5 Bxh2+!*

**28...Qc7xa5!**



*After this, I felt really confident: I'd got both my pawns back, and I was crawling all over White's kingside dark squares.*

**29. Bf2-d4 Re5-f5 (29...Rhh5!?) 30. Rc4-c8+ Kg8-g7**

*I smiled a little to myself at this point: after all my subtle manoeuvres around move 19 and 20, rearranging my king and rook, it now seems it would have been better to have kept the king on g7. I did it to avoid problems*

*along the a1-h8 diagonal when I played ...e4 (by getting the king and rook off the a1-h8 diagonal). I'm not sure that it made any difference. Perhaps you can say that it didn't do any harm, and it probably confused my opponent a bit.*

**31. c2-c3?!**

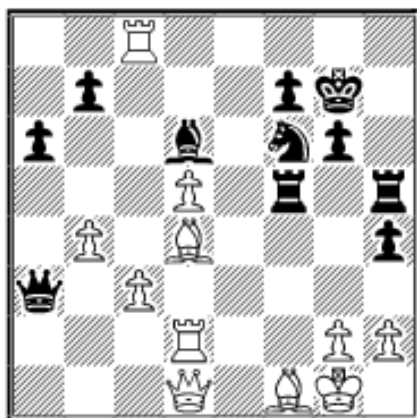
*This starts a very evil idea, which I had not seen at all when taking on a5, but it just asks too much of White's position. I think that White had to try 31. c4 and just try to push that d-pawn through with c5 and then d6.*

After 31. c4! the position would probably be assessed in White's favor.

**31...Rh7-h5!**

*The rooks are coming.*

**32. b2-b4 Qa5-a3**



**33. Bf1-c4?!**

*(Threatening 34. Ra2) Suddenly the queen is trapped – but I wasn't scared. If there's one thing I've learnt from playing blitz games against computers, it's that the queen never gets trapped.*

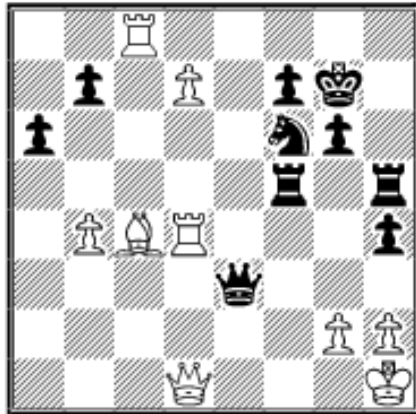
*In the Informant, Sadler examines 33. Qb1 Be5 (33...Qa4!?) 34. Bxe5 Rxe5 35. Ra2 Re1 36. Qxe1 Qxa2 37. Qe7 (here I should point out that 37. d6 h3!? 38. Qe8 Nd7!, with*

counterplay, is not dangerous to Black) 37...Ng4 38. Qf8+ Kf6 39. Qd8+ Kg7 =. However, White doesn't have to give perpetual check here, since 38. Qe2! wins. Instead of 37...Ng4? Black should play 37...Nh7 38. d6 Rf5 39. Qxh4 Qd2 40. Qd4+ Qxd4 41. cd Rd5, with just a small edge for White.

White would have done better to have given up the over-optimistic idea of catching the queen, and put his bishop on e2 or f3, where it could participate in the defense of the king: 33. Be2!? Rhg5 34. Bf3, and if 34...h3, then 35. Be3.

### 33...Rf5-f4!

The right way to attack. The tempting try at unpinning the knight by **33...Be5?** would have been justified after 34. d6?! Bxd4+ 35. Rxd4 Qxc3 36. d7 Qe3+ Kh1



– when Black creates terrible threats by 37...h3! 38.g4! Ne4! Now 39. Rg8+? Kxg8 40. d8Q+ Kh7 41. Rd2 Rf2 (or 41...Nc3, winning) 42. Qe7 Rxd2 43. Qxf7+ Kh6 wins for Black. White must first make the defensive move his game cannot live without anyway: 39. Rd2! Only then, depending on his opponent's reaction, can he choose the proper moment to give the rook check:

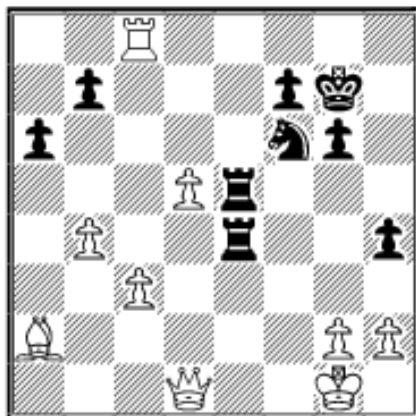
39...Nf2+ 40. Rxf2 Rxf2 41. Rg8+! Kh7 42. Rh8+, and draws;

39...Rf2 40. Qa1+! f6 41. Rg8+! Kh7 42. Rh8+ =;

39...Nc3 40. d8Q =;

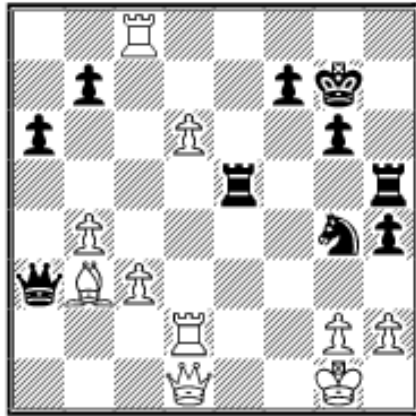
39...Nxd2 40. Rg8+ Kxg8 (40...Kh7 =) 41. d8Q+ Kh7 42. Q8xd2 Qe4+ 43. Kg1 Rhg5 42, Q2e2! is unclear.

But a much stronger choice is **34. Bxe5 Rxe5 35. Bb3**. Now he does threaten to trap the queen by 36. Ra2, while Black must also consider 36. d6. Some more curious variations arise after 35...Re4!? 36. Ra2 Qxa2 37. Bxa2 Rhe5



White gets nothing out of 38. d6?! Re1+ 39. Qxe1 Rxe1+ 40. Kf2 Rd1. On 38. Qf3?! Black plays 38...Ng4! 39. d6 Re1+ 40. Qf1 Rxf1+ 41. Kxf1 Nxe2+ 42. Kf2 Ng4+ 43. Kf3 Nh2+, and White has to take the perpetual by 44. Kf2, since 44. Kf4?? Kf6! loses. But 38. Qf1! Re1 39. d6 secures White the advantage, for example: 39...R5e2!? 40. Bxf7! Rxf1+ 41. Kxf1 Rd2 42. Rc7 Rxd6 43. Rxb7±.

Instead of 35...Re4, **35...Ng4 36. d6** (see diagram) must also be examined here.



Sadler looks at 36...Qxb3 37. d7 Qe6 38. Re8! Qb6+ 39. Rd4, and assesses the concluding position as unclear. But in fact, White wins right off: 39...Qc6 (39...Rd5 40. Qxg4 wins) 40. Rxe5 Rxe5 41. Qd2 (41. d8Q? Qxc3 wins) 41...Qe6 (or 41...h3) 42. Rxg4 and wins.

Black could also try. **36...Ne3**. Now there's only a draw after 37. d7? Nxd1 38. Rxd1 Rd5 (38...Qxb3 39. d8Q Qe6 = is possible also)

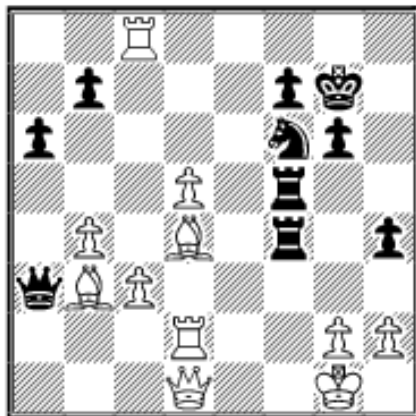
39. Bxd5 Rxd5 40. Rxd5 Qc1+ 41. Kf2 Qf4+.

But after **37. Qb1!**, Black seems unable to generate sufficient counterplay. Events might proceed as follows: 37...Rhf5! 38. Rf2! (38. d7? Qxb3 39. Qa1 Qa4) 38...Rxf2 39. Kxf2 Ng4+ 40. Kf1 Nxh2+ 41. Kg1 Ng4 (threatening 42...Qxb3!) 42. Bxf7! Kxf7 43. d7 Rd5 44. Qf1+ Nf6 45. Rf8+ Kxf8 46. Qxf6+ Kg8 47. Qxg6+ Kh8 48. Qf6+ Kg8 49. Qe6+ Kf8 50. Qxd5 Qc1+ 51. Kf2, and wins.

### 34. Bc4-b3?

Probably the decisive error. Alexander Morozevich stubbornly continues his efforts to trap the queen (the immediate 34. Ra2? is bad because of 34..Rxd4! 35. Qxd4 Qc1+ 36. Bf1 Rxd4 – Sadler). He had to return the bishop to the d1-h5 diagonal: 34. Be2! Rhf5 is still unclear.

### 34...Rh5-f5!



### 35. Bd4-f2

*It is not easy to suggest alternatives: Black is too active. For example, 35. Ra2 Qxb3 36. Qxb3 Rf1 mate.*

On 35. Bc4, Black would have decided the game by means of a spectacular combinative attack: 35...Rxd4! 36. Rxd4 Qxc3 37. Qd2 Bxh2+!! 38. Kxh2 Qg3+ 39. Kg1 h3 40. d6 h2+ (40...b5!?) 41. Kh1 Rf2 42. Qxf2 Qxf2 43. Rd1 Ne4 44. d7 Qf4! 45. Rg8+ Kxg8 46.

d8Q+ Kh7, and wins.

### 35...Nf6-e4 36. Bf2-d4+

Alas, here too, the queen cannot be caught: 36. Ra2 Nxf2 37. Qb1 Ng4 38. Rxa3 Rf1+ 39. Qxf1 Bxh2+ 40. Kh1 Rxf1 mate (Sadler).





**23...Qd7xh3 24. Be3-f4 Rc8-d8?!** And the game was drawn here.

The continuation could have been 25. Qe3 Nf3+ 26. Nxf3 ef 27. Qxf3 Qxf3 28. Bxf3 Bxf4 – unclear. 24...Bc5? doesn't work: 25. Qe3 Bf3+ 26. Bxf3 Bxd4 27. Bg2!±

DeFirmian later demonstrated a complex combination, which he believed would have led to Black's advantage: 24...Nf3+! 25. Nxf3 Qg4+ (25...ef? 26. Bxf3 wins) 26. Bg3 Bxg3 27. Ne1 Bxf2+ 28. Kxf2 Qh4+ 29. Kg1 e3 30. Qd4 Qf2+ 31. Kh1 Rxc3 32. bc Ne4 33. Ng2 Ng3+ 34. Kh2 Re4-/+.



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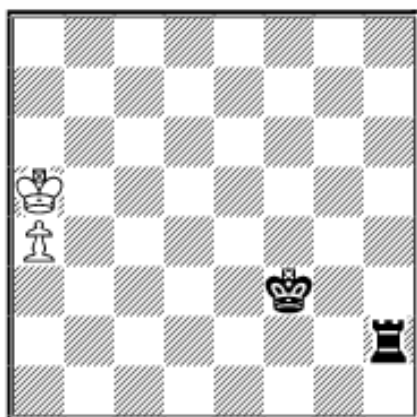
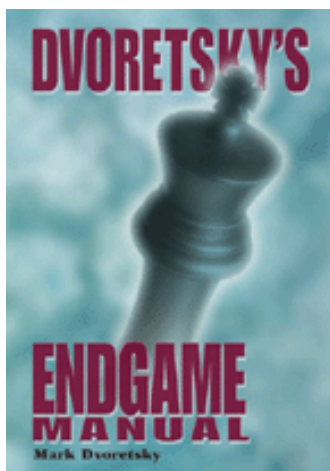


## Paradox

In an article devoted to the “Rook vs. Pawns” endgame, from the book *Technique for the Tournament Player*, by M. Dvoretsky and A. Yusupov, and also in [Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual](#), I spoke of the most important techniques used in such endgames. Let's review some of them.

### COLUMNISTS

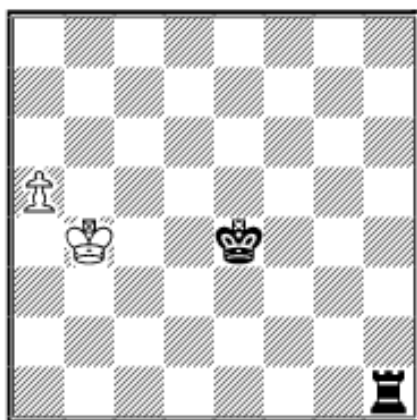
*The  
Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky



**1. Kb6!**

The white king naturally moves forward, to support the advance of its pawn. But Black manages to push it back, employing the typical technique of “*inserting a check to gain tempo.*”

**1...Rb2+! 2. Kc6 Ra2! 3. Kb5 Ke4 4. a5 Kd5 5. Kb6 Kd6 6. a6 Rb2+ and wins.**



Here both 1. Kb5? Kd5 and 1. a6? Kd5 2. Kb5 Rb1+ lose. White must make use of the “shoulder block” to prevent the approach of the enemy king.

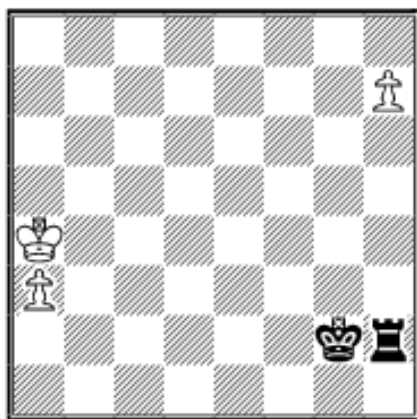
**1. Kc5! Ra1** (1...Rh5+ 2. Kb6 Kd5 3. a6 Rh6+ 4. Kb7 Kc5 5. a7 Rh7+, and now not 6. Kb8? Kb6 7. a8N+ Kc6, winning, but 6. Ka6! =, once more “shoulder blocking.”) **2. Kb6 Kd5 3. a6 Kd6 4. Kb7!** (4. a7? Rb1+ 5. Ka6 Kc7 wins) **4...Rb1+ 5. Kc8! Ra1 6. Kb7 Kd7**

**7. a7 Rb1+ 8. Ka8! =**

Ignorance – or weak assimilation – of theory is usually costly to a player. A great many examples could be presented. One such is the position in the first diagram (after 1. Kb6), which occurred, with wings reversed, in the game **Hamdouchi – Topalov** (Cap d’Agde 1994). The Bulgarian GM played **1...Ke4??**, and after **2. a5 Kd5 3. a6 Kd6 4. Kb7! Rb2+ 5. Kc8 Rc2+ 6. Kb7 Rb2+**, was forced to accept the draw.

Experienced players who are well acquainted with these techniques employ them almost automatically. But only “almost” – we must always be ready to encounter exceptions to the rules. They may be rare; but it does happen on occasion that the road to victory requires a refusal to employ one of our well-known and approved methods, when new and none-too-obvious ideas are at work instead. Such cases generally leave a great esthetic impression.

Let me show you the position after the first three moves of a study by **H. van der Heijden** (2001). Before reading the text which follows, try to answer this question: Can White to move draw? I will warn you that the task is quite difficult.



The first move has to be 1. Kb5. It's easy to see that 1...Rxb7? 2. a4 draws without difficulty. So we must look at getting the king closer.

1...Kf3 2. a4 Ke4 3. a5 Kd5, and 4. a6 loses to 4...Rb2+! 5. Ka5 (5. Ka4 Kc4!) 5...Kc5! 6. Ka4 Rh2 (6...Rb8 is even simpler) 7. a7 Kb6! And on 4. Kb6, Black wins by 4...Kc4! (still another important technique: “*outflanking*”!) 5. a6 Rh6+ 6. Ka5 Rxb7 7. Kb6 Rh6+ 8. Kb7 (8. Ka5 Kc5) 8...Kb5 9. a7 Rh7+ 10. Kb8

Kb6 11. a8N+ Kc6.

So where does White improve? Aha – clearly, we have forgotten the “shoulder block.” Instead of 3. a5, we can play 3. Kc5!?, when Black's king does not have the d5-square.

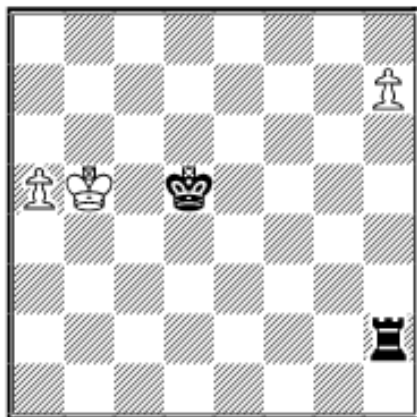
A tempting conclusion – but unfortunately, it's refuted by 3...Rh5+! 4. Kb6 Kd5 5. a5 Kc4! (outflanking again) 6. a6 Rh6+ – a position we've already seen. And 3. Kc6 Kd4 4. a5 Kc4 5. a6 Rh6+ 6. Kb7 Kb5 is no help, either.

So, that must mean the starting position is a loss – for surely, we've looked at all the possibilities?!

No, in fact, we have only examined the **natural** possibilities. We have acted in accordance with the rules laid out in the beginning of this article: bringing the king forward as quickly as possible and shouldering aside the enemy king. As it happens, in this concrete situation, both rules need to be broken.

The key to the riddle is the paradoxical fact that, with the kings on b5 and d5, the pawn at a5 and the rook at h2, we have a mutual zugzwang position. And in order to avoid falling into zugzwang, White must begin by losing a tempo.

**1. Kb4!! Kf3** (1...Rxb7 2. a4 =) **2. a4 Ke4 3. a5!** (not the “shoulder block”: 3. Kc5? Rh5+!) **3...Kd5 4. Kb5**



White to move loses, as we have already seen: 5. a6 Rb2+! or 5. Kb6 Kc4! But here, it's Black's move – and what is he to do? As long as the a6-square is clear, he gets nothing from **4...Rb2+ 5. Ka6 Rb8 6. Ka7 Rh8 7. Kb6!** (here, the “shoulder block” is necessary) **7...Kd6 8. a6 Rb8+ 9. Ka7 Kc7 10. h8Q Rxh8** is stalemate. This is the main line of the study.

If 4...Kd6, then 5. Kb6 (the outflanking via c4 is not possible here) 5...Kd7 6. Kb7 Kd8 7. a6

Rxh7+ 8. Kb8! Rh1 9. a7 Rb1+ 10. Ka8 =.

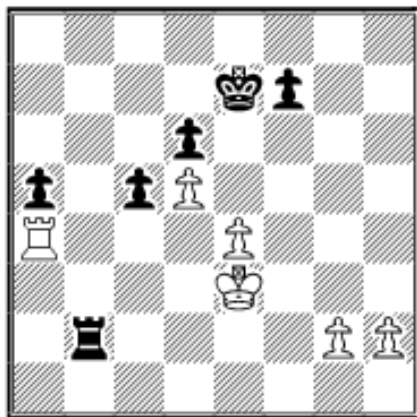
It's amazing that Black has no waiting move with the rook. On 4...Rh1 5. a6 Rb1+ 6. Ka5, he can't play 6...Kc5?!, because after 7.h8Q, the a1-square is covered. The drawback to the move 4...Rh3 is seen in the line 5. a6 Rb3+ 6. Ka4! (6...Kc4 is no longer available) 6...Rb8 7. a7 Ra8 8. Kb5 Kd6 9. Kb6 Rh8 10. Kb7 =. And finally, 4...Rxh7 leads to the final drawing position from the Hamdouchi – Topalov game: 5. a6 Kd6 6. Kb6 Rh1 7. Kb7!

The paradox of the position is certainly not that White must lose a tempo to avoid zugzwang himself and to put his opponent in zugzwang – we have seen this endgame technique fairly often. What's amazing is that zugzwang is even possible in an endgame with this kind of material. Such endgames **always** come down to just one question: who will win the race – who gets there first? Well, here's yet another illustration of the theme: never say “never” (or, in this case, never say “always”) – there are no absolute rules in chess!

Examples of such an unexpected loss of tempo in the endgame are still quite rare. I shall therefore allow myself to reproduce one more sharply drawn example, which I have used previously in my **ChessCafe** column [Discoveries in Rook Endgames](#) and also included in *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*.

### *Flear – Legky*

Le Touquet 1991



### **44...Kf6!**

King activity is more important than material! 44...Rb5? 45. Kf4 Kf6 46. g4 would be too passive; and after 44...Rxg2? 45. Rxa5 Rxh2 46. Ra7+ Kf6 47. Rd7 Ke5 48. Re7+, the game is drawn at once.

### **45. Rxa5?**

As noted by Nikolai Legky, White could prevent the enemy king from getting to e5 by playing 45. Kf4!! Rf2+ 46. Ke3! (46. Kg3? Rf1! and 47...Ke5) 46...Rxg2 47.

Rxa5 – after 47...Ke5 48. Ra7, there is no third-rank check. And on 47...Rxh2 White plays 48. Ra7 Rh6 49. Rd7 Kg7 50. e5!? de 51. Ke4, when the activity of White's pieces compensates for the two pawns minus.

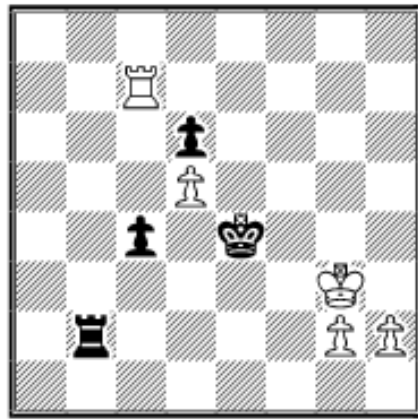
**45...Ke5! 46. Ra7 Rb3+ 47. Kf2 Kxe4 48. Rxf7**

48. h4 Rb2+ 49. Kg3 c4 50. h5 c3 51. Rc7 Kd3! 52. h6 c2 53. h7 Rb8 is a loss for White. But he should have considered 48. g4!? f6 49. Rf7, so that after 49...Rb2+ 50 Kg3, the king would not block the path of his passed pawn.

**48...Rb2+ 49. Kg3 c4!**

There's no sense wasting time on the d5-pawn: it's more important to advance his own pawn.

**50. Rc7**



**50...Kd3?! 51. h4?**

The decisive error. 51. Rc6! was necessary. Legky gives the line 51...c3 52. Rxd6 Rb5! 53. Rc6 Rxd5 54. h4 c2 55. Kh3 Rd4 56. Rxc2 Kxc2, evaluating it as “advantage to Black.” The concluding position is in fact won, because of the white king's unfortunate position. But if Glenn Flear were to bring him forward by 55. Rxc2! Kxc2 56. Kf4 (or 56. Kg4 Kd3 57. h5 Ke4 58. h6) 56...Kd3 57. g4, he would have gotten his draw.

On the previous move, Black should have played 50...Kd4!! instead, securing the d6-pawn (51. Rc6? c3 52. Rxd6 c2 53. Rc6 Rb3+ and 54...Rc3). After 51. h4 c3 52. h5 Kd3! (the inaccurate 52...c2? allows White to save himself by immediately activating his king: 53. Kf4! Kd3 54. Kf5) 53. h6 (White's hopelessly behind in the variation 53. Kf4 Rxd2 54. Kf5 Re2! 55. h6 c2 56. h7 Rh2 57. Kg6 Kd2, and wins) 53...c2 54. Kf4 Rb1 55. g4 (55. h7 Rh1 56. g4 Rxh7) 55...c1Q+ 56. Rxc1 Rxc1 57. Kf5 Kd4 58. g5 Rh1! 59. Kg6 (59. Ke6 Kc5 wins) 59...Ke5!, when the black king gets back just in time to win!

Nevertheless, as pointed out by Karsten Müller, White could save himself by choosing 52. Kf3!! (instead of 52. h5?) 52...c2 (52...Kd3 53. g4 c2 54. g5 =) 53. Kf4! Kd3 54. Kf5, for instance: 54...Rb5 55. Rxc2 Kxc2 56. Ke6 Kd3 57. g4 Ke4 58. g5 Rxd5 59. g6 Re5+ 60. Kf6 Rf5+ 61. Ke6 =.

A strange endgame, isn't it? In a sharp position, White had two occasions where it was better to lose a tempo (45. Kf4!! and 52. Kf3!!); and Black's best try also involved a loss of tempo (50...Kd4!!).

**51...c3** (Black wins) **52. h5 c2 53. h6 Rb1 54. Kf4** (54. h7 Rh1 55. Kg4 Rxh7) **54...c1Q+ 55. Rxc1 Rxc1 56. g4 Rf1+ 57. Kg5 Ke4 58. Kg6 Rg1** White

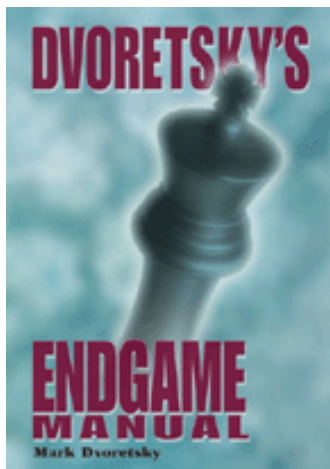




## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## A Battle of Opposites

The following tense encounter, offered for your perusal, is a most instructive one for several reasons.

1) It featured two great players. One of them, Mikhail Tal, was at the peak of his chess career. The game was played as part of the World Championship Match in which Tal secured his title.

2) We can contrast the points of view of both players, and compare their assessment of this battle's ebb and flow, which is always both entertaining and very useful. It's a shame that we so seldomly see such "face-to-face" annotations. One of the few pleasant exceptions was the book of the 1969 Petrosian-Spassky World Championship Match, consisting of notes to the games written by the players' trainers: Isaak Boleslavsky and Igor Bondarevsky. Studying this book gave me a great deal of pleasure.

Mikhail Botvinnik's commentaries are taken from his four-volume selected games – these will appear as bold text; Tal's comments (and both sets have been edited) will appear in *italics*; these are from his monograph on the first [Botvinnik-Tal match](#). This is a wonderful book; in my view, one of the best books in all of chess literature. Tal's annotations are quite genuine, and very detailed: each game receives several pages of entertaining text. Tal was an outstanding writer, with a lively, picturesque style. His comments never devolve – as so often happens these days, now that computers have gotten involved in analysis – into an endless rehash of variations. Quite the contrary: at every point in the game, Tal offers us his view of what is happening on the board – a positional assessment – and not a formalized one, either, but a lively, dynamic one. The most valuable characteristic of this book is the way it overflows with psychological observations and considerations. Psychology is a vital element of the chess struggle; yet it is portrayed in the pages of chess literature in either too primitive, or too formalistic and unconvincing a fashion. But here we can observe a believable psychological picture of a great match and each game of that match in particular, described by one of its main participants. An additional important element, and also rarely seen, is that the times after each move are noted. In short: Tal's book can be recommended without hesitation to any chessplayer, whether he seeks to achieve further progress in his game, or simply wants a pleasurable read.

3) The Botvinnik-Tal match saw a clash of antipodes: players with diametrically opposed approaches, both to the chess struggle and to life. I have always been amused at ideological attempts to assign even such wildly differing chessplayers

to a single “Soviet School of Chess.” Of course, this is partly a matter of definition: if by “school” you mean a common country and language, and consequently all books and articles published and read in the Russian language; if you mean that most of one’s contacts occur precisely with chessplayers from that country; and if you’re also referring to the necessity of subordinating oneself, to a greater or lesser extent, to the same set of rules and restrictions, of working with the same set of chess and non-chess related functionaries, etc. – why, I suppose that would be true. But to find a creative mesh, or matching ideas – now, that’s hard. That great chessplayers influence one another is indisputable; but such influence is hardly limited by national boundaries; and it’s hard to see why Tal would belong to the same “school” as Botvinnik, to a greater degree than, say, Fischer or Timman.

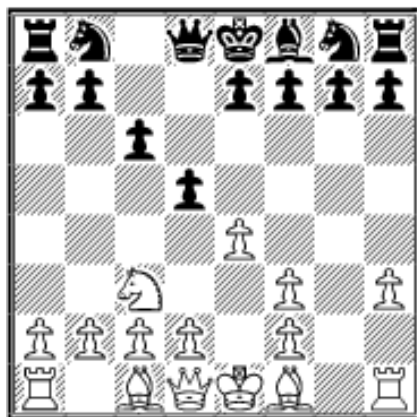
The game we shall be examining shows especially clearly not only the differences in the two players’ styles, but also the positive and negative aspects of each style. Well, this would be better discussed later: both while we are analyzing this game, and after we have finished it.

4) Tal managed to find himself in a strategically lost position (playing White, and very quickly, too!); but then, playing with rare energy and resourcefulness, he confused his powerful opponent and saved himself. A useful lesson to be learned from this example is that absolutely hopeless positions are almost nonexistent, once you learn the methods of active defense.

### **Tal – Botvinnik**

Moscow 1960, Match Game 3

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1. e2-e4</b> (0.00)   | <b>c7-c6</b> (0.00)  |
| <b>2. Nb1-c3</b> (0.01)  | <b>d7-d5</b> (0.01)  |
| <b>3. Ng1-f3</b> (0.01)  | <b>Bc8-g4</b> (0.02) |
| <b>4. h2-h3</b> (0.01)   | <b>Bg4xf3</b> (0.02) |
| <b>5. g2xf3?!</b> (0.01) |                      |



In this, as in other games of the match, Tal used this sort of play to create original opening situations. His first concern was not whether his conceptions were correct, but to force his opponent to use up more of the time he would find so necessary in time-trouble.

My opponent, like many others, considered my main weapon to be my preparations for the event. But he did not consider another and perhaps still more important

**component of my practical strength: positional understanding. It was this that allowed me to find the proper plans in unfamiliar situations.**

*In this case, it seems to me, in spite of the purely psychological plusses (an absolutely new position complete devoid of any possibility that Black might have*



done any home “grinding”), the move 5. gf has some positional basis. first of all it strengthens White’s center, and second of all it opens the g-file along which he might be able to create pressure in the future. If Black immediately tries to refute this move and plays the straightforward 5...e5, then the following factor comes into effect: in the open game, the strength of the pair of bishops (especially the light-squared one (not having an opponent) sharply increases. Here, for example, is one of the training games played before the match (against Alexander Koblents, Tal’s trainer).

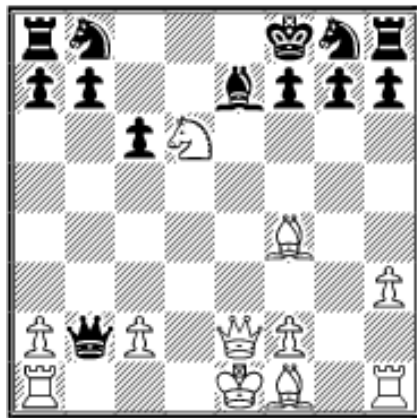
**1. e4 c6 2. Nc3 d5 3. Nf3 Bg4 4. h3 Bxf3 5. gf e5 6. f4 de** After 6...ef 7. ed cd 8. d4, we have something like a King’s Gambit, in a version favorable to White.

That’s debatable: Black could go into an unclear endgame with 8...Qe7+! 9. Qe2 f3.

**7. fe Qd4 8. Qe2 Qxe5 9. d4 9. Qxe4** was stronger, with a much superior endgame. But could any of you have withstood the temptation of playing such a tempting sacrifice, especially in a training game?

**9...Qxd4 10. Nxe4 Be7 11. Bf4 Qxb2** Not 11...Nf6 12. Nd6+ Kf8 13. Qxe7+! Kxe7 14. Nf5+ and 15. Nxd4.

**12. Rd1Nf6 13. Nd6+ Kf8**



**14. Qxe7+!? Kxe7 15. Nf5+ Ke8!** Black can’t play either 15...Kf8 16. Rd8+ Ne8 17. Bd6+, or 15...Ke6 16. Nxg7+ Ke7 17. Bd6+ Kd8 18. Ba3+.

**16. Nxg7+ Kf8 17. Bd6+!** (17. Rd8+ Ke7) **17...Kxg7** After 17...Kg8 18. Rg1, Black is defenseless, for example: 18...Qc3+ 19. Rd2 Qxd2+ 20. Kxd2 Ne4+ 21. Ke3 Nxd6 22. Ne6 mate.

But if Black plays 19...Qa1+ (instead of 19...Qxd2+?), then White has to take the draw (20. Rd1 Qc3+), since 20. Ke2?! allows the only, yet sufficient, defense: 20...h5!

**18. Rg1+ Ng4!** The only move. Considerably worse would be 18...Kh6 19. Bf4+ Kh5 20. Be2+ Kh4 (20...Ng4!? 21. Rxg4 Qb4+ 22. c3 Qxf4 23. Rxf4+ Kg5 24. Rxf7 would be hopeless as well) 21. Bg3+ (White has a mate in 4 by 21. Bg5+! Kxh3 22. Kf1!) 21...Kxh3 (21...Kg5 lasts longer, although his position after 22. Be5+ Kf5 23. Bxb2 is very bad) 22. Bf1+ (there are two ways of giving mate in three here: 22. Kf1! and 22. Rh1+! Kg2 23. Rh2+ Kg1 24. Kd2 mate) 22...Kg4 23. Be5+ Kf5 24. Bxb2, with a powerful attack.

**19. Rxg4+ Kf6 20. Rf4+ Kg7** Drawn by perpetual check. 20...Kg5 is too risky: 21. Rg4+ Kh5?! 22. Be2 Qxc2 23. Bf4! Qxe2+! 24. Kxe2.

At the very end of 2004 I came across Igor Zaitsev's book *Ataka v silnom punkte* in which he continues the analysis: After 24...f6 25.Rd6 Rf8 he looks at two interesting lines, each of which deserves consideration:

(A) 26. Kf1 b6! 27. Re6 Na6 28. Re7 Rh8! 29. Reg7 Raf8! [29...Nc5? 30. Bg5!! fg 31. R7xg5+ Kh6 32. f4! and mate is unavoidable] 30. Bg3 Kh6! 31. Bf4+ Kh5 with a draw. However, in the final position White need not be satisfied with a draw, since after 32. Bd6! Kh6 [a mate that is already familiar to us arises after 32...Rd8 33. Bg3 Kh6 34. Bf4+ Kh5 35. Bg5!!] 33. Bxf8 Rxf8 34 Rxa7 leads to a won ending.

(B) 26. Be3 b6 27. f4 Na6 28. f5 Rae8 29. Rg7 h6 30. Rg6 Rxe3+ 31. Kxe3. Now by continuing 31...Nb4!, Black can successfully resist. Therefore stronger is 27. Bd4! (instead of 27. f4) 27...Na6 [27...f5? 28. Be3 f4 29. Rxf4] 28. Bxf6.

*Botvinnik correctly evaluated the position, and decided to keep it closed. In the normal course of play, this would lead to a complex and roughly even game.*

5. ... e7-e6 (0.17)

6. d2-d4 (0.02)

**Worth considering was 6. d3 followed by f2-f4.**

6. ... Nb8-d7 (0.19)

*The most comfortable setup for his pieces. For now, Black does not define the position of his king's knight, so as not to give White the opportunity to play e4-e5 with tempo.*

**7. Bc1-f4? (0.10)**

*In our home preparations, we had looked at 7. Be3, intending to continue Qd2 and 0-0-0, in order to play actively in the center. In this case, 7...Qb6 accomplishes nothing, because of the simple 8. a3, when Black can't continue 8...Qxb2 9. Na4. After 7. Be3, White would keep control of the vital f4 square; on 7...Bb4, he would have the simple reply 8. a3 at his disposal. To his cost, White decided on a further "strengthening" of this variation, and found a most dubious move over-the-board.*

**Carelessly played; now the maneuver Ng8-f6-h5 will come with an extra tempo for Black.**

7. ... Bf8-b4 (0.31)

**This makes the above-mentioned maneuver stronger; besides, the bishop is safe here, because the continuation a2-a3 and b2-b4 would make it impossible for White to castle queenside.**

*A good positional move. Now Black responds to 8. a3 with 8...Ba5 followed by*

*Bc7, forcing White to trade the dark-squared bishops – not a good thing with this pawn structure – or lose time retreating.*

*At the same time, Black avoids a trap. Had he played 7...Qb6, so as to meet 8. a3 with a more favorable 8...c5, White could have replied 8. Qd2, and on 8...Qxb2 9. Rb1 Qa3 10. ed ed (10...cd 11. Nb5 – the consequences of 11...Qxa2 or 11...Qxf3 are not clear, so 11. Rb3 Qa5 12. Nb5 Qxd2+ 13. Kxd2 deserved consideration, with good compensation for the pawn) 11. Qe3+, when Black does poorly with either 11...Be7 12. Rxb7 Ngf6 13. Rb3 Qa5 14. Bd6, or with 11...Kd8 12. Rb3 Qa5 13. Rxb7, when he can't play 13...Bb4, because of the threatened 14. Bc7+. In all these variations, the white bishop stands very well indeed at f4. However, as we have already noted, the strength of the two bishops is evident only in open games, and Botvinnik is not going to play for this.*

### 8. h3-h4? (0.24)

*But this is just a mistake, based on a miscalculation. The strategic aim of the move is to meet 8...Ne7 with 9. h5; the tactical point is that in some lines, White can bring his rook out via h3. But the lesser evil was still 8. a3 Ba5 9. b4 Bc7 10. Be3.*

### 8. ... Ng8-f6 (0.36)



### 9. e4-e5? (0.47)

*After this, White's position is strategically lost, since all hope of opening the game disappears, and with it any compensation whatever for his multiple weaknesses. When I played 8. h4, I had intended the gambit line 9. a3 Bxc3+ 10. bc de 11. fe Nxe4 12. Qf3 Qa5 13. Rh3 Ndf6. White had further calculated the following variation: 14. h5 0-0-0 (14...h6!?) 15. h6 gh 16. Be5 Ng5 17. Qxf6 Nxf6 18. Kd2 Ng5 19. Bd3. I was examining*

*this position, and considering that White had a lot of initiative for his exchange sacrifice – when suddenly I saw the “cold shower” – 19...Qxe5!, when the outcome is a quite ordinary endgame... Typical Tal: a very long, and completely unnecessary, calculation. The final position is easily won for Black, even without that spectacular stroke on e5 (19...Rhg8!?). And earlier on, Black could also win with continuations like 15...g5!, or 18...Nxf2!*

*Since the e4-pawn could only be defended by un-esthetic moves like 9. Qd3 or 9. Qe2, White decided, “with pain in his heart” on yet another anti-positional move.*

**Unexpectedly, White changes his plans. If he had intended to close the center, this could have been done without the move 7. Bf4. He should have decided on 9. Qd3.**

9. ... Nf6-h5 (0.40)  
 10. Bf4-g5 (0.48) Qd8-a5 (1.00)

*The means of realizing an advantage, once achieved, is a matter of each player's taste. Black could have played 10...f6 11. f4 g6. Of course, in that event, White would have had some sort of murky hopes of creating play against the e6-pawn. Above all else, Botvinnik is trying to deprive White of counterplay.*

**In this match, I strove for a strategy that Tal would find most unpleasant, which was: to avoid opening the game, when his calculating abilities would give him a great advantage. This was exactly why I rejected 10...f6.**

**However, I was not consistent enough in my employment of this technique; additionally, poor sporting form interfered with my implementation of this form of struggle against Tal.**

Note here that Botvinnik is talking just about aiming for closed, strategic positions, and not at all about passivity, or avoiding favorable complications. Passive opposition plays right into the hands of aggressive and resourceful players such as Tal. Battling them requires firm counteraction, on a strict positional basis – this is precisely how one exploits an opponent's positional liberties.

11. Bf4-d2 (0.51) Qa5-b6 (1.03)  
 12. a2-a3 (0.53) Bb4-e7 (1.04)  
 13. Bd2-e3 (0.58)

*Now on 13. Bg5 f6 is considerably stronger.*

13. ... g7-g6! (1.13)



**Of course not 13...Qxb2, because of 14. Na4.**

*White's weaknesses are fixed; now Black can proceed to lay siege to them. His knight plans to relocate to the hugely profitable f-square.*

From this moment, Tal begins a skillful process of complicating the game, attempting to lure his opponent into winning a pawn in one way or another.

- 14. Nc3-a4! (1.13)**

*Now if Black replies 14...Qa5+, White can choose between 15. Qd2 Qxa4 (Black has a favorable endgame with 15...Qxd2+) 16. b3 Bb4 17. c3 (17. Qxb4!? Qxb4+ 18. ab isn't bad, either) 17...Qxb3 18. cb, with compensation for the pawn; or 15. c3 b5 16. Nxc5 Bxc5 17. b4! Both lines lead to an improvement in White's position. Botvinnik does not deviate from his previously-laid plan, and*

*concentrates his firepower on the h4-pawn.*

**14. ... Qb6-d8 (1.18)**

**15. Qd1-d2 (1.10)**

**Tempting Black into the line 15...Bxh4 16. Rxh4 Qxh4 17. Bg5 Qh2 18. Qb4. When you are playing Tal, looking at such lines is just a waste of time. Even if objectively poor, these lines would favor him subjectively. Black therefore chooses the prosaic transfer of the knight to a strong position at f5.**

The World Champion's logic is understandable, but not indisputable. Such players as Viktor Korchnoi and Lev Polugaevsky – outstanding calculators themselves – did not believe Tal's calculations, tested them, and sometimes found mistakes, which they then successfully exploited. Not accidentally, both players had terrific plus scores against him.

**15. ... Nh5-g7 (1.21)**

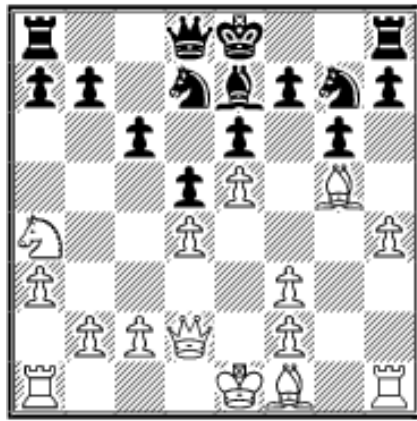
*Ostentatiously avoiding any sort of complications which in this instance would have been "life-giving balm" to White. Curious variations might arise after 15...Bxh4. White could then play either 16. Bh6, threatening Bf1-h3-g4, with a more pleasant position than the one he gets in the game (one of his weaknesses has disappeared, in any case); or he could decide upon the very sharp 16. Rxh4 Qxh4 17. Bg5 Qh2 (on 17...Nxe5?, Tal gives 18. Bxh4 Nxf3+ 19. Ke2 Nxd2 20. Kxd2, with active White pieces; but instead White just wins by 18. de! Qxa4 19. b3) 18. Qb4 f6 19. Qxb7 Rb8 (19...0-0 20. Bh6) 20. Qxc6 fg, and now not 21. Qxe6+ Kd8 22. Nc5 Nh6!, as given by Tigran Petrosian, but the immediate 21. Nc5! 0-0 22. Nxd7, with a very sharp game, perhaps not unfavorable to White.*

Objectively, the whole line still favors Black: he obtains a clear advantage by continuing 19...0-0! 20. Bh6 (20. Qxd7 fg 21. Qxe6+ Kh8-/+) 20...Rfd8 21. Qxc6, and now either 21...Kh8 22. Qxe6 fe-/+, or 21...Ng7 22. Bxg7 (22. ef Rac8 23. Qa6 Qxh6-/+) 22...Kxg7-/+.

*Had Black played 15...b5 here, White would naturally have tried for an open game, regardless of material loss, by continuing: 16. Nc5 Bxc5 17. dc Nxe5 18. 0-0-0, etc.*

Let's check out this "etc.", by continuing the variation: 18...Nxf3 19. Qb4!? a5 20. Qg4 Qf6 21. Be2 Ne5 22. Qd4 Nd7 23. Bxh5 gh – Black's advantage is obvious. No better would be 18. Be2 (intending 19. f4) 18...Nc4 19. Qc3 Qf6-/+. So objectively, White would have done better to avoid the pawn sacrifice by playing 16. Nc3.

**16. Be3-g5 (1.19)**



White can catch his breath. The scout on h4 is shielded now, but its position is strangely reminiscent of the “Trishkin Caftan;” soon, the pawn at f3 will start “wobbling”, too.

16. ... **h7-h6!** (1.28)

A fine positional continuation. Black frees his opponent of his weak h-pawn, but at the cost of exchanges favoring Black. On 16...Nf5 17. Bxe7 Qxe7 18. h5, White's position would be much improved.

**The unavoidable opening of the h-file will be good for Black, since the f-pawns' weakness will become concrete.**

17. **Bg5xh6** (1.28)

Taking matters into the endgame by 17. Bxe7 Qxe7 18. Qb4 b6 would have turned the game into a process of realization of Black's overwhelming advantage in position. Quite naturally, White tries to maintain the tension as much as possible.

But trading queens is not forced. It's not clear whether Black has any great advantage after 18. Bd3. Consequently, one can also doubt the efficacy of Botvinnik's “academic” approach to the position (15...Ng7, instead of the more straightforward 15...Bxh4 or 15...b5).

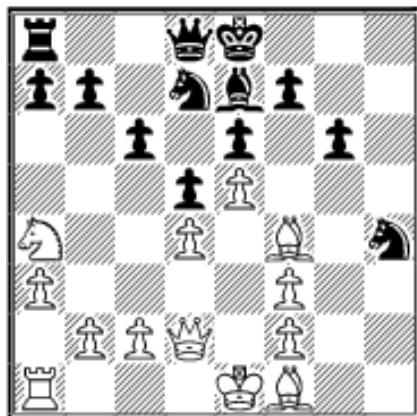
17. ... **Ng7-f5** (1.29)

18. **Bh6-f4** (1.30) **Rh8xh4** (1.31)

**If Black takes the pawn with a minor piece, it will be pinned on the h-file.**

There was no reason to weaken his position by 18...g5 19. Be3 Nxh4 20. 0-0-0 – the exchange of rooks favors Black.

19. **Rh1xh4** (1.35) **Nf5xh4** (1.31)



20. **0-0-0!** (1.35)

Defending the f3-pawn is a hopeless task. Thus, 20. Qe3 could be met by 20...Bg5 21. Bxg5 Qxg5, etc. White doesn't have to take on g5 with the bishop: 21. 0-0-0! is better. And instead of the spectacular, but insufficiently effective, move 20...Bg5, Black has the much stronger 20...Qa5+! 21. Nc3 c5!, with an overwhelming advantage.

*After 20. Be2, White loses the two-bishop advantage and the right to castle at the same time, after 20...Ng2+.*

*Now he expected, after 20...Nxf3 21. Qe3 Nh4 22. Bh3 Qa5 23. Bg5!, to disturb Black's king. This variation may also be continued: 23...Bxg5 24. Qxg5 Nf3 25. Qf4 Qxa4 26. Qxf3 c5 27. Rh1! (threatening 28. Bxe6) 27...Qc6 28. Bf1 0-0-0 29. Qxf7 cd 30. f4, with chances for both sides.*

**20.     ...                   b7-b5! (1.37)**

**At the appropriate moment – right here, after White has castled – this sortie is completely justified. After 21. Nc3 Nb6 Black has a very strong attack. (Tal didn't like 21...a5, with the threat of 22...b4; he also (though mistakenly) feared 21...Qa5, which he could have met by 22. Be2 Nb6 23. Rh1.) The other possibility – taking the f3-pawn – would have been inconsequent, as it would hand the initiative over to my opponent.**

**Tal employs a stratagem which is characteristic of him: at any cost, he tries to open up the game, in order to make it harder for his opponent to calculate the variations.**

*Passive play would be absolutely fatal to White; therefore, he makes one more desperate try: at the cost of a pawn, he tries to take the initiative.*

**21. Na4-c5! (1.42)                   Nd7xc5 (1.40)**  
**22. d4xc5 (1.42)                   Be7xc5 (1.43)**

It would have made sense here to take another pawn by 22...g5! 23. Bg3 Nxf3, for example: 24. Qe3?! (24. Qe2 g4 25. Bg2 was better, with chances for equality) 24...g4 25. Kb1 Qa5 (threatening 26...b4) 26. Qf4 Qa4!, or 25. Be2 Bg5 26. Bf4 Bxf4 27. Qxf4 Qg5 28. Qxg5 Nxc5 29. Bxc5 Ne4 – in both cases, Black has a great advantage. On the other hand, the text looked absolutely natural, and so neither side probably even noticed there was an alternative possibility.

**23. Bf1-e2 (1.48)**

*23. Bg5? fails against 23...Nxf3.*

**23.     ...                   Bc5-e7 (1.48)**

*White has some sort of compensation for the sacrificed pawn. The position has been opened somewhat, the White pieces are now more active, and his rook is ready to occupy the open file. With accurate play, of course, this would not have been enough for equality; but already, time-pressure was making its presence felt.*

**And so, Black has an extra pawn in a quiet position; the outcome would appear to be decided. Unfortunately, no – there are still 17 moves to be made before the time-control, and there's no longer so much time left to think.**

But not so little, either: 42 minutes.

**24. Kc1-b1!** (1.50)

*A useful prophylactic move. White takes his king off the c1-h6 diagonal, intending to continue c2-c4 under the right circumstances – such as after 24...Kd7. After 24...Kd7 25. c4?! bc 26. Bxc4, Black would have had the powerful reply 26...g5!, followed by 27...Nxf3. White would therefore have done better to play 25. Rh1.*

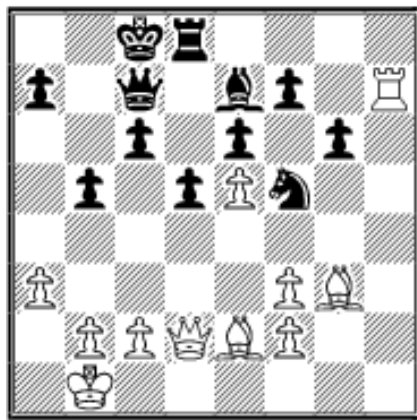
**24. ... Qd8-c7** (1.56)

*Black prepares to castle long.*

**25. Rd1-h1** (1.53)      **0-0-0** (1.58)

**26. Bf4-g3** (1.54)      **Nh4-f5** (2.00)

**27. Rh1-h7** (1.54)



*Perhaps my first truly active move in the game. Now Black has to resolve the problem of how to defend the f7-pawn. Short of time, Botvinnik chose a safe, but passive continuation.*

*After 27...Nxc3 28. fg Qxe5 29. f4 (29. Rxf7 Bf6 30. c3 was also possible) 29...Qf6 30. Qa5, Black's weakened queenside deprives him of winning chances. But with 27...Bc5!, followed by Rd7, Black would retain a very solid position; and after the necessary*

*prophylaxis, he could begin advancing his queenside pawns. This would, in the end, apparently, lead to a win.*

**The white rook's invasion of the seventh rank is not dangerous. It's only one threat, which could have been met most simply by 27...Bc5, so as to defend the f7-pawn, if necessary, by rook to d7. The text is more passive, although it still doesn't spoil anything.**

**27. ... Rd8-f8** (2.04)

*On this square, it turns out the rook is not so secure. The white bishops soon find their voice.*

**28. Bg3-f4** (1.55)

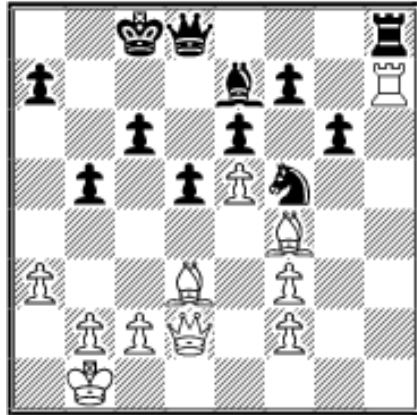
*White's idea is quite simple: he intends 29. Bd3, followed by trading on f5; then, after Bh6, he can start to "harvest" the seventh rank. Here again, Black had to play 28...Bc5. Botvinnik counted on trading off the active rook, but meanwhile,*



*he leaves the residence of his king insufficiently guarded.*

**28. ... Qc7-d8 (2.12)**

**29. Be2-d3 (2.00) Rf8-h8 (2.19)**



**The further course of the game and the analyses which followed confirmed that this was the most logical continuation, parrying the threatened 30. Bxf5 gf 31. Bh6, and leading to simplification.**

Whereas, in point of fact, neither the further course of the game nor analysis supported Botvinnik's opinion.

*The conclusion of the idea undertaken by Botvinnik back on move 27. Black forces the exchange of rooks, but fails to achieve the desired result. 29...g5 looked tempting here, and only after 30. Bh2 (30. Bxf5!?) would Black continue 30...Rh8. White had an interesting response to this: 31. Bxf5 ef 32. Qd3! Rxh7 (32...f4 is also unclear after 33. Qf5+ Kb8 34. Rxf7! Rxh2 35. Qe6 Bc5 36. Qxc6 Qc8 37. Qxb5+) 33. Qxf5+ Qd7 34. Qxh7 Qe6 35. f4, and the endgame turns out to be favorable to White, since he has gotten rid of his doubled pawns, and his queen rules quite effectively from the rear.*

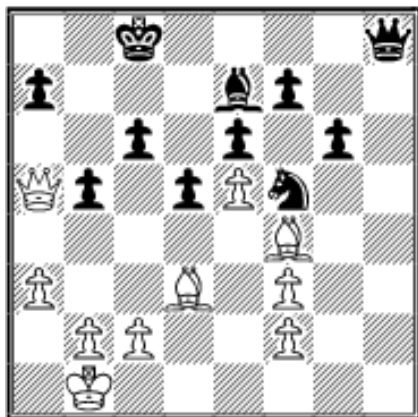
**30. Rh7xh8 (2.12)**

*I really wanted to sacrifice my rook here by 30. Rxf7!? Qe8 31. Qa5 (after 31. Rf6 Bxf6 32. ef e5 [or 31. Rxe7 Qxe7] the compensation for the exchange is insufficient) 31...Qxf7 32. Qxa7, with the terrible threat of 33. a4. At first, it seemed to me that White is assured of a perpetual check here; but then I found the strong move 32...Rh7! for Black, when he manages to get his king to the other side after 33. a4 Bd8 34. Qa8+ Kd7 35. ab Ke8! (not 35...cb 36. Bxb5+ Ke7 37. Qa3+!) 36. bc Qa7, when Black wins.*

*But the enforced trade of rooks turns out to be not so unpleasant after all: White gets the chance to begin an attack on the king, which soon brings about a peaceful conclusion.*

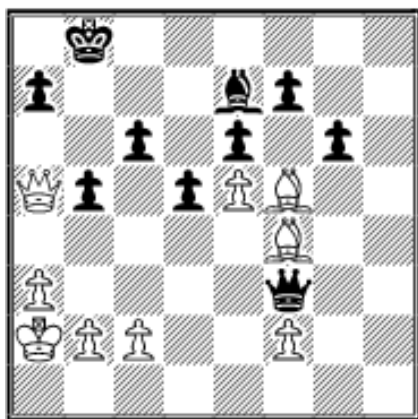
**30. ... Qd8xh8 (2.19)**

**31. Qd2-a5 (2.13)**



*The natural continuation. Black can't get his queen back in time, since the a7-pawn is loose. On 31...Kb7, White sacrifices his bishop by 32. Bxb5 cb 33. Qxb5+ Kc7 (or 33...Ka8 34. Qc6+ draws) 34. Bd2, and White's threats have suddenly become too dangerous. Well, not **too** dangerous: after 34...Qxe5 (and a few other moves as well), White still has to give perpetual check.*

*After 31...Kb8, the bishop sacrifice no longer works, since Black can meet 32. Bxb5 with the intermediate move 32...Bd8. 32. Bxf5, intending to answer 32...gf with 33. Be3, doesn't work either: Black refutes the attack by 32...Qh1+ 33. Ka2 Qxf3*

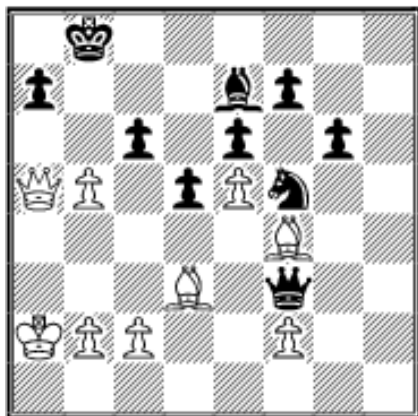


*34. Be3 d4! 35. Bxd4 Qd5+, maintaining great winning chances.*

*However, White could first insert the moves 32. a4 b4, and now, 33. Bxf5 would be very strong: on 33...Qh1+ 34. Ka2 Qxf3 35. Be3 d4 36. Bxd4, the d5 square is now controlled by White's queen. One may conclude that White's attack is quite sufficient to draw.*

*Instead of 32...b4, Tal also looked at the queen check.*

*Now 32...Qh1+ 33. Ka2 Qf3 34. ab*



*34...Qxf4 35. bc (35. b6!? ab 36. Qxb6+ Ka8 37. Qxc6+ Kb8 38. Qb6+ Ka8 39. Bb5+<sup>3/4</sup>) is risky, for instance: 35...Qb4 36. c7+ Kc8 37. Ba6+, or 35...Qxe5 36. Qb5+ Kc7 37. Qb7+ Kd6 38. Qb8+ (38. c7).*

*Unfortunately, this variation contains a serious hole. In the position from the previous diagram, instead of the losing bishop capture, Black plays 34...Qxf2! (preventing 35. b6, and preparing to bring the queen back) 35. bc Qb6. He keeps the extra pawn; on the other hand, after 36. Qa4 =/+, the game's outcome remains unclear.*

*And now, a word from Botvinnik:*

**Here, Black would have won by 31...Kb8 32. Bxf5 (32. Bxb5 Bd8) 32...Qh1+ 33. Ka2 Qxf3 34. Be3 d4 (35. Bxd4 Qd5+). Unfortunately, I missed the move 34...d4 in time-pressure (it was pointed out later by Petrosian).**

True, Tal later tried to show that White still obtains a draw by playing 32. a4, instead of 32. Bxf5. But, without trying to cast doubt on the multiplicity of complex variations he presented, we note that Black can avoid all this sophistry, and just force a favorable endgame by 32...Qd8! 33. Qxd8+ (33. Qa6 Qb6) 33...Bxd8 34. ab Nd4 35. bc Nxf3, with threats of 36...Bc7 and 36...Nd4. He could also play 35...Bc7, for example: 36. c4!? dc! (36...Nxf3 is inferior: 37. cd ed 38. Bxg6!, or 36...Nxc6 37. cd ed 38. Bb5) 37. Bxc4 (37. Be4? f5!) 37...Nxc6, with advantage to Black.

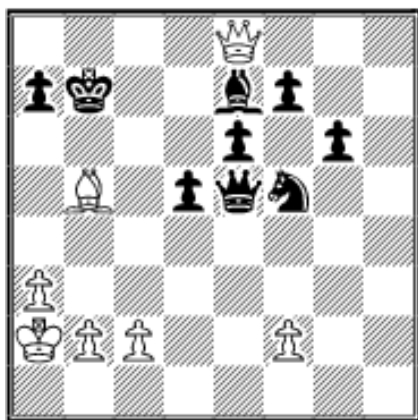
Nevertheless, White did have a clear path to the draw, which went unnoticed by the grandmasters. After 31...Kb8!? 32. Bxf5! Qh1+ 33. Ka2 Qxf3 (see the next-to-last diagram), White must play, not 34. Be3?, but 34. Bd2!!, and when Black takes the bishop with his pawn, 35. Bb4!, with perpetual check (and if he takes the bishop with the queen, 35. Be3!).

31. ... Qh8-h1+ (2.25)  
 32. Kb1-a2 (2.13) Qh1xf3 (2.28)  
 33. Qa5-a6+ (2.14) Kc8-b8 (2.29)  
 34. Qa6xc6! (2.18) Qf3xf4 (2.29)  
 35. Bd3xb5!? (2.19)

White could have had the draw right here, by playing 35. Qxb5+ Kc7 36. Qa5+, but he goes fishing in muddy waters instead.

*Now White threatens 36. Ba6. Black has but one defense.*

35. ... Qf4xe5 (2.29)  
 36. Qc6-e8+ (2.20) Kb8-b7 (2.29)



*36...Kc7 would have been more cautious. Now, pure chance saves Black.*

37. Qe8-c6+ (2.27)

*White used up almost all his time calculating the variations after 37. Ba6+! (the bishop has to be taken, else Black either gets mated or loses his queen. For instance: 37...Kc7 38. Qc8+ Kb6 39. Qb7+ Kc5 40. Qb4+ Kc6 41. Qb5+ Kc7 42. Qb7+, and Black can choose either 42...Kd8 43. Qc8 mate, or 42...Kd6 43.*

*Qb8+). So, 37...Kxa6 38. Qc6+ Kd5 39. c3 threatens mate in two moves, and 39...Bxa3 40. Kxa3 Qd6+ 41. b4+ is no salvation.*

*Black has only one chance: 39...Qe2, when White has to force perpetual check by 40. Qc7+ Kb5 41. Qb7+ Ka5 42. Qc7+. This was a definite practical chance; however, White had stood so poorly for so much of the game, that he decided not to "tempt fate", and forced the draw.*

37. ... Kb7-b8 (2.29) Draw.

I should like to conclude by showing my readers two more aspects of this battle we just examined.

1) When analyzing an unfavorably concluded game, chessplayers have a habit of discovering the last error which had an effect on the outcome, and seizing upon precisely that error as the cause of their misfortune. So it was here: Mikhail Botvinnik explained his failure to win this game by a single error he committed in time-pressure on the 31<sup>st</sup> move. Such an explanation does not withstand criticism. And it's not even that his "error" did not exist: already, there was no win. And even if there had been one, it's still impossible to believe that a grandmaster who had already missed – as we saw – more than one favorable possibility, should now have solved this precise problem correctly, especially considering how difficult it was.

When converting an advantage against a stubborn and resourcefully defending opponent, there always comes a moment when it becomes necessary to switch from a strictly positional or technical means of operation to accurate calculation of variations so as to uncover the one correct means of capitalizing on the advantages of your position. This problem is examined in detail in my lecture *Exploiting an Advantage*, contained in the book *Technique for the Tournament Player*, by M. Dvoretsky and A. Yusupov.

Botvinnik evidently had programmed himself to reject any and all complications. Throughout the course of the entire game, he consciously avoided any paths – even those favorable to him – requiring concrete calculation, and containing a higher risk of error. As a result, his enormous positional advantage gradually melted away and finally disappeared.

2) Isn't it amazing how many purely tactical errors occur in the commentaries written by Tal – a chess genius (this is not a cliché, but a "medical diagnosis"), whose chief strength lay precisely in tactics? Now, this fact did not surprise me, because I made a detailed study of Tal's work – and shared some of my observations in my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play*. Note also, that all his errors were committed in his commentaries – in the game, such tactical errors on his part almost never occurred. The reasons for his surprisingly weak treatment of the position in the first half of the game lie in a different field altogether (even if Tal did consider some of his strategic errors, such as 8. h4?, the result of miscalculations).

Tal was a chessplayer with a clearly drawn intuitive bent to his thinking. In sharp positions, he almost unerringly sensed the proper direction in which to search, what prospects lay down this or the other path. In his head, a multitude of ideas whirled; he saw lengthy variations in a split-second, with many unexpected, spectacular points. He saw – but he did not accurately test them – they served only as guideposts, and inspired his chess forays. When the time came to make a final decision, and turn this or that previously noted idea into life, Tal would re-examine them, and as a rule, he found mistakes (from his own annotations, it follows that such episodes also occurred in the game we have just examined). Then, he would correct his plans, choosing the optimal path to his goal (which he usually found, since Tal's intuition rarely betrayed him; as a rule, he generally

assessed the position and the overall direction of the game correctly).

Understandably, many of these variations never saw daylight, since his opponent chose a different path. But they remained in his memory, and then were set down in Tal's annotations, without being further tested at the board, with all their shortcomings. Well, to each his own style of play and commentary. Perhaps Tal's texts do contain a lot of mistakes – on the other hand, they give off the true aura of chess struggle, describe the real feelings of a chess genius, and for that reason, they remain most unusually engrossing and useful.

  
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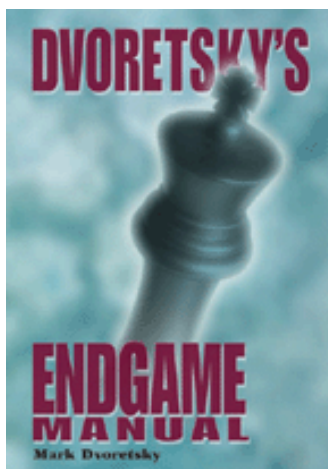


## The Test of Objectivity

“Genius and evildoing are two things incompatible” – so wrote Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin (*Mozart and Salieri*). Alas, it’s only a pretty phrase. There are more than enough examples of such “compatibility” in the world’s history; and we can also find plenty of them in a much narrower range of history – that of chess.

### COLUMNISTS

## *The* *Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



Hardly any chessplayer, at least in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, can have contributed more to the development of our game than that genius, Robert Fischer. But can the beastly anti-Semitism he puts forth be called anything but evildoing? Only a rank evildoer, or else an absolutely incorrigible person, could find it possible to rejoice at the merciless murders of thousands of peaceable Americans on September 11<sup>th</sup>, let alone break into a radio station to be the first to share his joy with the listeners. I am completely in agreement with the moral judgment of the situation Fischer currently finds himself in, which was recently given public expression by Viktor Korchnoi.

From a humanistic standpoint, another unattractive figure was cut by a different chess genius: Alexander Alekhine. One need only recall how he played along with the evil regimes of both Stalin (that was in the latter half of the 30s at the peak of his massive repressions) and Hitler (during the Second World War), or the series of racist articles he wrote during the same period. In the West, the documentary evidence of Alekhine’s life is quite well reflected; in Russia, unfortunately, the facts are much less well known. Conversely, the habit of factual manipulation is much better developed – this way, you can reconstruct the facts to fit the desired version of events. I am, however, not a historian, but a trainer; and I want to touch upon this narrow, special aspect of our theme: to show how some negative characteristics of the personality can influence one’s professional behavior, particularly in the analysis and commentary of games.

Alekhine has a well-deserved reputation as an outstanding commentator. In his notes, what is most instructive is the logical linking of his assessment of the position with his analysis of the variations. Accurate, concrete evaluation narrows the field of possibilities to be examined, which allows the accurate – and, where necessary, lengthy – analysis of the few remaining continuations.

In my study of Alekhine’s books, I have long noted that his most valuable commentaries are those involving games of “unimportant” players; and that a great deal less faith should be placed in his notes when he comments on his own games, or on the games of his historical opponents.



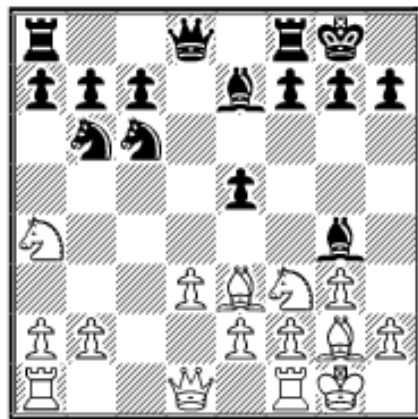
In many of the notes to his own games, one can clearly see that he is attempting to demonstrate his own genius. To this end, Alekhine is capable even of direct falsification: several such occasions are known – such as the famous five-queen position, which supposedly occurred in his game against Nikolai Grigoriev. And if the game didn't turn out well, then Alekhine strove either to ignore or to make excuses for his errors.

In his notes to games of his opponents we find constantly emerging attempts, either conscious or unconscious, to show their efforts in an unfavorable light, a concentration upon the errors they either committed – or didn't commit.

I have been aware of all this from my youth, when I made a close study of Alekhine's books. Quite recently, I came across a convincing illustration of this while reexamining games commented by Alekhine from his book of the tournament of Nottingham 1936 for inclusion in my book of exercises. Let's examine the game, comparing Alekhine's notes (in italics) with what was really going on.

**Alexander – Euwe**  
Nottingham 1936

**1. c2-c4 e7-e5 2. Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 3. g2-g3 d7-d5 4. c4xd5 Nf6xd5 5. Bf1-g2 Nd5-b6 6. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 7. 0-0 Bf8-e7 8. d2-d3 0-0 9. Bc1-e3 Bc8-g4 10. Nc3-a4**



**10...Qd8-d7**

*Black has a completely equal position; but this and the following moves lead only to exchanges, which do nothing to ease the pressure exerted by his opponent on the c-file. 10...Nd5 looks more promising; and if 11. Bc5, then 11...Re8, intending to play his bishop to f6, if White does not trade it off immediately.*

In reviewing old games, there's usually no sense in dealing with the problems of the opening – that is why I have edited out Alekhine's earlier annotations and neglected to indicate the alternatives which could have been tried later. On the whole, both players have acted reasonably so far. Alekhine's suggested plan isn't bad, as is the plan recommended by ECO: 10...Nd4; the text move, however, can hardly be weaker.

Since Max Euwe had just recently wrested the World Championship title away from Alekhine the criticism directed at his play certainly doesn't come by accident. Alekhine is trying to show that both sides played weakly, and that the outcome of this game, which was included in Euwe's book of his collected games, was determined chiefly by the errors both sides committed.

**11. Ra1-c1**

Euwe rates the position after 11. Nc5 Bxc5 12. Bxc5 as favorable to Black.

### 11...f7-f6

*White need have no fear of 11...Nxa4 12. Qxa4 Nd4 (?? – Dvoretsky) 13. Qxd7 Nxe2+ 14. Kh1 Bxd7 15. Rxc7.*

But what he really needed to be afraid of was the series of exchanges after 11...e4! 12. Nxb6 ab 13. de Qxd1 14. Rfxd1 Rxa2 =/+. Unfortunately, both Alekhine and Euwe overlooked this possibility in their notes.

### 12. Be3-c5 Nc6-d8

*That Black must now have recourse to this defensive move shows clearly that he must have committed an inaccuracy earlier.*

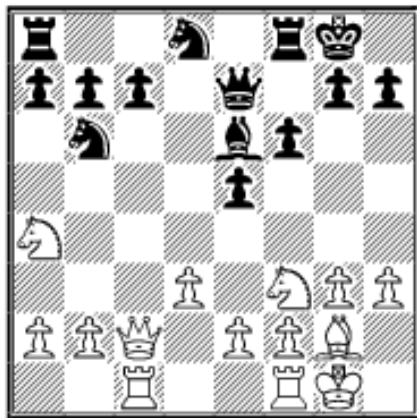
It can't be correct to say that the move Black played was necessary (he could, for instance, have played 12...Nxa4 13. Qxa4 Be6, with a slightly inferior position); but it does flow logically from his previous actions: this is how he prepared to neutralize the pressure on the c-file. This is a completely normal plan, undeserving of criticism.

### 13. Bc5xe7 Qd7xe7 14. h2-h3

*Weakening his pawn structure without any reason. 14. Nc5 was natural and good, with a favorable position.*

To which Euwe probably intended to reply 14...c6, followed by Ne6. White tries to induce Black's bishop to go to e6, so that the knight can't get there instead.

### 14...Bg4-e6 15. Qd1-c2



*If this move forced the following exchange, it certainly would deserve praise; however, Black could have continued 15...Rf7 here (16. Nc5 Bd5 or 16. Qc5 Qd7, etc.), so the simple 15. a3 was preferable. And Alekhine gives Black's reply, 15...Nxa4, a question mark.*

One may agree that 15. a3 deserved consideration; the rest is utter nonsense. After 15...Rf7? 16. Nc5 (of course not 16. Qc5?? Nxa4) 16...Bd5, White has the pleasant choice between 17. Nh4 Bxg2 18. Nf5 Qf8

19. Kxg2 and 17. e4!? Be6 18. Rfd1 followed by d3-d4 – in both cases, the position clearly favors him. Euwe dismissed 15...c6 because of 16. Nc5 (intending e2-e4 and d3-d4) – this is precisely the problem with the bishop's position – the one that White induced to go to e6. All that remains is the exchange on a4, which means that by no means does it deserve a question mark.



**15...Nb6xa4 16. Qc2xa4 Be6-d5**

*This is a [too] clever defensive idea, to put it mildly. Why not 16...c6 and then Nf7?*

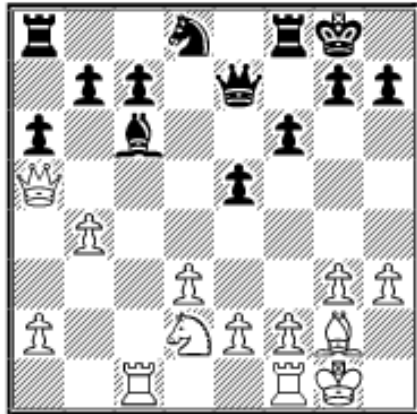
Most likely because putting his bishop on the long diagonal allows Black to neutralize his opponent's bishop, free the e6-square for his knight, and obtain an excellent position. In addition, after 16...c6, he would have to consider the reply. 17. d4.

**17. Qa4-a5! Bd5-c6**

*If 17...c6 now, then 18. e4 Bf7 19. d4, and the position opens in White's favor.*

**18. b2-b4**

*A subtle move, preparing White's following maneuver.*

**18...a7-a6 19. Nf3-d2!**

Of course not 19. b5? b6! and 20...ab (Euwe). The exclamation points were attached to White's next move by Alekhine.

*It now becomes clear that 19...Bxg2 would be met by 20. Rxc7 Qd6 21. Kxg2 Nc6 22. Qb6. There is no need to add that this variation only became possible owing to 18...a6, making the b6-square available to White's queen.*

Nonsense again! 21...b6! (instead of

21...Nc6?) wins a rook.

21. Nc4 would set greater problems for Black – here he could transpose by force into a very favorable endgame in the line 21...Qd5 22. Qxd5+ Bxd5 23. Nb6 Ne6 24. Re7 Nd4 (24...Bxa2 is weaker: 25. Ra1 Bb3 26. Nxa8 Rxa8 27. Rxb7=+/+ 25. Nxd5 Nxe2+ 26. Kg2 Rad8-/+).

Which means the capture at c7 doesn't work – White must play 20. Kxg2, but after 20...Ne6, Black's position is preferable.

Euwe also failed to notice that 20. Rxc7? was impossible, and suggested preparing the exchange on g2 by inserting the move 19...b6. The position after 20. Qa3 Bxg2 21. Kxg2 Ne6 would be about equal (Euwe's 21...a5 is weaker because of 22. Qb3+ and b4-b5).

**19...Kg8-h8**

*Intending to avoid possible exchanges along the a2-g8 diagonal. It turns out that Black is playing to win.*

One senses some irony in the last sentence, although it's not clear to whom it's directed. Of course, a World Champion, having a roughly equal position against a player who is considerably inferior to him, would strive to win.

## 20. Qa5-c5 Qe7-f7

*The same tendency.*

## 21. Bg2xc6 Nd8xc6 22. Nd2-b3 Qf7-h5

A double attack on the pawns at h3 and e2; Alekhine grants it a question mark, and again without reason.

*This tempting move turns out to be a tactical error. 22...Rad8 (preventing 23. b5 because of 23...Rd5) was correct, with an even game.*

## 23. d3-d4!



*After this continuation, which was probably overlooked by his opponent, White obtains a distinct advantage in position. The threat of 24. d5 followed by Qxc7 is most unpleasant.*

## 23...Ra8-d8

Alekhine doesn't even bother to comment on the e-pawn capture, while Euwe gives the variation 23...Qxe2 24. d5 Nd4 25. Nxd4 ed 26. Qxc7 which requires some adjusting. It's hard to see who is favored in the final

position, after 26...Rad8; on the other hand, White would keep somewhat better chances by playing simply 26. Qxd4. In turn, Black's play can also be strengthened considerably by 24...Na7! 25. Qxc7 Qxa2. The resulting situation is no longer any better for White at all – more likely the reverse (if the knight retreats, Black plays 26...Qxd5). And if that's true, then there was no reason to question the black queen sortie to h5, especially since, as the game went, Black did not stand worse.

## 24. d4-d5

Alekhine considered this a mistake.

*The logical consequence of the preceding move would have been 24. e3!, preventing the transfer of the black knight to d4 and strengthening the threat of d4-d5. After the text, Black is clear of all dangers.*

Black would have answered 24. e3 with 24...Qxh3, and after 25. d5, he would have had the choice of either a double-edged position after 25...Nb8 26. Qxc7 Rxd5 (the weakness of White's king serves as a sufficient counterweight to his queenside accomplishments), or the forced draw he can achieve after 26...f5!? 27. dc f4 27. ef ef 28. Rc3 f3 29. Rxf3 Rxf3 30. cb Rxc3+.

**24...Nc6-d4 25. Nb3xd4 e5xd4 26. Qc5xc7**

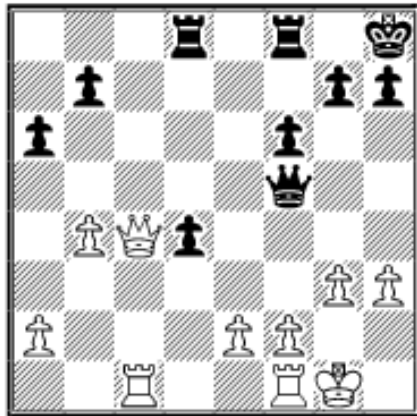
26. Qxd4 Rxd5 27. Qg4 was also good enough to draw.

I believe that after 27...Qxg4 28. hg c6=+, White would still have had to work for his draw, as he also would have after 27. Qc4 c6=+ (Euwe). 27. Qa7! looks better.

**26...Qh5xd5 27. Qc7-c4**

*This move, as well as the next few after this, were evidently the product of time-pressure.*

**27...Qd5-f5**



**28. Rf1-d1?**

*An oversight. The correct 28. Rcd1 would have secured an easy draw. But 28. Kg2 Rfe8=+ (Euwe) was weaker.*

**28...Qf5xh3 29. Qc4-c7**

*White can't play 29. Rxd4, in view of 29...Rc8.*

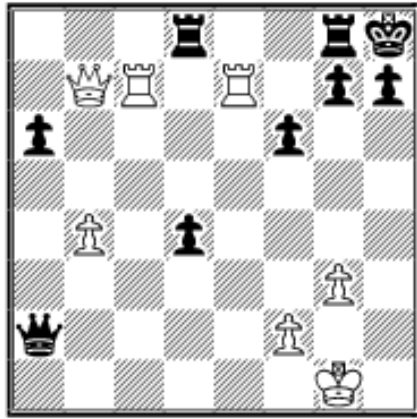
**29...Qh3-e6 30. Qc7xb7?**

*White could have resisted a lot longer after 30. Qc4.*

**30...Qe6xe2 31. Rf1-e1**

*Desperation.*

**31...Qe2xa2 32. Re1-e7 Rf8-g8 33. Rc1-c7**



This position kicks off my lecture, “The Technique of Formulating and Making Decisions” from the book, *The Development of Creative Thinking for the Chessplayer*, by M. Dvoretsky and A. Yusupov, Book 5 in our series, *School of Chess Excellence*.

Euwe found an outstanding solution for the task set before him.

**33...d4-d3!**

*An accurately calculated winning combination. However, 33...Qd2 (34. Rxd7 Rxd7, etc.) was simpler still.*

The desire (perhaps subconscious) to belittle – if only slightly – the achievement of one’s opponent in the battle for the Champion’s title, like any other prejudice, generally gives rise to errors in argumentation, sometimes elementary ones. Let’s extend the variation by just two moves: 33...Qd2? 34. Rxd7 Rxd7 35. Rxd7 Qh6 36. Rd7, with equality (and 36. Re7!? d3 37. Qc7 would have made White’s position even a little preferable).

But in fact, Black had no other means than the one he chose in the game to convert his indisputable advantage into the full point. Let’s examine the variations.

33...Qb1+? 34. Kg2 Qg6 35. Rcd7 d3 36. Qd5 (36. Qxa6!? deserved consideration) – White recovers the d-pawn, and soon obtains a drawn endgame, with three pawns vs. two on the kingside.

Roughly the same thing happens after 33...Qd5? 34. Qxd5 Rxd5 35. Red7.

The attempt to whip up an attack by 33...Rd5 (expecting 34. Rxd7 Rxd7 35. Rxd7 Qb1+ 36. Kg2 Rh5) is refuted by 34. Rc8!

Casting doubt on 33...Rb8!? is more complicated. White loses after 34. Qa7? Rxb4 35. Rxd7 Rb1+ 36. Kg2 Qd5+, or 34. Qe4? Rxb4 (Black is secured by the possibility of exchanging queens after Qb1+). White has to continue either 34. Qf3!? or 34. Qc6!?, for example: 34. Qc6 d3 (34...Rxb4 35. Rxd7!; 34...Qb1+ 35. Kg2 Qxb4 36. Qxf6!) 35. Kg2!? d2 36. Rcd7 Qb3 37. Rxd2 Qxb4 38. Rdd8=+.

**34. Re7xd7**

34. Rcd7 d2 is bad – it’s important that the pawn queens with check. Here’s why Black can’t reverse moves: 33...Qb1+? 34. Kg2 d3 35. Rcd7! d2, and now either 36. Rxd8 Rxd8 37. Qd7!, or better still, 36. Rxd7! Rxd7 37. Rxd8+ Kxd8 38. Qc8+ Kf7 39. Qxd7+ Kg6 40. Qxd2.

**34...Rg8xd7 35. Rc7xd7 Qa2-b1+**

The next move will be 36...d2 (from b1, the queen defends the h7-square). The question Euwe had to answer before deciding to give up the g7-pawn was: will White be able to whip up counterplay? And here it makes sense to go to our standard technique, which has considerably improved the calculation of variations: first, we list all the move candidates (or, more accurately, the possibilities) our opponent has, to refute them one after another.

White has two methods of continuing his attack: 37. Rg4 (threatening mate on g7) and 37. Qf7 (with ideas of 38. Rg8+ or 38. Rxh7+). Plus, the king could be at either g2 or h2. So we have four branches, each of which had to be accurately calculated in advance.

Let's start with the queen to f7.

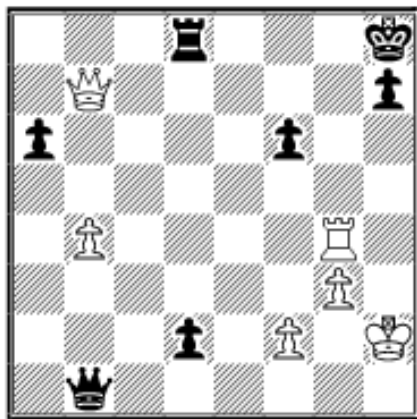
a) 36. Kh2 d2 37. Qf7 Qf5! White can't play 38. Rxh7+, since the rook will be recaptured with check; and on 38. Rg4 Black decides the game by 38...Qxf2+ 39. Kh3 Qf1+ 40. Kh2 Qh1+! (Euwe) or 40...Qe2+ 41. Kh3 Qxg4+!

b) 36. Kg2 d2 37. Qf7. Now 37...Qf5? is bad, because of 38. Rxh7+! Qxh7 39. Qxf6+ Qg7 40. Qxd8+ and 41. Qxd2, with two extra pawns; and 36...d1Q? leads to a perpetual check after 37. Rg8+! Rxg8 38. Qxf6+. Black wins by inserting 37...Qe4+! On 38. Kh2 Qf5, we transpose into the previous variation. On 38. f3, the simplest is 38...Qxf3+! 39. Kxf3 d1Q+, with mate soon to follow, although Black could also follow Euwe's suggestion 38...Qe2+ 39. Kh3 Qf1+ 40. Kh2 Qh1+! 41. Kxh1 d1Q+ 42. Kh2 Rd2+ (another path to the same end is 42...Qd2+ 43. Kg1 Qe3+ 44. Kg2 Rd2+ 45. Kh3 Qh6+ and 46...Qxg7+ [Dvoretsky]) 43. Kh3 Qh1+ 44. Kg4 h5+! 45. Kf4 Rd4+ 46. Ke3 Qg1+.

And now, let's look at retreating the rook to g4. Here, all the main variations were given by Alekhine.

c) 36. Kg2 d2 37. Rg4 Qh1+! 38. Kxh1 d1Q+ and 39...Qxg4.

d) 36. Kh2 d2 37. Rg4



The h1-square is controlled by the white queen; 37...Qg1+? is also insufficient: 38. Kh3! Qf1+ 39. Kh4. The only possibility is 37...Qg6! 38. Rxg6 hg. Let's see if White can get a perpetual check using nothing but his queen.

39. Qf7 d1Q 40. Qxf6+ Kh7 41. Qe7+ (after 41. Qf7+ Kh6 42. Qf4+ Kg7 43. Qe5+, both 43...Kh7 44. Qe7+ Kh6 [see below] and 43...Kf7 44. Qf4+ Kg8 45. Qc4+ Qd5 are strong) 41...Kh6 42. Qh4+ (42. Qe3+ Kh5!

43. Qe5+ g5, and the checks are over; or 43. Qe7 Qd4!) 42...Qh5, and White can't take the rook as the queen is pinned. Now we can understand why, on 36. Kg2 d2 37. Rg4, the reply 37...Qg6? was not enough to win – only 37...Qh1+!

works.

Let's return to the game. It only lasted one more pair of moves:

**36. Kg1-h2 d3-d2** White resigned.

*But I must admit that I, personally, would have liked to see if Black could have found the winning variation over the board.*

Our main conclusion is clear: One should not unquestioningly accept the annotations of even the great players, especially when we have reason to suspect their objectivity.



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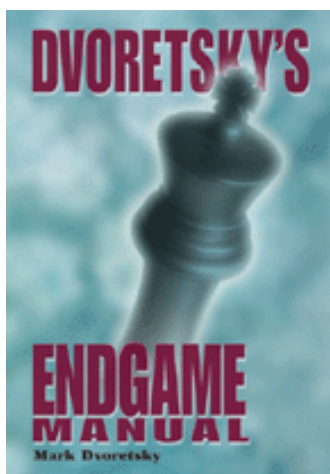
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## C O L U M N I S T S

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

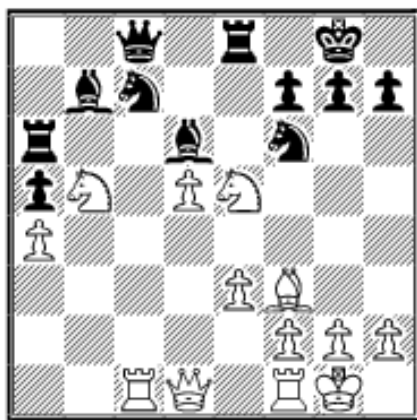


## Combinative Discoveries

From time to time, I publish articles in which I share new discoveries with my readers, which I sometimes uncover while studying well-known games, and sometimes when checking my own previously published analysis. In such articles, the endgame is most frequently discussed; this time, however, I would like to show you some curious tactical discoveries, based upon examples from my own books. As usual, I have indicated whose turn it is to move beneath the diagrams, and a question mark indicates that the position may be used as an exercise, to find the solution yourself. In the majority of cases, you will have to find an unexpected idea, not the first one that pops into your head; this means that the exercises are aimed at developing your combinative awareness and resourcefulness. And still, you should not forget to make a careful calculation of the variations.

We begin with the dissection of a critical moment in a tense battle between two top-class grandmasters. The game received detailed treatment in the chapter “20 Years Later” from my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*, and also in Artur Yusupov’s lectures, “General Principles of Opening Play”, from the book *Secrets of Opening Preparation*, the second book in our series written with Yusupov, *School for Budding Chess Champions*.

*Yusupov – Ljubojevic*  
Tilburg 1987



W?

White has sacrificed a piece for two pawns. Here, the value of each move is exceptionally high – any inaccuracy may shift the balance toward one side or the other. Black gains the advantage after either 22. Nxd6 Rxd6 23. Nc4 Rdd8, or 22. Nc6 Qd7! (threatening 23...Ncxd5) 23. e4 Nxe4 24. Bxe4 Rxe4 25. Nb8 Qe7 26. Nxa6 Nxa6.

**22. Ne5-c4!**

The only worthwhile possibility.

**22...Bd6-c5!?**

After the game, the players decided that this was the move that led to the loss. And it was only many years later that I established that the decisive error was in fact committed later.

Black is clearly worse after 22...Bxh2+?! 23. Kxh2 Ncxd5 24. Qd4, or 24. Kg1 Qb8 25. Qd4. 22...Bb4!? is possible – then Yusupov would have chosen either 23. d6 or 23. e4 (23...Nxe4?! 24. d6). In either case, White's pawns and active pieces would have compensated fully for the sacrificed piece, but probably no more than that. The battle would have been double-edged, with an uncertain outcome.

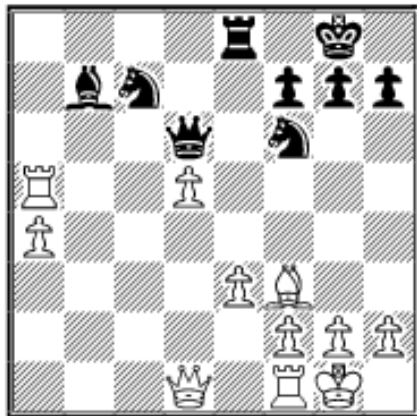
### 23. Nc4xa5! Ra6xa5 24. Rc1xc5 Qc8-d8

24...Qb8 loses to 25. Qd2 Na6 26. Rc4 Qd8 27. Nd6! Qxd6 28. Qxa5.

### 25. Nb5-d6!!

A beautiful shot, which Ljubomir Ljubojevic hadn't seen. 25...Rxc5 is bad: 26. Nxb7 Qe7 27. d6.

### 25...Qd8xd6 26. Rc5xa5



B?

Knowing how the game went, it's easy to label this moment or that moment critical; but how is one to see it in the heat of battle? Who would think that the absolutely natural capture of a center pawn would turn into the decisive error?

**26...Bxd5? 27. Qd4! Qe6** (27...Ne6 loses to 28. Rxd5) **28. Bxd5 Ncxd5 29. Rd1 Rc8 30. Rc5! Rxc5 31. Qxc5** Formally, two knights

are considered almost equal in value to a rook and two pawns; but not in the endgame, especially with that strong passed a-pawn, which the ungainly knights simply don't have the ability to fight against. And Black's rook and bishop, which might have put up some interference with the pawn's advance, Yusupov already had the forethought to exchange. Black's position is completely hopeless. (Notes from my book – there's nothing I can add here.) **31...h5 32. a5 Qe4 33. h3 g6 34. Qc6 Qb4 35. a6 Qa5 36. Qb7 Qa4 37. Rb1** Black resigned.

And now, let's see how the game should have been played.

### 26...Bb7-a6!

An unexpected move, hobbling the a5-rook. On 27. Re1, Black plays 27...Qb4!, while 27. Be2 is met by 27...Qb6! White would have to respond 27. Rxa6 Nxa6 28. Qd4, with a probable draw.



The variations aren't hard to calculate. What's much more difficult is to suspect the possibility of capturing the rook, to start thinking in the proper direction – this requires a sharp sense for combinations.

The following example is examined in the above-cited book, *Tactical Play*, and also in the 4<sup>th</sup> book of our “School” series with Yusupov, *Positional Play*.

**Shamkovich – Dvoretsky**

Viljandi 1972



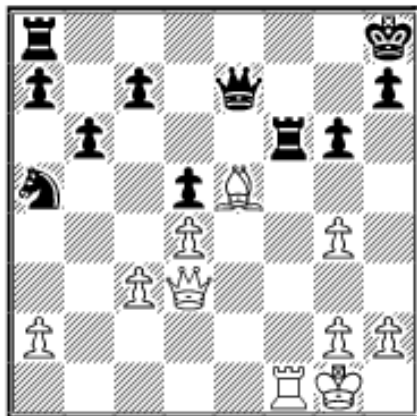
B? (Evaluate 18...f5)

This is the position that could have been reached, had Leonid Shamkovich played 18. Bc1-f4. Instead, the grandmaster chose **18. Re1?! (it would be better to put the other rook here instead). After 18...Rae8! 19. Bf4 (19. Nxf7+ Rxf7 20. e6 Bh4!) 19...Bh4!? 20. g3 Bd8**, Black retained a defensible position, and even went on to win the game.

Most likely, Shamkovich rejected 18. Bf4!? because of the reply 18...f5. On any other move of mine (18...Nc4, for instance), he would continue 19. Rae1, and then retreat the bishop; setting up the threat of f3-f4-f5. The knight stands prettily on c4, but it's useless – here it has not the slightest thing to do with the defense of the kingside.

In the positional sense, of course 18...f5 is the proper reaction; however, White has a clever combinational reply.

19. e6 Qxe6 20. Rae1 Qd7 21. Rxe7! Qxe7 22. Be5+ Rf6 23. Ng4! (but not 23. g4? Nc4 24. g5 Nxe5) 23...fg 24. fg – White recovers the rook, and appears to gain the advantage.



B

When your opponent has thought up something, from a practical point of view it sometimes makes sense to take a side line, rather than meet his plan head-on. But here, the f7-f5 advance is too important for Black to toss aside at the first sign of difficulty. Let's continue examining the combination. There are two replies: 24...Rf8 and 24...Kg8.

After 24...Rf8 25. Rxf6 (25. g5? Qxe5!) 25...Rxf6 26. g5 Kg8 27. gf, White stands better, although not so much as to make it necessary for Black to refrain from the strategically necessary move 18...f5.

And besides, he has a second possibility: 24...Kg8!? After 25. Rxf6 Nc4? would be a mistake, in view of 26. Rxc6+! hg 27. Qxc6+ Kf8 28. Qh6+ Kf7 (28...Ke8 29. Qc6+) 29. Qh5+! Kf8 30. Qh8+ Kf7 31. Qxa8 Nxe5?! 32. Qxd5+. Well, OK then – before we put our knight on c4, we'll move the rook to a safe square, like d8 or e8, and the position becomes unclear.

Up to this point, I have said nothing new – all this may be found in my books. But now, many years later, the young Pole Kamil Miton has suggested an important strengthening of the attack.

**18...f7-f5!? 19. g2-g4!! f5xg4**

On 19...Qe6 20. gf gf 21. Kh1 followed by 22. Rg1, Black's position is difficult, since his pieces will be tied down to the defense of the weak pawn at f5.

**20. e5-e6! Qd7xe6 21. Ra1-e1**

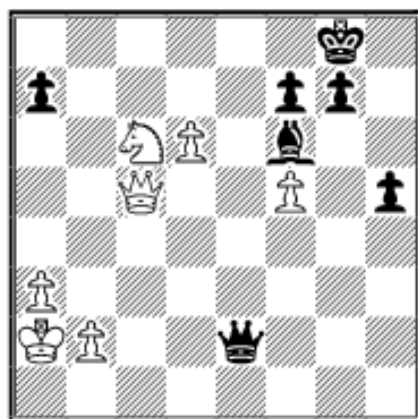
Black's game is difficult. 21...Qd7 no longer works, in view of 22. Rxe7! Qxe7 23. Be5+ Rf6 24. fg. And White also achieves a clear advantage after 21...Qc6 22. Rxe7 Rxf4 23. Qe3.

Imagine that you are considering 18...f5; having first convinced yourself that the combination beginning with 19. e6 was harmless, you then discover 19. g4!! Would you then have decided to push the f-pawn? It's hardly possible to give a definite answer here; but I would probably have gone ahead and taken the risk. Black's position is shaky, but the move f7-f5 resolves the defense's problems in the majority of variations; and the likelihood that my opponent would find the hidden refutation was not very great.

Now let's examine two episodes from my book, *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis*.

***Psakhis – Yusupov***

USSR Championship, Frunze 1981



W?

The game continuation, **45. Qb4?!** (intending 46. Ne7+ Kh7 47. Nd5) **45...Qd3!** allowed Black to gain a decisive advantage. Now the important d5-square is under control, the simplest answer to 46. Ne7+ Kh7 47. Qb8 would be 47...Qd4!

**45. Nc6-d4 Qe2-d2 46. d6-d7 Kg8-h7**

Yusupov and I had seen this position in our home analysis, and considered it won. But in fact, right here is where White unexpectedly saves himself by sacrificing the passed pawn.

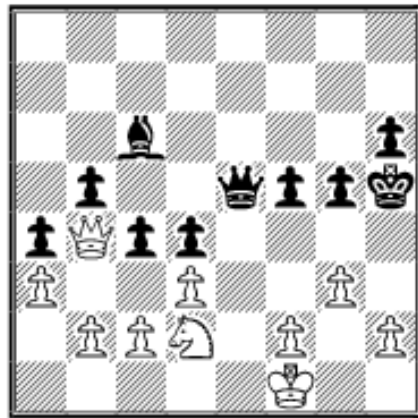
47. d7-d8Q!! Bf6xd8 48. Qc5xa7 Bd8-f6 49. Qa7xf7

Threatening a perpetual check.

49...Qd2-g5 50. Nd4-e6 Qg5xf5 51. Ne6xg7! Qf5-g6 52. Qf7xg6+ Kh7xg6 53. Ng7xh5

*Mateu – Dolmatov*

European Junior Championship, Groningen 1978/79



B?

With 39...f4?, Black lost his winning chances. The game ended as follows: 40. Qf8 Bd5 41. Nf3!, and the draw was agreed, in view of 41...Bxf3 42. Qf7+ Kg4 43. Qd7+.

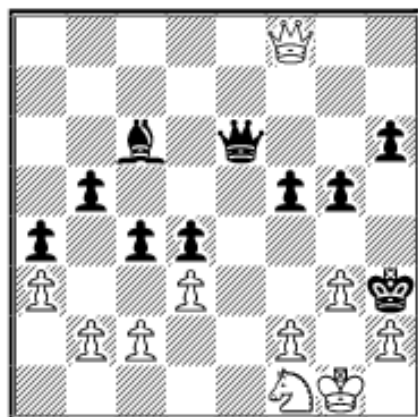
Nor is 39...c3 convincing, in view of 40. bc dc 41. Nb1. After 39...Qd5, 40. dc? bc 41. Nxc4 d3! is bad; but White does have the simple 40. Ke2.

It was time to bring the king into the attack.

39...Kh5-g4!

Now 40. dc? Kh3 41. Kg1 Bg2 42. Nf1 Qe2 is really bad for White. After 40. Qf8 Qe6, White's position is critical, owing to the threat of 41...Kh3. On the other hand, it's still not easy at all to demonstrate a win.

At first, I studied only 41. Kg1 Kh3 (41...c3!? is no less powerful, for example: 42. bc dc 43. Nf1 f4! 44. gf gf 45. Qg7+, and now either 45...Kh3 46. Ne3!? b4! 47. ab a3 48. Ng2 Bxg2 49. Qxg2+ Kh4, or simply 45...Kh5!, threatening 46...Qg6+) 42. Nf1



B?

White has managed to beat off the immediate threats to his king somehow. In order to breathe new life into his attack, in line with the "two weaknesses principle," Black must undertake decoying activity on the queenside, where the pawn configuration allows him to make a break. The only question is: What is the most accurate way of doing so?

42...Bg2?! 43. Qg7 b4 does not work, in view of 44. ab! (44. dc? b3 45. cb Bxf1 46. Kxf1 d3 would be bad) 44...c3 45. bc a3 46. cd Bxf1 (46...a2 47. d5!) 47. Kxf1 a2 48. Qa7! (but not 48. d5? Qa6 49. Qa1

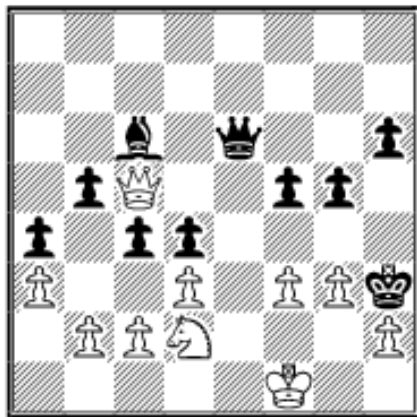
Qa4) 48...Qd5 49. Ke2 Kg2 50. Kd2.

Black must play **42...b4!** immediately. One interesting variation is 43. ab c3 44. bc a3 45. cd a2 46. d5 Bxd5 47. Qg7 Ba8! (threatening 47...Qc6) 48. b5 (48. Ne3 f4) 48...a1Q! 49. Qxa1 Qd5, and wins.

**43. dc h5!** Threatening 44...Qe4. 43...b3 44. cb Bg2 is also possible (the idea being 45...Bxf1 46. Kxf1 d3) – 45. Qc5 ab.

**44. f3** (44. Qh8 Qe2!) **44...ba 45. ba Bxf3**, and Black has a decisive advantage.

Joel Lautier has suggested an interesting defensive idea: **41. Qc5!?** (in place of 41. Kg1) **41...Kh3** (after 41...Qd5 42. f3+ Kh3 43. Qe7!, White even wins; and 42...Kh5 43. Qxd5 Bxd5 44. Ke2 would lead to a drawn endgame) **42. f3**, with the idea of 43. Qxd4.



B?

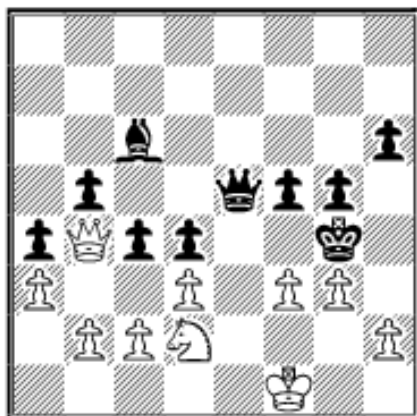
I managed to unearth a pretty combination leading to a forced win.

**42...cd! 43. cd Qe3!! 44. Qxc6** (44. Qxf5+ Kxh2 is no help here) **44...Qxd3+ 45. Ke1 Qe3+ 46. Kf1** (46. Kd1 d3 47. Qxh6+ Kg2) **46...Kxh2 47. Qxh6+ Kxg3 48. Qd6+ f4 49. Ne4+ Kxf3 50. Nxg5+ Kg3**

Not long ago, I decided to have another look at my old analysis. Experience has taught me that, although in the above-cited complex and pretty variations there might be errors hidden in any move, the overall assessment of the position (or, at the board, the fate of the game) hinges generally on mistakes made at the very beginning of the analysis.

And so it was that, having examined the position with fresh eyes, I discovered that after 39...Kg4!, White's first move in reply (40. Qf8) is not forced:

**40. f2-f3+!!**



B

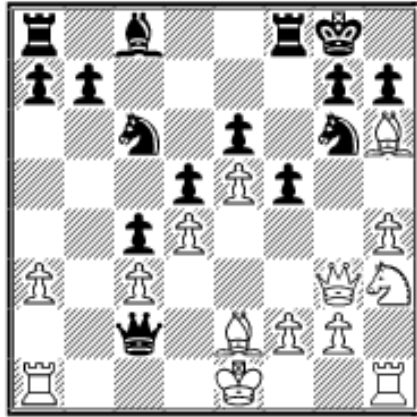
After 40...Bxf3? 41. Nxf3 Kxf3? 42. Qd2, the king finds itself in a mating net (42...Kg4 43. Qd1+ Kh3 44. Qh5 mate) – we must always deal with such dangers when we leave the queens on and run our own king into the enemy's lair.

**40...Kg4-h3 41. Qb4-f8 Qe5-e6 42. Qf8-g7!**

This threatens to capture on d4. The difference between this line and Lautier's variation (40. Qf8? Qe6 41. Qc5!? Kh3 42. f3) is that here, Black's queen is tied to the defense of the h6-pawn, and therefore cannot return to e3. The game should be drawn.

### **Heuer – Dvoretsky**

Viljandi 1972



W

We will be examining only an episode from one of my memorable games, which was analyzed in detail in *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*.

The actual continuation was **15. h5 f4! 16. Nxf4 Rxf4 17. hg** (17. Bxf4 Nxf4, and White can't play 18. Qxf4? Qxc3+) **17...gh**. This position looks very dangerous for Black, but in point of fact White has no advantage here

(I refer anyone who doubts this to my book).

The move White made was so obvious that it wasn't even commented upon. Only many years later did I turn my attention to an alternative possibility.

### **15. Nh3-f4!? Rf8-f7!**

15...gh? 16. h5! is just bad for Black.

### **16. Nf4xg6 g7xh6! 17. Ng6-f4+ Rf7-g7 18. Qg3-e3 Kg8-h8**

On 19. Rc1 Qb3, the queen can return home, after snatching the a3-pawn.

### **19. Nf4-h5**

Here, Black needs to play **19...Rg6**, when his position, although shaky, is far from being hopeless.

Taking the g2-pawn is too risky. On the other hand, it's not all simple here, either: White has to see through a clever trap.

### **19...Rg7xg2?**



W

The attempt to win immediately by 20. Qxh6? would allow Black to force a spectacular perpetual check: 20...Rg1+!! 21. Rxc3 Qxc3+ 22. Kf1 Qh3+.

And trapping the rook by 20. Ng3!? offers very little either. The position would be unclear after either 20...Bd7 21. Kf1 Rxc3, or 20...f4!? 21. Qf3 (21. Qxf4 Qxc3+ 22. Kf1 Rxc3 draws) 21...Bd7 22. Kf1 Rxc3 23. fg

Rf8 24. gf Ne7.

**20. Rc1!? Qb2** is tempting; but here too, White gets nothing out of 21. Qxh6 Bd7 (21...Qxa3!?) 22. Nf6 Rg7 23. Nxd7 Rxd7 24. Rg1 Rf7, or 23. Rh3 f4! 24. Qxf4 Qxa3. The correct plan involves the quickest possible exchange of Black's rook, guarding the kingside: **21. Kf1! Rg6 22. Rg1 Rxc3+ 23. Kxc3 Qxa3 24. Qxh6 Qe7 25. Kh2! Qxh4+** (25...Bd7 26. Nf6 followed by 27. Rg1, and the exchange of queens at g7 leads to the loss of the bishop) **26. Kg2 Qe7 27. Kh3 Bd7 28. Nf6**, or 28. Rg1, with a decisive advantage.

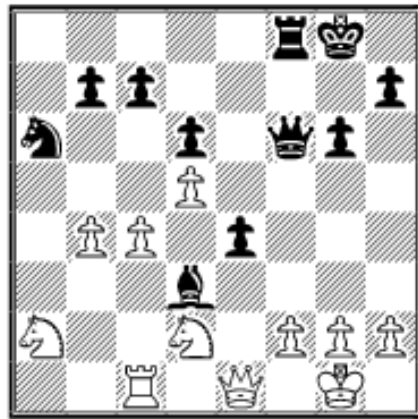
But in our main line, the exchange of rooks can be carried out by slightly different means.

**20. Ke1-f1! Rg2-g6 21. Rh1-g1 Qc2-e4 22. Qe3-d2**

After 22...Rxc3+ 23. Kxc3, a strong answer to 23...f4 is 24. Bg4!, preparing 25. Nxf4. If 23...Qxh4, then 24. Qxh6 Qe7 25. Kh2!, as in the variation examined earlier. The best defense is 23...Bd7 24. Qxh6 Rg8+, but the exchange-down endgame after 25. Ng3 Qxe2 26. Qf6+ Rg7 27. Qf8+ Rg8 28. Qxg8+ Kxg8 29. Nxe2 is very hard for Black.

We conclude with a fragment from a game presented with brief notes in the introduction to my lecture on the formation of an opening repertoire, from Yusupov's and my second book in the "School" series: *Secrets of Opening Preparation*.

**Mukhin – Dvoretsky**  
Moscow 1969

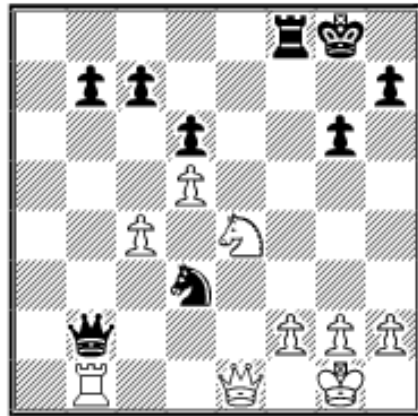


B

Black has an obvious advantage. The continuation was **26...Qb2!** (natural and strong) **27. Nc3 Nxb4 28. Ndx4 Bxe4 29. Nxe4 Nd3 30. Rb1**

One of the (unfortunately, many) shortcomings of my play was a careless calculation of variations, which is what happened in this case, also. Sometimes, it can work out anyway, provided you have

evaluated the situation properly in general, and don't commit too many gross blunders. Nevertheless, it behooves a player to rid himself of this shortcoming, by developing an ability to concentrate fully at the board, and by solving appropriate exercises.



B?

**30...Qe5!?**

This move, which wins a pawn, had been foreseen, and was therefore made quickly.

During the game, it seemed both to me and to my opponent that **30...Qd4?! would be refuted by 31. Qe2 Qxc4 32. Ng5 Qxd5 33. Qe7**. We both failed to see the only, but sufficient defense against the mating threat:

**33...Rxf2! 34. Qxh7+ Kf8**. On the other hand, **34. Nf3** or **34. Qh6+ Ke7 35. Nf3** would still have left the outcome uncertain.

Instead of **31...Qxc4?**, **31...Rf4!** **32. Ng5 Rxf2** is decisive. But White's play can be improved too: **31. Qe3!**, after which we would still have had to go into the afore-mentioned complex variation **31...Qxc4 32. Ng5**, etc.

In examining **30...Qc2! 31. Qd1**, I saw that the exchange sacrifice **31...Rxf2? 32. Nxf2 Qxf2+ 33. Kh1 Qe3 34. Qf3(or f1)** would give Black nothing. But for some reason, I forgot about the simple **31...Qxc4**. Here, Black gains a decisive advantage, because the white queen is less active than after **30..Qd4?!!**

**31. Qe2 Nxf2 32. Re1 Nxe4 33. Qxe4 Re8! 34. Qxe5 Rxe5 35. Rxe5?!!**

The rook endgame was probably lost, too.

**35...de 36. Kf2 Kf7 37. Ke3 Ke7!**

And White resigned, since after **38. c5 b6 39. Ke4 bc 40. Kxe5**, he soon falls into zugzwang.

The rule is: Let well enough alone! But recently, I noticed still another means of playing from the position in the next-to-last diagram, and decided to test it out. The results were quite pretty.

### 26...Qf6-d4!?

Creating the terrible threat of 27...Rxf2! 28. Qxf2 e3. 27. Rc3 Nxb4! (but not 27...Rxf2? 28. Rxd3!) 28. Nb3 Qb6 is hopeless.

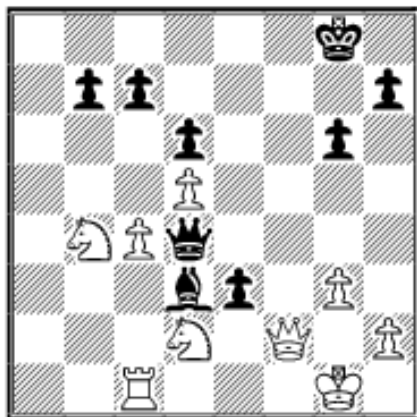
### 27. g2-g3!

The only defense. On 27...Rxf2?! 28. Qxf2 e3, White now has the saving move 29. Qf4! It's not too late to return here to the plan executed in the game: 27...Qb2! But how can one resist the spectacular combination that is now at Black's disposal?

### 27...Na6xb4?!

On 28. Nb3 Qb2 29. Nxb4 Qxb3, the outcome is not completely clear yet, but Black would still hold the advantage. White has a much stronger response – try to find it first.

### 28. Na2xb4! Rf8xf2! 29. Qe1xf2 e4-e3



Now 30. Qf4 ed+! is no help, since the rook at c1 is no longer defended by the knight. But a fantastic move saves White.

### 30. Qf2-f7+!!

Right here!

### 30...Kg8xf7 31. Nd2-f3

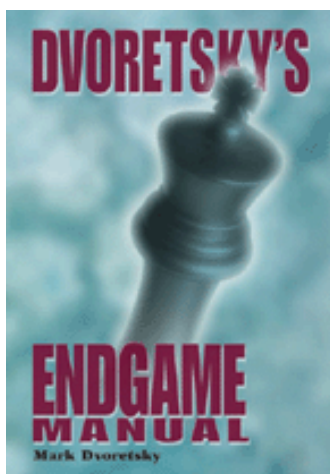
The queen cannot retreat to e4 because of the knight fork. And otherwise, White plays 32. Nxd3 and 33. Nfe1, consolidating, when he stands no worse.





## C O L U M N I S T S

# The Instructor Mark Dvoretsky



## A Game with Questions

Whenever I look at chess books or magazines, I always pay particular attention to the analysis of examples that also appear in my notebook. New publications help me correct my previous conclusions on developments in those games. As a result, I get the chance to show my new students a deeper and more accurate version and the lessons become more substantive and effective.

Sometimes the opposite happens as well: comparing published material with my own, I can see that the authors either repeat errors made by previous annotators, or commit new ones themselves. And finally, there are in-between cases: suggestions by some authors will force me to return to work on my own notes, occasionally leading to unexpected and pretty conclusions.

An article by Alexei Yuneev, published in *Shakhmatny Peterburg*, examines the dynamic encounter between Leonid Stein and Vassily Smyslov, which I also once studied. For both of us, it would seem, the primary source was the rather lightweight commentary by Gufeld and Lazarev from their book devoted to Stein's games.

The result was a combination of the second and third situations given above: errors in some of Yuneev's conclusions (although not really significant) were already known to me; but some of his other suggestions required additional analysis, which deepened my understanding of the game.

I submitted a new version of the game to be printed in the Russian magazine *Shakhmatnaya Nedelya* (*Chess Weekly*), and that ended up being used by Garry Kasparov in his book *Garry Kasparov on My Great Predecessors: Part III*, which in turn allowed me to correct a few details.

The form in which I now present this entertaining game, both here and in classes with my students, can be labeled "A Game with Questions". When analyzing the game, you will be asked several questions. Some of them are uncomplicated; others are harder, requiring lengthy and accurate calculation.

Try not to accidentally peek at the move following the question. It will not be commented upon (you'll find the answers at the conclusion of the article), and isn't even necessarily the strongest. Still, it *might* be the strongest move; and by looking at it before solving the question, you would get a strong hint.

Some magazines regularly publish such exercises. As a rule, the authors will ask you to find every move in the game after a certain point. I'm not doing that,

because some of the moves are completely obvious; and in other cases, equivalent or nearly equivalent alternative choices are possible. Usually, the authors of those articles reward solvers with points for each correct answer; and at the end, they rate the readers' strength on the basis of the number of points they have amassed. I understand that this format is entertaining; but still, I would rather not play around like this, since I have no idea how many points correspond to any level of chess qualification. There are too many qualifying circumstances, chief and most obvious being that an objective evaluation can only be arrived at on the basis of several dozen experiments – which, of course, no one has yet performed.

And so, to our game:

### Stein – Smyslov

All-Union Chess Olympiad (*Spartakiad*), Moscow 1972

**1. c2-c4 Ng8-f6 2. Nb1-c3 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4. e2-e4 Bc8-b7 5. Qd1-e2 Bf8-b4**

5...c5!?

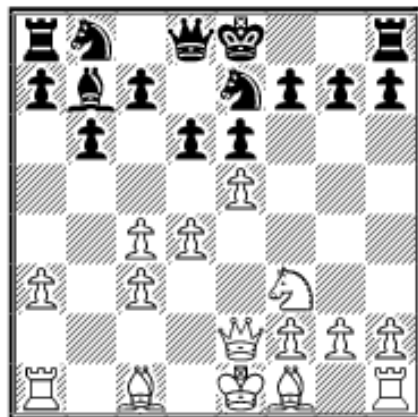
**6. e4-e5 Nf6-g8 7. d2-d4 d7-d6**

Not the best continuation. Theory recommends 7...Ne7 here, as in: 8. Bd2 0-0 9. 0-0-0 d5.

**8. a2-a3**

8. Bd2!? de 9. de, intending 10. 0-0-0.

**8...Bb4xc3+ 9. b2xc3 Ng8-e7**



1) How should White continue?

**10. h2-h4 Nb8-d7 11. h4-h5 Bb7xf3?!**

A risky decision – in order to win a pawn, Black allows his kingside to be broken up. 11...h6+/- was safer.

**12. Qe2xf3 d6xe5**

If 12...h6, either 13. Qg4 Nf5 14. Bd3 0-0! 15. Qf3 followed by g2-g4-g5, or 13. ed cd

14. Bd3, intending 15. Qg3.

**13. h5-h6! g7xh6**

After 13...g6 14. de, Black can't play 14...Nxe5? because of 15. Qf6+-.

**14. Bc1xh6**

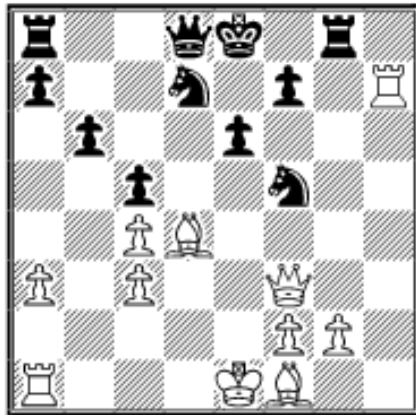
14. Bd3! Ng6 15. Be4 Rb8 16. Bc6 was probably stronger (Kasparov).

**14...e5xd4**

On 14...Nf5, Black would have to consider 15. Bg5!? or 15. d5!?

**15. Bh6-g7 Rh8g8 16. Rh1xh7 Ne7-f5?**

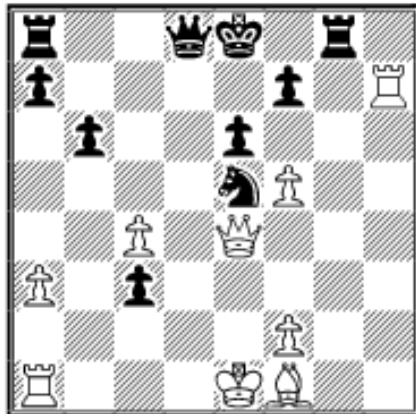
As Kasparov notes, he should have defended by 16...Nf8! 17. Bxf8 Rxf8 18. 0-0-0 (18. cd Qxd4 =) 18...c5!

**17. Bg7xd4 c7-c5**

2) Now how does White continue?

**18. g2-g4 c5xd4 19. g4xf5 e6-e5**

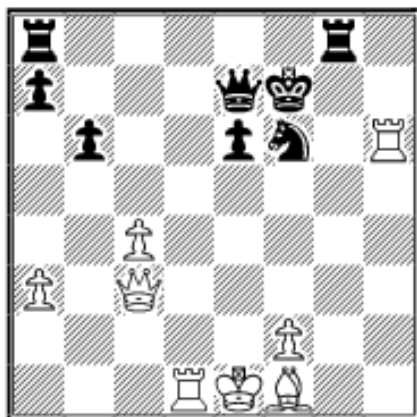
Black could have tried 19...Ne5!? 20. Qe4 dc



3) In this case, how should White have continued?

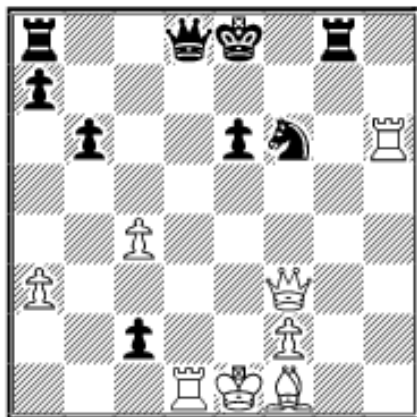
Yuneev suggested another defensive try: 19...Nf6!? 20. fe fe 21. Rh6 dc, when White would have had to choose between 22. Qxc3 and 22. Rd1. Let's look at both lines:

A) 22. Qxc3 Kf7 (here Yuneev stops, with the note: "Black has a very defensible position, although White has a distinct advantage in the form of his more actively placed pieces.") 23. Rd1 Qe7



4) How does White continue his attack?

B) 22. Rd1!? c2!



5) What happens if the queen is taken?

**20. Qf3-d5 Rg8-f8 21. c3xd4 Ra8-c8 22. Ra1-d1**

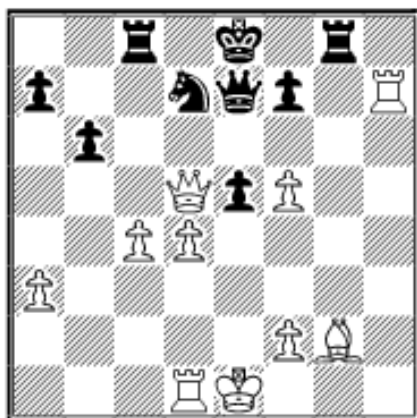
22. de? Rc5 would be a mistake, allowing Black to complicate. However, White had other tempting possibilities here, such as 22. Ra2!?, or 22. c5!? (intending 23. Bb5) 22...bc (22...ed 23. Ra2! Qg5 24. Bb5 Qc1+ 25. Ke2 Rc7 26. cb ab 27. Rd2 with an attack) 23. de

Qa5+ 24. Qd2, when White's advantage is indisputable. Alternatively, the text move is also very strong.

**22...Qd8-e7 23. Bf1-g2!**

Stein does not want the exchange of queens after 23. de Qxe5+ 24. Be2, even though the endgame is clearly in his favor. He clears the f1-square for his king, in the event of a discovered check along the e-file. After 23...ed+ 24. Kf1 Nf6 25. Qb5+ Qd7 26. Rh6! (even stronger than the simple 26. Qxd7+ Nxd7 27. Rxd4) 26...Rc5 (26...Qxb5 27. cb+-) 27. Qb2!, Black's position is hopeless.

**23...Rf8-g8**

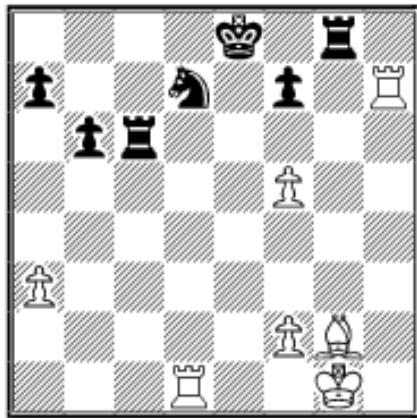


6) How should White continue?

**24. Qd5-b7 Rc8xc4 25. d4xe5 Qe7xe5+ 26. Ke1-f1 Qe5-b5 27. Kf1-g1 Qb5-c6**

Black does no better after 27...Rcg4 28. Qc8+ Ke7 29. Rxd7+! (or 29. Rxf7+!), or 27...Rxc2+ 28. Qxc2 (threatening 29. Qg8+).

## 28. Qb7xc6 Rc4xc6



7) How should White continue?

29. Rh7-h8 Rc6-g6 30. f5xg6 Rg8xh8 31. Bg2-c6 Rh8-g8 32. Bc6xd7+ Ke8-e7 33. Bd7-f5 f7xg6 34. Rd1-d7+ Ke7-f6 35. Bf5-d3 Rg8-a8 Black resigned.

### Answers

1. Black wants to put pressure on the e5-pawn by developing his knights to g6 and d7. So, **10. h4!**, and 11. h5. In this way, White breaks up his opponent's plan, seizes space on the kingside, and also brings the king's rook into the game, which would be difficult for White to do by any other means.

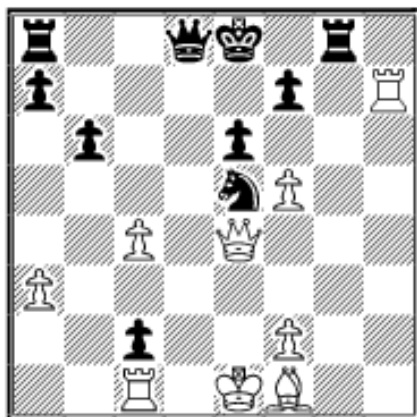
2. White would like to keep the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal, but 18. Bh8? works poorly, because of 18...Ke7! The solution is the energetic move **18. g4!** White's better after 18...cd 19. gf, since the protection of Black's king is shattered. If 18...Nd6, then 19. Bg7! (19. Bh8 Ke7 20. Bg7 Ne8 is inferior) 19...Rc8 20. Qf4! (not 20. Rd1?! Qg5!) 20...e5 21. Qh6 Ne4 (only move) 22. Bg2 Nef6 (or 22...Ng5) 23. Rh8, with an advantage.

3. If White isn't careful, Black will whip up a counterattack. The only line to win here is **21. Ra2! f6** (21...Qb8 22. fe) **22. f4! ef** **23. Qh1!** (23. Qe2 Qd4 24. fe+-) **23...Nf7** **24. Qb7+-**.

The other tries have instructive refutations:

21. Bg2? Qd2+ 22. Kf1 c2! 23. Qxa8+ Ke7+-;

21. Rd1? c2! 22. Rc1!



Yuneev stopped after this move and, astonishingly, so did Kasparov, even though my article published in *Shakhmatnaya Nedelya* – with which Kasparov was familiar – showed a secure defense. The aforementioned book by Gufeld and Lazarev only mentions 22. Rxd8+ Rxd8 23. Qxc2 Nf3+ 24. Ke2 Nd4+.

Black would indeed be in big trouble, were it not for the spectacular shot 22...Qd4!! 23. Qxa8+ Ke7 24. Qb7+ Kf6, when it is White

who must now seek salvation:

25. Rxc2 Rd8-+;

25. Rh6+ Kxf5 26. Rh5+ Kf6 27. Rxe5!? (27. Rh6+ Kg7 28. Rh3 Rd8 29. Qg2+ Kf6 30. Rh6+ Ng6-/+ or -+) 27...Qxe5+ 28. Kd2 Qf4+! 29. Kxc2 Qxf2+ 30. Kc3 Rg1-/+;

25. fe!? Qc3+ 26. Ke2 Qxc4+ (26...Qd3+ 27. Ke1 Nf3+?? 28. Qxf3 Qxf3 29. Rxf7+) 27. Ke1 Qc3+ 28. Ke2 Qd3+ 29. Ke1 Qxh7 30. ef Rf8 31. Qd5 (31. f4 Qh4+ 32. Kd2 Qxf4+ 33. Kxc2 Rxf7-/+ ) 31...Qf5! (preparing 32...Rxf7) 32. f4!? (32. Bc4 b5!) 32...Qxf4 33. Rxc2 Nf3+ 34. Kd1 Nd4 35. Bc4 Nxc2 36. Qc6+, followed eventually by Kxc2. White can continue fighting, but the advantage will remain with Black.

**4.** The exchange sacrifice is good only for a draw: 24. Rxf6+?! Qxf6 25. Rd7+ Kg6 26. Qg3+ (26. Bd3+ Kg5) 26...Qg5! (not 26...Kh6 27. Qh3+! Kg5 28. Be2 Qa1+ 29. Bd1 Qe5+ 30. Kf1 Raf8 31. Qh5+ Kf6 32. Qh6+ Kf5 33. Bc2+ Kg4 34. Rd3+-) 27. Bd3+ Kf6 28. Qf3+ Ke5 29. Qe4+ Kf6, and White only has a perpetual.

24. Rd3!? isn't too bad: 24...Rg6! (24...e5? 25. c5! Qxc5 (25...Kg7 26. Qc1+-) 26. Qb3+ Kg7 26. Rxf6! Kxf6 27. Rf3+ Kg5 29. Bc4!+-, or 29. Rg3+ Kf6 30. Rxg8 Rxg8 31. Qxg8+-) 25. Rxg6 Kxg6 26. Re3!? Black's position is shaky, but he still has a defense.

The strongest continuation was found by Ernesto Inarkiev.

**24. c5!!** This threatens 25. c6, for instance, after 24...Rad8 25. Rxd8 Rxd8 26. c6, with an overwhelming advantage (Black must not only protect his king, but also stop the passed pawn). And taking the pawn loses by force.

**24...bc 25. Rxf6+! Qxf6 26. Rd7+ Kg6 27. Bd3+! Kg5**

Now it's clear why White gave up the pawn: he has the queen check at c5 – just not at once: 28. Qxc5+ e5 29. Qc1+ Qf4.

**28. Qc1+! Qf4**

28...Kg4 is no better: 29. Be2+ Kf5 30. Qxc5+ e4 31. Qc2+ Kg5 32. Qh7!+-.

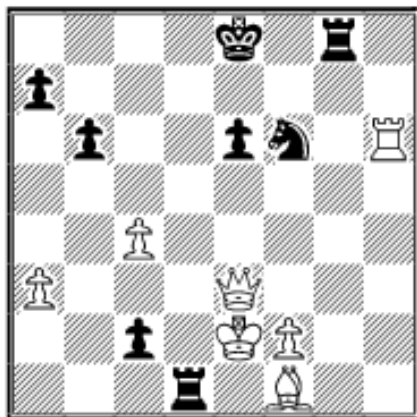
**29. Qxc5+ e5 30. Qe7+ Qf6**

30...Kg4 31. Be2+ Kh3 32. Qh7+ Kg2 33. Bf1+ Kg1 34. Rg7+.

**31. f4+!**

**5.** A tempting alternative is **23. Rxd8+?! Rxd8 24. Qe3! Rd1+ 25. Ke2**





Now the direct 25...c1Q? would lose to 26. Qxe6+ Kd8 27. Qxf6+ Kc8 28. Qe6+ Kb7 29. Rh7+! Ka6 30. Qxg8, when Black must deal with the mate threat (after 31. Qc8+), while being himself unable to mate, or even to check, the white king.

However, there is one move: **25...Rf8!!=**, which wards off all the threats. Now it is White who must find the hidden path to salvation. 26. Qxe6+? Kd8 27. Rh8 Re1+! is bad; so is 26. Bh3? Kd8! 27. Qd2+ Rxd2+ 28.

Kxd2 Ne4+ 29. Kxc2 Rxf2+, when Black has a healthy extra pawn for the endgame.

**26. Rh8!**, is necessary, with the following variations:

26...Kf7 27. Rxf8+ Kxf8 28. Qc3! (not 28. Qxe6? Kg7!! 29. Qe7+ Kg6 30. Bg2 c1Q 31. Be4+ Nxe4 32. Qxe4+ Kf6, and White has no perpetual) 28...c1Q 29. Qxf6+ Ke8 30. Qxe6+ Kd8 31. Qg8+ Kc7 32. Qg7+ Rd7 33. Qe5+, and with the white king's bishop still on the board, Black cannot avoid the perpetual check.

26...Ne4 27. Qxe4 (27. Rxf8+? Kxf8+-) 27...Re1+ 28. Kxe1 c1Q+ 29. Ke2 Qb2+ 30. Kd1 Rxh8 31. Qxe6+, once again with a perpetual check.

Instead of taking the queen, 23. Rc1! is correct, for example: 23...Kf7 24. Rxc2 (threatening 25. Rd2) 24...Rh8 25. Rxh8 Qxh8 26. Qb7+ Kg6 27. Bd3+ Kh6 28. f4, with a winning attack; or 23...Rf8 24. Rxc2 (intending 25. Rd2; 25. Re2), and Black's in a tight spot.

Conclusion: both 22. Rd1 and 22. Qxc3 lead to a decisive advantage for White. Conversely, his task here would have been much more complex than in the game.

**6.** White chose the strongest and most energetic move, **24. Qb7!** On 24...Rb8 he plays 25. Qc7 or 25. Qxa7; on 24...Rd8 – 25. de or 25. Bd5 Rg1+ 26. Ke2 ed+ 27. Be6! Black's choice in the game, 24...Rxc4?!, could have been immediately refuted by means of a double attack (overlooked by the annotators): 25. Qa8+! Qd8 26. Qd5+-. Stein played less accurately, but still retained enough of an advantage to win.

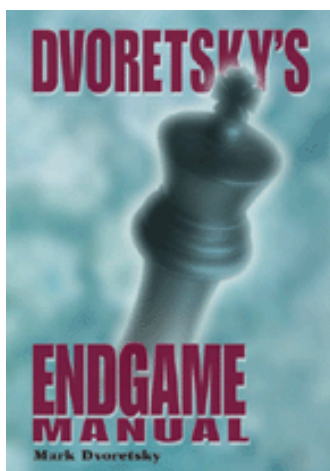
**7.** The simple deflecting move **29. Rh8!** would have ended the game, for all practical purposes: 29...Rxh8 30. Bxc6+-. And, in fact, he could also have played this one move earlier – 28. Rh8!+-.



## C O L U M N I S T S

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Castling on Opposite Sides

One of my articles, in the collection published under the English title *Attack and Defence* by Dvoretsky and Yusupov, concerns the outstanding collection of games by the 12<sup>th</sup> World Correspondence Champion, Grigory Sanakoev.

However, I did not deal with the engrossing encounter that I now bring to your attention in that article. I had previously prepared the game for training replay, relying chiefly on Sanakoev's comments. Several times, my students have played out the position arising after White's 18<sup>th</sup> move, either with Black (playing against me) or against one another (using the mutual attack against opposite-side castled positions as a training theme). Naturally, we discovered analytical additions and improvements in the process of examining the game. I would like to acquaint my readers with the most current version of my notes to this game.

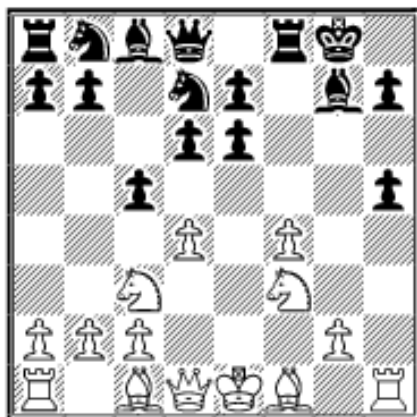
*Estrin - Sanakoev*

World Correspondence Championship 1968-70

1. e2-e4 d7-d6 2. d2-d4 g7-g6 3. Nb1-c3 Bf8-g7 4. f2-f4 Ng8-f6 5. Ng1-f3 0-0 6. e4-e5 Nf6-d7 7. h2-h4 c7-c5 8. e5-e6

8. h5 is considered the main line. According to theory, it offers White no advantage.

8...f7xe6 9. h4-h5 g6xh5!



10. d4xc5

Here I present a long quote from Sanakoev, which reflects his approach to explaining opening theory in his annotations:

*After the game Estrin maintained that this move was a major inaccuracy, bringing the Black knight into action and freeing the light-squared bishop, which plays an important role in Black's defense. To support this view he gave the variation 10. Rxh5 Nf6 11. Rh4,*

*and claimed that either of Black's replies would lead to positions where White's chances were clearly preferable despite his pawn minus:*

*a) 11...Nc6 12. Be3 cd 13. Nxd4 e5 14. Nxc6 bc 15. fe de 16. Bc4+ Kh8*



17. Qe2.

b) 11...cd 12. Nxd4 e5 13. Bc4+ d5 (13...Kh8 14. fe de 15. Nf3 Qxd1+ 16. Kxd1) 14. Nxd5 Nxd5 15. Qh5 h6 16. fe. Later, G. Fridstein discovered that Black could seize the initiative with 14...e6! 15. Nxf6+ Qxf6 16. Nf3 e4 17. Ng5 h6 18. Qh5 Qd4!. Ten years after this game, in Estrin - Nunn, Lublin 1978, Black demonstrated an improvement two moves earlier, with 12...Nc6!, which gave him the advantage after 13. Be3 Qb6! 14. Qd3 Nb4 15. Qd2 e5 16. fe de.

*Quite frankly, I can see little point in trying to establish the ultimate theoretical truth on the basis of a game I finished many years ago. A concrete opening problem arose during the game and had to be solved promptly (even allowing for the special conditions of postal play, with the relatively free time-limit for thinking about your moves). If, after the game, many qualified players in various countries exerted themselves and unearthed refinements, improvements, - even refutations! - in this or that variation, what does it prove?...*

*To revert to Estrin's comment on his tenth move, it must be said that the general grounds on which he prefers 10. Rxh5 are, of course, valid. Yet just as many arguments can be urged in support of 10. dc. For instance the black knight is diverted to the queenside; the pressure is lifted on d4; Black loses the chance to bring his knight to the defense of his weakened kingside with tempo; he can no longer develop the other knight with tempo after exchanging on d4, etc. The choice between two continuations of roughly equal worth is a matter of taste and may also depend on your mood.*

I must admit that what he says here is close to my own way of thinking. Real over-the-board struggles have always interested me far more than theoretical discussions, prepared at home with the aid of reference books and computers. In addition, the current article is devoted to the problems of the middlegame; thus, I won't even waste any time presenting the variations referred to above: the reader, if he wishes, may do so himself.

### **10...Nd7xc5 11. Rh1xh5 Nb8-d7**

11...e5? would be bad: 12. Bc4+! (12. fe Bg4) 12...e6 13. fe d5 14. Bd3 (Sanakoev).

### **12. Bf1-d3 Nd7-f6 13. Rh5-h4 Bc8-d7**

13...e5!? 14. fe Nxd3+ (or 14...de 15. Bc4+ e6) 15. cd de 16. Nxe5 Bf5 would have led to quieter play.

### **14. Bc1-e3 Nc5xd3+ 15. Qd1xd3 Qd8-e8**

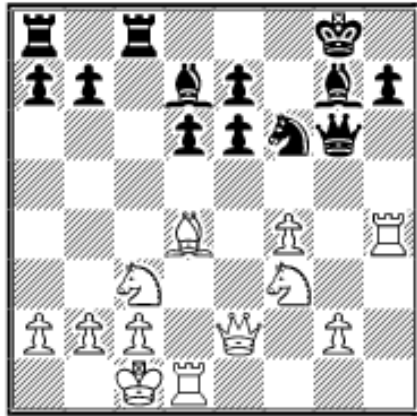
It looks more natural to bring the bishop to g6, not the queen. Of course, this would weaken e6. Sanakoev considers the variation 15...Be8!? 16. Ng5 Bg6 17. Qe2 Nd5 18. Bd2 as "leading to difficulties for Black." However, after 18...Qc8!

19. Qxe6+ Qxe6 20. Nxe6 Bxc3, or 19. Nxe6 Bxc3! 20. Nxf8 (20. bc Rf6 21. Ng5 Nxf4!) 20...Bxb2 21. Nxc6 Bxa1 22. Nxe7+ Nxe7 23. Qxe7 Qxc2, the position clearly favors Black.

### 16. 0-0-0 Qe8-g6 17. Qd3-e2 Rf8-c8

This rook could have come in handy on the f-file; therefore, it would have made sense to play 17...Rac8!? (with no need to worry about 18. Bxa7, because of 18...Nh5) Another promising-looking idea is Viorel Bologan's suggestion: 17...b5! 18. Nxb5 Nd5 (or 18...Bxb5!? 19. Qxb5 Nd5).

### 18. Be3-d4



This is where we begin the training games; for the notes which follow, I shall be relying on the games we played and the subsequent analyses.

In positions with opposite-side castling, both sides generally storm the enemy king's fortress with pawn attacks. The guiding principle in such positions is: "Whoever comes first, wins!"

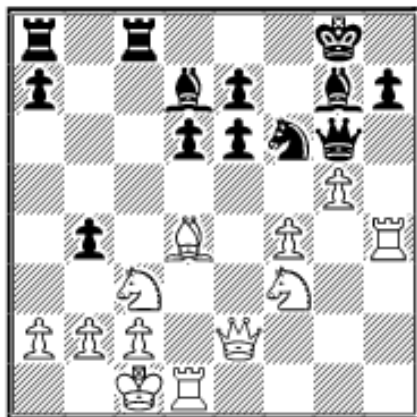
### 18...b7-b5! 19. g2-g4!

Of course it would be senseless to throw in the moves 19. a3? a5 - moving the pawn up to a3 would make it easier for Black to open queenside lines.

In one training game, an interesting pawn sacrifice was essayed: 19. f5?! Qxf5 20. g4 - the point being to gain a tempo for the pawn's march to g5. However, this idea was refuted by 20...Qf4+! 21. Kb1 (21. Be3!? Qc4-/+ 21...e5 22. g5 Bg4! (22...Ng4 23. Nd5 Qf7 24. Bc3 is much less convincing) 23. gf Bxf3 24. Rxf4 Bxe2 25. Rg1 (25. Nxe2 exf4 26. fg e5-+) 25...exf6 26. Rxf6 Bh5 27. Be3 Bg6-+.

And 19. Rdh1!? b4 20. Nd1 Rc7 (but not 20...Rxc2+?! 21. Qxc2 Rc8 22. Nc3 bc 23. bc, with advantage to White) 21. Ne3 Rac8 leads to an unclear position.

### 19...b5-b4 20. g4-g5!

**20...Nf6-h5!**

“The opening of the g-file would spell death for Black. After 20...bc? 21. gf cb+ 22. Kb1 ef 23. Rg1 Qf7 24. Rhg4, White wins” (Sanakoev). This analysis is inexact: as indicated by Bologan, Black meet 22. Kb1? with the tremendous counterblow 22...Rxc2!! 23. Qxc2 (23. f7+!? Kf8) 23...Qxc2+ 24. Kxc2 Ba4+ 25. Kxb2 Bxd1, and only Black is thinking about winning. White can keep the advantage by choosing 22. Bxb2! Ba4

(22...Bxf6 is bad because of 23. Rg1, and 22...ef, because of 23. Rg1 and 24. Rhg4) 23. f5!?, with 24. Rxa4 to follow.

Black would have a difficult position after 20...Nd5?! 21. Nxd5 ed 22. Bxg7 Qxg7, and now not 23. Nd4?! (hoping for 23...e5 24. Rdh1! ed 25. Rxh7 Qxh7 26. Rxh7 Bf5 27. Qh5! Bxh7 28. g6i) 23...Rc4!, but 23. Qd3! threatening 24. Qxd5+ or 24. Rdh1.

**21. f4-f5!**

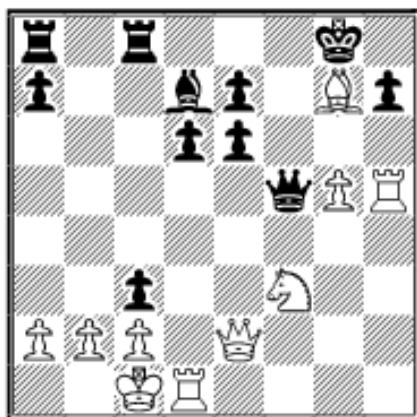
On 21. Ne4? Sanakoev examines 21...Rxc2+!?, but 21...Bc6! is simpler.

**21...Qg6xf5**

21...ef? 22. Nd5 is unfavorable, or 21...Qf7? 22. g6 hg 23. fg, when White has a dangerous attack.

**22. Rh4xh5 b4xc3**

The intermediate 22...Be8? is unfortunately met by 23. g6!

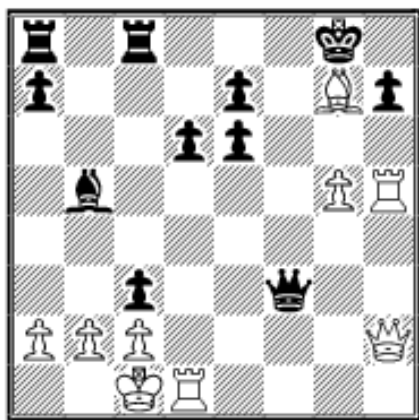
**23. Bd4xg7****23...Bd7-e8!!**

But here, the intermediate move proves necessary: it's the only way for Black to neutralize White's onslaught.

23...Kxg7? is bad: 24. Nd4! cb+ 25. Kb1 Qg6 26. Rdh1, and White's attack must succeed, despite the loss of two or three pawns.

Interesting complications would arise after

23...Bb5?! 24. Qh2 Qxf3



The normal 25. Rxh7?! leads, after 25...e5!., to an unclear position: 26. Bxe5 (26. Rh8+!? Kf7 27. Bxe5) 26...Qe3+ 27. Kb1 Qxe5 28. Qh5! (28. Qh6? Bd3!!-+) 28...Qf5! (28...Be8? loses to 29. Qh6 Rab8 30. b3 Rxb3+ 31. ab Rb8 32. g6! - just not 32. Rh1? Rxb3+ 33. cb Qf5+, drawing) 29. Rh8+ (29. Rh1? Bd3!-+) 29...Kg7 30. Qh6+ Kf7 31. Rh7+ (or 31. g6+) 31...Ke8 32. Re1. This was, in fact, the course of a training game in which Vadim Zvjagintsev played the black pieces against me.

White should have taken the other pawn first: 25. Bxc3! Rxc3; only now does 26. Rxh7! Bd3! (both 26...Rxc2+ 27. Qxc2 Rc8 28. Qxc8+ Kxh7 29. Qxe6 and 26...Qe3+ 27. Kb1 Qe5 28. Qh6 lose for Black) 27. Rh8+ Kg7 28. Qh6+ Kf7 29. bc lead to an advantage for White.

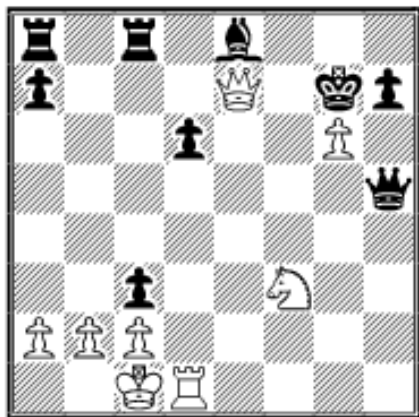
## 24. g5-g6!

Much weaker are both 24. Rh2? Kxg7 25. Nd4 cb+ 26. Kb1 Qe5 27. Nxe6+ Kg8 and 24. Nd4? Bxh5 25. Qxh5 Qf7 26. Qxf7+ Kxf7 27. Bh6 cb+ 28. Kxb2 Rab8+ 29. Kc1 e5 - in either case, Black is on top (variations by Sanakoev).

## 24...c3xb2+!

On 24...Qf4+? 25. Kb1 Bxg6, the simplest means to White's end is 26. Rh4! followed by 27. Bxc3.

After 24...Qxh5?! 25. Qxe6+ Kxg7 26. Qxe7+, Sanakoev's opinion is that White should mate soon.



Black's position indeed looks very dangerous; however, I see no win for White here. Some sample variations: 26...Kg8 27. gh+ Kh8 (27...Qxh7? 28. Rg1+ Bg6 29. Qf6) 28. Qf6+ Kxh7 29. Rg1 (29. Ng5+ Kg8 30. Rg1 cb+ 31. Kb1 Qg6) 29...Bg6 30. Ng5+ Kh6! (but not 30...Kg8? 31. Ne6! Qh6+ 32. Kb1 Kh7 33. Ng5+ Kg8 34. Nf7+-) 31. Ne6 (31. Nf7+ Kh7 32. Ng5+ Kh6!) 31...cb+ 32. Kb1 Rg8 33. Nf4 Raf8! 33. Rxg6+ Qxg6 34. Qh4+ Kg7 35. Nxg6 Kxg6, with equality.

## 25. Bg7xb2

25. Kb1 is worse: 25...Qxc2+! (as long as Black doesn't fall for 25...Rxc2? 26.

Qxe6+! Qxe6 27. gh+) 26. Qxc2 Bxg6! 27. Qxg6 hg, when Black has winning chances.

**25...Rc8xc2+! 26. Qe2xc2 Qf5xc2+ 27. Kc1xc2 Be8xg6+ 28. Kc2-d2 Bg6xh5**

Black has emerged from the complications with four pawns for the knight. On the other hand, White still has a way to keep a rough balance. This very sharp battle soon comes to a peaceable conclusion.

**29. Rd1-g1+ Bh5-g6 30. Nf3-h4 Ra8-b8 31. Bb2-c3 Rb8-b1**

On 31...Kf7, there follows 32. Nxg6 hg 33. Rf1+ Kg8 34. Rg1.

**32. Rg1-g4!**

Sanakoev notes that 32. Rg2?! was less exact: 32...Kf7 33. Nxg6 hg 34. Rf2+ Ke8 35. Rg2 Rh1! 36. a4 Rh6 37. Bg7?! Rh4. Now Black has to take Ra4 into account.

**32...e6-e5 33. Nh4xg6 h7xg6 34. Rg4xg6+ Kg8-f7 35. Rg6-g4 Drawn.**

For those who would like further practice with opposite-side castling positions, I recommend my lectures on this theme in the above-cited book, *Attack and Defence*.



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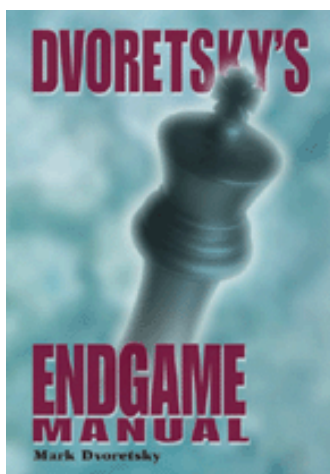
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## C O L U M N I S T S

# *The* *Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



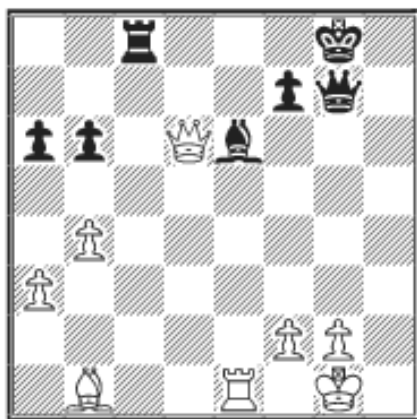
## Reverberating "Quiet" Moves

Beauty in chess comes in many different forms. For insufficiently skilled players, one of the primary esthetic criteria would probably be the “weight” of piece sacrificed. The experienced player, however, will not be astounded by sacrifices; the first thing he looks for is originality and purity of conception.

Sometimes the key to a position lies in an outwardly modest (in GM Kotov’s word – “furtive”) move. I always find myself most powerfully impressed by such cases. In the first place, by their mysteriousness: why it is that one of many apparently equivalent moves should suddenly turn out to be so much stronger than the rest – what hidden laws of chess geometry are being made clear here, and how should we learn to obey them? And secondly, by their paradoxical economy: the humble relocation of one piece radically changes what would seem to be the firm assessment of the position, and sometimes in fact immediately settles the outcome of the game.

I remember a game from my own praxis, which has already appeared in one of my books.

*Dvoretsky – Anikaev*  
Batumi, 1969



B?

Black is a pawn down, his queenside is vulnerable, and the protection of his king is inferior to White’s. Everything seems clear – but now comes:

**37...Qg7-g5!!**

“My flanks are collapsing, my center is beaten in – I attack!” – these famous words of a French Marechal could have been uttered in

precisely this position. The move creates two threats: 38...Rc1 and 38...Bd5, both quite unpleasant.

I didn’t want to play something craven, 38. Qd1 or 38. Rf1!?!; so I found what appeared to be a more acceptable way out of the position – and nearly lost the game!

**38. Bb1-e4?! Rc8-c1 39. Re1-d1 Be6-d5!!**

Another surprise! Fortunately, White still has a draw.

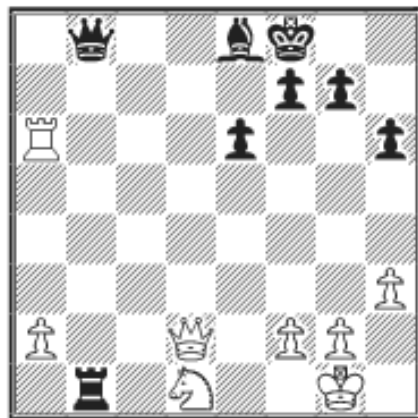
**40. Qd6-b8+! Kg8-g7 41. Rd1xc1 Qg5xc1+ 42. Kg1-h2 Qc1-h6+**

Or 42...Bxe4 43. Qe5+ Kf8 44. Qxe4 Qxa3 =.

**43. Kh2-g1 Qh6-c1+ 44. Kg1-h2 Qc1-h6+ 45. Kh2-g1 Qh6-c1+ Draw**

The queen is the most powerful piece in chess, exerting force in every direction. It's not surprising that many quiet moves of amazing power turn out to be queen moves. The g5-square turned out to be where the power lines of this position intersected: from here, the queen controlled the c1-square diagonally, the d5-square horizontally, while at the same time exerting continual pressure on the file against g2.

***Leko – Bologan***  
Dortmund, 2003



B?

The outcome of this game essentially determined the winner of this very strong international tournament. I looked in on the tournament online when the middlegame was in full swing and saw that White had a clear advantage. However, Viorel Bologan's resourceful defense made his opponent err, and the situation changed drastically. Returning to the site once again, I saw the diagrammed position.

Having made the time-control, Bologan stopped to think: how should he exploit the pin on the knight? In Moscow, I was thinking the same thing, examining several obvious continuations; but I could find no clear road to victory. Then I gave the position to "Fritz" – who immediately came up with the solution, of course. At the board, after a number of hours of tense struggle, it's very hard to analyze all the candidate moves accurately, and select the one correct line; nevertheless, the grandmaster dealt with his task no less effectively than did the computer.

**41...Qb8-e5!**

Exactly there! Black threatens 42...Qd5! 43. Rd6 Qxd2 44. Rxd2 Ba4, winning a piece. The counterpin 43. Ra8 doesn't help, while the other defensive move, 43. Rd6, is immediately refuted by 43...Ba4 44. Rd8+ Ke7 – here it's important that the queen is off the 8th rank, first of all; and secondly, that it keeps the d6-square under control.

**42. Ra6-a3**

The only defense: 42...Qd5? 43. Rd3.

**42...Qe5-g5!**

Amazing geometry! White can't play 43. Qxg5 Rxd1+; and on 43. Qd4, Black can once again play 43...Qd5 44. Rd3 Ba4; if 43. Qd3, then either 43...Qc1 or 43...Bc6; and finally, 43. Qd6+ loses to 43...Qe7! 44. Qd3 Rxd1+ 45. Qxd1 Qxa3.

**43. Ra3-e3 Be8-a4 44. Kg1-h2 Qg5-f4+**

44...Bxd1 was also possible – but not 44...Rxd1?, of course, because of 45. Qb4+.

**45. g2-g3 Rb1xd1! 46. Qd2-d8+**

A sign of terrible disappointment!

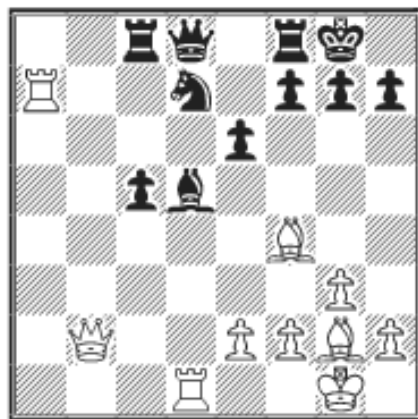
**46...Rd1xd8** White resigned

Sometimes, decisive threats can be created, not by encroaching on the enemy camp, but by appearing to retreat from it. The following example was shown to me quite recently by Artur Yusupov.

***Kramnik – Leko***

Budapest, 2001 (rapid)

3rd match game



W?

How does White exploit the obvious plusses of his position? The straightforward 21. Bxd5?! ed 22. Rxd5 fails to achieve the goal after the only, but sufficient reply 22...Qb6! =. Another tempting possibility, 21. Bd6?! Re8 22. Bxd5 ed 23. Qb7, also runs into a tactical riposte: 23...Qf6! 24. Qxd7 Rcd8 = (this variation was pointed out by Vadim Zvjagintsev).

Vladimir Kramnik failed to find the solution, and the game soon ended in a draw: **21. e4?! Bc6 22. Rd6** (22. Bd6 Re8 23. Bxc5 Qf6) **22...Ra8 23. Qa3 Rxa7 24. Qxa7 Qc8** (24...Qb8 = wouldn't have been bad, either) **25. Bf1 Nf6 26. Ba6 Qe8 27. f3 Bb5 28. Qxc5 Bxa6** Draw.

The goal is reached by means of an amazing quiet move.



## 21. Qb2-a1!!

And there appears to be no defense against the simple little threat of 22. Bxd5 ed 23. Rxd5. If 21...Nf6, then 22. e4. The best defense, relatively speaking, is 21...Qe8; but after 22. e4 Bc6 23. Bd6, White easily converts his exchange plus.

Why did the retreat of the queen into the very corner of the board turn out to be decisive? The point of the move is that from there, the queen defends both rooks, thus preventing any attempt by the enemy to free himself from the pin. Other queen moves would be less effective: for instance, 21. Qc1?! Nf6, and 22. e4 is already pointless, because of 22...Qb6 (when the rook at a7 is attacked). And if 21. Qa3!?, then 21...c4, when 22. Bxd5 is met by 22...Nc5! – now the undefended rook at d1 tells. Although, to be sure, 22. e4 Bc6 23. e5! Bb5! 24. Qb4 Rb8 25. Rb7 would still retain White's advantage.

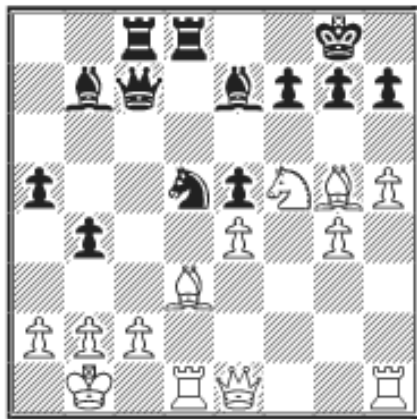
### *Inarkiev – Bakre*

Gibraltar, 2004

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cd 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qd2 Be7 8. 0-0-0 0-0 9. f3 a6 10. h4 Nxd4 11. Qxd4 b5 12. Kb1 Qc7 13. Qd2 Rd8 14. Bd3 Bb7 15. Qe1!**

This excellent preventive move, found over the board, is a theoretical novelty. Black was preparing d6-d5 (immediately, or else after 14...b4 16. Ne2), when the standard e4-e5 could be met by Ne4! By moving his queen off the d-file, White neutralizes his opponent's activity in the center.

**15...Rac8 16. g4 b4 17. Ne2 e5 (17...d5? 18. e5! Qxe5 19. Bf4+-) 18. Ng3 d5 19. Nf5 a5 20. h5 de 21. fe Nd5!?**



W?

White has a powerful kingside initiative. With his last move, the Indian player seeks to untangle the situation. White has a number of tempting possibilities, which makes it very hard to calculate all the variations accurately. Still, let's try a short analysis:

a) 22. Qh4? Bxg5 23. Qxg5 f6 – the attack is at an end; the initiative goes over to Black;

b) 22. ed Bxg5 23. d6 (23. Qe4 g6) 23...Qc5, with mutual chances;

c) 22. Bxe7 Nxe7 23. Qh4 (23. h6 should be met, not by 23...g6 24. Qh4, but by 23...g5!) 23...f6! (23...Nxf5 24. gf Ba6 25. f6 or 24...b3 25. ab a4 26. Bc4 would be much weaker) 24. h6 g5, with unclear play;

**d) 22. Nxe7+ Nxe7**, and after 23. h6 f6 24. Be3 g6 25. Qf2 Rd6, White has a hard time demonstrating the superiority of his position. Ernesto Inarkiev decided

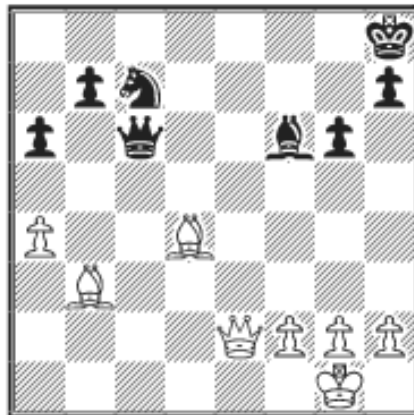
to prepare the move h5-h6 by playing **23. Bc1?**, underestimating the counterstroke **23...b3!**, strengthening the threatened exchange sacrifice on d3, which has been hanging in the air for some time already. He ended up even losing the game.

All that separated White from winning this game; however, was one move – one which we did not include in our initial list of candidates. Had we been able to find it first, we could have avoided all those complex calculations, as it would have been immediately clear which continuation was the strongest.

## 22. Bg5-h4!!

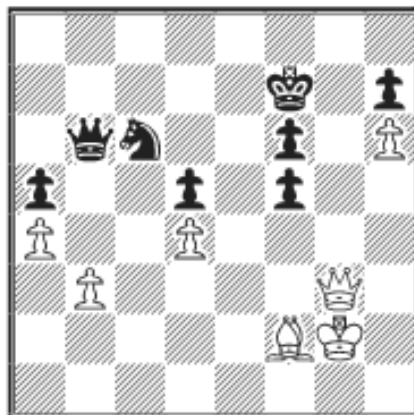
And what is Black to do? Going back to f6 with the knight would be stupid; the sacrifice on c3 doesn't work; and on 22...Bxh4 23. Qxh4 Nf4, White doesn't take the exchange with the knight check on e7 (which in fact would also be good enough), but continues his attack by 24. h6!

What could help you find powerful quiet moves in your own games? Why, the development of your tactical sense (and this is real tactics, even if there are no sacrifices involved), the regular use of the candidate-moves approach in calculating variations, and of course, practical training – which is why I now offer you the following eight exercises.



**Exercise 1**

W?



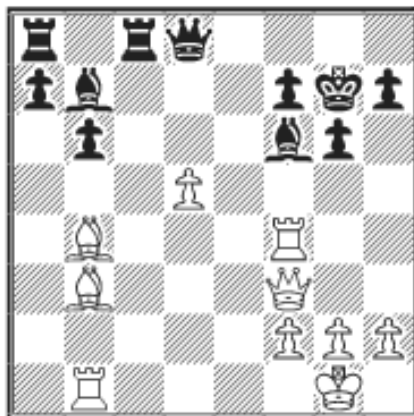
**Exercise 2**

B?



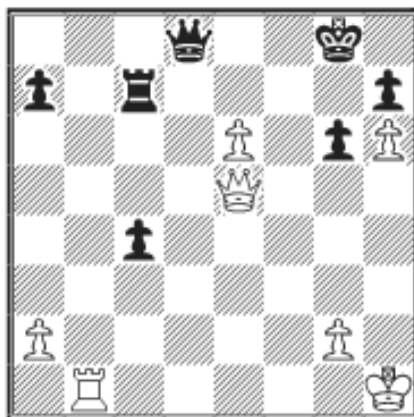
### Exercise 3

B?



### Exercise 4

W?



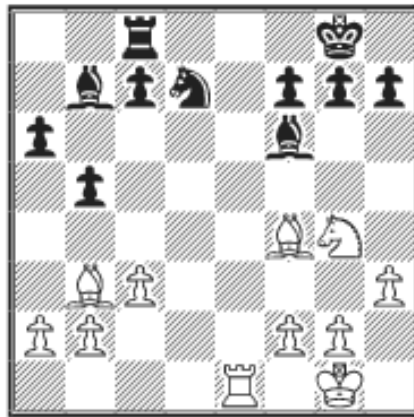
### Exercise 5

W?

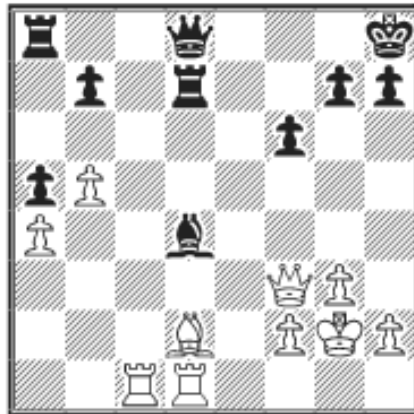


### Exercise 6

W?

**Exercise 7**

W?

**Exercise 8**

W?

**Answers****1 Riga – Orel**, inter-city match 1986

The obvious 1. Qc4? doesn't make the grade, in view of 1...Nd5! 2. Qxc6 (2. Qxd5?? Qc1+) 2...bc 3. Bxd5 Bxd4 =.

**1. Bd4-b2!!**

Now that the c1-square is defended, White is threatening 2. Qe7 and 2. Qc4. On 1...Ne8, he replies, not 2. Qe7? Qc1+! 3. Bxc1 Bxe7, but 2. Qxe8+! Therefore, Black resigned.

**2 Short – Bagirov**, Baku 1983

How does Black stop White's extremely unpleasant threat of a queen invasion at g7?

**48...Qb6-a7!!**

The only move to maintain rough equality. After 49. Qg7+ Ke6, the 7th rank is protected; 49. Qd6 Nb4 would not be dangerous, either.

**49. Qg7+ Ke6 50. Qg8+**

If 50. Bh4, then either 50...Qxd4!?, or the more restrained 50...Qf7 51. Qg3 Qh5 52. Qg8+ Qf7 =.

**50...Qf7 51. Qc8+ Qd7 52. Qg8+ Qf7 53. Qa8 Qc7 54. Bg3 Qd7 55. Qg8+ Qf7 56. Qc8+ Qd7 57. Qg8+ Qf7 58. Qa8 Qd7 59. Bf4 Kf7 60. Qh8 Kg6 61. Qg8+ Kh5 62. Qg3 Draw**

### **3 Endzelins – Dunhaupt, corr. 1973**

Which is more important: White's exchange plus, or his weakened king position? Everything depends on whether Black can find a way to create irresistible threats quickly.

The rook sacrifice on a3 doesn't work, of course; and on 1...Qa7?, White defends himself by 2. Rg3+- As so often happens, Black must look for a double threat, since two threats are much harder to parry than one.

### **1...Qc7-d7!**

White resigned immediately, since not only is his rook attacked, but Black also threatens 2...Qh3 attacking both the other rook and a3. For example: 2. Qxc4 Qh3, or 2. Rb4 Qh3! 3. a4 Qc3-+.

### **4 Chernin – Dvojrís, Podolsk 1993.**

White obtains nothing from 30. h4?! Rc7! – Black secures f7 and prepares for Be5.

### **30. Bb4-d2!!**

The threat of 31. Rxf6 Qxf6 32. Bh6+ forces Black into a decisive weakening of his kingside.

### **30...g5 31. Rf5 Rc7** (White's task is easier after 31...h6 32. h4) **32. Qg3!**

32. h4 Bc8! would be less accurate: after 33. Rxc5+ Bxc5 34. Bxc5 Qd6 35. Bf4 Qg6, or 33. d6 Bxf5 34. dc Qd3!, the outcome remains unclear.

**32...Rac8** (32...Bc8 33. Rxf6+-; 32...h6 33. h4 Bc8 34. Rxf6 or 34. hg Bxf5 35. gf+) **33. h4 Kh8 34. Bxc5**

Another good line was 34. hg Bg7 35. Re1, intending Re4-h4, Bf4, d5-d6.

### **34...Bxc5 35. hg** (threatening 36. Qe5+ and 37. d6) **35...Qe7! 36. Re5**

36. d6? would be a mistake: 36...Qe4 37. Qe5+ Kg8! (37...Qxe5 is worse: 38. Rxe5 Rd7 39. Re7 Bc6 40. Bxf7+) 38. Qxe4 Bxe4 39. dc Bxf5 40. Rc1 Be6, and White's advantage has disappeared.

**36...Qb4! 37. Bc2!**

37. Rbe1!? Rc1 38. Rxc1 Rxc1+ 39. Kh2± was possible, but the text is stronger.

**37...Qc3** (37...Qd4 38. Rd1) **38. Bd3 Qd4 39. d6!** (39. Qh3 f6!) **39...Rc3**  
(39...Rd7 40. Qh3!) **40. Re3 Rd8** (40...Rc1+ 41. Re1) **41. Qh3! Qg7 42. d7**

42. Re7 (intending 43. g6) 42...Ba6 43. d7 wins also.

**42...Bc6 43. Bf5 Rxe3 44. Qxe3 f6** (44...Bxd7 45. Bxd7 Rxd7 46. Qe8+) **45. Rc1! Bxd7 46. Rc7 Re8 47. Qf3 fg 48. Rxd7 Qa1+ 49. Kh2 Qe5+ 50. g3 Re7 51. Be6!** Black resigned

**5 Khalifman – Glek**, Leningrad 1989

In situations like these, we always look for spectacular tactical blows. But it's not hard to see that 1. Rb8? Qxb8 2. e7 Kf7 = doesn't work (or 2...Qb1+ 3. Kh2 Rxe7 4. Qxe7 Qb8+); on 1. Qd4? Black replies 1...Qf8; and on 1. Qd5? – 1...Rc8! And 1. e7? Rxe7 2. Rb8 Rxe5 is also useless.

**1. Qe5-f4!!**

Taking his queen off the e-file, White creates the unstoppable threat of 2. e7 (which would be his reply, for example, to 1...c3).

**1...g5 2. Qxg5+!** (2. e7! Rxe7 3. Qxg5+ would be okay too) Black resigned.

**6 Razvalyayev – Kalikstein**, Tashkent 1972**1. Ke1-e2!!**

By this highly unusual means of joining his queen and rook, White creates the terrible threat of trapping the queen by 2. g4.

**1...e5 2. g4 Bxg4 3. hg Qxg4 4. Qg1 Qe6 5. Rxh7! ed+ 6. Be3 Nxh7 7. Bxh7+ Kh8 8. Qh1 g6 9. Bxg6+ Kg7 10. Qh6+ Kf6 11. Bf5+** Black resigned.

Let me clarify: this idea was only unusual for those times. Later, the same idea would be employed by Anatoly Karpov (playing Black) in his beloved Caro-Kann Defense. Here was the opening of his game against Gata Kamsky, Dortmund 1993:

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 de 4. Nxe4 Nd7 5. Bg5 Ngf6 6. Bd3 e6 7. N1f3 Bd6 8. Qe2 h6 9. Ne4 Nxe4 10. Qxe4 Nf6 11. Qh4 (11. Qe2!?)



11...Ke7!?, intending 12...g5.

**7 Keres – Benko**, Yugoslavia 1959,  
Candidates' Tournament

White keeps the advantage “any way he wants;” the only question is how to extract the maximum from the position. 20. Nxf6+?! Nxf6 21. Re7 Nd5 is unconvincing, since the combination 22. Rd7 Nxf4 23. Rxf7 is only enough to draw: 23...Ne2+ 24. Kf1 Nc1 25. Be6 Re8 (26...Rb8!?) 26. Re7+ Kf8 =.

A better-looking line is 20. Rd1 Nc5 (on 20...Bc6, White has at least 21. Bc2 h5 22. Nxf6+ Nxf6 23. Bf5) 21. Nxf6+ gf 22. Bc2; however, after 22...Be4 23. Bxe4 Nxe4, Black can still put up stubborn resistance. For example: 24. Rd7 Nc5! 25. Rxc7 Rxc7 26. Bxc7 Na4, or 24. Bh6 Nd6 25. g4 (preventing Nf5) 25...f5, intending f7-f6 and Kf7.

Paul Keres found a deadly continuation.

### 20. Bb3-c2!!

There is no satisfactory defense against 21. Bf5. 20...Bd5 doesn't work: 21. Bf5 Be6 22. Rxe6+-. After the relatively best move, 20...h5 21. Bf5 (21. Nxf6+ Nxf6 22. Bf5 Re8 is less exact) 21...hg 22. Bxd7 Rd8 23. Bxg4, White keeps a healthy extra pawn.

The game lasted just one more move: **20...g6? 21. Rd1** Black resigned (21...h5 22. Nh6+).

**8 Makarov – Dvojris**, Gorky 1989

### 23. Qf3-g4!

An amazingly powerful quiet move. How does Black defend against 24. Bc3? If 23...Bb2, then the simple 24. Rc2 is sufficient, while a more spectacular solution would be 24. Bc3 f5 25. Qxg7+! Rxg7 26. Rxd8+ Rxd8 27. Bxb2. On 23...Bxf2, White also has a choice, between 24. Bh6 f5 25. Bxg7+ Kg8 26. Qe2, and 24. Bxa5 Rxd1 25. Bxd8 Rxc1 26. Qd7+-

### 23...Rd7-d5 24. Bd2xa5!

The point of White's idea: this wins an important pawn. Black can't play 24...Rxa5 because of 25. Rc8, while 24...Qxa5 is met by 25. Rxd4.

**24...b6 25. Bb4 f5 26. Qf4 h6** (26...Rxa4? 27. Rxd4, and the back-rank weakness tells) **27. Be7! Qxe7** (27...Qd7 28. Rc7) **28. Rxd4 Rad8 29. Rxd5 Rxd5 30. Rc6 Qd8 32. Qe3 Rd4 32. Qe6 Qe8 33. Qxf5 Rxa4 34. Qc8** (34. Kh3! was a quicker



kill) 34...Qxc8 35. Rxc8+ Kh7 36. Rc6 Rb4 37. Rxb6 h5 38. Rb8 g6 39. b6  
Kg7 40. b7 Kh7 41. f4 Kg7 42. h3 Black resigned



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## Sending the Rook to the Opposite Wing

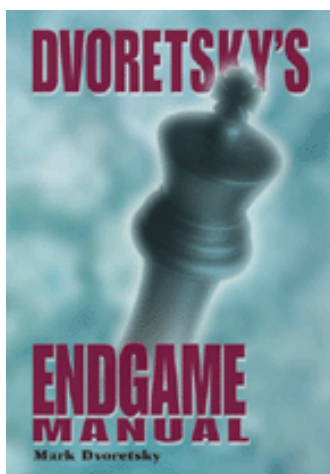
In his book, *My System*, in the chapter "On Open Files," Aron Nimzovitch formulated the following idea: *to advance in one file with the idea of giving up that file for another one... to use that file as a jumping-off place*. Unfortunately, he hardly developed this idea any further. We will somewhat fill in this blank spot with the small selection of examples we now bring to your attention.

### COLUMNISTS

*The*

*Instructor*

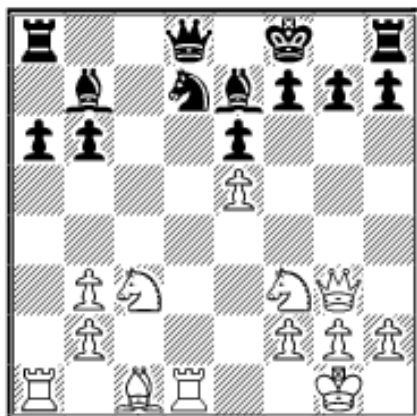
Mark Dvoretsky



### Bringing the Rook into the Attack

*Shipov - Miles*

Hastings 1998/99



W?

**16. Ra1-a4!+-**

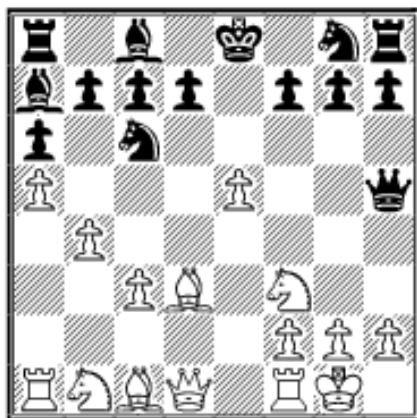
White already had dangerous kingside pressure; adding the rook brings the fight quickly to an end.

**16...Qe8 17. Rg4 g6** (17...Rg8 18. Rxg7!; 17...Bxf3 18. Rxg7!, intending 19. Rg8+ Rxg8 20. Bh6+ Kg8 19. Ng5 Bf8 20. Bxf8 Kxf8 21. Rgd4 Bc6 22. Rf4 f5 23.

ef e5 24. Qd3! Black resigned.

*Saverymuttu - van der Berg*

Arosa 1972



W?

**12. Ra1-a4!!**

An unusual and very strong move. White now has the terrible threat of trapping the queen by 13. b5 ab 14. Rh4.

**12...Nce7** (12...Nge7 13. b5 Nxe5 14. Nxe5 Qxe5 15. Re1 would be hopeless) **13. b5 Ng6 14. g4! Qh3 15. Re1** (threatening 16. Bf1)

**15...Nh4 16. Nxh4 Qxh4 17. b6! cb 18. g5 Qh3 19. e6! de 20. Re3** Black resigned.

**Lobzhanidze - Nadanian**  
Pasanauri 1997



B

**12...Ra8-b8!? 13. Be2-f3 Rb8-b4!**

Black plays for mate. After 14. g3, however, the success of his intended attack would remain problematical, as 14...Rh4! now would mean sacrificing a whole rook.

It is true that it could not be taken at once: 15. gh? Qe5 16. Re1 Bh3+-. White would have to choose either 15. Nxd5 Nxd5 16. Bxd5 cd 17.

gh Bxh2+ 18. Kxh2 Qxh4+, with perpetual check; or 15. Nb5!? cb 16. gh Bh3 17. Bg2 (17. Re1 Bb8 18. Bh1 is worth consideration, preparing to defend h2 by f2-f4) 17...Bxg2 18. Kxg2 Qe4+ 19. Qf3 Qxh4 20. h3 Ne4! 21. Rad1 (21. Qg4 Qh6, intending 22...f5) 21...f5, with a double-edged position (22. Rxd5? Ng5 is bad).

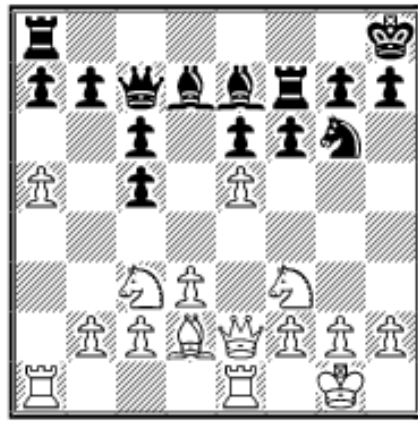
**14. Ne2?! Rh4! 15. g3 Rh6 16. Bg2 Ba6?!**

The bishop should not have been taken off the c8-h3 diagonal. After 16...Ng4! 17. h3, the continuation 17...Nxe3?! 18. fe Qxe3+ 19. Rf2 is dubious; but simply 17...Nf6 or 17...Ne5 would have maintained the attack. White might have had to continue 17. Nd4!? Nxh2 18. Nxc6 Qg5 19. Re1 Bg4 20. f4 Qh5 21. Qxd5 Qxd5 22. Bxd5 Nf3+ 23. Bxf3 Bxf3; but Black has a dangerous initiative in this endgame, offering more than enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

**17. Re1 Qd7 18. Qc2 Ne4!? 19. f3 Ng5 20. Nd4 Bc8 21. f4 Nh3+ 22. Kh1 c5 23. Nf3**, with a complicated game.

### Activating the Rook

**Dvoretsky - Kurajica**  
European Champions' Cup, Solingen 1976



W?

**14. Ra1-a4!**

For the rook, an open line can mean not only a file, but sometimes a rank as well.

**14...Raf8 15. ef gf 16. Nh4!**

Sacrificing a pawn to increase the rook's control over the 4th rank.

**16...e5**

On 16...Rg8, 17. Qh5 is strong. After 16...Nxh4 17. Rxh4 Qxa5 (17...f5 18. Rh6) 18. Ne4 Qd8 19. Bc3 (the idea being 20. Ng5, or 20. Rh6 and 21. Qh5), White's active pieces assure him sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn. On e6-e5, he always has f2-f4.

**17. Nxg6+ hg 18. f4 Bd6?! (18...ef was better) 19. Ne4 ef 20. Nxd6 Qxd6 21. Bxf4 Qd5 22. Qf2**

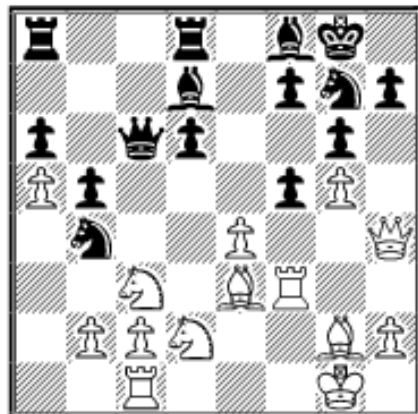
White's king is much better protected than Black's; with opposite-colored bishops, this is a very significant factor. I have time to quietly improve my position, since my opponent is unable to undertake anything.

**22...g5 23. Bd2 Kg7 24. Bc3 Kg6 25. Rae4 Qd6 26. h3 (26. b4!) 26...b6 27. b3 Rh8 28. R4e3 Rhf8 29. Rf3 Re7, and here White could have secured a decisive advantage after 30. Re4! f5 (30...Rxe4 31. de and 32. e5) 31. h4! (31...g4 32. Rxg4+).**

### Winning Material

*Dreev - Shabalov*

International Junior Tournament, Leningrad 1983



W?

**23. e4-e5! d6-d5**

23...de 24. Rh3, with a double attack, is quite bad for Black.

**24. Rf3-f4!**

The ability to take in the entire board at once is the mark of a great talent. One might think Alyosha Dreev was attacking the king;

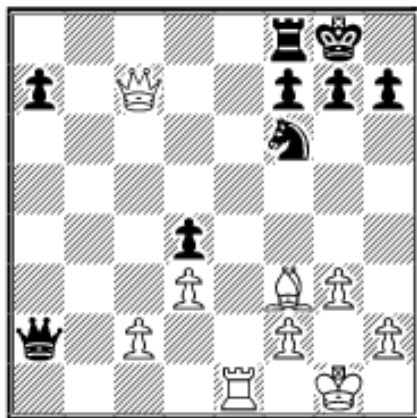
instead, he obtains a decisive advantage by exploiting the unfortunate position of

the knight, stuck out on the queenside.

**24...Be6 25. Rxb4 Bxb4 26. Qxb4 Rac8 27. Ne2 Rd7 28. Nf4 Qc7 29. Bd4 Qd8 30. h4 h6 31. Bb6 Qf8 32. Qxf8+ Kxf8 33. gh Ne8 34. Nb3 Kg8 25. Nc5 Re7 36. Nxa6 Rc4 37. Nd3 Bc8 38. Nab4 Nc7 39. b3 Rxh4 40. Nc6 Re6 41. Na7**  
Black resigned.

### *Larsen - Suetin*

Copenhagen 1965



W?

**27. Re1-e5!**

The rook aims for a5, and Black cannot avoid the loss of a pawn, for example: 27...Qb1+ 28. Kg2 Qb6 29. Qxb6 ab 30. Rb5 Rb8 31. Rb4.

**27...Qa6 28. Ra5 Rc8 (28...Qb6 29. Rxa7) 29. Qxf7+ Kxf7 30. Rxa6 Rc7**

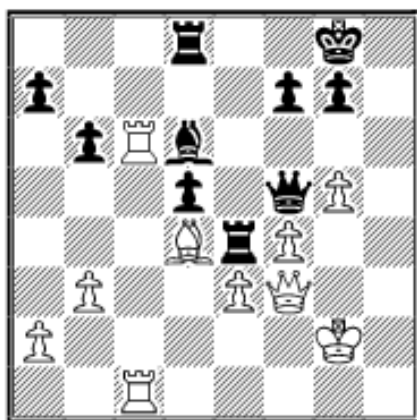
If 30...Rxc2 31. Rxa7+ Ke6!? (31...Kg6 32. Ra4) 32. Rxg7 Rd2, the simplest is 33. Bg4+! Nxg4 34. Rxg4 Rxd3 35. Kf1! Kd5 36. Rh4+- (Larsen).

**31. Kf1 Nd7 32. Ra2! Nb6 33. Be4 g6 34. Ke1 Kf6 35. Kd2 g5?! 36. Ra5**, and White won.

### Defense

### *Zlotnik - Kakhiani*

Kiev 1976



Finding a good way of parrying the threatened 1...Bxf4 is not so simple.

**1. Rc1-h1!! Bd6xf4?**

Black had to play 1...Rxd4! 2. ed g6!?, intending Q(B)xf4 or Bf8-g7 – Black would then have solid compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

**2. Rh1-h4! Qf5xg5+ 3. Rh4-g4**

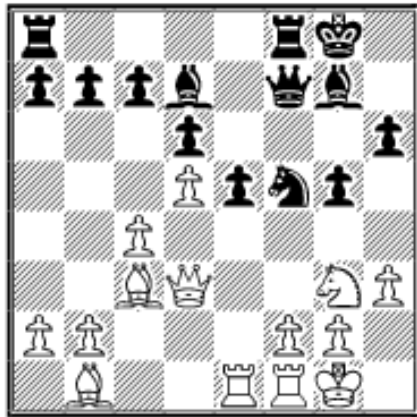
A piece down, Black soon resigned.

### Sending the Rook to a Neighboring File

Sometimes the rook remains on the same wing, but moves to a different file. Practically speaking, this changes nothing: the motives behind the maneuver remain the same.

### *Smyslov - Robatsch*

Olympiad, Amsterdam 1954



W?

The b1-h7 diagonal is a gaping wound in Black's position. One more attack on the knight covering the diagonal, and...

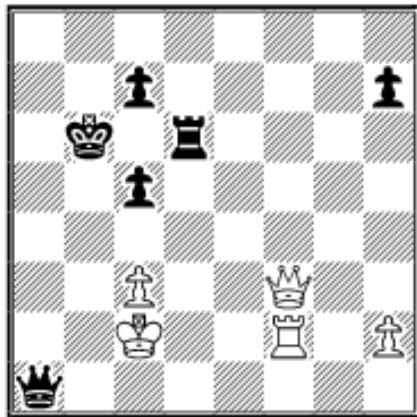
**24. Re1-e3!**

There is no satisfactory defense to the threatened 25. Rf3.

**24...Qe7 25. Rf3 e4 26. Nxe4 Nh4 27. Nf6+ Bxf6 28. Rxf6 Rxf6 29. Bxf6 Qxf6 30. Qh7+ Kf8 31. Qxd7 Re8 32. Qxc7 g4 33. hg Qf4 34. Bf5** Black resigned.

### *Barczay - Lengyel*

Kecskemet 1968



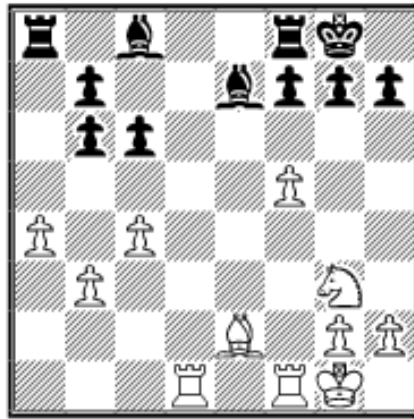
B?

**40...Kb6-a7!**

Next comes 41...Rb6 (or 41...Ra6) – Black's heavy pieces start working together, and the enemy king will have no escape from persecution. For example: 41. Qf7 Qd1+ 42. Kb2 Rb6+, or 41. Qe2 Rb6! 42. Kd3 Qa6+! 43. Kc2 Qa4+ 44. Kd3 Rd6+.

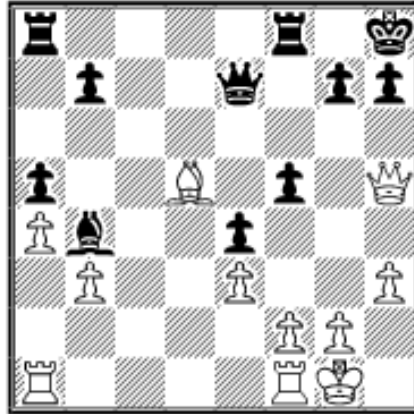
**41. c4 Qa2+ 42. Kc1 Qa1+ 43. Kc2 Ra6!** (43...Rb6 was also strong) **44. Qf4 Ra2+ 45. Kd3 Qb1+ 46. Ke3 Ra3+** White resigned.

In order to fix the habit of these rook maneuvers, why don't you solve the next set of fairly simple exercises on your own?



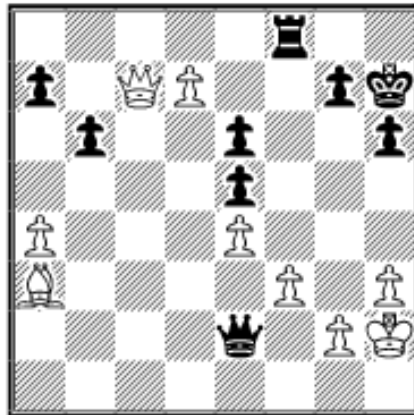
**Exercise 1**

B?



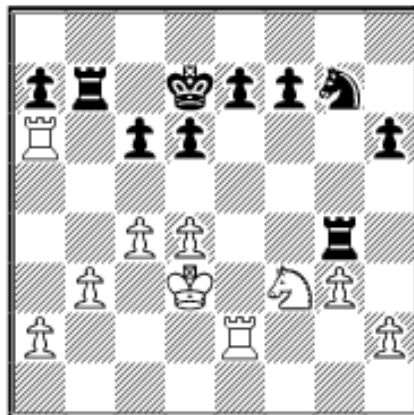
**Exercise 2**

B?



**Exercise 3**

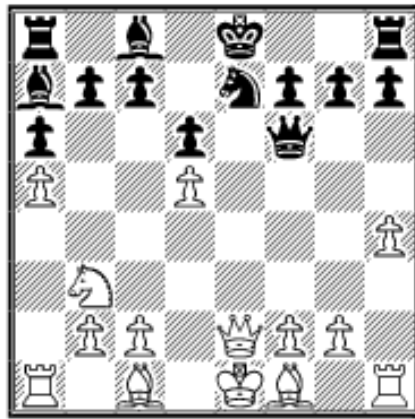
B?



**Exercise 4**

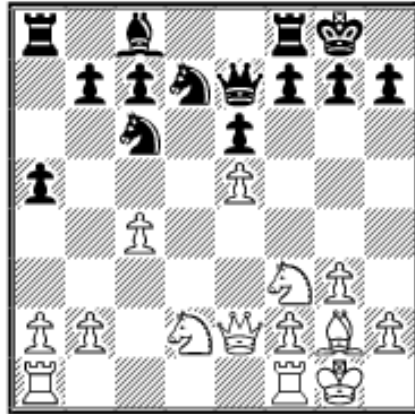
W?





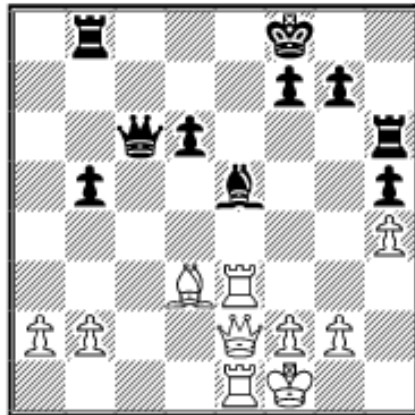
**Exercise 5**

W?



**Exercise 6**

B?



**Exercise 7**

W?



**Exercise 8**

B?

## Answers

**1** *Chechelian - Dvoretsky*, USSR Team Championship, Moscow 1979

**21...Ra8-a5!**

The only way to bring the queen's rook into play.

**22. Bd3 Re5** (22...Bb4 runs into the strong reply 23. Ne4!) **23. Rfe1 Rxe1+ 24. Rxe1 Bb4 25. Re2 Rd8 26. Bc2 Kf8 27. Kf2 g6!** Thanks to his pair of bishops, Black has real winning chances.

**2 Groszpeter - Kupreichik**, Minsk 1982**21...Ra8-a6!**

Intending ...Rg6, ...Bd6, ...Qe5. Black concentrates all his forces in an attack on the king. As usual, the presence of opposite-colored bishops reinforces Black's planned attack.

21...f4?! 22. ef Rxf4 23. g3 Rf6 (23...Rf3 24. Qg4 Re8 25. Rac1) 24. Qe2 Re8 25. Kg2, with 26. Rad1 to follow, would have been less effective.

**22. Rfd1 Rg6 23. Qe2 Bd6 24. Bc4 Qe5 25. g3 f4 26. ef Qxf4** (threatening 27...Bc5 or 27...e3) **27. Rxd6 Qxd6 28. Qxe4 Qc5 29. Qg2 Rgf6 30. Ra2 Rf3 31. Re2 h6**, and Black won.

**3 Yurkov - Belinkov**, Moscow 1967

1...Rxf3? (expecting 2. d8Q? Rf2-+) would be a mistake, in view of 2. Qxe5, when 2...Rf2? 3. Qg3 would even lose, while 2...Qe3! 3. d8Q Rxh3+ 4. gh Qf2+ leads to perpetual check.

**1...Rf8-f6!**

White has no satisfactory defense against 2...Rg6 (which would be Black's reply to 2. d8Q, for example). If 2. Qc1 Rg6 3. Qg1 Qd2-+.

**2. Kg1 Qe1+** (2...Rg6! was a quicker finish: 3. g4 Qe3+ 4. Kg2 Rf6) **3. Kh2 Qf2 4. Qc1 Rg6 5. Qg1 Qd2 6. Bb2 Qxd7 7. Bxe5 Qxa4**, and Black won.

**4 Plaskett - Tkachiev**, London 1993**31. Re1-e5!!**

An elegant move, securing the transfer of the rook to the a-file and the win of the a7-pawn (since 31...de?! 32. Nxe5+ and 33. Nxe4 is hopeless for Black).

But Jim Plaskett failed to see this tactical shot. His choice, **31. c5? Ne6 32. Rc2 Nc7 33. Ra5 Nd5 34. Rc4 Rg6 35. Rca4 Rf6 36. Nd2 a6 37. a3 Rf2** let Black maintain the balance.



**5 Bebhuk - Bakulin**, Moscow 1963**13. Ra1-a4!**

Bringing the queen's rook into the game strengthens White's position considerably. From now on, Black can never get in the important defensive move Qe5, in view of Re4.

In Prandstetter - Beljavsky (Bucharest 1980), White played the inferior continuation 13. Bg5?! Qe5 14. Qxe5 de 15. c4 c6!

**13...0-0 14. Rf4** (14. Bg5?! Qxb2 is weaker) **14...Bf5** (14...Nf5!? 15. g4 Bd7 was preferable) **15. g4 Rae8 16. Kd1! Qe5 17. Qxe5 de 18. Rxf5 Nxf5 19. gf Rd8 20. Bg2 Bxf2 21. Ke2**, with a won position for White.

**6 Raetsky - Bologan**, Bern 1997**12...a5-a4!**

Black intends to continue 13...Ra5, hitting at e5. There appears to be no way to save the pawn. White's relative best was 13. Rad1!? Ra5 14. Ne4 Ndx5 15. Nxe5 Nxe5 16. f4 Nc6 with a slight plus for Black.

**13. Qe3 Ra5 14. Qc3 Qb4! 15. Ne4 Ndx5 16. Nxe5 Rxe5 17. Rfd1 Ra5 18. Qxb4 Nxb4 19. a3 Na6 20. f4 e5 21. fe Rxe5**, and Black won.

**7 Motylev - Shariyazdanov**, Russian Championship, Tomsk 2004.

25. f4 is tempting, expecting 25...Bxf4? 26. Bxb5! However, Black has 25...Rf6.

**25. Re3-e4!**

This modest move is very strong, because it creates two threats at once: f2-f4 and Rb4. For example, on 25...b4, 26. f4 Rf6 27. Qxh5 is decisive; and 25...Qd5 26. f4 Rf6 27. g3 g6 28. Rd1! is quite joyless as well.

**25...g6 26. Rb4** (26. Qe3 is OK, since Black cannot reply 26...Kg7? 27. Rxe5; but the text is stronger) **26...Kg7 27. Rxb5** (27. Bxb5!?) **27...Rhh8 28. b3 Rxb5 29. Bxb5**, and White won.

**8 Shrentzel - Shvidler**, Israel 1985**11...Ra8-b8! 12. Nb1-c3?!**

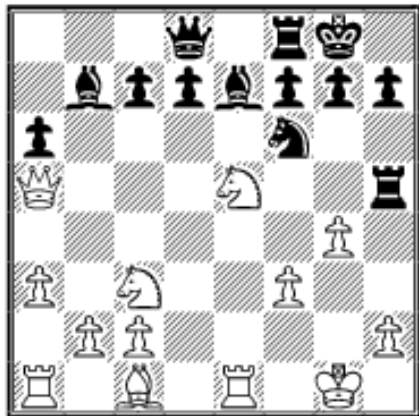
White should have forestalled the black rook maneuver, but that would also have validated Black's choice. After 12. Nd3, the knight abandons the center, and Black could reply, among other things, 12...Nd5 13. Bd2 Bf6. In a game Chiburdanidze - Romanishin (Frunze 1985), White played 12. a3!?, and after 12...Rb6, the black rook went to e6.

**12...Rb8-b4!**

The prelude to a spectacular storming of the enemy king's fortress.

**13. Qa5 Bb7 14. f3?! Rh4!**

An improvement on the game Chiburdanidze - Lukacs (Polanica Zdroj 1984), in which White got somewhat the better game after 14...d5?! 15. Nd3 Rb6 16. Bf4.

**15. a3** (the threat of 15...Bb4 16. Qa4 Bc5+ must be parried) **15...Rh5! 16. g4****16...Nxg4! 17. fg Rxh2!!**

White's in bad shape. Black's chief attacking resource is getting his queen onto the d8-h4 diagonal. For example: 18. Kxh2 Bb4! 19. Qxb4 Qh4+, or 18. Nc6 Bc5+! 19. Qxc5 Qh4 20. Ne7+ Kh8 21. Ng6+ hg 22. Qxf8+ Kh7. On 18. Nd5, the most convincing line is 18...Bb4! 19. Qxb4 Bxd5. 18...Rxc2 19. Nc6! Bxc6 20. Nxe7+ Kh8 would be less clear, although 18...Bc5+ 19. Qxc5 d6! is possible. Of course, Black couldn't play 19...Qh4? 20.

Qxf8+! Kxf8 21. Nxd7+, when suddenly he's the one getting mated.

The game continued with **18. Ne4**, when Black could have ended the game quickly with 18...Bc5+! 19. Kxh2 Qh4+ 20. g2 Bxe4+ 21. Rxe4 Qf2+ 22. Kh3 Qf1+ followed by Bf2+, or 19. Qxc5 Qh4 20. Nf3 Rh1+ 21. Kg2 Qh3+ 22. Kf2 Bxe4. Black chose the less energetic **18...Rxc2? 19. Qa4! Rc5! 20. Bf4! Rb5 21. Rab1**, winning only after a long struggle.

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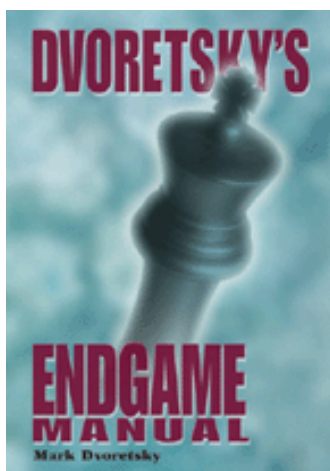
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## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Barcza Rampant

We have all studied the games of the World Champions, and of their close competitors; but when it comes to the creative output of grandmasters of somewhat lesser rank, we hardly know them – especially if the discussion turns to those who were not of our generation. In fact, any strong chessplayer has some outstanding games in his portfolio. Each one has his own “hobbyhorse” – that is, a type of position in which he was especially skilled.

I knew the Hungarian, Gedeon Barcza (1911 – 1986) as a good grandmaster of the positional style; but I barely knew anything about his work. A couple of years ago, I leafed through a book by the American grandmaster Pal Benko (who is also from Hungary), consisting of endgame articles which he had published over the course of many years in *Chess Life* magazine. My interest was drawn to those episodes that demonstrated grandmaster Barcza’s mastery of technique. Benko drew his readers’ attention to one of the characteristic features of Barcza’s work: his skill at working with knights. I liked his examples, and would like to show them to you. I shall rely mostly on Benko’s comments, only occasionally correcting and refining some of them.

### *Barcza – Soos*

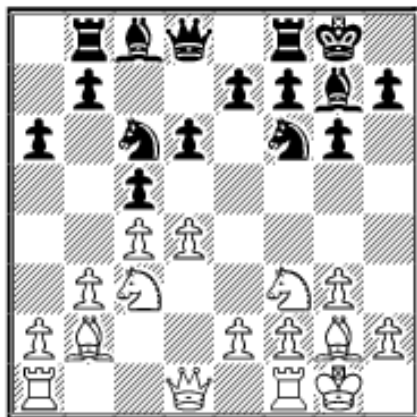
Olympiad, Varna 1962

**1. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 2. g2-g3 g7-g6 3. b2-b3 Bf8-g7 4. Bc1-b2 c7-c5 5. c2-c4 Nb8-c6 6. Bf1-g2 0-0 7. 0-0 d7-d6 8. Nb1-c3 Ra8-b8**

White is preparing 9. d4; it would make sense to hinder this advance by either 8...e5!? or 8...Ne4!?

**9. d2-d4 a7-a6?!**





*This wing action is inappropriate here because the center is still open (White has not played d4-d5). The b6-square is weakened and can be utilized by White's knights. Barcza does not hesitate in transforming the game immediately into the endgame because that is where he felt very much at home.*

A game Csom – van der Sterren, Ter Apel 1990, went 9....cd 10. Nxd4 Bd7 11. Nd5 Nxd5 12. cd Ne5 13. h3 Qb6 14. Qd2 Rfc8 15. Kh2, and White had achieved the better

game. Black would have better chances of equality after 12...Nxd4 (instead of 12...Ne5?!) – when your opponent controls more space, you should be striving for exchanges.

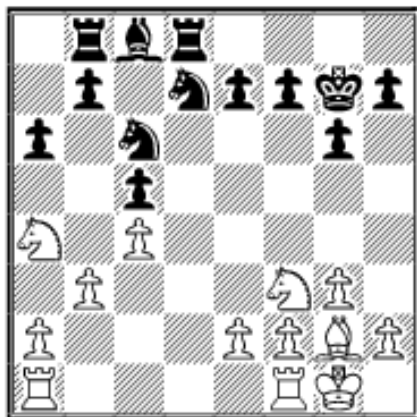
**10. d4xc5! d6xc5 11. Qd1xd8**

*Trading queens is entirely logical since it removes Black's protection of the b6-square. A rapid draw is the last thing on White's mind.*

**11...Rf8xd8 12. Nc3-a4**

*This move would be innocuous if the b6-square had not been weakened.*

**12...Nf6-d7 13. Bb2xg7 Kg8xg7**



**14. Ra1-c1!**

Insurance against b7-b5.

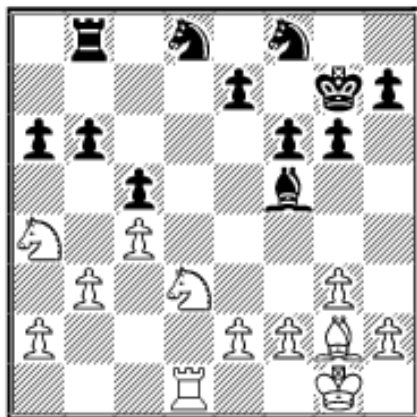
*This move illustrates Barcza's favorite theory on the spreading of weaknesses – here from b6 to c5.*

After 14. Rfd1 b5, White gets nothing from 15. cb (15. Nb2 Bb7) 15...ab 16. Nxc5 Nxc5 17. Rdc1 Nxb3 18. ab Bb7 =.

**14...b7-b6 15. Rf1-d1 Nd7-f8 16. Rd1xd8 Nc6xd8 17. Nf3-e5 f7-f6**

Black has a difficult position after 17...Bb7 18. Rd1 Bxg2 19. Kxg2.

**18. Rc1-d1! Bc8-f5 19. Ne5-d3**



### 19...Bf5-d7?!

*It was high time to eliminate one of Barcza's knights by 19...Bxd3. In this position White's knights, which attack the b6- and c5-pawns, are more useful than Black's bishop, which cannot directly support the weak pawns.*

After 19...Bxd3 20. Rxd3 Nde6 or 20...Nf7, White has only a small advantage – which, on the other hand, certainly does not mean that a draw is inevitable. An opponent may be

outplayed from such positions, too – skilled “technocrats” have demonstrated this time and again.

### 20. Na4-c3 Nd8-c6?

*After the text move Black lacks a viable defense. Stout resistance was possible only after the active 20...Bc6, although, in that case too, White would be better after 21.Nf4 Bxg2 22.Kxg2 Nc6 23.Na4, threatening 24.Nd5.*

### 21. Nd3-f4! Nc6-d4

*Black cannot play 21...e6? because of 22.Rxd7+ Nxd7 23.Bxc6.*

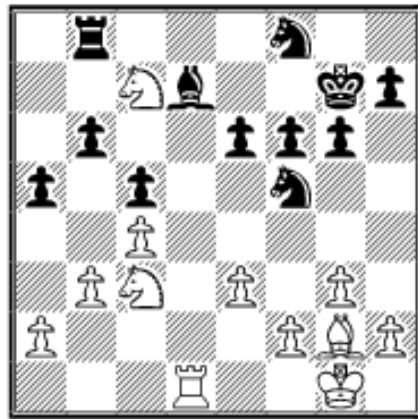
### 22. e2-e3 Nd4-f5

*If 22...Nde6?, White could still gather two pieces for his rook after 23.Rxd7. Now, however, White initiates a strange knight maneuver.*

### 23. Nf4-d5! e7-e6

23...Kf7 24. Nc7 a5 25. Na6 Rc8 was more stubborn, since 26. Bb7 Re8 27. Nd5?, contrary to Barcza's opinion, does not lead to the win of material. Black can meet this either with 27...Bc8 28. Bxc8 Rxc8 (29. Nxb6? Rc6), or 27...Nd6 28. Nxb6 Nxb7 29. Nxd7 Rd8.

### 24. Nd5-c7 a6-a5



**25. Nc7-a6!**

*A rare post for the knight, but, in this case, a decisive one.*

**25...Rb8-e8**

*If 25...Rc8, then 26.Bb7 and Black's rook is still forced to e8, under more uncomfortable circumstances.*

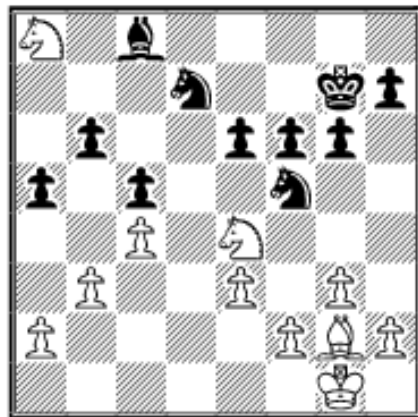
**26. Nc3-e4!**

*Black will not be able to prevent this knight's penetration into d6.*

**26...Bd7-c8 27. Na6-c7 Re8-e7 28. Nc7-a8!!**

*The knight's gallop into the far corner is hardly an everyday idea: it exhibits Barcza's undogmatic attitude.*

**28...Re7-d7 29. Rd1xd7+ Nf8xd7**



**30. Ne4-c3!?**

Benko thinks that 30. g4 Bb7 31. gf Bxa8 32. fe Ne5 33. Nd6 Bxg2 34. Kxg2 Kf8 35. Nc8 Nd3 36. Nxb6 Ke7! would have put White's win in doubt. One could continue the variation: 37. Na4 Kxe6 38. Kf1 Kd6 39. Nc3 f5±. However, replacing the capture of the b6-pawn with the immediate inclusion of White's king is far stronger: 36. Kf3! Nc1 37. Ke4 Nxa2 38. Kd5+.

**30...Nf5-d6 31. Nc3-a4!**

Now Black must fatally weaken his queenside pawns. White gets nothing out of 31. Bc6 Ne5 32. Ba4 (32. Bg2 Nd7) 32...Bb7 33. Nxb6 Nf3+.

**31...b6-b5 32. c4xb5 Nd6xb5 33. Bg2-c6**

*Now it's crystal clear why Black should have traded bishops by 20...Bc6, instead of 20...Nc6. Black's light-squared bishop cannot lend support to the weak pawns at a5 and c5.*

**33...Nb5-d6 34. Bc6xd7 Bc8xd7 35. Na4xc5 Bd7-c6**

35...Bc8 is just as hopeless: 36. Nb6 Nb7 (36...Kf7 37. Nxc8 Nxc8 38. Nb7) 37. Ne4 f5 38. Nd2! Nd6 39. Nxc8 Nxc8 40. Nc4 (Benko).

**36. Nc5xe6+ Kg7-g8 (36...Kf7 37. Nd8+) 37. Na8-b6 Nd6-e4**

*Now there are many ways to win, and White chooses the best and most thematic.*

**38. Ne6-d4 Bc6-e8 39. Nb6-c4 a5-a4 40. b3xa4 Be8xa4 41. Nc4-b6 Ba4-d1 42. a2-a4 Ne4-c5 43. a4-a5 Kg8-f7 44. f2-f3**

*To prevent the bishop from escaping to g4 (domination!).*

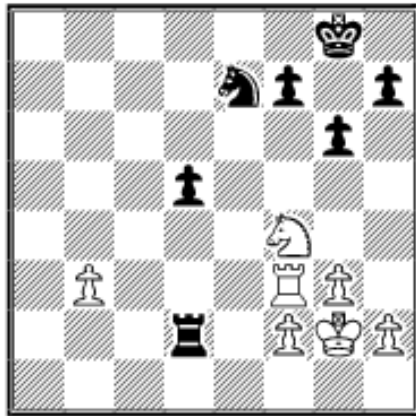
**44...Kf7-e8 45. Nb6-d5 f6-f5 46. Nd5-c3 Bd1-a4 47. a5-a6!** Black resigned.

*The knights indeed dominated this game. Of White's 47 moves, 23 were made by the knights.*

*It's no wonder that such performances by Barcza influenced the way his opponents played against him. For instance, at the 1952 Venice International tournament, Barcza's opponent, IM Eugenio Szabados, traded both knights almost immediately after the opening. While he was walking around the tournament hall, another competitor remarked: "You have the worse game now."*

*"At least," Szabados replied, "I am freed from his terrible knights!" And, this strategy worked: the game ended in a draw.*

**Barcza – Sanchez**  
Munich ol 1958



*The ending is theoretically very interesting. White's outside passed pawn would give him an obvious advantage in a knight or pawn ending. With rooks still on the board White's superiority is not as marked. So, trading rooks is the logical plan. But the obvious 42.Rd3?! is answered effectively by 42...Rb2! and White is not making any progress.*

**42. Rf3-e3! Kg8-f8?!**

42...Nc6! (intending to meet 43. Re2 by 43...Rd4, with equality) would seem to have the obvious shortcoming of allowing White to force a more favorable version of the exchange of rooks: 43. Rd3. But in fact, Black would not be forced to exchange, but could quite easily sacrifice a pawn temporarily, only to win it right back with 43...Rb2! 44. Nxd5 Na5! (44...Ne5 45. Rc3 Ng4 46. Ne3! Nxf2 47. Rc2 Rxc2 48. Nxc2 would be less convincing, as Black's troubles continue) 45. b4 Nc6 = (as indicated by Vadim Zvjagintsev and Ernesto Inarkiev).

In the starting position, I believe the chances for both sides are about equal: the activity of Black's pieces compensates for his opponent's outside passed pawn.

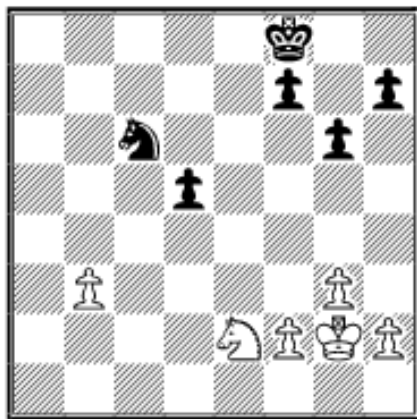
But this certainly doesn't mean a draw is inevitable – in order to finish the game successfully, it is necessary to match the opponent step for step, predict his plans (both the tactical and the strategic), and create your own plans to counter them. Luis Sanchez' understanding of the endgame was not on the same level as that of the grandmaster, and it is precisely this circumstance that determined the outcome of the battle – certainly, it was not the superiority of White's position.

#### 43. Re3-e2! Rd2xe2?!

*This is more or less forced since White was threatening 44.Rb2, in accordance with Tarrasch's precept that a rook stands best behind the passed pawn. One possible line could have been 43...Rd4 44.Rb2 Nc6 45.Ne2! Rb4 46.Nc1! Nd4 47.Rd2 Ke7 48.Rd3 Kd6 49.Na2 and White wins.*

As Benko noted previously, the outside passed pawn gains added weight if the rooks are exchanged; therefore, he should have paid more attention to the option of refusing the exchange. In Benko's indicated line, 46...Nd4? is inferior: if instead we play 46...Ke7! 47. f3!? (47. Nd3 Rd4 is useless, and the knight would stand poorly on a2) 47...Kd6 48. Kf2 (intending 49. Nd3) 48...Rb7!? Now Black is superior in the center, his pieces stand excellently – clearly, White has not the slightest advantage here.

#### 44. Nf4xe2 Ne7-c6



*White has a miniscule edge because of his outside passed pawn. If the knights were off the board, the win would be elementary. In their presence, however, nobody would be startled if White agreed to a draw here. But this was not Barcza's way. Often he would win just such endings by increasing little advantages, even against strong opponents.*

#### 45. Ne2-c3!

*The only correct continuation; for example 45.Nf4 is bad because of 45...Nb4 and White has nothing (46.Kf3 Nc2!).*

Well, I don't think it's all that obvious that the simple 45. Kf3 Ke7 46. Ke3 Kd6 47. Nd4 is any weaker than the game continuation – especially if you consider the variation analyzed in the following annotation.

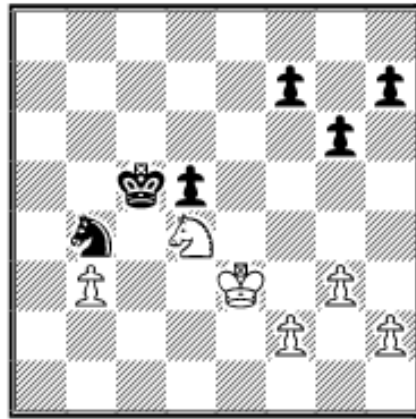
#### 45...Nc6-b4?!

*If 45...d4 46.Na2 Ke7 47.Kf3 and White has the edge.*

Zvjagintsev and Inarkiev continued as follows: 47...Kd6 48. Ke4 f5+ 49. Kd3 Kd5 50. f4 (50...Ne5+ was threatened) 50...g5! 51. fg Ne5+ 52. Ke2 Ke4, with fully adequate counterplay; or 51. b4 gf 52. gf Nd8 (threatening 53...Ne6) 53. Nc1 Nc6, with equality.



**46. Kg2-f3 Kf8-e7 47. Nc3-b5! Ke7-d7 48. Kf3-e3 Kd7-c6 49. Nb5-d4+ Kc6-c5**



A few careless moves, and Black's position has indeed become difficult.

**50. h2-h4!**

The principle of two weaknesses!

*The b-pawn pins down Black's forces, and White turns his attention to the other wing. Now, if Black were to play 50...h5, White would have proceeded with 51.f3, followed by 52.g4, either to loosen Black's pawn*

*formation or to create a passed h-pawn, most dangerous in knight endings.*

**50...Kc5-d6 51. g3-g4! Kd6-c5**

*Black is thrashing to and fro because of the belief that any pawn move would injure his position.*

**52. f2-f4**

Perhaps 52. h5 would have been more accurate, threatening to push the pawn to h6, fixing the pawn at h7 for later attack.

**52...Kc5-d6 53. Nd4-f3!**

*The threat of 54.Ng5 now forces Black to make a weakness on the kingside.*

**53...f7-f6**

*The alternative, 53...h6, could have been met by 54.Ne5 Ke7 55.Kd4. Black would not have been able to hold out much longer.*

**54. Nf3-d4**

Zugzwang! Any Black move involves some sort of concession.

**54...Nb4-a6**

*Of course, 54...Kc5 55.Ne6+, followed by 56.Nf8 decides.*

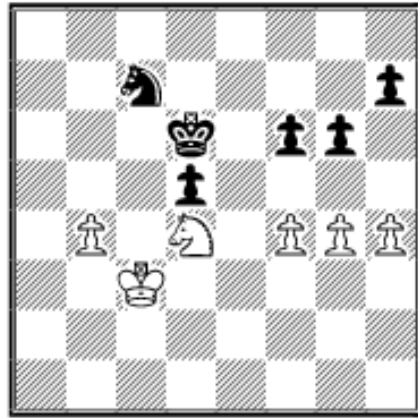
**55. Nd4-c2!**

Exploiting the opportunity to prepare the advance of his queenside passed pawn.

**55...Kd6-c5 56. Ke3-d3! Na6-c7 57. b3-b4+ Kc5-b5 58. Kd3-c3 Kb5-c6**

*If 58...Ne6 59.Nd4+ and White wins the pawn ending easily.*

**59. Nc2-d4+ Kc6-d6**



**60. Kc3-d3!**

*Careful! The move 60.Kb3 would have been a mistake because 60...g5! 61.hg fg 62.fg Ke5 would have rescued the game for Black.*

It should be added that Black would meet 62. f5 (instead of 62. fg) with 62...Ne8!, followed by 63...Ke5, but not 62...Ke5? at once, because of 63. b5!+-.

And 60. h5 would meet the same reply,

60...g5!.

**60...Nc7-e8**

Once again, Black fails to find the best defense. White's task would have been much more complex after 60...Na6!?

**61. f4-f5!**

Threatening to create an outside passed pawn by 62. fg hg 63. h5.

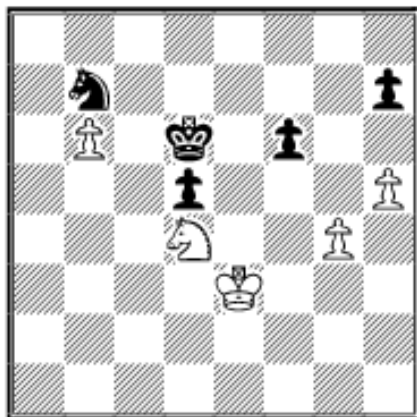
**61...g6xf5**

On 61...Ng7, Benko gives 62. fg hg 63. Ne2! (63. Ke3!? – Inarkiev – is also strong) 63...Ke5 (63...f5 64. g5 Ne6 65. Nd4 Nf4+ 66. Ke3! Ng2+ 67. Kf3 Ne1+ 68. Kg3 Nd3 69. h5 f4+ 70. Kh4 gh 71. g6 Ke7 72. b5+- – Dvoretsky) 64. b5 Kd6 65. Nf4! g5 66. h5! gf 67. h6, and wins (as we have indicated previously, the knight usually has a hard time against a rook pawn).

**62. Nd4xf5+ Kd6-e5 63. b4-b5 Ne8-c7 64. b5-b6 Nc7-a6 65. Kd3-e3 Na6-c5**

*The try 65...h5 can be answered by 66.Kf3.*

**66. h4-h5 Nc5-b7 67. Nf5-d4 Ke5-d6**

**68. Nd4-b3?**

The straightforward 68. Kf4! would have hammered it home. If 68...Nc5, then 69. Kf5 Ke7 70. Nb5 Nb7 71. Nc7 Nd6+ 72. Kf4 d4 73. Nb5+-. And on 68...Kc5, while 69. Ne6+?! Kxb6 70. Nf8 (70. Kf5 Nc5 71. Nf4 d4 72. Kxf6 d3 73. Nxd3 Nxd3 74. Kg7 Nf2 75. g5 Ne4 76. g6 hg 77. h6 Ng5 78. Kxg6 Ne6 =) 70...h6 71. Nd7+ Kc6 72. Nxf6 Nd6 is unconvincing, 69. Nf3! Kd6 (69...Kxb6 70. Kf5+-; 69...Nd6 70. b7 Nxb7 71. Kf5+-) 70.

g5 fg 71. Nxb5+-.

The text could have cast the win into doubt.

**68...Kd6-c6 69. Ke3-d4! Kc6-d6?**

Now Black's position is hopeless. But after 69...h6!, White would be in zugzwang: any move weakens his position. For example, 70. Ke3 Kxb6 71. Nd4 Nd6, or 70. Nd2 Nd8 71. Nf1 Ne6+ 72. Kd3 Kxb6 (72...Nf4+!? 73. Ke3 Ne6 = isn't bad, either) 73. Ne3 Kc5 74. Nf5, and the game would most likely end in a draw. Unfortunately, the errors committed by both sides in this stage were not explained by Benko.

**70. Nb3-c1! Nb7-d8 71. Nc1-d3 Nd8-c6+**

*After 71...Ne6+ the conclusion could have been 72.Ke3 Kc6 73.Nb4+ Kd6 74.Nxd5! and White wins.*

**72. Kd4-e3 Nc6-e7 73. Nd3-b4 h7-h6 74. Ke3-d4 f6-f5 75. g4-g5! f5-f4**

In the line 75...hg 76. b7 Kc7 77. Nxd5+ Nxd5 78. Kxd5 g4, White has the pleasant choice between either freezing the enemy pawns by 79. Kd4 or immediately advancing his h-pawn to queen.

**76. g5xh6 Ne7-f5+ 77. Kd4-d3 Nf5xh6 78. Nb4xd5! Black resigned.**

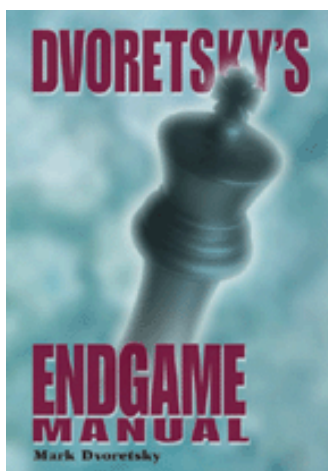
*Both examples are very instructive, particularly for those who, like Barcza, have a relationship with their cavalry.*



## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Saving Combinations, Part One

*Nothing inspires one, so much as the realization of the hopelessness of one's situation.* – a quote from the French writer, Albert Camus.

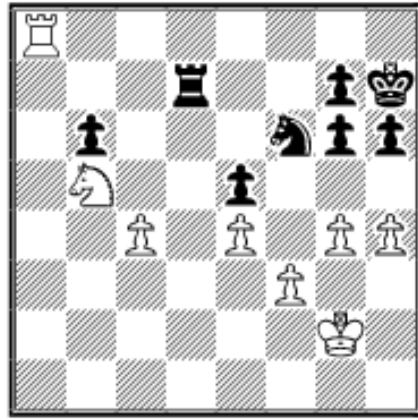
When we no longer have anything to lose, we sometimes decide on desperate measures, examining lines which, under other circumstances, would not even enter our heads. And sometimes, it is exactly by this means that we find the hidden path to salvation.

In fact, I have just described only one of the possible ways a situation could develop. Unfortunately, matters more often follow quite a different path. Yes, there are some players who come alive in difficult situations; but there are others who do the opposite: letting their hands fall, they stop fighting, for all practical purposes. Sometimes, there are purely chessic shortcomings preventing us from finding a hidden defensive idea – for example, our combinative eye might be dim, or we may be unable to calculate a complex variation to the end. Sometimes, time pressure takes a hand. And finally, sometimes a player simply does not realize how difficult his position is, and doesn't sense that he must look for a radical solution.

Among other things, even when the situation is objectively not yet hopeless – let's say it's just strategically dubious, or the way things are going, the game doesn't look good for us, as the position gradually gets worse and worse – in such situations, it also makes sense to try for a sharp change in the course of battle.

I have brought up the theme of active defense more than once. For example, it occupies the last quarter of my book: [School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play](#) – there, among other things, we deal with various psychological aspects of such situations. The examples I bring herewith to your attention didn't make it into that book, but come, rather, from my notebook of exercises. You can train yourself in finding combinations which can alter the assessment of a difficult, or at least an inferior, position. I recommend that for each one, you first place yourself in the player's position: evaluate the prospects for each side, given a "normal" course of events; try to let just this sense of threatening danger provide you with a stimulus to find a tactical solution. This isn't so simple – in any event, none of those actually playing in these examples (the majority of them very strong players) were able to cope with the task.

**Sosonko – Timman**  
Tilburg 1983



B?

Black's position is much worse than it appears at first glance. His knight on f6 is doing nothing; his pawns at b6 and e5 are weak (White at least threatens 33 Rb8); and if the rook leaves d7, he has to consider White's knight marching to the kingside, creating mate threats.

Jan Timman could only have saved himself by finding the following stalemate

combination:

**32...h6-h5!! 33 g4-g5**

After 33 gh Nxh5, the knight is activated and Black obtains sufficient counterplay.

**33...Nf6xe4! 34 f3xe4 Rd7-d2+ 35 Kg2-f3 Rd2-d3+ 36 Kf3-e2 Rd3-d2+**

And the king can't hide from the "berserker" rook.

And now, let's see how matters went in the actual game.

**32...Rd2+? 33 Kg3?**

Neither side noticed the stalemating possibility. Otherwise, Gennady Sosonko would undoubtedly have preferred the more accurate king retreat 33 Kf1!. In that case, 33...h5 is met decisively by 34 Nc7! (34 g5? Nxe4 =) 34...hg 35 Ne6 (threatening mate) 35...g5 36 hg Nh5 (36...Nd7 37 Rd8+-) 37 Nf8+ Kg8 38 g6.

But now, 33...h5! would again have saved the game: 34 Nc7! Rd3! (34...hg? 35 Ne6+-) 35 Ne6 Nxe4+ 36 Kg2 Rd2+ 37 Kh3 Nf2+ (37...hg+) 38 Kg3 Nh1+, or 37 Kf1 Rf2+ 38 Ke1 Rxf3 39 g5 Nd6 40 Nf8+ Rxf8 41 Rxf8 Nxc4 =.

**33...Rd3 34 Kf2 Rd2+?**

The last mistake. Black could still have gotten the draw by 34...h5! 35 g5 Nxe4+ 36 Ke2 Rd7 or 36...Rb3.

**35 Ke3 Rh2 36 Nd6 Rxe4 37 Nf7 g5 38 Rh8+ Black resigned.**

*Smejkal – Rogulj*

Trencianske Teplice 1979



B?

In contrast to the preceding example, it looks as though all is in order for Black here: he's active on the kingside and his rook may invade at b2. I would not be surprised if he had a concrete method of obtaining the advantage. But if you cannot find such a plan, then at least you have to consider how to maintain equality. For Black's position does contain a few strategic defects: his pawn structure is pretty rickety and his light-squared bishop might eventually end up "bad."

The game continued **21...fg? 22 hg Rb2 23 Rc2 Rxc2?! (23...Bg4 was better, although after 24 Qd3, White has the preferable position) 24 Qxc2 Bg4 25 Re1 Rb8 26 Rb1 Rb6**, and now, the simple 27 Rb3 would have kept a noticeable advantage for White, and his opponent would have had to work very hard to save the game. Unfortunately, in time pressure, Jan Smejkal played a rank blunder: 27 Nb3? Na3.

In his notes, Branko Rogulj indicates a combination that would have forced the draw:

**21...Rb8-b2! 22 Rc1-c2 f4-f3!**

Once again, anything but a forcing line would leave Black a little worse: 22...Rfb8 23. Nxe6 Rxc2 24 Qxc2+/, or 22...Bg4 23 Qd3+/=.

**23 Bg2xf3 Rb2xc2 24 Qe2xc2 Qf7xf3 25 Nc5xe6 Nc4-e3! 26 f2xe3 Qf3xe3+ 27 Kg1-g2 Qe3-f3+**

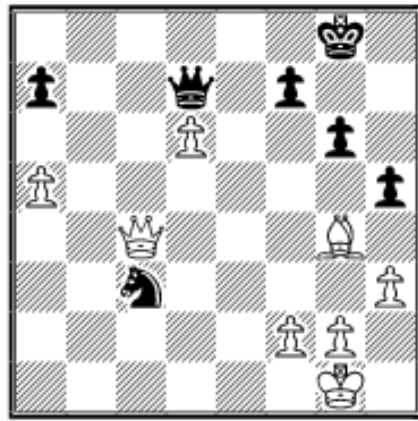
Perpetual check!

Black had a second solution here as well – perhaps even simpler:

**21...f4-f3! 22 Qe2xf3 Qf7xf3 23 Bg2xf3 Rf8xf3 24 Nc5xe6 Rb8-b2**

The position is even. For instance: 25 Rcb1 (25 ed Rxf2) 25...Rxf2 26 Rxb2 Rxb2 27 ed cd 28 Rf1 (28 Nxc5?! Nd2, with 29...h6 to follow) 28...h6 29 Rf2 = (29 Rf8+ Kh7 30 Rf7+ Kg6 31 Rxa7 Kf5 is worse).

***Voitsekhovsky – Kochiev***  
Sankt-Peterburg 1999



B?

A shortage of fighting spirit, coupled with an unwillingness to work at the board and calculate complex variations – these are the main reasons why such a talented grandmaster as Alexander Kochiev was unable to fully develop his gift. Here's an example: he chose the primitive **32...Qxd6?**, and after **33 Bxh5! Nd5 34 Bf3**, came out a pawn down and gradually lost.

He had to take the bishop.

**32...h5xg4! 33 Qc4-c7!**

33 Qxc3 Qxd6 34 Qc8+ Kg7 35 Qxg4 Qd2! leads to a draw. Black has two threats: 36...Qxa5 and 36...Qe1+ (but not 35...Qe5? 36 Qb4!±). White's queen invasion ensures that the pawn will queen, which is undoubtedly why Kochiev spurned 32...hg. In a desperate situation, however, you have to look at every chance – in this case, the attempted counterattack with queen and knight.

**33...Nc3-e2+ 34 Kg1-h2**

White gets nowhere with 34 Kf1 Qb5 =.

**34...Qd7-a4!!**

It has to be here! Everything else loses:

34...Qb5? 35 d7 Qb1 36 d8Q+ Kg7 37 Qe5+;

34...Qf5? 35 d7 Qxf2 36 d8Q+ Kh7 (36...Kg7 37 Qe5+) 37 hg (37 Qd1 gh 38 Qd5+- would be good, too) 37...Qg1+ 38 Kh3 Qh1+ 39 Qh2 Ng1+ 40 Kg3+ (with *check!*);

34...g3+? 35 fg Qe6 (35...Qf5 36 d7 Qf1 38.d8Q+ Kh7 38 Qh4+ Kg7 39 Qe5+) 36 d7 Qe3 37 d8Q+ Kg7 38 Qd1.

By the way, Black's moves could also have been transposed: 33...Qa4!! 34 d7 Qa1+ 35 Kh2 Ne2.

**35 d6-d7 Qa4-a1 36 d7-d8Q+ Kg8-g7 37 h3xg4**

37 Qxf7+ Kxf7 = is not dangerous.

**37...Qa1-g1+ 38 Kh2-h3 Qg1-h1+ 39 Qc7-h2 Ne2-f4+**

39...Ng1+ amounts to the same thing.

**40 Kh3-g3 Nf4-e2+ 41 Kg3-f3 Qh1xh2 42 Kf3xe2 Qh2xg2**

42...Qe5+ would also be sufficient.

**43 Qd8-d4+ Kg7-g8 44 Qd4xa7**

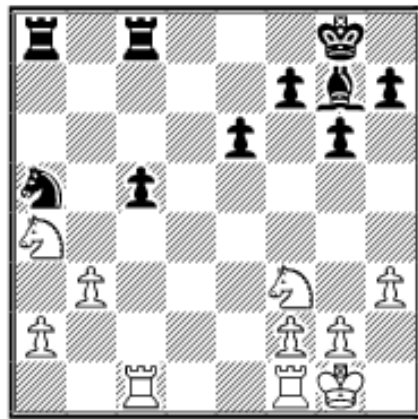
Nor does White have any realistic chances after 44 a6 Qa8+/-.

**44...Qg2xg4+**

The queen endgame is drawn.

*Zlotnik – Vetemaa*

Liepaja 1980



B?

After the loss of the c5-pawn, Black's position will become perilous. His best chance at a successful defense is a temporary rook sacrifice:

**24...c5-c4!! 25 b3-b4!?**

Black's task would be easier after 25 Nb6 cb 26 Nxc8 ba (threatening 27...Nb3) 27 Nb6 (27 Nd2 Bb2) 27...Rb8 (but not 27...Rd8? 28

Ra1+-) 28 Nd7 Rd8 =, or 28...Ra8 =.

**25...Na5-c6 26 Na4-b6**

26 Rxc4 Rxa4 27 Rfc1 Rca8 28 Rxc6 Rxb4 leads to equality.

**26...Nc6xb4 27 Nb6xa8**

After 27 Nxc8 Rxc8, Black has enough for the exchange.

**27...Rc8xa8**

After 27...Nd5!? (threatening 28...c3) 28 Rfd1 Rxa8 29 Rxc4 Rxa2 30 Rc8+ Bf8+/-, we get a position of roughly the same kind as in the main variation. It's hard to say which continuation is the more accurate.

**28 Rc1xc4 Nb4xa2 29 Rf1-d1**

29 Rb1!? Nc3 30 Rb7 Nd5 31 Ng5 Rf8+/-, followed by 32...h6, is about the same.



**29...Na2-c3 30 Rd1-d7 Nc3-d5 +/-**

Black has a pawn for the exchange and his knight sits beautifully on d5. The position is most likely drawn.

And now, let's see how the game actually went:

**24...Rd8? 25 Rxc5**

25 Nxc5! was stronger. On 25...Nc6, White could choose between 26 Nxe6 and 26 a4.

**25...Nb7 26 Rc7 Nd6 27 Rd1?!**

Probably White should have preferred the prophylactic 27 Re1!, preventing the activation of the enemy pawns.

**27...e5 28 Re1 e4 29 Nh2 f5 30 Nf1 Nf7 (30...Nb5!?) 31 Rec1 Ne5 32 Ne3 Nd3 33 R1c4 Bd4 34 Re7**

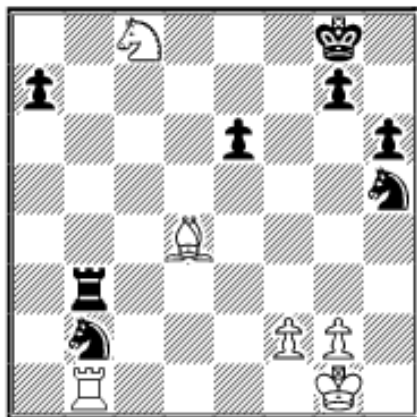
As a result of his opponent's inaccuracies, Black has significantly activated his forces; after 34...Rac8, he would have had good compensation for his pawn minus. In time pressure, however, he lost the thread of the game and his position instantly fell apart.

**34...h5 35 Kf1 Bf6?! (35...Nf4; 35...Rac8!) 36 Re6 Rf8?**

36...Kf7 37 Rcc6 Be7 was necessary, and if 38 Rxc6? Ne5.

**37 Rcc6 Bg7 38 Nd5+.** Black overstepped the time-limit.

*Leko – Bareev*  
Dortmund 2002



B?

The knight at b2 is lost, but Black's defensive resources are not yet exhausted. First he must force White to take that knight with his bishop, so that he can then exploit the b-file pin.

**34...Rb3-b4! 35 Bd4xb2**

If 35 Ne7+ Kh7! 36 Bxb2, and now it's important to stop the knight from getting

away: 36...Rb6! =.

**35...Rb4-b7!!**

Black must play this to prevent the knight from getting to c6 via e7 (or a7).

**36 Nc8-d6 Rb7-b4!!**

Once again the knight is hobbled, while Black threatens 37...a5 or 37...Nf4. White has nothing better than to repeat moves by 37 Nc8 Rb7!! =.

Evgeny Bareev did not find this fine domination ploy and made the natural move: **35...Nf4?**. After **36 Ne7+ Kh7 37 Nc6 Rb3 38 Ne5!** it became clear that he would not be getting the piece back: 38...Ne2+ 39 Kf1 Nc3 40 Rc1!.

**38...a5 39 g3 Nd5 40 Nc4 Nb6 41 Nd2 Rb4 42 Bc3 Rxb1+ 43 Nxb1**

White has untangled himself and kept his extra piece. Peter Leko does a nice technical job of realizing his material advantage.

**43...a4 44 Na3 Nd5 45 Bb2 g5 46 Nc4 h5 47 Ne5 Nb4 48 Kf1 Nc2 49 Ke2 Kh6**

49...a3 doesn't help: 50 Kd2 ab 51 Kxc2 Kg7 52 Kxb2 Kf6 53 Nf3 Kf5 54 Nh2! Ke4 55 Kc2+-.

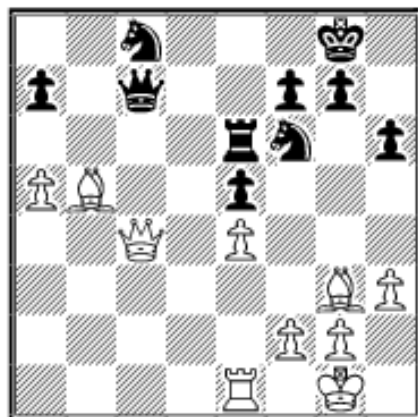
**50 Kd3 Nb4+ 51 Kc4 Nd5 52 Bc1 Nf6 53 Kd3**

Everyone chooses the winning method that most appeals to him. Another possibility was 53 Nf7+ Kg6 54 Nxg5, or 53 f3!.

**53...Nh7 54 Ke2 Kg7 55 Nd7 Kg6 56 Nc5 Kf5 57 Kf3 Nf6 58 Nxa4 h4 59 gh gh 60 Nc3 Ng4 61 Ne2 Ne5+ 62 Kg2 Nd3 63 Be3 Kg4 64 f3+ Kf5 65 Nc3 e5 66 Ne4 Ne1+ 67 Kf2 Nc2 68 Ke2 Nd4+ 69 Bxd4 ed 70 Kf2 Ke5 (if 70...Kf4 71 Nc5) 71 Nc5 Kd5 72 Nd3 Kc4 73 Ne5+ Kc5 (73...Kd5 74 Ng6) 74 Kg2 Kd5 75 Ng6 d3 76 Kf2 d2 77 Ke2 Kd4 78 Nxb4** Black resigned.

***Kasparov – Kramnik***

Linares 1997



B?

The two bishops are a powerful force in such positions. Sooner or later, White must get to Black's main weakness: the a7-pawn. This assessment is valid, both in the middlegame and after the exchange of queens.

On 29...Qxc4? 30 Bxc4 Rc6, White could reply 31 Rc1!? Kf8 32 Bxe5 Nxe4 33 Bb2±.

Black did not have it any easier in the game after **29...Qb8? 30 Qc5**. What follows is generally understandable: Garry

Kasparov gradually consolidated his forces, prepared the transfer of his bishop to the f2-a7 diagonal, and invaded the enemy position with his heavy pieces.

**30...Nd6 31 Bd3 Nd7 32 Qa3 Nf8 33 Rb1 Qc7 34 Rc1 Qd8 35 a6 Ng6 36 Qc5 Re7 37 f3 Ne8 38 Bf1 Rc7 39 Qe3 Rd7 40 Kh2 Re7 41 Rc6 (41 Rb1!) 41...Kh7 42 Qc1 Nc7 43 Qc3! Qd7 44 Rc5 Qd6 45 Bf2 Ne6 46 Rd5 Qb8 47 Rb5! Qd6 48 Rb7 Nd4 49 Qb4 Qf6 50 Qc5 Nc6 51 Be3 Re6 42 Bc4 Re7 43 Bd5 (53 Bxf7 Rxf7 54 Rxf7 Qxf7 55 Qxc6 was good too) 53...Nd4 54 Rxa7 Rxa7 55 Qxa7 Ne7 56 Bc4 h5 57 Qc5** Black resigned.

Black had to exploit his unexpected opportunity to get rid of the dangerous a5-pawn immediately.

**29...Qc7xa5! 30 Qc4xc8+ Kg8-h7**

Two white pieces are *en prise*, so the rook has to pin itself.

**31 Re1-b1 Re6-b6**

The bishop is going to be recovered (32 Qc4 a6); the only question will be whether White can whip up threats on the kingside in the meantime.

**32 Qc8-f5+ Kh7-g8 33 Qf5xe5**

33 Rc1 Qxb5 34 Rc8+ Ne8 35 Qxe5 Qxe5 36 Bxe5 Re6 is not dangerous – it leads to complete equality.

**33...a7-a6 34 Bg3-h4**

34. Qc7 Rxb5 = would be useless.

**34...Rb6xb5**

Black loses after 34...ab? 35 Ra1 Qd2 36 Ra8+ Kh7 37 Qf5+ g6 38 Qc5 Qd1+ (38...Qd6 39 Qc8+-) 39 Kh2 Qd6+ 40 Qxd6 Rxd6 41 e5.

**35 Rb1xb5 a6xb5**

35...Qxb5 36 Bxf6 gf = is possible too.

**36 Bh4xf6 g7xf6 37 Qe5xf6 Qa5-e1+ 38 Kg1-h2 Qe1xe4 39 Qf6xh6 b5-b4=.**

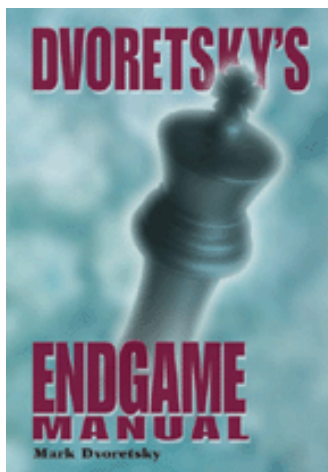




## COLUMNISTS

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Saving Combinations, Part Two

*Nothing inspires one, so much as the realization of the hopelessness of one's situation.* – a quote from the French writer, Albert Camus.

We shall look at our final two games in full, since in both of them, the crisis occurred just after leaving the opening. One of them was very short; the other considerably longer and more complicated.

**Morozevich – Korchnoi**

Biel 2003

**1 e2-e4 e7-e6 2 d2-d4 d7-d5 3 Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4 Bc1-g5 Bf8-e7 5 e4-e5 Nf6-d7 6 h2-h4 c7-c5 7 Bg5xe7 Ke8xe7**

Of course not 7...Qxe7? 8 Nb5.

**8 d4xc5**

The quieter alternative was 8 f4. After the text, White has to consider not just 8...Nc6!?, but also the most principled reply, 8...Nxe5!?. This continuation has already occurred in practice; and to my knowledge, White has not succeeded in demonstrating an advantage. Conversely, I am not a specialist in opening theory – perhaps the experts in this variation have already corrected this evaluation, or maybe Alexander Morozevich has his own opinion.

In refusing to take the sharp course of action, Black finds himself in difficulties.

**8...Qd8-c7 9 f2-f4 Qc7xc5 10 Qd1-d2 Nb8-c6 11 Ng1-f3 Nd7-b6 12 a2-a3!**

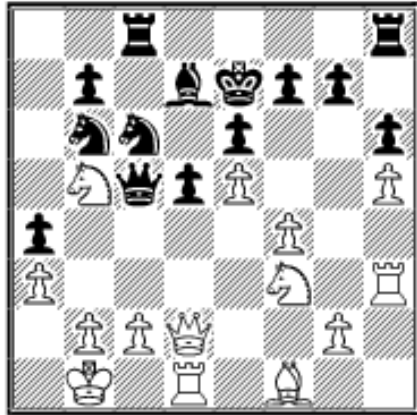
Threatening to seize space by 13 b4, White provokes Black into weakening the b5-square. In the game Fontaine – Schaefer, Senden 2001, White played the weaker 12 0-0-0 Bd7 13 g4 h6 14 g5 Rac8 15 h5 Na5 16 gh gh 17 Qd4 Qxd4 18 Nxd4+/=.

**12...a7-a5 13 h4-h5 h7-h6 14 0-0-0 Bc8-d7 15 Kc1-b1 a5-a4 16 Rh1-h3**

An interesting attempt to prepare the advance Nb5 (the immediate 16 Nb5?! would be met by 16...Nxe5!). The pawn sacrifice 16 f5 ef 17 Nb5 or 17 Qf4 is dubious, though tempting. The kingside breakthrough could be executed after the preparatory 16 g4!, which was probably objectively stronger than the game

continuation.

**16...Ra8-c8 17 Nc3-b5**



B?

The knight aims for d6; if it gets there, Black's position will become quite difficult. (The game's conclusion supports this evaluation.)

**17...Rhd8 18 Nd6 Rb8 19 Rg3 Kf8 20 Qd3!**  
(threatening both 21 Qh7 and 21 Nxf7) Black resigned.

Now let's try taking on e5.

**17...Nc6xe5! 18 Nf3xe5**

Clearly, Korchnoi could not have been afraid of 18 Na7 Nec4 19 Nxc8+ Rxc8, when Black has enough for the exchange.

**18...Bd7xb5 19 Rh3-c3**

This is what our clever Morozevich had prepared against the pawn capture. The queen is tied to the bishop, and cannot therefore retreat; and if Black blocks the file at c4, White intends to capture there a few times, open up the d-file, and invade with his queen at d7.

Such a prospect could frighten anyone; and under normal circumstances, it would have been natural to end one's calculations here. But this could not be considered a normal situation: teetering on the edge of defeat, Black has to clutch at any straw, and carefully test all forcing variations, even if they look hopeless at first.

**19...Nb6-c4!**

19...Bc4? would be much weaker: White is not forced to capture, but can insert the powerful 20 f5! first. Black loses immediately after 20...Rhd8 21 fe fe 22 Qf4. And on 20...d4, there follows 21 Rxc4 Nxc4 22 Nxc4 b5 23 Na5 e5 (23...Qxf5 24 Nb7+-, preparing 25 Qb4+) 24 Nb7 (24 Bd3± is good, too) 24...Qc7 25 Qb4+ Kf6 26 Bd3, with a decisive advantage.

**20 Bf1xc4**

20 Qe1 Rhd8 promises White little.

**20...d5xc4**

After 20...Bxc4? 21 Rxc4!, White's idea triumphs.

**21 Rc3xc4 Rh8-d8!**

This in-between move saves Black. A roughly equal endgame results after either 22 Rxc5 Rxd2 23 Rxd2 Rxc5, or 22 Qxd8+ Rxd8 23 Rxc5 Rxd1+ 24 Ka2 Bd7 (24...Be8 25 Rc7+ Kf8, intending 26...Rd2) 25 Rc7 f6. There is no change in the assessment after the unexpected 22 Nc6+ Qxc6 23 Qb4+ Kf6 24 Qc3+ Ke7, when White just has to repeat moves.

Whereas in the previous game Black quickly found himself in an inferior position, in the following encounter the opening had nothing to do with it: theory offers Black several acceptable continuations.

*Polugaevsky – M. Gurevich*

Reggio Emilia 1991

**1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 g7-g6 3 Nb1-c3 Bf8-g7 4 e2-e4 d7-d6 5 Bf1-e2 0-0 6 Ng1-f3 e7-e5 7 Bc1-e3 e5xd4 8 Nf3xd4 Rf8-e8 9 f2-f3 c7-c6 10 Qd1-d2 d6-d5 11 e4xd5 c6xd5 12 0-0 Nb8-c6 13 Ra1-d1**

13 c5 Rxe3!? 14 Qxe3 Qf8! was an interesting exchange sacrifice, introduced in the 11th match game Karpov – Kasparov, New York/Lyon 1990.

**13...Nc6xd4**

13...dc!? 14 Nxc6 Qxd2 15 Bxd2 bc 16 Bxc4 Be6 = was also possible.

**14 Be3xd4 d5xc4 15 Be2xc4 a7-a6**

15...Be6!? 16 Bb5 Rf8 17 Qf2 (threatening 18 Bc5) 17...Qa5 led to an unclear position in the game Tal – Yurtaev, 1983.

**16 Rf1-e1! Bc8-f5?!**

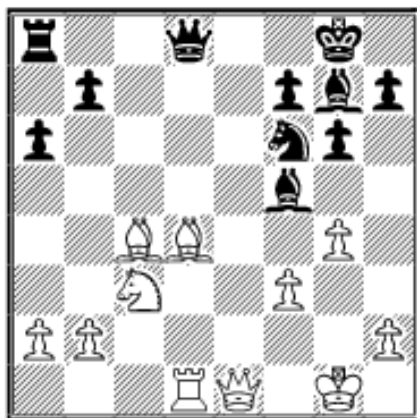
16...Bd7! was preferable: 17 Bxf6 Rxe1+ 18 Qxe1 Bxf6 19 Ne4 (19 Nd5 Bc6 =) 19...Be7! =; or 17 Qf4 Rxe1+ 18 Rxe1 Rc8 19 Bb3 Bc6 20 h4 Qc7 21 Qg5 Re8 = (Z. Polgar – Wojtkiewicz, Polanica Zdroj 1991).

**17 g2-g4!**

After driving off the bishop, White intends to continue g4-g5; and after trading off the dark-squared bishops, he will invade f6 with his knight.

On 17...Rc8, he has a pleasant choice between 18 Bb3 and 18 Bxf7+ Kxf7 19 gf.

And if 17...Be6, then 18 Bxe6 fe!? (18...Rxe6 19 Rxe6 fe 20 g5 Nh5 21 Bxg7 Qxd2 22 Rxd2 Nxg7 23 Rd7±) 19 g5 Nh5 20 Bxg7 Nxg7 21 Ne4 Qxd2 (21...Nh5 22 Qe3) 22 Rxd2 Red8 23 Red1 Rxd2 24 Rxd2±.

**17...Re8xe1+ 18 Qd2xe1**

B?

Here you have perhaps the most complex task presented in this article. Black's position is not easy; however, he does have a brilliant saving combination at his disposal.

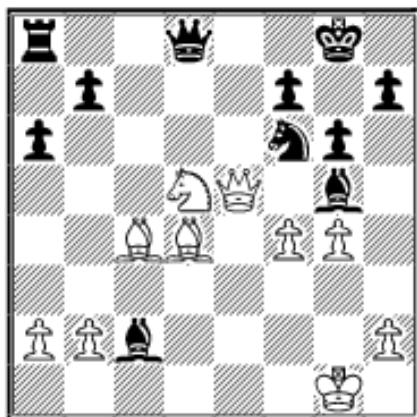
**18...Bf5-c2!! 19 Rd1-d2 Bg7-h6!**

On 19...b5, both 20 Bf2 Qc7 21 Bf1 and 20 Bd5 Nxd5 21 Bxg7 Kxg7 22 Nxd5 Qd6 (22...Qg5 23 h4 Re8 24 Qxe8 Qxd2 25 Qe5+)

23 Nc3 are strong.

**20 Qe1-e5!**

White gets nothing out of 20 Be3 Qe7, so he is practically forced to sacrifice the rook.

**20...Bh6xd2 21 Nc3-d5 Bd2-g5! 22 f3-f4!**

B?

After 22 Qxg5? Nxd5 23 Qe5 Nf6 the attack has been beaten off. Now, however, it looks as though Black is in trouble.

22...Qe8? loses to 23 Nxf6+ Bxf6 24 Qxf6 Kf8 25 f5 Qe1+ 26 Kg2. On 22...Be4?! 23 fg Bxd5 24 Bxd5 Qxd5 25 Qxf6 Kf8 26 Qh8+ Ke7 27 Bf6+ Ke6 28 Qxa8 Qd1+ 29 Kf2 Qd2+ 30 Kf3 Qd3+ 31 Kf4, it's hard to determine whether or not the king can ever

escape the perpetual check. Yet, White has another way: 23 Ne7+!? Kf8 24 fg Nd7 (24...Qd7 25 h3) 25 Qg7+ Kxe7 26 Qxf7+ Kd6 27 Qf4+ Kc6 28 Qxe4+ Kc7 29 Be3, when the black king is still in trouble.

**22...Bg5-h4!! 23 g4-g5 Bh4-f2+!!**

The point of Black's play! White must now pull his bishop back from the long diagonal (24 Kxf2?? Ng4+).

**24 Bd4xf2**

Now Black is able to trade off the dangerous knight: 24...Nxd5 25 Bxd5 Qe8 26 Bxf7+!? Qxf7 (if 26...Kxf7 27 Qd5+!) 27 Bd4 Qd7 (27...Qf8 is the same thing) 28 Qh8+ Kf7, and it comes down to perpetual check. Another possibility is

24...Ng4 25 Qd4 (White will get no advantage out of 25 Qe2 Nxf2 26 Kxf2 b5!?)  
25...Nxf2 (25...b5!? 26 Be1!? bc 27 Bc3 f6 leads to an unclear position) 26 Nf6+  
Kh8 (26...Kf8 27 Nxe7+) 27 Nd7+ Kg8, and draws.

The above analysis was by your author, working with grandmaster Ernesto Inarkiev.

Other continuations fail to get Black out of trouble:

On 18...Bd7?! 19 g5 (19 Qe3!? is probably stronger still) 19...Nh5 20 Qe3, the dark-squared bishops will be traded off, and the weakness of f6 must tell.

18...Qc8?! leads to a tough ending for Black after 19 Qe2 (19 Bb3 is just as good; but 19 Qe7?! offers White little after 19...Qxc4 20 Bxf6 Bxf6 21 Qxf6 Qc5+, followed by 22...Be6) 19...Be6 20 Bxe6 Qxe6 (20...fe 21 g5 with an attack) 21 Qxe6 fe 22 g5 Nh5 23 Bxe7 Nxe7 24 Rd7.

Mikhail Gurevich chose **18...Qc7?!**, not fearing 19 gf Qxc4, and intending to meet the bishop's retreat by 19...Re8.

**19 Bxf6! Bxf6 20 Nd5 Qc5+** (20...Qxc4 21 Nxf6+ Kg7 22 Qe5 is hopeless) **21 Kg2!**

Of course, 21 Qf2? is a mistake: 21...Qxf2+ 22 Kxf2 Bh4+ 23 Kg2 Be6 24 Nc7 Rc8. On 21 Kh1?!, the undefended f3-pawn would be a factor in some lines, such as: 21...Bg7 22 gf Qxc4 23 Nb6 Qf4.

### **21...Bg5**

Other lines offer Black no relief:

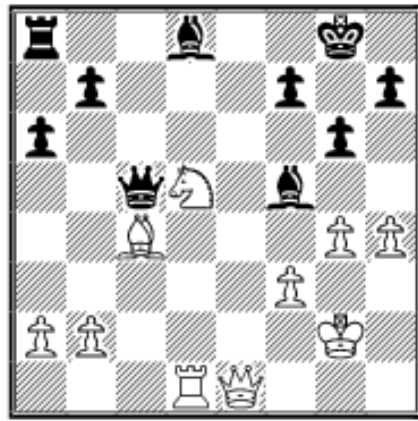
- 21...Bg7 22 gf Qxc4 23 Nb6;
- 21...Bxb2 22 Qe2 Be6 23 Qxb2 Qxc4 24 Nb6;
- 21...Qxc4 22 Nxf6+ Kg7 23 Nd5, threatening both 24 gf and 24 Qe5+;
- 21...Bd8 22 Qe8+ Kg7 23 Ne3 (or 23 Qe5+ f5 24 Qe2).

**22 h4!** (22 gf? Qxc4 23 Nb6 Qc2+) **22...Bd8**

If 22...Bxh4 23 Qxh4 Qxc4, then 24 Qf2! decides, with its twin threats of 25 gf and 25 Nb6.

And on 22...Bc2 23 hg Bxd1, White can win either by 24 Qxd1 Qxc4 25 Nb6, or by 24 Nf6+! Kg7 25 Qc3 Qc6 26 Nd5+ f6 27 gf+.





**23 Qe8+**

23 gf!? Qxc4 24 f6! was very strong, too.

**23...Kg7**

Here, the decisive line was 24 Qe5+! f6 25 Qe2 Bd7 (25...Bc8 26 h5; 25...Rc8 26 Bb3 or 26 gf Qxc4 27 Qxc4 Rxc4 28 Ne3 Rc8 29 Rd7+) 26 Nf4 (there are other ways as well: 26 Nxf6 Bb5!? 27 g5!; 26 b4 Qc6 27 Nb6!) 26...Qc6 27 Be6! Be8 28 Bd5.

Unfortunately, Polugaevsky let slip a well-deserved win with **24 Ne3?**, which would only have worked had Black played the immediate 21...Bd8 (without the inclusion of 21...Bg5 22 h4).

**24...Bxh4!** (24...Be6? 25 Bxe6; 24...Qc7? 25 Rd7!!, or 25 gf Bxh4 26 f6+!) **25 Qxf7+** (on 25 Qxa8 Qxe3 26 Qxb7 Qf2+ 27 Kh1 Kh6!, the position becomes double-edged) **25...Kh8 26 gf** (26 g5 Bxg5 27 Rh1 h6!) **26...Qxe3 27 fg Qg5+ 28 Kf1 Qxg6 29 Qxg6 Draw.**

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C O L U M N I S T S

## Grandmaster Technique, Part One

In August 2005, in my lecture at the London Chess Center, I offered the following position, taken from the magazine *64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozrenie*, which had published the endgame with the comments of the winner, Evgeny Najer.

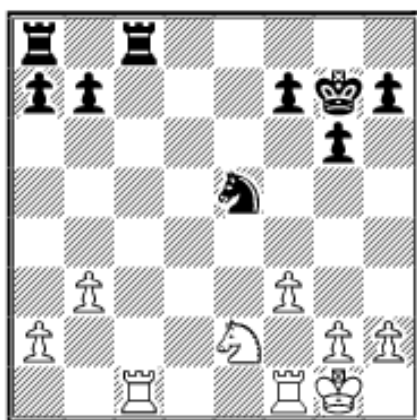
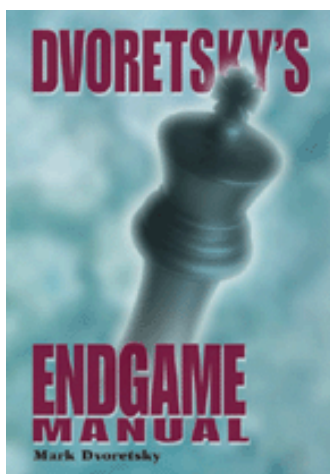
*Yandemirov – Najer*

Russian Club Championship

Dagomys 2004

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

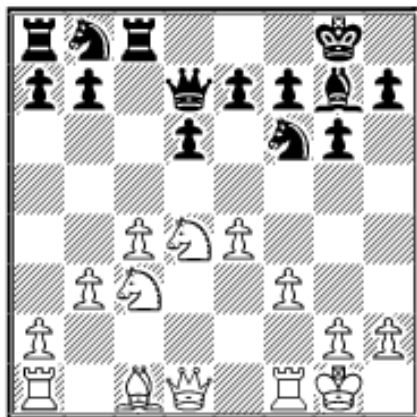


1...?

One of those in attendance, Grandmaster Jonathan Rowson noted, to my surprise, that this position comes about more or less by force at the end of a modern opening variation, and that in fact he himself had once played it.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 g6 7.0-0 Bg7 8.d4 cd 9.Nxd4

0-0 10.f3 Rc8 11.b3



1...?

11...d5!

A clever central blow, apparently first employed by Vassily Ivanchuk against Alexander Delchev, at the European Championship, 2003. By this means, Black solves his opening problems – in fact, it is now White who must play accurately to stay out of trouble.

12.ed (12.e5 Ne8 13.Nxd5 e6 14.Nc3 Bxe5 is dubious) 12...Nxd5 13.Nxd5 e6 14.Bh6 ed 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.cd (16.Nb5!?) 16...Qxd5 17.Ne2

Here a draw was agreed in the game Gdanski – Kempinski, Polish Championship 2004, and one move (and one year) earlier in Yandemirov – Biriukov. And on the whole, a look into my database reveals that the majority of games with this line went practically unplayed – a draw was agreed upon somewhere between moves 11 and 23.

In the summer of 2003, I published an [article](#), which can be found in the [ChessCafe Archives](#), suggesting a rule forbidding players from discussing and consequently agreeing to draws during play. Two years later, such a rule was successfully introduced in the Sofia super-tournament. Making such a rule universal would, I am certain, not only lead to longer games, but also increase the percentage of decisive games. Even in such a peaceful and seemingly lifeless situation, where a drawn outcome is in fact most likely, one can, as we shall soon see, find resources and create problems for the opponent.

**17...Qe5 18.Qd4 Nc6 19.Qxe5+ Nxe5 20.Rac1**

We have now reached the position in the first diagram. The move found by GM Najer might seem puzzling at first glance; but it is the strongest – it was precisely because of this move that he won the game.

**20...b7-b6!!**

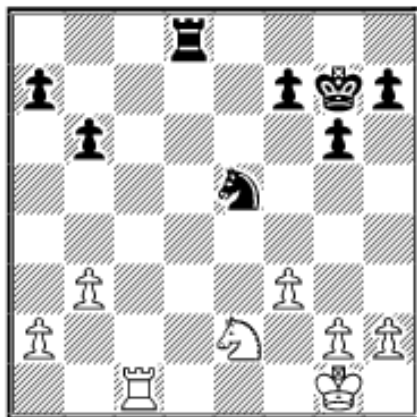
Let us reconstruct Black's logic. First of all, he probably looked at 20...Nd3, and saw that after 21.Rxc8 Rxc8 22.Rd1, the position is equal. After that, his attention was drawn to the possibility 20...Rxc1 21.Rxc1 Rd8, with the idea 22...Rd2. Najer is an experienced player, and knows that one must first examine the opponent's active replies – which in this case would be 22.Rc7. There doesn't seem to be anything better than 22...Rd2 23.Kf2 Rxa2 24.Rxb7, but here Black's advantage is strictly academic, with practically no hope of victory left – which was, in fact, supported by the outcome of the game Li Ruofan – Rowson, 2004.

But after ...b7-b6, this variation would end with Black a pawn up, since the rook on a2 can protect the a7-pawn.

**21.Rf1-d1?!**

After the game, Valery Yandemirov suggested that he should have played 21.f4. Of course, White doesn't really want to advance the f-pawn – it's a move one only chooses after doing some prophylactic thinking, leading to a clear recognition of the dangers confronting White.

**21...Rc8xc1 22.Rd1xc1 Ra8-d8**



1.?

Now, after 23.Rc7 Rd2, the only way to avoid losing a pawn, 24.Nc3 (24.Nc1?? Rd1+ 25 Kf2 Rxc1 would be very bad), allows the unpleasant pin 24...Rc2. The situation after 25.Nb5 Rxa2 26.Rxa7 Rb2 looks dangerous for White, with the b3-pawn under attack, and the maneuver Nd3-f4 (or -e1) to think about.

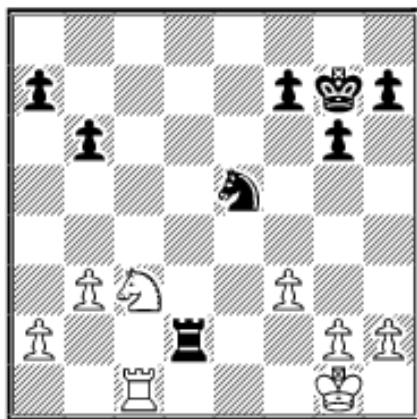
White should probably restrict himself to the accurate move 23.Rc2. But no one wants to station a rook passively – and besides, after 23...Rd1+ 24.Kf2 Nd3+, White has to play the crabwise retreat 25.Kg3, since 25.Ke3?! Ne1 26.Rc7 Nxcg2+ 27.Kf2 Rd2 28.Rxa7 Nf4 29.Ke3 Rxe2+ 30.Kxf4 Rxh2 leaves him down a pawn.

It is quite likely that 23.Rc2 and perhaps also 23.Rc7 leave the position objectively drawn. But it's one thing to analyze quietly at home, especially with the computer's help, and quite another to make your decision at the board. There's no forced draw in view, defending is a chore – in such a situation, one can easily lose one's bearings.

### 23.Ne2-c3?

A serious error! White wants to exchange rooks, but fails to take into account the fact that Black's king will be the first one into play. In a knight endgame, the more active king is a very important factor.

### 23...Rd8-d2



### 24.Rc1-e1?!

Obviously White planned to continue Re1-e2 when making his previous move. Of course, the enemy rook on the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank cannot be tolerated; but he should have engineered the exchange of rooks a little more favorably: 24.Kf1 contains the same idea of Re1-e2, and then 24...Nd3 (24...f6? 25.Ne4) 25.Rd1 Rxd1+ 26.Nxd1 Kf6 27.Nc3 Ke5. In the game, the same position occurred, but with Black to move.

White could exploit the extra tempo by continuing 28.g3 (28.Ke2 Nf4+ 29.Kf2 a6 30.g3 Kd4! 31.Ne4 Nd5 looks weaker). But here, too, Black has a pleasant choice between 28...a6 29.Ke2 Kd4 30.Kd2 Ne5 31.Ne2+ Kc5 32.Ke3 Kb4 and 28...Kd4!? 29.Nb5+ Kc5 30.Nxa7 Nc1 31.Ke1 Nxa2 32.Kd2 Nb4 (and 33...Nd5), with a sizable advantage.

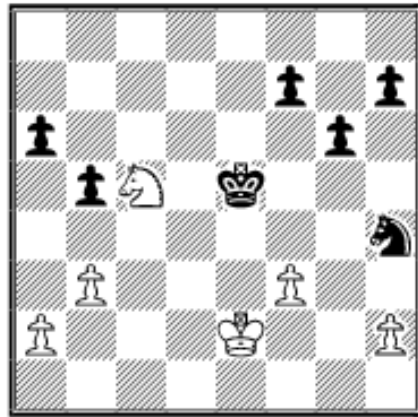
**24...Ne5-d3 25.Re1-e2 Rd2xe2 26.Nc3xe2 Kg7-f6 27.Ne2-c3 Kf6-e5 28.Kg1-**

**f1 a7-a6**

It follows from the previous annotation that 28...Kd4 was also possible; but in this situation, of course, the text move is more exact.

**29.Kf1-e2 Nd3-f4+ 30.Ke2-d2**

On 30.Kf2, both 30...Kd4 and Karsten Müller's suggestion 30...f5!? (meeting 31.g3? with 31...Kd4!) would be strong.

**30...Nf4xg2 31.Nc3-a4 Ng2-h4 32.Kd2-e2 b6-b5 33.Na4-c5**

1...?

**33...a6-a5!**

Najer didn't care for the variation 33...Kf4 34.Nxa6 Nxf3 35.Nc7 Nxh2 36.Nxb5, when the game becomes sharper. With the a-pawn's advance, he undoubtedly foresaw the tactical nuance of his next move, which makes the realization of his advantage considerably easier.

**34.a2-a4 Ke5-d5!**

In this way, Black secures the important a5-pawn.

**35.Nc5-b7 Kd5-c6 36.Nb7-d8+**

36.Nxa5+ Kb6 37.b4 ba would be completely hopeless.

**36...Kc6-c5 37.Nd8xf7 b5xa4 38.b3xa4 Kc5-b4 39.Nf7-e5 Kb4xa4**

Black has a healthy extra pawn. The outcome of the game is assured.

**40.Kd3 Kb3 41.Nc4 a4 42.Na5+ Kb4 43.Nc6+ Kc5 44.Ne5 Kd5 45.Nc4 Nxf3 46.Nb6+ Ke5 47.Ke3 Nxh2 48.Nxa4 Kf5**, and Black won.

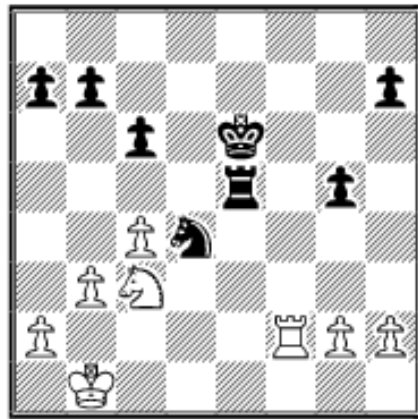
I was happy to read the following note by Najer to his 20...b6!!:

*A useful move, by which one may spot a student, or at least an attentive reader, of the books of M. Dvoretsky.*

Evgeny Najer has attended two of my training sessions, and studied my books – evidently, his labors were not in vain. I find that the grandmaster's commentaries show a deep inner concordance with an endgame he played over from one of the examples given in my book, *School of Chess Excellence 3 – Strategic Play*, which I shall now present for your perusal.

**Stein – Hort**

Biel 1981



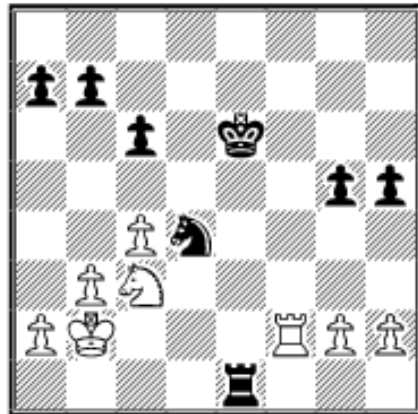
1...?

Black's positional advantage consists of the greater activity of his pieces. But it's a rather fragile one: the slightest inaccuracy, and it disappears. Which is, in fact, what happened in the game: **28...h5? 29.Kc1! Rf5 30.Rxf5 Nxf5 31.Ne4 g4 32.Nc5+ Ke5 33.Nxb7 Ne3** Draw.

A vital principle involved in the realization of one's advantage is to restrict the opponent's possibilities to the greatest degree possible – to prevent any counterplay or any useful operations he might undertake to improve his own position. In order to bring this principle successfully to life, it is necessary to use “prophylactic thinking.”

We ask ourselves: What would White wish to do here? His choices are few. Attacking the knight – 29.Rd2 Re1+ 30.Kb2 Ke5 – is useless. Clearly, the only operation that makes any sense is to bring his king to the center by Kb1-c1-d2-d3. This is what Black should prevent.

**28...Re5-e1+! 29.Kb1-b2 h7-h5**



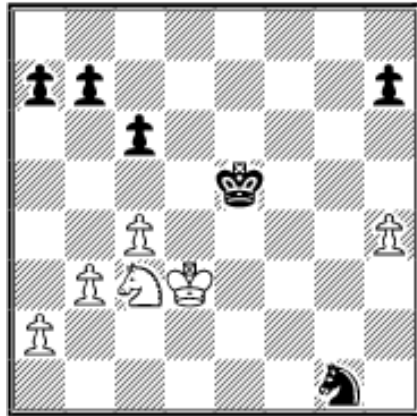
1.

Having forestalled our opponent's intentions, we can now quietly strengthen our own position. White finds his defense difficult. For example, 30.Rf8 is met by 30...Rg1 31.Rf2 Ke5 32.Ne2 Re1 33.Nxd4 Kxd4, and the black king's domination of the position assures him a great advantage in the rook endgame.

But there is also a completely different, and also acceptable, treatment of this position. Black's king is much more active than its White opponent – a factor which would be most keenly felt in a pawn or knight endgame (Mikhail Botvinnik once said: *A knight endgame is a pawn endgame.*) Artur Yusupov suggested **28...Rf5!?** White would respond **29.Rxf5** (29.Rd2 Rf1+ 30.Kb2 Ke5 would not be good for him).

Now, Black would like to recapture with the knight; but after 29...Nxf5 30.Ne4! g4 31.Nc5+! (31.Ng5+ Ke5 32.Nxh7 Ne3 33.Kc1 Nxg2 34.Kd2 Kf4 35.Ke2 Nh4 is weaker) 31...Ke5 32.Nxb7, Black could hardly hope to win.

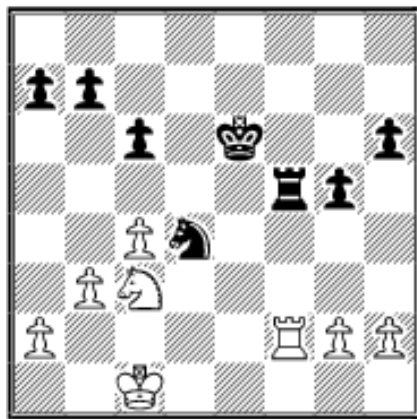
That means Black must play **29...Kxf5!**, intending 30...Ke5 and 31...Nf5. The game might proceed as follows: **30.Kc1 Ke5! 31.Kd2 Nf5 32.Kd3** (on 32.Ke2 or 32.g3, 32...Kd4 would be strong) **32...Nh4 33.g3 Nf3 34.h3 Ng1 35.h4 gh 36.gh**



1...

And here, either 36...Kf4, 36...Nf3, or 36...h5. The concluding position of this variation is most promising for Black. But is it a win? Could not White have played more accurately somewhat earlier? Clearly, everything hangs by a thread: the tiniest additional stroke to improve the defense, and the game will end in a draw.

Black's play can be improved. What is immediately obvious is that he did take a little extra time, in that his knight didn't immediately arrive on its proper square f5. This explains Vadim Zvjagintsev's recommendation: 28...h6!? (certainly a mysterious-looking move at first glance, isn't it?) 29.Kc1 Rf5



1.?

After 30.Rxf5 Nxf5 31.Kd2 (now 31.Ne4 would be useless, as the pawn on g5 is protected) 31...Nh4, Black must win.

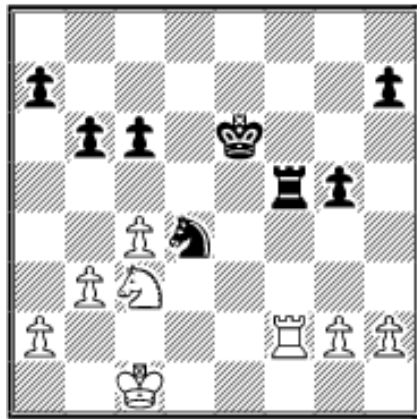
However, the exchange on f5 is not forced: 30.Nd1! (but not 30.Ne4 Ke5) would be much more accurate for White. For example: 30...Rxf2 31.Nxf2 Nf5 32.Nd3, intending 33.Nc5+ or 33.Kd2 Nh4 34.Ne1. And nothing much is changed by 30...Ke5 31.Kd2 Rxf2+

32.Nxf2 Nf5 33.Kd3, since 33...Nh4 can be met by 34.Ng4+ or 34.g3, with Ng4+ to follow. As we can see, the pawn on h6 is certainly not ideally placed.

And nevertheless, Zvjagintsev's idea is logical – we just have to bring it to life in a slightly different form. I suggest another mysterious move – which happens to be the very same one Najer played.

**28...b7-b6!! 29.Kb1-c1 Re5-f5!**





1.

White's position is difficult: 30.Rxf5 Nxf5, or 30.Nd1 Rxf2 31.Nxf2 Nf5 32.Ne4 h6, threatening either to attack the pawn (by 33...Nh4 or 33...Ne3), or to invade via the 4<sup>th</sup> rank with the king.

As you can see, the similarity between this endgame and Yandemirov – Najer is not limited to the fact that in both cases, the key to the position turned out to be an

insignificant pawn move. Here we also have an identical material balance and pawn structure, as well as the vital role played by king activity in a knight endgame – the leitmotiv of Black's play in both examples.

On the other hand, the Stean – Hort game allowed principally different approaches to the exploitation of the advantage. Which would you prefer? The first approach is purely technical (restricting the opponent's play, and quiet strengthening of the position); it does not require deep calculation, and thus allows you to save time and effort. The second approach – bringing about a knight endgame – is far more concrete, and requires careful testing. A quiet pawn move on the queenside, preparing the exchange of rooks under the most favorable circumstances, could only be found after deep immersion in the secrets of the position.

The process of realizing one's advantage is of a twofold character. On the one hand, accuracy and technical ability are required; conversely, one must also know when to end the maneuvering, to find and calculate a concrete path to the goal. It's not easy to sense which attitude is more correct at a given moment. In this example, both approaches seem equivalent to me; but that's not something that occurs very often.

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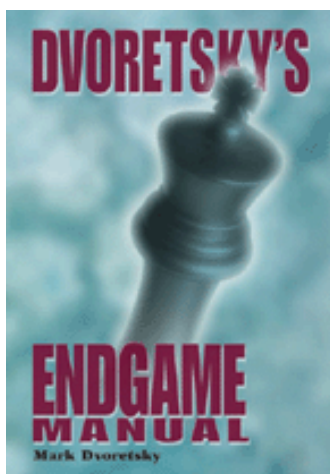
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C O L U M N I S T S

## *The Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



## Grandmaster Technique, Part Two

Sometimes, a position may look (or even, in fact, be) absolutely winning, but a player will not succeed in winning it. Most often the reason for this is a loss of concentration (unless fierce time-pressure steps in, of course), and not paying sufficient attention to those few resources which may still remain, or which may accidentally find themselves at our opponent's disposal. A vital habit, allowing us to avoid this sort of error, is prophylactic thinking, which I write about literally in every one of my books. It comes down to placing oneself in the opponent's shoes, and constantly asking: What can he do here, what would I do in his place, if it were his turn to move?

In some of the following examples, the use of prophylactic thinking enabled the player to find ideal ways to exploit the advantage, which may not have been obvious at first sight. And in others, by contrast, these kinds of opportunities went unexploited, and the advantage disappeared.

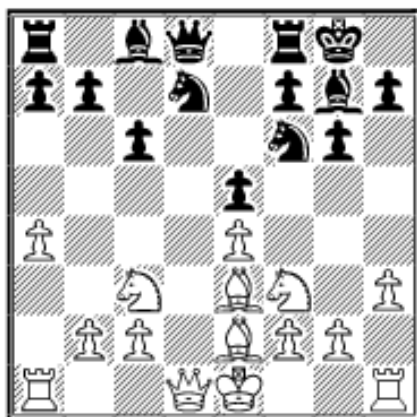
*Xie Jun – Larsen*

Monaco 1994

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 d6 5.h3 Nf6 6.a4 0-0 7.Be3 Nbd7 8.Be2 e5 9.de!?

After 9.0-0, White would have to consider 9...d5!?

9...de



1. ?

10.0-0

Rather than this unsophisticated move, 10.Nd2! was stronger; if then 10...Qe7 11.Nc4 Rd8 12.Qd6!, with advantage to White (as suggested by GM Vladimir Potkin).

10...Qe7 11.Qd3 a5!?

Black forestalls the possible squeeze of his queenside by a4-a5. 11...Nh5!?, a typical maneuver in such positions with the idea of planting the knight on f4, or even continuing ...f7-f5 under the correct

circumstances, was worthy of consideration.

## 12.Qc4 Re8 13.Rfd1 h6

Black's last two moves are logically connected to each other: first, the rook clears the f8-square for the knight (which has just been denied the c5-square), or perhaps for the bishop; then the g5-square is placed under control, securing the f7-pawn against a sortie by the white knight. Such a plan of action is too slow, however. He probably should have preferred 13...Qb4, intending to meet 14.Ng5 with 14...Rf8, or 14.Nd2 with 14...Bf8.

## 14.Nd2

White intends to retreat her queen to a2, and occupy c4 with the knight. By this time, 14...Qb4!? was necessary; however, Bent Larsen continues his kingside maneuvers, underestimating the strategic danger he faces.

## 14...Nh7?! 15.Qb3 Ng5 16.Nc4 Nc5?

The last chance was probably 16...Ne6, intending to sacrifice the exchange by 17.Nd6 Nd4! 18.Bxd4 ed 19.Nxe8 Qxe8.

**17.Qa3 Nce6 18.Qxe7 Rxe7 19.Nb6 Rb8 20.Bg4! Re8** (20...h5? fails against 21.Bxg5)



1. ?

The knight at b6 squashes the enemy queenside; the pin on the h3-c8 diagonal is most unpleasant. There can be no doubt White has an enormous positional advantage. The only question is what the best technique to exploit it is.

It would be premature to try to force matters by getting the rook to d7: 21.Nxc8? Rbxc8 22.Rd7? (22.Bxg5 hg 23.Bxe6 Rxe6 24.Rd7

is stronger, when White still retains a small advantage) 22...Nd4! 23.Rxb7 Rb8: Black activates his pieces, and his position is no longer inferior.

Let's ask ourselves what our opponent would do, if it were his turn to move. Obviously, he would want to rid himself of the pin by playing ...h6-h5.

21.h4 suggests itself; after 21...Nh7 22.Nxc8!? Rbxc8 23.Bb6, Black's position remains difficult. But we would also have to consider the reply 21...h5!? For example: 22.hg hg, or 22.Be2 Nh7, with 23...Nd4 to follow – in both cases, Black has good chances to equalize.

White still retains a solid advantage with the continuation 22.Bxh5! Nh3+ (22...gh 23.hg, with a good pawn plus for White) 23.gh gh 24.Ne2! and 25.Ng3.

But the Chinese player's choice was stronger still.

### **21.Be3xg5! h6xg5**

Thus, White liquidates the possibility of ...h6-h5, and maintains the pin on the knight at e6. But without her next excellent move, the complete bind on Black's position would not have come to pass.

What does Black want to do? Obviously, his best chance would be to disturb the dangerous knight at b6 by playing ...Bf8-c5.

### **22.Nc3-b1! Bg7-f8**

22...Nd4 doesn't work: 23.Bxc8 Nxc2 24.Ra2.

### **23.Nb1-d2 Bf8-c5 24.Nd2-c4**

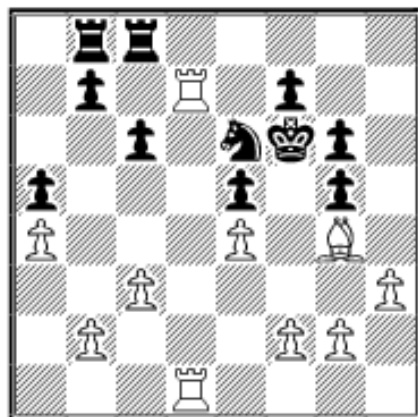
The knight arrived just in the nick of time, and now Black has simply nowhere to move. Meanwhile White will, at some point, invade at d7 with decisive effect. On 24...Rf8 (intending 25...f5), the simplest is 25.Nxc8 f5 26.Ncb6 fg 27.Nd7, or 25...Rbxc8 26.Bxe6 fe 27.Rd2, with a won position.

### **24...Bc5xb6 25.Nc4xb6 Kg8-f8 26.Rd1-d2 Kf8-e7 27.Ra1-d1 Re8-f8**

Black has prepared ...f7-f5, but he never gets the chance to play it – White is now ready for the decisive incursion.

### **28.Nb6xc8+ Rf8xc8 29.Rd2-d7+ Ke7-f6**

29...Kf8 30.Bxe6 fe 31.Rh7 was completely hopeless as well.



1.?

### **30.Bg4xe6 f7xe6 31.g2-g4!**

White's next move will be 32.R1d3, with unavoidable mate (the immediate 31.R1d3 could have been met by 31...g4). Black resigned.

Some years ago, GM Vadim Zvjagintsev came up with a new plan for White in one variation of the French Defense, and

suggested that I put his analyses to a practical test. We played two training games at a fast time control (15 minutes per game). Soon, there would be another test, at the Russian Cup, against a well-known expert in the French Defense.

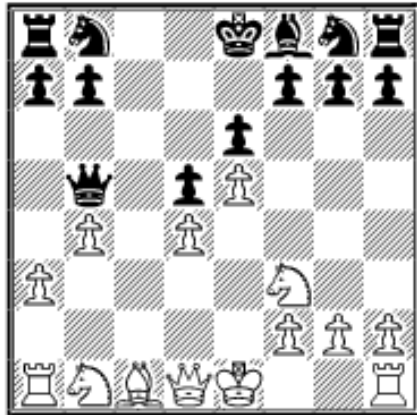
***Zvjagintsev – Volkov***

Russian Cup, Samara 1998

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Qb6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.a3 Bb5**

After this misfortune vs. Zvjagintsev, Sergey Volkov would switch to 6...a5!? With this variation, he played a pair of resounding games (with varying success) against Evgeny Sveshnikov and Peter Svidler.

**7.b4!? cd 8.Bxb5+ Qxb5 9.cd**



1...?

I was a regular on the black side of the French Defense, and was usually happy to rid myself of my “bad” light-squared bishop. These days, a space advantage is valued more highly than it used to be – many people are happy to play the white side of such positions. It’s no accident that the 3.e5 system against the Caro-Kann has also seen a sharp rise in popularity, with its early exchange of Black’s light-squared bishop.

The diagrammed position occurred in both training games with Zvjagintsev. Black has the choice of either continuing quietly, as with 9...Nd7!? 10.Nc3 Qa6; or of playing more sharply, starting with ...a7-a5. In our first game, I tried the tempting queenside break.

**9...a5?! 10.Nc3**

I continued 10...Qc4 11.Bd2 ab 12.ab Rxa1 13.Qxa1, and here, I stopped to think. I had planned to continue 13...Bxb4 14.Qa8 Bxc3 15.Qxb8+ Kd7 16.Qxb7+ Ke8; but I established that White could easily bring his rook into the game, either by 17.Qa8+ Kd7 18.Qa3, or by 17.Bxc3 Qxc3+ 18.Ke2, when there would be nobody to protect my king.

The search for an acceptable defense having proved fruitless, Black selected 13...Nc6 14.Qa8+ Nd8 15.Qa4+ Nc6 16.b5 Qxa4 17.Nxa4 Na7 (with the faint hope of defending the closed position after 18.b6 Nc6) 18.Ke2!, when Vadim confidently exploited his overwhelming lead in development.

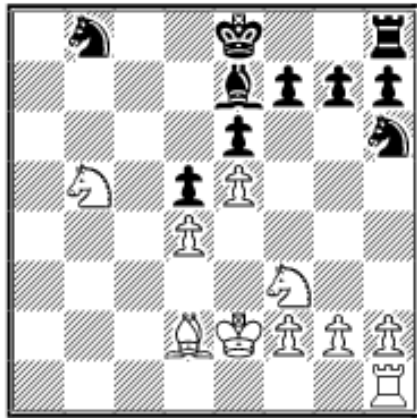
Volkov retreated his queen to a different square, but this did not change the way the game was going.

**10...Qc6 11.Bd2 ab 12.ab Rxa1 13.Qxa1 Qa6 14.Qa4+!** (the same technique he used in our training game) **14...Qxa4 15.Nxa4 b5**

15...Nc6 16.b5 would have transposed back into a position from the training game.

**16.Nc3!** (much stronger than 16.Nc5 – as in our game, Vadim aims for open

lines) **16...Bxb4 17.Nxb5 Be7 18.Ke2 Nh6**



1.?

White's solid positional advantage is, first and foremost, because of the unfortunate placement of Black's knights. It's important not to allow them back into play.

19.Rc1 suggests itself; but after 19...0-0 20.Rc7 Bd8 would be ineffective: depending on how White continues, Black could reply with either ...Nc6, ...Bb6, or ...Nf5-e7. On 20.Na7 Black continues 20...Re8 (with the

idea ...Nd7-b6) 21.Rc7 Bf8, followed by ...Nf5-e7, keeping a defensible position.

After some thought, the grandmaster discovered an elegant plan, allowing him to deprive both enemy knights of their mobility.

### **19.Nb5-a7!!**

Later, I examined another way that White could play this position, which was also very strong: 19.Ra1!? 0-0 20.Ra7. 20...Nc6 is quite joyless for Black: 21.Rc7 Rb8 22.Nc3 Rb6 23.Na4 Ra6 24.Rc8+ Nd8 25.Nc5 Ra7. And on 20...Bd8 21.Bb4 Nc6 (the simplest reply to 21...Re8 is 22.Ra8) 22.Bxf8 Nxa7 23.Bxg7, White comes out a pawn ahead. But the game continuation is evidently stronger still.

### **19...0-0**

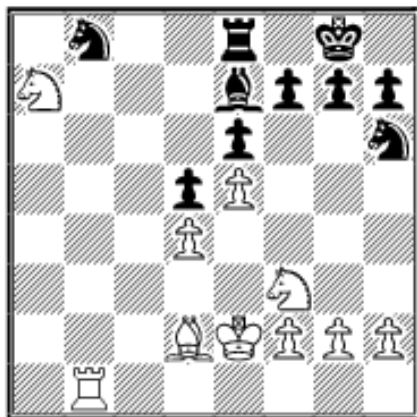
19...Kd7 loses to 20.Rb1.

### **20.Rh1-b1!**

The rook stands better on the b-file than on the c-file.

### **20...Rf8-e8**

Had Volkov foreseen his opponent's reply, he would probably have preferred 20...Nf5. 21.Rb7 Re8? is hopeless: 22.g4 Nh4 23.Nxh4 Bxh4 24.Bb4! and 25.Bd6, and the knight on b8 is lost. However, he could have defended by 21...h5! 22.h3 h4. Vadim would most likely have chosen 21.g4! Nh4 22.Nxh4 Bxh4 23.Rb7, intending both Bb4-d6 and f4-f5.



1. ?

But now White really must take 21...Nf5 into account, as well as 21...f6. For example: 21.h3?! f6!? (the knight heads for f7, but 21...Nf5 22.g4 Nh4 23.Nxh4 Bxh4 24.Rb7 Be7 is also possible) 22.ef Bxf6 23.Rb7 (23.Bf4 Nd7 24.Rb7 Nf8) 23...Nf5 24.Bf4 Nxd4+ 25.Nxd4 e5!.

And 21.Rb7 is also unconvincing: 21...Bf8, followed by ...Nf5-e7.

### 21.g2-g4!!

The point of White's plan! The knight on h6 is under arrest, as is the knight on b8. Black can no longer play 21...f6?, because of 22.ef Bxf6 23.g5. Also losing is 21...Nd7 22.Nc6! (22.Rb7 Nf8 23.Nc6 Ng6 would be less exact) 22...Nf8 (22...Bf8 23.Rb7; 22...Ba3 23.Rb7 Nf8 24.Ra7) 23.Nxe7+ Rxe7 24.Rb8.

Black's best practical chance may have been to give up the knight for two pawns: 21...Nxg4!? 22.Rg1 Nxe5 – but this is, of course, completely joyless.

### 21...Be7-f8 22.h2-h3 f7-f5?!

Passive waiting was better than this. The attempt at freeing himself meets with an efficient refutation.

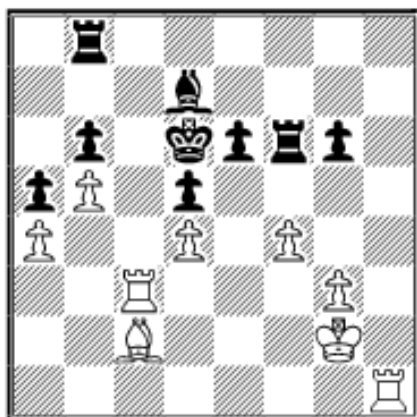
### 23.Bd2xh6 f5xg4 24.Nf3-h2!

Black evidently missed this. The rest is simple.

**24...gh 25.Nxg4 Nd7 26.Rb7 h5 27.Rxd7 hg 28.hg Rb8 29.Nc6 Rb2+ 30.Kf3 Ba3 31.g5 Rb6 32.Rc7 Bb2 33.Kg4 Ra6 (33...Bxd4 34.Nxd4 Rb4 35.Re7 Rxd4+ 36.f4) 34.g6 Ra1 35.Ne7+ Kh8 36.Kg5 Rc1 37.Kf6** Black resigned.

*Lutz – Dautov*

German Bundesliga 1997

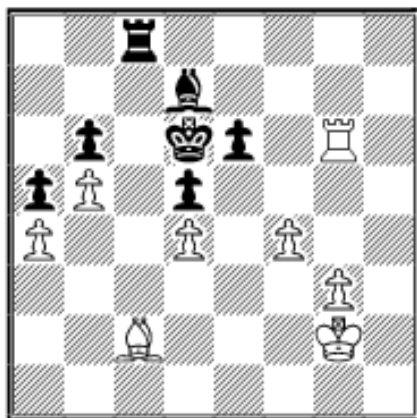


1.?

Black appears to be in a really bad way: his bishop is bad, he suffers from a space deficit, the g6-square is weak, and he has no counterplay whatsoever. But even in such positions (let me make that clearer – *precisely* in such positions), one must be especially on guard, to find and preemptively neutralize all of the opponent's active resources.

The natural move **43.Rh6?**, as played in the game, considered only the automatic response 43...Be8, when White would reply 44.Kf3, and Kg4-g5. But Black has the opportunity to generate some activity at the cost of a pawn, which Rustem Dautov duly exploits.

**43...Rff8! 44.Rxg6** (of course White cannot permit the pin: 44.Bxg6? Rf6, to be followed by ...Rg8 or ...Be8) **44...Rbc8 45.Rxc8 Rxc8**



1.?

46.Bd1?! would be unpleasantly met by 46...Rc4. Christopher Lutz acknowledged that he panicked here, and took the draw. The finish was **46.Bf5?! Ke7** (White threatened 47.Bxe6 Bxe6 48.f5) **47.Rg7+ Kd6 48.Rg6 Ke7**, and drawn.

In his substantive and interesting book, *Endgame Secrets*, Lutz presented a fairly complex analysis to show that, with accurate play, he could still have maintained good winning chances. I have my doubts about his evaluation; but even if my conclusions should fall short of convincing some, this does not change the basic reality: clearly, in a position where White has so great a positional advantage, there was no point in allowing such sharp counterplay.

**46.Bd3 Rc3**

46...Ke7? is bad: 47.Rg7+ Kd6 48.g4 Rc3 49.Be2 Ra3 50.g5.

**47.Be2 Rc2**

47...Ra3? is a mistake: 48.f5 Rxa4 49.f6!; but 47...Be8!? 48.Rg7 Ra3 is quite playable, and probably leads to the same position as reached in the main variation.

**48.Kf3**

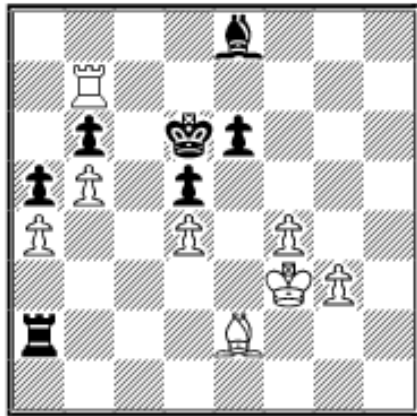
After 48.Kf2 Be8 49.Rg7 Ra2, White can't play 50.Rb7? Bh5; and if 50.Ke3,

then 50...Bd7 51.g4 Rxa4 52.g5 Ra3+ 53.Kf2 Rc3, with counterplay.

### 48...Be8

48...Ra2? 49.f5 Rxa4 50.f6 Ra3+ 51.Kf4 (threatening 52.Rg8) 51...Rc3 52.Rg8 Rc8 53.Rxc8 Bxc8 is a lost bishop endgame for Black: 54.Bd1 Bd7 55.Ba4 Be8 56.g4 Bf7 57.Bc2 (but not 57.Kg5? e5) 57...Be8 58.g5 Bxb5 59.g6 Be8 60.g7 Bf7 61.Bg6.

### 49.Rg7 Ra2 50.Rb7



1...?

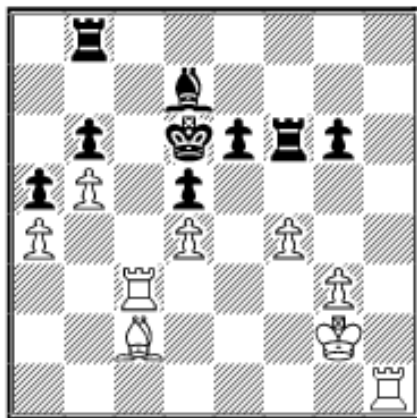
Up to this point, we have followed Lutz's analysis. His main variation is 50...Bh5+ 51.g4 Bxg4+ 52.Kxg4 Rxe2 53.Rxb6+, when White ought to win the rook endgame.

Black should retain the bishops.

**50...Rxa4** (instead of 50...Bh5+?) **51.Rxb6+** (Lutz ends his variation here) **51...Ke7**

Black's defensive idea is to harry the enemy king and bishop with the rook. If 52.Ra6, then 52...Ra3+ 53.Kf2 Ra2, or 53.Kg4 Ra2 54.Bf1 Rf2. 52.Ke3 is met by 52...Ra3+, and the king is unable to approach the rook (because of the bishop's vulnerability), while after 53.Kf2, White has to consider 53...Ra2 (53...Ra4!?!; 53...Rb3!?) 54.g4 a4 (54...Bg6? 55.f5) 55.Ke3 Rb2.

But what should White play from the starting position? Using prophylactic thinking, we figure out the opponent's plan, and take measures against the rook's transfer to the c-file, by moving the bishop out of harm's way ahead of time.



### 43.Bc2-d3!!

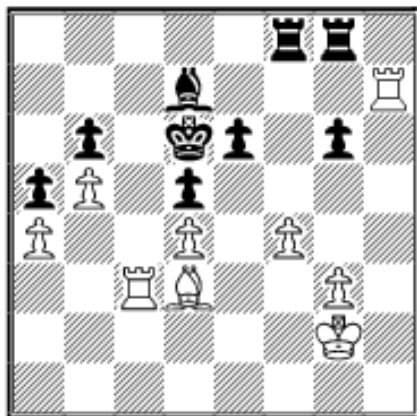
Now 43...Rff8? would be completely bad, owing to 44.Bxg6; and so would 43...g5? 44.fg.

### 43...Rb8-g8

Lutz continues with 44.Rh6 Rff8 45.Rxg6 Rc8 46.Rxc8 Rxc8 47.f5, which is of course enough to win. Vadim Zvjagintsev found another, more interesting plan.

### 44.Rh1-h7!? Rf6-f8





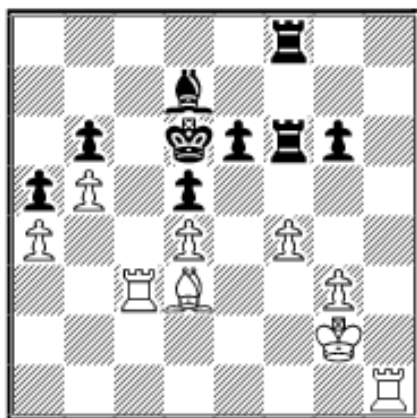
1.?

Now comes a spectacular, decisive blow:

**45.Rc3-c6+!! Bd7xc6 46.b5xc6**

Mate is threatened by 47.Rd7+ Kxc6 48.Bb5; and nothing is changed by 46...Kxc6 47.Bb5+ Kd6 48.Rd7#. And 46...Rd8 47.Bb5, or 46...e5 47.fe+, are hopeless, too.

Black's best chance is **43...Rbf8!?**, intending to continue with 44...g5.

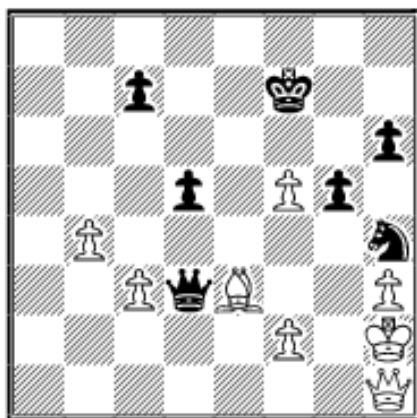


1.?

44.Rc2 g5 45.fg Rf3 46.Bh7 Ra3 47.g6 Rff3 48.Rg1!? Rxc3+ 49.Kh1 Be8 50.g7 Bf7 is unconvincing. However, **44.Rh6 g5 45.Rxf6 Rxf6 46.fg Rf8 47.g6 Rg8** (47...e5 48.de+ Kxe5 49.Rc7 Be6 50.Rb7) **48.Kf3 e5 49.de+ Kxe5 50.Rc7** would leave White with a considerable advantage.

*Timman – Kasparov*

USSR – Rest of the World Match, London 1984



1...?

Black's positional advantage is obvious, but it's not easily exploited. Every possible move, when subjected to careful scrutiny, reveals some shortcoming.

Of course, Black would like to take the pawn. But 49...Qxf5?! allows the strong reply 50.Qd1!, preparing not just the check on h5, but also 51.Qg4.

On 49...Nxf5?!, White has the tactical resource 50.Bd4!, when Black cannot play 50...Nxd4? 51.Qxd5+; and if he shores up the d5-pawn by 50...c6, his king is exposed, and White's queen breaks out with 51.Qa1.

Upon the immediate 49...c6?!, the same reply 50.Qa1! is still good.

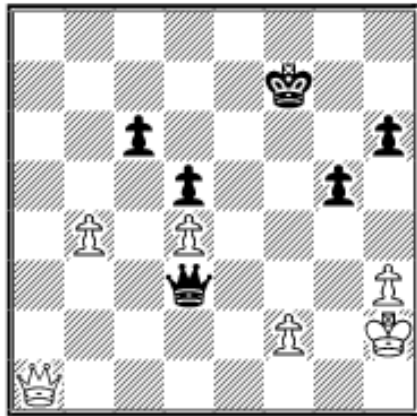
49...h5?! is tempting, since the pawn is taboo: 50.Bxg5?? Nf3+. On 50.b5 Qxf5 51.Qd1, Black would not play 51...Nf3+?! 52.Kg2 g4 53.hg Qxg4+ 54.Kf1 Qe4 (54...Ke6 55.Qd3) 55.Kg2!, but simply 51...Kg6!, with an overwhelming

advantage. A possible continuation: 52.b6 Qe4! 53.Qh1 Qe5+ 54.Kg1 cb 55.Bxb6 Qe6!, followed by 56...g4.

What saves White here is the pretty reply, pointed out by Kasparov: 50.c4!! Qxc4 (50...dc 51.Qc6) 51.Bxg5 (now 51...Nf3+ is prevented) 51...Nxf5 52.Qf3.

It appears that we have examined all the reasonable continuations, and found no solution. Nor did Garry Kasparov find one.

**49...Nxf5?! 50.Bd4! c6 51.Qa1 Nxd4 (51...Qf3 52.Qa8!) 52.cd**



1...

White's pawns are weak; however, the exposed position of the enemy king gives him sufficient counterchances.

**52...Qd2**

On 52...Qf3, Kasparov gives the line 53.Qa7+ Kg6 54.Kg1 Qxh3 55.Qb6 Qe6 56.b5, with equality. Instead of 53...Kg6, it would be a good idea to try 53...Kf6?!?, when 54.Kg1!?

Qxh3 is no longer effective, since after 55.Qb6 Qe6 there is no 6th-rank pin – the queen is defended by the king. White would have to play 54.Qa2, and if 54...Qf4+ 55.Kg1 Qxd4, then 56.Qa8.

**53.Qa7+ Kg6 54.Kg2 Qxb4 55.Qd7! Qxd4 56.Qe8+**

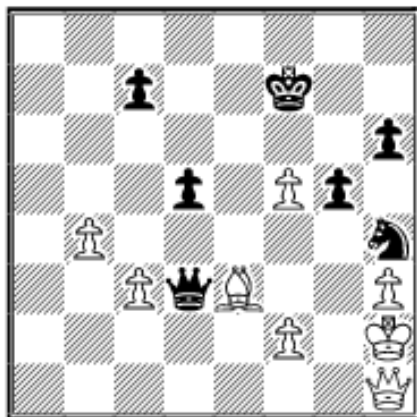
Timman is in no hurry to take the pawn (56.Qxc6+ Kh5) – first, he hopes to draw the Black pieces to inferior squares.

**56...Kf5?!**

As noted by Kasparov, the only way to continue fighting for the win was by 56...Kh7 57.Qd7+ Qg7 – nevertheless, the position after 58.Qf5+ Qg6 59.Qd7+ Kg8 60.Qd8+ Kg7 61.Qd7+ Qf7 (61...Kf8 62.Qd8+ Qe8 6.Qf6+ Kg8 64.Qxh6) 62.Qxc6 Qf5 is objectively drawn.

**57.Qd7+ Kf4?! (57...Kg6) 58.Qf7+ Drawn.**

Let's go back to the initial position. Note that White is completely tied up – not only is he unable to improve his position, but it's hard to suggest a move that would not weaken him. Nevertheless, Black is facing the same problem, since his pieces are already ideally placed. The only way to play for zugzwang is to come up with a non-obvious king retreat.



**49...Kf7-g8!!**

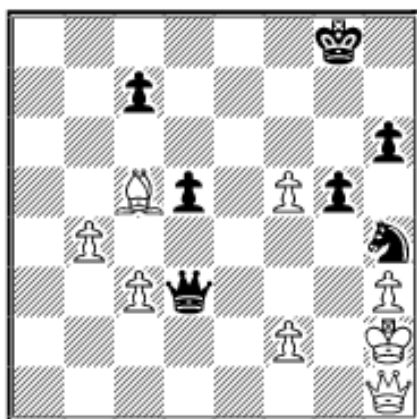
Now let's examine White's replies.

**50.f6 Kf7** doesn't improve matters for White, who faces a difficult choice once again.

**50.Qa1** hands over an important central square to the enemy: **50...Qe4! 51.Qh1 Qe5+** (or, per Kasparov: **51...Nf3+ 52.Kg3 Qe5+ 53.Kg2 Nh4+ 54.Kf1 Qxf5**) **52.Kg1 Qxf5** – the pawn at f5 has been taken, while the

enemy pieces are still boxed into the corner.

Now, let's look at **50.Bc5**.



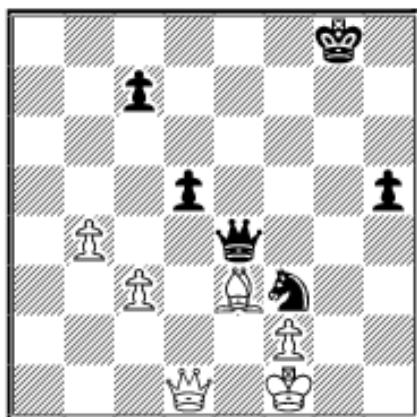
1...?

Kasparov gives **50...h5** (and appends an exclamation mark) **51.Be3 Qxf5**, missing the best defense: **51.Qc1! Kf7** (or **51...Qxf5**) **52.Qe3**.

Black retains a great advantage by playing **50...Nf3+! 51.Kg3** (after **51.Kg2**, both **51...Kf7 52.Be3 h5** and **51...Qxc3 52.Qd1 Qe5** are good) **51...Nd2+ 52.Kh2** (**52.Be3 Nf1+ 53.Kg2 Nxe3+ 54.fe Qe2+ 55.Kg3**

**Qxe3+** – with an easily won pawn endgame) **52...Kf7**.

After **50.Bd4**, the tempting **50...Qxf5** is not completely convincing: **51.Qd1 Qf4+ 52.Kg1 Nf3+ 53.Kg2 g4 54.hg Qxg4+ 55.Kf1 Qe4 56.Be3 h5**.

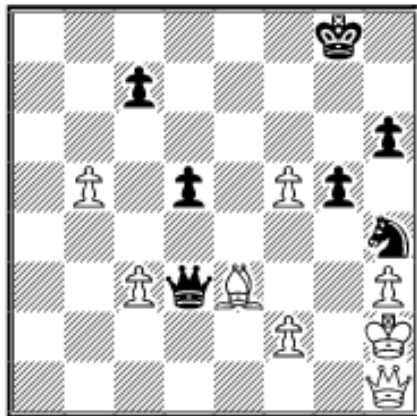


1.?

White parries the threatened advance of the h-pawn with the surprising **57.Kg2!**.

**50...Nf3+ 51.Kg2 Qe4** would be much stronger: after **52.Be3**, Black may continue as in the **50.Qa1** variation: **52...Nh4+ 53.Kh2 Qe5+ 54.Kg1 Qxf5**.

All that remains is the desperate try **50.b5!?**



1...?

– which is only justified after Kasparov's suggested response, 50...Kf7 (once again, his exclamation mark should be replaced by a question mark) 51.b6! cb 52.Qa1, with counterplay. Black should content himself with a healthy extra pawn after **50...Qxb5 51.Qd1 Nxf5**.

And so, the move 49...Kg8!! would have retained Black's enormous advantage, probably enough to win.

Understandably, finding the key to this position was most complex, even under the classical time-control which was the rule at that time for all games played in serious competition. And it would be completely impossible, under the idiotic short control enforced today by FIDE. If, God forbid, these bureaucrats are successful, then finely-conceived, deep ideas will disappear completely from tournament chess (except, of course, for opening analyses, prepared with the aid of computer programs). And what will then be left for chess-lovers to enjoy: the standard plans and techniques, or the simple little combinations we have already seen a thousand times? It won't take an oracle to foresee terrible consequences in store, both for chess literature, and for the popularity of chess in general.

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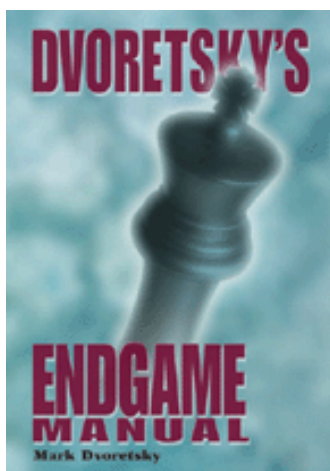
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## COLUMNISTS

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

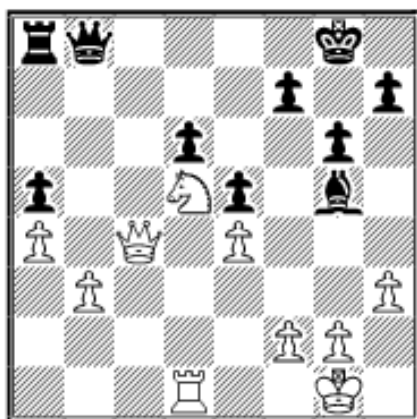


## Grandmaster Technique, Part Three

When a fruit is ripe, then it must be picked, or else it grows overripe and inedible. The same applies to the realization of an advantage. It's important not to miss the right moment for the favorable transformation of an advantage leading to immediate victory, or else to a situation in which further play is practically automatic. Hesitate, and such a favorable circumstance may never come again.

Unfortunately, even very strong chessplayers, having achieved overwhelming positions, sometimes stop and smell the roses – they stop playing concretely, and no longer wish to endure the tension or calculate even the least complex of variations, waiting for the fruit to drop from the tree by itself. The following is a very good example of what comes of this:

**Anand – Kamsky**  
Sanghi Nagar 1994  
5<sup>th</sup> Candidates' Match Game



1.?

White's position is strategically won, thanks to the overwhelming superiority of his powerful knight over Black's "bad" bishop.

Another important point is that, for the moment, White's pieces are active, while his opponent's are scattered. Given time, Black could improve the placement of his pieces (with Bd8, Kg7, Qb7, and Rb8, for example), which would of course not alter the

assessment of the position, but would increase Black's defensive resources. And that means that right now, before any of this occurs, White should look for a concrete way to capitalize on the advantages of his position.

Ljubomir Ftacnik examined a plan of creating a queenside passed pawn: 35.Rb1!? Qd8 36.b4 ab 37.Qxb4 Ra5 – his opinion was that White has just a minimal advantage. In my opinion, White's advantage is huge – he might continue 38.g3!?, for example, with 39.h4 to follow, practically eliminating any chance of the bishop's participation in the defense of his queenside.

But it was Vishwanathan Anand himself who demonstrated a still more

convincing method after the game: 35.Nc7! Ra7 36.Nb5 when 36...Rd7 37.Qc6 leads to the loss of a pawn; and if 36...Ra6, then 37.Qd5 Be7 38.Rc1 leaves Black practically without a useful move.

Note that, in such situations, the knight only *looks* good on d5 – it does not attack the weak d-pawn itself, while also protecting it from pressure on the d-file. So a typical plan is to transfer this knight to c4 or to b5.

Anand didn't want to change the character of the position, so he continued his unhurried maneuverings.

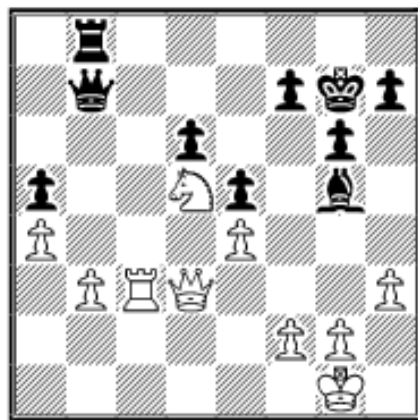
### 35.Rd1-d3? Qb8-b7

35...Qc8? would be altogether bad: 36.Nb6 Qxc4 37.Nxc4 Be7 38.Rd5 (Ftacnik). In his *Informant* notes, Anand rewards the text move with an exclamation mark, and the assessment: “+/=” (a slight advantage to White). This is, of course, an overly pessimistic appraisal, no doubt influenced by the outcome of the game.

### 36.Rd3-c3 Ra8-b8 37.Qc4-d3 Kg8-g7

Anand considered 37...Bd8!? subpar in view of 38.Rc4 followed by 39.b4 (not 38...Qxb3?, because of 39.Qxb3 Rxb3 40.Rc8). But I am not so sure that White has a guaranteed win after 38...Kg7 39.b4 ab 40.Rxb4 Qa7 41.Rxb8 Qxb8±. We saw a similar situation in Ftacnik's variation (35.Rb1), but there the bishop was unable to return to the queen's wing.

I consider the following position exceptionally important and instructive.



1.?

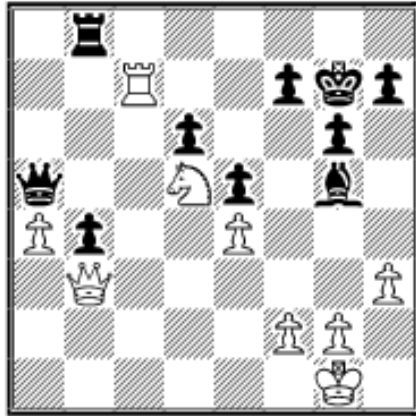
38.g2-g3?

Following the principle of “not hurrying,” White gradually improves his position. Unfortunately, the useful move he makes here is, in fact, a serious error, which puts his win in doubt.

What's the problem? How to explain this – and, more importantly, how to understand this while one is playing a tournament game?

The problem is that, along with the long-term plusses of his position, White also has one temporary plus: the chance to occupy the 7<sup>th</sup> rank with his rook (an immediate 38.Rc7 may not work, because of 38...Qxb3; but there is the pawn sacrifice 38.b4 first). Combined with an attack by the queen on f7, the idea looks attractive, and should therefore have been carefully analyzed; because any delay will allow Black to cover the c7-square by 38...Bd8, and the possibility will disappear. Of course, all of White's other advantages remain – but who knows whether they'll add up to a win?

So let's analyze: **38.b4! ab 39.Rc7 Qa8**. In the *Informant*, Anand gives only 40.Qf3?! Rf8 (and White has nothing special after 41.Qb3 Bd8). An immediate **40.Qb3!** is more logical, blockading the enemy passed pawn, while zeroing in on f7. Black's only reasonable reply is **40...Qa5!** – the queen ties the knight to the defense of the rook.



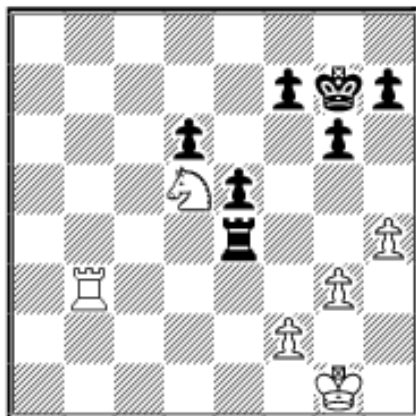
1.?

White gains nothing from 41.Nb6 Rf8 42.Rc6 h5!?, when 43.Nc4? Qa8 44.Rxd6 would even lose to 44...Qxe4 45.Rd1 Rd8. The correct attacking scheme was demonstrated by Igor Zaitsev: **41.g3!**, intending 42.h4. Black's bishop is at a crossroads – no matter which diagonal it chooses to retreat on, serious concessions must be made.

On 41...Bd2?, White has an instant mating attack: 42.Qf3 Rf8 43.Qf6+ Kh6 44.Ne7!. On 41...Bd8 comes 42.Rd7, when there is no satisfactory defense against a knight move, now that the rook's path to f8 is blocked by his own bishop.

If Black plays 41...Rf8!? immediately, then White picks up the b-pawn by 42.Rb7, with a decisive queenside superiority: the enemy rook can offer no assistance, since it's tied to the f7-pawn. And 42...Bd2 is useless: 43.Qf3 Bg5 (43...Qd8 44.a5+-) 44.h4 Bd8 45.Qb3, etc.

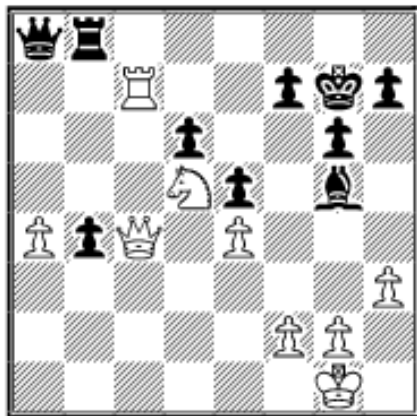
Black's best practical chance may be the bishop sacrifice: **41...Ra8!? 42.h4 Bd8 43.Rd7 Qxa4 44.Qxa4 Rxa4 45.Rxd8 b3 46.Rb8 Rxe4 47.Rxb3**



1...

Black has two pawns for the knight, which in more suitable circumstances might offer him decent saving chances. But here, thanks to his ongoing central blockade, White seems to me to be assured of capitalizing on his material advantage.

Note that White has still another, sharper attacking method: instead of 40.Qb3, he might try **40.Qc4!?**



1...

Now, after 40...Qa5, the rook is protected, and the knight could move to almost any square it wants. On the other hand, the a4-pawn is hanging, and the black passed pawn is free to move on to queen. Let's look at the variations:

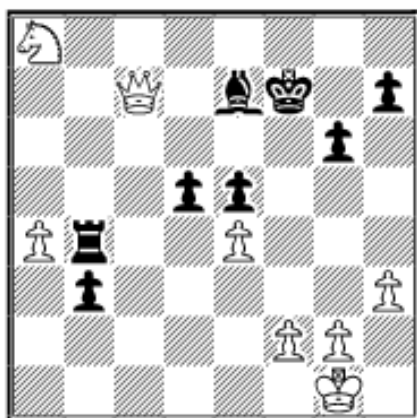
40...Qxa4? is very bad: 41.Rxf7+! Kh6 (41...Kxf7 42.Nb6+) 42.Rxh7+! Kxh7

43.Qc7+ Kh6 44.Qxb8.

40...Bd8 is met by 41.Rd7, and if 41...b3, then 42.Nb4 Kh6 (42...d5 43.Qxb3 – and Black is tied hand and foot) 43.Qxf7 Qxe4 44.Qxh7+ Kg5 45.Rxd6, threatening 46.h4+ – White has an irresistible attack. And after 41...Qxa4, White can choose between 42.Rxf7+!? Kh8 43.Rf8+ Kg7 44.Rg8+ Kh6 45.Ne3!+-, and 42.Nf6! Qd1+ 43.Kh2 Kxf6 (43...d5 44.Rxd5+-) 44.Qxf7+ Kg5 45.Qf8!+- (or 45.f4+! ef 46.h4+ Kg4 47.Qxh7+-).

Black's relatively best chance for defense is 40...Qa5!? 41.Nf4 (41.Nxb4? d5! 42.Nxd5 Qe1+) 41...d5; however, after 42.Nxd5 b3 (or 42...Rf8 43.Qb3!+) 43.Nc3 Rf8 44.Rb7, White comes out a healthy pawn up.

The line **40...b3!? 41.Nb6 d5! 42.Rxf7+! Kxf7 43.Qc7+ Be7 44.Nxa8 Rb4!** leads to amusing complications:



1.?

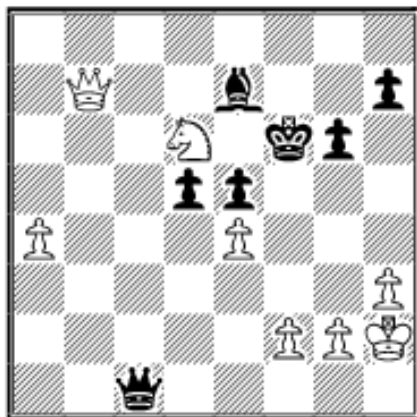
White faces a choice: should he blockade the pawn with his queen, or ignore it in favor of his attack?

A) 45.Qc1 b2 46.Qb1 Bc5! (threatening 47...Bd4 and 48.Rc4) 47.a5! Bd4 48.Nb6 de! (the position after 48...Rb5 49.Na4 Rxa5 50.Nxb2 Rb5 is probably lost for Black) 49.Kf1 Bxb6!? 50.ab Rxb6, and it's not clear how White can make progress: the rook and

b2-pawn are apparently enough to neutralize White's queen.

B) **45.Nb6! b2 46.Nc8 b1Q+ 47.Kh2 Rb7** (Black can hardly have anything better here: White's queen + knight tandem can create too many dangerous threats) **48.Nd6+ Kf6** (48...Ke6 49.ed+ Kxd5 50.Nxb7) **49.Qxb7 Qc1!?** (49...Qxb7 50.Nxb7 d4 51.Kg3 Ke6 52.Kf3 leads to a hopeless minor-piece endgame.)





1.?

The threat is 50...Qf4+, with a perpetual check. On 50.Qb6 d4!, White has to defend himself once more against the same threat: oddly enough, there doesn't seem to be any discovered check with sufficient force. But he does have **50.Qc7! Qxc7** (50...Qf4+ 51.Kg1 de 42.Qc6!+- is no better) **51.Ne8+ Kf7** **52.Nxc7**, and White must win, for example: 52...de 53.a5 Bc5 54.Nb5 Bxf2 55.g3!+-.

Thus, 38.b4! ab 39.Rc7 Qa8 40.Qb3! or 40.Qc4!? would have given White tremendous winning chances. But now, let's see how the game went.

### 38...Bg5-d8!

Black, of course, covers the c7-square.

### 39.Qd3-f3 Qb7-d7

I am not sure that White would have been able to capitalize on his advantage after 39...Rc8 40.Rxc8 Qxc8, either. Gata Kamsky preferred to keep the rooks on, hoping to tie White's pieces down with pressure on the b3-pawn.

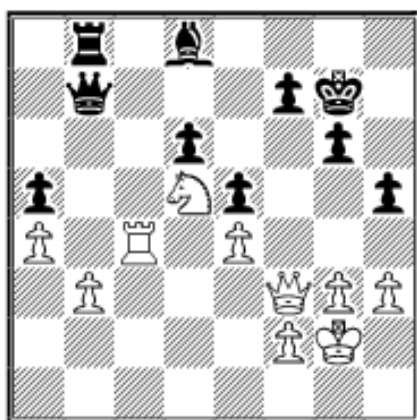
### 40.Kg1-g2

On 40.Qg4, Black has a good reply: 40...Qe6!; additionally, White has to consider 40...f5!? 41.ef Qxf5.

### 40...h7-h5!?

Taking away the g4-square is useful; and under some circumstances, the pawn might also advance to h4.

### 41.Rc3-c4 Qd7-b7



1.

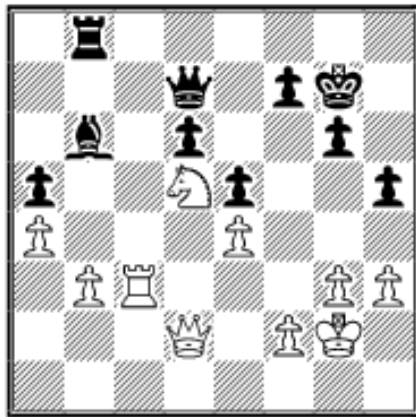
### 42.Rc4-c3

Creating a queenside passed pawn turns out to be not so simple after all. Anand declined to play 42.b4 ab 43.Rxb4 because of 43...Qxb4! (43...Qa8 44.Rxb8 Qxb8 was also possible, for instance: 45.Qc3 Qb1 46.Qb4 Qd3 47.a5 f5 [Ftacnik] 48.h4 f4 49.gf Qe2) 44.Nxb4 Rxb4. 45.Qd1 would then be met by 45...Rd4 46.Qc2 (46.Qb3 Rxe4) 46...h4!?, or

46...Bb6!?, when Black should not lose.

42.h4!? had some point to it. Black could wait and see; but in my view, he could also take the pawn, even though it is risky. After 42...Qxb3 43.Qxb3 Rxb3 44.Rc8 Bf6, Iosif Dorfman gives 45.Rc6, with an exclamation point, which is hardly justified. Black need only avoid playing 45...Rd3 (hoping for 46.Rxd6? Be7!, when the bishop is freed), which runs into 46.Ra6 Rd4 47.f3, when 47...Rxa4 48.Rxd6 loses the bishop. The correct continuation is 45...Rb8 46.Rxd6 Bd8, with Kf8-e8 to follow, when White's advantage is not that great. A more natural line would be 45.Ra8 g5! 46.hg Bxg5 47.Rxa5 Ra3 (47...Rd3) 48.Ra6 Bd2±, but here too, Black can fight on.

**42...Qb7-d7 43.Qf3-e2 Bd8-b6 44.Qe2-d2**



1...?

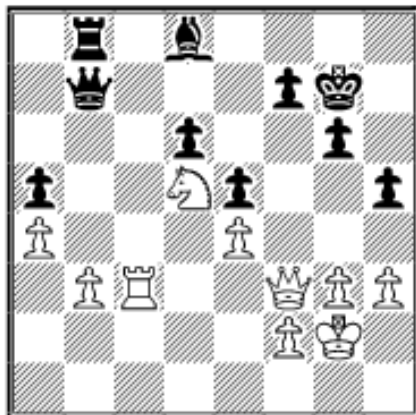
**44...Bb6-d8!**

David Bronstein was once asked how he had managed to save a game where he had stood badly for so long.

“Very simple,” the grandmaster replied, “I tried only to keep my position from becoming worse – and still more important, I didn’t try to make it better.”

Thus it is here: Black must learn patience, and wait. Any active move on his part will only make his opponent’s task easier. For example, 44...f5? 45.ef Qxf5 would grant White a decisive attack by 46.Nxb6 Rxb6 47.Rc7+ Kf6 48.Qd5 Qe6 49.Qf3+ Qf5 50.Qa8. And the attempt to activate the bishop by 44...Bc5?! turns out poorly because of 45.Qg5! Qd8? (45...Qe6 is better, and on 46.Rf3 Bb6 47.Rf6 Qd7) 46.Ne7! Kf8 47.Nxg6+ fg 48.Qxg6, and wins (Anand).

**45.Qd2-c2 Qd7-b7 46.Qd2-d3 Bd8-b6 47.Qd3-f3 Bb6-d8**



1.

How is White to make progress? It would be good to trade the h-pawn for his g-pawn by playing g3-g4 and recapturing on g4 with a piece, and then use the h-pawn as a battering ram against the enemy king’s defenses by h3-h4-h5. But there seems to be no easy way to bring this plan to life. And besides, White must always be alert for the central break f7-f5 (which could apparently be played in response to 48.h4).

**48.g3-g4?! h5xg4 49.h3xg4**

It would have been preferable to recapture on g4 with the queen, but 49.Qxg4 would be met by 49...f5!, with an unclear game.

### **49...Rb8-c8!**

Now that White has weakened his kingside, Kamsky willingly trades off the rooks. He liquidates a potential threat to transfer the white rook to the h-file, and also forces his opponent to keep an eye on the black queen's attempts to infiltrate the kingside from now on. This will tie White's hands, leaving him unable to develop any kingside activity of his own.

Although Black could also have played 49...Qd7 50.Qg3 Bg5 51.Rc7 Qe6, or 50.Rc1 Qb7 51.b4 ab 42.Qh3 Bg5!.

### **50.Qf3-e3 Rc8xc3 51.Qe3xc3 Qb7-a6 52.Qc3-c2**

Covering e2. It's a draw after 52.b4 ab 53.Qxb4 Qe2 54.Kg3 Bh4+ 55.Kxh4 Qxf2+ 56.Kh3 Qf3+ (Ftacnik).

### **52...Qa6-a7**

And now, Black's queen threatens to infiltrate via d4.

### **53.Qc2-d2 Qa7-b7**

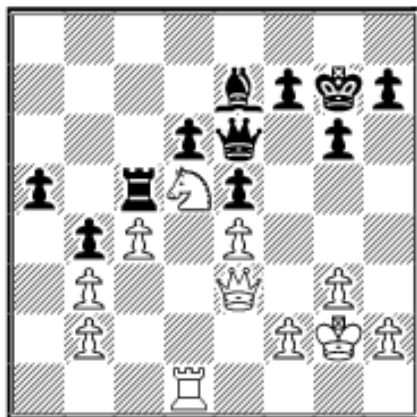
Yasser Seirawan thinks White could have maintained winning chances by playing 54.b4!? ab 55.Qxb4. I think not – 55...Qc8! assures Black sufficient counterplay.

### **54.Qd2-d3 Draw.**

Four years later, Anand once again had a complex position to play – but this time, he represented the defending side.

### ***Polgar – Anand***

Wijk aan Zee, 1998



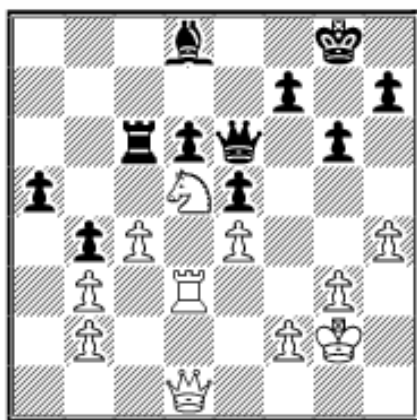
1.

The main difference between this example and the previous one lies in the queenside pawn structure. There, White's rook could operate along the c-file, and one promising plan was to create a passed a-pawn. Here, the queenside is nearly closed up; thus, play must be created on the opposite side of the board. Still, the closed nature of the queenside has its plusses for White: she does not need to worry about her backward pawn at b3, and

her opponent is unable to force the exchange of rooks, as Kamsky managed to do at the proper moment.

To begin, Judit Polgar resorts to a well-known technique – arranging her heavy pieces correctly on the half-open d-file, with the rook in front of the queen.

**32.Rd1-d3 Be7-d8 33.Qe3-d2 Rc5-c6 34.Qd2-d1 Kg7-g8 35.h2-h4!**



1...?

Judit understands that she will not win by working only on the central file. So she opens a “second front” on the kingside – in complete accordance with the well-known method of realizing one's advantage, the “two weaknesses principle.”

Black had to prevent the h-pawn's further advance by replying 35...h5! Polgar had intended to persist, continuing with: 36.f3

Kg7 37.Qe2, followed by Rd1-h1 and g3-g4. But such a plan is not easy to carry out: once the white king's protection is weakened, she would have had to consider the maneuver Bb6-d4, followed by f7-f5.

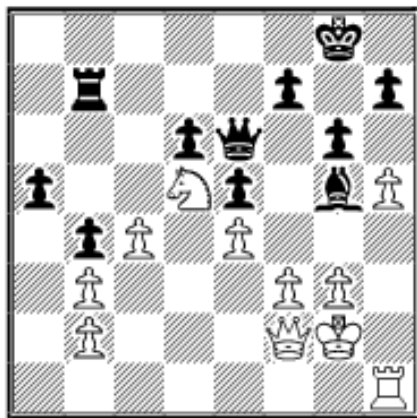
**35...Kg8-g7? 36.h4-h5 Bd8-g5 37.Qd1-f3 Rc6-c8 38.Rd3-d1**

White prepares to slide her heavy pieces over to the h-file, creating threats against the enemy king.

**38...Rc8-c6 39.Qf3-e2 Rc6-c8 40.Rd1-h1 Kg7-g8 41.f2-f3!**

Outstanding play, not only clearing the second rank for the maneuver Kf1 and Qh2, but also the f2-square, from which the queen will threaten to invade along the g1-a7 diagonal. Yet another appearance for the “two weaknesses principle”: in order to make the opponent's defense as difficult as possible, it is necessary to create problems for him over the entire board.

**41...Rc8-b8 42.Qe2-f2 Rb8-b7**

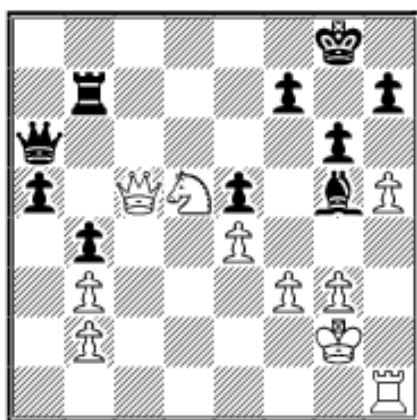


1.

Black has defended against the white queen's invasion on the diagonal, but at a steep price: White now has the additional possibility of c4-c5!

Before playing this, Polgar exchanged pawns on g6 – a sensible decision, which would require no comment, were it not for the variation **43.c5?! dc 44.Qxc5 Qa6**, which the

grandmaster alluded to as the reason behind the move she played.



1.?

Now there's no longer time for 45.hg? in view of 45...Qe2+ 46.Kh3 Qxf3. However, then comes the spectacular **45.Nf6+!!**. Black cannot reply 45...Bxf6?, because it's mate: 46.Qc8+ Kg7 47.h6#; and on 45...Qxf6 46.Qc8+ Qd8 47.Qxb7 Qd2+ 48.Kh3, Black doesn't get enough for the exchange.

That leaves 45...Kg7 46.Ne8+ Kg8; but after 47.Qxe5, Black's position is tough. Here are some variations: 47...Kf8 48.Qxg5 Qe2+ (48...Kxe8 49.Qe5+ Kf8 60.hg+-) 49.Kh3 Rb5 50.Qf6! Rxf5+ 51.Kg4 Rxf5 (51...Kxe8 52.Rc1+-) 52.Nd6 Rh4+ 53.Kxh4 Qh2+ 54.Kg4 Qh5+ 55.Kf4, when the checks soon run out; or 47...f6 48.Qd5+ Kf8 49.hg Qe2+ 50.Kh3 Qxf3 51.Qc5+ Kg8 (51...Re7 52.g7+ Kg8 53.Qc4+ Rf7 54.Rf1 Qh5+ 55.Kf2+-) 52.Qc4+, followed by 53.Rf1 (and there's also 52.Nxf6+!?).

### 43.hg fg

Now the black king's cover is significantly weakened; in return, he hopes to use the opened f-file for a counterattack – a chance he never gets.

Anand rejected 43...hg because of 44.Qg1!?, with an attack down the h-file. Perhaps he ought to have risked it – after 44...f5 45.Qh2 Bf6, the attack is not so simple. On 46.Qh6 Bg7 47.Qg5 (47.Qh7+ Kf7 48.Ra1 Ra7 with the threat of Ra8-h8) 47...Rf7, I don't see a mate; and taking his queen to the other side doesn't work, because of the counter-threats to his own king: 48.Qd8+ Bf8 49.Qxa5? fe 50.fe? Qg4, and now it's Black who's winning.

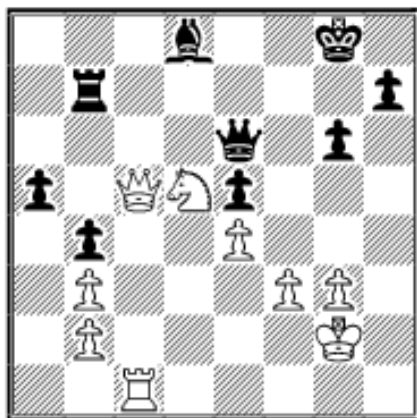
Artur Yusupov found the right idea: 46.Qh3!, and bringing the g-pawn into the assault on the enemy king's fortifications. For example, 46...Rf7 47.g4! fe (47...f4 48.Qh6+- is hopeless) 48.fe Rb7 49.Kg3 Rf7 50.Qh6 Bg7 51.Qh7+ Kf8 52.g5 (Black's in zugzwang!) 52...Ra7 (52...Rd7 53.Ra1) 53.Nf6 Qf7 54.Rf1

Bxf6 55.Qh6+ Qg7 56.Rxf6+ Rf7 57.Rxg6, or 57.Rxd6, with an easily won rook endgame.

And Polgar might also have played as in the game: 44.c5!? It's not clear which of the two plans she might have selected.

It usually makes sense to give the opponent this kind of choice. Over the board, it's very hard to determine which continuation is objectively stronger, or at least more promising from a practical standpoint. After 43...fg, White's task is simple: there's no need to hesitate now.

**44.c4-c5! d6xc5 45.Qf2xc5 Bg5-d8 46.Rh1-c1!**



1...?

The rook no longer has any business on the h-file, so White slings it over to the opened c-file. Polgar wants to carry out the same regrouping of the heavy pieces with which we began: queen behind the rook (Rc4 and Qe3-c1), and then infiltrate with the rook at c8.

**46...Kg8-f7?!**

A loss of time. 46...Kg7 was more accurate.

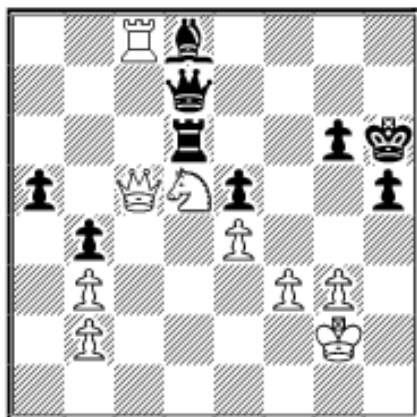
**47.Qc5-e3 Kf7-g7**

Otherwise, Black would have had 48.Qh6 to deal with.

**48.Rc1-c4 Rb7-d7 49.Qe3-c1 h7-h5 50.Rc4-c6 Rd7-d6**

50...Qf7 51.Qc5 is no better.

**51.Rc6-c8 Qe6-d7 52.Qc1-c5 Kg7-h6**



1.

**53.Rc8-b8**

White probably had no reason to reject the natural move 53.Ra8!? (intending 54.Ra7), since 53...Bb6 is strongly met by 54.Qc1+ Kg7 55.Qg5 (Polgar). On the other hand, that possibility won't go away, either.

**53...Bd8-f6**

The counterattacking try 53...g5?! is dubious, in view of the weakening of the f5-

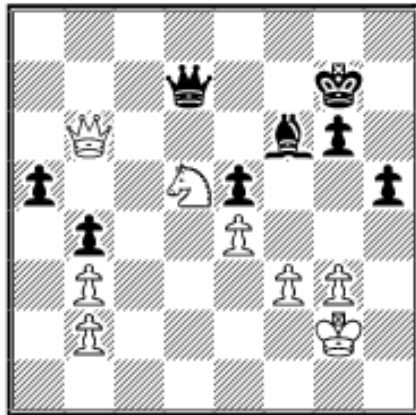
square. White would answer 54.Ra8! Qe6 (54...g4 55.fg hg 56.Qf2! Kg6 57.Qf8) 55.Ne3 Rd2+ 56.Kf1+- (but of course not 56.Kg1?? Bb6).

Tibor Karolyi, who has written an interesting book on Judit Polgar's career, believes 53...Kg7 was more stubborn. In that event, White could choose between simplifying the position with 54.Rb7 Qxb7 55.Qxd6, or the more energetic 54.Ra8!?, with a continuation similar to the variation given above by Polgar: 54...Bb6 55.Qc1 Bd8 56.Qe3 Bb6 57.Qg5+-.

#### 54.Qc5-e3+ Bf6-g5?

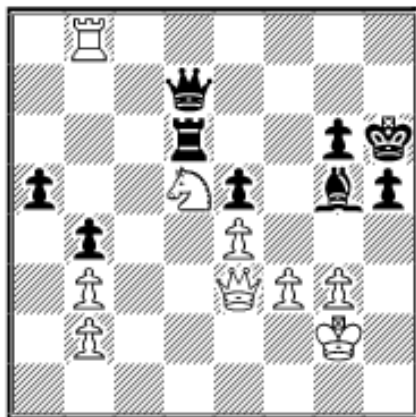
This allows the Hungarian a spectacular finish. Another quick loss was 54...g5? 55.Nxf6 Rxf6 56.Rh8+.

54...Kg7 was necessary. Polgar gives the continuation 55.Ra8 Qb5 56.Ra7+ (56.Nc7 is inferior: 56...Rd3 57.Qc1 Qd7 58.Nd5 Bd8 59.Qc2 Rd4 – Karolyi) 56...Rd7 (56...Kg8 57.Nxf6+ Rxf6 58.Qh6 Qe2+ 59.Kh3 Qf1+ 60.Kh4+-) 57.Rxd7+ Qxd7 58.Qb6.



1...

Black's position is difficult: 58...Bd8 (58...Be7 59.Qxa5; 58...Qd8 59.Qc6) 59.Qb8 (the e5-pawn hangs) 59...Qe8? 60.Nc7 and 51.Qxd8!



1.?

Now comes the final combination.

**55.f3-f4! e5xf4 56.Rb8-h8+!**

Black resigned before his opponent could demonstrate the pretty conclusion: 56...Kg7 57.Qd4+ Bf6 58.Qxf6+!! Rxf6 59.Rh7+! Kxh7 60.Nxf6+.

Comparing the two games, we may say that Polgar handled the white pieces more purposefully and consistently than did Anand. Conversely, she also encountered much weaker resistance from the Indian grandmaster than Kamsky put up in the first example.

Well, every chessplayer has his off days. Equally likely is another explanation: that no one stands fully complete – even gifted grandmasters find themselves in

situations (to each, his own), in which they feel uncertain. So for everyone, there is always room for further creative growth.



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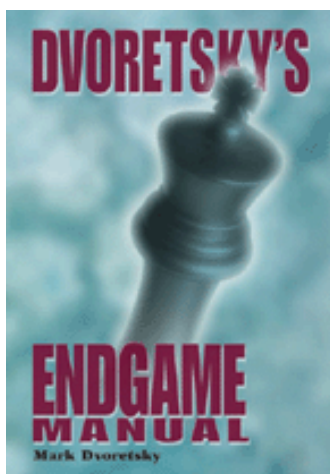
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C O L U M N I S T S

## The Instructor Mark Dvoretsky

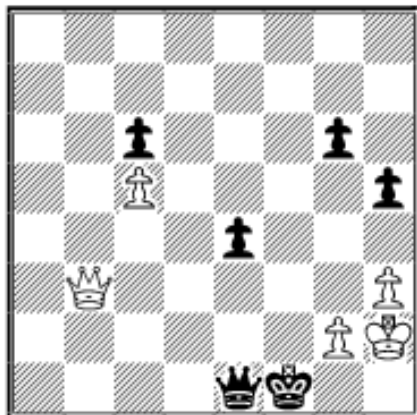


## Grandmaster Technique, Part Four

Let's examine a few more (less well-known) examples, where one of the players faced the same problem: finding the optimum method of exploiting his advantage. You could look at this selection as a set of exercises, finding your own solutions. All are taken from my notebook of exercises.

*Szily – Ozvath*

Hungarian Championship 1954



1...?

White's a pawn down, and the enemy passed pawn is also very dangerous. His only hope is either a perpetual check or his own c-pawn (that is, if he can quickly get rid of the c6-pawn).

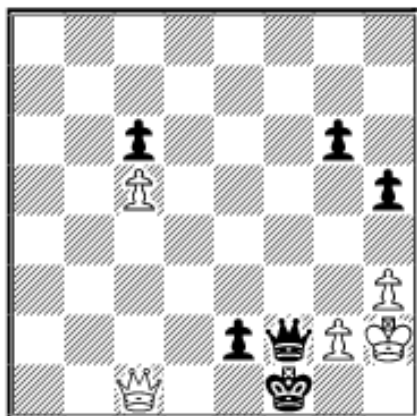
Black would do well to look at direct play first – i.e., queening his pawn. And only if it turns out that this plan will not succeed, should he look for a more subtle way to

capitalize on his advantage.

**44...e4-e3! 45.Qb3-c4+**

45.Qf7+ Qf2 46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kh1 e2 48.Qd2 Kf2 49.Qc2 Qg5+- is no help.

**45...e3-e2 46.Qc4-f4+ Qe1-f2 47.Qf4-c1+**



1...?

Oszvath undoubtedly calculated this variation, and decided that it would end in perpetual check: 47...e1Q 48.Qc4+ Qfe2 49.Qf4+ Q1f2 50.Qc1+, etc.

But the perpetual check could have been avoided by a knight promotion!

47...e2-e1N!! 48.Qc1-c4+ Qf2-e2 49.Qc4-f4+

Ne1-f3+! 50.Qf4xf3+ Qf2xf3 51.g2xf3 Kf1-f2-+

Perhaps the game could have been won another way as well. But no other direct route appears to exist. Black was unable to resolve the problem, and allowed his opponent to escape.

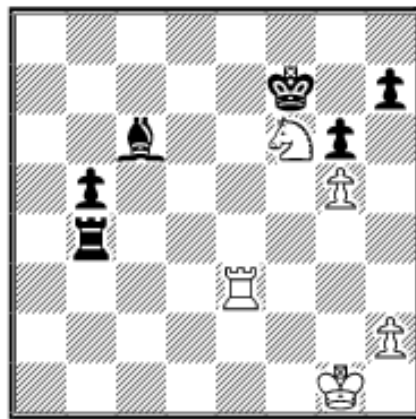
**44...Qc1? 45.Qf7+ Ke1**

If 45..Ke2, then 46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kg1 Qe5 48.Qd6! =, but not 48.Qxc6? Qa1+ 49.Kh2 Kf2, with a forced mate.

**46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kg1 Qf1+ 48.Kh2 Qc4 49.Qxc6 e3 50.Qd6**, and a draw was agreed.

***Browne – Timman***

Stockholm 1972



1...?

The game continued **38...Rc4?!** , and if White had replied **39.Nxh7!** , he could have set his opponent serious problems with realizing his advantage, in view of the small amount of material remaining on the board; for example, **39...b4 40.Nf6 Rc3 41.Kf2!** .

Browne chose **39.Rh3?!**  instead, but after **39...b4 40.Rxh7+ Ke6** , the enemy king came into play, and his position became hopeless.

The conclusion was: **41.Rh3 Kf5 42.Rg3 Rc3 43.Rg4 b3 44.Rb4 Kxg5 45.Ng4 Be4 (45...Bd5 46.h4+ Kxh4-+) 46.Rxe4 b2 47.Rb4 Rc1+ 48.Kg2 b1Q 49.Rxb1 Rxb1 50.Nf2 Rb2 51.Kg3 Rb3+ 52.Kg2 Kf5 53.Nh3 g5 54.Ng1 Kg5 55.h3+ Kh4 56.Nf3+ Rxf3 57.Kxf3 Kxh3 58.Kf2 g4 59.Kg1 Kg3 60.Kh1 Kf2**  White resigned.

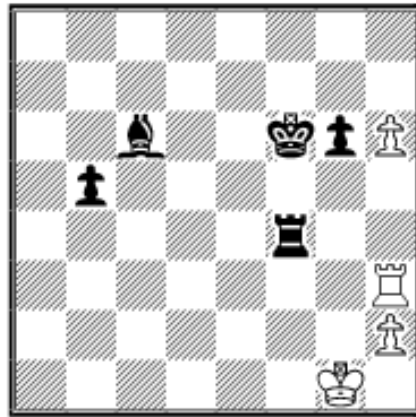
Why should Black give up the h-pawn? Why not push it instead – **38...h6**  or **38...h5** ? Evidently, Timman rejected it because of the following combination:

**38...h7-h6! 39.g5xh6!? Kf7xf6 40.Re3-h3**

Igor Zaitsev, however, showed how the passed pawn could be stopped.

**40...Rb4-g4+! 41.Kg1-f2 Rg4-f4+ 42.Kf2-g1**

**42.Kg3 Rf3+; 42.Ke1 Re4+**  and **43...Re8** .

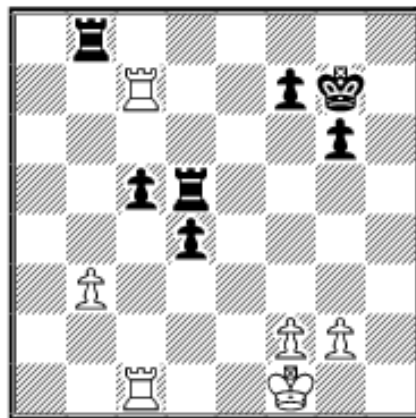


1...?

**42...Bc6-d7!! 43.h6-h7 Rf4-f1+! 44.Kg1xf1  
Bd7xh3+ 45.Kf1-f2 Kf6-g7**

***Kunitz – Dvoretsky***

Bad Wiessee 1997



1...?

Any position where Black has an extra pawn gives him good chances to win; but everywhere you look, the struggle continues. For example, after 34...Rb5 35.Ke2 or 34...d3 35.R1xc5 Rxb3 36.Rc1!. However, he does have a combination at his disposal, leading to a forced win.

**34...d4-d3! 35.Rc1xc5**

35.R7xc5? d2 is just bad.

**35...Rb8-h8!! 36.Kf1-g1**

The rook is untouchable: 36.Rxd5 Rh1 mate. On 36.Ke1 d2+ decides; and on 36.g3 Rxc5 37.Rxc5 Rh1+ 38.Kg2 d2.

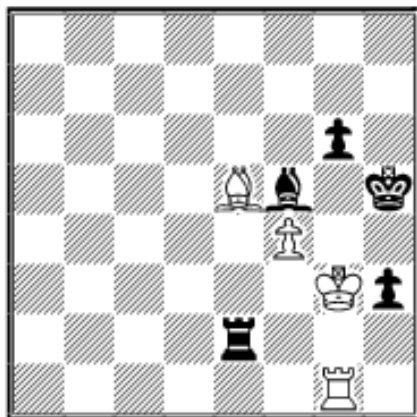
**36...Rd5-d8! 37.Rc5-c1 d3-d2 38.Rc1-d1 Rd8-e8!**

Of course not 38...Rhe8? 39.Kf1. The d-pawn cannot be taken, because of mate.

**39.Rd1-f1 Re8-e1 40.Rc7-d7 Rh8-h1+! White resigned.**

***Shirazi – Vasiukov***

Thiruchirappalli 1978



1...?

Converting the extra pawn is hardly possible without resorting to strong measures. A combination comes to Black's aid.

**80...g6-g5!**

This breakthrough suggests itself: 81...g4 and 82...Be4 is the threat. But you can't play this sort of thing "on general principles," without accurate calculation: the attack on the rook

also had to be taken into account.

**81.Kg3-f3 h3-h2!**

The exchange sacrifice 81...Rxe5? 82.fe Kh4 is only sufficient to draw: 83.Ra1! g4+ (83...Be6 is not dangerous: 84.Ra6 Bd5+ 85.Kf2=) 84.Kf4 Bg6 (84...h2 85.Kxf5=) 85.e6 g3 86.e7 h2 (86...g2? 87.Kf3! would even lose) 87.Ra8! Kh3!=. Paradoxically, it is the sacrifice of far more material – a whole rook – that leads to the win!

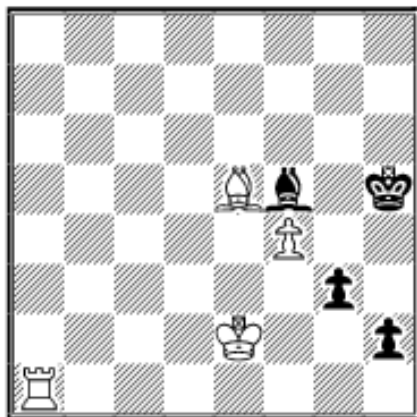
**82.Rg1-a1**

82.Rh1? is bad: 82...Be4+ 83.Kxe2 Bxh1 84.fg Bf3+.

**82...g5-g4+!!**

Strictly speaking, there was a second solution: 82...Ra2!? 83.Rh1 g4+ (but not 83...Bh3? 84.Ke3! g4 85.f5=) 84.Kg3 Ra3+ 85.Kxh2 g3+ (85...Be4 would be insufficient because of 86.Re1! Rh3+ 87.Kg1 Rh1+ 88.Kf2 g3+ 89.Ke2 followed by Bd4) 86.Kg2+ Kg4 87.Re1 (87.Ra1 Rd3+ ) 87...Ra2+ 88.Kg1 Rc2!? and 89...Kh3 – and White could not hold this position. But if White had played 82.Rc1!? (instead of 82.Ra1), then the rook sacrifice 82...g4+!! would have become necessary: 82...Rc2? is no longer of any use after 83.Rh1 g4+ 84.Kg3, since there's no longer that check on the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank, now that the bishop controls the c3-square.

**83.Kf3xe2 (83.Kg3 Be4) 83...g4-g3**



1.

The far-advanced passed pawns turn out to be stronger than the rook. On 84.Ra8, Black can continue either with 84...Bh3 or with 84...g2.

**84.Ke2-f3 Kh5-h4 85.Be5-d4 Kh4-h3  
86.Bd4-f2**

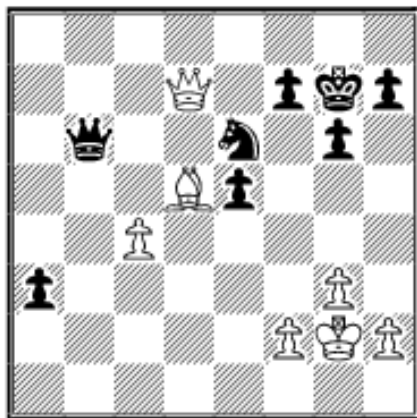
On 86.Rh1, transferring the bishop to the a8-h1 diagonal with 86...Bd7 decides.

**86...g3-g2**

White resigned, in view of 87.Ra8 Bg4+ 88.Ke3 g1Q.

### ***Krantz – Yudovich***

World Correspondence Team Championship, 1979-80



1...?

Black could easily get a “four pawns to three on one side” queen endgame: 39...a2?! 40.Bxe6 Qxe6 41.Qa4 Qxc4 42.Qxc4 a1Q. But can he win it? Are there any stronger lines?

After the exchange of minor pieces on e6, the white queen occupies the a-file, when the a3-pawn can only be defended via the diagonal – then, White continues Qa5 and c4-c5. The

idea of breaking through to support the passed pawn via the currently blockaded e-file is not one that would spring immediately to mind.

**39...e5-e4!! 40.c4-c5**

40.Bxe4? a2 41.Qa4 Qd4 or 41...Qb2 would lose immediately for White.

On 40.Bxe6 Qxe6 41.Qa4, Black gets nothing from 41...Qd6 42.Qa5, threatening 43.c5; and on 41...Qe7, White continues, not with 42.Qa5 e3!, but with 42.Qb3 instead. The decisive move is 41...e3! 42.Qxa3 (42.fe Qxe3 is completely hopeless) 42...e2 43.Qc3+ Kf8 (43...Kg8) 44.Qe1 Qe4+! (but not 44...Qxc4 45.f3 and 46.Kf2, with equality) 45.f3 Qe3, and White’s position is lost: the queen has no moves, the king cannot come to its aid, and the c-pawn is held by the black king.

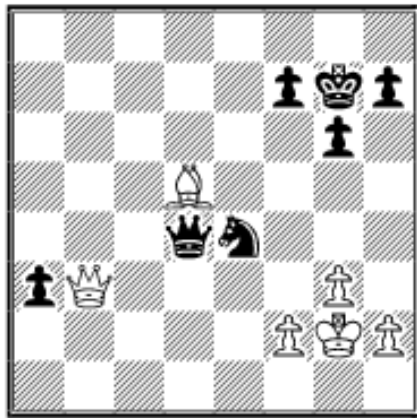
Roughly the same picture occurs after 41.Qa7 e3! 42.fe (42.Qxa3 e2 transposes into the previous variation) 42...Qe4+ 43.Kh3 Qf5+ 44.Kg2 (44.g4 Qf3+ 45.Kh4 h6-+) 44...Qc2+ 45.Kh3 Qb2, and the a-pawn queens.

**40...Qb6-c7! 41.Qd7-a4**

If 41.Bxe6 Qxd7 42.Bxd7, then Black continues, not 42...a2? 43.c6 a1Q 44.c7 = (in this line, insertion of the moves 42...e3 43.fe changes nothing), but 42...Kf8! instead (or 42...Kf6!) 43.c6 Ke7. The c-pawn is stopped, but the bishop cannot stop the a3-pawn.

**41...Qc7xc5 42.Qa4xe4**

White can't continue two pawns down. On 42.Bxe4, the simplest decision would be 42...Qd4.

**42...Qc5-d4 43.Qe4-f3 Ne6-g5 44.Qf3-b3 Ng5-e4**

1.

**45.f2-f4**

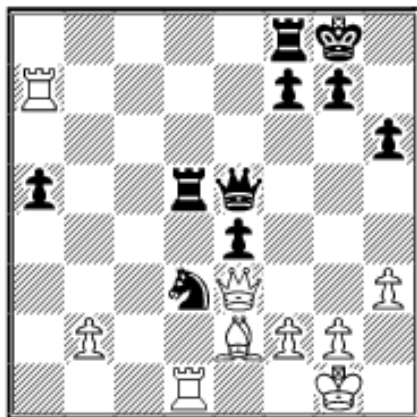
On 45.Bxe4 Qxe4+ 46.Kf1 (46.Kg1 Qe1+ 47.Kg2 Qa1-+), 46...Qa8 47.Qa2 Qa6+ 48.Kg1 (48.Ke1 Qe6+) 48...Qa4, followed by Qb4-b2, and 46...Qh1+ 47.Ke2 Qc1 48.Kd3 Qf1+ 49.Ke3 Qe1+ 50.Kd3 Qxf2 are equally strong.

**45...Qd4-f2+ 46.Kg2-h3 Qf2-f1+ 47.Kh3-h4**

**Qf1-e2** White resigned.

***Petrosian – Kholmov***

Vilnius 1951



1...?

Kholmov carried out a little combination, allowing him to win a second pawn:

**33...Qe5xb2!? 34.Qe3xe4**

34.Bxd3 ed 35.Rxd3? Qb1+ is altogether bad.

**34...Nd3xf2!! 35.Ra7-b7**

In the faint hope that Black might continue 35...Qxb7? 36.Qxd5 Qb6?! 37.Qd4 Qxd4 38.Rxd4, when his knight is trapped. 35.Kxf2 Rxd1 would leave White the exchange down, while 35.Qxd5 Nxd1 leaves him unable to recapture the knight, because of the threatened 36...Qb6+.

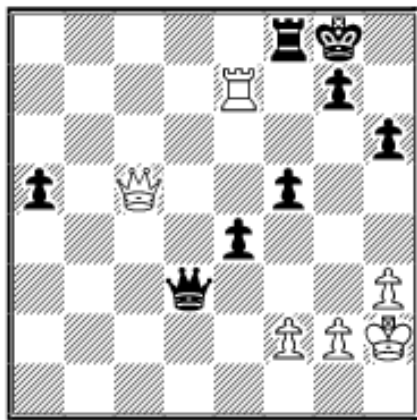
**35...Rd5xd1+**

35...Nxe4 would also be good.

**36.Be2xd1 Qb2-d2** and wins:

**37.Qe2 Qxd1+ 38.Kxf2 Qxe2+ 39.Kxe2 Ra8! 40.Kd2 a4 41.Kc2 a3 42.Kb1 a2+ 43.Ka1 g6 44.Rc7 h5 45.Rb7 Kg7 46.Rd7 Ra3 47.Re7 h4 48.Re4 g5 49.Rb4 f5 50.Rb6 f4 51.Rb5 Kg6 52.Rb6+ Kh5 53.Rf6 Re3** (of course not 53...Rg3 54.Ra6 Rxg2? 55.Rh6+! Kxh6 – stalemate!) White resigned.

And now I must explain why I did not give Black's 33<sup>rd</sup> move an exclamation mark, but rather an "!" – signifying doubt. The problem is that White could have replied 34.Re7! instead. The only way to keep his two extra pawns would have been 34...f5 35.Bxd3 Rxd3 36.Rxd3 Qb1+ 37.Kh2 Qxd3, but then comes 38.Qc5!, intending 39.Qe5.



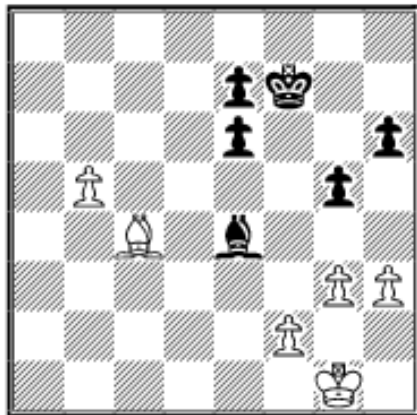
1...

I doubt whether Black could have exploited his advantage in that case. Which leads us to the question: should he have made the combination? Wouldn't it have been better to play the simple 33...Rfd8-/+ instead?

Conclusion: When you choose to force matters after gaining a great advantage, it's important to check the variations carefully, and assess their consequences – or you may soon find yourself with much less!

**Pigusov – Atalik**

Reykjavik 1994



1.?

A standard technique for capitalizing on an advantage is to trade off the last pieces to get a pawn endgame. Pawn endgames can usually be calculated to a finish. If the results of your calculation look favorable to you, then it's usually not necessary to play out the position move by move (with no guarantee of the outcome, and the constant risk of error) – by forcing matters, we do nothing more, really, than just demonstrate the solution we've

found.

In this case, the trade is accomplished by maneuvering the bishop to g2. Let's check the variations.

**33.Bc4-f1! Kf7-e8 34.Bf1-g2 Be4-d5**

34...Bxg2 35.Kxg2 is hopeless – White's outside passed pawn decides the game automatically. Avoiding the exchange also creates no problems: 34...Bd3 35.Bc6+! Kd8 36.b6 Kc8 37.f3, with Kf2-e3 to follow.

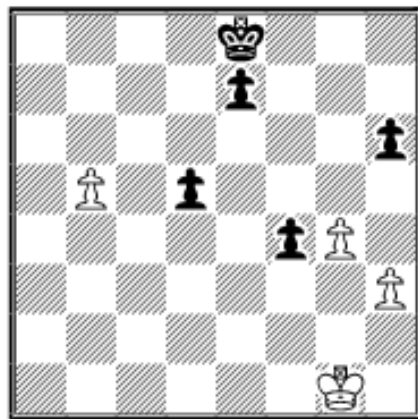
### 35.Bg2xd5!

A tough move – usually, repairing the opponent's pawn structure is not recommended. Here, it's justified by the chance of a pawn breakthrough on the kingside.

### 35...e6xd5 36.f2-f4 g5xf4

36...Kd7 37.fg hg 38.h4+- would be pointless.

### 37.g3-g4!



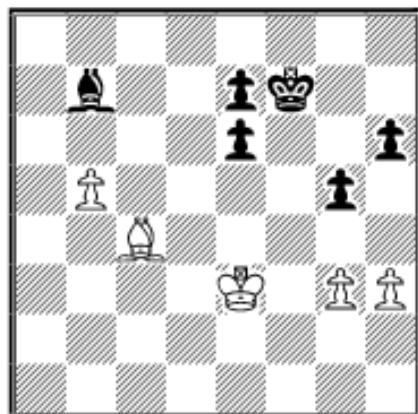
1...

White will queen just in time. Some of the moves that follow could have been transposed.

37...d5-d4 38.Kg1-f1 d4-d3 39.h3-h4 e7-e5 40.Kf1-e1 f4-f3 41.b5-b6 Ke8-d7 42.b6-b7 Kd7-c7 43.g4-g5 h6xg5 44.h4xg5 e5-e4 45.g5-g6 e4-e3 46.g6-g7 f3-f2+ 47.Ke1-f1 d3-d2 48.b7-b8Q+ Kc7xb8 49.g7-g8Q+

It was not so easy to find and calculate this variation accurately. But there is no other solution. For example, 33.b6?! does not work: 33...Bb7 (33...Ke8? 34.Bxe6+-) 34.Bf1 (if 34.f4, then 34...gf 35.gf Kf6 and 36...e5) 34...e5! 35.Bg2 e4 36.Kf1 Ke6 37.Ke2 Ke5 38.Ke3 Bc6, and White can make no progress.

The game continuation was **33.f3?! Bxf3 34.Kf2 Bb7 35.Ke3**



1...?

After **35...Ke8?? 36.Bxe6 Kd8 37.b6**, Black's position was hopeless. The conclusion was **37...Bg2 38.Kd4 Bf1 39.Kc5 Bg2 50.Kb5 Bf1+ 41.Kc6**, and Black resigned.

But by playing 35...Kf6! 36.Kd4 e5+, Black saves himself. For example: 37.Ke3 e4 38.Kd4 Kf5 39.Kc5 Ke5 40.Kb6 Bd5, or 37.Kc5 e6 (37...e4?? 38.Kb6+-) 38.Kd6 (38.Kb6 Bd5 39.Bxd5 ed 40.Kc5 d4=) 38...e4 39.Bxe6 (39.b6 e3 40.Kc7 Bd5

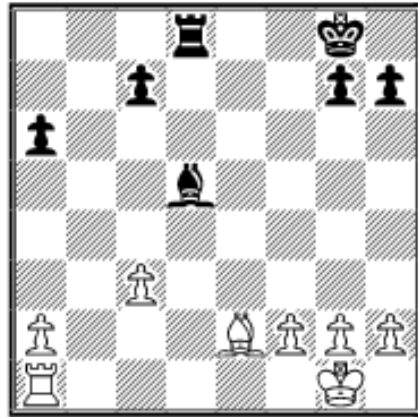


41.b7 Bxb7 42.Kxb7 Ke5 43.Kc6 Kd4=) 39...e3 40.Bc4 Kf5!?

In our final example, Paul Keres gives an impressive display of outstanding technique, based upon accurate calculation of variations - a characteristic of the Estonian grandmaster's work.

### ***Keres – Geller***

Budapest 1952



1.?

White has a healthy extra pawn. The pawn at a6 is under attack too; and White can also pin the bishop by 26.Rd1. White's great advantage could be maintained by practically any number of tempting continuations – the problem consists in evaluating their relative worth and choosing the best.

On 26.Rd1, Black replies 26...Re8! 27.Bxa6 (27.Rd2!? a5±) 27...Bxa2. As a rule, pawn

exchanges favor the weaker side, which means this can hardly be the preferred path.

26.Bxa6 Ra8 would allow White to enter a bishop endgame a pawn up: 27.Be2 Rxa2 28.Rxa2 Bxa2, but White's advantage might then prove insufficient to win – again, we can recycle the evaluation given after 26.Rd1. And on 27.c4, Black may choose between 27...Rxa6 28.cd Ra5 29.a4 Kf8±, and 27...Bxg2 28.Kxg2 Rxa6±. “Rook endings are always drawn” is a well-known rule: only one pawn down, Black could very likely hope to save the half-point.

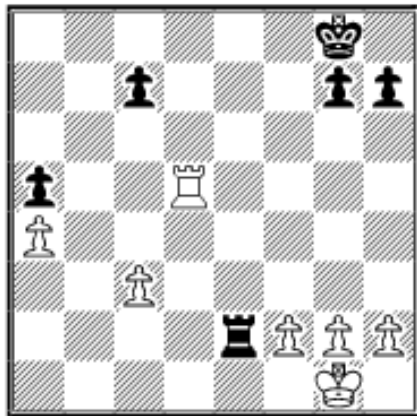
One more idea deserves study: to advance the a-pawn so that it's no longer attacked, and thus to maintain both threats: Bxa6 and Rd1 (another well-known rule is: “the threat is sometimes stronger than its execution”).

On 36.a3?!, Black would have either 26...Rd6 27.Rd1 Kf7!?, or 26...a5!? 27.Rd1 Re8 28.Rxd5 Rxe2 29.Kf1 Rc2 30.Rc5 a4 – Black has not lost another pawn, and his drawing chances are quite real.

But what if we move the a-pawn two squares forward? Then Black will have a hard time in the rook endgame, and the additional possibility of fixing the weakness on a6 by a4-a5 now arises.

### **26.a2-a4! Rd8-d6**

White would also have to play accurately after 26...a5 27.Rd1 Re8 28.Rxd5 Rxe2.

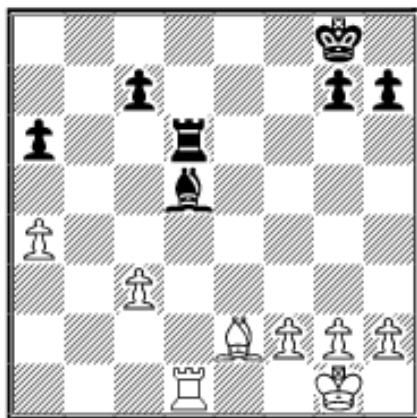


1.?

On 29.g3? (or 29.Kf1?), Black manages to avoid losing the second pawn by playing 29...Re4! 30.Rxa5 Rc4. The only correct line is 29.f3! Rc2 30.Rc5, when the loss of another pawn is unavoidable.

### 27.Ra1-d1

27.a5?! would be premature because of 27...Rc6. First, White must tie the rook to the bishop's defense.



1...

Threatening 28.Rxd5 Rxd5 29.Bc4 – this is why Black has no time for 27...a5. On 27...Bb7, there comes 28.Rxd6 cd 29.a5!, when the bishop endgame is probably a win for White: Black is not only a pawn down, but now has the weakness on a6 also, fixed on the same color square as his bishop.

I believe Geller should have tried 27...Re6!?

The variations 28.Bf1 Bb3 29.Rb1 Bd5 and 28.Bg4 Re8 (28...Re7 29.a5 is worse) 29.f3 (29.a5 Bb3) 29...Bb3 30.Rd7 c6 (or 30...Bxa4) don't seem convincing enough to me: in any event, Black could still have fought on here. Meanwhile, in the rook endgame after 28.Rxd5 Rxe2 29.Kf1 Ra2, White can't win a second pawn. But still, here we have the most favorable version for White of the rook endgame, compared to what we examined earlier. By continuing 30.Ra5 Rc2 31.Rxa6 Rxc3 32.Ke2 Kf7 33.a5 Ra3 34.Ra7 Kf6 35.a6, White would still most likely win.

### 27...Kg8-f7 28.a4-a5!

Creating the threat of 29.Bxa6. White does not win after 28.Rxd5? Rxd5 29.Bc4 Ke6 30.Kf1 Kd6 31.Bxd5 Kxd5 32.Ke2 Kc4 34.Kd2 Kb3.

### 28...Rd6-e6

On 28...Ke6 29.f4 Rc6 30.Bg4+ decides.

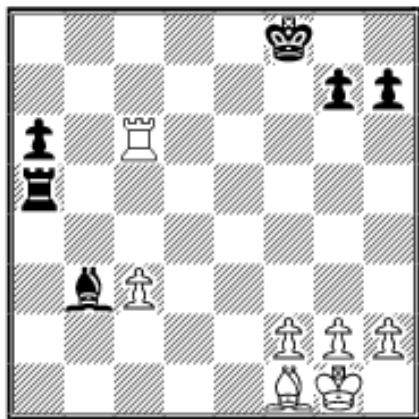
### 29.Be2-f1!

29.Bxa6? Bb3 would be a mistake. Nor does White win the second pawn after 29.Rxd5?! Rxe2 30.Kf1 Ra2 31.Rc5 c6.

**29...Bd5-b3 30.Rd1-d7+ Kf7-f8 31.Rd7xc7**

White increases his material advantage. Here 31...Re1 is useless: 32.f3 Ra1 33.Rc5.

**31...Re6-e5 32.Rc7-c6 Re5xa5**



1.?

**33.Rc6-b6!**

Accuracy to the end! On 33.Rxa6? Rc5, the c3-pawn is lost.

**33...Bb3-c2 34.Rb6xa6 Ra5-c5 35.Ra6-a3 Rc5-d5 36.f2-f3 Rd5-d1 37.Kg1-f2 Rd1-c1 38.h2-h4 Bc2-g6 39.Bf1-c4 Kf8-e7 40.g2-g4 h7-h6 41.Bc4-d5** Black resigned.

With his last moves, White has maximally improved his position, and further resistance would be futile.

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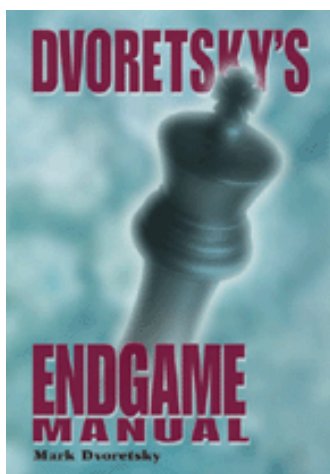
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## C O L U M N I S T S

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## An Invitation to Analysis

“Chess is inexhaustible!” is such an overused expression that it has become just another meaningless cliché, and wrongly so! Nowadays, there are many who cast doubt upon our game’s inexhaustibility – under the influence of the progress we have made in computer technology, and the tremendous growth of opening theory (which has become, in my opinion, a deadly tumor growing upon today’s chess, threatening to kill it by degrees, without some sort of radical surgical intervention – but that’s a subject for another column).

All this can be illustrated (although not, of course, proven) by various means. Let us suppose that a very strong grandmaster (Alexei Shirov, for instance) wins a good game. Sitting at the board, he sought tensely after the best moves and calculated lengthy, complex variations. Perhaps, at the end of the game, he analyzed it with his opponent; then, aided by his computer, he checked his conclusions and annotated the game for publication. Afterwards, while preparing his *Fire on Board* book, he returned to the game, found some new ideas, and added those to his commentary.

The outcome of such a process might seem, if not absolute completion (which can never, in principle, be achieved), to be at least something close to absolute. Of course, one can always add insignificant corrections, or maybe add a few lines of computer analysis – but who needs those?

But in fact, careful examination of a grandmaster’s analysis quite often succeeds in painting a very different picture of the struggle, in finding occasionally spectacular and rather instructive resources the commentator never examined, and in casting doubt on some assessments that formerly seemed unassailable. And we are certainly not talking about a computer left running for many hours, but about ideas that an inventive player could find and analyze over the board, even with limited thinking time – these are precisely the sort of ideas that are most interesting to practical players. Many sharp discoveries have been made during my training sessions with grandmasters and talented juniors, trying their own hands at resolving the tasks set before them.

So then, why weren’t these discoveries made by Shirov himself, one of the most inventive players of our time? There are some authors whom we might rightly suspect of hiding something – but Shirov, never! No, the point here is the inexhaustible richness of chess ideas, in the axiomatic possibility of a fresh approach to almost any complex position. And this, too, forms one of the most important sources of the attraction of chess – in its democratic nature. Each of us possesses the right to cast doubt upon, and sometimes even refute, the opinion of

the greatest authorities, offering in exchange our own handling of events – which of course, may in its turn be refuted.

I should also like to mention that even the most interesting and convincing discoveries and refutations still give us no grounds to look condescendingly upon an author or commentator of a game. After all, it is enough for us to be right only on occasion (and those occasions are self-selected!) while he must constantly maintain this high analytical level throughout the game and a myriad of variations that remain off-the-board, which is far more difficult. And besides, as Igor Zaitsev once wittily remarked, “it’s always easier to find treasure where somebody else has already found a pile of money.”

The analysis of the encounter that I offer for your examination is based on Shirov’s notes from the above-cited collection of his games. The authorship of most of the variations presented by the grandmaster will not be cited; the authorship of those variations which were added to his analyses will be. Direct quotes from the book, as in all my publications, will be given in italics.

The game is presented in a form allowing the hardest-working readers, and those possessing the necessary qualifications, to try their hand at resolving the problems that were faced or could have been faced by the players themselves. After some diagrams you will find questions, the answers to which are given following the game. Try not to look at the move in the game that follows the question. It will have neither a mark nor an evaluation – it could be good, it could be bad; but in and of itself, it would give you additional information that could influence your solution of the problem.

### ***Seirawan – Shirov***

Buenos Aires 1993

**1.d2-d4 d7-d5 2.c2-c4 c7-c6 3.Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4.e2-e3 a7-a6 5.Ng1-f3 b7-b5 6.c4xd5**

A modest move, which probably stems from Yasser Seirawan’s proclivity toward positions with a fixed pawn structure. 6.b3!? would lead to a more complex struggle.

**6...c6xd5 7.Nf3-e5 Nb8-d7 8.f2-f4 e7-e6 9.Bf1-d3 Bc8-b7 10.0-0 Bf8-d6 11.Bc1-d2 0-0 12.Bd2-e1 Nf6-e4!?**

Another good way was 12...Nb6 13.Bh4 Be7 with approximate equality.

**13.Qd1-b1!? Nd7-f6**

On 13...f5, Seirawan had planned 14.a4!. Then, however, Black maintains equality by playing either 14...ba!? or 14...b4 15.Nxe4 fe (but not 15...de? 16.Bc4 Bd5 17.Bxd5 ed 18.Qa2± – Seirawan) 16.Be2 Nxe5 17.fe Rxf1+ 18.Bxf1 Be7=.

The text move is dubious, allowing White to find a good post for his dark-squared bishop.

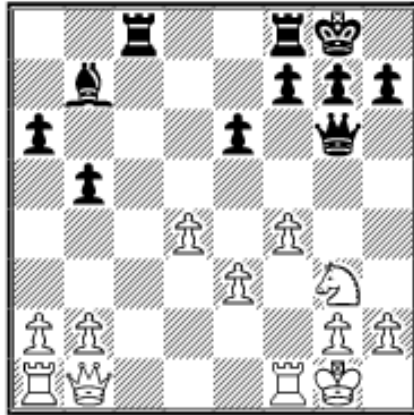
**14.Be1-h4!?**

1) Evaluate 14...Nd2.

**14...Ra8-c8**

2) How should White continue?

The variation **15.Bxe4 de 16.Ng4 Be7 17.Bxf6 Bxf6** (17...gf 18.f5) **18.Nxf6+** (18.Nxe4 Be7 with compensation) **18...Qxf6 19.Nxe4 Qg6 20.Ng3** leads to the following position:



3) How should Black continue?

Having dealt with the cluster of problems on the 14<sup>th</sup> move, it's time to return to our game.

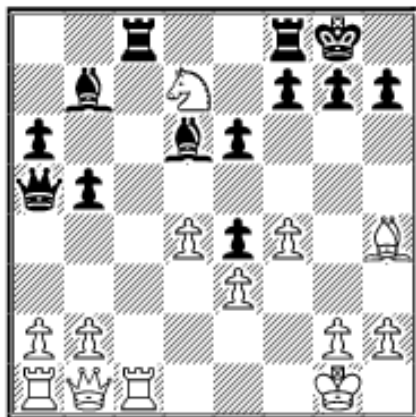
**15.Rf1-c1?! Qd8-a5**

Another possibility was 15...Be7 16.Bxf6 Nxf6 (16...gf 17.Ng4 f5 18.Ne5) 17.b4 Qd6 18.a3 Rc7 (18...Ne4!? – Dvoretsky) 19.Ra2 Rfc8 20.Rac2=.

**16.Bd3xe4**

After the game, Seirawan offered 16.a4!?, to which both 16...ba 17.Bxf6 Nxf6 18.Rxa4 Qb6 19.Qa2 Ra8= and 16...b4 17.Nxe4 Rxc1+ 18.Qxc1 Nxe4 18.Bxe4 de 20.Nc4 Qd5 21.b3 Rc8 22.Ra2 Rc6 23.Rc2 f6= are decent replies.

**16...Nf6xe4 17.Nc4xe4 d5xe4 18.Ne5-d7!?**



4) What should Black play here?

**18...Qa5-d2 19.Nd7xf8 Qd2xe3+ 20.Bh4-f2 Qe3xf4**

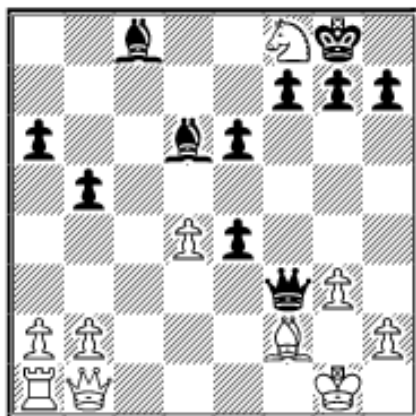
Here, White's proper continuation was **21.Rxc8!**, taking into account that after 21...Qxh2+? 22.Kf1 Bxc8 23.Qxe4 Bxf8 24.Rc1 he has the initiative: 24...Bd7 (24...Qb8!? 25.Qe5 Qa8 26.d5 – Dvoretsky) 25.Qb7 Qh1+ 26.Bg1 Qh6 27.Rc7 Be8 28.Rc8 Qd2 29.g3!+- (but not 29.Rxe8 Qd1+

30.Kf2 Qxd4+ and draws).

Black would have to reply **21...Bxc8!** Now 22.Qc1? Qxh2+ (22...e3?? 23.Bg3) 23.Kf1 Bb7! 24.Nd7 e3 25.Qxe3 Qh1+! 26.Bg1 (26.Ke2 Qxa1) 26...Qxg2+ loses for White (Dvoretsky), so White would have to reply **22.g3**.

Shirov gives the continuation 22...Qf5 23.Nxe6 Bxe6 with good compensation for the exchange. However, instead of 23.Nxe6, White has the unpleasant 23.Qc2!.

It's better to retreat the queen to a different square: **22...Qf3** (intending not just to recapture the knight, but also 23...e3).

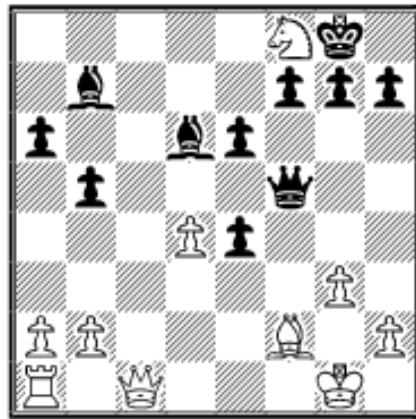


5) How should White continue?

**21.g2-g3?! Rc8xc1+ 22.Qb1xc1 Qf4-f5**

Shirov gave this move two exclamation marks. It is indeed very strong, especially from a practical viewpoint (which would have become especially clear, had the grandmaster given the correct answer to Question #7). On the other hand, 22...Qf3 isn't bad, either. Black could also have played 21...Qf3 22.Rxc8 Bxc8 (although not, of course,

22...e3?? 23.Qxh7#), obtaining the position we discussed previously in the 21.Rxc8 variation. Evidently, Shirov rejected, on principle, any continuation involving the exchange of queens.



6) What should White play?

**23.Bf2-e3**

7) How should Black recapture on f8?

**23...Bd6xf8 24.Qc1-c7 Qf5-f3 25.Qc7-f4 Qf3-e2 26.Qf4-f2**

26.Rf1!? (Dvoretsky) deserved consideration.

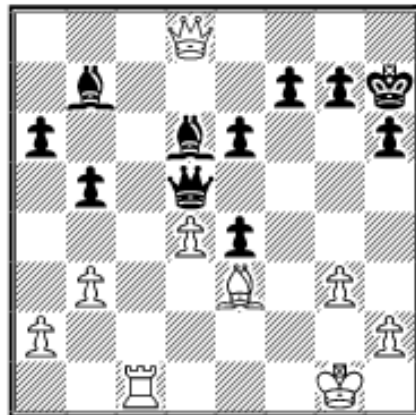
**26...Qe2-d3**

26...Qc4? would have been a mistake in view of 27.Rc1! Qxa2? 28.Rc7.

**27.Qf2-d2**

*After 27.Rc1 Bd5 28.Qd2 f6!, Black keeps a small advantage. [Formally, this is probably correct; but practically speaking, the exchange of queens would probably have put White out of danger.]*

**27...Qd2-c4 28.b2-b3 Qc4-d5 29.Ra1-c1 Bf8-d6 30.Qd2-a5 h7-h6 31.Qa5-d8+ Kg8-h7**



**32.Qd8-d7??**

*A terrible but understandable mistake when his flag was almost ready to fall. After 32.Kg2, White would have retained good drawing chances. [His next move could then have been 33.Qd7.]*

**32...Bd6-f4! White resigned.**

## Answers

**1. 14...Nd2?! 15.Qc2 (15.Bxh7+?? Nxh7) 15...Nxf1 16.Bxh7+**





16...Kh8 is extremely dangerous: after 17.Rxf1, there seems to be no satisfactory defense to White's mating attack. For example: 17...g6 18.Bxg6! fg 19.Qxg6 Qe7 20.Qh6+! Kg8 21.Rf3; or 17...b4 18.Rf3! bc 19.Rh3 (Shirov). And finally, on 17...Be7, 18.Bxf6 (18.Bd3) 18...gf (18...Bxf6 19.Rf3) 19.Qe2! fe 20.Qh5 Kg7 21.fe Bg5 22.Rf3 probably works (Dvoretsky).

So Black must give up the queen: **16...Nxb7 17.Bxd8 Nxe3 18.Qf2! Bxe5** (18...Nxc2?

19.Bb6+–) **19.fe Ng4 20.Qg3 Nxe5 21.Be7 Rfe8+/-**. Black has obtained rook, knight and pawn for the queen, but he still stands worse.

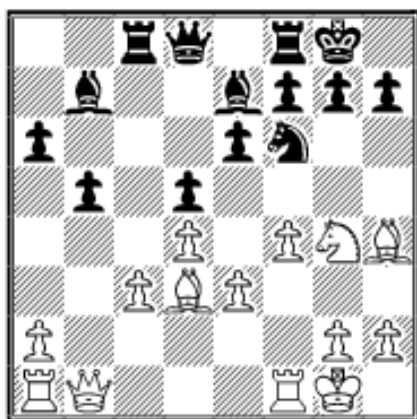
Since the simple 14...Qa5 15.Rc1 Rfc8 maintains the balance, in Shirov's opinion, there was no reason for him to go in for 14...Nd2.

However, the move he actually chose, 14...Rc8?, was poor (see the next question).

**2.** Shirov recommends 15.Bxe4!? de 16.Ng4, intending to win the e4-pawn after trading on f6. But Black would get decent positional compensation for his pawn.

Viorel Bologan's suggested **15.Ng4!** is stronger. If 15...Be7, then 16.Nxf6+ Bxf6 (16...Nxf6 17.Bxf6 and 18.Bxh7+) 17.Nxe4 de (17...Bxh4? 18.Nc5) 18.Bxf6 Qd5!? (18...Qxf6 19.Bxe4, when White wins the pawn without allowing the counterplay on the a8-h1 diagonal that Black obtains in the 15.Bxe4 de 16.Ng4 variation) 19.Bxb5! Qxb5 20.Be7 Rfe8 21.Bc5±.

Nor is 15...Nxc3 16.bc Be7 any better.



17.Bxf6 (17.Nxf6+ gf 18.a4!? or 17...Bxf6 18.Bxh7+ Kh8 19.Bxf6 Qxf6 20.Bd3 Rxc3 21.a4+ are other good lines for White) 17...gf (17...Bxf6 18.Bxh7+ Kh8 19.Rf3) 18.Bxh7+ Kg7 19.Rf3 f5 (19...Rh8!? 20.Rg3 Kf8 21.Nh6 f5 22.Qd1!?) 20.Bxf5 ef 21.Qxf5 with a powerful attack.

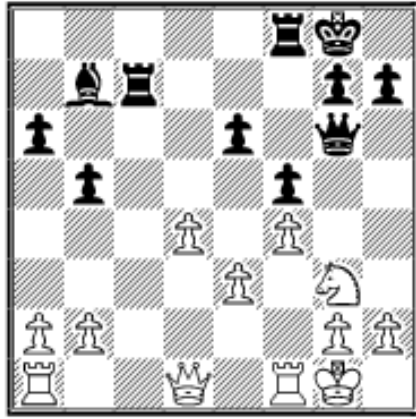
**3.** The tempting queen sacrifice is incorrect: 20...Rc2?! 21.Rf2 Rfc8? (21...Rxf2 is better) 22.f5! Rxf2! 23.fg Rxc2+ 24.Kf1. Here's the continuation given by Shirov: 24...fg 25.e4

Rcc2 26.Qe1 h5 27.Rc1 Rxb2 28.h4! (no less strong is 28.d5! ed 29.Rc7 intending 30.Qc3; or 28...h4 29.Ne2 Rxc2 30.Rc7 intending either 31.Rxc7+, 31.Rxb7, or 31.Qc3 – Bologan) 28...g5 29.Qe3 gh 30.Nxh5 Rg4 31.d5+–.

Simplifying the position by 20...Qxb1?! 21.Raxb1 Rc2 22.Rf2 Rfc8 would leave Black with excellent drawing chances, in view of the activity of his pieces. But

after 23.Re1!, White's position is still preferable: 23...Rxf2 (other tries, such as 23...Rc1!?, 23...b4!?, or 23...f5!? are worth considering – Dvoretsky) 24.Kxf2 Rc2+ 25.Re2 Rc1 (Shirov) 26.e4+=/±.

The strongest continuation, **20...f5!**, was pointed out by Alexander Motylev. White now has to think about h7-h5-h4, as well as the doubling of rooks on the c-file. For example: 21.Rf2 h5 with compensation; or 21.Qd1 Rc7:



22.Qd2 (22.Qh5 Qxh5 23.Nxh5 Rfc8; 22.Rc1 Rxc1 23.Qxc1 h5 24.Qc7 Bd5 25.Qe7 Rc8 – in both cases, Black has outstanding compensation for his pawn minus) 22...h5 23.Rfc1 Rfc8 24.Rxc7 Rxc7 25.Rc1 Rxc1+ 26.Qxc1 h4 27.Qc7 hg 28.Qxb7 Qh5! and we end up with a draw.

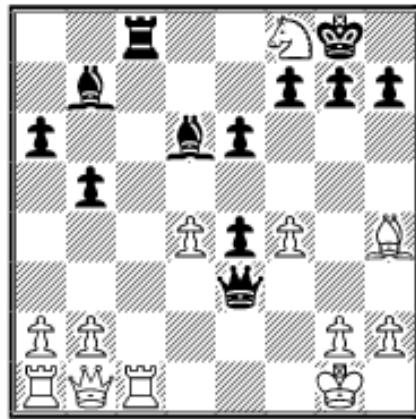
**4.** If White puts the knight on c5, a quiet, approximately even position results: 18...Rfe8 19.Nc5 Bd5 20.b4 Qb6=; or 18...Rxc1+!? 19.Qxc1 Rc8 20.Nc5 Bd5 (20...b4? fails against 21.Nxb7! Rxc1+ 22.Rxc1) 21.a3 with 22.b4= to follow.

*Here I spent about 20 or 25 minutes, leaving less than half an hour for the following 22 moves. But Seirawan had only 15 minutes, and this fact greatly influenced my decision.*

I have never gotten into time-pressure as a player; and, quite honestly, to this day I find it hard to understand how such a strong player could waste almost his entire time allotment on such a series of not overly complex moves as the ones White made here. But mainly – what's the point? After all, the remaining portion of the game quite possibly could be (and in fact, in the present case, was) considerably more complicated – and here is where he could have used that time. In my view, what we have here is a typical case of “time-pressure sickness”: a dangerous illness, widespread among chessplayers. It can be cured, although with considerable difficulty; and the cure should be started as early as possible – if at all possible, when the player is still young.

The rook sacrifice Shirov offered is objectively no stronger than quiet continuations. From a practical point of view, however, it was justified both because it suits his style of play (it is just such situations that inspire the grandmaster, and render him especially dangerous) and because of his opponent's time shortage. We need only assure ourselves there is no forced refutation.

**18...Qd2!? 19.Nxf8 Qxe3+**

**20.Bf2**

In the line 20.Kh1 Qxf4 21.Bg3 Rxc1+ 22.Qxc1 Qxc1+ 23.Rxc1 Bxg3 24.hg (24.Nxe6!?) 24...Kxf8 25.Kg1 White's position is preferable; however, Black can play better: 20...Rxf8! =/+ (Dvoretsky).

**20...Qxf4**

White's knight must go lost, when Black obtains enough compensation for the sacrificed exchange. Meanwhile, the position remains quite complex, with all three outcomes possible.

*I still like this sacrifice, but I am not sure I would have done it, had I seen more during the game.*

A curious note. For a considerable part of his creative life, Shirov openly expressed both his distrust of intuitive conclusions, and his tendency to find the solution to any problem on the basis of exact calculation. In fact, several approaches are possible here – I don't doubt that Mikhail Tal would have quickly decided on this combination, caring very little whether or not it was objectively correct.

**5.** 23.Qc1 Bb7 24.Nd7? e3—+ would be a mistake. And 23.Qd1 Qxd1+ (or 23...Kxf8 at once) 24.Rxd1 Kxf8 leads to an excellent endgame for Black.

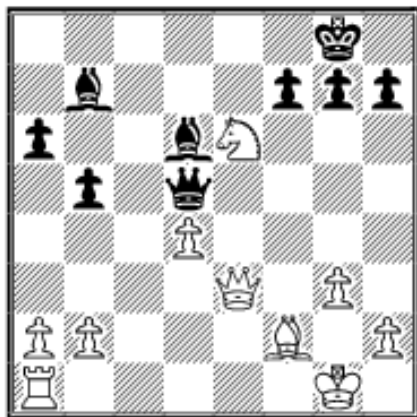
**23. Nxe6!**

The point of White's move is that the tempting 23...e3? is refuted by 24.Qxh7+!! Kxh7 25.Ng5+ Kg6 26.Nxf3+—.

**23...Bxe6 24.Qd1 Qf5** (analysis by Dvoretsky)

Evidently, the objective assessment of the whole operation begun by 18...Qd2!? hinges on the assessment of this position. Although Black has but one pawn for the exchange (in the actual game, he had two), he can hardly be said to stand worse. And that means that our preliminary conclusion, about 18...Qd2 not involving an excessive amount of risk, and therefore being the most promising continuation, has been borne out.

**6.** Thanks to the terrible threat of e4-e3!, White has no time to bring back the knight. For example: 23.Nxe6? e3!! 24.Qxe3 Qd5:



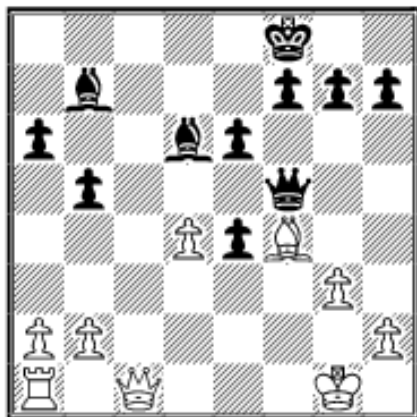
25.Kf1 Qh1+ 26.Bg1 (26.Ke2 Qxa1—+)  
 26...Qg2+ 27.Ke1 Bb4+ 28.Kd1 Bf3+ 29.Kc1  
 Bd2+ (29...Qf1+ is also strong: 30.Kc2 Qc4+  
 31.Kb1 Bd2!—+ Dvoretsky) 30.Qxd2 Qf1+  
 31.Kc2 Be4+ 32.Kb3 Qc4+ 33.Ka3 Qa4#.

**23.Be3!** was necessary, blocking the e-pawn, even if it meant settling for an inferior position.

**7.** In the game, Black played 23...Bxf8=+/, after which only White's tremendous time-pressure prevented him from easily holding the position.

*The text is probably stronger than 23...Kxf8 24.Bf4!*

No, here Shirov was wrong: he missed a chance to lay a cunning trap for his opponent. **23...Kxf8!** was stronger, when **24.Bf4?** is actually a serious error.



As Vadim Zvjagintsev indicated, Black wins here by **24...e3!! 25.Bxd6+ Kg8 26.Qxe3 Qd5 27.Kf2 Qg2+ 28.Ke1 Qh1+ and 29...Qxa1.**

And throwing in the moves 24.a4 b4 (25.Bf4? e3!!, etc.) changes nothing.

It might seem strange for a brilliant tactician like Shirov to miss such a chance, especially considering that Black's combination is basically the same as the one he examined when analyzing the move 23.Nxe6? (see the previous answer). Evidently, we all suffer from a predisposition that keeps us from finding certain tactical or positional ideas – among others, it's psychologically much easier actively to sacrifice a piece, than to allow the opponent to capture it with check.



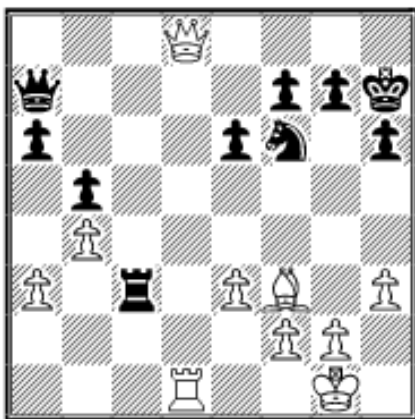
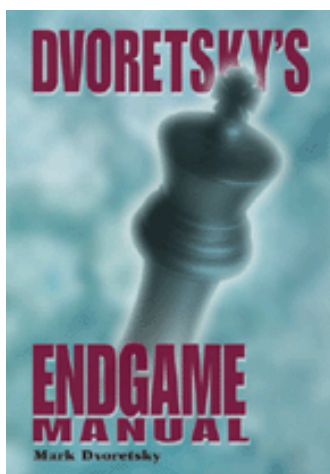


## Surprises in Calculating Variations

The diagrammed position below, taken from a game played in the English League, has already been published twice on [ChessCafe](#), in Anthony Miles' column, which can be found in the [Archives](#). The grandmaster got it from a friend of his, who played White, who is on move. (It's a shame that the names of the players remain anonymous.)

### COLUMNISTS

*The*  
*Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky



Even those who remember this position will discover a great deal that is new about it here. And for the rest of you, I recommend that before reading the analyses which follow, you make it a training exercise – and ideally, that you follow the approach I have used more than once in my own lessons, as follows:

Imagine that you are playing as White, and that you have to make your last move before the time-control, with only 3 minutes left on the clock. You will not be able to calculate

everything: it's more important to sense correctly the ideas in the position, to see a few of the possibilities, and then to make an intuitive decision. Write down the move you would have played, and perhaps a few of the ideas underlying your choice (so as not to forget what they were).

And then, execute the same procedure – but this time, give yourself 10 minutes. That's hardly time-pressure: now you have time for a bit of calculation. Write down your new choice (it might be the same decision you made earlier, or something different).

And finally, a third time: add 20 more minutes to study the position. Perhaps you won't need this much time, if you selected a quiet continuation, one which does not require analysis, and if you have no intention of second-guessing your choice. (I remind you that we are imitating your behavior in a practical game, under the given conditions.) Otherwise, if you were unable to fully calculate the complex lines you entered into, now you can accurately support or refute the line that interested you.

Once the results of this training have been fixed either in your memory or on paper, you may begin to acquaint yourself with the analysis itself. Comparing the course of your own thinking (during each time allotment) with the variations and assessments offered herein, you can assess the quality of your intuitive guesses,



your ability to find all the resources contained in the position (or “candidate-moves”), the depth and accuracy of your calculation, and the rationality of your time-expenditure (whether or not you wasted precious minutes on variations that really didn’t need to be examined at all), etc.

The main outcome of all this will be either a small step or a giant leap forward in the process of self-understanding, without which any truly effective work on self-realization is unthinkable.

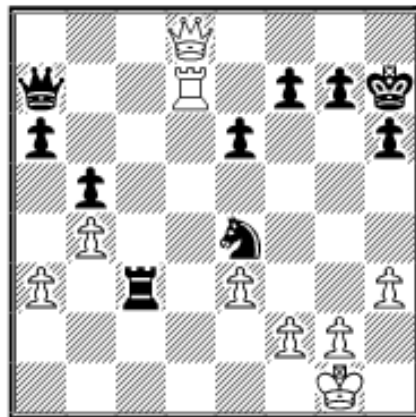
Let’s begin with your very first impressions of the position. Clearly, White has the advantage, consisting mainly of these two factors:

- Black’s queen is out of play; and
- The bishop is considerably better than the knight – indeed, this factor may have influence in the endgame as well, where the bishop will be able to attack the enemy queenside pawns.

Conversely, the a3-pawn is under attack. It must either be defended, or White must find enough play to render the threat of losing this pawn meaningless.

It would be very good if you immediately found the elegant combination to trap the queen: **1.Be4+!? Nxe4 2.Rd7**. It would be even better if you quickly spotted the opponent’s tactical resources, which are enough to put the combination under a cloud. Then, with the “3-minute time-control,” you would probably not be justified in entering a combination that you couldn’t calculate all the way through. For in our starting position, you recall, White stands better – which means, in turn, that a combination that ends in a draw will not be enough. And given more thinking time, before you start entering into the depths of this combination, it would make sense to prepare a “Plan B” – that is, a quiet continuation that still aims for some advantage, which you could select if you didn’t like the way your calculations turned out.

But let’s begin by examining the combination. If it wins, then we won’t really need to pay much attention to the analysis of the alternatives.

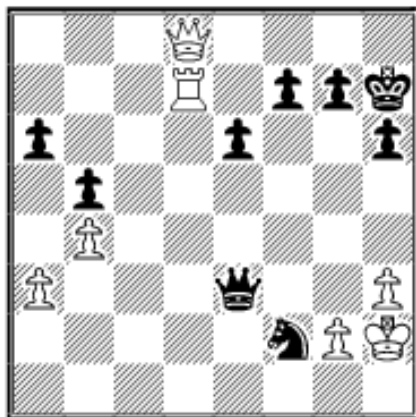


**4.Kxh1 Nxf2+ 5.Kh2 Qxe3**

2...Qxd7? 3.Qxd7 Kg6 4.f3 Nf6 5.Qd2, or 3...Rc1+ 4.Kh2 Nxf2 5.Qxf7 Rh1+ 6.Kg3 Ne4+ 7.Kh4 are hopeless for Black.

In the game, Black gave up his rook by 2...Rd3? 3.Rxd3, and of course lost. Nevertheless, the tactical shot he used (the d-file pin) should be noted – it will come in handy for us later.

In a previous [publication](#), Miles offered the following refutation: **2...Rc1+ 3.Kh2 Rh1+?! 4.Kxh1 Nxf2+ 5.Kh2 Qxe3**



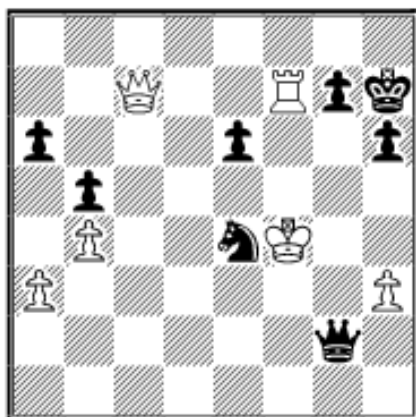
One of the psychological difficulties involved in analyzing complex variations can be generally summarized as “calculation horizon”: there exists a natural barrier, beyond which we normally cannot see. Here’s an excerpt from an article that was published as part of a collection of instructional materials, co-written with Artur Yusupov, entitled *The Development of Creative Thinking In The Chessplayer* (which the English-language publisher unfortunately entitled *Attack and Defence*):

*For practical players, the natural tendency is to cut off the calculation of variations as soon as possible. This saves both time and energy; but sometimes, as a result, the player fails to delve deeply enough into the position, fails to see the tactical or strategic resources hidden deep therein, and thereby misses the strongest continuations. What’s to be done? ‘Real life is, to most men, a long second-best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible.’ (Bertrand Russell)*

So it is here: Black already has two pawns for the exchange; his queen and knight are getting close to the enemy king, and 6.Rxf7? is strongly met by 6...Qe5+ 7.g3 Qe2. It would seem high time to reject the combination and turn our attention to studying other possibilities. Only a very resourceful and self-assured player could keep from giving in to first impressions and continue the search.

Kevin Bonham, one of the site’s visitors, used the “Fritz” computer program to establish that by taking the b8-h2 diagonal under control with **6.Qc7!**, White could set his opponent difficult problems, since the pawns on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank would be indefensible.

Here’s the main line: **6...Qe1 7.Rxf7 Qh1+ 8.Kg3 Ne4+ 9.Kf4 Qxg2**



And, once again, we want to stop at an unpleasant-looking conclusion for White. Everything looks to be in order for Black here, since both the knight and the g7-square are defended. But after one more quiet move – **10.Qb7! Kg8 11.Rd7(c7)**, White wins the pinned knight.

9...Nf6 is no help (instead of 9...Qxg2): after 10.Rxg7+ Kh8, White continues 11.Ke5! Qb1!? (11...Qa1+ 12.Kxe6 Qa2+ 13.Kxf6 Qb2+ 14.Qe5+–) 12.Kxe6!? Ne8 13.Rg8+!

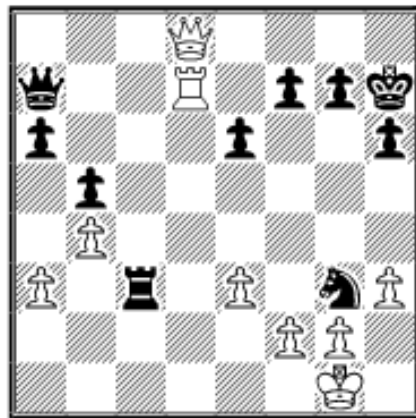
Kxg8 14.Qf7+ Kh8 15.Qxe8+ Kg7 16.Qf7+ Kh8 17.Qf8+ Kh7 18.Qf5+, obtaining a pawn endgame with an extra pawn. This extra variation is presented purely for analytical purposes – there’s no need to calculate it over the board. In contrast, White probably does need to find 10.Qb7! (in reply to 9...Qxg2) before

deciding on the combination; since without it, the whole idea collapses.

But having accurately calculated this whole line, we can go right ahead with our combination, since all Black's replies are natural enough, and it's wholly likely that he'll play this way.

Nevertheless, 2...Rc1+ 3.Kh2 Rh1+ does not exhaust all the ideas for the defense. Let's find some more possibilities for Black.

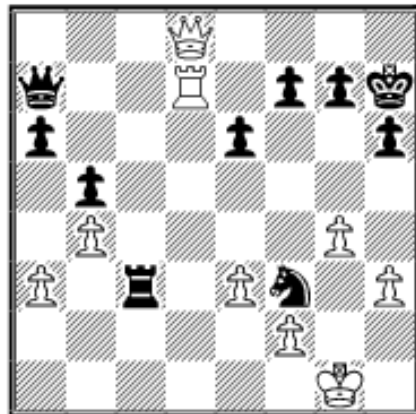
For example, there is the clever move **2...Ng3?!**



3.fg?? Qxe3+ even loses; while 3.Rxa7? Rc1+ 4.Kh2 Nf1+ leads to perpetual check. However, there is a convincing retort: **3.h4!!+-**. Black's queen is still trapped, and there's no perpetual, since the king now has the h3-square.

Black might also play for a perpetual by putting his knight on d2 instead of g3 – either at once, or after the preliminary 2...Rc1+. Which is more exact? Let's examine both move orders.

The strongest reply to **2...Nd2?!** would be **3.g4!** After **3...Nf3+**, White must choose the proper square to retreat his king.



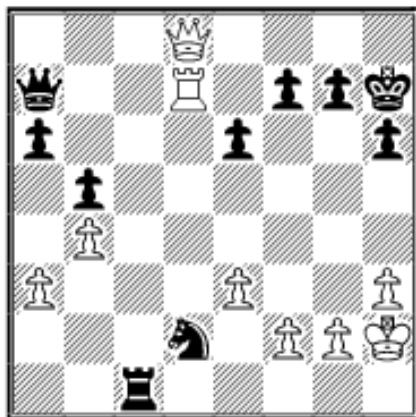
4.Kf1 suggests itself, after which Black's sole resource is our familiar d-file pin: 4...Rd3! 5.Rxd3 Qb7. Here a well-known principle applies: queen plus knight in the vicinity of the opposing king makes a powerful force. (In some books, this idea is often expressed poorly, as "queen plus knight is stronger than queen plus bishop," which is wrong – there are no statistics that support this assumption). Black threatens 6...Nh2+ (for example: 6.Qd7 Nh2+ 7.Kg1 Nf3+ 8.Kh1? Qe4+-). 6.Qd6!? is met by 6...Ng5 6.Qg3 Qc6!?, when the

extra exchange is not a factor yet, and Black has full counterplay, with the outcome still uncertain.

Much stronger is **4.Kg2! Rd3!** (4...Nh4+ 5.Kh2! Rd3 6.Rxd3 – the knight is *en prise* – 6...Nf3+ 7.Kg3+-) **5.Rxa7 Ne1+** (5...Rxd8 6.Kxf3 changes nothing: the knight check at h4 is no longer available) **6.Kf1 Rxd8 7.Kxe1** (two black pawns are attacked, and one must fall (7...Kg6 8.Rxa6+-; 7...Rd6 8.Rxf7 Rd3 9.Re7+-).

And yet, Black still has a hidden path to safety: he has to play **2...Rc1+! 3.Kh2 Nd2!!**





4.Rxa7 Nf1+ leads to a perpetual, while 4.g4!? has now lost much of its effect, in view of 4...Nf1+ 5.Kg2 Nxe3+! 6.Kf3! (of course not 6.fe?? Qxe3→) 6...Rd1! 7.Rxa7 Rxd8. After 8.Kxe3 (or 8.fe), compared with the variation we examined previously, White has a pawn less – thus, he is no longer winning here, but will only recover his pawn, with a likely draw.

And Black has a brilliant reply to **4.h4** (also discovered by Kevin Bonham): **4...Rd1!!** The same idea of a d-file pin, but this time – from behind his own knight! White can't respond with 5.Kh3? – after 5...Ne4! he remains a pawn down. So he must take the draw by **5.Rxa7 Nf1+ 6.Kg1** (6.Kh3?? Rxd8) **6...Nd2+!**

White should probably just play 4.Rxd2!?, hoping for 4...Qc7? 6.Qxc7 Rxc7 6.Rd6, with a sizable advantage in the rook endgame. (Black will either have to give up a pawn, or else take up a passive position with his rook at a7.) But there's another way to meet the threat of 5.Rd7: after 4...Rc7!+/=, White has next to nothing.

And so the combination, though it sets complicated tasks before Black, nevertheless does not lead to a win. From a practical standpoint, it's probably justified: the likelihood that Black will find the only way to defend, without falling into one of the many false leads, is small enough. But I repeat: before deciding to play a combination, we must first refute at least some of the defensive tries (and first among them would be 2...Rc1+ 3.Kh1 Rh1+).

In his columns, Miles only looked at the combination; in fact, White's proper approach to this position would have been quite different. At first, it seemed to me that White could quickly demonstrate an advantage by simple moves. But analysis dissipated this initial, over-optimistic impression. Let's examine the main lines.

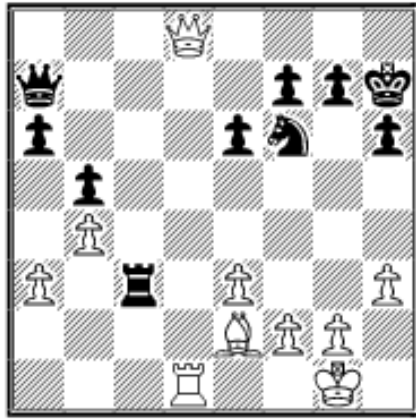
The direct attempt to attack on the 8<sup>th</sup> rank by **1.Qf8?!** (intending 2.Rd8) is most simply met by 1...Qc7, followed by 2...Rc1.

**1.Qa5?!** is dubious. White defends the pawn, intending 2.Rd6 or 2.a4; however, this temporarily puts the queen out of play. An experienced player will not waste time analyzing a queen move to the board's edge, knowing intuitively that it cannot be good, and that his opponent will probably find a way to exploit its shortcomings. And in fact, after 1...e5 2.Rd6 (2.a4 Ra3) 2...Rc1+ 3.Kh2?! e4, it's already White who's in trouble.

**1.Rd6?!** leads nowhere – the simplest reply is 1...a5!?=, 1...Rxa3 is also good, but here Black would have a few variations to calculate: 2.Rb6 Nd5 3.Be4+ f5 4.Bxd5 (4.Rxe6 Nxe3!) 4...ed 5.Rb8 Rxe3!+=.

Even if you take the white pieces here, with no wish to combine whatsoever, it's

still very helpful at least to take note of the combination examined above – I wouldn't rule out the possibility that you might find it useful in calculating other variations. For example, take a look at **1.Be2**.



The simplest defense against the threat of 2.Bd3+ might appear to be 1...e5. But this is a mistake: White continues 2.Bd3+ e4 3.Bxe4+! Nxe4 4.Rd7, with the idea we have already seen of trapping the queen – but here, Black's e6-pawn is gone. In this version, of course, the combination wins.

The only way to parry White's threat is by **1...Nd5! 2.Bd3+ g6**, and on 3.Be4, Black has either 3...Qc7 4.Qxc7 Nxc7 5.Rd7 Kg7, or 3...Nxe3!? 4.Bxg6+ Kxg6 (or 4...Kg7!? 5.fe

Qxe3+ 6.Kh1 Kxg6 7.Qg8+ Kf6 8.Rf1+ Ke5 unclear) 5.Qg8+ Kf6 (5...Kf5) 6.Qh8+ Kg6 7.Qxc3 Nxd1=.

### 1.Rd3!?

A humble continuation, but a decent one. The immediate rook exchange 1...Rxd3? leads, after 2.Qxd3+ g6 3.Qd8 Kg7 4.Bc6, to a difficult position for Black, whose queen is still out of play. After 1...Rc1+ 2.Kh2 Rc2, the rook exchange by 3.Rd2 Rxd2 4.Qxd2 Qc7+ is no longer dangerous; White can, however, retain some pressure by continuing 3.Kg3.

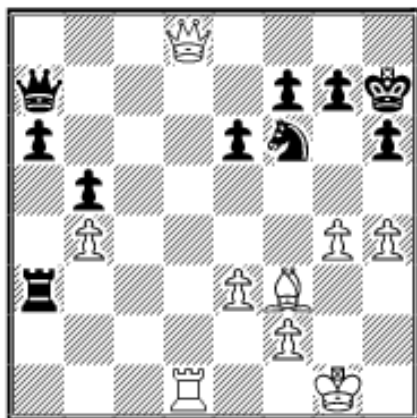
The first time I saw this position, I was immediately attracted by the move 1.g4!, which embodies several ideas. By opening up the g2-square for the king, White intensifies the threat of the Be4+ combination. The 8<sup>th</sup>-rank attack by Qf8 and Rd8 gains power, the closer White's pawns get to the enemy king. And finally, it might be possible to unseat the enemy knight by continuing h3-h4 and g4-g5.

Analysis showed that it was this last plan that would be most dangerous for Black. And White could also begin this pawn storm with **1.h4!** This adds another possibility: h4-h5, followed by Qf8 and Rd8. And the attempt to halt this pawn with 1...h5? is refuted by our well-known idea of trapping the queen: 2.Bxh5! Nxe5 3.Rd7+–.

In testing **1.g4!**, the first thing I looked at was the attempt at warding off this threatening attack by exchanging queens: 1...Qc7?! 2.Qxc7 Rxc7. And, as I had foreseen upon first examining this position, the endgame proves to be very tough for Black: 3.Rd6 Ra7 4.Rb6!? Nd7 5.Rb7 Rxb7 6.Bxb7 Nb8 7.f4, etc. Here the long-range bishop's superiority over the knight is especially telling.

I spent almost no time looking at the pawn capture 1...Rxa3. True, closer examination revealed that all was not so simple here, either. 2.Qf8? does not work, in view of 2...Qc7 3.Rd8 Ra1+ 4.Kg2 Qc4, when Black is the one who mates. And our familiar combination also fails: 2.Be4+?! Nxe4 3.Rd7 Ra1+ 4.Kg2 Qxd7 5.Qxd7 Ra2, and Black has sufficient counterplay. After 2.h4!,

however, I see no defense.



One possible line is: 2...a5 3.g5 hg 4.hg Rxe3!? (the only counterchance) 5.fe Qxe3+ 6.Kg2 Qxg5+ 7.Kf1, and the cluster of black pawns isn't enough to compensate for being a rook down – eventually, White has to win.

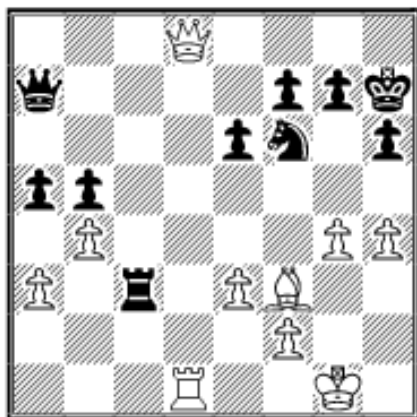
The best defense is: **1...a5!**

Again, if 2.Qf8, Black has time to counterattack: 2...ab! (wrong would be 2...Qc7? 3.ba!, or 2...Rxa3? 3.Rd8 Ra1+ 4.Kg2 Ra2 5.Qh8+ Kg6 6.Rd4!, intending 7.h4+–) 3.Rd8 (3.ab Qc7 4.Kg2!? Rc2 5.Rd8? Qc3 6.h4 Qxe3 7.Qh8+ Kg6 8.h5+ Nxh5 9.gh+ Kf6–+) 3...ba 5.h4 Qc5! 5.Qh8+ Kg6 6.h5+ Nxh5 7.gh+ Kf6 – and here, the chances for both sides appear to be equal.

To complete the picture, I should add that the 8<sup>th</sup>-rank attack offers no prospects after 1.h4, either. Black reacts the same way: 1...a5! 2.h5 (2.Qf8 ab 3.ab Qc7; 2.g4!) 2...ab 3.ab (3.Qf8? loses to 3...ba! 4.Rd8 Rc1+ 5.Kh2 Qc7+ 6.g3 Qxd8 7.Qxd8 a2) 3...Qc7 4.Qxc7 Rxc7 5.Be2 Nd5, and White has next to nothing.

2.ba Rxa3 3.Be2 Nd5 4.Bd3+ g6 5.Rc1 is not dangerous for Black. His simplest response is 5...Qe7!?, but he could also try the sharper 5...Nxe3!? 6.Qb6! Qd7! 7.Bxb5 Qd5! (not 7...Qd2? at once, because of 8.Qc7!) 8.Bc6 Qd2, with enough counterplay.

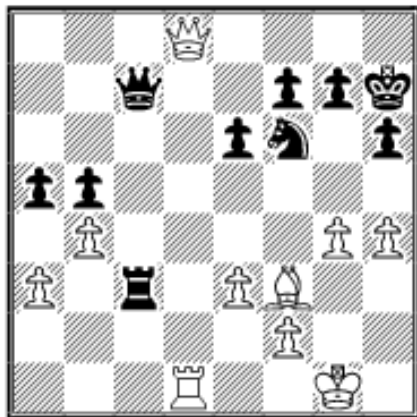
Stronger is **2.h4!**



After 2...ab 3.g5 hg 4.hg, White obtains a great advantage: 4...Rxe3 5.fe Qxe3+ 6.Kg2 Qxg5+ 7.Kf1 ba 8.Qd3+, or 4...Qc7 5.ab! (but not 5.gf? Qxd8 6.Rxd8 ba) 4...Qxd8 (4...Ng8 5.Qe8!? Qe7 6.Be4+ g6 7.Bxg6+! or 6...Kh8 7.Qxe7 Nxe7 8.Rd8+ Ng8 9.g6 f5 10.Bd3+– is just as hopeless) 5.Rxd8 Ng8 6.Rb8 (or 6.g6+ fg 7.Rb8).

Having found most of the variations examined above (many of the sidelines were added later on), I decided that my analysis was complete, and White's overwhelming advantage after 1.g4! (or 1.h4!) had now been demonstrated. The overall conclusion also seemed clear: with an overwhelming position, there's no reason to play combinations – just advance your pawns (no calculations required – just follow positional considerations) on the king's wing, and soon, your opponent's defense crumbles.

Unfortunately, some time later, another defensive possibility suddenly occurred to me, which I was completely unable to refute. This was **2...Qc7!**



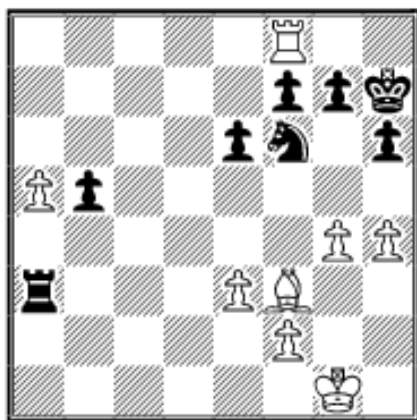
White now gets nothing from 3.g5 hg 4.hg Qxd8 5.Rxd8 Nd5! (this move only becomes possible because Black had not exchanged pawns earlier on b4) 6.Be4+ g6, and taking on d5 leads to the drawn rook ending of “three pawns to two on the same side.”

Roughly the same endgame occurs after 3.Qxc7 Rxc7 4.ba Ra7 5.g5 hg 6.hg Nd5! 7.Bxd5 ed 8.Rxd5 Rxa5 9.Rd3 Ra4!, with 10...Rg4+ threatened, White has no time to prevent the exchange of pawns by 10.b4.

And if, instead of 4.ba, White plays 4.g5 hg 5.hg, hoping for 5...Nd7?! 6.ba±, or 5...Nd5?! 6.Be4+! g6 7.Bxd5 ed 8.Rxd5 a4! (the only chance) 9.Rd3±, Black can save himself by inserting the trade 5...ab! After 6.gf ba, it's easy to see that the queenside passed pawns are no weaker than the bishop; and after 6.ab Nd7 7.Be2 Ne5, the chances are practically even.

I was stumped – I couldn't see how to demonstrate what should have been an obvious advantage for White from the starting position. Something was not right: either my assessment had been wrong, and White's advantage wasn't so great after all, or there was a mistake hidden in my analysis. Or perhaps, the chosen plan was just too complex, and I should be paying more attention to the more primitive strategy, 1.Rd3!?

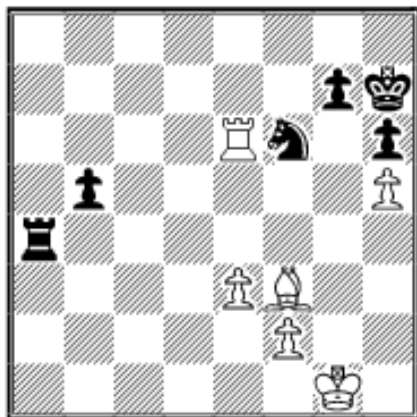
Relief arrived when Alexander Morozevich took an interest in the position. He came to the same conclusion I had: the kingside pawn advance was the most logical plan. In the last diagrammed position (after 1.g4! a5! 2.h4! Qc7), the grandmaster suggested playing **3.ba! Qxd8 4.Rxd8 Rxa3** (I stopped here, assuming that Black was in great shape) **5.Rf8!**



Now 5...Nd7? 6.Rxf7 Ne5 7.Be4+ Kg8 loses, in view of 8.Ra7 Ra4 9.f3 Nxc4 10.Bg6 Ra1+ 11.Kg2 Nxe3+ 12.Kf2 Nd1+ 13.Kg3.

In reply to **5...Rxa5**, 6.g5?! hg 7.hg Nd5 8.Be4+ g6 9.Rxf7+ Kg8 10.Bxc6 looks tempting; but Black has 10...b4 11.Rb7 Ne7!. Therefore, White plays **6.Rxf7 Ra4** (6...e5? is just bad: 7.Re7 b4 8.g5 hg 9.hg e4 10.gf ef 11.f7 Rf5 12.e4+-), and now, not 7.g5?! hg 8.hg Kg6 (or 8...Ne4), with equality, but **7.Re7 Nxc4 8.Rxe6 Nf6 9.h5±** (9.e4 Kg8

10.e5 Ng4 is inferior)



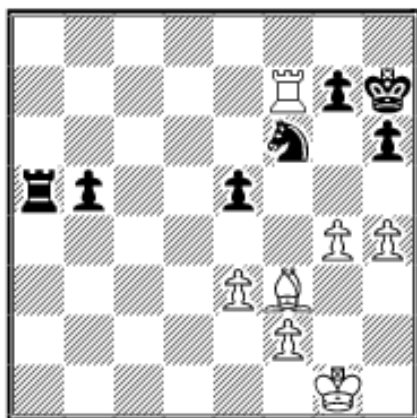
And here is where Morozevich's variation concludes. One cannot say that Black is doomed in the final position, but, in any case, he will have a long and difficult defensive task.

Yes, this path to the goal certainly cannot be called an easy one! This analysis confirms once again what the great Emanuel Lasker once said: that there are no lost positions – even in the most difficult situations, one can always find defensive resources that will

make your opponent's task much more difficult. Another strong impression, which would not leave me while I labored over this example, was of wonder – at the amazing richness of ideas in chess, the swirl of hidden possibilities that can sometimes lie hidden under cover of the most simple-looking and natural positions, such as the one we have just examined.

### Postscript

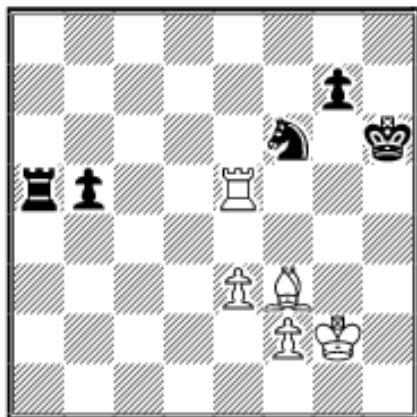
In early May, I paid a visit to Norway, and showed the initial position to Norwegian players. In the last variation, after **1.g4! a5! 2.h4! Qc7! 3.ba! Qxd8 4.Rxd8 Rxa3 5.Rf8! Rxa5 6.Rxf7**, grandmaster Simen Agdestein found another defensive possibility. It turns out that the move **6...e5!?** doesn't deserve a question mark at all.



The point is that 7.Re7 is answered, not by 7...b4?, but by 7...e4!, and on 8.Bxe4+ Nxe4 9.Rxe4, Black equalizes by 9...Ra4! 8.Be2?! Nd5! is even worse. And after 8.g5 hg 9.hg ef 10.gf Ra6! we get a drawn rook endgame: 11.f7 Rf6 followed by 12...Kg6, or 11.Rxg7+ Kh6 12.Rb7 Rxf6 13.Rxb5 Rg6+ 14.Kf1 Ra6=.

7.Rb7 e4 8.Be2 Ra1+ 9.Kg2 Ra2 10.Bxb5 Nxe4= is also useless.

The only try for a win is **7.g5! hg 8.hg Kg6** (8...e4? 9.gf ef 10.Rxg7+ Kh6 11.e4 is just bad for Black) **9.Re7 Kxg5 10.Rxe5+ Kh6** (10...Kh4 runs into the same reply) **11.Kg2**



Black's position remains difficult; most likely he will soon be forced to give up the b5-pawn. If 11...g5, then simply 12.Kg3. 11...g6!? is a foxier try, hoping for 12.Bc6? Ra2= or 12.Kg3?! Nd7! White continues 12.Re6! Kg5 (12...Nd7 13.Be4; 12...Kg7 13.Rb6) 13.Rc6 Kf5 (13...b4 14.Rb6) 14.Rc5+, intending either Bc6 or Be2. In chess terminology, this position is "±" – White has the advantage, but no guaranteed win. And this, apparently, is the objective assessment of the starting position.

Both sides will need to display exceptional accuracy and resourcefulness: even the tiniest inaccuracy means a certain loss for Black or the loss of the advantage for White.

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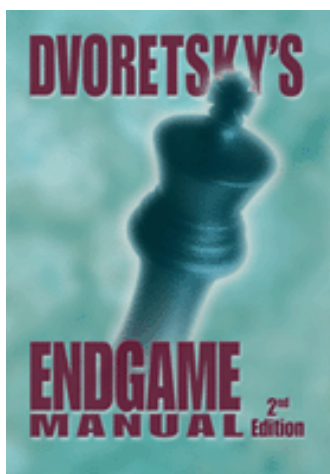
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## C O L U M N I S T S

# The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Patient Defense

Writing about active defense is much easier than writing about its counterpart. In my collection of works, there are more than a few examples of the former, taking up the entire final quarter of my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play*. But the situations where one side is forced to accurately secure his position and just ward off immediate threats, unable to alter the course of the struggle flowing continuously against him – that's not much fun to watch, and hence not very attractive to the reader. But such cases occur repeatedly in every player's practice – which means they should be studied, too.

Another problem is that when we defend bad positions our choices are, as a rule, limited – there are times when we seek out and play “only” moves. This in turn means that everything depends upon concrete calculation. So does this give us grounds for generalization – can the rules of alertness help us in making our decision?

In fact, the best advice here is to look at well-played examples of stubborn defense, to get a sense of the sort of problem confronting the weaker side and to accumulate some useful experience. And yet, there are some general principles that can help us. It's worth recalling the counsel of one of the greatest defensive specialists in all of chess history: the second World Champion, Emanuel Lasker.

*Opposed to the strategy of attack is the strategy of defense established by Steinitz. The side with the inferior position must give ground. But, in accordance with the principle of economy, he must make only the most insignificant, and only the most necessary retreats – and not a jot further. This comprises the inner esthetic principle of defense.*

*In order to hinder the opponent's attack as much as possible, the defender should not wait for the situation to become critical; he should strive to eliminate the major weaknesses of his position. And on the whole, he must seek to lay down so much resistance at each point that the “line of least resistance” will be almost impossible to reach. If Steinitz's rules bring success to an attacker, then inescapable logic dictates that his defensive rules must lead to success as well.*

The following two examples are presented in the classic work, *Lasker's Manual of Chess*.

*Steinitz – Golmayo*



*White's king is exposed, but he does have an extra pawn. How can White save this position? By strengthening his weak points: c2 and g2. Additionally, the knight at d3 blocks the d2-pawn, whose function is to defend the advanced pawn at e4. Thus, Steinitz's move in this position is, without a doubt, correct.*

**1.Nd3-e1!**

Black tried to forestall d2-d3 by tactical means, but his combination encountered a simple refutation.

**1...Nc6-b4? 2.a2-a3**

Of course not 2.d3? Nxc2!.

**2...Rh8-e8? 3.a3xb4 Nf6xe4 4.Qf4-f5+!**

The queen gets out of danger with gain of time. White went on to realize his extra piece (although, with the king stuck in the center, this is still no easy task).

Undoubtedly, Steinitz was absolutely correct in retreating his knight to e1. Nevertheless, the starting position here looks difficult for White: his opponent has an overwhelming lead in development, and excellent attacking prospects against the king stranded in the center. In such situations, even the best defensive move cannot alter the assessment – it can only create maximum difficulties for the opponent. Let's look for a stronger reaction from Black.

Of course, the e4-square is the weakest link in the white king's cover. But an immediate attempt to break through here would not be effective. After 1...Nxe4?! 2.Nxe4 Rhe8 3.d3 Nb4 (threatening 4...Nxc2), the variation 4.c3?! Qd7 5.cb f5 leaves Black still holding a dangerous initiative; however, White has the more accurate 4.Qf3!? or 4.Qf5+!? Kb8 5.c3. And on 3...Qd7!?, he has 4.Kd1.

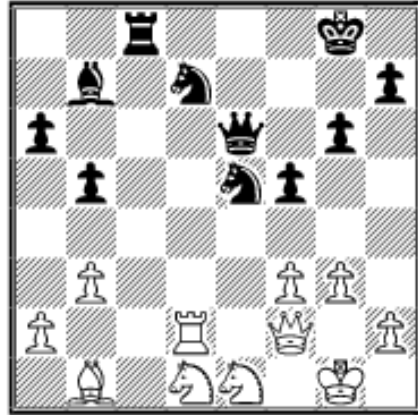
Worth consideration is a hard move to spot – the prophylactic 1...Ba5!?, increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn and directed against d2-d3. 2.Nf3 Qc5 would be bad. White's best way out would have been the immediate return of his extra pawn by 2.d3! Bxc3 3.bc Qxc3 5.Rb1 Rhe8 (4...Nd4+ 5.Kd1 Nxc2? fails against 6.Bb2!+–) 5.Bb2=+/+.

Vadim Zvjagintsev suggested a more dangerous plan: **1...g6!**, with which Black prepares to break in the center by f7-f5. A sample line: 2.d3 Nh5 3.Qh4 (3.Qxf7 Rhf8 4.Qe6+ Kb8) 3...f5, with a powerful attack; or 2.Rf1 Nxe4 (2...Nh5 3.Qxf7 Qd6! would be equally strong) 3.Nxe4 Rhe8 4.Kd1 (4.d3 f5) 4...Rxe4 5.Qxf7 Ne5!? 6.Nf3 Qe3!? 7.Qe6+ Kb8 8.Re1 Ng4 9.Rxe3 (9.Qxg4 Qxe1+ 10.Nxe1 Rxg4) 9...Nxe3+ 10.Ke2 Rxe6, and realizing the exchange plus will not be difficult for Black.



**Steinitz – Lasker**

USA/Canada 1894, 18th match game



Black threatens 33...Bxf3 (or 33...Nxf3+) 34.Nxf3 Nxf3+ 35.Qxf3 Qe1+ and 36...Qxd2, when good advice is hard to come by for White.

33.Qe3? is not a defense against 33...Bxf3!.

After 33.Rc2? Rxc2 34.Bxc2 Qc6, the f3-pawn cannot be defended: 35.Kg2 Nxf3 36.Nxf3 Ne5.

After 33.Kg2? Nxf3! 34.Nxf3 Ne5, the pin on the knight, coupled with the threat of a rook invasion at c1, decides the outcome: 35.Re2 Rc1 or 35.Rd3 Nxf3 36.Rxf3 Rc1.

In reply to 33.Ne3, the simplest would be attacking the knight by 33...Rc3. Another way could be 33...Rc1 34.Rd1 Rxd1 35.Nxd1 Qd5 (35...Qc6; 35...Nxf3+ 36.Nxf3 Qc6), and Black comes out a pawn up.

The line 33.Re2? Rc1 34.Bc2 Qd5 leaves Black with too many threats.

Steinitz finds the only way to hold this position.

**33.Kg1-f1!=/+**

The king neutralizes the enemy queen by covering its invasion squares on the e-file. In addition, it gets out of the danger zone on the kingside. Now, if Black's queen goes to c6, White has the additional defensive resource f3-f4. Meanwhile, White would like to continue 34.Qe3 or 34.Rc2.

Of course, the first thing to be considered must be the rook invasion 33...Rc1. This can be met either by 34.Bd3 followed by Be2, providing maximum protection of all his weaknesses; or by 34.Bc2 (intending to continue 35.Qe3) 34...Qc6 35.Qd4! (but not 35.Qe3? Nxf3), intending 36.Qb2, without fearing 35...Nxf3 36.Qxd7 Nxd2+ (36...Nxe2+? would be bad: 37.Ke2 Rxc2 38.Qd8+ 37.Qxd2 Qh1+ 38.Ke2).

The game continued: **33...Rc5 34.Qe3 Rd5 35.Rxd5 Qxd5 36.Nc3 Qc6 37.Kf2** (37.f4!?) **37...Kg7 38.Ne2**, and White achieved the draw.

For our analysis of the next game, we will again be relying on Lasker's commentary – from his book about the second world championship match between Alexander Alekhine and Efim Bogolyubow.

**Alekhine – Bogolyubow**

Germany 1934 8th Match Game

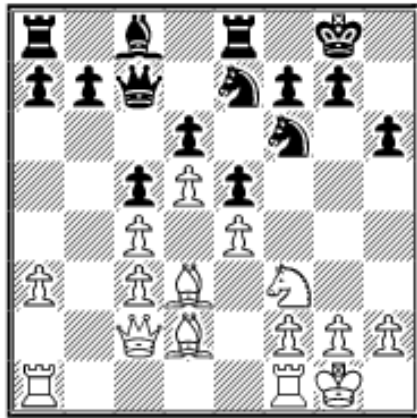
**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bc c5 6.Nf3!?**

We no longer play this way; the usual continuations are 6.f3 and 6.e3.

**6...0-0 7.Bg5 d6 (7...Qa5!? 8.Qc2 Ne4 9.Bd2 f5 – Nimzovitch) 8.Qc2 Re8 9.e4 h6 10.Be3**

Lasker considers both 10.Bh4 e5 and 10.Bf4 cd 11.ed e5 inferior.

**10...Qa5 11.Bd2 e5 12.Bd3 Nc6 13.0-0 (13.h3!?) 13...Qc7 14.d5 (14.Be3) 14...Ne7**



*White is in difficulties. The center is closed; and as a consequence, the knights are now stronger than the bishops.*

**15.Nf3-h4?!**

*The psychological consequence of Alekhine's realization of the weaknesses of his position is the rising in him of a thirst for aggression. Patient defense is not for him, if he sees any sort of chance to create an attack. But sound strategy often requires respect for the will*

*and strength of the adversary to shore up his weaknesses and rid himself of the defects in his position.*

*The correct plan of play here would have been Kg1-h1, Nf3-g1, and then g2-g3, f2-f3 and Rf1-f2. In this way, all the squares on the kingside would have been defended, all the way up to the 4th rank. If Black prepares an attack with f7-f5, then White can either play f3-f4 himself, or take the f5-pawn. White must accept the fact that it is Black who holds the initiative; attempts to seize the initiative oneself have the least likelihood of success.*

Lasker's recommended strategy is undoubtedly best, but in such positions a slightly different layout – Nf3-e1, f2-f3, g2-g3, and Ne1-g2 – is more commonly employed.

**15...g7-g5 16.Nh4-f5**

The piece sacrifice with 16.f4?! is most likely incorrect.

**16...Ne7xf5!**

*The bishop must be preserved, both for attack and defense.*

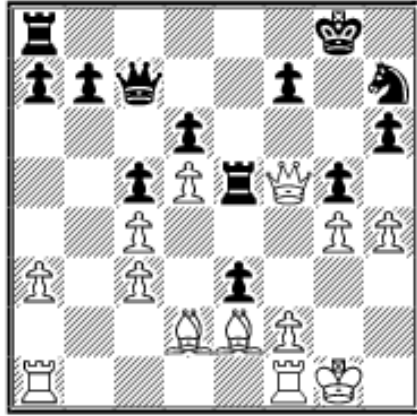
**17.e4xf5 e5-e4 18.Bd3-e2 Bc8xf5 19.h2-h4 Nf6-h7 20.g2-g4**

*White embarks upon a desperate counterattack.*

Black should not fall for 20...Bg6? 21.h5, as he has the strong counterblow...

**20...e4-e3! 21.Qc2xf5 Re8-e5**

21...ed 22.Bd3 was clearly weaker.



**22.Qf5-d3**

*Nimzovitch correctly recommended here (in the Amsterdam Telegraaf of April 25, 1934) 22.Qxe5 de 23.Bxe3 as a strategy which, in this desperate situation, might have done the most to hinder Black's victory. In addition to 22...de, Black could also quite properly take the pawn: 22...ef+ 23.Rxf2 de, keeping an indisputable advantage.*

Nimzovitch's suggested positional queen sacrifice is one of the techniques of active defense. It's hard to decide whether it would have given White greater practical chances than the game continuation.

**22...e3xd2 23.Qd3xd2 Ra8-e8 24.Be2-d3 Qc7-e7**

Seizing the only open file guarantees Black a great advantage.

**25.Bd3-f5**

If 25.f4, then 25...Re3! 26.Bxh7+ Kxh7 27.fg hg-/+.

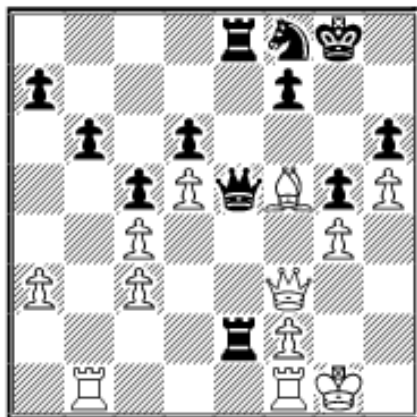
**25...Re5-e2 26.Qd2-d3 Nh7-f8**

Threatening 27...gh.

**27.h4-h5 Qe7-e5 28.Ra1-b1 b7-b6**

It would be premature to play 28...Qf4, as 29.Rxb7 R8e3 30.Qxe3 Rxe3 31.fe Qxe3+ 32.Kg2 gives White the strong threat of 33.Be6. But now Black really does threaten 29...Qf4.

**29.Qd3-f3**



### 29...Qe5-f6?!

Black should have played 29...Ra2!, preventing a3-a4-a5, and intending to continue 30...Qe2. 30.Rfe1? Qxe1+ 31.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 32.Kg2 Rxa3 33.Qg3 Re5 would be hopeless for White. On 30.Ra1, there follows: 30...Qe2 31.Qg3 (after 31.Qxe2 Rxe2, Black threatens 32...Rxf2, and 32.Rxa2 Rxa2 33.Re1 Rxa3 34.Re8 Rxc3 35.Rd8 Rxc4 offers no saving chances) 31...Rxa1 (but not 31...R8e5?, as Lasker recommended in his

book, because of 32.Bd3 Qd2 33.Rxa2 Qxa2 34.f4) 32.Rxa1 Re5 (32...Qxc4 is worse: 33.Qxd6 Qxc3 34.Rf1) and White's position remains difficult.

### 30.a3-a4 Kg8-g7?

Time-pressure takes its toll; Black is playing without a concrete plan. Here, too, 30...Ra2 was correct, not just in order to take a pawn, but also preparing to bring the knight out to d7 (since the immediate 30...Nd7?! is useless, in view of 31.Kg2).

### 31.Qf3-d3 Re8-e7 32.Rb1-a1 Qf6-e5 33.a4-a5 Nf8-d7 34.Qd3-f3 Qe5-f6?!

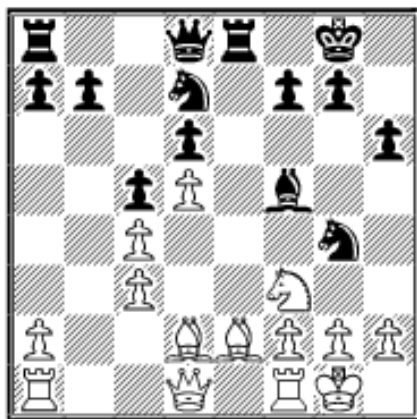
34...ba 35.Rxa5 Nb6 36.Bd3 Rd2 was worth considering, although White can still hang on after 37.Rc1.

### 35.a5xb6 Nd7xb6 36.Ra1xa7 Nb6xc4 37.Ra7xe7 Re2xe7

With a series of exchanges, Alekhine increased his saving chances. The game was eventually drawn.

### *Lipnitsky – Averbakh*

Minsk 1952, XX USSR Championship Semi-Final



The pawn structure is about the same as in the previous example. White stands worse. The enemy pieces are more actively placed, and Black's threat is to activate them further by Qf6, Re7, and Rae8. The c4-pawn is vulnerable, which will become especially acute if the light-squared bishops are exchanged.

White's first priority must be to shore up his weaknesses; only afterward can he begin to think about creating counterplay.

### 14.Nf3-e1!?

14.Bf4!? Qf6 15.Bg3 was worth consideration. 15...Qxc3?! 16.Rc1! Qb2 17.Nh4 Rxe2 18.Nxf5 and 19.Nxd6 would cost Black the initiative. On 15...Re7, White can trade off the bishops: 16.Nh4! Nge5 17.Nxf5. Black keeps the better game by continuing 15...Nge5! 16.Nxe5 Nxe5, with 17...Re7 to follow.

### 14...Ng4-f6?!

On 14...Nge5, White can drive the enemy pieces back by 15.g4! Be4 16.f3 Bh7 17.f4!. In this variation, we see why it is important that the white knight on e1 covers the weak square d3.

However, instead of the modest knight retreat, Black had the much more dangerous sortie 14...Qh4!. For example: 15.Nf3 Qf6; 15.h3 Nge5 16.f4 Ng6 17.Bd3 Bxd3 (or 17...Qf6) 18.Nxd3 Nb6; 15.Bf4 Nge5 16.Bg3 (16.Qd2!?) 16...Qe4! – in all cases, with advantage to Black.

### 15.f2-f3!

White must take the e4-square away from Black.

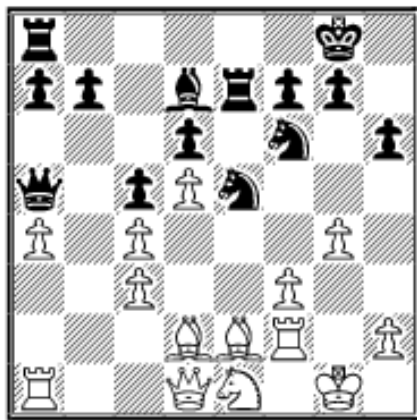
### 15...Nd7-e5 16.Rf1-f2

White has covered all his vulnerable center squares and is now ready to show some initiative on the kingside by g2-g4, Ng2 (or Rg2), h2-h4 – the h6-pawn will serve as a “hook” to help White eventually open lines on the kingside.

### 16...Qd8-a5 17.g2-g4 Bf5-d7 18.a2-a4!

Black threatened b7-b5, breaking up White’s center. This had to be prevented.

### 18...Re8-e7



Here, White had to continue with his plan of strengthening his position by 19.Ng2! Rae8 20.Bf1, getting his pieces out from under the e-file threats and intending 21.Qc2 followed by Nh4-f5. By being too hasty about preparing active operations on the kingside, White once again allowed “holes” to appear in his position.

### 19.Rf2-g2? Ne5-g6

On the immediate 19...Rae8, Black apparently feared 20.g5 hg 21.Bxg5; and if 21...Ng6 then 22.Qd2=+.

### 20.Be2-d3 Ra8-e8 21.Qd1-c1?

Clearly an oversight. 21.Bxg6 fg 22.g5 hg 23.Rxg5 was preferable, but here, too,

White's position would be difficult after 23...Qa6!, when Black exploits the absence of the light-squared bishop, which was defending the weak pawn at c4.

**21...Ng6-f4! 22.Bd3-f1**

No better was 22.Bxf4 Rxe1+ 23.Qxe1 Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Qxc3 25.Rd2 g5 26.Be3 Bxa4+.

**22...Nf4xg2 23.Ne1xg2 Nf6-h7**

Slightly more accurate was 23...Bc8 followed by Nd7.

**24.h2-h4 Nh7-f8 25.Bd2-f4 Qa5-c7 26.h4-h5 Bd7-c8**

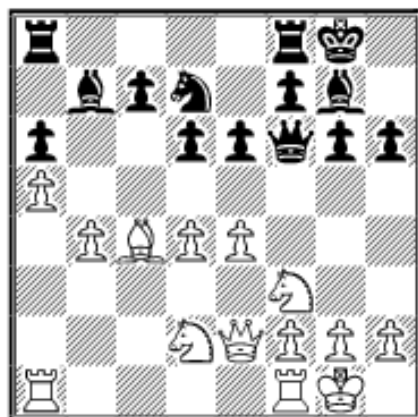
And Black realized his exchange plus.

A common story – at first Isaak Lipnitsky defended his weaknesses accurately, but at some point he lost patience, which immediately brought his defenses crashing down.

Our concluding example is our most nuanced and interesting. Do you recall the famous case of the hidden doubling of the black rooks on e7 and e8 behind the pawn on e6, in the last game of the second Karpov – Kasparov match? Well, what Ulf Andersson does here is even more “twisted” – he hides his rooks in the corner of the board behind his own a6-pawn. As the game went, the Swedish GM's defensive plan triumphed completely – later analysis even confirmed the correctness of his idea.

***Botterill – Andersson***

Hastings 1978/79



Black's position is difficult. The first thing to be done is to take measures against the threat of 16.b5 (after 16...ab 17.Bxb5, White's pawn goes on to a6).

**15...Ra8-a7!**

Now on 16.b5?!, there is 16...Rfa8!! and the a5-pawn becomes a weakness.

**16.Qe2-e3 Qf6-e7 17.Ra1-a2**

White is still thinking of playing b4-b5, but he should have switched to play on the c-file by 17.Rac1, intending Bb3. At the same time, he would prevent the break c7-c5, threaten his opponent with d4-d5, and take away the c6-square from the enemy bishop. On the other hand, it does not appear that he would have had any significant advantage. Here's a sample line: 17...Rfa8! 18.Bb3 Nf6 19.Ba4 d5! 20.e5 Ne4 21.Rb1 Nxd2 22.Nxd2 Bc8 23.Nb3 Bd7. In the final position,

Black retains counterchances thanks to the possibility of attacking the b4-pawn along the b-file.

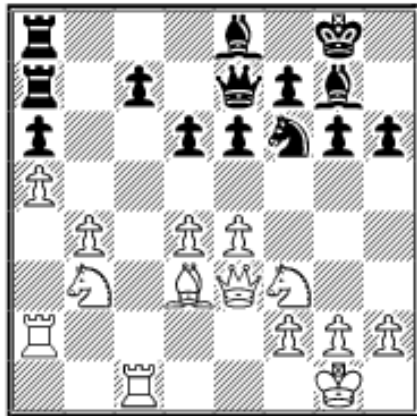
### 17...Rf8-a8!!

This is, of course, only a temporary spot for the rook. By defending his other rook, Andersson frees the eighth rank for maneuvers by his other pieces, and prepares for c7-c5. For example, 18.Rc1 c5 19.dc?! bc 20.Bb3 cb 21.Rc7 Qd6 22.Rac2 Bc3. Alternatively, White could retain the upper hand here, by playing simply 19.bc dc 20.Be2 cd 21.Nxd4, so it's unclear whether he should be in such a hurry to play this break.

### 18.Nd2-b3?!

This parries the idea c7-c5, but grants Black the possibility of carrying out a favorable regrouping of forces.

### 18...Nd7-f6 19.Bc4-d3 Bb7-c6! 20.Rf1-c1 Bc6-e8



Black's bishop now controls the b5-square, but, more importantly, it isn't underfoot of its own rooks, which are now ready to attack White's only weakness – the b4-pawn – along the b-file. Plus the c7-pawn is safely defended by its heavy pieces along the rank.

### 21.h2-h3 Ra7-b7 22.Qe3-e1 Qe7-d8

Threatening 23...Qb8.

### 23.Nb3-a1 Bg7-f8!

Andersson maneuvers his pieces excellently along the seventh and eighth ranks. He is ready to meet White's intended Nc2 with the break c7-c5.

### 24.Na1-c2 c7-c5

The "taut trampoline" now releases. In pursuit of a vanishing initiative, Botterill sacrifices a pawn, but obtains no real compensation for it.

### 25.d4-d5?

White could have retained rough equality by 25.bc dc 26.e5 Nd5.

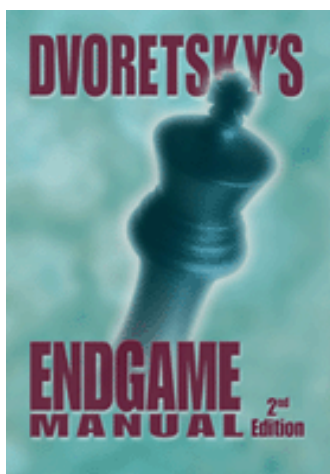
25...e6xd5 26.e4xd5 Nf6xd5 27.b4xc5 Rb7-e7 28.Qe1-d2 d6xc5 29.Bd3-c4 Nd5-c7 30.Qd2xd8 Ra8xd8 31.Nc2-e3 Kg8-g7 and Black realized his extra pawn.



C O L U M N I S T S

## *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Study Composing Tourney

My book of exercises, which I constantly use for lessons with my students, and as source material for my books and articles, contains over a thousand selected studies. I'd like to say a few words about my criteria for selecting studies – the system of preferences of somebody who is both a practical player and trainer. On the whole, since “there's no arguing with taste,” my tastes are my own, and might well be different from those of other players and trainers, to say nothing of professional study composers. But they're still worth discussing – because now, I am inviting chess composers to take part in a tournament of composition, of “Studies for Practical Players,” which I shall judge, together with the noted study composer Oleg Pervakov. And although Pervakov will undoubtedly not pass over any gifted composition that fails to fit exactly within the criteria laid down in this article – still, my opinion will probably have some influence on the process of awarding the prizes.

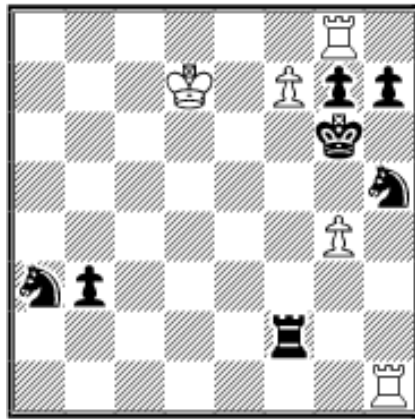
The total prize fund for the *Studies for Practical Players Tourney* is \$1,500 (U.S.). The prize distribution is: 1st Prize – \$500; 2nd Prize – \$300; 3rd Prize – \$200; 4th Prize – \$100; 5th Prize – \$50. There will also be Special Prizes totaling \$350 and other prizes of my books in your choice of three languages – Russian, English or German. Send two copies of your original studies before August 1, 2007 to: Russia, 121471, Moscow, ul. Ryabinovaya, 4-63, Pervakov O.V., or via e-mail: oper60@inbox.ru. The results of the competition will be published on December 1, 2007.

### “Restricted Genre”

Any chessplayer will get tremendous pleasure from short studies that contain a clear and unusual idea. Here are a few examples.

**A. Votava, 1960**





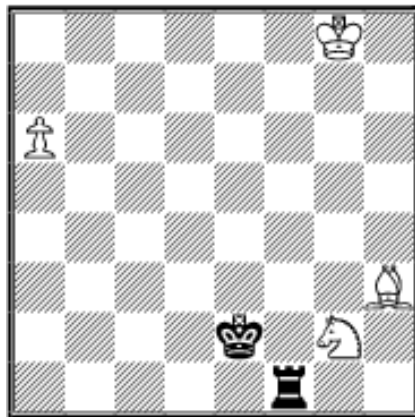
The first few moves are obvious.

**1 f8Q! Rxf8 2 gh+ Kf7**

But here, instead of the obvious 3 Rxf8+ Kxf8 4 Rf1+ Kg8 5 h6 (the endgame after 5 Ke7 h6 is drawish) 5...gh 6 Ke7, allowing Black to save himself by 6...h5! 7 Rg1+ Kh8 8 Kf7 h6, there comes an unbelievable quiet move, whose equal I cannot remember ever seeing.

**3 Rh8!! Rxh8**, and only now **4 Rf1+ Kg8 5 h6! gh 6 Ke7**, with mate to follow.

**I. Schultz, 1941**



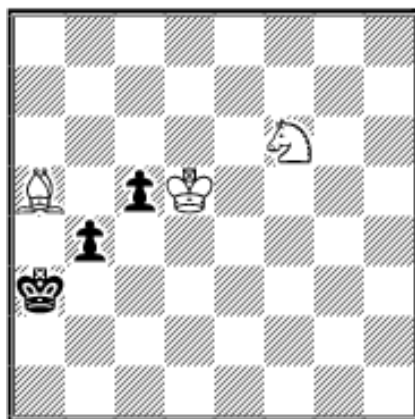
White's not going to win by "normal" means, giving Black the time to attack the a-pawn with rook and king. For example: 1 Bc8 Kd3 2 Bb7 Ra1 3 Nf4+ Kc4, or 1 Bd7 Ra1 2 Bb5+ Kf3 3 Nh4+ Ke4, or 1 Nh4 Ra1 2 Bc8 Kd3 3 Nf5 Kc4.

The solution is a surprising knight sacrifice.

**1 Nf4+!! Rxf4 2 Bd7!**

What is so delightful here is not so much White's play, as the paradox of the resulting position. The rook has two whole tempi to get to either the a-file or the 8th-rank; yet, on a wide-open board, he is unable to do so: all paths are closed: 2...Rf3 3 Bg4; 2...Rf1 Bb5+; 3...Rf6 3 a7 Ra6 4 Bb5+.

**R. Réti, 1922**



These kinds of studies are very useful for players, because they develop the all-important habit of paying extra-close attention to the opponent's ideas.

Stopping the pawns appears simple – in fact, it would appear that it can be done in many ways. For example: 1 Kc4 b3 2 Nd5 b2 3 Nc3. But here, White faces an unpleasant surprise: 3...b1Q!! 4 Nxb1+ Ka4, and retreating the bishop allows stalemate.

How about 1 Ne4 b3 2 Nc3, when 2...b2? loses to 3 Ke4!. Black, however, is rescued by 2...Kb2!, with 3...Kc2 to follow.

The only move-order to avoid all the clever traps laid by Black is: **1 Ke4!! b3 2 Nd5 b2 (2...Kb2 3 Kd3!) 3 Nc3 Kb3 4 Kd3.**

I'm not sure that studies similar to these could win a modern composition tourney; but in our tournament, they would probably win one of the special prizes.

### Endgame Studies

In their day, many studies helped to develop the theory of endgames. Today, this is practically impossible – if what you have in mind is those areas of theory that would be of interest and use to practical players.

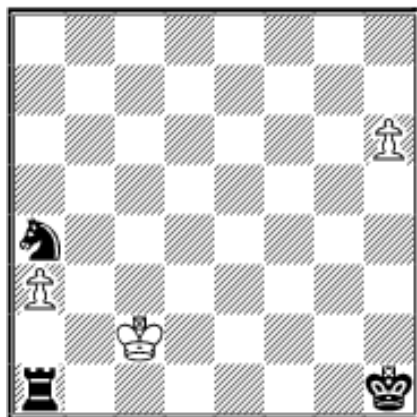
Let's suppose that research comes to a definite conclusion about the case where you have two minor pieces against a rook and a piece, or against three minor pieces – so what? I have never faced such a situation in all my years of playing, and neither have the vast majority of chessplayers. And even if it should arise once or twice in your lifetime, that's still no reason to immerse yourself in the theory – which is, no doubt, quite complex – after all, time is short, and there's much to be learned.

It would be apropos to mention here that it is this lack of practical benefit that leaves me largely uninterested in pawnless endgames, or let's say, studies based on various nuances of Troitzky's "two-knights-vs.-pawn" position.

But to show a player important aspects of contemporary endgame theory in a clear form, to help him get a better grasp on them – this is something study composers can still do today. And most often, the goal is achieved by paradoxical means: the unexpected exception to a well-known rule.

I received one of my strongest impressions of recent years from the following study:

**H. Van der Heijden, 2001**



As in the Votava study, the first few moves are obvious enough.

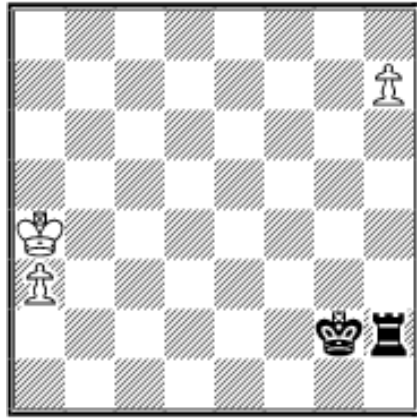
**1 h7 Ra2+ 2 Kb3 Rh2 3 Kxa4 Kg2!**

Composers are wont to make the play as lengthy as possible. In my notebook, I sometimes just throw out such introductions, and set only the critical position up for solving. Similarly, I remember that a famous study by the Sarychev brothers also had a few introductory moves; but nobody even

remembers what they were anymore.

I have already laid out my discovery of Van der Heijden's study in some detail in

a previous [column](#). I repeat my discussion here, with minimal adjustments.



The first move is doubtless 4 Kb5. It's easy to see that 4...Rxh7? 5 a4 leads to a problem-free draw. The immediate king march to the queenside is far more dangerous.

4...Kf3 5 a4 Ke4 6 a5 Kd5, and 7 a6 loses to 7...Rb2+! 8 Ka5 (8 Ka4 Kc4!) 8...Kc5! 9 Ka4 Rh2 (9...Rb8 would be simpler still) 10 a7 Kb6!. And on 7 Kb6, Black wins by 7...Kc4! (an important endgame technique: "outflanking"!)

8 a6 Rh6+ 9 Ka5 Rxh7 10 Kb6 Rh6+ 11 Kb7 (11 Ka5 Kc5) 11...Kb5 12 a7 Rh7+ 13 Kb8 Kb6 14 a8N+ Kc6.

How can White's play be strengthened? Clearly, we must utilize the well-known endgame technique: "shoulder block." Instead of 6 a5, White can play 6 Kc5!?, and Black's king is deprived of the d5-square.

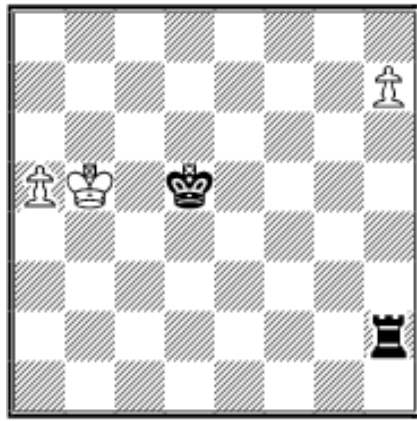
It's a tempting conclusion – but alas, it's refuted. Black replies 6...Rh5+! 7 Kb6 Kd5 8 a5 Kc4! (outflanked again) 9 a6 Rh6+ – a position we have seen already. Nor does 6 Kc6 Kd4 7 a5 Kc4 8 a6 Rh6+ 9 Kb7 Kb5 help White.

Well then, that means the starting position is a loss; for certainly we must have checked all the possibilities?

As it turns out, we have checked only the natural possibilities. We have acted in accordance with the usual rules in such positions: advance the king as quickly as possible, while shoulder-blocking the opposing king. As it happens, in this concrete situation, we have to ignore both those rules.

The key to this puzzle is the paradoxical conclusion, that with the kings at b5 and d5, the pawn at a5, and the rook at h2, the position is one of mutual zugzwang. And in order not to fall into zugzwang, White must lose a tempo at the very outset:

**4 Kb4!! Kf3** (4...Rxh7 5 a4) **5 a4 Ke4 6 a5!** (under no circumstances the "shoulder block": 6 Kc5? Rh5+!) **6...Kd5 7 Kb5**



White to move loses as we have already seen: 8 a6 Rb2+! or 8 Kb6 Kc4!. But here, it's Black's move, and what can he do?

The a6-square is free, so he gets nothing out of **7...Rb2+ 8 Ka6 Rb8 9 Ka7 Rh8 10 Kb6!** (but here, the "shoulder block" is strictly necessary) **10...Kd6 11 a6 Rb8+ 12 Ka7 Kc7 13 h8Q Rxh8** – stalemate. This is the main line of the study.

If 7...Kd6, then 8 Kb6 (outflanking via c4 is no longer possible) 8...Kd7 9 Kb7 Kd8 10 a6 Rxh7+ 11 Kb8! Rh1 12 a7 Rb1+ 13 Ka8.

It's amazing that Black has no waiting move with the rook here: 7...Rh1 8 a6 Rb1+ 9 Ka5 Kc5?? fails to 10 h8Q, when the a1-square is covered. And the drawback to 7...Rh3 is revealed after 8 a6 Rb3+ 9 Ka4! (here Black doesn't have 9...Kc4) 9...Rb8 10 a7 Ra8 11 Kb5 Kd6 12 Kb6 Rh8 13 Kb7. And finally, 7...Rxh7 leads to a drawn resolution often encountered in practice: 8 a6 Kd6 9 Kb6 Rh1 10 Kb7! (but not 10 a7? Rb1+ 11 Ka6 Kc7 12 a8N+ Kc6 13 Ka7 Rb2, and the knight is lost) 10...Rb1+ 11 Kc8! (the "shoulder block") 11...Ra1 12 Kb7 Kd7 13 a7 Rb1+ 14 Ka8!.

The paradoxical nature of this position is certainly not in White's need to lose a tempo in order to avoid falling into zugzwang himself, while forcing Black into it – we have seen this endgame technique often enough. What's amazing is that zugzwang is even possible in an endgame with this type of material. I know of no other examples – this one stands alone. In rook vs. pawn endgames, it always boils down to just one question: who wins the race; who will achieve his goal first. Well, it's one more illustration of the saying: "never-say-never" (or perhaps, as in this case, "always") – there are no absolute maxims in chess!

Van der Heijden's study widens the chessplayer's horizon considerably, helping him remember several standard techniques for playing the "rook vs. pawns" endgame.

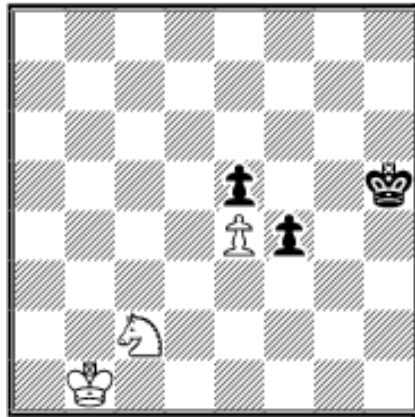
Here, we should touch on one delicate question. I am sure that this unique endgame position was discovered with the help of Thompson's famous computer database. Is this a "flaw," diminishing the composer's achievement?

Yes, the computer database is an instrument, available to anyone nowadays. Out of it, no doubt, we could probably extract yet more unique positions – there are some chess composers who do so regularly. The standard for evaluation here should be the result achieved. Thus: miracles, based upon complex computer analysis rather than on their content of sharp ideas, are probably of interest only to certain aesthetes.

Were Van der Heijden's position to arise in practical play, I'm sure that not even a world champion could find the way to safety. He wouldn't have given it a

thought – 4 Kb5? would have been played automatically. At the same time, the cold logic of the solution is something even a chessplayer of moderate qualifications would be quite capable of.

### D. Blundell, 1995

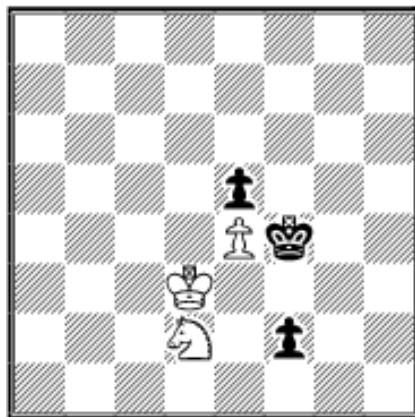


Of course, the fantastic first move of this study, **1 Na1!!**, is its crown jewel. Instead of sending his king, or at least his knight, after the kingside pawns, White marches his piece in the diametrically opposite direction.

In my [Endgame Manual](#), I laid out a series of conclusions that could lead one to this solution.

First, we examine White's most natural plan – approaching the pawns with his king.

1 Kc1? Kg4 2 Kd2 f3 3 Ne3+ (3 Ke3 f2! 4 Kxf2 Kf4) 3...Kf4 4 Kd3 f2 5 Nf1 Kf3 6 Nd2+ Kf4!



This is the mutual zugzwang position that forms the basis of this endgame. Black to move loses: 7...Kg3 8 Ke2. But it is White's move, and on 7 Ke2, there follows 7...f1Q+! 8 Kxf1 Ke3 9 Ke1 Kd3 10 Kd1 Ke3 11 Kc2 Kd4, with a draw.

Let's try 1 Na3? f3 2 Nc4. Now the natural 2...Kg4? loses: 3 Kc2 Kg3 4 Kc3! (zugzwang) 4...Kg4 (4...f2 5 Nd2 Kf4 6 Kd3; 4...Kf4 5 Kd3 f2 6 Nd2) 5 Nxe5+! Kf4 6 Kd4.

White succeeded only because, with the king at c3, the e5-pawn was taken with check. This can be avoided by playing 2...Kg5(h4)!! 3 Kc2 Kg4! 4 Kc3!? Kg3! (there's also 4...Kg5!?!; for example, 5 Kd2!? f2 6 Ne3 Kf4 7 Kd3 Kg3! 8 Nf1+ Kf3! 9 Nd2+ Kf4). Now we have yet another mutual zugzwang position – this one with White to move. On 5 Nd2, there follows 5...Kf4 6 Kd3 f2 (the main zugzwang); the same thing happens after 5 Kd2 f2 6 Ke2 Kf4 7 Nd2 (7 Nd6 Kg3) 7...f1Q+!, or 5 Kd3 f2 6 Nd2 Kf4!.

By the way, the variation just examined leads us to an amazing conclusion: both sides must maneuver so as to avoid being the first one to approach. As soon as White plays either Nd2 or Kd3, he falls into zugzwang; and if Black plays f2 or Kf4 too soon, the zugzwang position occurs with him to move. So we are now dealing with “mined squares” (a concept we studied in the chapter devoted to pawn endgames in my [Manual](#)). However, this is the only example I know of in which there are squares that are mined for four pieces, instead of the usual two.

And now, for the solution. White has to act similarly to the last variation, but bring his knight, not to c4, but to b3, in order to leave the c4-square free for the king.

**1 Na1!! f3 2 Nb3 Kg4 3 Kc2 Kg3 4 Kc3! Kg4 5 Kc4!**

This is the point! Black can't wait any longer: on 5...Kg3 6 Kd5 f2 7 Nd2 Kf4 8 Nf1 decides. He must step on the mined square first, which of course leads to zugzwang.

**5...Kf4 6 Kd3!** (6 Kd5? Ke3; 6 Nd2? Ke3) **6...f2 7 Nd2** (zugzwang) **7...Kg3 8 Ke2** (8 Kc4 Kf4 9 Kd5? is a mistake, in view of 9...Ke3 10 Nf1+ Kf4) **8...Kg2 9 Nf1 Kg1 10 Ne3.**

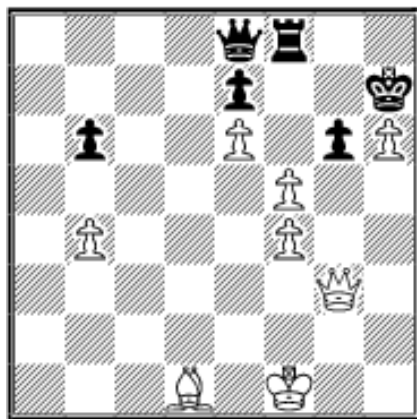
Blundell's study is pretty complex. Nevertheless, in my view, its complexity does not go beyond the capabilities of a strong player. Still, without its brilliant introduction, this study would probably have been received as something purely analytical, and would not have made such a strong impression.

In some articles and books devoted to composition, one may find the assertion that practical players "love" complex endgame analysis, and therefore analytical studies are aimed directly at them. Nothing of the sort! Excessive complexity or heaped-up analytical details only frighten people off, and to a great degree lessen the aesthetic impression of a study. Chessplayers find it interesting to solve studies similar to something they would be solving in a practical game, sometimes a little more complex, and desirably more beautiful.

### A Difficult Choice

The difficulty in the examples we have looked at so far consisted in finding the unusual, well-hidden basic idea. Another type of study is no less important for the practical player: choosing the only correct continuation, when you have two or more tempting lines.

**O. Pervakov, 1997**



I will say straightaway that such a position is fun to solve, because everything in it is natural. Just as in a practical game, the white king is in the lower half of the board, with the black king in the upper; the pawn structure and material count are both absolutely normal. White has been attacking the castled king's position, sacrificed the exchange, and must now show that he can get more out of his attack than just equality.

On 1 Bc2? Kxh6 2 fg Kg7 3 Qc3+ Rf6, Black has the pawns securely blockaded, and the queen cannot break in – so chances would be roughly even.

But 1 fg+ Qxg6 (1...Kxh6 2 Qh4+ is clearly no good) 2 Bc2! looks tempting, even considering the possible counterstroke 2...Rxf4+! – after all, the rook need not be taken.

If this is really the only way forward, a practical player would choose it without immersing himself in calculation (let me repeat: there's no point in solving problems during training that we would not bother thinking about in a practical game). Nevertheless, before making our move, we should take a close look at the position, lest we overlook anything significant. This approach reveals one of the most important principles of calculating variations and coming to a decision: the “candidate-moves” principle.

We note the interesting tactical stroke 1 Ba4. The bishop is taboo, and yet Black has the defense 1...b5, and 2 Bxb5? is not possible, as now the bishop is taken with check. On the other hand, if we put the bishop back on c2 or play 2 fg+, we obtain familiar positions, but with Black's pawn on b5. For the moment, it's unclear whether the position of the queenside pawns has any significance – after all, the major events are going to develop on the opposite side of the board. Nevertheless, White has a choice, which means that we can't make that move yet: first, we must calculate the variations, keeping in mind that we can have this pawn on either of two squares, if we so desire.

**1 Ba4!! b5 2 fg+ Qxg6!**

2...Kxh6 is quite bad: 3 Qh4+ Kg7 4 Qh7+ Kf6 5 g7 Rg8 6 Bc2 Rxd7 7 Qf5 mate.

The variation 2...Kg8 3 g7! Rxf4+ 4 Qxf4 b5 is more complicated. Here, the position of Black's pawn on b5 works against us, but it's not enough to refute 1 Ba4, since White still wins, though just barely: 5 Qf5! a3 6 h7+ Kxg7 7 Qf7+ Qxf7+ 8 ef.

**2 Bc2! Rxf4+! 4 Kg1!**

The only way to keep playing for the win: 4 Kg2?? Qxc2+; 4 Ke1? Re4+; 4 Qxf4? Qxc2 5 Qf7+ Kxh6.

**4...Rf6! 5 Qg5!**

White parries the threatened 5...Kxh6. If now 5...Kh8, then 6 Qxg6!.

**5...Rxe6! 6 Kf1!**

Time to get the king off the g-file, or else Black's rook will use the 6th-rank for continuous harrying of the bishop. Black can only defend against the threatened 7 Bxg6+ by pursuing the enemy king.

**6...Rf6+ 7 Ke1 Re6+ 8 Kd1 (8 Kd2? Re2+!) 8...Rd6+ 9 Kc1! Rc6! 10 Qc5!!**

And here, as it turns out, is why White had to induce b6-b5 – so that he could occupy c5 with his queen! After 10...Kxh6 11 Bxg6 Rxc5+ 12 bc Kxg6 13 c6, White's pawn queens.

Not a simple calculation; still, one that should be quite feasible, considering the small number of side-variations diverting our attention from the main track.

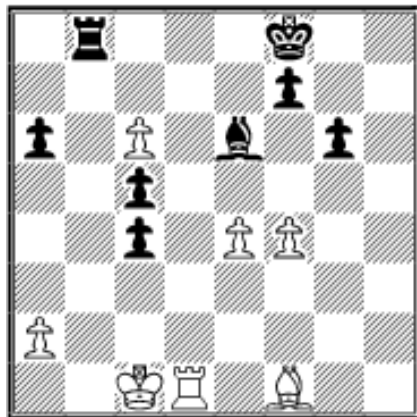
### Playing Over Studies

Of what use to a trainer are studies in which it may be pointless (and sometimes impossible) to calculate the variations through to the end? By insisting on complete analysis, the trainer is in fact instilling in his student an irrational decision-making process that will inevitably result in fierce time-scrambles, which will in turn cost him valuable points.

Such studies should not be solved, but played through with limited thinking time. Let the student resolve the problems one after another as they arise, making White's moves one after another, and obtaining Black's replies from the trainer or a friend who knows the solution (or even the text of the book or article if necessary).

I have regularly employed this training method, and have had practical experience of its enormous effectiveness (to a great degree because of its close similarity to the realities of the tournament struggle). I will show you a few studies that are good for this kind of exercise.

### V. Smyslov, 1938



Again, the naturalness of the starting position is pleasant to the eye. Clearly, White seeks the advantage here, pinning his hopes on the passed pawn at c6. But nothing comes of the straightforward 1 c7 Rc8 2 Rd8+ Ke7; nor does 1 Bxc4 Bxc4 2 c7 Re8 3 f5 (3 Rd8 Be6) 3...a5!? work.

After casting about for a bit, we find the only way to make things difficult for Black.

**1 f5! gf 2 Bh3**

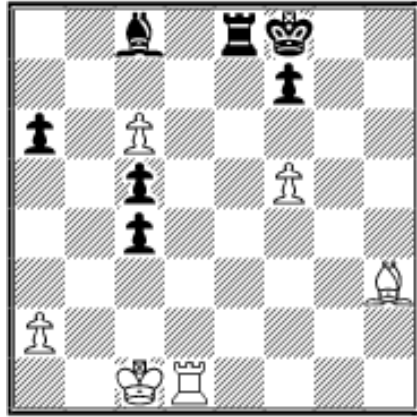
Now, taking on e4 is impossible: White trades bishops, followed by c6-c7. Nor can he continue 2...Rc8 because of 3 ef. Not a bad result for White – for lack of anything better, he should continue thus, without making it harder for himself by further analysis.

### 2...Re8

Black prepares to retreat the bishop to c8. We establish that 3 c7? Bc8 4 Bxf5 Ke7! or 4 ef f6! gives White nothing, while the immediate capture on f5 retains more options that would be difficult for Black to face.



### 3 ef Bc8



Now's the time to stop and think. Once again, we see that after 4 c7? f6!, Black defends successfully. But there are two gambit continuations, 4 f6!? and 4 Rd7!?, that require study. Here, accurate calculation is a must – either to find a sure refutation of one of them, while assuring ourselves that the other retains winning chances (the “exclusionary method,” which helped us choose the first moves); or else, having selected the right continuation, to calculate it through to a win.

Smyslov did not examine 4 Rd7 in his commentary, although casting doubt on this move is no easy task.

4...Bd7? is hopeless: after 5 cd Rd8 6 f6 Kg8 7 Bf5!. Black's pieces are locked down on the 8th-rank, and White's king can advance unhindered.

4...Kg7? has an interesting refutation. White continues 6 c7! Re1+ (5...Bxd7 6 f6+ Kxf6 7 Bxd7) 6 Kd2 Rh1 7 Bg4! (7 Rd8? is a mistake: 7...c3+ 8 Kc2 Rh2+, and the king cannot go to the 3rd-rank; 7 f6+? also leads to a draw after 7...Kg6! 8 Bg4 Rh4 9 Rd8 Bxg4 10 Rg8+ Kxf6 11 Rxg4 Rh8 =) 7...Rg1 (7...Rh4 8 Rd8) 8 f6+! (8 Rd8!? would also be strong) 8...Kxf6 (8...Kg6 9 Rd8 Bxg4 10 Rg8+ Kxf6 11 Rxg4) 9 Rxf7+ Kxf7 10 Bxc8, and wins.

4...f6?! 5 Rc7 a5 6 a4 grants White a sizable advantage. This would probably not be a satisfactory conclusion for the composer, who requires a more definite assessment; but for the practical player, sometimes this is sufficient grounds for choosing a variation.

The only line to give Black a safe draw is 4...Re3! 5 Rc7 (5 f6? fails to 5...Ke8!) 5...Rxb3 6 Rxc8+ Ke7.

### 4 f6!! Bxh3 5 c7 a5

If 5...Bf5, then 6 Rd8 c3 7 Kd1 (or 7 a4 a5 8 Kd1) 7...a5 8 a4! c2+ 9 Kc1! c4 10 Kd2, when Black falls into zugzwang. This kind of zugzwang was White's basic goal in sacrificing the bishop. But there's still some work to be done in order to reach the zugzwang position with Black to move.

### 6 Rd8

White has to restrict the mobility of the enemy pieces: 6 Kb2? is a mistake, because of 6...Re2+ followed by 7...Kg8. And 6 a4? is also inaccurate: 6...Kg8 7 Rd8 Rf8 (or 7...Kf8) 8 Kc2 Bg4 9 Kc3 Be6, and it's White who falls into zugzwang.

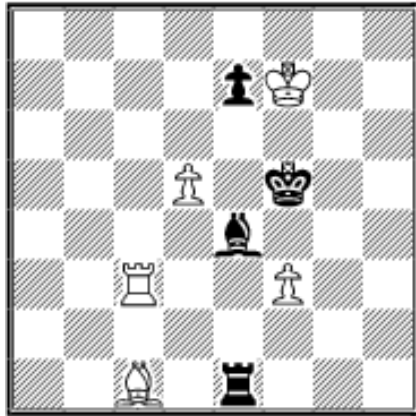
**6...a4 7 Kb2!**

Not 7 Kc2? a3.

**7...Be6** (7...Bf5 8 Kc3 Be6 9 a3) **8 Kc2! Bf5+** (8...a3 9 Kc3) **9 Kc3 Be6 10 a3**

The zugzwang will cost Black his pawns, after which the invasion of White's king is decisive.

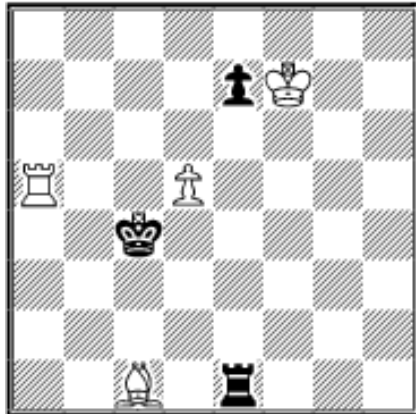
**Y. Bazlov, 2003**



This looks like a normal endgame. White will find it easy to win material, but will have a much harder time holding onto it. Already on the first move, he must make an important choice. White can win a piece, not only by just taking the bishop, but also by 1 Rc5, with its threat of 2 d6+. White can hardly expect to calculate the correct line to the end; it's more likely that one of the continuations can be refuted in the process of testing it.

Let's start by capturing the bishop.

1 fe+ Kxe4 2 Rc5 (2 Ke6 Kd4+ 3 Re3 Rxc1 is of no use to White) 2...Kd4 3 Ra5 Kc4 (of course not 3...Rxc1? 4 Kxe7)



White can ward off the threatened 4...Re5, either by 4 Bf4 or by 4 Bb2. But in either case, any attempt to make progress will cost White the d5-pawn – which means that it's a positional draw!

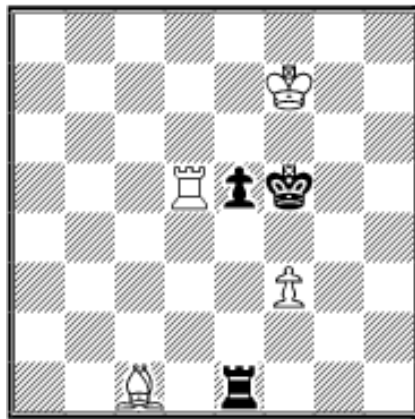
a) 4 Bb2 Re2 5 Bg7 Re1 6 Bf6!? Re2! 7 Bxe7 Re5.

b) 4 Bf4 Re4 5 Bc7 Re1 6 Bh2 Re2 7 Bg1 Re5 8 Rc5+ Kb4 9 Ke8 Re1 10 Bf2 Re2 11 Rc7 Re5.

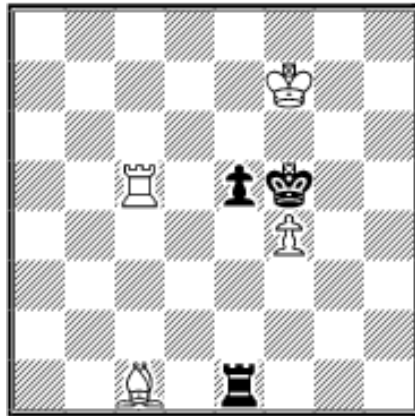
**1 Rc5!! Bxd5+!**

The only defense to the killing threat of 2 d6+.

**2 Rxd5+ e5**

**3 Bd2!**

3 Rc5?, which appears equivalent at first sight, allows Black to save himself by 3...Re3!! 4 f4 (4 Bxe3 is stalemate) 4...Re1, when White's in zugzwang.

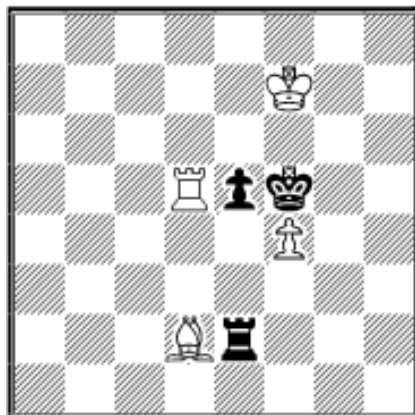


5 Ke7 Rxc1! 6 Rxc1 ef 7 Rf1 Ke5! leads to the mutual-zugzwang position known to us from the famous study by Richard Réti (1928) – Black's king “shoulder-blocks” the white king, preventing the latter from outflanking him and reaching the pawn: 8 Kf7 (8 Kd7 Ke4 9 Ke6 f3) 8...Kf5! 9 Kg7 Kg5!. And after 5 Bd2 Re2, White achieves nothing after either 6 Rd5 Rxd2! 7 Rxd2 ef 8 Rf2 (here, it's Black to move, but that doesn't mean anything, with the rook on f2 so close to the king) 8...Ke4 9 Kg6 f3 10 Kg5 Ke3, or 6 Ke7

Rxd2 7 fe Ra2! 8 e6+ Kg6. The position is drawn, since Black's rook controls the “long side,” and stands ready to deliver flank checks.

The analysis of this variation was based upon several endgame ideas, none of them exceptional, but basic and important to every chessplayer. Thus, here we are training not only calculation, but also our retention of endgame theory.

Let's look at one more unsuccessful attempt: 3 Bh6?. Black replies 3...Ra1!: the rook occupies the “long side,” allowing him to give numerous checks; it's a good thing to have in a rook endgame. After 4 f4 Ra7+ 5 Ke8 Ra8+ 6 Kd7 Ra7+ 7 Kd8 Ra8+ 8 Kc7, the simplest is 8...Kg6 9 fe Kxh6, although 8...Ra7+ 9 Kb6 Re7 10 Kc5 Re8 is possible, too.

**3...Re3!! (3...Re2 4 Rd6 is just bad) 4 f4 Re2**

Threatening 5...Rxd2.

**5 Bc1!**

With the king at f7, 5 Ra5? fails to 5...Rxd2 6 fe Rd7+.

**5...Re1 6 Rc5**

Now we have reached the same position as after 3 Rc5?, but with Black to move, which

means that he is the one to fall into zugzwang.

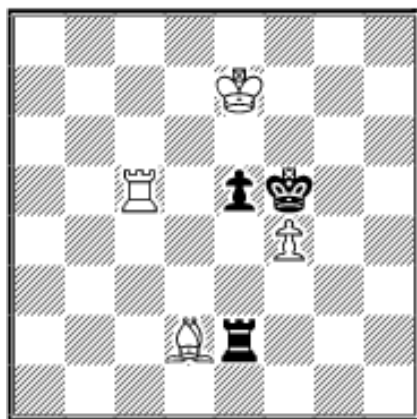
### 6...Re4

After 6...Rxc1 7 Rxc1 ef 8 Rf1, we have reached Réti's position with Black to move, and he has to give way before the white king: 8...Ke4 9 Kg6(f6) or 8...Kg4 9 Ke6(f6).

### 7 Ke7! Re1 8 Bd2!

8 Kd6? would be a mistake: 8...Rd1+ 9 Kc6 (9 Ke7 Rxc1! 10 Rxc1 ef 11 Rf1 Ke5!, reaching the Réti zugzwang position with White to move) 9...Re1 10 Bd2 (10 Kb5 Ke6) 10...Re2 11 Rd5 Ke6!.

### 8...Re2!



### 9 Ra5!!

Of course not 9 Rd5? Rxd2!=. The rook must take the a-file to prevent the enemy rook from reaching the long side (9 Rb5? Rxd2 10 fe Ra2! 11 e6+ Kg6, and draws).

### 9...Rxd2

9...Re4 10 Rd5 Re2 11 Kd6 is hopeless, too.

### 10 fe Rb2 11 e6+

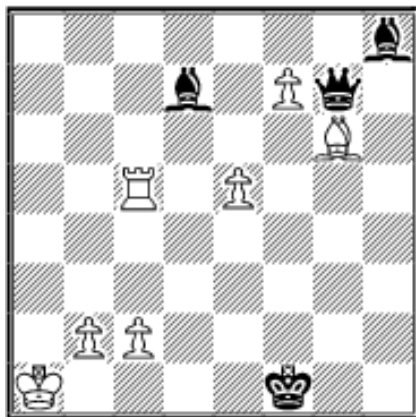
On the b-file, Black's rook is not far enough away from the e-pawn (there must be at least three files between them for a flank attack to succeed), so White wins.

This study might be a bit too complex; three grandmasters have played White against me, and each of them erred on either the first or third move. But despite this, it has indisputable aesthetic and instructional value.

### Both Sides Play

I have a very high regard for compositions in which both sides must spend many moves demonstrating uncommon resourcefulness and accuracy. Such studies may be offered to be played out between two players, with equal chances for both. Well, to be completely accurate: nearly equal, since if both sides play perfectly it is always White who achieves the goal. On the other hand, if the battle goes on long enough, with both sides having to resolve various tasks (at a tournament time-limit), then the chances become practically equal.

**E. Somov-Nasimovich, 1939**



In writing this article, I made use of van der Heijden's database of studies, and found three versions of this one. I had formerly known and used only one of them, in which the play was one move shorter (the starting position being the one we reach here after the first move).

It has already been mentioned that, when presenting studies for solving, it's sometimes a good idea for the trainer to throw out the introductory moves, if they don't add any

ideas to the composition. Matters stand differently with studies to be played out: it can even be a good idea for the player to start out calculating some technical variations (as long as they're not overly complex) – it serves to disguise the moment when the combination needs to be set off.

### 1 Rc7!

1 Rd5? would lose to 1...Be6; for example, 2 Rd8 Bxf7 3 Bxf7 Qxe5!, or 2 Rd6 Bf7 3 Rf6+ Qxf6 4 ef Bxg6.

### 1...Be6!

Black has no real winning chances with 1...Qf8 2 Rxd7 Bxe5 3 Rd1+ Kf2 4 c3, or 3...Ke2 4 Bh5+ Ke3 5 c3. The strong pawn at f7 limits the activity of Black's pieces, preventing them from capitalizing on his material advantage.

The same assessment holds true after 1...Qh6 2 Rxd7 Bg7, when White has either 3 Bd3+ or 3 Rd6 Kf2 4 Be4, threatening 5 Rf6+.

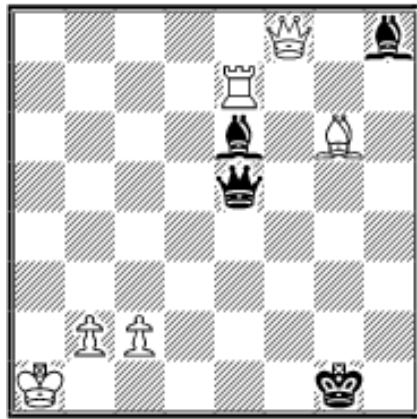
### 2 Re7

On 2 c3? Qh6, White loses the e5-pawn with a hopeless position: 3 Bb1 Bxe5 4 Re7 Bg7.

But now, the bishop is *en prise*; the normal response 2...Bd5 allows White to save himself by 3 Re8!. The problem is that after 3...Bxf7 4 Bxf7 Qxf7 5 Rxh8, the rook cannot be prevented from returning to the third rank (via a8 or h3), when White constructs the impenetrable fortress with rook and pawn on the second rank (one pawn is enough) versus queen, which has been known since the time of Philidor. Little is changed by 3...Ke2 4 b3! (of course not 4 f8Q?? Qa7+) 4...Bxf7 5 Bxf7 Qxf7 6 Rxh8 Qg7 7 Rh3 Qxe5+ 8 Kb1.

Thus, Black changes gears, from the attempt to exploit his advantage in material to a combinative attack against the enemy king.

### 2...Qxe5! 3 f8Q+ Kg1!



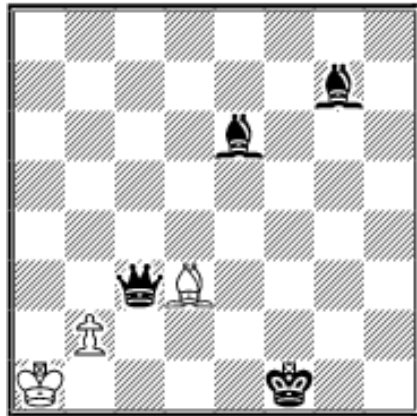
It is on precisely this square that the king will find his best shelter from checks.

Black threatens mate, either at b2 or at e1. So White has no choice.

**4 c3 Qe1+ 5 Bb1 Qxc3!**

The queen is taboo, and it might seem that it's time for White to resign. But now come the sacrificial fireworks.

**6 Rg7+!! Bxg7 7 Qf1+!! Kxf1 8 Bd3+!**



Taking the bishop is stalemate, and otherwise White takes on c3. But this engrossing battle is not yet over.

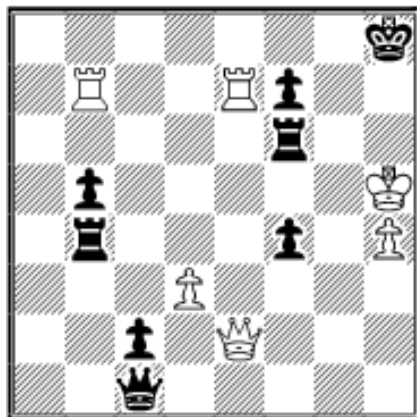
**8...Ke1! 9 bc Kd2**

The bishop is attacked, and Black also threatens 10...Kc1, forcing mate. White needs to make one more effort in order to break up this mating net.

**10 Bc2! Kc1! (10...Kxc2 is stalemate) 11**

**Bb3!**, and taking the bishop is stalemate, while after 11...Bxc3+ 12 Ka2 the bishop is protected, and the game is drawn.

**N. Rjabinin, 2003**

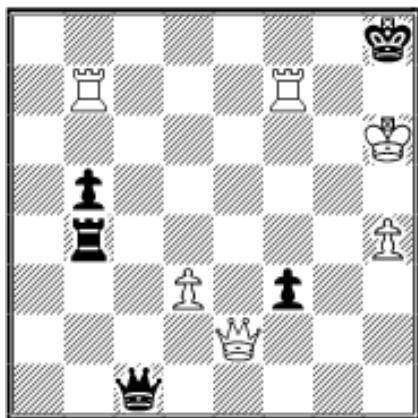


**1 Rxf7**

It's easy to see that White has nothing better. 1 Qe5? lets Black mate: 1...Qd1+ 2 Kg5 Qg1+ 3 Kxf6 Qg6 mate. The desperate 1 Re8+? Kh7 2 Rh8+ Kxh8 3 Qe8+ is pointless, because the checks end almost at once: 3...Kg7 4 Rxf7+ Rxf7 5 Qe5+ Kh7. But now, Black must find a combination. Well, let him play his sacrifice, and we shall try to find the weak spot in his plan.

**1...Rh6+! 2 Kxh6 f3+ 3 Kh5 Qh6+!!**

Black can't get off with just one more rook: 3...Rxh4+? 4 Kxh4 Qh6+ 5 Kg4, and he loses. But why does he give up his queen (to be exact: not a queen, but his powerful passed pawn at c2)?

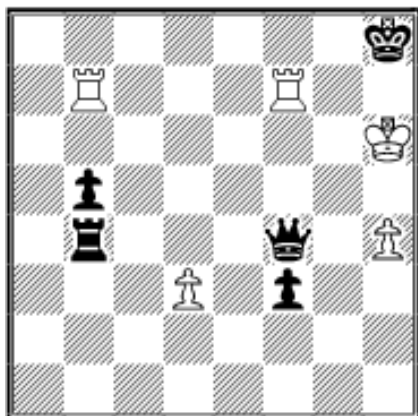
**4 Kxh6 c1Q+**

The whole point is that, after 4 Kh5?, the queen obtains a new checking possibility: 5...Qc5+ 6 Kg6 Rg4+ (here the rook protects the king against the 8th-rank mating threat) 7 Kf6 fe, and Black wins. We find the only defense: to deflect the enemy queen from the c-file.

**5 Qd2!! Qxd2+ 6 Kh5**

Now Black could give perpetual check by 6...Rxh4+ 7 Kxh4 Qh2+ 8 Kg4 Qg2+ 9 Kh4,

but he has a right to try to win.

**6...Qf4!**

From here, the queen covers the b8- and f8-squares, on which White had intended to give checkmate.

It's easy to establish that the only chance of resistance lies in trading on f4, followed by Kg6. But note that the principle of identifying all candidate-moves, which we brought up while examining the Pervakov study, helps us find an additional resource: the pawn sacrifice d3-d4. Why we should give up this pawn is not yet clear – after all, on the next move,

we'll still have to take the queen. But once we have a choice, that means we should not hurry with our move, but first calculate the variations accurately.

**7 d4!! Rxd4**

7...Qd6 is harmless: 8 Rbd7 Qxd7 9 Rxd7 Ra4 (to meet 10 Kg6 with a check along the 6th-rank) 10 Rf7.

**8 Rxf4 Rxf4 9 Kg6 Kg8**

If we protect the king by bringing the rook back to the 8th-rank, then White's rook can stop the f-pawn: 9...Rg4+ 10 Kh6! Rxh4+ 11 Kg6 Rg4+ 12 Kh6 f2 13 Rf7, and draws.

**10 Rb8+ Rf8 11 Rb7!**

Threatening perpetual check on g7 and h7. The only way to avoid the repetition is to sacrifice the rook.

**11...Rf6+! 12 Kxf6 f2 13 Kg6! f1Q 14 Rb8+ Qf8 15 Rxf8+ Kxf8 16 Kf5 b4 17**

## Ke4 b3 18 Kd3

And this is why we sacrificed that pawn on move 7: to clear the d3-square for the white king, which would otherwise not have been able to stop the passed b-pawn.



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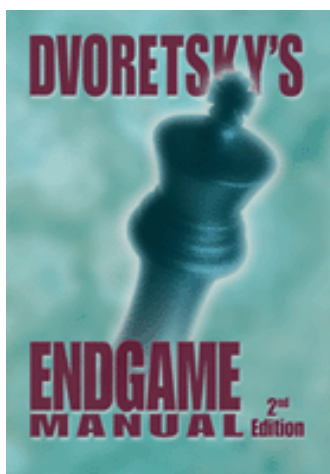




C O L U M N I S T S

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



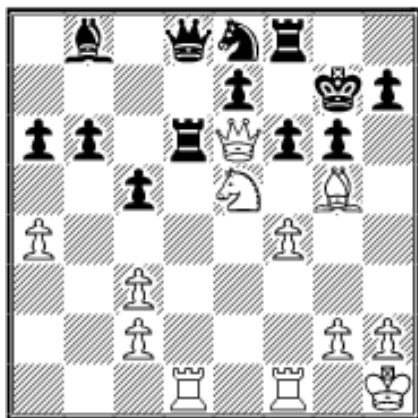
## An Ideal Game

Not long ago, I re-examined an exercise from my notebook, in which White won thanks to a beautiful attack. I ran it through *Fritz*, which told me the attack was refuted in several different ways. I couldn't believe that, as Black's king position looked way too dangerous. And in fact, soon the computer "changed its mind" and began showing equality in lines that it had previously considered won for Black. This was more believable; but I am not a fan of situations in which there are a number of equivalent ways to play (even though, in practice, such situations occur all the time). I continued searching; and finally, all the defensive tries went down, save one – now this result, I could live with. And in the end, we found a difficult win here, as well.

The course of analysis uncovered more and more subtleties, some of them utterly fantastic, even "non-human." People can't play chess at this level yet – in fact, I hardly think they'll ever be capable of learning how, especially taking into account the current tendency toward faster time-controls, and the ever-growing predominance of sporting (or should I say "financial") aspects over the creative side of chess life.

And so, you have before you an "ideal game," which you may employ as an exercise (perhaps more than once!) for training play between two strong opponents, during which they can work on their abilities in attack or defense, in resourcefulness and the exactness of their calculations. A different training approach would be to solve the numerous problems illustrated in the diagrams that have an accompanying question mark.

**Lelchuk – Voronova**  
USSR 1983



W?

White's a pawn down; what's more, she has four (!) pieces *en prise*. She could minimize her losses by playing 1 Rxd6? Qxd6 2 Bh6+ (or 2 Qxd6 Bxd6 3 Nd7 fg) 2...Kxh6 3 Nf7+ Rxf7 4 Qxf7 Ng7; but this is completely hopeless, of course. So finding a combination that will set the opponent problems is a matter of sheer survival; there's no point in even thinking about checking its correctness.

**1 Bg5-h6+! Kg7xh6 2 Qe6-f7!! Rf8-h8!**

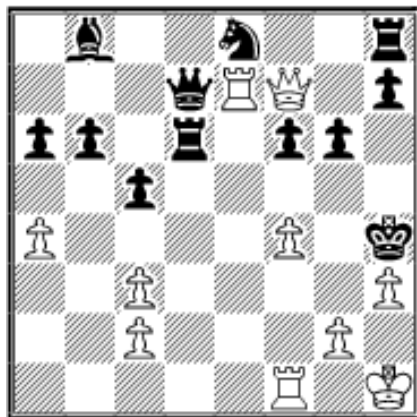
The careless 2...Rxd1?? ends in mate after 3 Ng4+ Kh5 4 Qxh7+ Kxg4 5 Qh3, or 2...fe?? 3 Qxf8+ Kh5 4 g4+! Kxg4 5 Rg1+ (5 Qh6!) 5...Kf3 6 fe+ (or 6 Rxd6 first).

And 2...Rxf7?! 3 Nxf7+ would leave White the exchange up after either 3...Kg7 4 Nxd8± or 3...Kh5 4 Nxd8 Rxd1 5 Rxd1 Bxf4 6 Rb1± (6 Rd7±). Of course, such an endgame could not appeal to Black; thus, Tatiana Voronova decided to go for a position in which her king would stand out in front of its whole army.

When warding off a dangerous onslaught, sometimes we find ourselves confronting a difficult dilemma: should we attempt to cast doubt on our opponent's idea in the most principled variations (usually involving the win or retention of material), or should we avoid them and select a "roundabout" path that involves significant concessions? Both approaches have a right to exist – the choice between one and the other is determined by our assessment of the situation occurring on the board, and by concrete calculation of variations – and sometimes, by intuition.

**3 Ne5-g4+ Kh6-h5**

Now the hyperaggressive **4 Rde1?** does not work: **4...Kxg4! 5 Re3** (the line 5 Rxe7 Kh5 6 Re3 Qd7! 7 Rh3+ Qxh3 8 gh Kh6 leaves Black with great winning chances) **5...Qd7! 6 h3+** (6 Rg3+ Kh5 7 Rh3+ Qxh3 8 gh Kh6+–) **6...Kh4! 7 Rxe7**

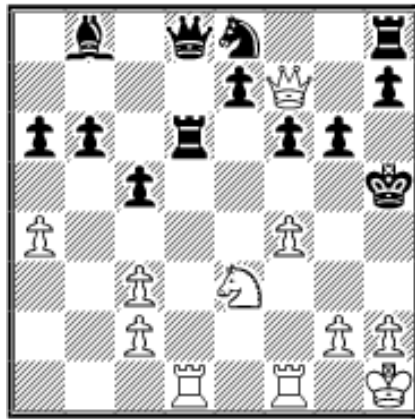


B?

**7...Qf5!** (7...Rd1 8 Kh2! Qxe7! 9 g3+ Kxh5 10 Qxe7 Rxf1 11 Qe2+ Kh6 12 Qxf1=+/– is less convincing) **8 Rxe8 Rd7!** (a necessary insertion, as 8...Rxe8? 9 Qxe8 offers Black no advantage) **9 Re7 Rxe7 10 Qxe7 Bxf4!** and White cannot withstand Black's considerable advantage in material.

The knight must be preserved – it will prove useful in the attack.

**4 Ng4-e3!**



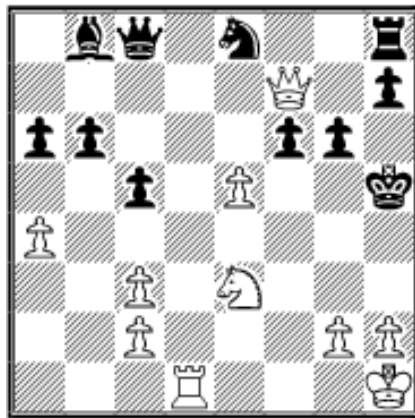
B?

Defending such a position is not at all easy. If Black plays 4...Kh6?, for example, White won't repeat moves, but play 5 Rde1! instead, with the terrible threat of 6 Rf3.

On 4...f5?, 5 Rde1? Rf6 6 Rf3 Bxf4! doesn't work; and the consequences of 5 Rxd6 Bxd6 6 Nxf5! (6 Rf3 would meet the same reply) 6...Bxf4! or 5 h3!? e6! 6 g4+ Kh6 (6...Kh4? 7 Kh2!±) 7 g5+ Kh5 8 Qb7! Rd5! are unclear.

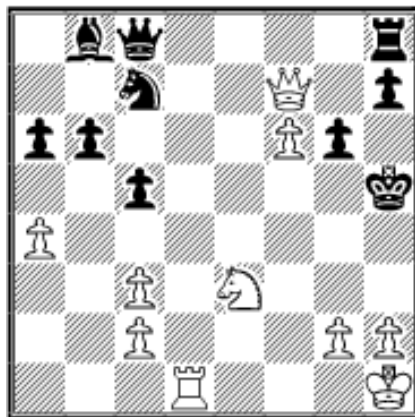
However, she wins spectacularly with **5 Nxf5!! Rxd1 6 g4+ Kxg4 7 Ne3+ Kh5 8 Rxd1 Qc8 (8...Qc7? 9 Rd5+) 9 Qd5+ e5 10 Qg2! Kh6 11 Qg5+ Kg7 12 Qe7+ Kh6 13 Rd7 Qxd7 14 Qxd7 ef 15 Ng4+ Kg5 16 Nf2** – White has both material and the attack.

And finally, Black is also unable to survive the line **4...e5?! 5 fe Rxd1 6 Rxd1 Qc8 (6...Qc7 7 Qc4+-)**.



W?

True, after 7 Rd7?! Qc6 (7...Bxe5? 8 Qe6!) 8 h4! (threatening 9 Qxh7+!) 8...Kh6 9 Ng4+ Kh5 10 Nf2(e3) Kh6, it looks like White has to settle for the repetition. But **7 ef!** (threatening 8 Rd5+ or 8 Qd5+) **7...Nc7**



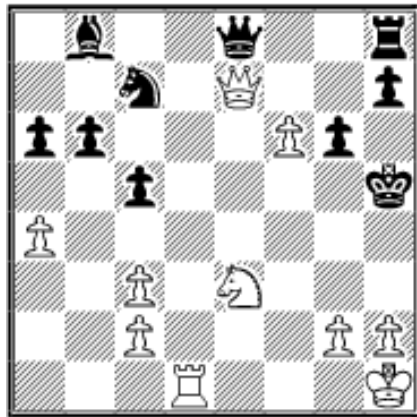
W?

Black's king is not to be envied; the only question is, how to mate him? 8 Qc4 is met by 8...Qe6! 9 Qe2+ Kg5. If 8 Rf1 (intending 9 Rf5+), then 8...Ne6! 9 Rf5+ Ng5, and the threat of 10...Qxf5 11 Nxf5 Nxf7 leaves White no time to press her attack.

The solution lies in the hidden quiet move **8 g3!!**, which strengthens all of White's threats.

For example: 8...Qe8 (8...Qe6 9 Rd5+!; 8...Qb7+ 9 Rd5+ Nxd5 10 Qb7; 8...Qg8 9 Qd7 Qc8 10 Qc6) 9 Qc4!, when the only way to prevent mate by Qh4 is 9...g5, then there follows 10 Qg4+ Kh6 11 Qh3+ Kg6 12 Qf5+, etc. And if **8...b5**, then **9 Rff1! Ne6 10 Rf5+ Ng5 11 Rxf5+! Kxf5 12 h4+ Kh6 (12...Kh5 13 Qd5+) 13 g4!** and Black can't parry the twin threats of 14 Qg7 mate and 14 Nf5+! gf 15 g5 mate.

There's a second solution that is also very pretty: **8 Qe7! Qe8** (on 8...Qe6, simplest is 9 Qg7 Qg8 10 g4+ Kg5 11 h4+ Kf4 12 Qh6+).



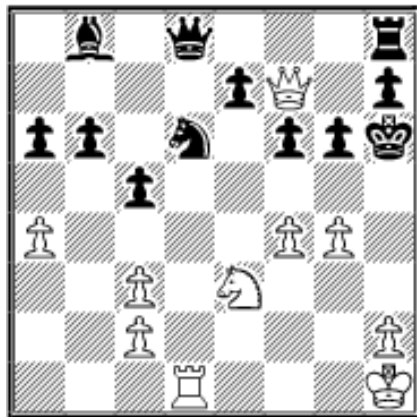
W?

Here, White delivers the brilliant **9 Rd8!!**. For example, **9...Qxd8 10 g4+ Kg5 11 h4+ Kxh4** (11...Kf4 12 Ng2+ mates quickly) **12 Ng2+ Kg5 13 Qe5+ Kxg4 14 Qf4+ Kh5 15 Qh4 mate** – queen and knight, united against the opposing king, demonstrate once more the power of this particular tandem. Or **9...Qxe7 10 fe Re8 11 Nd5! Nxd5** (11...Kg5 12 Rxb8!) **12 Rxe8 Bd6** (12...Be5 13 c4) **13 Rd8**, with an easy win.

Voronova traded rooks at once, which somewhat reduced her opponent's attacking potential, but mainly allowed her to develop her inactive knight.

**4...Rd6xd1! 5 Rf1xd1 Ne8-d6 6 Rd1-d5+**

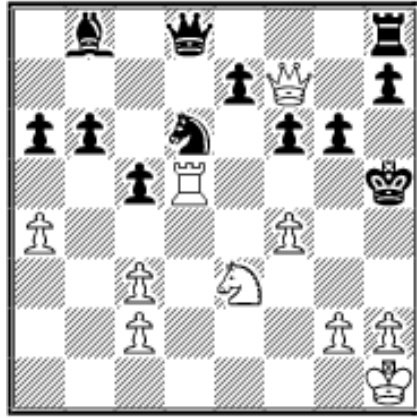
Another tempting way to attack was **6 g4+!? Kh6** (but not 6...Kh4? because of 7 Ng2+ Kxg4 8 Qe6+ Nf5 9 Qe2+ forcing mate)



W?

**7 Nf5+! gf** (a complex, but apparently equal position arises after 7...Nxf5 8 Rxd8 Rxd8 9 gf) **8 g5+! fg 9 fg+ Kxg5**. Now after **10 Rg1+? Kf4! 11 Qe6 Ne4! 12 Rf1+ Ke3 13 Qxf5 Rf8!? 14 Re1+ Kd2 15 Qxe4 Bf4**, Black's king penetrates deep into the enemy position and successfully eludes pursuit. White has to continue **10 Qg7+** (10 Qe6!?, preparing 11 Rg1+, also maintains the

balance) **10...Kf4 11 Qg3+ Ke4 12 Qe1+ Kf4**, with a perpetual check.



B?

Unfortunately, after 6 Rd5+, Black was unable to bear the tension in the game and played **6...f5?**, which lost quickly: **7 g4+ Kh6** (on 7...Kh4, 8 Qe6!+- is the most precise) **8 Rxd6! ed 9 Nxf5+ gf 10 g5+** Black resigned.

Zoya Lelchuk conducted the attack in outstanding fashion. But what would have happened if Black had pushed a different

pawn?

**6...e6-e5! 7 Qf7-g7!**

It's vital to cut off the king's retreat. Much weaker would be 7 Qe6? Kh6 8 fe Kg7 9 ed Re8 10 Qh3 Bxd6, or 7 g4+? Kh6 8 g5+ Kh5, when Black must win.

**7...Qd8-f8! 8 g2-g4+**

Not 8 Qd7? at once, in view of 8...f5! 9 g4+ Kh6 10 fe Qe8!? 11 Rxd6 Bxd6 12 Qxd6 Qd8!?-+.

**8...Kh5-h4 9 Qg7-d7!**



B?

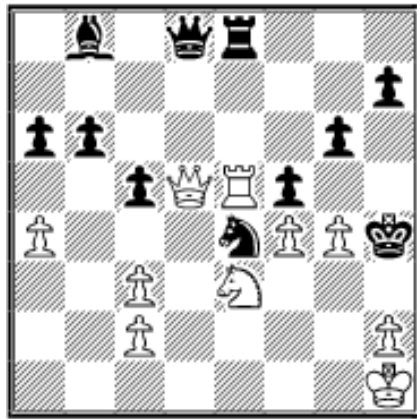
Threatening 10 Ng2+ Kh3 11 Rd3 mate. How should Black defend?

9...c4? loses quickly: 10 Ng2+ Kh3 11 g5+ f5 12 Rxe5.

**9...f5?!** is not as simple to refute. White continues **10 Rxe5** (10 fe? Ne4 11 gf gf would be considerably weaker)

Now if 10...Qf6?! 11 gf, Alexander Motylev continued the line as follows: 11...Nc4 12 Ng2+ Kh5 13 Qd3 Kh6 14 Re6 Qd8 15 Qh3+! Kg7 16 f6+, or 11...Nf7 12 Re7 Qd6 (12...Rd8 13 Qxd8!) 13 Qb7! and wins.

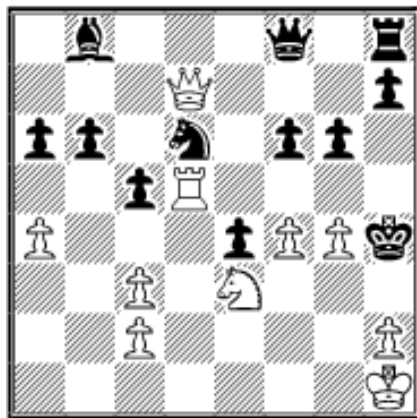
**10...Qd8 11 Qe6 Re8** (11...Ne4 12 Rxe4! Qd6 13 gf+) **12 Qd5 Ne4**



**13 Rxe8 Nf2+!** (the d1-square must be covered – 13...Qxe8? fails to 14 Ng2+ Kxg4 15 Qd1+ and mates) **14 Kg1(g2) Qxe8 15 Kxf2 Qe4!** (the only defense to the mating threats) **16 Qd8+ Kh3 17 Qxb8 fg 18 Qe5! Qf3+ 19 Ke1**, when the extra knight ought to be enough to win for White. She has the consolidating 20 Nf1 at her disposal, when capturing the h-pawn loses quickly: 19...Kxh2? 20 f5+ g3 (20...Kg1 21 f6) 21 Nf1+ and 22 Nxg3.

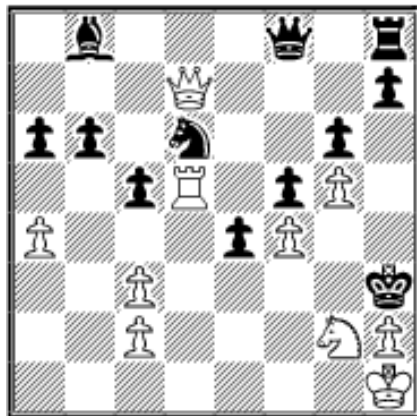
Things are even more complicated with the other two defensive tries, 9...e4!? and 9...Kh3!?. In both these cases, achieving success would require White to find a series of difficult, only moves, while avoiding a number of temptations along the way. It is hard to say which variation is the main line, so we'll examine both paths carefully.

### I. 9...e5-e4!?



W?

When we attack after sacrificing material, we generally try to force the issue; in particular, we give check at the first opportunity. Here, too, **10 Ng2+?! Kh3 11 g5+ f5** (but of course not 11...Nf5? 12 Rd3+! ed 13 Qxd3+ Kg4 14 h3+ Kh5 15 Qf3 mate) suggests itself:



W?

**12 Qc6!**

A subtle move – now Black must consider 13 Rd3+.

**12...Nc4!**

12...Kg4 is riskier: 13 Qxb6 (the queen wants to approach the enemy king via b1) 13...Nb5!! (the only defense) 14 ab Bxf4 15 Nxf4 Kxf4 – White can either give perpetual check: 16 Qc7+ Kxg5 17 Qg3+ Kh5 18 Qh3+, or carry on the fight with 16 ba!? Kxg5, which is unclear.

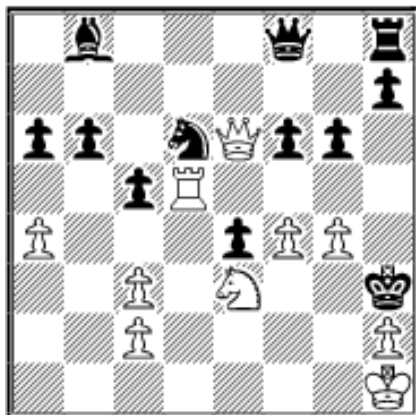
13 Rd3+! Kg4! 14 Rg3+ Kh5 15 Qd5 Qd6 16 Rh3+ (16 Qxc4?? Qd1+) 16...Kg4

17 Rg3+ Kh5, with perpetual check

White must play differently.

**10 Qd7-e6!!**

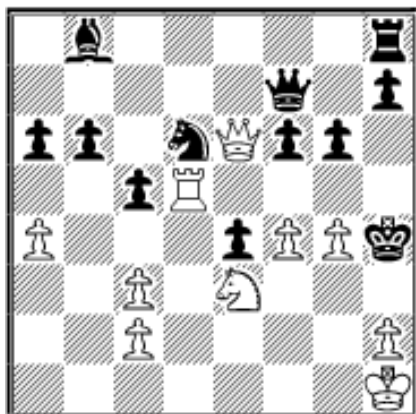
A quiet move that decisively strengthens the attack. White's main threat is not at all obvious. She will execute it; for example, after **10...Kh3** (or 10...c4).



W?

**11 Rh5+!! gh 12 g5+! f5 13 Qd5**, followed by 14 Qd1(d2), and Black's king is defenseless. I note that 11 Rd3!! also accomplishes this, although by a much more complicated route. We shall examine this position further, when we analyze 9...Kh3!?

White also has a pretty mate after **10...Qf7?**

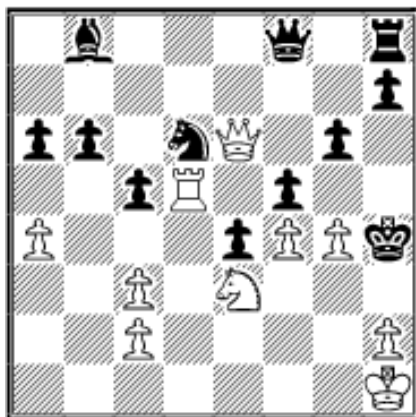


W?

**11 Ng2+ Kh3 12 Rd3+!! ed 13 Qe3+ Kxg4 14 Qg3+ Kf5 15 Qh3+ Ke4 16 Qxd3 mate.**

The only acceptable defense remaining does not, however, save Black from the storm of combinations.

**10...f6-f5!**

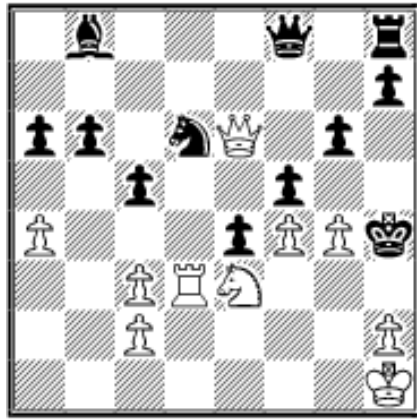


W?

Black counts on 11 gf? Qf7! 12 Rxd6 Qxe6 13 Rxe6 Bxf4 14 Rxe4 g5, with about even chances. 11 Rd1 isn't dangerous either – the simplest reply is 11...b5, preparing 12...Nc4.

**11 Rd5-d3!!**





B?

The rook is immune: 11...ed? 12 Ng2+ Kxg4 13 Qe1 and Black's king will be mated in 2 or 3 moves. On 11...Qf7?, White decides with 12 Ng2+ Kxg4 13 Rg3+ Kh5 14 Ne3! Kh6 (14...Kh4 15 Kg2) 15 Qe5. In order to break up the mating net, Black has to capture the f4-pawn with her bishop as quickly as possible. For this, she must retreat the knight – to a square that's twice attacked!

### 11...Nd6-c4!!

It's important to attack the enemy knight, or else White has time for the decisive strengthening of her attack by 12 gf!. Here are some sample variations:

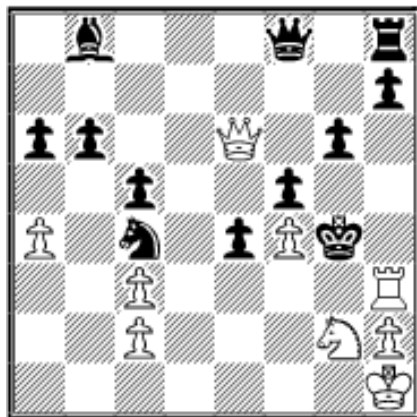
11...Nc8 12 gf! Qe7 (12...ed 13 f6+–) 13 Ng2+ Kh5 14 Rh3+ Kg4 15 Rg3+ Kh5 15 Rg5+ Qxg5 (15...Kh6 16 Rxg6+) 16 fg;

11...Nb7 (11...Nb5 is hardly different) 12 gf! ed 13 fg! (13 f6? Qc8) 13...Qxf4 (13...Qc8 14 Qf6+ Kh3 15 Qg5 Qc6+ 16 Ng2+–; 13...Kh5 14 Qg4+ Kh6 15 g7+–) 14 Ng2+ Kg5 15 Nxf4 dc (15...Bxf4 16 g7+–) 16 Nh3+! Kh5 (16...Kh4 17 Qe3!? c1Q+ 18 Qxc1 Kxh3 19 g7+–; 16...Kh6 17 gh+ Kg7 18 Qe7+ Kg6 19 Qe4+ and 20 Qxc2+–) 17 Qf5+ Kh6 (17...Kh4 18 Qg5+ Kxh3 19 Qh5 mate) 18 Qxc2+–.

### 12 Ne3-g2+!

The knight is immune, neither 12 Qxc4? ed nor 12 Nxc4? Bxf4 works.

### 12...Kh4xg4 13 Rd3-g3+ Kg4-h5 14 Rg3-h3+ Kh5-g4

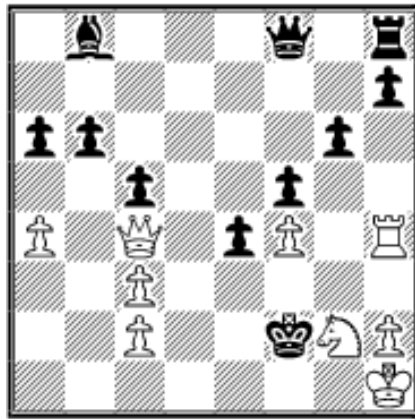


W?

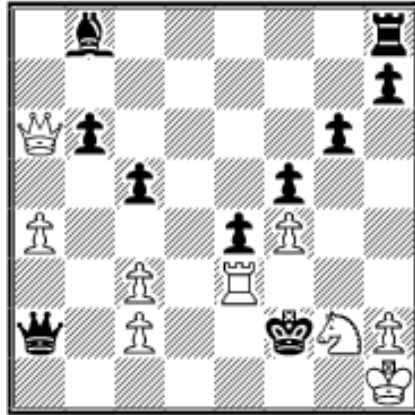
### 15 Qe6xc4!!

This is precisely the proper moment to remove the knight – while the rook at h3 is hanging (since its capture results inescapably in mate: 15...Kxh3 16 Qe2!, threatening 17 Qe3+). After the superficial **15 Rh4+? Kf3 16 Qxc4 Kf2!!**, the game takes a 180-degree turn.





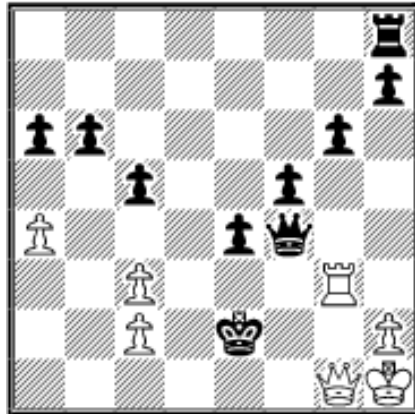
A fantastic situation! The king, having made its way deep into the enemy camp, not only defends itself successfully against an entire army of hostile pieces, but also aids in the counterattack, as may be seen from the variation **17 Rh3 Qg8! 18 Qxa6 Qa2! 19 Re3**



B?

**19...Qb1+ 20 Re1 Qxe1+! 21 Nxe1 Rd8!!**  
and Black wins.

Moving the white queen to the 1st rank doesn't help: 17 Qb3 Qd6 18 Qb1 Qd2 19 Rh3 Bxf4 20 Qg1+ (on 20 Nxf4, simplest is 20...Qe1+! 21 Qxe1 Kxe1 and the black pawns decide) 20...Ke2 21 Nxf4+ Qxf4 22 Rg3



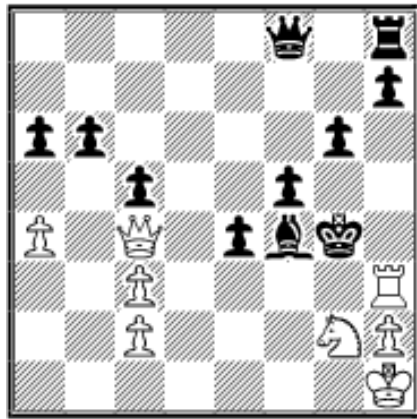
B?

22...e3! (22...Kd2 is weaker: 23 Rg2+ Kxc3 24 Qa1+ 23 Qg2+ (Black's task would be simpler after 23 Rg2+?! Qf2!) 23...Qf2 (23...Ke1!? 24 Rf3! Qxf3! 25 Qxf3 Re8! would also be very strong) 24 Qd5! Re8!? (24...Qf1+? doesn't work: 25 Rg1 Qf3+ 26 Rg2+; however, 26...Rd8!? 27 Qxd8 Qf1+ 28 Rg1 Qf3+ 29 Rg2+ Ke1 30 Qd3 c4! 31 Qxc4 e2 32 Qd4! Qe4 is worth considering. Despite

the extra rook, White has a difficult defense) 25 Qd3+ Ke1 26 Rg1 Qxg1+ 27 Kxg1 e2 28 c4 Re4! and Black appears to be winning.

### 15...Bb8xf4

There's nothing else – Black must shed a piece. Once it's taken, the king returns home and Black's strong central pawns secure her good saving chances. So White must be accurate to the very end.



W?

**16 Qc4-f1!!**

Stronger than 16 Rh4+ Kg5 17 Rxf4 Qd6 or 16 Qe2+ Kg5 17 Qf2 Kf6 18 Nxf4 Qd6 19 c4 Qd1+ 20 Kg2 Rd8 21 Nd5+ (21 Qh4+ g5!) 21...Kg7.

**16...Kg4-g5**

Black can neither take the rook (16...Kxh3? 17 Qxf4) nor save her bishop: 16...Be5 17 Nf4!! Kg5 (forced) 18 Ne6+.

**17 Ng2xf4!**

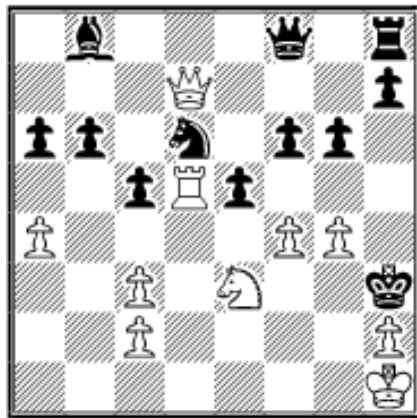
More accurate than 17 Qxf4+ Kf6 18 Ne3 Qb8.

**17...Qf8-d6 18 c3-c4!**

The knight obtains the excellent central post d5 and the queen obtains the a1-h8 diagonal. Black cannot take on f4, because of 19 Rg3+. White has a winning position.

## II. 9...Kh4-h3!?

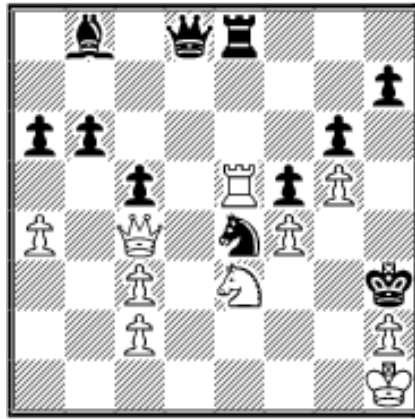
The king runs away from the knight check on g2 – although, of course, he renders himself vulnerable to other checks, such as g4-g5 or Rd3. I began to study this move after completing the analysis of the 9...e4!? variation; and for a while, I thought that this cheeky king sortie, deep into the heart of the enemy position, allowed Black to save the game.



W?

After **10 Ng2?! e4**, the game transposes into the drawing variation 9...e4 10 Ng2+?! Kh3 that we examined earlier. Black also has another way to maintain the balance: **10...f5!?** **11 gf Qf7!** (but not 11...Qe8? 12 Rd3+ Kg4 13 Rg3+ Kh5 14 Qg7+-) **12 Rd3+** (12 Rxd6? Qxd7 13 Rxd7 ef would be bad for White) **12...Kg4 13 Rg3+ Kh5 14 Rg3+ Kg4**, with perpetual check.

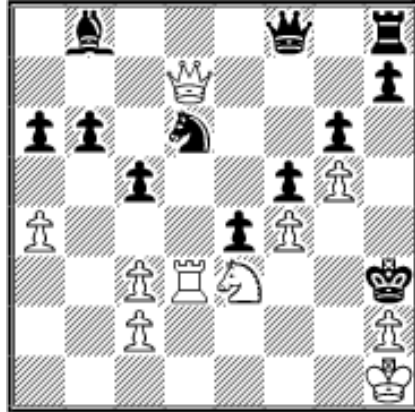
**10 g5+?! f5** leads to amusing complications. Taking the pawn by 11 Rxe5? puts White on the edge of disaster: 11...Qd8! 12 Qe6 (12 Qg7 Nf7! -+) 12...Re8 13 Qd5 Ne4 14 Qc4 (14 Qb7 Bc7 15 Qxa6 Nd2!, intending 16...Qa8+).



B?

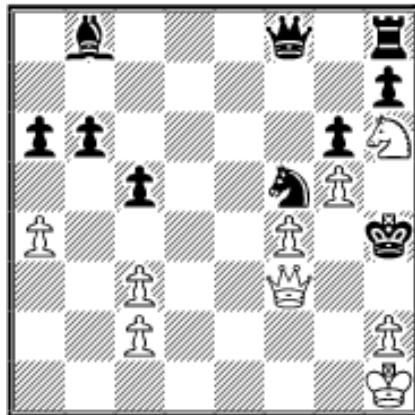
14...Ng3+!! (14...Qd2 15 Qf1+ Kh4 is only enough to draw) 15 hg Bxe5 16 Qf1+ Kxg3 17 Qg2+ Kxf4 18 Nd5+ Qxd5-/+ or 16 Nd5 Kxg3 17 Qd3+ (17 fe Qxg5!-+) 17...Kh4! 18 Qd2 Qxd5+! 19 Qxd5 Bxf4-/+.

So **11 Rd3 e4** must be played.



W?

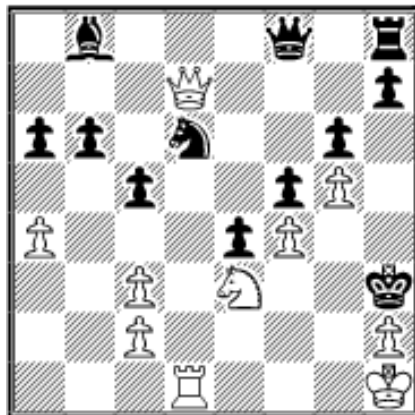
Now what? 12 Nxf5+? fails to 12...ed 13 Nh6+ (13 Nxd6+ Kh4-+) 13...Nf5 14 Qxd3+ Kh4 15 Qf3



B?

15...Qxh6!! 16 gh Re8, with a winning position for Black.

Retreating the white rook by 12 Rd1? also meets with a pretty refutation.



B?

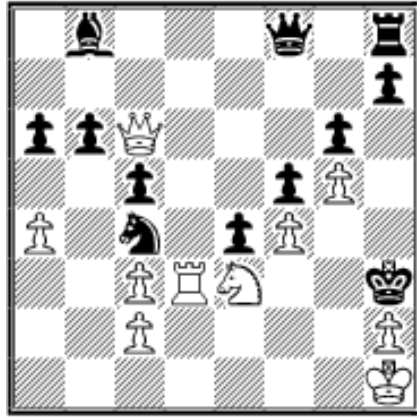
The heedless 12...Qf7?? allows White to conclude the game with a spectacular mate: 13 Rg1!! Qxd7 14 Rg3+ Kh4 15 Kg2, with the unstoppable threat of 16 Rh3 mate. On 12...Qd8?, White plays the same queen sacrifice, except that now it's only good enough for perpetual check: 13...Rg1!! Nc4! 14 Rg3+ Kh4 15 Qg7 Qf8 16 Ng2+ Kh5=. Another drawing line is 12...Nf7? 13 Qd2

Bxf4 14 Qf2 Qb8!! 15 Rg1!.

The winning move is 12...Nc4!! 13 Nxc4 (13 Ng2 Kg4) 13...Bxf4.

**12 Qc6!!**

The only way for White to avoid losing.

**12...Nc4!?**

Black isn't worried about losing the knight here: 13 Nxc4+? Kh4, followed by 14...Bxf4.

**13 Nxf5+** (or 13 Ng2+ Kg4 14 Rg3+ Kh5, with our familiar perpetual check) **13...Kg4**  
**14 Qxe4 Qxf5.**

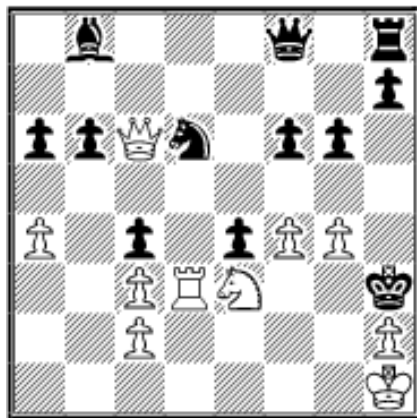
White can check in many different ways, but can't mate the black king.

White has one more attacking line at her disposal: 10 Rd3. I thought that after 10...e4

11 g5+ f5, it would transpose into our last line. But Grandmaster Alexander Motylev, to whom I showed my analyses, disagreed with my conclusion and found a difficult path to victory. I present his variations (with some retouching) herewith.

**10 Rd5-d3! e5-e4**

**10...c4 11 Qc6! e4** encounters a refutation that is quite difficult to see.



W?

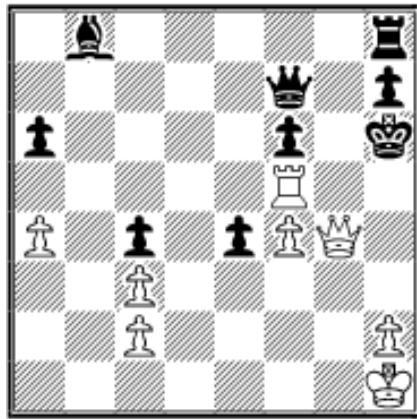
White only gets a draw from 12 Nxc4+? Kxg4  
13 Nxd6 Bxd6 14 Qxe4 (14 Rxd6 Qa8)  
14...Qa8 (14...Bxf4 isn't bad, either) 15 Rd5  
Re8 16 Qg2+ Kxf4.

**12 Qxb6!!**

We saw this idea in an earlier variation. The queen takes a roundabout path to get to the enemy king – via the 1st rank. Taking the

rook with either pawn allows 13 Qb1!, forcing mate. If Black blocks the queen's path by 12...Nb5, 13 Nd5+ Kxg4 (13...ed 14 Qg1!) 14 Nxf6+ Kxf4 (14...Kf5 15 Rd5+) 15 Qf2+ Ke5 16 Nd7+ decides.

**12...Nf5!?** **13 Nxf5+ Kxg4** (13...cd 14 Qg1!) **14 Rd5! gf** **15 Qg1+ Kh5** **16 Rxf5+ Kh6** **17 Qg4 Qf7**



W?

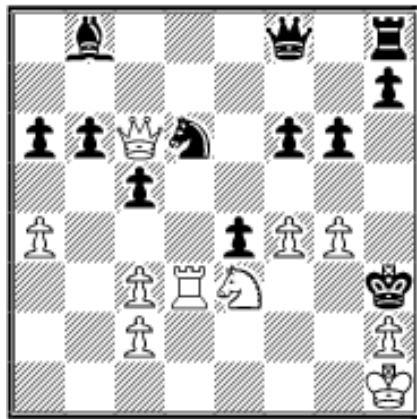
**18 Rg5! Qg6** (the only way to prevent an immediate mate) **18 Rxc6+ hg 20 Qh3+ Kg7 21 Qd7+ Kh6 22 Qd4 Re8 23 Qxf6** (with the terrible threat of 24 f5) and White wins.

**11 Qd7-e6!**

Just so – without the insertion of 11 g5+?! f5. As we have seen more than once in this game, a quiet move brings far greater dividends than

a tempting check.

Equally valid is **11 Qc6!**



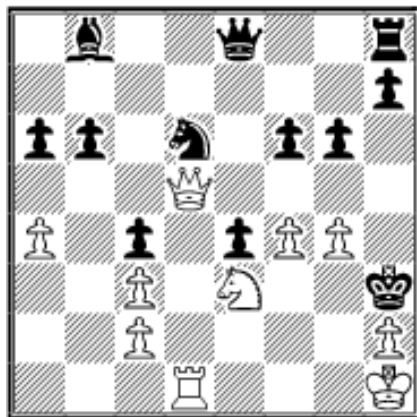
After 11...c4, play transposes into our familiar line. 10 Rd3 e4 11 Qc6 c4 (in which, let me remind you, White wins by 12 Qxb6!!).

On 11...g5, White replies, just as she would after 11 Qe6 – with 12 Qd5.

Black could still try **11...Qe8**. Once again, checks lead nowhere: 12 Ng2+? Kxg4 13 Rg3+ Kh5 14 Rh3+ Kg4 15 Rh4+ Kf3 16 Qd5 (16 Rh3+ Kg4=) 16...Ke2! (the only defense) 17 Ne3! (after White's slightly risky

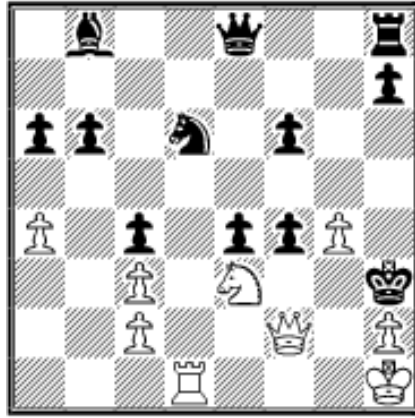
refusal of the repetition, she finds she has but one means of escaping defeat) 17...Kxe3 18 Qd1, forcing perpetual check.

**12 Qd5! c4 13 Rd1**



On 13...Nf5 14 gf Bxf4, the quickest way to win is 15 Rg1! Bxe3 16 Rg3+ Kh4 17 Qd1.

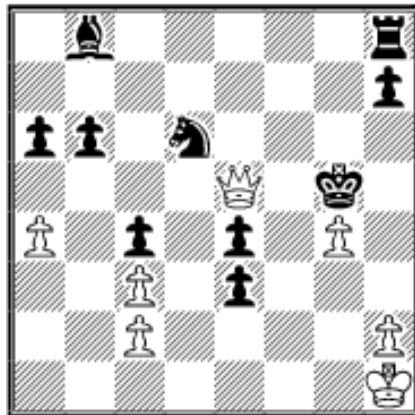
Now, we really should take a closer look at the line **13...g5 14 Qd2 gf 15 Qf2**, since this position could also arise after 11 Qe6.



On 15...Nc8, White wins by 16 Rg1! (threatening 17 Nf5) 16...Ne7 17 g5!. And mate soon follows after 15...h5 16 Rg1 as well.

But after **15...Qe5!** this recipe no longer works: 16 Rg1? Rg8 17 Rg3+! Kh4! and Black wins. But in that case, White has **16 Rd5! fe** (16...Qxd5 17 Qxf4 Nf7 18 Qf1+ Kh4 19 Nxd5) **17 Qg2+** (but not 17 Qxe3+? Kxg4 18 Rxe5 fe—) **17...Kh4 18 Rxe5 fe 19**

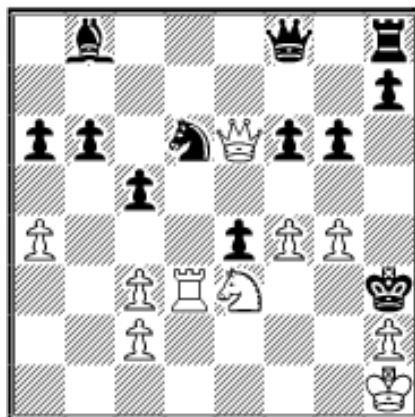
**Qg3+ Kg5 20 Qxe5+**



White's queen has time to take the rook and still get back home in time to stop the passed e-pawn.

**20...Kxg4** (20...Kg6 21 Qxh8 e2 22 Qg8+ Kf6 23 Qd8+ Ke6 24 Qh4+—) **21 Qxh8 e2 22 Qg7+ Kf4** (22...Kf5 23 Qxh7+ Kg5 24 Qg7+ Kf5 25 Qf8+ Ke5 26 Qf2+—) **23 Qg3+ Kf5 24 Qf2+ Ke5 25 Qxe2** and White's material advantage must tell.

And now, let's return to **11 Qe6**:



B?

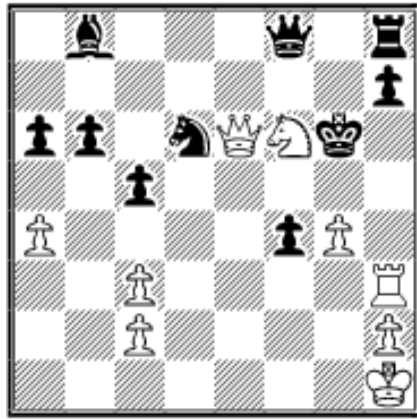
11...ed? 12 Qd5! loses at once for Black. And 11...c4 leads to unstoppable mate after 12 g5+ f5 13 Nxc4+ Kh4 14 Ne3 Kh5 15 Ng2 Qf7 16 Rh3+ Kg4 17 Rg3+ Kh5 18 Ne3! Kh4 19 Kg2.

**11...g6-g5!**

The only defense.

**12 Qe6-d5!**

**12 Nd1+? Kh4 13 Nf2 gf 14 Rh3+ Kg5 15 Nxe4+ Kg6 16 Nxf6** (White doesn't have enough for the exchange after 16 Rd3 Qf7 17 Rxd6 Bxd6 18 Qf5+ Kg7 19 Nxd6 Qe7).



B?

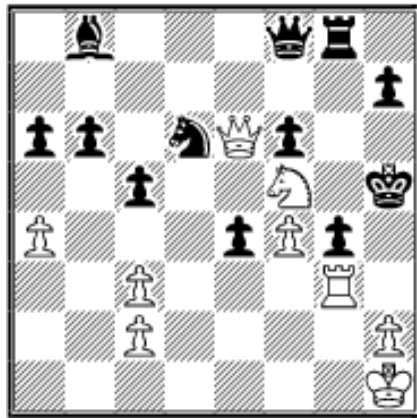
Black unexpectedly goes on the counterattack by **16...Qf7! 17 Qe5 Qa2!!**, intending 18...Qb1+ and 19...Qxc2+.

**12...c5-c4**

12...Qg8 13 Nf5+ Kxg4 14 Nh6+ Kxf4 15 Nxg8 ed 16 cd is hopeless for Black.

**12...Rg8 13 Nf5+ Kxg4 14 Rg3+ Kh5 15**

**Qe6 g4** allows White a tactical resource to finish off the attack.



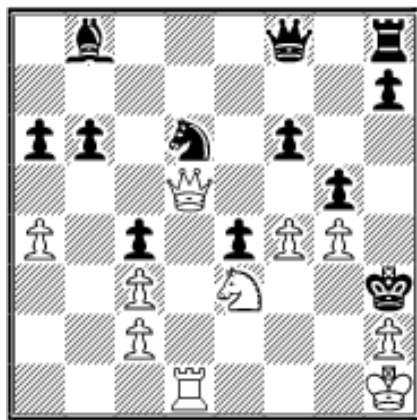
W?

**16 Ne7! Rg7** (16...f5 17 Nxg8+—) **17 Rh3+! gh 18 Qxh3 mate.**

**13 Rd3-d1**

13 Nxc4+? would lead to a draw after 13...Kh4 (but not 13...Kxg4? 14 Rg3+ Kh5 15 Rxg5+!) 14 Kg2 Nxc4 15 Qxe4 Qe8 16 Rh3+ Kxg4 17 Rg3+ Kh4 – White has no time to

take the knight, in view of the threatened Bxf4.



Stuck in the opposing camp, Black's king needs the help of its pieces – but they're not ready to give it. 14 Qd2 is threatened, and Black cannot capture on f4 for the moment, because of the queen mate at h5.

If 13...Kh4 (to answer 14 Qd2 with 14...gf), 14 Rg1!, threatening 15 Rg3 and 16 Ng2 mate, is decisive.

On 13...h5, the most convincing way to win is: 14 Rf1 gf (14...hg 15 Qd1 f5 16 Qe1+—) 15 Rxf4 followed by 16 Qd1 (15 Ng2 is also good, with its threat of 16 Nxf4+ Kh4 17 Ng6+).

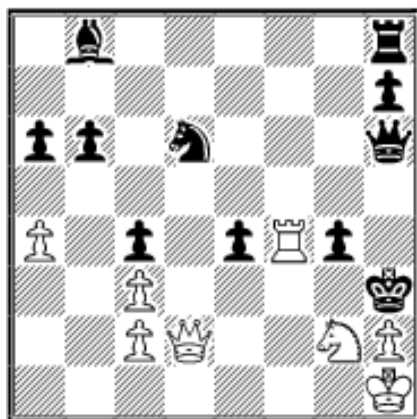
On 13...Qf7, there follows 14 Qd2 gf 15 Qf2 and Black is helpless. If Black plays 13...Qe8 (instead of 13...Qf7), then in the concluding position, she could defend herself by 15...Qe5 – however, she would still be doomed, since this would be the same situation we analyzed when we looked at 11 Qc6.

**13...f6-f5**

A last attempt, but this also fails Motylev shows two ways to win.

### 14 Qd5-d2

Another good way is **14 Rf1 g3** (14...Rg8 15 Qd2 gf 16 Rxf4 Kh4 17 Ng2+ Kg5 18 Rxf5+ Kxg4 19 Qf4+ Kh3 20 Qh4 mate) **15 Rxf4 Qh6 16 Ng2 fg 17 Qd2**

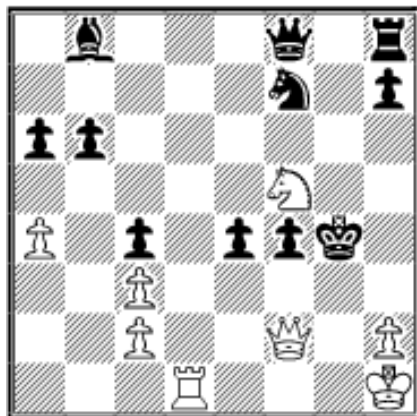


The quickest and most elegant way to win after **17...g3** is **18 Rxe4!**; and to **17...Qg5** – **18 Rf5!**

**14...g5xf4 15 Qd2-f2 Nd6-f7**

If 15...Ne8, then 16 Nxf5 Kxg4 17 Rd5! Kg5 18 Nd6+ Kg6 19 Qg2+ Kf6 20 Qg5+ Ke6 21 Qe5+ Kd7 22 Nxe8+.

**16 Ne3xf5 Kh3xg4**



W?

One last effort:

**17 Nf5-g7!!+-**

Far be it from me to consider my analysis error-free. I have seen Bent Larsen's old maxim, "long analysis, wrong analysis," proven many times. Experience tells us that any serious new immersion in a position is

capable of introducing fresh ideas, corrections and additions to those previously found. In fact, the note to Black's third move (concerning the attempt 4 Rde1?) came about after the position had been played over by two strong grandmasters – to say nothing of Motylev's contribution to the analysis of the important variation 9...Kh3!?.

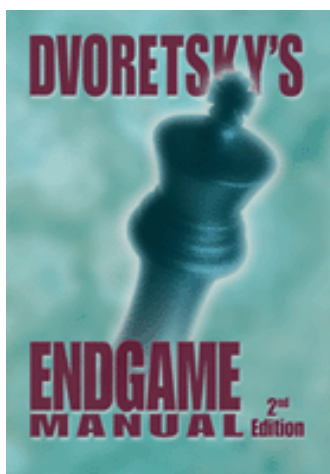
I would be grateful to my readers for any notes they might contribute – perhaps then we might actually arrive at an ideal game; one that is simultaneously spectacular and error-free. Of course, we might also arrive at the opposite result, wherein our pretty story falls completely apart – but then, we would still have many glittering fragments.





C O L U M N I S T S

## *The Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



## To Take a Pawn or Attack?

The sharp Anand – Karpov game offered herewith was deeply annotated by Mikhail Gurevich in *Shakhmaty v Rossii* (Chess in Russia) No. 1, 1997; by Igor Zaitsev in *64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozrenie* (Chess Review) No. 1, 1997; and, of course, by Vishwanathan Anand himself, in *New In Chess* No. 1, 1997 and later in his collected games. On several points, the grandmasters had differing opinions and such examples are always of interest. It is also intriguing to see how Anand's state of mind influenced his choice of strategy in this game, and to see how well his intuitive assessments were supported by the objective analysis that followed.

The grandmaster commentaries appear in italics, while Anand's are in quotes.

*Anand – Karpov*  
Las Palmas 1996

**1 Ng1-f3**

“The previous day, I had lost to Kramnik without so much as a struggle, and had spent the evening being disgusted with my play. There was no way I could be bothered playing some boring Caro-Kann and trying to deal with some improvement on move 45 leading to a difficult ending, etc. I felt I'd rather go down in style than do something like that. Now, how does a move like 1 Nf3 allow me to get interesting positions?? Well, to be honest, 1 Nf3 can lead to positions even more boring than after 1 e4 c6; but at least they would be NEW boring positions!!”

**1...d7-d5**

“Aha! Not so boring, maybe? He had played this against Topalov, and I had an idea...”

**2 d2-d4 e7-e6 3 c2-c4 d5xc4 4 e2-e4**

“And I played it without hesitating. Maybe 4 e3 some other time, but I just wanted to liven things up immediately.”

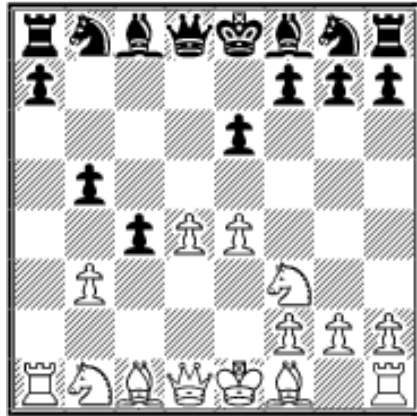
**4...b7-b5**

*A highly debatable, but aggressive continuation (compared to 4...c5 5 Bc4+/=),*

*which has resulted in several pretty wins for Black recently. Karpov calculates that his opponent will be insufficiently familiar with the resulting positions, and hopes to exploit this. (Gurevich).*

It's amusing to compare this judgment as to the motive for Karpov's choice of opening variation with Anand's next note, which expresses a diametrically opposite opinion.

**5 a2-a4 c7-c6 6 a4xb5 c6xb5 7 b2-b3**



“He had already started thinking a lot and I knew that he wasn't familiar with this opening. There isn't much to know, though – only a game Yermolinsky – Kuprejchik (Sverdlovsk 1987): 7...Nf6 8 bc Nxe4 9 c5 Bxc5 10 Bxb5+ Bd7 11 Bxd7+ Qxd7. Kuprejchik, not being one of the most solid players I know, could play this. I suspected that Karpov, if confronted with this, would find another solution.”

The above-cited game continued: 12 dc Qxd1+ 13 Kxd1 Nxf2+ 14 Ke2 Nxf1 15 Be3 Nc6 16 Nbd2 Ke7 17 Rxh1 f6 unclear.

A different way of handling Black's position was demonstrated in Dautov – Raetsky, Zeefeld 1997: 7...Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Bxd2+ 9 Nxd2 (9 Qxd2 Bb7) 9...Nc6 10 bc Nxd4, with about even chances.

**7...Bc8-b7 8 b3xc4 Bb7xe4 9 c4xb5**

“White already has a significant advantage on the queenside: the a-file and pawn b5 vs. pawn a7.”

**9...Ng8-f6 10 Bf1-e2**

Khalifman mishandled the opening as White against Ivanchuk at Tilburg 1994: 10 Bd3 Bb4+ 11 Kf1 0-0 12 Bxe4 Nxe4 13 Qb3 a5 14 ba Rxa6 15 Rxa6 Nxa6 16 g3 Qa8 17 Kg2 Be7 18 Be3 Nb4 19 Nbd2 Rc8 20 Nxe4 Qxe4-/+.

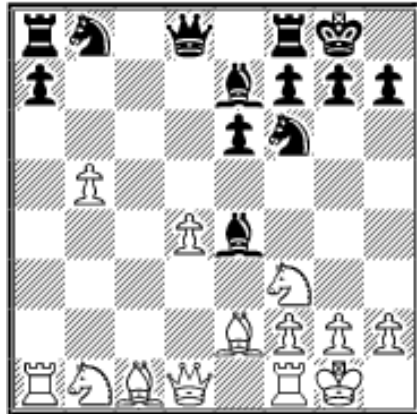
**10...Bf8-e7**

After 10...Bb4+ 11 Nbd2, Zaitsev indicates the line 11...0-0 12 Ba3 Bxa3 13 Rxa3 (13 Nxe4 Bb4+ 14 Ned2 Ne4 is worse for White, owing to the c3 weakness) 13...Bd5 14 0-0 Nbd7 15 Qa1 (15 Ra6+/- – Gyimesi) 15...Qb6 16 Rc1 *White will develop pressure against the backward a-pawn while also threatening to invade on c7.*

One might also add that in the game Gyimesi – Ortega, Bolzano 2000, Black got into difficulties after 11...Nd5?! 12 Ba3 Bc3 13 0-0! Bxf3 14 Bxf3. Zoltan

Gyimesi also looked at 11...Bxf3 12 Bxf3 Qxd4 13 Ra4 Nd5 14 0-0, assessing the resulting position as favorable to White.

### 11 0-0 0-0



Here we should note the game Tregubov – Yakovich, Russian Championship 2000, where Black defended with 11...Nbd7 12 Nc3 Bb7 13 Ne5 Nxe5 14 de Nd7, but failed to equalize after 15 Bf3!.

### 12 Nb1-c3

*This looks stronger and more logical than 12 Nbd2, which was played before. The seconds required for human consideration to accept the correctness of this assertion can turn into months for theory – sometimes even years of waiting. (Zaitsev)*

“Developing the b1-knight to c3 appears more natural as it exerts some influence over the important d5-square.”

12 Nbd2 Bb7 13 Nc4 a6 14 b6 Nc6 15 Bd2 Nd5 16 Qb3 Bb4 17 Bxb4 Ncxb4 18 Ra5 Nc6 19 Ra4 Nf4, with an unclear position in Lutz – Schlosser, Berlin 1989.

### 12...Be4-b7 13 Nf3-e5

Gyimesi recommends the restrained 13 Ba3+/-, but Anand wants more.

### 13...a7-a6

*Black tries to rid himself of a major defect of his position, the backward a-pawn, while also depriving his opponent of an important support point on c6. (Zaitsev)*

Let's examine some possible alternatives:

13...Nbd7?! 14 Nc6! Bxc6 15 bc Qc7 16 Bf3± (Gurevich) – but 15...Rc8 is stronger than 15...Qc7?!, in order to reply to 16 Bf3 with 16...Nb8.

13...Nd5?! 14 Nxd5 Bxd5 15 Bf3± (Zaitsev) – it's not so simple here, either, since Black has 14...Qxd5!, threatening mate (15 Bf3 Qxb5).

“13...Bb4!? 14 Bb2 (14 Qb3 Qxd4 – Zaitsev) 14...Bxc3 (14...a6 15 Bf3) 15 Bxc3 Qd5 16 Nf3+/- (16 Bf3?! Qxb5 17 Rb1 Bxf3 18 Qxf3 Qd5=/+ or 16 f3 Rc8 17 Qd2 Nbd7 unclear are inferior – Gurevich) or 15...a6 16 Bf3!+/- (rather than 16 Ba5 Qd5! 17 Bf3 Qxb5) both lead to a small advantage for White.”

### 14 Be2-f3!

*For his part, White is doing all he can to prevent the pawn exchange. (Zaitsev)*

### 14...Nf6-d5

“Typically, Karpov finds the safest solution, leaving him only a slight disadvantage. After 14...Bxf3 15 Qxf3 Qxd4 16 Re1! (on 16 Qxa8 Qxe5 (16...Qxc3 17 Bf4+/- – Anand) 17 Bb2 Ng4 18 g3 ab, Black has excellent compensation for the exchange – Gurevich) 16...Bb4 (16...Nd5 17 Bb2!) 17 Bb2, Black still has to unravel his queenside.” On 15...Nd5?, Gurevich gives 16 Nxd5 Qxd5 17 Qxd5 ed 18 Ba3±, while on 15...Ra7?!, he has 16 Nc6 Nxc6 17 bc. However, the second variation is unconvincing, because of 17...Qa8!, so White would do better with 16 Ra4 or 16 Rd1, with 16 Ba3 to follow).

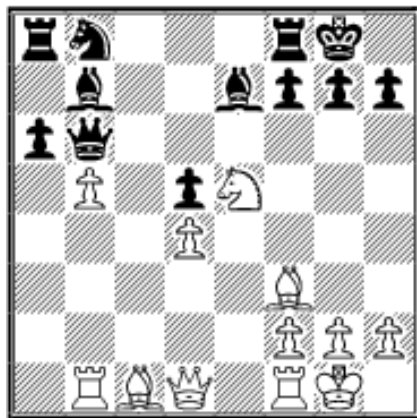
### 15 Nc3xd5 e6xd5

*I think that Karpov came to regret this decision later. 15...Bxd5 was more natural, even though after 16 Bf4 Black would have some difficulty developing his queenside, in view of the pin along the a-file. (Gurevich) While in Zaitsev’s opinion, after 16 Qd3 or 16 Bxd5 Qxd5 17 Qa4, the path to equality would have been rockier still.*

### 16 Ra1-b1!

“16 Qb3 ab 17 Rxa8 Bxa8 18 Qxb5 also with some advantage, but I had no interest in trying to play for some slight advantage that day.”

### 16...Qd8-b6



16...ab 17 Rxb5 Ra7 18 Qb3!± (Gurevich)

### 17 Bf3-e2!!

“The point. White can swing his bishop over to d3. Now I considered moves like 17 Qd3, but realized that the text was the strongest move – the bishop has no more work on f3.”

*An unexpected move. Vishy changes the focus of his developing initiative. The bishop goes to d3, in order to put pressure on the kingside.*

*Some years ago, I spent a great deal of time with Anand, and even then I noticed his positional understanding was quite original. His unexpected moves, sometimes played without any thought whatsoever, often turned out to be very strong. This is something that cannot be taught. Here it is: either you can, or you can't. They call it god-given talent ... 17 Qd3!? Qe6 18 Re1 was also possible. (Gurevich)*

Zaitsev could not agree with the assessment of Anand and Gurevich.

*It would be interesting to find out how the Indian super-GM saw the strategic panorama of this position: what could have made him deliberately reject the completely consequent squeeze approach, 17 Qd3!. Here is Zaitsev's analysis:*

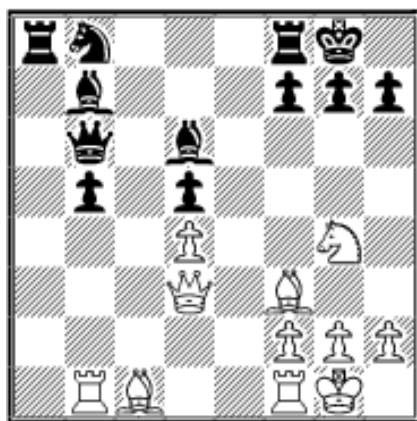
I. 17...f6? 18 Nc6!+- (18 ba!+- is simpler – Dvoretsky);

II. 17...ab 18 Rxb5 Qc7 19 Qb3!? Ba6 20 Bxd5 Bxb5 21 Bxf7+ Rxf7 (21...Kh8? 22 Ng6+) 22 Qxf7+ Kh8 23 Qd5+-;

III. 17...a5 18 Ba3 Bxa3 19 Qxa3 Qxd4 20 Qe7 Qb6 21 Rbc1!+- . Moving the other rook (21 Rfc1) seemed less accurate to Zaitsev because of 21...a4 22 Rc7 a3 23 Rxb7 a2, with counterplay; but in fact, after 24 Rd1, White's advantage is decisive. Additionally, instead of taking the bishop, he could play 23 Bh5! g6 (23...a2 24 Bxf7+; 23...Qf6 24 Rxb7 a2 25 Ra1) 24 Bxg6 hg 25 Nxf7+-.

IV. 17...Bd6!? 18 ba Qxa6 19 Qxa6 (19 Qb3 is weaker: 19...Bxe5 20 Qxb7 Qxb7 [20...Bxd4? 21 Qxd5+-] 21 Rxb7 Bxd4 22 Bxd5 Ra5 [22...Na6 23 Rxf7] 23 Bxf7+ Rxf7 24 Rxb8+ Rf8+/-) 19...Bxa6 20 Bxd5± (20 Re1!? is also strong – Dvoretsky) *Assessment: Here, White's practical winning chances are not less than Black's chances to draw. But apparently, Anand judged this plan clearly an insufficient tradeoff for the initiative he was enjoying at this moment.*

*And if, in addition to a good position, the Indian wanted to satisfy his thirst for beauty, he could, after 17...Bd6, have chosen a miraculous continuation, such as 18 Ng4!? ab (there's nothing else).*



A) 19 Qf5 promises little: 19...Bc8! (19...Na6? 20 Rxb5 Qxb5 21 Nf6+ gf 22 Bh6+-; 19...Nc6 20 Bh6! [but not 20 Nxf6+? gf 21 Bh6 Ne7+-, and not 20 Rxb5? Qxb5 21 Nf6+ gf 22 Bh6 Qxf1+! 23 Kxf1 Ra1+ 24 Ke2 Nxd4+ -+]) 20...Ne7 21 Qg5 Ng6 22 Bxg7! Bf4 23 Qf6 with attack) 20 Qxd5 Ra5, with an uncertain game.

B) 19 Rxb5 Qa6 (19...Ba6 is bad: 20 Rxb6 Bxd3 21 Rd1 Bc2 22 Rd2 Ra1 23 Rxc2 Ba3 24 Bxd5 Bxc1 25 Ra2!+-), and now:

B1) 20 Qf5? fails to 20...Qxb5 21 Nf6+ gf 22 Bh6 Qxf1+! 23 Kxf1 Ra1+ 24 Ke2 Re8+ and 25...Bf8-/+;

B2) if White plays 20 Bh6, 20...gh? is a mistake: 21 Qf5 Nd7 (21...Qxb5 22 Nxb6+ +-) 22 Rxb7 Qxb7 23 Bxd5+- . On 20...f5?!, Zaitsev gives 21 Rxb7! Qxb7 (21...Qxd3? 22 Bxd5+ Rf7 23 Bxf7+ Kf8 24 Bxg7+ Kxg7 25 Bc4+ +-) 22 Ne3 Ra5 23 Nxd5 Rxd5 24 Qc4+-, but this variation has a hole in it. Instead of the losing capture on d5, Black must continue 23...Qa6, with an unclear position; and besides, 23...Ra3! is stronger than 23...Ra5. The strongest defense, in Zaitsev's opinion, would be 20...Nd7! unclear.

B3) 20 Qb1!? Bc6 21 Rb6 Qa5 (21...Qc8 22 Ne3) 22 Nh6+! gh (22...Kh8 23 Nf5) 23 Bxh6 Re8 24 Qf5 (Zaitsev). Here, White's attack is decisive: 24...Bf8 25 Qg5+ Kg8 26 Bh5!, which both attacks f7 and clears the way to bring in the rook on b3 – so if there is a better defense, Black must find it earlier.

*However it came to be, this was one of those rare days in the immutable Indian Grandmaster's praxis when emotion got the better of his exacting calculation; taking note of Karpov's time-pressure, he threw himself into a whirlpool of complications.*

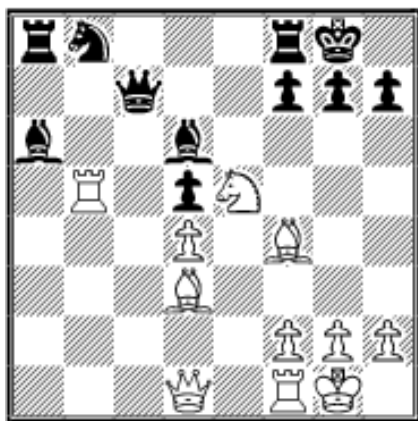
It is true that Zaitsev does not consider Gurevich's move, 17...Qe6!?; but since White keeps the advantage there, too, objectively he must be right – especially when you consider that the bishop sacrifice Anand soon employs is barely sufficient for victory (as we shall see later).

On the other hand, the game continuation also makes the defense very difficult. Anand played according to his style and his mood – and achieved a spectacular victory. Clearly, from a practical standpoint, his choice was correct, and deserves no criticism.

### 17...a6xb5

“There is no other way: both 17...a5 and 17...f6 18 Be3! a5 19 Nd3 Nd7 20 Bf3 would leave White with the monster on b5.”

### 18 Rb1xb5 Qb6-c7 19 Bc1-f4 Be7-d6 20 Be2-d3 Bb7-a6



The alternatives aren't very attractive:

A) 20...Nd7? (or 20...Nc6?) 21 Bxh7+! Kxh7 22 Qb1+ and 23 Rxb7 (Gurevich).

B) 20...g6 21 Qb3 Ba6 22 Rc1± (Gurevich).

C) 20...Bc6:

C1) With the a-file open, the sacrifice is no longer effective: 21 Bxh7+? Kxh7 22 Rb3 Kg8 23 Rh3 allows Black the reply 23...Ra3

unclear (Christiansen);

C2) 21 Rb1 isn't bad. If 21...f6?!, then 22 Qh5 g5 23 Nxc6 (another very strong line is 23 Nd7! Qxd7 24 Bxd6+- – Dvoretsky) 23...Bxf4 24 Nb4 Ra5 25 Bf5, with a great advantage (Gurevich) 21...Nd7± is more stubborn.

C3) 21 Rb3 suggests itself, since Black no longer has 21...Ba4?, because of 22 Bxh7+ Kxh7 23 Qh5+ Kg8 24 Rh3+-. Instead, he could play 21...g6! 22 Qg4! Nd7 23 Rc3 Nxe5 24 de Bb4 25 e6!± (Christiansen).

“Here I spent a few seconds checking 21 Rxd5, which leaves White with an extra pawn. But as I mentioned earlier, I couldn’t face a long technical game. In many lines, Black can exchange on e5, leaving a position with 4 vs. 3 on one side. Depending on which pieces are left, this might or might not be a win, but the game would certainly continue for a long time.

Then I saw Bxh7+ and didn’t waste any more time on Rxd5. I spent some time analyzing the sacrifice, and didn’t see a defense for Black. I then realized that I was too excited to analyze, and decided that I would simply play it. Karpov had hardly any time left, and I was sure he wouldn’t find a defence.”

*Karpov had used his time rather imprudently, and had only 30 minutes left on the clock – clearly not enough for the head-spinning complexities coming up.*  
(Gurevich)

“In the press centre, they had been expecting 21 Rxd5, but my close friend Mauricio Perea knew immediately that I would play 21 Bxh7+!, and he tried to work out all the details.”

There is another combination, leading to a draw: 21 Qb1?! Bxb5 22 Bxh7+ Kh8 23 Qf5 Bxe5 24 Bxe5 (24 Qh3? Bxf4-+) 24...Qc4 25 Bxg7+ Kxg7 26 Qg5+ Kh8 27 Qf6+ Kxh7 28 Qf5+ (Zaitsev).

Taking the pawn with 21 Rxd5 would have retained an advantage, but a much smaller one compared to 17 Qd3; and it’s quite likely that it would not have been enough to win.

A) 21...Nc6!? 22 Bxa6 Rxa6 23 Nxc6 Rxc6 (23...Bxf4 24 Ne5 Rd6+/=) 24 Bxd6 Rxd6+/=+ (Gurevich).

B) 21...Bxd3!? 22 Qxd3 Nc6 23 Qe4+/=+ (Dvoretsky). Zaitsev examines 23 Rc1?! Nb4! 24 Rxc7, and continues 24...Nxd3 25 Rxd6 Ra1+ 26 Bc1 Nxc1 27 g3 Nd3+ +/=+, but Black solves his problems with 24...Bxc7! unclear.

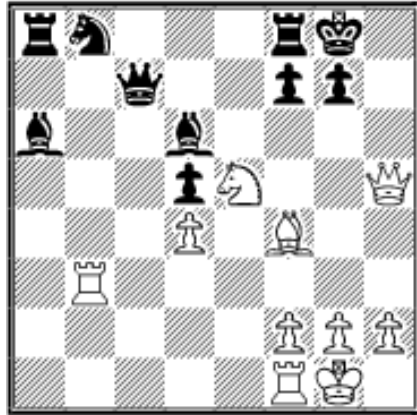
## **21 Bd3xh7+!**

*(!!?) Two exclamation marks only for Anand’s will to win. It’s amusing that, in his combination, the blow Bxh7+ is one of the most commonly used, and frequently overlooked by, amateurs. But Karpov doesn’t miss such things – and so I think it was here ... But the assessment of this blow from a purely chess standpoint is not clear, which is why the last mark in my assessment is a query.*  
(Gurevich)

## **21...Kg8xh7 22 Qd1-h5+**

Zaitsev believes 22 Rb3 would have been cleverer. He shows (not wholly convincingly, in my opinion) that after 22...f6? 23 Rh3+ Kg8 24 Ng6 and 22...g6 23 Qg4, White holding a great advantage. Still, I fail to understand why he should study such complex extraneous variations, when the simple 22...Kg8! 23 Qh5 leads by transposition right back into the game.

22...Kh7-g8 23 Rb5-b3



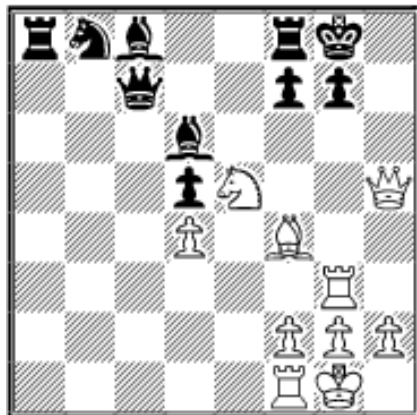
23...Bd6xe5?

“This loses trivially.”

Let’s look at the other possibilities.

I. “During the game, I was more worried about 23...Bc8 than about 23...f6, but later analysis suggests that the latter was the best move.

I hadn’t analyzed the alternative **23...Bc8!?** well. Later I asked Karpov what he saw against it and he said that he assumed 24 Rg3 (24 g4? Ra3 – Gurevich) would win.



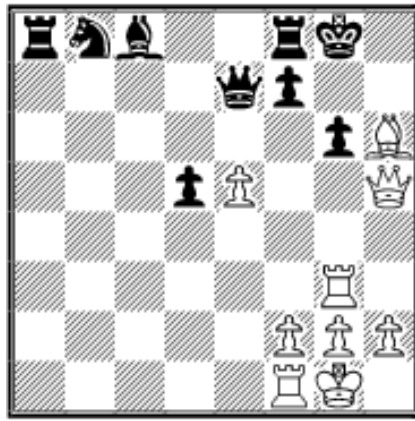
I showed him **24...Qe7** (24...f6? is just bad: 25 Ng6 Be6 26 Qh8+ Kf7 27 Qxf8+ Bxf8 28 Bxc7+- [Zaitsev], and 27 Nxf8! is stronger still) and we thought that this would have saved Black. Later (according to my second Ubilava), Dzindzi found the way for White.”

**25 Bg5!?** is tempting. On 25...Qe6, Anand gives 26 Rh3 (26 Bh6? Bxe5 27 de g6 28 Bxf8 Kxf8 unclear) 26...Qxh3 27 gh f6 28 Ng6 fg 29 Qh8+ Kf7 30 Nxf8 Bxf8 31 f4 g4 32 Qh5+ +-.

According to Zaitsev’s analysis, 25...f6 is no help either: 26 Ng6 (after 26 Bh6 fe 27 Bxg7 Qxg7, Anand gives the line 28 Qh6? Qxg3 29 hg Ra6 30 Qg6+ Kh8 31 Qh6+ Kg8 =, but Black wins with 28...Bg4! 29 Qxd6 Ra6 30 Qxd5+ Kh8, so White must play 28 Rxg7+ Kxg7 29 Qg5+, and if 29...Kf7, then 30 f4! with a likely draw – Dvoretsky) 26...Qe8 (26...Qc7 27 Bf4, and there’s no defense against 28 Qh8+ Kf7 29 Qxf8+ or 29 Nxf8) 27 Bxf6! Rxf6 28 Qh8+ Kf7 29 Ne5+ Ke7 30 Qxg7+ (30 Rxg7+? Kd8) 30...Rf7 31 Qg5+! (31 Nxf7 is weaker: 31...Qxf7 32 Re3+ Be6 33 Rxe6+ Kxe6 34 Re1+ Be5!! 35 Rxe5+ [35 Qxe5+ Kd7 unclear] 35...Kd6 unclear – Zaitsev. However, White still keeps the advantage by 35 Qg4+! Qf5 36 Rxe5+ Kd6 37 Qg3 – Dvoretsky) 31...Rf6 (31...Ke6 32 Re3) 32 Rf3+-.

Dzindzichashvili suggested **25 Bh6! Bxe5 26 de g6**



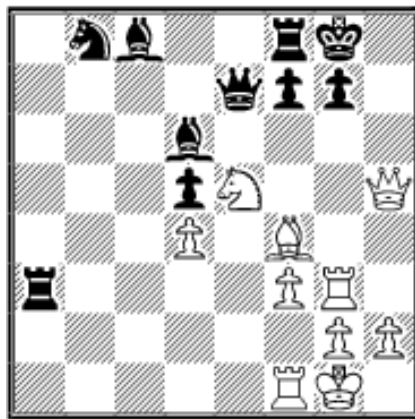


“And now **27 e6!!**. Black is lost after both 27...Qxe6 28 Bxf8 and 27...Bxe6 28 Qe5 f6 29 Rxc7+.”

Gurevich tried to hold Black's position with **24...Ra3!?**. The rook sacrifice is only good enough for a draw: 25 Rxc7+ Kxc7 26 Bh6+ (or 26 Qg5+ =) 26...Kf6 (26...Kh7? 27 Bg5+) 27 Re1 Rg8 28 Ng6 (28 Qh4+?! is inferior: 28...Ke6 29 Ng4+ Kd7 30 Nf6+ Kc6 31 Rc1+ Kb7 32 Rxc7+ Bxc7-/+; but 28 f4!? unclear, is worth looking into) 28...Rxc7 29 Qh4+ Kf5

30 Qh5+ with a perpetual check.

But White would play **25 f3! Qe7**



Here, it's true, 26 Bh6?! is no longer so effective, since after 26...Bxe5 27 de g6, 28 e6? Qxe6 29 Bxf8 Kxf8-/+ doesn't work anymore, and 28 Bxf8 Qa7+ (28...Qxf8 29 Rc1 unclear) 29 Kh1 Ra1 30 Rxc7+ fg 31 Qxc7+ Kf8 32 Qf6+ Ke8 33 Qh8+ Ke7! only leads to a draw (Gurevich).

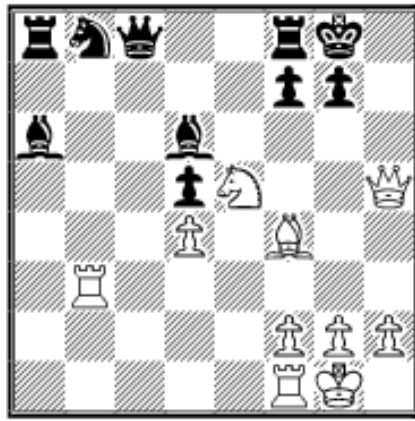
But **26 Bg5!** is just as strong as before. The variations are roughly the same as after 24...Qe7 25 Bg5:

A) 26...Qe6 27 Rh3 Qxh3 28 gh+-.

B) 26...f6 27 Ng6 Qe8 28 Bxf6! Rxf6 29 Qh8+ Kf7 30 Ne5+ Ke7 31 Qxc7+ Rf7 32 Qg5+! Rf6 33 Re1 Be6 34 Qh4!, with a decisive attack (Dvoretsky).

The other possibility is to bring the only currently non-participating White piece into the game by **26 Rc1!** Qf6 27 Bh6 (27 Bg5 Bxe5 28 Bxf6 Bxf6 29 Qxd5 Rd3 =) 27...Bxe5 (27...Be6 is no better: 28 Bxc7 Qxc7 29 Rxc7+ Kxc7 30 f4!, intending 31 f5, with a decisive attack – Dvoretsky) 28 de Qb6+ 29 Kh1 g6 30 Bxf8 Rc3 31 Qh6 Rxc1+ 32 Qxc1+- (Nunn).

II. Zaitsev thought that Black could successfully repel the enemy onslaught by playing **23...Qc8?!.**



The threat of 24 Rh3 is now prevented: 24...Qxh3 25 Qxh3 Bxf1 26 Kxf1 Ra1+, with sufficient counterplay. And blocking the black queen's access to the h3-square by 24 g4? fails to 24...Bxf1 (again controlling the h3-square) 25 Kxf1 Ra3+.

*White probably has a draw here somewhere, but no more than that. And this would have been the logical outcome after White abandoned the consequent strategic plan at move 17. (Zaitsev)*

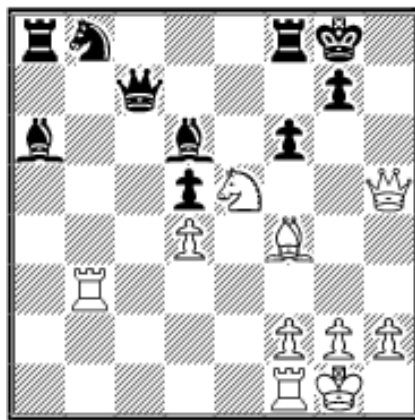
Unfortunately, the remaining variations presented by Zaitsev do not withstand analytical criticism.

**24 Rg3 Qe6** (here, Zaitsev ends his variation – but the battle is just beginning) **25 Qg5!** Bxe5 26 Bxe5 Qg6 27 Qh4 Bxf1 28 Rxg6 fg 29 Qe7 Rf7 30 Qe8+ Rf8 31 Qe6+ (31 Qxg6 Rf7 32 Kxf1) 31...Rf7 32 Kxf1 Ra1+ 33 Ke2 Ra2+ 34 Kd3 Nd7 35 Qxd5 – White has the upper hand, although Black retains realistic drawing chances.

**24 Rc1 Bxe5** (!! – Zaitsev) 25 Rxc8 Rxc8, and Black wins. White was in too great a hurry to take the queen: **25 de!** was much stronger; for example, 25...Nc6 26 Rh3 Qxh3 27 Qxh3!? (27 gh is good, too) 27...Nd4 28 Qg4! Ne2+ 29 Kh1, and after 29...Nxc1 30 Bh6 g6 31 Qg5 Kh7 32 Bxf8 Rxf8 33 Qxc1, White achieves a decisive material advantage.

**24 Re1 Bxe5 25 de Qe6 26 Rh3 f5.** Here, Zaitsev stops – and wrongly so, as **27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 Rg3** gives White a decisive attack.

III. **23...f6!** The most principled move, and at the same time – the best defense!



There's no win after 24 Rc1 Qa7! 25 Rh3 (25 Ng6 Bxf4 26 Nxf4 Qxd4 27 Rh3 Qxf4 28 Qxd5+ Rf7 29 Qd8+ Rf8 =, or 27 Ng6 Re8 = Dvoretsky) 25...fe 26 Bxe5 (26 de Rxf4 27 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Qh5+ also leads to a draw) 26...Bxe5 27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 Qh5+ Kg8 = (Gurevich).

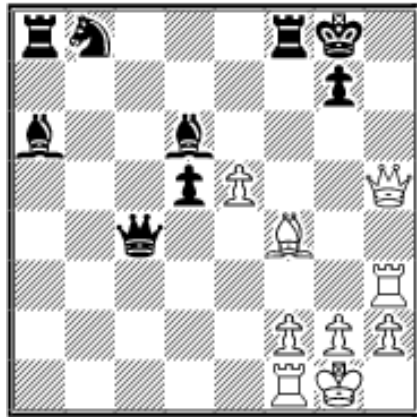
The main line is **24 Rh3 fe** (24...Bxe5? 25 de leads to the game) **25 de!** (25 Bxe5 would be a mistake: 25...Bxf1 26 Qh7+ Kf7 27 Rf3+ Ke8 28 Qg6+ Rf7 29 Bxd6 Bd3!!-+ Gurevich).

Gurevich).

After 25 de, Black loses quickly with 25...Rxf4? 26 e6! Kf8 27 Qh8+ Ke7 28 Qxg7+ Kxe6 29 Re1+! Re4 30 Rh6+.

And 25...Qd7? is also unsatisfactory: 26 Qh7+ Kf7 27 ed (27 Rg3 Ke8 28 ed amounts to the same thing) 28...Bxf1 29 Rg3 Ke8 (29...Rg8 30 Qg6+ Kf8 31 Bg5+-) 30 Rxd7 Bb5 (relatively best) 31 h4 Kd8 (31...Rxf4 32 Rxd7+-; 31...Ra1+ 32 Kh2 Re1 33 Rxd7 Nxd7 34 Be3 Kd8 35 h5+-) 32 Rxd7+ Nxd7 33 Bh6 Re8 34 Qf7 Re1+ (the threat was 35 Bg5+) 35 Kh2 Kc8 36 Qg8+ Kb7 37 Qxd5+ Bc6 38 Qb3+ Nb6 39 Be3 Ra6 40 h5+- (Dvoretsky).

The only defense is: **25...Qc4!**

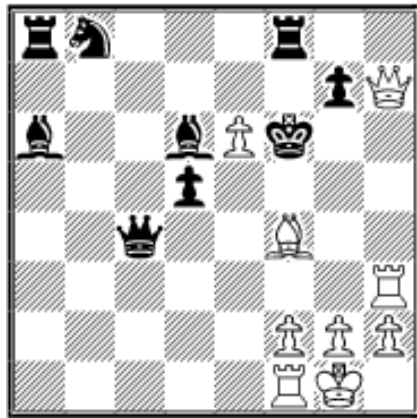


White must now make a choice between beginning his assault at once, or preparing it by Re1.

A) **26 Qh7+ Kf7 27 e6+!** (on 27 Qf5+, Black must answer 27...Kg8 =, but not 27...Ke8? 28 Qg6+ Rf7 29 Re1! [29 Rh8+ Bf8 30 Qe6+ Re7 31 Qg6+ Rf7 = Gurevich] 29...Qb4 30 Rhe3+-, threatening 31 ed+ and 31 e6 – Dvoretsky)

Black loses immediately after 27...Kxe6? 28 Re1+!. Also unattractive is 27...Ke8 28 Qg6+ Kd8 29 Bg5+ Kc8 (29...Be7? 30 Bxe7+ Kxe7 31 Qxg7+ Ke8 32 Qg6+ Kd8 [32...Ke7 33 Rh7+] 33 e7+ Kc7 34 Rc3!! +- (Gurevich), or 34 Qd6+!! Kxd6 35 efQ+ +- (Dvoretsky) 30 Rc1± (Anand).

All that's left is **27...Kf6!**



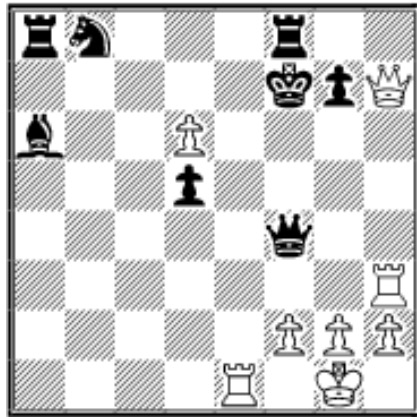
Now **28 Rh6+?! gh 29 Qxh6+ Kf5** would be tempting (29...Ke7? 30 Bg5+): **30 g4+ Ke4** (30...Kxg4 31 Qg5+ Kf3 32 Re1!! Qe2 33 Qxd5+ Kxf4 34 Qxd6+ – Zaitsev) **31 Re1!**; for example, 31...Kd3 32, Qg6+ Kd4 33 Bxd6 (Anand: “Fritz will probably tell you more than I could.”), or 31...Kd4 32 Be5+! (32 Bxd6 would be simpler – Dvoretsky) 32...Kc5 (32...Bxe5? 33 Qe3#; 32...Kd3? 33 Qe3+) 33 Bxd6+ Kc6 (33...Kxd6? 34 e7+) 34 Qxf8+- (Zaitsev)

Unfortunately, Anand correctly points out that Black has **31...Qe2! 32 Rxe2+ Bxe2** 33 Bxd6? Ra1+ 34 Kg2 Bf1+! 35 Kg3 Rf3+ 36 Kh4 Rh3+ -+. In this line, rather than the losing bishop capture, White must play 33 e7! Bxe7 34 Bc1, with mutual chances (Dvoretsky).

An alternative for White is: “28 Bg5+ Ke6 29 Re1+ Kd7 (not 29...Be5 30 Rxe5+ Kd6 31 Re1 Nc6 32 Qg6+ Kc7 33 Qxg7+ Kb6 34 Rb1+ Bb5 35 Rbh3+-) 30 Qxg7+ Kc6 31 Rc3 Nd7 32 Rxc4+ Bxc4, with an unclear position. White has a lot of pawns on the kingside, but since Black’s king is now safe, he can activate his pieces.”

B) “**26 Re1!** is much simpler – White doesn’t invest too much material.

**26...Qxf4 27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 ed**



28...Re8? 29 Qh5+ g6 30 Re7+!! was indicated by Fritz. There is no defence: 30...Rxe7 (30...Kf6 31 Qf3! is an unexpected win) 31 Qh7+ Kf6 (31...Kf8 32 de+ Ke8 33 Qxg6+ Kxe7 34 Rh7+) 32 Qxe7+ Kf5 33 Qf8+! Ke5 34 Re3+ +-;

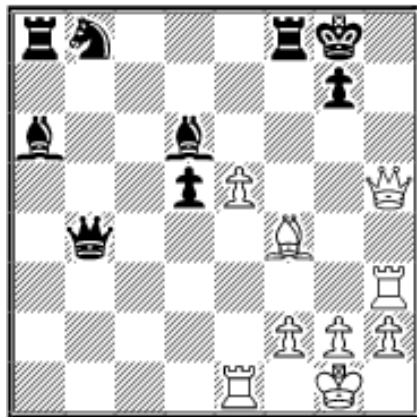
**28...Nc6 29 Rf3 Qxf3 30 gf Bc4**, and here both 31 h4 and 31 Kh1 are dangerous.

Still, to find your way through the complications with limited time over the board isn’t the easiest thing in the world, and Karpov didn’t manage it this time.”

On 31 h4, the game ends in a perpetual check after 31...Rad8 32 d7 Nd4 33 Qh5+ Kg8 34 Re7 Nc6 35 Re6 Nb8 36 Rh6! gh 37 Qg6+ (Dvoretsky).

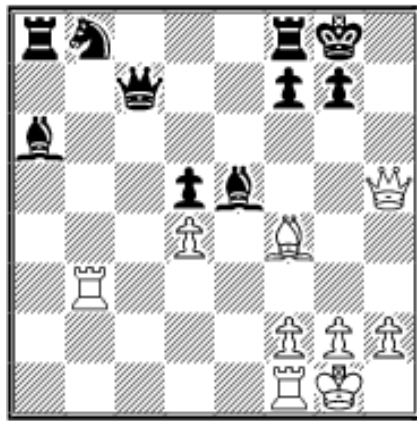
Larry Christiansen believes that after 31 Kh1, Black also retains good drawing chances; for example, 31...Rad8! 32 Rg1 Ke6! 33 Rg6+ Rf6 34 Qxg7 Rxg6 35 Qxg6+ Kd7 36 h4 d4 37 h5 d3 38 h6 Rf8! (38...d2? 39 Qc2) 39 h7 (39 Qg5!? Rf7 40 Kg2 Be6 = (Dvoretsky) 39...d2 40 Qc2 Rh8 41 Kg2 d1Q 42 Qxd1 Rxh7=/+.

And Black’s play could also be improved right at the beginning of his variation. As Gurevich notes, instead of taking the bishop on f4, he could play **26...Qb4!**



There seems to be nothing better than a perpetual check after 27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 Qh5+.

We now return to the game after 23...Bxe5.



*After the decisive error on move 23, Black loses by force (Zaitsev).*

**24 Rb3-h3! f7-f6**

24...f5? 25 Bxe5+- (Gurevich).

**25 d4xe5 Qc7-e7**

25...Bxf1? 26 e6!

25...fe 26 Bxe5 Qc4 27 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Qxg7+ Ke8 29 Re1+- (Gurevich).

“25...Qc4 26 Re1 (as Gurevich pointed out, 26 Qh7+ is also strong: 26...Kf7 27 e6+! Ke8 (27...Kxe6 28 Re1+ Kd7 29 Qxg7+) 28 Qg6+ Kd8 29 e7+ Kxe7 30 Re1+ Kd8 31 Qxg7+-) 26...Qxf4 27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 e6+ Ke8 29 Qg6+ is also no help for Black.”

**26 Qh5-h7+ Kg8-f7 27 Rh3-g3 Kf7-e8**

“27...Rg8 28 Qg6+ Kf8 29 ef, and Black can’t recapture.”

**28 Rg3xg7**

John Nunn suggested a different way here: 28 ef gf (28...Rxf6 29 Rxg7 Qe6 30 Qh5+ Rf7 31 Rxf7 Qxf7 32 Re1+) 28 Re3 Qxe3 30 fe Bxf1 31 Bd6+-.

**28...Qe7-e6**

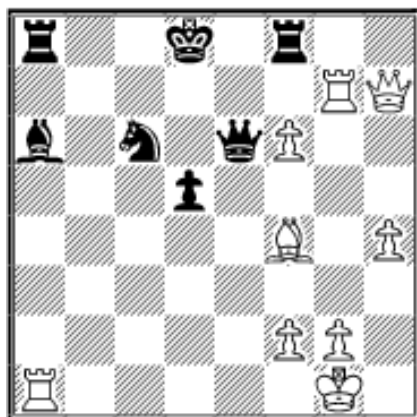
28...Rf7 29 ef (Gurevich)

**29 e5xf6 Nb8-c6**

29...Qxf6 30 Re1+.

29...Rxf6 30 Rg8+ Rf8 31 Qh5+ Qf7 (31...Ke7 32 Bg5+) 32 Re1+ Kd7 33 Rg7! Qxg7 34 Qxd5+ Kc8 35 Rc1+ +- (Gurevich).

**30 Rf1-a1 Ke8-d8 31 h2-h4!**



“To clear the back rank – it’s always nice to have time for the details.”

Still, he might also have played it more directly: 31 Bc7+ Kc8 32 Bb6 Qd6 33 Rc7+ Kb8 34 Rd7+- – Dvoretsky.

**31...Ba6-b7**

“31...Nd4 loses to 32 Bc7+ Kc8 33 Ba5.”

**32 Ra1-c1 Bb7-a6 33 Rc1-a1**

“I felt it would be better to have the rook on d1, and I was sure that Karpov would be grateful to repeat moves to get to the time control.”

White did have a forced win here: 33 Bc7+! Kc8 (33...Ke8 34 Rxc6!) 34 Rxc6 (34 Bb6 Kb8 35 Rb7+! +- [Zaitsev]; or 34 Ba5 Kb8 35 Rb1+ +-) 34...Qxc6 35 Qf5+ Kb7 36 Ba5+ Kb8 37 Qe5+ Kc8 38 Rc7+ +- (Gurevich).

**33...Ba6-b7 34 Ra1-d1 Bb7-a6 35 Qh7-b1! Rf8xf6 36 Bf4-g5 1-0**

By now, White could win “as he pleases.” Gurevich gives 36...Kc8 37 Qb6 Ne7 (37...Rf7 38 Rxf7 Qxf7 39 Qxc6+) 38 Qc5+ Kd8 39 Rxe7 Qxe7 40 Rxd5+ Ke8 41 Re5+-.

“Karpov lost on time playing 36...Kc8. Obviously I was delighted to have won after a loss, but I was especially happy with the way in which I won.”

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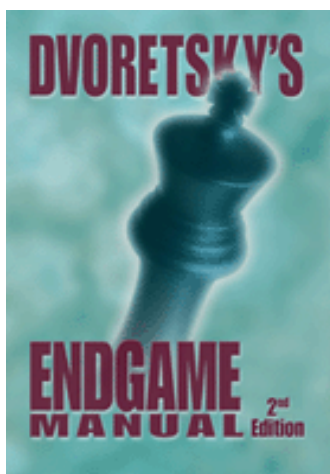
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C O L U M N I S T S

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



## Simagin's Exchange Sacrifices

Today, the positional exchange sacrifice  $Rxc3!$  in the Sicilian Defense has become a standard tactic that has probably been employed in thousands of games. But at one time it was an innovation, and one of the first players to make use of it was Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin. He wasn't terribly strong as a player – perhaps a middling grandmaster – but the depth of Simagin's ideas and the rich creativity of his play stood out, even compared to players who achieved considerably greater successes. Let me present some examples from Simagin's "Best Games," based upon his laconic annotations (given in *italic*). A question mark next to the diagram indicates that you can use the position as an exercise for solving.

**Ravinsky – Simagin**

Match-tournament Championship of Moscow, 1947

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nb3 Nbd7 (8...Nc6) 9.Kh1 b6 10.f4 Bb7 11.Bf3 Rc8 12.Be3?!**



B?

**12...Rxc3!**

*A universal exchange sacrifice in the Sicilian Defense. Black obtains just one pawn for the exchange, but all of his pieces will take up excellent positions. In the sharp middlegame fight that follows, Black's minor piece will be no weaker than White's rook.*

**13.bc Nxe4 14.Bd4 e5 15.fe de 16.Qe1?!**

The complications created by White lead to a decisive advantage – for his opponent! But after  $16.Bxe4 Bxe4 17.Be3 Bc6!$ , Black would still have a great positional advantage, in Simagin's opinion.

**16...ed 17.Bxe4 Re8 18.Bxb7 Rxe1 19.Raxe1 dc 20.Re3 h5!**

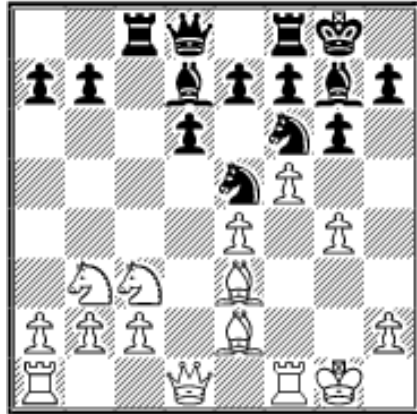
*The decisive moment: Black secures his king's safety, after which his material advantage decides the game.*

**21.Ba6 Ne5 22.Rxc3 Kh7 23.Rh3 Qd5 24.Bd3 Kg8! 25.Re3 Bh6 26.Rg3 h4  
27.Rh3 Bg5 28.Be2 a5 29.Nc1? Bxc1 30.Rxc1 Qd2 0-1**

*Black's exchange sacrifice turned up in many events to follow, eventually becoming a rather routine strategic technique, by which Black destroys the white center. However, Master Ravinsky was evidently not convinced of the correctness of White's strategy: ten years later, the following game was played between us.*

***Ravinsky - Simagin***

Moscow 1957



W

*In this position, White could have played 13.Nd2!, supporting his pawn center.*

**13.Bd4? Rxc3! 14.bc?! Nxe4 15.Nd2 Nxd2  
16.Qxd2 Bc6 17.c4 Qc7 18.Rad1 b6 19.Rf2  
Ba8 20.h3 gf! 21.gf Kh8 22.Kh2 Rg8 23.Rg1  
Qc6 24.Qg5 Qe4 25.Be3?**

After 25.f6! ef 26.Qd2 f5, Black's position would be preferable, but the fight would

continue.

**25...Ng4+!!** – Black wins the queen and the game.

Earlier still, Simagin discovered a different setup for his positional exchange sacrifice. Nowadays this can also be called typical, but it comes up far less frequently. I can count the number of examples known to me on the fingers of one hand.

***Ljublinsky – Simagin***

Moscow, match 1939

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 d6 4.d4 ed 5.Nxd4 g6 6.Be3 (6.Bb5) 6...Bg7 7.Be2  
Nge7**

Usually in such positions, Black develops his knight to f6.

**8.Qd2 0-0 9.h4**

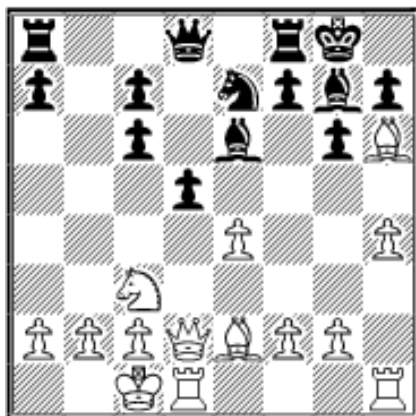
It would probably have been a good idea to castle long first, and only then play h2-h4. Black meets the immediate flank attack as he's supposed to – with a counterattack in the center.

**9...d5! 10.Nxc6 bc 11.0-0-0 Be6 12.Bh6?!**



*Had White foreseen the complications which follow, then of course he would have played 12.Bd4, retaining a decent position.*

12.h5!? was also worth a look.



B?

**12...Bh8!**

*Similar exchange sacrifices have occurred a few times in my games. In a complex middlegame, an active black bishop is of course no weaker than a passive white rook. Nevertheless, it should be noted that such sacrifices are not always correct. In the present position, a number of factors may be defined as allowing me to predict that Black's attack will be almost impossible to withstand. The most significant factors are these: 1) the open b-file, along which the remaining black rook will soon be operating; and 2) the mobile pawn center, which will soon be set in motion.*

**13.Bxf8 Qxf8 14.a3?**

*White had intended to attack, but must instead go on the defensive. The change of circumstance had a deleterious effect on him, and now he loses time. 14.Na4 was better.*

In reply to 14.Na4, Black would play 14...de, with excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange – even though, Simagin's opinion notwithstanding, I have some doubts as to the irresistibility of Black's attack. Another natural continuation for White would have been 14.h5.

**14...Rb8 15.Bd3 c5! 16.ed?!**

Here, too, 16.h5 was worth consideration.

**16...Nxd5 17.Na4 Bd7!–+ 18.Qa5 Bxa4 19.Qxa4 Qh6+ 20.f4 Nxf4 21.Rd2 Bxb2+ 22.Kd1 Bc3 23.Rf2 Rb1# 0-1**

A similar positional exchange sacrifice occurred in the game Byvshev – Tolush, USSR Championship semifinal, Leningrad 1954, which can be found in the exercise section of Dvoretsky and Yusupov's *School of Future Champions 1*.

All of the above serves as an introduction to the following game. It's far from error-free, but it was a very tense and interesting game. I hope you will like some of the ideas that I discovered during my analysis.

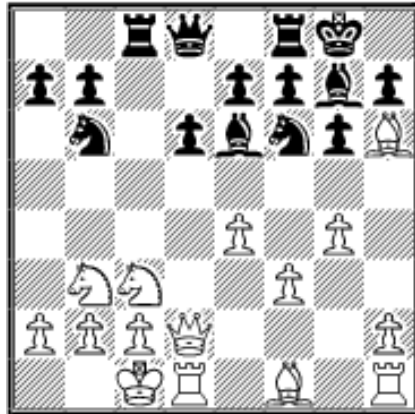
**Panov – Simagin**

Moscow Championship 1943

**1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5.Nb1-c3 g7-g6 6.Bc1-e3 Bf8-g7 7.f2-f3 0-0 8.Nd4-b3?!**

An inferior move; now White no longer has any reason to expect an opening advantage. The usual continuation is 8.Qd2.

**8...Bc8-e6 9.Qd1-d2 Nb8-d7 10.0-0-0 Nd7-b6 11.g2-g4 Ra8-c8 12.Be3-h6**



B?

**12...Bg7-h8?!**

Simagin's following note gives us insight into his objectivity and his creative tastes, to which he remained faithful his whole life.

*In this position, the exchange sacrifice cannot be considered completely correct. In my game against Ljublinsky, the sacrifice gave Black a clear strategic benefit. But here, we have no*

*reason to assert that the game must finish with a driving attack. If the sacrifice can be considered reasonable, then it is only on psychological considerations. Master Panov is an excellent attacker, but considerably worse in games requiring lengthy defense.*

*I don't rate games with such psychological nuances very highly. A chess master, in my view, should play consistently, and strive for error-free games. I include this game here only because it was published in many places, but it has never received the proper annotation.*

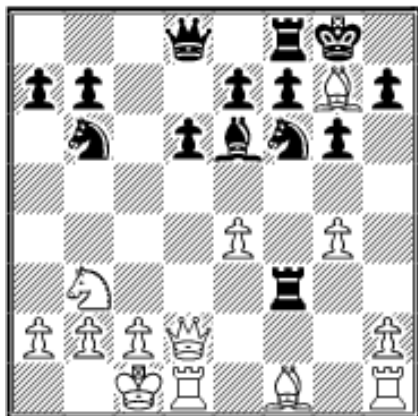
And how should he have played? In *ECO*, Efim Geller suggests 12...Bc4, with the idea of securing the important c4-square for the knight, but I don't find this recommendation convincing.

In my view, the positional exchange sacrifice noted at the beginning of this article suggests itself: 12...Bxh6 13.Qxh6 Rxc3! 14.bc Qc7, with full compensation, given the weakness of the queenside pawns.

Why didn't Simagin play this? Look at the date: he was aware of the Bg7-h8!? idea, because he had played it four years earlier. But the positional sacrifice of the exchange on c3 wasn't employed by him for another four years: in 1947. This is why it seems obvious now – because we have seen it in a number of analogous examples. To be the first to find such an idea over the board is very difficult indeed.

For gourmands, I offer the suggestion to examine a transposition of moves: 12...Rxc3!?. It has no independent significance, since after 13.bc, Black's best line would be to return to the same position by 13...Bxh6 14.Qxh6 Qc7. But

White has an additional possibility: 13.Bxg7, to which Black would reply 13...Rxf3.



W

On 14.Bxf8 Qxf8, Black's compensation for the exchange is quite sufficient. But White also has a rather unusual idea at his disposal: 14.Bxf6!? Rxf6 15.g5, when the rook is trapped. On 15...Rxf1 16.Rhxf1, White has the upper hand; and on 15...Rf3!, he has the reply 16.Nd4. But here, Black can obtain counterplay by 16...Bg4! 17.Re1! Rxf1 18.Rhxf1 e5 19.Nb3 Nc4 (unexpectedly winning the g5-pawn) 20.Qd5 Qxg5+ 21.Kb1

Be6 22.Qxb7 a5, with chances for both sides (joint analysis with Vadim Zvjagintsev).

**13.Bh6xf8 Qd8xf8 14.Nb3-d4 Be6-c4 15.g4-g5 Nf6-d7 16.Bf1-h3**

I am not commenting on White's moves, because they're good enough to retain the advantage, although they were clearly not the best available, as he probably could have varied somewhere.

**16...e7-e6 17.Kc1-b1**



B

Now how does Black continue? He would like to clear c4 for his knight, but 17...Ba6 is met by 18.Nxe6! And on 17...Qe7, 18.f4 Ba6 19.f5 Nc4 20.Qf2 looks strong.

GM Zvjagintsev suggested a curious positional idea: 17...h6!? 18.gh Kh7, diminishing the threat of the knight sacrifice on e6, and somewhat improving his chances in the event of later simplification, as his

pawn structure has been improved. However, the advantage still remains with White.

Simagin attempted to solve the problem tactically, and he succeeded, but only because of later errors by his opponent.

**17...Nd7-e5 18.f3-f4!**

Simagin disparages this move, recommending 18.Qf2 instead – mistakenly so, in my view.

**18...Ne5-f3!**

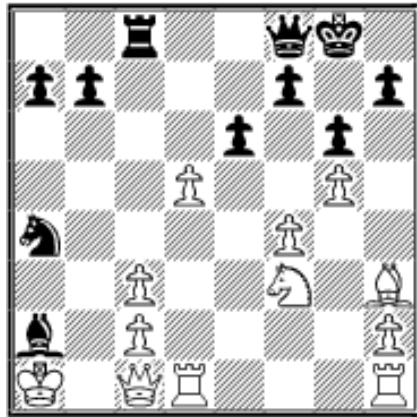


**22...Bc4xa2+!**

22...Nxc3+ 23.Ka1 Bxa2 was also strong.

**23.Kb1-a1**

23.Kxa2? would lose to 23...Nxc3+ 24.Ka1 Qb4! or 24.Kb3 Qc5! (Simagin)



B?

**23...Qf8-c5?**

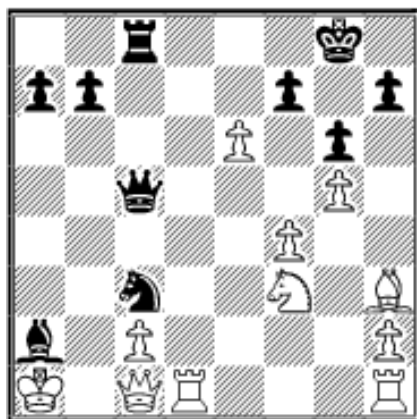
The natural move, but not the best. 23...Nxc3! was far stronger.

How do we establish this? For White, it's positionally very important to destroy the pawn at e6, for the bishop at h3 to go to work. So, after the text, 24.de! was possible, whereas 23...Nxc3! 24.de?! Bxe6 25.Bxe6 fe

would leave White defenseless. And if instead of 24.de White plays 24.d6, Black responds 24...Bd5 25.Rxd5 (there's nothing better) 25...Nxd5, and White's position is difficult. Black simply threatens 26...Qxd6, and on 26.d7?! comes 26...Rc4!, with decisive threats.

**24.d5xe6 Na4xc3**

Here, 24...Bxe6? 25.Bxe6 fe no longer works, because of 26.Nd4. And perpetual check, after 24...Qxc3+ 25.Ka2 Qc4+ is also insufficient for Black.



W?

Vassily Panov could not withstand the nervous tension of the battle and lost quickly.

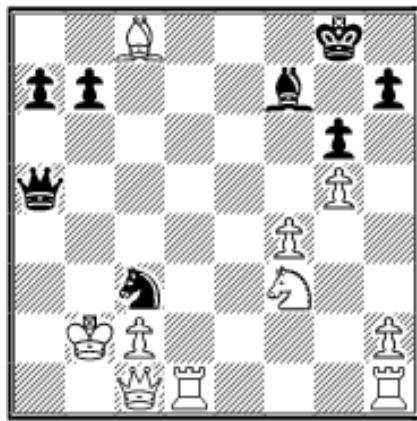
**25.Rd4? Bxe6 26.Bxe6 fe**

There is no satisfactory defense to the threatened 27...Qa5+.

**27.Ra4 Nxa4 28.c4 Rd8 29.Ka2 Qb4 30.Re1 Rd3 31.Rxe6 Nc3+ 0-1**

White had to choose either 25.ef+ or 25.e7. By itself, this choice is not too difficult, but the variations arising thereafter hold a number of engrossing subtleties.

First, let's look at A) **25.ef+? Bxf7 26.Bxc8 Qa5+ 27.Kb2**



B?

How does Black continue the attack? Simagin offered 27...Ne2 (adding an exclamation mark) 28.Rd8+ Kg7 29.Qa1 Qb4#! And if, instead of 29.Qa1, White plays 29.Be6!?, then 29...Qb6+! (but not 29...Nxc1? 30.Rd7! Qb6+ 31.Kxc1): 30.Bb3 (or 30.Ka1) 30...Nxc1 decides.

Nevertheless, White turns out to have an astonishing path to safety: 28.Be6!! (instead of 28.Rd8+?) 28...Bxe6 (28...Nxc1? 29.Bxf7+ Kxf7 30.Ne5+ Ke6 31.Kxc1; 28...Qb6+ 29.Bb3) 29.Rd8+! Kg7 (29...Qxd8? 30.Qe3+-) 30.Rd7+! Kf8 (30...Bxd7? 31.Qe3 Bc6! 32.Rf1+/-) 31.Rd8+ Ke7 32.Rd7+!, with perpetual check, since Black cannot play 32...Kxd7? 33.Qd2+.

Before playing Ne2, Black must take control of the d7-square with his queen.

**27...Qb4+! 28.Ka1 Qa4+ 29.Kb2 Ne2! 30.Be6 Bxe6 31.Rd8+ Kg7 32.Rd7+ Kf8**

The immediate 32...Qxd7 33.Qa1! Qb5+ 34.Ka3+ Kg8 is also strong. But in order to avoid the discovered check by the king, Black does well to improve his own king's position first.

**33.Rd8+ Ke7 34.Rd7+ Qxd7**

**B) 25.e6-e7!**

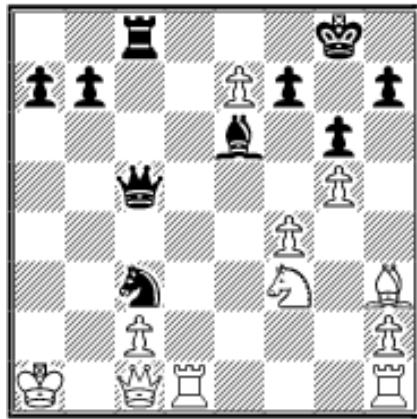
Only this move saves White. Black must now accept the draw. Here is the simplest and safest continuation.

**25...Qc5-a5! 26.Rd1-d8+ Kg8-g7**

White must take the rook (now, or after the preliminary 27.e8N+ Kh8), after which – as can easily be seen – Black gives perpetual check.

Curiously, Simagin doesn't mention 25...Qa5!. Instead, he analyzes two bishop retreats – 25...Be6 and 25...Bd5 – and shows that both of them lead to a draw. But in fact, both of them unexpectedly allow White a chance to play for the win.

**25...Be6?!**



W?

Simagin's variation runs 26.Rd8+ Kg7 27.e8N+ Kh8 28.Rxc8 Qa5+ with perpetual check.

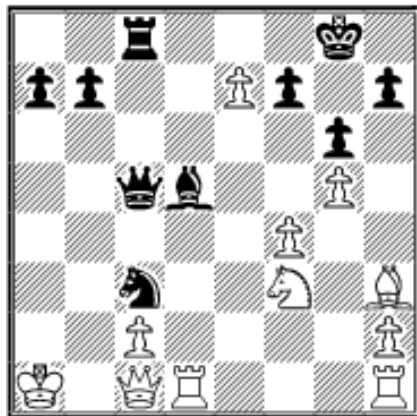
In such situations, analyzing with a computer can teach us a great deal and expand our chess horizons. In a practical game, almost any player caught in so dangerous a situation would be happy to force the draw. But for a computer, the only thing that matters is that

White is a rook up – and consequently, any variation that does not end in quick mate or perpetual check will be analyzed optimistically – by which, of course, I mean a high plus score displayed onscreen.

In the present case, we are talking about **26.Bxe6!**. We would decide at once that, after 26...Qa5+ 27.Kb2 Na4+, we would still have to repeat moves – how can the king walk into such a rain of checks? But the computer is fearless: 28.Kb3! Nc5+ (28...Rc3+ 29.Ka2+–) 29.Kc4! Nxe6+ (or 29...Qa4+ 30.Kc3 Qa5+ 31.Kd4) 30.Kd3, and the king escapes under enemy fire to the right wing, while keeping the extra rook

But **26...fe** is even harder to calculate. The only move to avoid the draw is **27.e8Q+!** (temporarily diverting the rook from the knight's protection) **27...Rxe8 28.Nd4!**. Here, it looks as though White's winning. For example, **28...Qa5+ 29.Kb2 Na4+ 30.Ka2!** (30.Ka3 Nc5+ is useless) **30...Rc8** (30...Nc5+ 31.Qa3+–; 30...Nc3+ 31.Kb3+–) **31.Qa3** (31.Qe3 Nc3+ 32.Kb2 Qa2+ 33.Kc1 e5! 34.fe Qa3+ 35.Kd2 Qb4+ 36.Ke1 Nxd1+ 37.Kxd1 Rd8 c3 Qb1+ 39.Qc1 Qd3+ 40.Ke1+/- is strong as well) **31...Rc3 32.Nb3 Rxc2+ 33.Kb1 Nc3+ 34.Kxc2 Qxa3 35.Rd8+ Kf7 36.Kxc3+–**.

**25...Bd5!?** is better than 25...Be6, but here too, White manages to keep some tension in the struggle.

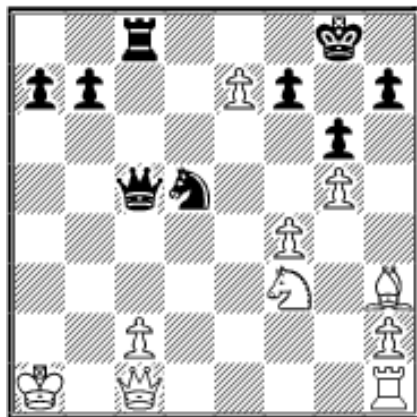


W?

Simagin only mentions 26.Bxc8 Qa5+ 27.Kb2 Na4+, after which White's only drawing line is 28.Kb1!, since after 28.Ka1?, Black mates: 28...Nb6+! (28...Qc3+ 29.Kb1 Qb4+ 30.Ka1=) 29.Kb2 Nc4+ 30.Kb1 Nd2+! 31.Kb2 Qb4+ 32.Ka1 Qc3+ 33.Qb2 Qa5+.

**26.Rxd5!** is much more interesting. Black cannot reply 26...Qxd5? because of 27.Qa3 Qxf3 28.Re1 Re8 29.Bd7+–, or 26...Qb4?

27.e8Q+! Rxe8 28.Rd4 Qa5+ 29.Kb2 Na4+ 30.Rxa4+–. All that remains is **26...Nxd5!**



W?

After 27.Bxc8 Qa5+ 28.Kb1 (28.Kb2 Qb4+) 28...Nc3+ 29.Kb2 Qb4+, once again it's perpetual check. The only way to avoid it is **27.c4!**. Playing to win might be even riskier than in the 25...Be6 variation, since there White had an extra rook, while here he has only an extra minor piece.

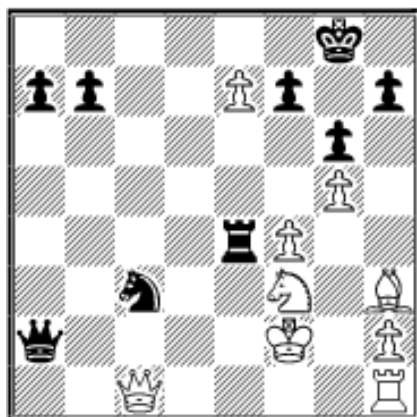
**27...Qa5+ 28.Kb1 Nc3+ 29.Kc2 Qa4+ 30.Kd2**

An alternative line is 30.Kxc3 Rxc4+ 31.Kd3 Rxc1 32.Rxc1 Qa3+ 33.Rc3 Qxe7 unclear. I don't know how to evaluate the final position. If the bishop stood on d5, then the pieces would probably be stronger than the queen. But here White's army is scattered and hard to consolidate, while Black's queenside pawns might become a powerful force.

**30...Rxc4 31.Ke1**

It's a draw after 13.Re1 Ne4+ 32.Rxe4 Qb4+! (32...Rxe4?? 33.Qc8+) 33.Kd3 Qb3+ 34.Kd2 Qb4+.

**31...Re4+** (31...Qe8? would be much weaker: 32.Qa3 Nb5 33.Qe3+/-) **32.Kf2 Qa2+!**



W?

**33.Qxd2!** (33.Nd2 Rxf4+) **33...Re2+ 34.Kg1!**

After 34.Kf1 Qa1+ 35.Ne1 Rxd2 36.e8Q+ Kg7, the powerful threat of 37...Re2 forces White to take the draw.

**34...Qxd2** (34...Qb1+?! 35.Bf1 Qb6+ 36.Qd4 Qxd4+ 37.Nxd4 Rxe7 gives Black an inferior version of the same ending) **35.Nxd2 Rxe7+/-**.

Black only has two pawns for the piece. Of course, White's pieces are far from their optimal positions, so Black does have real saving chances. Still, there can be no doubt that it is Black who will have to fight for the draw.





## Chaos on Board

Most grandmasters, especially experienced ones, are loath to give up control of events on the board. They grow uncomfortable as the outcome of the game becomes completely unpredictable, and neither assessments nor calculation are of much help in choosing one move over another. (Of course, we are not talking about those cases in which we are defending a bad position, and any confusion counts as a blessing.)

There are chessplayers, however, who will stir up irrational complications at the first favorable opportunity. Either a taste for the unknowable is rooted in their character (“I hear the song of battle / And of the bottomless darkness at the edge”), or else they understand or instinctively sense that it is just such circumstances that offer them a better chance to show the best features of their talent, and to outplay a stronger, but perhaps not so pugnacious and resourceful opponent.

One of the first gifted masters of “fighting in the shadows” was of course Mikhail Tal. Alexei Shirov is his worthy heir; and it is with one of his games that I should like to acquaint you.

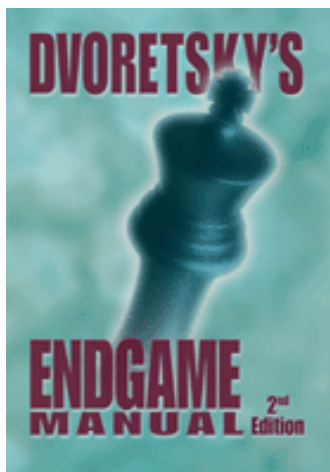
It was annotated in his collection, *Fire on Board*. And, while the analysis was plentiful, it was astonishingly weak. Of course, it would be easy to blame this on the fact that the book was published in 1997, when computer analysis was not as advanced, whereas nowadays programs quickly find the strongest moves. For the same reason, no doubt, in a few years somebody will find mistakes in my annotations as well (or even today, by using better technology or by taking more time to analyze).

But here’s the paradox: although many things were missed in Shirov’s annotations, over-the-board he was practically flawless. I could only cast doubt upon one of his moves, which for a hugely complex and confusing game is almost negligible. And this leads us to conclude that the tension of the struggle in a tournament game can sharply increase a chessplayer’s ability to concentrate, along with his ability to grasp intuitively what is happening on the board – allowing him, at times, to resolve the problems that arise better than any computer.

This game may be used for training purposes in various ways. For example, one could play it out, beginning with Black’s 16<sup>th</sup> move, either by oneself (discovering White’s replies from the game text), or against a strong friend. Another way would be to search for the strongest continuations from the

### COLUMNISTS

## *The Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



positions in those diagrams where a question mark appears.

You will face widely differing tasks in this game, sometimes there is a clear solution that has to be accurately calculated, and sometimes over-the-board calculation is either impossible or so difficult that you will be forced to rely on instinct.

To paraphrase a well-known aphorism of Albert Einstein: you have to calculate only the minimum number of variations needed – but not less than the number needed. Such extremely complex games not only provide material for training in fantasy and calculation, but are also very good for the development of intuition and the understanding of how to optimally combine evaluative considerations and calculation.

### ***Shirov – Eingorn***

Stockholm 1989

**1.d2-d4 e7-e6 2.c2-c4 Bf8-b4+ 3.Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4.f2-f3 d7-d5 5.a2-a3 Bb4-e7 6.e2-e4 c7-c5**

The main line is 6...de!? 7.fe e5.

**7.c4xd5**

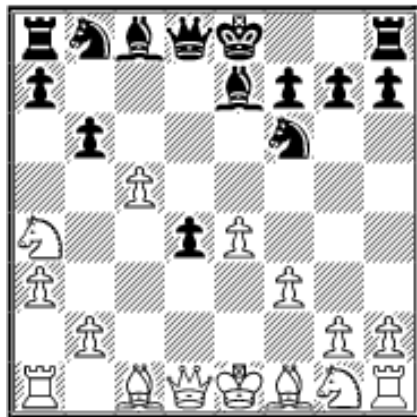
7.dc Bxc5 8.b4 Bxg1 9.Rxg1 Qc7=/+ was Shirov – Yudasin, Lvov 1990.

**7...e6xd5 8.d4xc5**

8.e5 Nfd7 9.Nxd5 was more commonly played.

**8...Be7xc5**

On 8...d4, Shirov gives 9.Na4 b6



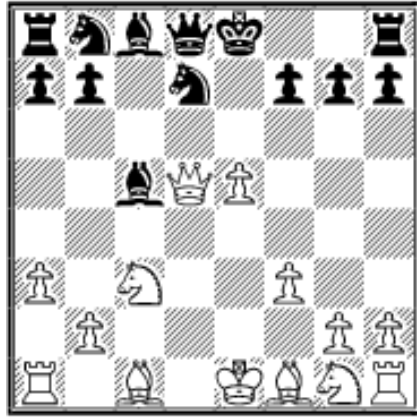
W?

10.cb ab 11.b4, but, after 11...0-0 12.Bb2 Nh5!?, Black has serious counterplay.

Instead of 10.cb, stronger is 10.e5! Nd5 11.Qxd4 0-0, and now, not 12.Bd3 f5! (Black takes the valuable e4-square away from the enemy queen), but 12.Bc4! Be6 13.Ne2 bc (13...Nc6 runs into the same reply) 14.Qe4+/-.

**9.e4-e5!? Nf6-d7**

9...Nh5 10.Qxd5+/- would be inferior.

**10.Qd1xd5**

B?

**10...0-0?!**

10...Bxg1? 11.Rxg1 Qb6 would not work (or 11...Qh4+? 12.g3 Qxh2 13.Rg2 Qh5 14.e6+—!), because of 12.Qd6! Qxd6 (12...Qxg1? 13.Nd5 Qc5 14.Nc7+ Kd8 15.Bg5+ f6 16.Ne6+) 13.ed+/-.

And 10...Qb6?! is also dubious: after 11.Ne4! 0-0 (11...Bxg1? 12.Nd6+ Kd8 13.Rxg1+—;

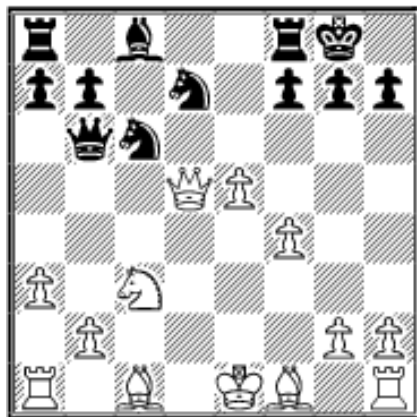
11...Be7 12.Nd6+/-) 12.Nxc5 Qxc5 (12...Nxc5 13.Be3 Qxb2 14.Bd4+—) 13.Qxc5 Nxc5 14.Be3 Nb3 15.Rd1+/- Black's compensation for the pawn is clearly insufficient.

However, 10...Nc6! was stronger than the game continuation. As sometimes happens, castling in a sharp position slows the tempo of the attack – it's more important to bring the pieces into play immediately.

The main line is: 11.f4 Qb6 12.Nf3 Bf2+ 13.Ke2 Nc5!? 14.b4 Be6 15.bc Bxc5! (Black also has 15...Qa5!? – Dvoretsky), and now either 16.Qe4 0-0-0! (Shirov) 17.Na4 Qb5+ 18.Ke1 Qa5+ 19.Bd2 Rxd2 20.Nxd2 Rd8 21.Rd1 Bxa3 with compensation, or 16.Qd3!? Rd8 17.Qc2 (Shirov) 17...Nd4+ 18.Nxd4 Bxd4 19.Ke1 0-0, and White's position looks dubious.

**11.f3-f4 Qd8-b6**

11...Bxg1?! 12.Rxg1 Qb6 (12...Qh4+ 13.g3 Qxh2 14.Qg2! Qxg2 15.Rxg2+/- Khenkin-Barle, Voskresensk 1990) is considerably worse: 13.Rh1 Nc6! (Gelfand-Spassky, Linares 1990, continued: 13...Nc5?! 14.b4 Ne6 15.Na4 Qc7 16.Be3+/-):



W?

Shirov continued poorly against Rausis (Daugavpils 1990): 14.Bc4? Ndx5! 15.fe Be6 16.Qb5 Bxc4 17.Qxc4 (17.Qxb6 ab—/+) 17...Nxe5, when Black whipped up a dangerous attack (and 17...Rfe8!—/+ was probably even more dangerous – Dvoretsky).

Black would get an outstanding position after 14.Na4?! Qc7 (14...Qd4? 15.Bc4! +/-) 15.Qd6 (15.Bc4 Ndx5; 15.Be3 Re8!)

15...Qxd6 16.ed Nf6!

White's play could be improved by 14.Qb5! Qd4 (14...Nd4 15.Qxb6, and 15...ab? is bad, owing to 16.Kf2!) 15.Qc4! Nb6 (15...Nc5 16.Nb5! Qxc4 17.Bxc4+/-) 16.Qxd4 Nxd4 (this is the same position that would have occurred after 14...Nd4 15.Qxb6 Nxb6) 17.Bd3 (*with a sizable advantage* – Shirov) 17...Rd8.



W?

Yes, 18.Be4 Bf5! 19.Bxf5 Nxf5 20.Kf2 Rd3 is unconvincing (Shirov's variation in *Informant*); but White can play 18.Be3! Bf5 (18...Nb3 19.Rd1+/- Yakovich-Piza, Cordoba 1991) 19.Bxd4 Bxd3 20.Bxb6 ab 21.Kf2+/- (Dvoretsky).

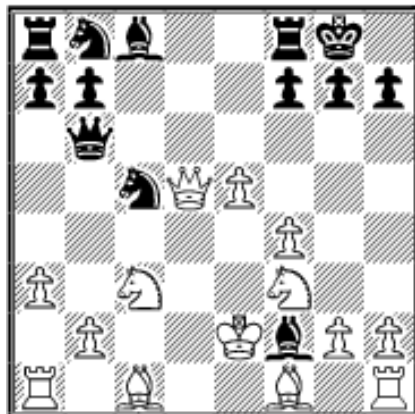
**12.Ng1-f3**



**12...Bc5-f2+**

Vadim Zvjaginsev's clever suggestion 12...Nf6?! 13.ef Bf2+ 14.Ke2 Re8+ (with the idea 15.Ne4 Be6) is put in doubt by 15.Ne5! Bg4+ (15...Be6 16.Qb5+-) 16.Kd2! Rd8 17.Nxg4+/-, when the black queen is weaker than White's rook and two minor pieces.

**13.Ke1-e2 Nd7-c5!**



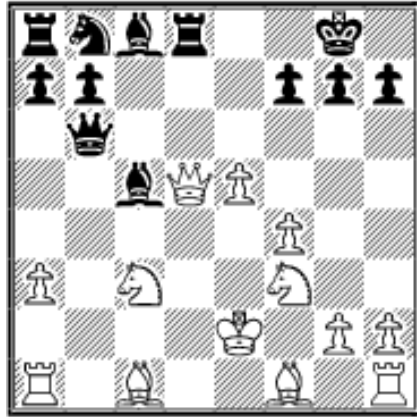
**14.b2-b4**

Shirov thinks that 14.Kxf2 Rd8 would have been bad. But, in fact, in the position after 15.Qxd8+ Qxd8 16.Be3, White retains the initiative, thanks to his palpable lead in development – his rook, bishop and pawn are no weaker than Black's queen. Black should win the queen a different way, giving up a bit more material, but retaining active prospects: 14...Nd3+!? 15.Ke2 Rd8 16.Qxd3 Rxd3

17.Kxd3 Nc6, with chances for both sides.

**14...Rf8-d8!**

On 14...Ne6?, White wins by 15.Na4! – but of course not 15.Ne4? (Shirov) 15...Bd4, with the opposite result.

**15.b4xc5 Be7xc5**

W?

**16.Qd5-e4?**

*With this move, White returns material, bringing about a completely irrational position. In any event, passive defense, such as 16.Qa2..., where the Black attack continues, is not my style.*

What we are seeing here is an example of how the peculiarities of a chessplayer's style

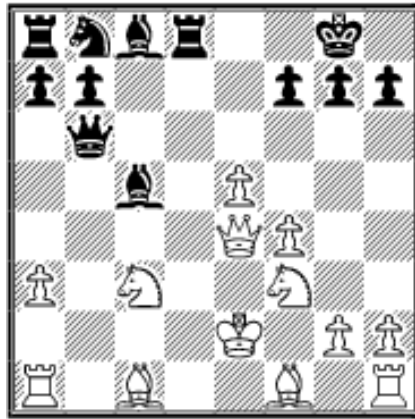
prevent him from choosing the strongest continuation. The text gives Black excellent play, whereas White could have achieved a significant advantage by other means.

The 16.Qa2!? Nc6 variation was improperly analyzed by Shirov. For instance, he did not examine the sharp 17.Ne4!? Nd4+ 18.Kf2! Nc2+ 19.Kg3 Nxa1 20.Nxc5 Qxc5 21.Bc4+/- . That same tempting move, Ne4!, was also later ignored by the grandmaster.

17.Rb1 Qa5 18.Bd2 (18.Ne4!?) 18...Bg4 (Shirov wrongly awards this move an exclamation point: 18...Be6 was objectively better, although here too, after 19.Qb2 Bb6!? 20.Ke1!, White retains his advantage) 19.Ke1 (19.Ne4! Nd4+ 20.Ke1+-) 19...Bxf3 20.gf Nd4 21.Be2 (21.Bg2? Qa6!-/+ ) 21...Nxe2 22.Kxe2 (22.Nxe2? is a mistake: 22...Rxd2 23.Qxd2 Bf2+ 24.Kd1 Rd8-+, according to Shirov; but either 22.Ne4 or 22.Rxb7! wins) 22...Qa6+. Here, the book ends the variation, although *Informant* continues with 23.Rb5, instead of the considerably stronger 23.Ke1! +/-.

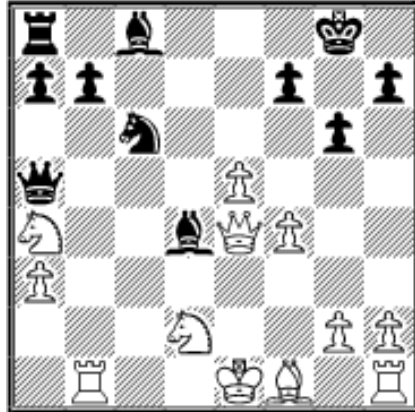
Another way to a decisive advantage for White was suggested by Zvjaginsev: 16.Rb1! Qa5 (16...Qa6+ 17.Ke1 Qa5 18.Qc4 Be6 19.Rb5!+-; 16...Qc7 17.Qe4 Nc6 18.Be3+-) 17.Rb5! Qxb5+ 18.Nxb5 Rxd5 19.Nc7 Rd8 20.Nxa8 b6 (20...Na6 21.Be3 or 21.Ke1, with the idea 22.Bxa6) 21.Nc7+- (21.Be3 Ba6+ 22.Kf2 isn't bad, either).

The text move (16.Qd5-e4) sets up the position from which you may begin training play.



B?

Black must worry, not so much about 17.Ng5, as about 17.Na4!. For this reason **16...Nc6?! would be unprofitable: 17.Na4! Qa6+ 18.Ke1 Qa5+ 19.Bd2 Rxd2 (forced) 20.Nxd2 Bd4! 21.Rb1! g6 (21...Qxa4 22.Bb5+--)**



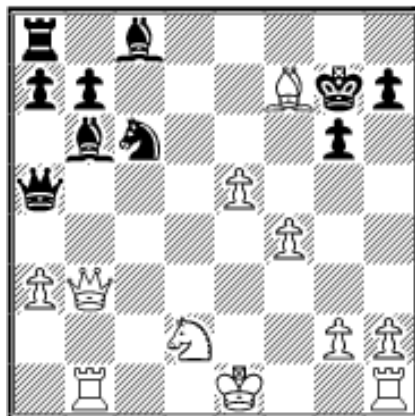
W?

Shirov considers 22.Qc2 Bf5 23.Bd3 Bxd3 24.Qxd3 strongest, with the following continuation: 24...Qxa4 25.Rxb7 Rd8 26.Qb3! Bf2+ 27.Kxf2 Qxf4+ (27...Rxd2+ 28.Kg3!+-- ) 28.Nf3 Rd2+ 29.Kf1 Nd4 30.Qb4 Rd1+ 31.Kf2+--.

The defense can be improved with the *zwischenzug* 24...Rd8! (instead of 24...Qxa4?)

25.Qe2! (Black gets dangerous counterplay after 25.Qb5 Bf2+ 26.Kxf2 Qxd2+ 27.Qe2 Qxf4+) 25...Qxa4 26.Ne4; and now, either 26...Ne7, intending 27...Nd5, or else 26...Qxa3 27.Kf1 Bb6, with a double-edged position.

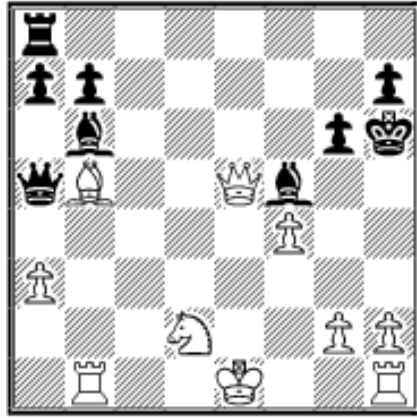
On the other hand, White's play can be improved too, by **22.Bc4! Qxa4 23.Qf3!** (intending 24.Qb3; White gets nothing out of 24.Bb5 Qxa3 25.Bxc6 (25.Qd3 Bc3) 25...Qc3! 26.Bxb7 Be3 27.Qd5 Rb8) **23...Bb6** (23...Qa5 24.Qd5 Qc7 25.Qd6+/-) **24.Qb3 Qa5 25.Bxf7+ Kg7** (25...Kh8!? 26.Qd5 Qc3 27.e6+/-).



W?

Now, if 26.Bg8, then 26...Nxe5! 27.fe Qxe5+ 28.Kf1 Qf6+ 29.Nf3 Bf5 30.Bc4 Re8, and the extra rook is meaningless, as Black has enough counterplay.

The bishop has to go to a different square: **26.Be8! Nxe5 27.Qb2!** (on 26.Bg8, the king would just take the bishop here) **27...Bf5 28.Bb5 Kh6!? 29.Qxe5**



After **29...Bxb1 30.g4! Bf5** (forced), White must not play 31.g5+? Kh5 32.Be2+ Kh4 33.Qe7 Rh8 34.Qg7 Bf2+! 35.Kxf2 Qc5+ with a draw, but **31.h4!! Bf2+** (31...Bxg4 32.h5+—) **32.Kxf2 Qxd2+ 33.Kg3**, and Black is helpless.

29...Bc7 changes nothing: 30.Qe3! Bb6 31.Qe7 Bxb1 32.Qg5+ Kg7 33.Qe5+ Kh6 34.g4! Bf5 35.h4!!; and, if 30...Bxb1 (instead of 30...Bb6), then 31.f5+ Kg7 32.Qe7+ Kh6

33.Qh4+ Kg7 34.f6+ Kh8 35.f7 Kg7 36.Qd4+ Kxf7 37.Bc4+! Ke7 38.Kd1, and the threat of 39.Re1+ decides the game.

### 16...Qb6-b3!

Vyacheslav Eingorn parries the threatened 17.Na4 with tempo.

### 17.Bc1-d2 Rd8xd2+!

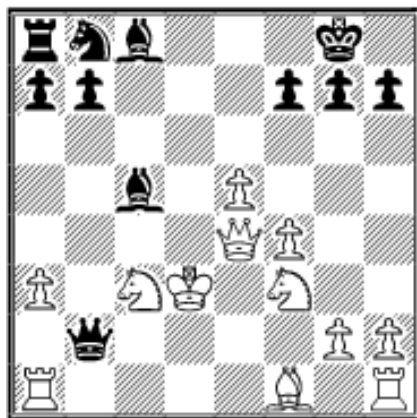
The only way to keep his opponent from consolidating. On 17...Nc6?, there follows 18.Rb1 (18.Qb1!? +/-) 18...Qxa3 19.Qa4+—.

### 18.Ke2xd2

Of course not 18.Nxd2? Qxc3 19.Rb1 Nc6 20.Qd3 Qa5—/+.

### 18...Qb3-b2+ 19.Kd2-d3

19.Qc2? Be3+! would be a mistake.



B?

### 19...Qb2xa1

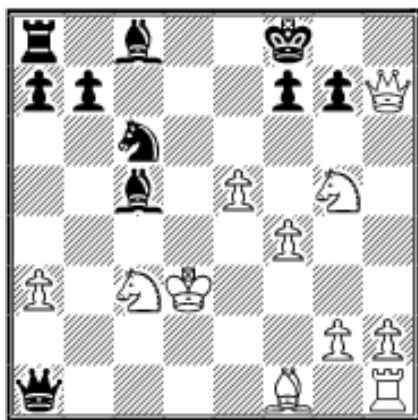
The grandmaster gives no comment on the rook capture, but Black did have a strong alternative, allowing him to force an immediate draw: **19...b6!? 20.Qxa8** (20.Nd4 Ba6+ 21.Ndb5 Nc6! 22.Qxc6 Rd8+ 23.Ke4 Qxa1—/+ would be dangerous) **20...Ba6+ 21.Ke4 Qc2+ 22.Kd5 Qb3+ 23.Ke4 Qc2+** — perpetual check.

### 20.e5-e6!?

Although this move is, objectively, no better than the obvious knight sortie to g5,

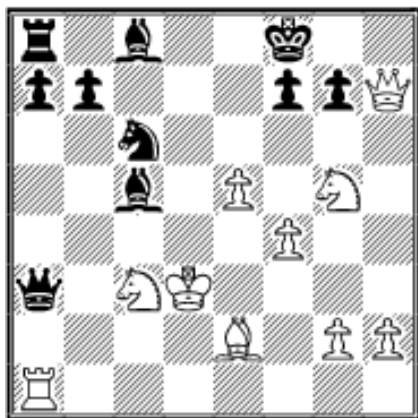
it does set Black more complex problems.

20.Ng5 is met by 20...Nc6! (20...g6? would be a mistake: 21.Qd5! Bf5+ 22.Kc4 b5+ 23.Kxb5+—) 21.Qxh7+ (but not 21.e6? g6 22.ef+ Kg7—+ or 22.Qd5 Qxa3! 23.ef+ Kf8 24.Nxh7+ Kg7—+) 21...Kf8



Here, too, White should content himself with 22.Qh8+ Ke7 23.Nd5+ (or 23.Nge4 Qxa3! 24.Qxg7 Be6= (Dvoretsky)) 23...Kd7 24.Qh3+ Ke8 25.Qh8+, with a repetition (Shirov).

The daring 22.Be2? Qxa3 23.Ra1 meets a pretty refutation:



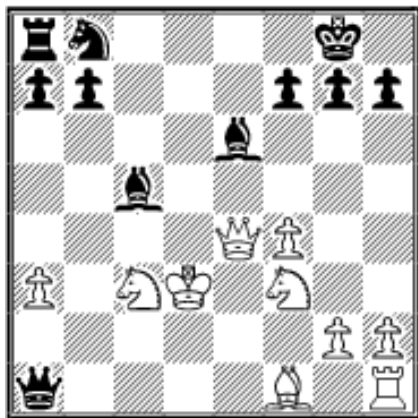
B?

Shirov gives the line 23...Nb4+ 24.Kc4 Qxa1 25.Qh8+ Ke7 26.Qxg7 Be6+ 27.Nxe6 Qa6+, which wins for Black. But 25.Qh5! (instead of 25.Qh8+?) saves White.

The problem is solved by the spectacular 23...Bf5+!! 24.Qxf5 Rd8+ 25.Ke4 Qb4+ 26.Kf3 Nd4+ 27.Kg4 Nxf5—.

After the text, Black faces a difficult dilemma: how should he capture the pawn?

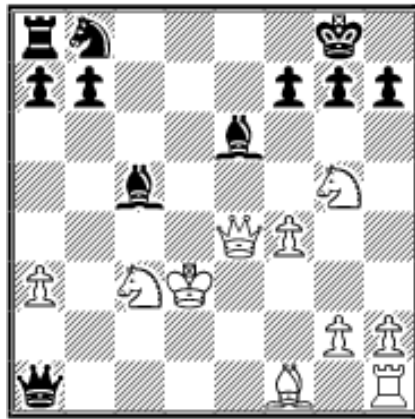
Both captures are possible in principle; but the safest, perhaps, is **20...Bxe6!**



The line 21.Qxb7 Bf5+ 22.Kd2 Be3+! 23.Kxe3 Qxc3+ 24.Kf2 Qc5+ 25.Kg3 Qc6 (Shirov) leads to an equal endgame. I note that Black may also play 24...Qc2+!? 25.Be2 Be4 26.Qb5 Nc6=. Additionally, instead of 22...Be3+, there is also the surprising idea 22...Bd7!? 23.Ne5 (23.Qxa8? Qb2+ 24.Kd3 Bc6—) 23...Bd4 24.Nd1 (best) 24...Bxe5 25.fe Qxa3, with an unclear position.

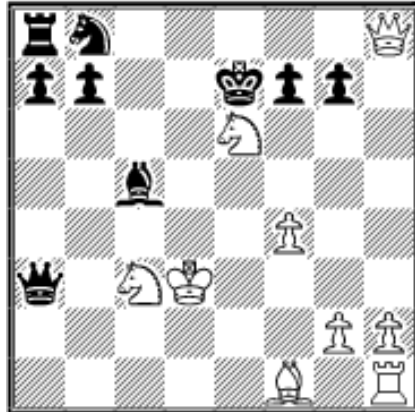
**21.Ng5!**





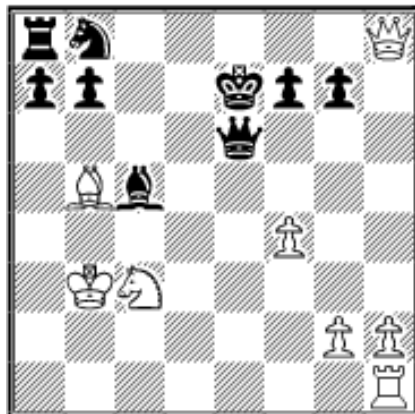
B?

21...Qxa3 (Shirov thinks this move is forced)  
 22.Qxh7+ (22.Nxe6? Bb4—/+ is a mistake (Shirov) – or 22...Na6!—+ (Dvoretsky))  
 22...Kf8 23.Qh8+ Ke7 24.Nxe6.



B?

Shirov thinks Black's strongest choice here is  
 24...Qa6+?, with the continuation 25.Kc2  
 Qxe6 26.Bb5!! Qg6+ 27.Kb3 Qe6+



W?

Unfortunately, here he walks right past the simple winning line 28.Kb2!.

He also improperly analyzes his own line, 28.Bc4 Qb6+ 29.Nb5. According to him, Black must play 29...Qa5 30.Qh4+ Kf8 31.Qh8+ Ke7, and I don't see how White can improve his position. The check on h8 isn't necessary – the winning line is 31.Kc2! Qa4+

32.Kd3 Nc6 33.Qh8+ Ke7 34.Re1+ Kd7 35.Qh3+ Kd8 36.Qf5 Nb4+ 37.Kd2 +–. But in the variation 29...a6! 30.Re1+ Be3 31.Qh3! ab 32.Rxe3+, Black does not continue 32...Kd8? 33.Bxf7+ (Shirov), but 32...Kd6! 33.Bxf7 Nc6 – here, in fact, there seems to be no way for White to achieve his goal.

The natural move here, 24...Bb4!, turns out to be correct as well.



White gets nothing out of 25.Qd8+ Kxe6 26.Qd5+ Ke7 (26...Kf6 also appears to be possible) 27.Qxb7+ Kd6! (27...Nd7? 28.Qxb4+!) 28.Qxa8 Qxc3+. And now White gets a draw either by 29.Ke4 Nc6 30.Qf8+ Ke6 31.Qc8+ Kd6, or by 29.Ke2 Nc6 30.Qf8+ Ke6 31.Qe8+ Ne7 32.Qb8! (intending 33.Qe5+) 32...Qc2+ 33.Kf3.

25.Ke4!! Nd7! (25...Qxc3? 26.Qd8+ Kxe6 27.f5 mate; 25...f5+? 2.Kxf5+-) is more dangerous for Black.

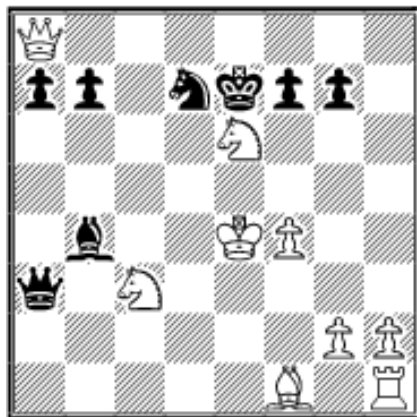
Before analyzing the rook capture, we should pay some attention to the try 26.Nd5+!? Kxe6 (26...Kd6? is much worse: 27.Qxg7! Re8 28.Ndc7 Rxe6+ 29.Nxe6 fe 30.Qd4+ Kc7 31.Qe3+/-).



White loses after 27.Qxa8? Nc5+ 28.Kd4 Qb2+ 29.Ke3 Qd2+. It's a draw after 27.f5+ Kd6 28.Qxa8 Bc5! 29.Bc4 (29.Qd8 Qa4+) 29...Qb2! 30.Qd8 Qd4(or c2)+ 31.Kf3 Qf2+! 32.Kg4 Qxg2+ 33.Kf4. And finally, 27.Nc7+ allows Black to repeat moves: 27...Ke7 28.Nd5+ Ke6; or he can go in for complications after 27...Kd6!? 28.Nb5+ Ke7 29.Qxa8 Nc5+, which is still drawn after 30.Kf5 Qe3 31.Qc8 g6+ (31...Qe4+ 32.Kg4 Qg6+) 32.Kg4 Ne4 33.g3! f5+ 34.Kh3 Qf3! 35.Qe6+! Kf8 36.Be2! Qxh1 (36...Qxe2

37.Nd4! =) 37.Qc8+ Kg7 38.Qd7+ Kh6 39.Qd4! Kh7 =.

Shirov examined 26.Qxa8.



B?

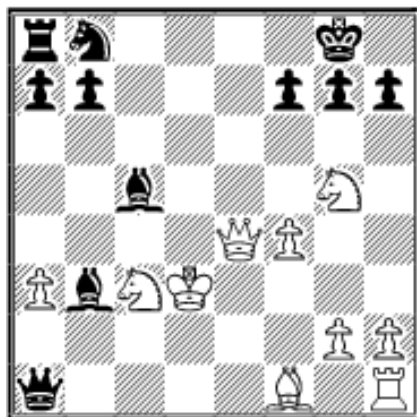
After 26...Nf6+ 27.Kf5! fe+ 28.Kg5 Qxc3 29.Qxb7+, Black does not play 29...Nd7?! (where Shirov demonstrated White's advantage), but 26...Kf8! (Dvoretsky), with fully satisfactory counterplay. So instead of 28.Kg5?!, White must continue 28.Kg6! Qxc3 29.Qxb7+ Nd7 30.Kh5, where Black's resources do not appear sufficient. Here's a rough idea: 30...Bd6!? 31.Bb5! (31.g3 Qc2) 31...Bc7 32.Qc6! (32.Bxd7 Qc5+ 33.Kh4

Qf5!? =) 32...g6+ 33.Kg4 Nf6+ 34.Kg5 Bxf4+ 35.Kxg6 Qxc6 36.Bxc6, with a won endgame (Dvoretsky).

Instead of the knight check, Black's correct choice is the grubby 26...Qxc3!. Continuing *à la* Shirov: 27.Qxb7 Kxe6 28.Qd5+ Ke7 29.Qc4! Nc5+ 30.Kf5!

(30.Kd5? Qd2+ 31.Qd4 Qa2+ 32.Kc6 Qe6+ 33.Kb5 Qb6+ 34.Kc4 a5!, with the attack) 30...Qf6+ 31.Kg4 Qg6+ 32.Kf3 Qc6+ 33.Ke3 a5! 34.h4!. In the concluding position of this variation, Shirov believes that Black will still have some difficulties, although a drawn outcome is most likely.

But now, let's return to the very beginning of the variation, to the position after 21.Ng5!. Let's forego Shirov's capture of the a3-pawn, in favor of **21...Bb3!**

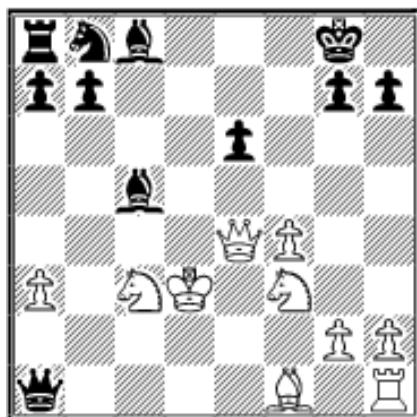


22.Qe8+? Bf8 doesn't work, so White must continue **22.Qxh7+ Kf8 23.Qh8+ Ke7 24.Qxg7 Qe1!?** (24...Qxa3 is also possible) **25.Qe5+** (forced, as 25.Be2? Qxh1 26.Qe5+ Kd8 27.Qxc5 Nd7 doesn't work) **25...Qxe5 26.fe Nc6**, and Black may even have the preferable position in the endgame.

Here's an example of how, by finding just one accurate move, one can sometimes avoid massively complex calculations, as well as the dangers lurking in irrational complications that are unnecessary to enter. One must only have more frequent and more attentive recourse to the study of candidate-moves.

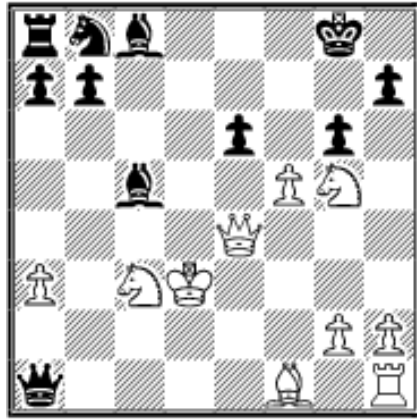
Now it's time to return to our game. Black captured on e6, not with the bishop, but with the pawn.

**20...f7xe6?!**



**21.Nf3-g5 g7-g6 22.Qe4-e5!**

Black would have an interesting task to resolve after 22.f5?!



B?

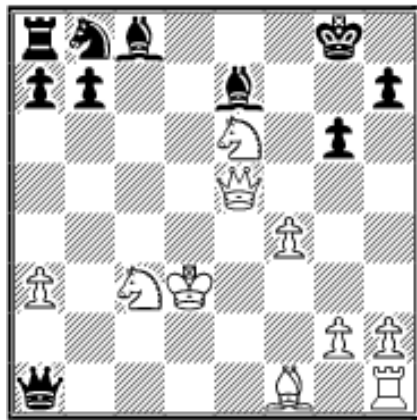
The pawn is untouchable: 22...ef?? 23.Qe8+, or 22...gf?? 23.Qh4. And 22...Nc6? 23.fg+— is no better.

Shirov offers 22...Be7? (except that he appends an exclamation mark) 23.fg Bxg5 24.gh+ Kg7 25.Qe5+ Kxh7 26.Qxg5 Nc6, when Black holds the balance. But, again, the capture is not forced. The intermediate move

26.Kc4!! is much stronger, creating the threat of 27.Bd3+, and forcing the reply 26...Kg8. Here, White delivers mate: 27.Qxg5+ Kf7 28.Be2! b5+ 29.Kb3 Qxh1 30.Bh5+ Kf8 31.Qf6+, etc.

Black's only defense is 22...Qc1!! (the knight on g5 is *en prise*) 23.Nxe6 (23.Qh4 h5) 23...Nc6 24.fg (24.Qd5 Bxe6) 24...Bd6! (intending 25...Ne5+), and even after White's best reply, 25.Be2!, the advantage is now with Black.

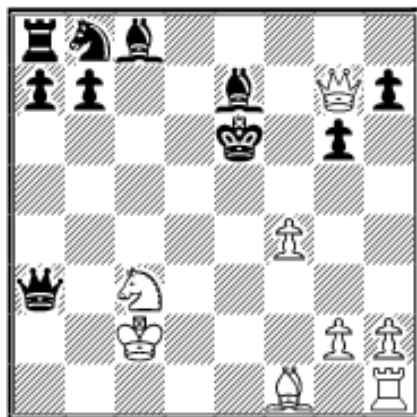
**22...Bc5-e7 23.Ng5xe6**



B?

Eingorn could not withstand the tension, and lost quickly after **23...Kf7? 24.Qg7+! Ke8 25.Nc7+** (25.Kc2!?, threatening 26.Bb5+, is also good – Dvoretsky) **25...Kd8 26.Qh8+! Kd7** (26...Kxc7 27.Nd5+) **27.Nxa8 Qxa3 28.Kc2** Black resigned.

24...Kxe6 (instead of 24...Ke8) would not have helped: 25.Kc2! Qxa3



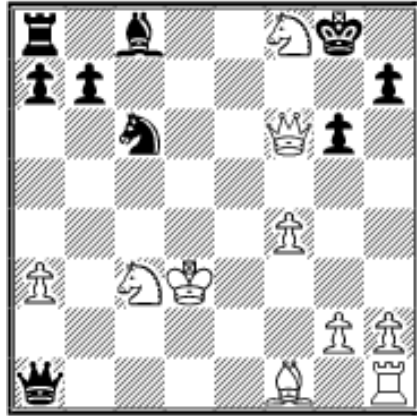
Shirov gives the winning line 26.Bb5! Nc6 27.Bc4+ Kd7 28.Rd1+ Qd6 29.Rxd6+ Kxd6 30.Ne4+ Kc7 31.Bb5+–, or 27...Kf5 28.Qf7+ Bf6 29.Qd5+ Be5 30.Qd3+ (White has a quick mate after 30.g4+! Kxf4 31.Qd2+, or 30...Kxg4 31.Qg2+ Kxf4 32.Rf1+ – Dvoretsky) 30...Kf6 31.Nd5+.

Less clear, in his opinion, is 26.Bc4+ Kd6 27.Rd1+ Kc6. But, here too, White wins: 28.Bd5+ Kb6 29.Rb1+ Bb4 (29...Ka5

30.Rb5+ Ka6 31.Bc4) 30.Qf6+ Nc6 31.Bxc6 bc 32.Rxb4+ Qxb4 33.Nd5+ Ka5 34.Nxb4.

Let's try a better defense:

**23...Be7-f8! 24.Ne6xf8 Nb8-c6 25.Qe5-f6**



B?

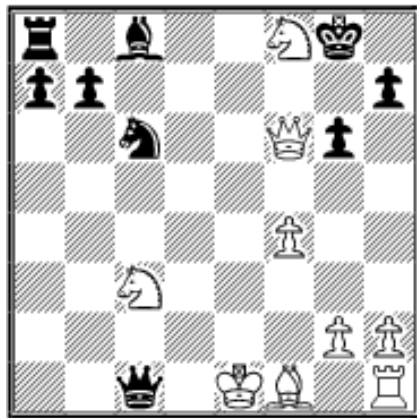
25...Bg4?! leads to a difficult position for Black after 26.Ne6 Bxe6 27.Qxe6+ Kg7 28.Ne2! (White prepares to retreat his king to f2) 28...Qxa3+ 29.Kd2 Rd8+ 30.Ke1.

Shirov awards 25...Qxa3? two exclamation marks – and he's wrong.

On 26.Nxg6? he gives 26...Bf5+! 27.Qxf5 Rd8+ 28.Ke4 (28.Ke3!? – Dvoretsky)

28...Qb4+, believing that Black wins, although after 29.Ke3 Qxc3+ 30.Bd3 Qd4+ 31.Ke2 Qb2+ 32.Ke3, he has only a draw.

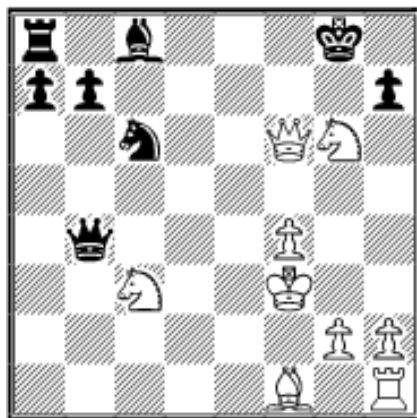
But White can get more with 26.Kd2! Qb2+ 27.Ke1 Qc1+



W?

In his comments in *Informant*, the grandmaster said it would result in an approximately even endgame after 28.Kf2 Qd2+ 29.Ne2 (29.Be2 Qd4+) 29...Qd8! 30.Qxd8 Nxd8 31.Nxg6! hg 32.Nd4 Kg7 =.

But then he found an improvement for White: 28.Ke2! Qb2+ (28...Bg4+ 29.Kf2 Qd2+ 30.Kg3+-) 29.Kf3 Qb4! 30.Nxg6! (30.Ne6 Bxe6 31.Qxe6+ Kg7 32.Qe3!? is also good)



And now we have these variations:

30...Nd4+ 31.Kf2 hg 32.Qxg6+ Kf8 33.Qf6+ Kg8 34.Nd5! Qd2+ 35.Kg1 Nf3+ 36.gf Qxd5 37.Kf2! Qc5+ 38.Kg3 (perhaps 38.Kg2!? Qc2+ 39.Kg3+- is more exact – Dvoretsky) 38...Bf5 39.Qg5+ (39.Bc4+!! Qxc4 40.Rg1! Qc5 41.Rg2 or 40...Qf7 41.Kf2+ decides more quickly and spectacularly – Dvoretsky) 39...Kh8 40.Qh5+ Kg7 41.Bd3 Rf8 42.Re1! Rf6 43.Bxf5 Rxf5 44.Qg4+ Kh7 45.Qh4+ Kg6 46.Re6+ Kf7 47.Rh6, with a winning

attack (Shirov).

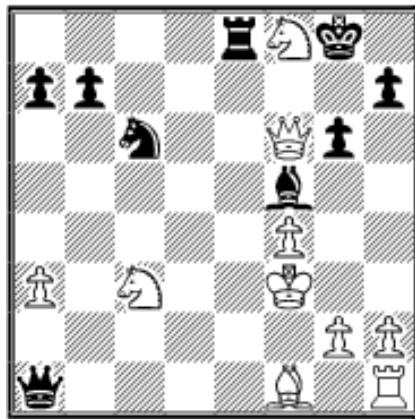
30...gh!? 31.Qxg6+ Kf8 32.Nb5! a6!? (Shirov only examined 32...Nd4+ 33.Nxd4 Qxd4 34.Be2+/-) 33.Qd6+ (the consequences of 33.Nd6 Qc3+ 34.Bd3 Be6 are not clear) 33...Kg7 34.Qxb4 Nxb4+/-, and White must try to convert his extra pawn in a rather sharp endgame.

Black has a much safer method at his disposal:

**25...Bc8-f5+! 26.Kd3-e3 Ra8-e8+**

But not 26...Na5? 27.Kf3! Rxf8 28.Bc4+ Nxc4 29.Qxf8+ Kxf8 30.Rxa1 (Dvoretsky).

**27.Ke3-f3**



B?

Here Shirov breaks off his analysis, believing that White wins.

**27...Nc6-e5+! 28.Qf6xe5 (forced)  
28...Re8xe5 29.Bf1-c4+ Kg8xf8 30.Rh1xa1  
Re5-c5**

Black recovers the piece and equalizes.

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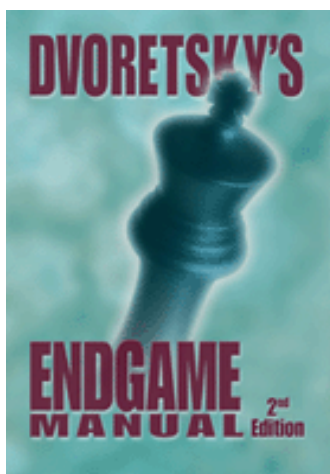
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## COLUMNISTS

## *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## The Power of Subtle, Quiet Moves

The 2006 Championship of Russia (Upper League) was a triumph for the new generation of Russian chess: all seven qualifying spots to the Superfinal (a 12-player round robin scheduled for December) went to young grandmasters – the oldest of them just twenty-two. Behind them came such well-known, highly experienced and highly-rated players as Vladimir Malakhov, Alexei Dreev, and Alexander Khalifman.

I am happy for the young players' successes – in part, because the great majority of them are very congenial, smart and well-behaved. Uncompromising fighters over-the-board, in life they maintain excellent relations with one another, without envying anyone's accomplishments. I have never heard of dirty dealings or tricks directed against their comrades – and oh, how many such stories could have been told about Soviet-era grandmasters!

In the old days, I would regularly assist my students at their tournaments, while also paying attention to their opponents play. Naturally, I would first share the results of my observations with my students, but I also often shared my conclusions in print or in personal meetings with interested players. These days, I hardly ever go to tournaments, and coming up with an objective opinion based upon watching someone's play on the Internet is pretty tough – that is, of course, if you don't spend much time every day analyzing the games as they finish. This is why I don't wish to write anything about the creative achievements of those who played in the Upper League: nobody needs another shallow impression – and sometimes, such things can actually do harm. But I did follow the games of the tournament winner – my own pupil, Ernesto Inarkiev – and I do have something to show there.

For those who are not familiar with Inarkiev, let me describe him as a modern young man, in which upbringing, goodwill and openness blend harmoniously with a strong character, competitiveness and ambition. In this regard he strongly reminds me of another student of mine, Artur Yusupov, who in his own day grew into one of the world's strongest grandmasters. Such a combination of qualities, ranked of course alongside an obvious talent, induced me to pay attention to Ernesto five years ago, when he appeared at one of the sessions of my chess school. We began working regularly with him.

Within one year, the 16-year-old Inarkiev scored a brilliant victory in the Russian under-20 Championship, outstripping his nearest rival by two full points (which is a fantastic margin for an 11-round Swiss). Soon, he became a grandmaster. Then came a lull, due partly to the fact that Ernesto was distracted by too many

tournaments, at the expense of his training. Later, he acknowledged this error and settled into a more normal tournament schedule.

Inarkiev's preparation for the Russian Championship Upper League took place at sea. Naturally, he spent plenty of time on his openings, but he needed almost none of his preparation (no problem – it'll come in handy later). However, his physical training did prove useful: he managed to accumulate an extraordinary reserve of freshness and energy, no less vital for success than purely professional knowledge and techniques.

Before traveling to the tournament, we did some special training aimed at putting the mind on a war footing and warming up the decision-making process. Of course, you're not going to accomplish too much in just a few days – such work cannot substitute for full-scale training sessions. Nevertheless, if you do it right, this work can bear fruit. We have done similar things before. As Ernesto says, he sees the positive influence of such training on his sporting form and his final result.

Although I knew that Inarkiev had already reached a level of mastery sufficient to allow him to reach the Superfinal (and said as much before the tournament), I was still pleasantly surprised by the maturity he showed in all of his games. Earlier, Ernesto would sometimes display positional floundering in between excellent victories. This time no such thing happened; only once did he stand worse throughout the entire tournament. In the opening, as a rule, he got nothing special, but afterwards, time after time, he would outplay strong opposition.

Of course, there were occasional inaccuracies – nobody has ever found a way to eliminate them entirely. Ernesto and I have gone over them already – so let them remain strictly between us. What I would now like to show you are a few episodes in which the champion demonstrated really high-class play.

Wins come in different ways – for example, as a result of powerful opening preparation or a terrible oversight by the opponent. I have always found myself powerfully engaged by situations in which, at a critical moment, one player manages to dig deeper into the secrets of the position, allowing him to tip the scales in his favor. This was just how Inarkiev achieved his success – and, as a rule, by very modest means – subtle, quiet moves whose meaning could only be discerned by intense analysis.

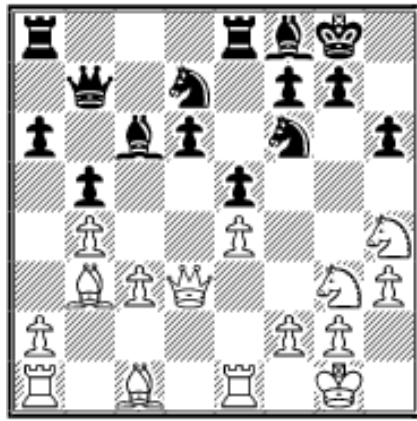
His first win came in the second round.

### ***Kosteniuk - Inarkiev***

Championship of Russia, Upper League (2) 2006

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Bb7 10.d4 Re8 11.Nbd2 Bf8 12.d5 Nb8 13.Nf1 Nbd7 14.Ng3 Nc5 15.Bc2 c6 16.b4 Ncd7 17.dc Bxc6 18.Bb3 h6 19.Qd3 Qc7 20.Nh4 Qb7**





This position occurred in Svidler – Almasi, Neum 2000. Black is ready for the important central advance d6-d5. After 21.Ng6 d5 22.Nxf8, Almasi selected 22...de?! 23.Qe3! Nxf8 (23...Rxf8 is bad, in view of 24.Nf5 Nh5 25.Nxh6+! gh 26.Qxh6) 24.Nf5 Nd5 25.Qg3 Ng6 26.Nd6, with an initiative for White. According to the notes in *Informant #79*, 22...Nxf8 23.Nf5 Re6! would have maintained equality.

Sasha Kosteniuk preferred **21.Nhf5 d5** – and here she played the surprising tactical blow **22.Nh5!**

Seeing the game over the Internet, I made the logical assumption that White's interesting novelty was the result of home preparation. However, Inarkiev later advised me that his opponent had spent plenty of time thinking about her moves and apparently found this new idea at the board. This shows how easy it is to reach false conclusions when you are not watching the game live.

Ernesto correctly decided that 22...Nxh5?! 23.ed would give White the advantage, so he accepted the challenge and followed the most principled line.

**22...de! 23.Qg3 Nxh5 24.Qg6!**

24.Nxh6+ Kh7 25.Qh4 gh 26.Qxh5 Bd5— would be a mistake.

**24...Kh8!**

This cold-blooded defensive move is best here.

**25.Qxh5 Bd5**



Up until this point, Kosteniuk had played precisely, but now she wavered. She had to go for the piece sacrifice: 26.Bxh6!. True, after 26...gh, 27.Nxh6? fails to 27...Nf6!—+, but there is the tactical blow 27.Nd6!!.. I won't provide the accompanying variations, since the thrust of this article is beyond the detailed analysis of these fragmentary presentations. Let me just say that White could have maintained the balance.

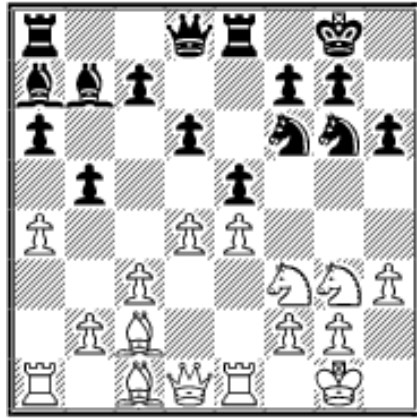
The actual game continuation, **26.Qh4?**, was met by the standard defensive maneuver in these kinds of positions: **26...Re6!**. With the kingside reinforced, Black neutralized his opponent's attacking possibilities and then competently exploited the long-term strategic advantages of his position.

A similar sort of struggle occurred in the fourth round.

**Kornev - Inarkiev**

Championship of Russia, Upper League (4) 2006

**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.d3 Nc6 4.Nf3 Bc5 5.c3 a6 6.Bb3 d6 7.0-0 Ba7 8.Nbd2 0-0 9.h3 Ne7 10.Re1 Ng6 11.Nf1 Re8 12.Ng3 b5 13.a4 Bb7 14.d4 h6 15.Bc2**



Now comes an inconspicuous, but very important move.

**15...Bb6!**

What's the point? It turns out that this allows Black to prepare the central blow d6-d5. An immediate 15...d5?! would not be good, in view of 16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.de Nxe4 18.Nxe4 de 19.Qxd8 Rxd8 (Black should take with the other rook, but this is not possible because of 20.ab, which is why the bishop needs to

move away from a7) 20.Kf1!?, and the e4-pawn goes lost.

But now White is faced with a difficult decision: how best to prepare for the opening of the center. The drawback of the natural development of the bishop – 16.Be3 – is that it weakens the e4-pawn, as we see in the variation 16...ed 17.Bxd4 c5!. Inarkiev believes that White's strongest move was the modest 16.Bd2!, after which the break 16...d5 becomes dubious in view of 17.Nxe5! (17.de de 18.ef ef 19.Rxe8+ Qxe8 is dubious) 17...Nxe5 18.de Rxe5 19.Bf4, and Black must either allow the pawn to go to e5 – which is rather uncomfortable – or sacrifice the exchange on e4. And 18...Nxe4 19.Nxe4 de 20.Bxe4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 Qd5 22.Qe1 leaves Black a pawn down.

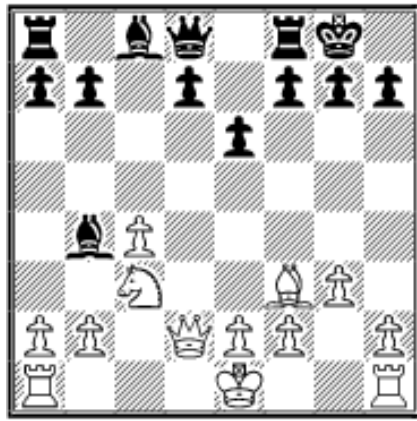
Alexei Kornev played the timid **16.Bd3**; there followed **16...d5! 17.ed Qxd5 18.ab ab 19.Rxa8 Bxa8**, and Black had completely equalized. Soon after, Black exploited his opponent's oversights and even managed to win.

The next day Inarkiev, with 3 points out of 4, had to cross swords with the sole leader, who had accumulated half a point more.

**Inarkiev - Khismatullin**

Championship of Russia, Upper League (5) 2006

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 c5 5.g3 Nc6 6.Bg2 Ne4 7.Bd2 Nxd2 8.Qxd2 cd 9.Nxd4 Ne5 10.Nf3 Nxf3+ 11.Bxf3 0-0**



GM Moiseenko has reached this position twice with White to my knowledge. He played the natural moves: 12.0-0 Rb8 13.a3. Bologan was able to draw with the retreat to e7 in the Tripoli knockout tournament of 2004 (FIDE called this event a “World Championship,” but how can you have a tournament for the highest title without the participation of the majority of the leading grandmasters?). But 13...Bxc3!? 14.Qxc3 b6 15.Rfd1 Bb7, with approximate equality, looks safer (Moiseenko – Parligras, Warsaw

2005).

Inarkiev thought for a while and discovered an excellent strategic solution to the problems facing White.

### **12.Rc1!**

Now White answers the exchange on c3 by recapturing with the rook and then moving it to d3, neutralizing Black’s natural queenside fianchetto plan.

### **12...a6 13.0-0 Qc7 14.Rfd1 Rd8**

Going after material involves too great a delay in development: 14...Qxc4 15.a3 Bxc3 16.Rxc3 Qb5 17.Qd6!? Qxb2 18.Rdc1.

### **15.Qg5!**

One more pointed prophylactic move! White will not allow the bishop to retreat to its natural square e7.

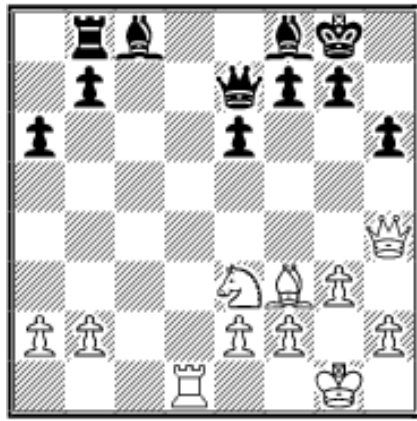
### **15...h6 16.Qh4 Bf8**

Black wouldn’t mind entering a “hedghehog” formation after d7-d6, but his opponent knows how to forestall this.

### **17.c5! d5 18.cd Rxd6 19.Nd5 Qd7 20.Ne3**

The knight is aiming for the important c4-square.

### **20...Rb8 21.Rxd6 Qxd6 22.Rd1 Qe7**



**23.Nc4!**

White would achieve nothing after 23.Rd8 Qc7 24.Qd4 e5. In his effort to exploit his opponent's lag in development, Inarkiev does not hesitate to make the "positional sacrifice" of doubling his own pawns. Black had to accept: 23...Qxh4 24.gh Be7 25.Nb6 (25.h5 b5 26.Na5 Kf8 27.Nc6 Rb6 is safe for Black) 25...e5 26.Nxc8 Rxc8, and after 27.Bxb7 Rc2 or 27.Rd7 Kf8 28.Rxb7 Bxh4 29.Bd5 Be7, he retains excellent chances to save this inferior

"opposite-colored bishop" endgame.

**23...g5? 24.Qd4 b5**

24...Qc7 doesn't help: 25.Nb6 e5 (25...Be7 26.Rd3! with the decisive threat 27.Rc3) 26.Qd8+–.

**25.Qe5!** White won the exchange and then the game.

In Round Six, Inarkiev confidently outplayed Artyom Timofeev; however, he was unable to convert his extra pawn. And now he faced a difficult game, with the black pieces, against one of the most experienced top-class participants in the tournament: Alexey Dreev (who has, in the past, also been a student of mine). Dreev was a half-point behind and naturally would be looking to win. It would be important to choose the proper approach to this game.

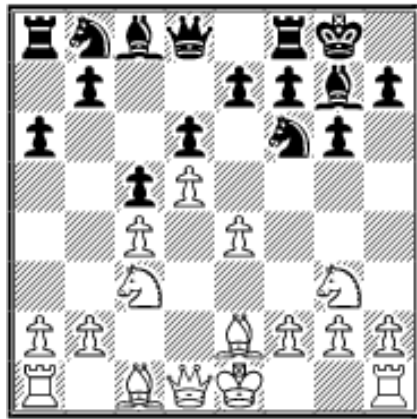
### ***Dreev - Inarkiev***

Championship of Russia, Upper League (7) 2006

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nge2 0-0 6.Ng3**

It seems Alexey had never played this before. Evidently, he chose a rare plan to steer the game into a strategic battle where Dreev's advantage in experience might tell.

**6...a6 7.Be2 c5 8.d5**



**8...b5!**

The main thing for Ernesto was not to lose. But he had enough experience to know that a passive approach would be suicidal, since it usually leads to the loss of the initiative, with all the sad consequences that follow. He decided on a pawn sacrifice, believing correctly that, in this situation, closely akin to the Benko Gambit, White's knight would not be too well-placed on g3.

**9.cb ab 10.Nxb5**

10.Bxb5 is also played.

**10...h5!**

Aggressive moves can sometimes also have a prophylactic effect. This flank diversion creates a threat against the e4-pawn – in this way Black forces the queen knight's retreat, which in turn prevents his opponent from establishing a strongpoint on b5 (after an eventual a2-a4).

**11.Nc3 Qb6**

Now we see another advantage of the h-pawn's advance: White's castling is impeded, since h5-h4 would then force the knight to retreat to the poor square h1.

**12.Nf1 Ba6 13.Ne3 Nbd7 14.0-0 Rfb8 15.Re1 Ra7**

Black's plans include transferring the knight via e8 and c7 to b5. However, on 15...Ne8, Inarkiev worried about the positional bishop sacrifice 16.Bxh5!? gh 17.Nf5 (or 17.Qxh5), allowing his opponent to create dangerous kingside threats. With his rook at a7, he could move his knight away from d7 and thereby defend the pawn at e7.

**16.h3 Bxe2 17.Rxe2**

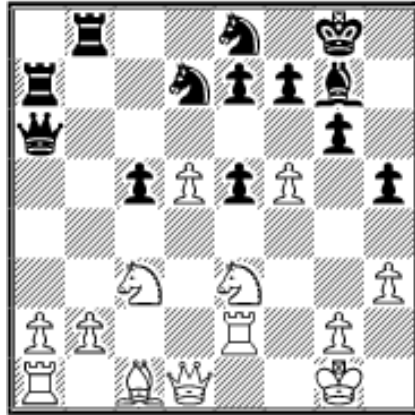
On 17.Qxe2, Black has either 17...Qa6 or 17...Qb4 18.Nc2 (18.Nc4 Nb6) 18...Qb6.

**17...Qa6 18.f4** (Otherwise, Black would continue 18...Ne5.) **18...Ne8**

Things are not going so well for Dreev, as there appears to be no clear plan for him. Predicting the outcome of any particular decision seems impossible, so White is forced to play without clear markers – move on move. Experienced players, as a rule, try to avoid such situations, which are more suited to young, energetic competitors with stronger nerves (and Alexey is certainly no exception). It's no accident that by now, White had already fallen into time-pressure. Still, Inarkiev didn't have much time either.

On 19.Rc2, Black would have continued with his intended knight transfer 19...Nc7. Dreev decides on a rather typical pawn sacrifice – but also a rather dubious one in this situation.

**19.e5 de 20.f5**



**20...Nd6**

A natural move, but probably not the best. Black, of course, must take control of the e4-square, before the enemy knight gets there. But it would have made sense to play 20...Rb4! instead, and not block the sixth rank just yet. The rook aims at d4 or f4, while 21.Nc2 will be met by the exchange sacrifice 21...gf!, and 21.fg is very strongly met by 21...Qxg6!. It was just this idea of recapturing on g6 with the queen that apparently escaped

Inarkiev's attention.

**21.fg**

Having made this move, Dreev offered a draw and Inarkiev accepted. I'm not sure this was correct – his position was very good, and the scales clearly tipped in his favor (which, indeed, he understood). After 21...fg, White would have to deal with 22...e4; if the knight retreats (say, 22.Nc2), there's 22...Nf5, 22...Qc4 or 22...c4. Of course, there would have been no guaranteed win – anything could happen in a mutual time-scramble – but, all things considered, Black's practical chances were better.

How should we assess this episode? On the one hand, I'm reminded of the anecdote about the three whist players:

Three Englishmen are playing whist, at 10 pounds a point. One of them bids null (that is, bids to take no tricks), but takes 4 tricks (or 40 points lost). Suffering a heart attack, he dies. His opponents play out the rubber over his dead body. One says to the other:

"I say, Sir John, do you know – if our departed Sir William had led spades, instead of diamonds, we could have given him 6 tricks, instead of 4.

"And that would have been good, too."

But on the other hand – if the following game hadn't turned out as well as it did, wouldn't he have had reason to lament the game he cut short yesterday? Well, history never runs backward; considering the final outcome, scolding Inarkiev for the only time in the tournament he displayed peaceful intentions is hardly fair.

The next game, from the penultimate round, decided the championship. Ernesto once again had black – this time against the top-rated Vladimir Malakhov, who shared the lead with him and two other players.

### ***Malakhov - Inarkiev***

Championship of Russia, Upper League (8) 2006

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba5 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Bxc6 dc 7.d3 Nd7 8.Nbd2 f6**

The main response to White's harmless system is considered to be 8...0-0 9.Nc4 f6 10.Nh4 Nc5 11.Nf5 Bxf5 12.ef Qd5 (or 12...Qd7). Once upon a time, I used to play this line with white, until I became convinced that he has nothing – the chances are about equal. Ernesto didn't remember the theoretical line, and, at the board, put together a more ambitious plan with the aim of castling long.

**9.Nh4 g6 10.Nc4 Nf8**



The knight could also have gone to c5, but it's hard to say which is the better square. In favor of the game continuation is the fact that Black can prevent the programmed central break d3-d4 by c6-c5.

The other programmed continuation is, of course, f2-f4. It could be played at once, since after 11.f4 ef (11...f5? 12.Nxf5) 12.Bxf4, both 12...g5? 13.Qh5+ Kd7 14.Bxg5 and 12...f5? 13.Nxf5 are bad for Black. But he plays 12...Be6 instead, and if the knight retreats

from c4, 13...g5 is now strong. And on 13.Nf3, there follows 13...Bxc4 14.dc Bc5+ 15.Kh1 Qxd1 16.Raxd1 Ne6, with a roughly equal ending. Obviously, Malakhov was not interested in such an early surrender of the battle for the advantage, but he was unable to think up anything better.

**11.Bd2 b6!**

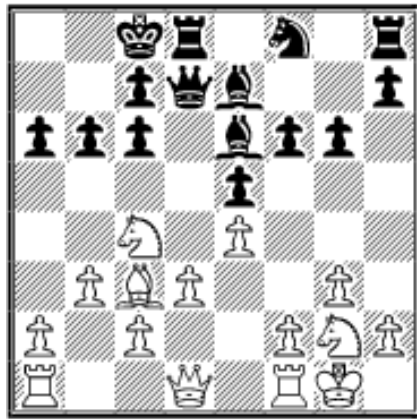
Still another subtle, but very powerful prophylactic move, similar to those we saw in Inarkiev's previous games. He prepares to develop the bishop at e6, seeing that the immediate 11...Be6?! allows the unpleasant reply 12.Na5. Now it would be pointless to try to gain territory on the queenside by 12.a4, because of the simple 12...a5. The fact that he would be advancing pawns in the region of his king's future home, in violation of commonly accepted principles, mattered little to Ernesto: concrete positional considerations are more important than bookish abstractions.

Black's next few maneuvers are obvious: Be6, Qd7, 0-0-0. Meanwhile, it's hard to find a reasonable plan of action for White – at any rate, I don't know what to recommend for him here (perhaps now or on the previous move, he should still have played f2-f4, accepting equality; or else he should have played Bh6). Here,

we must either analyze the position in greater depth or call upon the assistance of a deep-thinking strategist for a solution.

In any event, Malakhov could not find a good plan and his position began to slide downhill fast.

**12.b3 Be6 13.g3 Qd7 14.Ng2 0-0-0 15.Bc3**



**15...h5! 16.f4 h4!**

Black already stands considerably better. And although, of course, the road to victory was still long and rocky, Ernesto traversed it successfully, becoming sole leader with one round to go. And considering the tactics of the battle for qualification to the Superfinal, he had also practically assured himself of victory in the tournament.

Had I shown these fragments without saying who the players were, wouldn't it have been easy to guess that they were taken from the games of, say, Petrosian – the selfsame reliance on “prophylactic thinking,” the same masterly pawn play. All in all, an excellent characterization of a young player's achievement – especially considering that he usually favors a lively, open battle full of combinations.

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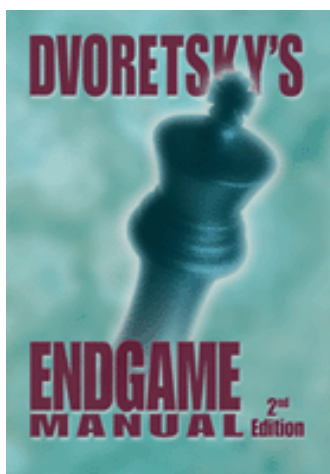
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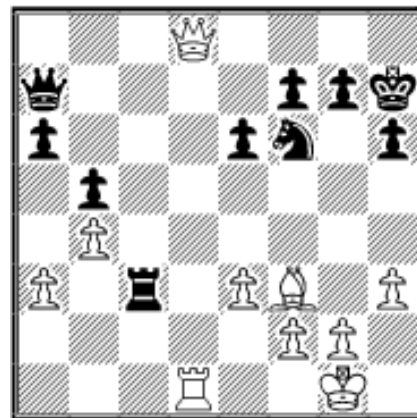
COLUMNISTS

## *The* *Instructor* Mark Dvoretsky



## New Surprises in Calculating Variations

Once again, our diagram displays “the Miles Position.” I published a detailed analysis of it in May 2006, entitled [Surprises in Calculating Variations](#). The article ended by extolling the richness of ideas in chess. But I could have never guessed that unraveling the secrets of such a simple and natural-looking position would turn out to be so exceptionally difficult, or that its study would yield so many deep, subtle, and occasionally also very beautiful variations. Even knowing that chess is inexhaustible – I still could not guess that I would have to prepare yet another column on the very same theme, so soon after publishing the previous one. The reason for this was the response of my readers – to whom I am genuinely grateful.



In the computerized era, our approach to decision making over-the-board, and still more in analysis, has become considerably more concrete. Chessplayers no longer believe in generalizations – they require exact proof, with variations. But this fact does not reduce the importance of skillful positional assessment.

Correct assessment helps decide the proper direction in which to search, to concentrate on studying the most important lines, and thus avoid unnecessary labor, saving time and energy. Calculating all variations to the end is something we lack the ability to do; this is why we must rely on generalizations (and sometimes on gut feelings) about both the starting position and about positions that arise in the course of our calculations. Our judgments or feelings are sometimes right – but they can also be wrong, in which case the results are usually dire.

Nimzovitch wrote, “to play positional chess means to express our judgments, and then strive to prove they are correct.” Judgments are usually based on our intuitive grasp of the position on the board. One of the best ways to develop a positional sense is the analytical testing of our intuitive judgments. In this way, we deepen and refine our understanding of many different types of positional problems and rid ourselves of misapprehensions.

When we test our intuitions, it’s important to know how to steer between the Scylla of uncertainty and the Charybdis of stubbornness. We should not alter our opinion at the first sign of difficulty; nor should we stubbornly adhere to it,

despite ever growing signs that it is wrong.

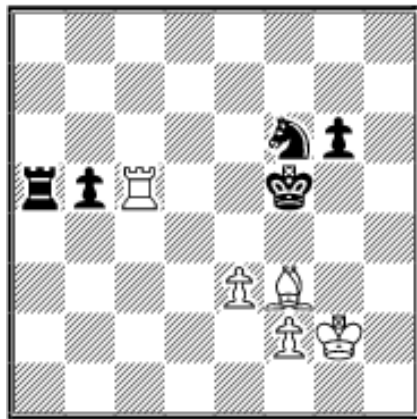
In this article, we shall encounter a great number of evaluative problems, whose solutions are unclear to me. Sometimes, in such situations, I will give my own opinion and present a few variations; in others, I will only give the problem itself. The reader should develop their own suggestions, and perhaps begin moving the pieces about with a friend whose opinion differs. And if you're a trainer, it would make sense to go over these problems with your pupils. Let me repeat: this kind of work is exceptionally useful in developing a player's positional understanding.

Here's an example of this sort of problem. One reader, named Igor, writes:

*Most likely, the concluding position is still closer to a draw.*

He's apparently referring to the concluding position of the previous article. This position came about after what was supposed to be best play for both sides.

### Evaluative Problem No. 1



After 14...Ke6, White plays 15 Be2 or 15 Bc6, winning the b5-pawn. I wrote, "In chess terminology, this position is "±" – White has the advantage, but no guaranteed win." Igor was less optimistic and evaluated the position as "more like fifty-fifty." I'll let the readers decide as to which of us was closer to the truth.

In any case, whether Igor was right or not, his judgment was quite sound, which means it deserves to be taken seriously. (Sound judgments may also be in error, just as formally correct ones can transpire to be totally wrong. But I will not develop this interesting theme any further here.)

Igor's other judgment was: "White had to have more somewhere..." I agree, but at the same time I refuse to believe that, in a position with an indisputable-looking advantage, White can only maintain winning chances by keeping to a narrow path of exceptionally accurate moves. Such feelings are very important – they usually stimulate us to search for new possibilities.

In order to make what follows easier to understand, I will cite, in edited form, the main conclusions of the previous article.

White has an elegant combination to trap the queen: 1 Be4+!? Nxe4 2 Rd7. Of Black's many possible defenses, only one – 2...Rc1+! 3 Kh2 Nd2! (threatening perpetual check), and if 4 h4, then 4...Rd1!! – can save him.

The positional plan of a kingside pawn storm: 1 g4! a5! 2 h4! (or 1 h4!

a5! 2 g4!) is very dangerous for Black. However, with 2...Qc7!, he avoids immediate danger in favor of an inferior endgame. Best play for both sides reaches the position we have just seen.

For a fuller, more detailed understanding of the problems confronting both sides, I recommend that you review my earlier [article](#).

The article also appeared on the *Chesspro.ru* website, after which I received a letter from Emil Sutovsky. The grandmaster attempted to resolve Miles' Position, and...

*After 10 minutes thought, I found a couple of promising ideas, which I then decided to compare with your conclusions. And here was a surprise – chess is, indeed, inexhaustible – my moves had not really been analyzed in the text.*

Sutovsky checked his ideas carefully and sent the results of his analysis. A new facet of the position had been revealed. I had suspected as much when I wrote, "Or perhaps, the chosen plan was just too complex, and I should be paying more attention to the more primitive strategy." I had it in mind to look for a clear advantage somewhere in those quiet lines, which had not yet been examined or examined only superficially.

What follows will be based mostly upon Emil's analyses. I have made a few corrections and additions, some in the treatment of new discoveries and also some analyses in the concluding segment of this article.

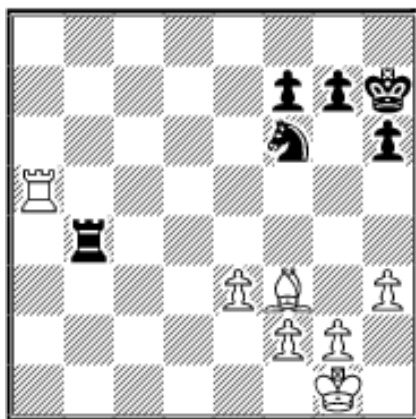
We must continually compare these new variations with those we studied before – sometimes, the positions are very similar; and the ideas are, from time to time, also the same, but used in slightly differing circumstances.

Let's return to the Miles' Position.

In the first place (or more accurately, in the third or fourth place, since the important line comes later), we found that Black's defense is difficult, even after the stupid-looking move **1 Qa5?!**

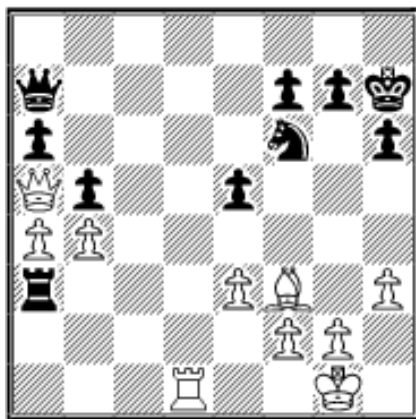
I suggested **1...e5** in reply, giving the short variations 2 Rd6 Rc1+ 3 Kh2?! e4, and also **2 a4 Ra3**. In place of Black's last move, Sutovsky also examined 2...ba?! 3 Qxe5 Qc7 4 Qxc7 Rxc7 5 Ra1 Rc4! 6 Rxa4 a5! 7 Rxa5 Rxb4.

## **Evaluative Problem No. 2**



“It’s hard to give a simple assessment of this endgame, but White keeps realistic winning chances,” writes Sutovsky. How great are those chances? It seems to me that Black’s drawing chances are not less. Analysis is not likely to help here – a sensible idea would be to look it up in the books or using a computer database with the same approximate configuration of forces. Absorbing all the prior experience can help us make a better estimation of the chances for both sides and their optimal plans of action.

Now let’s see what happens after 2...Ra3.



**3 Qd8!** leaves Black in a dilemma: how to capture on a4?

Sutovsky only looked at the pawn capture. And rightly so – the alternative, 3...Rxa4?, is refuted by 4 Qd3+ Kg8 5 Qd6 (threatening 6 Qxe5) 5...e4, and now the familiar combination: 6 Be4! Nxe4 7 Qd8+ Kh7 8 Rd7. I won’t repeat the combinative niceties analyzed in detail in the first [article](#). I will only say that the differences from the prior position (the absence of White’s a3-pawn and

Black’s e6-pawn) are clearly in favor of White. And if Black had to save himself there by means of a series of only moves, then he’s not likely to be able to do so here.

### 3...ba! 4 Bc6

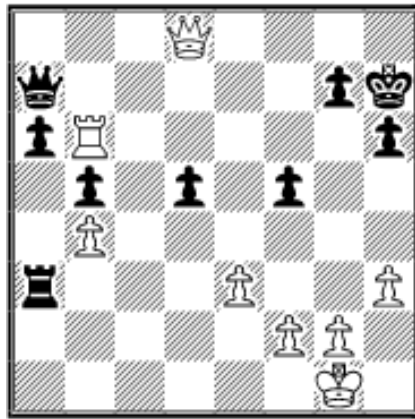
An important idea found by Emil, which will be used repeatedly in what follows: the move ...e6-e5 allows White a new attacking possibility: Bc6-d7-f5. Here, however, this pretty bishop maneuver does not win.

**4...Rc3! 5 Bd7** (5 Bxa4 Qc7 = is harmless) **5...Qc7! 6 Bf5+ g6 7 Qxf6 Rc6!** (“this move is the linchpin of Black’s defense”) **8 Bxg6+ fg 9 Qf8 Rc1 10 Rxc1 Qxc1+ 11 Kh2 Qc7**, “and now it’s White who has to think about holding the balance.”

In the second place, my analysis of **1 Rd6!?** turns out to have been clearly insufficient: Black’s position is much more dangerous than it had appeared. Igor also reached the same conclusion – the variations he gave were the same as the main lines from Sutovsky’s letter, which I had received the day before.

I suggested two means of defense against the threatened Rb6-b7: 1...a5 and 1...Rxa3 2 Rb6 Nd5 3 Be4+ f5 4 Bxd5 (4 Rxe6 Nxe3!) 4...ed



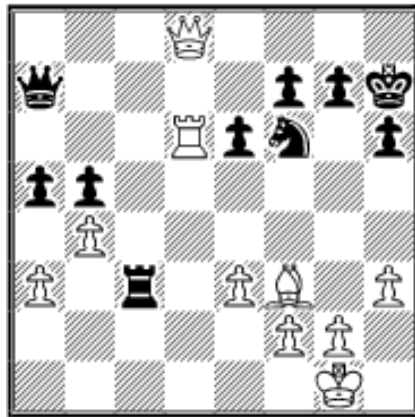


However, the second defense is no good. White does not continue 5 Rb8? Rxe3!, but by 5 Re6! instead. The main threat is 6 Qe8 followed by 7 Qg6+ On 5...Qf7, White plays 6 Qxd5 Qf8 (the threat was 7 Rxh6+) 7 Rd6, and Black is in a bad way.

After 1...e5, 2 Bc6! is very strong (but not 2 Rb6? e4): 2...e4 3 Bd7 (again, I remind you of the combination 3 Bxe4+!? Nxe4 4 Rd7) 3...Nxd7 5 Rxd7 Rd3 5 Rxd3 ed 6 Qxd3+ g6 7 Qd6, with a winning queen endgame.

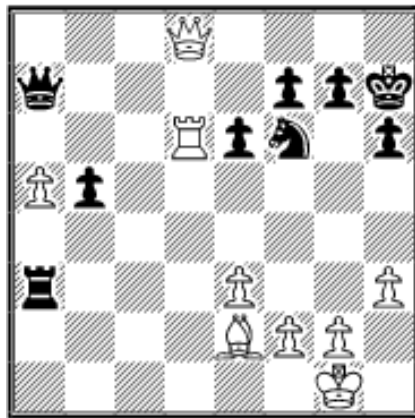
1...Rc1+ 2 Kh2 Rc7 would be no better. Here, the most forceful move is probably 5 Bc6!?, with the greatest possible restriction of the opponent's pieces. But going into a pawn-up endgame by 3 Rxa6 Qxa6 4 Qxc7 Qxa3 5 Qxf7 Qxb4 6 Qxe6 should also eventually bring home the point.

There remains only my reply, **1...a5!**, but cutting short the analysis at this point turned out to be premature.



True, 2 Rb6? is no longer dangerous to Black: 2...ab 3 ab Qa2 4 Rxb5 Rc1+ 5 Kh2 Qxf2, and he seizes the initiative. An equal endgame results from 2 Qxa5 Qxa5 3 ba Rxa3 4 a6 b4 5 Be2 b3 6 Bc4 Nd5.

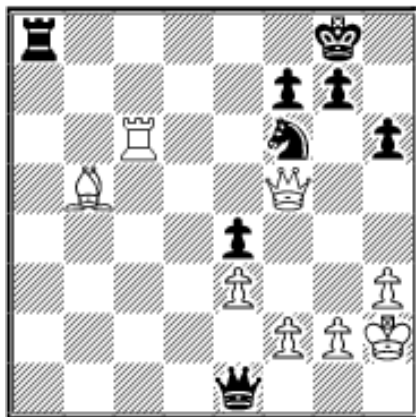
**2 ba Rxa3 3 Be2** would be much stronger.



Black loses immediately after 3...Rxe3? 4 Qb6!. And 3...Nd5? 4 Rd7! Qc5 5 Rxf7 Nxe3 6 Rf8! is also hopeless.

On 3...e5?!, White does not continue 4 Rc6 Qxa5 5 Qe7 Qe1+ 6 Kh2 Qxe2 7 Qxa3 Ne4, with plenty of counterplay for Black, but 4 Qc8! Qxa5 5 Qf5+ Kg8 (5...Kh8 6 Rc6 Qe1+ 7 Kh2 Qxe2 8 Rc8+ Ng8 9 Qxf7+-- ) 6 Rc6 Qe1+ 7 Kh2 Ra8 8 Bxb5 e4.

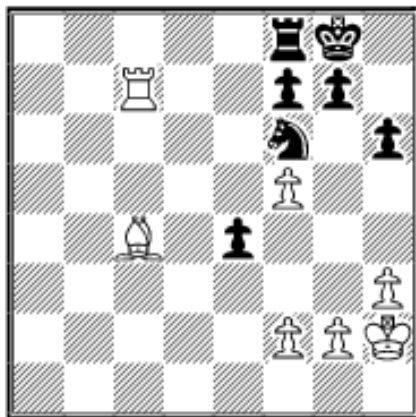
### Evaluative Problem No. 3



What is your assessment of the pawn-up queen endgame that arises after 9 Rxf6!? gf 10 Bc4 (threatening 11 Qg6+) 10...Kg7 11 Bxf7 Kxf7!? 12 Qh7+ Kf8 13 Qh8+ Kf7 14 Qxa8 – how great are White's winning chances?

Yet, White has a stronger idea in playing for domination: 9 Bc4 Qb4 10 Rc7! (again declining the pawn-up queen endgame by 10 Bxf7+ Kxf7 11 Rxf6+ gf 12 Qd5+ Kg7 13 Qxa8+) 10...Qd6+ (on 10...Rf8 11 Bxf7+!

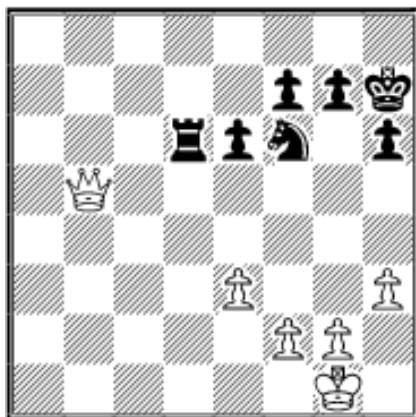
Rxf7 12 Qe6 Qf8, White would first improve his kingside pawn structure by 13 f4!, and only after 13...Qe8 would he take the queen by 14 Rc8 Qxc8 15 Qxc8+ Rf8 16 Qe6+ Kh8 17 g4+–) 11 Qf4 Qxf4+ 12 ef Rf8 13 f5!.



And Black has no moves; for example, 13...Ne8 14 Rd7! Nf6 15 Re7 Nh7 16 Kg3 Nf6 17 Kf4, etc.

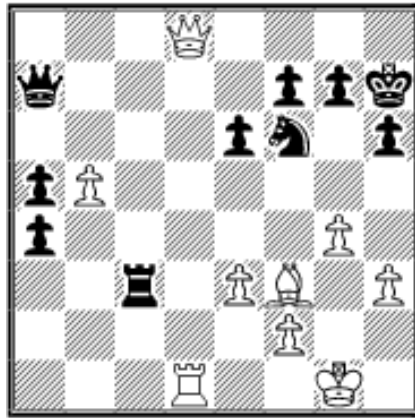
Let's return to the position after 3 Be2. Black has only one possibility left: taking the a5-pawn with the queen immediately, even if this leads to loss of the queen.

**3...Qxa5! 4 Bd3+ Rxd3 5 Qxa5 Rxd6 6 Qxb5**



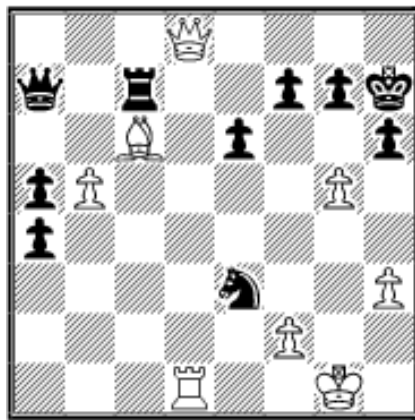
This position is probably drawn.

There's one more tense variation, in which Black holds on by means of "only" moves, if after **1 g4!? a5**, White tries **2 a4!? ba 3 b5**



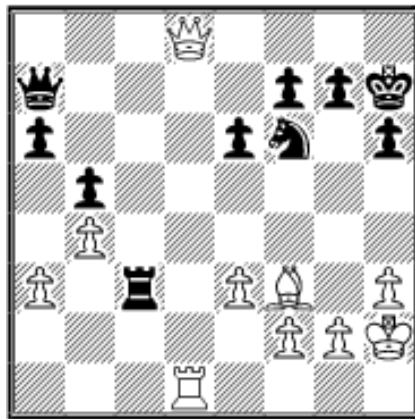
3...Qc5 4 b6 Rb3 5 b7 Qe5 would not be good, in view of 6 Qc8! (threatening 7 Rd8) 6...Nd5 (6...a3 7 Qc2+; or 6...Rb2?! 7 Rd2!) 7 Qc2+ g6 8 Bxd5 ed 9 Rb1! Rxb1+ 10 Qxb1 Qb8 11 Qb5 a3 12 Qd7! (12 Qxd5 Qc7 is inferior) 12...a2 13 Qxf7+ Kh8 14 Qf6+ Kh7 15 Qb2 a1Q+ 16 Qxa1 Qxb7 17 Qxa5 – here White's extra pawn must win.

Black has to continue **3...Rc7! 4 Bc6 Nd5**, without fearing 5 Bxd5 ed 6 Qxd5 Qb7=. And **5 g5!** is met, not by 5...hg 6 Qxg5 a3 7 e4+–, but by the counterblow **5...Nxe3!**.



Here, just as in the main line after 1 Rd6, White wins the queen by **6 Be4+ g6 7 b6! Qxb6 8 Bxg6+! fg 9 Rd7+ Rxd7 10 Qxb6 Nf5**, but he has no chance of winning.

Now it's time to evaluate Sutovsky's most important suggestion: **1 Kh2!**



What is its point? Well, above all, like almost any strong positional move, it contains a prophylactic idea. It turns out that this constitutes an indirect defense of the a3-pawn.

On 1...Rxa3?, White replies 2 Rc1, threatening both 3 Rc8 and 3 Rc7 Qb6 4 Qe7. With the king still on g1, Black would have the strong reply 2...Rxe3!. Here, this is not possible – both because White could now take the rook (since his king would no longer be in check from e3), and in view of 3 Rc7 (there's no first-rank rook check).

In several lines I tried to double major pieces on the 8th rank by Qf8 and Rd8, and it would never work, because of the counterattack beginning with Qc7. But here, White controls both the open c- and d-files, so there is no counterattack.

Emil continues his line as follows: 2...e5 3 Rc7 Qb6 4 Qe7 Qe6 5 Qf8 Qf5 (5...e4 6 Rxf7 Qe5+ 7 g3 Qg5 8 Rxf6 (threatening 9 Bxe4+) 8...ef 9 Re6! Ra2 10 Qxf3+–) 6 Rxf7 Qg6 (6...Qg5 8 Rxf6!) 7 Ra7! (the computer's recommended move, 7 Qe7, is strong too) 7...e4 8 Ra8 Qf5 9 Qh8+ Kg6 10 Ra7 Qe5+ 11 g3

Ne8 12 Bg4, “and mate is not far away.”

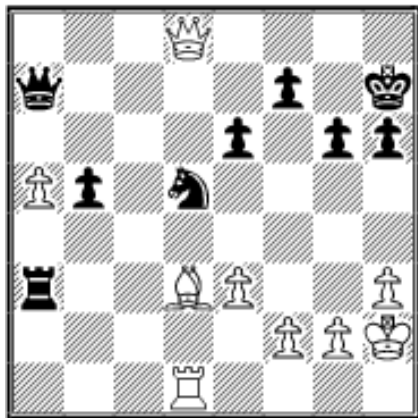
So what else can Black do? He doesn't have all that many resources left. Not 1...Rc2?!, because of 2 Qd3+. After 1...Rc7 2 Rd6 Rc2, the rook on c2 is vulnerable once again: 3 Rxe6! Rxf2 (3...fe 4 Qd3+ and 5 Qxc2) 4 Re7 Rd2 (only move) 5 Rxa7 Rxd8; and here, perhaps the most efficient way to win is 6 Bc6!?, since 6 Rxa6 Nd5 leads to some technical difficulties for White (my variation).

Instead of 2...Rc2, Sutovsky examined 2...Rd7 3 Rxd7 Nxd7 (3...Qxd7 4 Be4+) 4 Qe7 Qc7+ 5 g3 Kg8 6 Qe8+ Nf8 7 Qc6, and the a6-pawn must fall.

In reply to 1 Kh2, Black may of course trade queens by 1...Qc7+, but this endgame looks difficult. It would make sense to return to the analysis after answering the main question: what does White have after the programmed advance **1...a5!?**

It turns out that, by comparison to the starting position, the move 2 Be2! is now much stronger. Recall that, after the immediate 1 Be2?!, Black replied 1...Nd5 (but not 1...e5? 2 Bd3+ e4 3 Bxe4+! Nxe4 4 Rd7+—) 2 Bd3+ g6 3 Be4, and now either 3...Qc7 4 Qxc7 Nxc7 5 Rd7 Kg7, or 3...Nxe3!?. But here, Black no longer has the Nxe3 counterstroke, the b5-pawn is *en prise*, and the possibility of b4xa5 might also sow confusion in Black's defensive plans.

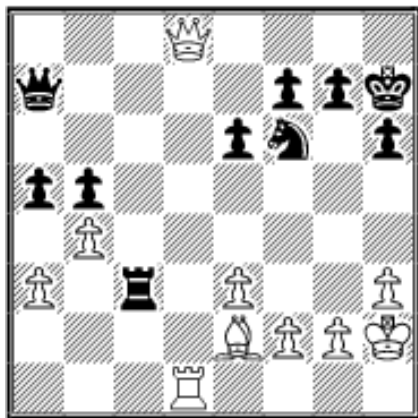
By the way, 2 ba?! would be inaccurate because of 2...Rxa3 3 Be2 Nd5! (3...Ne4? loses to 4 Bd3 f5 5 Bxe4 fe 6 Rd7 Qc5 7 Qf6 Qd6+ 8 Rxd6 gf 9 Rxe6) 4 Bd3+ g6



5 Rc1 Qe7! leads to a drawn endgame: 6 Qxe7 Nxe7 7 Rc7 Rxd3 8 Rxe7 Kg7 9 Rb7 Rb3. And on 5 Bxg6+ fg (5...Kxg6? 6 Rxd5! ed 7 Qd6+ and 8 Qxa3) 6 e4, Black saves himself by 6...Qxf2 7 ed (7 Qd7+ Kh8 changes nothing) 7...Qf4+ 8 Kg1 Rxb3!.

So we must play **2 Be2!**.

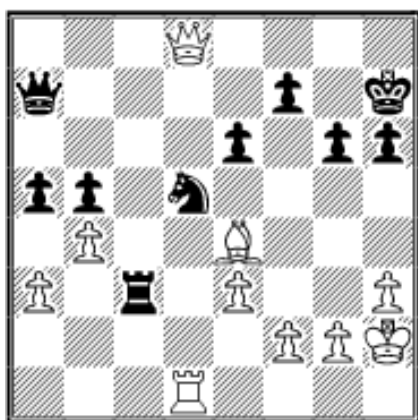




There's no time for 2...ab? in view of 3 Bd3+; and after 2...e5? the familiar bishop transfer to the f5-square by 3 Bxb5 Rxa3 4 Bd7! would be strong.

That leaves only **2...Nd5**. White of course does not continue 3 ba? Rxa3 – we just looked at this position – but instead **3 Bd3+ g6** (the exchange sacrifice 3...Rxd3 4 Rxd3 ab 5 ab Qa2 is hopeless: 6 e4 Nxb4 7 Rf3+–, or 6...Qb1 7 Rf3 Qxe4 8 Rxf7+–) **4 Be4!**

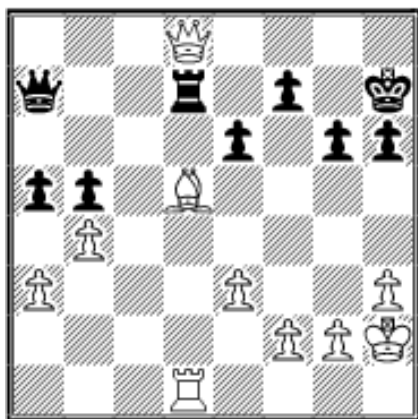
(again, not 4 ba? Rxa3)



This pretty bishop maneuver, setting off from f3 on a roundabout journey to e4, thereby breaking up Black's defense, is all known to us by analogy with the move 1 Be2, but here it's considerably more effective.

4...ab is met by 5 Bxd5 ba (5...ed 6 ab Rc2 7 Kg3 is hopeless for Black) 6 Bxe6 Qc7+ (there's nothing better) 7 Qxc7 Rxc7 8 Bd5, and the extra bishop must win for White.

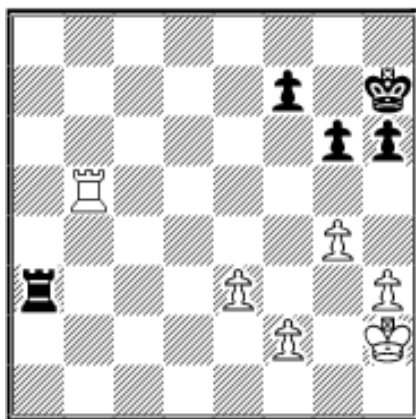
The variations after **4...Rc7!? 5 Bxd5 Rd7** are decidedly non-trivial.



The a5-pawn is untouchable: 6 Qxa5? Qb8+! 7 g3 Ra7!, and unexpectedly the white queen is trapped.

An important position (not for evaluating this particular variation, but for general chess culture) arises in the line 6 Qf8 ed 7 ba Qxa5 8 Qc5 Qc7+ 9 Qxc7 Rxc7 10 Rxd5 Rc3 11 Rxb5 Rxa3 12 g4.

#### Evaluative Problem No. 4



With best play for both sides – is this a win or a draw?

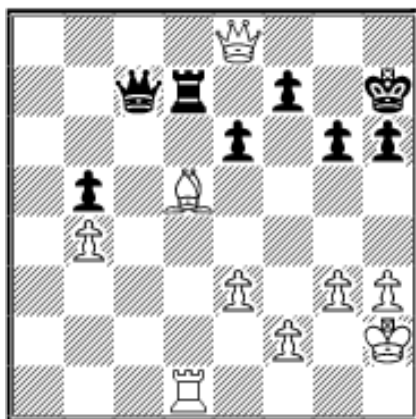
If Black had had time to play h6-h5, he could hold this position without any particular trouble. But since his opponent has prevented this, now the defense will be difficult. Still, objectively the position is drawn. To indicate one important guidepost: White obviously will continue h3-h4-h5. After g6xh5, he will recapture with the rook, then he will move the rook away and try for e3-e4-e5. So Black

should prevent the pawn's advance to e5, by playing f7-f6! at the proper moment. This is not the only path to the draw, but it's probably the simplest, at least from a practical point of view. This kind of recommendation is easily understood and memorized.

Instead of 6 Qf8, a stronger move is 6 Qe8!, attacking the black rook (now Black doesn't have 6...ed? 7 ba). The main threat is to bring the rook via c1 to c8. Black can't prevent this: 6...Qc7+ 7 g3 ab 8 Rc1! Qd8 9 Qxd8 Rxd8 10 Bc6 ba 11 Bxb5+; so he plays 6...ab!.

Let's assume that White responds simplistically: 7 ab Qc7+ 8 g3.

### Evaluative Problem No. 5



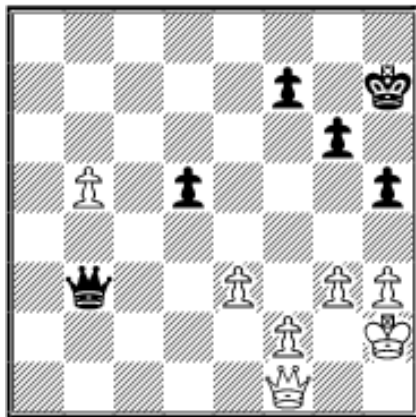
How does Black defend? Which line gives him the greater drawing chances?

Emil restricted himself to the short variation 8...ed 9 Rd4, maintaining the material balance, and evaluated Black's position as "very unpleasant." This is most likely correct.

In my day, when faced with similar difficult situations, I successfully employed the "escapology technique" (discussed in detail in the last quarter of my book, [\*School of Chess\*](#)

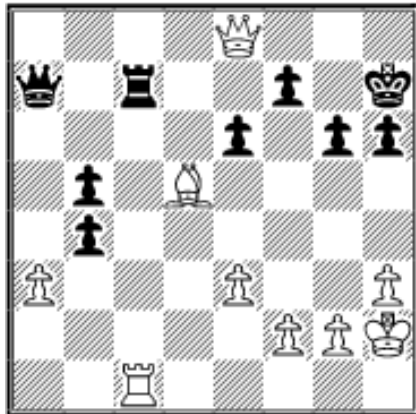
[\*Excellence 2 – Tactical Play\*](#)) – that is, I sought a way to sharply alter the character of the game, even if it meant losing a little material.

Therefore, my attention was drawn to 8...Rxd5!? 9 Rxd5 ed 10 Qxb5 Qc2, since the only way White can defend the f2-pawn, while avoiding some unpleasant checks, would be the passive 11 Qf1. Now it's not at all certain that Black must lose in the lines 11...Qc4?! 12 Qb1 d4 13 ed Qxd4 14 Kg1, or 11...Qb2 12 b5 d4 13 ed Qxd4 14 Kg1, but these positions still don't look good for him. In my view, it would be better for Black to try to restrict the opposing queen: 11...Qb3! 12 b5 h5.



And I don't see how White can make any progress. Black's more active queen goes a long way toward balancing his pawn minus.

White's game can be strengthened by **7 Rc1!**. The threat of 8 Rc8 is too dangerous – I see nothing better for Black than **7...Rc7**.

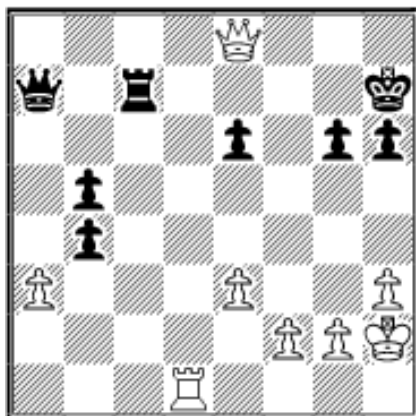


And White keeps his extra piece after **8 Bc6!**  
**ba 9 Rd1 Qc5 10 Rd8 Qe5+ 11 f4 Qg7 12 Ra8 b4.**

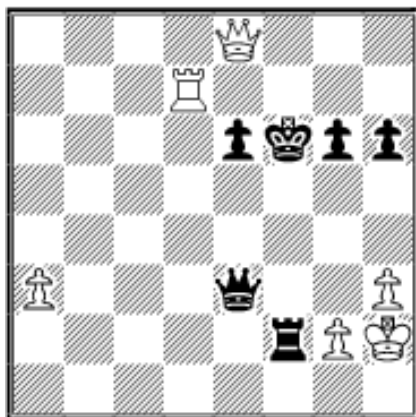


The final exactitude: the tempting 13 e4? (planning to wall in the queen by e4-e5) is refuted by 13...b3! 14 Rxa3 Qf6!=. So White plays simply 13 Be4!, with a gradual win, since the pawns will advance no further.

The attempt to play "brilliantly" is less convincing: 8 Bxe6!? fe (8...Rxc1 9 Bxf7 Kg7 10 Qg8+ Kf6 11 Qxg6+ Ke7 12 Qe6+ Kd8 13 Qe8+ Kc7 14 ab would be hopeless) 9 Rd1!.

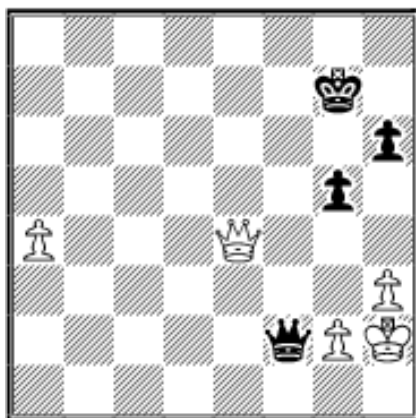


Considering the mortal threat of 10 Rd8, Black has no alternative but to harass the enemy queen by 9...Re7 10 Qf8! Rf7 11 Qxb4 Rxf2 12 Qxb5 Qxe3 13 Qd7+ Kg8 14 Qe8+ Kg7 15 Rd7+ Kf6.



I don't see any straightforward win: 16 Qe7+ Kf5!, or 16 Qd8+ Ke5 17 Qc7+ Ke4 18 Qc6+ Ke5. White must take the pawn-up queen endgame after 16 Rf7+ Kg5 (or 16...Ke5 17 Rxf2 Qxf2 18 Qxg6, with an overwhelming advantage) 17 Qe7+ Kh5 18 Qb4! g5 19 Qg4+ Kg6 20 Rxf2 Qxf2 21 Qxe6+ Kh7 22 Qe4+ Kg7 23 a4.

### Evaluative Problem No. 6



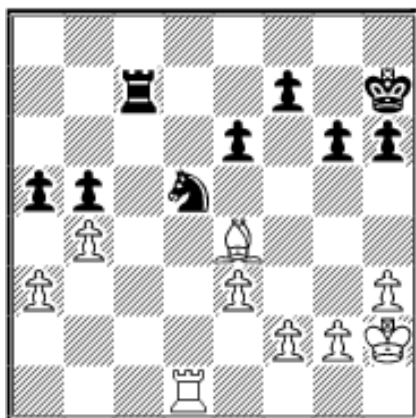
Can we say that White's position is won? I'm not so sure. The problem is that, after 23...Qc5, White's queen is unable to secure the pawn's advance, while simultaneously securing the king against checks, which means that the king must go forward. If Black's king could hide in the corner behind its own pawns, then there would be a great likelihood of a perpetual check. But with the black king out in the open, the defense becomes more difficult: the enemy queen can improve its position with tempo and

sometimes even block a check while giving check.

We've looked at 4...Rc7!?. Perhaps Black could offer greater resistance by exchanging queens: **4...Qc7+! 5 Qxc7**.

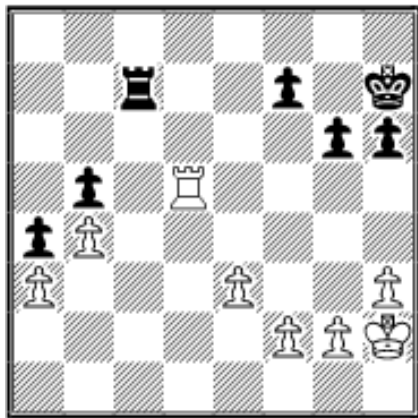
Without the moves 1 Kh2 a5, Black would have held the position by recapturing with the knight. But here, 5...Nxc7 would be bad in view of 6 ba Kg7 (6...Rxa3 7 Rd7) 7 Rd7 Kf8 8 Bb7! Ke8 9 Rxc7 Rxc7 10 a6. So **5...Rxc7** is necessary.

### Evaluative Problem No. 7



Which rook endgame do you prefer: taking twice on d5, or playing 6 ba (there's no difference if you play it immediately or after 6 Bxd5 ed)?

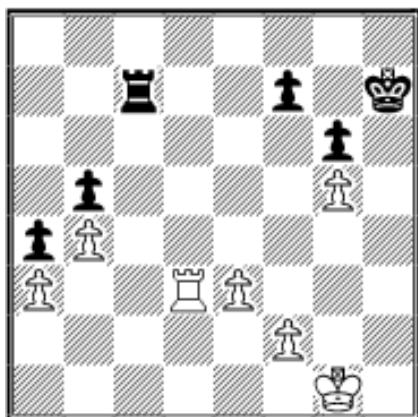
At first, Sutovsky argued for 6 Bxd5 ed 7 Rxd5. But he changed his mind after I pointed out the reply 7...a4!.



8 Rxb5 Rc3 9 Ra5 Rxa3 inevitably leads to the “four-vs-three-on-one-side” rook endgame; for example, 10 g4!? Ra1 11 h4 a3 12 Kg3 Rb1 13 Rxa3 Rxb4. We have already examined this endgame – see Evaluative Position No. 4.

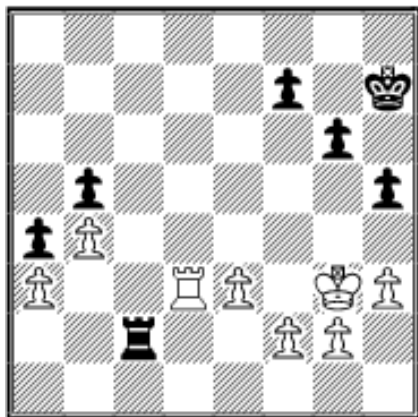
White can retain the queenside pawns by playing 8 Rd3 (there’s no need to fear Black’s rook getting to b3, since White’s king comes over in time to defend the rook). Among other

things, this situation occurred at one point in our previous article in this series: after 1 g4!? a5 2 h4 Qc7! 3 Qxc7 Rxc7 4 g5 hg 5 hg Nd5?! (5...ab!) 6 Be4+! g6 7 Bxd5 ed 8 Rxd5 a4! 9 Rd3!.



Black has lost his counterplay on the kingside, so White’s winning chances were considered quite realistic. But here, he does have counterplay, and Black has every right to expect a draw in my view.

For example: 8...Rc2 9. Kg3 h5.

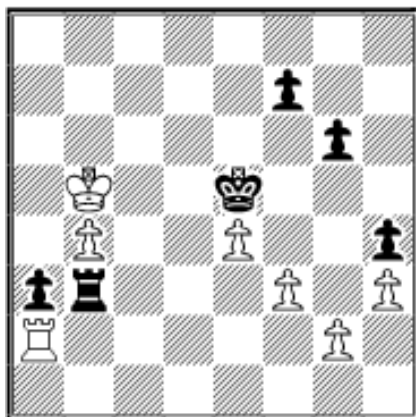


Black should probably not respond to 10 h4 with 10...f5?! on account of 11 f3± (11 f4 Rb2 12 Kf3 Rb3 13 Ke2 Rb2+ would be weaker) 10...Kg7 is safer: 11 e4 Kf6 12 f4 Ke6 13 Kf3 f6+/-.

And after 10 e4 h4+ 11 Kf3 Kg7 12 Ke3 (12 e5 Kf8) 12...Kf6, a drawn outcome is also the most likely. Here’s an interesting – although probably not forced – variation: 13 Rd2 (13 g3 hg 14 fg Ke6 15 h4 f6+/-) 13...Rc3+ 14

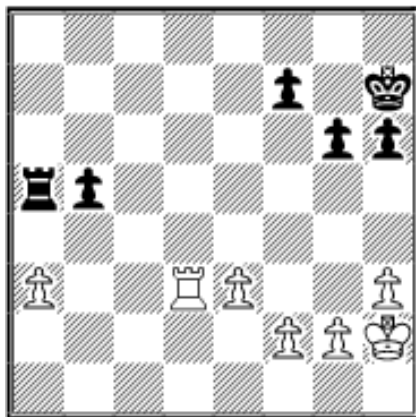
Kd4 Rxa3 15 Kc5 Ke5 16 f3 (16 Kxb5 Kxe4) 16...Rb3 17 Kxb5 a3 18 Ra2





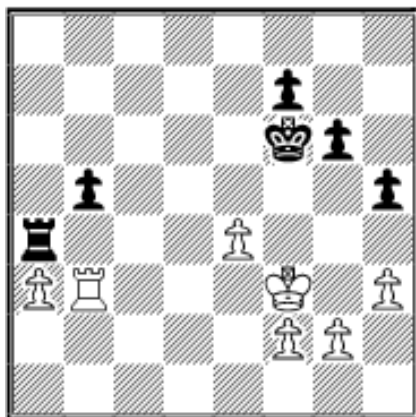
18...Kd4!? 19 Ka4 Rb1! 20 Rxa3 (20 Kxa3 Kc3; 20 b5 Kc4) 20...Kc4 21 Ka5 Rxb4, with equality.

There is a different pawn structure that is more promising for White: **6 ba! Ra7** (6...Nf6 7 Bd3+-) **7 Bxd5 ed 8 Rxd5 Rxa5 9 Rd3.**



We saw a similar situation to this once before also – in the variation 1 g4!? a5 2 h4 Qc7! 3 Qxc7 Rxc7 4 ba Ra7 5 g5 hg 6 hg Nd5! 7 Be4+ g6 8 Bxd5 ed 9 Rxd5 Rxa5 10 Rd3. Black has the vital tempo move 10...Ra4!, creating the threat of 11...Rg4+ and 12...Rxc5. After 11 f4 b4, the queenside pawns get traded off.

But here, 9...Ra4 is met by 10 Rb3. Sutovsky examines the following variations: 9...Ra4 10 Rb3! h5! (10...Kg7 11 g4! Kf6 12 Kg3 Ke6 13 h4) 11 Kg3 Kg7 12 Kf3 Kf6 13 e4!



13...Ke6 is met by 14 Ke3, or 14 h4 first. “I think that objectively speaking, the endgame must be a win, although it’s hard to give mathematical proof of this.”

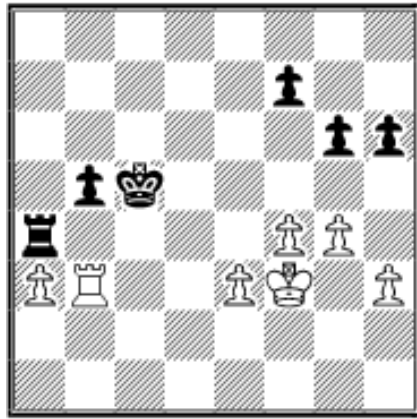
**9...Kg7! 10 g4!**

10 Kg3 Kf6 would be inaccurate; for example, 11 Kf4 Ra4+ 12 e4 b4, or 11 f4 Ke6 12 e4 Ra4 13 Kf3 b4 – trading off the queenside pawns allows Black to save himself.

**10...Kf6 11 f4** (11 Kg3 Ke5 would be inferior) **11...Ke6 12 Kg3 Ra4 13 Rb3 Kd6 14 Kf3**

Once again, White should not take the “four-pawns-vs-three-on-one-side” endgame: 14 Rxb5 Rxa3 15 Kf3 Ke7 16 h4 Kf6 17 h5 gh 18 Rxh5 Kg6 – with an appropriately-timed f7-f6, Black achieves the draw.

**14...Kc5**

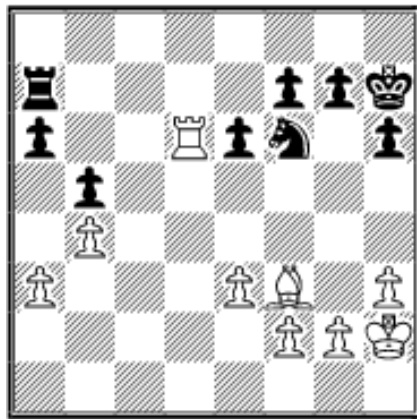


After 15 e4 Kc4 16 Re3 b4 17 ab Rxb4 18 f5 Kd4 19 e5 Kd5 20 e6 fe 21 fg e5 22 h4 (22 g7 Rb8) 22...Ke6 23 Ra3 Kf6 24 Ra6+ Kg7 25 h5, the position is most likely a draw. But White has the very strong 15 Rc3+! Kd6 16 Rd3+ Kc6 (16...Ke6 17 Rb3) 17 h4. “Now, with the king cutoff, all 4-vs-3 endgames should be easily won.”

Thus, the rook endgame is very difficult for Black, probably even lost. This circumstance forces us to look more closely at the situation

after the exchange of queens on the very first move. Let’s examine **1 Kh2! Qc7+!? 2 Qxc7 Rxc7 3 Rd6 Ra7.**

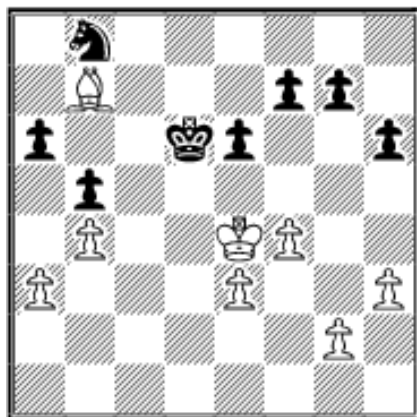
### Evaluative Problem No. 8



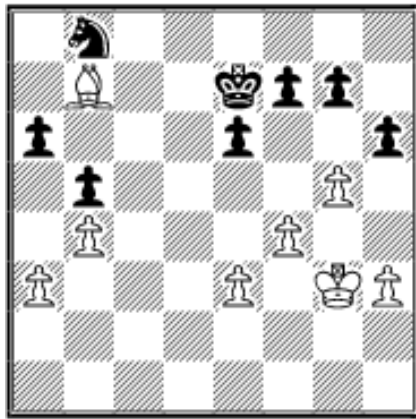
How would you assess this endgame? How great are White’s chances of winning (and consequently – Black’s chances of drawing)?

4 Rb6 creates the threat of 5 Rb7. After 4...Nd7 5 Rb7 Rxb7 6 Bxb7 Nb8, Emil thinks White should win. I’m not so sure Black’s defensive plan is simple enough: bring the king via d6 to c7; after the bishop retreats, either Nc6 (and a6-a5, if allowed), or more likely, Nd7-b6, threatening Nc4. For example, 7 Kg3 Kg6 8 Kf4 Kf6 9 Ke4 Ke7 10 f4 Kd6,

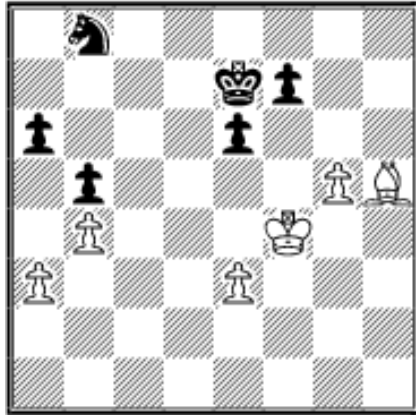
and now what?



In principle, while Black is improving his position on the queenside, White should be creating problems for him on the kingside. Instead of 7 Kg3, he could try 7 f4!? Kg6 8 g4 Kf6 9 Kg3 Ke7 10 g5.



The variations are very tense, but again, I could find no win. For instance: 10...hg 11 fg g6 12 h4 Kd6 13 Kf4 (13 h5 gh 14 Kh4 Kc7 15 Be4 Nd7 16 Kxh5 Ne5 17 Kh6 Kd6 18 Kg7 Ke7 isn't dangerous) 13...Kc7 (but not 13...Nd7? 14 Bxa6 Kc6 15 Bc8 Nb6 16 Bxe6! fe 17 Ke5) 14 Bf3 Kd6 15 h5 (I don't see how else to make progress) 15...gh 16 Bxh5 Ke7.



Now 17 Ke5 Nc6+ is useless. On 17 e4, Black does not respond 17...Nd7 18 e5 Nb6 19 Be2, but 17...f6! 18 gf+ Kxf6 19 e5+ Ke7 20 Bf3 Kd8, or 18 g6 Kf8 19 Bg4 (19 e5 Kg7) 19...e5+ 20 Kf5 Kg7 21 Ke6 Nc6 22 Kd5 Nd4. And if 17 Bf3, then Black can even sacrifice the a6-pawn: 17...Nd7!? 18 Bb7 Kd6 19 Bxa6 Kc6 20 Bc8 (20 e4 Nf8; 20 Ke4 Nf8 21 Ke5 Nd7+ 22 Kd4 Nf8) 20...Nb6 21 Bxe6 (White can also expect no advantage from 21 g6 fg 22 Bxe6 Nc4) 21...fe 22 g6 (22

Ke5 Kd7) 22...Kd6 23 g7 Nd5+ 24 Kg5 Ne7 25 Kf6 Ng8+ 26 Kf7 Nh6+ 27 Kf8 Kd5 28 g8Q Nxg8 29 Kxg8 Kc4 30 Kf7 Kb3 31 Kxe6 Kxa3 32 e4 Kxb4, and the pawns queen simultaneously.

Besides, as Sutovsky himself pointed out, the knight doesn't have to retreat to b8. 4...Ne8!? deserves serious consideration. On 5 Rb7 Rxb7 6 Bxb7, the pawn does not need to be defended: Black has 6...Nd6! 7 Bxa6 Kg6. The king threatens to go to c6, which forces White to play a move he doesn't want to play: a3-a4, after which there's no point in even talking about an advantage for him. The attempt to drive the knight from d6 by advancing the pawn to e5 doesn't work: Black plays e6-e5 himself (8 f4 Kf6 9 g4 e5).

And if White doesn't exchange rooks, he will always have to consider the a6-a5 advance, leading to the exchange of all the queenside pawns. For example, 5 Bb7 Nc7 6 Kg3 g5 (an unnecessary move) 7 Kf3 a5 8 Bc6 (Sutovsky) 8...ab 9 ab Ra6!, with a draw. And neither 5 e4 Kg6 nor 5 Be4+ g6 6 Kg3 Kg7 7 Kf4 Kf6 is dangerous to Black.

On 5 Kg3, Emil composes the variation 5...g5 6 Bb7 Nc7 7 Bc6 f5 8 Rb8, considering that White retains a solid advantage. I note that Black should restrain himself from playing g6-g5 in such situations, as tempting as the move appears, in order not to give his opponent a target for active kingside play. A decent alternative is 5...Kg6!? 6 Bb7 Nc7 7 Bc6 Kf6 8 Kf3 a5!? (8...Ke7) 9 ba (9 Bxb5 ab 10 ab Nd5) 9...Rxa5 10 Rb7 Nd5, and all that White has achieved is the "four-pawns-vs-three-on-one-side" endgame.



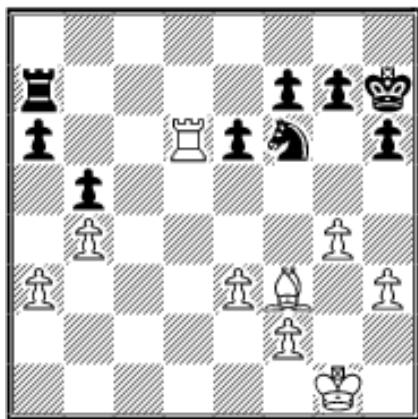
If White does not play 4 Rb6, Black will prevent this move for good, by playing 4...Nd7.

For example, 4 g4 Nd7 (other continuations are weaker: 4...a5? 5 Rb6; 4...Kg8 5 Rd8+; 4...g5 5 Kg3 and 6 h4) 5 Kg3 Kg6 (now there is the idea Ne5) 6 Be2 Kf6 7 f4 Ke7 8 Rc6 a5! 9 Bxb5 ab 10 ab Rb7, with equality. Or 4 Kg3 Nd7 5 Kf4 g5+ (here the pawn move is justified, since 5...Kg6 6 Bc6 Nb8 7 Be8 Kf6 8 Rb6 would lead to the loss of a pawn) 6 Ke4 Kg7 7 Kd4 Kf6, with excellent saving chances.

These variations are certainly not forced and most likely can be improved for both sides. But for now, the impression grows that Black's defensive resources are great enough. Sutovsky considers that, no matter what the "theoretical" assessment of this endgame is, saving it in practice is nearly impossible, and a grandmaster with good technique will more than likely win it. I find this opinion debatable. Black would find it hard to steel himself to enter such an endgame (so painful-looking at first glance). But once it actually occurs on the board, it's not that hard to play, in view of Black's limited selection of defensive resources. Meanwhile, White is the one who must resolve the task whose answer we do not yet know: how to avoid the exchange of queenside pawns, while maintaining long-term pressure. Finding such a path over-the-board is very difficult – if such a path even exists.

Among others, Black can also defend himself by means of the first move we recommended in the previous article: **1 g4!?**, as follows: **1...Qc7!?** (instead of 1...a5!? 2 h4! Qc7!) **2 Qxc7 Rxc7 3 Rd6 Ra7**.

### Evaluative Problem No. 9



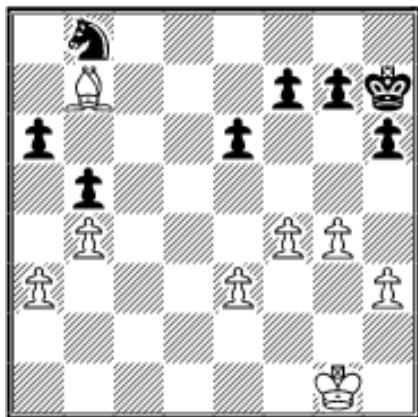
Who benefits from the change in position by comparison with the line 1 Kh2 Qc7+ (after g2-g4 has been played instead of Kg1-h2) – how much have White's winning chances increased or even decreased?

I propose that this situation is better for White. In the first place, the kingside pawn advance is already underway, and creating problems there for Black is one of the most logical plans, flowing as it does from the "two weaknesses principle." In the second place, the white king's march to the queenside (behind his pawns, not in front of them) is more natural – and sometimes shorter as well (after the likely continuation f2-f4). The only question is – does this circumstance have any significance to the overall assessment of this endgame.

It seemed to me that, in a bishop vs. knight battle (with or without rooks on), White's positional advantage would be overwhelming. Now I understand that I overestimated his position.

I see no reason not to play the natural **4 Rb6!?**, hindering Black from playing a6-a5 and creating the threat of 5 Rb7. If White does not, we have already seen that he must consider 4...Nd7 – and 4...g5, followed by Kg7-f8-e7, is also possible then.

In the preceding article, 4...Nd7 5 Rb7 Rxb7 6 Bxb7 Nb8 7 f4 was proposed.

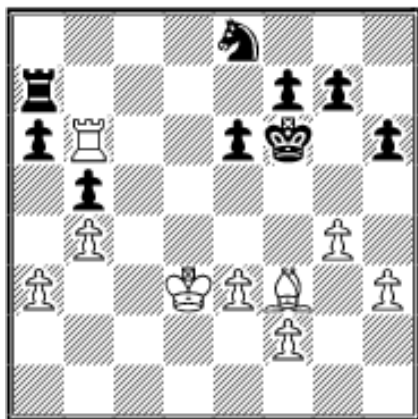


The assessment, “A difficult endgame for Black,” seemed obvious to me. I still think it’s not far from the truth. On 7...g5, White replies h3-h4! (either immediately or after the preparatory king move). If 7...Kg6, then 8 Kf2 Kf6 9 h4!? Ke7 10 e4! Kd6 11 e5+ Kc7 12 Be4 Nd7 13 Ke3 Nb6 14 Kd4, and 14...Nc4 can be unpleasantly met by 15 a4. White will exploit the first favorable opportunity to play h4-h5. Note the “pawn square” on the kingside – this sort of formation is very good for White. Now there

is the possibility of a pawn break (for example, after trading down to a pawn endgame), the f7-pawn is weak, and the advance of any of Black’s kingside pawns will create fresh weaknesses.

Of course, this variation does not exhaust the possibilities of this position, it only demonstrates some of the ideas, one being the e3-e4-e5 advance.

The advantage is harder to prove after **4...Ne8!**. On 5 Rb7 Rxb7 6 Bxb7, as before, Black can reply 6...Nd6!. An instructive line is **5 Kf1 Kg6 6 Ke2 Kf6 7 Kd3**.



If now 7...Ke7 8 Kd4 Nd6, then 9 Bc6 Nc4 10 Kc5! Nxa3 11 Rb7+ Rxb7 12 Bxb7, with a great advantage. However, Black can play more actively by sacrificing a pawn: **7...a5!? 8 Rxb5 ab 9 ab Ra2**, with unpleasant counterplay.

So the immediate exchange of queens is undoubtedly the best way of defending against Sutovsky’s recommendation of 1 Kh2!. He himself shares that opinion, as does Igor. But even my recommendation, 1 g4!?

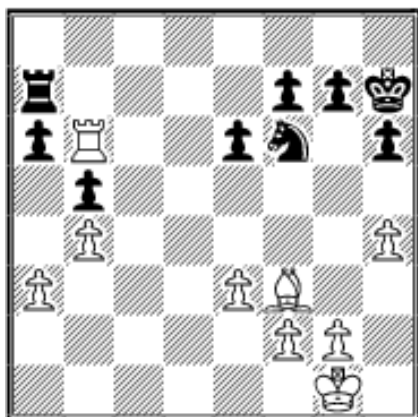
Qc7!?, although less effective, is still a worthy alternative to the main variation analyzed in the previous article.

Now is just the time to recall that White’s opening moves in that preceding main variation (1 g4 a5 2 h4) could be transposed without doing any harm. I must admit that this circumstance gave me pause at first – I knew that this wasn’t right. Why? Let me quote the opinions of two well-known specialists.

*In positions that are right on the line which separates a draw from a loss, we generally find, as a rule, a single solution. – Gavriil Veresov.*

*Many years experience in analysis have convinced me that in balanced, tense positions there cannot be more than one path to victory. – Igor Zaitsev.*

Let's try starting out with **1 h4!**. The advantage of playing the other move first shows itself precisely after the reply **1...Qc7?!**. In this situation, the endgame that arises after **2 Qxc7 Rxc7 3 Rd6 Ra7 4 Rb6** really is very difficult for Black.



Now **4...Ne8** would be bad, in view of **5 Be4+!** (**5 h5** would be strong too) **5...g6** (**5...Kg8?** **6 Rb8 Kf8 7 Bc6; 5...f5?** **6 Rxe6 fe 7 Rxe8**) **6 h5**. And after **5...Nd7 6 Rb7 Rxb7 7 Bxb7 Nb8**, the bind imposed on the king's wing by **7 h5!?** is quite unpleasant for Black.

Let's take stock. The plan recommended in the previous article (in its most accurate version, **1 h4!**) makes an immediate transposition to the endgame unfavorable for Black. Conversely, there is no assurance of a

White win in the concluding positions of the complex variations beginning with **1...a5 2 g4 Qc7!**.

Sutovsky's recommended **1 Kh2!**, on the other hand, practically negates the effectiveness of **1...a5**, but after **1...Qc7+!**, White's win is cast into great doubt.

Now I will offer the reader, who has taken in all this information, a final evaluative problem to solve. Where does White's greatest chance of success lie – after **1 h4!**, or after **1 Kh2!** – which would you prefer?

Let's return to our thoughts on the inexhaustibility of chess. Before publishing my previous article, I showed Miles' Position during many training sessions with strong players. I made one correction after another to my analysis. As a result, I got the impression that I knew practically all there was to know about this position, except for some small possible improvements.

But it turns out that matters are much more complicated – many previous assessments were thrown into suspicion, fresh ideas were discovered, and new, impressive analytical branches appeared.

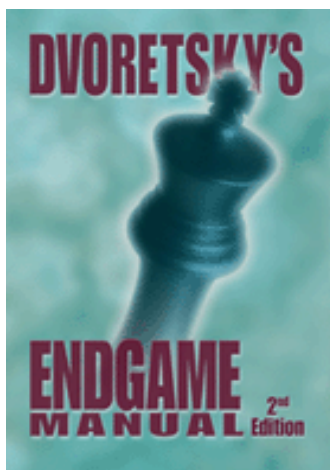
In this article, by contrast with the preceding one, the analysis offered is still green and insufficiently tested, so it's probably going to be extended and improved upon. And, whereas before I was acquainting my readers with my own finished conclusions, now it is the reverse – this article is filled with debatable problems. Some I do not know the answers to and can only guess. How much effort may still be required before we can achieve a somewhat accurate picture of the simple, natural position with which we started?!



## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## A Trainer's First Steps

After graduating from Moscow University, I spent a further three years working in the chess department of the Physicural Institute. Unwilling to limit myself to just teaching, I organized a little group of three first-year students for further sports development. My first pupils were master-candidates Andrei Deev and Sergei Arkhipov (one of whom would go on to become a master and the other a grandmaster), and the Mongolian player Lhagva. The following year, I also began working with master-candidate Valery Chekhov; two years later, our work was crowned by his annexing the title of world junior champion. Soon, my students Artur Yusupov and Sergei Dolmatov became world junior champions as well. Three champions in four years! Remember: over the course of the preceding twenty years, the Soviet Union only produced three players – Boris Spassky, Anatoly Karpov, and Alexander Beljavsky – who achieved such success.

Serious work with young players usually begins with the identification of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The easiest of the three to diagnose was the Mongol. It was immediately clear that nothing about his game would have to be changed. Lhagva's native talent was beyond doubt: he made good, natural moves, went over to the attack at the first appropriate moment, and had a good eye for tactics. Plus his personal qualities – strong health, great reserves of energy, fighting spirit, good work ethic – were also very much in order.

The only problem was his complete lack of education – he literally was ignorant in all stages and elements of chess. But then, I didn't really need to do anything about that. I gave Lhagva a few excellent books to study; and in our work sessions, any judgment I had to offer, on practically any subject from opening to endgame, was taken to heart.

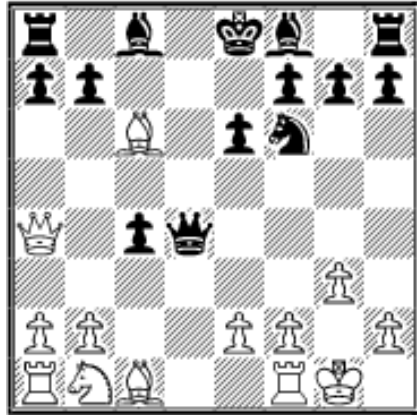
Of course, within a relatively small number of working sessions, it would have been unrealistic to expect anything too impressive in the way of progress – especially when the Mongolian Federation did not have the means to send its players to international tournaments, meaning they had to “stew in their own juices.” But we did all that we could. Before our work began, Lhagva took sixth place in his national championship; but within a year, he would be champion – an achievement he was to repeat several times, while also leading the Mongolian team to the Olympics.

I would like to show you an interesting game that is characteristic of my student's style. It was played against the American grandmaster Larry Christiansen. Although the outcome of the game went against Lhagva, he put up a good fight, posing complex problems for his considerably stronger and more

experienced opponent. Christiansen was unable to resolve some of these problems correctly, even in his later commentary for *Chess Informant*.

**Christiansen – Lhagva**  
Lucerne Olympiad, 1982

**1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 e7-e6 3 Ng1-f3 d7-d5 4 g2-g3 d5xc4 5 Bf1-g2 c7-c5 6 0-0 Nb8-c6 7 Qd1-a4 c5xd4 8 Nf3xd4 Qd8xd4 9 Bg2xc6+**



Here, Black usually continues 9...Bd7, and after 10 Rd1, rather than accept the inferior endgame with 10...Bxc6 11 Qxc6+ bc 12 Rxd4, he will sacrifice his queen by 10... Qxd1+ 11 Qxd1 Bxc6. Theory rates the ensuing position as somewhat better for White.

**9...b7xc6!?**

A brave decision! The positional exchange sacrifice this move entails had only been

played a couple of times previously, by rather unheralded players; so I am sure that Lhagva thought it up on his own (although I don't know if it was at the board or during home preparations). It's hardly been played since – mostly, I think, because of the “White is better” verdict rendered by *ECO*, precisely on the basis of the present game. I won't presume to judge how accurate that verdict might be, but we shall soon see that the game we examine here does not support it.

**10 Qa4xc6+ Qd4-d7 11 Qc6xa8 Bf8-c5 12 Nb1-c3 0-0 13 Rf1-d1**

A debatable move. Black will have to take his queen off the d7-square anyway, but, in some cases, the white rook would be more useful on f1 (protecting the f2-square) or on e1. 13 Qf3!? Bb7 14 e4 was worth considering.

**13...Qd7-c7 14 Qb7-f3 Bc8-b7 15 Bc1-f4**

Christiansen considers this *zwischenzug* strongest. On 15 e4, he points out 15... Bb4 (or 15...Qc6); while on 15 Qf4, Black would answer 15...e5.

**15...Qc7-b6**

The most natural retreat for the queen, although 15...Qc8!? also had some sense to it. Of course, 15...e5?? would be impossible, because of 16 Bxe5.

**16 e2-e4 Nf6xe4!**

Again, Black takes the most natural course. 16...Qxb2?? would lose to 17 Rab1, but 16...Bb4!? might be worth a look as a backup line. Christiansen gives 17 Be5 Bxc3 18 bc Nxe4 19 Rab1, and calls this a winning position for White;

however, in my view 19...Qc6 leaves matters unclear.

### 17 Nc3xe4 f7-f5



On 18 Qe2 (or 18 Qc3) 18...Bxe4, Black would retain excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange. And 18 Rd7 would be met by 18...Bxe4 19 Qe2 (19 Qc3? Bxf2+ 20 Kf1 Bd3+; 19 Be5? Rf7-/+ ) 19...Bd3, with equality (Christiansen).

### 18 b2-b4!?

An outstanding counterstroke! White tries to simplify and open lines for his rooks, as after 18...cb 19 Qxb3+/- . And 18...Qxb4 19

Rdb1! Bxe4 20 Rxb4 Bxf3 21 Rxc4 also leads to an advantage for White (Christiansen).

### 18...Bc5-d4!?

Not a bad reply, but hardly the only possibility. I believe that **18...Bxb4!** would have been stronger. White had intended to reply **19 Qe2!**

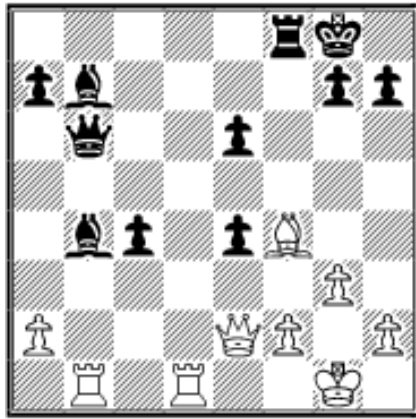


After 19...Bxe4 20 Qxc4, Christiansen gives the evaluation “advantage to White.” This is not completely obvious – the variation should be continued: 20...Bc5 21 Qe2 Ba8 22 Be3 Qc6 23 f3 Bxe3+ 24 Qxe3 Qxf3 25 Qxf3 Bxf3 26 Rd7. This endgame is undoubtedly better for White; the only question being: just how great is his advantage? I note also that instead of 24...Qxf3, Black could certainly try 24...f4!? 25 gf e5.

Still, there's no point in delving too deeply into the analysis of this continuation, since in my opinion, the other capture, **19...fe!**, would be stronger. Christiansen limits himself to the reply 20 Qxc4?, which in fact would have landed White in serious difficulties after 20...Bc5. Now 21 Qe2 loses to 21...e3, while after 21 Rd6!, Black continues 21...Bxf2+ 22 Kf1 Bd5!-/+.

20 Be3? Qc7-/+ is no better

The only serious try is **20 Rab1!**



But Black has the excellent reply **20...e3!**  
(it's important to open the long diagonal) **21 fe** (21 Bxe3 Qc6 22 f3 a5–/+ ) **21...c3!**



Now **22 a3?! Qc6 23 Rxb4 c2** is bad for White. On **22 Qc4**, Black has a draw either with **22...Rc8 23 Qxb4 c2 24 Qxb6 ab**, or with **22...c2 23 Qxc2 Rxf4! 24 gf Qxe3+ 25 Qf2 Qe4 26 Rd8+ Kf7 27 Rd7+ Kf8 28 Rxb7 Qxb1+ 29 Kg2 Qg6+**.

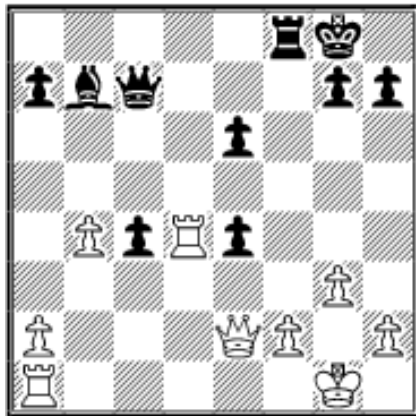
**22 Rd7!?** contains a trap: the careless **22... Bc6?** would be refuted by **23 Rxc7+! Kxc7 24 Qg4+ Kf7 25 Bh6**. So Black would reply **22...Qc6 23 Rxb7 Qxb7**; and after **24 a3 a5**

**25 ab Qe4 26 Rc1 ab–/+**, Black's far-advanced passed pawns are stronger than White's piece, while after **24 Bd6 Rc8 25 Rxb4 Qc6 26 Rd4 c2 27 Ba3**, the sharp struggle ends in well-deserved equality.

**19 Bf4-c7! Qb6xc7 20 Rd1xd4 f5xe4!**

Stronger than **20...Bxe4 21 Qc3**, with better chances for White.

**21 Qf3-e2**



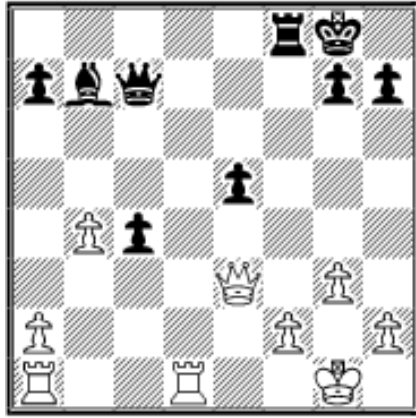
**21...e4-e3?!**

The critical moment of this game. Lhagva continues with his maximally active play, but objectively this is precisely where his position turns difficult. **21...Bd5!** deserved preference here: **22 Rc1** (threatening **23 Rxc4**), and here, not **22...c3 23 Qe1 Rf3 24 Rxe4 Bxe4 25 Qxe4+/-**, but simply **22...Rc8**, with chances for both sides.

**22 Qe2xe3 e6-e5**

**22...Qc6?** **23 f3 Rxf3** does not work, in view of **24 Qxf3! Qxf3 25 Rd8+ Kf7 26 Rf1+–**.

### 23 Rd4-d1



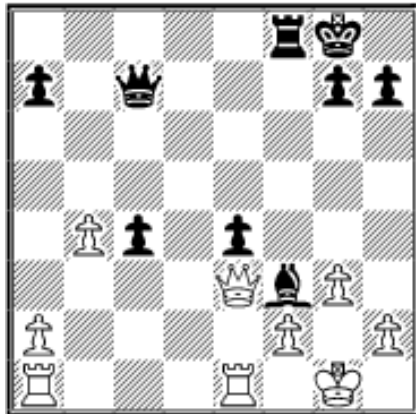
### 23...Bb7-f3?!

Once again, 23...Qc6 24 f3 Rxf3 was not possible, for the same reason: 25 Qxf3!, etc. Black should have tried 23...Qc8!?, intending either 24...Bf3 or 24...Qh3. Here his opponent would at least have had to give up his f-pawn. However, after something like 24 Rd6 Qh3 (24...Bf3? 25 Qxe5, intending 26 Qe6+) 25 f3 Bxf3 26 Rd2, the advantage would have remained with White.

### 24 Rd1-e1

Christiansen turned down the more active move 24 Rd2! because of 24...Qc8, when, in his opinion, Black is already better. But, in fact, White can easily parry Black's threat of a queen invasion on h3 by 25 Qc3 Kh8 (25...Qh3 26 Qxc4+ Kh8 27 Qf1) 26 Rc1, when Black can't play 26...Qh3 because of 27 Qxf3!.

### 24...e5-e4



24...Qc8? is bad, because of 25 Qxe5 Qh3 26 Qe6+.

Yet another crisis point.

### 25 Qe3-c5?

As Christiansen rightly indicated, White retains the advantage by playing 25 Rac1! Qd7 26 Qc3! Rc8 27 Re3!.

### 25...Qc7xc5 26 b4xc5 Rf8-c8

The game is now even. White later went on to win, but only because of his opponent's endgame errors.

### 27 Re3 Rxc5 28 Rc1 Kf7 29 Ra3 a5 30 Kf1 Ke6 31 Ke1 Kd5 32 Kd2 Kd4 33 Rac3 Bg4 34 R1c2 Be6 35 Rc1 g5 36 Kc2 Rf5?

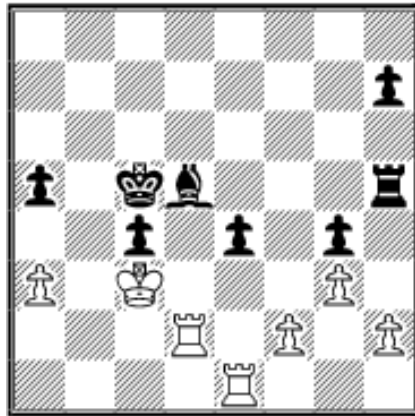
Time-pressure takes its toll. As Christiansen indicated, 36...Bg4 would have held the balance. However, contrary to his opinion, the text move was not the game's "decisive error."

### 37 Rd1+ Kc5 38 Rd2 g4 39 Ra3 Kb4 40 Re3 Rh5

40...Bd5 would have been simpler.



**41 a3+ Kc5 42 Kc3 Bd5 43 Re1**



**43...Rxb2?**

And here is where Black finally loses the thread of the game. I don't see how White could make progress after 43...Rf5. His rook on e1 would be unable to get to the b-file, considering the check threat at f3.

**44 Rb1 Bc6**

44...Rh6 (to get the enemy pawn to a4) 45 a4 Bc6 46 Rd4 Rf6 47 Rxc4+ Kd6+/- would

have held out longer.

**45 Rd4 Rh6 46 Rxc4+ Kd6 47 Rb6 Kc7 48 Ra6 Rf6 49 Rxa5 Rf3+ 50 Kd4 Rxf2 51 Rac5 Rf6 52 Rxc6+ Rxc6 53 Rxc6+ Kxc6 54 Kxe4 1-0**

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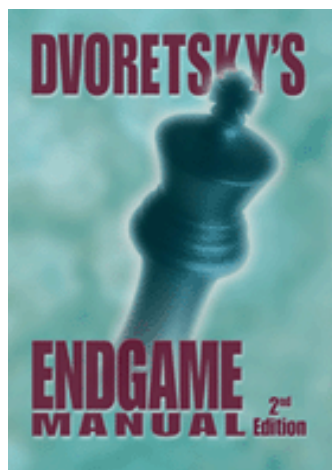
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## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



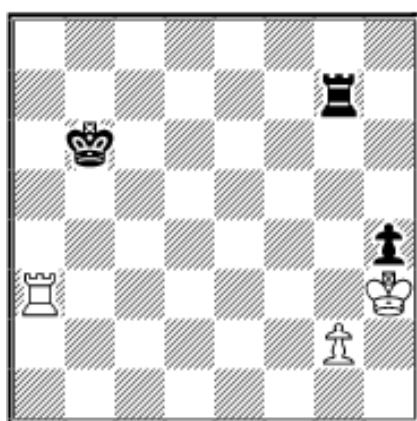
## Control Work

The well-known Thompson Endgame database (popular known as the [Nalimov Tablebases](#)) is a great help in analyzing endgames. When there are no more than six pieces and pawns on the board, the computer instantly gives its evaluation of the position and any of your possible moves. The use of endgame tablebases has made our impressions of several theoretical endgames much more accurate, leading to new, interesting and instructive positions.

Some time ago, I gave a chess seminar in Arizona, USA, where one of the participants showed me an endgame he had played. After the class, I analyzed the endgame with the aid of my computer program, and saw that it contained some difficult and instructive tasks. In trying to solve them, a player can train his calculating technique, and also practice and expand his knowledge of rook endings.

As is usual in my publications, a question mark alongside the diagram means that the position is an exercise (whether easy or – in most cases – difficult) you should solve for yourself.

*Casella – Anderson*  
Los Angeles, 2002



1.?

The h4-pawn will soon be lost. Black must defend by making use of the “head-on defense” (or the “frontal attack”). For those with a serious desire to brush up on their endgame mastery, I would recommend consulting the chapter on rook endgames in my [Endgame Manual](#); specifically, the section entitled, “The Pawn Hasn’t Crossed the Midline” (it’s only four and a half pages long). Without solid basic knowledge, you will find it hard to orient yourself in what follows.

On the other hand, even a good knowledge of theory is no guarantee of success when attempting to figure out a position over-the-board. There’s a great difference between “knowing” and “understanding.” It’s not enough to just soak up knowledge – it’s also important to train yourself in using that knowledge in a practical setting. Towards this end, honest trainers or book authors repeatedly

present appropriate exercises.

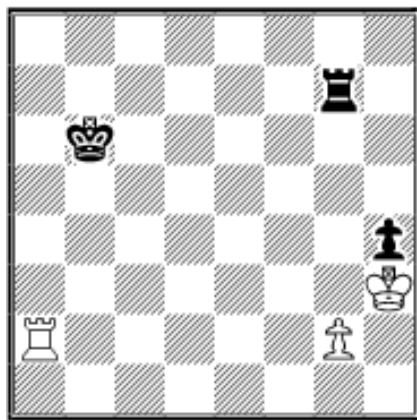
The complex of exercises contained in the endgame we are about to examine may be used as a “control task” for training in this area of rook endgames. I should add that these exercises are intended for high-rated players.

White has a choice to make among three possibilities:

- He can cut off the opposing king on the c-file by 57 Rc3;
- He can protect his pawn by 57 Ra2, threatening to take the h-pawn with his king;
- He can play 57 Ra4, intending to capture the pawn with his rook.

57 Rc3? is the easiest to dispose of: after 57...Kb5! (Black prevents White from attacking the pawn by Rc4) 58 Rc2 Rh7, I can't see how White can improve his position (the Rc2-f2-f4 maneuver involves a considerable loss of time, compared to the immediate attack on the pawn from our starting position).

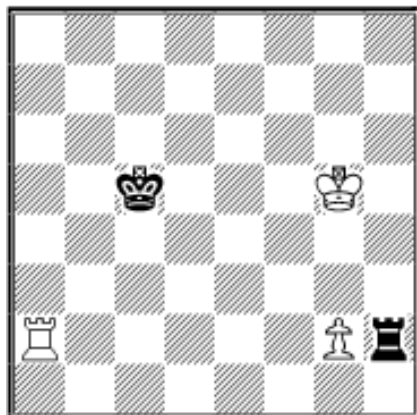
The only winning move is **57 Ra2!**



Now if 57...Rg8, the most exact move is 58 Rc2! (a **standard technique, cutting the king off along a file – it's important to keep the enemy king as far away from the pawn as possible**). Conversely, 58 Kxh4 doesn't throw the win away, either.

Here, as also in many other cases, I will omit the complex analysis needed to illustrate the computer's assessment of the position. We have no need to burden our text with a myriad of technical variations – especially when the reader can obtain them for himself, if he so desires, by consulting an [endgame database](#). We shall examine only the most important variations, discussing the ideas and techniques hidden therein.

57...Kc5 is hopeless: 58 Kxh4 Rh7+!? (58...Kd5 59 g4!+–) 59 Kg5 Rh2 (59...Rg7+ 60 Kf5+–).



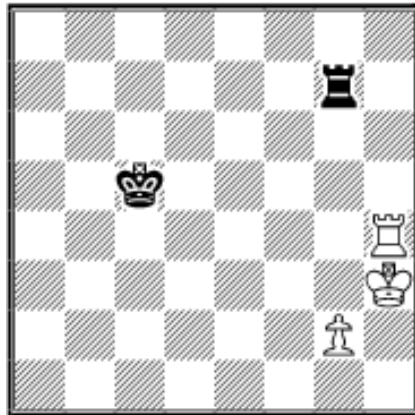
The g-pawn's advance may be secured in several different ways, such as: 60 Kf5 Kd6 61 Ra6+ Ke7 62 g4+–, or 60 Rf2 Kd4 61 Rf4 + Ke5 62 g4+–.

Here, it's a good idea to keep in mind the “Lucena position,” which White will be aiming for in this and in many other variations. **If you can keep the enemy king away from the squares in front of the knight's pawn, and get your own king**

there, usually the win is achieved without difficulty. Black's king prevents its own rook from bothering the opposing king from the flank. And the flank attack is in fact the main method of defense against a well-advanced passed pawn with its king beside it. With a central or a bishop's pawn, salvation is frequently achievable by placing the king on the "short side" and attacking with the rook from the "long side." You will find more on this subject in my [Endgame Manual](#), in the very first sections of the chapter on rook endings.

Black's most stubborn defense is **57...Rh7 58 Ra4 Kc6**

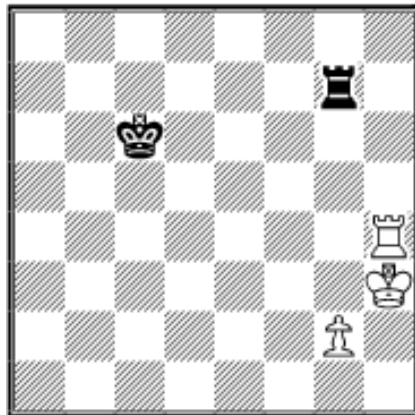
White's task would be easier after 58...Kc5 59 Rxh4 Rg7 (other rook retreats change nothing).



1.?

**Cutting off the enemy king on a file is sometimes even more effective than cutting it off on a rank!** Here the easiest path to our goal is 59 Rh6!, followed by 60 g4.

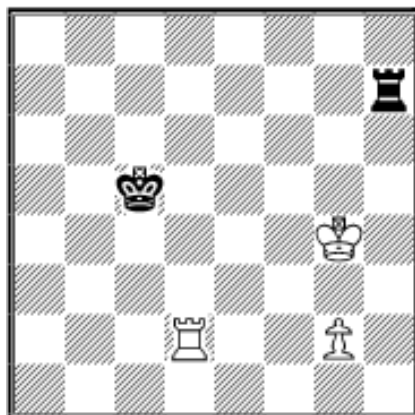
**59 Rxh4 Rg7**



**60 Rd4!** (cutting the king off on the rank)  
**60...Rh7+**

After 60...Kc5, White's simplest approach is to return to the plan of cutting off on the file by 61 Rg4 Rh7+ 62 Rh4 Rg7 63 Rh6!+.

**61 Kg4 Kc5 62 Rd2**



Here, 62...Rg7+ 63 Kf5 is useless for Black. The trickiest try would be **62...Rh8!?**. **The further the rook is from the enemy's pawn, the more chances of a successful frontal attack** (if it were Black's turn to move now, 63...Rg8+ would be a draw).

White in turn must bring the pawn closer to the enemy rook – if only by a little: the only winning move here is **63 g3!**; for example, 63...Rg8+ 64 Kf4 Rf8+ 65 Ke5 Re8+ 66 Kf6

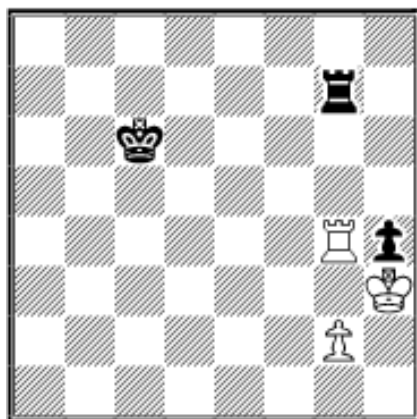
Rg8 67 Rg2!+.

Of course, making this decision doesn't require the accurate calculation of all variations (nor would this be possible). It's enough to uncover the main lines, compare them with what would happen with a different try, and (with the understanding that one's analysis is not exhaustive and may contain errors) decide which path offers the best prospects.

### 57 Ra3-a4?

This was played in the game. Black has three replies, each sufficient to draw. Let's examine one of them.

### 57...Kc6!? 58 Rg4

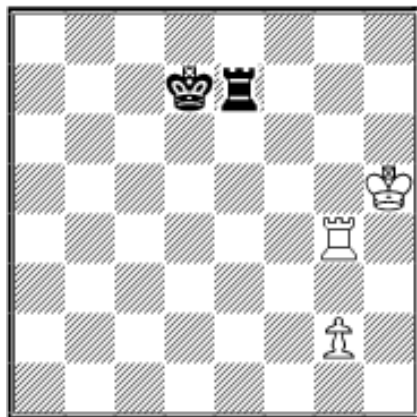


1...?

A rather difficult question: where should the rook retreat?

58...Ra7? is easily dismissed, owing to 59 Rg6+ Kd5 (the king cannot go to the seventh rank) 60 Kxh4+—, with a fatal horizontal cutoff of the enemy king. To prevent this, the rook must go either to e7 or to f7 – but which?

After 58...Re7? 59 Kxh4 Kd7, the only winning move is 60 Kh5!



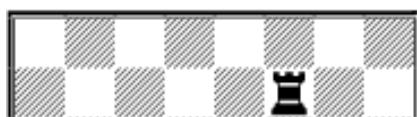
60...Ke8 allows a decisive horizontal cutoff of the king by 61 Rf4, when the g-pawn marches swiftly forward. Meanwhile, 60 Kg5? Ke8! allows Black to save himself, since White no longer has 61 Rf4 Rg7+.

And on 60...Re2 61 Kg6 Ke7 62 Kg7!, Black's king is denied access to the saving corner, and after 62...Ke6, its mobility will be still further restricted by the rook: 63 Rg5!. There could follow 63...Ra2 64 g4 Rg2 65 Kh6 Rh2+ (65...Kf7 66 Rg7+! Kf8

67 g5, followed by Ra7, Kg6 and Ra8+) 66 Rh5 Rg2 67 g5 Kf7 68 Rh1 (just not 68 Kh7? Rg1 =) 68...Kg8 69 Ra1+—, when the king is driven from its corner, leading to the winning Lucena position.

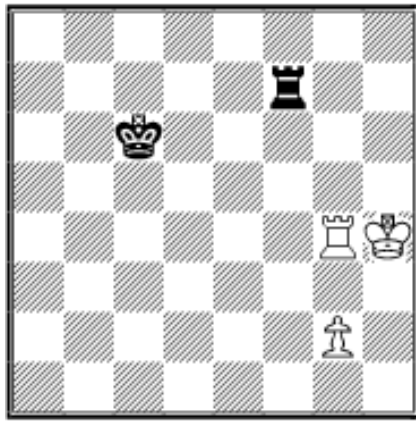
To gain the draw, Black must make two accurate moves in a row. We have already found the first of these through the method of exclusion.

### 58...Rf7!! 59 Kxh4



1...?

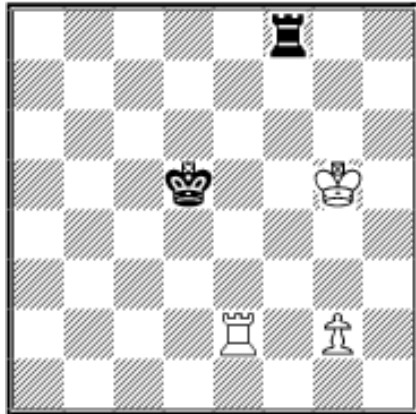




The king must be brought closer. We can rule out 59...Kd5?, because of 60 Rg6!+-. But making the correct choice between the two remaining moves is not the easiest of tasks.

It turns out that the “golden mean” is correct here. On 59...Kd7? 60 Kg5!, Black cannot save himself if White plays the best line; for example: 60...Rg7+ 61 Kh5 Rh7+ 62 Kg6 +- , or 60...Rf8 61 Kh6! Ke6 62 Rg7! Kf6 63

Kh7!+-, followed by g2-g4. The toughest line is 60...Ke6!? 61 Re4+! Kd5 62 Re2 Rf8!



1. ?

Black has resorted to a technique we have already seen, namely: maximizing the distance between his rook and the pawn. He sees that the careless 63 g4? Rg8+ leads to a well-known theoretically drawn position.

**When a bishop's or a center pawn has reached the fourth rank, cutting off the black king two files away assures the win; with a knight's pawn; however, given the proper placement of Black's pieces (rook on the eighth, king at d5 or d6), it's a draw.**

The only winning line is 63 Ra2! Rg8+ (everything else loses much more quickly) 64 Kf6+-. But I am unable to demonstrate the winning method here – it's far too complex. The computer gives a mate in 63!

So, how are we to see that **59...Kd6!** is the strongest move here in a practical game? By the comparison method! We need to see that it gives Black additional defensive resources that are not available after 59...Kd7.

Thus, on 60 Re4, Black has the attractive reply 60...Kd5 =. On the other hand, this isn't that important, since 60...Rh7+ is also sufficient to draw, regardless of whether the king is on d6 or d7.

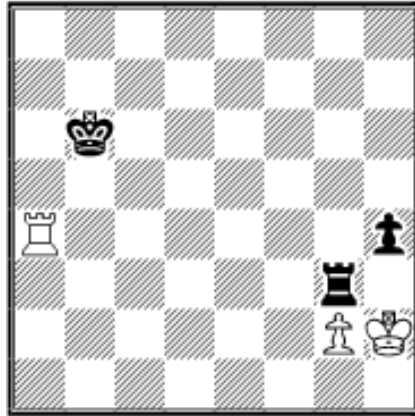
What is far more important is that, on **60 Kg5**, Black can forestall the rook transfer to e2 by **60...Ke5!** (60...Rf8 is also possible: 61 Kh6 Ke5! 62 Rg7 Kf4 63 g3+ Kf3! 64 g4 Rh8+! 65 Kg5 Kg3 =).

But with the king at d7, the only other choice, Ke8, is meaningless: after 59...Kd7? 60 Kg5! Ke8, 61 Re4+! decides: if then 61...Kf8, 62 Rf4.

Thus, we have dealt with 57...Kc6!?, more or less. It's easy to see that **57...Kc5!?** isn't bad either: we get the same **58 Rg4 Rf7!! 59 Kxh4** (on 59 Rg6, Black defends the pawn by either 59...Rh7 or 59...Rf4) **59...Kd6!** =.

The actual game featured a different defensive method – and a safer one, since Black did not need to find either study-like or “only” moves.

**57...Rg7-g3+! 58 Kh3-h2**



**58...Rg3-d3!?**

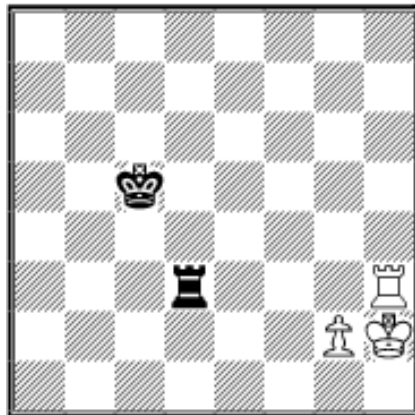
Curiously, other rook retreats along the rank lose. However, he could have played 58...Kc5 59 Rxd3 Rg8!? (59...Rd3!?), having in mind the variation 60 Rh6 Kd5 61 Kh3 Ke5 62 g4 Kf4! =.

**50 Ra4xh4 Kb6-c6!?**

Black didn't play **59...Kc5**, evidently fearing he would be cut off on the rank after 60 Rh6.

But if we continue this variation, we see that the draw isn't lost yet: 60...Kd5 61 g3 Ke5 62 Kh3 Kf5 63 Kh4 Rd4+! 64 Kh5 Rg4! 65 Rf6+ Kxf6 66 Kxg4 Kg6 =.

Black would have had an interesting problem to solve after **60 Rh3!?**



1...?

In order to choose the only correct square to retreat the rook, Black has to guess what the idea was behind White's last move. It turns out that he still wants to cut Black off on the rank, but in a rather more favorable situation: first, he gets the enemy rook off d3, where it restrains the advance of the white king and pawn.

60...Rd2? 61 Rh6! Kd5 62 Kh3 Ke5 63 g4

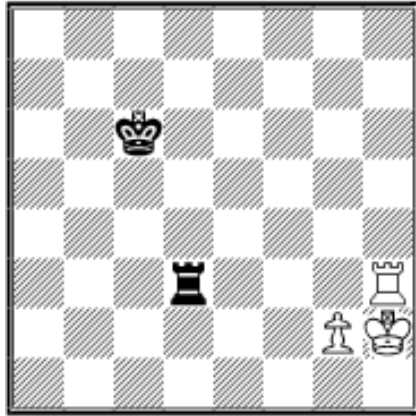
Kf4 64 Rh5!+;

60...Rd8? 61 Rh6! Kd5 62 Kh3 Ke5 63 g4+.

The only way to cross up the enemy's plan is by **60...Rd6!!**. After **61 Rh8** (61 g4 Rg6 62 Kg3 Kd6 =; 61 Re3 Rh6+ 62 Kg3 Kd5 =) **61...Kd5 62 Re8 Rh6+**, the distance between rook and pawn is just right for a successful frontal attack: three open ranks. Recall that with a knight's pawn, cutting off the black king by two ranks is insufficient to win.

**60 Rh4-e4**

Here White could also have tried 60 Rh3, but Black would have had a wide choice by comparison with the position where his king was on c5, since White would no longer be threatening to cut his king off on the rank.



Of course Black can't play 60...Rd8? (or 60...Rd7?), in view of 61 Rc3+!, when the king can't go to the d-file because of the rook exchange, while on b5 he would be too far away from the pawn.

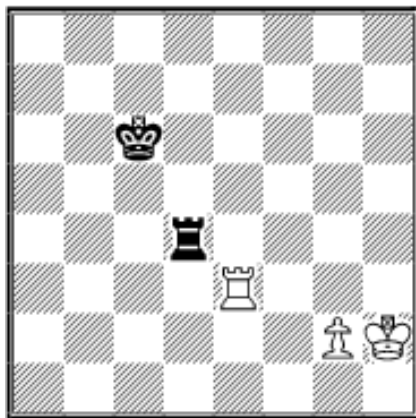
60...Rd2? would be a mistake: 61 Re3 Kd6 (61...Kd5 62 Kh3+—) 62 Kh3 Ra2 63 g4 Ra8 64 g5! (64 Kh4? Rh8+) 64...Ra4!? (once the pawn has crossed midboard, a frontal attack is useless) 65 g6 Kd7 66 g7 Ra8 67 Kh4 Rg8 68 Rg3 Ke7 69 Kh5 Kf7 70 Kh6+—.

**the horizontal cutoff of the stronger side's king from its pawn, although it was of no use in this case, nevertheless is an important defensive resource, and should always be kept in mind.**

Perhaps the simplest draw is by 60...Rd6! 61 Re3 Kd7 or 61...Rh6+.

60...Rd5! 61 Re3 Kd6 is also sturdy enough; for example, 62 Kh3 Rh5+ 63 Kg4 Rh8 =, or 62 g4 Rg5 (62...Re5 63 Rf3 Rg5 64 Kg3 Rg8! = is equivalent) 63 Kg3 Rg8! =.

But 60...Rd4!? is less accurate: after 61 Re3:



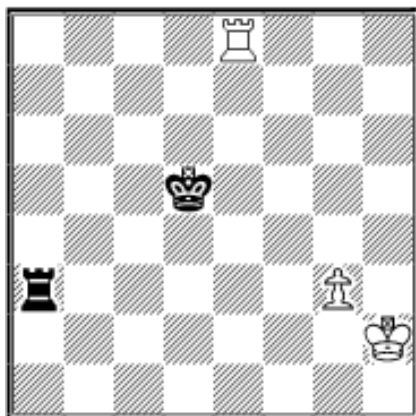
1...?

Here 61...Kd6? no longer works: 62 Kh3 and 63 g4+—. 61...Rg4? also loses, to 62 Rd3 Rg8 63 g3. 61...Rh4+! is necessary: 62 Kg3 Rh8 63 Rd3 Kc5! =. White's pawn is stuck on its starting square, and so cutting off the enemy king by three ranks is not enough to win.

**60...Kc6-d5**

Certainly not the only move here. Another decent line was 60...Rd8!?

**61 Re4-e8 Rd3-a3 62 g2-g3**



1...?

This is the last time Black will have to be accurate in his defense. He cannot quietly wait for the king and pawn to advance, but must go over to the frontal attack at once.

**62...Ra3-a7!**





But not 62...Kd6? 63 Kh3 Kd7 (here the king stands poorly, since it can't return to d5 in time) 64 Re4 Kd6 65 Kh4 Ra8 66 g4+-. This is a theoretically won position. It's very important that the rook defends the pawn, since this deprives the rook checks of their force. Kd5 can always be met by Re7. And you can learn the details if you go over the endgame Tal – Zaitsev in my [Endgame Manual](#).

### 63 g3-g4

Otherwise, Black will prevent the advance of the pawn by a frontal attack.

### 63...Ra7-a3!

The horizontal cutoff of the king from the pawn, which failed to work in the previously examined variation, here spells salvation for Black. The rest is simple.

**64 Kg2** (64 g5 Rb3 65 g6 Rb6 =) **64...Kd6 65 Kf2 Kd7 66 Re4 Rb3 67 g5 Rb5 68 Rg4 Ke7 69 Kg3 Kf7 70 g6+ Kg7 71 Kh4 Rb6 72 Kh5 Rb5+ 73 Rg5 Rb1**  
1/2-1/2

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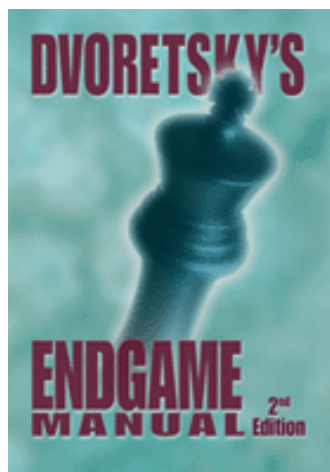
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## C O L U M N I S T S

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

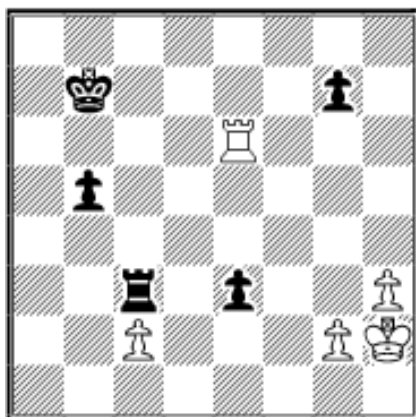


## Intermediate Moves in the Endgame

In the game I am about to bring to your attention, both sides have several pawns, so we can't just barge ahead and analyze this with our analysis engines. But many variations lead to exchanges, when it gets down to five- or six-piece endings; and here is where the computer makes the commentator's job much easier, since he no longer needs to investigate these variations to a conclusion. I will note here, however, that many years ago I was able to analyze endgames myself, without computer assistance. In fact, I even included a couple of engrossing episodes as exercises in my book, *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis*. Here I am directing my readers' attention to a considerably fuller piece of analysis. Consequently, the list of exercises is also longer: every diagrammed position that is accompanied by a question mark.

*Dolmatov – Kupreichik*

USSR Championship, Minsk 1979



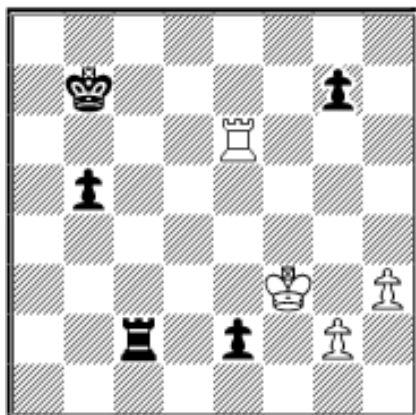
White stands noticeably worse; he will have to fight for the draw.

**47 h3-h4**

The move played in the game is undoubtedly a useful one. However, there is another attractive plan: the attempt to approach the enemy passed pawn with the king and capture it.

**47 Kg3! Rxc2 48 Kf3 (48 Rxe3!?) 48...e2**

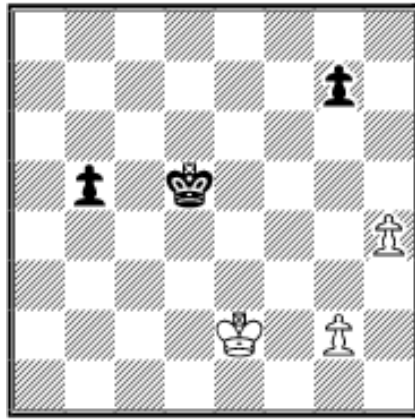
In order to avoid the possibility of 48 Rxe3, Black could have transposed moves: 47...e2+ 48 Kf2 Rxc2. But then he would have had to consider the possibility of 49 Rg6! b4 50 Rg4! Rb2 51 Rxg7+

**1.?**

Can White take the e2-pawn? How would you assess the resulting pawn endgame?

A proper answer to this question requires that we discover an important finesse on move fifty-two during our calculations.

**49 Rxe2! Rxe2 50 Kxe2 Kc6 51 h4 Kd5**



1.?

Of course, White doesn't have time to trade off the pawns: 52 h5?? Ke4 53 g4 Kf4—+ 52 Kd3? loses also: 52...Ke5 53 Kc3 Kf4 54 Kb4 Kg3 55 Kxb5 Kxg2! 56 Kc4 Kg3 57 h5 Kg4 58 h6 gh 59 Kd3 Kf3.

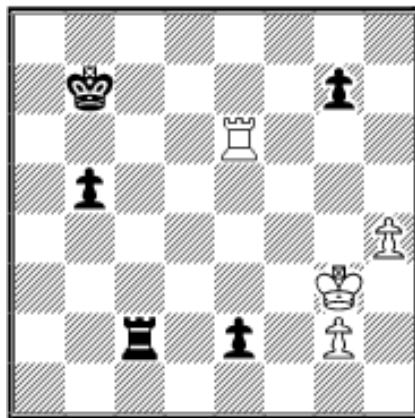
The only saving line is **52 Ke3!! Ke5 53 h5!**. For now, the enemy king is unable to reach the most important pawn, at g2; and capturing the pawn at b5 requires the same number of tempi with the white king at e3 as it did from d3.

**53...Kf5 54 Kd4 Kg4 55 Kc5 Kxh5** (55...Kg3 56 Kxb5 Kxg2 57 Kc4 Kg3 58 Kd3 Kg4 59 h6 gh 60 Ke2 Kg3 61 Kf1 =) **56 Kxb5 Kg4 57 Kc4 Kg3** (White should meet 57...g5 either by 58 Kd3 Kf4 59 Ke2 Kg3 60 Kf1 Kh2 61 g4! =, or by 58 Kd4 Kf4 59 Kd3 =; but not by 58 Kd5? Kf4! 59 Ke6 g4 60 Kf6 g3 61 Kg6 Ke3—+) **58 Kd4 Kxg2 59 Ke5 Kg3 60 Kf5 =**.

**47...Rc3xc2 48 Kh2-g3!**

48 Rxe3 Kb6 looks dangerous, although it probably does not lose. Sergei Dolmatov preferred to keep his rook on e6, from where it "controls" the enemy king.

Black could reply **48...e2**

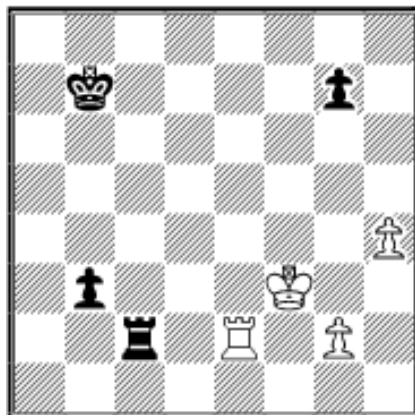


1.?

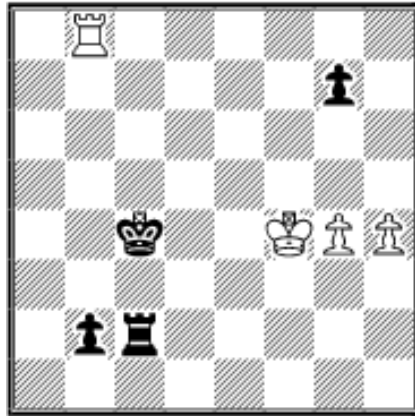
Now how should White defend?

He has an easy draw with **49 Kf2! e1Q+** (49...b4 50 Re4! =) **50 Kxe1 Rxc2 51 Kd1!** or 51 h5 Rh2 52 Re5! Kb6 53 Kd1 =, but not 52 Rg6? Rxh5 53 Rxg7 + Kb6 54 Kd2 Rc5—+.

But if White, fearing 49...e1Q+, should play 49 Kf3? b4 50 Rxe2 instead, then he loses after 50...b3!.



For example: 51 Re3 b2 52 Rb3+ Kc6 (52...Ka6?, threatens 53...Rc3+, but it's a mistake: 53 Rb8 Ka5 54 Ke3! Rxc2 55 Kd3 =) 53 Ke4 Rxc2 (53...Kc5!? 54 Kd3 Rxc2) 54 Kd4 g6 55 Rb8 Rh2 56 Kc3 Kd5—+, or 53 g4 Kd5 (53...Kc5 is equivalent) 54 Kf4 Kc4 55 Rb8



1...?

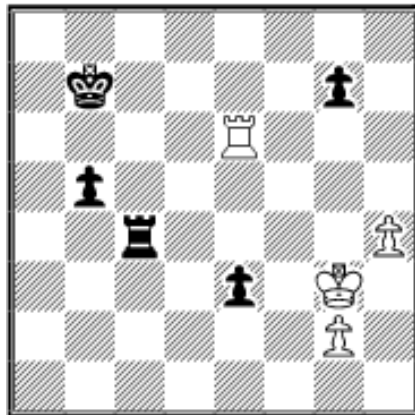
In such situations, every tempo counts. A king's march to the pawn's queening square (55...Kc3?) would take too long. Black wins vital time by threatening to interpose.

55...Rd2! (threatening 56...Rd4+, followed by another check and interposition on the b-file) 56 Rc8 + Kd3 57 Rb8 Kc2 58 Rc8+ Kd1 59 Rb8 Kc1 60 Kf5 Rd4! (61...b1Q+? lets the win slip: 62 Rxb1+ Kxb1 63 Kg6 =; however, he could play 60...Rd6! 61 Rc8 + Kb1 62 Rb8 Ra6—) 61 h5 (61 g5 Rxh4 62 Kg6 Rg4—) 61...b1Q+ 62 Rxb1+ Kxb1 63 g5 Rd6!—.

In the previously diagrammed position, it would make sense to drop the rook back to the first rank by 51 Re1!?, hoping to avoid the loss of tempi involved in warding off the threatened interposition. And, in fact, after 51...b2? 52 Rb1 Kc6 53 g4 Kd5 54 Kf4 Kc4 55 Kf5 Kb3 56 Kg6, White achieves a draw. But if his opponent plays the more accurate 51...Kc6! 52 Rb1 Rc3+! 53 Kf4 Kb5 54 g4 Kb4 55 Kf5 Rc6! 56 h5 Rb6! (of course not 56...Ka3 57 Ra1+ Kb2? 58 Ra7 =) 57 g5 Kc3—, or 52 g4 Kb5 53 Re7 (53 Kf4 Kb4 54 Kf5 Rc6—) 53...b2 54 Rb7+ Kc4 55 Kf4 Rd2!, we reach the same winning position for Black from the last diagram, as we reached in the 51 Re3 variation.

In the actual game, Black rejected 48...e2, in favor of a move more dangerous for his opponent:

**48...Rc2-c4!**



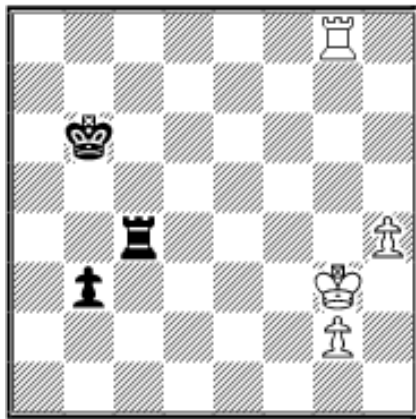
1.?

Now, attempting to force an exchange of pawns by 49 Kf3? Rxh4 50 Re7+ Kb6 51 Rxg7 is refuted by the typical shot: 51...Re4!—.

White must therefore make a choice between another forcing continuation: 49 Rxe3 b4 50 Re7+; or the more restrained 50 h5 (or else the transposition 49 h5 b4 50 Rxe3, which doesn't change anything). Of course, this has to be calculated; but it's not a good idea to rely wholeheartedly on concrete analysis. It would make sense to check out the opening moves of

both sides' plans, compare the ensuing positions, and come to a decision based on your intuition.

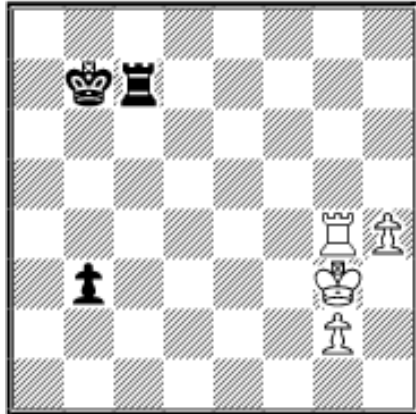
Let's examine **49 Rxe3 b4 50 Re7+** First, 50...Rc7? isn't enough to win: 51 Re4 Rc3+ 52 Kf2 b3 53 Ke2 Kc6 54 Rb4 Kc5 55 Rb7 (these are probably not the only moves White can play in this variation); therefore, Black plays **50...Kb6 51 Rxg7 b3** and White's only defense is **52 Rg8!**



1...?

Both 52...Rc7? 53 Rb8+ Rb7 54 Rd8 b2 55 Rd1 Kc5 56 Rb1, and 52...Rb4? 53 Rb8+ Kc5 54 Rc8+ Kd4 55 Rc1 b2 56 Rb1 Kc3 57 h5 lead to a draw.

**52...Kb7!** is much stronger: **53 Rg7+ Rc7 54 Rg4** (54 Rg5 Ka6 55 Rg6+ Ka7! loses for White).



1...?

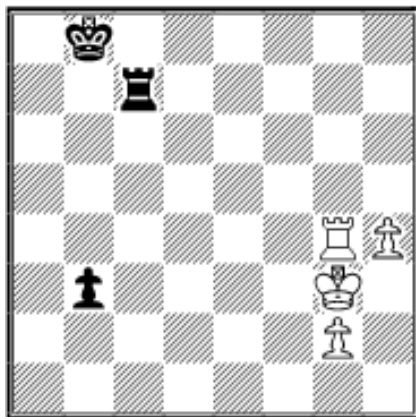
White will give up his rook for the b-pawn. The evaluation of the resulting “rook vs. two pawns” endgame will depend upon subtle nuances that will determine whether or not Black’s king can get back to the kingside in time.

In making his decision, it’s important for Black to identify all the sensible candidate moves and make logical comparisons among them. Then he can come to a decision without immersing himself in detailed

analysis.

The intermediate check **54...Rc3+!!** forces the enemy king back to the second rank, where it has less activity. After **55 Kh2(f2) Rc6!**, the win is not difficult.

As with the immediate 54...Rc6?, **54...Kb8?** lets the win slip away:



1.?

White’s position is still very dangerous. The only saving move here is **55 h5!!**

A) 55...b2 56 Rb4+ Rb7 57 Rxb2 Rxb2 58 Kf4 (or 58 Kg4) 58...Kc7 59 h6 (what saves White is that the enemy rook is not on the first rank, but the second, and therefore cannot reach the h-file in one move) 59...Rxb2 (59...Kd7 60 h7 Rb8 61 Kf5 Ke7 62 Kg6 =) 60 Kf5 Kd7 61 h7 Rh2 62 Kg6 Ke7 63 Kg7 Rg2+ 64 Kh8! = (but not 64 Kh6?? Kf7→).

**B) 55...Rb7 56 Rg8+!**

An important intermediate check, driving the king a bit further from the kingside; White loses after 56 Re4? B2 57 Re1 b1Q 58 Rxb1 Rxb1.

**56...Ka7**

On 56...Kc7, White would exchange rooks: 57 Rg7+ Kc6 58 Rxb7 Kxb7 59 h6 =. This demonstrates the basic idea behind h4-h5!.

**57 Re8 b2 58 Re1 b1Q 59 Rxb1 Rxb1 60 Kf4 Kb7 61 h6 Kc7 62 Kg5 =.**

I note here that 54...Rc6? would allow White to save himself the same way: 55 h5!! (but not 55 Rg7+? Ka6!→) 55...Rb6 (55...b2 56 Rb4+) 56 Rg7+!.

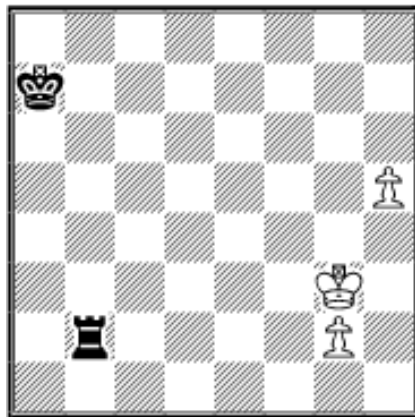
Let's look at one more possible variation: **54...Kb8 55 Rg8+?** (55 h5!!) **55...Ka7** (55...Kb7 56 Rg4 Rc3+!! would be simpler) **56 Rg4 b2**

With the king on the a-file, the rook check is now useless: 56...Rc3+? 57 Kf2 Rc6 58 h5 b2 59 Rb4 Rb6 60 Rxb2 Rxb2+ 61 Kf3 =.

**57 Rb4** (57 Ra4+ Kb8!) **57...Rb7 58 Rxb2 Rxb2**

Now, is this position a win? To answer this question, we will have to solve another couple of puzzles, and find the best replies to both the natural moves at White's disposal.

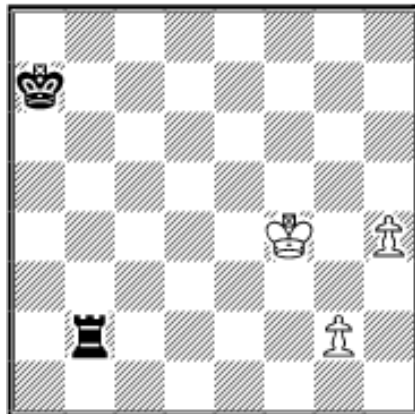
A) 59 h5



1...?

The only winning move is 59...Rb4! (the king must be cut off from its passed pawns) 60 h6 (60 Kh3 Kb7 61 g4 Kc6→) 60...Rb6! 61 Kf4 Rxb6 62 g4 Kb6 63 g5 Rh1, and Black's king gets back in time.

**B) 59 Kf4**



1...?

It's a draw after either 59...Rxb2? 60 h5 Kb7 61 Kf5 Kc7 62 h6 Kd7 63 h7 Rh2 64 Kg6 Ke7 65 Rg7 Rg2+ 66 Kh8!, or 59...Kb7? 60 h5 Kc7 61 h6! Kd7 62 h7 Rb8 63 Kf5 Ke7 64 Kg6.

The decisive move is an unexpected intermediate check.

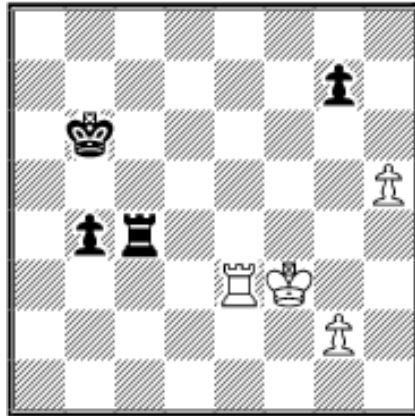
**59...Rf2+!! 60 Kg5** (60 Kg3 Rf1→, or 60...Rf8→) **60...Rxb2+ 61 Kf6 Rh2!** (a typical move, driving

White's king one step backwards) **62 Kg5 Kb7 63 h5 Kc7 64 h6 Kd7 65 Kg6 Ke7 66 Kg7 Rg2+ 67 Kh8 Kf7 68 h7 Kg6→.**

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that solving many of these problems required you to search out powerful intermediate moves. And this is, of course, no accident – the role of such moves is exceptionally important. In the majority of cases, intermediate moves will be unexpected and easily overlooked – this is why I call this an important path for the completion of your tactical mastery.

Back to our game. Dolmatov is usually a skilled player in this kind of concrete endgame. Here, he senses the danger in time, and chooses the strongest continuation.

**49 h4-h5! b5-b4 50 Re6xe3 Kb7-b6 51 Kg3-f3**



It becomes clear that the game will end in a draw. Black's passed pawn is stuck; and White, depending upon circumstances, stands ready either to push his own pawns (g2-g4), or aim his king towards the queenside.

**51...Kb6-a5**

If 51...Rc5 52 g4 Rb5, White could play 53 h6! gh 54 Re6+. The rook removes the h6-pawn, and returns to b1 in time.

**52 Kf3-e2**

52 Re5+! Ka4 53 Re7 b3 54 Ra7+! (once again, the intermediate check!), followed by 55 Rxc7, might have been simpler. On the other hand, the king move is also enough to draw.

**52...Rc2+ 53 Kd1 Rxc2 54 Kc1 Ka4 55 Kb1 Rg5 56 Rh3 b3 57 Rh1 Ka3 58 Ka1 Rg3 59 Kb1 Rc3 60 Ka1 (60 h6 => 60...b2+ 61 Kb1 Kb3 62 Rg1 Re3 (62...Rh3 63 h6! gh 64 Rg3 +!) 63 Rh1 Kc3 64 Ka2 Rf3 65 h6 1/2-1/2**

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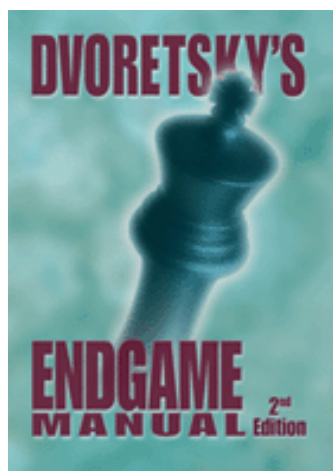




## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Chess Botany - The "Trunk"

In his book, *Think like a Grandmaster*, grandmaster Alexander Kotov introduced the concept of a "tree of variations," or the collection of variations that need to be analyzed. He also enumerated three kinds of trees: the "bare trunk," the "shrub," and "variational debris." In this article and the articles that follow, we will be looking at examples of each variety of tree.

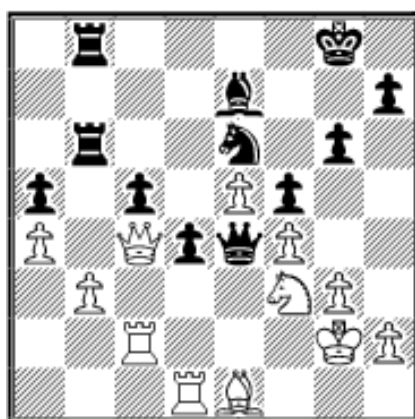
The "bare trunk" is a long, forcing variation practically devoid of alternatives. (In point of fact, there are almost always alternatives, but if they are of little significance, we can honestly assign our calculations this kind of label.)

For less highly-skilled players, the main impediment is the need to accurately foresee each of the many positions that come up in the course of the calculation. The deeper one goes into the variation, the stronger our doubts grow: should I extend this line? Did I calculate everything correctly? Did I overlook something important? You can increase your confidence in your calculation by moving down the line without haste, stopping at each step to check carefully whether or not there might be a strong alternative, either for yourself or for your opponent.

The question marks alongside the diagrams signify, as usual, that the position may be used as a self-testing exercise. Some of these exercises will be elementary in nature; others – very difficult.

*Spraggett – Browne*

New York 1987



1. ?

Your task: evaluate 32 Bxa5.

Even with the question phrased this way, zeroing in on one concrete continuation, it's still necessary to think, if only for a little, about the starting position. Who is better here, and what will happen if White plays a quiet move?

For if White stands better, then we will not be satisfied if; for example, the sharp variation that we must calculate ends in a draw; we should also

be justified in cutting our analysis short if we see that it will lead to a situation that will be difficult to evaluate, and involve us in considerable risk.

Conversely, these circumstances do not require us to just give up on the principled continuation, if we assess the starting position in our opponent's favor.

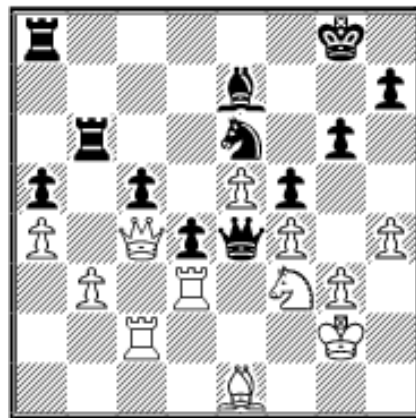
In the actual game, Kevin Spraggett chose **32 Rd3**. Black defended the a5-pawn with **32... Ra8** – although 32... Qa8!?, intending 33... Qa6! was also worth considering. An exchange



of queens would render the b3-pawn more vulnerable, with Black apparently taking over the initiative.

White's next move was a serious error, which his opponent failed to exploit.

**33 h4?** (33 Kf2 was correct)



1...?

The simple, but elegant tactical blow 33...Bxh4! would have won a pawn, since 34 gh?! would be bad in view of 34...Qxd3! 35 Qxd3 Nxf4+.

**33...h6? 34 Kf2 g5?**

This is suicide! After 34...Kh8, the position remains unclear.

**35 Re2 Qb7 36 hg hg 37 fg Kg7 38 Bd2±**

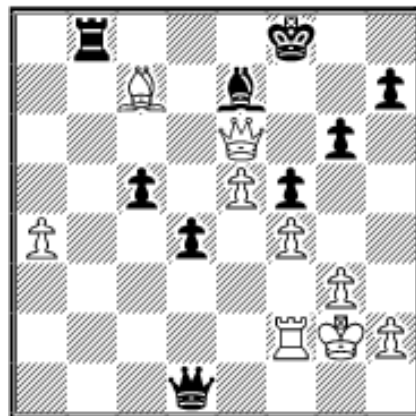
Of course, this did not give us a clear-cut answer to the assessment of our starting position, but some definite ideas have probably already surfaced. I don't know about you, but it seems to me that Black's chances are preferable – the position is easier to play for him.

And now, let's start calculating the principled line.

**32 Be1xa5!? Rb6xb3 34 Qc4xe6+ Kg8-f8 34 Rc2-f2 Rb3xf3 35 Rf2xf3 Qe4-e2+**

Of course not 35...Rb2+? 36 Rd2+–.

**36 Rf3-f2 Qe2xd1 37 Ba5-c7!**



1...?

White attacks the rook, and plans to create threats against the king by Bd6. After 37...Re8? 38 Bd6, he would have an obvious advantage. The counterattack 37...Rb1? fails in view of 38 Qc8+! (we shall examine the alternative 38 Bd6 after completing our analysis of the main line) 38...Kg7 39 Qe8+–.

This would all be very nice for White, if his opponent didn't have the following powerful move, forcing the exchange of queens:

**37...Qd1-b3!! 38 Qe6xb3 Rb8xb3**



The endgame looks good for Black, in view of the power of his connected passed pawns.

Here is exactly the place to recall those impressions we got while considering the starting position. If you liked it for White, then perhaps it



would make sense to stop here and reject the capture of the a5-pawn in favor of a quieter continuation. But if that position was not to your liking, then you should continue with the analysis: perhaps, in the endgame, White's counterplay – advancing his a-pawn – will be enough to save him. If so, then by taking the pawn, you avoid

defending an inferior position, force a draw (that is, if your calculations were correct), as well as posing a problem for your opponent, somewhere down the road (although it is true that the likelihood he will miss the move 37...Qb3!! isn't very great).

### 39 a4-a5

Now if 39...c4, 40 Ra2 c3 41 a6 Rb2+ 42 Rxb2 cb 43 a7 b1Q 44 a8Q+ Kg7 leads to equality.

### 39...Rb3-a3

The a-pawn is stopped, but now White has the chance to work up threats against the enemy king with e5-e6, Rb2 and Be5.

### 40 e5-e6 c5-c4 41 Rf2-b2 d4-d3 42 Bc7-e5 Be7-c5 43 Be5-f6

White likely has no reason to investigate the sharper line 43 Rb7 Ra2+ 44 Kh3 (44 Kf1?! Rxh2), although here too, the most likely outcome is a draw. For example, 44...Re2!? 45 Bg7+ Ke8 46 Rb8+ Ke7 47 Bf8+ Kxe6 48 Bxc5 d2 49 Rd8 c3 50 Bb4 Re1 51 Bxc3 d1Q 52 Re8+ and 53 Rxe1.

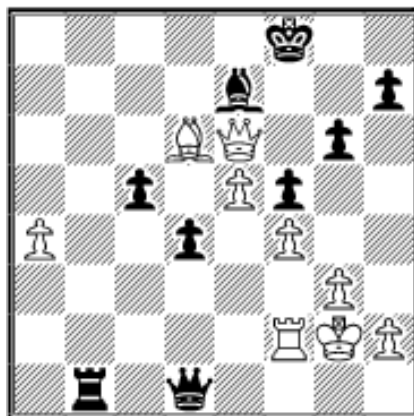
### 43...Ra3-b3

Forced.

### 44 Rb2xb3 c4xb3 45 Kg2-f1!

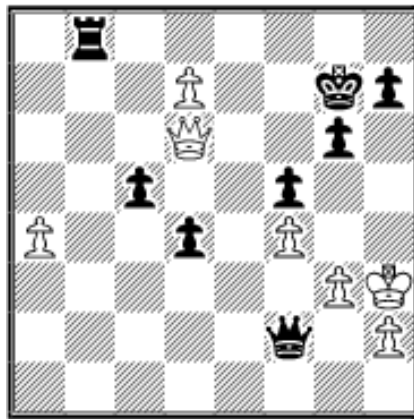
The passed pawns cancel each other out: the position is even.

And now, I'll let you solve an extra task, also on the theme of the "bare" (well, almost bare) trunk: calculate the variation **37...Rb1? 38 Bd6?!**



1...?

The first few moves are forced: **38...Bxd6 39 ed** (the queen capture ensures a draw, of course, but White wants more than this) **39...Qg1+ 40 Kh3 Qxf2 41 d7 Rb8 42 Qd6+ Kg7**



1. ?

**43 Qe5+!**

43 Qxb8? Qf1+ 44 Kh4 Qf3 would lead to an immediate draw.

**43...Kf7!**

43...Kh6? would lose: 44 Qxb8 Kh5 45 Qb5 (or 45 Qb2!?).

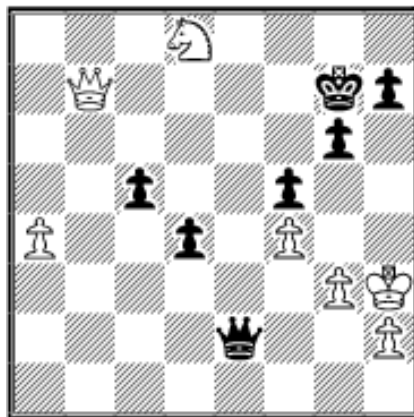
**44 Qxb8 Qe2!**

44...Qf1+? 45 Kh4 Qf3 no longer works: 46 Qe8+ Kg7 47 Qe7+ Kh6 48 Qf8 mate.

**45 d8N+!**

Queening the pawn would allow Black to give perpetual check.

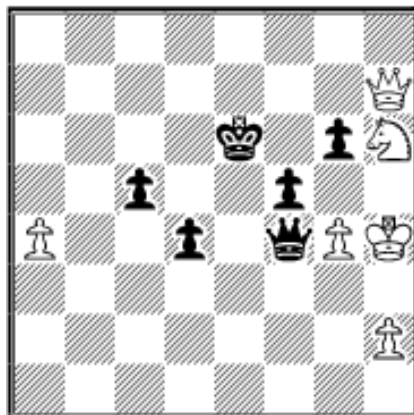
**45...Kg7 46 Qb7+!**



1...?

Retreating the king to f6 or to g8 leads to mate in one or two moves. 46...Kh6? is a mistake too: after 47 Nf7+ Kh5 48 Ne5+, the king takes a vital checking square away from the queen.

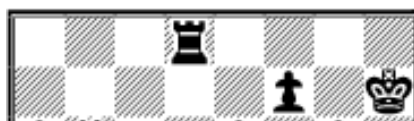
**46...Kh8! 47 Nf7+ Kg8 48 Nh6+ Kh8 49 g4!** (the only way to continue playing to win) **49...Qe3+ 50 Kh4 Qxf4 51 Qa8+ Kg7 52 Qg8+ Kf6** (52...Kxh6?? 53 Qf8#) **53 Qh8+! Ke6 54 Qxh7**



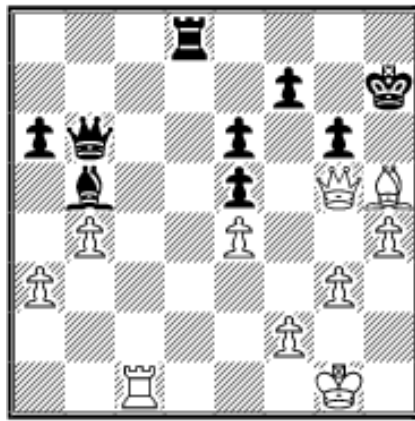
This is probably a good place to stop, since the forcing play has more or less ended. White retains the advantage, but it's difficult to say whether it will be enough to win.

For further training, I offer a couple of exercises from my "notebook."

*Kholmov – Jakobsen*  
Kislovodsk 1972



1. ?



Calculate 37 Bxg6+.

White has an overwhelming advantage; there is no need for a combination here. The game continued **37 Bf3 Rd3 38 Qf6 Qb7 39 h5 gh 40 Qxe5!** Black resigned.

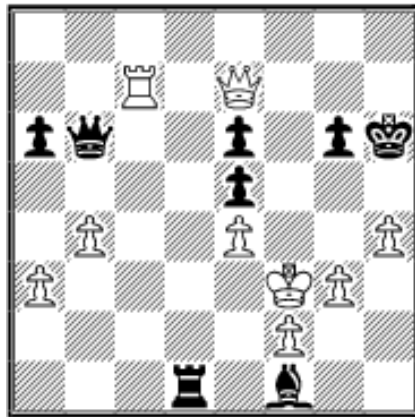
The bishop sacrifice would have thrown away the win.

**37 Bh5xg6+? f7xg6 38 Qg5-e7+ Kh7-h6 39 Rc1-**

c7

39 a4!/? has to be met by 39...Be2!.

**39...Rd8-d1+ 40 Kg1-g2 Bb5-f1+ 41 Kg2-f3**



**41...Rd1-d3+**

If you can accurately calculate the main variation to the end, there's no need to distract yourself by calculating alternate lines. Nevertheless, I will demonstrate that immediately sacrificing two pieces will not give Black a draw: 41...Be2+? 42 Kxe2 Qb5+ 43 Kxd1 Qd3+ 44 Kc1 Qxa3+ 45 Kd2 Qb2+ 46 Ke3+—, or 42...Rd2+ 43 Kxd2 Qxf2+ 44 Kc1 Qe3+ 45 Kb2 Qd4+ 46 Rc3 Qd2+ 47 Rc2 Qd4 + 48 Ka2+—.

**42 Kf3-g4 Bf1-e2+ 43 f2-f3 (43 Kh3 Bf1+) 43...**

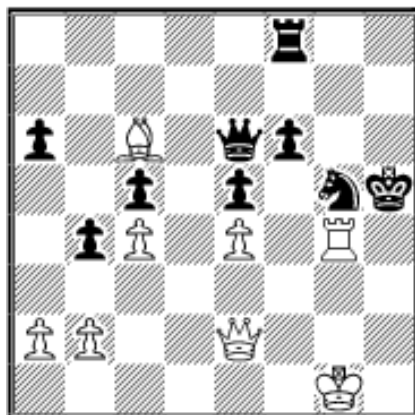
**Be2xf3+ 44 Kg4 h3 Bf3-g4+!**

But not 44...Bg2+? 45 Kh2!+—.

**45 Kh3xg4 Rd3xg3+! 46 Kg4xg3 Qb6-e3+**

Black gives perpetual check.

*Arnason – Miles*  
Reykjavik 1978



1. ?

Black has a healthy extra pawn, and with a “normal” continuation, he will most likely win. So White should carefully examine the combination beginning with a sacrifice on g5, because there just might be a draw there.

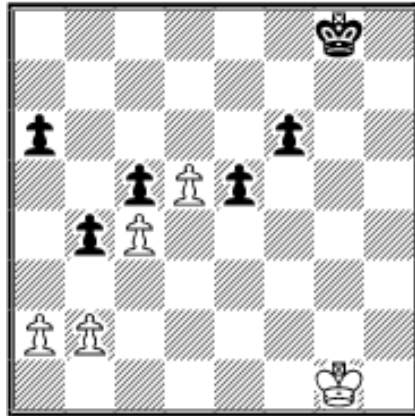
In the game, Jon Arnason decided against calculations, and deservedly lost: **36 Rg3+? Kg6 37 Bd5 Qc8 38 Qg2 Rh8 39 Rf3 Rh4 40 Rf5 Rf4 41 Bf7+ Kxf7 42 Qxg5 Rxf5 43 Qxf5 Qxf5 44 ef Kg7 45 Kf2 Kh6 46 Kf3 Kg5 47 Ke4 a5 48 b3**

**Kg4 49 Kd5 Kf4 50 Kxc5 e4** White resigned.

**36 Rg4xg5+! Kh5xg5 37 Qe2-d2+! Kg5-g6 38 Qd2-g2+ Kg6-f7**

There is no other way to escape the checks. Now the game becomes a pawn ending.

**39 Bc6-d5 Qe6xd5 40 e4xd5! Rf8-g8 41 Qg2xg8+ Kf7xg8**

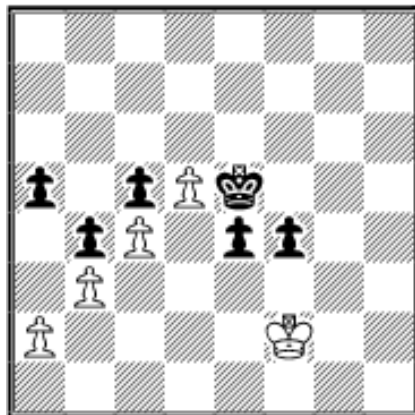


Now Black will strengthen his position as much as possible, advancing his pawns and king (in this stage, the individual moves don't have much significance). In order to ensure that one of his pawns will queen, at some point he will have to leave the square of the protected passed d-pawn, which will advance at once. Here, once again, concrete play resumes, requiring accurate calculation.

**42 Kg1-f2 f6-f5 43 Kf2-e3 Kg8-f7 44 Ke3-f3 a6-a5 45 b2-b3**

It's useful to bear in mind here that the pawns could be stationed a bit differently, starting with 45 a4!?. But for now, we shouldn't distract ourselves with this – we can come back to it, if our calculation shows us that the queenside pawn structure will factor significantly into the coming queen endgame.

**45...e5-e4+ 46 Kf3-e3 Kf7-e7 47 Ke3-f4 Ke7-f6 48 Kf4-e3 Kf6-e5 49 Ke3-e2 f5-f4 50 Ke2-f2**

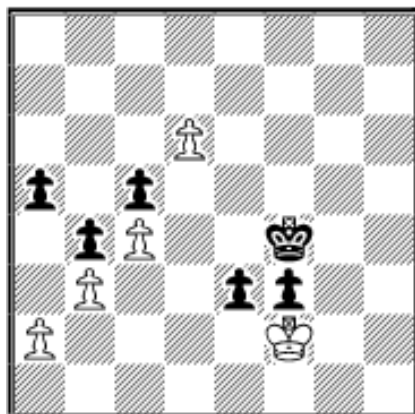


Two necessary elements of Black's play in such endings are choosing the optimal pawn placement on the "front line," and choosing the right moment to run the king in. In this case, Black should advance his f-pawn, since after 50...e3+?!, 51 Kf3 Kf5 52 Ke2 Ke4? doesn't work: 53 d6 f3+ 54 Kf1 e2+ 55 Kf2 Kd3 56 d7+, as White's pawn queens with check.

**50...f4-f3 51 Kf2-e3 Ke5-f5 52 Ke3-f2 Kf5-f4**

Tossing in the moves 52...a4 53 ba here does not change the assessment of the position.

**53 d5-d6 e4-e3+**



1. ?

54 Kg1? Kg3 55 d7 e2 loses for White. And on 54 Ke1!? f2+ 55 Ke2 Kg3 56 d7 Kg2 57 d8Q f1Q+ 58 Kxe3 Qe1+, the endgame looks dangerous for him.

In *Informant 25*, Anthony Miles assessed the final position of this variation as slightly better for Black. True, he arrives at it by a somewhat different route: 54 Kf1 f2 55 Ke2, etc. But 54... f2?? here is a gross blunder, which actually loses



for Black upon 55 Kg2!.

White manages to obtain a more pleasant version of the queen endgame here.

**54 Kf2-f1! Kf4-g3! 55 d6-d7 e3-e2+ 56 Kf1-e1 f3-f2+ 57 Ke1xe2 Kg3-g2 58 d7-d8Q f2-f1Q+ 59 Ke2-d2!**

This position is drawn.

For those who would like to solve similar exercises, I recommend the endings Pillsbury – Gunsberg (Hastings 1895) and Stangl – Schneider (Berlin 1992) in my [Endgame Manual](#).

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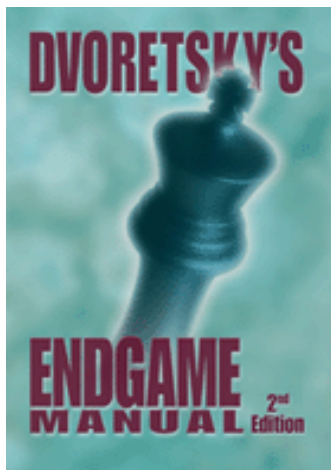
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*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Chess Botany - The "Shrub"

In his book, *Think like a Grandmaster*, grandmaster Alexander Kotov introduced the concept of a "tree of variations," or the collection of variations that need to be analyzed. In [part one](#) of this series we examined the "bare trunk." Here we will look at the "shrub."

That's what Kotov called the situation in which one must calculate, not a single long variation, but a number of comparatively short ones. Here, perhaps, the main problem is to identify all the variations worth examining. All the calculations we perform could prove fruitless, all our time wasted, if we neglect to study a strong candidate move at the very outset!

*Smyslov – Gufeld*

USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1967

**1 c4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g3 3 b4 Bg7 4 Bb2 0-0 5 e3 b6 6 d4 c5! 7 dc bc 8 b5 a6 9 a4 Ne4!?**

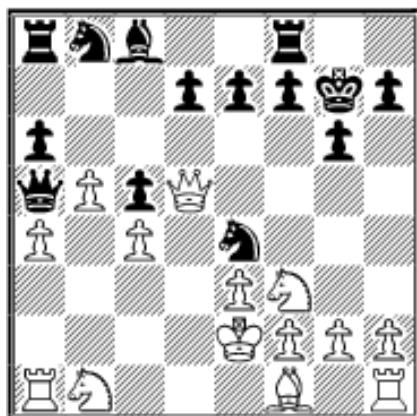
9...Bb7 = was simpler.

**10 Bxg7 Kxg7 11 Qd5!?**

With this and his next move, Vasily Smyslov accepts his opponent's challenge to enter irrational tactical complications. On the other hand, after quiet development by 11 Bd3 Qa5 + 12 Nbd2 Nxd2 13 Qxd2 ab! 14 cb d5, with Nb8-d7-b6 to follow, White could not expect an advantage out of the opening, according to Eduard Gufeld.

**11...Qa5+ 12 Ke2?!**

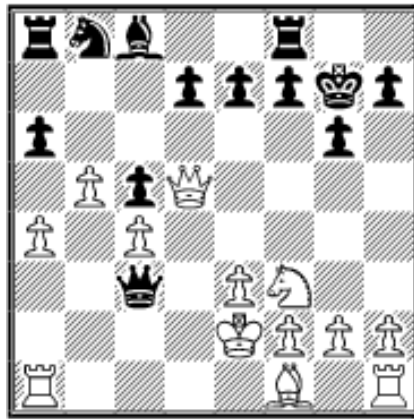
This was also necessary: after 12 Nbd2 Nxd2 13 Nxd2 ab!, Black is already better. Still, in my opinion, 13 Qxd2 (or 12 Nfd2 Nxd2 13 Qxd2) would have been safer.



1...?

Black has two pieces *en prise*. Let's calculate the variations, so as to understand who's better in this position, and how we should play it.

The first thing that attracts our attention would be **12...Nc3+? 13 Nxc3 Qxc3**



1...?

14 Qxa8? Qxa1 15 Qxb8 would be a mistake, which could be strongly met not only by 15...d6! (Black can expect at least a perpetual here – Gufeld), but also by 15...Qb2+ 16 Nd2 d5!, intending 17...Bg4+ or 17...dc (Dvoretsky).

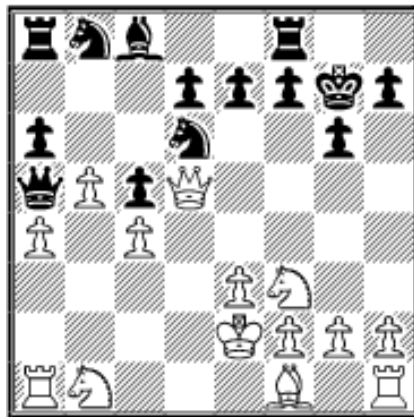
Smyslov had prepared **14 Rd1! Ra7 15 Qxc5**, with an overwhelming advantage (once the rook retreats, White can trade queens by Qd4+).

In the game, Gufeld executed a pretty idea: **12...Bb7 14 Qxb7 Nc6** (meeting 14 bc by 14... Rab8). As will shortly become clear, the combination leads to an approximately even position.

The grandmaster examined no other possibilities for Black. If in fact there were none, we could stop our calculations here. But, remembering the candidate-move rules, we shall not jump to conclusions.

The amusing **12...Qc3?** pops into our head, but does not inspire confidence. Even the endgame, with 12 Nxc3 Nxc3+ 14 Kd2 Nxd5 15 cd favors White; and 13 Qxa8 instead leaves Black badly off wherever you look: 13...Qxa1 14 Qxe4+; 13...Qb2+ 14 Nfd2+; 13...Qxc4+ 14 Kd1! Nxf2+ 15 Ke1 Qc2 16 Na3+.

However, there is one more combinative resource, this one much stronger: **12...Nd6!**



1.?

Black saves his knight, while preparing either 13... Bb7 or 14...ab. On 13 Qxa8?! Bb7 14 Qa7 Qc7! (threatening 15...Nc8) 15 b6 Qc8, White's queen falls into the trap. The only defense against 16... Nc6 would be 16 Ne5, but then Black gains the upper hand after either 16...Nc6 17 Nxc6 Qxc6, followed by 18...Ra8, or 16...f6 17 Qxb8! Qxb8 18 Nxd7 Qd8 19 Nxf8 Kxf8 (or 19...Qxb6 20 Ne6 + Kf7).

Nor are White's problems solved by 13 Nfd2 ab

14 Nb3 (14 cb Nxb5) 14...Qb4-/+.

There remains only **13 Qxc5**, which is answered by **13...ab 14 cb Nxb5**. Black clearly holds the initiative, while White must fight for equality.

Here at last, it seems, we may end our calculations. The combination I have suggested appears stronger, and is in any case simpler than the one played by Gufeld in the game. In order to come to the best conclusion, it was necessary to examine the whole "shrub," not just some of its branches

I am going to continue examining this game, noting first of all that it's quite interesting in and of itself; and also because Gufeld's further annotations also require correcting and fleshing out.

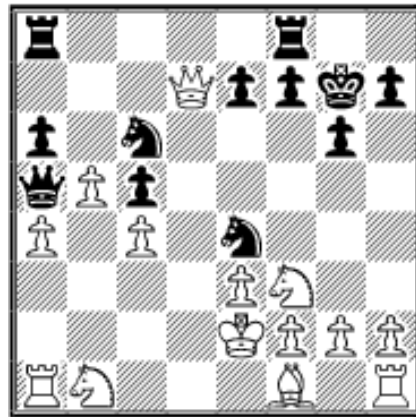


**12...Bc8-b7!? 13 Qd5xb7 Nb8-c6! 14 Nf3-d2!?**

For the moment, Smyslov is on the right track. Of course, he could also have taken the second piece, intending to transpose to the game after 14 bc Rab8 15 Nfd2!. But excessive greed – 15 Qxd7 – would cost White dearly: 15...Rfd8!, and despite his enormous material advantage, White's position is indefensible.

I have nonetheless replaced the exclamation mark with which Gufeld rewarded Smyslov's move with a humbler evaluation – and not just because of the possible transposition, either.

Gufeld was correct to note that, after 14 bc Rab8, the capture on d7 loses. But what would happen if White took the pawn on the previous move? As it happens, **14 Qxd7!?** is not a bad alternative.



1...?

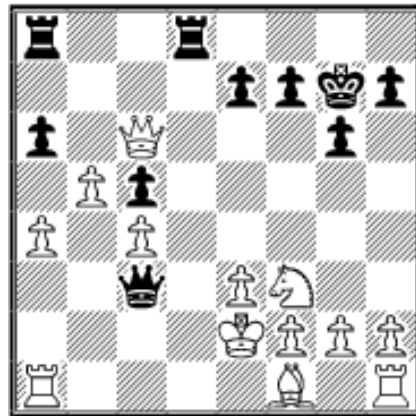
Black has no time to save his knight: the simplest refutation of 14...Nb4? would be 15 Qb7!?, and after the knight retreats, then 16 Qxe7.

Nor does 14...Qb4? work, in view of 15 Qd3! Qb2 + 16 Nfd2 Nxd2, and then: "as you like it" – either 17 Nxd2!? Qxa1 18 bc Qxa4 19 c7±, or 17 Qa3!? Qxa3 18 Nxa3 Nb3 19 Rb1±, or 17 Qc3+!? Qxc3 18 Nxc3 Nb3 19 Rb1 Nca5 20 g4!±.

And 14...Nc3+?! 15 Nxc3 Qxc3 leaves White on

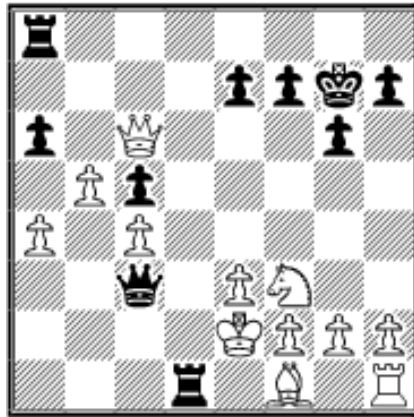
top after 16 Qd1!.

All that's left to try is: **14...Rfd8! 15 Qxc6 Nc3+ 16 Nxc3 Qxc3**



The most natural continuation would be **17 Rd1**. After **17...Qxc4+ 18 Ke1 Rxd1+ 19 Kxd1 Qxa4** + (19...Rd8+?! is weaker: 20 Nd4! Qxa4+ 21 Ke2 cd 22 Kf3±), Black has perpetual check, but no more than that.

White would have had an interesting task to solve after 17...Rxd1?! (instead of 17...Qxc4+).



1.?

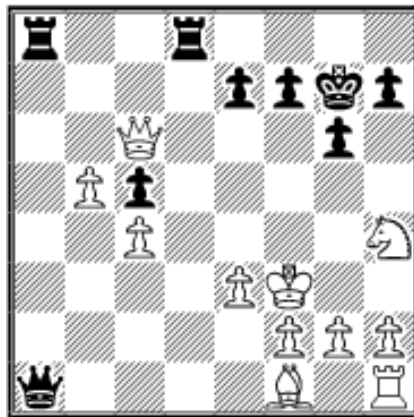
18 Kxd1 seems forced (taking the other rook is impossible, because of mate); if Black responds 18...Rd8+, 19 Qd5 Rxd5+ 20 cd leads to an unclear position, while 19 Nd4 leads to a draw: 19...cd 20 Ke2 Qc2+ (20...d3+ 21 Kf3) 21 Kf3 Qf5+ 22 Kg3 Qg5+, with perpetual check.

But in fact, White is perfectly justified in playing for the win by the far from obvious quiet move 18 Qe4!! . This not only stops mate, but also prepares a queen exchange on e5. The continuation might be 18...ab 19 Qe5+! Qxe5 20 Nxe5 Rb1 (or 20...Rc1) 21 ab, when Black has only a rook for bishop, knight and pawn. True, he could win the pinned bishop at f1; but in that time, the knight could stir up serious trouble for him on the queenside.

Let's go back to the diagram before last (after **16 Nxc3 Qxc3**). Seeing that White has a huge material advantage, he could also try a different defensive method, namely: by not wasting time shuffling the rook, he could move the knight instead, thereby freeing the f3-square for his king.

For instance, after 17 Ng5, 17...Qxa1 18 Kf3 would be dubious. However, Black gives perpetual check by continuing 18...Qd3(c2)+ 19 Kf3 Qf5+.

White could avoid this perpetual by controlling the f5-square by 17 Nh4. This is in fact the first recommendation of our computer. But deeper analysis shows that here too, White cannot hope for an advantage – in fact, he must display accurate play in order to stay out of difficulty. Black responds 17...Qxa1 (17...ab is inferior: 18 Ra2! Qxc4+ 19 Kf3 Qxa2 20 Bxb5±) 18 Kf3 ab 19 ab.



With 19...Rd1 or 19...Qe5 20 Qe4 Qf6+ 21 Kg3 Ra1, Black wins the pinned bishop. But perhaps even stronger would be the useful (if somewhat abstract) move 19...h5!?, after which the c5-pawn is taboo, in view of 20...Qf6+ 21 Kg3 Rac8+, while 20 Kg3 is met by 20...Qe5+

Let's return to the game.

**14...Ra8-a7 15 b5xc6!**

15 Qxa7?! is weaker: 15...Nxa7 16 Nxe4 ab 17 cb Nxb5-/+ (Gufeld).

**15...Ra7xb7 16 c6xb7**



The material balance favors White (rook, bishop and knight for the queen); however, considering the unfortunate placement of White's pieces, Black has full counterplay. Gufeld rejected the variation 16...Nd6 17 g3 Nxb7 18 Bg2 Nd6 19 Rc1 Rb8, leading to equality, in favor of a sharper

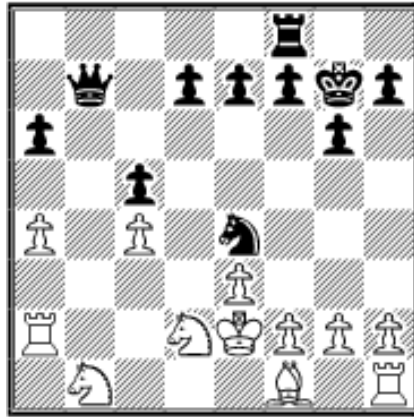


continuation.

### 16...Qa5-b4!?

Here, White should have contented himself with the careful **17 Ra2!**, to which there are several good replies, the most natural of which would be

**17...Qxb7.**



1.?

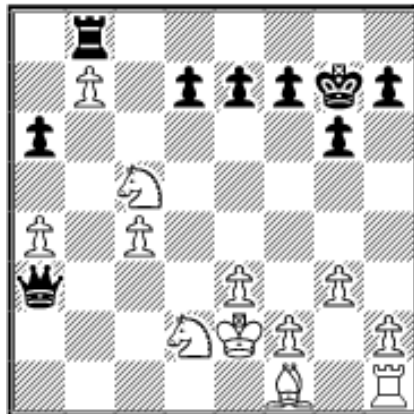
In Gufeld's opinion, 18 Nxe4 Qxb1 (18...Qxe4 19 Nd2! unclear) 19 Nc3 Qc1 20 Kd3! would allow White to consolidate his position with tempo, and ward off the attack. In fact, after 20...d5! 21 cd (21 Nxd5 Qb1+ 22 Rc2 e6+ 21...c4+ 22 Kd4 e5 + 23 de Rd8+, Black's attack slams home. So White would be obliged to choose **18 f3! Nd6 19 Kf2**, maintaining equality.

**17 Nd2xe4?**

Smyslov overestimates his own position, sacrificing the exchange to hold on to the b7-pawn. Now the advantage goes over to Black.

**17...Qb4-b2+ 18 Nb1-d2 Qb2xa1 19 Ne4xc5 Rf8-b8 20 g2-g3 Qa1-a3!**

Of course not 20...d6?, when White could play either 21 Nd7 Rxb7 22 Bg2 Qb2 23 Rb1+ (Gufeld) or 21 Bg2 Qa2 22 Nxa6+.



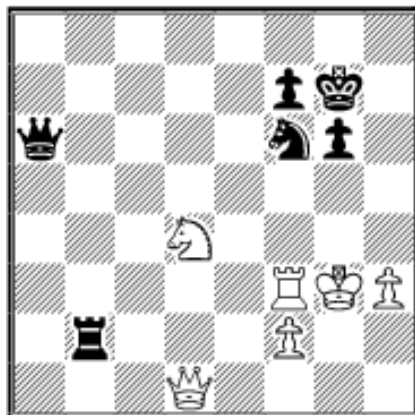
**21 Nc5xd7?**

21 Nd3 Rxb7 22 Bg2-/+ would last longer. The knight on d7, cut off from White's other pieces, is in grave danger. I present the finish of the game with only light notes (based on Gufeld's commentary).

**21...Rxb7 22 Bh3 Qd6 23 c5 Qd5 24 f3 Rb2** (on 24...Rxd7? 25 Bxd7 Qxd7 26 Rc1, White keeps good drawing chances) **25 Rd1 e6 26 c6** (26 Nb6 Qxc5) **26...Qc4+ 27 Ke1 Qd3! 28 Bf1 Qxe3+ 29 Be2 a5!** (Black prevents the knight's rescue by a4-

a5 and Nb6) **30 f4 f6! 31 c7 Rc2 32 Kf1 Rxc7 33 Nc4?! Rxc4 34 Bxc4 Qf3+ 35 Ke1 Qc3+ 0-1**

In practice, quite often we find positions with an obvious advantage, which can be maintained in any of several variations; but in all of them, the realization of the advantage is very difficult, sometimes altogether impossible. At the same time, the plethora of possibilities conceals just one that would allow us to convert our advantage forcibly into a point in the tournament crosstable. The problem lies in being able to sense that a solution does exist, to concentrate our attention on finding it, and to hack our way through the "shrubby" that has overgrown the position.



1...?

How does Black realize his indisputable positional advantage?

Lev Psakhis gave an unnecessary check: **59...Qd6 +?!**, throwing away the lion's share of his advantage.

**60 Kg2 Ne4** (60...Qd5 would have met the same reply) **61 Qd3 Qe5 62 Qe3**

The line 62 Nc6 Qg5+ 63 Kh2 Rxf2+ 64 Rxf2 Nxf2 65 Qd4+ Qf6-/+ results in a knight endgame with Black having an extra pawn. Defending such an endgame is of course unpleasant, but White could probably have drawn it.

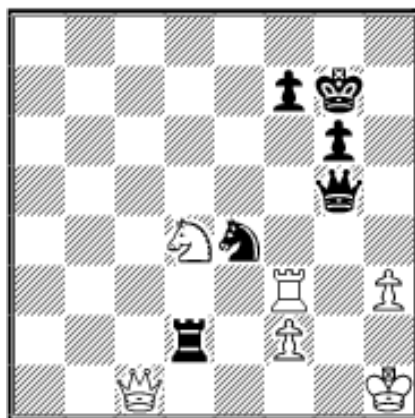
**62...f5**

62...Qd5!? is more dangerous, threatening 63...Ng5, White would respond 63 h4!.

**63 Ne2!** (now simplification is unavoidable) **63...Kh7 64 Qd4 1/2-1/2**

If Black wanted to get his queen into the attack quicker, it would have made sense to try 59...Qa5?!. The position after 60 Nb3 Ne4+ 61 Kg2 Qg5+ 62 Kf1 Qe5 looks dangerous for White (63 Kg2? Rxf2+! 64 Rxf2 Qg3+; 63 Kg1? Nc3; 63 Qd4? Qxd4 64 Nxd4 Nd2+). However, I see no direct refutation of the move 63 h4!.

But 60 Kg2 is safer: 60...Qg5+ 61 Kh1 Rd2 62 Qc1 (but not 62 Qa1? Qd5+) 62...Ne4:

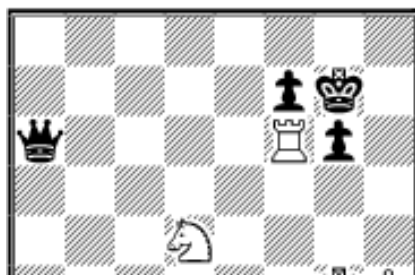


1.?

White's position would be critical, were there not a saving combination: 63 Rxf7+! Kxf7 64 Qc4+, and the king cannot escape perpetual check, since several squares are unreachable for him, in view of the knight fork at e6. Or 63...Kh6 64 Nf3! Nxf2 + 65 Kh2 Ng4+ 66 Kg3 Rg2+ 67 Kxg2 Qxc1 68 hg, with a drawn ending.

Generally, the first idea that pops into one's head in the starting position is to play for the win of a piece by Rd2 (either immediately, or after a preparatory 59...Ne4+). And these kinds of forcing tries should, in principle, be where we begin our calculations. For if one of them leads to the goal, then analyzing the other variations becomes unnecessary.

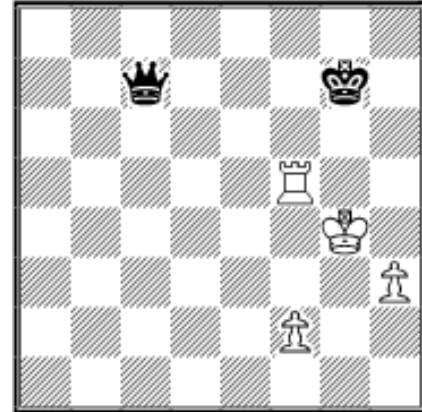
After **59...Rd2?!**, White has just one reply: **60 Rxf6!**



And here, Black plays the in-between check **60...Rd3+!**, ensuring the win of material. But let's not jump to conclusions: the assessment of the position after **61 Qf3! Rxf3+ 62 Rxf3** is unclear. 62...Qd6+ is not dangerous after 63 Rf4, followed by 64 h4 or 64 Kf3 (Black can't play 63...g5??



because of 64 Nf5+). In the line **62...Qa1 63 Nc2 Qg1+** (63...Qe5+ 64 Kg2 Qe4 65 Ne3 is probably drawn) **64 Kf4 Qc1+ 65 Ne3 Qc7+ 66 Kg4 f5+**, White must sacrifice his knight: **67 Nxf5+! gf 68 Rxf5**



The computer database confirms that this endgame is a draw. The assessment isn't self-evident: in a practical game,

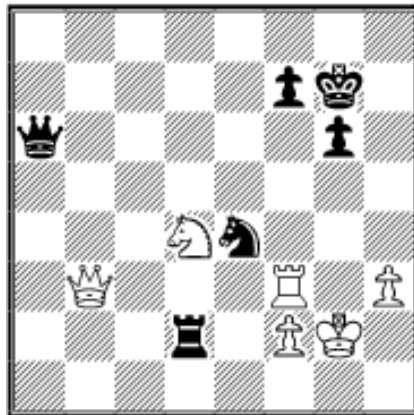
reaching this position through calculation, we wouldn't know how to assess it ourselves. But in any event, we would understand that it could be drawn; so before heading in that direction, it would make sense to look for alternatives.

Now it's time to look at the knight check.

**59...Nf6-e4+! 60 Kg3-g2 Rb2-d2**

60...Qc4 61 Rf4! is not dangerous. And 60...Qb7!? 61 Nb3 (61 Nc6!?) 61...f6 62 Qd4 Rxf2+ 63 Rxf2 Nxf2+ 64 Kxf2 Qxb3 leads to an endgame where, despite his pawn minus, White retains good drawing chances.

**61 Qd1-b3**



It might seem that, thanks to his attack on f7, White gets away scot-free. In fact, his troubles are not over: Black sets up counter-pressure against f2.

**61...Qa6-a7! 64 Nd4-c2**

The line 62 Qc4 Rxd4 63 Rxf7+ Qxf7 64 Qxd4+ Nf6 leaves White a piece down.

**62...Rd2xf2+ 63 Kg2-h1 Rf2-e2—+**

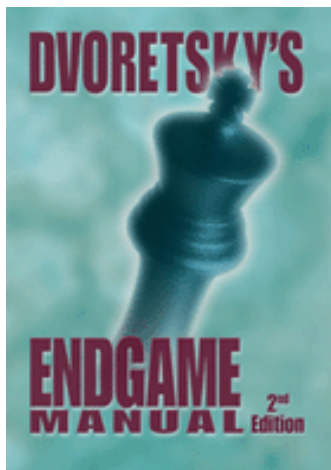
And Black has not only an extra pawn, but a decisive attack.



## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Chess Botany - "Variational Debris"

In his book, *Think like a Grandmaster*, grandmaster Alexander Kotov introduced the concept of a “tree of variations,” or the collection of variations that need to be analyzed. In [part one](#) of this series we examined the “bare trunk,” in [part two](#) we discussed the “shrub,” and here we will investigate “variational debris.”

The term “variational debris” refers to a situation in which we must calculate a number of variations, each of which breaks down – more than once! – into sub-variations, some of them pretty long ones. This kind of task is exceptionally difficult; and there are few grandmasters – even among the elite – who can solve it consistently.

Training ourselves to calculate such positions is most useful: it allows the development of several vital habits for any chessplayer. I'd like to enumerate some of them:

- The ability to maintain concentration and disciplined thinking for the extended period required for solving the exercise;
- Resourcefulness;
- Calculating technique – first and foremost, the timely determination of every sensible candidate move, both for oneself and for one's opponent, at different stages, followed by systematic checking; and
- The ability to clearly picture and, where possible, to accurately evaluate the great volume of positions arising in the course of our analysis.

Note the last point. Quite often, having begun the study of a variation, when we run into difficulties somewhere, or spot an interesting alternative a few moves earlier, we immediately switch over to the analysis of this new variation. And if we have to return to the previous variation later, we must then calculate it again, from the beginning, because we drew no conclusions about it. In order to avoid such a pointless waste of time and strength, I recommend that you stop periodically to fix in your mind the outcome of the work you have just done. And should you be unable to give a precise assessment at the moment, then a conditional one will do. For example, some position might arise by force, and appear quite promising (or the reverse: dangerous). Later, if you must come back to it, you may continue the analysis from this point, rather than the starting position.

For your consideration, I offer the following difficult exercise, which I am quite fond of. Not because it's so complex (as if that were a goal in itself!), but above all because of the clear-cut nature of most of the variations that must be calculated before making a final decision.

*Simagin – Leonovich*  
Moscow 1936



1.?

Give yourself some extra time (an hour, at least), and calculate the variations one after the other, until you can make an accurate assessment of each



final position. Count yourself successful if you come to the correct decision. Another important criterion of the success of your work will be the number of accurately calculated and properly evaluated variations and sub-variations, whether short or long, that you have rejected because of their inferiority – or, contrariwise: used them as the basis for your choice.

I must warn you, although I believe this problem is solvable in principle, so far not one of the grandmasters to whom I have offered it was able to solve it correctly – that is, to calculate accurately more than a greater or lesser part of the necessary variations.

Naturally, this gives rise to the question of whether it is right to set a task that, under tournament conditions, it would probably prove impossible to solve, especially considering there would most likely not be sufficient time in which to solve it? Arguing this question, as interesting and as important as it is, would take us too far afield. Let me just say that the well-known aphorism, “If schooling is hard, then battle will be easy!” is true not just in combat situations. Having trained yourselves to solve the most complex problems, you will find it easier to deal with any sort of problem over-the-board – both easy and complex.

One thing more: the game from which this exercise is taken is the first one from the best game collection of Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin. I treasure this little book, and at one time subjected it to careful study. The game was played in a second-category tournament! Despite his young age and modest chess qualifications, the grandmaster-to-be executed a pretty combination (it’s not really important whether the execution was flawless or not), which was overlooked by many solvers years later. Again, food for thought, concerning the inflation of rankings and titles, and the earlier and earlier appearance of chess talent, and of the possibility for full-fledged creativity, even in the early stages of a chessplayer’s development.

To begin: The first thing that catches our eye is that Black’s bishop is attacked, but that Black would recover the piece immediately by a queen check on d4.

Those of you who have spent some serious time on the position will probably already have figured out that the two main lines requiring deep and accurate analysis are 29 Bf4!? and 29 Rf4!?.

A bit of practical advice (being one facet of the “candidate moves” principle): when you can see that the calculation of an intended move will become too complex, it makes sense to lay it aside for awhile, and look for alternatives. It’s not impossible that a simpler path to your goal exists, which you haven’t yet considered. Let’s try to take this approach.

Taking the bishop is not so harmless: after 29 Qxb7?! Qd4+ 30 Rf2 Qxd3 31 cd, Black’s position is dubious. If White succeeds in consolidating, then both the powerful passed d-pawn and the exclusion of Black’s knight at h7 will gain importance. Such a position deserves a little more careful consideration; and perhaps we would go that way, if it were not for the powerful rejoinder 30...Qa1! (instead of 30...Qxd3?!) 31 Rf1 Qd4+, and draws. Here is the first clear variation of the many you will have to calculate.

29 Bxg6? fg 30 Rxf8+ Nxf8 31 Bb2 leads nowhere, because of 31...d4 32 Qxb7 Qe1+ 33 Kh2 Qe5+, when Black is at least guaranteed perpetual check.

This combination would work after 29 Kh2?! Ba6? 30 Bxg6! fg 31 Bb2 d4 32 g3+-. But Black has quite a sufficient answer in 29...Qd4!, which assures him an excellent position.

One more try: 29 Qe5?! dc 30 Bb2. In the variation 30...Nf6?! 31 Rxf6 gf 32 Qxf6 Qh7 33



Bxc4, White would have full positional compensation for the exchange sacrifice, although it would not be clear whether he could hope for any advantage. A safer line for Black would be 30...f6 31 Qe6+ Kh8 32 gf Nxf6.

It looks as though there is no quick way for us to find, which means there's no getting away from calculating the main lines.

First, let's calculate the complex combination that begins with an attack on the enemy queen.

**29 Rf1-f4!? Qh4-g3**

Of course not 29...Qh5? 30 Be2 Qxg5 31 Qxb7+-.

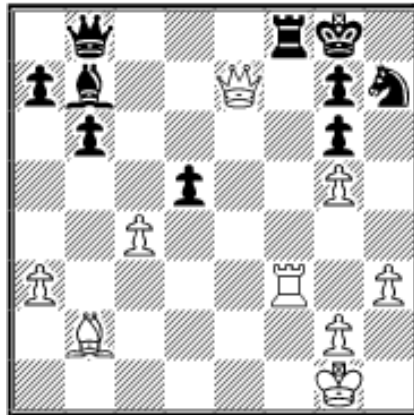
**30 Rf4-f3**

After the mistaken 30 Bxg6? fg (30...Nxc5 31 Bf5 Bc8 32 Bxc8 Rxc8 is also possible) 31 Bb2 d4! 32 Rxf8+ Nxf8 33 Qxb7 Qe3+ 34 Kh2 Ne6, the advantage passes to Black.

**30...Qg3-b8**

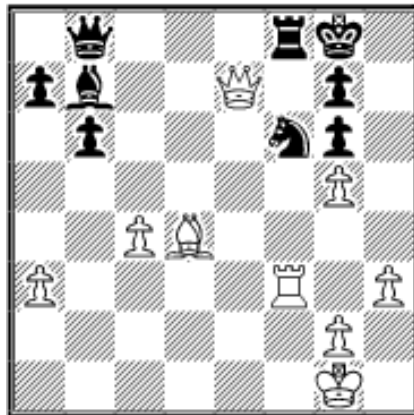
The queen defends the bishop, but now comes a powerful kingside blow.

**31 Bd3xg6! f7xg6 32 Bc1-b2**



Threatening mate. Play now divides into two practically equal variations, each one difficult to bring to a logical conclusion.

**32...d5-d4!? 33 Bb2xd4 Nh7-f6**



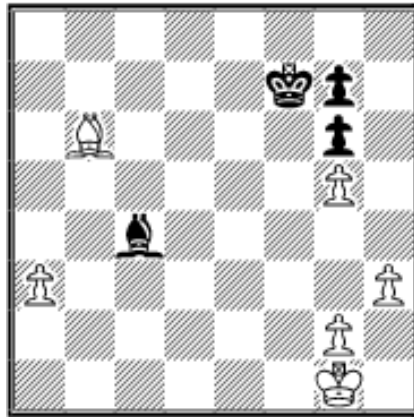
1.?

Black tossed a pawn, so as to attack the white rook. For this reason, 34 gf? Rf7 won't work.

**34 Bd4xf6! g7xf6**

34...Rf7? would lead to an opposite-colored bishops endgame: 35 Qxf7+! Kxf7 36 Be5+ Bxf3 37 Bxb8 Be2 38 Bxa7 Bxc4 39 Bxb6:





Let's assess this position. Not only is White two pawns up, which certainly doesn't always guarantee victory in an opposite-bishops ending, but he can also bear down on the weak pawn at g7 with his bishop. His king will go to the queenside to support the passed pawn, so Black's king will have to move to meet him. Then the bishop takes on g7, after which his three-pawn advantage should be enough to win.

**35 Rf3xf6!**

Of course not 35 gf? Rf7.

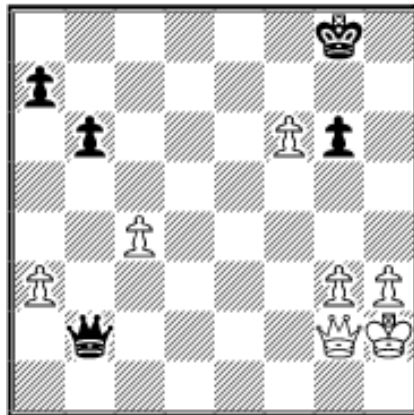
**35...Qb8-e8!**

35...Rxf6 is weaker: 36 gf Qf8 37 Qxb7 Qxf6 38 Qb8+.

**36 Qe7xb7!**

36 Rxf8+ Qxf8 37 Qxb7 Qxa3+/- is less promising for White.

**36...Qe8-e1+ 37 Kg1-h2 Qe1-e5+ 38 g2-g3 Rf8xf6 39 g5xf6 Qe5-b2+!? 40 Qb7-g2**



This position comes about more or less by force. Black must now choose one of two possible queen endgames.

**40...Qb2xf6**

Another possible way is 40...Qxa3!? 41 Qd5+ Kf8 42 Qe6± (or 42 h4±).

**41 Qg2-a8+ Kg8-h7 42 Qa8xa7+ Kh7-h6 43 Qa7-a8 Qf6-b2+ 44 Qa8-g2 Qb2xa3±**

In both cases, White is a pawn up, with real chances to win – and Black also has real chances to draw. A more definite evaluation could only come after a detailed analysis – which is not our job here. In a practical game, it makes sense to extend our analysis only to the end of a forcing variation. After that, we need to stop, evaluate the position, and switch over to the examination of other continuations.

**32...Nh7-f6! 33 g5xf6**

Here, 33 Bxf6 gf 34 Rxf6 Qe8= no longer works; however, in contrast to the 32...d4 variation, we can now take the knight with the pawn.

**33...Rf8-f7**



1.?



It's not difficult to see that the combination 34 Qxf7+ Kxf7 35 fg+ Kg8! is only good enough to draw: 36 Rf8+ Qxf8 37 gfQ+ Kxf8=. So that means we must retreat the queen – but where?

After 34 Qe6 dc, White's rook is *en prise*: 35 Rf2 runs into 35...Qc8, and 35 Re3, into 35...gf 36 Bxf6 Qc8. Here, White hasn't the shadow of an advantage.

One idea that comes to mind is to drop the queen back, and then play Re3 (on an open file, the rook should, as a rule, be stationed in front of the queen). But after 34 Qe2 d4!, the rook would be attacked, the e3-square inaccessible, and Black would follow up with 35...gf.

### 34 Qe7-e1!!

A delicate move! From here, the queen might sally forth to h4, but the main thing is that it protects g3, making it safe for the rook.

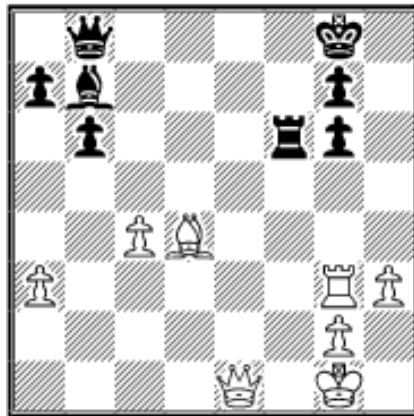
### 34...d5-d4!

34...dc? is altogether bad: 35 Re3 Bc6 36 fg. Nor does 34...gf? help: 35 Bxf6 dc 36 Qh4 Rh7 37 Qxc4+ Rf7, and now either 38 Be5 Qe8 39 Rf6+-, or 38 Qh4 Rh7 39 Qg4 Qe8 40 Rd3+-.

### 35 Rf3-g3! Rf7xf6

Two unpleasant alternatives are 35...Qd6 36 fg or 35...gf 36 Rxc6+ Rg7 37 Qe6+ Kh7 38 Rxc7+ Kxc7 39 Qg4+ Kf7 40 Qxd4, although here the battle might still continue (in the latter variation, after 40...Qe5!).

### 36 Bb2xd4



1...?

On 36...Rc6?, 37 Qe7 decides. After 36...Rf7?! 37 Rxc6, Black's position is lost: he's a pawn down, and his opponent still has a dangerous attack. But the rook has one other square:

### 36...R6-d6!

Black is not afraid of 37 Be5 Qe8, nor of 37 Qe5 Qf8+/. If 37 Bxc7 (expecting 37...Kxc7? 38 Qe5 + and 39 Rd3+-), then Black has 37...Rd1! 38 Qxd1 Qxc3=.

### 37 Rg3-e3! Rd6xd4! 38 Re3-e8+ Qb8xe8 39 Qe1xe8+ Kg8-h7 40 Qe8-f7 Bb7-c6 41 Qf7xa7

41 g4!? might actually offer slightly better practical chances.

### 41...Rd4xc4 42 Qa7xb6 Rc4-c1+ 43 Kg1-f2 Rc1-c2+ 44 Kf2-e3 Bc6xg2

This ending is almost certainly drawn.

Now let's look at the alternative line on the first move, the one which occurred in the game. Simagin executed a surprising and beautiful idea that involves trapping the enemy queen.

**29 Bc1-f4! Bb7-a6**

29...Bc8 30 cd is hopeless.

**30 Bd3-e2!?**



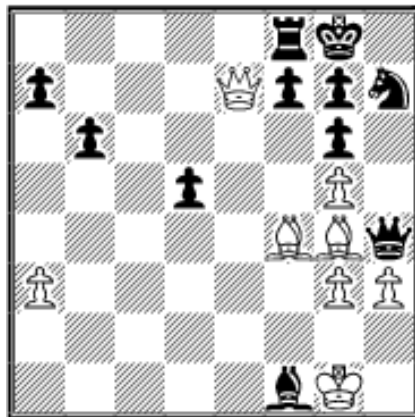
Threatening 31 Bg4 and 32 g3. Black's response was unfortunate: **30...f6?**, expecting 31 Bg4? Nxg5 32 Bxg5 Qxg5 33 Be6+ Kh7 34 Qxf8 Qe3+ 35 Kh1 Qxe6. The game continued: **31 Qe6+! Kh8 32 g3 Nxg5** (32...Bc8 is no help: 33 Qxc8 Rxc8 34 gh) **33 Qe7!** (33 Qd6! also works) **33...Nxh3+ 34 Kg2 Nxf4+ 35 Rxf4** and Black resigned.

What Black had to do was grab everything that came to hand, against the time when he would have to give up his strongest piece.

**30...Ba6xc4 31 Be2-g4 Bc4xf1**

31...Nf6? would lose: 32 g3 Qh8 33 gf Bxf1 34 Bd6 Ra8 35 Be6 (Motylev).

**32 g2-g3**



Simagin continued this variation as follows: 32... Qxh3 33 Bxh3 Bxh3 34 Qxa7, and White must win, after overcoming certain technical difficulties. However, Black's defense can be strengthened.

**32...Qh4xg4! 33 h3xg4 Bf1-c4 34 Qe7xa7**

34 a4 could be met either by 34...a6 or 34...b5.

**34...b6-b5**

White can't create a passed pawn on the queenside, nor does he have any active kingside possibilities left. If Black succeeds in getting his knight to e6, the initiative passes to him. White's best course here is to force the draw by chasing the enemy rook along the eighth rank with his queen and bishop (since it's not possible to interdict all eight squares with just two pieces).

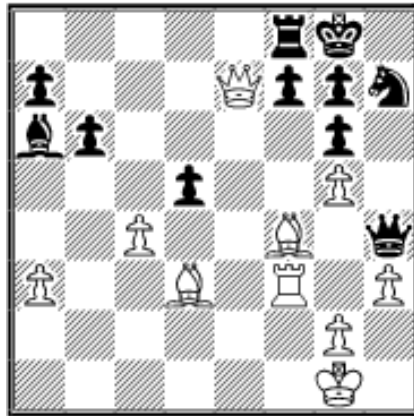
Simagin also mentions 32 Kxf1!?, without further analysis. I don't believe it's that dangerous to Black, who can try different approaches. For example, 32...Nf6 33 g3 Qh8 34 gf gf 35 Bd6 Ra8, or 32...Nxg5!? 33 g3 Qh8 34 Bxg5 f5 35 Qe6+ (35 Bf3 Qxh3+ 36 Bg2 Qxg3 37 Bxd5+ Kh7 38 Qxf8 Qd3+) 35...Kh7 36 Bf3 Rc8 37 Bxd5 Qe8, both with roughly equal chances.

It appears that we have been unable to demonstrate a convincing advantage for White after all. With accurate defense, Black retains real saving chances in all lines.

I considered this analysis complete, and was planning to hand over this piece for publication, but then I used it one more time in a training session with grandmasters Alexander Motylev and Vladimir Potkin. After the exercise, Motylev returned to the position and uncovered a promising new line for White, stronger than those examined previously. His idea looks natural enough, and not too complex; but of course, this is only after it was actually discovered – for some reason, it had never previously occurred to anybody. On the one hand, this is yet another demonstration of the colossal practical value of the “candidate moves” principle. On the other, it shows how difficult it can be to know how to use that principle, and consequently how important it is to train that habit regularly.

The first move of this idea is the same one Simagin played, but now a totally different plan is involved.

**29 Bc1-f4! Bb7-a6 30 Rf1-f3!**



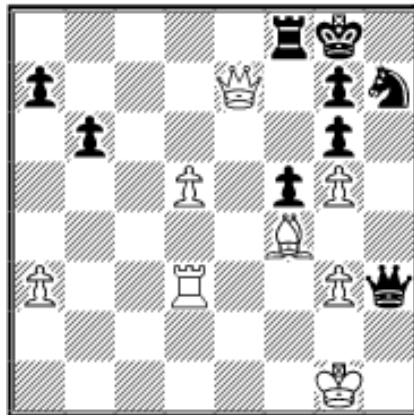
1...?

The point to getting the rook off the first rank appears in the short variation: 30...Bxc4? 31 Bxg6! fg 32 Be5, when Black is defenseless.

Let me point out here that, in the analysis of previous variations, it was necessary to calculate all the way to the end, because their assessment was completely unclear, and dependent upon tactical nuances which came up at various stages of the calculations. Motylev's discovery is excellent also in that, once the first two moves

(and the idea involved) are found, a practical player would be completely justified in stopping his analysis right there, and going in for this position. Because, for now at least, White is sacrificing nothing – on the contrary, he's strengthened his position; and his opponent will find it quite difficult to come up with even the most minimally acceptable counter to the threatened bishop sacrifice on g6.

If 30...f5, for example, the decisive reply is 31 cd! Bxd3 32 g3! Qxh3 33 Rxd3:



The d-pawn threatens a quick march to the eighth rank, Black's queen is out of play and unable to help its other pieces. Here's one possible continuation: 33...Rf7 34 Qe8+ (equally powerful is 34 Qe5 Nf8 35 d6 Qg4 36 Qd5! Qe2 37 Re3 Qc2 38 d7!+-) 34...Nf8 35 d6 Rd7 36 Qa8! (or 36 Qe5!) 36...Qg4 37 Qd5+ Kh7 (37...Rf7 38 Re3 and 39 Re7) 38 Rd2, and the only way Black will be able to cover the yawning wound on the h-file will be to give up the queen.

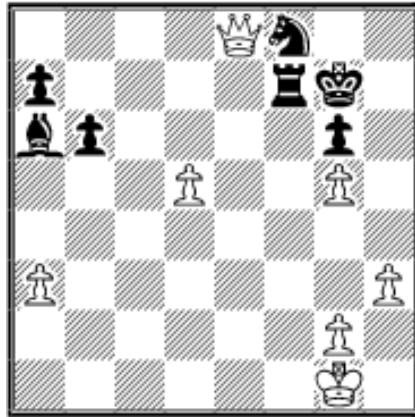
The most stubborn defense involves retreating the king into the corner, in order to be able to defend the weakness at g7 by Rg8.

**30...Kg8-h8!**

Now White has a new task: selecting the optimal way to win from among several tempting possibilities, all of which give him the advantage.

The bishop sacrifice on g6 works here as well.

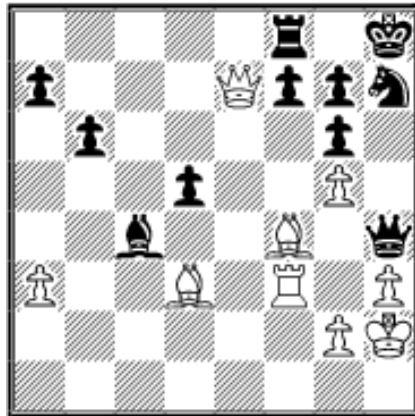
31 Bxg6!? fg 32 Be5 Rg8 33 Bxg7+! (but not 33 Rf7? Nxd5, and taking on g7 allows Black a perpetual after sacrificing the knight on h3 or f3) 33...Rxd7 34 Qe8+ Rg8 35 Qe5+ Rg7 36 Rf7 Qe1+! (stopping the mate requires giving up the queen) 37 Qxe1 Rxf7 38 Qe8+ Kg7 39 cd Nf8:



Black has rook, bishop and knight for the queen and two pawns – approximate material equality. And although a pawn storm against his king is a very real threat, there is no assurance that this attack will succeed. One would like to find something more convincing.

It's well-known that sometimes the threat can be considerably stronger than its immediate execution. So it is here: the sacrifice needs to be delayed a bit.

**31 Kg1-h2! Ba6xc4**



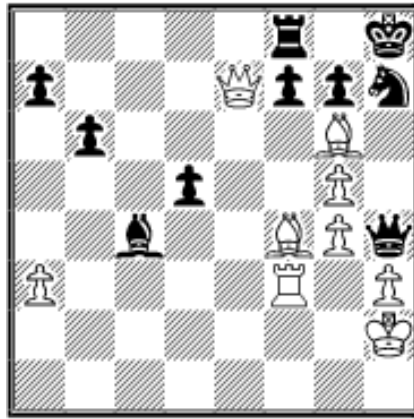
1.?

Again, a difficult choice must be made. For besides the blow on g6, there is once again the tempting idea of trapping Black's queen. Here's a possible variation: 32 Bc2!? b5 33 g3 Qh5 34 Bd1 Kg8 35 Rf1 Bxf1 36 Bxh5 gh:



White has an indisputable advantage; yet once again, it's unclear whether it would be enough to win.

The bishop sacrifice could be executed at once; or it could be prepared with 32 g3 Qh5 33 g4 (the consequences of 33 Kg2!? Rg8 or 33...a6 are not completely clear) 33...Qh4, and only now 34 Bxg6:



1...?

34...fg is hopeless: 35 Bg3 Qxh3+ 36 Kxh3 Rxf3 37 Kg2 Rf8 38 Be5 Rg8 39 Qf7!?. However, Black has an outstanding *zwischenzug*: 34...Be2!! After 35 Qxe2 fg 36 Kg2 (or 36 Qe5), we see the same old picture once again: White has the advantage, but no assurance he can win with it.

There remains only to check out the immediate blow against g6 – with the pawn still on g2.

**32 Bd3xg6! f7xg6 33 Bf4-e5 Rf8-g8 34 Be5xg7+! Rg8xg7 35 Qe7-e8+ Rg7-g8 36 Qe8-e5 + Nh7-f6!**

36...Rg7 37 Rf7 is weaker.

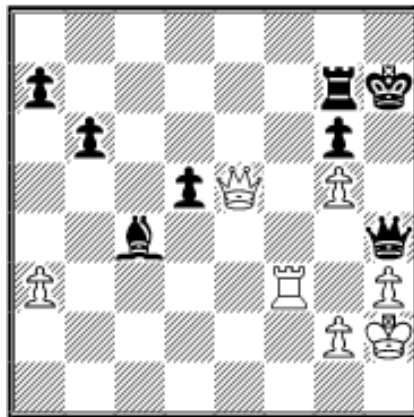
**37 Qe5xf6+**

37 Rxf6? Qe4 = or 37 gf? Rf8 (37...Qh5) 38 Rf4 Qh6 would cost White the win.

**37...Rg8-g7 38 Qf6-e5!**

Black will soon have to give up the queen to ward off the threats to his king. On 38...d4 39 Rf4 Qh5 40 Rxd4 b5 41 Kg3, with 42 Rh3 to follow, White will have no difficulty converting his material advantage.

**38...Kh8-h7**



1.?

Now the straightforward 39 Rf4 Qh5 40 Kg3 would allow Black to keep on fighting after 40...d4! 41 Rh4 Qxh4+ 42 Kxh4 d3, or 41 Rxd4 Bf1!! 42 Rh4 Qxh4+ 43 Kxh4 Bxg2.

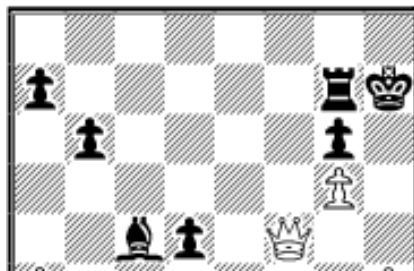
**39 Rf3-f8! d5-d4!**

The only defense against the killing threat of 40 Qb8.

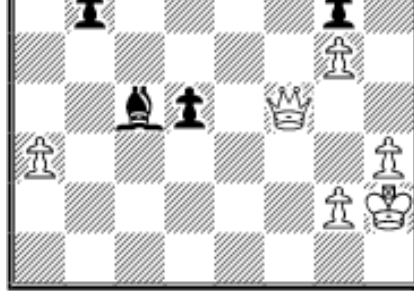
**40 Rf8-f4 Qh4xf4+**

The variation 40...Qh5 41 Rxd4 b5 42 Kg3 is one we have already seen.

**41 Qe5xf4**



In order to hold onto his d-pawn, Black has to move his rook to d7, where it will be exposed to attacks from the white queen. Motylev extends this variation as follows: **41...Rd7 42 h4! d3 43 h5 d2** (or 43...Bf7 44 Qf3!! d2 45 hg+ Bxg6 46 Qh3+ and 47 Qxd7) **44 hg+ Kg7** (44...Kxg6 45



Qf6+ ) **45 Qf6+** (45 Qe5+ Kf8 46 g7+ Rxd7 47 Qf4+ and 48 Qxd2+- is just as good) **45...Kg8 46 g7 Rxd7** (46...d1Q 47 Qf8+ Kh7 48 g8Q+! Bxd7 49 Qh6 mate) **47 Qd8+ Kh7 48 Qxd2**, and Black will almost certainly be unable to hold the fortress he erects.



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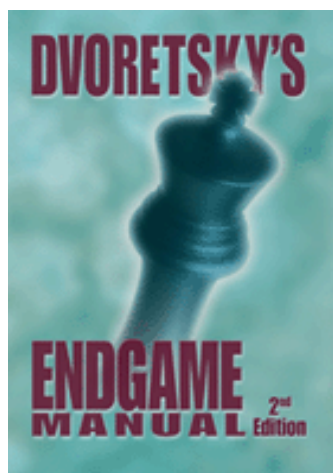
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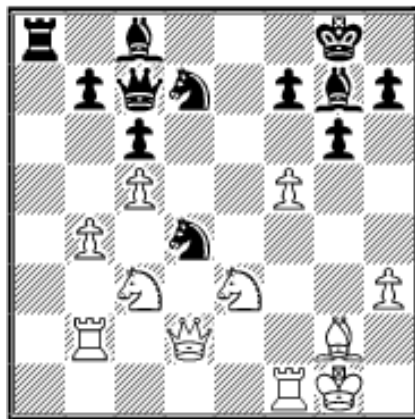


## Chess Botany - "Variational Debris"

## Part Two

To those who found the training method recommended in my previous [article](#) interesting, I offer the following exercise. In contrast to the Simagin – Leonovich game we examined earlier, some variations here end in positions that are difficult to evaluate. Well, that's what happens most often in real life, too. No sense going round and round about it: just fix in your mind that this position's evaluation was "unclear" (that's an evaluation, after all!), and without wasting any more time on it, move on to studying the other lines.

*Portisch – Najdorf*  
Santa Monica 1966



1...?

Black is on move, with a pawn for the exchange, and control of the dark squares. But he needs to consider White's threat of 30 f6 – as well as 30 Nc4 and 30 Ne4.

The task is to calculate the sortie 29...Ra3, and evaluate its usefulness.

Before concentrating on the analysis of a problem variation, it's generally sensible to make some kind of assessment of the starting position. For example, if it favors White, and the move 29...Ra3 leads either to equality or to double-edged complications, such an outcome is desirable. On the other hand, if Black is better in the starting position, such an outcome would not be what we want.

Unfortunately, this position is very difficult to assess one way or the other. We may at least suppose that Black is bound to find sufficient resources to maintain dynamic equality. The course of the game supports this assessment.

29...gf!? 30 Ra2

Najdorf's suggestion of 30 Nxf5?! Nxf5 31 Rxf5 Ne5 32 Rg5 is risky.



1...?

The grandmaster continued this variation as follows: 32...h6? 33 Rg3 Nc4 34 Rxc7+ Kxc7 35 Qd4+ Ne5 36 Ne4, intending 37 Nd6, when White clearly has the initiative. But 32...Ng6! is far stronger; for example, 33 Rb1?! h6 34 Rh5 Qf4!–+.





**30...Rxa2 31 Qxa2 Nf8 32 Qf2 b6 33 Na4**

Here, a draw was agreed. After 33...b5, Black's position is preferable.

Now let us consider a direct answer to the question we posed.

**29...Ra8-a3!?**

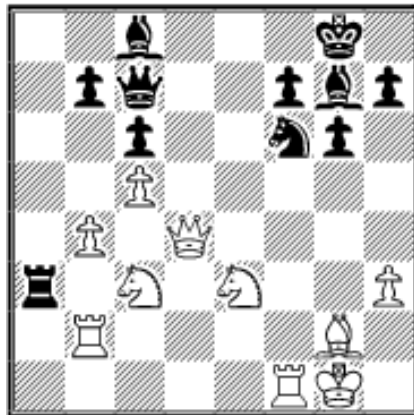
Najdorf believed this would give Black the advantage. Unfortunately, his analysis was inaccurate.

**30 f5-f6!?**

Of course, this counterstroke must be the first one considered. 30 Nc4? Rxc3 loses for White; on 30 Ne4?, 30...Bh6!— is a very strong reply. But 30 Nb1!? appears to have no refutation. However, this is unnecessary in any case, since Black risks nothing here: the knight moves far away from the theater of action, and the rook can retreat to almost any square it wishes – preferably to a1.

**30...Nd7xf6**

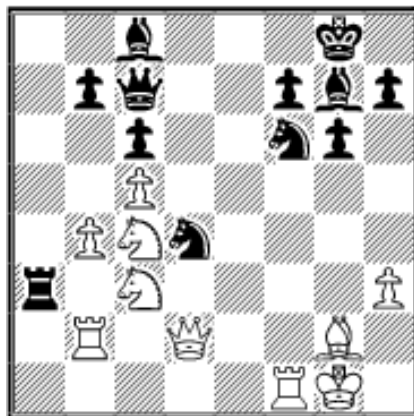
It turns out that taking the knight by 31 Qxd4? is not good for White.



1...?

True, the position after 31...Nh5 32 Qh4 Bxc3 33 Rbf2 remains unclear, but 31...Ng4! 32 Qf4 Qxf4 33 Rxf4 Nxe3 leads to an obvious advantage for Black.

**31 Ne3-c4!**



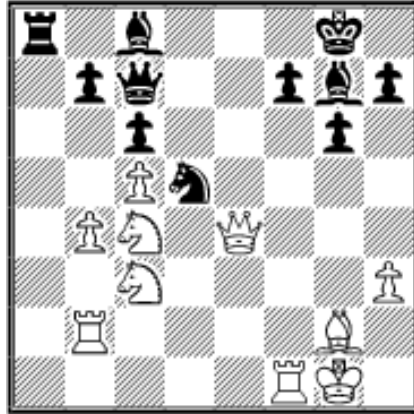
1...?

What can Black do here, with two pieces *en prise*?

We begin by examining, and refuting, the combination 31...Rxc3? 32 Qxc3 Ng4 33 hg (33 Nd6 Nf5! is much weaker) 33...Ne2+ 34 Rxe2 Bxc3, since after 35 Re8+ Kg7 36 Nd6 Bxb4 37 Rxf7+ Qxf7 48 Nxf7 Bxc5+ 39 Kh2, White wins.

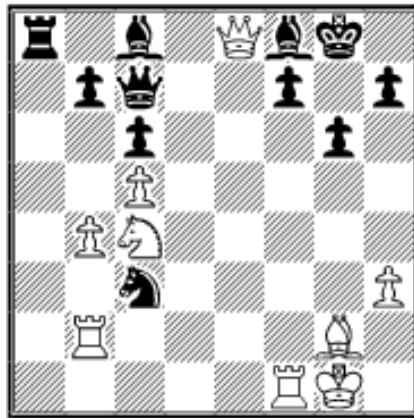
Najdorf analyzed **31...Ra8**. First, I will note that a variation he failed to consider – 32 Nb6 Rb8 33 Qxd4 Nd5 34 Qc4 (34 Qe4 Bxc3 is weaker) 34...Nxc3 35 Nxc8 Rxc8 – results in a position of rough material equality (two pawns for the exchange). For now, we will take this outcome as an acceptable one for us, and return to our study of the immediate capture of the knight.

32 Qxd4 Nd5 33 Qe4



1...?

The answer to the question of how best to capture on c3 is no longer as difficult to guess. The following supplementary question would be more interesting: what should White do after 33... Nxc3?! 34 Qe8+ Bf8?

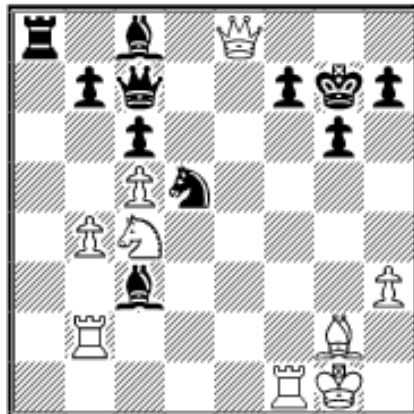


1.?

Najdorf gives 35 Nb6 Rb8 36 Nxc8 Rxc8 37 Rxf7. However, here Black unexpectedly saves himself by 37...Ne2+!! 38 Rxe2 Rxe8 39 Rxc7 Rxe2 40 Rxb7 Rb2 41 Bxc6 Rxb4!.

35 Rbf2! would be much stronger; for example, 35...f5 36 Nb6 Rb8 37 Rd2+.

33...Bxc3 34 Qe8+ Kg7



1.?

Najdorf's variation is 35 Bxd5? Qg3+! (not 35... cd? 36 Nd6+—) 36 Bg2 (36 Rg2? Bd4+) 36...Be6! 37 Qxa8 Bxc4, favoring Black. He's right there: I don't see a saving line for White:

38 Rc2 Bxf1—.

38 Rbf2 Bd4! (threatening 39...Bxf1) 39 Qxb7 Bd5! 40 Kh1 Qxh3+.

38 Qe8 Bxf1 (38...Bxb2 39 Qe1μ is inferior) 39 Rf2 Bc4 40 Rf3 Bd4+ 41 Kh1 Qh4—.

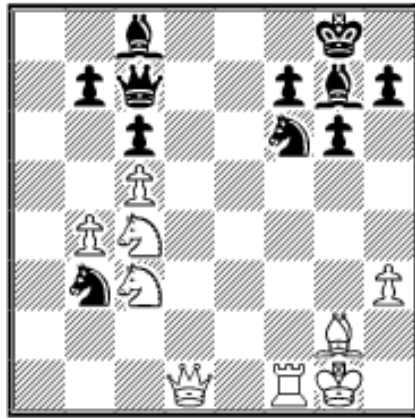
The grandmaster rejected **35 Nd6!**, because of the reply **35...Nf6**. But if we extend this variation by just one move – **36 Re2!** – and try to find a decent defense for Black, we will become convinced that he's in a bad way. Which in turn means, that not only does 31... Ra8 not give Black the advantage, it even places him at the brink of defeat. There's a definite logic to this: what's the point of zooming the rook up to a3, if it's only going to beat an inglorious retreat, one move later?

Now, let's try the more active

**31...Ra3-b3!! 32 Rb2xb3**

32 Nd6 Rxb2 33 Qxb2 Nf5 would give Black excellent counterplay. I admit that here, as also in some of the other lines, my evaluation is not too defined, but I truly don't know who stands better, or by how much.

### 32...Nd4xb3 33 Qd2-d1



1...?

Black's knight has wandered into a trap – however, the rest of his pieces now become extremely active.

### 33...Bc8-e6!!

The tempting 33...Bxh3? could be justified after 34 Bxh3 Qg3+ 35 Bg2 Qxc3 36 Qd8+ Bf8 37 Qxf6 Qxc4 38 Rf4 Be7!, with chances for both sides. But White has the cold-blooded response 34 Ne2! (from here, the knight controls the vital dark squares around its king)

34...Be6 35 Qxb3 Ng4 36 Rf4±.

Nor is 33...Nd4? satisfactory, after 34 Qxd4 Nd5 35 Qe4 Nxc3 36 Qe8+ Bf8 37 Nd6 Be6 38 Re1±, with the unpleasant threat 39 Rxe6.

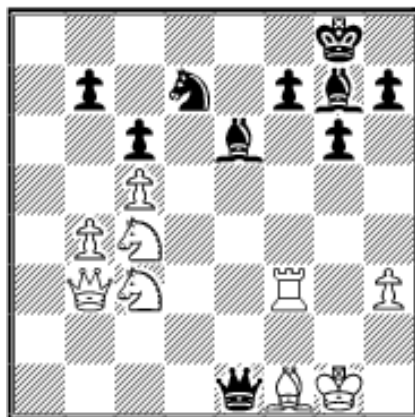
### 34 Qd1xb3 Qc7-g3 35 Rf1-f3

35 Qd1 could be answered, either by 35...Bxc4 unclear, or by 35...Qxc3!? 36 Qd8+ Bf8 37 Qxf6 Qxc4 with counterplay.

### 35...Qg3-e1+ 36 Bg2-f1

On 36 Rf1, Black could either repeat moves by 36...Qg3, or continue 36...Qh4!?

### 36...Nf6-d7!



An amazing position! White's a rook ahead (for just two pawns), yet the tied-down state of his pieces and Black's powerful threat of 37...Ne5 allow us to evaluate this position as being more in Black's favor, since he will probably win the knight back, having then two pawns for the exchange with all his pieces active.

Conclusion: Objectively, the move 29...Ra3!? is correct. However, from a practical standpoint, it's probably not the move Black should play. In my view, it gives Black more complex problems to solve than White, requiring extraordinary accuracy and resourcefulness; he's the one who's more at risk.

The move 29...gf!?, which he selected in the actual game, was safer.

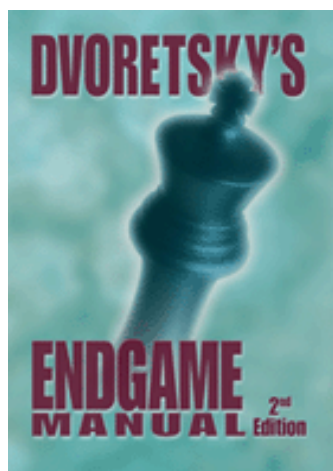
Conversely, I will not insist on my conclusion – that wasn't the point here. The main thing is that we have had some training in complex calculation, learning something about hacking our way through the debris of variations.



## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Studies for Practical Players

Few tournament chessplayers are familiar with the name of the Austrian study-composer Alois Wotawa. I don't know much about him myself. His creative period occurred during the second third of the twentieth century, and he avoided participating in competitions.

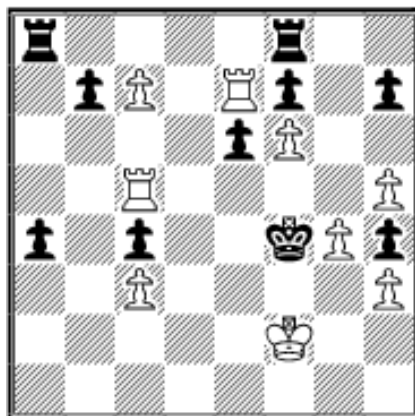
But I do recall that the first works of Wotawa with which I became acquainted made a strong impression. Many years later, when I acquired the computerized database of studies put together by Harold van der Heijden, I went over all of Wotawa's studies and selected several dozen of the best (according to my own taste, of course). I offered this selection to my students for solving, either with the aim of developing their combinative acuity, or to help them reach peak form before important tournaments.

The distinguishing feature of the Austrian composer's studies is that they are brimming with brilliant combinations, generally paired, as a rule, with fantastic quiet moves as well as with effective sacrifices. Most of his studies resemble a practical game, in form as well as in spirit. In them, White most often initiates a direct attack on the black king; but the mating constructions are far from obvious, and uncovering them requires the solver to display a great deal of inventiveness.

I shall begin by demonstrating some studies in which, unfortunately, a defect was found – either a refutation or a second solution. I hope even these will please you. And then I will present my collection of Wotawa's unimpeachable studies – from which, I am sure you will derive even greater pleasure.

**A. Wotawa**

1962



1.?

Something must be done – the passed a-pawn is about to queen.

1 c8Q Raxc8 2 Rxc8 Rxc8 3 Rxf7 leads to a sharp ending, difficult to assess.

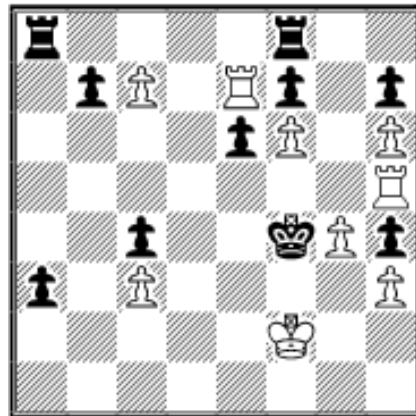
The straightforward 1 Rd7 (threatening 2 Rd4#) meets 1...e5, when the black king escapes the danger zone via the g5-square. The position after 2 Re7 Kg5 3 Rxe5+ Kxf6 4 Re2 a3 5 Ra2 is about even.

And so it appears that White can escape defeat. The question is: Should he try for a win? The composer came up with a wonderful way to prepare the move Rd7.

**1 h5-h6!!(?)**

The exclamation marks are for the cleverness of the idea. The question mark reflects its actual value.

**1...a4-a3 2 Rc5-h5!**



1...?

**2...a3-a2?**

2...Ra6? 3 Rd7 e5 4 Rd8+— wouldn't save Black either.

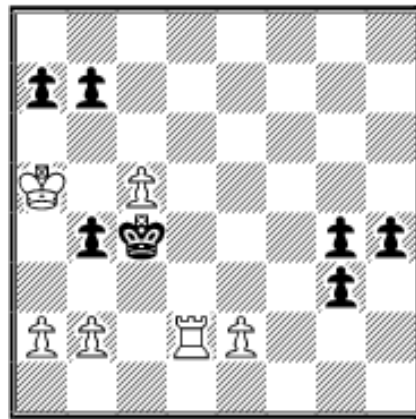
**3 Re7-d7 e6-e5 4 Rd7-d5 Rf8-e8 5 Rh5-f5+ Kf4-e4 6 Rf5xe5+! Re8xe5 7 Rd5-d4 mate**

A beautiful attack! Unfortunately, White's idea falls apart, if in the last diagrammed position, Black takes preventive measures against the

transfer of the e7-rook to the fifth rank; namely, **2...Ke4! 3 Rd7 e5—**.

**A.Wotawa**

1960



1.?

The black pawns cannot be stopped, and promoting White's e-pawn clearly comes too late. So – do we play for mate? At first sight, it seems absurd; on the other hand, White really has nothing else.

**1 c5-c6! b7xc6**

After 1...g2?, White wins with either 2 Rc2+ Kd5 3 e4+ Kxe4 4 Rxg2, or with 2 c7 g1Q 3 c8Q+ (3 Rc2+ Kd5 4 c8Q) 3...Qc5+ 4 Qxc5+ Kxc5 5 e4

g3 6 e5 h3 7 e6 h2 8 e7 h1Q 9 e8Q.

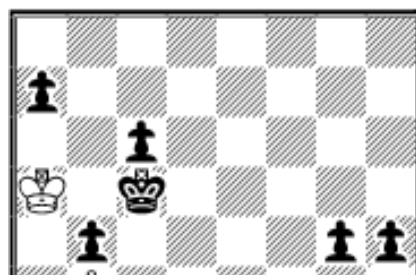
**2 Rd2-d3!**

2 e3? is bad because of 2...c5! (White cannot create any more mating threats) 3 e4 h3.

**2...g3-g2**

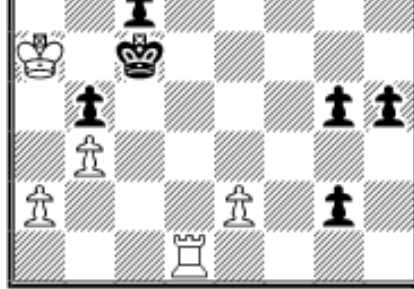
2...c5? results in a “cooperative mate” with 3 b3#, as does 2...b3?? 3 ab+ Kc5 4 b4+ Kc4 5 b3#.

**3 b2-b3+ Kc4-c5 4 Rd3-d1!**



1...?

The outlines of the mating construct are becoming clear: White will continue e2-e3, securing the d4-square for his rook, and then a2-a3.



**4...h3? 5 e3!! h2** (5...g1Q 6 Rxd1 h2 7 Rd1! g3 8 a3! changes nothing) **6 a3! ba 7 Rd4 g1Q 8 b4 mate.**

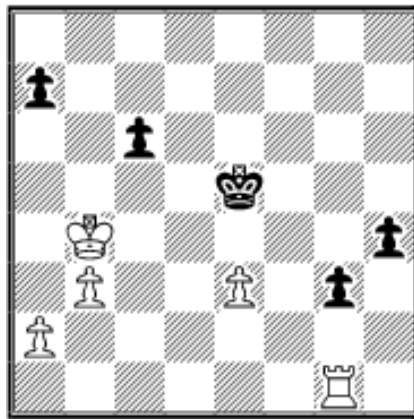
While solving the exercise, grandmaster Motylev discovered a defense that the composer hadn't seen.

**4...g4-g3!! 5 e2-e3 g2-g1Q! 6 Rd1xg1 Kc5-d5!**

Here's the point! After 4...h3?, the king would not have time to get out of the mating net, since the g4-pawn would be *en prise*. But now, White must find a defense against Black's threat to bring his king over to the aid of the kingside pawns and promote them.

**7 Ka5xb4 Kd5-e5!**

Black must transit via the fifth rank and the f5-square. The careless 7...Ke4? would lose to 8 Rh1.



1.?

Try to find a saving line for White. Not simple, is it? Let me show you the solution proposed by Motylev.

**8 Kb4-c3! Ke5-f5 9 e3-e4+!**

9 Rf1+ Kg4 10 Rf4+ Kg5! (10...Kh3 11 Rf7 only draws; for example, 11...Kg2 12 e4 h3 13 e5 h2 14 Rh7 h1Q 15 Rxh1 Kxh1 16 e6 g2 17 e7 g1Q 18 e8Q) 11 Rf7 h3 12 Rg7+ Kh4 13 Rxa7 h2 14 Rh7 + Kg4 would be weaker. This is a much more

dangerous version of the queen-vs.-rook endgame seen in Motylev's variation.

**9...Kf5xe4**

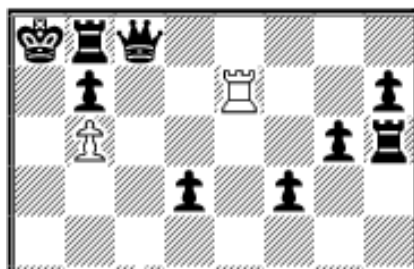
On 9...Kg4? 10 e5, only Black runs the risk of losing

**10 Rg1-h1 g3-g2 11 Rh1xh4+ Kf4-f5 12 Rh4-h5+ Kf5-g6 13 Rh5-c5 g2-g1Q 14 Rc5xc6 + Kg6-f5 15 Kc3-b2 Qg1-d4+ 16 Kb2-b1 Qd4-e4+ 17 Rc6-c2 =**

Black appears unable to break through the fortress White has constructed.

So instead of a play-to-win study, we have a play-and-draw study – also interesting, and also useful for “two-handed play,” against a strong opponent.

**A. Wotawa**  
1963



1.?

How do we get at the black king? The primitive approach – 1 Rxh1? Rxh1 2 Qxh1 Qc5 – is completely hopeless. And 1 Qf4? Qc4! 2 Qd5 (2



Qxh6 Qb4 3 Qc1 Qxe7—+) also loses, in view of 2...Rh4!. And 1 e4?, although it creates the pretty threat of 2 Qa6+!, is refuted by the same 1...Qc4!.

**1 Rg1-g4!! f5xg4**

What's the idea behind the brilliant rook sacrifice?

If we recall the try 1 Qf4?, we could guess: it's to block the fourth rank.

**2 Qf4! Qc4 3 Qd6! Rc8**

There's no other defense against mate – 3...Qa4? loses at once to 4 Rd7, with the unstoppable threats of 5 Qxb8+ and 5 Rd8. Now White can get a draw in different ways (he has nothing better). One possible way is 4 Rc7 Rxc7 5 Qxc7 Qxc7 6 bc Ka7 7 c8Q =. Another way is to chase the black rook along the eighth rank.

**4 Qa3+ Qa6 5 Qc5**

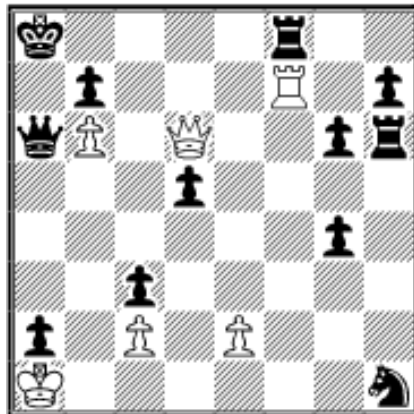
5 Rc7 Rg8 (5...Rb8?? 6 Qxa6+) 6 Qc5 = is no worse.

**5...Rb8 6 Qd6! Rf8**

As we already know, the threat of 7 Qxb8+ cannot be parried by 6...Qa4? because of 7 Rd7 +–.

**7 Rf7!**

7 Qf6!? Rc8 8 Qe6 Rd8 9 Qd6 or 9 Rc7 are also enough to draw.



1...?

White would be winning, if his opponent did not have the following excellent counterblow.

**7...Qxb6!! 8 Rxf8+** (all other reasonable moves also lead to a draw) **8...Ka7 9 Qa3+ Qa6 10 Qc5 + Qb6 11 Ra8+ Kxa8 12 Qxb6 g3**, and sooner or later, White will have to give perpetual check.

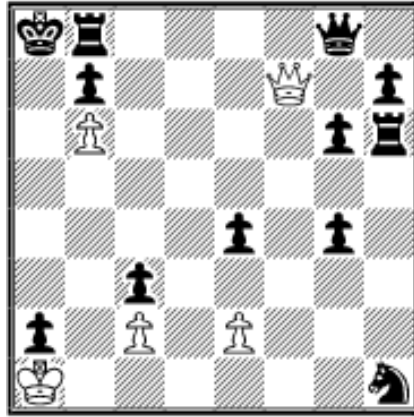
My readers will, of course, have understood (because of the abundance of equivalent alternatives) that what has been demonstrated so

far is a second solution. In the author's variant, the draw came about through a fundamentally different approach. The rook sacrifice on move one was not for the purpose of closing off the fourth rank, but to open the f-file for the queen. But before the queen invades, one more important highway must be opened: the a2-g8 diagonal – and for that, we need to sacrifice the other rook!

**2 Re7-e4!! d5xe4**

Black could try 2...Qc6!?, when there follows 3 Qc1! Qxb6 4 Ra4+ Qa6 5 Rxa6+ ba 6 Qxh6, with about equal chances.

**3 Qf2-f7! Qc8-g8**



1.?

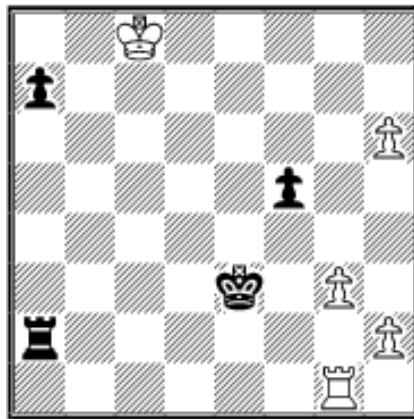
The threat of mate from a2 is now parried. However, having conveniently gotten rid of all his pieces, White has, in return, obtained a new defensive resource.

**4 e2-e3! Qg8xf7**

Stalemate! And if Black doesn't take the queen, White stalemates himself, by 5 Qxb7+!.

To conclude this column, let's look at an endgame study – which, nevertheless, still manages to feature a beautiful combination.

### A. Wotawa 1936



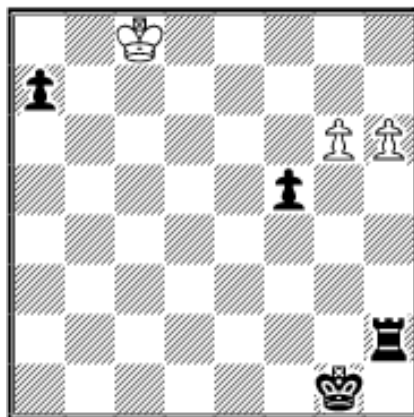
1.?

White's hopes, of course, are pinned on the advanced h6-pawn. But how can White support it? 1 Ra1? Rxh2 2 Ra6 Kf3 is useless; and on 1 h3? (or 1 h4?), there follows 1...Ra6 2 h7 Rh6 3 Re1+ Kf3.

**1 g3-g4!! f5xg4**

1...Rxh2!? 2 g5 Kf2! is worth serious consideration. White has no advantage in the variation 3 Ra1 Rh5 4 Ra5 f4, so he would have to

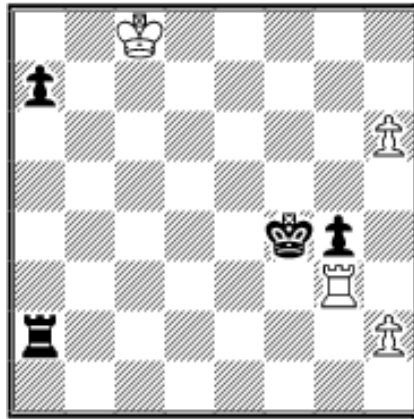
sacrifice the rook by 3 g6! Kxg1.



The computer confirms that the win is there, whether by 4 g7 Rg2 5 h7 Rxg7 6 h8Q Rg3!? 7 Qd4+, or after 4 h7 Kf2 5 g7 Rxh7 6 g8Q Rh3!? 7 Qa2+!, although it will be difficult: with proper play by both sides, mating will take over fifty moves!

**2 Rg1-g3+ Ke3-f4**





1.?

White's idea is to sacrifice the rook to close off the h-file. The rook may be given up in two ways. Not 3 Rh3? gh 4 h7 Rxh2 5 h8Q Rc2+ 6 Kd7 h2, when the position is drawn.

**3 Rg3xg4+! Kf4xg4**

3...Kf5 4 Rh4 Re2 5 Kd7 Rd2+ 6 Ke7 Re2+ 7 Kf7 Rb2 8 Rh5+ Kg4 9 h7 is hopeless.

**4 h2-h3+! Kg4-f5**

4...Kxh3 5 h7 changes nothing. The king hides from checks on a8, just as in the main line of the solution.

**5 h6-h7 Ra2-e2+ 6 Kc8-b7(b8)**

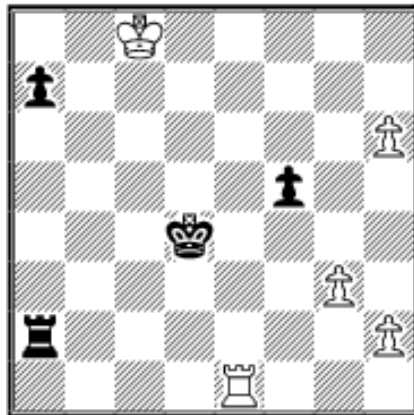
Not 6 Kd7 Rd2+ 7 Ke7 Re2+ 8 Kf7?? Rb2—+.

**6...Rc2-b2+ 7 Kb7-a8!+—**

And now, let's examine the attempt to win without sacrifices. We will send the rook to the aid of its pawn via the e1-square. The check must be played at once, while the black king is denied access to the f-file.

**1 Rg1-e1+! Ke3-d4**

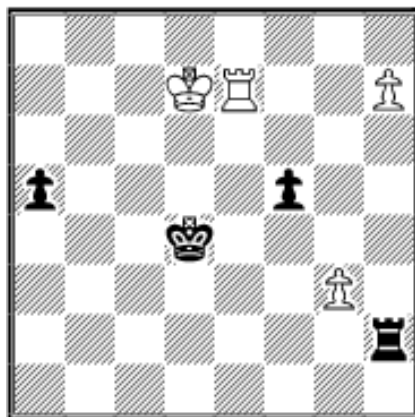
1...Kf2? 2 h7 or 1...Kf3? 2 Rf1+! Ke3 3 Rf4! lose quickly.



1.?

From several possible continuations, White must now choose the only correct one.

2 h7? Rxh2 3 Re7 a5 4 Kd7



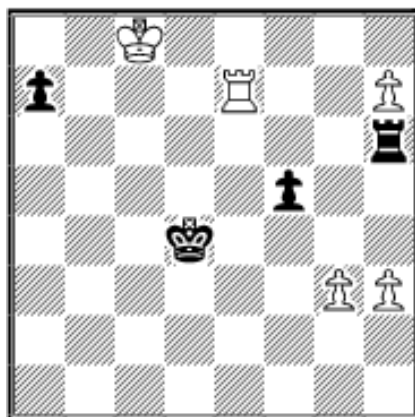
1...?

4...a4? loses to 5 Ke6. Black must first prevent the white king from getting to e6 by playing 4... Kd5! (or 4...Rh6!); and after 5 Ke8 a4 6 Kf8, prevent him from getting to g7, by attacking the g-pawn with 6...Rh3! =.

2 Re6? Rxh2 3 Kd7 Rh3 4 Rg6 a5 5 Ke6 Ke4 6 Kf7 a4 7 Kg7 a3 8 h7 a2 9 Ra6 Rxg3+, with equality.

2 h4? Ra6 3 h7 Rh6 4 Re7 a5 5 Kd8 a4 6 Ke8 a3 7 Ra7 a2 8 Rxa2 Rxh7 9 Kf8 Ke4 10 Kg8 Rb7 11 h5 f4 (11...Kf3! 12 Ra3+ Kg4 13 h6 Rb8+ would be simpler) 12 Ra4+ (12 g4 Kf3! 13 g5 Kg4 =) 12...Kf5! 13 Rxf4+ (13 gf Rb8+) 13...Kg5 =.

**2 h2-h3!! Ra2-a6 3 h6-h7 Ra6-h6 4 Re1-e7**



White's threat to obtain two connected passed pawns after 5 g4! leaves Black no time to push his a-pawn.

**4...Rh6xh3 5 Re7xa7**

Now Black has nothing to use against White's threat to advance his king in support of the h-pawn.

**5...Kd4-e5 6 Kc8-d8 Ke5-f6 7 Kd8-e8 Kf6-g6 8 Ke8-f8**



## A Lotta Wotawa

### Part One

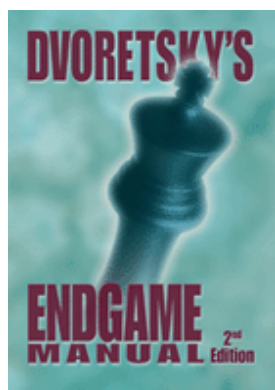
This month and next, we present a heaping helping of studies by the Austrian composer, Alois Wotawa. There are twenty in this month's column, and seventeen in next month's – thirty-seven in all. I chose the ones I liked, rather than striving to present some artificial round number. In all the studies, it is white to move.

The studies are presented in increasing order of difficulty, a factor which is, of course, quite arbitrary and subjective. I recommend that you employ this selection to develop your resourcefulness and fantasy, or else to get yourself into shape before an important tournament.

## COLUMNISTS

### *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

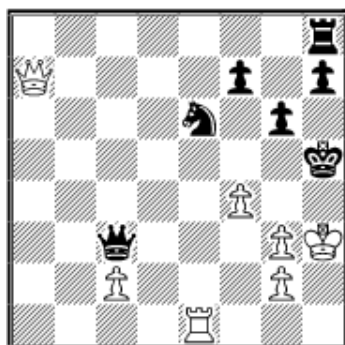


**CHESSTHEATRE**

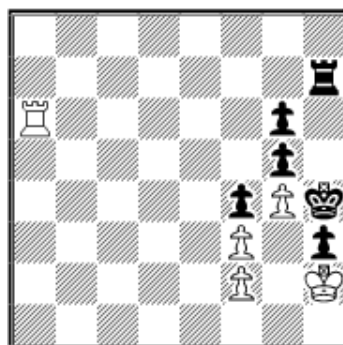
Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

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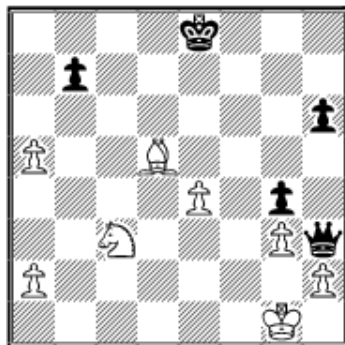
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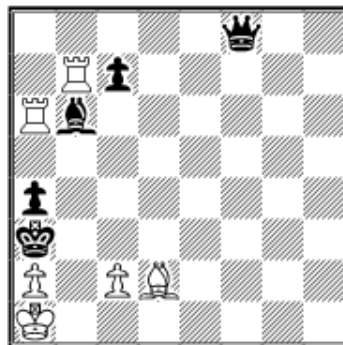
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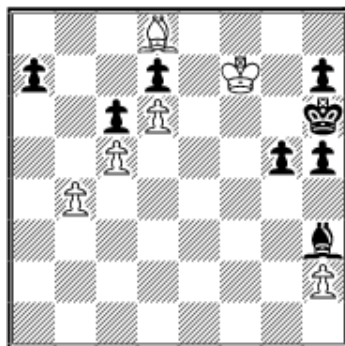
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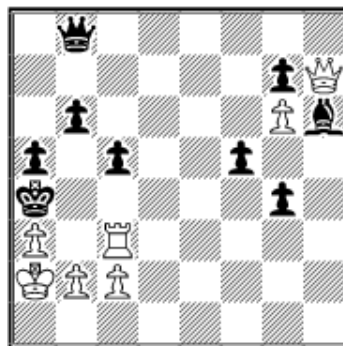
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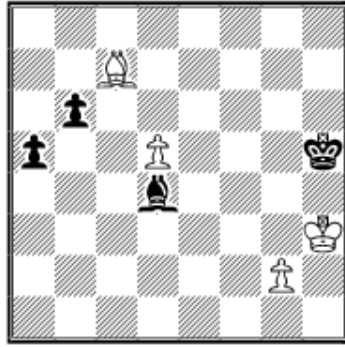
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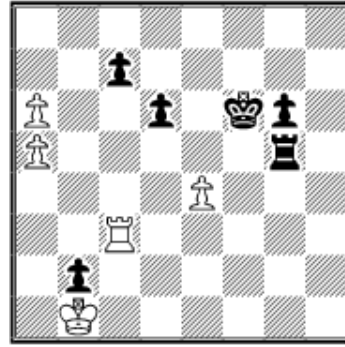
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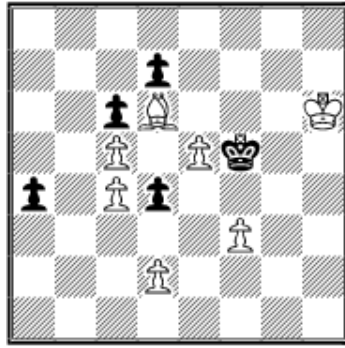
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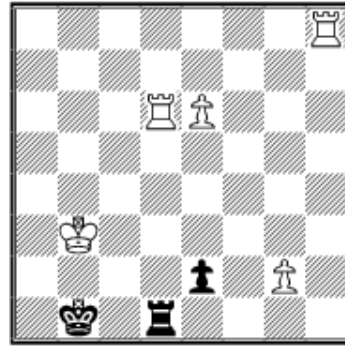
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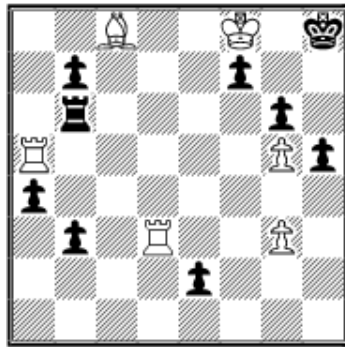
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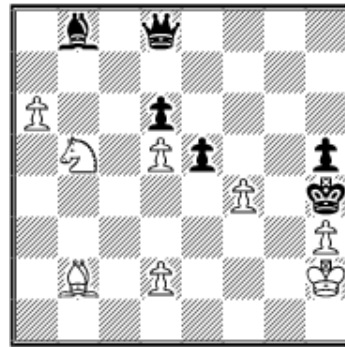
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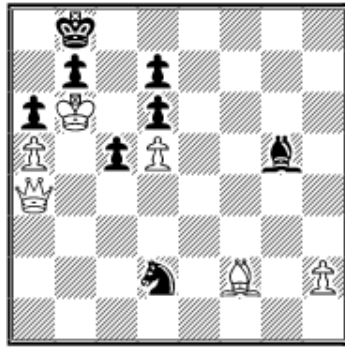
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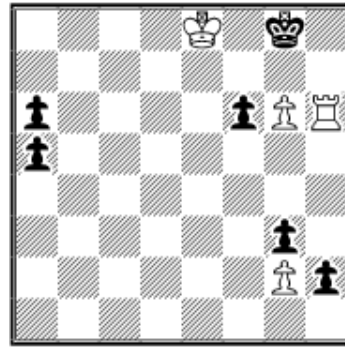
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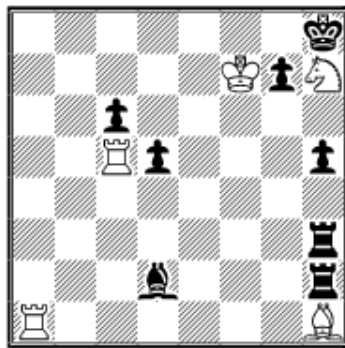
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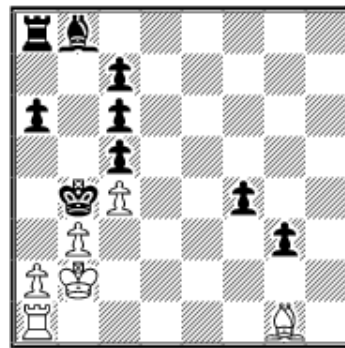
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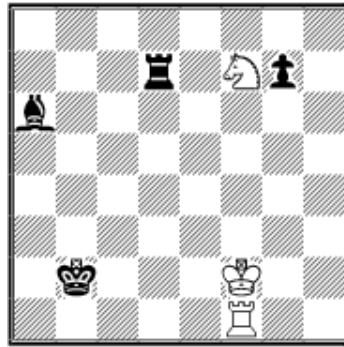
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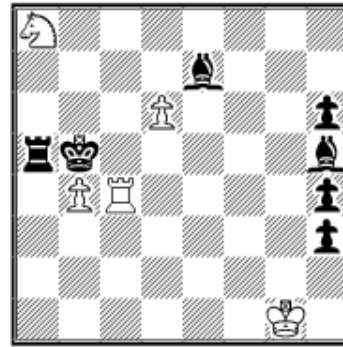
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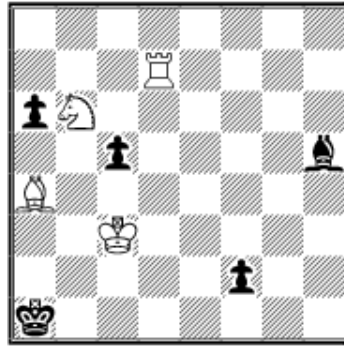
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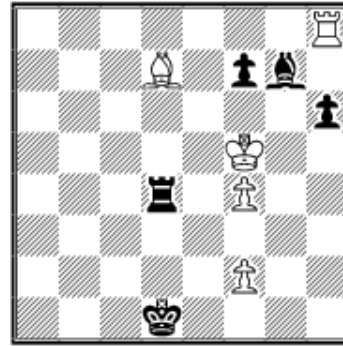
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### Solutions

#### 1) 1935

White mates – yet not with the queen as you might expect, but with pawns: **1 Rxe6!** (1 Qe7? Nxf4+ 2 Kh2 Nxc2) **1...fe 2 Qg7!** (2 Qe7? Kh6=) **2...Qxg7** (2...Qe3 3 Qxh8+) **3 g4 + Kh6 4 g5+ Kh5 5 g4#.**

#### 2) 1935

**1 Ra8!** (*zugzwang*: the enemy rook is forced onto the unfortunate square h6.) **1...Rh6 2 Ra1! Rh8 3 Rg1 Ra8 4 Rg3! fg 5 fg#.**

#### 3) 1962

The spectacular sacrifice of two pieces by 1 Bc6+!? bc 2 Nd5! cd 3 a6 allows White's pawn to queen. However, after 3...Qh5 4 a7 de 5 a8Q+ Kd7 6 Qxe4 Qc5+ 7 Kg2 h5, Black keeps reasonable drawing chances in the pawn-down queen endgame. White's strongest plan is to catch the queen. **1 a6! ba 2 Bc6+ Kd8 3 Be8! Kxe8 4 Nd5 Kd8** (4...Qh5 5 Nf6+) **5 Nf4+.**

#### 4) 1935

Black's king is in trouble, but White has 1...Qf1+ to worry about. **1 Raxb6! cb 2 Re7!! 2 Rxb6? Qf6+ (or 2...Qf1+ 3 Rb1 Qxb1+ 4 Kxb1) leads to stalemate. But now White threatens 3 Re3#, and 2...Qf1+ loses to 3 Re1. 2...Qxe7 3 c3,** with the deadly threat of 4 Bc1#.

#### 5) 1936

Wotawa found ways to play for mate even in the quietest-looking endgames. In order to get at the black king, White gives up all of his pawns. **1 b5! cb 2 c6 dc 3 d7** (threatening 4 Bxg5+) **3...Bxd7 4 h4! gh 5 Bxh4,** and Black is helpless against the threat of 6 Kf6 and 7 Bg5#.

#### 6) 1936

The mating pattern is clear: c2-c4 and b2-b3#. **1 Rh3!!** The choice of the square for the rook's retreat is defined by the need to prevent Black's king from escaping the danger zone. Now 1...Kb5 is bad, because of 2 Rxh6+. **1...gh 2 Qh8!** (not 2 c4? at once, because of 2...Qg3!+) **2...Qxh8** (2...Qe5 3 c4 Qe3 4 Qe8+! Qxe8 5 b3#) **3 c4+.**

#### 7) 1951

White uses tactical means to secure the b-pawn's promotion. **1 d6 Be5! 2 Bb8!** (threatening 3 d7) **2...Bf6 3 d7 Bd8** 3...a4 is hopeless: 4 Bc7 a3 5 d8Q Bxd8 6 Bxd8 a2 7 Bf6+. Now 4 g4+? Kg6 5 Bg3 doesn't work, in view of 5...Kf7! 6 Bh4 Bxh4 7 Kxh4 Ke7 8 g5 Kxd7, and Black's king is inside the square of the g-pawn. **4 Bg3! a4 5 Bh4! Bxh4 6 g4+.**



### 8) 1959

“Normal” methods will not make a queen of the a6-pawn, as the following variations demonstrate: 1 Ra3? Rh5 2 a7 Rh8 =, or 1 Kxb2? Rxa5 3 Ra3 Rb5+ 3 Kc3 Rb8 =. So White uses an interference theme, as illustrated in several variations. **1 Rf3+! Ke7** On 1... Kg7 2 Rf5!! gf 3 a7 decides; or 2... Rg1+ 3 Kxb2 Rh1 4 Rf8!+-. **2 e5!! Rxe5** (2... Rh5 3 Rf8!+-) **3 Re3!** (another standard technique, this time – deflection!) **3...Rxe3 4 a7+.**

### 9) 1944

White appears to be in trouble: the a-pawn can't be stopped. One must have an exceptional gift for fantasy to discover, in this harmless-looking position, the idea of playing for mate. **1 d3!!** Move order is important 1 e6? fe 2 d3 e5! would lose. **1...a3 2 e6! de** If 2...Ke6, then 3 Kg6 a2 4 f4 a1Q 5 f5#. **3 Be5! Kxe5** (3...a2 4 Bxd4 Kf4 5 Kg6+/-) **4 Kg5 a2 5 f4#.**

### 10) 1955

1 Rhd8?! Rxd6 2 Rxd6 e1Q 3 e7?! (3 Kc4 is better) would be a mistake, because of 3... Qe3 +!. And on 1 e7? e1Q 2 e8Q, Black saves himself by 2... Qg3+! 3 Ka4 Qxd6 =. **1 Rd2!! Rxd2** (1...e1Q 2 Rb2+ Kc1 3 Rc8+) **2 Rh1+ Rd1 3 Re1!! Rxe1 4 e7 Rd1** 4...Kc1 5 e8Q Kd2 6 Qd8+ Ke3 7 Qb6+ Kd3 8 Qd6+ Ke3 9 Qg3+ doesn't help: it's mate in two moves after 9...Kd2. **5 e8Q e1Q 6 Qg6+,** and mate is forced.

### 11) 1937

The black pawns cannot be stopped. As is usual with Wotawa, White plays for mate, and with this in mind, sacrifices nearly all of his pieces. **1 Re3! b2 2 Bf5! gf 3 Rb5!! Rxb5 4 Re6!!** Of course not 4 Kxf7? b1Q 5 Re8+ Kh7 6 g6+ Kh6 7 Rh8+ Kg5 8 g7 Qb3+. **4...fe 5 g6 e1Q** (5...h4 6 g7+ Kh7 7 g8Q+ Kh6 8 Kf7) **6 g7+ Kh7 7 g8Q+ Kh6 8 Qg7#.**

### 12) 1937

The bishop or knight can only approach the enemy king through the d4-square. The question is, which piece should White sacrifice, and which one should he keep? The obvious 1 Nd4? ed 2 Bxd4 lets Black save himself by 2...Ba7! 3 Bxa7 Qb6! 4 Bxb6 – stalemate. **1 Bd4! ef!** (1...ed 2 Nxd4, with inescapable mate) **2 Bf2+ Kg5 3 Bh4+! Kxh4 4 Nd4** (threatening 5 Nf3#) **4...Kg5 5 Ne6+.**

### 13) 1937

**1 Bh4 Be3** White has protected himself from 1...Bd8#, but the bishop now creates a threat on a different diagonal (2...c4#). **2 Bf2! Bxf2 3 Qf4 Nc4+! 4 Qxc4 Bd4** What's to be done against the threat to move the bishop via f6 to d8? **5 h3!! Bf6 6 Qh4! Bxh4** – stalemate.

### 14) 1961

1 Rh8? (in the faint hope of 1...Kxh8? 2 Kf7+/-) is useless, in view of 1...Kg7 2 Rh7+ Kxg6 3 Rh3 Kf5+/-, or 2 Ke7 a4+ (2...f5+/-). Another losing try is 1 Ke7? Kg7 2 Rh7+ (2 Ke6 Kxh6; 2 Rh3 a4) 2...Kxg6 3 Rh3 Kf5+/-). **1 g7! f5** On 1...Kxg7, White has time to eliminate the dangerous kingside pawns: 2 Rh3 Kg6 (or 2...f5) 3 Rxg3+ Kf5 4 Rh3+/- . And 1...a4 would change nothing: 2 Ke7 (threatening 3 Kxf6) 2...Kxg7 3 Rh3 a3 4 Rxg3+ Kh6 5 Rh3+ Kg5 6 Rxh2 a2 7 Rh1+/- . On the other hand, 2 Kxe7? is no longer dangerous to Black: 2...Kxg7 3 Rh3 f4 4 Ke6 a4 5 Ke5 a3 6 Kxf4 a2+-. **2 Rh7!! f4 3.Ke7 f3 4 Kf6 Kxh7 5 Kf7 f2 6 g8Q+ Kh6 7 Qg6#.**

### 15) 1950

How to weave a mating net around Black's king? We must open some lines, and close off others. **1 Nf6! gf 2 Be4!! de 3 Rg5! fg** (on 3...Bxg5, the reply is the same) **4 Kg6+/-.**

### 16) 1959

It's not hard to figure out that the lines. 1 a3+? Ka5 2 Bxc5 Ba7+ and 1 Rd1? Ba7+ don't lead to mate. **1 a4!** suggests itself. It's a quick mate, after 1...f3 2 a5 f2 3 Ra4#, or 1...Ka5 2 Bxc5 Ba7 3 b4#. The only question that remains is, after **1...a5**, how to continue the attack: **2 Rc1!! Ba7 3 Bd4!** (threatening 4 Bc3#) **3...cd 4 c5 Bxc5 5 Rc4#.**

### 17) 1952

Two of White's pieces are *en prise*; material loss is inevitable. **1 Ne5 Rd2+ 2 Ke3 Re2+ 3 Kd4** (3 Kf4? Rxe5+/-) **3...Rxe5 4 Rf6!!** Now, **4...gf** leads to a completely unexpected stalemate in the middle of the board, and 4...Ra5 5 Rg6 – to the loss of Black's last pawn.

### 18) 1951

After 1 ba? h2+! 2 Kg2 Bf3+ 3 Kxh2 Bxd6+ 4 Kh3 Kxc4, Black retains a large material advantage. **1 Rc5+! Kxb4 2 Rxh5** (2 Rxa5? h2+!) **2...Bg5!** After 2...Rxh5 3 de Re5 4 Nc7 Re1+ 5 Kh2, the e7-pawn is indirectly defended by the threat of a knight fork on d5. And in the line 2...Ra1+ 3 Kh2 Bxd6+ 4 Kxh3 Rxa8 5 Rxh4+ and 6 Rxh6, Black loses his last pawn. But now, he threatens both 3...Rxa8 and 3...Be3+. **3 Nc7 Be3+ 4 Kh1 Rxh5 5 d7 Bg5 6 Nd5+ Kc5 7 Nf4! =.**

### 19) 1952

The f-pawn is bound to queen. This time, White is unable to mate his opponent, so he must play for stalemate. **1 Bb5!! ab 2 Nc4!!** 2 Re7+? Kb1 3 Nc4 would be inaccurate, in view of 3...b4+!. **2...bc** Of course not 2...f1Q? 3 Re7+ Kb1 4 Nd2+ Kc1 5 Re1#. **3 Ra7+ Kb1 4 Rb7+ Kc1 5 Rf7!!** (or 5 Re7 Bg6 6 Rf7!! →) **5...Bxf7** – stalemate.

### 20) 1957

Two of White's pieces are *en prise*. It's not hard to find the variation 1 Rg8? Rd5+! 2 Ke4 (g4) Rxd7 4 Rxg7 f5+, and the rook drops. **1 Rd8!!** (threatening 2 Ba4+) **1...Kd2** (1...Kc1 2 Rc8+; 1...Ke1 2 Re8+) But what has White achieved? 2 f3? would be met by 2...Rd6, with a decisive zugzwang: 3 Kg4 Bf6→, or 3 Rg8 Rd5+! and 4...Rxd7→. **2 Rg8! Rd5+ 3 Ke4(g4) Rxd7 4 Rxg7 f5+ 5 Kf3! Rxg7** – stalemate This is why it was necessary to lure the black king to d2!



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## A Lotta Wotawa

### Part Two

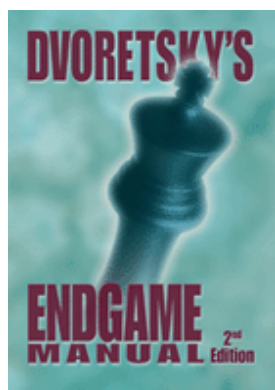
Last [month](#) we presented twenty studies by the Austrian composer, Alois Wotawa. In this month's column, there are seventeen – thirty-seven in all. I chose the ones I liked, rather than striving to present some artificial round number. In all the studies, it is white to move.

The studies are presented in increasing order of difficulty, a factor which is, of course, quite arbitrary and subjective. I recommend that you employ this selection to develop your resourcefulness and fantasy, or else to get yourself into shape before an important tournament.

## COLUMNISTS

### *The Instructor*

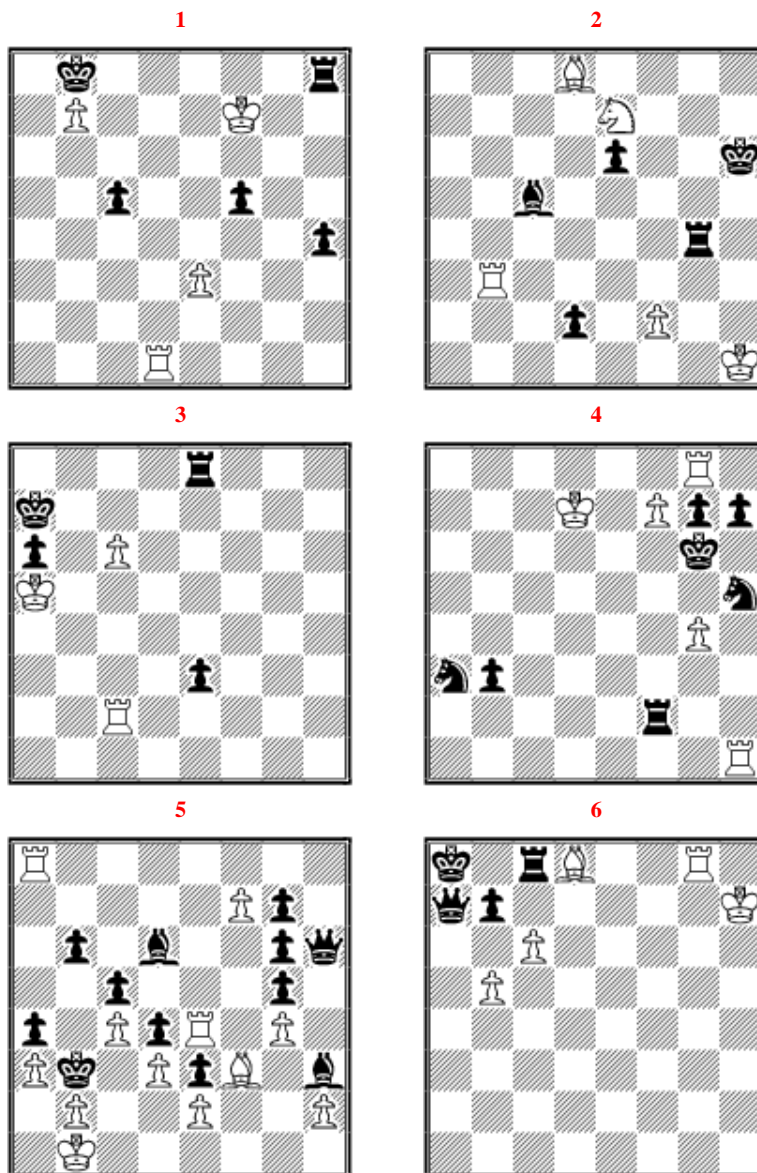
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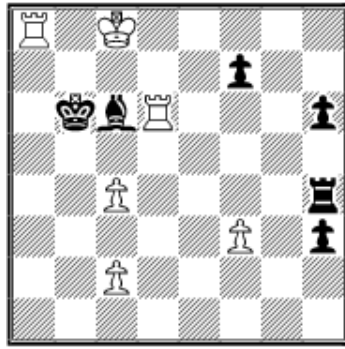
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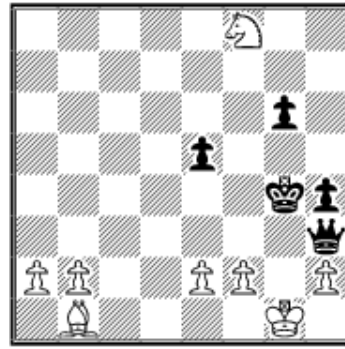




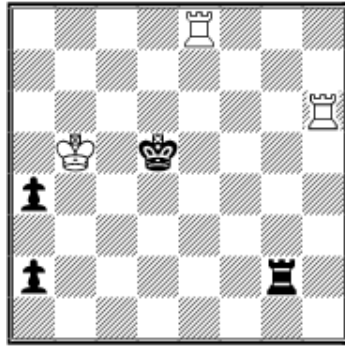
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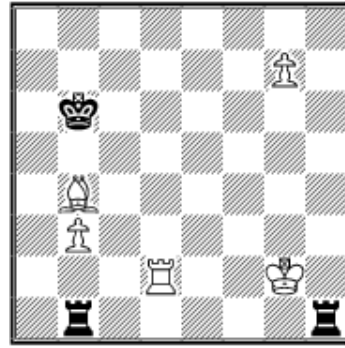
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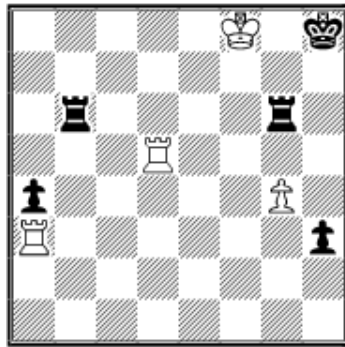
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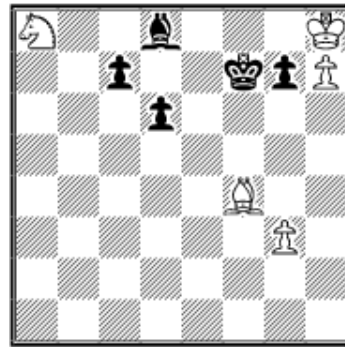
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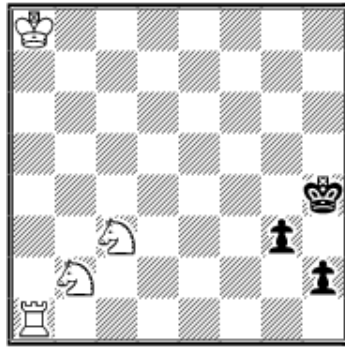
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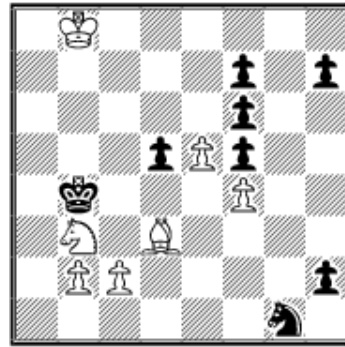
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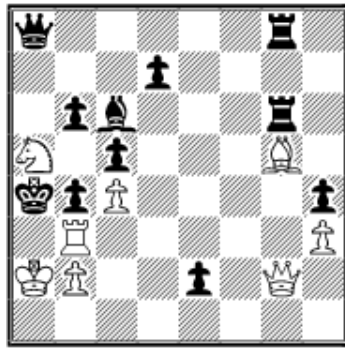
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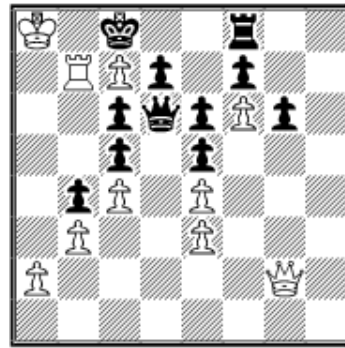
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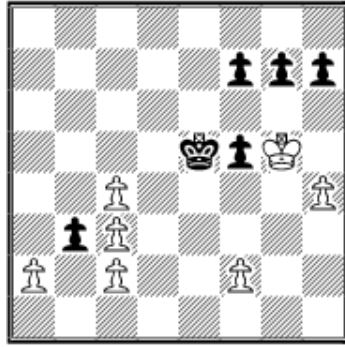


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### Solutions

#### 1) 1938

The rook ending is difficult for White – as exemplified by the following variation: 1 Kg7? Re8 2 Rc1!? h3! 3 Rxc5 h2 4 Rc1 Rxe3 5 Kf6 f4 6 Kf5 (6 Rh1 Re2 7 Kf5 f3 8 Kf4 f2 9 Kf3 Re1+ is no better) 6...f3 7 Kf4 Rc3! 8 Rb1 f2 9 Kg4 Rb3 10 Rf1 Kxb7+.

**1 e4!! fe 2 Kg7 Rh5** (2...Re8 3 Kf7 Re5 4 Kf6 Rh5 5 Kg6, etc.) **3 Kg6 Re5 4 Kf6 Re8 5 Kf7 Rh8 6 Kg7 =**

A rare picture: the rook, pursued by the king, circles the corners of the square e8-h8-h5-e5, unable to break out to freedom.

#### 2) 1952

Black's passed pawn is very strong. On 1 Rb1?, Black can win with either 1...Rd4 or 1...Rc4. On 1 Ng8+?, Black can retreat his king either to h5 or g6.

On 1 Rd3?, 1...Rh4+! 2 Kg2 Rd4 is decisive. As for why Black couldn't play 1...Rd4? immediately – that will become clear, once we discover the main line.

**1 Nf5+!! ef 2 Rd3**

2 Rb1 is hopeless: 2...Rc4 (2...Rd4 would win as well, but not 2...Re4? 3 Ba5) 3 Rg1 Bxf2 or 3...Be3 4 fe Rc1.

**2...Rd4 3 Rxd2 Rxd2 4 Bg5+! Kxg5 5 f4+**, and White's king is stalemated.

#### 3) 1953

White loses after 1 Re2? Re4! (Black cuts White's king off from his pawns) 2 c7 Kb7 3 c8Q + Kxc8 4 Kxa6 Kc7 5 Kb5 Kd6. What else can he do?

**1 c7! Kb7 2 c8Q+! Rxc8**

Here, too, 3 Re2? doesn't work: 3...Re8 4 Kb4 a5+! 5 Kc3 (5 Kxa5 Kc6 6 Kb4 Kd5 7 Kc3 Ke4+) 5...a4 6 Kd3 a3+.

**3 Rc4!! Rg8**

The rook is taboo, because of stalemate. Black can't stop it from getting behind the pawns, either: 3...Re8 4 Re4! =. On 3...e2, White continues 4 Re4 Rc2 5 Kb4 a5+ 6 Kb3! (but not 6 Kxa5? Kc6 7 Kb4 Kd5 8 Re8 Rc4+ 9 Kb3 Re4+) 6...Rd2 7 Kc3 =.

**4 Re4 Rg3 5 Kb4!**

5 Re6? is a mistake: 5...Kc7 6 Rxa6 Kd7! 7 Kb4 e2 8 Ra1 Re3 9 Re1 Kd6 10 Kc4 Ke5+.

**5...a5+** (5...Kc6 doesn't change anything: 6 Kc4 a5 7 Kd3) **6 Kc3! Kc6 7 Kd3 Kb5 8 Rxe3 =.**

#### 4) 1960

**1 f8Q! Rxf8 2 gh+** (2 Rxf8? is no problem: 2...Nf6+ 3 Ke6 b2 =) **2...Kf7**

Now the obvious course would be 3 Rxf8+ Kxf8 4 Rf1+ Kg8 5 h6 (5 Ke7 h6 =) 5 gh 6 Ke7, but Black escapes mate by 6...h5! 7 Rg1+ Kh8 8 Kf7 h6 9 Kg6 b2 =.

**3 Rh8!!** (a fantastic move!) **3...Rxb8 4 Rf1+ Kg8 5 h6! gh 6 Ke7 b2 7 Rg1#.**

### 5) 1938

1 Re7? fails to 1...Qh4+. Mate is achieved by sacrificing all White's pieces!

**1 Ra5! ba 2 Re7! Bxe7 3 f8Q! Bxf8 4 Bc6 Qh4 5 Bxa4+! Kxa4 6 Ka2 Qe1 7 b3#**

Unfortunately, the study is cooked – I was able to find a second solution, which is also pretty interesting: 1 Ra6!? b5 2 Rb6 b4 3 ab cb 4 c5! Qh4 (4...a3 5 cd) 5 Rxb4+! Kxb4 6 Rxd4+ Kxc5 7 Rd5+ Kb4 8 Rxd6 Qh8 9 Re6 Qf8 10 Bd5 Bxg4 11 Re8+.

### 6) 1941

This study implements a theme that is comparatively rare for Wotawa: constructing a fortress.

**1 Bb6!** (1 b6? Qa5+) **1...Qxb6** (1...Qb8 2 Rxc8 Qxc8 3 c7 =) **2 Rxc8+ Ka7 3 c7 Qc5** (3...Qe6 meets the same reply) **4 Ra8+!! Kxa8 5 b6 =**

Black's king is sealed into the corner, and the queen alone can do nothing about it.

### 7) 1953

On 1 Ra1? Kc5 2 Rf6 h2 3 Rh1 Rh3 4 Rxf7 Bxf3 5 Rxf3 Rxf3, the position levels out.

**1 Ra4!**

The rook has set up an ambush: 1...h2 now loses to 2 c5+ Kxc5 3 Rxc6+ Kxc6 4 Rxh4. And 1...Rh5 2 Rxc6+ Kxc6 3 Ra6+ Kc5 4 Ra5+ is no help. Only one move remains, but it seems sufficient.

**1...Kc5**

Could it have been easy, in this natural-looking position, to find a way to play for mate – especially a way involving the immediate sacrifice of one of the rooks?!

**2 Rxc6+! Kxc6 3 c3!! h2** (3...Kb6 (3...Kd6) 4 c5+; 3...Kc5 4 Kc7) **4 Ra6+ Kc5 5 Kc7 h1Q** (5...Rxc4 6 Ra5#; 5...Kxc4 6 Ra4+ and 7 Rxh4) **6 Rc6#.**

### 8) 1937

1 Nxc6? Kh5 2 Nxe5 Qc8 is good for Black.

**1 Ne6! Kh5**

After 1...g5 2 Bg6 e4, White has several ways to win; for instance, 3 e3 Qf3 4 h3+! Qxh3 5 Nd4+; or 3 Nd4 Kf4 4 Bf5 g4 5 e3+ Ke5 6 a4+; or 3 Bxe4 Kh5 4 Bf5 Qxf5 5 Ng7+.

**2 Bf5!! gf** (2...Qxf5 3 Ng7+) **3 Nf4+! ef 4 f3**

Black's queen is trapped, and the a-pawn advances unhindered to the queening square.

**4...Kg5 5 a4 Kf6 6 a5 Ke5 7 a6 Kd4 8 a7 Ke3 9 a8Q Kxe2 10 Qa6+!**

On 10...Kxf3, 11 Qd3+ Kg4 12 Qxh3+ Kxh3 13 b4 decides. And 10...Kd2 is hopeless: 11 Qd6+ Kc2 (11...Ke2 12 Qe5+ and 13 Qxf4) 12 Qxf4 (12 Qa3+) 12...Kxb2 13 Qd2+ Kb3 14 Qg2+.

The author continued: **10...Ke3 11 Qb6+ Ke2 12 Qf2+ Kd3 13 Kh1!** (an accurate waiting move, forcing the king away from the f3-pawn) **13...Kc4 14 Qg2+.** I believe White also has other ways, such as 11 Qe6+, aiming to bring his queen to e5 and then capture the f4-pawn.

### 9) 1948

On 1 Rh1?, there follows 1...Rb2+ and 2...Rb1. And 1 Rh5+? Kd6 is pointless.

**1 Rd8+! Kc5** (1...Ke4? 2 Rh4+ and 3 Rxa4+—) **2 Rh1 Rb2+ 3 Kc5! Rb1**

Trying to drive the white king away from the center first doesn't work: 3...Rc2+ 4 Kb4 Rb2 + 5 Ka3 Rb1 6 Rh5+ and 7 Kxa2+—.

**4 Rf1!!** (4 Re1+? Kf6)

Black's king has unexpectedly stumbled into a mid-board mating net. 4...a1Q fails to 5 Re8#, and 4...Rxf1 is also bad: 5 Re8+, followed by 6 Rf8+ and 7 Rxf1.

**4...Kc6 5 Re8+ Kd7 6 Rfe1! a1Q 7 R1e7#.**

#### **10) 1954**

White can't queen the pawn yet, owing to the check from g1. How does he prepare for the queening?

**1 Kg3!**

By threatening 2 g8Q Rg1+ 3 Rg2, White forces Black to remove the pawn at b3, which is only getting in the way. 1 Kf3?!, with the same idea, is inaccurate, in view of 1...Rh3+ 2 Kg4? (better to return the king to g2 now) 2...Rh7! =.

**1...Rxb3+ 2 Kg2! Rbb1! 3 Ba5+!**

Here's the point! This was the idea behind luring the enemy rook to the first rank, as shown by the sample line 3...Kxa5 4 Ra2+ Kb6 5 Rb2+!.

**3...Ka6 4 Bb6!!** (from here, the bishop controls the vital g1-square – so Black must take it) **4...Kxb6 5 Rb2+! Rxb2+ 6 Kxh1 Rb1+ 7 Kg2 Rb2+ 8 Kf3 Rb3+ 9 Kf4 Rb4+ 10 Kf5 Rb5+ 11 Kf6+—.**

#### **11) 1955**

White must check on the h-file and trade off a pair of rooks. Any “normal” player would prefer to remove the dangerous passed pawn at h3 with tempo; this, however, would let slip the win.

1 Rxh3+? Rh6 2 Rxh6+ Rxh6 3 Rf5 a3 4 Rf1 a2 5 g5 Rh2 6 g6 a1Q+! 7 Rxa1 Rf2+; or 3 g5 Ra6 4 g6 (4 Rd4 Ra8+ 5 Kf7 Ra7+ 6 Kg6 Ra6+) 4...Rf6+ (4...Ra8+ 5 Kf7 Ra7+).

**1 Rh5+!! Rh6 2 Rxh6+!** (2 Raxh3? Rbf6+) **2...Rxh6 3 g5 Rh5**

3...h2 would be bad: 4 g6! Rh7 5 Rh3! and 6 g7#. 3...Rh4 would be no better: 4 Rf3 Kh7 (4...h2 5 g6 Rh7 6 Rh3! +—) 5 Rf6! (but not 5 Kf7? h2 6 g6+ Kh6) 5...h2 6 g6+ Kh6 7 g7+ Kg5 8 Rf7+—.

**4 Rf3! Kh7** (on 4...a3, or 4...h2, 5 g6 wins) **5 Kf7 h2 6 g6+ Kh6 7 g7+—**

If 7...h1Q, then 8 Rf6+!, and the pawn queens with check.

White's task is complicated somewhat by 7...Rf5+ 8 Rxf5 h1Q. On 9 g8Q?! Qb7+ 10 Kf6 Qb2+ 11 Re5 Qf2+ 12 Ke7 Qa7+, the king has a hard time escaping the checks. However, according to the endgame tablebase, the position is still won: 13 Kf8 Qb8+ 14 Re8 Qd6+ 15 Kf7 Qf4+ 16 Ke6, and the king, after traversing practically the entire board, at last finds shelter (mate in twenty-seven!).

Of course, it would be a great deal simpler to begin with 9 Rf6+!, in order to obtain the comfortable square g7 for his king: 9...Kh5 10 g8Q Qd5+ 11 Re6 (11 Kg7?! Qg5+) 11...Qb7+ 12 Kf6 Qf3+ 13 Kg7 Qc3+ 14 Rf6, etc.

#### **12) 1936**

White's king is locked in the corner, and risks being mated by the hostile bishop. For example, 1 g4? g5 would lose right away.

Nor does the deflecting sacrifice of the knight by 1 Nxc7? Bxc7 2 g4 solve White's problems. Black responds 2...g6! 3 g5 Bb6, threatening mate again. The attempt to play for stalemate falls short: 4 Be3 (4 Be5 d5—) 4...Bd8 5 Bb6 Bxg5 6 Bd8 Bh6 (6...Bf4 7 Bf6 g5 is also strong) 7 Bf6 Kxf6 8 Kg8 Bg7—; or 5 Bf4 d5 6 Be3 Ba5! 7 Bd2 (7 Bd4 Bd2 8

Bf6 Be3+ 7...Bb6 8 Be3 d4+.

The desperate sacrifice of two pieces by 1 Be5? de 2 Nb6 would also have little effect. Black has no reason to study the consequences of the variation 2...cb 3 g4 e4 4 g5 e3 5 g6+ Kxg6 6 Kg8 e2 7 h8Q e1Q – not when 2...Be7! 3 Nd7 Bd6! 4 g4 g5, or 4 Nb6 e4 reaches the goal so much more efficiently.

### 1 Nb6!! cb

After 1...Bf6 2 Nd5 (2 Nd7 is also possible), 2...Bd4! 3 Be3! Be5 (3...Bb2? would even lose: 4 Bd2! c6 5 Bc3) 4 Bf4! forces a repetition.

And after 1...g5 2 Nd7! gf 3 gf, the advance of the f-pawn leads inexorably to stalemate: 3...c5 4 f5 c4 (4...Ba5 5 Ne5+ de 6 f6 =) 5 f6 c3 6 Ne5+.

### 2 Bg5!

Wrong would be 2 g4? b5! (the bishop is free at last) 3 Bxd6 (3 g5 g6+ 3...Bf6+.

### 2...Bc7

If 2...Bxg5, then 3 g4 Bf6 4 g5, with stalemate after either 4...Bxg5 or 4...Ba1 5 g6+ Kf8.

### 3 Bd8!

A pretty picture: Black's bishop, trapped by its own pawns, cannot hide from the suddenly berserk white bishop, and will eventually be forced to capture it.

**3...Bb8 4 Bc7!** (4 g4? b5! 5 Bc7 b4!+) **4...Ba7 5 Bb8!** (5 g4? b5 6 Bb6 Bb8! 7 Bc5 g6+) **5...Bxb8 6 g4 d5 7 g5 Be5 8 g6+ Kf8** – stalemate.

## 13) 1960

### 1 Rh1! Kh3

1...g2 loses: 2 Rxh2+ Kg3 3 Rh8 g1Q 4 Ne2+, as does 1...Kg4 2 Ne2 Kf3 3 Nxg3 Kxg3 4 Nd3 (4 Nd1) 4...Kg2 5 Nf2.

But now White needs to defend against not only 2...g2, but also 2...Kg2. And 2 Ne2? g2! 3 Nf4+ Kg3 = would cost White the win.

### 2 Nd3! Kg2

The threat of 2...g2 is now removed: 3 Nf4+ Kg3 4 Nce2+ Kf3 5 Rxh2+. But what has White got against the other threat?

**3 Nf4+!** (or he could transpose moves: 3 Ne2! Kxh1 4 Ndf4) **3...Kxh1 4 Nce2! g2 5 Ng3+ Kg1 6 Nh3#.**

## 14) 1958

Once again, White has nothing but to try weaving a mating net, with few pieces, around the hostile king.

### 1 e6!!

This move, which seems senseless at first, has the point of blocking the sixth rank and the e6-square. Black would answer an immediate 1 Kc7? with 1...fe! (both 1...h1Q? 2 Nd4! and 1...Nf3? 2 e6! would be bad for Black, as will become clear later) 2 Kb6 h1Q and 3...Qh6+, or 2 fe Nf3!+.

### 1...fe (1...h1Q 2 e7!+) 2 Kc7!

On 2...h1Q, 3 Nd4! is decisive (threatening 4 c3+ Ka5 5 Nb3+ Ka4 6 Nc5+ Ka5 7 b4#) 3...Qe4 (3...Ne2 4 Bxe2) 4 c3+ Ka5 5 Nb3+ Ka4 6 Nc5+ Ka5 7 Bxe4 de (7...Kb5 8 Bd3+ Kxc5 9 b4#) 8 Kc6, and 9 b4# cannot be prevented. 2...Ne2 also loses: 3 Bxe2 h1Q 4 Nd4 and 5 c3+.

## 2...Nf3

But what now? The d4-square is controlled, and 3 Kb6? allows 3...Ne1!—+.

**3 Nc5!!** (threatening 4 c3+ and 5 b4#) **3...Kxc5** (3...d4 4 Kb6 h1Q 5 Na6+ or 5 Bb5) **4 c3 d4 5 b4+ Kd5 6 c4#**

Black's king no longer has the e6-square – the consequence of that far-seeing pawn sacrifice on move one!

## 15) 1959

1 Bd2? (threatening 2 Ra3+) is refuted by 1...Rg3!—+ or 1...Kxa5 2 Ra3+ Ba4—+; 1 Qf3? Kxa5! 2 Ra3+ Ba4—+ (or 2...ba 3 Qxa3+ Ba4—+) doesn't work; 1 Qxe2? Kxa5! —+ isn't dangerous; and 1 Nxc6? Qxc6 2 Bd2, threatening 3 Ra3+ ba 4 b3# is parried by 2...Rg3! —+.

These variations present all White's main attacking ideas. All that remains is to mold them cleverly together, so that Black has no saving loophole.

## 1 Nb7!! Qxb7

On 1...Rxc5, simply 2 Qxe2 Rg3 3 Qc2(d1) decides, or if 2...Qxb7 3 Ra3+ (3 Qc2 Ka5 4 Ra3+ works, too) 3...ba 4 Qc2+ Ka5 5 Qc3+.

And if 1...Bxb7, then 2 Qf3!! (threatening 3 Ra3+) 2...Bxf3 3 Bd2! e1Q 4 Ra3+ ba 5 b3#.

## 2 Qf3!! (but not 2 Qxe2? b5—+ or 2...Ka5—+) 2...Bxf3

Another quick loss comes after 2...Ka5 3 Ra3+ Ba4 4 Qxb7 (4 Rxa4+ Kxa4 5 b3+ Ka5 6 Qxb7— is just as good) 4...b3+ 5 Rxb3 Bxb3+ 6 Kxb3.

## 3 Bd2! e1Q 4 Ra3+ ba 5 b3#.

## 16) 1937

Black wants to play 1...Qxc7 2 Rxc7+ Kxc7+ 3 Ka7 Rb8, setting up a perpetual harassment of the white king. The only way to break up Black's plan is:

## 1 Ka7! Qxc7! 2 Rxc7+ Kxc7 3 Qd2!!

3 Qh2? Rb8! 4 Qxe5+ d6 = would let slip the win. Now on 3...Rb8, White has prepared 4 Qd6+!! Kxd6 5 Kxb8 g5 6 Kb7 g4 7 Kb6 g3 8 a3 g2 (8...ba 9 b4) 9 ab g1Q 10 bc#.

## 3...g5 4 a4! (4 a3 Rb8! =) 4...Rb8

After 4...ba 5 Qa5+, Black loses quickly: 5...Kd6 6 Kb7 or 6 b4; 5...Kc8 6 Kb6 d5 7 Kxc6 or 7 Qa8+.

On 4...g4, both 5 Qh2!? Rb8 (5...d6 6 a5—) 6 Qxe5+ d6 7 Qh5!— and 5 a5 g3 6 a6 Rg8 (6...d6!? 7 Qg2 Rg8 8 Qh3 g2 9 Qh7—) 7 Qa2 g2 8 Qa5+ Kc8 (8...Kd6 9 Kb7) 9 Qb6— win.

## 5 Qxd7+! Kxd7 6 Kxb8 g4 7 a5 g3 8 a6 g2 9 a7 g1Q 10 a8Q Qg8+ 11 Kb7 Qxa8+ 12 Kxa8 Kc8

Now it's a pawn endgame, where White still has to prove the win.

## 13 Ka7 Kc7 14 Ka6 Kd7 15 Kb7 Kd6 16 Kb6 Kd7 17 Kxc5 Kc7 18 Kxb4 Kb6 19 Ka4

The immediate 19 c5+ Kb7 20 Ka5 Ka7 21 b4 Kb7 22 b5 cb 23 Kxb5 Kc7 24 Ka4 (but not 24 c6? Kd6! 25 Kb6 – stalemate) 24...Kc6 25 Kb4 works just as well.

## 19...c5 20 b4 cb 21 Kxb4 Kc6 22 c5 Kc7

22...Kb7 runs into 23 Ka5! Kc6 24 Ka6 Kxc5 (24...Kc7 25 Ka7) 25 Kb7 Kc4 26 Kc6 Kd3 27 Kd6 Kxe4 28 Ke7—.

**23 Kb5 Kb7 24 c6+ Kc8!**

A well-known situation in pawn endgame theory: White triangulates, to reach the same position with his opponent to move.

**25 Kc4** (25 Kb4) **25...Kd8** (25...Kc7 26 Kc5 Kc8 27 Kd6 Kd8 28 c7+) **26 Kb4! Kc8 27 Kb5! Kb8 28 Kb6 Kc8 29 c7 Kd7 30 Kb7 Kd6 31 Kb8+—** (or 31 c8R, avoiding 31 c8Q? – stalemate).

### **17) 1963**

A counter must be found against Black's main threat, which is ...h7-h6+, followed by king to h7 and g7-g6#. Black easily carries out this plan after 1 f4+? Ke6 2 ab h6+ 3 Kh5 Ke7! 4 c5 Kf8 5 c6 Kg8 6 c7 Kh7 7 c8Q g6#.

1 cb? is no help: 1...h6+ 2 Kh5 Kd6! 3 c5+ (otherwise 4...Ke7) 3...Kxc5 4 b4+ Kd6 5 b5 Ke7 6 b6 Kf8 7 b7 Kg8 8 b8Q+ Kh7—, forcing mate.

**1 ab! h6+ 2 Kh5 Kd6!**

2...Ke6? doesn't work: 3 c5 Ke7 4 c6 Kd6 5 c4 Kxc6 6 b4+—.

**3 c5+!** (3 b4? Ke7!—) **3...Kxc5 4 c4 Kd6 5 c5+!** (White gets rid of all his pawns, playing for stalemate) **5...Kxc5 6 c4 Kd6 7 c5+! Kxc5 8 b4+ Kd6** (8...Kxb4 9 f4=) **9 b5 Ke7 10 b6 Kf8 11 b7 Kg8 12 b8Q+ Kh7 13 Qh8+! Kxh8 14 f4**

The only way for Black to avoid stalemate is to give up one of his two extra pawns, after which he can no longer win.

**14...f6** (14...g6+ 15 Kxh6 Kg8 16 h5 =) **15 Kg6 Kg8 16 Kxf5 Kf7 17 h5 g6+ (17...Ke8 18 Kg6 Kf8 19 f5 Kg8 – stalemate) 18 hg+ Kg7 19 Kg4! Kxg6 20 f5+ Kf7 21 Kh5 =.**



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## Polemic Thinking Part One

**On development, the place of opening preparation in it, and ways of making chess grow**

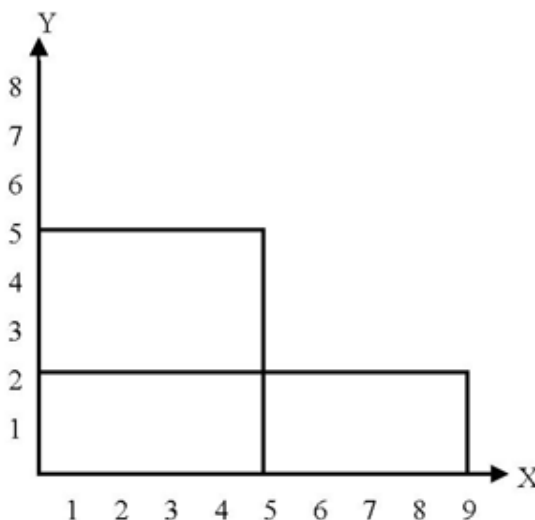
### 1. The Components of Success

Mikhail Botvinnik gave the following definition of those factors that define the strength and prospects of any chessplayer:

- A natural talent for chess.
- Good health, and reserves of energy.
- A goal-directed will, and a competitive character.
- Specialized chess preparation.

Of these four factors, only the first – natural chess talent – is beyond our control, or “God-given.” The others may be developed; here, everything – or nearly everything – depends upon the chessplayer himself, and upon those who help him (trainer, parents, friends).

Note that, for Botvinnik, pure chess preparation was only one factor – a very important one, of course, but no more so than the rest. The necessity of developing a well-rounded personality is illustrated by the following diagram, which was suggested for a similar purpose many years ago by Napoleon Bonaparte:



We have a graph, with a player's chess mastery on the horizontal axis, and his personal qualities (character, energy reserves, etc.) on the vertical. A chessplayer's practical strength, and the level of his achievements are equivalent to the product of the quadrant formed by the lines drawn thereby, measured in some sort of agreed upon units.

Let's assume that 10 units is the maximum possible. A player with a middling development of both components (5 out of 5) would reach a level of achievement equal to 25; a player with purely chess abilities in the brilliant range (9) and low-level personal qualities (2) will have a significantly lower result – 18.

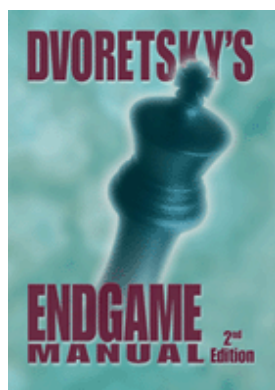
The following observation is also useful: for such a player, a step forward in purely chess qualities (which would, in fact, be quite difficult to do, given the high ranking already achieved) would only give him a small increase – just 2. But even a single step upward in his lagging area would result in a much greater cumulative effect ( $3 \times 9 = 27$ ).

Of course, this diagram could also be multi-valued: we could use it to measure (either with

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the same or with adjusted coefficients) several components at once.

The same logic would hold true if we laid out other significant factors along the coordinate axes. For example, we could lay out opening knowledge on the horizontal axis, and mastery of the later stages of the game on the vertical. I don't believe I'd be wrong to assume that, for nearly everyone – juniors, grandmasters – the horizontal component would be considerably longer than the vertical. The conclusions given above give rise to the thought that this sort of overkill is hardly justifiable, that it delays the development of the chessplayer, and that the most effective means of increasing mastery certainly does not lie in the sphere of opening theory. We should like to take a more detailed look at this problem.

## 2. The Role of Opening Theory

On more than one occasion, well-known masters and grandmasters have tried to convince me that all, or nearly all, of one's preparation time should be spent preparing openings. This approach always amuses me.

Try to remember how many times you, or your students, have lost points because of problems in the opening, and how many times it was because of something later. I am sure you will see that the outcome of the game is settled in the middle- and endgame much more often than it is in the opening. And it's precisely in those areas that it's easiest to achieve significant progress, leading inevitably to rapid and secure growth in overall playing level. These considerations hold true even for very strong players – so it must be even truer for the young.

And nevertheless, the fanatical devotion to work on the openings is easy to understand.

**In the first place**, every chessplayer has holes in his opening repertoire, which he would like to plug. Here's what the Scottish grandmaster Jonathan Rowson has to say on the subject in his informative book, [\*Chess for Zebras\*](#), dedicated to the psychological and educational aspects of a chessplayer's development.

*I remember when I was 14 and rated around 2000, my first chess coach, FM Donald Holmes, advised me to put my openings to one side for a while and concentrate on improving my calculation. At the time, I was very comfortable with my repertoire, which involved playing a Scheveningen with a Taimanov move-order and a sketchy Grünfeld as Black, and main-line 1.e4 openings as White. I used to write down my openings on a piece of paper and felt a certain pride in these variations, mainly because I felt that they were mine. In any case, I told Donald that I would work on my calculation soon, but first I wanted to "complete" my opening repertoire, and make sure that there were no problems with my openings. He laughed, and advised me, rightly, that I would never be able to do that.*

His trainer was absolutely correct: for every opening problem you resolve, a new one is bound to pop up. You may widen and deepen your repertoire endlessly, but theory itself never stands still – more and more games get played that are important for the opening variations we've prepared.

**In the second place**, we know that the fruits of opening research may be used in the very next event we play in, whereas the work we do on other aspects of chess is of a more abstract nature. The majority of middlegame and even endgame positions, which we study so carefully at home, are hardly likely to come up in our actual practice.

Following this kind of thinking, chessplayers forget that the opening stage must sooner or later come to an end. Even if the outcome of that opening is favorable, sooner or later, we have to search, move by move, for the very best continuations, and solve one problem after another – positional or tactical, technical or psychological. And the way in which a chessplayer deals with these problems has a far greater influence on the outcome of the game than does the position he gets out of the opening duel. When all's said and done, the one who makes the last error loses.

In many events – chiefly children's and teenagers' tournaments – I have observed the same picture, again and again. The players run through the opening stage "according to the last word of theory," and sometimes even introduce their own novelties. But after a half hour to an hour, a great change occurs. The level of play declines sharply; there are extended periods of thought over elementary moves; positional or tactical errors follow one after another.

Nonetheless, when they go over the games later, the trainers will frequently analyze only the opening stage with their students, paying no attention to much more serious problems.

In 64 – *Shakhmatnoye Obozrenie* No. 4/2002, I saw an article by grandmaster Evgeny Sveshnikov, the well-known opening theory expert and researcher. I am going to reproduce a fragment of that article, written after the Russian Junior Championships of 2002 in Dagomys.

Let me tell you about the preparation of my 13-year-old pupil from Chelyabinsk, Sergei Trofimov. Here's a game he played two years ago.

*S. Trofimov – Y. Krivoborodov*  
Kazan 2000

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cd cd 4 Nc3 Nf6 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 Bf4 Bf5 7 e3 e6 8 Bb5 Nd7 9 Qa4 Rc8 10 0-0 a6 11 Bxc6 Rxc6 12 Rfc1 Be7 13 Nd1?!**



**13...b5 14 Qb3 Qc8?** (14...Rc4 was better) **15 e4! de 16 d5 Rc4 17 Nd4 Nc5 18 Rxc4! bc 19 Qxc4 ed 20 Qxd5**, and White won.

Trofimov acknowledged that he had selected this variation because of a game of Shirov's. In the database, we found the game A. Shirov – D. Komarov (Borzhomi 1988), but Komarov's play was unconvincing: 13...b5 14 Qb3 Qb6?, losing quickly. 14...Rc4 would have been much stronger, and after 15 Nd2 Qa5 16 Nc3 Rb4 17 Qa3 Ra4! 18 Qb3 Rb4, White's best

hope would be for a draw, but Black would have other possibilities. But if White sacrificed a pawn by 17 Qd1?! Rxb2, then neither 18 e4 nor 18 a4 looked convincing; I therefore recommended to Sergei that he try a something else...

My recommendation to Sergei was 13 Ne2!? We checked it with the computer: Black doesn't stand so badly, and the odds that Yegor Krivoborodov would make a mistake were vanishingly small. He's a strong player; and his trainer, the well-known master and theoretician Vladimir Lepeshkin, was of course familiar with the fine points of this variation. I soon found a "hole" in Yegor's opening repertoire, and gave Sergei a choice of either using my suggestion or improvising something. He chose my line, and soon found out for himself over-the-board how far Lepeshkin and Krivoborodov's knowledge extended...

So, here's the game we prepared for Dagomys.

*S. Trofimov – Y. Krivoborodov*  
Dagomys 2002

(The first 13 moves are the same as in the game he played in Kazan in 2000).

**13 Ne2 Qb6 14 Rxc6 bc 15 Rc1 Bd3 16 Qd1 Bg6!** (White has a small advantage after 16...Bxe2 17 Qxe2) **17 Qa4 Bd3 18 Qd1 Bg6 19 Qa4 Bd3** Draw.

Can such a game be called creative? There wasn't a single new move in it! But here we see serious work done on preparation by both the players and their trainer-helpers, making use of the experience of several generations of chessplayers.

Let's analyze this in depth.

It has long been known that after 13 Ne2, Black completely equalizes with a couple of accurate moves. Sveshnikov understood that the opponent would most likely be familiar with the conclusion of theory. So how can a trainer recommend (or even allow) his young charge in effect to refuse to play – to be ready, with White, to conclude the game with a forced draw out of the opening? Could anyone possibly learn to play a good game with this kind of approach? Why not offer to let the youngster fight it out in any of the problematic positions, instead of trying to catch the opponent in the opening? For me, the explanation is obvious: more than likely, Sergei (not without the influence of his trainer) overestimates the role of the opening, and therefore can't bring himself to swim into independent opening waters.

When these words of mine were first published, in a booklet of materials for an all-Russian

trainers' conference, naturally they drew sharp dissatisfaction from grandmaster Sveshnikov, and we had a long discussion. The most wide-ranging arguments were brought forward – some of them having almost nothing to do with the subject under discussion. Still, the quintessence of our disagreement could be very quickly expressed.

According to Sveshnikov, he deserves no blame, because he performed his task in a limited time-frame in a sufficiently professional manner, as Trofimov was not his only charge who had to be prepared for his game. He rightly noted the dubious nature of the 13 Nd1 variation, and offered a safer way to play instead.

However, I am convinced that the work of a children's trainer should not be reduced to that of openings consultant. At this level, the objective strength of the opening recommendations offered is not so much the point – it's far more important to teach the youngster to throw himself unreservedly into battle, without fear of any possible opening surprises.

The reader can rightly choose for himself between our two points of view.

And now, a word about the earlier game: In 2000, I would sometimes consult with Yegor Krivosorodov. In one of our sessions, before he showed me his last game (the one we are discussing), the boy said that he had lost because "he was caught in an opening trap."

Demonstrating the opening moves, Yegor explained why White should not take the a7-pawn on move ten (10 Bxc6 Rxc6 11 Qxa7 Qc8! 12 Qa5 Ra6, etc.) Of course, I no longer remember the variations, although I once played this system myself, and my students have used it successfully, too. At the time, the move 13 Ne2 was the main line. And after 13... Qb6 14 Rxc6 bc 15 Rc1 Bd3 16 Qd1, Sergei Dolmatov continued 16...Bxe2 17 Qxe2 0-0 followed by Rc8 in three games, and garnered two points – so I was less than convinced by Sveshnikov's evaluation of this position. But that's not the point here.

I knew what would happen after 13 Ne2, as did Yegor; but the move **13 Nd1** (worked out, and apparently first played in 1986 by grandmaster Alexander Shabalov) took him by surprise. So that's what he meant by "caught in an opening trap." Boy, I wish they'd catch me like that every day! Can a move like this possibly be dangerous? Of course, sharp opening variations do exist, in which you have to follow attentively after every new idea. But this can hardly apply to such peaceful systems.

"But my trainer said that there were games with this move in the database, and I should look at them," replied Yegor. So that means, according to the trainer, that a ten-year-old boy lost because he didn't look at the games in the database with 13 Nd1. OK, let's keep looking.

**13...b5** A good answer. After 13 Ne2, however, it would have been bad, because after the queen retreats to d1, White takes over the c-file.

**14 Qb3 Qc8** Of course, 14...Rc4 deserved serious consideration – many games have already been played in this fashion. But the queen move also looks natural, and doesn't deserve to be criticized.

**15 e4!** A sharp continuation – White begins to fight for the open c-file. Here Black could play 15...Bxe4 16 Rxc6 Qxc6 17 Rc1 Qa8 18 a4 Bxf3 19 gf (Shabalov – Khalifman, 1987) – White holds an initiative, which compensates for the sacrificed pawn, but Black maintains counterplay.

**15...de 16 d5!?** The quieter 16 Rxc6 Qxc6 17 Rc1 can be met either by 17...Qa8 or by 17...Qd5.

But here 16...ed? would lose to 17 Nd4. However, nothing fatal has occurred yet – Black still has a defense. The only bad thing that's happened is that Yegor had overlooked this move of his opponent's. And the previous one...

**16...Rc4! 17 Nd4**



Here is where the outcome of the game was decided. After **17...Nc5?? 18 Rxc4! bc 19 Qxc4**, White obtained a great advantage.

Think about the position after 17 Nd4. Black has everything protected. He should choose one of



three possible continuations: 17...Bf6, 17...Qc5, or 17...0-0, with the whole game still ahead. The last of the three moves is probably the safest: on 18 Nc6? Bf6 19 Rxc4 bc 20 Qxc4, Black has 20...Nb6.

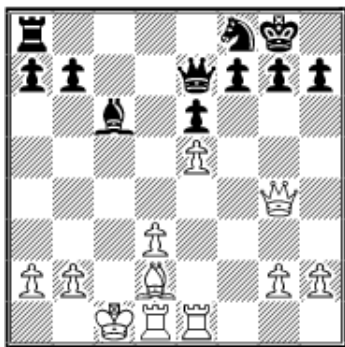
Why did Black lose? Certainly not because he didn't know about the move 13 Nd1!. Of course not – for his age, the kid knew his opening well enough. What was considerably more important was his clear weakness in tactics: Black first overlooked the central break (which, fortunately, was not yet catastrophic), and then the pin of his knight after 18 Rxc4. Here lies the true reason for his loss.

So – what's more important for a ten-year-old chessplayer? To study the games with 13 Nd1 in the database or to train his eye for combinations and his calculation of variations? To me, the answer is as obvious as I hope it is to you. Concentrating a youngster's attentions on the openings, which must unavoidably come at the cost of other more important developmental problems (time, after all, is not unlimited!), means that a trainer will do a poor job with his student: he will disorient him.

Next is an example of the same theme – except now the players are a bit older, of master strength. The Dutch junior playing Black was showing me a recently played game.

**Barendse – van Delft**  
Groningen 1997

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cd 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Bg5 e6 7 Qd3 Be7 8 0-0-0 Nxd4 9 Qxd4 0-0 10 f4 Qa5 11 Bc4 Bd7 12 e5 de 13 fe Bc6 14 Bd2 Nd7 15 Nd5 Qc5 16 Nxe7+ Qxe7 17 Rhe1 Rfd8 18 Qg4 Nf8 19 Bd3 Rxd3 20 cd**



One of the opening “tabias” – an exchange sacrifice frequently seen in practice. The usual continuation is 20...Qd7, attacking the pawn at d3 and intending to continue 21...Qd5, forking a2 and g2. If 21 Kb1 Qxd3+ 22 Ka1, then 22...h5! 23 Qxh5 (23 Qe2 Qg6, with an excellent position for Black) 23...Ba4!, and 24 b3 Qd4+ 25 Kb1 Bb5 is dangerous for White.

21 Bb4 Qd5 (21...Ng6? 22 Bd6) 22 Bxf8! Rxf8 23 Kb1 Qxg2 24 Qxg2 Bxg2 is stronger, with a somewhat inferior, but defensible endgame for Black. This was the continuation, for example, in Adams – Kramnik, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

Eighteen-year-old Merijn van Delft chose a rare move, evidently prepared at home from his study of this opening variation.

**20...Qc5+!? 21 Kb1 Qd5**

By taking a different route to the d5-square, Black has avoided the exchange of the “bad” dark-squared bishop for the knight on f8, which favors White. If now 22 Bb4, then 22...Ng6! (attacking e5) 23 Bd6 (23 Qe4!?) 23...Qxg2, when Black's position is obviously better than the one he gets at the end of the above-cited theoretical variation.

And still, it would be wrong to label this opening idea an improvement. In the first place, White could meet the queen check with 21 Qc4. The queen trade improves White's pawn structure; and on 21...Qf2 22 Rf1!? Qxg2 23 Qf4, Black probably has to defend f7 with the rather passive 23...Be8. And in the second place, in the position reached in the game, White has 22 Qe4!, when it's going to be difficult to get so much as a pawn for the sacrificed exchange.

Far from resolving the opening problem set before him, White commits a terrible error – which goes unpunished.

**22 g3?? Qxd3+ 23 Ka1 h5??** The elementary 23...Bf3 would have ended the game at once.

Observe: The opening moves were played on a level equal to the leading grandmasters of the world. But as soon as their book-knowledge ended, the stupid mistakes began. So, what should a young player do next: continue to extend his opening repertoire, or switch to

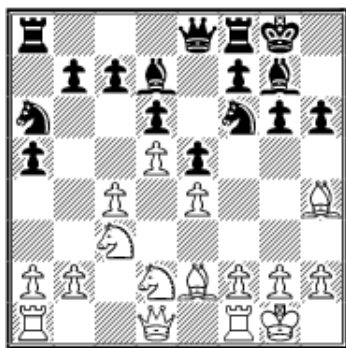
working on his other problems?

How to explain the awful blunder committed by Black? Evidently, he was betrayed by routine. Merijn remembered that, after White gives up the d3-pawn (in the line 21 Kb1 Qxd3+ 22 Ka1), the move h7-h5! is very strong, and made the analogous move without thinking.

Of course opening knowledge is necessary. But in the first place, only part of a student's time should be devoted to it (the stronger and more experienced the player, the less time needed). And in the second place, a player should never become a slave to his opening knowledge. What's important is to learn how to make use of it in order to resolve the problems arising over the board yourself. This is precisely what was done in the following game, played by twelve-year-old Sasha Riazantsev, who was then a student of mine. I only worked with him for two years (beginning when he was eleven); during that time, he won the Under-12 World Championship and the European Under-14 Championship.

**Werner – Riazantsev**  
Moscow 1998

**1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 d4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 d5 a5 8 0-0 Na6 9 Bg5 h6 10 Bh4 Qe8 11 Nd2 Bd7**



The position after 12 b3 Nh7 13 a3 represents one of the main lines of the Petrosian System of the King's Indian Defense. Black's most common continuation is 13...h5; but the plan with f7-f5 isn't bad either – and it's this plan that Riazantsev was aiming for. He knew the game Yusupov – Kasparov (Barcelona 1989), in which the World Champion essayed an interesting positional exchange sacrifice: 13...f5 14 ef gf!? 15 Bh5 Qc8 16 Be7 Re8 17 Bxe8 Qxe8 18 Bh4 e4 19 Qc2?! (19 Rc1 Nc5 20 Rc2! was better – but here too, after 20...Nf6 21 Ne2 Nh5, Black has reasonable compensation for the sacrificed material) 19... Qh5 20 Bg3 Rf8 21 Bf4? (21 f4) 21...Qg4 22 g3

Ng5, and already Black was better.

As he was showing the game, Sasha explained to me that he didn't like the bishop recapture on f5, because then Black would be ceding his opponent the important e4-square. But is this true? If White answers 14...Bxf5 with 15 g4!?, for example, then Black could play 15...e4! 16 Rc1 e3!, with unclear complications.

This sort of discussion of a recently played game with a trainer helps a young player enlarge his arsenal of ideas. It's a good idea to allow the student to decide for himself whether an idea the trainer suggests (in this case, a well-known idea from opening theory) is correct or not, and whether it would suit him.

**12 Rb1?! Nh7 13 b3**

Riazantsev sank into thought, seeing that in this situation, his planned exchange sacrifice was no longer effective: 13...f5 14 ef gf? 15 Bh5 Qc8 16 Be7 Re8 17 Bxe8 Qxe8 18 Bh4 e4 19 Ne2!, with advantage to White (with the rook still on a1, White would not have this move, because of 19...Bxa1 20 Qxa1 Qh5). He didn't want to switch to the plan with h6-h5; so – what to do? A solution was soon found.

**13...f5 14 ef Bxf5!**

Outstanding – Sasha overcame the stereotype he had fixed in his head concerning the surrender of the e4-square. He saw that 15 Nde4? would be impossible, in view of 15... Bxe4! 16 Nxe4 Rf4, winning a piece. And if White can't do this, he just loses a tempo.

**15 Rc1 Bf6!?**

Once again, a good idea: Black rids himself of the "bad" bishop. On 16 Bg3, he intends 16...Bg5, pinning the knight, and preventing it from going to e4. After 17 f3?! (17 h4) 17... Nc5, Black has a clear advantage. And he could also have gotten an excellent position after the simple 15...g5 16 Bg3 Nc5.

## 16 Bxf6 Nxf6 17 g4!

Practically forced – otherwise, Black would enjoy an untrammelled initiative.

## 17...Bd7 18 f3

18 Nde4?! Nxe4 19 Nxe4 b6 20 Qd2 Rf4 21 f3 Nc5 would be worse.

## 18...Kg7 19 Bd3 Qe7

Chances are about even. Eventually, this error-strewn game ended in victory for Black.

And now, for one more widespread, but in my opinion, mistaken reason that many people give as the basis for their unwillingness to tear themselves away from working on openings. “Now that computer databases are here, the amounts of opening information available to any player, and the speed of its transmission, have significantly increased; it’s become harder to follow the development of contemporary theory, and keep the enormous mass of necessary opening news in your head – that’s why the role of opening preparation has assumed such importance nowadays.”

But in fact, besides these factors complicating our work on openings, there are other factors as well, pulling in the opposite direction. Thanks to computers, it takes much less time than before to find and go over the necessary games; it’s become easier to accumulate and store analytical work. **The increased flow of information in connection with computer databases does not at all mean that this information has become more important; it just means that we have to work out new and more effective ways of dealing with it.**

Truth to tell, the purposeful collection of opening knowledge always brings with it a greater or lesser degree of benefit to the chessplayer; and this process is unending. But in the middlegame or the endgame, sooner or later, we always reach a satiation point: new **knowledge** (and here, I am speaking only of knowledge of concrete concepts) after this point has almost no effect on playing potential. For example: if a player looks at a few examples of the bishop sacrifice at h7, so that he understands the basic ideas of this combination, new examples on the same theme can hardly enrich his understanding (even though sometimes it’s a good idea to go over them again, because repetition aids learning).

Once you have absorbed the basics of endgame theory well, you don’t need to spend so much time carefully studying and memorizing new, ever more specific positions – they are hardly likely to come up over the board, and will have little effect on the growth of your overall endgame knowledge.

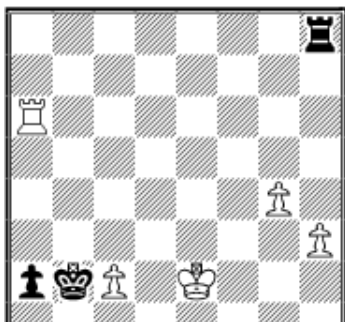
So for chessplayers who have already reached a high level of mastery in the middle- and endgame, further progress in these areas becomes more and more problematic. And consequently, opening preparation’s role will grow for them – it’s precisely here that they will be able to outplay a strong opponent, while justifiably expecting not to make any significant errors in the later stages.

However, I am certain that this reasoning rightly applies (yet with serious reservations) only to a narrow circle of gifted chessplayers. Practice shows that even grandmasters will make many mistakes in the middle- and endgame, some of them quite primitive. And you needn’t go far afield to find examples: check the reportage, in any magazine or Internet website, of any recently completed tournament.

Here’s a good illustration: an instructive fragment from an endgame, which I saw while reading a fresh issue of the Russian-language newspaper, *Shakhmatnaya Nedelya* at the end of 2005. The players are two good grandmasters.

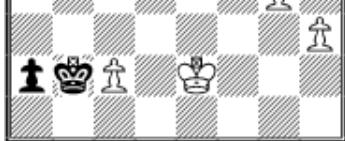
### *Galkin – Timofeev*

Russian Championship – Upper League, Kazan 2005



Artyom Timofeev stubbornly tried to win an approximately equal endgame, and in the end, his opponent slipped.

White has an easy draw by advancing his king along with his g-pawn. True, an immediate 44 Kf3?? would be a mistake, in view of the **interference** 44...Rxb3+ 45 Kf4 Ra3; but White could first give up his rook by 44 Rxa2+ Kxa2,



and only then play 45 Kf3. And 44 Kd2 a1Q (44... Rxh3 45 Rb6+) 45 Rxa1 Kxa1 46 Ke3 would be more accurate still, as here the black king stands a little further away – on a1, instead of a2. In this

case, it wouldn't mean anything; but it's important to train oneself not to ignore such "details" – it's normal for every tempo to be important in the endgame.

Alexander Galkin decided to make a draw a different way.

#### 44 Rb6+?! Kxc2 45 Ra6 Kb2 46 Rb6+?

It was not too late to play 46 Rxa2+! Kxa2 47 Kf3 Kb3 48 g5 Kc4 49 Ke4! (the only way! – it's important to "shoulder block" the opposing king) 49... Re8+ 50 Kf5 Kd5 51 g6 Rf8+ 52 Kg5 Ke6 53 g7 and 54 Kg6, with a draw.

#### 46...Kc3! 47 Ra6 Rxh3!

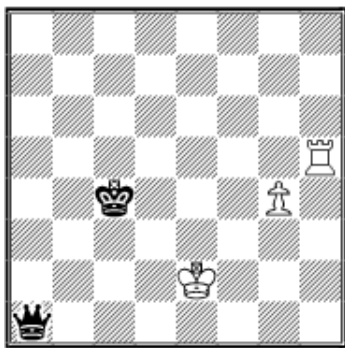
White overlooked a standard tactical shot: the "skewer." After 48 Rxa2 Rh2+ 49 Kf3 Rxa2, Black's king can aid his rook against White's g-pawn. And if 48 g5 (hoping for 48... Rh1? 49 Rxa2 Rh2+ 50 Kf3 Rxa2 51 Ke4! =), then 48... Kb2! – now **the white king being cut off from its own pawn** is decisive.

Alexei Kuzmin, an experienced grandmaster commenting on the game, had until this point given a proper description of the battle. After this, in his opinion, nothing more of interest occurred. Well, let's see:

#### 48 Ra3+ Kc4?

An illogical move. Although it does not let slip the win, still, it makes the win considerably more complicated. The rook can support the a-pawn by itself. The king isn't needed on the queenside – its place, in all lines, is on the other wing. After 48... Kd4! 49 Ra4+ Ke5 50 Ra5+ would be useless: Black could reply either with 50... Ke6 51 Ra6+ Kf7, or with 50... Kf4 51 Rf5+ Ke4!.

#### 49 Rxh3 a1Q 50 Rh5



The next pair of moves, 50... Kd4 51 Rf5, received no comment; Kuzmin followed them with this note:

*All that was left for Galkin was a bitter sigh: if only his pawn were on g2 and his rook on f3 – and if his king could also get to f2, then... But as it is, White's scattered forces are in no position to offer resistance.*

This is, in fact, a widely held delusion: that you can only construct a fortress with rook and pawn (not a rook's pawn) against a queen if the pawn is

on its original square. This is in fact true for a center or a bishop's pawn – but not for a knight's pawn. **With pawn at g3 and rook at f4, you can also make a draw (and without much difficulty), if the king is on g2 (with the king on g4, Black has a very complex win). But with the pawn at g4 and the rook at f5, you can make a draw with the king either behind the pawn, or in front of it – at g5.**

I believe that players who have reached master level (to say nothing of grandmasters) should add this information to their arsenal of endgame knowledge. There's nothing complex here, nothing requiring you to memorize lengthy analysis: all you need to know is the evaluation of the most important fallback positions. Such endgames do occur in practice, though rarely; and it's good to have a few benchmarks.

Had these two players known of a potential fortress built around the pawn at g4, they would have chosen their moves more carefully. Understandably, had Black chosen the right forty-eighth move, he would have had no problems to speak of; for example, 50... Ke4 would have been sufficient. In the game, his task was far more complex.

Black could only prevent the construction of the fortress by continuing 50... Qg1! 51 Kf3 Kc3 (on 51... Kd3 there is 52 Rd5+). If 52 Kf4 Qf2+ 53 Kg5 Kd4, the rook is unfortunately

placed (as already noted, it's a draw with the rook at f5). And if 52 Rf5, then 52...Kd2 (the king heads for the enemy rear, while also preventing White from transferring his own king to g5: 53 Kf4? Qe3#) 53 Re5 Kd1, and Black wins. But not without effort – to say the least! According to the computer tablebase, with best play by both sides, mate comes only on the seventy-sixth move!

Timofeev's choice, **50...Kd4?**, was a mistake – which his opponent failed to exploit. He could have made a draw with 51 Kf2!. For example, 51...Ke4 52 Rf5 Qh1 53 Kg3, or 51...Qd1 52 Kg3 Qg1+ 53 Kh3! Qe3+ 54 Kg2 (54 Kh4 Qf2+ 55 Kh3!) 54...Qf4 55 Kh3 Qf3+ 56 Kh4 =.

After **51 Rf5? Qh1**, the game really was almost over. The pawn was quickly lost, and Black only had to show he could win with queen versus rook. Now, this is not completely elementary – especially considering that, in such situations, there's almost no thinking time left. Recall that Peter Svidler was unable to overcome Boris Gelfand's resistance at the 2001 World Championships in Moscow, or that Alexander Morozevich couldn't win from Dmitri Yakovenko in Pamplona 2006.

**52 Kf2 Qh2+ 53 Kf3 Qh3+ 54 Kf2** (54 Kf4 Qe3#) **54...Qxg4 55 Rf3 Ke4 56 Re3+ Kf4 57 Rd3 Qh4+ 58 Ke2 Qh2+ 59 Kd1 Qb2 60 Ke1 Qc2 61 Rd2 Qc1+ 62 Ke2 Ke4 63 Rd8 Qc4+ 64 Kd1 Qa4+ 65 Ke2 Qb5+ 66 Kd1 Ke3 67 Kc2 Qc6+ 68 Kd1 Qb6 69 Rc8 Qb1+** White resigned.

I think that if these grandmasters had given the development of their endgame skills even ten or fifteen percent of the time they devote to opening preparation, they would have known endgame theory better, their mastery of playing practical endgames would have been increased, and as a result, the incidence of such cases would have declined dramatically. And I do understand that this observation applies to almost every chessplayer not a bit less than to the contestants in the game just examined.

### 3. The Principles of Working Effectively

Many players spend loads of time studying chess, with barely noticeable results. Obviously, in addition to the amount of work they do, the quality of that work must be very important. Another way of expressing this is: "the coefficient of worthwhile effort."

Don't believe anyone who tells you he knows the one true algorithm for development. It doesn't exist; and such declarations are at best self-deception, and at worst – a conscious effort to lead students or readers into error. All of us differ in the amount and nature of our talent, each of us with their own mix of merits and demerits. There is also a great difference in the external circumstances that either encourage or interfere with our development. Many roads may lead to success; and it is impossible, without knowing all the circumstances, to forecast which of them will prove most effective – to each chessplayer, their own path.

What actually exists, and should be studied – that would be those effective methods, techniques of either individual or collective effort that might be useful to you. There are also the general principles of such work that suggest the most effective ways to organize it, and also allow us to avoid standard mistakes.

Here I will note just a few of the most important principles out of the many that I, as a trainer, have always followed. Their worth is proven by the sporting and creative successes of my many students. I say I will note them. To lay them out completely, in the parameters of a single article, would of course be impossible. For those who wish to delve more deeply into these questions, I recommend the study of my books, all of which are devoted to the various aspects of a chessplayer's development.

I have already said how important it is to pay the most serious attention, not only to the purely chess-related, but also to psychological and physical preparation, the fully-rounded development of the individual. I have also spoken of how time spent on chess should not turn into single-minded absorption of opening theory.

Concrete information (whether variations, analyses, or particular endgame positions) is merely the necessary starting point for the work that follows. **The study of the endgame, and still more so the middlegame, consists chiefly in the absorption of endgame and middlegame ideas: the general and the more particular principles and maxims, standard evaluations, techniques of playing different positions. The richness and variety of the arsenal of ideas that a chessplayer has at his command will, to a great extent, determine his class – and, based upon that, his playing strength.**

Chessplayers themselves, especially the young, sometimes find it difficult to extract general



ideas from the concrete materials they are studying – and here, the assistance of a qualified trainer becomes quite significant.

Take another look at the examples we saw in this article, and you will see that, although the examination of any of them gave you some concrete information, the point of the examination, the impression that you had to take away, was certainly not limited to that.

Getting involved in chess must never be reduced to just expanding your store of knowledge – be it opening knowledge, middle- or endgame, concrete or more general in nature. **There is another border to development, not less (and, I remain deeply convinced, far more) important than absorbing information. I'm talking about knowing how to use your knowledge – the ability to make correct decisions in all the different situations that can arise over the chessboard.**

Rowson came to the same conclusion – among others – in the above-cited book:

*Aspiring players should place much more emphasis on developing their skill than increasing their knowledge. This means that chess work should be less focused on “learning,” and more about “training” and “practicing” whereby you force yourself to think.*

What is meant by “habits,” and what do we mean by knowing how to use your knowledge?

In the first place – possessing such basic qualities as combinative vision, accurate calculation of variations and an objective assessment of position, which in turn are composed of many more specific habits. Without them, knowledge becomes useless, since they cannot be employed automatically. Each time, you must enter into the concrete situation that exists on the board – and it will most likely differ, in some details, from the positions previously studied. At this point, you cannot do without concrete calculation and evaluation.

Second – having absorbed the general (and this means, primarily, psychological) principles of the move-search and decision-making in the different situations that arise in the course of the game: such things as attack and defense, the realization of the advantage, or outplaying your opponent in a roughly equal position, etc.

How do you achieve progress in any of the indicated directions? The recipe is well-known from other aspects of life (first and foremost, from sports): you need **purpose-driven training**.

Sometimes, a player will see clearly that, for example, he is weak in calculating variations; or he is insufficiently strong and resourceful in difficult positions; or he does a bad job of realizing his advantages. This failing gets in his way, leading repeatedly to the loss of valuable points, and lower placing in tournaments.

What's to be done? He must, for a period of time, concentrate on this problem; he must analyze his games, crack some of the books written on this theme, and seek out suitable examples... It would be very useful to find the solutions to some appropriate exercises – but where do you find them? Here is why, at the very start of my training career, I began to collect high-quality exercises, aimed at the development of habits and the knowledge every chessplayer needs. My students made active use of my notebook full of exercises, and it helped them rapidly and effectively rid themselves of their failings, as well as to develop their strong sides.

Once again, a word from Rowson.

*Now I believe that the main function of chess trainers should be to guide the training of their students, rather than to teach them directly. The best thing you can do for a student is to select interesting positions for them, and analyse them carefully so you can see the kinds of things that the student is missing.*

(I note that in fact there are also other important aspects in which a trainer can be of assistance to his students; for example, in diagnosing the peculiarities of their game, their strengths and weaknesses, with the goal of setting out a program to work on their chess.)

Exercises from the trainer's arsenal differ not only in themes or level of difficulty, but also in the way they will be used. They can be offered in class, or for homework; they can be for solving, for analysis (that is, with moving pieces on the board), or for playing-out (I spoke about this form of training in the first two books in my series, *School of Chess Excellence*).

**Training becomes more effective, the closer it imitates the atmosphere of a real tournament game – and consequently secures maximum concentration.** This is why, in a class of several students, all of approximately the same level of strength, it makes sense to set up competitions among them. Chess is a game, after all; and using a playing form of exercise is most natural.

Towards the same end, sometimes it makes sense to set up “fines” for “losses” – mostly in those cases where the student makes serious errors that he should certainly have known how to avoid. With young players, fines can be various forms of physical exercise; for example, pushups, sit-ups, running, etc.

Unfortunately, there are very few chessplayers who train regularly. The majority spend their time just reworking information. Many console themselves with the thought that analyzing the openings, coupled with tournament practice, must inevitably lead to a general growth of chess mastery. But I only believe part of this. Chess mastery includes many components; quick development of any of them requires (as in any sport) purpose-driven training in precisely that direction.



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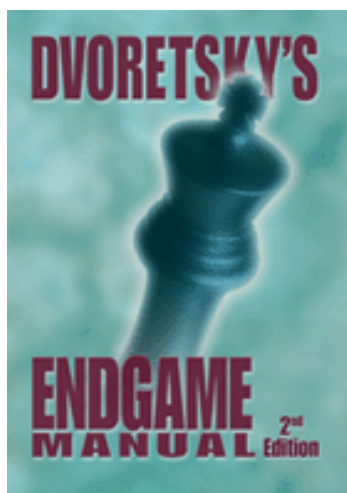
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## COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



## Polemic Thinking

### Part Two

**On development, the place of opening preparation in it, and ways of making chess grow**

#### 4. Problems In Contemporary Chess

I believe that almost everyone who loves chess has the feeling that our game does not, unfortunately, occupy the place it deserves in society. And there are important, objective reasons for this, some of which are natural, and some of which can certainly be eliminated.

The most important natural reason lies in the specific nature of chess: it lacks any outward dynamism, you can't eliminate the length of either the individual games or of a tournament in general without wreaking catastrophic qualitative damage (a case where the cure would be worse than the disease), and the limited number of its adherents. Compared with football and other forms of sport, there is no point in watching a game of chess without knowing the rules of play (which are quite complex for an uninitiated bystander) to at least a minimal level that would allow him to understand, if only with a commentator's help, what is going on over the board. Here's why efforts to develop chess among children and introduce chess lessons into the scholastic curriculum deserve our full support: by this very means, we greatly increase the number of adherents to our game.

Of course, the specific nature of chess includes positive aspects as well: its attractive image as practically the sole intellectual form of sport, and its widespread use of computer technology and the Internet, which should serve as a basis for mutually beneficial contacts with the appropriate companies, etc. Unfortunately, profitable opportunities are barely exploited – to a great extent this is the fault of those who govern chess. It's no secret to anyone that in our day, FIDE has become a collection of incompetent bureaucrats, who have lost all connection, either with those who love chess or with the professionals: they work only for their own profit.

The great number of short draws – an unavoidable attribute of nearly every competition, especially in the late rounds – hurt the popularity of chess. And it's not just the short draws: it looks strange to the fans to see the battle cut short at any point in the game, when the position is still complex and interesting. To resolve this problem, I suggested rescinding the rule allowing players to converse during the game, hence eliminating draws by agreement. I published a lengthy article on this subject in 2003 in the Russian-language magazine *Shakhmatnaya Nedelya*, and on several Internet websites; my suggestion was soon successfully carried out at tournaments in Corsica and Sofia. I think it should be tested more widely, with the aim of eventually introducing corresponding changes in the "Chess Codex."

I could go on for a long time, making a list of the existing problems, but for now I would like to dwell on just one of them: the negative influence of opening theory on contemporary chess.

Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

## The Complete DGT Product Line

Let me explain what I mean.

Even before the computer age, many opening variations had been analyzed out to a forced draw, or to positions of little interest, which a competent player should be unable to lose. The introduction of computers has brought about an enormous increase in this kind of “scorched earth.” As a result, many opening duels lead to an immediate shutting-down of play, and quick draws.

And if a player enters a complex opening variation without being sufficiently prepared, then we see the opposite picture: he finds himself outplayed, or at a decisive disadvantage, without having played a single move of his own, but merely a demonstration of his own, or someone else’s, computer analysis.

In both cases, the very concept of the game is destroyed: instead of a tense struggle of intellect over the board, the spectators see merely a comparison of home analyses, of interest only to a narrow circle of chess professionals.

I must make clear at once that the indisputable fact that a considerable percentage of games now have their outcomes determined by home analysis is merely a phenomenon of contemporary tournament practice – it does not, under any circumstances, presage the death of chess ideas under computer pressure. On the contrary: we have not yet discovered many of its secrets; what we do over the board is often, alas, far from perfect.

In the Russian Championship Superfinal at the end of 2005, grandmaster Zvjaginsev astounded his opponents, as well as all chess enthusiasts, with a completely new idea as early as the second move of the Sicilian Defense. After **1 e4 c5**, in three games he continued **2 Na3!?**, and scored two points with it.



How do you deal with a knight move to the edge of the board? It’s probably not the strongest move – on the contrary, if a hypothetical top-end computer had evaluated White’s advantage before this move at, let’s say, +0.5, then after it, his advantage would more than likely be reduced, let’s say, to +0.3 (of course, these numbers would be approximate). But then the same assessment would probably prove applicable as well to the case where Black, in response to 1 e4, instead of 1...e5 or 1...c5, chose some other reply, such as 1...d6 or 1...Nf6 – but that doesn’t stop aficionados of the Pirc-Ufimtsev or Alekhine’s Defenses from employing those openings.

What’s important is that Zvjaginsev created a fresh position, in which the players could no longer rely on contemporary opening theory, and had to operate independently, which is never easy.

And if such a thing could happen in the very beginning of a game, then later on the probability of seeing fresh positions must increase considerably. To come up with such positions, we rely on all our experience, and on the strategic and tactical techniques we have learned; however, resolving the position by such means is usually not possible. Some room almost always remains, both for independent creativity, and for mistakes.

Let us return to the situation on the board after Zvjaginsev’s move. The most aggressive

replies are 2...d5 or 2...Nf6. Should Black play one of these moves? 2...Nc6 could be met by 3 Bb5 – what new angle does the knight's position at a3 bring to this position, compared to the usual variations; which side does it favor? Does White plan to continue f2-f4, taking advantage of the fact that his king's knight is not developed yet? It could very well be that he has in mind the King's Indian Reversed setup, with d2-d3, g2-g3, and Bf1-g2, but with the queen's knight unusually placed: what arrangement of forces should be employed against such a plan?

It's interesting that, in commenting on the game Zvjaginsev – Khalifman at the [www.e3e5.com](http://www.e3e5.com) website, openings expert GM Sakaev suggested 2...b6 as the best reaction. In the opinion of Zvjaginsev, and also of Motylev, who was preparing for the move 2 Na3 before his own game against Vadim, Sakaev's recommendation is not very good. The question isn't who's right: what's important is that the problem turned out to be quite a complex one, even for leading specialists.

And so, there are creative opportunities, even at the very beginning of the game. But this fact doesn't change the reality that the overwhelming majority of players prefer to follow well-trodden paths. And if they do seek out new ideas and improvements, then it is only at the end of lengthy theoretical variations. The result, as we have already noted, is that for a considerable number of games, the outcome of the battle is predetermined – even before it starts.

We can sense the other side of opening theory's negative influence if we consider what a chessplayer occupies himself with in the time between tournaments. He must spend by far the greater part of his time trying to come to grips with enormous amounts of information. He must examine the opening phase of new games that have been played in those variations that form his repertoire; he must catalogue all the useful games into the systems he is trying to learn. It is useful to examine analyses posted on websites, in magazines and opening books; it is necessary to check the information so acquired on a computer, to expose any weaknesses therein, to examine carefully the complications arising in many sub-variations, to look for new ideas. As the tournament draws nearer – and during the tournament itself – it's important to see what his opponents are playing, to pinpoint weaknesses in their repertoire, and to select the appropriate weapon from his own. Since his opponents will, as a rule, make a practice of varying the openings they use, he will have to prepare himself on several fronts simultaneously, and also to expect surprises. Memorizing this immense load of information is impossible, which means it must be constantly repeated. The fear of forgetting one's analysis during the game chokes many of us (as I know from personal experience). And so, the work goes on, day after day, much of it not even creative, but merely technical. Does that sound like an enjoyable life to you?

Now, let's dream for a bit. Imagine that stone has been lifted from your shoulders, that opening information has all disappeared somewhere, and that the Sisyphean labor described above is no longer necessary.

How much fuller and more interesting the chessplayer's life would be! Professional preparation would take on a completely different aspect. Our colleagues' games would no longer be studied for ways to catch them in the opening, but in order to understand their particular kind of creativity, to choose the most appropriate strategy against them, and at the same time to introduce some newly-discovered playing methods into our own arsenal. There would be time to delve more deeply into our own game, and then to give it a good strengthening, with the aid of some directed training methods, while at the same time devoting more attention to physical and psychological preparation – the result would be an increase in the level of chessplaying in general. The outcome of the struggle would be decided purely over the board, by one's mastery of chess, and not by home computer analyses and one's ability to memorize. The pages of chess books and magazines devoted

to indexes of opening variations would be replaced by pithy analysis of well-played games and fragments, articles on creative problems, and discussions that might involve leading grandmasters, no longer suffering from the time-shortages they have today. They could meet with chess amateurs more often, and share their experience with young players.

I remain convinced that chess in its present form is moving gradually towards a dead end, and must inescapably lose its current stature in the life of society. The first sign to appear – indeed, it's already appearing, in part – will be the straitened financial circumstances of masters and grandmasters; after them will come the trainers, the authors of books and articles – almost every inhabitant of the chess world, in fact, except for the bureaucrats, who always seem able to take care of themselves.

For chess to make progress requires changes; and one of the most important changes must be the realization of that fantasy which I have just described.

But how do we turn it into reality? One possible way already exists, and has been tested in several tournaments. I'm talking about Chess-960, or Fischer-random.

## **5. Chess-960**

The rules offered by Robert Fischer for this form of chess are the same (except for the changes required in castling), but the initial setup of the pieces changes. The pieces are set up behind the pawns on the first rank at random – that is, by lot, with the black pieces arranged the same as White's. There are some restrictions: the bishops must still start on different colors, and the rooks must be on opposite sides of the king. There are 960 possible variations of the opening position.

Clearly, opening preparation would be senseless in Fischer-random, since it's impossible to know which position you'd have to play; still less would you be able to know how your opponent would play it. Creating and memorizing an entire system of opening variations for each of the 960 possible setups would be unrealistic. You have to create, starting with move one.

I've never played this game myself, but many of my friends and students have taken part in the traditional Fischer-random tournaments in Mainz. Most of them liked the new game. They were very happy not to have to waste time preparing for the game, and it was interesting to test themselves and compete with their opponents in solving original tasks. That being the case, one can only welcome the continued hosting of such events, and hope there will eventually be more of them.

But this can hardly mean that chess-960 should be promoted as the designated successor to everyday chess. Most of us love playing blitz, but nobody (well, except for GM Tkachiev – I just remembered him) is suggesting we should replace serious chess with blitz. The problems involved with such an enormous change in the rules should be examined from all sides and tested, with all aspects considered in order to find out whether there are drawbacks that might prove dangerous to the future of chess.

The first things that springs to mind is the original shape that play takes from the very first moves, and the almost complete lack of any connection with the usual strategic schemes. Some will be scared off by the unusual nature of the resulting positions; others will like it – but one could hardly give a definite answer as to whether this is a bad or a good thing. It's a question of one's own system of likes and dislikes, and everybody's different.

Let's approach the problem from a different angle. The basis of our attraction to chess comes from sporting as well as esthetic elements. The former involves, for players, the

battle for victory; for the spectators, it's the intrigue of a tournament, "rooting" for one player or the other, determining a champion. Obviously, changing over to chess-960 would cost us nothing from the sporting standpoint – on the contrary, the battle would probably grow even fiercer.

The esthetic element, for the player, is expressed through his joy in finding and successfully executing over the board beautiful and hard-to-find ideas. The spectators (and most of us find ourselves on both sides: sometimes we play, sometimes we watch) gain enjoyment from the players' discoveries, usually after the fact when they play over already-played games. Then they can enjoy not only the moves actually played, but also the sharp ideas that remained behind the scenes, yet were noted in commentaries. The best examples of chess creativity are retained for many years, examined repeatedly in the pages of magazines and books, giving joy to new chess enthusiasts, increasing their love for our game, and their respect for its leading specialists, capable of creating such beauty over the board. Here, I see a most important distinguishing feature of chess, separating it from any other form of sport in which the most interesting part of the game is over when the tournament concludes. This is one of our trump cards, and we must not, under any circumstances, devalue the creative element of the game of chess.

One of the main criteria of beauty (along with subtlety and originality) is the soundness, the correctness of the moves, of the individual ideas, or of entire games. And here is where I have some doubts about the future of chess-960.

Recall our examination of Zvjaginsev's novelty. Into the standard Sicilian position one fresh element is introduced, and immediately we have problems not easily solved over the board. But there, we could at least give a qualified assessment of the plusses and minuses of this or that way of continuing the game, since we could refer to a known setup of the remaining pieces, and tested plans of action in similar situations.

But in Fischer chess, where the majority of the pieces – if not all of them – are standing in unusual positions, we must deal with many new and unknown elements. As a result, a chessplayer has almost nothing to refer to in looking for a move; he's playing "without line or compass."

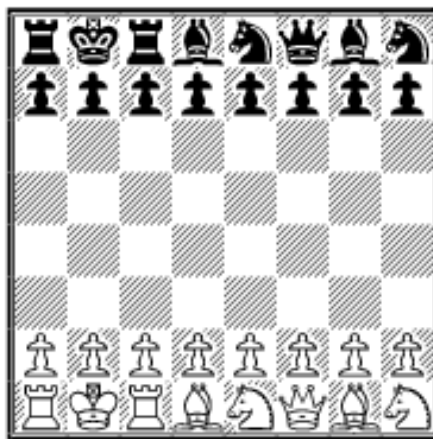
I can assure you that even leading grandmasters play a weak game of chess-960, full of both strategic and tactical errors. Some of these blunders are immediately evident; others are not easily uncovered, even during analysis, in view of the absence of reliable and proven positional benchmarks. Fine, deeply considered decisions, close to the level of the best achievements of traditional chess, become practically impossible. True, somewhere in the midst of the middlegame, the position usually begins to look something like "normal" – that is, familiar to us. But by that time, the players already have no thinking time left, because they had to use it all resolving the hugely complex problems of planned development from the very first moves. So these games almost never show us any aesthetic value.

If we remember how hard it can be to discover the secrets of a position even in traditional chess, where we can refer to many generations' worth of experience, what I'm saying becomes logically obvious. Nonetheless, I shall illustrate my idea with a concrete example.

Grandmaster Yusupov showed me the opening of two games from the Mainz tournament of 2005, both played in the same round. On that day, the game began with the following position:



*Aronian – Bacrot*

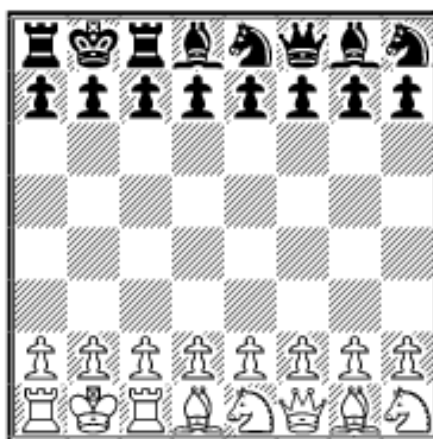


**1 e4 e5 2 Nd3 Ng6?! 3 f4! Bf6? (3...Nf6) 4 Nc5 Rd8 5 Qb5 Nd6 6 Nxd7+ Rxd7 7 Qxd7, and White parlayed his exchange plus into a win.**

What's to be said about this? Levon Aronian spotted one of the tactical peculiarities of this starting position: the weakness at d7. He chose a developmental scheme, allowing him to mount a quick attack on this weakness in his opponent's camp (while simultaneously attacking another one at b7). His opponent, meanwhile, brought out his

pieces with no suspicion of the danger threatening him.

The same motifs appeared in the following game, where it was Black who exploited the weakness at d2.



### *Hertneck – Morozevich*

**1 d4** This move looks weaker than 1 e4, since it doesn't open any lines for White's pieces. Evidently, Hertneck intended to develop the knight at d3, but did not wish to place it in front of the pawn. This is a positional consideration taken from classical chess, laid down as a rule back in the 18th century, as far back as Philidor. But is it correct to follow it in this situation? Nobody knows.

**1...f5 2 Nd3 Nf6 3 f3 g5** Strange. Instead of developing his pieces and fighting for the center, Alexander Morozevich advances a wing pawn – apparently for the same reason that I used to explain Gerald Hertneck's opening move: he wanted to develop the knight on g6.

**4 e4 fe 5 fe? Nxe4!** The queen is untouchable, because of the mate on d2.

Clearly the German GM overlooked an elementary tactical shot, although after **6 Qe1**, he definitely had compensation for the pawn in the form of Black's lagging development (Morozevich went on to win the game).

White should have played 5 Nc5, with threats of 6 Qb5, 6 Nxb7 and 6 fe. Black would probably have had to protect his queenside with the "non-standard" 6...c6 7 fe Rc7 (without fear of 8 e5? Ne4!), but the position looks better for White. On the other hand, I wouldn't stake my life on any of my evaluations so far.

This is all very curious and funny – but that's all. The level of play demonstrated here by grandmasters isn't much different from (to take an example from traditional chess) the efforts, successful or unsuccessful, to exploit the weakness at f7 from the starting position, and deliver the "scholars mate." Of course we need to take into account the fact that in Mainz, the games were played in rapid chess; however, I suspect that, even under a classical time-control, the quality of play would not have risen very much.

In the early days of chess, many such naïve games were played. As experience grew, so did the understanding of the principles of opening play; new schemes of battle appeared and



were worked upon, and those that didn't work out were tossed aside. For example, it became clear that certain gambits were not too promising; others, by contrast (like the Queen's Gambit), were positionally well-founded. Some excessively categorical statements (such as Tarrasch's thesis that it's wrong to accept the Queen's Gambit, because the white bishop can then get to c4 in one move, without loss of tempo) appeared, and then lost their power. The conception that one need not occupy the center with pawns, but could attack it with pieces instead, proved viable. And it was this kind of idea-filled development of views on the opening that undoubtedly aided the progress of chess – it was a positive thing, until the time came when the process had grown into an enormous mass of purely concrete information, needing daily absorption by generations of modern chess players.

But in chess-960, there will be practically no accumulation of experience: there are too many opening positions, and too many differences between them. And thus, the concept of the opening phase will find itself frozen, for a long time, at a childhood level.

Let me summarize, briefly: Playing Fischer-random is undoubtedly interesting (and probably even useful: overcoming routine, and developing an unfettered approach to the position). But studying played games is of no interest, because it's almost impossible for anything creatively important to come from them (when measured against the level that both amateurs and experts in classical chess have grown accustomed to). So switching to this new game involves a serious risk that we may lose the aesthetic element of chess – and consequently, a great number of its adherents.

## **6. An Alternative Suggestion**

It's not an easy thing, psychologically, to abandon centuries of tradition. But if it has to be done, then let us try to reach the goal we have set (in this case, getting rid of opening theory) by the most economic means, with the smallest possible changes. In this regard, I suggest a different path, one less radical than Fischer chess.

Let's take the usual opening position. Make one move each of a black and white pawn, chosen at random, one square forward (and the moves don't have to mirror each other); then begin play. This gives us only 64 variants of the starting position, some of which will slightly decrease the advantage of the first move, while others will increase it slightly – but this is not so terrible. Most likely, some combinations of these first moves will give too much of an advantage to one side (such as 1 d3 f6, leaving Black with great difficulties in developing his king's knight) – so we will exclude them. That leaves roughly fifty variants. This number could also be increased, if we add the opening knight moves (though not all of them: after 1 Nf3 Nf6, for example, we reach a position that has already occurred numerous times in practice, which is not what we want). If it should ever prove necessary sharply to increase the number of opening positions, then we could specify that each side gets two opening moves, instead of one. This would add a few hundred more variants unknown to contemporary theory, which at the same time would still be practically balanced.

On the other hand, just one pair of opening moves would be sufficient to take today's theory off the table. And the new theory, which would inevitably appear, would no longer consist of piles of just-played games and computer work-throughs (not knowing what position would be played, or how my opponent would play it, there would be no point in stuffing my head with endless analyses). What will be studied will be the basic strategic motifs behind various opening setups (for example, if the move f2-f3 is played, then it would be a good idea to develop the knight via h3 to f2), as well as the possibility of adapting various plans that were worked out for traditional chess into the new circumstances. For the positions that will be reached will be very similar to those we are familiar with, so the principles of opening strategy will hardly change, and the experience of all those centuries of dealing with the opening will remain at chess players' disposal.

We can see that this suggested form of chess achieves the same goal as chess-960: it frees chess players from all that grinding home preparation, and forces them to think for themselves from the very first moves. But the changes will be less radical (a normal position will arise, but one containing just one or two new elements), chess players will find it easier to get used to, and there will be no significant loss in the quality of play. Everything that's important in our accumulated heritage will be retained, including the best examples of how to solve the problems of the opening (since the tasks to be solved will be very similar). And the technical aspect (that is, recording of games, and using computer programs) of moving to this kind of variant will be much simpler than Fischer-random, since the usual starting position is used as our basis.

We should give the American grandmaster his due; he did not simply come up with the idea of scattering the pieces at will across the back rank (as had already been suggested before), but worked out precise rules for this new game. I have merely described a scheme that will require considerable working out – although I don't think it would be too complex.

It would be good if my suggestion attracted enough interest to be tested in practice. A few tournaments played under these rules (just like the ones played under Fischer rules) would help give a better understanding of the new playing variants, and demonstrate their strong and weak points. If this or some other new form of chess achieved popularity, it would inevitably acquire official status, at which point it would become possible for the majority of fans and professionals alike to move to a kind of chess where opponents would test each other's mastery, and not the results of their computers' homework and their own memorizing skills. The future will show if such projects will remain in Utopia, or turn into reality.



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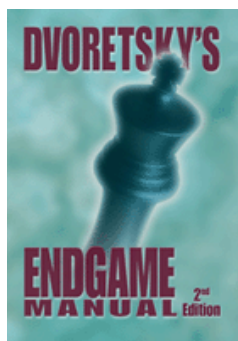
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## Greed is Good

It's not a surprise when a grandmaster suffers defeat against high-class opposition. But when he does more than just carry a negative score against him, when he loses every game – now it's time to start thinking about whether his playing style possesses some inherent shortcomings, or whether his understanding of the game is somehow defective.

Frank Marshall was one of the strongest players of his time, scoring many victories in tournaments and matches. But all his matches against Siegbert Tarrasch, José Raúl Capablanca, and Emanuel Lasker ended badly for him: in each of them, he lost eight times, winning only one game out of the first two matches; and against Lasker, he couldn't win a single one.

Such enormous superiority, however, did not mean that the games were won automatically, "on class," without any special effort. Sometimes, the outcome of the struggle remained unclear for a long time; the winner had to display all his skill. That's what happened in the following encounter, played at the start of a match for the world championship, which had a great influence on the match's further course.

[In this article and the next, several analyses are labeled "Vainshtein"; these are from Boris Vainshtein's great study of Emanuel Lasker, titled simply, *The Thinker* – Tr.]

**Lasker – Marshall**

New York Match (2), 1907

**1 e2-e4 e7-e6 2 d2-d4 d7-d5 3 Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4 Bf1-d3?!**

These days, it's likely that no one remembers anyone ever playing anything other than the two main moves, 4 Bg5 and 4 e5.

In his opening play, Lasker of course considered the principle formulated in his *Manual of Chess*: **knights should be developed before bishops**. But great chessplayers were never slaves to any formal rules – they could break them easily when they saw a concrete basis for it. And in general, in chess, **rules are a wonderful servant, but a terrible master** – that's a pithy statement from the English player and trainer Steven James (which I found in Jonathan Rowson's excellent book, *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*).

**4...c7-c5!****5 e4xd5?!**

This careless opening play was a characteristic of the second World Champion. Savielly Tartakower wrote – **Lasker is the only grandmaster who, even in the opening phase, can allow himself the luxury of making second-rate moves.**

In his next two "white" games of this match, Lasker played 5 Nf3, and won all three – but not, of course, because of any advantages of his chosen opening. He opened this way in later games, too. For example, against Efim Bogoljubow (Zurich 1934), or Andor Lilienthal (Moscow 1935).

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### 5...c5xd4! 6 Bd3-b5+

White could also have played 6 Nb5 Nd5 7 Nxd4. A game Ljubojevic – Padevsky (Amsterdam 1972) continued: 7... Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Qg5 9 Bxb4 Nxb4 10 Ngf3 Nxd3+ 11 Qxd3 Qa5 +, with equality.

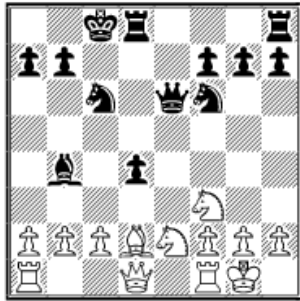
### 6...Bc8-d7 7 Bb5xd7+

Of course not 7 de? Bxb5 8 Nxb5 Qa5+. 7 Qxd4 Bxb5 8 Nxb5 Nxd5 9 Ne2 Nc6 10 Qa4 a6 11 Nbd4 Nb6 12 Nxc6 Nxa4 13 Nxd8 Rxd8 led to a more pleasant endgame for Black in Steinitz – Blackburne, Vienna 1873.

### 7...Qd8xd7 8 d5xe6

8 Qxd4 Nc6 9 Qd1 ed=/+ (Paoli – Wade, Bucharest 1954).

### 8...Qd7xe6+ 9 Nc3-e2 Nb8-c6 10 Ng1-f3 Bf8-b4+ 11 Bc1-d2 0-0-0 12 0-0



**Even a cursory glance at the board will convince you that Black has a noticeable advantage here** (Dawid Janowsky). In fact, the position is still about equal, although it probably would be easier and more pleasant to play Black.

### 12...Rh8-e8 13 Ne2-f4

White could maintain equality without difficulty after 13 Bxb4!? Qxe2 14 Bd2 or 14 a3, but Lasker avoids simplification. If that's what he wanted, however, it would have been more accurate to continue 13 Re1!?, maintaining the pressure on d4 for the time being.

### 13...Qe6-g4

13...Qf5!?=/+ at once was simpler. Marshall provokes h2-h3, to obtain a target for opening lines on the kingside by g7-g5-g4.

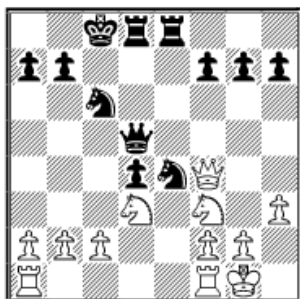
### 14 h2-h3 Qg4-f5 15 Nf4-d3

**White's position is so bad, that it's hard to find any other move** (Janowsky). No, his position certainly isn't bad; on the other hand, the text move is indeed strongest. On 15 Re1, there follows 15...Rxe1+ (the immediate 15...g5 would be much worse, as White first exchanges on e8 and b4 before retreating the knight) 16 Nxe1 Bxd2 17 Qxd2 Ne4 18 Qc1 g5 19 Nfd3 h5, when Black holds the initiative.

### 15...Bb4xd2 16 Qd1xd2?!

An imperceptible, but significant inaccuracy. 16 Nxd2 (preparing 17 Qf3) was correct, and if 16...Ne5, then 17 Nxe5 and 18 Nf3, with roughly equal chances.

### 16...Nf6-e4 17 Qd2-f4 Qf5-d5!



Of course, Black doesn't want to trade queens: right now, he's threatening a kingside attack, beginning with g7-g5 or f7-f5.

### 18 Qf4-g4+!

A typically Laskerian heroic solution. He bravely snatches the g7-pawn, granting his opponent an open line against his own

king, and apparently making it easier for him to mount his attack.

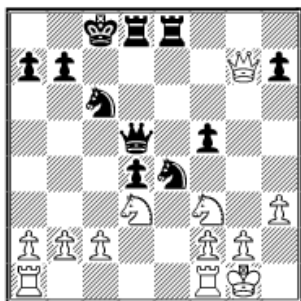
But Black is going to get his attack anyway, and Lasker could see no immediate loss after the pawn capture – which meant that it would be up to Marshall to choose among several tempting continuations, to seek out the accurate moves. **In fact, Black's task becomes more complicated than it would be if the attack were allowed to develop quietly. This not only increases the likelihood of errors, but also their cost (the consequence of his opponent having a pawn more). In addition, having a material advantage adds to the arsenal of defensive resources: possibilities now include the sacrifice of a pawn, or two, or the exchange, etc.**

White's decision is based as much on purely chess calculating as on psychological considerations. And we're certainly not speaking here of Marshall's peculiarities of character or style of play (Lasker's opponent was an aggressive player who loved to attack, which would ordinarily mean that one should prefer a quieter game against him). Here we're working with "the psychology of the opponent in the abstract," in which we confront our opponent (any opponent, including Marshall) with more difficult problems from a practical standpoint.

### 18...f7-f5

After the cautious 18...Qe6, it would no longer be a good idea for White to grab the pawn: 19 Qxg7? Rg8 20 Qxh7 Rh8 21 Nf4 (21 Qg7 Rdg8+ ) 21...Rxh7 22 Nxe6 fe, when Black would be up a piece (for two pawns). But then, the exchange of queens by 19 Qxe6+ Rxe6 would have transposed into an approximately equal endgame. Marshall was a courageous player; understandably, he preferred a more principled approach.

### 19 Qg4xg7

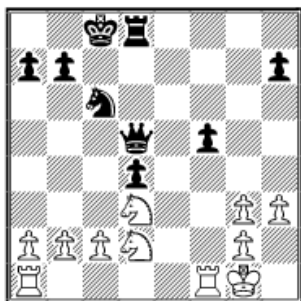


### 19...Re8-g8?

A natural move, but a mistake. Black had a strong and attractive shot at his disposal: **19...Nd2! 20 Nxd2 Rg8.**

Undoubtedly, Lasker had foreseen this possibility. He had seen not only the counterstroke 21 Nf4!?, but also the "fallback exit":

**21 Qg3!?** Rxg3 22 fg (and it was this line that he had intended to play).



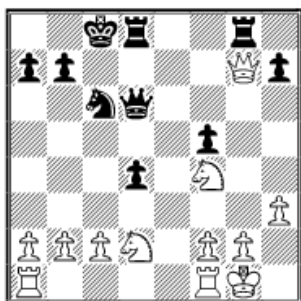
For the queen, White has rook, knight and pawn; his pieces are well placed, Black's attack is over – he could rightly have faced the future with confidence, even though, objectively speaking, Black's position would still have been preferable. Later Tarrasch, who wrote a book about the

match, demonstrated that Black was winning here. Lasker, however, disagreed with his assessment, and pointed out errors in several of his variations. It would have been interesting to have tested the grandmasters' analysis; unfortunately, I do not have the record of this discussion.

It's worth noting that, once we find a reserve possibility like 21 Qg3!? over the board, which doesn't require much calculation, we avoid the necessity of making a close study of the principal continuation (21 Nf4). This in turn means that we can come to our decision much more easily and quickly: in this case, we can establish that the pawn at g7 may be taken, because the 19...Nd2 shot is not fatal. The search for the "fallback exit" is an important practical technique, which renders decision-making quicker and easier.

Now, why didn't Marshall follow this line? Perhaps he simply failed to see 19...Nd2!, or perhaps he didn't like the position after 21 Qg3, or he hadn't been able to calculate fully the consequences of 21 Nf4 – or finally, the grandmaster might have been led astray by some other idea when he selected the continuation 19...Rg8.

By the way, White's position holds after **21 Nf4!? Qd6**, as well. However, this requires extraordinary accuracy.



On 22 Qxh7 Qxf4, White's in bad shape. 23 Nb3? Qf3! 24 g3 Rh8 would lose immediately. 23 Rad1 Qg5 24 g3 wouldn't be much better: the most energetic response is 24...Rd7! 25 h4 Qg4 26 Qh6 f4 27 Ne4 fg 28 Nxg3 Ne5+ (Dvoretsky).

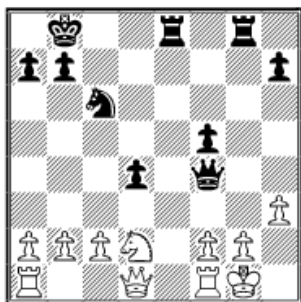
Another possibility, which was mentioned in the old annotations, is

24...Ne5 (threatening 25...Rh8 or 25...Rd7) 25 h4 Qf6 26 Qh5 Rg4+, with 27...Rdg8 to follow – of course, in this case, Black would have to consider the queen sacrifice 25 Rfe1 Rh8 26 Qxh8 Rxh8 27 Rxe5-/+.

White must play **22 Qf7! Qxf4**, and now the knight has to be defended, one way or another. The question now is whether or not to check on e6.

A) 23 Qe6+ Kb8

A1) 24 Qe2 Rde8 25 Qd1

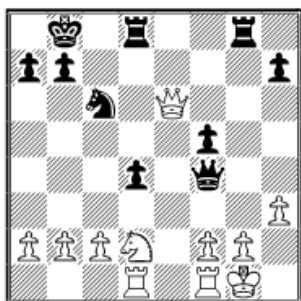


Vainshtein suggests 25... Rxg2+? 26 Kxg2 Rg8+ 27 Kh1 Qh4, but this is clearly wrong: after 28 Qf3! Ne5 29 Qxf5 or 29 Qb3, it's White who is winning.

Black maintains a very dangerous attack with 25...Ne5 26 f3 (the only defense to the threatened 26... Qxd2! and 26...Rxg2!) 26...

d3 or 26...Ng6. Another very strong line is 25...Qg5 26 g3 Re3! 27 Kh1 (27 Nf3 Qf4!-+) 27...Qh4! 28 Nf3 (there's nothing else) 28...Qxh3+ 29 Nh2 Re6-/+.

A2) 24 Rad1

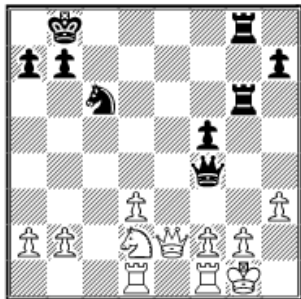


The following variation is from Vainshtein's book (and, like many other variations, it was probably found decades earlier): 24...Qg5 25 g3 Rge8 26 Qb3 Re3! The rook is taboo, or else a quick mate follows: 27 fe? Qxg3+ 28 Kh1 Qxh3+ 29 Kg1 Qg3+ 30 Kh1 Rd6. And 27 Nf3! Rxb3 28 Nxg5 Rxb2 leads to a difficult endgame for White.

The defense can be strengthened by the intermediate move 26 Nf3! (instead of 26 Qb3?), when Black has a choice between a roughly equal endgame after 26...Rxe6 27 Nxg5 Re2, or an unclear middlegame after 26...Qh5 27 Qb3 – Black no longer has 27...d3, and 27...Qxh3 is met by 28 Rfe1.

Black needs to attack in a different way: 24...Rg6! 25 Qe2 (other retreats are still worse: 25 Qb3 d3!, or 25 Qe1 Rdg8 26 g3 Qh6, threatening to catch the queen by 27...Re6) 25...d3! 26

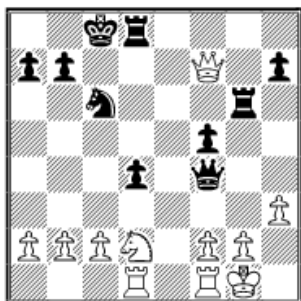
cd Rdg8.



On 27 g3, 27...Nd4 28 Kh1 (28 Qe1 Re6+) 28...Nxe2 29 gf Rh6 decides. And 27 Qf3 Qd6! 28 Nc4 Nd4!+ or 28 Nb3 Ne5+ is no better.

B) **23 Rad1!** This move must be made first, in order to give Black no time to double his rooks on the g-file.

B1) 23...Rg6

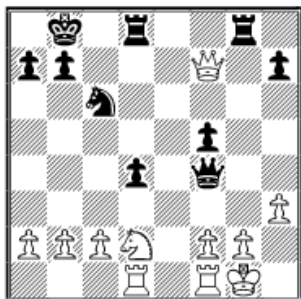


Here is where Vainshtein ends his analysis – too soon, as White now has new defensive possibilities.

The variation 24 Kh1 Qg5 25 Rg1 Ne5 26 Qb3 d3! 27 cd Ng4 28 Rgf1! Ne3 29 Rg1 Nxd1 30 Qxd1 Kb8 would leave Black with winning chances.

But after 24 g3!, he is worse after either 24...Rdg8?! 25 Kh1 or 24...Qg5?! 25 Rfe1. He would have to give perpetual check by 24...Rxcg3+ 25 fg Qxcg3 + 26 Kh1 Qxh3+ 27 Kg1, as he can't bring either the other rook or the knight into the attack.

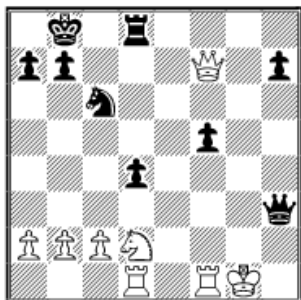
B2) **23...Kb8!?**



A well-known technique: such quiet king moves sometimes improve one's general strategic position, and they can also prove useful in some concrete variations.

For example, the defensive maneuver that works well after 23...Rg6, could here be put in doubt.

24 g3? Rxcg3+! 25 fg Qxcg3+ 26 Kh1 Qxh3+ 27 Kg1



The only way to play for the win here must involve the move Ne5. But the immediate 27...Ne5?! allows White a successful defense by 28 Qe6! or 28 Qg7!. Both of these squares have to be brought under control, by moving the queen to h6 (to my mind, a subtle and beautiful maneuver!).

27...Qg3+ 28 Kh1 Qh4+! (on 28...Rg8? there is the only, but sufficient defense 29 Rf2! +-) 29 Kg2 Qg5+ 30 Kh1 (30 Kf2? Rg8+-) 30...Qh6+! 31 Kg2 Ne5! (clearly, with the king still on c8, this move would fail because the capture on f5 comes with check) 32 Qb3 d3!



A simple plan: a check with the queen, followed by Rg8, which practically forces White to give up his queen for the rook. Black keeps an extra pawn or two, which means he can go



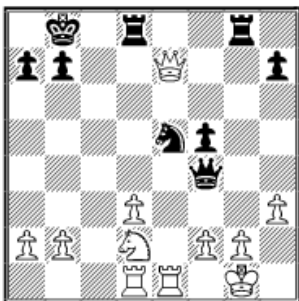
on trying to win.

On 33 Rf3 f4! is strong:  
34 cd Qg6+ 35 Kf1 Rg8,  
and if 36 Rf2, then 36...  
Nxd3 37 Qd5 Nxf2 38 Qe5

+ Ka8 39 Kxf2 Qg3+ 40 Ke2 Qg4+! 41 Kf1 f3-+.

33 Nf3 is better: 33...Qg6+ 34 Kh1 Nxf3 35 Rxf3 Rg8 36 Qxg8  
+ Qxg8 37 Rfxd3 (or 37 cd) 37...Qxa2-/+.

On the other hand, White doesn't have to allow the rook sacrifice on g3. By playing the simple **24 Rfe1!**, he maintains a secure position. For example, 23...d3 25 cd Ne5 26 Qe7 (26 Qf6 Nxd3 27 Re2 Rd6 28 Qf7 = is also possible)

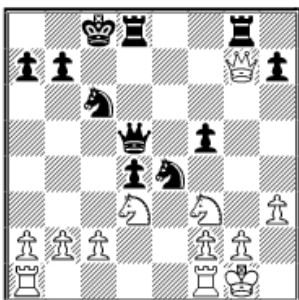


On 26...Nxd3?!, there's a pretty riposte: 27 Nf3! Qxf3 28 Qxd8+! Rxd8 29 gf Rg8+ 30 Kh2 (or 30 Kf1) 30...Nxe1 31 Rxe1, when White has the better of the rook endgame. Black holds the balance after 26...Rge8 27 Qa3 (or 27 Qf6 Rxd3 28 Re2 a6 =) 27...Rg8! 28 d4!? (28 Qe7 =>) 28...Qxd4 (28...Rxd4 29 Ob3!±) 29 Nf3 Qxd1

30 Rxd1 Rxd1+ 31 Kh2 Rd3 32 Qe7 Nxf3+ 33 gf Rd2 (but not 33...Rxf3?? 34 Qe2!+-) 34 Qe3 Rc2.

To sum up: after 19...Nd2! 20 Nxd2 Rg8, Lasker was not forced to sacrifice his queen – he would only have had to find three accurate moves: 21 Nf4!? Qd6 22 Qf7! Qxf4 23 Rad1, and the position would have remained approximately equal. And that means he made the right choice, not just from the psychological standpoint, but objectively, as well.

Rejecting the tactical shot 19...Nd2! (or else failing to notice it), Marshall got into serious difficulties.



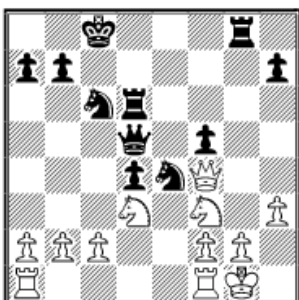
## 20 Qg7-h6

White would lose after 20 Qxh7? Nf6! (20...Nd2 21 Nh4, or 20...Rxc2+ 21 Kxc2 Ng5 22 Qh5 Nxf3 23 Kh1! are less convincing) 21 Qh4 Qxf3 22 Ne1 Qh5! (just not 22...Rxc2+? 23 Kh1!) 23 Qxf6 Rg6, as he loses his queen.

## 20...Ne4-d2

Delayed, this shot leads only to the exchange of knights; and exchanges are, in principle, good for the defender.

But even after 20...Rd6 21 Qf4, there seems to be no effective means of continuing the attack.



21...Nd2 22 Qxd2 Qxf3 23 g3 Rdg6 is useless: White replies with either 24 Nf4!?, or 24 Kh2!?, with no fear of 24...Rxc3? 25 fg Qxc3+ 26 Kh1+-.

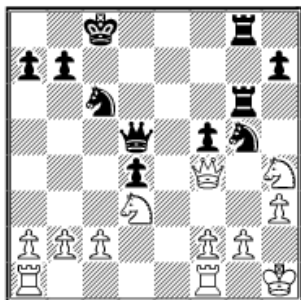
On 21...Rdg6, there follows 22 Nh4 Ng5 (22...Rxc2+? 23 Nxc2 Ng5 does not work, in view of 24 Kh1! Nxc3 25 Qh2+-) 23 Kh1! (threatening 24 Qxf5+); (threatening 24 Qxf5+);

23 Kh2 Ne6 24 Qf3 Rxc2+ would be less accurate).



The line 23...Nxh3 24 Qxf5





+ Qxf5 25 Nxf5 Rxc2 26 Ng3 R8xg3 27 fg Rxc3 or 27...Rxc2 leaves Black the exchange down for the endgame, with only minimal saving chances.

On the other hand, protecting the pawn by 23...Rf6 also fails to cure Black's troubles.

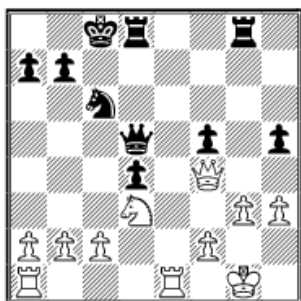
White keeps the

better position with either 24 Nf3 or 24 Rae1 Nxb3 25 Qf3 Qxf3 26 Nxf3 Ng5 27 Nxg5. And the simple 24 Kh2! is stronger still; for example, 24...Ne6 25 Qf3 Qd6+ (25...Qe4 26 g3 Ng5 27 Qh5 ±) 26 Kh1 Ng5 27 Qg3! Qxc3 28 fg Ne4 29 Kh2! Nxg3 30 Rf3 ±. It's amusing that White can solve his problems by simply shuffling his king back and forth – exactly as set forth in Steinitz's theory that: **The king is a strong piece, and can take care of itself.**

## 21 Qh6xd2 Qd5xf3 22 g2-g3

Of course not 22 Nf4?? Rxc2+ 23 Nxg2 Rg8–+.

## 22...h7-h5 23 Qd2-f4 Qf3-d5 24 Rf1-e1



## 24...Rd8-e8

24...h4 25 Qxh4 Rh8 would be useless, in view of 26 Qf6! (but not 26 Nf4? Qf7 27 Qg5 Rdg8–+) 26...Rxb3 27 Qe6+ Qxe6 28 Rxe6 Rbh8 29 Rae1+– (Vainshtein).

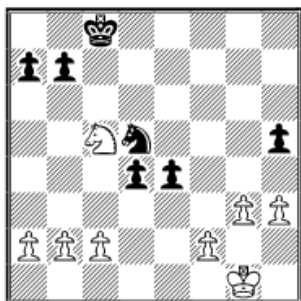
## 25 Re1xe8+ Rg8xe8 26 Ra1-e1 Re8-e4

Here's one more variation out of the old commentaries: the queenside sortie 26...Rxe1+ 27 Nxe1 Nb4 28 a3 d3 is easily refuted by 29 cd (29 Nxd3 would also be good) 29...Nxd3 30 Qd2+–.

## 27 Qf4-g5 Nc6-b4 28 Re1xe4

Perhaps 28 Rc1!+– would have been simpler, or 28 Rd1!? Nxd3 29 cd+–. On the other hand, the path Lasker chooses is also good enough.

## 28...f5xe4 29 Qg5xd5 Nb4xd5 30 Nd3-c5



Now we have reached a knight endgame, with White a pawn up. Lasker confidently realizes his advantage, though not without some help from his opponent.

## 30...e4-e3 31 Nc5-d3 h5-h4?

A nervous move, which makes White's

task significantly easier. Marshall gives up a pawn for some reason, while also granting White an outside passed pawn. Of course he should have centralized the king by 31...Kd7.

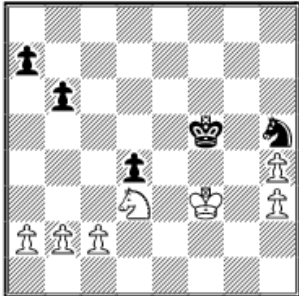
## 32 g3xh4 Kc8-d7 33 Kg1-f1 Kd7-e6 34 Kf1-e2 e3xf2

If 34...Kf5, then 35 fe Nxe3 36 c3+–.

## 35 Ke2xf2 Ke6-f5 36 Kf2-f3 Nd5-f6 37 Nd3-c5 b7-b6 38 Nc5-d3 Nf6-h5



## 39 Nd3-c1!



The knight relocates to e2, where it attacks the d4-pawn, and then to g3, in order to set his passed pawn in motion.

**39...Nh5-f6 40 Nc1-e2 Kf5-e5 41 Ne2-g3 Nf6-d5 42 h4-h5 Nd5-e3**

Of course 42...Nb4 43 h6 Kf6 would have been no help: White continues either with 44 h7 Kg7 45 Nf5+ Kxh7 46 Nxd4, or with 44 Nf5 Kg6 45 Ke4.

**43 h5-h6 Ke5-f6 44 c2-c3! Ne3-d1**

44...dc 45 Kxe3 cb 46 Ne4+, and the knight gets back in time to stop the pawn at b2.

**45 c3xd4 Nd1xb2 46 Ng3-f5 Kf6-g6 47 d4-d5 Nb2-c4 48 Kf3-e4 Nc4-a5 49 d5-d6 Na5-b7 50 Ke4-d5 Nb7-d8 51 d6-d7 a7-a5 52 Nf5-e7+ 1-0**

***Teichmann, Janowsky, Schlechter and Tarrasch demonstrated, with variations almost 20 half-moves deep, that Marshall was winning this game. But Lasker had his own opinion on that score: there was a win indeed, but the path to victory was inaccurately drawn by the commentators...*** (Vainshtein)

But here's a miracle! My own analyses not only show no win – I don't even see a path to any sort of clear advantage for Black!

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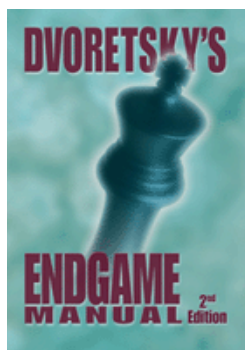
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## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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### Unjustified Greed

In 1975, the English master (soon to become grandmaster) and prolific chess author Raymond Keene published an interesting book, entitled *Learn from the Grandmasters*. He invited many well-known players to participate (I even contributed to a later edition, published in 1998). His co-authors were asked to describe the two games they found most memorable – but only one could be their own.

Viktor Korchnoi annotated a battle between two principal rivals: Siegbert Tarrasch and Emanuel Lasker. His choice was understandable, given that he titled his entry *My Chess Hero*. In fact, among contemporary chessplayers, Korchnoi is the one who comes closest to Lasker, both in his approach to the duel of chess and in his strong fighting character.

#### Tarrasch – Lasker

Dusseldorf/Munchen 1908  
2nd Match Game

1 e2-e4 e7-e5 2 Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3 Bf1-b5 Ng8-f6 4 0-0 d7-d6 5 d2-d4 Bc8-d7 6 Nb1-c3 Bf8-e7 7 Rf1-e1

Some years later, Nimzovich would introduce into practice a different plan, beginning with 7 Bxc6 Bxc6 8 Qd3.

7...e5xd4 8 Nf3xd4 0-0



In the 4th match game, Black played 8... Nxd4 9 Qxd4 Bxb5 10 Nxb5 0-0 (see *School of Chess Excellence 2*, the chapter titled "Form Your Own Opinion").

9 Nd4xc6?!

9 Bf1!? has also been played here, but taking with the bishop has been considered White's strongest: 9 Bxc6 bc, and then either 10 Qf3, 10 Qd3 or 10 Bf4.

9...Bd7xc6

It might be simpler to recapture with the pawn: 9...bc!? 10 Bd3 Re8 (Karl Schlechter suggested 10...Rb8 11 b3 Ng4 =). In a game Tarrasch – Steinitz (Vienna 1898), Black got into a difficult position after 11 h3 Bf8?! 12 Bg5 h6 13 Bh4 Rb8 14 Rb1 g5 15 Bg3 g4 16 Bh4. Savielly Tartakower's opinion was that Black could maintain the balance by 11...h6, followed by Nh7 and Bf6; later, this plan would be employed in practice.

10 Bb5xc6

After 10 Bd3, Black has a choice between the restrained 10...Nd7 and Richard Réti's recommendation, 10...d5!?



Upon 11 ed Nxd5 12 Nxd5, Black will lose a pawn after 12...Qxd5 13 Bxh7+ Kxh7 14 Qxd5 Bxd5 15 Rxe7, although White would have a very hard time exploiting his small material advantage, in view of the opposite-colored bishops. But after 12... Bxd5 13 Bf4, White's temporary initiative, based on the shaky positions of the enemy

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bishops, should be neutralized with careful play.

Nor does White get any advantage with 11 e5 Ne4 12 Qg4 (12 Bxe4 de 13 Qg4 Qd4! =) 12...f5 13 ef Nxf6 14 Qe6+ Rf7, followed by 15...Bd7 and 16...c6.

**10...b7xc6 11 Nc3-e2!?**



White intends to manoeuvre the knight to f5 and exert pressure on the king's wing. There is also an element of psychology in the move chosen by White, who prevents Black from following the natural plan of development for his pieces. If, for example, White plays the natural 11 b3 or 11 Bf4, then Black replies 11...Nd7 and 12...Bf6. The knight move to d7 is normal, but after 11 Ne2, it is no longer sufficient: 11 Ne2 Nd7?! 12 Nd4 c5 13 Nc6 Qe8 14 e5, and White has a clear advantage (Korchnoi).

**11...Qd8-d7?**

The pawn on e4 is of course taboo: 11...Nxe4? 12 Nd4+-; but the text move is also a mistake: it was precisely this move that placed Lasker in a difficult situation.

Zak (and Korchnoi after him) recommends **11...Re8!?** 12 Nd4 c5 13 Nf5 (13 Nc6 Qd7 =) 13...Nd7.

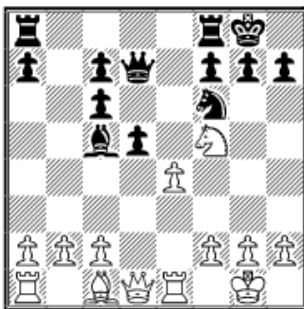


After 14 Qg4 Bf6, Black equalizes, according to the annotators. In my opinion, a non-standard means of adding the queen's rook to the attack is more dangerous: 14 a4! Bf6 15 Ra3, with 16 Rh3 or 16 Rg3 to follow, leaves Black in a seemingly scary situation.

The principled response to Tarrasch's knight maneuver would be an advance in the center: **11...d5!**

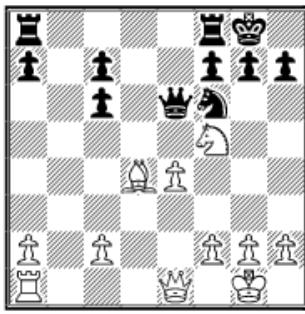
12 e5 Ne4 13 Nd4 Qd7 = (Zak) doesn't offer White an advantage; so **12 Nd4** suggests itself. If Black doesn't want to calculate complex variations, he can certainly reply 12...de!? 13 Nc6 Qe8 14 Nxe7+ Qxe7, without fear of 15 Bg5 Qe5 (attacking the pawn at b2). On the other hand, either 15 Bf4 or 15 Be3 would leave White with the preferable position.

**12...Qd7 13 Nf5 Bc5** leads to a more complex game (13...Rfe8?! 14 Bg5 would be inferior – Korchnoi).



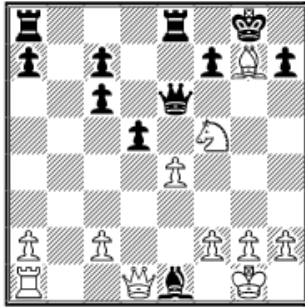
A) Having followed Korchnoi's notes to this position, I immediately spotted a sharp forcing attempt: **14 b4!?** Bxb4 15 Bb2 Unfortunately, it offers White no objective advantage.

**A1) 15...d4?! 16 Bxd4 Bxe1 17 Qxe1 Qe6**



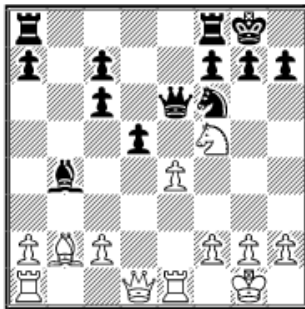
Now the tempting 18 Qe3? doesn't work, in view of 18...Nxe4! 19 Nxg7 Qg6. On the other hand, the simple 18 f3 maintains excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

**A2) 15...Bxe1 16 Bxf6 Qe6 17 Bxg7 Rfe8**



White must refrain from the obvious 18 Qd4?, since Black has the only but sufficient defense 18...c5!-+. And **18 Qxe1 Qxf5! 19 ef Rxe1+ 20 Rxe1 Kxg7** would lead to an approximately equal endgame. White might sharpen it considerably with 21 Re7 Rb8 22 g4 Rb2 23 g5 Rxc2 24 Kg2, hoping to bring off a small-forces kingside attack, but the outcome of such an attack would be difficult to predict.

**A3) 15...Qe6!?**

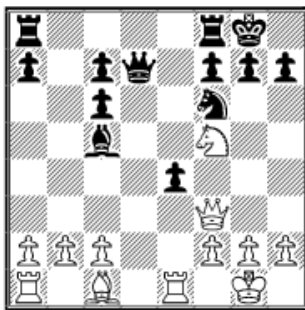


If 16 Re3, hoping for 16...de? 17 Nxg7! Kxg7 18 Rg3+ Kh8 19 Qg4+-, then Black replies 16...Nxe4! 17 Nxg7 Qg6 18 Nh5 Be7 or 18...f5, with a position that may be difficult to assess, but which can hardly be considered good for White.

In the other line, **16 Nxg7!? Kxg7 17 Re3** (17 Qh5? d4! 18 Bxd4 h6-+ is a mistake) **17...d4! 18 Qxd4 Be7 19 Rg3+ Kh8**, White must take the draw after **20 Rf3**, while Black may either accept the repetition

of moves by 20...Kg7 21 Rg3+ Kh8, or play on in a complex endgame after 20...Rfb8 (but not 20...Rab8? 21 Qxf6+! Bxf6 22 Bxf6+ 21 Rxf6 Bxf6 22 Qxf6+ Qxf6 23 Bxf6+ Kg8).

**B) 14 Qf3!? de**



Now Korchnoi examines 15 Rxe4? Nxe4 16 Qg4 Bxf2+ 17 Kf1 Qxf5 18 Qxf5 Rfe8, when Black has sufficient compensation for the queen. But he could get more by 16...g6! 17 Nh6+ Kg7 18 Qxd7 Rad8 19 Nf5+!? (19 Qg4 Nxf2 loses immediately) 19...gf (the most likely outcome of 19...Kh8 20 Qd3! is a draw) 20 Bh6+! Kxh6 21 Qxf5 Rfe8, with an obvious advantage.

White therefore continues **15 Qf4!**, and if **15...Rfd8**, then not 16 Qg5 Bf8, but **16**

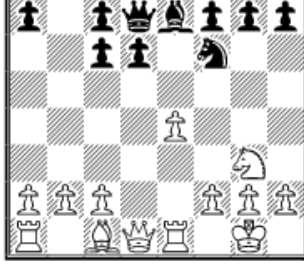
**Nxg7**, keeping somewhat better prospects after either 16...Qd6 17 Nf5 Qxf4 18 Bxf4, or 16...Nd5 17 Nh5 Nxf4 18 Nf6+ Kg7 19 Nxd7 Rxd7 20 Bxf4 f5 21 Rad1 Rad8 22 Rxd7+ Rxd7 23 Kf1. On the other hand, his winning chances would be insignificant; and Black might also defend himself differently: 15...g6!? 16 Ng3 Nd5 17 Nxe4! Rfe8 18 Bd2 Bd4! 19 Qh4 Bxb2 20 Rab1 Bg7, with complete equality.

**12 Ne2-g3**



**12...Rf8-e8**

In Réti's opinion, 12...Rfd8 was preferable,



preparing Rab8 and d6-d5 (after e4-e5, the knight could retreat to e8).

### 13 b2-b3 Ra8-d8

The attempt to free himself by 13...Ng4? 14 Nf5 Bf6? does not work, because of 15 Qxg4 Bxa1 16 Nh6+ (Zak).

Korchnoi believes that Black had to admit his mistake from two moves back, and retreat the queen: 13...Qc8!?. Now 14 Nf5 Bf8, attacking the e4-pawn, is not dangerous for Black (who can also play an immediate 14...Nxe4), and on 14 Bb2, he plays 14...Nd7. On the other hand, continuing this variation by 15 Nh5 g6 14 Qd4 f6 17 Qc4+ Kh8 18 Nf4 makes it clear that Black's position is not easy.

### 14 Bc1-b2



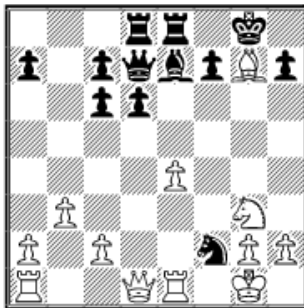
What is Black to do against White's plan of straightforwardly strengthening his position (Nf5, Qf3, etc.)? On 14...Qe6, Korchnoi considers 15 Qf3 strongest, but that's not wholly convincing, in view of 15...Nd7. A more uncomfortable reply may be 15 Qd4!, preparing Nf5, while also attacking the weak pawn at a7. If 15...c5, then 16 Qc3, intending Rad1 and also Qa5 in some lines.

*Any other player would probably have lost this game. But Lasker, correctly assessing the position, once again followed his beloved psychological path. His next move looks like an oversight; but in fact, it's a deliberate pawn sacrifice, with the aim of isolating the e4-pawn... The chief benefit that comes from saddling the opponent with an isolated pawn is not the chance to attack it, but control of the strong square that lies in front of it (here, e5), which may be occupied with pieces. In the further course of the game, Lasker makes skillful use of this resource. But since a game filled with various opportunities for both sides would be more alien to Tarrasch's style than the straightforward weakening of the enemy position, followed by a decisive assault, without any counterplay for the opponent, then Lasker's next move, which would objectively be considered a mistake, turns out, from a psychological point of view, to be unexpectedly masterful (Réti).*

### 14...Nf6-g4!? 15 Bb2xg7!

*One well-known grandmaster says that on 14...Ng4, he would have replied 15 Nf5 without a second thought (Vainshtein). This grandmaster was in error: after 15...Bf6, White loses most of his advantage.*

### 15...Ng4xf2!



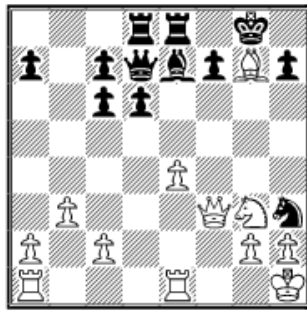
A typical "desperado" counterstroke. 15...Kxg7 16 Nf5+ and 17 Qxg4 would have been just awful. On the other hand, the text move doesn't change the evaluation: from a positional standpoint, the pawns exchanged are not at all equivalent. *I must say...that of the three pawns protecting the king, the most important one is the g-pawn, and to exchange it for the f- or h-pawn is a poor deal (Korchnoi).*

### 16 Kg1xf2?

White could have gone after the a7-pawn by a more effective means – one which has escaped the notice, as far as I can tell, of all the annotators: **16 Qf3!?** Kxg7 (16...Ng4? 17 Nf5+/-) 17 Qxf2+/- . Considering the threat of 18 Nh5+, Black has no time to save the vulnerable rook's pawn, leading to a more favorable version (for White) of the situation in the game.

True, White would have to consider yet another “desperado”-type move: 16... Nh3+!?. After 17 gh Kxg7, White’s advantage is not great: 18 Nh5+ Kh8 19 Nf6 (19 Qxf7? Rg8+ and 20...Rdf8) 19...Bxf6 20 Qxf6+ Kg8 21 Re3 Qe6 22 Rg3+ Kf8 23 Qh4 (23 Qg7+ Ke7 24 Rf1 Rg8+/-) 23...Re7! 24 Qxh7 Ke8+/-.

But he doesn’t have to take the knight: 17 Kh1! is far stronger.



Now 17...Ng5 18 Qc3 Qe6 19 Nf5 Nxe4 20 Rxe4 Qxf5 21 Rae1 d5 (21...Bf8 22 Bxf8 Rxf8 23 Qxc6) 22 R4e3 Rd6 23 Bd4 leads to a lost position. So Black must defend by 17...Kxg7 18 Nf5+ Kh8 (18...Kg8 19 gh! is just bad) 19 Qc3+ f6 20 Qxh3 Bf8 (21 Qh6 was the threat). Although Black’s position remains difficult after 21 Qh4, he can still carry on the fight.

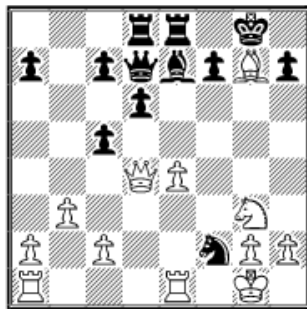
*Instead of winning the pawn, White could have obtained a powerful, irresistible*

*attack after 16. Qd4. A player with an attacking style would doubtlessly have won this game from Lasker. But it would be more accurate to say that, against an attacking player, Lasker would probably never have selected the double-edged continuation 14...Ng4! (Réti).*

Réti continues to insist upon the idea that Black’s risky decision was primarily due to his hope of exploiting the specific nature of Tarrasch’s playing style. This assertion seems questionable to me. The World Champion undoubtedly took into account whom he was playing, but I doubt that this was the overriding factor. I suggest that he would have played exactly the same against any – or practically any – opponent. Lasker’s position, after all, was completely hopeless, and the complications would produce definite practical chances. *Lasker’s vast tactical talent finds the only possible way of complicating the game* (Korchnoi).

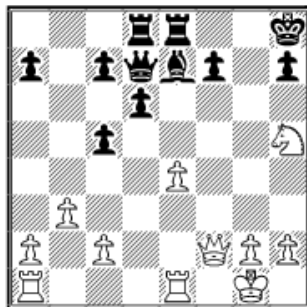
Let’s see what would have happened after the strongest move, **16 Qd4!**

**A) 16...c5?!**



In my view, White’s simplest course would be **17 Qc3!?** Ng4 18 Nf5 (threatening 19 Qg3) 18...Qe6 19 h3 Ne5 20 Re3+-.

Another good line is **17 Qxf2 Kxg7 18 Nh5 + Kh8** (18...Kh6 19 Nf6+-; 18...Kg6 19 Re3+-).



Korchnoi continues with 19 Qxf7, but after 19...Bh4!? 20 Qxd7 Rxd7 21 g3 Re5 22 Nf4 Bf6+/-, Black can defend himself, while after the stronger **19 Nf6!** Bxf6 20 Qxf6+ Kg8 21 Re3 Qe6 22 Rg3+ Kf8 23 Qh4!?, with threats of 24 Rf1 or 24 Qxh7, it doesn’t seem as though Black’s game can be saved. We reached almost the same position in our analysis of the variation 16 Qf3 Nh3+ 17 gh variation – but there, White’s advantage was considerably

lessened by his ruined kingside pawn structure.

**B) 16...Ng4 17 Nf5 Qe6**



White’s task would be simpler after 17...c5 18 Qc3 (a position we have already



examined), or 17...f6 18 h3 Ne5 19 Re3+-, or 17...Bg5 18 h3 Ne5 19 h4!+-.

Here, White has a wide and mostly pleasant choice:

**B1)** In Zak's opinion, the direct **18 Re3?** wins (expecting 18...Nxe3? 19 Nh6+). But Korchnoi found a strong retort: 18...c5! 19

Qc3 Bf6 unclear.

**B2)** Nor is **18 h3** Bf6 19 Bxf6 Nxf6 wholly convincing (Korchnoi): White may have the advantage, but his success isn't guaranteed.

**B3)** On **18 Qc3!?**, Black loses, as Korchnoi notes, after 18...Bf6? 19 Bxf6 Qxf6 20 Qg3 Qg6 21 Qxg4!, or 18...d5? 19 h3. 18...Qg6!? is a little better – then, White could continue either with 19 Qxc6 d5 20 Qxc7, or with 19 h3 Bf6 20 Bxf6 Nxf6 21 Qxc6 d5 22 Qxc7 Rd7 23 Qf4. And finally, in reply to 18...Ne5, Korchnoi recommends 19 Bxe5, with an overwhelming positional advantage, but 19 Re3! reaches the goal more quickly.

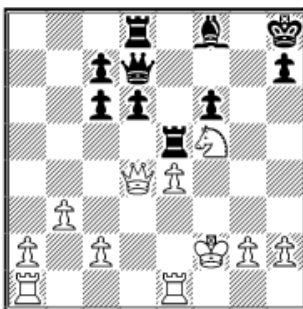
**B4)** Another recommendation of Korchnoi's is **18 Qxa7!?** d5 19 h3 Nf6 20 Nxe7+ Qxe7 21 ed. Let's extend this variation: 21...Ne4 22 Bb2 cd 23 a4+/- . If this isn't enough for White, he could also play 21 Bxf6!? Qxf6 22 ed Qc3 23 Qf2+-.

*The move chosen by Tarrasch also wins a pawn, but after the exchange of the important bishop on g7 for the knight, Black succeeds in creating counterchances (Korchnoi).*

**16...Kg8xg7 19 Ng3-f5+ Kg7-h8 20 Qd1-d4+ f7-f6**

The intermediate check by the knight on the previous move forced Black to advance the pawn to f6, depriving his bishop of that square.

**19 Qd4xa7 Be7-f8 20 Qa7-d4 Re8-e5**



It looks as though White has succeeded, and the assessment of the position is obvious: He's a pawn up, and his knight is far more active than the opposing bishop. In this kind of situation, it's a very difficult task psychologically to pull oneself together, and examine the contours of the opponent's threatened counterplay, in order to take accurate measures to neutralize it.

**The slackening and sense of well-being that sometimes overtakes the stronger side, after a sharp and apparently**

**favorable turn of events, is fraught with heavy consequences And exactly the reverse can also happen: an excessive tenseness and indecision, brought about by the dangers of throwing away one's advantage and letting slip the win, multiple rechecking of variations, and as a result – the inescapable time-pressure.**

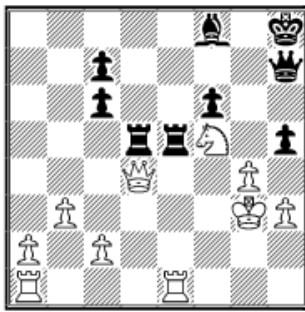
The more so, in that actually matters are not so simple here. The e4-pawn is weakened, Black's rook occupies an excellent post at e5, the break d6-d5 is looming; and if the knight retreats, in order to defend the pawn, Black's bishop comes irrepressibly back into the game.

Clearly, it's not yet time to shepherd the a-pawn to the queening square: first White must consolidate. And if he succeeds in this, then he must simplify. But it's not that obvious precisely what plan White should follow.

Here are some rough variations, illustrating Black's counterattacking resources.

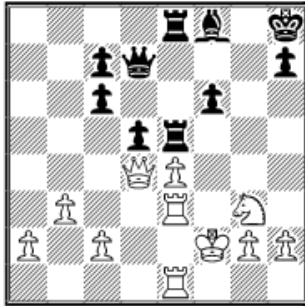
21 g4 h5!? 22 h3 Qh7 23 Kg3?! d5 24 ed? Rdx d5





White's injudicious play has rendered his position difficult. Zak continues: 25 Qf2 hg 26 hg Rxf5! 27 Rh1 Bd6+ 28 Kg2 Rxf2+ 29 Kxf2 Bh2+-. No better is 25 Qf4 Rxf5! 26 gf Rxf5 27 Qd2 Qg8+ (or 27...Qg6+) 28 Kh2 Rf3!-+.

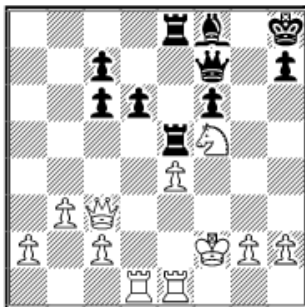
21 Re3 Rde8 22 Rae1 (22 c4 d5 23 Rd1 Qf7) 22...d5 23 Ng3



Black could win the exchange by a small combination: 23...Bc5! 24 Qxc5 d4. Another good line is 23...Qg4!? 24 c3 (24 Kg1 de 25 Rxe4 Bc5 26 Qxc5 Rxc5 27 Rxe8+ Kg7 leads to an unclear position) 24...Bh6! (Zak's move, 24...de?, would be a mistake in view of 25 Rxe4+/-) 25 R3e2 Bf4, with sufficient counterplay.

Perhaps it would have made sense for White to play c2-c4 here or on the next move. But the path he actually chose should not be criticized either.

**21 Ra1-d1 Rd8-e8 22 Qd4-c3 Qd7-f7**

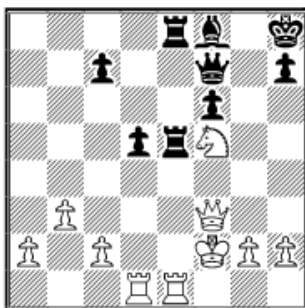


With the f6-pawn protected, Black was now threatening to take on e4. But I think that 22...d5! would have been stronger.

**23 Nf5-g3?!**

White loses the thread of the game. Trading off the c-pawns with 23 Qxc6 Rc5 24 Qa6 Rxc2+ 25 Re2 Rc5 apparently didn't appeal to him, even though 26 Qd3, followed by 27 Qf3, would have retained the upper hand.

As Korchnoi pointed out, the simplest approach was to shore up the position with 23 Qf3!, so that after 23...d5 (otherwise 24 c4), he could start mass exchanges by 24 ed cd



25 Rxe5 Rxe5 (25...fe 26 Rxd5 e4 doesn't work, in view of 27 Qc3+ Kg8 28 Qc4 or 28 Re5!?) 26 Re1 Bc5+ 27 Kf1 Qe6 28 Rxe5 Qxe5 (28...fe was more stubborn; White would continue 29 g4+/-) 29 a4+/- (29 c3!? is more accurate, preventing the queen check at a1). Black's position would remain nearly lost.

Now the black bishop gets into the game.

**23...Bf8-h6 24 Qc3-f3 d6-d5 25 e4xd5?**

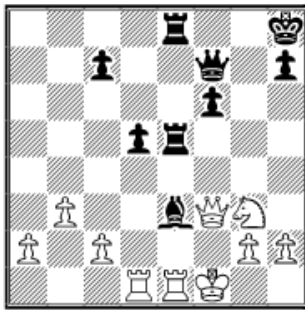
White's "swimming." Why let the bishop into e3? 25 Nf5 suggests itself. On 25...Bf8 26 ed, we've transposed into the variation favorable to White examined earlier. 25...Qg6 isn't much better: 26 Nxh6 Qxh6 27 ed cd 28 Rxe5 fe 29 Qxd5 Qxh2 30 Qf7 Qh4+ 31 Kg1 Rg8 32 Qf5+/-.

And, by the way, White could have returned the knight to f5 on the previous move.

**25...Bh6-e3+ 26 Kf2-f1 c6xd5**



**27 Rd1-d3?**



27 Nf5! was necessary. In Tarrasch's opinion, he would still have had the better chances. But Korchnoi considers Black would have equality after 27...d4, thanks to the activity of all his pieces.

**27...Qf7-e6 28 Re1-e2 f6-f5!**

Playing with enormous energy, Lasker has outplayed his opponent, and now has an obvious advantage, in spite of the pawn minus.

**29 Rd3-d1**

29 Ke1? f4 30 Nf1 Bf2+! would be bad (Korchnoi).

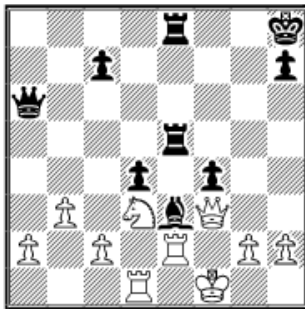
**29...f5-f4 30 Ng3-h1**

Look how far the mighty knight on f5 has fallen!

**30...d5-d4 31 Nh1-f2 Qf6-a6**

Threatening 32...Bxf2.

**32 Nf2-d3**



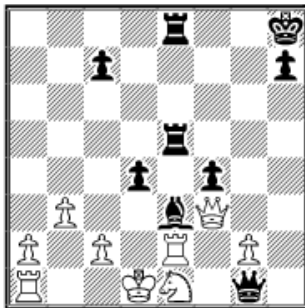
**32...Re5-g5!**

It's bad enough that the a2-pawn is hanging – Black is also threatening 33...Qh6!, against which there is no satisfactory defense.

**33 Rd1-a1 Qa6-h6 34 Kf1-e1**

On 34 h3 Rg3 35 Qd5 f3! is decisive (Korchnoi). Réti's 35...Qxh3? is weaker: at the end of the following forced sequence – 36 Qxd4+ Kg8 37 Qd5+ Kg7 38 Rxe3 Qh1+ 39 Kf2 fe+ 40 Kxg3 Qxa1 – White retains some hope of drawing.

**34...Qh6xh2 35 Ke1-d1 Qh2-g1+ 36 Nd3-e1 Rg5-e5**



*In order to force the win Black needs to move the bishop from e3 to f2, or some other square after a preparatory ...d3 or ...f3. White can only prevent this temporarily by attacking one of the black rooks with the queen (Korchnoi).*

Lasker quickly solves the problem, but not without some help from his opponent, who loses his way completely in time-pressure.

**Qc7-d8+?**

**37 Qf3-c6 Re5-e6!? 38 Qc6xc7 Re8-e7 39**

39 Qc8+ (keeping an eye on the rook at e6) 39...Kg7 40 a4 was more stubborn.

**39...Kh8-g7 40 a2-a4**



And here too, 40 Qc8! was necessary.

**40...f4-f3! 41 g2xf3 Be7-g5!**

White resigned, in view of 42 Rxe6 Rxe6 43 Qa5 Qe3.



*I ought to be ashamed of this game. As far back as the 15th move, after the stroke on g7, my advantage was so great that Lasker, who had a habit of walking around the hall, told the spectators, while I was considering*

*my moves, that "I always lose the second game." But here, the effects of my previous loss came to bear. On the 16th move, I could not decide whether to play for a continuation of the attack or the win of a pawn, and chose the second possibility, telling myself that my opponent might be able to withstand the attack, and then I would regret not taking an easy pawn, which would be enough to secure me the win. Had I not lost the first game, I would certainly have played for the attack, since even if I had not won the game, I would not have been in an inferior position. But the concern was to equalize the match score and catch up with my opponent. On the other hand, this plan should also have been enough for victory. But my indecisiveness about which was the best defensive plan, and the terrible time-pressure it induced, led to my making a whole series of weak moves, which ruined a won position (Tarrasch).*

*With my back to the wall, I decided to allow a powerful attack against the position of my king, intending to seek compensation in other factors. Had I hesitated, I would have lost the initiative completely. Tarrasch took the opportunity offered him, drove my king to an exposed square, maintained his threats, and even gained the material advantage of a pawn. He thought that he had assured himself an advantage sufficient for victory; but in fact, as later became clear, he had only equality at best. Had he, like Pillsbury or Steinitz, taken himself in hand, refused the insignificant material advantage, and thrown himself into the whirlwind of attacking combinations, he would have won. He was not to be allowed the quiet, risk-free exploitation of his material advantage. I gave him a choice, and he made a mistake. His pieces were driven back from their strong positions, and by the 41st move, he was beaten (Lasker).*



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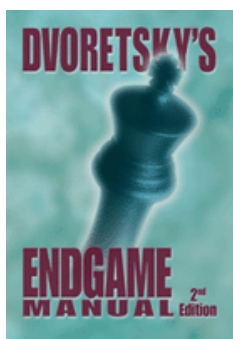
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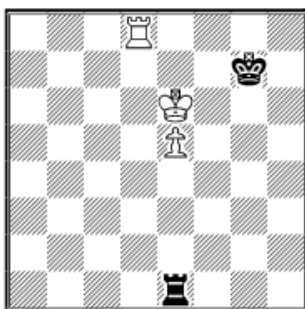
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## Swimming in Theory

Many of the chapters in [Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual](#) (*DEM*, for short) end with a section called "Tragicomedies." These are practical examples of terrible blunders related to the theme of that chapter. Well, I recently completed most of the work on a new book to be titled *Endgame Tragicomedies*. It will help my readers refresh their memories of some important theoretical positions and techniques, and make them think about why everyone, from run-of-the-mill amateurs to gifted grandmasters, commits endgame errors, so that they may avoid such errors in the future. For those who are not familiar with *DEM*, this new book will serve as an introduction to the fascinating world of the endgame, and may perhaps inspire them to a systematic study of endgame theory.

Let me acquaint our visitors with some excerpts from this new book.

*Aronian – Carlsen*  
Moscow 2006

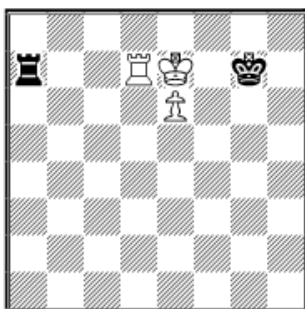


B

**69...Ra1?!**

Black had no need to exchange one defensive position for another. It was simpler just to prevent the pawn's advance by keeping the rook behind it: 69...Re2! (70 Kd6 Kf7!), only switching to the flank attack after 70 Re8, with 70...Ra2.

**70 Ke7 Ra5 71 e6 Ra7+ 72 Rd7**



B

This is an important theoretical position, in which Black has an easy draw, because his rook is on the long side. But you still have to know a few subtleties – many a chessplayer has lost from this position. And the present game proved to be no exception.

**72...Ra8**

The safest defensive method is to maintain control of the eighth rank. For **if White succeeds in playing Ke8, followed by e6-e7, without consequence, he will have a won position.**

And yet, the rook may still go to almost any square; for example, 72...Ra1. You see, after 73 Ke8+, the saving idea for Black is the active 73...Kf6! 74 e7 Ke6! – this is why the white rook stands so poorly. And it's important that on 75 Kf8, Black has the check 75...Rf1+!

The last note makes it clear that **the only rook retreat along the a-file**

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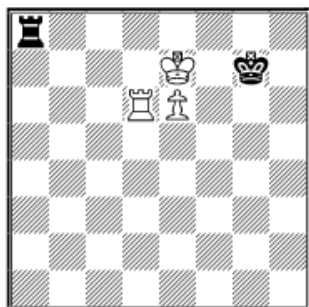
by Victor Bologan

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that loses is 72...Ra6??. After 73 Ke8+ Kf6 74 e7 Ke6 75 Kf8!, the rook check is no longer possible. Paradoxical as it sounds, many players have put the rook on just that square: a6!. The most famous example is the ending of the game Capablanca – Menchik (*DEM*, diagram 9-11).

### 73 Rd6!?

White gets nothing out of 73 Rd8 Ra7+ 74 Kd6 Ra6+ 75 Ke5 Ra5+ 76 Rd5 Ra8.



B?

**With the rook on d6, Black must keep his rook on the eighth rank** – because if he allows Ke8, then he no longer gets the active counterplay with Kf6, since the pawn advances to e7 with check!

Moving the rook closer to the king by 73...Rb8? is bad, in view of 74 Rd8 Rb7 + 75 Kd6 Rb6+ 76 Kd7 Rb7+ 77 Kc6+.

This leaves only one move that does not worsen the situation, namely: 73...Kg6! =.

### 773...Ra7+?? 74 Ke8 1-0

The finish might be: 74...Ra8+ 75 Rd8 Ra1 76 e7 Ra7 77 Rd1, or 77 Rc8.

What can we say about all this? The conclusion seems obvious: the young and exceptionally talented Norwegian grandmaster was unfamiliar with basic endgame theory, because he never studied endgames.

However, the day after the game, I talked with Carlsen's trainer, grandmaster Peter-Heine Nielsen, who assured me that Magnus had studied books on the endgame. This invalidates the obvious explanation – the problem cannot be ignorance of elementary concepts. In fact, this episode spurs us to give some thought to the disconnect between theory and practice, and the need to train oneself in putting one's knowledge to practical use.

School lessons in mathematics cover theoretical rules, formulas, and problem-solving methods. But teachers do not confine themselves to teaching theory: they also give their students many exercises. Without these, acquired knowledge only becomes dead weight, most of which is soon forgotten.

Let us suppose that a person who had never sat behind the wheel of a car were to commit to memory every rule of motor travel, and all the techniques of steering, until he knew just when and how to turn that wheel and which pedals to press. Would that be enough to send him out on the street with the motor running? Of course not – first, he'd need to practice, to work out and solidify his driving habits.

It's just the same in chess: **knowledge of endgame theory does not guarantee that you will know how to play the endgame.**

Reading endgame books, you will encounter many instructive examples, but you don't know which of them are of special importance and require that you know all of their subtleties. (In fact, one of the chief methodological ideas behind the writing of *DEM* was precisely to single out this key, essential information.) In order to better understand and memorize the material under consideration, it's important to examine additional examples on the same theme, and to solve the appropriate exercises.

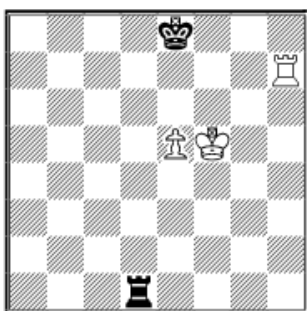
As I noted in the preface to *DEM*, the connection between theory and

concrete practical endgames is not always straightforward and obvious. It's sometimes difficult to spot familiar theoretical contours in a complicated position, to understand just which of the ideas you have studied needs to be utilized here. And at other times, by contrast, the position may be quite similar to a theoretical one; in that case, it's important to note the subtle differences, and decide what effect they will have on the course and outcome of the game.

This brings to mind an episode from one of the sessions of my school for gifted chessplayers, held near Moscow in October 2001. The participants included young candidate-masters, masters and even grandmasters as well. I lectured on the theory of the endgame "rook and advanced pawn vs. rook." My students wrote it all down, and then they were given the following position (*DEM*, diagram 9-22):

***Rohde – Cramling***

World Junior Championship, Innsbruck 1977



W

If Black's rook were on e1, the draw would be his with no problems at all (in *DEM*, this situation is dubbed the "second method of defense from Philidor's Position"). But the rook does not stand so well, which means that White to move wins – although, contrary to expectations, it involves considerable difficulty. He must calculate some

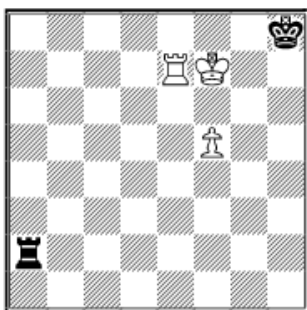
concrete variations accurately – based, naturally, upon the evaluation of the basic theoretical positions.

I divided the participants into two-man teams. Each team was to play out this endgame, with one person taking white, the other black – this way, both sides had equal chances in the matches.

The teams were allowed a certain amount of time (30 or 45 minutes, I think) to prepare for play: they could analyze the position with the aid of their notes and moving the pieces about (but of course, without using computers). Then, the matches began.

One would not expect the task to be too complicated under these circumstances. Unfortunately, not one of the games reached the proper conclusion: in each game, at least one player (and usually both) committed grievous errors, and generally in the very first moves.

I repeated the session, using a different rook endgame: Hector – Krasenkow (*DEM*, 9-14) – and with the same sad result.



Three months later, the experiment was repeated at a training session of the strongest club of the moment, the French club NAO. I reminded the team members of the basics of rook endgame theory, and then asked them to play out the above two positions against me in simultaneous format (this time, with no preliminary analysis). The result was exactly the same: not one of my opponents was able to cope with the task

– and this team included the leading grandmasters of France: Etienne Bacrot and Laurent Fressinet among others.

I tell this story for a reason: it gives a stark illustration of how far even very strong grandmasters are from a real level of endgame mastery. Nor is

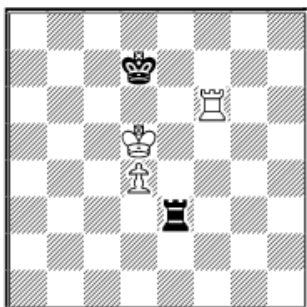
this surprising: after all, they have never made a systematic study of endgame theory, nor have they trained in the calculation of complex variations based upon this theoretical knowledge.

I have no doubt that we would have seen the same result had we made some serious middlegame problem the subject of study instead. So, is it worthwhile to spend all our time and strength in endless work on our openings, as do the overwhelming majority of chessplayers, while there are other areas of chess that hold huge opportunities for growth in mastery?!

I offer for your consideration two “multi-part tragicomedies,” in which both sides erred repeatedly.

### ***Salwe – Burn***

Saint Petersburg 1909



W

This position is, of course, completely drawn. And yet Burn, one of the leading players of his day, demonstrates such ignorance of the basics of endgame theory as to bring his game to the verge of defeat.

**75 Rf7+ Ke8?!**

The first misstep. 75...Kc8! was the proper choice: the king should head for the short side.

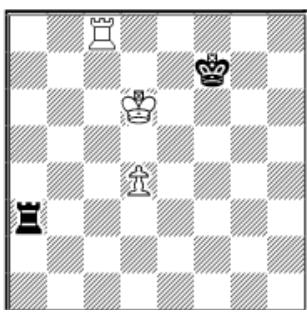
**76 Rh7 Rd3**

A good move; but 76...Ra3, with 77...Ra6 to follow, was undoubtedly simpler, executing the basic Philidor defensive method.

**77 Ke6 Re3+**

It was not too late to aim his king for the short side: 77...Kd8!?

**78 Kd6 Ra3 79 Rh8+ Kf7 80 Rc8**



B

**80...Ra6+?**

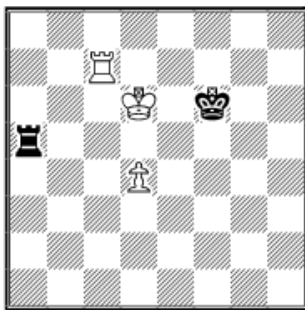
The losing move – checks from the short side are hopeless. In such situations, the only saving idea is to put the rook behind the pawn: 80...Rd3 81 d5 Rd1 82 Kc6 Ke7!, or 82 Rd8 Ra1!. With a center pawn, this defensive method guarantees an easy draw, even with the

king stuck on the long side.

**81 Rc6?**

The drawback of White's move is that it allows his opponent to return to the correct plan: 81...Ra1 82 d5 Rd1! =.

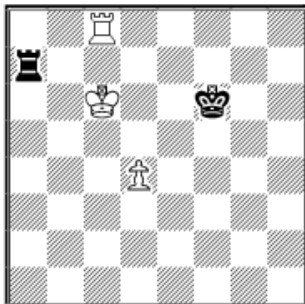
White wins (although with considerable difficulty) by 81 Kd7! Ra5 (81...Ra7+ 82 Rc7 changes nothing) 82 Rc5! Ra7+ 83 Rc7 Ra5 84 Kd6+ Kf6:



W

85 d5

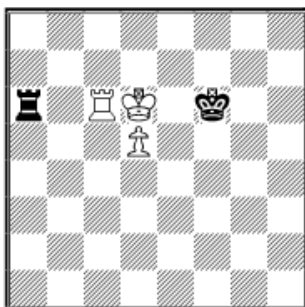
Many years ago, A. Iglitsky recommended the weaker 85 Rc8 Ra6+ 86 Kd7 Ra7+ 87 Kc6?.



B?

Here, the annotator continued: 87...Ra6 +? 88 Kb5 Rd6 89 Kc5 Ke7 90 Re8+, failing to notice the subtle rejoinder: 87...Ra4! =.

85...Ra6+ 86 Rc6 (86 Kc5 Ra5+ 87 Kc6 Ra6+ 88 Kb5 Ra1 would be pointless).

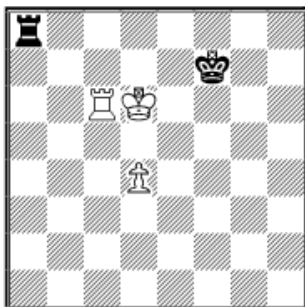


B?

The right reply to 86...Ra1 would be 87 Rb6!, giving his king a comfortable hiding place on the c-file. For example, 87...Ra7 (87...Kf7 88 Kc7) 88 Rb1 Ra6 + 89 Kc7 Ra7+ (89...Ke5 90 d6) 90 Rb7 Ra8 91 Kd7 and 92 d6+.

On 86...Ra7, it would be premature to play 87 Rc1 Ra6+ 88 Kc7 Ra7+, when 89 Kb6? lets slip the win, because of 89...Rd7! 90 Kc6 Ke7. Again, he could play 87 Rb6, or else 87 Rc5!, when Black would be in *zugzwang*, and must move either his king or his rook to an inferior position: 87...Ra1 (87...Kf5 88 Rc1 Ra6+ 89 Kc7 Ke5 90 d6+.) 88 Kd7 Ra7+ 89 Rc7 Ra8 90 d6+.

**81...Ra8?**



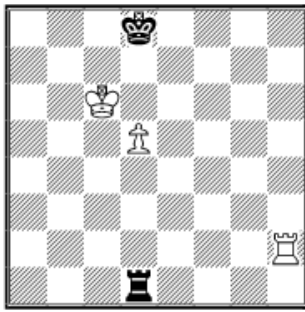
W

Not knowing the correct defensive plan here (Ra1-d1) allows White to play 82 Kd7!+, transposing back into the variations previously examined. Alas, Salwe did not take advantage of this possibility, missing the win once and for all. Black, at long last, setup the Philidor Position.

**82 Rc7+? Ke8 = 83 d5 Kd8 84 Rd7+ Ke8 85 Rc7 (85 Rh7 Ra6+) 85... Kd8 86 Rc6 Ra7 87 Rb6 Rd7+ 88 Kc5 Rc7+ 89 Kd4 Ra7 90 Rh6 Rg7 91 Ra6 Rb7 92 Ra1 Kd7 93 Ke5 Rb6 94 Ra7+ Kd8 95 Kd4 Rh6 96 Kc5 Rg6 97 Rb7 Rh6 98 Rb8+ Kd7 99 Rg8 ½-½**

Nonetheless, at the start of the twentieth century, chess wasn't taken as seriously as it is today, and theory was poorly known. One would think that, by the close of the century, the picture would have changed. Yet take a look at the following endgame.





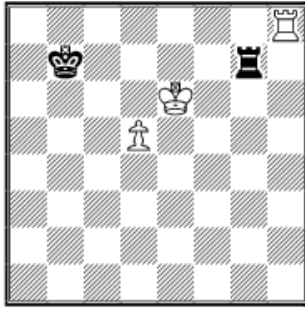
B?

**85...Rc1+??**

It's amazing that such an experienced grandmaster as Taimanov would not know where to keep his rook! He had an elementary draw by 85...Ke7 or 85...Rd3.

**+ 89 Ke6 Rg7**

**86 Kd6 Kc8 87 Rh8+ Kb7 88 Kd7 Rc7**



W

**90 Re8??**

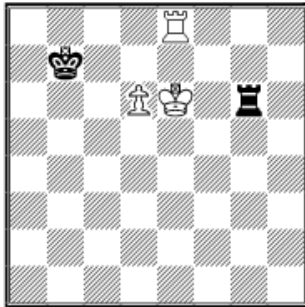
After 90 d6!, the pawn could not be stopped.

**90...Rg5?**

The only saving line was 90...Rg6+ 91 Kd7 Rh6!, leaving the rook on the long side, as far away from the pawn as possible.

In the continuation, both players ignored the need to control the h-file.

**91 d6 Rg6+**



W

**92 Kd7?**

White had an easy win by 92 Ke7! (the threat of 93 d7 gives her opponent no time for 92...Rh6) 92...Rg7+ (92...Kc6 93 Rc8+ Kd5 94 d7 Rg7+ 95 Ke8 Ke6 doesn't work, in view of 96 Rc6+) 93 Kf6, and Black doesn't have either 93...Rh7 94 Re7+, or 93...Rd7 94 Ke6.

**92...Rg1?**

92...Rh6! = was necessary.

**93 Re7?**

Almost any other move would have won. 93 Kd8 or 93 Ke7 would have secured the pawn's advance to the seventh rank; and 93 Rh8 would have secured control of the long side.

Now, Black achieves the draw with 93...Rh1!.

**93...Rg8?**

The last mistake.

**94 Rh7**

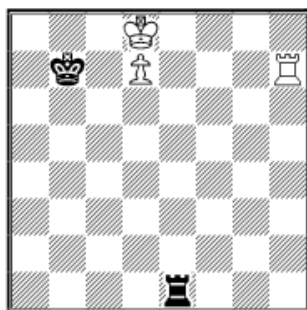
This is a well-known theoretical position of mutual *zugzwang* (DEM, Diagram 9-8). It's Black's move, and he must worsen the position of one or the other of his pieces. I remind you that 94...Kb6 loses to 95 Rh1 Rg7 + 96 Ke6 Rg6+ 97 Ke7 Rg7+ 98 Kf6 Rg2, and now not 99 Rc1? Rh2! =,

but 99 Rd1!+-. (White would not have this move with Black's king on b7).

**94...Rf8 95 Ke7 Rf1 96 d7**

Another way was 96 Ke8+ Kc6 97 d7 Re1+ 98 Re7 Rh1+ 99 Re6+.

**96...Re1+ 97 Kd8**



B

**97...Kc6**

On 97...Rg1, the classic winning method would be to **build a bridge**: in other words, to shield the fourth rank against vertical checks. For example, 98 Rh4 Rb1 99 Re4 Rh1 100 Rb4+ Ka7 101 Kc7 Rc1+ 102 Kd6 Rd1+ 103 Kc6 Rc1+ 104 Kd5 Rd1+ 105 Rd4+.

Yet a simpler way might be 98 Rh8 Re1 99 Re8 Rh1 100 Ke7.

**98 Kc8 0-1**

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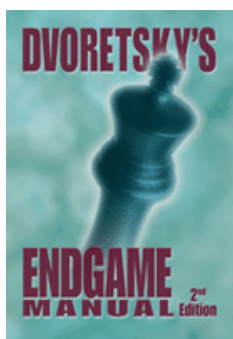
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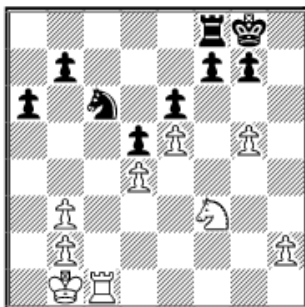
## When Technique Fails

**The most important principle of the technical realization of your advantage is to restrict your opponent's possibilities to a minimum.**

The successful resolution of this task requires you to develop **prophylactic thinking**: the habit of attentive control of your opponent's intentions and the resources he has at this disposal.

Prophylactic thinking is one of the most useful habits to have in chess. It will come in handy, not just when you have the advantage, but in the opposite case as well, when you are defending an inferior position – in fact, everywhere: in the most varied situations, at every stage of the game.

**Bartel – Kosyrev**  
Moscow 2002



W?

Black threatens to activate his king by Kg8-h7-g6; this must be prevented.

26 Rg1?! isn't very convincing: 26... Kh7! 27 g6+ fg 28 Ng5+ Kg8 29 Nxe6 Rf5! –/+ , followed by 30... Kf7 – White's pawns (especially d4) are weak, while Black's pieces are now active.

26 h4! solves the problem: now 26... Kh7 is useless, in view of 27 h5. And if 26... f6, then 27 g6!? fe 28 Nxe5 Nxd4 29 Rc7 (or first 29 Nd7) gives White counterplay.

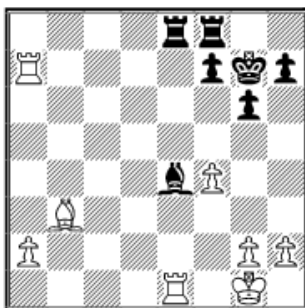
**26 Kc2? Rc8?**

Black fails to make use of his chance: 27... Kh7! would have given him a solid advantage.

**27 Kd2 Kf8 1/2-1/2**

27... Kh7 is no longer as strong here, in view of 28 Nh4 and 29 Ke3.

**Yusupov – Timman**  
Candidates Semi-Final, Game 7  
Linares 1992



W?

Here White has an extra pawn, and an overwhelming position to boot. There's no reason for him to hurry with promoting the passed pawn – with his opponent's pieces completely tied up, the more technical solution would be to first get his own pieces to their best possible squares. While doing so, **it's important to control the opponent's possible actions, forestalling any reasonable move where possible.**

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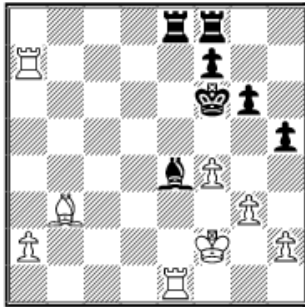
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With 26 g4!, White would “squeeze” the kingside, depriving his opponent of any chance of untying his pieces.

## 26 Kf2?!

A tiny inaccuracy. Observing the game, while I understood that Yusupov’s move doesn’t change the assessment of the position, I was nonetheless sorry that Artur hadn’t chosen the most technical continuation. This seemed a bad sign to me – evidence that further, and perhaps weightier, errors lay ahead.

## 26...h5 27 g3 Kf6



W?

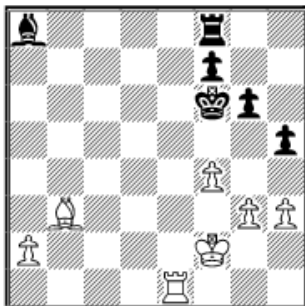
Black would gain saving chances if he could trade bishops, but he can only dream of this for now. In order to untangle himself to any degree, first it’s important to trade one pair of rooks. Jan Timman did not play 27...Bc6, since after 28 Rxe8 Bxe8 (the rook cannot recapture, owing to the weakness at f7) 29 Ra8!?, the other pair of rooks must

inevitably be exchanged, after which the bishop endgame is an elementary win. Nor would 27...Ra8 28 Rxa8 Bxa8 29 Re7 suit him, since the remaining black rook would be forever tied to the defense of f7.

Having taken the e7-square under control with his last move, Black prepares to exchange rooks, which could have been easily prevented by 28 Rc7!. After this simple prophylactic move, White’s position would have remained absolutely winning.

## 28 h3? Ra8!

But now, matters are more complicated. What should White do? If he retreats the rook to the seventh rank, the bishop goes via f5 to e6, taking the pressure off f7. Nor is everything clear after 29 Rxa8 Bxa8.



W

30 g4 hg 31 hg g5 promises White little. On 30 Re5 (intending g4-g5+), Black can cover the seventh rank by 30...Rc8 31 g4 hg 32 hg Rc7. White keeps the extra pawn and good winning chances, but the win is not guaranteed.

Another try is 30 Rc1, threatening 31 Rc7. If 30...Rd8 (with the idea 31 Rc7?

Bd5) 31 Rd1! – the bishop endgame is lost; and if Black avoids the exchange, the rook invades the seventh rank. Therefore, Black replies 30...Be4! 31 g4 (31 Rc7 Bf5) 31...hg 32 hg g5! 33 f5 (33 Rc4 Bd5 34 fg + Kg6 35 Bc2+ Kg7 36 Ra4 Rb8, with counterplay) 33...Rh8 34 Rc7 (34 Ke3 Re8!) 34...Ke5, and all his pieces unexpectedly become very active.

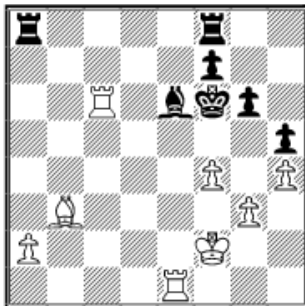
## 29 Rc7 Bf5 30 h4

30 Ree7 Be6 is not dangerous, but perhaps it would have made sense to keep Black from trading bishops by 30 Rc6+!? Kg7 31 Re7 (31 h4 Ra7) 31...Rae8!? (31...Bxh3 32 Rcc7+—) 32 Rxe8 Rxe8 33 h4+/-.

## 30...Be6 31 Rc6



B?

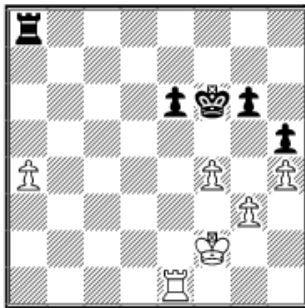


**30...Rfc8?!**

He had to play 31...Rfe8. After this move, Black's position becomes critical again.

**32 Rxc8 Rxc8 33 Bxe6 fe 34 a4 Ra8**

Going after the g3-pawn offers no chances: 34...Rc4 35 Ra1 Rc2+ 36 Ke3 Rc3+ 37 Ke4 Rxc3 38 a5 Rb3 39 a6 Rb4+ 40 Kd3 Rb8 41 a7 Ra8 42 Ra5+.



W?

**35 Ra1?**

The rook usually stands best behind its passed pawn, but in this case, Black manages to trade off too many pawns. Meanwhile, going to e4 instead would allow the rook to secure all of its pawns, permitting the king to move unimpeded to the queenside. Thus, 35 Re4! would have led to victory:

35...Kf5 36 Re5+ Kf6 (36...Kg4 37 Rg5+) 37 a5.

35...Ra5 36 Ke3 Rd5 37 Re5!.

35...Ke7 36 Ke3 Kd6 37 Kd3, followed by Kc3.

**35...Ra5! 36 Ke3 e5! = 37 Ke4** (37 fe+ Kxe5 38 Kd3 Kd5 39 Kc3 Kc6 40 Kb4 Re5 =) **37...ef 38 Kxf4** (38 gf would leave White with weakened pawns) **38...Ke6 39 Ke4** (there's no win after 39 Re1+!? Kf6 40 Re4 g5+ 41 Ke3, either) **39...g5! 40 hg Rxc5 41 Kf3 Ra5 42 Re1+ Kf5 43 Re4 Rc5 44 Re3 Ra5 45 Ra3 Ke5 46 Ke3 Ke6 47 Ke2 Kd6** (47...h4 48 gh Rh5 =) **48 Kf2 Ke6 49 Re3+ Kd5 50 Ra3 Ke6 51 Ke3 h4 52 g4 Kf6 53 Kf4 Kg6 54 Kf3 Kg5 55 Ra2 h3 1/2-1/2** (55...Ra8 56 a5 Rf8+ =)

Naturally, Artur was terribly upset at this result, berating himself mainly for his oversight in the rook endgame. I, on the other hand, was considerably more disappointed at his simple technical errors in the preceding stage of the game, in a completely winning position. For Yusupov possesses great technique; once he obtains an advantage, he usually realizes it very confidently and accurately. So what happened here?

In my view, the explanation is that whatever useful habits or knowledge a chessplayer may have worked out are not everlasting, but must be regularly reinforced. Roughly a year before his Candidates Match with Timman, Yusupov moved to Germany; for that entire year we did not meet or train as we had before. Evidently, Artur himself had done no work for a long time on the problem of realizing one's advantage – his most recent games had given him no reason to think about it. And as a result, his technical mastery slipped slightly.

My ruminations may seem speculative to my readers. And in fact, there is no ironclad way of proving such subtle matters, but I shall support my point of view by describing one further episode that occurred in the same Candidates' Match, two days earlier. In this case, the victim was Artur's opponent.

**Yusupov – Timman**

Candidates' Semi-Final, Game 5

Linares 1992



B

It was at this point (or perhaps a bit earlier) that I entered the match press center, where I found two Dutch journalists, GM Hans Ree and master Gert Ligterink. We knew one another: in the mid-70s, we had all played at Wijk aan Zee.

Timman had clearly solved his opening problems, and the Dutch players were happy with their countryman's position. They asked me how I would evaluate the position now on the board.

"It's about even," I replied, "but I think Yusupov will win today."

"Why?"

"I looked at Timman's games, and I don't remember a single one in the last couple of years where he had a full-fledged "opposite-colored bishop" game. Playing that particular complex is difficult without experience, and Timman will probably make a mistake somewhere. Yusupov, on the other hand, is familiar with the ideas of the opposite-colored bishops, which we have subjected to careful study."

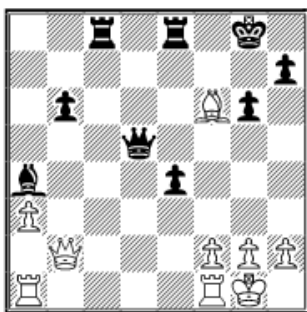
The game's further course supported my prediction. Watching the game develop, I noted the gradual deterioration of Black's position, pointing out to Ree and Ligterink the inaccuracies Timman was committing. The course of events made a powerful impression on my colleagues, as Ligterink later described in a column he wrote for the Dutch press.

**21...Ba4?**

**The most important factor in evaluating "opposite-colored" middlegames is control of the initiative.** The text move hands the initiative to White, while the obvious 21...f6 would have held the balance.

**22 e4! +/- f6**

It's not easy to decide on a move like 22...de!? – the a1-h8 diagonal is opened, after being weakened by g7-g6. And yet, this was Black's best chance. After 23 Nxc4 Qe6 24 Ne3 Nf6 (24...Bc6 is weaker: 25 d5! Bxd5 26 Rfd1 with compensation) 25 d5! (before Black plays 25...Nd5) 25...Nxd5 26 Nxd5 Qxd5 27 Bh8 f6 28 Bxf6 (28 Qxf6 Qf7) 28...Rac8!?, White's advantage is small.



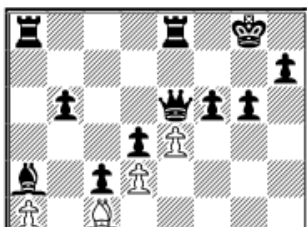
W

For example, 29 Qxb6?! e3! 30 fe Rc2 31 e4 Rxe4 32 Rf2 Rxf2 33 Qxf2 Bc6, and the extra pawn isn't worth much.

**23 Nxd7 Qxd7?!**

It would have been a good idea to bring the bishop home: 23...Bxd7 24 e5 Qc6.

**24 e5! (of course not 24 ed? b5 => 24...Qe6**



W

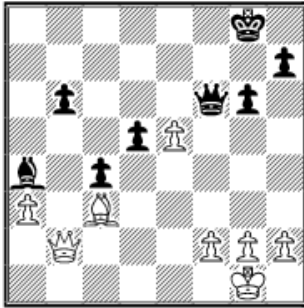
An interesting moment. Yusupov rejected the natural 25 Rae1!?, because it would have allowed Timman to close



lines by 25...f5. True, White would still have had the upper hand: he could gradually construct a kingside attack, while his opponent would have had no active possibilities at all.

Artur preferred the plan of occupying the strong point e5 with his rook. After the forced exchange on e5, White would be left with a favorable pawn structure.

**25 e5!? Qxf6 26 Rfe1 Rxe1+ 27 Rxe1 Re8 28 Re5 Rxe5 29 de**



B

**29...Qe6**

In such cases, it's important not to go into a bunker defense – better to disturb your opponent with some activity of your own. From this standpoint, the move 29...Qf4!? is attractive, but after 30 h3! (not 30 e6? Qg4!) 30...Bd7 doesn't work in view of 31 Qxb6! Qc1+

32 Kh2 Qxc3?! (32...Qf4+ 33 g3+/-) 33 Qd8+, with a won queen ending for White. White also maintains strong pressure after 30...Be8 31 e6 b5 32 Bh8 Qf8 33 Qe5.

**30 Bd4 Bb3?!**

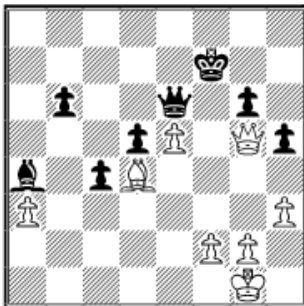
Here and later, Timman mistakenly refuses to advance his pawn by 30...b5. The pawn is weak at b6, and eventually drops.

**31 h3 h5 32 Qd2**

A strategic double attack! The queen threatens to invade Black's position either via b4 or g5.

**32...Ba4 33 Qg5 (33 Qb4!?) 33...Kf7**

If 33...Bd7, then 34 Qd8+ Kf7 35 Bxb6 c3 36 Bc5+/-, 33...Be8 34 f4 Kf7 35 Qd8 (35 g4 hg 36 hg Bd7) 35...b5 was worth looking into, although after 36 Kf2, White still has the advantage. But in any event, Black would have brought his bishop home, and advanced the b-pawn to the protected square b5.



W

Here, the sortie 34 Qd8!? looks attractive. The pawn at b6 is attacked, and the natural response 34...b5? would allow White to whip up a strong attack on the king using minimal force: 35 Bc5 Kg7 (35...Qxe5? 36 Qf8+ Ke6 37 Qe7+ Kf5 38 Qf7+ Qf6 39 g4+) 36 Bf8+!? (36 Be7 is good too, forcing the reply 36...g5) 36...Kf7 37 Bb4! (still stronger than

the obvious 37 Bh6) 37...Kg7 (37...g5 38 Qxg5 is also hopeless) 38 Qd6!!+-, and after the queen trade on d6, the pawn queens unimpeded. Now you see the point of moving the white bishop from c5 to b4: depriving Black of the defense b5-b4.

Black would have to give up the b6-pawn in order to trade queens: 34...Be8!?. After 35 Qxb6 Qxb6 36 Bxb6 c3 (or 36...Ke6 at once: 37 Bd4 Kf5 38 f3 h4+/-) 37 Bd4 c2 38 Bb2 Ke6 39 f4 Kf5 40 Bc1 h4+/-, the most likely outcome would be a draw. White's play is strengthened by the intermediate check 35 Qc7+! Kg8, and now either 36 Qxb6 Qxb6 37

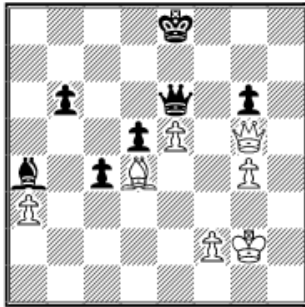
Bxb6 c3 38 Bd4 c2 39 Bb2+/-, or 36 Bxb6 Qc6 37 Qxc6 Bxc6 38 Bd4+/-.

Yusupov preferred a different plan, involving the advance of his kingside pawns.

**34 g4!? hg 35 hg Ke8**

35...Bd1 would be useless in view of 36 f3!, but he should have preferred 35...Bd7 36 f3 b5+/-.

**36 Kg2**



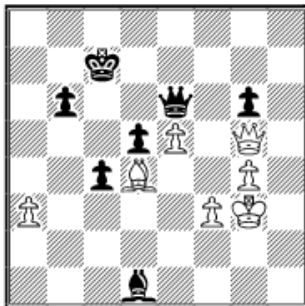
B

**36...Kd7**

The desperate sacrifice of a pawn by 36...c3 brings no relief: 37 Bxc3 d4 38 Bb4 Bc6+ 39 Kg3+-, 36...Bd1 is met by 37 f3, and if 37...Qf7?!, then 38 Qe3 b5 (otherwise 39 Bxb6) 39 e6 Qf8 40 Be5 +-, 36...b5!? was once again Black's relative best, hoping to put together some sort of defense after 37 Kg3 Bd1 38 f4 Bc2 or 38 f3 Qf7. White replies 37 f3!+/-, intending 38 Qd2, for example: 37...Qf7 38 Qd2 Qe7 39 Qa5 Qxa3? 40 Qa8+ Ke7 41 Qb7+, with mate soon to follow.

**37 Kg3 (37 f3!+/-) 37...Bd1 38 f3 Kc7?**

Black's position was not to be envied after 38...b5 39 Qd2! Ba4 40 Qa5 Qc6 41 f4 or 38...Qf7!? 39 f4 Bc2 40 Bxb6, but now the solution is simpler still.



W

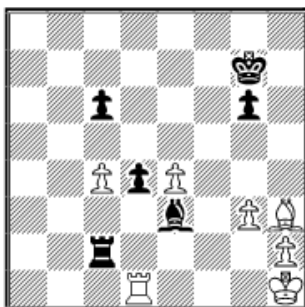
**39 Qf6! Qxf6 40 ef Kd7 41 Bxb6**

As often occurs in "opposite-colored bishop" endgames, separated passed pawns are much stronger than connected ones. White has a standard plan of action: his bishop will blockade the central pawns, while his king advances in support of the passed pawn, which the enemy bishop has to deal with.

**41...c3 42 Bd4 c2 43 Bb2 Ke6 44 g5 Be2 45 Kf2 Bb5 46 Ke3 Be8 47 Kd3 Ba4 48 Kc3 Kd6 49 Bc1 Ke6 50 Kb4 1-0**

Curiously, a similar story, complete with a prediction about the "opposite-colored bishop" situation, was described by GM Viorel Bologan in his outstanding book, [Victor Bologan: Selected Games 1985-2004](#).

**Benjamin – Bologan**  
Moscow Olympiad 1994



B?

*Time-pressure is over and the position is objectively even. At this moment, Mark Israilevich Dvoretsky appeared in the playing hall along with Boris Gulko. Together, they began analyzing my position. Dvoretsky said, "Most likely, Victor wins this." "How?" wondered Gulko, "the position is drawn!" "Well,*





*Black has the initiative here; and besides, we spent ample time on opposite-colored bishop endgames.”*

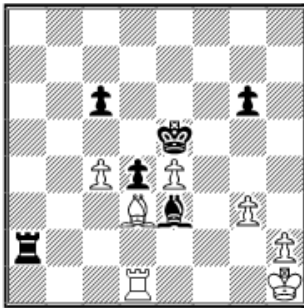
*Well, the trainer proved to be right! The fact that Benjamin had a material advantage played a nasty trick on him. He has great technical skill, but White cannot think about winning. It's clear that with his king cornered on h1, White should concentrate on finding the most precise drawing line.*

**41...Kf6!?**

**In opposite-colored bishop positions, the initiative, activity, attacking the king – all these are worth far more than a pawn.** This principle remains in force even in the endgame – with the obvious exception of “pure opposite-colored bishop endings” (with no other pieces on the board). On the other hand, even there pawn sacrifices come up all the time, although with a different motivation: there it is to create or to break down a fortress.

On 41...Rxc4 42 e5, White gains some activity, making his later play easier. Bologan declines to win material, preferring maximal restriction of his opponent's pieces.

**42 Bf1 Ke5 43 Bd3 Ra2**



W

**44 h4?**

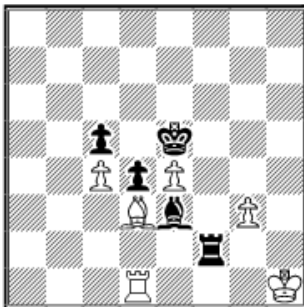
A positional error, and not an obvious one. Now Black has a plan of invading the kingside with his king, creating mating threats. Analyzing later, Bologan was unable to find any way of breaking down White's defense after 44 h3!. The difference between the two pawn moves

will soon become obvious.

**44...c5 45 Bb1 Rb2 46 Bd3 Rf2!**

A necessary refinement: the rook cuts off the king's path to the center. The hasty 46...g5?! 47 hg Bxg5 would allow White to get his king out of the corner by 48 Kg1 Be3+ 49 Kf1 Rf2+ 50 Ke1, with reasonable drawing chances.

**47 Bb1 g5 48 hg Bxg5 49 Bd3 Be3**



W

**50 Bb1**

Exchanging rooks would not help: 50 Rf1 Rxf1+ 51 Bxf1 Kxe4, and it is easy to see that White will soon have to give up his bishop for the d-pawn.

**50...Kf6 51 Bd3 Kg5 52 Ra1**

White could hold out a little longer with 52 e5 Kg4 53 Rg1!, although after 53...Ra2, his position remains difficult. For example: 54 Rg2 (54 e6 Bxg1 55 e7 Ra8 56 Bg6 Kxg3 57 e8Q Rxe8 58 Bxe8 Be3+) 54...Ra3 55 Bh7 (55 Be2+ Kf5 or 55 e6 Rxd3 56 e7 Rd1+ 57 Kh2 Re1 58 e8Q Bg1+ 59 Rxg1 Rxe8 are just bad, but 55 Be4!? d3 56 e6 d2 57 Bc2 Ra7 58 Bd1 + would be a little better) 55...d3 56 e6 Ra1+! 57 Kh2 Ra8+.

**52...Kg4 53 Ra7 Rd2 54 Bf1 Kxg3 55 Rg7+ Kf4**

55...Kf3! was more energetic: 56 Bg2+ (56 Rf7+ Bf4; 56 e5 Rd1) 56...  
Rxb2! 57 Rxb2 d3--.

**56 Rd7** (56 e5!? Kxe5 57 Re7+ Kf4 58 Bg2) **56...Kxe4** (56...Kf3,  
followed by 57...Bf4) **57 Re7+?! Kf3 58 Rd7 Rd1 59 Rf7+ Bf4 60 Kg1**  
**d3 0-1**



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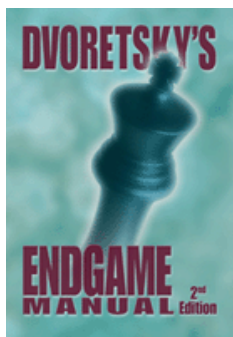
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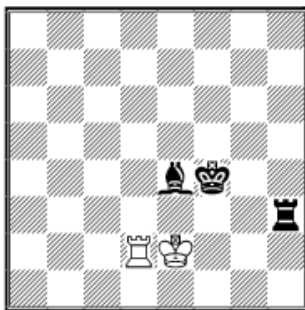
## Rook and Bishop vs. Rook

Rook and bishop vs. rook endings can be exceptionally difficult if the defender's king is restricted to the edge of the board. With the king in a less dangerous position, the defense is easier – if you know the main ideas: “**Cochrane's position**” and “**the seventh rank defense.**” In [Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual](#), we examined the instructive game Timman – Lutz (Wijk aan Zee 1995), in which both defensive methods were used. Nevertheless, the defender finally strayed off the proper course, turning the game into a won Philidor position. However, Timman had to take the draw in accordance with the “fifty-move rule.”

In practice, players in this situation – nearly always suffering from a severe time shortage – rarely manage to avoid committing fatal errors, altering the evaluation of the position. I could present a number of instances, some from the careers of leading grandmasters. I hope this article helps reinforce your understanding.

The first endgame we will examine was played over a decade ago. I use it to draw your attention to one significant theoretical detail, which I myself only found out about very recently. The other two examples are taken from recent games played by strong grandmasters.

*San Segundo – Beliavsky*  
 Madrid 1997



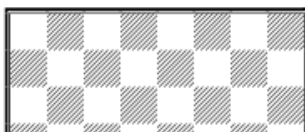
One of the defensive systems is called “**the seventh-rank defense**”: the rook stays within one square of the king.

White had already maintained the position for a number of moves by this defensive method, and should have continued in the same style: 108.Kf2!. After 108...Rh2+ 109.Ke1, Black's rook is attacked, and thus he has no time to bring his king closer. And the attempt to

play for zugzwang by 108...Bd3 doesn't work, because White has a stalemate defense: 109.Ke1! Ke3 110.Re2+!. This short variation makes clear why **this defensive method is only effective from the second (seventh) rank, or from the knight's file.**

Instead of 109...Ke3, Black could try 109...Re3+!?, hoping for 110.Kf2?! Rf3+!. Now the king has to retreat to g1 or g2, and the defensive redoubt on the second rank breaks down, making the defense more difficult. Such a position did indeed occur, in our third example: Rychagov – Grischuk.

A safer defense is 110.Kd1! Rf3 111.Kc1 (or 111.Rh2 Ke3 112.Kc1) 111...Ke3 112.Rh2; for instance, 112...Kd4 113.Kd2, returning to the second-rank defense on a different set of squares. And if 112...Rf1+ 113.Kb2 Kd4, then White could set up the “Cochrane position” by 114.Rh4+ Be4 115.Kb3 Rb1+ 116.Ka4 (but not 116.Ka3? Kc3!→).



The fourth-rank pin restricts the mobility of Black's king. On 116...Kd3, there

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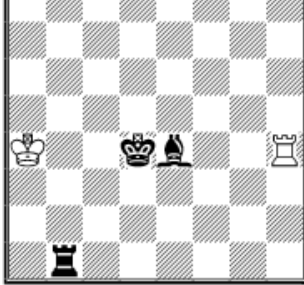
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[Victor Bologan:  
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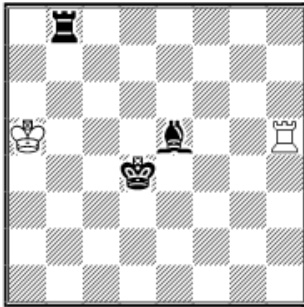
by Victor Bologan

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follows 117.Ka5! Bd5 118.Rb4, freeing the king from the edge of the board. A symmetrical variation would be 116...Kd5 117.Ka3! Bd3 118.Rb4. 116...Re1 117.Kb4 is useless; and if Black plays the waiting 116...Rb8, White can wait too: 117.Rg4.

By the way, the position after 116...Kd5 (if you rotate the board on its horizontal axis, reversing the upper and lower halves) also occurred in the game Iljushin – Inarkiev, Moscow 2008.



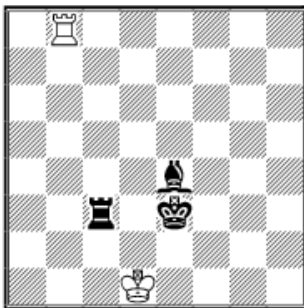
Here, instead of 117.Ka6!, White played the inaccurate 117.Rg5?!, to which his opponent replied 117...Bc7+! 118.Ka6 Kc4. The defense was now more complicated, since the king could no longer leave the edge of the board. Twelve moves later, Iljushin committed the decisive error and lost.

After this theoretical excursion, let us return to our game where, instead of the approved defensive method, Pablo San Segundo played a losing move:

**108.Rd8? Rh2+ 109.Kd1 Ke3 110.Rb8??**

Unbelievable! White overlooks a mate in one, 110...Rh1# – and Beliavsky doesn't see it. On the other hand, as we shall see, 110.Kc1 Rc2 + 111.Kd1 Rc3 (but not 111...Rb2 112.Rc8 =) would not have saved him either. After the text, the game is also lost.

**110...Rd2+? 111.Kc1 Rc2+ 112.Kd1 Rc3**

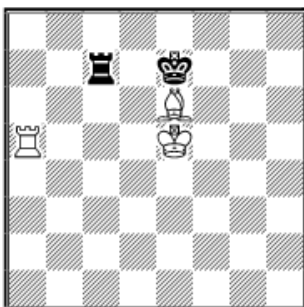


**113.Rb2?**

Loses quicker. In the opinion of the annotators – Hecht in *ChessBase*, Beliavsky and Mikhalechishin in their book, *Modern Endgame Practice* – White is saved after 113.Re8. This isn't true: 113...Rc7 114.Re5 Rh7 115.Kc1 Rb7+.

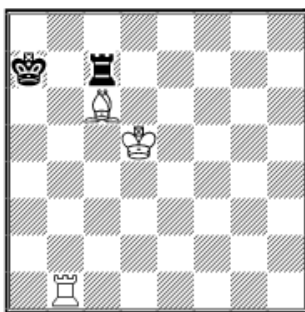
**113...Bf3+ 0-1**

**Bologan – Rublevsky**  
Poikovsky 2007



The last capture occurred on move 76. Black has held out for more than half the required 50 moves, and hasn't very far to go before the "final" 126th move. Rublevsky has successfully employed the "seventh-rank defense," and had he played 103...Rb7 here, could have continued with it even longer. But he allowed his opponent to change the course of the battle.

**103...Kd8?! 104.Kf6 Rc6 105.Ra7 Rd6 106.Ke5 Rc6 107.Kf6 Rd6 108.Rb7 Rc6 109.Rh7 Rd6 110.Ke5 Rc6 111.Rd7+ Kc8 112.Kd5 Rc7 113.Rd6+ Kb7 114.Rd8 Kb6 115.Bd7 Ka7?! (115...Rc5+ 116.Kd6 Rc7 would have been simpler) 116.Bc6 Kb6! (only move!) 117.Rb8+ Ka7 118.Rb1**



The only way to hold the draw in this position was 118...Rh7(g7)! 119.Kc5 Rh3(g3)! – but not 119...Rh2? 120.Be4! +-. The exact reason why Black would have to bring the rook precisely to the third rank would have been difficult to see, even with much more time available to the players. In our next example, a similar situation occurs, but turned 90 degrees to one side. There, the key factor becomes control of the c-file.

### 118...Re7? 119.Kc5 Re5+

Now 119...Re3 is useless, in view of 120.Ra1+ Kb8 121.Kd6, as the rook is placed too close to the king, and is therefore unable to deliver a check from the side.

### 120.Bd5 Rh5?

After 120...Re7, White's remaining six moves would not be enough for mate or the win of the rook: 121.Rh1 Rc7+ 122.Bc6 Kb8 123.Kd6 Rg7 124.Rh8+ Ka7 125.Kc5 Ka6 126.Rh1 Rg5+ 127.Bd5 Ka7 128.Rh8+- (Black would have had to resign, if this had been White's 125th move).

### 121.Rb7+! Ka6 122.Rg7!

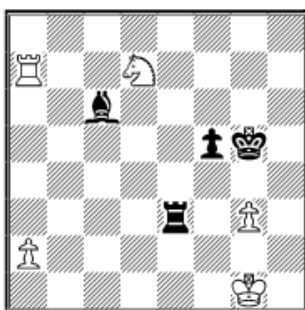
122.Rb8 Rh7 123.Rb3 Ka7 124.Ra3+ Kb8 125.Ra8+ Kc7 126.Ra7+ wins also. But White's last move would be the 50th move without a capture, and the rook only gets taken on the following move – so it would be a draw! Viorel Bologan accurately counted the moves, and saw that in the other line, he would win in time (one move before the deadline, in fact).

### 122...Re5 123.Rg1 Ka7 124.Rg8 1-0

We begin our study of the following example long before the material imbalance under consideration appears – there are a number of interesting and instructive moments before it that we don't want to miss.

### *Rychagov – Grischuk*

Russian Championship, Moscow 2007



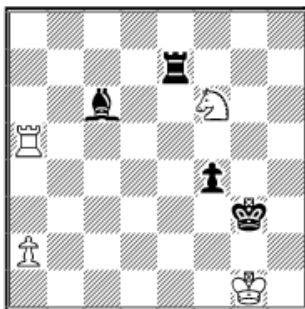
**In-between moves are a powerful tactical weapon**, but they can be hard to handle. Frequently, in-between moves can be so subtle that players either fail to notice them altogether or underestimate them. That's what happened in this game.

At first glance, everything's clear: Black brings his rook to e7, winning the pinned knight. Note that he may do this either immediately, or after a preliminary

check on e1. Why give the check? We will find the answer to that question once we discover and calculate the tactical defense White has at his disposal.

Black wins after 42...Re1+!! 43.Kf2 Re7 44.g4!? fg! 45.Ra5+ Kf4 46.Nf6 g3+ (the pawn advances with check – this is why it was necessary to bring the white king forward to f2) 47.Kf1 g2+ (47...Rf7!? is also very strong) 48.Kf2 Re2+ 49.Kxe2 g1Q.

**42...Re7? 43.g4! f4** (43...fg 44.Ra5+ Kh4 45.Nf6 =) **44.Ra5+ Kh4 45.Nf6 Kg3 46.Nh5+ Kxg4 47.Nf6+ Kg3**



**48.Ra3+?**

48.Nh5+ looked right. The text is illogical: why allow the pawn to reach f3? *In chess – a game ruled by iron logic – every inconsequential move is soundly punished* (Rudolf Spielmann).

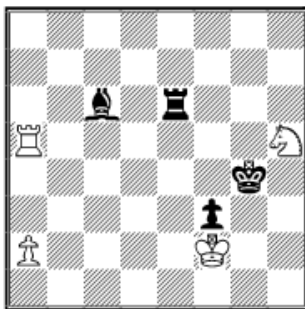
**48...f3 49.Nh5+ Kg4**

In Grischuk's opinion, Black had a simpler way: 49...Kh4 50.Nf4 Kg4, or 49.Ra5 Re1+ 50.Kf2 Re2+ 51.Kf1 Rb2 52.a4 Be4 (with the king on g4, this move would not be available because of the check on f6) 53.Nf4 Kg4.

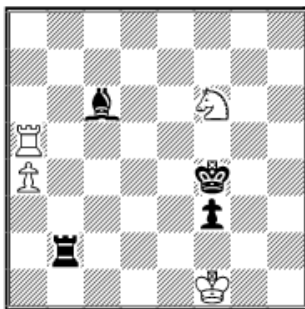
**50.Ra5**

White does no better after 50.Nf6+ Kg5 51.Ra6 Re1+ 52.Kf2 Re2+ 53.Kf1 Rc2+, or 53.Kg3 Rg2+ 54.Kh3 f2+.

**50...Re6 51.Kf2**



Black might have exploited White's badly placed pieces by 51...Re2+! 52.Kf1 (52.Kg1 meets the same reply) 52...Rb2! 53.Nf6+ Kf4 54.a4.



Now, the quiet move 54...Bb7!! would have placed White in zugzwang. The rook cannot move along the fifth rank, because of 55...Ba6+; on 55.Ra7 f2! 56.Rxb7 Rxb7 57.Kxf2 Rf7! decides, or if 56.Ra5 Ba6+! 57.Rxa6 Kf3. King moves are refuted in exactly the same way: 55.Kg1(e1) f2+ 56.Kf1 Ba6+! And knight checks would allow Black's king to invade the third rank: 55.Nh5+ Ke3 56.

Re5+ Be4+, or 55.Nd5+ Kg3 56.Nc3 Bc8+.

**51...Rh6? 52.Rc5!**

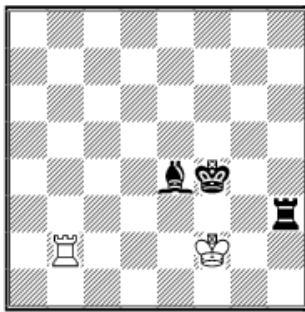
As long as the bishop remains on the a8-h1 diagonal, the rook will chase it. As soon as the bishop leaves the diagonal, White gives up his knight for Black's last pawn on f3.

**52...Bb7 53.Rb5 Bc6 54.Rc5 Be8 55.Rc4+ Kxh5 56.Kxf3**

Now I will cease commenting on the ensuing "rook and bishop vs. rook" endgame, until it reaches the critical position, which is important for endgame theory.

**56...Ra6 57.Kf4 Kg6 58.a4 Kf6 59.a5 Rxa5 60.Rb4 Bc6 61.Rc4 Rf5+ 62.Ke3 Re5+ 63.Kd4 Rd5+ 64.Ke3 Bb5 65.Rd4 Rh5 66.Kf4 Ke6 67.Ke4 Bc6+ 68.Kf4 Rf5+ 69.Ke3 Ke5 70.Rd3 Rh5 71.Rc3 Bd5 72.Kd2 Rh2+ 73.Ke3 Rh4 74.Kd3 Rg4 75.Ke3 Bc4 76.Kf3 Rh4 77.Ke3 Re4+**

78.Kf3 Be2+ 79.Kf2 Kf4 80.Rc2 Bd3 81.Rb2 Re3 82.Rb4+ Be4 83.Rb2 Rh3



#### 84.Re2?

An inaccuracy, making White's task considerably more difficult. He should have continued either with 84.Rd2 (refer to the endgame San Segundo – Beliavsky), or with 84.Ke1.

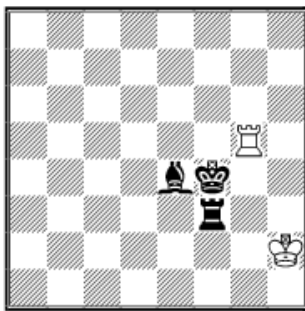
#### 84...Bd3 85.Rd2 Rf3+!

In this way, Black breaks up the defensive redoubt on the second rank. The concluding portion of the game took place in mutual time-pressure: the thirty seconds added for each player per move was clearly not enough time for successfully resolving the problems they faced.

#### 86.Kg2

White's defense would have been simpler after 86.Kg1!? Ke3 (87.Rf2 was threatened) 87.Rg2 Rf7 (87...Bf1 88.Rg7, intending either 89.Rf7+ or 89.Kh2) 88.Rg3+ Ke4 89.Kh2. Here, Black would have had a more difficult time coordinating his pieces.

**86...Bf1+ 87.Kg1 Ke3** (87...Kg3 88.Rg2+!) **88.Rd5** (88.Rd8 or 88.Ra2 would have been no worse) **88..Bd3 89.Rg5 Be4 90.Kh2 Kf4**



We can hardly make sense of what follows without computer assistance. We can no longer rely on simple variations, or logically understandable approaches – we must now deal with the hidden geometry of the chessboard.

According to the endgame tablebase, there are only two moves to draw here:

a) There's the pretty stalemate defense:  
91.Rg3! Rf2+ 92.Kg1 Ra2 93.Rc3; and

b) Moving the rook to one of the "correct" files (the c- or a-file): 91.Rg7! Rf2+ 92.Kg1 Ra2 (92...Rc2 93.Ra7!) 93.Rc7!.

#### 91.Rg8? Rf2+ 92.Kg1 Ra2?

The only move to win was 92...Rc2!! 93.Rb8 (the rook can't get to the a8-square – this is why White's 91st move was a mistake) 93...Rg2+ 94.Kf1 Rd2! 95.Rb4 Ke3 96.Rb3+ Bd3+ 97.Kg1 Kf3 98.Rb8 Bc4! (the rook takes away the vital g8-square from the rook) 99.Rb6 Rg2+ 100.Kh1 Ra2!—+.

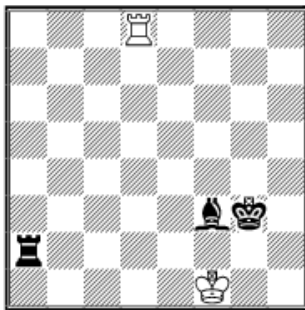
#### 93.Rb8?

The rook belongs on the c-file: 93.Rc8! Rg2+ (93...Ke3 94.Rc3+) 94.Kf1 Rd2 95.Rc4 (95.Kg1) 95...Ke3 96.Rc3+ Bd3+ 97.Kg1 Kf3 98.Rc8! =, now the vital c4-square remains under White's control. Inhuman finesses, indeed!

#### 93...Bd5?

Black wins by 93...Rg2+! 94.Kf1 Rd2!.

#### 94.Rd8 Kg3 95.Kf1 Bf3



### 96.Ke1?

The final mistake. The draw was his after 96.Re8! or 96.Rg8+ Bg4 97.Re8!.

**96...Re2+ 97.Kf1 Re3! 98.Rg8+ Bg4 99.Rg7 Re8 100.Rg5 Rh8 0-1**

White resigned, in view of 101.Ke1 Rd8+.

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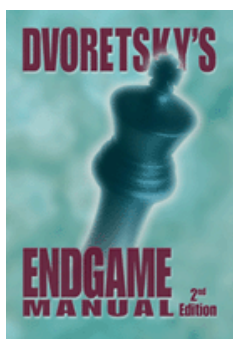




## COLUMNISTS

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## Critical Moments Part One

*Go there – I don't know where.  
 Bring it to me – I don't know what.*

**In any game, we can isolate especially important moments, where the moves that we, or our opponents, find (or not) have a significant influence upon the further course of the game, and upon its final outcome. Such moments are usually labeled crucial, or critical.**

It would be great to learn how to tell when a critical moment approaches, concentrate your energy on it, and find the correct solution to the tasks set before us. But how do we achieve this?

Boris Spassky considers that in his best years, he was very strong in this area, even stronger than Robert Fischer. But when I asked him one day what had helped him make the right decision at critical moments, and how he could tell that this moment was in fact an important, or critical one, I got no answer. Generally speaking, great players aren't really obliged to give clear explanations of their thinking process – after all, much of it is felt intuitively. The question is whether it is possible to translate so ephemeral a substance onto the level of practical recommendations. This is what occupies trainers and methodologists; and sometimes they turn up interesting and useful results, but certainly not always. In any case, the problem outlined in the header of this article remains, in my view, one of the least studied – even though several attempts at solving it have been undertaken, starting from differing methodological positions.

First, let me present the approach of grandmaster Leonid Shamkovich, as he described it in the magazine *Shakmaty v SSSR* Nos. 5&6, 1972. Shamkovich proposed the construction of a graph of a chess game, laying out on the horizontal axis the moves of the game, and along the vertical axis, the assessment of the position, using, for example, the standard scale of symbols (–+, –/+, =/+, =, +/–, +/–, ++). Assuming that the game has been analyzed objectively, we can assess the position after each move; then, by displaying it on the graph and connecting the lines, we can clearly see where the line goes from one assessment zone into another. These, of course, will be the crucial moments. If the game stays in the same assessment zone, and in a few moves the assessment changes, then we must either review our assessments, or look more carefully into exactly which move signified the change – most likely, that is where the error was made.

Such an approach obviously helps us diagnose our play, and uncover those stages of the game and those situations where we most often make our mistakes, to define the nature of our oversights. But this doesn't help us to reveal the critical moments and search for solutions in the midst of our games.

Perhaps now would be a good time to take a little detour into something of a more general nature. It frequently happens that different people use similar words and expressions in different ways, which leads to misunderstandings. It would be useful first to agree on the meaning of the terms we use, but this isn't always so easy to do. As here, I use the words

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“crucial” and “critical,” “moment” and “position,” as if they were synonymous, but one could probably uncover some fine distinctions, if one were so inclined.

Critical moments may be understood Shamkovich’s way: first and foremost, they would be positions in which significant changes occur in the evaluation and character of the game. Such changes generally reveal themselves *ex post facto*. Or, a different approach, consider situations that arise in a game, where one player faces a more or less complex task, where the game’s further course and outcome hinge upon his decision. I won’t hold strictly to any one understanding of the problem – instead, I’ll try to use them both.

Exposing a game’s critical moments is one of the key elements of the method (or, in fact, *pseudo*-method, but I won’t go into this theme for now) propagandized by grandmaster Josif Dorfman. He writes:

*I suggest three criteria for the existence of a critical position.*

*1) A position in which a decision has to be taken regarding a possible exchange. If the exchange is forced, there is no change compared with the previous critical position.*

*2) A position in which a decision has to be taken regarding a possible change in the pawn formation. Especially of the central pawns.*

*3) The end of a series of forced moves. Here one should not draw a parallel between forced moves and the moves relating to a combination.*

Here, he ought to have made it clear whether he meant that all the criteria had to be fulfilled, or just one of them. Reading further, we can make out that he meant it in the second sense.

I could agree with Dorfman that in critical positions (perhaps not even in all, but certainly in many of them), one of the criteria he gives does indeed exist. The problem is that they are, in fact, true for the majority of chess positions (you can almost always either exchange something, or push a pawn), which makes them not of much practical use.

What I’ve just said may seem obvious. Still, let’s illustrate it with an almost random selection from Dorfman’s book, *The Method in Chess*.

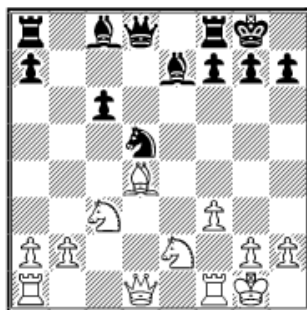
**Vorotnikov – Dorfman**

Lvov 1983

First, I shall reproduce the game, just as it is given in the book.

*As early as move 9, White executed a trade of bishop for knight, with the intent of fixing the pawn structure.*

**1 e4 c5 2 c3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 4 f3 Nc6 5 Be3 e5 6 Bb5? cd 7 cd ed 8 Bxd4 Be7 8 Nc3 0-0 10 Bxc6 bc 11 Nge2 d5 12 ed Nxd5 13 0-0**

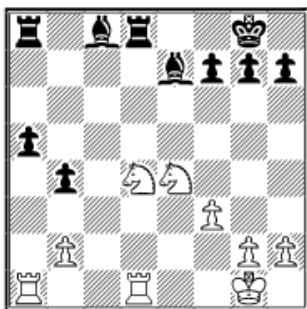


*A critical position has been reached. White has prepared the exchange of knights, which will finally fix the pawn formation. I should mention that on the previous move 13 Nxd5 Qxd5 14 0-0 Ba6 would have been bad for him. Searching for dynamic play, Black found and carried out an unusual idea. After the forced moves*

**13...Nb4 14 a3 (14...c5 followed by 15...Nd3 was threatened) 14...c5 15 Bxg7 Kxg7 16 ab Qxd1 17 Rfxd1 cb**

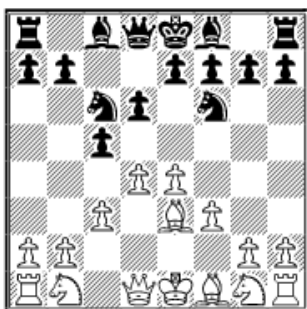
*He was able to connect his isolated pawns.*

18 Ne4 Rd8 19 Nd4 a5



*The potential passed a-pawn supported by the bishop pair does not leave White any chances of saving the game.*

And so, according to Dorfman, Black's critical position occurred after his opponent's thirteenth move. Let's begin our own logical analysis a bit earlier.



Here, after **5 Be3**, Black chose the crucial (if you consider that his opponent could very well have replied with 6 dc or 6 d5!?) pawn advance **5...e5**, which was certainly not forced. And if we follow the definition given above, doesn't that make this a critical moment?

In reply to **6 Bb5**, besides the double exchange of pawns at d4, 6...Qb6 7 Qa4 cd 8 cd a6 deserved consideration, the idea being to induce the exchange on c6, giving Black the two bishops. The same end could also have been achieved by a7-a6 on moves seven, eight or nine. It's not completely clear whether this would have been better or worse than the actual game continuation – which means that each of these points must also be taken as critical.

The exchange on c6, undertaken by White “without special invitation,” seems dubious – after all, he could also have played 10 Bf2, or accepted a different sort of exchange by 10 Nge2!?

The central pawn advance **11...d5** is tempting, but certainly not forced: completing his development by 11...Be6!? 12 0-0 Qa5 was a decent alternative, and with no fear of 13 Bxf6? Bxf6 14 Qxd6 Rab8-/+ . This means that here too, “according to Dorfman,” we have a critical moment of the game.

Black could also have taken on d5 with the pawn (another critical moment?), although **12...Nxd5** looks more natural. And by the way, I am not convinced by the assessment of the position after the line the grandmaster disparages: after 13 Nxd5!? Qxd5 14 0-0 Ba6 15 Re1, followed by 16 Nc3, in my opinion, White's only a little better.

Dorfman's dynamic idea **13...Nb4 14 a3 c5** was interesting, but dubious.



W?

According to his notes, Black obtains a winning position by force. But here, as almost everywhere in his books, the grandmaster consciously avoids examining, or even mentioning, the best choices for his opponent. Instead of 15 Bxg7?!, Vorotnikov should have continued 15 ab cd 16 Qxd4 Qxd4+ 17 Nxd4 Bxb4 18 Nd5 Bc5 (18...Bd6!?) 19

Rfd1 Rd8 20 b4, with rough equality: the centralized positions of White's pieces compensate, or nearly so, for Black's pair of bishops.

Some of my suggested alternative possibilities are probably a bit weaker than the moves made in the actual game; others may be equivalent, or

perhaps even stronger – but that’s not the point. The grandmaster was of course within his rights to concentrate the readers’ attention on just one of these positions. But as we have seen, in fact, critical moments (in the sense that Dorfman means them) arise literally on every move. And that in turn means that his criteria are too formalistic and generalized to be of any help to the chessplayer at the board.

There is a much more useful analysis of the problem of critical positions in the second chapter of Jonathan Rowson’s interesting book, [\*The Seven Deadly Chess Sins\*](#). Rowson begins with an idea, which I share:

*In fact, I suspect that the main problem with “thinking” as opposed to “feeling” is that it undermines your ability to sense the key moments/ critical positions in a game. In other words, a chessplayer generally senses the important, crucial moments of a game, not by logical means, but by intuition.*

The Scottish grandmaster analyses signs that can tell us when the critical moment of the game has arrived. It’s hardly possible to lay out his entire theory in the space of one article, so I would recommend that you turn to the immediate source. I note only that the author pays special attention to defining characteristics (*signs*) of the solidifying position, and chiefly to the ability to sense (or *sensitivity*) that the character of the game is about to change.

Rowson illustrates his ideas with very convincing examples, closely bound to the problem under discussion, rather than dragging his examples in by the ear, as Dorfman almost invariably does. The only question would be how applicable Rowson’s examples might be to real games, with limited thinking time available. The only way to answer this would be through the experimental method. Unfortunately, I myself have long since given up tournament practice, and can’t try it out on myself. I would like some strong player to attempt Rowson’s ideas, and then tell us about his (or her) results.

With this challenge, I switch over from introductory development to the main thrust of this article. First, we shall spend a little more time talking about the art of recognizing critical moments; then, we shall turn to analysis of concrete examples, which show how, in such situations, chessplayers resolve the tasks arising before them – or not.

So if a move radically changes the assessment of a position, then we have, “by definition,” a crucial moment in the game. (True, there are some exceptions – for instance, when we are studying the problem, we should not take time-pressure blunders, or gross tactical oversights into consideration.)

Right away, let me say that **the “criticality” of many positions is relative and subjective!**

*Heuer – Dvoretsky*  
Viljandi 1972



B?

What you see is a crucial moment in a most interesting game, analyzed in great detail in my book, [\*School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play\*](#) (in the chapter, “On the Edge of the Abyss”).

With 10...f6!, Black would have maintained a good position. The game continuation was **10...f5?? 11 Qg3!**,

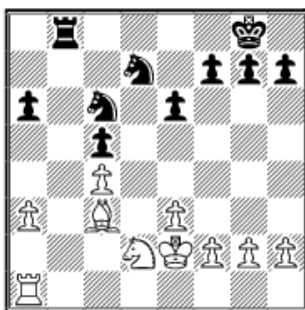
when my position became strategically hopeless: White develops his kingside initiative without interference, since Black has closed the

queenside by c5-c4.

Many chessplayers would push the f-pawn one square without thinking; it would never enter their minds that they had just passed a crucial moment. For here, it would seem, everything is clear; Black has nothing even the slightest bit complicated to resolve – so where's the criticality in this position? That's exactly what I would have thought, had I spent a moment's reflection on my idiotic move (played "automatically" – as in the analogous position with the pawn still at c5). As soon as I took my hand off the f-pawn, I saw what a horrendous mistake I had made. On the other hand, I will allow that for less advanced players, the necessity for a move like f7-f6 is not as obvious; so for them, this moment certainly would be critical.

In my joint analytical sessions with Artur Yusupov, time and again we have encountered situations in which the solution was not clear to me, while Yusupov confidently expressed his own opinion, which further checking proved to be correct. This would mean that positions that were critical for me were not for this gifted grandmaster. And, on occasion, the opposite occurred, too.

**Yusupov – Lautier**  
Amsterdam 1994



W?

(This game is annotated in our joint collection entitled, *School of Future Champions 4 – Positional Play*, in the lecture by Yusupov titled, "The Key to a Position.")

I remember that I was visiting Artur, and at his request we analyzed in detail games he had recently played. Upon

reaching the diagrammed position, Artur said:

- Here, I succeeded in getting down into the position, the way I should, and found what appears to be a very powerful solution.

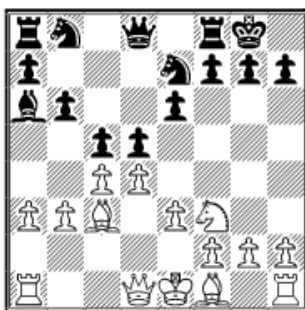
- You mean, something like g2-g4?, I asked.

Artur actually got upset.

- Well, here I was sweating like a pig to come up with this, which you'll probably put in as a sample exercise in how to reach the right decision quickly!

Considering our theme, it would also be instructive for us to consider critical positions that arose in this game during the transition out of the opening.

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 Ne7 5 Bd2!? 0-0 6 a3 Bxc3 7 Bxc3 b6 8 Nf3 Ba6 9 b3 c5**



W?

**One of the outward signs of a position's "criticality" is that there is a choice** – especially when it means a **transformation** of the current state of the game.

In the present instance, White can either exchange pawns in the center, or allow his opponent to do so; each will lead to

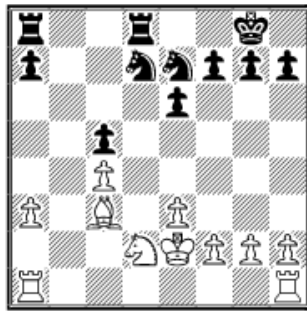
different structures. Yusupov made the optimal choice. I believe that, in making his decision, the grandmaster was aided by past experience: I suggest you compare this episode with the opening phase of the game Yusupov – Ljubojevic, Tilburg 1987 (examined in my book, [School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play](#), in the chapter “Twenty Years Later”).

#### 10 dc! dc 11 Bxc4

Here, my opinion diverges from Artur’s. I thought it was more natural and stronger to recapture with the pawn at c4 (to keep the bishop-pair), while Yusupov preferred the text move without much hesitation, with the idea of clearing the comfortable e2-square for his king in the endgame. And there was a third possibility as well: 11 cb!?

Should we regard this moment as critical? I don’t know – here, much depends on an objective evaluation of each of the indicated continuations. If we acknowledge them to be approximately equivalent, that means the general evaluation of this situation remains unchanged (or almost unchanged), whatever our choice. Thus, White would not need to immerse himself in finding a solution to the task in front of him – he can quickly execute the move he likes best, since the choice is not critical. Understandably, evaluating the level of criticality over the board is something that can only be done intuitively.

#### 11...Bxc4 12 bc bc 13 Qxd8 Rxd8 14 Ke2 Nd7 15 Nd2



B?

Now we have reached one of the most important critical points of the game, one that bears no resemblance to any of those we have encountered up to this point. We have that rare situation where there’s no exchange, nor choice of pawn structure to be considered: what we need to decide is the best setup for our pieces. Nor can we use the framework offered

by Rowson: there’s nothing exceptional to see, either in the position or in White’s last move. So it’s very hard to see this as the onset of a critical position. Yusupov and I were only able to determine this was so after deep analysis.

After the natural move Joel Lautier actually made – **15...Nc6?** – Black’s position grew difficult: he had no counterplay. 15...Nc8! was necessary, the idea being to place the knights on d6 and b6, and restrict White’s play through pressure on the c4-pawn. You will find the analytical support for this in the above-cited lecture of Yusupov’s.

Once again, I consider it useful to draw a parallel between this episode and another one featuring similar ideas (once again, it required that the optimal scheme for coordinating a pair of knights be found). I’m thinking of a match game between Sokolov and Yusupov (Riga 1986), examined in the collection, *School of Future Champions 2 – Secrets of Opening Preparation*, in the Yusupov lecture entitled, “Unexpected Moves in the Opening.”

**The proper method of action in a critical position unsurprisingly involves generating activity. The search for a solution at crucial moments quite often means fighting for the initiative: either seeking ways to develop an initiative, or ways to neutralize the enemy’s.**

**16 Rhb1!** (this is the right rook, allowing White to answer 16...Nb6 by 17 a4) **16...Rab8 17 Rb5!** (excellent technique: before exchanging rooks, it’s useful to provoke the move a7-a6, to weaken the b6-square) **17...a6 18 Rxb8 Rxb8**

And we have arrived at the position with which we began our examination of this game.

**19 g4! f6 20 h4 Kf7 21 h5 Nb6 22 Rd1 Na4 (22...Rd8!?) 23 Ba1 Na5?  
24 Ne4 Nb6 (24...Nxc4 25 Rd7+ Kf8 26 h6) 25 g5 f5 26 Nxc5 Naxc4 27  
Nd7 Rc8**

On 27...Rb7 28 Nxb6 Nxb6, the pin 29 Rb1 is decisive (29...Rb8 30 Be5).

**28 Nxb6 Nxb6 29 Rd6**

The vulnerability of the knight on b6 is, just as in the variation examined in the last note, a direct consequence of White's accurate seventeenth move!

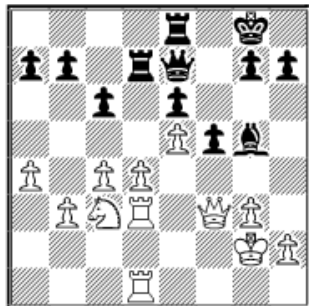
**29...Rc2+ 30 Kf3 Ra2 31 Bxg7 Nc4 32 Rd7+ Ke8 33 Ra7 Nd6!? 34 g6  
hg 35 h6 Ne4 36 Kg2 Rxf2+ 37 Kg1 Rd2 38 h7 Rd1+ 39 Kg2 Rd2+ 40  
Kf1 1-0**

Let's draw the major conclusion from what we have discussed above. The reader will probably already have guessed that he will not be offered an exact algorithm for determining that the critical moment of a game has arrived. We can honestly only rely on some signs or "clues," which may help us, but may also sometimes lead us astray.

The rest of this article will be devoted to the analysis of concrete examples, illustrating the search for correct solutions in problematic positions.

### ***Botvinnik – Flohr***

Moscow 1936



W?

White controls more space, but his opponent has no obvious weaknesses – his position is solid. All White's pieces are ideally, or nearly ideally placed; however, if he doesn't find a way to develop an initiative, his position cannot be improved. Meanwhile, his opponent will make his own position more secure (a judgment in Rowson's style on the

"tendency" of further play). The central break with d4-d5 is not dangerous, since it would expose the e5-pawn to attack. So – what should White do?

**33 c4-c5!?**

*This at first sight rather strange move (after all, it weakens the d5-square!) puts Black in a critical position. Now the knight maneuver via b1, a3 and c4 to d6 is threatened. But after c4-c5 White also has another plan – the advance of the b-pawn. I picked up this idea from one of Romanovsky's games in the 5th USSR Championship (against Selezniev). Flohr parries the second threat, but White carries out the first (Botvinnik).*

Once again, I draw the readers' attention to the fact that **working out many of our solutions aids in making associations with similar ideas we have encountered earlier.**

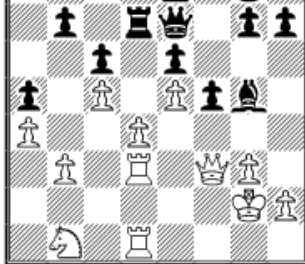
**33...a7-a5! 34 Nc3-b1!**



B?

**34...Qf8? 35 Na3 Bd8 36 Nc4 Bc7 37**





Nd6 Rb8 38 Rb1 (38 Nxb7!? Rxb7 39 Qxc6 Bb8 40 Qxe6+) 38...Qd8 39 b4 ab 40 Rxb4 Bxd6 41 ed Qa5 42 Rdb3, and White went on to win.

**In many critical positions, a correct solution, found by one player, may not objectively upset the balance, but**

**merely set the opponent a problem. Sometimes, the latter may not cope with it well; only then does he begin to face serious difficulties. In other words, critical positions not infrequently turn out to be so for both sides. And sometimes, the critical position for the opponent occurs a bit later – after a series of more or less forced moves.**

This thought is well illustrated by the present game and by those that follow, as well as by our very first example in this article (Vorotnikov – Dorfman).

So what should Black have done? Taking the long view, his task here was relatively simple – it's strange that a grandmaster like Flohr couldn't resolve it over the board, or that Botvinnik didn't indicate the solution in his notes to the game. It's quite obvious that if the knight gets to d6, Black's position becomes strategically hopeless. Black had to prevent that maneuver at any cost. With the knight on a3, Black has the b7-b6 break, but it's important that this should not leave the c6-pawn hanging.

### 34...Rd7-d5!

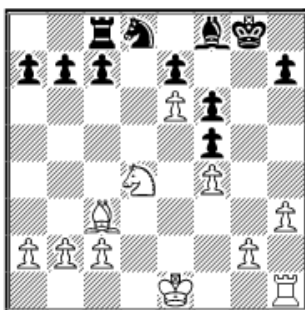
On 35 Na3, Black continues 35...b6 36 Nc4 bc 37 Nxa5 Qc7 38 Nc4 cd 39 Rxd4 Be7, with chances for both sides. Of course, White could certainly return his knight to c3, driving Black's rook back to d7, but it's unclear how he would make progress after that – for there is no other way to d6 except via b1-a3-c4.

And if that's true, then it raises doubts as to whether Botvinnik's solution to the problem on move thirty-three was correct. Instead of the 33 c5 he awarded an exclamation point, in my opinion, **33 a5!** would have been stronger, to create the threat of 34 a6 and follow up with 34 Na4. After that, if nothing better appears, White could play c4-c5, and then bring the knight to d6 – and this time, Black would be unable to prevent it. The 33...Qb4 sortie would be harmless: even if White didn't like the position after 34 a6 Rb8 (34...Qxb3? 35 Qh5+-), he could still play 34 Qh5 Qe7 35 Na4+/-.

Tasks such as the one faced by Black in this example arise fairly frequently in practice; and it's useful for a player to train himself in solving them. **It's exceptionally important to learn to notice an unfavorable tendency in time – to see when the opponent will be able to improve his position without risk, and to decide how to prevent it.** Examples of this may be found in the concluding chapters of the book, [School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play](#) – for example, the fragments from my games against Khachaturov and Taimanov.

### Hort – Donner

Skopje Olympiad 1972



W?

If White could hold on to the pawn at e6, his position would become strategically winning, as Black would be forever shut in on the kingside. The task was apparently resolved by the prophylactic move selected by Hort.

**18 b2-b4!? c7-c5**





White had intended to answer 18...b6 by 19 b5.

### 19 b4xc5

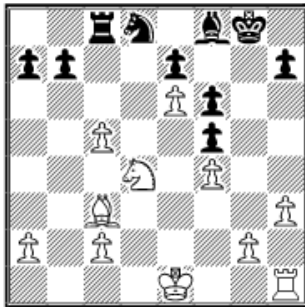
As the game went, Hort's idea was completely triumphant.

**19...Rxc5 20 Kd2 Rd5 21 Kc1 h5 22 h4 Bh6 23 g3 Kf8 24 Rd1 Ke8 25 a4 Bf8 26 Rd3 Rd6 27 Re3 Ra6 27 a5 Nc6 29 Nxc6 Rxc6 30 Kb2 Kd8 31 Kb3 Rd6 32 Bb4 Rd1 33 Rd3+ Rxd3+ 34 cd Kc7 35 Kc4 a6 36 Bc5 Kd8 37 Bb6+ Kc8 38 d4 Kb8 39 d5 Bh6 40 Bc5 (40 d6!) 40...Bf8 41 Bd4 Kc7 42 Kc5 1-0**

Black resigned, in view of 42...Bh6 43 d6+ ed+ 44 Kd5.

This looks convincing enough! But in fact, it's the same story as in the previous example: had Black seen the strategic danger threatening him in time, he could have avoided the tragic fate in store for him.

Unfortunately, Hein Donner failed to find the simple solution. Moreover, even after the game, it remained undiscovered by both players, if we may judge from the book, *Together With Grandmasters* (which, by the way, is excellent), written by Hort and Vlastimil Jansa, from which I took this example. There, the position is evaluated as close to winning, while the best defense goes unexamined.



B?

*The little pawn at e6 is the biggest pawn on the board!* – write Hort & Jansa. That means that it must be eliminated at all costs. Thus, the decisive error was 19...Rxc5?.

### 19...b7-b6!

White can't play 20 cb? Rxc3; meanwhile, Black intends 20...bc, forcing 21 Nxf5 Nxe6+/-.

### 20 c5-c6

By the way, the same position is reached after 18...b6!? (instead of 18...c5) 19 b5 c5 20 bc. Now 20...Nxc6 21 Kd2 leads to practically the same prospectless position for Black as in the game. So

### 20...Nd8xe6! 21 Nd4xe6 Rc8xc6!

Double attack!

### 22 Ne6xf8 Rc6xc3 23 Nf8-d7

Not 23 Ne6? Re3+. In the rook endgame after 23 Kd2 Rc6! 24 Nxb7 (24 Nd7? Rd6+) 24...Kxb7, Black stands no worse.

### 23...Rc3xc2

It is possible to win back the knight by 23...Rc8!? 24 0-0 Kf7, followed by Ke8 and Rd8, arriving at a drawn pawn or rook ending.

### 24 0-0 Rc2xa2 +/-

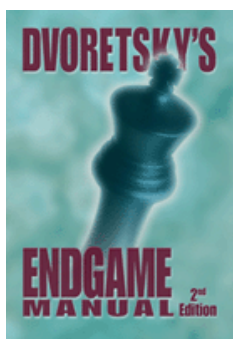
But not 24...Rc8? 25 Rf3! Rd8 26 Rd3 or 25...Kf7 26 Ra3. White has kept the extra piece, but his opponent has three pawns for the knight and can look to the future without fear – the result of the struggle is not clear.



## COLUMNISTS

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Mark Dvoretsky



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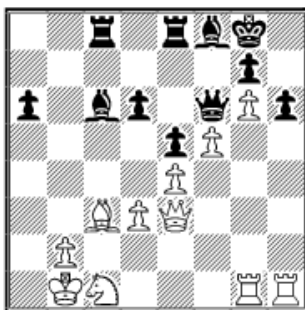
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## Critical Moments Part Two

The critical positions we have been examining up to now have been resolved mainly on positional considerations. But, of course, far more frequently the solution to the position turns out to be purely tactical, or to be partly tactical and partly strategic, in varying proportions. The character of our annotations to all of the examples that follow must change accordingly, becoming more detailed and concrete.

Yet is it worthwhile to tack on a detailed, variant-filled analysis to the games under examination, when it will exhaust many of our readers? Would it not be better to settle for a general explanation of the important ideas? Here, of course, it's important to decide whom these notes are for. I generally write for higher-rated players, for whom the reading, and even more so, the attempts to solve the exercises presented, lead inescapably to the appearance of their own thoughts, ideas and suggestions. I try to inspire them, and prepare to answer at least some of their questions.

**Polgar – Polugaevsky**  
Aruba 1991  
1st Match Game



W?

Black is going to free himself by means of the central advance 29...d5. If White does not want to hand over the initiative to her opponent, she must create counter-threats.

**29 Bc3-e1!?**

White intends to open lines on the kingside by 30 Bh4 and 31 f6. In *Chess Informant*, Judit Polgar assessed this position as winning for White – evidently influenced by the actual course of the game.

**29...d5?**

Lev Polugaevsky follows his intended plan, but allows his king to fall under a deadly attack.

**30 Bh4 Qd6 31 f6 Re6 (31...gf 32 g7!) 32 f7+ Kh8 33 Qg3!**



White's bishop has engineered a breach in the opponent's defenses; now it becomes a "desperado," or kamikaze piece, prepared to go crashing off somewhere, to open the far-right file for the rook sacrifice on h6. For example, 33...Rb8 34 Be7! (but not 34 Bd8?, in view of 34...Rxb2+! 35 Kxb2 Qb4+, with perpetual check), as indicated by Tibor Karolyi.

Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](http://USCFSales.com):



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**33...Ba4 34 Bf6!**

34 Be7! would be equally strong.

**34...Rxc1+ 35 Rxc1 Rxf6**

If 35...gf, then 36 g7+ Bxg7 37 Rxh6+!.

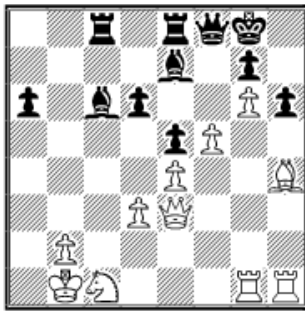
**36 Rcg1!**

Once again threatening the rook sacrifice on h6. Black is defenseless.

**36...Rf1+ 37 Rxf1 dxe4 38 Rfg1 Qxd3+ 39 Qxd3 ed 40 Re1 Bc2+ 41 Kc1 1-0**

As in the preceding example, Black lost only because he failed to take timely action against the strategic danger threatening him. He had to forestall White's f5-f6.

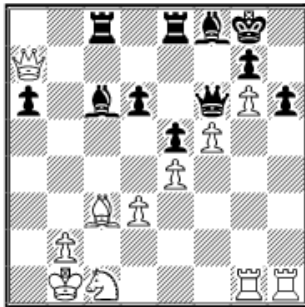
**29...Bf8-e7! 30 Be1-h4 Qf6-f8**



Now the pawn sacrifice 31 f6?! Bxf6 32 Rf1 Re6 gives White nothing. And after 31 Bxe7 Rxe7 32 Rf1 Qf6! (stopping 33 f6) 33 Ne2 d5 34 Ng3, a double-edged position arises, in which both sides have roughly equal chances.

And so, the obvious bishop transfer to h4 gives no advantage – it only sets the opponent a problem (not a very complex one), which he failed to solve.

White could also have tried to prevent the planned advance d6-d5 by another means. The sortie **29 Qa7!?** deserved serious consideration, in order to threaten 30...Rxh6!



B?

For example, 29...d5? 30 Rxh6! Bc5 (30...gh 31 Qh7#) 31 Rh5(h7)! Bxa7 32 Rgh1 Kf8 33 Bb4+, and mates.

There are several ways to parry this threat, not all of them equivalent: in many variations, White does succeed in getting to the black king. Some of the attacking ideas are so subtle that they

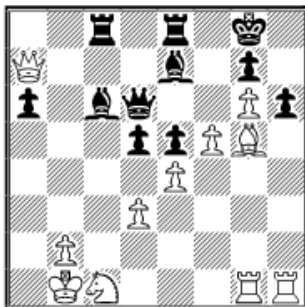
cannot be properly evaluated over the board – making such a judgment without a computer would be very difficult, making it difficult to decide on such play (transferring the bishop to h4 was more natural and understandable). But if White succeeds, then his opponent would have a much harder task to solve than he did in the game.

29...Re7?! 30 Qxa6 is dubious. Black has lost a pawn, and his pieces do not coordinate well.

29...Qe7?! would be met, not by 30 Qxa6 d5, with counterplay, but by 30 Qf2! On 30...Qf6, White wins with 31 Bd2! (with the deadly threat of 32 Bg5!), when 31...Be7 no longer works, in view of 32 Bxh6! And after 30...d5, the same maneuver, 31 Bd2! is very strong; but there is also another, more spectacular solution: 31 Rxh6! gh 32 f6 Qe6 33 f7+ Kh8 (33...Kg7 would be no better) 34 Bd2!+, followed by 35 Qh2.

29...Be7?! looks enticing, considering the variation 30 Qxa6?! d5 31 ed Bxd5 32 Qxf6 Bxf6, with excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

White continues her attack with the technique we have already seen: 30 Bd2! d5 (30...Ba4 31 Bg5! Qf8 32 Bxh6! gh 33 Qe3! Bg5 34 Rxc5! hg 35 Qxc5 is a pretty line: despite the extra rook, Black is defenseless) 31 Bg5! Qd6



W?

The 32 f6 break is good here only for a draw: 32...gf! 33 Qf2 (33 Rxc6 fg 34 Qf2 Qf6 35 Rh8+! Kg7! 36 Rh7+ Kg8! = ) 33...Ba4!? 34 Rxc6 Rc2 35 Rh8+! Kg7! =.

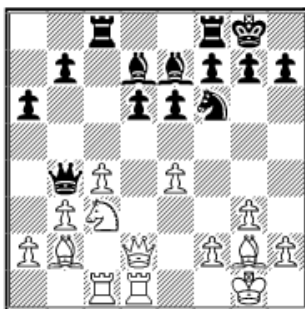
The bishop sacrifice 32 Bxh6! gh 33 Qe3! (but not 33 Rxc6 Rc7!, preparing 34...Bf6) would be much stronger: 33...

Rb8 (33...Qf6 34 Rxc6+-) 34 Rh2!? (White could also try the straightforward 34 Rxc6 Rxb2+ 35 Kxb2 Qb4+ 36 Nb3 Qa3+ 37 Kc2 Qa2 + 38 Kd1 Qxb3+ 39 Ke2, and the king escapes the checks) 34...Bf6 35 g7! Bg5 36 Rxc5+-, Note that the apparently equivalent 34 Rg2?! would leave the b2-square unguarded at the end of this variation, allowing Black to seize the initiative by 36...Rxb2+! 37 Kxb2 Rb8+.

These variations give some idea of the dangers facing Black. It seems that the only safe way out of his problems lay in the move **29...Ra8!** If Black plays this, he needs to be sure that 30 Rxc6?! Rxa7 31 Rh7 will not work, in view of 31...Re6! 32 Rgh1 Qxc6 33 fg Rxc6. And **30 Qb6 Rec8** leads to a complex position, where both sides have chances.

*Bilek – Alster*  
Prague 1955

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cd 4 Nxd4 a6 5 g3 Nf6 6 Bg2 Qc7 7 0-0 Be7 8 b3 Nc6 9 Bb2 Nxd4 10 Qxd4 0-0 11 c4 d6 12 Nc3 Bd7 13 Rac1 Rac8 14 Rfd1 Qa5 15 Qd2 Qb4**



W?

The first thing that strikes one is that White could get a favorable endgame by 16 Nd5 Nxd5 17 ed Qxd2 18 Rxd2; however, after 18...e5, White's advantage is not great.

Istvan Bilek found another, tactical way, which looks more promising.

**16 c4-c5!! Rc8xc5**

Black cannot avoid the main line of the combination:

16...Qxc5? 17 Nd5+-.

16...dc? 17 e5 Nd5 17 Bxd5!+-.

16...Ne8? 17 Nd5+-.

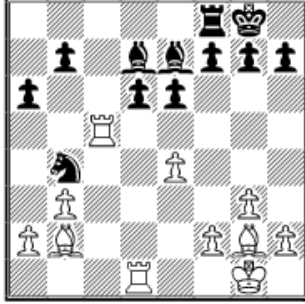
16...Rc6? 17 e5 (17 Na4 Qxd2 18 Rxd2 is not bad either) 17...de 18 Nd5 Nxd5 19 Qxb4 Nxb4 20 Rxd7+-.

From here, up to a certain point, the game proceeded almost by force.

**17 Nc3-d5! Nf6xd5 18 Qd2xb4 Nd5xb4 19 Rc1xc5**



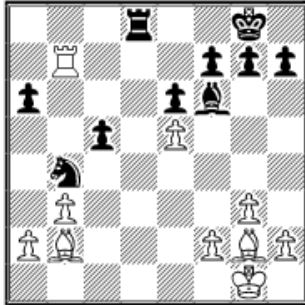
Taking the rook obviously leads to an inferior endgame for Black. **Sometimes,**



it makes sense to jump out of the game track laid down by one's opponent, even if it costs some material. Just so here: Black could have tried the exchange sacrifice 19...Bc6 20 Rc4 d5, when he would have knight and pawn for the rook, with his pieces decently placed.

But in any case, would this have been the lesser or the greater evil? I think, greater: after 21 Rcd4! de 22 Ba3 Nd5 23 Bxe7 Nxe7 24 Bxe4, White retains good winning chances. It is not yet time for such desperate measures.

19...d6xc5 20 Rd1xd7 Be7-f6 21 e4-e5 Rf8-d8! 22 Rd7xb7



**Sensing the onset of a critical moment sometimes comes down merely to seeing that one has a choice.** In this game, Black comes up more than once against a subtle choice – this is why his defense proved so difficult.

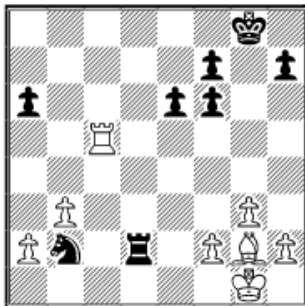
22...Rd8-d1+ 23 Bg2-f1 Bf6-d8

Besides the obvious check, followed by 23...Bd8, Black also had to examine

22...Nd3?! 23 ef (not only the bishop, but also the e5-pawn was under attack) 23...Nxb2.

Black has equality after 24 fg Rd1+ 25 Bf1 Ra1. It is harder to assess the consequences of 24 Bf1 gf 25 Bxa6 Rd1+ 26 Kg2 Rd2 and 24 Ra7 gf 25 Rxa6 Rd1+ 26 Bf1, but it is clear that Black would have to fight for the draw.

24 Rc7!? gf 25 Rxc5 Rd2



After something like 26 Ra5 Nd3 27 Rxa6 Nxf2, Black retains counterplay. The question is only how realistic it is – whether his kingside threats will prove enough to distract his opponent from the advance of his passed pawns. In any case, taking on these variations would have meant that Black would have been playing *va banque*. Sometimes, that decision has to be taken – though apparently, not here.

22...Rd8-d1+ 23 Bg2-f1 Bf6-d8 24 a2-a3

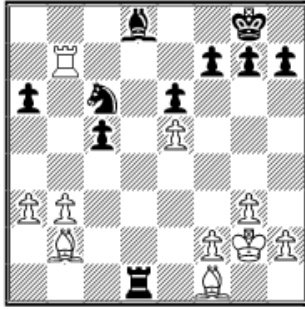
24 Ba3 a5 is evidently weaker.

24...Nb4-c6!

Still another far from obvious move. 24...Nc2?! 25 Rb8! Kf8 26 Rc8 is hardly better, but he should have considered 24...Na2?!, taking away a square from the dark-squared bishop before attacking it with the rook – although it would seem that Black could not solve his problems that way, either. White would retain the advantage even after the simple 25 a4 g6 26 Ba3 Nb4 27 Kg2 a5 28 Bc4; still more accurate would be 25 Kg2 Rd2 26 Rb8 g6 (26...Kf8 27 a4 Rxb2 28 Rxd8+ Ke7 29 Rc8+/-) 27 a4 Kg7 28 Ba3+/-.

25 Kg1-g2

White would get nothing special out of 25 Bc3!? Kf8 26 Kg2 Rc1 27 Bd2 Rc2 28 Bf4 (28 Be3 Nxe5) 28...g5 29 Be3 Be7 (29...Nxe5? 30 Rb8) 30 Bxa6 Nxe5 31 h3 c4 32 a4 cb 33 Rxb3 Ra2 34 Rb8+ Kg7 35 Bb5 g4!?!+/-.



B?

Here was the critical moment for Black, in my opinion. Up to this point, he had played the best moves, but here Ladislav Alster finally broke under the strain.

**25...Rd1-d2?**

A natural, but mistaken move, allowing White to make a significant

improvement in the position of his dark-squared bishop by getting it to e3.

Not much would have been changed by 25...Rb1? 26 Bc3 Rc1 (26...a5 27 Bd3 Rc1 28 Bb2 Rd1 29 Be4+/-) 27 Bd2 and 28 Be3+/-.

He had to play **25...Ba5!!**, without fearing 26 b4 cb 27 ab Bxb4 28 Rb6, in view of 28...Rd2! 29 Rxb4 Nxb4 30 Bc3 Ra2! (30...Rd5 does not lose, either: 31 Bxb4 Rxe5 32 Bxa6+/-) 31 Bxb4 a5, with counterplay. You will see this same opposition of forces – rook and distant passed pawn vs. two minor pieces – in the next example as well.

White would probably have selected **26 Bxa6 Rb1 27 Rb5! Rxb2 28 Rxc5 Rxb3 29 Rxc6**. But the opposite-color bishops ending a pawn down is most likely drawn. After **29...g5 30 a4**, Black could play either 30...Rb4 31 Bb5 Re4+/-, or 30...Rc3 31 Bc4 Ra3 32 Bb5 Ra2+/-.

**26 Bb2-c1 Rc1-c2 27 Bc1-e3**

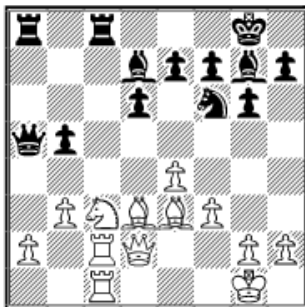
Two powerful bishops, plus his opponent's pawn weaknesses, assure White an easy victory.

**27...Kf8 28 Bd3 Rc3 29 Bc4 Na5 30 Bxc5+ Ke8 31 Bb4 Nxb7 32 Bxc3 Nc5 33 b4 Na4 34 Bd4 Kd7 35 Bxa6 Kc6 36 Bd3 Kd5 37 Ba1 1-0**

*Portisch – Gheorghiu*

Siegen Olympiad 1970

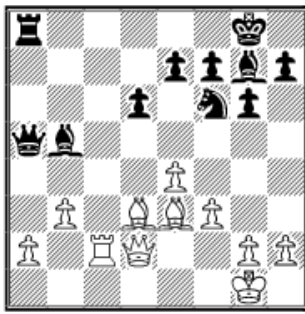
**1 c4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cd 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 e4 Nf6 6 Nc3 Nxd4 7 Qxd4 d6 8 Be3 Bg7 9 f3 0-0 10 Qd2 Qa5 11 Rc1 a6 (11...Be6) 12 b3 Bd7 13 Bd3 Rfc8 14 0-0 b5 15 Rc2! Be6 16 cb ab 17 Rfc1 Bd7**



W?

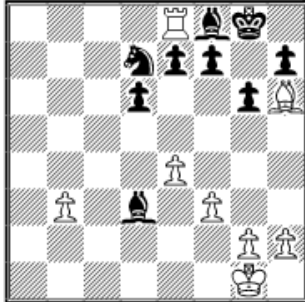
Florin Gheorghiu probably rejected 17...b4 because of 18 Nb5 Rxc2 19 Rxc2 Bd7 20 Nd4+/- . Now, however, he is ready to advance the pawn to b4. Quiet continuations could hardly allow White to try for any advantage. The question is how to assess the consequences of the tactical transformation of the position undertaken by Lajos Portisch.

**18 Nc3xb5!! Rc8xc2 19 Rc1xc2 Bd7xb5**



20 Rc2-c8+!?

Portisch awards the text move two exclamation marks, while assessing the position after **20 Qxa5! Rxa5 21 Bd2 Rxa2!** as won for Black – but he’s wrong! Let’s extend the variations: **22 Rxa2 Bxd3 23 Ra8+ Bf8 24 Bh6 Nd7 25 Re8!**



On 25...e5 or 25...e6, White plays 26 Rd8. If 25...f5, then 26 Bxf8 (26 ef? Kf7) 26...Nxf8 27 Rxe7 fe 28 fe, and Black has to struggle to draw – **rook and distant passed pawn in such situations usually outweigh the two minor pieces.**

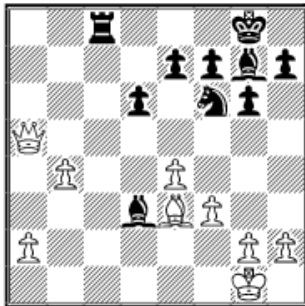
White could try gaining a tempo in the above variation by playing 21 b4?! (instead of 21 Bd2), the idea being 21...

Rxa2 22 Rxa2 Bxd3 23 Ra8+ etc. But after the reply 21...Ra3! 22 Bxb5 Rxe3 23 Rc8+ Bf8 24 Bc6 Re1+! 25 Kf2 Rb1 26 b5 Kg7 27 a4 e6 28 a5 d5, Black is at least not worse.

## 20...Ra8xc8

Black must give up the queen. He gets into a hopeless position after 20... Bf8 21 Rxa8 Qxd2 22 Bxd2 Bxd3 23 Bh6 Nd7 24 a4! (compared to the variations examined previously, White keeps not one, but two queenside pawns). 20...Be8 is also joyless: 21 Qxa5 Rxa5 22 a4! threatens both 23 Bb5 Kf8 24 b4 and 24 Bb6 Rg5 25 a5.

## 21 Qd2xa5 Bb5xd3 22 b3-b4!



B?

In Portisch’s opinion, White has a great advantage. The game’s further course confirms his assessment: **22...Nd7 23 b5 d5!?** (23...Bc3 24 Qa6 and 25 a4) **24 b6** (24 ed Be5 is weaker, allowing the bishop to join the defense) **24...d4 25 b7 Rb8 26 Bf4 e5 27 Qc7 ef** (27...Bb5 28 Qc8+ Bf8 29 Bxe5! Rxc8 30 bcQ Nxe5 31 Qb8+—) **28 Qxd7 Be5 29 Qd5 Re8?**

**1-0** Black resigned, in view of 30 Qxe5 (I have made use of Portisch’s notes from *Informant*).

“Things aren’t so dark, up close!,” as Vladimir Vysotsky assured us in his song, “The Honor of the Chess Crown – The Game.” Black had at his disposal an effective plan of defense, indicated by Vadim Zvjaginsev. According to the old rule, **the rook should be placed behind the furthest-advanced passed pawn.** But in order to free the rook, Black first has to make “luft” for the king.

## 22...h7-h5! 23 b4-b5 Rc8-c2 24 b5-b6 Rc2-b2 25 b6-b7 Rb2-b1+

25...Kh7!? 26 Qc7 Rb1+ was good, too.

## 26 Kg1-f2 Rb1-b2+



Now 27 Kg1 Rb1+ is a repetition of moves, but does White have anything

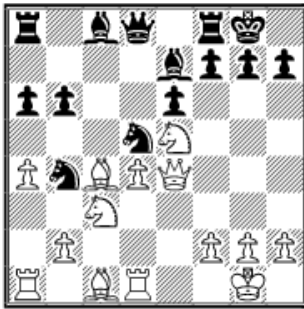


Banja Luka 1979

better? After 27 Ke1 Nd7 28 Qc7 Kh7 unclear, the knight is taboo: 29 Qxd7?? Bc3+. And on 27 Kg3 Bf1 (just not 27... Kh7?, because of the double attack with 28 Qa3+), White's king is not comfortable. On 28 Bf2, the simplest reply would be 28...Kh7 unclear.

*Vukic – Sibarevic*

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 dc 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Bxc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 Nc6 8 Qe2 cd 9 Rd1 Be7 10 ed 0-0 11 Nc3 Nd5 (11...Nb4 12 Ne5 Bd7 was preferable) 12 Qe4 Ncb4 13 Ne5 b6**



W?

In a game Rashkovsky – Kupreichik (Minsk 1985), White tried the primitive 14 Nxd5 ed 15 Qf3 Be6 16 Bb3 Rc8, and obtained almost nothing.

The following tactical shot promises White more.

**14 Ne5-c6!! Nb4xc6 15 Nc3xd5 Bc8-b7**

White would have an obvious advantage after 15...ed 16 Bxd5. Matters are more complicated after **15...Ra7**.



W?

Still another critical position for White – one that has been seen frequently in practice.

A) 16 Nf4 Nb4 (Milov – Spangenberg, Buenos Aires 1996) promises little. Black's pieces all come to good squares, his position is solid, and White's intended attack, even after Vadim

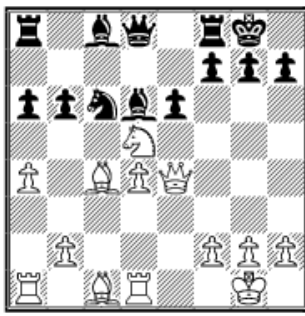
Milov's recommendation of 17 Ra3!/? doesn't look very threatening.

B) In the game Susan Polgar – Magem Badals, Pamplona 1991/92, White continued: 16 Nxe7+ Nxe7 17 Bg5 Qd7 18 Bxe7 Qxe7 19 d5 ed 20 Bxd5 Qf6 21 b4 Re7, with approximate equality. White should not have traded so much off: 18 Qg4!/? Rc7 19 Bd3 was stronger, retaining some initiative.

I think it makes sense to induce a weakening of Black's pawn structure by 16 Bd3! f5, and then to play 17 Nxe7+ Nxe7 18 Qe3!, intending 19 Bc4 (18 Qe2 is inferior, because of 18...Nc6, with a counterattack against the pawn at d4). If 18...Rc7, then 19 Bd2, with advantage to White.

Black has yet another continuation at his disposal, a suggestion of grandmaster Alexander Motylev: **15...Bd6!/?**.





It might seem that White could refute this move by 16 Nf6+!? gf 17 Bh6 f5 18 Qxc6. However, Black would take on f6 with the queen: 16...Qxf6! 17 Qxc6 Qe7. For example, 18 Qxa8 Bb7 19 Qa7

B?



The obvious 19...Qc7 allows White to gain the upper hand by 20 d5! Ra8 (or 20...Bxh2+ 21 Kh1 Ra8 22 Qxb7 Qxb7 23 de+/-) 21 Qxb7! Qxb7 22 de Qe7 23 ef+ Kf8 24 g3 Bc5 25 b3!+/- (the f2-square can now be protected from a2 by the rook).

What saves Black is the standard two-bishop sacrifice: 19...Bxh2+!! 20 Kxh2 Qh4+ 21 Kg1 Bxg2! 22 f3! (the only way to play for a win) 22...Bxf3! 23 Rd2 Qe1+ 24 Bf1 Qg3+ 25 Rg2 Bxg2 26 Bxg2 Qe1+ 27 Bf1 Qg3+ 28 Kh1 Qh4+ 29 Kg2 Qg4+ (29...Rc8) 30 Kf2 Qxd4+, with a likely draw.

White still maintains somewhat better prospects by declining the rook offer in favor of 18 Bg5! Qc7 (18...Qxg5 19 Qxa8) 19 Qxc7 Bxc7 20 d5 +/- . Additionally, it would be good for him to induce the weakening of the opposing pawn chain by 16 Bd3!? f5 first, and only then play 17 Nf6 +!. In the line 17...Qxf6 (17...gf!? 18 Qxc6+/-) 18 Qxc6 Qe7 19 Bg5! Qc7 20 Qxc7 Bxc7 21 Rac1, White's position is to be preferred; the question is – by how much?

Black could have played this, and the outcome of the game would have remained unclear. But the game continuation was also acceptable for him.

**16 Nd5xe7+**

16 Bd3!? g6 17 Nxe7+ Qxe7 18 d5 was also worth considering.



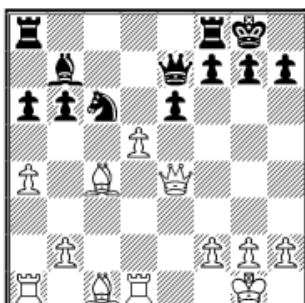
B?

After 18...ed 19 Qxe7 Nxe7 20 Be3, Black has a difficult endgame.

He should have steeled himself to play 18...Nb4!, not fearing either 19 Bh6 Rfd8, or 19 d6!? Qxd6 20 Qxb7 Nxd3 21 Ra3 Rad8!? (21...Nc5 22 Rxd6 Nxb7 23 Rxb6 Rfd8 24 g3+/-) 22 Raxd3 Qxd3 23 Rxd3 Rxd3 24 g3 Rd1+ 25

Kg2 Rxc1 =.

**16...Qd8xe7 17 d4-d5!**



B?

This is obviously the position Milan Vukic had in mind when he began his tactical operation. Black is in difficulties; however, just as in the preceding examples, I do not believe they were insurmountable. On the other



hand (again, just as in the preceding examples), Black did not, in fact, manage to cope with the task before

him, and lost without a fight.

This is probably no accident. **By finding an idea our opponent did not expect at a critical moment, we exert pressure on him, both in the purely chess sense and in a psychological sense, which he sometimes will be unable to overcome, either because he lacks coolness, or because he lacks the necessary mastery.**

Black would have stood much worse after 17...Nb4 18 Qe2 Rfd8 (18... Nxd5?? 19 Bxd5 Bxd5 20 Rxd5+–) 19 de Rxd1+ 20 Qxd1 fe 21 Bd2+/-.

He had to play for exchanges:

**17...e6xd5! 18 Bc4xd5 Qe7xe4 19 Bd5xe4 Rf8-e8 20 Be4-f3 Nc6-a5**

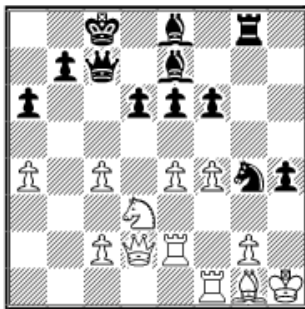
As long as White has not played Be3, it is important to trade off one of his powerful bishops.

**21 Bf3xb7 Na5xb7 22 Bc1-e3 b6-b5+/-**

Compare the end-position of this variation with what actually happened in the game.

**17...Na5? 18 Bd3 g6 19 Bh6 Rfe8 20 Qd4 e5 21 Qxb6+– Qd8 22 Be3!?**  
(22 Qb4) **22...Qxb6 23 Bxb6 Nb3 24 Ra3 Bxd5 25 Bxg6 (25 f4!) 25... hg 26 Rxd5 Nd4 27 g3 Rab8 28 a5 Re6 29 Re3! Nc6 30 Rd7 e4 31 f4! ef 32 Rxe6 fe 33 Rd6 Ne7 34 Rxe6 Kf7 35 Re3 1-0**

*Gulko – Ljubojevic*  
Niksic 1978



B?

White is the exchange ahead, for which his opponent can immediately pick up a pawn as compensation. Yes, he can – but he should not. **With opposite-sided castling, the chance to attack the enemy king is usually worth more than material – in such situations the first thing to look for is a way to develop our initiative.**

**33...f6-f5!**

This central break is aimed at opening the h1-a8 diagonal. Had Ljubomir Ljubojevic played thus, it would have been Boris Gulko who would have been forced to worry about maintaining the balance. For starters, he would have had to guess what his opponent's idea was, and to figure out that the natural 34 ef? allows Black to develop a killing attack by 34... h3!., and if 35 Nb4, then 35...a5!. The only way to safeguard the king would have been to return the exchange.

**34 Rf1-f3!**

Some possible variations:

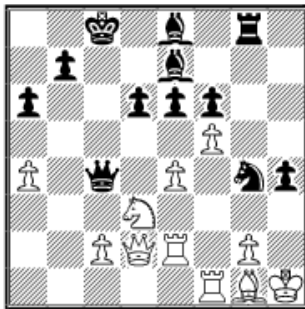
34...fe 35 Rxe4 Bc6 36 Rxe6 Bxf3 37 gf Nf6 38 Nf2!? unclear, or 38 c5!? unclear.

34...Bc6 35 ef Bxf3 36 gf Qc6 37 Rg2! (more active than 37 Ne1 Nh6 38 Rxe6 Nxf5 39 Qd5=+) 37...Qxf3 (37...ef 38 Qe2) 38 Qe2 Qh3+ 39 Bh2 unclear.

And now, let us see what happened in the game.

### 33...Qxc4? 34 f5!?

The point behind this move is to gain the central square d5 for White's knight. It would have been more accurate, however, to play 34 Rf3!, completely liquidating the threat of h4-h3 and getting the rook onto the third rank for an attack on the enemy king. White would threaten 35 Ne5, followed by 36 Rc3. On 34...Qxa4, there follows 35 Nb2, and the knight occupies the important square c4, with decisive effect. After 34...Kb8, 35 f5! would have become more powerful, as may be seen from the variations 35...ef? 36 ef Ne5 37 Qe3+/-, and 35...Ne5 36 Nxe5 de 37 Qe3 +/-, when the queen gets to a7 with tempo. And White's attack would probably have been simpler still after 35 Nb2! (instead of 35 f5).



B?

### 34...e5?

Positional capitulation – once again, the strong Yugoslav grandmaster falters at the task set before him. 34...Bc6 would not be much better, in view of 35 Qb4! Qxb4 36 Nxb4, with a clear advantage. But after 34...ef! 35 Rxf5 (35 ef? h3!) 35...Bc6 36 Qb4 (36 Rf4! ?+/-) 36...

Qxb4 37 Nxb4 Bxa4 38 Nd5 Bd8+/-, the outcome would still be unclear.

### 35 Nb4 Bf7?!

Black follows the path of least resistance. Of course, his position would be bad after 35...Bxa4 36 Rf3 Kb8 too, but there would have been at least some hope. **In difficult situations, one should take the extra material – it might come in handy, if your opponent finds some second-best moves.**

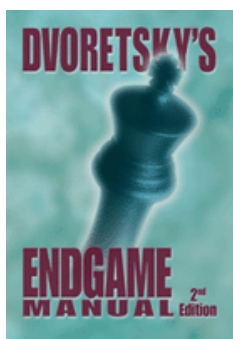
**36 Rf3 Kb8 37 Rc3! Qxb4 38 Rc8+ Rxc8 39 Qxb4**, and White later won.



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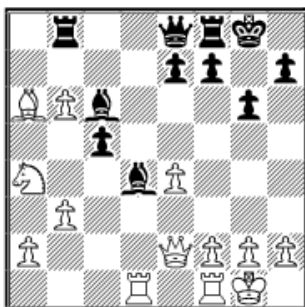
## Critical Moments Part Three

My readers will no doubt have noticed that in each of the examples we have looked at so far, one of the players, or sometimes both of them will have played in a manner that falls far short of the ideal. We could, of course, ignore the problem, while dropping one of Savielly Tartakower's appropriate aphorisms, such as: "The errors are always there, waiting to be made," or "A game of chess is a tale of a thousand and one errors." Or we could take thought: do even leading grandmasters play that strongly? Why is it that, both over the board and in their annotations, they make so many mistakes? Can't this be avoided – or at least, can't the number of mistakes be decreased?

In any case, such thoughts continually occur to me, when I analyze recently played games, or test examples from my notebook. (In fact, careful analysis is sometimes precisely what shears the decorations from games which had, until then, seemed wholly admirable.) Of course, it's easy to look wise in the quiet of one's home study, especially after turning on "Fritz." But from a different standpoint, almost none of the errors of omission found in nature are computer-grade: this sort of task should certainly be within the abilities of masters and grandmasters.

The following position is one I have used as an exercise to train the powers of quick absorption. The task is to find, in one or two minutes, White's strongest move – which is the one he actually played.

*Agdestein – Vaganian*  
Naestved 1985



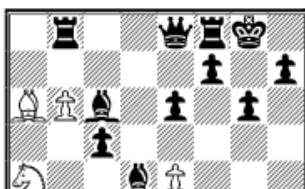
W?

Black wants to trade on a4, and then to take on b6. Simen Agdestein found a subtle means of keeping his far-advanced pawn at b6 on the board, where it soon turned into a terrible force.

**22 Rd1-b1!+/-**

And that's the whole task. However, not long ago, seeing that it was Black who won the game, after all, I decided to make an analysis of the game's further developments. And I was stunned: it turns out that nearly every point was critical, because the assessment of the position changed several times, sometimes radically. But these were two very talented, strong grandmasters! Time-pressure wasn't the excuse here: there were still many moves to go before the control, and at least one of the players, Rafael Vaganian, has never been known as a time-pressure artist.

**22...e7-e6**



W?

**23 Rf1-c1?!**

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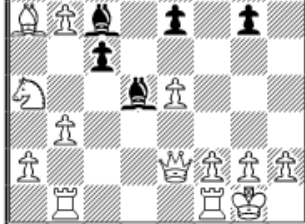
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The error in this move comes from general considerations: the weakening of f2 lends the opponent's counterplay added force.

So, how should White have continued?

Clearly, Vaganian's hopes were pinned to the opening of lines by f7-f5. By playing **23 Kh1!**, White prepares f2-f3, neutralizing both bishops and keeping the advantage. **Prophylactic thinking is the key to solving many positional tasks!**

For those who have no faith in "general considerations," and want to see the proof in variations, here's a short analysis. After 23...f5 24 ef, Black can recapture on f5 either with the rook or with the g-pawn. On 24...Rxf5, in addition to 25 f3, White should also take a look at 25 f4!? (with the idea of Bd3-e4), and if 25...e5, then 26 Nxc5! On 24...gf, White still should not play 25 Rfc1, in view of 25...Rf6 26 Nxc5 Rxb6 unclear – he has better in 25 f3 e5 26 Nxc5! Kh8 27 b4 Rxb6 28 Bc4 (intending 29 Nb3), or 25...Rf6 26 Rfd1! (the safest) 26...Rh6 27 Rxd4! cd 28 Qe5+/-.

### 23...Qe8-e7?!

An "automatic reaction": White attacks the c5-pawn, so we defend it! But now, White gets time to shore up his position. The immediate **23...f5!** would have given Black full-fledged counterplay. On 24 Nxc5, there follows 24...fe 25 Nxe4 Rf4!, and Black gets to f2. And if 24 e5, then 24...f4, and the constant threat of f4-f3 is most unpleasant.

### 24 Ba6-b5 Bc6-a8 25 Bb5-d3 f7-f5 26 e4xf5 g6xf5 27 b3-b4?!

And here, White should have executed the same prophylactic operation: 27 Kh1, with 28 f3 to follow, even though now the consequences are less well-defined – White has, after all, lost some time. I found this variation: 27...Rf6 28 f3 Rh6 (28...Kh8 is weaker: 29 Rc4! intending either 30 Rxd4 or 30 b4) 29 Bxf5 Qf6 30 Qxe6+! Qxe6 31 Bxe6+ Rxe6 32 Nxc5+/- = (even though White has a lot of pawns for the piece, the outcome remains unclear).

Agdestein is in too much of a hurry to execute his planned line opening on the queenside, and allows his opponent to create immediate problems for his king.



B?

Vaganian had an interesting and very difficult task to resolve. Unfortunately, he could not do it.

### 27...Kg8-h8?

Black can only allow White to take the pawn at c5, and create the terrible threat of 29 c6, if he has a strong counter-

argument in place. But Black turns out to have nothing convincing at his disposal.

Vaganian apparently rejected 27...cb? out of fear of 28 Rc7, and with good reason: his position looks entirely too airy. Here are a few variations:

28...Qh4 29 Nc5! Rxb6 30 Nxe6+/-.

28...Qg5 29 g3!+/-, with 30 Rxb4 to follow, but not 29 Qxe6+? Kh8 30 g3 (30 Bf1 Qf4 31 Rb2! unclear would be better) 30...Bxf2+! 31 Kxf2 (31 Kf1!? Bxg3! 32 hg Qxg3, with an attack) 31...Rbe8!+/-.

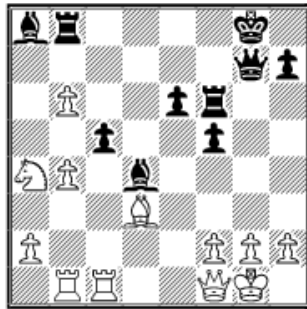
28...Qd6 29 Qh5 Bg7 30 Bc4 Rbc8 31 Rd1 Qe5 32 Rxc8 Rxc8 33 Nc5!!

+.-

Black would have to attack g2 with the queen; the only question is, from which square – g7 or g5?

First, we examine **27...Qg7!?**

28 g3? is no good, in view of 28...Qb7-+ (or 28...f4). Another losing line is 28 Qxe6+? Kh8 29 Bf1 Rg8 30 Rb3 Rbe8! 31 Qc4 (31 Qxf5 Ref8) 31... Qxg2+! 32 Bxg2 Rxg2+ 33 Kf1 Rxf2+ 34 Kg1 Rg2+ 35 Kf1 Rg1#. So White has to play 28 Qf1, which is met by 28...Rf6! (28...cb 29 Rxb4 would be bad)



W?

29 Kh1 Rg6 30 b7! (30 f3 Rh6 31 h3 Qg3-+) 30...Qxb7 31 f3 Qc7 leads to a dangerous position for White. But still worse is 29 bc Bxg2 30 Qxg2 Rg6 31 Bf1 (31 Qxg6 Qxg6+ 32 Kh1 Qh5 33 Rg1+ Kf7 34 Rg2 Qf3-+) 31...Kh8 32 Rb3 f4! 33 Kh1 Rg8! (but not 33...Rxg2 34 Bxg2 Rg8 35 Bf3 Bxf2 36 Rbb1 unclear) 34 Rg3 fg-+.

White can only avoid these unpleasant consequences – in fact, he could even place his opponent in a bad spot, instead – by finding the spectacular counterstroke 29 b7!! (*en prise* three times!). The variations are relatively uncomplicated:

29...Bxb7 30 bc+-;

29...Rxb7 30 Nxc5 Rc7 (30...Rb8 would meet the same reply) 31 Nxe6! Rxe6 32 Rxc7 Qxc7 33 Bc4+-;

29...Qxb7 30 bc Qc7 31 Rxb8+ Qxb8 32 c6+/-.

In my opinion, Black's strongest move here is **27...Qg5!** – the point being to keep an eye on the rook at c1. In the variation 28 Qf1 cb 29 Rxb4 (else 29...Bxb6), Black has the unexpected shot 29...Bxf2+!! 30 Kxf2 (30 Qxf2 Qxc1+; 30 Kh1!? Rfd8 unclear) 30...Qd2+ 31 Qe2 Qxb4 32 Qxe6+ Rf7!, with approximate equality.

And on 28 g3, there follows 28...f4 29 Qxe6+ Kh8



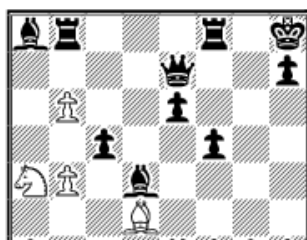
W?

To avoid the worst, White must choose 30 Rxc5!, but after 30...Bxf2+! 31 Kxf2 fg+ 32 Ke1 Qg7!, the chaos that now rules the board could produce any result.

**28 Kg1-h1?**

The most inappropriate possible moment to show caution. The straightforward 28

bc! Bc6 (28...Rg8? 29 c6) suggests itself, and now the simplest continuation is 29 Bb5 (29 Rc4 or 29 g3 are also good) 29...Be4 30 g3!? (intending 31 Rb4) 30...Bxb1 31 Rxb1+-.



B?

**28...Rf8-g8?**

With the respective king moves included, the capture on b4 is now



possible: 28...cb 29 f3 Qd6 30 Rd1 e5, or 29 Rc7 Qh4!? (there is also 29...Qd6 30 Qh5 Bg7) 30 Rxb4 (30 f3 Rf6) 30... Bxg2+! 31 Kxg2 Rg8+ 32 Kf1 Qxh2 33 Ke1 Rg1+ 34 Kd2 Bxb6! – all variations

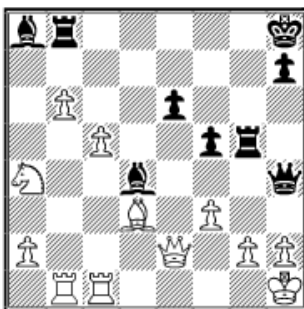
lead to non-standard positions which are difficult to assess.

### 29 f2-f3 Qe7-h4

Here, the pawn capture is weaker than it was one move ago: 29...cb 30 Rc4, ! (but not 30 Bxf5?, because of the pretty shot 30...Rxb2!! unclear).

### 30 b4xc5

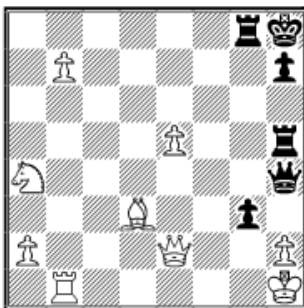
On the queenside, White holds an overwhelming advantage, while on the opposite side of the board, his opponent's attacking resources are insufficient. Now the principled continuation would be **30...Rg5!**



W?

A) The natural 31 c6? looks like it even loses after 31...Bxc6! (but not 31... Rh5? 32 g4!+., and not 31...Rbg8? 32 g3! Rxb3 33 b7+-) 32 Rxc6 Rbg8 (threatening 33...Qxh2+! 34 Kxh2 Rh5#) 33 g4 (33 g3 Rxb3 34 Rc8! Rxc8 35 b7 Rb8 36 Nc5 Rgg8 37 Nxe6 Rxb7- +) 33...fg (in this line, had Black played 30...Rg6?, the f5-pawn would be

pinned, and White wins) 34 f4! Rh5 35 Rc5! (I see no other way to stop the impending 35...g3) 35...e5! (stronger than 35...Bxc5 36 Nxc5 g3 37 b7 Qxf4 38 b8Q g2+! 39 Kg1! Qd4+ 40 Qf2 Qxf2+ 41 Kxf2 g1Q+! 42 Rxb1 Rxb8+/-) 36 Rxe5 Bxe5 37 fe g3 38 b7



B?

White is expecting 38...g2+ 39 Qxg2 Rxb2 40 b8Q+ Rg8 41 Qb2 Qxa4 42 e6 +, and draws. However, Black has a spectacular combination: 38...Qf4!! 39 b8Q (39 Rf1 Qh6!+/-) 39...g2+! 40 Qxg2 Rxh2+! 41 Qxh2 Qf3+, and mates.

B) The variation 31 Rc4 Rh5 32 h3 Qg3 33 Rxd4 Rxh3+ 34 Kg1 Rg8 35 Rd8!

looks like it should be a draw. Black is justified in trying for more with 31...Rbg8!?, for example, 32 g3 Rxb3 33 Rxd4 Qh3 (but not 33...Qxd4? 34 hg Rxb3 35 Be4! fe 36 Qb2 Qxb2 37 Rxb2 ef 38 Kh2 Rg4 39 Nc3 Rc4 40 Nb5 Rxc5 41 Nd6+/-) 34 Rf4 h6!+., followed by 35...Rg2; or 32 Rxd4 Qxd4 33 Qb2 Qxb2 34 Rxb2 Bxf3 35 Bf1 Bc6, when White's position looks shaky.

C) But **31 b7!!** is very strong. For example:

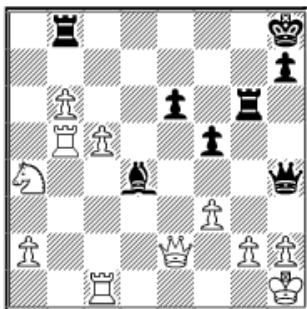
31...Rbg8? 32 b8Q, and the h2-square is defended.

31...Bxb7 32 c6 Rbg8 33 g3!+., or 32...Rh5 33 g4! fg 34 Rxb7+-.

31...Rxb7 32 Rxb7 (but not 32 Qxe6? Rxb2!+/-) 32...Bxb7 33 c6 Bc8 34 Rc4!+.,

The continuation chosen by Vaganian makes White's task considerably easier.

### 30...Ba8-c6?! 31 Bd3-b5 Bc6xb5 32 Rb1xb5 Rg8-g6



W?

Now 33 b7?! is tempting, tying the rook to the b8-square. On 33...Rh6 34 g4! decides. But Black has the brilliant reply 33...Qg3!!, forcing perpetual check after 34...Rh6 35 h3 Rxh3+ (the attempt to take h6 under control by 34 Qd2? is refuted by 34...Be3!).

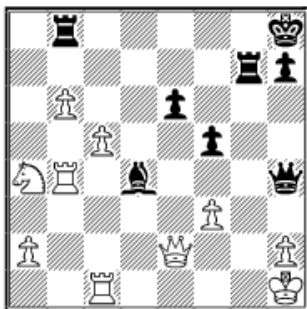
White has an effective means of extinguishing his opponent's pressure – pinning him along the fourth rank by **33 Rb4!** (33 Rc4! is just as good). He only has to make sure the queen sacrifice does not work: 33...Qxh2+ 34 Kxh2 Rh6+ 35 Kg3 Rg8+ 36 Kf4 Rh4+ 37 g4+-. Black fares no better after 33...Rh6 34 g3 Qxg3 35 Rxd4, or 33...Rbg8 34 g3 Rxg3 35 Rxd4 Qxd4 36 hg+-.

### 33 g2-g3? Rg6xg3 34 Rb5-b4?

As a classic player once said, "A move made one move too late is always a mistake!" Now, with the g-file opened, it would make sense to secure the first rank by **34 Rbb1!?** Black could not respond by 34...Rbg8 because of 35 b7+-, while 34...Qh3 is met by 35 Rg1! (weaker is 35 b7 Rxf3 36 Qxe6 Re3! 37 Qd5 Be5 unclear) 35...Bxg1 36 Rxg1 (36 Qe5+ Rg7 37 Qxb8+ Rg8 38 Qe5+ Rg7 =) 36...Rxg1+ 37 Kxg1 Rg8+ 38 Kh1, and it is Black's turn to seek the draw.

But the straightforward **34 b7!** might even be better. In any case, White continues with the same idea of returning his rook to the first rank. For example, 34...Rg7 35 c6 Qf4 36 Rbb1+-, or 34...Qf4 35 Rf1 Rg6 36 Rbb1 Qc7 37 Rfd1+/-.

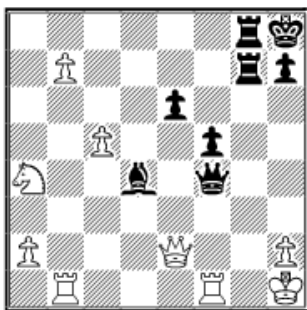
### 34...Rg3-g7



W?

### 35 Qe2-e5?

The final mistake. By now, 35 Rbb1 would be useless: 35...Qg5! (the rook stays at b8 in order to stop 36 b7) 36 f4 Qxf4 37 Rf1 Rbg8! 38 b7



B?

Black wins by means of the fine move 38...Rg6!!, whose idea becomes clear in the variation 39 c6 Qc7! 40 Qf3 Qxh2+ 41 Kxh2 Rh6+ 42 Qh3 Be5+, with mate to follow. Black may also transpose moves: 38...Qc7 39 Qf3 Rg6!! (threatening 40...Qxh2+!) 40 Rfe1 Qe5!-+.

But **35 b7!** would still have permitted Agdestein to avoid loss; for example, 35...Rbxb7 36 Rxb7 Rxb7 37 c6 Rc7 38 Qxe6 =.

### 35...Rb8-g8 36 Qe5xd4 Qh4-g5

"An open line frequently looks like an open wound." (Tartakower)



### 37 Rc1-g1?!

To add to his other troubles, White now overlooks mate. On the other hand, 37 Qb2 e5! would also have made it impossible for him to defend his king.

### 37...Qg5xg1+ 0-1

There are many ways to go about completing yourself as a chessplayer. You can train your combinative alertness and your ability to calculate variations, develop your capability to intuitively grasp the essence of a position, study endgame theory and complete your technical mastery, analyze typical middlegame positions, acquaint yourself with the work of great players past and present so that you may enrich your own arsenal with the techniques and weapons they used, and so on, and so forth. I have often held relatively short training sessions in various countries, dedicated to one or more of these above-cited (or un-cited) problems. And almost always our exercises helped facilitate measurable growth in our students, which they themselves joyfully noted. Now, what sort of heights might they aspire to, if they could do such work regularly?!

Nevertheless, it seems that I cannot convince anybody that this is the right thing to do – neither by logic, nor by the stability of my training achievements. On the one hand, many players do not understand how they can effectively set up educational or training work, or where they can obtain good materials and quality exercises. But the main problem is this worldwide, insane focus on the openings, this ruling conviction (when it is really a misconception!) in the minds of chessplayers that here – right here! – lies the key to success. Everyone, from the weak to the strong, is doing nothing but endlessly refining their opening repertoire, closing their eyes to the unsatisfactory quality of the play that follows.

I recall one amusing episode that occurred early in the 90s, during one of my first U.S. visits. One of the local amateurs approached me, saying that he had heard a lot about my work methods, and had enormous respect for and interest in them. He asked me who else among the American trainers made use of my methods, and expressed a burning desire to take a lesson from me. I declined, but this amateur was persistent. At last, we agreed to spend two or three hours at it. I began to explain something; he listened patiently for a while, and then cut me off.

“All this is interesting, of course; but couldn’t you just show me the best way to play the King’s Indian vs. the Samisch Variation?”

So there you have it: method/schmethod – concrete opening information, alas, always looks more useful.

I’d like to conclude with another example of this theme, which I consider the deepest and most significant.

#### *Rodriguez – Ernst*

Subotica Interzonal Tournament, 1987

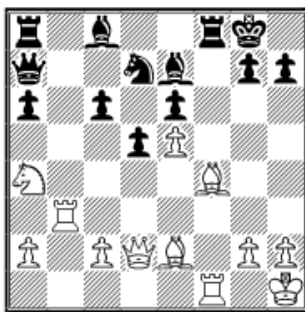
**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Qb6 8 Qd2 Qxb2 9 Rb1 Qa3 10 f5 Nc6 11 fe fe 12 Nxc6 bc 13 Be2 (13 e5) 13...Be7 14 0-0 0-0 15 Rb3 Qc5+ 16 Be3 Qe5 17 Bf4 Qc5+**

Black could also take the pawn: 17...Nxe4 18 Nxe4 Qxe4 19 Bxd6 Rxf1+ 20 Kxf1 Bf6 21 Ba3 = (Timman – Ribli, Amsterdam 1986).

### 18 Kh1 d5?!

18...e5? 19 Be3 Qa5 20 Bb6+- would be a mistake, but Black had the better line 18...Ng4! 19 h3 (19 Bxg4 e5) 19...e5 =.

### 19 e5 Nd7 20 Na4 Qa7



W?

Let's try to solve the task White faces here. Right away, we see that he cannot attack the pawn at e6 by 21 Bg4?, because of the reply 21...Nxe5-+.

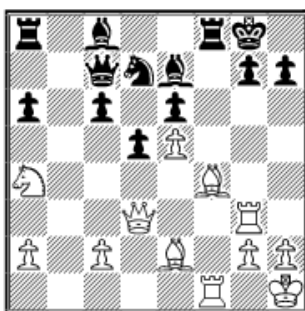
At first glance, this would not seem to be the place for deep thinking: why not just move the rook to g3 or h3, with the idea of whipping up an attack on the king?

Let's not jump to conclusions, however. Time for some prophylactic thinking: let's ask ourselves, what will our opponent be doing in the meantime? The question is not a simple one – it requires an accurate assessment of different possibilities. The answer will actually be two ideas: fortifying the kingside (and the e6-point as well) with 21...Rf7! and 22...Nf8!, or attacking the central pawn at e5 by 21...Qc7! – removing it would even be worth giving up the exchange by Rxf4, under certain circumstances.

On 21 Rh3, Black would reply 21...Rf7!, and attacking h7 will be useless after 22...Nf8.

But after 21 Rg3, the move 21...Rf7 is now dubious, in view of 22 Bh5, and if 22...g6? (22...Rf8 would be better now), White gains a decisive attack by sacrificing the bishop: 23 Bxg6! hg 24 Rxg6+ Kh8 (24...Rg7 25 Rxg7+ Kxg7 26 Qd1+-; 24...Kf8 25 Bh6+ Ke8 26 Rxf7 Kxf7 27 Rg7+ Ke8 28 Rxe7+! Kxe7 29 Qg5+, and mates) 25 Qe2 Nf8 26 Rg3 Nh7 27 Be3! Rxf1+ 28 Qxf1+-.

But now 21...Qc7! is strong. If 22 Qe3, then 22...Rb8 creates a strong threat of 23...Rb4. 22 Qd3!? would be more interesting.



B?

Black cannot play 22...Nxe5?? in view of 23 Rxg7+! Kxg7 24 Qg3+, while 22...Rb8?! would allow White to stir up great complications by 23 Rh3 g6 24 Rxh7!! Kxh7 25 Qh3+ – although it appears that this method fails to give White an advantage: 25...Kg8 26 Qxe6+ Rf7 27 Qxf7+ (27 Qxg6+ Rg7 28 Qe6+ Kh8 29 Bd3 Nxe5 30 Qxe5 Qxe5 31 Bxe5 Rb4

unclear) 27...Kxf7 28 e6+ Ke8 29 Bxc7 Rb4 =.

Black has no need to go in for these adventures: the exchange sacrifice 22...Rxf4! 23 Rxf4 Qxe5 gives him an excellent position.

21 Qd1!? might look tempting, defending the rook and preparing 22 Bg4. Black cannot reply 21...Nc5? because of 22 Be3+-; and on 21...Rf7 there follows 22 Bg4 Nf8 23 Nb6 Rb8 24 Nxc8 Rxc8, when White's position is preferable in view of the weakness of e6. Still, his advantage is not great. Also, his opponent could quite rightly play something more aggressive: 21...Qc7!? On 22 Bg4, he would sacrifice the exchange by 22...Rxf4!? 23 Rxf4 Qxe5, with outstanding compensation. And on 22 Bd3, he could play either 22...g6 or 22...Nxe5!?

Amador Rodriguez found a brilliant strategic solution to the position.

## 21 Qd2-c3!!

The threat to take on c6 leaves Black no time to play 21...Rf7. And after Black parries this threat, the queen moves to h3, taking aim at the

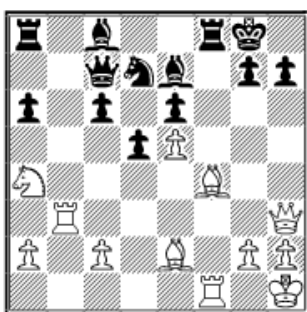
vulnerable h7- and e6-squares (the knight doesn't have time to go to f8); after this, the rook goes to g3 or f3, and the bishop to d3. In this manner, White's pieces gain coordination, and the pressure on Black's kingside grows stronger.

Now Black faces a critical moment: he must find the best way to counter White's incipient attack.

The knight exchange 21...Nc5 that he selected in the game turned out favorably for White, since a potential defender of the kingside disappeared from the board, in exchange for the only white piece not participating in the attack.

21...c5 is met by 22 Qh3! (22 Bg4 d4 23 Bxe6+ Kh8 unclear, is weaker) 22...Rf7 (22...Kh8 23 Bd3+-), and now either 23 Bh5!? g6 24 Rbf3+/-, or the more forcing 23 Qxe6! Nf8 24 Qxd5 (24 Qc6 Bd7 25 Qxd5 amounts to the same thing) 24...Be6 25 Qe4 Bxb3 26 ab+- In view of the unpreventable threat of 27 Bc4, Black is forced to return the exchange, winding up a pawn down in a bad position.

As usual, the way out involves showing some initiative. With **21...Qc7!**, Black targets the central pawn at e5. But he must find some answer to **22 Qh3!**



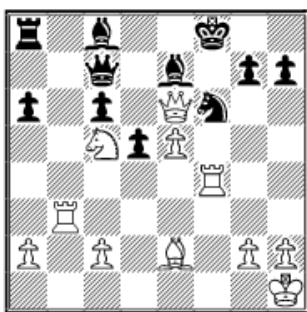
B?

22...Nxe5? doesn't work, in view of 23 Nb6 and 24 Nxc8. After 22...Nc5?! 23 Nxc5 Bxc5 24 Rbf3, followed by 25 Be3, White's attack plays itself; nor is 23...Rxf4!? 24 Rxf4 Qxe5 25 Qg4 Bxc5 26 Rh3 any better for Black.

The exchange sacrifice by **22...Rxf4!!** is, of course, the first thing that pops into

one's head (after 23 Rxf4 Qxe5 24 Rf2 Nf6, Black's compensation is more than sufficient). But first, White will take the e6-pawn with check. This looks so threatening, that the first impulse is to quit calculating and look for something else. Only a clear realization of the difficulties Black faces after "normal" continuations can force us to continue our examination of this variation. In the end, we decide to go for it, despite its obvious risks and the impossibility of calculating its entertaining complications to the end.

**23 Qxe6+ Kf8! 24 Rxf4+ Nf6** (White's queen is trapped, but he has a beautiful shot) **25 Nc5!**



B?

And what now? Black cannot take, either on e6 or on c5 (because of 26 Rxf6 +! gf 27 Qxf6+).

**25...Ke8!**

As Wilhelm Steinitz taught us, **the king is a strong piece that can take care of itself**. White still has to give up the

queen, but his assault continues.

**26 ef! Bxe6 27 Nxe6 Qe5! 28 fg**

White gets nothing out of 28 Nxg7+ Kd7 29 fe Qxf4 or 29 Bg4+ Kd6.



B?



28...Kd7!

But not 28...Qxe6?, in view of 29 Rb7! Qg8 30 Bh5+ Kd8 31 Rf7+-.

29 Nf8+ Rxf8!

And now, White has a choice:

a) 30 Rb7+ Kd6 (30...Kc8 31 gfQ+ Bxf8 32 Bxa6 Qe1+ 33 Rf1 Qxf1+ 34 Bxf1 Kxb7+/-) 31 gfQ Bxf8 32 Rf2.

b) 30 Rxf8 Qxg7 31 Rf1.

c) 30 gfQ Bxf8 31 Rf7+! Ke8 32 Rff3.

The latter two variations look more appealing. In each, White retains somewhat better chances, but the outcome remains unclear.

It's too bad that all this is merely the product of my own fantasy – it would have made a notable game! And wouldn't it be great to learn how to play at this level?!

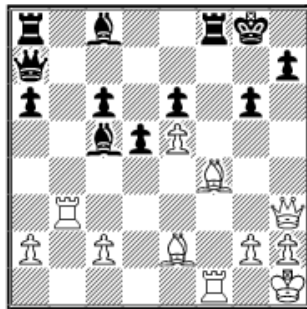
21...Nd7-c5? 22 Na4xc5 Be7xc5

22...Qxc5 23 Qh3+/- would hardly change anything.

23 Qc3-h3!

Intending to bring up the rook, and then follow up with 25 Bd3.

23...g7-g6



W?

Another critical position, which means a new task, where should we move the rook?

As usual, it makes sense to employ prophylactic thinking: think about what means our opponent plans to use in order to coordinate his pieces. And then we shall see that we should play **24 Rbf3!**,

in order to answer **24...Qg7** with **25 Bh6 Rxf3 26 Qxf3! Qe7**, after which comes either 27 Qg3 followed by 28 h4, or **27 Bg5!?** The bishop is taboo: 27...Qxg5 28 Qf7+ Kh8 29 Qe8+ Kg7 30 Rf7+ Kh6 31 Qh8, and mates soon. On 27...Qg7, White can continue his attack by 28 Qc3 Qa7 (only move) 29 h4; and 28 Bf6, followed by 29 h4, isn't bad, either. If 27...Qc7, then the simplest is 28 Be3!? Ba3 29 h4; and 27...Qe8 is met by 28 h4. Black's position undoubtedly remains extremely shaky, even though one cannot assert with absolute conviction that White's attack must inevitably break through.

24 Rb3-g3? Qa7-g7

Now 25 Bh6? no longer works: 25...Rxf1+ 26 Bxf1 Qxe5.

25 Be2-d3



B?

25...a6-a5?!

This is a strange move: Black will not be



able to trade off the light-squared bishops by Bc8-a6 in any case, because of the weakness on e6.

Meanwhile, the proper path for Black was very easy to find: he had only to

apply **“the principle of the worst-placed piece,”** as described in Alexei Kosikov’s lecture in *School of Chess Excellence 4 – Positional Play*. Black’s queen rook is not in play, so it should be developed via Ra8-a7-f7. After 25...Ra7!, the position becomes completely unclear. Thomas Ernst indicates the variation 26 Rg4 Raf7 27 Qg3? (27 g3 would be better) 27...Qxe5+.

Instead of 26 Rg4, 26 Rgf3 is stronger (“amending his mistake” on move twenty-four). Then Black could choose the roughly equal endgame with two pawns for the exchange after 26...Raf7 27 Bh6 Rxf3 28 gf Qxe5 29 Bxf8 Bxf8 30 Qg3 Qd6!? 31 Qxd6 Bxd6 32 Rb1 Bc7, or else play the waiting move 26...a5, in order to get the queen’s rook to f7 only after White plays 27 Qg3 or 27 Qg4. For example, 27 Qg4 Raf7 28 h4 Be7 unclear.

### 26 Qh3-g4!

The queen clears the way for the h-pawn.

### 26...Bc5-d4

Here too, 26...Ra7 27 h4 Raf7 was better.

### 27 Rg3-f3

Finally, the rook takes up its mandated position on the open file.

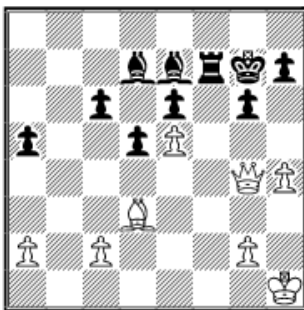
### 27...Bc8-d7 28 Qg4-h4!

Having indirectly defended his center pawn (28...Bxe5? 29 Bh6+-), White prepares the bishop invasion at h6.

### 28...Bd4-c5 29 Bf4-h6 Rf8xf3

If 29...Qxe5?, then 30 Bxf8 Rxf8 (30...Bxf8 31 Rf7+-) 31 Rxf8+ Bxf8 32 Qd8 Qd6 33 Rxf8+ Qxf8 34 Qxd7+- (Ernst).

### 30 Bh6xg7 Rf3xf1+ 31 Bd3xf1 Kg8xg7 32 Bf1-d3 Ra8-f8 33 Qh4-g5! Rf8-f7 34 h2-h4 Bc5-e7 35 Qg5-g4



White has achieved a significant advantage. The following mistake by his opponent makes his task easier.

35...c5? (as Ernst indicated, Black had to play 35...Kh6!+/-) **36 c4! d4 37 h5 g5 38 h6+! Kg8** (38...Kxh6 39 Qh3+) **39 Qe4 Bf8 40 Qa8 a4 41 Kh2 Re7 42 Kg3 Re8 43 Qa7 Re7 44 Qxc5 Rf7 45 Qb6 Bxh6 46 c5 Bg7 47 Qd8+ Bf8 48 Be4 d3 49 Bxd3 Bc6 50 Bc4 Re7 51**

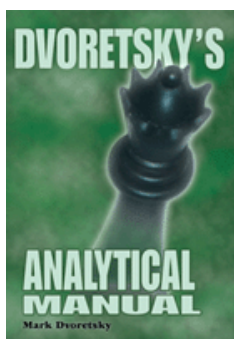
**Qd6 Bd7 52 c6 Bc8 53 Qd8 1-0**



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## Two Misfortunes

The Filipino grandmaster Eugenio Torre has long been faithful to his favorite opening setups, which he has worked out and carefully prepared. Even the occasional losses have not turned him away from his systems – he just repairs, and then goes on playing them. As a rule, Torre's variations represent slight deviations from the mainline paths of opening theory, and usually involve a fair amount of positional risk-taking. But only his strongest opponents have been able to expose the weaknesses of his opening strategy, as in the two games presented below. Both followed the same variation of the Slav Defense. White played energetically and accurately, and as a result, Black proved unable to resolve his opening problems.

Readers who wish to find the best continuations at key moments of both games are advised to note the question marks following some of the diagrams, indicating that the position may be used as an exercise.

*Yusupov – Torre*  
Leningrad, 1987

**1 d2-d4 d7-d5 2 c2-c4 c7-c6 3 Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 4 Nb1-c3 d5xc4 5 a2-a4 Bc8-f5 6 e2-e3 e7-e6 7 Bf1xc4 Bf8-b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 Nf3-h4**

The aggressive choice; the more restrained 9 Qe2 is more common.

**9...Bf5-g4**

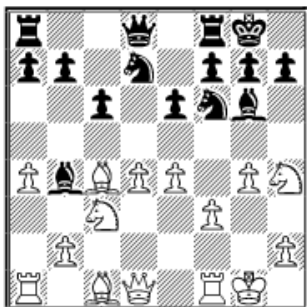
The bishop doesn't have to move here. Vassily Smyslov, and many other players after him, preferred 9...Nbd7.

**10 f2-f3 Bg4-h5**

In the variation 10...Nd5 11 fg Qxh4 12 Qf3 Nbd7 13 Bd2 a5 14 Rad1, White's pair of bishops secure him somewhat better chances.

**11 g2-g4 Bh5-g6 12 e3-e4 Nb8-d7**

12...Nxe4? doesn't work; after 13 Nxg6 Nxc3 14 bc Bxc3 15 Nxf8, White comes out a piece ahead, which will prove considerably stronger than the two or three pawns his opponent gets.

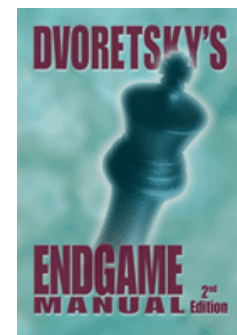


W

The knight has nothing to do on h4, and must either retreat to g2 or exchange itself off on g6.

On 13 Ng2, White must take c6-c5 into consideration. The game Portisch – Hort (Petropolis Interzonal, 1973) continued 13...c5 14 Na2! Ba5 15 dc Bc7 16 Be3, when Hort considers this position better for White. The grandmaster recommended that Black prepare for this central break by 13...Qe7.

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White usually follows up the exchange on g6 with the advance g4-g5, driving the hostile knight from the center. Now the question arises, which is the right order of moves?

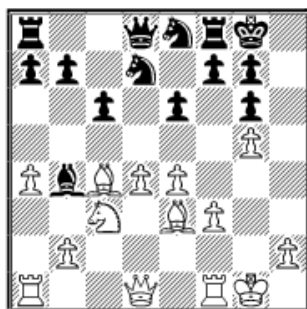
On 13 Nxg6 hg 14 g5, Black can play 14...Nh5, as in Knaak – Meduna, Trnava 1981. White did gain the upper hand there with the continuation 15 f4 c5 16 Na2 (16 f5!? ef 17 ef Nb6 18 Bb3! was worth considering) 16...Ba5 17 Be2! cd 18 Bxh5 gh 19 b4 Bc7 20 Qxh5.

### 13 g4-g5!? Nf6-e8

Here, 13...Nh5? 14 f4 is just bad for Black.

### 14 Nh4xg6 h7xg6 15 Bc1-e3

15 f4?! would be inaccurate, because of 15...Nd6 16 Bd3 c5.

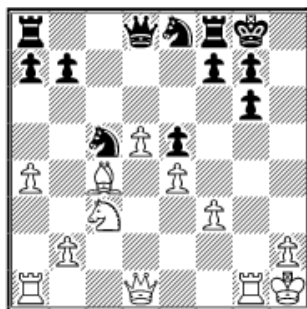


B

### 15...Ne8-c7

On 15...c5, White continues 16 d5, which practically forces the reply 16...e5, since 16...Nb6? 17 Ba2 doesn't work very well for Black – or, even stronger 17 de! Nxc4 (17...Qxd1 18 Raxd1 Nxc4 19 e7 Nxe3?! 20 Rd8!+-) 18 Qxd8 Rxd8 19 e7+-.

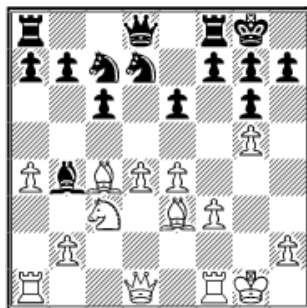
On the other hand, the assessment of this position is far from obvious. After all, Black's knight now has the excellent blockading square d6. The game Ftacnik – Hector, Debrecen 1989, took an instructive course: 17 Bb5 c4!? 18 Bxc4 Bc5 19 Bxc5 Qxg5+ 20 Kh1 Nxc5 21 Rg1 Qd8



W

22 d6!? Nxd6 23 Ba2 g5? 24 Qd5! Rc8 25 Rad1 Qf6 (25...Rc6 26 Qxe5 would also be hopeless) 26 Qxd6 Qxf3+ 27 Rg2 Nxe4 28 Nxe4 Qxe4 29 Qd5, and White won.

For 15...Nd6!?, see our other game (Polugaevsky – Torre).



W

### 16 Qd1-d2!?

At Biel 1988, Vladimir Tukmakov essayed the more natural 16 Qb3 against Torre. According to his notes, Black should have replied 16...c5 17 Rad1 cd 18 Qxb4 de, with unclear play. But in fact, 16...c5? is a pretty weak reply, considering 17 d5! Bxc3 (17...ed 18 Nxd5+/-) 18 de! Nxe6 19 bc, when White has an obvious advantage.

Torre preferred 16...Qe7 17 Kh1 (17 Rad1!?) 17...c5 18 d5 (White gets nothing from 18 Na2 cd 19 Bxd4 Bc5); and here, instead of his 18...Bxc3? 19 de!+/-, he should have continued 18...Nb6+/-.

After 16 Bb3, White would have had to consider a different central break: 16...e5!?.

Yusupov decided that concentrating his heavy pieces on the d-file would

offer him the best chances to oppose any active operations by his opponent in the center.

### 16...c6-c5

16...Qe7!? 17 Rad1+/-.

### 17 Ra1-d1 Qd8-e7?

An obvious, but unfortunate move, as Yusupov convincingly demonstrates. On the other hand, Black was already experiencing difficulties. On 17...Nb6 18 Bb3 cd, White intended to take on d4 with the bishop (the queen defends the g5-pawn from d2). The result of the variation 17...cd!? 18 Qxd4 Nb6 (18...Bc5?? 19 Qxc5+-) 19 Bb3 Qxd4 (19...Qe7? 20 Na2!+/-) 20 Bxd4+/- is an inferior endgame for Black.

### 18 d4-d5 e6xd5

Torre evidently expected White to continue 19 Nxd5?! Nxd5 20 Qxd5 Ne5 (here Black seizes the initiative), or 19 Bxd5 Nb6!? 20 Bxb7 Rab8 21 Bc6 Qe6, with enough activity to compensate for the sacrificed pawn. Yusupov's reply came as an unpleasant surprise.

### 19 e4xd5! Nc7-e8

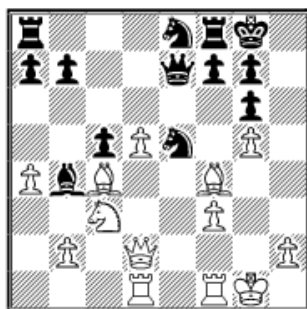
The queen is not a good blockader, as the variation 19...Qd6 20 Bf4 Ne5 21 Qe1! Rfe8 22 Qg3 Bxc3 23 bc Re7 24 Rfe1 Rae8 25 Re4 demonstrates: the pin on Black's knight decides the game. And if 19...Ne5, then 20 d6 Qe8 21 Ba2+/-.

### 20 Be3-f4

Of course not 20 d6? Nxd6.

### 20...Nd7-e5

20...Nd6 21 Rfe1 Nxc4 22 Rxe7 Nxd2 23 Rxd2 would have been hopeless.



W?

If the knight gets to the blockading square d6, Black's position solidifies; for example, 21 Qe2? Nd6! unclear, or 21 Rde1 Nxc4 22 Rxe7 Nxd2 23 Bxd2 Nd6+/-.

### 21 d5-d6!!

With this pawn sacrifice, Yusupov opens lines and achieves a great advantage. The threat of a pin on the e-file plays a major role. Note that this is the same technique Lubomir Ftacnik would employ two years later, in the game we examined in the note to Black's fifteenth move.

### 21...Ne8xd6

21...Qxd6? 22 Qc1 would lose at once.

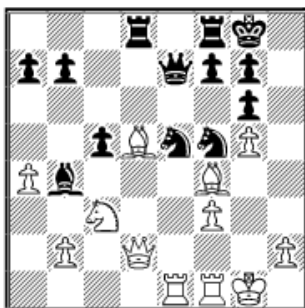
### 22 Bc4-a2

White did have an alternative that might even have been a bit stronger: **22 Bd5!**, with the idea of continuing with Qe2 and Rfe1; for example, 22...Rfe8 23 Rfe1 Ndc4 24 Qe2 Nb6 25 Bxe5 (but not 25 Qxe5? Qf8 26 Qd6 Rxe1+ 27 Rxe1 Qxd6) 25...Qxg5+ 26 Kh1 Nxd5 27 Rxd5, and if 27...f6, then 28 Qc4!+/-.



**22...c5-c4?!**

Now the game ends at once. But even the more stubborn **22...Nf5** **23 Rde1 Rad8** (hoping for 24 Qf2? Nd3-+) would not have gotten him out of trouble, as Yusupov had prepared the reply **24 Bd5!**



B?

The grandmaster indicates the line 24... Nc4 25 Bxc4 Rxd2 26 Rxe7 Rxb2 (26... Rd4 27 Re4+-) 27 Nd1! Rc2 28 Bb3+- (and there is also 28 Re4!? Nd4 29 Ne3 +-).

24...Nxf3+ 25 Bxf3 Rxd2 26 Rxe7 Rxb2 27 Nd1! would not be much better. Here, too, in my view, White's win is

only a question of time.

Black probably had to give up his queen by **24...Nc6!? 25 Rxe7 Ncxe7**. Now 26 Bxf7+ Kh7! 27 Qe2 Rxf7 would be inaccurate. A stronger line would be 26 Qd3!? Kh7! (26...Bxc3 27 Bxf7+ Kxf7 28 Qc4+ Nd5 29 bc +-) 27 Qb5 Bxc3 28 Bxb7 Bd4+ 29 Kh1+/-.

**23 Nc3-d5! Bb4-c5+ 24 Kg1-h1 Qe7-e6 25 Bf4xe5! 1-0**

Black resigned, in view of 25...Qxe5 26 Rfe1 Qf5 27 Ne7+.

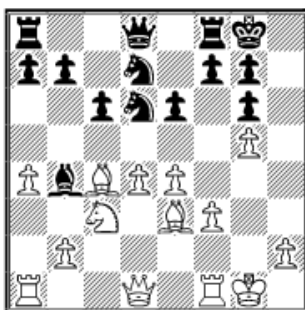
*Polugaevsky – Torre*

Biel 1989

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 dc 5 a4 Bf5 6 e3 e6 7 Bxc4 Bb4 8 0-0 0-0 9 Nh4 Bg4 10 f3 Bh5 11 g4 Bg6 12 e4 Nbd7 13 g5 Ne8 14 Nxg6 hg 15 Be3**

**15...Ne8-d6!?**

And here is Torre's prepared improvement. White now has to resolve a subtle positional task on the theme of "prophylaxis."



W?

White should choose his bishop's retreat square, taking into consideration Black's central counterstroke c6-c5. White's standard reaction to 16...c5 would be 17 Na2!. Thus, the bishop should not take up the square a2.

On 16 Bb3?! c5 17 Na2 Ba5 18 dc, Black has the tactical shot 18...Nxc5!,

securing him an excellent position (19 Bxc5 Qxg5+ and 20...Qxc5).

**16 Bc4-e2!+/-**

Now 16...c5? is bad, in view of 17 Na2! Ba5 (17...cd 18 Nxb4 de 19 Qxd6+-) 18 dc Nxc5 19 b4+-.

**16...Bb4-a5**

Dealing with the unpleasant threat of 17 Qb3, Black forgoes breaking in the enemy center, and accepts a somewhat inferior position. The same evaluation holds true for a different quiet move: 16...Qe7!+/-.

But it's hard to cast doubt on the active **16...e5!?**; for example, take **17 de Nxe5 18 Qb3 Qa5**



W?

Here's your question: find promising possibilities for White, and calculate the resulting variations.

Considering Black's desire to trade off the dark-squared bishops by 19...Bc5, the game Horvath – Acs (Hungarian Team Championship 1997) continued 19 Kh1 Bc5 20 Bf4 Rfe8 21 Rd1 Rad8 22

Rac1 Qb6 23 Qxb6 Bxb6, and White's position was a shade more comfortable.

The move 19 f4 involves a small trap. The obvious 19...Bc5? would be mistaken, in view of 20 Bf2! Nd7 21 e5 Nf5 22 Qxb7+/- . But if Black replies 19...Nd7, White has to think about 20...Bc5, as well as 20...Nc5.

The most interesting possibility would be the unexpected tactical shot **19 Nb5!?**. After 19...cb? 20 ab Qc7 21 Qxb4, White has a winning position. Black is rescued by the brilliant counterstroke **19...Nxf3+!!**, deflecting one of White's pieces. On 20 Rxf3 cb, the a-pawn would be pinned; while on **20 Bxf3 cb**, the b5-square is no longer controlled by the bishop. Here's a rough idea of the possible continuation: **21 e5 Nc4** (21...Nf5 22 Bf2+/- would be worse) **22 Bd5 Bd2! 23 ab!? Bxe3+ 24 Kh1 Qc7 25 Bxc4 Qxe5 25 Bxf7+ Kh8**, and although White does stand better, it's not by very much. Could the play of one side or the other be improved in this variation?

Let's go back to the game.

**17 Kg1-h1!**

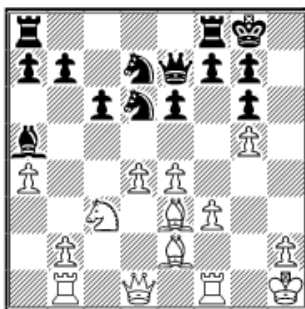
A useful bit of prophylaxis.

**17...Qd8-e7**

Here an attacking plan on the kingside deserved attention: 18 Qe1!?, with the idea of Qh4 and Rg1-g3-h3. Polugaevsky chose something different.

**18 Ra1-b1!?**

White wants to advance the b-pawn.



B?

We discover a tactical means of combating the looming squeeze on the queenside: 19 b4 Bxb4! 20 Rxb4 Nf5. In this variation, the e-file is opened, so it would be good to have a rook there. This is why I think the best move would be the "mystery" prophylactic move **18... Rfe8!** (and it would also prove useful if White decided not to play 19 b4 after all,

as a support for an eventual e6-e5).

Preparing b2-b4 is not going to be simple. The bishop can't retreat to f2 without leaving the g5-pawn unprotected; and if White plays 19 Qd2, he can no longer play the queen to b3, which means that Black's bishop could return to b4 (19...e5 would be good then as well).

**18...Rf8-d8 19 b2-b4! Ba5xb4**

19...Bc7 20 f4+/-.

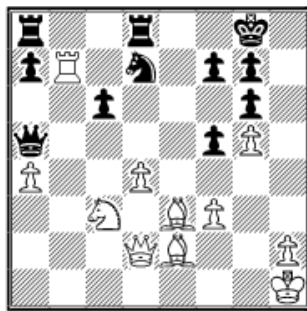
**20 Rb1xb4 Nd6-f5 21 e4xf5 Qe7xb4 22 Qd1-d2! e6xf5**

The reply to 22...gf is simply 23 Rb1, followed by 24 Rxb7+/- . In Polugaevsky's notes, there is the line 23 g6 fg 24 Bg5 (this move mistakenly receives an exclamation point – here, too, 24 Rb1 would be better) 24...Nf6 (24...Re8 25 Rb1) 25 Bxf6 gf 26 Qh6, and the grandmaster's opinion was that White has the advantage. But in fact, Black easily repels the attack: 26...Qf8! 27 Qxg6+ Qg7 28 Qh5 Qh7 29 Rg1+ Kh8 30 Qxh7+ Kxh7 31 Bc4 Rd6=+.

**23 Rf1-b1 Qb4-a5**

Not much changes after 23...Qa3!? 24 Rxb7+/- . But if Black had played 18...Rfe8, he could now have retreated the queen to e7 with tempo.

**24 Rb1xb7**



B?

**24...Ra8-b8**

It seems to me that **24...Nc5!?** would have given Black greater practical chances. Polugaevsky intended 25 Re7, indirectly defending the a4-pawn (25...Nxa4?? 26 Qa2+-), but in response, Black could have played either 25...Qb4!?, or simply 25...Ne6!?, when the

rook may be in trouble on e7.

**25 Rb2** would be safer. On 25...Ne6 26 f4 is strong, since the line 26...Nxd4 27 Bxd4 c5 28 Nd5! Qxd2 29 Rxd2 cd (29...Rxd5? 30 Bf3+-) 30 Rxd4 gives White a significant advantage, while 26...Rd6 would be met by 27 Rb7 (intending 28 Bc4), when 27...Nc5 allows White to force – spectacularly! – a favorable endgame of two pieces vs. rook: 28 Rxf7!! Kxf7 29 Ne4! Qxd2 30 Nxd6+ Ke7 (30...Ke6 31 Bc4+ Kd7 32 Bxd2 Nxa4 33 Nf7+-) 31 Bxd2 Ne6 (31...Nxa4 runs into the same reply) 32 Nc4 Nxd4 33 Bd3+/-.

Black needs to eliminate the a-pawn at once: **25...Nxa4 26 Nxa4 Qxa4**. After **27 Kg2**, the position unquestionably favors White, but it's not clear just how large his advantage would be.

The text move weakens Black's control of the central squares, which his opponent immediately exploits.

**25 Rb7xb8 Rd8xb8 26 d4-d5! c6xd5 27 Be2-b5 Nd7-b6?**

A passive continuation, allowing White to establish complete control of the entire board. 27...Nf8? was also unsatisfactory: 28 Nxd5 Qxd2 29 Bxd2 a6 30 Bf4!+-.

He should have tried 27...Ne5!, attacking the f3-pawn. Here 28 Nxd5 Qxd2 29 Bxd2 a6 unclear, would be useless, so Polugaevsky intended to play 28 Bf4!. But after 28...Nxf3!, he would have had a hard time finding the appropriate square for his queen.



W?

29 Qxd5?? would even lose: 29...Qxc3! 30 Bxb8 Qe1+ 31 Kg2 Qg1+ 32 Kxf3 Qh1+, and White loses the queen.



If 29 Qe3?!, then 29...Rxb5! 30 ab (30 Nxb5 Qxa4) 30...d4 31 Qxf3 dc 32 Qf1 Qb4, and this position is probably drawn.

Polugaevsky indicated 29 Qd3?!, having in mind the variations 29...Rc8 30 Nxd5! Qe1+ 31 Kg2 Nh4+ 32 Kh3+- and 29...Rxb5 30 ab Qa1+ 31 Nd1+/- . But the weird move 29...Ne1! would have sowed confusion in White's ranks. In all lines, Black obtains unpleasant counterplay:

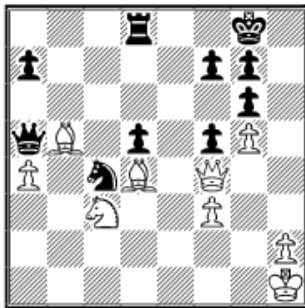
30 Qxd5 Rc8.

30 Qe3 Rd8 31 Qxe1 d4 32 Bd2 dc 33 Bxc3 Qb6.

30 Qg3 Rxb5! 31 ab Qa1 (31...d4) 32 Nxd5 Nd3+ 33 Qg1 Qa2.

The only correct queen move would have been **29 Qd1!+/-**. On 29...Rxb5, White now has 30 Nxb5; and if 29...Qxc3, then 30 Bxb8 a5 31 Bf4.

## 28 Be3-d4! Nb6-c4 29 Qd2-f4 Rb8-d8

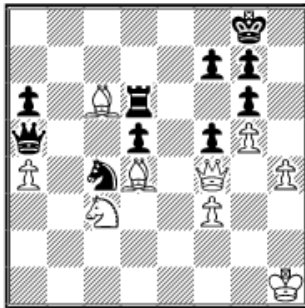


W?

The simple 30 Nxd5! Rxd5 31 Bxc4 would have ensured White an overwhelming advantage. Trying to squeeze the maximum possible out of the position, Polugaevsky rejected a favorable transformation of the position in favor of what looks like a useful preparatory move, which in fact he awarded an exclamation point.

## 30 h2-h4? Qa5-b4?

Black misses his chance. He had to play **30...a6! 31 Bc6** (31 Bxc4 dc 32 Kg2 Rd7 gives White nothing) **31...Rd6**. Unexpectedly for White, he now has problems with his light-squared bishop.



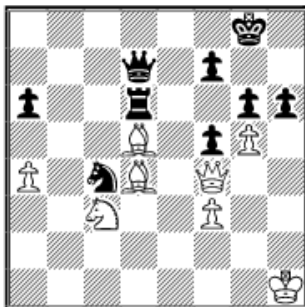
W

After **32 Bb7 Qd8!**, Black threatens 33...Qd7, and after 33 Bc5, Black would take over the initiative by 33...d4! 34 Ne2 Re6 35 Nxd4 (35 Qxd4 Qc7 36 Qxc4 Qxb7) 35...Re5! 36 Bb4 Qc7.

So White would have to throw himself into a desperate attack by **33 h5! Qd7!**

**34 h6!?** Now, 34...Qxb7? loses to 35 hg

f6 36 gf Kf7 37 Qh6 Qb8 39 Ne2! and 39 Nf4 (Polugaevsky). So he would have to play **34...gh 35 Bxd5!**



B?

Now the rapid advance of the h-pawn becomes understandable: Black cannot reply 35...Rxd5? 36 Nxd5 Qxd5 37 Qb8 +; nor does 35...hg? 36 Qh2+- work. On 35...h5, Polugaevsky gives 36 Bf6! Nb6 37 Qe5, but after 36...Nxd5 37 Nxd5, both 37...Re6 and 37...Qe6 38 Qb2 Rd8! 39 Bxd8 Qxd5 lead to unclear positions. On the other hand, 37 Bb3!?

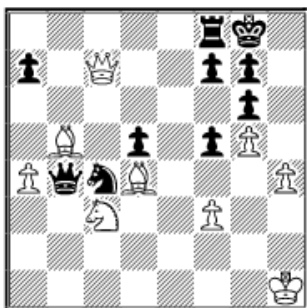
(instead of 37 Qe5) also leaves Black with counterplay, beginning with 37...Rxf6! 38 gf Qd3.

Black also has a safer defense at his disposal: **35...Kh7! 36 Bf6 Rxd5 37**

**Qxc4** (37 Qb8? Rd1+ 38 Nxd1 Qxd1+ 39 Kh2 Qd6+) **37...Rd2!**, and now it is White who has to hunt for the saving line.

Since the results of this variation could hardly have been satisfactory to White, I sought, in the position from the next-to-last diagram, a way to stir up the attack with the bishop on c6: **32 h5!?** (instead of 32 Bb7) 32... Rxc6? is bad: 33 Qb8+ Kh7 34 Qf8; on 32...gh?, 33 Bb7 is strengthened by the new threat of 34 Qxf5. But the same reply saves Black: **32...Qd8! 33 h6** (33 Bb7 leads to positions we examined earlier) **33...gh!** (and we know the 33...Rxc6? 34 hg f6 35 gf Kf7 36 Qh6 Rd6 37 Ne2! already, as well) **34 Bxd5 Qxg5 35 Qxg5 hg**, and the endgame is not better for White.

**31 Qf4-c7! Rd8-f8**



W?

**32 Bb5xc4**

Perhaps 32 Nxd5! Qe1+ 33 Kg2 Qd2+ 34 Bf2+/-, or even 32 Qc5!+- would have been simpler.

**32...d5xc4**

32...Qxc4!? offered greater practical drawing chances: 33 Qxc4 (33 Qe5? f6 34 gf gf 35 Qxd5+ Qxd5 36 Nxd5 Rd8 37 Nxf6+ Kf7+/- was a bit less convincing) 33...dc 34 Bxa7 Rd8 35 Bc5! Rd3 36 Bb4 Rxf3 37 Kg2 and 38 a5. Still, the ending reached is joyless for Black. The passed a-pawn is too strong.

**33 Qc7-e5 f7-f6 34 Qe5-e6+ Kg8-h7 35 g5xf6 Qb4-b7**

If 35...gf, then either 36 Nd5 or 36 Bxf6 Qb7 37 Nd5 Qf7 38 Qd6, followed by Bc3.

**36 Nc3-d5 g7xf6**

If 36...Qf7, White has the elegant solution 37 fg! Qxe6 38 gfN+.

**37 Kh1-g2 Kh7-h6 38 Nd5xf6 Rf8-d8 39 Nf6-g8+ Kh6-h5 1-0**

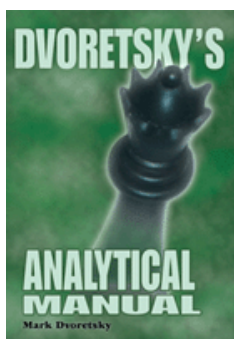
Black resigned, without waiting for the obvious reply 40 Qf6.



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Mark Dvoretsky



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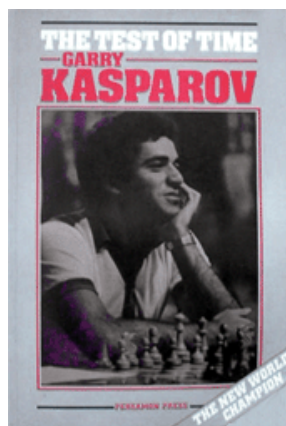
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## When to Trade

Sometimes the main problems a player has to resolve during the course of the game all come down to one and the same theme. In the game we now bring to your attention, the theme was trading pieces. In order to render the material suitable for independent study, it is organized in the “game with questions” format, with the great majority of the questions involving the indicated theme. The answers to the questions are placed at the end – in fact, they form this article’s second half.

The game is taken from Garry Kasparov’s book, *The Test of Time*, published in 1985 (all direct quotes from it will be in italics). In those days, annotators could not make use of a computer; nevertheless, the level of Kasparov’s analysis was, as a rule, quite high. But not in this game!



I have already rendered my opinion that intuitive assessment of the situation at the board is not the thirteenth world champion’s strong suit. He has always had the ability to immerse himself deep in a position, calculate long and accurately, and find (notice: I said *find*, not *guess*) the optimal solution, even when it may be difficult and subtle. But not every task in chess can be resolved on the basis of accumulated knowledge and accurate calculation. Sometimes what is chiefly needed is an ability to sense what is the main problem in the present position, to give preference intuitively to one direction of play or the other, and only thereafter, if needed, to support one’s feeling by analysis. In the game under consideration, Kasparov’s positional evaluation betrayed him over and over again – and not even so much at the board, as in his later annotations. As a result, the concrete variations upon which he based his conclusions turned out insecure and unconvincing.

Try it yourself: can you cope with these tasks better than a future world champion?

***Veingold – Kasparov***  
USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1979

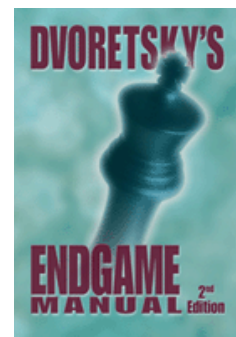
1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 Ng1-f3 g7-g6 3 c2-c4 Bf8-g7 4 Nb1-c3 d7-d6 5 e2-e4 0-0 6 Bf1-e2 e7-e5 7 d4-d5 a7-a5 8 Bc1-g5 h7-h6 9 Bg5-h4 Nb8-a6 10 0-0 Qd8-e8 11 Nf3-d2 Nf6-h7 12 a2-a3 f7-f5?!

A serious inaccuracy: 12...Bd7 was correct.

13 e4xf5 Bc8xf5

13...g4 Bh5 Qd7+/- was not very attractive.

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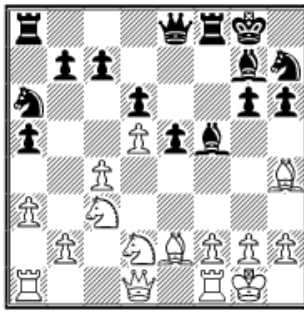
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### 1) How should White continue?

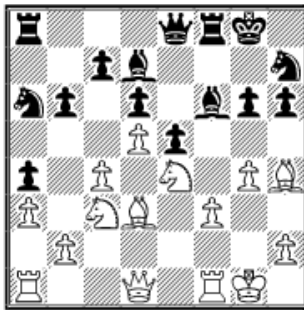
**14 g2-g4 Bf5-d7 15 Nd2-e4 a5-a4**

*Black's only achievement in this unattractive position. Had White managed to play b2-b3, his Q-side offensive would have developed unhindered. But how should the resulting position be assessed? During the game, depressed by my mistake on the move 12, I considered Black's position to be poor. Veingold, as it later transpired, assessed the situation quite differently, reckoning that everything was relatively all right for Black. The most accurate assessment was given by Botvinnik: "White for a long time holds a strategic initiative, and if he does not go wrong he will be able to dictate his conditions. Black's position, although passive, is solid, and with accurate defence it is unlikely that he should lose."*

**16 f2-f3 b7-b6 17 Be2-d3**

*With his last move White probed a weak point in Black's position – his g6-pawn, and prevented 17...Nc5 (18 Nxc5 bc 19 Qc2). Therefore it is natural that Black should want to defend the weak pawn with his king, and at the same time to activate his king's bishop.*

**17...Bg7-f6!?**



### 2) How should White continue?

**18 Ne4xf6+ Nh7xf6 19 Qd1-d2 Na6-c5 20 Bd3-c2 Kg8-g7?**

*By this time I had convinced myself that Black's prospects were not after all so cheerless, and I quickly went the other extreme – I began to overrate my chances. I rejected the correct 20...g5, not wishing to allow the perpetual check after 21 Bxg5 hg 22 Qxg5+ Kh8 23 Qh6+ Kg8 24 Qg5+ (but not 24 g5 Qh5, or 24 f4 Qe7).*

White is not obliged to force the draw – **21 Bf2!?** instead is worth considering.



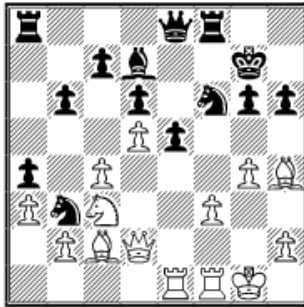
### 3) How should Black continue?

**21 Ra1-e1!**

Now there is the extremely dangerous threat of f3-f4. For example, 21... Qf7 22 f4 ef 23 Qxf4 g5 24 Bxg5 hg 25 Qxg5+ Kh8 26 Rxf6 Qxf6 27 Qh5 +, and mates (Kasparov).

**21...Nc5-b3!?**

*At the cost of a pawn Black tries to eliminate the dangerous white-squared bishop and to parry the attack.*



### 4) How should White play?

**22 Qd2-d3 g6-g5 23 Bh4-g3**

*23 Bf2 is evidently more accurate.*

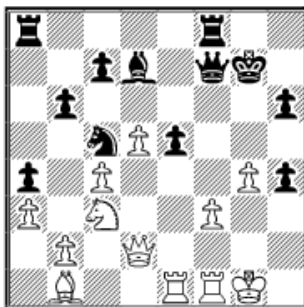
**23...Nb3-c5 24 Qd3-d2 Qe8-f7 25 h2-h4 Nf6-h7 26 Bc2xh7 g5xh4!?**

*Black could have given up a pawn: 26...Kxh7 27 hg hg 28 Qxg5 Qg6 with an acceptable position.*

**27 Bg3xe5+**

*27 Bxh4 Kxh7 would have been weaker.*

**27...d6xe5 28 Bh7-b1**



### 5) How should Black defend?



## 28...Qf7-f4 29 Qd2xf4

On 29 Qg2, Black could try 29...Rae8, for one thing. The exclamation mark that Kasparov attaches to 29...h5? is wrong: Black is actually worse after 30 gh+ Kh8 31 Qh2.

## 29...Rf8xf4!

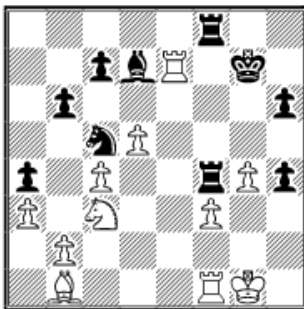
29...ef 30 Re7+ Rf7 31 Rfe1+/- holds no prospects for Black.

## 30 Re1xe5 Ra8-f8

*Only by activating his forces to the maximum can Black gain sufficient counter-chances. There was no time to restore the material balance: 30...Rxc4? 31 Re7+ Kf6 32 Rh7.*

Instead of White's last move in this line, he might also try 32 d6!? (threatening 33 Nd5+), forcing his opponent to give up the exchange: 32...Rxc3 33 bc cd 34 Rh7+-. And Kasparov's own recommendation is just as good: on 32...Kg5, the quickest way to win would be 33 Ne4+! (33 Rg7+ is good too – Bellin and Ponzetto) 33...Nxe4 34 fe Bxg4 35 Rg7+ Kh5 36 Bd3, followed by 37 Rf5+ or 37 Be2.

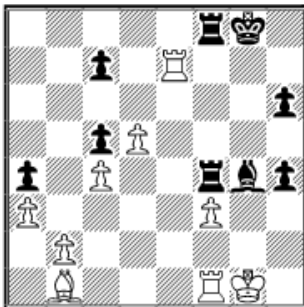
## 31 Re5-e7+



## 31...Rf8-f7

*A mistake, which reduces to naught all Black's efforts. By retaining both rooks, he could have avoided defeat...*

Unfortunately, he's not going to avoid it that way, either. Let's examine Kasparov's continuation: 31...Kg8?! (my assessment) 32 Ne4 Bxg4 33 Nxc5 bc.



The line 34 Rxc7? Bxf3 35 Rxc5 Rg4+ 36 Kh2 Rg2+ 37 Kh3 Rg7 (37...Rg5!?) would, in fact, lead to a draw. But the other line he gives, 34 Be4 Bh3 35 Rf2 R8f7 36 Rxf7 Kxf7, is totally unconvincing.

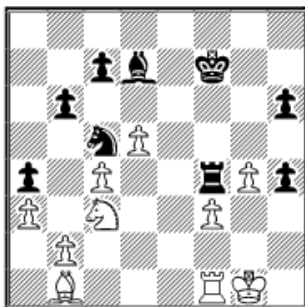
In the first place, the king recapture on f7 can be easily forestalled by giving a check first: 34 Bh7+!? Kh8 35 Be4 Bh3 36 Rf2+/-.

And the immediate 34 Be4 is strong enough, anyway. After 34...Bh3 35 Rf2 R8f7, White should try 36 d6. Black can mount a successful defense

here with 36...Rxe7! 37 de Kf7 38 Re2 Bd7! 39 Bd5+ Ke8. But our examination of this variation tells us where we should seek an improvement for White. Instead of 35 Rf2?, let's play 35 Re1! R8f7 36 d6! (threatening 37 Bd5) 36...Kf8 (here Black can't trade at e7) 37 Rxc7 (37 Bd5! is still more energetic – in fact, it wins) 37...Rxc7 38 dc Rf7 39 Bc6 Rxc7 40 Bxa4, and White has a great advantage.

I believe Kasparov played the correct line: White had more complex tasks to solve in the actual game.

**32 Re7xf7+ Kg7xf7**



**6) Which piece should White put on e4?**

**33 Nc3-e4 Nc5-b3?**

*To this day I cannot understand what caused me to make such a ridiculous move. I was obviously unable to withstand the tension in a game which had been difficult from the very start.*

**34 Kg1-f2!**

*A precise move, which essentially concludes the game. Black is without both a pawn, and any activity – he has only weaknesses.*

**34...Bd7xg4 35 Kf2-e3 Rf4-f5 36 Rf1-f2 Bg4-h5 37 Ne4-d6+ c7xd6 38 Bb1xf5 Kf7-f6 39 Bf5-c2 Nb3-c5 40 Rf2-h2 Kf6-g5 41 Bc2-d1 1-0**

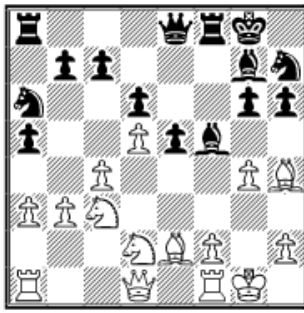
## Answers

**1) With 14 g4!,** White drives the bishop off the b1-h7 diagonal (it's important to get this in before Black plays g6-g5). This establishes secure control over the e4-square, guaranteeing White the better chances. *Such a ridiculous losing of opening battle upset me and, as the course of the game shows, partly prevented me from making a sober assessment of what was happening.*

What is the nature of the error (12...f5?! ) made by Kasparov?

After 12...Bd7 13 b3, the theoretical main line is 13...h5. The young grandmaster came up with a different plan: to push the f-pawn instead (which is also quite feasible), but to do so before White plays b2-b3.

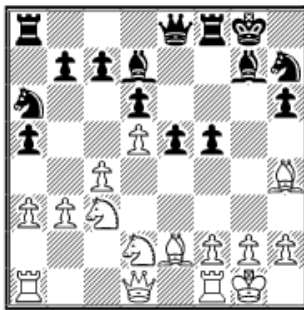
Kasparov was following a game Timman – Westerinen, Geneva 1977, in which Black obtained an excellent game after 12...Bd7 13 b3 f5 14 ef Bxf5 15 Re1?! g5 16 Bg3 Nf6 17 Nf1 Nc5 18 Ne3 Bg6=/. A more principled line for White would be 15 g4!.



However, Black would then reply 15...e4! 16 Rc1 e3 (16...g5?! 17 gf gh 18 Ndx4 Rxf5 19 Bg4+/-) 17 fe (17 gf ed 18 Qxd2 Nc5 unclear) 17... Qxe3+ 18 Bf2 Qg5 unclear.

Clearly, with the pawn still on b2, Black no longer has the counterstroke e5-e4.

Later, Kasparov found an interesting positional exchange sacrifice in this line: 14...gf!? (instead of 14...Bxf5).



15 Bh5 Qc8 16 Be7 Re8 17 Bxe8 Qxe8 18 Bh4 e4 with compensation (Yusupov-Kasparov, Barcelona 1989).

2) Our first problem on the exchanging theme. Should we take on f6; and if so, which piece should we take with?

The one thing we can say for certain is that trading off the bishop on h4 is bad, as it leads to the weakening of White's dark-squares. After 18 Bxf6? Nxf6 19 Qd2 Nxe4 20 Nxe4 Kg7 (but of course not 20...Rf4?? 21 Qxf4! ef 22 Nf6+), Black's position is preferable – he intends Rf4 and Nc5.

Kasparov considers his opponent's actual choice, **18 Nxf6+!?**, to have been his strongest.

*The exchange by White of his finely-placed knight at e4 for the bishop is the result of a correct evaluation of the position: the King's Indian bishop was playing an important part in the defence of its king, and after its transference to g5 it could have become a powerful force.*

Generally speaking, when you have an advantage in space, it is recommended to avoid making unforced exchanges – that is why I am not one hundred percent convinced of the correctness of Kasparov's assertion – the more so, in that it will be Black's formally "bad" bishop that leaves the board. Retreating the bishop from h4 deserved serious consideration.

A) Playing **18 Bf2**, White of course must pay close attention to the activation of Black's bishop by Bg5. An immediate 18...Bg5?! would be unpleasantly met by 19 h4 Bf4 20 Ne2. Kasparov gives the variation **18... Nc5 19 Nxc5 bc**



And continues 20 Ne4 Bg5, with good counterplay.

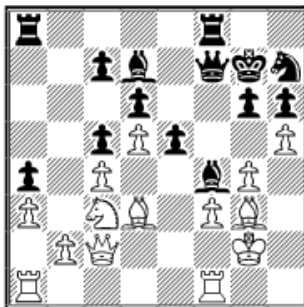
White could try 20 Qc2!? Kg7 (20...Ng5 is dubious: 21 Kg2 threatens 22 Bxg6 and 22 h4, and I don't see any tactics involving the weakness at f3) 21 h4, restricting the mobility of the enemy pieces. However, after something like 21...Be7 22 Kg2 Qf7, the situation looks tense enough: White would find it difficult to prove he has an advantage in this position.

I also tested the prophylactic move 20 Kg2!?. For example, 20...Bg5 (20...Kg7!? 21 h4) 21 Qc2 Kg7 (a move Black must make anyway: in the line 21...Qf7 22 Bg3 Be8 23 h4 Bf4 24 Bxf4 Qxf4 25 Bxg6 Bxg6 26 Qxg6+ Kh8 27 Qe4, his compensation for the pawn would be problematic) 22 h4



22...Bf4 suggests itself, when the tempting 23 h5?! would allow Black to begin a dangerous counterattack with 23...Ng5 24 hg Qc8! (threatening 25...Bxg4) 25 Qe2 Nxf3! 26 Qxf3 Bxg4. So White should reply 23 Ne2!, keeping the better chances.

The intermediate move 22...Qf7! would be stronger, continuing 23...Bf4 only after 23 Bg3. The only question would be how to react to 24 h5.



24...Ng5 25 hg Qf6 26 Bh4+/- is no problem for White. 24...Bxg3 25 hg Qe7 26 gh is also dubious, though Black does maintain an active stance.

Black must sacrifice a piece: 24...gh! 25 Bxh7 Bxg3 26 Kxg3 Qf4+ 27 Kg2 hg. For example, 28 Qg6+ Kh8 29 fg Qd2+ 30 Kh1 Qe3! 31 Qd3 Qg5, with full-fledged counterplay.

B) In the variations examined thus far, White's bishop has had to move from f2 to g3, in order to protect the f3-pawn. So why not play **18 Bg3!?** immediately, saving an important tempo?



Now the reply 18...Nc5 loses a considerable amount of its force: 19 Nxc5 bc 20 Qc2 Kg7 21 Rae1 (intending f3-f4) 21...Qf7 22 h4, and White stands better.

And if 18...Bg5, then 19 Kg2!?, without fear of 19...Be3 20 Qc2, followed by 21 Rae1, preparing to meet the bishop's retreat from d4 with an attack on the enemy center by f3-f4.

Time to take stock. Kasparov was correct in saying that the text move was safe, and deprived Black of counterplay. But was it enough to maintain White's advantage? I doubt it; and in the answer to my next question, I shall try to demonstrate my assessment. But then the question arises: shouldn't White have chosen a more principled line, one where he certainly would find it very easy to make a mistake and hand over the initiative to his opponent, but also one in which, if he played accurately, he could hold on to his advantage?

In a game, such a decision could only be taken intuitively. Alexander Veingold probably took into account that his youthful opponent would find it particularly unpleasant to play a dried-out kind of position, offering him little room for imagination. And the white player's calculation was in fact borne out.

3) As Kasparov noted, 21...Qe7?! would not be good for Black: 22 h4 Qg7 (22...Nh7!? 23 Be3 – Dvoretsky) 23 Be3+/- (or 23 hg!? hg 24 Be3 +/-).

The grandmaster gives 21...Kf7 an exclamation mark. After 22 h4 Rg8 23 hg hg 24 Be3 Ke7 25 Bxg5 Qf7, he writes that *White probably retains the advantage, but playing for a win would involve some risk in view of the insecure position of his king.*



Kasparov continues 26 Ne4 Nxe4 27 Bxe4 (27 fe? Rxc5 28 Qxc5 Rg8) 27...Qg7 28 Bxf6+ Qxf6 29 Rf2 Rh8, with chances for both sides.

Instead of 26 Ne4?, White has better in 26 Rf2!. For example, 26...Qg7 27 Bh6+/-, and Black has no real compensation for the pawn. And an even more energetic response, 26 f4!, was pointed out by Robert Bellin and Pietro Ponzetto.

In light of this, I consider Kasparov's recommendation inferior, and believe the correct move was **21...Nb3!**, forcing the exchange of the dangerous bishop after **22 Bxb3 ab**.

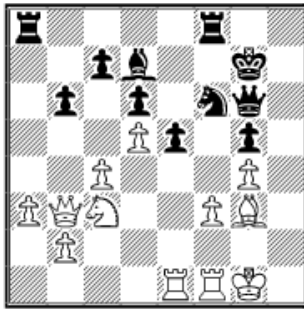


After **23 h4?! Qg6 24 hg hg**, the position is double-edged: White must consider e5-e4 (25 Kg2?! e4; 25 Be3 e4; 25 Rae1 Rae8 and 26...e4).

On 23 Rae1 Qg6 24 Qd1 h5 25 h3 Rae8 26 Qxb3 e4?! 27 Qc2, White has the upper hand; and the piece sacrifice 25...hg 26 fg Nxg4?! 27 fg Rf4 is problematical at best. However, Black can set up an attack on the h-file by 25...Kg7!. Incautious play might then lead White to catastrophe, as in: 26 Qxb3 hg 27 hg (27 fg meets the same reply) 27...Qh7! (27...Qd3!? wouldn't be a bad try, either) 28 Kg2 Bxg4! 29 fg Nxg4-+.

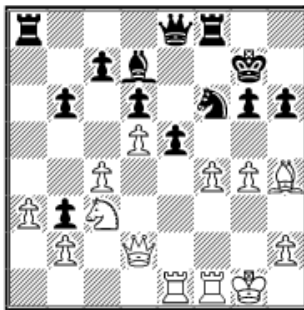
4) White's indecisive 22 Qd3?! allowed Black to set up a defense of sorts after 22...g5. **22 Bxb3! ab** was stronger.

Now White has no time to go after the pawn at b3. Here's the line Kasparov gave (with my corrections in parentheses): 23 Qd1? g5 24 Bg3 h5 25 h3 Qg6 26 Qxb3 hg 27 hg



27...Bxg4! (27...Nxg4!? or 27...Qd3!? wouldn't be bad either) 28 fg (28 Nb5!? Bh3 29 Nxc7 Nh5 is unclear) 28...Qd3, and White can't play 29 Kg2? Ne4! 30 Bh2 Rxf1 31 Rxf1 Qxf1+ (31...Qd2+ 32 Kg1 Rh8!-+ would be stronger still) 32 Kxf1 Nd2+; and if 29 Bh2, then 29...Nxg4 30 Qd1 Qh3 31 Qe2 Rh8 (31...Rxf1+!? 32 Rxf1 Rh8) leaves White's position shaky.

The energetic **23 f4!** is correct here.



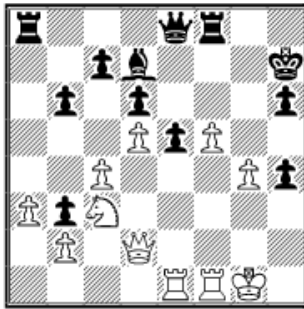
*When to maintain his hold on to e5 Black has to resort to extreme measures – 23...g5. In Kasparov's opinion, nothing comes of 24 fg Nxg4 25 Rxf8 Qxf8 26 Rf1 Qe8 27 h3 Qh5, with counterplay (while 27 gh+ Nxh6 27 Bg5 Nf5 29 Kh1 appears to leave the initiative in White's hands).*

The grandmaster also examines the stronger 24 fe! Nxg4 25 Rxf8 Qxf8 26 e6 Ne5 (26...gh 27 Qg2! Qf4 28 h3) 27 Rxe5 de 28 Bg3 Be8 29 Bxe5 + Kh7.



True, he does end this variation with a terrible blunder, 30 Bxc7?!, overlooking 30...Qc5+. But his general assessment of the position as favoring White is correct. For example, White could play 30 Qe2+/-, and follow it up with 31 Ne4.

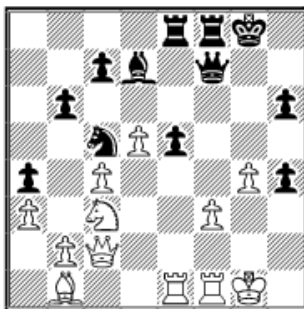
Instead of 23...g5?!, Black has another defensive try that deserves preference: 23...Nxg4!? 24 h3 (24 fe? Nxe5!/+ ) 24...g5! (24...Nf6 25 fe +/-) 25 hg! (25 fg Qh5) 25...gh 26 f5 Kh7.



Here too, however, it looks like White stands better.

5) Kasparov thought the move he actually played, 28...Qf4 (threatening Qg3+) was the only move here. And in fact, 28...Qf6? is bad, because of 29 f4! (if White transposes moves by 29 Qc2 Rf7 30 f4, he has to consider 30...e4) 29...ef (29...e4 30 f5+/-; 29...Bxg4 30 fe Qg5 31 Qxg5 + hg 32 Nb5+/-) 30 Qc2 Rh8 (30...Rf7 31 Rxf4!+- [Kasparov]), and now either 31 Ne4 Nxe4 32 Rxe4+- or 31 Rxf4 Qxf4 32 Qg6+ Kf8 33 Rf1 Qxf1+ 34 Kxf1+-.

However, even in the game, White still had the advantage, the grandmaster's opinion notwithstanding. With this in mind, we can recommend **28...Rae8!? 29 Qc2 Kg8.**



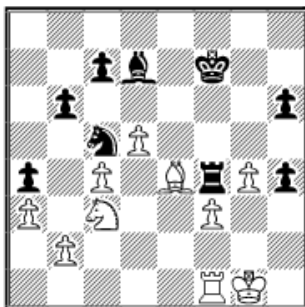
In the middlegame, the position remains almost even – I don't see how White can make progress here.

6) The very same question could be phrased differently: considering a likely trade on e4 (now or in the near future), which piece should White

leave on that square – the knight or the bishop? This task will have to be solved on an intuitive level, since it would be nearly impossible to demonstrate the correctness of your choice with exact variations.

In Kasparov's opinion, the move 33 Ne4, as played in the game, was an error, and should have resulted in a draw. We shall see later on whether this is correct; but first, let's examine the other choice.

*33 Be4! would have consolidated White's advantage.* Kasparov presents no variations in support of his assessment; nor does my own analysis support it.

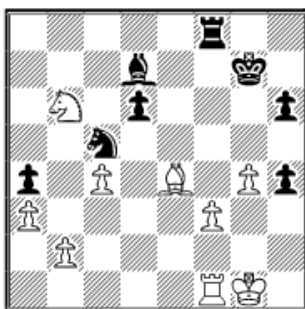


33...Bxg4?? is bad: 34 fg (the black rook is pinned); so is 33...Kf6? 34 Ne2. I examined two possibilities:

A) With 33...Kg7!?, Black sets up the threat of 34...Nxe4 35 Nxe4 Bxg4. It cannot be parried by 34 Rf2, since then 34...Nxe4 35 Nxe4 Bxg4!? is still playable, with the continuation 36 Rg2 h5 37 Nd2 h3 38 Rg3 Rd4, with enough counterplay.

Black meets 34 Kf2 with 34...Nxe4+ (but of course not 34...Bxg4? 35 Ke3) 35 Nxe4 Bxg4 36 Ke3 Rf7, with an equal, or nearly equal, position.

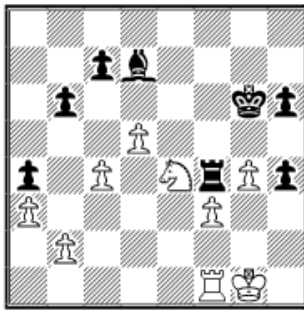
The surprising shot 34 d6!? deserves serious consideration, clearing the d5-square for the knight. On 34...Nxe4, White plays 35 Nd5! Rf7 36 fe Rxf1+ 37 Kxf1 cd 38 Nxb6, or 35...Nd2 36 Nxf4 Nxf1 37 Kxf1 cd 38 Kg2 – in either case, White has the better endgame. The only question is: how much better? However, Black could very well choose 34...cd 35 Nd5 Rf8 36 Nxb6 instead:



Now 36...Bxg4 fails against 37 fg Rxf1+ 38 Kxf1 Nxe4 39 Kg2+/-; instead, he should play 36...Be6!, preparing 37...Rb8. The rook is aiming for the pawn on b2; attempting to prevent this by 37 Rd1 runs into the unpleasant riposte 37...Nxe4 38 fe Rf4 39 Rxd6 Rxd4+ 40 Kh2 Rxe4. And on 37 Nd5, Black can now play 37...Bxg4 38 fg Rxf1+ 39 Kxf1 Nxe4 40 Kg2 Kg6 unclear, since the pawn at a4 is no longer under attack, as it was after the premature 36...Bxg4?.

B) The immediate exchange by 33...Nxe4!? 34 Nxe4 (34 fe Rxf1+ 35 Kxf1 Kf6 would be inferior) 34...Kg6 would not be bad, either:

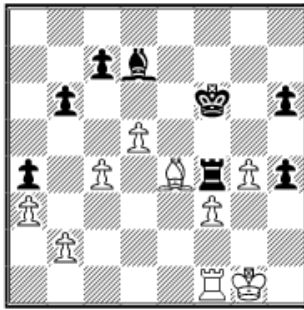




If 35 Kh2, then 35...Bxg4!? works: 36 Rg1 h5 37 Nd2 h3! 38 fg Rf2+ 39 Kxh3 Rxd2, with an even rook endgame. And 35 c5 bc (but not 35... Bxg4? 36 d6!+/-) 36 Nxc5 Bc8+/- is not so dangerous for Black, either – he intends to continue 37...Rc4.

And now, let's examine 33 Ne4, which – Kasparov's opinion to the contrary – looks like the strongest move to me.

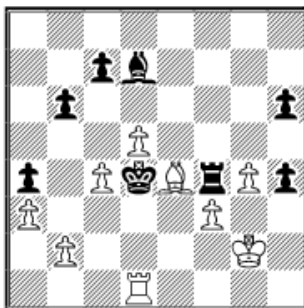
*Whereas after 33 Ne4? Black has a clear draw by 33...Nxe4 34 Bxe4 (34 fe? Rxf1+ 35 Kxf1 Kf6, and it is only White who is in danger of losing) 34...Kf6! and ...Ke5.*



In order to neutralize the black king's march to the center, White would like to play Kf2-e3; but an immediate 35 Kf2 runs into 35...Bxg4! 36 Ke3 Ke5 37 Rg1, and now either 37...Bh5!? 38 Rg7 Bf7 (Bellin, Ponzetto), or 37...Bf5!?

The strongest move turns out to be the prophylactic **35 Re1!**, putting Black in a difficult dilemma: which way should his king go?

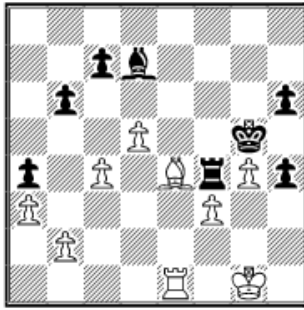
35...Ke5 is met, not by 36 Kf2? Bxg4=, and not by 36 Bf5+? Kd6= either, but simply by 36 Kg2!. Now Black's best would be to retreat his king by 36...Kf6!+/- . The temptingly active 36...Kd4 could be met either by 37 Bb1!? Kxc4 38 Re7 Bb5 39 Ba2+ Kd4 40 Rxc7+/-, or by the more energetic 37 Rd1+!.



On 37...Ke3, 38 d6! leads to a decisive advantage for White. And 37... Ke5 38 d6! cd 39 Rd5+ Ke6 40 Rh5 would be equally hopeless. On 37... Kxc4 38 Rc1+ Kb3 39 Rxc7 Bxg4 40 Bc2+ Kxb2 41 fg Rxg4+ (or 41... Rd4 42 d6 Rxd6 43 Bxa4+-) 42 Kf3 Rd4 43 Be4+-, White's extra bishop must tell eventually. And finally, 37...Kc5 allows White to bring his own king to the center by 38 Kf2!, followed by 39 Ke3, with an overwhelming

advantage.

In my view, Black gets better practical drawing chances by taking a different route with his king: **35...Kg5!?**, with the idea of taking the first reasonable opportunity to trade off a pair of pawns by h6-h5.

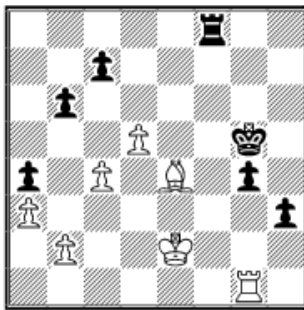


Here's an interesting variation, which, although not forced, serves to illustrate Black's counterattacking possibilities.

36 Kg2 h5!? 37 gh Kxh5 38 Kf2! h3 39 Rg1 (39 Kg3 Rf7 40 f4 Rg7+ with counterplay, or 39 c5 bc 40 Rc1 h2 41 Kg2 Bf5! 42 Rxc5 Bxe4 43 fe Kg6!, with a drawn rook ending) 39...Rh4 (39...h2 40 Rh1 Rh4 is equivalent) 40 Rg7 h2 41 Rh7+ Kg5 42 Rxh4 Kxh4 43 Kg2 Kg5 44 Kxh2 Kf4 45 Kg2 Ke3, and despite Black's two-pawn deficit, the bishop ending looks like a draw: the king either goes to d4 to get the c4-pawn, or to d2 for the b2-pawn.

**36 Kf2!** would be stronger, when either 36...Bxg4?? 37 Ke3 or 36...h5? 37 gh Kxh5 38 Rg1 would lose for Black. He should wait, instead, playing something like **36...Rf8!?**.

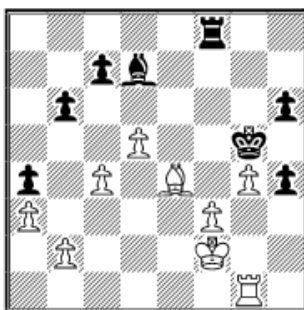
And now White really does have to worry about losing the pawn at g4. For example: 37 Rh1?! Bxg4! 38 Rg1 h5 39 Ke2 h3 40 fg hg=.



Black's strong passed pawns counterbalance White's extra bishop.

37 Ke3?! would also be premature: 37...h3 38 Rg1 (by defending the g4-pawn, White prepares to return his king to f2) 38...Kh4 39 Kf2 (threatening Bd3-f1) 39...Rf4, and on 40 Bd3, Black has the unpleasant 40...Rd4.

But the prophylactic move **37 Rg1!** keeps White's advantage.



Black can only wait until White plays something like Ke3 (with the rook on g1, the reply h4-h3 is now bad, because White can put his king back on f2 and continue Bd3-f1). Still, Black's position remains defensible; and it's unclear whether White can find a way to strengthen his position substantially.

On the basis of my own difficult analysis (which I doubt is error-free!), we may conclude that 33 Ne4!, as White played, is more promising than 33 Be4 – after the exchange of knights on e4, the clear draw Kasparov promised us is nowhere to be seen. But in any case, Black had to play this: declining the exchange deprived him of any counterchances whatsoever, and led to a speedy defeat.



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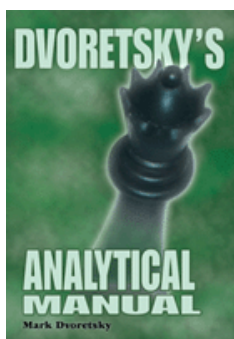
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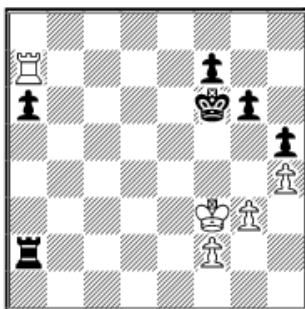
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## Extra Pawn on the Side

The ending with material equality on one side, and an extra pawn on the other, is one of the most important, and also one of the most difficult segments of the general rook endgame. You will find a systematic exposition of the theory in my *Endgame Manual*. What I would like to bring to your attention here are two instructive examples of this theme, which will also be included in my forthcoming book, *Endgame Tragicomedies*.

*Kashtanov – Inarkiev*  
St. Petersburg, 2004



W

About a year before this game was played, some revolutionary changes occurred in the theory of rook endings with an extra pawn on the opposite wing. I acquainted my pupil, Ernesto Inarkiev, with these new discoveries, which his opponent in this game knew nothing about (the Russian-language version of the *Endgame Manual* would not be published until two years later).

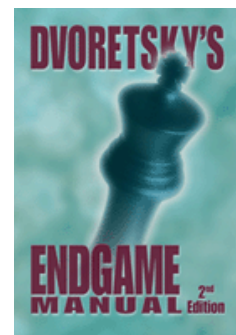
Inarkiev's advantage in knowledge and understanding of this position proved effective: he won an objectively drawn ending. To be sure, the defense was not of the highest quality, even considering what we used to think about this ending.

**42 Ra8?**

42 Ke3 would have been much better. **In such situations, the rook should keep an eye on the f7-pawn, and be ready to capture it as soon as the black king moves toward the opposite wing.** But mainly, the text move allows Black to drive back the white king.

**42...Kf5! 43 Ra7 Ra3+ 44 Kg2 Ke6**

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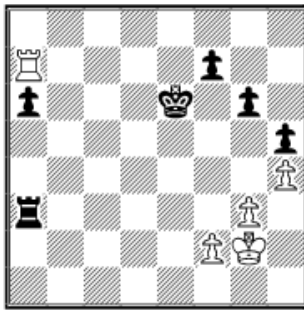
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W?

**45 Ra8?**

**White will eventually have to advance his kingside pawns, and every tempo could prove decisive. This is why it makes sense to start active operations there as soon as possible.** The standard plan in such positions would be 45 f3!, followed by 46 g4.

**45...a5 46 Ra7!**

The obvious 46 Ra6+? Kd5 leads to a position from the game Akopian – Kir. Georgiev, Las Vegas Wch 1999, with colors reversed (Diagram 9-166 in the *Endgame Manual*). The complicated analysis given in the book shows that White's counterplay comes too late, so his position is lost.

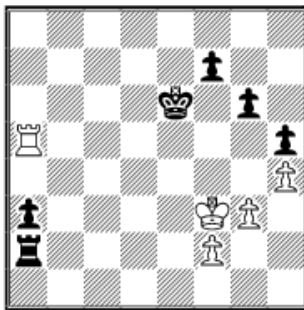
**46...a4 47 Ra5?**

How many times can White make the same double blunder? Again, he takes his rook off the seventh rank, and postpones his kingside counterplay. After 47 f3!, it appears that the position would still have been drawn.

**47...Ra2?!**

**The advance of the black king, sacrificing the f7-pawn, is very dangerous for White, either with the rook on a3 and White's king on g2 (as in the above-cited endgame Akopian – Georgiev), or with the rook on a2 and the pawn on a3. Ernesto decided to play the second of these lines.** Objectively speaking, 47...Kd6! was stronger, and should have won.

**48 Kf3 a3**



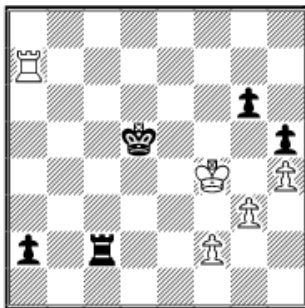
W?

**49 Ra7?**

The concluding error, although a most excusable one. According to prior theory, the text move assures White an easy draw. Only recently was it discovered that White's only chance to save himself is 49 g4!! You may find out all the rest in the detailed analysis of the Kantorovich/Steckner position from my *Endgame Manual* (Diagram 9-144).

**49...Kd5! 50 Ke3**

The main line is 50 Rxf7 Rc2 51 Ra7 a2 52 Kf4



B?

The Swiss player Johannes Steckner discovered that after 52...Kc5!!, Black wins by a single tempo. For example, 53 Kg5 Kb6! 54 Ra3 Rc5+ 55 Kxg6 Ra5 56 Rxa2 Rxa2 57 Kxh5 Kc6!-+.

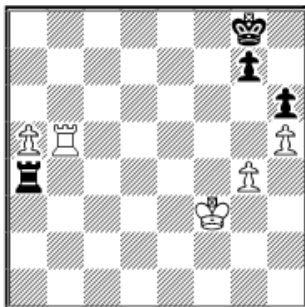
**50...Kc4 51 Rxf7 Rc2 52 Rc7+ Kb3 53 Rb7+ Kc3 54 Ra7 a2 55 f3 Kb3 56 Rb7+ Ka3 57 Ra7+ Kb2 58 Rb7+ Kc1 59 Ra7 Kb1 0-1**

Sometimes, the stronger side is able to place his rook on the same rank as his passed pawn, in order to defend both it and his pawns on the other wing. Such a setup is exceptionally dangerous for the defender, since the king is then free to jump over and support its passed pawn.

Let's examine an instructive endgame, badly played by Adrian Mikhalchishin, and poorly annotated by him in his book, *Modern Endgame Practice*. Some considerably deeper and more accurate notes were given by Boris Gelfand (first in *Informant #80*, and later in his book, [My Most Memorable Games](#)) – I shall rely on these.

#### ***Gelfand – Mikhalchishin***

Istanbul OI 2000



B

White's rook cannot guarantee the protection of his kingside pawns, so one might suppose that the position is drawn. **The guiding principle in defending such situations is generate counterplay on the kingside after White's king has gone to the queenside.** Well, such general advice is easily given. It is much harder to choose the only correct concrete way to do it. Let's examine the different possibilities.

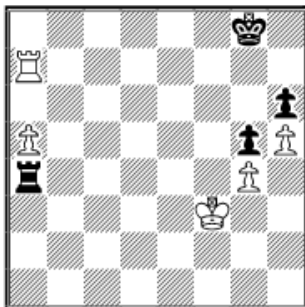
A) 54...Kh7?! *The passive defence I rejected – White will sacrifice the g4 pawn to control the a-pawn with his king. It is too late for Black's counterplay ...g7-g6* (Mikhalchishin).

This note makes no sense: he does not explain under exactly what circumstances White would be justified in sacrificing the g4-pawn for nothing (when in fact, it should not be given up at all). Since Mikhalchishin's "analysis" stops here, while Gelfand did not examine moving his king to h7, I had to study it for myself. The results were pretty interesting.

55 Ke3? Rxc4 56 a6 (56 Kd3 Ra4 57 Kc3 g6 =) 56...Ra4 57 Rb6 Ra5 =, or 55 g5? hg 56 Rxc5 Kh6 57 Kc5 g6 are useless.

It is more logical for White to play for zugzwang: 55 Rc5!. Now 55...g6 leads to a position that we will examine later on (cf. 54...g6?!). Here we shall test a continuation of Black's waiting tactics by 55...Kg8, and the move 55...g5.

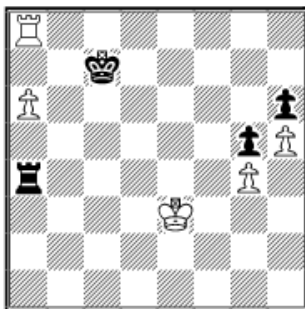
**A1) 55...g5 56 Rc7+ Kg8 57 Ra7**



B

Black cannot just jog in place: White would continue 58 a6, and send his king after the a-pawn. 57...Rf4+ 58 Kg3 Re4 might look tempting, with the idea 59 a6? Re6! 60 Kf3 Kh8, when Black has a guaranteed draw, because his rook simultaneously locks White's king up on the kingside, while tying White's rook to the pawn's defense. However, White has the winning 59 Ra6!, allowing the rook to get off the a-file and move the pawn up to a6. For example, 59...Kh7 60 Rb6 Ra4 61 a6 Kg7 62 Rb7+ Kf6 63 Rh7 Ra3+ 64 Kf2 Ke5 65 Rxc6+-.

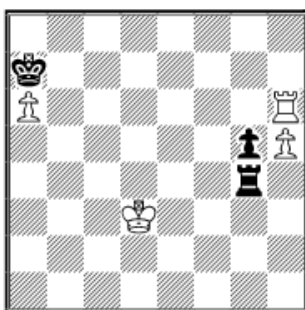
We must also check 57...Kf8 58 a6 Ke8 59 Ke3 (59 Ra8+ Kf7 60 Ke3 Kg7 = would be premature – with his next move, Black intends to snap off the g4-pawn) 59...Kd8 60 Ra8+! Kc7 (60...Ke7 61 a7 Kf7 62 Rh8+-).



W?

After Black's king moves to the queenside, White should plan on securing the g4-pawn with his king. 61 Kf3! wins; for example, 61...Rf4 + 62 Kg3 Rf6 63 a7 Kb7 64 Rg8 Kxa7 65 Rg6+-.

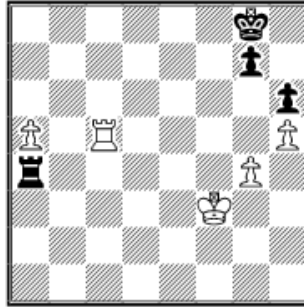
An instructive draw occurs after the mistaken 61 Kd3? Rxc4 62 Rh8 Kb6 63 Rxc6+ Ka7.



After 64 Rg6 Rh4 65 h6 (65 Rxc5 Kxa6 =) 65...Ka8, the white king, permanently cut off on the fourth rank, cannot get close to its pawns; and without its help, they can never queen.

But if White leaves the rook at h6, then a position of mutual zugzwang inevitably arises, with the rook on h4 and the king on g3, and White cannot obtain this position with Black to move. For example, 64 Ke3 Rh4 65 Kf3 Rf4+ 66 Kg2 Rg4+! (but not 66...Rh4? 67 Kg3+- zugzwang) 67 Kh3 Rf4 68 Kg3 Rh4 = zugzwang.

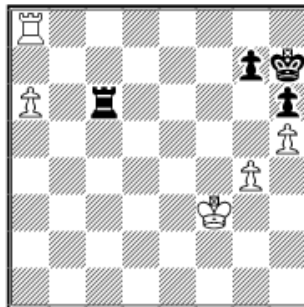
**A2)** 55...Kg8



W?

Once again, the pawn sacrifice does not work: 56 Ke3? Rxc4 57 a6 Ra4 58 Rc6 Kf7 59 Kd3 Ke7 60 Kc3 Kd7 61 Rg6 Kc8 62 Kb3 Ra5, and draws. Therefore, White continues 56 Rc8+!.

After 56...Kh7 57 Ra8, the attempt to attack the a-pawn from the flank by 57...Rc4 58 a6 Rc6 (generally speaking, this is a typical method of defense against a rook pawn) fails to achieve its aim, in view of the rook's inability to operate freely on the f-file (without the important square f5); and on the e-file, it is too close to the pawn.



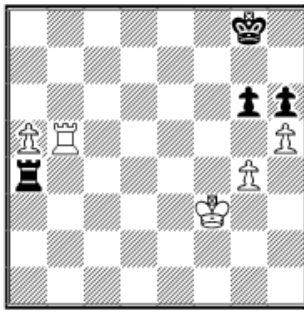
W

Here's a sample variation: 59 Ke4 Rb6 60 Kd5 Rf6 61 Kc5 (threatening 62 Kb5) 61...Re6 62 Kb5 Re5+ 63 Kc6 Re6+ 64 Kc7+-.

And if 56...Kf7, then 57 Ra8? Kf6 58 Ra6+ Kf7 = no longer works. White plays 57 Rc7+! Kf6 (57...Kg8 58 Ra7) 58 Rc6+ instead, with 59 a6 to follow, reaching the same winning position as in the game. We shall analyze that later on.

**B)** At first, Gelfand thought that Black could draw by playing 54...g6?!; but while preparing his book for publication, he found the winning method for White.

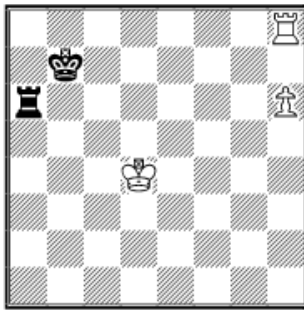




W?

55 hg? Kg7 56 Kg3 Kxg6 57 Kh4 Ra1 58 Rb6+ Kg7 59 Ra6 Rh1+ 60 Kg3 h5 = is not a problem.

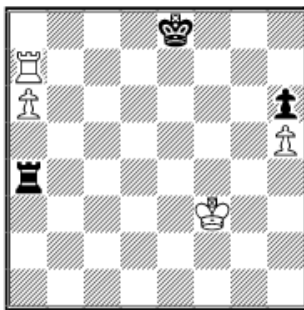
After 55 Ke3?! gh (but not 55...Rxc4? 56 Rb8+ Kg7 57 Rb7+ Kf6 58 Rb6 + Ke5 59 Rxc6+-) 56 gh Kf7 57 Kd3 Ke6 58 Kc3 (58 Rb6+ Kf5) 58... Kd6 59 Kb3 Ra1, the a-pawn is no longer a threat: White will have to trade it for the pawn at h6. The game might continue as follows: 60 Kb4 (60 Rb6+ Kc5 61 Ra6 Kb5 62 Rxh6 Rxa5 63 Rh8 Kb6 64 h6 Kb7 65 Kc4 Ra6 = changes nothing) 60...Rb1+ 61 Kc4 Rc1+ (but not 61...Ra1? 62 Rb6+ Kc7 63 Kb5+-) 62 Kd4 Ra1 63 Rb6+ Kc7 64 Rxh6 Rxa5 65 Rh8 Kb7 66 h6 Ra6 =.



W

On the board, we have the so-called “Vancura Position,” which every chessplayer will find useful to include in his briefcase of endgame knowledge. The rook attacks the pawn from the side, keeping the opposing rook tied to the h-file, and checking the king away from the pawn when it goes to the kingside.

55 Rb8+! Kg7 56 Rb7+ is considerably stronger. The king cannot move forward and remain cut off on the eighth rank. Let us examine 56...Kg8 57 Ra7 gh 58 gh Kf8 59 a6 Ke8.

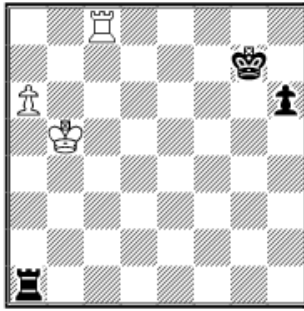


W?

As in the similar situation from the 54...Kg8 variation (where the pawns at g4 and g5 were still on the board), the major subtlety of the position is that White must give check with the rook at a8 at exactly the right moment – not too early, nor too late.

**B1)** The immediate 60 Ra8+? leads to a draw: 60...Kf7 61 Ke3 Kg7! (just not 61...Kf6? 62 Rg8!+-) 62 Kd3 Ra5 63 Kc4 Rxh5 64 Kb4 (64 Rc8

Ra5 65 Rc6 h5 66 Kb4 Ra1 67 Kb5 h4 => 64...Rh1 65 Rc8 Ra1 66 Kb5



B?

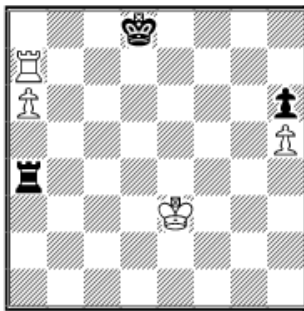
66...Rb1+!

A standard technique: to avoid interference, the king is checked into a less favorable position. 66...h5? loses to 67 Rc5! Kg6 68 Kb6.

67 Kc6 Ra1 68 Kb7 Rb1+ 69 Ka8 Kg6 =

**B2)** 60 Ke3 Kd8

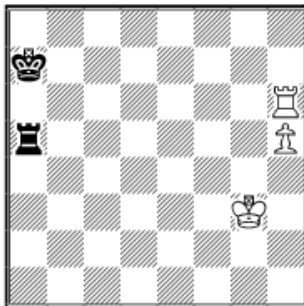
Waiting tactics do not make much sense here: 60...Kf8 61 Kd3 Ke8, and White does not play 62 Kc3 Kd8 63 Kb3 Ra1 64 Kc4 Kc8 65 Ra8+ Kc7 66 a7 Kb7 =, but 62 Ra8+!. Wherever the king goes, White wins easily: 62...Kf7 63 Kc3 Kg7 64 Kb3 Ra1 65 Kb4+-, or 62...Kd7 63 a7 Kc7 64 Rh8 Rxa7 65 Rh7+ Kb6 66 Rxa7 Kxa7 67 Ke4+-.



W?

The rook check must be given now, since 61 Kd3? Kc8 62 Kc3 Ra5 leads only to a draw. As in the analogous situation from the 54...Kh7 variation, after the black king arrives on the queen's wing, White changes his plan, and sends his own king after the pawns on the opposite side.

61 Ra8+! Kc7 (61...Ke7 62 a7 Kf7 63 Rh8) 62 Kf3! Ra5 (62...Rh4 63 Rh8 Kb6 64 Rxh6+; 62...Kb6 63 Rh8 Kxa6 64 Ra8+) 63 Kg4 Rg5+ 64 Kh4 Ra5 65 a7 Kb7 66 Rh8 Ra4+ 67 Kg3 Kxa7 68 Rxh6 Ra5 (68...Kb7 69 Rg6+-)

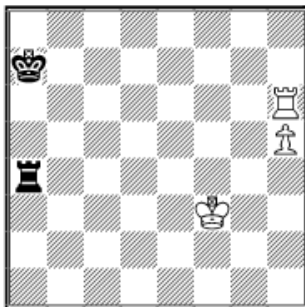


W

If the black rook were on c5, we would have the drawn Vancura position. We would inevitably arrive at the same situation, if the white king stood a

little farther away from the pawn. But here, it stands ready to support the pawn, and it cannot be driven away by checks, since the black king interferes with its own rook. Here's a sample line: 69 Rh7+ Ka8 70 Kg4 (70 h6?? Ra6! 71 Kg4 Rc6 =) 70...Ra4+ 71 Kg5 Ra5+ 72 Kg6 Ra6+ 73 Kf7 Ra7+ 74 Kg8 Ra5 75 h6 Ra6 76 Rh8! Ra7 (White threatened 77 Kg7, discovered check) 77 Kf8+-, as 78 Rg8 is coming next.

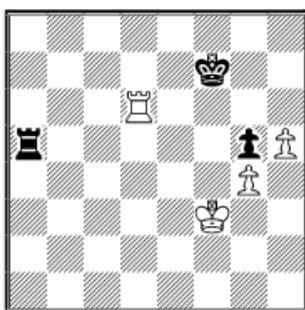
For a full picture, recall that at the very beginning of this variation, the black king could have immediately gone over to the queenside: 56...Kf8 (instead of 56...Kg8) 57 Ra7 gh 58 gh Ke8 59 a6 Kd8. But this would have changed little: 60 Ra8+ Kc7 61 a7 (61 Kg3? would be a mistake: 61...Ra5 62 a7 Kb7 63 Rh8 Kxa7 64 Rxh6 Rc5 – this is the Vancura position) 61...Kb7 62 Rh8 Kxa7 63 Rxh6



B

We already know what happens after 63...Ra5 64 Rh7+ and 65 Kg4. And 63...Kb7 should be answered, not by 64 Rg6? Rh4 65 h6 Kc7 66 Kg3 Rh1 =, nor by 64 Rh8? Rc4! =, intending 65...Rc5, but by 64 Rh7+! Kc6 (64...Kb8 65 Kg3 Ra5 66 Kg4+-) 65 h6 Rh4 (Black can no longer attack the pawn from the side; and the rook behind the pawn is known to be lost for Black) 66 Rh8+-.

C) Mikhalchishin rightly considers 54...g5! to be the correct move here. He examined the variation 55 Rb6 (55 Rb8+ Kf7 56 Ra8 Kf6 57 a6 Kg7 =, or 56 Rb7+ Kf6 57 Rb6+ Ke5 58 a6 Ra3+ 59 Ke2 Kf4 60 Rxh6 Kxg4 61 Kd2 Kh4 = Gelfand) 55...Rxa5 56 Rxh6 Kf7 57 Rd6.



B

*It seemed to me that after a subsequent march of the king and the move Rd6-d5, the endgame could not be held, but I did not notice that Black keeps the rook on e5 and makes a draw – this also shows poor knowledge of a theoretical position* (Mikhalchishin). Well, let's just say that "poor knowledge of theoretical positions" does not mean much here, since the position is not a theoretical one. What we should be talking about here is a theoretical technique – cutting off the king. In fact, 57...Re5! gives Black an uncomplicated draw: 58 Rg6 Ke7 59 h6 Kf7 60 h7 (60 Rg7+ Kf6) 60...Re8 61 Rxg5 Rh8 62 Rh5 Kg7 63 Kf4 Rf8+, and White cannot make progress.

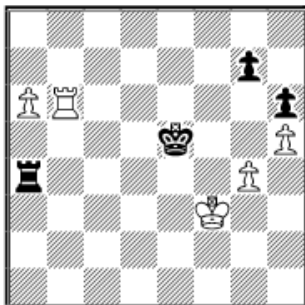
On the other hand, it is not clear how he was going to win after 57...Ke7 58 Rd4 Kf6 (59 Ke4 is met by 59...Re5+), either.

As you may see, the only correct path turned out not to be so complex,

after all. Now, the refutation of the alternative possibilities required a great deal of hard analysis – but that way, you do not have to do it during play!

**D)** Black's mistaken choice of **54...Kf7?** in the actual game (which Mikhalchishin awarded a "!!") would only have justified itself if White had played 55 g5? hg 56 Rxg5 Kf6 57 Rb5 g6! (or 57...g5! – as long as Black does not play 57...Ke6 58 Ke3 Kd6? 59 Kd3 Kc6 60 Rg5 and 61 Rg6+, when White wins) 58 h6 (58 Rb6+ Kg5 =) 58...Rh4 59 a6 Rxh6 60 Ra5 (60 a7 Rh3+) 60...Rh8 61 a7 Ra8 =.

**55 Rb7+! Kf6** (55...Kg8 56 Ra7 is no fun for Black either) **56 Rb6+ Ke5 57 a6**

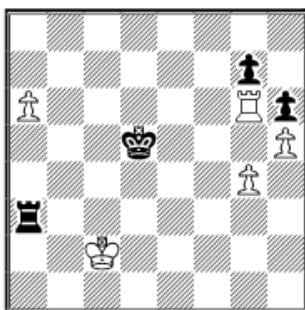


B

This is the ideal layout of White's forces that we spoke of when we introduced this example. The rook defends the passed pawn from the side, while simultaneously protecting, from g6, his own kingside. Such situations are won, as a rule: marching the king over to the passed pawn is decisive. And if Black's king comes and stands in the way, then the king's wing will be left undefended.

**57...Ra3+ 58 Ke2 Kd4 59 Rd6+ Ke4 60 Kd2 Ke5 61 Rg6 Ke5 62 Kc2**

On 62 Rxg7? Rxa6 63 Rg6, Mikhalchishin gives 63...Ra4 =, although of course 63...Rxg6 hg Ke6 = would do equally well.



B

**62...Kc4?**

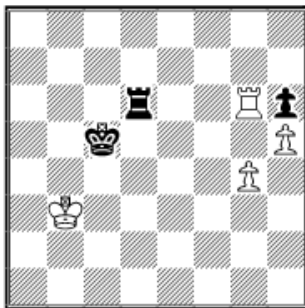
62...Ra4? 63 g5 hg 64 Rxg5+ Kc6 65 Rxg7 loses at once (Mikhalchishin), but the text move was no better. There followed **63 Kb2 Ra5 64 Rxg7 Rxa6 65 Rg6 Ra4 66 Rxh6 Kd5 67 Rg6** and Black resigned.

He could have held out far longer after 62...Kc5!. The grandmaster believes Black could have saved the game. He gives the line 63 Rxg7 Rxa6 64 Rg6 Rd6! 65 Kc3 (65 g5 Rd5! =) 65...Rd4! (all exclamation marks are Mikhalchishin's).

But, in fact, as the following analysis will make clear, the final position of his variation is lost. However, Black can in fact save himself by 64...Ra4! (instead of 64...Rd6?) 65 Kd3 Kd5 66 Ke3 Ke5 67 Kf3 Ra3+ (67...Rf4+

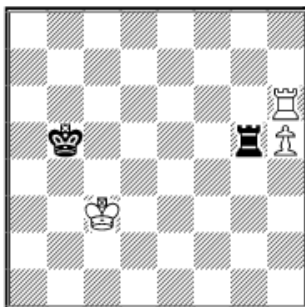
68 Kg3 Rf6 = is not bad, either) 68 Kg2 Kf4 =.

And yet, as Gelfand demonstrated, 62...Kc5 would not have saved Black. Before capturing on g7, White would need to improve his king's position, and take away the a4-square from Black's rook. This can be done by 63 Kb2! Ra4 64 Kb3 Ra1, and only now playing 65 Rxc7 Rxa6 66 Rg6 Rd6! (here indeed, Black has nothing better).



W

67 Kc3 (of course not 67 Rxd6? Kxd6 68 g5 Ke6 69 g6 Kf6 =) 67...Rd4! (67...Kd5 68 g5!+-) 68 g5! (Mikhalchishin only looks at 68 Rc6+? Kxc6 69 Kxd4 Kd6 =) 68...Rd5 69 Ra6! Kb5 (69...Rxc5 70 Ra5+ Kd6 71 Rxc5 +-) 70 Rxh6 Rxc5



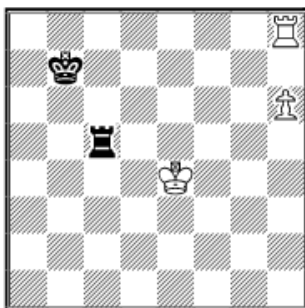
W?

71 Kd4! (71 Rh8? Kc6 72 h6 Kb7! lets slip the win) 71...Ka5 72 Ke4!

Getting the king closer to the pawn is important. The hasty 72 Rh8? would be a mistake: 72...Kb6 73 h6 Kb7 (threatening 74...Rg6, with the "Vancura Position") 74 Rf8 Rh5 75 Rf6, and Black's king gets back to the kingside in time: 75...Kc7 76 Ke4 (76 Ra6 Kb7!) 76...Kd7 77 Kf4 Ke7 =.

72...Rb5 73 Rh8! Rb4+ (73...Ka6 74 h6 Rb4+ 75 Kd5 Rb5+ 76 Kc4 Rh5 77 Kd4+-) 74 Kd5 Rb5+ 75 Kc6 Rb6+ 76 Kc7+-.

I will add one tiny note to Gelfand's analysis: instead of 71...Ka5, let's try 71...Rf5 72 Ke4 Rc5 73 Rh8 (otherwise, Black starts checking from the side) 73...Kb6 74 h6 Kb7.



W?

In order to prevent Vancura Position (with 75...Rc7), White wants to play

75 Rg8 (or 75 Rf8), but after 75...Rh5 76 Rg6? (76 Rh8!) 76...Kc7 77 Kf4 Kd7 78 Kg4 Rh1, Black's king gets back just in time to the kingside.

The clever check 75 Rh7+! attains our goal. On 75...Kc6, White can reply either with 76 Kf4 (the rook cannot use the c6-square now), or with 76 Ra7 Rh5 77 h7 Kd6 78 Ra6+! Ke7 79 Ra8!. And after 75...Kb6 76 Rg7! Rh5 77 h7 Kc6 78 Kf4 Kd6 79 Kg4 Rh1 80 Kf5, White's king will win the king race.



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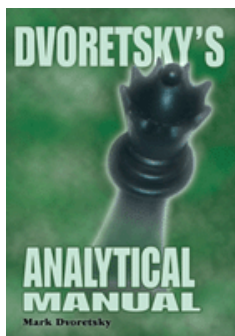
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## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Wing Attack with an Open Center Part One

A wing attack only has chances to succeed when the center is either closed or under our firm control. The best way to meet an unprepared wing attack is by a timely counterblow in the center.

These strategic laws, as I have just formulated them, are known to every chess player (well, almost every one) from his childhood. And it's not that we take them on faith and follow them without question (for in chess, there are no rules without exceptions – this might in fact be the only rule that would be worth taking on faith). And over the board, as a rule, we rarely recall abstract principles: we just look for the strongest continuation, and try to calculate the variations a little more precisely. A chess player's knowledge shows on an instinctive level: sometimes the hand simply refuses to play a move that contradicts our previously-learned principles.

In order to widen our strategic understanding, it is useful to study games in which a fresh, non-standard strategy triumphed. Each time, it's important to investigate why this happened, which hidden characteristics of the position were revealed, to what extent the outcome of the game was influenced by either player's mistakes (which nearly always make their appearance), and to what extent these mistakes were a result of the complexity of the problems confronting the players. It would be good to deal with quality, well-annotated examples, because the variations and evaluations of the commentator can help us to better understand the content of the struggle.

Herewith, I present to you some "exceptions to the rules" – games in which a flank attack reached, or could have reached its goal, notwithstanding that the center had not been closed. Some of them have become classics, and have already been commented upon many times. And the first of those commentators, even highly ranked ones, falling under the spell of the bold play of one of the players (and, perhaps, as it happens, under the influence of the game's result), considered the game's outcome wholly justified. A more balanced assessment of events was worked out only much later.

In my first example, I made considerable use of the commentaries by Grigory Jakovlevich Levenfish (in italics), from his book, *Selected Games and Recollections*, published in 1967 (in a sharply condensed version, alas – the work of the Soviet censors). I prepared my own version many years ago, and sometimes used it for exercises with my students. And later, on the site [www.chesspro.ru](http://www.chesspro.ru), I saw some quality notes by Sergei Voronkov, who made significant corrections to a number of the variations.

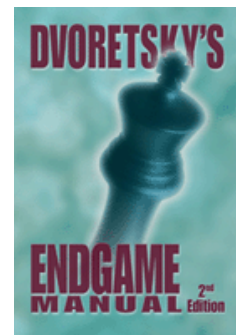
### *Romanovsky – Levenfish*

II Russian Championship, Petrograd 1923

**1 e2-e4 e7-e5 2 Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3 Bf1-c4 Ng8-f6 4 d2-d3 Bf8-c5 5 Nb1-c3 d7-d6 6 Bc1-g5 h7-h6 7 Bg5-h4**

7 Bxf6 Qxf6 8 Nd5 Qd8 9 c3 is more often played, but after 9...Ne7 or 9...a6 10 d4 Ba7, the chances are about equal, according to theory.

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### 7...Bc8-g4

After 7...g5 8 Bg3 Bg4 9 h4, White's position is preferable.

### 8 h2-h3 Bg4xf3

*Black agrees to give up one of his bishops, in order to wrest the initiative. 8...Bh5 is a mistake, because of 9 g4 Bg6 10 Nd5, followed by the exchange on f6. On g6, Black's bishop is shut out of the game.*

*8...Be6 is quite acceptable.*

### 9 Qd1xf3 Nc6-d4 10 Qf3-d1 c7-c6

*Black threatens 11...b5 12 Bb3 a5 13 a4 Nxb3 14 cb, splitting White's pawns.*

### 11 a2-a3 b7-b5 12 Bc4-a2 a7-a5 13 0-0

It would be safer to leave the king in the center for a while, and play 13 Ne2!?, a move that is useful for White anyway.



*White's plan is clear. After castling, he intends to start operations in the center. Since a basic strategic principle holds that wing attacks are doomed to failure, if the opponent can deliver a counterblow in the center, White had very little fear of the move g7-g5.*

### 13...g7-g5!?

*Anyway!*

### 14 Bh4-g3 Qd8-d7 15 Nc3-e2 h6-h5 16 Ne2xd4 Bc5xd4 17 c2-c3 Bd4-b6



### 18 Qd1-f3?

A tempting move, but a mistaken one, which hands the initiative over to Black. Pyotr Romanovsky expected 18...Rh6 (18...Qe7 gives the white queen the f5-square) 19 h4! g4 20 Qe2 (*Black's assault on the queenside is stopped, and White's central counterstroke will not be long in coming*). True, in this variation Black also retains full counter play by 19...gh! (instead of 19...g4)) 20 Bxh4 Qg4 21 Qxg4 hg. But Levenfish played something even stronger.



White had to prepare a central counteraction by **18 Kh1!**. Then his opponent would have had 19 d4 to think about, as well as the positional piece sacrifice 19 f4!? gf 20 Bxf4 ef 21 Rxf4. Let's examine those variations.

### 18...h4 19 Bh2



After **19...g4 20 f4!**, the f-file is opened. At first, it seemed to me that the simplest reply to **20...gh** would be 21 gh Nh5 (21...Qxh3? 22 Rf3 and 23 fe+—) 22 fe d5 (22...Ng3+ 23 Bxg3 hg is bad, because of 24 Bxf7+ Kd8 25 e6, followed by Qg4 and Kg2) 23 Qg4+—, But then, I found a clever counterattacking possibility, beginning with 22...0-0-0!. Now the cautious 23 Qg4!? leads to an approximately equal endgame after 23... Ng3+ 24 Bxg3 Qxg4 25 hg hg+ 26 Kg2 de, while the inviting 23 Bxf7 Ng3+ 24 Bxg3 hg 25 e6 allows Black to seize the initiative with a rook sacrifice: 25...Rxh3+! 26 Kg2 Rh2+! 27 Kxg3 Qe7 28 Qg4 (28 Kxh2? Rh8+) 28...Rdh8.

So White must enter complications that are difficult to assess: **21 fe! hg+ 22 Kxg2 Ng4!** (22...Rg8+ is much weaker: 23 Kh1 Qh3 24 Qe2+—) 23 Bxf7+ Kd8 (Black finds himself in a lost endgame after 23...Qxf7 24 Qxg4 Rg8 25 Rxf7 Rxg4+ 26 Kh3) **24 Qf3!** (stronger than 24 e6 Ne3+ 25 Kf3 Qe7 26 Qd2 Nxf1 27 Rxf1 Kc7 28 d4, with unclear play) **24...de** (24...Ne3+ is bad: 25 Kh1 Nxf1 26 Rxf1) **25 Bxe5! Nxe5 26 Qf6+ Kc7 27 Qxe5+ Kb7 28 d4 Qg4+ 29 Kh1**, when the position appears to favor White.

These energetic actions in the center, even sacrificing material when necessary, were just the right way for White to successfully withstand his opponent's risky strategy.

Voronkov correctly noted that Black was not obliged to enter into this exchange of blows: it would have made sense for him to evacuate his king from the center by **19...0-0-0!?** (instead of 19...g4), and if 20 a4, then Black could play 20...g4!. But here also, White retains decent counterattacking possibilities. He could, for example, play 20 Qf3 Rh6 21 d4! g4! (21...ed 22 cd Bxd4 23 Rad1+/- is dangerous) 22 Qd3, with a complex game. And a decent alternative would be 20 f3 Nh5 21 Qe1 f5 (Voronkov) 22 ef Qxf5, and now either 23 Qe4 Qxe4, with an endgame that's still more pleasant for Black, or the sharp 23 a4!? Qxd3 24 ab, with great complications.

### 18...Bb6-d8!

*A difficult move, temporarily leaving my king in the center.*

Analysis appears to support Levenfish's opinion. He thought the move he actually played was the strongest, despite the fact that later on, the bishop has to return to b6. Still, Black had other promising continuations at his disposal.

We have already noted that 18...Rh6!? 19 h4 gh! 20 Bxh4 Qg4 21 Qxg4 hg deserved consideration.

Voronkov suggested another interesting possibility: 18...Ke7 19 d4 g4, continuing 20 hg hg 21 Qe3 Rh5 22 f4 ed 23 cd Rah8, with a dangerous initiative for Black. But White could avoid the unfavorable opening of the h-file by playing 20 Qd3! h4 21 Bh2 Rad8 22 Kh1, or 20...gh 21 Bh4! hg 22 de! gfQ+ 23 Kxf1 Rh6 24 Bxf6+ Kf8 25 Rd1, with a sharp position that's difficult to evaluate.

### 19 d3-d4

*19 h4 would be met by 19...Ng4 20 hg Bxg5, followed by h4.*

### 19...g5-g4 20 h3xg4 h5xg4



### 21 Qf3-e3

If White trades queens by 21 Qf5 Qxf5 22 ef, Black gets the advantage by playing 22...Nh5 (22...Ne4!?) 23 Rfe1 Nxg3 (23...f6 24 Rad1 Bb6, with the idea of d6-d5, followed by e5-e4, as given by Levenfish, is weaker, in view of 25 Bh4!+/-) 24 fg Bb6-/+.

*21 Qd3 Nh5 22 de Nxg3 23 Qxg3 was tempting, but the hidden riposte 23...f6!, with its threat of 24...Qh7, alters matters radically. After the forced 24 Rfe1 fe, followed by Bd8-h4, 0-0-0 and Rdf8, Black must win.*

*White's actual move was well thought-out. If 21...Nh5?, then 22 de Nxg3 23 fg! Rf8 24 Rf5 Rb8 25 Kf1 is clearly in White's favor. In the concluding position, 25 Qf4! would be even stronger, while a move earlier, White has 24 Rxf7! Rxf7 25 e6, or 24 e6! at once.*

Voronkov offered a more stubborn defense: 23...Qa7!? (instead of 23...Rf8) 24 Bxf7+ Kd7, but whether White follows his suggested line 25 e6+ Ke7 26 Qxa7+ Rxa7 27 Kf2 Bb6+ 28 Ke1 Rh2 29 Rd1! Rxe2 30 Bg8, or 25 Qxa7 Rxa7 26 Kf2 de 27 Rad1+ Ke7 28 Bg6, he keeps his advantage.

### 21...Bd8-b6!

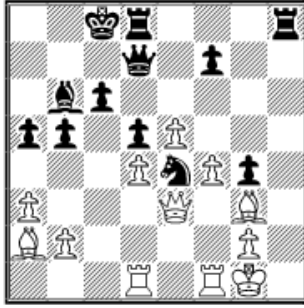
*Threatening to castle long, followed by Rh5 and Rdh8. When we analyzed this game, Romanovsky indicated the following plan for White: 22 Rfe1 0-0-0 23 a4 Rh5 24 ab Rdh8 25 Kf1 cb 26 Bb3 Rh1+ 27 Ke2 Rxe1+ 28 Rxe1; but here also, after 28...Re8, Black keeps a strong attack. In fact, all is not clear here: 29 Kf1 ed 30 Qd3! d5 (30...dc? 31 Qxc3+) 31 ed Rxe1+ 32 Kxe1=/+ (Voronkov).*

In this variation, Black should not be in a hurry to trade off his active rook on h5 – the immediate 26...Re8!-/+ is stronger. And a move earlier, Voronkov suggested an excellent way to strengthen the attack: 25...c5!? (instead of 25...cb) 26 Bc4 (26 de? Qxb5+) 26...cd 27 cd ed! 28 Qf4 Nxe4!. On the other hand, White can still fight on in the endgame arising after 29 Rxe4 Rh1+ 30 Ke2 Rxa1 31 Qxf7 Qxf7 32 Bxf7.

### 22 f2-f4 e5xd4!

*Black prevents the opening of the f-file, and switches over to attack the weak d4-pawn.*

23 c3xd4 0-0-0 24 Ra1-d1 d6-d5! 25 e4-e5 Nf6-e4



*Threatening to double his rooks on the h-file. White's reply is forced.*

**26 Ba2-b1 f7-f5 27 e5xf6**

*Otherwise, Black replies to the forced exchange on e4 with d5xe4, and the d4-pawn soon falls.*

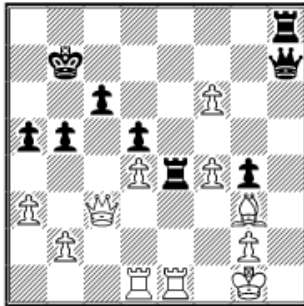
**27...Rd8-e8**

A natural move, but evidently not the best. It still made sense to leave the rook on d8, and answer the exchange on e4 with the pawn recapture, in order to increase the pressure on the central d4-pawn. For example, 27... Qf5! 28 Bxe4 de (threatening 29...Qxf6) 29 f7!? Qxf7 30 Qxe4 Qc4! 31 Bf2 (31 Qf5+ Kb7 32 Qxg4 Rh7!, and White's in trouble) 31...g3 32 Bxg3 (32 Qf5+ Kb7 33 Bg3 Bxd4+ 34 Bf2 Bxf2+ 35 Kxf2 Rhf8—) 32... Bxd4+ 33 Rxd4 Rxd4 (33...Qxd4+ 34 Qxd4 Rxd4 is also strong) 34 Qe5 Rh1+ 35 Kxh1 Qxf1+ 36 Kh2 Rd1, and Black's advantage is decisive.

**28 Bb1xe4 Re8xe4 29 Qe3-c3 Kc8-b7**

This move was also inaccurate. The pawn at f6 might be a problem for Black in some lines, so it would have been worthwhile to go after it at once: 29...Qe6! 30 f7 Kb7—/+, or 30 Rfe1 Qxf6 31 Rxe4 de—/+.

**30 Rf1-e1 Qd7-h7**



**31 Kg2-f2?**

The final mistake. White had to play 31 Rxe4 Qh1+ 32 Kf2 Qxd1 33 Re7 + Ka6. On 34 Qxc6?, 34...Qd2+! is immediately decisive (Levenfish gives the less forcing 34...Qxd4+ 35 Ke2 Qxb2+ 36 Kd3 Qxa3+ 37 Kd2 Qb4+ 38 Kc2 Qc4+): 35 Re2 (35 Kg1 Qxd4+) 35...Qxd4+, forcing mate.

However, Voronkov pointed out that 34 Ke3! leaves Black with no immediately decisive continuation; for example, 34...Qg1+ 35 Kd2 Qxg2 + 36 Kc1 Qf1+ (36...Rh1+? 37 Be1—) 37 Kc2 =.

**31...Rh8-e8 32 Re1xe4 Re8xe4 33 Kf2-g1 Qh7-h8!—**

*Preventing 34 f7, because of 34...Rxd4.*

### 34 Bg3-f2 Re4xf4 35 Bf2-e3

*White had at his disposal a curious combination: 35 Bh4!?, and if 35... Qxh4, then 36 g3. The refutation would be 35...Rxd4! 36 Rxd4 Qxh4 37 f7 g3 38 f8Q Bxd4+.*

### 35...Rf4xf6 36 Rd1-f1 g4-g3 37 Rf1xf6 Qh8xf6 38 Qc3-d3 Bb6-c7 39 b2-b3 Bc7-f4 40 b3-b4 a5xb4 41 a3xb4 Qf6-h6 42 Be3xf4

42 Kf1!? Bxe3 43 Qxe3 Qf8+ (43...Qxe3?? is stalemate) 44 Ke2 Qxb4+.

### 42...Qh6xf4 43 Qd3-f3 Qf4-c1+ 0-1

“In this game, I made no serious errors; I think that I just played too routinely, and failed to formulate my plans concretely enough. Whereas my opponent played brilliantly, demonstrating in this game the best features of his creativity.” (Romanovsky)

*The game was interesting from a strategic point of view. How did Black succeed with his flank attack? Could it be that a basic tenet of strategy, which holds that a flank attack will be refuted by a central counterblow, has become outmoded? No – it remains in full force. I decided to play 13...g5 for two reasons: the White king was on the kingside, and White had played the move h2-h3, which made it easier to open the h-file. But even with these two points in my favor, the attack required exceptional accuracy, and literally hung by a thread (see the variation after White's move 21 Qd3). Games which are decided by a wing attack with a closed or firmly controlled center are many; but games such as this one are very rare. One example of an analogous strategy would be the famous game Vidmar – Nimzowitsch, from the New York tournament of 1927.*

Well, OK, let's look at the Nimzowitsch game, then. We shall rely on Alexander Alekhine's comments from the tournament book.

### **Vidmar – Nimzowitsch**

New York, 1927

### 1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 Ng1-f3 e7-e6 3 c2-c4 Bf8-b4+ 4 Bc1-d2 Qd8-e7 5 Nb1-c3

The usual move is 5 g3.

### 5...0-0 6 e2-e3

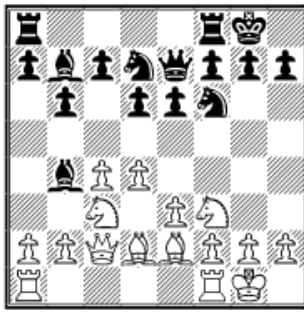
A passive move. In such positions, the fianchetto with 6 g3 is preferable. Alekhine recommended 6 Qc2 (intending e2-e4 and Bd3) – but Black, if he wishes, can break up this plan by playing 6...c5!?

### 6...d7-d6!?

*White's preceding move was so meaningless that Black, before fianchettoing his queen's bishop, can permit himself the luxury of feinting at e6-e5, thus forcing his opponent to make the humble move Bf1-e2 (instead of Bf1-d3).*

### 7 Bf1-e2 b7-b6 8 0-0 Bc8-b7 9 Qd1-c2 Nb8-d7

*Since Black is trying to occupy the e4 square, it would have been better to play 9...Bxc3 10 Bxc3 Ne4 now. After the text, White could have prevented this maneuver.*



### 10 Ra1-d1

Savielly Tartakower's recommendation of 10 Nb5 is not convincing, in view of 10...Bxd2 11 Nxd2 a6 12 Nc3 c5=+.

*Since the d-file will eventually be opened, occupying it with the rooks is indicated in principle. But here, White had a different plan at his disposal, giving him the opportunity to reduce the pressure exerted by his opponent's queen bishop on the center squares: 10 Ng5!, and if 10...h6 11 Bf3 d5, then simply 12 Nh3, and if now 12...g5, then 13 cd! ed (13...g4 14 d6) 14 Qf5, with full play.*

Note that, instead of 12...g5?!, 12...c6 would be preferable. And White was not obliged to retreat his knight to h3 – the intermediate move 12 cd! was stronger, practically forcing the reply 12...Bxc3+/- (12...hg 13 d6 +/-; 12...ed 13 Nxd5 Bxd5 14 Bxb4 Qxb4 15 Bxd5 hg 16 Bxa8 Rxa8 17 Qxc7 Qxb2 18 Qb7+/-).

### 10...Bb4xc3

*Black correctly plays no more "moves that strengthen his position," but clarifies the position immediately. Indeed, in this position it is impossible to decide which file the rooks should control; and his other waiting moves also give him nothing.*

### 11 Bd2xc3 Nf6-e4 12 Bc3-e1

*As a counter to Black's significant advantage in the center, White has hopes (true, they are rather weak ones) of eventually exploiting the activity of his bishops. After 12 Nd2 Nxc3! 13 Qxc3=+, White would have no counterplay whatever.*

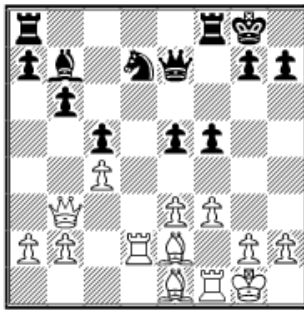
### 12...f7-f5 13 Qc2-b3

White prepares an exchange of knights. On the immediate 13 Nd2, Black has the standard reply 13...Qg5!, preventing 14 f3 and practically forcing the undesirable move f2-f4.

### 13...c7-c5!?

*Black wants to clarify the situation in the center before beginning a wing attack. This desire costs him the d-file; and in view of this, many would have preferred, instead of the text move, weakening d6, a different way of preparing e6-e5, for example, 13...Kh8. But – the world belongs to the brave.*

### 14 Nf3-d2 Ne4xd2 e6-e5 16 d4xe5 d6xe5 17 f2-f3



*On the natural reply 17...Nf6, White pins the knight with 18 Bh4, exchanges it, and then has no difficulties inducing a general exchange by means of pressure on the open file. Nimzowitsch quite simply cuts short this plan and overturns all White's calculations.*

### **17...g7-g5!**

“The tactical basis for this move is to prevent the threatened sortie 18 Bh4. And its strategic idea consists of a *positionally prepared-for* storm of the enemy king's fortress” (Tartakower).

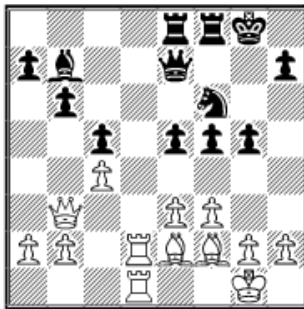
*This move, beautiful in its immediacy, sets a difficult task before the opponent: from now on, White will have to spend all his time defending against two possible breaks: with e5-e4 and with g5-g4. In addition, the Black knight is now secure from the aforementioned exchange.*

### **18 Be1-f2?**

White prepares to double rooks (not a very effective idea, since there are no squares he can invade on), but this takes the bishop further away from its designated post on c3. Igor Bondarevsky proposed the stronger move 18 Qd3!, with the idea of a queen invasion at d6. For example, 18...Rad8 (18...Nf6? 19 Qxf5! [19 Qd6] 19...Ne4 20 Rd7+– [20 Qd7+–]) 19 Qd6 Qxd6 20 Rxd6 Nb8! (20...Nf6 21 Rxd8 Rxd8 22 Bc3+/- or +/- or 21 Re6!?) 21 Rxd8 Rxd8 22 Bc3 Nc6 23 Kf2+/- (or 23 Rd1+/-).

As this short analysis shows, objectively speaking, Black should have played 17...Nf6 18 Bh4, or the slightly more accurate 17...Rad8!? 18 Bg3 =, since the attacking plan he actually chose is strategically dubious.

### **18...Nd7-f6 19 Rf1-d1 Ra8-e8!**



*This shows that Black's determination to win, and the game's further course affirms that he was correct. Black's playing for the win deserves even more approbation, in that here, it involves the complete abandonment of the open file – a choice that many experienced fighters would not make. For example, I have, in my many years' experience, known masters of the first rank, who in analogous positions, put both of their rooks on the open file to be exchanged without a second thought – and afterwards complained of how chess was approaching a draw-death... I must admit to being unable to bring myself to share such views.*

### **20 Qb3-a4**

Threatening 21 Qxa7 or 21 Rd7. *Black's reply shows the futility of this sortie. 20 Bg3 would have been somewhat better, warding off the threat of e5-e4, at least.*

#### **20...Bb7-a8! 21 Rd2-d6**

21 Rd7? Nxd7 22 Rxd7 Qf6 23 Qxa7 h6 fails (Nimzowitsch). As before, it would have made sense to play 21 Bg3, preventing 21...e4? because of 22 Bd6+—. This would have left his opponent a difficult choice:

a) 21...f4 22 ef (22 Bf2? e4 would be worse) 22...ef 23 Bf2+/=.

b) 21...g4 22 Bh4! (but not 22 fg Ne4! 23 Rd7 Qg5, when White's position becomes shaky). Now 22...gf?! 23 Bxf3 Bxf3 24 gf hands the advantage over to White. 22...Qg7 is better, when White will play either 23 Bxf6 Qxf6 24 Qxa7 Qg5 unclear, or 23 Kh1 gf 24 Bxf3 (24 gf? is a mistake: 24...Ng4! 25 Rd6 – defending against Qh6 – 25...Qf7!, followed by 26...Qh5) 24...Ng4 unclear.

c) 21...Qg7 22 Qc2!?, and Black must do something about the positional queen sacrifice 23 Qxf5!? Ne4 24 fe Rxf5 25 ef.

#### **21...Qe7-g7!**

*A palpable strengthening of the breakthrough threat. 21...e4 would still have been premature, in view of 22 f4, for example: 22...gf 23 Bh4! f3 24 Bxf6 Rxf6 25 Rxf6 fe 26 Re1, with advantage.*

#### **22 Be2-f1?**

*Inconsistent and bad. White had to take the threat of e5-e4 into account, and play 22 Be1!; if Black then plays 22...e4?, then 23 Bc3, and White obtains some chances (in reality, White would have a great advantage here, threatening to take twice on f6; 23...Qe7 is bad, because of 24 Rd7!; and if the rook leaves the e8-square, White has 24 Rd7 or 24 Rxf6 Rxf6 25 Rd7). In view of this, Black would of course have preferred 22...g4; but even in this case, despite his indisputable advantage, the game's outcome would still not have been entirely clear. For example: 23 fg Nxg4 24 Bxg4 (24 Rd7 Qg5 25 Bxg4 Qxg4 26 Qc2 Bc6 27 R7d6 leads to the same thing) 24...Qxg4 25 Qc2, etc.*

I believe Alekhine overrates Black's position: after 25...Be4 26 Qf2=+/, he doesn't have even the hint of an indisputable advantage.

#### **22...e5-e4! 23 Bf2-e1**

*Joyless – just like all the alternatives. If 23 fe, then 23...Nxe4, with Qg7xb2 to follow. Let's extend this variation: 24 Rd7 Qxb2 25 Be1 a5=+/+ (but not Tartakower's recommendation: 25...Nc3 26 Bxc3 Qxc3, in view of 27 Qxa7 unclear.*

Another defensive try, 23 f4!? gf 24 Bh4 (of course not 24 ef? e3+–) is convincingly refuted by 24...Ng4! 25 ef e3 26 Re1 Nxh2! 27 Kxh2 e2.

#### **23...e4xf3 24 Be1-c3 Qg7-e7! 25 Rd6-d3**

*A sad retreat.*

White gets mated after 25 Bxf6 Qxe3+ 26 Kh1 fg+ 27 Bxg2 Qe1+. But a more stubborn defense was 25 R1d3!? Ne4 26 Rd7 f2+ 27 Kh1 Rf6! (threatening Ng3+) 28 Bxf6 Qxf6 (Tartakower's variation) 29 R7d6! Nxd6 30 Rxd6 Qe5 31 Rd2.

#### **25...f3xg2 26 Bf1xg2 Ba8xg2 27 Bc3xf6**

27 Kxg2 Qe4+ is no better.

**27...Qe7-e4! 28 Rd1-d2 Bg2-h3 29 Bf6-c3 Qe4-g4+ 0-1**

*And mate in two.*

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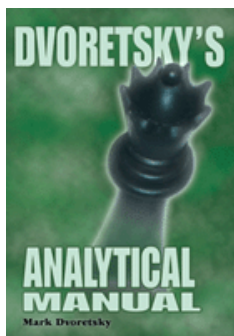




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## Wing Attack with an Open Center Part Two

Last [month](#) we began our study of games in which a fresh, non-standard strategy triumphed; games in which a flank attack reached or could have reached its goal notwithstanding that the center remained open. Our first two examples were classics that had been commented on many times. This month, let's look at a few later, less well-known games.

*Ostl – Hertneck*

German Bundesliga 1985/86

1 Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 2 g2-g3 d7-d5 3 c2-c4 c7-c6 4 b2-b3 Bc8-g4 5 Nf3-e5

5 Bg2 is preferable.

5...Bg4-f5

5...dc 6 Bb2! Qd5 7 f3 cb? 8 Nxc4 Nxc4 9 Nc3+-;

5...Bh5 6 Bg2 e6 7 Bb2 Be7 8 0-0 Nbd7 9 Nxd7 Qxd7 10 d3 0-0 = (Réti – Capablanca, Moscow 1925).

6 Bc1-b2 Nb8-d7 7 Bf1-g2 Nd7xe5 8 Bb2xe5 e7-e6

8...d4?! 9 e3 d3 10 b4.

9 0-0

9 d3 was safer.



9...h7-h5!

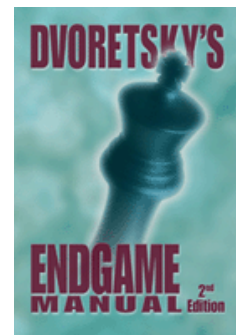
A brave plan! Black exploits the knight's absence from f3 to launch an attack on the king.

10 h2-h3?

The best measure to be taken against a flank attack is a counterstrike in the center! White should have started active operations there immediately by 10 cd ed 11 d3 h4 12 e4! de (12...Be6 13 Nc3) 13 de, with mutual chances.

Against this move, Gerald Hertneck had prepared a sacrifice of a knight

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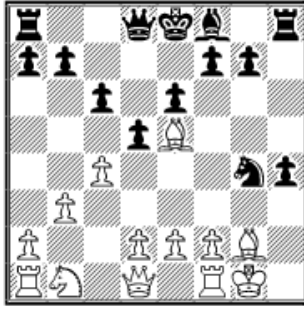
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for two pawns, destroying the kingside.

**10...h5-h4 11 g3-g4 Bf5xg4! 12 h3xg4 Nf6xg4**



**13 Be5-b2?**

This bishop retreat loses by force.

**13...h4-h3 14 Bg2-f3 Qd8-g5 15 Kg1-h1 Qg5-f4! 16 Bf3xg4 Bf8-d6 0-1**

Hertneck undertook an analysis (reproduced here, with some corrections) to show that the sacrifice was correct, even against his opponent's best defense.

#### **I. 13 f4 h3!**

Black could also play 13...Nxe5 14 fe Qg5 15 Kh1 d4!? 16 e3! h3 17 Bf3 0-0-0, with good compensation for the piece, but the advance of the h-pawn is stronger.

**14 Bf3** (14 Bh1 Qh4 15 Rf3 Nxe5 16 fe Qd4+) **14...Qh4 15 Qe1** (15 Kh1? Qg3 16 Bxg4 Qg2#) **15...Nxe5 16 fe Qd4+ 17 Qf2**. Here, Black has a pleasant choice:

a) 17...Qxa1 18 Nc3 Qb2 19 Bg4 (19 cd Qxd2! 20 Ne4 Qa5, followed by 21...0-0-0+; 19 Bxd5 cd 20 Qxf7+ Kd8 21 Qxb7 Rc8-+) 19...0-0-0! 20 Qxa7! Qa3! 21 Na4 h2+! 22 Kh1 Be7! 23 cd cd -+;

b) **17...Bc5!?** (threatening 18...h2+) **18 e3 Qxa1 19 Nc3 Qb2 20 Na4 Qa3** and 21...0-0-0 wins.

#### **II. 13 Bf4 g5!**

But not 13...Qf6 14 e3 Qxa1 15 Qxg4, when White is far ahead in development.

**14 e3**

14 Bh2? is hopeless: 14...h3 15 Bf3 Nxe2 16 Kxe2 Qf6 17 Nc3 Bd6+ 18 Kg1 g4. And 14 e4?! isn't much better: 14...gf 15 Qxg4 h3! 16 Bxe3 (16 Bf3 Rh4! 17 Qg8 de! 18 Bxe4 Qf6 19 Nc3 0-0-0+; 16 Bh1 h2+! 17 Kg2 Qf6 18 Nc3 f3+! 19 Qxf3 Rg8+ -+) 16...Rh4! 17 Qg2 de 18 Nc3 f3 19 Qg3 Bd6! 20 Qg8+ Ke7-+.

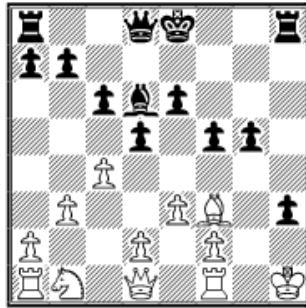
**14...f5! 15 Bh2**

White loses after 15 f3 h3! 16 Bh1 gf 17 fg Qh4 18 Rxf4 Bd6! 19 Qf3 Qe1 + 20 Kh2 fg-+.

**15...h3 16 Bf3**

Putting this bishop in the corner would be worse: 16 Bh1 Nxe2 17 Kxe2 Bd6+ 18 f4 (18 Kg1 h2+ 19 Kg2 Qf6 20 Nc3 Qh6-+) 18...gf 19 ef Qg5 20 Qf3 Rh4 21 Qg3 Rg4 22 fg Rxe3-+.

16...Nxb2 17 Kxb2 Bd6+ 18 Kh1



Now **18...g4!?** would be strong: **19 Bxg4** (19 Be2 Qh4 with attack) **19...fg 20 Qxg4 Qf6 21 cd ed 22 Nc3 Ke7-/+.**

Hertneck prefers 18...Qf6 19 d4 0-0-0 20 Nd2 (20 cd!?) 20...g4 21 cd! (21 Be2 Qh4 22 cd g3!-+) 21...cd 22 Be2 Qh4! 23 Qe1 Rdg8 24 Rg1 g3 25 fg Bxg3, but here either 26 Qf1 Bf2 (Hertneck) 27 Nf3 Rxd1+ 28 Qxg1 Bxg1 29 Nxb4 Bxe3 30 Nf3, or 26 Qc1+ Bc7! (Hertneck) 27 Rxd8 + Rxd8 28 Qe1 would leave the outcome uncertain.

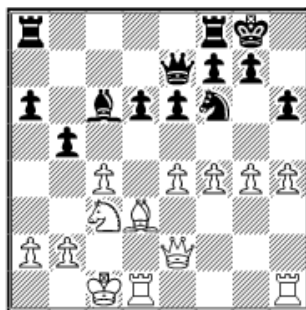
We should at least see one example, in which the flank attack was met “by the book.”

*Smirnov – Makarychev*  
Tbilisi 1979

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 Be7 7 Qc2 c5 8 e4 cd 9 Nxd4 Nc6 10 Nxc6 Bxc6 11 Bd3 Nh5?! (11...d6) 12 Bxe7 Qxe7 13 g3 0-0 14 0-0-0 d6 (14...Rfc8!?) 15 f4?!**

This natural move ends up costing a valuable tempo. He should have started the assault at once: 15 Qe2 Nf6 16 g4!, followed by 17 h4.

**15...a6 16 Qe2 Nf6 17 g4 b5 18 h4**



White’s attack is rather dangerous. The threat is g4-g5, opening lines on the kingside. 18...h5? 19 gh doesn’t work for Black. As usual, the proper reaction to a flank attack turns out to be a counterblow in the center.

**18...b5-b4!**

18...bc! would not have been bad, either. Black feared the reply 19 Bb1!, renewing the threat of g4-g5. But after 19...g6! (intending to meet 20 g5 with 20...Nh5, and 20 h5 with 20...g5!), the position would be unclear.

**19 Nc3-b1 d6-d5!!**

19...Qb7?! looked attractive, intending 20 Nd2? d5! 21 cd ed 22 e5 Ne4 23 g5 h5!, with 24...Bb5 to follow. But White plays the sharper 20 g5! Nxe4 21 gh g6 22 Rhg1, and Black’s king position looks dangerous. So Sergei Makarychev breaks immediately in the center, even if it means

sacrificing a piece.

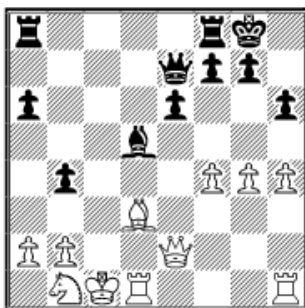
**20 e4xd5**

20 g5?! Nxe4.

**20...Nf6xd5! 21 c4xd5**

21 Qe4 f5 22 gf ef 23 Qf3? Rac8 (23...b3!?).

**21...Bc6xd5**



This was the position Makarychev was aiming for. White now has no time to continue his pawn storm. He can't continue 22 Bh7+? Kxh7 23 Rxd5, because of 23...Qc7+. On 22 Rhf1 Bxa2, Black has two pawns for the piece, and White's king is not comfortable.

**22 Nb1-d2 Bd5xh1 23 Rd1xh1**

Material is now approximately equal, and Black's chances in the forthcoming battle are not inferior to White's. He only needs to resist the temptation to win a pawn: 23...Qc7+?! 24 Kb1 Qxf4, as after 25 Rf1 Qd4 26 Nb3 (followed by g4-g5 or Qe4), White would once again be on the attack.

**23...Rf8-d8 24 Nd2-c4**

24 Qe4?! Qd6!; 24 Ne4!?.

**24...Rd8-d4 25 f4-f5 Ra8-d8 26 Bd3-c2 Qe7-c7 27 Nc4-e3**

27 b3 Qf4+.

**27...Qc7-e5 28 f5xe6 Qe5xe6 29 Kc1-b1 Rd8-e8**

29...Re4!? 30 Re1 Re5 looked better. On the other hand, after 31 Bb3 Qg6+ 32 Bc2, Black would have to accept a repetition of moves by 32...Qe6 33 Bb3 =, since 32...Qc6?! (intending 33...Re8) would allow his opponent to seize the initiative by 33 Qf2 Rde8 34 Rf1 Qc7 (34...Rxe3?? 35 Qxf7+ Kh8 36 Qf8+ and mates) 35 Qf4.

**30 Rh1-e1**

In this non-standard situation, it's not so easy to decide who is better.

The rule about active counteractions in the center looks obvious; but sometimes, even very strong players prove unable to carry it out in practice.

**Taimanov - Petrosian**

Match Leningrad – Moscow 1959

**1 d2-d4 e7-e6 2 c2-c4 d7-d5 3 Nb1-c3 Bf8-e7 4 Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 5 Bc1-g5 0-0 6 e2-e3 b7-b6?!**

The usual continuation is 6...h6 7 Bh4, and only then 7...b6.

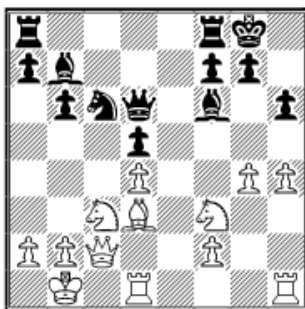
**7 c4xd5 e6xd5 8 Bf1-d3 Bc8-b7 9 Qd1-c2 h7-h6**

Or 9...Nbd7 10 h4!, with an attack.

**10 Bg5xf6 Be7xf6 11 h2-h4 c7-c5 12 0-0-0 Nb8-c6 13 g2-g4 c5xd4 14 e3xd4 Qd8-d6**

14...Nxd4? is bad because of 15 Nxd4 Bxd4 16 Bh7+. On 14...Kh8 (to prepare Nxd4), 15 Bb5!? is unpleasant.

**15 Kc1-b1**



**15...Nc6-b4?**

While he does trade off the strong bishop at d3, at the same time, Black also takes the pressure off the d4-pawn, and deprives himself of counterplay in the center, which is what he should be using against his opponent's flank attack.

Tigran Petrosian refrained from the counterattacking move **15...Qf4!**, evidently, because of **16 Nxd5**, when 16...Qxf3? is bad because of 17 Be4 +-. But he had an excellent retort at his disposal, namely: **16...Nxd4!**

17 Nxf6+ Qxf6 18 Nxd4 Bxh1 19 g5 Qe5.

17 Bh7+ Kh8 18 Rxd4 Qxf3 19 Be4 Qxh1+! 20 Bxh1 Bxd4.

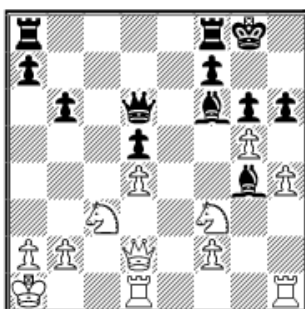
**17 Nxd4 Bxd5 18 Ne2 Qe5** 18...Qb4!?, as pointed out by Sergei Dolmatov, is good too: 19 Bh7+ Kh8 20 Rxd5 Rac8 21 Qb3 (21 Qd2 Qxd2 22 Rxd2 Kxh7 23 g5 Rfd8) 21...Qxb3 22 ab Kxh7 23 g5 Rfe8.

**19 f4 Qe6 20 Bh7+ Kh8 21 Rxd5 Qxd5 22 Be4**, and now, either 22...Qc5 23 Qxc5 bc 24 Bxa8 Rxa8 (Taimanov), or 22...Qd7!? 23 Bxa8 Rxa8 24 g5 Rc8 (Dvoretsky).

**16 Qc2-d2 Nb4xd3 17 Qd2xd3+/-**

White threatens 18 g5. On 17...Be7, 18 g5 h5 19 Ne5 would be strong.

**17...g7-g6 18 g4-g5 Bb7-c8 19 Kb1-a1 Bc8-f5 20 Qd3-d2 Bf5-g4**



This is what Petrosian was counting on, but his idea will be refuted by his opponent's powerful reply.

**21 Nc3-b5! Qd6-e6**

21...Qc6 22 Rc1! Qxb5 23 gf+-.

21...Qd8 22 Qf4 Bxf3 23 Qxf3 hg 24 hg Bxg5 25 Qh3 Kg7 26 f4!, and White's attack decides.

**22 Rd1-e1 Qe6-f5 23 Nf3-e5 Bf6xe5 24 d4xe5 h6-h5**

Black has managed to close the kingside anyway, but at too high a price. The White knight invading at d6 will be much stronger than the Black bishop.

**25 Nb5-d6 Qf5-e6 26 Re1-e3 Ra8-d8 27 Rh1-c1 Rd8-d7 28 Qd2-d4 Bg4-h3 29 Re3-f3 Rd7-e7 30 a2-a3 Rf8-d8 31 Rf3-f6 Qe6-g4**

31...Qxe5 32 Qxe5 Rxe5 33 Nxf7+-.

**32 Qd4xd5 Qg4xh4 33 Rf6xg6+ Kg8-f8**

33...Kh7 34 Nf5! Rxd5 35 Rg7+ Kh8 36 Rc8+ (Taimanov).

**34 Qd5-f3 Qh4-d4 35 Qf3xh5 1-0**

Our next example differs somewhat from the previous one – it's more of a behind-the-scenes look. Here, the wing-attacking possibility stayed in the notes.

***Kasparov – Timman***

Amsterdam 1988

**1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 e7-e6 3 Ng1-f3 d7-d5 4 Nb1-c3 Bf8-e7 5 Bc1-g5 h7-h6 6 Bg5xf6 Be7xf6 7 Qd1-b3 c7-c6 8 e2-e3 0-0 9 Ra1-d1 Qd8-b6!?**

9...Nd7 is the usual continuation.

**10 Qb3-c2 d5xc4**



**11 Bf1xc4**

The natural move. But couldn't White have started a wing attack with **11 h4?!** (with ideas like 12 g4, or 12 Ng5)? On 11...Qa5 or 11...Nd7, White continues 12 g4; if 11...Be7, then 12 Bxc4, and now 12...c5 can be met by 13 d5.

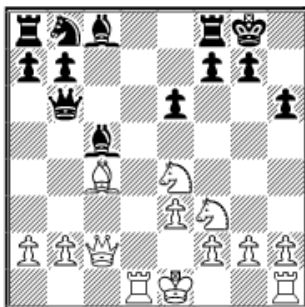
Still, the attack looks dubious. Artur Yusupov suggested 11...Na6!? 12 g4 (12 Ng5 Rd8) 12...Nb4; for example, 13 Qb1 Be7!? (13...Nd5 14 g5 Be7 is possible, as well) 14 g5 h5 15 Bxc4 Nd5 unclear.

The central counterblow **11...c5!** would be stronger still, and was the reason Garry Kasparov rejected 11 h4. Now 12 g4? is useless, owing to

12...cd 13 ed Nc6 (13...e5!?). After **12 Ng5**, 12...g6?! 13 Nge4 Bg7 (13...Nd7?! 14 dc 14 dc (14 Nxc5?! is inferior, in view of 14...Qc6!? or 14...Na6!? – just not 14...e5? 15 Nd5! Qd6 16 Bxc4 ed 17 Ne4 Qd8 18 h5+/-) 14...Qa5 15 g4 favors White. But Black can play something else: **12...Rd8! 13 Qh7+ Kf8 14 Nce4 Nd7-/+**.

Well, I suppose this means that for now, both sides must tamp down their aggression.

**11...c6-c5 12 Nc3-e4 Bf6-e7 13 d4xc5 Be7xc5**



Kasparov played the “normal” move **14 0-0**, after which the position remained equal.

**14...Be7 15 Be2** (15 Rd2 Qc7!? 16 Rfd1 Bb4 17 Rd3 b5) **15...Bd7!**  
Black intends either 16...Bc6 and 17...Nd7, or 16...Rfc8 and 17...Be8.

**16 Ne5 Rc8 17 Qd3** (17 Qd2 Bb5; 17 Nc3 Qa6) **17...Be8 18 Nc4 Qc7 19 Ned6 Rd8 20 Nxe8**

20 Bh5!? Nc6 21 Nxe8 Rxe8 22 Qd7 is an interesting try, which works out fine after 22...Rac8? 23 Bxf7+! Kxf7 24 Nd6+ Kf8 25 Nxe8 Qxd7 26 Rxd7 Kxe8 27 Rxb7+/-; however, Black can hold the balance by playing 22...Rec8!

**20...Rxe8 21 Bf3 Rd8 22 Qb3 Nc6 23 g3 Bf6 24 Kg2 Rab8 25 Rxd8+ Rxd8 1/2-1/2**

And yet, it was right at this moment (at White’s fourteenth move) that a flank attack could, while perhaps not bring White an advantage, at least have injected considerable dynamism into the game, and set complicated tasks before his opponent.

**14 g2-g4! Bc5-e7**

White wants to open lines by g4-g5. The bishop check would be useless, as White’s king would merely retreat to the comfortable e2-square: 14...Bb4+ 15 Ke2 Bd7 16 g5!? Rc8 (threatening 17...Rxc4) 17 b3! h5 18 g6. The exchange of queens by 14...Qc7 15 g5 Bb4+ 16 Ke2 b5 17 Bb3(d3) Qxc2+ 18 Bxc2 gives White the advantage.

**14 g4-g5**

15 h4?!, the standard White move here, isn’t really necessary, and could turn out to be a loss of tempo: 15...Nc6 16 g5 h5 17 Rg1 (17 g6 fg-/+ ) 17...g6. But a different preparatory move, **15 Rg1!?**, would undoubtedly be useful here, the point being that the black queen has not occupied the important f5-square (see the following variations).

**15...h6xg5 16 Rh1-g1**

16 h4 g4 (after 16...gh 17 Nxh4 and 18 Nf3, Black risks coming under attack) 17 Neg5 (17 Nfg5 f5 18 Ng3 Na6, and White can’t play 19 Nxf5?? because of 19...Qa5+) 17...g6 (17...f5?! 18 Nd4) 18 Nxf7!?

Rxf7 19 Qxg6+ Kf8 20 Ng5 Qa5+ 21 Rd2 Qf5 would be weaker, leaving both sides with chances.

But now, both 16...Na6 17 Nexg5 f5 18 Nd4, and 16...f6 17 h4 Nc6 (17...g4 18 Rxg4 f5 19 Neg5) 18 hg f5 19 Nc3 (and if 19...Na5 20 Be2 Qc7, then 21 Qa4, intending 22 Qh4) would place Black in a tricky situation.

He should probably defend by **16...Qa5+! 17 Ke2 Qf5 18 Nfxg5** (18 Bd3? g4) **18...b6!?** (followed by either 19...Ba6 or 19...Bb7).

The last example could serve as a starting point for a study of situations where the aggressive g2-g4! is played at even earlier stages of the game – for example, in some modern lines of the Sicilian Defense, or in the sharp variation **1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4 4 g4!?**, invented by Vadim Zvjaginsev (and also, independently, by Mikhail Krasenkow). But I am no openings specialist, so I will leave this part of our theme for other researchers.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you of two other examples of problematic wing attacks that I consider very interesting and instructive; they are analyzed in detail in my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play*:

- Yusupov – Ivanchuk Candidates’ Match, Game 9 (the chapter entitled, “The Spectators Were In Ecstasy”).
- The game Knaak – Reich (from the chapter, “Two Attacks by Rainer Knaak”).



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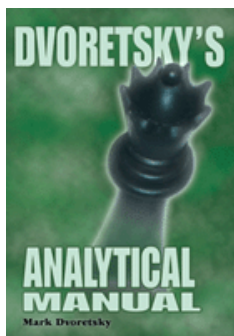




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## A Battle of Equals

Drawn games can sometimes be just as interesting as decisive ones. This statement applies in full measure to the absorbing encounter that opened the Candidates' Match in what is now the distant year 1994. The two opponents proved worthy of one another – hence, the title of this column. But they played as equals only for this one game. As far as I can recall, on the whole, Viswanathan Anand appeared much superior to Gata Kamsky, and outplayed him clearly and convincingly more than once. But he still lost the match – such paradoxes do happen! The Indian grandmaster was let down by poor technique in the realization of the advantages he achieved; and of course, his opponent's dogged defense and outstanding sporting qualities eventually told.

This game was commented upon by Anand in *Chess Informant* (#61/345). Upon studying it, I managed to find a number of new ideas, which corrected and added to previous analyses, and sometimes even forced the reevaluation of some key moments in the battle.

I invite my most highly qualified readers to test themselves by attempting to answer a number of questions, most of them rather difficult. The answers to those questions form the second half of this publication. There also you will find a number of additional questions – at the diagrams with the move number and a question mark under them.

### Anand – Kamsky

Candidates' Match (1), Sanghi Nagar 1994

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 ed Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6 12 d4 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4 14 g3 Qh3 15 Be3 Bg4 16 Qd3 Rae8 17 Nd2 Re6 18 a4 Qh5 19 ab ab



20 Nd2-e4!?

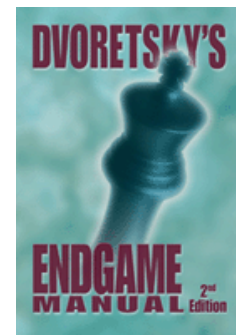
20 Nf1 and 20 Qf1 had been previously played.

20...Bd6-c7?!

When I examined this game, the improvement 20...Bb8! immediately sprang to mind. In many lines, the bishop on b8 neutralizes an eighth-rank incursion by the enemy rook. Later, this novelty was used once in the semi-finals of the Polish Championship of 1997.

An accurate path to equality was soon demonstrated in the game Svidler –

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Kamsky, Groningen 1995: 20...Bf5! 21 Bd2 Rxe4 22 Rxe4 Nf6 23 f3 Qg6 24 Qf1 (24 Rae1? Bxg3! 25 hg Qxg3+; 24 Bc2 Bxg3! 25 hg Qxg3+ 26 Kf1 Nxe4 27 fe Bh3+ 28 Ke2 Bg4+ =) 24...Nxe4 25 fe Bxe4 26 Bf4 Bd3 27 Qf2 Bxf4 28 Qxf4 h6 = 29 Qf2 Re8 30 Re1 Rxe1+ 31 Qxe1 Be4 32 Qf2 ½-½.

## 21 Be3-d2

Another possibility was 21 Nc5!?

## 21...Rf8-e8

Threatening 22...Bf3.



### 1) Evaluate 22 Nc5.

After this move, those so inclined may play this position out for Black – you will find your opponent’s responses in the “Answers” section. Otherwise, you have a task to solve, in the position that arises after a few forced moves.

### 2) How should Black continue his attack after 22 Nc5 Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 24 Bxe1 Nf4 25 gf Bxf4 26 h4?

### 3) And what would you suggest for White after 21...Rfe8?

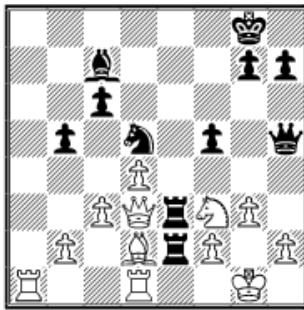
## 22 Bb3-d1 Bg4xd1 23 Re1xd1 f7-f5 24 Ne4-g5 Re6-e2

If 24...Rh6, then 25 h4 (25 Nf3 f4 would be worse) 25...f4 26 Re1 fg 27 fg, with advantage to White, thanks to the rook’s unfortunate position at h6. For example, 27...Rf8 28 Ne6 Rg6 (28...Rxe6 29 Rxe6 Qg4 30 Re4 Qh3 31 Rf1+) 29 Bg5 h6 30 Nxf8 Kxf8 31 Ra8++ (S. Klimov).



### 4) What should White do now?

## 25 Ng5-f3 Re8-e3



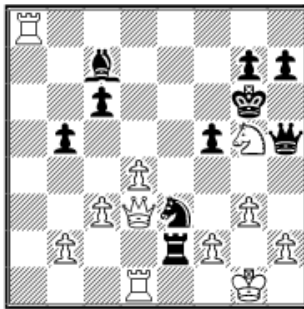
This spectacular counterstroke sharply altered the situation on the board, making the game's outcome unpredictable. 26 Bxe3? would lose to 26... Qxf3, with the unstoppable threat of 27... Nxe3. White has little choice; he can either play 26 Ra8+ Kf7 27 Ng5+!, which he did, or 26 Ne5.

5) Evaluate 26 Ne5.

26 Ra1-a8+ Kg8-f7 27 Nf3-g5+ Kf7-g6

Of course not 27... Qxg5? 28 Qxe2! Rxe2 29 Bxg5+.

28 Bd2xe3 Nd5xe3



6) Now what should White play?

29 Rd1-f1

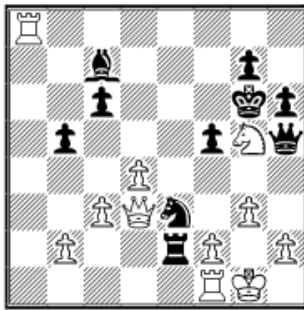
Now it is Black who must come up with the right choice. Besides the planned capture of the knight, there are other possibilities as well. The task facing Kamsky was quite difficult, so I do not offer it as a separate question. Instead, we will do something a little bit different and divide the problem into several separate parts. *Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs* – Henry Ford.

A) 29...Nxf1



7) How should White play?

B) 29...h6



8) How does White continue?

C) 29...Bf4

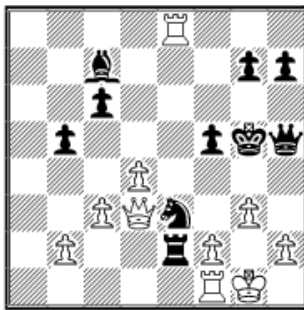


9) With best play by both sides, what should be the outcome?

The move made in the actual game led to a position of dynamic equality.

29...Kg6xg5!? 30 Ra8-e8!

After 30 h4+ Kh6, 31 fe? Qg4 32 e4 Bxg3 (or 32...fe—+) would lose for White. He would have to play 31 Re8!

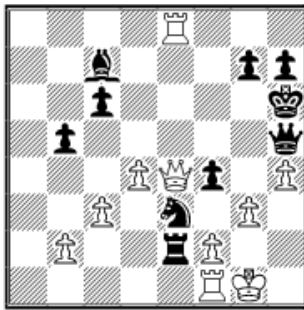


Now Black cannot play either 30...Qf3 31 Rxe3 (the f2-square is defended) or 30...Qxe8 31 Qxe2; while on 30...Nxf1 (or 30...Ng4) 31 h4 +! wins. But Black still has a defense.

30...f5-f4!

Again White must defend against 31...Qf3 (and also against 31...fg 32 hg Nxf1). Moving the queen to e4 seems obvious – the question is whether to play it at once, or after checking with the h-pawn.

First let's examine 31 h4+!? Kh6 32 Qe4! (32 fe? loses to 32...Qg4, while after 32 Rxe3 fe 33 f3, Black has various ways to make a draw, such as 33...Qg6 34 Qxe2 Qxg3+ 35 Kh1 only move 35...Qxh4+).



**10)** How does Black continue?

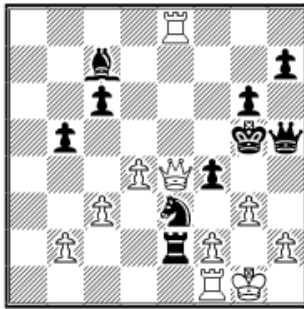
If we hold off on playing the move h2-h4+, we get completely different variations.

**31 Qd3-e4 f4xg3!**

The simplest and best decision! To make sure of this, we shall examine the alternative possibilities.

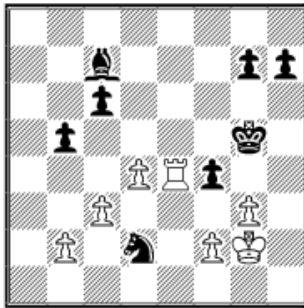
31...Nxf1? loses to 32 h4+ Kh6 33 Qxe2.

And **31...g6** (which would save Black if White had included 31 h4+ Kh6) doesn't work too well here.



**11)** How should White play?

The exchanging combination 31...Qxh2+!? 32 Kxh2 Nxf1+ 33 Kg2 Rxe4 34 Rxe4 Nd2 leads to an endgame that is difficult to assess.



In Anand's opinion, after 35 Re6, White would retain a considerable advantage. That's debatable; in my view Black has enough counterplay. He could choose either 35...fg 36 fg Bb8 37 Kh3 (37 Rxc6 Kg4) 37...g6!? 38 Rxc6 Ne4 39 Rb6 Bxg3 40 Rxb5+ Kf4 unclear or 35...f3+!? 36 Kg1 (if 36 Kh3, then 36...Bb8!?, when 37 Rxc6?? would lose to 37...Ne4+) 36...g6!? (not 36...Kg4 right away, because of 37 Re7) 37 Rxc6 Bxg3! 38 fg Kg4 =, with dangerous kingside threats.

I also see no advantage after 35 Re7!? Bd6 36 Rxc6 Kf6 37 Rxc7 fg 38 fg Nc4.

Let's go back to the game.

### 32 h2-h4+!

White can't do without the pawn check here. 32 hg? loses to 32...Bxg3!, and 32 Re5+? to 32...Bxe5 33 Qxe5+ Nf5.

### 32...Qh5xh4!

32...Kh6? 33 fe+— would be a mistake. We studied this position already, when we examined the variation 31 h4+!? Kh6 32 Qe4 fg? 33 fe.

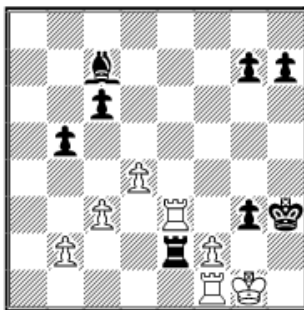
### 33 Qe4xh4+ Kg5xh4 34 Re8-e4+!

Of course not 34 Rxe3?? gf+. On 34 fe? Kh3 35 Re7 (the only move that might let White make a draw after 35...g2?! 36 Rf3+ Bg3 37 Rxd3+ Kxg3 38 Rxd7+) 35...Rg2+! 36 Kh1 Rxb2, White ends up in a difficult rook endgame.

### 34...Kh4-h3

Of course there's no point in playing 34...Kg5?! 35 fe – the king must take part in the attack. But along with the move in the game, Black could also quite well have played 34...Bf4!? 35 Rxf4+ Kh3, forcing his opponent to accept the perpetual after 36 fe.

### 35 Re4xe3



**12)** How should Black continue?

### 35...Re2xb2 36 Re3-e7! Bc7-f4 37 f2xg3

37 Rxd7 would not work: 37...gf 38 Rxf2 Rb1+ 39 Rf1 Be3+ and mates, or else 38 Kh1 h5—.

### 37...Rb2-g2+ 38 Kg1-h1 Rg2-h2+ 39 Kh1-g1 Rh2-g2+ 40 Kg1-h1 Rg2-h2+ 41 Kh1-g1 Bf4-g5 42 Re7-e5 Rh2-g2+ 43 Kg1-h1 1/2-1/2

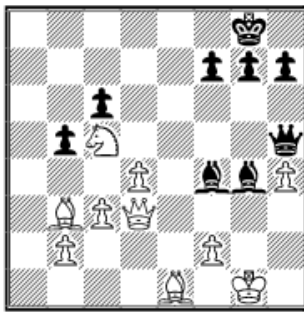
A sharp and warlike struggle, in which both sides played resourcefully and accurately. There were, of course, a few gaffes; but in such complex situations, playing error-free chess would be beyond the ability of any contemporary player.

### Answers

**1) 22 Nc5?** would be bad, since after **22...Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 24 Bxe1**, Black lands the terrible blow **24...Nf4! 25 gf** (25 Qe4 Ne2+ 26 Kg2 Qh3+ and mates) **25...Bxf4** — (if 25...Bf3?, not 26 Ne4? Qg6+, but 26 Bxf7+! Kxf7 27 Ne4 unclear).

26 h3 Bf3 27 Ne4 Qg6+ would lose immediately. White's best chance is **26 h4!?** – for which, see the next question.

**2)** This position occurred in an earlier Anand – Kamsky game (Monaco 1994, rapid chess).

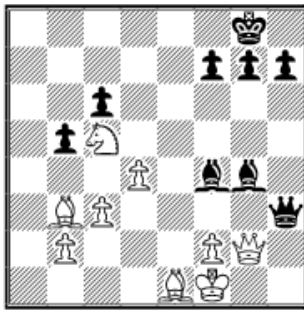


1...?

White's last move set up a clever trap, laid out in a difficult situation by the resourceful Anand. Which of the two tempting continuations (26... Bf3 or 26... Qxh4) should Black choose? Kamsky failed to solve this test.

26...Bf3? 27 Bxf7+! Kxf7 28 Ne4 =. Now 28... Qg6+ only leads to a draw: 29 Ng5+ (with check! – this is what White sacrificed his bishop for; and the g5-square is defended by a pawn, which is why it went to h4) 29...Bxg5 30 Qxg6+ Kxg6 31 hg =. Black gains nothing by 28...Bh2+ 29 Kf1 h6 30 Nd2, or by 28...g5!? 29 Ng3! The game continued 28...Qg4+ 29 Ng3 g6 30 b3 Bd5 31 c4 bc 32 bc Qf3 33 Qxf3 Bxf3 34 Nf1 Be2 35 Bd2 Bc7 36 d5 =, and ended in a draw.

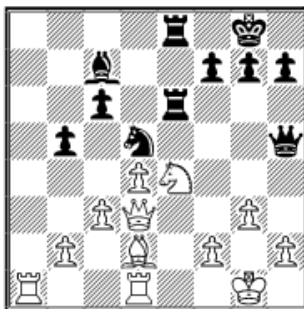
As Anand pointed out, Black could have won by **26...Qxh4! 27 Qe4 Qh2 +!** (27...Bh2+ 28 Kh1! would only delay the conclusion) **28 Kf1 Qh3+! 29 Qg2** (29 Kg1 Bh2+ 30 Kh1 Bf3+ 31 Qxf3 Qxf3+ 32 Kxh2 Qe2—)



**29...Be2+!** (29...Qh5? 30 Ne4! Bh3? 31 Nf6+) **30 Kg1 Bh2+! 31 Kh1** (31 Qxh2 Qf1#) **31...Bf3 32 Qxf3 Qf3+ 33 Kxh2 Qe2—.**

**3)** So 22 Nc5? doesn't work. And 22 Bc2? f5 23 Nc5 Rxe1+ 24 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 25 Bxe1 Nf4! 26 gf Bxf4 27 h3 Bxh3— would be wrong as well.

White can solve all his problems by trading light-square bishops: **22 Bd1!! Bxd1** (22...f5 23 Bxg4 Qxg4 24 Nc5 Nf4 25 Rxe6!+—, or 24... Rxe1+ 25 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 26 Bxe1 Nf4 27 Qe3) **23 Rxd1!** (23 Raxd1? Rxe4 24 Rxe4 Rxe4!+— – but not 24...Qxd1+? 25 Be1! Qxe1+ 26 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 27 Kg2 g5 28 b3 unclear.



The weakness of Black's back rank betrays him; he can't play **23...Rxe4?** because of **24 Qxe4! Qxd1+ 25 Kg2!+—** (25 Be1? Qxe1+ unclear would

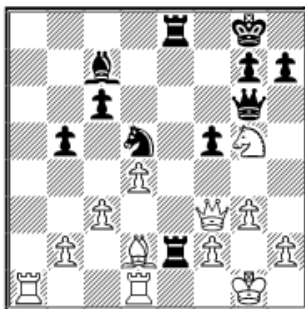


not be as good).

4) The enticing move 25 Nf3?, as actually played, allowed Black to create powerful counterplay by 25...R8e3!! (25...f4 26 Re1 would be weaker).

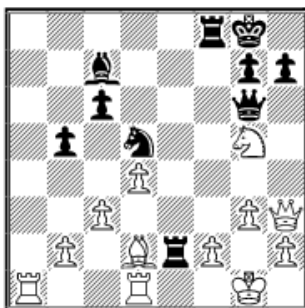
White had two ways to gain a great advantage:

A) 25 Qf3! Qg6 (threatening 26...Rxd2 or 26...h6).



26 Ra8! Rxd2 (objectively, 26...Rxa8 27 Qxe2+/-/+ would be better)  
27 Rxe8+ Qxe8 28 Rxd2 Qe1+ 29 Kg2 Qxd2 30 Qh5!+- Anand.

B) 25 Qxf5! Rf8 26 Qh3 Qg6

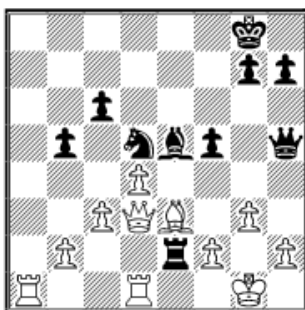


27 Qg4! Another strong line is 27 f4!? h6 28 f5! Qxf5 (28...Rxf5?? 29 Ra8+ Rf8 30 Rxf8+ Kxf8 31 Qf1+; 28...Qf6 29 Qf1! Rxd2 30 Ne4!) 29 Qxf5 Rxf5 30 Ra8+ Rf8 31 Rxf8+ Kxf8 32 Nf3+/-, with 33 Kf1 to follow – A. Motylev.

27...Ree8 (27...Rxf2? 28 Ra8+; 27...Rexf2? 28 Qe6+ Qxe6 29 Nxe6)  
28 f3!+/- O. Borik.

Instead of 25...Rf8, a correspondence game Joao – Tavares, 2000, tested 25...Nf6!? 26 Qf3 Qxf3 27 Nxf3 Ne4 28 Bc1 (28 Be1!+/- Dvoretzky) 28...Rxf2 29 Ng5! Re2 30 Nxe4+/-.

5) The move 26 Ne5! went unmentioned in previous commentaries to this game. It creates two threats: 27 Ra8+ and 27 Be3. Black has no choice: 26...Bxe5 27 Bxe3.



1...?



Black can no longer play either 27...Nxe3?? or 27...Qf3?!, because of 28 de. On 27...f4?, White can reply either 28 Bc1!?!+ or 28 Bxf4 Bxf4 (28... Nxf4 29 gf Bxf4 30 Kf1+!) 29 Re1!+.

### 27...Bxg3!! 28 hg Nxe3

This threatens either 29...Qf3 or 29...Ng4. Black could also play 28... Qf3, leading to an approximately equal position after 29 Re1 Rxf2! 30 Ra8+ Kf7 31 Qxf5+ (31 Ra7+) 31...Qxf5 32 Bxf2.

### 29 Qxe2! Qxe2 30 Re1! Qxb2 31 Ra8+ Kf7 32 Rxe3



Material is about equal: queen and pawn vs. two rooks. The most likely outcome would be a draw.

Anand played differently, aiming for a considerably sharper game, whose outcome would be impossible to predict. Objectively, the path he chose was weaker, and put him on the brink of losing.

6) Black's main threat is 29...Kxg5, followed by 30...Qf3. 29 Rc8? Kxg5 30 Rxc7 Qf3, or 29 h4? Bxg3 30 fg Rg2+ (30...Qg4) 31 Kh1 Rxc3 would both be bad. And he doesn't have the time to try to bring his attack home first: 29 Re8? Ng4! 30 h4 (or 30 Nf3) 30...Rxe8+. If 29 Ra6?, Black wins either by 29...Kxg5 30 h4+ (30 Rxc6 Qf3+) 30...Kh6! 31 Rxc6+ g6, with the unstoppable threat of 32...Qf3, or by 29...Bxg3 30 hg Kxg5.

Anand finds an outstanding tactical defense.

### 29 Rf1!

The rook has to go here; it's vital that the f2-square be defended. In the variation 29 Rda1? Kxg5 30 Re8 Qf3, White can't take on e3 with the rook, so after the forced 31 Qxe3+ Rxe3 32 Rxe3 Qd5-/+ , Black comes out a piece up.

7) 30 Kxf1 would be met, not by 30...Re7? 31 h4 h6 32 Rf8 Qg4 33 f3 Qxg3 34 Qxf5+ Kh5 35 Ne4+!+, and not by 30...Rxb2? 31 h4+/- (or 31 Nf3+/-) either, but by 30...Rxf2+! 31 Kxf2 Qxh2+ 32 Kf1 Bxg3 33 Qf3 Kxg5, with a double-edged position in which White would find it difficult, if at all possible, to demonstrate his advantage. For example, there is the following variation, which is by no means forced: 34 Rc8 Qh3 + 35 Qg2 Qg4 36 Qe2 Qh3+ 37 Kg1 g6 38 Rxc6 Kh6, followed by 39... f4 with compensation.

The move **30 Nf3!** sets up threats of 31 Kxf1 and 31 Qxe2; however, Black has a worthy reply in **30...Nxb2!**



1.?

After 31 Nxb2 Rxf2 32 Kxf2 Qxb2+ 33 Ke1 Bxb3+ 34 Kd1, an unclear position is reached, similar to the one reached in the 30 Kxf1 variation – except perhaps even less dangerous to Black. But White has better: **31 Qxe2! Nxf3+ 32 Kg2 Nh4+** (the knight sacrifice 32...Qh2+ 33 Kxf3 Qh1 + 34 Ke3 Qc1+ doesn't give Black a perpetual) **33 Kf1 Nf3 34 Qe8+ Kh6 35 Qxb5+ Kxb5 36 Ra7!?** (36 Rc8+/-) **36...Bd6 37 Rxb7**, with an obvious endgame advantage for White. And 43...Ng5 (instead of 32...Nh4+) 33 Qxb5+ Kxb5 34 Ra6+/- changes little.

**8)** 30 Re8? loses to 30...Ng4, threatening both mate and the rook.

30 Ra6? would lead to a draw in the variation 30...hg 31 Rxc6+ Kh7 32 Rxc7 Qf3 33 Qxe3 Rxe3 34 fe Qxe3+. But Black has better: 30...Bxb3! 31 hg Kxb3 32 Qxe3 (32 Rxc6? Qf3+/-) 32...Rxe3 33 fe Qe2+/-.

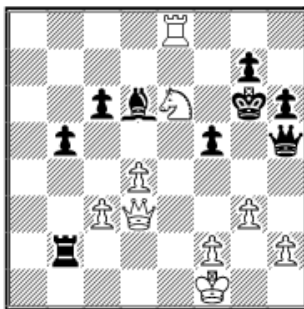
White achieves a decisive advantage in a most unexpected way.

**30 h3!! Nxf1** (on 30...Bxb3 or 30...hg, there follows 31 fe+/-) **31 g4!** (31 Nf3! would be strong, too) **31...Qxg5 32 Qxe2 Nd2 33 Rf8!** (threatening 34 Qe8+) **33...Ne4 34 Rxf5**.

The move 30 h3!! is unquestionably strongest, and convincingly refutes the 30...h6?! try.

I also looked at one more promising continuation: 30 Rh8!?. On 30...Nxf1, White does not play 31 Kxf1?! Rxf2+ 32 Kxf2 Qxb2+ 33 Kf1 Bxb3 34 Qf3 Kxb3, with an unclear position, but 31 Nf3! Nxb2 32 Qxe2! +/-, reaching approximately the same favorable endgame for White that we reached in the 29...Nxf1?! 30 Nf3! variation – the inclusion of the moves h7-h6 and Ra8-h8 doesn't change much of anything.

It would be harder for White to demonstrate his advantage after 30...Bf4! 31 Ne6 Bd6 32 Re8! Nxf1 33 Kxf1 Rxb2

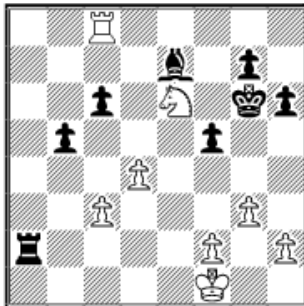


White has two ways to try to play for the win.

a) 34 Nd8!? Kh7 35 Re6, to which Black responds, not with 35...Bf8 36 Kg2! c5 37 Re5+/-, but with 35...c5!! 36 Kg2 (36 Rxd6? c4!+/-) 36...c4 37 Qe3 Bc7+/-.

b) 34 h4!? Qg4! (just not 34...Kf6?, in view of 35 Rd8! Kxe6 36 Qe3+

Kd5 37 c4+! Kxc4 38 Rxd6+—) 35 Rd8 (if 35 Nd8 Qh3+ 36 Kg1, then Black is rescued by 36...Rb1+!! 37 Qxb1 Bxg3 =) 35...Qh3+ (35...Ra2 36 Kg2 Be7 37 Rd7 Bf6 38 d5!+/- would be weaker) 36 Kg1 Ra2 37 Qf1 Qxf1+ 38 Kxf1 Be7 39 Rc8



1...?

The “automatic” 39...Ra6?! 40 Rc7 allows White to keep a solid positional advantage in the endgame. Active defense should be preferred: 39...Kf7! 40 Rxc6 Rc2 (or 39...Rc2! 40 Rxc6 Kf7). Considering the threat of 41...b4, White has nothing better than 41 Rb6 Rxc3+/-.

9) 30 Ra6 Bxg5 holds no prospects, so White plays **30 Ne6**. Here, it’s important that Black select the right square for his bishop retreat.

After **30...Bh6!**, the bishop controls the e3-square, which is important in the variation 31 Re8 Qf3 32 Nf8+ Kf7—+. On **31 Nf8+**, Black does not play 31...Kf6 32 d5!? =, when the queen is ready to check on d4, but **31...Kf7!**



And there seems to be no satisfactory defense against the threats of 32...Qf3 and 32...Qh3. All attempts to create counterplay against the black king fail even to create perpetual check.

32 Nd7 Qh3 33 Ne5+ Ke7 34 Ra7+ Kd6! (but not 34...Ke6? 35 d5+! cd 36 Ra6+, with a draw) 35 Nf7+ Kd5 36 Rd7+ (36 c4+ bc 37 Ra5+ Ke6—+) 36...Ke6 37 d5+ Kxd7 38 dc+ Ke8 39 Qd7+ Kf8 40 Qd8+ Kxf7 41 Qd7+ Kg6 42 Qe8+ Kg5—+.

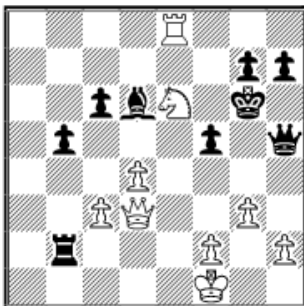
32 Ra7+ Kxf8 44 c4 Qf3 34 Qa3+ Kg8! 35 Ra8+ Kf7 36 Qf8+ Kg6 37 Qe8+ Kg5 38 Qe7+ Kh5 39 Qh4+ Kg6—+.

32 Qb1!? Nxf1! (it’s drawn after 32...Qf3 33 Qa2+ Nc4! 34 Nd7 Kg6! or 34 Qa7+ Re7) 33 Qa2+ (nothing changes after 33 Kxf1 Qf3 34 Qa2+ Kf6) 33...Kf6 34 Nxh7+ (34 Nd7+ Kg5) 34...Kg6 35 Nf8+ Kg5 36 h4+ Kg4 37 Kxf1 Kh3—+.

We can conclude that Black would have won, had he played 29...Bf4!! 30 Ne6 Bh6!, which means that, instead of 26 Ra8+?!, White should have played 26 Ne5!, and settled for a roughly equal position. This winning plan for Black was not mentioned in previous commentaries, so the game never received a proper assessment.

To get the full picture, let's look at what happens if the bishop retreats to some other square than h6.

30...Bd6? 31 Re8! (31 Qxe3 Rxe3 32 fe Qe2 =) 31...Nxf1 32 Kxf1 Rxb2



1.?

Now 33 Kg2? would lose, in view of 33...Kf6!

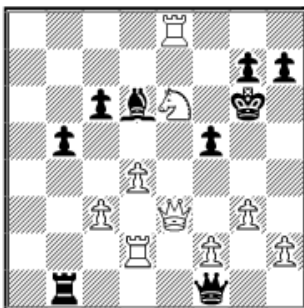
But White would win quickly after 33 Nd8!!, with the idea of 34 Re6+. For example, 33...Qh3+ 34 Kg1 Kh5 35 Re6 Bc7 36 Qd1+ (36 Nxc6+— would also be sufficient) 36...Qg4 37 Qf1! +—, with the deadly threat of 38 f3.

Everything else is considerably less convincing.

On 33 Qe3?! Qh3+! 34 Ke1, White only draws, and that after considerable effort.

34...Qxh2 35 Nf4+ (35 Nf8+? Bxf8 36 Qe6+ Kg5 37 Qe3+ Kh5 38 Qf3+ Kg6! 39 Re6+ Kf7 40 Qxf5+ Kg8—) 35...Kf6 (35...Bxf4? 36 Re6+ Kf7 37 Re7+) 36 Re6+ Kf7 37 Re7+! Bxe7 38 Qe6+ Ke8 39 Qxc6+, with perpetual check.

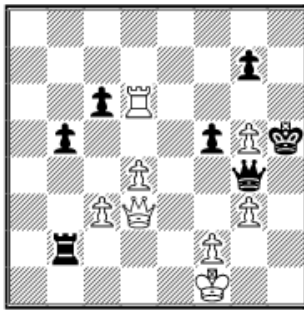
34...Rb1+!? 35 Kd2 Qf1



1.?

36 Qg5+ (36 Nf8+? would not work; after 36...Bxf8 37 Qe6+ Kg5 38 Qe3 + Kg4, the king will escape from its pursuer inside the enemy camp) 36...Kf7 37 Rf8+!! Bxf8 38 Qxf5+ Ke7 39 Qxf8+ Kxe6 40 Qe8+ Kf6 41 Qe5 + here, the king cannot hide from checks.

33 h4!? isn't bad, but it's much less convincing than 33 Nd8!!. The variation 33...Kf7(f6)?! 34 Rd8! Kxe6 35 Qe3+ Kd5 36 c4+! Kxc4 37 Rxd6— is one we already know, from our analysis of the move 29...h6. There, Black held on by 33...Qg4 34 Rd8 Qh3+ 35 Kg1 Ra2. Here, White has the g5-square at his disposal, and he could very well replace 34 Rd8 with the try 34 Ng5!? h6 35 Re6+ Kh5 36 Rxd6 hg 37 hg.



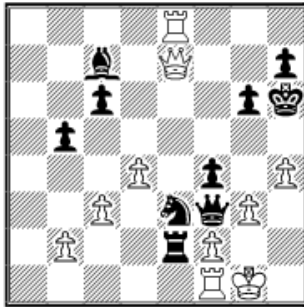
But it's unclear whether his advantage would be enough to win after 37... b4!.

**10)** 32...Nxf1? is hopeless; after 33 Qxe2, the knight is lost.

After 32...fg? 33 fe, Black cannot work up any serious threats, so White's material advantage will decide; for example, 33...g2 34 Rf3+ (34 Rf5!? Re1+ is less convincing), or 33...Rg2+ 34 Qxg2 Qxe8 35 e4+, or 33...Rh2 34 Qxc6+ g6 35 Qxc7 Rxh4 36 Qxh7+! Kxh7 37 Rf7+ Kh6 38 Rh8+ Kg5 39 Rxh5+.

And the outcome of 32...Rxb2?! 33 Qxc6+ g6 34 Qxc7 Qf3 35 Qxf4+ Qxf4 36 gf Nxf1 37 Kxf1 is a rook ending with an extra pawn for White.

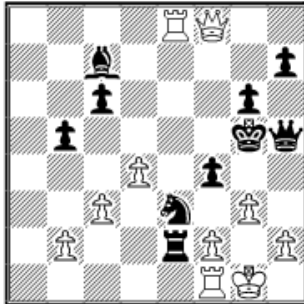
The best defense is **32...g6!**. In the variation 33 fe?! Rxe3 34 Qxc6 Rxg3 + 35 Kf2 Rd3! 36 Rg1! (the only defense) 36...Bd6! (meeting the threat of 37 Rxg6+!), White's position looks shaky. So he continues **33 Qe7 Qf3**



Here, as Anand noted, White must accept the perpetual check: **34 Qg5+ Kg7 35 Re7+ Kg8 36 Re8+**, since 34 Qf8+? Kh5 35 Rxe3 Rxe3 36 Qg7 fg! 37 Qxh7+ Kg4 38 Qd7+ (38 Qxg6+ Kh3!) 38...Kxh4 39 Qh7+ Kg5 40 fe Qxe3+ 41 Kh1 Qe4+ 42 Kg1 Bf4!+ doesn't work for him.

**11)** Picking the right move requires accurate calculation of some rather difficult variations, and the proper assessment of the resulting positions.

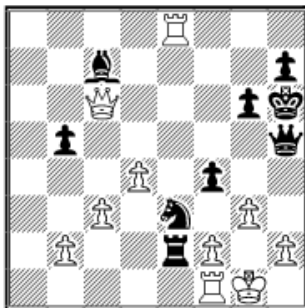
A series of checks won't work: 32 Qe7+?! Kh6 33 Qf8+ Kg5



34 h4+ Kg4 35 Qf7! (35 gf? Kh3! 36 Rxe3+ Rxe3 37 Qc8+ Kxh4 38 fe Kg3+) 35...Kh3!? 36 Qd7+ Qf5 (but not 36...Nf5? 37 Qxc6+) 37 Qxf5 + gf 38 gf Bxf4 =.

Instead of 34 h4+, White should consider 34 Qc5+!? Nf5 35 h4+ Kh6 36 Qf8+ Ng7 37 Re7! Rxe7 38 Qxe7. After 38...Bb6 39 Ra1 Qf5!+/-, the outcome remains unpredictable.

The cool **32 Qxc6!** is much stronger. On 32...Nxf1?, White wins by 33 Qxb5+ Kh6 34 Qxh5+ Kxh5 35 Rxe2+-. So Black must reply **32...Kh6!** (when 33...Nxf1 is threatened).



Now either 33 Qxc7!? Rxf2! 34 Kxf2 Qxh2+ 35 Ke1 Qxg3+ 36 Ke2 Qh2 + 37 Rf2 f3+ 38 Kxe3 Qxc7+/- (here two rooks appear to be stronger than the queen), or 33 Rxe3 fe 34 Qxc7 ef+ 35 Rxf2 Rxf2 (35...Re1+ 36 Rf1 Rxf1+ 37 Kxf1 Qf3+ 38 Ke1 hardly changes anything) 36 Kxf2 Qxh2 + 37 Kf3, with White having the upper hand in the queen ending, would be good.

**12)** “Playing for the brilliancy” with 35...Bf4? is out of place here: 36 Rxe2 g2 37 Re3+! (37 f3? Bh2+ 38 Kf2 Bg3+ =) 37...Bxe3 38 Rd1+.

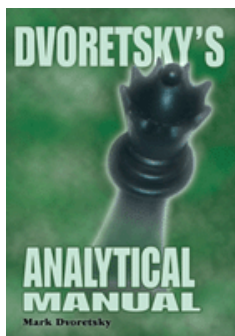
The simple **35...Rxb2!** leads to a position in which the activity of Black’s pieces provides full compensation for his exchange minus; now White will have to play accurately in order to stay out of trouble.



## COLUMNISTS

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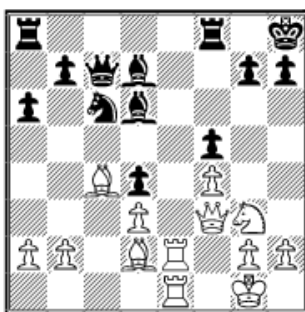
## The Worst-Piece Principle

*Secrets of Positional Play*, by M. Dvoretsky and A. Yusupov (the fourth volume in our series, "School of Chess Excellence") contains a lecture by Alexei Kosikov, entitled "Constructing a Plan in the Game of Chess." In this lecture, Kosikov formulated his "worst-piece principle."

*In situations involving strategic maneuvers (when the time factor is not of decisive importance), look for the piece which stands worse than the others. Making this piece more active will often turn out to be the surest way to improve your position as a whole.*

Offered for your consideration: a small selection of examples where using the worst-piece principle makes it easier to search for the strongest continuation. Some may wish to train themselves in the use of this technique: for them, the question mark beneath the diagrams (right after the indication of whose turn it is to move) denotes that the position would be a good one to use as an exercise.

*Nimzowitsch – Rubinstein*  
Dresden 1926



W?

White needs to get his knight involved in order to increase the pressure; currently, the knight does not stand well. Its place is at g5, coordinating with White's light-squared bishop, rooks and queen.

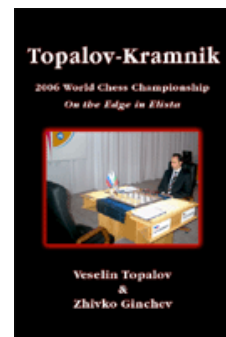
19.Ng3-h1!! Ra8-e8 20.Nh1-f2+/-

This is the position that occurred in the game (by transposition of moves – in the actual game, the white rook was on f1, and the black bishop on c8; after 18.Rfe1 Bd7, the diagrammed position was reached. The actual move order was 18.Nh1! Bd7 19.Nf2 Rae8 20.Rfe1.

It's not a simple matter to decide which of two move orders is better, and I generally try to avoid using exercises with more than one possible solution. In the interests of improving an exercise's quality, a trainer has the right to alter the position slightly, which I sometimes do.)

Note that in my demonstration of the rest of the game, I go from full notation to abbreviated notation. This is not accidental. A trainer should indicate, as much as possible, the boundary between the answer to the exercise (the moves that must be found) and further illustrative variations.

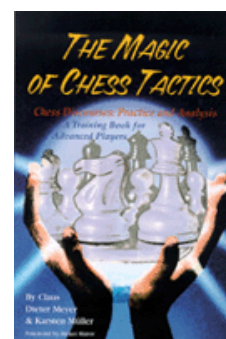
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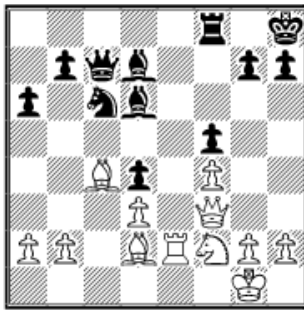


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This I do with the help of a change in notation.

**20...Rxe2 21.Rxe2**



**21...Nd8?**

Akiva Rubinstein overprotects the weak squares at f7 and e6. However, his defensive plan is too passive, and now Black's position becomes difficult.

21...Re8? is also poor. White has two good answers: 22.Qd5, forcing the rook back, or 22.Rxe8+ Bxe8 23.Qd5 Ne7 24.Qxd4.

Ilya Odessky suggested trading off the powerful c4-bishop: 21...Be8!? 22.Nh3 Bf7 23.Ng5 Bxc4 24.dc, and now Black can play 24...Nd8. Then the inviting 25.Qd5?! would not be good after 25...h6 26.Nf3 Nc6 (with the unpleasant threat of 27...Ne7!) 27.Nh4 Kh7 28.Nxf5 Bxf4. The stronger 25.Qd3 h6 (25...Bxf4?? 26.Qxf5!+—) 26.Nf3 Nc6 (26...Bxf4 27.Bxf4 Qxf4 28.Qxd4) 27.g3 would maintain somewhat better chances.

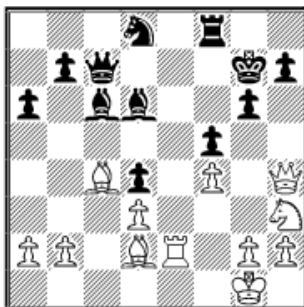
Artur Yusupov pointed out another good idea: playing to restrict the opposing knight by 21...g6 22.Nh3 h6!. Before bringing the knight out to h3, White might throw in the move 22.h4!, using the h-pawn as a battering ram to break down his opponent's kingside protection. Considering this, Black should probably change the order of his moves, and play 21...h6!? first.

**22.Nh3 Bc6**

The move 22...h6 would not prevent the knight from invading at g5.

The simplest response to 22...Re8 is 23.Rxe8+ Bxe8 24.Qd5. Another good line is 23.Qd5, forcing the rook back. But Aaron Nimzowitsch's recommendation 23.Qh5 Rxe2 24.Ng5 (expecting 24...h6? 25.Qg6 hg 26.Qh5#) fails, in view of 24...Rxc2+! 25.Kxc2 Bc6+ 26.Kg1 g6 (as found in 1970 by Dushko Bzhakov). For example, 27.Qh6 Qg7 (not 27...Qe7? 28.Bf7!), or 27.Qh4 h5 28.Nf7+ Nxf7 29.Qf6+ Kg8 30.Qxg6+ Kf8 31.Bxf7 Qxf7 32.Qxd6+ Kg8 =.

**23.Qh5 g6 24.Qh4 Kg7**



**W?**



Black has warded off the immediate threats (25.Ng5 h6 is no longer dangerous). White therefore uses the “two weaknesses principle” – he attacks the vulnerable d4-pawn in order to tie one of Black’s pieces to its defense and decoy it away from the kingside; then he will return once again to his attack on the king.

## 25.Qf2! Bc5

Nimzowitsch planned to answer 25...Qb6 with 26.b4!?, threatening 27. Bc3. But after 27...Re8!, things are not so clear, even though White could retain the upper hand by continuing 28.Bc3 (28.Rxe8 Bxe8 29.Bc3 Nc6 30.Ng5 Bd7 promises White less) 28...dc 29.Qxb6 Rxe2 30.Qd4+ Kh6 31.Qxc3 Rxc2+ 32.Kf1 Rxc2 33.Qd4!. Probably 26.Qe1! would be simpler: 26...Nf7 27.Ba5! Qa7 28.Bxf7 Rxf7 29.Ng5, or 26...Qc7 27. Ng5 h6?! 28.Ba5! b6 (28...Qd7 29.Bb6! hg 30.Bxd4+ Kh7 31.Qg3) 29. Bxb6! Qxb6 30.Re7+, and wins.

## 26.b4 Bb6 27.Qh4?!

27.Qe1! was more energetic and stronger (observe the typical placement of heavy pieces on the open file, with the queen behind the rook) 27... Be4 28.Nf2+– (Nimzowitsch).

## 27...Re8

If 27...Rf6, then 28.Ng5 h6 29.Nh7!+–.

## 28.Re5!

Black wants to trade rooks, but White offers to do so in a way more favorable to himself – on the e5-square – since that would open the c1-h6 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop.

## 28...Nf7?

On 28...h6, Nimzowitsch gives 29.g4! fg 30.f5!, or 29...g5 30.fg, with mate soon to follow. But Black has no reason to open lines like this: with 29...Qd7!, he maintains a defensible position. The immediate 28...Qd7!? isn’t bad either.

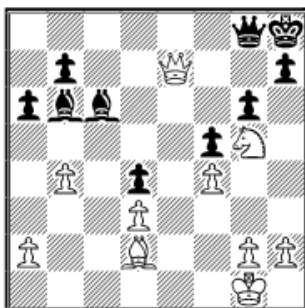
## 29.Bxf7 Qxf7

29...Rxe5 30.fe Qxf7 31.Ng5 Qg8 was more stubborn; and if 32.e6?! (Nimzowitsch), then 32...Bd8! 33.Qxd4+ Bf6. White wins by 32.Ne4!, threatening 33.Qf6# or 33.Nf6.

## 30.Ng5 Qg8 31.Rxe8 Bxe8 32.Qe1! Bc6

32...Kf8 was no improvement: 33.Qe5 Bd8 (33...Qxa2 34.Qf6+ Kg8 35. Ne6, or 34...Bf7 35.Nxf7 Qxf7 36.Qxb6) 34.Ne6+ Ke7 35.Qc5+! Kd7 36. Nf8+! (Nimzowitsch).

## 33.Qe7+ Kh8



W

Here, of course, all roads lead to Rome; for example, 34.Ne6 h5 35.Qf6+ Kh7 36.g4!. Nimzowitsch selects what may have been the method with the purest idea: bringing his only non-participating piece – the bishop – into the attack.

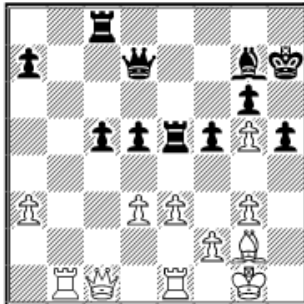
**34.b5!**

34...ab runs into 35.Ne6 h5 36.Qf6+ Kh7 37.Ng5+ Kh6 38.Bb4.

**34...Qg7 35.Qxg7+ Kxg7 36.bc**, and White won easily.

**Larsen – Browne**

Buenos Aires 1980



W?

28.e4? would be premature, and met strongly by 28...c4!; if then 29.d4 Rxe4+/. And on 28.Qd2, Black could try 28...d4!? 29.e4 (29.Rb7 de 30.fe Rc7=+) 29...fe 30.Rxe4 Rxe4 (30...Rce8!?) 31.Bxe4 Qg4 32.Rb7 h4.

We shall use the worst-piece principle here. The rook on e1 isn't in the game – it ought to be on either b2 or c2.

**28.Re1-e2!+/=**

By making this rook active, White creates pressure on his opponent's position.

Black responded with **28...Re7?! Too passive!** If he must retreat, then 28...Re6 29.Rc2 Rb6 was more solid, although White would retain somewhat better chances by continuing 30.Rxb6 ab 31.d4 c4 32.Qb1 b5 33.Rb2. But there were more aggressive tries that were worth considering:

28...h4?! 29.f4! (29.gh f4, with counterplay) 29...Re7 30.gh+/=;

28...d4! 29.e4 c4 (39...fe!? 40.Rxe4 Rxe4 41.Bxe4 Qg4) 30.dc d3 31.Re3 d2 (31...Qd4 32.ef+/=; 31...Rce8!?) 32.Qc2 Qd4 33.Rd3!? (33.Rd1 Rxc4 34.Qxd2 Qxd2 35.Rxd2 fe =) 33...Qxc4 (33...Rxc4? 34.Qxd2 Qc5 35.Rd7+–) 34.Qxd2 fe 35.Rd7 Rc7 36.Rb7 Rxb7 37.Rxb7 e3!, with chances for both sides.

**29.Rc2 Qd6 30.a4! Rec7 31.a5 Qe6 32.Qd1 d4?! 33.e4 c4 34.Rb5!**

When there are opposite-colored bishops, the most important thing is to seize the initiative, and force the opponent on the defensive. It's well-known that in the middlegame, opposite-colored bishops add impetus to the attack.

**34...Rc5?!**

He should have preferred 34...cd 35.Rxc7 Rxc7, although after 36.Qxd3! (36.ef Qe2 is inferior), White would maintain pressure on his opponent's

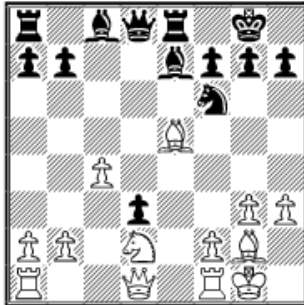
position.

**35.Rxc5 Rxc5 36.Bh3+/- Qe7** (36...Rxa5 37.ef; 36...c3 37.ef gf 38.Qxh5 +) **37.ef Qxg5 38.fg+ Kxg6**

After 38...Qxg6 39.Rxc4 Rxa5 40.Bg2 or 39...Rxc4 40.dc and 41.Qf3, White has a strong attack. 38...Kh6!? was worth considering.

**39.dc** (39.Rxc4?! Rxc4 40.dc Qxa5 = would have been weaker.) **39... Rxa5 40.Re2 Ra6 41.Qd3+ Kh6 42.c5 Rg6** (42...Rc6 43.Bg2 Rxc5 44.Re6+ Bf6 45.Qxd4 Rf5 46.Be4 Re5 47.Qxa7, and wins.) **43.Bf5 Rf6 44.Re5 h4 45.g4 Rf8 46.Rd5 Qf4 47.Rd7! Qc1+ 48.Kg2 Rf6** (48...Qxc5 49.Qd2#) **49.Qh3 1-0** Black resigned, in view of 49...Qg5 50.f4.

*Kiss – Hulak*  
Oberwart 1988



**B?**

Black stands well, but it's not easy to choose a plan of action. The key to the position turns out to be the unexpected activation of the "worst-piece principle": it's the rook on a8 that's out of play.

**15...a7-a5!**

Black intends Ra6-e6. If 16.Nf3, then 16...Ra6 17.Nd4? Bc5—+. On 16.Qb3 Ra6 17.a3 (intending 18.Qc3), the reply 17...Nd7! is unpleasant.

**16.Re1 Ra6 17.Nf3?**

White chooses a bad plan, and soon his position becomes difficult. 17.Re3!? was better, when Black would need to play 17...Re6 (17...Bf5 – expecting 18.Bxb7 Re6 19.g4 Bg6 – is dubious because of 18.Qf3). Another possibility worth looking into was 17.Bc3!? Re6 19.Rxe6 Bxe6, with mutual chances.

**17...Bf5 18.Nd4 Bb4! 19.Re3**

After 19.Nxf5 Bxe1 20.Qxe1, Black can win the exchange by 20...d2 21.Qe2 Rxe5 22.Qxe5 Re6 23.Qc3 d1Q+ 24.Rxd1 Qxd1+ 25.Kh2, but 20...Nd7! 21.f4 f6 is probably stronger, with advantage to Black.

White's position is also clearly worse after 19.Bxf6 Rxe1+ 20.Qxe1 Rxf6 21.Qe5 Bg6.

**19...Bg6 20.Nb3**

White would lose after 20.Bxb7? Rxe5 21.Rxe5 Qxd4, but the knight should have gone to b5.

**20...Rae6 21.a3 Bf8**

21...Bd6!? 22.Bd4 Rxe3 23.Bxe3 Bxg3—+ was another possibility.

22.Bf4 a4 23.Nd2 Bc5, and Black won.

*J. Polgar – Hübner*

Munich 1991

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Nxe4 6.d4 b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.  
de Be6 9.c3 Be7 10.Bc2 Bg4 (10...0-0) 11.h3 Bxf3 12.gf Nc5 13.f4 Qd7  
14.Qf3 Rd8?!

14...f5! at once was better, since now White could have prevented this  
important move by 15.Be3! f5? 16.ef.

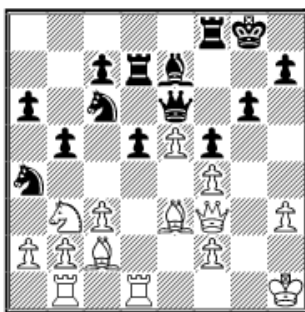
15.Rd1 f5! 16.Be3 Qe6

16...0-0? is bad, because of 17.Bxc5 Bxc5 18.Rxd5!.

17.Nd2 0-0 (17...Ne4!?) 18.Nb3 Na4?

A serious positional error: “A knight on the rim is dim!” 18...Ne4! would  
have led to an unclear position. Perhaps Robert Hübner feared the reply  
19.Qg2, when the complications after 19...g5?! 20.f3 would not have  
been in his favor. However, he could have played 19...Rf7!, preparing  
20...g5 21.f3 Rg7, without fearing an immediate 20.f3, because of 20...  
Nf6.

19.Rab1! Rd7?! (19...Kh8) 20.Kh1 (prophylaxis against g7-g5) 20...g6



W?

White's light-squared bishop is not yet in play. It must be brought to the  
h1-a8 diagonal, in order to increase the pressure on d5.

21.Bc2-d3!+/-

An excellent maneuver: White intends to continue Bd3-f1-g2. The central  
pawn will prove difficult to defend: if the knight leaves c6 (to prepare c7-  
c6 or c7-c5), White immediately replies Nd4.

White also had at her disposal a different, yet no less promising  
regrouping: 21.Rd2!? followed by Qg2 and Bc2-d1-f3.

In her annotations, Judit Polgar pointed out a number of elegant tactical  
variations (after 21.Bd3), which underscored the unfortunate position of  
the knight at a4, and illustrate the difficulties Black faces.

21...Nd8 22. Nd4 Qf7 23.Nxb5!+/-;

21...Qf7 22.Qe2!? (threatening 23.Bxb5) 22...Rb8 23.Ba7!+—  
(threatening 24.e6). And here's a second solution: 22. Bf1!? Nd8 23.Bg2  
c6 24.Nd4! Nc5 25.Nxc6! Nxc6 26.Rxd5+/-.

The game ended as follows: 21...Bh4?! 22.Bf1 Rdd8 23.Bg2 Ne7 24.  
Nd4 Qf7 25.Qe2!

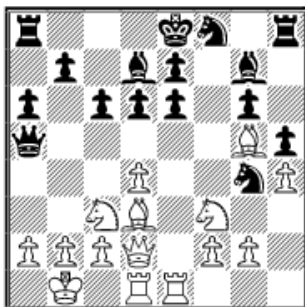
The bishop has fallen into a trap at h4: White threatens 26.Nf3. Polgar confidently turns her advantage into victory.

**25...g5 26.Rg1 c5 27.Nf3 Ng6 28.fg f4 29.Bd2 Qf5 30.b3 Nb6 31.Rbe1 Rfe8 32.Bf1 (threatening 33.Rg4) 32...d4 33.cd cd 34.Ba5 Qe6 35.Rg4 Rd5 36.Qd2 Nd7 37.Nxh4 Ndx5 38.Bg2 1-0**

*Hodgson – Hillarp Persson*

Erevan Olympiad, 1996

**1.d4 d6 2.e4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Be3 a6 5.Qd2 Nd7 6.h4 h5 7.Nf3 Ngf6 8.e5!? Ng4 9.e6 fe 10.Bd3 Nf8 11.0-0-0 Bd7 12.Rhe1 c6 13.Bg5 Qa5 14.Kb1**



**B?**

Black is a pawn up; but his pieces are scattered, and there's no self-evident means of completing his development (castling is impossible, in view of the loss of the e7-pawn). 14...c5? would be a mistake, because of 15.Nd5! (15.Be7!? cd 16.Bxf8) 15...Qxd2 16.Rxd2+/-.

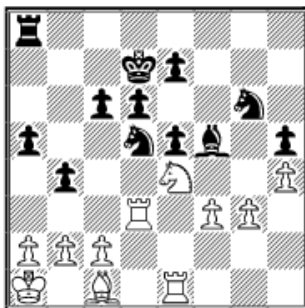
**14...Rh8-h7!**

Black prepares 15...Bh8 and 16...Rf7. In this way, he develops his inactive rook to the half-open f-file, and defends the e7-pawn as well, making queenside castling possible.

**15.Qe2 Bh8 (15...c5!?) 16.Bd2 Rf7 17.Ne4 Qb6! 18.Bc1 (18.c3!?) 18...a5!? 19.Nfg5 Rf5! 20.f3 Nf6 21.Nc3 Rd5!**

An excellent exchange sacrifice. Instead, the tempting 21...Nd5?! would have led to a difficult position for Black after 22.Nxd5 Rxd5 23.c3.

**22.Nxd5 Nxd5 (23...Nc3+ was threatened) 23.Qd2 Bxd4 24.Bxg6+ Nxg6 25.Qxd4 Qxd4 26.Rxd4 e5 27.Rd2 b5! 28.g3 b4 (28...a4!?) 29.Rd3 Bf5 30.Ne4 Kd7 31.Ka1**



**B?**

Black's knight stands badly on g6 – it ought to go to e6, which would also clear the g-file for the rook.

**31...Ng6-f8!/+**

**32.c4 bc 33.bc Ne6 34.Ba3 Rg8?!**

A disappointing error, marring the course of an excellently played game by Black. As Jonathan Rowson has pointed out, he could have played 34...Kc7!?, meeting 35.c4 with 35...Nf6. But the strongest was another prophylactic move: 34...Nb6!, taking control of the important c4-square.

**35.c4! Bxe4 36.Rxe4 Nb4 37.Bxb4 ab 38.Rxe5 Rxb3 39.Ra5 c5 40.Ra7 + Nc7**

Now the position has become unclear.

**41.a3! Kc6!? 42.ab cb 43.Kb2 e5 (43...Rh3)**

In Rowson's book and in the computerized database, the continuation given is: 44.Rb3 e4? (Black keeps equality after 44...Rh3 – it's unclear why Black simply gives up a pawn, and also why White doesn't take it.

**45.Re3?! ef??**

45...Kb6 was necessary, only then to be followed by 46...ef, maintaining equality). Here a draw was agreed, even though 46.Re7 would have won knight and game.

Everything makes sense, if you assume that the king, and not the rook, was the piece which went to b3. After 44.Kb3!? e4 45.Re3 ef, the draw agreement is justified: 46.Re7 f2+ 47.Kxb4 f1Q 48.Rxc7+, with perpetual check.

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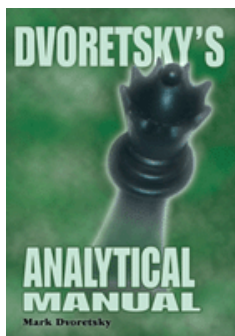
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## The Worst-Piece Principle

### Part Two

*Oll – Hodgson*

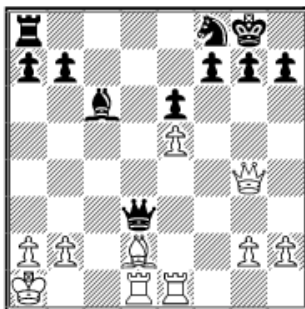
Groningen 1993

(Based on comments by Julian Hodgson)

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5.Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6 6.Bc1-g5 e7-e6 7.Qd1-d2 Bf8-e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f2-f4 Nc6xd4 10.Qd2xd4 Qd8-a5 11.Bf1-c4 Bc8-d7 12.e4-e5 d6xe5 13.f4xe5 Bd7-c6 14.Bg5-d2 Nf6-d7 15.Nc3-d5 Qa5-d8 16.Nd5xe7+ Qd8xe7 17.Rh1-e1 Rf8-d8 18.Qd4-g4 Nd7-f8 19.Bc4-d3 Rd8xd3!? 20.c2xd3 Qe7-d7 21.Kc1-b1?!

At one time, this was considered the strongest move here. But Vasilios Kotronias found an excellent riposte, which he then showed to Hodgson, who used it in the present game. After this, the theoretical main line became 21.Bb4! Qd5 22.Bxf8! Rxf8 23.Kb1 Qxg2 24.Qxg2 Bxg2, with a somewhat inferior, although probably defensible, endgame for Black. Now, consigning oneself from the very start of the game to a difficult fight to draw is not the most pleasant prospect; so gradually, Black ceased to play this line.

21...Qd7xd3+ 22.Kb1-a1



B?

22...h7-h5! 23.Qg4xh5

On 23.Qe2, Hodgson would have replied 23...Qg6, with good compensation for the exchange.

23...Bc6-a4! 24.Bd2-c3

The point of Black's idea can be found in the short variation 24.b3 Qd4+ 25.Kb1 Bb5, with dangerous threats to White's king, which can only be neutralized, if at all, with great difficulty. Thus, White has to return the exchange.

This could have been done by 24.Bb4!? Bxd1 25.Rxd1 Qe4 (25...Qc2 26.Bxf8 Rxf8 27.Qf3=+) 26.Bxf8 Rxf8 27.Qg5=+. The presence of the white e5-pawn on the board renders White's bishop "bad," so it would make sense to get rid of it. On the other hand, the text move should not have led to an inferior game, either.

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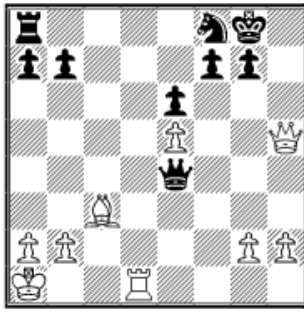
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24...Ba4xd1 25.Re1xd1 Qd3-e4



W?

26.Qh5-g5

White's attacking chances are a mirage, while Black is in a position to whip up an assault by advancing his queenside pawns. White's position would become especially uncomfortable if the knight were to return to play, operating in concert with the queen (queen + knight are, as is well known, a most dangerous tandem). From this, it follows that White should trade queens by **26.Qf3!** The game Hracek – Leko, Brno 1993, saw this move, and continued 26...Qxf3 27.gf Kh7 28.b4 Kg6 29.a4 (29. Rg1+ Kh6 30.Rd1 =) 29...Kf5 30.h4 Rc8 31.Kb2 g6 32.Rd4 Rc7 33.a5 Nd7 34.Rg4 Rc8 35.Kb3 a6, with equality.

The main reason for Lembit Oll's loss in this game was apparently that he would refuse a trade of queens under any circumstances.

26...a7-a5! 27.Qg5-d2

White could have held the balance by **27.h4!?** b5 28.h5 b4 29.Bd2 a4 (29...Rc8!?!=+) 30.Qf4.

27...Nf8-g6!

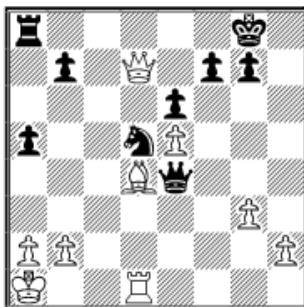
As a consequence of White's passive move, the knight obtains the opportunity to move through either e7 or f4 to the excellent central square d5. White would be ill-advised to take the a5-pawn: 28.Bxa5? Qa4 29.b4 Nxe5.

28.g2-g3 Ng6-e7 29.Qd2-d7?

Now White's position grows difficult. It was necessary to drive the queen from its active position by **29.Qd3!**. But as we have already noted, Oll's list of candidate-moves did not include any moves involving a queen trade.

29...Ne7-d5 30.Bc3-d4

The only move; 30.Qxb7? Nxc3 loses.





B?

### 30...Qe4-e2

Hodgson spent a long time weighing the consequences of simplifying the position by 30...Nb4?! 31.a3 Qd5 32.Qxd5 Nxd5, but was unsure whether or not he could win this endgame. And in fact, the middlegame was more promising.

With the text, he takes away the f-file from the white rook, but he should probably have taken control of a different file, instead: **30...Qc2! 31.Rf1 Rf8**. Now 32.a3 fails against 32...Qd3 (double attack!) 33.Rxf7 Rxf7 34.Qe8+ Rf8 35.Qe6+ Kh8 36.Qxd5 (36.Qh3+ Qh7) 36...a4!? 37.Ka2 Kh7! 38.Qe6 (38.e6 Rf5!) 38...Qxd4 39.Qh3+ Kg6 40.Qe6+ Kh5 41.Qh3+ Kg5—+. And after 32.Qb5, Black could choose either 32...Qd2, 32...Qxh2 33.Qxa5 Qxg3, or 32...b6 33.Bxb6!? (33.a3 Qxh2 34.Qd3 Rc8 35.Qf3 Rc7) 33...Rb8 34.Qd7 Nxb6 35.Qxf7+ Kh8 36.Qxe6 Nd5 37.Qh3+ Qh7 38.Qxh7+ Kxh7, in all cases with an obvious advantage to Black.

30...Qg4, expecting 31.Rf1? Rf8, with the bishop on d4 under attack, would be less convincing. White would reply 31.Rd2, and after 31...Qg5 32.Rd1 Rd8, he has the saving move 33.Be3!.

### 31.Rd1-c1! b7-b5

31...Qd2? 32.Rf1 Qxd4 33.Qxf7+ leads to a perpetual check.

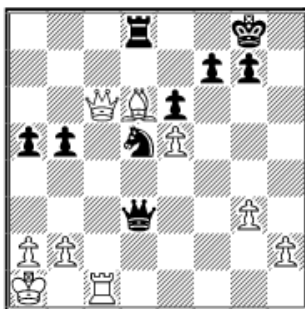
### 32.Bd4-c5 Qe2-d3

Again, the English grandmaster rejects the exchange of queens: 32...Qxe5 33.Qxb5 Rb8 34.Bd4! Rxb5 35.Bxe5 f6 – this endgame offers Black only a small advantage.

### 33.Qd7-c6?!

In Hodgson's opinion, it would have been better to play 33.Qb7, keeping an eye on the f7-pawn. However, after 33...Rd8 34.Bd6 b4, or 34.Be7 Nxe7 35.Qxe7 b4, White's position would remain difficult.

### 33...Ra8-d8 34.Bc5-d6



B?

Black has an indisputable advantage, but how can he make use of it?

### 34...Kg8-h7!?

*Lembit gave me a rather funny look as I played my move. To say I was pleased with 34...Kh7 is something of an understatement – it is the one move that stands out from all others.*

*However, if one examines the position logically, it is actually not so difficult to find. Here is what went through my mind: my queen and knight are superbly centralised on d3 and d5, so there is no need to move them.*

*However, my rook is not pulling its weight on d8. How can I get it into the game? Simple – play my king to g6, and then manoeuvre my rook to f5 via h8 and h5!*

What can White do against this plan of his opponent's? Could he, for instance, enter the endgame by **35.Qc2!?** If 35...Nb4?!, then 36.Bxb4? Qxc2 or 36.Qf2? Rc8! would be bad; and on 36.Qb1, Black would have the strong reply 36...f5!. He would have to play 36.Qxd3 Nxd3 37.Rf1!, meeting 37...f5 with 38.ef!.

Black's best choice then would be **35...Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5!**. After 37.Rc5 g5 (or 37...b4 38.Rxa5 g5), he would obtain a powerful passed f-pawn, but it's unclear whether this would be enough of an advantage to win.

Black's idea – unusual, yes, but also completely in accordance with the worst-piece principle – was awarded two exclamation marks in all the publications. But there were, in fact, some serious alternatives.

For example, a different means of executing the same strategic idea of getting the rook into the game – **34...g5!?** – was worth considering. Black's plan of g5-g4, Kg7, and Rh8 is not easily countered. On 35.Qc2 Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5, he reaches the endgame in a more favorable version, since his opponent lacks the time to attack the queenside pawns: 37.Rc5 f4 38.gf gf 39.Rxb5? f3 40.Bc5 Ne3+-. If 35.Qb7 (threatening 36.Be7), then 35...g4! 36.Be7 (36.a3 b4 is just bad), and now, not 37...Ne3? 38.Qc6, nor 37...Re8?! 38.Bg5, but 37...Qd2!, with a great advantage to Black (38.Kb1 Re8 39.Bd6 Qd3+ 40.Ka1 Kg7, etc.) On 35.h4, there follows 35...g4!.

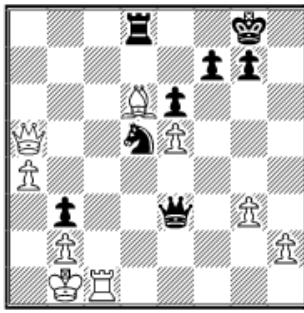
The best, and quite surprising, response to the g-pawn push was pointed out by Alexander Motylev. White can, in turn, justifiably move a pawn away from his king, too: **35.a4!!** ba 36.Qxa4, or 35...b4 36.Qb5 Qd2 37.Kb1, with an unclear position.

Additionally, the same reply – 35.a4!! – also lets White solve his problems in answer to 34...Kh7!?

And now, it will be easier for us to assess the significance of the simple **34...b4!** – which was, in my view, the strongest. For now, Black postpones the activation of his rook, in order to squeeze his opponent even more tightly on the queenside. This move is also useful if White is thinking about entering the endgame: **35.Qc2 Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5!**. For example, 37.Rc5 g5! 38.Rxa5 f4 39.gf gf, and it will be very hard to stop the passed f-pawn. The attempt to make it harder to create a passed pawn, with 37.h4, runs into a strong riposte 37...Nf6!. In the variation 38.Rc5 (38.ef Rxd6+ ) 38...Ne4 39.Rxa5 Nxe3 40.Rb5 Ne4 41.Rxb4 Nxd6 42.ed, Black does not continue 42...Rxd6?!, in view of 43.a4 e5 44.Rb5, but instead plays 42...e5! immediately: 43.Kb1 (on 43.a4, Black has the same response) 43...f4! 44.Kc2 Rxd6 45.Re4 f3! 46.Re1 e4! 47.Rf1 Kf7+.

After 35.Qc5 Kh7!, the a5-pawn is taboo: 36.Qxa5? Rc8! +.

And finally, on **35.a4**, Black has a good reply in 35...ba, and if 36.Bxa3, then 36...Nb4! Another possibility is **35...b3!?**; for example, 36.Qc4 Nb4! 37.Qc7 (37.Qxd3 Nxd3+ ) 37...Ra8 38.Bxb4 ab 39.Qc6 Ra6+. White could defend more stubbornly with **36.Qb5**, to which Black replies **36...Qd2!** (36...Qe3 37.Qc4 would be inferior) 37.Qc4 Nb6 38.Qf4 (38.Qc3 Qd5+ ) 38...Qxf4 39.gf Nxa4, with a healthy extra pawn for the endgame. Or **37.Kb1 Qe3! 38.Qxa5** (on 38.Qc4 Nb6, we see the downside of White's unfortunate king move from a1 to b1).



**B?**

**38...Kh7!! 39.Qxd8?!** (39.Qe1 Qd3+ 40.Ka1 Ra8 41.Qd1 Rxa4+ 42.Ba3 Qxe1 43.Rxe1 Re4+ ) **39...Nc3+!! 40.bc Qe2 41.Qh4+ Kg6+.**

**35.Qc6-c5?! Kh7-g6!**

*My king is perfectly safe on this square, as it is very difficult for any of White's pieces to attack it. White's bishop on d6 is especially ineffective – it is more like an overgrown pawn.*

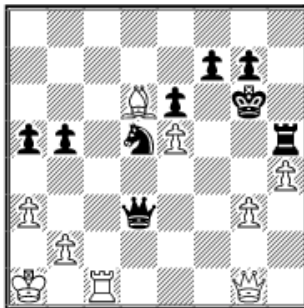
**36.h2-h4 Rd8-h8 37.a2-a3?**

Once again, it was necessary to exchange queens: 37.Qc2!, even though the endgame after 37...Qxc2 38.Rxc2 f5! would be a difficult one for White.

**37...Rh8-h5**

Psychologically, one can understand why Hodgson would not deviate from his intended plan to transfer the rook. But after the weakening move a2-a3, the rook could also be of service on the eighth rank. 37...b4 was worth considering; and if 38.Qxa5?! (38.ab would be better, to be followed by an offer to exchange queens), then 38...Rc8!. Taking the rook would lose by force: 39.Rxc8? Qd1+ 40.Rc1 (40.Ka2 b3#) 40...Qxc1 + 41.Ka2 Qc4+ 42.Ka1 (42.Kb1 Qd3+) 42...b3 43.Qe1 Ne3!+.

**38.Qc5-g1**



**B?**

**38...Kg6-h7?**

This error could have cost Black dearly. Hodgson apparently rejected 38...Rf5!? because he was afraid of his king getting chased after 39.g4. But White's attacking resources are clearly insufficient: 39...Rf3 40.h5+ Kg5 41.Qh1 (threatening 42.h6) 41...Rh3 42.Qg2 b4-/+.

And 38...b4!? would have been just as strong as before. Here's a sample variation: 39.Rd1 Qb3 40.Qd4 ba 41.ba (41.Bxa3 Rxe5+) 41...Nc3 42.Qd3+ Kh6 (42...Rf5? 43.Rd2) 43.Qd2+ (43.Rd2 Rxe5!) 43...Kh7 44.Rc1 Ne4-/+.

### 39.Rc1-d1?

The double attack by **39.Qa7!** wins a pawn. Hodgson shows Black keeping the upper hand in the variation 39...Rf5 40.Qxa5 Rf2! (40...Qxg3 41.Qxb5) 41.Qe1 (41.Bc5? Rf1! 42.Rxf1 Qxf1+ 43.Ka2 Qc4+) 41...Qd4!? (41...Qxg3 42.Rc2! Rf3 [42...Rg2?? 43.Qe4+] 43.Qe4+ would be unclear) 42.Rb1 Rd2!, “*with total domination.*” Well, not really: he won’t have time to make the planned move b5-b4, after his opponent replies either 43.Bc5 Qd3 44.Qf1 Qxg3 45.Qxf7 Qxe5 46.h5 unclear, or 43.Qf1 Nc3 44.Qxf7 =.

**39.Qe1!** would have achieved the same purpose, creating the threat of 40.g4, in addition to the attack on a5. In fact, White could also have pushed the g-pawn immediately: **39.g4! Rxh4 40.Qf2** (yet another double attack, this time on h4 and f7) 40...Qh3 41.Qxf7 Qxg4 42.Qa7 =.

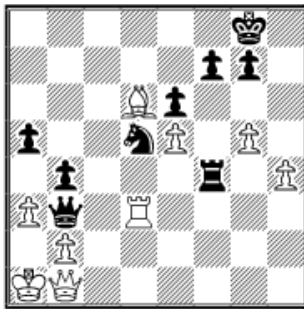
### 39...Qd3-b3 40.Rd1-d2

40.Rf1 Rf5 41.Rxf5 ef-/+ would hold out longer.

### 40...Rh5-f5 41.g3-g4 Rf5-f4 42.Qg1-b1+ Kh7-g8 43.g4-g5 b5-b4!

Black’s attack is irresistible. If 44.h5, then 44...Nc3! 45.bc Qxc3+ 46.Qb2 (46.Rb2 ba) 46...Rf1+ 47.Ka2 b3+ 48.Qxb3 Ra1# (Hodgson).

### 44.Rd2-d3



### B?

The English grandmaster finishes spectacularly.

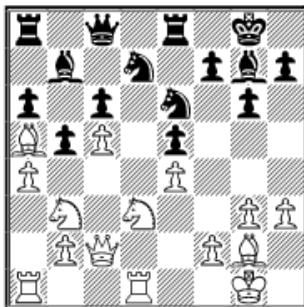
### 44...Nd5-c3! 45.Bd6xb4

Could Black have overlooked this reply?

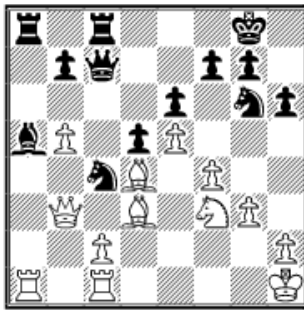
### 45....Qb3-a2+!!

No, he did not. White resigned.

In conclusion, let me offer a simple positional quiz. In all examples, the worst-piece principle will help you to arrive at the correct solution.



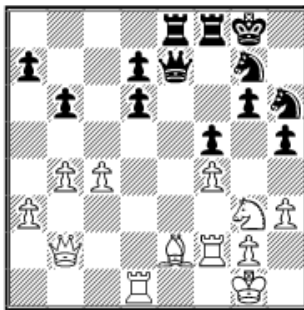
### W?



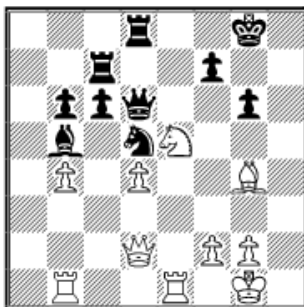
B?



W?



B?



W?



**B?**

## Solutions

### 1. *Korchnoi – Penrose*, Palma de Mallorca 1969

**1.h3-h4! Bg7-f8 2.Bg2-h3+/-**

By bringing the bishop into the game, White has considerably increased the pressure on his opponent's position.

**2...Qb8 3.Kh2 Bc8 4.Bd2 Bb7 5.Be3 Qc7 6.Qc3 Rad8 7.f3 Ra8 8.Rd2 Rad8 9.Kg2 Ra8 10.Rdd1 Rad8 11.Qa5!+—**

The most accurate way of exploiting White's advantage: if 11...Qb8, then 12.Bxe6 followed by 13.Nb4; or if 11...Qc8 12.Nb4, and White may proceed either by doubling rooks on the d-file, or by continuing 13.ab ab 14.Qa7.

**11...Qxa5?! (the trade of queens leads to the destruction of his queenside) 12.Nxa5 Ba8 13.Bxe6! Rxe6 14.Nb4 Kg7 15.Nxa6 1-0**

### 2. *Short – Vaganian*, Biel Interzonal 1985

**1...Ng6-f8!**

Transferring this knight to c5 lets Black take over the initiative.

**2.c3 Nd7 3.Ra2 (3.Bb1 Nc5 [3...Bb6!? 4.Rxa8 Rxa8] 4.Qc2 g6) 3...Nc5 4.Bxc5? (4.Qd1!-/+ was better – White has no attacking chances anyway, and the dark-squared bishop is an important defender of his weaknesses) 4...Qxc5 5.Nd4 Bb6 6.Qb1 Ne3! 7.Re2 Qa3!+ 8.Nb3 Rc7 (White can find no useful moves) 9.h3 h5! 10.Kh2 h4 11.g4 Qa4! 12.Nd4 Rxc3! 13.Rxc3 Qxd4) 11...Rac8 12.Qa2 Qxa2! (12...Qe7 13.Qd2) 13.Rxa2 g6! 14.Nd2 Rxc3 15.Rxc3 Rxc3 16.Be2 Nf5 17.h5 Be3, and Black won.**

### 3. *Petrosian – Smyslov*, USSR Championship, Moscow 1961.

**1.Qc2-a4!**

*“A simple move, but with killing force. Taking the queen to the kingside gives White the opportunity to obtain an irresistible attack” (T.Petrosian).* On 1...g6, besides 2.Qg4 or 2.h4, White could play the equally powerful 2.Be4, intending Rd7, or perhaps Bxg6 and Qg4.

**1...Rfd8 2.Qe4 g6 3.Qg4 h5 (3...Kh7 4.Bxg6+! fg 5.Qxe6 Rf8 6.Rd7 or 6.Nh4) 4.Qh3 f5 (4...Rd6 5.g4 Rcd8 6.g4) 5.Bc4 Rxd1+ 6.Rxd1 Kf7 7.e4 Qf4 8.Re1! Qg4 9.ef Qxc4 10.fg+ Ke8 (10...Kxg6 11.Rxe6+ Kf7 12.Rxc6) 11.g7 e5 12.Qxh5+ Kd7 13.Rd1+ Bd6 14.Bxe5 Nd4 15.Nxd4 1-0**

### 4. *Korchnoi – Hamann*, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978

Black must bring the unfortunately placed knight on h6 over to f6.

**1...Kg8-h7!**

And Ng8-f6 follows.

**2.Bf3 Ng8 3.Qd2 Nf6 4.Re2 (4.Qxd6 Qxd6 5.Rxd6 Re3) 4...Qf7 5.Qxd6 (5.Rxe8!? Rxe8 6.Qxd6 Re3) 5...h4 6.Nf1 Rxe2 7.Bxe2 Re8?! (7...Ne6 8.Bf3 Ne4 9.Qxd7 Nxf4 =) 8.Bg3 Rc8, and the game ended as a draw.**

### 5. *Kasparov – Hübner*, 2nd Match Game, Hamburg 1985

### 1.Rb1-b3!

Once the rook is added, all of White's pieces will be participating in the attack. If 1...Qf6, then 2.Rf3 Qg7 3.Nxf7! Rxf7 4.Be6 Nf6 (4...Rf8 5.Bxf7+ Rxf7 6.Re8+) 5.Qf4 Rf8 6.Qxf6+—.

**1...f5** (1...Re7 would have lasted longer) **2.Bd1** (2.Bxf5!? gf 3.Rg3+ is tempting, too) **2...Rg7** (2...Rh7 3.Rg3) **3.Rh3! Qxb4** (5...g5 6.Bb3+—) **4.Qh6! Qxe1+ 5.Kh2 Kf8 6.Nxg6+ Kg8** (6...Kf7 7.Ne5+ Kf8 8.Rg3+—) **7.Qh8+ Kf7 8.Qxd8 1-0**

**6. Beliavsky – Geller**, USSR Championship, Minsk 1979

### 1...Rd8-a8!-/+

2...Ba6 comes next. By bringing his light-squared bishop into the game, Black obtains the upper hand.

**2.a4?! (2.Bxe4 de-/+; 2.Nc3 Ba6 3.Ncb5 a4-/+)** **2...Ba6 3.Qb3** (3.Nb5 Nxf2!) **3...Bc4 4.Rxc4 dc 5.Qxc4 Rad8 6.Qb3 Rd6 7.h3 Rf6 8.Qc2** (8.Bxe4 Qxe4 9.Nc3 would have been better) **8...Ng5 9.Bb7? Bd6— 10.Nf4 Rxf4! 11.Nc6 Nxh3+ (11...Qf6!?) 12.gh Qg5+ 13.Kf1 Rf6 14.Qd2 Bg3 0-1**



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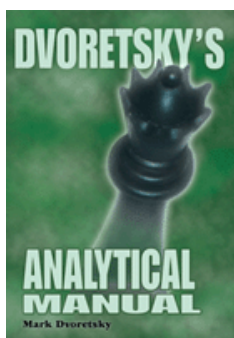
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## The Worst-Piece Principle

### Part Two

*Oll – Hodgson*

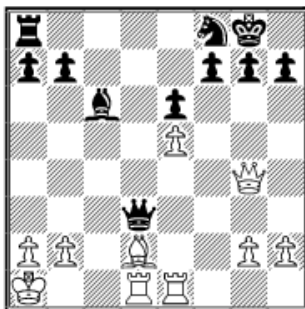
Groningen 1993

(Based on comments by Julian Hodgson)

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5.Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6 6.Bc1-g5 e7-e6 7.Qd1-d2 Bf8-e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f2-f4 Nc6xd4 10.Qd2xd4 Qd8-a5 11.Bf1-c4 Bc8-d7 12.e4-e5 d6xe5 13.f4xe5 Bd7-c6 14.Bg5-d2 Nf6-d7 15.Nc3-d5 Qa5-d8 16.Nd5xe7+ Qd8xe7 17.Rh1-e1 Rf8-d8 18.Qd4-g4 Nd7-f8 19.Bc4-d3 Rd8xd3!? 20.c2xd3 Qe7-d7 21.Kc1-b1?!

At one time, this was considered the strongest move here. But Vasilios Kotronias found an excellent riposte, which he then showed to Hodgson, who used it in the present game. After this, the theoretical main line became 21.Bb4! Qd5 22.Bxf8! Rxf8 23.Kb1 Qxg2 24.Qxg2 Bxg2, with a somewhat inferior, although probably defensible, endgame for Black. Now, consigning oneself from the very start of the game to a difficult fight to draw is not the most pleasant prospect; so gradually, Black ceased to play this line.

21...Qd7xd3+ 22.Kb1-a1



B?

22...h7-h5! 23.Qg4xh5

On 23.Qe2, Hodgson would have replied 23...Qg6, with good compensation for the exchange.

23...Bc6-a4! 24.Bd2-c3

The point of Black's idea can be found in the short variation 24.b3 Qd4+ 25.Kb1 Bb5, with dangerous threats to White's king, which can only be neutralized, if at all, with great difficulty. Thus, White has to return the exchange.

This could have been done by 24.Bb4!? Bxd1 25.Rxd1 Qe4 (25...Qc2 26.Bxf8 Rxf8 27.Qf3=+) 26.Bxf8 Rxf8 27.Qg5=+. The presence of the white e5-pawn on the board renders White's bishop "bad," so it would make sense to get rid of it. On the other hand, the text move should not have led to an inferior game, either.

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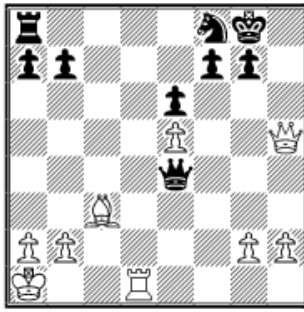


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24...Ba4xd1 25.Re1xd1 Qd3-e4



W?

26.Qh5-g5

White's attacking chances are a mirage, while Black is in a position to whip up an assault by advancing his queenside pawns. White's position would become especially uncomfortable if the knight were to return to play, operating in concert with the queen (queen + knight are, as is well known, a most dangerous tandem). From this, it follows that White should trade queens by **26.Qf3!** The game Hracek – Leko, Brno 1993, saw this move, and continued 26...Qxf3 27.gf Kh7 28.b4 Kg6 29.a4 (29. Rg1+ Kh6 30.Rd1 =) 29...Kf5 30.h4 Rc8 31.Kb2 g6 32.Rd4 Rc7 33.a5 Nd7 34.Rg4 Rc8 35.Kb3 a6, with equality.

The main reason for Lembit Oll's loss in this game was apparently that he would refuse a trade of queens under any circumstances.

26...a7-a5! 27.Qg5-d2

White could have held the balance by **27.h4!?** b5 28.h5 b4 29.Bd2 a4 (29...Rc8!?!=+) 30.Qf4.

27...Nf8-g6!

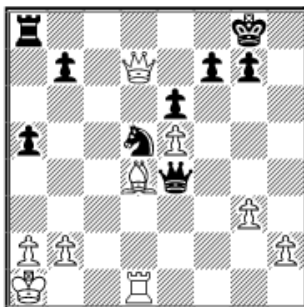
As a consequence of White's passive move, the knight obtains the opportunity to move through either e7 or f4 to the excellent central square d5. White would be ill-advised to take the a5-pawn: 28.Bxa5? Qa4 29.b4 Nxe5.

28.g2-g3 Ng6-e7 29.Qd2-d7?

Now White's position grows difficult. It was necessary to drive the queen from its active position by **29.Qd3!**. But as we have already noted, Oll's list of candidate-moves did not include any moves involving a queen trade.

29...Ne7-d5 30.Bc3-d4

The only move; 30.Qxb7? Nxc3 loses.



B?

### 30...Qe4-e2

Hodgson spent a long time weighing the consequences of simplifying the position by 30...Nb4?! 31.a3 Qd5 32.Qxd5 Nxd5, but was unsure whether or not he could win this endgame. And in fact, the middlegame was more promising.

With the text, he takes away the f-file from the white rook, but he should probably have taken control of a different file, instead: **30...Qc2! 31.Rf1 Rf8**. Now 32.a3 fails against 32...Qd3 (double attack!) 33.Rxf7 Rxf7 34.Qe8+ Rf8 35.Qe6+ Kh8 36.Qxd5 (36.Qh3+ Qh7) 36...a4!? 37.Ka2 Kh7! 38.Qe6 (38.e6 Rf5!) 38...Qxd4 39.Qh3+ Kg6 40.Qe6+ Kh5 41.Qh3+ Kg5—+. And after 32.Qb5, Black could choose either 32...Qd2, 32...Qxh2 33.Qxa5 Qxg3, or 32...b6 33.Bxb6!? (33.a3 Qxh2 34.Qd3 Rc8 35.Qf3 Rc7) 33...Rb8 34.Qd7 Nxb6 35.Qxf7+ Kh8 36.Qxe6 Nd5 37.Qh3+ Qh7 38.Qxh7+ Kxh7, in all cases with an obvious advantage to Black.

30...Qg4, expecting 31.Rf1? Rf8, with the bishop on d4 under attack, would be less convincing. White would reply 31.Rd2, and after 31...Qg5 32.Rd1 Rd8, he has the saving move 33.Be3!.

### 31.Rd1-c1! b7-b5

31...Qd2? 32.Rf1 Qxd4 33.Qxf7+ leads to a perpetual check.

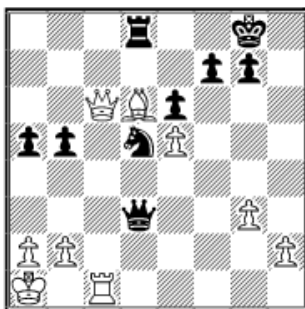
### 32.Bd4-c5 Qe2-d3

Again, the English grandmaster rejects the exchange of queens: 32...Qxe5 33.Qxb5 Rb8 34.Bd4! Rxb5 35.Bxe5 f6 – this endgame offers Black only a small advantage.

### 33.Qd7-c6?!

In Hodgson's opinion, it would have been better to play 33.Qb7, keeping an eye on the f7-pawn. However, after 33...Rd8 34.Bd6 b4, or 34.Be7 Nxe7 35.Qxe7 b4, White's position would remain difficult.

### 33...Ra8-d8 34.Bc5-d6



B?

Black has an indisputable advantage, but how can he make use of it?

### 34...Kg8-h7!?

*Lembit gave me a rather funny look as I played my move. To say I was pleased with 34...Kh7 is something of an understatement – it is the one move that stands out from all others.*

*However, if one examines the position logically, it is actually not so difficult to find. Here is what went through my mind: my queen and knight are superbly centralised on d3 and d5, so there is no need to move them.*

*However, my rook is not pulling its weight on d8. How can I get it into the game? Simple – play my king to g6, and then manoeuvre my rook to f5 via h8 and h5!*

What can White do against this plan of his opponent's? Could he, for instance, enter the endgame by **35.Qc2!?** If 35...Nb4?!, then 36.Bxb4? Qxc2 or 36.Qf2? Rc8! would be bad; and on 36.Qb1, Black would have the strong reply 36...f5!. He would have to play 36.Qxd3 Nxd3 37.Rf1!, meeting 37...f5 with 38.ef!.

Black's best choice then would be **35...Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5!**. After 37.Rc5 g5 (or 37...b4 38.Rxa5 g5), he would obtain a powerful passed f-pawn, but it's unclear whether this would be enough of an advantage to win.

Black's idea – unusual, yes, but also completely in accordance with the worst-piece principle – was awarded two exclamation marks in all the publications. But there were, in fact, some serious alternatives.

For example, a different means of executing the same strategic idea of getting the rook into the game – **34...g5!?** – was worth considering. Black's plan of g5-g4, Kg7, and Rh8 is not easily countered. On 35.Qc2 Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5, he reaches the endgame in a more favorable version, since his opponent lacks the time to attack the queenside pawns: 37.Rc5 f4 38.gf gf 39.Rxb5? f3 40.Bc5 Ne3+-. If 35.Qb7 (threatening 36.Be7), then 35...g4! 36.Be7 (36.a3 b4 is just bad), and now, not 37...Ne3? 38.Qc6, nor 37...Re8?! 38.Bg5, but 37...Qd2!, with a great advantage to Black (38.Kb1 Re8 39.Bd6 Qd3+ 40.Ka1 Kg7, etc.) On 35.h4, there follows 35...g4!.

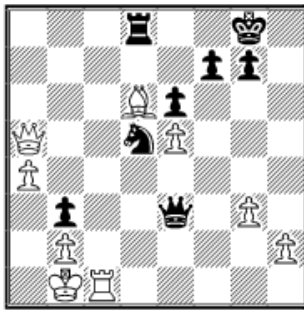
The best, and quite surprising, response to the g-pawn push was pointed out by Alexander Motylev. White can, in turn, justifiably move a pawn away from his king, too: **35.a4!!** ba 36.Qxa4, or 35...b4 36.Qb5 Qd2 37.Kb1, with an unclear position.

Additionally, the same reply – 35.a4!! – also lets White solve his problems in answer to 34...Kh7!?

And now, it will be easier for us to assess the significance of the simple **34...b4!** – which was, in my view, the strongest. For now, Black postpones the activation of his rook, in order to squeeze his opponent even more tightly on the queenside. This move is also useful if White is thinking about entering the endgame: **35.Qc2 Qxc2 36.Rxc2 f5!**. For example, 37.Rc5 g5! 38.Rxa5 f4 39.gf gf, and it will be very hard to stop the passed f-pawn. The attempt to make it harder to create a passed pawn, with 37.h4, runs into a strong riposte 37...Nf6!. In the variation 38.Rc5 (38.ef Rxd6+ ) 38...Ne4 39.Rxa5 Nxe3 40.Rb5 Ne4 41.Rxb4 Nxd6 42.ed, Black does not continue 42...Rxd6?!, in view of 43.a4 e5 44.Rb5, but instead plays 42...e5! immediately: 43.Kb1 (on 43.a4, Black has the same response) 43...f4! 44.Kc2 Rxd6 45.Re4 f3! 46.Re1 e4! 47.Rf1 Kf7+.

After 35.Qc5 Kh7!, the a5-pawn is taboo: 36.Qxa5? Rc8! +.

And finally, on **35.a4**, Black has a good reply in 35...ba, and if 36.Bxa3, then 36...Nb4! Another possibility is **35...b3!?**; for example, 36.Qc4 Nb4! 37.Qc7 (37.Qxd3 Nxd3+ ) 37...Ra8 38.Bxb4 ab 39.Qc6 Ra6+. White could defend more stubbornly with **36.Qb5**, to which Black replies **36...Qd2!** (36...Qe3 37.Qc4 would be inferior) 37.Qc4 Nb6 38.Qf4 (38.Qc3 Qd5+ ) 38...Qxf4 39.gf Nxa4, with a healthy extra pawn for the endgame. Or **37.Kb1 Qe3! 38.Qxa5** (on 38.Qc4 Nb6, we see the downside of White's unfortunate king move from a1 to b1).



**B?**

**38...Kh7!! 39.Qxd8?!** (39.Qe1 Qd3+ 40.Ka1 Ra8 41.Qd1 Rxa4+ 42.Ba3 Qxe1 43.Rxe1 Re4+ ) **39...Nc3+!! 40.bc Qe2 41.Qh4+ Kg6+.**

**35.Qc6-c5?! Kh7-g6!**

*My king is perfectly safe on this square, as it is very difficult for any of White's pieces to attack it. White's bishop on d6 is especially ineffective – it is more like an overgrown pawn.*

**36.h2-h4 Rd8-h8 37.a2-a3?**

Once again, it was necessary to exchange queens: 37.Qc2!, even though the endgame after 37...Qxc2 38.Rxc2 f5! would be a difficult one for White.

**37...Rh8-h5**

Psychologically, one can understand why Hodgson would not deviate from his intended plan to transfer the rook. But after the weakening move a2-a3, the rook could also be of service on the eighth rank. 37...b4 was worth considering; and if 38.Qxa5?! (38.ab would be better, to be followed by an offer to exchange queens), then 38...Rc8!. Taking the rook would lose by force: 39.Rxc8? Qd1+ 40.Rc1 (40.Ka2 b3#) 40...Qxc1 + 41.Ka2 Qc4+ 42.Ka1 (42.Kb1 Qd3+) 42...b3 43.Qe1 Ne3!+.

**38.Qc5-g1**



**B?**

**38...Kg6-h7?**

This error could have cost Black dearly. Hodgson apparently rejected 38...Rf5!? because he was afraid of his king getting chased after 39.g4. But White's attacking resources are clearly insufficient: 39...Rf3 40.h5+ Kg5 41.Qh1 (threatening 42.h6) 41...Rh3 42.Qg2 b4-/+.

And 38...b4!? would have been just as strong as before. Here's a sample variation: 39.Rd1 Qb3 40.Qd4 ba 41.ba (41.Bxa3 Rxe5+ ) 41...Nc3 42.Qd3+ Kh6 (42...Rf5? 43.Rd2) 43.Qd2+ (43.Rd2 Rxe5!) 43...Kh7 44.Rc1 Ne4-/+.

### 39.Rc1-d1?

The double attack by **39.Qa7!** wins a pawn. Hodgson shows Black keeping the upper hand in the variation 39...Rf5 40.Qxa5 Rf2! (40...Qxg3 41.Qxb5) 41.Qe1 (41.Bc5? Rf1! 42.Rxf1 Qxf1+ 43.Ka2 Qc4+) 41...Qd4!? (41...Qxg3 42.Rc2! Rf3 [42...Rg2?? 43.Qe4+] 43.Qe4+ would be unclear) 42.Rb1 Rd2!, “*with total domination.*” Well, not really: he won’t have time to make the planned move b5-b4, after his opponent replies either 43.Bc5 Qd3 44.Qf1 Qxg3 45.Qxf7 Qxe5 46.h5 unclear, or 43.Qf1 Nc3 44.Qxf7 =.

**39.Qe1!** would have achieved the same purpose, creating the threat of 40.g4, in addition to the attack on a5. In fact, White could also have pushed the g-pawn immediately: **39.g4! Rxh4 40.Qf2** (yet another double attack, this time on h4 and f7) 40...Qh3 41.Qxf7 Qxg4 42.Qa7 =.

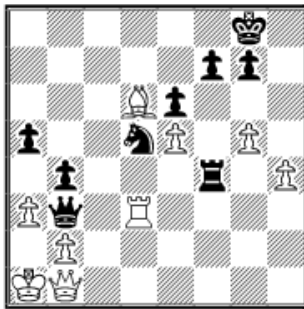
### 39...Qd3-b3 40.Rd1-d2

40.Rf1 Rf5 41.Rxf5 ef-/+ would hold out longer.

### 40...Rh5-f5 41.g3-g4 Rf5-f4 42.Qg1-b1+ Kh7-g8 43.g4-g5 b5-b4!

Black’s attack is irresistible. If 44.h5, then 44...Nc3! 45.bc Qxc3+ 46.Qb2 (46.Rb2 ba) 46...Rf1+ 47.Ka2 b3+ 48.Qxb3 Ra1# (Hodgson).

### 44.Rd2-d3



### B?

The English grandmaster finishes spectacularly.

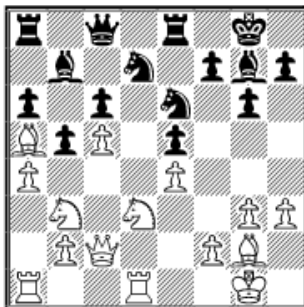
### 44...Nd5-c3! 45.Bd6xb4

Could Black have overlooked this reply?

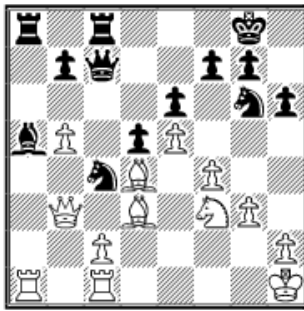
### 45....Qb3-a2+!!

No, he did not. White resigned.

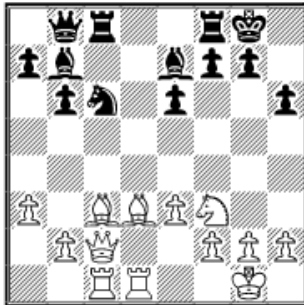
In conclusion, let me offer a simple positional quiz. In all examples, the worst-piece principle will help you to arrive at the correct solution.



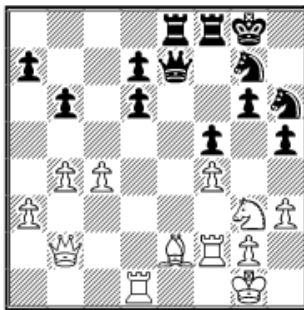
### W?



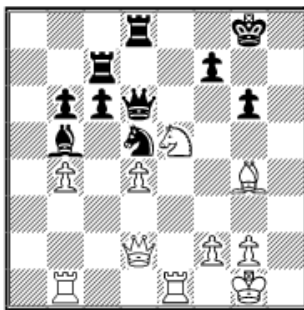
B?



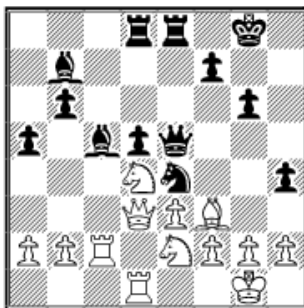
W?



B?



W?



**B?**

## Solutions

### 1. *Korchnoi – Penrose*, Palma de Mallorca 1969

**1.h3-h4! Bg7-f8 2.Bg2-h3+/-**

By bringing the bishop into the game, White has considerably increased the pressure on his opponent's position.

**2...Qb8 3.Kh2 Bc8 4.Bd2 Bb7 5.Be3 Qc7 6.Qc3 Rad8 7.f3 Ra8 8.Rd2 Rad8 9.Kg2 Ra8 10.Rdd1 Rad8 11.Qa5!+—**

The most accurate way of exploiting White's advantage: if 11...Qb8, then 12.Bxe6 followed by 13.Nb4; or if 11...Qc8 12.Nb4, and White may proceed either by doubling rooks on the d-file, or by continuing 13.ab ab 14.Qa7.

**11...Qxa5?! (the trade of queens leads to the destruction of his queenside) 12.Nxa5 Ba8 13.Bxe6! Rxe6 14.Nb4 Kg7 15.Nxa6 1-0**

### 2. *Short – Vaganian*, Biel Interzonal 1985

**1...Ng6-f8!**

Transferring this knight to c5 lets Black take over the initiative.

**2.c3 Nd7 3.Ra2 (3.Bb1 Nc5 [3...Bb6!? 4.Rxa8 Rxa8] 4.Qc2 g6) 3...Nc5 4.Bxc5? (4.Qd1!-/+ was better – White has no attacking chances anyway, and the dark-squared bishop is an important defender of his weaknesses) 4...Qxc5 5.Nd4 Bb6 6.Qb1 Ne3! 7.Re2 Qa3!+ 8.Nb3 Rc7 (White can find no useful moves) 9.h3 h5! 10.Kh2 h4 11.g4 Qa4! 12.Nd4 Rxc3! 13.Rxc3 Qxd4) 11...Rac8 12.Qa2 Qxa2! (12...Qe7 13.Qd2) 13.Rxa2 g6! 14.Nd2 Rxc3 15.Rxc3 Rxc3 16.Be2 Nf5 17.h5 Be3, and Black won.**

### 3. *Petrosian – Smyslov*, USSR Championship, Moscow 1961.

**1.Qc2-a4!**

*“A simple move, but with killing force. Taking the queen to the kingside gives White the opportunity to obtain an irresistible attack” (T.Petrosian).* On 1...g6, besides 2.Qg4 or 2.h4, White could play the equally powerful 2.Be4, intending Rd7, or perhaps Bxg6 and Qg4.

**1...Rfd8 2.Qe4 g6 3.Qg4 h5 (3...Kh7 4.Bxg6+! fg 5.Qxe6 Rf8 6.Rd7 or 6.Nh4) 4.Qh3 f5 (4...Rd6 5.g4 Rcd8 6.g4) 5.Bc4 Rxd1+ 6.Rxd1 Kf7 7.e4 Qf4 8.Re1! Qg4 9.ef Qxc4 10.fg+ Ke8 (10...Kxg6 11.Rxe6+ Kf7 12.Rxc6) 11.g7 e5 12.Qxh5+ Kd7 13.Rd1+ Bd6 14.Bxe5 Nd4 15.Nxd4 1-0**

### 4. *Korchnoi – Hamann*, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978

Black must bring the unfortunately placed knight on h6 over to f6.

**1...Kg8-h7!**

And Ng8-f6 follows.

**2.Bf3 Ng8 3.Qd2 Nf6 4.Re2 (4.Qxd6 Qxd6 5.Rxd6 Re3) 4...Qf7 5.Qxd6 (5.Rxe8!? Rxe8 6.Qxd6 Re3) 5...h4 6.Nf1 Rxe2 7.Bxe2 Re8?! (7...Ne6 8.Bf3 Ne4 9.Qxd7 Nxf4 =) 8.Bg3 Rc8, and the game ended as a draw.**

### 5. *Kasparov – Hübner*, 2nd Match Game, Hamburg 1985

### 1.Rb1-b3!

Once the rook is added, all of White's pieces will be participating in the attack. If 1...Qf6, then 2.Rf3 Qg7 3.Nxf7! Rxf7 4.Be6 Nf6 (4...Rf8 5.Bxf7+ Rxf7 6.Re8+) 5.Qf4 Rf8 6.Qxf6+—.

**1...f5** (1...Re7 would have lasted longer) **2.Bd1** (2.Bxf5!? gf 3.Rg3+ is tempting, too) **2...Rg7** (2...Rh7 3.Rg3) **3.Rh3! Qxb4** (5...g5 6.Bb3+—) **4.Qh6! Qxe1+ 5.Kh2 Kf8 6.Nxg6+ Kg8** (6...Kf7 7.Ne5+ Kf8 8.Rg3+—) **7.Qh8+ Kf7 8.Qxd8 1-0**

**6. Beliavsky – Geller**, USSR Championship, Minsk 1979

### 1...Rd8-a8!-/+

2...Ba6 comes next. By bringing his light-squared bishop into the game, Black obtains the upper hand.

**2.a4?! (2.Bxe4 de-/+; 2.Nc3 Ba6 3.Ncb5 a4-/+)** **2...Ba6 3.Qb3** (3.Nb5 Nxf2!) **3...Bc4 4.Rxc4 dc 5.Qxc4 Rad8 6.Qb3 Rd6 7.h3 Rf6 8.Qc2** (8.Bxe4 Qxe4 9.Nc3 would have been better) **8...Ng5 9.Bb7? Bd6— 10.Nf4 Rxf4! 11.Nc6 Nxh3+ (11...Qf6!?) 12.gh Qg5+ 13.Kf1 Rf6 14.Qd2 Bg3 0-1**

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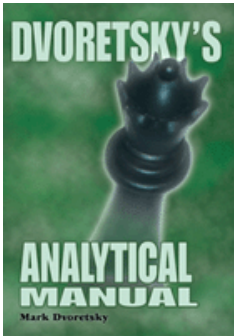




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## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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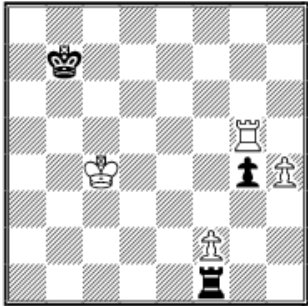
## Solid Endgame Knowledge

In the endgame, everybody makes mistakes! It’s partly because of the modern-day time-control, that condemns players to perpetual time-scrambles in the endgame; and it’s partly because, in our day, the overwhelming majority of masters and grandmasters have gone crazy studying openings, and pay almost no attention to rounding out any other phase of their game. And that’s sad, because knowing endgame theory not only prevents a player from making elementary endgame blunders, but also aids in the growth of their overall understanding of the game, and heightens the class of their play.

Of course, all endgame problems are far from being elementary in nature; at times, we must put forth a great deal of effort in order to unlock a position’s secrets. On the other hand, the difficult, subtle solutions are, as a rule, still based upon well-known theoretical ideas and standard techniques. Solid endgame knowledge may not guarantee that you’ll always find the right move, but at least it will increase your chances of success.

After deep analysis of an endgame played in the European Championship of 2009, I came to some rather interesting and instructive conclusions that I would now like to share with my readers.

*Grachev – Navara*  
Budva 2009



After the obvious moves 48.Rxg4 Rxf2 49.Kd5 Kc7 50.Ke6 (White gives the opposing king a “shoulder block,” preventing the latter from reaching the king’s wing), the position is most likely a win. But under tournament conditions, with the endgame tablebases temporarily inaccessible, this assessment would not seem obvious even to very strong grandmasters.

Note that Black is not obliged to take the f2-pawn: 48...Kc6 49.Rf4 Kd6 50.Ke4 Ke6 would be worth considering. This particular position with f- and h-pawns would also be hard to evaluate. Such positions are mostly drawn, but here the king is cut off on the f-file, and it’s hard to tell whether this circumstance would consign Black to defeat, or whether he might still defend.

And finally, it’s important to note the possibility of transposing moves, in order to rule out Black’s ability to reach the f- and h-pawn endgame: 48. Kd5 Rxf2 (on 48...Kc7, the simplest reply is 49.Ke6, although White also has 49.h5) 49.Rxg4. Logically, this has to be the most accurate continuation. On the other hand, in a practical game situation, it sometimes makes sense to leave your opponent a choice. First of all, he will have to expend valuable time; and second, it gives him a chance to make a mistake (if it turns out that the situation with one extra pawn is drawn, while the one with two is a win).

As you can see, the decision Boris Grachev had to make was far from obvious. In the actual game, he either guessed wrong, or else he simply failed to notice the favorable transposition of moves.

**48.Rxg4?**

White wins after 48.Kd5! Rxf2 49.Rxg4 Kc7 50.Ke6! Rh2 51.Rd4, although it’s not an easy win to demonstrate.

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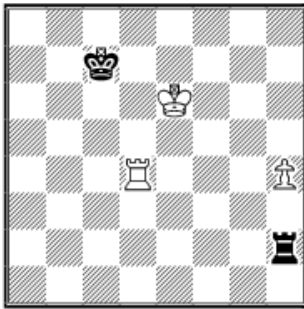
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Every tempo has value here. The waiting move 51...Rh1? would render his opponent's task much easier: 52.Kf6 Kc6 53.Kg6 Rg1+ (53...Kc5 54.Rg4) 54.Kh6. White continues by advancing king and pawn as far as possible, followed by bringing the rook to g8, letting the king out of its prison. Now if the black king were cut off on the e-file instead, this plan would not work, since in the time it took the rook to get to g8, the black king would arrive at f7.

The position under discussion should be part of every chessplayer's endgame arsenal. You will find it in my [Endgame Manual](#), in Diagrams 9-34 and 9-35.

51...Kc6!

Here straightforward play lets the win slip: 52.Kf6? Kc5 53.Rg4 Kd6! 54.Kg6 Ke7 55.h5 Kf8 =. The black king gets back to the kingside in time.

A rather unexpected strategy leads to the goal. White must gradually force the opposing king to the edge of the board. Then, thanks to the threat of mate, White will be able to win the deciding tempo.

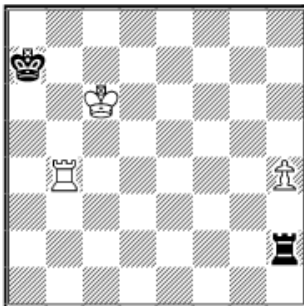
52.Rc4+! Kb5 53.Kd5 Rh1 54.Rg4 Kb6

Nothing is changed by 54...Rh2 55.Kd6! (threatening 56.Rg5+ and 57.h5) 55...Kb6 56.Rb4+.

55.Kd6 Kb7 (55...Kb5 56.Rg5+ and 57.h5) 56.Rc4

Now we have the same situation we reached in the last previous diagram. On 56...Rh2, 56.Ke6 is decisive, so Black must keep his king close to the rook, allowing himself to be pushed further back.

56...Kb6 57.Rb4+! Ka5 58.Kc5 Rh2 59.Rg4 Ka6 (59...Rh1 60.Kc6) 60.Kc6 Ka7 61.Rb4



This is the position White was aiming for. Black can't play 61...Ka6? 62.Ra4#. And if not, then White will finally be able to finish ahead of his opponent in the king race to the king's wing.

61...Rh1 62.Kd6 Ka6 63.Ke6 Ka5 64.Rg4 Kb6 65.Kf6 Kc5 66.Kg6 Kd6 (66...Rd1!? 67.h5 Rd6+ holds out a little longer, but doesn't change the assessment of the position) 67.h5 Ke7 68.h6 Kf8 69.h7 Rh3 70.Rg5, with 71.Rf5+ Ke7 72.Rh5+— coming.

**48...Kc6!**

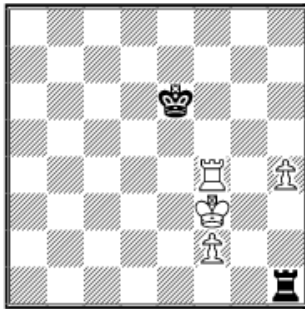
David Navara makes the right choice in refusing to recover one of his pawns.

**49.Rf4 Kd6 50.Kd4 Ke6 51.Ke4 Rg1** (51...Ra1 is equivalent) **52.Kf3**

The computer provides the proper assessment of this position (draw!), and shows the right and wrong moves; but it can't judge and summarize the results obtained – that's up to the commentator. It turns out that White wins if he can advance his pawn to h5 supported by the king. Correspondingly, Black must either prevent the pawn from advancing, or allow it to advance, but only in a situation where the king can't protect it, and White must play Rh4, opening the way for the opposing king to get to the h-pawn.

**52...Ke7?**

A subtle error, which should have led to a loss. The only correct move was 52...Rh1!, making it harder to play h4-h5.

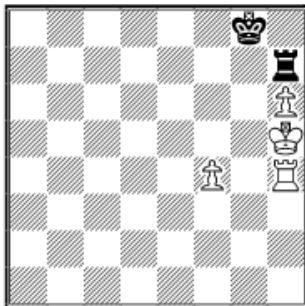


53.Kg4 is met by 53...Rg1+! 54.Kh5 Rg8! =, and Black switches to “frontal attack mode.” For those unfamiliar with this technique, I would recommend studying my [Endgame Manual](#) (the section on “Pawn In Its Own Half of the Board,” from the chapter on rook endings).

And on 53.Kg2 Ra1 54.h5, White’s king is now too far away from the h-pawn, allowing Black to play 54...Ra5! 55.Rh4 (55.h6 Rh5 =) 55...Kf7!, when Black’s king blockades the pawn, and he draws without much difficulty.

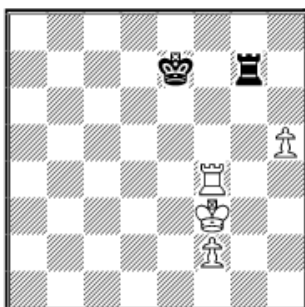
54.Rf8 (instead of 54.h5) doesn’t cut it either after 54...Ke7! (but not 54...Ra3? 55.f3 Ke7 56.Rf4 Ra8 57.Kh3 Rh8 58.Kg4 Rg8+ 59.Kh5 Ke6 60.Kh6+–, with the pawn still on f2, Black could save himself here by 60...Ke5) 55.Rf3 Ra8! (55...Ke6? would lose to 56.h5 Ra5 57.h6, when 57...Rh5 could be met by 58.Rh3) 56.Kh3 (56.h5 meets the same reply) 56...Rh8! =. Thanks to the “frontal attack,” Black succeeds in keeping the pawn at h4.

Curiously, the preceding diagram turns out to be a mutual zugzwang position. If it were Black’s move in that position (after 51...Rh1? 52.Kf3!), he loses. For example 52...Rh2 53.Kg4 Rg2+ 54.Kh3 Rg8 55.h5 +–, or 52...Ke5 53.Kg2! Ra1 54.Rf8+–. The most complex line is 52...Rg1!? 53.h5 Rg5 54.Rh4 Rg7 (after 54...Kf7, 55.h6 Kg8 doesn’t work, because of 56.Rg4, and 55...Rg8 is also hopeless, because of 56.h7 Rh8 57.Kg4) 55.h6 Rh7 56.Kg4 Kf7 57.Kh5 Kg8 58.f4



Black can only save himself if he can get his rook out to an active position, while not allowing his king to be cut off on the eighth rank. He hasn’t enough time for it: 58...Ra7 59.Rg4+ Kh8 (59...Kh7 60.Rg7+) 60.f5 Kh7 61.f6+–, or 58...Rf7 59.Rg4+!(59.Kg6 Rg7+!) 59...Kh8 (59...Kh7 60.Rg7+) 60.Kg6 Rh7 61.Rh4! (but not 61.f5? Rxh6+!) 61...Kg8 62.f5 Rg7+ 63.Kh5+–.

### 53.h5 Rg7



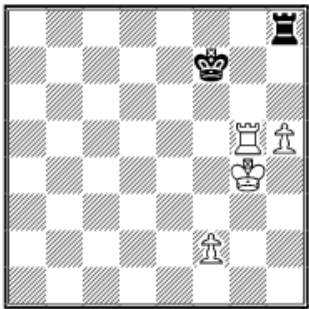
### 54.h6?

This overhasty pawn push spoils the win once and for all.

54.Rf5 Ke6 55.Kf4 suggests itself. For example, 55...Rg1 56.Rf8! Ke7 57.Ra8 Kf6 58.Ra6+ Kf7 59.Kf5+– here, the Black king is forced back to the eighth rank, and such positions are generally hopeless. White would have more complex problems to solve in the line 55...Rg2!? 56.f3 Rh2. The sole winning move is 57.Kg4!, and then 57...Rg2+ 58.Kh3 Rg8 59.Rf4 Ke5 60.Rh4! Rf8!? 61.Kg3 Rg8+ 62.Kf2 Rh8 63.h6 Rh7 (otherwise 64.h7) 64.Kg3 Kf6 65.f4 Kf7 66.Kg4 (another possible way is 66.f5 Kg8 67.Rg4+ Kh8 68.f6! Rf7 69.Rg6 Ra7 70.Kh4 Ra1 71.Rg4! Kh7 72.Rf4 +–) 66...Kg8 67.Kh5, and we have reached the position we know from

the second-last diagram.

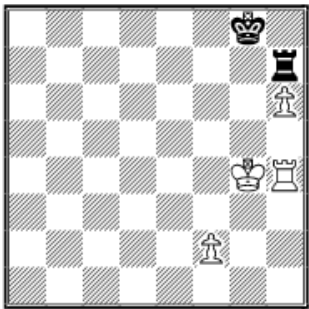
There's also another way to win, beginning with 54.Rg4. Black has nothing better than 54...Rh7 (54...Rf7+ 55.Kg3) 55.Rg5 Rh8 (55...Kf6 56.Kg4) 56.Kg4 Kf7.



The exact same endgame (with the insignificant difference being that the pawn there was on f3) was won convincingly by Paul Keres against Alexei Sokolsky in the Chigorin Memorial Tournament of 1947.

57.Rf5+! Kg7 58.Kg5 (58.Ra5!? Kh7! 59.Ra7+! Kh6 60.Ra6+ Kh7 61.Kg5 Rg8+ 62.Rg6 Ra8 63.f4+- would have been strong, too) 58...Rg8! (the most stubborn) 59.Rf6! (the only move) 59...Kh7+ (59...Ra8 60.h6+ Kg8 61.Kg6 Kh8 62.f4 Rg8+ 63.Kh5 Rg1 64.Rf8+! Kh7 65.Rf7+ Kh8 would only have extended the game somewhat, not changed the outcome) 60.Rg6 Ra8 61.f4 Ra1 62.Re6! (but not 62.f5? Rg1+! 63.Kf6 Ra1!, with a draw) 62...Rg1+ 63.Kf6 Rf1 64.f5 Rf2 65.Re5 Rh2 66.Re7+ Kh6 67.Re8 Kh7 68.Ke6 Re2+ 69.Kf7 Ra2 70.f6 Ra6 71.Ke7 Ra7+ 72.Kf8 Ra6 73.f7 Ra7 74.Rc8 Ra1 75.Ke7 1-0.

**54...Rh7! 55.Rh4 Kf7 56.Kg4 Kg8**



**57.Kg5**

Perhaps 57.Kh5!? would have left White a few more practical chances: 57...Ra7 (57...Rf7!? 58.Rg4+ Kh8 59.f4 Rf8! =, or 59...Rf6! =) 58.Rg4+. In our analysis, we obtained this position with the pawn at f4, which was a win. But here, Black can draw: 58...Kh8! 59.f4 Ra5+! (59...Ra6! is also possible, threatening 60...Rxh6+!; and if 60.Rg6, then 60...Ra1) 60.Rg5 Ra1 (Black only holds on thanks to the stalemate threat: on 61.f5, there comes 61...Rh1+ 62.Kg6 Rxh6+!) 61.Re5 Rh1+ 62.Kg6 Rg1+ 63.Rg5 Rh1! (but not 63...Ra1? 64.f5+-), and once again White cannot advance the f-pawn because of the stalemate after 64...Rxh6+! 65.Kxh6.

**57...Ra7 58.Rf4 Ra1 59.Re4 Ra5+ 60.Kf6 Kh7**

The king has finally reached the square in front of the pawn, and the draw is now obvious.

**61.Re8 Ra4 62.Kg5 Ra5+ 63.Kf6 Ra4 64.Rf8 Rf4+ 65.Ke7 Rxf8 66.Kxf8 Kxh6 67.f4 Kg6 68.f5+ Kxf5 ½-½**

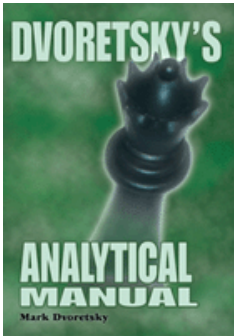




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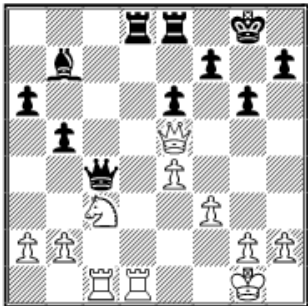


A Lesson in Positional Play

There are different ways to expand your mastery of positional play. One is to study well-played and carefully annotated games between strong players. I found the following game fragment in an outstanding collection of exercises, prepared by Andrei Volokitin and his trainer, Vladimir Grabinski, entitled, [Perfect Your Chess](#) (the Russian edition came out under the title: “Self-Teacher For Wonderboys”).

Of course, the authors’ attention was concentrated on the starting position, offered to their readers for independent solving. Yet, analysis demonstrated that the game’s further course offered a number of instructive episodes, related to various aspects of positional mastery: knowing how to play with pawns and pieces, prophylaxis, the choice between steady improvement of the position and forcing play, etc. Diagrams that have a question mark placed under them, after the indication of whose turn it is to move, may be used as exercises.

*Ponomariov - Svidler*  
Sofia 2006



1.?

White has nothing, or next to nothing, here. 23.Nd5?? fails to 23... ed!—+. (White would also have to think about 23...b4.) If 23.a3, then 23...b4 24. ab Qxb4 =. On 23.b3, there follows 23...Qb4 24.Qf6 Rxd1+ 25.Rxd1 Qe7 =. In the variation 23.Qf6 Qc5+ 24.Kf1!? Rxd1+ 25.Rxd1 Qe7, White could try 26.e5!?, when Black would not need study the position that arises after 26...Qxf6 27.ef b4 (with 28...Bd5 to follow), since he could simply continue 26...b4 unclear.

Ruslan Ponomariov finds an outstanding setup for his pieces.

23.Kg1-f2!!

White prepares to retreat his knight to e2, and then to invade at c7 with his rook. The king can be tucked away at g3, if necessary, where it will be safer than it was on the first rank. Another factor is that Black’s situation worsens with each trade, since the king’s proximity to the center grows more important in the endgame.

23...Qc4-c6

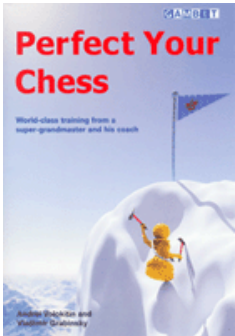
After 23...b4?! 24.Ne2, exchanging queens by 24...Qb5 25.Qxb5 ab 26. Rxd8 (26.Rd4!?) 26...Rxd8 27.Ke3 leads to a difficult endgame for Black. And chasing the pawn by 24...Qxa2? would be refuted by 25. Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Rc7 Ba8 27.Nf4! (with the threat of 28.Nh5!) 27...Rf8 28. Re7+—, with the unstoppable threat of 29.Nxe6. If he wants to, White could even play 28.Kg3!?, intending to continue marching his king by Kg4-g5-g6 into the opposing camp, since even winning the queen after Kg5 by f7-f6+ would not keep Black from getting mated.

If 23...Qb4!?, then 24.Rxd8 Rxd8 25.Ne2, intending 26.Rc7.

24.Nc3-e2

This was consistent. However, **24.Na4!?** deserved serious consideration. Similar problems continually arise during play – sometimes, when we are seeking to realize the advantage we have achieved. Should we follow our intended plan, or seize upon a sudden tactical opportunity? Will this path increase our advantage, or make it disappear? Most often, only attentive calculation will allow us to establish the truth – but should we be spending time and energy on it? Should we follow our calculations, or

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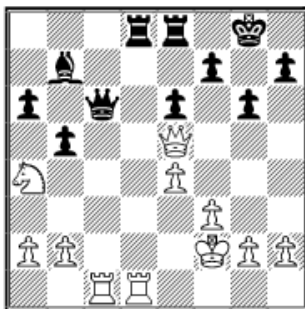


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make an intuitive decision? I have no general recipe for this – such problems must be resolved afresh each time.



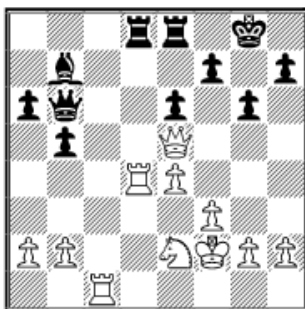
It's hard to give Black good advice in the position with two rooks versus queen that arises after 24...Rxd1 25.Rxc6 Bxc6 26.Nc5. His bishop has no future, his rooks are separated, and his opponent is dominant on both wings. The a6-pawn is under fire, while he must consider the queen invading at c7, the solidifying move b2-b4, and also the advance of the h- and g-pawns. On 26...Red8, White wins by 27.Nxe6 fe 28.Qxe6+ Kg7 29.Qxc6. 26...a5 27.Qc7 would be bad for Black; and after 26...Rc1, White can choose among 27.b4, 27.h4 or 27.Nxa6 Rd8 (27...Ra8 28.Nb4 Be8 29.g4) 28.Ke3. Nor does Black's position get any easier after 26...Rd2+ 27.Kg3.

Black would probably need to try 24...Rd2+!? 25.Kg3 (25.Rxd2 Qxc1 26.Qc3 Qxc3 27.Nxc3 Rc8 is weaker) 25...Rc2. He's not overly afraid of 26.Rd6?! Rxg2+! 27.Kxg2 Qxc1 unclear, or 26.Rxc2?! Qxc2 27.Rd7 Bc8 28.Nc5 Bxd7 28.Nxd7 Rd8 =. But White plays 26.Nc5! Rxc1 27.Rxc1, with 28.Rd1 or 28.b4 to follow, and keeps a significant advantage.

In the game, Ruslan Ponomarev's achievements were more modest.

#### 24...Qc6-b6+ 25.Rd1-d4!

Cool play: having his rook pinned doesn't bother Ponomarev. A simpler defense is 25.Kg3 Rxd1 26.Rxd1 Rd8.



1...?

#### 25...Rd8-d7?

The natural move, but not the best. Black increases the pressure on the rook, but he will be unable to exploit the pin.

On 25...b4, White forces favorable exchanges by 26.Qc5+/-.

And Grabinski and Volokitin's recommendation of 25...a5 26.Qc5 Qa6 would be met by 27.Rxd8 Rxd8 28.Qe7 Qb6+ (28...Rc8 29.Rxc8+ Bxc8 30.Qc7+/-) 29.Ke1 Rf8 30.Rc7 Ba6 31.Qc5+/-.

For both sides, control of the c-file is more important than control of the neighboring d-file, which is why Black should have played **25...Rc8!**. For example, 26.Qd6 Rc6!? (in the variation 26...Qxd6 27.Rxd6 Rxc1 28.Nxc1 Rc8 29.Nd3, Black risks losing his unfortunately placed bishop) 27.Rxc6 Bxc6 28.e5 Rc8+/-.

#### 26.b2-b4!

Ponomarev fixes the opposing queenside pawns on the same color squares as Black's bishop, while also increasing his control over the c5-square.

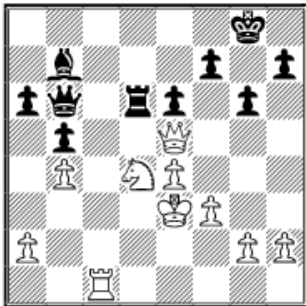
#### 26...Re8-d8 27.Kf2-e3!

The centralized king is perfectly safe.

#### 27...Rd7xd4

27...a5 28.a3 changes little.

#### 28.Ne2xd4 Rd8-d6



1.?

White would like to post either the rook or the queen at c5; there are other attractive continuations as well. But if we use prophylactic thinking – that is, if we ask ourselves, What is my opponent planning? – then we arrive at the move played by Ponomariov.

**29.Qe5-f6!**

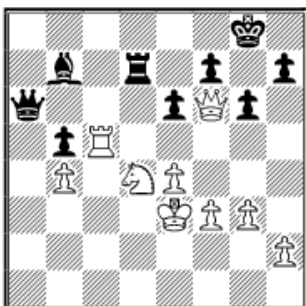
It's important to keep the black queen out of d8.

**29...Rd6-d7 30.Rc1-c5 Qb6-d6 31.g2-g3 a6-a5**

Black's pieces are penned inside their own camp. Peter Svidler tries to show some activity: he opens the a-file, hoping to generate counterplay. But his decision is questionable, as it also weakens the pawn at b5. Perhaps he should have stuck with the waiting game; for instance, 31...h5! (and possibly h5-h4 later on).

**32.a2-a3 a5xb4 33.a3xb4 Qd6-a6**

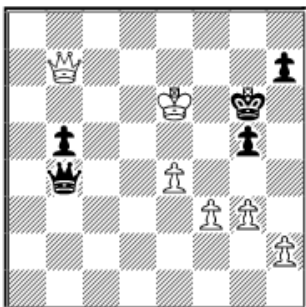
A move that is logically understandable, although certainly not necessary (33...h5!?).



1.?

**34.Nd4-e2**

Once again, we must deal with the same kind of problem we faced on the twenty-fourth move. White had an interesting try at simplification available: **34.Rc7!?**, whose consequences are not at all simple to calculate. The game might continue 34...Qa3+ 35.Kf4 Rxc7 36.Qd8+ Kg7 37.Qxc7 (37.Nxe6+ fe 38.Qxc7+ Kh6 39.Qxb7 Qxb4 results in an even queen endgame) 37...g5+! (without this counterstroke, Black's position would have to be considered hopeless) 38.Ke5 (38.Kxg5? Qe3+ 39.Kg4 Qxd4 40.Qxb7 Qxb4; 38.Kg4 Kg6! 39.Qxb7 h5+ 40.Kh3 Qa1 41.Qxb5 Qxd4 =) 38...Qxb4 39.Nxe6+ (39.h4 Qc4 =) 39...Kg6 40.Qxb7 fe 41.Kxe6.



1...?

Evidently, Black could justifiably expect to draw the game after 41...Qc4 + (but not 41...Qb3+?! 42.Qd5 Qxf3? 43.Qf5+) 42.Qd5 Qc8+ 43.Qd7 (43.Ke5 Qc3+ 44.Kd6 Qxf3) 43...Qc4+ (43...Qxd7+? would lose to 44.Kxd7 b4 45.e5 b3 46.e6 b2 47.e7 b1Q 48.e8Q+ Kg7 49.Qe7+ Kg6 50.Qe4+) 44.Kd6 Qd3+ 45.Ke7 Qxf3.

Ponomariov is in no hurry to force matters, preferring to maintain the tension – and it appears he was right.

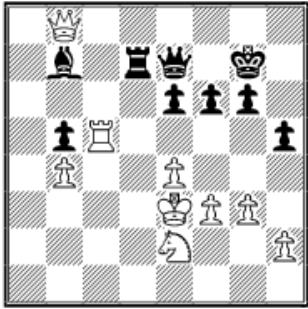
**34...Qa6-d6 35.Qf6-c3**

The immediate 35.Qd4 Qe7 36.Qe5 would be more accurate.

**35...h7-h5 36.Qc3-d4 Qd6-e7 37.Qd4-e5 f7-f6**

37...Kh7 would have been safer.

**38.Qe5-b8+ Kg8-g7**



**1.?**

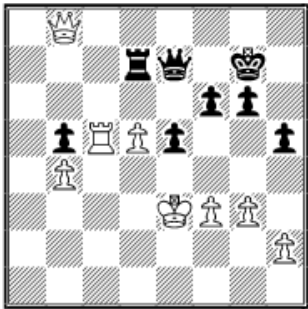
Ponomariov has outplayed his opponent, and now the natural move **39.e5!** would have secured his positional advantage (39...Bd5 40.Nc3). And it's possible that **39.f4!** would have been still more exact.

The indecisive continuation he actually chose should have let White's advantage disappear.

**39.Ne2-c3? e6-e5! 40.Nc3-d5 Bb7xd5?**

Of course Black would like to get rid of the powerful knight, but he did not need to rush this exchange. 40...Qe6! or 40...Qf7! would have equalized completely.

**41.e4xd5**



**1...?**

**41...f7-f5?**

A second successive error puts Black in difficult straits.

Mihail Marin's recommendation, 41...Ra7?, is also dubious: White replies 42.d6 Ra3+ 43.Ke4! f5+ (only move) 44.Kd5+/-.

Black needed to drive the queen away from b8 first, by 41...Rb7!; only after 42.Qc8 (or 42.Qa8) should he play 42...Ra7 – this way, the d-pawn would be unable to advance immediately. 43.Rxb5 would be met by 43...Rc7!, followed by f7-f5.

**42.Qb8xb5 f5-f4+ 43.Ke3-f2 e5-e4**

Black is not to be envied after 43...fg+ 44.hg h4 45.Qc4 hg+ 46.Kxg3, either.

**44.f3xe4 f4xg3+ 45.h2xg3 Qe7-f6+ 46.Kf2-g2 Qf6-b2+ 47.Kg2-h3**

The rest is elementary.

**47...Rf7 48.Qd3 Qxb4 49.Qc3+ Qxc3 50.Rxc3 Re7 51.Rc4 Kf6 52.Kh4 Ke5**

52...Re8 53.Rc6+ Kf7 54.Re6.

**53.Rc6! 1-0**

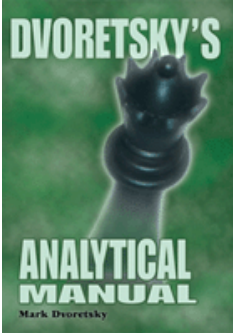




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Enriching Your Strategic Arsenal

People are not computers! We cannot find the right moves simply by combing through the variations. We all (some to a greater or lesser degree, whether clearly or subtly) must evaluate the situation as it arises over the board, rely upon positional considerations, bring standard plans to life, and execute familiar strategic techniques.

When we begin to study the game, we learn, with the aid of trainers and/or manuals, the most important chess principles. As our playing strength increases, it becomes ever more difficult to expand the arsenal of strategic knowledge. New ideas are no longer generally known; they are not, as a rule, formalized – that is, not expressed in exact verbal form – in fact, sometimes they contradict one another. For every rule of chess, there are many exceptions, which sometimes turn into rules themselves. They’re just more subtle, less obvious.

A chess player grows, first of all, on the basis of the games he has played, his analysis and independent thinking. But his own practical experience is not sufficient: it makes no sense to disparage the tremendously valuable information contained in good books, articles, and annotations to the games of the leading grandmasters. All that matters is that the annotator was competent and honest, that he knew enough to uncover and demonstrate the important general ideas hidden behind the moves and variations.

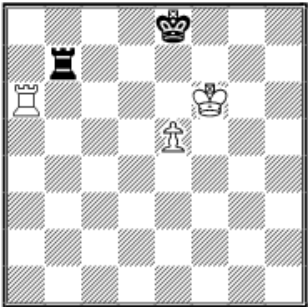
Extracting useful information from chess texts is the theme of the lengthy article I now offer you. The examples we will go through will acquaint you with useful strategic ideas, which may not be generally known. This article consists of two parts. The first part will be a critique, composed of examples of material badly presented, which will disorient the reader, and might actually hinder his development. By contrast, our examination of the games and fragments in the second part is based upon interesting commentaries written at various times by different authors.

I

One obvious and frequently encountered cause of “disinformation” is mistaken analysis. Everybody makes mistakes – what can you do? Sometimes, deeply thought-out judgments and far-reaching conclusions are based upon comparatively simple tactical oversights. The reader who discovers the mistake must consider the instructive episode afresh, sometimes even rethinking the entire concept he has been presented with, even when the presenter is a well-respected authority.

Understandably, such errors are more likely to be found in the writings of under-qualified and/or dishonest authors. And the worst that such authors can do is not even their concrete errors – the trouble is that sometimes, they do not try, or are simply unable correctly to understand and adequately convey to the reader the ideas behind the position.

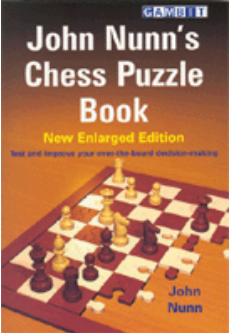
I begin with the simplest examples, taken from endgames. In an interesting book of exercises entitled [John Nunn’s Chess Puzzle Book](#), the grandmaster reproduces a few fragments from another book published in England, *The Batsford Chess Encyclopedia*, by Nathan Divinsky. Here is one of them:



Divinsky writes:

*The correct way to defend is 1...Rb1. Then neither 2.Ra8+ Kd7 nor 2.Ke6 Kf8 (to the short side) 3.Ra8+ Kg7 4.Re8 Ra1 nor 4.Kd6 Kf7 leads to anything for White.*

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Nunn asks:

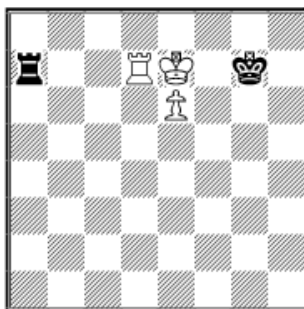
*How many moves in this analysis throw away half a point? There is a section in his book called “Clues,” and for this example, the answer provided is rather mysterious: The subtleties of R+p vs. R are irrelevant if you can promote your pawn by force.*

The answer: there are three mistaken moves (1...Rb1?, 2.Ke6?, and 4...Kf7?); additionally, two of the three positions Divinsky calls drawn are in fact wins!

Perhaps you are thinking that this kind of thing could only have been written by a very weak player? Hardly!

After retiring from many years of service as a high-ranking bureaucrat and going off to live in the USA, grandmaster Nikolai Krogius decided to earn some money by writing an endgame manual. It is true that, in all those years, he had spent no time on chess in general or on the endgame in particular, nor was he interested in either one. “Who cares,” he probably thought, “after all, I was a decent player once. Shouldn’t I be able to pull some endgames out of different endgame manuals, recall a few of my own, and put together my own little book out of the collection?”

Unfortunately, either his memory has failed him, or the grandmaster’s endgame knowledge in the old days wasn’t up to par. He failed even to check his material against the most elementary guidebooks, and the result was a hopeless little book from a methodological standpoint, containing a whole raft of elementary errors. Here are a couple of examples.



**1...Ra8!**

*All other moves, for example 1...Ra6, lose (2.Ke8+ and 3.e7).*

Utter bunk! Everybody knows that all rook retreats except 1...Ra6?? lead to a draw. After 2.Ke8+ Kf6! 3.e7 Ke6 4.Kf8 (there’s nothing better), the rook checks on the f-file; only with the rook at a6 is this check impossible.

And here’s what the author has to say about those situations of queen vs. rook and pawn:

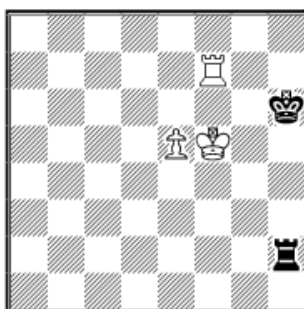
*With an already advanced non-rook pawn, the stronger side wins because he can drive the king out of his fortress from behind. (There can be drawing possibilities if the pawn is far-advanced.)*

The grandmaster was evidently unaware that this assessment is wrong for positions with a knight pawn.

It would be easy to expect, though very hard to track, the negative consequences of this sort of “instructivization” upon trusting chess players. Perhaps the following episode will both amuse you and force you to think a bit about the subject.

In the autumn of 2008, I and Artur Yusupov conducted a joint seminar in Germany for two groups of students: strong players and amateurs. At the session with the amateur group covering endgame theory, I showed the following endgame:

**Svidler – Pelletier**  
Biel 2001



**1.?**

The black king stands, “correctly,” on the short side. On the other hand, if White could cut him off on the g-file (with 51.Rf7-g8!), this would be completely meaningless, as White could then advance his king and pawn unhindered.

But such moves only work for certain underhanded blitz specialists. Under normal rules of play, the black king cannot be prevented from getting to g6 (or g7). So it’s important to prevent the only effective plan of defense: checks from the long side. With this in mind, the rook must go to the a-file (on the b-file, the rook would be too close to the king and the pawn).

White wins after 51.Ra7! Rf2+ 52.Ke6 Kg6 53.Ra8!, etc.

Peter Svidler played **51.Kf6??** (51.e6?? is also a mistake: 51...Rf2+ 52.Ke5 Rxf7 53.ef Kg7 54.Ke6 Kf8 => **51...Rf2+ 52.Ke7 Ra2!**)

Black’s rook controls the long side, and now the position is drawn.

**53.Rf1 Kg6!** (not allowing the king to be cut off by 54.Rg1 – now Black is ready to start the side checks) **54.Rd1 Ra7+ 55.Rd7 Ra8 56.Rc7 Kg7 57.e6 Kg6 58.Kd6 Ra6+ 59.Kd7 Ra8 ½-½**

After setting out the pieces on the demonstration board, I asked the group what White should play. One player, no longer young, suggested the same move as in the game: 51.Kf6. I asked what was the basis for his choice, and was floored by his response: to take the opposition! Of course, here his reliance on the opposition was absolutely uncalled for: the point behind that concept is mutual zugzwang, and there’s not a trace of that here!

When I told that story to Yusupov, he noted that many Germans would have given the same response (as he had already found out himself). The reason: the endgame handbook approved by the German Chess Federation insists that the opposition is the most important principle of the endgame, and that you should always strive to take it! Apparently, this handbook was written by a candidate-master, a longtime teacher of chess, who believes that therefore, he knows a lot about it. (This, by the way, is a standard misconception: the lengthy experience of many trainers is definitely not to be confused with successful experience. This is why their recommendations, based on that experience, are so frequently misguided.)

Even absurdities as clear as these are unfortunately not going to be obvious to many readers, in view of their uncritical approach to the material they are studying, or their own insufficient chess qualifications. This makes them even more prone to believe in the assertions and recommendations of famous chess players and trainers, who, one might think, must have analyzed completely what they’re putting forth. But in fact, certainly not everything written by such authors is worthy of attention and study, especially when they are prone to replace concrete descriptions of a game’s actual events with attempts to twist them into some theory or other.

It’s not productive to try to get by completely without theory, limiting oneself just to analyzing variations. When we study chess, we are dealing with an enormous number of tremendously varied concrete situations. It’s not possible to absorb and commit to memory this whole chaos, so we isolate from it typical, repeating elements, organize our observations, and convert them into theories, or individual rules – because it is only in such a form that we are capable of understanding such a hugely complex system as chess, and of teaching our own observations to others. So yes – theory is necessary, but it’s important to understand that it is only an instrument for understanding, and certainly not a set of absolute truths, operative under any circumstances.

There are some chess works extant, whose authors propagandize their ideas as “simple systems,” guaranteed to give a player the key to solving any problems over the board. To the eyes of a specialist, such attempts are sacrilegious, even though they can “hoodwink” many an unskilled reader – such is the lure of a panacea that works on every problem.

Take, for example, the books written by grandmaster Iosif Dorfman. Dorfman is a very strong player, with a refined understanding of the game, and a successful trainer. In his works, he attempts to reduce chess to a small selection of simple formulas, asserting that any chess player employing his theory will be able to resolve the problems in a position without much trouble.

Unfortunately, among the examples from his books that I looked into (I couldn’t bring myself to read the rest of them), I was unable to find even one that demonstrated the usefulness of his approach to working out the secrets of a position. To some extent, this was owing to the author’s intellectual dishonesty: he didn’t spend any time looking for games and fragments that would demonstrate his ideas convincingly. On the contrary – he tried to link his theses to an almost randomly selected group of

positions; here, if his conditions exist at all, then they exist only formalistically, and do nothing to help a player make his decision. In order to “convince” his readers, Dorfman presents only the “cooperative” variations, omitting those that cast doubt upon, or even refute, his own logic.

But the main and principle reason why Dorfman’s books fail is because any sort of “universal recipes” can never in fact be universal – they can only be employed in particular circumstances. Rather than attach your formulas to every circumstance in life, you must work them out, find the limits of their application, seek out the exceptions that can sometimes easily become rules themselves, and so forth.

Let me illustrate all this with some concrete examples.

Near the very beginning of the book entitled, *The Method In Chess*, he offers the following conclusion:

*There is the crude method, enabling an immediate static evaluation of a position to be obtained:*

*- analyze whether it is possible for your own position to evolve independently of the opponent’s;*

*- analyze whether the opponent’s position can evolve independently of your own.*

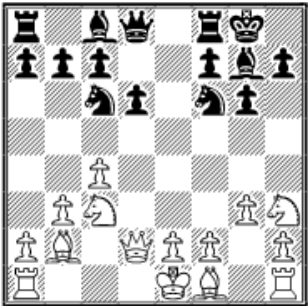
*The position which is ready for evolution is statically better.*

We’re not going to nitpick over his vocabulary – even though in this context, the use of the word “evolution” brings tears to my eyes. (Many years ago, when I became acquainted with the materials from the chess laboratory run by Vladimir Alatorsev, I was amazed that, in place of the simple word “move,” he always used the expression “goal-directed activity.” Perhaps the author expected, by employing this substitution, to raise the educational level of the text?!)

Dorfman’s theoretical contribution is clarified by an example from one of his own games.

**"Murshed – Dorfman**  
Palma de Majorca 1989

**1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nc3 ed 4.Qxd4 Nc6 5.Qd2 g6 6.b3 Bg7 7.Bb2 Nf6 8.g3 0-0 9.Nh3**



*Here on White’s part one can contemplate evolution by Nf4, Bg2 and 0-0. Nothing similar exists for Black. This means that White has a static advantage.*

*Therefore Black went in for vigorous measures, and a double-edged situation arose after.*

**9...a5 10.Nf4 a4 11.Nxa4 Ne4 12.Qc1 Nd4 13.Bg2 Re8 14.0-0 Bg4 15.f3 g5**

Now, try to apply Dorfman’s “method,” without prejudice, to the position in the diagram. Of course, you will find White’s moves, completing his development, without any trouble. But how are we to understand the assessment that for Black “nothing similar exists.” Don’t moves like Bf5 (or Bg4), Qd7 and Re8 improve his position?

Now imagine that White’s queen knight still stood at b1, or at a3, his pawn on c3, and a black pawn at d5. Here, there would not be the slightest doubt as to Black’s superiority. And yet, as far as possible “evolutions” are concerned, nothing has changed.

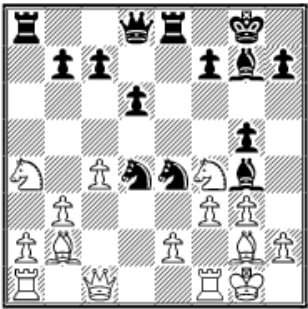
Any commentator who was not laboring under the need to propagandize for his own theories would have given different – and more acceptable – explanations.

If White developed his pieces unhindered, his position would become preferable, thanks to his space advantage and control of the advance-post

at d5 on an open file. (Apropos of this, in Aron Nimzovich’s classic monograph, [My System](#), in Chapter 2, which is written about open lines, the very first diagram in Section B, “Advance-Post,” illustrates this type of situation.)

But he has fallen behind in development, and Black should exploit this factor by immediately getting active operations underway, one way or another.

This assessment is based upon standard ideas and evaluations, known to most players, and may be executed over the board with relative ease. It’s harder to choose a concrete means of displaying activity. Dorfman gives no explanation whatever for his moves, thus indicating to the reader that these are the best moves – or in any case, strong enough. But the position at which the text of the game is cut off is clearly the apotheosis of Black’s strategy, especially since it is marked with its own diagram.



1.?

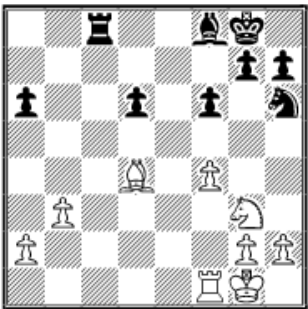
If the reader were to think about this position, then he would probably find the move 16.Rd1! (in the actual game, White played the weaker 16.e3?! Nxf3+ 17.Bxf3 Bxf3 18.Rxf3 gf+/-). Now Black is bound to lose material. 16...c5 17.Bxd4 Bxd4+ 18.Rxd4 cd 19.Nd5 is hopeless. And on 16...gf, White could reply either with 17.Rxd4 Bxd4+ 18.Bxd4, or with 17.Bxd4 fg 18.fe – in either case, White would have an overwhelming advantage.

What does this mean? Was Dorfman’s logic faulty, or did he execute his aggressive strategy inaccurately? The author gives no answer. As for myself, I can only note that, after 9...a5 10.Nf4, Black in some games has successfully tried 10...Ne5 11.Bg2, and only now 11...a4.

Think now: does this example, presented as the author has done in his book, have even the slightest instructional value? The author has, in fact, merely declared his ideas, but done nothing to show them in action.

But in fact, the conception that Dorfman poorly formulated and illustrated does have definite practical significance. It doesn’t happen often, but we do sometimes encounter situations that at first glance appear unclear, where one side can strengthen his position by means of natural moves, while the other side cannot. In such cases, it’s important to spot the gathering strategic danger in time, and to find concrete resources that can redirect this unfavorable tendency. The following fragment, taken from my book, [School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play](#), the chapter entitled, “The Psychology of Defense,” might serve as a decent example of this theme.

**Dvoretsky – Khachaturov**  
Moscow 1972



1...?

I shall cite myself (with some editing):

*I thought that the game would end with a repetition of moves: 23...Rc2 24.Rf2 Rc1+ 25.Rf1 Rc2. However, Andrey Khachaturov played differently.*

**23...d5!**

*After the move made by my opponent I, fortunately, immediately sensed that I stood worse. Black is intending 24...Bd6 (tying the rook to the defense of the f4-pawn) and only then 25...Rc2. The activity of this rook*

will enable him either to win a pawn, or, after attacking the bishop at d4, to begin advancing his passed d-pawn. For the moment the white knight has no right to leave the g3 square, since it is unfavorable to allow the enemy knight to go to f5. And the latter, on the other hand, may in some cases also go to g4, as for example in the variations 24.Rb1 Rc2 25.Rb2 Rc1+ 26.Kf2 Ng4+ or 24.Rd1 Rc2 25.Be3? Ng4.

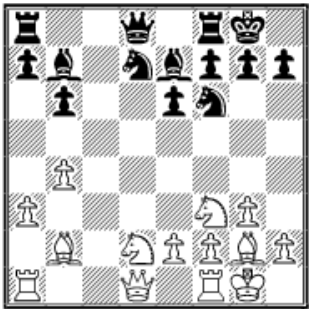
At the board I did not find a reliable plan of defense, and, realizing that 'approximate' play move by move might lead White to disaster, after twenty minutes' thought I decided on a rather risky pawn sacrifice.

You can find out what White actually played in my book. There also, in the chapter entitled "Into The Storm," you will also find other examples of this theme.

Once again, back to Dorfman.

Let us use this method in the following position.

**Botvinnik – Donner**  
Amsterdam 1963



1.?

This is a critical moment, since White has to decide about the possible exchange 14.Nd4.

The static balance does not give an advantage to either side. In addition, Black can improve his position after 14...a5 or 14...b5. This means...

For those who have faith in Dorfman's theory, I propose that you demonstrate it in practice: on the basis of the considerations given above, try to reach the same conclusion – or any conclusion, for that matter.

Back to the quote:

This means that White can either maintain the balance, or play for an advantage with 14.Nd4.

Astounding! Look how the theory has reduced White's choices: he can either play for advantage, or maintain equality! Without the theory, we might instead have played for the loss – what else could there be? And by the way – why is it just the move Nd4 that allowed White to play for the advantage – what is the connection to Dorfman's logic?

An honest author would find it natural to at least occasionally give his manuscript a fresh look, in order to see how logical and convincing his arguments are, or whether they give rise to a sound disbelief among his readers. It's unfortunate that Dorfman appears incapable of such testing, for it would have relieved his book of a huge amount of the nonsense found therein.

For comparison purposes, look at the short, clear explanation given by Mikhail Botvinnik:

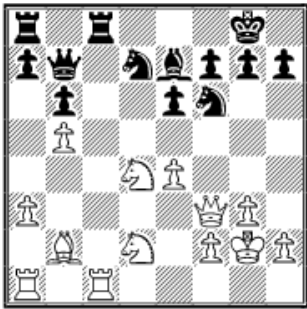
The exchange of the light-square bishops, for which Black has been openly aiming, turns out to be to White's advantage, since it weakens the c6 square, making it easier to him to seize control of it.

The game's further course, which I give with light notes, demonstrates the enormous power of a knight invading at c6.

**14.Nd4! Bxg2 15.Kxg2 Qc7 16.Qb3**

White wants to meet 16...Qb7+ with 17.Qf3, as the queen exchange definitely favors him.

**16...Rfc8 17.Rfc1 Qb7+ 18.Qf3 Nd5 19.e4 N5f6 20.b5!**



20...a6

*In the event of 20...Ne5 21.Qe2, Black would have had to reckon with inevitably having to retreat his knight after f2-f4 (Botvinnik).*

I believe Black should still have played this, with the continuation 21... Bd6!?. On 22.f4 Ng6, White would have had to spend time dealing with the threat of 23...Bxf4, and Black's bishop would have time to get to c5. If 22.Kg1, then 22...Ne8 23.f4 Nd7, intending to meet 24.Nc6 with 24... Bc5+ 25.Kg2 Nb8. Compared with what happened in the game, here White would face a harder time expanding his advantage.

**21.Nc6 Bf8** (21...Bc5 was better) **22.a4 ab 23.ab Rxa1 24.Rxa1 Ra8 25.Rd1!**

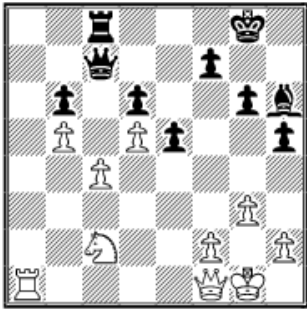
*This move decides the game. On the a-file the lone rook is no danger, whereas on the d-file the white rook is in close contact with its other pieces and will play a leading role (Botvinnik).*

**25...Ne8 26.Nc4 Nc5 27.e5 Rc8** (27...Nc7? 28.Rd7! Nxd7 29.Ne7+) **28.Ra1 Rc7 29.Ra7 Qxa7 30.Nxa7 Rxa7 31.Nxb6 1-0**

The Botvinnik game serves as a classic example of the execution of a plan of seizing the c6-square with a knight. The result of such a strategy is usually a major restriction in the activity of the enemy pieces, primarily the rooks.

Once you have learned a new idea, it's usually good practice to secure this new knowledge by examining additional examples on the same theme. I shall limit my example to one simple fragment, taken from my notebook of exercises.

**Gheorghiu – Larsen**  
London 1980



1.?

A positional pawn sacrifice suggests itself: 31.Nb4! Qxc4 32.Nc6 Qxf1+ (forced, in view of the threatened 33.Ne7+) 33.Kxf1. Black's position is difficult. The knight on c6 is clearly stronger than the bishop firing off into nowhere, while Black's rook is locked into its own camp. Continuing 34.Ra6, White would win the b6-pawn and obtain a powerful passed pawn.

But in the game, White played **31.Ra4? Kg7 32.Qd3 h4 33.Kg2 hg 34.hg Bg5=**/. Among other things, this structure illustrates an earlier theme of ours – the presence of a clear plan of action for one side, and the absence of such a plan for his opponent. Black threatens to whip up an attack by Rh8 and Qd7, while White has no active possibilities.

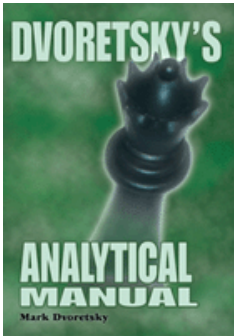




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The Superfluous Piece

One of the most intriguing modern ideas that has actually been codified is the brainchild of the Russian super-trainer IM Mark Dvoretsky – so writes the American author, John Watson, in his popular book, *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy – Advances Since Nimzowitsch*. He’s talking about my article “The ‘Superfluous’ Piece,” published in 1981 in the magazine “64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye,” and later included in the book, *Secrets of Chess Training* – the first volume of the series written by myself and Yusupov, “School of Future Champions.” The article examines the situation in which two or three pieces (generally knights) are all aiming for the same point. In such cases, the opponent should usually avoiding exchanges on that square – since only one piece at a time can occupy it, the other pieces become “superfluous.”

The article did not pass unnoticed – many respected authors have made reference to it. Here, for example, is what grandmaster Mihai Suba wrote, in his weighty tome, *Dynamic Chess Strategy*:

*In a Soviet magazine I once saw an interesting article entitled Lishnaya Figura (roughly = “The Superfluous Piece”). It stressed the inactivity of the superfluous piece, which may cause trouble for its owner. Here is an example.*

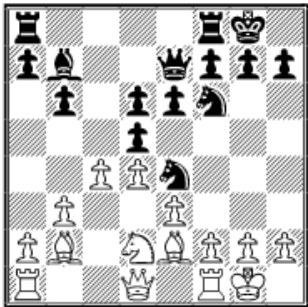


*White to move should play 1.Nxc7 Qxc7 2.Nd5 with a clear advantage of a dominant knight against a bad bishop and automatic play on the queenside by b4, bxc5 etc. Black to move should avoid the exchange and make the knight on c3 superfluous, e.g. 1...Ne6!, keeping the game alive with good counterchances on the kingside.*

That’s a good text, reflecting the basic idea of my article laconically and accurately.

I present one more instructive example – from a classic game that Artur Yusupov demonstrated at the first session of our school for gifted young players (cf. the same book, *Secrets of Chess Training*).

**Zukertort – Blackburne**  
London 1883

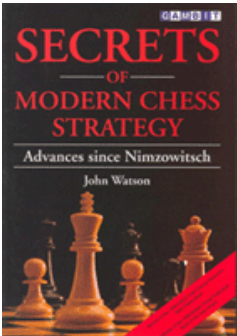


**White to move**

*Recently I was discussing this game with Dvoretsky and he drew attention to the move 13.Nb1!. A hundred years ago, of course, they didn’t play that sort of chess. This positional procedure – non-standard avoidance of an exchange – appeared much later. Mark Israilevich easily found the strongest move, because he had already studied such situations, even written an article on this topic “The ‘Superfluous’ Piece.”*

*In avoiding the exchange, White intends by 14.f3 to drive the knight away from e4, and then play Nc3, preparing e3-e4. In this case he retains more pieces on the board, which is advantageous to the side with a spatial*

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advantage.

A similar situation sometimes occurs in the English Opening or in the Stonewall Variation of the Dutch Defence.

There is an additional nuance – in some cases Ba3 becomes possible, which is important, say, in the variation 13.Nb1 e5 14.f3 Ng5 15.de de 16. Ba3, winning the exchange.

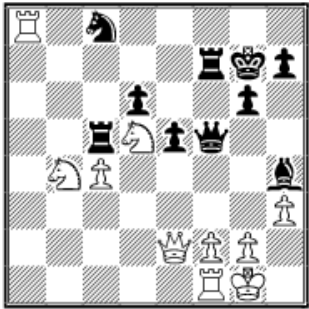
In the game White played more simply, allowing the exchange of knights and thereby lessening his positional advantage.

Dorfman doesn't like this concept. He writes, *It is possible that the topic "Superfluous Pieces" is no worse than others. But the constant mixing of static and dynamic elements is not favourable to the development of a correct understanding of chess.*

If you juggle words, it's not difficult to put together such assertions: on the surface, they may appear deeply thought out, but in fact, there's nothing to them. What sort of constancy are we talking about here – since, after all, this specific situation doesn't occur very often? What are these dynamic and static elements in reference to? – I'm only dealing with the usefulness of a trade. And by the way, the evaluation of position in contemporary chess practically always consists of dynamic and static elements, combined in varying proportions. And finally, how can learning a useful chess technique possibly have a negative influence on one's understanding of chess? Now, Dorfman's commentaries really do disorient the reader, and prevent him from getting at the truth of a position – you could compare, for example, Dorfman's comments with Botvinnik's on the game Botvinnik – Donner.

Dorfman criticizes two endgames from my article. Let's evaluate his critiques.

**Karpov – Dolmatov**  
Amsterdam 1980



**Black to move**

Of course, White stands better; but the outcome of the game has yet to be determined – even these kinds of positions may offer stubborn defenses. First, let's see what happened in the game.

**34...Ne7?! (a dubious decision – Black is actually trading off the “superfluous” knight on b4) 35.Ra6! Qd7**

If the knight returns to c8, then 36.Nc3! is unpleasant, with its threat of 37. Ne4.

**36.Qe4 Nxd5 37.Nxd5 Be7 38.Rfa1 Bf8**

White's advantage has increased. All his pieces are much more active, with the knight's superiority over the poor bishop at f8 being particularly acute.

**39.Qe2 Rc6 40.R6a3! Rc5 41.Rf3!**

An excellent maneuver. Anatoly Karpov trades off the rook which defends the king, and then puts together a killing attack.

**41...Rxf3 42.Qxf3 Qf7**

**42...Rxc4 43.Qf6+ Kg8 44.Nb6+–.**

**43.Qg4 h5 44.Qe4 Rc8**

**44...Kh7 45.Ra3 Bg7 46.Rf3 Qe6 47.g4!+–** offers no joy either.

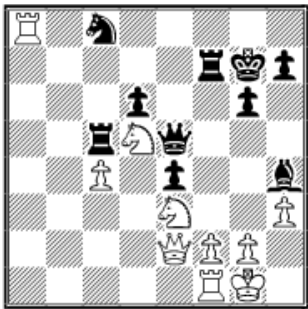
**45.Ra3 Qf5 46.Ra7+ Kh6 47.Qe3+ g5 48.Qe2 Rb8 49.g4! hg 50.hg Qb1 + 51.Kg2 Rb7 52.Rxb7 Qxb7 53.Qf3 Qc8 54.Qf6+ Kh7 55.Qf7+ 1-0**

How could the defense be improved? Instead of the illogical exchange of knights, I suggested 34...e4, putting at least one pawn on a light square –

the opposite color of his own bishop – and allowing Black to activate his pieces, if only a little, by Qe5-d4, if White allows it.

Now I shall present the main thrust of Dorfman’s argument, editing out his usual rhetoric about dynamics and statics.

*In accordance with all the rules of strategy, White converts his advantage by playing 35.Ne3 Qe5 36.Nbd5.*



**Black to move**

36...Ne7 37.Ng4 Qd4 38.Rd1 Qxc4 39.Qb2+.

Let’s look at the diagrammed position (by the way, Dorfman places his diagram only at the very end of his variation, when it’s time for Black to resign).

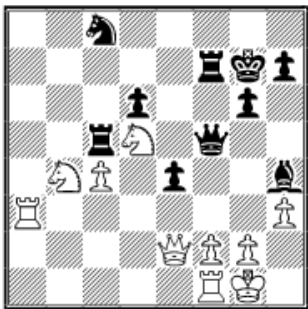
The threat of 37.Ng4, to seize control of the a1-h8 diagonal, is indeed dangerous, but it’s also easily parried by 37...h5!. And then what should we recommend for White? If, for example, he plays sharply by 37.f4, then 37...ef 38.Rxf3 Rxf3 39.Qxf3 Bg5 40.Rb8 Ne7!? (40...Bxe3+ 41.Nxe3 Rc7 wouldn’t be bad, either) 41.Rb7 (41.Qf8+ Kh7) 41...Ra5, with approximately equal chances.

White doesn’t have to force matters, but there are no clear ways to increase the pressure. This situation would be much more pleasant for Black than what happened in the game. As you can see, Dorfman’s concrete conclusions are not defensible, which in turn erodes the basis for the arguments he has constructed.

Dorfman’s books were first published in French. Early in 2000, the grandmaster published material in “64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye” laying out the basis of his theory. Unfortunately, both his logic and the commentaries he gave to concrete examples have not stood up to criticism, which induced me to place an analytical dissection of Dorfman’s article in that same magazine. Among other things, I examined the Karpov – Dolmatov endgame.

Once they learn of their analytical errors, honest authors either correct them or remove the refuted examples from future publications. Dorfman has never done so. He has seen my article; evidently, he has been unable to disprove the conclusions it contains. Nevertheless, in subsequent English- and Russian-language editions of his book, he reproduces the very same “cooperative” variation, and the gibberish assertions that came with it.

Now, when I prepared the above-mentioned Volume 1 of the “School of Future Champions” series for later re-publication, I made some changes to my own text – certainly not in response to Dorfman’s notes. The point here was that grandmaster Yuri Yakovich had shown me something that cast serious doubt on my recommendation of 34...e4, that being the move 35.Ra3!



This threatens 36.Re3, winning the pawn at e4. If Black replies 36...Bg5, then 37.f4! is very strong (but not 37.f3? Qe5): 37...Bf6 (taking *en passant* is out) 38.g4 (38.Rd1!?) 38...Qe6 39.Kh1, with an overwhelming advantage for White.

Which in turn means Black must play more accurately; for example, 34...Bg5!?, taking control of the e3-square, and preparing to play e5-e4 again. The maneuver 35.Nc3?! is poor here, because of the reply 35...Nb6, attacking the c4-pawn. After 35.Rfa1?! e4 (35...Bh4!?), attacking the e4-

pawn would no longer be effective: 36.Re1 Rxc4! (Black also has 36... Bh4 37.Qb2+ Qe5) 37.Qxc4 Qxf2+ 38.Kh2 Qxe1 39.Rxc8 Rf3! =.

White keeps his advantage the same way: 35.Ra3!, to which 35...Rb7 is one possible reply. Even if Black chooses 35...Ne7, the strong Karpovian move 36.Ra6 will be played, even at the cost of a tempo.

One more thing: after 34...Ne7?! 35.Ra6! (the game continuation), Dolmatov was wrong to put himself into deep defense by 35...Qd7?!. He would have done much better to play 35...Nxd5 36.Nxd5 e4! (this active continuation at least answers the needs of the position!). Taking the pawn would leave Black with decent drawing chances after 37.Rxd6 Qe5 38.Ra6 Qd4 39.Ne3 Bg5 40.Rd1 Qc3 41.Ng4 e3!? 42.Nxe3 Bxe3.

This new analysis does not refute the logic connected with the “superfluous” piece idea – although I must admit that it renders its application to the present example considerably less convincing. As I look at it today, the Karpov – Dolmatov endgame is a better illustration of the search for defensive resources in a strategically difficult position.

In my article published in 2002, entitled “[Lawless Pawns](#),” I analyzed situations where pawns should be placed (or left) on squares that are the same color as one’s bishop, thereby breaking a well-known strategic principle. One of those situations was described as follows:

*If your opponent is confined to passive defense on account of his “bad” bishop, but a pawn of his is “properly” placed (on the opposite-colored square), then it is this pawn that will sometimes become a weakness, and the chief target of your attack.*

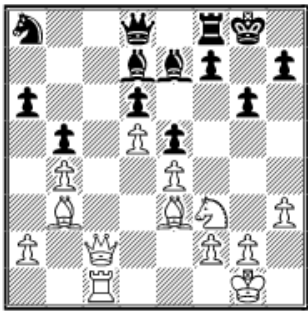
The refutation of the move 34...e4?! pointed out by Yakovich is a clear illustration of this thesis: the opponent immediately falls upon the only pawn brave enough to go onto a light square.

But in the variations 34...Bg5!? 35.Rfa1?!, or 34...Ne7 35.Ra6! Nxd5 36.Nxd5, the continuation e5-e4 would be positionally justified: moving the pawn off the same color square as the bishop allows Black to create active counterplay, and thus to increase his chances of not losing.

As you can see, even diametrically opposite conclusion may sometimes prove correct – all that’s necessary is for some of the concrete circumstances to change. Chess is like that: it cannot endure dogmatic schemes!

I cannot resist one more clear illustration of this theme.

**Anand – Carlsen**  
Linares 2007



White to move

Commented (outstandingly, as far as I’m concerned) by Viswanathan Anand.

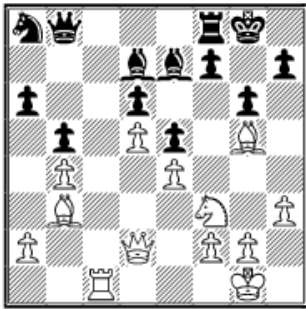
**23.Qd2**

*I considered 23.Ne1, with the idea of simply playing Nd3 and Nc5, and after Black takes on c5, I will have two connected passed pawns and a lot of play (and once I play d6, you can see that the knight on a8 is trapped forever). But I didn’t like 23...Bg5, and here Black gets some relief even if White keeps a nice edge after 24.Qd2 (24.Bxg5 Qxg5, and here White has to deal with both Rc8 and Bxh3) 24...Bxe3 25.Qxe3 Qb8 (25...f5 26.Nf3 fe 27.Ng5 is clearly better for White) 26.f4.*

**23...Qb8**

*After 23...f6, White goes 24.Ne1, with the idea of Nd3 and Nc5!.*

**24.Bg5!**



*It seems illogical. You first avoid the bishop exchange and then you force it yourself. There is no grand reason I can give, it's purely a tactical thing. It seems less effective to exchange the bishops with the knight on e1. But here Black wants to play ...Rc8, and once Black manages to swap the rooks or to defend himself, the advantage is gone and you can offer a draw. So it's very important to act quickly. 24.Bg5 relies on two things. One is that 24...f6 is impossible because of 25.Nxe5, and wins. The second is that after swapping there are some very direct lines, as you will see, involving Qh6.*

#### 24...Bxg5

*The best was 24...Qd8!, when I felt that maybe 25.Qe3 (25.Bxe7 only improves the black queen's position, 25...Qxe7, and after 26.Qe3 he has 26...Rc8!) 25...Bxg5 26.Nxg5 Qe7 27.f4 gives White an edge anyway.*

*If 24...Bd8 I play 25.Bxd8 Qxd8 (if he takes with the rook, 26.Qg5 is unpleasant, threatening Qe7 or Qf6) 26.Qh6, and this is unpleasant too, as these lines testify:*



*A) 26...Qf6 27.Ng5 Qg7 28.Qh4 Rc8 (28...Re8 29.Ne6!; 28...Kh8 29.Nxh7! Qxh7 30.Qe7 [after 30...Qh6 31.Rc3 Bc8 32.Qxd6, Black's position is difficult]) 29.Rxc8+ Bxc8 30.Nxh7!;*

*B) 26...f6 27.Rc6! Bc8 28.h4! Rf7 29.h5 Rg7 (if 29...g5 30.Nxg5 fg 31.Rxd6, with a winning advantage) 30.hg hg 31.Nh4 g5 32.Nf5 (the line 32.Ng6?! Rh7 33.Qf8+ Qxf8 34.Nxf8 Rc7! 35.Ne6 Rxc6 36.dc Bxe6 37.Bxe6+ Kf8 leads to a minor-piece endgame in which White's king will probably be unable to break into the enemy position) 32...Bxf5 33.ef, and now White's rook can never be dislodged from c6.*

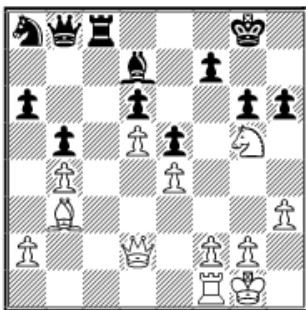
#### 25.Nxg5

*Again purely tactical. It's very important that White takes back with the knight. Now 25.Qxg5 f6 is not the right plan.*

#### 25...Rc8

*Here I spent a fair amount of time, as 26.Rxc8+, followed by 27.f4, was also tempting. And I still was not sure how strong 27.Ne6 was. But in the end I decided that it was important to keep rooks, since this improves White's attacking chances.*

#### 26.Rf1 h6



**White to move**

#### 26.Ne6!

*On the one hand this is the kind of move that gets you diagrams and so on and I must say it's a move you play with a lot of pleasure. In fact, it*

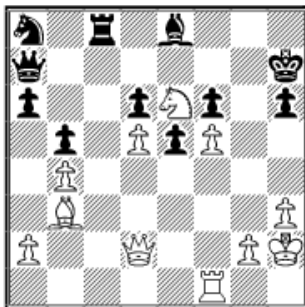
*cheered me up for the rest of the tournament. But objectively speaking there is no other way. White's whole plan has led him to this point, and you have to follow through.*

Analysis showed that Anand's combination was absolutely correct. The conclusion of the game is given with short notes.

**27...Kh7!?**

White's attack also reaches its goal after 27...fe 28.de Be8 29.Qxh6! Nb6 30.e7+ Nc4 31.Qf8+ Kh7 32.f4!?, or 32.Bd1!?.

**28.f4 Qa7+ 29.Kh2 Be8!?** (White also gains no joy from 29...fe 30.de Be8 31.f5) **30.f5! gf 31.ef f6**



**32.Re1! Nc7 33.Rc1!**

It's just amazing how flexible and unprejudiced the gifted Indian grandmaster is in making his decisions. When he moved the rook to e1, he intended to bring it to the king's wing via the e4-square, and would undoubtedly have played this, had Black replied 32...Nb6. The other route – 32.Rf3 Bf7 33.Rg3 – was less attractive to him (although I think that was also pretty strong – after all, it threatens 34.Rg7+, and if 33... Rg8, he can respond with 34.Rxg8 Bxg8 35.Qc3 Qb7 [otherwise, the queen invades via the c-file] 36.Qg3, when Black's in a bad way, since 36...Qf7 is met decisively by 37.Bd1!, intending 38.Bh5).

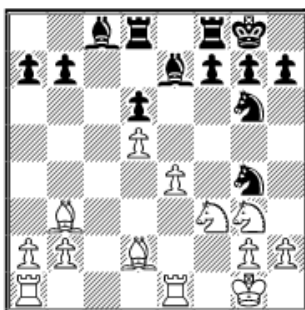
But after the knight went to c7, Anand saw that pinning it on the c-file would force Black to take pieces away from the king's defense, so without hesitating, he altered his plan.

**33...Bd7 34.Rc3 e4** (34...Ne8 35.Rg3 Bxe6 36.Rg6!) **35.Rg3 Nxe6 36.de Be8 37.e7! Bh5** (37...Qxe7 38.Bg8+) **38.Qxd6 1-0**

Now that we've enjoyed Anand's brilliant play and his lively, entertaining commentary, we return once again to the theme we were discussing earlier.

#### **Dolmatov – Romanishin**

USSR Championship, Minsk 1979



The basic idea of this position was explained in an old article of mine, which I still consider completely correct:

*White has a spatial advantage, but Black has at his disposal the strong point e5, for which both his knights and the dark-square bishop are contending. White cannot and should not fight for the e5-square – one of the opponent's pieces will occupy it, but the other two will prove “superfluous.”*

In the game, Sergei Dolmatov chose an unfortunate continuation.

**27.Bc3 N4e5 28.Bd4 b6 29.a4?** (better was 29.Bc3, and if 29...Bf6, then 30.Nd4) **29...Bf6**

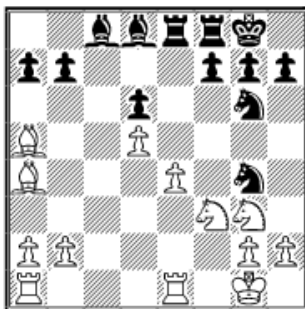
The bishop “hangs” at d4. Dolmatov could find nothing better than **30. Nxe5 Bxe5 31.Bxe5 Nxe5 32.a5 g6**.

Look at what has happened: Black still controls e5, but his two “superfluous,” unnecessary pieces have now left the board: the dark-square bishop and the knight from g6. Meanwhile, White is left with two “slackers” – both the knight at g3 and the bishop stand poorly. Black's

chances are now indisputably better and, exploiting his opponent's later inaccuracies, he went on to win.

The improvement on White's play was pointed out in the note to move twenty-nine. In order to avoid losing time on the back-and-forth bishop maneuver, I suggested another improvement: 27.Ba5! This appears to force the move 27...b6, weakening the c6-square and granting White a target for opening another line by a2-a4-a5. After 28.Bc3 N4e5 29.Nd4!, he retains excellent prospects.

I acknowledge thinking the reply 27...Rde8 impossible, in light of 28.Ba4, overlooking the strong reply 28...Bd8!, pointed out by Dorfman. But from this single oversight, the latter immediately spun several far-reaching conclusions about the insupportableness of the whole "superfluous piece" concept!



### White to move

In an article in "64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye," I replied that, in the first place, the point of my ideas did not consist of one concrete recommendation for White (who could have played something different), but in how he should **not** have played: he had to avoid the exchanges on e5. And in the second place...

*Fine, let's play these generally unnecessary moves, and after 28...Bd8!, let's continue this variation: 29.Bc3! Bb6+ 30.Nd4 Re7 (30...Rd8!?) 31.h3 N4e5 (or 31...Nf6) 32.Kh2. My problems with the "poor static position of the king" have ended, but now Black's difficulties are just beginning, with the unpleasant threat of 33.Ng5. This is precisely where White's space advantage – which Dorfman underestimates – and the unfortunate position of the "superfluous" knight on g6, preventing the move g7-g6, come into play. White is at least not worse. You can see that even this plan, hampered as it is by a tactical oversight, is still stronger than what happened in the game.*

And now, I give the comments from Dorfman's book, published seven years later.

*Let us employ the method.*

*The static balance gives an advantage to Black due to the difference in the kings' positions and the backward e4 pawn (and, as a consequence, the weakness of the e5 square). The short variation 27.Ba5 Rde8 28.Ba4 Bd8 29.Bb4 (with the exchange of bishops 29.Bxd8 Rxd8 White would, at the least, not have improved his position) 29...Bb6+ emphasises all the defects in White's position.*

Note that in the French edition of his book and in the article in the magazine "64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye," Dorfman ended his variation with 28...Bd8. After my response was published, he added one move in the English and the Russian editions – not the move that I suggested, but a different, completely pointless move that immediately puts White in a difficult position. This is not a mistake in analysis – it's a card-trick! Naturally, if you use this sort of thing, it's easy to prove anything you want.

I have not delved into the heart of Dorfman's theories – a critical analysis of those could be the theme of a separate article. We have spoken only of his means of argument, of their very weak link to the actual chess content of the examples he gives, and finally, of their low analytical level. Still, in conclusion, I would like to give a short version of my opinion on the basic postulates of the Dorfman "method."

1. **Critical positions.** The criteria that Dorfman offers to determine "criticality" are in fact applicable to almost any chess position, and thus are of no use in a practical game. This is discussed in greater detail in my July-September 2008 articles "Critical Moments," published at [Chesscafe.com](http://Chesscafe.com).
2. **"Regressive Scale for the Static Evaluation of a Position."** This attempt to suggest some formal procedure for evaluating a position was been tried earlier, but it never met with success – no one uses such procedures. Without getting into the strengths and weaknesses of Dorfman's scheme, I note that it too will eventually be forgotten. It almost never offers any real help in the decision-

making process at the board, nor could it, in view of the colossal variety of the situations that can arise over the board.

3. **Strategy In Statically Inferior and Superior Positions.**  
According to Dorfman, in the overwhelming majority of positions, one can determine a static advantage for one of the two sides. His main idea is as follows: that *if for one of the players the static balance is negative, he must without hesitation employ dynamic means, and be ready to go in for extreme measures.* On the other hand, his opponent should play conservatively. And in order to determine who should “twist,” and who should “fortify,” Dorfman proposes all the preceding analysis.

This scheme does in fact describe situations that frequently arise in the course of battle. They are useful for study – but in the first place, they certainly cannot be considered universal; and in the second place, one should select convincing and clear examples in which such an approach would be productive. Dorfman does not meet these conditions, and thus his analysis can only serve to disorient the student, and to distract him from a realistic attempt to deduce the secrets of a position, with a stillborn scholasticism.

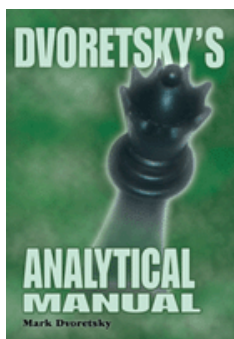




## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Enlarging your Strategic Arsenal

Where can we find quality annotations, capable of enlarging a chessplayer's strategic arsenal, and teaching him to evaluate a position properly? There are, of course, a lot of useful sources.

For example, we may confidently recommend books where great players select their own games, and annotate them themselves. Grandmasters usually explain their own work deeply and accurately, getting not only into the purely technical, but also the sporting and psychological aspects of the struggle.

Also quite interesting and illustrative are those monographs (although of course not all of them – far from it – I mean only the best ones), illuminating the most important aspects of contemporary chess theory and practice. To name but a few of the authors responsible for some outstanding (non-openings related) books: Aron Nimzowitsch, John Nunn, Jonathan Rowson, Mihai Marin, Jacob Aagard, Karsten Müller... This is not a full listing, of course – and there are also a number of players who have published only one or two books each – but they are of very high quality.

It distresses me to note that, among the names presented above, not one writes in the Russian language. On the other hand, it's not only books that serve as a source of valuable information – there are also magazines, and Internet sites – one can find a great deal of excellent material there.

The games and fragments I present here have already been annotated by various authors. Computer checking has forced some corrections and additions to be made here and there, some of which are interesting in and of themselves, but they certainly do not negate the work of the annotators. The ideas and assessments they express still mostly hold true, and remain exceptionally useful to study.

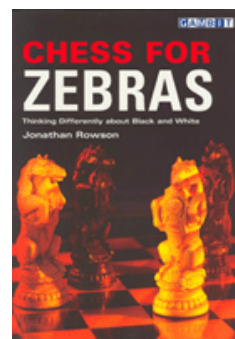
Each of these authors has his own style of annotating. For example, Botvinnik's annotations are rather dry, strict and definitive, much like a teacher's. Here's how he described a pair of episodes from his own games, in which he had to make skillful use of a pair of knights (a theme that closely resembles what we looked at in our last article, and which coincides with it at some points).

**Ciocaltea – Botvinnik**  
Tel-Aviv Olympiad, 1964

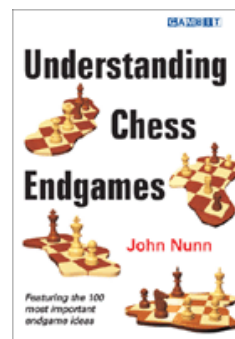


**Black to move**

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accessible:



*Chess for Zebras*  
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by John Nunn



*Bishop v Knight:  
The Verdict*  
by Steve Mayer



*It is hard to believe that in such an ending it is possible to win in just six moves. To intensify the pressure in the centre, Black transfers his knight from b6 to c5, and his rook will occupy the strongpoint at d4.*

Believing that a game might come to a quick end isn't so difficult – over-the-board, anything can happen. What's harder to believe is that such a quick finish was justified. And in fact, White could have defended quite a bit more stubbornly. On the other hand, Botvinnik's regrouping was in fact the strongest plan, setting his opponent the most complex tasks.

### **23...Nb6-d7! 24.Rh1-c1+**

White could have fought Black's idea by taking control of c5, with 24. Ne4!? In that event, 24...Ne5 25.Rc1+ Kb6 26.Nxf6 gf 27.Rc3 is not dangerous. Botvinnik would probably have replied 24...Nxe4+ 25.de Nc5 + 26.Ke3 Rd3+ 27.Ke2 Rd4 28.f3 Rb4, anticipating the continuation 29. Rc1 Kb6 30.Rc3 a5, with an overwhelming advantage. White could improve this defense by 29.Kd2! Nxb3+ 30.Kc3 Rb5 31.ab; on the other hand, after 31...Rc5+ 32.Kd3 Kb6, White's troubles are still not over, since the resulting rook ending is pretty unpleasant for him.

### **24...Kc7-b6 25.Rc1-c3?**

He had to continue 25.f3!, so as to put his knight on e4 at the first available opportunity. For example, 25...Nc5?! 26.Bc4 Rd4 27.Ne4! Nxe4+ 28.fe =/+ , and Black can't play 28...Nxe4+? 29.Ke3. After 25... Ne5 26.Rc3 Ng6 27.Rc4, White's position remains clearly worse, but defensible.

### **25...Nd7-c5 26.Kd2-e2?!**

26.Ke3 Ng4+ 27.Ke2 would have held out longer.

### **26...Rd8-d4 27.h4-h5**

27.Rc4 Rxd3 28.Rxc5 Rxb3 was absolutely hopeless.



**Black to move**

### **27...a7-a5**

*27...Rh4 could also have been played immediately, but Black is aiming at a more important pawn – b2.*

Perhaps it was more accurate to aim at it by 27...Rb4, with a7-a5 to follow, since White could now play 28.Bc4, forcing the enemy rook to go after the h-pawn after all. By the way, an immediate 27...Rh4?! could be met by 28.Rc4, when 28...Rh2? doesn't work, in view of 29.Kf1 and 30. Kg1. On the other hand, 28...Rxc4 29.Bxc4 Na4 would maintain Black's advantage.

### **28.Ke2-e3?! Rd4-b4 0-1**

*Now 29...a4 is threatened, and if 29.d4 there follows 29...Ng4+. In addition my opponent had hardly any time left on his clock.*

### **Botvinnik – Levenfish**

Moscow/Leningrad 1937, 12th Match Game



26...d6-d5 27.Nc3xd5 Ne7xd5 28.e4xd5 Nd4-f5



**White to move**

As Botvinnik pointed out, 29.Rxf5! gf 30.Qh5+ Kg8 31.d6 Rf7 32.Bc4 Rdd7 33.Bxf7+ Rxf7 34.d7 would have won by force. On the other hand, the move he actually played, **29.Bc5**, doesn't let slip his decisive advantage, and White did go on to win.

This endgame reminds me of an old game, which I might have played better, had I been familiar with the classic example we just looked at.

**Radashkovich – Dvoretsky**

Batumi 1969



In contrast to the Botvinnik – Levenfish game, here the knight on d4 plays a significant role, because it works together with the rook, which has just invaded the enemy camp. The other Black knight occupies a shaky position; but for now, the threat of a2-a4 isn't too dangerous, in view of Ne2+, followed by Nbd4.

Black's task is to bring up new fighting units in support of his already advanced troops, so that they will not be doomed to extinction after his opponent consolidates.

**19...Bg7-h6?!**

A risky path. Had I known the Botvinnik game then, I would have been more afraid of the advance of White's f-pawn.

19...Qd6 wasn't bad, but it required accurate calculation. On 20.a4, Black should not continue 20...Ne2+ 21.Kh1 Nbd4 22.Ne3 +/-, but 20...Na3! 21.Ne3 Ne2+ (21...Nxb1 22.Nxc2 Nd2! 23.Ba3 Qd7 24.Bxf8 Bxf8 is also interesting) 22.Kh2 Rd2 23.Qxd2 (23.Bxa3 Rxd1 24.Bxd6 Rxd6=) 23...Qxd2 24.Bxa3 Nd4, with roughly equal chances.

And 19...Qg5!? was also worth considering.

**20.f2-f4! f7-f5**

20...Ne2+? 21.Kh2 Nbd4 22.Rf2 +/- would not work, as White threatens both 23.Bxd4 and 23.Rxe2.

Retreating the bishop seemed illogical, but this move was quite playable: 20...Bg7!? 21.Kh1 ef 22.Rxf4 (22.gf Re8 is worse, as all the black pieces become quite active) 22...Rxb2 23.Rxb2 Ne6 24.Rc2 Nxf4 (24...Nbd4?! 25.Rc8!) 25.gf +/-.

### 21.Qd1-d3 Bh6-g7

21...Qd6? loses to 22.fe Qxe5 23.Qxc2. And the knight reconfiguration is still premature: 21...Ne2+ 22.Kh2 Nbd4 23.Bxd4 Nxd4 24.fe Rd2 25.Qc4 +/-.

### 22.Kg1-h1!

The king avoids the check, thereby creating a threat of 23.a4. And here again, Black fails to withstand the tension.



**Black to move**

### 22...e5xf4?

He had to play 22...fe! (rather than 22...Qd7? at once, because of 23.fe!) 23.Bxe4! (23.Qxe4? would be bad because of 23...Nd6 and 24...N6f5) 23...Qd7 24.g4 ef (Black could also play 24...Rd8 25.Ne3 Rxb2 26.Rxb2 ef unclear) 25.Nxf4 Rfc8, with chances for both sides. After the text, White simplifies favorably.

**23.Nd5xf4! Qd8-c8 24.Rb1-c1 Rf8-e8 25.Rc1xc2 Qc8xc2 26.Qd3xc2 Nd4xc2 27.Bb2xg7 Kg8xg7 28.e4xf5**

And Black ends up a pawn down. The attempt to solve this problem tactically meets a rather simple refutation.

**28...Nc2-e3?! 29.Rf1-e1 Nb5-d6 30.Nf4-e6+ Kg7-f6 31.Ne6-c7!**

I had been hoping for 31.Rxe3? Nxf5 +/-.

**31...Re8-e7 32.Re1xe3 Re7xc7 33.Re3-e6+ 0-1**

Bent Larsen is one of my favorite chessplayers and authors. The famous Danish grandmaster's annotations clearly reflect his creative nature and his deep, non-standard understanding of chess, along with his indisputable literary talent.

Larsen wrote many articles, which managed to be both amusing and instructive. His book, *Larsen's Selected Games of Chess*, came out in a Russian edition way back in 1972, in Valeri Murakhveri's brilliant translation (what a pity that this amazingly talented, multi-faceted, and wise human being is no longer with us). Since that time, it has not been reprinted.

Let me show you one of Larsen's games, related to our theme. The first half will be presented with short notes.

**Larsen – Donner**  
Beverwijk 1960

**1.g2-g3 e7-e5 2.Bf1-g2 d7-d5 3.Ng1-f3**

An original development scheme that Larsen used with success. His book features a number of victorious encounters stemming from this variation.

**3...Bf8-d6**

3...e4 has also been tried (Larsen – Donner, Zurich 1959, Larsen – van Scheltinga, Beverwijk 1960), as has 3...Nc6 (Larsen – Geller, Copenhagen 1960, Larsen – Simagin, Moscow 1962).

**4.0-0 Ng8-e7 5.c2-c4?!**

In Larsen's opinion, White would have done better to have played 5.d3, intending Nbd2 and e2-e4.

**5...c7-c6 6.d2-d3 0-0 7.Nb1-d2 Nb8-d7 8.e2-e4 d5xe4**

8...d4! deserved, not just consideration (Larsen), but preferment.

**9.Nd2xe4 Bd6-c7 10.b2-b3**

*10.d4 ed 11.Qxd4 Ne5 is good for Black.*

**10...Rf8-e8 11.Bc1-b2 Ne7-f5 12.Rf1-e1**

*I had caught a bad cold, and my thinking apparatus was rotating at minimum speed. On these not very ingenious moves I had spent more than an hour and a half!*

**12...Nd7-f8 13.Qd1-d2 14.f7-f6 15.Ra1-d1**

*Afraid of time pressure I began to play quickly. If I didn't wish to play the equalizing 14.d4, then 14.b4 at once was possibly better.*

**14...Nf8-e6 15.b3-b4 a7-a5 16.b4-b5 Bc7-b6**

16...cb 17.cb a4 was stronger.

**17.b5xc6 b7xc6 18.Qd2-c1 a5-a4 19.c4-c5 Bb6-a5 20.Bb2-c3 Re8-e7 21. Bc3xa5 Ra8xa5 22.Nf3-d2 Ne6-d4 23.Nd2-c4 Ra5-a7 24.f2-f4**



**Black to move**

*Of course Black has every reason to be proud of the Knight on d4, but exaggerated care for it leads him astray. The black position must not be*

overestimated; also the white Knights are full of pep.

*Black should play ...exf4, but Donner thought that the centralized Knight deserved to keep its solid pawn protection. During the rest of the game this Knight does not do very much.*

*What follows belongs to my dearest recollections. That is why the game has been included in this selection, although, seen as a whole, it can hardly be called one of my best games.*

I shall present one more extended commentary on this position, from author Steve Mayer's interesting book, [\*Bishop v Knight: The Verdict\*](#).

*One thing that's remarkable about this game is how well-placed all four knights appear to be. Whose knights are actually better placed? A straightforward arithmetic approach suggests that Black's are; after all, White's knights are "only" on the fourth rank, while Black has a knight on the fourth rank and a somewhat further advanced knight on the fifth rank.*

*You may have noticed that the black knights "link up" with each other. This can sometimes be a very useful arrangement, as it means that one knight can replace another if an exchange occurs. In fact, Mark Dvoretsky has made a useful discovery that he terms *The Superfluous Piece*...*

*In Larsen – Donner, we see an excellent illustration of *The Superfluous Piece*, and it helps us to determine whose knights are really better placed. Donner's knights look impressive, but only one of them can occupy d4, while the other has no special square that beckons. Thus, Donner's knight at f5 is superfluous. By contrast, Larsen's knights both occupy good squares in their own right and have the potential of playing into the hole at d6. At the moment, however, a white knight playing into d6 would make the other knight largely superfluous, as it would have no better square to play to than its present post. In part, this is the reason behind Larsen's suggesting 24...ef here, as no new squares would open up for the white knights.*

*In conclusion, I think that we could say that each side's knights are equally well-placed following White's 24th move. However, this evaluation will soon change.*

After something like 24...ef! 25.Qxf4 Nc2 26.Re2 Ncd4 27.Red2, White appears to stand better, but not by much.

**24...Bc8-e6? 25.f4xe5 f6xe5 26.Kg1-h1**

*The black Knight must be shown due respect. Now it can never give check.*

In my view, White could also have spared the respect: 26.Ned6! Kh8 27.Qg5 +/- is quite strong – while 26.Nxe5?! Bxa2 27.Qf4 would be far less convincing.

Here's one more of Steve Mayer's annotations.

*And now we can see how Donner's mistake at move 24 has hurt his position. His own knights still have the same possibilities as before and the knight at f5 is still superfluous. But the white knights have gained a number of possibilities, for example, the knight at c4 presses on the weak e5-pawn, while the knight at e4 has gained the possibility of using g5 as a staging ground for tactical operations on the kingside and possible entry to the hole at e6. Consequently, if either white knight plays into d6, the other knight will still retain possibilities of improving its current placement and therefore avoid the fate of Dvoretsky's *Superfluous Piece*.*

**26...Be6-d5 27.Re1-f1 Re7-e6 28.Rf1-f2 Ra7-f7 29.Rd1-f1**



*White is making progress. He is gaining control of the f-file, and Black has problems with his weak e5 pawn. Now something must be done against Ng5.*

**29...Bd5xc4 30.d3xc4 Nf5-h6 31.Rf2xf7 Nh6xf7 32.Qc1-d1!**

*A strong move. Black must defend his a-pawn, and then White starts an action on the King's side.*

**32. . .Qd8-a5 33.Qd1-h5 Qa5-c7 34.Bg2-h3**



**34...Re6-h6?**

*Here the rook is quite misplaced. 34...Re8 was impossible because of 35. Ng5 but 34...Re7 had to be tried. The black position was difficult, but not clearly lost.*

**35.Qh5-g4 Rh6-g6**

He can no longer get his rook back: 35...Re6 36.Qxe6! Nxe6 37.Bxe6+-. He should probably have left it on h6, to keep an eye on the bishop. On the other hand, after 35...Qd8 36.Qd7!? Qxd7 37.Bxd7, White also retains a great advantage.

**36.Qg4-d1 Qc7-a7 37.Qd1-b1! Nf7-g5 38.Qb1-b6! Qa7-a8**

*38...Qxb6 39.cxb6 would obviously give White an irresistible passed pawn.*

**39.Ne4xg5 Rg6xg5 40.Qb6-c7 h7-h6 41.Rf1-b1**

*The game was adjourned here and Black sealed 41...Kh7 after which 42. Bg2 wins easily. But 41...Qa6 was no better because of 42.Bf1! But what I like about this game is this: What did the black Knight on d4 really accomplish?*

Botvinnik's annotations showed us his conclusions regarding the assessment of the position, and his plan of action. Larsen expressed the feelings he had at various stages of the battle. Meyer explained in detail the connection between various elements of the concrete position on the board, and the general principle having the most to do with its assessment. As you can see, these various approaches to annotating differ significantly, but each is interesting in its own way, and gives us some excellent food for thought.

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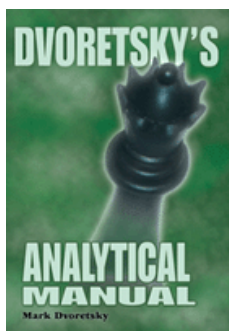
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## The Logic of a Grandmaster

Especially valuable, to my taste, are notes that reproduce the logic of a grandmaster's search for the correct plan in a complex situation, when it isn't obvious which factors he should be relying on. Most often this is done, naturally, with demonstrations of one's own duels. But the most intelligent and competent commentators are also able to shed light on other people's work superbly. As, for example, Jonathan Rowson did, explaining a key moment in the following game to his readers.

**Portisch – Christiansen**

London, 1982

1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 e7-e6 3.Ng1-f3 b7-b6 4.a2-a3 Bc8-b7 5.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 6.c4xd5 Nf6xd5 7.Qd1-c2 Bf8-e7 8.e2-e4 Nd5xc3 9.b2xc3 0-0 10.Bf1-d3 c7-c5 11.0-0 c5xd4 12.c3xd4 Nb8-c6 13.Bc1-b2 Ra8-c8 14.Qc2-e2 Be7-f6 15.Ra1-d1



15...g7-g6

The d4-pawn is unassailable:

15...Bxd4? 16.e5! Bxb2 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Rxd8 Nxd8 19.Qxb2 Bxf3 20.gf +/- (Dvoretsky);

15...Nxd4? 16.Bxd4 Bxd4 17.Bb5! (17.e5?! Bxf3) 17...e5 18.Nxe5 Qe7 19.Nd7+/- Gligoric – Liang Jinrong, Olympiad, Lucerne, 1982.

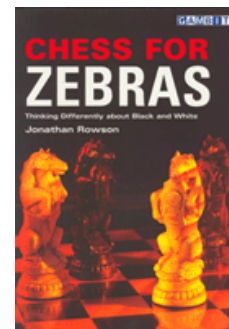
Theory recommends 15...Na5 16.Rfe1 Re8 unclear.

16.h2-h4! Qd8-e7

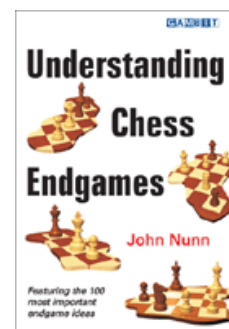
It isn't convenient to take on h4: 16...Bxh4?! 17.d5! Na5 (if 17...ed 18.ed Re8, then 19.dc! Rxe2 20.Bxe2+/-, but not as proposed in Chess Informant 19.Qd2 Na5 20.Qh6 Bf6 21.Ng5 due to 21...Qxd5 22.Qxh7+ Kf8 23.Qh6+ Kg8=) 18.de, and not 18...fe? 19.Bb5+/-; he has to play 18...Qe7!+/-.

17.h4-h5 Rf8-d8

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*Bishop v Knight:  
the verdict*  
by Steve Mayer





**W?**

*...If you were playing White, what would you be trying to do here? This is not an easy question to answer because the pressure on the centre makes it difficult to start anything serious on the kingside (e.g. with Nh2-g4) and Black seems to be very well coordinated in general. In such situations it can be a good idea to focus on one particular positional aspect and see if you can build a plan around that. It is important not to become blinkered by this single feature, but focusing your attention on something specific can lead to new insights that you may not see if you look at the position too generally.*

*Let's look at Black's king, our ultimate target. There are a few weak squares around it and it's only really protected by the f6-bishop. However, this prelate is difficult to exchange because White is not ready to advance in the centre. White can play h6 at some point, which would tend to signify threats to the g7-square, but we are still faced with the problem of exchanging the bishop in this regard. However, another feature of playing h6 is that Black's king is suddenly short of air and if White were ever to get "round the back" then he'd be most uncomfortable. But how can we ever do that when Black's rooks are such good guardians of the back rank and pressurize the centre? Exchange them! In fact, this thought reveals that Black rooks are currently out-performing their counterparts in any case.*

*...It seems that exchanging rooks would at least give us something to hope for, so let's try to do this. What's he going to do in the meantime? He'll probably play ...Na5 intending ...Nc4 or ...Nb3 but this just helps us to exchange on the c-file. Anything else? Well he might just double his rooks but then he will have to weaken himself on either c- or d-file.*

**18.Qe2-e3!**

*The first step in the plan. This defends d4 but weakens c4. Sometimes in these positions White plays e5 to gain even more space and try to exploit the weakened dark squares on the kingside, but Portisch's strategy looks much more convincing. Black is quite cooperative in this game but even if your plan is not especially threatening for the opponent, having some sense of where you are going enables you to play quickly and confidently.*

**18...Nc6-a5?!**

*This turns out badly even though it's hard to believe that it's a mistake. Black probably didn't appreciate that White wants to exchange rooks...*

In Rowson's opinion, it was worth choosing 18...Rc7! 19.Rc1 Rcd7! (after 19...Rdc8 20.Rc2!? White's position is preferable) 20.e5 (weaker is 20.Bb5?! Nxd4! 21.Bxd7 Nxf3+ 22.Qxf3 Bxb2 23.Rc2 Bxa3) 20...Bg7 21.Bb5 Rc7 22.a4 with an unclear game.

**19.Rd1-c1! a7-a6?!**

*Understandably, Black wants to play ...b5, but he underestimates the long-term danger to his king.*

**20.Rc1xc8 Rd8xc8 21.Rf1-c1 Rc8xc1+ 22.Qe3xc1 Qe7-d8**

*Probably designed to stop Ne5.*

**23.h5-h6!**



Now he has to reckon both with 24.Qf4, and also 24.d5.

**23...Qd8-c8**

On 23...b5 decisive is 24.d5! ed 25.Bxf6 Qxf6 26.Qc7. Hopeless too is 23... Nc6 24.Bxa6 Nxd4 25.Bxd4 Bxa6 26.Bxf6 Qxf6 27.Qc7.

**24.Qc1-f4 Qc8-d8 25.Nf3-e5 b6-b5**

Deserving of attention is 25...g5!?, but such moves aren't made when life is good.

**26.Bb2-c3! Na5-c4?!**

*This loses by force but the alternatives don't look much better.*

26...Nb3 27.d5 ed 28.Nc6 Bxc6 29.Bxf6 Qe8 30.Bc3 d4 31.Qf6 Qf8 32.Bb4 +/-;

26...Nc6!? 27.Nxf7! (27.d5? Nxe5 28.Bxe5 Bg5) 27...Kxf7 28.e5+/-

**27.Bd3xc4 b5xc4 28.Bc3-a5! Qd8-e7 29.Ne5-d7! 1-0**

The decisive combination was the logical conclusion of White's plan with the exchange of rooks.

As I was getting to know this game, I was reminded of another, older one, in which a similar structure arose out of a completely different opening. It was annotated in the monograph by Paul Keres, *100 Games*, published in 1966. Keres was an outstanding analyst, but still there's something to add to his notes (as usual, I should emphasize). The impressions we have just received will prove useful in the process of analysis.

**Keres – Malich**

Olympiad, Varna, 1962

**1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 4.Ng1-f3 Bf8-g7 5.e2-e3**

*A modest continuation. White isn't striving for an opening advantage, but intends to transfer the center of gravity of the battle to the middlegame.*

**5...0-0 6.c4xd5 Nf6xd5 7.Bf1-c4 Nd5xc3**

*A few rounds later Malich chose in this position 7...Nb6 8.Bb3 c5, which is also completely acceptable.*

**8.b2xc3 c7-c5 9.0-0 Qd8-c7 10.Qd1-e2 b7-b6**

*A good continuation here is 10...Bg4, so as to undertake Nd7 and e7-e5 when the opportunity arises. Although later analyses showed that Black shouldn't*

*fear complications after 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Qxf3 cd 13.Bd5 (due to 13...dc!-/+) , nevertheless without home preparation it's risky to go into such an unclear continuation.*

Instead of 11.h3? the move 11.Ba3 has been tried (I also recall the recommendation of Gerardo Lebrede – 11.Rb1!?). Now already unfavorable is 11...Bxf3?! 12.Qxf3 cd 13.Bd5 Nc6 (for an endgame with extra material White undertakes an exchange of blows 13...de 14.Bxb7 Qxc3 15.Bxe7 ef+ 16.Kh1 Qxf3 17.gf Re8 18.Rad1 Rxe7 19.Bxa8+/- – Dvoretsky) 14.cd Qd7 15.Rfc1 Rac8 16.h4+/- (Keres-Pachman, Marianske Lazne, 1965). So Black replies 11...Nd7 12.Rac1 Qa5 13.Bb2 Rac8= (Najdorf – Korchnoi, Hastings 1971/72).

### **11.Rf1-d1**

White didn't achieve anything in the game Kuzmin – Kochiev, 1st League of the Soviet Championship, Minsk, 1976, where played was 11.Bb2 Nc6 12.Rac1 Bb7 13.Rfd1 e6 14.Bb5 Rfd8 15.Ba3 Na5=.

### **11...Nb8-c6 12.Bc1-b2**

*The immediate 12.e4 looks suspect because of the possible pin 12...Bg4. For reinforcement of the center the bishop is superbly placed on b2.*

### **12...Bc8-b7 13.e3-e4 Nc6-a5 14.Bc4-d3 e7-e6**

*With this good move Black prevents d4-d5 and equalizes the chances. Now follows a prolonged regrouping of forced by both sides.*

### **15.Ra1-c1 Rf8-d8 16.Re2-e3**

As in the Portisch game, the queen is successfully positioned on e3. From there it strengthens the center and is prepared for a jump to the kingside, where White plans to start an attack.

### **16...Ra8-c8 17.h2-h4**

Also a well-known method: advancing the h-pawn increases the pressure on the position of the black king.

### **17...c5xd4**

*Well played. Black has to create play in the center and on the queenside in order to compensate for White's activeness on the kingside.*

### **18.c3xd4 Qc7-d6 19.h4-h5**



**B?**

### **19...Rc8xc1**

*Here Black didn't choose the best plan, in my opinion. He's relying on exchanges to simplify the position, but he turns out still to be under unpleasant pressure despite the simplification.*

As in the game Portisch – Christiansen, exchanging off all the rooks is favorable for White, most of all because it weakens the enemy's home front, and the danger of the white queen penetrating into his opponent's camp increases.

*Corresponding more with the demands of the position is 19...Qb4, so that after 20.Qe2 he can bother his opponent on the queenside with the move 20...Qa4.*

### 20.Rd1xc1 Rd8-c8

In the event of 20...Nc6 very strong is 21.h6! Bxd4 (unhappy also is 21...Bh8!? 22.Bb5) 22.Nxd4 Nxd4 23.Qg5! e5 (a natural move) 24.Bxd4 ed (on 24...f6 follows 25.Bxe5!) 25.e5 Qf8 (25...f6 26.Qxg6+! hg 27.ed Rxd6 28.Rc7 with a winning endgame for White) 26.Rc7+/-.

### 21.Rc1xc8+ Bb7xc8



W?

### 22.Nf3-g5?!

*Black still hasn't freed himself from the pressure. White intends to begin an attack on the kingside by the route 23.hg hg 24.Qh3. Also very strong was 22.h6!. If then 22...Bh8, then after 23.e5 this bishop is removed from play for a long time, and if 22...Bf8, then 23.d5!, and Black is threatened with major unpleasantness on the long diagonal.*

In the previous game we already saw how dangerous the position of the black king becomes with rooks exchanged and a pawn on h6. True, after 22.h6! Bf8 Keres' recommendation 23.d5?! doesn't promise White an advantage because of 23...ed 24.Qd4 f6. On 25.ed simplest of all is 25...Bxh6 26.Qxf6 Qxf6 27.Bxf6 Bg7=. And if 25.e5, then 25...Qc5 26.Qa4 f5 unclear.

Considerably stronger is 23.Ne5!, intending to place the knight on g4.



A) 23...Nc6 24.Ng4 Be7 25.d5 ed 26.ed Nb4 (26...Bxg4 27.dc+/-) 27.Bc4 Bxg4 28.Qd4 Bf6 (28...f6 29.Qxg4) 29.Qxf6 Qxf6 30.Bxf6, and White has an overwhelming advantage in the endgame.

B) 23...Qd8 24.Qf4 f6 25.Ng4 Be7 – now premature is 26.d5 e5, and if 27.Nxe5?!, then 27...Bd6. But the simple 26.Be2 puts his opponent in a difficult

position: White plans 27.d5, and after 27...e5 the queen already isn't chained to the defense of the knight, and so it's correct to retreat to e3 or c1.

The move made by Keres in the game is significantly weaker, and after it the situation on the board remained close to equality.

### 22...Qd6-e7! 23.h5xg6 h7xg6 24.Qe3-g3

In the event of 24.Qf4 Black can't reply 24...Nc6? because of 25.Ba3!+/- . However, it was necessary to reckon with both 24...Bh6!? 25.Qb8 Qb7 26.Qe5 Nc6+/-, and 24...e5!? 25.de Be6 26.Qh4 Bxa2 27.f4 Nc6 unclear.

### 24...Bg7-f6?

*Up till now Black has defended very carefully and has deflected all of his opponent's direct threats. However, the move in the text isn't the best and leads to significant difficulties. He overestimates the strength of the threat 25.Qh4 and places his bishop in a very unfavorable position. Correct was 24...Nc6!, so that on 25.Qh4 he could reply cold-bloodedly with 25...Nxd4!. That's why after 24...Nc6 White, should evidently play 25.e5, retaining at least a slight advantage.*

### 25.Ng5-f3 Qe7-b4?

*One mistake often drags another one behind it. This active thrust leads to a quick loss in a surprising way. Here, too, Black should have continued 25...Nc6. For example, 26.d5 Bxb2 27.dc e5! 28.Bc4 Kg7 unclear.*

Then again, contrary to Keres' opinion, there's no quick win with the move in the game either.



W?

### 26.Qg3-c7!

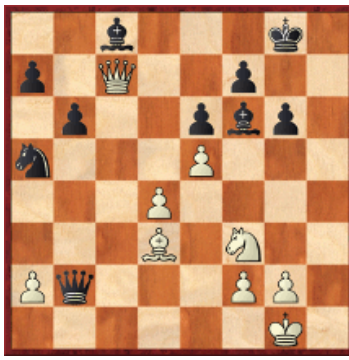
*The white queen invades his opponent's position with great force. Black expected this move, of course, and was relying on successfully deflecting all the threats, but...*

### 26...Qb4xb2

If 26...Bb7, then 27.Bc1!+/- (worse is 27.Bc3 Qa3).

*Black's calculation was based on the variation 27.Qxc8+ Kg7 28.e5 Be7 29.Qc7, after which 29...Kf8 gives him the opportunity to organize enough of a defense.*

### 27.e4-e5!



**B?**

*This strong and unexpected advance decides the game. If Black wants to keep his king's bishop, then he has to leave the d8-h4 diagonal, and after that White's attack becomes unstoppable.*

After 27...Bg7 28.Qxc8+ Bf8 White can equally with 29.Qc7 also obtain a decisive advantage by the route 29.Bxg6! fg 30.Qxe6+ and so on.

The rout could have been avoided simply by resorting to tactics: 27...Bh4!! In the event of 28.Nxh4 Qxd4 29.Qxc8+ (nothing is gained from 29.Bxg6 because of 29...Qd7!) 29...Kg7 the piece is immediately won back (30.Bxg6 Qxh4= or 30.Nxg6 Qxd3 31.Ne7 Qd1+ 32.Kh2 Qh5+ with perpetual check). Useless is 28.g3?! Bb7=, and after 28.Qxc8+ Kg7 29.g3 Be7 almost the same position arises as in the one refuted by Keres, 27.Qxc8+, only with the inclusion of the move g2-g3, in some variations freeing the g2-square for the king.

Then again, the situation that arises after 30.Qc7 is far from safe for Black.



**B?**

If this is defended "according to Keres": 30...Kf8, then White continues 31.Qb8+ Kg7 32.Qxa7 Kf8 (32...Nc6 33.Qd7+/-) 33.Qb8+ Kg7 34.Qc7 Kf8, and now to his decisive advantage leads the impressive breakthrough 35.d5!! ed 36.e6! Qf6 (36...fe 37.Ne5+/-; 37...Nc4 38.Qc8+ Kg7 39.ef Kxf7 40.Qc6+/-) 37.Qb8+ Kg7 38.ef, and on any pawn capture follows 39.Ne5+/-, and on 38...Bf8 – 39.Nh4+/-.

More chances are retained with 30...Qa3 31.Be4 Qb4!? 31.Qxa7 Nc4 with the idea of Nb2-d1.

**27...Bf6-e7?**

*Black is hoping for 28.Qxc8+ Kg7 and so on, but a new surprise follows.*

**28.Qc7xe7! Qb2-c1+ 29.Bd3-f1!**

*This was the whole point. After 29.Kh2? Qf4+ 30.Kh3 Bb7 there's nothing for Black to fear.*

**29...Bc8-b7**

*The main variation of White's combination is the following: 29...Ba6 30.Qd8 +! (but not 30.Ng5 Qxf1+ 31.Kh2 Qxf2 and so on) 30...Kg7 (or 30...Kh7 31.Ng5+ Kh6 32.Nxf7+ Kg7 33.Qf6+ Kg8 34.Ng5 and so on) 31.Qf6+, 32.Ng5, and Black is mated, as the f2 pawn is defended. The move in the game doesn't save Black either.*

**30.Nf3-g5 Qc1-f4 31.g2-g3 1-0**

*After 31...Qf5 32.Bd3 he loses his queen.*

In conclusion, I hope readers will concern themselves only with first-class chess texts, if possible, enjoy them, and then successfully use your newly-acquired knowledge at the chessboard.

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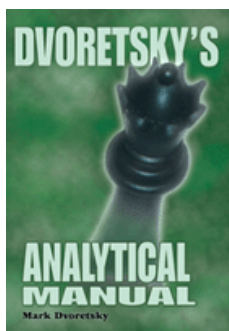




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## The Instructor

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## "Tasty" Tactics

The twenty positions offered in this article are taken from my card-index of exercises. They are comparatively easy, but elegant, and I'm sure you'll have to like them. You don't have to calculate long, branching variations in them – it's enough to find the correct tactical idea. The only problem is that in most cases the solution is quite unusual and doesn't jump out at you. The purpose of the training is to develop combinational vision and inventiveness.

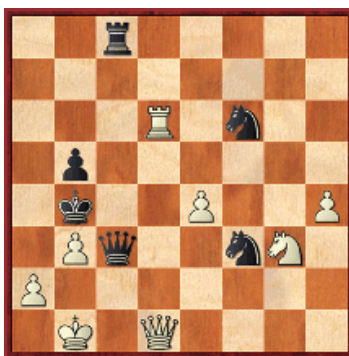
I have divided all the material into five short tests with four positions in each.

### Test One

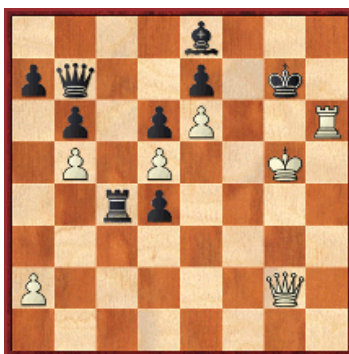
The first exercises are the simplest, for warming up. The solution, as a rule, consists of just one strong move.



B?

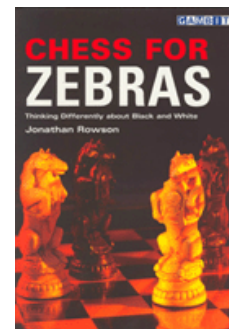


B?



W?

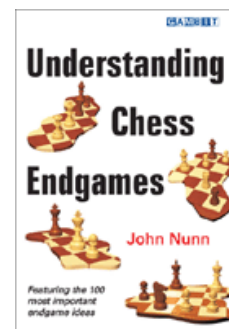
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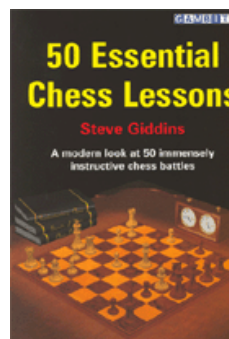
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**B?**

### Test One Solutions

#### 1. Picket-Ernst, Apeldoorn, 2003

##### 19...Rd1+!!

A brilliant deflection of one of two white pieces. In the variation 20.Kxd1 Qxf1+ 21.Qe1 Rd8+ 22.Nd2 Rxd2+! 23.Kxd2 Qxg2+ 24.Kd1 Qg4+! with the subsequent 25...Qxh3 Black obtains many pawns for the material. But taking with the rook leads to a knight fork.

##### 20.Rxd1 Nc2+ 21.Ke2 Nxe3

Black has a decisive advantage. I'll show you a few more moves.

22.Nd6+ (22.Nxe3 Qxa4) 22...Kc7 23.Rxe3

On 23.Rf3 follows 23...Qxf3+ 24.gf Nxd1 (stronger than 24...Nxf1?!, on which White replies not 25.Nxf7 Ng3+! 26.Kf2 Ne4+!, but 25.Ne4!, considerably complicating his opponent's task) 25.Nxf7 Rf8 26.Ng5 Rf6 27.Kxd1 h6 28.Ne4 Rxf3-+.

23...Qg4+! 24.Rf3 Rd8-+, and Black won.

#### 2. Lahtinen-Palkovi, Hungary, 1990

Three black pieces: the queen, the rook and the f3 knight can't succeed without outside help. Another fighting unit must be included in the attack: the second knight or even the king.

The impressive blow **35...Nd5!!**-+ combines in itself the ideas of covering the d-file (36.ed Nd2+) and deflecting the rook from the sixth rank (36.Rxd5 allows the lethal 36...Ka3!). On 36.Nf1 the answer can be either 36...Nf4 with the idea of Ne1-d3, or an immediate 36...Ne1 37.Qd2 Nd3.

The game ended like this: 36.a3+ Kxa3 37.Ra6+ Kb4 38.Ra2 (38.ed Nd2+ 39.Ka2 Qd3) 38...Ne3 39.Qd6+ Rc5 40.Re2 Qc1+ 41.Ka2 Nd1 White resigned.

#### 3. Aagaard-Kempinski, Groningen, 1998

Black's major pieces are stuck on the queenside and apparently unable to help the king. But the situation turns out not to be that simple: the carefree 50.Qe4? is refuted by means of 50...Qxd5+! 51.Qxd5 Rc5 52.Qxc5 dc (or 52...bc) 53.a4 d3, and Black wins. Having calculated this variation, Jacob Aagaard decided to force perpetual check by means of 50.Kf5+?! Kxh6 51.Qg5+ Kh7 52.Qh4+ Kg7 Draw.

But meanwhile a win (and with it the achievement of a grandmaster norm) was close at hand.

##### 50.Rh8!!

The bishop is under attack, so useless is 50...Qxd5+ 51.Qxd5 Rc5 52.Qxc5 dc

53.Rxe8+-, and otherwise the mate can't be defended: 50...Kxh8 51.Kh6; 50...Bg6 51.Rg8+ Kxg8 52.Kh6 (or 52.Kxg6); 50...Rc2 51.Qh1! Bh5 52.Rxh5.

#### 4. Najer-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow, 2006

There followed 31...Qb5? 32.Rd4 Rxd4 33.Bxd4 Nd5 34.Qb3+-. Evgeny Najer won this game, and subsequently the whole tournament.

The outcome of the contest could have been different if Ian Nepomniachtchi had noticed an impressive combination.

**31...g4! 32.Qg3 Qf1+!!**

Any capture leads to mate: 33.Kxf1 Rh1 or 33.Rxf1 Ne2.

Probably many readers were reminded of the episode that has already become a classic from the duel between two top British grandmasters, which looks very similar.

#### Short-Miles

British Championship, Brighton, 1984



Nigel Short chose the restrained 22.a3?!, preserving his solid advantage, which he subsequently made the best of.

The grandmaster turned down the provocative **22.Nb6!**, foreseeing the dangerous counter-blow **22...Ne2!** (23.Nxd7? Rc1+ 24.Rxc1 Rxc1; 23.Bxe2? Qxd1+ 24.Bxd1 Rc1). What he didn't see was an impressive refutation: **23.Qf8 +!! Rxf8** (23...Kxf8 24.Nxd7+) **24.Nxd7+-**.

#### Test Two

The exercises offered in this test are about the same as in the first one, only the path to the goal will be slightly longer. Which, then again, will complicate your task just a little.



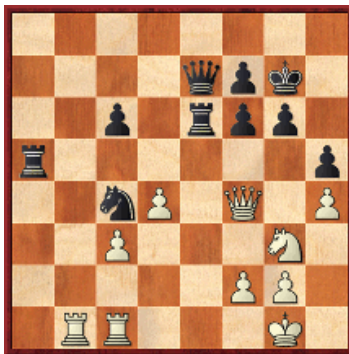
**B?**



B?



B?



W?

### Test Two Solutions

**5. Tolush-Flohr, Kiev, 1944** (variation from the game)

**23...Ne3!! 24.Nxc6**

In the event of 24.f3 good are either 24...Nxf3!, or 24...Qxf3! 25.Nxf3 Nxf3.

**24...Nf3!** with the unavoidable 25...Rh2. A rare picture: a rook and two knights have invaded the opponent's camp, and with a full board White's pieces are unable to save themselves from a very simple mate.

**6. Stern-Sanakoev, correspondence 1994-99**

**1...Ra1!!**

A beautiful deflection of the queen, preparing a mating attack.

**2.Qxa1 Qxh2+! 3.Rxh2 Ng3+ 4.Kg1 Bb6+ 5.Re3 Bxe3**

No help was 2.Qe4 – the same combination led to a rook endgame with two extra pawns for Black: 2...Qxh2+ 3.Rxh2 Ng3+ 4.Kg1 Bb6+ 5.Qd4 Bxd4+ 6.cd Rxe1+ 7.Kf2 Nf1 (7...Re3!?) 8.Rh1 Rd1 9.Rxf1 Rxd4+-. But ending the game more quickly was 2...Qf4! (threatens 3...Qxe4 or 3...Qf1+) 3.Qe8+ Kg7 4.Rxa1 Qxh2+! 5.Rxh2 Ng3+ 6.Kg1 Bb6+.

**7. Omar Ibrahim-Ibarra, Cuba, 2003**

**1...Nxd4! 2.Kxg3**

In the event of 2.Qxd4 Rxa3 3.Rd1 Qh4 White is left a piece down. And now an impressive queen sacrifice by Black lures the enemy king into his camp, where a warm welcome has been prepared for him.

**2...Qh4+!! 3.Kxh4 Nf5+ 4.Kg5 Nf8!** with the unavoidable 5...Nh7, so White resigned.

**8. Schmidt-Bronstein, USSR 1970**

In the game nothing interesting happened: 27.Rd1? Rd5 28.Qf3 Rd8 29.Qd3 Ne5 30.Qd2 Nc4 Draw. But happiness was so possible...

**27.d5!!**

Forces him to cover the fifth rank, as the rook and the c4 knight are under fire.

**27...cd 28.Nf5+! gf 29.Qg3+ Kh7 30.Rb8**

Black is saved from mate only by sacrificing material: 30...Re1+ 31.Kh2! Qe5 32.Rxe1 Qxg3+ 33.Kxg3 (there's no time for 33...Ra3 because of the threat of 34.Ree8) or the queen: 30...Qe8 31.Rxe8 Rxe8 32.Qc7 Kg7 33.Rb1 (33.Rd1). In both cases Black isn't to be envied.

**Test Three**

The "spirit" of the exercises in this test is the circumstance that their solutions are associated with non-standard quiet moves.



**B?**



**B?**



**B?**



**B?**

### Test Three Solutions

#### 9. Kobese-Van Tonder, South Africa, 2002

In the game followed the provocative, but unsound combination: 26...Rxc3? 27.bc Ba2. It was refuted by the route 28.Bb5+! ab 29.Kb2. After 29...Bf7 30.Qg7! (worse is 30.Rxf4 Qe3) 30...Bg6 31.Qf8+ Kd7 32.Rxf4 the additional material guarantees White an advantage, but the battle continued. Attempting to defend the knight with the move 29...Qe3? hastened the denouementx 30.Rf8+ Kd7 31.Rxd6+! ed (31...Kc7 32.Rc8+!) 32.Qg7+ Kc6 33.Rc8+, and Black resigned

The outcome of the duel would have been the reverse if the one playing Black had found an amazing quiet move.

#### 26...Ba2!!-+

The bishop is unassailable: 27.Nxa2 Nxd3+ 28.Rxd3 Rfxc2+. The threats 27...Qe3+ and 27...Rxc3 can be parried only by giving up the queen: 27.Qf8+ Kd7 28.Qxc8+ Kxc8 29.Nxa2, which is completely hopeless, of course.

#### 10. Domnitz-Pachman, Netanya, 1973

Playing 24...Kg8!? 25.Rad1 (25.gh? g6-+) 25...hg 26.h3 Re8, Black preserved his obvious advantage. However, Ludek Pachman found a way to end the game immediately.

#### 24...Rh8!!

White resigned, as he has no defence to the threat of 25...g6 26.Qxh6+ Kg8.

Such rook moves, apparently "to nowhere", to a closed file, Nimzowitsch called "mysterious". In his examples (and also in mine – see *School of Chess Excellence 3 – Strategy*), the chapter "Mysterious Rook Moves") the motive was purely prophylactic: the need to prevent an important pawn advance by the opponent, even by such an unusual method. But in this case the solution can be found in concrete, tactical ideas.

#### 11. Gomes-Neto, Rio de Janeiro, 1942

The pin of the f3 knight seriously compromises White's position, as no way to quickly get rid of it is apparent. The question is only how best to exploit this circumstance. Black found the best path to his goal.

**1...Rg8!!-+**

Another "mysterious rook move"! The threat of 2...Nh4+! 3.gh g5 is unpreventable. For example, 2.Nb1 Nh4+! 3.gh g5 4.Nbd2 g4!-+.

The game ended like this: 2.c3 Nh4+! 3.gh g5 4.Rg1 Bxf3+ (sufficient is also 4...gh+ 5.Kf1 Rxcg1+ 6.Kxcg1 Bxf3-+) 5.Qxf3 gh+ White resigned.

Black could have changed the move order: 1...Nh4+!! 2.gh Rg8! with the subsequent 3...g5-+. Less precise is 2...g5?! 3.hg Rg8 4.h4 h6 5.Nb1! hg 6. Nbd2 gh+ 7.Kh1.

## 12. Shofman-Ilivitsky, Sverdlovsk, 1945

The pin on the f6 knight apparently prevents the exploitation of the obvious weakness of the e4 point. Georgy Ilivitsky solves the problem by using a combination.

**28...Bxe4! 29.Rxe4 Ra8!!-+**

The cold-blooded transfer of the rook from one open line to another creates a multitude of threats: 30...Qxe4; 30...Nxe4; 30...Ra1+. If 30.Bxf6, then 30...Ra1+ 31.Re1 (31.Ne1 Rxe1+) 31...Qxf3 32.Rxa1 gf, and Black's material advantage is enough for victory.

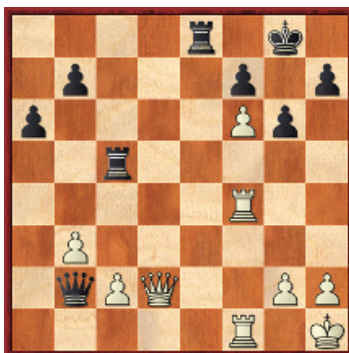
Further followed: 30.h4 Qxe4 31.Qxe4 Nxe4 32.Be3 Ra2 33.g5 Rxb2. White resigned.

## Test Four

In all the previous exercises you had to find a win. But brilliant moves are sometimes made not only in the attack, but also in defense. It's no less important to foresee and defuse the impressive surprises that your opponent has prepared in advance.



W?



B?

Is it possible to take on c2?





**B?**



**W?**

#### Test Four Solutions

**13. I. Zaitsev** – from the game Ermolin-Petryaev, 1971

In the event of 1.Qf1? Qe5-/+ White has to look for salvation in a difficult queen endgame a pawn down. But meanwhile a drawing outcome can be forced immediately.

**1.Qf2!! Qxf2** (1...ef – stalemate) **2.g3+** with unavoidable stalemate.

**14. Thipsay-Ivell**, Edinburgh, 1985

An unclear position arose with 23...Rc6!? or 23...h6!?. And here any pawn capture is forcibly refuted.

A) In the event of **23...Qxc2?** the answer is **24.Re4!! Qxe4 25.Qh6+-**.

B) The situation is slightly more complicated with the move chosen in the game **23...Rxc2?**. Then came the immediate blow **24.Re4!**, but Black had counted on **24...Rec8**, and wasn't afraid of 25.Qh6? Qxf6!.

He hadn't taken into account another impressive blow, **25.Rc4!!**, from which it's already impossible to defend.

25...Qxf6 (25...R2xc4 26.Qxb2) 26.Rxc8+ Black resigned.

**15. Pheling-Rutshi**, Biel, 1984

**1...Kh6!!**

It becomes clear that White is powerless to prevent a stalemating combination.

**2.Qd3 d1Q! 3.Qxd1**

Nothing is changed by 3.Qxg3 Qxg1+!! 4.Kxg1 Rxg2+!!.

**3...Qxh3+! 4.gh Rh2+! 5.Kxh2** – stalemate.

## 16. Lucarelli-Carra, Bologna, 1932

White is a rook up, but it isn't clear how he can defend from the threatened mate. On 1.d4? the answer is 1...Qe2. No help is 1.Qxc7+? Bxc7 2.h7 Be5+.

**1.Rd2!! Rxd2 2.d4 Qe2?!**

White also preserved his large advantage with other replies: 2...Bd6 3.Qf5+- or 2...Rg2!? 3.Ka1 Qe2 4.Rb1 Bd6 5.Qf5+-.

**3.Bc1** Black resigned. The idea of the rook sacrifice has become clear: his opponent's pieces are positioned on the second rank in the wrong order (the queen is behind the rook), and as a result the attack has run into a dead end.

### Test Five

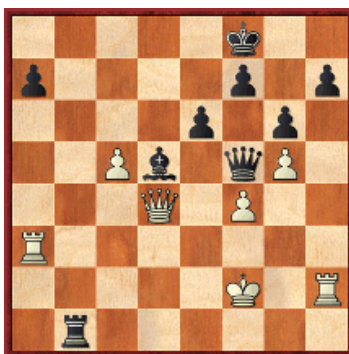
The last test is probably the most complicated one. Here you have to calculate variations, although they don't branch off too much – but the point is still to find a beautiful idea.



W?



W?



B?





W?

### Test Five Solutions

#### 17. Mieses-Janowski, Paris, 1900

The g6-pawn seems to be poisoned, and still Jacques Mieses boldly eats it.

**23.Qxg6!! Rdg8 24.Qg7!**

It becomes clear that taking the queen is bad: 24...Rxc7 25.hg Rg8 26.Rxc7 Qd8 27.Nh5+-. But otherwise White obtains a decisive advantage, invading on f5 with his knight.

**24...Bc8 25.Nf5 Bxf5**

And here no joy comes from 25...Rxc7 26.hg Rg8 27.Rxc7 Qc7 28.Rh8+-.

**26.Rxf5 Bb4 27.Kb1**

The queen could have been pulled out from under the attack: 27.Qf7 Rf8 28.Qh5.

**27...Bxc3**

Beautiful is 27...Rxc7 28.hg Rg8 29.Rxc7 Qg1+ 30.Nd1!!+-.

**28.bc Nf8**

Or 28...Rxc7 29.hg Rg8 30.Rf7! Qd8 31.Rxc7 Qe8 32.Rf6+-.

**29.Rhf1! Ng6 30.Qd7 Rd8 31.Qe6 Nf4 32.Bxf4 ef 33.R5xf4 Qc5 34.Rf7 Qg5 35.Rf8! Qc5 36.Qe7** Black resigned.

#### 18. R. Liberzon-Belov, Moscow, 1957 (variation from the game).

**1.Qe1!!**

A deflecting queen sacrifice that must be accepted (1...Rxa2 is refuted by 2.Rxc7+! Nxc7 3.Qe8+ or 2...Kxc7 3.Nxf6+), making it possible to develop a mating attack on the king with just two rooks.

**1...Bxe1 2.Nxf6 gf** (2...h6 3.Rxc6+!) **3.Rgh1 Kg8 4.Rxc7** (threatens 5.Rh8+ Kg7 6.R1h7) **4...Kf8** (4...Bh4 5.R7xc4!) **5.Rh8+ Ke7 6.Rxe1+ Kd7 7.Rhe8!** with an unavoidable mate.

#### 19. Gauglitz-Horvath, Debrecen, 1987

Check on c2 is useless for now – first he has to deflect the enemy queen.

**43...e5!! 44.Qxe5**

Very bad is 44.Qxd5 Qxf4+. The retreat 44.Qd2 makes it possible to escape a combinational rout, but after 44...ef Black obtained a decisive advantage. For example, 45.Rxc7 Qxc7 (45...Qe5!?) 46.Rh8+ Kg7 47.Qc3+ (47.Qd4+ f6-+)

47...f6 48.Rxa7+ Kxh8 49.Qh3+ Qh5-+.

**44...Qc2+ 45.Kg3 Rg1+ 46.Kh3 Be6+!** (Black doesn't have any other sensible checks) **47.Qxe6**



It seems that Black has miscalculated: his queen is under attack, and as before he has no checks.

**47...Qxc5!!**

The cold-blooded capture immediately clarifies the situation. White's queen and rook are under fire, and moreover the queen has to protect the h3-c8 diagonal. He couldn't manage to do it all at the same time, and White resigned.

**20. Winants-Guris, Belgium, 1992**

All of White's pieces are exceptionally active, while his partner hasn't finished his development yet. A combination absolutely must be found. And it is found, although it's not very simple.

**1.Nxe5!! Bxe5 2.Rxe5! Qxe5 3.Bc1!**

With his rook sacrifice White has opened the a1-h8 diagonal and his bishop is ready to seize it. But it's too soon to stop calculating.

**3...Qe7**



You want to check with the bishop automatically, but this isn't the best move, as it significantly complicates White's task. Luc Winants found a forcing and impressive mate.

**4.Qc3+!! Rf6 5.Qxf6+!! Qxf6 6.Rd8+! Qf8** (6...Qxd8 7.Bb2+ Qd4 8.Bxd4#; 6...Kg7 7.Rg8#) **7.Bb2#**

But why must you capture on f6 with the queen, and not with the bishop? The fact of the matter is that after 4.Bb2+?! Rf6 5.Bxf6+! (unclear is 5.Qc3 Ne4, for example, 6.Qe3 Be6 7.Bxe6 Qxe6 8.f3 Kg8 or 6.Re1 h6!?) 5...Qxf6 6.Rd8+! Black continues the battle, escaping with the king to the h6 square, which in the game was controlled by the bishop: 6...Kg7! 7.Rg8+ Kh6.

White continues the attack by the route 8.g4! Ne4 (natural) 9.Qd3. If 9...Qh4,

then 10.Qe3+ Ng5 11.Be2, and you don't envy Black's king. His relatively better chance is the exchanging combination 9...Qa1+ 10.Kg2 Qh1+! 11.Kxh1 Nxf2+ 12.Kg2 Nxd3. Then again, either after 13.g5+ Kh5 14.Bxd3 Kg4, or with 13.Bxd3 fg 14.Bf5 Bxf5 15.Rxa8 Kg5 16.Rxa5 White preserves a large advantage.

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### Readers' Responses

**Peter** from the **USA** - As always, an *excellent* article!!

**Ankit** from **India** - Very good tests, especially Test Five.

**T.S.** from the **USA** - Thank you for publishing your wonderful [Studies for Practical Players](#). I hope your work opens the doors for further appreciation of chess studies and leads other authors to offer similar works. In regard to the comment in your book, "...I remember that the famous study by the Sarychev brothers (1.Kc8!!) also had introductory moves, which no one today knows about." You may be pleased to note that Mr. Beasley and Mr. Whitworth appreciate the preceding moves and included these moves in the appendix of their book, *Endgame Magic*. Your efforts at [ChessCafe.com](#) are greatly valued and appreciated.

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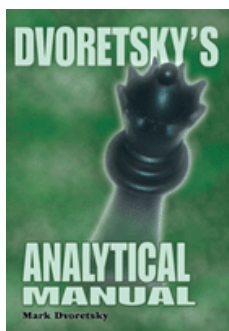
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## COLUMNISTS

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## Emotions and Playing Strength

As we go through some of our own games, we're at a loss: how on earth could I have played so weakly?! Emotional instability can be one of the factors giving rise to a failure by chess players in important duels. Under the influence of surging emotions (and not necessarily negative ones) we sometimes lose concentration and stop objectively evaluating the events that are taking place on the board. This has even happened to great fighters who possess a powerful sporting instinct – not to mention mere mortals.

During Emanuel Lasker's game against a young Carlos Torre in the Moscow International Tournament of 1925, the ex-world champion was given a telegram with the news that the play he had written with his brother Berthold was going to be produced. Excited about a happy event that was important to him, Lasker, who by that point had obtained a winning position, lost his ability to control the course of the battle, made several mistakes and in the end allowed his opponent to undertake an impressive combination on the theme of the "windmill."

**Torre-Lasker**  
Moscow, 1925



1...?

21...Qa5-f5

Vladimir Zak (in his book *Lasker*) considers the move made by Black inaccurate and recommends 21...Qd5! 22.Rg3 h6 23.Bf6 Ng6 24.Rxg6 fg 25. Qxg6 Qxg2+! with a winning endgame. Then again, Lasker didn't make the mistake that actually relinquished the victory here, but on the next move.

22.Rd3-g3

22.Rh3 e5 is also unpleasant.

22...h7-h6?

22...f6! 23.Nc4 Re7! 24.Nxd6 Qd5-- led to the win of a piece.

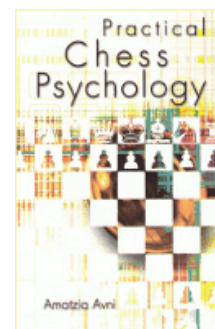
23.Na3-c4!

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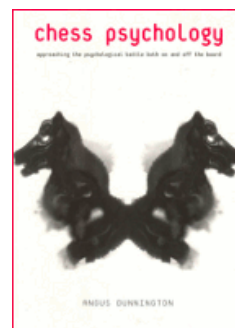
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1...?

23...Qf5-d5?

It was necessary to transfer into an endgame by the route 23...hg 24.Nxd6 Qg6 (or immediately 23...Qg6) 25.Qxg6 Nxg6. Zak evaluates the position that arises after 26.Nxb7 Reb8 27.Nc5 Rxb4 as favorable for Black. In fact it is equal: 28.Rxg5 Rxd4 29.Nxe6 Re8 30.Kf1.

24.Nc4-e3 Qd5-b5?

Considerably more stubborn is 24...Qxd4!?, on which White replies 25.Rd1. In Zak's variation 25...Qb2 26.Bxh6 Ng6 27.Bg5 Be4 28.Rh3 f6 White obtains a decisive advantage by means of 29.Nc4! Qxb4 (29...Qc2 30.Rc1) 30.Qh7+ Kf8 31.Nxd6 (threatens 32.Bxf6) 31...fg 32.Rb3!? (also good is the immediate 32.Nxe4) 32...Qa4 33.Nxe4 Qxe4 (on 33...Rad8 he can reply 34.Rxd8 Rxd8 35.Rf3+ Nf4 36.Qh8+ Kf7 37.Nxg5+ Kg6 38.Qxd8) 34.Rf3+ Qxf3 35.gf. Then again, with 25...Qe4 26.Bxh6 Ng6 27.Bg5 Black's position also remains difficult.



1.?

25.Bg5-f6! Qb5xh5 26.Rg3xg7+ Kg8-h8 27.Rg7xf7+ Kh8-g8 28.Rf7-g7+ Kg8-h8 29.Rg7xb7+ Kh8-g8 30.Rb7-g7+ Kg8-h8 31.Rg7-g5+ Kh8-h7 32.Rg5xh5

The "windmill" has ground up a lot of extra material for White.

32...Kg6 33.Rh3 Kxf6 34.Rxh6+ Kg5 35.Rh3 Reb8 36.Rg3+ Kf6 37.Rf3+ Kg6 38.a3 a5 39.ba Rxa5 40.Nc4 Rd5 41.Rf4 Nd7 42.Rxe6+ Kg5 43.g3 1-0

A similar case occurred with Anatoly Karpov during his second match against Garry Kasparov in 1985. After ten games the world champion was leading with a score of 5½-4½. And at that point an article titled "Tolya's Million" appeared in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, describing Karpov's lawsuit against his business partner, who hadn't paid the world champion the royalties he was owed from the sales of chess computers. Karpov had been hoping to keep it all a secret, as in the Soviet era independent business activity without the permission of the authorities wasn't encouraged, to put it mildly. Disclosure of this kind of information threatened him with serious repercussions. So, as Karpov himself tells it in the newspaper Sport Express from March 23, 2001:

*From the morning they started harassing me. Gramov called (the chairman of the Sport Committee – M.D.), asking what this story was about. They called from Staraya Square (where the Central Committee of the Communist Party's building was located – M.D.), to inquire how this was possible - a Soviet citizen, and suddenly he has a lawsuit somewhere in Germany... Basically, due to all this song-and-dance I was completely knocked off balance and couldn't play the 11th game properly, of course... The outcome is well known: I tripped up horribly and lost very quickly.*

### **Kasparov-Karpov**

Moscow, 1985



#### **21...Rd8-d7?!**

In connection with White's reply, which hadn't been taken into account, it would have been more accurate to double the rooks by the route 21...Rc7! 22. Be4 Rcd7, obtaining complete equality (Kasparov).

#### **22.Qa4-g4! Rc8-d8??**

Karpov was playing almost as if he wasn't thinking. The position remained approximately equal with 22...Rdd8 or 22...Rd6!?.

#### **23.Qg4xd7! Rd8xd7 24.Re1-e8+ Kg8-h7 25.Bd5-e4+ 1-0**

Nevertheless, the chess player is more often unbalanced by events that take place directly on the board. There don't have to be any non-chess distractions by someone (the opponent, the arbiter or the surrounding people). Calmness and self-confidence are sometimes lost as a consequence of an unfavorable opening, unexpectedly strong (or weak) moves by the opponent, one's own errors, and so on. The following game, played by the future grandmaster in an international junior tournament, is a good example. I'll base this on the commentary by Alexei Shirov, and in a number of cases I'll take issue with him.

### **Lev-Shirov**

Lloyds Bank Open 1991



1...?



Shirov thought for a long time, trying to calculate an interesting combination.

**15...Ng4!? 16.h3 Nxf2! 17.Kxf2**

In the event of 17.Qf3? Black has a pleasant choice between 17...f5!? 18.Qxf2 fe and 17...Ncd3!? 18.Bxd3 Rxc3 19.Qxf2 (19.Kxf2 f5-+) 19...Rxd3-/+.

**17...Qb6**

Now 18.Ke2? Na4! doesn't work, and it wasn't possible to find anything convincing after **18.Kf3!**, so White played differently.



**1...?**

Indeed, no good are

a) 18...f5? 19.Nc4 fe+ 20.Kg3 Bf4+ 21.Bxf4 ef+ 22.Kh2+-;

b) 18...Ne6? 19.Nc4 Qg1 20.Ne2!+- (but not 20.Bxh6 Nd4+ 21.Kg3 f5 with an attack);

c) It's more difficult to refute 18...Nxe4?!. I managed to find the only, far from obvious, means of obtaining a decisive advantage: 19.Ndxe4 f5 20.Bxh6 fe+ 21.Kg3 Rxc3+ 22.Kh2 Rf2 (22...Qf2? 23.Kh1+-) 23.Kh1 Bxh3 24.g4 Rg3.



**1.?**

25.Re3!! (weaker is 25.Be3 Rxe3 26.Rxe3 Qxe3 27.Qg4 Qd2 28.Bg2 e3=) 25...Rxe3 26.Qg4! Rf5 27.Bxe3 Qxe3 28.Bg2.

No use is the attempt to simplify the task for himself by the route 19.Ncxe4 f5 20.Nf6+ (better is 20.Nc4 fe+ 21.Kg3, leading the game after 21...Rxc4 22.Bxh6! Rc3+ 23.Kh2 into the variation examined above) 20...Rxf6 21.Nc4 e4+ 22.Kg3.



**1...?**

Black doesn't play 22...f4+? 23.Kh2 Qf2 24.Nd2! Rc3 25.Kh1+-, but 22... Qg1!. His opponent is forced to execute a series of only moves in order to maintain approximate equality: 23.Bxh6 f4+ 24.Bxf4 Rxf4 25.Bd3! (very bad is 25.Kxf4? Qf2+ 25...Qf2+ 26.Kh2 Rf3! 27.Kh1! (otherwise 27...Rxh3#) 27...Rxd3 (or 27...Bxh3 28.Bf1=) 28.Qe2.

d) 18...Nd3 19.Bxd3 Rxc3 20.Nc4 Qd4 21.Ke2! f5 22.Bxh6 fe 23.Bxf8+-.

Only after the game the future grandmaster found an impressive opportunity to continue the attack: **18...Nd3 19.Bxd3 f5!!**.



Losing is 20.ef? Rxc3 or 20...Bxf5, so it was necessary to go into the variation **20.Nc4! fe+ 21.Kg3 Qf2+ 22.Kh2 Rf3! 23.Kh1! Bxh3 24.Bf1 Bxg2+** (weaker is 24...Bg4?! 25.Nxe4! Qh4+ 26.Kg1 Rxf1+ 27.Rxf1 Bxd1 28.Bxh6, and White retains his material superiority) **25.Bxg2 Qh4+ 26.Kg1 Qf2+**, ending in perpetual check.

So Black's combination led to a forced draw. But, contrary to Shirov's opinion, I think that the continuation he chose in the game was objectively no worse and preserved fully-fledged counterplay for Black.

**15...Nc5-d3!?**

(?! - Shirov)

A different opportunity: 15...b5 is justified with 16.Nxb5? Bxd2 17.Bxd2?! (17.Qxb2 Nxe4 18.Qb2=+) 17...Nxe4-/+ with the threats of 18...Rc5; 18... Nxf2!, or 16.Bxb5?! Bxb5 17.Nxb5 Bxd2 18.Bxd2 Nxe4 19.Be3 Qd7 unclear.

However, White plays 16.b4! ab (16...Nd3!? 17.Bxd3 Rxc3 18.Qe2+/-) 17.ab Na4?! (17...Nd3) 18.Nxa4 ba 19.h3! with an advantage (but not 19.b5 Ng4 20. Be2? Nxf2! 21.Kxf2 Be3+!, and Black wins).

**16.Bf1xd3 Rc8xc3**

Black was counting on 17.Nc4 Bxc1 18.Rxc1 Rxc1 19.Qxc1 b5!, and not 20. Nxd6? because of 20...Qb6. If 17.Bc4 (planning 18.Bb2), then 17...Ng4! is strong.



**17.Qd1-e2!**



*And I couldn't find a decent reply. For the remainder of the game my opponent made very accurate moves, while I got into time trouble and played indifferently.*

**17...Nf6-g4?!**

*Certainly the decisive mistake. After the correct 17...b5! 18.Bb2 Rc8 19.Nf1 Qb6 the position remained playable.*

I think that Black would hardly have been any worse and his opponent would have had to make an accurate move like 20.Bc1= to maintain equality.

17...Nh5 18.g3 f5 was also worthy of attention (or 18...b5).

**18.Nd2-c4!**

Of course, not 18.h3? Nxf2! 19.Kxf2 Qb6+ 20.Kf1 f5-+.

**18...Qd8-h4 19.h2-h3 Ng4xf2**

*I also considered 19...Bxc1 20.Rxc1 Rxd3, but after 21.hg! Rd4 22.Nxd6 Bxg4 23.f3 White must win.*

**20.Qe2xf2**

No good was 20.Bxh6? Nxd3 21.Qd2 (21.Bxf8 Nf4!) 21...Nxe1 22.Qxc3 Nxc2! 23.Bxf8 Nf4-+.

**20...Qh4xf2+ 21.Kg1xf2 Bh6xc1 22.Rb1xc1 Rc3xd3 23.Re1-e3!**



*This is what I overlooked. White is a pawn down, but his position is almost won, as the black bishop is completely blocked in.*

In actual fact, approximate equality has been preserved on the board for now.

**23...f7-f5?!**

*The last chance was certainly 23...Rd4 24.Nxd6 f5 25.Rc7 fe+ 26.Ke1 Bf5.*

In the final position of the variation there is evidently nothing for White: 27. g4 Rxd5= or 27.Nxf5 Rxf5 28.Rxb7 Rxd5 29.Rxe4 Rf7=.

Possible also is 23...Rxe3 24.Kxe3 (24.Nxe3 f5 or 24...b5) 24...Rc8 25.Kd2 Kf8 26.Nxd6 Rxc1 27.Kxc1 b5! 28.Kd2 f5! with an unclear minor piece endgame. Weaker is 28...Ke7?! 29.Nb7 a4 30.d6+! Ke6 (better is 30...Ke8) 31. Nd8+ Kxd6 32.Nxf7+ - here White preserves a noticeable advantage.

**24.Re3xd3 f5xe4+ 25.Kf2-e3 e4xd3 26.Nc4xd6 Rf8-f4**



**27.Rc1-c4!?**

On 27.Rc7 Black doesn't reply 27...Rd4 28.Kd2 e4 due to 29.Nxe4! Rxe4 30. Rxd7 Rd4 31.Rxb7 Rxd5 32.a4! with the subsequent 33.Rb5, but 27...Bf5! 28. g4 Be4! 29.Nxe4 Rxe4+ 30.Kxd3 Rd4+ 31.Ke3 Rxd5 32.Rxb7 Rd1 33.Ke4 Rh1 with good drawing chances in a rook ending.

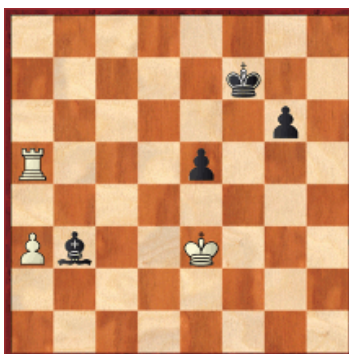
**27...d3-d2 28.Ke3xd2 Rf4-f2+ 29.Kd2-e3 Rf2xg2 30.Rc4-c7 Bd7xh3 31. Nd6-e4!**



**1...?**

Even here Black could still fight successfully by preserving the h-pawn: 31... h5! 32.d6 Kf8.

**31...Bh3-f5? 32.d5-d6! Kg8-f8 33.Rc7xh7 Rg2-g4 34.Ne4-c5 b7-b6 35.d6-d7 Rg4-d4 36.Rh7-h8+ Kf8-f7 37.d7-d8Q Rd4xd8 38.Rh8xd8 b6xc5 39. Rd8-d5 Bf5-e6 40.Rd5xc5 Be6xb3 41.Rc5xa5**



#### 41...Kf7-e6 42.Ra5-b5

With the black king cut off from the passed pawn, the win is achieved without difficulty.

**42...Bb3-c4 43.Rb5-b6+ Ke6-d7 44.Ke3-e4 g6-g5 45.Ke4xe5 g5-g4 46.Ke5-f4 Kd7-c7 47.Rb6-b1 Bc4-e6 48.a3-a4 Be6-c8 49.a4-a5 Kc7-c6 50.Rb1-c1+ 1-0**

I'll sum up my impressions in brief. Throughout the entire game Shirov mistakenly believed that he was worse, more than once making mistakes in his evaluation of the variations he'd calculated. The reason obviously lies in an emotional breakdown, a sharp deterioration of his mood after his protracted think on move fifteen and his rejection of a tempting combination.

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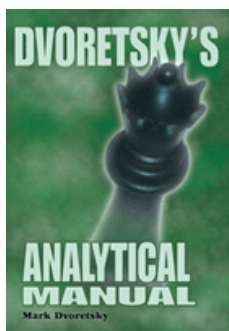
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## All that Glitters is not Gold

Here's what master Maxim Notkin wrote in the forum of the website chesspro.ru.

"I'm playing the Ecuadorian Matamoros in Cappelle in 1996. After what they call a fascinating muddle, the following arises:



"I'm sitting there, calculating the variation 21.Kc2 h6 22.Ne6 fe 23.de Nb6 24.Qe4 d5 25.Qe5 Kd8 26.Ba5 Rxa5 27.Qb8+ Nc8 28.b6, and I see that it's extremely good. He has 4 pieces of differing value, but he can't do anything against my queen and pawns. And the position is so colorful that I won't hold back, I'll stick in another diagram.



"After weighing everything up again, I move into action. On the 25th move my partner reaches for his king, I lean over the scoresheet and write Kd8, I lift my head... – and he's played 0-0-0!! And I had to switch to a battle for a draw, which was achieved after 25...0-0-0! 26.Ba5 Kb7 27.b4 cb 28.Qd4 Rd6 29.Bxb6 Rxb6 30.Qxd5+ Kb8 31.Qd8+ Kb7 and perpetual check.

"The worst part wasn't the fact that I'd missed the castling, but that when I was thinking about my 21st move, I hesitated – should I "win time" by means of 21.Ne4 Kd8 22.Ng5 Ke8 (Black has only moves with his king, I understood this perfectly well) and now 23.Kc2. And in the end I decided – why do I need time, when there's a forced win here! Even now, ten years later, I look at all this and I'm dumbfounded – how could I have been such a numskull?!"

The story is good and instructive. It's just a shame that an analytical check of the position leads to different conclusions.

1) In the game, White would have preserved his decisive advantage if he had retreated the queen to a different square on the twenty-fifth move: 25.Qe3!

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(instead of 25.Qe5? 0-0-0!). Castling is already impossible; altogether bad is 25...d4 26.Qe4; if 25...Rc8, then either 26.Qf4, or 26.Ba5 Nc4 27.Qf4 Nxa5 28.Qa4; on 25...Rd8 the most energetic is 26.b4.

2) In the event of 21.Ne4! Kd8 22.Ng5 Ke8 23.Kc2 (as with the immediate 21.Kc2), Black shouldn't attack the knight. He plays 23...Nb6!, after which no direct means of breaking through his defenses are evident – the entire battle is still ahead.

3) After 21.Ne4 Kd8 22.Ng5 Ke8 (as in the initial position), the knight sacrifice on e6 is also carried out immediately, without the inclusion of the move Kc2. For example, 23.Ne6 fe? 24.de Nb6 25.Qe4 d5 26.Qf4+-. However, Black doesn't accept it: 23...Ra1+ 24.Kc2 Nb6!, and again the battle continues.

4) Taking into account the fact that in all the variations the opponent is supported by the blockading move Nb6, we come to the solution of the position: the pawn sacrifice 21.b6! (or 21.Ne4 Kd8 22.Ng5 Ke8 23.b6!, but here the opportunity to castle unfortunately has no significance). The important b5-square is freed up for the queen. On 21...Nxb6 decisive is 22.Qb5+ Nd7 23.Qc6 Rb8 24.Ne6!.

Maxim's version is rather more interesting, of course, but what can you do: the objective truth rarely coincides with our desires.

I am constantly encountering similar situations. In a book, a magazine, or on a website you find a colorful and instructive example that sometimes even passes the first test and gets into the "card-index." Then you study it more closely and you see that what appeared to be a clear and precise little picture is destroyed under the pressure of newly-discovered variations, or refuted by an idea you've come up with, or made dispensable by secondary solutions, and thereby also much less impressive.

#### **Tskitishvili – Piliya**

Tbilisi, 1984



White mated his opponent eye-catchingly: **31.Qxg7+!! Kxg7 32.Rh7+ Kf8 33.Rh8+ Bg8** (33...Kg7 34.R1h7#) **34.Rxg8+! Kxg8 35.Nxf6+ Kf8 36.Rh8+ Kg7** (36...Ke7 doesn't change anything) **37.Rh7+ Kxf6** (or 37...Kf8) **38.Rf7#**.

An additional charm of the combination comes from the circumstance that the apparently equivalent 31.Qh8+? doesn't work because of 31...Bg8! 32.Qxg8+ Kxg8 33.Rh8+ (33.Nxf6+ Kf8 34.Rh8+ Ke7!; 33.Ne7+ Kf8 34.Ng6+ Ke8) 33...Kf7!.

Alas, under scrutiny it became clear that White could also carry out his attack by another method: 31.Ne7! bc (31...Qxe7 32.Qh8+; 31...Kxe7 32.Bxf7; 31...Bxc4 32.Ng6+ Ke8 33.Qxg7) 32.Ng6+ Bxg6 33.Qxg6 with the irrefutable threat of 34.Rh8+. The same goal is achieved by the knight rebound to another square: 31.Nf4!.

In the next example it was a positional problem rather than a tactical one that had to be solved.

#### **Spiridonov – Kasparov**



Black has a superb position: a powerful knight in the center of the board against a "bad" bishop. However, he has to reckon with his opponent attempting to open lines for his pieces by means of 19.b4 or 19.c5 Qxc5 20. Qxc5 dc 21.Rd5.

In his book *The Test of Time*, Garry Kasparov asserts that the task is resolved with the ingenious and unexpected prophylactic move 18...Kf6!. By defending the knight Black neutralized the threat of 19.c5. "After the forced 19.b4 Qxb4 20.Rb1 Qa3 21.Rxb7 Rab8! his advantage is obvious." Significant here is the fact that the king is defending the e7-pawn.

I wouldn't have placed an exclamation mark next to the last move of the variation, as 21...Qxa2! looks to be even stronger. Then again, this is irrelevant. It's more important that before taking the pawn White should include 21.Qd2!, retaining a playable position.

But the main thing is that the forward exit that Kasparov proposed for the king, useful with c4-c5 or b3-b4, turns out to be not terribly successful with a different development of events. For example, White has a right to play 19. h3!?, preparing 20.Bg4. And in the case of 19.Qd2! Black must go so far as to return his king to g7, as 19...g5?! 20.Qc3 (or 20.h4 h6 21.Qc3) allows his opponent to seize the initiative in connection with the possibilities Qh3; Bg4; b4; Rd5.

So Kasparov's striking recommendation isn't the optimal solution, which must be sought by analyzing the standard moves. Thus the situation loses a significant portion of its attractiveness.

I suspect that there's no convincing way to solidify Black's advantage. For example, on 18...a5!? White can reply as Kasparov suggests: 19.c5 Qxc5 20. Qxc5 dc 21.Rd5 Kf6 22.Rxc5, although after 22...Rfd8 (with the idea of 23... Rd2 or 23...Rd4) he's still a little worse, and the question is only how much worse. In my opinion, preferable is 19.Qe6!? Rae8 (19...Nc6!? unclear) 20. Rd5 Rf6 21.Qh3 unclear.

With that we could also conclude our analysis of the game, but I'll show it to the end, to correct a few more inaccuracies and mistakes made by Kasparov in his commentary. I found some of them a very long time ago, when I was preparing this example for lessons with my students, and I found others many years later, by then with the help of a computer.

### 18...Rac8

The move is no worse (although, most likely, no better either) than the continuations given above, so Kasparov was unjustified in awarding it a question mark.

### 19.b4 (! Kasparov)

Here, too, 19.Qe6!? isn't bad.

### 19...Qxb4 20.Rb1 Qa3 21.Rxb7 Kf6





**22.h4?! (threatens 23.Bg4!)**

An inaccuracy that wasn't noted by Kasparov. He should have played 22.Qd2! g5 23.h4, obtaining the position after 23...h6 that should have arisen in the game.

On an immediate advance of the h-pawn there's a strong reply, guaranteeing an advantage for Black: 22...Rb8!. In the event of 23.Rfb1 Rxb7 24.Rxb7 Qxa2 already useless is 25.Bg4? because of 25...Qa1+. No better is 23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.Qd2 f3 or 24.c5 Qxc5 25.Qd2 g5 26.hg+ Kxg5 27.g3 Ng6.

**22...h6?! 23.Rd1?**

White was forced to retreat his queen with a tempo: 23.Qd2 g5, and then choose either the move given by Kasparov, 24.Rb3 (but not 24.g3? f3! 25.Rb3 Qa4 26.Bxf3? Qxb3!) 24...Qc5 25.Rb5, or 24.Rfb1!?, not fearing 24...Nxc4 25.Bxc4 Rxc4 because of 26.Qd1(e2) with the idea of 27.Qh5.

Spiridonov was seduced by a naive trap: 23...Qxa2?? 24.Qxd6+!, giving his opponent time to exchange off the active b7 rook.

**23...Rb8! 24.Rc7 Rfc8 25.Rxc8 Rxc8 26.Qb7**



**26...Qc5?**

Why take the queen away from an active position? The advantage is preserved, for example, with 26...Rf8.

**27.Qb2 Qb6**

I've taken out the question mark that Kasparov placed next to White's move and the exclamation mark that was next to Black's reply. The fact of the matter is that the move 27.Rb1?!, recommended by the grandmaster, led to a difficult position after 27...Qc6!. And in the game itself White obtained sufficient counterplay.

**28.Qc1 g5**



The Bulgarian player wouldn't have been any worse if he had chosen 29.Qc3! (or 29.Qa3!) with the idea of 30.hg+ hg 31.Qh3. Here also the Black queen's unjustified retreat to the rear would have played a role, giving up important squares opposite it.

White lost the game only as a result of his subsequent series of mistakes.

### 29.Rd5? e6 30.hg+?

It's better to retreat the rook immediately – as Black controls the h-file.

### 30...hg 31.Rd1 Ke7?!

And again an inaccuracy that was awarded an exclamation mark by Kasparov. He should have gone into a mating attack without delay: 31...Rh8! with the idea of Qc7-h7. On 32.Qc3!? he should play not 32...Qc7?! 33.Rd3!, but 32...Qb7!. If now 33.Rd3, then 32...Qxe4 33.Qb2 g4+. After 33.f3 Qh7 34.Qe1 (threatening 34...Qh2+ 35.Kf1 Qg3 36.Kg1 Rh2) the subtle move 34...a6!! is very strong, freeing up the a7-square for a deadly queen check. Finally, in the variation 33.Rxd6 Qh7 34.Qh3 Qxh3 35.gh Rxh3 36.Ra6 Rc3 there comes an ending that is lost for White.

The move in the game closes the seventh rank and thereby makes it difficult to transfer the queen to the kingside. White was obliged to reply 32.Qc3!, not fearing 32...g4? 33.Bxg4! Rxc4? 34.Qh3. Unsuccessful also is the "positional" 32...Rb8 because of 33.Qh3. He probably had to play 32...Rh8 after all, but then 33.Rc1 is possible with the idea of 35.c5. White's position remained difficult, but he was still capable of putting up a fight.

**32.Qc2? Rb8** (even stronger is 32...g4!) **33.Qa4?** (more stubborn is 33.Qd2) **33...g4! 34.Qa3 Qc5**

34...g3! also won easily. Then again, in such situations, when any endgame is completely hopeless for the opponent, the player has a right to alternate attacking moves with offers to exchange queens.

### 35.Qc3 g3 36.Rf1



"Here I calculated the straightforward winning variation for about ten minutes just in case, as I'd already had sad experience of playing out solved positions in my opponent's time trouble."



Kasparov could have spent these ten minutes not only on the variation that occurred in the game, but also on another, more impressive one: 36...Rb1! 37. Rxb1 Qxf2+ 38.Kh1 Qxe2-+.

**36...gf+ 37.Rxf2 Rb1+ 38.Bf1 Qe3 39.Qxe3 fe 40.Rc2 Nxc4 0-1**

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Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

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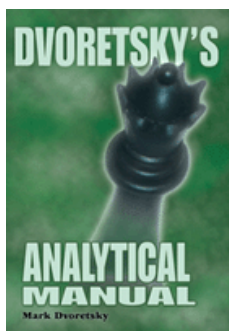
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## The Instructor

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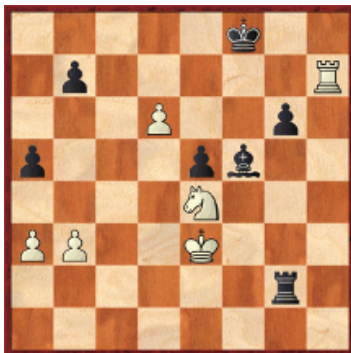
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## There's Always a Defense!

*Eternal vigilance is the price of supremacy.*  
- Mark Twain, *Eve's Diary*

I'll start by thanking Charles Sullivan for his instructive addition to the analysis of the ending of **Lev-Shirov**, London 1991 (from my January column).



1...?

In the game there followed 33...Rg4? 34.Nc5 b6 35.d7 Rd4 36.Rh8+ Kf7 37.d8Q Rxd8 38.Rxd8 bc 39.Rd5, and White capitalized on winning the exchange.

Sullivan pointed out the correct plan of defense: play to exchange off all the remaining white pawns on the board, preparing to give up the bishop for the most dangerous of them: the passed d6-pawn.

**33...a4!! 34.Nc5** (34.ba Ra2 35.d7 Rxa3+; 34.d7 Bxd7 35.Rxd7 Ra2) **34...ab 35.d7 Bxd7 36.Nxd7+ Ke8 37.Nf6+ Kd8 38.Rxb7 Rg3+ 39.Ke4 Kc8 40.Rb4 b2 41.a4 Ra3=** with the subsequent 42...b1Q.

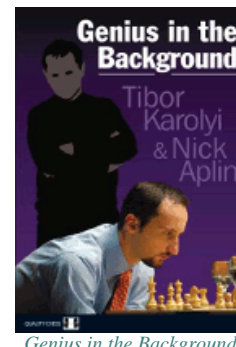
I'll use this case to reply to a comment from one of my readers about the question marks under the diagrams. I put them there in all cases when the position is suitable as an exercise for you to solve on your own. Moreover, it doesn't have to be connected with the subject being discussed at all.

When I'm working with strong players I don't limit myself to merely describing the material I've prepared, but I stop at every appropriate case and suggest that my student solves the problem that's facing the players in the game we're studying. Then we discuss his choice and evaluate the right ideas and the mistakes in the decision he made.

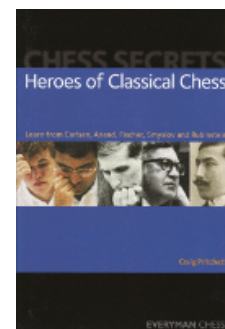
I won't insist (although it probably is the case) that this approach is effective in lessons with weaker players, but I've already been convinced many times of its expediency for my students. It's useful for practical players to constantly test their mastery in the most varied spheres, including, of course, those that don't directly fit into the lesson program.

On the same principle I also stick with articles that basically imitate my lessons to a great extent. The reader doesn't have to solve all the exercises, of course, but I think I'm right in pointing them out in the text for those who want to train themselves. Furthermore, I would also like to recommend that other authors use the same approach in their articles and books.

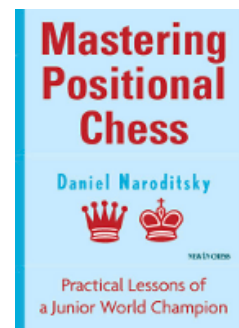
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Another of Sullivan's suggestions concerning one of the exercises from the December column served as inspiration for writing this column.

**R. Liberzon-Belov**

Moscow, 1957 (variation from the game)



**1.?**

White is a piece down and 1...Rxa2 is threatened. He needs to outrace his opponent by immediately starting an attack against the enemy king. But how to do this? He can't achieve his aim with 1.Nxf6? Bxf6 2.Rgh1 h6 3.Qxf4 Kg8! 4.Rxh6 gh 5.Rg1+ (5.Qxh6 Bg7 6.Rg1 f6-+) 5...Kh7! (a draw after 5...Bg5 6.Rxg5+ hg 7.Qxg5+ Kf8! 8.Qd8+ Kg7 offers little for Black) 6.Rh1 Bg7 7.f6 Qb4! 8.Qf5+ Kg8 9.Rg1 Qd4 10.Rxg7+ Kf8-+, and White doesn't succeed in continuing his attack because of the impending threat of 11...Qd1+ 12.Kb2 Rxa2+! 13.Kxa2 Ra7+.

An impressive combination will help, starting with a deflecting queen sacrifice.

**1.Qe1!! Bxe1** (1...Rxa2 is refuted by 2.Rxh7+! Nxh7 3.Qe8+ or 2...Kxh7 3.Nxf6+) **2.Nxf6 gf** (2...h6 3.Rxh6+!) 3.Rgh1 Kg8 4.Rxh7 (threatening 5.Rh8+ Kg7 6.R1h7) **4...Kf8** (4...Bh4 5.R7xh4!) **5.Rh8+ Ke7 6.Rxe1+ Kd7 7.Rhe8!** with unavoidable mate.

White's first move is strictly an only move (all others lose), and we've checked the main variations associated with accepting the sacrifice, and also with an immediate counterattack on the queenside – so the exercise has been solved! In a practical game you wouldn't have to search for your opponent's best defense: it's his problem, as they say. There's no point doing this in training, either, so as not to develop the bad habit of calculating unnecessary variations, expending time and energy in vain.

If a new problem is posed it's another matter, though. After 1.Qe1!! is Black really doomed to defeat? What is his best and most stubborn defense?

To answer these questions we must again check and conclusively refute the most natural continuations that we previously analyzed, and then look for new candidate moves.

Above all, 2.Nxf6 is threatened with a subsequent mate on e8. Let's try to cover this square without being troubled by the loss of the bishop (it's extraneous in any case).

Let's calculate 1...Qb5!? 2.Qxc3 (2.Nxf6 Bxf6 isn't dangerous) 2...Nxg4.



1.?

A nice discovery: 3.Rxg4? is impossible because of 3...Qf1+ 4.Kb2 Rxa2+! 5. Kxa2 Ra7+, and Black mates. On 3.Rhg2? the reply 3...Qb4! is strong.

However, White has a very strong retort: 3.Rhh1!! The first rank has been protected, White wants to take the knight, and it can't retreat: 3...Nf6? 4. Rxg7!. No good now is 3...Qb4? because of 4.Qh3 Nh6 (or 4...Nf6) 5.Rxg7!. He has to play 3...f6, and after 4.Rxg4 White wins back the piece, obtaining a clear advantage.

Then again, this advantage isn't a win yet, and it's clear that Black's situation here is better than in the variations we looked at earlier. And that's besides the question of whether his opponent will find the subtle move 3.Rhh1!! However, before making our choice, let's see if Black has anything else.

The e8-square can also be protected by a rook, and it isn't difficult to work out which rook. Let's study the position after **1...Ra8! 2.Qxc3**.



1...?

Here 2...Nxg4? 3.Rxg4 no longer works, although 2...Ne4 looks tempting. Calculation shows that the rook sacrifice 3.Rxh7+ Kxh7 4.Qh3+ Kg8 5.Qh5 is enough, at most, to maintain equality (Black can, for example, play 5...Kf8 6. Qh8+ Ke7 7.Qxa8 Ra7). Considerably more dangerous is 3.Qh3! Ng5 (the only move) 4.Qh5 Qa7 5.a4. In the event of 5...f6 6.Qg6 Black has no satisfactory defense to the multiple threats. Also clearly in White's favor is 5...c4!? 6.Rgh1! f6 (defending from 7.Qxh7+!) 7.Qg6 h6 8.Nxh6 gh 9.Qxf6+ Kg8 10.Rxh6 Nh7 11.Qe6+ Kh8 12.Qxd6 cb 13.cb.

It's necessary to immediately switch to a counterattack by means of **2...c4!**. Precisely this move in combination with the previous one was suggested by Charles Sullivan. When I checked his recommendation I came to the conclusion that a drawn rook endgame arises from best play from both sides.

**3.Rgh1** (the rook moves away from the queen's attack) **3...cb 4.Qxb3 Qa7! 5. Nxf6 h6 6.Ng4!** (he has to act as energetically as possible: in the event of 6. Kc1? Rb8 Black will attack) **6...Rb7 7.Nxh6**



In the variation 7...Rxb3+?! 8.cb f6 9.Nf7+ Kg8 10.Nxd6 Kf8 11.Rh8+ Ke7 12.Nc8+ Rxc8 13.Rxc8 the two white rooks are evidently stronger than the queen (although the computer evaluates the position that has arisen as equal).

**7...gh 8.f6!** (8.Rxh6+? Kg8 loses – the rook is needed not only for the attack, but also to defend the second rank) **8...Qxa2+**

After 8...Kg8 9.Rg2+ Kf8 10.Rxh6 Qxa2+ 11.Kc1 Qa1+ 12.Kd2 Qxf6! 13. Rxf6 Rxb3 14.cb Ra2+ 15.Kc3 Rxc2 16.Rxf4 Black still has some problems, although objectively the position is probably drawn.

**9.Kc1 Qa1+ 10.Kd2 Qxh1 11.Rxh1 Rxb3 12.Rxh6+ Kg8 13.cb Ra2+ 14. Kd3 f3** with a certain draw.

I emphasize: here, as in all the subsequent examples, we're not talking about refuting your opponent's idea. The problem posed for discussion and training is how to avoid losing heart under powerful attacks; stay calm and find a relatively good way out of the difficult situation that has been created.

Those of you who carefully studied my article about critical moments in the battle that was published in the July, August, and September 2008 columns will most likely have noticed one of the most important conclusions drawn in it:

**In many critical positions the successful solution found by one of the players doesn't objectively upset the balance of power very much, but simply poses a problem for the opponent. The latter often can't cope with it, and only then starts to endure serious difficulties. In other words, positions often turn out to be critical for both sides at once. And sometimes a critical position for the opponent arises slightly later - after a series of more or less forced moves.**

In literally all the examples analyzed in that article the weaker side could defend successfully, but didn't solve the problem posed by the opponent and lost. I've observed a similar scenario when I offer my students (strong players) the positions given below. They confidently determined the correct path for the attacking side, but when I then asked them to find the best defense against the idea they'd suggested, the grandmasters couldn't cope with the new task.

This hardly means that attacking is easier than defending. More likely, it's because of their lack of sufficient practice at solving complex defensive problems. In collections of exercises the overwhelming majority of examples are usually associated not with defending your own positions, but with breaking through the enemy defenses. Well, psychology also plays a significant role, of course. On the receiving end of an unexpected and strong attack from his opponent, a player often becomes flustered, his belief in his own success is weakened, and he's no longer capable of calmly and precisely analyzing the variations that arise.

In my article dedicated to critical positions the weaker side mainly had to face strategic threats, so here the problems will be purely tactical.

Let's take an example that has appeared in many books, although it's hardly ever analyzed adequately. I found the solution to the position many years ago, and computer analysis later allowed me to discover or clarify a number of

new interesting details.

### Fischer-Sherwin

U.S. Championship, New York, 1957



1.?

Useless is 30.Bxf7+?! Kh8. It's possible to fight for the advantage only by delivering the straightforward combinational blow **30.Rxf7!**. The rook is unassailable, of course, but White had to consider his opponent's more aggressive retorts that could have refuted his idea.

30...Qxd5? doesn't work because of 31.Rxf8+ Kxf8 32.Qf1+!.

On 30...Qc1+? White doesn't reply 31.Rf1+? Kh8, but 31.Qf1! with an immediate win.

On the move that followed in the game, **30...Rc1+?** it was necessary to foresee the same powerful reply **31.Qf1!!** (31.Rf1+? Kh8 even loses). After 31...Rxf1+ 32.Rxf1+ Qxd5 33.Rxf8+ Kxf8 32.ed White is left the exchange and a pawn up. No help either is **31...h5 32.Qxc1!** (with 32.Rxf8+? Kh7 Black is fine). That's everything White had to calculate in undertaking the combination. The game ended like this: **32...Qh4 33.Rxf8+ Kh7 34.h3 Qg3 35.hg h4 36.Be6 1-0**

And now let's try and answer a more difficult question: how should Black have defended?

Before trying to find the strongest defense let's look at some other, less successful tries.

The counterattack 30...Ne3? is most convincingly refuted by means of 31.Qxe3!. Almost as strong too is 31.Qf1!.

The move 30...Rfc8? doesn't pose any serious problems for White either. The most precise retort is: 31.Rc4! Rc1+ 32.Qf1, but also possible is 31.Qf1!, not fearing the combination 31...Qxd5!? 32.ed Ne3 because of the impending sacrifice: 33.Rxg7+! Kxg7 34.Ra7+.

It's more difficult to find something wrong with a retreat to c8 by the other rook: 30...Rcc8?!.





1.?

Black intends to move the king away to the corner, retaining a defensible position. His idea fails only because of the effective deflection 31.Ra8!! Rxa8 32.Rf5+ Kh8 33.Rxg5, and if 33...Rac8, then 34.Bc4!.

For Black this variation is preferable to the previous ones from a practical point of view, as it poses concrete problems for his opponent, leaving open the possibility that he'll make a mistake. But still, he has a much better solution.

30...h5!!



1.?

Black has defended from the move 31.Qf1 that was threatening him, on which now follows 31...Kh7! (but not 31...Rxf7? 32.Qxf7+ Kh7 33.Qg8+ Kh6 34.Qh8+ Kg6 35.Bf7+! Kxf7 36.Ra7+ Kf6 37.Qd8+ Kg6 38.Rxg7+ +-) 32.Rxf8 Rc1, and White already has to play accurately to avoid getting into difficulties. For example, losing is 33.Be6? Ne3! 34.Bf5+ Nxf5 35.Rxf5 Rxf1 + 36.Rxf1 Qb5! (an unexpected double attack!) and the rook on a6 is lost.

Nor does 31.Rxf8+ Kxf8 32.Qf1+ Qf6! achieve the aim (weaker is 32...Nf6 33.Rc4+/-). For example, 33.Qb1 Nf2+ 34.Kg1 Nh3+! 35.Kh1 (bad is 35.gh? Qg5+) 35...Nf2+ with perpetual check, or 33.Ra8+ Ke7 34.Ra7+ Kd8 35.Rf7 Qxf1+ (also possible is 35...Nf2+ 36.Kg1 Qh6!) 36.Rxf1 Ne3 with a drawn endgame, or 33.Qf6+ Nxf6 34.h3 Nxd5 35.ed Rd3 36.Ra5 Kf7 – White's extra pawn has no significance, as his pieces are positioned worse than the enemy pieces.

White's advantage is only preserved with **31.Rc4! Rxc4** (mistaken is 31...Rxf7? 32.Bxf7+ Kxf7 33.Rxc3 Qe5 34.Rf3+ Ke7 35.g3+- or 32...Kh7!? 33.Rxc3 Qe5 34.g3 Qxc3 35.Bxh5+-) **32.Qxc4!**

Significantly weaker is 32.Rxf8+?! Kxf8 33.Qxc4 – Black plays either 33...Nf2+!? 34.Kg1 Nh3+ 35.Kf1 Qf6+ with real chances to save himself, or 33...Qe5!? (but not 33...Qf4? 34.Qc8+ Ke7 35.Qc7+ Ke8 36.Bc6+ Kf8 37.Qd8+ Kf7 38.Qe8+ Kf6 39.Qf8+) 34.Qc8+ (34.Qf1+ Ke7 35.Qg1 Qf4! 36.Qa7+ Kd8! 37.Qb8+ Kd7!=) 34...Ke7, and the exchange of queens on f5, which White can force, doesn't guarantee him a win.

32...Rxf7 33.Bxf7+ Kh7 (worse is 33...Kf8 34.Be6+/-)



## 1.?

The double attack 34.Qc8?! (threatening 35.Qg8+ and 35.Qf5+) is parried by 34...Nh6! 35.Bd5 Qd2 36.h3 Qe1+ 37.Kh2 Ng4+! with perpetual check. He has to play **34.Qf1! g6 35.h3!?**, repelling his opponent's direct threats and retaining the extra pawn. But the entire battle is still ahead, of course, and its outcome remains undetermined.

If we recall the solutions to the positions we've just studied, we can draw the conclusion that training in this area also enables us to develop one of the most important elements of the technique of calculating variations: the ability to determine candidate moves.

### Spielmann-Tartakower

Munich, 1909



Rudolf Spielmann sacrificed the exchange for the sake of an attack on the king, and his strategy justified itself after a serious blunder by his opponent:

**15...Ne5?.** The game ended like this: **16.Nxg7! Qd8 17.Ngf5 Ng6 18.Qh6 Ne8 19.Nf3! Bxe3+ 20.fe Qf6 21.Ng5 Qh8 22.Ne7+ 1-0**

It was possible to defend using different methods. For example, 15...Rfe8!? or 15...g6!? 16.Qh6 Ne8 – in both cases with reciprocal chances. But we'll concentrate on discussing the move mentioned by Spielmann, **15...Kh8!?**.

The first problem: how should White continue the attack?

This recommendation by Spielmann doesn't withstand criticism: 16.g4? g6 17.g5 Ng8 (probably stronger was 17...Nd5!) 18.Rg1 with the subsequent Rg1-g3. Black easily repels the threats by playing 18...Rfe8 with the subsequent 19...Nf8, or, even better, 18...Ne5!.

The correct answer to the question is that he has to sacrifice a piece, **16.Nxg7!**.



## 1...?

Of course, the answer is incomplete – we also have to bring in the accompanying variations. In contrast to the previous examples, I won't do this right away, so as not to make the solution to the next problem, the most important one, any easier: searching for the best defense for Black. In practice when we receive this kind of blow, as a rule we first have to figure out our opponent's idea and check whether it's correct, and once we've convinced



ourselves that "straightforward" play won't help us, look for additional, "side" resources.

It might seem that on 16...Kxg7 White was preparing 17.Nf5+ Kh8 18.Bg5, intending after 18...Ng8? to continue the attack by means of either 19.Be4! Bxf2 20.g3+-, or 19.Ne7! f5 20.Bxf5+-. However, the knight retreats to another square: 18...Nd5!. For example, 19.Ne7 (19.c4!? Bxf2 unclear) 19...f5 20.Bxf5 Rxf5 21.Nxf5 Bxf2 22.Qe4 Rg8 with reciprocal chances. The variation isn't completely forced, but, in any case, no direct threats for Black are visible, and he's right to go into this kind of play.

In actual fact, as grandmaster Igor Platonov has shown, taking the knight can be effectively refuted.

**16...Kxg7? 17.Bxh7!! Nxh7 18.Ne6+! fe** (no help either is 18...Kh8 19.Bxc5 +-) **19.Rxd7+ Rf7 20.Qh6+ Kg8 21.Qg6+ Kh8 22.Rxf7** (or 22.Qxf7) **22...Bxe3+ 23.Kb1!** with unavoidable mate.

Grandmaster Vadim Zviagintsev has established that by declining the sacrifice Black preserves equality.

### **16...Rg8! 17.Ngf5 Rg4**

Dangerous is 17...Rxxg2 at least because of 18.Ng3 (even stronger, apparently, is 18.Nh6 Rf8 19.Bf5).

### **18.Qh6 Rg6**

Doubtful is 18...Rag8?! 19.Nf3!, but 18...Rxxg2!? already makes more sense than it did a move earlier: as White doesn't have a single one of the retorts mentioned in the previous note. A rook retreat still looks more solid. On 19.Qh3 follows 19...Ne5, and in the event of 19.Qh4 or 19.Qf4 it's possible to at least repeat moves: 19...Rg4.

With that we'll take a break for now. You'll see some new examples on the same theme in a month's time.

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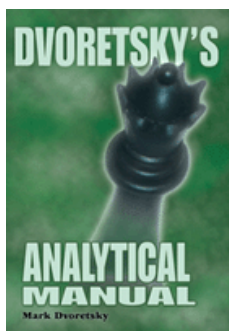
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## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Determine the Best Defense

I'm offering some new examples for your perusal in which you first have to find the strongest, most dangerous continuation of the attack. Then, switching to the opponent's side, determine the best defense.

**Botvinnik-Suttles**  
Belgrade, 1969



[FEN "2r1r3/pp3nkp/1q1p2p1/3P4/  
3NNP2/6Pb/PP1Q4/4RR1K w - - 0 25"]

1.?

I'll point out first that the tempting attacking move 25.f5? is refuted by 25... Rxe4!.

In the game, White moved his rook out from under the attack: **25.Rf3 Rc4 26. Rd3**



[FEN "4r3/pp3nkp/1q1p2p1/3P4/2rNNP2/  
3R2Pb/PP1Q4/4R2K b - - 0 26"]

1...?

The position is still worrying for Black and he has to make several precise moves. The first of them is 26...Bf5!:

a) 37.Nxf5+ gf 38.Rb3 Qc7 39.Nc3 Rxe1+ 40.Qxe1 Nh6=.

b) 37.b3!? Bxe4+ 38.Rxe4 Rxe4 38.bc Qb1+! (so as not to come under attack he has to deflect his opponent's pieces with threats to his own king) 39.Kg2 Re1 40.Nf3 Rh1!? 41.Qe2 Rc1=.

Duncan Suttles wasn't playing as strongly and his position soon became serious: **26...Qb4?! 27.b3 Qxd2 28.Rxd2 Rc7 29.Rde2 Bg4** (29...Rce7? 30.

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Nxd6+/-) **30.Re3 Bf5?** (better is 30...Bd7+/-) **31.Nxd6!**

White won a pawn and subsequently made good on his advantage.

Grandmaster Georgi Tringov suggested a clever idea: begin an attack on the a1-h8 diagonal, securing a square on this diagonal for the queen with the move **25.b3!**.



[FEN "2r1r3/pp3nkp/1q1p2p1/3P4/3NNP2/1P4Pb/P2Q4/4RR1K b - - 0 25"]

**1...?**

The question is, how should Black defend?

Obviously he has to choose between two possibilities: 25...Bxf1 and 25...Rxe4. Let's calculate the variations.

A) 25...Bxf1 26.Qb2 Kf8 (in the event of 26...Ne5 the simple 27.Rxf1 is decisive) 27.Ne6+ Rxe6 (27...Ke7 28.Qf6+) 28.de



[FEN "2r2k2/pp3n1p/1q1pP1p1/8/4NP2/1P4P1/PQ6/4Rb1K b - - 0 28"]

There's no visible escape from the multiplicity of threats (29.Qf6; 29.ef; 29.Rxf1). For example, 28...Qb4 29.Qf6 Rc7 30.ef Qxe1 31.Qd8+ Kxf7 32.Ng5+ (Botvinnik), or 28...Bc4 29.ef Bxf7 30.Qh8+ Bg8 31.Qf6+ Bf7 32.Nxd6 Qc6+ 33.Kh2 Qd7 34.f5!, or 28...Qc6 (the most stubborn) 29.Qf6 Rc7 30.ef Re7 31.Qh8+ Kxf7, and now either 32.Qf6+ Ke8 33.Qxd6+/-, or 32.Qxh7+ Ke8 33.Qxg6+ Kd8 (33...Kd7? 34.Kg1! with the terrible threat of 35.Nf6+) 34.Rd1! Qxe4+ 35.Qxe4 Rxe4 36.Rxf1+/-.

B) **25...Rxe4! 26.Rxe4 Bxf1 27.Ne6+ Kg8 28.Qb2 Ne5**



[FEN "2r3k1/pp5p/1q1pN1p1/3Pn3/4RP2/1P4P1/PQ6/5b1K w - - 0 29"]

## 29.Rxe5

Taking the pawn also deserves serious attention, as it leads to interesting forced play. Let's have a look: 29.fe Bd3! 30.Re2!! (everything else loses) 30... Bxe2 31.ed Rc1+! 32.Qxc1 Bf3+ 33.Kh2 Qf2+ 34.Kh3 Bg4+! (the only move) 34.Kh4 (34.Kxg4?? Qf5+ 35.Kh4 Qh5#) 34...Bxe6 35.de Qh2+!? (35... Qf6+ 36.Qg5 Qxe6 is also sufficient for a draw) 36.Kg5 (36.Kg4?? Qh5+ 37. Kf4 Qh6+ and 38...Qxc1) 35...Qxg3+ 36.Kf6 Qxd6. Black has won a pawn and isn't afraid of 37.Qc8+? Qf8+. However, it isn't clear how he can strengthen his position, which means that the battle will most likely end in a draw.

## 29...de 30.Qxe5

Botvinnik continued the variation like this: 30...Rc7 31.Qxc7 Qxc7 32.Nxc7 Kf7 33.d6 Kf6 34.Kg1 Bh3 35.Kf2 with a winning minor piece ending.

But it isn't compulsory to give up the rook. As Jose Fernandez Garcia has pointed out, after **30...Kf7!** (rather than 30...Rc7?), White only has perpetual check.

We can see that the combination that started with the move 25.b3 and the path chosen by Botvinnik in the game are objectively about equal. In both cases Black has to defend accurately, but with correct play he obtains a draw. I'll leave it to readers to decide which course of action leaves White greater practical chances of success.

## Aronin-Nezhmetdinov

Cheboksary, 1950



[FEN "5rk1/6pp/2pb3r/1p3p1q/2PP1PbP/4R1P1/1P1N4/R2B1QK1 b - - 0 25"]

## 1...?

Black is a pawn down, but the material balance can be reestablished immediately by means of 25...Bxf4 26.Qxf4 Bxd1. This is what was played in the game. The peaceful position that arises is obviously preferable for White, and he won in the end.

The brilliant attacking player Rashid Nezhmetdinov found an impressive combination starting with the move **25...Bxd1!**, but he rejected it because of

the reply 26.Qxd1?, not noticing the simple retort 26...Bxf4! 27.gf (certainly better than 27.Rd3 or 27.Rea3) 27...Qxh4 28.Qf3 Qh2+ with a win. This often happens: a strong player undertakes deep and beautiful ideas, but still fails because of some elementary miscalculation. From which stems an important conclusion for coaches and players: reliability and accuracy in calculating variations is no less important than depth and inventiveness.

### 26.Rxd1 Qg4!

Here an attack on f4 is now harmless: 26...Bxf4? 27.gf Qxh4 (27...Qg4+ 28.Kf2 Qxf4+ 29.Nf3 Rxf4 30.Ke2+/-) 28.Qf3 Qh2+ 29.Kf1 Rh4 (29...Rg6 30.Qf2 30.Qf2 Rxf4 31.Nf3 with better chances for White.



[FEN "5rk1/6pp/2pb3r/1p3p2/2PP1PqP/4R1P1/1P1N4/3R1QK1 w -- 0 27"]

### 1.?

What should White do now? His opponent intends 27...Bxf4 or 27...Rxf4. Losing is 27.Qf3? Bxf4 28.Rb3 (28.Qxf4 Qxd1+) 28...Rxf4 29.cb Bxf3 30.Qxg4 Rxf4.

The move **27.Kf2?**, would seem to parry both threats. But Nezhmetdinov had prepared an impressive retort for this very occasion.

### 27...g5!! 28.hg (28.fg f4-+) 28...Rh2+ 29.Kg1

In the event of 29.Ke1, the idea was to employ a deflecting queen sacrifice: 29...Qxg3+!! 30.Rxg3 Re8+. But I won't examine this variation as the main one because it has a prosaic path to victory, unfortunately: 29...Rh3 or 29...Bb4.

### 29...Rh3



[FEN "5rk1/7p/2pb4/1p3pP1/2PP1Pq1/4R1Pr/1P1N4/3R1QK1 w -- 0 30"]

Subsequently, Nezhmetdinov considers 30.Kf2 Bxf4! 31.gf Rh2+ 32.Ke1 Qh4 + and 30.Kg2 Bxf4! 31.Qxf4 Qxd1 32.Kxh3? Qh1#. In the second variation after 32.Nf1, White can still defend stubbornly, so I would prefer to win the exchange by another method: 31...Qxf4 32.gf Rxe3 with a big advantage.

Instead of a king move, it's better for White to play 30.cb!? (or immediately 30.Rde1!?) 30...cb (the consequences of 30...Bxf4 31.Qxf4 Qxd1+ 32.Nf1 or



30...Qh5 31.Qf3 Bxf4! 32.gf Rxf3 33.Nxf3 Qg4+ 34.Kf2 are unclear) 31. Rde1 Rxd3 32.Rxd3 Qxd3+ 33.Kh1. However, the advantage here unquestionably remains on Black's side, so it's worth doubting the move 27. Kf2?! and considering an alternative: retreating the rook from the vulnerable d1-square.

But to where? In the event of 27.Ra1?!, the same breakthrough 27...g5!! 28.hg Rh3 is strong, and not 29.Qf3 or 29.Qg2 because of 29...Bxf4 – the indefensibility of the e3-rook is having an effect. The solution to the position is finally becoming clear.

**27.Rde1!**



[FEN "5rk1/7p/2pb4/1p3pP1/2PP1Pq1/4R1Pr/1P1N4/4RQK1 b - - 0 30"]

Now 27...g5? no longer works. On 27...Rxd4, unpleasant is 28.c5! Bc7 29. Qf3, and the initiative passes into White's hands. Also, in the variation 27... Bb4 28.R1e2 Rxd4 29.Qg2!, Black encounters difficulties. This kind of play calls for a cold heart on the part of the "attacker" and it's quite possible that it would allow White not only to get out of danger, but also to obtain good chances for ultimate success. As a result we come to the same final question as in the previous example: which path is more expedient from a practical point of view, the peaceful one or the sharper one?

**Vartanov-Pokinboroda**

Barnaul, 1966



[FEN "3r2k1/1q1rpp1/4p2p/1pp5/5PQ1/P2P2P1/1PP1RN1P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

In the game between two amateurs, the unprepossessing move 1.Qh5? was made, leading after 1...c4! to a difficult position for White.

A coach from Barnaul, Candidate Master Yuri Nikonov, found a beautiful combination starting with **1.Ne4!**. Of course, such aggressive continuations should be examined before anything else, as White creates two threats simultaneously: 2.Nf6+ and 2.Nxc5.

The question is, how can Black best cope with the danger that has arisen?

First let's consider and eliminate the straightforward 1...f5? 2.Nf6+ Kh8 (even worse is 2...Kf7 3.Qh5+) 3.Qh5 gf 4.Qxh6+ Kg8 5.Qxf6+- with the

subsequent Rxe6.

But the careful 1...Kh8? 2.Nxc5 Qb6 3.b4+/- shouldn't suit us either – no compensation for the pawn is visible. You can only go into this kind of position if all other options lose by force.

The main variation in Nikonov's analysis looks like this:

**1...Rc7 2.f5!!** (an unexpected and effective breach of the enemy defenses on a square that appeared to have been solidly reinforced) **2...ef**

In the event of 2...Nxf5, decisive is 3.Nf6+ Kh8(f8) 4.Qxf5!. On 2...Kh8, White replies not 3.fe? f5, but 3.f6 with a big advantage. Relatively better is the cool 2...c4!? 3.f6 Ng6, although the position after 4.h4 cd 5.cd still looks unpleasant for Black.

**3.Nf6+ Kf8** (3...Kh8 4.Qxf5! g6 5.Qe5+-) **4.Qxf5!**



[FEN "3r1k2/1qr1npp1/5N1p/1pp2Q2/8/P2P2P1/1PP1R2P/4R1K1 b - - 0 4"]

Taking the queen leads to mate, and on 4...g6 it's simplest to reply 5.Qf4 g5 6.Nh7+ Kg8 7.Qf6+-.

**4...gf 5.Qxf6 Rc6** (if 5...Qc6 or 5...Qb6, then 6.Re6+-) **6.Rxe7 Rxf6 7.Rxb7**, and White's extra pawn will most likely bring him victory.

And now I'll show you the best defense that I've managed to find by checking Nikonov's analysis.

**1...Rd4!**



[FEN "3r2k1/1q2npp1/4p2p/1pp5/3rNPQ1/P2P2P1/1PP1R2P/4R1K1 w - - 0 2"]

Here the rook is positioned much more actively than on c7, which makes a difference in all variations. For example, 2.Nxc5 Qb6 3.b4 a5, and the b4-pawn is under attack. On 4.Kf1, Black replies not 4...ab? 5.Nxe6! fe 6.Rxe6 +-, but 4...Qc6! with sufficient counterplay.

**2.f5!? c4!**

Taking on f5 is still bad: 2...ef? 3.Nf6+ Kf8 4.Qxf5! gf 5.Rxe7 Qxe7 6.Rxe7 Kxe7 7.Qxc5+. The move 2...Kh8 wins in strength compared with the

variation 1...Rc7, as after 3.f6 gf, the knight is pinned and can't take on f6. Then again, in the position that arises with 4.Qh5 Ng8 5.Nxc5 Qc7, White is still better, although possibly not by much.

### 3.f6

A double-edged situation that is difficult to evaluate arises in the variation 3. fe f5 4.Nf6+ Kh8 5.Qh5 cd 6.cd gf 7.Qxh6+ Kg8 8.Qxf6 Rg4 or 8...Rxd3.

### 3...Ng6 4.Rf2 cd 5.cd



[FEN "3r2k1/1q3pp1/4pNp/1p6/3rN1Q1/P2P2P1/1P3R1P/4R1K1 b - - 0 5"]

White has maintained unpleasant pressure on the kingside and his position is probably preferable. But weaknesses have arisen in his camp, too, and the outcome of the battle after 5...Qd5 or 5...Qb6 remains unclear.

### Kasparov-Yusupov

Soviet Championship, Frunze 1981



[FEN "2nq2rb/3pr2k/1pp1p2p/p3PP1B/3P1P2/PPN5/5Q1P/R5RK w - - 0 31"]

### 1.?

Black is a pawn up and he wants to exchange major pieces on the g-file. White mustn't hesitate!

### 31.Ne4!! fe 32.f5



[FEN "2nq2rb/3pr2k/1pp1p2p/p3PP1B/3Pp3/PP6/5Q1P/R5RK b - - 0 32"]



1...?

In time trouble, Artur Yusupov didn't manage to find his way around the changed situation and quickly lost.

**32...Rg5? 33.Rxg5 hg 34.f6 Kh6**

34...Qf8 is refuted by 35.fe! Qxf2 36.e8Q+-.

**35.fe Qxe7**

No better is 35...Nxe7 36.Qf7!+-.

**36.Bf7! d6 37.Rf1 g4 (37...de 38.Qe2) 38.Bxe6! Qxe6 39.Qh4+ Kg7, and Black resigned because of 40.Rf6.**

Let's return to the position after White's thirty-second move and try to improve the defense.

As Garry Kasparov justifiably commented in *Chess Informant* #32, the most energetic retort to the deflecting 32...e3? is 33.Qc2!+- . Also losing is 32... Reg7? 33.Bg6+ Rxg6 34.fg+ Rxg6 35.Rxg6! Kxg6 36.Rg1+.

It was necessary to play **32...Qf8!**, defending from 33.Bg6+? Rxg6 34.fg+ Kg8+. White has to advance his pawn to f6, and the only question is whether to do it immediately or after a preliminary exchange on g8.

First let's look at 33.f6.



[FEN "2n2qrb/3pr2k/1pp1pP1p/p3P2B/3Pp3/PP6/5Q1P/R5RK b - - 0 33"]

1...?

Kasparov limits this to a short comment: 33.f6? Reg7!. Yet the move recommended by him doesn't deserve an exclamation mark, but a question mark, as it allows White to obtain a decisive advantage by means of 34.Rxg7 + Rxg7 (34...Bxg7 35.f7!) 35.Qc2 Rg5 36.Qxe4+ Kg8 37.h4! – there isn't a single safe square for the rook on the g-file.

Sacrificing the useless h8-bishop is the key to a successful defense in all variations.

33...Bxf6!! 34.Qxf6 (34.ef Reg7! 35.Rxg7+ Rxg7, and the rook hunt now fails, as the queen is tied to the f6 pawn) 34...Reg7 35.Bg6+ Kh8 36.Raf1 Qxf6 37.ef Rxg6 38.Rxg6



[FEN "2n3rk/3p4/1pp1pPRp/p7/3Pp3/PP6/7P/5R1K b - - 0 38"]

**1...?**

It would seem that the passed f-pawn decides the outcome of the battle. But there follows the coldblooded 34...Kh7!!, and an ending arises in which the knight and pawns are evidently no weaker than the white rook.

Kasparov recommends **33.Rxg8 Kxg8 34.f6.**



[FEN "2n2qkb/3pr3/1pp1pP1p/p3P2B/3Pp3/PP6/5Q1P/R6K b - - 0 34"]

**1...?**

And again the grandmaster awards a bad move an exclamation mark - 34...Rg7?. After 35.Qe2! Rg5 36.h4!, he looks at 36...Rg3 37.Kh2, which isn't completely convincing because of 37...Bxf6! 37.Kxg3! (37.ef? Qd6+) 37...Bg7 38.Qxe4 Ne7. This position is good for White, of course, but much stronger for him is 37.f7+! (rather than 37.Kh2) 37...Kg7 38.Qh2 (38.Kh2) or 37...Kh7 38.Qxe4+ Kg7 39.Qf4+- (39.Rf1+-).

Instead of 36...Rg3, more stubborn is 36...Bxf6 37.hg (+/- Kasparov) 37...Bxg5 38.Rf1 Qd8 39.Qxe4 Ne7, but after 40.Qf3, Black's position is probably lost.

The bishop had to be sacrificed a move earlier.

**34...Bxf6!! 35.ef (35.Qxf6? Rg7+) 35...Rg7! 36.Qf4**

Dubious is 36.Rf1 Rg5 37.Be8. Black makes a draw with 37...Kh8 38.Bxd7 Rf5, but he is also entitled to fight for the advantage by choosing 37...Nd6! 38.Bxd7 Kf7.

**36...Rg5 37.f7+ Kg7 38.Rg1 Rxd1+ 39.Kxg1 Ne7**

The strong f7-pawn compensates White for his material deficiency, but does no more than that. The game should end in a draw.

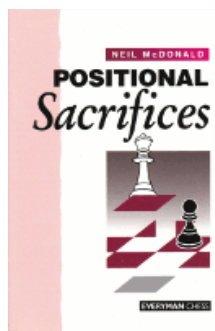
Anyone who wants to continue training on this theme can find additional examples (in English) in my [article](#) that was published a few years ago on the Russian site e3-e5.



## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

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## Destroying the Material Balance

During one of the rounds of the Superfinal of the Russian Championship, I stopped into the room where they were doing commentary on the games for the audience. On the demonstration monitor I saw the position that had arisen after 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 de 5.Nxe5 g6 6.Bc4 Be6 7.0-0 Bg7 8.Re1 0-0 9.Nd2 Nd7 10.Nef3 N7f6?!.

Grischuk-Riazantsev  
Moscow 2009



[FEN "r2q1rk1/ppp1ppbp/4bnp1/3n4/2BP4/5N2/PPPN1PPP/R1BQR1K1 w - - 0 11"]

1.?

The peaceful move 11.c3 was being discussed, preserving better chances for White. In a similar way to some examples that are familiar to me, I suggested sacrificing the exchange on e6, which at first provoked a rather skeptical reaction. However, Alexander Grischuk did play that, and after **11.Rxe6! fe 12.Ng5 Qd6 13.Qe1** he obtained an appreciable advantage, which he subsequently converted to a win. Commenting on his decision in the magazine 64 – Chess Review, Grischuk wrote:

*As Kasparov once said (about a sacrifice on c3 in the Sicilian Defense), "the question of sacrificing the exchange is a question of chess culture!"*

To confirm that these weren't just empty words, I'll give an example of a similar exchange sacrifice.

Tal-Kolarov  
European Team Championship, Kapfenberg 1970

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.h3 de 6.Nxe4 Nd7 7.Bc4 Ngf6 8.Nxf6 + Nxf6 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Bf5 11.Ne5 Be4 12.Bg5 Bd5 13.Bd3 Be6 14.c3 Nd7?! 15.Nf3! Re8

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[FEN "r2qr1k1/pp1nppbp/2p1b1p1/6B1/3P4/2PB1N1P/PP3PP1/R2QR1K1 w - - 0 16"]

1.?

16.Rxe6! fe 17.Qe2 e5!?

On 17...Nf8, there would have followed 18.Bc4 or 18.Bf4!?, gradually increasing the pressure. If he wanted to, White could have preserved precisely this game scenario by transposing the moves: 17.Bc4 Nf8 18.Qe2, but obviously the change in structure that Black undertook completely suited Mikhail Tal.

18.Bc4+ Kh8 19.de Qc7 20.Bf7! Rf8 21.e6 Nf6 22.Qc4! (transferring the queen to h4 would be decisive) 22...Qa5 23.Re1 Qd5 24.Qh4 (threatening 25. Bxg6) 24...Rxf7



[FEN "r6k/pp2prbp/2p1Pnp1/3q2B1/7Q/2P2N1P/PP3PP1/4R1K1 w - - 0 25"]

25.Ne5! Nh5 (25...Rff8 26.Nxg6+ Kg8 27.Nxe7+) 26.Nxf7+ Kg8 27.Bxe7 Re8 28.Nd6 Bf6 29.Bxf6 Qxd6 30.Bg5 Rxe6 31.Qc4 Ng7 32.Qb3 Kf8 33. Rd1 Qe5 34.Bh6 Rd6 35.Rxd6 1-0

And here's the exact episode with the exchange sacrifice on c3, in reference to which Garry Kasparov expressed the opinion quoted by Grischuk.

**Movsesian-Kasparov**

Sarajevo 20000

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 7.f3 b5 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.0-0-0 Bb7 10.g4 Nb6 11.Qf2 Nfd7 12.Kb1 Rc8 13.Bd3



Black should probably have prevented the sacrifice by playing, for example, 12.Bd3 Rc8 13.Nce2. Sergei Movsesian clearly underestimated the strategic danger that was threatening him. Then again, a modern computer also underestimates it: Rybka considers the position to be slightly better for White.

It's significant that having given up the exchange, Black doesn't rush into an attack on the queenside, but calmly completes his development. I won't give the further course of this game and some of the others, as they're easy to find (in *Chess Informants*, databases or on the Internet), and with detailed notes, which there is no point in reproducing here.

### Kamsky-Kasparov

#### Olympiad, Manila 1992

[FEN "rnbq1rk1/1p3bp/p2p2p1/3P2n/4P3/2NBBP2/PP1Q2PP/R3K1NR w KQ - 0 11"]

It's clear that taking twice on f4, activating the g7 bishop and conceding total control of the dark squares to his opponent is equivalent to a positional capitulation.

12.Bc2 b5 13.Qf2 Nd7 14.Nge2



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/3n1pbp/p2p2p1/1p1Pp3/4PnP1/2N1BP2/PPB1NQ1P/R3K2R b KQ - 0 14"]

**1...?**

In making his crazy eleventh move, White was probably counting on forcing an exchange of the threatening enemy knight. And in vain: Black is right to sacrifice a pawn, even if his opponent's dark-squared bishop remains on the board.

**14...b4! 15.Na4 a5! 16.Nxf4 ef 17.Bxf4 Ne5 18.0-0-0?! Nc4!**

Kasparov developed a nasty attack and won.

In my forthcoming book, I've included an ending that was played by someone who was a student of mine at the time.

**Zaid-Chekhov**

Sochi 1975



[FEN "r5k1/5p1p/p2r3b/2p2b2/2P5/1N2p3/PP2B1PP/2KR3R b - - 0 24"]

**1...?**

**24...Rd2!!**

An excellent positional exchange sacrifice, allowing him to completely pin down the enemy pieces.

**25.Nxd2**

White's position was also poor with 25.Rxd2 ed+ 26.Kd1 Bb1!.

**25...ed+ 26.Rxd2 Rd8 27.Rhd1 Rd4**





[FEN "6k1/5p1p/p6b/2p2b2/2Pr4/8/PP1RB1PP/2KR4 w - - 0 28"]

The situation has been defined: his opponent doesn't have the power to disentangle himself and is doomed to complete passivity, while Black can do whatever he wants. A means of breaking through the enemy defenses will certainly be found.

**28.Bf1 Kf8 29.Be2 Ke7 30.Bf1 Be4 31.b3 Kd6 32.g3 Kc6 33.Be2 Kb6 34. Bf1 a5 (with the idea of 35...a4) 35.a4 Kc6 36.Be2 Kd6 37.Bf1 Ke5 38.Be2 Be3 39.Bf1 h5 40.Be2 h4 41.g4 f6 42.Bf1 Kf4 43.Bh3 Kg5 44.Bf1 Kxg4 45. Be2+ Kg5 46.Bf1 f5 47.Be2 f4 48.b4 cb 49.c5 b3 50.c6 Bxc6 0-1**

I noticed that modern computer programs ([Rybka](#) and [Fritz](#)), contrary to "human" commonsense, evaluated the situation in the last diagram as favorable for White! I waited a few minutes – the evaluation hardly changed. No surprise there: I've seen this kind of thing on more than one occasion when I'm analyzing positional sacrifices with a computer. Let's think about the consequences of this phenomenon.

These days all players actively use computers in their preparations. Many of them, trying to process as much information as possible in a short time, get somewhat out of the habit of thinking about a position on their own. They are inclined to trust the computer's recommendations and prioritize studying the moves from the "first lines" of Rybka or Fritz. And as positional sacrifices rarely get in there, today's grandmasters and masters (not to mention the weaker players) tend to underestimate them, often missing opportunities that would have been fairly obvious to players from an older generation. This by no means applies to everyone, of course, but it does to many people, and it's worth considering this tendency.

I'll give a fragment from a game that was played a few years ago, which has been annotated in detail by several experts. One of them was the experienced grandmaster Jan Timman. It is instructive to compare his evaluations with the ones given by his younger colleagues.

### Grischuk-Radjabov

Wijk aan Zee 2003



[FEN "2r1kb2/pp1b1pp1/1q2p2r/n2pPn1P//1P1P2Q1/P2B4/1B1NNP2/2R1K2R b K - 0 20"]

**1...?**

**20...Nc4!**

*Radjabov marks this active knight move ?!, only to give !? to the passive alternative 20...Nc6. It seems to me that White is definitely better after the knight retreat. The text is in accordance with all known principles of the fight for the initiative. As we will see, however, it often requires inventiveness to continue to fight like this.*

**21.Nxc4 dc 22.Bxf5!**

*The usual reaction. White gives up the bishop pair in order to establish full control over the center.*

**22...ef 23.Qg2**



[FEN "2r1kb2/pp1b1pp1/1q5r/4Pp1P//1PpP4/P7/1B2NPQ1/2R1K2R b K - 0 23"]

**1...?**

**23...a5?**

Grandmaster Sergei Shipov, who published detailed notes to the game, awards the move made by Black an exclamation mark. Here, undoubtedly, his considerable experience commenting on games online made itself felt, in essence reduced (because of a constant lack of time) to a verbal explanation of the computer's recommendations. The move in the game, naturally, comes into the first line, just as it is obvious to a high-class grandmaster like Timman that a positional pawn sacrifice won't get into the first lines. Here is what Timman writes:

*This obvious move lands Black in great, probably insurmountable problems. In itself it is positionally justifiable for Black to want to break open the queenside, but only the a-file is opened as a result – a rather modest attacking base for Black in this half-closed position, given the overwhelming central superiority White conjures up with his next move. The pawn sac 23...c3! was called for to do justice to the black bishop-pair.*

*After 23...c3! 24.Rxc3 Rxc3 25.Bxc3*



[FEN "4kb2/pp1b1pp1/1q5r/4Pp1P/1P1P4/P1B5/4NPQ1/4K2R b K - 0 25"]

*25...Rc6 Black has positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn. This kind of positional pawn sacrifice used to be utterly natural for top players, but as*



*people work more and more with computers, you see fewer and fewer of them.*

Older players are usually much worse than their younger colleagues in terms of the technique of working with the computer. Moreover, they sometimes simply forget to check their impressions against the opinion of the electronic oracle, and so they make real tactical mistakes. That was also the case here: in the final position of the variation White obtains a big advantage with energetic play: 26.d5 (26.Rh3 isn't bad either) 26...Rc4 (26...Rxc3 27.Nxc3 Qd4 28.Rh3 f4 29.e6!+-) 27.e6! fe 28.Qg6+ Kd8 29.h6! (29.Bxg7 Bxb4+ 30.ab Qxb4+ 31.Bc3 Qb1+ 32.Kd2 Qxh1 33.Qf6+ only leads to a draw) 29...gh 30.Qg8 Qd6 (30...Ke7 31.Bf6+! Kxf6 32.Qxf8+ Ke5 33.de Bxe6 34.Rh3+-) 31.Bg7 Ke8 32.Rxh6 Re4 (32...Rg4 33.Rh8+-) 33.f4!? (33.Rf6? Rxe2+ with perpetual check) 33...Bb5 (33...Qe7 34.Rh8+-) 34.Rxe6+ Rxe6 35.de+-.

Nevertheless, in my opinion Timman's conclusion is generally correct. The pawn was worth sacrificing "from general considerations", and then it was possible to choose (in the position in the last diagram) the most attractive of several tempting continuations.

Besides 25...Rc6?, the move 25...Qb5?! should also be rejected (with the ideas Ra6; Bc6) because of 26.Bd2! Bc6 (26...Rc6 27.Rh3+/-) 27.Qh3 Bxh1 28.Bxh6+/-.

But 25...Qa6!? is quite possible. Black intends 26...Qxa3; 26...Qd3; 26...Rc6. The move 26.Bd2 is no longer dangerous because of 26...Qxa3 27.Bxh6 Bc6 with counterplay. On 26.Qf3! (by covering the d3-square White simultaneously prepares to castle) the reply can be 26...Qc4! 27.Bd2 (27.0-0 g6!? counterplay; 27.Qxb7 Bb5 28.Qa8+ Kd7 29.Qxa7+ Kd8 30.Qa8+ Kc7 31.Qf3 Ra6!? counterplay) 27...Ra6 28.0-0 Bc6 with mutual chances.

Another good possibility is 25...a5!?. After 26.d5 ab 27.ab Bxb4 28.Qxg7 Bf8! a position arises that is difficult to evaluate. White's attack improves with 28.0-0! Bxc3 29.Qxg7! Bd2 30.Ra1!. Then again, there's no point in Black going into these complications: instead of taking the b4 pawn he plays 27...Qa6!, preparing 28...Qc4 or 28...Qd3.

#### **24.Bc3 ab 25.ab Ra8 26.d5 Ra2 27.Kf1!**

Excellent regrouping. The king frees the e1-square for the rook, to prepare e5-e6.

#### **27...Qa6?**

*A serious mistake. Correct was 27...Kd8 in order to take the king to c8 as quickly as possible.*

#### **28.Re1! Kd8**

*Too late.*



[FEN "3k1b2/1p1b1pp1/q6r/3PPp1P//1Pp5/2B5/r3NPQ1/4RK1R w - - 0 29"]

**1.?**

**29.Rh3?**

*Grischuk hesitates.*

As all the notes pointed out, 29.e6! fe 30.Bxg7 Bxg7 31.Qxg7 ed (31...e5 32.Qxe5) 32.Nc3! led to a win.

There were many other fascinating events in the game that were far from always correctly evaluated by the commentators, but examining them would take us too far away from our topic.

Incidentally, even when the computer's distrust of a positional sacrifice is objectively justified, from the practical point of view a sacrifice still makes sense if it creates sufficiently complex problems for your opponent. I've already quoted Rudolf Spielmann on previous occasions in my publications:

*In a practical game it is not the objective position that decides matters, but the relative difficulty of the obstacles that have to be overcome. That is why I also believe that a sacrifice should be evaluated not only from the point of view of its correctness, but, primarily, from the point of view of its dangerousness.*

And indeed, people aren't computers, and finding the series of precise, sometimes only correct moves suggested by the machine is often too much to ask of us.

Even if in the example we just looked at we didn't manage to prove the correctness of the pawn sacrifice (of which I was afraid for some time, under the influence of the computer), it's still clear that this is precisely the way Black should have played. Look at the position that arises after the sacrifice: is a player really wrong to go into that? It would seem to be a completely reasonable hypothesis that one of the numerous active continuations that Black has at his disposal (and maybe not only one) will give him good play.

By the way, in reply to 23...c3! the computer highly rates a rejection of the exchange of rooks 24.Bxc3 at first. The machine's recommendation is typical: but leaving your own passive rook and the enemy's active one on the board is illogical from the human point of view. A "normal" person playing White probably wouldn't even consider that capture, and so there's no point in Black paying serious attention to it. And objectively: in the variation 24...Qa6 25.d5 Qxa3 26.0-0 Qa2 27.Rfe1 Rc4 28.f3 Rh4 the evaluation on the screen changes at a certain point from a big advantage for White to approximate equality.

Besides the influence of computer analysis programs there's another factor that hinders our evaluation of positions where material equality is destroyed and restrains players from going into them. I'm talking about a mere lack of experience. After all, these situations don't arise that often, and we don't get enough practice at playing them (compared with more standard structures) – and so mistakes become more likely.

Then again, what I've said doesn't apply to certain gambit systems that were invented many years ago but are encountered only rather rarely. In the past decade or two they have been subjected to intense computer processing, after which they've become fashionable and many players have mastered them successfully. I'm talking about the Marshall Attack in the Ruy Lopez, for example, or the "Anti-Moscow" Gambit. It used to be that in almost all games after the moves **1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 h6** White exchanged on f6, as it was considered that with **6.Bh4 d6** an improved version of the "Botvinnik System" arose for Black. Today, on the contrary, the majority of players retreat the bishop – relying on the countless games that have already been played with this variation, and their own computer analysis.

Practice in these gambit systems undoubtedly improves our understanding of the complicated, non-standard positions that arise in them. But as giving up material in them is a given at the start and we don't even think about it any more, it's unlikely that you'll be able to find positional sacrifices in new situations.

The following game was played in the last round of the top division of the

**I. Popov-Inarkiev**

Ulan-Ude 20099

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.e4 de 8.Nxe4 Nxe4 9.Qxe4 c5 10.Bg5 Qa5+ 11.Bd2 Qc7 12.Qg4**



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppqn1ppp/3bp3/2p5/2PP2Q1/5N2/PP1B1PPP/R3KB1R b KQkq - 0 12"]

**1...?**

The position that has arisen is examined in my old book [School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play](#), in the chapter "Diamond Cut Diamond." In there is a reference to the game Seirawan-Yusupov (interzonal tournament, Toluca 1982), in which White acted differently: 12.Bc3 Nf6 13.Qh4 cd 14.Qxd4 0-0, and didn't achieve anything. This note is given to White's twelfth move:

*In the event of 12.Qg4 Artur was planning a positional exchange sacrifice: 12...0-0!? 13.Bh6 g6 14.Bxf8 Qa5+ 15.Nd2 Bxf8.*

Now, armed with a computer, I probably wouldn't change anything in that text, apart from replacing the symbols !? with an exclamation mark, and pointing out the possible transposition of moves 13...Qa5+!?

As it turned out, neither of the young grandmasters, who were keen on an aggressive playing style, even considered the exchange sacrifice. Ernesto Inarkiev quite quickly chose **12...cd?! 13.Qxg7 Be5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5+ 15.Qxe5 Nxe5**. In the endgame the bishop-pair secures White a positional advantage.

Class and strength of play aren't synonymous. The two strong grandmasters didn't notice the exchange sacrifice in a position on the board. But Yusupov – a player of the highest class – foresaw it even before his opponent had made his twelfth move. The advantages of the sacrifice were obvious to him.

I'll show you a few more moves from that game because of one interesting and instructive moment, even though it isn't connected to our topic.

**16.0-0-0**

16.f4 was more accurate, as after 16...Ng4 17.h3+/- the knight has to retreat: since 17...Ne3 18.Bxe3 de 19.Ke2 leads to the loss of a pawn without any compensation. It's also clearly worse for Black with 16...Nc6 17.Bd3.

**16...f6 (16...Rg8!?) 17.f4**

Weaker is 17.Be2 Bd7 18.f4 Nxc4.

**17...Ng4 18.Re1 Bd7**



[FEN "r3k2r/pp1b3p/4pp2/8/2Pp1Pn1/8/PP1B2PP/2K1RB1R w kq - 0 19"]

1...?

In the game there followed **19.Be2? Rg8 20.Rhf1 f5 21.h3 Nf6 22.g4 Ne4** with mutual chances: the knight reinforced on a central square is no worse than the enemy bishop.

Ivan Popov rejected 19.h3! because of 19...Nf2 (19...Nh6 20.g4+/-) 20.Rh2 f5 21.g4 Ne4 unclear. The powerful rook lunge 21.Re5!! remained unnoticed, which would have secured White a clear advantage. The rook is formidably positioned on e5: it puts pressure on e6, chaining the bishop to the d7-square, and also on f5 after the inevitable g2-g4, while also taking the c5-square away from the knight in the variation 21...Ne4 22.g4 Kf7 23.Bd3 (23.Bb4 is no less strong, intending 24.gf or 24.Bd3).

If a player manages to develop his ability to see promising positional sacrifices and correctly evaluate the non-standard positions that arise from them, he'll obviously surpass the majority of his opponents in this respect, which will inevitably manifest itself in terms of results. How to achieve this? The recipe is exactly the same as for developing other valuable qualities: familiarize yourself with good examples on the topic you're studying and solve relevant exercises.

Next month, I'll draw your attention to an interesting game, the majority of which took place with a material imbalance. In the course of investigating it we'll practice looking for different positional sacrifices.

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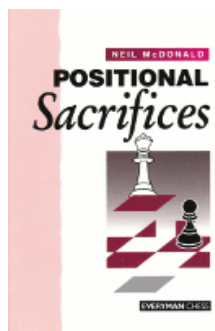
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## COLUMNISTS

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## Practicing Positional Sacrifices

The game that we're going to look at now will help you train your ability to find positional sacrifices and orient yourself in situations where there is a material imbalance. In the course of the game you'll be asked several questions, the answers to which I will give you at the end.

**Polugaevsky-Timman**

Breda 1979, Game Six

Exchange Grünfeld [D87]

1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 4.c4xd5 Nf6xd5 5.e2-e4  
 Nd5xc3 6.b2xc3 Bf8-g7 7.Bf1-c4 c7-c5 8.Ng1-e2 Nb8-c6 9.Bc1-e3 0-0 10.0-0  
 Bc8-g4 11.d4-d5!?

Rejecting the usual 11.f3, White goes for an interesting positional pawn sacrifice.

11...Nc6-a5 12.Bc4-d3 c5-c4 13.Bd3-c2 Bg7xc3 14.Ra1-b1 Bc3-g7

Another possibility was 14...Bxe2!? 15.Qxe2 Qd7. Now winning the pawn back doesn't give him anything 16.Bxa7 Rxa7 17.Qe3 b5 18.Qxc3 Nb7 with mutual chances. In the game Vladimirov-Wegner, Gausdal 1991 16.Rfd1 Rfc8 17.f4 b5?! 18.e5 was played, and Black's position became difficult. Instead of his last move 17...e5 18.de Qxe6 was stronger, and here Evgeny Vladimirov recommends 19.Rb5 unclear, although 19.e5!? looks more logical, with good compensation for the pawn.

Most likely Gata Kamsky played more solidly as Black against Joel Lautier (Paris rapidplay 1992): 15...b6!? (rather than 15...Qd7) 16.f4 e5 17.de fe 18. Rfd1 Qe7 19.e5 Rad8 20.Qg4 (20.Be4 Bb4 21.Qg4 Bc5) 20...Kh8 (20...Bb4 21.Rxd8 Rxd8 22.Rxb4 Qxb4 23.Qxe6+ Kf8 24.Qf6+ Ke8 25.Ba4+ Qxa4 26. Qe6+ led to a forced draw; 20...Nc6!? deserved attention) 21.Qh3 Kg8=.

15.f2-f3 Bg4-d7 16.f3-f4 b7-b5

According to Timman, 16...e6 17.de fe 18.e5 or 17...Bxe6 18.f5 were worse.

17.e4-e5 a7-a6 18.Ne2-c3 Ra8-b8?!

A significant inaccuracy that led to difficult consequences. 18...Rc8 was stronger.



[FEN "1r1q1rk1/3bpbp/p5p1/np1PP3/2p2P2/  
 2N1B3/P1B3PP/1R1Q1RK1 w - - 0 19"]

1) How should White play?

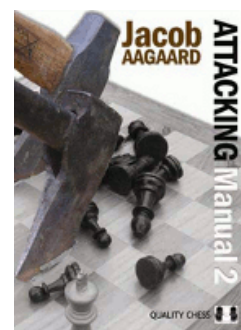
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19.Be3-a7 Rb8-b7 20.Ba7-c5 Rf8-e8 21.Qd1-f3 Rb7-b8 22.Qf3-f2 Qd8-c8  
23.Bc5-a7 Rb8-a8 24.Ba7-b6 Na5-b7



[FEN "r1q1r1k1/1n1bppbp/pB4p1/1p1PP3/  
2p2P2/2N5/P1B2QPP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 25"]

2) How should White continue?

25.h2-h3 Bd7-f5 26.Nc3-e4 Qc8-d7 27.g2-g4 Bf5xe4 28.Bc2xe4 Ra8-c8 29.  
a2-a4 c4-c3!? 30.a4xb5 a6xb5



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1n1qppbp/1B4p1/1p1PP3/  
4BPP1/2p4P/5Q2/1R3RK1 w - - 0 31"]

3) Evaluate 31.e6.

31.Rf1-c1

4) How should Black play?

31...Bg7-h6 32.g4-g5 Bh6-g7 33.Qf2-e3

33.Kh2? Rc4 is worse.



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1n1qppbp/1B4p1/1p1PP1P1/  
4BP2/2p1Q2P/8/1RR3K1 b - - 0 33"]

5) What should Black do?

33...h7-h6 34.g5xh6 Bg7xh6





[FEN "2r1r1k1/1n1qpp2/1B4pb/1p1PP3/4BP2/2p1Q2P/8/1RR3K1 w - - 0 35"]

#### 6) How should White play?

**35.Rc1xc3 Rc8xc3 36.Qe3xc3 Re8-c8**

In the event of 36...Bxf4 the move 37.Rf1 leads to a decisive advantage for White. Another tempting move, 37.Qc6?!, is significantly weaker, on which the reply can be not only 37...Qc8!? unclear, but also the sharper 37...Qxh3!? 38.Qxe8+ Kg7 39.Rb2 Be3+ 40.Bxe3 Qxe3+ 41.Rf2 Qe1+ 42.Rf1 Qe3+ 43.Kh2 Qh6+ 44.Kg2 Qg5+ 45.Kf3 (Black's useful checks have ended, but nevertheless he retains sufficient counterplay, even though he's a rook down!) 45...Qxe5 46.Qc6 (46.Qxb5 Qxe4+! 47.Kxe4 Nd6+ with an equal endgame) 45...Nd6 46.Qc2 Qf6+ 47.Ke2 Qe5=.



[FEN "2r3k1/1n1qpp2/1B4pb/1p1PP3/4BP2/2Q4P/8/1R4K1 w - - 0 37"]

#### 7) How should White continue?

**37.Qc3-g3 Rc8-c4 38.Rb1-e1**



[FEN "6k1/1n1qpp2/1B4pb/1p1PP3/2r1BP2/6QP/8/4R1K1 b - - 0 38"]

#### 8) How should Black play?

**38...e7-e6 39.f4-f5 e6xf5 40.Be4-g2 Bh6-f4 41.Qg3-f2**

On 41.Qa3 Black replied 41...b4. After 42.e6 (42.Qa7 is more solid) 42...ba 43.ed a2 an unusual position that is difficult to evaluate could arise, with two bishops for the queen: 44.d6 Rc1 45.Rxc1 Bxc1 46.Bxb7 Be3+! 47.Bxe3 a1Q

+ 48.Kg2 Qb2+ 49.Kg3 Qe5+ (or 49...Qf6).

#### 41...Qd7-e7!

Timman provokes the advance d5-d6, to obtain a favorable situation for him with three pawns for a bishop.

#### 42.d5-d6 Nb7xd6 43.e5xd6 Qe7xd6

Objectively the chances are approximately equal – White should have continued 44.Kh1 or 44.Ba7. Instead of that Polugaevsky carries out an extremely unsuccessful idea: he moves his rook off the first rank, weakening the position of his king.

#### 44.Re1-e8+?! Kg8-h7 45.Re8-d8?



[FEN "3R4/5p1k/1B1q2p1/1p3p2/2r2b2/7P/5QB1/6K1 b - - 0 45"]

#### 9) How should Black play?

45...Bf4-h2+ 46.Kg1-h1 Rc4-c1+ 47.Bg2-f1 Rc1xf1+ 48.Qf2xf1 Qd6xb6 49.Rd8-d5 (49.Rd7 Qc6+)



[FEN "8/5p1k/1q4p1/1p1R1p2/8/7P/7b/5Q1K b - - 0 49"]

#### 10) How should Black continue?

49...Bh2-c7 50.Rd5xb5 Qb6-c6+ 51.Kh1-g1 Bc7-b6+ 52.Kg1-h2 Qc6-c2+ 53.Qf1-g2 Qc2-c7+ 54.Qg2-g3 Bb6-g1+ 55.Kh2-g2 Qc7-c6+ 56.Kg2xg1 Qc6xb5 57.Qg3-h4+ Kh7-g7 58.Qh4-d4+ f7-f6 59.Qd4-a7+ Kg7-h6 60.Qa7-f7 Qb5-e5 61.Kg1-g2 f5-f4 62.Qf7-f8+ Kh6-g5 63.Qf8-c8 f4-f3+ 0-1

#### Answers

1. White found an excellent way to pin down his opponent's forces on the queenside: 19.Ba7! Rb7 (if 19...Rc8 or 19...Ra8, then 20.Qd4 threatening 21.Bb6) 20.Bc5. The bishop now can't be attacked by either the knight (the b7-square is occupied) or the queen (the e7-pawn is under attack). White intends to reinforce the bishop, though, by putting his queen on the g1-a7 diagonal, and then preparing an attack on one of the flanks.

2. White decided to prepare g2-g4 by playing 25.h3?!. However, a pawn



advance away from his own king gives his opponent future counter-chances. Moreover, Black obtains an opportunity to exchange off a pair of minor pieces, which is desirable in a constrained position.

Already having pinned down the enemy forces on the queenside, it would have been logical to attack there: 25.a4!. Possibly Lev Polugaevsky was disturbed by the reply 25...Nd6!?, but then possible are both 26.Na2!?, transferring the knight to the excellent square b4: 26...Nb7 27.ab ab 28.Nb4 (Timman), and 26.Rfc1!?, intending 27.ed Bxc3 28.de Rxe7 29.Bxg6.

3. The move 31.e6? could be justified with 31...Qd6?! 32.ef+ Kxf7 33.Rxb5. However, Black replies 31...fe! 32.de Qxe6 33.Bxb7 Rb8, achieving a decisive advantage thanks to the vulnerable position of the white bishops. For example, 34.f5 (nothing else is apparent) 34...Qd7 (34...gf 35.gf Qd7 36.f6! Bxf6 37.Qg2+ Kh8 38.Bc6 Qd6 39.Rbd1 Qxd1 40.Rxd1 Rg8 unclear is much less convincing) 35.fg Rxb7+.

4. Black has to find a way to put pressure on the enemy center. In the game, he decided to provoke a weakness in his opponent's pawn structure by means of 31...Bh6? 32.g5 Bg7 (with a subsequent h7-h6). But that plan was slow and so it didn't achieve its aim (after 33.Qe3 the important c3-pawn was already under attack). Moreover, White could react with 32.Bd4! Rc4 33.Rxc3, winning the pawn back and obtaining an appreciable advantage.

On 31...Rc4!?, follows 32.Bd3. Timman points out the variation 32...Qxd5 33.Bxc4 Qxc4 34.Qd4!+/- (by the way, 34.Qf3?! is weaker due to 34...b4! 35.Qxb7 Qxf4 unclear, but 34.Qf1!+/- is possible). However, the exchange may be sacrificed another way: 32...Rec8! 33.Bxc4 Rxc4 with sufficient counterplay.

Another good solution, that Timman recommends, is to undermine the enemy center 31...f6!?. On 32.f5, follows 32...fe 33.fg Nd6=/. The move 32.d6?! is risky, it's better to parry with the move 32...fe (32...ed 33.e6! unclear), not fearing 33.Qa2+ Kh8 34.Qa7 Qxd6 35.Qxb7 ef/+ (or 35...c2 36.Rxc2 Rxc2 37.Bxc2 Rb8-/+). If 32.e6, though, then 32...Qd6 33.Rxb5 Qa3 (with a subsequent 34...Nd6), and Black is fine.

5. The logical continuation of the intended plan 33...h6?! should have led to difficult consequences for Black. He had to support the important c3-pawn, even at the price of material losses, and with this aim he could choose one of two combinational continuations.

A) 33...Nd6!! 34.ed ed 35.Rb4!? (in the event of 35.Qf3!? Rb8 36.Bf2 b4 37.Bc2 Qb5 unclear the far-advanced pawns on the queenside compensate Black for the absence of a piece) 35...c2 (threatening 36...Rc3) 36.Bd4 Bxd4 37.Rxd4 h6! (intending 38...hg 39.fg Re5) 38.Qf3 (38.gh?! f5) 38...hg 39.fg Qa7 40.Qf2 Re5 counterplay;

B) 33...e6! 34.d6 (34.Rxc3 Rxc3 35.Qxc3 ed unclear) 34...Nxd6! 35.ed e5! (35...Qxd6 36.Rxb5 is worse) 36.Bc7 ef 37.Qxf4 Qxh3 (threatening 38...Be5) 38.Bg2 Qd7 counterplay.

6. The c3-pawn can be eliminated without any punishment: 35.Rxc3!, as 35...Bxf4? 36.Qxf4 Rxc3 37.e6!+- doesn't work. After 35...Rxc3 36.Qxc3 the f4-pawn is again unassailable: 36...Bxf4? 37.Rf1!+-.

7. White didn't play energetically enough: 37.Qg3?!, gradually letting the initiative get into the hands of his opponent.

The impressive queen sacrifice 37.Qc6?! leads to equality in the variation 37...Qxh3!? 38.Qxb7 Bxf4, and with 37...Rxc6 38.dc Qe6 39.Rxb5 (Timman) 39...Nc5!! 40.Bxc5 (40.Rxc5 Bxf4+) 41...Kg7! 42.c7 (42.Rb8 Qc4 43.Bb6 Qc1+ 44.Kg2 Qxf4+) 42...Qd7 Black obtains an advantage.

You had to find the counter-attack 37.e6! Qxe6 (37...fe 38.Qg3!+-; 37...Qe8 38.ef+ Kxf7 39.Qg3 Qg8 40.Re1!+/-) 38.de Rxc3 39.Bxb7, for example, 39...Rxb7 40.Bd5! or 39...fe 40.Bg2 with great chances of a win (pointed out by Timman).

8. In the event of 38...Nc5?! 39.Bxc5 Rxc5 40.f5, Black's position is alarming. It's important to prevent the opponent's attacking opportunities e5-e6 and f4-f5, which is achieved with the move 38...e6!. If 39.d6, then 39...Nxd6! 40.ed Qxd6 with fully-fledged counterplay for Black. 39.Qg4 Nc5 doesn't promise White an advantage (the exchange sacrifice 39...Rxe4 40.Rxe4 Qxd5 also deserves attention) 40.Bxc5 Rxc5 41.d6 Qc8!? with the idea of 42...Rc1.

White decided to sacrifice a pawn by playing 39.f5?!, but it didn't bring him the desired result. After 39...ef, nothing comes of 40.e6?! Qd6! 41.Qxd6 Nxd6 42.Bd3 Rc3 43.Bf1 fe (43...Kf8!?=+/+ is even better, evidently) 44.Rxe6 (44.de Bg5=+/+ 44...Nc4 (Timman) or 44...Bf4=+/+.

9. Timman undertook a simple combination.

45...Bh2+! 46.Kh1 Rc1+ 47.Bf1 Rxf1+ 48.Qxf1 Qxb6 Three pawns for the exchange and the open position of the enemy king secures a decisive advantage for Black.

10. The bishop and the b5-pawn are under attack. It's desirable to choose a bishop retreat with which a capture on b5 would lead to mate or new material losses for White.

49...Bc7! 50.Rxb5 (50.Qxb5 Qf2-+) 50...Qc6+ 51.Kg1 Bb6+ 52.Kh2 Qc2+ 53.Qg2 Not 53.Kh1 because of 53...Bc7 – that's why 49...Bc7! is more accurate than 49...Bb8.

53...Qc7+ Here there are already different paths to the goal; for example, 53...Qc1! (threatening 54...Bc7+) 54.Rxb6 Qc7+.

54.Qg3 Bg1+! 55.Kg2 Qc6+ 56.Kxg1 Qxb5-+ and Black is two pawns up in a queen endgame.

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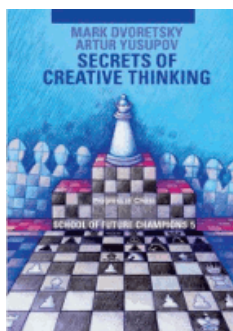
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## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Pay Attention to your Opponent's Resources Part One

*Your opponent also has a right to exist* – Savielly Tartakower remarked with his characteristic irony. Absorbed in our own thoughts, we sometimes forget this, for which we have to pay dearly. As Viktor Korchnoi wrote – "Well, if you do not check what your opponent is doing, you will end up complaining about bad luck after every game." No chess player has managed to completely exclude this kind of mistake, but some make it less often and others more often. Many who are over-self-confident optimists make it with unenviable regularity.

The key word in the title of this article is attention, attentiveness. It's no accident that a significant proportion of mistakes (we call them "oversights" and "blunders") are by no means associated with your own failed ideas, but with strong opposition on the part of your opponent. You don't notice them because your attention is mainly directed towards looking for and studying your own strongest moves. You should put yourself in the position of your partner a little more often, and think about how he's going to react to the idea you have in store for him. However, this very important skill that forms the title of this article (then again, like any other skill) doesn't appear by itself, you have to develop and train it with the aid of specially-selected exercises.

Let's have a look at a few practical examples and think about the reasons why mistakes happened in them.

**Vallin - Nielsen**  
1968



[FEN "6R1/1P6/P1b2p2/2p2k2/2P5/5p2/1r5P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**Does 1.b8Q win?**

White has an overwhelming advantage and there's no way he's going to allow the blow f3-f2+. Simplest of all are 1.Rf1! or 1.Kf1! – his opponent would have to capitulate immediately.

In completely winning positions, when almost all roads apparently lead to Rome, it's easy to lose your caution and concentration, which, obviously, also happened to the person who was playing White. The classic formula: "Winning a won position is the most difficult thing of all" warns against dangerous complacency. In situations like this you have to be a "predator," trying to choose from out of several possibilities the path on which your opponent won't get even the tiniest chance.

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### 1.b8Q? f2+ 2.Kf1 Bg2+!!

White probably overlooked this ingenious thrust, which should have put him on his guard, but didn't do so. By taking with the rook on g2 he would have forced a transfer into a rook ending, in which he retained a big advantage. But he didn't want to drag out the battle.

### 3.Kxg2?

In the variation 3...feQ+? 4.Qxb2 the king easily gets away from the checks: 4...Qe4+ 5.Kh3 Qf3+ 6.Rg3 Qh5+ 7.Kg2. But here a new surprise follows.

**3...f1Q+!! 4.Kxf1 Rf2+!!**, and the rook pursues the king on the squares f2, g2, and h2 – taking it leads to stalemate.

The answer to the question under the diagram is: yes! In the rook endgame, White wins.

3.Rxg2! feQ+ 4.Kxe1 Rxb8, and now either 5.a7 Rb1+ 6.Kd2 Ra1 7.Rg7 Ke6 8.h4 f5 9.h5 Kf6 10.h6+-, or 5.Ra2 Ke4 6.a7 Ra8 7.h4 Kf4 8.Kf2 Kg4 9.Ke3 f5 10.h5+-.

### Taimanov - Vorotnikov

Leningrad, 19788



[FEN "3rr1k1/ppp1qp1p/3b2p1/4np1P/1P1N2n1/P1P4R/1B1NBP2/R2Q1K2 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

### Evaluate 21.f4.

Black only has two pawns for the piece with no direct threats, and that means that he should probably lose. But sometimes a single careless move is enough to change the evaluation to its diametric opposite.

### 21.f4?

Commenting on one of his games against Mark Taimanov, Mikhail Botvinnik remarked: "He didn't like doubt, which often led to rushed decisions."

Taimanov himself also acknowledges the fairness of that characterization: "I often make 'only' moves without thinking, and sometimes even completely let my opponent's 'time trouble rhythm' draw me in."

White was reckoning on 21...Nc6 22.Bxg4 fg 23.Qxg4+-, and missed the very strong counter-blow.

### 21...Nf3!! 22.Rxf3?!

"Mistakes never come singly!" 22.N2xf3?! Ne3+ 23.Kg1 Nxd1 24.Rxd1 Bxf4 didn't promise chances for salvation either, but 22.Nc4! was considerably more stubborn. Then again, in the variation 22...Nfh2+! 23.Kg1 Bxf4 24.Bc1 Bxc1 25.Rxc1 b5! Black retained an overwhelming advantage.

**22...Qh4! 23.Rg3** (the only defense from the threat of mate on h1) **23...Qh1+ 24.Rg1 Ne3+ 25.Kf2 Qh2+ 0-1**

The center of gravity in these examples isn't in determining the strongest continuation (there may be several good moves), but in avoiding the tempting but erroneous path. Still, let's try to make the best choice for White.

Taimanov recommends 21.Nc4!/?+/- (you can also play this way after a preliminary exchange of pawns on g6). Being a piece up, in principle simplifying the position is favorable. The ingenious try 21...Nxc4 22.Bxc4 Bg3!/? (and if 23.Rxg3?!, then 23...Qh4 24.Rxg4 Qh1+ 25.Rg1 Qh3+ with perpetual check), suggested by Artur Yusupov, is refuted by means of 23.hg 24.Qb3!, preparing the decisive blow 25.Bxf7+!.

Another way to force a simplification, 21.Ne4 fe 22.Bxg4 looks worse: after 22...Nd3 Black is left with good compensation for the piece.

The most energetic and strong decision is associated with switching to a counterattack: 21.hg hg 22.c4!, and if 22...c5, then 23.Nxf5! gf 24.Bxg4 fg 25.Qxg4+! with unavoidable mate.

It's much more difficult to evaluate the following position than the two previous ones.

**Hodgson – M. Gurevich**  
European Team Championship, Haifa 1989



[FEN"1r3r1k/p6p/2q2b1P/3p1Pp1/2P1p3/QP2P3/P1B3P1/1K1R3R b - - 0 31"]

1...?

**Is 31...Rfc8 worth playing?**

It's clear that Black's initiative compensates for being two pawns down, especially as he can immediately win one of them back (only not by 31...Qxc4?? because of 32.Qxf8+!). The only question is whether he'll find a way to convert his activeness into a decisive attack.

The move 31...Rfc8?!, creating the difficult-to-repel threat of 32...Qxc4, at first glance solves the problem convincingly. But Mikhail Gurevich rejected it, finding the ingenious refutation: 32.Rxd5! Qxc4 33.Qb2!! Qc6 (33...Bxb2? 34.bc is bad), and now not 34.Rc5? Qa6! 35.Rxc8+ (35.Re5 Rxc2!-+) 35...Rxc8 36.Qc1 Qa5-+, but 34.Rd4! – here White at least isn't worse.

He could play simply 31...dc!/? 32.Rd6 (32.Qd6 Qc8) 32...Qc7, intending 33...cb 34.ab Qc3. The initiative remains in Black's hands, although breaking through his opponent's defenses won't be easy.

The consequences of the move that the grandmaster made, **31...Rfd8!/?** are rather unclear as well. The variation 32.cd Qc3 33.Rd4 Rbc8 34.Qb2 Qxb2+ 35.Kxb2 Bxd4+ 36.ed Rxd5 37.Bxe4 Rxd4 led to the best endgame for Black (the only question is by how much). However, White had the defensive resource 32.Kc1! at his disposal, repelling the threat 32...Qxc4 and simultaneously preventing 32...dc? because of 33.Rxd8+ Rxd8 34.Rd1+-. Black would have maintained the tension by means of 32...a5!/?.

**32.c5?! Rb5 33.Bxe4 Rxc5**



[FEN"3r3k/p6p/2q2b1P/2rp1Pp1/4B3/QP2P3/P5P1/1K1R3R w - - 0 34"]

White's position looks alarming both after 34.Rc1 Rxc1+ 35.Rxc1 Qb6 with a subsequent 36...Qxe3, and after 34.Bd3 Qd6! (preventing the move 35.Rc1 and pointing the queen in the direction of e5). Then again, both of these were much better than the capture of the a7-pawn that occurred in the game. Julian Hodgson clearly underestimated the danger his king was facing.

**34.Qxa7? Rc8 35.Bxd5 Qb5**

35...Rxd5! 36.Rc1 Rd1!! 37.Rh:d1 Qe4+ decided matters more quickly and impressively.

**36.Rd2** (36.Qf7 Rc1+!; 36.Be4 Qe8!) **36...Rxd5 37.Qf7 Rd6! 38.Rc2 Qxf5 39.Rhc1 Qxc2+! 0-1**

It often happens that when a player is enthusiastic about the combinational idea he's found, he doesn't have the time or the patience to check it. As a result he doesn't notice a refutation, and sometimes fairly a simple one.

**Simagin - Beylin**  
Vilnius, 1946



[FEN"r4rk1/1b2qpp1/p3pn1p/1pN1N3/3P4/1Q6/PP3PPP/2R1R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

**Find a combination and evaluate its correctness.**

Vladimir Simagin was seduced by the tactical idea **1.Ng6? fg 2.Rxe6 Qf7 3.Nxb7**. His opponent replied **3...Nd5!**, and taking the knight leads to mate 4... Qxf2+ 5.Kh1 Qf1+, and otherwise Black retains his extra piece. There followed **4.Re2 Qxb7 5.Rc5 Rad8 6.Re5 Qf7!-+** (again the same motif; then again, 6...Rf5-+ was also enough).

White should have recognized that he didn't have an advantage and limited himself to a peaceful move: most likely it made sense to exchange off the strong bishop, 1.Nxb7=.

Then again, when you find an apparently strong retort by your opponent, you don't always have to reject your idea immediately. Sometimes that retort in its turn runs into a refutation.



A sharp opening duel unfolded in the following game.

Sax – Veingold  
Tallinn, 1979

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.Bh4** (more often the bishop retreats to f4 or e3) **9...Nxe4 10.Qf4 Ng5 11.Nxc6 bc 12.Qa4 Qb6 13.f4 Nh7 14.f5 Rb8 15.fe Bxe6 16.Bc4 Be7 17.Bxe7 Kxe7 18.Bxe6 fe 19.Qg4 Qe3+**

A slightly unusual situation: in the course of the last few moves Black could have taken on b2 with check, but he didn't do so, and he was right! For example, in the game Vasiukov – Zurakhov, 1960, after 19...Qxb2+?! 20.Kd2 Ng5? (20...Rh8 is better) 21.Rb1 Qa3 22.h4 Nf7 23.Rhe1 e5 24.Rf1, White created a winning attack.

**20.Rd2 Ng5**



[FEN"1r5r/4k1p1/p1ppp2p/6n1/6Q1/2N1q3/PPPR2PP/2K4R w - - 0 21"]

**1.?**

Gyula Sax played carefully, **21.Nd1?!**, and didn't get anything out of it.

**21...Qe4 22.Qg3 Qe5 23.Qxe5** (he has to exchange queens: after 23.Qf2 Ne4 24.Qa7+ Kf6 the advantage is on Black's side) **23...de 24.Re1 Nf7** with approximate equality. It's no worse for Black either with 24...Rhd8 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Rxe5 Rd5, as occurred in the game Westerinen – Csom, Las Palmas, 1978.

Natural and best was the move 21.h4!. I'll risk suggesting that Sax rejected it because of the counter-blow 21...Rxb2?, which, however, can be refuted, and even in two ways: 22.Rh3! Qe1+ 23.Rd1+- or 22.Qd4! Qxd4 23.Rxd4+-.

That's why Black had to reply 21...Nf7, on which 22.Nd1 or 22.Rh3 are possible with a complicated battle.

Next month, the continuation of this article will be published. But now I suggest for training that you solve by yourself a comparatively straightforward test associated with the theme we're looking at. I'll make a couple of preliminary comments, which could be useful in solving the exercises in this and subsequent publications.

Bearing in mind the theme of the training, don't forget to check your ideas, and to constantly look for a dirty trick on the part of your opponent. As a matter of fact, this skill should also develop in you as a result.

There isn't necessarily just one solution to some of the exercises. Don't waste too much effort on exposing a microscopic difference (sometimes even a nonexistent one) between approximately equivalent-looking continuations, but just be concerned with not missing something that really is important.

## Test One

### 1. Sneider – Agzamov

Soviet Championship, First League, Telavi, 1982

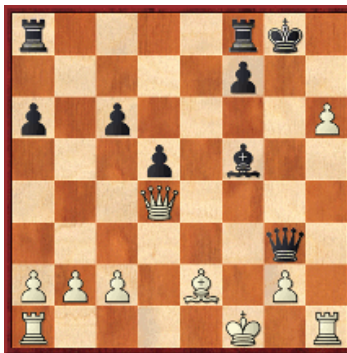


[FEN"2r1q1k1/3R1p1p/2P1r1p1/2BQ4/  
1p1b4/5P1P/6P1/5R1K b - - 0 27"]

1...?

## 2. Dworakowska – Calotescu

European Team Championship, Gothenburg, 2005



[FEN"r4rk1/5p2/p1p4P/3p1b2/3Q4/  
6q1/PPP1B1P1/R4K1R b - - 0 21"]

1...?

## 3. Shamkovich – Sherwin

Lone Pine, 1976 (variation from the game)



[FEN"r1r3k1/5q1p/p5p1/3bB3/P1B5/  
2p4Q/1PP3PP/R6K w - - 0 27"]

1.?

## 4. Shtukaturkin – Shakarov

USSR, 1981





[FEN"5rk1/p4p2/1pr3pp/5P2/2qP2QR/6P1/P3P2P/R5K1 w - - 0 29"]

1.?

### 5. Giorgadze – Polugaevsky

Soviet Championship, Tbilisi, 1978



[FEN"r1q1rbk1/1b1n1ppp/1B2p3/PpP5/5P2/4Q3/6PP/1NRR1BK1 w - - 0 32"]

1.?

### 6. Seirawan – Lobron

Arnhem/Amsterdam, 1983



[FEN"6k1/p4pp1/5q1p/8/4B3/1rr1P1Pb/RQ3P1P/2R3K1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

### Solutions

#### 1. Shneider – Agzamov

Black was left a healthy pawn up by choosing the simple **27...Bxc5! 28.Qxc5 Rexc6-/+**.

The attempt to obtain more with 27...Re1? counting on 28.Rxe1? Qxe1+ 29.Kh2 Be5+ didn't work. White would have replied either 28.Bxd4! Rxf1+ 29.Kh2 Rc1! 30.Be5 b3 31.Ba3 R1xc6 32.Re7 Qf8 33.Rd7=, or 28.Qxd4! Rxf1+ 29.Kh2, threatening 30.Qf6 or 30.Bxb4, from which only 29...Rc1!= is a reliable defense.

## 2. Dworakowska – Calotescu

Black carelessly played 21...Rae8?, on which followed the artless 22.Bd3? Bxd3+ 23.cd Kh7 24.Rh3 Qg5=. The players missed the simple but elegant blow 22.Bg4!!, which combined tactical blocking, enticement, deflection and a pin:



[FEN"4rrk1/5p2/p1p4P/3p1b2/3Q2B1/6q1/PPP3P1/R4K1R b - - 0 22"]

22...Bxg4 23.Qg7# or 23.h7#;

22...Qxg4 23.h7+;

22...Qe5 23.Qxe5 Rxe5 24.Rh5

22...Re5 23.Rh3!

And now let's look for the best continuation for Black.

Taking the pawn 21...Bxc2? is refuted most simply by means of 22.Rh4+-.

On 21...Be4? the reply 22.Bf3+- is strong, as the black bishop is pinned down by the need to control the h7 square.

It's possible to play 21...f6?!, but after 22.Qf2 or 22.Bd3 the advantage remains on White's side.

But with **21...Kh7!** the position almost equalizes: 22.Bd3 Bxd3+ 23.Qxd3+ Qg6!? or 23...Qxd3+.

## 3. Shamkovich – Sherwin

The tempting 27.Rf1? (hoping for 27...Qb7? 28.Qe6+!) is a mistake because of 27...Bxg2+!! with a subsequent 28...Qxc4.

The simple **27.Bxd5! Qxd5 28.Bxc3=** maintains approximate material equality (two pawns for the exchange). 27.Bd3!? cb 28.Bxb2 unclear, isn't bad either.

## 4. Shtukaturkin – Shkarov

It might seem that **29.Rxh6!** is refuted by the double blow **29...Qc3** (threatening both 30...Qxa1+ and 30...Qe3+). However, White is right to disregard the loss of the queen's rook: after **30.Qh4!** he has created an irrefutable attack.

**30...Qxa1+ 31.Kg2 gf 32.Rh8+ Kg7 33.Qh7+ Kf6 34.Qh6+ 1-0**

## 5. Georgadze – Polugaevsky

The simple **32.Bxb5!** secured White a healthy extra pawn. For example, 32...Bc6 33.Qd3 Nf6 34.Nc3+-, and so on.

That didn't seem like much to Tamaz Georgadze. He preferred 32.c6? Bxc6

33.Bxb5, underestimating the queen sacrifice 33...Bxb5! 34.Rxc8 Rexc8 35. Rc1 Bc4!



[FEN"r1r2bk1/3n1ppp/1B2p3/P7/2b2P2/4Q3/6PP/1NR3K1 w - - 0 36"]

The threat of 36...Nxb6 forced him to part with the passed pawn on a5, which led to a complete equalization of chances: 36.Bd4 (36.Kh1?! Nxb6 37.ab Bc5 38.Qf3 Bd5) 36...Rxa5 37.Nd2 Ra3 38.Rc3 Ra1+ 39.Kf2 Ra2 40.Kg1 Ra1+ 41.Kf2 Ra2 ½-½

## 6. Seirawan – Lobron

The American grandmaster decided to win a pawn: 22.Rxa7?, exploiting the fact that the queen was invulnerable because of mate.



[FEN"6k1/R4pp1/5q1p/8/4B3/1rr1P1Pb/1Q3P1P/2R3K1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

He had overlooked the brilliant counter-blow 22...Qxf2+!! After 23.Kxf2 Rxb2+ 24.Kf3 Rxc1, White had to resign.

22.Qa1! was necessary (or 22.Qd2!) 22...Rxc1+ 23.Qxc1 Qb6 with a probable draw.

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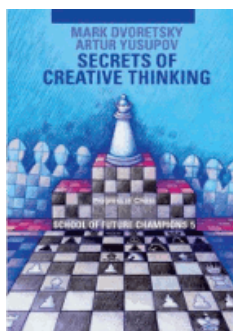


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## Pay Attention to your Opponent's Resources Part Two

In each of the examples we looked at in the [June 2009 column](#), the center of gravity lay in the search for a hidden tactical resource for our opponent that was capable of upsetting our plans. In practice tactics are usually closely intertwined with strategy: in order to make the best choice, it's important not only to find specific moves, but also to evaluate their consequences and to sense the dangers that lie in store for us on one path or another. Let's investigate a few games and fragments in which the problem of taking into account and correctly evaluation the opponent's possibilities arose for the players on more than one occasion.

**Dvoretsky – Ludolf**  
Viljandi, 1971



[FEN "r3nrk1/3b2bp/1qnp1p1/6B1/ppp1P1P1/3P1N1P/PPP1N1B1/1R2QR1K w - - 0 18"]

1.?

Black intended to destroy my pawn chain with the move 18...b3. Then 18.dc Qc5 was favorable to him with the threats of 19...Rxf3 and 19...Qxc4.

So how to avoid opening up a file on the queenside, favorably for my opponent? The problem was solved by means of a positional pawn sacrifice.

**18.d4! Nxd4?**

He shouldn't have accepted the sacrifice, as the black king falls under a decisive attack. Underestimation of the opponent's possibilities sometimes manifests itself in precisely this form: not a concrete blunder, but failing to understand the disadvantages or dangers of the position into which the player is going.

**19.Nexd4 Bxd4 20.Nxd4 Rxf1+ 21.Qxf1 Qxd4 22.e5! d5 (22...Qxe5 23.Bh6 +-)**

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[FEN "r3n1k1/3b3p/4p1p1/3pP1B1/pppq2P1/7P/PPP3B1/1R3Q1K w - - 0 23"]

**1.?**

If I make the natural move 23.Bh6?, Black defends by means of 23...Qc5! 24. Qf4 Ng7 with a subsequent 25...Rf8 or 25...Qf8. It's vital to take control of the c5-square.

**23.Be7! 1-0**

On 23...Ng7 or 23...Nc7 the moves 24.Qf6 and 25.Rf1 are decisive.

**Inarkiev – Vitiugov**

Russian Championship, Moscow, 2008



[FEN "1r4qr/1k3pp1/1nn1p2p/pp1pP2P/b1pP4/P1P1N1BB/R1P2PP1/2Q1R1K1 w - - 0 27"]

**1.?**

Black's position is difficult, there's absolutely nothing for him to do. The advance g7-g5 leads to the creation of multiple weaknesses on the kingside, and the same can also be said about the move f7-f5 (which at the moment is impossible anyway, as the b8-rook comes under attack). There are also almost no chances to start play on the opposite side of the board; for example, an immediate 27...b4 is easily refuted by means of 28.ab ab 29.cb Nxd4 30.Qa1 or 29...Nxb4 30.Rxa4 Nxa4 31.Qa3.

And White has at his disposal the obvious and extremely dangerous plan f2-f4-f5. Black can't let the pawn get to f5, which is why in these kinds of positions he usually replies to f2-f4 by g7-g6, but then the knight or the bishop gets through to f6.

The situation turns out to be very simple: if Black has no serious response to f2-f4, then it should be played immediately; if there is a response, then the pawn march must be prepared. If Ernesto Inarkiev had thought about his opponent's possible reaction, even for a moment, he undoubtedly would have understood everything and played 27.Bh4!, retaining all the advantages of his position. But, unfortunately, concentrating on his own plans, Ernesto often forgets about his partner and allows dangerous counterplay.

**27.f4? f5!**

It becomes clear that in the event of 28.ef gf, the g3-bishop comes under attack. After 29.Bh4 f5 the position stabilizes, and Black gets the strong maneuver Nb6-c8-d6-e4.

The commentary on White's next two moves illustrates one of the most important aspects of an attentive attitude towards your opponent's possibilities: prophylactic thinking.

### 28.Qd1?!

Obviously Black intends to play g7-g5. White will take the h-pawn en passant, his opponent can take on g6 with his queen, but he would prefer to put the knight there. To prevent the knight from getting to g6 it made sense to play 28.Bh4!, after 28...g5 29.hg Qxg6 preserving better chances. Although, of course, White's advantage has significantly decreased over the last few moves.

### 28...Ne7!



[FEN "1r4qr/1k2n1p1/1n2p2p/pp1pPp1P/b1pP1P2/P1P1N1BB/R1P3P1/3QR1K1 w - - 0 29"]

### 1.?

After the exchange of pawns on g6, he has to reckon with h6-h5-h4. He would like to prevent this by putting his queen on h5, but the lack of defense for the g3-bishop allows his opponent to deliver the blow ...Nxe5!. White should make the prophylactic move 29.Kh2!, having in mind the variation 29...g5 30.hg Nxg6 (30...h5 31.Bh4 Nxg6 32.Bg5) 31.Qh5!.

### 29.Rf1?! g5 30.hg Nxg6

The situation has changed sharply. White's active possibilities are now limited, while his opponent intends to move his h-pawn forward, and later he'll also think about preparing the advance b5-b4. White's position remains defensible, but it's indisputable that with this development of events Black has complete possession of the initiative. That's why I think that Inarkiev was completely right in trying to halt what was an unfavorably developing situation for him with a positional piece sacrifice for two pawns.

### 31.Bxf5! ef 32.Nxf5 Ka6 33.Qf3?!

The latest inaccuracy. It was better to play 33.Bh2!?, intending 34.Qh5, and if 33...h5, then 34.Ne3 with a subsequent f4-f5.

### 33...h5!?

Nikita Vitiugov saw the variation 33...Rf8 34.Ne3 Ne7 35.f5 (a blockade on the f5-square can't be allowed) 35...Nxf5 36.Nxf5 Rxf5 37.Qxf5 Qxg3 38.Qf3 with approximately equal chances, but he decided that he had a right to fight for an advantage.

### 34.Ne3 h4 35.Bh2 h3 36.g4 Nh4 37.Qg3 Rb7! 38.f5 Ng2





[FEN"6qr/1r6/kn6/pp1pPP2/b1pP2P1/  
P1P1N1Qp/R1P3nB/5RK1 w - - 0 39"]

1.?

39.g5?

The decisive mistake, again associated with inattention to his opponent's resources: Inarkiev overlooked Black's lethal forty-first move. Meanwhile, after 39.Nxg2 hg 40.Rf2 (on 40.Kxg2? both 40...Rbh7 41.Bg1 Qg5++ and 40...Rg7!? 41.Rf4 Rgh7 42.Bg1 Qg5++ are very strong) 40...Rbh7 41.Rxg2 Rh3 42.Qf4, White preserved his main trump card: the passed pawns on the kingside, and with them the hope for a favorable outcome to the battle.

39...Rh5 40.g6 Nxe3 41.Qxe3 Rf7!

One of the pawns is lost and the game quickly ends.

42.f6 Qxg6+ 43.Bg3 h2+ 44.Kh1 Rh3 45.Rf3 Bxc2 0-1

Anand - Ninov

World Junior Championship, Baguio, 1987



[FEN"r1bqnrk1/5ppp/p1npp3/6P1/lp2PP2/  
1NNBQ3/PPP4P/2KR3R w - - 0 15"]

1.?

Choosing a square for the knight's retreat, White solves a purely positional problem, which, however, is also associated with the evaluation of his opponent's counterplay. By playing 15.Ne2 he plans to develop a pawn attack on the kingside, but Black still has a similar opportunity on the queenside. The alternative is a blockade of the enemy pawns with the move 15.Na4 with a transfer of the main battle to the center and to the queenside. What decision would you have made in the young Indian player's place?

Viswanathan Anand saw that after 15.Na4! Rb8 (otherwise the knight goes to b6) 16.e5! conquers the important c5-square and obtains an advantage, but he preferred a sharper route.

15.Ne2 a5 16.Nbd4 Nxd4 17.Nxd4

In the game White's strategy was justified: there followed 17...Qb6?! 18.e5! +/- Bb7 19.Rhf1 de (19...a4 20.f5!) 20.fe Rd8? (the more stubborn 20...g6

led to a difficult endgame: 21.Nf5 Qxe3+ 22.Nxe3+/-) **21.Bxh7+! Kxh7 22.g6 + Kg8 23.Qh3 Nf6 24.ef fg 25.fg 1-0**

With opposite-side castling every tempo counts, and you have to act with the utmost energy, not letting material sacrifices stop you. Black obviously rejected the principled 17...a4! because of 18.Nc6 Qc7 19.Nxb4 a3 (otherwise 20.a3 with a subsequent Kb1 and c3) 20.b3.



[FEN"r1b1nrk1/2q2ppp/3pp3/6P1/1N2PP2/pP1BQ3/P1P4P/2KR3R b - - 0 20"]

**1...?**

White intends Qd4. Anand gives two short variations:

20...Qc3 21.Qe1! Qb2+ 22.Kd2 *is clearly in White's favor – to Black's surprise he has little compensation for the pawn.*

20...Rb8 21.Na6 Bxa6 22.Bxa6 with a subsequent Bc4 – *White's position on the queenside is solid, as the poorly-positioned knight on e8 is unable to chase the white bishop away.*

Alas, Anand was inattentive towards his opponent's resources. The second variation contains a serious mistake: on 21.Na6? follows 21...Qb6!! 22.Qxb6 Rxb6, and the knight is lost. That's why White has to play 21.Qd2 Qc5 22.Na6 Bxa6 23.Bxa6 Nc7 with a subsequent 24...d5 – Black gets good compensation for the pawn. Then Anand would probably have regretted rejecting the accurate 15.Na4!

**Khodos – Sergievsky**  
Voronezh, 1959



[FEN"2r1r1n1/6kp/p1pQ2p1/qpn1p3/2P1P3/2N2PP1/PP2N3/2KR3R b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

A choice obviously has to be made between 19...bc and 19...b4.

The simple move 19...bc!, creating the extremely unpleasant threat of a knight check on d3, secured Black a winning position. The desperate 20.Nf4 (threatening 21.Rxh7+) 20...ef 21.Qd4+ doesn't work because of 21...Nf6! 22.Rxh7+ (22.e5 Rxe5!) 22...Kxh7 23.Qxf6 Nd3+ 24.Kb1 Qh5-+. And 20.Nd4 is refuted in exactly the same way.



Vladimir Sergievsky chose **19...b4?** counting on 20.Nb1? Rcd8! 21.Qxc6 Re6+. His choice was unsuccessful at least because the combination examined above, 20.Nf4!?, which didn't work with a black pawn on c4, here was enough for a draw. True, it was practically impossible to calculate and evaluate the arising complications precisely at the board.

20...ef (20...Nf6? 21.Rxh7+!!) 21.Qd4+ Kf8 (21...Nf6? 22.Rxh7+ Kxh7 23.Qxf6 Nd3+! 24.Kc2! Qh5 25.Rxd3+/- no longer works) 22.Rxh7 Re7 23.Rxe7 (on 23.Rh8?! the strong reply 23...Nd7! can be found) 23...Nxe7 24.Qf6 + Ke8



[FEN"2r1k3/4n3/p1p2Qp1/q1n5/1pP1Pp2/2N2PP1/PP6/2KR4 w - - 0 25"]

1.?

The direct 25.Qh8+?! Kf7 26.Qh7+ Kf8 doesn't give perpetual check and allows his opponent to repel the attack: 27.Qh8+ Ng8 28.Rd6! Nd3+! 29.Rxd3 (otherwise 29...Qe5) 29...bc or 27.Rd6 Nd3+! 28.Kb1 Qe5 29.Rxd3 bc-/ +.

25.e5! bc 26.Qh8+ Kf7 27.Qf6+ Kg8 28.Rh1 (if Black had deflected the rook with a check from d3 on the twenty-fifth move, then the e6-square would now be accessible to the queen) 28...Nd3+ 29.Kb1 c2+! 30.Kxc2 Nb4+ 31.Kc1! Nxa2+ 32.Kb1 Nc3+ 33.Kc2 Qa4+ (another small problem related to attention to the opponent's resources: 34.Kxc3? Nd5+! loses) 34.Kd3! Rd8+ 35.Kxc3 Qa5+ is much stronger, with perpetual check.

But it's not only about this: having advanced his pawn to b4, Black didn't foresee his opponent's brilliant reply, which allowed him to create a decisive attack.

**20.Na4!! Nxa4 21.Qd7+ Ne7 22.Qe6** (threatening 23.Rxh7+) **22...h5**



[FEN"2r1r3/4n1k1/p1p1Q1p1/q3p2p/npP1P3/5PP1/PP2N3/2KR3R w - h6 0 23"]

1.?

And here German Khodos missed the opportunity to complete his attack impressively by means of 23.Rxh5!! gh 24.Rd6! with the deadly threat of 25.Qh6+ Kg8 26.Qg5+.

**23.g4?! Nd5?!**

Black couldn't allow the capture of the pawn on h5, creating the threat of h5-h6+: 23...Nxb2? 24.gh or 23...Qc7? 24.gh! is lost (but not 24.Rd7? Nc5!+-). However, 23...Nc5! 24.Qxe5+ was significantly stronger than the move in the game, and now not 24...Kg8? 25.Kb1 Nd5 (25...b3 26.a3 Nf5!? 27.Qf6 Ng7 28.gh!+-) 26.Qg5+-, but 24...Kf7!, leaving the g6-pawn defended by the king. 25.Kb1 Nd5! 26.Qg3 b3 27.a3 h4! 28.Rxh4 Nf6 with the idea of 29...Rcd8 is no longer dangerous; 25.Qf4+ Kg8 leads to an unclear and, evidently, approximately equal position.

**24.Qd7+**



[FEN"2r1r3/3Q2k1/p1p3p1/q2np2p/npP1P1P1/5P2/PP2N3/2KR3R b - - 0 24"]

**1...?**

The primitive 24...Ne7? gave White a very important tempo to continue his attack, and the game quickly ended.

**25.gh Qc5**

Neither 25...Rcd8 26.Qe6 Rxd1+ 27.Rxd1+- nor 25...Nc5!? 26.Qd6 g5 27.Ng3! Kf7 28.Nf5+- saved him.

**26.Qe6!** (threatening 27.h6+) **26...Ng8 27.Rd7+ Re7 28.Rxe7+ Qxe7 29.Qxc8 Qg5+ 30.f4 Qg2 31.Rg1 1-0**

Let's go back to the position in the last diagram. As indicated by Vadim Zviagintsev, Black's best practical chance was to switch to a counterattack, for the sake of which he shouldn't have minded even sacrificing a rook.

24...Re7!! 25.Qxc8 (25.Rxd5 Rxd7 26.Rxa5 Nxb2! 27.Kxb2 Rd2+ 28.Kb3 Rxe2 29.gh c5! leads to a playable rook ending for Black) 25...b3!



[FEN"2Q5/4r1k1/p1p3p1/q2np2p/n1P1P1P1/1p3P2/PP2N3/2KR3R w - - 0 26"]

**B?**

White has a big choice, the variations that arise are fairly complicated and it doesn't take long to get lost in them. White would be lost with 26.ed? ba 27.Kc2 Qb4 28.Qxc6 Qxb2+ 29.Kd3 Qa3+ 30.Kd2 e4! 31.fe Nc5+- and 26.a3?! Qc5 27.Kb1 Nxb2!? (27...Ndb6 or 27...Qf2 are also possible) 28.Kxb2 Nb6. Not bad is 26.ab!? Nab6 27.Qb8!, although the position that arises doesn't

look safe for White and so going into it isn't easy. The most energetic and strong is 26.Rxh5!! gh 27.gh Nf6 (27...Qc5 28.ab+-) 28.Qf5 Rf7 29.ab Nc5 30. Kc2, retaining excellent winning chances.

I suggest that you solve a new test to train your ability to pay attention to your opponent's resources.

## Test One

### 1. Nunn - Portisch

Reykjavik, 1988



[FEN"7k/2pr1p1p/p1pq1p1Q/4pP2/1nP5/1P6/P5PP/2B1R1K1 b - - 0 30"]

1...?

### 2. Lputian – Petursson

World Team Championship, Lucerne, 1993



[FEN"5rk1/1b2qppp/pp2p3/4n3/1P1NP3/P1r2P2/3R1QPP/R4BK1 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

### 3. Junge – Ahrens

Lübeck, 1939



[FEN"4r1k1/1b1nq2p/2ppp2Q/6pP/2P1P1B1/2N5/PP4P1/2K2R2 b - - 0 20"]

1...?

#### 4. Tseshkovsky - Miles

Palma de Mallorca, 1989



[FEN"q2b3k/6pp/2bp4/1p1Np3/1P1r2P1/  
1P2N2P/2Q2P2/3R2K1 w - - 0 33"]

1.?

#### 5. Fernandez – Marino

Spanish Championship, Zamora, 1996



[FEN"2r2rk1/pp2bPPP/q7/3pN3/3P4/  
1R3Q2/PP3PPP/R5K1 b - - 0 19"]

1...?

#### 6. Adams – Anand

Hilversum, 1993



[FEN"2rq1rk1/5ppp/p3p2b/1p1nP3/1P1N3P/  
P2P2P1/1B3Q1K/4RR2 w - - 0 26"]

1.?

#### Solutions

##### 1. Nunn – Portisch

Black has to parry the threat Re1-e4-h4. In the game he ignored it. To be more precise, not the threat itself, but a small combination associated with it.

31...c5?? 32.Re4! Rg8



[FEN"6rk/2p2p1p/p2q1p1Q/2p1pP2/1nP1R3/1P5P/P5P1/2B3K1 w - - 0 33"]

1.?

33.Qxh7+! 1-0, Black resigned because of 33...Kxh7 34.Rh4+ Kg7 35.Bh6+ Kh7 36.Bf8#.

31...Nd3? 32.Re4! Nf4 (32...Nxc1 33.Rh4 Ne2+ 34.Kf2 Kg8 35.Rg4+) 33.Rxf4! ef 34.Bb2+- didn't help.

Just one defense is left: **31...Rg8! 32.Re4 Rg7!**, leading to an unclear position. On 33.Bd2 (with the idea of Be1-h4) it's possible to reply 33...Nd3 or 33...Nc2.

## 2. Lputian – Petursson

The c3-rook is quite dangerous. It was worth exchanging it off with the move **21.Rc2!**, preserving approximate equality.

But forcing the rook out doesn't work: on 21.Ne2? a combination followed on the theme of a double attack 21...Rxf3! (if 22.gf, then 22...Qg5+ 23.Ng3 Qxd2!). White replied 22.Qxb6.



[FEN"5rk1/1b2qppp/pQ2p3/4n3/1P2P3/P4r2/3RN1PP/R4BK1 b - - 0 22"]

22...Bxe4? doesn't work because of the reciprocal double attack 23.Qd4! Sufficient for a win is 22...Nc4!?, but the ingenious path that Petursson chose is also good.

22...Qg5!? 23.Qxb7 Rh3!! 24.Qa7 Nf3+ 25.Kf2 Nxd2 0-1

## 3. Junge – Ahrens

White has no direct threats, and so, according to the computer, Black has several almost equally good possibilities. Human logic differs from computer logic: we rarely pay attention to "abstract" moves, we're usually trying to carry out some kind of idea. From that point of view **20...Bc8!**=/+ seems logical, preparing for the knight to come out to the center 21...Ne5.

An immediate 20...Ne5? is refuted by 21.Bxe6+! (21...Qxe6 22.Rf8+!). The game ended like this: 21...Kh8 22.Bf5 (22.Rf6!?, 22.c5!? dc 23.Rf5) 22...Rf8 (22...Nxc4? 23.Bg6+-) 23.Rd1 Rxf5? (23...Nxc4 24.Bxh7 Qg7 25.Qxg7+

Kxg7 is more stubborn) 24.ef 1-0

The passive 20...Nf8? 21.e5! (21.Rf6!?) 21...d5 (21...de 22.Ne4) 22.Rf6 Qg7 23.Qxg7+ Kxg7 24.h6+ Kg8 25.Na4+- is also unsatisfactory.

#### 4. Tseshkovsky – Miles

White's position is strategically concerning. He has to choose and accurately calculate the best way of creating counterplay.

**33.Rxd4! ed 34.Qf5!** was essential.



[FEN"q2b3k/6pp/2bp4/1p1N1Q2/  
1P1p2P1/1P2N2P/5P2/6K1 b - - 0 34"]

On 34...Bh4, as indicated by Anthony Miles, there follows 35.Nc7! with an unclear position. In the event of 34...h6!? 35.Qf8+ Kh7 36.Qf5+ Kg8 37.Qe6+ Kh8 the checks end, but White maintains the tension by means of 38.Nf4! Bg5 (38...Be4 39.f3!) 39.Ng6+ Kh7 40.Qf7! (but not 40.Nf1? Bh1! 41.Nf8+ Qxf8 42.Kxh1 Qf3+ 43.Kg1 d3) 40...Be4! 41.Nf8+ Kh8 42.Nf1 d3 43.f3! d2 44.Ne6! Bf6 45.Nxd2 unclear.

Another tactical idea is 33.Rc1? Bxd5 34.Qc8, which Vitaly Tseshkovsky implemented in the game, and it turned out to be a mistake.



[FEN"q1Qb3k/6pp/3p4/1p1bp3/1P1r2P1/  
1P2N2P/5P2/2R3K1 b - - 0 34"]

**1...?**

Both 35.Nxd5 and 35.Qxa8 Bxa8 36.Rc8 are threatened. However, his opponent finds an elegant retort.

34...Rc4!! 35.Rxc4 bc 36.Qd7 Qa1+ 37.Nf1 cb 38.Qxd6 Bg8 0-1

#### 5. Fernandez – Marino

The typical tactical blow on the theme of deflection 19...Qxa2?? was refuted by 20.Qd1! Black had to resign immediately.

It made sense to exchange off the strong e5-knight by playing **19...Bd6!** If 20.Qxd5, then 20...Qxa2! now works.

#### 6. Adams – Anand



According to Anand, his opponent should have chosen **26.Nb3!** "White has a good outpost on c5, and this circumstance compensates for Black's theoretical structural advantage; the position remains approximately equal."

An attempt to exchange off the "bad" bishop by means of 26.Bc1? is a mistake because of 26...Rxc1! 27.Rxc1 Ne3-/+.



[FEN"3q1rk1/5ppp/p3p2b/1p2P3/1P1N3P/P2Pn1P1/5Q1K/2R2R2 w - - 0 28"]

1.?

Now White's best chance was 28.Nc6! Although here, too, a clear advantage remained on the side of Black, who could choose both 28...Qxd3 29.Qf3! (29. Qxf7+? Rxf7 30.Ne7+ Kf8! doesn't work) 29...Qd2+ (it's weaker to transfer to an endgame a pawn up 29...Nxf1+ 30.Rxf1 Qxf3 31.Rxf3=+/+) 30.Kh3 Nxf1 31.Rxf1-/+, and 28...Ng4+!? 29.Kg2! Qxd3 30.Qf3 Qf2+ 31.Kh3 Nh2-/+.

Adams's choice 28.Kh3? Nxf1! (of course, not 28...Qxd4?? 29.Qxf7+!) 29. Rxf1 Qd5!-+ 30.g4 g6 31.Re1 Rc8 32.Nf3 Rc3 33.g5 Bf8, loses without a struggle, and White soon resigned.

It's probably also worth showing how another unsuccessful try in the initial position is refuted: on 26.Re4? Black replies 26...f5! 27.Re2 (27.Nxe6 fe-+; 27.ef Nxf6-+) 27...Qd7 with a subsequent 28...f4.

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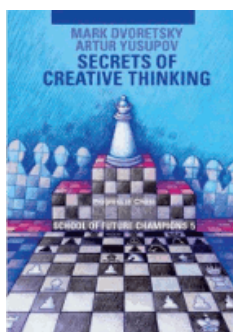
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## Pay Attention to your Opponent's Resources Part Three

The final part of the series consists of two tests on the given theme: the first one is a little simpler, and the second one is more complicated.

### Test One

**1. Forintos - Vukic**  
Zemun, 1980



[FEN "r5k1/1p3p2/2bq2pb/p1Rp1n1p/P5n1/1P2BP1/3B2QP/3NR2K w - - 0 34"]

1.?

**2. Wedberg – Kozul**  
Olympiad, Novi Sad, 1990



[FEN "2r2rk1/1q2bppp/pB2p3/n3P1P1/Np3P2/1p6/P1P1Q2P/1K1R3R w - - 0 23"]

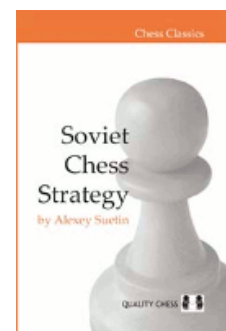
1.?

**3. E. Pogosyants**  
1977 (fragment from a study)

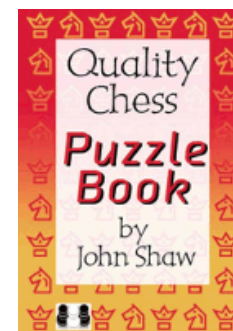
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[FEN"8/4P3/6r1/4n3/2B5/5K2/3N4/6k1 w - - 0 4"]

1.?

#### 4. Dolmatov – Podgaets

Soviet Championship, Kharkov, 1985 (variation from the game)

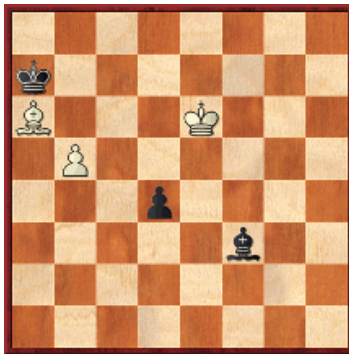


[FEN"6k1/pb3ppp/1p2nq2/2r5/1Q1p4/P1nBPN2/2R2PPP/5RK1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

#### 5. G. Kasparyan

1963 (fragment from a study)



[FEN"8/k7/B3K3/1P6/3p4/5b2/8/8 w - - 0 4"]

1.?

#### 6. Smyslov – Botvinnik

World Championship match (20), Moscow, 1957



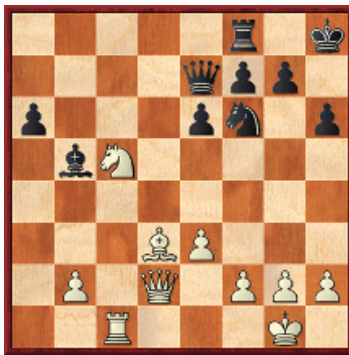
[FEN"8/p2r2pp/2nBk3/1Rp5/2Pp4/  
P2P3P/5KP1/8 w - - 0 33"]

1.?

## Test Two

### 7. Kasimdzhanov – Stellwagen

Bundesliga, Solingen, 2008



[FEN"5r1k/4qpp1/p3pn1p/1bN5/8/  
3BP3/1P1Q1PPP/2R3K1 w - - 0 26"]

1.? Evaluate 26.Nxa6.

### 8. Petrosian – Spassky

World Championship match (10), Moscow, 1966

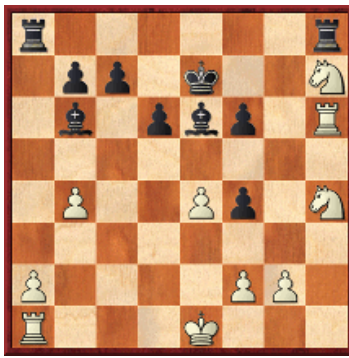


[FEN"r1bq1rk1/7p/p2p4/nppPn3/2P2P2/  
1P6/PQ1NB2P/R2N1RK1 b - - 0 20"]

1...?

### 9. Van der Wiel – Van der Sterren

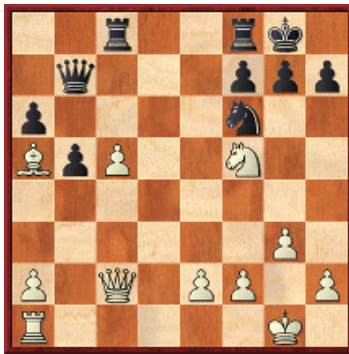
Dutch Championship, 1986



[FEN"r6r/1pp1k2N/1b1pbp1R/8/  
1P2Pp1N/8/P4PP1/R3K3 b Q - 0 26"]

1...?

**10. Suba – Morovic**  
Olympiad, Dubai, 1986



[FEN"2r2rk1/1q3ppp/p4n2/BpP2N2/8/  
6P1/P1Q1PP1P/R5K1 b - - 0 27"]

1...?

**11. Glek – Averkin**  
Minsk, 1983



[FEN"r2r2k1/1p3ppp/q4b2/p1P5/1P1pn3/  
P2R2B1/2Q1NPPP/3R2K1 w - - 0 23"]

1.? Is 23.Nd4 possible?

**12. Van der Sterren – Glek**  
Germany, 1994



[FEN"r3r1k1/p1p2pbp/1qpp1np1/8/2P1PP2/1PN2Q2/P2B2PP/R4R1K b - - 0 17"]

1...?

## Solutions

### 1. Forintos – Vukic

In reply to any rook retreat follows 34...Ne5! with an exchange of the important f3 bishop, after which the white king comes under a dangerous attack.

He should have returned the exchange **34.Rxd5! Bxd5 35.Bxd5**. For example, 35...Rd8 36.e4 Bxd2 37.Qxd2 Ne7 38.Nc3 with approximately equal chances.

In the game there was 34.Rc2? (34.Rxa5? Rxa5 35.Bxa5 Ne5 or 35...Ngxe3 are even worse) 34...Ne5 (34...Re8!?) 35.Nf2 Re8 36.Kg1 Re6 37.Rb2?! Nxf3 + 38.Qxf3 Nxe3-+ 39.Rc1 (39.Bxe3 d4) 39...Rf6 40.Qh1 h4 (40...Rxf2 41. Kxf2 Qf6+ is also possible) 41.Rxc6 bc 42.g4 Qf4 43.Bxe3 (43...Qg4+! was threatened) 43...Qxe3 0-1

### 2. Wedberg – Kozul

Which pawn to take with on b3? The solution isn't based on positional considerations, but purely tactical ones.

23.ab? is a mistake in connection with a small combination: 23...Nc4! 24.bc Qc6=+.



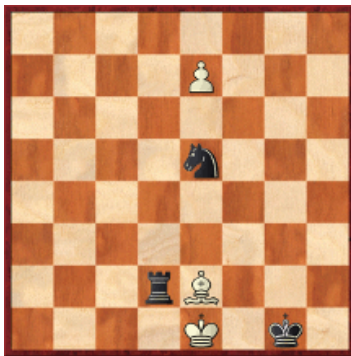
[FEN"2r2rk1/4bPPP/pBq1p3/4P1P1/NpP2P2/8/2P1Q2P/1K1R3R w - - 0 25"]

"Mistakes never come singly!" By continuing 25.Qd3 Qxa4 26.Qd7 Qc6 (of course, not 26...Rc6? 27.Rd3!, and Black's pieces are completely pinned down) 27.Qxc6 Rxc6 28.Rd7!, Tom Wedberg would probably have taken the ending that arose to a draw. In the game, though, there followed 25.Nb2? Qxb6 26.Rd7 (26.Rd3!? Rfd8-/+ ) 26...Bc5 27.Rhd1 (27.Qd3 Qc6 28.Rd1 a5) 27...b3! 28.cb Qxb3 with an overwhelming advantage for Black.

With **23.cb!** the combination 23...Nc4? 24.bc Qc6 didn't work because of 25. Qc2. On 23...Nc6 the reply 24.Qe4! was unpleasant. It would have been necessary to play 23...Bd8 24.Bc5!? Re8+/-.

### 3. E. Pogosyants

Clearly unsuitable are 1.Ke3? (the bishop will be captured with check), and 1.Ke4? Nxc4 2.e8Q? Nd6+. And 1.Ke2? looks tempting: as on 1...Rg2+ 2.Ke1 Rxd2! (threatening 3...Nf3#) there's the strong retort 3.Be2!



[FEN"8/4P3/8/4n3/8/8/3rB3/4K1k1 b - - 0 6"]

1...?

But that's just a false trail: Black finds a beautiful way to save himself 3...Rd5! 4.e8Q Nf3+! 5.Bxf3 Re5+! 6.Qxe5 stalemate.

You have to play **1.Kf4!**, without being put off by the fact that Black manages to destroy the passed pawn by means of **1...Re6! 2.Bxe6 Ng6+**. After **3.Kg3! Nxe7 4.Bh3!**, mate is unavoidable. By the way, 4.Nf3+ Kh1 5.Bh3 is less accurate because of 5...Nf5+! 6.Kf2 Ne3. Then again, according to an endgame database, White also wins here (mate in forty moves!).

### 4. Dolmatov – Podgaets

22.ed? loses because of 22...Qxf3!! (but not 22...Bxf3? 23.dc+-), and that means that **22.Nxd4!** is forced. White shouldn't be disturbed by the blow **22...Bxg2!**, for one thing because he doesn't have anything better anyway. He just has to accurately calculate the variations that arise.

23.Kxg2? Nxd4 is bad, and 23.Nxe6?! fe 24.Rfc1 Bh3 25.f4 allows Black to give perpetual check. On the other hand, **23.Rxc3** is very strong – here his opponent can't find sufficient counterplay and White's material superiority decides matters.



[FEN"6k1/p4ppp/1p2nq2/2r5/1Q1N4/PIRBP3/5PbP/5RK1 b - - 0 23"]

23...Qg5 24.f4+-

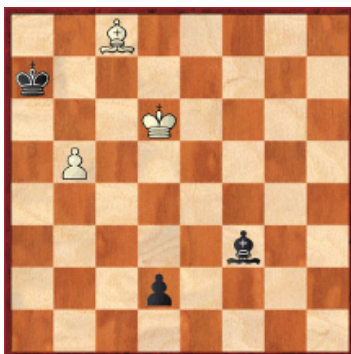
23...a5 24.Qxb6 Rxc3 25.Nxe6 fe 26.Qb8+ Kf7 27.Bb5!+-

23...Bh3!? 24.Rxc5 Nxc5 25.Kh1! Bxf1 (in the event of 25...Nxd3 the double attack 26.Qb5! is decisive; on 25...Qg5 it's possible to reply 26.Rg1 Qd5+ 27.f3 Nxd3 28.Qd2+/-, but it's better to eat the pawn first: 26.Bxh7+! Kxh7 27.Rg1+-) 26.Qb5! (a useful *zwischenzug* - 26.Bxf1 Qxf2 27.Qb5 Qxe3 is weaker) 26...g6 27.Bxf1 Qxf2 28.Qe8+ (28.Qe2+-) 28...Kg7 29.Qe5+ Kg8 30.Qf4+-

## 5. G. Kasparyan

How to stop the black pawn? The precise move order is essential. The move 1. Kd6? that suggests itself is refuted by means of 1...Bb7!

**1.Bc8! d3** (1...Bg4+ 2.Ke5=) **2.Kd6! d2** (2...Kb6 3.Bf5 d2 4.Bc2 Kxb5 5.Ke5=)



[FEN"2B5/k7/3K4/1P6/8/5b2/3p4/8 w - - 0 6"]

1.?

**3.Kc7! d1Q 4.b6+ Ka8 5.Bb7+! Bxb7** stalemate.

## 6. Smyslov – Botvinnik

Here it's important not to get greedy. In the event of 33.Bxc5? Black saves himself by pinning his opponent's bishop: 33...Rf7+ 34.Ke2 Rf5 (threatening 35...a6) 35.Bb4 Rxb5 36.cb Nxb4 37.ab Kf5(e5) =.

Vasily Smyslov chose **33.Bh2! Rf7+ 34.Ke2**, and 34...Rf5 35.g4 Rg5 36.Bf4 Rg6 37.Rxc5 is bad. From this variation it's clear why the bishop retreated specifically to h2, and not to g3.

The game ended as follows: 34...Re7 35.Rxc5 Kd7+ 36.Kd2 Re6 37.Rg5 g6 38.Rd5+ Kc8 39.Bg1 Rf6 40.Bxd4 Nxd4 41.Rxd4 Rf2+ 42.Kc3 1-0

## 7. Kasimdzhanov – Stellwagen

In the game 26.Bxb5= was played, and a draw was agreed.

Rustam Kasimdzhanov rejected the alluring attempt to win the a6-pawn, finding the following variation.

**26.Nxa6? Rd8** (26...Qd6? 27.Qb4+/- is a mistake) **27.Qb4 Qxb4 28.Nxb4 Bxd3 29.Rd1**



[FEN"3r3k/5pp1/4pn1p/8/1N6/3bP3/1P3PPP/3R2K1 b - - 0 29"]

1...?

**29...Nd5!!** (it's very easy to overlook this kind of move) 30.Rxd3 (30.Nxd3 Nb4+ ) **30...Rc8!** (but not the apparently equivalent 30...Ra8? because of 31.



Ra3) **31.Na2 Nb4! 32.Rc3 Rd8-+.**

Instead of 27.Qb4?! the move 27.Nc5 or 27.Nb4 was better, but here, too, the advantage remains on Black's side.

27.Nc5 Bxd3 28.Nxd3 Qd6 29.Rd1



[FEN"3r3k/5pp1/3qpn1p/8/8/3NP3/1P1Q1PPP/3R2K1 b - - 0 29"]

**1...?**

An attempt to win a pinned piece by means of 29...Ne4?! 30.Qc2 Nc5 doesn't achieve its aim: 31.Kf1! Nxd3 32.Ke2 (White in turn exploits the pin) 31... Qxh2 33.Rxd3 Rxd3 34.Qxd3 Qxg2 35.Qc4! and 36.b4 with a very likely draw. And if 29...Ng4 30.f4 Qb6, then 31.Re1 Qb5 32.Qe2=+. Significantly stronger is 29...e5! 30.f3 (the only move) 30...e4 31.fe Ng4 32.g3 Ne5 33. Nxe5 Qxd2 34.Rxd2 Rxd2 35.Nxf7+ Kg8 36.Ne5 Rxb2, and Black retains excellent winning chances.

27.Nb4! (the best defense) 27...Qd6 (27...Bxd3? 28.Nc6)



[FEN"3r3k/5pp1/3qpn1p/1b6/1N6/3BP3/1P1Q1PPP/2R3K1 w - - 0 28"]

**1.?**

Again White, although losing the pinned piece, immediately wins it back by pinning the enemy bishop: 28.Qe1! (but not 28.Rd1? Ng4 29.f4 Nxe3 30. Qxe3 Qxb4-+) 28...Bxd3 29.Rd1 Ng4 30.f4 Qb6 31.Rxd3 Rxd3 32.Nxd3 Nxe3 33.Qf2=+.

## 8. Petrosian - Spassky

He should have taken the f4-pawn immediately: **20...Rxf4!**. For example, 21. Rxf4 Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Qxf4 or 21.Ne3 Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Rxf1+. As subsequent analysis showed, the chances remained approximately equal.

Boris Spassky was lured by the *zwischenzug* 20...Bh3?, underestimating the positional exchange sacrifice his opponent had prepared.

21.Ne3! (21.Rf2? Rxf4) 21...Bxf1?

Consistent, but bad. Then again, in the variation 21...Rxf4 22.Rxf4 Qg5+ 23.

Rg4! Nxg4 24.Nxg4 Bxg4 25.Bxg4 Qxg4+ 26.Kh1 Qd4! 27.Rg1+ Kh8 28. Qxd4+ cd, White also retained the advantage.



[FEN"r6k/7p/p2p4/np1P4/2Pp4/1P6/P2N3P/6RK w - - 0 29"]

1.?

As Kasparov pointed out, the move 29.Rg4 recommended by Boleslavsky allows Black to save himself by means of 29...bc 30.bc Re8! 31.Rxd4 Re1+ 32.Kg2 Rd1! 33.Kf3 Nxc4 34.Rxc4 Rxd2. Significantly stronger, according to Kasparov, is 29.Ne4! Nb7 30.cb! ab 31.Rd1 Rxa2 32.Rxd4+/-.

22.Rxf1 Ng6 23.Bg4!



[FEN"r2q1rk1/7p/p2p2n1/nppP4/2P2PB1/1P2N3/PQ1N3P/5RK1 b - - 0 23"]

White's achievements are obvious. I'll show you how the world champion finished the game.

23...Nxf4?! (23...Qf6 24.Be6+ Kh8 25.Qxf6+ Rxf6 26.f5 Ne5 27.Ne4+-) 24. Rxf4! Rxf4 25.Be6+ Rf7 26.Ne4! Qh4 27.Nxd6 Qg5+ 28.Kh1 Ra7 29.Bxf7+ Rxf7 30.Qh8+! 1-0

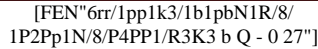
## 9. Van der Wiel – Van der Sterren

Paul Van der Sterren repelled the threat of 27.Ng6+ with the primitive 26... Bf7?. After 27.Nf5+ he didn't want to let his king get checked again with 27... Kd7!?, although 28.Nxf6+?! Ke6 was playable for him (28.a4 is stronger with the advantage). The move chosen by Black, 27...Kd8? allowed his opponent to obtain a winning position with the tactical blow 28.Ng5!. There followed 28...fg (28...Rxb6 29.Nxf7+) 29.Rxb8+ Be8 30.Ng7 Kd7 31.Nxe8 Rxe8 32. Rxe8 Kxe8 33.Ke2, and White soon made the most of being the exchange up.

A positional exchange sacrifice secured excellent play for Black 26...Bd4!? 27.0-0-0! Be5 28.Ng6+ Kf7 29.Nxb8+ Rxb8. But before going into this kind of position it is worth looking to see if there is anything stronger.

**26...Rag8!** suggested itself, threatening 27...Rg7. Hopeless is 27.Ng6+ Rxg6 28.Rxg6 Rxb7. Van der Sterren didn't play like that, obviously, because of a small combination: **27.Nxf6**.





In the variation 27...Rxb6? 28.Nxg8+ Bxg8 29.Nf5+ and 30.Nxb6 White wins. However, the ingenious resource 27...Rxb2!! can be found, completely changing the evaluation of the position.

Only 28.Rxh8 remains, but after 28...Rg1+ 29.Kd2 Rxa1 30.Nh5!? Rxa2+ Black retains excellent winning chances.

With a modest bishop retreat **23...Be7!** Black's position wasn't worse. He intends 24...c4 or 24...Rfe8; in the variation 24.Nxe7+ Qxe7 25.bc Rxc5 26. Bb4 (26.Qb3?! Rc4!≠/+; 26.Qb2!?) 26...Rxc2 27.Bxe7 Re8 28.Bxf6 gf the pawn weaknesses and the surplus are compensated for by the activeness of the black rook.

[FEN"2r2rk1/1q3ppp/p4n2/BpP2N2/8/6P1/P1Q1PP1P/R5K1 b - - 0 25"]

Now 25...Qd7 26.c6! Rxc6 (26...Qe6!? 27.Rd1 with compensation) 27.Qxc6 Qxf5 28.Qxa6+ /= +/- is the comparatively lesser evil for Black, but he would prefer not to go into that kind of position, of course.

## 11. Glek – Averkina

Taking the d4-pawn looks risky, but it still requires careful calculation: if Black doesn't find a concrete refutation, then he will simply be left a pawn down.

**23.Nxd4? ab 24.ab Bxd4 25.Rxd4 Rxd4 26.Rxd4**



[FEN"r5k1/1p3ppp/q7/2P5/1P1Rn3/6B1/2Q2PPP/6K1 b - - 0 26"]

**1...?**

If 26...Qa1+?, counting on 27.Rd1? Nc3! 28.Rf1 Qxf1+! 29.Kxf1 Ra1+, then 27.Qd1!+/-, and 27...Nc3? doesn't work because of 28.Rd8+! Rxd8 29.Qxa1 +-,

However, an immediate 26...Nc3!! puts White in a desperate situation: as not only 27...Qa1+ is threatened, but also 27...Ne2+ 28.Kf1 Nxd4.

In the game 23.Bc7 (23.Bf4!?) 23...Rdc8 24.Bxa5 was played.



[FEN"r1r3k1/1p3ppp/q4b2/B1P5/1P1pn3/P2R4/2Q1NPPP/3R2K1 b - - 0 24"]

**1...?**

24...Nxc5! 25.bc Qxa5 26.Nxd4 Qxc5=+/-, and the players agreed on a draw, as Black was in time trouble and did not dare to continue the fight.

Orest Averkin could win a piece by 24...b6?!, but avoided the temptation, and rightly so, because the positions that arise after 25.Bxb6! Qxb6 26.cb Rxc2 27.Nxd4 Rc4 (27...Rc3? 28.f3 Rxd3 29.Rxd3+- and 30.Nc6) 28.b7!? or 28.Nb5!?, are extremely dangerous.

## 12. Van der Sterren - Glek

The position remains approximately equal in different continuations; for example, 17...Re7!?. The problem lay in evaluating the different forcing attempts.

So, for example, it was worth noting that 17...Qd4? 18.Rad1 Nxe4?? didn't work because of 19.Be1!+-.

And after **17...Nxe4!? 18.Nxe4**, the move 18...Bxa1? (counting on 19.Rxa1? Qd4-+) is impossible, because of the counter-blow 19.c5!+-. Essential is **18...**

Qd4!



[FEN"r3r1k1/p1p2pbp/2pp2p1/8/2PqNP2/1P3Q2/P2B2PP/R4R1K w - - 0 19"]

Another correct choice had to be made in the event of 19.Rae1. The move 19...f5?! would have been justified with 20.Nxd6 Qxd6=, but 20.Nf6+! and 21.Qxc6 allow White to achieve an advantage, and that means they make the operation that Black undertook unjustifiable. However, by playing 19...d5! 20.cd cd 21.Ng5 Qxd2 22.Rd1 Qe2 (worse is 22...Qa5?! 23.Rxd5 Qxa2 24.f5!) 23.Qxd5 Qe7, Black maintains equality.

An equal position also came about in the game after 19.Nxd6 cd 20.Rad1 Qe4. Now 21.Bc3, 21.Ba5 or 21.f5 aren't bad, but the continuation chosen by White 21.Rde1? Qxf3 22.Rxf3 Rxe1+ 23.Bxe1 Re8 24.Bd2 Re2 25.Rd3 c5! led him into serious difficulties, and in the end to defeat.

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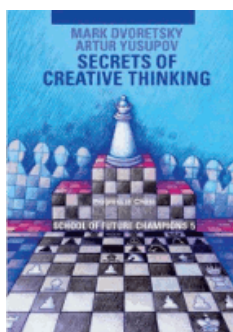
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## The Transit Square

The following game attracted my attention because of its clearly-expressed strategic picture. All of Black's play revolved around just one square on the board, and not even a central one. Our strategy is often based on seizing an important square, but here it only served as a transit square for almost all the black pieces, which occupied it one by one so that they could proceed further or implement a favorable exchange.

**Kovacevic, Vladimir – Ilic, Zoran**

Yugoslavia, 1980

Modern Benoni [A64]

1.d4 c5 2.d5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 ed 5.cd d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.g3 Bg7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 Nbd7 10.Nd2 a6 11.a4 Re8 12.h3 Rb8 13.Nc4 Nb6 (13...Ne5) 14.Ne3 Nbd7 15.Nc4 Nb6 16.Na3 Bd7 17.a5 Nc8 18.Nc4



[FEN "1mqr1k1/1p1b1pbp/p2p1np1/P1pP4/2N5/2N3PP/1P2PPB1/R1BQ1RK1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

The opening variation that has been played, despite White's additional space, doesn't promise him any advantage. True, he has prepared to open the b-file: in the event of b7-b5 an exchange of pawns on b6 with a subsequent Nc4-a5 follows – a knight invasion on c6 will be very unpleasant for Black. An example is the game Kovacevic – Andersson, Titovo Uzice, 1978: 18...Qc7 19.Bd2 b5?! (on 19...Bb5 Kovacevic mentions 20.b3, but after 20...Bxc4! 21.bc b5 22.ab Nxb6 Black has sufficient counterplay) 20.ab Nxb6 21.Na5 Bb5 (21...c4?! 22.Nc6 Ra8 23.e4 – Kovacevic) 22.b3 Ra8 23.Re1 Nfd7 24.Rc1, and the position is in White's favor.

Black's counterplay in this variation is associated with possession of the b5-square. First, it's occupied by the bishop with the aim of exchanging off the formidable enemy knight on c4.

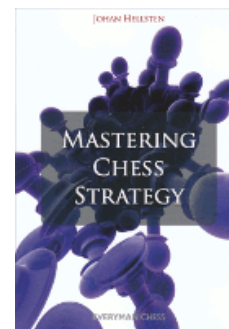
**18...Bd7-b5! 19.Qd1-b3 Bb5xc4 20.Qb3xc4 Nf6-d7 21.Ra1-a3**

White didn't play the best way in the game Liberzon – Yusupov, Lone Pine 1981: 21.Qd3?! Ne5 22.Qc2. Black sent his knight to the transit square b5, and after 22...Na7! 23.Rd1 Nb5 24.Nxb5 ab he obtained better play.

21.Kh2, 21.Ra2, 21.Ne4 has also been tried, and Artur Yusupov's recommendation 21.e4 deserves attention, but White doesn't manage to prove his advantage anywhere.

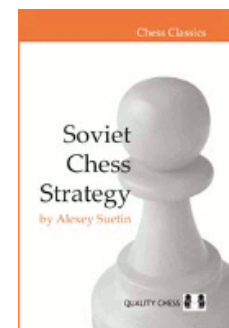
**21...Nd7-e5**

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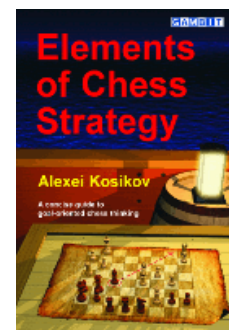
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A knight transfer to f5 is also promising, as tried in the game Rubinetti – Gheorghiu, Buenos Aires 1979: 21...Ne7!? 22.Qa2 Nf5 23.e3 Ne5 24.Rd1 Qc7 25.Ra4 Rec8 26.Kh2 h5, and Black is doing superbly.

## 22.Qc4-a2



[FEN"1rnqr1k1/1p3pbp/p2p2p1/P1pPn3/8/R1N3PP/QP2PPB1/2B2RK1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

## 22...Nc8-a7

The knight goes to the transit square b5. From there it attacks the rook and when necessary will threaten an invasion on d4. White tries to interfere with his opponent's idea by taking control of the b5-square.

## 23.f2-f4 Ne5-d7 24.Qa2-c4 Qd8-c8!

Well played. Having reinforced the a6-pawn with his queen, Black has prepared b7-b5. After opening the b-file, the move Nb5 again becomes possible.

## 25.e2-e4?

A positional mistake: he shouldn't have weakened the central square d4. 25.e3 b5 26.ab Rxb6 27.Ra5 Nb5 28.Bd2 led to an unclear situation.

## 25...b7-b5 26.a5xb6 Rb8xb6 27.Ra4-a5



[FEN"2q1r1k1/n2n1pbp/pr1p2p1/R1pP4/2Q1PP2/2N3PP/1P4B1/2B2RK1 b - - 0 27"]

1...?

## 27...Na7-b5!

All the efforts to prevent a knight invasion on b5 have been in vain: the knight has occupied that square anyway. 28.Nxb5 ab 29.Rxb5? loses because of 29... Qa6.

## 28.Bc1-d2 Nb5-d4

Threatening both 29...Nb3 and 29...Rxb2.

### 29.Nc3-a4

A restrained 29.Ra2 is preferable, intending, Nd1 and Bc3.



[FEN"2q1r1k1/3n1pbp/pr1p2p1/R1pP4/  
N1QnPP2/6PP/1P1B2B1/5RK1 b - - 0 29"]

1...?

### 29...Rb6-b5!

The b5-square has also worked for the rook! 29...Nb3? 30.Nxb6 Nxd2 31. Nxc8 Nxc4 32.Ra4 Nxb2 33.Nxd6 was a blunder, with a winning position for White.

### 30.Bd2-c3 Qc8-b7

30...Ne2+?! 31.Qxe2 Bxc3 32.Rxb5 Bd4+ 33.Kh2 ab 34.Qxb5 didn't work. But now a check on e2 is already threatened.

The computer suggests a different path: 30...Bf6, with the idea of 31...Bd8.

### 31.Rf1-f2



[FEN"4r1k1/1q1n1pbp/p2p2p1/RrpP4/  
N1QnPP2/2B3PP/1P3RB1/6K1 b - - 0 31"]

1...?

How can Black further develop his initiative? An attempt to undermine the center, 31...f5?!, is a mistake because of 32.e5! (32...de?? 33.d6+ and 34. Bxb7). On 31...Nb3?!, there follows 32.Rxb5 Qxb5 33.Bf1!, and White manages to consolidate.

The solution is to exploit the same b5-square for yet another piece.

### 31...Rb5xa5! 32.Bc3xa5 Qb7-b5! 33.Qc4xb5

Forced. But now Black's pawn structure improves, and he achieves decisive superiority.

### 33...a6xb5 34.Na4-b6

If 34.Nc3, then 34...b4 (cutting off the road back for the white bishop) 35.Nd1



Ra8 36.Bc7 Nb5, and the bishop is caught.



[FEN"4r1k1/3n1pbp/1N1p2p1/BppP4/  
3nPP2/6PP/1P3RB1/6K1 b - - 0 34"]

1...?

34...Nd4-b3?!

All that remained was to make another precise move, 34...Nf8!, and White wouldn't have managed to avoid big material losses because of the absurd position of his bishop and knight. There's no satisfactory defense to 35...Rb8 or 35...Nb3 (with the additional threat of Bd4).

35.Ne5xd7 Nb3xa5 36.e4-e5! d6xe5 37.f4xe5

In the case of 37.Nxc5, both 37...e4 (Ilic) 38.Nxe4 Bd4 39.Kf1 Bxf2 40.Nf6+ (40.Kxf2 Rc8) 40...Kf8 41.Nxe8 Bxg3 42.Nc7 b4 and 37...ef 38.Rxf4 Bxb2 39.Rb4 (39.d6!? Ba3! 40.Ne4 Rd8-/+) 39...Nc4 40.Rxb5 Bd4+ 41.Kh2 Re2 are strong.

37...Bg7xe5 38.Nd7xe5 Re8xe5 39.Rf2-f6

A hopeless minor piece ending arose with 39.d6 Re1+ 40.Rf1 (otherwise 40...Rd1) 40...Rxf1+ 41.Bxf1 (41.Kxf1 Kf8) 41...c4.

39...Re5-e2 40.Rf6-a6?!

40.Rb6 b4 41.d6!? (41.Rb5 Nb3 42.Bf1 Rxb2) 41...Rd2 42.Bf1 is more stubborn, but here, too, after 42...Kg7 White's position is difficult.

40...Na5-c4 41.Ra6-c6 Re2xb2 42.Rc6xc5 Kg8-g7 0-1

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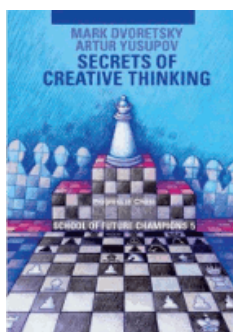
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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## A Poor Queen Position

In all the games I'm offering for your attention this month, the white queen found itself in a vulnerable position soon after the opening. That circumstance influenced the subsequent course of the battle and its outcome in a decisive manner.

**Trois – Polugaevsky**  
Interzonal tournament, Riga, 1979

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.Qa4 c5 6.Bg2 Bb7 7.0-0 cd 8.Nxd4 Bxg2 9.Kxg2 Be7 10.f3 0-0 11.Rd1 Qc8 12.Nc3 a6 13.e4 d6 14.Be3 Qb7



[FEN "m3rk1/1q2bPPP/pp1ppn2/8/Q1PNP3/2N1BPP1/PP4KP/R2R4 w -- 0 15"]

1.?

White will probably need to reinforce the c4-pawn soon with the move b2-b3. But then his queen falls into a difficult position – in connection with the maneuver Nb8-d7-c5. He should have transferred his queen to a more solid position immediately: 15.Qc2! Rc8 16.Qe2, intending Rac1, b2-b3, with approximate equality. This plan can't be refuted with 16...Qc7?! 17.b3 b5? (17...d5? doesn't work either) because of 18.cb! Qxc3 19.Rac1+.

But in the game there followed **15.Rac1?! Rc8! =/+ 16.Qb3 Nbd7 17.Nb1 Nc5 18.Qc2 b5 19.Qe2 bc 20.Rxc4 d5** and Black seized the initiative and went on to win.

**Portisch – Taimanov**  
Leningrad, 1959  
(Notes based on Mark Taimanov's)

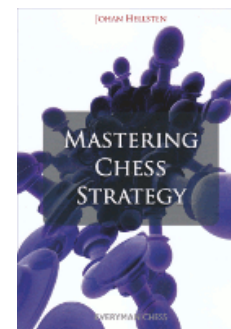
1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 Bb4 3.e4 c5 4.Qg4!?

A roughly equal position arises with 4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 Nge7 6.Nge2 0-0. The Encyclopedia of Chess Openings recommends 4.Nb5 d6 5.a3 Ba5 6.b4 a6 7.ba ab 8.cb Nf6 9.Qc2 (Serper – Rajsikij, Poland, 1991) and with hardly any justification evaluates the outcome of the opening in White's favor – obviously under the influence of the positive result of the game for him.

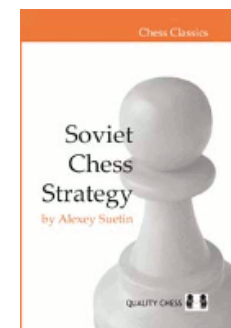
4...Kf8

4...Qf6? wouldn't be good, of course, because of 5.Nb5, and moves like 4...g6 aren't even worth assessing.

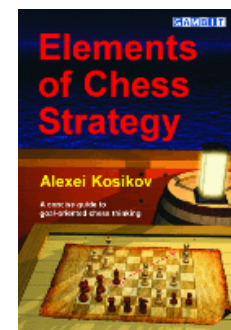
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[FEN"rnbq1knr/pp1p1ppp/4p3/2p5/1bP1P1Q1/2N5/PP1P1PPP/R1B1KBNR w KQ - 0 5"]

### 5.Nf3?!

A natural but unsuccessful move. The white queen will feel uncomfortable on the kingside, and that will become the leitmotif of the entire game. Taimanov recommends 5.Qd1!? ("The Moor has done its job.") 5...Nc6 6.g3 (or after Max Euwe: 6.f4 d6 7.Nf3 Nf6 8.d3 unclear) 6...Nf6 7.Bg2 with a double-edged position. White has lost two tempi on queen moves, but on the other hand the king on f8 doesn't beautify Black's position.

### 5...Nf6 6.Qh4 d6 7.Be2 Nc6 8.0-0 h6! 9.d3



[FEN"r1bq1k1r/pp3pp1/2nppn1p/2p5/1bP1P2Q/2NP1N2/PP2BPPP/R1B2RK1 b - - 0 9"]

### 1...?

Black wants to play g7-g5, but for that he has to defend his rook.

### 9...Rh7!

An apparently unusual but very logical move. 9...Kg8 was less precise – the king isn't positioned as solidly on the g-file as it is on f8.

### 10.Ne1

Otherwise, after g7-g5, Black would have continued Nh5-f4.

### 10...g5 11.Qg3 Nd4 12.Bd1 e5

The position is already in Black's favor. White should have defended accurately with 13.Nc2 or 13.Qe3. Lajos Portisch makes an impatient move, only weakening his position.

### 13.h4?!

Black is stronger on the kingside, so opening lines is favorable to him.



[FEN"r1bq1k2/pp3p1r/3p1n1p/2p1p1p1/  
1bPnP2P/2NP2Q1/PP3PP1/R1BBNRK1 b - h3 0 13"]

**1...?**

**13...Ne6!**

An excellent maneuver: the knight is going to f4. On 14.hg hg 15.Bxg5, there follows 15...Bxc3 16.bc Nxe4! 17.Bxd8 Nxc3 18.fg Nxd8 with a better endgame for Black. 13...Bxc3 14.bc Ne6 was also possible.

**14.Nc2**

14.Nd5 Bxe1 15.Rxe1 Nxd5 16.ed Nf4 isn't much better.

**14...Bxc3**

He's managed to exchange off the bishop, which has been removed for a long time, and what's more, he's done it after the d4-square was used by the black knight.

**15.bc Nf4**

The storm clouds over the white king's position are thickening. 16...Rg7 is threatened, with an inevitable opening of the g-file. That's also the payback for the rash move 13.h4.

In the event of 16.hg hg 17.Qxg5, Black has a choice between winning the queen 17...Nh3+ 18.gh Rg7 (Taimanov), which, in my view, isn't completely convincing because of 19.f4!, and the less impressive, but then again probably stronger 17...Nxd3!?.

**16.d4?!**

That's already desperation!

**16...Rg7**

Of course, not 16...Nxe4 because of 17.Qe3. Black's position is so strong that deviating from the course he's taken would be unforgivable.

**17.Qh2**

17.Bxf4 gf 18.Qd3 is more stubborn.

**17...Nxe4 18.de de 19.Bf3 Nxc3 20.Bb2 g4! 21.Bd5 Nce2+ 22.Kh1 g3**

A logical conclusion to Black's plan – by sensibly exploiting the poor position of the queen he reaches the white king.

**23.fg Nxc3+ 24.Kg1 Nfe2+ 25.Kf2 Qf6+ 0-1**

**Karpov – Larsen**  
Tilburg, 1980

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.d4 Nxe4 4.Bd3 d5 5.Nxe5 Nd7 6.Qe2?! Nxe5! 7.Bxe4**

de 8.Qxe4 Be6 9.Qxe5 Qd7 10.0-0 0-0-0 11.Be3



[FEN"2kr1b1r/pppq1ppp/4b3/4Q3/3P4/4B3/PPP2PPP/RN3RK1 b - - 0 11"]

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn he sacrificed in the opening.

### 11...Bb4!?

A subtle move. By removing the a5-square from the queen, after 12...f6 Black wants to chase it to the kingside, where it will be attacked by the advancing black pawns. And if White brings his knight out to c3, a transfer to a favorable "opposite color" for Black is possible.

Then again, as Artur Yusupov indicated, the direct 11...Bd6 12.Qa5 Bd5! (threatening 13...Bxg2 or 13...Qg4) 13.f3 (13.h3!?) 13...Qe6 14.Qd2 Rhe8 is also sufficiently strong.

### 12.Nc3?!

Now Black's idea justifies itself. On 12.a4, there would have followed 12...a6!, preventing the move 13.Qb5. And if 12.a3, then 12...f6 13.Qg3 Bd6. In the event of the more principled 12.c3 Black has a choice between 12...Bd6!? (the pawn removes the c3-square from the knight) and 12...f6 13.Qg3 Be7 (13...Bd6 14.Bf4 is worse – the d4-pawn is defended) 14.Nd2 h5.

**12...f6 13.Qg3** (13.Qb5 Qxb5 14.Nxb5 Bc4 is bad, but 13.Qf4!? deserved preference.) **13...Bxc3 14.bc h5!**

14...g5 15.f3 h5 16.Qf2 is less precise.

### 15.h4 g5!

There's an obvious advantage on Black's side. He's attacking, which is particularly dangerous in connection with the presence of opposite-colored bishops on the board. And White has no counterplay on the opposite flank.

There followed **16.f3** (16.hg? h4 17.Qh2 h3 or 17...fg) **16...Rdg8 17.Rf2 Qc6 18.Bd2 g4 19.f4 Bc4 20.d5 Bxd5 21.f5 Re8 22.a3 Re4 23.Re1 Rhe8 24.Rxe4 Rxe4 25.Kh2 Qc5 26.Bf4 Re1 27.Bd2 Ra1 28.Qe3 Qd6+! 29.Rf4 b6 30.c4** (30.Qe8+ Kb7 31.Qxh5 Bf3!-+) **30...Bxc4 31.Qd4 Qxd4 32.Rxd4 Bb5 33.Bh6 Rxa3 34.Bg7 Bd7 35.Rf4 Ra5 36.Bxf6 Bxf5** and Black won in thirty more moves.

### Nei – Gurgendze

Soviet Championship, Kharkov, 1967

**1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.Bg2 Bb7 6.0-0 Be7** (6...a6!?, 6...d6!?) **7.d4 cd 8.Nxd4 Bxg2 9.Kxg2 Qc8 10.Qd3 Nc6 11.b3 Ne5! 12.Qe3**

Grandmaster Mihai Suba, who commented on this game in his book The Hedgehog System, recommends 12.Qd2. Both queen retreats seem about the same to me.

**12...Qb7+ 13.f3 Ng6 14.Rd1 0-0 15.Bb2 h5**



[FEN"r4rk1/pq1pbpp1/1p2pnn1/7p/2PN4/1PN1QPP1/PB2P1KP/R2R4 w - h6 0 16"]

1.?

16.Qd3?!

The alternative mentioned by Suba, 16.h4?!, is dubious, in my view, as it weakens the kingside. Black replies 16...Ng4 17.Qd2 f5; for example, 18.e4 fe 19.Nxe4 e5! 20.Re1 (the knight can't retreat because of 20...Rxf3!) 20...ed 21.fg Rae8.

But the move in the game, which prepares e2-e4, isn't the best either. The queen soon finds itself vulnerable on the d3-square, and subsequently it can no longer find itself a stable spot.

He should have exploited the position of the queen on e3 by playing 16.Ne4! The endgame that arises after 16...Nxe4 17.Qxe4 Qxe4 18.fe is favorable for White: the defects in his pawn structure are more than compensated for by his space advantage and pressure on the d-file.

16...h4 17.e4 Nh5! (threatening 18...Nf4+) 18.Qe3 Rae8!

Two non-standard moves by Black have allowed him to seize the initiative. After the planned f7-f5, the queen feels uncomfortable on e3.

19.Nde2 f5 20.ef



[FEN"4rrk1/pq1pb1p1/1p2p1n1/5P1n/2P4p/1PN1QPP1/PB2N1KP/R2R4 b - - 0 20"]

20...ef!

What romantic chess, leaving d5 en prise. I was always convinced that the players of the past knew less but played better chess, Suba writes.

It seems to me, though, that the more natural 20...Rxf5 was, in any case, no weaker than the move in the game. Possibly Bukhuti Gurgeniidze was distracted by the reply 21.Qe4. But then there follows 21...Qc8!, defending the e6-pawn to prepare d7-d5. The prophylactic 22.Rac1 allows Black to develop a dangerous attack with 22...hg 23.hg Rg5 (or 23...Ref8 first). And if 22.Nb5, then 22...hg 23.hg d5! 24.cd (24.Qg4 Rg5) 24...ed 25.Qg4 (25.Rxd5 Nxe3!! 26.Nxe3 Nf4+ 27.Kh2 Rxd5 28.Qxf4 Rxb5-) 25...Nh4+! 26.gh Bxh4, and White can't defend himself from two threats at once, 27...Rxe2+

and 27...Rg5.

## 21.Qd2 Qb8

Black declines to exchange queens by 22.Qd5+. It would have made sense for him to first exchange pawns on g3, although on 21...hg 22.hg Qb8 the reply 23.Rh1 is unpleasant. Then again, instead of 22...Qb8? the continuation 22...f4 23.Qxd7 Qxd7 24.Rxd7 fg isn't bad.

## 22.Nd5

In the event of 22.Qxd7 the move 22...Bb4 is strong. But the sealing move 22.Re1! allowed White to hold the defense: no direct refutation is evident. Now the natural 22...hg?! lets almost his entire advantage slip because of 23.Nxg3!.



[FEN"1q2rrk1/p2pb1p1/1p4n1/3N1p1n/2P4p/1P3PP1/PB1QN1KP/R2R4 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

## 22...Bb4!!

An impressive concluding combination. The white queen comes under a knight fork in the variations 23.Nxb4 Rxe2+! 24.Qxe2 Nhf4+ 25.gf Nxf4+ 26.Kh1 Nxe2 27.Rxd7 Rf7 and 23.Bc3 Rxe2+! 24.Qxe2 Bxc3.

**23.Qd3 hg 24.hg Rxe2+! 25.Qxe2 Qxg3+ 26.Kf1 Ngf4 27.Nxf4 Nxf4 28.Qf2 Qh3+ 29.Kg1 Bc5 30.Bd4 Rf6 0-1**

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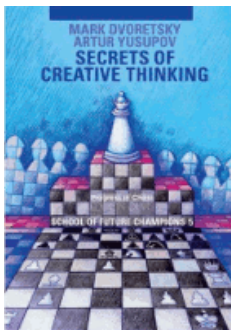
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## Lessons from a Loss

For a good commentator, the moves, the variations, the question marks, and the exclamation marks are just an interim, albeit essential stage of the work. His main task is to discover what's hidden behind the moves that were or were not made. On the one hand, it is important to draw readers' attention to the purely chess-related ideas, patterns, and technical methods; on the other, to bring out the battle's psychological background, to shed light on a player's thought processes during the game, to indicate the factors that helped or hindered him in finding the correct solution of the position.

Matthew Sadler is a superb commentator. In the years when he was actively playing chess (for the last few years he has been doing other things), I enjoyed studying his articles and used them in lessons with my students. The example I'm offering for your attention demonstrates the high level of his play as well as the vivid style of his commentary.

**Anand – Sadler**  
Tilburg, 1998



[FEN "4k2r/1pr1bpp1/pq1p1n2/3Pp3/7p/1N3PPB/PPP4P/1K1RQ2R b k - 0 17"]

1...?

*Here I started to spend oceans of time, but this time, I really got into the position. White's only clear goal is to play f4 and clear the black pawn from e5. This will allow him to activate his knight on b3 via d4 when Black's kingside light squares will become rather sensitive. Whilst considering the ways to prevent f4 altogether, it suddenly struck me how weak White's pawns would become after f4 e4, f4 g4 and how badly developed White was to defend his weak pawns on d5 and f4: his bishop should be on g2, not h3 and his queen has no role on e1. I therefore came up with a quite precise method of exploiting White's positional play. It took me so long to play because I knew that if it all went wrong, I would look like a complete idiot!*

**17...Ke8-f8! 18.f3-f4 e5xf4 19.g3xf4 Rh8-h5! 20.Bh3-g2 Rc7-c4! 21.Rh1-f1 Rh5-f5 22.Qe1xh4 Nf6-h5 23.Qh4-h3 g7-g6**

*The f4-pawn is lost and Black has a gorgeous position that is almost completely invulnerable.*

Having obtained an overwhelming positional advantage, Matthew then made a crude tactical blunder in time trouble and was forced to settle for a draw.

In this next game, which he lost, besides purely chess-related questions, Sadler also discusses the problems of one's attitude towards the battle and of the rational expenditure of time, which are important for any player. I don't

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think that he'll mind me reproducing his notes. But I'll add a few things to them, of course. (Otherwise this would be Sadler's article, not mine.) On the other hand, my disagreement with some of the commentator's chess evaluations in no way places the main ideas expressed by the English grandmaster in doubt.

### **Plaskett – Sadler**

Hastings, 1998/99

SSicilian Defense [B52]

*I have to say that before this game, I became incredibly nervous: if there is one thing I should have learnt by now, it is that in order to win a game, particularly against someone you really feel you should beat, it is necessary not to think about winning. Thinking about the end robs you of the will to concentrate on the means: you don't want to calculate, you get impatient, the slightest flaw in your plan gets you angry and annoyed and liable to force the pace recklessly.*

*This game is a good example of what can happen – a bad attitude, coupled with my opponent's good play, and suddenly my tournament lurches toward disaster.*

**1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2..Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3.Bf1-b5+**

A harmless "anti-Sicilian" system that I myself have used regularly as white, which, naturally, heightened my interest in this game.

**3...Bc8-d7 4.Bb5xd7+ Nb8xd7 5.0-0 e7-e6 6.b2-b3**

White intends c2-c4 and d2-d4. With an immediate 6.c4 he has to deal with the reply 6...Ne5!?, so first he takes control of the e5-square.

**6...Ng8-f6 7.Qd1-e2 Bf8-e7 8.Bc1-b2 0-0 9.c2-c4 a7-a6**

Black played unsuccessfully in the game Dvoretzky – Zilbershtein, USSR Team Championship, Ordzhonikidze, 1978: 9...d5?! 10.e5 Ne8 11.cd ed 12.d4 Nc7 13.Nc3 Re8 14.Rad1+/- . In my view 9...e5!? deserves serious attention, not letting the pawn go to d4 and limiting the mobility of the b2-bishop, but for some reason no one has played that way against me.

**10.d2-d4 c5xd4 11.Nf3xd4**



[FEN"r2q1rk1/1p1nbppp/p2ppn2/8/2PNP3/1P6/PB2QPPP/RN3RK1 b - - 0 11"]

**1...?**

**11...Qd8-b6!**

*An important finesse. White's most harmonious set-up is to play his knight to c3, his queen's rook to d1 and then either to play f4 and e5 or to switch his rook to the kingside via d3. By preventing Nc3, Black throws a spanner into this plan and gives himself more time to prepare against White's eventual assault.*

In the following game my opponent allowed me to position my pieces ideally.

**11...Re8 12.Nc3 Qa5 13.Rad1 Rad8** (13...Rac8!?) **14.f4 Nf8 15.Kh1**  
(threatening 16.e5) **15...Qh5 16.Qxh5 Nxh5 17.g3+/-** (17.e5? Nxf4!) **17...  
Nf6 18.Kg2 d5? 19.ed ed** (19...Bc5 20.Na4) **20.Nf5! Bc5** (20...dc? 21.Nxe7+)  
**21.cd g6?**



[FEN"3rnk1/1p3p1p/p4np1/2bP1N2/  
5P2/1PN3P1/PB4KP/3R1R2 w - - 0 22"]

**1.?**

**22.Ne4! Rxe4** (22...Nxe4 23.Nh6#) **23.Bxf6 gf 24.Bxd8 1-0**, Dvoretsky – Sziladi, Budapest, 1978.

**12.Kg1-h1 Qb6-c5!?** **13.Nb1-d2 Qc5-h5!?**

*A very careful manoeuvre – having committed White's knight to a passive square, the queen is transferred to the kingside in an attempt to prevent, or at least slow down, White's prosecution of his kingside attack.*

In my view Black's idea is dubious – as the queen finds itself in the path of the attacking pawns. 13...Rfe8 14.f4 was more cautious, and now either 14...Bf8, or even 14...Qh5!? (White doesn't have the reply f2-f3).

**14.f2-f3 Rf8-e8**

14...Ne5 deserved attention.

**15.g2-g4**



[FEN"r3r1k1/1p1nbppp/p2ppn2/7q/2PNP1P1/  
1P3P2/PB1NQ2P/R4R1K b - g3 0 15"]

*How do you annotate a move like this? I think it's rather horrible (why? what else should White do?), but it had a great effect on me – I had planned 15...Qg5 but just as I was about to play it, I started thinking about an interesting sacrifice for White. By the time, I'd stopped thinking, I only had 30 minutes left for the rest of my moves. This is actually the thing that made me so angry after the game – I'm an experienced player, how can I keep on doing things like this?*

**15...Qh5-g5 16.Rf1-g1**

*16.f4!? Qxg4 17.Rf3* was what I thought Jim would head for, and it is dangerous. White is looking for Rg1 and then Qg2 and Rh3 – it isn't winning,



but White does have a lot of compensation. I spent a very long time and found some good defences, but **I'm not really sure that this is something you should calculate that deeply – at the end of day, either you feel it's OK or you don't. In this sort of position, you will always need more time later.**

**16...Nd7-e5! 17.Ra1-f1**

17.f4 Qxf4 18.Raf1 (18.g5 Nfg4!) 18...Qg5 19.N2f3 Nxf3 20.Nxf3 Qg6! attacks the weak pawn on e4.

**17...Ne5-g6 18.Qe2-f2**

If 18.f4 Nxf4 19.Qe3 Nh3! and now:



[FEN"r3r1k1/1p2bPPP/p2ppn2/6q1/2PNP1P1/1P2Q2n/PB1N3P/5RRK w - - 0 20"]

**1.?**

a) 20.Rg3 Qxe3 21.Rxe3 e5 and Black keeps his extra pawn (21...Nf2+ 22.Rxf2 Nxe4 is also good for Black).

After 21...e5 22.Rxh3 ed 23.Bxd4, the position is unclear; 21...Nf2+ 22.Rxf2 Nxe4 23.Ref3 Nxf2+ 24.Rxf2=+ isn't completely convincing either. 21...Ng5! 22.h4 e5! 23.Nf5 (23.hg ed 24.Bxd4 Nxe4-/+ ) 23...Ne6-/+ is stronger.

b) 20.Qxh3 Qxd2 21.Rg2 (21.g5 Qxb2 22.gf Bxf6 23.Rxf6 Qxd4 wins) 21...Qg5 with a clear extra pawn.



[FEN"r3r1k1/1p2bPPP/p2ppn2/6q1/2PNP1P1/1P5Q/PB4RP/5R1K w - - 0 22"]

**1.?**

Black is a pawn up, you can't argue with that, but in fact his position is very dangerous. White continues 22.Nf5!

In the variation 22...ef? 23.gf Qh5 24.Rxg7+! Kh8 (on 24...Kf8, follows the impressive 25.Rfg1! Qxh3 26.Rg8+! Nxe8 27.Bg7#) the continuation 25.Bxf6 Qxh3 26.Rg8+! Kxe8 27.Rg1+ Kf8 28.Bg7+ Kg8 leads to perpetual check, but 25.Qg2! is much stronger. His opponent is helpless against the threat of 28.Rg1, with a subsequent 29.Rg5 Qh6 30.Rh5!

22...Nxe4? 23.Nxe7 Rf8 24.Nf5! is dangerous; for example, 24...Bf6 25.

Bxf6 Nxf6 26.Qf3! Nd7 27.Nxd6, with an overwhelming advantage for White.

In the case of 22...Bf8 he had to deal with 23.Bc1! Qg6 24.Nh6+! gh 25.g5 Ng4 (25...hg 26.Rxg5 Nxe4 27.Rxg6+ hg 28.Qf3 f5 29.Qg2!+) 26.gh f5 27.Rfg1 – White preserves a dangerous attack. True, instead of 24...gh?! he can play 24...Kh8!, but the position that arises after, say, 25.e5!? de 26.g5 Nd7 27.Nxf7+ Kg8, looks alarming, and deciding to go into it isn't easy.

It probably makes sense for Black to play a neutral move like 22...b5!?. The response 23.Bc1!? Qg6 isn't bad here either, but now not 24.Nh6+?! gh 25.g5 Nxe4 26.gh any more, because of 26...Ng5, but simply 24.Qf3. White also has an impressive combination at his disposal: 23.Nxg7!? Kxg7 24.Rf5!, but then Black manages to preserve approximate equality by playing 24...ef 25.gf h6! 26.Rxg5+ hg 27.Qh5 Rg8!

Conclusion: the pawn sacrifice 18.f4!? is correct. It seems that both during the game and when commenting on it Sadler overestimated his own position, not sensing the dangers that were threatening him.

### 18...Ng6-f4

*Around here, I started to lose the thread of the game – I think I was starting to get a bit annoyed with my time handling. Black is not better, but he has a very nice Hedgehog position. Maybe 18...Qa5 simply followed by preparing the ...b5 or ...d5 breaks. What I did got me into a terrible tangle.*

### 19.Qe2-e3 Nf6-d7

An unsuccessful move. 19...h6 is preferable, and on 20.Ne2 – either 20...e5 (Plaskett), or 20...Nxe2 21.Qxe2 Qa5.



[FEN"r3r1k1/1p1nbppp/p2pp3/6q1/2PNPnP1/1P2QP2/PB1N3P/5RRK w - - 0 20"]

1.?

### 20.Nd4-f5!

*Oops. Missed that one.*

### 20...e6-e5

*20...ef 21.gf is rather tragic for Black, so I have to play ...e5 to cover the g7-square and protect the knight on f4.*

### 21.Rf1-d1 Be7-f8?

"Blunders never come one at a time." He should have played 21...b5+/=, with a completely defensible position.

*And another tactical blunder: after*

### 22.Nd2-b1

*...I had intended 22...d5 which rather tragically fails to 23.Rxd5! as the knight*

on f4 is now pinned to the queen on g5. Short of time, I lashed out with:

**22...b7-b5?!**

*and put up very little resistance thereafter. This was another thing I was angry with – I'm usually a pretty tough defender, but there I gave up as if I didn't care. I suppose that if all you were thinking of doing was winning, holding on desperately for a draw just doesn't feel like a goal worth suffering for.*

Black's last move allowed his opponent to obtain a strong passed pawn. 22... Nc5+/- was significantly more stubborn, with the idea of putting his knight on e6.

Sadler doesn't comment on the final stage of the game, and I'll also limit myself just to short notes.

**23.Nxd6 Bxd6 24.Rxd6 Nf8 25.c5 N8e6 26.Nc3 Nh3 27.Qxg5 Nhxg5 28.c6 Nxf3 29.Rf1 (29.Rc1!+/-) 29...Nfd4 (29...Nfg5!? 30.h4 b4 31.hg bc 32.Bxc3 Rac8+/-) 30.Nd5 Rac8 31.Bxd4 ed 32.Rd7 Rxc6 33.Ne7+ Rxe7 34.Rxe7 h5 (34...h6 is a little more stubborn) 35.gh Rd6 36.Rfxf7 d3 37.Rd7 1-0**

*So, a very comprehensive victory in the end. And for me, a learning experience. How many will I need? I think that in the rest of my career, I'll probably have quite a few more.*

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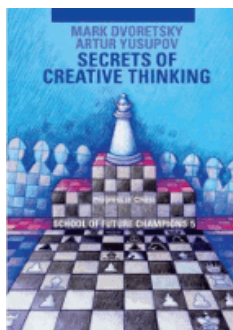
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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This month, I am offering for your attention an excerpt from my memoir that is being prepared for publication, *A Book for Friends and Colleagues*. I touch on some general problems for the development of a young chess player, and so I think this excerpt is appropriate for my column.

## First Steps

One of the best tournaments I ever played in, in both the competitive and the creative respects, was when I was only second category. (The rating system didn't exist back then, and a young player had to follow a path from the fifth category to the first; with subsequent progress he received the title of candidate master, and then the master's title.) But I'll get to everything in order!

At the age of twelve (as we'd see it today – very late!) I started studying chess at the Kalinin District House of Pioneers. Then again, "studying" is an inaccurate word. The chess section was headed by a very old first-category player, Andrei Sergeevich Smyshlyaev. There were a lot of kids, and only enough teachers to open and close the auditorium, put out the equipment, maintain order, hold tournaments and provide their results to the Moscow qualifications commission. I had to figure out everything else on my own, or to be more precise together with my friend Sasha Karasev.

I quickly achieved the fifth and fourth categories, but at that stage I got slightly bogged down and decided to "work on some theory." In the summer vacation I successfully studied the solid and superbly-organized book by Ilya Maizelis Chess. I was studying it thoroughly and didn't have enough time for the whole book – the section "Openings" was left unmastered. Perhaps that was precisely the source of the difficulties that I experienced constantly later when I was playing the early stage of the game.

My work on chess didn't bear fruit right away, naturally. In the fall I achieved the third-category norm (ten points out of ten), and then the second-category one (ten out of eleven). I played in another two or three individual and team events, but further improvement at the House of Pioneers was impossible – there weren't enough highly-qualified players to organize a tournament for a first-category norm. And then I took part in the Spartakiad of Second-Category Players of 1963, which was held at the Moscow Palace of Pioneers on the Lenin Hills.

I felt like a provincial, having made it to an event in the "wider world" virtually for the first time. Many of my opponents were residents of that world, regularly working with experienced coaches, masters or candidate masters. On the other hand, provincials don't usually display any particular timidity, and I didn't experience it either.

The qualifying norms were very high: a score of seventy-five percent. That meant 9 out of 12, and since I had to play thirteen games and norms were never rounded down, I needed one extra win: 10 out of 13.

I played my "big" game at the start of the tournament.

**Gorelik – Dvoretsky**

Spartakiad of Second-Category Players (1), 1963

French Defense [C02]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.Be2 Nge7?!

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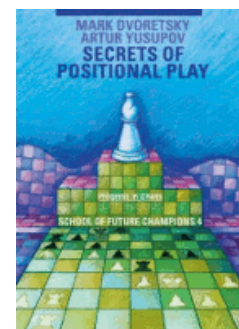
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[FEN "r1b1kb1r/pp2nppp/1qn1p3/2ppP3/3P4/2P2N2/PP2BPPP/RNBQK2R w KQkq - 0 7"]

### 7.Na3

Black's opening inaccuracy (well known in theory) was left unexploited. In the game Euwe – Kramer (Zaandam, 1946) 7.dc! Qc7 8.Nd4! (the exclamation mark is from old books and notes; in fact 8.Na3!? is no less strong) 8...Nxe5? 9.Nb5 Qxc5 10.Qd4! was played, and it was already time for Black to resign.

Unfortunately, in those days I wasn't in the habit of checking a reference book either before the game or after it to get to know the opening variation better. Which meant that sooner or later I would inevitably repeat my mistake. And indeed, a year later, when I was already studying at the Palace of Pioneers, my friend Sasha Shvarts caught me in the variation.

Then again, I also kept things together after 8...Qxe5 (instead of the losing 8...Nxe5?) 9.0-0 (White wants to get an overwhelming advantage on the queenside by playing b2-b4) 9...Nf5 10.f4 Qf6 11.Nxf5 and started to confuse the game with the non-standard 11...ef!? (White's task is simpler with 11...Qxf5 12.Be3+/-).



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/pp3ppp/2n2q2/2Pp1p2/5P2/2P5/PP2B1PP/RNBQ1RK1 w kq - 0 12"]

The Fritz program on my computer doesn't particularly object to my partner's subsequent moves; nevertheless, the position soon became unclear: 12.Be3 Be6 13.Nd2 0-0-0 14.Nf3 d4! 15.cd Bxc5 16.Rc1 Bb6 17.Ne5 Bd5 18.Bf3 Kb8 19.Bxd5 Rxd5 20.Nxc6+ bc unclear. The game ended with a peaceful outcome on the thirty-sixth move.

### 7...cd 8.cd Nf5 9.Nc2 Bb4+ 10.Kf1 Be7 11.a3?!

Theory recommends 11.h4 or 11.g3 with a subsequent 12.Kg2. My opponent chose an unsuccessful plan involving a noticeable lag in development.

**11...Bd7 12.b4 Rc8 13.g4? Nh4 14.Nxh4 Bxh4** (threatening 15...Nxe5!) **15. Be3 f6 16.f4 0-0 17.Kg2**





[FEN"2r2rk1/pp1b2pp/1qn1pp2/3pP3/1P1P1PPb/  
P3B3/2N1B1KP/R2Q3R b - - 0 17"]

Has any kind of association occurred to you in connection with the position that has been created? One did occur to me during the game. In my case, "cruising" through opening theory didn't mean having no interest at all in chess literature or general chess theory. I recalled a game that was played between Alekhine and Capablanca at the AVRO Tournament in Holland in 1938. In it Alekhine moved his king forward to destroy an enemy piece that had wandered into his camp.



[FEN"r2bb1k1/q5pr/1p2p1Np/pP1pP2P/  
N2P1Pp1/P3Bn2/1Q4K1/2R4R w - - 0 31"]

31.Kg3! Qf7 32.Kxg4 Nh4 33.Nxh4 Qxh5+ 34.Kg3 Qf7 35.Nf3 1-0

Here I did start to worry: would I lose my bishop after a king move to h3? I didn't want to take with the pawn on e5 because of the reply 18.de. Of course, I thought of a reciprocal attack on the vulnerable c2 knight. Having figured out the forced (as it seemed to me) variation, I immediately saw its impressive concluding move.

**17...Ne7! 18.Kh3 Ba4**

It was possible to play a little more simply: 18...Ng6 19.Bd3 fe 20.Bxg6 (20. fe Bf2) 20...ef!-+, but I was so enchanted by the idea I'd found, I wasn't looking around any more.

I didn't look around later either: the game wasn't subjected to critical investigation for many years after it was played. The reason is obvious – a subconscious desire not to throw doubt on an idea of which I was justifiably proud. And only recently the merciless Fritz put everything in its place: it became clear that Black achieved a big advantage by many methods, and the one chosen by me, although not bad, objectively wasn't the best.

**19.Bd3 Rc3**

There were worthy alternatives here, too. For example, this combination is very strong: 19...Bxc2! 20.Bxc2 fe 21.Kxh4 ef, with a subsequent 22...e5-+.

**20.Qd2 Qc7 21.Rhc1 Rc8 22.Ra2**



[FEN"2r3k1/ppq1n1pp/4pp2/3pP3/bP1P1PPb/P1rBB2K/R1NQ3P/2R5 b - - 0 22"]

## 22...Be1!!

Under three strikes! In [Lasker's Manual of Chess](#) (which I couldn't obtain in those years), such thrusts are called "desperado": the world champion showed that pieces that are apparently doomed to death are capable of all kinds of craziness.

I didn't look at any other moves, understandably, although 22...fe 23.de (23.fe g5) 23...g5! (but not 23...Ng6 24.Bxg6 hg counting on 25.Kxh4? g5+! – because of 25.Nd4!) 24.fg Qxe5-+ wasn't bad.

23.Rxe1 Bxc2 24.Rxc2 Rxc2 25.Bxc2 Qxc2 26.ef (it's preferable to exchange queens immediately) 27...gf



[FEN"2r3k1/pp2n2p/4pp2/3p4/1P1P1PP1/P3B2K/2qQ3P/4R3 w - - 0 27"]

The picture of the battle has changed sharply. There's an obvious advantage on Black's side, associated with the presence of his opponent's "bad" bishop (this has been my favorite positional theme since childhood) and my possession of the open c-file. On the other hand, the latter factor disappears if White manages to knock all the major pieces off the board.

## 27.Re2?!

27.Qxc2 Rxc2 28.Rc1 is better, on which Black replies 28...Rc4-/+ . The move in the game allowed him to create an attack with the queens on the board, continuing 27...Qg6!, but I was already in the mood for a favorable endgame.

## 27...Qxd2 28.Bxd2 Kf7 29.Re3 Rc2 30.Be1 Rc4 31.Rd3 b5!

Correct: my opponents' pawns are fixed on squares that are the color of his bishop.

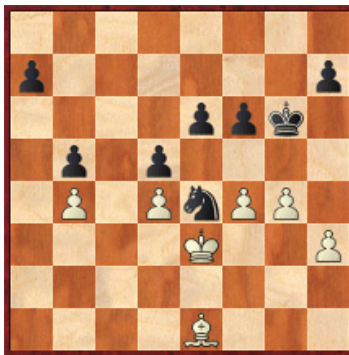
## 32.Kg3 Nc8!

The knight comes up to the "holes" in the pawn chain – the e4- and c4-squares.

## 33.Kf3 Nd6 34.Ke2 Rc2+ 35.Rd2 Rc3 36.Rd3 Rxd3

The temptation to win a pawn turned out to be too strong, although it also can't be ruled out that it would have been easier for Black to make the best of his advantage with the rooks on the board.

**37.Kxd3 Nc4 38.Bf2 Nxa3 39.Bg3 Kg6 40.h3 Nc4 41.Bf2?! (41.Be1) 41... Nd6?! (41...a5! 42.ba Nxa5 43.Kc3 Nc6, with a subsequent h7-h6 and f6-f5) 42.Be1 Ne4 43.Ke3**



[FEN"8/p6p/4ppk1/1p1p4/1P1PnPP1/4K2P/8/4B3 b - - 0 43"]

The game was adjourned in this position. I had to analyze it myself: computer programs didn't exist in those days and I didn't have a coach.

I evaluated the position as easily winning, of course, but to my surprise it all turned out to be not so simple. In the end I managed to choose the right plan. My analysis was very useful for the future – it helped me to understand important peculiarities of similar endings.

A knight by itself can't win the game. Black has to create a path to his opponent's camp for his king – for that you have to exchange one or two pairs of pawns on the kingside.

An immediate 43...f5 is a mistake because of 44.g5, so I recorded the move **43...h6.**

**44.Kf3**

My opponent chose a waiting tactic. In analysis I also had to deal with the active try 44.h4!?. On the direct 44...h5?, White replies 45.f5+! ef 46.gh+ Kxh5 47.Kf4, with sufficient counterplay. I intended 44...Nd6 45.h5+ Kf7, with a subsequent Ne8-g7 (taking the h5 pawn in my sights), and only then f6-f5. I don't know how convincing that plan was, but I didn't see a better one.

**44...Nd6 45.Bc3 Nc8!**

It was already possible to go f6-f5, then exchange on g4 and h6-h5. But what then? The white king gets in the way of the black one. The "principle of two weaknesses" (about which I didn't have the slightest idea at the time, of course) came to my aid. Transferring the knight to c6 creates the threat of the breakthrough a7-a5, and to prevent the breakthrough the king has to get closer to the queenside, and then undermining the pawn chain on the kingside has more force.

**46.Ke3 Ne7 47.Bd2 f5! 48.Be1 fg 49.hg h5**





[FEN"8/p3n3/4p1k1/1p1p3p/1P1P1PP1/4K3/8/4B3 w - - 0 50"]

Black's knight is positioned ideally. On 50.g5, the continuation 50...Nf5+ 51. Kd3 h4 52.Bf2 h3 53.Bg1 Ng3 decides matters. But the main idea of Black's plan is displayed in the variation 50.Kf3 hg+ 51.Kxg4 Nc6! 52.Bc3 a5 53.ba b4 54.Bd2 b3 55.Bc3 Nxa5+.

**50.gh+ Kxh5 51.Kf3 Nc6 52.Ke3**

The same thing again: 52.Bc3 a5! 53.ba b4+.

**52...Kg4**

In the book [Dvoretsky's Analytical Manual](#), commenting on an episode from an ending in the first Karpov – Kasparov match, I wrote: "In such situations, the enemy king is slowly pushed back, the knight comes to f5, and after the forced king retreat, the black king goes to f3, followed by another knight check, etc." (In relation to this endgame the specific squares and the color of the pieces have been changed). As you can see, I mastered this typical plan back in my childhood game with Gorelik.

**53.Bd2 Ne7 54.Bc1 Ng6**

54...Nf5+ corresponded to the plan described above, but it's also possible to play this way – first eat the pawn, and only then drive the king back.

**55.Bd2 Nxf4 56.Bc3 Ng6 57.Bb2 Ne7 58.Bc3 Nf5+ 59.Kd3 Kf3 60.Be1 Ne7 61.Bh4 Ng6 62.Bf6 Nf4+ 63.Kd2 Ke4 64.Be5 Ng2 65.Bf6 Ne3 66.Be5 Nc4+ 0-1**

"The grandmaster didn't spoil his opponents with a variety of openings" (a line from my favorite novel by Ilf and Petrov, *The Twelve Chairs*) – and I also followed the example of the "great conman" Ostap Bender. In my next game as black, as in almost all my subsequent ones, my favorite French Defense was played.

**Komov – Dvoretsky**

Spartakiad of Second-Category Players (3), 1963



[FEN"2r2rk1/pp3ppp/4p1n1/q2pP1N1/b1nP1BP1/P2B4/2P2P1P/R1Q2RK1 w - - 0 19"]

**19.h4! Nxh4?!**

Impudent play: Black doesn't want to defend accurately with 19...Rfe8 20.h5 (20.Nxh7!? Kxh7! 21.h5 Qc3 22.hg+ fg 23.Kg2 Qxd4 24.Rd1!, and only after a queen retreat - 25.Rh1+ is unclear) 20...Nf8 21.h6 Qc3.

Objectively the best reply is 19...h6! 20.Nxe6, and now either 20...Nxf4 21.Nxf4 Nd2 22.g5!?, with a sharp position, or 20...fe!? 21.Bxg6 Qc3, with good play for Black. I'm giving (far from exhaustive) variations here and later only for objectivity: in second-category tournaments no one calculates them accurately – that's a difficult task even for masters and grandmasters.

The main drawback of the move in the game is the opening of the h-file, on which White will attack. By luring the king there: 20.Bxh7+! Kh8 21.Bg3! (but not 21.Bd3? Qc3), he achieved a decisive advantage.



[FEN"2r2rk1/pp3ppB/4p3/q2pP1N1/b1nP2Pn/P5B1/2P2P2/R1Q2RK1 b - - 0 21"]

For example, 21...Nf3+ (sacrificing a piece for two or three pawns doesn't help either, 21...Qc3 22.Bxh4 Qxd4 23.Bg3!, with a subsequent Kg2) 22.Kg2! (22.Nxf3 Kxh7 is unclear) 22...Ncd2 (22...Nxg5 23.Qxg5 Kxh7 24.Rh1+ Kg8 25.Qh5+-) 23.Nxf3 Nxf1 24.Qxf1 (24.Bd3 Nxg3 25.Kxg3 Kg8 26.Qh1 Rfd8 27.Qh5 is also good, intending Rh1 and Ng5) 24...Kxh7 25.Qh1+ Kg8 26.Qh5 Bxc2 27.Rh1 f6 28.ef 29.g5+- (or 29.Bd6+-).

## 20.Nxh7?!



[FEN"2r2rk1/pp3ppN/4p3/q2pP3/b1nP1BPn/P2B4/2P2P2/R1Q2RK1 b - - 0 20"]

My opponent was tempted by an attack on the rook, hoping to mate me after 20...Rfe8 21.Bg5! Nf3+ 22.Kg2 Nxg5 (22...Nxd4 23.Nf6+! Kf8 24.Rh1) 23.Qxg5. Then again, Black could defend successfully here too, by continuing 21...Ng6! (instead of 21...Nf3+?), as 22.Nf6+ gf 23.Bxf6 Qd2 doesn't work. And on 22.Bxc4 (with the idea of 22...Rxc4? 23.Nf6+!), there follows 22...Kxh7 or 22...Qc3.

I solved the problem in a much simpler way – with a positional exchange sacrifice.

## 20...Qc3!

In such a sharp situation the rook is no more valuable than a minor piece. And time is what's really important here: it's vital to create reciprocal threats as quickly as possible. Counterplay in the center, according to the well-known

classical principle, is the best way of opposing a flank attack.

For a sophisticated player the solution for Black is probably obvious, but for a young second-category player this was a small discovery.

### 21.Nxf8 Kxf8

21...Qxd4! is stronger.

### 22.Be3

22.Bg5 Nf3+ 23.Kg2 Qxd4 (24.Rh1 was threatened) 24.Qf4 (24.Kxf3? Nxe5 +) 24...Qxf4 25.Bxf4 Nxe5!? (or 25...Nfxe5) led to a favorable endgame for Black. 22.Bg3!? Qxd4! (22...Nf3+? 23.Kg2 with a subsequent Rh1) 23.Bxh4 Qxg4+ 24.Bg3 Nxe5 25.Qf4 Nf3+ deserved attention, and now White either agrees to a repetition of moves, 26.Kg2 Nh4+ 27.Kg1 Nf3+, or continues the battle in the double-edged position that arises with 26.Kh1 Qh3+ 27.Bh2 Bc6!?

### 22...Nf3+ 23.Kg2 Nxd4 24.Bxd4?

A hasty exchange. 24.Rh1 Ke8 is better, with mutual chances.

### 24...Qxd4 25.Qg5



[FEN "2r2k2/pp3pp1/4p3/3pP1Q1/b1nq2P1/P2B4/2P2PK1/R4R2 b - - 0 25"]

### 25...Nxe5?

The simple 25...Qxe5 brought Black a clear advantage. Without thinking twice, I made a natural move, attacking everything at once (g4, c2 and d3), after which my opponent could force a draw. Alas, I wasn't able to rid myself of this kind of "flunk" throughout my entire playing career.

### 26.Rh1 Kg8

26...Ke8 27.Qxg7 also led to equality; for example, 27...Bxc2 (27...Qxg4+ 28.Qxg4 Nxg4 29.Rh4! f5 30.f3 is risky) 28.Rh8+ Kd7 29.Bb5+ (29.Rxc8 Bxd3 30.Qg8=) 29...Kc7 30.Rxc8+ Kxc8 31.Rc1 Qe4+ 32.Kg1 Nf3+ 33.Kf1, with inevitable perpetual check.

### 27.Bh7+ Kf8 28.Bd3

Neither player noticed the interesting retort 28.Bf5!?. On 28...Kg8, it's possible to play 29.Qh4 (the g4-pawn is defended). On the other hand, after 29...Ng6 30.Bxg6 fg the position remained drawn. 28...f6 29.Rh8+ Kf7 30.Qh5+ Ke7 31.Rxc8 Qxa1 32.Qh8 ef 33.gf (33.Qxg7+ Ke6) 33...Nc6 34.Qxg7 + Kd6 probably also leads to the same outcome, but via a more complicated path.

### 28...Kg8 29.Qh5??

"Fighting spirit triumphs over reason" – this reminded me of a phrase from Bronstein's book about the 1953 Candidates Tournament. My opponent doesn't want to repeat moves, but playing for a win turns out to be playing for

a loss.

**29...Qxg4+ 30.Qxg4 Nxg4 31.Rh4 f5**

Black has too many pawns for the exchange, and his opponent doesn't manage to win a piece.

**32.Rb1 b6 33.Kg3?! Bxc2!**

A straightforward tactic: 34.Rc1 Rc3.

**34.Bxc2 Rxc2 35.f3 Rc3 36.Kf4 Nf6 37.Re1 Kf7 38.Re3? g5+ 0-1**

Weak play? Of course it was weak, but it wasn't devoid of ideas.

### **Dvoretsky – Romanov**

Spartakiad of Second-Category Players (6), 1963

Nimzo-Indian Defense [E54]

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Nf3 d5 6.Bd3 0-0 7.0-0 cd 8.ed dc 9. Bxc4 b6 10.Bg5 Bb7 11.Qe2 Be7 (11...Nbd7!?) 12.Rfd1 (12.Rad1) 12...Qc7? 13.Bb3 (13.Rac1!) 13...Nc6 14.Rac1 Rac8**



[FEN"2r2rk1/pbq1bppp/1pn1pn2/6B1/3P4/1BN2N2/PP2QPPP/2RR2K1 w - - 0 15"]

The typical breakthrough in the center 15.d5 suggests itself. However, after 15...ed 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Bxg5 18.Nxg5 h6 White doesn't obtain anything. 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17.Nxd5 Qd6 (there's also 17...Nd4!? 18.Nxf6+ gf 19. Nxd4 Qxc1=) is useless too.

Despite my young age and low chess qualification, I managed to find an unusual solution to the problem. As a result I not only won the point I needed, but also added a useful little brick to the wall of my future strategic arsenal.

**15.d5! ed 16.Bxd5!**

This move, when it's not the knight that's being exchanged, but the bishop, is discussed in the book [\*School of Future Champions 2: Secrets of Opening Preparation\*](#), in the chapter "In the Footsteps of One Game."

**16...Rfe8 17.Qc4**

This queen thrust seemed very strong to me, but my computer confirms that this isn't the case in connection with the reply 17...Ne5!, and it suggests instead 17.Qd3!+/-, with the idea of 18.Qf5.

**17...Nxd5? 18.Nxd5 Qb8 19.Bf4**

Black is defenseless. On 19...Qa8, the move 20.Nc7 is decisive, and on 19...Bd6, either 20.Bxd6 Qxd6 21.Nxb6, or 20.Nf6+ gf 21.Bxd6 Qa8 22.Qg4+.

**19...Na5 20.Nxe7+ Rxe7 21.Qxc8+! 1-0**

Not all my games ended so favorably. I suffered two defeats and made one draw, and I had to score one-and-a-half points in the last two rounds to

achieve the first-category norm. I had to play black in both games. Then again, at that level the color had no significance – it was probably even the other way around: all my losses of points occurred when I had the white pieces.

### Lukachevsky – Dvoretsky

Spartakiad of Second-Category Players (12), 1963

French Defense [C11]

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Nce2 Nc6 7.c3 Qb6 8.Nf3 f5 (8...f6; 8...Be7) 9.a3 c4**



[FEN"r1b1kbr/pp1n2pp/1qn1p3/3pPp2/2pP1P2/P1P2N2/1P2N1PP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 10"]

My perception of these kinds of positions back then was simplistic and dogmatic. I had no doubt that the weakened b3-square guaranteed Black a protracted positional advantage. I didn't sense the dangers (especially as my opponent apparently wasn't thinking about the natural plan of attack on the kingside with g2-g4), played carelessly, and in the end I was punished for it.

**10.Qc2 Na5 11.Be3 Qb3 12.Qd2 Nb6 13.Nc1 Qb5 (13...Qa4!?)**

I missed the reply 14.b4!?, of course, although objectively it isn't clear whether it's worth pushing the pawn: after 14...Nc6 15.Be2 a5, Black retains counterplay.

**14.Qc2 Qa4 15.Qd2 Nb3 16.Nxb3 Qxb3 17.Qc1 a5?**

An inane move. 17...Bd7 suggested itself.

**18.Be2 Bd7 19.Kf2**



[FEN"r3kb1r/1p1b2pp/1n2p3/p2pPp2/2pP1P2/PqP1BN2/1P2BKPP/R1Q4R b kq - 0 19"]

**19...Ba4??**

A serious mistake, and a double one. Firstly, White could have attacked the e6 pawn with the move 20.Ng5, winning a tempo for the attacking 21.g4 (which is why it was necessary to play 19...Be7). Secondly, there's a very strong tactical idea that was implemented by my opponent in the game.

**20.Nd2 Qb5**

Black still doesn't suspect the danger. On the other hand, with 20...Qc2 21. Qf1 his position remained weak too.

**21.b3!**

Only here did the suspicion arise: I lose a piece, at minimum. This is where the ridiculous advance of the a-pawn made itself felt! I didn't want to resign (especially as losing meant not achieving the norm) – so I had to find the best practical chance, create at least some kind of difficulty for my opponent. And I made the best decision: I sacrificed my queen for just a rook.

**21...Bxb3 22.Nxb3 Qxb3 23.Rb1**



[FEN"r3kb1r/1p4pp/1n2p3/p2pPp2/2pP1P2/PqP1B3/4BKPP/1RQ4R b kq - 0 23"]

**23...a4!!**

Black manages to extract an advantage from the unhappy a-pawn anyway – this pawn will move over to b3, becoming a strong passed pawn, making coordination of the enemy pieces more difficult.

**24.Rxb3 ab 25.Qb1?**

Strange as it may seem, despite being a queen up, playing White isn't easy, and he doesn't cope with the task. It was probably worth bringing his rook to the queenside: 25.Rd1.

**25...Rxa3 26.Bc1? (26.Rd1) 26...Ra2 27.Rd1 Na4 28.Bd2**



[FEN"4kb1r/1p4pp/4p3/3pPp2/n1pP1P2/1pP5/r2BBKPP/1Q1R4 b k - 0 28"]

Hooray!, I'm not losing any more - I can chase the queen with the rook forever on the b2, c2 and a2 squares. And here I made a courageous decision: sensing my opponent's uncertainty, as well as the objective difficulties he was facing, I didn't try to force a draw but continued the battle. In fact, no active possibilities are evident for White, while Black can bring in the reserves, finally completing (with considerable delay) the development of the kingside.

**28...Kd7! 29.g4 g6 30.gf?! (for whom is the line being opened?) 30...gf 31.Ke3 (31.Be1 is better.) 31...Rg8 32.Bxc4?**

And this is now desperation!



**32...dc 33.d5** (33.Rg1 Rxc1 34.Qxc1 b2) **33...Rg2**

33...Bc5+ 34.Kf3 Nxc3 decided matters more impressively.

**34.de+ Kxe6 35.Kf3 Ra:d2 36.Rxd2 Rxd2 0-1**

My main impression from the game was that in any situation it isn't worth getting desperate, you can almost always find counter-chances, making your opponent's task harder. This conclusion was very useful to me later: I regularly got into bad positions, but I rarely lost, because I'd learned how to get out of the water still dry.

### **Rubtsov – Dvoretzky**

Spartakiad of Second-Category Players (13), 1963

French Defense [C13]

In my last game I only needed a draw, so I tried to act more solidly, sometimes even being excessively cautious. But only until a curious tactical opportunity turned up...

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 de 5.Nxe4 Nbd7 6.Nf3 Be7 7.Ng3 h6 8. Bd2 c5 9.c3 b6 10.Bc4 Bb7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Re1 Qc7 13.Rc1 Nd5**



[FEN"r4rk1/pbqnbpp1/1p2p2p/2pn4/2BP4/2P2NN1/PP1B1PPP/2RQR1K1 w - - 0 14"]

The position is roughly equal, and White is perhaps even a little better after 14. Ne5. But here my opponent undertook a strange operation.

**14.Bxd5?! Bxd5 15.c4 Bxf3 16.Qxf3 cd 17.Re4?!**

17.Qg4 Ne5-/+ is bad, although after 17.Nh5! (with the idea of 18.Qg4) White maintained approximate equality. I would probably have replied with the strong 17...Nf6, on which White shouldn't rush with 18.Nxf6+ Bxf6 19.Bxh6 because of 19...Be5, with an attack on the h2-pawn. 18.Bf4! is stronger, and certainly then 19.Nxf6+ Bxf6 20.Bxh6.

**17...Nf6**

A move that can be explained by the tournament position, of course – Black is worrying about safety above all, not allowing the appearance of a rook on the kingside and the thrust Nh5. The variation 17...Nc5 18.Rg4 (or 18.Rxd4 Bf6 19.Rg4) seemed too sharp. Objectively the strongest continuation was probably 17...Ne5!?, although not everything is clear here either after the example 18.Qb3!? Rad8 19.Bf4.

**18.Rxd4 Rad8 19.Bc3 Rxd4 20.Bxd4 Rd8 21.Be3 Qe5 22.b3**



[FEN"3r2k1/p3bpp1/1p2pn1p/4q3/2P5/  
1P2BQN1/P4PPP/2R3K1 b - - 0 22"]

Now Black could have achieved an advantage by continuing 22...Qb2! 23. Qe2 Qxe2 24.Nxe2 Ng4. But a tactical idea attracted my attention: couldn't I lure my opponent into winning the a7 pawn? The main variation quickly flashed through my head, and I couldn't resist the temptation any longer.

**22...Rd3!? 23.Qa8+? (23.Rd1) 23...Kh7**

But not 23...Bf8, so as not to frighten my partner off. The bishop should stay under attack.

**24.Qxa7?**

The trap worked!

**24...Rxe3! 25.Qxe7 Re1+ 26.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 27.Nf1 Ne4 28.Qxf7 Nd2**

White loses a piece.

**29.h4 Nxf1 30.h5 Ne3+ 31.Kh2 Ng4+ 32.Kg3 Nf6**

The knight succeeded in shielding the king from perpetual check. Black won easily.

Let's draw some conclusions:

1) When a young player is at the "interim" level: stronger than a beginner, but not yet a master or a candidate master, every serious event is important for him. I tried to show with my example how a style is formed in these tournaments, old habits are displayed and new useful (and also harmful) ones are acquired, and technical skills are mastered in practice. Gifted children can follow this path by themselves, but the help of a good coach speeds up and regulates the improvement process considerably, of course. A bad coach, on the contrary, can do a great deal of damage.

2) Creative achievements are by no means a prerogative only of masters and grandmasters. Players of almost any level are capable of making breakthroughs, finding and bringing to life interesting ideas.

3) I was a weak player then, of course, and even the somewhat better games that I gave in the article are full of inaccuracies and mistakes. Then again, focusing attention on oversights and playing defects makes sense when the problem of further improvement is being solved. If we're talking about evaluating the talent and promise of a young player, though, it's more important here to evaluate his achievements, to enable him to generate interesting ideas at the board. From that point of view everything was seemingly fine with me, and it was no accident that right after the tournament I received an invitation to study at the Palace of Pioneers, in the strongest group. A new phase of my chess life had begun.





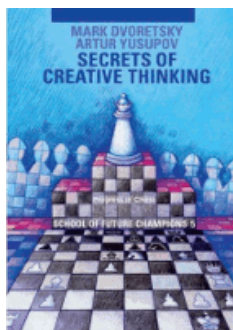
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## My Last Game

In [last month's column](#), I described a tournament from my childhood. And now I'll show you a game by a "chess retiree" whose competitive career ended a long time ago, that I played very recently. Obviously the criteria for evaluating old games and a new one are completely different. But what they have in common, besides the name of one of the players, of course, is also the fact that the story of these games (with a few changes) is going into the autobiographical book that I'm working on.

I really like Holland. I used to play at Wijk aan Zee myself, then I took Sergey Dolmatov to Groningen for the European Junior Championships, seconded Vadim Zvjaginsev at the same place in 1997 at the knock-out World Championship, and went there for candidates matches in Wijk aan Zee and Tilburg. I still have the fondest memories about the hospitality of the Dutch organizers.

At a certain point trips started being organized for me to work with Dutch players. So, I worked in Tilburg in the late '90s three times with the country's then top grandmaster (along with Timman) Loek Van Wely. I also gave lessons in Amsterdam and other cities. The young talents Erik Van Den Doel, Daniel Stellwagen, Jan Werle, Erwin L'Ami and Jan Smeets, who would soon form the backbone of the national team, participated in my training sessions several times.

From 1998 I began regularly being invited to Apeldoorn. The energetic chess organizer Karel van Delft had initiated systematic work with children in his city, which was done by both local players and players who visited from other towns (Holland is a small country), in particular the wonderful study composer Yochanan Afek, who lived in Amsterdam. After me Artur Yusupov started going to Apeldoorn regularly.

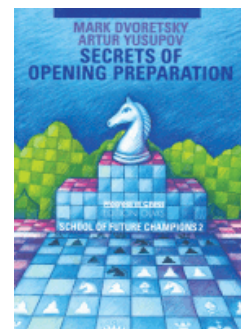
I held training and study sessions in Apeldoorn with local players and with members of the Homburg Apeldoorn team. Some of them quickly became international masters and grandmasters. I even played for the team myself a few times.

In the summer of 1999, van Delft organized an interesting event – a match-tournament between junior teams from Israel and Germany and two Dutch teams. The playing was also combined with coaching sessions. Yusupov and I not only examined the kids' games, but also gave additional lessons. I think this format works superbly for youth competitions – the children don't just play, but also get lessons from professionals. Of course, that isn't feasible at the European and World Championships and so on, where the battle for a result is the most important thing. But there are also unofficial tournaments and festivals where there isn't as much responsibility bearing down on the players.

I liked the idea, and a few months later there was a reciprocal visit to Germany by a Dutch team. The German and Dutch juniors competed again, and Yusupov and I gave them lessons. The coach who was working, very energetically and successfully, with the German junior team at the time, was the young grandmaster Michael Bezold, whom we knew well. He also organized a session at the famous Pulvermühle hotel, which has been host to such chess greats as Bobby Fischer and Paul Keres. He participated in analyzing the games that were played, and at the same time took on the physical preparation of the team, as Michael is also a very good athlete.

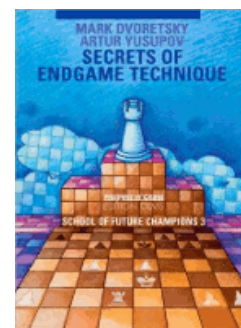
We had planned to continue working with Bezold, but unfortunately that

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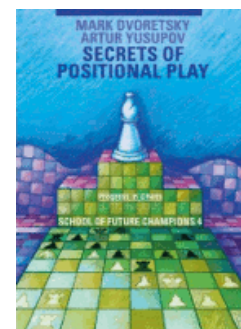
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didn't happen. As a rule federations don't tolerate active and independent people, even if they demonstrate excellent results – it wasn't surprising that Bezold soon lost his job.

I've already mentioned my appearances for the Apeldoorn club team. During one of my visits there in 1999 I played two games on first board. I beat a Dutch master and then faced Viktor Korchnoi as black. The battle continued for almost ninety moves, but I still lost to him. It's surprising: we both lived in the Soviet Union for so many years and never once met over the board, but we managed to play in Holland.

I was invited to play for the local club again in 2010. For the first time I found myself on the same team as Yusupov: Artur was playing on first board and I was on second. I managed to win a rather fun game. Artur said afterwards that he had been looking at my board more than his own – he was so fascinated by what was going on there. I was pleased with my play at first, but when I looked at the game at home with my computer, of course it turned out that I hadn't noticed many fairly simple things. Well, what to do? It's absurd to demand precise play from oneself, not having trained for so many years. My previous game with a normal (not a rapid) time control was actually the one against Korchnoi, eleven years previously!

### Dvoretzky – De Jong

Apeldoorn, 2010

Slav Defense [D10]

**1.c4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.cd cd 4.d4 Nc6?! (4...Nf6)**

I remembered that the move Black had made was at some point considered inaccurate because of the reply 5.e4. There my theoretical knowledge ended, and in particular I didn't know if the indicated evaluation had changed in the past few years. But I realized that I had to make my move very quickly: either immediately decide to go into a position that was new for me or reject it. Thinking here wouldn't change anything: anyway it was impossible to calculate and evaluate the variations that would arise.

**5.e4!? de (5...Nf6 and 5...e6 have also been encountered) 6.d5 Ne5**



[FEN "r1bqkbnr/pp2pppp/8/3Pn3/4p3/2N5/PP3PPP/R1BQKBNR w KQkq - 0 7"]

It was clear to me that the primitive 7.Nxe4?! didn't make any claims to an advantage. At first I was attracted by 7.Qd4 Nd3+ 8.Bxd3 ed 9.Nf3, with the hope of exploiting my obvious lead in development. But I didn't manage to find anything after 9...Nf6 10.0-0 e6. And then I turned my attention to the idea 7.Bf4!? Ng6 (7...Nd3+ 8.Bxd3 ed 9.Qxd3 Nf6 10.Nf3 is bad here now, as on 10...e6?! there's 11.d6, and if 11...Nh5?!, then 12.Qb5+) 8.Bg3. Having noticed that in the case of 8...f5 White had the strong move 9.h4!, I decided to play that way.

White's logic would have been irreproachable if not for one circumstance: my list of candidate moves turned out to be incomplete. For some reason I missed the elementary 7.Qa4+! Bd7 8.Qxe4.

**7.Bf4!? Ng6 8.Bg3 f5 (8...Nf6 is more solid) 9.h4!**

Looking in the megabase on my computer after the game I didn't find a single game in which White played 7.Bf4 (which isn't surprising: the check with the queen from a4 is far too attractive). But still my move wasn't a novelty – a few days earlier this position had arisen at a tournament in Nice in the "rapid" game Aronian – Smeets. After 9...f4 10.Bh2 e5 (10...Nxb4 11.Bxf4) 11.de Bxe6, the simplest way to prove White's advantage is 12.Qa4+! (Levon Aronian preferred 12.h5 Ne5 13.Bxf4 Nd3+ 14.Bxd3 Qxd3 15.Qa4+).

### 9...h5?!

A poor choice, in my view, although also the corresponding "first string" from the computer. 9...e5!? 10.de (10.h5 Nf4) 10...Bxe6 is probably preferable, although after 11.Bb5+ Kf7 12.Nh3, White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

### 10.Nh3 Nf6 11.Ng5 a6



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/1p2p1p1/p4nn1/3P1pNp/4p2P/2N3B1/PP3PP1/R2QKB1R w KQkq - 0 12"]

The most natural means of developing: put the queen on b3, preparing both castling queenside and d5-d6. It's possible to play 12.Qb3 immediately, or give check first: 12.Qa4+!? Bd7 (12...b5 13.Bxb5+), and only now 13.Qb3. I realized that it made sense to think for a while and compare the two alternatives, but I was too lazy to do that, which I regretted a move later.

### 12.Qb3 f4 13.Bh2

13.d6 e6! (13...fg? 14.Qf7+ Kd7 15.0-0-0+?) gave nothing, and if 14.Nxe6, then 14...Qxd6. Now with a black bishop on d7 the move d5-d6 would have led to victory.

### 13...e6?

After a long think my opponent makes a suicidal move. 13...Qd6 14.0-0-0 Nxb4 was necessary.

### 14.de (14.0-0-0!? ed 15.Bc4 is also strong) 14...Bc5 15.Ngxe4

15.Rd1 Qb6 gave nothing, and 15.Bb5+!? Ke7(f8) didn't seem completely clear either. I didn't look at taking on e4 with the other knight, not wanting to expose the a5-e1 diagonal, and this was evidently wrong. Both 15.Ncxe4!? and the even stronger 15.Qa4+! Kf8 16.Ncxe4 put Black in a very difficult position. Then again, the move in the game wasn't bad either.

### 15...Nxe4 16.Qa4+ Ke7

16...Kf8 17.Qxe4 Qf6 is more stubborn, but here again you wouldn't envy Black.

### 17.Qxe4 Qd4



[FEN "r1b4r/1p2k1p1/p3P1n1/2b4p/3qQp1P/2N5/PP3PPB/R3KB1R w KQ - 0 18"]

### 18.Qxg6?

I had seen other possibilities, but I didn't start to study them, as I thought that the move in the game was winning by force. And only after making it on the board did I notice the mistake in my calculations.

18.Nd5+! Kd6 (18...Kf8 19.Qxd4 Bxd4 20.0-0-0 Bxf2 21.Bd3 is also hopeless) 19.Qxg6 Qxf2+ 20.Kd1 Kxd5 21.Rc1!+- led to the aim.

### 18...Qxf2+ 19.Kd1 Rd8+ 20.Bd3 Bxe6

Going into this variation I had in mind 21.Re1 Rd6 22.Bg1, but Black, of course, replies 21...Be3. It would have been worthwhile for me to have studied the position that arises more carefully and to establish that on 22.Re2 there follows not 22...Bg4? (which I feared) 23.Qxg7+ Ke6 24.Qg6+ Ke7 25.Kc2+-, but 22...Rxd3+! 23.Qxd3 Qf1+ 24.Kc2 Qxa1 (threatening 25...Qc1#) 25.Rxe3 fe-/. The continuation 21.Kc1 Be3+ 22.Kb1 Rxd3! 23.Qxd3 Qxg2 24.Rd1 Qxh2 isn't clear either.

### 21.Qxg7+ Ke8?!

After 21...Bf7, White would have to be satisfied with perpetual check.

### 22.Qg6+ Ke7?

22...Bf7? 23.Qe4+ is bad here now, but 22...Kf8! maintained equality, bearing in mind that 23.Qxe6?? Rxd3+ 24.Kc1 is refuted by means of 24...Rxc3+!. On 23.Kc1!?, there's 23...Rxd3! 24.Qxd3 Be3+ 25.Kb1 Qxg2 26.Rd1 Qxh2 27.Qg6 Qh3!=

### 23.Qg5+?

If I'd accurately studied the variation 21.Re1, I would have known that after the destruction of the g7-pawn this move leads to a win: 23.Re1! Be3 24.Re2 Rxd3+ 25.Qxd3 Qf1+ 26.Kc2 Qxa1 27.Rxe3 fe 28.Qh7+. But I was only counting on 24...Bg4, and so I wanted to eat up the h5-pawn with checks first. Which I did manage to do, but only with my opponent's cooperation, of course.

### 23...Ke8? (23...Kf8 24.Qf6+ Bf7= or 24.Qh6+ Ke7 25.Qh7+ Kf8=) 24.Qxh5 + Ke7?

The final blunder. With 24...Bf7 25.Qe2+ Qxe2+ 26.Kxe2 Bh5+ 27.Kd2 Bg6 the outcome of the battle still remains unclear.

### 25.Qg5+ Ke8 26.Qg6+ Ke7



[FEN "r2r4/1p2k3/p3b1Q1/2b5/5p1P/2NB4/PP3qPB/R2K3R w - - 0 27"]

The same position as the one after Black's twentieth move has arisen, but without the g7- and h5-pawns. Now nothing is stopping me from carrying out my final attack.

**27.Re1** (27.Kc1!?) **27...Be3** **28.Re2** **Rxd3+** (28...Qf1+ 29.Kc2 Qxa1 30.Qg7+ Bf7 31.Bc4) **29.Qxd3** **Qf1+** **30.Kc2** **Qxa1** **31.Qh7+** **Bf7** **32.Rxe3+** **fe** **33.Nd5** **+ Ke8** **34.Qe4+** **Kf8** **35.Qe7+** **Kg8** **36.Qg5+** **1-0**

Quite possibly this was the last "serious" game of my life.

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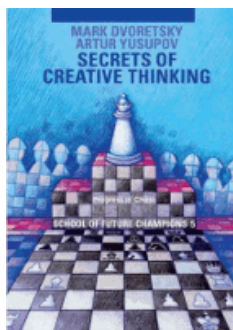
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## The Queen Exchange, Part One

I haven't done a statistical analysis, but I think I'm right in saying that the queens are exchanged in at least half the games of any player. Sometimes the exchange is natural and doesn't provoke any questions, but in a large number of cases the player has to solve a complex problem: who benefits from the exchange of queens, and if the exchange is favorable, how can it be achieved and what version of it should be implemented?

Clearly a transformation of the position as fundamental as exchanging the strongest piece has a significant influence on the character of the battle and its result. It's useful to improve your mastery of this important method, and the wide selection of examples that I offer here will help you do that.

There are no absolute laws in chess, no rules exist that are without exceptions. One and the same problem can be treated in a diametrically opposite way – compare, for example, the two well-known pieces of advice: "Do not exchange from a position of weakness!" and "Go youthfully to the endgame!" And yet there are frequent cases when a player who has taken or that template into his armory, sometimes even a clearly unsuccessful one, then follows it strictly without paying any attention to the specific circumstances.

For example, some people naively believe that against higher-rated opponents you should play more simply, exchange pieces – thereby increasing the chances of achieving the desired draw.

I'll give an episode that was described in the book [Secrets of Chess Training](#) by Dvoretsky and Yusupov.

In the summer of 1991 I gave lessons to some young American players. To my surprise I found that many of them, when they were playing important games or facing a more distinguished opponent, didn't want to play actively, but only thought about drawing. Clearly the result turned out to be the exact opposite – their ultra-cautious, passive play most often led to a worsening of their position.

**Michael Granne – Dvoretsky**  
Blitz game, 1991

**1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 4.f4 d6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be3 Qb6 7.Qd2 Nd7?**

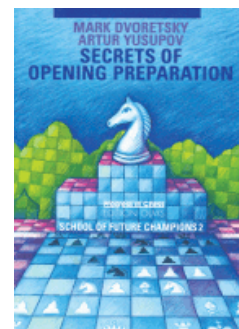
I forgot to exchange on f3 first and Black's entire setup immediately looked ridiculous.

**8.Be2 Qa5 9.0-0 b5**



[FEN "r3k1nr/p2nppbp/2pp2p1/q6/3PPPb1/2N1BN2/PPQB1PP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 10"]

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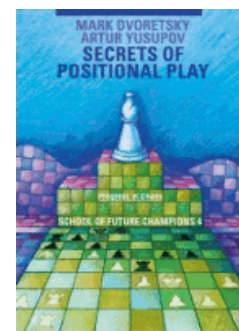
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Black doesn't develop his knight to f6, fearing e4-e5. But the pawn attack on the queenside with the white king castled kingside is also unpromising. My opponent could most easily underscore his huge lead in development by playing 10.h3. Instead of that Michael undertook a completely absurd exchange operation.

**10.Ng5?! Bxe2 11.Nxe2? Qxd2** (thank you!) **12.Bxd2 h6 13.Nf3 Ngf6** (now it's also possible to develop the knight) **14.e5 Nd5**. Black has a playable position; later he won the ending.

"Why on earth did you exchange queens?" I asked my opponent.

"I didn't know how I should play."

"Any way you like, but with the queens on the board! White has excellent chances of an attack."

In general Michael is a fighting player with an active style, but here a common reflex probably went into action (one that's mistaken at its root) – the desire to play more quietly, "more solidly" against a stronger partner. In actual fact this approach only helps your opponent and usually makes his task easier.

Stories like this occur everywhere, and not only with American school kids. In the fall of 2004 my then student Ernesto Inarkiev played successfully for the Tomsk team at the European Champions' Cup in Turkey, scoring six out of seven. Examining the games he played I was amused to see that in the first three rounds his opponents made exactly the same mistake – they themselves offered to go into an endgame that would be unfavorable for them.

**Ristoja – Inarkiev**  
Izmir, 2004



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/pp4b1/2n3pp/2p1p3/3pP3/1P1P1N2/1PPBN1PP/R3QRK1 w - - 0 16"]

**1.?**

Black controls more space in the center and on the queenside. A certain pressure that White can create on the enemy king's position may serve as compensation. 16.Qg3 Kh7 suggested itself, and now either 17.h3 with a subsequent Nh2-g4, or 17.h4, planning not only to carry out the same knight transfer to g4, but also to play h4-h5 when the opportunity arises. I think that the players' chances are roughly equal.

In the game White offered an exchange of queens without any justification for doing so, thereby eliminating his opponent's worries about the kingside and untying his hands on the other flank.

**16.Qh4? Qxh4 17.Nxh4 Bg4! 18.Ng3 Kh7 19.h3 Be6 20.Nf3 Kg8!**

A good prophylactic move. By playing h3-h4-h5 White planned to win squares for his king, which was standing idle on g3. Now on 21.h4 there's 21... h5 22.Ng5 Bg4.

But still White should have played like this (the g5-square could be useful in future), or, acting on the "principle of the worst piece" (see Alexei Kosikov's lecture from the book Positional Play by Dvoretsky and Yusupov), send the poorly-positioned g3 knight off on the route h1-f2-g4. For some reason White brought his other knight there, which wasn't badly positioned on f3.

**21.Nh2 a5 22.Ng4 Kh7 23.Rxf8 Rxf8 24.Rf1 Rxf1+ 25.Kxf1 Nb4 26.Bxb4 cb**

A pawn attack on the queenside, supported by the two powerful bishops, quickly leads to the goal.

**27.Ke1 b5 28.Ne2 Kg8 29.Nh2 h5 30.Kd1** (30.Nf3 is a little more stubborn) **30...Kf7 31.Nf3 Kf6 0-1**

**Inarkiev – Schebler**

Izmir, 2004



[FEN "r1q2rk1/p4ppp/1p6/2nQ4/3R4/P1N2P2/1P4PP/2KR4 b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

Black preserved a playable position in the middlegame after 19...Ne6 20.Rc4 Qe8. Most likely 19...b5! 20.Kb1 is even more accurate, and only now 20...Ne6 or 20...Rb8!?

**19...Qe6? 20.Qxe6 Nxe6 21.Rd7**

In the ending White is better – his pieces are more active, and in the event of subsequent exchanges the white king comes into play more quickly.

**21...Rfe8** (21...Rfd8!?) **22.Kb1 Nc5 23.R7d5 Kf8 24.Nb5 g6?!**

He should have gone for 24...a6, as 25.Nd6 Rc6 26.Nc4 Rac8 isn't dangerous. On 25.Nc3 there also follows 25...Rc6+/-.

**25.h4** (a provocative move) **25...h5?**

The provocation worked! It's usually favorable to use this method to prevent a pawn attack by your opponent, but in this case the move g2-g4 hasn't been prevented, but on the contrary gains strength, as it leads to the creation of a passed pawn on the h-file.

**26.g4! hg 27.fg a6** (or 27...Kg7!? 28.Nd6 Rc7 29.h5+/-) **28.Nd6 Rc6 29.h5 Rd8?** (29...Kg8 is more stubborn) **30.h6 f6 31.h7 1-0**

**Rotstein – Inarkiev**

Izmir, 2004





[FEN "4r1k1/1q2r1b1/1p1p1n1n/1Pp1ppp1/2P5/2NPP1P1/1B1Q3P/4RRNK w - - 0 33"]

1.?

For a long time the players skillfully maintained the tension in a difficult-to-evaluate situation, and finally White lost his cool.

**33.Qg2?**

33.e4 unclear was necessary.

**33...Qxg2+ 34.Kxg2 e4!**

Now White's position falls apart instantly. On 35.d4, there follows 35...cd 36. ed Rc7.

**35.Na4 Ra7! 36.Bxf6 (36.Nxb6 Ra2) 36...Rxa4 37.Bxg5 ed 38.Bxh6 Bxh6 39.Rxf5 Rxe3 40.Ref1 d2 41.Rd5 Re1 (41...Ra2! 42.Rf2 Re1) 42.Nf3 Ra2,** and Black won easily.

And in the following game, which was played a few years later, Inarkiev himself made a serious mistake on the same theme.

**Inarkiev – Wang Yue**  
Baku, 2008



[FEN "r4rk1/1q3ppp/p3p3/5b2/QPR2B2/P3P3/5PPP/2R3K1 w - - 0 28"]

1.?

White is not only a pawn up, but also has significantly more actively-positioned pieces. His opponent can only place his hopes on the opposite-colored bishops, but that factor will only make itself felt in the endgame, which would seem to be a long way off.

28.Bc7! suggested itself. With that move White kept both enemy rooks on the back rank. Then he could have continued f2-f3, e3-e4, Rc5, h2-h4-h5, retaining all the winning chances.

Instead of that Ernesto decided to play "more accurately": **28.Qc6??** Exchanging queens brings the affair closer to the endgame, and, what's more, Black now manages to activate one of his rooks.

**28...Qxc6 29.Rxc6 f6 30.Bd6**

On 30.Bc7!? his opponent would have replied 30...e5 31.f3 Rf7 32.e4 Bd7.

**30...Rfd8 31.Bc7 Rd3 32.a4 e5 33.R6c5**

33.b5 ab 34.ab Ra2 35.b6 Rb3 isn't dangerous.

**33...Bd7**

33...Rb3 34.b5 ab 35.Rxb5 Ra3 36.a5 Rc8 is also possible, with a subsequent 37...Bd3.

**34.Ra5**

The battle ends in a draw in the variation 34.b5 ab 35.ab Ra2 36.b6 Rb2 37. Ra5 Rdd2 38.Ra8+ Kf7 39.Rd8 Ke7 40.Rf1 Rdc2 and 41...Bb5.

**34...Rc8** (threatening 35...Rxc7) **35.h3 Rb3 36.Rc4** (36.Rxa6? Rxb4, with the threat of 37...Rb7) **36...Ra3 37.Rxa6 Rxa4 38.Ra5 Kf7**

The position has almost equalized, and a peace treaty was signed twenty moves later.

Finding the strongest move 28.Bc7! that I suggested is much easier if you're familiar with the classic example on this theme.

**Karpov – Unzicker**

Olympiad, Nice, 1974



queens was far less obvious.

**Adams – Van Wely**  
Dortmund, 2005



[FEN \"2r2k1/5p2/p1q1p2p/6bP/1p4P1/3B1Q2/PPP5/1K1R2R1 w -- 0 27\"]

1.?

**27.Qxc6?!**

*Hydra Syndrome* – grandmaster Sergei Shipov commented on this exchange. Shortly before the tournament in Dortmund Michael Adams had lost a match disastrously to the computer program Hydra – he only scored half a point in six games. Not wanting to compete with the computer at calculating complicated variations, the English grandmaster exchanged pieces at the first convenient moment.

This strategy is sensible in principle in a battle against a computer, especially bearing in mind the fact that Michael has a deserved reputation for his high level of technique when playing quiet, maneuvering positions. But still, simplifying the game isn't always objectively justified, and sometimes leads only to a worsening of the position.

That was the case here: Adams obviously wasn't satisfied with the results of the opening and hoped that by exchanging queens he could get closer to his desired drawing outcome. In actual fact Black's advantage increases in the endgame, as he can easily activate his king, while the white king's mobility is restricted by the enemy bishop and b4-pawn. With the queens on the board that circumstance wouldn't have any significance, which is why after 27.Qe2 or 27.Be4 Black is left with only a slight advantage.

**27...Rxc6-/+ 28.Rge1 Rcd6 29.Re5 Rd4 30.Rg1 R8d6 31.b3** (*This isn't a little window, it's a trapdoor to hell* – Shipov) **31...Bf6 32.Ree1 Kg7!** (the king starts its journey to the opponent's camp) **33.a4 a5 34.Ref1 Bg5 35.Rg2 Bf4!** (securing a path to g5 for the king) **36.Rgf2 e5 37.Kb2 Kf6! 38.Bf5 Kg5 39.c4 Be3** (39...bc+ isn't bad either) **40.Rc2 Rd1 41.Rxd1 Rxd1 42.Re2 Kf4 43.Kc2**

If 43.c5, then 43...Rd5! 44.c6 Rc5 45.Rc2 Bd4+ 46.Kc1 Bc3 47.Bd7 e4.

**43...Rd6 44.Re1 Rd2+ 45.Kb1 Bd4 46.Kc1 Rf2 47.c5 Rf3!** (of course, not 47...Bxc5? 48.Re4+!) **48.c6 Rc3+ 49.Kd2 Rxc6 50.Rf1+ Kg3 51.Be4 Rc3 52.Bd5 Kxg4 53.Bxf7 e4 54.Bc4 Be3+** (54...Bf2!?) **0-1**

After this wide-ranging introduction we'll move on (in subsequent columns) to a systematic examination of episodes on the theme of "the queen exchange."



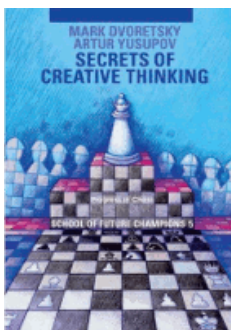
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## The Queen Exchange

### Part Two

I've divided up the whole set of examples that I have to offer you into several groups. The division isn't set in stone, of course, as many positions could find a place in other columns too.

Almost all the positions can be considered exercises – usually straightforward ones (the sign of an exercise will be a question mark under a diagram next to an indication of whose turn it is to move). I recommend that before you read the text you try to look for the solution to the exercises on your own (which is given with full annotation).

#### Forced Play

Often the decision to exchange queens is associated not with the positional peculiarities of the situation that has been created, but purely tactical ones: it's by this method that we can manage to direct play towards a tactical variation that's favorable to us.

#### Hebert – Portisch

Interzonal tournament, Rio de Janeiro, 1979



[FEN "8/6kp/2bp2p1/2q1p3/Np2P3/1P1Q2P1/2P3KP/8 b - - 0 43"]

1...?

43...Qc5-d4!

An exchange of queens leads to winning material or a breakthrough of the passed pawn to become a queen.

44.Qd3xd4

In the game there was 44.Qe2 Bxe4+ 45.Kf1 Bf5 0-1.

44...e5xd4 45.Kg2-f3 d4-d3!

Of course, not 45...Bxa4? 46.ba d3 47.Ke3!+.

46.c2xd3 Bc6xa4-+

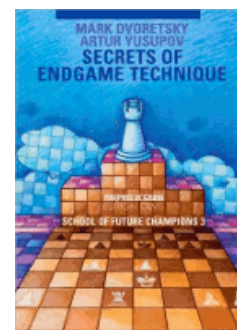
Georgi – Mikhail Tseitlin  
Balatonbereny, 1989

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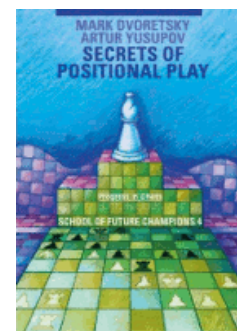
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[FEN "8/p7/1p6/4P2p/P1PPbqk1/Q7/  
1P4P1/6K1 b - - 0 45"]

1...?

45...Qf4-g3!-+

In the endgame Black mates or promotes his pawn to a queen.

46.Qxg3+ Kxg3 47.e6 (47.Kf1 Bxg2+ 48.Ke2 h4 49.e6 h3) 47...Bxg2 48.e7  
(48.d5 h4 49.e7 h3) 48...Bc6 49.b4 h4 50.d5 Be8 0-1

**Karpov – J. Polgar**

Linares, 1994



[FEN "r3k2r/p7/1qp1bp2/2Qp1n1p/8/  
BPP5/3N1PPP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 18"]

1.?

18.Qc5xb6! a7xb6 19.Ba3-c5!

White wins a pawn: 19...Rxa1 (19...Rb8 20.Bxb6) 20.Rxa1, threatening 21.  
Ra8+ and 21.Bxb6.

Karpov didn't notice the favorable tactical possibility for him and simply  
played 18.Bb4?! Kf7 19.Ra4! Qxc5 20.Bxc5 a6 21.f3+/-.

**Belavsky – Hjartarson**

Moscow, 1990



[FEN "4rrk1/pp1b1ppp/8/2nBq3/2P1PN2/  
Pn2BR2/1Q4PP/1R4K1 w - - 0 22"]



1.?

**22.Qb2xe5! Re8xe5 23.Nf4-d3! 1-0**

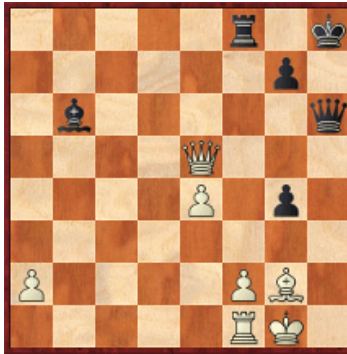
Black resigned because of 23...Nxd3 24.Rxb3 Ne1, and now either 25.Rf2 (threatening 26.Kf1) 25...Ba4 26.Rc3+-, or 25.Rf1 Nc2 26.Bc5+-.

### Playing for an Attack

Theoretically everything is clear here: when you're attacking it's desirable to protect the most important attacking piece from an exchange. But making this simple idea a reality isn't always easy.

**Anand – Topalov**

Dortmund, 2001



[FEN "5r1k/6p1/1b5q/4Q3/4P1p1/8/P4PB1/5RK1 b - - 0 40"]

1...?

Veselin Topalov chose **40...Qh4?**, and after **41.Qh2 Bxf2+ 42.Kh1 Qxh2+** (42...g5 43.Qxh4+ gh 44.a4! h3 45.Bxh3 gh 46.a5=) **43.Kxh2** an ending arose that despite being better for Black was still objectively drawn.

But meanwhile the game could literally have ended in two moves.

**40...Rf8-f4!**

Black prevents the exchange of queens and creates the formidable threat of 41...g3.

**41.Qe5-c3 Qh6-h4+**

**Fischer – Spassky**

Fourth match game, Reykjavik, 1972



[FEN "7r/5pk1/4p3/p1b1q1p1/2B5/P4Q1P/1PP3P1/3R3K b - - 0 31"]

1...?

White plans 32.Rf1 or 32.Qc3. Nothing comes from 31...Qxb2?! 32.Rf1 Rf8

33.c3, threatening 34.Qf6+.

In the game there followed **31...Bd6?! 32.Qc3! Qxc3 33.bc Be5** (33...Bxa3 34.Ra1) **34.Rd7 Kf6 35.Kg1 Bxc3 36.Be2 Be5 37.Kf1 Rc8 38.Bh5 Rc7 39.Rxc7 Bxc7 40.a4 Kc7 41.Ke2 f5 42.Kd3 Be5 43.c4 Kd6 44.Bf7 Bg3 45.c5+ 1/2-1/2.**

By allowing the exchange of queens, in essence Boris Spassky let go of the advantage that he had. It's difficult to explain why he failed to play a powerful prophylactic move.

### **31...Rh8-h4!**

With this Black fends off both of his opponent's ideas and preserves a dangerous initiative. For example, 32.Rf1 (after 32.b3? Bd6 White has to give up the exchange, and 32...g4! is even stronger) 32...Rf4 33.Qe2 Rxf1+ 34.Qxf1 Qxb2 (34...Bd6 35.Qg1 Qxb2 isn't bad either), or 32.Be2 Rf4 33.Qh5 Rf2.

**Karpov – Timman**  
Mar del Plata, 1982



[FEN "2r2rk1/1p3pp1/p2p3p/2nPp3/6Pq/4PB2/PPP4P/1K1RQ2R b - - 0 22"]

### **1...?**

White has just played 22.Qd2-e1?!. In the event of an exchange on e1, an equal endgame arises. More dangerous for his opponent is the subtle plan to transfer his queen to the queenside, where the queen and knight, as often happens, form a powerful tandem.

### **22...Qh4-d8!**

Threatening 23...Qb6 and 24...Na4. Even such a skillful defender as Anatoly Karpov unquestionably would find himself powerless to quell Black's attacking surge.

In connection with that we should admit that White's last move was unsuccessful. 22.e4! was significantly stronger, intending 23.Rdg1 and 24.g5. Then again, as Jan Timman pointed out, after 22...Rc7 23.Rdg1 f6 his opponent was hardly likely to find any method of improving his position other than 24.Qe1. But here Black would now have to go for an exchange of queens, leading to approximate equality.

### **23.e4 Qb6 24.Qe3 Qb5! 25.h4 Na4 26.Qb3 Rc5!**

Black prepares to double his rooks, exploiting the circumstance that in the situation that has been created his opponent mustn't exchange queens. I offer a curious variation for your perusal that illustrates the difficulties facing White: 27.g5!? Rfc8 28.Rc1 (28.c3 Qa5 29.Be2 Rxc3! 30.bc Nxc3+ 31.Ka1 Nxe2 with a subsequent Nd4) 28...Qa5 29.Be2 Rc3! 30.Qxb7 R3c7! (but not 30...Qd8? 31.Qb4!) 31.Qb3 Nc5! 32.Qe3 Rb8 33.c4 Rxb2+!! 34.Kxb2 Rb7+ 35.Kc2 Qxa2+ 36.Kd1 Rb3 37.Qd2 Rb2! 38.Qe3 Nb3 and 39...Nxc1+.

### **27.Rh3 Rfc8 28.c3 (28.Rc1? Rxc2!) 28...R8c7 29.Ka1**

29.Re1 Nxc3+! 30.bc Qd3+ 31.Ka1 Rb5 loses immediately. And on 29.Rg3, besides the prophylactic move 29...g6!, preventing the opening of lines on the kingside, there's also a surprising piece sacrifice: 29...Nxc3+!? 30.bc Qxb3+ 31.ab Rxc3 32.Kb2 Re3!.

### 29...Qd7!

White has repelled the first wave of the attack (and, by the way, has prepared an exchange of queens on b5) – so Timman moves his queen away, switching to a pawn assault on the queenside.

**30.Be2 b5 31.a3** (31.Qb4 a5! 32.Qxa5 b4 33.Qxb4 Rb7) **31...a5 32.Kb1 Rb7 33.Rg3 g6!**

Timman skillfully synchronizes his attack with his opponent's prophylactic reciprocal actions. Using a typical method he guarantees the safety of the kingside.

**34.g5 h5 35.Bf1 Rcc7 36.Qc2 b4 37.ab ab 38.c4 b3!?** (38...Nc5! is simpler, intending 39...Ra7) **39.Qg2**

White had more practical chances with 39.Rxb3 Rxb3 40.Qxb3. Timman looked at 40...Rb7 41.Bh3! Rxb3 42.Bxd7 Nxb2 (42...Rxb2+ 43.Kc1 Rb4 44.Bxa4 Rxa4 45.c5! dc 46.Kc2 isn't completely convincing either) 43.Kc2 Rb6 (or 43...Nxd1 44.Kxb3 Nf2 45.c5 dc 46.Kc4 Nxe4 47.Ba4 Kf8 48.Bc2 Nd6 49.Kxc5 Ke7 50.Kc6 – Dvoretzky), proving a win for Black with 44.c5 and 44.Rb1. But White preserves real counterplay by continuing 44.Re1! Nxc4 45.Kc3 Na5 46.Ra1.

Instead of 40...Rb7?! the continuation 40...Nxb2! 41.Bh3 Qe7 42.Qxb2 Rb7 is much stronger, with a winning position.

**39...Rb4** (39...Qc8 probably led to the goal more quickly, preparing Qa8 and Nc5) **40.Qh3 Qxh3**

Not compulsory, but a completely possible decision – Black's attack is strong enough even without the queens.

**41.Rxh3 Nc5 42.Kc1 Nxe4 43.Re3 Nc5 44.Kd2 Na4 45.Rc1 Nxb2 46.c5** (46.Kc3 Nxc4 47.Kxb4 Nxe3 48.Rxc7 Nxd5+) **46...Rd4+ 47.Ke2 Rxc5 48.Rxc5 dc 49.Rxb3 Nc4 50.Rc3 Rxh4 51.Ke1 0-1**

### Neutralizing your Opponent's Attack

If our king is in danger (even if the danger is potential or latent), then exchanging off the strongest enemy piece is favorable to us, as a rule.

### Kasparov – Karpov

Thirteenth game of the second match, Moscow, 1985



[FEN "r2q1rk1/3p2pp/bp2p3/4Q3/3B4/6P1/P3PP1P/R4RK1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?



It's favorable for Black to exchange queens (thereby attacking the e2-pawn), to get closer to a saving endgame with opposite-colored bishops. In a middlegame, though, on the contrary, his position is alarming precisely because of the presence of opposite-colored bishops on the board, which, as is well known, strengthen an attack.

**18...Qd8-f6! 19.Qe5-e3**

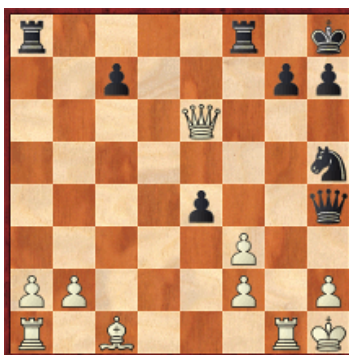
On 19.Qd6, there's both 19...Qf7 (threatening 20...Bxe2) and 19...e5!?

**19...Qf6-h6!**

**20.Qxh6** (20.Qe4 d5 21.Qe5 Rf5) **20...gh 21.Rfe1 Bc4 22.a3** (22.a4 Bb3) **22...b5 23.Rad1 Rf5 24.Bb2 Rd5** ½-½

**Alburt – Rohde**

U.S. Championship, Estes Park, 1986



[FEN "r4r1k/2p3pp/4Q3/7n/4p2q/5P2/PP3P1P/R1B3RK w - - 0 21"]

**1.?**

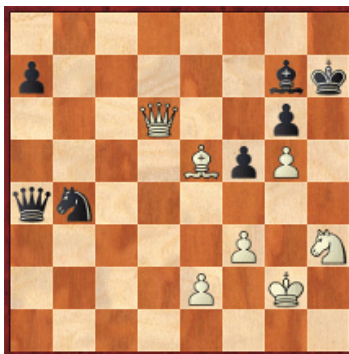
**21.Qe6-g4!+-**

Exchanging queens is the simplest way to crush Black's hopes of an attack. For example, 21...Qxg4 22.fg Nf6 23.Be3 Nd5 24.Bc5+-.

**21...Qxf2 22.Qxh5 ef 23.Bh6! 1-0**

**Korchnoi – Spangenberg**

Buenos Aires, 1993



[FEN "8/p5bk/3Q2p1/4BpP1/qn6/5P1N/4P1K1/8 b - - 0 41"]

**1...?**

Black has to deal with Qe7(c7) or Nf4. The response 41...Qb5? 42.Bxg7 Qxe2 + 43.Nf2 Nc2 (43...Kxg7 44.Qxb4) 44.Bd4 Ne1+ 45.Kh2 Nxf3+ 46.Kg3+- doesn't work.

After 41...Bxe5?! 42.Qxe5 Qd7 43.Nf4, Black's position remains alarming.

**41...Qa4-a6!=/+**

In connection with the threat of 42...Qxe2+, Black forces an exchange of queens and thereby eliminates all the danger.

**42.Qxa6 Nxa6 43.Bd6 Bc3 44.e4 fe 45.fe Bb4 46.e5 Kg7 47.Kf3 Bxd6 48.ed Nc5 49.Ke3 Kf7 ½-½**

The next two considerably more complicated examples are taken from my duels with top-class opponents.

### **Petrosian – Dvoretsky**

Vilnius, 1978



[FEN "r2r2k1/pp2qpp1/2p1bn1p/8/4P3/P1R3N1/1PQ2PPP/1B3RK1 b - - 0 22"]

**1...?**

White threatens e4-e5; on 22...Nd7(h7) or 22...g6 the response 23.f4 is very strong. In order to weaken White's attack it makes sense to exchange queens.

**22...Qe7-d6! 23.f2-f4 Qd6-d4+!**

It's important to worsen the position of the white king – the weakness of the back rank will then help Black.

**24.Kg1-h1 Qd4-d2**

In the ending White still retains the initiative, but it isn't as formidable as with a pawn attack in the middlegame.

**25.f5 Qxc2 26.Bxc2 Bd7 27.e5 Ng4**

I rejected 27...Nd5 because of 28.Rb3 b6 29.Nh5. Then again, after 29...Kh8 30.Rg3 Rg8 Black's position remains stable, and it isn't clear whether White has a real advantage. For example, on 31.Kg1 Rae8 32.Re1 (with the idea of a subsequent improvement of his position by means of Kf2, Rf3, g4, Bb3 and so on) there follows 32...Re7 33.Kf2 Bxf5! 34.Bxf5 g6, with approximate equality.

A tactical attempt at defending: 28...c5?! (instead of 28...b6) is justified with 29.Rxb7? Ne3 or 29.Nh5?! Ba4. White gets an advantage anyway by means of 29.Be4 Bc6 30.Nh5! Re8 (30...Ne7 31.Bxc6 Nxc6 32.e6! fe 33.Rxb7) 31.e6! fe 32.Rg3.

**28.Nh5!?**

28.e6 Be8! is unclear, but 28.Re1!? deserved serious attention, and 28...Re8 is bad because of 29.e6! fe 30.Bb3+/- . I would have to reply 28...f6! 29.Bb3+ Kh7 30.e6 Be8 (intending Rd2; h5), but after 31.Nf1! with a subsequent Ne3 Black has to conduct an unpleasant defense.

**28...Nxe5 29.Rg3 Kh8** (29...Kf8 30.Rxg7 is weaker, as 30...Be8? 31.f6 and 32.Bh7 loses) **30.Rxg7 Be8 31.Rg3** (31.f6 Rd2 unclear) **31...Rd2 32.Nf6 Bd7**, and the game ended in a draw.

For a long time I was sure that the queen exchange Black undertook was practically forced, and I only recently found a worthy alternative to the move 24...Qd2!? But not 24...Bg4? 25.e5 Bd1 26.Qc1 Ng4 27.h3! (the simplest) 27...Nf2+ 28.Kh2+- when Black's minor pieces are stuck in his opponent's camp, but **24...Ng4!?**

25.f5?! Bd7 leads to conceding the e5-square: 26.Qe2 Ne5 27.Nh5 Be8! 28.Rg3 Qd2 with counterplay that compensates for the loss of the g7-pawn, or 26.h3 Nf6! (26...Ne5 27.Nh5 and 28.Rg3 is weaker) 27.Rd1 Qe5 28.Rcd3 Re8 29.Qb3 Re7! counterplay.

The main line is interesting: **25.e5 Kf8! 26.Qe2!?** (if 26.f5 Bd5 27.e6 counting on 27...Ne3?? 28.e7+! Kxe7 29.Re1+-, then 27...Re8!? unclear) **26...Qd2 27.Bd3!?** (27.Qf3 Qxb2 with the idea of 28...Nf2+ is unconvincing) **27...Qxe2 28.Bxe2 Rd2!!** (28...h5 29.f5 Bd5 30.e6 with the initiative for White is weaker) **29.h3** (29.f5 Bd5 30.Bxg4 Bxg2+ 31.Kg1 Bxf1 32.Nxf1 Rxb2=+/+) **29...h5!** counterplay (on 30.hg there follows 30...h4). True, finding and precisely calculating this path at the board is virtually impossible. Exchanging queens is still simpler and sounder.

### Korchnoi – Dvoretsky

Dutch League, Apeldoorn, 1999

**1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.Bb5+ Nd7 5.a4 Be7 6.f4 ef 7.Bxf4 Ngf6 8.Nc3 0-0 9.Nf3 Nh5 (9...Ng4!?) 10.Bd2**

On 10.Be3, there's both 10...Ndf6!? 11.0-0 Ng4 and 10...Bf6!? 11.0-0 Qe7.

**10...Bh4+!** (a useful interim check) **11.g3 Bf6 12.0-0 g6 13.Bh6 Ng7 14.Bf4 Qe7 15.Qd2 Ne5 16.Bxe5!?** **Bxe5 17.Qh6 f6**

As Viktor Korchnoi pointed out after the game, 17...Bf6!? (with the idea of Nh5, Bg7) was possible, as 18.e5 de 19.d6? Qxd6 20.Ne4 Nf5! doesn't work.

17...Bd4+!? 18.Kg2 Nh5 (with the same idea Bg7) isn't bad either.

**18.Nxe5 Qxe5** (of course, not 18...fe? 19.Rxf8+ Qxf8 20.Qh4! with a subsequent Rf1) **19.Rf4**



[FEN "r1b2rk1/pp4np/3p1ppQ/1BpPq3/P3PR2/2N3P1/1PP4P/R5K1 b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

Fearing an attack I forced an exchange of queens without putting much thought into it: **19...Qh5? 20.Qxh5 Nxh5**. But after **21.Rf2** the endgame turned out to be difficult: my opponent quickly creates threats to the queenside and the weak d6-pawn. For example, 21...Bh3 22.a5 a6 (otherwise 23.a6) 23.Bf1 Bd7 24.Ra3!, and then Rb3-b6+/-, or 21...a6 22.Be2 Ng7 23.a5 Bd7 24.Ra3!, with a subsequent Rb3-b6+/-.

**21...Bg4?!** (in the hope of 22.Be2 Bxe2 23.Nxe2 Kf7 and 24...Ke7, or 22.Raf1 Bh3) **22.Kg2! a6 23.h3!**, and White has an overwhelming positional advantage. I defended stubbornly, and at one point I even got chances of saving myself, but I still lost on the eighty-seventh move.

I shouldn't have exchanged the active queen on e5 – it was the only piece that was capable of creating reciprocal threats.

### 19...a7-a6!

Probably the soundest means of parrying the threat of 20.Rh4 – Black banishes the bishop to get the e8-square for his knight. The knight would be less well positioned on h5 in the variations 19...Nh5 20.Rf2 or 19...Rf7 20.Rh4!? Nh5 (threatening 21...Qg5) 21.Qe3. Possible, although also fairly risky is 19...Qd4+!? 20.Kh1 Qd2 (or 20...Qe3!?). To defend against 21...Nh5 White plays either 21.Rd1 Qxc2 22.Rh4 Nh5 23.Be2 Qxb2 24.Bxh5 gh 25.Qxh5 Rf7 unclear or 21.Be2!?, after which 21...Qxc2? 22.Rh4 Qxb2 23.Qxh7+ Kf7 24.Rf1 Qxc3 25.Rh6 with a very dangerous attack is unfavorable.

### 20.Bb5-e2

20.Rh4? doesn't work, on which the simplest reply is 20...Nh5 21.Be2 Qg5!-/ +.

### 20...Rf8-f7

Now in the case of Rh4 the knight can retreat to e8.

### 21.Ra1-f1 Bc8-d7 22.Rf4-h4 Ng7-e8 23.Be2-g4

If 23.a5, then 23...Nc7 and 24...Nb5.

### 23...Bd7xg4 24.Rh4xg4 b7-b5!

It isn't clear who is better.

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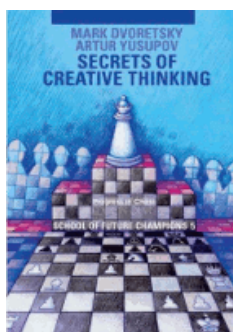
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## The Queen Exchange Part Three

### The Opponent's Active Queen

A specific implementation of a general principle: it makes sense to exchange off active enemy pieces.

**Makarychev – Naumkin**  
Moscow Championship, 1983



[FEN "4k2r/p1R1npp1/4p2p/3pP2P/6P1/q7/3B1P2/3QK3 w k - 0 29"]

1.?

Apparently you should play for an attack. But the tempting 29.Qb1? is a mistake because of 29...0-0! 30.Bb4 Qf3, and White is already threatened with deadly danger (31.Qc2 d4! 32.Bxe7 d3 33.Qd1 Qe4+ 34.Kd2 Rb8, and so on).

**29.Qd1-c1!**

By exchanging queens White prevents castling and, despite being two pawns down, gets a big advantage. But with the queens on the board, castling, even if it's associated with losing a knight, is still possible: the open position of the white king guarantees Black real counter-chances. So you should play 29...Qa4! (or 29...Qb3) 30.f3! 0-0! 31.Rxe7 Qd4+/-.

**29...Qxc1+? 30.Bxc1** (threatening 31.Ba3) **30...Kd8 31.Rxa7 Re8 32.Ba3 f6 33.f4 fe 34.fe Nc6 35.Rxg7 Nxe5 36.Bd6 Nc6 37.g5 hg 38.h6 Nd4 39.h7 Nf5 40.Bc7+ Kc8 41.Rg8 1-0**

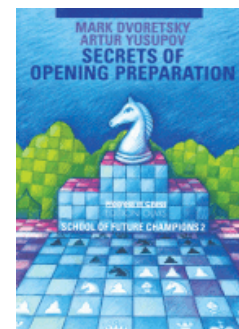
**Cooper – Petrosian**  
Olympiad, Buenos Aires, 1978

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bg5 c5 5.d5 d6** (5...Bxc3+ 6.bc d6) **6.e3** (6.Rc1!?) **6...Bxc3+ 7.bc e5 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.f4!?**

On 9.f3 there follows 9...Nf8, intending Ng6 and h7-h6. Tigran Petrosian recommends 9.Ne2! with the idea of 9...Nf8 10.Ng3 h6 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.Nh5 Qg5 13.h4 Qxg2 14.Ng3+-. Black defends with 9...h6 10.Bh4 e4! 11.Bc2 Qe7.

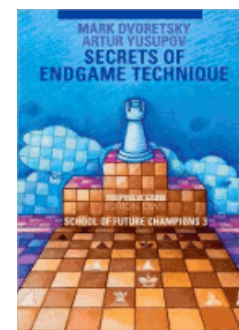
**9...h6 10.Bh4 Rg8 11.Nh3!** (11.Nf3? e4! 12.Bxe4 g5) **11...Qa5 12.Qd2** (Petrosian's suggestion 12.Kd2?! is dubious because of 12...b5!, and 13.cb? c4! loses) **12...e4 13.Be2 Qa4** (threatening 14...Nb6) **14.Nf2 g5 15.fg hg 16.**

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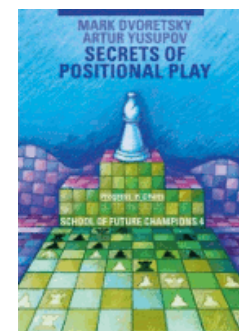
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## Bg3 Nb6



[FEN "r1b1k1r1/pp3p2/1n1p1n2/2pP2p1/q1P1p3/2P1P1B1/P2QBNPP/R3K2R w KQq - 0 17"]

1.?

17.Bxd6? Nxc4 18.Bxc4 Qxc4-/+ is unfavorable. To make the c4-pawn safe White exchanged queens.

**17.Qd1 Qxd1+ 18.Rxd1** (18.Kxd1!? Ke7 19.Kd2) **18...Ke7 19.h4 Bf5! 20.0-0 Nbd7! 21.Rb1! b6 22.h5 Rg7 23.Bh2 g4!** (not allowing 24.g4+/-) **24.Nh1 Bh7** In the complicated ending that arose the players' chances were roughly equal.

It was worth at least postponing the exchange operation.

**17.0-0!**

This move sets a subtle trap for his opponent – the pawn capture is refuted in a non-obvious way.

17...Nxc4? 18.Qd1!! Nb6 (with 18...Qxd1 19.Nxd1 both black knights find themselves under fire) 19.Qb1! (not only threatening a deadly check on b5, but also aiming at the e4-pawn) 19...Bd7 (19...Kd8 20.Bxd6 is also hopeless) 20.Bd1! (20.Bxd6 Nbx5 is much less convincing) 20...Qc4 (20...Qa5 21.Nxe4) 21.Bb3 Qe2 22.Re1 with a subsequent 23.Nxe4, and the defense collapses.

Black is also noticeably worse with 17...Ke7?! 18.Nd1! Rg6 19.Nb2 Qa3 (19...Qe8!?) 20.Rf2 Bd7 21.Raf1.

The only sound path is 17...Rg6! – by defending the knight Black revives the threat of taking the pawn and maintains approximate equality. It's clear that from a practical point of view it made sense for White to test this chance (then again, first he had to find it).

I showed this example at a training camp before the World Junior Championships in 2004. The kids suggested another curious method of solving the problem of the weak c4-pawn: 17.Nd1!? If 17...Nxc4, then 18.Nb2! Nxb2 19.Qxb2+/- . Black's situation is no better after 17...Bg4 18.0-0 Bxe2 19.Nb2! and 20.Rxf6, and 17...Ke7 18.0-0 takes the affair into the variation examined above (17.0-0 Ke7?! 18.Nd1). In the end we found the consolidating maneuver 17...Qd7! 18.0-0 Qe7 (with a subsequent Nb6-d7-e5) – it isn't easy for White to attack here, mainly because of the poor position of his knight.

**Timman – Portisch**

Candidates match, (2) Antwerp, 1989





[FEN "2k5/p2n1pp1/2pBp2p/1q2P2P/6P1/1P3P2/P3Q3/1K6 w - - 0 40"]

1.?

**40.Qe2xb5!**

After the exchange of queens White has a decisive advantage in the endgame in connection with the possibility of a pawn breakthrough on the kingside and the weakness of the g7- and h6-pawns. For example, 40...cb 41.Kc2 Kb7 42.Kd3 Kc6 43.Kd4, intending f4-f5, Be7, f6. No less strong is 43.Ke4 Nc5+ 44.Kd4, or even 44.Bxc5 Kxc5 45.a3! with a subsequent f3-f4-f5. (But a hasty 45.f4?! b4! 46.f5? lets the win slip because of 46...ef+ 47.gf a5 48.e6 Kd6!)

Alas, in the game Timman played differently.

**40.Qe3? Kb7**

With the queens on the board Black has sufficient counter-chances because of the open position of the white king.

**41.Qf4 Qd3+ 42.Kb2 Qe2+ 43.Ka3 Qa6+ 44.Kb2 Qe2+ 45.Ka3 Qa6+ ½-½**

**Nikolic – Timman**  
Amsterdam, 1984



[FEN "r4qk1/p1p2rpp/1p1pQn2/3Pp3/1PP5/P3PR2/1B4PP/R5K1 b - - 0 21"]

1...?

In the game we examined previously, Karpov – Timman, White's bishop was bad, as it was blocked by his own pawns. Here we're dealing with a less common, but also fairly important case: the bishop is bad because the opponent's pawns are solidly restricting it.

**21...Qf8-c8!**

White's only active piece is his queen. By forcing its exchange Black gets a very favorable endgame. 21...Qe8?! 22.Qh3, or 21...Re8?! 22.Qf5! (22.Qh3 Ne4 23.Rxf7 Qxf7 24.Rf1 Qg6 is worse) are less convincing, and after 21...g6?! 22.Qh3 Ne4 23.Rxf7 Qxf7 24.Rf1 White is fine.

**22.Qxc8+ Rxc8 23.Rc1 c5!?**

A good plan, but far from the only one. It was also possible to try 23...c6!?, not fearing 24.c5 cd 25.cd Rxc1+ 26.Bxc1 Nd7!-/+. The position that arises with 24.dc!? is examined in the next note.

Jan Timman rejected 23...Ne4 because of 24.Rxf7 Kxf7 25.c5!? (passive defense is thankless: 25.Kf1 Ke7 26.Ke2 Rf8 27.Rc2 h5-/+) 25...bc 26.bc Nxc5 27.Bxe5 with equality. However, by playing 26...Rb8! (instead of 26...Nxc5?) 27.cd cd he achieves a clear advantage – as the weakness of the d5-pawn was added to the problems with the inactive and vulnerable b2 bishop.

#### **24.b5?**

A serious positional mistake. Now the bishop will never get into play and White's position becomes strategically hopeless. 24.bc? bc is no better (Black immediately occupies the b-file). It was necessary to clear a line for the bishop, which could be achieved by means of 24.dc! Rxc6 25.c5! (but, of course, not 25.b5? Rc8 26.a4 Rfc7 27.Ba3 Ne4-+ as given by Timman) 25...bc 26.bc. Then again, Black retained winning chances here, too, by continuing either 26...Rd7!? 27.cd Rxc1+ 28.Bxc1 Rxd6 29.h3 (if 29.Bb2, then 29...Ng4!-/+) 29...Kf7, or 26...Rfc7!? 27.Rd1! Rxc5 28.Rxd6 Rb7.

#### **24...a6 25.ba Ra7 26.Rf2 Rxa6 27.Rb1 Ne4 28.Rc2 Rf8 29.Bc1**

On 29.Rf1 Timman gives the variation 29...Rb8! 30.Rb1 b5 31.Bc1 b4!-/+.

#### **29...h5! 30.Bb2 Ra4** (preventing 31.Rf1 because of 31...Rxf1+ 32.Kxf1 Rxc4!) **31.h4**

In the case of 31.Bc1, as Timman pointed out, Black could organize an invasion via the kingside with 31...Ra7! 32.Rxb6 Raf7 33.g3 (33.h4 Rf1+ 34.Kh2 Re1 35.g3 Rff1 36.Bb2 Nf6-+ is no better) 33...Rf1+ 34.Kg2 R1f2+ 35.Rxf2 Rxf2+ 36.Kg1 Rc2-+.

#### **31...Rf6 32.Kh2** (32.Bc1!?) **32...Rf2 33.Rbc1 Rd2! 34.Kh3 Rd3 35.Re1** (35.Re2 Rd2!) **35...Nd2 0-1**

### **Transitioning into a Favorable Endgame**

#### **Tukmakov – Gulko**

Soviet Championship, Leningrad, 1977

#### **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.Qa4 c6 6.Nc3 b5!? 7.cb cb 8.Nxb5 Qb6 9.Nc3 Bb4 10.Bg2 0-0 11.Qc2**

In this opening variation Black gets good positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn. White, striving for speedy development, often returns it immediately: 11.0-0 Bxc3 12.bc Bxe2 13.Re1, but after 13...Bb5 14.Qb3 d5 the game equalizes (Vukic – Bronstein, Sarajevo, 1971).

11.Bd2 Nc6 isn't convincing either.

In the game Sakaev – Berzinsh, Duisburg, 1992 White got an advantage with 11.Qd1!? Rc8 12.Bd2 d5 13.0-0 Bxc3 14.Bxc3 Ne4 15.Rc1 Nd7 16.Re1! Rab8 17.Qa4 Bb5 18.Qa3. It was probably worth replying 11...Ne4!? 12.Bd2 Bxc3.

#### **11...Nc6 12.0-0 Rfc8 13.a3 Bxc3 14.bc Nd5 15.Rd1 Nce7 16.Bb2 Rab8 17.Rab1**





[FEN "1rr3k1/p2pnppp/bq2p3/3n4/3P4/P1P2NP1/1BQ1PPBP/1R1R2K1 b - - 0 17"]

**1...?**

**17...Qb6-b3!**

The white queen is defending the vulnerable c3- and e2-pawns – it has to be exchanged off. 17...Qa5?! 18.e4 is weaker, and not 18...Nxc3? 19.Bxc3+-.

**18.Qc2xb3 Rb8xb3 19.Nf3-d2 Rb3-b6!**

Black wins the pawn back, retaining the initiative.

**20.Bf3 Nxc3 21.Bxc3 Rxc3 22.Rbc1?!**

If 22.Rxb6 ab 23.Rb1, then simply 23...Nc8 24.Rb3 Rc2-/+ . When you're defending these kinds of positions it's important to find the right moment to activate your forces, even if you have to sacrifice something for that. I can recommend 22.Ne4! Rxa3 23.Ra1 Rxa1 24.Rxa1, intending 25.Nc5, which even follows in reply to 24...d6. Vadim Zvjaginsev suggested another way of defending: 22.Rdc1!? Rxa3 (22...Rxb1!? 23.Rxb1 f5=+/+ 23.Rxb6 ab 24.Rc7 Bb5 25.Rb7=+/+).

The plan chosen by Vladimir Tukmakov was much weaker.

**22...Rxa3 23.Rc7 Bb5 24.Rdc1 Kf8 25.Nc4 Bxc4 26.R7xc4 Ke8 27.R1c2 Kd8 28.Kg2 a5**

Black probably has a won position already.

**29.Rc5 Rb8 30.d5!? ed! 31.Bxd5 Nxd5**

The variation 31...d6 32.Rc7 Nxd5 33.Rxf7 Nc3 34.Rxg7 h5 didn't seem convincing enough to Boris Gulko.

**32.Rxd5 Ra8! 33.Rc4**

Perhaps it was worth looking for chances to save himself after 33.Rcc5 a4 34.Ra5 Rxa5 35.Rxa5 Kc7, although that rook endgame is joyless too.

**33...a4 34.Rh5 h6 35.Rg4 Ra6 36.Rxg7 Rb3 37.Rh7 a3 38.R5xh6 Ra7** (38...f6!) **39.Rxf7 Rbb7!** (of course, not 39...a2? 40.Rh8+ Kc7 41.Rxd7+!) **40.Rh8 + Kc7 41.Rf3 0-1** White resigned because of 41...a2 42.Rc3+ Kd6 43.Rh6+ Ke7 44.Re3+ Kf7 45.Rf3+ Kg7 46.Rff6 d6!.

**Tartakower – Pirc**

Interzonal tournament, Saltsjöbaden, 1948



[FEN "3q2k1/1bp2p1p/pp3p2/8/1PP1pP2/P3P3/4B1PP/2KQ4 b - - 0 21"]

1...?

21...Qd8-e7!

The exchange proposed by White should have been declined. On the next move Black plays 22...c5. With the queens on the board he has a worse, but defensible position.

In the game Vasja Pirc transitioned into a lost ending: **21...Qxd1+? 22.Kxd1**

In order to build a defense Black needs two pawn moves: c7-c5 and f6-f5. But according to the rules he can only make one of them, and White succeeds in preventing the other. On 22...c5 there follows 23.bc bc 24.Bg4!, and if 24...a5 (with the idea of Ba6), then 25.Bd7!, reserving for himself the resource Bb5 and preparing Kc2-b3-a4. The continuation 24...Bc6 25.Bc8 a5 26.Ba6 is no better, for example, 26...Kf8 27.Bb5 Be8 28.f5, and in the pawn endgame the king inevitably comes to f4. Finally, on 24...Kf8 a possible reaction is 25. Bf5!? h6 26.g4.

**22...f5 23.c5! b5 24.Kd2 Kg7 25.Kc3 Kf6 26.Kd4 Ke6 27.Bd1 Bd5 28.g4 c6 29.g5 Bc4 30.a4 Bd5 31.h4 Bc4 32.h5 Bd5 33.h6 Ba2 34.Kc3 Bd5 35.a5 Kd7 36.Bh5 Ke7 37.g6 fg 38.Bxg6 Kf6 39.Bxh7 Be6 40.Kd4 (zugzwang) 40...Bd7 41.Bg8 1-0**

**Adorjan – Lukacs**

Hungarian Championship, 1970



[FEN "5r2/2pq2kp/ppp2p2/5Pp1/6P1/1Q6/PPP2P1P/4R1K1 w - - 0 24"]

1.?

Neither 24.Re6 Qd1+ 25.Kg2 Qxg4+ nor 24.Qe6 Qd4 (with a double attack on g4 and b2) work, and if 24.h3, then 24...Re8 with equality. It's possible to prevent an exchange of rooks with the move 24.Qe3, of course, but it isn't clear what to do next after 24...c5 or 24...Rf7.

**24.Qb3-d3!!**

In a rook ending White is looking at a win thanks to his space advantage (and as a consequence the black king's confinement), and, mainly, the passivity of

the enemy rook, which will be chained to the defense of its own pawns.

Black has a choice between 24...Qxd3 and 24...Qd5. I would have preferred the first possibility. After 25.cd Rf7! (25...Rd8 26.Re7+ is bad, and in the event of 25...c5 26.Re7+!? Rf7 27.Rxf7+ Kxf7 28.f4! the pawn endgame is hopeless) 26.Re6 (26.b4? Rd7 27.Rc1 Rxd3 28.Rxc6 Rd4 29.Rxc7+ Kg8= isn't enough) 26...c5 27.Kf1 Rd7 27.Ke2 the black rook, despite being chained to the defense of the c7-pawn, is nevertheless positioned on an open file, which promises some hopes of counterplay in future.

Peter Lukacs probably feared a transition to a pawn ending: 24...Qxd3 25.Re7 +!? Rf7 26.Rxf7+ Kxf7 27.cd. White's advantage here is indisputable, but whether it's enough for a win isn't as obvious. Black plays 27...Ke7, and with 28.h4 or 28.d4 I didn't manage to find a win. White had to precisely calculate the variation 28.f4! gf 29.Kf2 Kd6 30.Kf3 Ke5 31.d4+! Kxd4 32.g5! (32. Kxf4? Kd5, and 33.g5? fg+ 34.Kxg5 Ke5 even loses, and 33.h4 Kd6 34.g5 Ke7 leads to a draw) 32...Ke5 33.g6 hg 34.fg Ke6 35.Kxf4 c5 36.h4, and the white pawn is the first to reach the promotion square.

**24...Qd5?! 25.Qxd5!**

Andras Adorjan probably didn't even look at 25.Qxa6?!

**25...cd 26.Re6 Rf7 27.Kf1 h5 28.h3 hg 29.hg**

Black's position is hopeless because of the cardinal difference in the position of the rooks. A rook's activeness is the most important evaluating criterion in rook endings.

**29...a5 30.a4! Rd7 31.Ke2 Kf7 32.Kd3 Rd8 33.Rc6 Rd7 34.Kd4 Kg7 35.f3 Kf7 36.c3! Ke7 37.b4 ab 38.cb Kf7 39.a5 ba 40.ba Re7 41.a6 1-0**

**Simagin – Benko**

Moscow – Budapest match, 1949



[FEN "1k3mr/1p2b3/p1p2p2/P1p1pP1p/2N3q1/1P1PB1Pp/2P2P1K/R2Q2R1 w - - 0 20"]

**1.?**

**20.Qd1xg4! h5xg4 21.f2-f3!+/-**

"Destroying the black pawn chain on the kingside, White opens up the game and sets about making the best of his positional advantage" (Vladimir Simagin).

**21...gf 22.Raf1 Bd8?! (22...Nh6 23.Bxh6 Rxh6 24.Rxf3 Bd8 is better) 23. Rxf3 Be7 24.Bxc5 Rf7 25.Bb6! Nh6 26.g4 Rfh7 (26...Rg7 27.g5) 27.g5 fg 28.Rxg5 Nf7 29.Rg6 Kc8 30.Bxc7 Kxc7 31.Rfg3, and White won.**

**Hübner – Petrosian**

Candidates match, (7) Seville, 1971

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Nc3 e6 4.d4 cd 5.Nxd4 Nf6 6.Be3 Be7 7.f4 Nc6 8.Qf3 e5 9.Nxc6 bc 10.fe (10.f5!?) 10...de (10...Ng4!?) 11.Bc4 0-0 12.h3**

On 12.0-0, there follows 12...Ng4 13.Rad1 Nxe3! 14.Rxd8 Bxd8 or 14.Bxf7+ Kh8 15.Qxe3 Qb6.

### 12...Be6 13.Bxe6 fe 14.Qe2 Rb8

It would have been interesting to have tested Mikhail Tal's suggestion, 14...Nd5!? 15.ed Bh4+ 16.Kd1 cd, but that kind of play wasn't Petrosian's style.

### 15.0-0! (15.Rb1 Rb4) 15...Rxb2 16.Rab1 Rb4! 17.Qa6 Qc7 18.a3 Rxb1 19.Rxb1 Ra8 20.a4 h6



[FEN "r5k1/p1q1b1p1/Q1p1pn1p/4p3/P3P3/2N1B2P/2P3P1/1R4K1 w - - 0 21"]

### 1.?

White should have exchanged queens.

### 21.Qa6-b7! Qc7xb7 22.Rb1xb7 Be7-d8 23.Rb7xa7

Of course, not 23.Bxa7? Rxa7!

### 23...Ra8xa7 24.Be3xa7 Bd8-a5 25.Nc3-d1! Nf6xe4 26.Nd1-e3

The knight is heading for c4. Despite being a pawn up, Black is worse, as the advanced passed a-pawn is extremely dangerous.

All the other possibilities are weaker:

21.Rb7? Qc8, and the white pieces are pinned;

21.Qc4 a5!? 22.Qxe6+ Kh8 (threatening 23...Bb4) 23.Bb6 Qd7 24.Qxe5 Bb4 with the idea of Re8.

In the game 21.a5? Kh7! 22.Qb7?! (22.Kh2) 22...Qxa5! was played.

Petrosian's trademark weapon was the exchange sacrifice. Then again, there was no choice here: 22...Qxb7? 23.Rxb7 Bd8 24.a6 Ba5 25.Na4 Nxe4 26.Rxa7 is very bad.

### 23.Qxa8 Qxc3 24.Qxa7 Nxe4 (with compensation)

In the subsequent complicated and far from error-free battle White made the last blunder.

### 25.Rf1?

Equality was maintained with 25.Qxe7 Qxe3+ 26.Kh1! (but not 26.Kh2? Qg3 + 27.Kg1 Nd2!). But the move in the game could be refuted with 25...Ng3! 26.Rf7 Qe1+ 27.Kh2 Nf5 28.Bf2 Qd2, with the extremely unpleasant threat of 29...Kg6.

### 25...Bh4? 26.Rf7 Bf6 27.Kh2 Qxc2 28.Qd7 Qb3 29.Bf2

Tal recommended 29.Rf8! Bh4! (29...Qxe3 30.Qe8=) 30.Qf7! Bg3+ 31.Kh1 Nf6 32.Qa7! Qb1+ 33.Bg1, with very good drawing chances.

### 29...Qd5 30.Qa7 Qd2

30...Nxf2? is a mistake (thinking of 31.Qxf2? Kg6! with a subsequent 32...e4) because of 31.Rxf6!

**31.Qe3 Qc2 32.Be1 c5 (32...Nd6!?) 33.h4 c4 34.Rc7 Qd3 (34...Nd6!? 35.Qc5 Qd1) 35.Qf3**

35.Qh3 Qd5 36.Qf3! isn't bad either (36.Qg4 as given by Igor Zaitsev is less convincing because of 36...Nd6).

**35...Qb1! 36.Qe3?**

If the queen does retreat, then it should be to e2 (36...Nd6 37.Rc6 or 37.Bg3). The most natural continuation was a pawn capture: 36.Rxc4! Nd6 37.Rc6 (37.Rc7? Qxe1 38.Qxf6 Ne8+) 37...Qxe1 38.Rxd6 Qxh4+ 39.Qh3 Qf4+ 40.Qg3 Qf5 41.Qh3 e4 42.Rxe6 Be5+ 43.g3 or 43.Kg1 Qf4 44.g3, and Black is hardly likely to be able to prove his advantage.

**36...Nd6 37.Qd2**



[FEN "8/2R3pk/3npb1p/4p3/2p4P/8/3Q2PK/1q2B3 b - - 0 37"]

**1...?**

The denouement of the tense duel in time trouble turned out to be absurd: **37...Nf5? 38.Rxc4 e4 39.Qc2?? Qxe1 40.Rxe4 Be5+ 0-1**

After the game other queen retreats were recommended on the thirty-ninth move, but they also lost, apparently: 39.Qe2? Be5+ 40.Kg1 Nd4 (40...Ng3 is equivalent) 41.Qd2 Bf4!, or 39.Qb4? Be5+ 40.Kg1 Qd3! 41.Rxe4 Bd4+ 42.Rxd4 Nxd4, with a difficult ending. The unexpected move 39.Rb4! saved him, for example, 39...Qd3 40.Qxd3 ed 41.Rb3 Bxh4 42.Bd2, or 39...Be5+ 40.Kh3 Qa1 41.Rxe4 Qa3+, and now both 42.g3 Bxg3 43.Qc3 Qa8 44.Qd3 and the bold 42.Kg4!? are possible.

It was generally accepted that in the position in the diagram Black was winning if he chose 37...e4? - in fact after 38.Qxd6 Qxe1 39.Qf4 the position equalizes.

The simple move 37...Qb6! is very strong, but a more convincing way of achieving a decisive advantage was probably to exchange queens: 37...Qd3! 38.Rd7 Qxd2 39.Bxd2 e4 or 39...Nb5.

**Seirawan – Kozul**  
Wijk aan Zee, 1991

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Bd3 0-0 6.Nge2**

This rare system is grandmaster Seirawan's specialty dish, and he has won quite a few excellent games with it. You're looking at one of them.

**6...Nc6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 Nd4 9.f3!?** (in the [Encyclopedia of Chess Openings](#) the main line is 9.Nxd4 ed 10.Ne2) **9...c5 10.Nxd4! cd 11.Na4! Bd7** (9...Nd7?!

10.b4 f5 11.c5) **12.b4 a5 13.b5! b6?**

A low-profile but substantial inaccuracy that allows White to achieve an advantage. Seirawan recommends 13...Qc7 14.Bg5 (14.b6 Bxa4) 14...h6.

**14.f4!** (threatening 15.fe de 16.c5!) **14...Ng4 15.f5 gf! 16.ef Qh4 17.h3 Ne3 18.Bxe3 de**



[FEN "r4rk1/3b1pbp/1p1p4/pP1PpP2/N1P4q/3Bp2P/P5P1/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 19"]

1.?

**19.Qd1-g4!!**

A brilliant move! By sacrificing the exchange White eliminates his opponent's counterplay and gets a decisive positional advantage. Other continuations, according to analysis by the American master John Watson and Sherlock... sorry, Yasser Seirawan, led to unclear consequences:

19.Nxb6?! Qd4 20.Kh1 Qxb6 (20...e4 21.Nxd7 ed 22.f6 e2 23.Qd2 efQ+ 24.Rxf1+- is a mistake) 21.f6 (threatening 22.Bxh7+) 21...Qd4! 22.fg Kxg7 – Black wants to play f7-f5 and e5-e4;

19.f6?! Bxf6 20.Nxb6 e4 (of course, not 20...Qd4? 21.Bxh7+) 21.Rxf6 (21.Nxd7? Bxa1 22.Qxa1 ed 23.Nf6+ Kh8 24.Nh5+ f6 25.Nxf6 e2 26.Nh5+ Rf6) 21...Qxf6 22.Nxd7 Qf2+ 23.Kh1 ed 24.Qg4+ Kh8 25.Qd4+ f6 26.Nxf8 Rxf8 27.Qxd3 e2.

**19...Qh4xg4 20.h3xg4 e5-e4 21.Bd3-e2!**

21.Bxe4? e2 22.Rfe1 Bxa1 23.Rxa1 Rfe8-- and 21.f6? ed 22.fg (22.Nxb6 Bh6!) 22...Rfb8 are both mistakes.

**21...Bg7xa1 22.Rf1xa1**

Despite his material advantage, Black is bad. One of his rooks will be forced to defend the weak b6-pawn, and there isn't a single open line for the other one on which it could demonstrate activeness. Meanwhile White plans to transfer his king to f4 and play Rh1-h6.

**22...Rab8 23.Kh2 h5!? 24.gh Bxf5 25.Kg3?!**

An inaccuracy that doesn't change the evaluation of the position, however. As Seirawan pointed out, 25.Rf1! Bh7 26.Rf6! Rfd8 27.g4! Kf8 28.Kg3 Ke7 29.Rh6 Rh8 30.g5+- was stronger.

**25...Kg7 26.Kf4 Bh7 27.g4! f6 28.Nc3 Kh6 29.Nd1 Rbe8 30.Nxe3 Re5 31.Rf1**

31.Rd1!? can also be played, with a subsequent Rd4, Bd1-c2, or even c4-c5.

**31...Rg8 32.Bd1** (intending Bb3, c4-c5) **32...f5? 33.Be2! Rg5 34.c5! bc 35.b6 Re8 36.gf Rb8 37.Rb1 Rgg8 38.b7 Kg7 39.Rb6 Kf7 40.Ba6 Ke7 41.Rc6 Kd7 42.Rc8 1-0**

## Prophylactic Considerations

We make many decisions, including decisions about exchanging queens, out of prophylactic considerations – to parry an unpleasant threat or to prevent our opponents from implementing their ideas.

### Morozov – Despotovic

Correspondence, 1981



[FEN "r1b2rk1/pp4p1/4p1Bp/2ppP1q1/8/P1P3Q1/2P2PPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

18...Rf8-f4!

It's important to prevent the move f2-f4. The continuation 18...Qxg3?! 19.hg Bd7 20.f4 with a subsequent g3-g4 and f4-f5 is weaker.

19.Qg3xg5 h6xg5

Threatening 20...Rc4. The endgame is in Black's favor because of the prospect of attacking his opponent's weak pawns.

20.a4 Bd7 21.a5 Raf8! 22.f3 Rh4!

An excellent maneuver. The planned moves c5-c4 and Rh6 put both the white bishop and the e5-pawn in a difficult position. For example, 23.g3 Rh6 24.Bd3 c4 25.Be2 Rf5 26.f4 gf 27.gf Rh4, or 23.Bd3 c4 24.Be2 Rf5.

23.g4?! c4! 24.Bh5 Kh7 25.Kg2 g6 0-1

### Vaganian – van der Wiel

European Team Championship, Plovdiv, 1983



[FEN "b2r1rk1/p3ppb1/2n1p1pp/q1p1P3/N1P2B2/1Q4P1/PP3PBP/R3R1K1 w - - 0 18"]

1.?

You have to take measures immediately against 18...Nd4 and 18...g5.

18.Qb3-b5!



By exchanging queens White reduces the strength of the thrust Nd4 and attacks the c5-pawn.

**18...Qxb5 19.cb Nd4?!**

Black retained more active possibilities with 19...Nb4.

**20.Rac1 Bxg2**

On 20...g5 21.Be3 Bxe5 both 22.Rxc5 22.Bxg5 are strong.

**21.Kxg2 Nxb5 22.Rxc5 Rd5 23.Re4! Rfd8 24.Be3 Rxc5?**

An unsuccessful exchange, freeing White's hands for operations on the queenside. 24...g5 would at least be preferable.

**25.Nxc5 Rd1? 26.Na6! Rd7 27.Rb4**, and White won.

**Timman – Diez del Corral**

Olympiad, Lucerne, 1982

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 Ne8?! 8.Qd2 f5 9. ef gf 10.0-0 Na6** (on 10...Nd7 the reply 11.g4 is unpleasant) **11.Bd3 Nc5 12. Bc2 Qh4** (12...a5 is better, according to Timman) **13.f4! Ne4 14.Nxe4 fe 15. Nge2 Bg4 16.fe Bxe5 17.h3 Bxe2 18.Qxe2 Ng7**



[FEN "r4rk1/ppp3np/3p4/3Pb3/2P1p2q/4B2P/PPB1Q1P1/2KR3R w - - 0 19"]

**1.?**

It's important not to let the knight come into play via f5 or h5. The move 19. g4 isn't bad, but after 19...Rae8 all the other black pieces (besides the knight) remain active, which makes subsequent operations more difficult for White.

**19.Qe2-g4! Qh4xg4**

19...Qg3 is probably slightly better, on which follows, 20.Rde1 Rae8 21.Kb1, and you wouldn't envy Black.

**20.h3xg4+/-**

By exchanging queens White attacked the e4-pawn, removed the f5-square from the knight and opened the h-file. Solid achievements.

**20...Bf4 21.Kd2! Rf6?! (21...Rae8 is more stubborn) 22.Bxe4 h6 23.Rdf1 Raf8 24.Rf3 Bxe3+ 25.Kxe3 R8f7 26.Rfh3 h5 1-0**

**Geller – Unzicker**

Interzonal tournament, Saltsjöbaden, 1952

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dc 5.e4 b5 6.e5 Nd5 7.a4 e6 8.ab Nxc3 9.bc cb 10.Ng5 Bb7 11.Qh5 g6 12.Qg4 Be7 13.Be2 Nd7 14.Bf3! Qc7?**

A subtle but fairly serious mistake. The theory of the Slav Gambit was only just being created in those years and the move in the game was recommended



in commentaries by Salo Flohr. Later it was established that 14...Qc8! was correct. In that way Black prevents the important move 15.Ne4, on which follows 15...0-0! 16.Bh6 f5! 17.ef Nxf6, and the e6-pawn is defended by the queen.

### 15.Ne4 Nb6 16.Bh6 (16.Bg5) 16...Rg8?

Black repels the threat of 17.Bg7 Rg8 18.Nf6+ in the most unsuccessful way. Efim Geller recommends 16...Nd5, although the position after 17.Bg5 0-0 18.Bxe7 Qxe7 19.Nf6+ is clearly in White's favor.

### 17.Bg5 Bxe4 18.Bxe4 Nd5 19.Bxd5 ed 20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.0-0 Kf8 22.Rfb1 a6



[FEN "r4kr1/4qp1p/p5p1/lp1pP3/2pP2Q1/2P5/5PPP/RR4K1 w - - 0 23"]

### 1.?

Black wants to consolidate by playing 23...Kg7. In the case of 23.Rxb5? ab 24.Rxa8+ Kg7 White is no better because of the weakness of the c3-pawn. 23.Rxa6? Rxa6 24.Qc8+ Kg7 25.Qxa6 Rb8 also promises little.

### 23.Qg4-f3! Qe7-e6?!

23...Kg7 is preferable. Then again, White gets a big advantage here too, for example, 24.Qxd5 Rgd8 25.Qe4 Qe6 26.f4 (in the case of 26.Rxb5? ab 27.Rxa8 Rxa8 28.Qxa8 b4! 29.cb c3 the evaluation flips the other way around) 26...f5 27.Qf3 Rd5?! 28.Rxb5! (Geller) or 27.Qb7+!? Qd7 28.Qb6.

### 24.Qf3-f6!

With his king stuck on the back rank Black's position is completely hopeless.

### 24...Qc8 (24...Qxf6 25.ef g5 26.Rxb5 Rg6 27.Rxa6!) 25.f4 Qb7 26.Ra5 Ke8 27.Rba1 b4 28.cb Qxb4 29.Rxd5 Qb7 30.e6 1-0

A similar strategy was used successfully in the following game.

### Filip – Korchnoi

Olympiad, Siegen, 1970



[FEN "r5k1/5pp1/pp1p4/2pPr2p/P7/1P1QPqP1/R4P1P/3R2K1 b - - 0 27"]

1...?

White wants to weaken his opponent's pressure by offering an exchange of queens. For example, 27...h4?! 28.Qe2 Qf5 29.Qd3 Qh3 30.Qf1.

**27...g7-g5! 28.Qd3-e2 g5-g4-/+**

Now with an exchange the f3-pawn will severely constrain White's position: his king will stay out of play for a long time.

**29.Qxf3?! (29.h4 is better) 29...gf 30.Rc2 Re4 31.Rc4 f5! 32.h3**

On 32.Kf1!?, Viktor Korchnoi gives the variation 32...Kf7 33.Ke1 Kf6 34.Kd2 Ke5 35.Kc3 h4-/+.

**32...Kf7 33.Kh2 b5** (in the case of 33...Kf6?! Korchnoi was disturbed by the reply 34.g4, so he forces events) **34.Rxe4 fe 35.Ra1 b4! 36.g4 h4! 37.g5 Rc8 0-1** (threatening 38...c4; if 38.Rc1, then 38...Kg6 39.Rc4 Kf5.)

### Anand – Kamsky

Candidates match, (11) Las Palmas, 1995

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 7.Be2 Be7 8.f4 Nc6 9.Qd2 Nxd4 10.Qxd4 0-0** (10...b5?! is premature because of 11.a4!, as occurred in the game Short – A. Sokolov, candidates tournament, Montpellier, 1985) **11.0-0-0 Qa5?**



[FEN "r1b2rk1/1p2bPPP/p2ppn2/q7/3QPP2/2N1B3/PPP1B1PP/2KR3R w - - 0 12"]

1.?

Black's last move is a serious blunder. After castling queenside there was no longer any basis to delay the strategically necessary advance 11...b5. In an extreme case he could first play his queen to c7, but not to a5, as in the game.

**12.Qd4-b6 Qa5xb6 13.Be3xb6+/-**

Viswanathan Anand has frozen his opponent's queenside. His advantage in development and in space together with the weakness of the d6-pawn guarantees him a stable advantage in the ending. Not 13...Nd7 because of 14.Bc7. On 13...Bd7 the reply 14.e5 is strong, and if 13...e5, then 14.f5.

**13...Ne8 14.e5!** (the black knight is now excluded from the game for a long time) **14...d5 15.f5!** (15.Bg4 g6! with a subsequent Ng7 is less precise) **15...Bd7 16.Bg4! Bc8?** (16...Bb4 is more stubborn, on which there would have followed 17.fe Bxe6 18.Nxd5! Bxg4 19.Rd4+/-) **17.Rhf1! a5 18.Na4! f6 19.fe fe 20.Nc3! Bg5+** (in the event of 20...Rxf1 21.Rxf1 Nf6 the move 22.Rxf6!! with a subsequent 23.Nxd5 is decisive) **21.Kb1 Nf6 22.Nxd5 Nxe4 23.Rxf8+ (23.e7 Re8 24.Nc7 also won) 23...Kxf8 24.Nc7 Ra6 25.Bc5+! Kg8 26.Nxa6 Bxe6 27.Nc7 Bf5 28.h3**, and White made the best of being the exchange up.



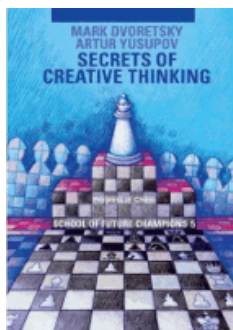
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## The Queen Exchange Part Four

### Which Version of the Exchange to Choose

At a lecture that he gave in 1990 at the first session of the Yusupov-Dvoretsky school for gifted young chess players, master Alexei Kosikov wisely remarked that "any exchange in a chess game is a kind of business deal. You offer your product, you're offered something else, and each side tries to extract some kind of benefit from that." This is worth repeating often in order to carry out the exchange in the most favorable way for you.

**Tukmakov – G. Kuzmin**

Zonal Tournament, Yerevan, 1982



[FEN "2r2rk1/1pp2pp1/p3p1bp/3Pn1q1/P3P3/2N4P/BP1Q1PP1/2R1R1K1 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

Check with the knight on f3 is threatened; it also follows on 21.Re3?? The tense variation 21.f4?! Nf3+ 22.Kf2 Nxd2 23.fg ed finishes with an endgame that's playable for Black (24.Nxd5 Nxe4+; 24.Bxd5 c6; 24.ed Rfe8). In the case of 21.Qxg5?! hg the exchange sacrifice 22.de Nd3 23.Nd5 Kh7 is questionable, and on 22.Red1 there follows the simple 22...Rfe8 23.de fe (with a subsequent Kf7-e7). Black's defense holds because of the e5-knight, superbly positioned in the center, and chasing it away from there isn't easy, as the g5-pawn prevents the move f2-f4.

**21.Qd2-e3!**

This simple move solves all the problems. Vladimir Tukmakov defended against the knight fork and prepared f2-f4. For example, 21...Qxe3 22.Rxe3 Rfe8 23.f4 Nd7 24.de fe 25.Rd1 (25.e5) 25...Nf8 26.Red3+/-.

**21...Qe7 22.f4 Nd7 23.e5 Rfd8 24.Red1 Nf8 25.Rd4 h5 26.Rcd1 Bf5 27.a5!**

White has a clear positional advantage, which he gradually made the best of.

**Beliavsky – Chernin**

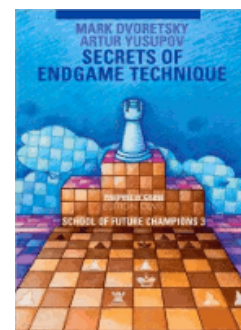
Interzonal tournament, Tunis, 1985

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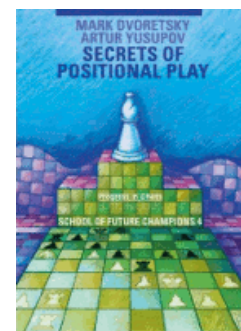
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[FEN "r3r1k1/1b3ppp/p2p4/1p1p4/2qPn3/PQN3PB/1PR1PP1P/2R3K1 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

In the case of 21.Qxc4 dxc Black wouldn't be bad.

**21.Qb3-b4!**

On 21...Nxc3, you can reply both 22.Qxc3 (22...Qxc3 23.Rxc3 Rxe2? 24.Rc7 Rb8 25.Rxb7 loses immediately) and 22.Rxc3 Qxe2 23.Rc7 Rab8 24.Qxd6 Qxb2 25.Qf4 Rf8 26.Be6! Black has a difficult ending after 21...Qxb4 22.ab Nf6 23.e3 Re7 24.Ne2 g5 25.Bc8!.

**21...a5!? 22.Qxb5 Nxc3 23.Qxc4 dc 24.bc Rab8**

If 24...Be4, then not 25.Rb2 Rab8, but 25.Rd2 Rab8 26.d5 Rb3 27.a4 Re5 28.Rd4 (Beliavsky).

**25.Bd7!** (by transferring his bishop to a4, Alexander Beliavsky prevents an invasion by the enemy rook on b3) **25...Re7 26.Ba4 Bd5 27.g4!**

Technical play! In the case of 27.f3?! Black would reply 27...f5! (in essence we're seeing the same method of reinforcement of his central piece as in the previous example – in the variation 21.Qxg5?!). And now, to prevent f2-f3 and e2-e4, his opponent has to allow the g-file to be opened, which the white rook occupies.

**27...g6 28.f3** (not 28.g5 h6!) **28...f5 29.gf gf 30.Kf2 Kf7 31.Kg3** (centralizing the king) **31...Kf6 32.Kf4 Bf7 33.Rg1 Bg6**

As usual, switching to a rook endgame promised him more practical chances of saving himself: 33...Be8!? 34.Bxe8 Rbxe8. Beliavsky analyzes 35.Rg5?, overlooking 35...Re4+! Instead I can suggest, for example, 35.Rg2!? (planning a3-a4, h2-h4, and so on) 35...a4 (35...Rb8 36.Rg5) 36.Rb2!? (36.h4) 36...Re3 37.Rb6 Rxc3 38.d5, with a very dangerous attack.

**34.h4**, and White made the best of his extra pawn.

**Mering – Plachetka**

Strbske Pleso, 1978



[FEN "3rbbk1/1p3ppp/q3p3/P3P3/3NBP2/P1r3P1/4Q2P/3R1R1K b - - 0 30"]

1...?

30...Qxe2? 31.Nxe2 Rxd1 32.Rxd1 Re3?! doesn't work because of 33.Bxb7! Rxe2 34.a6 Bc5 35.Rd8+-.

A dubious queen sacrifice: 30...Rxd4? 31.Qxa6 Rxe4. Your opponent can either play more solidly: 32.Qa8 (on which the best thing for Black is to force a draw with 32...Re2! 33.Qxe8 Rcc2), or fight for a win in the variation 32.Qb6 Re2 (32...Bc6 33.Kg1 with the threat of Rd8) 33.Rf2 Rxf2 34.Qxf2 Bc6+ 35.Kg1 h5 36.Qb2.

**30...Qa6-c4!-+**

This way Black gets a material advantage. For example, 31.Bd3 Qxd4 32.Bxh7+ Kxh7 33.Rxd4 Rxd4+.

**31.Qxc4 Rxc4 32.Bxh7+?** (time trouble spasms – but 32.Bxb7 Rcxh4 33.Rxd4 Rxd4 34.a6 Ra4 35.Rb1 Rxa3 is also hopeless) **32...Kxh7 33.Nxe6 fe 34.Rxd8 Bc6+ 0-1**

**Benko – Damjanovic**  
Monte Carlo, 1968



[FEN "8/qpk5/4p3/1QPpPp1p/3P2pP/1K2P1P1/8/8 w - - 0 47"]

1.?

47.Qe8 Qa1 48.Qe7+ Kb8= gives nothing. Pal Benko tries his only practical chance of winning.

**47.Qa4 Qxa4+?**

A different version of the queen exchange should have been carried out: 47...Qa6! 48.Qxa6 ba 49.Kb4 Kc6 50.Ka5 Kb7 51.c6+ Kc7! 52.Kxa6 Kxc6=. But now Black falls into *zugzwang* and loses.

**48.Kxa4 Kd7 49.Kb4! (zugzwang) 49...Kd8** (49...Kc6 50.Ka5! Kc7 51.Kb5 didn't change anything) **50.Ka5! Kd7 51.Kb6 Kc8 52.c6 Kb8 53.Kc5!** (but not 53.cb?? f4=, of course) **1-0**

### Improving Your Pawn Structure

Sometimes the motivation for a queen exchange is the desire to fix defects in your pawn structure.

**Fedorowicz – Miles**  
Lone Pine, 1980





[FEN "1r3rk1/1p3p1p/pNbR4/2P1ppq1/4Pn2/5P2/PP3Q1P/2R2B1K w - - 0 23"]

1.?

23.Qf2-g3!

An exchange of queens allows you to chase the knight off the strong f4-square.

23...Qg5xg3

Black is right to decline the offer by playing 23...f6. In actual fact 24.Rxf6?!, which suggests itself, doesn't promise an advantage: 24...Qxg3 25.Rxf8+ Rxf8 26.hg Nh5 27.Kh2 fe. On the other hand you can force an exchange of the dangerous c6-bishop by playing 24.Nd7! (threatening 25.Nxf6+) 24...Bxd7 25.Rxd7+/-.

24.h2xg3 Nf4-h5 25.Kh1-h2 f5xe4 26.f3xe4

The position is clearly in White's favor. He wants to play 26.Bxa6 or 26.Be2. The e4-pawn is invulnerable for now: 26...Bxe4? 27.Nd7.

26...Kg7 (to get the f6-square for the knight) 27.Bxa6 Nf6 28.Bd3 Ne8 (28...Bxe4 29.Rxf6) 29.Rd5! Bxd5 (29...Nf6!?) 30.ed Rd8 31.Bf5! (31.d6? Nxd6) 31...Nf6 32.d6, and White won.

Lalic – Hoi

Olympiad, Manila, 1992

1.d4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Be3 Nf6 5.Qd2 Nc6 6.f3 0-0 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 Nd4 9.Nge2 c5 10.dc bc 11.Nxd4 ed 12.Bxd4 Be6 13.h4 Qa5? A mistake that reminds me of the one that Kamsky made against Anand in an example we looked at previously. He should have chosen between 13...Rb8 and 13...c5 14.Be3 Qa5.



[FEN "r4rk1/p4pbp/2ppbnp1/q7/3BP2P/2N2P2/PPPQ2P1/2KR1B1R w - - 0 14"]

1.?

14.Qd2-g5!

Black is a pawn down, so exchanging queens, especially in this situation, with

the g5-pawn falling, is unfavorable to him. But a queen retreat isn't very attractive either.

#### 14...Qd8 15.e5 Nh5

The alternatives are no better: 15...h6 16.ef! hg 17.fg Re8 18.Ne4, or 15...de 16.Bxe5 Nd5 17.Qxd8.

**16.ed Bxd4 17.Rxd4 Qb6 18.Qe5! Rae8 19.Na4 Qb8 20.Bd3 Bd5 21.Qh2,** and White won.

#### Hübner – Wockenfuss

Bundesliga, 1985



[FEN " 2kr3r/pp1b3p/4pp2/2qp3P/6n1/P1PB2B1/2PQ1PP1/R3R1K1 w - - 0 19"]

#### 1.?

19.Kh1?! Rdg8 20.f3 seems like a tempting idea. The thrust 20...Ne3 counting on 21.Bf2? d4! (threatening to take on h5 with check) is refuted by the modest move 21.Bh2!, establishing White's advantage: after the knight retreat the queen jumps out to f4. Black is right to give up the pawn: 20...Ne5, preserving a defensible position, but the advantage remains with White here too.

But the tactical retort 20...d4! has been found, suggested by Ernesto Inarkiev. In the case of 21.fg?! Rxc4 22.cd Qxh5+ 23.Bh2 Rh4! (23...Bc6 24.Be4! is weaker) 24.g4 Rxc4 25.Be4 Rxe4 the advantage transfers to Black, and 21.cd Qxh5+ 22.Kg1 Ne3 leads to an unclear position.

White gets a noticeably better endgame in the variation 19.c4!? dc 20.Qf4 e5 21.Qxc4 Qxc4 22.Bxc4, but after 22...Nh6! 23.Bh4 Rhf8 24.f3 Nf5 25.Bf2 Kb8+/- Black's position remains defensible.

It seems that the immediate transfer of the queen to b4 that Robert Hübner undertook promises White more.

#### 19.Qd2-f4! e6-e5 20.Qf4-b4!+/-

After exchanging queens Black has a difficult endgame, and in the case of 20...Qc7!? 21.Rab1 the queen on b4 sharply increases White's attacking possibilities.

#### 20...Qxb4?

20...b6!? is considerably more stubborn, on which White should probably choose 21.Bh4 Rdf8 22.c4! d4 23.c3 dc 24.Qxc5+ bc 25.Rac1+/-.

#### 21.ab a6 22.Ra5! Be6

Here good advice is already hard to come by: if 22...Bc6, then 23.Bf5+ Bd7 24.Rc5+ Kb8 25.Bxd7 Rxd7 26.f3 Nh6 27.Rxe5!

**23.Bh4 Rdf8 24.f3 Nh6 25.b5 Rhg8** (25...ab 26.Bxf6!) **26.ba ba 27.Rxa6 1-0**

#### A Non-Standard Exchange (Doubling Pawns)

Concern about our pawn structure isn't the only positional problem we have to solve in the process of the battle, of course. On the contrary – in order to achieve more important goals we sometimes have to violate the "Philidor" principle of compactness of the pawn chain. Still, these kinds of situations don't arise very often, and so exchanges associated with damaging our own pawns usually produce a strong aesthetic impression because of their oddness.

### Nikolic – Mirumian

Olympiad, Yerevan, 1996

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.b3 Bg7 4.Bb2 0-0 5.g3 c5 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0 d6 8.d4 cd 9. Nxd4 Bd7 10.e3 Rc8 11.Nc3 a6 12.Rc1 Nxd4 13.Qxd4 Bc6 14.Qd3 (14. Nd5) 14...Nd7 15.Rfd1 Qa5 16.Qe2 Rfe8 17.Bh3 Ne5 18.e4 Bd7 19.Bxd7 Nxd7 20.a3?!**



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1p1nppbp/p2p2p1/q7/2P1P3/PPN3P1/1B2QP1P/2RR2K1 b - - 0 20"]

**1...?**

**20...Qa5-h5!!**

White intended 21.b4 (with a subsequent 22.c5) or 21.Nd5. By exchanging queens Black prevents his plans and in his turn creates the dangerous threat of attacking the enemy pawns with the move Nc5.

**21.Qe2xh5**

On 21.f3 there follows 21...Nc5 (21...b5 22.cb ab 23.Rd5 is worse) 22.Rd5 Qh6=/+.

**21...g6xh5**

Now it isn't easy to choose a suitable means of parrying 22...Nc5. He should probably play 22.Rc2! Nc5 23.b4 Ne6 (23...Bxc3 24.bc! Bxb2 25.cd! ed 26. Rxb2=) 24.Na4 b5 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.Nb2 Ng5 (26...Rc6!?) 27.Re2! (27. Rd5?! Nxe4 28.Rxh5 e5! 29.f3 Kg6! 30.Rh4 Ng5-/+ ) 27...bc 28.f4 c3 (28... Ne6 29.Rc2) 29.fg cb 30.Rxb2, and the defects in White's pawn structure are probably compensated for by the opportunities for counterplay on the queenside (Rd1-d5-a5).

**22.Ba1?! Nc5 23.Rb1 (23.b4?? Nb3 24.Rc2 Nxa1 25.Rxa1 Rxc4-+) 23... Bxc3 24.Bxc3 Nxe4-/+ 25.Ba1 Rc6 26.Rd4 f5 27.Rbd1 Kf7 28.f3 Nc5 29. Rb1 Rec8 30.Kg2 Rb6! 31.b4 Ne6 32.Rd5 Rxc4 33.Rxf5+ Kg6 34.Rd5 Rc2 + 35.Kh1 Ng5-+ 36.Rd3 Rbc6 37.Bd4 Re2 38.h4 Nf7 39.Kg1 Rcc2 40.Kf1 Nh6! 41.Re1 Nf5 42.Rxe2 Nxg3+ 43.Ke1 Rxe2+ 44.Kd1 Rh2 45.Rc3 Rxh4 46.Bf2 Rh1+ 47.Kd2 Nf5 0-1**

### Kholmov – Suetin

Soviet Championship, Leningrad, 1963

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 e6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Be2 a6 7.a3 b5 8.Nxc6 dc (8...Qxc6!?) 9.0-0 e5 10.Qd3! (10.Bg4 Nf6=) 10...Ne7! (10...Nf6 11.Qg3) 11. a4 b4 12.Nb1 Ng6 13.Qb3 Bc5 14.Bc4 0-0 15.Be3 Qe7 16.Nd2 a5 17.Rad1 Nf4 18.Bxc5 Qxc5**





[FEN "r1b2rk1/5ppp/2p5/p1q1p3/PpB1Pn2/1Q6/1PPN1PPP/3R1RK1 w - - 0 19"]

**1.?**

It isn't easy for White to deploy his forces. Bad, for example, is 19.g3? Nh3+ 20.Kg2 Ng5, threatening 21...Bh3+.

You have to exchange the black queen or chase it off the strong c5-square.

**19.Qb3-e3!**

If 19...Qxe3 20.fe Ne6 (with 20...Ng6 21.Nb3 or 21.Nf3 the black knight is out of play), then 21.Nf3 Ba6 22.Bxa6 Rxa6 23.Nxe5 Nc5 24.Nd7!+/-.

19...Ne6 20.Bxe6 Qxe3 21.Bxf7+ Rxf7 22.fe+/- is no better (Black has a weak pawn on e5).

And with a queen retreat, by playing 20.Nb3 White starts a struggle for the c5-square and the d-file.

**19...Qe7 20.Nb3 Be6 21.Bxe6 Nxe6 22.Rd2 c5**

Mass exchanges didn't make Black's position any easier: 22...Rfd8 23.Rfd1 Rxd2 24.Rxd2 Rd8 25.Rxd8+ Qxd8 26.Qd3!+/-.

**23.Rd5 c4** (23...Nd4 24.Rxc5 Nxb3 25.cb+/-) **24.Nc5 Rfc8 25.Nxe6 Qxe6 26.Rfd1 Qc6** (26...Qe7 27.Qb6!) **27.Rb5 c3?! 28.b3 Rd8 29.Rbd5! Rxd5** (29...Qc7? 30.Qa7!) **30.Rxd5**

Control of the only open line secured White a significant advantage, which Ratmir Kholmov gradually made the best of.

**Smyslov – Tal**

Candidates tournament, Yugoslavia, 1959

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be2 e5 7.Nb3 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Be3 Qc7?! (according to theory 9...Be6 is more precise) 10.a4 Be6 (10...b6) 11.a5 Qc6**

In the famous game Geller – Fischer (candidates tournament, Curacao, 1962) there was played 11...Nbd7 12.Nd5 Nxd5 13.ed Bf5 14.c4 Bg6?! (as Edmar Mednis pointed out, 14...Rac8 15.Rc1 Qd8 16.Qd2 h6+/- is better, with the idea of Bg5) 15.Rc1 Nc5? (15...f5?! 16.f4!; 15...Rac8) 16.Nxc5 dc 17.b4!+/-

**12.Bf3**

Of course, not 12.f3? d5. Isaac Boleslavsky recommended 12.Qd3!? Rd8 13.Rfd1 Nbd7 14.Nd5.

**12...Nbd7 13.Nd5! Bxd5 14.ed Qb5**

In the game Stein – Boleslavsky (Soviet Team Championship, Grozny, 1969) Black tried 14...Qc4 15.Nd2 Qb5 (15...Qh4 16.g3 Qh3 17.Ra4!?), but after 16.Qb1! with the idea of 17.c4 he ran into serious difficulties.



[FEN "r4rk1/1p1nbppp/p2p1n2/Pq1Pp3/8/1N2BB2/1PP2PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 15"]

1.?

15.Qd1-d3!!

"The correct treatment of the position. An exchange of queens on d3 is good for White, as he gets favorable possibilities for rook operations on the c-file. Having the advantage of the bishop-pair and strong pressure on the queenside, he can count on success in the endgame" (Smyslov).

**15...Rfc8 16.Rfc1 Qxd3?! After the exchange White's advantage is in no doubt. Preferable is 16...Qb4 17.Bd2!?** (17.c4? e4! 18.Bxe4 Ne5 is bad; 17.Nd2 Nc5 leads to equality, although 17.Be2!? deserves attention) 17...Qh4+/=.

17.cd g6

As Vasily Smyslov pointed out, 17...Nc5? 18.Nxc5 dc 19.d6! lost. According to Artur Yusupov it was worth thinking about 17...Kf8!? 18.Rc3 Ke8 19.Rac1 Kd8.

**18.Rc3 Rxc3 19.bc Rc8 20.c4 e4!** (otherwise by playing 21.Rb1 White would put pressure on b7) **21.de Rxc4 22.Nd2 Rc2 23.Bd1 Rc3 24.Kf1 Nc5 25.Bd4 Rd3 26.Bxc5 dc 27.Ke2 Rxd2+** (27...Rd4 28.f3 is also joyless) **28.Kxd2 Nxe4+ 29.Kc2 Nd6** (29...Nxf2? 30.Bf3 f5 31.Rb1 is very bad) **30.Be2 Bf6 31.Rb1 Kf8** (31...Bd8? 32.Bxa6! ba 33.Rb8) **32.Kb3 Ke7** (it's better to play 32...Bd4 33.f4 h5 and put the king on f6) **33.Bd3 Kd7 34.f4!**, and White gradually made the best of being the exchange up.

In conclusion I suggest that you take a small test: six exercises that are associated with the problem of exchanging queens one way or another. I hope that after studying this article the problems will seem easy to you.

## Exercises

1.



[FEN "2r4r/qp1kbppp/4p3/p2pPn2/P2P4/BP1Q1NP1/5P1P/R4K1R b - - 0 19"]

1...?

2.



[FEN "k2rr3/pp1bn1p1/1q1Bp2p/1B1pP3/  
P1p5/2P1QP2/2P2P1P/R3R1K1 b - - 0 21"]

1...?

3.



[FEN "1n1r1rk1/1pq1bppp/3p1n2/pB1Pp3/  
8/PN2BP2/1PP1Q1PP/1K1R3R w - - 0 19"]

1.?

4.



[FEN "2r3k1/5pp1/1p2pn1p/8/2NP1q2/  
1R2Q2P/1P3PP1/6K1 b - - 0 33"]

1...?

5.



[FEN "1rr3k1/1pqn1pp1/p3p1p1/3pP3/P2Q4/2P1R2P/1P1N1PP1/R5K1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

6.



[FEN "r3r3/3nqpk1/p2n2p1/P3p3/1Pp1P3/5NNP/B4PP1/2QR2K1 w - - 0 32"]

1.?

### Solutions

**1. Paulsen – Tarrasch, Nuremberg, 1888**

**19...Qa6! 20.Qxa6 (20.Ke2?? Rc2+) 20...ba**

The bad b2-bishop and the weakness of the b3- and d4-pawns determine Black's big advantage.

**21.Kg2 (21.Ne1 Rb8 22.Bc3 Rxb3 23.Bxa5 Nxd4-+) 21...Rc2 22.Bc1 Rb8 23.Rb1 Rc3 24.Bd2 Rxb3 25.Rxb3 Rxb3 26.Bxa5 Rb2! 27.Bd2 Bb4!, and Black won.**

**2. Stefansson – Dolmatov, New York, 1989**

An exchange of queens is favorable for White both on e3 (fixing his pawn configuration on the kingside) and on b6 (severely weakening Black's queenside).

The interesting try 21...d4?! 22.Qxd4 Qxd4 23.cd Nf5 is justified with 24.Bc7 Nxd4 25.Red1 Bxb5 unclear, but White retains slightly better chances after 24.c3 Nxd6 25.ed Bxb5 26.ab Rxd6 27.Ra4.

The strongest move is 21...Qa5! By preserving a pawn structure that's favorable for him, Black gets an advantage. For example, 22.Bb4 (22.Qc5!? Rc8 23.Qb4=+/+ is preferable) 22...Qc7 23.Bd6 Qc8-/+ (with a subsequent 24...Nf5).

In the game there was **21...Qxe3?! 22.fe Bc6 (22...Bxb5 23.ab b6?! 24.Bc7 or 23...Nc8 24.Bc7!? Rd7 25.b6) 23.Bxc6 Nxc6 24.Kf2 Ne7 25.e4! de 26.fe+/=.**

**3. Sax – Quinteros, Interzonal tournament, Moscow, 1982**

**19.Qc4!+/-** In essence the black queen is the only defender of the queenside, and it's favorable to exchange it off.

**19...Qxc4 20.Bxc4 Rc8 21.Bb5** (another path is 21.Nxa5! Bd8 22.Nxb7 Rxc4 23.Nxd6+/-) **21...Bd8 22.g4 Nfd7 23.Nd2 Bb6 24.Bg5** (threatening 25.Be7 and 25.Nc4)

The exchange of bishops 24.Bxb6?! Nxb6 25.Ne4 Rfd8 (with the idea of Rc7, Nc8) would have allowed Black to reinforce. But this other version of the exchange 24.Rhe1!? Bxe3 (24...Rfd8 25.Nc4+-) 25.Rxe3 Nb6 26.Ne4 Rfd8 27.Rb3! Rc7 28.Bc6!+/- (28.Ba6) was fairly strong.

**24...Bd8** (Black also has a difficult position with 24...f6 25.Bh4, for example, 25...Rc5 26.c4 and 27.Ne4; 25...g5 26.Be1 and 27.Nc4; 25...Bc7 26.Nc4, intending 27.Be1 b6 28.b4+/-) **25.Bxd8 Rfxd8 26.Nc4** (two pawns are attacked at the same time) **26...Rc7 27.Nxd6 Nf6 28.Nf5 Rc5 29.c4**, and White won.

#### 4. Knaak – Inkef, GDR – Bulgaria match, 1982

With any version of a queen exchange (33...Qxe3; 33...Nd5; 33...e5; 33...g5!?) White can count on equalizing. The strongest plan is an attack on the king.

**33...Qf5!** (threatening 34...Qb1+)

**34.Nd6** (34.Nd2 Rc1+ 35.Kh2 Nd5 or 35...Qc2) **34...Qb1+ 35.Kh2 Rc1 36.Qd3 Rh1+ 37.Kg3 Qc1 38.Rc3** (38.Qe3 Qc7 39.Qe5 Qxd6!) **38...Qg5+ 39.Kf3 Qh5+** (39...Qd5+!? 40.Ke2 g6 with a double attack on d6 and g2) **40.Kg3 Qg5+ 41.Kf3 Qh5+ 42.Kg3 g5! 43.Qe3** (43.Rc8+ Kg7 44.Ne8+ Nxe8 45.Rxe8 Qh4+ 46.Kf3 Re1+) **43...g4! 44.Rc8+ Kh7** (44...Kg7 is inaccurate because of 45.Qe5! Rxh3+ 46.Kf4) **45.Ne8 Nxe8** (but not 45...Rxh3+? 46.gh Qxh3+ 47.Kf4 Nd5+ 48.Ke5 Nxe3?? 49.Nf6+ with mate) **46.Rxe8 gh 47.Qe4 + Kg7 48.gh Qxh3+ 49.Kf4 Qh4+ 0-1**

#### 5. Illescas – Anand, Linares, 1994

In future White could have started an attack on the kingside by means of Nf3, then either Qh4 and Ng5, or Qg4 and h4-h5. It's useful to eliminate the eventual danger to the king immediately by forcing an exchange of queens.

**22...Qb6!+=** It's impossible to avoid the exchange – the b2-pawn is under attack.

**23.Qxb6 Nxb6 24.h4** (otherwise at some point he'd have to deal with g6-g5, g7-g6, Kg7, Rh8-h4) **24...Kf8 25.g3 Ke7 26.b3?!**

The start of a dubious plan. The Indian grandmaster's superior class is beginning to make itself felt – his opponent isn't coping well with the ending that has arisen.

**26...Rc7 27.a5 Nd7 28.c4 Rbc8 29.Kg2** (after 29.cd Rc1+ 30.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 31.Kg2 ed the a5- and e5-pawns are vulnerable) **29...Nb8 30.Ra4?!** (it's easy to prevent the threat of 31.cd ed 32.e6 and 33.Rg4) **30...Rd8 31.f4 Nc6 32.Rd3 Rcd7 33.c5 f6 34.Nf3 d4 35.ef+ gf 36.Nd2 e5 37.Ne4 Rd5** (Black has prepared f6-f5) **38.fe Rxe5 39.Nd6 Rxc5 40.Nxb7? Rc2+ 0-1**

#### 6. Karpov – Spassky, Moscow, 1973

32.Qd2? Rad8 33.Qxd6? Nf8+- is wrong.

**32.Qg5!!+-**

**32...f6?!** (32...Rac8 33.Rxd6 Qxg5 34.Nxg5 Nf6 35.Ne2 c3 36.Bxf7 isn't much better) **33.Qg4** (threatening 34.Rxd6) **33...Kh7 34.Nh4 0-1**

Black resigned on account of 34...Nf8 35.Nxg6!; 34...Rg8 35.Bxc4 (or 35.

Rxd6 Qxd6 36.Nhf5 immediately) 35...Rg7 36.Rxd6 Qxd6 37.Nhf5.

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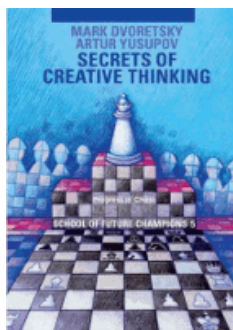
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## Mikhail Tal's "Unknown" Game

This is the end of an essay by Genna Sosonko that was published in the third issue of the magazine [New in Chess](#) for 2011.

"In the summer of 1988, in Moscow after a trip to the U.S., Mikhail Tal showed David Bronstein an 'entertaining game' that he'd played in a simul in California. Seeing the game, David Ionovich insisted that the winner wrote it down in his own handwriting: such pearls shouldn't vanish without a trace.

"Here it is, a never-before-published game, carefully preserved for us by David Bronstein."

**Mikhail Tal – N.N.**  
Los Angeles, 1988

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 d6 5.de Nxe4 6.Bxf7+ Kxf7 7.Qd5+ Be6 8.Qxe4 d5 9.Qd3 Be7 10.0-0 Qd7 11.Nc3 Rxf8 12.Re1 Ke8 13.Ng5? Bc5 14.Nxe6 Bxf2+ 15.Kh1 Bxe1 16.Nxf8 Rxf8 17.Bg5 Nb4 18.Qe2 Nxc2 19.e6 Qd6 20.Nb5 Qe5 21.h4 Qg3 22.Rd1 Rf2 23.Qxf2 Bxf2 24.Rxd5 1-0

First a specific note – about the only question mark, which Tal placed after his thirteenth move.



[FEN "4kr1r/ppqb1pp/2n1b3/3pP3/8/2NQ1N2/PPP2PPP/R1B1R1K1 w k - 0 13"]

Although the move **13.Ng5** probably isn't the strongest (it made sense to play 13.Bg5!+/-, not fearing 13...Rxf3? 14.Qxf3 Bxg5 15.Qh5+), nevertheless it doesn't let the advantage slip and so it doesn't deserve to be condemned. A real blunder was made a little later.

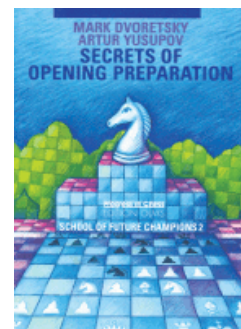
**13...Bc5 14.Nxe6** (14.Rf1) **14...Bxf2+ 15.Kh1 Bxe1 16.Nxf8?**

A clear advantage was preserved with 16.Nxd5! Ba5, and only now 17.Nxf8 Rxf8 18.Be3! Nxe5 19.Qd4 Nc6 20.Qe4+ Kd8 21.Rd1+/- . After the move in the game, though, the evaluation changes to favor Black.

**16...Rxf8 17.Bg5?! (17.Be3=+/) 17...Nb4! 18.Qe2 Nxc2**

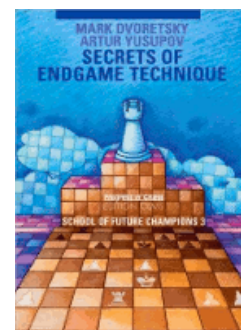
And now – the most important part. I can't speak for the whole game, but I have already been using its brilliant ending for many years as an exercise to play through with my students. My first "training game" against Artur Yusupov as white took place that same year, 1988. Obviously I learned about this combination from some publication or other (Tal didn't show it to me); it's a shame that with all the time that has passed I no longer remember where I got it. Moreover, I even know the name of Tal's opponent.

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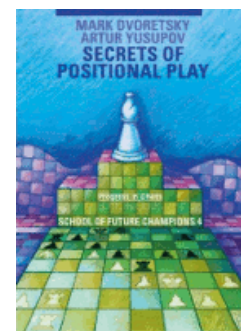
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**Tal – Miller**  
Los Angeles, 1988



[FEN "4kr2/pppq2pp/8/3pP1B1/8/2N5/  
PPn1Q1PP/R3b2K w - - 0 19"]

Naturally, before I showed this ending to my students I carefully analyzed it and then checked my conclusions on a computer. I now want to let you know the results of my analysis.

The primitive 19.Rxe1 Nxe1 20.Qxe1 leads to a losing position for White after 20...Qf5! (20...d4!? 21.Ne4 Qf5-/+ isn't bad either).

Tal preferred **19.e6!?**, and here his opponent blundered. Instead of **19...Qd6?** the move 19...Qc6! was much stronger; for example, 20.Rxe1 Nxe1 21.Qxe1 d4+-. On 20.Rd1 Black can switch to a favorable endgame for him with 20...Rf2?! 21.Rxd5! Qxd5 22.Qxf2 Bxf2 23.Nxd5 Bb6-+/. But he gets even more by continuing 20...d4! 21.Kg1 (nothing better is apparent) 21...Rf2! 22.Qh5+ g6-+, and the queen has to retreat in defense of the g2-square.

Bearing in mind what's been said, I had to move the start of the training play one move forward. From this point Tal's combination is flawless.



[FEN "4kr2/ppp3pp/3qP3/3p2B1/8/2N5/  
PPn1Q1PP/R3b2K w - - 0 20"]

**1.?**

What should White do? 20...Qe5! is threatened. 21.Rxe1? Nxe1 22.Qxe1 Qe5!-+ is bad.

20.Rc1? Rf2! 21.Qd3 Nb4! 22.Nb5 Qxe6 23.Nxc7+ Kf7-+ is forcibly refuted.

20.Rd1?! is also a mistake. Black only has to avoid the traps: 20...c6? 21.Nxd5! cd 22.Qb5+ Qc6 23.Rxd5 Rf6 (23...Ba5 24.Rc5!+-) 24.Bxf6 gf, and now you can at least switch to an overwhelming endgame, 25.Qxc6+ bc 26.Rd7. But 25.Qd3 is even stronger, planning the impressive variation 25...Nb4 26.Rd8+ Ke7 27.Qxh7+!! Kxd8 (27...Kxe6 28.Qg8+ doesn't help either) 28.e7+ Ke8 29.Qg7!, and Black is defenseless.

The advantage is preserved with 20...d4!?, or, even more simply: 20...Rf2! 21.Rxd5 Rxe2 22.Rxd6 cd 23.Nxe2 h6 – the e6-pawn is lost, and a difficult endgame for White arises.



## 20.Nc3-b5! Qd6-e5

On 20...Qc6 there is a pleasant choice between 21.Rd1!+- and 21.h4 Bg3 (21...Nxa1?! 22.Qh5+ g6 23.Qxh7+-) 22.e7 Rf5 23.Rf1!+-.

It's harder to refute 20...Qc5!?



[FEN "4kr2/ppp3pp/4P3/1Nqp2B1/8/8/PPn1Q1PP/R3b2K w - - 0 21"]

1.?

21.Rd1? d4! 22.Nxd4 Nxd4 23.Qxe1 Qxg5 24.Rxd4 Qe5! 25.Rd1 Qxe1+ 26.Rxe1 Rf2+- or 22.h4 Rf2! 23.Nxd4! Rxe2 24.Nxe2 Qd6 25.Rxd6 cd-/+ fails.

Unconvincing is 21.Rc1 Rf2! (but not 21...a6? 22.h3+-) 22.Qd3 (22.Rxc2 Qxc2 23.Qxe1 Rf5 is unclear too) 22...a6! 23.Bh4 (23.Nxc7+ Qxc7 24.Be3! Nb4! 25.Rxc7 Nxd3 26.Bxf2 Bxf2 unclear) 23...Rf8 (23...Qxb5 24.Qxb5+ ab 25.Bxf2 Bxf2 26.Rxc2 Bb6+/- is also possible) 24.Nxc7+ Qxc7 25.Bxe1 Nxe1 26.Rxe1 Qc4 27.Qd1 Ke7=.

Only 21.b4!! Qb6 (21...Bxb4 22.Qh5+ g6 23.Qxh7+-) 22.Rd1! d4 (22...Rf5 23.Rxd5! Rxd5 24.Qh5+ g6 25.Qxh7+-) 23.h4 leads to the aim. On 23...Rf2 (or 23...a6) there follows 24.Qh5+ g6 25.Qxh7 Rf1+ 26.Kh2+-, and, thanks to the inclusion of the moves 21.b4 Qb6, Black has no queen check from e5. And if 23...Bg3, then either 24.Qd3+- (intending 25.Qxg3; 25.Qxh7), or 24.Qh5+ g6 25.Qxh7 Qxe6 26.Nxc7+ Bxc7 27.Qxc7+-.



[FEN "4kr2/ppp3pp/4P3/1N1pq1B1/8/8/PPn1Q1PP/R3b2K w - - 0 21"]

1.?

21.h2-h4!!

21.Rd1?! c6 22.h4 Qb8 unclear is inaccurate.

21...Qe5-g3

The queen is invulnerable because of 22.Nxc7#.

22.Ra1-d1!

Threatening both 23.Rxd5 and 23.Rd3. In the event of 22...c6, the response 23.

Rd3 Qb8 24.Rf3! is decisive.

## 22...Rf8-f2 23.Qe2xf2!

An elegant finish! It's harder to win with 23.Nxc7+!? Qxc7 24.Qb5+ Qc6 25.Rxd5 Rf6! (I won't bother to give my analysis, which proves that White preserves a decisive advantage here as well).

## 23...Be1xf2

23...Qxf2 24.Nxc7+ Kf8 25.e7+

## 24.Rd1xd5 1-0

*Editor's note:* [Inside Chess, Vol. 1, Issue #8](#) gives the remaining moves as **24...Qxh4+ 25.Bxh4 Bxh4 26.Nxc7+ Kf8 27.Rf5+ Bf6 28.Rd5 a6 29.Rd7 Nb4 30.Rf7+ Kg8 31.Rxf6 Nc6 32.Rf7 g6 33.e7 1-0**

I gave the grandmasters who were playing this position as white against me half an hour to find the series of best moves, and only a few of them were successful. But Tal, I would remind you, solved this difficult problem in the conditions of a simul on at least twenty-five boards, with no opportunity to think about his moves or accurately calculate the variations. Well, we've just seen one more manifestation of the intuitive genius that helped the grandmaster to correctly determine where to develop an attack and instantly find successful variations that led him to his goal.

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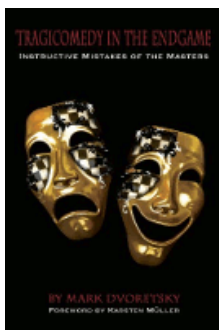
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## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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## The Process of Elimination

### Part One

Sometimes accurately calculating the consequences of our intended move is difficult and even unnecessary. It is easier to convince ourselves that it makes sense, isn't refuted immediately, and all the other moves are bad or at least noticeably weaker. As a result we save time and simultaneously confirm the correctness of our choice. It is natural to call this approach to decision-making the process of elimination.

### Korchnoi – Gipslis

Zonal tournament, Tallinn, 1967



[FEN "r3qbk1/p4pp1/1p2p2p/2n1P3/1P6/5NP1/P1Q2PBP/3R2K1 b - - 0 24"]

### 1...?

The queen thrust to a4 that followed in the game was easily refuted by 25. Ne1!, with a double attack on his opponent's rook and knight. Which means the knight should have retreated, but to where?

In the case of 24...Nd7? the response 25.Ng5 hg 26.Bxa8 Nxe5+/- isn't bad, but 25.Qc7 Rd8 (nothing else works) 26.Bf1 is even stronger, with the unstoppable threat of 27.Bb5+/-.

Material losses are inevitable with 24...Na4? 25.Nd4 and 26.Bc6+/- . And the miserable move 24...Nb7? isn't even worth considering.

Only 24...Na6! remains. The position that arises after 25.a3 Rc8 (or 25...Rd8 26.Rc1 Nb8) 26.Qd3 Nb8 is in White's favor, but it can be defended, Black isn't doomed to defeat.

### 24...Qa4? 25.Nd4?

Viktor Korchnoi, in turn, doesn't cope with a small task that can easily be solved by the process of elimination. In the choice between two knight moves to defend the queen he should have concentrated on the search for his opponent's resources. And then the move in the game would have been rejected in favor of 25.Ne1!+/-.

**25...Rd8!** (now the advantage switches to Black) **26.Bf3 Qxc2** (26...Qxb4!? 27.Nc6 Rxd1+ 28.Qxd1 Qa3-/+ is no less strong) **27.Nxc2 Rxd1+ 28.Bxd1 Nd3 29.f4 Bxb4 30.Be2 Bc5+**, and Black was left a pawn up.

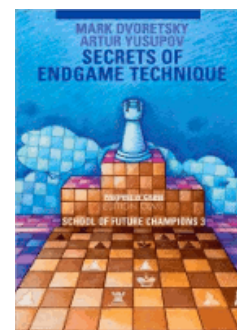
The situation White came up against when he was considering his twenty-fifth move was fairly typical. When you compare two continuations that are

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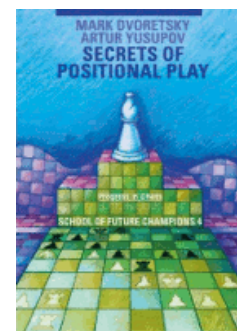
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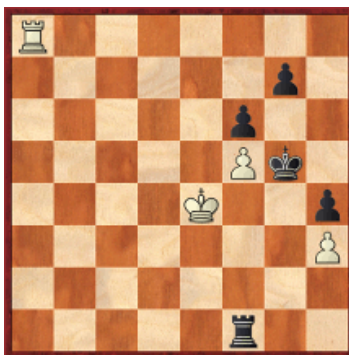
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equally attractive at first sight, it often makes sense to try and refute one of them, to then choose the other by the process of elimination.

### Saidy – Popovych

Gausdal, 1982



[FEN "R7/6p1/5p2/5Pk1/4K2p/7P/8/5r2 w - - 0 66"]

1.?

The rook has to attack the g7-pawn. The move **66.Rg8??** should be rejected in connection with **66...Re1+ 67.Kf3 Re7+**. Alas, that's exactly how Anthony Saidy played. Having convinced himself that the loss of a second pawn was inevitable, he ceased his resistance.

66.Ra7! Rf4+ 67.Ke3 gave an easy draw.

A variety of the same situation: we see a solid path, but there is also a sharper possibility. We carefully check it, and if it doesn't work then we have a back-up plan.

### Randviir – Bronstein

Parnu, 1947



[FEN "3rk1nr/1pp2pQp/1pn1b3/2p5/4q3/1N2B3/PP3PPP/R3KB1R b KQk - 0 14"]

1...?

The aggressive thrust 14...Nb4? (hoping for 15.Qxh8?? Nc2+ 16.Ke2 Bc4#) is refuted by 15.Bb5+! c6 16.0-0!+/- (but not 16.Qxh8?? Qxg2! 17.Rf1 Nc2+ 18.Ke2 Bg4#).

Which means you should simply play **14...Qe5!** (there's also 14...Ke7!?, intending 15.Qxh8? Nb4+, but after 15.Nd2 you still have to exchange queens with 15...Qe5) **15.Qxe5 Nxe5**+/-.

What is the standard procedure for using the process of elimination? We determine all the candidate moves that make sense, then carefully look for the strongest responses by our opponent, which forces us to throw out the majority of the candidate moves. If only one unrefuted possibility remains as a result, then we choose it. Which is why training exercises on the theme of the process of elimination simultaneously develop the skill of paying attention to your opponent's resources.



[FEN "3qr1k1/1pR2ppp/4r3/p1Qb1N2/8/P4P2/1PP3PP/1K5R w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

You have to defend against 1...Re1+. But it's also important to bear in mind another, less obvious threat, 1...Re5. Thus 1.Rc1? Re5! with a double attack (2...Rxf5; 2...Ba2+) loses instantly.

For the same reason the natural move in the game **1.Qc3?** is also a mistake. His opponent replied **1...Re5!**, threatening not only 2...Rxf5, but also 2...Qxc7! After **2.Rd1 Rxf5**, Black won.

The choice has narrowed down considerably: to the two pawn moves 1.b3 and 1.c4. It isn't possible to eliminate one of them conclusively, but it's easy to observe that in the case of 1.b3?! Re5! 2.Nd6 (on 2.Nd4? both 2...Bxf3 and 2...Bxb3 are strong) White's position is alarming. Besides the capture of one of the pawns with the bishop (on which the only playable reply to be found is 3.Qb6), 2...b6!? 3.Qxb6 R5e6 also looks strong. In the forced variation 4.Nxf7! Re1+ (4...Rxb6 5.Nxd8 Rxd8 6.Rd1 is weaker) 5.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 6.Kb2 Bxf7 7.Qxa5 Qd1 8.Rc8+ Be8 9.Kc3 you wouldn't envy White's king.

But with 1.c4! Black has no time for the dangerous move for us Re5, and 1...Bxf3? 2.gf Re5 is refuted by 3.Nh6+! gh 4.Rg1+. Which means 1...Bc6 is forced, on which we play 2.Qd4!, apparently keeping the extra pawn. Then again, by continuing 2...Qg5!, the opponent again poses a tricky problem for White.



[FEN "4r1k1/1pR2ppp/2b1r3/p4Nq1/2PQ4/P4P2/1P4PP/1K5R w - - 0 3"]

**1.?**

The knight and the g2-pawn are under attack. 3.Qg4? doesn't work because of the impressive blow 3...Be4+!! It's very difficult to see why the quiet 3.Ng3? is bad. A surprise pawn move on the other side follows, 3...a4!!-+, freeing the a5-square for the queen, and the c7-rook finds itself in a trap.

Which means that we have to part with the f3-pawn by playing 3.g4! Bxf3 4.Rg1 with a subsequent 5.h4 (4.Rf1 Bxg4 5.Qd5 h6 6.Ka2 also deserves attention).



## Geller – Gufeld

Soviet Championship, Tbilisi, 1959



[FEN "3r2k1/1p1r1pb1/p2P3p/P2R1Q2/3RN3/7p/4qPP1/6K1 w - - 0 35"]

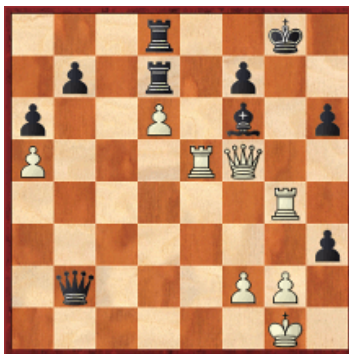
1.?

White's position is won. He can happily ignore the threat of 35...Bxd4, as then the black king will be left defenseless – which means that 35.gh is strong. He can also take the rook out from under attack with 35.Rd3.

Grandmaster Geller played **35.Re5??**. He created the threat of 36.Nf6+ (immediately this check didn't give him anything), underestimating the only defense, which isn't difficult to choose by the process of elimination.

**35...Qb2! 36.Nf6+ Bxf6 37.Rg4+**

The d4-rook is under fire, so he can't just take on f6 (37.Qxf6 Qxd4 38.Re8+ Rxe8 39.Qxd4 Re1+ 40.Kh2 hg 41.Kxg2 Re6+).



[FEN "3r2k1/1p1r1p2/p2P1b1p/P3RQ2/6R1/7p/1q3PP1/6K1 b - - 0 37"]

1...?

Black had to reject one of two possibilities: 37...Bg5 or 37...Bg7. In the game neither player turned out to be at their peak.

**37...Bg5? 38.Rxg5+? hg 39.Qxg5+ Kh7 40.Qh5+ Kg8 41.Qg5+ (41.Rg5+ Qg7=) 1/2-1/2**

In reply to 38.Qxg5+! hg 39.Rxg5+ Eduard Gufeld envisioned the only defense against mate: 39...Qg7!! 40.Rxg7+ Kh8 41.R7g5 f6. But he evaluated the position that arose incorrectly: after 42.Rd5 hg 43.Kxg2 the d6-pawn is inviolable, and there is a clear advantage on White's side.

In the variation 37...Bg7! 38.Qf6 Qb1+ with a subsequent 39...Qh7 White's attack hits a brick wall. For example, 39.Re1 Qh7 40.Re7 Rxe7 41.Qxe7 Rf8 42.d7 Qd3+ (not 43.Qf6?! Qd1+ 44.Kh2 Qxg4).

In the case of 39.Kh2 Qh7 40.Re7 the response 40...Rxe7? 41.Qxe7 Rf8? 42.d7 Qf5 (42...Qd3 43.Qf6+-) 43.Qxf8+! Kxf8 44.d8Q# no longer works (this variation was indicated by Gufeld – it seems he rejected the move 37...Bg7!)

because of it). Or 41...Rb8 42.d7 Qf5 43.d8Q+ Rxd8 44.Qxd8+ Kh7, with roughly equal chances.

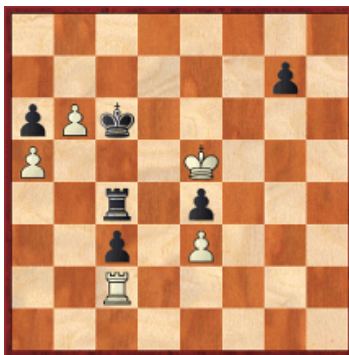
However, Black doesn't have to exchange rooks: with the king on h2 he can play 40...Kh8!-+, as 41.Qxf7 Be5+ doesn't work.

That fragment illustrates the difficulty of using the process of elimination in confusing situations. Sometimes we throw out one of the possibilities after calculating it carelessly without noticing a resource that changes its evaluation in our favor. As a result we choose another, weaker one.

Then again, sometimes an approximate, imprecise calculation of some of the variations nevertheless helps us to choose a good path, even if objectively it isn't the only possible one.

### Van der Wiel – Timman

Amsterdam, 1987



[FEN "8/6p1/pPk5/P3K3/2r1p3/2p1P3/2R5/8 w - - 0 47"]

1.?

John Van der Wiel justifiably rejected 47.b7? Kxb7 48.Kd5 Rc6 49.Kxe4 g5! 50.Kd3 (50.Kf3 Rc5 51.e4 Kc6+) 50...g4, and White is defenseless.

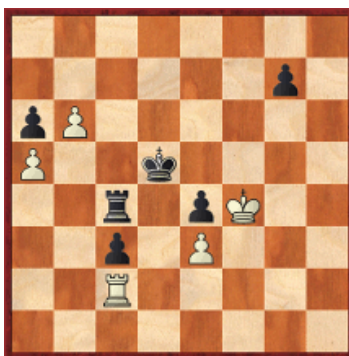
He didn't like the waiting move 47.Kf4 because of 47...Kd5 48.b7 Rb4 49.Rxc3 Rxb7 – Black intends 50...Rf7+ and 51...Rf3(f2).

### 47.Rc1!

This move was found by process of elimination (Van der Wiel). The idea of it is that after 47...c2 48.Kf4 Kd5 49.b7 Rb4 50.Rxc2 Rxb7 he manages to force a draw with 51.Rd2+.

In the game there followed **47...g5 48.Kf5 Rc5+** (48...Kd5 49.Rd1+ Kc5 50.Rd8) **49.Kxe4 Rxa5 50.Rxc3+ Kxb6 51.Rc8 Rc5 52.Rb8+ Ka7!?** (52...Kc6 53.Kd4 Rd5+ 54.Kc4=) **53.Rf8** (53.Rg8!? a5 54.Kd4 Rb5 55.Kc4 Rb4+ 56.Kc5=) **53...a5 54.Kd4 Rb5 55.e4 a4 56.e5 a3 57.Rf1**, and soon (true, after a few adventures) a peace treaty was signed.

And now let's go back to the position that arises after 47.Kf4 Kd5.



[FEN "8/6p1/pP6/P2k4/2r1pK2/2p1P3/

White has an interesting path to a draw: 48.Rg2! c2 (48...Rb4 49.Rxg7 Kc4 50.Kxe4 isn't dangerous) 49.b7 c1Q 50.Rg5+! Ke6 51.b8Q Qf1+ 52.Kg4 Qf3 + 53.Kh4, and his opponent has to settle for perpetual check.

Moreover, even the variation calculated by Van der Wiel, 48.b7 Rb4 49.Rxc3 Rxb7, doesn't promise Black any real winning chances after 50.Rc8 Rf7+ 51.Kg4 Rf3 52.Ra8 Rxe3 53.Rxa6 Ra3 54.Ra8.

It turns out that the subtle rook retreat to c1 wasn't compulsory at all. But it didn't worsen White's position an iota and even offered him a good additional opportunity in one of the variations. Which means that the attempt to use the process of elimination, if not all that accurate, still produced a good result.

I offer you a few comparatively simple exercises, in the solving of which you'll use the process of elimination.

## Exercises

### 1. Ragozin – Boleslavsky

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1945



[FEN "6k1/4P2p/6p1/1r6/8/5N2/2B2PPP/b5K1 b - - 0 35"]

1...?

### 2. Feldmus – V. Nikitin

Correspondence, 1983



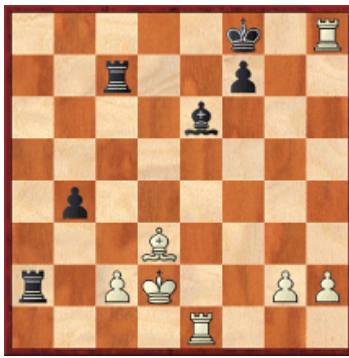
[FEN "1rr2k2/pp1bpp2/3p2pp/3P2P1/3R3P/P2B1P2/1PP5/2K1R3 b - - 0 20"]

1...?

### 3. Timoshchenko – Kuzmin

USSR, 1980

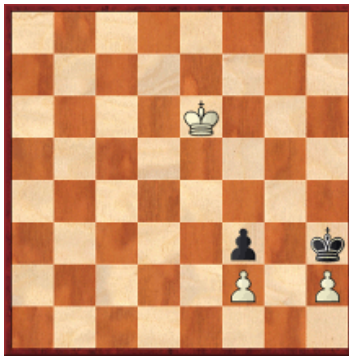




[FEN "5k1R/2r2p2/4b3/8/1p6/3B4/r1PK2PP/4R3 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

4. J. Moravec, 1925



[FEN "8/8/4K3/8/8/5p1k/5P1P/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

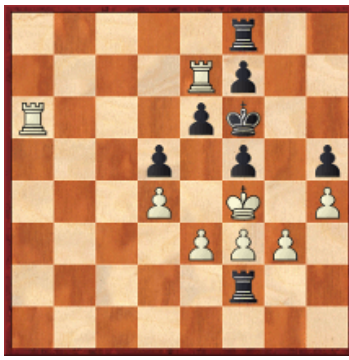
5. Miles – Hort  
Amsterdam, 1982



[FEN "1r4k1/R1R2p2/4p3/3p1p1p/p2P4/4P1P1/r4PKP/8 b - - 0 33"]

1...?

6. Miles – Hort  
Amsterdam, 1982



[FEN "5r2/4Rp2/R3pk2/3p1p/3P1K1P/4PPP1/5r2/8 w - - 0 42"]

1.?

## Solutions

### 1. Ragozin – Boleslavsky

Isaac Boleslavsky carelessly played 35...Kf7?!, and after 36.e8Q+! he resigned because of 36...Kxe8 37.Ba4.

By continuing **35...Rb8!** (with the idea of 36...Re8), Black retained winning chances.

### 2. Feldmus – V. Nikitin

Exchange on g5 or advance the h-pawn? The question should be answered not based on positional considerations, but purely concrete ones. In the game there followed 20...h5? 21.Rf4! (threatening 22.Bxg6). Black resigned, as he inevitably loses a pawn and his position is hopeless.

**20...hg! 21.hg Re8+!** was necessary. Black has a difficult ending, but there's still nothing better for him.

### 3. Timoshchenko – Kuzmin

Where should the king retreat to? Gennady Kuzmin "didn't guess right": 29...Ke7? 30.Rb8 Ra4 (if 30...b3, then 31.Rxb3) 31.Re4 Ra1 32.Rxb4, and being two pawns up, White won easily.

Only **29...Kg7!** is correct. Now 30.Rb8 b3 is useless, and on **30.Rh7+**, there is **30...Kf6!** (but not 30...Kf8? 31.Rxe6). Thanks to the threat of b4-b3 Black should get a draw.

### 4. J. Moravec

You have to get close to the pawns so that your opponent doesn't have time to take on h2.

In the variation 1.Kf5? Kg2! 2.h4 Kxf2 the black pawn promotes to a queen with check: 3.h5 Kg3 4.h6 f2 5.h7 f1Q+.

1.Ke5? Kg2! 2.h4 Kxf2 is also bad, as the white queen that appears on the board will immediately be lost: 3.h5 Ke3 4.h6 f2 5.h7 f1Q 6.h8Q Qa1+.

All that remains is **1.Kd5!! Kg2** (1...Kxh2? 2.Ke4 Kg2 3.Ke3+- – Black is in zugzwang) **2.h4 Kxf2 3.h5=.**

### 5. Miles – Hort

Black rejected the "active" defense 33...Rbb2? because of 34.Kh3! Rxf2 35.Kh4! Rxh2+ 36.Kg5+-. He simply defended the f7-pawn: **33...Rf8! =.**

There then followed 34.Re7 (White prevents the move 34...Kg7) 34...a3 35.Kf3 Ra1 36.h3 Ra2 37.h4 Ra1 38.Kf4 Ra2 39.f3 Rf2 40.Rxa3 Kg7 41.Ra6

Kf6, and the position in the next exercise came about.

## 6. Miles – Hort

Tony Miles probably realized that he had no chance of success, but he nevertheless pretended to fight for a win, not suspecting that the dangers might not only threaten his opponent.

After 42.Rd7?? Rg8!, it became clear that there was no satisfactory defense against 43...Rg4#. White played 43.e4, and immediately resigned.

The threat had to be parried by means of **42.Raa7!**=.

To be continued next month.

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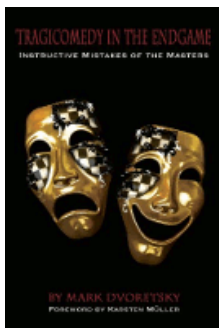
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## The Process of Elimination

### Part Two

Studies are an excellent training ground for learning about the process of elimination. Here's a simple example.

S. Isenegger, 1951



[FEN "8/3b1K1B/6Pk/8/8/8/7P/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

We can immediately toss out 1.g7? Be6+! 2.Kxe6 Kxg7 (an elementary draw, as the bishop doesn't control the rook pawn's promotion square). In the case of 1.Bg8? the same check comes to the rescue 1...Be6+! (but not 1...Be8+? 2. Kxe8 Kxg6 3.Kf8!+, and the black king doesn't get to a safe corner). Finally, 1.Kf6? Be8 2.h4 Bxg6 3.Bxg6 leads to stalemate.

1.Kg8!

In order to choose this move it isn't enough to throw out all the other continuations, you also have to foresee the bishop sacrifice that enables you to put your opponent in *zugzwang*. For example, 1...Bf5 2.g7! Bxh7+ 3.Kh8 Kg6 4.h4! Kh6 5.h5+-. Or 1...Be6+ 2.Kh8! Bf5 3.g7! Bxh7 4.h3! Kg6 5.h4 Kh6 6. h5+.

In *School of Chess Excellence 1: Endgame Analysis* and *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*, I described an effective training method: playing through specially-chosen positions taken from practical games or studies. In those exercises it's impossible or extremely difficult to calculate the correct path from beginning to end, and so you have to progress move by move.

By playing through these studies we learn to make some decisions quickly – with the help of the process of elimination – and at the key points, on the contrary, to think for a while in order to find non-obvious counterplay for our opponent and the only path that allows us to achieve our aim.

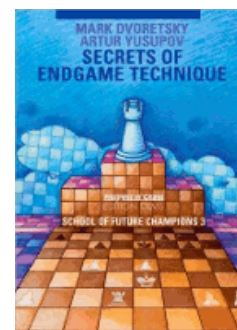
O. Pervakov, 1997

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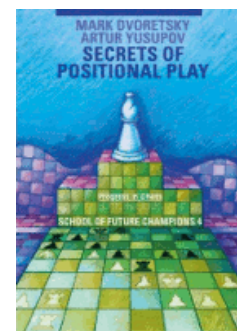
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[FEN "8/5p1p/5p1k/7P/P2p1P2/B2p1P1r/  
P4PK1/8 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

The rook is inviolable: 1.Kxh3? d2 2.Kh4 (threatening 3.Bf8#) 2...Kg7!-+. The move 1.Bb4? (or 1.Bc1?) 1...Rxb5-+ is also unsatisfactory. Thus we come to the only playable option: first we force the king to occupy the h5-square, and only after that do we stop the d3-pawn. It will then be difficult for Black to fight the passed a-pawn.

**1.Bf8+! Kxh5 2.Bb4 Rh4 3.Bd2!**

We make the last move after convincing ourselves that 3.a5? is impossible because of 3...Rxf4 4.a6 Rf5 5.a7 Rg5+ and 6...Rg8.

**3...Kg6!**

Threatening 4...Rh5, but again we have a way of closing the rook's outlet to freedom.

**4.f5+!**

It seems that the battle is over: after 4...Kxf5 5.a5 the pawn can't be stopped. But our opponent finds a surprising chance.

**4...Kh5!!**

What's this? It looks like he's playing for stalemate. Well, for now we have to move our pawn towards the promotion square and we'll choose a method of fighting our opponent's idea a little later.

**5.a5 h6! 6.a6 Rh3!**



[FEN "8/5p2/P4p1p/5P1k/3p4/3p1P1r/  
P2B1PK1/8 w - - 0 7"]

**1.?**

And now the moment has come to go into the position deeply. We can reject both 7.Kxh3? and 7.a7? Rg3+! There are various ways to avoid an immediate draw. Let's test them.

The "flashy" 7.Bg5? fg! even loses.

7.Bf4? d2! 8.Bxd2 d3 gives us nothing (9...Rg3+ is again threatened), and on 9.Bf4 – either 9...d2 10.Bxd2 Rg3+!, or 9...Rh4 10.a7 d2=.

On 7.f4? Black replies 7...Rh4 8.f3 Rh3! (renewing the threat of 9...Rg3+) 9.Be1 d2! (it's important to get rid of one of the pawns) 10.Bxd2 d3 11.Be1 Rg3+ (11...d2 12.Bxd2 Rg3+ is also possible) 12.Kxg3 (12.Bxg3 d2) 12...d2 13.Bxd2 – stalemate.

### 7.Bxh6! Kxh6

After the destruction of the h6-pawn, 7...d2 8.Bxd2 d3 is now useless because of 9.f4! Rh4 10.f3+-. And in the variation in which the pawns on both sides queen, White finds a way to achieve a decisive advantage.

**8.a7 d2 9.a8Q d1Q 10.Qh8+!** (but not 10.Qf8+? Kh7!)=) **10...Kg5 11.Qg7+ Kxf5** (11...Kh5 12.Qxf7+ Kg5 13.Qg6+ doesn't change anything) **12.Qg4+ Ke5 13.f4+!** and 14.Qxd1.

In the examples we looked at above the continuations that should have been rejected had a concrete refutation: a move or a forced variation leading to clearly unfavorable consequences. In endgame situations you can rarely get by without such precise calculations – which is why there are lots of studies and practical endings among the exercises that I offer for training on the process of elimination.

In the opening and middlegame we often eliminate this possibility or that one out of positional considerations. In some respects this is easier: it doesn't require precise calculation or finding non-obvious resources for your opponent, but in others it's harder – the evaluation may betray us.

### Enklaar – Dvoretsky

Wijk aan Zee, 1975

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Be7 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Re1 Bg4 9.c3 f5 10.h3** (10.Qb3 or 10.Nbd2 are usually played) **10...Bxf3!?** (10...Bh5 is also possible) **11.gf!?** (11.Qxf3 0-0=) **11...Nf6** (11...Nd6? 12.Qb3) **12.Bxf5 0-0 13.Qd3 Bd6 14.Bg5 Ne7!**



[FEN "r2q1rk1/ppp1n1pp/3b1n2/3p1BB1/3P4/2PQ1P1P/PP3P2/RN2R1K1 w - - 0 15"]

### 1.?

Black, obviously, wants to exchange on f5. We can immediately toss out 15.Bxf6? Rxf6 16.Bxh7+ Kh8 (or 16...Kf7) with the very dangerous threat of 17...g6 – White's position is unsatisfactory here.

15.Re6? Nxf5 16.Qxf5 is also a mistake in connection with 16...Qd7! 17.Bxf6 Rae8!

But the natural bishop check on e6 should be rejected not out of concrete considerations, but purely positional ones: the e7-knight gets the g6-square, after which there's the threat of seizing the very important f4-square, which is in close proximity to the white king.

So White should agree to exchange off the f5-bishop and simply complete his



development: 15.Nd2! Nxf5 16.Qxf5 Qc8 17.Qxc8 Raxc8=.

Played in the game was **15.Be6+?! Kh8 16.Nd2 Ng6** (threatening 17...Bf4) **17.Bf5?**

"Mistakes never come one at a time" – Bertus Enklaar choked and quickly lost. 17.Bxd5? Bf4 18.Bxf6 Qxd5+ didn't work; he should have chosen between 17.Qf5 (on which I intended 17...c6 with a subsequent Qc7, Bf4) and 17.Nb3.

**17...Bf4! 18.Bxf6** (18.Bxf4 Nxf4 19.Qe3 N6h5 or 18.Bxg6 Bxg5 are hardly better) **18...Qxf6 19.Bxg6 Bxd2 20.Re2** (20.Qxd2 Qxg6+ is joyless too) **20...Bf4 21.Bxh7** (21.Bh5 Qg5+ 22.Bg4 h5) **21...Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Qh5** White resigned.

**Ivkov – Polgar**

Monaco, 1994

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.0-0 Bg7 5.Re1 Qb6?! 6.Nc3** (6.Na3!?) **6...Nd4 7.Nd5** (7.Bc4!?) **7...Qd8 8.Nxd4 cd 9.c3?! 10.Nf4?**

9.d3 is preferable, for example, 9...a6 10.Ba4 b5 11.Bb3 e6 12.Qf3! with a formidable attacking position.

**9...e6**



[FEN "r1bqk1nr/pp1p1pbp/4p1p1/1B1N4/3pP3/2P5/PP1P1PPP/R1BQR1K1 w kq - 0 10"]

**1.?**

The natural move **10.Nf4?** that was made in the game was refuted by an attack on two White pieces at the same time, **10...Qg5!** It was necessary to return the knight to the firing line: **11.Nd5 ed 12.ed+**, but there wasn't enough compensation for the loss of material and Black won.

The knight sacrifice is also incorrect in this version: 10.Qe2? ed 11.ed+ Kf8 12.d6 Bf6+.

It would seem that we already know enough that by process of elimination we can arrive at the only correct move, 10.Nb4!+/- . For a practical game this reasoning is playable, allowing us to make a rational decision without wasting too much time. Still, at the end of the day we should check again to see if we've missed any candidate moves that make sense – what if they exist and promise us more than the modest knight retreat?!

When the German player Berthold Ries was solving the problem he looked for a way to get an attack after sacrificing the knight on d5. He examined possibilities that I hadn't considered. His conclusions were tested and corrected by Artur Yusupov, and then by myself too. I'll give our brief summary.

In the variation 10.d3?! ed 11.ed+ Kf8 12.Bf4 Bf6 13.c4 Kg7 White is left with definite compensation for the sacrificed piece, but it still isn't worth it for him to go into this kind of position.

In the case of 10.b3?! the knight can't be taken immediately: 10...ed? 11.ed+ Kf8 12.Ba3+ or 11...Ne7 12.d6+-. However, 10...a6! is very strong; for example, 11.Bd3 ed 12.ed+ Kf8 13.Ba3+ d6, or 11.Ba3 Bf8!-/ (11...ab? 12. Bd6! is weaker).

But the move 10.Qa4!? deserves serious attention. On 10...a6 you can reply either 11.b3 Kf8 12.Ba3+ d6 13.Nf4, or 11.d3!? (and if 11...Rb8?, then 12. Bf4!). After 10...ed 11.ed+ Kf8 12.Qb4+ (or 12.Qa3+) 12...Ne7 13.d3 h6 14. Bf4 Bf6 15.Bd6 a6 a tense position is created that is difficult to evaluate.

### Belikov – Saulin

Russian Championship, Elista, 1995

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Qxd4 a6 5.c4 Nc6 6.Qd1 Nf6 7.Nc3 g6 8.h3 Bg7 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 Be6 11.Be3 Qa5 12.Nd2 Rfc8 13.Nd5



[FEN "r1r3k1/1p2ppbp/p1npbn1/q2N4/2P1P3/4B2P/PP1NBPP1/R2Q1RK1 b -- 0 13"]

1...?

*Difficult problems always have simple, easy-to-understand incorrect solutions (from the famous book *Murphy's Law*).*

I used this example for a long time as an exercise for paying close attention to your opponent's counter-chances. The logic seemed clear. You want to parry the threats of 14.Nb6 and 14.Bb6 with 13...Nd7. But your opponent has a strong tactical response, and once you notice it, with a heavy heart you have to play 13...Bxd5 14.cd Ne5 – typical use of the process of elimination. True, the position that arises after 15.f4 Ned7 16.Bd3 is very unattractive, but what to do, there doesn't appear to be any choice.

But still, why is the knight move bad?

13...Nd7!? 14.Bb6! Nxb6 15.Nb3



[FEN "r1r3k1/1p2ppbp/pnnpb1p1/q2N4/2P1P3/1N5P/PP2BPP1/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 15"]

1...?

Black loses material. His resistance didn't last long.

15...Nxd5? 16.Nxa5 Nc3



Other knight retreats don't bring any relief either:

16...Nb6 17.Nxc6 Rxc6 18.b3! Bxa1 19.Qxa1 Nd7 20.f4, and White's material advantage should make its presence felt.

16...Nf4!? 17.Nxc6 Rxc6 18.Re1!? (18.Bf3 also deserves attention, with the idea on 18...Bxc4 of replying 19.e5!) 18...Bxb2 (18...Nxe2+ 19.Rxe2 Bxc4 20.Rc2) 19.Rb1 Bc3 20.Rxb7 Bxe1 21.Qxe1, and again Black's chances of salvation aren't great.

**17.Nxc6! Nxd1 18.Nxe7+ Kf8 19.Nxc8 Nxb2 20.Nb6 Ra7**

A strange move. 20...Re8 21.Rab1 f5 looks like a more natural attempt to help the knight that's stuck in the opponent's camp. But even then White preserves a decisive advantage by choosing 22.e5! Bxe5 23.Rfc1 Bd4 24.Rc2 Bxb6 25.Rxb2 with a subsequent 26.Rxb7.

**21.Rab1 a5 22.Rfc1 Bd4 23.Rc2** Black resigned.

"The harm or the benefit of an action is conditioned by the aggregate of the circumstances," the pseudonymous nineteenth-century humorist Kozma Prutkov taught us. It would be a shame if you chose 13...Nd7 only because you missed 14.Bb6! And conversely, very good if you played that way having foreseen your opponent's tactical blow and prepared a positional exchange sacrifice in response (suggested by grandmaster Simen Agdestein).

15...Qa4! 16.Nxb6 Qb4 17.Nxa8 Rxa8



[FEN "r5k1/1p2ppbp/p1npb1p1/8/1qP1P3/1N5P/PP2BPP1/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 18"]

Besides the pawn captures 18...Bxc4 or 18...Bxb2, White also has to reckon with 18...a5 and 18...Rc8. In analysis I didn't manage to prove an advantage for White – evidently the opponent preserves fully-fledged counterplay. This course of action is much more promising from a practical point of view than the depressing defense after 13...Bxd5.

The next game was played in the last round of a big "Swiss" and determined who would be the winner of the tournament and receive a very large monetary prize.

**Hellers – Khalifman**

New York, 1990

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 de 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.Nf3 Nd7 8.h5 Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 e6 11.Bf4 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qc7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.Qe2 Ngf6 15.Ne5 Nb6 16.c4!?**



[FEN "2kr1b1r/ppq2pp1/1np1pn1p/4N2P/2PP4/6N1/PP1BQPP1/2KR3R b - - 0 16"]

Here's what Alexander Khalifman writes:

"The move made by Hellers came as a complete surprise to me. At first I couldn't even understand the point of the pawn sacrifice. Then I got it, but I still had to accept the sacrifice, as the threat of 17.Bf4 was too unpleasant. Only after our encounter was over did I find out from local players that White's 16th move wasn't a novelty, this had all happened before in lower-rated tournaments."

Later, besides taking the pawn, 16...c5 17.Bf4 (17.Be3!?) 17...Bd6 18.dc Qxc5 19.Kb1 was tried, with better chances for White. From myself I'll add that instead of the "automatic" move 17...Bd6 it would have been interesting to test an unexpected combination: 17...cd!? 18.Ng6 Bd6 19.Bxd6 Rxd6 20. Nxb8 Nxc4, for example, 21.Kb1 Na3+! 22.Ka1 Nc2+ 23.Qxc2 (23.Kb1=) 23...Qxc2 24.Rc1 Rc6 25.Rxc2 Rxc2 with an ending that's difficult to evaluate, in which Black's two pawns possibly compensate for being a knight down.

**16...Rxd4 17.Be3! Rxd1+ 18.Rxd1**



[FEN "2k2b1r/ppq2pp1/1np1pn1p/4N2P/2P5/4B1N1/PP2QPP1/2KR4 b - - 0 18"]

**1...?**

It's difficult for Black to complete his development. He has to deal with the threat of 19.Bf4 and 20.Ng6. A difficult endgame results from 18...Qxe5?! 19. Rd8+! Kxd8 20.Bxb6+ ab 21.Qxe5+/-.

18...Bd6? 19.Rxd6 Qxd6 20.Nxf7 is bad. If 18...Bb4?!, then 19.Nd3!, and then:

19...Be7 20.Bf4 Qd8 21.Ne5 Qe8 22.Ng6! (or 22.Nxf7!) 22...fg 23.Qe5+-;

19...Qe7!? 20.a3 Bd6 (20...Bxa3 21.Bxb6 ab 22.ba Qxa3+ 23.Qb2+/-) 21.c5 Bxg3 22.cb Bd6 23.ba, and the position looks alarming for Black.

**18...Rg8!!**

"This strong move can be found by process of elimination (using Mark Dvoretsky's terminology). The main thing is not to panic."

Khalifman realized that it was very important for him to take his rook off the vulnerable h8-square in order to prepare to develop his bishop to d6.

Now 19.Qd2? Bb4! 20.Qxb4 Qxe5 21.Bxb6 ab 22.Qxb6 Qf4+ is in Black's favor. The move chosen in the game, 19.Bf4!?, is also bad.

The strongest continuation of the attack is 19.f4!, for example, 19...Bd6? 20.c5 or 19...c5 20.Qd3! (20.Kb1!?), and Black's position remains dangerous.

But he can rightly respond 19...Kb8!? (preparing 20...Nc8) or 19...Na4!?, and if 20.Bxa7, then 20...b6!

Ferdinand Hellers, unlike his opponent, couldn't cope with the problem he was facing, and his attack quickly fizzled out.

### 19.Bf4? Nbd7!

Again played with the help of the process of elimination: Now a knight rebound isn't dangerous any more: 20.Ng6 Qa5 21.Nxf8 Rxf8 22.Bd6 Rd8-/+.

### 20.Qd2 Bb4! 21.Qxb4 (21.Qd4 Bc5) 21...Nxe5 22.Ne2

Nothing better is evident: on 22.Kb1, there follows 22...Nd3!-/+ , and if 22.Be3, then 22...Rd8!-/+.

22...Nxe5 23.Be3 Rd8! 24.Rxd8+ Qxd8, and Black successfully exploited his material advantage.

## Exercises

### 7. Planinec – Bagirov

Banja Luka, 1976



[FEN "8/kP3p2/4pNpp/4n3/3p4/3P4/2r3PP/1R4K1 b - - 0 42"]

1...?

### 8. Vranesic – Smyslov

Interzonal tournament, Amsterdam, 1964



[FEN "8/7p/8/6p1/4knP1/7P/8/2BK4 b - - 0 60"]

1...?

**9. Agdestein – Nunn**

Nestved, 1985



[FEN "5q2/3B3k/bp1n2p1/p2PQ2p/4P2P/1P6/1NR5/1K3r2 w - - 0 53"]

**1.?**

**10. Dizdar – Chandler**

Jurmala, 1983



[FEN "r3k3/p6p/3b1B2/3p4/3Qp1q1/8/P1P2P1P/1R3R1K b q - 0 24"]

**1...?**

**11. M. Zinar, 1982**



[FEN "8/8/8/8/p1k1P3/P3K3/8/8 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

**12. H. van der Heijden, 2002**



Simen Agdestein played **53.Rc1!** After 53...Rxc1+ 54.Kxc1, Black should have tried 54...Be2!, intending either 55...Bf3 or 55...b5. An attempt to force events with 54...Qf1+ 55.Nd1 Be2 56.Qxd6 Qxd1+ 57.Kb2 didn't bring Black any benefits, and the game ended in a draw.

## 10. Dizdar – Chandler

Murray Chandler had just sacrificed a rook on g2 and given check with his queen on g4, after which the players agreed to a draw. And they did the right thing! Black should give perpetual check: **24...Qf3+! 25.Kg1 Qg4+ 26.Kh1 Qf3+!**

The appealing attempt to play for a win with 24...Qf4? is forcibly refuted.

25.Qa4+! (25.Be5 Bxe5 26.Qa4+ Kd8! 27.Qa5+ Ke8= is inaccurate) 25...Kf8 (25...Kf7 26.Qd7+ Kxf6 27.Qh3+-)



[FEN "r3k3/p6p/3b1B2/3p4/3Qpq2/8/P1P2P1P/1R3R1K w q - 0 25"]

Black's attack can be repelled in two ways:

26.Bg7+! Kg8 27.Be5! Qf3+ (27...Bxe5 28.Rg1+ and 29.Rg2+-) 28.Kg1 Bxe5 29.Qb3!+- (29.Rb3 Bc3= is worse);

26.Be5! Qf3+ (26...Qxe5 27.f4!+-; 26...Bxe5 27.Qa3+ and 28.Qh3+-) 27.Kg1 Bxe5 28.Rb3!+- (but not 28.Qb3? Bc3!+=).

## 11. M. Zinar

1.Kf4(f3)? Kb3 2.e5 Kxa3 3.e6 Kb2 4.e7 a3 5.e8Q a2 leads to a draw – the white king is too far away from the queenside. We should note that with the king on e3 or e2 this position would be won.

1.e5? Kd5 2.Kf4 Ke6 3.Ke4 Ke7 4.Kd5 Kd7 5.Kc5 Ke6 6.Kb5 Kxe5 7.Kxa4 Kd6 8.Kb5 Kc7= doesn't achieve the aim either. If the pawn had been eliminated on e4 instead of e5, the black king wouldn't have succeeded in getting back to the safe corner.

White's strategy becomes clear: don't move the pawn, don't move the king away from the queenside without reason, and first try to make it your opponent's turn to move in the initial position.

**1.Ke2!! Kd4** (1...Kb3 2.e5 Kxa3 3.e6 Kb2 4.e7 a3 5.e8Q a2 6.Kd2 a1Q 7.Qb5+, and so on.) **2.Kf3 Ke5** (2...Kc4 3.Ke3! – *zugzwang*) **3.Ke3 Ke6 4.Kd4 Kd6 5.Kc4 Ke5 6.Kb4 Kxe4 7.Kxa4 Kd5 8.Kb5+-.**

## 12. H. van der Heijden

Attempts to win can only be associated with the pawn sacrifices g4-g5 or e4-e5. These breakthroughs obviously can't take place now or after 1.Kh3? Kf3.

**1.Kh1!! Kf1**

If 1...Kf3, then 2.e5! (2.g5? fg 3.e5? Kf2! even loses) 2...fe 3.g5 e4 4.Kg1!+-.

2.e5! fe 3.g5 e4 4.g6 e3 5.g7 e2 6.g8Q e1Q 7.Qg2#.

Conclusion next month.

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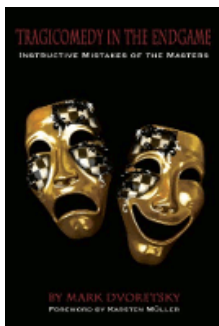
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## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## The Process of Elimination

### Part Three

In conclusion, I suggest that you solve a few more exercises that will train you in the use of the process of elimination. The majority of these are more difficult than the ones we looked at previously.

#### 13. Daly – Smith

British Championship, Plymouth 1992



[FEN "r4N2/4Pp2/n1kP2p1/6P1/3R4/  
PPp1Bb2/K1P5/7r w - - 0 37"]

1.?

#### 14. Polugaevsky – Hartston

Las Palmas, 1974



[FEN "8/1P6/3k2p1/8/6p1/2n1R3/  
5P2/1r3BK1 b - - 0 43"]

1...?

#### 15. Stahlberg – Alekhine

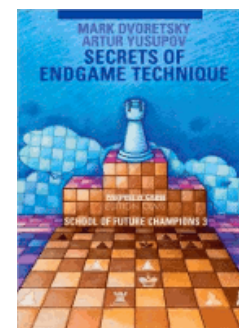
Olympiad, Hamburg, 1930

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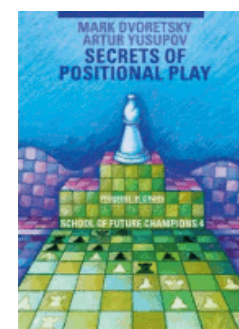
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[FEN "5rk1/1b4p1/1p1p3p/4p1q1/1PPn1r2/  
4QP2/5RPP/3RNBK1 w - - 0 31"]

1.?

**16. Chernin – Gindin**

Kharkov, 1975



[FEN "3r1b1k/p1qr4/1p1p2p1/4p2p/2P1PPb1/  
BP1R2P1/P2Q2B1/3R2K1 w - - 0 29"]

1.?

**17. A. Cheron, 1957**



[FEN "1b6/8/2P5/6KB/8/  
4kP2/8/8 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

**18. Kempinski – Ogaard**

Saint-Vincent, 2005



[FEN "r4rk1/p2qb1pp/2N2p2/1p1n3b/2pPQB2/8/PPB2PPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

### 19. Smyslov – Veresov

Moscow, 1940



[FEN "r4rk1/4ppbp/p1np1np1/q6/3PP3/1BN1BQ1P/PP3PP1/R3K2R w KQ - 0 14"]

1.?

### 20. Timoshchenko – Yusupov

Soviet Championship, Frunze, 1981



[FEN "8/1k4pN/4n3/PP6/2K5/8/8/8 b - - 0 59"]

1...?

### 21. R. Réti & A. Mandler, 1921



[FEN "5k2/6p1/7p/8/7P/7K/8/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

## 22. De Firmian – Gheorghiu

Lone Pine, 1980



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/1pNn1ppp/3ppn2/8/1q2PP2/3BB3/P1P3PP/R2Q1RK1 b kq - 0 12"]

1...?

## 23. R. Réti, 1929



[FEN "K2n4/8/P7/8/2k5/8/2N5/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

## 24. I. Sokolov – Rozentalis

Tilburg, 1993



[FEN "8/8/4N1k1/2pP3p/5R2/3K3P/3n1pr1/8 b - - 0 46"]

1.?

### Solutions

#### 13. Daly – Smith

The unsophisticated 37.d7? allows Black to give mate in three: 37...Nb4+! 38.Rxb4 Rxa3+! 39.Kxa3 Ra1#.

The move 37.Ra4? doesn't save you from mate: 37...Nb4+! 38.ab Rxa4+ 39.ba Bd5+ 40.Ka3 Ra1#.

Played in the game was **37.b4? Bd5+ 38.Rxd5 Kxd5** (38...Nxb4+ 39.Kb3 Nxd5 is also good) **39.d7** (39.Kb3 Kxd6+) **39...Kc4!** (threatening 40...Nxb4#) **40.Bc5 Nxc5** (and now threatening 41...Rxa3+!). White resigned.

There remains the only, but fully sufficient defense, 37.a4! Preventing 38.d7 +- can only be done by means of 37...Nb4+ 38.Rxb4 Kxd6, then follows 39.Rc4 Kxe7 40.Bc5+ Ke8 41.Rxc3 with an overwhelming advantage for White.

#### 14. Polugaevsky – Hartston

Where should the knight retreat to? In the case of 43...Nd1?? 44.b8Q+ Rxb8 45.Rd3+ or 43...Na2?? 44.Ra3 Nc1 45.Ra1! Ne2+ 46.Kh2 Black loses a piece. On 43...Nd5?, the reply 44.Rd3! is unpleasant. But no flaws in the move 43...Na4! are evident, and by playing this way Black easily achieves a draw.

In the game, though, there followed **43...Nd5? 44.Rd3!**



[FEN "8/1P6/3k2p1/3n4/6p1/3R4/5P2/1r3BK1 b - - 0 44"]

1...?

**44...Kc6?!** (44...Rxb7?? 45.Rxd5+!) **45.Rd1! Rxb7 46.Rxd5!** Black resigned.

It was possible to defend considerably more stubbornly by retreating the king to a different square: 44...Ke5! For example, 45.Kh2?! Nf4 46.Rd7 Rb2 47.Ba6 (47.Kg3 Nh5+ 48.Kh4 Nf6 49.Rg7 Ne4=) 47...Rxf2+ 48.Kh1 Rb2 49.Rd8 Rb1+ 50.Kh2 Rb2+ 51.Kg1 (51.Kg3 Kf5! 52.Rf8+ Kg5 53.Rxf4 Rb3+

54.Bd3!=) 51...Rb1+ 52.Kf2 Rb2+ 53.Ke1 (53.Ke3 Nd5+ 54.Kd3 Nc7=) 53...Rb1+ 54.Kd2 g3!=.

Lev Polugaevsky gives the variation 45.Rd1! Rb2 46.Bg2 Nf4



[FEN "8/1P6/6p1/4k3/5np1/8/1r3PB1/3R2K1 w - - 0 46"]

1.?

47.Rd8 Nxb2 48.b8Q+ Rxb8 49.Rxb8, but after the knight retreat to f4 or h4 the position that arises is most likely drawn.

Instead of 47.Rd8 the move 47.Re1+! is stronger, and any king retreat has its drawbacks:

With 47...Kd6 48.Re8 Nxb2 (48...Kc7 49.Rc8+) 49.b8Q Rxb8 50.Rxb8 Black's king is far from the kingside, which sharply diminishes his chances of building an impenetrable fortress.

And in the variation 47...Kf6 48.Bc6! g3!? (48...Nh3+ 49.Kh2+-) 49.Rf1!+/- (49.fg? Nh3+ 50.Kh1 Nf2+ leads to a draw) the position of Black's king on the f-file has an unfavorable impact on his position.

## 15. Stahlberg – Alekhine

With his last move, 30...h6!, Alexander Alekhine defended his queen, thus preparing a capture on f3. Gideon Stahlberg, not seeing the biggest danger, played 31.Kh1?, and after 31...Rxf3! resigned in connection with the impossibility after 32.Qxg5 Rxf2 of repelling two threats at once: 33...Rxf1# and 33...hg.

31.Qd2? doesn't help (the queen retreats to a defended square) because of a forced exchanging operation: 31...Bxf3 32.Nxf3 Nxf3+ 33.Rxf3 Rxf3 34.Qxg5 Rxf1+ 35.Rxf1 Rxf1+ 36.Kxf1 hg 37.Ke2 Kf7 38.Kd3 Ke6 (38...b5) 39.Ke4 b5-+.

The only defense: 31.Bd3!=/+. Taking on f3 is impossible now, Black has to look for new resources to conduct his attack.

## 16. Chernin – Gindin

White is better, so the positional sacrifice of a pawn or the exchange 29.f5?!, leading to unclear consequences, simply isn't necessary.

29.fe? de is a mistake – Black has too many threats: 30...Rxd3; 30...Bxa3; 30...Bxd1.

Exchanging the light-squared bishops is favorable to White in principle, but on 29.Bf3? there follows 29...Bxf3 30.Rxf3 d5!.

Alexander Chernin restricted himself to the simple move **29.Rf1!** White retained all the advantages of his position, he intends 30.Bf3 or 30.f5.

**29...Bh6 30.Bf3! Bxf3 31.Rxf3** (intending 32.Rd5, 33.Rfd3) **31...b5!?** (31...h4 32.Qh2!) **32.cb d5** (and here it was probably worth trying 32...h4!?) **33.**

**Rxd5 Qb6+ 34.Kg2 Rxd5 35.ed Qxb5 36.d6 ef 37.Qd4+** (37.gf is more precise) **37...Bg7?! (37...Kh7 38.gf Qf5) 38.Qxf4 Qa5 39.Qb4!?** (39.Qc1!?), and White won.

### 17. A. Cheron

Black has to keep control of the f4-square – for that reason he should only move his bishop for now. The opponent will obviously bring his king to d7 – then the black king should make it to b6.

With 1...Bd6? 2.Kf5 Kd4 3.Ke6 Kc5 4.Kd7+- the black king doesn't get there. 1...Bh2(g3)? is also a mistake because of 2.Kf5 Kd4 3.f4+- . We're left with the only defense.

**1...Bc7! 2.Kf5 Kd4! 3.Ke6 (3.f4 Ke3=) 3...Kc5 4.Kd7 Kb6 5.Be8**



[FEN "4B3/2bK4/1kP5/8/8/5P2/8/8 b - - 0 5"]

**1...?**

Accuracy is again demanded from Black – bearing in mind the possible return of the enemy king to the kingside. A draw can only be secured with **5...Bb8! 6.Ke6 Kc5 7.Kf5 Kd4 8.Kg4 Ke3**.

### 18. Kempinski – Ogaard

A capture with the queen on h7 isn't White's only threat: 18...Bg6? 19.Qxd5+! loses immediately.

Leif Ogaard chose **18...Nxf4? 19.Nxe7+ Kf7 20.Qxf4 Qxe7**, but after **21.Rfe1** his position became hopeless. There then followed **21...Qb4 (21...Qd7 22.Bf5) 22.Qf5 g6 23.Qd7+** Black resigned.

But with 18...Kf7! 19.Nxe7 (19.Qxh7? Nxf4+-) 19...Nxe7 Black would be no worse. For example, 20.Qxh7?! Rh8 21.Qe4 Bg6 (21...Rae8!?) 22.Qe2 Bxc2 23.Qxc2 Qxd4=+.

### 19. Smyslov – Veresov

The tempting 14.e5?! only leads to a draw: 14...de 15.Qxc6 Rac8 16.Qb7 Rc7! (16...e4?! with the threat of 17...Rc7 is weaker – after 17.Bf4 Rxc3 18.0-0 Rcc8 19.Qxe7 Black experiences difficulties in connection with the weakness of the f7-square) 17.Qf3.





[FEN "5rk1/2r1ppbp/p4np1/qp2p3/3P4/  
1BN1BQ1P/PP3PP1/R3K2R b KQ - 0 17"]

The simplest is to act on Smyslov's recommendation: 17...Rxc3! 18.bc (18. Bd2? Rxf3 19.Bxa5 Rf4-/+) 18...Qxc3+ 19.Ke2 e4! 20.Qg3 Qd3+ 21.Ke1 Qc3 + with perpetual check. But 17...ed 18.Bxd4 e5! 19.Bxe5 Re7 (or 19...Re8) 20.0-0 Rxe5= is also possible.

In the initial position White controls more space and is better, so there's no point in him going into the drawing variation. The simple **14.0-0!+/-** is stronger, as Vasily Smyslov did play. Then came **14...Rac8 15.Rad1 b4 16. Nd5!**



[FEN "2r2rk1/4ppbp/p1np1np1/q2N4/  
1p1PP3/1B2BQ1P/PP3PP1/3R1RK1 b - - 0 16"]

**1...?**

16...Nxd5?! (16...Qb5! is preferable, intending 17...a5 or 17...Nxd5 18.ed Na5) 17.ed! Na7 18.Bg5!, and White has an obvious advantage thanks to the pressure on the e-file.

## 20. Timoshchenko – Yusupov

The h7-knight is locked in for now, but if White gets it into play (for example, after 59...g5? 60.Nf6), he'll easily win.

The game ended like this: **59...Kc7? 60.Kd5 Nf4+ 61.Ke5 Ne2** (61...Nd3+ 62. Kd4 and 63.Ng5) **62.Ng5+-** (the knight has joined the battle and Black hasn't got any counterplay) **62...Nc3 63.Ne6+ Kb8** (63...Kb7 64.Nc5+ Kc7 65.b6+ Kc6 66.b7 Kc7 67.a6 Nb5 68.Nd7) **64.b6 Na4 65.Kd4 g5 66.Nc5** Black resigned.

The move Kd5 can't be stopped, but before letting the white knight out to freedom it's important to force b5-b6, to attack the pawns with the king. The aim is achieved by means of 59...Ka7!! 60.Kd5 Nc7+! 61.Kc6 Ne6.

62.Ng5 Nxcg5 63.b6+ Kb8 64.a6 Ne6= isn't dangerous; 62.Kd6 Nd4 63.b6+ Kb7= is harmless. Only 62.b6+ Ka6 63.Ng5 (63.Nf8 Nxf8 64.b7 Nd7=) maintains the intrigue.



[FEN "8/6p1/kPK1n3/P5N1/8/8/8 b - - 0 63"]

**1...?**

In this situation the knight is invulnerable; 63...Nd4+? 64.Kc7 Nb5+ 65.Kd7! Nd4 66.Ne6 Nb3 67.Kc7 Nxa5 68.Nc5+ Kb5 69.Nb3 also loses.

63...Nd8+! 64.Kc7 gives a draw, and now either 64...Nb7 65.Ne4 g5! 66.Nxg5 Nxa5=, or 64...Kxa5 65.Nf7 Ne6+ 66.Kb7 g5! 67.Ka7 Nc5!= or 67...Nd4!= (but not 67...g4? 68.b7 Nd4 69.Ka8! Nc6 70.Ne5+-).

## 21. R. Réti & A. Mandler

Many years ago in a game against Oleg Romanishin I had the chance to transfer into this kind of pawn ending, but I was unable to calculate it correctly (see [School of Chess Excellence 1: Endgame Analysis](#), the chapter "Give me an envelope, please"). Of course, I didn't know this study by Réti and Mandler at the time.

We can immediately reject 1.h5? Kf7 2.Kg4 Ke6 3.Kf4 Kf6+- and start calculating the most natural move 1.Kg4. Our opponent replies 1...Kf7 (but not 1...Ke7? 2.Kf5 Kf7 3.h5=, of course).



[FEN "8/5kp1/7p/8/KP/8/8/8 w - - 0 2"]

Neither 2.h5 Ke6+- nor 2.Kh5 Kf6 3.Kg4 Ke5 4.Kh5 Kf4 5.Kg6 Kg4 6.Kxg7 h5+- works.

In the case of 2.Kf5 g6+ 3.Ke5 Ke7 Black gets the opposition and then advances his king without hindrance: 4.Kd5 (4.h5 g5 5.Kf5 Kd6 is hopeless too) 4...Kf6 5.Ke4 Ke6 (again Black has the opposition) 6.Kf4 Kd5 7.Kf3 Ke5 8.Ke3 Kf5 9.Kf3 h5 (the reserve tempo h6-h5 allowed Black to put his opponent in zugzwang for the last, decisive time).

The key to understanding the following variation, and indeed the whole ending, is the fact that seizing the opposition has decisive significance for both players with a black pawn on g6. But with the pawn on g7 it's essential, on the contrary, to yield the opposition to the opponent. Which means that on 2.Kf4 it's necessary to reply 2...Ke6! 3.Ke4 g6-+. Finally, in the case of 2.Kf3 the move 2...g6! (seizing the distant opposition with the pawn on g6) wins 3.Ke3 Ke7! 4.Kf3 Kd6! (a king walkabout is a weapon with the help of which the strongest player exploits the possession of the opposition) 5.Ke4 Ke6 6.Kf4 Kd5 7.Kf3 Ke5 8.Ke3 Kf5 9.Kf3 h5.

And so, 1.Kg4? doesn't save White. We have to put the king on another square: **1.Kg3!!** For example,

### 1...Kf7 2.Kg4! Kf6

2...Kg6 3.h5+ is useless. On 2...Ke6 there follows 3.Kf4!= (with the pawn on g7 White yielded the opposition to his opponent), and on 2...g6 – 3.Kf3!= (seizing the distant opposition).





[FEN "8/6p1/5k1p/8/6KP/8/8/8 w - - 0 3"]

1.?

**3.Kh5!** (but not 3.Kf4? g6+) **3...Ke5** (3...Kf5 stalemate) **4.Kg6 Kf4 5.Kxg7 h5 6.Kf6! Kg4 7.Ke5 Kxh4 8.Kf4=.**

Black doesn't manage to achieve success with maneuvering of the kings either: 1...Ke7 2.Kf3! (it's impossible to go forwards: 2.Kf4? Ke6!-+ ) 2...Kf6 (2...Ke6 3.Kf4! Kf6 4.h5=; 2...g6 3.Ke3!=) 3.Ke4! (but not 3.Kg4? Ke5-+ and not 3.Kf4? g6-+ ) 3...Kf7!? (3...Kg6 4.Kf4=) 4.Ke3! (with the pawn on g7 you can't take the distant opposition) 4...Ke7 5.Kf3!=.

## 22. De Firmian – Gheorghiu

Black played a sharp and very risky variation of the Sicilian Defense: **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Nf6 6.0-0 d6 7.Nc3 Nbd7 8.f4 Qb6?! 9. Be3 Qxb2 10.Ncb5!** (10.Ndb5! is equivalent) **10...ab 11.Nxb5.**



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/1p1n1ppp/3ppn2/1N6/4PP2/3BB3/PqP3PP/R2Q1RK1 b kq - 0 11"]

By choosing **11...Qb4**, Florin Gheorghiu allowed a knight fork on c7, counting on catching the white king in the corner of the board. Subsequently, 11...Ra5 12.Rb1 Rxb5! (forced) 13.Rxb2 Rxb2 was also used. In my view, what happened in the duel Anand – Kasparov (Tilburg, 1991), 14.Qa1 Rb6 15. Bxb6 Nxb6 16.Qc3! Be7 17.Rb1 secured White an advantage. For those who are interested in this variation I suggest an idea that hasn't been tried once in practice yet and wasn't mentioned by Anand in his notes to the above game: 11...Ra3!? 12.Rb1 (having to deal with 12...Qxb5 13.Bxb5 Rxe3, and on 12. Qe2 possible is 12...Rxd3 13.Qxd3 Qb4 unclear) 12...Qxa2 13.Bd4 e5 unclear.

Let's switch to the position from our exercise that arises after 12.Nc7+. The move 12...Kd8 looks like the natural retreat. But Gheorghiu justifiably rejected it in connection with 13.Nxa8 Qa5 14.Nb6! Nxb6 15.Qe1!, and in the case of 15...Qxe1 the knight is taken with check, and with 15...Qa7 16.a4 it's lost because of a pin.

**12...Ke7! 13.Nxa8 Qa5**

Here he wins the knight back; then again, Black's position remains alarming.

**14.e5! Ne8!** (14...Nd5 15.ed+ is much worse) **15.ed+ Nxd6 16.c4! Qxa8 17.c5**



[FEN "q1b2b1r/1p1nkppp/3np3/2P5/5P2/3BB3/P5PP/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 17"]

**17...Ne8** (17...Nf5 18.Bxf5 ef is hardly better) **18.f5! f6?** (18...Qa3 left more chances for a successful defense), and now White achieves a big advantage by continuing 19.Bc4!? (E. Geller) or 19.fe!? Ne5 20.Be4.

### 23. R. Réti

Obviously we have to choose between two king moves: to a7 or b8.

In the case of 1.Kb8? the response 1...Nc6+? 2.Kb7 Kb5 3.Nd4+! quickly loses (and with 2...Kc5 the move 3.Nb4 is good too). But Black gets a draw by means of 1...Kb5! 2.Nb4 Nc6+ 3.Kb7 Na5+ (3...Nd8+? 4.Ka7! Kxb4 5.Kb6 +- or 4...Ka5 5.Kb8+- are mistakes) 4.Kc7 Nc6.

**1.Ka7!** is stronger. If 1...Kc5, then 2.Nd4! decides matters (but not 2.Nb4? Kb5 3.Kb8 Nc6+). **1...Kb5 2.Nb4!**



[FEN "3n4/K7/P7/1k6/1N6/8/8/8 b - - 0 2"]

Black is in *zugzwang*. His king is forced to occupy the important a5-square.

**2...Ka5 3.Kb8 Nc6+** (3...Kxb4 4.Kc7 Ne6+ 5.Kb6+-) **4.Kb7** (4.Kc7? Nxb4 5.a7 Nd5+) **4...Nd8+** (unlike the variation 1.Kb8?, there's no knight check from a5) **5.Kc7 Ne6+ 6.Kb8+-** (or 6.Kc6+-).

### 24. I. Sokolov – Rozentalis

White's position is alarming. True, 46...f1Q+ isn't threatened yet (because of the knight fork on f4), but it will be threatened on the next move. For example, 46.d6? Rxh2! 47.d7 f1Q+ 48.Rxf1 Nxf1, and a winning knight endgame for Black arises.

It makes sense to move the h-pawn out from under the attack. In the case of 46.h4? c4+ the response 47.Kd4 Rg4+- can't be played, and 47.Kc3 Ne4+ (or 47...Nb1+ 48.Kb4 c3) 48.Kxc4 Rg4+- doesn't help. It's becoming clear that the g4-square has to be taken under control.

**46.h3!! Rh2** (46...f1Q+ 47.Rxf1 Nxf1 48.Nf4+; 46...c4+ 47.Kd4) **47.d6 f1Q+** **48.Rxf1 Nxf1 49.d7 Rd2+ 50.Kc4=**



[FEN "8/3P4/4N1k1/2p4p/2K5/7P/3r4/5n2 b - - 0 50"]

White wins the rook back and with the h3-pawn still on the board easily holds the knight ending.

**50...Ng3** (50...Rxd7 51.Nf8+) **51.d8Q Rxd8 52.Nxd8 Ne4 53.Ne6 h4 54.Nxc5 Nf2 55.Nd3** Draw.

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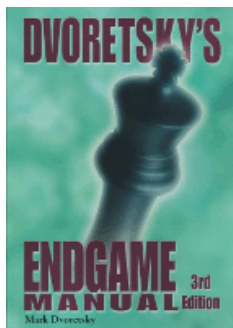
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

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## Recent Analytical Finds

The third edition of my [Endgame Manual](#) is now available. The new text contains a number of clarifications and additions based on recent analytical finds. This month I would like to tell you about some of the most interesting changes.

Theoretical discoveries in the endgame are rare nowadays. I'm not talking about accumulating new analyses and correcting old ones, of course, but about conclusions that change the previous ideas about positions that are important for practical chess players. One such discovery, concerning the rook ending "with three pawns on one side and an extra knight's pawn on the other" was made by the Russian master Igor Yanvarev and Wilburt Micawber from Holland independently from each other. Of course, it is reflected in the new edition of my *Manual*, but, as Karsten Müller already wrote about it in his [February 2011 column](#), there's no point in reproducing the same analyses again in this article.

In exactly the same way I'll just mention the recently-discovered mistakes in the classic ending with opposite-colored bishops from the game Euwe-Yanofsky (Groningen, 1946) – Müller talked about these in his [August 2010 column](#).

I like endgame positions with an unapparent and only solution. They can be used as exercises in coaching work. The strong aesthetic impression they make on students helps them to more deeply understand the plans, evaluations, and technical methods that are hidden behind the variations and remember them more confidently.

Here's one of those examples. With its help we can discuss the situation where the rook belonging to the stronger side, the player who is a pawn up, is defending all its pawns along the rank.

### Marshall – Capablanca

Ninth match game, New York, 1909



[FEN "8/5K2/8/p1r5/P4R2/1k5P/8/8 b - - 0 57"]

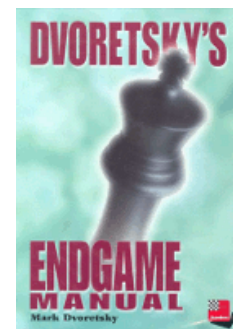
1...?

This is an excerpt from the book.

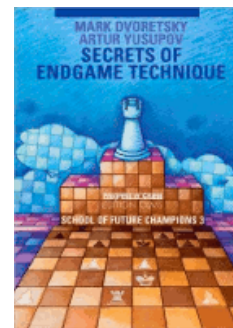
"Only active defense leaves the weaker side with chances of saving himself. Let's identify the two most important defensive methods:

"1) **Attacking a pawn with the king.** Sometimes you can manage to give up the rook for one pawn, eat another with the king and save

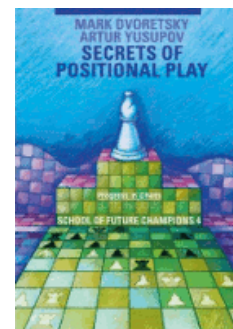
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yourself with pawn versus rook.

"2) **Exchanging rooks.** If the pawn endgame is drawn, then by offering an exchange the weaker side drives the enemy rook off the rank on which it was defending the pawns."

The ending of the game illustrates what's been said.

**1...Rc7+ 2.Kg6 Rb7 3.h4 Rb4! 4.Kg5**

In the case of 4.Rxb4+ ab! 5.a5 Kc4 6.a6 b3 7.a7 b2 8.a8Q b1Q+ a drawn queen ending arose.

**4...Kxa4 5.h5 Ka3!**

Of course, not 5...Kb5(b3)?? 6.Rxb4+ ab 7.h6+-.

**6.h6 Rb8 7.h7 a4 8.Rh4 Rh8 9.Kg6 Kb3 10.Kg7 Rxh7+ 11.Kxh7 a3 1/2-1/2**

In the new edition two significant corrections have been made that turn this ending into a real study.

It turns out that if Frank Marshall had figured out his opponent's idea in time, he could have neutralized it by playing 2.Kf6(e6)! Rb7 3.Ke5! Here Black's situation is bad, as exchanging rooks no longer works: 3...Rb4 4.Rxb4+ ab 5.a5 Kc3 6.a6 b3 7.a7 b2 8.a8Q b1Q



[FEN "Q7/8/8/4K3/8/2k4P/8/1q6 w - - 0 65"]

9.Qf3+ Kd2 (9...Kc4 10.Qc6+) 10.Qf2+ Kc3 11.Qd4+, and the queens are exchanged.

The plan to transfer the rook to b4 is still correct, but as grandmaster Igor Zaitsev established, it should have been implemented slightly differently. A draw was achieved with **1...Rc6!!** (preventing the white king from moving into the center) **2.h4 Rb6 3.h5** (3...Rb4= was threatened) **3...Rh6! 4.Rh4.**



[FEN "8/5K2/7r/p6P/P6R/1k6/8/8 b - - 0 60"]

**1...?**

**4...Ka3! 5.Kg7 Rxh5!** (a move earlier the rook sacrifice wouldn't work: it was essential to wait for the appearance of the king on g7) **6.Rxh5 Kxa4 7.Kf6 Kb4=.**



Wouldn't you agree that the theoretical ideas expressed above have now been proven considerably more clearly and vividly than they were previously?

I'll take advantage of this convenient excuse to remind you of a simple but important truth: knowledge of theory doesn't give you a guarantee of success, it only increases its likelihood. Every (well, almost every) position is unique; in order to choose the best continuation you have to demonstrate inventiveness in your search for strong moves and calculate the variations accurately. Theoretical recommendations usually only orient our thinking in the right direction, but they don't dictate the exact solution.

Let's get acquainted with a small episode (after three introductory moves) from an instructive ending that illustrates the exceptional importance of activity in a rook endgame.

### Ilivitsky – Taimanov

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1955



[FEN "8/8/p4pk1/6p1/6Pp/r4P1P/  
P1R2K2/8 w - - 0 39"]

1.?

In the game there was **4.Rb2 Rc3?** (4...Kf7 left him with more chances of success) **5.Kg2 a5?** (5...Ra3), and White, by playing **6.Rf2**, continued the waiting tactic that led him to perish in the end.

I pointed out in the *Manual* that White could have forced a draw by sacrificing a pawn for the sake of activating his rook and keeping the enemy king out of the game: **6.Rb7! Rc2+ 7.Kg1 Rxa2 8.Ra7** with a subsequent **Kg1-h1-g1**. Black brings his pawn to a3, but there's nothing for him to do from there: his king is hemmed in on g6 and the try f6-f5 will always be met with **Ra7-a6+**.

It seemed to me that this method of defense became correct only after the black rook retreated to c3 and the pawn got to a5, giving the rook the a6-square. Grandmaster Vugar Gashimov justifiably pointed out that it was also possible to activate the rook immediately: **4.Rc7! Rxa2+ 5.Kf1!** (but not 5. Kg1? Re2! 6.Rc6 a5, and on 7.Rc5 there's 7...Re5) **5...Rb2**.



[FEN "8/2R5/p4pk1/6p1/6Pp/5P1P/  
1r6/5K2 w - - 0 41"]

1.?

**6.Rc6! a5 7.Rc5! a4 8.Ra5 Rb4** (on 8...Ra2 the same reply follows) **9.Ra7! Rf4 10.Kf2 f5** (and how else to improve the position?) **11.Ra6+ Kf7 12.gf** with equality.

In the section dedicated to using a passed pawn in a playable queen endgame, I give the following ending.

### Prandstetter – Gheorghiu

Zonal tournament, Warsaw, 1979



[FEN "8/7Q/p4k2/1p4q1/1P2p3/P6P/7K/8 b - - 0 47"]

**1?**

In the previous edition, there was no question mark with the diagram that would indicate that the position could be used as an exercise. I didn't see a way to make the best of Black's obvious positional advantage (his passed pawn has advanced significantly further than his opponent's pawn). An invasion of the king into the enemy camp to support its passed pawn led to success, but how to do that? In my analysis of various tries I've put the variations that were added in the new edition in square brackets.

In the game there followed **1...Qf4+?! 2.Kg1 Qg3+** [evidently there was no win with 2...Qc1+ 3.Kg2 Qd2+ 4.Kf1! either] **3.Kf1 Qf3+ 4.Ke1=**. The white king has moved in front of the pawn and a draw can now be achieved without difficulty. In his search for winning chances Black forgot about caution, "blundered" an exchange of queens that was favorable to his opponent and even lost.

**4...Ke5 5.Qc7+**



[FEN "8/2Q5/p7/1p2k3/1P2p3/P4q1P/8/4K3 b - - 0 51"]

**5...Kd4?? 6.Qc5+ Kd3 7.Qd5+ Kc3 8.Qd2+ Kb3 9.Qd1+! Kxa3 10.Qxf3+ ef 11.h4 1-0**

But what should he have done?

1...e3? 2.Qe4!= [or 2.Qc7!]= is useless.

It's tempting to try and activate the king immediately with the move **1...Ke5?!** In the variation **2.Qc7+ Kd4 3.Qc5+? Qxc5 4.bc** a pawn ending arises that

soon switches to a queen ending again, which is winning for Black: 4...Kxc5! (4...e3? 5.Kg2=) 5.h4 (5.Kg2 Kd4 6.Kf2? Kd3 7.Ke1 a5-+) 5...Kd4! 6.h5 e3 (6...Ke5? 7.Kg3 a5 8.h6 Kf6 9.Kf4 b4 10.ab a4 11.b5=) 7.Kg2 (7.h6 e2 8.h7 e1Q 9.h8Q+ Qe5+) 7...Kd3 8.h6 e2 9.h7 e1Q 10.h8Q Qd2+ and 11...Kc2-+.

[But instead of the exchange of queens 3.Qd6+! Kc4 4.Qe6+! Kd3 5.Qb3+ gives a draw. And a move earlier it was possible to play 2.Qh8+! Kd5 (with 2...Kf4 3.Qf8+ Ke3 4.Qc5+ the pawn ending is already drawn) 3.Qc3!, and the king hasn't managed to get in front.]

After 1...Qd2+ 2.Kg3 e3?, a subsequent pawn advance is threatened, as well as 3...Ke5.



[FEN "8/7Q/p4k2/1p6/1P6/P3p1KP/3q4/8 w - - 0 49"]

1.?

But an elegant defense can be found: 3.Qh4+! (it's important to take control of the f2-square) 3...Ke5 4.Kf3!=.

The additions given above aren't too significant, as nothing changes in the evaluation of the variations. The solution to a position that only appears in the new edition is much more important.

**1...Qd2+! 2.Kg3 Qe3+!** (instead of 2...e3?) **3.Kg2 Qe2+! 4.Kg3 Ke5!**



[FEN "8/7Q/p7/1p2k3/1P2p3/P5KP/4q3/8 w - - 0 51"]

White's position is difficult. He's no longer able either to exchange queens on c5 or to prevent the forward march of his opponent's king.

The example under examination is associated in my memory with the ending of the following old game.

**Marants – Dvoretsky**  
Minsk, 1972





[FEN "8/8/3p3Q/8/2P1p3/5kqP/8/7K w - - 0 1"]

### 1.Qf6+ Ke2?!

In the variation 1...Qf4! 2.Qxf4+ Kxf4 3.Kg2 (3.h4? Kg4) 3...Ke3 4.h4 Kd3! 5.h5 e3 6.h6 e2 7.h7 e1Q 8.h8Q Qe4+ and 9...Qxc4 a "queen and pawn versus queen" endgame arose, the evaluation of which I was uncertain (the [Nalimov tablebase](#), which confirms that Black's position is winning, didn't exist back then, and nor did ChessBase). At the same time I realized that I would have to play this ending for a long time, and finding precise moves would be very difficult for me (and also for my opponent, on the other hand). So I decided to decline the exchange of queens in the hope that the e4-pawn would soon manage to get through and queen. From the analytical point of view this was an incorrect decision, but from the practical one it was very sensible.

**2.Qb2+ Kf1 3.Qc1+ Qe1 4.Qf4+ (4.Qb2 Qe3) 4...Ke2+ (4...Qf2 5.Qc1+ Ke2 6.Qb2+! Kf3 7.Qf6+ is useless) 5.Kg2 e3**



[FEN "8/8/3p4/8/2P2Q2/4p2P/4k1K1/4q3 w - - 0 6"]

### 1.?

I wasn't afraid of 6.Qf3+ Kd2 7.Qd5+ Kc1. But instead of checking with the queen on d5 White can play more strongly: 7.c5! dc 8.Qd5+ Kc1 9.Qxc5+ Kd1, and now, for example, 10.Qf5!? – according to my database the position is drawn.

### 6.Qg4? Kd2?

Evidently 6...Kd3! 7.Qf5+ (7.Qg6+ Kc3) 7...Kd2 8.Qa5+ (8.Qd5+ Kc1!) 8...Kd1! 9.Qa4+ Ke2 10.Qc2+ Qd2 11.Qb1!? Qc3! was winning. But I thought there was a quicker way of sheltering from the checks.

### 7.Qd4+ Kc2? (7...Ke2)



[FEN "8/8/3p4/8/2PQ4/4p2P/2k3K1/4q3 w - - 0 8"]

1.?

8.Kf3!

The same resource as in the position in the penultimate diagram of the game Prandstetter-Gheorghiu – I overlooked it, of course. The e-pawn doesn't advance, and the game equalizes.

8...Qf2+ 9.Ke4 Qe2 10.Qxe3 Qxc4+ 11.Kf5 1/2-1/2

A number of corrections were made in endings where one side was the exchange up. In preparing the previous edition I didn't use a six-piece computer tablebase for this class of positions (I don't remember why any more). The computer helped me to draw interesting new conclusions in the following endgame.

**Sturua – Yusupov**

Tournament of young masters, Baku, 1979



[FEN "8/7p/5k2/r7/5NK1/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 53"]

1.?

I'll quote my introduction to this example from the *Manual*.

"When Yusupov showed me the ending he had just played I came up with the suggestion that it was worth keeping the white knight on h3 (and the pawn on g4). Why? From there it not only makes the approach of the black king more difficult, but also prepares for an attack on the h7 pawn with the move Ng5. And if it goes to h6 the opponent has to deal with the advance g4-g5.

"Subsequently Yusupov analyzed the position in detail and proved that indeed by retreating the knight White got a draw."

There's no point in reproducing the analysis that confirms the correctness of the given evaluation – it didn't undergo any changes. But later in the new edition you will read:

"In the indicated variations White has a considerable reserve of stability: the majority of his moves aren't only ones. In the game it was more difficult for him to defend. Yusupov and I even thought that White's

position had immediately become lost, and this point of view was reflected in the first editions of the Manual. However, a new computer review showed that in fact a draw was missed much later."

Having retreated his knight to the wrong square in the game, Zurab Sturua then defended brilliantly, finding only moves for a long time. I won't get bogged down in a refutation of alternative tries, I'll just stop at the point where White finally made a mistake.

**1.Nh5+?! Ke5 2.Kg5 Ra6 3.Nf4 Ke4 4.Kg4!** (but not 4.Nh3?! Rg6+!) **4... Ra5 5.Ne6!** (5.Nh3? h6!) **5...h6 6.Kh4!** (6.Nf4? Rg5+) **6...Re5**



[FEN "8/8/4N2p/4r3/4k2K/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 59"]

**1.?**

White chose **7.Nd8? Kf5!?** (7...Re7!? 8.Kh5! Kf5! 9.g4+ Kf6! 10.Kxh6 Rg7 11.Ne6 Rg8 12.Kh7 Rxd4 13.Nf8 Kf7 is no less strong) **8.Nc6** (8.Nf7 Rd5! 9.Nxh6+ Kg6) **8...Re4+! 9.Kh5**, and now the simplest way to the goal was 9... Kf6 10.Kxh6 Rc4 11.Nb8 (11.Na5 Rg4 or 11...Rc1 12.Kh7 Rc5) 11...Ke6 with a subsequent 12...Kd6+.

7.Nf4? Kf3 8.Nh3 Re1+ didn't work, and in the case of 7.Nf8? only 7...Rg5! 8.Ne6 Rg8! led to a win.

The only correct knight retreat was **7.Ng7!!**. For example, 7...Kf3 8.g4! Re1 9.Kh5 Rh1+ 10.Kg6 Kxg4 11.Ne8!=.

An even more paradoxical variation was **7...Rg5 8.Nh5 Kf3 9.Nf6 Rg6**



[FEN "8/8/5Nrp/8/7K/5kP1/8/8 w - - 0 62"]

**1.?**

10.Nh5 Rg4+ 11.Kh3 Rd4 12.Nf6 Rd1 13.Kh2 Rd6 is hopeless. Only **10.Nh7!! Rxd3 11.Kh5 Rh3+ 12.Kg6=** rescues him. Obviously finding this idea at the board, which is associated with a sacrifice (not an exchange) of the last pawn in all variations, was virtually impossible.

In conclusion I'll give an ending whose analysis is almost unchanged, except that the evaluation was corrected.

**J. Enevoldsen**, 1949



[FEN "6k1/1R5p/4K3/7P/8/2b5/8/8 b - - 0 1"]

First I'll give a paragraph from the previous edition, which remains unchanged.

"The situation with the pawn, which has crossed the middle of the board with the enemy king in a dangerous corner, is probably more favorable for the stronger side. White forces h7-h6, then pushes the black king further back, and cuts it off on the file, after which he returns the king to the pawn and sacrifices the exchange."

(I'll explain that by "dangerous" corner I mean a corner that is the same color as the bishop. Black doesn't manage to avoid the move h7-h6; for example, 1...Bd2 2.Kf6 Bc3+ 3.Kf5 Bd2 3.Rd7 Bc1 4.Rd1 Be3 5.Kf6. After 1...h6 2.Kf5 Bd2 3.Kg6 Kf8 4.Rf7+, White easily carries out the described plan.)

And now a new addition to the paragraph given above, which practical players should bear in mind.

"It's necessary, though, to make an important proviso. We can easily implement this particular plan only because the black king is cut off on the 8th rank. With the king on g7 the position is drawn: White doesn't manage either to push it off to the edge of the board, or to carry out h5-h6, or to force his opponent to play h7-h6."

When I was writing the *Manual* for some reason I didn't pay any attention to this rather important detail, and I only became aware of it after I saw the following game.

### Carlsen – Anand

Morelia/Linares, 2008



[FEN "8/4k3/5p2/6p1/4P1Bp/5PP1/1r5P/6K1 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

White intends 2.gh gh 3.f4, after which an exchange of his e- and f-pawns for the f6-pawn is inevitable. Analyzing the ending, I realized that the position that arises is winning if Black manages to force h2-h3 or keep the king confined to the first rank. What was news to me was that if White plays Kg2 with his pawn on h2, the position turns out to be drawn. As, for example, in the variation 1...Kd6? 2.gh gh 3.f4 Rd2 4.Bh3 Kc5 5.e5 Rd4 6.ef Rxf4 7.Kg2 Rxf6 8.Bc8.

Viswanathan Anand understood the situation that had been created superbly.

**1...Re2!! 2.gh gh**



[FEN "8/4k3/5p2/8/4P1Bp/5P2/4r2P/6K1 w - - 0 3"]

Now, in order to play f3-f4, he either has to put the bishop on the bad f5-square or prepare Kf1 by playing h2-h3. On 3.Bf5, there follows 3...Kd6 4.f4 Kc5 5.e5 fe 6.fe Rxe5 (with a tempo!) 7.Bg4 (7.Bc8 Re2!) 7...Rg5!, forcing h2-h3.

The subsequent events were easy to understand and hardly require any commentary.

**3.h3 Kd6 4.Kf1 Rb2 5.f4 Kc5 6.e5 Rb4 7.ef Rxf4+ 8.Ke2 Kd4 9.Bf3 Rxf6 10.Bb7 Rb6 11.Bc8 Ke4 12.Bg4 Rb2+ 13.Ke1 Ke3 14.Kf1 Kf4 15.Ke1 Kg3 16.Kf1 Rf2+ 17.Ke1** (17.Kg1 Rf7!, and White is in zugzwang) **17...Rf4** (threatening 18...Rxb4 19.hg h3) **18.Bc8 Rf8 19.Bg4 Kg2 20.Ke2 Re8+ 21.Kd3 Kf2 22.Bf5** (22.Kd4 Re3) **22...Re3+ 23.Kd4 Kf3 24.Bg4+ Kf4 25.Kd5** (25.Bc8 Re8 and 26...Rd8+) **25...Re5+ 26.Kd4 Rg5 0-1** There could have followed 27.Be6 (defending against 27...Rxb4) 27...Rg6 28.Bc8 Rd6+ 29.Kc5 Rd2 30.Bg4 Kg3 31.Bf5 Rh2 32.Kd4 Rxh3.

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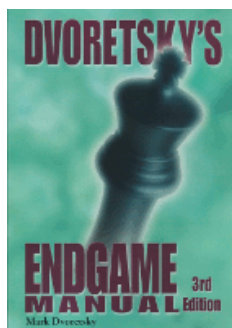
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## An Absence of Deep Ideas

Annotating rapid games (those played with a reduced time control) and, even more so, blitz games, is a fairly pointless exercise. It is not even about the almost inevitable abundance of inaccuracies and crude blunders – there are sometimes enough of them in serious "classical" games (although, in general, a significantly lower number). What's more important is the complete absence in rapid chess of any interesting, deep ideas that can only be created through immersion in a position, for which there simply isn't time in a speed game.

A strong player is capable of making many sensible, logical moves at an accelerated pace, and sometimes even pulling off a straightforward combination (pleasant to see, but objectively uninteresting, as thousands of similar combinations have already been played), but has virtually no chance in the limited number of seconds, or even minutes, to create something significant that would subsequently delight chess fans or sophisticated professionals. Of course, I'm not talking about those rare cases when all the main events take place either in the opening stage, which has been studied carefully by one of the players, or soon after it ends.

So am I contradicting myself if I draw your attention to a game from the recent World Cup that was played with the time control of ten minutes per player plus ten seconds per move? Yes, but only partly: this game is important in a sporting respect, but it doesn't have the slightest creative value. However, one episode in the middlegame, and, most importantly, the rook endgame that came about afterward, may be useful for study purposes.

**E. Bacrot (2710) – R. Robson (2560)**

Khanty-Mansiysk (rapid) 2011

Grünfeld Defense [D76]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cd Nxd5 5.g3 Bg7 6.Bg2 Nb6 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Re1 a5 11.Qe2 Be6 12.Nd2 Nb4 13.Rd1 c6 14.a3 N4d5 15.Nce4 Qc8 16.Nc5 Bg4 17.Bf3 Bxf3 18.Nxf3 Nd7 19.Nxd7 Qxd7 20.e4 Nb6 21.Bf4 a4 22.Rac1 Ra5 23.Rc5 Rea8 24.Bd2 Rb5 25.Bb4 e6 26.h4 h5 27.Kg2 Bf8?! 28.Rxb5 cb 29.Bxf8 (29.Ne5 is stronger) 29...Kxf8 (29...Rxf8+/- is better) 30.Ne5 Qe8

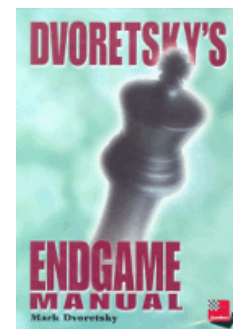


[FEN "r3qk2/1p3p2/1n2p1p1/1p2N2p/p2PP2P/P5P1/1P2QPK1/3R4 w - - 0 31"]

1.?

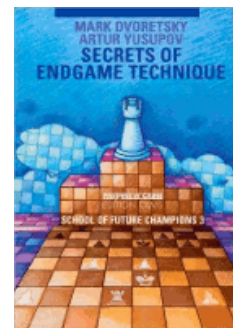
White's positional advantage is determined by his better pawn structure and the possibility of soon creating a passed pawn in the center with d4-d5. But besides these long-term pluses he also has some fleeting, temporary ones: the positions of the black rook, knight, and even king are not very good. If he lets his opponent make one or two moves unimpeded (for example, 30...Rd8 or

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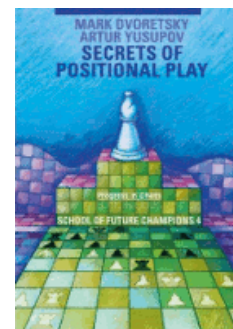
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30...Rc8 and 31...Nc4), the temporary factors evaporate and White's overall advantage diminishes. That's why it made sense to start active play on the kingside without delay, where only the black king was located, lacking support from the other pieces.

I suggest 31.g4! hg (31...f6 32.Nd3 Nc4 33.gh gh 34.Nf4+/-) 32.Qxg4+/-.



[FEN "r3qk2/1p3p2/1n2p1p1/1p2N3/p2PP1QP/P7/1P3PK1/3R4 b - - 0 32"]

It's difficult for Black to defend, for example:

32...Nd7 33.Nxd7+ Qxd7 34.h5 gh 35.Qxh5, intending 36.Rd3, with a very dangerous attack;

32...Nc4 33.h5 Nxe5 34.de Rd8 35.Rxd8 (35.Rc1!? gh 36.Qxh5) 35...Qxd8 36.hg (threatening 37.Qf4) 36...Kg7 (the only move) 37.gf+ Kxf7 38.Qf4+ Kg6 39.Kg3+- or 33...Rd8 34.Nxc4 gh (34...bc 35.hg fg 36.Rh1+-) 35.Qxh5 bc 36.Rh1 Ke7 37.Qc5+ Kd7 (37...Rd6 38.d5+/-) 38.Qxc4+/-.

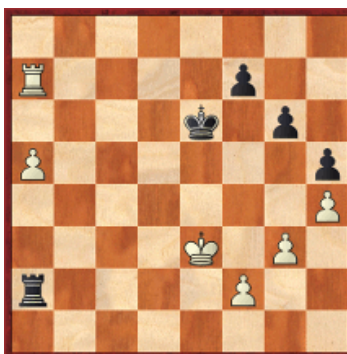
**31.Qe3?! Nc4** (31...Kg8+/- is preferable) **32.Nxc4 bc 33.Qc3**

White achieved more with 33.d5!? Kg8 34.d6 Qc6+/-.

**33...b5 34.d5 ed 35.ed Kg8 36.d6 Rd8 37.Qf3 Qe5+/-**

Soon the game switched to a rook endgame with White a pawn up, which, according to theory, was drawn.

**38.Qc3 Qxc3 39.bc Kg7 40.Rd5 Kf6 41.Rxb5 Rxd6 42.Rb4 Rd3 43.Rxc4 Ke5 44.Rc7 Ke6 45.Rc8 Ke5 46.Re8+ Kd5 47.Ra8 Rxc3 48.Rxa4 Ke6 49.Re4+ Kf6 50.Re3 Rc2 51.Kf3 Ra2 52.Rc3 Kf5 53.Rc5+ Ke6 54.Ra5 Kf6 55.Ke3 Ke6 56.Ra7 Kf6 57.a4 Ke6 58.a5**



[FEN "8/R4p2/4k1p1/P6p/7P/4K1P1/r4P2/8 b - - 0 58"]

**1...?**

On the board there's a typical position with an extra rook's pawn for White with the rook on the weaker side, positioned in the rear behind the passed pawn, and a standard pawn structure on the kingside. We shouldn't be too hard on the players' subsequent actions, bearing in mind that they only had their incremental seconds left. Although we're probably still justified in

drawing some conclusions about their endgame abilities, and contemplating on how thorough knowledge and understanding of theory might have influenced the players' actions even in such extreme circumstances. But the main purpose of investigating the game is to inform (or remind) readers about some typical ideas in this kind of ending.

### 58...Kf6?!

In such situations, White sends his king towards his passed pawn at the appropriate moment, sacrificing one or two pawns on the kingside. His opponent has to give up his rook for the passed pawn, and the outcome of the battle depends on whether or not Black succeeds in his counterplay on the kingside. In the coming race every tempo may be decisive.

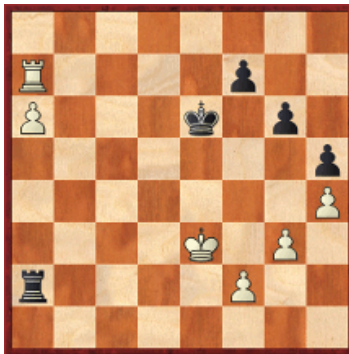
Direct pursuit of the pawn loses: 58...Ra3+? 59.Kd4 Rf3 60.a6 Rxf2 61.Rc7 Ra2 62.a7 Kf5 63.Kc4! – we'll have more than one reason to come back to this important variation later.

At the same time there's no point in Black waiting passively. Any move that is useful for the future race must be made. 58...f6! 59.a6 Kf5 60.f3 (60.Ra8 Kg4 61.a7 Ra3+) 60...Ra3+ 61.Kd4 Rxf3 62.Rc7 Ra3 63.a7 Kg4 gave an easy draw.

### 59.a6 Ke6?

If on the previous move the right decision could be made based on common sense and an understanding of the general principles of this kind of ending, then here even a very strong grandmaster would hardly be capable of making a choice without precise knowledge of the theory, and besides that the theory is very complicated and comparatively new, having been worked out only in 2003 (and presented in my *Endgame Manual*).

The draw can only be achieved with 59...g5!, or to be even more precise: 59...Ra4! 60.Kd3 g5!! The move in the game should have led to defeat.



[FEN "8/R4p2/P3k1p1/7p/7P/4K1P1/r4P2/8 w - - 0 60"]

### 1.?

### 60.Ra8?

Etienne Bacrot doesn't know or doesn't remember the conclusions of modern theory. As the Swiss player Johannes Steckner proved, the king has to move forwards with the rook specifically on a7, but not on a8. The main variation is 60.Kd4! Rxf2 61.Rc7 Ra2 62.a7 Kf5 63.Kc4!! Kg4 64.Kb3! Ra6 65.Rc4+ Kxg3 66.Ra4 Rxa7 67.Rxa7 Kxh4 68.Kc3, and so on – the rook turns out to be stronger than the three pawns. Black can defend differently, the position contains quite a few subtleties, but he won't find a way to save himself anywhere.

### 60...Kf6?

Ray Robson is not only unaware of the latest theoretical discoveries, but apparently is completely unfamiliar with the ideas in this kind of ending – probably because of his youth, he just hasn't had time to study them. Of



course, he should have positioned his king more actively at the first opportunity: 60...Kf5! An "educated" player would have made this move automatically, regardless of how much time he had left. Robson's blunder clearly wasn't accidental: as we already saw this kind of mistake on the fifty-eighth move, and we'll see more of them.

### 61.Kf3?!

This move, and the following unsuccessful one, by White were provoked by severe time trouble. Bacrot had obviously decided to tread water in order to carve out a little time to think.

### 61...Ra4 62.Ke2?! Ra3 63.Ra7 Ke6 64.Kd2 Ra2+?!

Why let the king advance? The situation reminds me of the one with which we began our analysis of the endgame (see the fifty-eighth move). It's dangerous to pursue the pawn: 64...Rf3? 65.Rc7 Rxf2+ 66.Kc3 Ra2 67.a7, but it was worth playing 64...f6!.

### 65.Ke3

In time trouble White doesn't go for 65.Kc3!? Rxf2 66.Rc7 Ra2 67.a7.

### 65...Kf6 66.Ra8?

Bacrot repeats the same mistake as on the sixtieth move. 66.Kd4! is correct.

In my *Endgame Manual*, from an identical position, I wrote that 66.Kd4! wins. However, Vardan Poghosyan from Armenia recently proved that, instead of 66...Rxf2, Black is saved by 66...g5!! 67.Kd5!? g4!. Karsten Müller will have more on this in an upcoming *Endgame Corner*.

### 66...Ra3+?

A move that, even if it isn't losing, is still deserving of condemnation for two reasons. First, Black again misses a chance to activate his king: 66...Kf5!=. Second, it pointlessly takes the attack off the f2-pawn – now taking it with the rook will entail the loss of a tempo.

### 67.Kd4



[FEN "R7/5p2/P4kp1/7p/3K3P/r5P1/5P2/8 b - - 0 67"]

### 1...?

### 67...Ra2?

He would manage to save himself only by playing 67...Kf5! Karsten Müller gives the following variations:

68.f3 Rxf3 69.Rf8 Ra3 70.Rxf7+ Kg4 71.a7 Kxg3=;

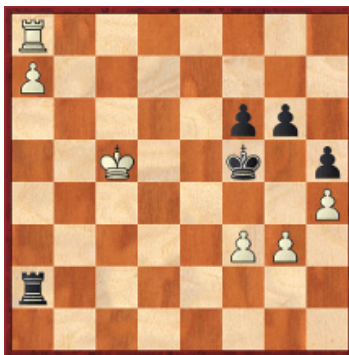
68.Kc5 Kg4 69.Kb5 Kf3 70.Rf8 Kxf2 71.Rxf7+ Kxg3=;

68.Ra7 Kg4 69.Rxf7 Rxa6 70.Ke5 g5 71.Rg7 (71.hg Ra5+ 72.Kf6 Ra6+ 73.

Ke7 Kxg5=) 71...Kf3 72.Rxg5 Kxf2 73.Kf4 Ra4+ 74.Kf5 Ra6! 75.Rxh5 Kxg3=.

## 68.Kc5 Rxf2

68...Kf5 69.f3 f6 (69...Ra3 70.Kb4 Ra2 71.Kb5 Rb2+ 72.Kc6 Rc2+ 73.Kd6 Ra2 74.Ke7 f6 75.a7+-) 70.a7! doesn't help.



[FEN "R7/P7/5pp1/2K2k1p/7P/5PP1/r7/8 b - - 0 70"]

There's an important theoretical position in the diagram that is famous from the game Unzicker – Lundin (Olympiad, Amsterdam, 1954). White wins easily by transferring his king to h6 and then playing 1.Rb8 Rxa7 2.Rb5+.

## 69.Rd8

As Müller pointed out, 69.Rb8! Rc2+ (or 69...Ra2) 70.Kb6 Rb2+ 71.Ka7 Re2 72.Rb5+- is more precise.

## 69...Ra2 70.Kb6 Rb2+ 71.Kc6 Rc2+ 72.Kb7 Rb2+



[FEN "3R4/1K3p2/P4kp1/7p/7P/6P1/1r6/8 w - - 0 73"]

## 1.?

## 73.Ka8?

In time trouble any knowledgeable player would put his king specifically on a8 – so as not to prevent the pawn from taking a step forward. In the overwhelming majority of similar situations this logic is justified, but not here! Only with time to think would you manage to recognize the necessity of leaving the a-pawn under the defense of the king, which makes itself plain in the variation 73.Ka7! Kf5 74.Rb8! Ra2 75.Rb4!

As Müller showed, other attempts to defend don't help: 73...Re2 74.Rd5 Rb2 75.Rd6+ Kf5 76.Rb6 Re2 77.Rb4+-, or 73...Rb3 74.Rb8 Rxb3 75.Rb5 Re3 76.Kb6 Re6+ 77.Ka5 Re7 78.Rc5! Ke6 79.Kb6 Re8 80.a7 f5 81.Ra5 f4 82.a8Q Rxa8 83.Rxa8 Kf5 84.Kc5 Kg4 85.Kd4 Kxh4 86.Ke4 Kg3 87.Rg8+-.

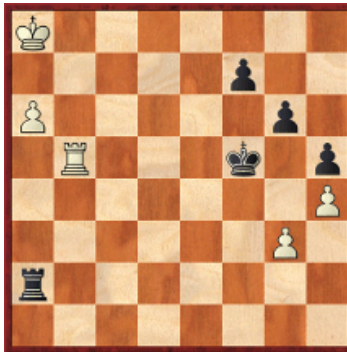
## 73...Kf5!

This time Robson guessed the right move. 73...Rb3? 74.a7 Kf5 75.Rb8 Rxb3

loses to 76.Rb5+ Kf4 (76...Kg4 77.Rg5+) 77.Rb4+ Kf5 78.Kb7 Ra3 79.a8Q Rxa8 80.Kxa8 f6 (80...g5 81.Rb5+ Kg4 82.hg h4 83.Kb7 h3 84.Kc6 h2 85. Rb1 Kxg5 86.Rh1) 81.Kb7 g5 82.Kc6!.

#### 74.a7

74.Rb8!? Ra2 (the pawn is under fire, so there's not time to put the rook on b4) 75.Rb5+ is more dangerous for his opponent.



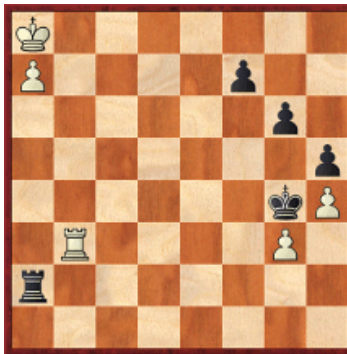
[FEN "K7/5p2/P5p1/1R3k1p/7P/6P1/r7/8 b - - 0 75"]

#### 1...?

In the variations that arise with 75...Ke4? 76.a7 Kf3 77.Rb3+ Kg4 78.Kb7, Black lacks precisely one tempo to save himself. On 78...f6 or 78...f5, there follows 79.Rb6! (threatening 80.Ra6) 79...Rxa7+ 80.Kxa7+-, But in the case of the waiting move 78...Ra1, White doesn't choose 79.Rb6? Rxa7+ 80.Kxa7 Kxg3=, rather 79.a8Q Rxa8 80.Kxa8, and, with a pawn on f7, Black's counterplay comes too late.

A draw can only be achieved by means of 75...Kg4! 76.Rg5+ Kh3 77.Kb7, and now the white rook, which is able to protect the king from vertical checks, doesn't help it against the checks on the horizontal. So Black plays 77...Re2 (it's also possible to start with 77...Rb2+) 78.a7 Re7+ 79.Kb6 Re6+ 80.Kb5 Re8=.

#### 74...Kg4 75.Rb8 Ra2 76.Rb3



[FEN "K7/P4p2/6p1/7p/6kP/1R4P1/r7/8 b - - 0 76"]

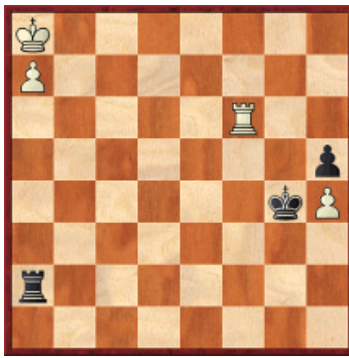
#### 76...f6

76...f5 77.Kb7 f4 78.gf Kxh4 79.a8Q Rxa8 80.Kxa8 Kg4= isn't bad either.

#### 77.Rb6 (77.Kb7 g5=) 77...g5

Or 77...Kxg3 78.Rxf6 Kxh4=.

#### 78.Rxf6 gh 79.gh



[FEN "K7/P7/5R2/7p/6kP/8/r7/8 b - - 0 79"]

1...?

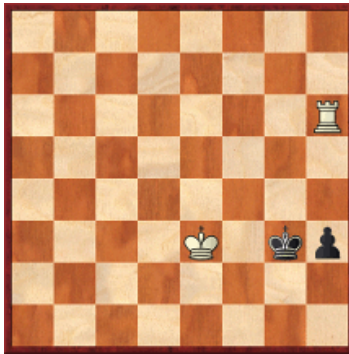
79...Kxh4?!

With his flag hanging Black doesn't manage to work out that besides the planned pawn capture he had another candidate move at his disposal. A stronger one: 79...Rb2!. The h4-pawn is still lost, but White only manages to free his king from confinement with a substantial loss of time: 80.Rf8 Kxh4 81.Rb8 Ra2 82.Kb7 Kg3=.

80.Kb7 Rxa7+ (81.Ra6 was threatened) 81.Kxa7 Kg3 82.Rg6+! Kf3 83.Rh6!

An interim check to win a tempo is a standard method in a rook versus pawn battle. Bacrot is familiar with it, and so he successfully uses it even in severe time trouble. True, the position still remains drawn.

83...Kg4 84.Kb6 h4 85.Kc5 h3 86.Kd4 Kg3 87.Ke3



[FEN "8/8/7R/8/8/4K1kp/8/8 b - - 0 87"]

1...?

An important position has been created that should be included in the arsenal of every player's endgame knowledge. If Robson had known it he would automatically have played 87...Kg2! 88.Rg6+ Kf1! or 88.Ke2 h2 89.Rg6+ Kh1! with a draw.

87...h2??

A terrible blunder that has been made by many masters and grandmasters who in their turn hadn't worked on studying endgame theory.

88.Rg6+ Kh3 89.Kf2 h1N+ 90.Kf3 Kh2 91.Rg7 1-0

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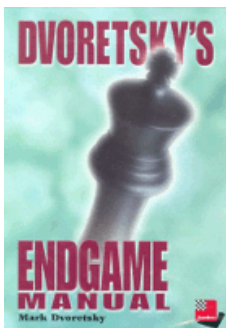
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## The Problem is Not the Time Control

This month, a conversation with Oleg Pervakov (in bold below) from the Russian magazine *64 – Chess Review* initiated by the [December 2011 article](#) about the game Bacrot – Robson.

**The FIDE President has proposed a new championship system that supposedly attracts more attention to chess. One in which classic, rapid, and blitz chess will be used to determine the absolute champion of the world. How do you feel about this?**

I am against it, not just the proposal itself, but also against the "procedure" for its adoption. Ilyumzhinov does not analyze the consequences of unilateral decision-making by first conducting preliminary experiments – justified or not. His expert opinion, by and large, is that he is not interested. The FIDE President and his associates essentially denounced serious chess – saying that it is unspectacular, and that it is necessary to adopt faster time controls to attract additional interest in chess, with regards to TV broadcasts. They have moved in this direction for a long time now, with a time control that is steadily decreasing, yet there is no increase in interest in classical or quick chess, and little TV coverage. So, perhaps "the problem" was not the time control.

Vladimir Kramnik recently noted one of the greatest dangers of this kind of solution: once it is legislated to reduce the time control, we run the risk of hitting the slippery slope of no return. When Ilyumzhinov introduced the "knockout" championship (here my opinion differs with Kramnik – I think that this system has proven itself), it was not difficult to return to a tournament or match format. The transition to a rapid time control is different. Both Kramnik and I believe that the results have been negative, but getting back to a normal, serious game is already difficult. After all, rapid is convenient for organizers and the chess is easier – it is played quickly, if things do not work out as planned, we immediately move to another tournament.

So Ilyumzhinov must first prove, not in words but in practice, that the transition to a rapid format actually increases the popularity of chess. And prove it convincingly: be it in increased audience attendance or the addition of thousands of fans on the Internet. (In fact, I'm sure this will not be so.)

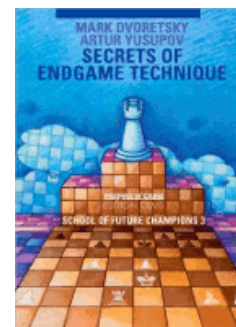
In an interview, the Chairman of the Board of the Russian Chess Federation, Ilya Levitov, claims that well-organized tournaments brings about rapid "Kremlin stars." But did the world championship match with a classical time control of two-and-a-half hours for forty moves have less of an audience? Only one game per day; and the room was crammed with those wanting to see firsthand the game's strongest players!

Entertainment depends on several factors. Even having a good coffee shop would attract more viewers than the change in time control. And what if we add the commentary of well-known grandmasters and organize simultaneous games, contests, and solving tournaments for studies? Take the traditional "classic" tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, London, or Dortmund: there is a large audience because of the deliberate and well-organized program.

**In Dortmund, the audience does not even have to buy tickets.**

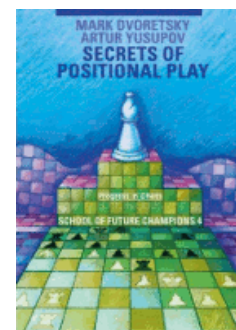
So you see! In general, though, it is wrong to compare a well organized tournament and rapid chess. For example, the "classic" Russian championship, was held in closed quarters, with no buffet, and no direct

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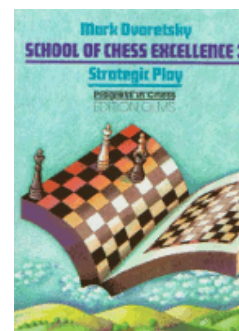
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communication by the commentators to the audience. Yet the last Tal Memorial (classical chess) was held in one of the most beautiful buildings in Moscow, the "Pashkov House," and immediately the number of viewers increased dramatically.

**Ilyumzhinov proposes that a simple survey is enough. To accept comments and suggestions until a certain date before the change is implemented.**

Yet the vast majority of skilled people do not participate in the polls. In particular, because similar surveys have been conducted, and if the results were poor, FIDE simply did not pay attention. In addition, much depends on how you pose the question. If you ask, for example, whether one likes to play rapid or blitz, almost everyone answers affirmatively. But when asked what kind of chess should predominate, almost all GMs have expressed a clear choice in favor of classical time controls. The problem of reducing the time control should be discussed extensively and professionally. This is a very serious issue to make a decision so easily and blithely.

**But opponents of the classic time control contend that the audience does not stay.**

Exactly. So what?

**So, chess must entertain.**

Of course. Now we turn to the merits.

I want to draw attention to an important caveat, which, in my opinion, has not yet been discussed. In competitions in any sport there are many intermediate events, which in themselves are interesting for the spectators, other than the final result (win or draw). There can be magnificent plays, or passes, or volleys in soccer or tennis that captivate the audience who watch the process of the struggle, switching attention from one episode to another, noting the fleeting successes and failures of the athletes.

In chess, there are no similar activities. Some may find it interesting to observe the behavior of players: the grandmaster scratches his head in search of a good move, grimaces, or is faced with a surprise. But this is just a curiosity, secondary to what is happening on the board. It is much less spectacular than what we see in other sports, and will never be a great incentive to attract viewers. In chess, most of what is going on is largely behind the scenes. This organic property of chess makes it less accessible to the masses. Still, with a long time control the commentator can explain what is happening on the board, and the viewer has the time to try to understand the intentions of players. With rapid time controls this is impossible.

The audience for chess can be divided into three categories:

The first category is the spectators who are present in the tournament hall, who come and watch the game as it is played. Compared with popular sports, it is a small audience, and it always will be. Monitoring the game in this way is only interesting to someone who already knows the rules of chess. Fans of football or tennis can recruit from virtually the entire population, as the rules can be explained in a few minutes, and the person is immediately able to watch a match with interest. Actually, there are a large number of individuals who play chess, and the expansion of this group, of course, is our real goal; for instance, we can only welcome the teaching of chess in school.

The second category of viewers is much more extensive – those who watch chess competitions via the Internet. Here tens and even hundreds of thousands of viewers participate. It is clear that this audience is more important. It is true that they do not pay money for viewing the broadcasts, but popular sites receive more advertising or membership fees and thus there is a commercial effect. However, I am not an expert on such matters and I cannot say to what extent.

The third category of viewers, which is very large, is the one that advocates of

a transition to rapid time controls have completely ignored. The advantage that chess has over other sports is its longevity. A game is not only followed in the heat of the moment, but for years, decades, and centuries later. The best games are discussed in magazines, on websites, and in books. Who will review in the passage of time, say, a tennis match? Yet, we have the opposite: the study of books and articles maintains an interest over a sustained period of time.

Annotators help to see that games, whether played in the past or present, are entertaining and instructive. Readers (or viewers) can then become directly involved in the process by seeking their own ideas. This "cooperation" between the recognized authorities and amateurs is one of the most attractive features of chess, which is absent in other sports.

### **This only applies to classical chess?**

Of course. To seriously discuss rapid and blitz chess makes no sense. It's not even a real game. Yes, the player can intuitively guess the subtle and interesting move, but with such a time control great ideas cannot be found. It is the inner beauty and logic of chess that attracts people by appealing to their aesthetic sensibilities.

### **Beauty may exist in a small combination.**

Of course. But for the most part combinations executed in a rapid time control are standard in nature, they are quite obvious and therefore of little interest. In a classic chess match one has the creative element, as well as the same level of "sport." The endless original ideas of grandmasters captivate not only fans, but also experienced professionals.

There is another aspect here. We delve into analysis and discuss the options, and not only because it's interesting. Prolonged searches in chess teach us to think of truth over the board, and having to find difficult, non-obvious solutions. Deepening a position in speed chess completely loses its practical significance in view of the inapplicability of this in actual practice – instead there will be demand for good opening and endgame knowledge, with a quick response.

Therein lies the main danger of acceleration of pace. Speeding up the time control will gradually eliminate the third category of audience, because the games will lack practical relevance and be of low creative content. This will deal a terrible blow to the chess industry. Games will become bare information only, relegated to news feeds. This will sharply reduce the interest in chess, and will diminish the influx of new fans, and, as a result, players.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, I must note that I protest the attempts to displace normal chess with fast play, not rapid or blitz in general. I love them both, and if I were to choose which to play – classic or rapid – I would choose rapid. Quick chess is good for demonstrations. They are sometimes appropriate for professional competition, and even more so, they are indispensable for some amateur tournaments. The everyday working player does not play in serious tournaments, but will engage in rapid play. Rapid chess is also useful for training. When we were engaged in Yusupov's opening preparation, we had to check our lines by playing games in rapid chess (serious training games would require too much time). In short, rapid and blitz has its own scope, which is quite extensive, but it should not go beyond that.

Let us talk about audiences who watch the games in the tournament hall or on the Internet. I completely disagree with the assumption that it is more interesting to see rapid games than serious classical ones, and will try to show this.

In football or tennis a spectator watches the entire game, so as not to miss some important moment. It would be absurd to expect this from a chess audience. A spectator present in the playing hall is not going to sit still for six or seven hours. They are free to move about and even watch the game from

other areas of the venue if the organizers provide monitors. Even distracted by half-an-hour, the audience will miss very little, because they always will be able follow the events that occurred during their absence. In the meantime, they can eat, socialize with friends, listen to expert commentary, and try to guess potential moves. Who knows what else you can provide that is interesting to the audience at a chess tournament? Technically, organizing all this is simple and the financial costs of implementing it are small compared to, say, a prize fund.

As for the Internet spectator, he may watch the opening phase of the game, return to work for a while, and then check back in to see what has changed. He can play through the previous moves, or read the notes made by the commentator, and follow several games at once. If he desires, he can check something on the board with the use of an engine. It is not required to follow the moves at the pace at which they were made on the board. Not all episodes of the struggle will be of interest – some may be skipped to focus on the most meaningful moments to that particular viewer. Everyone has the right to choose the method of viewing the game that is best for them.

But all this is feasible only when the game continues long enough. In rapid chess, viewers, especially those who are unskilled, have no time to assess what is happening on the board and no ability to pause at interesting moments to consider or discuss them. Even more so, when there are multiple games of interest ongoing. The only thing of interest is the final result of the games, and this can be learned at the end of the day. All, or almost all, of the chess content that is interesting to an audience slips away.

Ilya Levitov in an interview at chess-news.ru vividly described his feelings as a fan.

"I cannot sit seven hours to watch the game. Even on the Internet. The game starts at three, he [GM Bareev] comes to me at four, five, six, we look, we analyze something. For me it's great fun to guess the moves. I get a huge rush. It is interesting when you start to think along with the chess player. That is, you take a position, saying: "What if ... so maybe that's the plan." And then he makes a move that you guessed – it's interesting. But after that we can take a break. You cannot just sit for seven hours."

All very true, in fact, it describes exactly what I said.

### **So, a transition to a rapid time control would cause a decline in the chess culture.**

Of course. Moreover, a reality will result that was expressed many years ago in a sadly ironic maxim of master Oleg Mosaic: "Chess is just a hand board game."

Interesting is, for example, the opinion of Kramnik:

"Chess is an intellectual activity. And, like any intellectual activity, it is elitist. Maybe that's not quite the right word, but I do not think he [Ilyumzhinov] will ever bring thousands of chess fans. Chess is very closely linked with culture and with the presence of some intelligence. This is our trump ace. And to give it up to forge some mythical popularity among people who like, say, baseball or basketball? I would choose a different niche."

I understand that there are those who will call for a shift from elitism to democracy, but this is just juggling words. Kramnik is right in principle. Incidentally, computer technology is one of the most promising directions for us. Chess uses computer and Internet technology to its advantage far more than any other sport. The problem is how to turn this advantage into mutually beneficial relationships with potential sponsors, but this is a matter for marketing professionals.

I welcome a public debate on this subject, but only an exchange of real arguments, rather than empty statements by apologists for speed chess. I



cannot stand demagoguery, such as the argument that we live in a fast age, and we have to follow the increased pace of life. We can in fact say the opposite: a higher level of chess needs to be played with more subtle nuances – and to find them we need more time. That's all – no substantive arguments and only verbal gymnastics.

Of course, there are real arguments in favor of speeding up the game. One is too much opening theory, pushing the boundaries of the "independent" game farther and farther away from the starting position. Accordingly, fewer moves require independent thinking. This is really an argument that is worth discussing. But there are counter-arguments. First, the pace of the game is accelerated: before tournaments were held with the time control at two-and-a-half hours for forty moves; now it is two-hours for forty moves or even less – that is, chess players have significantly less lead time than before. Secondly, not every game "starts" after, say, the twentieth move. Often the struggle still occurs early in the game. And not necessarily from the fact that your opponent springs a new opening innovation. The player may simply not be ready, as he does not have to remember all that opening theory.

Let me add a point. Theory has advanced tremendously, but not as far as wide. At the dawn of opening theory Alekhine and Capablanca contested theory, albeit a narrow and even poor one according to our notions. In most games where Capablanca had the black pieces, they played out the same version of the Orthodox Defense to the Queen's Gambit with the transition to the endgame, and the novelty began somewhere around the twentieth move. And remember the game of the Soviet era Novikov – Tukmakov, where the first new move in a Grünfeld was applied on the thirty-sixth move, and Novikov's analysis extended more than fifty moves!

Yes, today's grandmasters opening preparation results in endgame positions, but mostly they are not realized on the board. Indeed, opponents are also aware of this and try to evade preparation, turning the game into something less studied and more of a surprise. But here we are dealing with an entirely different issue, one that I have often wrote about, and which has a negative influence on modern chess opening theory – a dimensionless enlargement. But this is another topic, the time control has nothing to do with it.

I remember the game in the last round of the Russian Championship Super Final 2011, Galkin – Kramnik, which I commented on live. There the "independent" game began with the very first moves. Kramnik, with black, over-the-board, without any preparation, built a very clear strategy to cast doubt on the plan chosen by Galkin. And these fights are not the only exceptions.

**Many believe that the popularity of chess would be improved if you eliminated draws; for instance, by making them be replayed. What do you think about this?**

A draw is a completely natural result, as, incidentally, in football, where no one is talking about eliminating the draw. Should chess players compete for three outcomes or only two? This process of canceling draws will not be fun. One can learn the end results of games from the Internet, and it does not make sense to travel to the tournament to do that. But it is not only important to reveal the winner of the game, but also the process of the struggle.

The replayed game from that draw will be played with a short time control. Recall that in the knockout tournament, some participants tried to decide the outcome of the fight in the "rapids" and willingly made quick draws in the major battles.

**One reason why rapid chess is promoted by Ilyumzhinov is because of cheating. Thus, one does not have to buy expensive equipment to check the players.**

"The best remedy for a headache – the guillotine!" The only way to avoid problems is to not play the game at all. Cheating is a very important issue, although it is not discussed enough. Feller's French Chess Federation took the initiative, and was bent on disqualifying him – they did not wait for the

slightest support from FIDE. In fact, there are tools that require little cost. For example, the most severe rules regarding disqualification deter cheaters. FIDE does not want to consider, nor to discuss the various options – it is simply going to "decapitate" classical chess. Cheating would indeed be more difficult, but the consequences would be too grave.

In conclusion, I would like to return to **Bacrot – Robson**:



[FEN "r3qk2/1p3p2/1n2p1p1/1p2N2p/p2PP2P/P5P1/1P2QPK1/3R4 w - - 0 31"]

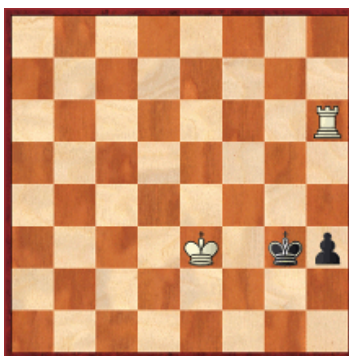
In my December 2011 column I wrote, "White's positional advantage is determined by his better pawn structure and the possibility of soon creating a passed pawn in the center with d4-d5. But besides these long-term pluses he also has some fleeting, temporary ones: the positions of the black rook, knight, and even king are not very good. If he lets his opponent make one or two moves unimpeded (for example, 30...Rd8 or 30...Rc8 and 31...Nc4), the temporary factors evaporate and White's overall advantage diminishes. That's why it made sense to start active play on the kingside without delay, where only the black king was located, lacking support from the other pieces. I suggest 31.g4!"

This is an interesting solution, which achieves a much larger white advantage compared with other ideas. In principle, it is very easy to miss such things in the rapid time control, because it stands out from the previous course of the game. One need not reproach Bacrot for this omission, but if it were a normal time control, then there would be occasion to reflect on possible flaws in his decision-making process.

### Well, blunders in the endgame.

Of course, gross errors, which can be avoided with better study on the theory of endings. Such knowledge helps even in rapid chess. This was the main idea of my commentary to the game. On the other hand, the players are "in the box" here, tired, under stress, so that in rapid and blitz chess flaws occur, even with a good knowledge of the endgame.

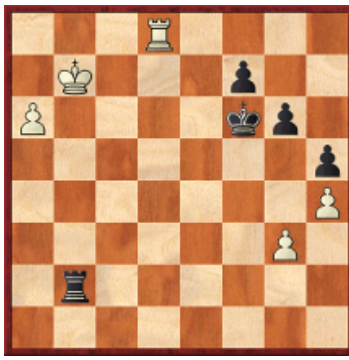
Two examples from the game **Bacrot – Robson**, as discussed last month:



[FEN "8/8/7R/8/8/4K1kp/8/8 b - - 0 87"]

**87...h2??**

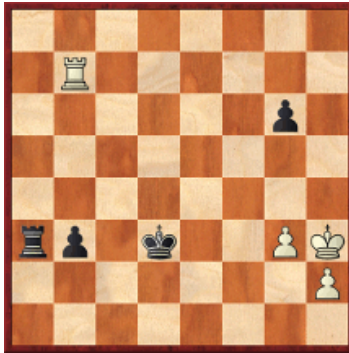
And earlier:



[FEN "3R4/1K3p2/P4kp1/7p/7P/6P1/1r6/8 w - - 0 73"]

The game saw **73.Ka8?**. Instead, Müller's winning move is **73.Ka7!!**. One does not find such moves intuitively – to find it, we should think carefully.

I recall a similar incident, described in [Secrets of Endgame Technique](#) from a position that could have occurred in the game **Lapin – Utyatsky**:



[FEN "8/1R6/6p1/8/8/rp1k2PK/7P/8 b - - 0 1"]

After **1...Kc2 2.Rc7+**, only the paradoxical move **2...Kb2!!** leads to a win. It is somewhat similar to Müller's suggestion in Bacrot – Robson, but the idea here is the interference. For example, if **3.Kg4**, then **3...Ra5! 4.Rc6 Ka3! 5. Rxb6 b2 6.Rb6 Ra4+** and **7...Rb4**. And if **3.Rc6**, then **3...Ra4!**.

At a normal time control an ordinary master, playing black, can expect to successfully solve the problem. Nevertheless, Bacrot, a strong grandmaster, did not find the right solution, and could not find it, given the acute shortage of time. Does this not frighten supporters of "speeding up the game"? I do not want to see the extinction of subtle ideas in chess practice.

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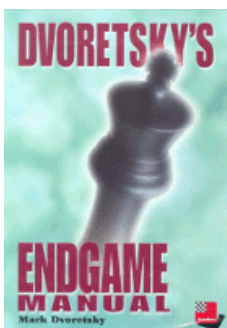
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Strategy Lessons

After browsing the Chesspro website (October 2011) with the superb article "Opening Dialectics" by Evgeny Gleizerov, I remembered an old game played with the same French Defense, Wedberg – Gleizerov, that I have already been using for many years in my work with strong players. In its time it was published in *New in Chess Magazine* 2002/1 with notes by the winner – Tom Wedberg. Besides the high quality of the play and commentary, I was impressed by the deep and absolutely non-obvious strategic solution of the opening problem that the Swedish grandmaster found.

In analytical testing, and also in the process of working with my students, as usual I managed to clarify a number of important details and add new polish to the picture of the battle. When I was preparing the material for publication I included in the text some thoughts on various topics that are as important for practical players as for coaches, and I also added a few examples that illustrate the chess problems discussed in the article (you'll find them at the end, in the "appendices").

The outcome of the opening duel that was won by White had a significant influence on the result of the game we're going to look at. Although I've played the French Defense as Black all my life, albeit completely different variations, I'm in no way a connoisseur of the opening and I don't follow the development of modern theory. So I thought that for an objective insight into the process of the battle it would be useful to get an expert's opinion. Fortunately, grandmaster Gleizerov acceded to my request and, after looking at my comments on the game, gave his views on several important moments. Wedberg's notes, which are the basis of this article, are in italics, and Gleizerov's notes are in italics enclosed by square brackets.

**Wedberg – Gleizerov**  
Stockholm, 2001

1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4.Bc1-g5 Bf8-e7 5.e4-e5 Nf6-d7 6.Bg5xe7 Qd8xe7 7.f2-f4 0-0 8.Ng1-f3 c7-c5 9.Qd1-d2 Nb8-c6 10.d4xc5 f7-f6 11.e5xf6 Qe7xf6 12.g2-g3 Nd7xc5 13.0-0-0 Rf8-d8



[FEN "r1br2k1/pp4pp/2n1pq2/2np4/5P2/2N2NP1/PPPQ3P/2KR1B1R w - - 0 14"]

1.?

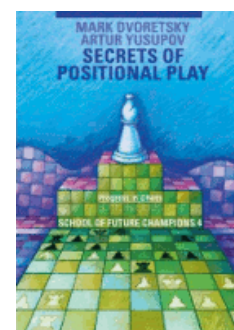
*This line is considered to be solid but slightly passive for Black, a drawing line at best. A look at Gleizerov's play and results from this position conveys a dramatically different picture. After the game he told me he had a clean 9-0 result in this line as Black. Somehow he always manages to bring the supposedly bad black bishop into decisive action.*

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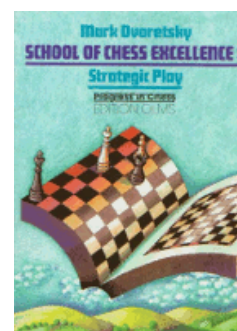
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The problem of the "bad" French bishop is too interesting and important to be limited to a short note on this subject. It's examined in more detail in the first appendix to this article.

*His play looked so impressive that I wasn't sure whether I really wanted to play this against him. But some old advice from Lars Karlsson came to mind: While preparing, look for lines where your opponent has good results but the opening itself doesn't look all that impressive. That's where he is most vulnerable!*

*The next question was: What to play here? The ideal formation for White must be something like Qe3, Bb5 and Rhe1. 14.Qe3? at once loses to 14...d4, while 14.Bb5 can be met by 14...Ne4, and White will have to play with doubled c-pawns.*

Gleizerov's opinion is as follows:

*[In fact, specifically 14.Bb5! is the strongest. After 14...Ne4 15.Qe3 Nxc3 16.Qxc3 Qxc3 17.bc, Black doesn't succeed in preventing the destructive c3-c4. And if 14..Bd7 15.Qe3!, then by comparison with the move chosen in the game White wins a tempo. It's precisely because of this that I stopped using the plan with f7-f6 against queenside castling!]*



[FEN "r1br2k1/pp4pp/2n1p3/1B1p4/5P2/2P2NP1/P1P4P/2KR3R b - - 0 17"]

I really wanted to prove that the damaged pawn structure on the queenside (well, if not doubled pawns – the undermining c3-c4 is inevitable, but at least isolated ones) significantly reduces White's chances of success. But analysis of the positions that arise after 18...Bd7 (on 18...Ne7 the same reply follows) 19.Rhe1 h6 (in the case of 19...Rac8 the thrust 20.Ng5 is unpleasant) 20.c4 (20.Bxc6 bc is also in White's favor) 20...Na5 21.Bxd7 Rxd7 22.cd ed 23.Ne5 confirmed that the grandmaster was right. The d5 pawn will most likely be lose, and Black is faced with a difficult defense. For example, 23...Rdd6 24. Re4! +/- or 23...Rdd6 24.Ng6! Kf7 25.Ne7 +/-.

*In a couple of recent games White has entered complications with 14.Qf2 d4!? 15.Nb5 e5 16.Ng5 (16.Nc7 is bad because of the decisive 16...Qf7! 17. Nxa8 Qxa2, and the white king is in deadly danger), but simply 16...Rf8! guards f7 and creates an unclear situation in which Black is active.*

*Moves like 14.Bd3 and 14.Bg2 are playable, but fail to hit Nc6, the guardian of the important central squares d4 and e5. For example, on 14.Bd3 it's possible to play 14...Bd7 15.Rhe1 Be8 16.Ne5 Rac8 (16...Nxe5 17.Rxe5 Rac8= Grechkin – Estrin, correspondence 1960) 17.Kb1 Nxe5 18.Rxe5 Nd7 19.Ree1 Bh5 20.Be2 Bg6= Fercec – Ulibin, Croatian League, Pula, 2000.*

Keres and Euwe recommended 14.Nd4 Ne4 15.Qe3 +/- . But Black can play 14...Bd7!?

*During my preparation I couldn't decide what to play and left the decision to later. Over the board I finally saw the solution to the puzzle.*

#### **14.Qd2-e1!**

I will point out that 14.Qe2 is less precise because of 14...b6! (the queen has cut off the bishop's route to b5) 15.Bh3 (15.Nb5!?) 15...Ba6 unclear.



14...Bc8-d7

If 14...a6 [*in my view – the strongest*], then 15.Bg2 b5 16.Qe3!, and 16...d4? 17.Nxd4 is bad.

Gleizerov adds the following:

*[Here it seems to me you have to play 15...b6!, defending the knight in advance. Depending on circumstances the bishop can go via the route d7-e8-f7 or come out to b7, from where it will fire on e4 by "X-ray." As soon as the white knight sets off on the march c3-e2-d4, its black opponent, supported by the bishop, will jump to e4.]*



[FEN "r1br2k1/6pp/ppn1pq2/2np4/5P2/2N2NP1/PPP3BP/2KRQ2R w - - 0 16"]

This probably is the best defense in fact, but still I think White's position deserves preference here. He can continue, for example, 16.Qe3 Bb7 (16...d4? 17.Nxd4) 17.Nd4 Rac8 18.Kb1+/- . Another path: 16.Ne2 Ne4 (16...Bd7 17.Ned4 Rac8 18.Qe3+/-) 17.Ned4 Nxd4 18.Nxd4 Bb7 19.Kb1 Rac8 20.Rf1 with a subsequent Qe3. No counterplay is evident for Black, and he constantly has to reckon on an exchange on e4, and also the kingside actions g3-g4-g5 or f4-f5.

### 15.Qe1-e3!

*By sacrificing a move White gets his pieces to the right squares. Bartosz Socko tried 15.Bb5 Rac8 16.Bxc6 Bxc6 17.Nd4 Be8! 18.Qe5 Qxe5 19.fe against Gleizerov in the 1999 Rilton Cup, but after 19...Kf7! Black had no problems and went on to win on move 86.*

### 15...b7-b6



[FEN "r2r2k1/p2b2pp/1pn1pq2/2np4/5P2/2N1QNP1/PPP4P/2KR1B1R w - - 0 16"]

### 16.Bf1-b5

At the 2003 Russian Championship in Krasnoyarsk the same variation was played in the duel **Inarkiev – Riazantsev**. Before that I had managed to show Ernesto Inarkiev the Wedberg – Gleizerov game (true, not during opening preparations, but while working on improving his positional skills), and so he made the strongest fourteenth and fifteenth moves fairly quickly. But he didn't remember the move 16.Bb5, and rejected it, being unsure of the evaluation of

the position that arises with 16...Ne7. Then again, the continuation Ernesto chose also preserved better chances for White. The game developed as follows:

**16.Bg2 Be8 17.Nd4 Nxd4**

*[A slight inaccuracy. An immediate 17...Rac8 would have been better, and if White wants to exchange knights he has to lose a tempo. Then again, it isn't all that important. The bishop is very well positioned on g2, and the destructive f4-f5 is always hanging in the air (after g3-g4, of course). Black has to keep his bishop on f7 and conduct a fairly passive defense. Basically the key to positions of this type is in the principle "Don't block the center, destroy it!" The knight on c3 is positioned badly for a blockade, while its pressure on d5 is very suitable for an assault.]*

**18.Rxd4 Rac8 19.Re1 b5 (19...Bg6 20.g4)**



[FEN "2rrb1k1/p5pp/4pq2/1pnp4/3R1P2/2N1Q1P1/PPP3BP/2K1R3 w - - 0 20"]

**1.?**

**20.Bh3!**

White is preparing an exchange operation that will give him a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces. No other active options are evident.

**20...b4 21.Nxd5! (21.Rxb4? d4) 21...ed 22.Bxc8 Rxc8 23.Rxd5 Na4 24.Qd4**

Inarkiev correctly decided that exchanges of major pieces were favorable to him (the queens and a pair of rooks). In a middlegame Black can create reciprocal threats to the white king, while in an endgame on a half-empty board the rook's chances of invading his opponent's camp with a decisive impact increase.

**24...Qc6 25.Qd2**



[FEN "2r1b1k1/p5pp/2q5/3R4/np3P2/6P1/PPPQ3P/2K1R3 b - - 0 25"]

**25...Qf6?**

Black gives up another pawn, after which he is left with no hope of saving himself.

26.Qxb4 Qc6 27.Qd2 Qb6 28.Qd4 Qc7 29.Rxe8+ Rxe8 30.Rd7 Re1+ 31.Kd2 Re2+ 32.Kxe2 Qxc2+ 33.Kf3 Black resigned.

In the position in the last diagram I looked at the more stubborn 25...Qc7; for example, 26.Rde5 Bf7 27.Re7 Qc6 (intending 27...Nc5 or even 27...b3) 28.Rd7 h6, and White's advantage is insignificant.

Discussing the game with Ernesto, he immediately suggested the right path, based on the same strategy of exchanging off the major pieces: 26.Rd1! Nb6 27.Rd8 Rxd8 28.Qxd8 Qxd8 29.Rxd8 Kf7 30.Rd4 a5 31.Rd6 Nc4 32.Rd5 with a big advantage.

As a coach I was glad that my student had confidently used ideas in practice that we had previously discussed (see Appendix Two). But you, of course, are right to wonder: why didn't I myself, knowing these ideas, find the strongest continuation?

Well, firstly, **knowledge in no way guarantees that you'll find the right moves, it only increases your chances of success. One of the main purposes of the training I do with my students is precisely to develop the ability to use the knowledge they have acquired in different concrete situations.**

And secondly, in my analysis I had a subconscious desire to prove that after not playing the best way on the 16th move, Inarkiev had lost his advantage, or at least most of it. So I was mainly looking for a defense for his opponent, paying less attention to resources for White. This often happens: **too much emotional investment in analysis leads to a loss of objectivity and a distorted perception of the position.**

And now it's time to go back to the game.

**16...Ra8-c8**

*Black could go for 16...Ne7 17.Bxd7 Rxd7 18.Nd4 Nf5 19.Nxf5 Qxf5, but after 20.Rhe1 White is clearly better. The secret of this line is that Black must hang on to his 'bad' bishop. It holds the position together and can provide effective counterplay later on, when White has exchanged his bishop for a knight.*

Here I recommend that you turn to appendix three.

**17.Rh1-e1 Bd7-e8 18.Bb5xc6!**

*This is the right moment to exchange – before Black has time for Bg6 and Ne4.*

**18...Rc8xc6 19.Nf3-d4 Rc6-d6**



[FEN "3rb1k1/p5pp/1p1rpq2/2np4/3N1P2/2N1Q1P1/PPP4P/2KRR3 w - - 0 20"]

White's opening strategy has been completely justified – there's a big positional advantage on his side. Gleizerov's fair comments after Black's thirteenth and fourteenth moves slightly weaken the aesthetic impression of Wedberg's play, alas – so I also wanted to doubt them. As objective correctness and only solutions are significant criteria for beauty in chess, along with those like efficiency, non-obviousness, originality... But still, I



think that any grandmaster would be proud to find such a non-trivial plan at the board: a pure loss of a tempo in the opening, which in testing turns out to be appropriate and very strong.

## 20.g3-g4!

*With the black central pawns firmly blocked, the next step is to attack them with f4-f5. When the e6 pawn is exchanged, the d5 pawn becomes vulnerable. At this point 20...Bg6 is unplayable due to 21.Ncb5 R6d7 22.Nxe6. In the post-mortem 20...Ne4 was tried, but the position after 21.Nxe4 de 22.c3 e5 23.fe Qxe5 24.Rd2 is nice for White.*

Gleizerov mentions a different, no less dangerous continuation for his opponent.

*[An immediate 20.Qe5! also deserved attention, and the tempting 20...Ne4? doesn't work due to 21.Qxf6 gf 22.Nxe6 (or 22.Nxe4 de 23.Nxe6!) 22...Rxe6 23.Rxe4. In any case, White is on the right path. All his pieces are positioned ideally for an assault, it's enough to bring in the pawns, and Black's position should collapse. I'll point out that with kingside castling by White the resource with g4 and f5 becomes inaccessible! Precisely for that reason, in my current opinion, the setup with Qf6 and Nc5 is perfectly good against the plan with kingside castling, but is insufficient against queenside castling – assuming the white bishop hasn't come out to d3 at an early stage. In that case Black is also fine after queenside castling by his opponent, as the bishop on d3, cutting off the all-important d-file and not putting pressure on d5 and e6, is positioned very poorly in this structure.]*

## 20...a7-a6 21.Qe3-e5 Be8-f7

*Black cannot exchange: 21...Qxe5 22.fe R6d7 23.b4, and Black loses the vital e6 pawn. The endgame after 21...Bg6 22.Qxf6 gf 23.f5! ef 24.gf is pleasant for White – Black is passive.*

## 22.f4-f5 e6xf5?!

*Since 22...Qxe5 23.Rxe5 Nd7?! 24.Ree1 e5 25.Ne6! is very awkward for Black, he must be more cautious. One alternative, indicated by Gleizerov after the game, was 23...g6!? in order to prevent a knight alighting on f5. But after the simple 24.fe Nxe6 25.Nxe6 Bxe6 26.Rd4 Black is condemned to passivity.*

## 23.Nd4xf5

*The check on e7 is an important weapon now. Black cannot exchange queens without losing d5.*

## 23...Qf6-g5+ 24.Kc1-b1 Rd6-e6 25.Qe5-d4 Re6xe1 26.Rd1xe1 Bf7-e6



[FEN "3r2k1/6pp/pp2b3/2np1Nq1/3Q2P1/2N5/PPP4P/1K2R3 w - - 0 27"]

## 1.?

## 27.b2-b4!

*The black position is under great strain, with weak pawns everywhere.*

#### **27...Nc5-e4 28.Nc3xe4 d5xe4**

White wins a pawn. The process of making good on his advantage wasn't subjected to critical analysis by Wedberg, but meanwhile, in my view, not everything is clear here – as he had to make a non-obvious choice a few times.

#### **29.Qd4xe4**

This capture looks sounder and safer by comparison with 29.Qxb6! Bxf5 30. gf Re8.



[FEN "4r1k1/6pp/pQ6/5Pq1/1P2p3/8/P1P4P/1K2R3 w - - 0 31"]

The f5-pawn is under attack and the passed "e"-pawn is threatening to advance. But a closer look at the position shows that after 31.Qxa6 Black has no satisfactory defense:

31...e3 32.Qc4+ Kf8 (on 32...Kh8 the response 33.Qf7+- is very strong) 33.b5 +- , and good advice is hard for Black to come by;

31...Qxf5 32.Qc4+ (32.Qc6!?) 32...Kh8 33.Qd4+- – the "e"-pawn has been stopped, while the white pawns are gradually advancing.

**Here and later Wedberg chooses the "comfortable" path, not associated with risk and not requiring accurate calculations. In many cases this approach is completely justified. But sometimes the opposite picture can be observed: by refusing to go deeply into specific variations, the player misses the shortest paths to his goal and as a result complicates his task, sometimes even letting victory slip from his grasp altogether.**

#### **29...Rd8-e8 30.Kb1-b2!**

*Walking out of the discovered check on a2 and setting up a little trap: 30... Bf7? 31.Qxe8+! Bxe8 32.Rxe8+ Kf7 33.Nd6+ Kg6 (33...Kf6 34.Ne4+) 34.Re6 +, winning the queen back with interest.*

#### **30...Qg5-f6+ 31.Qe4-d4 Qf6xd4+ 32.Nf5xd4 Be6-d7 33.Re1xe8+ Bd7xe8**



[FEN "4b1k1/6pp/pp6/8/1P1N2P1/8/PKP4P/8 w - - 0 34"]

The outcome of the battle in the endgame isn't completely obvious, as Black has counterplay associated with an attack by his king and bishop on the kingside pawns.

### 34.Kb2-c3!

Wedberg's exclamation mark. I'm not sure that the king move deserves it.

34.c4!? Kf7 35.Kc3 looked more natural. Let's figure out (without striving for absolutely precise evaluations) how the battle might have continued.

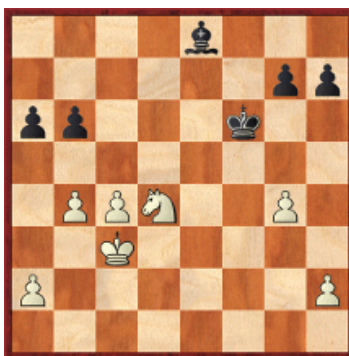
A) 35...Bd7



[FEN "8/3b1kpp/pp6/8/1PPN2P1/2K5/P6P/8 w - - 0 36"]

The consequences of 36.g5 Kg6 37.c5 bc 38.bc Kxg5 39.c6 Bc8 or 36.c5 bc 37.bc Bxg4 38.Kb4 Kf6 39.Ka5 Ke5 40.Nc6+ Kd5 41.Kb6 h5 aren't completely obvious. I would recommend 36.Nf5!? Kf6 37.Kd4 or 36...h5 37.Ne3 hg 38.Kd4.

B) 35...Kf6



[FEN "4b3/6pp/pp3k2/8/1PPN2P1/2K5/P6P/8 w - - 0 36"]

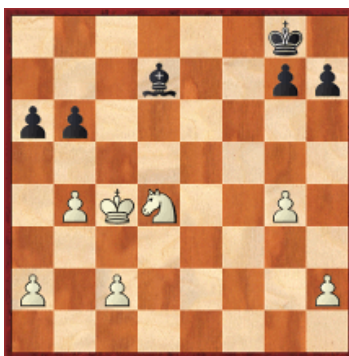
The computer rates 36.Nf3!? Bd7 37.g5+ highly. After 37...Kf5 38.Kd4 a position arises that could have come about in the game too (see notes to Black's thirty-sixth move) – we'll come back to it again. Another path: 36.Nf5! g6 37.Ne3 Ke5 38.Nd5 b5 39.Nc7 Bf7 40.cb ab 41.a3+-, or 36...h5 37.Nd6 Bd7 38.gh Ke5 39.Nf7+ Kf6 40.Nh8! Bg4 41.Ng6 Bxh5 42.Nf4+-.

Players rarely go into these kinds of computer variations at the board. It's very difficult, for example, to find and evaluate the worth of the at first glance strange knight thrust to f5. Wedberg's efforts to centralize his king as quickly as possible were completely justified from a practical point of view.

But it would have been more accurate to start his planned setup with 34.Nf3! The reality is that with 34...Bd7 35.Ne5 the f7 square is taken from the black king. And 34...Kf7 35.Kc3 Kf6 36.Kd4 led to a position that was more comfortable for White than the one that arose in the game.

### 34...Be8-d7 35.g4-g5

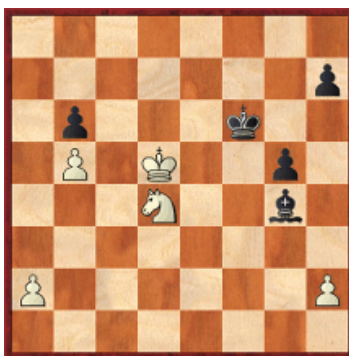
A pawn sacrifice for the sake of the fastest activation of his king deserved serious attention: 35.Kc4!



[FEN "6k1/3b2pp/pp6/8/1PKN2P1/8/P1P4P/8 b - - 0 35"]

A) 35...Bxg4 36.Kd5 b5 (36...Bd7 37.Kd6 Ba4 38.c4+-) 37.Kc6 g5 38.Kb7 h5 39.Kxa6 Bd7 40.Nxb5 Bxb5+ (40...g4 41.Nd4 h4 42.b5+-) 41.Kxb5 g4 42.Ka6 h4 43.b5 with White two pawns up in the queen endgame that arises.

B) 35...Kf7 36.Kd5 Kf6 37.c4 Bxg4 38.b5! (38.Kc6 Ke5 is weaker) 38...ab 39.cb g5



[FEN "8/7p/1p3k2/1P1K2p1/3N2b1/8/P6P/8 w - - 0 40"]

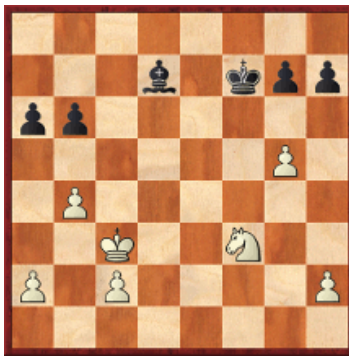
1.?

Initially I analyzed 40.Kc6 Ke5 41.Nb3 Bf3+ 42.Kxb6 g4 43.Ka7 h5 44.b6 h4 45.Nd2! Kd4 46.a4 Kc3 47.Nf1 Kb4 48.b7 Bxb7 49.Kxb7 Kxa4 50.Kc6 g3 51.Nxg3+- . Then I saw that with 46...Ke3! 47.Nxf3 gf 48.b7 f2 49.b8Q f1Q a queen endgame arises in which a win for White is by no means guaranteed. An attempt to improve the variation with 46.Nf1 (instead of 46.a4) 46...Kd3 47.a4 Ke2 48.Ng3+! hg 49.hg leads after 49...Kf2 50.a5 Kxg3 51.a6 Kf2 52.b7 g3 53.b8Q g2 to a position in which White's huge material advantage (queen against bishop) isn't enough for a win!

In the end a precise path to the goal was found: 40.a4! h5 (40...Ke7 41.Kc6 Bd1 42.a5 ba 43.b6+-) 41.Kd6! (41.Kc6? Ke5) 41...h4 42.a5! ba 43.Kc7! Bh3 44.b6 Bg2 45.Nc6+- . If instead of 41...h4 Black plays 41...Bh3, then 42.a5? ba 43.Kc7 Bf1 44.b6 Ba6 no longer works, but the simple 42.Kc7 is strong.

Obviously we are dealing with computer recommendations again that are almost impossible to follow in a practical game. After White missed the strongest continuation on his 29th move and allowed an inaccuracy on his 34th, his task seemed to have become considerably more complicated.

**35...Kg8-f7 36.Nd4-f3**



[FEN "8/3b1kpp/pp6/6P1/1P6/2K2N2/P1P4P/8 b - - 0 36"]

1...?

36...Bd7-f5?!

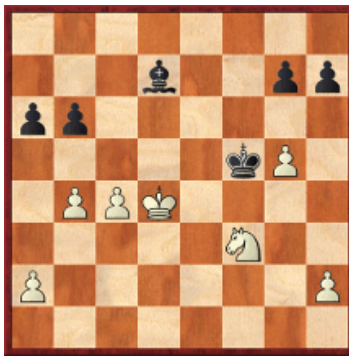
Black prevents the move Kd4, but now his king can't attack the g5 pawn. [I agree that this was the decisive mistake.]

36...Ke6! 37.Kd4 Kf5 is much more stubborn.

*[38.h4!? is interesting, with the idea 38...Kf4 39.Ne5 Bf5 40.c4 Kg3 41.Ke3! Kxh4 42.Kf4, and White wins. But 38...b5! is essential. I don't know how to evaluate this, I've never seriously analyzed the endgame that arises.]*

Moves like 38...b5!, weakening the dark squares, are anti-positional in a maneuvering game. But in a very complicated situation, when both players are trying to create and advance passed pawns as quickly as possible, slowing down the white pawns on the queenside is highly appropriate.

I analyzed 38.c4!



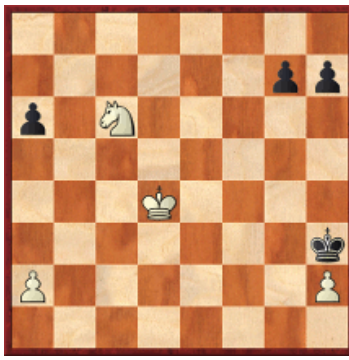
[FEN "8/3b2pp/pp6/5kP1/1PPK4/5N2/P6P/8 b - - 0 38"]

We've already had this position – in one of the branches from the notes to White's thirty-fourth move.

For a long time the consequences of 38...Be6 39.a4 Kf4 or 39...Kg4, and 38...Be8 weren't clear to me. I'll show you my analysis of the second continuation.

In the case of 39.c5 bc+ 40.bc Ke6 it isn't clear how White can make progress. He should probably sacrifice a pawn: 39.Ne5!

With a pawn on c4 the cautious 39...Ke6 no longer promises him real chances of saving himself: 40.h4 Kd6 41.Ng4 Bd7 42.Ne3 and 43.Nd5. I placed my hopes in the variation 39...Kxg5 40.c5 bc+ 41.bc Kh4 (41...Kf5 42.c6 Ke6 43.c7 Bd7 44.Nc4! g5 45.Nb6+-) 42.c6 Bxc6 43.Nxc6 Kh3.



[FEN "8/6pp/p1N5/8/3K4/7k/P6P/8 w - - 0 44"]

This kind of position could have been drawn, but subsequent computer testing allowed me to find a path to White's goal anyway:

44.Nb8! a5 45.a4! (or 44.Nb4 a5 45.a4!!) 45...Kxh2 46.Nc6 g5 47.Nxa5 g4 48.Nc4 g3 49.Ne3 (the knight made it right on time) 49...h5 50.a5 h4 51.a6 h3 52.Nf1+! "Chess is a tragedy of a single tempo!"

We can draw the conclusion that White hasn't let go of the win, although he has complicated his task considerably.

**37.Nf3-e5+! Kd7-e6 38.Ne5-c4**

*Now it's clear that White will win. After 38...b5 39.Ne3 (threat Kd4) 39...Ke5 40.Nxf5 Kxf5 41.h4 Kg4 42.Kd4 Kxh4 43.c4 bc 44.a4 it's easy.*

It still isn't worth giving up a pawn. Since the pawn endgame after 39...Ke5 is lost, the bishop has to retreat: 39...Bg6 40.Kd4 Bh5 or 40...Kd6. Then again, his chances of survival are objectively low here too.

**38...Bf5-h3 39.Nc4xb6 Ke6-f5 40.Kc3-d4 Kf5xg5 41.a2-a4 Kg5-f5 42.Nb6-d5 g7-g5 43.c2-c4 h7-h5 44.a4-a5 Kf5-e6 45.b4-b5 Ke6-d7 46.Nd5-f6+**

*Here Gleizerov resigned. He did it in the most gracious possible way, complimenting me on an excellent game. I was overwhelmed, but also felt a bit conscience-stricken thinking of all the times I didn't resign in such exemplary manner.*

## Appendix One

### "Good" and "Bad" Bishops

One of the leitmotifs of Gleizerov's article "Opening Dialectics" happens to be the problem of the "bad" French bishop for Black. He writes:

*[Black doesn't rush, but brings his most important piece into play – his light-squared bishop. Yes, yes, I didn't misspeak! I'm deeply convinced that this bishop is the best, most important piece in the French Defense, exactly like the g7 bishop in the King's Indian. And don't be upset that it starts out behind a solid fence of its own pawns, as even behind it the "French" bishop is fulfilling some very important defensive functions. And when it breaks out to freedom...]*

I admit that as an active player I held to the opposite point of view and tried to exchange off my "bad" bishop at the first convenient opportunity. Thanks to that, for example, after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 I sometimes chose such dubious systems as 3...c5 4.c3 Qb6 5.Nf3 Bd7 with a subsequent 6...Bb5, or even 3...b6, intending 4...Ba6. I understood that pursuing a narrow strategic goal at the price of losing time and giving up space was objectively unfavorable to me and led to difficult positions, but I felt more confident in them than in "normal" ones, and I often outplayed my opponents.

When I became a coach I never suggested that my students should follow the same strategy. **There is nothing more harmful than – by exploiting your superior knowledge and rating – imposing your own mistakes on others,**



and not only your mistakes, but your general approach to the game, your tastes, your opening repertoire... Each of us has our own personality, our preferences, our set of strengths and weaknesses, and what is perfect for one player may be completely inappropriate for another.

Of course I understood that the presence of a "bad" bishop was just one of the factors influencing the evaluation of the position: other factors sometimes turn out to be far more significant. In my book *School of Future Champions 4: Secrets of Positional Play*, in the chapter "Whose Strategy will triumph?," I investigate the situation that arose in the game **Kimelfeld – Dvoretzky** (Moscow, 1972) after the following moves:

**1.e4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.d4 c5 6.dc Nc6 7.Bf4 Bxc5 8.Bd3 f6 9.ef Qxf6** (another reason to recall Gleizerov's article – there too in a well-known position, instead of the usual capture with the knight, Black took on f6 with his queen) **10.Bg3 0-0 11.0-0 Nd4 12.Nxd4 Bxd4 13.Qe2 Nc5 14.Rae1 Nxd3 15.cd Bd7 16.Be5 Bxe5 17.Qxe5 Qxe5 18.Rxe5**



[FEN "r4rk1/pp1b2pp/4p3/pR3/8/2NP4/PP3PPP/5RK1 b - - 0 18"]

I'll reproduce my own notes from my book.

At first glance White has succeeded by seizing the e5 square and being left with a knight against the "bad" French bishop. Indeed, imagine if he plays f2-f4 and transfers his knight to d4 – my position immediately becomes strategically hopeless. But my opponent had no time for that, and my bishop in fact isn't really as bad as it seems at the moment. Black has dynamic resources at his disposal, associated with the move d5-d4 and play on the open c-file. To be honest I don't even see a sure path to equality for White.

#### 18...Rac8 19.f4

The following variation is typical (although by no means forced): 19.d4 Rc4 (an immediate 19...b5! is more precise) 20.Rd1 b5 21.Rd2 b4 22.Ne2 Rfc8 23.Kf1 Rc2 24.Ke1 Kf7 (intending 25...Bb5) 25.Kd1? (25.Nf4 is better) 25...Ba4! 26.b3?! (26.Rxc2 Bxc2+ 27.Ke1 is necessary, although after 27...Bf5 the initiative is with Black) 26...Rxa2! There's the bad bishop for you!

Almost thirty years later the position in the diagram arose in a blitz game that I played against the Cuban grandmaster Becerra-Rivero (Miami, 2000). My opponent chose the cautious 19.Re2, but he couldn't extinguish Black's initiative either: 19...b5 20.Rfe1 b4 21.Nd1 Rc1 22.f3 (White is hoping to transfer his knight via f2 or e3 to g4 and then to e5) 22...Rfc8 23.Ne3?! Bb5 24.Ng4 Bxd3 25.Rxe6 Bf5 26.Re8+ Rxe8 27.Rxc1 Bxg4 28.fg Re2 29.Rc7 a5 30.Ra7 d4 31.h4 (31.Rxa5 Rxb2 32.Rd5 Rxa2 33.Rxd4 b3) 31...Rxb2 32.Rxa5 d3 33.Rd5 d2 34.Kf1 Rxa2 White resigned.

#### 19...d4! 20.Ne2 Rc2 21.f5?!

The simple 21.Nxd4 Rxb2 22.Nxe6 is preferable, and I have to switch to a sharp four-rook ending, as 22...Bc6 23.Rf2 or 22...Rc8 23.Nc5 with a subsequent Rf2 are useless.

#### 21...ef 22.Nxd4 Rxb2

If now 23.Re7, then 23...Rf7 24.Nxf5 Bxf5 (24...Kf8!? 25.Rxf7+ Kxf7 also deserves attention) 25.Re8+ Rf8 26.Rxf8+ Kxf8 27.Rxf5+ Ke7 with a better rook endgame for Black.

**23.Rc1 g6!**, and there's noticeable advantage on my side.

Subsequently (no longer restricting myself to the boundaries of the French Defense) I investigated situations with a violation of the general principle of "good" and "bad" bishops – cases when "against the rules" it makes sense to put pawns on squares the color of your own bishop or to exchange off your opponent's "bad" bishop. A long article on this subject was published on [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) in (it's easy to find my [July 2002](#) and [October 2002](#) columns in the archive).

In my files I've preserved an excellent article by Boris Gulko that, alas, is inaccessible to almost everyone, "The Mystery of Bad Bishops," which was published in 1993 in the second issue of the short-lived *American Chess Journal*. After examining a number of interesting games – in some of them the bishop really was "bad," and in others, on the contrary, it played an important role in attacking actions – the grandmaster came to an ironic conclusion:

*So what we can conclude from these games? There appears to be only one common thread: Perhaps the solution to the mystery of bad bishops is that bishops keep the qualities of their owners, so stronger players have better bishops than weaker players. But even this cannot always be true.*

*In 1989 I gave a lecture at the Harvard Chess Club, where I discussed the game I won against Bent Larsen at Hastings 1988-89 (see Informant 47, game 609). In that game my bad bishop played an important role in my attack. One listener told me afterwards, "Before your lecture I thought I understood one element of chess strategy – good and bad bishops. Now I realize that I don't understand anything." I was proud to have raised at least one player's understanding of chess strategy to a higher level.*

This would be exactly the right time to talk about the complete absence of any absolute rules in chess, the dialectic of rules and the exceptions to them (incidentally, you can find a deep discussion on this topic in Isaak Lipnitsky's wonderful book [Questions of Modern Chess Theory](#)). But my article can't stretch that far.

## Appendix Two

### Clearing the Playing Space

**Simplifying the position with the aim of invading the enemy camp with your rook is a standard method in a battle of rook against two pieces, and also in positions where you're the exchange up.**

So that these statements aren't just words, but turn into useful tools that a player can wield in tournament clashes, we have to track their effects in successfully-chosen practical examples. For many years a substantial part of my day-to-day work on refining chess problems and developing effective methods of decision-making has been the search for meaningful examples on the topics I'm studying.

In my book [School of Chess Excellence 4: Opening Developments](#), in the chapter "Advanced technique," the game **Bareev – Shirov** (Linares, 1994) is investigated in detail. In the diagram is the position that arose after Black's twenty-third move.





[FEN "5rk1/p4pp1/4p2p/3n3Q/1p6/3q4/PP3PPP/R4RK1 w - - 0 24"]

1.?

Grandmaster Evgeny Bareev gives these comments on the situation that was created:

*Nominally White's advantage amounts to only half a pawn, and one may gain the impression that Black's impregnable knight at d5 guarantees him a quiet life. But the centralisation of the queen at e5 (one of Capablanca's favourite techniques) shows that this is not altogether so. In the position there is an open file, and in view of the fact that an exchange of rooks is unfavourable for Black, White can develop his initiative.*

On the move played in the game, **24.Qe5!** (24.Qd1 Qc4! is less precise), Alexei Shirov reacted incoherently: **24...Rc8 25.Rfc1 Rd8**. If he was avoiding a battle for the c-file, then why put his rook on c8? But since he'd put it there it was worth studying 25...Rc4 and 25...Rc2. Specifically in connection with the mentioned thrusts we can try and understand why White went to c1 with his king's rook and not his queen's rook, and whether the choice he made was right. All these are rather deep and interesting questions – there's a reason why the chapter is called "Advanced technique"! Their discussion occupies a great deal of space, and so I won't reproduce my analysis here – look at the book if you want to see it. Instead I'll show you an exercise from the same chapter on the same topic.

**Ivkov – Korchnoi**  
Baden-Baden, 1981



[FEN "4r1k1/1pp2ppp/4b3/p1B5/5Pn1/P7/1P1K2PP/R3R3 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

In the game there followed 22.Kc3? g6 23.Bg1 Nf6 24.Rad1 Ra8! (Black correctly avoids exchanging) 25.Re5 c6 26.Rd4 Nd5+ 27.Kd2 a4, and a drawing outcome has become almost inevitable.

It made sense to prevent the knight's transfer to the central square d5 with 22. Bd4!? (the variations that arise are investigated in the book). But a more precise path to victory is Victor Korchnoi's suggested positional pawn sacrifice, forcing White's desired exchange of rooks.

**22.f5!! Rd8+ 23.Kc3 Bxf5 24.Rad1 Rc8 25.Be7!+-** with a subsequent 26.Rd8

+ Rxd8 27.Bxd8, and Black's queenside becomes defenseless.

I'll point out too **that going for simplifications also makes sense when the queen is fighting against pieces that aren't as strong as it. The logic is this: to expand the playing space for our chief fighting unit.**

**Liberzon – Murey**  
Beersheba, 1982



[FEN "3r1bk1/1p3p1p/p2r2p1/3b2Q1/8/  
P2B4/1PP3PP/1K1R4 w - - 0 26"]

1.?

At this point the queen is of little use – all the invasion squares are controlled by black pieces. Transferring his bishop to f3 allowed White to simplify the position and thus sharply increase the possibilities for his queen.

**26.Be2! Bg7 27.Bf3 Bf6 28.Qf4 Kg7 29.Bxd5 Rxd5 30.Rxd5 Rxd5 31.Qc7 Rd1+ 32.Ka2 Rd2 33.g4! Re2 34.Kb3 Re7 35.Qb6 h6 36.c3+/-, and White won.**

### Appendix Three

#### More on the Benefit of "Bad" Bishops

The article on this topic that I mentioned above starts by listing exceptions to the general rule, which in turn can also be considered rules, but more limited, specific ones.

**More often than not a "bad bishop" is a serious drawback for a position. But there are also exceptions:**

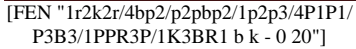
**Having the initiative often outweighs the presence of a bad bishop, and that bishop sometimes takes an active part in attacking actions.**

**In defense, as grandmaster Mihai Suba pointed out, sometimes "a bad bishop defends good pawns" (it would be more accurate to say "important" or "necessary") and so it is a valuable piece that the stronger side has to exchange off in order to penetrate the opponent's defense.**

Situations in which the player with the bad bishop has the initiative are examined in Appendix One and in Gleizerov's article. But in Wedberg's notes to Black's sixteenth move this happens to be the second case (he points out that an exchange of light-squared bishops weakens Black's central pawns).

Then again, this episode doesn't illustrate the topic all that convincingly: Black's position remains serious both with the exchange of bishops and if he turns it down, so it's difficult to decide which is the lesser evil. The following example is much more effective.

**Ivanchuk – Anand**  
Linares, 1992, first match game



[FEN "1r6/4b3/p4p2/1p1kp3/8/PP4Br/  
2P1R2P/1K3R2 w - - 0 30"]

Black has implemented his planned pawn exchanges. All that's left is to put his king on e6, and his position will be strategically winning.

Short notes to one fragment from a battle don't of course give you the full impression of this game, which was one of the Indian grandmaster's most vivid strategic masterpieces. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with it either through my old article or through Anand's book *My Best Games*.

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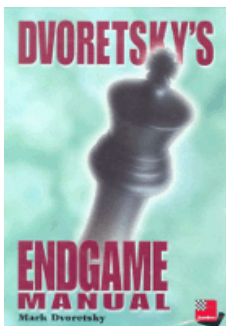
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## Traps Part One

A conscious attempt to help your opponent make a mistake is known as a trap. We tempt him to choose an alluring or at least natural continuation, having foreseen a non-obvious retort in advance.

The topic of playing for traps is poorly reflected in chess literature. It usually focuses on how not to fall into a trap, how not to make a move with a hidden refutation. In my view this is a slightly different problem – my [July 2010](#), [August 2010](#), and [September 2010](#) articles were devoted to it. The majority of examples that train you to pay attention to your opponent's resources also develop your ability to avoid the traps we've set.

Here, though, we'll look at the art of setting traps, which is much more difficult. We not only have to determine our opponent's possible train of thought, what he's planning to play, but also simultaneously identify the vulnerable spot in his idea, which, of course, doesn't throw itself at us (otherwise there would be no basis to bank on a mistake). Clearly this is only achievable by players with sharp combinational vision.

I'll start with an ancient episode when a top player fell into a trap set by an amateur (true, the former was only taking his first steps in the international arena at the time).

**Middleton – Rubinstein**  
Germany, 1905



[FEN "5r2/1p1r1k2/p2Pbpb1/2p1np2/4pN2/1P5P/P1PRBPP1/2K4R w - - 0 24"]

After Black's intended 24...Rfd8, the pawn must be defended by means of 25. Rhd1. So the move that was made in the game, **24.Re1!?**, looks strange, and it should have put the opponent on the alert. Rubinstein didn't sense the danger, though, and played according to his plan, which was what his resourceful partner was counting on.

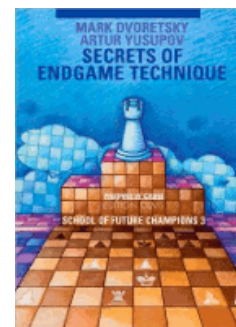
**24...Rfd8?**

24...b5! was necessary, and if 25.a4, then either 25...Rb8 with a subsequent Rb6, or 25...c4!?

**25.Nxe6 Kxe6 26.f4!**

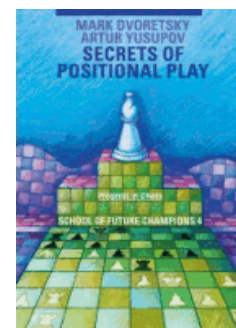
The idea behind the "mysterious" rook move becomes clear: 26...ef?? is impossible 27.Bc4# – the knight is pinned! After the forced **26...Rxd6 27. Rxd6+ Rxd6 28.fe Kxe5**, White is left a piece up (for two pawns). True,

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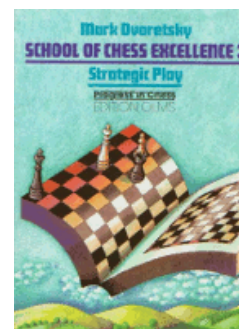
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making good on his advantage isn't that simple, and Akiva Rubinstein, whose technical skills were considerably superior to his partner's, managed to hold out.

Often to make your opponent blunder you need some "bait": an easy, and, at first glance, unpunished opportunity to obtain material or positional advantages.

The following game was played in school tournaments and the players' ratings weren't high.

### **Rubtsov – Dvoretzky**

Moscow, 1963



[FEN "3r2k1/p3bpp1/1p2pn1p/4q3/2P5/  
1P2BQN1/P4PPP/2R3K1 b - - 0 22"]

The black pieces are positioned more actively, but it isn't clear how to exploit this circumstance to achieve something substantial. Not much, for example, is promised by switching to an endgame after 22...Qb2!? 23.Qe2 Qxe2 24.Nxe2 Ng4 25.Bd4.

My attention was attracted by a trap idea: lure my opponent into winning the a7-pawn. The main variation quickly shot through my head, and I didn't try to resist the temptation.

**22...Rd3!? 23.Qa8+? (23.Rd1) 23...Kh7**

But not 23...Bf8, so as not to scare my partner. The bishop must stay under attack.

**24.Qxa7?**

The trap worked!

**24...Rxe3! 25.Qxe7 Re1+ 26.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 27.Nf1 Ne4 28.Qxf7 Nd2**

White loses a piece.

**29.h4 Nxf1 30.h5 Ne3+ 31.Kh2 Ng4+ 32.Kg3 Nf6**

The knight has succeeded in protecting the king from perpetual check. Black won easily.

A trap tactic isn't justified when it doesn't flow from the logic of the position and leads to a worsening of it if the idea is guessed by your opponent.

The following game was played in the early twentieth century. Both the opening setup and the players' subsequent actions were characteristic of the time.

### **Alekhine – Levitsky**

St. Petersburg, 1913, Second match game

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 ef 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Nge2 d5 6.ed f3 7.gf 0-0 8.d4**





[FEN "rnbq1rk1/ppp2ppp/5n2/3P4/1bBP4/2N2P2/PPP1N2P/R1BQK2R b KQ - 0 8"]

The simple 8...Nxd5!/+ gave Black excellent play. Instead of that Stepan Levitsky chose **8...Bh3?** Having prevented castling and threatened the move 9...Bg2, he expected the natural reply 9.Nf4, on which he had prepared an interesting retort.

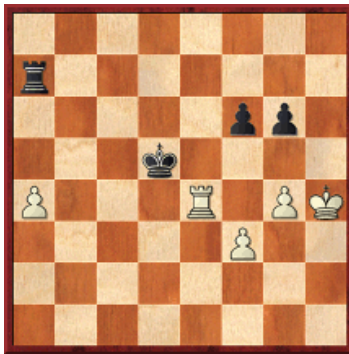
Alexander Alekhine didn't go along with his opponent's provocation, and after **9.Bg5!? Bg2 10.Rg1 Bxf3 11.Qd2** he seized the initiative. Black's subsequent blunders quickly led him to collapse: **11...Be7?** (11...Nbd7+/=) **12.0-0-0 Bh5?! 13.Rde1 Nbd7 14.Nf4 Bg6 15.h4**, and White won.

Incidentally, it made sense to fall into the trap! On 9.Nf4 Levitsky planned to reply 9...Re8+ 10.Kf2 Ng4+? (10...Bf5 unclear is better) 11.Kg3! (11.fg?? Qh4 +) 11...Nf2!? Alas, his idea has a serious flaw: by continuing 12.Qg1! Nxh1+ 13.Kxh3, White achieved a decisive advantage. I don't doubt that Mikhail Tal would have gone for this variation immediately (we'll acquaint ourselves later with a couple of examples where he deliberately fell into the trap his partner had prepared).

Although they say: "No one judges the victors!", I still think that playing for a trap by no means always deserves approval, even if it is crowned with success. I'll give a typical example which has already been investigated in my previous books.

#### Dvoretzky – Kupreichik

Soviet Championship, First League, Minsk, 1976



[FEN "8/r7/5pp1/3k4/P3R1PK/5P2/8/8 b - - 0 53"]

**1...?**

A few moves earlier the game was adjourned and both players examined this position in our home preparation.

I was counting only on a logical transfer of the rook to the rear of the passed pawn: 53...Rh7+! 54.Kg3 Rh1. True, after 55.Kf4 Ra1? 56.g5! fg+ 57.Kxg5 Ra3 58.Rf4 Black loses, but by playing 55...Rf1! he disrupts his opponent's plan and prepares g6-g5+ himself. The game would probably have concluded with a peaceful outcome.

Viktor Kupreichik was tempted a different move, strange at first glance, containing a clever trap.

### 53...Rb7?!

Now it's not his rook but mine that can go behind the pawn, and in two different ways: after 54.Re3 or 54.a5. The second path looks more attractive (in principle it's good to advance a pawn further). I did choose it, which was exactly what my opponent was counting on.

### 54.a5? Rb3! 55.Ra4 Rxf3 56.a6

It would seem that the pawn could only be stopped by means of 56...g5+ 57.Kh5 Rh3+ 58.Kg6 Rh8 59.a7 Ra8, which, of course, is completely hopeless.

### 56...Ke6!!

It becomes clear that after 57.a7? g5+ 58.Kh5 Kf7 the white king gets mated.

### 57.g5 fg+ 58.Kxg5 Rf8 Draw.

After the correct 54.Re3! Ra7 55.Ra3 Ra5! 56.Kg3, Black's position remained difficult, and very probably lost. So was it worth taking a risk if he had a more reliable path at his disposal?

But if you are trying to save a hopeless position or win a completely drawn one, here a trap tactic makes sense, and what's more: sometimes it's the only thing that promises us any hope. "Traps are the last chance" (as I call them), and even very naive ones are successful surprisingly often. Probably because the opponent, not doubting the favorable outcome of the battle for himself, relaxes and loses his vigilance.

### A. Petrosian – Hazai

Schilde, 1970



[FEN "2k5/q1p5/3p4/pPpPp1pp/  
N1P1Pp2/P4PbP/KQ4P1/8 b - - 0 1"]

Black's position is strategically hopeless. He tries a final trap, which unexpectedly brings success.

### 1...Qb6!? 2.Nxb6+??

Unjustified greed. By continuing 2.Qd2!, and then, for example, Kb3, Nb2, Ka4, Nd3-c1-b3, White won the a5-pawn, and with it also the game.

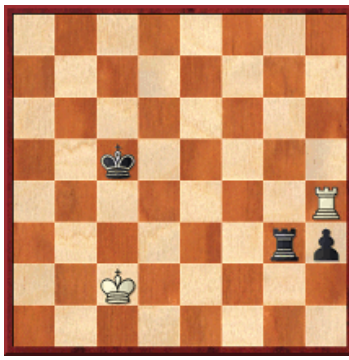
### 2...cb (Black wants to close up the game conclusively with the move 3...h4=) 3.h4 gh 4.Qd2 h3! 5.gh h4.

Draw. Neither the king nor the queen is capable of surmounting the barrier.

### Vyzhmanavin – Lerner

Soviet Championship, Lvov, 1984





[FEN "8/8/8/2k5/7R/6rp/2K5/8 b - - 0 74"]

In a drawn position Black tries his last chance.

**74...Ra3!? 75.Kd2??**

Correct, of course, is 75.Kb2! Rf3 76.Kc2 Kd5 77.Kd2=.

**75...h2! 76.Ke2 Ra1!** White resigned.

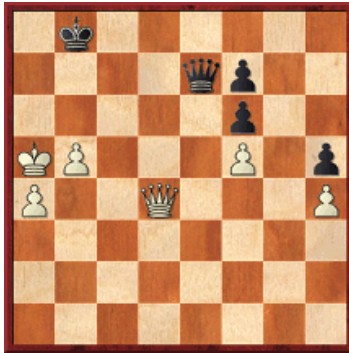
For the two fragments we've just looked at, as well as some of the examples from the exercise section, the words of Charles Dickens are completely appropriate: *Don't leave a stone unturned. It's always something, to know you've done the most you could.*

You'll find a few more endgame "last chance traps" in my book [Tragicomedy in the Endgame](#).

### Exercises

#### 1) Chigorin – Schlechter

Ostend, 1905



[FEN "1k6/4qp2/5p2/KP3P1p/P2Q3P/8/8/8 b - - 0 44"]

**1...?**

#### 2) Dvoretsky – Zlotnik

Blitz game, Moscow, 1989



[FEN "5r1k/pp5p/3q2b1/8/3N1ppR/8/"]

1.?

**3) Tukmakov – Karpov**

Interzonal tournament, Leningrad, 1973

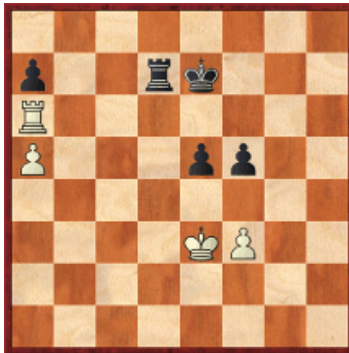


[FEN "1R6/4rppk/2p2q1p/4pP2/8/1B4QP/  
P3rPP1/6K1 w - - 0 33"]

1.?

**4) Pilskalniece – Berzins**

Riga, 1962

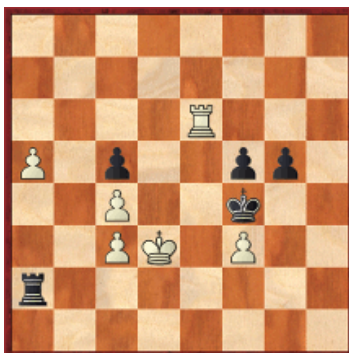


[FEN "8/p2rk3/R7/P3pp2/8/4KP2/8/8 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

**5) Jansa – Rublevsky**

Ostrava, 1992

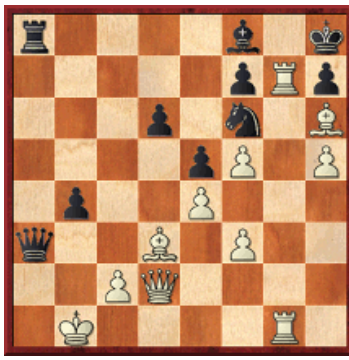


[FEN "8/8/4R3/P1p2pp1/2P2k2/  
2PK1P2/r7/8 w - - 0 50"]

1.?

**6) Lopez Martinez – Guseinov**

European Championship, Warsaw, 2005



[FEN "r4b1k/5pRp/3p1n1B/4pP1P/1p2P3/q2B1P2/2PQ4/1K4R1 w - - 0 28"]

1.?

### Solutions

#### 1) Chigorin – Schlechter

44...Qc7+!

The last trap in a completely hopeless position.

45.Qb6+??

After 45.b6 or 45.Kb4, there's nothing for Black but to resign.

45...Ka8!

Draw. If the queen is captured, it's stalemate, and if 46.Ka6, then 46...Qc8+ 47.Ka5 Qc7!=.

#### 2) Dvoretsky – Zlotnik

The pin on the d-file should decide the outcome of the battle in Black's favor. I tried my only chance.

1.h3!

1.g3? is considerably weaker, on which there are various good replies; for example, 1...Qf6!? And in the variation 1...Rd8 2.Qxg4 Qxd4 3.Qxg6 Black also wins: 3...Qd1+ 4.Kg2 f3+ 5.Kh3 Qf1+ 6.Kg4 Qc4+ 7.Kxf3 Qxh4.



[FEN "5r1k/pp5p/3q2b1/8/3N1ppR/7P/PP3PP1/3Q2K1 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

1...Rd8?

My opponent has fallen into the trap! In the case of 1...g3?! 2.fg fg the rook defends the knight and I can play 3.Qc1 unclear. I managed to win with one of two not completely obvious (especially in a blitz game) methods, united by a general idea: provoking a capture with the rook on g4.

1...Be4! 2.Rxg4 Rd8 3.Qc1 Qxd4 4.Qxf4 Re8-/+ (then again, even after calculating this variation at the board, a player would be right to doubt the evaluation of its consequences because of the exposed position of the black king and the pin on the fourth rank);

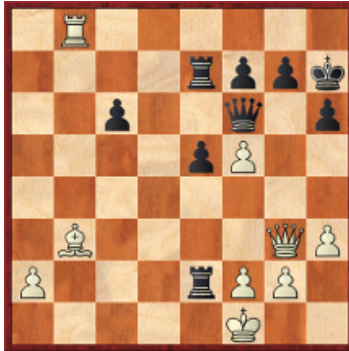
1...Rg8! 2.Rxg4 Rd8 3.Qf3 Qxd4 4.Qxb7 Re8-+.

## 2.Qxg4!+-

On 2...Qxd4, there follows 3.Qxg6. White won.

### 3) Tukmakov – Karpov

White has no compensation for the his insufficient material. Vladimir Tukmakov tried his last chance: **33.Kf1!**



[FEN "1R6/4rppk/2p2q1p/4pP2/8/1B4QP/P3rPP1/5K2 b - - 0 33"]

## 1...?

And after **33...Rd2!** – he resigned.

Against someone else White's trap would have had chances of success, but Anatoly Karpov is always attentive towards his opponent's resources. He made the only move with which Black's tactic doesn't work.

On 33...Rb2? there would have followed 34.Qg6+!! fg (34...Qxg6 35.fg+ Kxg6 36.Bxf7+ and 37.Rxb2=) 35.Bg8+ Kh8 36.Bb3+ with perpetual check. The same combination also worked with 33...Re4? – 34.Qg6+!! Qxg6 (34...fg 35.Bg8+) 35.fg+ Kxg6 36.Bc2=.

The move 33...Rd7? (counting on 34.Kxe2? Qd6-+) is refuted by 34.Bxf7! Rxf2+ (the best) 35.Qxf2=+. And 33...Qd6?? even lost because of 34.f6!

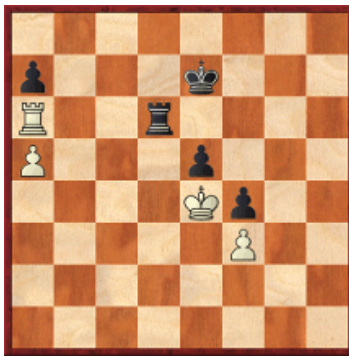
### 4) Pilskalniece – Berzins

The position is drawn, the extra pawn has no significance because of the activeness of the white rook.

## 1...f4+!? 2.Ke4??

Black's simple trap worked. Equality was preserved with 2.Ke2!

## 2...Rd6!



[FEN "8/p3k3/R2r4/P3p3/4Kp2/5P2/8/8 w - - 0 3"]

White resigned. In the case of 3.Rxa7+ Ke6 only a rook sacrifice saves him from the mate 4...Rd4#. A pawn endgame is also hopeless: 3.Rxd6 Kxd6 4.a6 Ke6 5.Kd3 Kd5 (*zugzwang*) 6.Kc3 (6.Ke2 Kc4) 6...e4.

#### 5) Jansa – Rublevsky

White's position is hopeless: both 50...Kxf3 and 50...Rxa5 are threatened.

#### 50.Re2! Rxa5?

The simplest way to win is 50...Ra4!? 51.Rg2 (51.Rf2 Kg3) 51...Ra1! with a decisive *zugzwang*.

#### 51.Ra2! Draw.

#### 6) Lopez Martinez – Guseinov

Before ending the battle with perpetual check (28.Rg8+ Nxg8 29.Rxg8+ Kxg8 30.Qg5+ Kh8 31.Qf6+), it makes sense to set a trap for the opponent.

#### 28.Ba6!



[FEN "r4b1k/5pRp/B2p1n1B/4pP1P/1p2P3/q4P2/2PQ4/1K4R1 b - - 0 28"]

#### 1...?

In the case of 28...Rxa6? the affair finished with mate: 29.Rg8+! Nxg8 30.Rxg8+ Kxg8 31.Qg5+ Kh8 32.Bg7+! Bxg7 33.Qd8+ Bf8 34.Qxf8#. The move 28...b3? also loses because of 29.Qg2! Qa2+ 30.Kc1.

#### 28...Qxa6!

The only correct response, forcing White to accept a peaceful outcome.

#### 29.Rg8+! Nxg8 30.Rxg8+ Kxg8 31.Qg5+ Draw.



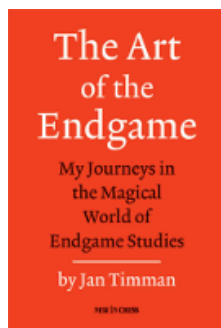
COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Traps Part Two

Now let's discuss an example of a successful trap in a duel between two top grandmasters.

**Bronstein – Korchnoi**

Moscow – Leningrad match, 1962



[FEN "7k/5qp1/1Q5p/8/6P1/1p3P2/1P1r2PK/4R3 w - - 0 36"]

1.?

White has a significant advantage, which is based not so much on his extra pawn as it is on the vulnerable position of the enemy king. True, two pawns (b2 and f3) are under attack, but if he plays, for example, 36.Qa5, they will be untouchable: on 36...Rxb2?, there follows 37.Qa8+ Kh7 38.Re8 with a decisive attack.

An attack on the back rank can also be launched immediately, but then the f3-pawn remains under attack. That circumstance doesn't rattle David Bronstein.

**36.Qb8+! Kh7 37.Re8! Qxf3?!**

Viktor Korchnoi doesn't guess his opponent's clever idea and falls into the net he has set. Capturing the other pawn also lost: 37...Rxb2 38.Rh8+ Kg6 39.Qe5 Rc2 40.Qh5+ Kf6 41.Qf5+ Ke7 42.Qe5+, and White's attack is unstoppable. 37...Kg6!+/- gave comparatively better chances of a successful defense.

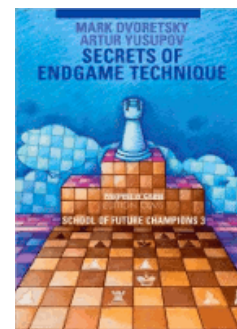
**38.Rh8+ Kg6**



[FEN "1Q5R/6p1/6kp/8/6P1/1p3q2/1P1r2PK/8 w - - 0 39"]

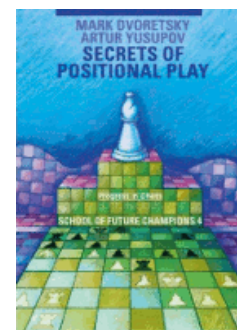
1.?

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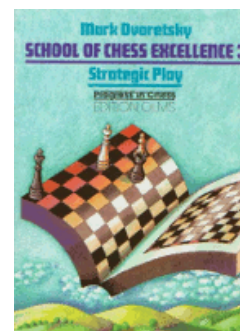
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In deciding to take the f3-pawn, Korchnoi was undoubtedly convinced that his opponent had no simple paths to his goal. For example, 39.Qe8+? Qf7! 40.Qe4 + Kg5 41.Qe5+ (41.Qe3+? Qf4+) 41...Kxg4, and White has to be satisfied with perpetual check.

### 39.Rxh6+!!

Black resigned because of the variation 39...Kxh6 (39...gh 40.Qg8+ Kf6 41.Qf8+) 40.Qh8+ Kg6 41.Qh5+ Kf6 42.g5+ and 43.Qxf3.

What can we say about the trap that we have just looked at? Well, firstly, it is sufficiently well-hidden (Korchnoi didn't fall into it for no reason – he himself is a superb tactician), and that means it had good chances of success.

Secondly, playing for a trap in this case wasn't associated with the risk of worsening White's position: as the continuation he chose was the strongest or one of the strongest. The tactical blow that Bronstein prepared served in essence as the tactical basis of the path he intended to take. These kinds of "incidental" traps are a powerful weapon, and they are not even associated with any particular risk. Because if our opponent guesses our idea we don't lose very much: the evaluation of the position doesn't change substantially and the battle will continue.

In calculating the variations we check the correctness of the move that we intend to make. And we don't usually consider its tactical basis to be a trap, except in those rather rare cases when our idea is non-obvious and we are justified in hoping that our opponent won't guess it.

I will elaborate on the thoughts I've expressed with the following example.

### Grachev – Inarkiev

Moscow, 2011



[FEN "6k1/pp3pp1/3rnp1/2q5/2P5/1P3N1P/P1Q2PP1/3R2K1 w - - 0 24"]

### 1.?

On the board there is a quiet and almost equal position that is just a little more pleasant for White. To fight for a win, on the one hand you have to accumulate tiny advantages, hoping that with inaccurate play by your opponent they'll gradually transform into noticeable superiority; and on the other you have to prepare tricks for your opponent, to provoke him into inaccuracies and mistakes.

The mentioned requirements are fully satisfied by the move that Boris Grachev made, **24.Rd3!** He wants to seize the d-file with his queen, playing Qd1 or Qd2 at the appropriate moment (by the way, this isn't threatened for now because of the reply Ne4). And at the same time he sets a little trap, which his opponent falls into.

**24...Qf5?? 25.Rxd6! Qxc2 26.Rd8+ Kh7 27.Ng5+** Black resigned because of unavoidable mate.

Grachev probably didn't see the move he'd made as a trap: he hardly expected

that his sophisticated partner would make such a crude blunder. For White the variation that occurred in the game served only as the tactical basis for his intended move. But, as we can see, even such apparently simple traps have practical chances of success. As a very large number of players are inclined to concentrate only on their own ideas and are insufficiently attentive to their opponents' resources.

In choosing one path or another in a game, with all things equal it makes sense to give preference to a continuation in which the likelihood of your opponent making a mistake increases. Even if we can only talk about a trap in these cases with a considerable share of reservations, still, in essence this is the same "trap" approach.

Let's take a look at a theoretical endgame position that arose in analysis of the famous ending **Capablanca – Janowsky**, New York, 1916.



[FEN "8/2B5/2K5/1P6/8/3kb3/8/8 w - - 0 89"]

**1.?**

White is in no condition to get a win: with accurate defense all his efforts are parried. The question is how to cause the most problems for his opponent.

89.Bd6 Kc4= is harmless. Having positioned itself in the rear of its counterpart, the black king prevents a cover on c5 and guarantees an easy draw.

89.Bb6 Bg5 90.Bf2 Bd8 91.Bg3 Kc4= gives nothing – again White was too late for the cover 92.Bc7.

The move 89.Kb7 causes a problem for Black, but we can come back to that later.

**89.Kd5!**

Counting on his opponent sticking to a waiting tactic, by choosing, for example, 89...Kc3? then White wins by means of 90.Bd6 Bb6 (90...Kb3 91.Bc5 Ka4 92.Kc6+-) 91.Kc6 – depending on the bishop retreat the white bishop goes to c5 or c7.

**89...Bd2!!**

The only non-obvious defense. On 90.b6, there follows 90...Ba5=.

**90.Bd8** (90.Bd6 Ba5=) **90...Be3!** (91.b6 Ba5 92.b7 was threatened) **91.Be7** (91.Be7 Bb6 92.Bd6 Ba5 isn't dangerous) **91...Bd2! 92.Kc6**

After our opponent has found the defense associated with the move Bd2! we should go back to the initial position and try a plan with a transfer of the king to a6.

**92...Be3 93.Kb7! Kc4 94.Ka6 Kb3!!**

Only this! Both 94...Bd4? 95.Bb6 Bf6 96.Bf2 Bd8 97.Be1 with a subsequent 98.Ba5 and 94...Kb4? 95.Bb6 Bg5 96.Ba5+ lose.



**95.Bb6 Bg5 96.Bf2 Bd8 97.Be1 Ka4=**

Black still managed to implement the main defensive idea in these kinds of positions: he positioned his king behind its counterpart.

After playing the moves made by White in the main variation you'd be right in saying to yourself, "I did everything I could!" In actual fact, as my practice using this ending in coaching lessons showed, the likelihood of a mistake by Black here is rather high even for grandmaster-level players.

### **Aronian – Jakovenko**

Olympiad, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2010



[FEN "8/3nbpk1/4p1pp/r1p5/1p1P1P2/3NPBP1/1P2K2P/2R5 w - - 0 36"]

**1.?**

Black's pieces are tied down to the defense of the c5-pawn, and taking on d4 is bad because of the reply Rc7. But it isn't easy for White to increase the pressure, as in the case of 36.Bc6 the knight retreats with a tempo: 36...Nb8.

The last move was 35...Kf8-g7. Levon Aronian rationally assumed that his opponent planned to go 36...Bf8, to prepare 37...cd. Having spotted a flaw in Dmitry Jakovenko's idea, Aronian decided to provoke him into blundering and made a harmless waiting move.

### **36.Rc2! Bf8?**

Black should have waited too: 36...h5 (or 36...Kf8). After the likely 37.e4 Bf8 38.Ke3 cd+ 39.Kxd4, with a subsequent 40.e5, Black's position remained worse, but was completely defensible.

### **37.Bc6 Nb8 (37...b3 38.Rc3 is useless) 38.Be8!**

Here is why: 38...cd 39.Rc7 is bad.

### **38...Na6 39.Ne5 cd**

Black inevitably loses a pawn, and now he has to decide which way to give it up. I would probably have preferred 39...f6!? 40.Nxg6 Bd6 – as here the white pieces temporarily find themselves in not very convenient positions.

### **40.ed**



[FEN "4Bb2/5pk1/n3p1pp/r3N3/1p1P1P2/6P1/1PR1K2P/8 b - - 0 40"]

After the exchange of pawns indicated above the opportunity 40...f6!? 41. Nxc6 Bd6 loses some of its force, as the c-file has opened up for the white rook. Then again, it deserved attention here too, for example, 42.Rc6 (42. Nh4!? Nc7+/-) 42...Nc7 43.Rxd6 Nxe8 44.Rxe6 Kxc6 45.Rxe8 Ra2, and the outcome of the battle in a rook endgame isn't completely obvious yet.

Another try, 40...Be7, is justified with 41.Nxf7? b3! 42.Rc3 Ra2 43.Rxb3 Kf8 unclear or 41.Bxf7?! Rxe5+ 42.fe Kxf7 43.Rc8 (43.b3 Bd8) 43...b3!+/. But after 41.Rc8! Black's position becomes hopeless: one more threat has been added to all the others, 42.Ra8.

The path chosen by Jakovenko didn't leave him any chances of saving himself.

#### 40...g5?! 41.Bxf7!

Aronian correctly notices that he can give up two minor pieces for a rook and pawn, as the black knight remains out of play and will soon be lost. Then again, 41.Rc6!? was also very strong.

#### 41...Rxe5+ 42.fe Kxf7 43.Rc6 Nb8 44.Rc7+ Be7

On 44...Kg8, he intended 45.b3, putting his opponent in a *zugzwang* position. An analogous *zugzwang* also came about in the game.

**45.b3 Na6 46.Rb7.** Black resigned because of 46...Ke8 (preparing 47...Bd8 and 48...Nc7) 47.Ra7 Nb8 48.Ra8.

The words of La Rochefoucauld could serve as an epigraph for the next two examples: "By pretending that we have fallen into a trap that has been set we demonstrate truly sophisticated cunning, because deceiving a person is easiest of all when he wants to deceive us."

In one of the books of Mikhail Tal's collected games there is a section called "Falling into a Trap." The grandmaster describes how he tries *to find a carefully-hidden net so as to later find a move (it may be a zwischenzug) or an unexpected solution that turns everything upside down (or downside up – I don't know). It's like with wrestlers – one of them falls on the mat so that later, after extricating himself, he'll be in a more favorable position.*

I will introduce you to two episodes of creativity by Tal on the mentioned topic, using his notes.

#### Bannik – Tal

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1957



[FEN "1r1r2k1/1p2qp2/p1p2bp1/7p/2Pnp2P/2B3P1/PP1RPPB1/2R1Q1K1 b - - 0 25"]

**1...?**

*White's last move, 25.Rd1-d2, forced me to be on my guard. Why did Bannik provoke Black into the favorable advance for him e4-e3? As after the forced 25...e3! 26.fe Qxe3+ White apparently can't continue 27.Qf2 because of 27...Nxe2+!, winning the exchange. Did my experienced opponent, by the way also an excellent tactician, really not notice this obvious blow?*

*By doubting White's "naivete", Black easily guessed the trap that had been set for him. And then found a zwischenzug in it and happily stuck his head in the trap.*

From myself I'll point out that after 27.Kh2=/+ White's position remained playable. But thanks to that there was no point in provoking e4-e3 – there were more reliable paths.

**28.Rxe2 Qxc1+ 29.Re1**



[FEN "1r1r2k1/1p3p2/p1p2bp1/7p/2P4P/2B3P1/PP3QB1/2q1R1K1 b - - 0 29"]

**1...?**

Anatoly Bannik was obviously counting on achieving a significant advantage in the variation 29...Rd1? 30.Qxf6! Rxe1+ 31.Kh2 Qh6 32.Bxe1. But an extremely unpleasant surprise was lying in wait for him.

**29...Bxc3! 30.Rxc1 Bd4++**

The exchange and a pawn up, Black won easily, of course.

**Hübner – Tal**

Interzonal tournament, Biel, 1976



[FEN "1r3rk1/p4pp1/q3p2p/2p1P1n1/  
1bPn3N/2N1R1PP/PP4Q1/2B2RK1 w - - 0 23"]

*It's obvious that White's position is worse. In his search for a defense Robert Hubner prepared a trap for me.*

### 23.b3 Nxb3+!

*Once again Black happily goes "to meet his death", as he'd discovered an interim counterblow in reserve. A few of the next moves were made virtually instantaneously.*

It is worth noting that the transposition of moves 23...Bxc3?! 24.Rxc3 Nxb3+ would have allowed White to get a playable position, by playing 25.Kh2! Ng5 26.Bxg5 hg 27.Nf3=+/. In the game, though, declining to capture the knight, 24.Kh2 Ng5-/+ , doesn't alleviate his position, as his own rook is preventing the bishop from taking on g5.

### 24.Qxh3 Bxc3 25.Qg4

*The lesser evil for White was the simple 25.Rf2, leaving him a pawn down after 25...Ba5. But the essence of the trap was specifically in the move 25.Qg4.*

I'll clarify that in the variation 25.Rf2 Ba5?! 26.Qg4 (with a subsequent 27.Rd3) it isn't all that simple – as the white pieces are hanging threateningly over the kingside. 25...Qa5!-/+ is stronger, and if 26.Qg4, then either 26...Nc6 (attacking the e5-pawn and preparing Bd4), or 26...Be1 27.Rh2 f5.

### 25...Qxa2! (25...Ba5? 26.Re4 with an advantage for White) 26.Rxc3



[FEN "1r3rk1/p4pp1/4p2p/2p1P3/2Pn2QN/  
1PR3P1/q7/2B2RK1 b - - 0 26"]

### 1...?

*Now on 26...Ne2+ 27.Kh1 Nxc3 White has 28.Bxh6 with a winning attack. But at this point the saying "he that mischief hatches, mischief catches" has never been more appropriate.*

### 26...h5!!

*In this paradoxical way Black destroys the harmony of the white pieces and after obtaining a material advantage easily makes the best of it.*

By the way, after 26...Ne2+ 27.Kh1 the same move 27...h5! is very strong (instead of the losing 27...Nxc3??). The move 28.Qxh5 leads to what happened in the game, and if 28.Qf3, then 28...Nxc3 29.Qxc3 Rxb3-+.

**27.Qxh5 Ne2+ 28.Kh1 Nxc3 29.Bh6 Qe2! 30.Qg5 Qe4+ 31.Rf3 Qh7**, and Black won.

## Exercises

### 1) Blackburne – Nimzowitsch

St. Petersburg, 1914



[FEN "4rb1k/3q2pp/2n1bp2/2p1pN2/1pP1P1P1/3PBQ2/rP1R1N1P/5RK1 w - - 0 25"]

1.?

### 2) J. Polgar – Antunes

Olympiad, Yerevan, 1996



[FEN "r1r3k1/1p2ppbp/3p2p1/p1nP4/4P3/1P2BP2/P2KB1PP/2R4R b - - 0 19"]

1...?

### 3) Taimanov – Averbakh

Leningrad, 1947



[FEN "5nk1/R5p1/p3p2p/2B1P2P/rp3P2/6K1/6P1/8 b - - 0 44"]

1...?

#### 4) Honfi – Lengyel

Hungarian Championship, Budapest, 1963



[FEN "8/1b6/p2k2P1/2Rp1B2/PKp5/2P5/6r1/8 w - - 0 47"]

1.?

#### 5) Boleslavsky – Bondarevsky

Moscow, 1941



[FEN "2r1k2r/3bppb1/p7/1p1N3p/3NP3/1P2QPq1/PP1R4/1K5R b k - 0 25"]

1...?

#### 6) Fuchs – Bronstein

Berlin, 1968



[FEN "3r1rk1/3qppb1/1p3npp/1N6/Pn1P1N2/5QP1/1P2RPKP/R1B5 b - - 0 21"]

1...?

### Solutions

#### 1) Blackburne – Nimzowitsch

25.g5!

Joseph Blackburne opens lines on the kingside in the hope of creating an attack. At the same time he provokes the following reply from his opponent, foreseeing its tactical refutation.



### 25...g6?!

He should have played 25...fg! Attacking the knight, Aron Nimzowitsch was obviously counting on 26.Ng3? f5-/+ (or 26...fg-/+).

### 26.Ng4!

White seizes the initiative, which his opponent doesn't manage to extinguish.

### 26...gf?!

26...fg!/? 27.Nf6 Qf7 28.Nxe8 Qxe8, is preferable, but then again after 29. Bxg5 gf 30.ef Bf7 31.Bf6+ Bg7 32.Bxg7+ Kxg7 Black's position remains dire. And if we do go into the position that occurred in the game, then it is more precise to get it by transposing moves: 26...Nd4 27.Qf2 gf, as taking the knight immediately offers White an additional not unfavorable opportunity.

### 27.Nxf6 Nd4



[FEN "4rb1k/3q3p/4bN2/2p1ppP1/1pPnP3/3PBQ2/rP1R3P/5RK1 w - - 0 28"]

### 28.Qf2

The continuation 28.Qh5! Qf7 29.g6! Qxg6+ 30.Qxg6 hg 31.Nxe8 deserved serious attention. In the variation 31...Nb3 32.Rg2 f4 33.Rxg6! Bf7 White preserves a significant advantage in two ways: 34.Rg5 Bxe8 35.Rxe5 and 34. Rf6 Kg8 35.Bxf4! Bxe8 36.Bxe5 Bg7 37.Re6 Bf7 38.Re7 Bxe5 39.Rxe5.

28...Qc6 29.Nxe8 Qxe8 30.Bxd4 ed 31.ef Bd7 32.Re1 Qf7?! (32...Qh5 is better) 33.Qh4 Ra8 34.Rf2 Bc6? (34...h6!?) 35.Qg4?! (35.g6! Qg7 36.Rfe2+-) 35...Re8? 36.Rxe8 Qxe8 37.Re2 Qd7 38.Re6 Ba8 39.g6+- hg 40.Rxg6 Qh7 41.Qg3 Qh5 42.Rg4. Black resigned.

### 2) J. Polgar – Antunes

### 19...a4!!

In making his move, Antonio Antunes prepared a beautiful counter to his opponent's natural reply.

**20.b4?! (20.Bxc5 dc=+) 20...Nb3+! 21.ab Rxc1 22.Rxc1 a3**



[FEN "r5k1/1p2ppbp/3p2p1/3P4/1P2P3/  
p2BP2/3KB1PP/2R5 w - - 0 23"]

Black gets a material advantage, as the rook has to be given up for the "a" pawn. Then again, the battle isn't over yet.

### 23.Bb5!

23.Bg5 Kf8 24.Rc7 a2! 25.Bxe7+ Kg8 26.Rc1 Bh6+ is useless. But it made sense to advance the pawn to b6: 23.b5!? a2 24.b6 Bb2!? 25.Rd1 a1Q 26.Rxa1 Rxa1 (threatening 27...Bc1+) 27.Kc2. Antunes suggests 27...Ba3 and cuts the variation short, considering Black's position won. In actual fact, after 28.Bb5! Bc5 29.Bxc5 dc 30.Kd3 Kf8 31.Kc4 Rc1+ 32.Kd3 White has sufficient counterplay in connection with the threat 33.Bc6. Instead of 27...Ba3?! stronger is 27...Bg7 28.Bb5 Ra2+ 29.Kd3 Rb2 30.Ba4 Kf8-/+.

### 23...a2 24.Kd3

An immediate 24.Bc6!? deserved attention, for example, 24...a1Q (the bishop is untouchable) 25.Rxa1 Rxa1 26.Bxb7 Rb1 27.Bc6 Rb2+ 28.Kc1 Rxb3 29.Bd2 Bd4-/+.

24...a1Q 25.Rxa1 Rxa1 26.Bc6 Rb1 27.Kc4 Rb2! 28.Bxb7 Rc2+ 29.Kd3 (29.Kb5 Rxc2) 29...Rc3+ 30.Ke2 Rxb3 31.Bd2 Bc3! 32.Bxc3 Rxc3 33.b5 e5!, and Black won.

### 3) Taimanov – Averbakh

The threat of 45.Ra8 can be parried with 44...Nh7. Black chooses a cleverer path that contains a trap.

### 44...b3! 45.Ra8?

45.Rb7 Ra5! 46.Bxf8 is better (47...Rb5 was threatened) 46...Kxf8 47.Rxb3 Rb5 with a drawn rook ending.

### 45...Rb4!! 46.Rxf8+ Kh7



[FEN "5R2/6pk/p3p2p/2B1P2P/1r3P2/  
1p4K1/6P1/8 w - - 0 47"]

The rook is untouchable: 47.Bxb4? b2-+. Black wins the piece back and gets a rook endgame with a solid advantage.

47.Bd4 Rxd4 48.Rb8 Rd3+ 49.Kf2 a5 50.f5! Rd5! 51.fe Rxe5 52.Rxb3 Rxe6-+

### 4) Honfi – Lengyel

White's position is lost because of the extremely unfortunate position of his rook. There is an obvious threat: 47...Rb2+, for example, 47.Ra5 Rb2+ 48.Ka3 Rb3+ 49.Ka2 Rxc3-+ (50.g7 Rg3 is useless). On 47.a5, it is possible to react in exactly the same way, but 47...Bc6 is also strong, intending 48...Rb2+ 49.Ka3 Rb3+ 50.Ka2 Kxc5 51.g7 Rb8. If 47.Bh3, then simply 47...Rxc6-+.

The best practical chance is a stalemate trap, which was crowned with

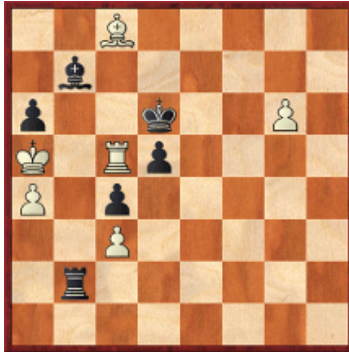


complete success in the game.

#### 47.Bc8! Rb2+?

Winning was 47...a5+! 48.Kb5 (48.Kxa5 Kxc5; 48.Rxa5 Bxc8) 48...Rb2+ 49.Kxa5 Kxc5 50.g7 Rb6 (here is where the absence of black pawn on a6 makes itself felt: 51...Ra6# is threatened) 51.Bxb7 Rxb7 (again mate is threatened; then again, 51...Rg6 is also sufficient).

**48.Ka5!** (but not, of course, 48.Ka3? Kxc5 49.Kxb2 Bxc8 50.g7 Be6-+)



[FEN "2B5/1b6/p2k2P1/K1Rp4/P1p5/2P5/1r6/8 b - - 0 48"]

#### 48...Kxc5

On 48...Rg2, there follows 49.Kb6!? (or 49.Rxc4!?). The move 48...Rc2!? set more complex tasks for White, and if 49.Kb4, then 49...Rc1! with zugzwang. It seems that you have to play 49.Rxc4! dc 50.Bxb7 Rxc3 51.g7! (but not 51.Kb4?? Rb3+ and not 51.Bxa6? Kc5-+) 51...Rg3 52.Kb4 c3 53.Kb3 Kc5 54.Bxa6 Kd4 55.g8Q Rxc8 56.Bxa6 with a drawn endgame.

**49.g7 Rg2 50.Bg4! Rxc4 51.g8Q Rxc8** – stalemate.

#### 5) Boleslavsky – Bondarevsky

##### 25...Bh6!

The strongest move and simultaneously a trap.

##### 26.Rxh5?

26.Qf2 was necessary; then again, after the approximate 26...Qxf2 27.Rxf2 e6 28.Nf6+ Ke7 29.Nxd7 Be3 30.Nf5+ ef 31.Re2 f4 32.Ne5 Black's position is better.

##### 26...Rg8!

The deadly threat of 27...Qg1+ decides the outcome of the battle.

**27.Qd3 Qg1+**. White resigned because of 28.Rd1 Rc1+.

#### 6) Fuchs – Bronstein

It is highly likely that White wants to complete his development by bringing his bishop out. Since on Bd2 there is the reply Nc2, we can expect the move Be3. Bearing this in mind, Black prepared a clever trap.

**21...Rfe8! 22.Be3? g5!**



[FEN "3rr1k1/3qppb1/1p3n1p/1N4p1/Pn1P1N2/4BQP1/1P2RKP/R7 w - - 0 23"]

1.?

23.Nh5?

It is better to give up the pawn, 23.Bd2.

23...g4 24.Nxf6+ ef! 25.Qf4 Nd5

Now it is clear why the move 21...Rfe8! was necessary – the queen is trapped. White resigned.

Next month, we will conclude this series of articles.

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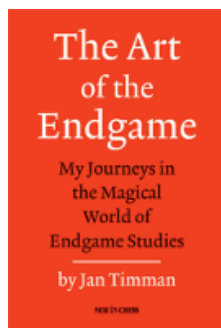
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Traps

### Part Three, Exercises I

This month, I offer you the first part of a series of exercises to solve on your own. These are more difficult than the ones in the two previous articles. You will practice the art of setting traps for your opponents, and then, I hope, you will be able to do this in your own games.

**1 Jimenez – Keene**  
Camaguey, 1974



[FEN "2r5/1r2ppkp/3p2p1/3Pn3/RP1R2P1/7P/3QB1PK/2q5 b - - 0 31"]

1...?

**2 Ganchev – Pipkov**  
Albena, 1966

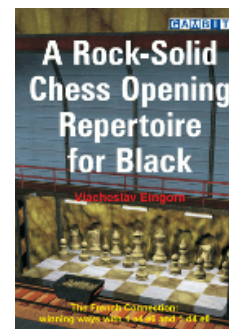


[FEN "6k1/2q2ppp/r1p1b3/1r2p3/N1p1P3/R1R4P/1P1Q1PP1/6K1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**3 Karpov – M. Gurevich**  
Reggio Emilia, 1991

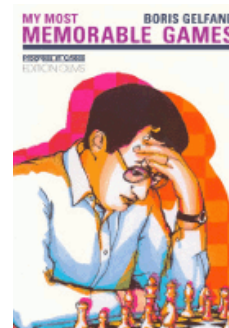
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[FEN "8/1q4k1/6p1/2p1p3/p2nP2P/3B2PK/P2b1B2/5Q2 w - - 0 73"]

1.?

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#### 4 Vladimirov – Sorokin

Hyderabad, 2000



[FEN "4R3/5ppk/7p/p2b4/1p1N4/PPr2P2/3K2PP/8 w - - 0 38"]

1.?

---

#### 5 Korchnoi – Lputian

Sarajevo, 1998



[FEN "5b2/5p1p/4p1k1/6p1/R2P2P1/4P2P/1rr2PK1/R3B3 w - - 0 36"]

1.?

---

#### 6 Klinova – Volokitin

Saint Vincent, 2002



[FEN "r2r2k1/6p1/p5bp/4q3/2Ppp3/  
P4B1P/3R1PP1/3QR1K1 b - - 0 24"]

1...?

**7 Ulibin – Cramling**  
Stockholm, 2005



[FEN "r3k2r/1bq1bpp1/p3p3/7p/Pp1Q1P2/  
1P1BB3/1P4PP/R4R1K b kq - 0 19"]

1...?

**8 Sznepik – Lechtynsky**  
Decin, 1979



[FEN "r3r1k1/1p3ppp/1B1b1p2/p2P1q2/  
1n6/1P3N2/1P1Q1PPP/R2R2K1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

**9 Seirawan – Shirov**  
Buenos Aires, 1993



[FEN "5Nk1/1b3ppp/p2bp3/1p3q2/3Pp3/4B1P1/PP5P/R1Q3K1 b - - 0 23"]

**1...? What to take with on f8?**

## Solutions

### 1 Jimenez – Keene

In the endgame that arises after 31...Qxd2 or 31...Rc2 Black retains better chances. But a stronger and more dangerous continuation for his opponent than the one he chose in the game is associated with a clever trap.

### 31...Qb1!

Threatening an invasion on the open line: 32...Rc1 or 31...Rc2.

### 32.Ba6?

An attempt to get two rooks for the queen – a natural but incorrect reaction. 32.Qa2=/+ was necessary.

### 32...Rc2 33.Bxb7



[FEN "8/1B2ppkp/3p2p1/3Pn3/RP1R2P1/7P/2rQ2PK/1q6 b - - 0 33"]

**1...?**

### 33...Qb2!!

This is the essence of Black's idea. In the case of 33...Rxd2? 34.Rxd2 White's position remained defensible. Then again, 33...Nf3+! 34.gf Qb2! also won.

### 34.Qxc2

34.Qf4 Rxc2+ 35.Kh1 Rf2 (or 35...Re2 36.Rd1 Qb3) is completely hopeless.

**34...Qxc2** (threatening both 35...Qxa4 and 35...Nf3+) **35.Ra3 Qb2**. White resigned in connection with his excessive material deficit after 36.Rdd3 Nxd3 37.Rxd3 Qxb4.

## 2 Ganchev – Pipkov

### 1.Nc5!

With a tempo White activates a piece that was standing on the edge of the board and simultaneously lures his opponent into an opportunity to win a piece.

**1...Rxa3 2.Rxa3** (2.Nxe6?? Ra1+)



[FEN "6k1/2q2ppp/2p1b3/1rN1p3/2p1P3/R6P/1P1Q1PP1/6K1 b - - 0 2"]

1...?

2...Rxc5?

He should have refused the "gift", accepting a slightly worse position after 2...h6 3.Nxe6 fe 4.Ra4.

**3.Ra8+! Bc8 4.Ra7! Qb6**

Obviously Black expected that the game would end with a repetition of moves: 5.Ra8 Qc7 6.Ra7. But an extremely unpleasant surprise was lying in wait for him.

**5.Qd7!!** Black resigned.

---

## 3 Karpov – M. Gurevich

White is better, but not by much: his "advantage of the bishop-pair" is compensated for to a significant extent by the active position of the enemy pieces.

**73.Bc4!**

Anatoly Karpov brings his bishop out to an active position, leaving his central pawn defenseless, although it turns out to be poisoned.

**73...Qxe4?** (73...Qd7+) **74.Bxd4** ed **75.Qf7+ Kh6 76.Qf8+ Kh5** (76...Kh7 77.Qg8+ Kh6 78.Qh8#) **77.Qh8+ Bh6**





[FEN "7Q/8/6pb/2p4k/p1Bpq2P/6PK/P7/8 w - - 0 78"]

1.?

78.Qe5+!! Black resigned.

#### 4 Vladimirov – Sorokin

The b3-pawn is under attack. Calculating the direct variation 38.ab ab 39.Rb8 Bxb3 40.Rxb4 (two black pieces are under attack), we prove that our opponent preserves equality with the move 40...Rc4! And then we start studying another try.

38.Re5!



[FEN "8/5ppk/7p/p2bR3/1p1N4/PPr2P2/3K2PP/8 b - - 0 38"]

1...?

It might seem that it does not work because of **38...Bxb3?** (as will become clear from the following, he should not have taken the pawn) **39.Rxa5 Bc4**. In actual fact, after **40.ab! Rd3+ 41.Kc2 Rxd4 42.Kc3**, White wins the piece back and gets a decisive advantage thanks to his strong passed "b"-pawn.

42...Rf4 (or 42...Rh4 43.g3 Rxb2 44.Kxc4+-) 43.g3 Rxf3+ 44.Kxc4 Rf2 45.b5 Rxb2 46.b6 Black resigned.

Certainly, Black was not obliged to lose quite so quickly and humiliatingly, but that is irrelevant: it is clear that after getting caught in the trap he came up against very serious problems. If he'd guessed his opponent's idea in time, he would have found the best defense: 38...Rc5! 39.ab ab 40.Nc2 f6 41.Rf5 g6! (41...Rb5? 42.Ne3 Bc6 43.Rxb5 Bxb5 44.Nd5+/- is worse) 42.Rxf6 Bxb3 43.Nxb4 Kg7+/- – White most likely would not have been able to do anything with this kind of extra pawn.

#### 5 Korchnoi – Lputian

It is not easy for White to make the best of his extra pawn, so he sets a trap, the success of which made the process of exploiting his advantage



considerably easier.

### 36.Ra8! Bb4?

36...Kg7! was necessary. Then White would return with his rook, 37.R8a4 (37.Kf3?! Bb4! 38.Rb8 Bxe1 39.Rxb2 Rxb2 40.Rxe1 h5 is weaker), and after 37...Kg6 would gradually improve his position, starting with 38.Kf3 h5 39.Ke4+/-.

### 37.Rg8+!

37.Bxb4? Rxf2+ 38.Kg3 Rg2+ 39.Kf3 Rgf2+ 40.Ke4 Rxb4 or 38.Kg1 Rg2+ 39.Kf1 Rgf2+ (39...Rh2) led to a draw, and 40.Ke1? Rh2 is bad. An interim check with the rook changes the situation considerably: in the case of 37...Kh6 38.Bxb4 Rxf2+ (38...Rxb4 39.h4+-) both 39.Kg3 Rg2+ 40.Kf3 Rgf2+ 41.Ke4 Rxb4 42.h4 and 39.Kg1 Rg2+ 40.Kf1 win – Black has no time for a quiet rook move because of the threat of Bf8#.

### 37...Kf6 38.e4!+-



[FEN "6R1/5p1p/4pk2/6p1/1b1PP1P1/7P/1rr2PK1/R3B3 b - - 0 38"]

The black king is in a mating net: there is no 38...Bxe1 39.e5+ Ke7 40.Ra7+. Also joyless is 38...e5 39.Ra6+ Ke7 40.Bxb4+ Rxb4, and now either 41.de Rxe4 42.Ra7+ Ke6 43.Re8+ Kd5 44.Rxf7 (44.Rd7+ Kc6 45.Rxf7), or 41.Ra7+ Kd6 (41...Kf6 42.Rf8) 42.Rd8+.

### 38...Rc7 39.e5+ Ke7

If now 40.Rxg5?!, then 40...Bxe1 41.Rxe1 Rcc2 42.Rf1 Kf8, and White experiences technical difficulties associated with the blocked position of his rook on g5. In my view the most convincing solution was 40.Bxb4+ Rxb4 41.Raa8! (41.Rxg5 Rxd4+- is weaker) 41...Kd7 (42.Rad8! was threatened) 42.Rad8+ Kc6 43.Rd6+ Kb5(b7) 44.Rxg5 with a completely winning position. Then again, the continuation chosen by Viktor Korchnoi, 40.Rh8!? Bxe1 41.Rxe1 Rcc2 42.Rf1 Rd2 43.Rxh7 Rxd4 44.Rg7 Re4 45.Rxg5, also allowed him gradually obtain victory.

---

## 6 Klinova – Volokitin

In the variation 24...Rac8 25.Bxe4! Bxe4 26.Rde2 White virtually equalizes the game. Andrei Volokitin found a way to parry his opponent's threat, simultaneously setting a clever trap for her.

### 24...d3! 25.Rxd3?!

It would seem that this way White avoids any danger, but that is just an illusion. She should accept the difficult position that arises after 25.Bg4!? h5 26.Qa1! Qd6 27.Bd1 Rab8-/+.

### 25...Rxd3 26.Qxd3



[FEN "r5k1/6p1/p5bp/4q3/2P1p3/P2Q1B1P/5PP1/4R1K1 b - - 0 26"]

1...?

With 26...ed 27.Rxe5 White is a pawn up, and in the case of 26...Qa5 27.Rxe4! – two pawns for the exchange. But an extremely unpleasant surprise lay in store for her.

26...ef!! White is left a piece down, so she had to give up the fight immediately.

## 7 Ulibin – Cramling

An approximately equal ending arose in the case of 19...Qd8 20.Rad1 Qxd4 21.Bxd4 Rd8.

19...Rd8!!

The move in the game secures Black a slightly better version of that endgame after 20.Qc4 Qxc4 21.Bxc4 h4 22.h3 (22.Kg1!? h3 23.g3 Bf6=/+).



[FEN "3rk2r/1b2bpp1/p3p3/8/PpB2P1p/1P2B2P/1P4P1/R4R1K b k - 0 22"]

She can choose between 22...Bf6 23.f5!, 22...Rh5!? 23.Rac1 Rf5=/+ and 22...g5!? 23.f5 (23.fg Rg8=+) 23...g4! 24.fe gh 25.ef+ Kf8=+.

At the same time Pia Cramling lures her opponent into capturing the g7-pawn, and Mikhail Ulybin did not resist the temptation.

20.Qxg7? Bf6! 21.Qxf6 Rg8



[FEN "3rk1r1/1bq2p2/p3pQ2/7p/Pp3P2/1P1BB3/1P4PP/R4R1K w - - 0 22"]

On 22.Rfc1, there follows 22...Bxg2+ 23.Kg1 Qb7! 24.Rc5 (the only move) 24...Rxd3 25.Rg5 Rxc3 26.Qxg5 Rxe3 27.Qg8+ Ke7 28.Qg5+ Kd7, and it is necessary to take on g2, switching to a completely hopeless rook endgame.

In the game White defended the g2-square, allowing his opponent to win a piece back and obtain an overwhelming advantage.

22.Rg1 Rxd3 23.Bf2 Rd2 24.Bg3 Bd5! (intending 25...Qb7) 25.Qh4 Qb7 26.h3 (26.Qh3 h4!) 26...Bxg2+ 27.Kh2 Bf1+ White resigned.

## 8 Szapnik – Lechtynsky

It is possible to play 18...Rac8 in the hope of 19.Bxa5? Rc2 20.Re1! (20.Qd4 Bc5) 20...Rec8-/+ . But this kind of "trap" is too transparent. Your opponent will most likely see through it and choose 19.Nd4 Qh5 (19...Qxd5 20.Rxa5 Qe4=) 20.h3 with approximate equality: the a5-pawn still remains under attack.

Another try: 18...Bf4!? 19.Be3 Bxe3 20.fe. Here 20...Nc2?! is useless because of 21.Nd4! Nxd4 22.Qxd4=. A better response is 20...Red8 21.d6 Qe6=/+.

The continuation that was chosen by Black seems to me to be stronger and more dangerous for his partner.

## 18...Ra6!



[FEN "4r1k1/1p3ppp/rB1b1p2/p2P1q2/1n6/1P3N2/1P1Q1PPP/R2R2K1 w - - 0 19"]

If 19.Be3, then 19...Rd8-/+ (the d5-pawn is very weak, while the a5-pawn is solidly defended). So White decided to take on a5, not noticing that the last impressive move in the game led to a forced variation.

## 19.Bxa5? Rea8 20.Bxb4

In the case of 20.Re1 Black plays, of course, not 20...Rxa5?? 21.Rxa5 Rxa5 22.Re8+ Bf8 23.Rxf8+! Kxf8 24.Qxb4+, but 20...Qd7!-+ or 20...Qxd5!-+.

20...Rxa1 21.Bxd6 Rxd1+ 22.Qxd1 Qxd5! White resigned.

---

## 9 Seirawan – Shirov

With any capture Black's position is preferable, but his advantage is not very big, and with accurate defending White successfully holds on.

The game continued like this: 23...Bxf8 24.Qc7 Qf3 25.Qf4 Qe2 26.Qf2 (26. Rf1!?) 26...Qd3 (26...Qc4? 27.Rc1! Qxa2? 28.Rc7) 27.Qd2 (27.Rc1 Bd5 28. Qd2 f6! =/+ ) 27...Qc4 28.b3 Qd5 29.Rc1 Bd6 30.Qa5 h6 31.Qd8+ Kh7



[FEN "3Q4/1b3ppk/p2bp2p/1p1q4/3Pp3/1P2B1P1/P6P/2R3K1 w - - 0 32"]

Instead of the accurate 32.Kg2=/+ Yasser Seirawan carelessly played 32. Qd7?? in severe time trouble, and after 32...Bf4! was forced to lay down his arms.

Let's go back to the initial position of the exercise. Alexei Shirov rejected 23... Kxf8! because of the reply 24.Bf4.



[FEN "5k2/1b3ppp/p2bp3/1p3q2/3PpB2/6P1/PP5P/R1Q3K1 b - - 0 24"]

1...?

And it is a shame: a clever trap would have worked here, associated with Black's last move. As Vadim Zvjaginsev showed, 24...e3!! 25.Bxd6+ Kg8 26. Qxe3 Qd5 27.Kf2 Qg2+ 28.Ke1 Qh1+ and 29...Qxa1+- wins. The inclusion of the moves 24.a4 b4 (25.Bf4? e3!!, and so on) does not change much.

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## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Traps Part Four, Exercises II

This is the second part of a series of exercises to solve on your own. These are more difficult than the ones in the previous articles. You will practice the art of setting traps for your opponents, and then, I hope, you will be able to do this in your own games.

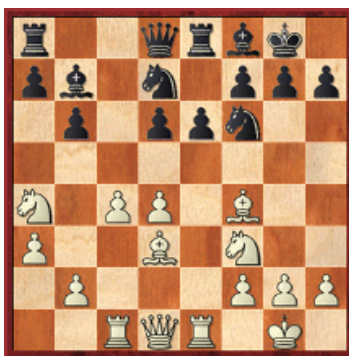
**10 Gipslis – Dvoretsky**  
Semifinal of the Soviet Championship, Odessa, 1972



[FEN "3r4/p2qbp2/1k2p1p1/pP1pP2r/3P1P2/P4NK1/7P/R3Q2R w - - 0 22"]

1.?

**11 Potkin – Bologan**  
Olginka, 2011

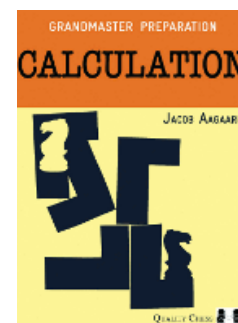


[FEN "r2qrbk1/pb1n1ppp/1p1ppn2/8/N1PP1B2/P2B1N2/1P3PPP/2RQR1K1 b - - 0 13"]

1...?

**12 Kosikov – Kogan**  
Lvov, 1974

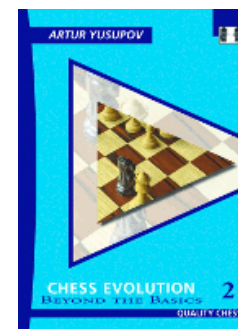
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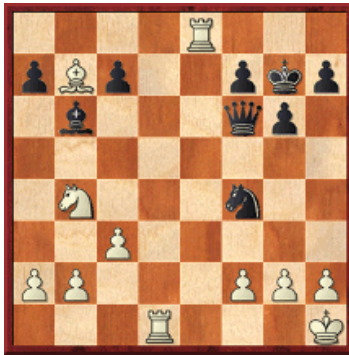
[FEN "r4rk1/1bqn1ppp/pp2pn2/8/1bPN4/  
1P1B1N2/PB2QPPP/R2R2K1 w - - 0 16"]

1.?

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### 13 Ortega – Fuchs

Berlin, 1968



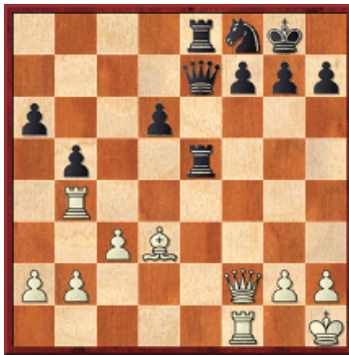
[FEN "4R3/pBp2pkp/1b3qp1/8/1N3n2/  
2P5/PP3PPP/3R3K b - - 0 25"]

1...?

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### 14 Khasin – Tal

Soviet Championship, Leningrad, 1956



[FEN "4rnk1/4qppp/p2p4/1p2r3/1R6/  
2PB4/PP3QPP/5R1K b - - 0 29"]

1...?

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### 15 Gulko – Vasiukov

Moscow Championship, 1983





[FEN "r1b1r1k1/pp3ppp/n1p2nq1/8/4P3/1NPQ2PP/P4PB1/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 15"]

1.?

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### 16 Dolmatov – Mamedyarov

Moscow, 2002



[FEN "r2qk2r/ppp1bppp/4b3/3pP2Q/8/2PB4/P1P2PPP/R1B1K2R w KQkq - 0 10"]

1.?

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### 17 Mochalov – Yuferov

Semifinal of the Soviet Championship, Minsk, 1972



[FEN "2r3k1/pp1q1p1p/2nbp1p1/8/3P4/4PNP1/PQ3PBP/2R3K1 w - - 0 20"]

1.? Evaluate 20.Ng5

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### 18 Cooper – Petrosian

Olympiad, Buenos Aires, 1978



[FEN "r1b1k1r1/pp3p2/1n1p1n2/2pP2p1/q1P1p3/2P1P1B1/P2QBNPP/R3K2R w KQq - 0 17"]

1.?

## Solutions

### 10 Gipslis – Dvoretzky

The position of both kings is cause for some concern: White has to deal with the undermining move g6-g5; Black with the maneuver Rc1-c6+ (on a retreat to b7 the a5-pawn is lost).

White's best practical chance is to play for a trap.

### 22.Rc1!



[FEN "3r4/p2qbp2/1k2p1p1/pP1pP2r/3P1P2/P4NK1/7P/2R1Q2R b - - 0 22"]

1...?

### 22...Bxa3?

It was precisely because of the capture of the pawn that Aivars Gipslis rejected 22.Rc1, and in vain!

22...g5? 23.Rc6+ Kb7 (23...Kxb5 24.Qb1+ 24.Qxa5 gf+ 25.Kf2+- with a subsequent 26.Rhc1 is also a mistake.

22...Rc8! is necessary, not fearing 23.Rc6+?! Rxc6 24.bc Qxc6 25.Qb1+ Qb5 26.Qa2 (26.Qc2 Bxa3) 26...Qd3! with the very unpleasant threat of 27...Rh3+! White continues either 23.Rxc8 Qxc8 24.Qe3 and 25.Rc1, or 23.Qe3 Rxc1 24.Rxc1, retaining slightly better chances, but no more – when necessary Black reinforces his queenside by means of Bd8.

### 23.Rc6+ Kxb5 (23...Kb7 24.Qxa5+-) 24.Qe2+!

Gipslis did not notice the rook sacrifice; I might not have noticed it either if my opponent had gone into that variation.

24...Kxc6 25.Qa6+ Kc7 26.Qxa7+! (26.Rb1 Bb4 27.Qxa7+ Kc6! 28.Qa6+



Kc7 29.Rc1+ Kb8 30.Qb6+ Ka8 31.Rc7 Qxc7 32.Qxc7 Rf8+/- is significantly weaker) **26...Kc8 27.Qa6+ Kc7 28.Qxa5+ Kc8 29.Qa8+ Kc7 30.Qxa3+-**, and White's attack is decisive.

All the other continuations pose far fewer problems for Black.

The prophylactic 22.h4?! Rc8= is inaccurate.

The move 22.Qe3!? (preventing g6-g5 and threatening 23.Rhc1) is objectively OK. After 22...Rc8 23.Rhc1 Rxc1 24.Rxc1 Rh8 the same position arose as with 22.Rc1! Rc8!, but here there was nowhere for me to blunder along the way.

Now let's take a look at what happened in the game.

22.a4?! g5!? (to maintain equality 22...Rc8 is enough, but I was already thinking of more) 23.Rc1 (in the case of 23.fg Bxg5 the over-optimistic 24.Kg4? is easily refuted by 24...f5+! or 24...Rg8! 25.Kxh5 f5 with unavoidable mate) 23...gf+ 24.Kxf4 (24.Kf2!?) 24...f6 25.Rc6+ Kb7



[FEN "3r4/pk1qb3/2R1pp2/pP1pP2r/P2P1K2/5N2/7P/4Q2R w - - 0 26"]

## 1.?

It is not easy to hit upon 26.Qxa5! fe+ 27.Ke3! (27.Nxe5? Rf8+ 28.Ke3 Bg5+ 29.Ke2 Qh7 or 27.de? Rf5+ 28.Ke3 d4+ lose) 27...ed+ 28.Ke2, but this is precisely the way the battle should be continued.

26.ef? Rf8 27.Ke3, and now the simple 27...Bxf6 secured me a decisive advantage.

## 11 Potkin – Bologan

The game has hardly got out of the opening yet, and there is a position on the board that is typical of one of the variations of the Nimzo-Indian Defense. It seems to me that Black could have got good play now by sacrificing a pawn: 13...e5!? 14.de de 15.Nxe5 Qc7 16.Nxd7 Qxf4 17.Nxf6+ (17.Nxf8?? Ng4+) 17...Qxf6 with sufficient compensation thanks to his two strong bishops.

Viorel Bologan made a more cunning and ambitious decision.

## 13...g6!?



[FEN "r2qrbk1/pb1n1p1p/1p1ppnp1/8/N1PP1B2/P2B1N2/1P3PPP/2RQR1K1 w - - 0 14"]

It appears that Black wants to drive the bishop off the h2-b8 diagonal with 14...Nh5, and then play 15...Bg7. That is probably what Vladimir Potkin also thought – he made the natural move **14.h3?** (instead of the correct 14.Nc3+/-), on which his inventive opponent had prepared a tactical refutation.

**14...e5! 15.de de 16.Nxe5** (the fork 16...e4 was threatened) **16...Nh5**

A bishop retreat loses by force: 17.Bh2? Nxe5 18.Bxe5 Qg5 19.Bg3 Nxc3 20.fg Qxc3, and so on. White finds the best defense, but it does not rid him of serious difficulties either.

**17.Bf1! Nxf4 18.Qxd7 Qxd7 19.Nxd7 Rxe1 20.Rxe1 Bc6 21.Nxf8 Bxa4**



[FEN "r4Nk1/p4p1p/1p4p1/8/b1P2n2/P6P/1P3PP1/4RBK1 w - - 0 22"]

Black is left a piece up. And although his opponent gets three pawns in return, he is facing a rather unpleasant battle for a draw.

22.g3 Nh5 23.Nxh7! Kxh7 24.Re7 Be8!? (so that the a7-pawn is taken without a tempo) 25.Bg2 Rd8 (25...Rc8!?) 26.Bd5

In my view 26.Rxa7 immediately would be more stubborn, to prevent the knight from returning to f6 with a tempo, attacking the bishop. Then again, after 26...Rd1+ 27.Kh2 Rd2 28.Re7!? Ng7 (28...Nf6 29.Bc6! is weaker) 29.b4 Rxf2 you would not envy White's position here either.

26...Kg7 27.Rxa7 Nf6 28.Ra8 Rd6-+ 29.Bf3 Rd3 30.Kg2 Rxf3 31.Rxe8 Rb3 32.Re2 Nd7 33.a4 Nc5 34.a5 ba 35.Re5 Nd3 36.Rxa5 Rxb2 37.Kf3 Nxf2 38.h4 f5 39.h5 Ng4 40.Kf4 Kh6. White resigned.

## 12 Kosikov – Kogan

Black has prepared e6-e5-e4. By defending against the threat, White loses time and allows his opponent to consolidate his position. For example, 16.Nc2?! Bd6 unclear or 16.Bc2?! Rfe8 17.Rac1 Rad8 18.Bb1 Bf8 19.Qc2 g6=.

**16.Rac1!**

Alexei Kosikov completes his development, prepares 17.Bb1, and simultaneously sets a crafty trap. He said this about his decision:

*Apparently a very simple move, included in White's plan. I did not think about it for long – about seven minutes. But my opponent considered his reply for about 20 minutes. He was trying to figure out if this was a blunder or a sacrifice.*

**16...e5?!**

16...Rfe8 is more solid with a subsequent 17...Bf8, or 16...Bd6!?

**17.Nf5 e4 18.Qe3!**

Here is what White was counting on: the threat of 19.Qg5 is exceptionally unpleasant.



[FEN "r4rk1/1bqn1ppp/pp3n2/5N2/1bP1p3/1P1BQN2/PB3PPP/2RR2K1 b - - 0 18"]

**1...?**

His opponent chose his response by the process of elimination. After 18...ed? decisive is 19.Qg5 g6 20.Nh6+ Kg7 21.Rxd3 with the deadly threat of 22.Rxd7. No better is 18...ef? 19.Qg5 g6 20.Nh6+ Kg7 21.Bc2, and again there is no defense against 22.Rxd7. Finally, as Alexander Baburin pointed out, in the case of 18...h6? the knight sacrifice 19.Nxh6+! gh 20.Qxh6 Rfe8 21.Bxe4! Bxe4 22.Rxd7!+- is very strong.

**18...Rfe8!**

The only move! Black hopes to return his bishop to f8 to defend the g7-square. For example, in the variation 19.Qg5 Bf8 20.Nh6+ (Black's task is more difficult with 20.Bf1!? or 20.Bc2!?, but even here he retains decent chances of holding the position) 20...Kh8 21.Nxf7+ Kg8 the battle ends with perpetual check.

In the case of 19.Bb1 ef 20.Qg5 Black is not obliged to go into the worse endgame that arises after 20...Bf8 21.Rxd7! Qxd7 22.Nxg7! Qg4! 23.Nxe8+! Qxg5 24.Nxf6+ Qxf6 25.Bxf6 – the response 20...g6!? is more promising.

**19.c5!!**

An ingenious blow! Cutting the bishop off from the f8-square, White significantly increases the threat of Qg5.

**19...ef!**

19...h6? 20.Nxh6+ gh 21.Qxh6 ed 22.Rxd3+- or 19...ed?! 20.Qg5 g6 21.Rxd3 +/- are worse (Baburin).

20.Qg5 g6 21.Qh6!? (21.Bxf6 Nxf6 22.Qxf6 gf 23.Qg5+ Kh8 does not promise White an advantage) 21...gf (21...Nh5? 22.g4 Qf4 23.gh Qxh6 24.Nxh6+ Kf8 25.c6 loses) 22.Bxf5



[FEN "r3r1k1/lbqn1p1p/pp3n1Q/2P2B2/lb6/1P3p2/PB3PPP/2RR2K1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

White has a multitude of threats: 23.Rxd7; 23.Bxd7; 23.Bxh7+. But still, as Baburin demonstrated, the outcome of the battle remained unclear if Black had found the beautiful defense 22...Re5!! 23.Rxd7 Rae8! After 24.gf there is no point in him going into the very sharp variation 24...Re1+?! 25.Rxe1 Rxe1 + 26.Kg2 Bxf3+! 27.Kxf3 (27.Kh3 Qxh2+! 28.Kxh2 Rh1+ 29.Kg3 Rxh6 unclear) 27...Qc6+ 28.Kg3 Ne4+ 29.Bxe4 Qxh6 30.Rd8+ Qf8 31.Bxh7+! Kxh7 32.Rxf8, which leads to a difficult ending for him. Stronger is 24...Bxf3 25.Rf1 Qxd7 26.Qg5+ (26.Bxd7 Nxd7 27.Qf4 Bc6 unclear) 26...Kf8 27.Bxe5 Rxe5 28.Qh6+ Ke8 29.Bxd7+ Nxd7 30.Qf4 Bc6 31.cb Re6 unclear.

But in the game there followed 22...Ne5? 23.Qxf6 Bxc5 24.Rd7 Qxd7 (24...Qc6 25.Bxh7+! Kxh7 26.Rxf7+) 25.Bxd7, and Black soon resigned.

### 13 Ortega – Fuchs

25...c6!!

An extremely strong move that secures Black a big advantage. Before playing it, of course, he had to prove to himself that any pawn capture was refuted by force.

26.Bxc6?!

On 26.Nxc6? there follows not 26...Nxg2? 27.Ne7! Nf4 (otherwise 28.Bxg2) 28.Rg8+ Kh6 29.Rxg6+! hg 30.Ng8+, and White wins (Yusupov), but 26...Nh3! 27.g3 Qf3+ with the opposite result.

In reply to 26.f3 (counting on 26...Nh3? 27.Nd3!) very strong are both 26...Qg5 27.g3 Ne6! 28.Bxc6 Qe3, and 26...Qh4 (intending 27...Qf2) 27.Re4 (the only move) 27...Qg5 28.g3 (28.Rxf4 Qxf4 29.Bxc6 Bc7 30.g3 Qc4+) 28...Nh3 29.Nd3 (29.Re2 a5!) 29...Qf5 30.Rf1 Ng5! 31.Bxc6 Nxe4 32.Bxe4 Qb5! with a decisive advantage.

So what is left for White? In the case of 26.Rf1!? Qd6!-/+ it is difficult for him to battle the threats of 27...Qd2 and 27...a5. If 26.Nd3!?, then Black has a pleasant choice between 26...Nxd3 27.Rxd3 Qxf2 28.Rd1 Qxb2 29.Bxc6 Qxa2-/+ and the more sophisticated 26...Qd6!? 27.Ba6 Bc7! 28.Kg1 (White's actions are strictly forced) 28...c5!? 29.Bc4 Nxg2!-/+.

Since the refutation of the move in the game is far from obvious, it is possible (with a generous share of reservations) to claim that Black has set a trap. Although it is more correct here to talk about a tactical basis for the "c"-pawn sacrifice.

26...a5 27.Nd5! Qxc6 28.Rg8+! Kh6! (28...Kxg8?? 29.Ne7+) 29.Nxf4



[FEN "6R1/5p1p/1bq3pk/p7/5N2/2P5/PP3PPP/3R3K b - 0 29"]

1...?

And here it became clear that Reinhart Fuchs in fact had not set a trap, but had simply not thought enough about the superb 25th move that he made, obviously not noticing the tactical retort from his partner's side. The primitive 29...Bxf2? 30.Nh3 Bc5?! (30...Bb6) 31.Rgd8 Qe6 32.R8d5 allowed the latter to seize the initiative and ultimately even obtain victory.

And here is how Black's brilliant tactical operation should have ended.

**29...Qa4!** (a double attack on the knight and the rook) **30.Rd3!** (now 30...Qxf4? only leads to a draw: 31.Rh3+ Kg5 32.Rg3+) **29...Qc2!-+**

It is impossible to fend off the two threats at the same time: mate on the first rank and 29...Qxf2. Then again, 29...Qxa2! is no less strong.

#### 14 Khasin – Tal

We looked at a couple of similar examples of the work of Mikhail Tal at the beginning of this topic. The grandmaster deliberately allowed his opponent to carry out a combination, having foreseen a hidden refutation of his idea ahead of time.

To be honest, this fragment does not completely achieve the quality of an exercise. As the play in it is not forced, both partners had an almost equal choice, so it is hard to assess where Black's practical chances are better. But I think it will be interesting and rather useful for you to compare your approach with the actions of a top player.

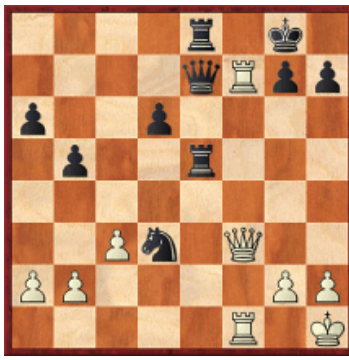
What can we say about the position that has been created? The advantage is indisputably with Black, who is a pawn up and controls the central e-file. Now it makes sense for him to activate his knight, transferring it, let's say, to c5. The move 29...Ne6 is not bad, on which his opponent would most likely reply 30.Qc2 g6 31.a4.

But could not he play 29...Nd7 with the same goal, not blocking the e-file and preserving the additional possibility of Nf6 (let's say, on 30.Qc2)? The drawback of the move is that it allows 30.Rf4. It would be nice to continue 30...Nc5, but then we have to deal with an attack on f7. Let's test it...

**29...Nd7!? 30.Rf4 Nc5! 31.Rxf7**

Realizing that with 31.Bb1 Re1 (or 31...Re2 32.Qf3 Re1) his position was joyless, master Khasin gladly exploits a chance to solve his problem in a tactical way.

**31...Nxd3 32.Qf3**



[FEN "4r1k1/4qRpp/p2p4/1p2r3/8/  
2Pn1Q2/PP4PP/5R1K b - - 0 32"]

### 1...?

In the case of 32...Qd8? 33.Qxd3 White seizes back the initiative, and after 32...Ne1 33.Rxe7 Nxf3 34.Rxe8+ Rxe8 35.gf he preserves decent drawing chances in a rook ending. But here comes an unforeseen surprise.

### 32...Re1!!

In the variation 33.Rxe7 Rxf1+ 34.Qxf1 Rxe7 with a subsequent 35...Re1 Black is left a piece up, and with 33.Qxd3 Qxf7 even a rook up.

33.Qd5 Qxf7!? (33...Qe6-+) 34.Qxf7+ Kh8 35.Kg1 Rxf1+ 36.Qxf1 (36.Kxf1 Re1#) 36...Re1. White resigned.

## 15 Gulko – Vasiukov

The e4-pawn is under attack. He'd like to defend it with a rook, but the bishop thrust to f5 impedes that. Thinking about the position it is possible to establish that the impediment is in vain, and then the simple move 15.Re1! turns into a clever trap.

**15.Re1! Bf5?** (15...Be6 16.Ba3+/- is better) **16.ef! Rxe1+ 17.Kh2 Qg4!** (but, of course, not 17...Qh5 18.Bf3, and the queen is caught).



[FEN "r5k1/pp3ppp/n1p2n2/5P2/6q1/  
1NPQ2PP/P4PBK/R1B1r3 w - - 0 18"]

### 1.?

After calculating this variation Boris Gulko rejected the rook move to e1. And indeed: the queen cannot be taken, and the complications 18.Qxa6?! ba 19.hg Nxc4+ 20.Kh3 Nxf2+ 21.Kh4 Nd3 do not unfold in his favor.

But the unexpected blow **18.Bxc6!!**, freeing the g2-square for the king and creating the threat of 19.Bxb7, allows White to get the upper hand in a tense tactical duel. After 18...Qe2 19.Qxe2 Rxe2 20.Bxb7 Rae8 (or 20...Rd8) 21.Bxa6 Rxf2+ 22.Kg1 he will probably make the best of his material advantage.

In the game a more modest continuation was chosen: 15.Bd2!? Be6! (15...



Nxe4? cannot be played because of 16.Bxe4! Qxe4 17.Rae1+- or 17.Rfe1+-) 16.c4! (16...Bxb3 17.ab Nc5 or 17...Nxe4 were threatened) 16...Rad8.



[FEN "3rr1k1/pp3ppp/n1p1bnq1/8/2P1P3/1N1Q2PP/P2B1PB1/R4RK1 w - - 0 17"]

1.?

Where to retreat the queen to? White rejected the natural 17.Qc2!? in connection with 17...b5?!, and in vain – as in the variation 18.Na5! Bxc4 19.Nxc4 bc 20.Be3! Nxe4 21.Qxc4 c5 22.Rad1 he seized the initiative.

The move that was made in the game, 17.Qe2, justified itself after an extremely poor reply by his opponent: 17...b5? 18.cb cb 19.Qxb5 Nc7 (19...Nxe4? 20.Ba5+-) 20.Qg5 Bxb3 21.ab Nxe4 22.Qxg6 hg 23.Ba5, and the two bishops in an open position are significantly stronger than the pair of enemy knights. White successfully exploited his advantage.

17...Bc8 did not solve all the problems either because of 18.e5; for example, 18...Nd7 19.f4! Qxg3 20.Be1 Qg6 21.Bh4. And 17...Nxe4! led to a complicated and unclear position after 18.Qxe4 (or 18.Ba5, but just not 18.Bxe4? Bxh3 19.Bxg6 Rxe2-/+ ) 18...Qxe4 19.Bxe4 Bxc4 20.Rfe1 Bxb3 21.Ba5.

## 16 Dolmatov – Mamedyarov

On the board there is a position that is typical for one of the variations of Petrov's Defense. The first moves are: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.d4 Nxe4 4.Bd3 d5 5.Nxe5 Nd7 6.Nc3 Nxe5 7.de Nxc3 8.bc Be7 9.Qh5 Be6.

White was afraid of 10...Qd7 threatening 11...Bg4, so he played 10.f4. His opponent replied 10...g6 (not allowing 11.f5) 11.Qf3 f5 (11...Qd7!?) 12.ef Bxf6 13.0-0 0-0 with fully-fledged counterplay. The game ended in a draw.

As Sergey Dolmatov established later, it made sense for him to set a clever trap.

**10.Rb1! Qd7 11.h3** (of course, not 11.Rxb7?? Bg4)



[FEN "r3k2r/pppqbp/4b3/3pP2Q/8/2PB3P/P1P2PP1/1RB1K2R b Kkq - 0 11"]

1...?

### 11...0-0?

Precisely because of castling White considered an attack on the b7-pawn useless, and he was wrong.

### 12.Bb5! c6 13.Ba6!! ba 14.Qe2+-

Black has to part with his queen.

After the comparatively better 11...c6 12.0-0 Black still cannot castle either side (12...0-0-0? 13.Ba6!!). Necessary is 12...g6 or 12...h6, preparing 13...0-0. The unclear position that arises is more convenient for White to play without a pawn on f4, blocking the diagonal for the dark-squared bishop.

---

### 17 Mochalov – Yuferov

With the move **20.Ng5!?** White prevents an exchange of rooks for now (20...Ne7 leads to the loss of a pawn), forces his opponent to deal with the threats of d4-d5 and Ng5-e4, and, most importantly, lures him into a tempting chance to get a material advantage. The question is how the long and forced (if Black so chooses) variation will end.

### 20...Qe7 (a double attack: threatening both 21...Qxg5 and 21...Ba3) 21.Qb5 a6 22.Qb6 Qxg5 23.Qxb7 Rc7 24.Qb6!

24.Qa8+? Qd8! is a mistake, and White is left a piece down, while now he wins it back.

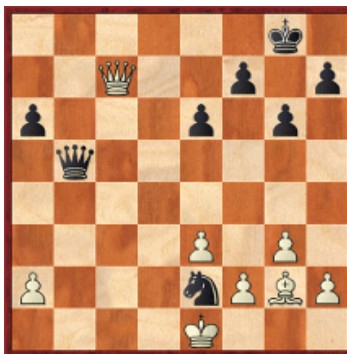
### 24...Nxd4!

In the variation 24...Qb5 25.Qxb5 ab 26.Bxc6 b4+/- Black had to defend in an endgame a pawn down for a long time.

### 25.Rxc7 Ne2+

25...Bxc7 26.Qxc7 Ne2+ (otherwise 27.Qc8+ and 28.Qxa6) 27.Kf1 led to a transposition of moves.

### 26.Kf1 Bxc7 27.Qxc7 Qb5 28.Ke1



[FEN "6k1/2Q2p1p/p3p1p1/lq6/8/4P1P1/P3nPBp/4K3 b - - 0 28"]

### 1...?

The moment of truth! After 28...Qb2? 29.Qd8+ Kg7 30.Qd2 Black resigned.

White's trap worked and brought him victory, but his opponent could have defended better.

### 28...Qd3! 29.Qb8+Kg7 30.Qe5+

On 30.Bf1, there follows 30...Qc3+! 30.Kxe2 Qc4+, forcing perpetual check



or a transfer to a drawn queen endgame.

And now 30...Kf8 31.Bf1 Qc3+ 32.Qxc3 Nxc3 33.a3 (or 33.Bc4) 33...a5 leads to an almost equal minor piece ending. 30...f6!? 31.Qc7+ Kh6 32.Bf3 (32.Qe7? Ng1!; 32.Bf1 Qb1+ 33.Kxe2 Qb5+) 32...Qc3+ (32...Nc3 33.Qe7! is weaker) 33.Qxc3 Nxc3= is also good.

And so, even after falling into the trap Black had not lost, it was enough for him to find one precise move, 28...Qd3!, at the very end. So despite the success that Evgeny Mochalov achieved, I still doubt the expedience of his choice. In my view the strong positional move 20.Nd2! deserved preference.



[FEN "2r3k1/pp1q1p1p/2nbp1p1/8/3P4/4P1P1/PQ1N1PBP/2R3K1 b - - 0 20"]

By retreating White maintains the pressure on his opponent's position, achieving the same goals as after 20.Ng5 (opening up the h1-a8 diagonal, preparing Ne4), but without putting his knight on a vulnerable square in the process.

---

## 18 Cooper – Petrosian

17.Bxd6? Nxc4 18.Bxc4 Qxc4 is unfavorable, with better chances for Black.

To secure the c4-pawn, White exchanged queens. After 17.Qd1 Qxd1+ 18.Rxd1 (18.Kxd1!? Ke7 19.Kd2) 18...Ke7 19.h4 Bf5! 20.0-0 Nbd7!, an approximately equal ending arose.

It was not worth rushing with the exchange. 17.Nd1!? did not promise much either, although his opponent would have had to find an accurate defense here.



[FEN "r1b1k1r1/pp3p2/1n1p1n2/2pP2p1/q1P1p3/2P1P1B1/P2QB1PP/R2NK2R b KQq - 0 17"]

### 1...?

17...Nxc4? is a mistake because of 18.Nb2! Nxb2 19.Qxb2+/- – when play opens up the multiple weaknesses in Black's position make themselves felt. He is not too great either in the variations 17...Bg4? 18.0-0 Bxe2 19.Nb2! with a subsequent 20.Rxf6+/-, и 17...Ke7?! 18.0-0+/-.

The problem is solved with the consolidating maneuver 17...Qd7! 18.0-0 Qe7 unclear and then Nb6-d7-e5 – the white knight is very poorly positioned here.

### 17.0-0!

An extremely strong move that contains a clever trap: at first glance it is not obvious why his opponent should not devour the c4-pawn.

### 17...Nxc4?

Black is also clearly worse with 17...Ke7?! 18.Nd1! Rg6 19.Nb2 Qa3 20.Rf2 Bd7 21.Raf1+/- . Only the subtle 17...Rg6! maintains approximate equality – after defending the knight Black renews the threat of taking on c4.

### 18.Qd1!! Nb6

In the case of 18...Qxd1 19.Nxd1 both black knights find themselves under attack!



[FEN "r1b1k1r1/pp3p2/1n1p1n2/2pP2p1/q3p3/2P1P1B1/P3BNPP/R2Q1RK1 w q - 0 19"]

### 1.?

### 19.Qb1!

Threatening 20.Bb5+, and White is simultaneously aiming at the e4-square.

**19...Bd7 20.Bd1!** (stronger than 20.Bxd6 Nbx d5 21.Qxb7) **20...Qc4** (20...Qa5 21.Nxe4+-) **21.Bb3 Qe2 22.Re1** and **23.Nxe4+-**.

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## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky


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## Lessons Learned Part One

When studying opening theory before an event, a player hopes to use the results of his work in previous games. But the process of general chess preparation doesn't have such a utilitarian bent. Becoming familiar with new middlegame and endgame ideas and sharpening the vitally important skills of searching for and using solutions will probably lead to an improvement in the player's game, which will be evident in his results, but won't necessarily be noticeable immediately in his moves.

It is also worth pointing out here that to a considerable degree opening knowledge is used directly: the player simply uses the moves in the variation he has studied at the board. Whereas positions that are examined during general chess preparation almost never repeat themselves in actual play. You have to act by analogy, using familiar ideas effectively in the new situation that arises in the game. Which means that the usefulness of this preparation depends not only on the quality of the material studied and the clarity of its explanation in a book, article or by a coach, but also on the intelligence of the player himself, his ability to absorb and comprehend the information that is provided and then to apply it in a tournament battle.

During my short visit to Georgia in February 2012 I held three training sessions with the junior Meri Arabidze, the Under-18 girls' world champion. Discussing the results of our work afterwards with the president of the chess federation, grandmaster Giorgi Giorgadze, I pointed out not only the girl's enormous natural talent, but also her excellent "teachability" – her ability to easily absorb the new ideas that are shown to her.

Confirmation of my words came just a few days later – at the women's European Championship in Turkey in March 2012. In her games against strong opponents in the third and fourth rounds Arabidze directly used some of the specific ideas and methods that we had discussed in our sessions. That really doesn't happen very often (in my book [School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play](#), in the chapter "Hard studying makes fighting easy!" I look at a similar story from the work of Artur Yusupov).

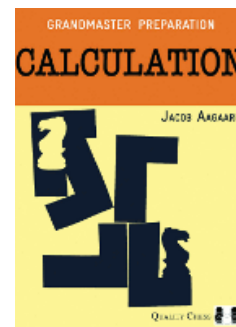
First you will become acquainted with my detailed commentary on the examples that I showed Meri, and then you will see how she used her newly-acquired knowledge in practice.

For a long time I was haunted by an occasion when after achieving a position that was already overwhelming I played carelessly and allowed my opponent to create serious threats literally from nothing.

**Dvoretsky – Anikaev**

Soviet Championship for Young Masters, Batumi, 1969

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[FEN "r2rk1/1p3pb1/p3b1pp/2Rp4/1P1P1q2/  
PQ1B1N1P/5PP1/4R1K1 w - - 0 27"]

**27.Bd3xg6! Bg7xd4**

In the case of 27...Bxh3, White has a pleasant choice between 28.Rxc8 Rxc8 29.Qxd5 and 28.gh fg 29.Qxd5+.

**28.Nf3xd4 Qf4xd4 29.Bg6-b1**

A small problem that Black didn't deal with in the game: is it worth fighting for the c-file by attacking the rook with the move b7-b6?

**29...b7-b6?! 30.Qb3-c2 Rf8-d8**

Only here did Yuri Anikaev notice that 30...Qg7 loses immediately because of 31.Rxc8 Rxc8 32.Rxe6!.

31.Qc2-h7+ Kg8-f8 32.Rc5xc8 Rd8xc8 33.Qh7xb6+ Qd4-g7



[FEN "2r2k2/5pq1/pp2b2Q/3p4/1P6/  
P6P/5PP1/1B2R1K1 w - - 0 34"]

1.?

Now two questions have to be answered. The first is simple: do we exchange queens? And the second is a little more difficult: if we don't exchange, where do we retreat the queen to – h4, leaving it the h3-pawn defended, or f4, where the queen is more active, but then the pawn is undefended?

**34.Qh6-f4?**

Of course, White should play for an attack. In the case of an exchange of queens the passed "d"-pawn and open file for the rook secured my opponent definite counter-chances despite being a pawn down. But 34.Qh4! deserved preference, intending Kh2 and Re3.

In making the move in the game I thought that exchanging the h3- and d5-pawns would remove any hope of counterplay for my opponent, but I underestimated the fact that my own king's cover would be weakened at the same time.

**34...Be6xh3 35.Of4-d6+ Kf8-g8 36.Od6xd5 Bh3-e6 37.Od5-d6?!**



[FEN "2r3k1/5pq1/pp1Qb3/8/1P6/P7/5PP1/1B2R1K1 b - - 0 37"]

1...?

Black's position looks completely hopeless, but without losing his cool Anikaev found a brilliant retreat.

**37...Qg7-g5!!**

*My center is giving way, my right is in retreat – I shall attack!* – it is as if the famous phrase by the French marshal was said specifically about this position. Two threats have been created: 38...Rc1 and 38...Bd5, and both are rather unpleasant.

I didn't want to make a wretched move like 38.Qd1 or 38.Rf1!? I thought I'd found a more playable way out of the situation and... almost lost the game!

**38.Bb1-e4? Rc8-c1 39.Re1-d1**



[FEN "6k1/5p2/pp1Qb3/6q1/1P2B3/P7/5PP1/2rR2K1 b - - 0 39"]

1...?

A strong blow followed on the theme of covering:

**39...Be6-d5!!**

I was still lucky to find a draw.

**40.Qd6-b8+!**

It is important to deflect the king to g7.

**40...Kg8-g7 41.Rd1xc1 Qg5xc1+ 42.Kg1-h2 Qc1-h6+**

Or 42...Bxe4 43.Qe5+ Kf8 44.Qxe4 Qxa3=.

**43.Kh2-g1 Qh6-c1+ 44.Kg1-h2 Qc1-h6+ 45.Kh2-g1 Qh6-c1+ Draw.**

Some examples are particularly useful for a coach – if there is a clear and convincing expression of some idea or other in them, or even better – several ideas at once. This is also completely true of the fragment we just looked at.

Firstly, it contains four good exercises at once that train combinational vision and evaluation of a position: after White's twenty-ninth move and in the last three diagrams.

Secondly, Black's thirty-seventh move is an excellent illustration of a "strategic double attack" – a move with a double purpose, each of which, unlike tactical double attacks, has a strategic character and is not associated with a direct attack on the enemy pieces. This topic is discussed briefly in the book mentioned above, *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*, in the chapter "The Double Attack," in which this example is included.

In a slightly different context the same problem is investigated in my article "Loud 'Quiet' Moves." It can be read in Russian on the website e3e5.com (January 2005) and in English in my [July 2005 column](#) on the [ChessCafe.com](#) website. It also talks about the hidden geometry of the chessboard.

The queen is the most powerful piece, able to go in all directions. It isn't surprising that many quiet moves with terrible force are queen moves. The g5-square turned out to be the intersection of the position's force lines: from there the queen took control of the c1-square along the diagonal, the d5-square along the rank, and also continued putting pressure on the g2-square down the file.

And here is what happened in the third round of the women's European Championship.

#### Ushenina – Arabidze

Gaziantep, 2012



[FEN "4r3/2RR4/p5pk/p3ppnq/1b6/4P2P/1B3PQ1/5K2 b - - 0 46"]

**46...Re7! 47.Bxe5 Bd6!!**



[FEN "8/2RRr3/p2b2pk/p3Bpnq/8/4P2P/5PQ1/5K2 w - - 0 48"]

Isn't this, in essence, exactly the same attack that Anikaev made on me? After getting to know the "predecessor," finding it probably wasn't all that difficult for Meri!

Neither 48.Bxd6?? nor 48.Rxe7?? is possible because of 48...Qd1#; 48.Rxd6? Rxc7-+ doesn't work either. The "computer" moves 48.Qa8 and 48.Qd5 led to a draw.



## 48.f3 Rxd7

Arabidze had been on the brink of losing, so now she willingly forces a draw. But meanwhile it made sense to try 48...Rxe5!?, after which accuracy and inventiveness would now have been demanded from White. 49.Rxd6? Rxe3-+ is bad. Deflecting the black queen away from the f3-pawn after 49.h4 Qxh4 is possible, but it still doesn't free White from danger. For example, 50.Rc8 Be7! 51.Rd4! Qh5 52.f4! Rb5! 53.fg+ Kg7 54.Rd7 Rb1+ 55.Kf2 Qh4+!? (55...Rb2 + 56.Kf1=) 56.Ke2 Re1+!? 57.Kd2 Qb4+ 58.Rc3 Rxe3! 59.Qc6!/=+.

The best was to immediately play 49.Rc8! Qxf3+! 50.Qxf3 Nxf3 51.Rxd6 Rxe3=. But it is by no means certain that her opponent, shaken by the sharp change in the situation on the board, would have been able to find the best moves.

**49.Rxd7 Bxe5 50.f4 Bxf4 (50...Bf6 51.fg+ Bxg5=) 51.ef Ne4 52.Rd8 Kh7! 53.Rd7+ Kh6 54.Rd8 Kh7 55.Rd7+ Kh6 56.Rd8 Draw.**

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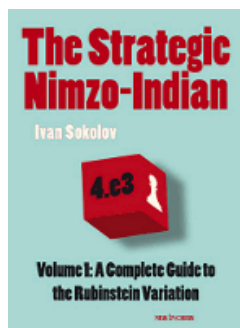
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Lessons Learned

### Part Two

In closed openings, such as the Nimzo-Indian or the Queen's Gambit, Black sometimes gets a defended passed c4-pawn. I began to understand the ideas in these kinds of positions better after playing the following game, which I showed to Arabidze many years later in our sessions before the European Championship.

**Dvoretsky – Sturua**

Goglidze Memorial, Tbilisi, 1980

Queen's Gambit Declined [D55]

1.c2-c4 e7-e6 2.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 3.d2-d4 Bf8-e7 4.Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 5.Bc1-g5 0-0  
6.e2-e3 h7-h6 7.Bg5xf6 Be7xf6 8.Ra1-c1 c7-c6 9.Bf1-d3 Nb8-d7

In the case of 9...dc 10.Bxc4 Nd7 the response 11.Ne4! e5 (11...Be7 12.0-0 b6 +/-) 12.Nxf6+ Qxf6 13.0-0 isn't bad.



[FEN "r1b2rk1/pp1n1pp1/2p2q1p/4p3/  
2BP4/4PN2/PP3PPP/2RQ1RK1 b - - 0 13"]

I started playing this variation as White under the influence of two wins by Svetozar Gligoric (included in his book *I Play Against Pieces*):

Gligoric – Filip, Zagreb, 1965 13...ed 14.Qxd4! Qxd4 15.Nxd4 Nf6 16.f3!  
Bd7 17.Rfd1 Rad8 18.e4 Rfe8 19.b4 Bc8 20.Bb3 a6 21.Kf2+/-.

Gligoric – Portisch, Zagreb, 1965 13...Qe7 14.e4! ed 15.Qxd4 Nb6 (15...Nf6 16.e5) 16.Bb3 Bg4 17.Qe3+/- Rad8 18.Rfe1 Rd7 19.h3 Be6 20.Bc2 Nc4 21.  
Qc3 Rfd8 22.Rcd1 (defending against 22...Nd2) 22...Rxd1 23.Bxd1! Qf6 24.  
e5 Qe7 25.Nd4 Bd5 26.Bg4 Qg5 27.e6! Nd6 28.ef+ Bxf7 29.Ne6 Bxe6 30.  
Bxe6+ Kh8 31.Re5 Qf6 32.Qe3+/-.

After the move in the game, trying to act according to the same templates is ineffective: 10.0-0 dc 11.Bxc4 e5, and if 12.Ne4 ed 13.Nxf6+, then the reply 13...Nxf6! 14.Qxd4 Bg4 appeared, with equality.

Later a position with an isolated pawn was tried many times: 12.h3! (instead of 12.Ne4) 12...ed 13.ed Nb6 14.Bb3 (it is important that there is no move 14...Bg4). Then again, according to theory Black gets equality here too.

### 10.c4xd5 e6xd5

In the case of 10...cd 11.0-0 White gets slightly better play by carrying out e3-e4. For example, 11...b6 12.e4! de 13.Bxe4 Rb8 14.Nb5! Bb7 15.Bxb7 Rxb7 16.Qa4+/-.

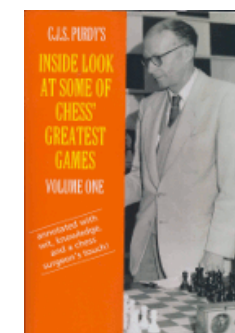
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## 11.b2-b4

11.0-0 Be7 is less precise, and the advance b2-b4 has been made more difficult. The position that arises now seems favorable to me: as in the Carlsbad structure an exchange of bishop for knight is rarely provoked with the move h7-h6, as simplifying the position usually benefits White, as the black bishop is deflected away from its rightful square d6, while the standard maneuver Nd7-f8-g6 is now more difficult. But still, as practice has shown, Black retains fully-fledged play.



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/pp1n1pp1/2p2b1p/3p4/1P1P4/2NBP2/P4PPP/2RQK2R b K - 0 11"]

## 11...a7-a6!?

Another continuation: 11...Be7 12.b5 Ba3 13.Rc2 Nf6 14.0-0 Bd6 15.bc bc. This was played in the game Tal – Geller (Soviet Championship, Tbilisi, 1978), in which Black held onto equality in a tense battle. Artur Yusupov found an improvement for White and won a very important skirmish in the last round of the next Soviet Championship (Minsk, 1979) against Tamaz Georgadze, taking the silver medal as a result of that victory. But, as subsequent analysis has shown, Black could still have defended at a certain point.

The move made by Zurab Sturua is evidently sounder – it is aimed at exchanging off all the pawns on the queenside.

## 12.a2-a4

12.0-0 Be7 13.Qb3 Bd6 14.Na4 Re8 15.Nc5 Nf6 with mutual chances (Raina – Bensch, Polanica Zdroj, 1987).

## 12...Bf6-e7

In the case of 12...Re8 13.0-0 Nf8 White doesn't continue 14.Nd2?! Qd6 15.b5 ab 16.ab Bd8! with a subsequent Bc7, or 14.b5?! ab 15.ab Bg4=, but 14.h3! +/-, and then Qb3(c2), b4-b5.

Worthy of attention is 12...a5!? 13.b5 Be7 (13...Nb6 14.0-0 Bg4 15.Qb3!? Bxf3 16.gf+/- Gligoric – Benko, Palma de Mallorca, 1968) 14.0-0 Re8 15.Qb3 Rb8 16.e4 de 17.Bxe4 Nf6= (Tukmakov – Dolmatov, Soviet Championship, First Division, Tashkent, 1980).

## 13.b4-b5 a6xb5

13...Ba3!?

## 14.a4xb5 Nd7-f6

If he did want to play 14...Ba3, then it should have been on the previous move, as here this thrust will be met by 15.Ra1 Qa5 16.Qb3 c5 17.Bb1!+/-

In the game Ivkov – Klován, Riga, 1981, Black preserved equality with 14...Bd6 15.0-0 Nf6 16.bc bc 17.Qc2 Re8 18.Na4 Ne4 (18...Ba6) 19.Ra1 (19.Qxc6 Bg4 counterplay) 19...Qf6=.

**15.b5xc6 b7xc6 16.0-0**

16.Ne5!? deserved attention.

**16...c6-c5 17.Nf3-e5**

On 17.dc Bxc5, the game is equal. The continuation chosen by White doesn't change the evaluation, but merely creates a slightly more tense situation.

**17...c5-c4**

In the case of 17...Bd6, he would have to reckon with 18.Nb5.

**18.Ne5-c6 Qd8-e8 19.Nc6xe7+ Qe8xe7 20.Bd3-e2**



[FEN "r1b2rk1/4qpp1/5n1p/3p4/2pP4/2N1P3/4BPPP/2RQ1RK1 b - - 0 20"]

A standard feature of the position that has been created is the strength of the c3-knight. It not only blocks the passed pawn, but also puts pressure on the d5-pawn (together with the bishop, which will occupy the f3-square). But the other white pieces are rather inactive for now, so objectively neither player has an advantage.

**20...Bc8-f5 21.Be2-f3 Rf8-d8**

21...Qe6!? deserved attention, leaving the rook free to fight on the queenside. My opponent decided to use his queen for this purpose.

**22.Rc1-a1**

White, naturally, exchanges off his passive rook.

**22...Bf5-d3 23.Rf1-e1 Ra8xa1 24.Qd1xa1 Qe7-b4!**

Correct: the queen takes control of squares on the queenside. On a straightforward attempt to exchange on e4, my major pieces would become active: 24...Ne4?! 25.Bxe4 de 26.Qa5 Rb8 27.Ra1 Rb3 28.h3, or 24...Be4?! 25.Nxe4!? Nxe4 26.Qa5 – in both cases White has the initiative.

**25.h2-h3**



[FEN "3r2k1/5pp1/5n1p/3p4/1qpP4/2NbPB1P/5PP1/Q3R1K1 b - - 0 25"]

## 25...Kg8-h7?!

From this point Sturua starts acting without a plan and soon encounters difficulties.

He should have been striving for exchanges on the e4-square. What is more, Black's main enemy is the strong c3-knight. For that reason 25...Ne4?! 26. Bxe4! de is unconvincing. White continues 27.Rd1 with a subsequent Rd2-a2, seizing the initiative – the knight neutralizes any attempts at counterplay.

25...Be4! is correct. A draw by repetition of moves is obtained with 26.Bd1 Bd3 (threatening 27...Ne4) 27.Bf3 Be4. And in the case of 26.Bxe4 Nxe4 27. Nxe4 de 28.Rc1 (28.Rb1 Qd2 gives nothing) Black preserves equality with the prophylactic move 28...Qb5!, parrying the unpleasant thrust 29.Qa6!

Then again, later Black also retains the opportunity to exchange that I mentioned.

## 26.Re1-d1

"The principle of the worst piece" in action: planning the activation of the only white piece that is out of play – the rook via the route Re1-d1-d2-a2.

## 26...Rd8-d6?!

26...Be4!.

## 27.Rd1-d2



[FEN "8/5ppk/3r1n1p/3p4/1qpP4/  
2NbPB1P/3R1PP1/Q5K1 b - - 0 27"]

## 1...?

## 27...Bd3-g6?

27...Ne4? is beautifully refuted by means of 28.Rxd3!! cd 29.Nxd5!+-. This was his last chance to aim for a quick draw after 27...Be4! 28.Bd1 Bg6 (with the idea of 29...Ne4) 29.Bf3 Be4! If White had wanted to continue the battle he would have had to accept a weakening of his kingside – playing 28.Ra2!? Bxf3 29.gf.

## 28.Rd2-a2 Bg6-e4

Too late – White moves his bishop away from the f3-square with a tempo.

## 29.Ra2-a4 Qb4-b3

Otherwise after exchanges on e4, the c4-pawn is lost.

## 30.Bf3-d1 Qb3-b6 31.Ra4-a7 Be4-g6 32.Bd1-f3 Qb6-b3

The black bishop is tied to the f7-pawn, so it can't go back to e4.

## 33.Ra7-c7

White is preparing an attack on the 8th rank: Rc8 and Qa8.

### 33...Qb3-c2

And Black isn't against counterattacking: Rb6-b2.



[FEN "8/2R2ppk/3r1nbp/3p4/2pP4/2N1PB1P/2q2PP1/Q5K1 w - - 0 34"]

### 1.?

My next move prevents the activation of the enemy rook.

### 34.Rc7-b7?!

The attempt to limit my opponent's active opportunities wasn't justified in this case, as it doesn't come free: Black manages to defend his eighth rank. I should have accurately calculated the variations that arise after 34.Rc8! Rb6 35.Qa8:

35...Bd3 36.Nxd5 Nxd5 37.Rh8+ Kg6 38.Qxd5, and the black king is defenseless;

35...Bf5 36.Rh8+ Kg6 37.Ne2! – bringing in the knight significantly strengthens White's attack;

35...Be4 26.Ne2!, and 26...Bxf3 27.Nf4! is bad.

The fate of the c3-knight in this game as a whole, and in the variations we've just looked at in particular, is a good illustration of the following thought by Aron Nimzowitsch from his famous book [My System](#):

*The main function of the blockader appears to be as a competent stopper of the relevant pawn. In this sense, it itself tends to be immobile. And yet (for it has great vitality!) it is not rare for it to display considerable activity. Namely:*

- 1) From its post, it can deliver threats ...
- 2) A certain elasticity, which shows itself when the blockader does leave its square in appropriate circumstances.

### 34...Rd6-d8!

In the case of 34...Ne4 35.Bxe4 de White parries the threat of 36...Rf6 by offering an exchange of queens: 36.Qb2. In the endgame there is a big advantage on my side, as the black bishop is out of play.

### 35.Qa1-a5 Rd8-d6?

Black chooses the greater of two evils, allowing an attack on the eighth rank anyway. Obviously he didn't want to give up the d5-pawn, but its capture means an exchange of the blockading c3-knight, and the passed c4-pawn finally becomes dangerous. After 35...Rc8! 35.Nxd5 (and how else to improve the position?) it is bad to play 35...Ne4? 36.Bxe4 Bxe4 37.f3! or 35...c3? 36.Nxf6+ gf 37.Bg4! (the rook is under attack; 38.Rxf7+! is also threatened). But

possible is 35...Nxd5 36.Bxd5 c3 (36...Qd1+!? 37.Kh2 Qh5) 37.Bxf7 Bxf7 38.Rxf7 Qg6 39.Qd5! c2 40.Rxg7+ Kxg7 41.Qd7+ Kf6 42.Qxc8 Qd3, and the affair ends with perpetual check.

### 36.Rb7-b8 Nf6-e4

If 36...Qc1+ 37.Kh2 Qe1, then both 38.Qa8 and 38.Qb4!? are strong.

### 37.Bf3xe4 Bg6xe4



[FEN "1R6/5ppk/3r3p/Q2p4/2pPb3/2N1P2P/2q2PP1/6K1 w - - 0 38"]

### 1.?

### 38.Nc3xe4!

"The Moor has done his duty..." – the knight can now be exchanged off to free the queen for an attack on the enemy king.

### 38...Qc2xe4 39.Qa5-a8 Rd6-f6?!

Now **40.Rh8+ Kg6 41.Qg8** led to the target immediately with a subsequent 42.Qh7+ or 42.Rh7. I was playing more weakly and only won after trading mutual blunders.

39...c3!? 40.Rh8+ Kg6 was more stubborn. White would have had to choose between two equally tempting possibilities: continuing the attack or switching to a battle against the "c"-pawn.

A) 41.Qf8 (threatening both 42.Qxd6+ and 42.Rg8) 41...Rf6 (41...Rd7 42.Qc5 +-) 42.Rg8 Kh5 43.Rxg7 (43.Qxg7?? Rg6-+) 43...Qc2 (43...c2 44.Qc8 Rg6 45.Rxg6 Kxg6 46.Qc3 Kg7 47.f3 Qg6 48.e4, and White is left a pawn up) 44.Qc8!? Qxf2+ 45.Kh2 Rg6 46.Rxg6 Kxg6 47.Qxc3+/- – again White is a pawn up in a queen ending.

B) 41.Rc8 Qb1+ (41...c2?! 42.Qa2+/-; 41...Qc2 42.Qa1 Rf6 43.f3+/-) 42.Kh2 Qf5 43.f3 c2 44.Rc3 Re6 45.Qa3 with a subsequent 46.Qc1, and Black barely manages to avoid losing the pawn.

Another example on the same theme, which I also discussed with Arabidze.

### Yusupov – Timman

Candidates Semi-final match, (9) Linares, 1992  
Nimzo-Indian [E52]



[FEN "3r1nk1/1q3ppp/rp6/1Q1p4/P1pP4/2R1P3/R2N1PPP/6K1 b - - 0 23"]

Before advancing his pawn to c4 Black exchanged off the blockading c3-knight. With his last move (23.Nf3-d2) Yusupov began a transfer of his other knight to that square. The regrouping of the white pieces is associated with a loss of several tempi – in that time Black has to initiate something, otherwise he will find himself in a worse position.

The following maneuver was a good solution: 23...Nd7! 24.Rca3 (24.e4 Ra5 25.Qb4 Nb8!? isn't dangerous) 24...Nf6, and if 25.Nb1, then 25...Ne4 26.f3 Nd6. The weakness of the e3-pawn provides Black with sufficient counter-chances.

### 23...Rd8-a8 24.Rc3-a3

The rook frees the c3-square for the knight.

### 24...Qb7-d7?!

Black could count on equality with 24...Ra5!? 25.Qb4 b5 26.Nb1 Qc6! 27. Nc3 ba (given by Timman).



[FEN "r4nk1/3q1ppp/rp6/1Q1p4/P1pP4/R3P3/R2N1PPP/6K1 w - - 0 25"]O

### 1.?

### 25.Qb5-b4?

He should have played 25.Qxd7! Nxd7 26.Nb1, intending Nc3, Rb2-b5. Timman continues the variation as follows: 26...f5 27.Nc3 Ra5, and evaluates the position that arises as equal. I think he is wrong. The superbly positioned c3-knight eliminates any active possibilities for Black. White, though, has the prospect of improving his position both on the queenside: Rb2, Ra1, Rb4, Rab1 (the move Rb4 is necessary to avoid the exchange sacrifice Rxa4!) and on the kingside: f2-f3, Kf2, h2-h3, g2-g4, and if his opponent impedes the "g"-pawn's advance with h7-h5, then h3-h4 and Kg3-f4. Black faced a long and unpleasant defense in the absence of a clear plan – in that situation it is easy to lose your orientation and play your way into big difficulties.

The serious positional blunder made by Yusupov can be explained by the situation in the match. Artur was a point behind his opponent and had to win one of the two remaining games. And instead of a good decision – simplifying the position, which promised good practical chances of success, he made an

emotional and anti-positional decision – he "played for complications"!

The presence of the queens on the board is favorable for Black. All the white pieces are clumped together on the queenside. The knight, by standing on c3, cuts the queen and rook off the queenside, where the opponent can create unpleasant threats with minimal forces.

**25...Nf8-g6 26.g2-g3?!**

As Timman pointed out, 26.h3 Ne7 (26...Nh4!?) 27.Nb1 is preferable, although here, too, after 27...Nc6 (28.Qb5 Ra5) Black would have been wonderful.

**26...h7-h5 27.Nd2-b1 h5-h4 28.Nb1-c3 Qd7-g4 29.Qb4-b2**

29.Nxd5? Qd1+ is bad (less clear is 29...Qf3 30.Nc7 h3 31.Kf1 Rc8!? 32.Nxa6 c3 33.Ra1! c2 34.Nc5! bc 35.Qc3) 30.Kg2 h3+ 31.Kxh3 Qh5+ 32.Kg2 Qxd5+. Also unsuccessful is 29.Qd6?! b5! 30.Qxd5? (30.Qc5) 30...b4+.

**29...h4xg3 30.f2xg3**



[FEN "r5k1/5pp1/rp4n1/3p4/P1pP2q1/R1N1P1P1/RQ5P/6K1 b - - 0 30"]

Alexander Alekhine called these kinds of moves "testimonium paupertatis" – evidence of poverty. To bring the major pieces to the defense of his king White significantly weakens his pawn structure and dooms himself to a protracted defense in a clearly worse position.

Yusupov rejected 30.hg in connection with 30...Nh4! On 31.Qe2? decisive is 31...Qh3! 32.gh b5! 33.h5 b4+ (a more roundabout route to the goal is 33...Rh6!? 34.ab Rxa3 35.Rxa3 Rxh5 36.Qxh5 Qxh5 37.Ra6!? – intending 38.b6 or 38.Rd6 – 37...Qg4+ 38.Kf1 Qf5! 39.b6 Qd3+ 40.Kg2 Qg6+ 41.Kf1 Qc6 42.Ke2 Qb7+).

31.Ra1!? is more stubborn in the hope of 31...Nf3+ 32.Kg2 Ng5 33.Rh1 Qf3+ 34.Kg1 unclear. Black replies 31...b5! 32.Nxd5 Nf3+ 33.Kg2 (33.Kf1 Rh6+) 33...Ng5+, or 32.Qxb5 Rh6 33.Qxd5 Nf3+ 34.Kf1 Re8 with a formidable attack.

**30...Ng6-e7**

The knight first defends the d5-pawn, then attacks the backward e3-pawn, and subsequently heads for the e4-square.

**31.Qb2-f2?!**

This move allows a favorable exchange operation for Black on the queenside. In Timman's opinion, 31.Ra1 is preferable.

**31...b6-b5! 32.Nc3xb5 Ra6xa4 33.Ra3xa4 Ra8xa4 34.Nb5-c3**

White also has a problematic position after 34.Rxa4 Qd1+ 35.Kg2 Qxa4 36.Nc3 Qb3 37.Qd2.

**34...Ra4xa2 35.Qf2xa2 Qg4-e6**





[FEN "6k1/4npp1/4q3/3p4/2pP4/2N1P1P1/Q6P/6K1 w - - 0 36"]

Black has a clear positional advantage. Yusupov had to work very hard to get a draw.

And now the game played by Meri Arabidze in the fourth round.

### Arabidze – Romanko

Gaziantep, 2012

Slav Defense [D12]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nh4 Be4 7.f3 Bg6 8.Qb3 Qb6 9.Nxg6 hg 10.Kf2 Nbd7 11.g3 Be7 12.Kg2 0-0 13.Bd2 c5 14.Na4 Qc7 15.cd ed



[FEN "r4rk1/ppqnbpp1/5np1/2pp4/N2P4/1Q2PPP1/PP1B2KP/R4B1R w - - 0 16"]

16.Nc3!? c4 17.Qc2 Qc6 (17...Bb4!?) 18.a4 Bb4 19.Be2 Rfe8 20.Rhc1 a6 21.a5 b5 (21...g5!?) 22.ab a5



[FEN "r3r1k1/3n1pp1/1Pq2np1/p2p4/1bpP4/2N1PPP1/1PQBB1KP/R1R5 w - - 0 23"]

On 22...Nxb6 or 22...Qxb6, Black was evidently bothered by 23.b3+/-.

But here, too, undermining the pawn chain with 23.b3!? secured White better chances. The breakthrough in the center 23.e4!? also deserved serious attention, although it required precise calculation. On 23...Bxc3 24.Qxc3 de the response 25.b3! is strong. And if 23...de, then 24.Nxe4 Nxb6 (24...Bxd2 25.Bxc4!+/-; 24...Nxe4 25.Bxb4+/-) 25.Bxb4 Nxe4 26.Bxc4 Nxc4 27.Qxc4+/-



=.

#### 23.g4

White starts a pawn assault on the kingside, but then it wasn't worth moving the rook off h1 – as it had to go back there a move later anyway.

**23...Nxb6 24.h4 a4 25.Rh1**



[FEN "r3r1k1/5pp1/1nq2np1/3p4/pbpP2PP/2N1PP2/1PQBB1K1/R6R b - - 0 25"]

A decision should be made by Black taking into account the impending 26.h5 gh 27.g5 and then 28.Rxh5 (which follows, for example, in reply to 25... Qd7?!). Then again, is the threat really that strong? After 25...Rab8!? 26.h5 gh 27.g5 Nh7 28.Rxh5 you can find 28...Qg6! 29.Qxg6 fg 30.Rhh1 Nxg5 unclear.

**25...a3 26.ba Rxa3?!**

By opening lines on the queenside Black made her opponent's attack on the kingside less effective, but on the other hand she got an unfavorable structure with a strong blockading knight on c3, which will be impossible to chase away or exchange off. If Marina Romanko had perceived the strategic danger that was threatening her, she wouldn't have moved her bishop off the a5-e1 diagonal. An exchange of minor pieces 26...Bxc3 27.Qxc3 Re6+/- (and then, perhaps, Nfd7, Na4) secured Black good positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Even more crafty is 26...Ba5!?, retaining the possibility of exchanging ("the threat is strong than its immediate execution") and intending Nc8-d6. In that situation it wouldn't have been easy for White to find an active plan.

**27.Rxa3 Bxa3 28.h5**

An aggressive decision. White sacrifices a pawn to then chase the knight off f6, play f3-f4 and attack the d5-square with her bishop from f3, as I did in my game against Sturua. But it was also possible to act more simply: 28.Rb1!?, preventing the bishop's return to b4 and intending g4-g5 with a subsequent e3-e4 or f3-f4.

**28...gh 29.g5 Nh7 30.f4 g6 31.Rb1!**

Arabidze realizes that she has to secure the knight's invulnerability, so she takes the b4-square away from the bishop and also prepares an unpleasant rook invasion on b5.

**31...Bd6 32.Bf3** (threatening 33.Rb5) **32...Bc7?**

Makes White's task easier. 32...Rb8 33.Rb5 Nf8 was preferable.

**33.Rb5 Rd8** (there is no 33...Qd7 because of 34.Nxd5!)



[FEN "3r2k1/2b2p1n/1nq3p1/1R1p2Pp/2pP1P2/2N1PB2/2QB2K1/8 w - - 0 34"]

1.?

Now White should attack the queen immediately, exploiting its attachment to the bishop: 34.Rc5! Qb7 35.Qb1 Qb8 (natural), and now, for example, 36.Kf2!?, preparing to capture on d5: 36...Nf8 37.Bxd5! Nxd5 38.Qxb8 (thanks to the king move the knight can't take the white pawn with check) and 39.Nxd5+-. Very strong also are 36.Rb5 or 36.Nb5 Bd6 37.Rc6.

**34.Qb1?! Rd6?**

Black didn't exploit her opponent's inaccuracy. 34...Rd7! 35.Rc5 Qe6 was considerably more stubborn.

**35.Rc5 Qd7 36.Nb5!**

The scenario of events reminds me of my duel against Sturua. First White, exploiting the constraint of the enemy pieces, activated her rook. Then the blockading knight demonstrates elasticity "à la Nimzowitsch," leaving the blockading square to secure White a decisive advantage after being exchanged off.

**36...Rc6 37.Nxc7 Qxc7 38.Ba5**

Black loses a piece.

**38...c3**



[FEN "6k1/2q2p1n/1nr3p1/B1Rp2Pp/3P1P2/2p1PB2/6K1/1Q6 w - - 0 39"]

1.?

Now the quickest route to the goal was 39.Qb5! Rxc5 40.dc c2 41.cb. The continuation 39.Qb3! (39...Nxc5!? 40.Bxb6!+- also won easily, but not 40.fg? h4! unclear). The move in the game is less energetic, but also possible.

**39.Bd1?! Nxc5 40.Rxc6?**

Evidently time trouble was a factor. White doesn't find the natural correct continuation 40.Qxb6! Rxb6 41.Rxc7 Rxb2+ 42.Kf1 Ne4 43.Bxc3+-, and as a result cedes the advantage that she had achieved through superb play.

#### 40...Qxc6 41.Bxb6

In the variation 41.Qxb5!? c2! 42.Qxc6 cdQ 43.Qe8+ Kg7 44.fg Qg4+ 45.Kf2 Qf5+ 46.Ke1 Qxg5+/- Black can count on a drawing outcome.

#### 41...Ne4= 42.Bd8 Qc4

42...Nd2 43.Qb8 Qe8= is no worse.

#### 43.Bh4



[FEN "6k1/5p2/6p1/3p3p/2qPnP1B/2p1P3/6K1/1Q1B4 b - - 0 43"]

Equality was maintained after 43...Kg7. But here the scales tipped for the last time: after missing an elementary tactic Black loses in two moves!

#### 43...Nd2?? 44.Qb8+ Kg7?

After 44...Kh7 45.Qf8 Qf1+ 46.Kh2 Ne4! 47.Qxf7+ Kh8+/- it still isn't all that simple.

**45.Bf6+!** Black resigned because of 45...Kxf6 46.Qe5#.

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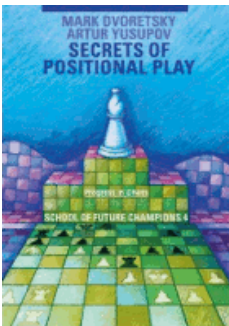
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Prophylactic Thinking, Part One

The idea of prophylaxis was first advanced by the great chess thinking Aron Nimzowitsch. He defined it as *taking measures with the aim of preventing some events which are undesirable from a positional viewpoint*. True, for some reason he reduced the scope of using prophylaxis only to the prevention of liberating pawn moves by the opponent (and also to the excessive defense of strategically important squares, which, in my view, is a rather different case – we will not be examining it here).

Thinking about the topic of "prophylaxis" in my turn, I realized that it is useful for a significantly wider circle of situations than those that were examined by Nimzowitsch. And most importantly, that it makes sense to concentrate not on the prophylactic moves themselves, but on the process of finding them.

In order to prevent the enemy's ideas, you have to know them, which means learning to put yourself in your opponent's shoes and figure out what might be favorable to him. For the process of this kind of thinking we can use the well-known psychological term "empathy" (albeit with some reservations, of course). However, bearing in mind one of the facets of the old philosophical principle Occam's razor: "Entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily!," I decided to use the accepted term in chess theory, with the one difference that I do not usually refer to prophylaxis, but to "prophylactic thinking."

**Prophylactic thinking is the habit of constantly asking yourself what your opponent wants to do, where he would go on his move, the ability to find a reply to the question that has been posed and to take it into account in your decision-making process.**

In the book [Secrets of Positional Play](#), the fourth in the *School of Future Champions* series by myself and Yusupov, you will find a long article about prophylactic thinking, which I strongly recommend to the reader's attention. I will not repeat the examples from that article here, but I will reproduce one lengthy quote.

*Developing the skill of prophylactic thinking enables a player to make an enormous step forward, and to greatly raise his standard of play. Why? I will single out two main reasons.*

1) *The range of positions in which prophylactic thinking can be used is extremely broad. Any significant positional decision is bound to combine the implementation of your own plans with actions against the opponent's. The main principle of converting an advantage is the restriction of the opponent's possibilities; it is clear that here one cannot manage without prophylactic thinking. By developing this trait, you also become stronger in tactics and you make fewer blunders. When defending a difficult position, you must all the time see with what you are threatened; and when attacking, you must reckon with the opponent's defensive resources. Thus a possession of the skill of prophylactic thinking exerts a favourable influence on practically all aspects of your play.*

2) *Chess is a battle between two players with equal rights, and your opponent's ideas may be no worse than yours. It is logically clear that the optimal strategy should harmoniously combine the implementation of your own ideas and the prevention of your opponent's. Of course, it is bad to remain passive and merely destroy, but the opposite tendency is also extremely dangerous, and liable to lead to constant failures.*

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Meanwhile, players often forget to think about their opponent's plans. This is understandable: concentration on one's own feelings is typical of human nature. After all, sometimes in life too, unfortunately, we do not take too much account of the thoughts and feelings of others.

Thus it is not a matter, of course, of giving priority to destructive actions over creative ones, but simply that the important skill of prophylactic thinking is most probably insufficiently well developed in us. By improving this aspect in which we are backward, and making our thinking more harmonious, we will certainly raise significantly our overall standard of play.

In my previously-published articles about traps and paying attention to the opponent's resources we already had to engage in prophylactic thinking, directly or indirectly. These topics are closely interwoven, but there is still a difference. "Prophylactic thinking" means guessing your partner's intentions, while "paying attention to the opponent's resources" is primarily the ability to find hidden defensive moves in the apparently tempting combinations that we would like to implement. What is more, prophylaxis, according to Nimzowitsch, prevents the opponent's positional threats, not the specific tactical ones we were dealing with there. Then again, the boundary here is rather vague, of course.

The exceptional importance of prophylactic thinking to the practical player is illustrated by a duel that was analyzed in the second book of the series by myself and Yusupov, *School of Future Champions* ([Secrets of Opening Preparation](#), the chapter "In the Footsteps of one Game"). Here I'll only give the selection of my notes that relate to the topic we are discussing.

#### Gavrikov – Yusupov

Interzonal tournament, Tunis, 1985

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5 0-0 6.e3 h6 7.Bh4 b6 8.Bd3 Bb7 9.0-0 Nbd7 10.Qe2 c5 11.Bg3 Ne4 12.Rfd1 cd! 13.ed (13.Nxd4 Nxc3) 13... Nxc3 14.hg Nf6 15.Ne5 Rc8 16.Rac1 dc 17.Bxc4 Nd5 18.Bb3 Nxc3 19.bc**

Among the numerous deep conceptions expounded by Aron Nimzowitsch in his book [My System](#), one of the most important seems to me to be the idea of prophylaxis. Nimzowitsch wrote: 'Neither attack nor defense is, in my opinion, a matter properly pertaining to position play, which is rather an energetic and systematic application of prophylactic measures.' This idea seems paradoxical and incomprehensible, but I hope that an analysis of the present game will help it to be understood.

Of course, grandmaster Yusupov developed the skill of prophylactic thinking long ago, from the time when he was not yet a grandmaster. Let us see this skill in action.



[FEN "2rq1rk1/pb2bpp1/1p2p2p/4N3/3P4/1BP3P1/P3QPP1/2RR2K1 b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

Artur asked himself: 'What does the opponent want, and what would he play if it were him to move?' Perhaps he was intending to sacrifice his knight on f7? (However, it is not clear whether the sacrifice is correct.) Black certainly has

to reckon with activity in the centre by c3-c4 and d4-d5. Is that all? No, there is also another threat: Qd3 and then Bc2. The move ...f7-f5 weakens the position too much, while in reply to ...g7-g6 there follows the knight sacrifice on g6.

Now, knowing the opponent's ideas, it is easier to choose your move. For example, 19...Ba3 comes into consideration – after 20.Rc2 it is not easy for White to set up the battery on the b1-h7 diagonal. But does this move help against c3-c4 and d4-d5, and with what plan can it be linked? (Remember, Nimzowitsch demands 'an energetic and systematic application of prophylactic measures'.)

### 19...Rc7!!

A grandmaster move! Black improves his position and prepares ...Qc8 (or ...Qa8), which is a good antidote to White's offensive in the centre. Now almost certainly the knight sacrifice on f7 will be incorrect.

### 20.Qd3 Bf6

It transpires that after 21.Bc2 g6 White cannot play 22.Nxg6? f7xg6 – the black rook participates in the defence along the 7th rank.

### 21.Ng4 h5!

Parrying the obvious threat of 22.Bc2 g6 23.Nxh6+.

### 22.Ne3

22.Nxf6+ Qxf6 would have led to equality, but for the moment Gavrikov is hoping for more.



[FEN "3q1rk1/pbr2pp1/1p2pb2/7p/3P4/1BPQN1P1/P4PP1/2RR2K1 b -- 0 22"]

### 1...?

But now what does White want? Either, as before, c3-c4 and d4-d5, or 23.d5 immediately, in order to then support the d5-point by c3-c4.

### 22...Rd7!

Now 23.c4? Rxd4 is not possible, while if 23.d5 Yusupov was intending 23...Bg5! 24.f4 Be7 followed by ...Bc5. 23.Ba4 Rd6 24.Nc4? Ba6 is also pointless.

### 23.g4 hg 24.Nxg4

Now what is threatened? Probably nothing. After strengthening his position with a series of prophylactic moves, Black can also think about his own active possibilities.

### 24...g6





[FEN "3q1rk1/pb1r1p2/1p2pbp1/8/3P2N1/1BPQ4/P4PP1/2RR2K1 w - - 0 25"]

1.?

**25.Re1?!**

White decided to improve the placing of his rooks, by playing *Re1* and *Rcd1*. A sensible operation? Undoubtedly. However, absolutely ill-timed. Now it was his turn to employ 'prophylactic thinking' and forestall Black's prosaic idea of activating his forces: ...*Kg7* and *Rh8*. The problem would have been most simply solved by *25.Qe3!* (but not *25.Qh3? Bg5!* and *26...Kg7*), for example, *25...Bg7* (*25...Kg7? 26.Qh6+; 25...Bg5 26.f4*) *26.Ne5* with roughly equal chances.

**25...Kg7 26.Rcd1?**

Consistent, but bad! White should have forestalled the threatened attack on his king with a series of exchanges: *26.Qe3* (or *26.Nxf6* immediately) *26...Rh8 27.Nxf6 Qxf6 28.Qe5* with somewhat the better endgame for Black.

**26...Rh8 27.Qg3**

What does White want? Obviously, to simplify the position by *28.Nxf6 Qxf6 29.Qe5*. But it is not hard to parry this threat with a move which at the same time comes into Black's plan of attack.

**27...Rh5! 28.Qf4?**

*28.Nxf6* was nevertheless better.

**28...Be7!**

The bishop switches to a powerful attacking position – *d6*. A possible variation is *29.Ne5 Bd6 30.Qe3 Qh4 31.f3 Rxe5! 32.de Bc5 33.Rxd7 Qxe1+*.

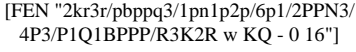
**29.Qc1 Bd6 30.Ne5 Qh4 31.f3 Qg3 32.Re3** (*32.Nxd7 Rh1+!*) **32...Rd8!**

The last black piece joins the attack (*33...Rdh8* is threatened). White resigned.

White lost quickly, without making any obvious positional mistakes. There was a simple reason: Gavrikov had not developed the skill of prophylactic thinking, which Yusupov possessed. For this reason, in this game they proved, in boxing terminology, to be 'in different weight categories.'

Prophylactic thinking has been used successfully not only by my students, but also other players with whom I discussed this topic, and also readers of my books and articles.

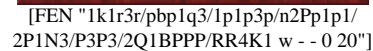
**Gelfand – Miles**  
Amsterdam, 1988



**16.a3!**

*A move inspired by a lecture by Mark Dvoretzky on the topic of "Prophylaxis," which he gave at one of the training sessions for the national junior team.*

**16...e5** (16...d5 17.cd+/=) **17.d5 Na5 18.0-0 Kb8 19.Rfb1 d6**



Again prophylaxis. Now on 20...c6 there follows 21.c5! cd 22.cb or 21...dc 22. d6.

## Navara – Kramnik

Prague, 2008, Eighth match game (rapid)





## 1.?

**23.Kc2!**

Here is how grandmaster David Navara commented on the move he made.

*It would have been much more natural to place the king on the dark square b2, but I wanted to prevent a7-a6. A brief look into Mr Dvoretsky's book on strategy during my preparation helped me to think about prophylaxis.*

*23.Kb2 a6 24.a4 ab 25.ab gives Black sufficient counterplay along the a-file, which prevents White from playing Kb3, Kb4 and c4-c5.*

**23...g5?!**

*This advance wins space but loses time.*

*23...a6! 24.b6+! Kxb6 25.Rb1+ Kc5 26.Rxb7 looked very pleasant to me, White's rook binds Black's pieces. To my great disappointment, Fritz indicates that Black can equalize after 26...Rd8! (26...Kxc4? 27.Rc7+) 27.Kc3 Bd7 followed by some pawn moves on the kingside. Despite this, I still like my 23rd move.*

**24.Kc3 f5 25.g3 g4 26.Bg2 h5 27.a4 a6 (too late!) 28.Kb4 a5+ (28...ab 29.cb with a subsequent a4-a5 is useless) 29.Kc3 Rc8 30.c5 Kb8 31.Kc4 e5 32.Rd6 e4**



[FEN "1kr1b3/1p6/3R4/pPP2p1p/P1K1p1p1/6P1/5BP/8 w - - 0 33"]

**33.Rf6!**

Also prophylaxis: on 33.Bf1? there would follow 33...Bf7+ 34.Kd4 Bb3.

**33...Bd7 34.Bf1! h4 35.gh Rh8 36.c6 bc 37.bc Be8 38.Kc5 Kc7 39.Re6 f4 40.Re7+ Kd8 41.c7+ Black resigned.**

In technical positions such as the ending Navara – Kramnik you cannot get by without prophylactic thinking. The following example confirms that truth once again.

**Miles – Nikolac**

Wijk aan Zee, 1979



[FEN "8/5R2/1p1k3p/p2p4/2pPnNr1/2P5/PP4P1/6K1 w - - 0 48"]

## 1.?

An immediate attack on the d5-pawn is useless: 48.Rf5?! Rg5. Let's ask ourselves what we would do in Black's place. By the way, the answer is often obvious, and the only problem is not forgetting to ask. That is the case here: after finding b6-b5-b4, we play **48.a4!** without much hesitation, of course.

Our opponent immediately has a shortage of sensible moves, though: all of them worsen his position in some way. For example, 48...Rg5 takes the attack off the knight and allows us to win a pawn with 49.Rh7. In the event of 48...Rh4 we have to be careful: 49.Rf5? is ineffective because of 49...Rh1+! 50.Kxh1 Ng3+. But 49.Ng6! with a subsequent 50.Ne5 is very strong.

## 48...Kc6 49.Rf5



[FEN "8/8/1pk4p/p2p1R2/P1pPnNr1/2P5/1P4P1/6K1 b - - 0 49"]

## 1...?

It becomes clear that with the king on c6 an attempt to defend the pawn with 49...Rg5? will be met by a mini-combination: 50.Nxd5! Rxf5 51.Ne7+.

**49...Nd6? 50.Rf6 Rh4 51.g3 Rg4 52.Kg2+- h5 53.Nxh5 Kd7 54.Kf3 Rg8 55.Nf4!?** (55.g4) **55...Rxc3+** (55...Ne4 56.Nxd5) **56.Kxc3 Ne4+ 57.Kg4 Nxf6+ 58.Kf5 Ne4 59.Nxd5 Nd6+ 60.Ke5 Nf7+ 61.Kf6** Black resigned.

Even if the prophylactic measures taken do not objectively change the evaluation of a position, they give us definite psychological advantages and increase our practical chances of success. When we manage to make it more difficult for our opponent to implement his plans, he is forced to switch to solving newly-arisen problems which he cannot cope with for a while. We saw this kind of picture in the previous example Navara – Kramnik. And here too: in the position in the final diagram Black could have successfully held the defense if he had found 49...Rh4! 50.Nxd5 (on 50.Ng6 the same reply follows) 50...Rh1+! 51.Kxh1 Ng3+ 52.Kh2(g1) Nxf5 53.g4 (53.Nf6 Ne3) 53...Nxd4 with a likely draw.

## Exercises

A few words about the exercises given below. The logic of a solution in

positional examples is easy to explain in words, but sometimes it is not as simple to prove in variations. The computer often does not give a clear advantage to one path or another, assessing them as almost equivalent. But chess players are not computers, they cannot award the variations they examine precise numerical values, and they are forced to depend on positional factors when calculating and evaluating. And the benefits for improvement from discussing and thinking about these factors will be greater. I recommend that you give priority to human logic over the numbers that appear on the screen (if, of course, they are not based on strong moves that were missed in your analysis or mine).

On the other hand, sometimes you can approach a position differently, and suggesting a solution is not always strictly obligatory. After all, comparing my arguments with your own in any case will be useful, regardless of which of them you ultimately decide is more correct.

And one more thing. Sometimes the suggested path does not determine that the final evaluation of the situation is in your favor, but merely makes your opponent's task harder. After investigating a position, he may solve the problems facing him, but often he will not cope with them. That's exactly how things are in tournament games too: if there is no arithmetically precise solution that forces a favorable outcome for us, we look for and choose something that promises us practical chances of success. The exercises in this section will help you to training in this approach.

**Hort – G. Kuzmin**  
West Germany, 1981



[FEN "5nk1/5p2/6p1/Q7/4B1Pp/P2P3P/  
1q3PK1/8 w - - 0 37"]

1.?

**Bastrikov – Yakovlev**  
USSR, 1956



[FEN "1r1r4/2n1b1pk/1p1p2pp/4p3/P1B5/  
2P1B3/1P3PPP/R2R2K1 w - - 0 24"]

1.?

**Spielmann – Alekhine**  
Carlsbad, 1911



[FEN "r3k2r/pp1n1p2/4pnp1/3q2Bp/3P3P/3Q2N1/PP3PP1/R3R1K1 w kq - 0 17"]

1.?

**Kasparov – Martinovic**

Baku, 1980



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1bpnqpb1/pp3npp/4p3/1PN1P2B/2P2N2/P1Q2PPP/R3RBK1 w - - 0 16"]

1.?

**Kasparov – Martinovic**

Baku, 1980



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1bpn1pb1/pp2q1pp/4p2n/PPN1P2B/2P5/2QN1PPP/R3RBK1 w - - 0 18"]

1.?

**Ljubojevic – Beliavsky**

Tilburg, 1984



[FEN "5rk1/pp1b1r1p/4p1p1/3p4/2pP1q2/P1P5/2P1RPPP/R3QBK1 b - - 0 23"]

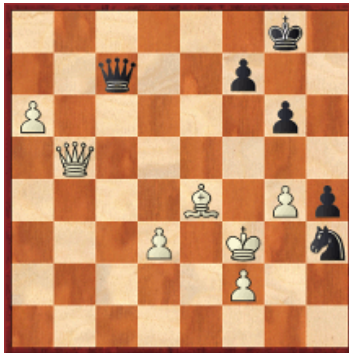
1...?

## Solutions

### 1 Hort - G. Kuzmin

Black gets counter-chances only if his knight makes it to f4. By playing **37. Bd5!**, Vlastimil Hort could have prevented the move 37...Ne6 and prepared an attack on the f7-square, which led to an easy win.

Instead, there went 37.Qb4? Qe5 (now the knight comes out to freedom and the affair becomes much more complicated) 38.a4 Ne6 39.Qb5 Qc7 40.a5 Nf4 + 41.Kf3 Nxe3 42.a6



[FEN "6k1/2q2p2/P5p1/1Q6/4B1Pp/3P1K1n/5P2/8 b - - 0 42"]

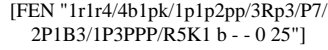
1...?

A draw could have been forced by 42...Qf4+! 43.Ke2 (43.Kg2?? Qxf2+) 43...Qc1! (43...Qxf2+ 44.Kd1 Qh2 45.Kc1 Nf2 46.Qb7 is less convincing). 44...Ng1# is threatened; on 44.Kf3 there follows not 44...Ng5+? 45.Qxg5! Qxg5 46.a7+/-, but 44...Qf4+.

Gennady Kuzmin did not solve the problems, but chose 42...Qc2? 43.Qb6!+/- and gradually lost.

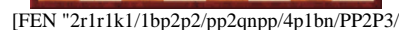
### 2 Bastrikov – Yakovlev

There is no sense in allowing d6-d5. The exchange **24.Bd5! Nxd5 25.Rxd5** secured White an overwhelming positional advantage.



The prophylactic move 25...Rdc8! was the most stubborn, making a white pawn advance on the queenside more difficult. But in the game there followed 25...Rd7 26.c4 Bg5 27.Bxg5 hg 28.Rad1 Rc8 29.b3 Rcd8 30.h3 Kg8 31.Rb5 Rb8 32.c5! Black resigned.

It is strange that the big fan of attacks Rudolf Spielmann missed the natural move **17.Qa3!**, constraining the enemy king and creating the threat of 18.Ne4. Black's position would become completely hopeless.



21.c4! (an advance with multiple plans: it prepares 22.Nd5, 22.a5 or 22.c5) 21...c6 22.Nb3 Nd7 23.c5 b5 24.Red1 Be7 25.Nc4!, and White's position became winning (also, by the way, in case of the other powerful blow 25.Nf5!).

## 6 Ljubojevic – Beliavsky

White plans to seize space with g2-g3 and f2-f4. The continuation 23...Qf5?! 24.f3 with the idea of 25.Qg3 is inaccurate. By playing **23...g5!**=/+ Alexander Beliavsky restricted his opponent's possibilities on the kingside.

24.g3 Qf5 25.Bg2 g4! 26.Qd2 Qh5 27.Re5 Rf5 28.Rae1 Rxe5 29.Rxe5 Rf5 30.Re2 (30.Qf4!?) 30...Kf7 31.Qc1 Ke7 32.Qb1 Bc6 33.Qe1 Qg6 34.h3 h5 35.hg? (35.h4) 35...hg-/+.

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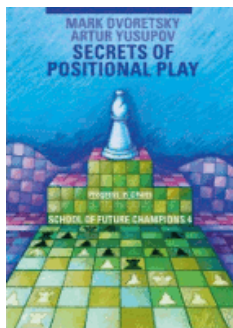
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Prophylactic Thinking, Part Two

All chess players have to resort to prophylaxis, regardless of their playing style and regardless of their opponents' strength. Here is a fragment from a duel between a top grandmaster, an expert on attacking and combinations, and an ordinary British master.

Winter – Alekhine  
Nottingham, 1936



[FEN "2kr3r/ppp1np1p/2nb2p1/3p4/3P3q/2PQB1N1/PP2NPPP/2KR3R b - - 0 13"]

1...?

Black's position is preferable. But no means to obtain any concrete advantages is evident, so Alexander Alekhine started thinking about what his partner might want now.

The grandmaster concluded that White was planning 14.Qd2 with a subsequent 15.Bf4 (exchanging off his "bad" bishop) or 16.Bg5. That's why he chose **13...h6!** – to meet 14.Qd2 with 14...g5, and then, if he could manage it, f7-f5-f4.

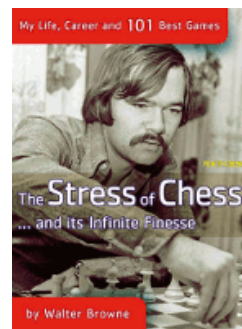
His opponent nevertheless should have played 14.Qd2 g5 15.Qc2 (or 15.f3), or perhaps simply 14.Kb1 and 15.Nc1. But the master preferred the aggressive **14.f4?!**, hoping to advance the pawn to f5.

His plan wasn't difficult to prevent with 14...f5. But White replies 15.Qd2, preparing the maneuver Ng1-f3-e5, almost equalizing the game. So Alekhine preferred a different prophylactic move, **14...Qg4!**



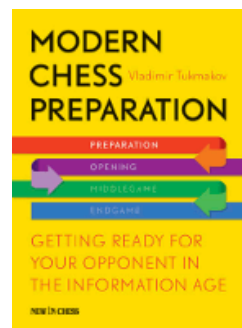
[FEN "2kr3r/ppp1np2/2nb2pp/3p4/3P1Pq1/2PQB1N1/PP2N1PP/2KR3R w - - 0 15"]

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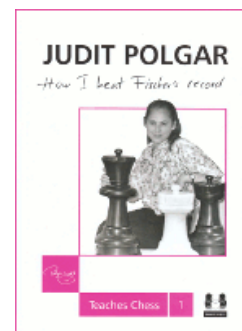
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Of course, he had to take into account the pawn sacrifice 15.f5!?. Strangely, in the tournament book, Alekhine didn't even mention that possibility. Then again, whenever possible the fourth world champion typically avoided moments in his notes that might have put the infallibility of his strategy in doubt.

I think Black still preserved better chances by continuing 15...Bxg3! (not 15...Nxf5 immediately because of 16.h3) 16.Nxg3 Nxf5 17.Nxf5 gf with a subsequent Rd8-e8-e4. For example, 18.g3 (18.h3 Qg6!?) 18...Rde8 19.Bf4 Re6! (so that after 20.Qb5 Rd8, the h6-pawn would still be defended).

William Winter, probably fearing his formidable partner, apparently didn't even consider the pawn sacrifice. Alas, excessive caution usually leads to passivity and almost inevitable defeat!

In the game there followed **15.h3 Qd7 16.Rhf1 h5!** (prophylaxis against 17.f5, on which 17...h4 18.f6 Ng8 19.Nh1 Re8-/+ was planned) **17.Ng1 h4 18.N3e2 Nf5 19.Nf3 f6!** (another prophylactic move, albeit a completely obvious one). Black's positional advantage has grown significantly, and in the end he successfully made good on it.

In the previous examples timely prophylaxis helped to prevent the opponent's possible counterplay in a good position. But in the next ending prophylactic measures would have made it possible to maintain approximate equality in a slightly worse position.

#### Aronian – Jakovenko

Olympiad, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2010



[FEN "r3rk1/1p2bpp1/2p1p2p/8/Pp1PN3/4P1P1/1P2BP1P/R2R2K1 b - - 0 21"]

#### 1...?

Black has to deal with a4-a5-a6. He wouldn't want to prevent this plan mechanically, by putting his knight on a6: the place for the knight is d7, from where it will support the undermining of the enemy center by means of c6-c5 or e6-e5. The move 21...Ra5 is also bad: after 22.Nd2, the white knight is ready to attack the rook. That is why Levon Aronian recommends 21...Rd8!. This move is useful from the point of view of the planned undermining of the center, and it also prevents 22.a5?! because of 22...Rd5.

**21...Nd7?! 22.a5 Ra7 23.a6?! (haste: preliminary 23.Rdc1! was stronger) 23...ba 24.Rxa6 Rxa6 25.Bxa6**



[FEN "5rk1/3nbpp1/B1p1p2p/8/1p1PN3/4P1P1/1P3P1P/3R2K1 b - - 0 25"]

### 1...?

White intends 26.Rc1, and if 25...Ra8, then 26.Bb7. With a transfer to passive defending the opponent retains protracted pressure, and there is no certainty that Black will manage to hold out, although objectively his position is defensible. The best prophylactic against the opponent's threat in this case would have been reciprocal activeness: 25...Rd8! with the idea of 26.Rc1?! (26.Kf1!?!+/-) 26...e5! 27.Rxc6 Nb8= (or first 27...ed=).

**25...Rb8? 26.Rc1+/- Rb6 27.Be2 (27.Bc8!?) 27...Bf8 28.Kf1 g6 29.Ke1 Kg7 30.Kd1 Be7 31.f4 Kf8 32.Bf3 (32.Nf2!?) 32...Ra6 33.Nf2! c5 34.Nd3 Ra5 35.Ke2 Kg7**, and a position has arisen that is analyzed in my article on traps.

Some players, knowing about prophylactic thinking only by repute, are sure that it is a synonym for passive, defensive tactics. Nothing of the sort! The point isn't to defend against everything – it is important to figure out the opponent's intentions in time, and subsequent actions depend on the player himself. Sometimes you really do have to fend off a threat, but sometimes you can ignore it or play to get ahead, take decisive measures yourself, not giving your partner time to implement his idea. Finally, prophylactic actions are often associated with sharp, aggressive moves, nothing like passive defense. This, for example, is what Aronian recommended on the twenty-fifth move of the previous game, but the next episode is even more convincing.

### Shirov – Adams

Wijk aan Zee, 1996



[FEN "r4rk1/pp1nb1pp/1q2pp2/3pP3/3P1PP1/3BB3/PP2Q2P/R4RK1 w - - 0 19"]

### 1.?

White can't play actively right away; for example, 19.f5?! fe 20.fe ed doesn't work. Meanwhile, on his move Black will strive for exchanges: 19...fe 20.fe Rxf1+ 21.Rxf1 Rf8, or 20.de Bc5 (20...d4 21.Bd2 Nc5 isn't bad either). For instance, an unclear situation arises with 19.Rac1?! fe (in the case of 19... Rac8? 20.Rxc8! Rxc8 21.f5! fe 22.fe+/- works now) 20.de d4 (mistaken is 20...Bc5? 21.Rxc5! Nxc5 22.Qc2 Rac8 23.Bxh7+ Kh8 24.Qg6 with a decisive attack) 21.Bd2 Nc5.

Ernesto Inarkiev suggested an interesting and strong prophylactic move: **19. b4!** White takes control of the important c5-square, and on 19...fe?! there now

follows 20.de d4 (there is no 20...Bc5) 21.Bd2+/- (there is no 21...Nc5).  
 Taking the b4-pawn leads to a favorable opening-up of the game for White:  
 19...Qxb4? 20.Rab1 Qa5 21.Rxb7+/-, or 19...Bxb4? 20.Rab1 Qa5 21.a3! (21.  
 Qb2 isn't bad either).

In more restrained continuations Black also experiences serious difficulties.  
 For example, 19...a5 20.ba (seizing space with 20.b5 also deserves attention)  
 20...Qxa5 21.Rab1+/-, or 19...Rac8 20.a3!+/- (here the breakthrough 20...fe  
 21.fe Qxe6 22.Bf5 is debatable because of the exchange sacrifice 22...Rxf5!  
 23.gf Qf6).

Alexei Shirov approached the position differently. He decided to base himself  
 on the capture f4xe5, and in anticipation of the exchange he made a king  
 move, but he did not choose the best square.

**19.Kg2?! (19.Kh1!) 19...fe 20.fe Rxf1 21.Rxf1 Rf8**



[FEN "5rk1/pp1nb1pp/1q2p3/3pP3/  
 3P2P1/3BB3/PP2Q1KP/5R2 w - - 0 22"]

**22.Rc1**

With the exchange of the second pair of rooks White's space advantage would  
 not have any particular significance, so Shirov withdraws the rook. But if his  
 king had been on h1, his rook could have gone to g1 with a subsequent g4-g5  
 or Rg3.

**22...Qd8!**

With his king on h1 the planned 23...Bg5 by Michael Adams could have been  
 parried by 23.g5! Bxg5 24.Qh5 Bh6 (24...h6 25.Qg6+-) 25.Rg1 with decisive  
 threats, while now the pawn sacrifice is only enough for a draw. Analysis of  
 the subsequent course of the battle would take us too far from our topic, so  
 we'll halt our investigation of the game here.

I found an impressive example of the use of prophylactic thinking in the  
 opening stage in one of the books by Scottish grandmaster Jonathan Rowson.

**Rowson – Cooper**  
 Walsall, 1997

**1.c4 b6 2.d4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb7 4.a3 f5 5.d5 Nf6 6.g3 g6 (6...b5!?) 7.Nf3 ed?! 8.  
 cd Bg7**



## 1.?

*Black's early capture on d5 was not necessary but it might make sense if Black can demonstrate that the white d-pawn is weak. One obvious way to remove a defender of d5 is ...Na6-c5-e4, after which Black's forces will coordinate rather effectively. However, this is really the only way in which Black can develop the queen's knight because ...d6 intending ...Nbd7 would leave e6 and c6 gruesomely weak. ...c6 also leads to serious weaknesses so if I can stop Black's above-mentioned plan he'll have a hard time making use of his minor pieces on the queenside and I can gradually turn my attention to playing e4 or attacking on the kingside. The best way to do this seems to be just to wait for ...Na6 and then play b4, but this has the shortcoming that it's liable to run into tactics on the h8-a1 diagonal. So the long and short of it is that I need to be in a position to meet ...Na6 with b4 without allowing tactical tricks based on ...Ne4 or ...Nxd5.*

Rowson includes a short variation with his evaluation, 9.Bg2?! Na6! 10.0-0 (10.b4 Ne4 11.Nxe4 fe 12.Nd4 Bxd5) 10...Nc5 with counterplay for Black.

### 9.Rb1!! 0-0

I checked attempts to initiate tactical complications after 9...Na6 10.b4!, exploiting White's slight lag in development, and I convinced myself that they don't work:

10...Ne4 11.Nxe4 fe 12.Ng5 Bc3+ 13.Bd2 Qxg5 14.Bxc3 Rf8 (14...0-0 15.Qd4) 15.e3+/-.

10...Qe7 11.Bg2 Ne4 12.Nxe4 Qxe4 13.Bb2! Bxb2 14.Rxb2+/- Qxd5? 15.Rd2 +/-.

### 10.Bg2 a5 11.0-0 Na6 12.b4! ab 13.ab c5?!

Black's position is also sad in the variation 13...Qe7 14.Bf4 Ne4 15.Nxe4 fe 16.d6.

**14.dc dc 15.Nd4 Qd7 16.Qb3+ Kh8 17.Ne6 (17.Rd1) 17...Rfe8 18.Nxg7 Kxg7 19.Na4!? Qe6 20.Nxb6+/-, and White won.**

As I have already mentioned, prophylactic thinking is not a very familiar method for the majority of players, and learning how to use it capably requires purposeful training. However, there are players who seem to have "in their blood" constant attention to their opponents' plans and a desire to prevent those plans. One such player is Anatoly Karpov. In the article on prophylaxis from the book [School of Future Champions 4: Secrets of Positional Play](#) a few examples of the work of the twelfth world champion are given, and Artur Yusupov comments on another impressive game by Karpov on the same theme in [School of Future Champions 1: Secrets of Chess Training](#).

To perfect any skill it is useful to get to know what has been done here by the strongest experts – which is why I recommend that you study Karpov's games, and not only the ones I mentioned. This next game of his, although not all that colorful, vividly demonstrates that Karpov was thinking prophylactically even at the dawn of his sporting career.

### Amos – Karpov

Student Olympiad, Mayaguez, 1971

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Nc3 a6 6.g3 Nge7 7.Nb3 Na5 (7...d6) 8.Bg2 (8.Qh5!?) 8...Nec6 9.0-0 d6 (9...Be7 10.Bf4 d6 11.Nxa5 Nxa5 12.Qe2 Nc6 13.Rfd1 Qc7= Romanishin – Podgaets, USSR, 1973) 10.Nd2!? Bd7 11.b3 Be7 12.Bb2**



[FEN "r2qk2r/1p1bbppp/p1npp3/n7/4P3/1PN3P1/PBPN1PBP/R2Q1RK1 b kq - 0 12"]

## 12...Rc8!

But why not just castle? In reply to 12...0-0, Karpov was bothered by 13.a3 b5 (13...Nd4 14.Nd5!) 14.b4 Nc4 (14...Nb7!?) 15.Nxc4 bc 16.Qe2.

Then again, even now 13.a3!? deserved serious attention, as 13...Nd4?! 14.Nd5! Nxc2? leads to a losing position after 15.Nxe7 Qxe7 16.Rc1. But, firstly, White still had to find that, and secondly, he had to deal with 13...Ne5 14.Kh1 (14.f4 Nec4! 15.Nxc4 Nxc4 16.bc Qb6+ 17.Kh1 Qxb2 18.Qd4 e5 unclear) 14...h5!? 15.f4 Ng4.

**13.Ne2 0-0 14.c4** (according to Karpov, 14.c3 was preferable) **14...b5 15.cb ab 16.Nf3 b4**

*Black is probably already slightly better. Amos tries to initiate play on the queenside, but he only weakens his own position (Karpov).*

## 17.a3?! Rb8 18.a4

18.ab was preferable, on which Karpov points out 18...Rxb4 19.Ba3 Rxe4.

## 18...e5!

The pawn limits the mobility of several white pieces at once.

## 19.Nd2



[FEN "1r1q1rk1/3bbppp/2np4/n3p3/Pp2P3/1P4P1/1B1NNBP/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 19"]

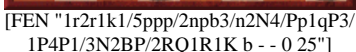
Black's next move was typical of the playing style of the future world champion.

## 19...Bf6!

The only possibility for his opponent to display activeness was f2-f4, as he probably would have played after the natural 19...Be6. But now an advance of the f-pawn sharply loses force, as it leads to a favorable exchange of the dark-squared bishops for the opponent.

**20.Rc1 Be6 21.f4 ef 22.Bxf6 Qxf6 23.Nxf4 Rfc8 24.Nd5?!**

**24...Qd4+ 25.Kh1**



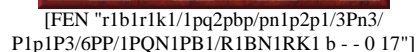
Another excellent quiet move. By moving his king away from check by the knight from the e7-square, Black prepares 26...Ne5.

"Do not rush!" There is time to make a window, improving his position before the start of decisive actions.

No useful moves are evident for the opponent, and in these cases new blunders are quite likely.

I am not claiming that all of Karpov's prophylactic moves were the best ones in the position. Here it is important to pay attention not to the moves, but to the type of actions by a player who would soon become the strongest in the world, and for a long time, and to his approach to decision-making. By no means do you have to play in Karpov's style, you only have to try and take from him everything that is valuable to you.

Montreal, 1979



USA, 1978





[FEN "r1n1k2r/3bb1p1/p3p1p1/lp1pPp2/  
1P1N4/P2B1N2/2P2PPP/R3R1K1 w kq - 0 18"]

1.?

**Larsen – Spassky**  
Tilburg, 1978



[FEN "4r3/1p6/1R6/2pN1pk1/7n/  
P2P1p1P/1PP5/5K2 w - - 0 46"]

1.?

**Vaganian – Razuvaev**  
Moscow, 1985



[FEN "1n1r1rk1/q3bPPP/p3p3/2pbBn2/  
PpN1NP2/1P1P2PP/2P1RQBK/R7 w - - 0 24"]

1.?

**Spassky – Karpov**  
Candidates match (6), Leningrad, 1974



[FEN "4r3/1p1n2p1/1b1Pkp2/p3p3/P3N1P1/1P6/1BR2PK1/8 w - - 0 34"]

1...?

### Yusupov – Rubinetti

Interzonal tournament, Toluca, 1982



[FEN "r1bbr1k1/1pq2ppp/2pp1n2/p1nPp3/P1P1P3/2N1B2P/1P1NBPPK/R2Q2R1 b - - 0 14"]

1...?

## Solutions

### Hort – Timman

The b6-knight guarantees the safety of the c4-pawn – so you have to repel the threat of a4-a5.

**17...a5!**

*A very strong move. The white knight can't go to b5 immediately and Black gets some pressure on his opponent's position. By playing 17...Nd3 he fell into a trap: 18.a5 Nb4 19.ab Nxc2 20.bc Nxa1 21.Nxc4 with a win for White (Timman).*

**18.Ne3 Bd7**



[FEN "r3r1k1/1pqb1pbp/1n1p2p1/p2Pn3/P1p1P3/4N1PP/1PQN1PB1/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 19"]



19.Rd1?!

After getting into an unpleasant situation, players often lose their way and allow inaccuracies, making it easier for their opponents to develop an initiative. That was the case here: 19.f4? Qc5 20.fe Qxe3+ 21.Kh2 Qe2!-+ with the terrible threat of 22...Bxh3! didn't work, but you had to choose between 19.Ra3 and 19.b3!?

19...Qc5 (the queen is heading for b4) 20.Nb1 Nd3-/+ 21.Nc3 (21.Nd2 Nb4 22.Qb1 Bxa4) 21...Rac8 22.Bd2



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1p1b1pbb/1n1p2p1/p1qP4/P1p1P3/2NnN1PP/1PQB1PB1/R2R2K1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

22...f5?!

22...Qb4! is preferable, intending the exchange of queens 23...Qb3. The tempting but dubious move in the game could have led to Black losing the lion's share of his advantage. Also a fairly typical picture: after getting a comfortable advantage, a player sometimes loses his concentration and stops checking his decisions carefully, as they seem natural to him.

23.ef Bxf5 24.Rf1 Ne1 (24...Nb4 25.Qd1 Bd3 26.Re1=+) 25.Qd1 Nxe2 26.Kxe2?

White misses a lucky chance. Correct was 26.Nxf5! gf 27.Qf3!/+.

26...Bd3 27.Re1 Rf8 28.f4 Rce8, and Black's position became winning.

### Root – Lane

Black plans 18...Nb6 and 19...g5 (but not 18...g5? immediately because of 19.Bxf5! ef 20.e6+/-).

**18.g3! Nb6 19.h4+/-**

The pawns on the kingside are blocked, and the g5-square is now at White's disposal.

19...Kf7 20.Kg2 Na4 21.Rh1 Bd8?! (21...Rac8) 22.Ng5+ Bxe5 (22...Ke7!?) 23.hg Rxh1 24.Rxh1 Rc8 25.Kf3 Kg8 26.Ke3+/-.

### Larsen – Spassky

It is important to impede an invasion by the black rook on e2. 46.Nc3?! Is not enough (counting on 46...Kf4? 47.Kf2 Rg8 48.Nd5+ Ke5 49.Ne3+-) 47...Ng6!? (47...Rh8!?) 47.Rxb7 Rh8 or 47.Kf2 Rh8 48.Nd5 Ne5 49.Re6 Nc6 with counterplay.

**46.Nc7!+-**

Now not 46...Re2 because of 47.Ne6+, and the rook is lost.

46...Rg8 47.Ne6+ Kf6 (47...Kh5 48.Rxb7) 48.Nxc5+ Ke5 49.Rh6 (49.Rb4) 49...Kf4 50.Rxb4+ Ke3 51.Ne4! fe 52.Rxe4+ Kd2 53.Kf2. Black resigned.

### Vaganian – Razuvayev

After playing 24...Nc6, Black would have seized the d4-square with his knight.

#### 24.g4!

If 24...Nh4, then 25.f5, and on 25...Nxc2?! there follows 26.f6!

24...Nd4 25.Bxd4 cd 26.f5+/- Nd7 27.Kh1 Nf6 28.Ng3?! (28.Rf1!?) 28... Bxg2+ 29.Qxg2 Nd5 30.Rf1 Bg5 31.fe fe 32.Rxf8+ Rxf8 33.Rf2! Rxf2 34. Qxf2



[FEN "6k1/q5pp/p3p3/3n2b1/PpNp2P1/1P1P2NP/2P2Q2/7K b - - 0 34"]

#### 1...?

Black's pawns are on squares of the color of his bishop, so he can expect a worse ending. You have to use this fact and exchange off the "bad" bishop.

34...Bh4! 35.Qf3 Bxg3 36.Qxg3 h6 37.Qe5 Qf7, and the players soon agreed a draw.

### Spassky – Karpov

White wants to play b3-b4 and a4-a5, conquering the c5-square for the knight. For example, 33...g6 34.b4 a5 35.ba! Bxa5 36.g5! f5 (on 36...fg the same reply follows) 37.Nc5+, or 34... f5 35.Ng5+! Kxd6 (35...Kf6 36.f4!?) 36.a5 Bd4 (36...Bd8 37.Nf7+ Ke6 38.Nxe5) 37.Rd2=.

#### 33...a5!

Counterplay has been prevented, and White, unlike his opponent, will now have trouble choosing a sensible plan, so Black's chances are better, at least from a practical point of view.

34.Ba3



[FEN "4r3/1p1n2p1/1b1Pkp2/p3p3/P3N1P1/BP6/2R2PK1/8 b - - 0 34"]

1...?

34...Rb8!

Another superb move: Anatoly Karpov is preparing to demonstrate activeness on the queenside himself with 35...Bd4 36.Rc7 b5.

35.Rc4! Bd4 (35...g6 is inaccurate because of 36.Nc3; while putting the knight on c3 a move earlier was unfavorable because of the pin 35...Rc8) 36.f4 g6! (on 36...b5 Karpov was bothered by 37.ab Rxb5 38.f5+ Kd5 39.Nc3+ Bxc3 40.Rxc3 with a likely draw) 37.Ng3 ef! 38.Rxd4 fg 39.Kxg3 Rc8 40.Rd3 g5!-/+

Black's subtle play turned his positional advantage into a win. The whole game, to my taste, is one of the best examples of Karpov's technical artistry.

### Yusupov – Rubinetti

Black has to deal with both 15.g3 and a subsequent f2-f4, and also 15.g4. The subtle move **14...Qd7!** suggested by Vladimir Kramnik makes it harder for White to implement both plans (on 15.g4?!, there is 15...Nh5!) and prepares the development of the bishop to b6. Artur Yusupov probably would have replied 15.Bf1 with mutual chances.

His opponent preferred 14...Qb6? with the idea of Qa7, Bb6. But this regrouping requires more time, and also the queen is out of play on a7.

15.Rb1! Qa7 16.g4!+/-



[FEN "r1bbr1k1/q3ppp/2pp1n2/p1nPp3/P1P1P1P1/2N1B2P/1P1NBPK/1R1Q2R1 b - - 0 16"]

16...Rf8?

Too passive! Black rejected 16...Bb6 17.g5 Nfd7, worrying about the fate of the d6-pawn after 18.Nf1?!, and in vain: in the variation 18...Nf8 19.dc bc 20.Qxd6? Rd8 White loses. So Yusupov planned 18.h4! Nf8 19.h5, not letting the knight go to (an attack, and prophylaxis at the same time).

17.Nf1! (but not 17.g5? Ne8 with a subsequent 18...f5) 17...Ne8 18.Ng3 f6 19.Nf5 Bxf5?! 20.gf Bb6 21.Bh5! Rd8 22.Bh6! Rd7 23.Bxe8 Rxe8 24.Qh5 Qb8 25.Bxg7! Black resigned.

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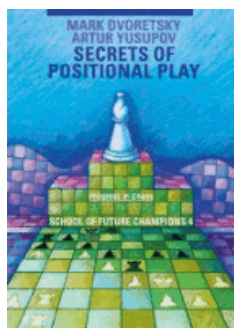
COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Prophylactic Thinking, Part Three

To reinforce the skill of prophylactic thinking discussed in the [September 2012](#) and [October 2012](#) articles, I offer you another series of exercises. The majority of these are slightly more difficult than the previous ones.

**Kovacevic – Matanovic**  
Yugoslavia, 1981



[FEN "3rr2k/pp5p/2p2qb1/2P2p2/P2P1Q1R/1B2R3/5PP1/6K1 w - - 0 39"]

1.?

**Bartel – Kosyrev**  
Moscow, 2002

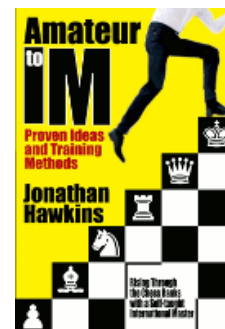


[FEN "5rk1/1p3pp1/p1n1p3/3pP1P1/3P4/1P3N2/1P5P/1KR5 w - - 0 26"]

1.?

**Smyslov – Timman**  
Amsterdam, 1971

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[FEN "3rr1k1/1q3pb1/p2p3p/1ppRn1p1/  
P3PB2/1PP4P/2Q1BPP1/5RK1 w - - 0 26"]

1.?

---

**Ljubojevic – Larsen**  
Buenos Aires, 1980



[FEN "r3qmk/1ppbbppp/2n5/p2pP3/B2P4/  
P4N2/1PQ2PPP/R1B1RNK1 w - - 0 15"]

1.?

---

**Polugaevsky – Bleiman**  
European Team Championships, Skara, 1980



[FEN "3rr1k1/p1qn1ppp/1pp2n2/2b5/  
P1PNPP2/6P1/1BQ3BP/R2R3K w - - 0 21"]

1.?

---

**Christiansen – Gheorghiu**  
Interzonal tournament, Moscow, 1982



[FEN "4rq2/p1nb3k/1p1p2p1/1PpP1p1p/  
P1P2Q1P/3B1NP1/5PK1/7R b - - 0 28"]

1...?

**Aseev – Makarichev**  
Moscow Championship, 1982



[FEN "2r1k2r/3nqpp1/p2p3p/1p1PpP2/  
6P1/4Q3/PPP1B2P/1K1R3R b k - 0 22"]

1...?

**Bareev – Ivanchuk**  
Novgorod, 1994



[FEN "2k4r/pp4p1/5pb1/2Pr3p/1P1p1BP1/  
P4P2/4PKBP/7R b - - 0 24"]

1...?

**Quinteros – Portisch**  
Mar del Plata 1982





[FEN "r7/pp1knpb1/3p4/2p3P1/4PN2/3P2P1/PPP3K1/R1B1rN2 b - - 0 24"]

1...?

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### Cheparinov – Ivanchuk

Sofia, 2008



[FEN "r1r3k1/1bqnbppp/p2pp3/4n1P1/Np1BP3/1N3PR1/PPP2Q1P/1K1R1B2 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

---

### Van der Sterren – Drasko

Balatonbereny, 1983



[FEN "5rk1/pp1b3p/4ppq1/3p1r2/2pP4/P1P1R1Q1/2P1BPPP/5RK1 b - - 0 23"]

1...?

---

### Simagin – Petrosian

Match, Moscow (4), 1956



[FEN "1k1r3r/ppq2pp1/2pbpn2/7p/P2P1n2/2P2QN1/1PB2PPP/R1B1R1K1 w - - 0 17"]

1.?

## Solutions

### Kovacevic – Matanovic

White's positional advantage is evident. His opponent's natural counter-chance is the undermining move b7-b6, which can easily be prevented with **39. a5!+/-**.

39.Bc2? Re7? (39...b6!) 40.g3?

The absence of even a hint of prophylactic thinking – ignoring both of Black's ideas: b7-b6 and Re7-d7. He should have continued 40.Rxe7 Qxe7 41.a5!+/-.

[Editor's note: [ChessBase Mega Database 2012](#) has the game continuing with 40.f3 instead.]

40...Red7 41.Rd3 b6! 42.cb ab 43.Qd2



[FEN "3r3k/3r3p/1pp2qb1/5p2/P2P3R/3R2P1/2BQ1P2/6K1 b - - 0 43"]

1...?

43...c5?

The simple 43...Bf7 secured approximate equality. The incautious pawn advance in the center could have led to a difficult position after 44.dc! Rxd3 45.Bxd3 bc 46.Qc2. But White again fails to find himself on top.

44.d5? Qe5 45.Qg5 Qe7 46.Qxe7 Rxe7 47.Rf4 Re5 48.d6= Kg7 49.d7 Kf6 50. Rd6+ Re6 51.Rd1 Ke7 52.Bxf5 Bxf5 53.Rxf5 Rxd7 Draw.

### Bartel – Kosyrev

A problem on the theme of king activity in the endgame. You should prevent



Kh7-g6 by means of **26.h4!**. On 26...Kh7, there is now 27.h5, and you do not have to fear the move 26...f6 at least in connection with 27.g6!? fe 28.Nxe5 Nxd4 29.Rc7 (or first 29.Nd7), and White's chances are no worse.

Less precise with the same idea is 26.Rg1?! – the opponent can still reply 26...Kh7!, not fearing 27.g6+ fg 28.Ng5+ Kg8 29.Nxe6 Rf5 (or 29...Rf2) with a subsequent 30...Kf7-/+.

The importance of activating the black king apparently was not considered by either player. The game concluded as follows: 26.Kc2? Rc8? (26...Kh7-/+ ) 27.Kd2 (if 27...Kh7, then 28.Nh4 and 29.Ke3) 27...Kf8. Draw.

---

### **Smyslov – Timman**

In choosing a retreat square for the bishop, White must bear in mind the undermining move f7-f5! If, for example, 26.Bg3?!, then 26...f5! and 27...f4.

#### **26.Be3!**

Now on 26...f5, there follows 27.ab (or 27.Rfd1 immediately) 27...ab 28.Rfd1! f4 28.Bxc5.

26...Nc6 27.ab (27.Rfd1?! b4! 28.Rxd6 Rxd6 29.Rxd6 bc with counterplay) 27...ab



[FEN "3r1k1/1q3pb1/2np3p/1ppR2p1/4P3/1PP1B2P/2Q1BPP1/5RK1 w - - 0 28"]

#### **1.?**

28.b4! (28.Rfd1? b4) 28...Ne7 (28...cb 29.Rxb5; 28...c4 29.Rfd1) 29.Rd2 cb 30.cb d5?! (30...Rc8) 31.Rfd1+/-.

---

### **Ljubojevic – Larsen**

White has to deal with both the quiet 15...Nd8, and also 15...Nxd4 or 15...Nxe5. For example, 15.Ne3?! Nxe5! 16.Nxe5 Bxa4 17.Qxc7 f6 unclear.

#### **15.Bb3!+/-**

The simplest way of preventing his opponent's plans. Black faces a tough problem. He risks falling into a positional vise, and in order to avoid losing the initiative he had to take sharp measures, not being daunted by a pawn sacrifice.



[FEN "r3qmk/1ppbbpp/2n5/p2pP3/3P4/PB3N2/1PQ2PPP/R1B1RNK1 b - - 0 15"]

## 1.?

I suggest 15...Bg4!? based on 16.Qd3 Bxf3 17.gf a4!? (17...f6!? 18.Bxd5 Rd8 is also possible) 18.Bxd5 Rd8 19.Ne3 f6 20.e6 f5 21.Bxc6 bc with counterplay. White should probably reject winning the pawn and go for the slightly better position that arises in the variation 16.Bxd5 Bxf3 17.Bxf3 Nxd4 18.Qc3 Nxf3+ 19.Qxf3 Qb5 20.Ng3 Rad8 21.Nf5.

15...Be6 16.Ne3

Simpler, in my view, is 16.Qd3!? a4 17.Bc2+/-.

16...Qd7 17.Ba4!

Again prophylaxis! Ljubomir Ljubojevic rejected 17.Bd2 because of 17...a4! 18.Ba2 (18.Bxa4 Nxd4) 18...f6! 19.ef Nxf6 unclear.

17...Rfb8?!

Black is looking at the wrong flank. He should choose between 17...Nh6!? and 17...f5!? with the idea of 18...f4.

18.Bb5! Bf8 (18...Nb4 19.Qe2+/-; 18...Nh6!? 19.Bd3! a4 20.Bd2+/-) 19.Bd2 Nge7 20.Ng5 g6 21.Nxe6 Qxe6 22.Bc3+/-.

## Polugaevsky – Bleiman

White is better. His opponent's only active resource, which he does have to be careful about, however, is the thrust Ng4. For example, 21.Nf5? Ng4 with counterplay, is completely unclear. With 21.e5?! Ng4 22.Qe2 h5, Lev Polugaevsky was bothered by a knight sacrifice on e5: 23.h3? (23.Rd2 is better) 23...Ndx5 24.fe (24.hg Nxe4) 24...Rxe5 unclear.

21.h3?! doesn't look very sound because of 21...Nh5, although this position is in White's favor.

The simplest is to neutralize your opponent's counterplay with the prophylactic move **21.Bf3!+/-**.

The game ended as follows: 21...Nf8 22.Nf5 Ne6 23.Be5 Qb7 24.Qb2 Be7 25.g4 h6 26.h4 c5 27.g5 hg 28.hg Nxe4 29.Qg2 Rxd1+ 30.Rxd1. Black resigned.

## Christiansen – Gheorghiu

If White had managed to "open a second front" by carrying out a4-a5, Black would have had to constantly deal with the threat of an invasion on the queenside.

That is why Florin Gheorghiu chose **28...a5!**, and after 28.Re1 the players

agreed to a draw.

---

### Aseev – Makarichev

After playing h2-h4, White would have launched a pawn attack on the kingside. After the blockading **22...Qh4!**=/+ , he had to restructure and come up with another plan.

Useless is 23.Qa7 Nc5 threatening to catch the queen: 24...Qd8 and 25...Ra8. But a sortie deep into the enemy camp apparently seemed tempting to Konstantin Aseev, and he did it anyway by another route.

23.Rdg1 [Editor's note: [ChessBase Mega Database 2012](#) has 23.Rd2 instead.]  
23...Nf6! 24.Qb6? 0-0!



[FEN "2r2rk1/5pp1/pQ1p1n1p/1p1PpP2/6Pq/8/PPP1B2P/1K4RR w - - 0 25"]

Which pawn to take? If 25.Qxd6, then not 25...Ne4?! 26.Qb4! (26.Qxe5? Nd2 + 27.Kc1 Rfe8+) 26...Nf2 27.Qe1 e4 28.Rg2 e3 29.Bf3 unclear, but Black plays 25...Qf2! 26.Re1 Rfd8 27.Qxa6 Nxd5 with a winning attack.

25.Qxa6 Ne4! (here 25...Qf2 is no longer so effective: 26.Qxb5 Rb8 27.Qd3 e4 28.Qd2 unclear threatening 29.g5). The move in the game defended the b5-pawn obliquely: 26.Qxb5? Nc3+! 27.bc Rb8+ or 26.Bxb5 Ra8 27.Qb6 Nd2+! 28.Ka1 (28.Kc1 Qg5 29.h4 Qf4+) 28...Qf2! (the most energetic), and if 29.Qxf2, then 29...Rxa2+! with mate.

26.Rd1 Qf2 27.Bd3 Ra8 28.Qc6 Nd2+ 29.Rxd2 Qxd2 30.a3 b4 31.ab Qxb4 32.c3 Qxg4 33.Re1 e4 34.Bc2 Qxf5. White resigned.

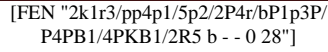
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### Bareev – Ivanchuk

**24...Bc2!**=/+ or -/+

It is important to prevent the maneuver Rh1-d1-d2, reinforcing White's position – now, though, he constantly has to deal with d4-d3. The bishop goes to a4, from where it stops the pawns on the queenside, and subsequently can transfer to b5 (after Rh8-e8).

25.h4 Re8 26.Rc1 (26.g5!?) 26...Ba4 27.gh?! (27.g5) 27...Rxb5 28.Bg3?!



Quinteros – Portisch

Lajos Portisch found a brilliant solution to the problem.

[FEN "2r5/pp1knp2/3p4/2p3P1/3bPN2/  
2PP2P1/PP4K1/R1B1rN2 w - - 0 26"]

Cheparinov – Ivanchuk

**Van der Sterren – Drasko**

It is important to take the g4-square away from the bishop, which can be achieved by means of **23...h5!** In reply to 24.Qd6, the continuation 24...Rxf2? 25.Rf3+- does not work, but 24...Bc8= is simple enough.

In the game there followed 23...Rf4? 24.Bg4! Kh8?! (24...Qe7 25.h4!) 25.f3! – White improved his position and got an advantage.

---

### Simagin – Petrosian

**17.h4!+/-**

*This move seems risky, but it is precisely in this way that White paralyzes Black's attack on the kingside (Simagin).*

On 17.c4, there would have followed 17...g5! 18.c5 (18.h4!?) 18...Be7 19. Bxf4 Qxf4 (19...gf 20.Ne2=) 20.Qxf4+ gf 21.Ne2 f3!? unclear.

17...N4d5 18.Ne4 Nxe4 19.Bxe4 Nf6 20.Bc2 Ng4 21.g3 Rhe8 22.a5! e5



[FEN "1k1rr3/ppq2pp1/2pb4/P3p2p/3P2nP/2P2QP1/1PB2P2/R1B1R1K1 w - - 0 23"]

### 1.?

23.Bg5! (the bishop-pair begin demonstrating their power) 23...f6 24.Bd2 (threatening 25.Bg6) 24...ed 25.cd (25.Rxe8! Rxe8 26.cd+/- is more precise) 25...Rxe1+ 26.Rxe1 c5 (26...Bc5!?) 27.a6! cd, and now instead of 28.Ba5?! b6 29.Bd2 Ne5 unclear, White should have continued 28.Be4! ba 29.Qd3 Ne5 (29...Qb6 30.Bg2!+- [Simagin]) 30.Qxa6 Qb6 31.Qa4+/-.

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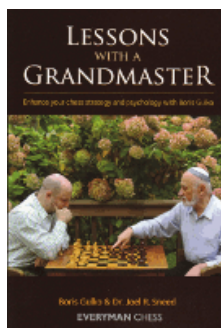
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## From the World of "The Matrix" and "Terminator"

With considerable pleasure I studied the superb book by Boris Gulko and Joel Sneed that recently appeared in English, *Lessons with a Grandmaster*. (I would also like to see it come out in Russian soon.) The book consists of twenty-five of Gulko's games, which he demonstrates to his student and co-author, who asks him questions along the way associated with the search for the best moves, with Gulko then explaining the obvious or hidden ideas behind the various solutions.

The games offered for the readers' attention teach the subtleties of positional play and the technique of playing endings. The co-authors also decided to prepare a second volume dedicated to combinational and dynamic play. One of the crazy duels included in [the new book](#) was published in the fourth issue of the magazine *64-Chess Review* for 2012. Here is a fragment of that game.

**Bronstein – Gulko**  
Moscow Championship, 1968



[FEN "1k1r4/pP4p1/Q4p2/3p1KP1/B4P2/  
R6r/1P4q1/2B2R2 b - - 0 29"]

Gulko's position was lost just before this, but now the worst is behind him. *Black had to decide if he would be satisfied with perpetual check (29...Qe4+ 30.Kg4 Qg2+) or continue the game.*

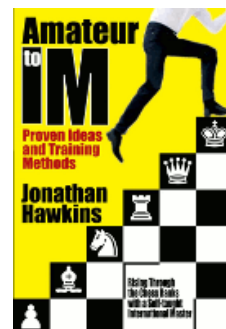
The young master (Boris was not yet a grandmaster at the time) took a risk, choosing **29...fg!?** (threatening 30...Rf8+). In the game the risk justified itself. The exchange of rooks 30.Rxh3? that his opponent undertook allowed Black to achieve a win by force: 30...Rf8+ 31.Kg6 (31.Ke5 Qe4+ 32.Kd6 Rf6+) 31...gf+ 32.Kh7 Qxh3+ 33.Kxg7 Qh8+ 34.Kg6 Rg8+ 35.Kf5 Qh7+! (only this! – all the other checks even lose) 36.Ke5 Qe4+ 37.Kd6 Rg6+ 38.Kc5 Rxa6 39.Bxf4+ Kxb7 40.Bb5 Ra5. White resigned.

The beautiful move 30.Be8!, cutting off the rook's path to f8, allowed David Bronstein to avoid defeat. Black would have had to give perpetual check anyway.

It is clear that postponing the draw agreement by a move, forcing his opponent to solve one more additional problem, was very smart and practical on Gulko's part. But only on the condition that White did not actually find some unpleasant retort.

In the past any such retort probably could not have been found. The surprises began when the computer joined the search.

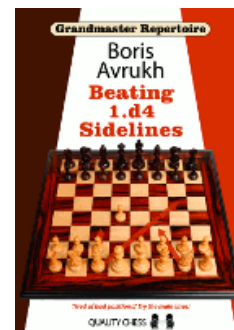
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Let's take a look at **30.Re1!!** White removes the e4-square from the queen and is preparing for a king retreat to the e-file. But his opponent simply eats up the rook: **30...Rxa3**.



[FEN "1k1r4/pP4p1/Q7/3p1Kp1/B4P2/r7/  
1P4q1/2B1R3 w - - 0 31"]

**1.?**

On 31.ba? Qh3+, White is bad, as the rook on e1 is inevitably lost. The king flight 31.Kg6? gf+ 32.Kf7 is efficiently refuted by means of 32...Re3!! 33. Bxe3 fe (threatening a fatal check on the opening f-file) 34.Qe2 Qe4 35.Qxe3 Qf5+ 36.Kxg7 Qf8+ 37.Kg6 Rd6+, and so on.

But an amazing quiet move can be found, **31.Qa5!!**, after which the advantage transfers to White. (By the way, there is also 31.Qc6!? Qh3+ 32.Ke5, but here the position is unclear.) With the queen on a5, the d8-rook comes under attack, which considerably restricts Black's choices. 31...Rf8+ 32.Ke5 Ra1 (32...Re8+ 33.Kd6) 33.Qc5! Rd8 34.Bd7! loses quickly. Subsequent events may develop like this: 31...Qh3+ 32.Ke5 Qh8! (the only way to maintain the tension) 33.ba g6+ 34.Ke6 Qf8! (34...Qg8+ 35.Kf6 Qf8+ 36.Kxg6!+-) 35. Qxd8+! (there are no other ways to fight for a win) 35...Qxd8 36.fg (or 36. Bd2), and White preserves a tangible advantage.

Gulko cut off the analysis at the move 31.Qa5!!, giving the following comments: *This variation is from the world of The Matrix and Terminator – such a thing can't come into a human head, and we won't examine it.*

He is right, of course: in a real chess game such finds are extremely improbable. But in training it makes sense for ambitious players to sometimes try their strength in a search for these kinds of computer solutions. I do not mean masses of variations without any clear ideas, of course, the evaluation of which only appears as the result of a long series of not completely comprehensible and sometimes not completely compulsory moves – this "computerism" is a sin committed by many modern analysts. No, I am talking specifically about clear ideas: unexpected, non-standard, but very strong moves. When we train ourselves in this area we develop our imagination and expand our view of the horizons of the possible in chess, which will probably help us on occasion to find something similar in tournament battles, too. Only dour pragmatists who understand little about the reality of coaching and have not achieved any significant coaching successes doubt the benefits of trying to "look beyond the horizon" in the training process. Incidentally, many acknowledged authorities, and above all Mikhail Botvinnik, solved studies regularly and recommended that others should as well. As in them we also search for unexpected and difficult ideas – in essence the same computerish ones, but nevertheless thought up by inventive chess composers, not machines.

I will acquaint you with some of my analysis, which includes unusual solutions from the world of The Matrix and Terminator, that are almost impossible to find in tournament game conditions.

**I. Popov – Khairullin**  
Ulan-Ude, 2009



[FEN "r7/pp6/4k3/2p1np2/7P/2P2pP1/PPB2K2/3R4 w - - 0 33"]

White's position is preferable. He probably should have played 33.Bb3+!? c4 34.Bc2, to get the d4-square for the rook.

In the game there followed the straightforward **33.Rd2?!** White created the threat of 34.Bd1, but that is not too difficult to neutralize by preparing the jab f5-f4! with the move 33...Rg8 or 33...Rf8. The question is, which one of them is correct? Or, to be more precise: are there any hidden drawbacks to one of these moves?

Ildar Khairullin "didn't spot it," choosing **33...Rg8?!**



[FEN "6r1/pp6/4k3/2p1np2/7P/2P2pP1/PPBR1K2/8 w - - 0 34"]

## 1.?

In the game, Black's mistake was left unpunished. After 34.Rd1?! (34.Bd1 f4=) 34...f4 35.Rg1 Rg4 (35...fg+!? 36.Rxg3 Rd8) 36.gf Rxf4 37.Rh1 Rg4 38. Bd1 Rg2+ 39.Ke3 f2 40.Rf1 Rh2 41.Be2 Rxh4, the players agreed to a draw.

Neither grandmaster noticed the elegant prophylactic move **34.Rd4!!**, preventing f5-f4. If you refuse to take the rook in favor of 34...b5, then there follows 35.Rf4 (35.Bb3+ c4 36.Bc2) 35...Rf8 36.h5 is not bad either – all of Black's forces are tied up and his position remains difficult. He also faces a tough battle for a draw after **34...cd 35.Bb3+ Kd6** (or 35...Kf6!? 36.Bxg8 d3 37.Ke3) **36.Bxg8 d3 37.Bb3** (37.Ke3) **37...b5 38.Bd1+/-**.

That example is probably positioned on the border of "human" and "computer" chess. It does not seem particularly difficult, but just try finding it in tournament game conditions, when there is very little time left on your clock! It is much easier to deal with the problem in training: there you can guess that the position contains something interesting and, perhaps, not completely typical.

**Acs – Korchnoi**  
Ohrid, 2001





[FEN "6rk/R7/4ppp1/3p2RP/5r2/P5Q1/5P2/6K1 b - - 0 31"]

1...?

Viktor Korchnoi undertook an incorrect combination: 31...Qxg5?? 32.Qxg5 gh, and after 33.Ra8! Black resigned because of 33...Rg4+ 34.Qxg4 hg 35.Rxg8+ Kxg8 36.a4+-.

31...Rf5?? 32.hg! with inevitable mate, or 31...Rxf2?? 32.hg! Rf1+ 33.Kg2 Rf2+ 34.Kh3 both lost.

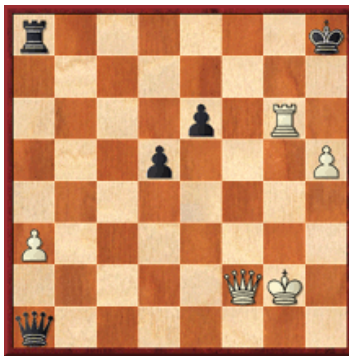
31...Rf3?! is better – after 32.Qe5! the endgame is drawn. But can't more be achieved?

We can find the idea Rg8, Qa1+ and Rxf2+, then determine the precise move order.

**31...Rf8!! 32.Rxg6 (or 32.hg) 32...Qa1+ 33.Kg2 Rxf2+ 34.Qxf2 Rxf2+ 35.Kxf2 Qd4+ and 36...Qxa7+-**

32.Ra8 Rxa8 33.Rxg6 Qf8 (33...Qa1+ 34.Kh2 Rf6!+-) 34.Qg5 Ra7+- does not help White.

But in the case of 31...Qa1+? 32.Kg2 Rg8 the move 33.Ra8! gains in strength significantly: 33...Rxf2+ (33...Rxa8 34.Qxf4+-) 34.Qxf2 Rxa8 35.Rxg6 (35.hg Qg7!= is worse).



[FEN "r6k/8/4p1R1/3p3P/8/P7/5QK1/q7 b - - 0 35"]

1...?

A tricky problem for the process of elimination. White has two threats: 36.Qd2! and 36.Rh6+ Kg7 37.Qg3+! The move that suggests itself, 35...Rg8?, is refuted by means of the computerish 36.a4!! A modest pawn advance puts Black in a *zugzwang* position: 36...Qe5(c3) 37.Rxg8+ Kxg8 38.Qg3+ or 36...Rxg6+ 37.hg Kg7 (37...Qg7 38.Qh4+ Kg8 39.Qd8+) 38.Qf7+ Kh6 39.g7 Qb2+ 40.Kg3 Qc3+ (40...Qb3+ 41.Qf3!) 41.Kg4 Qd4+ 42.Qf4+ with a win.

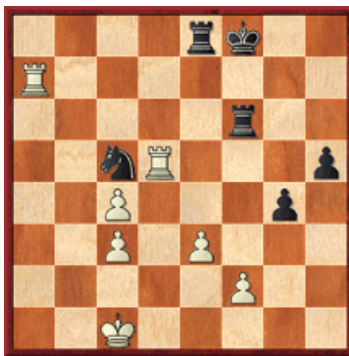
The only defense is 35...Qc3! After 36.Rh6+ Kg7 37.Rxe6 Kh8!, Black's position is worse, but no forced loss is evident.

Another example from a Korchnoi game – a more complicated one – and also

intended for training in the use of the process of elimination.

### Korchnoi – Timman

London, 1980



[FEN "4rk2/R7/5r2/2nR3p/2P3p1/  
2P1P3/5P2/2K5 b - - 0 37"]

#### 1...?

There are not many pawns left on the board (and soon there will be even fewer), and the white rooks are very active, so it is quite difficult for Black to win.

Defending the h5-pawn by means of 37...Re5 (planning 38.Rxe5? Nd3+ and 39...Nxe5) does not work: 38.Rd8+! Re8 39.Rd5.

The knight sacrifice 37...Rxf2? does not give Black anything: 38.Rxc5 g3 (38...Rxe3 39.Kd1=) 39.Rxh5 (threatening mate), and if 39...Re7, then 40.Ra8+.

In the game there followed 37...Nb3+? 38.Kc2 (38.Kb2!? Rb8 39.Rxh5= also made sense) 38...Rb8 39.Rxh5 Rxf2+ 40.Kd1 Rd8+ 41.Ke1 Rf7 42.Rxf7+. Draw.

The only winning try is associated with **37...Ne4! 38.Rxh5 Kg8**. Hopeless is 39.Rhh7 Rg6!. Most likely Jan Timman was put off by **39.Rah7!** The continuation 39...Rxf2? 40.Rh8+ Kf7 41.R5h7+ Kg6 42.Rh6+! leads to an immediate draw. But it is possible to play **39...Ref8**.



[FEN "5rk1/7R/5r2/7R/2P1n1p1/  
2P1P3/5P2/2K5 w - - 0 40"]

#### 1.?

The response **40.Re7** looks unpleasant, on the knight retreat planning to give perpetual check on the g5- and h5-squares. Only after the game Timman found the winning blow **40...g3!!**

In the case of 41.fg, the king falls into a mating net: 41...Rf1+ 42.Kb2 R8f2+ 43.Ka3 Ra1+ 44.Kb3 Rb1+ 45.Ka3 Nxc3+, or 42.Kc2 R8f2+ 43.Kd3 (43.Kb3 Rb1+) 43...Nf6! 44.Rg5+ Kf8, threatening 45...Rd1#. No help either is 41.Rhh7 R8f7! 42.Rhxf7 (42.Rexf7 Rxf7 43.Rxf7 g2!+) 42...gf! (but not 42...Rxf7? 43.Re8+) 43.Rg7+ Kf8+.

Checking the exercise on my computer I came up against the surprising resource **40.c5!!**. The pawn advance distracts Black's forces, and what is more his possible attack becomes less dangerous, as the c4-square has been freed up for the white king. I did not manage to find a path to a win. Here is an example variation: 40...Nxf2 41.c6 g3 42.Kc2! Ne4 (or 42...g2 43.Rh8+ Kg7 44.R8h7+ Kg6 45.R7h6+ Kf7 46.Rh7+ Ke6 47.Rg5 Nd1 48.Kd3!) 43.c7 g2 44.Rh8+ Kg7 45.R8h7+! Kg6 46.R7h6+ Kf7 47.Rh7+ Ke6 48.Rg7 Rf2+ 49.Kd3.

Of course, the presence of such a "refutation" does not devalue the original exercise. As in a practical game you do not have to calculate the move 37...Ne4! to the end, it is chosen by the process of elimination after establishing that other paths do not promise anything, and here Black retains excellent chances of success. Even seeing the best defense 40.c5!! in advance, it does not make any sense to calculate it – that is not a task for a human, but for a computer program. What is more, the move 39...Ref8 is not strictly necessary: we can also consider 39...Rff8!? and check whether we preserve our advantage after the more or less forced 40.R5h6! Nf6 41.Ra7 Rf7 42.Rh8+! Kxh8 43.Rxf7 Re6. Problems should be solved as they arise – there is no point in thinking about these kinds of subtleties on the first move.

**Tal – Tseshkovsky**  
Riga, 1981



[FEN "r3r1k1/p1Q3pp/1pN2p1q/2nRp3/2R1P3/1P4PP/P4PK1/8 w - - 0 27"]

White has an overwhelming positional advantage: to express it in modern jargon, at minimum "plus minus vertical," or even "horizontal." In the pre-computer era I had no reason to doubt the moves made by Mikhail Tal – they are logical and, apparently, very strong. But checking the game with modern technology made the picture of the battle considerably less clear.

According to the computer, a positional exchange sacrifice promises White the most: 27.Rcxc5!? bc 28.Ne7+ Kh8 (White's moves can be reordered: 27.Ne7+!? Kh8 28.Rcxc5 bc) 29.Rd7! (more precise than 29.Nf5 Qg6 30.Rd7 Rg8+/-). But this solution is non-human: who starts thinking about a material sacrifice in an overwhelming and very quiet position (not a forced combination, but specifically a sacrifice), which is not conducive to precise calculation? I am sure this would not even have occurred to Tal with his incredible imagination, and in any case he certainly did not find the refutation in his notes to the game. Which is why, incidentally, there is no point in asking students to find the exchange sacrifice in training: it is impractical, as there are more "normal" routes that are hardly less effective than the one given above.

Let's look at another possibility: 27.Nxa7!? This move is not a "machine" one – as greed, or, to put it more politely, materialism, is not only a computer trait, but also a completely human one. The b6-pawn is under attack (White takes it in response, say, to 27...Ne6).

An experienced player would not really want to take the pawn, though (Tal did not look at the capture in his notes either). The harmony of the white piece configuration is somewhat disrupted, and the knight risks being stuck on the edge of the board for a while, as its retreat leads to the loss of the a2-pawn. Black replies 27...Qg6, attacking e4.



[FEN "r3r1k1/N1Q3pp/1p3pq1/2nRp3/2R1P3/1P4PP/P4PK1/8 w - - 0 28"]

## 1.?

28.Qxb6 Nxe4 does not look too clear. As during the game the computer cannot show you (if, of course, you are not a "cheater") the modest but very strong move 29.h4!! – the only one that preserves a big advantage for White. It is not obvious at all what White's top priority should be – taking the g5-square away from the knight.

It might seem that the problem can easily be solved: 28.Nc6 and 28...Nxe4 are impossible because of 29.Ne7+. For the same reason Black cannot take the a2-pawn with the rook. But here we are dealing with a completely human problem on the theme of "paying attention to your opponent's resources" (which the computer helped the coach to prepare, of course). The player must take into account such defensive resources as 28...b5!!, after which 29.Rxc5?? Qxe4+ with a subsequent Rxa2 even loses. You either have to give up the exchange (29.Rdxc5 bc 30.Rxc4 Qf7+/-), or go into the sharp variation 29.Rb4! Na6 30.Ne7+ Kf7, in which White retains the advantage, but it is not clear if this is enough for a win.

The strongest is the completely non-human blow 28.Nc8!! with the idea of capturing the b6-pawn with the queen in response to any capture of the knight, after which you win the piece back and White's material advantage should decide the outcome of the battle. Here is an example variation: 28...Raxc8 (here 28...b5 is already far less effective because of 29.Qxc5! bc 30.Qxc4 Kh8 31.Nd6+-) 29.Qxb6 Nd7! 30.Rxd7 Rxc4 31.bc Qxe4+ 32.Kh2, and if 32...Qxc4?!, then 33.Qa7+-.

It is virtually impossible to find the knight jump at the board – but it is useful and interesting to feast your eyes on such an impressive idea, and at the same time to think once again about the inexhaustible nature of the game of chess.

Now let's have a look at how the game developed.

## 27.Rd6!?

Prophylaxis! White prevents the enemy knight from getting to e6 (27...Ne6? 28.Ne7+).

## 27...Qh5!

Also prophylaxis – Black repels the threat of 28.b4, on which there is now 28...Qe2! with equal chances.

The idea flashed past of setting the trap 28.Ne7+, and if 28...Kf8, then 29.Nf5 Qf7 30.Rxc5. But after 28...Kh8 29.Nf5 Qg6 I could not find a decisive continuation (Tal). Here White probably cannot avoid an exchange sacrifice on c5 – roughly the same situation arises as with 27.Rxc5!?, but in a slightly less favorable version for White.

## 28.Nd8!



[FEN "r2Nr1k1/p1Q3pp/1p1R1p2/2n1p2q/2R1P3/1P4PP/P4PK1/8 b - - 0 28"]

1...?

A wonderful idea: by taking control of the e6-square again, White was preparing 29.b4 – as now 29...Qe2 is impossible because of 30.Qf7+.

In the game, White's strategy was completely justified. In severe time trouble Vitaly Tseshkovsky replied **28...Qg6?!**

*Obviously the only move* (not so, as we have already proved!), *but after 29.f3 the chances of running out of time were quite high.* There could follow 29...h5 30.b4! (30.h4? Kh7 31.b4? Na6+) 30...h4 31.g4 Na6 32.Qb7 Rb8 (the white knight cannot be taken because of 33.Qd5+ – that is why it was essential to hurry with b3-b4) 33.Qd5+ Kh7 34.Nc6, and White gets a material conquest (34...Rb7 35.Nxe5). Then again, this path is hardly simpler than the one they chose in the game.

**29.Qc6**

*Not that bad, but there's a significant drawback – Black can make his next moves instantly.*

**29...Raxd8 30.Qd5+ Ne6 31.Rxd8 Rxd8 32.Qxe6+ Kf8**

32...Kh8 33.Rc8 *lost instantly.* The rook endgame that arises on 32...Qf7 33.Qxf7+ Kxf7 34.Rc7+ and 35.Rxa7 is hopeless.

Up to this point Tal was playing superbly, but here he was literally replaced by someone else. I think that he missed 30...Ne6 (or 32...Kf8), got upset, and his negative emotions destroyed the former precision of his thoughts.

**33.Rc7 Re8**



[FEN "4rk2/p1R3pp/1p2Qpq1/4p3/4P3/1P4PP/P4PK1/8 w - - 0 34"]

1.?

**34.Qd6+?!**

The move in the game cannot be called a blunder, of course, but it was much more correct to keep the enemy king on f3, where it is in constant danger.

After 34.Qd5!, there is simply nothing for Black to move.

### 34...Kg8 35.Qd5+ Kh8 36.Rxa7 h5

White's position remained completely winning, but Tal's subsequent indecisive actions soon led to the loss of a large part of his advantage, and the game ended with a drawn outcome.

Black's difficulties in the piece of the game we examined partly stemmed from the unsettled state of his king (true, only partly – there were also other unfavorable factors in play). Let's go back to the diagram after 28.Nd8! and try 28...h6! (preparing 29...Kh7) 29.b4 Qe2! 30.Qf7+ Kh7 31.Qxe8.



[FEN "r2NQ3/p5pk/lp1R1p1p/2n1p3/1PR1P3/6PP/P3qPK1/8 b - - 0 31"]

### 1...?

Black has a choice between 31...Qxc4 and 31...Nxe4. It is completely unclear whether or not the complications in both cases definitely unfold in White's favor. This circumstance also forced me to doubt the strength of his previous moves and impelled me to search for alternative paths.

The variations given below, although found with the aid of a computer, are completely "normal." Trying to work them out on your own serves as a good exercise for training your calculating technique.

A) 31...Nxe4 32.Rxe4 Qxe4+ 33.Kh2 Qe2 34.Rxf6! (essential, as the primitive 34.Qc6 Rc8! 35.Qg2 Rc2 gives your opponent sufficient counterplay) 34...gf (after 34...Rxd8 35.Qxd8 gf 36.Qxf6 Qxa2 37.Qf5+ White destroys one of two pawns with check – e5 or h6) 35.Qf7+ Kh8 36.Qxf6+ Kh7 37.Qf7+ Kh8, and now either 38.Qe8+ Kg7 39.Qd7+ Kh8 40.Nf7+ Kg8 41.Nxh6+ Kh8 42.Qf5 with a winning position, or, even simpler – 38.Ne6 Rg8 39.Nf8 Rg7 40.Qf6+-.

B) 31...Qxc4!? 32.bc Qxe4+ 33.Kh2 Qc2! (34...Qe2 35.Rxf6 Rxd8 36.Qg6+ Kh8 37.Rf7 Rg8 38.c6+-) 34.Qc6 (34.Rxf6 does not give anything here now because of 34...Rxd8! 35.Qxd8 gf 36.Qxf6 bc) 34...Qxf2+ 35.Qg2 Qxg2+ 36.Kxg2 bc. Black has three pawns for a knight in the ending, but after 37.Rd7 his position still remains serious.

White manages to get roughly the same endgame with great chances of victory another way too.





[FEN "r2Nr1k1/p1Q3p1/lp1R1p1p/2n1p3/  
1PR1P3/6PP/P3qPK1/8 w - - 0 30"]

Instead of 30.Qf7+, he can play 30.Rxc5!? bc 31.Qf7+ Kh7 32.Qxe8 Qxe4+ 33.Kh2 Qc2! (it is important to keep control of the g6-square), and now not 34.Rxf6 because of 34...Rxd8! 35.Qxd8 gf 36.Qxf6 c4 (the queen ending is probably drawn), but 34.Qc6! Qxf2+ 35.Qg2 Qxg2+ 36.Kxg2 cb 37.Ne6.

I think the last example illustrates the various aspects of understanding the results of computer analysis and their use in the training process particularly vividly.

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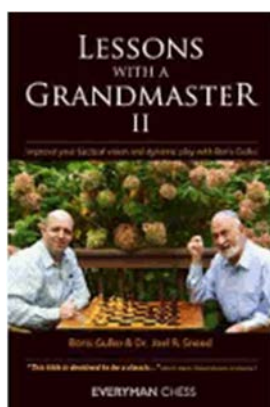
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## From the World of "The Matrix" and "Terminator": Fantastic Combinations

This month we will turn our attention from the surprising computer moves that were present in the fragments we looked at previously to some fantastic combinations that are not only difficult to find, but probably even harder to embark on. They contain quite a few quiet moves, so in the conditions of a practical game they can hardly be subjected to precise calculation and evaluation. This is a serious problem for a human, but a machine can handle these kinds of problems capably.

**Reshevsky – Bronstein**

Candidates Tournament, Switzerland, 1953



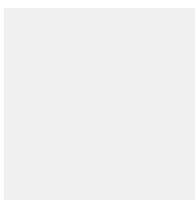
[FEN "3rr1k1/1p3pbp/2p3p1/2q1PbP1/1nP1NR1B/pP2R2P/P3Q3/5B1K b - - 0 32"]

1...?

Why not 32...Qxe5, as the variation 33.Nf6+ Bxf6 34.Rxe5 Bxe5 gives Black a big advantage, does it not?

*In the event of a pawn capture Reshevsky had prepared a devilish combination (Bronstein).*





33.Rxf5!! gf (33...Qxf5 34.Nf6+ Bxf6 35.Rxe8+ Rxe8 36.Qxe8+ Kg7 37.gf+) 34.Nf6+ Bxf6



[FEN "3rr1k1/1p3p1p/2p2b2/4qpP1/1nP4B/pP2R2P/P3Q3/5B1K w - - 0 35"]

1.?

35.gf! Qxe3 36.Qg2+, and Black is mated.

David Bronstein figured out his opponent's idea and played simply **32...Bxe4+!**, preserving his excellent position. White replied **33.Rfxe4.**



[FEN "3rr1k1/1p3pbp/2p3p1/2q1P1P1/1nP1R2B/pP2R2P/P3Q3/5B1K b - - 0 33"]

1...?

Next came 33...Na6 (with the idea of Nc7-e6) 34.e6 fe 35.Rxe6 Rf8 36.Re7?! (36.Bg2=+/+) 36...Bd4 37.R3e6 Qf5, and Black now has a significant advantage, which he made the best of after a long battle.

Kasparov, in [\*My Great Predecessors, Part 2\*](#), awarded the knight retreat to a6 an exclamation mark, and explained 33...Re6 34.Bg3 is *not so clear*. In my view, Black could have got more if in his turn he had found a "devilish combination" that was not mentioned by Kasparov or Bronstein.

**33...Nxa2!! 34.Qxa2 Rxe5**



[FEN "3r2k1/1p3pbp/2p3p1/2q1r1P1/2P1R2B/pP2R2P/Q7/5B1K w - - 0 35"]

a) 35.b4 Rxe4 36.Rxe4 Qf5 (36...Qxb4) 37.Bg2 Rd1+ 38.Re1 (38.Be1 Bc3+) 38...Rxe1+ 39.Bxe1 Qe5!-/+ or 36.bc Rxe3 37.Bf2 Rc3+, intending 38...Rd1.

b) 35.Rxe5 Bxe5 (besides 36...Qxe3, also threatening 36...Rd1 or 36...Bb2) 36.Bf2 Bd4 37.Rd3 (37.Rf3 Bxf2 38.Qxf2 Qe5!-/+ ) 37...Qf5! 38.Qd2 c5-/+.

In all variations the formidable passed a3-pawn more than compensates for the sacrificed piece.

**M. Gurevich – Tal**  
Jurmala, 1985



[FEN "1r2r1k1/3b1pbp/p2p1np1/qp1Pn3/PR2P3/4BPNP/N1Q1B1P1/5RK1 w - - 0 21"]

## 1.?

White not only had to deal with 21...ba, but also 21...Rbc8 and 22...Nc4. There is another threat too: on 21.f4?, besides 21...Rbc8, Mikhail Tal also points out 21...Nc4 22.Bxc4 bc 23.Rxc4 Nxd5. If 21.Qd2, then 21...Rec8 (21...Rbc8) 22.Rfb1 Qd8 23.ab Bxb5. There is clearly no sense in 21.Bd4 ba.

## 21.Qb1!!

A superb prophylactic move. White prevents 21...ba and 21...Nc4 and pins the enemy pieces down to the b5-pawn, preparing to play f3-f4 at the appropriate moment (the e4-pawn remains abundantly defended).

## 21...h5



[FEN "1r2r1k1/3b1pb1/p2p1np1/qp1Pn2p/PR2P3/4BPNP/N3B1P1/1Q3RK1 w - - 0 22"]

## 1.?

And again a problem on the theme of prophylaxis. Premature is 22.f4?! Neg4! (Tal's planned 22...Nxd5!? 23.ed Nc4 24.Bxc4 Rxe3 is also good) 23.hg Nxd5 24.ed Rxe3 with rich counterplay. The strongest was the consolidating move 22.Rf2!, preparing a knight retreat to f1, after which it is difficult for Black to take any active measures.

With the same aim Mikhail Gurevich played **22.Rd1!?**, and here Tal, unfortunately, missed a chance to carry out a pure "Tal" combination starting with a completely unexpected knight sacrifice on the square that White had only just reinforced: 22...Nxd5!!



[FEN "1r2r1k1/3b1pb1/p2p2p1/qp1nn2p/PR2P3/4BPNP/N3B1P1/1Q1R2K1 w - - 0 23"]

a) 23.ed Nxf3+! 24.Bxf3 Rxe3 or 24.Kf2 Rxe3 25.Kxe3 Ng5. In the first variation Black is a piece down (for two pawns), and in the second – even a rook down! But think about the positions that arise, and you will feel how powerful his attacking resources are, and how hard it is for White to find defensive moves. It is no accident that the computer, which highly values extra material, still gives a certain preference to Black.

b) 23.Rxd5 Be6 24.Rd2 Nc6 25.Rb3 (the strongest) 25...Bxb3 26.Qxb3 ba, and Black's chances are at least not worse. Or 24.ab Bxd5 25.ed Nxf3+! 26.Kf2 (26.Bxf3? Rxe3 27.ba Rxb4 28.Nxb4 Qb6 29.Kh1 Ra3!-+).



[FEN "1r2r1k1/5pb1/p2p2p1/qP1P3p/1R6/4BnNP/N3BKP1/1Q6 b - - 0 26"]

1...?

My computer considers the strongest (although also not completely obligatory) to be the surprising move 26...Ng1!! . The continuations 27.Qxg1? Rxe3! 28.Kxe3 Qb6+ or 27.Kxg1? Rxe3 lose; not much better is 27.Bf1? Rxe3! 28.Kxe3 ab-+. The only defense is 27.ba! Rxb4 28.Nxb4 – after 28...h4! and 29...Nxe2 a position arises in which it is not clear to which player to give preference.

And now we will emerge from the world of wonderful adventures (the analysis of which, of course, has been far from exhaustive and probably contains inaccuracies), and return to the game.

22...Qc7 23.ab ab



[FEN "1r2r1k1/2qb1pb1/3p1np1/1p1Pn2p/1R2P3/4BPNP/N3B1P1/1Q1R2K1 w - - 0 24"]

1.?

The crucial moment! Gurevich took the pawn that he had had his eye on for a long time, but, as often happens, with its loss the black pieces, unbound from their defensive duties, gained their freedom and launched some unpleasant counterplay.

Not completely convincing is 24.Bd4 (with the idea of 25.Nc3) 24...h4 25.Nf1 Nh5. The strongest seems to be 24.Rc1! Nc4 (24...Qa5 25.Nf1!) 25.Nf1! – White preserves all the advantages of his position. By the way, winning the pawn here with 25.Bxc4?! bc 26.Rcxc4 Qxc4 27.Rxb8 Rxb8 28.Qxb8+ Ne8!? 29.Nc1 Bb5 also led to unclear consequences.

**24.Bxb5?! Bxb5** (24...Qa5! is more precise) **25.Rxb5 Rxb5**  
**26.Qxb5 Rb8.**

White's extra pawn does not really make itself felt. In the subsequent flawed battle Tal outplayed his opponent and got the win.

Completely coincidentally I got interested in one of the games from the just-finished top league of the 2012 Russian Championship, and my interest was rewarded with this surprising find.

**Inarkiev – Shimanov**  
Tyumen, 2012



[FEN "4r1k1/Rp3pp1/2b2bnp/2Pp1q2/  
3P3n/1NQ4P/2N2PPB/5BK1 b - - 0 28"]

**1...?**

White's last moves have incautiously transferred the f3-knight that had been defending the kingside to c2, which has allowed his opponent to bring his pieces closer to the enemy king. But Alexander Shimanov was not able to reap the fruits of the activity



of his pieces. The continuation that followed in the game, 28...Nf4?! 29.Ne3 Qg5 30.Bxf4 Qxf4 31.Ng4, led to an approximately equal position. An attempt to impede the knight's approach to e3 by means of 28...Bg5?! did not promise much either, on which there is the solid reply 29.Qd3!

Enjoy the combinational extravaganza that Black could have undertaken.

### **28...Nxf4!! 29.Kxf4**

Joyless is 29.Bxf4? Re2, with a double attack on c2 and f2.

### **29...Nh4+ 30.Kh1!**

Terrible is 30.Kg1? Nf3+ 31.Kg2 Nxe2. Black wins the piece back (32.Kxe2 Qxf2+ 33.Bg2 Re2-+), preserving both the extra pawn and the attack.

And now 30...Qe4+? does not work because of 31.f3! Nxf3 32.Bg2! (stronger than 32.Bd3 Qh4 33.Bh7+ Kxh7 34.Qxf3 Bd7 unclear) 32...Qxc2! 33.Qxc2 Re1+ 34.Bf1 Rxf1+ 35.Kg2 Ne1+ 36.Kxf1 Nxc2 37.Bg1, and in the complicated ending that is created White's chances are probably better.

### **30...Qxf2! 31.Nd2!**

The only worthy defense against the threats of 31...Qxf1+ and 31...Nf3. The continuation 31.Ra1? Nf3 32.Bg2 Nxe2 33.Kxe2 Re2 lost.



[FEN "4r1k1/Rp3pp1/2b2b1p/2Pp4/3P3n/2Q4P/2NN1q1B/5B1K b - - 0 31"]

### 1...?

Up to this position it was quite possible to calculate things, but further precise calculation is difficult. Here you have to depend on a general evaluation: two pawns and the exposed position of the enemy king should secure you more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece.

Then again, attacking is far from simple. As the move 31...Bg5? that suggests itself is refuted by means of 32.Bg3!+/- . The same reply also follows on 31...Re2? And the impressive thrust 31...Be5?! is parried by the cold-blooded 32.Bg1!.

In order to keep the bishop on h2 you have to find the non-obvious but very strong knight retreat **31...Nf5!!** Besides prophylaxis, this move is also good because it creates a threat to the d4-pawn. If it falls (in the variation 32.Qf3?! Bxd4!), then the light-squared bishop that has been lying in wait is activated. Hopeless are both 33.Qxf2 Bxf2 (intending 34...d4+ or 34...Bxc5), and 33.Nxd4 Qxd4 (the knight and the c5-pawn are under fire, and also 34...Ne3 and 34...Nh4 are threatened).

### 32.Qd3!



[FEN "4r1k1/Rp3pp1/2b2b1p/2Pp1n2/3P4/3Q3P/2NN1q1B/5B1K b - - 0 32"]

### 1...?

An indirect defense of the central pawn: there is no 32...Nxd4?? 32.Bg1+/-, and after 32...Bxd4?! 33.Nxd4 you have to exchange queens, which leads to an unclear endgame.

Black is right to allow himself the useful preparatory move 32...g6!? But his opponent exploits his slowness, reinforcing the



weak g3-square with 33.Ra3. The combination 33...Bxd4!? 34.Nxd4 Re3 will be met by a queen sacrifice, 35.Qxe3 Nxe3 36.Bg1! Qxd2 37.Rxe3 with a position that is difficult to evaluate (probably still better for Black, though).

### 32...Be5!!

An impressive blow, aimed at exchanging off the h2-bishop – one of the few defenders of the white king (the bishop cannot retreat to g1, as it has to guard the g3-square).

### 33.Bxe5

33.de?? d4+ is impossible, and on 33.Qe2 there follows 33...Qxe2 34.Bxe2 Bxh2 (the e2-bishop is under fire) 35.Bg4 Bb8 (or 35...Bf4), and Black is left two pawns up.

### 33...Rxe5 (threatening 34...Ng3+) 34.Ra3 Re3!!

Effective cover 35.Nxe3?? Ng3# is ruled out. A simple rook retreat would be useless: 34...Re8? 35.Qf3! Qxd2 36.Qxf5+/-.

Now you can expect an exchange of queens for a couple of pieces, 35.Qxf5 Qxf5 36.Nxe3, but after 36...Qf2 White's position is completely hopeless. The f7-pawn soon arrives on f4, destroying the opponent's defenses.

### 35.Ra8+



[FEN "R5k1/1p3pp1/2b4p/2Pp1n2/3P4/3Qr2P/2NN1q2/5B1K b - - 0 35"]

1...?

### 35...Re8!!

You do not want to exchange off an attacking piece, but you have to! Of course, there is no 35...Kh7?? 36.Nxe3 (the black knight is pinned), and the move 35...Be8?! that suggests itself should also be rejected, as then the exchange of queens for a couple of pieces is considerably stronger than it was a move earlier. Possible are both 36.Qxe3 Nxe3 37.Rxe8+ Kh7 38.Nxe3 Qxd2 39.Bg2 Qxd4 40.Bxd5= and 36.Qxf5 Qxf5 37.Nxe3 unclear.

Incidentally, if White had given the check 34.Ra8+ on the previous move, then you would have also had to reply 34...Re8!, as 34...Kh7 35.Ra3 g6?! (35...Kg8! 36.Ra8+ Re8!) allowed the opponent to defend with 36.de! d4+ 37.Ne4.

**36.Rxe8+** (36.Ra3 g6!-+, and White has nothing to move)  
**36...Bxe8 37.Bg2**



[FEN "4b1k1/1p3pp1/7p/2Pp1n2/3P4/3Q3P/2NN1qB1/7K b - - 0 37"]

### 1...?

It seems that White has succeeded: he has repelled the direct threats to his king and simplified the position. But there follows a blow from the opposite side that destroys the coordination of his pieces and allows the opponent to start a new wave of attacks.

### 37...Ba4!

Now the lesser evil for White would be the return of a piece for the sake of transitioning to the endgame: 38.Qf3!? Qxf3 39.Bxf3 Bxc2 40.Bxd5 Nxd4 41.Bxb7. But after 41...Ne6 42.c6 (or 42.Be4 Bxe4

43.Nxe4 Kf8) 42...Kf8 Black retains excellent chances of making good on his extra pawn.

38.Nb3 Ng3+ 39.Kh2 Ne2 40.Qe3 (the only defense) 40...Qxe3 41.Nxe3 Bxb3 42.Nxd5 Bxd5 (42...Nxd4) 43.Bxd5 Nxd4 44.Bxb7 Ne6 45.c6 Kf8 leads to roughly the same consequences.

So, an attempt to keep the extra material by playing **38.Nb4** allows Black to continue his attack on the king.

### 38...Ne3!

Less convincing is 38...Ng3+ 39.Kh2 Ne2, because of 40.Nf3!. After 40...Bd7!, Black manages to destroy the h3-pawn by a tactical method, but only at the price of an exchange of queens: 41.Qd1 Bxh3! 42.Qf1! Qxf1 43.Bxf1 Bxf1 44.Nd2! (the bishop is caught) 44...Nxd4 45.Nxf1-/+ . Black's advantage is indisputable, but there is no guarantee that it is enough for a win.

In this variation Black can reject the exchange of queens by playing 42...Qg3+ 43.Kh1 Nxd4! 44.Nxd4 Bxg2+ 45.Qxg2 Qh4+, but that does not bring him any particular advantages: 46.Qh2 Qe1+ 47.Kg2 Qxb4 48.Qe5 Qxc5 49.Nf5 unclear or 46...Qe4+ 47.Qg2 Qxd4 48.Nxd5 Qxc5 49.Qe4 unclear. Although he gets four pawns for the knight, the white queen and knight duo cooperate wonderfully, providing real counterplay.

**39.Bxd5 Bd1 40.Bxb7** (40.Qb5 Kh7!)



[FEN "6k1/1B3pp1/7p/2P5/1N1P4/3Qn2P/3N1q2/3b3K b - - 0 40"]

The attack can now be concluded in more than one way:

a) **40...Nf5!?** 41.Bg2 (41.Nf1 Be2) 41...Ng3+ 42.Kh2 Ne2 43.Nf3 Qg3+ 44.Kh1 Nf4 45.Qf1 Be2-+. This variation must be calculated precisely by Black to the end: any deviation from it leads to the opposite result.

b) **40...Qg3!** (a simpler path, as here White really has no useful moves) 41.Be4 (41.Qb5 Qxh3+ 42.Kg1 Qg3+ 43.Kh1 Qe1+) 41...Qxh3+ 42.Kg1 Qg3+ 43.Kh1 Qe1+ 44.Kh2 Ng4+, and so on.

---

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COLUMNISTS

## *The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Accidental Tactics

Sometimes combinations or individual strong moves that sharply change the evaluation of a position look accidental and illogical because they run counter to the character of the preceding struggle, becoming possible only as a consequence of an inaccuracy or outright blunder by the opponent. It is not surprising that players, not expecting "gifts," often miss a lucky opportunity that presents itself, even if it is fairly elementary.

I will give you examples of these oversights in the form of exercises, beginning with some episodes from my own games. Each time I will provide a few moves that were made in the game without any comments. Your task is to determine at which point one person's play could have been improved considerably.

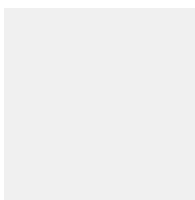
**Bogomolov – Dvoretsky**

Moscow, 1965



[FEN "r1bqk1nr/pp1pppbp/6p1/1Bp5/3nPP2/2N2N2/PPPP2PP/R1BQK2R w KQkq - 0 6"]

6.a4 a6 7.Bc4 d6 8.0-0 e6 9.d3 Ne7 10.Be3 0-0 11.Bxd4 cd 12.Ne2 unclear.



**Alburt – Dvoretsky**  
Kiev, 1970



[FEN "5k2/5pb1/p1q5/1p2r3/4P3/  
1P3Q1R/P7/4R2K b - - 0 36"]

**36...Qc2 37.Rh2 Qc6 38.Rh5 Qc2 39.Rxe5 Bxe5 40.Re2 Qc1+  
41.Kg2 Qg5+ 42.Kf1+-**

---

**Dvoretsky – Chekhov**  
Moscow Championship, 1973



[FEN "R7/5p1p/P5p1/2p2kP1/  
r6P/3K2P1/8/8 w - - 0 39"]

**39.Ra7 Ke6 40.Kc3 f6 41.Rxh7 fg 42.a7 gh 43.gh Kd5 Draw.**

---

### Euwe – Alekhine

Zurich, 1934



[FEN "r1b2rk1/1pp2ppp/p1nq1n2/3p4/3P4/2NBP3/PP2NPPP/R2QK2R w KQ - 0 10"]

**10.a3 Ne7 11.Qc2 b6 12.b4 Bb7 13.0-0 Rfe8+/-**

---

### Fischer – Filip

Candidates' Tournament, Curacao, 1962



[FEN "6k1/1qb2ppp/p3b1n1/1p2pNP1/2p1P3/2P1B1P1/PPB2P2/3Q2K1 b - - 0 26"]

**26...Qc6 27.a4 Kf8 28.Qa1 Bc8 29.Qa3+ Kg8 30.ab ab 31.Qa7 Bb7+/-/+/-**

---



**Plaskett – Tkachiev**

London, 1993



[FEN "6r1/pr1kpp2/R1pp1n1p/8/2PP4/  
1P3N2/P1K1R1PP/8 b - - 0 28"]

**28...Rg4 29.Kd3 Nh5 30.g3 Ng7 31.c5 Ne6 32.Rc2 Nc7 33.Ra5  
Nd5=**

---

**Kasparov – Kramnik**

Wijk aan Zee, 2001



[FEN "3rk2r/p1p2pp1/1pp5/4P2p/3n1P2/  
2N4P/PPP2KP1/2R2R2 w - - 0 22"]

**22.Rfd1 Ke7 23.Ne4 h4 24.b4 Rh5 25.Ng5 Rhh8 26.Rd3 Ne6  
27.Nxe6 Kxe6+/-**

---



**Morozevich – Giri**

Biel, 2012



[FEN "3r4/R2nqpk1/4p1p1/prp5/8/  
2P1QN1P/5PP1/R5K1 b - - 0 29"]

**29...Rdb8 30.Ne5 R8b7 31.Rxb7 Rxb7 32.Rxa5 Qd6 33.f4 Rb1+  
34.Kh2 Nxe5 35.fe Qd1 unclear.**

---

**Grachev – Ovetchkin**

Olginka, 2011



[FEN "2r1r1k1/p2n1pp1/1p2pn1p/P7/  
2PPq3/1Q2BN2/5PPP/R2R2K1 w - - 0 25"]

**25.h3 Rc7 26.ab ab 27.Ra4 Ra8 28.Rxa8+ Qxa8 29.d5 ed 30.cd  
Ra7 31.Kh2 Ra5=**

---

## Solutions

### Bogomolov – Dvoretsky



[FEN "r1bqk2r/1p2nbp/p2pp1p1/2p5/P1BnPP2/2NPBN2/1PP3PP/R2Q1RK1 b kq - 0 10"]

The terrible blunder 10.Be3?? should have led to the loss of a piece after **10...d5!** with a subsequent exchange of knights on f3 and d5-d4.

---

### Alburt – Dvoretsky



[FEN "5k2/5pb1/p1q5/1p2r2R/4P3/1P3Q2/P7/4R2K b - - 0 38"]

Having decided that the simplest path to victory was associated with simplifying the position, I carelessly played 38.Rh5??., and immediately saw the tactical blow **38...Qc3!!**, winning a whole

rook! Fortunately, my opponent, who did not expect such a gift, moved his queen one square further than he should have.

---

### Dvoretsky – Chekhov



[FEN "8/R6p/P3kpp1/2p3P1/r6P/  
2K3P1/8/8 w - - 0 41"]

Black can achieve an easy draw by various routes; for example, 39...Kg4 or 39...f6. But a move later it was already impossible to advance the "f" pawn (40...Kd5= is correct) because of **41.Ra8! fg 42.a7 gh 43.gh**, and Black loses his rook. But I had assessed the position as drawn long before and was making moves more for form's sake, so I missed the chance that accidentally arose.

---

### Euwe – Alekhine



[FEN "r1b2rk1/2p1nppp/pp1q1n2/3p4/3P4/  
P1NBP3/1PQ1NPPP/R3K2R w KQ - 0 12"]

The careless 11...b6?! allowed **12.e4!** Exchanging on e4 leads to the loss of a pawn: 12...de 13.Nxe4 Nxe4 14.Bxe4 Nd5 (or 14...c6) 15.Bxh7+. Black is also worse on 12...Nd7(e8) 13.0-0 Bb7 14.e5+/-.

---

### Fischer – Filip



[FEN "5k2/2b2ppp/p1q1b1n1/1p2pNP1/P1p1P3/2P1B1P1/1PB2P2/3Q2K1 w - - 0 28"]

After playing 28.Qa1?, Robert Fischer logically continued with his intended plan to invade with his queen on the queenside. However, his opponent's last move allowed him to get a decisive advantage immediately with a queen thrust in the opposite direction: **28.Qh5!** The h7-pawn is under attack, and it cannot be defended by 28...Kg8 because of 29.Qxg6! hg 30.Ne7+ and 31.Nxc6.

---

### Plaskett – Tkachiev



[FEN "8/pr1kppn1/R1pp3p/8/2PP2r1/  
1P1K1NP1/P3R2P/8 w - - 0 31"]

Transferring the knight to e6 via g7 and later to c7 made sense, but without the inclusion of the moves 28...Rg4 29.Kd3. But in the game this could have been refuted by means of **31.Re5!!**, winning a pawn (32.Rea5 is threatened; 31...de 32.Nxe5+ and 33.Nxg4 is no fun).

---

### Kasparov – Kramnik



[FEN "3r4/p1p1kpp1/1pp5/4P2r/1P1nNP1p/  
7P/P1P2KP1/2RR4 w - - 0 25"]

The careless thrust 24...Rh5? (he should have continued 24...Nf5 or even 24...f5) could have been refuted by **25.g4!** The continuation 25...hg+ 26.Nxg3 Rxh3 27.Rxd4! Rxd4 28.Nf5+ leads to the loss of a piece, and on 25...Rhh8 26.f5, White has an overwhelming positional advantage.

---

### Morozevich – Giri



[FEN "8/1r1n1pk1/3qp1p1/R1p1N3/8/  
2P1Q2P/5PP1/6K1 w - - 0 33"]

Before putting his queen on d6 he should have given check with the rook: then the reply f2-f4 was forced because of the knight pin. Neither player noticed the tactical resource **33.Qh6+! Kxh6** (33...Kg8 34.Qh8+!) **34.Nxf7+ Kg7 35.Nxd6**. The extra pawn almost certainly guarantees a win for White.

---

### Grachev – Ovetchkin



[FEN "r5k1/2rn1pp1/1p2pn1p/8/R1PPq3/  
1Q2BN1P/5PP1/3R2K1 w - - 0 28"]

Both players' attentions were fixed on the a-file and the queenside, so they did not notice a small combination that allowed White to win a pawn: **28.Nd2! Qc6 29.Rxa8+ Qxa8 30.Bxh6!**, and there is no **30...gh** because of **31.Qg3+**.





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## Training Your Creativity

Besides improving your form before an event and reinforcing your theoretical knowledge, training in solving specially-chosen exercises on your own has another, probably even more important function: developing qualities and skills that are essential to a chess player. Chess success depends not so much on knowledge, as on skills, on the ability to make decisions confidently in the most varied situations. Now we will talk about selecting exercises to develop some important skills.

To train your creativity and combinational vision it is a good idea to use exercises with a relatively short solution that do not require an enormous amount of calculating work, but are unusual and vivid. The main thing in these kinds of positions is finding the idea. Here are two examples.

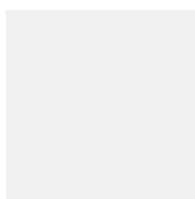
### G. Kissling, 1915



[FEN "8/1p6/7p/5p1P/5P2/1p6/6RK/k7 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

1.Rg7? b2 2.Rxb7 b1Q 3.Rxb1+ Kxb1 leads to a lost pawn ending for White. A draw can be made by means of 1.Rg8?! b2 2.Ra8+ Kb1 3.Ra5 Kc2 4.Rc5+ Kd2 5.Rb5 Kc2 6.Rc5+, but White should try for more.



### 1.Rg2-g5!!

In the easily-calculated variations 1...b2 2.Rxf5 b1Q 3.Ra5+ Qa2+ 4.Rxa2+ Kxa2 5.f5 and 1...hg 2.h6 b2 3.h7 b1Q 4.h8Q+ Ka2 5.Qa8+ Kb2 6.Qxb7+ Kc2 7.Qxb1+ Kxb1 8.fg the white pawn soon queens.

Lucarelli – Carra  
Bologna, 1932



[FEN "8/pkp4Q/q6P/3pb3/1p6/1P1PP3/  
PB4r1/1K1R3R w - - 0 1"]

### 1.?

White is a rook and a pawn up, but how can he defend against mate? 1.d4? Qe2 loses immediately; 1.Qxc7+? Bxc7 2.h7 Be5 does not help either.

### 1.Rd1-d2!! Rg2xd2 2.d3-d4 Qa6-e2?!

2...Bd6 3.Qf5 is hopeless; White should also win after 2...Rg2!? 3.Ka1 Qe2 4.Rb1 Bd6 5.Qf5.

### 3.Bb2-c1

Black resigned.

White's rook sacrifice changed the positions of the enemy pieces on the second rank: the black queen is now harmless behind its own rook.

Completely different positions must be chosen to develop the ability to calculate variations deeply and accurately.



## Fischer – Smyslov

Candidates' Tournament, Yugoslavia, 1959

(variation from the game)



[FEN "5rk1/3q1p2/p4b1Q/2rppP2/4n3/1BP4R/P5PP/5R1K b - - 0 29"]

### 1...?

The white queen was positioned on h5, the black pawn on h6. Robert Fischer played 29.Bc2?, which was refuted most simply by means of 29...Rxc3-+. But 29.Qxh6! would have set his opponent a difficult problem, which you should solve. The choice of square for the rook retreat should be made taking into account the opponent's obvious threat of 30.Bc2.

Vasily Smyslov gives 29...Rfc8?! 30.Bc2 (30.Rff3 Bg7-+) 30...Bg7 (30...Rxc3!? 31.Bxe4 Rxh3 32.gh Bg7 33.Qd2!? Rd8 34.Rd1 leads to an unclear position) 31.Qh7+ Kf8 32.Bxe4 de? (with 32...Rxc3 33.f6 Bxf6 34.Bf5 Rc1! 35.Qh6+ Bg7 36.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 37.Qxc1 Qxf5 the players' chances remain approximately equal) 33.f6 Bxf6, thinking that the attack has been repelled. Let's continue the variation for a little while: 34.Rh6! Bg7 (34...R8c6 35.Rhxf6 Rxf6 36.Qh8+) 35.Rg6, and it becomes clear that it is time for Black to resign.

Another try is 29...Rfb8?! 30.Bc2 Bg7 (30...Qb5?! 31.Bd3 Nf2+ 32.Rxf2 Qxd3 does not work because of 33.Rg3+! Qxg3 34.hg+/-) 31.Qh7+ Kf8 32.Bxe4 de 33.f6 Bxf6 34.Rh6 Qe6(c6). Thanks to the position of the black rook on an open file the bishop is untouchable for now, but after 35.h3 it will get eaten anyway, and an approximately equal position arises with queen versus two rooks.

Having accurately calculated the last variation you can figure out how to improve it.

**29...Rf8-d8!! 30.Bb3-c2**

30.Rff3 Bg7 is hopeless.

**30...Bf6-g7 31.Qh6-h7+ Kg8-f8 32.Bc2xe d5xe4 33.f5-f6 Bg7xf6 34.Rh3-h6**



[FEN "3r1k2/3q1p1Q/p4b1R/2r1p3/4p3/2P5/P5PP/5R1K b - - 0 34"]

**34...Qd7-c6! 35.h2-h3**

35.Rhxf6 Qxf6-+

**35...Rd8-d6!-+**

It is better for White to play 35.Qf5, but the rook endgame after 35...Rd6 36.Rxf6 Rxf6 37.Qxf6 Qxf6 38.Rxf6 Rxc3 (38...a5!?) 39.Kg1 Ra3 is very tough for him.

Lots of endgames are good for practicing calculation, and especially pawn endings. As an example I will give a very difficult study with a classic pawn ending by Nikolai Dmitrievich Grigoriev.

**N. Grigoriev, 1934**



[FEN "8/1p1p2p1/8/P7/5pPk/1K6/  
1P3P2/8 w - - 0 1"]

## 1.?

At first glance everything is simple and standard: 1.Kc3 Kxg4 2.b4 Kf3 3.b5 Kxf2 4.a6 ba 5.ba f3 6.a7 Kg1 7.a8Q f2 8.Qa7 Kg2 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2 (other moves do not help either) 11.Qg6+ Kh2 12.Qf5 Kg1 13.Qg4+ Kh2 14.Qf3 Kg1 15.Qg3+.

But Black can defend better. He gets to the f2-pawn by another route, leaving the g4-pawn alive, protecting his king from checks on the g-file: 1...Kh3! 2.b4 Kg2 3.b5 Kxf2 4.a6 ba 5.ba f3 6.a7 Kg1! 7.a8Q f2 8.Qa7 Kg2 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2=. Obviously nothing would change with the white king positioned on c2 or c4.

An attempt to defend the f2-pawn with the king does not lead to the goal either:

2.Kd3 Kg2 3.Ke2 (3.Ke4 f3 4.Ke3 d5) 3...f3+ (3...d5 is equivalent) 4.Ke1 d5 5.b4 d4 6.b5 d3 7.a6 ba 8.ba d2+ 9.Kxd2 Kxf2 10.a7 Kg1 11.a8Q f2 12.Qa7 Kg2 13.Qb7+ Kg1 14.Qb6 Kg2 15.Qc6+ Kg1 16.Qc5 Kg2 17.Qd5+ Kg1 18.Qd4 Kg2 19.Qe4+ Kg1 20.Qe3 Kg2 21.Qe2 Kg1 22.Ke3 f1Q 23.Qxf1+ Kxf1 24.Kf3



[FEN "8/6p1/8/8/6P1/5K2/8/5k2 b - - 0 24"]

1...?

And now only 24...Kg1!! 25.g5 (25.Kg3 g5!) 25...Kh2 26.Kg4 g6!=.

2.Kd2 Kg2 3.Ke1 Kf3 (here it is already too late for 3...f3 or 3...d5) 4.g5 (4.b4 Ke4 5.b5 Kd5 6.Ke2 Kc5 7.a6 ba 8.ba Kb6 9.Kf3 Kxa6 10.Kxf4 Kb5 11.Ke3 Kc4=) 4...Ke4 5.Ke2 g6 6.b4



[FEN "8/1p1p4/6p1/P5P1/1P2kp2/8/4KP2/8 b - - 0 6"]

1...?

6...f3+! (not immediately 6...Kd4? 7.b5 Kc5 8.a6 ba 9.ba Kb6 10.Kf3 Kxa6 11.Kxf4 Kb5 12.Ke5+-) 7.Kd2 Kd4 8.b5 Kc5 9.a6 ba 10.ba Kb6 11.Ke3 Kxa6 12.Kxf3 Kb5 13.Ke4 Kc5 14.Ke5 (14.f4 Kd6=) 14...d5 15.f4 d4 16.f5 gf 17.g6 d3=.

You can keep checking and rechecking the difficult variations examined above, but you will not find a substantial improvement in White's play. A new idea comes to the rescue: in an endgame with

queen versus the f2-pawn at the appropriate moment (with the black king on the edge of the board) eat the enemy g-pawn, and in reply to f2-f1Q exchange queens, putting your queen on the first rank. For this the corresponding square should be defended by the white king.

### **1.Kb3-a2!! Kh4-h3**

We already know the consequences of 1...Kxg4 2.b4 Kf3, and if 2...d5 3.b5 d4, then 4.Kb3! Kf3 5.Kc4+-.

**2.b2-b4 Kh3-g2 3.b4-b5 Kg2xf2 4.a5-a6 b7xa6 5.b5xa6 f4-f3 6.a6-a7 Kf2-g1 7.a7-a8Q f3-f2 8.Qa8-a7**



[FEN "8/Q2p2p1/8/8/6P1/8/K4p2/6k1 b - - 0 8"]

On 8...Kg2, White has 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2 11.Qb2! Kg1 (11...Kg3 12.Qe2 Kg2 13.g5+-) 12.Qxg7! f1Q 13.Qa1! d5 14.g5 d4 15.g6 d3 16.g7 d2 17.g8Q+. The continuation 8...d5 9.Qd4 is hopeless too.

### **8...g7-g5!? 9.Ka2-b1!!**

Exactly the same idea: prepare the exchange of queens, but this time on the c1-square (after winning the g5-pawn).

**9...Kg1-g2 10.Qa7-b7+ Kg2-g1 11.Qb7-b6 Kg1-g2 12.Qb7-b2! d7-d5**

Again Black tries to turn away from the main line: 12...Kg1 13.Qd4 Kg2 14.Qd5+ (14.Qd2 Kg3 is less accurate) 14...Kg1 (14...Kg3 15.Qh1) 15.Qxg5! f1Q+ 16.Qc1! d5 17.g5, and so on.

### **13.Qb2-d2**

The most precise.

### 13...Kg2-g1

13...d4 14.Kc2 d3+ 15.Kxd3 Kg1 16.Qe2 f1Q 17.Qxf1+ Kxf1  
18.Ke4+-

### 14.Qd2-d4!

Not falling into the trap: 14.Qxg5? f1Q+ 15.Qc1 Kf2=.

14...Kg1-g2 15.Qd4xd5+ Kg2-h2 16.Qd5-d2 Kh2-g3

16...Kg1 17.Qxg5

### 17.Qd2-e2 Kg3-g2 18.Kb1-c2 Kg2-g1 19.Kc2-d3+-

Can players solve this study without repositioning the pieces? Yes, they can: both Artur Yusupov and Vladimir Potkin successfully managed the task in their day.

One of the most important constituent parts of smart technique for calculating variations is the ability to determine the scope of candidate moves that we have at our disposal (or that our opponent has) in a timely manner. Here the coach has to select exercises in which the search for candidate moves makes it easier to determine the best path, allowing you to save time spent on calculating.

### Stupina – Nasyrovayte

Lvov, 1976



[FEN "5k2/5p1p/1Q2p1p1/3pP3/1p6/  
4RKPP/5P2/3r1q2 b - - 0 1"]

## 1...?

Black is two pawns up, and the only question is how she can avoid perpetual check.

In the game Black did not solve the problem, choosing 1...Qh1+?, and after 2.Kg4 Kg7 3.Qd8 Rd4+ 4.f4 Qd1+ 5.Rf3 Rd3 (5...h5+ 6.Kg5 does not change anything) 6.Qf6+ the players agreed a draw.

At first glance it is not obvious why you would not take a third pawn with 1...Qxh3, as after 2.Qd8+ Kg7 3.Qf6+ Kh6 4.Qf4+ Kh5 the checks stop. We might be concerned that our king has gone too far away, but it is not clear how White can exploit this circumstance.

But still, before playing, let's think about whether there is anything simpler. We can take the king off the f8-square immediately, for example.

## 1...Kf8-g7! 2.Qb6-d8

We can take on h3 now too, but haven't some new possibilities appeared for us? Yes, they have. For example, 2...Qb5. Then again, the position after 3.Qf6+ Kf8 4.Qh8+ Ke7 5.Qf6+ Ke8 6.Qh8+ Kd7 7.Qxh7 does not look clear, and we do not want to allow that kind of aggravation.

But there is another candidate move that we will probably like, if we can find it in time.

## 2...Rd1-d4! 3.Qd8-f6+ Kg7-h6

The checks have stopped, but White cannot make any kind of useful move, for example, 4.Qxf7, because of the threat of 4...Qh1+ 5.Ke2 Qd1#.

This path looks sounder in comparison with 1...Qxh3, here there is less chance of making a mistake, and as a practical player, if you can just find the idea 1...Kg7 and 2...Rd4, you will probably prefer to play precisely this.

And you would be right! In the other variation, in the position where we stopped calculating, White can find an efficient way to save herself.



[FEN "8/5p1p/4p1p1/3pP2k/1p3Q2/  
4RKPq/5P2/3r4 w - - 0 5"]

1.?

The unexpected rook sacrifice 5.Re1!! follows, and 5...Rxe1 6.Qg5+! Kxg5 leads to stalemate. And after 5...Rd3+ 6.Ke2 Ra3, White plays 7.Rh1! Qxh1 8.g4+ Kh4 9.Qh6+ and 10.Qxh1.

For those who are typically over-confident about their own strength and who underestimate their opponents' possibilities a special set of exercises can be selected that require attentiveness and critical thinking.

**Taimanov – Geller**

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1951



[FEN "6r1/5p1k/4p3/3pQp2/1p1P1P1q/  
1P3RR1/2r4P/5K2 b - - 0 41"]

1...?

Efim Geller carelessly played 41...Rxh2? His opponent did not exploit the chance that had fortuitously arisen, and after 42.Qe3?



Ra8 43.Rg7+ Kh6 he resigned the game. But he could have saved himself efficiently with 42.Rxg8! Kxg8 (42...Rh1+? 43.Rg1) 43.Rg3+!! Qxg3 44.Qb8+ Kh7 45.Qh8+! Kxh8 stalemate.

### 41...Rg8-g4!

A winning quiet move: Black is preparing 42...Rxh2. On 42.Rh3 you can reply both 42...Rf2+ and 42...Rc1+ 43.Ke2 Rg2+ (43...Re1+ 44.Kd3 Rxe5-+) 44.Kd3 Rc3#.

It is probably worth pointing out that 1...Rc3?! 2.Rxc3 bc 3.Qc7=/+ is not completely convincing. The initially apparently very strong move 41...f6? does not lead to the goal either.



[FEN "6r1/7k/4pp2/3pQp2/1p1P1P1q/1P3RR1/2r4P/5K2 w - - 0 42"]

### 1.?

It is justified with 42.Qxe6? (42.Rh3? Rc1+ or 42...Rf2+; 42.Qe3? Ra8 or 42...Rxg3 43.Rxg3 Rxh2; 42.Qe1? Rxh2 or 42...Rxg3) 42...Rc1+ 43.Ke2 (43.Kg2 Rxg3+ 44.Rxg3 Rc2+ 45.Kf1 Qxf4+) 43...Qxh2+ 44.Rf2 Qxg3 (44...Qh5+ 45.Rgf3 Re8-+ is sufficient too) 45.Qf7+ Kh8! 46.Qxf6+ Rg7 47.Qf8+ Kh7 48.Qxf5+ Kg8 (48...Rg6-+) 49.Qe6+ Kf8 50.Qf6+ Ke8-+.

However, by playing 42.Qd6! White saves himself: 42...Rc1+ 43.Kg2 Rxg3+ 44.Rxg3 Rc2+ 45.Kf1=, it is important that the f4-pawn remains defended.

### D. Przepiorka, 1920



[FEN "7k/5p1p/8/7N/P1P5/8/K1R5/6q1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**1.Rc2-e2! Qg1-g8**

1...h6? 2.Re8+ Kh7 3.Nf6+ Kg6 4.Rg8+ leads to the loss of the queen.

And now the move 2.Nf6?! that suggests itself runs into a stalemate defense: 2...Qg1! 3.Re8+? (it still is not too late to go back to the previous position: 3.Nh5) 3...Kg7 4.Rg8+ Kh6!.

**2.Nh5-g7!!+-**

**Gawlikowski – Olejarczyk**  
Warsaw, 1963



[FEN "3r2k1/1p3p1p/r5q1/1Q6/3pNRn1/P5P1/1P5P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**1.Rf4xg4! Qg6xg4 2.Qb5xa6!**

When launching a combination on the theme of a double attack (2...ba 3.Nf6+), it is essential to consider your opponent's counterplay.

**2...Qg4xe4!**

And foresee a worthy retort.

**3.Qa6-a5! Qe4-d5**

3...Rd5 4.Qa8+; 3...b6 4.Qg5+

**4.Re1-e8+! Kg8-g7 5.Qa5xd8**

In the first of the last three examples White must resist the temptation to win a pawn in favor of a quiet continuation; in the second, on the contrary, after proving that the banal path does not lead to the goal, find a beautiful attack; and in the third, after finding what at first glance appears to be a strong retort to his combination, not be afraid, but keep calculating and refute the opponent's idea. As you can see, the exercises vary in terms of content, but they all work as training to increase understanding of the opponent's counter-chances.

For single-minded players who are not cunning enough, exercises can be used in which the path to the goal is not direct, and a decision has to be made by taking into account the opponent's possible mistakes (traps, etc.).

**Moiseenko – Yusupov**

European Championship (rapid), Warsaw, 2012



[FEN "2r3k1/Q1p2pbp/4p1p1/2R1P3/3P4/5N2/Pr2qPPP/5RK1 b - - 0 23"]

1...?

**23...Bg7-h6!**

The move made in the game is objectively the strongest, as it indirectly defends the c7-pawn. Yusupov's opponent did not figure out Black's idea and fell into the ambush that had been set for him.

**24.Rc5xc7? Qe2xf2+!!**

The same blow can also be delivered after an exchange of rooks on c7.

**25.Rf1xf2 Rb2-b1+**

White resigned because of 26.Rf1 Be3+ with unavoidable mate.

The only way to avoid immediate catastrophe was 24.Qa5! Be3! 25.Qe1 Qxe1 26.Nxe1 Bxd4 27.Rc4, but you would not envy White's position here either.

I have mentioned only some of the qualities that are important for chess players to develop. Of course, they can be developed all at once, offering difficult and tangled positions in the form of exercises, the solution of which requires all or almost all their skills. It was this path that grandmaster Alexander Kotov recommended on the basis of his own experience. But there is a danger here that the first failures, which are inevitable when solving difficult positions, will undermine players' confidence in their ultimate success and make them give up training. Furthermore, obviously essential skills develop more quickly with targeted activities. It

makes sense to switch to solving difficult, tangled examples when enough training experience has already been accumulated.

While the problem of selecting material to develop calculating and tactical abilities can be solved without any particular difficulty, the task of developing the skills of positional play is in a far worse predicament. It is harder to define the qualities that must be trained, and very tough to select the right examples. Try to imagine how exercises would look, for example, for developing a "sense of danger"!

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## The Instructor

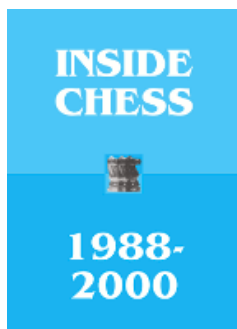
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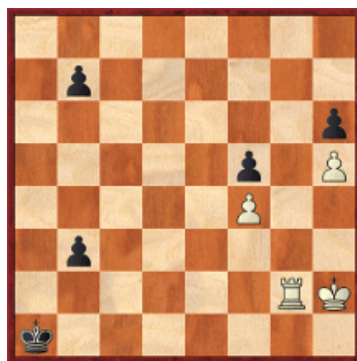
We inadvertently posted the *The Instructor* for [April 2013](#) (#151) in place of the [March 2013](#) (#150) column. Both columns will now be available until May 2013. Below is the April 2013 column ...

## Training Your Creativity

Besides improving your form before an event and reinforcing your theoretical knowledge, training in solving specially-chosen exercises on your own has another, probably even more important function: developing qualities and skills that are essential to a chess player. Chess success depends not so much on knowledge, as on skills, on the ability to make decisions confidently in the most varied situations. Now we will talk about selecting exercises to develop some important skills.

To train your creativity and combinational vision it is a good idea to use exercises with a relatively short solution that do not require an enormous amount of calculating work, but are unusual and vivid. The main thing in these kinds of positions is finding the idea. Here are two examples.

### G. Kissling, 1915



[FEN "8/1p6/7p/5p1P/5P2/1p6/6RK/k7 w - - 0 1"]

#### 1.?

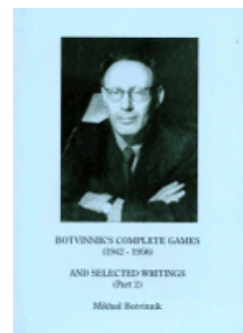
1.Rg7? b2 2.Rxb7 b1Q 3.Rxb1+ Kxb1 leads to a lost pawn ending for White. A draw can be made by means of 1.Rg8?! b2 2.Ra8+ Kb1 3.Ra5 Kc2 4.Rc5+ Kd2 5.Rb5 Kc2 6.Rc5+, but White should try for more.

#### 1.Rg2-g5!!

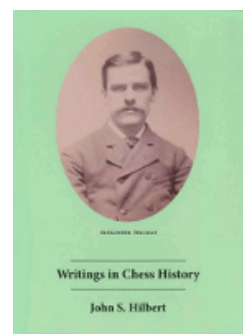
In the easily-calculated variations 1...b2 2.Rxf5 b1Q 3.Ra5+ Qa2+ 4.Rxa2+ Kxa2 5.f5 and 1...hg 2.h6 b2 3.h7 b1Q 4.h8Q+ Ka2 5.Qa8+ Kb2 6.Qxb7+ Kc2 7.Qxb1+ Kxb1 8.fg the white pawn soon queens.

Lucarelli – Carra  
Bologna, 1932

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[FEN "8/pkp4Q/q6P/3pb3/1p6/1P1PP3/  
PB4r1/1K1R3R w - - 0 1"]

### 1.?

White is a rook and a pawn up, but how can he defend against mate? 1.d4? Qe2 loses immediately; 1.Qxc7+? Bxc7 2.h7 Be5 does not help either.

**1.Rd1-d2!! Rg2xd2 2.d3-d4 Qa6-e2?!**

2...Bd6 3.Qf5 is hopeless; White should also win after 2...Rg2!? 3.Ka1 Qe2 4.Rb1 Bd6 5.Qf5.

### 3.Bb2-c1

Black resigned.

White's rook sacrifice changed the positions of the enemy pieces on the second rank: the black queen is now harmless behind its own rook.

Completely different positions must be chosen to develop the ability to calculate variations deeply and accurately.

### Fischer – Smyslov

Candidates' Tournament, Yugoslavia, 1959  
(variation from the game)



[FEN "5rk1/3q1p2/p4b1Q/2rppP2/4n3/  
1BP4R/P5PP/5R1K b - - 0 29"]

### 1...?

The white queen was positioned on h5, the black pawn on h6. Robert Fischer played 29.Bc2?, which was refuted most simply by means of 29...Rxc3-+. But 29.Qxh6! would have set his opponent a difficult problem, which you should solve. The choice of square for the rook retreat should be made taking into account the opponent's obvious threat of 30.Bc2.

Vasily Smyslov gives 29...Rfc8?! 30.Bc2 (30.Rff3 Bg7-+) 30...Bg7 (30...Rxc3!? 31.Bxe4 Rxh3 32.gh Bg7 33.Qd2!? Rd8 34.Rd1 leads to an unclear position) 31.Qh7+ Kf8 32.Bxe4 de? (with 32...Rxc3 33.f6 Bxf6 34.Bf5 Rc1! 35.Qh6+ Bg7 36.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 37.Qxc1 Qxf5 the players' chances remain approximately equal) 33.f6 Bxf6, thinking that the attack has been repelled. Let's continue the variation for a little while: 34.Rh6! Bg7



(34...R8c6 35.Rhxf6 Rxf6 36.Qh8+) 35.Rg6, and it becomes clear that it is time for Black to resign.

Another try is 29...Rfb8?! 30.Bc2 Bg7 (30...Qb5?! 31.Bd3 Nf2+ 32.Rxf2 Qxd3 does not work because of 33.Rg3+! Qxg3 34.hg+/-) 31.Qh7+ Kf8 32.Bxe4 de 33.f6 Bxf6 34.Rh6 Qe6(c6). Thanks to the position of the black rook on an open file the bishop is untouchable for now, but after 35.h3 it will get eaten anyway, and an approximately equal position arises with queen versus two rooks.

Having accurately calculated the last variation you can figure out how to improve it.

**29...Rf8-d8!! 30.Bb3-c2**

30.Rff3 Bg7 is hopeless.

**30...Bf6-g7 31.Qh6-h7+ Kg8-f8 32.Bc2xe d5xe4 33.f5-f6 Bg7xf6 34.Rh3-h6**



[FEN "3r1k2/3q1p1Q/p4b1R/2r1p3/4p3/2P5/P5PP/5R1K b - - 0 34"]

**34...Qd7-c6! 35.h2-h3**

35.Rhxf6 Qxf6-+

**35...Rd8-d6!-+**

It is better for White to play 35.Qf5, but the rook endgame after 35...Rd6 36.Rxf6 Rxf6 37.Qxf6 Qxf6 38.Rxf6 Rxc3 (38...a5!?) 39.Kg1 Ra3 is very tough for him.

Lots of endgames are good for practicing calculation, and especially pawn endings. As an example I will give a very difficult study with a classic pawn ending by Nikolai Dmitrievich Grigoriev.

**N. Grigoriev, 1934**



[FEN "8/1p1p2p1/8/P7/5pPk/1K6/1P3P2/8 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

At first glance everything is simple and standard: 1.Kc3 Kxg4 2.b4 Kf3 3.b5 Kxf2 4.a6 ba 5.ba f3 6.a7 Kg1 7.a8Q f2 8.Qa7

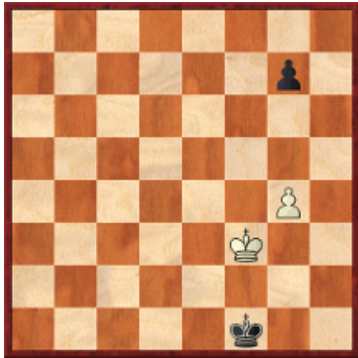


Kg2 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2 (other moves do not help either)  
11.Qg6+ Kh2 12.Qf5 Kg1 13.Qg4+ Kh2 14.Qf3 Kg1 15.Qg3+.

But Black can defend better. He gets to the f2-pawn by another route, leaving the g4-pawn alive, protecting his king from checks on the g-file: 1...Kh3! 2.b4 Kg2 3.b5 Kxf2 4.a6 ba 5.ba f3 6.a7 Kg1! 7.a8Q f2 8.Qa7 Kg2 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2=. Obviously nothing would change with the white king positioned on c2 or c4.

An attempt to defend the f2-pawn with the king does not lead to the goal either:

2.Kd3 Kg2 3.Ke2 (3.Ke4 f3 4.Ke3 d5) 3...f3+ (3...d5 is equivalent) 4.Ke1 d5 5.b4 d4 6.b5 d3 7.a6 ba 8.ba d2+ 9.Kxd2 Kxf2 10.a7 Kg1 11.a8Q f2 12.Qa7 Kg2 13.Qb7+ Kg1 14.Qb6 Kg2 15.Qc6+ Kg1 16.Qc5 Kg2 17.Qd5+ Kg1 18.Qd4 Kg2 19.Qe4+ Kg1 20.Qe3 Kg2 21.Qe2 Kg1 22.Ke3 f1Q 23.Qxf1+ Kxf1 24.Kf3

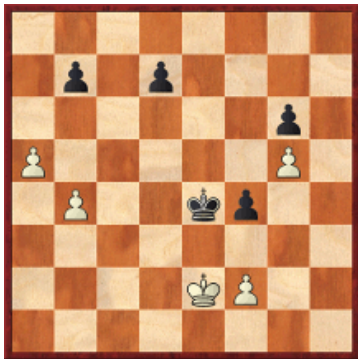


[FEN "8/6p1/8/8/6P1/5K2/8/5k2 b - - 0 24"]

1...?

And now only 24...Kg1!! 25.g5 (25.Kg3 g5!) 25...Kh2 26.Kg4 g6!=.

2.Kd2 Kg2 3.Ke1 Kf3 (here it is already too late for 3...f3 or 3...d5) 4.g5 (4.b4 Ke4 5.b5 Kd5 6.Ke2 Kc5 7.a6 ba 8.ba Kb6 9.Kf3 Kxa6 10.Kxf4 Kb5 11.Ke3 Kc4=) 4...Ke4 5.Ke2 g6 6.b4



[FEN "8/1p1p4/6p1/P5P1/1P2kp2/8/4KP2/8 b - - 0 6"]

1...?

6...f3+! (not immediately 6...Kd4? 7.b5 Kc5 8.a6 ba 9.ba Kb6 10.Kf3 Kxa6 11.Kxf4 Kb5 12.Ke5+-) 7.Kd2 Kd4 8.b5 Kc5 9.a6 ba 10.ba Kb6 11.Ke3 Kxa6 12.Kxf3 Kb5 13.Ke4 Kc5 14.Ke5 (14.f4 Kd6=) 14...d5 15.f4 d4 16.f5 gf 17.g6 d3=.

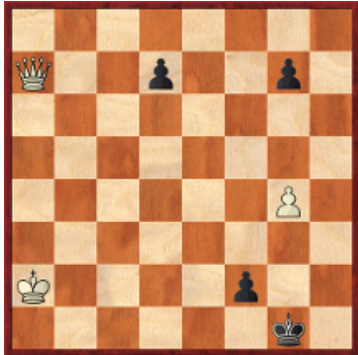
You can keep checking and rechecking the difficult variations examined above, but you will not find a substantial improvement in White's play. A new idea comes to the rescue: in an endgame with queen versus the f2-pawn at the appropriate moment (with the black king on the edge of the board) eat the enemy g-pawn, and in reply to f2-f1Q exchange queens, putting your queen on

the first rank. For this the corresponding square should be defended by the white king.

**1.Kb3-a2!! Kh4-h3**

We already know the consequences of 1...Kxg4 2.b4 Kf3, and if 2...d5 3.b5 d4, then 4.Kb3! Kf3 5.Kc4+-.

**2.b2-b4 Kh3-g2 3.b4-b5 Kg2xf2 4.a5-a6 b7xa6 5.b5xa6 f4-f3 6.a6-a7 Kf2-g1 7.a7-a8Q f3-f2 8.Qa8-a7**



[FEN "8/Q2p2p1/8/8/6P1/8/K4p2/6k1 b - - 0 8"]

On 8...Kg2, White has 9.Qb7+ Kg1 10.Qb6 Kg2 11.Qb2! Kg1 (11...Kg3 12.Qe2 Kg2 13.g5+-) 12.Qxg7! f1Q 13.Qa1! d5 14.g5 d4 15.g6 d3 16.g7 d2 17.g8Q+. The continuation 8...d5 9.Qd4 is hopeless too.

**8...g7-g5!? 9.Ka2-b1!!**

Exactly the same idea: prepare the exchange of queens, but this time on the c1-square (after winning the g5-pawn).

**9...Kg1-g2 10.Qa7-b7+ Kg2-g1 11.Qb7-b6 Kg1-g2 12.Qb7-b2! d7-d5**

Again Black tries to turn away from the main line: 12...Kg1 13.Qd4 Kg2 14.Qd5+ (14.Qd2 Kg3 is less accurate) 14...Kg1 (14...Kg3 15.Qh1) 15.Qxg5! f1Q+ 16.Qc1! d5 17.g5, and so on.

**13.Qb2-d2**

The most precise.

**13...Kg2-g1**

13...d4 14.Kc2 d3+ 15.Kxd3 Kg1 16.Qe2 f1Q 17.Qxf1+ Kxf1 18.Ke4+-

**14.Qd2-d4!**

Not falling into the trap: 14.Qxg5? f1Q+ 15.Qc1 Kf2=.

14...Kg1-g2 15.Qd4xd5+ Kg2-h2 16.Qd5-d2 Kh2-g3

16...Kg1 17.Qxg5

**17.Qd2-e2 Kg3-g2 18.Kb1-c2 Kg2-g1 19.Kc2-d3+-**

Can players solve this study without repositioning the pieces? Yes, they can: both Artur Yusupov and Vladimir Potkin successfully managed the task in their day.

One of the most important constituent parts of smart technique for calculating variations is the ability to determine the scope of candidate moves that we have at our disposal (or that our opponent has) in a timely manner. Here the coach has to select exercises in which the search for candidate moves makes it easier to determine the best path, allowing you to save time spent on calculating.

**Stupina – Nasyrovayte**  
Lvov, 1976



[FEN "5k2/5p1p/1Q2p1p1/3pP3/1p6/4RKPP/5P2/3r1q2 b - - 0 1"]

**1...?**

Black is two pawns up, and the only question is how she can avoid perpetual check.

In the game Black did not solve the problem, choosing 1...Qh1+?, and after 2.Kg4 Kg7 3.Qd8 Rd4+ 4.f4 Qd1+ 5.Rf3 Rd3 (5...h5+ 6.Kg5 does not change anything) 6.Qf6+ the players agreed a draw.

At first glance it is not obvious why you would not take a third pawn with 1...Qxh3, as after 2.Qd8+ Kg7 3.Qf6+ Kh6 4.Qf4+ Kh5 the checks stop. We might be concerned that our king has gone too far away, but it is not clear how White can exploit this circumstance.

But still, before playing, let's think about whether there is anything simpler. We can take the king off the f8-square immediately, for example.

**1...Kf8-g7! 2.Qb6-d8**

We can take on h3 now too, but haven't some new possibilities appeared for us? Yes, they have. For example, 2...Qb5. Then again, the position after 3.Qf6+ Kf8 4.Qh8+ Ke7 5.Qf6+ Ke8 6.Qh8+ Kd7 7.Qxh7 does not look clear, and we do not want to allow that kind of aggravation.

But there is another candidate move that we will probably like, if we can find it in time.

**2...Rd1-d4! 3.Qd8-f6+ Kg7-h6**

The checks have stopped, but White cannot make any kind of useful move, for example, 4.Qxf7, because of the threat of 4...Qh1+ 5.Ke2 Qd1#.

This path looks sounder in comparison with 1...Qxh3, here there is less chance of making a mistake, and as a practical player, if you can just find the idea 1...Kg7 and 2...Rd4, you will probably prefer to play precisely this.

And you would be right! In the other variation, in the position where we stopped calculating, White can find an efficient way to save herself.



[FEN "8/5p1p/4p1p1/3pP2k/1p3Q2/4RKPq/5P2/3r4 w - - 0 5"]

### 1.?

The unexpected rook sacrifice 5.Re1!! follows, and 5...Rxe1 6.Qg5+! Kxg5 leads to stalemate. And after 5...Rd3+ 6.Ke2 Ra3, White plays 7.Rh1! Qxh1 8.g4+ Kh4 9.Qh6+ and 10.Qxh1.

For those who are typically over-confident about their own strength and who underestimate their opponents' possibilities a special set of exercises can be selected that require attentiveness and critical thinking.

### Taimanov – Geller

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1951



[FEN "6r1/5p1k/4p3/3pQp2/1p1P1P1q/1P3RR1/2r4P/5K2 b - - 0 41"]

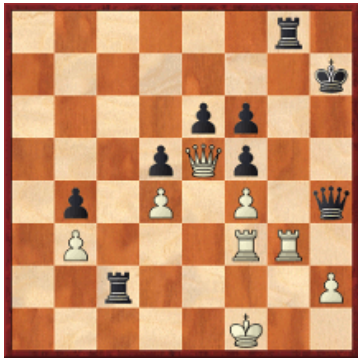
### 1...?

Efim Geller carelessly played 41...Rxb2? His opponent did not exploit the chance that had fortuitously arisen, and after 42.Qe3? Ra8 43.Rg7+ Kh6 he resigned the game. But he could have saved himself efficiently with 42.Rxg8! Kxg8 (42...Rh1+? 43.Rg1) 43.Rg3+!! Qxg3 44.Qb8+ Kh7 45.Qh8+! Kxh8 stalemate.

### 41...Rg8-g4!

A winning quiet move: Black is preparing 42...Rxb2. On 42.Rh3 you can reply both 42...Rf2+ and 42...Rc1+ 43.Ke2 Rg2+ (43...Re1+ 44.Kd3 Rxe5-+) 44.Kd3 Rc3#.

It is probably worth pointing out that 1...Rc3?! 2.Rxc3 bc 3.Qc7=+/+ is not completely convincing. The initially apparently very strong move 41...f6? does not lead to the goal either.



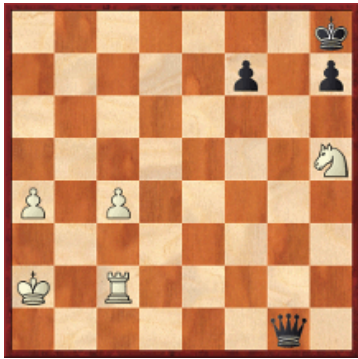
[FEN "6r1/7k/4pp2/3pQp2/1p1P1P1q/1P3RR1/2r4P/5K2 w - - 0 42"]

1.?

It is justified with 42.Qxe6? (42.Rh3? Rc1+ or 42...Rf2+; 42.Qe3? Ra8 or 42...Rxc3 43.Rxc3 Rxc2; 42.Qe1? Rxc2 or 42...Rxc3) 42...Rc1+ 43.Ke2 (43.Kg2 Rxc3+ 44.Rxc3 Rc2+ 45.Kf1 Qxf4+) 43...Qxc2+ 44.Rf2 Qxc3 (44...Qh5+ 45.Rgf3 Re8-+ is sufficient too) 45.Qf7+ Kh8! 46.Qxf6+ Rg7 47.Qf8+ Kh7 48.Qxf5+ Kg8 (48...Rg6-+) 49.Qe6+ Kf8 50.Qf6+ Ke8-+.

However, by playing 42.Qd6! White saves himself: 42...Rc1+ 43.Kg2 Rxc3+ 44.Rxc3 Rc2+ 45.Kf1=, it is important that the f4-pawn remains defended.

D. Przepiorka, 1920



[FEN "7k/5p1p/8/7N/P1P5/8/K1R5/6q1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

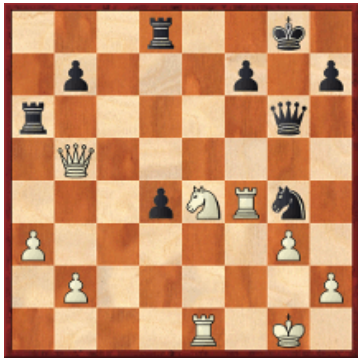
1.Rc2-e2! Qg1-g8

1...h6? 2.Re8+ Kh7 3.Nf6+ Kg6 4.Rg8+ leads to the loss of the queen.

And now the move 2.Nf6?! that suggests itself runs into a stalemate defense: 2...Qg1! 3.Re8+? (it still is not too late to go back to the previous position: 3.Nh5) 3...Kg7 4.Rg8+ Kh6!.

2.Nh5-g7!!+-

Gawlikowski – Olejarczyk  
Warsaw, 1963



[FEN "3r2k1/1p3p1p/r5q1/1Q6/3pNRn1/P5P1/1P5P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**1.Rf4xg4! Qg6xg4 2.Qb5xa6!**

When launching a combination on the theme of a double attack (2...ba 3.Nf6+), it is essential to consider your opponent's counterplay.

**2...Qg4xe4!**

And foresee a worthy retort.

**3.Qa6-a5! Qe4-d5**

3...Rd5 4.Qa8+; 3...b6 4.Qg5+

**4.Re1-e8+! Kg8-g7 5.Qa5xd8**

In the first of the last three examples White must resist the temptation to win a pawn in favor of a quiet continuation; in the second, on the contrary, after proving that the banal path does not lead to the goal, find a beautiful attack; and in the third, after finding what at first glance appears to be a strong retort to his combination, not be afraid, but keep calculating and refute the opponent's idea. As you can see, the exercises vary in terms of content, but they all work as training to increase understanding of the opponent's counter-chances.

For single-minded players who are not cunning enough, exercises can be used in which the path to the goal is not direct, and a decision has to be made by taking into account the opponent's possible mistakes (traps, etc.).

**Moiseenko – Yusupov**  
European Championship (rapid), Warsaw, 2012



[FEN "2r3k1/Q1p2pbp/4p1p1/2R1P3/3P4/5N2/Pr2qPPP/5RK1 b - - 0 23"]

1...?

**23...Bg7-h6!**

The move made in the game is objectively the strongest, as it indirectly defends the c7-pawn. Yusupov's opponent did not

figure out Black's idea and fell into the ambush that had been set for him.

**24.Rc5xc7? Qe2xf2+!!**

The same blow can also be delivered after an exchange of rooks on c7.

**25.Rf1xf2 Rb2-b1+**

White resigned because of 26.Rf1 Be3+ with unavoidable mate.

The only way to avoid immediate catastrophe was 24.Qa5! Be3! 25.Qe1 Qxe1 26.Nxe1 Bxd4 27.Rc4, but you would not envy White's position here either.

I have mentioned only some of the qualities that are important for chess players to develop. Of course, they can be developed all at once, offering difficult and tangled positions in the form of exercises, the solution of which requires all or almost all their skills. It was this path that grandmaster Alexander Kotov recommended on the basis of his own experience. But there is a danger here that the first failures, which are inevitable when solving difficult positions, will undermine players' confidence in their ultimate success and make them give up training. Furthermore, obviously essential skills develop more quickly with targeted activities. It makes sense to switch to solving difficult, tangled examples when enough training experience has already been accumulated.

While the problem of selecting material to develop calculating and tactical abilities can be solved without any particular difficulty, the task of developing the skills of positional play is in a far worse predicament. It is harder to define the qualities that must be trained, and very tough to select the right examples. Try to imagine how exercises would look, for example, for developing a "sense of danger"!

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## The Instructor

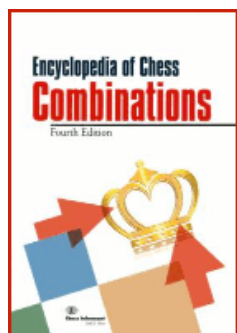
Mark Dvoretsky



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This is the third in a series of articles dedicated to selections of exercises to train chess players. For part one see the [March 2013](#) (#150) column, and for part two see the [April 2013](#) (#151) column.

## Requirements for Training Exercises

Now let's talk about the requirements that examples used in training should meet. It is essential that the exercises should be interesting, that the solutions that are found (or even not found!) should give pleasure, and that they should be remembered for a long time, provoking a desire to keep studying.

**Difficulty of solving.** You should not choose problems that are either too easy or extremely difficult – here it is important to use moderation. Sometimes it makes sense to use exercises of increased complexity, but the difficulties should not be purely analytical ones. Only the pleasure received from examining a subtle and beautiful solution can compensate for annoyance at not finding the solution.

**Necessity and uniqueness of the solution.** Here are some examples, taken from various collections of exercises, that did not seem very successful to me.

**Stefanov – Andreev**  
Bulgaria, 1957



[FEN "rn3rk1/4ppbp/b2p2p1/2pP2B1/q3N3/5P2/PP1Q2PP/1K1R2NR b - - 0 1"]

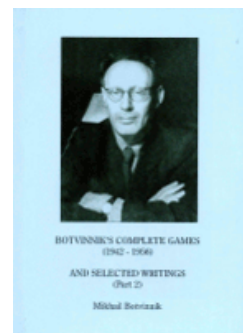
**Black to play**

In the game there was **1...Qxa2+ 2.Kxa2 Bd3+ 3.Kb3 c4+ 4.Kb4 Na6+** (4...Nc6+!?) with a quick mate. But it is obvious that both 1...Bd3+ and 1...Bc4 win easily, and after the simple 1...Nd7 White's position remains hopeless. The search for a solution in these situations does not provide any pleasure, as it is clear that you can stop on virtually any move.

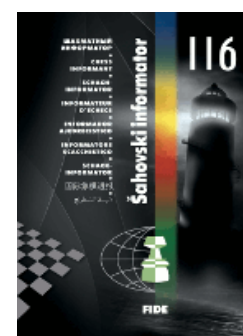
Alternative routes to the goal also spoil the impression.

**Khasin – Stein**  
Soviet Championship, Tallinn, 1967

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[FEN "r4rk1/1bq2p1p/p2ppb1B/1p2n3/3QP3/2N2B2/PPP4P/R4R1K b - - 0 18"]

**Black to play**

18...Bg7?? 19.Rg1 Ng6 20.Qxg7# or 18...Nd7?? 19.Rg1+ Kh8 20.Bg7+ (20.Qxf6+) lose immediately. But in the case of 18...Rfd8? White develops a very strong attack by means of 19.Bh5! Qe7 (19...Bh8? 20.Bxf7+! Nxf7 21.Rg1+), and now not 20.Rxf6 Qxf6 21.Rg1+ Kh8 22.Bg5! Qf5!, but 20.Rf4! with a subsequent 21.Raf1 or 21.Rg1+.

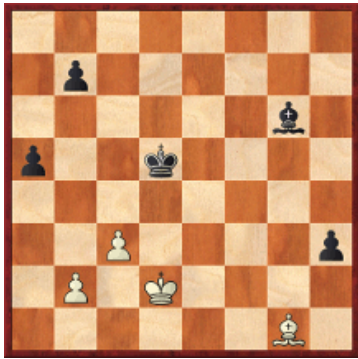
We come to the conclusion that it is essential to sacrifice the exchange, for which Black will have more than sufficient compensation: a pawn and a strong dark-squared bishop whose opponent, the h6-bishop, will disappear from the board.

In the game there followed **18...Kh8! 19.Bxf8** (19.Rg1 Rg8; 19.Bh5 Bg7) **19...Rxf8 20.Rad1 Rd8 21.Bg2 Bg7** (threatening 22...Nc4) **22.Qf2 Rg8**-/+, and Black won the subsequent battle.

Testing allowed us to find a no less promising version of the exchange sacrifice: 18...Qc5! 19.Qxc5 dc 20.Bxf8 Kxf8 21.Bg2 Ke7-/+ and 18...Bh8! (threatening 19...Ng6) 19.Qg1+ (19.Bxf8?! Nxf3-/+) 19...Ng6 20.Bxf8 Rxf8-/+. We could think for a long time trying to choose which of them is best, but the point of the exercise is something else entirely: you have to easily and quickly decide on a positional sacrifice.

Generally it is desirable that a solution be "pure," that all the moves you have to find are unconditionally the best, and if possible even the only ones. For the sake of this a coach may even slightly adjust the initial position of an exercise.

**Gragger – Barcza**  
Olympiad, Varna, 1962



[FEN "8/1p6/6b1/p2k4/8/2P4p/1P1K4/6B1 b - - 0 74"]

**1...?**

The correct plan is associated with transferring the king to b3 and then preparing for it to break through on the kingside to the h3-pawn.

**74...Kd5-c4! 75.Bg1-h2 Kc4-b3 76.Kd2-c1 a5-a4**

White resigned because of 77.Be5 Bc2! 78.Bd6 (78.c4 b6) 78...a3 79.ba Kxc3, then Ba4, b7-b5, Kd3 and so on.

But the move 74...Ke4 did not let go of the win, as after 75.Ke2 it still was not too late to go back to the same plan: 75...Kd5! 76.Kf3 Kc4 77.Bb6 a4-+. Black could also think about 75...Bh5+ 76.Kf1 Bf3 (in the case of 76...Kd3 the bishop managed to defend its queenside: 77.Bb6! a4 78.Bc5 Kb3 79.Ba3=) 77.Kf2 (77.Bh2? Kd3 78.Bc7 Kc2-+) 77...Kd3!? 78.Kxf3 Kc2. True, as subsequent calculation shows, White can save himself here.

Unnecessary additional variations can be avoided by moving the white bishop to h2 in the position in the diagram. In that case you then get strictly one method of winning.

It goes without saying that the above-mentioned requirements for an exercise are not dogma, and sometimes it makes sense to ignore them. So, a second solution is allowable if it is clear and instructive.

### Sumpter – Stream

Australia, 1964



[FEN "r2n1r1k/5p1p/1n1p3P/q3p3/pb2PN2/1P2QP2/4BPR1/BK4R1 w - - 0 1"]

#### 1.?

Both kings are in danger. It is important to be the first to create mating threats. 1.Nh5? ab is bad, so we have to look for something more decisive.

**1.Qe3xb6!! Qa5xb6 2.Nf4-d5 Bb4-c5**

If 2...Qxf2 3.Rxf2 Bc5, then 4.Rg7! (threatening 5.Nf6) 4...Ne6 5.Rfg2. In the case of 2...Qa5, the outcome is the same as on 2...Bc5.

**3.Nd5-f6 Qb6xb3+ 4.Ba1-b2 Nd8-e6 (or 4...Nc6) 5.Rg2-g7**

Mate is unavoidable.

An appealing combination! But another path to the goal is no less beautiful and convincing: **1.Nd5! Nxd5** (1...ab 2.Rg8+! Rxc8 3.Rxc8+ Kxc8 4.Qg5+ Kf8 5.Qe7+) **2.ed!** (but just not 2.Qg5? Ne6) **2...f6** (both 3.Bxe5+ and 3.Qg5 were threatened) **3.Qf4!!**.

**The limits of calculation.** Which moves and variations that illustrate them should the coach examine in the solution to the exercise and require to be found, and which ones can the student rightly ignore? Let's look at the next example.

### Perez – Najdorf

Torremolinos, 1961



[FEN "7r/6Q1/pB1pkn2/7q/1p6/1P6/P1r5/1N3RK1 w - - 0 34"]

## 1.?

Both kings are in danger, and the outcome of the battle depends on whether White can chase the enemy king into a mating net with endless checks.

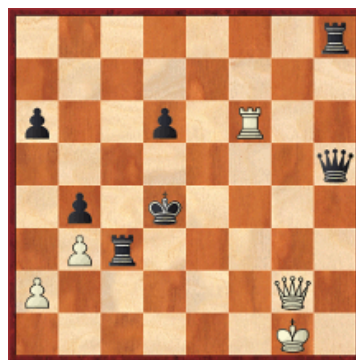
34.Qxf6+? Kd7 35.Qg7+ Kc6 36.Qc7+ Kd5 37.Qb7+ Rc6 (the checks ended) 38.Rc1 was played in the game, and White resigned.

Having convinced ourselves that with a capture by the queen on f6 the attack quickly fizzles out, and concentrated on the search for a sensible alternative, we can find a beautiful combination.

**34.Rf1xf6+! Ke6-d5 35.Nb1-c3+!! Rc2xc3**

35...bc 36.Qb7+ Ke5 37.Qe7+ Kd5 38.Rxd6#.

**36.Qg7-g2+ Kd5-e5 37.Bb6-d4+!Ke5xd4**



[FEN "7r/8/p2p1R2/7q/1p1k4/1Pr5/P5Q1/6K1 w - - 0 38"]

## 1.?

In a practical game a player who reaches this position in his calculations will decide it is worth going for, as the attack looks formidable, and it can be carried out by various means (the most tempting is 38.Qd2+ or 38.Rxd6+, but there are also other checks). And there is nothing better, anyway, which is easy to prove by process of elimination. The player will think exactly the same thing in training, so the task of "calculating the variations to mate" from the initial position will not seem interesting to him. And in general, solving these kinds of artificial problems often leads to the development of a harmful skill: calculating variations even when you do not need to.

On the other hand, if we pose the question differently: "find the best path for conducting the attack," or, even better, just ask them to make a decision for White, we get a decent exercise that develops inventiveness. And the choice and calculation of the most efficient method of pursuing the enemy king in the position that arises by force after Black's thirty-seventh move could be a topic for a new exercise aimed at training the ability to calculate.

We can immediately reject 38.Rf4+? Kc5, and Black wins.

In the case of 38.Qf2+?! Kd5 39.Qd2+ Kc6! 40.Qxd6+ Kb7 41.Qxa6+ Kc7, nothing more than perpetual check is evident.

In the book from which this example was taken, a suggestion is 38.Qd2+!? Rd3 39.Qxb4+ Ke5 40.Qf4+ Kd5 41.Qxd6+ Ke4, and now, as is easy to prove, both 42.Qf4+ and 42.Re6+ win. Instead of 38...Rd3, more stubborn is 38...Ke4. The next variation seems to be forced: 39.Qf4+ Kd3 40.Rxd6+ Kc2 41.Rd2+ Kc1 (41...Kb1 42.Qe4+) 42.Rh2+ Kb1 43.Qe4+ Kc1 44.Rxh5 Rxh5 45.Qe1+ Kb2 46.Qe2+ Rc2 47.Qxh5 Kxa2 48.Qd5 (but not 48.Qa5+? Kxb3 49.Qxa6 with a theoretical draw). The final position is apparently won, but still this path to the goal does not look like the most convincing one.

**38.Rxd6+! Ke5** (38...Ke3 39.Qf2+ Ke4 40.Rd4+ Ke5 41.Qf4+ and so on) **39.Qd5+ Kf4 40.Qd4+** (40.Rf6+ Ke3 41.Re6+ Kf4 42.Qd4+ is also strong) **40...Kg3 41.Qf2+ Kg4 42.Rd4+ Kg5 43.Qf4+ Kg6 44.Rd6+ Kh7 45.Rd7+ Kg6 46.Qf7+ Kg5 47.Qe7+ Kg4 48.Rd4+ Kf5 49.Rd5+ Kg4 50.Qxb4+.**

We do not have to calculate this variation precisely to the end, as in the course of things White had some good alternative options. It is enough just to convince ourselves that a given method of conducting the attack is the strongest.

**The problem.** As a rule, when you offer an exercise it is enough to indicate whose move it is, and the problem will be making a decision for the player whose on move, finding the best option for them.

But sometimes, especially when examining complex positions, you can also use artificial problems.

**Lipnitsky – Smyslov**  
Moscow, 1950 (variation from the game)



[FEN "r4rk1/pp1Nbppp/2n1p3/3p4/3PnB1P/P1NQ3/1q3PP1/RB2K2R w KQ - 0 15"]

1.?

The strongest continuation is 15.Nxf8!, but the variations that prove this are not very engaging. Another possibility – taking with the knight on e4 – leads to interesting complications that are difficult to calculate. So here it makes sense to set the problem: "Evaluate the consequences of 15.Nxe4."

**15.Nc3xe4!? d5xe4**

A forced reply. We can establish that after 16.Qxe4 g6! White is in no condition to hold onto his big material advantage. You have to postpone taking the pawn and choose an unexpected zwischenzug.

**16.Ra1-a2!!**

The following variations arise:

16...Qxa2 (16...Qc1+? 17.Qd1) 17.Qxe4 f5 18.Bxa2 fe 19.Bxe6+ (or first 19.Nxf8), with White a pawn up.

**16....Be7-b4+! 17.Ke1-d1!**

Of course, not 17.ab? Qxb4+ 18.Qd2 Qxb1+.

**17...Qb2xa2 18.Bb1xa2**

Now 18.Qxe4?? is impossible here because of 18...Qd2#.

**18...e4xd3 19.a3xb4 Rf8-d8 20.Nd7-c5 Nc6xb4 21.Ba2-b1**

(or 21.Bb3), and with two pieces for a rook White retains real winning chances (analysis by Isaac Lipnitsky).

By changing the problem we can make the solution to the exercise easier or more difficult, shifting the accent from certain problems to other ones.

**Kunneman – NN**  
Berlin, 1934



[FEN "6k1/pp3p1p/2p3pB/3rb3/8/2P2QP1/Pq3P1P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

The "zinger" in this position is that on **1.Qf6** (with the idea after 1...Qxc3 of giving mate by means of 2.Qg7+! Bxg7 3.Re8+) Black finds a beautiful way to save himself: **1...Qc1!! 2.Qxe5 Qxh6**, with equal chances.

If in the problem the request is to evaluate the consequences of 1.Qf6, we make it considerably easier to find the answer, as the solver thereby concentrates their attention on the search for double-edged combinational blows. On the other hand, if we suggest just making a decision in the initial position, we thus set a very difficult problem: you have to overcome the strong temptation to "win the game" immediately by means of 1.Qf6?!, convincing yourself that neither 1.Rxe5? Rxe5 2.Qf6 Qb1+ not 2.c4? Rd8 give you anything, and only then choose the best of the quiet moves that strengthen White's attack.

In my old article two candidate moves were mentioned: 1.Kg2 and 1.Qe3, and preference was given to the latter. Later, having convinced myself that Black could hold the defense here, I analyzed the position again, and, in the end, reached a completely non-obvious solution: 1.g4!? You can see the details in the chapter "Can the problem be solved?" in my book [School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play](#).

After he read the book, the German analyst Claus Dieter Meyer subjected the position to detailed computer analysis. It confirmed almost all my conclusions, except for the most important one: it became clear that after 1.g4 Black could also count on saving himself with precise defending. So the problem turned out to be insoluble.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that a good support for independent training can be a book of problems in which the exercises are sorted not by tactical method, as is usually done,

but by the skills for conducting the battle that are being trained. My book *Remember Your Opponent*, published in Russian and German, was designed according to this principle – and I hope it will come out in an English edition. I can also mention Jacob Aagaard's book [Grandmaster Preparation: Calculation](#), and for players with a relatively low rating, [Artur Yusupov's series of books](#).

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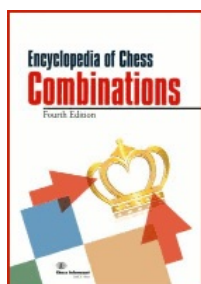
## COLUMNISTS

## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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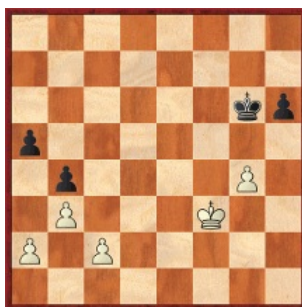
This is the fourth in a series of articles dedicated to selections of exercises to train chess players. For part one see the [March 2013](#) (#150) column, for part two see the [April 2013](#) (#151) column, and for part three see the [May 2013](#) (#152) column.

## The Rational Technique of Decision-making

Far from every position is worth offering as an exercise to solve on your own, even if it has a precise and only path to the goal.

**Berger – Bauer**

Correspondence, 1889-91



[FEN "8/8/6kp/p7/1p4P1/1P3K2/P1P5/8 w - - 0 1"]

### 1.?

A player thinking about this position will probably give the following answer after a few minutes:

1.c2-c4!

Or 1.Ke3 Kg5 2.c4!

1...b5xc4 2.Kf3-e3 Kg6-g5 3.a2-a4! Kg5xg4 4.b3-b4

And White wins.

The coach could argue that this answer is incomplete. As you also have to find that on 4...ab only 5.Kd3! leads to the goal, and the natural 5.a5? allows your opponent to save himself: 5...b3 6.Kd3 b2 7.Kc2 Kf3 8.a6 Ke2 9.a7 b1Q+ 10.Kxb1 Kd2.

"But why do I have to see these variations in advance?," the player asks. "In any case there is no other route to the goal, and ultimately the nuances can be figured out later, as we go along."

If the coach tells him that by trying to give the most precise answer the student will best develop his ability to calculate variations, he would be completely wrong.

In chess you can calculate all the variations from start to finish only in comparatively rare cases. The player's goal during a game is not to calculate the variations as far as you can, but to make the best decision. And since play occurs in limited time conditions, and you have to do plenty of calculating during the game, it is important to learn to make decisions in the most efficient way, only examining lines that are essential in a given position.

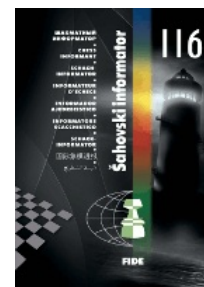
The ability not to waste time and effort on variations that are unnecessary for making a decision is no less essential than the ability to calculate deeply and accurately. In essence, this skill is an extremely important and inseparable constituent part of the art of calculating.

In the endings we have looked at you do not have to see a subtlety on the fifth move

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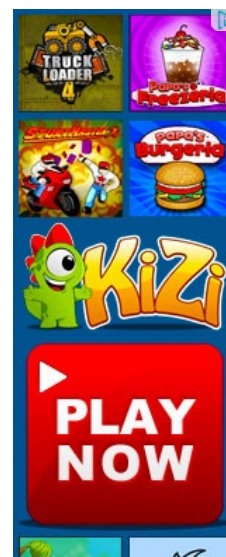
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in order to make a decision about the first one – and consequently a coach should not demand this from a student.

In general, those kinds of examples should not be offered for solving. Although playing through such positions is a very good training method. The player makes moves for the side that has to solve a series of consecutive problems. Opposite him sits the coach (being familiar with the analysis of the position), or another player who is participating in the training session.

The clocks are set with the time control established in accordance with the difficulty of the problems that have to be solved and the player's level (in our example White can be given between five and fifteen minutes), and the player subsequently solves the problems that are hidden in the position. He himself determines which moves to make quickly (in order to stay within the time allocated), and at what point he should go deeply into the position and calculate the variations precisely.

The problem of distributing the time rationally is far from easy for many people. So, when playing through the position given above, even strong masters sometimes spent too long thinking about the first move, but then on the fifth one they instantly moved a pawn forward – and missed the win.

The example we looked at, with all its simplicity, still gives us a reason to think again about some aspects of the rational technique of decision-making. For example, about choosing the best move order. Objectively 1.c4 and 1.Ke3 Kg5 2.c4 are equivalent options, but it is more practical to choose the former. With a capture on c3 you get the same thing, but in the latter case you additionally have to calculate the variation 2...Kxg4 3.Ke4! Kg5 4.Ke5!, and after 4...h5 5.c5 the newly-promoted queen on h1 will be lost. And 1.Ke2?! Kg5 2.c4? (2.Kf3) 2...Kxg4 just leads to a draw.

In the initial position White is right to first maneuver his king to the kingside, and only then switch to a plan of breaking through on the opposite side of the board. That is how some players did act, pointlessly wasting time thinking and then getting into severe time trouble. It is easier to convince yourself right away that the only position of mutual *zugzwang* with the kings on h4 and g6 is impossible to get on your opponent's move, which means it is not worth trying for, and it is better to concentrate on the idea of a pawn breakthrough from the outset.

Training in playing through a game, if done seriously, is the closest thing to tournament conditions and substantially helps a player to improve. Of course, choosing quality exercises is very important. You can use both studies and practical examples for this purpose. Let's talk about playing through studies first.

There are likely to be unusual and beautiful ideas in studies. This means that when we solve studies we develop our imagination and combinational vision.

**M. Matous, 1979**



[FEN "8/1pK5/P7/1p6/Q2Nk3/8/r7/1q6 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**1.Qa4xb5!**

It is easy to make the first move – by finding the short variation 1...Qxb5 2.Nxb5 ba 3.Nc3+. Even if we notice the unpleasant interim check in the answer, taking the rook out of the knight fork, we will still go into this position after convincing ourselves that we do not have anything better. We start calculating variations when a position arises on the board.

**1...Ra2-c2+!**

We can reject 2.Kb8? Qxb5 3.Nxb5 ba immediately – the rook and pawn easily overcome the lone knight.

After 2.Kb6? Rb2, we can test 3.ab Kxd4! 4.Qxb2+ Qxb2+ - a queen, as we know, wins against a knight's pawn. But 3.a7 Kxd4! 4.Qxb2 Qxb2+ 5.Kc7 is no better either, as the enemy king is positioned too close by. Black gives up the b7-pawn, switches to queen checks on the seventh rank, and in reply to Kb8 plays 1...Kc5 2.a8Q Kb6.





2.Nxc2? Qxb5 does not help either; for example, 3.ab Qc5+ 4.Kd7 Qb6 5.Kc8 Qc6+ 6.Kb8 Qxc2, or 3.a7 Qc6+ 4.Kb8 Qe8+ 5.Kxb7 Qb5+ 6.Kc7 Qa6 7.Kb8 Qb6+ 8.Ka8 Qc7.

Only one possibility remains.

**2.Kc7xb7! Rc2-b2**



[FEN "8/1K6/P7/1Q6/3Nk3/8/1r6/1q6 w - - 0 3"]

1.?

3.a7 Kxd4! 4.Qxb2+ Qxb2+ leads to a familiar lost position. Here, and perhaps a move earlier, it was necessary to find some clever play for stalemate.

**3.Nd4-b3! Rb2xb3 4.Kb7-a8!!**

Precise move order is important. The "automatic" 4.a7? was refuted by 4...Kd4!.

**4...Rb2xb3**

On 4...Kd4, there is 5.Qd7+, or even 5.Qd5+ Kxd5 6.a7.

**5.a6-a7**

Stalemate is unavoidable: it is impossible to take both major pieces off the b-file in one move.

The method, with the help of which the decision was made on the first move, is called the process of elimination. A move is not made because it has been calculated to the end, but because it has been precisely established that all other continuations are unsatisfactory. This method of calculating has enormous significance for the practical player. Calculating your intended option is often much harder than convincing yourself that alternative paths do not work. Skillful use of the process of elimination saves time and effort, making the process of decision-making far simpler.

This method has to be used very carefully, of course. Sometimes we quickly reject an apparently unfavorable continuation that actually contains a hidden resource which changes the evaluation of the position. Playing through studies is an excellent way of training your ability to use the process of elimination: as you have to use it here all the time.

The following study should be played through primarily by using the process of elimination.

**N. Kralin, 1973**



[FEN "K7/8/7P/1r3k1P/8/8/6N1/2n5 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

The first move does not provoke any doubt.

**1.h6-h7 Rb5-a5+ 2.Ka8-b7(b8) Ra5-b5+**

The rook cannot be allowed onto the eighth rank; on the other hand, on 3.Kc8, there is 3...Ra5. This means that you have to run away from the checks on the

seventh rank.

**3.Kb7-c7 Rb5-c5+ 4.Kc7-d7 Nc1-d3!**

4...Rd5+? 5.Ke7 Re5+ 6.Kf7 Ra5 7.Ne3+ (or 7.Nh4+) lost immediately. But now White has to make a choice between 5.h8Q, 5.Ne3+, and 5.Nh4+.

Let's test the most natural move: 5.h8Q Ne5+ 6.Ke7 (6.Kd6 Nf7+) 6...Rc7+ 7.Kd8 Nf7+ - draw.

The inclusion of the moves 5.Nh4+ Ke4 (threatening 6...Rxb5) changes practically nothing: 6.h8Q Ne5+ 7.Ke7 Rc7+ 8.Kf6 Rc6+ 9.Kg7 Rc7+, and the king cannot be protected from the checks without coming under a double attack.

**5.Ng2-e3+! Kf5-e4**

5...Kf4 6.h8Q Ne5+ 7.Ke6+- is bad. Now 6.h8Q? Ne5+ leads to a familiar draw, but a new resource appears.

**6.Ne3-g4!**

The e5-square has been taken away from the black knight. The pawn can only be stopped by taking with the rook on h5, but then there is a knight fork.

**6...Rc5xb5 7.Ng4-f6+ Ke4-f5 8.Nf6xb5 Nd3-e5+ 9.Kd7-e8(e7) Ne5-g6 10.Ke8-f7 Kf5-g5**



[FEN "8/5K1P/6n1/6kN/8/8/8 w - - 0 11"]

**1.?**

It feels as if White is already close to his goal. But it was this moment that turned out to be the most difficult one for many of the players who were solving this study.

They quickly and confidently made the "study" move 11.Nf4?, which in actual fact misses the win: 11...Kh6! 12.Kg8 Ne7+ 13.h8 Nf5! 14.Nd5 Kg6! 15.Kg8 Nh6+.

Before moving a piece on the board it is important to first check and see if there are any other candidate moves. Once you have asked yourself this question it is not difficult to find a more modest, but also stronger option.

**11.Nh5-f6!**

From here the knight defends the h7-pawn. You can only choose between 11.Nf4 and 11.Nf6 either by ruling out 11.Nf4 because of the variation given above, or by calculating the move 11.Nf6 to the end – whichever is easier for you.

**11...Kg5-h6 12.Kf7-g8 Ng6-e7+ 13.Kg8-f8! Ne7-g6+ 14.Kf8-f7 Ng6-e5+ 15.Kf7-g8 Ne5-g6 16.Nf6-g4+ Kh6-g5 17.Kg8-g7(f7)+-**

Or 17.Ne5+-.

These kinds of studies, in which you can make a mistake when playing through them at a point when the goal is already close, are worth keeping in a special place among your training materials. Unfortunately, we often make blunders such as these in tournament games, so it is very useful to practice maintaining total concentration at the board until the very last move!

In many studies the correct solution can only be found after neutralizing your opponent's hidden counterplay. Paying attention to your opponent's possibilities is a very important skill for the practical player, which you need to develop and train regularly.

**G. Nadareishvili, 1957**



[FEN "1b6/8/1r2p1P1/8/3k4/8/4KN2/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

**1.g6-g7 Rb6-b2+ 2.Ke2-f1 Rb2-b1+**

The first two moves could be made almost automatically, but now it is important not to make the third move automatically too: 3.Kg2? Our opponent finds the brilliant retort 3...Bh2!! Let's continue the variation: 4.Ng4 (4.g8Q Rg1+; 4.Kxh2 Rb8-+) 4...Rb8 5.Nf6 (on 5.Nh6 the same reply follows) 5...Bf4! 6.g8Q Rxb8 7.Nxg8 Bg5 8.Kf3 e5 9.Kg4 e4! 10.Kxg5 e3, and the pawn queens.

**3.Nf2-d1! Rb1xd1+ 4.Kf1-g2!**

Is it worth putting the king on the same file as the pawn? Alas, this is forced – the move 4.Kf2? does not work because of 4...Kd3! 5.g8Q Ba7+ (Black's moves could be transposed) 6.Kf3 Rf1+ and 7...Rg1+.

**4...Rd1-d3 5.g7-g8Q Rd3-g3+ 6.Kg2-h1!**

And 6...Rxb8 leads to stalemate.

When playing through many studies you have to calculate variations deeply and precisely. The following ending is an excellent exercise for training both your calculating technique and your ability to take into account your opponent's resources.

**J. Fritz, 1980**



[FEN "n7/8/6B1/3p1K2/1b6/8/7k/8 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

If Black can coordinate his forces, he can easily take advantage of the extra piece. White's hopes are associated with the fact that the d5-pawn is rather vulnerable. On 1.Bf7? Nb6 (or 1...d4), no counterplay is evident, which means you have to attack the pawn with the king.

**1.Kf5-e5! Na8-b6!**

In case of 1...Nc7?, White immediately achieved a draw by means of 2.Bf7 Bc3+ 3.Kd6 (the knight came under attack). On the other hand, now 2.Bf7? Bc3+ is useless.

**2.Ke5-d4! Bb4-e1!**

Otherwise 3.Bf7.

**3.Kd4-c5! Be1-f2+ 4.Kc5-c6**

And again threatening 5.Bf7, as after 5...d4 the knight is left undefended. Black solves the problem with a tactical method.

**4...Nb6-c8!**



[FEN "2n5/8/2K3B1/3p4/8/8/5b1k/8 w - - 0 5"]

1.?

It becomes clear that the move cannot be stopped. One chance remains: to pursue the knight, which is cut off from its main forces. Let's try 5.Kd7 Na7 6.Kd6 (on 6.Bd3, there would follow 6...Bc5 or 6...Bb6 with a subsequent d5-d4 and the approach of the king – here you cannot get close to the black pieces) 6...d4 7.Bd3 Nc8+ - the knight breaks out to freedom and Black wins.

No better is 5.Bb1 d4 6.Kc7 (6.Bh7 Na7+, and there is no 7.Kb6 d3+) 6...Ne7-+ (but not 6...Na7? 7.Bd3 with a subsequent 8.Kb7). there is also a similar outcome on 5.Bd3. It is becoming clear which square the bishop has to take under control.

**5.Bg6-h7!! Nc8-e7+**

5...d4 6.Kc7 Na7 7.Bd3 or 7...Ne7 8.Kd6.

**6.Kc6-d6 Bf2-h4**



[FEN "8/4n2B/3K4/3p4/7b/8/7k/8 w - - 0 7"]

1.?

Now only transferring the bishop to a2 or b3 in combination with the move Ke5 promises hope of salvation. How can this plan be carried out in the most precise way?

On 7.Ke5?, Black responds 7...Be1! 8.Bb1 Bc3+ 9.Ke6 Bb4 10.Ke5 Bc5 11.Ba2 d4-+ – he has everything defended and can calmly bring his king up.

Also mistaken is 7.Bc2? Kg2 8.Ke5 (8.Bb3 d4) counting on 8...Nc6+?! 9.Kd6 Nb4? (9...Ne7!) 10.Bb3 d4 11.Kc5=. Black's play is improved with 8...Bg3+! 9.Ke6 Nc6 10.Bb1 Nb4, and again his position is unassailable.

**7.Bh7-b1!! d5-d4**

Now useless here is 7...Kg2 8.Ke5 (threatening 9.Ba2) 8...Be1 (8...Bg3+ 9.Ke6; 8...Bf2 9.Kd6! Bh4 10.Ke5) 9.Ba2 Nc6+ 10.Kd6(e6)=.

**8.Bb1-h7!!**

The final nuance! The rushed 8.Ke5? Bf2 9.Kd6 Ng8 loses.

**8...Kh2-g2 9.Ke6-e5! Bh4-f2 10.Ke5-d6! Ne7-c8+ 11.Kd6-c7 Nc8-a7 12.Bh7-d3! Kg2-f3 13.Kc7-b7 Kf3-e3 14.Bd3-c4! d4-d3 15.Kb7xa7 d3-d2 16.Bc4-b3=**

We can rarely talk about the optimal algorithm for making a decision in these kinds of calculable positions: the situations that arise on the board are too varied, as are the peculiarities of the thinking of players going through them. Still, I will describe an approximate plan of action that works in many cases.

First we define a list of the candidate moves. Then with the help of some guesswork we try to establish whether there is a path that quickly and forcibly leads to the goal. If we do not find such a variation, we try to reduce the list of candidate moves as much as possible, rejecting some of them. Thus, perhaps, we manage to identify the only possible move. In principle, it is desirable to precisely calculate either the path that leads to the goal or all the other options that we are throwing out by using the



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## Practical Positions for Training

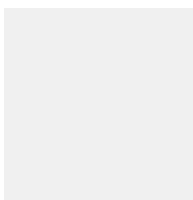
Having discussed playing through exercises, let's now move on to training in which fragments from practical games are used. These two forms of training have quite a lot in common, but there are also fundamental differences.

In studies, as we know, there is no positional evaluation. All the variations end definitively: a win, a loss, or a draw. Yet when you play through practical positions many decisions are made on the basis of evaluative considerations (nevertheless, usually corroborated by calculation).

In studies White always has to make a series of only, difficult moves; so many studies are suitable to play through. Choosing examples from practical games is much more difficult (especially when the position is from the opening or middlegame) – it often turns out that the position can be treated differently from the way suggested by the coach.

The process of playing through them is also more difficult for him. In a study any deviation by White from the author's solution has been foreseen in advance and is punished immediately – in these cases it is enough for the coach simply to execute the refutation on the board that was indicated by the author of the study.

Yet things are not always clear when playing through practical positions. Often a deviation from the intended solution turns out to be unforeseen or not analyzed in detail. The coach has to join the play and fight with all his strength to demonstrate the drawbacks of the unexpected decision that his partner has made (if, of course,



they exist), or be able to set new problems for him so that weak play does not ultimately erode his authority in front of his student.

Let's move on to some practical examples that demonstrate the interesting results that can come from positions played through in training.

I played an interesting "game" with Yusupov in 1979. We took the duel **Kakageldyev – Tseshkovsky** (Ashkhabad, 1978) as a template, starting with the following moves.

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 ed 5.cd d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.g3 Bg7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Nd2 a6 11.a4 Nbd7 12.h3 Rb8 13.Nc4 Ne5 14.Na3 Nh5 15.g4?** (15.e4 is better).



[FEN "1rbqr1k1/1p3pbp/p2p2p1/2pPn2n/P5P1/N1N4P/1P2PPB1/R1BQ1RK1 b - - 0 15"]

**1...?**

Black needs a combination, otherwise his last move loses its purpose. A difficult question: which combination to choose.

**15...Bxg4!?** **16.hg** is tempting, and now not **16...Qh4?** **17.gh Ng4 18.Bf4 Be5** (after **18...Bd4 19.e3 Rxe3 20.Qxg4! Qxg4 21.fe**, White has too many pieces for the queen) **19.Qd3!** (**19.Qd2 g5 19...Bxf4 20.Qh3** – the attack is repelled, but **16...Nxg4**).

Against the threat of **17...Qh4** only **17.Qd3!** defends.



[FEN "1r1qr1k1/1p3pbp/p2p2p1/2pP3n/P5n1/N1NQ4/1P2PPB1/R1B2RK1 b - - 0 17"]

**1...?**

In training with Sergei Dolmatov (in 1987) my partner continued the attack with 17...Re3? 18.Bxe3 Bxc3 (if 18...Qh4, then 19.Bf4! Nxf4 20.Qg3), but after the accurate reply 19.Bc1! he had to lay down his weapons. However, in itself the efficient idea of covering on e3 is very good, but it has to be carried out more precisely.

**17...Bxc3! 18.Qxc3**

On 18.b3 strong is 18...Re3! 19.Bxe3 Qh4 20.Rfb1 (not 20.Bf4 Nxf4 21.Qg3 because of 21...Nxe2#) 20...Re8, preserving a dangerous attack. 18.Qh3 Bxb2 (18...Nxf2!?) 19.Bxb2 Rxe2 leads to an unclear game.

**18...Re3!** (a position that is difficult to evaluate arises upon 18...Rxe2 19.Qh3 f5) **19.Bxe3!**

19.fe? Qh4 20.Rf3 Qh2+ 21.Kf1 Ng3+ is much weaker. The timid 19.Qxe3?! Nxe3 20.Bxe3 Qh4 does not impress either.

**19...Qh4**





[FEN "1r4k1/1p3p1p/p2p2p1/2pP3n/P5nq/N1Q1B3/1P2PPB1/R4RK1 w - - 0 20"]

## 1.?

White's position remains alarming. Our opponent retains a clear advantage on 20.Bh3 Qxh3 21.Bf4 Qxc3 22.bc Nxf4. The rook has to retreat, and it is very difficult to choose the best square for it.

**20.Rfc1!** (why to here specifically will become clearer only at the end of the main line)

## 20...Re8!?

20...Nf4 21.Bxf4 Qxf2+ 22.Kh1 Qxf4 23.Kg1 leads to a draw, but Black is right to continue the attack.

## 21.Nc4!

It is important to take control of the e5-square, which is clear from the variation 21.Nc2? Nf4! 22.Bxf4 Qxf2+ 23.Kh1 Qxf4 24.Kg1 Qf2+ 25.Kh1 Re5-+.

**21...Rxe3 22.Qxe3** (forced) **22...Qh2+ 23.Kf1 Nxe3+ 24.Nxe3 Nf4 25.Bf3** (25.f3 h5 is bad) **25...Nh3 26.Ke1**, and the position is unclear. For example, 26...Qxf2+ (with the rook on d1 Black would have taken with the knight on f2 with a tempo and then advanced his pawns on the kingside) 27.Kd2 Qh4 28.Rc3!?

We can draw the conclusion that 15...Bxg4!? is a good way of conducting the attack, although with accurate defending objectively it does not give a win. But the same can probably also be said about the queen thrust to h4 that occurred in the game. The choice between the two continuations has to be made intuitively. If in training the student does not go for the main line and chooses



15...Bxg4, it is OK, since here, as you already proved to yourself, you get an interesting and rich game, and for Black to maintain his attack considerable accuracy and inventiveness are required.

Yusupov played the same way as Tseshkovsky.

**15...Qd8-h4!? 16.Nc3-e4**

Threatening 17.Bg5.

**16...h7-h6! 17.g4xh5**

17.Nxd6? Bxg4 18.Nxe8 Bxh3 loses. It is harder to refute 17.f4. Black achieves an overwhelming advantage by means of 17...Nxg4! 18.hg Rxe4! (18...Ng3 19.Nxg3 Bd4+ 20.e3 Rxe3 21.Bxe3 Bxe3+ 22.Rf2 Bxg4 23.Qf1 Qxg3 24.Nc2 is not dangerous) 19.Bxe4 Bxg4! (19...Ng3 20.Bf3 Bxg4 21.e3 Nxf1 22.Qxf1 is weaker) 20.Bf3 (there is nothing better) 20...Qg3+ 21.Kh1 Re8 22.Nc2 Qh3+ 23.Kg1 Bxf3 24.Rxf3 Ng3 25.Rxg3 Qxg3+ 26.Kf1 Qh3+ 27.Kg1 Qh5! 28.Kf2 Qh2+ 29.Ke1 Qh4+ 30.Kd2 Qxf4+ 31.Ke1 Qe4!?, and so on.

**17...Bc8xh3**

Threatening 18...Bxg2.

**18.Ne4-g3**



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3pb1/p2p2pp/2pPn2P/P6q/N5Nb/1P2PPB1/R1BQ1RK1 b - - 0 18"]

**1...?**

Again Black has a choice. 18...Bd7 makes sense, but after 19.Nc2 (19.hg? fg is worse) 19...Ng4 20.Re1, nothing decisive is evident.

Artur preferred **18...f5!?**, to which White should have replied 19.hg Bxg2 (19...Ng4? 20.Nxf5; 19...f4!? 20.Bxf4) 20.Kxg2 f4 21.Rh1 (21.Bxf4 Qxf4 22.e3) 21...Qg4 22.e3!? Qxd1 23.Rxd1 fg 24.Kxg3, and in the endgame his chances are in any case no worse.

I played unsuccessfully, though: **19.Nc2? Ng4 20.Bf4**. After **20...Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Qh2+ 22.Kf3 g5! 23.e3!** (the only move) **23...gf 24.ef b5! 25.a5** (the inclusion of the b8-rook cannot be allowed) my position became lost.



**30.e6** (30.Rh1!? Qd4 31.e6) **30...Rxf5+ 31.Ngxf5!** (Yusupov overlooked this move of mine, just like 29.Ne3!) **31...Qxh5+ 32.Ke4.**



[FEN "1r4k1/6b1/p2pP2p/P2P1N1q/1pp1K3/4N3/1P3P2/R4R2 b - - 0 32"]

**1...?**

**32...c3?**

32...Rf8 33.Rg1 Rxf5 34.Nxf5 Qe2+ 35.Ne3 was necessary, with mutual chances.

**33.Rg1** (33.Rh1! with a subsequent Rag1 is even stronger) **33...Rb7 34.Rg3?** (the straightforward 34.e7 won) **34...cb 35.Rag1 Kf8?**

The decisive blunder! On 35...Kh8! the outcome of the battle remained uncertain.

**36.Kd3! b3 37.e7+ Rxe7 38.Nxe7 Be5 39.Ng6+ Ke8 40.Nxe5 de**

40...Qxe5 is cleverer, in the hope of 41.Rg8+ Kf7 42.Rb8? Qg5!! I planned to reply 41.Rg4 or 41.Rg6.

**41.Rg4 Qf7 42.Kc3 Qxf2 43.Rg8+ Kd7 44.R1g7+ Kd6 45.Rd8+ Kc5 46.Rc7+ Kb5 47.Rb8+ Ka4 48.Rc4+ Ka3 49.Rxb3+ Ka2 50.Ra4+ Kb1 51.Kd3! e4+ 52.Rxe4** Black resigned.

Did not this turn out to be an interesting skirmish, even if it was not free of mistakes? Like some other training episodes, this game showed that Yusupov energetically and accurately solves problems in uncertain positions, but when he has already obtained a situation that is favorable to him he starts acting considerably less confidently, he was inclined to underestimate his opponent's

counterplay. Yusupov later had to work very seriously to eliminate this shortcoming.

Now let's go back to the position after White's eighteenth move and look at how Vitaly Tseshkovsky attacked.

### **18...Ne5-g4! 19.Bc1-f4**

One of the ways (I am not sure it is the best) to parry the threat of 19...Bxg2 20.Kxg2 Qh2+ 21.Kf3 Ne5+. It was also possible to take control of the e5-square by means of 19.Nc4!?



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3pb1/p2p2pp/2pP3P/P1N3nq/6Nb/1P2PPB1/R1BQ1RK1 b - - 0 19"]

In the variation 19...b5 20.ab ab 21.Nxd6 Bxg2 22.Kxg2 Qh2+ 23.Kf3 Ne5+ 24.Ke3 Nc4+ 25.Kf3 (worse is 25.Kd3 Nxd6) 25...Ne5+ (25...Nxd6? 26.Rh1+-) 26.Ke3 and Black only has perpetual check. Another try is 19...f5!? 20.e3 Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Qh2+ 22.Kf3 Qh3!, but the outcome of the battle remained unclear here too.

But on the move in the game it seems to me that it was worth Black's while to choose the direct 19...Bxg2! 20.Kxg2 Qh2+ 21.Kf3.



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3pb1/p2p2pp/2pP3P/  
P4Bn1/N4KN1/1P2PP1q/R2Q1R2 b - - 0 21"]

1...?

At first glance White is fine: he plans 22.Kxg4 or 22.e3. Here it is important to notice and evaluate correctly the resource 21...g5! In the variations 22.Bxd6 Rbd8 or 22.e3 gf 23.ef Kh8! Black preserves a very strong attack.

Other continuations are less convincing, although they are very difficult to place in doubt too.

Here, for example, is the move 19...Be5!?



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3p2/p2p2pp/2pPb2P/  
P4Bnq/N5Nb/1P2PPB1/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 20"]

1.?

In many variations Black successfully concludes his attack.

20.Bxe5? Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Qh2+ 22.Kf3 Nxe5+ 23.Ke3 Nc4+ 24.Kf3 (24.Kd3 Nxb2+) 24...Re3+! 25.fe Ne5+ 26.Ke4 f5+ (26...Qxg3 is also enough) 27.Nxf5 Qg2+ 28.Rf3 Qg4+ 29.Rf4 gf#

20.e3? Bxf4 21.ef Re3!! 22.Bf3! Nh2! (there is also 22...Rbe8!) 23.Bg2 (23.Kxh2 Bg4+ 24.Kg1 Bxf3-) 23...Rxg3! 24.fg Qxg3 25.Qd2 Ng4-+

It seems that the bishop must be defended by the queen. But from which square?

20.Qc1!! (why not 20.Qd2 will become clear from the following) 20...Bxg2 (20...f5 21.Nc4!) 21.Kxg2 Qh2+ (on 21...Bxf4 22.Qxf4 Qh2+ 23.Kf3 Ne5+ 24.Ke3 the king runs off to the queenside) 22.Kf3 g5!



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3p2/p2p3p/2pPb1pP/P4Bn1/N4KN1/1P2PP1q/R1Q2R2 w - - 0 23"]

With the queen on d2 White would not have found a defense: 23.Bxe5 Nxe5+ 24.Ke3 Nc4+; 23.Kxg4 Bxf4; 23.Bxg5 Nxf2 (or 23...Bxg3); 23.e3 Bxf4! 24.ef Qh3! 25.Rh1 Nh2+ 26.Rxh2 g4#.

But here he plays 23.Bxe5 Nxe5+ 24.Ke3 Ng4+ (24...Nc4+ 25.Kd3 is useless now – the queen is not being attacked, as in the variation 20.Qd2?) 25.Kd2 Nxf2 26.Qe1! Ne4+! 27.Nxe4 Rxe4 28.Nb1! Qxh5 29.Nc3 Rd4+ 30.Kc1. Black has three pawns for the knight, and after 30...Qg6 his position looks more preferable, but the result of the battle still remains uncertain.

Tseshkovsky chose an inobvious and difficult move, to which his opponent did not find a worthy retort.

**19...Bg7-d4!?**



[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3p2/p2p2pp/2pP3P/P2b1Bnq/N5Nb/1P2PPB1/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 20"]

## 1.?

Threatening 20...Nxf2 21.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 22.Kxf2 Qxf4+. On 20.Qd2, strong is 20...g5, and on 20.Nh1, strong is 20...Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Be5! 22.Qd2 g5.

But I did not find anything decisive in response to 20.hg! The continuation 20...Bxf2+? 21.Rxf2 Nxf2 22.gf+ Kxf7 23.Qc2! loses; 20...Nxf2? 21.gf+ Kxf7 22.Bxd6 is also unfavorable. It is necessary to play 20...fg, after which events unfold in a forced manner, or almost forced.

21.Qd3! Bxg2 22.Kxg2 (but not 22.Qxg6+? Kh8 23.Kxg2 Rg8! 24.Qxd6 Qh2+ 25.Kf3 Rbf8-+) 22...Qh2+ 23.Kf3 Ne5+ 24.Bxe5 Rf8+! 25.Bf4 Rxf4+ 26.Kxf4 Rf8+ 27.Kg4 Kg7 28.Nc4 h5+ 29.Kg5 Bf6+ 30.Kf4 Bd4+, with perpetual check.

## 20.e2-e3? Bd4xe3!!

This is how Tseshkovsky's idea concluded! No good was 20...Bxg2? 21.Kxg2 Qh2+ 22.Kf3 Bxe3 because of 23.Bxe3! Rxe3+ 24.Kxg4! f5+ 25.Kf4. The continuation 20...Rxe3?! 21.Bxe3! (mistaken is 21.fe? Bxe3+ 22.Bxe3 Qxg3 23.Qxg4 Qxe3+ 24.Rf2 Bxg4) 21...Nxe3 (21...Bxe3? 22.Qf3) 22.fe Bxe3+ 23.Rf2 Qxg3 24.Qf3 led to an unclear position.

## 21.f2xe3 Bh3xg2 22.Kg1xg2

22.Qxg4 Qxg4 23.Kxg2 g5 is hopeless.

## 22...Qh4-h2+ 23.Kg2-f3





[FEN "1r2r1k1/1p3p2/p2p2pp/2pP3P/P4Bn1/N3PKN1/1P5q/R2Q1R2 b - - 0 23"]

1...?

**23...Re8xe3+!! 24.Bf4xe3**

24.Kxg4 f5+.

**24...Ng4-e5+**

Black's attack is unstoppable. But unfortunately the brilliant game did not get a worthy ending because of the terrible time trouble that Tseshkovsky got into, as was his habit.

**25.Ke4** (25.Kf4 Qh4+) **25...f5+**

There were also other winning continuations, for example:  
25...Qxg3! or 25...Qg2+! 26.Kf4 g5+ 27.Kf5 Qxg3 (27...Qh3+ 28.Ke4 Qxg3).

**26.Rxf5**

In the case of 26.Nxf5 the continuation 26...Qg2+ 27.Qf3 (27.Kf4 g5#) 27...gf+ 28.Kxf5 Nxf3 29.Rg1 Rf8+ 30.Ke6 Ng5+ 31.Bxg5 Qe4+ leads to the goal.

**26...gf+ 27.Kxf5** (27.Nxf5 Qg2+ 28.Kf4 Rf8, and if 29.Qg1, then 29...Nd3#) **27...Qh3+**

Another path to the goal: 27...Rf8+ 28.Ke6 Qh4! 29.Kxd6 Rd8+ 30.Kxe5 (30.Kxc5 Rc8+ 31.Kb6 Qd8+) 31...Re8+ 32.Kf5 Rf8+, and so on.



## 28.Ke4

And with the king on e4 28...Re8! was decisive. Unable to calculate any of these variations with his flag falling, Tseshkovsky forced perpetual check.

**28...Qg2+ 29.Kf5 Qh3+ Draw.**

This game has been provided with detailed (and probably in some places inaccurate) analysis for a reason. With its help, during the playing process the coach can quickly and precisely react to almost any deviation from the main lines by his partner, and based on its ending objectively evaluate his student's actions, point out his blunders and demonstrate the ideas he missed.

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## The Instructor

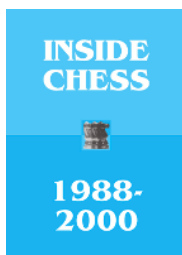
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This is the sixth in a six-article series dedicated to selections of exercises to train chess players. For part one see the [March 2013](#) (#150) column, for part two see the [April 2013](#) (#151) column, for part three see the [May 2013](#) (#152) column, for part four see the [June 2013](#) (#153), and for part five see the [July 2013](#) (#154) column.

### Strong Growth in a Player's Mastery

For a long time it was characteristic of Sergei Dolmatov that he did not calculate variations accurately enough, especially in cases when the goal seemed to be very close already.

We tested the following position from the game **Simagin – Ragozin** (Moscow, 1944) in the summer of 1979 (Dolmatov played white). For a long time he found the strongest moves made by Vladimir Simagin.



[FEN "8/1p1B1qkp/1Q3pp1/2nN4/p3P3/P6P/5PPK/2r5 w - - 0 38"]

1.?

White is the exchange down and has to act energetically – otherwise his opponent's material advantage will make itself felt.

**38.Bd7-e8! Qf7-e6**

38...Qxe8?? 39.Qxf6+ Kh6 (39...Kg8 40.Ne7+) 40.Ne7! loses. But objectively Black retains more chance of success on 38...Qf8!? 39.e5! fe (39...Ne4!?) 40.Qc7+ Kh8 41.Qxe5+ Qg7 42.Qe3 Rd1!

**39.Qb6-c7+ Kg7-f8!?**

If White plays 40.Qxh7?, it is refuted by 40...Qd6+! 41.f4 Kxe8.

The trap is simplistic, of course, but, surprising as it may seem, some of the players who were going through this position fell into it: specifically Kolya Andrianov, Sasha Chernin, and Joel Lautier.

**40.Qc7-d8! Kf8-g7**

In order to reject 40...Qxe8?? the variation 41.Qxf6+ Qf7 42.Qh8+ Qg8 43.Qf6+ with perpetual check is sufficient, and 41.Qd6+! Kg7 42.Qxf6+ even wins.

**41.Qd8-c7+ Kg7-h8 42.Qc7-d8**

42.f4? Nd3 does not work.

**42...Qe6-e5+!**

The only try to fight for a win.

**43.f2-f4 Ne5-e6! 44.Qd8-e7!**

The endgame 44.fe? Nxd8 45.ef is hopeless for White: his opponent plays either 45...Re1 46.Bxa4 Rxe4, or 45...Rc4!? 46.e5 Re4 47.Nb6 Rxe5 48.f7 Ne6.

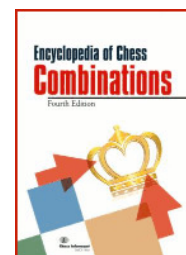
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44...Qe5-a1



[FEN "4B2k/1p2Q2p/4npp1/3N4/p3PP2/P6P/6PK/q1r5 w - - 0 45"]

1.?

Black has switched to a counterattack which has to be dealt with seriously. So, 45.Qxe6?? Rh1+ 46.Kg3 Qe1+ 47.Kg4 h5+ 48.Kf3 Rf1# loses immediately.

On 45.Nxf6? Rh1+ 46.Kg3 Qe1+ (or 46...Qc3+) 47.Kg4 h5+, White has to give up the knight on h5. The remaining four passed pawns he has left on the kingside hardly compensate for being a rook down, not least because on an exchange of queens Black can quickly create a passed pawn on the queenside. In this kind of position a player moves out of desperation in the absence of a sensible alternative. So here it is time to stop calculating and try to find out if there is anything more solid.

But it makes sense for the coach who is preparing this example for playing through to go deeply into the variations so as to be fully armed if his student nevertheless chooses 45.Nxf6? Rh1+ 46.Kg3.

After 46...Qc3+!?, you cannot play 47.Kf2? Qe1+ 48.Kf3 Rf1+ 49.Kg4 Rxf4#. Little better is 47.Kh4?, as Black mates beautifully by 47...Rxb3+!! 48.gh Qe1+ 49.Kg4 Qg1+ 50.Kf3 (50.Kh4 Qf2+ 51.Kg4 Qxf4#) 50...Nd4#. There remains only 47.Kg4 h5+ 48.Nxh5, which leads to an endgame a rook down: 48...gh+ 49.Kxh5 Qc5+ or 49.Bxh5 Qg7+.

Another path is 46...Qe1+ 47.Kg4 h5+ 48.Nxh5 gh+ (the strongest, thinking that on 48...Qe2+ there follows not 49.Kg3 gh+, but 49.Kh4!, and 49...Qxh5+? 50.Kg3 misses the win; then again, not bad is 49...g5+! 50.fg Qxe4+). White now chooses between 49.Bxh5, 49.Kxh5 and 49.Kf5, but as subsequent analysis showed, he is bad in all cases.

45.Be8xg6!

The bishop is sacrificed to take the very important attacking resource h7-h5+ away from the opponent.

45...h7xg6

After playing 46.Nxf6!?, Simagin forced his opponent to give perpetual check: 46...Rh1+ 47.Kg3 Qe1+ 48.Kg4 Qe2+ 49.Kh4 Qe1+ (49...Qf2+ 50.g3 Rxb3+) 50.g3 (50.Kg4) 50...Rxb3+! 51.Kxb3 Qh1+ 52.Kg4 Qd1+ Draw.

White was not obliged to force a drawing outcome: he could have played the complex position that arises on taking the knight. That is what Dolmatov and other players did when they played through this position against me.

46.Qe7xe6!? Rc1-h1+ 47.Kh2-g3 Qa1xa3+

Evidently stronger than 47...Qe1+ 48.Kg4 Qe2+ 49.Kh4 g5+ 50.Kg3! (50.fg fg+ 51.Kxg5 Qxg2+ 52.Kh4 looks worse) 50...Qe1+ (but not 50...gf+? 51.Nxf4+/-) 51.Kg4 Qh4+ 52.Kf5 Qh7+ 53.Kg4 with a draw (53.Kxf6?! Qh6+ 54.Kf5 Qxe6+ 55.Kxe6 gf+/- is too risky).

48.Kg3-g4 Qa3-f8 49.Nd5xf6 Rh1-c1!



[FEN "5q1k/1p6/4QNp1/8/p3PPK1/7P/6P1/2r5 w - - 0 50"]

Black has defended against 50.Kg5?, on which there follows 50...Rc6 51.Qe5 Qxf6+ 52.Qxf6+ Rxf6. And in general, from the c6- or c7-square the rook will

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help to defend the king, which is feeling very uncomfortable near the opponent's queen and knight.

**50.Nf6-d7**

Also deserving of attention was 50.Qe5!? which most likely would have led to a draw after 50...Rc6!? 51.Nd7+ Qg7 52.Qe8+.

**50...Qf8-d8! 51.Qe6-e5+**

Both 51.f5?! gf+ and 51.Ne5?! Qe8 52.Nd7 Rc6 53.Qe5+ Kg8 54.Qe7 a3 are dubious.

**51...Kh8-g8 52.Qe5-d5+**

52.Nf6+?! Kf7 53.Nh7 Rc6 54.Ng5+ Kg8 gave nothing. After 52.Qe6+!? Kg7 53.Ne5 (53.Qe5+) 53...Qc8 54.Nd7 the affair would have ended in a draw.

**52...Kg8-g7**



[FEN "3q4/1p1N2k1/6p1/3Q4/p3PPK1/7P/6P1/2r5 w - - 0 53"]

1.?

The critical point in the battle. White has been playing well up to now, but here neither Dolmatov nor other players could withstand the tension when they reached this position (strange as it may seem, as the previous play was far from forced).

The move 53.Qxb7? is clearly "the wrong place" – the reply 53...Qc8 is very simple.

Many years later Alexander Motylev played 53.f5? gf+ 54.ef against me, underestimating the powerful retort 54...Qg8!! There then followed 55.Qd6 Rc6 56.Qe7+ Kh6+ 57.Kf4 (57.Kh4 Qg7) 57...Rc4+ 58.Ke5 Qg3+ 59.Kd5 Qd3+ 60.Ke6 Rc6+. White resigned.

White should choose 53.Qd4+! Kh6 54.Qxa4, with approximately equal chances. For example, 54...Qc8 55.Qb5 Rc7 56.Qg5+ Kg7 57.Qe7+, and the battle ends with perpetual check.

Artur Yusupov played considerably weaker against me: 54.e5? (instead of 54.Qxa4) 54...a3 55.e6 Re1 (I rejected 55...a2!, afraid of 56.e7 Qxe7 57.Qh8+, but foolishly: 57...Qh7 58.Qd8 Qxd7+ 59.Qxd7 a1Q+) 56.Qd2 Re4! 57.Kf3 Rxe6! 58.f5+ Qg5 59.Qxg5+ Kxg5 60.fe a2 61.e7 a1Q 62.e8Q Qf1+. White resigned.

Let's go back to the game with Dolmatov.

**53.Qe5+? Kf7! (53...Kh6 54.Nf6 is unclear) 54.Qd6 Rc6! 55.Ne5+ Ke8 56.Qb4 Qd1+! 57.Kh4 (57.Kg5?? Qh5# - this mate was blundered by Sasha Chernin, who had fallen into terrible time trouble in his second attempt to play the position against me) 57...Rc7!**

The king hopes to take shelter on the queenside, after which Black aims to queen his a-pawn. White's position has become unpleasant. His subsequent play could probably be improved, but it is not easy to make the right decisions at the board: there are no clear markers; no precise short variations are evident that would protect him against the danger.

**58.Qb5+ Kd8 59.Qb6?! (59.Qa5) 59...Kc8 60.Qxg6 Kb8 61.Kg3?! a3 62.Kh2 Ka7 63.Qg3 Qc1 64.Nd3 Qc3 65.Qe3+ b6 66.Qe2 Qb3 67.Qd2 Rd7 68.Nc5 Rxd2 69.Nxb3 a2 70.f5 Rb2 71.f6 Rxb3 72.f7 a1Q 73.f8Q Qe5+** White resigned.

As you can see, the young guys did not play very successfully, and the coach was successful in all the games. But these results are not recorded on tournament tables, they do not influence ratings, and the mistakes that were made are immediately noticed, along with the playing flaws behind them. Practice has confirmed that this kind of training is very effective, enabling strong growth in a player's mastery of the game.



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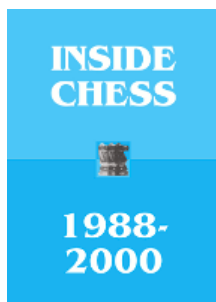
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## The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## Who is Attacking?

I found the example that I am offering for your attention in one of Jacob Aagaard's books: [Attacking Manual 1](#). I liked both the game and the notes to it. On the one hand, there is an opportunity here to discuss the ability to combine attack and defense in a double-edged position, and some principles of the technique of calculating variations; and on the other, many of the episodes can serve as useful exercises for practical training on the given theme.

As usual, before offering the fragment to my students, I checked it thoroughly. As a result I managed to go considerably deeper into the position and find a multitude of nuances that provide new food for thought. When you read this you will easily be able to distinguish Aagaard's notes (given in italics, as usual) from my own analysis.

**Hillarp Persson – Grooten**  
Hoogeveen 2007



[FEN "1r1r4/1b3kpp/p2ppb2/q6P/np1NP3/4BP2/PPPQ4/1K1R1BR1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

*Black has a lot of weaknesses and only one active idea (...Nc3+). White's best possible strategy would be to combine an attack on the black weaknesses on g7 and e6 with a prophylactic measure against Black's counterplay. All of this sounds easy in theory and once the position is approached with this attitude, it is not too difficult to find the best move.*

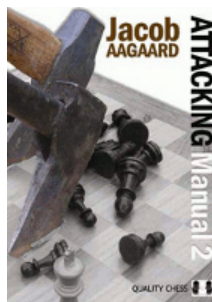
*Fritz 9 on my rather old laptop suggests 22.Ka1 as the best move, offering White a large advantage. This evaluation is probably correct and the move is certainly not bad. However, it does slow down White's action on the kingside, as all this move does is react against Black's threat.*

*The best move is 22.Bc4!, preparing to go to b3 to defend the king, and attacking e6 just as well as from h3. ... Black is forced to play 22...d5 when we reply with 23.Bb3.*

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[Attacking Manual 1](#)  
by Jacob Aagaard



[Attacking Manual 2](#)  
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[Grandmaster Preparation: Positional Play](#)  
by Jacob Aagaard





[FEN "1r1r4/1b3kpp/p3pb2/q2p3P/np1NP3/1B2BP2/PPPQ4/1K1R2R1 b - - 0 23"]

*White is simply winning here. He is going to play 24.Bg5, eliminated the only defender in the black camp.*

This evaluation is correct, of course, and at the board a player can stop calculating here. Nevertheless, I went into the possible variations anyway. After 23...de, the attack can be continued in various ways. For example, 24.fe Nc5 (24...Bxe4 25.Qf2+-) 25.Rdf1! Nxb3 26.Qg2! Rg8 27.Nxb3+-, or 24.Bxe6+ Ke8 25.Qh2! ef 26.Rde1+-, or 24.Qg2 Nc5 (24...ef 25.Qg4 Nc5 26.Qf5!+-) 25.Qg4 Kg8 26.Bg5+-.

*Certainly there are no tactical problems for White to solve in this line. ... So, why did he not play it? I will hypothesise that he tried to solve the position with ordinary calculation, meaning that he selected some options and tried to work out the consequences. Though this is an important aspect of chess it will not give the best results in every position. Tiger is likely to have predicted the next few moves, but overlooked his opponent's 24th move, or simply evaluated the consequences of it incorrectly.*

## 22.Bf1-h3?

*This move fails in the opposite direction of 22.Ka1, by attacking the black weaknesses without taking his counter chances into account.*

*It seems to me that Tiger's mistake in this position was that he relied solely on calculation.*

*By paying attention to his opponent's threat and attacking the most obvious weakness in the opponent's position ... you can find the best moves rather quickly.*

The move that was made in the game is unquestionably wrong, as it needlessly allows the opponent to sharpen the battle. But with a choice between 22.Bc4 and 22.Ka1 it is not all that simple. Aagard's reasoning is both logical and instructive: the bishop move to c4 is stronger, as it simultaneously attacks and neutralizes the opponent's threat, while a king retreat to the corner only pursues defensive aims. But it could be countered by different logic: by retreating his king, White cuts off the idea of a knight sacrifice on c3 at its root and can now develop his bishop not only to c4 (then he has to deal with the reply d6-d5), but also to h3.

Since the computer gives White an overwhelming advantage in both cases, it is hardly possible to prove the superiority of one move over the other with variations, which means that it is not even worth trying. Ultimately, in chess different approaches to a position that has been created are very often allowable.

## 22...Na4-c3+!

*Black seizes his chance given and would be foolish not to do so. 22...Bd5 23.Nb3 is quite complicated, but does not really work out. After 23...Bxb3 24.cb Nxb2 25.Rc1 White has the advantage.*

## 23.b2xc3 b4xc3

*24.Qe2? loses in a way reminiscent of the game... (24...Bd5+ 25.Nb3 Bxb3+-).*

## 24.Nd4-b3!?

*A very risky decision. Tiger is counting on keeping the extra piece in the upcoming complications.*

*Safer was 24.Bxe6+ to help with defence of the kingside. The downside is that ...Bd5+ will arise in most lines, winning back the piece. However, White*

would also have the chance to exchange queens, which would attract some players, though not Tiger.

Aagard limits himself to a (completely correct) verbal comparison of the move made by White and the interim capture of the e6-pawn. But the variations that could occur are so interesting that we will deviate from the events in the game here for a long time and train ourselves to solve the problems that face the players after **24.Bxe6+!?**.



[FEN "1r1r4/1b3kpp/p2pBb2/q6P/3NP3/2p1BP2/P1PQ4/1K1R2R1 b - - 0 24"]

### 1...?

Immediately the first, rather tricky problem: to which square should the black king retreat? A strong player not only has to calculate the necessary variations accurately and at length, but also avoid calculating anything irrelevant, be able to limit the calculations that he does during a positional evaluation. It is a very important and difficult art, which has to be used in this case. It will not be possible to calculate everything to the end – a decision is made on the basis of carefully studying the first moves in each line and comparing their consequences.

The drawback of **24...Ke7?!** is the circumstance that after **25.Qd3!** the move **25...Bxe4+?** does not work because of **26.Bb3 Bxd3 27.Nc6+** and **28.Nxa5+-** (on other king retreats the move **25.Qd3** is impossible).

It is necessary to play **25...Bd5+ 26.Nb3 Bxe6**, but then the exchange of bishops **27.Bd4** gives White a clearly better position.



[FEN "1r1r4/4k1pp/p2pbb2/q6P/3BP3/1NpQ1P2/P1P5/1K1R2R1 b - - 0 27"]

It is also possible to stop here, but for the doubters I will continue the analysis a little further. According to the computer, the most stubborn defense is **27...Bf7!** (**27...Qxh5 28.Rh1 Qb5 29.Bxf6+ Kxf6 30.Qxc3+ Qe5 31.Qe3+-** is weaker), but then there follows **28.Bxf6+ gf 29.f4!?** (**29.h6** or **29.Rg7** are also tempting).

On **24...Ke8** or **24...Kf8**, an almost identical position arises in the case of **25.Nb3 cd** (**25...Qe5** is worse) **26.Nxa5 Bd5+ 27.Nb3 Bxe6**.



[FEN "1r1rk3/6pp/p2pbb2/7P/4P3/1N2BP2/"]

P1Pp4/1K1R2R1 w - - 0 28"]

On 28.Rxd2, the response 28...a5 is unpleasant. White chooses between 28.Bxd2 and 28.Bg5, but he can hardly count on an advantage here either (regardless of where the black king is situated).

Which means that in order to make the right choice between a king retreat to e8 or f8 we have to see if White has any other resources (besides 25.Nb3) and with which king position he can make more impact.

In reply to **24...Kf8?** very strong is **25.Qh2!**.



[FEN "1r1r1k2/1b4pp/p2pBb2/q6P/3NP3/2p1BP2/P1P4Q/1K1R2R1 b - - 0 25"]

Wherever the king went, 25...Bd5+ 26.Nb3 Bxe6 27.Rxd6 leads to an overwhelming advantage for White.

The difference can be found after 25...Bxd4. With the king on f8 there is an important check: 26.Qf4+! Bf6 27.Bb3, with a winning position.

It is time to stop calculating here. Then again, further analysis allows us to uncover some new nuances.

If 27...Qe5, then 28.Qxe5 Bxe5 (28...de 29.Bc5+ Ke8 30.Bd6, intending 31.f4) 29.Bg5 or 29.f4 Bf6 30.e5.

The best defense is **25...Be5!? 26.Qh3!**, and only now **26...Bxd4**.



[FEN "1r1r1k2/1b4pp/p2pB3/q6P/3bP3/2p1BP1Q/P1P5/1K1R2R1 w - - 0 27"]

## 1.?

Here you have to choose a more energetic way of attacking.

The combination 27.Bb3!? Bxe3 28.Qe6 is tempting. On the forced 28...d5, there follows 29.Qf5+ (29.ed Bxd5 30.Qxe3 Bxb3 31.ab Qxh5= does not promise much) 29...Kg8.

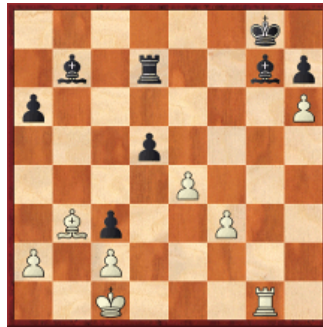


[FEN "1r1r2k1/1b4pp/p7/q2p1Q1P/4P3/1Bp1bP2/P1P5/1K1R2R1 w - - 0 30"]



## 1.?

30.Qe5! (the strongest) 30...Bh6 31.Rxg7+! Bxg7 32.Rg1 Rd7 (a strictly only move) 33.Qxb8+ (33.Rxg7+ Rxg7 34.Qxb8+ Kf7 35.Qxb7+ Kf8=) 33...Qd8! (33...Kf7? 34.h6!) 34.Qxd8+ Rxd8 35.h6 Rd7 36.Kc1.



[FEN "6k1/1b1r2bp/p6P/3p4/4P3/1Bp2P2/P1P5/2K3R1 b - - 0 36"]

White's advantage is indisputable, but still this variation is not the best one: there is a quicker and more convincing path to the goal.

**27.Ka1!**, and the white bishop is untouchable: 27...Bxe3 28.Rd5!+-. It is necessary to play **27...Bf6**, but here it is now possible to attack in various ways.



[FEN "1r1r1k2/1b4pp/p2pBb2/q6P/4P3/2p1BP1Q/P1P5/K2R2R1 w - - 0 28"]

The strongest and most impressive is **28.Bh6! gh 29.e5! Qxe5 30.Rde1!+-**.

And now let's go back to the move **24...Ke8!**. On **25.Qh2!?**, it is already possible to reply **25...Bxd4!**.

This is the end of the calculations that are required for choosing the best king retreat. Could you have coped with them? I will point out that in a training session grandmaster Ivan Popov flawlessly solved the problem that had been set: he calculated all the necessary variations, precisely evaluating their consequences, and at the same time did not calculate anything irrelevant.

The last variation, like the previous one, can be continued (but outside the framework of the problem we are discussing). White has to sacrifice a piece by means of **26.Ka1!**.



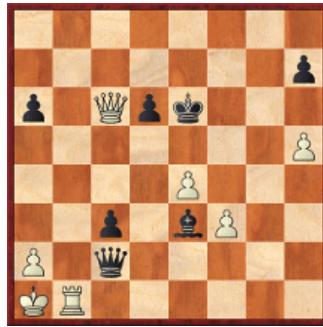
[FEN "1r1rk3/1b4pp/p2pB3/q6P/3bP3/2p1BP2/P1P4Q/K2R2R1 b - - 0 26"]

## 1...?

It makes sense to postpone the capture of the bishop. After **26...Bc8!** White has nothing better than **27.Bd5! Bxe3 28.Rxg7 Qa3 29.Rg8+ Kd7 30.Rg7+** with perpetual check.

But on an immediate 26...Bxe3 27.Rxg7! defending is still very difficult. So 27...Qe5?! is refuted by 28.Rg8+ Ke7 29.Qh4+! Kxe6 (29...Qf6 30.Rg7+ Kxe6 31.Qg4+ Ke5 32.Re7+! Qxe7 33.Qf5#) 30.Rxd8 Rxd8 31.Qxd8+-.. It is necessary to go into the next long but almost forced variation, foreseeing the consequences of which in advance is completely impossible.

27...Qa3! 28.Rb1 Bc6! 29.Rg8+ Ke7 30.Rxb8 Rxb8 31.Rxb8 Kxe6 32.Qh3+ Ke7 33.Qh4+ Kf7 34.Qd8! Qc1+ 35.Rb1 Qxc2 36.Qc7+ Ke6 37.Qxc6



[FEN "8/7p/p1Qpk3/7P/4P3/2p1bP2/P1q5/KR6 b - - 0 37"]

### 1...?

A new, relatively easy little problem on the theme of "the process of elimination." By playing 38.Qd5+ White wants to chase the king to the seventh rank with a lethal rook check. 38...Qd2 does not help because of 39.Qc8+ Kf6 40.Qf5+. The threat is parried only by a bold king march into the enemy camp: 37...Ke5!. It is not clear how to prove an advantage for White. For example, in the case of 38.Qd7!? the response 38...Bc1? 39.Qf5+ Kd4 40.Qd5+ Ke3 41.Qg5+ does not work, but there is the good reply 38...Bc5!, planning 39...Ba3 or 39...Qd2.

And now it is finally time to return to the game.

### 24...Bb7xe4!?

The thematic combination 24...Bd5? 25.Qd3 Bxb3 26.cb Rxb3+ 27.ab c2+ did not work because of 28.Kc1! cdQ+ 29.Kxd1, and Black is a piece down without any real compensation.

But 24...cd!? 25.Nxa5 Bxe4+ 26.Nb3 Bxf3 27.Rxd2 Bxh5 was fully possible. It is not too easy to evaluate the position after 28.Kc1.



[FEN "1r1r4/5kpp/p2ppb2/7b/8/1N2B2B/P1PR4/2K3R1 b - - 0 28"]

Black has three pawns for the knight – seemingly sufficient compensation. But White's pieces are active, and his chances are probably greater; the only question is, by how much.

Herman Grooten preferred a more principled continuation.

### 25.Qd2-c1!

The only move, as White cannot allow the queen to come to a3. 25.Qe2? is bad because of 25...Qa3 26.Bc1 Rxb3+ with a winning attack. In fact, after the forced 27.Ka1 Rb2 28.Bxe6+! Kxe6 29.Qxe4+ Kd7 30.Qd5 Kc7 you would not envy White's position.



[FEN "3r4/2k3pp/p2p1b2/3Q3P/8/q1p2P2/PrP5/K1BR2R1 w - - 0 31"]

### 1...?

I am not too fond of problems such as the one that has arisen here, where the solution is problematic and you can argue about which path is more promising. But what can you do: these kinds of problems crop up all over the place in practical play.

25...Bxf3? 26.Rdf1 with a deadly attack clearly does not work. It is necessary to make the difficult choice between a combination starting with a sacrifice on b3, and the retreat 25...Bd5, associated with the idea of a double capture on b3. By calculating the variations you have to evaluate from a practical point of view where the most difficult problems will be posed for your opponent and a blunder by him will be most likely.

### 25...Rb8xb3+

Aagaard awards an exclamation mark to the move that was made in the game.

*A very tempting combination that works wonders in the game. This is one of those instances where the brilliancy of the idea unfortunately does not translate well into moves on the board. However, Tiger is just a normal fabulous grandmaster and not a perfect machine, so it works out well in practice. Tiger "blunders" by overlooking a most remarkable defence and thereby fails to block his opponent's outstandingly creative play.*

*25...Bd5 was probably the objectively best move. Black has lots of play for the piece, probably enough, but White is fully in the game as well.*

Let's study the move **25...Bd5!?** more carefully.



[FEN "1r1r4/5kpp/p2ppb2/q2b3P/8/1Np1BP1B/P1P5/1KQR2R1 w - - 0 26"]

### 1.?

It is essential to neutralize the threat of a capture on b3 by blocking off the diagonal from the dangerous f6-bishop. 26.Bd4 e5 (the only move) 27.Be3 suggests itself. It appears that the problem has been solved: as Black is a piece down, 27...Bxf3 28.Rdf1 is bad, and on 28...Bxh5 or 28...e4 the move 29.Bg5! is decisive.

But a bold rook sacrifice can be found: 27...Bxb3! 28.cb Rxb3+! 29.ab Rb8 30.Kc2 Qa2+ 31.Kd3 Rxb3.



[FEN "8/5kpp/p2p1b2/4p2P/8/1rpKBP1B/q7/2QR2R1 w - - 0 32"]

Despite White's enormous material superiority, he has no advantage, and a very sharp skirmish should most likely end in a peaceful outcome. On 32.Rg2, there follows 32...c2+ 33.Ke2, and now either 33...Rb1!?, or 33...cdQ+ 34.Kxd1 Rd3+. And if 32.Bf5, taking control of the b1-h7 diagonal, then the calm 32...d5!, and only the deflecting rook sacrifice 33.Rg2! saves White from a rout.

Going back to White's twenty-sixth move, we can observe that the dangerous diagonal can be blocked not only by the bishop, but also by the rook:  
**26.Rd4!!.**



[FEN "1r1r4/5kpp/p2ppb2/q2b3P/3R4/1Np1BP1B/P1P5/1KQ3R1 b - - 0 26"]

In this situation the sacrifice on b3 no longer works: 26...Bxb3?! 27.ab (or 27.cb) 27...Rxb3+? 28.cb Rb8 29.Qc2 Qa3 30.Bxe6+! Kxe6 31.Qe4+ Kd7 (31...Kf7 32.Qd5+) 32.Rxg7+! Bxg7 33.Qf5+, and White mates! But it is not clear what else his opponent can do. On his move White wants to play 27.Rf4, or first include 27.h6.

Now let's look at what the continuation in the game leads to.

### 26.a2xb3 Rd8-b8



[FEN "1r6/5kpp/p2ppb2/q6P/4b3/1Pp1BP1B/2P5/1KQR2R1 w - - 0 27"]

### 1.?

How can White defend? Hillarp Persson did not cope with the task.

### 27.f3xe4? Rb8xb3+! 28.c2xb3 c3-c2+!

*White resigned. After 29.Kxc2 Qc3+ he is mated a bishop and two rooks up.*

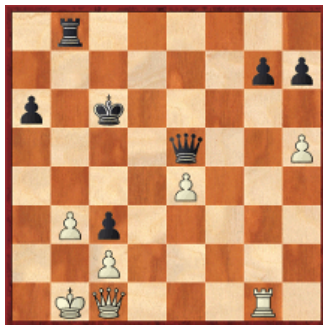
*I think Tiger took the bishop out of resignation and envy at his opponent's brilliant play.*

*27.Bxe6+!! was the only move. Black has to take the bishop, as it defends b3. 27...Kxe6 28.Rxd6+!! This might look like utter desperation. However, it is*

also a great defence. (It is important to free the d1-square for the king with a tempo.)

After 28...Ke7? 29.fe Rxb3+ 30.cb c2+ 31.Kxc2 Qc3+, White has an extra option compared to the game in 32.Kd1, leaving him in a winning position.

If Black takes the rook, he will be in great difficulty after the bishop check on f4. (28...Kxd6 29.Bf4+ Be5 30.fe Kc6 31.Bxe5 Qxe5+/-.)



[FEN "1r6/6pp/p1k5/4q2P/4P3/1Pp5/2P5/1KQ3R1 w -- 0 32"]

With material equality the black king is exposed, so White has a clear advantage.

But this is his only option, as moving the rook from d1 with tempo has given White enough time to take the hanging black pieces.

Going back to the problem facing Black on the twenty-fifth move, we can draw the conclusion that it does not have an unambiguous solution: in both cases with correct play White preserves an advantage. Still, it seems to me that on 25...Bd5!? it would be more difficult for him to precisely calculate the variations and choose the right path.

I hope that readers have obtained some pleasure from the heated battle that we have examined. One of the most important tasks for coaches, as well as authors of books and articles, is to look for these kinds of vivid examples and definitively reveal and explain their inner content.



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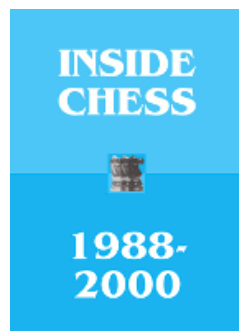
Mark Dvoretsky



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## The Specifics of Exploiting an Advantage

A banal truth: strategy and tactics in chess are closely intertwined. Even in relatively quiet positions it is very important to constantly display tactical vigilance, to look for the strongest individual moves and accurately calculate the variations that arise.

Grandmaster Evgeny Bareev is very strong in a strategic battle, but his tactical skill, in my view, is slightly weaker than his positional abilities. This can be seen in the game I am offering for your attention. After superbly outplaying his opponent, Bareev then missed the most accurate path to his goal several times when trying to exploit the advantage he had achieved, giving his opponent serious counter-chances. True, the latter more than once failed to make use of the opportunities that were presented to him, and the duel ended with a victory for White anyway.

The material has been structured in the form of a "game with questions." This is how I often structure my lessons with strong students. The first half is the text of the game with short notes and a series of questions about the most important and instructive points. The second half is the answers to the questions.

**Bareev – Lalic**

Bosnian League 2003

1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 4.Ng1-f3 Bf8-g7 5.Qd1-b3 d5xc4 6.Qb3xc4 0-0 7.e2-e4 Nb8-c6 8.Bf1-e2 Bc8-g4 9.d4-d5 Nc6-a5 10.Qc4-b4



[FEN "r2q1rk1/ppp1ppbp/5np1/n2P4/1Q2P1b1/2N2N2/PP2BPPP/R1B1K2R b KQ - 0 10"]

### 1) How should Black play?

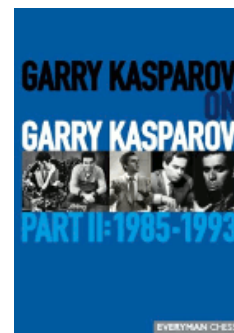
10...Bg4xf3 11.Be2xf3 c7-c6 12.0-0 Qd8-b6 13.Qb4-a4

13.Qxe7?! Nc4 and 14...Rfe8 is worse, with an excellent position for Black.

13...Nf6-d7 14.Bf3-e2!?

A novelty. Previously encountered were 14.Rd1 Nc5 15.Qc2 Nc4 16.Be2 Qb4! counterplay (Kasimdzhanov-Sutovsky, Batumi

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by David Vigorito

Rapid 1999), and 14.Be3 Qxb2 15.Rfc1! Bxc3 16.Rab1 Nb6 17.Bxb6 ab 18.Rxb2 Bxb2 19.Rd1+/- (Khalifman-Vokarev, Tolyatti 2003). In the second game, by continuing 16...b5! (instead of 16...Nb6) 17.Rxb2 ba 18.Rxc3 cd 19.ed Rac8, Black maintained approximate equality.

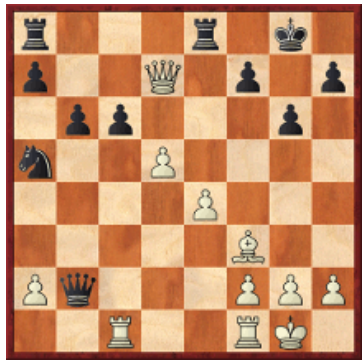
**14...Nd7-c5 15.Qa4-c2 Qb6-b4**



[FEN "r4rk1/pp2ppbp/2p3p1/n1nP4/1q2P3/2N5/PPQ1BPPP/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 16"]

**2) How should White continue?**

**16.Bc1-e3 Bg7xc3 17.Ra1-c1 Bc3-d4 18.Be3xd4 Qb4xd4 19.Qc2xc5 Qd4xb2 20.Be2-f3! b7-b6 21.Qc5xe7 Rf8-e8 22.Qe7-d7**



[FEN "r3r1k1/p2Q1p1p/1pp3p1/n2P4/4P3/5B2/Pq3PPP/2R2RK1 b - - 0 22"]

**3) How should Black defend?**

**22...Re8-d8 23.Qd7-c7 Qb2xa2**

23...cd? 24.ed Qxa2 25.d6 Rab8 26.Rfe1+- (or 26.Rfd1) does not work. 23...Rdc8!? 24.Qf4 cd 25.ed deserved attention, and now not 25...Qxa2? 26.d6+-, but 25...Kg7!, preparing 26...Qf6. Then again, after 26.h4!? Qf6 27.Qa4 the initiative remained with White.



[FEN "r2r2k1/p1Q2p1p/1pp3p1/n2P4/4P3/5B2/q4PPP/2R2RK1 w - - 0 24"]

**4) How should White continue?**

**24.e4-e5 Na5-b3 25.Rc1xc6 Nb3-d4 26.e5-e6 f7xe6 27.d5xe6**

**Rd8-f8 28.e6-e7 Nd4xf3+**

Black probably rejected an immediate 28...Rfe8 because of 29.Rxg6+ hg 30.Bxa8, but after 30...Qe6 31.Qxa7 Rxe7+/- he can still resist. It cannot be ruled out that Bareev would have preferred to keep the formidable passed e7-pawn by playing 29.Rd6! Nxf3+ 30.gf, with an overwhelming advantage. For example, 30...Qe2 31.Rd8! Qxf3 32.Qd7+- or 30...Qa5 (intending 31...Qg5+) 31.Qc4+! Kg7 32.Qd4+ Kg8 33.Qe3! – White has neutralized his opponent's counterplay and should win without any difficulty.

**29.g2xf3 Rf8-e8 30.Rf1-e1?**

A shallow move! Both 30.Rd6!, taking the game into the variation we just looked at, and the more direct 30.Rd1!, intending 31.Rd8, were strong. After 30...Qa5 31.h4! (it is important to take the g5-square away from the queen) 31...Qa4 32.Rd8 Qxh4 33.Rxa8 (33.Rcd6) 33...Qg5+ 34.Kf1 Qb5+ (34...Rxa8 35.Qc8+) 35.Ke1 Qb4+ 36.Ke2 Qb2+ 37.Ke3 Qb3+ 38.Kf4 the king gets away from the checks.



[FEN "r3r1k1/p1Q1P2p/1pR3p1/8/5P2/q4P1P/4R1K1 b - - 0 30"]

**5) How should Black defend?**

**30...Qa2-f7 31.Kg1-g2 b6-b5**

The a-pawn does not succeed in queening: 31...a5 32.Rd6! a4 33.Rd8 a3 34.Rxa8 Rxa8 35.Qd8+.

**32.Rc6-d6!?**

The rook is aiming for d8. 32.Ra6? Rac8! 33.Qxa7 Qf4! is significantly weaker, and it is necessary to deal with both 34...Qg5+ and 34...Rc7.

But 32.Re4! was even more precise. From here the rook both slows down the opponent's pawn and restricts the enemy queen, thereby helping its own king.

**32...Qf7-f5!**

On 32...Qc4, there follows 33.Qa5!? (33.Rc6!?) 33...Qf4 34.Qa2+! Kg7 (34...Qf7 35.Qd2!+-) 35.Qd5!, and the centralization of all White's pieces secures him a quick win.





[FEN "r3r1k1/p1Q1P2p/3R2p1/1p3q2/8/  
5P2/5PKP/4R3 w - - 0 33"]

6) How should White continue?

33.h2-h4 Ra8-c8

Now White should play 34.Qa5!, not allowing either 34...b4 or 34...Rc3, and preparing 35.Rd8. But the brutish pawn capture 34.Qxa7? gives his opponent new chances.



[FEN "2r1r1k1/Q3P2p/3R2p1/1p3q2/7P/  
5P2/5PK1/4R3 b - - 0 34"]

7) How should Black defend?

34.Qc7-b7? a7-a5?

Hopeless is 34...Qc5? 35.Qa6! (threatening 36.Rxg6+) 35...Kg7 36.Ree6 Qf5 37.Qa1+ Kg8 (37...Kh6 38.Rf6 Qc5 39.Rf7 Qc3 40.Qxc3 Rxc3 41.Rd8) 38.Rf6 Qh5 39.Qe1!. Only 34...Rc4! is correct.



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1Q2P2p/3R2p1/pp3q2/7P/  
5P2/5PK1/4R3 w - - 0 35"]

8) How should White play?

35.Rd6-d5 Qf5-f6 36.Rd5-e5

In the case of 36.Rxb5? (or 36.h5?) 36...Qc6! Black saved himself. 36.Qxb5!? Rxe7 (36...Qxh4!+/-/+-) 37.Rxe7 Qxe7 38.Rd7 Qf6 (38...Qe6 39.Qb7+-) 39.Qb3+ Kh8 40.Rf7 Qe5 41.Qb7 Kg8! 42.Re7 Rb8! 43.Qa7 Qb2 44.Rxh7 (44.Qxa5!?) 44...Rf8+/-/+- deserved serious attention.

36...Qf6-c6 37.Qb7-a7 a5-a4 38.h4-h5! Rc8-a8

38...b4 39.Qe3 Qc3 (39...b3 40.hg+-) 40.Qb6!+-.

39.Qa7-e3 Ra8-a6!



[FEN "4r1k1/4P2p/r1q3p1/1p2R2P/p7/4QP2/5PK1/4R3 w - - 0 40"]

9) How should White continue the attack?

40.h5xg6 h7xg6 41.Qe3-h6

Again not the most energetic choice. As before, 41.Rd1!? with Rd8 is very strong. Another option is 41.Rc5!? Qf6 (41...Qd7 42.Qh6, intending Rh1) 42.Rc8! Rxc8 43.e8Q+ Rxe8 44.Qxe8+ Qf8 45.Qxb5 Ra8 (45...Rf6 46.Re8 Rxf3 47.Rxf8+ Rxf8 48.Qxa4, and in this situation queen and pawn win against rook and pawn.) 46.Qd5+ Kg7 47.Qd4+ and 48.Rh1+-.

41...Qc6-f6

41...a3 42.Rh1 Kf7 43.Qh7+ Kf6 44.Re4+-.

42.Re5xb5 Ra6-e6

Other moves are no better:

42...a3 (or 42...Ra7) 43.Rb8!+-.

42...Qg7 43.Qh2! (intending 44.Rb8) 43...Raa8 44.Qd6+- with a subsequent 45.Re6.

42...Qf7 43.Rb4! (threatening 44.Rf4 Rf6 45.Rh1) 43...Qg7 44.Qd2!+-.

42...Raa8 43.Re4!? Rxe7 44.Rxe7 Qxe7 45.Rb6!+-.



[FEN "4r1k1/4P3/4rqpQ/1R6/p7/5P2/5PK1/4R3 w - - 0 43"]

10) How should White continue?

43.Re1xe6 Qf6xe6 44.Rb5-h5 Kg8-f7 45.Rh5-h4 Re8xe7 46.Rh4-f4+ Kf7-e8 47.Qh6-f8+ Ke8-d7 48.Rf4-d4+ Kd7-c7 49.Qf8-d8+ Kc7-c6 50.Rd4-e4 1-0

Answers

1. Not only a capture of the knight is threatened, but also e4-e5. The move 10...c6?? 11.e5!+- (Antoshin-Nezhmetdinov, Sochi 1966) is a mistake, so you first have to take the g4-bishop out from under attack: 10...Bxf3! 11.Bxf3 c6.

Gambit play can serve as an alternative: 10...c5!? 11.Qxc5 Rc8 12.Qb4 Rxc3!. After 13.Qxc3 (13.bc Nxe4 14.Qxe4 Bxc3+ 15.Bd2 Bxf3 and 16...Bxa1 unclear is weaker) 13...Nxe4 14.Qb4 Qxd5 15.0-0 you have to continue in the same style for the sake of supporting the initiative: 15...Nc6! 16.Qxb7 Nc5 17.Qb5 (unclear are 17.Qc7 e5! 18.Rd1 Nd4 or 18.Bc4 Qxc4 19.Qxc6 Rc8 20.Qd6 Bxf3 21.gf Ne6 22.Be3 Rd8 23.Qe7 Qc6) 17...Rb8 18.Qc4 Bxf3 19.gf. But White still retains better chances here (19...Qd6 20.Be3+/-/+/-).

2. 16.Bf3 Nc4 17.Rab1 unclear does not promise much. Bareev found the only opportunity to preserve the initiative.

**16.Be3! Bxc3 17.Rac1!** Threatening 18.bc. An immediate 17.bc?! Qxe4 18.Qd1 b6 unclear is weaker.

On 17...Qxb2, the most energetic is 18.Bxc5 (18.Qxb2 Bxb2 19.Rxc5 b6 20.Rc2 Be5 21.f4 Bc7 22.dc+/- is not bad either) 18...Qxc2 (18...cd 19.Qxc3 Qxe2 20.Bxe7 Rfe8 21.Bf6) 19.Rxc2 Be5 (19...Bf6 20.Bb4 b6 21.dc Rfc8 22.c7) 20.Bxe7 Rfe8 21.Bb4 Bc7 22.Bf3 with an overwhelming advantage.

If 17...b6, then White gets an advantage by 18.Bxc5! Qxc5 (18...bc 19.Qxc3+/-) 19.Qxc3 Qxc3 20.Rxc3. In the case of 20...c5 the move 21.Ba6! is strong, intending a2-a3 and b2-b4. On 20...cd, the simplest is 21.ed (there is also 21.b4) 21...Nb7 (21...Rfc8 22.Rfc1 Rxc3 23.Rxc3) 22.Rc7 Nd6 23.Ba6+/-.

The best defense, associated with an exchange of dark-squared bishops, was demonstrated in the game: 17...Bd4! 18.Bxd4 Qxd4 19.Qxc5 Qxb2! (19...Qxc5 20.Rxc5 b6 21.Rc3 led to the same difficult position that also came about on 17...b6).

3. The move chosen by Black, 22...Red8?, took him to a lost position.

Not much better is 22...Rad8?! 23.Qxa7 cd 24.ed Qxa2 25.Rc7 (25.Qxb6? Nb3!= is a mistake, threatening both 26...Nxc1 and 26...Nd2) 25...Rf8 26.Qxb6 Nc4 27.Qf6 Nd2 (27...Nd6 28.h4) 28.Rd1 Nxf3+ 29.Qxf3 Rd6+/-, with a healthy extra pawn for White.

The correct defense is **22...Qe5!**. Black plans to kick the enemy queen out of his camp. For example, 23.dc Red8 24.Qh3 Rac8 25.Rfd1 Nxc6 (25...Rxd1+!?) 26.Rd5 Qb2!. White should probably prefer 23.Rfd1 Re7 24.Qh3 cd 25.Rxd5, with a slightly better game.

4. 24.dc? Qe6! (with the idea of 25...Rdc8) gives nothing.

We have to create a threat to the black king: **24.e5!** (intending 25.e6) **24...cd? 25.e6! fe** (25...Rf8 26.Qd6) **26.Qe5! Nc4 27.Qxe6+ Kh8 28.Qf6+ Kg8 29.Rce1!** loses.

In the game they played 24...Nb3 25.Rxc6 (25.e6 fe 26.Rxc6! is equivalent, but not 26.de? Nxc1 27.Qf7+ Kh8, and White only has perpetual check) 25...Nd4 (on 25...Nd2 the same reply follows) 26.e6! fe (26...Nxc6? 27.Qxf7+ Kh8 28.dc Rf8 29.Qd7 Rfd8 30.c7+-) 27.de. Now it is impossible to take either the pawn: 27...Nxe6? 28.Qe5+- or the rook: 27...Nxc6? 28.Qf7+ Kh8 29.Bxc6 Rf8 30.Qd7 Rfd8 31.Qe7+-). But otherwise White preserves the strong passed e-pawn, which secures him a decisive advantage.

5. So as not to give White time to exploit the passed pawn, it is essential to dig up some threats to his king. The problem is

solved by means of **30...Qd5!** – Black attacks the f3-pawn and simultaneously prepares check from g5. If 31.Qb7, indirectly defending the pawn, then 31...Qg5+ 32.Kh1 Rab8!? 33.Qxa7 Qa5, forcing a transition to a drawn ending. On 31.Re4, there follows 31...Qg5+ 32.Kh1 Qf5!+=.

The move that was made in the game, 30...Qf7?, created only one threat, which was easily repelled, and considerably fewer possibilities for counterplay remained.

---

**6.** Black had prepared 33...Rac8 34.Qxa7 Qg5+ 35.Kf1 Rc1=. Mistaken is 33.Re5? Qxe5 (33...Qc8? 34.Qa5+-) 34.Rxg6+ hg 35.Qxe5 Kf7= (or 35...Rab8=).

You have to take control of the g5-square by means of **33.h4!** (when it is convenient the pawn can also be used for an assault on the enemy king's protection). Now 33...Rac8 loses considerable force, and on 33...Qc8 decisive is 34.Qa5! Qc4 35.Re4 Qc5 36.Rd8.

Another slightly more complicated path to calculate is **33.Rd7!**. There is no longer 33...Rac8 because of 34.Qxc8, and on 34...Qg5+ both 35.Kh1 Qf6 36.Re3+- and 35.Kf1!? Qf6 36.Re4! (intending 37.Rf4) 36...Qxf3 37.Re3! Qf6 38.Red3+- are good.

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**7.** Black plays **34...Rc3!** (but not 34...b4? 35.Qb6+- and not 34...Rc4? 35.Rd8+-) **35.Qb7 Rc4!**. On 36.Rd8, now there is 36...Rxh4! 37.Rxe8+ Kg7 38.Rg8+ Kh6 (with the queen on a7 check from the e3-square is decisive here). 36.Rd5 Qc8 37.Qxb5 Rxh4 38.Rd7 Rh5 is not convincing either.

For the same reason the move in the game, 34.Qb7?, is also a mistake – Black could reply 34...Rc4! 35.Rd8 Rxh4!.

---

**8.** A direct path for White to exploit his advantage is associated with creating the threat of Rd8. This can be achieved in two ways.

A) **35.Qb6!** b4 (35...Rc3 36.Rf6 Qd7 37.Rf8+! Rxf8 38.efQ+ Kxf8 39.Qf6+) 36.Rd8 Kf7 37.Qd4! (or 37.Rc1! Rxc1 38.Rxe8 Rc8 39.Rxc8 Qxc8 40.Qd8+-) 37...b3 38.Re5+-.

B) **35.Red1!** The only chance to postpone a rook invasion on d8 is the clever move 35...Rc4! with the idea of 36.Rd8? Rxh4! 37.Rxe8+ Kg7 38.Rg8+ Kh6 39.Qd7! (otherwise Black wins) 39...Qg5+ 40.Kf1 Rh1+ 41.Ke2 Qe5+, and the king cannot hide from the checks. However, 36.R1d5! Qc8 (36...Rg4+ 37.fg Qxg4+ 38.Kf1 Qh3+ 39.Ke1 Qc3+ 40.Ke2+-) 37.Qxc8 Rxc8 38.Rd8 Kf7 39.Rxc8 Rxc8 40.Rd8 Kxe7 41.Rxc8 Kd6 42.Kf1 wins easily.

All other continuations, including the move in the game 35.Rd5?!, although not losing the advantage, complicate and drag out its exploitation.

---

**9.** The exchange of pawns 40.hg? that occurred in the game, which would be justified after 40...hg?, is nevertheless a blunder – as Black could reply 40...Qxg6+!. On 41.Rg5?, there is 41...Qxg5+ 42.Qxg5+ Rg6-/+, so it would be necessary to play 41.Kf1. After 41...Qf7! 42.Rg5+ Rg6 43.Rxb5 Qc4+ 44.Qe2 Qxe2+ 45.Rxe2 Ra6 a drawn endgame arose.

**40.Rd1!!** with the idea of 41.Rd8 led to the aim. For example, 40...a3 41.Rd8 a2 42.Qh6 with the idea of 43.Qf8+!, or 40...Qf6 41.Rd8! Kf7 42.Rxe8 Kxe8 43.Qd3 Qd6 44.Qxb5+ Rc6 45.Rd5 Qc7 46.Rc5. If 40...Raa8, then 41.Re6+-.

In the case of 40...Kf7 there are various ways of acting. After 41.Qh6 Qf6 switching to a rook endgame is decisive: 42.Qxh7+ Qg7 43.Qxg7+ Kxg7 44.Rd8 Kf7 45.Rxe8 Kxe8 46.h6 g5 47.h7 Rh6 48.Rxb5 Kxe7 49.Rb8. Another path is 41.Rd8 Qf6, and now either 42.Rxe8 Kxe8 43.Qd3! (we have already seen this position), or 42.Qh6 Qxe5 43.Rxe8.

**10. 43.Rxe6 Qxe6 44.Rh5!** (but not 44.Rg5? Rxe7) **44...Kf7 45.Rh4!**, and a direct attack on the black king decides the outcome of the battle.

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## The Instructor

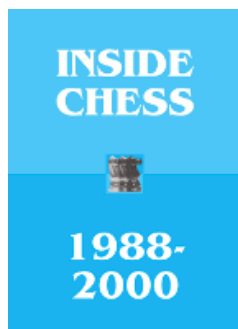
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## How to Study Openings

The acknowledged expert in the sphere of opening theory Yuri Razuvaev considered it useful, when working on one opening system or other, to collect and closely study sample games that were characteristic of it. Games that not only gave you an idea about the specific opening nuances, but also demonstrated typical strategic and tactical ideas. This approach has not lost its significance even today. And above all when we are talking about preparing young players who are still little-versed in the peculiarities of the variations they have assimilated.

An example in a line of the Scotch Game will illustrate the idea I have expressed. It is rare nowadays, but still encountered at times. We can see that even strong players have often found themselves ill-prepared, and at the same time we can convince ourselves of how much easier their task would have been if they had been acquainted with this classic game that was played by Yuri Balashov. At the same time we will train ourselves to solve the positional and tactical problems that arise in the duels we are looking at.

**Zheltnin – Balashov**  
Moscow 1998

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 ed 5.Nxd4 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bc 7.Bd3 d5 8.ed cd 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 c6 11.Ne2 h6 12.Bh4 Bd6 13.Nd4 c5 14.Nf5

Artur Yusupov's recommendation 14.Nb5!? deserves attention, and on a bishop retreat, 15.c4. The good player and wonderful study composer Yochanan Afek played this way more than once. Then again, here, as in the continuation in the game, White does not have a shadow of an advantage – the opening variation he has chosen is too harmless.

14...Bxf5 15.Bxf5 Rb8



[FEN "1r1q1rk1/p4pp1/3b1n1p/2pp1B2/7B/8/PPP2PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 16"]

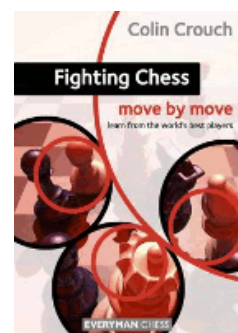
16.b3?!

As White, it is psychologically difficult to admit right after the opening that you have nothing and have to play bluntly for a draw. But meanwhile, here we have such a case, and so we can

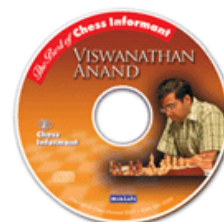
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recommend to White 16.Bxf6!? Qxf6 17.Qxd5 Rfd8 18.Qf3 Be5 19.Rad1=/. Another option is 16.Rb1!?=/.

**16...Be5 17.Rc1 Qd6 18.Bg3?!**

And again correct is 18.Bxf6! Bxh2+ (18...Qxf6 19.Qf3=/(+)) 19.Kh1 Qxf6 20.Qxd5=/.

**18...Bxg3 19.hg Rfe8 20.Qf3 Re5 21.Rfe1 Rbe8 22.Rxe5 Qxe5 23.c3**

White defends against the thrust 23...Qb2, although objectively it is not too dangerous. 23.Bd3!? Qb2 24.Qd1 deserved attention.



[FEN "4r1k1/p4pp1/5n1p/2ppqB2/8/1PP2QP1/P4PP1/2R3K1 b - - 0 23"]

**1...?**

The decision that Balashov made at this key moment gives the game an instructional character and makes it a template for Black's strategy in similar positions.

**23...c4!**

The grandmaster laconically explained the pawn advance:

*Maintaining the weakness on c3 and restricting the f5-bishop; it is now difficult for White to find a plan of defense – his pieces are like dummies.*

We will give a more developed commentary. Black's move has a considerable prophylactic aspect to it. On other continuations, White would have his only defensive plan: putting the bishop on d3 or f1, defending the e2-square and preparing the exchange of rooks Rc2-e2.

It is also worth noting that Balashov was following a recommendation by the great Capablanca: *When your opponent has a bishop, keep your pawns on squares the color of that bishop.* We are generally used to the idea that a bishop is bad when its own pawns are stuck on squares of the same color. But the strategy of restricting our opponent's bishop with our pawns probably is not as well known.

**24.Rd1?!**

Now Black establishes control of the important g4-square. 24.g4? g6 25.Bc2 did not work because of the double blow 25...Qg5, but it was worth offering the exchange of queens 24.Qf4!.

**24...g6 25.Bc2 h5! 26.Rf1**

26.bc? Qe1+! 27.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 28.Kh2 Ng4+ 29.Qxg4 hg 30.cd Rc1 lost.

**26...Kg7**

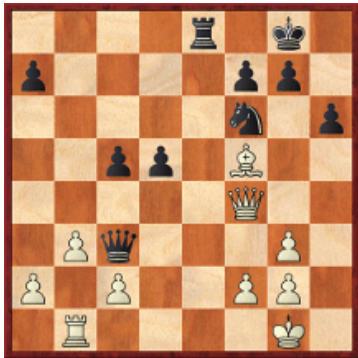
The position can be quietly improved, as the opponent does not

And in the case of 21.g4 complications begin, the outcome of which is almost impossible to foresee. Black plays 21...g6



22.Rbe1 Qd4 23.Qxh6!? (an exchange of queens leads to the loss of a pawn) 23...gf 24.Qg5+ Kh8, and now not 25.Rd1? Qe5 26.gf Ne4-+ with a subsequent Rb6, but 25.Qxf5 (threatening 26.g5) 25...Rxe1 (25...Nxc4 26.Qxf7 unclear) 26.Rxe1 Rg8 27.g5 Nh7 28.Qxf7 Rf8 (28...Nxc5 29.Qh5+ Nh7 30.Re7=) 29.Re8 (29.c3!? Qxc3 30.Qe6=+) 29...Rxe8 30.Qxe8+ Kg7 31.Qe7+ Kg6 32.Qxa7=+.

**20...Rxe1+ 21.Qxe1 Re8 22.Qd2 Qe5 23.Qf4 Qc3**



[FEN "4r1k1/p4pp1/5n1p/2pp1B2/5Q2/1Pq3P1/P1P2PP1/1R4K1 w - - 0 24"]

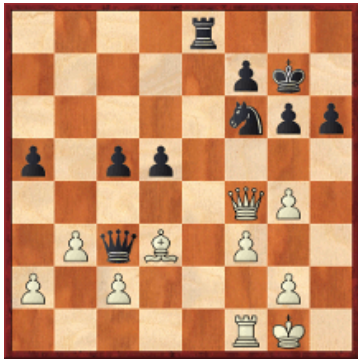
**1.?**

Again a good reason to recall the previous game. White should have retreated the bishop: 24.Bd3!, and if 24...h5, then 25.f3=+/, taking the g4- and e4-squares away from the enemy pieces.

**24.Rf1?! g6?!**

Yusupov did not exploit his partner's inaccuracy. 24...c4! 25.bc dc was very strong, and if the artless 26.Rd1?!, then 26...g6 with a decisive advantage.

**25.Bd3 Kg7 26.f3 a5 27.g4**



[FEN "4r3/5pk1/5npp/p1pp4/5QP1/1PqB1P2/P1P3P1/5RK1 b - - 0 27"]

**1...?**

The last two moves only weakened White's position (I think f2-f3 is appropriate only in reply to h6-h5). And now Black could achieve a big advantage by continuing 27...g5!. Depending on the queen retreat, he chooses between opening lines on the kingside with h6-h5 (after a preliminary queen check from d4), and the move c5-c4. For example, 28.Qg3 c4 29.Bf5 Qd2, intending 30...h5, or 28.Qc7 Qd4+ 29.Kh2 h5, or 28.Qd6 Qd4+ 29.Kh2 Re5!? and then 30...h5 (an immediate 29..h5 30.gh Qh4+ 31.Kg1 Nxc5 is also possible, sacrificing pawns for the sake of the attack).

**27...c4?! 28.bc g5**

Yusupov implements the same idea, but it was not worth including an advance of the c-pawn, as it is not appropriate in all variations.

### 29.Qc7?!

Equality was maintained on 29.Qd6!. The difference in the queen's position soon becomes clear.

### 29...Qd4+ 30.Kh2 h5 31.gh

31.g3 hg 32.Kg2 is preferable.

### 31...Qh4+ (31...Nxb5? 32.g3) 32.Kg1 Nxb5



[FEN "4r3/2Q2pk1/8/p2p2pn/2P4q/3B1P2/P1P3P1/5RK1 w - - 0 33"]

With the queen on d6 it was possible to play 33.Qxd5. But here no satisfactory defense is evident. 33.cd? Qd4+ 34.Kh2 Rh8 is very bad.

### 33.Qb6 Ng3 34.cd (forced, as 34.Rb1? dc-+ does not work) 34...Nxf1 35.Kxf1 Qb4, and Black won in the end.

Let's go back to the position in the very first diagram again.

**16.Rb1!?** (Yusupov's recommendation) **16...Rb4!?** **17.Bg3** (after 17.Bxf6!? Qxf6 you cannot play 18.Qxd5?? Rd4-+, but 18.Bh3 Rh4!? 19.Qxd5 Rd8 20.Qf5 (20.Qb3? g5!) 20...Bxh2+ 21.Kh1=+ preserves a playable position) **17...Bxg3 18.hg** has been tried several times.



[FEN "3q1rk1/p4pp1/5n1p/2pp1B2/1r6/6P1/PPP2PP1/1R1Q1RK1 b - - 0 18"]

### 1...?

White intends 19.c3 and at the appropriate moment b2-b4. It makes sense for Black to transfer his queen to the central e5-square with a tempo: **18...Qb8! 19.b3 Qe5.**

The game **A. Ivanov – Liss**, played in 1995, ended surprisingly quickly.

### 20.Qf3 (20.g4!?) 20...g6 21.c3 Rb6 22.Bc2 Re8 23.b4



[FEN "4r1k1/p4p2/1r3npp/2ppq3/1P6/2P2QP1/P1B2PP1/1R3RK1 b - - 0 23"]

1...?

We have already accumulated enough experience to confidently recommend the move 23...c4!, which restricts the mobility of the enemy bishop and establishes the weakness on c3. Black preserved a noticeable positional advantage.

But he preferred the more concrete path **23...Qg5** with the idea of 24...Ng4 and 25...Qh5 (24.bc? Rxb1 25.Rxb1 Ng4 loses). But, firstly, the threat was not difficult to repel by means of 24.Qf4!? =/+ . Secondly, strictly speaking, it is not a threat at all: 24.a4!? Ng4 (24...c4 is stronger) 25.Bd1!, and the attack does not work. Alas, the person playing White did not solve the problems that were facing him.

**24.Rfd1? Ng4!** (his own rook prevents the bishop from getting to d1) **25.Qxd5? Re1+** White resigned.

A capture on d5 with another piece was only slightly better: 25.Rxd5 Rbe6! 26.Rf1 Re1! 27.Rxg5 Rxf1+ 28.Kxf1 Nh2+ 29.Kg1 Nxf3+ 30.gf Re1+ 31.Kg2 hg, and Black has a winning endgame.

In conclusion let's look at a game from the semifinal of the Women's Knockout World Championship. A draw would have taken the Chinese player (after overcoming her opponent in the first duel) to the final.

**Kosteniuk – Xu Yuhua**  
Moscow 2001

A familiar eighteen moves (with minimal transposition) were made, leading to the position in the penultimate diagram.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.d4 ed 5.Nxd4 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bc 7.Bd3 d5 8.ed cd 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 c6 11.Ne2 h6 12.Bh4 Bd6 13.Nd4 c5 14.Nf5 Bxf5 15.Bxf5 Rb8 16.Rb1 Rb4 17.Bg3 Bxg3 18.hg**

Alexandra Kosteniuk's choice of opening for a decisive battle cannot be called successful. She needed a victory at any price, but she got a slightly worse quiet position, where a draw was the most she could dream of.

**18...Re8** (more precise, as we already know, is 18...Qb8!) **19.c3 Rb7 20.Qa4?!** (20.Qd2 is better)



[FEN "3qr1k1/pr3pp1/5n1p/2pp1B2/Q7/2P3P1/PP3PP1/1R3RK1 b - - 0 20"]

### 20...Re2?!

20...g6-/+ suggested itself, determining the position of the bishop. In reply to 21.Bc2 a rook invasion on e2 gains in strength, and in the case of 21.Bd3 Black plays c5-c4 with a tempo.

### 21.b4 (21.b3!?!=+) 21...cb?

An instructive positional blunder! Xu Yuhua does not suspect that the pawn has to be placed on c4 in these kinds of positions. After 21...c4!, White ran into serious difficulties. No sensible reply is evident apart from 22.Rfe1. There is no need for Black to calculate the tempting pawn sacrifice 22...Rbe7!? 23.Rxe2 Rxe2 24.Qxa7 g6 25.Bh3 Ne4 26.Bg4! Rxf2 27.Bf3. She simply plays 22...Rxe1+ 23.Rxe1 Re7. A relatively better defense is 24.Qd1, but then there follows 24...Rxe1+ 25.Qxe1 g6 26.Bc2 d4 27.cd Qxd4=+/-+. Play here only goes towards two favorable results for Black, and it is not clear which of them is more likely.

### 22.cb Re5 (22...d4; 22...Qb6!?) 23.Bd3

The initiative is probably already on White's side. Her bishop, which would have suffered a sad fate with the enemy pawn on c4, has now become a powerful piece: it is blocking the passed d-pawn, supporting a possible pawn advance on the queenside, and when needed it can take part in the attack.

### 23...Ne4 24.Rbc1 g6



[FEN "3q2k1/pr3p2/6pp/3pr3/QP2n3/3B2P1/P4PP1/2R2RK1 w - - 0 25"]

### 25.Ba6?!

There is no reason to take the bishop off its rightful d3-square. 25.Rc6 suggested itself, and 25...d4? 26.Qa6! is bad, not only attacking the rook, but also intending 27.Bxe4 Rxe4 28.Rxg6+. Then again, after 25...Kg7 26.b5 d4 the position remained double-edged.

### 25...Rb8 26.a3 d4

In the case of 26...Qb6 27.Rc6 Qd4, White had the worthy retort 28.Qd1!, neutralizing her opponent's activeness. The most precise

is probably 26...Re6!?, preparing 27...Qb6, which practically forced the return of the bishop to d3. True, it had to retreat after the move in the game too.

**27.Bd3 Nc3 28.Qxa7 Ra8 29.Qb7 Rxa3?**

29...Re7 is sounder, and only after a queen retreat, 30...Rxa3.



[FEN "3q2k1/1Q3p2/6pp/4r3/1P1p4/r1nB2P1/5PP1/2R2RK1 w - - 0 30"]

**1.?**

Now White could have got an advantage by playing 31.Rfe1! Rxe1+ (31...Qe8 32.Rxe5 Qxe5 33.Bc4 Qf5 34.Re1+/- is no better) 32.Rxe1 Qd5 33.Qc7!? (33.Qc8+ Kg7 34.Bc4 is not bad either) 33...Kg7 34.Re5. Meanwhile, a move by the other rook to e1 is inaccurate: 31.Rce1?! Qe8! 32.Rxe5 Qxe5 33.Bc4 Ne2+! 34.Bxe2 (forced) 34...Qxe2=. With the rook staying on c1 a knight check would be impossible because of 34.Kf1!.

**30.Ra1?! Rxa1?!**

Equality was preserved on 30...Re7 31.Qf3 (31.Qc6 Rxa1 32.Rxa1 Kg7) 31...Rea7 32.Rxa3 Rxa3 33.Qf4 Kg7 34.Re1 Qf6.

**31.Rxa1 Qd5??**

The decisive mistake: now White launches a mating attack. 31...Kg7! was necessary, and on 32.Ra8, there is 32...Re1+ 33.Kh2 Qg5!.

**32.Qb8+ Kg7 33.Ra5!** (the Chinese player obviously did not notice this *zwischenzug*) **33...Re1+ 34.Kh2 Qd7 35.Ra8 Kf6 36.Qh8+ Ke7 37.Bxg6** Black resigned.

The score in the match was level, and Kosteniuk won the tiebreak.

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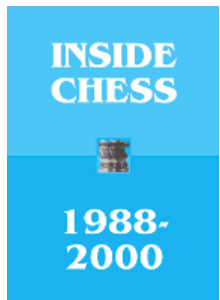
COLUMNISTS

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



Translate this page



Surprises in Sidelines

We analyze games that have been played to give an objective evaluation of the course of the battle, identify mistakes and inaccuracies by the players and find out the reasons for them, as well as to determine the deficiencies in style and ability that are hidden behind the errors. When checking variations the computer sometimes shows us surprising subtle and beautiful ideas that probably were not considered by the players and hardly have any influence on our understanding of the game we are investigating, but which are interesting in themselves. They are interesting above all for true connoisseurs of chess beauty, but also for coaches who need new material to demonstrate to their students as exercises or for practice sessions.

This month I offer for your perusal a few episodes of this type that I liked. Their solutions – found with the help of Houdini or Rybka, of course – are quite complicated, but still not purely "computerish." I am certain that good players who have enough time at their disposal will be able to find and accurately calculate the best path in each case.

The first fragment (the simplest of them all, although far from elementary) does not completely fulfil the selection criteria for examples in this article, as its solution considerably influences the evaluation of events in the game we are looking at.

Romanishin – Alexandrov  
Pula 1990



[FEN "3qk2r/p2b1ppp/4p3/n3N3/2pP4/PrR3P1/3QPPBP/R5K1 b k - 0 19"]

Black played **19...Bb5?!**, and after **20.a4!** his position became difficult: **20...f6** (20...Ba6 21.Rxb3! cb 22.Nc6 or 21...Nxb3 22.Bc6+ Kf8 23.Qb4+ Kg8 24.Rd1) **21.ab fe 22.Bc6+! Nxc6 23.bc**, and so on.

In the book I wrote with Yusupov, *Training for the Tournament Player*, where this game is examined, **19...0-0!?** was recommended, and the conclusion was drawn that Black preserved approximate equality. The mistake in the evaluation was only corrected in the latest edition of the book.

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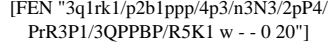


[The Panov-Botvinnik Attack: Move by Move](#)  
by Lorin D'Costa



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The question is whether White can take the c4-pawn without incurring a punishment – without that he is unlikely to be able to prove his advantage. It may seem that the pawn is untouchable because of the pin, but that is not the case.

21.Rac1? Rxc3! 22.Qxc3 Rc8 loses.

White wins the piece back and is left a healthy pawn up.

[FEN "2rr2k1/plq1pplp/2p1b1p1/1p1nP1B1/  
1P6/P5P1/2Q1PPBP/2RR2K1 w - - 0 26"]

White is better, but this is not easy to prove. I think that the move 26.Qc5! was the strongest, with the idea on 26...Qxe5 of replying 27.Bxe7 Rd7 28.e4! Bg4! (the natural move), and now either 29.ed Bxd1 30.d6 with superb compensation for the exchange, or 29.Rxd5 Qxe7 30.Qxe7 Rxe7 31.Rdc5, and the opponent cannot avoid losing a pawn.

The complications after 27...Bf5 28.Qd4! Nxb4 29.Qc5 also unfolded in White's favor; for example, 29...Rxd1+ 30.Rxd1 Na6 31.Qxe7 Qxe7 32.Bxe7 with an advantage in the endgame. But an immediate 27...h5! (without a preliminary exchange of pawns) allowed him to hold the position successfully. 28.Rd2 Rd7 is not too dangerous, and on the reflexive 28.Qd4 there follows 28...Nxb4! 29.Qc5 Rxd1+ (29...Na2!?) 30.Rxd1 Nd5 31.e4 Nb6 32.Bxe7 (32.Qxe7? Qxe7 33.Bxe7 c5-/+ 32...Nd7, and Black is in any case no worse.

All this is the usual professional analysis of events in a game, and this example was not offered for the sake of that, of course. I was interested in what happened if instead of 27.h4 White tried **27.Rc5**, intending 28.Rdc1.



[FEN "2rr2k1/2q1pp1p/2p1b1p1/ppRnP1B1/1P2Q3/P5P1/4PPBP/3R2K1 b - - 0 27"]

1...?

If events develop quietly, Black runs into serious difficulties. But he has a saving combination at his disposal, and in fact more than one. Then again, all the combinations share a single idea: exploiting the weakness of the back rank.

I

27...a5xb4! 28.a3xb4 Nd5xb4!! 29.Rd1xd8+

It is necessary to accept the challenge: in the case of 29.Rdc1? Na2! 30.Ra1 b4 or 29.Rb1? Nd5 30.Rbc1 b4 Black already has the advantage.

29...Rc8xd8 30.Qe4xb4 Rd8-d1+ 31.Bg2-f1



[FEN "6k1/2q1pp1p/2p1b1p1/1pR1P1B1/1Q6/6P1/4PP1P/3r1BK1 b - - 0 31"]

31...Qc7xe5!!

The sting in the combination! The queen is untouchable: 32.Rxe5? Bh3 with unavoidable mate. An immediate 31...Bh3? did not work because of 32.Rc1+-.

32.Rc5-c1 Rd1xf1+

And 33...Qxg5 with roughly equal chances.

II

And now: a second combination, also quite impressive.

27...Nd5xb4! 28.Rd1xd8+ Rc8xd8 29.a3xb4 Rd8-d1+ 30.Bg2-f1



[FEN "6k1/2q1pp1p/2p1b1p1/ppR1P1B1/1P2Q3/6P1/4PP1P/3r1BK1 b - - 0 30"]

Again 30...Bh3? 31.Rc1+- does not work. 30...ab is possible, trying to take the affair to a variation that is familiar to us: 31.Qxb4 Qxe5!! But it is necessary



to deal with 31.Rc1 Rxc1 32.Bxc1. It is not easy to evaluate the position that arises, but we cannot rule out the possibility that it is still in White's favor.

### 30...Qc7-d7!!

The threat of 31...Bh3 sharply gains strength. On the less accurate 30...Qd8?! White could continue 31.h4! Bh3 32.Kh2, which is impossible now because of 32...Rxf1, and the bishop is defended by the queen.

It is difficult for White to choose a move. In case of 31.Rc1?! Rxc1 32.Bxc1 Qd1 33.g4 Qxc1 34.ba Qa3 35.Qxc6 Qxa5 he has to fight for a draw. 31.Qe3 Bh3 32.Rc1 Bxf1 33.Rxd1 Qxd1 34.Qd2 leads to approximate equality, but he has to deal with 31...ab!? 32.Rc1 b3. The following variation is the most appealing one.

### 31.Qe4xc6!? Be6-h3 32.Qc6-a8+ Kg8-g7 33.Bg5-h6+! Kg7xh6 34.Qa8-f8+ Kh6-h5!

34...Kg5? 35.e6+ f5 loses to 36.Rxf5+ gf 37.Qg7+ Kh5 38.Qxh7+ Kg5 39.f4+.

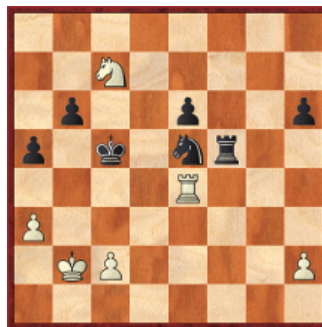
35.e5-e6+ f7-f5 36.Rc5xf5+ g6xf5 37.Qf8-f7+ Kh5-h6 38.Qf7-f8+ with perpetual check.

Unfortunately, as Michal Konopka indicated, Black has a third version of the same combination at his disposal, though less interesting than the first two.

27...Nc3! 28.Rxd8+ Rxd8 29.Rxc3 Rd1+ 30.Bf1 Qd7! 31.Qe3 (with the rook leaving the fifth rank, taking with the queen on c6 is now impossible) 31...Bh3 32.Rc1 Bxf1 33.Rxd1 Qxd1 34.Qc1 Qxc1 35.Bxc1 Bxe2 36.ba c5, and the endgame with opposite-color bishops that arises is drawn.

### Carlsen – Ivanchuk

Candidates tournament, London 2013



[FEN "8/2N5/1p2p2p/p1k1nr2/4R3/P7/1KP4P/8 w - - 0 48"]

Taking on e6 is impossible, of course, because of 48...Kd5. In the game 48.Rh4 Kd6 49.Nb5+ Kd7 50.a4 h5-/+ was played. Despite being a pawn down, White is far from doomed, and later he could have achieved a draw. But after a long and not blunder-free struggle Vasily Ivanchuk nevertheless overcame his powerful opponent.

Magnus Carlsen examined a rook retreat to a different square: 48.Re2, but he intuitively rejected that option.



[FEN "8/2N5/1p2p2p/p1k1nr2/8/P7/1KP1R2P/8 b - - 0 48"]

### 1...?

It was not I who found the secret to the position. It was shown to me by Alexander Motylev, who in turn saw the solution on the Internet. I would not be surprised to learn that it appeared simultaneously on several computers in different countries, and correspondingly on several chess sites. Nevertheless,

Black's brilliant combination did not become widely known – in any case, none of my grandmaster friends to whom I showed the position knew about it. That is why I felt it was appropriate to give it here.

In case of 48...Kd6?! 49.Nb5+ Kd7 50.Nd4 Rh5 51.Kb3=/+ White retains excellent chances of saving himself.

#### 48...Ne5-c4+! 49.Kb2-b3

Completely hopeless is 49.Ka2? e5. That is why the king attacks the knight, so that in the case of 49...e5?! 50.Ne6+ Kd6 51.Nd4!? (51.Kxc4 is also possible) 51...ed 52.Kxc4=/+ the game can transfer to a rook endgame, which looks drawn. 49...Rf3+?! 50.c3 a4+ 51.Kxa4=/+ is not dangerous for White either.

#### 49...a5-a4+!! 50.Kb3xa4 Nc4-d2!!

An elegant knight sacrifice – the sting in Black's idea. Threatening 51...Rf4+.

#### 51.Re2xd2 Kc5-c4!

There is no satisfactory defense against 52...Ra5# In case of 52.Nb5 Rxb5 53.Rd4+ Kxd4 54.Kxb5 e5 the black pawn promotes first.

From a coach's point of view, the exercises we have looked at are good for training inventiveness and combinational vision. In the following examples, besides these qualities, which are essential to all players, you will need others that are also very important: in the first place, attentiveness to your opponent's resources.

My manual on this topic, *Remember your Opponent!*, came out in early 2013. I will give two fragments from my book: we will consider them an advertisement.

#### Karpov – Sax Linares 1983



[FEN "r2qk2r/pp2bpp1/2bp1n1p/4p3/4P1PP/2NQB3/PPP2P2/R3KBR1 b Qkq - 0 13"]

Gyula Sax did not find the best defense 13...Nh7!, which would have secured him fully-fledged counterplay. The move he chose, 13...Qa5?!, led to serious difficulties, which ultimately turned out to be insurmountable.

One more try was examined in the notes: 13...d5?! 14.ed Nxd5, on which White plays 15.0-0-0! Nxe3 16.Qxe3 Qa5 17.Bb5!. Capturing the bishop allows White to develop a formidable attack: 17...Bxb5 18.Qxe5 0-0 19.g5!. The same move g4-g5 is also very strong in reply to 17...0-0. And if 17...a6, then simply 18.Bxc6+ bc, and now either 19.g5!?, or 19.Qf3!? Qb6 20.Ne4+/-.

The combinational try 18.Qxe5?! ab 19.Qxg7 Rf8 20.Rge1 is weaker.



[FEN "r3kr2/1p2bpQ1/2b4p/qp6/6PP/2N5/PPP2P2/2KRR3 b q - 0 20"]

## 1...?

Here the point of the task is not so much to choose the right defense, as to reject ones that appear no less tempting, but are in fact the wrong continuations.

Only a modest queen retreat is correct.

**20...Qa5-c7!** unclear

With a subsequent b5-b4. White cannot find a way to create strong threats here. But everything else loses!

20...Qb4? is refuted relatively easily: by means of 21.Rd4! Qc5 22.b4!+-.

It is harder to find the right response to **20...b4?**. It may seem that the impressive 21.Nb5?! Qxb5 22.Qf6 Qc5 23.Rd6 leads to the goal. But Black throws away one of his two extra pieces, 23...Be4!! 24.Rxe4 Qc7, and in case of 25.Rd5 he repels the threats by bringing his rook in on the sixth rank: 25...Ra6 unclear.

**21.Rxe7+!! Kxe7 22.Qd4!!**

The quiet queen retreat is very difficult to foresee when calculating variations (remember that White is a rook down)! But it is worth looking into the position, and the power of the attack will become obvious. There is an only defense against the deadly check on the e-file.

**22...f6 23.Re1+ Kf7 24.Qc4+ Bd5!?**

On 24...Kg6 decisive is 25.Re7!, cutting off the king's path back and threatening both 26.Qd3+ and 26.f4.

**25.Nxd5 Kg7 26.Re7+ (26.g5 is also very strong) 26...Rf7 27.Rxf7+ Kxf7 28.Qe4!+-** (the simple 28.Nc7+ is also enough)

**Timman – Yusupov**

Hilversum 1986, 6th match game



[FEN "r7/pb1pkp2/3n3R/3Pp2N/2p1PP2/2P5/P1B4r/2KR4 b - - 0 25"]

Black made the objectively best move: **25...f6**. And although after **26.Rh7+ Kd8 27.f5! Kc7 28.Nxf6 Rxe7 29.Nxe7 Rg8** his position was still very difficult, Artur Yusupov managed to exploit his opponent's inaccuracies and save the game with stubborn defense.

Let's have a look at what could have happened in the case of the sharper **25...ef 26.e5 Ne8 27.d6+ Kd8**.



[FEN "r2kn3/pb1p1p2/3P3R/4P2N/2p2p2/2P5/P1B4r/2KR4 w - - 0 28"]

## 1.?

The impressive-looking 28.e6?! is not convincing. I will give my analysis for those who were tempted by this blow (the rest of you can skip the variations that arise).

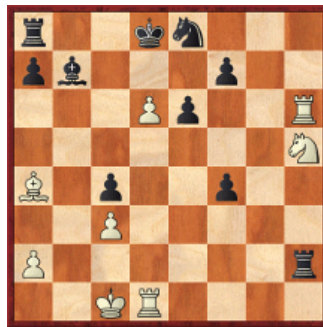
White preserves his advantage not without difficulty on 28...fe 29.Rh8 Bf3 30.Bg6 Kc8 31.Rxe8+ Kb7 32.Rxa8 Kxa8 33.Rd2!



[FEN "k7/p2p4/3Pp1B1/7N/2p2p2/2P2b2/P2R3r/2K5 b - - 0 33"]

33...Rxb5 34.Bxb5 Bxb5 35.Rd4 Be2 36.Rxf4 Kb7 37.Kd2 Bd3 38.Ke3 Kc6 39.Rf8 Kxd6 40.Ra8+/-, or 33...Rh1+ 34.Kc2! (34.Kb2 Rxb5 35.Bxb5 36.Rd4 f3 is worse) 34...Rg1 35.Be8 Be4+ 36.Kb2 f3 37.Nf6 (37.Bxd7? Rg2) 37...Bc6 38.Ka3 Rg7 39.Kb4+/-.

It is even harder to evaluate the consequences of 28...de!? 29.Ba4 (29.d7 Ke7 30.Rh8 f3 unclear).



[FEN "r2kn3/pb3p2/3Pp2R/7N/B1p2p2/2P5/P6r/2KR4 b - - 0 29"]

29...Nxd6! 30.Rxd6+ Kc7 31.Rd7+ Kb6 32.Rxf7 Rh1+ 33.Kb2 Bd5!. White is a piece up, but he is troubled by the pin on the h-file and the threats of 34...f3 and 34...Ka5.

It is much more promising to try and give mate on the back rank by playing 28.Rh8 or 28.Rg1. These options seem almost equivalent, but only almost.

In fact, 28.Rg1? allows Black to save himself.



[FEN "r2kn3/pb1p1p2/3P3R/4P2N/2p2p2/2P5/P1B4r/2K3R1 b - - 0 28"]

**1...?**

He plays 28...Rb8!! (but not 28...Bf3? 29.Rh8! with the lethal threat of 30.Rxe8+) 29.Rg8 (29.Rh8 does not change anything) 29...Rxc2+! 30.Kxc2 Be4+ 31.Kd2 Rb2+ 32.Ke1 Rb1+ 33.Kf2 Rb2+ 34.Kg1 Rb1+, and the king has nowhere to hide from perpetual check (35.Kh2?? Rh1#).

But after a move by the other rook salvation cannot be found.

**28.Rh6-h8!**

28...Bf3 29.Rg1! and 30.Rxe8+ (29.e6 fe 30.Bg6 Kc8 is weaker).

28...Rxb5 29.Rxb5 Bf3 30.Rh8 Bxd1 31.Bxd1+-.

**28...Ra8-b8 29.Rh8-f8!**

Threatening 30.Nf6. Then again, now White has a choice here: 29.Rg8! or 29.e6! are also enough for a win.

**29...Rh2xb5**

With the rook on d1 you do not get perpetual check: 29...Rxc2+ 30.Kxc2 Be4+ 31.Kd2 Rb2+ 32.Ke1 Bd3 33.Rd2 Rb1+ 34.Kf2 Rf1+ 35.Kg2 f3+ 36.Kg3+-.



[FEN "1r1knR2/pb1p1p2/3P4/4P2r/2p2p2/2P5/P1B5/2KR4 w - - 0 30"]

**1.?**

In conclusion, an elegant "flourish."

**30.e5-e6!! d7xe6**

30...fe 31.Bg6+-.

**31.Bc2-a4!+-**

**Karpov – Kasparov**

Moscow 1985, 4th game of 2nd match

Garry Kasparov played the opening well, getting full equality for Black. But later Anatoly Karpov gradually outplayed his opponent. In the diagram is the position in which the decisive mistake was probably made.



[FEN "4qr1k/6p1/4p2p/p2p2b1/1p2P1Q1/1PrB3P/P1R2PP1/3R2K1 b - - 0 33"]

By playing **33...Rxc2?** Black exchanged off his only active piece, thereby completely freeing his opponent to prepare an attack on the kingside.

Commenting on the game in the book *Positional Play*, Yusupov and I suggested 33...Qc6 or 33...Qc8 as sensible alternatives. Karpov, and after him many years later Kasparov (in the first volume of his monograph "Great Rivalry"), also mentioned 33...Qf7.

And even more interesting is the unexpected **33...d4!?** **34.e5** (otherwise e6-e5) **34...Rf4 35.Qe2 Qc6** with counterplay (Kasparov).





[FEN "7k/6p1/2q1p2p/p3P1b1/1p1p1r2/1PrB3P/P1R1QPP1/3R2K1 w - - 0 36"]

This recommendation seems dubious to me. So, if we extend one of the variations given by the grandmaster, 36.g3 Rf8 37.h4 Be7, by just one move: 38.Rcd2! (threatening 39.Qg4), it becomes clear that Black's position is very difficult. He is unlikely to find anything better than 38...Qf3, and then after 39.Qxf3 Rxf3 40.Bc4 the e6-pawn is lost (on 40...g5 there follows 41.h5!).

But considerably more interesting is Kasparov's second variation, which starts with **36.Rxc3 bc**. I will not give its subsequent moves for now, as they are mistaken and will only disorient you. Try to investigate the situation that arises on your own.



[FEN "7k/6p1/2q1p2p/p3P1b1/3p1r2/1PpB3P/P3QPP1/3R2K1 w - - 0 37"]

## 1.?

It makes sense for White to retreat his bishop to c2 or b1, planning to create threats to the king with Qd3 or the d4-pawn by means of g2-g3. The task is to choose the best way to implement these ideas.

37.g3?! Rf7 38.Bc2 (38.f4 Bd8+/=) is inaccurate, as Black manages to neutralize the enemy rook by means of 38...Bd2!. Winning the pawn with 39.Qd3 Kg8 40.Qxd4 Qd5+/- does not give White very clear winning chances – in the endgame that arises the drawing power of the opposite-color bishops makes itself felt. Another way of defending also leads to a drawn "opposite-color" ending a pawn down: 37...Rf3!? 38.Be4 Re3! 39.Qxe3! de (or 39...c2 40.Ra1! de) 40.Bxc6 c2 41.Ra1 ef+ 42.Kxf2 c1Q 43.Rxc1 Bxc1+/-.

## 37.Bd3-b1!!

Why the bishop should retreat specifically to here, and not to c2, becomes clear only as a result of carefully checking the variations that arise.

## 37...Kh8-g8!?

If 37...Qc5 38.Qd3 Kg8, suggested by Kasparov with the bishop on c2, then 39.Qh7+ Kf8 40.Bg6 with a decisive advantage.



[FEN "5k2/6pQ/4p1Bp/p1q1P1b1/3p1r2/1Pp4P/P4PP1/3R2K1 b - - 0 40"]

40...Ke7 41.Qxg7+ Kd8 42.Bc2+-.

40...Rf7 41.Qh8+ Ke7 42.Qg8! Rf8 43.Qxg7+ Kd8 44.Rxd4+! Qxd4 45.Qxf8+ Kc7 46.Qf7+ (the queens can be preserved if desired: 46.g3!? Qxe5 47.h4+/-) 46...Qd7 47.Qxd7+ Kxd7 48.g3, intending 49.f4, the endgame is probably won.

40...Qxe5 41.Qh8+ Ke7 42.Qe8+ Kd6 43.Qb8+ Kd5 44.Qa8+! Kd6 45.g3!, and, as subsequent analysis showed, Black is defenseless.

Let's go back to the position after **37...Kg8**:



[FEN "6k1/6p1/2q1p2p/p3P1b1/3p1r2/1Pp4P/P3QPP1/1B1R2K1 w - - 0 38"]

Now 38.Qd3 considerably loses force because of 38...Kf8!, and on 39.Qh7 (of course, not 39.g3?? Rxf2!-+) the successful reply 39...Bh4! can be found, allowing Black to preserve equality (after 40.f3 or 40.Rf1 he attacks the e5-pawn with his queen).

### 38.g2-g3!

It is here that the difference in the bishop position becomes clear. With the bishop on c2 Black won with the impressive tactical blow 38...Rxf2!! 39.Kxf2 Be3+ 40.Ke1 Qh1+ 41.Qf1 Qh2, threatening both 41...Qxc2 and 42...Bd2+.

But with the bishop on b1 the combination does not work: 38...Rxf2?! 39.Kxf2 Be3+ 40.Ke1 Qh1+ (40...Bd2+ 41.Rxd2 Qh1+ 42.Kf2 Qh2+ 43.Kf3 cd 44.Bc2+-) 41.Qf1 Qh2 42.Qf3! c2 43.Qa8+ Kh7 (43...Kf7 44.Qb7+ Kf8 45.Qc8+) 44.Qe4+ Kg8 45.Qxc2+-.

**38...Qc6-f3 39.Qe2xf3 Rf4xf3 40.Kg1-g2 Rf3-f7 41.Rd1xd4 Rf7-c7 42.Bb1-c2+/- or +-.**



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## The Instructor

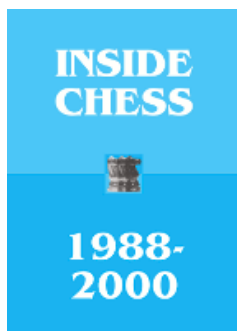
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## Returning to Old Analysis

I recently remembered a half-forgotten ending that I had once used as an exercise for training in practical play, but later discarded. Checking the variations again (this time with the help of a computer, of course), I found some interesting ideas that I had not noticed before, and the landscape of the battle seemed rather different.

**Toshkov – Yusupov**

World Junior Championship, Graz 1978



[FEN "8/7p/3pBnpk/3P4/2Q4P/5pPK/P4R2/lr1q4 b - - 0 41"]

1...?

The adjourned position from the game in the penultimate round. Even if he won Artur Yusupov would be a half point behind Sergey Dolmatov, and a draw practically killed any chances of him catching up with the leader.

Having studied the position with his assistant at the tournament, grandmaster Vladimir Tukmakov, Artur could not find any resources to play for a win. I joined in the analysis briefly a couple of times, and quite successfully – I was able to suggest some promising ideas to continue the battle. But still the strongest path for Black did not show itself then, or subsequently. Meanwhile, as I now see, the task is not all that difficult. Can you solve it?

**41...Qd1-h1+**

**41...Nh5!** (defending against Qf4+) **42.g4** (42.Bg4 Qg1 43.Bxh5 Qxf2 44.Qf4+ Kg7 45.Bxf3 Rf1+) **42...Rc1!** (the queen must be chased off c4, from where it is defending the important f1- and f4-squares) 43.Qe4 Qh1+ 44.Rh2 Qf1+ led to a decisive advantage for Black. Then again, it was not surprising that this idea remained unnoticed in our analysis, as a queen check was the sealed move.

**42.Rf2-h2 Qh1-f1+?**

Here a real analytical mistake was made. We only looked at the endgame that arises after an exchange of queens. But meanwhile **42...Qd1!** is much stronger planning in the case of 43.Rf2 to

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return to the idea 43...Nh5!.

If 43.Rc2, then 43...Nh5? no longer works because of 44.g4+- (there is no move 44...Rc1). A win results from 43...Rb4! 44.Rc1 (the only move: it is mate in three on 44.Qxb4 Qh1+ 45.Rh2 Qf1+) 44...Qd2 (less convincing is 44...Rxc4 45.Rxd1 Ne4 46.Rf1 f2 47.Kh2 with a subsequent Bh3-g2) 45.Qc2 (45.Rc2 Qe1 46.Rc1 f2-+) 45...Ne4! 46.Qxd2+ Nxd2 and material losses are inevitable for White.

The main variation: **43.Qf4+ Kg7 44.h5!**



[FEN "8/6kp/3pBnp1/3P3P/5Q2/5pPK/P6R/1r1q4 b - - 0 44"]

**1...?**

Black faces a very difficult choice between 44...Nxb5 and 44...Qf1+. Long and precise calculation of the variations is required in order to make the right decision.

First let's look at 44...Qf1+ 45.Kh4 h6! 46.hg.



[FEN "8/6k1/3pBnPp/3P4/5Q1K/5pP1/P6R/1r3q2 b - - 0 46"]

Going into this position, Black must foresee the beautiful queen sacrifice 46...Qe2!? or 46...Qg2!? Bearing in mind that both continuations are dangerous for his opponent, in a practical game it is easy to stop the analysis here in the hope that one attack or another will lead to the goal (which one specifically can be established later). Well, OK, let's check it.

A) 46...Qg2 47.Rxg2 (in the case of 47.Rh3 f2 48.Qxd6 Black covers the king with the move 48...Rb7!-+) 47...fg 48.Qxd6 (White's hopes are associated with perpetual check) 48...Rh1+ 49.Bh3 Rxh3+ (49...g1Q 50.Qc7+! Kxg6 51.Qc2+) 50.Kxh3 g1Q 51.Qc7+! (the only way to ensure a continued series of checks) 51...Kxg6 52.Qc2+ Kg5 (the checks cannot be avoided in the rear either) 53.Qd2+ Kf5 54.Qc2+! (54.Qd3+ Ne4! 55.Qf3+ Ke5 is weaker) 54...Ne4 (or 54...Ke5 55.Qc3+ Qd4 56.Qxd4+ Kxd4 57.Kh4 with a subsequent g3-g4-g5) 55.Qc8+! Ke5 56.Qe8+ Kd4 57.Qa4+ with perpetual pursuit of the enemy king.

B) After 46...Qe2 47.Rxe2 fe 48.Qxd6 Rh1+ 49.Bh3 e1Q the black queen is better-positioned on e1 than g1, and 50.Qc7+ Kxg6 51.Qc2+ is now useless because of 51...Qe4+.

Let's check a refusal to take the queen. In the variation 47.g4 Qxh2+! (with the same idea 47...f2 is also possible) 48.Qxh2 f2 49.Qxf2 (49.Qxd6 Rh1+ 50.Kg3 Ne4+) 49...Rh1+ 50.Kg3 Ne4+ 51.Kg2 Nxf2 being the exchange up should bring Black victory.

It may seem that our aim has been achieved. Alas, the calm reply 47.Kh3! parries the opponent's onslaught and preserves approximate equality. For example, 47...Rh1!? 48.Rxh1 Qg2+ 49.Kh4 Qxh1+ 50.Bh3 promises nothing. We can switch to variation A) by means of 47...Qf1+ 48.Kh4 Qg2, but we did not find a win there either.

Let's go back now to the position after White's forty-fourth move and investigate **44...Nxb5! 45.Qxd6** (45.Qf7+ Kh6 46.Qf8+ Kg5-+ is useless).



[FEN "8/6kp/3QB1p1/3P3n/8/5pPK/P6R/1r1q4 b - - 0 45"]

### 1...?

Going this way, it is essential to foresee the only means of neutralizing our opponent's activeness, which is **45...Qf1+! 46.Kh4 Rb7!!** (but not 45...Rb7? immediately because of 46.Qe5+ Nf6 47.g4=). In the case of 47.Rc2 decisive is 47...Qh1+!? 48.Bh3 Qe1!, parrying both the threat of perpetual check and the move g3-g4, which is unpleasant in a number of variations. No better is **47.Qe5+ Nf6 48.g4 f2 49.g5 Qc4+! 50.Kg3 f1Q-+** (or even 50...f1N+).

These are the fascinating adventures that could have occurred at the very beginning of the game's resumption. How wonderful it would have been to have found a subtle path to a win in time and demonstrated it at the board! Alas, it did not happen.

### 43.Qc4xf1 Rb1xf1 44.g3-g4! g6-g5!

44...Ne4?! 45.g5+ Kg7 is a mistake: after 46.Rc2! White wants to check perpetually on the c7- and c8-squares.

### 45.Be6-f5!

It is essential to take the e4-square away from the knight.

### 45...Rf1-g1!

It is easier to defend in the case of the primitive 45...Nxd5?! White replies 46.Kg3 Nf4 (threatening 47...Ne2+) 47.Rf2. Next 47...gh+ 48.Kxf3 Rxf2+ 49.Kxf2 Kg5 50.a4 h5 51.Kf3 h3 52.Kg3= is possible.



[FEN "8/7p/3p1n1k/3P1Bp1/6PP/5p1K/P6R/6r1 w - - 0 46"]

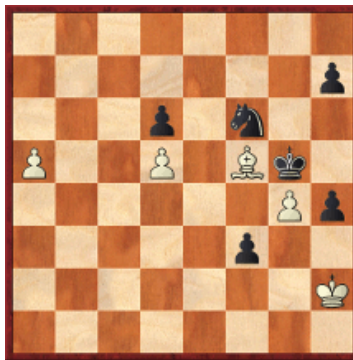
1.?

### 46.h4-h5!

For now the defense is at its peak. Other continuations are noticeably weaker.

For example, after 46.Rd2? Rh1+ a very difficult position for White arises from 47.Kg3 gh+ 48.Kxf3 h3! 49.Kg3 Kg5 (with the threat of 50...h5) or 48.Kf4 Rg1! (intending 49...Rg2).

And 47.Rh2 Rxh2+ 48.Kxh2 gh loses by force: 49.a4 Kg5! 50.a5.



[FEN "8/7p/3p1n2/P2P1Bk1/6Pp/5p2/7K/8 b - - 0 50"]

Black just should not rush with 50...Nxd5? because of 51.Be4=. There is no need to switch to a queen endgame with a couple of extra pawns by 50...Nxg4+ 51.Bxg4 Kxg4 52.a6 h3 53.a7 f2 54.a8Q f1Q – our opponent continues his resistance by playing 55.Qc8+ Qf5 56.Qe6!

Both 50...Kf4! 51.a6 Nxd5+ (probably the simplest) and 50...h5! 51.a6 Ne8 52.a7 (52.Bd7 hg 53.Bxe8 g3+) 52...Nc7 53.Kh3 Kf4!-+ lead to the goal (but not 53...f2? 54.Kg2 hg 55.Bd3!, and Black does not have a win, despite his three connected passed pawns).

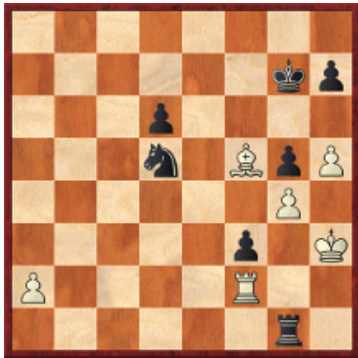
Instead of 46.Rd2? slightly better is 46.Rf2?! In the variation 46...Rh1+ 47.Kg3 gh+ 47.Kxf3 (47.Kf4 Nxd5+) 47...Kg5 48.Kg2! White retains drawing chances, but his position still looks unpleasant.

### 46...Nf6xd5 47.Rh2-f2!

47.Rd2? Nf4+ 48.Kh2 Ne2! with the horrible threat of 49...Rg2+ lost immediately.

### 47...Kh6-g7

47...Nf4+ 48.Kh2= is useless.

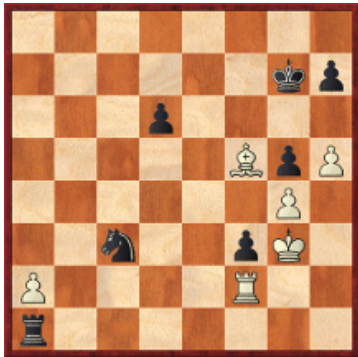


[FEN "8/6kp/3p4/3n1BpP/6P1/5p1K/  
P4R2/6r1 w - - 0 48"]

**48.Kh3-h2!?**

Possible was 48.Rxf3!? Nf4+ 49.Kh2 Rg2+ 50.Kh1 Rxa2 51.Rb3, and the rook's activeness almost certainly allows White to save himself. But this is not obvious at first glance, and the Bulgarian junior chooses a different path.

**48...Rg1-a1 49.Kh2-g3 Nd5-c3!**



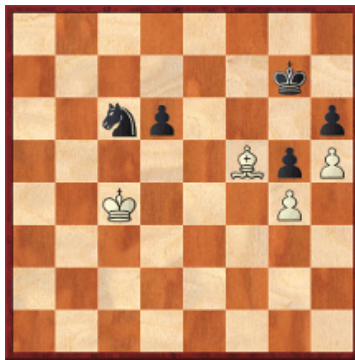
[FEN "8/6kp/3p4/5BpP/6P1/2n2pK1/  
P4R2/r7 w - - 0 50"]

While preparing for the resumption we came to the conclusion that it was only this way that we could pose some problems for our opponent. Now White has to make the best choice from several continuations, each of which is objectively enough for a draw.

The most accurate seemed to us to be 50.h6+! Kxh6 51.Rh2+ Kg7 52.Rxh7+ Kf6 53.Rh6+ Ke5 54.Re6+ Kd5 55.Kxf3 with a subsequent 56.Rg6. The merit of the variation is in the fact that due to being forced it is easily calculated, it leads to the exchange of several pawns (which is usually favorable for the defender), and, finally, there is no doubt about the evaluation of the final position.

However, we hoped that Toshkov would not notice the possibility I just mentioned, as his attention would be attracted by the f3-pawn, which was under attack. It can be taken in two ways, and it was quite likely that our opponent would immediately start thinking about which capture would be more convenient for him.

In the case of 50.Kxf3?! Rxa2 Black was left a pawn up, which was perfectly fine for us: we could keep fighting for a win. Then again, a subsequent investigation of the minor piece endgame 51.Rxa2 Nxa2 52.Ke4 Nb4 53.Kd4 h6 showed that with accurate defending Black did not manage to make progress. For example, 54.Kc4 (54...Ke4 Kf6 55.Kd4! Nc6+ 56.Ke4! Ne7 57.Bd7=/+ is simpler) 54...Nc6.



[FEN "8/6k1/2np3p/5BpP/2K3P1/8/8/8 w - - 0 55"]

### 1.?

He cannot play 55.Kd5? of course, because of 55...Ne7+ and 56...Nxf5. Losing is 55.Kd3? Kf7! 56.Ke4 Ne7 57.Bd7 Kf6 58.Kd4 d5, and White is in *zugzwang*. 55.Be6! Ne7 (55...Kf6 56.Kd5!) 56.Kd4=/+ is necessary.

### 50.Rf2xf3?! Nc3-e2+ 51.Kg3-f2

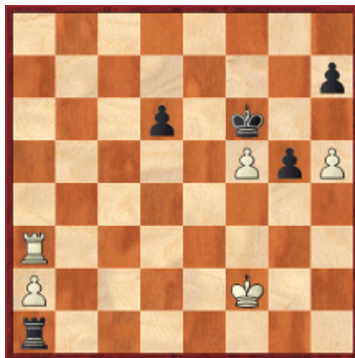
51.Kh2!? deserved attention, with the idea on 51...Nd4 of having the reply 52.Rf2. After 51...Rxa2 mistaken are 52.Be6? Nd4+ 53.Bxa2 Nxf3+ 54.Kg3 Ne5-+ or 52.h6+? Kxh6 53.Rh3+ Kg7 54.Rxh7+ Kf6 55.Rh6+?! (55.Rh8 Ke5 56.Rf8-/+ 55...Ke5 56.Re6+ Kf4 57.Rxd6 Nd4+ 58.Kh3 (58.Kg1 Kg3!-+) 58...Nxf5 59.Rd4+ (59.gf g4+ 60.Kh4 Rh2#) 59...Ke5!-+. So White plays 52.Rf2! Nc3 53.Rxa2 Nxa2 54.Kg3 h6 55.Kf3, getting a drawn minor piece endgame a pawn down, which was examined in the previous note.

But Toshkov wanted to preserve material equality and preferred to switch to a rook ending.

### 51...Ne2-d4!

Not 51...Rxa2? 52.Be6, of course.

### 52.Rf3-a3 Nd4xf5 53.g4xf5 Kg7-f6



[FEN "8/7p/3p1k2/5PpP/8/R7/P4K2/r7 w - - 0 54"]

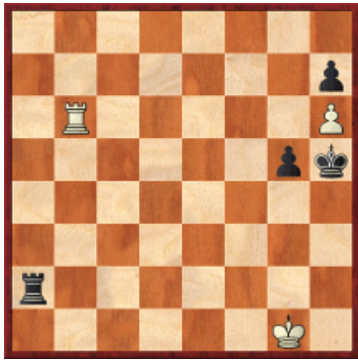
### 1.?

The computer considers the various continuations almost equivalent. But it is not worth seriously examining (regardless of their objective strength) super-cool ways of acting such as 54.Kg3 – there is something non-human in them. In a practical game we would probably choose one of three rook moves: defending the f5-pawn (54.Ra5), or attacking the h7-pawn (54.Ra7), or the d6-pawn (54.Ra6).

A solid draw was achieved by means of 54.Ra7! h6 55.Rh7 Rxa2+ 56.Kg3 Kxf5 57.Rxh6 Ra3+ 58.Kf2 d5 59.Rd6, and so on.

54.Ra6?! Kxf5 is much weaker, as taking the d6-pawn loses: 55.Rxd6? (55.Kg3 is better) 55...Rxa2+ 56.Kg3 Ra3+ 57.Kg2

Kg4! (but not 57...g4) 58.h6 (58.Rh6 Ra7-+) 58...Ra2+ 59.Kg1 Kh5 60.Rb6.



[FEN "8/7p/1R5P/6pk/8/8/r7/6K1 b - - 0 60"]

1...?

60...g4? 61.Rc6 Kh4 62.Rc3 Ra6 63.Kg2 Rxh6 64.Rc7! (or 64.Rc1!) is a mistake – in this situation the two extra pawns do not give us a win. The h6-pawn has to be won a different way: 60...Ra8! 61.Kg2 Rg8! 62.Kg3 Rg6-+.

**54.Ra3-a5? Ra1-h1**

Here it seems that White has no way to save himself. For example, 55.Rd5 Rxh5 56.Rxd6+ Kxf5 57.Rd5+ Kf6 58.Rd6+ Ke5 59.Ra6 Rh3!, and so on.

**55.a2-a4 Rh1xh5 56.Ra5-d5 Rh5-h4 57.a4-a5 h7-h5!**

The last nuance! The rest is easy.

**58.Rxd6+ Kxf5 59.Rd5+ Kf6 60.Rb5 Ra4 61.Kf3 h4 62.Rb6+ Kf5 63.Rb5+ Kg6 64.Rb6+ Kh5 65.a6 Ra3+ 66.Kg2 h3+ 67.Kh2 Kh4 68.Rh6+ Kg4 69.Rc6 Ra2+ 70.Kh1 Kg3 71.Rc3+ Kh4** White resigned.

Artur still did not manage to catch up with his rival. After playing strongly in his sharp last-round duel against the Mexican Marcel Sisniega Campbell (it can be found in my book *School of Chess Excellence 4: Opening Developments*, in the chapter "Risk in a Decisive Game"), Sergey Dolmatov won the title of world champion. The previous year's champion, Artur Yusupov, was the silver medalist on that occasion.

The picture of the battle in the ending we have examined seems fairly typical and very instructive to me.

Frequently, the possibility of a win, as in the given example, hangs by a thread, requiring you to find concrete and often completely non-obvious ways of acting, and to precisely calculate the variations that arise. If you miss the critical moment, your advantage diminishes and then disappears altogether.

Computers help to reveal these moments. If a solution that has been found in analysis (or directly at the board) satisfies the defined methodical criteria, a coach can use it in his lessons with students, thereby enabling an improvement in their skill and increasing their chances of future success in their own games.

After the mistaken exchange of queens a completely drawn ending arose, which White lost anyway. This often happens (remember at least the games of Magnus Carlsen), and in the search for an explanation it is only worth taking the affair to the last, decisive mistake.

In the given example White missed a concrete, precisely-calculable path to a draw a couple of times (on the fiftieth and fifty-third moves). In practice players often do not want to (or



cannot) delve into things one more time and simply make moves "at a glance." At a certain point they "guess wrong," and as a result their position becomes lost.

On the other hand, Yusupov did everything possible to help his opponent blunder. Every time he chose moves on which the battle continued: natural, obvious replies that did not lead to immediate equality. If you can manage to maintain the tension, constantly set problems for your partner, even if they are not all that difficult, he will get tired and it will be more likely that he will make a mistake. Of course, this kind of play (in the style of Carlsen) requires maximum concentration, considerable reserves of energy, and a fighting spirit.

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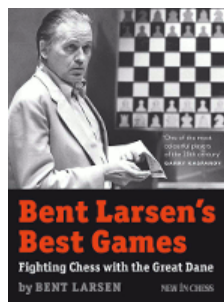
## COLUMNISTS

### The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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## A Minimal Advantage

The topic of fighting when one of the players has a minimal advantage, which came up in the process of examining the [Toschkov-Yusupov ending](#), is exceptionally important for practical players, and at the same time quite inconvenient to study – and even more so to demonstrate to students. As a rule the examples that have been collected are not very vivid, and hardly contain any flashy combinations or deep plans. In many episodes it is difficult to make the best choice from the available options, and even more difficult to prove its expedience, as the computer does not indicate any tangible difference between the various continuations, and players who are armed with modern programs are not too inclined to trust verbal evaluations if they are not backed up by numbers on a screen.

One of the few attempts to investigate this problem was made in Jonathan Rowson's superb book [Seven Deadly Chess Sins](#). The following quote taken from it reflects the grandmaster's ideas, which he then illustrates with well-chosen examples.

*The idea of playing only for "a slight advantage" (+/= or =/+ if Black) for a prolonged period can be very awkward for the opponent, especially if he wants only to draw, and not to play. The player in "plus equals mode" seeks only to maintain a healthy position and very gradually to improve it. Such a strategy is only possible when the position is rather simple, but this is often the case when your opponent is trying to force a draw. Transformations of the tiny advantage are an integral part of this strategy, but the emphasis is on keeping psychological pressure on the opponent even if your position is only minutely better.*

*Your search is not so much for lines which cause significant problems for your opponent's position, but ways to preserve "the +/= factor." The neatest formulation of this idea, which I heard in another context entirely, comes from one of GM Lev Psakhis's pearls of wisdom: "The best way to get a big advantage is to play for a small advantage." The advantage is largely psychological, persistent, and can lead to disorientation...*

Six weeks or a month before I wrote this article, Artur Yusupov drew my attention to a Magnus Carlsen game that had impressed him, in which his opponent lost an equal endgame without making a single obvious mistake. According to the computer all of White's moves were, if not the best, then among the best, and the evaluation deviated from zero only slightly almost to the very end.

I will give this game with commentary based on Yusupov's succinct notes.

**Vallejo-Pons – Carlsen**  
Sao Paolo/Bilbao 2012  
Pirc Defense [B07]

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.de de 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Nf3 Bd6

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[FEN "rnbk3r/ppp2ppp/3b1n2/4p3/4P3/2N2N2/PPP2PPP/R1B1KB1R w KQ - 0 7"]

7.Bg5

I do not like this move, although it is played quite often. White wants to castle long, but he does not manage to exploit his advantages from the pins on the central file and the h4-d8 diagonal. 7.Bc4 looks more logical, on which Black usually replies 7...Be6!?.

7...Be6 8.0-0-0 Nbd7 9.Nb5

Pursuing the advantage of the bishop-pair. The aggressive 9.Bb5 is not dangerous because of 9...Kc8.

9...Ke7



[FEN "r6r/pppnkppp/3bbn2/1N2p1B1/4P3/5N2/PPP2PPP/2KR1B1R w - - 0 10"]

10.Nxd6

In my view it made sense, without rushing into the exchange, to make the useful move 10.Nd2!? After 10...h6 11.Bh4 g5 12.Bg3, the bishop could hardly leave the d6-square, as the variation 12...Bb4 13.Nxc7 Bxd2+ 14.Rxd2 Nxe4 15.Rxd7+ Bxd7 16.Nxa8 Rxa8 17.Bxe5 Nxf2 18.Rg1 looks favorable for White.

10...cd 11.Bb5 (11.Nd2!?) 11...Rhd8 12.Nd2 h6 13.Bh4 g5 14.Bg3 a6



[FEN "r2r4/1p1nkp2/p2pbn1p/1B2p1p1/4P3/6B1/PPPN1PPP/2KR3R w - - 0 15"]

15.Bxd7?!

The impression is created that the Spanish grandmaster, realizing that he had not obtained an advantage in the opening, wanted to turn into a drawing harbor as soon as possible, and for the sake of that was going into a position with opposite-colored bishops. I think it was still worth it for White to keep the bishop-pair by playing 15.Be2!?, and then perhaps h2-h4.

15...Rxd7 16.f3

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Yusupov examined other, more active options; for example, 16.h4 Nh5 17.Nf1 g4 18.Ne3. Now Black manages to carry out an important pawn advance in the center.

**16...Rc8 17.Kb1 (17.Nf1 Bxa2) 17...Nh5 18.Nf1 (18.Bf2 Nf4) 18...f5! 19.ef Bxf5 20.Ne3 Bg6**



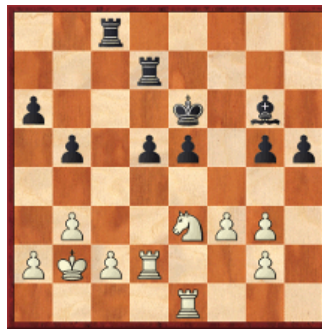
[FEN "2r5/1p1rk3/p2p2bp/4p1pn/8/4NPB1/PPP3PP/1K1R3R w - - 0 21"]

Black has activated his pieces and now plans to prepare an advance by the central d-pawn. If 21.b3 Ke6 22.Kb2, then 22...d5 23.c4 is premature, but the simple 22...b5 is good.

**21.Rd2 Ke6 22.b3**

The move 22.Re1 did not allow an immediate 22...d5, but it was possible to prepare this advance by means of 22...Nxg3 23.hg h5.

**22...b5 23.Kb2 d5 24.Re1 Nxg3 25.hg h5!**



[FEN "2r5/3r4/p3k1b1/1p1pp1pp/8/1P2NPP1/PKPR2P1/4R3 w - - 0 26"]

Although the computer still gives an evaluation on the border between equality and "equal/plus," it is getting harder and harder to give White good advice. For example, 26.Nd1 d4 led to a four-rook ending that was unpleasant for him: 27.Nf2 Rc3 28.Ne4 Bxe4 29.Rxe4 b4.

**26.c3** (apparently the most natural) **26...d4** (Carlsen is not afraid of discovered check) **27.cd Rxd4**



[FEN "2r5/8/p3k1b1/1p2p1pp/3r4/1P2NPP1/PK1R2P1/4R3 w - - 0 28"]

**28.Rxd4**

Now Black gets a passed pawn. Yusupov recommends defending by playing 28.Ree2 Rcd8 29.Kc1.

**28...ed 29.Nc2+ Kd5 30.Nb4+ Kd6**



[FEN "2r5/8/p2k2b1/1p4pp/1N1p4/1P3PP1/PK4P1/4R3 w - - 0 31"]

### 31.Rc1

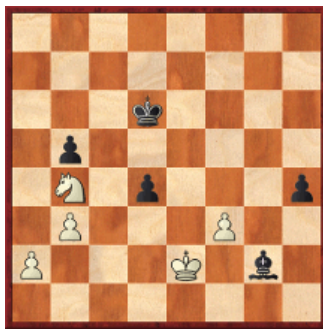
The minor piece endgame is probably lost, but what else could White do? I looked at this alternative:

31.Rd1 a5! 32.Rxd4+ Ke5 (of course, not 32...Kc5? 33.Rd5+!, and taking the knight leads to mate) 33.Rd8 (33.Rd5+ Ke6 34.Rxg5 Kf6) 33...Rxd8 34.Nc6+ Kd5 35.Nxd8 h4. Perhaps White does save himself here, but that is not obvious, in any case.

### 31...Rxc1 32.Kxc1 h4!

The a6-pawn does not bother Black – he establishes a weakness on g2, intending to attack it immediately with his bishop or king.

### 33.gh gh 34.Nxa6 Bd3! 35.Nb4 Bf1 36.Kd2 Bxg2 37.Ke2



[FEN "8/8/3k4/1p6/1N1p3p/1P3P2/P3K1b1/8 b - - 0 37"]

### 37...Bh3!

The last nuance, probably examined by Carlsen beforehand. The bishop transfers to f5, from where it supports both passed pawns.

### 38.a4 Bf5 39.ab d3+ 40.Ke3 h3 41.Nxd3 Bxd3 White resigned.

I admit that I looked at this game rather superficially and my notes can only serve as a starting point. It is quite possible that with deep analysis the events will be perceived somewhat differently. It would be particularly interesting to compare the variations that are found with the psychological factors: the mood of both players, and their evaluations of their prospects at different stages of the battle. But we receive this kind of information, as a rule, only when we become acquainted with the notes to our own games.

You might not believe this, but I started writing this article without any connection to the World Championship match that was starting at the same time in Chennai, and I basically finished it literally the day before Carlsen overcame Anand with two straight wins in the same style – putting protracted pressure on his opponent in almost equal endings. These games (the fifth and sixth) will probably be analyzed in detail on chess websites and in magazines, thereby becoming superb examples on the topic we are discussing.

Several instructive examples can also be found in my books (true, they are usually examined from another point of view: making the best of an advantage, endgame technique, accumulating small advantages, etc.). But now I will introduce you to another game from my collection that has not been included in my books or articles before.

### Suetin – Gulko

Moscow Championship 1983  
Classical Sicilian [B57]

1.e2-e4 Nc7-c5 2.Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5.Nb1-c3 d7-d6 6.Bf1-c4 Qd8-b6 7.Nd4-b3 e7-e6 8.0-0 a7-a6 9.a2-a4



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/1p3ppp/pqnppn2/8/P1B1P3/1NN5/1PP2PPP/R1BQ1RK1 b kq - 0 9"]

### 9...Nc6-a5!?

White wanted to hold down his opponent's pawns on the queenside by playing a4-a5. For example, 9...Be7 10.a5 Qc7 11.Be2 (or 11.Bd3) with slightly better chances.

In the case of 9...Qc7 (intending 10...b6) 10.a5 the continuation 10...Nxa5?! 11.Nxa5 b6 does not work because of 12.e5! ba (12...de 13.Qf3+-) 13.ef Qxc4 14.fg Bxg7 15.Qxd6+/- . Also dubious is 10...b5?! 11.ab Qxb6 12.Be3+/- . After 10...Nb4 11.Bd3 (11.Be2) Black must complete his development: 11...Be7, as an attempt to activate in the center, 11...d5?! does not lead to anything good: 12.Be3 Bd6 13.f4 e5 14.Bb6 Qe7 15.ed 0-0 16.Re1+/- (Skrobek – Radulov, Warsaw 1979).

### 10.Bc1-e3 Qb6-c7 11.Nb3xa5 Qc7xa5 12.f2-f3

The aggressive 12.f4!? is stronger.

### 12...Bf8-e7



[FEN "r1b1k2r/1p2bppp/p2ppn2/q7/P1B1P3/2N1BP2/1PP3PP/R2Q1RK1 w kq - 0 13"]

### 13.Qd1-d4?!

This plan is a mistake: for the sake of seizing the b6-square (temporarily!) Alexey Suetin goes for an exchange of queens. But it is well known that standard Sicilian endgames are OK for Black as a rule, as White has to look for chances in the middlegame.

13.Qd2 Bd7 14.Rad1 suggested itself, and White's position is preferable, as his opponent cannot castle: 14...0-0? 15.Nd5.

### 13...Bc8-d7!

Black does not rush to castle – in the event of an exchange of queens the king's place is in the center.

### 14.Qd4-b6

There was a curious blow: 14.b4!?



[FEN "r3k2r/1p1bbppp/p2ppn2/q7/PPBQP3/2N1BP2/2P3PP/R4RK1 b kq - 0 14"]

1...?

Boris Gulko points out the variation 14...Qxb4? 15.Rfb1 Qa5 16.Rxb7 0-0=+/. He overlooked the straightforward retort 15.Bxe6! Qxd4 16.Bxd7+ with an advantage for White.

It would be necessary to take the queen away, 14...Qc7. The question is how to handle the advance of the b-pawn: with a weakening or seizing of space on the queenside.

14...Qa5xb6 15.Be3xb6 Ra8-c8!

The bishop is at a crossroads. If 16.Be2, then 16...Bc6, preparing 17...d5.

16.Bc4-b3 Be7-d8! 17.Bb6xd8

Black's position is also sound on 17.Bf2 Ba5 18.Rfd1 Ke7 19.Bg3 Bb4 20.Rd3 Bc6 (20...Nh5) 21.Rad1 Rhd8.

17...Ke8xd8 18.Rf1-d1 Kd8-e7 19.Rd1-d4 Rh8-d8 20.Ra1-d1 Bd7-c6



[FEN "2rr4/1p2kppp/p1bppn2/8/P2RP3/1BN2P2/1PP3PP/3R2K1 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

A roughly equal position has arisen. From this point Black started to outplay his opponent.

21.Kg1-f2?!

A natural move (the king heads for the center in an endgame), but an ill-timed one. It was more important to secure himself some space on the kingside by means of 21.h4!, and only then would the time have come for 22.Kf2. Later he could think about g2-g4-g5 and f3-f4.

21...g7-g5!

Gulko immediately exploits his partner's inaccuracy.

22.a4-a5?!

This move, which would have made sense in the middlegame, is inappropriate here and only provides Black with a target to attack. It was better to wait (22.Ke3), asking his opponent to demonstrate how he planned to improve his position.

It was also worth considering 22.h4!?



[FEN "2rr4/1p2kp1p/p1bppn2/6p1/P2RP2P/1BN2P2/1PP2KPP/3R4 b - - 0 22"]

The aggressive 22...gh 23.Rh1 Rg8 24.Rxh4 h5 looks tempting. But White finds a strong maneuver that reinforces his kingside: 25.Nd1! Rg5 26.Ne3+/. So Black would probably reply 22...g4 unclear.



[FEN "2rr4/1p2kp1p/p1bppn2/P5p1/3RP3/1BN2P2/1PP2KPP/3R4 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

22...Bc6-e8!

Brilliantly played! Threatening 23...Rc5. After 23.Rb4 Rc7 Black would carry out the knight transfer Nd7-e5-c6.

23.Nc3-a4 Be8xa4 24.Rd4xa4?!

24.Bxa4 is preferable, to meet 24...Rc5 with 25.b4 Rc3 26.R1d3= (26.Ke2!? is also possible). Here at least the a5-pawn is reliably defended.

24...Rc8-c5 25.Rd1-d4?!

In combination with the next moves 26.Rdb4 and 28.Ra1 – absurd play! The same piece set up, but with a saving of one tempo, could be achieved by means of 25.Rb4 Rd7 26.Ra1 (26.Rb6!? Rxa5 27.Rd4 and 28.Rdb4 also deserves attention). After 27...Rdc7 (the d7-square is freed for the knight) White has time to transfer the poorly-positioned bishop: 27.c3=/+ with a subsequent Bd1-e2 (given by Yusupov).

25...Nf6-d7 26.Rd4-b4 Rd8-b8



[FEN "1r6/1p1nkp1p/p2pp3/P1r3p1/RR2P3/1B3P2/1PP2KPP/8 w - - 0 27"]

1.?

27.Kf2-e3?

Another superficial king move. White should have used "prophylactic thinking," and then he would have easily established that he had to deal with the maneuver Ne5-c6.



Gulko recommends exchanging a pair of rooks: 27.Rc4!? Ne5 28.Rxc5 dc=+.

Another option: 27.Bc4!? Black then either would have transferred his king to the queenside: 27...Kd8=+/, or gone for a simplification of the position in the variation 27...Ne5!? 28.Bxa6 Nc6! (28...Rxc2+?! 29.Ke3+/=) 29.Rxb7+ Rxb7 30.Bxb7 Nxa5 31.Ba6 Rxc2+ 32.Kg3 Nb3=+/+ (32...Nc6 is less accurate because of 33.Rc4! Rxc4 34.Bxc4=).

### 27...Nd7-e5

The threat of 28...Nc6 is extremely unpleasant.

### 28.Ra4-a1 Ne5-c6 29.Rb4-a4



[FEN "1r6/1p2kp1p/p1npp3/P1r3p1/R3P3/1B2KP2/1PP3PP/R7 b - - 0 29"]

### 1...?

The white rooks have doubled on a closed file and now play a sad role. Black has to choose a way to further improve his position.

The temporary pawn sacrifice 29...g4!? is tempting. Rejecting its capture with 30.f4 leads to White going a pawn down: 30...Rh5 31.Kf2 Rxh2 32.Kg3 Rh6, and 33.Kxg4? Rg8+ 34.Kf3 Rhg6 35.Rg1 h5+ is bad. He has to play 30.fg Rg8 31.h3 h5 32.Rc4 hg, and now either 33.h4 unclear, not fearing 33...Rxa5?! 34.Rxa5 Nxa5 35.Rc7+ Kf6 36.Ba2, or 33.Rxc5 dc 34.h4 g3 unclear.

Gulko found a much more convincing plan.

### 29...Rb8-f8!

Black is preparing 30...f5, and on 31.ef – 31...Rxf5f, attacking the weak a5-pawn with another piece.

### 30.Ke3-d2?!

The path of least resistance. The bishop is playing a modest role for now as defender of the c2-pawn – it was necessary to transfer it to another diagonal. After 30.Bc4! f5 (30...Nxa5 31.Bxa6 ba 32.Rxa5 Rxc2 33.Rxg5 is not dangerous) 31.Bd3, White's position remained defendable.

And now let's go back to the position in the last diagram. The idea of transferring the b3-bishop could be hindered by Yusupov's suggested subtle prophylactic move 29...h6! In the variation 30.Bc4 Nxa5 White is left a pawn down (as the g5-pawn is defended). And if 30.Kd2, then the undermining move 30...g4!? gains strength.

### 30...f7-f5 31.c2-c3



[FEN "5r2/1p2k2p/p1npp3/P1r2pp1/R3P3/1BP2P2/1P1K2PP/R7 b - - 0 31"]

### 1...?

### 31...Rc5-b5!

An excellent *zwischenzug*. In the case of 31...fe 32.Rxe4 e5 (32...d5 33.Rea4-/+ is better) 33.h4 (or 33.Ba4 with the idea of 34.b4) White got counterplay. And on 31...Re5 (threatening 32...fe) there is the reply 32.Bc2!

### 32.Kd2-c2 Rb5-e5!

Now the bishop does not get to c2.

### 33.Kc2-d3 f5xe4+ 34.Ra4xe4 Re5xe4 35.Kd3xe4 Rf8-f5

The triumph of Black's strategy – the a5-pawn inevitably perishes. The rest is a matter of technique.

### 36.Bb3-c2 Rf5-e5+ 37.Ke4-d3 Re5xa5 38.Ra1-b1 h7-h6 39.Kd3-d2 Ra5-d5+ 40.Kd2-e2



[FEN "8/1p2k3/p1npp2p/3r2p1/8/2P2P2/1PB1K1PP/1R6 b - - 0 40"]

### 1...?

### 40...a6-a5!

The start of a pawn attack on the queenside.

### 41.Rb1-h1

By playing 42.h4 White wants to activate his rook.

### 41...Rd5-b5!

Before advancing the b-pawn it is important to provoke a weakness on the queenside.

### 42.b2-b3

After 42.Rb1 Re5+ and 43...b5, the white rook no longer supports the move h2-h4.

### 42...Rb5-c5 43.Ke2-d2 b7-b5 44.h2-h4 b5-b4!



[FEN "8/4k3/2npp2p/p1r3p1/1p5P/1PP2P2/2BK2P1/7R w - - 0 45"]

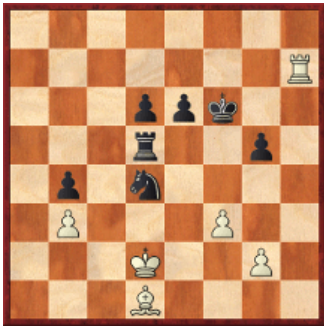
Now it is clear how useful it was to Black to force the move b2-b3. If 45.c4, then 45...Nd4 (45...d5! 46.hg hg 47.cd Nd4 48.Bd1 Rxd5-+ is also very strong) 46.hg hg 47.Rh7+ Kf6 with a subsequent 48...d5.

### 45.c3xb4 a5xb4 46.h4xg5 h6xg5 47.Rh1-h7+ Ke7-f6 48.Rh7-b7

48.Rh6+ Ke5 49.Rg6 Kf4 50.Rxe6? Rxc2+!.

### 48...Nc6-d4 49.Bc2-d1 Rc5-b5 50.Rb7-h7 Rb5-d5





[FEN "8/7R/3ppk2/3r2p1/1p1n4/1P3P2/3K2P1/3B4 w - - 0 51"]

51.Rh7-b7?

Loses immediately, but White's position is hopeless anyway. Gulko gives the following variations:

51.Kc1 Nf5 52.Rb7 Ne3 53.Be2 Rd4++ (53...Nxg2 54.Rxb4 Nf4 is also possible).




51.Ke1 Nb5 52.Be2 Nc3 53.Bc4 Rd1+ 54.Kf2 d5-+.

In the second line more stubborn is 52.Rh6+ Ke7 (52...Ke5!? 53.Rg6 Kf4 54.Rxe6 Kg3) 53.Rh7+ Kd8 54.Bc2 Nc3 55.Rb7 Rb5 56.Rg7 Re5+ 57.Kf1, but here too after, say, 57...Ra5!?, Black should win.

51...Nd4xb3+ White resigned (52.Ke1 Nc5 53.Rxb4 Nd3+).

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### In Houdini's Footsteps

The famous illusionist of the past Harry Houdini was known for his impressive tricks in which he escaped from apparently impossible situations. His "namesake," the computer program that is popular at the moment, sometimes comes out with similar "tricks" when analysing positions that at first glance look hopeless or very difficult, which have arisen in practical games of the past or present. Getting to know these kinds of examples broadens our conception of the boundaries of the possible in chess and teaches us never to despair, but to stubbornly keep looking for hidden resources in any situation.

I already published the article "Saving Combinations" on this topic a few years ago; you can find it in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#) for October and November 2005 and at Chesspro.ru for February 2006. The article contains several difficult and, in my view, rather beautiful exercises for independent solving. Now I offer you a new portion of these kinds of problems, with which I recently supplemented my card index.

The exercises are designed for strong players, but less sophisticated readers can just investigate the given variations, following the logic of the search and checking the solutions. Meanwhile, in all the examples, both in the previous article and in this one, the players did not manage to cope with the problems that were facing them (and sometimes even the commentators failed too). I hope that those who want to train seriously by using my materials will consequently be more successful in their games.

In the first two examples the saving chance presented itself twice, and in each game at a certain point it was possible not only to save yourself, but even achieve a win.

#### Zueger – Landenbergue

Swiss Championship, Chiasso, 1991



[FEN "2b2rk1/4R3/2pp3b/Q3p1n1/2P1Nqp1/B2P4/P2NPpB1/5K2 w - - 0 33"]

#### 1.?

A situation that is typical in one of the strategic schemes of the English Opening. White has broken through on the queenside, and in exchange his opponent, by sacrificing a piece, has created very dangerous threats to the king on the opposite side of the board. It is very difficult to defend. Bad, for example, is 33.Nxg5? Bxg5 34.Bxd6 Bxe7 35.Bxe5 (35.Bxe7 Qh2-+) 35...Qe3+.

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You have to return the extra piece to defuse the situation somewhat.

### 33.Re7xe5!! d6xe5

Nothing is changed by 33...Nxe4 34.Nxe4 de 35.Bxf8. In the case of an exchange of queens, 33...Qxe5? 34.Qxe5 de 35.Bxf8 Kxf8, White is left a pawn up in the endgame.

### 34.Ba3xf8 Ng5xe4

34...Bxf8 35.Qd8!? Nxe4 36.Nxe4= is not dangerous.

### 35.Nd2xe4

White managed to defend against direct threats, and there, in principle, it is possible to stop calculating: as there was not anything better for him anyway. In fact, the dangers are not over yet - his opponent can continue the attack.

### 35...Qf4-c1+ 36.Kf1xf2 Bh6-e3+

If 36...g3+, then 37.Nxg3! Qe3+ 38.Kf1, and Black is forced to give perpetual check: 38...Qf4+ 39.Kg1 Qd4+ 40.Kf1.

### 37.Kf2-g3 Be3-f4+ 38.Kg3-h4 Qc1-g1!



[FEN "2b2Bk1/8/2p5/Q3p3/2P1NbpK/3P4/P3P1B1/6q1 w - - 0 39"]

### 1.?

Now White already has to look for perpetual check. Two pieces are sacrificed for the sake of it!

### 39.Ne4-f6+! Kg8-h8!

39...Kxf8? is a mistake: 40.Qd8+ Kf7 41.Qe8+ Kxf6 42.Qf8+ Ke6 (42...Kg6? 43.Be4+) 43.Qxc8+ Ke7 44.Qxg4+/-.

### 40.Bf8-g7+! Kh8xg7 41.Qa5-c7+ Kg7xf6 42.Qc7-d8+ Kf6-f7 43.Qd8-c7+ Kf7-f6 44.Qc7-d8+

But in the game White chose 33.Bxd6? Qh2! 34.Nxf2 g3 35.Qxe5. Now quickly decisive was 35...Rxf2+ 36.Ke1 Qg1+ 37.Nf1 Rxf1+ (37...Nf3+! is possible immediately) 38.Bxf1 Nf3+! 39.ef Qf2+ 40.Kd1 Qd2#, or 37.Bf1 Nf3+! (37...g2 does not let go of the win either). Instead of that Black played "for beauty": 35...Bh3?.



[FEN "5rk1/4R3/2pB3b/4Q1n1/2P5/3P2pb/P2NPNBq/5K2 w - - 0 36"]

### 1.?

I found this position in the good book *Invisible Chess Moves*, written by Yochanan Afek and Emmanuel Neiman. From this, by the way, my acquaintance with the given example also began: I went into Megabase, found the game and discovered that several moves earlier White had to solve a

problem (which we already investigated) that was no less interesting than this one.

Black's idea justified itself: his opponent missed a mate in one based on two simultaneous pins: **36.Qxg3?? Qh1#**.

Meanwhile, excessive aggression can be harshly punished.

**36.Re7-g7+! Bh6xg7 37.Qe5xg7+! Kg8xg7 38.Bd6xf8+ Kg7xf8 39.Nf2xh3 Ng5xh3**

On 39...Ke7, the simplest of all is 40.Nf3! Nxf3 41.ef. The queen is excluded from the game forever, and the black king cannot fight alone against multiple pawns.

**40.Nd2-f3+-**

A minor piece endgame arises with White two or three pawns up.

**Schmidt – Gulko**  
Yerevan, 1976



[FEN "2b2k2/4r2p/p2p3b/n1pPpp2/1pP4q/1P3P2/PBQ1RNK1/4RN2 w - - 0 28"]

**1.?**

The King's Indian was played, of course. Black has sacrificed a whole rook, relying on the strength of the threat 28...Rg7+. His idea could have been refuted by a reciprocal sacrifice, which would have allowed White to switch to a decisive counter-attack.

**28.Bb2xe5!! d6xe5 29.Re2xe5 Re7-g7+**

29...Rxe5 30.Rxe5 is completely hopeless.

**30.Nf2-g4! f5xg4 31.Re5-e8+**

But just not 31.f4? Bd7, and Black wins.

**31...Kf8-f7**



[FEN "2b1R3/5krp/p6b/n1pP4/1pP3pq/1P3P2/P1Q3K1/4RN2 w - - 0 32"]

**32.f3-f4!**

Black's attack is exhausted, and his own king finds itself in a desperate position.

**32...Bc8-d7 33.Qc2-e4+-**

33.R1e7+ Qxe7 (33...Kf6 34.Re6+) 34.Rxe7+ Kxe7 35.Qf2!? Kd6 36.Qb2 also wins.

All other tries are significantly weaker.

The worst is 28.Ng3? Rg7 29.Nh1.



[FEN "2b2k2/6rp/p2p3b/n1pPpp2/1pP4q/1P3PN1/PBQ1R1K1/4R2N b - - 0 29"]

### 1...?

In the case of 29...f4 the move 30.Bxe5! can be found, after which the position remains unclear: 30...de 31.Rxe5 or 30...Bh3+ 31.Kg1 Rxe3+ 32.Nxe3 Qxe3+ 33.Kh1 Qxf3+ 34.Rg2! de 35.Rxe5.

The move 29...Bf4! given by Boris Gulko sets more difficult tasks for his opponent. But here too, contrary to his opinion, it is hardly possible to evaluate the position unequivocally. White continues 30.Rg1 Bxe3 31.Kf1 f4 32.Nxe3 fg 33.Ke1 (33.Bc1!?) 33...g2+ 34.Rf2! (but just not 34.Kd1? Qh2! 35.Rexg2 Qxe1+!), and in the case of 34...Bh3?! the move 35.f4! equalises. You have to resort to more subtle methods such as 35...Ke8! 36.Qe2 (36.f4? Rg3!) 36...Kd8 37.f4 Bg4 38.Qc2! Rf7!. Then again, here we have a typical computer scenario, so I will cut the variation off (I probably should have done this a lot sooner).

But on 28.Nh2!? Black no longer finds a clear path to equalisation: 28...Bf4 (28...Rg7+? 29.Kh1 Bf4 30.Nd3+-) 29.Rh1 Rg7+ 30.Kf1 Bxe2 31.Ne4! Qh3+ 32.Ke1.



[FEN "2b2k2/6rp/p2p4/n1pPpp2/1pP1N3/1P3P1q/PBQ1R2b/4K2R b - - 0 32"]

Here the variations are also purely computer-like. White remains the exchange up everywhere, but taking advantage of that is problematic.

32...Bg3+ 33.Nxe3 Qxe3+ 34.Rf2! f4!? (34...Nb7 35.f4!) 35.Rxe7 Bh3+/-/+/-.

32...Qxf3 33.Rexh2 Qe3+, and now either 34.Re2 Rg1+ 35.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 36.Kd2 fe 37.Qxe4 Bg4 38.Qg2! Qxe2 39.Rxe2 h5+/-, or 34.Qe2 Rg1+ 35.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 36.Kd2 fe 37.Qf2+ Qxf2+ 38.Rxf2+ Kg7+/-.

Wlodzimierz Schmidt chose a different retreat of the f1-knight, which by strength is in the middle of the ones we have already looked at. Gulko wrongly awarded it an exclamation mark.

### 28.Ne3? Rg7+ 29.Kf1 Qh2

The alternative 29...Bxe3 30.Rxe3 f4.



[FEN "2b2k2/6rp/p2p4/n1pPp3/1pP2p1q/1P2RP2/PBQ2N2/4RK2 w - - 0 31"]

1.?

31.Re4? Bh3+ 32.Ke2 Qxf2+! 33.Kxf2 Rg2+ 34.Kf1 Rxc2+ loses. A draw results from both the variation given by Gulko 31.Bxe5! Bh3+ 32.Nxh3! (32.Ke2? Qxf2+!) 32...Qxh3+ 33.Ke2 de! 34.Rxe5! Rg2+ 35.Kd1 Rxc2 36.Re8+ Kg7 37.R8e7+ Kg6 38.R1e6+, and also 31.Rxe5! Bh3+ 32.Nxh3! Qxh3+ 33.Ke2 Rg2+ 34.Kd1 de 35.Re2.

Let's go back to the game.



[FEN "2b2k2/6rp/p2p3b/n1pPp2/1pP5/1P2NP2/PBQ1RN1q/4RK2 w - - 0 30"]

1.?

Again, as on the 28th move, the terrible danger threatening the white king can be neutralised by switching to an energetic counter-attack (this time it is only enough for a draw). The variations are given in Gulko's notes.

**30.Ne3-g4!**

30.Nfg4? Qh3+ with a subsequent 31...fg-+ does not work. But the game finished like this: 30.Rd2? Rg1+ 31.Ke2 Rxe1+ (31...Bxe3! decided things more quickly) 32.Kxe1 Bxe3 33.Nd1 Bxd2+ 34.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 35.Kxd2 f4 (intending Bf5-b1). White resigned.

**30...f5xg4 31.Bb2xe5!**

But not 31.Nxg4? Qh3+ 32.Kg1 Be3+ 33.Rxe3 Bxg4-+.

**31...d6xe5 32.Re2xe5 Bc8-d7! 33.Qc2-e4!**

Another path to a draw: 33.Rf5+! Kg8! 34.Qe4! Rg6!= (Dvoretsky).

**33...Rg7-f7! 34.Re5-e7! g4-g3 35.Re7xf7+ Kf8xf7 36.Qe4xh7+! Kf7-f8 37.Qh7-h8+**

A sharp battle ends in perpetual check.

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Annonce

We are still ironing out some wrinkles in the website redesign. In the meantime enjoy this month's *The Instructor*. Please support this column with a purchase from our [chess shop](#).

## In Houdini's Footsteps, Part Two

I will say a few words about the book [Lessons with a Grandmaster](#) by Boris Gulko and Joel Sneed, from which the last game we looked at in the [August 2014 column](#) was taken. Actually this is not even one book, but two, and now a third is being prepared. I was studying [the second volume](#) just before writing this article.

The books are structured in an unusual way; in my view, they should be both interesting and useful to readers of various levels – from amateurs to grandmasters. Gulko shows his student and co-author his best games (in the first volume positional advantages, and in the second tactical ones), suggesting that he answer questions associated with the search for the best moves. Their conversation often reminds me of the dialogues of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson from Conan Doyle's immortal tales: the student regularly suggests bad solutions and asks naive questions, allowing his partner in conversation to give wise answers and explanations. From a pedagogical point of view this approach is fully justified, especially for non-expert readers. They get the opportunity to compare opinions that they might have expressed themselves with a grandmaster's take on the same problems, his explanations of the clear or hidden motives for the decisions that were made. It is very useful to get to know the thoughts of an experienced professional about the most important problems of the chess struggle, and not only technical ones, but also psychological ones (by the way, Gulko's co-author is a professional psychologist, and Boris himself in his time graduated from the Psychology faculty of Moscow University).

Unfortunately, the grandmaster did not check the variations he gave very carefully on his computer. So they contain quite a few oversights and direct tactical mistakes, which we already saw and will see again subsequently.

**Gulko – Van der Sterren**  
Amsterdam, 1988

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cd ed 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0-0 7.Bd3 c6 8.Nge2 Nbd7 9.Ng3 h6

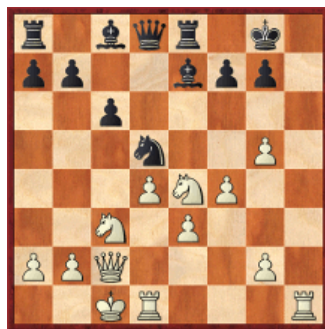
In the thirty-second game of the Alekhine-Capablanca match (Buenos Aires, 1927) 9...Ne8?! 10.h4 was played.

10.h4 Nb6! 11.Qc2 Re8 12.0-0-0 hg!? (12...Bd6!?) 13.hg Ne4



The g5-pawn, which constrains his opponent's kingside, is under attack. Gulko defended it by means of **14.Bxe4! de 15.f4!?**. I will point out that it was also possible to go into the double-edged position that arises on 15.Qxe4 Bxg5 16.Qh7+ Kf8 17.Ncxe4; true, Black was no worse here, in any case.

**15...Nd5 16.Ngxe4** (16.Qxe4 g6 is hopeless).



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp2bpp1/2p5/3n2P1/3PNP2/2N1P3/PPQ3P1/2KR3R b - - 0 16"]

**1...?**

Black has a rich choice of continuations, and it is not that easy to determine which of them promises him the best prospects. We can reject 16...g6? immediately due to 17.Qf2, and an attempt with the move 17...Kg7 to fight for the h-file is refuted by the straightforward blow 18.Rh7+!.

**16...Nxe3**

At first I thought that 16...Nxc3!? was stronger. 17.g4? Nxe4 18.Qh2 (18.Qxe4 Bd6 19.Qh7+ Kf8-+) does not work in reply due to 18...f5 19.g6 Bh4-+. Also losing is 17.bc? Ba3+ 18.Kd2 Bf5 19.Nf6+ Qxf6. After 17.Qxc3? Bg4 18.Rde1 (18.Qe1 f5!) 18...Qd5, White does not manage to create an attack either: 19.Rh4 Qxe4 20.Rdh1 f5-+.

The only correct continuation is 17.Nxc3! g6 18.Rh4! (18.Qf2 Bf8 19.Qh4 Bg7-/+ is weaker) 18...Bf8 19.e4 Bg7 20.g4, and the mobile pawn phalanx on the kingside secures White sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece – the battle can probably end in any of the three results.

Grandmaster Ian Nepomniachtchi suggested the move 16...f5!, apparently refuting the opponent's risky attack. Both 17.gf Bxf6, and 17.Qe2 fe 18.Qh5 Bf5! 19.g6 (19.g4 Bxg4 20.Qxg4 Qc8! 21.Qh5 Qf5) 19...Bxg6 20.Qxg6 Qd6! 21.Qh7+ (21.Qxe4 Bh4!-+) 21...Kf7 allow Black to preserve his material advantage without subjecting him to too much danger.

**17.Qf2!**

Gulko mentions the alternative path 17.Qe2 Ng4 18.Rh4! Nh6 19.Rdh1, evaluating the position that arises as double-edged. In my view, the advantage here is with Black: 19...Bf5 20.Rh5 Bb4 21.gh g6-/+.

**17...Nxd1**

This moment also deserved comment – as Black could try 17...f5!? 18.Qh4 fe or 18.Qxe3 fe! 19.Qxe4 Qd6! – with unclear consequences in both cases.

**18.Qh4 f5 19.Qh5!?**



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp2b1p1/2p5/5pPQ/3PNP2/2N5/PP4P1/2Kn3R b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

A sad conclusion followed for the Dutch player: **19...Kf8? 20.Qg6! Kg8**



**21.Rh7! Qxd4 22.Qh5 Qe3+ 23.Kc2.** Black resigned.

19...fe! 20.g6 Bh4! 21.Rxh4 Kf8!? was necessary, forcing his opponent to repeat moves: 22.Qc5+ Kg8 23.Qh5. Gulko also looks at 21...Qxh4 22.Qxh4 Nxc3 23.bc!, evaluating the consequences of the difficult variations he gives as favorable for White. On checking these I came to the conclusion that approximate equality is preserved here too.

The game we have investigated is very interesting, but does not completely fit the theme of this article. Only one of its episodes, which arose in one of the side variations, got into my card-index of exercises. Let's go back to the position after Black's thirteenth move, which you will find in the first diagram.

Besides the move he chose, 14.Bxe4, Boris also mentions 14.g6. This move is bad due to 14...Nxc3! 15.gf+ (15.fg? f5-+ with a subsequent 16...Bg5) 15...Kxf7 16.fg Rf8!-/+.

The grandmaster does not look at an exchange of knights, offering instead 14...f5, and furnishes his recommendation with an exclamation mark. In fact, White can find an impressive path to salvation here.



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp2b1p1/1np3P1/3p1p2/3Pn3/2NBP1N1/PPQ2PP1/2KR3R w - - 0 15]

## 1.?

The position looks dire: he is a piece down; and besides exchanging on g3, an attack on the g6-pawn with the move Qd6 is threatened, and also the maneuver Bg5-h6.

In the examples we investigated earlier we convinced ourselves more than once that attack is often the best form of defense! It is the same here: you have to create threats on the h-file, without flinching at sacrifices. Then again, the given plan is fairly obvious, but the question is how to implement it correctly.

## 15.Nc3xe4!! f5xe4

On 14...de the same reply follows.

## 16.Rh1-h7! Be7-g5

There is no time to take the bishop: 16...ed? 17.Rdh1 Bh4 18.Qxd3+-.

An attack on the g6-pawn with the move 16...Qd6? is refuted by means of 17.Nxe4! de 18.Rdh1 Qxg6 19.Bxe4 Qf6 20.Bg6!+-.

An attempt to use the light-squared bishop for defense 16...Be6? 17.Rdh1 Kf8 18.Rh8+ Bg8 ends in failure after 19.Qe2! Bg5 20.R1h7! (stronger than 20.Qh5 Ke7! 21.Qxg5+ Kd7 22.Qxd8+ Raxd8+/-; now the threat of Qh5 gains strength) 20...Qf6 21.Qh5 Ke7 22.Rxg7+! Kd6 (22...Qxg7 23.Nf5+) 23.Bxe4!? de 24.Rhxg8+- (the rook is deflected from the defense of the e4-square).

It is quite possible for the king to escape from the danger zone by means of 16...Bd6 17.Rdh1 Kf8. White continues his attack by playing 18.Bxe4! de (the interim exchange 18...Bxc3? 19.fg+- does not work for Black, as the new threat 20.Qc5+ appears) 19.Nh5 Bf5 (the only move) 20.Nxg7 Bxg6 21.Nxe8, with a sharp and unclear position.

There is probably no need to precisely calculate all these variations while making decisions for White – it is clear that he preserves excellent attacking prospects. But you have to seriously consider the closing of the h-file.

## 17.Rd1-h1 Bg5-h6



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp4pR/1np3Pb/3p4/3Pp3/3BP1N1/PPQ2PP1/2K4R w - - 0 18"]

### 18.Rh1xh6! g7xh6 19.Ng3-h5

This is why White hit e4 specifically with the queen's knight! His opponent cannot avoid perpetual check.

### 19...e4xd3

19...Be6 19.Qc5=.

### 20.Rh7-g7+ Kg8-h8 21.Rg7-h7+

It is probably also worth showing that 15.Bxe4?! fe is weaker than 15.Ncxe4!!. The main difference makes itself felt on 16.Rh7? Qd6! – it is awkward to defend the g6-pawn here: 17.Nh5 Bf8 18.Nf4 (18.Rh1 Qxg6 19.Rh8+ Kf7-+) 18...Bf5-+.

You cannot create enough counterplay by other means either:

16.Ncxe4 de 17.Rh7 Be6! 18.Rdh1 Kf8-/+;

16.Qe2!? Bg5! 17.Rh7 Bh6 18.Qh5 (18.Rh1 Qg5 19.R1xh6 gh 20.Nh5 Qxg6 21.Rg7+ Qxg7 22.Nxg7 Kxg7-+) 18...Qg5 19.Qxg5 Bxg5 20.Rdh1 (20.Nh5 Kf8!) 20...Kf8 (20...Bh6 21.R1xh6! gh 22.Nh5=) 21.Nh5 Bg4-/+.

The duel between Gulko and Vaganian (the last one in the book) is full of sharp fighting, which both players did at a high level, sometimes surprising the opponent with subtle, difficult-to-find moves. In such skirmishes it is impossible to avoid occasional inaccuracies (people are not computers), but the errors that were made were not that easy to spot.

In the analysis of this game, like the previous one, you will be offered a series of problems, only one of which is directly connected to the theme of this article. But the others are also sufficiently deep and interesting.

### Vaganian – Gulko

Soviet Championship, First Division, Baku, 1977



[FEN "2q2nk1/p5pp/bpr1p1n1/3pPpQN/P2P4/B6P/5PP1/R2B2K1 w - - 0 27"]

### 1.?

As early as the opening White sacrificed a pawn, but the compensation for it is problematic. His opponent intends to drive his queen into an active position with the move 27...h6 (on 28.Qg3 the move 28...Rc3 is unpleasant), and then perhaps transfer his queen via d8 to g5 or h4. So as not to lose the initiative, Rafael Vaganian decides on a positional knight sacrifice, the consequences of which are impossible to calculate, and he probably did not try to.

### 27.Nxg7!! Kxg7 28.h4 h6!?

Gulko also looks at 28...Rc4 29.h5 Rxd4 30.hg Nxg6 (Black has given the

piece back, but is two pawns up) 31.a5! ba 32.Bh5 Qe8 33.Bc5 with a palpable advantage.

**29.Qf6+ Kg8**

In the opinion of the commentator, 29...Kh7 30.h5 loses. This is not the case: Black continues 30...Rc7! with the idea of Rg7, and the position remains unclear.

**30.Bh5!**



[FEN "2q2nk1/p7/bpr1pQnp/3pPp1B/P2P3P/B7/5PP1/R5K1 b - - 0 30"]

**1...?**

The grandmaster does not comment on the move he made (30...Nh8). And in fact, what could be more natural than taking an attacked piece away from the attack? But meanwhile, it was from this moment that Black's position became alarming.

We should note that the thrust 30...Rc3 is useless, as it is easy for White to parry the threat of 31...Rxa3, by playing 31.Kh2!. He managed to avoid danger by carrying out an unexpected combination associated with the return of the extra piece and the subsequent sacrifice of a couple of pawns.

**30...Rc6-c7!! 31.Bh5xg6 Nf8xg6 32.Qf6xg6+ Rc7-g7 33.Qg6xh6 Qc8-c3!**

The point of Black's idea!

**34.Qh6xe6+ Kg8-h8**

White has nothing better than perpetual check. Attempts to continue the battle by sacrificing the a3-bishop do not give him anything – as he has to deal with the weakness of the g2-square. For example, 35.Rd1 (on 35.Ra2, there is at least 35...Qc4) 35...Qxa3 36.Qxf5?! Be2! 37.Re1 Qf3.

Let's go a little way back, to the note to the 28th move. In the variation given by Gulko Black could successfully implement the same idea: 31...Qc3! 32.Qf6+ Kg8 33.Qxe6+ Kg7 with an unavoidable draw.

And now let's think about how White can continue his attack after the move in the game **30...Nh8?!**.



[FEN "2q2nkn/p7/bpr1pQ1p/3pPp1B/P2P3P/B7/5PP1/R5K1 w - - 0 31"]

**1.?**

31.Qxh6 is tempting. Black has only one playable defense: 31...Rc7! 32.Bxf8 Qxf8 33.Qxe6+ Kh7. In the position that arises White preserves good compensation for the piece. Then again, according to the computer, the chances are approximately equal.

Examining this variation helps us evaluate the worth of the brilliant blow

31.a5!! If 31...ba (or 31...b5), then 32.Qxh6 gains considerable strength, as at the end of the variation examined above the a6-bishop is lost. And on 32...Qd8 there follows 33.Bd6 with the very dangerous threat of 34.Ra3. I do not even know what to recommend for Black – it looks like his position is very difficult.

**31.Re1?! Nh7 32.Qxh6 Rc7**



[FEN "2q3kn/p1r4n/bp2p2Q/3pP1B/P2P3P/B7/5PP1/4R1K1 w - - 0 33"]

**1.?**

White's pieces are positioned very actively, but it is not clear how to intensify the onslaught. If 33.Re3, then 33...Rg7. True, he manages to transfer his dark-squared bishop to the kingside by means of 34.Be7!, but this is sufficient only to maintain equality: 34...Nf7 35.Bxf7+ Kxf7 36.Bf6 Nxf6 (36...Qc1+ 37.Kh2 Rxc2+ 38.Kxc2 Qf1+ 39.Kh2 Qxf2+ 40.Kh1 leads to perpetual check) 37.Qxf6+ Kg8 38.h5=.

Vaganian finds a superb solution to the problem: he opens a "second front" on the queenside.

**33.a5!!**

Only this way can White manage to get his sole inactive piece into the game – the rook. Perhaps some readers would not have found it that difficult to suggest this move, which already proved its worth in some of the variations that we looked at above. But finding this kind of idea in a tournament game with limited thinking time and without preliminary hints is a sign of superior mastery!

If now 33...Rg7, then 34.ab ab 35.Rb1!, and the initiative remains in White's hands. But 33...b5? is even worse, on which there follows not 34.Re3 Rg7 leading to unclear play, as examined by Gulko, but 34.Bd6!, and the black rook is at a crossroads. 34...Rg7 35.Rc1 is very bad, and on 34...Rc3 or 34...Rc4 the most energetic move is 35.g4!+-.

Now it is already obvious that White's thirty-first move was, at minimum, a loss of a tempo. After a4-a5!, the rook created threats from the a1-square, and when necessary would immediately head for b1, c1, or the third rank (Ra3).

**33...Nf7?! (33...Bc4!? deserved attention or 33...ba!? 34.Bd6 Rb7!) 34.Qg6+ Kh8 35.ab ab 36.Rb1!?**

The rook is attacking the vulnerable pawn, intending afterwards to transfer to the third rank. For example, 36...b5 37.Rb3 or 36...Rb7 37.Rb3 (37.Rc1 Bc4 38.Rc3) 37...f4 38.Bg4. But it was probably more accurate to include 36.Re3! f4 (the only defense), and only now occupy the b-file: 37.Rb3! (the move 37.Rf3 that suggests itself is worse because of 37...Qg8! 38.Qxe6 Be2! unclear). In any case, the counterplay that was successfully implemented by Black in the game did not work with a the pawn on f4.

Realising the impending danger, Gulko sacrifices a pawn in the hope of exchanging queens.

**36...Qg8!? 37.Qxe6 Bc8**



[FEN "2b3qk/2r2n1n/1p2Q3/3pPp1B/3P3P/B7/5PP1/1R4K1 w - - 0 38"]

1.?

There is no 38.Qxd5?? Bb7+-. You can switch to a better endgame by continuing 38.Qg6 Qxg6 39.Bxg6 Nd8 40.Rxb6, but after 40...Rc6 (the move 40...Ne6 given by Gulko is weaker due to 41.Bxf5 Nxd4 42.Bb1+/-) 41.Bc5 Kg7 42.Be8 Rxb6 43.Bxb6 Nf7 Black retains decent chances of saving himself.

Vaganian preferred a sharper solution: he sacrificed his queen, hoping to exploit the strength of his passed e-pawn. From a practical point of view his choice was completely expedient: it was impossible to foresee that his opponent would be able to hold onto equality with a long series of precise and almost overwhelmingly only moves.

38.Qxb6!! Rb7 39.Qxb7 Bxb7 40.Rxb7



[FEN "6qk/1R3n1n/8/3pPp1B/3P3P/B7/5PP1/6K1 b - - 0 40"]

1...?

Both 40...Nd8? 41.Rb8 and 40...Nh6? 41.Bd6 (41.Re7) are totally hopeless. So the move chosen by Black, **40...Qa8!**, looks like strictly the only solution, if you do not count the computer's 40...Nfg5! 41.hg Qxg5 42.Be2(f3) Qd2 unclear or 41.Bd6 Nh3+! 42.Kf1 Nf4 43.Bf3 (43.Rb8 Nxh5 unclear) 43...Qe6 44.g3 Ng6 unclear.

41.Rxf7 Qxa3 42.e6



[FEN "7k/5R1n/4P3/3p1p1B/3P3P/q7/5PP1/6K1 b - - 0 42"]

1...?

At this point the game was adjourned. *In those years, we didn't have computers, which would have helped me tremendously in such a position. Reasonably, the practice of adjourning games was discontinued with the introduction of strong chess playing computer programs.* (Gulko).

Thorough home analysis allowed the grandmaster to find a non-obvious path

to a draw and demonstrate it in the resumption. I have included this position in my card-index as an exercise for training in playing things out (as black). You can try and independently look for the right solution move by move, rejecting false tries by the process of elimination and each time choosing a continuation in which at least a forced loss is not evident. The task is not easy, but many grandmasters who have participated in my training sessions have successfully coped with it.

#### 42...Qa3-c1+!

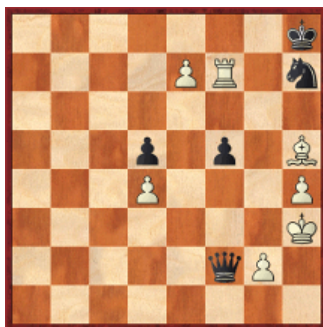
Initially Gulko thought that a draw could be obtained by means of 42...Qa1+? 43.Kh2 Qxd4 44.e7 Nf6 45.Rxf6 (but not 45.Rf8+? Kg7 46.Rxf6 Qxh4+ 47.Kg1 Qxh5=) 45...Qe5+ 46.g3 Qxe7 47.Rxf5 d4. Waking up in the middle of the night, he suddenly realised that his opponent would put his bishop on f3, his king on g2 and his rook on d5, thereby neutralising the passed d-pawn, and would then advance his g- and h-pawns, which should lead to a win. He had to turn on the light and sit down to analyse again.

It is also worth noting that Black can transpose his first moves: **42...Ng5!**

**43.hg Qc1+**, as he does not have to fear 43.e7 Qc1+ 44.Bd1?! (44.Kh2 Qf4+ with perpetual check) 44...Qxd1+ 45.Kh2 Nxf7! (but just not 45...Nf3+? 46.gf Qe2 47.Kg2!+-) 46.e8Q+ Kg7-/+.

#### 43.Kg1-h2 Nh7-g5!

After taking control of the h3-square, Black prepares perpetual check with 44...Qf4+. An immediate **43...Qf4+!** is also possible, but in connection with a different defensive idea: **44.Kh3 Qxf2** (44...Ng5+? 45.hg Qxg5 46.g4 fg+ 47.Bxg4 loses) **45.e7**



[FEN "7k/4PR1n/8/3p1p1B/3P3P/7K/5qP1/8 b - - 0 45"]

#### 1...?

On 45...Nf6?, there follows not 46.Rf8+? Kg7 47.Rxf6 Qe3+ 48.g3 – we will soon see this position, but 46.Rxf6! Qe3+ 47.Bf3! (47.g3? Qxe7 48.Rxf5 Qe6! 49.Bg4 Qe4!)=) 47...Qxe7 48.Rxf5 Qe6, and now either 49.g4 Qe3 50.g5 Qxd4 51.Bxd5, or 49.Kg4!? – White retains decent chances of success here.

Stronger is **45...Qe3+! 46.g3** (46.Bf3? Kg8) **46...Nf6!** (of course, not 46...f4? 47.e8Q+! Qxe8 48.Rxh7+) **47.Rf8+** (or 47.Rxf6 Qxe7 48.Rxf5 Qe6! 49.Bg4 Qe4!)=) **47...Kg7 48.Rxf6 Qf2!!** (this defensive resource needs to be seen in advance, when you decide on 43...Qf4+; neither 48...Qxe7? 49.Rf7+ nor 48...Qe1? 49.e8N+! with a subsequent Rxf5 worked) **49.e8N+ Kh8!** (49...Kg8? 50.Bf7+ Kf8 51.Bg6+ Ke7 52.Rxf5+-) **50.Rf8+ Kh7 51.Nf6+ Kh6!=** (but not 51...Kg7?? 52.Rf7+ and 53.Rh7#).

#### 44.h4xg5 Qc1xg5

We already know that 44...Qf4+? 45.Kh3 Qxg5 46.g4 fg+ 47.Bxg4+- is a mistake.

#### 45.g2-g4! f5xg4





[FEN "7k/5R2/4P3/3p2qB/3P2p1/8/  
5P1K/8 w - - 0 46"]

**46.Kh2-g2!?**

46.Kg1 is equivalent. Black's task is simpler on 46.Rf8+ Kg7 47.e7 g3+! or 46.Kg3 Qxh5 47.Rf8+ Kg7 48.e7 Qh3+ 49.Kf4 Qh4 (49...Qh2+) 50.e8Q Qxf2+ and 51...Qxf8=.

**46...g4-g3!**

You need to open lines around the white king so that the queen can give checks. Bad is 46...Qxh5? 47.Rf8+ Kg7 48.e7+-; although now in the case of 47.fg? taking the bishop even wins.

**47.e6-e7 g3xf2+ 48.Kg2xf2**

Now it is important to choose squares for the queen so that the series of checks does not run out, as in the variation 48...Qd2+? 49.Be2 Qxd4+ 50.Kf1 Qa1+ 51.Kg2+-.

**48...Qg5-h4+! 49.Kf2-g2 Qh4-e4+!**

But not 49...Qg5+? 50.Kf1 Qc1+ 51.Kf2 Qc2+ 52.Be2+-.

**50.Kg2-g3 Qe4-e1+**

The white king cannot hide from the checks.

**51.Kg3-g4 Qe1-e4+ 52.Kg4-g5 Qe4-e3+ 53.Kg5-h4**

53.Kf6 Qxd4+ 54.Ke6 Qb6+ is useless.

**53...Qe3-e1+!**

The last precise move. 53...Qe4+?? 54.Bg4 Qh1+ 55.Kg5 lost.

**54.Kh4-g5 Qe1-e3+**

Draw.

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# The Instructor #164 by Mark Dvoretsky

## A String of Associations

Looking at a recent issue of *New In Chess* magazine (No. 6, 2013), my attention was drawn to the final section of an article by grandmaster Jan Timman.

### Kunin – Edouard

Helsingfors, 2013



[FEN "r5k1/rnpb2qp/1p1p2p1/p2Ppp2/1PP5/P1Q1P2P/2BN1PP1/R4RK1 w - - 0 22"]

*Kunin is a grandmaster with roughly 2500 Elo-points. In this position he seems to be worried that Black has doubled rooks on the a-file, because he went in for **22.b5?***

*An utterly unbelievable move. Black's positional problem has been solved at a stroke: the black knight, with no prospects on b7, has been gifted a magnificent square in c5. Before that, Black didn't have a single threat.*

*Remarkably enough, the computer isn't even overly critical here, indicating that White would have been fractionally better after 22.e4. After White's pawn move it assesses the position as fractionally better for Black. It seems to me, however, that Black has a clear strategic advantage now after having been in a difficult position before.*

This episode reminded me of another game commented on many years ago in the same magazine (No. 5, 1988) by grandmaster John Nunn, and later included in his book, [\*Secrets of Practical Chess\*](#).

### Seirawan – Nunn

Brussels, 1988





[FEN "r3rqk1/1p1b2bn/p2p1pp1/3P2P1/P2BNPn1/6Np/1P1QB2P/R3R1K1 w - - 0 25"]

After obtaining nothing out of the opening, the American grandmaster has afterward, by exploiting his opponent's excessively optimistic activity, outplayed him completely. Up to this point, he had played outstandingly well, but...

*Here, Seirawan made a serious strategic error: 25.gf?, which not only robbed White of all the advantages he had obtained thus far, but put him in danger of being worse off.*

The continuation was **25...Ngxf6** (25...Nhxf6 26.Ng5) **26.Bf3?** (26.Nf2 Qf7) **26...Nxe4** (with this move, Black declined White's draw offer) **27.Rxe4 Rxe4 28.Bxe4** (28.Bxg7 Qxf4) **28...Bxd4+ 29.Qxd4 Qxf4 30.Rf1 Qg4-/+.**

After a long series of mutual oversights, the game eventually ended up drawn.

*After having played so consistently to maintain his pawn at g5, White suddenly abandoned control of the f6-square, and let the crippled horse back into the game. Had Seirawan continued with 25.Qd1 f5 26.Bxg7 Qxg7 27.Bxg4 fg 28.Qd2, Black would have serious difficulties. The d6-pawn would be under attack, and the h7-knight could come back to life only in the distant future. He might also tighten the screws with 25.Rf1. Then 25...fg would be impossible, and White would soon break through by f4-f5. Black would be left with just one reasonable move, ...Rac8; after that, he would have to wait and see what White intended, in order to improve his position.*

Now, I present the rest of Nunn's magazine commentaries, which did not make it into his book.

*Curiously, when I played Seirawan for the first time, at Hastings 1979-80, he made almost the same mistake.*



[FEN "r2q4/1p6/n2Pb1kb/4pp2/1PP4p/2N4P/4N3/BR1QK3 w - - 0 28"]

*In this position, from the game Seirawan – Short (forgive me, Yasser!), White would have dealt successfully with the knight on a6 (which has been shut out of the game) by playing 28.Nd5! with advantage here. Instead, the unforgivable 28.b5? resulted in activating the knight on a6 and the rook on a8. After 28...Nc5 29.Nd5 Ra3 30.Bc3 Qg5 31.Ra1 Qg2 (another simple and strong line was 31...Rxa1, followed by 32...Qg2, or just 31...Rxc3!?), the deadly threat of Qh1+ and Na4# would give Black a won position. This leads us along a dark path: probably, all of us have some “short-outs” in our thinking that let us make the self-same errors, time and again.*

There can be no doubt about Nunn’s evaluations; however, noting that in the last example, his recommended move nevertheless allowed the black knight to get into the game – and win a pawn to boot – I decided to check out the variations that arose for myself. Analysis showed that White indeed wins, but with great difficulty, requiring exceptional accuracy and resourcefulness from him. This position appears to be quite suitable to play out for training purposes, with two persons doing the playing: Black’s task would be to always find the defense that holds out longest, and complicates his opponent’s task the most. On the opponent’s smallest inaccuracy, he must not let slip the chance that comes to him.

While demonstrating the variations I have discovered, I must clearly acknowledge that I have switched from the positional theme of my earlier examples to a diametrically opposite one: training in complex calculation. On the other hand, such “inconsistency” frequently occurs in my articles: it is a shame to let a chance go by to show interesting discoveries that could prove useful to chess players, or to trainers.

### 28.Nc3-d5!

28.Na4?! Bxc4 29.Bxe5 Nb8! would have no point, as Black ends up with the better chances.

### 28...Be6xd5 29.Qd1xd5 Na6xb4!

Black has brought his problem knight into the game, and even won a pawn. But his position is still difficult.

### 30.Rb1xb4!

But not 30.Qe6+? Qf6 31.Qxf6+ Kxf6 32.Bxe5+ Kxe5 33.Rxb4 Be3!=+.

### 30...Ra8xa1+ 31.Ke1-f2

White starts attacking first, relying on the wide-open position of the enemy king and the strength of his passed d-pawn, while his own king is safely protected by the knight.



[FEN “3q4/1p6/3P2kb/3Qpp2/1RP4p/7P/4NK2/r7 b - - 0 31”]

31...Qg5? would be hopeless: 32.Qe6+ (32.Qxe5? Qd2! 33.Qe6+ Kg5) 32...Kh7 (32...Qf6 33.Qe8+ and 34.d7)

33.Rxb7+ Bg7 34.Qe7+- (or 34.Qxe5+-).

Nor would 31...Ra3? (with the threat of 32...Be3+) be any better: 32.Qe6+! Qf6 33.Qe8+ Kg5 (33...Qf7 45 d7+-; 33...Kh7 34.Rxb7+) 34.c5!?+-.

It is much more difficult to cast doubt on 31...Qa5!? 32.Qe6+ Kg5 33.d7 Bg7! (Black would like to stop the pawn by 34...Bf6).



[FEN "8/1p1P2b1/4Q3/q3ppk1/1RP4p/7P/4NK2/r7 w - - 0 34"]

1.?

34.Qb6 Bf6 35.Qxa5 Rxa5 36.Rxb7 Ra2! 37.c5 Rc2+= is not convincing. It looks like White would have to play 34.Nc3!! Qc5+ (there is no perpetual check after 34...Ra2+ 35.Nxa2 Qxa2+ 36.Ke1 Qa1+ 37.Ke2! Qa2+ 38.Kd1 Qa1+ 39.Kc2 Qa2+ 40.Rb2 Qa4+ 41.Kd2+-; while after 34...Bf6, there follows 35.Rb5! Ra2+ 36.Kf1! Ra1+ 37.Ke2+-) 35.Ke2 Qd4 36.Qd5! Bf6 (or 36...Ra8) 37.Qxd4 ed 38.Nd5, with a winning advantage in the endgame.

**31...e5-e4! 32.Qd5-e6+!**

32.Rxb7 e3+ (32...Qf6? is not as good, in view of 33.Qg8+! Bg7 34.Re7+-, or 33...Kh5 34.c5!?+-) 33.Kg2 Qg5+ 34.Kh2 is interesting.



[FEN "8/1R6/3P2kb/3Q1pq1/2P4p/4p2P/4N2K/r7 b - - 0 34"]

1...?

Black saves himself with a spectacular queen sacrifice, shown by Sofia Polgar: 34...Qf4+!! 35.Nxf4 Bxf4+ 36.Kg2

Ra2+ 37.Kf1 e2+ 38.Kf2 Bg3+ 39.Kf3 e1N+! 40.Ke3 Bf2+ 41.Kf4 Bg3+, with a perpetual check.

And if 33.Kf3 (instead of 33.Kg2), there would follow 33...Rf1+ 34.Kg2 Rf2+ 35.Kh1, and now, not 35...Rxe2? 36.Qf7+ Kg5 37.Qe7+! Qxe7 38.de+-, nor 35...Rf1+? 36.Ng1+-, but 35...Qf6! 36.d7? Rxe2 is bad for White; if 36.Ng1, then 36...Rd2 37.Qg8+ Bg7 (37...Kh5 38.c5 Rd1 is unclear as well) 38.Qe8+ Kh7 39.Qh5+ Kg8 40.c5 Qe5 41.Rb8+ Bf8 42.Qg6+ Qg7 43.Qxg7+Kxg7 unclear.

32.d7?! does not change much: 32...e3+ 33.Kg2 Qg5+ 34.Kh2 Qf4+!., with our familiar perpetual check; or 33.Kf3 Rf1+ 34.Kg2 Rf2+ 35.Kh1 Qc7!=.

### 32...Qd8-f6

Of course not 32...Kg5? 33.Rb5 Qf6 34.Qxe4+-.

### 33.Qe6-e8+ Kg6-h7

33...Kg5 34.d7 Rd1 is refuted by the spectacular 45.Rb1!!+-.

### 34.Rb4xb7+ Bh6-g7



[FEN "4Q3/1R4bk/3P1q2/5p2/2P1p2p/7P/4NK2/r7 w - - 0 35"]

1.?

### 35.Qe8-h5+!

35.d7? would be premature, considering 35...Rd1! (35...e3+?! 36.Qxe3 Qd6 is considerably weaker: 37.Qf4! Qc5+ 38.Kg2 Qc6+ 39.Qf3) 36.Qh5+ Kg8 37.Rb8+ Bf8 39.Qe8 e3+! 39.Kxe3 (39.Qxe3 Rxd7) 39...Qd6! (39...Rxd7 40.Qxd7 Qe5+ 41.Kf2+/-) 40.d8Q Rd3+ 41.Kf2 Qh2+ 42.Kf1 Qxh3+, with perpetual check.

After 35.Qe7? Qh6! 36.d7, Black has two different ways to draw:

A) 36...e3+ 37.Qxe3 Rf1+ 38.Kxf1 Qxe3 39.d8Q Qf3+ and 40...Qxb7.

B) 36...Ra2 37.d8Q Qf4+ 38.Ke1 Rxe2+! 39.Kxe2 Qf3+ 40.Kd2 Qc3+ 41.Kd1 Qf3+ 42.Kc2 Qc3+ 43.Kb1 Qa1+, perpetual check.

### 35...Kh7-g8 36.c4-c5!

A bit earlier (with the queen on e8), this move does not work because of the response 35...Qg5!, making White force the draw by 36.Rxg7+!.

### 36...Ra1-a8!

36...e3+ 37.Kg2!+-; 36...Rd1 37.c6! Rxd6 38.c7+-.

### 37.c5-c6

37.Re7?! is weaker, on account of 37...Rf8 38.Re8 Bh6!; for example, 39.Rxf8+ Kxf8 40.d7 Kg7 41.c6 Bd2!=, or 39.Kg2!? Be3!? 40.c6 Qxd6 41.Rxf8+ Kxf8 (41...Qxf8? 42.Qg6+ Kh8 43.c7+-) 42.Qxf5+ Ke8 43.Qxe4+ Qe7+=/+/-.

### 37...Ra8-f8 38.d6-d7

38.Rd7 wins too.

### 38...e4-e3+ 39.Kf2-f1

Perhaps 39.Kg1! would be more precise, so that, after 39...Qxc6 40 d8Q, Black could not give check from h2.

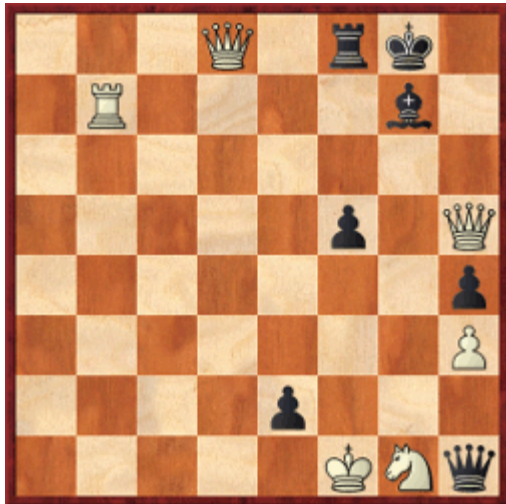
### 39...Qf6xc6

39...Qd6 40.Qf3! (or 40.Kg1!).

### 40.d7-d8Q Qc6-h1+

40...Qxb7 41.Qdxb4+-.

### 41.Ne2-g1 e3-e2+



[FEN "3Q1rk1/1R4b1/8/5p1Q/7p/7P/4p3/5KNq w - - 0 42"]

### 1.?

### 42.Qh5xe2!

Otherwise, White might even lose.

### 42...Rf8xd8 43.Rb7xg7+! Kg8xg7 44.Qe2-e7+ Kg7-g6 45.Qe7xd8+-

An exercise so beautifully suited to playing out for training is a real rarity. In order to gain the point, White has to make eighteen (!) best moves in a row – in fact, practically the only moves. And all the tasks set before him are not totally computer-like; a strong player could resolve all of them over-the-board. The difficulty is to parcel out one's thinking time reasonably (I usually allow an hour); and mostly, to maintain absolute concentration for the whole "game."





# The Instructor #165 by Mark Dvoretsky

## At the Crossroads

In a very old classic game, after all of thirty rather boring moves, an interesting position arose, which shall become the subject of our discussion.

### Fine – Shainswit

U.S. Championship, New York 1944

**1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. d4 d5 4. Nc3 dc 5. a4 Bf5 6. Ne5 Nbd7 7. Nxc4 Qc7 8. g3 e5 9. de Nxe5 10. Bf4 Nfd7 11. Bg2 Be7?!**

To cite Garry Kasparov in [My Great Predecessors, Part 2](#): “Later on, players would prefer 11...f6 12. 0-0 Rd8, or 11...Rd8 12. Qc1 f6. 11...g5!? is the fashion these days.”

**12. 0-0 Be6 13. Nxe5 Nxe5 14. a5**

14. Qc2! Rd8 (14...Qa5 15.Nb5; 14...0-0 15. Nb5 Qb8 16. Nd4) 15. Rfd1 0-0 16. Nb5 is probably stronger, as was played in the 1st game of the 1935 World Championship match between Alekhine and Euwe.

**14...a6 15. Ne4 Rd8 16. Qc2 0-0 17. Ng5 Bxg5 18. Bxg5 f6 19. Bf4 Rfe8 20. Be4 g6 21. Bd2! Bd5 22. Bc4 Be4 23. Qxe4 Qf7 24. Rad1 Rd5 25. Rxd5 cd 26. Qf4 Nc6 27. e3 Kg7 28. Rd1 Qe6?! (28...Rd8 29. g4+/-; 28...Ne5!?)**



[FEN “4r3/1p4kp/p1n1qpp1/P2p4/5Q2/2B1P1P1/1P3P1P/3R2K1 w - - 0 29”]

**1.?**

Sacrificing the rook at d5 was tempting – any self-respecting chess player would probably start by looking at it. White is guaranteed a perpetual check; but that would not be enough for him, because his position looks more promising than that. One would like to calculate the combination through to a forcing win – or at least a decisive advantage. But wouldn’t he throw away all of his remaining time in pursuit of a vanishing mirage? He quickly rejects the sacrifice, after assuring himself that it would not give White anything; it would also lead nowhere.

On the other hand, it is not a simple matter to demonstrate White’s advantage by quiet means, either. For instance, 29. e4?! would be useless, in view of 29...d4! 30. Bd4 Rd8!=. If 29. g4, then 29...Ne5 30. g5 fg 31. Qxg5 Kg8+/-.

Perhaps, this dilemma before White (to sacrifice, or not to sacrifice) has no single solution – at any rate, upon its perusal in a practical game, one may come to a conclusion both for and against. Which would **you** choose?

In those days, many considered Reuben Fine a dry sort of player, relying mainly on his superior technique (at least, you remember Romanovsky's expression: "a Fine-Flohrian style"). But here, he went ahead, and sacrificed the rook, anyway!

**29. Rd1xd5!! Qe6xd5 30. Qf4xf6+ Kg7-h6 31. Qf6-f4+!**

31. Qh4+? would be a mistake: 31...Qh5 32. Qf4+ g5.

In the game, White actually played **31. Qg7+?! Kg5?! 32. Qf6+** (32. Qxh7? Kg4!; 32. h3? Kf5!) **32...Kh6 33. Qf4+!**, and so on, according to the main variation given below (the move numbers of which, if we were to accord with the actual history, would have to be increased by two).

Black could improve on his defense by 31...Kh5! For example, 32. h3! (32. Qxh7+?! Kg4 33. Qxg6+? Kf3) 32...Ne5 33. Qxh7+ Kg5 34. f4+!? (34. Bxe5 Re5 35. f4+ Kf5 =) 34...Kf5 35. fe Qd1+ 36. Kf2 Qc2+ 37. Ke1 Qc1+ 38. Ke2 Qc2+ 39. Bd2



[FEN "4r3/1p5Q/p5p1/P3Pk2/8/4P1PP/1PqBK3/8 b - - 0 39"]

Fine reached this position in his analysis, and believed it to be winning for White – a clear exaggeration! The simplest way to maintain equality is 39...Qc4+!? 40. Ke1 Qc6. And 39...Ke6 40. Qxb7 Qc4+ 41. Ke1 Rf8 42. Qb6+ Kxe5 43. Bc3+ Kd5 44. Qb7+ Ke6 = was also possible.



[FEN "4r3/1p5p/p1n3pk/P2q4/5Q2/2B1P1P1/1P3P1P/6K1 b - - 0 31"]

Now, Black faces a most difficult choice: whether to interpose pawn or queen. In either case, his position remains difficult; but calculating either variation out to a forced loss is not possible. So you can't use the method of exclusion.



### 31...Qd5-g5

Let's look at **31...g5!?** **32. Qf6+ Kh5** **33. h3!** Here is precisely where we ought to use the exclusionary method. It is easy to refute 33...Re6? 34. Qf7+, 33...Ne5? 34. Bxe5, 33...Qe6? 34. g4+ Kh4 35. Qf3 Qd6 36. Kg2!; and, finally, 33...g4? 34. hg+ Kxg4 35. Qf4+ Kh5 36.g4+ Kh4 37. Bf6+. All that is left is **33...Re4!** The continuation might be **34. Qg7! h6** (34...Qf5? 35. f3!) **35. g4+ Rxg4+ 36. hg+ Kxg4 37. Qxh6.**



[FEN "8/1p6/p1n4Q/P2q2p1/6k1/2B1P3/1P3P2/6K1 b - - 0 37"]

### 1...?

Once again, we are following the analysis of Fine, who believed that here, White had a winning advantage. And, in fact, he has not only restored the balance of material – he has even won a pawn. 37...Ne5 is met strongly by 38. Bxe5 Qxe5 39. Qb6. And if 37...Qd1+ 38. Kh2 Qf3, then 39. Qe6+ Kh4 40. Kg1.

However, it all remains most unclear after the subtle retreat **37...Ne7!** The knight intends to move via f5 to h4 – and how is White to improve his position? On 38. Qh2 Nf5 (38...Qd1+ is weaker: 39. Kg2 Qf3+ 40. Kf1) 39. Qg2+ Qxg2+ 40. Kg2 Nh4+ 41. Kf1 Kf5 (41...Kf3 is even a possibility: 42. Bf6 Ng6 43. Bxg5 Ne5+/-) 42. Ke2 Ke4, with Nf3 and g5-g4 to follow, the draw is practically forced, for all White's pawns are fixed on the same color squares as his bishop.

### 32. Bc3-g7+ Kh6-h5 33. Qf4-f3+ Qg5-g4 34. Qf3-d5+



[FEN "4r3/1p4Bp/p1n3p1/P2Q3k/6q1/4P1P1/1P3P1P/6K1 b - - 0 34"]

### 1...?

### 34...Qg4-f5?

Here it is, the fatal error! 34...Ne5! 35. Bxe5 Qf5 36. Qd1+ Kh6 was required: after 37. Bd4, White would have two pawns for the exchange and the better chances; but would that be enough to win with?

The text leads by force to a sad outcome for Black.

### 35. Qd5-d1+ Qf5-g4

If 35...Kg5, 36. h4 mate.

### 36. f2-f3! Qg4-e6 37. g3-g4+ Kh5-g5 38. Kg1-g2

There are other ways of winning, too: 38. h4+ Kxh4 39. Kg2, or 38. e4, threatening 39. Qd2(c1)+.

### 38...Qe6xe3

On 38...h5, White mates after 39. h4+ Kxh4 40. Qh1+ Kg5 31. f4+ Kxg4 42. Qh3.

### 39. h2-h4+ Kg5xh4

If 39...Kf4, then 40. Bb6+ or 40. Qd6+.

### 40. Qd1-h1+

Black resigned (40...Kg5 41. Qh6 mate).

As we have seen, the rook sacrifice cannot be called “a winning combination.” Twice, Fine’s opponent could have deviated from the “main line” that occurred in the game, and kept a defensible position. But there, the draw still would not have been guaranteed; White could have continued the fight for victory. So Fine’s decision, from a practical point of view, seems perfectly justified to me – even though I understand that the alternate viewpoint has a right to exist.

In 1979 (and later), I used the Fine – Shainswit game a number of times in training sessions as exercises for training. My students would play white, while I played black.

The ones who were the most successful against me were Alyosha Dreev (June 14, 1983) and Sasha Chernin (November 19, 1986). They followed the same route as the American grandmaster, playing all the moves of the main variation. In those pre-computer days, I did not know where we could leave that path correctly, so I followed Fine in assuming that Black was lost in all lines.

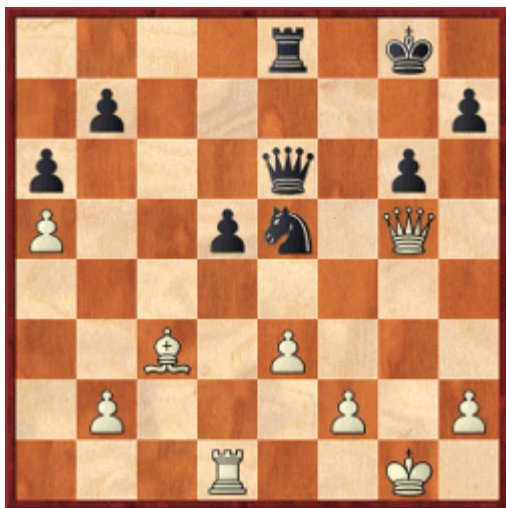
In my encounters with the other players, matters developed in wholly different ways. The battle was far from being error-free; both the youngsters and their trainer were many times not playing at their best. And nevertheless, I am going to show you those games. First of all, they show how to get a better feel for the pluses and minuses of declining the sacrifice. Secondly, they give an impression of how similar training sessions go. And lastly, some episodes are interesting in and of themselves.

Although I do acknowledge right away: the games are not all that entertaining. You will find much clearer battles for training games, together with methodical advice about this training format, in my books, [\*School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play\*](#) and *For Friends & Colleagues, Volume 2: Thoughts About The Profession*.

### Yusupov – Dvoretsky

(February 23, 1979)

29. g4 (in calculating the sacrifice, he failed to find 31. Qf4+!) 29...Ne5 30. g5 (30. h3 g5) 30...fg 31. Qxg5 Kg8



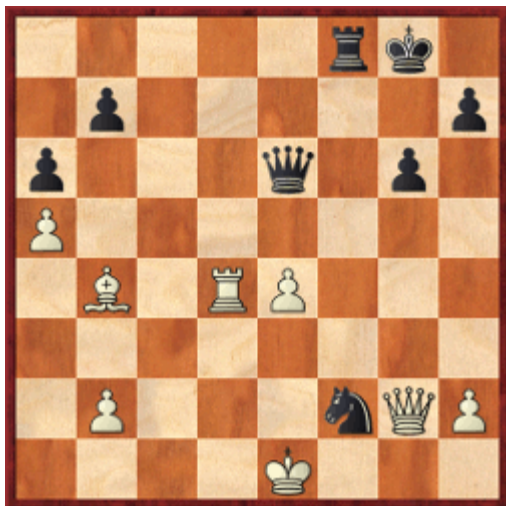
[FEN "4r1k1/1p5p/p3q1p1/P2pn1Q1/8/2B1P3/1P3P1P/3R2K1 w - - 0 32"]

After 32. Bxe5 Qxe5 33. Rxd5, 33...Qxb2 is possible; but 33...Qxg5 34. Rxc5 Re4 is safer, with 35...Rb4+/- to follow.

**32. Qg2 Rd8 33. e4?!**

Artur built his entire game on this break; but Black has a worthy riposte.

**33...d4! 34. Rxd4 Rf8 35. Kf1 (35. Rb4!? =) 35...Ng4!? 36. Ke1 Nxf2 37. Bb4**



[FEN "5rk1/1p5p/p3q1p1/P7/1B1RP3/8/1P3nQP/4K3 b - - 0 37"]

**1...?**

An interesting pawn ending arises after 37...Qe5 38. Bxf8 Qxf4 39. Qxf2 Qxf2+ 40. Kxf2 Kxf8. Which is more important – Black’s potential outside passed pawn on the kingside, or White’s advantage in space and the fact that he has extra pawn moves for the b-pawn in reserve?

It looks like “White’s trumps are better.” Here is an approximate variation: 41. Ke3 Ke7 42. e5 Ke6 43. Ke4 g5 44. Kd4 h6 45. Ke4 h5 46. b4 (the fatal zugzwang) 46...h4 47. h3+-.

Black has to choose between 37...Qb3!? 38. Bxf8 Qe3+ 39. Kf1 Qxd4 40. Qxf2 Qd1+ with a draw, and 37...Rf7!? 38. Rd8+ Kg7 39. Bc3+ Kh6 with equal chances. I decided that, since I had already gained the initiative, I would play something more active. It turned out to be not so good.

**37...Rf4? 38. Qg3! Rxe4+ 39. Kf1! (Black missed this move) 39...Qe8?**

I only considered 40. Qxf2 Qb5+ 31. Kg2 Qg5+, with a draw, overlooking White's far stronger reply. I had to play 39...Qf5! 40. Qb8+ Kg7 41. Rd7+! Kh6 42. Qf8+! Kh5 43. Qxf5+ gf 44. Rxh7+ Kg4 45. Rg7+ Kh5, with some saving chances.

Now, Black's position becomes lost – fortunately, just for a little while.

**40. Qb3+! Kg7 41. Bc3 Kh6**



[FEN "4q3/1p5p/p5pk/P7/3Rr3/1QB5/1P3n1P/5K2 w - - 0 42"]

The simple 42. Kxf2 was probably possible, too. But we were playing with a time-control of forty-five minutes for the entire game; and Artur had gotten into serious time-pressure, which explains the terrible error he made in a couple of moves.

**42. Bd2+ Kg7 43. Qxb7+?** (43. Qc3+-; 43. Bc3 Kh6 44. Kxf2+-) **43...Re7 44. Qf3** (44. Qxa6+-!?) **44...Ne4**

At this point I stood at least no worse. Within a few moves, White overstepped.

The same day I played a game with Kolya Andrianov, with the same time-control. He refused the sacrifice after only a moment's thought, according to his practical, careful nature. The first few moves were the same as I had played with Yusupov (see the first diagram from the previous game).

**Andrianov – Dvoretsky**  
(February 23, 1979)

**32.Kg2!? h6 33.Qf4 Nc6! 34.h3**



[FEN "4r1k1/1p6/p1n1q1pp/P2p4/5Q2/2B1P2P/1P3PK1/3R4 b - - 0 34"]

**34...Qe4+?**

A serious positional error – in the endgame, White gains a great advantage. The simple 34...Kh7 35. Qf3 Rd8+/- would have maintained an acceptable position.

**34. Qxe4 de 36. Rd6 Kh7 37. h4**

A pointed move. On 37...g5, White wishes to have the reply 38. h5. But the direct 37. Kg3!, bringing the king closer to the weak e4-pawn, was simpler.

**37...Re7 38. Bf6?!**

And this is a significant inaccuracy. Once again, 39. Kg3! was very strong.

**38...Rf7 39. Re6** (in order to meet 39...Nxa5? with 40. Bc3 Nc6 41. Re8 g5 42. h5) **39...h5 40. Kg3?!**

He should have “taken back a move” with 40. Bc3 Re7 41. Rf6+/-.

**40...Nxa5 41. Bc3** (41. Kf4 Nb3!) **41...Nc6 42. Re8 g5** (42...Kh6) **43. hg Ne7 44. Bf6**



[FEN "4R3/1p2nr1k/p4B2/6Pp/4p3/4P1K1/1P3P2/8 b - - 0 44"]

**44...Ng8?**

The fatal error. After 44...Nd5, I might have continued to resist; now Black’s defense collapses.

**45. Bd8! Rf3+**

With his knight on d5, Black would have played 45...h4+ 46. Kxh4 Rf2; now this does not help, because of 47. Bb6 followed by Bd4 and g5-g6+ (in either order).

**46. Kh4** (46. Kg2 Rf5 47. Rxe4+-) **46...Rxf2 47. Ba5** (47. Kxh5 or Bc7 were simpler) **47...Kg7**

Giving up the piece by 47...Rxb2 48. g6+ (or 48. Bc3 first) would hold out a little longer.

**48. Rb8!** Black resigned.

Frankly, I played that game very weakly. Fortunately, there were not that many bad training games for me.

Two days later:



## Dolmatov – Dvoretzky

(February 25, 1979)

### 29. h4

Now 30. Rxd5 is a real threat. The immediate rook sacrifice would have been refuted, since in his calculations, Dolmatov failed to see the attacking scheme involving the queen transfer via d1.

**29...Rd8** (29...Ne5 30. Kg2 Re7 was possible, too) **30. h5**

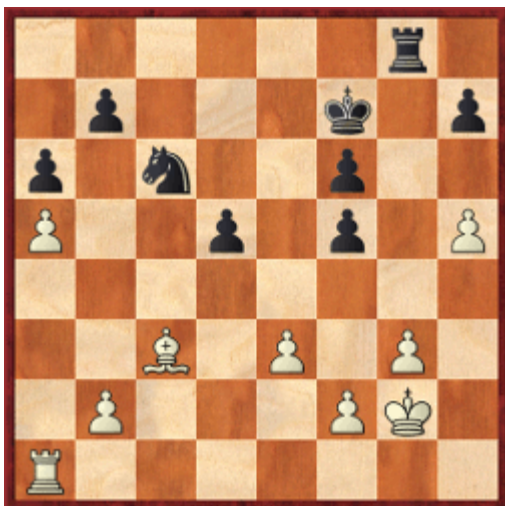


[FEN "3r4/1p4kp/p1n1qpp1/P2p3P/5Q2/2B1P1P1/1P3P2/3R2K1 b - - 0 30"]

### 30...Qf5!?

A non-standard decision, but a fairly good one. In the endgame, White finds it difficult to exploit the weakness of the doubled, isolated pawns, whereas his own h-pawn may, in certain circumstances, become an object of attack.

**31. Qxf5 gf 32. Kg2 Kf7** (Black wants to play 33...Ke6, and then perhaps Rg8-g5) **33. Ra1!?** (Sergei hopes to restrict the activity of the black pieces by bringing his rook to b3) **33...Rg8**



[FEN "6r1/1p3k1p/p1n2p2/P2p1p1P/8/2B1P1P1/1P3PK1/R7 w - - 0 34"]

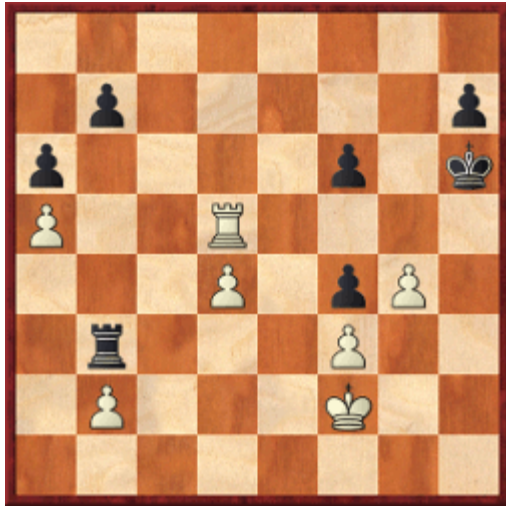
### 34. Bd4

On 34. Ra3, Black had readied 34...Na7!; so Dolmatov takes the a7-square under control. But this allows the move 34...f4!, weakening the white pawn chain (35. Ra3 fg 36. fg Ke6 37. Rb3 Rg7 =). I played more carefully.

**34...Ke6** (But not 34...Rg5?! 35. Ra3 Rxb5? 36. Rb3 Nxa5 37. Rb6 and 38. Bc3) **35. Ra3 Rg7 36. h6?!** (36. Bb6) **36...Rd7 37. Kf3 Kf7**

The h-pawn has moved too far forward, and now may be attacked by the king. Of course, the position still remains roughly equal.

**38. Rc3 Kg6 39. Kf4 Re7** (39...Nxa5?! 40. Rc8) **40. f3** (40. Rd3 = was simpler) **40...Nd8 41. g4 Ne6+ 42. Kg3 f4+ 43. Kf2 Nxd4 44. ed Kxb6 45. Rc5 Re3** (45...Rd7 46. b4 =) **46. Rxd5 Rb3**



[FEN "8/1p5p/p4p1k/P2R4/3P1pP1/1r3P2/1P3K2/8 w - - 0 47"]

On 47. Rf5?! Rb2+ 48. Ke1 Kg6 49. Rxf4 Rb6, White would experience serious difficulties, Sergei properly evaluated the position, and before all else, he made sure of his king activity.

**47. Ke2! Kg6 48. Rd7** (48. Rf5 was good, too) **48...h6 49. d5 f5 50. Rd6+ Kg5 51. gf Kxf5 52. Rxh6 Rxb2+ 53. Kd3 Rb3+ 54. Kc4 Rxf3 55. Rh7 Rf1 56. Rxb7**, and soon the players agreed to a draw.

**Alexandria – Dvoretsky**  
(September 29, 1983)

The rook sacrifice went unnoticed. An unusual oversight for Nana, since on the whole she is an outstanding tactician.

**29. h4 Rd8 30. h5 Qf5 31. h6+**

A dubious decision, for White is lessening her own prospects in the event of a queen exchange. On the other hand, she is certainly not obliged to exchange.

**31...Kf7 32. Qc7+ Qd7** (32...Rd7!?)



[FEN "3r4/1pQq1k1p/p1n2ppP/P2p4/8/2B1P1P1/1P3P2/3R2K1 w - - 0 33"]

Considering the evaluation I have given above, White ought to have played 33. Qb6!+/=, intending to continue with b2-b4-b5.

**33. Qxd7+?! Rxd7 = 34. e4?**

Poorly played – now the advantage goes over to Black.

**34...d4 35. Bd2 Re7 39. f3 g5=+/+;-/+**, and White has to defend an inferior ending.

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# Held Captive by the Computer's "Top Line"

by Mark Dvoretsky

In the fifth issue of *New in Chess* magazine for 2014, an article appeared by GM Matthew Sadler, entitled "Puzzles? Must be easy!" In it, Matthew recalls how he traveled to Moscow twice, in 1994 and 1995, in order to train with your author, and he presented two tasks he had to solve during training.

In Issue #7 of the same magazine, a letter from Bogdan Lalic appeared, disputing the solutions to both tasks. Here are those two tasks: you see if his criticism was deserved.

**Hort – Mestel**

London, 1982



[FEN "2r3k1/p1q3pp/2r1pp2/2Pp4/Q2P1P2/1R6/P5PP/4R1K1 w - - 0 25"]

1.?

White stands significantly better. Vlastimil Hort protected the f4-pawn by means of a most unexpected move: 25. Rf3 (the rook leaves the open file for a passive position). Nevertheless, by exploiting his opponent's inaccuracies, Hort soon established coordination among his pieces, and forced Jonathan Mestel's capitulation on the 33rd move.

In solving this exercise, Sadler correctly assumed that, in the event he played the natural 25. g3, he would have to consider the reply 25...e5! (which was precisely why Hort defended the pawn with his rook). Matthew found the clever combinative idea 26. Rbe3!? for White, the main line being 26...ed 27. Re7 Qb8 28. Qd1! Kh8 29. Qh5 Rg8 30. Rxg7! It's true that, in the position arising after 30...Rxg7 31. Re8+ Rg8 32. Rxb8 Rxb8 33. Qxd5 Rbc8 34. Qxd4 (34. Qf7!?) 34...Kg7, White's victory is by no means guaranteed.

GM Lalic is not convinced.

*Instead of 26. Rbe3 he [Sadler] does not even mention 26. fe fe 27. Rxe5 Rxc5? (otherwise Black is a pawn down with a completely lost position), when 28. Re8+ Kf7 29. Rf3+ Kg6 30. Re6+ wins at once for White.*

Generally speaking, before you write letters to the editor, it would be a good thing to check one's conclusions carefully first – otherwise, one might easily "stub one's toe" before the whole readership. In the present case, performing due diligence turns out to be a simple matter of opening my book, which Sadler depended on for the text of his article. But let us suppose that he did not have this book to hand – in that case, he would have to rely upon his good sense. Wouldn't it be strange if Hort, one of the leading players of the period, were to reject a variation that won a pawn, and instead made a passive move? The trainer, seeing this game, approves of the grandmaster's decision, and includes the

game in his notebook of exercises, and thence into his book. Sadler, a talented young grandmaster, also fails to capture the pawn, instead beginning a complex combination. Could all of us have been stricken with chess blindness, and not one of us noticed, after 27...Rxc5?, the winning check on e8?

Of course not! In fact, both Hort, in the actual game, and Sadler, in his training, dealt quite well with the task set before them (although it is true that they found completely different solutions). But GM Lalic did not solve the task, despite having computer assistance – or, more exactly, precisely because he "had computer assistance." A computer will confidently move the pawn capture up to Line Number One, promising that White will obtain a great advantage. However, we should certainly not always take computer moves and evaluations as the absolute truth: sometimes it makes sense to think for yourself.

After **26. fe fe 27. Rxe5**, Hort (and Sadler) feared the reply **27...Rf8!**



[FEN "5rk1/p1q3pp/2r5/2PpR3/Q2P4/1R4P1/P6P/6K1 w - - 0 28"]

**1.?**

Now, indeed, Black wants to continue with 28...Rxc5. But his main threat is to triple his heavy pieces on the f-file. In a practical game, with limited thinking time, it is not at all clear whether White will be able to neutralize the pressure against his king position, weakened by the move g2-g3.

The point of the exercise was precisely to guess Black's idea of a positional pawn sacrifice for the initiative. Of course, this does not mean that one should automatically decline an offer of material. There are certain players, of course, who love and know how to defend themselves, and do not believe in the strength of Black's attack, and will look for a means of securing their king, in the hope that they can later go on to realize the extra pawn. There is such a way (although it's far from obvious): White must solidly secure his 2nd rank; and as for the 1st rank, he must only defend against the Black queen's invasion at f1.

**28. Qb5! Qf7 29. Qe2 Rf6 30. Rb2 Qg6 31. Kg2** (but not 31. Qg2? Qd3!) **31...h5** (31...h6 is also worth looking into.)



[FEN "5rk1/p5p1/5rq1/2PpR2p/3P4/6P1/PR2Q1KP/8 w - - 0 32"]

This whole variation was shown in the book I wrote many years ago - when analytical programs were still weak, and I didn't make use of them. Black does not fear 32. Qxh5 Qd3, with counterplay; he intends to play 33...h4 himself. Of course, he is a pawn down, and has no direct threats; but the outcome is not at all clear, because White has no clear means of improving his position. Curiously, the computer, which at first evaluates White's position as definitely winning, on further analysis begins gradually to reduce its certainty. On its first line, it shows the move 32. Rb7; but in the line 32...h4 33. Re7 (best) 33...Rf2+ 34. Qxf2 Rxf2+ 35. Kxf2 Kh8!?, White will find it is not easy to avoid perpetual check or the loss of valuable pawns. Success for White is also a problem after 32. h4 Rf3 33. Rg5 (33. Qxf3 Rxf3 34. Kxf3 Qd3+ 35. Kg2 Qxd4+/-) 33...Rf2+ 34. Qxf2 Qe4+ 35. Kh2 Rxf2+ 36. Rxf2 Qxd4.

Let me summarize: Examining the situation through the eyes of a practical player, it's not at all clear that taking the pawn is stronger than the method chosen, both by Hort and by Sadler. But even if it's stronger, one should only play that way after first examining the dangers facing the White king, and finding a concrete way to neutralize Black's attack.

Let's move on to the next position.

**Knaak – Geller**

Moscow, 1982



[FEN "2r2nk1/pp2r1pn/lq2bp2/3p3P/3P4/2NB1PQ1/PP2NK2/1R5R w - - 0 22"]

In the game, White played **22. Bc2!** However, chess engines give this move only as 4th best for White, writes Lalic. As a general rule, one need not be a grandmaster in order to make such a statement. This way, some amateurs like to criticize the games of stronger players without getting into the crux of the problem, but merely by looking at the monitor; and

then they're amazed, or sometimes even incensed, that the decisions taken in the actual game do not coincide with the sacred "first line."

Digressing for a bit, let me say that finding high-quality positional exercises is considerably tougher than finding tactical ones. Combinations, if they are correct, most often lead to clear, indisputable conclusions. Whereas the benefits of a successful positional operation are not nearly so obvious (to the computer, at any rate) – they don't show up right away; therefore, the usefulness of such operations is more easily placed in doubt.

In making a move, we depend upon definite evaluative considerations. But there are various factors active in any position, not just those which we pay attention to; so sometimes, another way of treating the position is also possible. It is also logical, in its own way (as, for example, in the game we just looked at). The advantages of one approach over the others could be very hard to see; or sometimes, different approaches are, objectively, roughly equivalent.

However, if a choice must be made between exact logic, not refuted by concrete tactical variations; and the recommendations of a computer, whose point isn't obvious even to an experienced player, then preference should be always be given (whether in books, in articles, or during the training process) to the "human" solution. Because reproducing a computer's logic (I even doubt that I can use the word "logic" here) in a tournament game would not be possible, while learning from a human's solutions is something you can, and must, do.

In moving his bishop to c2, GM Rainer Knaak found a well-honed plan to improve his position. He plans to play 23. Bb3, not merely to increase pressure against d5, but also to free his rook from protecting the b2-pawn. From b1, the rook will go to d1, covering the pawn at d4, which will allow his knight to jump to f4, bringing still another piece to bear on d5. White's following moves become completely clear, while it becomes very difficult to point to an effective counter-plan for his opponent.

Geller's reaction, **22...Bf7 23. Bb3 Rce8**, is approved by the computer ("the top line" – although, for some reason, it prefers him to make these moves in reverse order), as well as his next move: **24. Rbd1 Ng5**



[FEN "4rnk1/pp2rbp1/1q3p2/3p2nP/3P4/1BN2PQ1/PP2NK2/3R3R w - - 0 25"]

But after **25. Nf4**, its evaluation of White's advantage, quite modest at first, grows suddenly enormous – the number becomes much larger than it had been on the upper lines of the starting position. Which means that we may consider the computer's response to Knaak's plan as a strong one.

But what step did it consider as stronger, then? Well, it strongly recommends (both on move 22, and later) moving the pawn to h6. But what has White achieved after 22. h6 g5? Looks dubious to me.



[FEN "2r2nk1/pp2r2n/1q2bp1P/3p2p1/3P4/2NB1PQ1/PP2NK2/1R5R w - - 0 23"]

At this point, White is not too well prepared for sharp play with f3-f4. To my surprise, it now brings up the strange queenside foray, 23. Nb5, to the first line. As the Americans would say, "Come on!" Let Lalic teach his students to make such moves - would certainly never play such a move; nor do I intend to. By the way, while I;m writing these lines, the computer's evaluation of this approaching position has gone down in relation to the starting position, although it's remained in White's favor.

I note that, in Sadler's position, I would probably have talked about the positions he produced in a bit more detail, anyway. In the first case, I would have pointed out the reason for declining to take the pawn on e5; in the second, I would have explained White's plan; perhaps I would have presented a few of the moves that were actually played in the game. Then Lalic – as well as other students – would have had fewer questions. On the other hand, Matthew wasn't writing an analytical work, but a review of recently published books; and he probably considered in-depth analysis of positions a distraction from his basic theme.

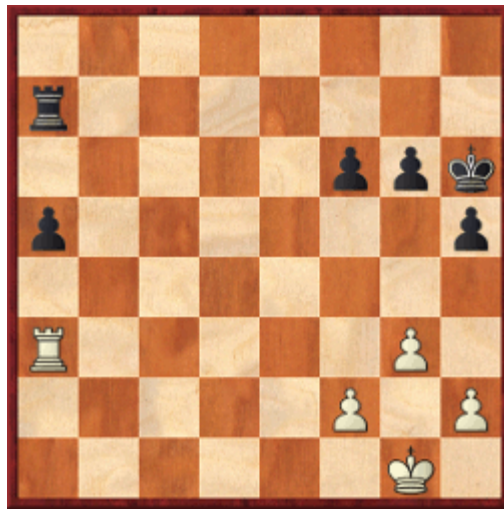
I hope my readers won't take what I've said as an underestimation of the role the computer plays in the training process, or a principled unbelief in its recommendations. Like they say: "Believe it – but test it!" Analytical programs continually catch our mistakes – in the majority of cases real, not imaginary – uncover hidden resources, which would just not enter our heads. I value computer discoveries highly, when they are either unexpectedly pretty, or instructive, or help us to better understand the ideas of the position (and I value them especially highly when both of these factors occur simultaneously). At the same time, usually I pay no attention to moves and evaluations that don't contain an interesting idea, since I don't see how they could be useful.

To make what I've said clearer, let me acquaint my readers with one more example – a classic endgame, which I have commented upon in my "Endgame Handbook." Not too long ago, its evaluation was significantly modified, with the help of a computer.

### **Botvinnik – Borisenko**

USSR Championship, Moscow 1955





[FEN "8/r7/5ppk/p6p/8/R5P1/5P1P/6K1 w - - 0 45"]

**1.?**

First of all, I will bring my readers up to speed, by skipping over many of the analytical details.

**45. Ra4!**

It is important to blockade the pawn as far back as possible.

**45...Kg5?!**

It would have made sense to set his king on the path to the queenside by means of the g7-square. The point is that the best – and sometimes the only – defensive chance in such situations (with the White rook passively placed in front of the enemy pawn) is counterplay on the king-side, aiming to create a passed pawn, or else weaknesses in the enemy camp. The text move makes creating such counterplay easier for White.

**46. f3! Kf5 47. g4+! hg?! 48. fg+ Ke5**

Nor would 48...Kg5!? 49. Kg2 Kh4 win. White would not continue 50. Kg1? Kh3 51. Kh1 Re7 (51...f5 52. gf gf 53. Kg1 f4 54. Kf2 =) 52. Ra3+ Kxg4 55. Rxa5 (suggested by Kopayev, as well as Levenfish and Smyslov) 55...Kf3!-+, but 50. h3 (Botvinnik) 50...g5 51. Kh2 Rb7 52. Rxa5 Rb2+ 53. Kg1 Kxh3 54. Ra6 Kxg4 55. Rxf6 Kg3 56. Rf1!= (Marin).

**49. h4 Kd5 50. h5 gh 51. gh**

The goal is achieved – White has created a passed pawn. There is no longer a win – for example, 51...Kc5 52. h6 Kb5 53. Rh4 Rh7 54. Rh5+ Kb4 55. Rh4+ Kb3 56. Rh3+ Kb2 57. Rh4=.

**51...Ke6 52. h6 Kf7 53. Rg4! Kf8 54. Rf4 Ra6 55. Rg4 Ra7 56. Rf4 Kg8 57. Rf6 a4 58. Rf2 Kh7 59. Ra2 Kxh6 60. Kf2 Kg5 61. Ke3 Draw.**

Now, let's see how the game might have gone after 45...Kg7!



[FEN "8/r5k1/5pp1/p6p/R7/6P1/5P1P/6K1 w - - 0 46"]

1.?

In all the theoretical guides, Black's position is evaluated as winning. I shall reproduce the authors' analysis here.

46. f3 Kh7 47. g4 h4-+.

46. Kf1 Kf7 47. Ke2 Ke6 48. Kd3 Kd5 49. Kc3 Kc5 50. Kb2 Kb5 51. Re4 a4+ 52. Ka3 Ra6 53. h4 Kc5 54. Re2 Kd4 55. Re3 g5-+ (Marin). In this variation, White tried to make use of another typical defensive method: transferring the king to the queenside, so as to free up the rook from the necessity of holding up the passed pawn. As so often happens, the aforementioned plan proves insufficient to save the game: his opponent switches to a kingside attack, where he suddenly has an advantage in forces: an "extra king."

46. h4 Kf7 47. Kf1 Ke6 48. Ke2 Kd6 49. Kd3 (49. g4 hg 50. Rxc4 a4 51. Rxc6 a3 52. Rg1 a2 53. Ra1 Ke5 54. Kf3 Ra4-+) 49...f5! (49...Kc6? would be mistaken: 50. g4 Rd7+ 51. Kc3 Rd5 52. Rf4 f5 53. gh gh 54. Kc4=) 50. f3 Kc5 51. g4 Kb5 52. Rd4 a4 53. Kc2 a3 54. Kb1 Ra4! 55. Rd6 hg 56. Rxc6 gf-+ (Kopayev).

46. Kg2 Kf7 47. Kf3 Ke6 48. h4 (48. g4 h4 49. g5 fg 50. Kg4 Kf6 51. h3 Ra8-+) 48...f5 49. Kf4 Kd5 50. Kg5 Ra6 51. f3 Kc5 52. g4 fg 53. fg hg 54. Kg4 Kb5 55. Ra1 a4-+ (Levenfish, Smyslov).

The conclusion, that 45...Kg7 would win, was refuted by Vardan Pogosyan, who found an improvement for the defense in Levenfish and Smyslov's variation.



[FEN "8/r7/4kpp1/p6p/R7/5KP1/5P1P/8 w - - 0 48"]

1.?

After 48. g4! h4, instead of the pawn sacrifice 49. g5?, White should play simply 49. Kf4! Then 49...g5+ would pose no danger for him: 50. Ke4 (intending 51. f4), and 50...Rb7 51. Rxa5 Rb4+ 52. Kf3 Rf4+ 53. Kg2 Rxg4+ 54. Kf3 leads to the drawn "two pawns vs. three on the same wing" endgame. And in the case of 49...Kd5 50. g5 f5 51. Ke3, the h4-pawn loses its support, and becomes a target: 51...Kc5 52. Kd2 h3 53. Ra3 a4 54. Kc1 Kb4 55. Rxh3 a3 56. Kb1=.

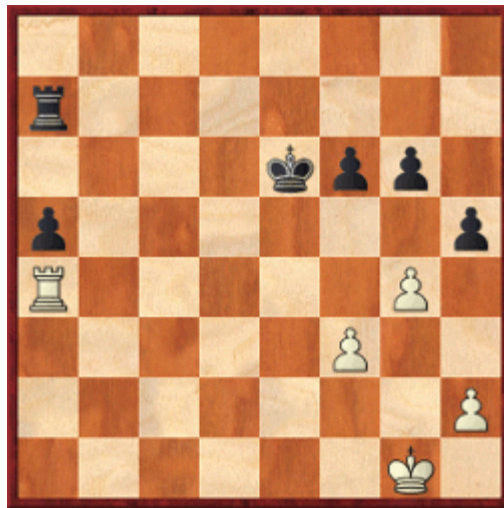
I like Pogosyan's discovery (undoubtedly, found with the aid of a computer) very much. First of all, it alters the evaluation of the starting position; which is not unimportant, even from the psychological point of view. Not long ago, a strong grandmaster, whom I introduced to this endgame, acknowledged that before this, he had considered all such endgames with a passive rook in front of the passed pawn to be hopeless, not suspecting that they held some sort of counter-chance.

And secondly: the path to the draw seems to be absolutely the only one; and the uniqueness of the solution is one of the significant criteria of beauty in chess.

But the main thing is that the plan offered by the Armenian analyst is very logical, and illustrates excellently the most important ideas in the position. Kingside counterplay here is combined with the blockade of the passed pawn by the king; and this once again underscores the importance of White's 45th move (if the Black pawn were on a4, White could never achieve the draw).

And now, let us return to the situation arising in the game after White's 47th move. In my "Endgame Handbook", I restricted myself to short comments.

*Trading pawns eases White's task. As later analyses showed, with 47...Ke6!, Black would still keep winning chances.*



[FEN "8/r7/4kpp1/p6p/R5P1/5P2/7P/6K1 w - - 0 48"]

After the natural moves 48. gh gh 49. Kf2 Kd6 50. Ke3, White intends to take one more step with his king toward the queenside, and then attack the h-pawn with his rook; but the response 50...Re7+!, then, is unpleasant. Now 51. Kf4? loses to 51...Re5 52. Rc4 Rc5; White has to play 51. Kd3 Re5 52. Rf4. Here, the logic we understand ceases, to be replaced by "computer-ese"!

After 52...Rd5+! (Black gets nothing out of 52...f5 53. Rh4 Kd5 54. Rxh5 f4 55. Rh4 Re3+ 56. Kd2 Rxf3 57. Rh5+ and 58. Rxa5), for some reason. White cannot continue moving the king to the queenside. According to the computer, 53. Kc3? Ke6 54. Ra4 Rf5 55. Kd3 Kd6! leads to a loss for White (all those back-and-forth maneuvers, by *both* sides, are strange, no?). He has to play 53. Ke3, and now 53...Ke6 is no longer so strong as it was when the king stood on c3. On 53...Kc5 54. Rxf6 a4 White is saved – although it's not so simple to show it. For instance, 55. Ra6? Kb4 loses: White has to play 55. Ke4! And finally, in reply to 53...f5, according to Averbakh, commenting in his monograph, the straightforward 54. Rh4 Kc5 is hopeless. However, Pogosyan showed that White could still save himself, by 54. Rc4!, and only after 54...Rb5, play 55. Rh4.



In preparing the new edition of "Endgame Handbook," understandably, it would have been wrong to ignore the conclusions drawn by a computer. But I also didn't feel it would be right to confuse the minds of my readers with complex variations and boring analyses not based upon clear and instructive logic. So I simply edited my previous commentary, without adding a single move:

*The pawn exchange eases White's task. In playing 47...Ke6!, Black had to set before his opponent considerably tougher problems. But nevertheless, as further analysis shows, objectively the position remains drawn.*

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# Exchange at f6: A Standard Structure

by Mark Dvoretsky

In a lot of openings we get a standard structure with Black pawns at e6, f7, g7, and h7, and the knight at f6. Sometimes, White is able to carry out a trade of minor pieces such that his opponent must recapture with his g-pawn, creating a weakness in his camp.

Most often, these weaknesses can be exploited; but it also happens, conversely, that Black can whip up dangerous counterplay along the opened g-file - as, for example, in the following.

**Peterson - Skuja**  
Riga, 1950



[FEN "r3kbr1/pp1b1p1p/2p1pp2/3P4/2Q1Pq2/5N2/PP2NPPP/R3RK2 b q - 0 1"]

**1...?**

The rather simple tactical stroke **1...Qxf3!!** forced an immediate capitulation, since after 2.gf ed (with the threat of 3...Bh3#), White would be a piece down.

**Nimzowitsch - Fleiss**  
Zurich, 1906



[FEN "2kr4/ppp2p1p/2b1ppr1/8/2PN4/6Pq/P1P1BP1P/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 16"]

## 1.?

Here too, Black's attack looks frightening. On 1.Bf3? both 1...Rxd4 and 1...Rh6 win. And if 1.f3?, then 1...Rxd3+ 2.hg Qxd3+ 3.Kh1 Qh4+ 4.Kg2 Rg8#. But Aron Nimzowitsch beat his opponent to the punch: by sacrificing his queen, he mated the black king first.

**1.Nxc6! Rxd1 2.Rfxd1 bc 3.c5!+-** (with the terrible threats 4.Ba6+ and 4.Rab1).

That was just a little stretch, before it's time to get into something more serious. A selection of a few games, offered for your consideration, of course will not give you a complete, exhaustive impression of this structure we are talking about. I have a more modest goal here: to show a few typical examples and offer you the chance to train yourselves to resolve the tasks that arise. These are among the most varied forms they can take, and not all with the same theme.

Let's begin with a couple of classic games.

### **Spassky - Avtonomov** Leningrad Junior Championship, 1949

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dc 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 c5 5.Bxc4 e6 6.0-0 a6 7.Qe2 b5 8.Bb3 Nc6?!**

Afterwards, 8...Bb7 became the main line.

**9.Nc3 cd?!**

An expert on the Queen's Gambit Accepted, Sergei Rublevsky, prefers 9...Na5.

**10.Rd1 Bb7**

The game Ubilava - Dokhoian, Sevastopol 1986, continued 10...d3 11.Rxd3 Qc7 12.e4 Be7 13.Nd5!+/-.

**11.ed Nb4?**

11...Na5 (hoping for 12.Bc2 Be7, with an acceptable game), was preferable; but after 12.d5! Nxb3 13.de Black's position remains difficult. On the other hand, after the move he actually made, things get much worse.



[FEN "r2qkb1r/1b3ppp/p3pn2/1p6/1n1P4/1BN2N2/PP2QPPP/R1BR2K1 w kq - 0 12"]

## 1.?

**12.d4-d5!**

White opens up lines, to exploit his lead in development.

## 12...Nb4xd5

12...Nfxd5 13.a3+-.

## 13.Bc1-g5! Bf8-e7 14.Bg5xf6 g7xf6

Black would lose a piece after 14...Bxf6 15.Nxd5.

## 15.Nc3xd5 Bb7xd5 16.Bb3xd5 e6xd5 17.Nf3-d4

White has a strategically won position. On 17...0-0 either 18.Nf5 or 18.Nc6 decides. And if 17...Qd7, then 18.Re1 Kf8 19.Qh5 h6 20.Nf5, etc.

**17...Kf8 18.Nf5 h5** (18...Ra7 19.Qe3, threatens both 20.Qxa7 and 20.Qh6+) **19.Rxd5! Qxd5 20.Qxe7+ Kg8 21.Qxf6** and Black resigned.

In this short game, White first played d4-d5! - the typical "isolani" thrust - and then forced Black to recapture on f6 with the pawn. It generally happens that this occurs in reverse order. Note that the thrust d4-d5! occurs in practically all the following examples. So it may be considered a standard method for this structure.

### Smyslov - Stahlberg Candidates' Tournament, Switzerland 1953

## 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 de 5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 Bxf6 7.Nf3 Nd7 8.Bc4 0-0 9.Qe2 Nb6?!

The beginning of an unfortunate plan. Later, different, safer plans were experimented with. For instance, the game Fischer - Pachman, Leipzig Olympiad, continued 9...c6 10.0-0 b6 11.Rad1 Qc7 12.Nxf6+ Nxf6 13.Qe5 Qe7 14.c3 Bb7 15.Rfe1 Rfd8, with approximate equality. But the most popular move turned out to be 9...a6!? with the idea 10...b5 and 11...Bb7.

## 10.Bb3 Bd7 11.0-0



[FEN "r2q1rk1/pppb1ppp/1n2pb2/8/3PN3/1B3N2/PPP1QPPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 11"]

## 11...Qe7

Three years before, in the first Candidates' tournament in history, at Budapest 1950, a game between the same two players continued 11...Ba4 12.Nxf6+ gf 13.c4 Bxb3 14.ab c6 15.Qe3 Kh8 16.Nd2 Rg8 17.Ne4+/-.

Gideon Stahlberg didn't want to play the more natural 12...Qxf6, probably because of 13.Bxa4 Nxa4 14.Qc4, winning a pawn (this same variation was the one pointed out by Vassily Smyslov in his notes).



[FEN "r4rk1/ppp2ppp/4pq2/8/n1QP4/5N2/PPP2PPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 14"]

In my opinion, this was the continuation Black should have tried: after 14...Nb6 15.Qxc7 Rac8 16.Qxb7 Rxc2 17.Qxa7 Nd5, Black would have had counterplay, which would have gone a long way toward compensating him for his loss of material.

Referring to still another practical game, there is Spassky - Czerniak, Goteborg 1972: 11...Bc6 12.Nxf6+ gf 13.Rad1+/-.

**12.Rfe1 Rad8 13.Rad1 Ba4 14.Bxa4 Nxa4 15.Qb5**

Now Black no longer fears 15.Nxf6+ Qxf6 16.Qc4? Nxb2, attacking both queen and rook.

**15...Nb6 16.c4 c6 17.Qb3 Qc7?!**

*17...Rd7 would have been more careful - although in that event also, White would have had a space advantage, and might continue 18.a4, increasing his pressure (Smyslov).*

**18.Nxf6+ gf**



[FEN "3r1rk1/ppq2p1p/1np1pp2/8/2PP4/1Q3N2/PP3PPP/3RR1K1 w - - 0 19"]

**1.?**

The future world champion puts together an attack on his opponent's weakened kingside in exemplary fashion.

### 19.Qb3-e3!

Threatens 20.Qh6. If 19...Nxc4 20.Qh6 Qe7 White would continue, not with 21.Re4 f5 22.Ng5 f6 23.Rxe6 Qg7 24.Qxg7+ Kxg7 25.Re7+ Kg8, nor with 21.Nh4 Rd5 22.Rd3 Rg5 (Dvoretsky), but with the immediate 21.Rd3! Kh8 (21...Rd5 22.Ne5 Nxe5 23.Rxe5+-; 21...Nd6 22.Nh4! Kh8 23.Rh3+-) 22.Nh4! Rd5 23.Nf5! Rxf5 24.Rh3+- (Smyslov's variation).

Another variation which the grandmaster indicated is 19...Kh8 20.Qh6 Nd7 (20...Qe7 21.Nh4 followed by Nf5) 21.d5! cd (21...ed? 22.Re7! Qd6 23.Ng5!+- or 22...Rde8 23.Rd4!+-) 22.cd e5 23.Nh4 Rg8 24.Qh5, when 24...Nb6? is bad, because of 25.Qf3.

### 19....Kg8-g7 20.Nf3-e5!

Threatening 21.Qg3+, as well as 21.Ng4.

*A beautiful move, captivating by its simplicity. There is no other path to g4, except through e5 - so his knight runs directly upon the sword! What could be simpler! The whole point is that taking the knight would open the way for the queen and rook to begin their mating attack (Bronstein).*

The knight cannot be taken: 20...fe 21.Qg5+ Kh8 22.Qf6+ Kg8 23.Rd3 Rfe8 24.Qh6! (the computer gives the more decisive 24.Rh3!) 24...ed (24...Kh8 25.Rg3+-; 24...e4 25.Rg3 Qxg3 26.hg f5 would hold out longer - but this position too is of course hopeless) 25.f4! Kh8 26.Rg3+-.

### 20...Qc7-e7 21.Ne5-g4

Let's examine 21...Kh8.



[FEN "3r1r1k/pp2qp1p/1np1pp2/8/2PP2N1/4Q3/PP3PPP/3RR1K1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

Smyslov offers the standard line-opening 22.d5!:

22...Nxc4 23.Qh6 Rg8 24.Nxf6 Rg7 25.Re4+- followed by 26.Rh4;

22...cd 23.Qh6 Nd7 24.Rxd5 Rg8 25.Rxd7 Rxd7 26.Nxf6 Rg7 27.Nxd7 and White emerges with a healthy extra pawn;

22...f5 23.Qd4+ f6 24.Rxe6! Qxe6 25.de Rxd4 26.Rxd4 Re8! 27.Nh6 Rxe6 28.Kf1 - here too, White has a great advantage: Black cannot avoid the loss of a pawn.

### 21...Rf8-g8 22.Ng4-h6



In view of the threat 23.Nf5+, Black loses the exchange. The rest is simple.

**22...Qc7 23.Nxg8 Rxc8 24.b3 Kh8 25.Qh6 Rg6 26.Qh4 Nd7 27.Re3 Qa5 28.Rh3 Nf8 29.Rg3 Qxa2 30.Rxc6 Nxc6 31.Qxf6+ Kg8 32.Qf3 Qc2 33.Qd3** and Black resigned.

Let us consider another example of a successful attack, based on the damage to the opponent's pawn structure.

### Romanishin - Savon

Yerevan, 1976

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d5 6.Nf3 dc 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Re1 Rb8 (8...Nd5!? 9.Qc2 Be7!; 8...Bd6!? 9.e4 e5) 9.a3 Bxc3 (9...Be7!? 10.e4 b5; 9...Ba5!?) 10.bc Na5 11.Rb1 b6 12.e4 Bb7? (12...h6!)**



[FEN "1r1q1rk1/pbp2ppp/1p2pn2/n7/2pPP3/P1P2NP1/5BP/1RBQR1K1 w - - 0 13"]

**1.?**

Oleg Romanishin found an outstanding method of weakening the opposing king's pawn cover.

**13.Bc1-g5! h7-h6 14.Bg5-h4!**

15.e5 is threatened. And on 14...g5 15.Nxg5 hg 16.Bxg5 with a killing pin: Black's lack of a dark-squared bishop really makes itself felt.

**14...Qd8-e8 15.Bh4xf6 g7xf6 16.Nf3-d2 Kg8-h7 17.Bg2-f1**

White is playing across the whole board. Attacking the c4-pawn, he hopes to draw the Black bishop off the long diagonal. But Black still should have played 17...Ba6.

**17...b6-b5?**

The black queen is tied, for the moment, to the defense of his pawn on b5 - which allows the white queen to carry out a successful diversion on the kingside.

**18.Qd1-f3! f6-f5 19.Qf3-f4 Na5-b3 20.Nd2xb3 c4xb3 21.Bf1-d3**

Stronger than 21.ef Qc6.

**21....f5xe4 22.Bd3xe4+ Bb7xe4 23.Re1xe4+-**

A number of pawn weaknesses have appeared in the black camp, which White easily exploits.

**23...Qe7 24.Re5 Rg8 25.Rc5 c6 26.Rxb3 Rbc8 27.Qe4+ Rg6 28.Rxc6 Rxc6 29.Qxc6 e5 30.Qxb5 Rb6 31.Qc4 ed 32.Rxb6 ab 33.cd Qe1+ 34.Kg2** and Black resigned.

I have analyzed the encounter that follows, starting from the commentaries of Alexey Dreev, from his book of selected games.

**Dreev - Chekhov**  
Protvino 1988

**1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 dc 4.e3 e6 5.Bxc4 a6 6.0-0 c5 7.Bd3 cd 8.ed Nc6 (8...Be7) 9.Nc3 Be7 10.Bg5 0-0 11.Rc1**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/1p2bppp/p1n1pn2/6B1/3P4/2NB1N2/PP3PPP/2RQ1RK1 b - - 0 11"]

**11....b7-b6**

*Judging from my opponent's lengthy thinking time here, this was clearly not the product of home analysis.*

*In a considerably later game (Dreev - Karjakin, Dos Hermanas 2003), Sergey Karjakin equalized the game without much effort by 11...Nd5 12.h4 (or the principled 12.Nxd5 Bxg5 13.Nxg5 Qxg5 14.Nb6 Rb8 15.Qc2) 12...h6 13.Bxe7 Ncxe7=.*

**12.Bg5xf6**

*Here, playing normally, without exchanges, by 12. Qd2!? and Rfd1 was worth considering. But I went in for a more forcing line.*

**12...Be7xf6 13.Nc3-e4**

*At first, I thought that 13.Be4 would give me the advantage: 13...Bb7 14.d5 ed 15.Nxd5*





[FEN "r2q1rk1/1b3ppp/ppn2b2/3N4/4B3/5N2/PP3PPP/2RQ1RK1 b - - 0 15"]

**1...?**

(Evaluate 15...Bxb2.)

*15...Bxb2 16.Rb1. But rather than capturing on b2, Black plays 15...Rc8, and he can hold this position: 16.Nxf6+ Qxf6 17.Qd7 Ba8. As before, White is the more active; but one cannot see what he can extract out of it.*

I would agree with his assessment of 15...Rc8 but here, taking the pawn is inaccurately evaluated. After 15...Bxb2! 16.Rb1 Black would have an excellent in-between move: 16...f5!. The simplest answer to 17.Bc2 would be 17...Na5 - when Black's chances would be not one bit worse. The knight could very well go back to a different square: 17...Nd4 18.Nxd4 Bxd4 19.Qxd4 Bxd5 20.Rfd1 Rc8 unclear.

### 13...Bc8-b7

*Black cannot capture on d4: 13...Nxd4 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 15.Nxd4 Qxd4 16.Bxh7+. And if 13...Bd7, then 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 15.Be4 Rac8 16.Qd3*



[FEN "2r2rk1/3b1ppp/ppn1pq2/8/3PB3/3Q1N2/PP3PPP/2R2RK1 b - - 0 16"]

*16...Nb4 17.Qb3, and after the unavoidable a2-a3, Black would lose his b-pawn. But, instead of the inadvisable knight sortie, he would have 16...Qh6!? unclear, with the idea 17...f5 (and the a6-pawn would be untouchable: 17.Qxa6? Nb8).*

### 14.Ne4xf6+ g7xf6

*He should have recaptured with the queen: 14...Qxf6 15.Be4 Rac8 16.Ne5 Nxe5 17.Bxb7 Rxc1 18.Qxc1, and after Black's best reply 18...Ng6 one may only talk about a small advantage to White.*

**15.Bd3-e4 Ra8-c8 16.Rc1-c3 f6-f5**

Obviously, Black set great store by this move, underestimating his opponent's reply.

**17.Nf3-g5!**



[FEN "2rq1rk1/1b3p1p/ppn1p3/5pN1/3PB3/2R5/PP3PPP/3Q1RK1 b - - 0 17"]

**1...?**

17...Qxg5 would be met by 18.Bxc6 (not the immediate 18.Rg3 Qxg3 and 19...fe) 18...Qe7 (18...Rxc6 19.Rg3+-) 19.d5!. Black would have to take on c6, and White would get a powerful passed pawn.

*17...h6 is bad, in view of 18.Bxc6 Rxc6 (taking with the bishop runs into the same thing) 19.Qh5, and now either 19...hg 20.Rh3, or 19...Rxc3 20.Qxh6 mates.*

Dreev's analysis overlooked the defense 19...Qf6! allowing Black to avoid mate. (Note that the same queen move would allow Black to defend himself also on 18...Bxc6!? 19.Qh5.)



[FEN "5rk1/1b3p2/ppr1pq1p/5pNQ/3P4/2R5/PP3PPP/5RK1 w - - 0 20"]

After 20.Rg3 Kh8, White gets nothing out of 21.Nf3 Rg8 22.Ne5 Rc7. Dangerous is 21.Nxf7+!? Rxf7 22.Rg6 Qe7 23.d5!. Black couldn't take on d5; he would have to retreat the rook to d6 or c8, and White would get three pawns for the piece. Here's an approximate variation: 23...Rd6 24.de Rg7 25.Rxh6+ Rh7 26.Re1 (or 26.Qf7 Qxf7 27.ef Rd8 28.Re1 Be4!) 26...Rxh6 27.Qxh6+ Kg8 28.h4.

In these complications, Black's position looks shaky. But it would still have been better for him to go in for a sharp struggle with an uncertain outcome (the computer judges the position to be roughly equal). He should not take with the queen on g5, granting his opponent a sizable positional advantage without any sort of counterplay.

**17...Qd8xg5? 18.Be4xc6 Qg5-e7 19.d4-d5! Bb7xc6**

And if 19...Rfd8, then either 20.Qh5+/- (Dreev), or, stronger still, 20.Qd4!+/-, threatening not just the rook check on g3, but also capturing the pawn at b6.

**20.d5xc6 Rf8-d8**



[FEN "2rr2k1/4qp1p/ppP1p3/5p2/8/2R5/PP3PPP/3Q1RK1 w - - 0 21"]

**21.Qd1-e2**

*Not a very good move. Mark Dvoretsky's suggested 21.Qc1! was correct, the idea being to trade one pair of rooks after Rd1. Now Black prevents that idea. In his turn, he would very much like to exchange queens.*

In many cases, making the right decision is helped by some evaluating considerations, connected with the point of this or that exchange. On the other hand, in this situation, it's hard to demonstrate the advantage of one reasonable move over another. Yes, 21.Qc1!? (and if 21...Qd6, then 22.Qh6 with dangerous threats) - would be a good choice. But the rook trade could also be carried out after 21.Qb3!? (simultaneously attacking the b6-pawn). Additionally, one might treat this position a different way, by aiming for a direct attack on the king - in that case 21.Qh5!? looks attractive. And the text move is not bad, either - in fact, the mistake made by White came later.

**21...Qe7-d6 22.Qe2-e3**

*In light of what has been said previously, 22.Qf3 was better.*

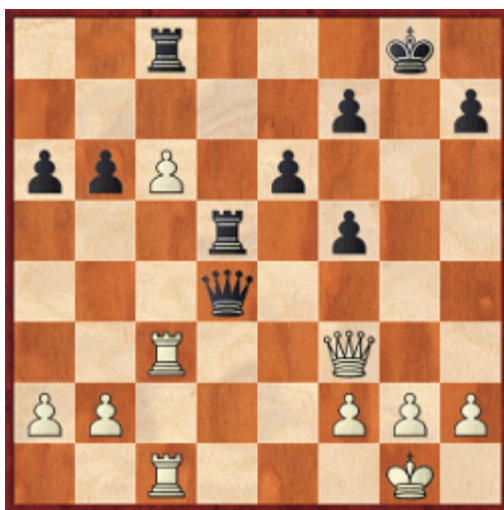
**22...Qd6-d4 23.Qe3-f3?!**

Inconsistent. 23.Qg5+ Kf8 24.h3, maintaining White's advantage, was far more logical.

**23...Rd8-d5**

*Valeri has exploited my dull play to substantially improve his affairs. Now White must continually deal with the blocking move Rc5, allowing Black to capture the pawn on c6. And this isn't the only idea for Black.*

**24.Rf1-c1**



[FEN "2r3k1/5p1p/ppP1p3/3r1p2/3q4/2R2Q2/PP3PPP/2R3K1 b - - 0 24"]

**1...?**

24...Qg4! as pointed out by Dreev, would have forced the trade 25.Qxg4+ fg and practically equalized the game.

24...Qe4 with the same idea, would be less exact, owing to 25.Qh5.

**24...Rc8-c7?**

*Black can't consider surrounding the c-pawn - not with his king so exposed.*

**25.h2-h3 Kg8-f8 26.Qf3-h5! Kf8-e7 27.Qh5-g5+!**

*And if 27.Qxh7, then 27...Rc5 equalizes. This is an assessment we have to disagree with. On the other hand, from a practical point of view, the queen check is a very good move: White provokes an error by his opponent.*



[FEN "8/2r1kp1p/ppP1p3/3r1pQ1/3q4/2R4P/PP3PP1/2R3K1 b - - 0 27"]

**1...?**

**27...Qd4-f6?**

Leads to the loss of a pawn, which leads in turn to a completely hopeless position for Black. The king retreat was forced.

*After 27...Kf8 28.a3, we get an original sort of zugzwang - Black doesn't seem to have a useful move.*



And why not? 28...Rc5! comes to mind, and on 29.Rxc5 bc 30.Rxc5 there comes 30...Qd1+! 31.Kh2 Qd6+ followed by 32...Rxc6, leveling the game.

Instead of his "playing for zugzwang," White should have returned to his hunt for the pawn at h7: 28.Qh6+ (or 28.Qh5 - on 28...Rc5?, there is 29.Rd1) 28...Ke7 29.Qxh7 Rc5 30.Rxc5 bc.



[FEN "8/2r1kp1Q/p1P1p3/2p2/3q4/7P/PP3PP1/2R3K1 w - - 0 31"]

1.?

The pawn at c6 is lost but, by taking over the important d-file, White retains his advantage, thanks to the exposed position of the black king and his h-pawn, which could become dangerous.

31.Qh5! Rxc6 32.Rd1 Qf4 33.g3 Qc7 34.Qg5+ Ke8 35.Qd2! followed by 36.h4.

28.Qg5-f4!+-

28...Kd8 29.Qb4 Qe7 30.Qxb6 a5 31.Rc5 Qd6 32.Qxa5 Rd1+ 33.Rxd1 Qxd1+ 34.Kh2 Qd6+ 35.Kg1 (*gaining time, in time-pressure*) 35...Qd1+ 36.Kh2 Qd6+ 37.g3 f4 38.Qc3 fg+ 39.fg Ke7 40.b4 Ra7



[FEN "8/r3kp1p/2Pqp3/2R5/1P6/2Q3PP/P6K/8 w - - 0 41"]

*Time-pressure is over. How should White continue? If 41.a3?, then 41...Rxa3! draws. There was a temptation to play it beautifully: 41.c7? Rxa2+ 42.Qc2; but after 42...Qxc5!, it's a draw again. At first, I admit, I wrote 41.c7 on my scoresheet...But writing down a move doesn't mean that you must play it!*

41.Qc2!

*Avoiding all temptation!* White would have gotten the same result after 41.Qb2! or 41.Ra5!.

**41...Kd8** (41...Ra3 42.Rc3) **42.a4 Rxa4 43.c7+ Kc8 44.Rg5**

*The last accurate move.* Black resigned.

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# Further Investigations of a Standard Structure

by Mark Dvoretsky

There are some openings where this structure (with doubled pawns on Black's f-file) appears from the very first moves. Rauzer's Attack in the Sicilian is too complex and wide-ranging a topic for us even to touch on here. And as for the French Defense variation 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 de5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 gf, or the Caro-Kann variation 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 de4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ gf - they have long since gone out of style, so there's no point in delving into them. I shall only present one example each of the above-cited openings.

**Sigurjonsson - Dvoretsky**

Wijk aan Zee 1975

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.ed** (this was a popular line back in the twenties) **5...Qxd5 6.Bxf6 gf**

The game Capablanca - Alekhine, New York 1924, showed that 6...Bxc3+ 7.bc gf was less accurate, in view of 8.Qd2! Nd7 9.c4 Qe4+ 10.Ne2, followed by 11.f3.

**7.Qd2 Qa5**



[FEN "rnb1k2r/ppp2p1p/4pp2/q7/1b1P4/2N5/PPPQ1PPP/R3KBNR w KQkq - 0 8"]

**8.Ng1-f3**

I had reached this position more than once, but my previous opponents had tried different moves. I had not reacted well to them: each time, I overlooked the same queen sortie. Unfortunately, in those days I didn't take a critical approach to my own game, as everything turned out well, and computers that could point out strong resources had not yet appeared. On this occasion, finally, I received payback for my inattention in analyzing my own games.

Abjirko - Dvoretsky, Moscow Rapid Cup, 1971: 8.Bd3 b6?! 9.Nge2 Bb7 10.0-0 (10.Qf4! was very strong) 10...Nd7 11.a3 Bxc3 12.Nxc3 Rg8 13.Be4 Bxe4 14.Nxe4 Qxd2 15.Nxd2 0-0-0= 16.Rad1 f5 17.Rfe1 c6 18.Nc4 Kc7 19.Rd3 Rg4!? 20.f3 Rg7 21.f4?! Rdg8 22.g3 h5 23.Ne5 h4 24.Nxd7 Kxd7, and in the ensuing rook endgame, Black had the better chances. Notice the pressure along the open g-file in connection with the h-pawn's advance - this is one of Black's basic plans in this structure.

Mejin - Dvoretsky, Moscow 1969: 8.Nge2 b6? (Alekhine recommended 8...Nd7 9.a3 Nb6 10.Rd1 Be7) 9.0-0-0 (9.Qf4!) 9...Ba6 10.Kb1? (10.d5!) 10...Nd7?! (10...Bxe2 11.Bxe2 Bxc3 12.Qxc3 leads to a practically even endgame) 11.Nf4? (11.a3!) 11...Bxf1 12.Rhxf1 0-0-0 13.Nd3 Bxc3 14.Qxc3 Qxc3 15.bc Rhg8= 16.g3 b5! 17.Rhe1 Nb6 18.f4? (18.Nc5) 18...Nb6+.

### 8...b7-b6

8...Nd7 9.Bd3 b6 would have been inaccurate, owing to 10.Be4, but 8...c5 or 8...Bxc3 9.bc b6 was worth looking into.

### 9.Bf1-b5+!? c7-c6

I didn't want to enter a somewhat inferior endgame with 9...Qxb5, and acquiescing to the trade of bishops by 9...Bd7 looked illogical after I had already played 8...b7-b6.

### 10.Bb5-e2 Nb8-d7

10...Ba6 deserved attention.

### 11.0-0 Bc8-b7



[FEN "r3k2r/pb1n1p1p/1pp1pp2/q7/1b1P4/2N2N2/PPPBPPP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 12"]

### 12.Qd2-f4! Bb4xc3

12...0-0-0 13.Ne4 Be7 was preferable (at the board I only looked at 13...f5 14.a3!, which is not as secure). The text move was bound up with the hope that my opponent would be tempted into the intermediate 13.Qc7?!, when I intended 13...Bxb2 14.Rab1Ba6 15.Bxa6 Qxa6 16.Rxb2 Rc8 17.Qd6 Qc4.

### 13.b2xc3 0-0-0 14.Nf3-d2!

An excellent maneuver! The knight aims for d6, via either c4 or e4. Soon enough, the game moved into an inferior ending for Black. The fact that it all ended well for me, after a sharp rook endgame, is described in the first volume of *A Book for My Friends and Colleagues*.

**Nijvelt - Vasiliev**

CorrespondenceGame 1988

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 de 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ gf 6.Nf3 Bf5 7.c3 Qc7 8.g3 Nd7 9.Bg2 e6 10.0-0 Bd6?! (10...Bg4)





[FEN "r3k2r/ppqn1p1p/2pbpp2/5b2/3P4/2P2NP1/PP3PBP/R1BQ1RK1 w kq - 0 11"]

**1.?**

The computer evaluates this position as favoring White (chiefly based, I suspect, on White's more solid pawn structure). And, in fact, White's winning percentage from this position is quite high. But on the other hand, to demonstrate the validity of this evaluation by "normal" means is not easy. The game Arnason - Christiansen, Lone Pine 1980, where this position first occurred, according to Megabase, went as follows: 11.Be3 Bg4 12.Qb3 Bxf3 (12...0-0-0) 13.Bxf3 h5 14.c4 h4 15.c5 Be7 - unclear. Later, other continuations were tried, most frequently 11.Nh4!? But in not one "face-to-face" game did White risk the surprising pawn sacrifice that we see now.

**11.d4-d5!!**

Michael Nijvelt opens lines for himself favorably, and takes firm hold of the initiative.

**11...c6xd5**

On 11...ed 12.Nd4 Bg6 13.Re1+ Black loses the right to castle.

**12.Nf3-d4 Bf5-g6 13.Nd4-b5 Qc7-b6 14.Nb5xd6+ Qb6xd6 15.c3-c4 d5-d4**

I don't see anything better.

**16.b2-b4!**

There's no point wasting time, winning back the pawn: 16.Bxb7 Rb8 17.Bg2 0-0, and after 18.b4, then 18...Rxb4! 19.Ba3 a5 (or 19...Rfb8), when Black has outstanding compensation for his exchange sacrifice.

**16...d4-d3**

Hardly any better is 16...Qxb4 17.Qxd4.

**17.c4-c5 Qd6-c7 18.Bc1-h6**

Now Black is having king problems. On the queenside, after 18...0-0-0 19.Rc1!? Ne5 20.Qd2, with b4-b5 to follow, his king would feel most uncomfortable.

**18...Ke8-e7 19.Ra1-c1 Ra8-c8 20.f2-f4 a7-a5 21.a2-a3 a5xb4 22.a3xb4 Rc8-a8**



[FEN "r6r/1pqnp1p/4ppbB/2P5/1P3P2/3p2P1/6BP/2RQ1RK1 w - - 0 23"]

### 23.f4-f5!?

A tempting - though not a necessary - exchange sacrifice. 23.g4?! would be premature after 23...Ra2! If now 24.f5, then a tense variation could follow: 24...Bxf5! 25.gf Rg8 26.Bd2 Qc6 27.Rf2 Ne5 28.Qf1 (inferior is 28.Kh1 Rxd2! 29.Rxd2 Nf3) 28...Rxd2! 29.Rxd2 Nf3+ 30.Kf2 Nxd2 31.Bxc6 Nxf1 32.Bxb7 Nxb2, with a sharp endgame. However, the simpler 23.Qd2!, preparing 24.g4, would be very strong.

### 23...Bg6xf5 24.Rf1xf5 e6xf5 25.Qd1xd3 Nd7-e5 26.Qd3xf5 Rh8-g8

Black probably didn't want trading queens by 26...Qd7!? to cost him the b-pawn.

### 27.b4-b5 Ra8-a2 28.Kg1-h1

Worth a look was 28.Qe4.

### 28...Qc7-a5?

The fatal mistake. 28...Qd7! would have left matters in doubt.

### 29.Rc1-f1 Rg8-g6 30.Bh6-g7! Ra2-e2

Of no help is 30...Nd7 31.Qe4+ Kd8 32.Re1.

### 31.Bg7xf6+ Rg6xf6 32.Qf5xf6+ Ke7-f8 33.Qf6-h8+ Kf8-e7 34.Qh8-b8 Qa5xb5 35.Qb8-d6+ Ke7-e8 36.Rf1-a1!

Black resigned.

In order to disrupt the opponent's pawn structure, White sometimes agrees to an exchange of unequal values: he captures at f6, not with a minor piece, but a rook.

### Stein - Parma

USSR - Yugoslavia match, Lvov 1962



**28.Rf1xf6! g7xf6 29.Qg3-f2 Kh8-g8**

**30.Rd1-f1 Rd8-e8 31.Nd4-f5 Qc7-d8**

### 32.Qf2-g3

32...Kh8 33.Qh6 Rg8 34.Rf3.



[FEN "3qrrk1/5p1p/pp1p1pn1/3B1N2/P3P3/2P3Q1/1P4PP/5R1K b - - 0 32"]

### 32...Kg8-h8

32...Re5 33.h4 (33.Qh3!?) 33...Kh8 34.h5 Rxf5 35.Rxf5 would hardly be better, since on 35...Ne7 (Notkin), 36.Rxf6 Nxd5 37.Rxd6 decides. 35...Ne5 is more stubborn, but, here too, Black's position is quite joyless.

### 33.Nf5xd6

33.h4 was stronger, leading to the above-mentioned variation after 33...Re5.

### 33...Re8-e7 34.Rf1xf6?

But this is a real mistake, overlooking what was, in fact, also overlooked by all the other commentators. And he also overlooked his opponent's mistaken reply. He had to return the knight to f5.



[FEN "3q1r1k/4rp1p/pp1N1Rn1/3B4/P3P3/2P3Q1/1P4PP/7K b - - 0 34"]

1...?

### 34...Re7xe4?

After 34...Rd7! 35.e5 Qe7!, White's advantage not only disappears, but in fact goes over to the opponent. He threatens capturing at e5, while the pawn on f7 cannot be taken because of White's first-rank weakness.

### 35.Nd6xf7+! Rf8xf7 36.Rf6xf7+-

Now 36...Qxd5 37 Qb8+ isn't playable; nor is 36...Rxa4 due to the simple 37.h3.

**36...Re5 37.c4 Qe8 38.Rf1** (38.h3? Rxd5; 38.Qc3!?) **38...Qxa4 39.Qc3 Qe8 40.Bf7 Qf8 41.Rf5 Qd6 42.h3** Black resigned.

**Yusupov - A. Sokolov**

10th Game, Candidates' Match Finals,  
Riga, 1986

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Be7 7.Bg2 d5 8.Ne5 c6 9.Bc3 Ne4!?**

A novelty! Artur Yusupov parries in the most natural way.

**10.0-0 Nxc3 11.Nxc3 0-0 12.Re1** (later games continued with either 12.Rc1!? or 12.e4!?) **12...Bb7** (12...dc!?) **13.cd**

13.e4 is more promising, and that is what began to start being played later.

**13...cd** (13...ed?! 14.e4+/-) **14.e4 Bb4!? 15.Rc1 Bxc3 16.Rxc3 de 17.Bxe4 Bxe4 18.Rxe4 Nd7 19.Nc6! Qe8**



[FEN "r3qrk1/p2n1ppp/1pN1p3/8/3PR3/1PR3P1/P4P1P/3Q2K1 w - - 0 20"]

**20.Re4-f4!?**

With the unmistakable threat of meeting Black's planned 20...Nf6 with an exchange sacrifice. 20.d5? Nf6 21.d6 doesn't work, because of 21...Nxe4 22.d7 Nxc3. But the alternative 20.Re2!? Nf6 21.Rc1, with 22.Rec2 to follow, was worth just about as much. It would have led to a strange situation, where the knight's powerful position on c6, coupled with White's absolute control of the c-file would have totally restricted Black's pieces. On the other hand, Black would have no weaknesses, and his own knight would have the d5-square at his disposal. I cannot see how White could make any progress.

**20...Nd7-f6!**

After checking the variations out accurately, Andrei Sokolov accepts the challenge. None of the remaining tries would get Black out of his troubles.

20...Rc8? is bad, because of 21.Qc2! threatening 22.Ne7+, and if 21...Kh8, then 22.Ne7! Rxc3 23.Qxh7+! Kxh7 24.Rh4#.

After 20...b5?! 21.d5! Nb6, White has a pleasant choice between 22.de Qxe6 23.Rd4+/- and 22.d6 Nd5 23.Rc5+/-.

A similar situation arises after 20...f5?! 21.d5! Nf6 (21...e5 would be well met by either 22.Rh4+/-, or 22.Rfc4+/-,



probably the most precise is 22.Re3+/-). Both 22.de Qxe6 23.Nd4, and 22.d6 Nd5 23.Rc2! Nxf4 (23...Qd7 24.Ne7+! Nxe7 25.Rc7) 24.gf+/-.

Finally, after 20...Nc5, White retains a small, but long-lasting advantage by various means: 21.dc Qxc6 22.b4 (22.Qc2), or 21.Qf3, or 21.Ne5 Nd7 22.Rc7 Nxe5 23.de.

**21.Rf4xf6! g7xf6 22.Qd1-g4+ Kg8-h8 23.Qg4-h4 Kh8-g7!**

23...Rg8? would lose to 24.Qxf6+ Rg7 25.d5! (25.h4+/-) 25...ed 26.Ne7.

**24.Rc3-f3!**

White gets nothing from 24.g4?! Rg8 (or 24...h6).

**24...Qe8xc6**

Of course, not 24...f5?? 25.Qg5+ Kh8 26.Qf6+ Kg8 27.Ne7+.

**25.Qh4xf6+ Kg7-g8 26.Rf3-f4**



[FEN "r4rk1/p4p1p/1pq1pQ2/8/3P1R2/1P4P1/P4P1P/6K1 b - - 0 26"]

**1...?**

Black will have to give up the queen to avoid mate. The question is, in what way?

**26...Qc6-c2!**

26...Qc1+ is considerably weaker: 27.Kg2 Qxf4 28.Qxf4, and Black can still expect a lot more suffering.

**27.Rf4-g4+ Qc2-g6 28.Rg4xg6+ h7xg6 29.h2-h4 Rf8-d8 30.h4-h5**

Of no harm to Black is 30.g4 Rd5 31.f4 Rad8 (31...Rc8!?) 32.h5 gh 33.gh Rxd4 - his rooks get out into the open just in time. Yusupov therefore decides to force a draw.

**30...ghxh5 31.Qf6-g5+ Kg8-f8 32.Qg5xh5 Ra8-c8 33.Qh5-h6+ Kf8-e7 34.Qh6-g5+ Ke7-e8 35.Qg5-g8+ Ke8-e7 36.Qg8-g5+ Draw.**

Russian IM Mark Dvoretsky is one the most respected chess trainers in the world today. In his March 2015 column he presents the third of a six-part series dealing with positions in which Black opens the g-file after a trade of minor pieces. A new column is posted the second Tuesday of each month.

## Unjustified Weakening of the Pawn Structure

By Mark Dvoretsky

As a rule, White strives to exploit his opponent's kingside weaknesses by playing for attack, and keeping the queens on the board. But sometimes, pawn structure minuses make themselves felt even deep into the endgame, as the following examples demonstrate.

### Tal - Korchnoi

Game 1, Semi-Final Candidates' Match, Moscow 1968

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Ne4 8.Qc2 Nxc3 9.Qxc3 c5 10.Be3(10.Rd1) 10...Bf6**

10...d6 is considered more exact. White could meet the text move by 11.Qd3(d2), to prevent the exchanging operation that follows.

**11.Rfd1?! Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Nc6 13.Bxc6 dc 14.Qd3 cd 15.Bxd4 c5 16.Bc3(16.Bxf6 Qxf6=) 16...Qe7 17.Qd7 Rfd8 18.Qxe7 Bxe7 19.e4**



[FEN "r2r2k1/p3bppp/1p2p3/2p5/2P1P3/2B3P1/PP3P1P/R2R2K1 b - - 0 19"]

**1...?**

The position is held without much difficulty had Black played 19...f6 and Kf7-e8.

**19...h5?! 20.Kf1 Bf6?(20...f6) 21.Bxf6 gf**

The unjustified weakening of his pawn structure immediately put Viktor Korchnoi on the verge of losing.

**22.Ke2 Kg7 23.Rxd8! Rxd8 24.Rd1! Rxd1**

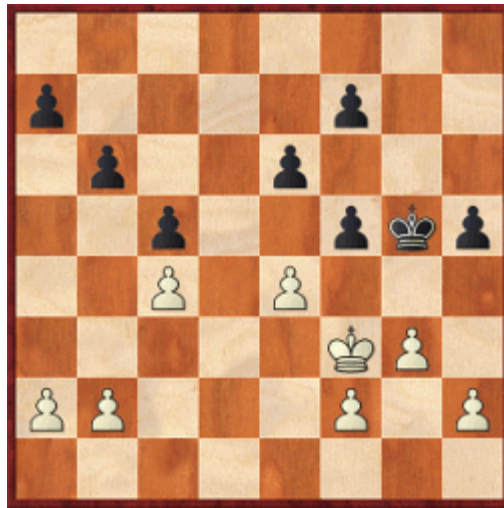
The attempt to activate his rook on the b-file, by 24...Rb8 25.Rd7 b5, would be parried by 26.Kd3! bc+ 27.Kc3+/-.

**25.Kxd1 Kg6 26.Ke2 Kg5 (26...f5 deserves attention) 27.Kf3**

It is important not to allow the king on g4. 27.h3, with the same idea, would be weaker, in view of 27...f5.

27...f5

White intends 28.h4+, followed by Kf4, f2-f3, and g3-g4, creating an outside passed h-pawn.



[FEN "8/p4p2/1p2p3/2p2pkp/2P1P3/5KP1/PP3P1P/8 w - - 0 28"]

1.?

The game wound up as follows: **28.h3?! Kf6**(28...e5 leads to approximately the same thing) **29.Kf4 e5+ 30.Ke3 a6 31.b3 Ke6 32.ef+ Kxf5 33.f3 Ke6 34.g4 f5!**(it's important to prevent 35.Ke4; 34...hg? 35. fg!+- would be a terrible mistake) **35.gf+**

On 35.g4 Kf6 36.Kf2 Black holds his position by 36...Kg7! (but not 36...Kg5? 37.f4+!) 37.Kg3 Kh7! (a mistake would be 37...b5? 38.Kh4! Kh6 39.a3, as Black falls into zugzwang) 38.a3 Kh6 39.Kh4 b5 - here, it's White who gets into zugzwang.

**35...Kxf5 36.h4 Kf6 37.Ke4 Ke6 38.a3 b5 39.cb ab 40.Kd3**(40.a4 c4!) **40...Kd6**Drawn.

I have analyzed what would have happened, had Mikhail Tal played 31.a3!? (instead of 31.b3). In that case, the defensive method Black used in the game would have lost: 31...Ke6 32.ef+ Kxf5 33.f3



[FEN "8/5p2/pp6/2p1pk1p/2P5/P3KPPP/1P6/8 b - - 0 33"]

1...?

33...Ke6? 34.g4 f5 35.g4! Kf6 36.Kf2 Kg7 (36...Kg5 37.f4+!; 36...b5 37.Kg3 Kg5 38.f4+!) 37.Kg3 b5 (37...Kh7 38.Kh4



Kh6 39.a4 a5 40.b3+-) 38.Kh4! Kh6 39.b3 when Black is in zugzwang.

The waiting move 33...f6! improves things for Black. 34.g4+ hg 35.fg+ Kg5, is not dangerous; and on 34.b3, White loses a valuable tempo on the queenside.

However, the immediate clarification of matters on the queenside, with 33...b5!, is now playable as well.

A) 34.g4+ hg 35.fg+ Kg5 36.b3 (36.cb? ab 37.b3 even loses: 37...b4! 38.ab cb 39.Ke4 f6 or 38.a4 c4 39.a5 cb 40.Kd2 e4 41.a6 b2 42.Kc2 e3 43.a7 e2-+) 36...bc 37.bc Kh4 38.Ke4 Kxh3! (weaker is 38...f6 39.Kf5) 39.g5 Kg4 40.Kxe5 Kxg5 41.Kd5 f5 42.Kxc5 f4 43.Kd4=;

B) 34.cbab 35.Kd3!? (more dangerous for Black than 35.b3 Ke6 36.g4 h4!=) 35...Ke6 36.g4



[FEN "8/5p2/4k3/1pp1p2p/6P1/P2K1P1P/1P6/8 b - - 0 36"]

1...?

36...h4! 37.Ke4 c4! 38.g5 f5+ 39.gf Kxf6 40.f4 ef 41.Kxf4 Ke6 42.Kg4 Kd5 43.Kxh4 Kc5! (losing is 43...Kd4? 44.Kg4 Kd3 45.h4 Kc2 46.h5 Kxb2 47.h6 c3 48.h7 c2 49.h8Q+ Kb1 50.Qh7 Kb2 51.Qg7+ Kb1 52.Qg6 Kb2 53.Qf6+ Kb1 54.Qf5) 44.Kg4 b4 45.ab+ Kxb4 46.h4 Kb3 47.h5 Kxb2 48.h6 c3 49.h7 c2 50.h8Q+ Kb1, and the queen cannot win against a bishop's pawn, as is well known.

Now let's go back to the position after Black's 27th move. Yuri Averbakh writes:

*V. Smyslov, S. Furman, and Y. Averbakh subjected this position to exhaustive analysis; and finally managed to show that White could have won with 28.e5!*

*White's advantage here comes down to two main factors: he has the better pawn structure and a greater number of pawn moves, which ought to play a decisive role in the battle for zugzwang.*

*With 28. e5, White starts a plan that is characteristic of such positions: he intends to drive away the king by h2-h4; he will then occupy the f4-square with his own king and, advancing his pawns by f2-f3 and g3-g4, create an outside passed pawn on the h-file.*

I would not have repeated all this well-known (and, truly, already half-forgotten) analysis, had I not come to the opposite conclusion: despite the opinion of these respected grandmasters, Black could still save himself! Back in the day, in my training sessions, more than once I offered strong players the opportunity to play out this position. And one day, when entering the just-completed "game" into my computer, suddenly I discovered a hitherto unseen possibility.

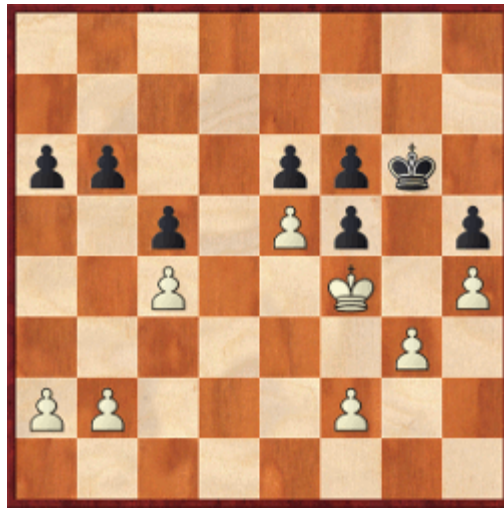
But all in good time!

## 28.e4-e5! f7-f6

He cannot prevent the king from being driven away by 28...h4. Vassily Smyslov gives the following variation: 29.h3 a6 30.a3 a5 31.a4 Kg6 32.Kf4 Kh5 33.b3 (zugzwang) 33...Kh6 34.g4 Kg6 35.gf+ ef36.f3+-with a decisive zugzwang, or 33...hg34.fgKg6 35.g4 fg36.Kxg4+- the outside passed pawn determines the outcome.

## 29.h2-h4+ Kg5-g6 30.Kf3-f4 a7-a6!

After 30...Kf7? 31.f3 Kg6 32.a3 a6 33.a4! a5 34.b3 a basic position for this kind of endgame occurs: mutual zugzwang, Black to move. His king has to abandon the g6-square, after which White creates an outside passed pawn: 34...Kf7 35.g4! fg36.fgfe+ 37.Kxe5 hg38.Kf4+-.



[FEN "8/8/pp2ppk1/2p1Pp1p/2P2K1P/6P1/PP3P2/8 w - - 0 31"]

1.?

The direct 31.f3? b5 32.cb(32.b3 b4) 32...ab33.a3 c4 would lead to the same zugzwang position - except with White to move. With his king at g6, 34.g4? fe+ 35.Kxe5 fg36.fghg37.Kf4 Kh5+- does not work.

## 31.a2-a3!

The extra tempo b2-b3 must remain in reserve, as indicated by the variation 31...Kf7? 32.f3 (but not 32.a4? Kg7! 33.f3 Kg6 and it is White who is in zugzwang) 32...Kg6 (32...b5 33.cbab34.g4 fg35.fgfe+ 36.Kxe5 hg37.Kf4+-) 33.a4 a5 34.b3, and this time, it's Black in zugzwang.

Black responds to 31.b3?! with 31...Kf7! (since 31...b5? is refuted by 32.cbab33.Ke3! fe34.a4+-or 33...b4 34.f4! fe35.feKf7 36.Kd3+-). After 32.a3 Kg6 White can't play for a tempo anymore: 33.a4 Kf7 34.f3 Kg6=; 33.f3 b5!=; 33.b4 Kf7 34.b5!? ab 35.cb fe+ 36.Kxe5 Ke7 37.a4 Kd7 38.f3 Kc7(e7) 39.Kf4 c4! 40.Ke3 e5 41.f4! Kd6! =.

More interesting is 32.f3 Kg6 (32...b5? 33.g4+-) 33.a3 (33.a4 a5=) 33...b5! 34.cbab35.Ke3!? fe36.Kd3! (upon 36.a4? c4 White stands on the verge of defeat - just as he does after 36.Kd2? e4! 37.fefe).



[FEN "8/8/4p1k1/1pp1pp1p/7P/PP1K1PP1/8/8 b - - 0 36"]

A safe way to draw was offered by Vladimir Belov and Vladimir Potkin: 36...e4+! 37.fe e5! 38.ef+ Kxf5 39.a4 e4+ (39...c4+? 40.Kc3+-) 40.Kc2 ba 41.ba Kg4=.

Another possible way is 36...Kf7 37.a4 ba (37...c4+? 38.Kc3 cb 39.ab!+-) 38.ba Ke7 39.a5 Kd6 40.a6 Kc7 41.a7 Kb7 42.g4! e4+! (but not 42...fg? 43.fg hg 44.h5 c4+ 45.Ke2+-) 43.Ke3 c4! 44.gh c3 45.h6 (45.f4 e5) 45...f4+ 46.Kxe4 c2 47.h7 c1Q 48.a8Q+ Kxa8 49.h8Q+ Kb7=.

**31...b6-b5! 32.c4xb5 a6xb5 33.b2-b3!**

White intends to create an outside passed pawn on the queenside, by playing a3-a4 at the right moment. This of course requires him to take into account the counterstroke c5-c4.

**33...f6xe5+! 34.Kf4-e3!!**

Indicated by Smyslov. It's a draw after 34.Kxe5? Kf7 35.a4 (35.b4 c4 36.Kd4 e5+ 37.Kc3 Ke6=) 35...c4 36.bc ba 37.Kd4 Kf6! 38.Kc3 (38.f4? a3 39.Kc3 e5!-+) 38...Ke5 39.Kb4 Kd4 40.c5.



[FEN "8/8/4p1k1/1pp1pp1p/7P/PP2K1P1/5P2/8 b - - 0 34"]

**1...?**

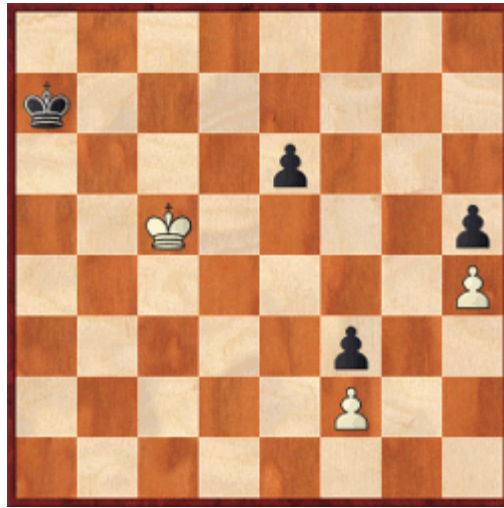
**34...Kf6**

The king tries to get into the square of the a-pawn - Averbakh. (He is responsible for the entire variation that follows.)

**35.a4 ba**(35...Ke7 36.ab Kd6 37.f3! Kc7 38.g4+-) **36.ba Ke7 37.Kd3 Kd6 38.Kc4 Kc6 39.a5 f4 40.gf**(40.a6? fg 41.fg e4) **40...ef 41.a6 f3!?**

White's job would be simpler after 41...e5 42.a7 Kb7 43.Kxc5 e4 44.Kd4.

**42.a7 Kb7 43.Kxc5 Kxa7**



[FEN "8/k7/4p3/2K4p/7P/5p2/5P2/8 w - - 0 44"]

Now, which pawn should the king go after? It would be a mistake to play 44.Kd4?! Kb6 45.Ke3? (it's still not too late to play 45.Ke5) 45...Kc5 46.Kxf3 Kd4 47.Kf4 e5+ 48.Kg5 Ke4 49.Kxh5 Kf3 50.Kg5 Kxf2 51.Kf5 Kf3! 52.Kxe5 Kg4= or 52.h5 e4=.

**44.Kd6! Kb6 45.Kxe6 Kc7 46.Kf5 Kd6**

The same question here: which pawn does he attack?

**47.Kf4!**

47.Kg5? throws away the win: 47...Ke5 48.Kxh5 Kf5 (zugzwang) 49.Kh6 Kg4 50.h5 Kh3 51.Kg5 Kg2 52.h6 Kxf2 53.h7 Kg2 54.h8Qf2.

**47...Ke6 48.Kxf3 Kf5 49.Ke3! Kg4 50.f4 Kxh4 51.Kf3!+-**

And now - that defensive improvement I promised. Go back to the position after White's 34th move:

**34...f5-f4+!! 35.g3xf4**

After 35.Kd2? fg! 36.fge4! 37.a4 c4! 38.a5 (forced), 38...cb transposes into a lost queen ending for White.

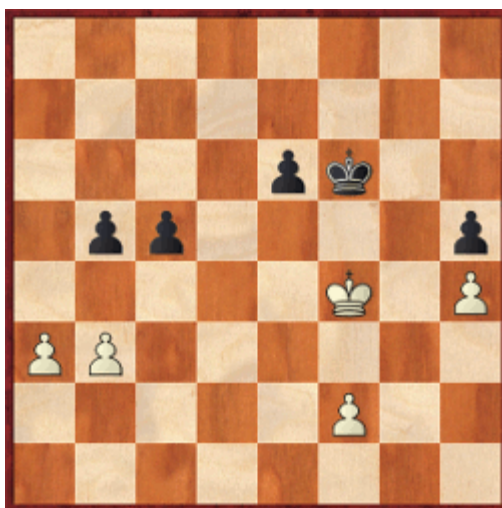
**35...e5xf4+!**

The tempting 35...Kf5?! is refuted by 36.a4! ef+ 37.Kd3! (37.Kd2? ba 38.ba Ke4+-). For example, 37...c4+ 38.Kc3, or 37...e5 38.a5! e4+ 39.Kd2 c4 40.bc b4 41.a6 b3 42.a7 e3+ 43.fe fe+ 44.Kxe3 b2 45.a8Qb1Q 46.Qf3+, or 37...ba 38.ba Ke5 39.Kc4 Kd6 40.a5 Kc6 41.a6 e5 42.a7 Kb7 43.Kxc5 e4 44.Kd4 e3 45.fe f3 46.Kd3 Kxa7 47.e4.

**36.Ke3xf4**

36.Kd3 e5! 37.a4 c4+ 38.Kc3 e4 39.ab e3 40.fe f3= isn't dangerous.

**36...Kg6-f6**



[FEN "8/8/4pk2/1pp4p/5K1P/PP6/5P2/8 w - - 0 37"]

By returning his extra pawn, Black wins an important tempo, in order to bring his king over to the queen's wing.

**37.Kf4-e4 Kf6-e7 38.a3-a4**

On 38.Kd3 Kd6 39.a4 Black could answer not only 39...c4+ 40.Kc3 cb, leading back into the main variation, but also with 39...Kc6 40.Ke4 Kb6 41.abKxb5 42.Ke5 Kb4 43.Kd6 Kxb3 44.Kxc5 Kc3 45.Kd6 Kd4 46.Kxe6 Ke4 47.Kf6 Kf4 48.Kg6 Kg4=.

**38...c5-c4! 39.a4-a5 c4xb3 40.Ke4-d3 Ke7-d6 41.Kd3-c3 Kd6-c6!**

Or 41...Kd5!. The c5-square is "mined": after 41...Kc5? 42.Kxb3 Black gets into zugzwang, and loses.

**42.Kc3xb3 Kc6-c5!**

Now it's White who is in zugzwang. He cannot win, either by 43.f3 e5, or 43.Ka3 b4+ 44.Kb3 Kb5 45.a6 Kxa6 46.Kxb4 Kb6 47.Kc4 Kc6 48.Kd4 Kd6 49.Ke4 Ke7= (or 49...e5 50.Kf5 Kd5=).

**43.f2-f4 Kc5-d6(d5)! 44.Kb3-b4 Kd6-c6**

Again zugzwang.

**45.a5-a6 Kc6-b6 46.a6-a7 Kb6xa7 47.Kb4xb5 Ka7-b7=**

Thanks to accurate king maneuvers, Black has kept his pawn on e6, which allowed him to save himself.

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Russian IM Mark Dvoretsky is one the most respected chess trainers in the world today. In his April 2015 column he presents the fourth of a six-part series dealing with positions in which Black opens the g-file after a trade of minor pieces. A new column is posted the second Tuesday of each month.

## Defending an Inferior Ending

By Mark Dvoretsky

Dvoretsky - Moiseev  
Moscow Championship 1973

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.0-0 Nf6 6.e5 de 7.Nxe5 Qd8?! (7...Qc8) 8.Nc3 Nbd7 9.d4 e6 10.Bg5 Be7 (10...cd!? 11.Qxd4+/=) 11.Nxd7 Qxd7 (11...Nxd7?! 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.d5+/=) 12.dc Qxd1**

It's harder for Black to defend if he keeps the queens on: 12...Bxc5 13.Bxf6 gf? 14.Qh5+/-.

**13.Rfxd1 Bxc5 14.Bxf6 gf 15.Ne4 Be7 16.Nd6+ Bxd6 17.Rxd6 Rd8 (17...Rc8 18.Rad1!) 18.Rad1 Rxd6 19.Rxd6 Ke7**



[FEN "7r/pp2kp1p/3Rpp2/8/8/PPP2PPP/6K1 w - - 0 20"]

**1.?**

**20.Rd6-d4!**

The fourth rank is the best line of operations for the white rook. From here, he can attack any one of the pawns. The third rank isn't as suitable for this, since after 20.Rd3 Rc8 forces the move c2-c3, restricting the rook's mobility.

In contrast to our previous game, the pawn structure here at once produces the potential for White to create a passed queenside pawn, whereas Black will have a very hard time doing the same on the kingside. Thus, it would be very dangerous for him to enter any pawn endgame. So 20...Rd8 21.Rxd8 Kxd8 22.g4!? is almost certainly lost.

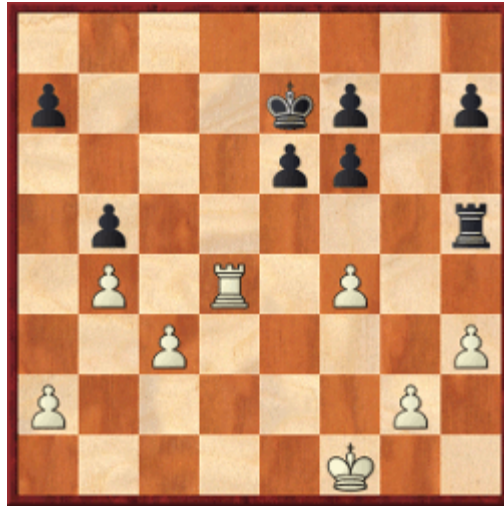
**20...Rh8-c8 21.c2-c3 Rc8-c5**

If 21...e5 (hoping to seize the d-file after 22.Rh4? Rd8), then 22.Rb4! b6 23.Kf1.

**22.Kg1-f1 Rc5-b5 23.b2-b4 Rb5-h5 24.h2-h3 b7-b5!?**

My opponent is trying to provoke 25.c4?!, to which he would respond 25...bc (25...a5? would be a mistake because of 26.g4!) 26.Rxc4 (26.a4 c3 27.Rc4 Kd6 28.Rxc3 Rh4) 26...a5=. White would be left with only one pawn on the queenside, unsupported by his king - which would win in a pawn endgame, but not in a rook.

An attempt to restrict the black rook's mobility by 25.f4!? was worth considering.



[FEN "8/p3kp1p/4pp2/1p5r/1P1R1P2/2P4P/P5P1/5K2 b - - 0 25"]

1.?

**How does Black defend?**

25...e5 26.Rd5 or 25...Rh6 26.c4 don't work. If he plays the waiting move 25...a6, then simply 26.Ke2, and Black can neither check from e5, nor attack the pawn at g2 with ...Rg5.

But here, in this position, the trade of rooks unexpectedly lets Black escape: **25...Rd5! 26.Rxd5 ed 27.g4!?** (otherwise 27...f5) **27...f5!** (waiting tactics, in accordance with my analysis; in the end, with correct play by both sides, we arrive at a queen ending advantageous to White - those who wish to may find these variations for themselves) **28.g5 f6 29.Kf2 fg 30.fg Kf7 31.Ke3 Kg7!** (the g6- and f4-squares are mined!) **32...Kf4** (what else?) **32...Kg6** (and now we have a position of zugzwang for both sides, with White to move) **33.h4 Kh5 34.Kxf5 Kxh4=.**

**25.Kf1-e2 Rh5-e5+ 26.Ke2-d2**

White should not allow the enemy rook to get behind him: 26.Kd3? Re1. By taking his king to the queenside, White prepares 27.c4, and on 27...bc, 28.a4!, with the better of it. My opponent forestalls this by attacking my pawns.

**26...Re5-f5 27.Kd2-e3 Rf5-e5+ 28.Ke3-d2 Re5-f5 29.f2-f3**

29.f4 e5! was much weaker.

**29...Rf5-g5**



[FEN "8/p3kp1p/4pp2/1p4r1/1P1R4/2P2P1P/P2K2P1/8 w - - 0 30"]

1.?

### 30.Rd4-g4!

White offers his opponent the chance to go into a pawn endgame; he can even select the right moment to make the exchange. 30...Rxc4 is possible, followed by moving his king to d5; or 30...h5, forcing the trade on g5, freeing Black from his doubled pawn; finally, 30...Kd6, postponing the exchange for a move. Burrowing into these myriad variations is exceptionally difficult, even with a computer to analyze - to saying nothing of doing it over-the-board. And, once you've decided that you can't resolve it - why, then, you shouldn't even try to do that. The advance of the g-pawn practically ruined all of White's winning chances; but all pawn endgames, by contrast, look good for him. These considerations proved quite sufficient for my decision.

Of course, there is an element of 'bluff' here, but it's quite justified. It hardly seems necessary to underscore the intuitive character of the decision taken by White - after all, I didn't even try to guess at an objective evaluation of the consequences of a rook exchange. In the end, I saved myself both time and energy, by letting my opponent stew over whether to choose one of several different possibilities.

### 30...Ke7-d6

If 30...h5 31.Rxc5 fg 32.Kd3, White would create an outside passed pawn with c3-c4 (even now, I do not know if this would be enough to win). The consequences of the rook trade on g4, we will examine in our notes to the following move.

### 31.Kd2-d3 Kd6-d5

Yet another pawn endgame (besides 31...Rxc4 or 31...h5) comes up after 31...Rd5+ 32.Rd4. Oleg Moiseev, experienced master that he was, refrained from such complicated calculations; and he was probably right to do so.

Out of all the myriad variations that would arise then, I carefully analyzed just one: **31...Rxc4 32.hg Kd5 33.g3 h6.**

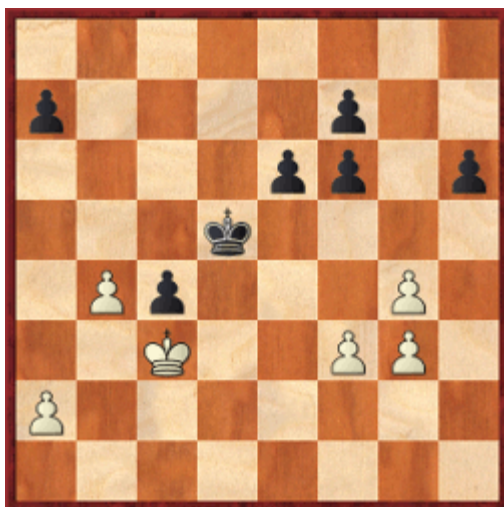




[FEN "8/p4p2/4pp1p/1p1k4/1P4P1/2PK1PP1/P7/8 w - - 0 34"]

Is this a winning position? On that score, my opinion has changed; and mainly because the corresponding variations altered themselves, and quite substantially; the last time, was when I was preparing this article for publication. And so, attempting to answer the question we've posed independently isn't worth it (nor could we attempt to guess at it) - better to train oneself to solve the tasks which come up in the course of analysis - which are also mostly difficult enough.

A) First of all, we need to calculate the straightforward **34.c4+ bc+ 35.Kc3**, hoping to put my opponent in zugzwang.

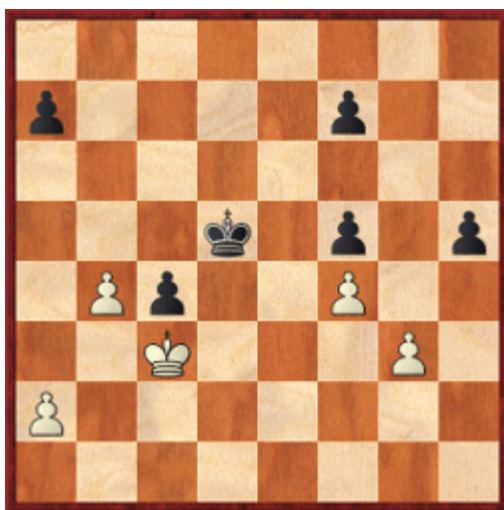


[FEN "8/p4p2/4pp1p/3k4/1Pp3P1/2K2PP1/P7/8 b - - 0 35"]

**1...?**

**How does Black defend?**

My hopes would be realized after 35...e5? 36.a4 a6 37.a5+-, or 35...f5 36.gf ef (threatening to break through with 37...f4) 37.f4 f6? 38.a3! h5 (38...Ke4 39.Kxc4+-) 39.a4 a6 40.a5+-. However, White's plans are not destined to work out: **37...h5!**



[FEN "8/p4p2/8/3k1p1p/1Pp2P2/2K3P1/P7/8 w - - 0 38"]

Trying to save the maximum number of tempi in reserve by 38.a3? leads to catastrophic consequences: 38...Ke4! 39.a4 (39.Kxc4 Kf3 40.a4 Kxg3, and we get a queen ending that's lost for White) 39...Kd5!-+, with a winning zugzwang.

So I would have to play **38.a4 f6 39.a5 a6** - here White also gets into zugzwang; but thanks to the fact that his opponent has already spent his extra tempo with f7-f6, it's a draw (40.Kd2 Kc6 41.Kc2! Kd6!, etc.)

**B)** Another possible plan is to triangulate with the king, returning to the same square, but with Black to move. And alas, this idea doesn't work out, either: on 34.Kd2?! f5! 35.gf ef 36.f4 Ke4, or 36.Ke3!? Kc4 37.Kd2 f4 38.g4 f6 39.Kc2 Kd5 40.Kd3 f5 41.gf Ke5, it's White who has to work for the draw.

And if we play 34.Ke3? Then, after 34...Ke5, taking the king back to the second rank would allow our opponent to trade off his doubled pawn by 35...f5; and on 35.f4+? Kd5+-, he achieves the same thing by playing e6-e5.

**C)** Sergei Dolmatov suggested the elegant waiting move **34.a3!?**



[FEN "8/p4p2/4pp1p/1p1k4/1P4P1/P1PK1PP1/8/8 b - - 0 34"]

**1...?**

If 34...a6 35.c4+! bc+ 36.Kc3 f5 37.gf ef 38.f4 h5 (38...Ke4 39.Kxc4 Kf3 40.a4+-) 39.a4 f6 40.a5, Black has used up all of his reserve moves. Nor does 34...f5 35.gf ef 36.f4 h5 help.



[FEN "8/p4p2/8/1p1k1p1p/1P3P2/P1PK2P1/8/8 w - - 0 37"]

1.?

White does not play 37.c4+? bc+ 38.Kc3 Ke4! 39.Kxc4 Kf3-+, or 39.a4 Kd5!-+, but 37.a4! ba 38.c4. Then, the king goes after the a4-pawn, while his opponent is denied kingside counterplay.

Nevertheless, a defense does exist. After **34...e5!!** White is in zugzwang, because he has already spent the extra tempo, a2-a3. And 35.a4? does not work because of 35...ba 36.c4+ Ke6 37.Kc3 f5 38.gf+ Kxf5 39.b5 (39.Kb2 Ke6 40.Ka3 f5 41.Kxa4 h5! -+) 39...Ke6 40.g4 f5!-+ (Black manages to create a passed pawn, and return his king to the queenside in time), or 40.Kb4 f5 41.Kxa4 e4 42.fe fe 43.Kb4 e3 44.Kc3 Kd6 45.Kd3 Kc5-+.

**35.c4+! bc+36.Kc3** is much stronger.



[FEN "8/p4p2/5p1p/3kp3/1Pp3P1/P1K2PP1/8/8 b - - 0 36"]

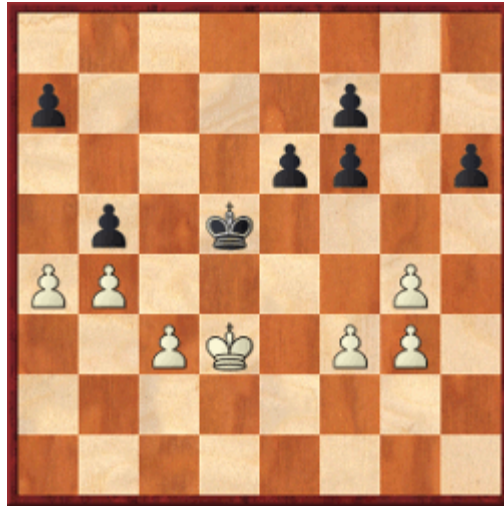
1...?

In considering the variations after 36...e4? 37.fe+ Kxe4 38.Kxc4, we can see that Black's counterplay is too slow.

However, he does manage to set up counterplay on the kingside, by first advancing his h-pawn one square ahead: **36...f5! 37.gf h5!** (but not 37...f6? 38.g4! e4 39.fe+ Kxe4 40.Kxc4 Kf4 41.b5 Kxg4 42.a4 Kxf5 43.a5 Ke6 44.a6!+-).

After 38.a4 f6 39.a5 a6=, it's White in zugzwang. And the variation **38.f6 e4! 39.fe+ Kxe4 40.Kxc4** (40.a4 Kd5!-) **40...Kf3 41.b5 Kxg3 42.a4 h4 43.a5 h3 44.b6 ab 45.ab h2 46.b7 h1Q 47.b8Q+ Kg4** ends up in a drawn queen ending.

D) There's one more attempt that holds danger for our opponent: **34.a4!?**

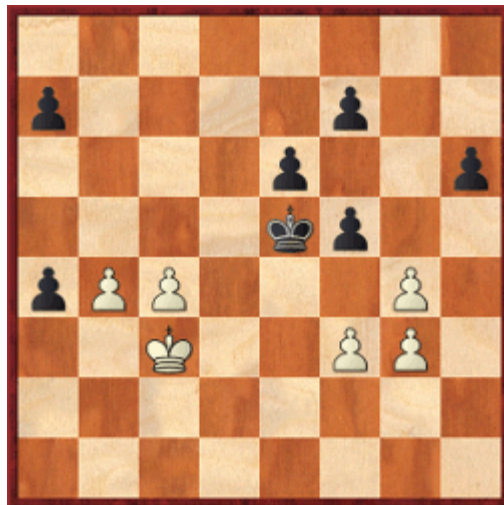


[FEN "8/p4p2/4pp1p/1p1k4/PP4P1/2PK1PP1/8/8 b - - 0 34"]

**1...?**

Black has a most difficult choice, between 34...ba and 34...a6. If he takes the pawn, an exciting race begins, where every tempo counts. And if he refuses to take, then the struggle assumes quite a different character, where zugzwang plays a decisive role.

First, let's look at 34...ba 35.c4+ Ke5 36.Kc3. Now, it's hopeless to play 36...a3 37.Kb3 Kd4 38.c5 Kd5 39.Kxa3 a5 40.Ka4 ab 41.Kxb4 Kc6 42.Kc4; so Black trades off his doubled pawn by 36...f5 and hopes to drum up counterplay on the kingside.



[FEN "8/p4p2/4p2p/4kp2/pPP3P1/2K2PP1/8/8 w - - 0 37"]

**1.?**

Try calculating both of White's possibilities - the immediate capture on f5, and the intermediate check 37.f4+ - in order to select the best line.

Positional considerations would make 37.f4+ Kf6 (or 37...Ke4) 38.gf more attractive, since the e5-square would be taken away from Black's king. After 38...Kxf5, the most precise line is 39.c5 (not permitting either 39...Ke4 40.c6+-, or 39...e5 40.c6 Ke6 41.fe+-) 39...Kf6 40.b5 Ke7 41.Kb4+-. On the other hand, White also wins after 39.b5 e5 40.g4!+-, or 39...Ke4 40.c5 Kd5 41.c6 Kd6 42.Kb4.

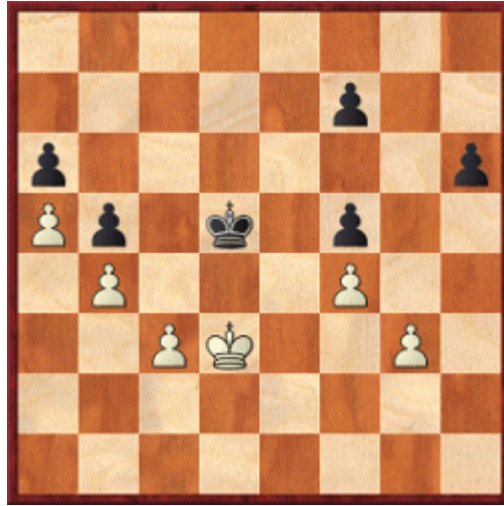
However, Black does have the brilliant resource 38...e5!! 39.fe+ Kxf5! 40.b5 Kxe5 41.c5 Kd5 (another possibility is 41...f5 42.Kb4 h5 43.Kxa4 h4) 42.c6 Kd6 43.Kb4 f5 44.Kxa4 h5 45.Ka5 f4! 46.gf h4 47.f5 h3 48.f6 h2 49.f7 Ke7 50.c7



h1Q 51.f8Q+ Kxf8 52.c8Q+ Ke7! 53.Qc7+ Ke6! (Black's last two moves were, according to our computer, forced - but also sufficient to draw).

We conclude that the intermediate check lets the win slip. White must play 37.gf! Kxf5 (it's hopeless to play 37...ef 38.f4+! Ke4 39.Kb2!?) 38.b5 (or 28.c5) 38...Ke5 (if 38...e5 39.c5 Ke6, then 40.g4!+-, restraining three enemy pawns with two) 39.c5. For example, 39...Kd5 40.c5 Kd6 41.Kb4 a6 (41...Kc7 42.Kxa4 h5 43.Ka5 e5 44.Ka6) 42.ba! (42.Kxa4? ab+ 43.Kxb5 Kc7 44.Kc5 h5!=) 42...Kxc6 43.Kxa4 Kb6 44.Kb4, and the king gets through to the pawns.

And now, let's examine **34...a6! 35.a5 f5** (35..e5? 36.c4+ bc+ 37.Kc3, with a winning zugzwang) **36.gf ef 37.f4!**



[FEN "8/5p2/p6p/Pp1k1p2/1P3P2/2PK2P1/8/8 b - - 0 37"]

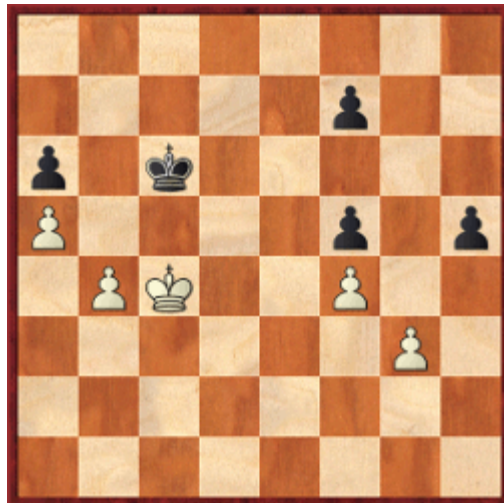
**1...?**

**How should Black not play - and why?**

37...Ke6? 38.c4 is bad, we understand - but that's of no interest. But of the four moves remaining, only one loses! It's important to understand why that is: otherwise, it's easy to commit the fatal error - if not here, then a bit later.

37...h5? would be a fatal mistake because of 38.Kd2! The variations are easily calculated: 38...Ke4? 39.c4!+- or 38...Kc4? 39.Kc2 f6 40.Kb2! Kd5 (40...Kd3 41.Kb3 Ke4 42.c4+- changes nothing) 41.Kb3 (zugzwang) 41...Kd6 42.c4 bc+ 43.Kxc4 Kc6 44.b5+ ab+ 45.Kb4, with a decisive zugzwang.

Black used his reserve tempi too early. One of them should be kept by playing 38...Kd6! 39.Ke3 Kc6 40.Kd4 Kd6 41.c4 bc 42.Kxc4 Kc6.



[FEN "8/5p2/p1k5/P4p1p/1PK2P2/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 43"]

1.?

Now it's no longer any use to play 43.b5+ ab+ 46.Kb4 f6 (White is now the one in zugzwang) 47.a6 Kb6 48.a7 Kxa7 49.Kxb5 Kb7=. But there is still a win by 43.Kd4! Kd6 44.b5 ab 45.a6 Kc6 46.a7 Kb7 47.Kc5 Kxa7 48.Kxb5 Kb7 49.Kc5 Kc7 50.Kd5 Kd7 51.Ke5, etc.

In the position of the previous diagram, if ...f7-f6 were played, instead of ...h6-h5, then the White king would not be able to break into the king's wing, and the draw would be inevitable. So, instead of 37...h5?, that means it would be better to play **37...f6!? 38.Kd2! Kd6! 39.Ke2!?** (an attempt to outfox his opponent by getting a position of zugzwang, with himself on move, and kings at d4 and d6) **39...Kc6 40.Ke3 Kd7!** (or 40...Kc7!, but not 40...Kd6? 41.Kd4+-, and not 40...Kd5? 41.Kd3+-) **41.Kd3 Kc7! 42.Kd4 Kd6 43.c4 bc 44.Kxc4 Kc6 45.Kd4** (45.b5+ ab+ 46.Kb4 h5=) **45...Kd6 46.b5 ab 47.a6 Kc6 48.a7 Kb7 49.Kc5 Kxa7 50.Kxb5 Kb7=.**

Besides, the quickest way is 37...Kc6!? 38.c4 bc+ 39.Kxc4 f6! Or 37...Kd6!? 38.c4 (38.Kd4 f6!) 38...bc+ 39.Kxc4 Kc6 40.Kd4 Kb5! 41.Kc3 Kc6!

Glancing over the analysis I have presented, I hope you will better understand why, during the game, I didn't even try to calculate the pawn ending. It would have been impossible to predict what would have happened, if my opponent had taken the rook on g4.

**32.Rg4-d4+ Kd5-c6 33.g2-g4**

Now the situation is more favorable for this advance than on move thirty. And nevertheless, White's advantage is still fairly small.



[FEN "8/p4p1p/2k1pp2/1p4r1/1P1R2P1/2PK1P1P/P7/8 b - - 0 33"]

1...?

**33...Rg5-g6?!**

The idea of hitting the h3-pawn by ...Rh6 has not worked out. When defending an inferior ending, it's a good idea to trade pawns. Since 33...f5?! is uncomfortably met by 34.h4 followed by 35.gf. Black should play 33...h5! After 34.c4 hg 35.fg Rg8 36.Kc3 Rh8 37.Rd3, White has almost nothing. Nor do rook moves promise anything; during the game, I had put great stock in them. On 34.Rd8 hg 35.hg, Black does not play 35...f5 36.Rc8+ Kd6 37.Rc5 e5 38.f4! ef 39.Rxb6, when White retains winning chances, but 25...Rd5+!, entering a drawn pawn ending. And if 34.Rf4 hg 35.fg, then - besides 35...Rg6 - Black could also sacrifice a pawn to activate his rook: 35...f5!? 36.h4 Rg8 37.gf Rg3+ 38.Kd4 Kd6 39.fe fe 40.Re4 Rh3.

**34.Rd4-f4!**

White was ready to answer 34...Rh6?! with 35.h4!

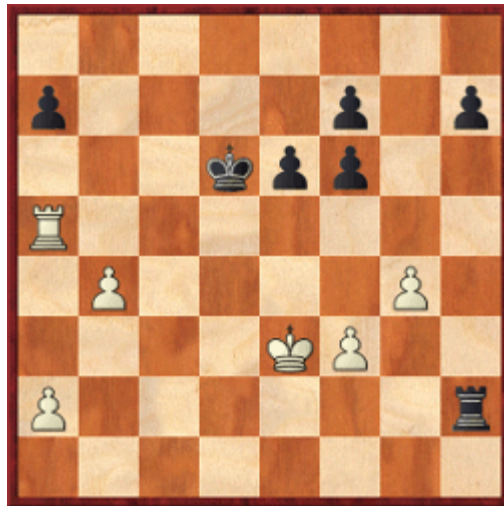
**34...Kc6-d5?!**

But this is a significant inaccuracy. 34...Kd6, and if 35.h4, then 35...h5!, was considerably better.

**35.c3-c4+! b5xc4+ 36.Rf4xc4 Rg6-h6 37.Rc4-c5+ Kd5-d6 38.Rc5-a5 Rh6xh3 39.Kd3-e3**

White obtains two connected passed pawns. His position now looks completely won. But in fact, matters are not so simple.

**39...Rh3-h2**



[FEN "8/p4p1p/3kpp2/R7/1P4P1/4KP2/P6r/8 w - - 0 40"]

**1...?**

40.Rxa7? Rb2 is inaccurate. Setting up "by the rules," behind the furthest-advanced pawn, the rook successfully holds up its advance.

The a7-pawn won't run away. For the moment, I have to use the opportunity to advance my pawns as far as possible.

**40.a2-a4! Rh2-b2 41.b4-b5 Rb2-b3+ 42.Ke3-e4**

There is also something to be said in favor of 42.Kd4!?, or 42.Kf2!? Evidently, both moves win.

**42...f6-f5+!?**

White's job may have been easier after 42...Rb4+ 43.Kd3 Rb3+ 44.Kc4 Rxf3 45.Ra6+ Kc7 46.Rxa7+ Kb6 47.Ra6+ Kb7 48.a5!. For example, 48...Rf1 49.Rb6+ Ka7 50.Rc6!? (50.Kc5!?) 50...Rc1+ 51.Kb4+-.

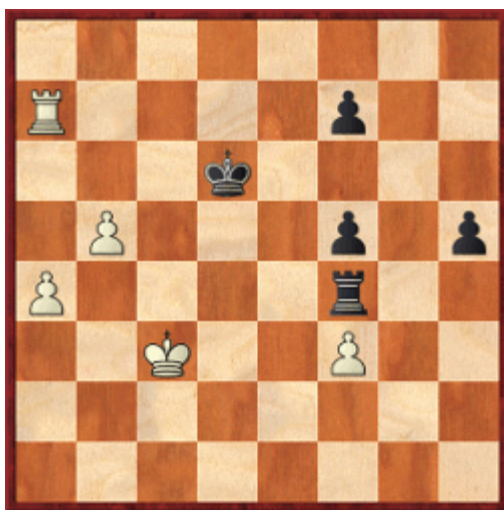
**43.g4xf5 Rb3-b4+**

43...ef+ 44.Kf4 h5 45.Rxa7 is no better.

**44.Ke4-d3 e6xf5 45.Ra5xa7 h7-h5!**

Pushing his own passed pawn is Black's best counterchance. 45...Rb3+ 46.Kc4 Rxf3 47.Rxf7 Rf4+ 48.Kb3 was hopeless.

**46.Kd3-c3 Rb4-f4**



[FEN "8/R4p2/3k4/1P3p1p/P4r2/2K2P2/8/8 w - - 0 47"]

**1.?**

The ending of this game is presented in my book, "For My Friends and Colleagues." Here, I am simply repeating my annotations. It was important to understand that advancing the pawns would not be very effective, if they didn't have the support of the king. Thus, 47.b6? would be met by 47...Kc6 48.a5 (48.b7 Kc7 49.a5 Kb8) 48...Rxf3+ 49.Kd4 Rf4+ 50.Ke5 Rb4=. And 47.a5? Rxf3+ would also be useless, for there would be no shelter for the king behind the pawns against the checks. So White must acquiesce to losing an important tempo.

**47.Kc3-b3! Rf4xf3+**

I also examined the attempt to maintain the rook on the fourth rank, where it cuts off the white king: 47...h4 48.Rxf7 h3 49.Rh7 Kc5!? 50.Rxh3 Rb4+ 51.Ka3 Rf4. There follows 52.Rg3!, when Black loses to zugzwang: 52...Kc4 53.b6; 52...Kd6 53.Rg8; 52...Rd4 53.f4!.

**48.Kb3-b4 Rf3-f1**

48...h4 49.Rxf7 h3 50.Rh7 f4 51.b6 (51.Rh6+!?) 51...Kc6 52.Ka5!, isn't any better.

**49.Ra7xf7 f5-f4 50.Kb4-a5 f4-f3 51.b5-b6**

I wanted to play 51.Kb6, and then advance my a-pawn (51...f2? 52.a5 h4 53.a6+-). However, after 51...h4! 52.a5 h3, White doesn't make it.

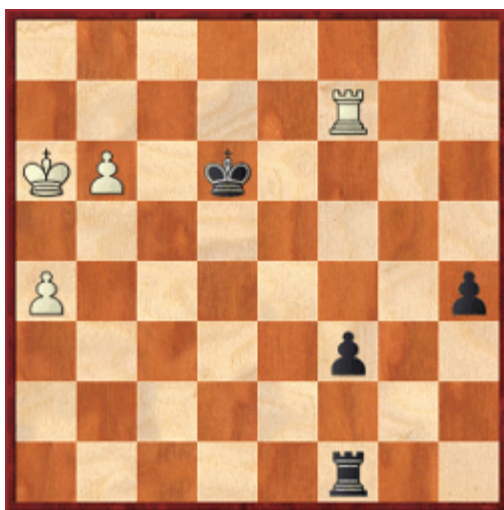
**51...h5-h4**

In case of 51...f2, a mistake would be 52.b7? Rb1 53.Ka6 Kc6! 54.Rxf2 Rb6+ or 54.a5 Rxb7!. Only 52.Ka6! wins: 52...Ra1 (52...Ke6 53.b7!) 53.b7!.

**52.Ka5-a6**

Also good is 52.b7.





[FEN "8/5R2/KP1k4/8/P6p/5p2/8/5r2 b - - 0 52"]

### 52...Kd6-e6

An important finesse lay just offstage. In the variation 52...h3 53.b7 Rb1 54.Rxf3 h2, the natural 55.Rh3? would have let Black save himself by 55...Kc6! 56.Rxh2 Rb6+. The only move to win was 55.Rf1!.

**53.b6-b7 Ke6xf7 54.b7-b8Q f3-f2 55.Qb8-f4+ Kf7-g6 56.Qf4-g4+**

Black resigned.

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Russian IM Mark Dvoretsky is one of the most respected chess trainers in the world today. In his May 2015 column he presents the fifth of a six-part series dealing with positions in which Black opens the g-file after a trade of minor pieces. A new column is posted the second Tuesday of each month.

## A Complex Encounter

By Mark Dvoretsky

Time for us to examine two more complex encounters that took place in Candidates' matches.

**Yusupov - Ivanchuk**

Candidates' Match, Game 6

Brussels, 1991

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 0-0 7.0-0 cd8.eddc9.Bxc4 b6 10.Bg5 Bb7 11.Ne5**



[FEN "rn1q1rk1/pb3ppp/1p2pn2/4N1B1/1bBP4/2N5/PP3PPP/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 11"]

**11...Nb8-d7**

A courageous decision: Black is aiming for exchanges; and for this reason, he does not shirk even from weakening his own king's pawn cover.

11...h6!? 12.Bh4 Be7, or 11...Be7 at once, would have been safer. And 11...Bxc3 12.bcQc7 was also worth looking into.

**11...Nc6** leads to interesting complications: White faces a difficult choice. The standard tactical ploy, 12.Ba6, offers him no advantage after 12...Bxa6 13.Nxc6 Qd6 14.Bxf6 gf15.Qg4+ (15.Nxb4 Bxf1 is weaker) 15...Kh8 16.Qh4 Qxc6 17.Qxf6+ Kg8, when he would have to give perpetual check (since 18.Rfe1? fails to ...Bd3).

**12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.Nd7 Qh4** (Rainer Knaak's recommendation) leads to sharper play after **14.Nxf8**.

A) 14...Rxf8 15.Ne2 (15.a3!? has been tried in a few games) 15...Rd8 16.Qb3 Nxd4 (16...Bd6!?) 17.Nxd4 Rxd4 (17...Bd6!? 18.g3 Qxd4 19.Rad1 Qc5, with compensation, deserved attention) 18.Qxb4 Bxg2! 19.Qb5! g6 20.Be2 Bh3 21.Bf3?? Qg4+!, and White resigned in Farago - Rigo, Budapest 1976). However, the position after 21.Qc6 or 21.f4!?, evidently favors White. On the other hand, Black could easily avoid this whole variation.

B) **14...Nxd4?! -** Now it's White who must tread carefully.



[FEN "r4Nk1/pb3ppp/1p2p3/8/1bBn3q/2N5/PP3PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 15"]

1.?

In the game Van de Plassche - Hoogendoorn, Dutch Club Championship 1995, White played 15.Nd7? Bf3! 16.Be2 (16.gf Bd6) 16...Nxe2+ 17.Nxe2 Qg4 18.g3 Bxe2, and Black ended up a pawn to the good.

On 15.Ne2 Bd6 16.h3 (16.f4 Rxf8 17.Nxd4 Bxf4 18.Rxf4 Qxf4-/+), Black plays, not 16...Nf3+? 17.gf Qg5+ 18.Ng3 Bxg3 (hoping for 19.fg Qxg3+, and a perpetual check) - in view of 19.Nxe6 fe 20.Bxe6 Kh8 21.fg+/-; and on 16...Qe4 17.f3 Nxe2+ (another interesting try is 17...Qe3+!? 18.Kh1 Qe5 19.f4 Qe4 20.Rf2 Nf5, with compensation) 18.Qxe2 Qd4+, with outstanding compensation for the exchange sacrificed.

White can cast doubt on his opponent's idea with **15.Nxe6! fe16.Qd3!**. The game might continue **16...Rf8** (16...Rd8 17.Qg3+/-) **17.Ne2!**(here 17.Qg3 doesn't lead to anything, because of 17...Nf3+! 18.gf Qxc4 with compensation) **17...Qg4 18.Ng3**.



[FEN "5rk1/pb4pp/1p2p3/8/1bBn2q1/3Q2N1/PP3PPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 18"]

White is a solid exchange up, but the position remains unclear. **18...Rf3!?** is tempting, and sets Black a difficult task - how does he react to it?

Taking the rook is obviously bad. On 19.Qd1 Bc5, Black retains dangerous counterplay; for example, he has to think about 20...Rxc3!? 21.hg Qe4. It would be easy to fall for the deflecting 19.Bxe6+ Nxe6 20.gf, if it weren't for the reply 20...Ng5!!, which is quite sufficient. The queen is untouchable, and the game would most likely end in perpetual check: 21.Rfd1 Nxf3+ 22.Kf1 Nxe2+ 23.Kg1 Nf3+.

The best line is **19.h3! Qh4 20.Nf5!!**.

A) 20...Rxf5 21.Bxe6+ Nxe6 22.Qxf5 - advantage, White.

B) 20...Rxd3 21.Nxh4 Ne2+ 22.Kh2 (22.Kh1?? Rxh3) 22...Bd6+ 23.f4! (23.g3?! Rxg3! 24.f4 g5?! is much worse for White) 23...Rd2 24.Bxe6+ (24.Bxe2 Rxe2 offers no advantage - the black bishops are too powerful) 24...Kf8 25.Rad1 Rxd1 26.Rxd1 Bxf4+ 27.Kh1 Ng3+ 28.Kg1 Be3+ 29.Kh2 Bf4 30.Nf3+/- here, the compensation for the missing exchange - is still missing.

### 12.Ne5xd7

After this, White chose 12.Qe2 more often; but got nothing special out of it: 12...Bxc3 13.bcQc7 14.Nxd7 Nxd7.

### 12...Qd8xd7 13.Bg5xf6 g7xf6



[FEN "r4rk1/pb1q1p1p/1p2pp2/8/1bBP4/2N5/PP3PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 14"]

1.?

### 14.d4-d5!

A standard pawn sacrifice to open lines. Objectively, it is insufficient for advantage; but nonetheless, it sets more difficult problems for your opponent, than 14.Qg4+ Kh8 15.Qh4 Rg8!? 16.Qxf6+ Rg7, or 14.Re1 Bxc3 (14...Rad8 15.Re3 Kh8) 15.bcRfc8 with equality is possible, too.)

### 14...Bb4xc3 15.b2xc3 Bb7xd5 16.Qd1-g4+!

A necessary in-between check: the immediate 16.Qd4 is parried by 16...Rac8 or 16...Rfd8.

### 16...Kg8-h8 17.Qg4-d4

17.Rfd1 Rg8 18.Rxd5 (18.Qh3? Bxg2!-+) 18...Qc7 19.Qh4 ed20.Qxf6+ Rg7 21.Bxd5 Re8 is inferior: White does not have enough for the exchange (Black is going to play 22...Qe5). And 17.Qh4 would allow Black force a perpetual check immediately by 17...Bxc4 18.Qxf6+ Kg8.

### 17...Ra8-c8?!

This is inaccurate! The coolheaded 17...Qd8!? was stronger. After 18.Bxd5 ed19.Rfe1 Rc8 20.Re3 Rc4 21.Qd2 (21.Qd3?! Rxc3! 22.Qxc3 d4 is inferior), White has total compensation for the pawn sacrifice (21...d4?! 22.Rd3 dc? 23.Qh6+- doesn't work), but no more than that.

He could also play 17...Kg7!? 18.Rad1 Qc6! 19.Qg4+ Kh8 20.Qh4 Bxc4 21.Qxf6+ Kg8 22.Rd4 Rfc8!, and White's attack would only be good for a perpetual.



[FEN "2r2r1k/p2q1p1p/1p2pp2/3b4/2BQ4/2P5/P4PPP/R4RK1 w - - 0 18"]

1.?

**18.Qd4xf6+?!**

Another oversight, in reply to White's. Black would have more serious problems after the surprising flank attack **18.Ba6!**, with the following variations:

18...Rg8 19.Qxf6+ Rg7 20.Bxc8 Qe7!? 21.Qd4! Bxg2 22.f4!+/- - the exposed white king does not compensate for Black's missing piece;

18...e5 19.Bxc8 - Black only has one pawn for the exchange, so a wearying fight for the draw lies ahead of him;

18...Rc5 19.Qxf6+ Kg8 20.Rad1!, and the line 20...Qd8 21.Qxd8 Rxd8 22.c4 Ra5 23.cdRxa6 24.deRe8 (24...Rxd1 25.e7+-) 25.ef+ Kxf7 26.Rd2 leads to a four-rook endgame a pawn down, which is most likely losing. And to 20...Qc6, White replies, not 21.Bd3? Bxg2, but 21.Rd4! (21.Qg5+ Kh8 22.Qh6 is strong, too) 21...Be4 22.Rfd1! Rd5 (the only move) 23.Rxd5 Bxd5 24.h4!, with a winning attack.

The only acceptable defense is **18...Rc7! 19.c4 Ba8** (Black stands worse after 19...Bb7 20.Qxf6+ Kg8 21.Bxb7 Rxb7 22.Rad1 Qe7 23.Qd4!) **20.Qxf6+ Kg8 21.Rfd1 Qe7** - here the most likely out-come would be a draw.

**18...Kh8-g8 19.Bc4-d3**

19.Ba6 would now be worthless, since Black now has 19...Qd8! (if 20.Qf4, then 20...Rc5=).

19.Bxd5 Qxd5 20.Rfd1 (20.Rad1 Qf5=) 20...Qf5 21.Qe7 a5 (21...Rxc3 22.Qxa7 Qc5 is possible, too) 22.h3 Rxc3 23.Rd8 Rxd8 24.Qxd8+ Kg7 25.Qxb6 would lead to a draw.

## 19...Qd7-d8!

It is important to drive the queen away from her dangerous position. 19...Bxg2?? loses after 20.Kxg2 Qxd3 21.Kh1.

**20.Qf6-h6 f7-f5**





[FEN "2rq1rk1/p6p/1p2p2Q/3b1p2/8/2PB4/P4PPP/R4RK1 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

Considering Black's threats of 21...Rxc3, 21...Rf6, or 21...Qf6, White has no time to wait. But he can no longer count on getting the advantage, any more, because he never succeeded in getting the rook into the game.

**21.c3-c4! Bd5xg2 22.Qh6xe6+**

22.Rfd1? Rf6 23.Qe3 Bb7 24.Bxf5 Qe7-/+ would be unprofitable.

**22...Kg8-g7 23.Qe6-e5+**

After 23.Kxg2 Qxd3 24.Rfd1 Qe4+ 25.Qxe4 fe 26.Rd4 Rf4 27.Re1 Rcf8 28.Re2, the four-rook endgame is about even - possibly a little more pleasant for White.

**23...Rf8-f6!**

In the variation 23...Kg6 24.Kxg2 (24.Qg3+?! Kf7 25.Bxf5 Bxf1 26.Bxc8 Rg8 27.Bg4 Be2 28.h3 h5=/+; 24.Rfd1?! Qg5=/+ 24...Qxd3 25.f3, White would keep some initiative, as the enemy king would be more exposed. Ivanchuk, who is leading the match by a point, strives for maximum solidity.

**24.Rf1-d1**

On 24.Kxg2 Qxd3 25.f3, 25...Qd6 is possible (this is why the rook went to f6).

**24...Rc8-c5! 25.Qe5-c3**

25.Qg3+ Rg6 26.Bxf5 Rxc3 27.Rxd8 Rg5 28.Rd7+ Kf6 29.h4 Rg:f5 30.Kxg2 Rxc4 leads to a draw.

**25...Bg2-c6**

25...Qa8 26.Be2 Qc6 27.f3 Bh3 (unclear) leads to a tenser situation.

**26.Bd3-e4 Qd8-c7!**

26...Qe8 is less accurate: 27.Bd5!

**27.Be4xc6 Qc7xc6 28.Ra1-c1**



[FEN "8/p5kp/1pq2r2/2r2p2/2P5/2Q5/P4P1P/2RR2K1 b - - 0 28"]

**28...b6-b5!?**

Black sacrifices the pawn, to get into a drawn rook endgame. Of course, other moves were possible. For example, 28...Kf7, to which White would respond 29.f3, intending 30.Kh1.

**29.c4xb5 Rc5xc3 30.b5xc6 Rf6xc6 31.Rc1xc3 Rc6xc3 32.Rd1-d7+ Kg7-g6 33.Rd7xa7 h7-h5**

Exploiting this kind of extra pawn is not possible.

**34.Ra4 (34.a4 h4=) 34...h4 35.Rxh4 Ra3 36.Kg2 Rxa2 37.Kg3?! (37.Rb4) 37...Ra1 38.f3 Kg5 39.Rb4 f4+! 40.Kh3 Ra2 41.Rb5+ Kg6, Draw.**